

MAY 1999



NUMBER 65

# THE QUEEN'S ROYAL SURREY REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

President  
Brigadier R. W. Aeworth CBE  
Chairman  
Colonel P. R. H. Thompson OBE TD DL  
Honorary Secretary  
Major J. C. Rogerson  
Assistant Secretary and Editor  
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## NEWSLETTER





## Regimental and Association Events

1999



19th May	Golf Society Annual Golf Match v The Royal Marines, Fleet.
21st May	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. The Revd Robert Cotton Rector of Holy Trinity will preach the sermon. During the service two windows commemorating the service of The Queen's Royal Regiment and The East Surrey Regiment Home Guard will be dedicated in the Regimental Chapel.
15-18th July	Regimental Cricket at Winchester. Details from: Lt Col Hugh Keatinge OBE (01962) 863658.
20th July	
2nd August	The last Royal Tournament - Group concessions, 0171 370 8399
1st August	MINDEN DAY (1759).
4-8th August	PWRR and Buffs Regimental Tent at Canterbury Cricket Week.
4th September	2/6th Queen's OCA Annual Reunion, Union Jack Club 11 am - 4 pm. Details from: Major M R Nason TD (01322) 527017.
9th September	SALERNO DAY (1943).
11th September	Queen Margrethe II presents new Colours to 3rd (Volunteer) Bn The PWRR at Ardingley South of England Show Ground, Sussex.
19th September	Museum Open Day - More War Stories - Clandon.
24th September	Queen's Surrey Museum Trustees Meeting - 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.
2nd October	PWRR and Queen's Regiment WO's & Sgts' Past and Present Dinner - Kent University, Canterbury. Details RHQ PWRR.
14th October	40th Anniversary of the formation of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment.
5th November	Annual Reunion - Union Jack Club. (Details in May Newsletter).
11th November	Field of Remembrance - Westminster Abbey - London.
14th November	Remembrance Day Parades - Guildford - Kingston - Southwark, Bermondsey and the Cenotaph, London. First Surrey Rifles, Stailes Church, Camberwell.
27th November	PWRR Officers' Club Regimental Dinner - Guards and Cavalry Club, London.
20th December	BRITISH BATTALION DAY. (1941)

2000

10th February	SOBRAON DAY (1846)
3rd March	Queen's Surreys Regimental Council Meeting - Clandon.
4th March	Queen's Surreys Territorial Trustees Meeting - Clandon.
18th March	Queen's Surreys Association and Charity Trustees Meeting Clandon.
27th March	2/7th Battalion Queen's Royal Regiment Re-union Lunch. Details From:- S Messenger, 10 South Row, Blackheath, London SE3 ORY (0181) 8526183.
23rd April	YPRRES DAY (1915).
16th July	Regimental Reunion, PWRR and Forebear Regiments, Tidworth.

Thank you Major J L A Fowler TD for your help, not only with this issue of the Newsletter but also for the T A Supplement we have produced.

*Frontpiece: All Saints Church, Kingston-upon-Thames, with the Memorial Gates which have been completely refurbished. The Gates form part of The East Surrey Regiment War Memorial to those who gave their lives in the two World Wars.*  
*The bottom left photo shows the Reverend Jim Bates and a drummer of The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment and the photo on the right is of our Chairman Colonel Peter Thompson and the Reverend Jim Bates after the service of re-dedication.*  
*Centre photo: shows the badge of The East Surrey Regiment and surrounding ornamental features above the Gates..*

## Editorial

This edition contains a Supplement on our Volunteers through the ages. Before the publication of the next Newsletter, the Territorial presence of the Regiment will have been reduced to two locations, Farnham and Camberley. Guildford will be without a military unit for the first time since 1876. We owe a tremendous debt to our Territorials and it is to be hoped that this Supplement will act as a form of tribute, in this the year that so many drastic cuts are/will have taken place.

The long and protracted negotiations continue for our regimental museum's new home, led by our President and the museum Chairman, Colonel Mac McConnell who has worked so hard these last few months. It is probably not known that he and the previous Chairman, Colonel Peter Durrant have visited over thirty sites for a new location for the museum.

I am also enclosing in this Newsletter another full update on the museum with some comments to the local papers from members of the public and it also includes a short history of the museum written by Colonel Anson Squire, a long serving Trustee.

The President has written in his notes the need to look after our old soldiers and their dependants. This work continues from Canterbury. But should any of our readers be aware of one of their old comrades (or a dependant) needing help please do contact the local SSAFA (address and phone number in the local phone book) and alert our Secretary, John Rogerson at Canterbury.

At our annual Church Service this year, two stained glass windows are being dedicated to the men of the Home Guard who served during the Second World War. The windows are badges of our two Regiments and we hope for a good attendance for this, our annual Church Service.

With good wishes to you all

Les Wilson

## President's notes

The discussions of the Regimental Council and the Trustees have inevitably been focused on the plans for the museum and its long term future. We should though not forget that our prime responsibilities are providing benevolence for our own soldiers in need and their dependants and the successful running of the Association in which I include this Newsletter. Nevertheless all matters to do with our Regiment are important.

We are in the process of commissioning a business plan to determine how best we can plan for our finite future for discharging our various responsibilities. In this way we hope to ascertain what resources we might responsibly allocate to the museum now, or in five or ten years and so on. It looks, however, as though we may have to raise a considerable sum of money by appeal if we are to endow our museum as a memorial to the Regiment in Surrey. In these days of professional fundraising we will need to commission a feasibility study before any decision, which will be taken by the Regimental Council and the Trustees, is taken to launch an appeal. We will keep you informed but I have no intention of launching an appeal until all the building blocks are in place.

Although the Museum continues to keep us busy the Association is clearly in good heart and the reports from Branch Secretaries at our annual meeting last month were very encouraging. I hope that by the time the November Newsletter is published we will be clear on the future of the Museum and funding.

With my best wishes

Bob Acworth

## The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment



Since the last Newsletter notes the pace of life within the four PWRR Battalions has been hectic but also it has been a time of consolidation.

The 1st Battalion completed an extensive training exercise in Canada (Ex Pond Jump West). This was carried out at Wainwright in Alberta. This is a vast training area where the Battalion has free play to complete its own training. This is very different from BATUS, which is held at Suffield (near Calgary) where every exercise is controlled by staff. The training consisted of four weeks of dry training and live firing integrated with some high quality adventurous training and a short stand down period. The exercise allowed Company Commanders to conduct progressive training for live firing and the final testing exercise.

The weather changed from too hot to too cold and the really damp cold spell coincided nicely with a Company river crossing exercise! There was a good link up with the South Alberta Light Horse (one of our affiliated Regiments) when a group attended the Officers Mess party.

Since its return from Canada the Battalion has focused its training on its TALO (Tactical Air Landed Operational) role.

The Commanding Officers have changed, Lt Col M P Rayner has departed to work at Warminster on the Staff and Lt Col S P B Kilpatrick has taken over command.

The Battalion completes an arms plot move to Tidworth in December 1999 and are replaced by 1st Battalion The Royal Irish in Howe Barracks in Canterbury.

The 2nd Battalion moved to Belfast in November 1998 for a six months tour and do not return until the end of May 1999. On deployment they found themselves 'locked in' to their Belfast bases with the remit to maintain the lowest possible profile whilst the Good Friday Agreement progressed with its fudges and delays. To combat boredom a highly workable 'macro' rotation of company multiples was designed to provide a level of friction which constantly challenged the soldiers. All tasks would be completed by all soldiers. At the same time Company Headquarters remained static so as to provide the RUC with a sense of reassurance and continuity. This seems to have worked and the Battalion are looking forward to some well-earned leave.

In the last notes The Strategic Defence Review was looming but had not impacted. In November 1998 it was announced. It has had an immediate effect and will be completely implemented by 1st July 1999. In summary the titles of 5th Battalion and 6/7th Battalion's PWRR will disappear. Some locations will shut. We have ended up with a complete cap badge Battalion that will be called the 3rd Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment. This will be in the counties of Kent, Surrey and E & W Sussex. The Battalion will consist of three Rifle Companies plus an HQ Coy plus the Band. In addition we will have a cap badge rifle Coy based in Portsmouth and IOW which will be C Company of a new Battalion called The Rifle Volunteers. They will cover Hants, IOW, Wiltshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire. We will also have a cap badge company in the London Regiment (which we already had). In general terms we came off quite well compared with others. It is of course very sad that once again we have had to change names and reduce.

We have had many individuals serving in the Balkans and as I write we have just pulled some out of Kosovo and we have others deployed in Macedonia. Only time will tell if history repeats itself something that politicians seem to have a blind spot for!

The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment is in good form and ready to meet any challenge.

AJM

## First World War Survivors

As readers will recall the National Press ran a series of articles in November 1998 to mark the 80th Anniversary of the ending of the 1914 -18 war. Several of our old soldiers are still living aged from 99 years to 101. A marvellous achievement gentlemen and we salute you all.



**Arthur Bury 99** who served with the Queen's, **Dennis Finbow 99** and **Gilbert Rugg 100**, both believed to have served with 1 Surreys also **Frederick Burday 100**. **Frederick Attoe 100** served with 7 Surreys. **George Howard 100**, a regular soldier served with 2 Queen's on the Somme and later moved with them to India and the North West Frontier.

All the above were invested with the Legion d' Honneur Medal given by France to mark the 80th anniversary.

George Howard's medal was presented to him on 11th April and the photo above shows him proudly wearing his medal after the presentation by The Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire.



George Howard was born on April 22 1899 and served from 1915-1923. He married on 21st April 1923 and the couple had two children, his wife died in 1989. They had 6 grandchildren, 17 great grandchildren and a great-great granddaughter.

George lives alone with the help of his family and the social services, and very much values his independence.

LW



*Presentation to Captain Brian Scripps the PSAO at A Coy 5 PWRR who retires in July after 48 years service. Brian Scripps has been a loyal supporter of the Association since 1980 and we at the Association owe him a real debt of gratitude for all he has done for us. Thank you Brian, Keep in touch and a very happy retirement*

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*Two Ex RSM's - Ron Wildgoose and Les Wilson compare notes on some of the members present!?*

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## Supplementary Reserve for the Army

Army Orders issued in August, 1924 authorised the formation of a Supplementary Reserve of Officers, provisionally fixed at 2,489, "to complete and maintain all arms at full strength at mobilization" and also the formation of a Supplementary Reserve, provisionally fixed at 20,639, to complete on mobilization the requirements of the Royal Artillery, Royal Engineers, Royal Corps of Signals, Royal Army Service Corps, Royal Army Medical Corps, Royal Army Ordnance Corps and the Royal Army Veterinary Corps.

Broadly speaking the Reserve was to be divided into two categories viz:- those who would have to undergo peace-time training and those who would not. The latter would consist of specialists who, when called to the Colours, would carry out duties similar to their civilian occupations.

Although liable for service in any part of the world when called out for duty, it was emphasised that the members "would not be required to serve in aid of the Civil Power in a domestic emergency".

Source - East Surrey "Regimental News".

## Association Affairs 1999

### The Regimental Council

Brigadier R W Acworth CBE - President of the Association.

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

Brigadier M J Doyle MBE - Past President.

Colonel J W Sewell - Past President.

Colonel W E McConnell TD - Chairman, The Museum Trustees.

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

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

Colonel J W Francis

Major M J Jarratt - Honorary Legal Advisor.

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

Major J C Rogerson - Honorary Secretary.

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

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

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

Colonel P R H Thompson OBE TD DL.

Colonel A C Ward OBE.

Colonel J W Francis.

Lieutenant Colonel F B Herd TD JP DL.

Major P C Aitkens.

Major J C Rogerson - Honorary Secretary.

Major M J Jarratt - Honorary Legal Advisor.

### Branch Secretaries

5th Bn OMA-Queens:	J Chatfield Esq , 13 Wood Road, Farncombe, Godalming, Surrey GU7 3NN	Tel: 01483 429425
6th Bn OCA-Queens:	J T Brown Esq 6 Lawrence House, Millbank Estate, London SW1P 4ED	Tel: 0171 8210028
7th Bn OCA-Queens:	Maj J M A Tamplin MBE TD 10 Hugh Street SW1	Tel: 0171 8340120
2/6th Bn OCA-Queens:	Maj. M A Nason TD, 64 Westfield Road, Barnehurst, Kent DA7 6LR	Tel: 01322 527017
2/7th Bn OCA-Queens:	S Messenger Esq 10 South Row, Blackheath, London SE3 0RY	Tel: 0181 8526183
East Surrey Reunion:	F A W Ramsey Esq MM 20 Lavender Road, Carshalton, Surrey SMS 3EF	Tel: 0181 4012070
2/6th East Surrey St Valery Assoc:	Maj A J Redfern MC TD Courtlands, 12 Kent House, Sheen Rd, Richmond, Surrey TW10 5AV	Tel: 0181 9402191
WOs and Sgts Assoc:	P Henman Esq 35 Downside Road, Sutton, Surrey SM2 5HR	Tel: 0181 6420585
Queen's Royal Surrey: 60/70 Assoc:	W L Soffe Esq 19 Gale Close, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3QG	Tel: 0181 2603111
Queen's Royal Surrey Kent Branch:	R F Harper Esq 7 De Havilland Close, Hawkinge, Kent CT18 7FE	Tel: 01303 891970
Queen's Royal Surrey Suffolk Branch:	D J Gardner Esq 106 Oakes Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP32 6QS	Tel: 01284 753160
1st Surrey Rifles (21st London Regiment)	T W Young Esq BEM 38 Stanstead Manor, St James Road, Sutton, Surrey	Tel: 0181 643 6189

### Benevolence Secretary's report

During 1998 a total of 225 cases were investigated and 201 (reduction of 30 on 1997) grants-in-aid were approved. In the majority of cases' the grants were for debts, particularly gas, electricity, rent arrears, and travel. The Association helped provide 22 further wheelchairs or mobility scooters, 11 sets of orthopaedic furniture and contributed to 15 convalescent holidays.

We now administer 31 ABF Annuities (were Supplementary Allowances) and the ABF generously contribute £10 per week per case. During this period we have renewed or arranged for 12 Nursing Home Fees of £624 from the ABF and the Associations contribution was £154 per case per year to be paid for our old soldiers or their widows to be looked after. We have one resident in Gifford House, with two other members in on short stays during the year. The Queen's Surrey Charity paid out £43,786 as grants-in-aid. Of the 24 cases not receiving a grant, 10 were assisted by local Councils/Charities or member and other Regimental Charities after we had contacted them. 6 cases were not receiving such allowances as Attendance, Mobility or Rent Rebate. The ABF total grants and annuities in support was £22,208. Our Branch Secretaries have the SSAFA and Forces Help half yearly Handbook, for them to deal direct with the local case workers. I should again like to pay tribute to the Army Benevolent Fund who are always helpful with prompt action and advice. SSAFA, Forces Help Society and The Royal British Legion investigate the majority of our cases and to their case workers I am particularly grateful for all their assistance. During this last year we have also assisted St Dunstaners and members who are being cared for by the Ex Services Mental Welfare Society, War Pensioners and Combat Stress.

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

**Patrick Tootal OBE, County Field Officer, Royal British Legion Kent writes:** Thank you very much for your letter dated 24th November 1998 together with your generous grant of £134 to Mrs A towards a washing machine. Mrs A will, of course, be advised of your kindness. Many thanks for the Formation History. I do apologise, I am a simple 'crab' whose Service was formed in 1918 and I can't cope going back to 1661! I get even more stick from the Armoured Corps War Memorial Benevolent Fund when I confuse lancers and hussars!! Roger over and out. I am most grateful for your assistance with this application.

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**Wing Commander J R G Lawrie, Honorary Divisional Secretary SSAFA writes:-** Thank you for your letter enclosing the cheque for a further £495.00 on behalf of Mrs B. Mrs B is almost fully chairbound and has to rely on her husband at present to push her in a normal wheelchair, the strain of which is affecting his health. I consider this further grant most generous and I would ask you to convey my deepest gratitude to the committee. I am sure Mr B will be writing to you personally to express his own thanks. When Christopher Stevens telephoned advising the cost of the wheelchair I virtually gave up the idea of obtaining a wheelchair for Mrs B and was prepared to explain to Mr B that we might have to resort to purchasing a lightweight push wheelchair. I know this deserving couple will be delighted and Mr B will I know be relieved being free of the constant worry that the strain of pushing his wife could affect his heart. Once again my sincere gratitude for the help given to Mr and Mrs B.

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**Lt Col J P Shoesmith, SSAFA and FHS Guildford writes:-** I acknowledge receipt of your Association's cheque for £350 to purchase a new washing machine for Mr C, I know he will be most appreciative. Please convey my gratitude to the Benevolence Committee of the Queens Royal Surrey Regt Charity for their generosity. I will ensure that Mr C receives the Association Newsletter and will suggest that he may wish to remain in contact with his old Regiment.

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**Mrs Anne Ford a SSAFA/FHS Case Worker writes:-** Thank you very much indeed for your letter of 9th April, enclosing a cheque for £500 towards a stairlift and shower for Mr D. I need hardly tell you how grateful Mr and Mrs D are. I am sending your cheque off to our treasurer today in order that it will be available to pay for the installation of a stairlift and shower. I have sent on the copy of your Association Newsletter to Mr D having had a quick look through myself. I found it very interesting, what a "close knit family" you are!

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I am writing to say a big thank you for the Cheque which you sent us through SSAFA. We have bought the electric operated chair and it is a great help for my husband. Thank you again.

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I am writing to thank you and the Association for so kindly sending a Cheque for my new teeth dentures. Also my thanks goes to Mr M Tullberg, and SSAFA for getting in touch with you. Thanking you once again Sir.

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On behalf of my wife, I wish to thank you for the donation you sent to SSAFA, towards the cost of her Bath Bubble. She is so thrilled to be able to lie and soak her old limbs for the first time in years. Thanking you once again.

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I should like to thank you for the £500 grant towards my new second hand disability car which I got a fortnight before Xmas. Mr N Trimble, the Bracknell based SSAFA worker did a great job raising funds. He has taken my photo with the car, it's nice to be mobile again, and getting about a bit. I should like to thank all my comrades and wish them all a happy new year.

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I would like to thank you most sincerely for the grant of £500 which I understand has been sent to SSAFA towards the cost of an Electric Wheelchair for me and which I hope to take delivery of early in the new year. I am really looking forward to this - what a difference it will be to driving a Bren Gun Carrier. I can just hear the lads laughing their heads off at old "XXXX XXXX" in his wheelchair - one thing is certain I shall place a Paschal Lamb on it somewhere. Once again thank you so much and all the best for 1999 onwards.

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I wish to send my thanks to the Regiment on behalf of my wife and myself, in acknowledging SSAFA's request for help on my behalf, in part funding for the purchase of a Manual Self Propelling Wheelchair, it has been with your generous donation I have now been presented with a wheelchair, enabling me to leave my house and enjoy life once more. I thank you once again for your generosity.

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Just a few lines to let you know the wheelchair for my wife was delivered a few days before Christmas, she is indeed very pleased with it. My wife and I would like to thank the Committee for the most generous donation, I have one wish, that someday I would be able to repay the Regiment for the kindness which has been shown to my wife and I. We would like to wish you all a very Happy New Year and may you continue in all the good work that you do so well.

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Thank you very much for your donation towards the purchase of my new Motor Scooter. The Scooter is going very well and enables me to get about more than I would otherwise be able to, thereby giving me more independence.

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Bert Quickenden explains what went wrong! Joe Gooden listens - again

## Into Burma

I have long been fascinated by Burma, now renamed Myanmar (Me-an-ma) by its military rulers, with its British colonial past and the 1942-45 campaign against the Japanese. Having been closed to the outside world since gaining independence in January 1948 and with its development stunted by inward looking isolationist policies, it has gradually reopened up to foreign visitors in the last few years, though even now not totally. Largish tracts of the country are still off limits and passage through others restricted to holders of special permits; this is largely because several of the tribal areas, notably the Kachins to the north and the Shan to the east, amongst others, are not keen to be ruled from Rangoon, and so there is an ongoing but weakening insurgency problem coupled with local warlords and drug barons. There is also the Democracy party, led by the much publicised lady Aung San Suu Kyi, which won the last popular elections in 1988 but which was at once suppressed by coup d'etat by the 350,000 strong army who still rule this country of some 42 million outwardly happy looking and smiling people, living an unsophisticated life at a slow pace in sometimes adverse conditions. But, I digress.

My wife and I first went to Burma on a three week trip in 1996 and visited the then more easily accessible areas. We saw the two beautifully maintained Commonwealth War Cemeteries, the main one, a memorial to some 27,000 Allied servicemen, about 20 miles north of Rangoon, now called Yangon, and a smaller one at Thanbyuzayet (Than-boo-ee-at) about 45 miles south of Moulmein where some 3,500 prisoners of war who died in the construction of the infamous Burma to Siam railway lie buried.

All this set the scene for our October 1998 expedition, and my hopes of reaching the areas of Burma where 1st and 2nd Battalions The Queen's Royal Regiment saw action against the Japanese in 1943 and 1944.

The 1943 - 1944 period saw the 1st Battalion in the thick of it in the Arakan in the northwest. The Japanese advance towards India had its eyes on Chittagong in what is now Bangladesh, and had reached north of Akyab, with its port and airfield, up the Maya peninsula. Akyab is now called Sittwe (Sit-way). is incredibly hot and humid and the border areas with Bangladesh are officially closed, certainly to Westerners. The airfield where my wife and I landed is now tarmac of course, but there were lengths of World War 2 metal all weather runway and tracking strips much in evidence all over the town as fencing and makeshift walls. The wide Kaladan river reaches Sittwe from some 275 miles to the north, with little boats and rice barges plying to and fro. The port is a jetty or two and an inlet. We managed to hire a noisy motor boat for a four hour journey upstream to the unlikely sounding place of Mrauk U and thence on by land nearly to Kyauktaw, within about forty miles of Braganza. Box; our vehicle on this latter stretch was an asphyxiating MOT failure of a 1945 jeep, driven by a cheerful chainsmoker. Burmese army checkpoints exist here and there, the wooden bridges over the innumerable streams are in an advanced state of decay and the road potholed tarmac. Hills and rice fields are all around. The locals clearly had not seen many, perhaps any, Europeans before, but were smiling and welcoming. Our advance further northwards ran out of roads and bounds, and so we retired slowly to Sittwe, and its stifling heat.

Our next objective was the area of the 1944 Chindit operations and this meant getting back to Rangoon, by air, to fly northwards from there.

I should perhaps at this stage remind you of why the Chindits were in Burma at all. Major General Orde Wingate, their creator and leader, was an unorthodox warrior with Churchillian support but unpopular in conventional British

army command and staff circles in India at the time, who believed passionately in the concept of long range penetration behind the Japanese lines and aggressive actions once there. The first Chindits went in on foot in 1943 in brigade strength, spent some weeks behind the Japanese front harassing and agitating them before marching back out to India again. The 1944 plan was on a much larger scale and included three brigades part of whom were flown in by dakotas and gliders, the setting up of strongpoints to dominate selected Japanese supply routes, with the twofold purpose of closing the road and railway lifeline to their forces facing U.S. General. 'Vinegar Joe' Stilwell with his American and Chinese troops on the Ledo road to Myitkyina (Me-chee-na), and of forcing the enemy to deploy troops to search for and remove the Chindits when they would otherwise be concentrating for the forthcoming struggle on the threshhold of India at Imphal and Kohima.

Why Chindits? Well, the usual pair of rather dragon-like stone lions who stand as guardians at the entrance to many pagodas are called Chinthes, pronounced Chin-dees, hence Chindits.

By April 1944, 2nd Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment, in the guise of Nos 21 and 22 Columns of Brigadier Bernard Fergusson's 16 Brigade, having marched in from Assam in India, via the initial strip of the Ledo road and thence the mystical sounding settlements of Tagap Ga, Hkalah Ga, Lulum Nok and Sezin, supported by airdrops en route, had reached the strongpoint of Aberdeen by the forested Meza river, some 180 miles as the dragon flies, through some of the most difficult terrain in the world. Aberdeen was strongly fortified and boasted a dakota airstrip and lay some 40 miles northwest of the township of Indaw, with its two airfields and Japanese garrison. Not far from Indaw lie the road and railway running northeastwards to Myitkyina and on this axis, about 20 miles away, just north of a village called Mawlu, sprang up another strongpoint, the road and rail block called White City, where for some two months Brigadier Mike Calvert and his 77 Brigade held a stranglehold on the Japanese supply route, despite ferocious enemy attempts to erase it. The Queen's columns, in action around Indaw, its lake, the villages of Pebin, Seiktha and Thetkegyin, at Milestone 20 on the road to Banmauk, and at the Sedan Chaung, would have been conscious of this struggle going on not far from them, but were not directly involved. With the rest of Brigadier Fergusson's brigade the Queen's columns finally marched to another strongpoint called Broadway, 80 miles further to the northeast, thence to be flown out to India.



Elephants near Indaw

We had a difficult time too, reaching these remoter northerly areas of Burma. The boarding pass for our Air Myanmar flight in an ancient and probably ill-maintained Fokker from Mandalay to Myitkyina said "free seating". Keeping a stiff upper lip we were almost the last on in the rush and consequently in the two seats at the very back of the aircraft,

Row 13. Noting the emergency exits through the dense fog of cigarette smoke as we took off, I doubted if we would have reached them in the event of a mishap. At Myitkyina we had our first proper taste of Burmese bureaucracy in the shape of "Immigration". Laboriously copied, hand written entries in the arrivals log from our passports, under a burning sun and assailed by insects, together with the wait for our one suitcase, took one hour. Then off by car to the hotel, which rather surprisingly was all right, even with in the wording of its advertisement, ensue birthroom!. It was, however, subject to frequent power failures, a common occurrence in Burma. Myitkyina is on the upper reaches of the Irrawaddy river, nearly 750 miles by road from Rangoon, a bustling and expanding little town with a market and a large and visible military garrison. In 1944 it had a good airfield which eventually General Stilwell and his Chinese captured. That airfield today is no longer in use but its outline is still there. There is also a Japanese war memorial in the form of an inscribed clocktower.

Our next requirement was a special permit to drive southwestwards along the former Japanese supply route to the Irrawaddy port township of Katha, some ten bone shaking and shockabsorber damaging hours away by car, and the only place near Indaw with accommodation licensed to receive foreigners. The wait for the permit took a whole day, but we got it at last and set off early next morning on the 100 miles drive.

Possession of the permit was not a magic token for smooth passage, as it turned out. At Mogaung, a scruffy town and the scene of Brigadier Calvert and 77 Brigade's final epic triumph in the last of the Chindit days we were closely scrutinised again, with head scratching and shaking, but at last we were allowed on. Two further stops at remote check points followed. Beautiful scenery, with distant forested hills, pagodas, rice fields, the occasional Burmese army patrol, little villages, bullock carts, smiling people, terrible roads, more rotten wooden bridges, black exhaust from the very occasional vehicle and then sunset.

We passed through Henu, the actual site of White City, about a mile north of Mawlu railway station, at this moment. The dakota strip has reverted to brilliant green rice fields, the forested hillock of Pagoda Hill, the centre of the arena, has a new shining golden pagoda on it and the road and railway line are still close together. Smoke from cooking fires in the village hung in the air and bullock carts were being unladen for the night. The only sign of 1944 was a red and white painted bomb casing of unknown origin now serving out its time as some sort of gong.

Pitch darkness then covered us for the last hour of the day and then we rattled into dimly lit Katha; our 'hotel' was a very close relation to the Black Hole of Calcutta; myriads of insects descended on us. We met an elderly man who said he had served in this area in the Gurkhas in 1945; great shakings of hands\* By 10 o'clock the generator spluttered to a halt and a tremendous tropical downpour followed later. Sleep was impossible on our inch thick mattress on hard wooden boards, even after two Mandalay beers and a whisky.

We were up at dawn, thankful the night was over; the lavatories were indescribable. Hiring a pick-up truck of Japanese make, and passing the occasional timber hauling elephant, we bounced and shuddered our way to Indaw, an hour away, a pleasant little town on the southeast of a large lake shimmering in the sunshine. I had hoped to get out to Milestone 20 on the road to Banmauk where 21 Column had a successful ambush action against a convoy of Japanese trucks, but the road has now fallen into such chaotic disrepair that the maximum attainable speed was under 5 mph, so I had to content myself with getting as far as Thetkegyin on the northern shore of Indaw lake. There was no serious possibility



*On the road to Banmauk at Thetkegyin, "like an alien from outer space!"*

of walking to Aberdeen either. At Thetkegyin we were encircled by at least a hundred excited small schoolchildren, to whom we must have seemed like aliens from outer space. Here again the two Japanese held airstrips have become rice fields., and the huddled village of Pebin on the south west shore of the lake, subject of a Queen's attack,, shone in the fierce heat. Indaw lake is a most attractive setting with two or three little fishing boats at work on it. Seiktha, also held by 2 Queen's for a short while, was unreachable some four or five miles further west.. Low undulating forested hills lie to the north of this terrible road, cultivations surrounding the actual lake. The Sedan Chaung, south of Indaw and the venue of another clash with the Japanese, is a steeply banked muddy stream about as wide as the River Wey at Guildford. I could see nobody who looked old enough to have been more than a young child in 1944. Everybody seemed very welcoming and surprised to see us. The only signs of the war in Indaw itself-were two buses of great antiquity which, in their heyday, had clearly been Bedford 3 tonners.

Our journey on by car from Indaw to Mandalay took a further ten arduous hours, through variations in-the countryside ranging from beautiful teak forests to cultivations.. crossing several elderly Bailey bridges and fording some other stoney river beds, finally reaching the Ava bridge over the Irrawaddy into Mandalay, which had been blown by the British in 1942 and fully repaired after the war. At last, a bath, clean sheets and airconditioning!

The campaign against the Japanese in Burma especially was fought under the most trying and exacting conditions, as those of you who were there will know, and having now seen the actual ground for myself I can only reiterate the poignant words of the epitaph to those servicemen who fought and died here,

**When you go home, tell them of us and say  
For your tomorrow we gave our today.**

HMH

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#### Battle Honours

**Taku Forts 1861** A battle honour of both the Queen's and Surreys, that of the Taku Forts, was also the occasion of youthful reception of a medal, this time the highest award of all - the Victoria Cross. Hospital Apprentice Andrew Fitzgibbon of the Indian Medical Establishment, became the youngest winner of the VC when, at the age of 15 years 3 months, he showed great gallantry when attending to wounded under fire. The British Forces, fighting with courage and fortitude, captured the Forts and immediately afterwards, due to heavy rains, found themselves enduring hardships of cold, mud and water - miseries that were to be repeated more than fifty years later on the Western Front in the First World War.

## A Soldier's story

It was on 11th February 1929, that John (Jock) Henderson, along with thirty other men from Tyne and Wear joined the Regular Army at Durham City. Posted to Stoughton Barracks, Guildford, they travelled all night to be received later at the Guard Room by Sgt Torkington who was later to become Jock's Platoon Sergeant.

All the North Country new intake were put into a squad known as the Geordie Platoon and after four months training they were posted to the 2nd Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment at Grand Shaft Barracks, Dover where they received further training from RSM "Buzzy" Waspe and Corporal Salmon. But their stay was not long as they were soon bound for overseas service.

On 12th September 1929, via a rough passage in the troopship *Neuralia*, they joined the 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment at Malta. Posted to different companies at St Paul's Barracks, Jock soon volunteered for the Drums under Drum Major "Skin" Wallace from whom he learnt his new art, as well as learning to play the flute under the instruction of Paddy Monahan. Malta was a happy station, under excellent officers, including Colonel Ponsonby and Captain Oxley-Boyle, and had good facilities for sport. It was there that Jock got his bronze medallion for swimming. But by the end of another twelve months fresh moves were afoot. In September 1930, again in the *Neuralia*, they sailed for China where they remained for four years before onward transportation to India. While en route in the troopship *Dorsetshire* Jock became batman to Captain Duncombe.

They arrived at Quetta just in time for the earthquake and all its horrors. Thankfully out on manoeuvres at the time of the actual "quake", the Queen's were then able to re-enter the stricken town and play a valuable part in rescue work and general aid. Presumably the Regiment aimed to be self-sufficient in construction work as Jock was afterwards sent on a bricklayers' course with the Sappers and Miners. Later the Regiment built their own mud huts and it was at that time, 1935, that Jock met the future Field Marshal Montgomery who was a Major at the Staff College.

In December 1935, there was a return to the UK and to the 2nd Battalion at Corruna Barracks, Aldershot, soon to be followed by duty for the parade for the funeral of King George V. In the drums, pouring rain resulted in several broken drum-skins. In 1936 the Battalion moved to the Isle of Wight where the Bandmaster was the famous Roger Barsotti. Maintaining an interest in sport, Jock took up boxing and, even more important, reached the dizzy heights of Corporal. With pay of 39 shillings per week, he felt a rich man.

In 1938 the Battalion embarked at Southampton for Palestine where they were posted to Tulkarem. From there Jock, promoted Sergeant, went with a platoon to Haifa and, attached to The Sherwood Foresters, for six months guard duties. Later following the steps of the birth of Christianity, Jock visited Jerusalem and Bethlehem before being posted to Jericho for training in Desert Warfare. This was followed by an Intelligence Course at Brigade HQ. His superior officer in the battalion was one Michael Forrester MC. From Jericho, with band and drums playing, the Battalion marched to Latrun.

But, ever on the move, and after more training, the Battalion travelled by train to Egypt where they arrived on the Bagash Box near Mersa Matru.

Soon involved in Middle East operations of the Second World War, Jock served under General Wavell, Commander of the Middle East Forces, in the left hook move which took them around the south of Mersa Matru, up the pass to Fort Capusso and on to Bardia where they were later relieved by Australian Forces.



'Jock' Henderson and John Kershaw with two of our 'younger' members at the annual reunion

The Crete campaign was remembered by Jock as presenting him with a reception that was anything but welcome. The ship he travelled in was bombed and in danger of sinking so tins of petrol had to be hastily jettisoned. As troops under Lieutenant Colonel Oxley-Boyle, energetically threw the fuel overboard, the ship's Captain understandably bawled for them to get a move on. The ship did not sink but limped into Alexandria. Later the battalion moved up to Syria for action against the Vichy French Forces. It was here in the hills above Beirut that Jock won his Military Medal for gallantry. Many members of the battalion were taken prisoner but were returned a few weeks later.

Some anticipated leave in Cairo did not materialise as a quick move to Tobruk took place when it was under siege by Rommel. It was there that Jock and his comrades earned the title "Desert Rats". According to Jock the conditions under which they were living made it a very apt nomination.

Selected for training for a Commission, Jock found that the course was not to his liking so he left it to become an Instructor and later RSM and went into the Desert to join the 1st Buffs while the 2nd Queen's went off to India. With his new Regiment Jock was at El Alamein which he says "seemed like hell" with 25 pounder guns firing almost wheel to wheel. After the breakthrough the big chase began with Jock taking part though in considerable pain with a bout of toothache. A dentist solved the problem by making an extraction while the battle was still in progress.

While with the Buffs, Jock had the honour to be the Parade RSM for the whole parade for the Prime Minister (Mr Churchill) when he visited the 8th Army at Tripoli and also when King George VI visited the troops in Algiers.

From Algiers Jock went back to the UK and the Buffs Depot at Canterbury where he requested a transfer back to his old Regiment, The Queen's. This was not immediately forthcoming so after a month's leave, spent with his sister at Tooting, he was posted to Fenham Barracks and attached to the 11th Hampshire Regiment. This was a holding battalion to train personnel for service in Europe when the Second Front began. From there he was posted as RSM to 206 Officers Cadet Training Unit (OCTU) at Foremark Hall, Repton College, Derbyshire and it was while so posted that he met and married Dorothy Cook, she being a Corporal Projectionist in the ATS. Shortly afterwards the Second Front began and as the European war drew towards its close the OCTU's began closing down. On leaving, Jock went to Herne Bay, Kent and then volunteered for service in West Africa as RSM to the 1st Battalion The Sierra Leone Regiment. His wife later joined him but after an eighteen months tour he returned to England to become RSM to the 5th Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment at Sandfield Terrace, Guildford. After a few months

in this posting he resigned from the Regular Army to become an Army recruiter in Leeds where he had an interesting job which took him round most of the villages in Yorkshire. He and his wife bought a house at Roundhay.

In 1951 he answered an advertisement for the post of Army Instructor at the King William's College, Isle of Man. On being interviewed he was pleased to find that the interviewing officer was an ex Queen's man, Major Barrier, with who he had served in India and China. He got the job and became the school staff instructor. Although he liked the post, foreign climates were calling again so after two years on the island he and his wife moved to Trinidad on his obtaining an appointment as Army Instructor to the Trinidad Police Force. His first big parade was for Princess Margaret and this was very successful. Enjoying the work, he engaged for a second tour, but on his wife becoming seriously ill they returned to England where he eventually obtained a post as Head Porter at Winchester College. He and his wife moved to a College house in Kingsgate Street, Winchester. The retired Field Marshal Montgomery was a frequent visitor to the College and often had a chat with Jock, doubtless recalling old times in the Desert.



Inspection Parade, Trinidad and Tobago 1961, I carrying the sword

Jock's stay at the College, 15 years, was the longest time he had ever remained in one place. He retired in 1976 and returned to Yorkshire where his wife died in 1988. In the same year he became an In-Pensioner at The Royal Hospital Chelsea where he remained until his death in July 1998, at the age of 87.

A true and distinguished soldier of the old breed, Jock was a faithful servant of Sovereign, Country and Regiment and will long be rightfully and gratefully remembered.

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#### Historian honoured

Malaysian author and ex-teacher Chye Kooi Loong was presented to the Queen, and the Duke of Edinburgh and Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook at a special "Tea with Veterans" at Carcosa in the Lake Gardens, Kuala Lumpur on 23rd September 1998.

Mr Loong had close associations with the 2nd East Surreys and 1st Leicesters when they were fighting together as the British Battalion at Kampar in December, 1941 before the eventual later surrender to the Japanese. Before he and his friends were evacuated to the safety of foothills to the east of the territory, some of the troops gave him their cap badges and said "remember us Joe". He never forgot and later he recalled campaign experiences in his book "*The History of the British Battalion - Malayan Campaign 1941-42*". At the presentation the Queen and the Duke showed great interest in the book, thanked Mr Loong for his work and commented that the British people would be thankful for the research he had done.

#### Territorial Officers Reunion Dinner

Territorial officers from The Queen's Royal Regiment and those associated Regiments by amalgamation from the era 1950/60/70, dined together in London on the 23rd October 1998. For this third reunion, the venue chosen was the Inn's of Court and City Yeomanry Mess, in Lincolns Inn. Regular officers who served with us were also included.

The Chairman for the evening was Sir Colin Cole KCVO., CVO., MVO., TD., Hon. Colonel to 6/7th Battalion Queen's Regiment 1981-86. Also present was Sir Bryan Cartledge KCMG, Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Soviet Union in 1988, but who dined with us last as Second Lieutenant Cartledge. Brigadier Miles Hunt Davis was included who after leaving us went to the Gurkha's.

Of the 24 Officers who went to camp in Essex at Fingrinhoe (nr Colchester) in 1957, with 5 Queen's Royal Regiment, eight were present at the dinner.

Lieutenant Colonel Hugh Harris, and with their appointments at the time:-

Intelligence Officer Mike Wigan, OC MMG Platoon David Roscoe, OC Mortar Platoon Julian Gill, Signals Officer Noel Napier Ford, Second in Command 'D' Company David Robinson, OC 'A' Company Richard Asper, Second in Command 'A' Company Desmond Wilson. This must be some sort of record for a 41 year span!

The regular officers present, were Lieutenant Colonel Mike Lowry and Lieutenant Colonel John Burgess, both had served as Training Majors.

The evening was voted a big success in excellent surroundings and was superb. (The Lord Mayor of London dined in the Mess two days before) - after the Lord Mayor's show....! The President for the evening was Tony Clayton and the Vice President was Geoff Wright.

Anyone reading this, who feels he should be on the list of names for circulation of details for the next reunion, should contact anyone he knows on the list of attendees:-

Richard Asper, Adrian Birtles, John Burgess, Sir Bryan Cartledge, Tony Clayton, Sir Colin Cole, Peter Dorey, Bill Frend, Julian Gill, Hugh Harris, Foster Herd, George Hodges (sick), Brig-Miles Hunt-Davis, Mike Lowry, Noel Napier-Ford, John Rae, David Robinson, Brian Robinson, David Roscoe, His Honour Judge John Samuels, Denis Savage, Mike Wigan, Geoff Wright, Gerald Webb, Desmond Wilson.

From letters received following this event it would appear that there is feeling that a repeat in two or three years, with wives or carers, in Surrey or London, and for a luncheon, rather than dinner? You will be circulated for opinions nearer the time!



Desmond Wilson, Noel Napier-Ford, Foster Herd, Adrian Birtles, Brian Robinson.

DGW

## A Day at War - Savignano and the "Mosque"



The author J H Day

Whilst we were bivouacked in the rest area, we were reinforced by drafts from the 7th Ox and Bucks and the 1st Welch. It had been decided to disband the 168th Brigade since the Division had had such heavy casualties. Such a reorganisation provided at least two fairly strong brigades. The 8th Royal Fusiliers amalgamated with the 9th Royal Fusiliers, and the 7th Ox and Bucks and 1st Welch were disbanded, the personnel being posted to the remaining battalions.

Three or four of these reinforcements came to our platoon. Lance-Corporal Johnny Willerton, MM, and Ginger Parry joined our section. Lance-Corporal Willerton was a tall, thin man, with fair hair and a thin moustache. He came from London. I have forgotten how he won the MM, although he did tell me. Ginger Parry was from Shrewsbury, a bit taller and heavier than myself, and about 6 months older. He had a good head of wavy ginger hair.

We learnt that our next objective was Savignano. It was on the edge of the Lombardy Plain! It was pouring with rain as we moved forward. There was a heavy artillery barrage, and together with the enemy's counter-barrage, the noise was terrific. The bridge we had to cross had been blown up by the retreating Germans. A Churchill "Ark" Tank threw its bridge across. The first tanks to cross this bridge at dawn got stuck, making it impossible for any of the other tanks to cross. Our 'B', 'C' and 'D' Companies were already on the far side. We heard that 'B' Company was surrounded and that radio contact had been lost. 'C' and 'D' Companies had been withdrawn to the "Ark" crossing.

We fell back to a position near a barn, and were told to dig in by a straw stack. Buster Brown and I were together digging a trench, but it kept filling with water. By the time that we had finished it it was half full of water. However, as shells were raining down on us, we had no choice but to get in it. It was a case of being killed by shellfire or drowning! We decided to look around and found some boards. We put them over our trench propped up the front so that we could get in and out and fire our weapons, and then covered them with straw to camouflage our position. By the time that we had finished this construction, the water in the trench was seeping away.

At this stage I told Buster that I was going for a smoke in the barn. I sat at the back of the building, undid my cape, which had kept me reasonably dry, although my feet, face and neck were soaked. I managed to get a fairly dry



River Senio, looking west from the (new) heavy bridge

cigarette out of my case and lit it with my lighter. I then had a couple of drags. The next thing I knew was that daylight was breaking. I heard voices. Some of our transport had arrived and were hiding behind the barn. The cigarette was still in my hand, but it had gone out as my hand was so wet that it had become soaked too. I jumped to my feet, threw away the wet cigarette, and dashed out. I was supposed to be standing-to! It had stopped raining. I got into the trench, which was empty of water and drying out. It was like home from home! I told Buster that I had fallen asleep. He had guessed that, but he was not bothered. He knew where to find me if he had wanted me. I had been away an hour.

As the time approached noon, my stomach was turning over, and I was bursting to go to the toilet. I could not stand it any longer, so I picked up my shovel, went round to the back of the stack, dug a hole, and just as I got squatted over it, I heard a shell coming over which was going to be too close, for comfort. I pulled up my trousers, ran round the stack, and dived into the trench. I waited a few minutes, crept out of the trench, went to my hole, pulled down my trousers, and again a shell came screaming in too close for comfort. Once again I pulled up my trousers and ran to the trench. This happened every time I went for my crap. I was beginning to get annoyed! Buster was in stitches. In between his laughter he came out with a theory. *"They are having fun with you. They can see you every time you go round the stack. They time it until you have taken your trousers down and settle down, then they fire a shell at you. They will be like me, laughing their hats off at you running round the stack back to our trench!"* I realised that he could be right, and so postponed my attempt for relief. We stayed there until after dark and our hot meal came up. It had not rained all day, and I even finished my business in peace!

We received orders to move into Savignano. As we moved into the town the gunfire intensified, both ours and the Germans'. A platoon of 'B' Company had made their way back to our lines, and reported that Savignano was clear of the enemy. The Battle Patrol went forward to make contact with their rearguard, and found them a few hundred yards -west of the bridge.

At a vacated German Dressing Station a number of our wounded, who had been captured, were found, including Major R M Campbell, MC, the OC of 'B' Company. The Germans had been very good to them, leaving them as comfortable as possible, and giving them cigarettes. They told the wounded that their comrades would soon arrive. Unfortunately Major Campbell later died in a British hospital.

Savignano was a small town. At the end of the town stood a tall tower, part of the home of the local squire. It was known as "The Mosque" it was an important observation post, and also, I believe, most of the population had taken refuge there. It was so solidly built that the biggest shells from either side could not damage it much.

*(Editor's note - The so-called "Mosque" is, in fact, the Villa Marchesi Guidi di Bagno. It was built in 1820 as the summer residence of the Guidi di Bagno family. The family's principal residence at this time was in Mantua. The family dates from AD 943, when a German warlord called Ottone was granted a fiefdom in Italy. However, the family did not become Italianized until the 13th Century. The Marchesi, who is referred to by John Day as the squire, was a senator prior to Italy's surrender, and a friend of the Italian Royal Family and of Count Ciano, the Foreign Minister. He was also considered by Mussolini to be an influential politician. At the time of the Queen's Brigade attack into Savignano, the Marchesi gave shelter within the villa to about 100 villagers, of whom about 5-6 were killed during the attack. The villa was initially used by the Germans as an OP, a communications centre, and as a small field surgery. Lt N H Eldridge's platoon, about 15*

strong, from 'B' Company, the 2/6th Queen's, attempted to occupy the building, but was surprised by German reinforcements and Lt Eldridge was killed. A Sherman tank and another armoured vehicle eventually broke into the marble-floored dining-room, being used by the German surgical team, and the building was captured. It was soon occupied by ten assorted OPs and other oddments, such as a platoon and a half of Vickers machine-guns from the 6th Cheshires, and became so important that Brigadier Stratton appointed Major P G Thompson to be in command to ensure the co-ordination of fire on all the targets observed from it).



*The Mosque (with Toby Sewell) in 1998*

We made our way up the street towards "The Mosque". Enemy shells were raining down on us. We crouched in the doorways sheltering from them. Corporal "Spud" Tate's 6pdr anti-tank gun was on the other side of the street and the shells were dropping close to it. For some unknown reason Spud Tate jumped up and ran across the road to look at his gun. As he knelt beside the gun examining it, a shell dropped beside him and down he went. We ran across the road to him. He was wounded all over. We turned him over, he tried to say something, but then his bright blue eyes went dull and he died. He was a Londoner, short, very broad, and in his late twenties. We covered him with his gas cape, and he was later buried in a garden nearby.

For this operation we were armed with Thompson submachine-guns. We had handed in our rifles to our stores. The tommy-gun was the standard infantry submachine-gun in Italy. All officers and NCOs, corporal and above in rank, were issued with them. But it was a poor infantry weapon, no way in the Schmeisser class. Even the cheaply made Sten gun was better. This gun had so many working parts that it would easily jam, it was heavy, firing a .45" bullet, and when the magazines were fully loaded, they were heavy too. Our magazines were straight, so that they could be carried in our pouches, and carried 20 rounds each. On the films they are shown fitted with circular magazines. Indeed, it was designed for gangsters on the streets of Chicago to be carried about in cars! Tank men and recce troops swore by them, but they did not have to carry them around. However, they had some advantages. One could knock a man flying at 25 yards, since the .45" bullet was a soft nosed bullet, usually referred to as a dum-dum, which would make a normal hole as it entered, but exited like a small plate. Men hit by tommy-guns stayed down.

As we moved further up the street, we crouched again in cover as a fresh salvo dropped a bit too close to us for comfort. Suddenly we saw an old woman come out of a house on the other side of the road, and walk slowly up the street with a sack on her shoulder. There was shrapnel flying all over the place. However, as she passed a doorway of another house, we were glad to see that someone rushed out and dragged her in.

We then received orders to move up to "The Mosque" itself. keeping close to the walls of the houses, we made our way up

the road. We were almost there when a sergeant, ex-334th Battery, came towards us. I knew him very well, and he recognised me. He came up to me, with staring eyes, gripping his tommy-gun, which was slung across his chest. He asked me if I had seen Captain Conners. I knew then that he was gone. Captain O'Connell had served as a Lieutenant ever since we had been with The Queen's. In fact he was the only officer, of those who had joined with us from the 101st LAA, left in the Battalion. I told the sergeant that I had not seen him. He said, "Oh!" and carried on walking. He was like a zombie. He was well gone. I never saw him again. I do not think that he knew what was going on around him. If he was not killed by that awful shellfire, he would have ended up in hospital in the nut house!

We arrived at "The Mosque". The road from "The Mosque" to the outskirts of the town was a sunken road with banks on either side. Ernie Lovett and Ginger Green met someone they knew, and were chatting away in the middle of the road. I was getting nervous, and tried to get them to move. Ernie Lovett told me that he would stick one on me if I did not shut up. I told him to try it! I then realised that the situation was getting to me, just like Tommy Hinnigan and the sergeant whom we had just passed. I therefore walked away in a determined frame of mind, and joined Buster Brown on the bank, waiting for them to join us.

Major Thompson then arrived to give us further orders and to tell us what was expected of us. He pointed out an area that we had to defend. He told us that a counter-attack was imminent, and we had to hold "The Mosque" at all costs. Since we were behind the bank of the sunken road, he told us to move about, firing from different positions, to make the enemy think that there were more of us than there actually were. Apparently it was this eventuality which was the reason why we were armed with tommy-guns. We could hear the enemy moving about, and we waited for them to come at us. We waited all night, but they never came. We wondered why.

Just before stand-to we were ordered to dig in in front of a peasant's house. It was very small with one bedroom and one living room. We managed to dig in before stand-to, and then asked about the expected counter-attack. We were told that our artillery had broken it up. Forty years later I was to read in a book the real reason why the counter-attack was never delivered. The enemy could not muster enough men to mount the attack, whilst we had not got enough men to hold them! Both sides therefore relied on intensive artillery barrages. In other words we had fought each other to a standstill.

We had paired off, Buster and myself, and Ginger with Ernie. We kept watch, four hours on and four off. We had decided on spells of 4 hours so that there was a chance of a good rest at night. However, like sailors, we had a dog watch (2 hours) so that we were not on at the same times every day. Both sides kept pounding away at each other, so the noise was still deafening and the shells were still crashing around us. The enemy were by now giving us a treat by firing air bursts, that is shells that exploded in the air and sprayed shrapnel downwards on us and our trenches.

During the day Buster and I played "Battleships". This was a game played with squared paper and a pencil. A board was drawn, measuring ten squares by ten squares, by each player, and then marked off with the numbers 1-10 along the top of the board, and letters A-J down the side. Each player then placed his fleet on his board (without letting his opponent see) by drawing lines, denoting ships, either diagonally, or vertically or horizontally, of the following sizes; four submarines of one square each; three destroyers of two squares each; two cruisers of three squares; and one battleship of four squares. Each player then made out a similar board to plot the fall of his own

shells, and the position of his opponent's fleet. Each player had so many shots in turn, calling out the squares where he wished his shells to land, e.g. C9 would indicate the third line down and the ninth square along that line. If his opponent had part of a ship on that square he would answer "*Hit*", if not he would say "*Miss*". After a while the players would be able to discern where their opponents' ships were placed, and the winner was the player who sank his opponent's fleet first. It passed the time away, and as nobody was killed or wounded near us, we played on while shells and mortars fell around us.

In an interval between playing Battleships, I looked over the top of our trench, and spotted smoke from a gun which had just fired. I called Buster over and showed him my observations. He saw the smoke too, and crawled out of our trench, went over to "The Mosque", and reported this to the artillery observers. Before long an artillery officer came crawling to our trench. We pointed out the position, and he crept forward a little way. He then came back and said, "*We'll get him with a Vickers.*" A few minutes later a Vickers crew came by with their gun, and then we heard it firing; and that was the end of that. We never saw any more firing from that position.

Later we were sitting in our trench when a patrol of The 44th Reconnaissance Regiment came by. They walked straight past us, talking away and all bunched up. I said to Buster, "*I'll frighten the life out of them!*" I crept out of the trench, and since there were plenty of bushes about to give me cover, I skirted them in a semi-circle, and hid in a bush, waiting for them. After a couple of minutes they arrived in front of me, so I gave them the first part of the password and pointed my tommy-gun at them. They stopped dead and stared in amazement. "*You frightened the life out of us,*" said the Sergeant. "*I intended to,*" I replied, "*If I had been a Ted I could have shot you all dead. You passed us up there, and I got here without you seeing me.*" I then told them to spread out and be careful of the enemy just in front across the river, which was not very wide at that point.

During one of our 4 hour rests, early in the morning, I was lying on the floor of the living room in the little house, fast asleep. The front door opened, and suddenly Ginger Green came running through. My right arm was lying straight out from my body, and, as he ran through, Ginger trod on my hand, which woke me up. I sat up and cursed him as he went through the other door opposite, which led outside to the back. Whether it was my cursing him that brought him round or not, I do not know, but he stopped his panic, came back to me, apologised for standing on my hand, and went back to his trench. The guns were still deafening, but I just turned over and went to sleep again.

Sometimes during our 4 hours rests we would go into "The Mosque". The downstairs was packed with the town's civilian population. The local squire was a man in his forties, I would say, thin on top, with a goatee beard and smartly dressed. He seemed very popular with the people, and very concerned about them. He kept getting on to us about being there, and wanted us to leave. We told him that it was not our fault, and ignored him.

"The Mosque" was a round building, something like a large tower. Going up the stairs to the first landing, one passed the body of Lieutenant Eldridge, wrapped up in a blanket awaiting burial. He had been surrounded with his platoon in The Mosque, and was descending the stairs when the Germans came in. They pointed their weapons at him and called upon him to surrender. He replied "*Never,*" whipped up his tommy-gun and fired at them. Standing on the stairs he was a sitting target in the ensuing gun battle, and was killed. However, Lieutenant Eldridge managed to kill two of the enemy first.

At the top one came into a room, and after going through another door, there was a gallery with many other rooms running off this area. The rooms facing the Germans were occupied by artillery observers,



OP's eye view, looking north from the Mosque, Savignano

We were standing in the gallery when a shell hit "The Mosque", but it was so solidly built that it just shook a bit, although everything went black. Whether I blacked out for a second, or whether it was dirt being dislodged and falling down, I do not know. It happened again and again, since the building was being continually hit. Eventually we ran round the gallery looking for the doorway which led to the staircase. When we found it we fled down the stairs!

After about 4 days we were relieved by The London Scottish. We came out at night, mounted on the back of some trucks. We stopped halfway between Savignano and Santarcangelo, and went into a barn. We laid our blankets down inside. I was so tired that I just took off my boots and socks, which I had had on for a week, and fell asleep. Someone did the guard. We did not know who, but I think that they were from B Echelon. It was daylight when I woke up. I went outside. It had been raining again, but it had stopped, although everything was damp.

Outside, under a tarpaulin sheet, were about seven or eight bodies. I thought that they were asleep until I looked under the sheet. They were from the Pioneer Platoon. Apparently they had taken refuge in a hut which was used as a paint store. A shell hit it, killing them all and covering them with paint. I recognised one of them as one of the lads who had been fighting in the NAAFI in Egypt during our morning break. I heard later that his opponent on that occasion had deserted at Savignano.

We were then billeted in a school. The battles for the Gothic Line were over. We had entered the fray as an over-strength Battalion, and now we were at the end; three weak companies, so weak that, when mustered together, we would not make up to a full strength company. The Anti-Tank Platoon was now called Thirteen Platoon, 'C' Company. In fact, we had been that for the previous two weeks.

The Division was down to two under strength Brigades.

Our platoon consisted of Ginger Green, Ernie Lovett, Bob Waldron, Bob Lancaster, Cpl Jimmy Ethridge, Ginger Parry, L/Cpl Johnny Willerton and Bill Mills. The Platoon Sergeant was a Londoner called Bob Pearce, who had come abroad with the Battalion, and was one of the few left who had been in a rifle company all the time. He was about 6ft tall and weighed maybe 12 stone. He was a great fellow. Our platoon officer was still Lieutenant Maynard.

We also had a coloured lad called Nick Tedross. He was the first coloured lad that I had ever met. The first time I saw him was in Cairo, since he was in the Anti-Tank Platoon. I was

surprised at his London accent. He was born in Fulham. His favourite comment was, “I’m the only one in the Battalion who can’t work a double shuffle in the cookhouse. They would remember my black hands!” I found that he was a great chap. There was the South African Division near us, and they used to invite us into their canteens. However, they refused Nick entry, so we declined to go. We even saw the CO about it, but there was nothing he could do, as that was their laws. He advised us to boycott them, and we were already doing that. We never entered one of their canteens while we were there, even though we were told that there were some great nights. After awhile one never noticed Nick’s colour. I would have fought anybody who insulted him.

“Bill” Mills was another unforgettable character. He was not christened “Bill”, but John. He picked up “Bill” as a nickname when he first joined the Battalion at Salerno. He had originally joined the 5th East Yorkshires, the local Hull TA battalion. He was about 12-14 years older than myself, about 5ft 7” tall, and lived in the village of Bilton, only a few miles from where I lived. He was married with two children, a boy and a girl. He had been with the 5th East Yorkshires in the desert, and served with them in the Sicilian Campaign. However, when the 50th (Northumbrian) Division was sent back to the UK to take part in the D-Day landings, he was in hospital with malaria. He was with the reinforcements at Salerno that mutinied. They did have a point, since when they boarded the ships in Sicily after coming out of various hospitals, they were told that they would be joining their old units. They were then dropped off on the Salerno beaches to take part in a pitched battle with strange units. They refused to go to the front, and the Army classed this as mutiny. A sergeant out of the Durham Light Infantry was sentenced to be shot, but was later reprieved and sentenced to a spell in prison. “Bill” Mills did not actually take part in the mutiny. But he did have a secret! He had won the Irish Sweepstake before the war, although nobody knew about it, and I only got to know through someone else some 12 years later.

We laid out our beds in a school room with the usual three blankets laid out on our Groundsheets on the floor. I was on guard the first night, so there was no night out for me. However, I was lucky to be with such hardened veterans who taught me the rules. What I would have done had I been with greenhorns all like myself I just cannot bear to think!

In the afternoon we received some reinforcements. We had lost about 100 dead, including 11 officers, of which four were company commanders. I think that there were double that number wounded. Added to those were the ones who had been taken prisoner and those that had deserted.

JHD

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**In aid of the Royal National Institute for the Blind**



Congratulations to Michael Langley (author of the Short History of The East Surrey Regiment). He did a free fall parachute jump in aid of the RNIB

## Another History

Richard Ford, formerly Curator of Clandon Museum and who is normally associated with Regimental histories, has broken new ground by researching and writing the history of Maryvale Pastoral Centre at Bramley, Surrey.



Originally known as Snowdenham Hall, it was built between 1884 and 1886 by Robert Courage the Chairman of the famous brewery company with whom our Regiment has connections by way of the Courage Trophy. The building, as a private house, later passed through the hands of a wealthy stockbroker and an Indian Prince whose wife refused to live there. During the Second World War it became the offices of Philips Electrics of Holland who were fleeing before the German invasion and who seem to have been engaged on highly secretive work. Canadian troops were billeted in huts in the grounds but not in the main building. Remains of the foundations of one of the huts are still visible. At the time of construction Robert Courage gave instructions that “no expense was to be spared” and from the magnificence of the premises it seems that the builders certainly took him at his word. The beautiful expansive window in the Great Hall bears the crests and coats of arms of the Courage and connected families. Readers may be interested to know that the cockerell, emblem of the present day brewery, has its origins in the fact that the Courages were originally a Huguenot family from France of which country the cockerell is the national emblem (as can be seen from the occasional release of frantic birds at international football matches).



The Centre is now owned by The Franciscan Sisters of the Divine Motherhood but administered by the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. As well as being used for religious purposes it is also a centre for courses, seminars and conferences of a private or commercial nature.

## Return to the Gothic Line and Italy - September 1998

After the articles by Brigadier Geoffrey Curtis and John Day in the November Newsletter readers will be well aware of the Gothic Line and the very intense fighting in which 169th Queens Brigade as part of 56th Division was involved in September 1944. In the month that the main actions lasted all three Battalions sustained casualties of over 400 each, of whom more than a quarter were killed in action.

Some years ago an Italian Professor Amedeo Montemaggi took it upon himself to study and document the history of the Gothic line so that the sacrifices of all the participants, including also those of the German army and of the Italian people, would not be forgotten. Besides writing books Professor Montemaggi's work has led to a number of communities wishing to dedicate their own local memorials.

Amongst these communities has been the little Commune of Gemmano, who have resisted more prominently and expanded their Memorial - "To all the dead". The dedication of their new Memorial took place on 13th September 1998, and was accompanied by the publication of a special book by Professor Montemaggi entitled "Gemmano, the Cassino of the Adriatic". While this titling may seem high flown there are parallels, not least in the initial failure of the Higher Command to recognise the key importance of Gemmano and the ridge to the west. If the German army was to prevent a break through into the flat ground of the Po valley it was essential to hold Gemmano and the ridge, and this becomes very clear with the extraordinary view from Gemmano over Croce, the Coriano ridge and all the way down to Cattolica, Rimini and the sea.

For the ceremonies on 13th September Colonel Toby Sewell, as the senior in rank surviving officer of 2/7th Queen's, which took the hill-top town of Gemmano itself was invited to lead a party to attend and speak on behalf of the Battalion and to represent the 8th Army. Unfortunately while hoping to come Major A G (Sandy) Sanders DSO who led one of the assault companies of the 2/7th representatives of 2/5th and 2/6th Queen's, and of 64th and 113th Field Regiments RA was unable eventually to make it, so the representation was small. A record of the visit compiled by John Mills of 2/7th Queen's appears below.

JWS

### Gemmano/Coriano visit

On Friday 11th September a 2/7th Queen's party consisting of Colonel Toby Sewell, Colonel David Blum, Eric Schnabel and John Mills were joined at Stansted Airport by Major Bob Johnson, a retired post-war Queen's Officer, and Don Birley DCM., of the Queen's Bays for the flight to Rimini. On Saturday afternoon we were joined at the Hotel Napoleon by Col Tom Huggan, late RTR, Honorary Military attache at our Embassy in Rome, Lt Colonel Robert Shaw a serving Irish Guardsman and his wife, and by Major Harry Waugh, 46 Division Recce, with his son David. Professor Montemaggi also joined us.

In the evening a small bus took us all to Montecieco on the Ceriano Ridge. It was there on 20th September 1944 that the Queen's Bays were ordered to attack (without infantry support), of the 27 tanks that charged, as ordered, 24 were destroyed. Also on that same morning of 20th September 1944 the 2/7th, under command of Major A V Domoney, attacked the Ridge towards the Casa Cantoni. There was a short ceremony, in a sharp squall, at a modest memorial to the Queen's Bays. Don Birley laid a wreath in tribute to his comrades and Toby Sewell followed suit on behalf of the Queen's. Upon the return to Rimini our party was taken to the Town Hall for a reception and welcome by the Mayor, who made a short speech to which Toby Sewell responded.



Bob Johnson, David Blum, Eric Schnabel, John Mills

On Sunday morning the early arrival of Mrs Norah MacWilliam, her daughter Sheila Harrington and grandson Paul Harrington cheered the party. A little later came Harry Shindler and his wife; Harry lives in Rome and is the representative of the Italy Star Association in Italy. We were taken by bus to Gemmano. The approach was from the North, the side occupied by the Germans in 1944, was very steep with hairpin bends. The British approach from the South was less steep but still needed mules to bring up supplies. When we got to Gemmano we found the large open square at its summit to be teeming with people waiting for a momentous day to start. The opening ceremony, in a small hall, consisted of innumerable speeches, only two of which were summarised in English. Harry Shindler presented two framed scrolls, one in Italian the other in English on behalf of the Italy Star Association. These will eventually be placed in the new museum the Commune is proposing to erect, in a room to be dedicated to Brigadier MacWilliam. Professor Montemaggi then introduced his book, bilingual, Italian and English in one volume. The book covers the political and strategic aims and effects of the battles and is an important addition to the literature of the Italian Campaign.

After the opening ceremony we were released into the bright sunshine of an Italian September for the next ceremony. This was to be the dedication of the new memorial, erected by the Commune, to the fallen of both sides as 'A token of Peace for future generations'. Among the speakers was Toby Sewell representing the Queen's and all other units of the Eighth Army: his speech was in English with a small passage in Italian. He was followed by Herr Georg Rohleider who, in 1944, had been Lieutenant and Adjutant to Colonel Ernst, commanding the 100th Mountain Regiment, he spoke emotionally, in German, of the horrors of war and pleaded for reconciliation. A regimental band of the Bersaglieri with their feathered headdress enhanced the sense of occasion. Before each speech they were drawn up to a theatrical 'Attention' and played a rousing fanfare. After the speeches, and the dedication of the Memorial by the local Priest, wreaths were laid.

At the conclusion of that ceremony we were free to again mingle with the local inhabitants. We came across a young mother from Essex, happily married to a local Italian; she had bestowed good Anglo-Saxon Christian names on their two sons. Shortly we were summoned to the local restaurant for a sumptuous lunch, hosted by the Mayor, of good Italian food and fine local wines. Then it was time for the return journey to Rimini. En route we stopped at the war cemetery at Coriano. A visit that brought memories to us all. Toby Sewell laid a wreath, we paid our respects to old friends; recited Binyon's lines to the fallen and departed. At Rimini, Mrs MacWilliam and family and others left for their various destinations, only the Queen's party and Don Birley remaining. That evening a retired Italian schoolteacher gave a film show at the local hotel. It was a British film, loaned by the Imperial War Museum,

showing scenes of the various battles around Gemmano, some of the scenes were certainly of the 2/7th. It was a long, interesting film and a late night.



*After the Dedication of the new memorial*

*Admiral Mancinelli, Commander of the Military and Naval Department of the Adriatic, Professor A Montemaggi, Toby Sewell late 2/7th Queen's, The Mayor of Gemmano, Georg Rohleder, late 100th Mountain Regiment, German Army.*

Monday was a free day and it was decided to hire a car. Only people under the age of 75 can hire a car in Italy so the task was delegated to youthful David Blum ably assisted by the wife of our hotel proprietor, Heather. David also proved an able driver with Italian experience. The first objective was Savignano - Toby wanted to see again 'The Mosque' that he had used as an OP for a possible river crossing. The 2/7th did not make that river crossing, but had been congratulated earlier on its crossing of the 'Rubicon' now called the F. Marrechia, which flows past San Arcangelo.

It was not easy to find 'The Mosque' in Savignano. The church on top of the ridge seemed a possibility but Toby rejected it. A walk along a road lined by trees and wire fencing stirred the memory and Toby and Bob Johnson disappeared into the wood ignoring the barking of fierce dogs. Further down the hill David Blum and Eric Schnabel had come across gates leading into the estate and talked to a lady who offered to phone the house to ask if a visit would be welcome. Toby and Bob reappeared unharmed, a visit would be welcome and the party went up to the house. The Villa Bagno, a large English Heritage sort of country house, was 'The Mosque'. The owner of the house, Marchese di Bagno, was most welcoming. He gave a conducted tour round the house while telling of his war time experiences there as a small boy. It had changed hands several times and at least one English Officer (of 2/6th Queen's) was killed in the house: eventually two English tanks came through the dining room door.

Following that visit the car was turned towards Forli, passing places and signposts that brought memories, Forlimpopoli, Cesena, San Carlo where 2/7th spent Christmas 1944. Forli seemed a large prosperous, industrial town but buildings occupied and used by the battalion in 1944 were still there eg. The Officers' Club and Company Offices. Lunch at Russi, David particularly wanted to travel the 'Russi Lateral' then on to the Senio. The riparian land of the Senio was much as it was in early 1945. The previous bridge near San Severo, the area of which had at last been cleared by 2/7th Queen's on 3rd March 1945, had been replaced by a larger one erected in 1953. Onward to Faenza and its War Cemetery where a large number of New Zealand men were buried. There was one Queensman buried there, Lt D J Whitaker, 1/5th Queen's. Bob Johnson told us that he had been captured in Egypt, in an action before Alamein, October 1942, his face shot away.

We returned to Rimini via Forli (crossing the Lamone on the way) for a visit to the cemetery. It was tucked away and not well signposted but David had found it on a previous visit and

eventually we saw it. As with Coriano it was a place of memories, long rows of headstones bearing the names of men, many of them Queensmen, who had fallen at the actions round Forlimpopoli, the Senio and the Lamone.

For our last evening the proprietor of our hotel and his wife, Guido and Heather Forcellini invited us all to be their guests for dinner at a local restaurant. It was a night to be remembered. The hospitality of our hosts seemed unlimited. Heather Forcellini was a lovely, bubbly Canadian who, though half our age, seemed to take a maternal interest in us all. The food was delicious the wines fine and plentiful, as was the conversation. The evening was fun and a delightful climax to our visit.

At Stansted on the Tuesday evening, before going our various ways, we were all agreed that it had been a most enjoyable visit, An enjoyment that was the greater for the presence in our party of Major Bob Johnson and Don Birley DCM. Bob Johnson accompanied us on all our excursions and it was as though he had been with the battalion in 1944, can we pay him a higher compliment? The reason, apart from being the likeable man he is, was his encyclopaedic knowledge of regimental history. He is the author of that marvellously informative and readable book "The Queen's in the Middle East and North Africa 1939-1943" published by and obtainable from The Queen's Museum, West Clandon, Surrey. It is a book to be read by every Queensman, particularly those that served in the Territorial battalions.

It was a memorable visit and left one member of the party, at least, with two abiding memories. The kindness, hospitality and friendship of our Italian hosts and the sadness of those long lines of headstones with the names of so many that shared our youth but not the 'Laughter and the Love of friends' (as Belloc puts it) that we have enjoyed these many years.

EJM

### Memorial at Gemmano, Italy

A Memorial has been unveiled at the mountain village of Gemmano in Italy to honour thousands of soldiers who fell during ten days of some of the bloodiest fighting of the Second World War. Italy Star Association 1943-45 veterans were among those who heard a message from the Prince of Wales. Driving force behind the project was Italian military historian Prof Amedeo Montemaggi, who is also behind plans for a room in the Gemmano museum dedicated to Maj (later Brig) M E M MacWilliam CBE DSO MC TD, commander of 2/7 Queen's during the battle.

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### Montague-Bates Platoon Cup

The August 1924 issue of the East Surrey Regimental News reported that the Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion was presenting a Challenge Cup, to be known as the Montague-Bates Challenge Cup, to be awarded each year to the best platoon in military efficiency and games combined.

The subjects included in the competition were to be Drill, Musketry, Bayonet Fighting, Barrack Room Kits, Turnout and Discipline. Games were to include Cricket, Football, Hockey, Swimming, Billiards, Athletics, Boxing and Tug of War.

The rewards were distinctive. The winning platoon would be granted several privileges. It would lead the Battalion on the line of march, would carry a suitable flag on all parades, would be entitled to permanent passes and would be granted seven days leave. Each man would wear a distinctive mark on his dress and would receive a medal.

RF

## Pause for thought



- 1st VBRW Surrey Regiment.
- 2nd VBRW Surrey Regiment.
- 3rd VBRW Surrey Regiment.
- 4th VBRW Surrey Regiment.
- 1st Cadet Bn. Surrey Regiment.
- 1st Surrey Rifles Regiment.
- 3rd Surrey Rifles Regiment.
- 4th Surrey Rifles Regiment.

After the recent butchering of the Territorial Army and doing some research, I found a Review Parade State for July 8th 1899 on Horse Guards Parade - one hundred years ago. As can be seen the Review was conducted by Field Marshal HRH The Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII.

As you would expect, the Parade State details commanding officers by name, numbers of officers, men, horses and guns taking part in the Review. In overall command was Major General H Trotter, Commanding Home District.

The Corps are then listed, The Honourable Artillery Company. The Volunteer Artillery, The Volunteer Engineers, East London Brigade, South London Brigade, (which General Sir G H Willis will head the 1st and 2nd VB's Middlesex Regiment) North London Brigade (General HRH The Duke of Connaught and Strathearn will head the 16th Middlesex VRC), Volunteer Medical Staff Corps.

### The Surrey Brigade comprised the following Corps:

**In Command** - Colonel Lord Belhaven and Stenton. Staff- Lieut Colonel W. Ansell Scott, Brigade Major; Major H. A. Barclay, Aide-de-camp; Capt. C.W. Trotter, Notts Yeo., Lieut A Harrison, Rifle Brigade, Orderly Officers.

Officers	Other ranks	Total all ranks	Horses	Guns	
20	490	510	3	-	Col J.P. Fearon, V.D.
22	576	598	4	-	Col. G. Drewitt, V.D.
16	334	350	3	-	Col. S.B. Bevington, V.D.
28	650	678	3	-	Lt Col. J. Davies-Jenkins.
15	410	425	3	-	Hon Lt Col. A.L. Salmond.
23	330	353	3	-	Col. Ernest Villiers.
20	360	380	3	-	Lt Col. J.L.G. Powell V.D.
32	516	548	4	-	Col. H.J. Bowen V.D.

The summary of Corps taking part is shown below.

<b>Honourable Artillery Company</b>	39	527	566	152	8
<b>Volunteer Artillery</b>	81	1971	2052	14	-
<b>Volunteer Engineers</b>	59	1426	1485	12	-
<b>East London Brigade</b>	233	6017	5250	30	-
<b>South London Brigade</b>	245	5666	5911	35	-
<b>Surrey Brigade</b>	191	4016	4207	29	-
<b>West London Brigade</b>	135	3062	3197	22	-
<b>North London Brigade</b>	163	3694	3857	24	-
<b>Volunteer Medical Staff Corps</b>	19	296	315	12	3*
<b>Totals</b>	1165	25675	26840	330	8 * 3 Wagons

It should be remembered too, that this was only a fraction of the strength of the Volunteers as they were then known. Many of those on parade that day volunteered for active service in South Africa, and later in 1914 volunteered for active service overseas during the Great War. Many did not return.

The music played at this Review is of interest as none of the marches associated with our two regiments were played, the marches for the Surrey Brigade being 'Herzog von Brabant', 'Hoch Hapsburg', 'Dorner', 'Double Eagle' and 'Pro Gloria et Patria'. Overall the music was mostly of German origin.

LMW

\* Note titles of units reproduced as printed on original programme.

## Old News

That publications such as the Regimental Association Newsletter are not a new idea is shown by the fact that when pensioner ex-Colr\*-Sgt Anderson, aged 75 years, of The East Surrey Regiment visited the 2nd Battalion Sergeants' Mess in 1922 he brought with him a journal called "The Sentry" published by the Battalion in Dover in 1887. Mr Anderson joined the 70th Regiment in 1867 and retired from The East Surrey Regiment in 1888. Still active at his age he was carrying on his job as a sub-postmaster in a village near Aldershot.

RF

Source - East Surrey "Regimental News".

\* Original spelling.

### Seventeen Bright Stars

*Come all you bold Britons to the seas do belong,  
Of the seventeen bright stars I will sing you a song.  
On the 15th of April, at Spithead as we lay,  
Lord Bridport he hove out a signal to weigh,  
But we one and all refused to obey.*

*Then each son of Neptune took their oath without dread  
Until redress was obtained not to sail from Spithead,  
Two tars from each ship of the line did appear  
On board the Queen Charlotte without dread or fear,  
While the ships manned their yards with a  
thundering loud cheer.*

*But at length from our King, Lord Howe he was sent  
To redress our grievance to our full content,  
We received the old hero with joy as our friend,  
And the Act being passed we will cheerfully sing  
'Confusion to France and long live our King.'*

*Drink a health to Lord Howe in a full flowing glass,  
Confusion to Pitt, likewise to Dundas,  
The seventeen bright stars in a bumper shall roar,  
Their praises shall sound from shore unto shore  
And they will never be forgot until Britain's no more.*

The name of HMS *Queen Charlotte* is well known in the Regiment for her part in the Battle of the Glorious First of June in 1794 when members of The Queen's Royal Regiment were aboard her and fighting in a marine capacity. Less well known, however, is the fact that three years later, on 15th April, 1797 she led the Naval Mutiny at Spithead when the crews of seventeen ships of the Grand Fleet (later referred to in verse as "The Seventeen Bright Stars") refused to weigh anchor and sail on patrol duties in the English Channel where French forces formed a constant threat.

Discontent in the British Fleet had been simmering for some time, mainly over pay which, in modern parlance, had fallen below the cost of living. Complaints to the Admiralty by way of letters to Lord Howe, to whom *Queen Charlotte* had once been flagship, brought no results as neither did later petitions which extended the complaints about pay to include grievances about food and about the "tyrannical" conduct of certain officers.

On the 15th April the blow fell. *Queen Charlotte* signalled the start of the mutiny by loud cheering. (The ploy of communicating by cheering was later used at the Naval Mutiny at Invergordon in 1931 and had in fact been used by the German High Seas Fleet mutineers in 1918). The ships remained firmly at anchor.

Finally taking notice of the sailors' grievances, Earl Spencer, First Lord of the Admiralty, arrived at Portsmouth on 18th April and then negotiations commenced. The mutineers, aware of the drastic penalties which could result from their actions, would not back down from their position unless assured that a Royal Pardon would be granted. This arrived on 23rd April

and the Fleet moved off to St Helens, the "jumping off" point for Channel cruises, the mutiny seemingly at an end. But it was not to be. With grievances still not properly settled, *Queen Charlotte* sent out notes to other ships ordering resumption of mutinous action.

The government, at last realising the seriousness of the situation, rushed through a motion in the House of Commons granting an extra £327,000 for Naval Expenditure and on it becoming a statute dispatched copies of the Act to Portsmouth. Lord Howe, a much respected figure among the sailors, came down personally to meet delegates to try and resolve their grievances. On his arrival on 11th May, he immediately visited the *Royal George*, the *Queen Charlotte* and the *Duke* and later made his way round the fleet, ship by ship. By 15th May the whole matter had been settled and the fleet and the town of Portsmouth were in festive mood.

But *Queen Charlotte*'s days were numbered and she came to a sad end on the 17th March, 1800 when she was taking on ammunition at Leghorn in the Mediterranean. A fire broke out in a bundle of hay and spread through the ship which eventually blew up, causing many casualties. The presence of hay on board a warship may seem strange but in those days, before the advent of refrigeration, livestock was often carried to provide supplies of fresh meat "on the hoof".

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### A Cold Blow at Stow

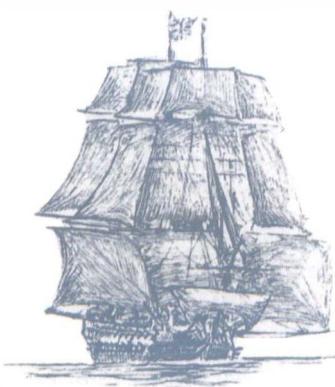
That the title of **Young Buffs**, bestowed on the 31st Regiment at the Battle of Dettingen by King George II in 1743, was becoming well known and accepted less than twenty years later is shown by the extract below from the Gloucester Journal of 2nd March 1762.

*"We have received many melancholy Accounts of the unhappy Consequences of the violent Storm of Wind and Snow which happened Yesterday Se'nnight; but those from Stow on the Wold are the most affecting: A Party of about Eighty Recruits, belonging to the Regiment of Young Buffs, were on their March from Northleach; and when they had reached within the Distance of a Mile from Stow, the Severity of the Storm became so great, and the Intenseness of the Cold so sharp as to deprive them of the Use of their Limbs; and it was with the utmost Difficulty that the Officer, who was on Horseback, reached Stow; where he procured the Assistance of the Inhabitants, who sent Men and Horses to their Relief. Four of them were found dead upon the Road, and another died soon after he was brought to Stow. They were all buried on Thursday in one Grave. The Benevolence and Humanity which the Inhabitants of Stow displayed upon this melancholy Occasion, deserve the highest Encomiums." \**

With acknowledgments to the County Librarian, Gloucestershire Library.

RF

\* Spelling as printed from original paper.



## "Defence" of The Realm

Symbolic of the close associations between the Royal Navy and The Queen's Royal Regiment, there is, at The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Museum at Clandon Park, Guildford, a handsome gavel which was presented to the Officers' Mess 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in 1911 by the Captain of HMS *Defence* of the First Cruiser Squadron, Royal Navy. Its silver mounted inscription reads:-

*Presented by the Wardroom  
Made from wood of  
HMS Defence 1861-1904.  
Fourth of her name*



A self explanatory covering letter, shown here, gives further information.

*1st Cruiser Squadron.*

*H.M.S. Defence.  
4th January 1911*

*Dear Sir,*

*Will you allow me, on behalf of myself and the Officers of this ship, to ask you to accept the enclosed mallett as a present to the Officer's Mess of your Regiment.*

*The inscription on the mallett explains itself but I might perhaps add that this present Defence is the 5th of her name; the mallet was turned and carved by the Carpenter of this ship. It is somewhat of a coincidence that while he was carving the arms of the House of Braganza that family was being turned out of Portugal.*

*You are probably aware of the number and names of the Officers and men of the "Queen's" Regiment who were killed or wounded on board the Defence on the 1st of June 1794. If however you are not, they are as follows:-*

<i>Officers</i>	<i>Men</i>		
<i>Killed -</i>	<i>Nil</i>	<i>Pte</i>	<i>Collier</i>
	"		<i>North</i>
	"		<i>Roberts</i>
	"		<i>Hamilton</i>
<i>Wounded</i>		<i>Pte (i)</i>	<i>Name unknown</i>
<i>Ensign Boycott</i>			

*Believe Me, Yrs: Very truly,  
C F Dampier, Captain.*

HMS *Defence* was a Minotaur Class armoured cruiser of 14,600 tons. Built at Pembroke Dockyard, she was launched in April, 1907 and completed in February, 1909.

She was coal fired and her main armament of four 9.2 in guns was supplemented by secondary armament and five submerged torpedo tubes. Her original crew complement was 755. Operationally she carried out normal cruiser duties in various

parts of the world and in November 1912, she acted as escort to the Royal Yacht *Medina*. In September 1914, she was sent to the South Atlantic to reinforce Admiral Cradock's Squadron. Becoming flagship of the 1st Cruiser Squadron in 1915 she met her end in the following year when at the Battle of Jutland on 31st May 1916, she blew up while under heavy fire from the German battleship "*Friedrich Der Grosse*". All of her increased war-time complement of 893 men were lost - a tragic end to a gallant ship and her crew.

RF

With acknowledgement to the Librarian and Head of Information Service, Royal Navy Museum, Portsmouth.

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## A Southerly Wind and a Cloudy Sky

The leaflet advertising the CD by the Kohima Band lists seven regiments which are now incorporated into the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment. The East Surreys are not named in the list.

The bandmaster informs me that '*A Southerly Wind and a Cloudy Sky*', the regimental march of the Surrey's is included on the CD. It is in fact an old hunting song maybe first used in the old 31st of Foot, or Huntingdonshire Regiment. In 1881 it reached the Surreys with other old customs and traditions. The Royal School of Music (Kneller Hall) knows nothing about it except that it is based on several tunes connected with old hunting ballads. It was well known throughout the country in the 1840's, and is mentioned in *Vanity Fair* by Thackery, which was first published in 1848. Some months ago the BBC gave us an excellent portrayal of the book in which the 'heroine' is the pretty little schemer Becky Sharp. Modern editions of the book are very much shortened, as the original is over 900 pages, but still a wonderful read. On page 114 we find that Becky on her first visit to Queens Crawley is naturally the life and soul of the party as she joins in the singing round the piano after a dinner given by her future relative the local parson.

*The Reverend Bute Crawley was a tall, stately, jolly, shovelled-hatted, man far more popular in his country than the baronet his brother. ....*

*.....He carried his taste for boxing and athletics exercises into private life; there was not a fight within twenty miles at which he was not present, nor a race, nor a coursing match, nor a regatta, nor a ball, nor an election, nor a visitation dinner, nor indeed a good dinner in the whole county, but he found means to attend it. You might see his bay mare and gig-lamps a score of miles away from his rectory house, whenever there was any dinner-party at Fuddleston, or at Roxby, or at Wapshot Hall, or at the great lords of the county, with all of whom he was intimate. He had a fine voice; sang 'A southerly wind and a cloudy sky'; \* and gave the 'whoop' in chorus with general applause. He rode to hounds in a pepper-and-salt frock, and was one of the best fishermen in the county. Mrs. Crawley, the rector's wife, was a smart little body, who wrote this worthy divine's sermons.....*

The asterisk \* in the original book states that it was, a popular hunting song, known as the 'Fox Chase'. It is the only song in the book actually named by Thackery, so he was well aware that not only his fictional characters knew it, but so would his readers at the time. That it was sung round the piano with a 'Whoop' and general applause shows its popularity, rather like John Peel or Clementine, would have been to future generations. Let us hope that it is still played now and then in The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, and perhaps still accompanied by general applause, and plenty of 'Whoops'.

RCT

## Bag and Baggage

The Editor has received a copy of a war-time "diary" from Major Peter Hughes D'Aeth recording a long troop movement journey on which he had the misfortune to be appointed baggage officer. Young and uninitiated readers will find it difficult to credit such manoeuvres, which still won the war, while many older hands will recognise the scenes and situations as being only too familiar.

When the 2/7th Queen's mobilised for overseas service in the summer of 1942 Major D'Aeth was placed in charge of the Advance and Baggage Party (presumably having been a "volunteer" under old and well established Army systems). Without the benefit of any advice and support, he and Company Commanders eventually mustered the baggage in a haphazard sort of way only to encounter obstacle No.1 - the fact that there were insufficient packing cases. However, by ingenuity, initiative and the use of plywood, wire and nails, difficulties were overcome and the baggage was loaded on to trucks at Lavenham ready for departure.

Then occurred one of those most critical of Army catastrophes - a vital form had not been completed. Urgent motor cycle journeys around Bury and district, plus appeals to Movements officers, eventually produced the necessary stationery and soon the party plus the baggage were happily entrained and en route for the port of departure, blissfully thinking their troubles were over. As was to be expected the Station Master knew more about their movement arrangements than did official sources.

Surprisingly, the train arrived at Liverpool an hour before time. Loaded on to lorries, the troops soon found that their "spare time in hand" was soon used up in frantic searches for the appropriate ship, whose code number was known, but "betrayal" of her correct name of Johan Van Oulden Barneveldt resulted in quick location. (One presumes that with a name like that her nationality was of inexplicable secrecy). Once on board time was spent in allocation of accommodation for personnel, the Baggage Officer justifiably selecting the best berth for himself. Leaving Liverpool the ship went first to the Clyde to join other vessels in convoy before finally departing for foreign shores.

While on voyage the troops were kept occupied with various forms of training and recreation as well as Tewts held by the Colonel for the officers and sergeants. There was some seasickness but not, apparently, a serious problem. A stay of two or three days was made at Freetown where troops were not allowed ashore. Mosquitoes were such a plague that scuttles had to be closed at night to keep them out of the cabins. A daytime amusement was watching boys diving for silver coins. Leaving Freetown there was a submarine scare, emphasised by the sight of an escorting destroyer picking up survivors from a sunken tramp steamer.

Some shifting of stores, in strenuous and cramped conditions, had to take place at sea before the next port of call, Capetown, was reached. There the first day was spent in unloading MT stores, while on the second day Major D'Aeth's hopes of going ashore were dashed when he found he had to be the Captain of the Day and remain on board. The duties were not arduous but restrictive. Troops found that the famed hospitality of Capetown lived up to expectations.

From thence it was on to Bombay although, mysteriously, drivers and MTO were left at Capetown. Arriving at Bombay the Major's "diary" caustically comments that "Fred Karno was very much in command". Stores were unloaded and stacked and the baggage party then went off to join the rest of the Battalion at Colabar Transit Camp, where billets were described as adequate, but messing expensive. But the sea was soon calling again and stores were re-loaded into another ship. Stowage, hastily done, had been "*shoved on board all anyhow*".

Ship-board conditions were bad - the French built ship not having been intended for trooping purposes and being unsuited

to the intense heat encountered on entering the Persian Gulf. Things were not improved by the sights of the uninteresting shore-line where yellowish-brown cliffs showed not a vestige of greenery. Anchorage was eventually made at Shatt-el-Arab at the lower reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates. Beyond this was the desert. Weather at that time became surprisingly cold and greatcoats were worn.

Troops were issued with haversack rations before being dispatched to Shaiba or Zubair by transport. For the baggage party unloading into lighters commenced, a task not made any easier by the earlier haphazard loading and the activities of some light fingered dockers. An eventual trip ashore resulted in the sight of the beautifully kept War Memorial on the river bank to men who fell in the First World War.

The fact that the party had been taken off rations when the ship docked presented some difficulties over food and drink and there were further unloading problems when operating in hours of darkness without proper lighting. Things improved somewhat when troops were taken by RIASC transport to a rest camp for a meal, but spirits which had temporarily lifted were dampened in succeeding days when chaotic situations resulted in programmes of loading, unloading and re-loading in operations which Major D'Aeth describes as being "*a heart breaking job*".

All this was followed by a rail journey from Maqil to Baghdad in a train of some seventy trucks all of which were ordered to be guarded - a somewhat difficult task as all the troops were located in wagons at the rear. Fresh food was put on board, allegedly to be cooked en route, but as there were no cooks or cooking facilities this presented a typical Army problem which was solved in typical Army fashion by locating the man with the key of the bully beef store. Tea could be brewed by obtaining water from the engine driver although this meant a long walk for the full length of the train. On arrival at UR there were plentiful mugs of hot tea supplied by Indian troops.

Competition for rail space between the troop train and the Baghdad Belle became acute when attempts were made to hold the former for several hours to allow the latter to pass. The difficulty was overcome by granting the trooper classification as a "special" with the relevant priority. On approaching Baghdad, and only six hours late, the country seemed to be more luxuriant with green vegetation, dates and farms in evidence, but later entry into the city by way of a route march to an alternative railway and station revealed conditions of stench and fly-blown squalor.

Departure by the fresh train was about midnight and ten minutes before leaving Major D'Aeth ensured that all his baggage in relevant wagons was on the train. Satisfied, he partook of a good night's sleep but any optimism he may have had was dispelled when he woke at 6 a.m. to find the wagons were missing. Arrival at "KK" Transit Camp was about five hours late and there was then an anxious wait and enquiries about the missing baggage trucks which eventually arrived several hours later. The explanation was simple. The railway authorities had detached them from the original train. There followed a period of frustration with more instances of confusion, misdirection of stores, loss of stores and recovery of same.

Time was passed in exercises and in various forms of recreation which included shooting, picnicking and football and hockey on pitches which were constructed by use of a bulldozer obtained from the Royal Engineers. The weather became very cold and although shorts were worn by day, battle dress was necessary by night. Sunsets were a colourful picture in themselves..

The Major's "diary" is an entrancing story of the Army life known to so many - of order eventually coming out of chaos, and will-power triumphing over adversity and victory coming out of what, to many other nations, would have seemed impending defeat.

## Aldershot - Home of the British Army

Many of our members will be familiar with Aldershot, the town in Hampshire which is generally recognised as the "Home of the British Army". In actual fact "The Home" was very nearly established across the border in Surrey.

When the idea of a "camp" of permanent barracks for troops in the area was formulated in the middle of the last century, the idea of siting it at Chobham in Surrey was much favoured. Chobham Common, already the location of a summer camp which was established there in 1853, had proved successful for military exercises and was also socially popular. Queen Victoria and Prince Albert had received, troops there on 21st June of the same year. But eventually, on the recommendation of Lord Hardinge, Aldershot Heath was selected for the new military quartering and training area and, on the owners agreeing to sell at £12 an acre, a tract of land nearly ten thousand acres was purchased early in 1854.

Although only a summer camp was originally envisaged, permanent barracks were later built to accommodate cavalry, infantry and artillery close to the neighbouring village of Aldershot which then had a population of about 850.

In succeeding years both town and the "camp" as it was known, grew into considerable proportions, housing many troops and seeing them depart and return from many wars and campaigns and overseas service.

Not unnaturally, Surrey's Infantry Regiments were often involved and became part of Aldershot's history. Indeed The Queen's, as the 2nd Foot, had shown a presence in the area even before the establishment of The Camp. At manoeuvres, or "sham fights" as they were known, carried out in 1792 the 2nd Foot were shown as being among the participating Infantry Regiments.

As Aldershot reached one of its peak periods at the time of the approach of the South African War the Queen's were present, but very soon absent, as they departed for active service in the weeks immediately preceding the outbreak of hostilities. Other units quickly followed amid enthusiastic and sometimes heart-rending scenes at the Government siding railway station.

Many of the departing soldiers were Reservists, hurriedly called away from their homes, wives and families. Noticeably, uniforms were khaki. The red coat was fast disappearing from the British Army particularly in theatres of campaign and war.

The somewhat noisy and glamorous departures to the South African war were in stark contrast to similar occasions in the First and Second World Wars when operational secrecy demanded quieter affairs.

In 1914 Aldershot was home to the 1st and 2nd Divisions comprising the 1st British Army Corps and it was from Aldershot that the British Expeditionary Forces set out for France in 1914. Different in form from their predecessors of the Boer War they were to see a war which was largely static but, contrastingly, becoming increasingly mechanised and even airborne. (The first military airship - the **Nulli Secundus** - had flown from Aldershot to London in 3 hours 25 minutes in 1907 and in the same year S F Cody made a flight on Laffans Plain which resulted in him building "**British Army Aeroplane No 1**" in the following year).

Just as Aldershot had seen the departure of troops for France in early August 1914, it saw the sad return of the first hospital trains by the end of the month. Many more were to follow. Meanwhile, recruits were flocking to the Colours in droves and Aldershot's accommodation, equipment and training facilities were stretched to their limits. A picture of King George V inspecting the 14th (Light) Division on Laffan's Plain in

September 1914, shows all the men in plain clothes, mostly pullovers and trousers, and wearing civilian cloth caps. It was reported that during August "a thousand men were enrolled into the County Regiment at a recruiting office set up in the Traction Company's Garage".

The end of the war saw a return to officially "peaceful" times but they certainly weren't untroubled. Aldershot was depleted of troops during the Irish "Troubles" and the departure to the Emerald Isle in January 1921 of the 2nd Bn, The East Surrey Regiment meant that not a single, Infantry battalion remained in South Camp.

By the end of the year, however, with the ratification of the Irish Treaty, troops were returning to Aldershot but more trouble was on the way.

As a result of the great coal strike of 1921 Army and Navy Reservists were called up, some of the latter unusually being embodied at Tweedown Camp. Regrettably, extremists in the Army ranks incited disaffection with the result that a serious riot involving about 200 men took place. Quickly subdued by military and civil police it resulted in restrictions on troops leisure activities and movements and the appearance of mounted cavalry picquets on the streets. (The Naval Reservists at Aldershot do not seem to have been affected but far away at Newport, Monmouthshire similar, but peaceful, trouble among reserve sailors caused Captain Kennedy RN, father of the present day author and broadcaster Ludovic Kennedy, to be court-martialled and reprimanded for failure of duty).

1922 was an important year for the town of Aldershot as it received its Charter. A magnificent parade received the Mayor Elect and the Charter on its arrival at the Railway Station and the 2nd Bn The East Surrey Regiment were one of those taking part. The Queen's were obviously in Aldershot in 1923 as at the unveiling of the 2nd Division War Memorial by General Lord Home GCB, KCMG, Last Post and Reveille were sounded by the regimental buglers.

When the King and Queen visited Aldershot in 1934 the King inspected a composite British Infantry Brigade composed of the 2nd The Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey) (England), 2nd Gordon Highlanders (Scotland), 1st Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers (Ireland) and 1st Welch Regiment (Wales).

In the following year, on the death of King George V, a seventy gun salute, one for each year of the King's life, was fired on Queen's Parade, Aldershot. The Queen's were among the numerous Regiments quartered at the Camp at the time.

An imposing edifice in Aldershot is the red bricked Royal Garrison Church of All Saints which houses, among other things, many Regimental Colours including those of the 70th Regiment. Aged, the shredding remnants still have a dignity which recalls Sir Edward Hamley's famous lines:- "*A moth eaten rag, on a worm-eaten pole, It does not look likely to stir a man's soul. 'Twas the deeds that were done', neath that moth-eaten rag, When the pole was a staff, and the rag was a flag.*"

By the chancel steps stands the brass lectern given to the church by Colonel Samuel Bowen Bevington of the 3rd Volunteer Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment in memory of Captain Samuel Bevington, 2nd Bn The Queen's who died in March 1896.

In 1939 when the main body of the Regular Army departed to France, Aldershot became the base for the Canadian Army during the war as well as being a transit area for British units and formations before embarkation for various theatres of war. At the end of hostilities in 1945, and the consequent departure of the Canadians, vast changes took place at Aldershot. The

camp became a training centre for National Service recruits as well as housing the Mons Officer Cadet School. It also accommodated depots and training centres of eight corps of the British Army as well as becoming the home of the newly formed Parachute Regiment. In the early 1960's National Service ended and Aldershot was again host to a Regular Army, an Army that was vastly different from that of earlier years - those days, for example, of either scarlet tunics or, later, khaki serge, brass buttons, riding breeches and tightly wound puttees.

At Roundhill is the imposing equestrian statue of the Duke of Wellington as he appeared at Waterloo, mounted on his famous horse Copenhagen and wearing his customary short cloak. The sculptor was Mr Matthew Coles Wyatt of London whose initials MCW form the embroidery of the saddle cloth.

The statue stands upon a red corshill stone plinth - on either side of which is the single word "Wellington" - which is surrounded by a circle of sixteen cannon barrels sunk into the ground and linked by an iron chain affixed to wooden balls in the mouths of the cannons. At the foot of the front of the plinth is a plaque bearing the inscription:

*1846 Erected at Hyde Park Corner, London. 1885 Re-erected here and handed over to the charge of Aldershot Division by HRH Prince of Wales by order of HM Queen Victoria.*

*Matthew Coles Wyatt, Sculptor.*



The statue has stood now on its present site for a hundred and fourteen years and it is without doubt Aldershot's most famous landmark.

Extensive post war planning and construction has resulted in demolition of many older buildings (subject of many memories of old hands) to be replaced by modern structures. Some of the old Victorian edifices remained standing, defiant to the last, to become part of Aldershot's history, a history of which the country may be proud and of which many Regiments, including those of Surrey, played notable praiseworthy parts.

Much of Aldershot now stands empty of military personnel but its martial spirit remains and, if ever needed, both town and camp will doubtless be found ready.

### Recce Platoon

On 19th September 1998 a reunion was held at Sharnley Green for members of the Reconnaissance Platoon of the 5th Bn Queen's Royal Regiment (TA). The Recce Platoon was formed in 1961 at the Woking Drill Hall Walton Road, 37 years later the surviving members and their wives met for the second reunion, the first being some 17 years before. At the same time we celebrated the 90th birthday of our oldest member Corporal Vic Farrant, who made the trip escorted by his son in law David Morgan from Leamington Spa.

Vic Farrant had put his age down by 5 years to enable him to transfer over to the Territorials on the disbandment of the Home Guard (second edition) in 1956/7. Following National Service I joined the battalion at the same time. Vic was 50 and I was 24. Our first camp was Castlemartin, South Wales under canvas and straw paliasses!!

In 1961 we became the Reconnaissance Platoon for the 5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment, Lt Foster Herd as our OC. After the first camp, when we had been under the impression that our job was to chase round the Thetford training area in our vehicles rounding up the 'enemy', Foster was sent on a course for "reconnaissance and observation".

Things changed rapidly and we lived up to our motto "See and not be seen" for the next 5 years. Vic won the Battalion Wigan award for the best "young" corporal with less than 2 years service and the juniors leadership competition, not bad for a 50+ year old. The fact that Vic took a cold shower every morning may have had something to do with it.

The 19th September was the best summers day for 1998, warm sunshine a light breeze, in fact just perfect. Lunch was provided by Audrey Browning the guests bringing the usual bottles. There were two iced cakes on Vic's birthday and the other Ken and Carol Simpson's 35th Wedding anniversary cake which was on the following Monday.



The following were present:- Audrey and Stuart Browning, Foster Herd, David Robinson, Daphne and Arthur Dunipace, Carol and Ken Simpson, Barbara and Steve Message, Carol and Chris Message, Janet and John Carpenter, Gwen and Bert Parks, Bob Johnson and Vic Farrant. The party went on into the early evening, when with reluctance we had to part agreeing that we would not wait so long for the next one.

None of this would have been possible without the common factor of The Queen's Royal Regiment, which brought us all together in the first place. Only those who have had the good fortune to serve in such a regiment can understand the comradeship that holds us all together.

## So There We Were

**1669** The Queen's at Tangier were having troublesome times. Beset by fanatical and aggressive foes, poorly paid and supplied and often at logger-heads with the civil authorities, it is no wonder that Major Fairborne wrote, "*Tangier was never in a worse condition than at present. I hope some care is taken to remedy this, or else may the Lord have mercy upon us.*". On one occasion Major Fairborne, out riding with his wife, had to go in personal pursuit of a deserter who was trying to defect to the enemy. The man was captured, tried and sentenced to be hanged.

**1689** The Queen's, under Major-General Kirke, were in Ireland where they relieved the siege of Londonderry by means of a combined operation which involved ships breaking through the booms in the River Foyle in a water-borne attack to get supplies through to the beleaguered citizens who were in pitiable states of starvation.

**1709** The Queen's, by the following correspondence were ordered to prepare for foreign service and to take necessary steps, with assistance, to bring the Regiment up to quota in terms of men and material.

*Whitehall  
6th April 1709.*

*Sir,*

*It is Her Majesty's pleasure that you hold the Regt under your command in a readiness to March and that you give notice to the Several officers of your Regiment to provide themselves with Tents and other Field necessaries the Regt being designed for foreign service.*

*I am, Sir, Your most Humble Servt.  
R. Walpole.*

On 10th June Lord Portmore was ordered to raise by beat of drum as many men as he required to fill up his regiment to the full quota. "*All the Magistrates, etc. whom it may concern are hereby required to be assisting unto him in providing quarters, impressing carriages, and otherwise as there shall be occasion.*"

Goring's Marine Regiment, forerunner of The East Surrey Regiment were involved in Naval actions in the Mediterranean. Captain Taylor was killed in action and Lieutenant Meriam died on service.

**1729** The 31st Regiment were in Ireland, records showing that they were there between 1715 and 1739, their actual historical record of their long period of service was lost.

The Queen's in England were very much on the move. In the middle of April orders were sent for the regiment to move from their "*present quarters*" to places as follows:-Four companies to Salisbury and Fisherton; three companies to Southampton; three to Winchester; one to Lymington, and one to Ringwood. The Lymington company was moved at the end of the month to Ramsey. A sergeant's party that had been sent on duty to Wye did not rejoin the regiment till November.

**1749** The Queen's moved from Gibraltar to Ireland their strength, by order of the War Office, being reduced while in transit. "*Reduced*" men were to be landed at Portsmouth while the remainder continued to Kinsale from whence they were dispersed to Bandon, Dungannon, Cashell and Roscrea. The 31st were ordered to foreign service and embarked for Minorca.

**1769** The 70th Regiment were in the West Indies where the facings on their uniforms had, by Royal Warrant, been changed from grey to black. At Gibraltar the Queen's were also receiving new clothing regulations, it being specified, among other things, that sergeants in marching regiments were to have fusils and pouches. Considerable correspondence was taking place between Lieutenant Governor Boyd, at Gibraltar and the War Office regarding quotas for regiments. The Governor complained of the numbers of officers home on leave, some of them having overstayed and becoming absent from duty.

**1789** Still in Gibraltar the Queen's were having some disciplinary troubles as Captain Ruston was found guilty of an act of insubordination against Colonel Dalrymple. On account of his long service (and seemingly for the good name of the Regiment) Captain Ruston was allowed to "*sell out*" instead of being court-martialled. The 31st Regiment were on home service, having landed at Portsmouth from Quebec in the previous November.

**1809** The 70th Regiment were continuing their service in the West Indies. A state of war was at that time existing between England and Denmark with the result that the 70th occupied certain of the Danish West Indian islands, including St Thomas. The Queen's in the Peninsular War, were at Corunna with Sir John Moore and on his death in battle Sir John Hope, the Queen's Divisional Commander, took his place and conducted the ensuing withdrawal with great skill. The Regiment added "*Corunna*" to its Battle Honours.

**1829** The Queen's were in India near Poonah and once more authorities were giving attention to the matter of uniform dress regulations being "*determined to introduce a uniform of much neater and plainer character*".

A Regimental Order of Merit was established in the same year as a reward for meritorious service. (The award was in the form of a Silver Regimental Cross and some examples are on display in the Regimental Museum at Clandon). The 31st, also in India at Meerut had an effective strength of 1086 and were reported to be in excellent health and a high state of efficiency.

**1849** The 70th Regiment, bound for Indian service, embarked at Cork in January in six ships of the Honourable East India Company to arrive at Calcutta in May and June. The Queen's would probably have been glad to do the same as they, in Dublin, were ravaged by cholera and forced to move from Ship Street Barracks to encamp at Phoenix Park.

**1869** On home service the Queen's were in the Hampshire area, being quartered in Fort Elton, Fareham and Gosport New Barracks. Yet again there was another change in dress, the Norfolk jacket having been approved in place of the shell jacket. The 70th were back in Ireland again with their Headquarters stationed at Kinsale and five companies furnishing garrisons at out-stations.

**1889** The East Surrey Regiment, as it now was, were at Calcutta where they were to remain for two years before going to Dum-Dum. The Queen's were also in India, serving on such stations as Subathu, Dagshai, Jutoch and Solan. During this period they showed a marked improvement in musketry and this was attributed to the establishment of a Regimental shooting club.

**1909** The Queen's were at Aden having arrived there from India at the end of the previous year. Some members, however, remained in India for detachment duty at Deolali. The East Surrey's in India took part in the 5th Divisional Manoeuvres south of Mhow and on 25th February were inspected by General Sir Edward Barrow, commanding the Southern Army.

**1929** The East Surrey's left Gibraltar in May in the troopship HT *Neuralia* bound for Southampton and Catterick where they joined the 13th Infantry Brigade of the 5th Division. The Queen's arrived in Malta in April together with The Northamptonshire Regiment, both from China. Their arrival brought the establishment of the island garrison to four battalions, the strength fixed by the War Office. In the following month a ceremonial Beating Retreat took place in the Palace Square watched by an enthusiastic and appreciative crowd.

**1949** The East Surrey's at Salonika left for Athens on the 1st April to relieve the 1st Suffolks at Aliki camp seven miles out of the city. A later farewell ceremony before the battalion left Athens in November was honoured by the presence of King Paul in Constitution Square before the tomb of the Unknown Warrior.

The Queen's were in Berlin where they had been heavily involved in extra duties in connection with the air-lift. They left for Iserlohn in November after an interesting and very important eighteen months. Neither Regiment realized that they were entering a decade which was eventually to see the end of their individual existences.

RF

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#### Letter from a Chindit - 2nd Queens Royal Regiment India Command. 12.5.44.

Dear Bobby,

At last I am able to write and tell you of our expedition. I am now out of Burma, and recuperating after a most thrilling, hazardous, and gruelling trip. We were members of the 'Special Force' and recently commanded by the late General Wingate. We set off and marched behind the enemy to the extent of 300 miles. At the initial stage of our trek we had to cut away every yard of jungle growth, we walked, or I should say crawled 21 3/4 miles over mountains, in 69 marching hours, and climbed over 14000 feet carrying a pack weighing about 70 lbs so you can see how we at times could only do three miles a day. We crossed rivers which were often waist high. After crossing the Chindwin without much trouble we settled down to do some really useful commando-cum-guerrilla warfare. We blew up bridges, roads, railways, damaged airfields, laid a few ambushes, and we in turn were ambushed ourselves, but managed to escape. Our policy was to harass the Jap so that he did not know where or when we were going to strike, and because we in our party were small we fought the Jap when it suited us not when it suited him. Our last ambush was very successful. My guns caught the first trucks loaded with Japs, and cut them to pieces. He brought up reinforcements and put in a counter attack which looked rather sticky for a time, but we managed to slip away, only losing five men killed and several wounded, for the Japs total of 60 killed, and many wounded. In all we walked during our operations behind the enemy lines to the extent of 500 odd miles. It was a great strain mentally as well as physical as you can well imagine. Every track and village held for us the possibility of being ambushed and shot up so we avoided these, except when we travelled in the dead of night.

We were as hunted criminals. After we had been 'inside' for several months we were flown out in heaven sent planes. We were also supplied with food, clothing, equipment and ammunition which we needed by air, and we all pay tribute to the pilots, and crew, because they never once let us down. They also lifted our wounded after a battle, and flew them to hospital. I am in a rest camp for the moment and expecting a leave soon. Since we came out people have been doing everything for us, giving us what we have missed in the way of luxuries during last few months.

You know, I don't think that it will be long now before I come home as all the five year abroad men have gone to Blighty in my opinion we should be home by this time next year. Today I have had a thorough medical inspection, and strangely enough I have turned out one of the fittest men in our bunch as well as one of the oldest. Our physical category was A1 plus higher than that demanded by any other Force. We had a Commando with us, who said commando work was a 'piece of cake' to ours! Cheerio Bobby I am trying to catch the post. Excuse horrible scribble.

Tom.

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## Congratulations and Best Wishes



#### Diamond Wedding Congratulations to:

Major and Mrs Norman Riches who celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary on September 24th 1998.

#### Congratulations to:

Lieutenant Colonel (Director of Music) P E (Mantovani) Hills FLCM psm, who has been promoted and is now the Senior Director of Music The Guards Division. Lt Col Hills will be remembered by members of 1 Queen's in Werl and Canterbury. It was all that Queen's training that pulled it off!

RSM and Mrs Tom Atkins who celebrated their 54th Wedding Anniversary on 3rd March 1999.

#### Best wishes to:

Brigadier Charles Millman and RSM Tommy Atkins, both now recovering at home having had hip and knee operations. There is NO truth in the rumour, that they are jointly writing a 'drill book' for those who have undergone these operations! Limp Smartly Gentlemen!

Dave Coles MM who is now in a nursing home and has been ill of late. As most of our readers will remember Dave is the Vice President of 6 OCA The Queen's.



*The Editor and Joe Gooden, Joe still thinking hard!*

## The Queen's (Southwark Regimental Association)

The Annual Re-union took place this year on March 6th at the Union Jack Club with the Chair taken by our President, Major Stuart Playfoot MC.

It was pleasing to note an increase in numbers attending as compared with the past years, which gave proof to the resolution made by the Committee that a day time event would be helpful to those members having long journeys to make, in some cases as distant as the North of England and Cornwall.

The party was altogether a great success more particularly as March 6th co-incided with the 56th Anniversary of the Battle of Medenine in which 1/7th Queen's played such a conspicuous part. This gave the President full rein in his address when proposing the Toast to the Regiment. He gave a full description of that memorable day during which 27 enemy tanks were destroyed by the Bn Infantry, using the six pounder anti-tank guns for the first time in the war. At the conclusion of his speech Major Playfoot called upon those eight or nine old comrades present who had taken part in this 24 hr battle, to stand, and he took wine with them amidst generous applause from the audience.



Major John Tamplin with members of the Belgian party who paid tribute at the 1/7th War Memorial in Kensington Gardens

Previously toasts had been proposed for HM The Queen and HM King Albert of the Belgians. A moving address was also made by Mr Paddy McCourt in proposing 'Absent Comrades' in which he cited the names of the families who had provided fathers, brothers and sons for the Regiment in the past.

Guests were present at the Luncheon from the Southwark branch of the British Legion, the Medical Corps, 1/6th Queen's Alderman Johan De Cuyper of Sint Niklaas (the Town relieved by 1/7th Queen's in the advance through to Germany) and Ladies. Response to the toast of The Guests was made by the Alderman.

Altogether a great party with ample opportunity to reminisce and exchange memories, continuing, until we meet again next year.

KAJ

## Battle Honours

**Tangier:** During the Queen's service in Tangier the Moors were a constant harassing problem, their mounted troops being particularly troublesome. On one occasion, when expecting an attack from "4,000 horse and 2000 foot", British Troops sprinkled the ground with "cultrips" which were defensive instruments with four spikes disposed in such a manner that, three of them being in the ground, the other pointed upwards to impede horses' hooves and obstruct enemy cavalry. (Similar devices were employed against police horses during the Miners' Strike of 1984-85).

## Laying up of Colours of The 70th Regiment

On Thursday, 25th September 1924 the two Colours of the 70th Regiment, which were handed over to the 2nd Battalion prior to leaving Ireland in 1922, were lodged in the Parish Church of Kingston-upon-Thames, in the Regimental Memorial Chapel. The Colour party consisted of Major H St G Schomberg, DSO, Lieut. H L R. Ellis, CSM Bull, DCM, CQMS Rowe and Sgt Falconer. In the course of a very impressive service the Colours were handed to the Vicar for safe custody by Colonel Orpen-Palmer. The church was crowded during the ceremony.

The Colours were presented to the 70th Regiment at Dublin in 1831 by the daughter of the Commanding Officer, Colonel Thomas Evans, C.B., who commanded the Regiment from 24th September 1829 until 28th June 1838 when he was promoted Major-General. 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 GOC the Forces in Ireland, where they remained until General Macready handed them over to the 2nd Battalion in 1922.

RF

Source - East Surrey "Regimental News".

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## Book Reviews

Warrant Officer (retd) Lawrence Fish **MMM CD**, lately of the Canadian Forces and formerly of the 1st Bn., The East Surreys serving from North Africa through Sicily, Italy, Austria and Greece, has produced another book.

Unlike the first, "*Up the Boot: A Private's War*" which chronicled Fish's wartime experiences, this slim volume details his development into the upper echelons of international marksmanship. Starting out with his Canadian Regiment as a Territorial a 'fair shot' he went on to win the National Championship in his second season and subsequently was placed on 5 Canadian national teams to Bisley, 2 World Palma teams (shot at 800, 900 and 1000 yards) and won the Queen's Medal in Service Conditions competition. The book records the training, the techniques and the psychological measures enacted to become a champion shot.

Copies of the book are available for the cost of printing plus packaging and air-mail postage. This amounts to 5 Pounds Sterling. The address is: Warrant Officer (retd) L Fish **MMM, CD**, 70-3033 Townline Road, Stevensville, Ontario, Canada. L0S 1S1.

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## Win, Lose or Draw

When Richard Ford, former Curator, received an invitation to the Christmas lunch at Clandon Museum on December 16th he regretfully declined as he was already booked to attend the POSH (P&O Shipping) Club lunch at the Marriott Hotel in London, where 450 people eventually sat down to the meal. Fortune smiled on him. He won first prize in the draw - a week's free cruise for two in P&O's Arcadia to France, Spain and the Channel Islands in May. Despite clamours from various ladies for the appropriate "partnership" he will be accompanied by his son.

Richard has cruised in Arcadia before. Of 63,500 tons, carrying 1461 passengers and 650 officers and crew, he finds her luxurious and comfortable conditions to be vastly different from those he encountered when serving in the Royal Navy in the frigate HMS *Torrington* in the Second World War.



*Arcadia*

P&O have long standing military and Regimental connections through their troop carrying activities dating back to the last century. In 1837 they took the 650 tons vessel *Braganza* into their fleet and during the Boer War they built *Sobraon*, specifically as a trooper, but unfortunately she foundered when she struck a reef in fog in the China seas on her third voyage.

In more recent years P & O *Canberra* served with distinction as a troop carrier in the Falklands War where she, and others like her, came under the somewhat inglorious Naval classification of STUFT (Shipping Taken Up From Trade).

LW

○ ○ ○

## Major and Mrs Peter Hill



*Major Peter and Daphne Hill and Daphne's daughter Jane at their 25th Silver Wedding Anniversary on 26th October 1998*

## A Surrey Soldier Policeman

The first name on the Surrey Constabulary First World War Memorial at Police Headquarters, Mount Browne, Guildford is that of William Avenall, shown as being in "Queen's" RWS.



Avenall, sometimes spelt as Avenell, was born at Gomshall, Surrey in 1897 and served for five years in the Regiment before joining the Surrey Constabulary on 12th September, 1910. Described as being 5ft 11½ ins in height, with pale complexion and brown hair, he was unmarried and his parents lived at Bramley, Surrey. His appointment number was 1570 and his collar number 55.

First stationed at Betchingley, he was later transferred to Normandy in 1912 and it was from there that he was recalled to the Colours as a Reservist for war service. Obviously a policeman of good conduct, there were no disciplinary entries on his record sheet and on January 1st, 1916, in his absence, his Force advanced him from the grade of 2nd Class Constable to 1st, presumably for pay benefits. Tragically and ironically he died of wounds two days later while serving with the 1st Battalion in France and Flanders.

To the number of Surrey policemen who fell in the First World War a further eleven were added in the Second. Also two others were murdered on duty in peace-time. They were all men who the Force and the country could ill afford to lose.

○ ○ ○

## B K Shattock a case worker writes from Piddletrenthide, Dorset:-

You asked me to provide a photograph of Mrs Isaacson on her hundredth birthday and I enclose two not very good (amateur) ones which I hope you will find of use. I have sent her copies of these. They show her looking at the telegram from the Queen, I was interested to see that the Secretary of State for Social Affairs, or was it Pensions, also sent her one. The flowers in the vase are yours! She is a splendid character.



*Brian Shattock SSAFA/FH Society with Mrs Mary Isaacson 100 years old. Reading her birthday card from the Queen & The Regimental Association.*

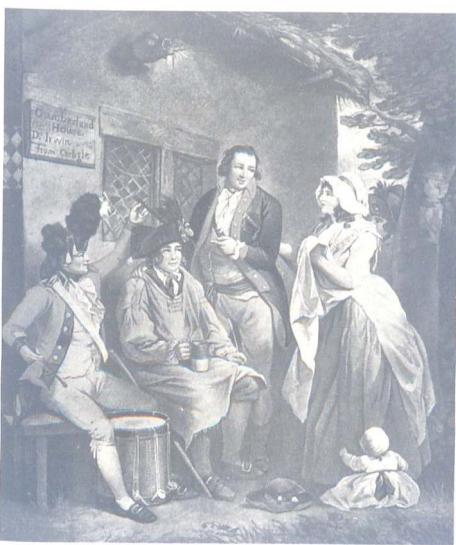
Mrs Isaacson is the widow of Private Harry Isaacson who served with the Queen's in the First World War.

## 'Taking the King's Shilling'

### Recruiting the British Army in the 18th and 19th centuries

In 1846 an experienced staff-sergeant wrote that the British Army was the last resort '*of the idle, the depraved, and the destitute*'<sup>(1)</sup>. It is a sobering fact that during the 18th and for much of the 19th century, the soldiers who won such fame on countless battlefields, and imprinted their identity on the history and traditions of such famous regiments as The Queen's, were regarded by the general

public much akin to Lord Erskine's opinion about '*a brutal and insolent soldiery*'. This was confirmed by one 'ranker's' remark that '*whoever "listed for a soldier" was at once set down among the catalogue of persons who had turned out ill*'<sup>(2)</sup> and such beliefs had a profound effect upon the recruiting of the army.



Enlisting a recruit, c. 1790: a countryman is persuaded to join the army against the wishes of his family. (Engraving by Keating after George Morland).

especially for those forced by poverty from a higher station in life, army service could be a rude shock. The staff-sergeant quoted above, an impoverished 'gentleman-ranker', discovered that once he donned a red coat he was unable to keep his civilian friends, as '*I had sunk from their level in society; betaken me to what is considered the last resource of the unfortunate and the profligate, yet conversely found himself unable to mix with his fellow-soldiers, for although there was much order and regularity, in a military point of view, among the old soldiers, their conduct in other respects was frequently abominable, and their language of so foul a character, as almost to make my blood curdle and my flesh creep*'<sup>(3)</sup>.

With the prevalence of such opinions, inducements had to be offered to attract recruits, wherein lay most of the sharp practice and the source of most of the anecdotes involving the process. Most men where crowds would gather, such as markets, fairs or public houses. Sanctioned by a '**Beating Order**', such parties might consist of an officer, one or two sergeants, a drummer (to attract the crowds) and four or five privates selected for their smart appearance and quick wits, all bedecked with bunches of ribbons or 'recruiting-favours', which would be given to each man who was enlisted. Their presence would be announced by posters, the contents of which might be read to the crowds (most recruits being illiterate), and besides extolling the virtues and fame of the regiment in question, the posters often made outrageous claims concerning the rewards and easy life awaiting all who took the symbolic '*king's shilling*'.



Assembling recruits c. 1785. (Print by Watson & Dickinson after Bunbury).

Prior to 1916, all enlistment in the regular army was voluntary, there being no system of conscription even at times when manpower was in desperately short supply. With soldiering having so bad a reputation, it had little attraction for the more productive members of society; instead, as the Secretary for War stated in the House of Commons in November 1795, '*in recruiting, it was always necessary to employ men of a very low description*'<sup>(3)</sup>. Because of this, the army's reputation remained low, and so continued to attract only those in need of a refuge from civilian life or who were forced into it by poverty and starvation. The Duke of Wellington's often-misquoted opinion on the subject recognised the effect of service life upon such unpromising material, but still stated the general view: that the British soldiers '*are the very scum of the earth. People talk of their enlisting from their fine military feeling - all stuff - no such thing. Some of our men enlist from having got bastard children - some for minor offences-many more for drink; but you can hardly conceive such a set brought together, and it really is wonderful that we should have made them the fine fellows they are*'<sup>(4)</sup>.

For those - most probably a considerable number - who had enlisted from 'fine military feeling' or for a life of

much adventure, and

especially for those forced by poverty from a higher station in life, army service could be a rude shock. The staff-sergeant quoted above, an impoverished 'gentleman-ranker', discovered that once he donned a red coat he was unable to keep his civilian friends, as '*I had sunk from their level in society; betaken me to what is considered the last resource of the unfortunate and the profligate, yet conversely found himself unable to mix with his fellow-soldiers, for although there was much order and regularity, in a military point of view, among the old soldiers, their conduct in other respects was frequently abominable, and their language of so foul a character, as almost to make my blood curdle and my flesh creep*'<sup>(3)</sup>.

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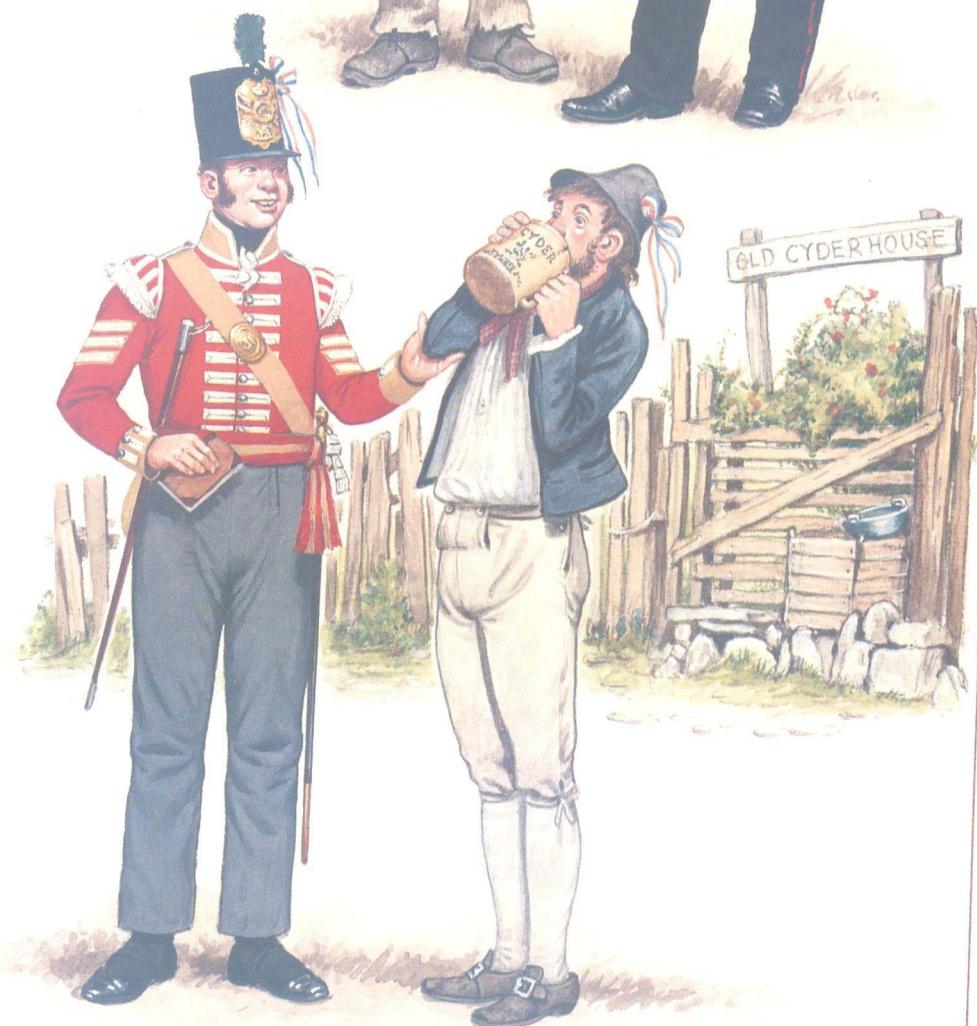
One such notice (issued by the 14th Light Dragoons) described those to whom it was directed: '*All you who are kicking your heels behind a solitary desk, with too little wages, and a pinch-nut Master - all you with too much wife, or are perplexed with obstinate and unfeeling parents!*' Typical of the blatant lies used to seduce the gullible were descriptions of '*Five Shillings a Day and a Black Servant*' and '*luxurious living, an hospitable table and capacious bowl of punch*', neither of which were remotely associated with reality.

Further deceptions were perpetrated by the recruiting-sergeants, whose efforts to secure men might be motivated less by a sense of duty than by the monetary reward received by the recruiting-party for each man enlisted, in the early 19th century the considerable sum of £1 11s. 6d. Although many men enlisted on the spot, hoping for a life of adventure or to escape penury or civilian toil, others would have to be inveigled into joining up. It was said that weavers responded best to tales of an outdoor life, as a contrast to their damp and dreary civilian work, but agricultural labourers, already working in the fresh air, were best caught by exaggerated tales of riches and rapid promotion, even the prospect of a commission within a few months (an absolute impossibility). As well as telling unlikely tales which would be believed by the uneducated or gullible, some sergeants gave away cheap watches by the handful, and others put on displays to attract the crowds: for example, John Heyes, a Yorkshire dwarf, was much in demand by recruiting parties to perform the arms drill, presumably a step up from his previous employment as an exhibit in a



Recruiting for the 33rd Foot, c. 1813, the sergeant brandishing an oatcake on his sword. (Print by George Walker).





freak-show. Recruiters from the 33rd Foot, a West Riding regiment, flourished Yorkshire oatcakes on their swords to represent the plentiful food which they claimed was the soldier's lot (far from the truth!).

The biggest inducement for enlistment, however, was the bounty, a cash sum paid to every recruit. It varied according to the urgency with which men were required; in 1812, for example, it was £ 23 17s. 6d., for lifetime service (i.e. until a man was incapacitated by wounds, illness or age or until his services were no longer required), and five guineas less for 'limited service' enlistment (seven years in the infantry). (Most recruits still signed away their lives for the extra cash). Such sums proved irresistible to many who had known only extreme poverty in civilian life, but the bounty was an illusory fortune. Many recruits were fleeced by the recruiting-parties, whom they were expected to treat, or by NCOs who would give favoured treatment only so long as the recruit had money: 'They will first suck you dry, and then (5) grind you to powder' Much bounty-money was squandered out of sheer bravado: in September 1799, for example, it was reported that some £20,000 had been wasted in Winchester, 'a scene of riot, dissipation and absurd extravagance ... in mere wantonness, Bank notes were actually eaten between (6) slices of bread and butter' Those who refused to spend their money buying drinks for their fellows could expect reprisals: in July 1809 a recruit died from a broken neck while being tossed in a blanket for his unwillingness to part with his money.



Would-be recruits queuing to enlist, 1857. (Engraving after W. McConnell).

ruptured. Recruits were supposed to be examined medically, but on occasion this did not prevent unfit men from being enlisted, especially in times of great need. Few cases can have been so extreme as that of John Metcalfe, enlisted as a musician in 1745, who became famous as the engineer and road-builder 'Blind Jack of Knaresborough' and had lost his sight at the age of four, but an idea of the efficiency of some medical examinations may be gauged from a report by a Member of Parliament in 1795 who had seen a regiment 'filled up with decrepit [sic] men from 70 to 80 years, and of boys (7) little more than 12', and who said that in his own constituency a man had been accepted into the army despite having been discharged ten years earlier as totally unfit for any kind of service! One infirmity which does seem to have disqualified a man from being enlisted, however, was the absence of a trigger-finger, which accounts for stories of wives hacking off their husband's finger while he was asleep to prevent him carrying out a threat to leave her to join the army!

Young recruits were preferred with an enlistment for lifetime service the army might be expected to get more years out of a younger man - but older recruits were not rejected, especially those who had served previously, like one George Ryston, a veteran, of Dettingen, Culloden and Belle-isle. At his death in 1808, aged 94, it was recalled that he had twice given up a pension to re-enlist, and that he had had thirteen wives, of whom six were alive at one time, so presumably he was at least five times a bigamist. His survival was attributed not only to the iron constitution of a veteran but to his copious imbibing of a fierce mixture of gin, rum and water.

A number of criminals were sent to the army as an alternative to imprisonment - sometimes for no more than being 'idle and disorderly'! - but the worst aspect of the recruiting process was probably the operation of the 'crimbs', rogues who undertook to supply men in return for the cash payable to any 'bringer of a recruit' (£2 12s. 6d. in the early 19th century). Crimbs often crooked merchants or publicans - used all means and lures to entrap their victims, including plying them with drink and when insensible handing them to a recruiting-party, who would tell the new recruits that they had agreed to enlist while drunk. There were even cases of kidnap; one such was revealed in 1795 when an abducted pot-boy smashed a window of the house in St. George's Fields where he was imprisoned, and shouted 'murder!'; when the building was entered to release him, eighteen men were found in chains, awaiting 'sale' to the army.

Despite such cases, the majority of recruits enlisted willingly and no doubt found military service no worse, indeed sometimes preferable, to the hardships of civilian life. Indeed, the best calibre of recruit during the long and costly Napoleonic Wars was that drawn from those who had gained a taste for army life while serving in the militia, and by permitting members of this organisation to transfer to the regular army, the government obtained a valuable source of recruits already inured to military discipline and trained in the use of arms. The existence of the militia, however, helped some recruits to get the better of the recruiting-sergeants. Civilians could be conscripted for militia service, but those who wished to avoid it were permitted to provide a 'substitute' to serve in their place. The demand for these increased considerably the competition for men which already existed between the recruiting-parties of the different regiments, and gave opportunities for would-be recruits. Some of these put themselves up for sale to competing

The bounty gave rise to a variety of fraud so common that it had its slang name, 'pear-making': the acceptance of the money followed by immediate desertion. Probably its Leading exponent was Thomas Hodgson, alias 'Tom the Devil', who was executed for robbery in 1787 and admitted obtaining 397 guineas by enlisting under various names and then deserting, which he had done no less than 49 times! To prevent such absconding, it was not unknown for a recruiter to handcuff himself to a man who had been enlisted while drunk, to prevent him running off when sober.

Recruits had to swear an oath of allegiance to the king (officially not within 24 hours of being enlisted, presumably to prevent men being sworn-in while out of their wits with drink), and to declare that they were not an apprentice (whom it was illegal to enlist) and that they suffered from neither fits nor a rupture, the latter an important consideration: so arduous was civilian manual labour that in 1814 it was estimated that one in eight working men was



Recruits waiting to be medically examined, 1857. (Engraving after W. McConnell).

Recruits waiting to be medically examined, 1857. (Engraving after W. McConnell).

recruiters: one in Edinburgh in 1794 auctioned himself to the highest bidder and got 20 guineas, while another sold himself like butcher's meat, eventually getting no less than 7s. 3d. per pound! Perhaps the most successful of all was a man in Rochdale who declared that he was sixty-three inches tall, and that his price was a guinea an inch - and he got his price!

Of all recruiting stories, however, probably the most famous - though it may be apocryphal - was that ascribed to the beautiful Duchess of Gordon who devised an effective method of helping her husband raise his regiment (later the 92nd, Gordon Highlanders) in 1794. It was said that she put the token 'king's shilling' between her lips and offered a kiss to any man who would take it. One was reported to have taken the coin and then immediately paid his pound 'smart money' to release him from his enlistment, remarking that a pound was a cheap price for a kiss from 'Bonnie Jean'; while another demonstrated true chivalry by taking the coin and flinging it into the crowd, to show that he had enlisted to get the kiss, not the money!

Philip Haythornthwaite

#### Footnotes

- (1) Anon., *Camp and Barrack-Room, or, the British Army as it is*, London 1846, p. 269, and later quotation pp. 128-9.
- (2) Anon., *Jottings from my Sabretache*, London 1847.
- (3) London Chronicle 21 November 1795.
- (4) Stanhope, 5th Earl, *Notes of Conversations with the Duke of Wellington*, London 1888, p. 18.
- (5) Farmer, G., in *United Service Journal*, 1840, Vol. II p. 455.
- (6) The Monthly Magazine, September 1799, p. 671.
- (7) London Chronicle 22 January 1795.



#### Caption to Colour Plates

**Top Left:** Sergeant, Battalion Company, 31st Regiment, 1797  
**Top Right:** Sergeant, Grenadier Company, 70th Regiment, 1854 (Medal, MSM).

**Bottom Left:** Sergeant, 2nd The Queen's Royal Regiment, 1878 (Medals, SA, China, MSM).

**Bottom Right:** Sergeant, Light Company, 31st Regiment, 1810.

**Centre:** Sergeant and Grenadier of the 2nd, Queen's Regiment, 1714/27.

Assorted Recruits

#### Enlistment Investments

Deserting soldiers, absconding after taking the King's Shilling, have always existed in the Armed Forces but at least one man seemed to have made a living out of it in the past. The "Nottingham Courant" of October 1760 reported that:-

*"Last week was shot at Dundee John Maddox, a soldier belonging to the 3rd Regiment, for repeated acts of desertion. He enlisted in the seventeenth year of his age and, by his own confession, deserted 34 times from the Army and twice from the Navy. He had enlisted in 29 different Regiments and on board two men of war; he acknowledged the justice of his sentence, and submitted to his fate with becoming resignation".*

#### Photograph taken with Rommel's camera



*The surrender at St Valéry. Extreme right, General Fortune, Commander of the 51st Highland Division. The French prisoner in the foreground is General Ihler, Commander of the French XI Corps. The bare-headed figure is the Luftwaffe pilot who had been shot down by the British and taken prisoner. He was released by the Germans and Rommel subsequently put him in charge of the guard on the captured Allied Generals. "He was visibly delighted by the change of role", comments Rommel.*

#### St Helena



*Many old 1 Queen's veterans of the fifties will be delighted to see this photo of Fred Isaacs and his wife, outside their home on St Helena. Despite several operations recently 'Darky' writes that he is well. He was delighted to hear from his old platoon commander recently, Lt Col George Redfern. He writes also, that he has heard from several of his old friends in the regiment, and is delighted to receive their news.*

# LETTERS



## N Wellbeloved writes:

Thank you once again for the Regimental Association Newsletter which I look forward to receiving. It is of added interest when looking through the Newsletter, to find someone with a regimental number close to mine, 6142076 given to me on joining The 6th Battalion The East Surrey Regiment at Orchard Road, Kingston in May 1937. I have many happy memories of the T.A. in those days.

Annual camps at Arundel and Dover, March and Shoot Competitions, I still have the silver medal I won firing the Old Lewis Gun, Bisley, most weekends. I wouldn't have missed it. Thank you again for the Newsletter and I enclose a cheque for the Association Funds.

## G J Thornton writes:

It was a great pleasure to meet Lt Col Les Wilson and Maj John Rogerson and all our other officers and friends on Thursday last at All Saints Church, Kingston.

I also wish to thank you for a very intriguing and interesting Newsletter once again. I would also like to thank Major Rogerson for taking the photo of myself in my new form of cap and my friend Bill Hewitt, also thanking you for printing my invasion article of N Africa, with Lt Crabtree and our platoon. I will add to that, Mr Crabtree was a brilliant officer and fair man to all of us in the platoon. I met Mr Crabtree on Thursday last at All Saints for the first time in 56 years since we were in N Africa fighting side by side, really wonderful it made my day after all those years ago.

## G Watson writes from Thetford in Norfolk:-

Reading about Major Reed he was our Company Commander (C Coy) when I was first called up in February 1940 at Kingston Barracks, I did not think he was still around till December 1997.

We were doing our spell of beach guard at Pevensey Bay near Bexhill in the 40's and we had to stop all cars on the coast road (where Halls Sand and Ballast Plant was) there were two of us on guard, one was Hastings side and I was the Bexhill side, it was very cold I was chipping the ice away from my beat. I heard this car coming from the Hastings end, my mate waved his oil lamp for the car to stop, it slowed down and then sped up again, my mate called for it to stop, and then I heard a shot, the car stopped then and this officer was shouting "you bloody

fool you have shot him", it was Major Reed who was shot. I know the man who fired the shot was arrested, but we never heard anymore, so I never got to find out, I cannot remember the man's name.

We were in Citadel Barracks Dover for two spells of duty and were there when the Canadians took part in the raid, I think it was Dieppe, then I was posted to the Carrier Platoon, after being in the Battle Patrol section under a Lt Watson, with Cpl W Creswell, L/Cpl J Snellgrove, Pte's H Foster and 'Tich' Lovat. We all went into the Carrier Platoon and then to Horsham Barracks in Devon then back to Dover, then to Essex, then over to Coleraine in Northern Ireland. We were then split up Cpl Jack Snellgrove and myself and some more, were posted to Italy and I got wounded up around Frenze. I was blasted by shellfire, received head injuries. When I came out of hospital I was regraded to B3, and posted to the RASC as a driver and despatch rider. It was in Naples when I had an accident on a motor bike with a ten ton Yankee GMC and nearly lost my left leg, and now get a 60% pension after putting up with my injuries for 50 years. Still I am better off than many of my mates.

While I was in Italy, I was told I could go on home leave, I believe it was called (*MEDLOCK*), we were in a transit camp near Bari this was in August 1945 and you had to wait your turn. Anyway by the time my turn came it was around December, the train we were on nearly crashed as a circus train in front had come off the rails and they were going around shooting the lions that were loose. We had to change trains with a load of New Zealand soldiers coming south and we had to have their train to get home, so I spent my first Christmas with my dear wife after five years and my two sons and daughter.

I reported back to the RTO from leave and was sent to Greece until I got my release papers and was sent home via Marseilles through France to Aldershot in May 1946. Since then I have only met two of my mates, in the fifties, I often wonder if any of them are still around. I supposed a lot of it is my fault, but when I was wounded I lost a lot of my memory and I still only get slight memories back now and again, still as I said before there are plenty worse off than myself, I was seventy nine last November, so I can't be too bad. I often wonder if the doctor at the hospital where I was regraded is still around. I was in a bit of a state in them days, and I can still hear him laughing when he asked me what I wanted to do, as I was unfit to rejoin my unit, and I said driving, he said "*what in your state*", but I am still able to drive a bit, only automatics.

The only thing I would like to do before it is too late, to have a look round Citadel Barracks, Dover and maybe stir up a few more memories and take my wife with me. It is a good job I had a good one like her, that's the only thing about Dover, she would have to use a wheelchair and I cannot walk far.

*Editor's note - Citadel Barracks has long since been formed into a housing estate.*



Wally Creswell, Tich Lovat, Jack Snellgrove, Harry Foster

### Gordon Church writes from Tonbridge:-

Congratulations once again for such an excellent Newsletter. The Gothic Line article, together with John Day's memoirs, was particularly outstanding, combining as they did, a graphic description of the Black Cats final victorious campaign, together with personal experiences of those who took part in it. With illustrations and photographs, descriptions of events over the years, an outstanding publication is once again produced under its much too modest title of 'Newsletter'. Many thanks again and best wishes.

### Ann Witts writes:-

I am writing to say thank you very much for all the time and consideration yourself and other members of the Association gave and showed to me when I visited the museum yesterday. I had a truly memorable day and learned a lot about my father's soldiering especially with the 2/7th Battalion. This battalions history written by Bullen and presented to me will always be treasured. Having now found my way to Clandon I know I shall return and next time will wear my Queen's brooch!!!

Thank you once again for all of your kindness and assistance during my visit. I look forward to receiving further Newsletters.

*\*Mrs Anne Witts is the daughter of the late 'Dom' Domoney*

### R Rosado writes from County Down, N. Ireland:-

I was very interested to read one of my old company officer's letter regarding Major W. Brown M.C. It has made something that has been a bit of a puzzle to me for years even worse. When the battalion was disbanded I was transferred to the Lovat Scouts along with many others. We eventually ended up in the Cameron Barracks in Inverness after a nightmare Journey from Dover (where we had foolishly expected to get our leave paper and proceed home). Nobody knew anything about us and after spending all day in Dover Castle watching everybody else get their leave passes the powers that be decided to send us to Scotland so that they could tidy up their desks and go home. We arrived at the barracks a couple of days later in the dead of night and the duty officer who had to be dragged from a 'do' in the mess was not very happy having to deal with us. We were starving, tired and frozen stiff. It was January 1947 and one of the coldest winters on record. In the morning we paraded at the company office and got our leave passes to London and the awful Journey again but at least we were going home. When I returned to Inverness I ended up working in the company office and one day a box of papers was opened up and someone said "*here is some more Junk from the Lovats*". We weren't very popular with the Camerons I might add and used to get the worst fatigues. I was given the job of getting the papers disposed of and at the bottom of the box was a folder that I have kept to this day. It was "*A short war history of The 1/6th Battalion The East Surrey Regiment North Africa and Italy 1943 - 1945*". How it got into a box of Lovat Scouts papers I can only imagine happened in Athens. The file was in a bit of a state with some of the sheets torn but after I retired from work I started to reprint it but I must admit I have not done much with it for quite a few years.

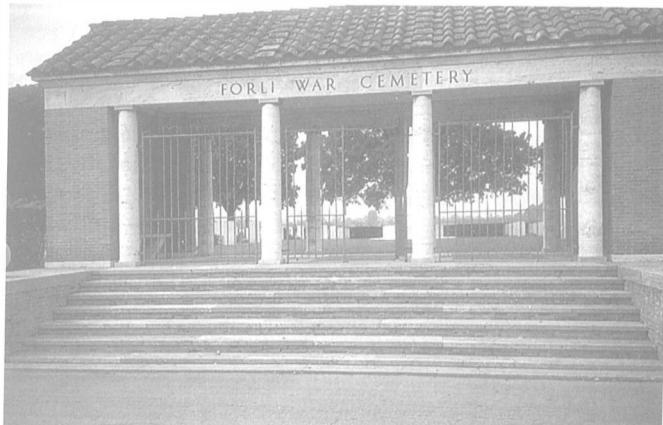
What has all this got to do with Lt. Theobalds you may ask? Well, there are lists of all the casualties in the file I have mentioned and under Coriano - Faenza Lt. D. S. Theobalds appears and under Greece Lt. H. G. Theobalds. Did he change his christian names during his stay in hospital I used to wonder. We had only one Lt. Theobalds in D Coy. but I see from his letter that he is now M. Theobalds. Will he be so kind as to put the records straight before I reprint the relevant pages. Thank you.

### W Oliver writes:-

Many thanks for the Nov 98 Newsletter, especially the items about the Berlin airlift, I too was serving at the same time in Berlin with the 1st Bn The Royal Norfolks in Wavell Barracks next door to Brooke Barracks. As an old Queensman it was nice to see my old regiment in Berlin alongside of us, as I read the stories, it was just like it was yesterday, and yes, I was watching the Boxing match when our Sgt Wackett lost. Ref A E Payne's item, what a night. Once again many thanks.

### Colonel D E Blum writes:-

In his very interesting articles on the history of 56th (London) Division, Brigadier Geoffrey Curtis describes how, in April 1945, the three Queens battalions of 169 Brigade turned the right flank of the German line by advancing across the impenetrable Lake Comacchio. The area of the lake had been considerably increased as a result of flooding arranged by the enemy. The brigade debouched from the amphibious Fantails to capture the villages of Menate and Longestrino.



I recently visited the area. The villages have of course, reverted to being some kilometres from the lake. I was intrigued to discover that the main road through Menate is named "Via 11 Aprile 1945" after the day it was freed from German occupation by the Queen's.



### Don Papworth writes from India

Just a line to say how very good the Newsletter is - November's has just arrived.

Of the Regimental Association Church Service and the reproduction of the Dean of Guildford's sermon is absolutely excellent. To hear again of Field Marshal Viscount Wavell and a mention of his book "*Other Mens Flowers*", perhaps the greatest commander of the last war. His command on many fronts 1940-41, with so many reverses elsewhere kept the fire, faith and belief in final victory alive. On Brigadier Fergusson too. Both of the greatest humanity and in the finest traditions of leadership in the Army - of the last war I would also add Lord Lovatt and his book "*March Past*". Anyway a

wonderful sermon and amid the never-ending emanation of change and millennium keeps faith in the not forgotten and unforgettable.

Being a reluctant contributor to the Weekly Telegraph (Daily and Sunday combined) and a horrified (mostly) reader, that fine sermon is indeed badly needed.

Best wishes to all

#### Alan Elliot writes from Colchester:-

Please accept my apologies for the long delay in returning the service record form, but it has been "one of those years" which happens as one gets older! Anyway I have now completed it and thought I would add a line to say how much I enjoyed the article in the May Newsletter regarding the 2nd Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in Berlin 1948. I joined them on their return from India, and was demobbed just before they went to Berlin. The cartoon regarding the Foreign Secretary "*dropping in for drinks*" reminds me of an inspection by GOC 2nd Infantry Division at Dortmund. The MT section were issued with bedside lockers and lamps (no plugs) and sheets. Needless to say these were recalled immediately he had gone!

I wonder what happened to Major Watson the Second in Command Capt Hancock and the MTO Lt Patterson, and the rest of the MT section. Did Lt Patterson marry his nurse at Iserlohn Military Hospital, or remember the visit to the caves at Herdecke, but that is another story. It would be nice to meet up again; I shall be unable to attend the reunion next month but I send my best wishes to all, especially those that remember me. Known as Lofty for obvious reasons, Oh Happy Days.

#### Frank Bell writes:-

I served with 2/5th Queen's until the end of the war and just after. In 1947 I went to MPSC (Colchester) I reached the rank of WOI. One of my vivid memories of the war was with the late Major General Ling. At Salerno he was a major. I was sent back to the beach with two prisoners, after getting rid of them, there was a few 25 pounders round an old barn, they were making tea, and invited me to have a cup. Along came Major Ling, "*What are you doing lad*", I told him and he said "*well it will be too hot to drink so come with me*". I followed him, he had a patrol of nine men ready to go somewhere. Off we went, only to be caught by mortars on a cross road, it went on all night. I could hear a funny sound coming from the other side of the road from where I was. In the morning I found the noise had come from a corporal who had been wounded. Major Ling had nursed this man all night only to find the man died at daybreak.

#### Lt Col David Patterson writes:-

I was at a conference in Oporto, Portugal a couple of weeks ago and whilst there our Portuguese hosts gave us a sightseeing tour. Inside the Cathedral there was a statue and shrine to Queen Catherine of Braganza and the guide gave details of her marriage to Charles II and the dowry etc. Small world! They offered to take me to Braganza - only 50 Km, but we ran out of time.

#### Brigadier M J A Clarke MBE writes:-

During a recent visit to the Queen's Surreys Museum at Clandon I asked why there is no explanation of the adoption of the Paschal Lamb as the badge of the Queen's Royal Regiment in either the excellent guide to the museum and the potted history of the Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment which are on sale there. I was referred expeditiously to a volume of correspondence on the subject which left me none the wiser, although clearly I was not the first to ask. Now however I may have fortuitously found the answer, which I shall try out on you.

I had thought, ever since I visited Braganza in North Portugal many years ago and found that the main church displayed the Paschal Lamb on pews and tombs and practically everywhere else that it was the badge of the Royal House of Braganza and had been adopted as the regimental badge because of Charles II's marriage to Princess Catherine. However Brigadier Block's erudite article published in the March 1965 Journal refuted that theory, and I may have overlooked that the church I visited was the Church of St. John.

The most recent edition of **Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable**:- (much used by crossword enthusiasts).

1. Refers me to John 1:29 in which Jesus Christ is called the Paschal Lamb.
2. Tells me that in heraldry a Paschal Lamb is a white lamb passant carrying a banner of St. George.
3. States that the 2nd Foot, originally raised for service in Tangier against the Muslim forces, adopted the Christian emblem of the Paschal Lamb as their badge.

So it appears that when The 2nd Foot, The Queen's Regiment came into being in 1684 it retained as its badge the Christian Emblem carried by its predecessor, The Tangier Regiment, against the Moors. If that is agreed, should we not say so?

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#### Major Roy Thorburn MBE writes from Buderim, Australia:-

I really enjoy receiving the Newsletter, and must congratulate you on the beautiful way it is set up. The coverage gives one a good appreciation of the involvement of The Queen's and associated Regiments in history, British and otherwise, way back to 1661.

I personally only saw 2 Queen's in the Middle East when I was serving in the Australian Army and later, when, by absolute coincidence, I joined 2 Queen's and the British Army out in the East. But the Newsletter has enlightened me on the spread of The Queen's activities, and that of the other associated Regiments right through World War II and in Europe thereafter. It's most interesting.

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#### Star and Garter Homes

At the Annual Dinner of The East Surrey Regiment Old Comrades Association at Harrod's Georgian Restaurant on 1st November 1924, Sir John Longley commented on the fact that the Association had been allotted the nomination of a bed in the Star and Garter home, Richmond, and he hoped that anyone who knew of a totally disabled man of the Regiment would bring it to notice so that the bed could be used.

The Star and Garter Homes had a detached wing at Sandgate, Kent which, after the Second World War became a Home Office Police Training Centre. The nominated bed spaces were still visible by way of the appropriately inscribed brass plaques affixed to the walls in certain of the rooms. For some weeks in 1950, while on an Instructors' Course, I slept beneath a plaque which showed that a bed had been donated by the Borough of Cheltenham.

RF

Source - East Surrey "Regimental News".

# PAY ATTENTION CAN YOU HELP?



## Bob Edwards writes from Swansea:

I enclose my annual subscription to the Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association, any extra cash please pass onto the normal Regimental funds. As always the Newsletter is maintaining a very high standard, congratulations to all concerned. As a former member of 1st Queen's who joined in 1953 to keep to a family tradition of serving with this Regiment, the last previous serving man was my mother's brother, CSM Bill Doncaster. Since then I found that my late brother-in-law, Fred Woodcock, also served with 1 Queen's in the early 1950's. At that time I had not met my wife so there was no connection. I actually never knowingly met him but it is likely that our paths did cross. His son, Carl Woodcock, also served with the Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment in the 1970's including time in Ulster. So there is quite a family connection but I was rather surprised to find during a recent visit to my brother's house, an old clock sitting on the table inscribed "To Sgt C Simmonds, 4th Bn Queen's Royal Regiment January 1914 from all his friends at the Sgt's Mess on the date of his wedding".

Apparently this was an Uncle of my brother's wife. Further enquiries from her implied that this Sgt Simmonds went on to become the RSM still serving with the Queen's. He appeared to be a long time serving soldier who eventually died some time in the 1960's. I wonder if anybody reading the Newsletter can offer any information about this soldier so that I can pass it onto his surviving family.

Thank you for any help in this matter. yours faithfully, Bob Edwards. Ex. A Coy, 1 Queen's.

If any reader can help Bob please write to him at, 9 Folland Court, Llwynderw Drive, West Cross, Swansea, SA3 5BJ

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**Roy Rodwell asks**, does anyone know the origin of the Second World War song? 1st line - "We haven't seen old Tojo for a heck of a time" — Ending lines - "If he's the leader of the Rising Sun, then he's no cousin of mine". If any member can help please contact Roy at 3 Pentland Avenue, Chelmsford Essex CM1 4AY

## A Medal Quest

Medals posthumously awarded to a Walthamstow man who was killed in the First World War have just been discovered in Sussex and have started the niece he never knew on a search for his family.

The soldier was 28516 Pte Sidney Fisher, The East Surrey Regiment, who was killed in action in France, leaving behind his widow Ada and their two little children Edna and Sidney at their home in 56 Mersey Road, Forest Road, Walthamstow.

The medals, British War and Victory, together with a memorial plaque and relevant documents were found by the niece, Mrs Irene Udall at her home in Lindfield, Sussex. They were in a 75 year old St Bruno tobacco tin (priced at five shillings and nine-pence, about 30p) which in turn was in a wooden deed box which had belonged to Mrs Udall's mother, Mrs Blanche Lee, Private Fisher's sister-in-law, who died ten years ago.

Private Fisher's widow Ada lived for only a short time after her husband's death and the two children were eventually made Wards of Court and placed in a foster home somewhere in London. They may have gone later to live with the family of Mr Tom Cole, Mrs Lee's brother, who lived, in Borwick Avenue, Walthamstow. Due to a family feud Mrs Lee lost contact with Thomas Cole and the two orphans.

So far, through the British Legion and other service associations, Mrs Udall has tried to trace the family but without success. She says she could never throw the medals away but would like them to go to Sidney Fisher's family who she would like to meet.

If any members have any information it is requested that it be forwarded to Mrs Udall at 14 Meadow Crescent, Hove BN3 7NL.

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**L Stiggall** of 17 Blundell Lane, Stoke Dobernon, Cobham Surrey KT11 2SO would like to hear from any of his old mates with whom he served in 1957 with 1 Surreys.

## Cookhouse!

*Lt to Rt:-Butch Stiggall, Cpl Johnny Lightfoot REME (att), and Pte Fred Sharpe*



*Around the camp fire*

o o o

**W Ashby writes from 'Bala' 25 Gaynor Close, Abbey Meads, Swindon SN2 3XX**

I am researching my late father's military career and wonder if you could find space in the Newsletter to ask for information.

During the period when Hitler threatened to invade England (1940 - 43) my father, a Lieutenant serving with the regiment was seconded to the then very secret organisation 'Auxiliary Units'. Small groups of men, farmers, poachers, gamekeepers etc, were recruited to form a British Resistance Movement.

They were trained to build well concealed underground 'hides' and carry out sabotage. Considering the state of the army after the fall of Dunkirk where the BEF had lost most of its equipment, these groups had the best that there was available - plastic explosives, detonators, time pencils, tommy guns etc. There were small groups in nearly all coastal counties.

In East Sussex a small number (about ten) of Queen's men under command of Lt W Ashby formed a 'Scout Section'. This group trained the local recruits and built some of the 'hides'. I would like to hear from anybody that knew my father or knows about 'Auxiliary Units'.

In 1943 Lt Colonel Trevor Hart-Dyke (Queen's Royal Regt.) was given command of the Hallamshire Battalion, The York and Lancs Regt. As the threat of German Invasion had died down he asked my father to join him as Adjutant. He accepted and served with the Hallams until he was wounded in Normandy.

My father was a professional soldier. He joined the East Lancs Regt. in 1933, worked his way up through the ranks, and gained his Commission in the Queen's in 1940. His Army Record shows that he served in the Initial Training Company prior to being seconded to 'Aux Units' and afterwards in 13 H Battalion.

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## 7th Armoured Division Memorial

On the outskirts of Thetford Forest a memorial has been unveiled by Field Marshal Lord Carver. It is a stones throw from where the Nissen huts housed the 'Desert Rats' whilst they trained for the Normandy invasion. The memorial was five years of hard work and preparation by a former 'Desert Rat' Les Denning, who proudly watched as the memorial in the form of a Cromwell tank was dedicated on October 23rd 1998.



*Just after the unveiling*

The significance of the Cromwell tank being part of the memorial is that the three armoured regiments of the 7th Armoured Division were equipped mainly with Cromwell tanks while stationed in Thetford Forest and it is believed the Division was the first formation to take the then brand new British tank into action.

## The Division

The 7th Armoured Division was formed in 1938 in North Africa, and later as part of the 8th Army played a major role in the defeat of the Italian Army and Rommel's Afrika Korps. Following the North African campaign and the subsequent invasion of Italy, the Division was withdrawn to England to prepare for the Normandy invasion, and was stationed in Thetford Forest from January to May 1944. On the 8th May 1944 the Division moved into concentration camps in the grounds and surrounding area of Orwell Park School, Ipswich and on the 1st June 1944 loading the tanks onto the Landing



*Bill Morris talking to Field Marshal The Lord Carver*

Craft Tank (LCT's) and Landing Ship Tanks (LST's) in Felixstowe docks. On the 3rd June 1944 the LCT's and LST's moved out of the Felixstowe docks and anchored in the rivers Orwell and Stour ready to sail the following day, but departure was delayed for 24 hours due to bad weather. On the 5th June the LCT's and LST's set sail for Normandy and the Division commenced landing on Gold Beach on the 6th June 1944.

The time spent in Thetford Forest and in the Ipswich and Felixstowe areas was the only time the Division was in the United Kingdom during its entire existence. The Division was then heavily involved in the fighting for Normandy and the subsequent breakout and pursuit through France, the Low Countries, into Germany, and through to Berlin.



*Bill Morris reading the inscription on the memorial*

## The Divisional Sign

The Jerboa or Desert Rat came into being as the Divisional sign early in 1940, soon after General Greagh took command. The desert was the birthplace of the Division, when the defence of Egypt depended on it to halt the Axis advance through North Africa. The men of the Division were proud of the freedom and the mobility the desert offered. To them it was a little of what the sea is to a sailor, something to be respected but not unfamiliar or alarming. To many of them, for all its manifold disadvantages and discomforts, the Desert held a certain charm, and some men even affirmed that the sand dunes were alive - as they moved they sang.

So the men of the Division were proud to think of themselves as Desert Rats after the hardy, highly mobile little denizens of the desert's most inhospitable vastness: The Jerboa.

*The Editor wishes to record his thanks to the Editor of the Eastern Daily Press for allowing publication of their photos.*

## The Army Physical Training Corps

### "The Twelve Apostles"



*First Army Gymnastics Class formed for instruction at Oxford September 1860 from which the Army Physical Training Corps originated*  
Back row standing left to right:- Sergt Rafferty, 45th Foot, Sergt Bartlett, Royal Artillery, Sergeant Kearney, 10th Foot, A McLaren, Esq., Director of Gymnasium, Oxford, Canon Jenkins, Jesus College, Oxford, Major Hammersley, First Inspector of Army Gymnasiums JAS Talboys Esq., (McLaren's Nephew) Instructor of Gymnasium, Oxford, Sergt Beer, Royal Horse Artillery, Middle row left to right:- Sergt Smith, 31st Foot Sergt Jackson, 49th Foot, Sergt Sheppard, Royal Engineers, Sergt Tarbottton, 5th Royal Irish Lancers, Sergt Steele 32nd Foot, Sergt Cox, 16th Lancers, Centre front seated left to right:- Sergt Flanigan, 41st Foot, Sergt Riley 10th Hussars.

Doubtless most of our readers will have encountered at some time or other the members of the Army Physical Training Corps, whose bouncing and enthusiastic performances of fitness some people found refreshing and others revolting. Few may know, however, the long and progressive history of this important Army unit.

The Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny both resulted in an outcry over the poor standards of physical fitness of the troops and it was believed that some appropriate forms of training should take place. The idea was taken up and in consequence, in 1860, Major Hammersley and twelve NCOs (the Apostles) went to Oxford University for a twelve months course. The Army Gymnastic Staff was formed and the first gymnasium was set up at Wellington Lines, Aldershot. Following this example an order was given in 1862 for gymnasiums to be built in all garrisons with an officer in charge of each.

In 1865 Regulations for Physical Training were published. Recruits were to do no more than one hour per day. Trained soldiers up to the age of thirty were to do an annual course of three months, one hour each day. Major Hammersley's efforts were obviously being successful and appreciated as in 1871 he was made Lieutenant Colonel, Director of Gymnasia. He was succeeded in 1876 by Major Gildea who was the founder of the Royal Tournament. By that time some new ideas from Scandinavia were being incorporated into the training programme. When Colonel Fox became Inspector of Physical Training in 1890, the value of such training was becoming noticeable and recognised. Boxing and fencing were particularly gaining popularity. As a tribute to Colonel Fox's work the Cranbrook Gymnasium, built in 1894, was later named the Fox Gymnasium. His successor in 1897, Colonel Napier, had a swimming pool built next to the gym, paid for by receipts of £12,000 from the Royal Tournament. Training methods were altered in 1906 by the introduction of the Ling system and in 1908 the first Manual of Physical Training was published by Major Charles Moore. Many public and private schools copied the Army methods of physical training and Swedish drill.

At the start of the First World War the Army Gymnastic Staff were credited with the excellent standards of physical fitness displayed by what was known as the "*Contemptible Little Army*" of the British Expeditionary Force.

Despite this, at home PT instructors were returned to their units but the mistake was soon realised and a new staff was quickly assembled. Colonel Couper recreated the Army Gymnastic Staff with eighty NCOs and courses were held at the Army School of Physical Training at Aldershot. In 1916, the first Overseas PT School was established in France under the direction of Major (later Colonel) R B Campbell, Gordon Highlanders, author of "*The Spirit of The Bayonet*", who was to play a distinguished part in the war and was later to become Inspector of Physical Training, arrived in France with fifty-one Instructors with the object of establishing Physical and Bayonet Training.



*Sgt Richard ("Punchy") Wallace, Kent Constabulary (nearest camera), an ex member of the APTC who became the Physical Training Instructor at the Home Office District Police Training Centre, Sandgate in the 1950s.*

staff the work at Aldershot increased with often over four hundred students on courses at any one time. The Staff became the leaders in physical training in the country, providing members in the British Olympic teams in Fencing, Boxing and the Modern Pentathlon. Vocational training courses for instructors leaving the service were held and most of the public schools employed ex APTs instructors as also did many police forces. Instructors were sent to all overseas stations to serve with garrisons or schools. But despite this and the fact that new PT tables were introduced, numbers of staff fell further in 1929 to 148.

Extending activities beyond the Regular Army, courses were carried out for the Territorial Army and Officers Training Corps in 1930. The first Senior Officers course was also held at the Army School of Physical Training. A Manual of Physical Training was introduced in the following year and this remained basic until 1939. Also in 1931, commemorating the name of the Staff's founder, the first two blocks of Hammerley Barracks were completed for training purposes.

Gaining prestige, the training school was visited in 1932 by the Emir Feisal and his son and in 1934 by their Majesties' King George V and Queen Mary. Efforts of the Staff were obviously needed as in 1935 the standards of fitness of the nation generally were poor, resulting in 50% of prospective recruits for the Army being rejected on those grounds. The British Medical Association were obviously concerned as by 1936 they were recommending that Physical Education in schools should be on Army lines.

With the advent of the Second World War, there was a steady increase in instructors, eventually reaching a peak of 3,000. The Staff became the Army Physical Training Corps and, among other activities, instruction in unarmed combat was included in the training programmes. As before, instructors served all over the world, the airborne operation at Arnhem being one sphere where four were killed and sixteen taken prisoner. Again, as previously, there were considerable reductions after the war, although for a time the APTC were heavily engaged in rehabilitation of sick and wounded.

By the 1950s-60s some instructors were being qualified as Remedial Gymnasts at Pinderfields Hospital. Others, in a more aggressive role, served in the Korean War where WO2 Strong particularly distinguished himself with the Glorious Gloucesters, especially in their long march into captivity from Imjin to Pyongyang. Other trouble spots such as Aden, Suez, Malaya, Borneo and Northern Ireland also saw the involvement of the Army Physical Training Corps.

In the mid 1970s Adventurous Training came into its own and various experts in the subject were inducted into the APTC so that, after training of instructors, it could be added to the Corps activities and responsibilities. The excellence of the standards in sports by the APTC can be gauged by the fact that in the post-war period they held the Adams Shield gymnastic trophy for nine consecutive years. By the mid 1970s there was some concern over Army standards of fitness which had in some cases been shown to be lacking when on operational service. As a result, new methods of training and assessment were evolved and relative pamphlets issued. So wide did the field of gymnastically orientated achievement become that some instructors had to qualify in over thirty separate subjects. By the 1980s a Training Development Team was set up to define the role of the APTC and review the total concept of physical and recreational training in the Army. This was done just in time to receive the changes brought about by the cut back of the Armed Forces in the government's "Options for Change" policy. With the disbandment of the Women's Royal Army Corps women were required to undergo the same training as men. Relative to this, the first woman officer in the APTC entered in 1992.

Two senior officers of our Regiments held the appointment of Inspector of Physical Training, Colonel G N Dyer DSO late The Queen's from 1932 - 1936 and Colonel O'N Wallis MC late Surreys from 1959 - 1960

They set up their first Headquarters at Flexicourt, where they were absorbed into the first Army Training School in the BEF. The Staff had been sent to France for a two month experiment, but at the end of this period they were not allowed to return to England. They later moved to St Pol, where a more permanent School was established. This tiny force with which the bayonet crusade was started did not remain long together and was scattered after the initial demonstration to units of the line. It is recorded that Sgt Wilcox, who served on the Staff at St Pol, killed eighteen Germans with the bayonet at the first battle of Ypres, for which feat he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal, The Russian Order of St Nicholas, and Mentioned in Despatches. The Staff Instructors served in all theatres of war, including Italy, Salonika, Mesopotamia and with the American Army. Bayonet fighting, so much a feature of the times was taught by the Instructors. Thirty -three members of the Army Gymnastic Staff were killed in action and many decorated for their work and bravery.

After the war there was the usual reduction in numbers. In 1918 the strength was 2,299 but by 1922 it was down to 150. The title became the Army Physical Training Staff. Despite reductions in



*Pte Shackleton, 1/5th Queen's Territorial Army Welter-weight and Imperial Services Boxing Association Champion, 1938. Shackleton served with distinction as a Sergeant Instructor with APTC during the Second World War.*

Somewhere 'out there' are many more individuals who started their military careers in the Queen's or the Surreys, and then transferred to the APTC. We should like to hear from them. Details of their distinguished careers in the APTC are given below of two of our members, Lt Col George Gelder (well known to many Queen's Regiment boxers) and of course our very own 'breathe through the nose muscle man' John Rogerson, our Association Secretary.



Lt Col George Gelder joined the Queen's Royal Regiment in Shorncliffe at the Home Counties Brigade Training Battalion on 2 September 1949 as a regular soldier aged seventeen and a half. He was previously a member of the Queen's Royal Regiment Cadets based in Ash Vale near Aldershot. His sole intention on joining the Army was to qualify and transfer into the Army Physical Training Corps, a Corps in which his father, Lt Col G L L Gelder, served with distinction until he tragically died in Malaya in November 1952 aged 48 years.

After 18 weeks Basic and Continuation Training and a member of the winning Recruit Platoon, he was selected as a L/Cpl Assistant Physical Training Instructor on the huge staff of the Home Counties Brigade Training Centre and badged Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment, where the pressure of work due to the re-call of Reservists for Korea and Malaya was uppermost at the time. Later promoted Cpl, he continued Advanced and Probation PT training and promoted Sgt Inst APTC in 1951. (The youngest in the Army).

As a sportsman he was an under 20 yrs British International Fencer, Cricketer, Boxer and Pentathlete. Later as his career progressed, he became an International Boxing Referee and Fencing Official, he also won numerous Army, Combined Service and International Fencing Competitions. He organised the World Pentathlon Fencing Event, Crystal Palace 1973, and was Director of Combats (Dismounted) at the Royal Tournament Earls Court for a number of years.

He served in Korea, Egypt and Cyprus with the 1st Bn Royal Warwickshire Regiment 1953-57, several appointments later and promoted WO 2 he joined BAOR School of P&RT as Fencing Master, progressing to ASPT Aldershot in 1963-66 as Army Fencing Master and became Assistant National Coach when duties permitted. Promoted WO 1 he became Commandant WESTCO School of

P&RT and later appointed RSM ASPT 1969-71. Commissioned Captain (Master at Arms) 1971 Western Command and in 1974 became the first APTC badged Adjutant at the Army School of Physical Training. Several UK and BAOR HQ Staff appointments followed until he was promoted Lt Colonel in 1984 as Senior MAA BAOR, HQ I (BR) Corps, and finally as Senior MAA APTC. Lt Col Gelder retired in 1987, after 38 years Service. He now is Vice President APTC and Chairman of the South West Branch of the APTC Association. He is still an active Fencer and is President of the Cornwall Amateur Fencing Union.



North East Command APTC Staff 1970  
Back row 2nd from left - SI JC Rogerson

ambition was achieved. It took 12 months of courses at the Army Physical Development School five PT tests came for Remedial Training. Courses lasted two to eight weeks with up to fifty on each course. In those days, before budget cuts, there was an APDC South at Bulford. During his three years at York SSI Rogerson represented the Army and Combined Services at Modern Pentathlon and Fencing (Epee) and helped set up York as an Adventure Training School. In 1971 he was posted to the ASPT, Aldershot as the Athletics and Swimming Instructor where he continued to represent in Pentathlon and Fencing, in 1973 he trained and competed in the APTC Highland Pentathlon Team which came 4th out of 30 teams. Having failed to be selected for the Montreal Olympic Pentathlon Team. In 1974 he was offered a commission with both the APTC and the Queen's Regiment, he took Brigadier Michael Clarke's, (Divisional Brigadier) exciting offer to run the Queen's Division Junior Soldiers External Leadership Wing which he did for four and a half years before returning to the Queen's as a Regimental officer. He is very grateful to the Regiment for the experience he gained whilst competing in the Regimental sports teams; in helping train the very successful boxing team and to the Corps for improving his 'Mind Body and Spirit'.

John Rogerson joined the Queen's Royal Surrey's, from the Infantry Junior Leaders Battalion (IJLB) in 1959 and having been inspired by Major Mike Hare of The Queen's Royal Regiment, his Infantry Junior Leaders Battalion boxing officer, was determined to join the Army Physical Training Corps.

It was not until 1968, after serving with the Regiment in UK, Aden, Hong Kong, Munster and Lingfield and having been RTU'D from his Advanced PT Course through injury, that his Physical Training School (ASPT) to qualify and as a fairly elderly Centre (APDC North), York, where recruits who failed their week



This photograph shows ten of the Assistant Physical Training Instructors based at the Gymnasium Shorncliffe 1949-50. "Pick and Shovel Exercises".

L to R: Cpl Berryman (QRR), L/Cpl Timperley (E Surrey's), L/Cpl Brimble (QRR), Not Known, Not Known, Cpl Rodmell (RWK), L/Cpl Arnold (RWK), Not Known, L/Cpl Gelder (QRR), L/Cpl Arpino (MX)

## With 1 Queen's in 1945

Hugh Harris was commissioned into The Queen's Royal Regiment in January 1940. He served with the 15th Queen's in England, then the 2nd Queen's in Ceylon and 1st Queen's in Burma. In 1950 he joined the 5th Queen's (TA) and was CO from 1957-1960.

### Action at last

I arrived back with the Battalion about 17th March 1945 to find that it had been recalled to rejoin the 7th Indian Division, which was engaged in operations against Japanese bridgeheads on the Irrawaddy and Chindwin Rivers. The Battalion was still understrength, but before leaving Major John Terry, a Regular officer, arrived with some eighty other ranks who had been transferred from the Royal Navy and the RAF. I quote from an article written by Major Tony Hobrow M.C. "These men came without benefit of Army training in an infantry unit, and must have felt shocked at this transition. However they settled down and found they had feet like us all. Some became NCOs in due course and one became a Colour Sergeant three months later. Sometime during the journey a further draft was posted to the Battalion of some two hundred men. Most were Welshmen, most from towns, all generally untrained, and some appeared never to have been out on a night exercise even. The Battalion now consisted of some twenty four officers and eight hundred and thirty nine men. They had come from some forty five different units .... the inexperience of NCOs in particular was alarming".

Of course it was not possible to do proper training while we were moving into action, and this explains why a number of mistakes were made. But my experience is that no amount of training is adequate preparation for the real thing. This is perhaps because training tends to be carried out in artificial circumstances. For instance, learning to fire a rifle at a distant target on a range lying down is no preparation for moving against a hidden enemy in jungle. Equally, tactical exercises without bullets are quite different to battles under fire. Montgomery had the right idea when he made us hide in bunkers while weapons were fired overhead, so that we could identify where they were being fired from and what they sounded like. But when I tried to introduce that idea to the 2nd Battalion in Ceylon, it was vetoed by the CO because he thought it too dangerous.

We moved off from the railhead at Dimapur on March 24th, in lorries driven by West Africans. At first the road was not too bad and we did 105 miles the first day. However after that the road became extremely rough with many steep gradients, and on one day we only did 14 miles. The driver of the lorry I was riding in was not good at gear changing, and it must have been most uncomfortable for the troops in the back. So eventually I ordered him to let me take the wheel and after that we got on better. However that night he complained to his officer, who said I was not to do it again. Fortunately his driving seemed to improve the next day.

On the 26th we reached the Kabaw Valley, which was known as "Death Valley" because so many civilians fleeing from the Japs in 1942 had come to grief there. We saw family cars abandoned because they had run out of petrol and we wondered how many had made it on foot to safety. The Valley was a teak forest, dark, dry and airless at that time of year. A fire burning in the distance gave the scene a sinister air.

It was a relief to reach Kalewa, where we crossed the Chindwin River. The countryside became more fertile, and villagers threw us welcome fruit as we motored by. On the 30th we reached Pyingaing, which we called "Pink Gin". On April 1st we recrossed the Chindwin and moved down to Myitche, and on the 3rd we crossed the Irrawaddy River to Pagan. I remember lying under my mosquito net the night

before feeling excited but rather apprehensive that at last I was to meet the enemy.

The Japanese were still in possession of the oil fields at Chauk and Yenangyaung, but were withdrawing. The territory was like dry desert, which favoured us as we were able to use our superiority in tanks. I was at this stage Second in Command of "C" Company, and we were not involved in the initial fighting to secure the oil fields. However on April 8th I was sent out on a reconnaissance patrol to find out if the enemy were in a certain village. My patrol consisted of myself and my batman, Private Kemp, a Corporal and a Burmese interpreter. On the way I spied a native hut, and I walked up to it, thinking I might find a native in it who could tell me where the Japs were. To my astonishment, as I approached, out walked a Jap with nothing on but his trousers and, with his back to me, he started to hang up his washing. He was a big man, with superb physique. I should have remembered that recce patrols are not meant to fight, but in the excitement I opened fire, and so did the rest of the patrol. Four or five other Japs then rushed out, running for their lives. I went into the hut, and found only a horse, and a pistol, which I confiscated. I suppose I should have shot the horse, but that did not occur to me. However, the Japs were now firing at us from the rear of the hut, so I decided to withdraw, and we hastened back to the Battalion to report. I felt a bit of a hero at the time, but I got a tremendous rocket from the CO for forgetting that recce patrols are meant only to observe, and as a punishment I had to take back a Fighting Patrol. Of course when we got back to the hut, the enemy had gone, leaving not a trace behind. (The Japs were very good at leaving no litter, unlike our soldiers). I felt desperately ill on the long trek back, I suppose it was the reaction.

We occupied Chauk on April 17th with little opposition but there was some fighting to take Yenangyaung. I noted in my diary "Battle of Yenangyaung, four killed, 2 3.7 guns and 1 75mm captured." However all I can remember is that although the oil field was derelict, some cosy little suburban cottages remained, and we occupied them and cleaned them up with great joy, feeling that we were back in civilisation again.

At the beginning of May the Battalion moved about sixty miles south from Yenangyaung and took on responsibility for a large stretch of the Irrawaddy. The main task was to prevent the escape of the remnants of the 28th Japanese Army, some 20,000 strong, which were partly in the Pegu Yomas, east of the Irrawaddy, but mainly still west of the River, whence they were trying to escape to the East. They were of course battle experienced soldiers and fighting for their survival, so they were highly dangerous. They usually killed themselves rather than surrender. "C" Company was stationed to guard the crossing of the Yin Chaung, which was dry when we arrived, but shortly after the monsoon broke, and it became a raging torrent. I remember pushing the Brigadier across in a canvas boat; he was dry, but we were up to our necks in the flood. It was then that Tony Hobrow went home on repatriation, having served four years with the same Battalion, and having gained a well deserved M.C. Major Terry became Battalion Second in Command, and I was promoted to command "C" Company. We were in action when we heard of the end of the German War on the radio, and the celebrations and we felt indeed that we were the "Forgotten Army."

On 21st May we moved at short notice further south to the Allanmayo-Kama-Prome area. The Japanese had established a bridgehead east of the Irrawaddy at Zalon, and which was the main concentration area for their parties before moving across the river into the Pegu Yomas. The elimination of this bridgehead was entrusted to the 7th Division, and especially to our Brigade, the 33rd. My Company was at the village of Bogon. The Zalon Spur was strongly held by the enemy, and the country round the bridgehead was particularly close, the sharply rising hills being covered with almost impenetrable

bamboo thickets. Fighting started in earnest. On May 23rd two men of my No. 13 Platoon were wounded and during the night of the 24th we were attacked by a Japanese "Jitter Party". Their attack started with cries of "Banzai" and we all opened fire with all our weapons. It was like a firework display. Lance Corporal Worrall and Private Clarke, who were in a "fox hole" near me were mortally wounded by a Jap grenade and Lance Corporal Downes was also wounded. We listened to their cries, thinking they were wounded Japs, but did not dare move in the dark. When dawn came, the Padre, Arthur Davies (1) and stretcher bearers arrived, but by that time Worrall and Clarke were dead. I did not feel very proud of our efforts, especially as when I went round our perimeter I found no Japs, only a dead cow. The lesson we learnt that night is that you do not fire when it is dark, as the flashes of the weapons only disclose your positions. It is better to lie low and use grenades. The Colonel arrived with a group from Battalion Headquarters, which I found almost as jittery as the Japs. However we may not have done as badly as I remember, because according to the Regimental History, while we were at Bogon we accounted for a number of Japs including a Sergeant Major. My Second in Command, Captain Brian Grainger distinguished himself by crossing the river with a wireless set to observe and report enemy movements, for which he was awarded the M.C.

According to my diary on May 25th we were ordered to set an ambush with the Ghurkas. We were equipped with flame throwers, which we strapped to a mule, and set off for the rendezvous. As we approached, a Ghurka thought we were Japs and fired his rifle, with the result that the mule took fright and charged off into the jungle. So we had to abandon the ambush, and the mule, which we never saw again. I have often wondered what happened to it. At least we were comforted to think that the Ghurkas were as trigger happy as we were.

Before we left Bogon we closed up on Zalon. According to my diary Private Rudkin was killed and Private Lamb wounded. But the bridgehead was cleared. This may have been the occasion when we were given artillery support, but it was not much use in the hilly jungle, as the field guns could not easily drop their shells into the deep valleys. The gunner officer who was with me had a powerful wireless set, but we were caught in a downpour, and the set refused to work. Bad weather in the jungle was often our best protection.

On May 31st 1st Queen's moved by motor transport up to the Wettingen Area. The intention was to post companies at likely interception points, and harrass the retreating Japanese 28th Army by ambushing them and attacking them whenever possible. The Battalion Headquarters was at Napyadaw. Initially my Company was at Powya with "A" Company. We had many clashes with the Japs in that area with losses on both sides. I will try to recount the episodes I remember, but they may not be in the right order.

On June 6th I spotted some Japs moving in the bushes and we chased after them, and killed three. I found myself in a sunken lane and, hanging from a tree, was a naked man who must have been strung up by the enemy. He looked like a Jap, I wondered if he had been hanged for cowardice during an earlier battle. The same day I sent out a recce patrol to find out if another village was occupied by the enemy. I only had one officer in the Company at that time, so I had to send an NCO, Sergeant Scott, who I thought was experienced, but to make sure I loaned him my compass, so that he would not get lost. His patrol found no enemy in that village, but perhaps because he did not use the compass, he led his patrol back to another village which was held by the Japs, and he and Private Reeves were killed, and Lance Corporal Benett, Privates Dolley and Skipper were wounded.

The next day I sent a young officer, Victor Mosnicka, with his platoon to occupy an outpost position. Perhaps because they did not post sentries before they settled down to cook their

evening meal, they were surprised by the Japs, and they panicked, and abandoning all their weapons and gear, rushed back to the safety of our position, with the officer trying to stop them. The CO, who by now was Colonel John Terry, told me I must recover the weapons. I waited until it was dark, and then led a party with great care back to the position of the outpost, and we managed to recover everything.

The following day, June 10th, we had another set back. We attacked the village of Dandaung, but because of the density of the jungle, the operation was not successful. Private Moon was killed, Captain Grainger, Corporal Keen and Private Griffiths were wounded. It may have been on this occasion I fired a 2 inch mortar, forgetting I was under a tree. The bomb hit the tree and exploded. Fortunately I was unharmed, but my spectacles were blown off, and the battle stopped while I searched for them. Luckily I found them on a tree, if I had not, that would have been the end of my usefulness.

You will not find in the Regimental History an account of all these muddles and disasters, but I think it is worth recording them as a true picture of what war is like, particularly with inexperienced and poorly trained troops. I am glad to say that we were beginning to learn from our mistakes, and soon had the upper hand.

"C" Company now occupied the village of Pepington. We were astride a chaung (river bed) which the Japs were using as an escape route. We were joined by Lt. Kirby, but one of my platoons was commanded by a Sergeant. I noted that on June 11th we killed four Japs, but were attacked after "Stand To" and Lance Corporal Guantlett and Private Golding were wounded. The next day a sentry reported he had seen a section of Japs getting in position to shoot us up with a light machine gun. We put down mortar fire on the place he had indicated, and the following morning I found the complete section lying dead. I had learned by now that the golden rule was always to post sentries in pairs well clear of our positions to give us warning, but it was a test of nerves for the sentries. On one occasion a sentry came running in to my position, saying he could not stand it any more. I said, not very seriously, "*if you don't go back to your position I will have to shoot you.*" whereupon he handed me his rifle, and said "*shoot me if you like, but don't send me back.*" The Sergeant Major and I burst out laughing, and he spent the rest of the night in the safety of our position. But later on I thought it only fair to take a turn myself at sentry duty. I spent the whole night lying awake with my rifle aiming at a dark object which I thought was a Jap waiting to attack. When first light came I saw it was only a bush.

(1): Arthur received the MBE for his conduct under fire.

HWH

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### East Surrey War Memorial

The February 1925 issue of The East Surrey Regimental News had some good news to impart to its readers. It was said that the Regimental War Memorial Committee had earlier abandoned all hope of raising money for the South screen in the Memorial Chapel, but thanks to a most generous gift of £200 by the widow of a former officer, whose brother was also in the Regiment, work on the screen had already been put in hand. Costs were estimated to be in the region of £400. The Depot had undertaken to raise some of the money and it was hoped that the 1st and 2nd Battalions would raise more.

It was said that the screen was in the original scheme for the restoration of the Chapel and would give it a much needed and beautiful finish.

RF

## Rupert gets religion and is saved

You get to do some strange things in the Army and you get given responsibility for things that would never come your way in civilian life. Take signing for a Mosque. Now that is not what you would call your every day occurrence. But there I was in Sharja signing for a mosque. I had to take it over from the builders until everything was ready for the hand-over to the Imam. I had learnt by now to take great care of things that had been signed for. It would be no use going back to the Colour Sgt and saying, *"Excuse me Colour, I seem to have mislaid that Mosque. Any chance of trading in a buckshee pair of binoculars and a compass and you calling the whole thing quits."* So for the short time it was in my charge I enjoyed the cool peaceful atmosphere inside and simply thought about things whilst the world outside just passed by. All too soon I was no longer the owner of a Mosque.

But then I was given the first national Radio station in the region. Here, I was a little out of my depth. It was great deal more complicated than a 31 set and was looked after by a team of four engineers. I had hoped that I had been chosen because of a fine microphone manner and a delicate way with words. But apparently all they wanted was some administrative support whilst they carried out tests around the Trucial States to see if the signal could be received. I had been brought up with the rule that radios in the field only worked well if you could see the person who was transmitting. Soon a competent Royal Army Education Corps (RAEC) officer was imported to take over the project, just at the time when I had got bored with the whole thing, after discovering that they had no intention of letting me broadcast. I rather fancied reading the evening news wearing my Dinner Jacket. I think Lord Reith would have been proud to see his standards being maintained.

Having shed these duties it was decided that I could be used as an extra DIO (Desert Intelligence Officer) but without the desert bit. I was to meet up with RN ships and assist them in their search for gunrunners. Well here I must be accurate – what they wanted me for was to shout through a large loud hailer at passing Dhows telling them to heave to because we were going to board and search them. I kept getting signals from a gentleman in Bahrain who signed himself SNOPG – this apparently stood for 'Senior Naval Officer Persian Gulf.' I therefore signed my replies SNOTOS. This went on for some time until we received a signal enquiring what SNOTOS stood for. I dutifully replied 'Senior Naval Officer Trucial Oman Scouts.' Apparently SNOPG was not amused. I had always liked the fact that the Commander Trucial Oman Scouts went by the acronym COMTOS and his wife was known as COMTESSA.

It took some time before I cottoned on to the fact that the various officers of the watch were having a competition to see who could board the most Dhows during any one watch. Each time a Dhow was sighted, day or night, I would be hauled on deck to shout at the Dhow skipper. Then I would have to scramble down the side with the Royal Marines and from a bouncing inflatable attempt to jump on to the rolling deck of the Dhow. I never found any guns. All I ever saw was contraband gold that was being smuggled to India.

As my tour of duty aboard HMS *Ashanti* came to an end I was told that I would shortly be doing a sea transfer to HMS *Nubian*. Before my departure a kindly Chief Petty officer invited me to his mess for a farewell drink. Soon I was happily chatting with the members of the mess. They were a friendly crowd. I had already been given a pint of beer and a tot of rum. For those of you who have not seen a tot – it is much bigger than you think, about a tumbler-full of rum diluted with water. Then another mess member offered me a second tot. I politely refused and pointed out that I already had a beer and a tot of rum. The Chief Petty officer took me to one side and told me that I had offended the person offering me the tot. Apparently

it was an old Naval custom called '*Sippers*'. All you did was take a sip from the glass and hand it back. Naturally I apologised profusely.

A line of Petty Officers then formed to offer me '*Sippers*.' This was not going to be a pretty sight. As soon as I possibly could I beat a retreat. But now I had to be lowered into a boat that would take me across to HMS *Nubian*. By the time I reached *Nubian* I was not a happy bunny. I was met by the officer of the watch who informed me that the Captain was waiting with his officers on the bridge and would like me to brief them on the intelligence situation. I had serious doubts that I would be able to recite my army number, let alone speak coherently about the situation in the Persian Gulf. So I mumbled my apologies and asked for some time to freshen up since I had been on continuous duty for the last three days etc etc. I had learnt an important lesson – the Petty Officers mess is worse than the Sgts Mess for a young fresh mind and body like mine.

I returned to Sharja and wondered what would come along next. It was Lt Mohammed Saleh who came along. He was the oldest local officer in the Trucial Oman Scouts. A tall thin man whose crinkly eyes betrayed an inner humour that his somewhat weather beaten features tried to hide. He came bearing a gift in the shape of a most welcome bottle of cold Stim. I had been sitting in my office with my feet on an upturned waste paper basket staring out across the sandy square at the offices of Force Headquarters that were on the other side. They were in a neat row, all in order of seniority. They had real offices, whereas mine was really a shed with a sand floor. After the usual greetings Mohammed pulled up the other battered chair and sat alongside me. We sipped our Stim, enjoyed the moment and said nothing. I asked him about the latest rumours and then after some of the usual gossip he decided to move on – he was going to see some friends in Dubai.

I sat and watched. Something was not right. Something was up. I was trying to work out what was different, what it was that had caught my eye and what all these little bits of information added up to. As an idea began to take shape I was disturbed by the arrival of Capt Mike Cowan. Mike was the G3 Staff Officer and a good friend of mine. He pulled up the recently vacated chair. After a few minutes of general chat I decided to see what I could get out of him. *"I suppose you Staff Wallahs think you're being very clever – but it is absolutely clear what you are up to."* *"Oh and what would that be?"* *"You are going to depose the Sheikh."*

There was silence for a moment or two and Mike looked away. When he looked back his face had gone very serious. *"I want to know who told you this and I want to know now – if you don't tell me I will put under close arrest."* I told him not to be so silly and that no one had told me but from where I sat, I could see the various vehicles pulling up outside the Staff Offices and by knowing who was in them and putting that together with the prevailing political climate, I had made an educated guess. Mike was not too happy with my explanation and informed me that our conversation would now be reported to the Force Commander. He had acted with absolute correctness and we remained good friends.

Things moved quite rapidly after that. After getting very suspicious looks from the Intelligence Officer – I think Tim Budd wanted me thrown into one of the old dungeons – it was decided that I could play a useful part in the saga that was about to unfold. Sheikh Sagr bin Sultan had been a naughty Sheikh and had not been doing the things that a Sheikh ought to do. So everyone had decided that he should make way for someone more capable. Now the trick was to do this without anyone getting upset. Well no more upset than your usual Sheikh does when being deposed.

The first thing was to invite him along for coffee at the Political Residency in Dubai and let the poor chap know that

he was about to get his P45. Now this isn't as easy as most redundancies since wherever he went a large bodyguard of armed retainers went with him. We needed to know how many would accompany him on this trip. A Landrover was despatched to a 'break down' position on part of his known route from Sharja to Dubai. Under the bonnet the operator had a radio – soon we heard the news "Snow White has passed my position with nine dwarves, I say again, nine dwarves." Three minutes later there came another frantic cry from the same radio "Hold everything! That wasn't Snow White it was bloody Robin Hood and his Merry Men from up North!" It took the planners a little while to interpret this to mean that Sheikh Rashid bin Humaid from Ras Al Khaima had coincidentally gone past our lookout. But soon all was sorted and we knew that our man was on his way with a modest entourage.

My job was to catch a plane from Sharja. The pilot was expecting me and asked "Where to?" I really enjoyed the moment. "I can tell you once we are airborne." Saying that to someone from the RAF has got to be the ultimate satisfaction. He was none too impressed when just after take-off I pointed down to Dubai airport and said "That'll do nicely." We landed and I asked the pilot to stay at the furthest point from the control tower and tell them that we were cleaning the plugs – or whatever they do to aircraft that want to be left alone.

A few minutes later we could see the dust cloud. A black Humber from the Agency arrived with Sheikh Sagr, Capt Desmond Cosgrove of the TOS and the Political Resident Horace (later Sir Horace - KCMG) Phillips. Within moments we were airborne and on our way to Bahrain. I sat directly behind the Sheikh on the left, with the other two in front of me on the right hand side. Soon after take off I saw the Sheikh start to fumble around looking for something in his robes. Had he been disarmed? I had no time to look at Desmond for confirmation. I held my pistol against the back of the Sheikh's seat; he reached further down in the folds of his robe - then he pulled out a gold Dunhill lighter.

Our next problem was trying to get out of Bahrain. We had safely delivered our charge and he was comfortably lodged in luxury with the Sheikh of Bahrain. But we had come without passports or identity cards and the kindly RAF Movements people were having a field day with their highly polished bureaucratic red tape. "You cannot have got into this country without a passport and ID card – so you cannot leave?" Eventually our good friend Horace Phillips came to the rescue and we returned to Sharja without further interference from our flying friends.

As a footnote I thought you would be interested to know that the Royal Navy later outlawed the tradition of 'Sippers'. Apparently it got so bad that some celebrants died of alcohol poisoning. I count myself lucky to have lived to tell you this tale.

Rupert

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### Cordon - Malaya 1956

It is raining. The vehicles we are in are warm and make one almost feel sleepy, soon I knew we would reach our destination, and almost at once we seem to arrive. "Debus right and fall in, in single, keeping in your pairs".

The men tumble out into the cold wetness of the approaching darkness. Our vehicles turn about us as quietly as possible and drive away to some hidden area, we are alone, silently we break off from the main road onto the laterite track of the rubber estate. It is darker amongst these trees. Off we go at quite a fast pace, and follow the track through the rain and gathering darkness. Our guide leads us to a prearranged place, and then he too leaves us with his escort. It is up to us now.

Off we go again, at a faster pace. It is now almost dark. To our left a dead branch cracks sharply. We freeze. Was it a terrorist?

We listen and decide it was not and we press on again. Ahead through the trees we can now see the village lights, surrounded by the daylight type lighting of the perimeter fence. Almost there now. Suddenly a mortar flare goes up. Silly fools, much too early. And then another. Then we wonder. Perhaps they had not been told of the change in plan. I hope the rest of the cordon of which we are but a small party, get into position in time.

A hundred yards from the perimeter fence we halt. The difficult task of positioning the pairs in our part of the cordon and joining up with the next platoon begins. We move along slowly, freezing at every flare the goes up. What are they doing? Soon the cordon as far as we are concerned is completed and we link up with the neighbouring platoon on our right. I make my way back to my batman and my wireless set. I nearly lose my way, but a few quiet whistles redirect me. Then all is still.

The rain ceases for a while. A few more flares go up. We watch the perimeter fence like hawks for signs of incoming or outgoing Terrorists. They will have their work cut out to get through with all the food they are lifting from this village. They would be well silhouetted to us, while we must be invisible to them. We wait. At about 2100 hours, a shot rings out, to my right. Then another and another. We peer into the gloom but can see nothing. Silence, more flares go up. The rain is coming down heavily again. Another shot, then spasmodic shooting for about a quarter of an hour. We cannot contact the group on my right, nor is it safe to move along in the dark to investigate for fear of being shot, by my now trigger happy men. We have been ordered to stay in position till first light, so we resign ourselves soaked to the skin and very cold, to wait for the dawn, which seemed an eternity ahead. A very welcome dawn eventually breaks, and I set off along the dispersed line to investigate. About 150 yards from my position I find one of my cordoning pairs looking fearfully at a body lying in the grass five yards from them.

It is face down, wearing gym shoes, khaki trousers, a dirty white shirt and clasping a carbine of Dutch origin. We turn the body over. It is a Communist Terrorist, and as we learned later a Committee Member of the local communist branch. We are overjoyed, the dampness and cold forgotten. We have killed a communist terrorist, and his body is now borne in triumph to the village Police Station.

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### Malaya 1956



J Folkes of 144 Wolfs Wood, Hurst Green, Oxted sent in this photo of himself and his platoon sergeant, Sgt Wally Geeves, just before setting off on a patrol

## The Home Guard

In May 1940 Britain stood in danger of her life. The Army in France was falling back before a massive German "blitzkrieg" attack, their French allies had crumbled, panic was spreading throughout the Low Countries and at home the threat of invasion was poised at a level not exceeded since the days of the Napoleonic wars. It was against this background that Sir Anthony Eden, Secretary of State for War, broadcast to the nation an appeal for volunteers to come forward to form a defence force, organised on local basis, to supplement the Regular Army in defence of the homeland, especially against the new German tactic of the use of paratroops. The new force would be known as the Local Defence Volunteers, open to British subjects between the ages of fifteen (later altered to seventeen) and sixty-five, and initial enrolment would be at local police stations.

The writer, at that time the son of a Gloucestershire police inspector and living in a country town police station, well remembers the scenario. The announcement had barely been made before telephone enquiries were being received and volunteers were arriving on the doorstep to enrol by means of hastily prepared forms. Foremost among the enthusiasts was a local ex Army Major, of strong will and even stronger language, whose avowed intention towards the enemy was "*to shoot the bastards*".

Arms were not officially available at that stage although soon a miscellany of shot guns, rook rifles and other assorted weaponry began to appear among the belligerent volunteers whose only uniform was an arm band bearing the letters LDV (Local Defence Volunteers). There was a limited issue of firearms to the police. The writer's father received a revolver and a box of ammunition while a .303 rifle was also received into the station where it was warmly welcomed by a bushy moustached constable who was an ex regular soldier of First World War vintage. Even the local fire brigade had a Boer War rifle and three rounds of ammunition with which to defend their fire engine while the fire chief and a fireman appeared with pistols on their belts next to their axes. Britain was ready to fight.

The scenes were being repeated countrywide. At the base of organisations were the Lords Lieutenants and Secretaries of the Territorial Army Associations but initially arrangements were, by the very nature of things, very impromptu and haphazard. Paperwork thankfully was kept to a minimum, thoughts being centred more on the sword than the pen. Early instructions from the Adjutant General's Office directed that the LDV's were to be organised within existing Military Areas, divided into Zones and Groups and an unpaid Volunteer Organiser was to be put in charge of each Zone or Group. Area Commanders, in consultation with the Government's Regional Commissioners, were to arrange the division of Areas and, in consultation with the Lords Lieutenants appoint the Volunteer Organisers of Areas, Groups and Zones. Initially many of the geographical divisions of Areas were made to coincide roughly with police divisions, there being no other immediately available local precedent. It also made police liaison easier. Although there were no official ranks as such, ex service officers came naturally to the fore in such circumstances.

For administration purposes reliance had to be placed on loans of premises and resources together with the help of volunteer workers. Such help was usually readily forthcoming in its various forms although in one office, where the girl typist was frantically typing LDV instructions, the dour Scotsman in charge was heard to comment, "*If they (the LDV) canna supply the typist they might at least supply the paper*". Within a surprisingly short space of time arms were officially issued, principally to "front line" areas such as Kent, mainly in the form of rifles which, fresh from stores, were usually heavily greased and often "gritty". Units, not yet in receipt of official arms, still relied on their unofficial collections including in one case a Ghurka knife. In one Lancashire mining village menacing figures armed with crowbars were to be found on patrol. Uniforms of khaki denim overalls began to be issued. All head dress seemed to be size 6½ irrespective of the heads they were supposed to fit.

As well as the "General Service" units, many factories and public and industrial organisations had their own formations. One such was Dennis Bros Platoon, 4th Guildford Home Guard. The commander was Major C T Skipper, a Company Director who, as an ex member of the First World War Royal Flying Corps, wore wings on his uniform. Railways had their own volunteers, those of the Southern Region being organised from Woking where the 12th Surrey (3rd Southern Railway) Battalion were based. Post Office units were mainly formed with a view to protecting communication centres against parachutists and saboteurs. The BBC were similarly organised and prepared.

Parnall's Aircraft Factory at Yate, Gloucestershire, who were engaged in manufacturing aircraft gun turrets during the war, had their own detachment of volunteers. Enthusiastically, they acquired two old turrets and machine guns of an obsolescent nature, together with ammunition, and mounted them on the roof as a defence against air attack. Sadly this was not to prove sufficient deterrent later in the war when the factory was demolished and set on fire and fifty-two people were killed during a daylight air raid by a single enemy aircraft. Captured German papers after the war, however, showed an aircrew member recording that the aircraft had been hit by gunfire (of indeterminate origin) during the raid. Night patrols and road blocks and checks were regularly mounted by General Service Units. Regrettably on some occasions understandable over-reactions by armed members caused casualties. A special Constable of the Gloucestershire Constabulary was fatally shot by Home Guard members when travelling to his police station in his car in the Forest of Dean at night. An inquest jury returned a verdict of "*justifiable homicide*". Some members on patrols apparently allowed their attention to wander on occasions. In Yorkshire a volunteer was severely reprimanded "*for rabbitting in the early morning when he should have been on lookout*".



Men of The Queen's Home Guard relax in the garden of the Rose and Crown, Manor Road, Wallington, Surrey

In July 1940 the rather cumbersome title of Local Defence Volunteers was changed to the more prestigious one of Home Guard. Command structures, with appropriate badges of rank, were formulated and later officers, properly commissioned, were appointed. As the winter of 1940-41 developed the immediate danger of invasion receded but there was no lack of duty or tasks for the Home Guard who during the time of the blitz became heavily involved in air raid duties. They participated in all activities carrying out guards, assisting in rescue work and fire fighting or rendering first aid and removing casualties. All this had to be combined with their normal employment. All those with

arms were most anxious to bring down an enemy aircraft and there were claims of having done so. But for the 3rd Renfrewshire Battalion there was an unexpected "drop" from the sky when Rudolf Hess landed by parachute from his abandoned aeroplane and was arrested by local volunteers.

The County of Surrey was quick to respond to the call in 1940. The first elements of the Volunteers were formed at Camberley and Farnham where the police stations were besieged by men of all ages from all walks of life who were eager to enrol. Other areas showed similar determined attitudes with the result that formations were quickly effected and affiliated to the two County Regular Army Regiments of The Queen's and Surrey's as shown below:-

### The Queen's Royal Regiment

Home Guard Battalion	Raised	Based	Remarks
1st Surrey Battalion	May 1940	Camberley and Farnham	
2nd Surrey Battalion	Summer 1940		
4th Surrey Battalion	May 1940	Guildford	
5th Surrey Battalion		Godalming and country districts	
11th Surrey Battalion	1942	Woking and Chobham	
12th Surrey Battalion		Southern Railway Unit with HQ at Woking	
23rd Surrey Battalion	June 1940	Croydon	

In addition, the following Home Guard battalions of which there are no records were also affiliated to The Queen's: 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 32nd and 60th.

The following Home Guard battalions were affiliated to The East Surrey Regiment:

### The East Surrey Regiment

Home Guard Battalion	Raised	Based	
3rd Surrey Battalion		Weybridge	
51st Surrey Battalion	1940	Malden	
56th Surrey Battalion	May 1940	Epsom and Ewell	
62nd Surrey Battalion	July 1940	Amalgamated with Banstead	
	July 1940	Norbury	
Home Guard Battalion	Raised	Based on	
1st Surrey	May 1940	Camberley and Farnham	A 2nd Bn. formed soon afterwards
	Autumn 1940	Woking & Chobham	
	October 1942	Sunningdale	Farnham companies to another battalion
4th Surrey	May 1940	Normandy and Worpledon	
		Guildford	In close liaison with ITC at Stoughton Barracks
5th Surrey		Effingham, Shere-Cranleigh and Chiddingfold	
	Feb 1942	Bramley	Godalming and Haslemere to another battalion
11th Surrey	1942	Woking and Chobham	
12th Surrey (3rd Southern Railway)		Woking	Formed from 1st Battalion Covered over 100 stations of the Southern Railway
33rd Surrey	June 1940	Croydon	Personnel from the staff of Croydon Corporation.
51st Surrey	June 1940	Malden	Commando Company formed in April 1941. Medical Section formed in Summer 1941
56th Surrey	May 1940	Epsom and Banstead	Amalgamated with Ewell in July 1940.
62nd Surrey	July 1940	Norbury	
63rd Surrey	1940	Richmond	
64th Surrey	May 1944	Kingston	Formed from personnel transferred from 53rd Surrey (Molesey) Bn.

Guarding of vulnerable points had to be quickly organised. Surprisingly, consideration was given to the matter of the Milk Marketing Board building then under construction. By the 27th May some rifles were being received so the bands of hastily mustered volunteers were beginning to shape into an organised Armed Force. Until they received an official issue of firearms the Molesey group made use of borrowed miniature weapons and practised on the Metropolitan Police range at Imber Court. The Kingston Group, on becoming possessed of .303 rifles underwent training at the Depot of The East Surrey Regiment and later at Bisley.

Generally speaking the Surrey volunteers were blessed with the proximity of Regular Army establishments which greatly facilitated training. Lieutenant Colonel J L B Vesey, commanding the 1st Battalion of the Surrey Home Guard was very appreciative of the support he received from the Aldershot District. The 4th Battalion at Guildford were in close liaison with the ITC at Stoughton Barracks.



*Captain Roy Thomas Harris GC, 33rd Croydon Battalion, The Queen's Royal Regiment, Home Guard. He was awarded the George Cross for his gallantry in dismantling an unexploded bomb at Langdale Road School, Thornton Heath, on September 18th 1940. He was employed with Croydon Corporation at the time of his award, later he joined the Royal Engineers and rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.*

London Sub Area, it was formally opened by the GOC London District who was accompanied by Major Atlee.

The 62nd (Norbury) Battalion had an overwhelming response by volunteers on formation, so much so that they had to increase their original waiting list of 300, but by 1941 their numbers were becoming depleted by drafting of men to the Armed Forces, so they organised a recruiting drive which included a march headed by the band of The Scots Guards accompanied by other military bands, Bren-gun carriers and artillery. The salute was taken outside Norbury police station by Brigadier General Whitehead, commanding the London Area.

Few units could have had such a beautiful and historic area to defend as the 63rd (Richmond) Battalion whose territory included Kew Gardens and Wick House, once the residence of Sir Joshua Reynolds. But there were other things than beauty to think about. Enemy air attacks were frequent and on one night in 1940 Richmond, illuminated by flares, became the specific target. Valuable assistance was rendered to the Civil Defence services and Pte Dean was commended for his bravery. He later became an officer in the Regular Army.

In May 1943, on the occasion of the Home Guard's third birthday, special parades were held throughout the country. At Addlestone the 10th (Chertsey and Egham) Battalion gave displays of bayonet fighting, camouflage and first aid at Victoria Park. In 1944 the Home Guard, their duty done, were stood down. Farewell parades were held, that of the 11th (Woking) Battalion taking place on the Wheatsheaf Recreation Ground, Horsell where 747 officers and men paraded to be addressed by the Commanding Officer, General Sir Alan Bourne.

As the war progressed the Home Guard became more and more professionally trained, armed and equipped and developed into an efficient fighting force. By 1943 they were even manning anti-aircraft batteries in some places. They became subject to military law although Commanding Officers were reluctant to resort to such measures. In Cheshire, however, two privates were given fifty-six days for insubordinate language to their superior officer. They served only a week before the sentence was suspended. Gradually the country progressed from a defensive state and attitude to an offensive one. In 1944 as preparations were made, and eventually activated, for the invasion of Europe there was the danger that the enemy may launch counter-measures against Britain. Security measures had to be undertaken and during the "mini-blitz" era of the flying bombs renewed air raid activities were necessary. But eventually the longed for day of Victory arrived and the Home Guard were able proudly to take part in the resulting celebrations and processions, knowing full well that they had nobly partaken in the defence of their country and contributed to its triumph in arms. Members received a certificate which, by way of signature of King George VI, paid tribute to the fact that "*when our country was in mortal danger..... they were ready for her defence by force of arms and (sacrifice) of life if need be*".



*Inspection for the ladies of the Home Guard, Richmond*

Courage was certainly not lacking in the County. In connection with supporting Civil Defence activities during air raids the 33rd (County Borough of Croydon) Battalion gained one George Cross and four George Medals, three British Empire Medals and four commendations. Regretfully, two members lost their lives due to enemy action. There was ample support from the public for the Home Guard. When 'C' Company, 8th (Reigate) Battalion were on duty at the "Black Horse" road block, their commander was approached by a gentleman who wished to show his interest by presenting a cup and medals for competition by teams of men at the Miniature Ranges. The offer was officially approved and accepted.

The 51st (Malden) Battalion was able to take the war to the enemy in more active form when they took part in rounding up German air crew who sometimes baled out over their area. Tragically, on their own side they lost five killed and seven wounded by enemy action. Improvement in the supply of weapons resulted in the formation of a Special Service Platoon under Lieutenant Hepburn who was recognised as an expert in machine guns.

When dwelling on the efforts of men in the various battalions, tribute should also be paid to the women supporters, often wives, girl friends and relatives of the Volunteers. Although not officially part of the Force they contributed in many ways in matters of administration, communication, catering and medical services. The 51st Battalion in fact formed a complete Medical Section composed of both men and women. Supplies were either purchased or made privately.

The 56th (Epsom and Banstead) Battalion, with obvious appreciation of their specific location, made use of the facilities of the Race Course and during the summer of 1941 a week-end training school was formed at the Grand Stand. Attended by representatives from all Battalions in SW



*A Home Guard Band*

Guard battalions were affiliated to The Queen's Royal and East Surrey Regiments: 3rd, 6th, 10th, 51st, 52nd, 53rd, 54th, 55th, 56th, 57th, 63rd, and 64th. But the new effort was not particularly distinguished or long lasting. Many felt no doubt that the old days of the Home Guard and its volunteer fighting spirit had passed away with the 1940s. But one thing had not gone and never will - the memory of an era when England's menfolk, with the support of their women, rallied to the call to arms to defend their country in its hour of need.

RF

*Photos acknowledgment: All photos except one were from the albums of the late Lt Col A E Redfern OBE, MC, kindly loaned by his son Major A J Redfern MC TD. The photo outside the Rose and Crown came from Bryan Fosten*



*Lt Col A E Redfern OBE MC, commanding officer 63rd Richmond Battalion and some of his officers*

### Golf Society

The Autumn meeting of the Golf Society was held at the Woking Golf Club on 7th October 1998. Twenty members attended the meeting, and we were pleased to welcome Adrian Cross and Jennifer Davidson at lunch. As usual the course was well prepared, which combined with the good weather produced some excellent scores.

The winner of the Trophies were as follows:-

Autumn Bowl	Colonel J G W Davidson	67 net
Glasgow Grey's Cup	Capt P J Dorey	78 net
Petri Plate - Aggregate of Spring and Autumn Meetings:-		
Heale's Memorial Trophy	Maj M J Farrall	37 pts
	Col J G W Davidson	39 pts
Veteran's Halo	Col J G W Davidson	39 pts

The Sweep winners were: A C Cross, H P Mason, and B A Hoffman

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### Old soldiers wanted

The Royal Hospital Chelsea, home of the famous Chelsea Pensioners, is looking for old soldiers to join its ranks. Based in a magnificent building designed by Sir Christopher Wren in 1682, the hospital occupies a 60-acre site in the heart of London, close to the Thames and King's Road. Facilities include a billiards room, library of books and videos, arts and crafts centre and a post office. There are also Anglican and Roman Catholic chapels and a fully staffed infirmary.

Those wishing to apply must be able to meet certain criteria. You should be in receipt of a pension for Army service or disability due to a military career; or an officer on retired pay with at least 12 years service.

Prospective in-patients must also be over 65; able to walk unaided and look after themselves; free from obligations to support a wife or family; and passed medically fit for admission. Remember, the Royal Hospital is primarily a residential home not a hospital.

If you would like to know more, contact: The Secretary (Room 6) Royal Hospital Chelsea, London SW3 3SR, tel: 0171 881 5204, fax: 0171 823 6871.



**John Woodroff saw this article and photo of 15 Platoon 8th East Surreys recently**

### 8th East Surreys

I enclose a postcard (below) which I came across at a recent Militaria Fair in Manchester. It shows the 15th Platoon, D Company, 8th East Surreys. This was the battalion to which Captain Nevill (of football fame) belonged. The postcard is undated and has nothing significant written on the back, but it seems to be of the right period.



*15th Platoon "D" Company, 8th E. Surrey*

Incidentally, the then famous footballer, Alex (Sandy) Turnbull, who partnered the legendary Billy Meredith and won FA cup medals with both Manchester City and United, was a Lance-Sgt with the 8th E. Surreys. He died on 3 May 1917, and is commemorated on the Arras Memorial.

Ken Smallwood, Sale, Greater Manchester

## Roger Barsotti, MBE., ARCM



A distinguished military musician of his time was former Bandmaster of The Queen's Royal Regiment, Roger Barsotti.

Born in London in 1901, he was taught by his father, Luigi Barsotti, a professional musician and one-time professor at the Milan Conservatoire. Roger made his debut at the age of fourteen as a deputy flautist with the Hastings Municipal Orchestra.

Joining the Buffs as a bandboy in 1916, he was promoted to Band Sergeant at the age of twenty-two. On passing out of the Royal School of Music in 1930 he was appointed Bandmaster of 2nd Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment, a position he held for fifteen years.

On retirement from the Army, after nearly thirty years service, he was appointed Director of Music to the Metropolitan Police Band in 1946. In 1958 and 1960 he had the honour of being asked to adjudicate at the National Brass Band Championships held at the Albert Hall. He was awarded the MBE in the Birthday Honours in 1961.

Retiring from the Metropolitan Police Band in October, 1968, he became Director of Music for the Royal Parks for some years. He died in 1986 after a prolonged illness.

### "Policemen's Notes"

The Metropolitan Police Central Band, as it was originally known, was formed in December, 1927 with a total strength of 70 players and 11 reserves, the Founder President being Brigadier Whitehead. Its first major concert was at the Central Hall, Westminster, in aid of the Mayor of Westminster's Distress Fund for victims of the floods of 1927, and its first broadcast was on a BBC programme in 1931.

As distinguished and accomplished musicians the Metropolitan Police Band, particularly under the direction of Roger Barsotti, became well known in London and further afield. They played at State ceremonial functions, at sports meetings (including Arsenal football fixtures) and at horse shows in connection with the Mounted Police Musical Ride.

But, as with so many other organisations, finance eventually ran against them, resulting in their disbandment in recent years - a loss to the Police Service and the world of music in general.

Other Forces, besides the Metropolitan, have had bands. The Birmingham Police Band, formed in 1864, were fortunate in having Charles Haughton Rafter appointed as their Chief Constable in 1899 as he was himself a competent flute player and was undoubtedly interested in his Force's music. After the First World War he took advice from the Army School of Music. Subsequent musical standards and achievements were so high that eminent musicians such as Sir Adrian Boult conducted the band on occasions and composed pieces for it. Their last performance was in the grounds of Birmingham Cathedral in 1940, appropriately in aid of War Weapons Week, before they were disbanded. They never reformed in their original style although post war police music was generated in the form of the Police Dance Band, the Police Choir and eventually the Birmingham City Police Pipe Band.

The Bristol Police Band was formed in 1929 when Captain F W Wood, MVO, formerly Senior Director of Music of the Scots Guards and the Massed Bands of the Brigade of Guards, became their Director. Unable to find suitable musicians within the Force he recruited thirty-two men direct from HM Forces.

Their practice room was next to the City Mortuary so presumably there were no complaints from the neighbours about noise. The band was disbanded on the outbreak of war and never reformed.

Not surprisingly, South Coast seaside resorts tended to favour bands. Hastings and Brighton Police Bands were both popular in their times but respectively ceased playing on the outbreaks of the First and Second World Wars. One member of the Brighton Band was the holder of the Military Cross.

With the demise of many of their bands the police had to look elsewhere for music, often to the Services. When the Eastbourne Borough Police Force was merged into the Sussex Constabulary in 1967 the music at the final parade was supplied by the Band of The Queen's Regiment.

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## Opening Ceremonies

The Editor has received, from a well known member of the Association, an interesting personal account of the preparations for the opening of the Regimental Depot at Canterbury in 1959. Readers will have no difficulty in recognising Army organisation at its best. All hands were mustered for extra duties between 1700 and 1900 in the evenings with, at first, no exceptions.

All loose ground, only recently laid by the Garrison Engineer at great expense was swept from the square. Rose bushes, which weren't supposed to be planted out of season, were transplanted into the Officers' Mess garden where, contrary to all expectations, they flourished. These and other activities were not enjoyed by the personnel involved, some of whom had been winkle out of quiet corners and "cushy" numbers hitherto unknown to have existed.

Excuses, all of them well thought out and which had stood the test of time, multiplied. Representatives from the Officers' Mess, the Quartermaster's Stores, the Orderly Room and other departments all pleaded their respective cases to the Regimental Sergeant Major who, with the astute acumen of such exalted personages, referred the supplicants to the Adjutant. He generous soul absent from the actual scene of operations, granted their pleas with the result that one evening later he found himself alone on the parade ground except for the RSM and the Sergeants' Mess Caterer. Enquiring as to the whereabouts of the working parties, he was politely informed by the RSM that he (the Adjutant) seemed to have been too generous with granting excuses. But the Adjutant was equal to the occasion. He said nothing but retired to the Officers' Mess for a cup of tea, presumably leaving the RSM to sort it all out.

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## First Surrey Rifles

The First Surrey Rifles seem to have been in good form in 1925. The May issue of the East Surrey Regimental News reported that a Recruiting March took place with Band, Bugles and Transport under Lieut. Mason and, thanks to the energetic efforts of the accompanying sergeants, about 40 quite excellent recruits were obtained.

A successful camp took place at Pirbright at Easter Training in good weather and with excellent food. At the annual prize giving on St George's Day prizes were awarded for Rifle Shooting, Lewis Gun Shooting, Boxing, Cross Country Running, Athletics, Football and Cricket. Afterwards an enjoyable dance was held with music provided by the Band under Bandmaster Carl Taylor.

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## The Jerningham-Kandler Wine cooler

Among the highly prized pieces of Queen's Royal Regimental silver is one of outstanding beauty and value - the replica of the Jerningham-Kandler Wine-Cooler sometimes known as "the cistern" and known to hundreds of officers irreverently as 'the Flying Tits' But valuable though it may be in itself, the replica in no way compares with the original which is currently in Russian hands and has a long, interesting and intriguing history. It has, in fact, been described as in all probability the most immense and one of the most elaborate pieces of decorative plate in the world.



The cooler appears to owe its origin to the whim of a certain Henry Jernega, or Jerningham, a London goldsmith of Russell Street from 1735 to his death in 1761. He was also believed to be a banker. Seemingly of considerable wealth, or else backed by a rich patron, he ordered a wine cooler to be made by another goldsmith at a hitherto unsurpassed price. He roughed out the design of it himself. The sketch still exists as it was presented to the Society of Antiquaries in 1740.

The goldsmith chosen by Jerningham to carry out the work was Charles Kandler, the name being an English adaptation of the original German Kaendler. The cooler was to be fashioned from one solid lump of silver and some of its supporting figures were first modelled in wax by a distinguished sculptor, John Michael Rysbrack, before being finally cast. After four years work the cooler was finished in 1734 and was then triumphantly exhibited at various places with a view to finding a buyer. But this was easier said than done.

The size and price of the object placed it beyond the range of most prospective purchasers and letters to foreign Ministers brought nothing but polite refusals.

In desperation Jerningham petitioned Parliament for the cooler to be disposed of by way of a lottery and this was agreed to. (Certain State lotteries were being held even in those days - there's nothing new about such practices).

Queen Caroline became interested in the matter and Jerningham, ever the opportunist, had a medal struck showing her as a patron of the Arts. These were to be given to every purchaser of a ticket and about 30,000 such medals were struck. Sale of tickets, sold at five or six shillings each, were enormous, probably being boosted by the medals.

The prize winner was Major William Battine of East Marden, Sussex who, on receipt of his good news, gave five barrels of beer to the local populace. Surprisingly, after gaining his

prize, nothing more seems to have been heard of it for a time. Rumour has it that it was too big a trophy for the Major to use and handle and that it was secretly re-sold, probably via Jerningham and Kandler and other agents, into Russian hands. Certainly it eventually arrived in the Russian court but in 1741 it was declared to be State property, although for the time being allowed to remain where it was in the apartments of Anna Leopoldovna of Brunswick, Regent mother of her infant son the ill-fated Ivan VI. It was later removed and again became temporarily lost in obscurity.

In 1880 William Cripps, the author of Old English Plate, heard certain rumours about the value of Russian treasures and wrote to the Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum on the subject. Later in the year, a British party under Cripps, a recognised silver expert, went to Russia, with the consent of the Emperor, to examine valuable pieces in the Treasury. Brought from the depository was the massive silver wine-cooler which Cripps instantly recognised as the Jerningham-Kandler masterpiece, and which was soon to be known to the world at large again.

Over the years several copies were made of it. One went to the Victoria and Albert Museum, another went to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and yet another, via the hands and custody of The Queen's Royal Regiment, finished in its prestigious place in our Regimental silver.

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## Weekend Wanderers Club

Recently the Curator of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Museum received a donation of a very old badge discovered near Hindhead by Alan Palmer using a metal detector. Mr Palmer is a member of The Weekend Wanderers Club and is very keen to redress some of the bad publicity that metal detecting tends to attract. This particular badge, though in quite poor condition because it had probably spent some 120 or so years in a field, could have fetched a reasonable price from a collector or dealer but Mr Palmer wanted it to come "home", as he put it.

The badge is that of 13th Surrey Rifles which is a pre-1880 forbear of our own Guildford TA - 5th (V) Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment. The Volunteer Force was formed in 1859 (authorized by the War Office Circular dated 12 May 1859) and today's County Infantry Territorial Units are descended from the original Surrey Rifle Volunteer Corps which were part of that Volunteer Force.

How the badge ended up in a field near Hindhead is a matter for speculation. Maybe the unit was undertaking rifle practice; maybe it was taking part in a competition. The museum does not have records of the Surrey Rifle Volunteer Corps and so it has not yet been possible to discover when or whether the 13th Surrey Rifles were in the area where the badge was discovered.

We do not have a photograph that dates back as far as the 1859 Surrey Rifle Volunteer Corps but I enclose a scan of the badge that Mr Palmer donated.



PJ

## Birth of a Drill Hall

Many of our members may be conversant with Sandfield Terrace Drill Hall, Guildford, but few may know of its history.

In the late nineteenth century military volunteer units (predecessors of the Territorial Army) were flourishing in various parts of the country and Surrey was not lacking in this respect. Rifle Companies were formed at different locations in the county, principally at Guildford, Reigate, Dorking and Farnham and these eventually became Volunteer Battalions of The Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment. Headquarters of the 2nd Battalion were originally at Reigate but on its being appropriately moved to the county town of Guildford it was felt that proper prestigious accommodation was required and it had become a matter of urgency by 1891.

A suitable building, capable of transportation and re-erection, was located in far away Edinburgh where it had been used to form the "Japanese Village" at the Edinburgh Exhibition! Cost of moving and erecting the building was to be £1,000 plus £1,500 for the land on which it was to stand - a total of £2,500 which was a considerable sum in those days. Major Dixon and brother officers patriotically loaned the first £1,000 and it was hoped that public subscriptions would raise the balance of £1,500 as well as repaying the £1,000 loan from the officers.

The building survived its journey to Guildford, apparently without difficulty, and was erected in the grounds of East Sandfield House on a 21 year lease basis with option to purchase. The house itself became the residence of the Sergeant-Major and Drill Instructor, with a room provided for the officers and battalion offices within the precincts of the building. A convenient club was erected adjoining the drill hall. The hall was 120ft long by 52ft 6ins wide and thus of sufficient size for drilling the Battalion. It was built of corrugated iron and wood and was paved with wood blocks. Interior height was about 18ft.

The formal opening, by Colonel Hercy, Commander of the 2nd Regimental District, took place on the evening of 18th July 1891. In the "absence of Colonel Drewitt at the Assizes" the parade was under the command of Major Dixon. Representative officers of other Surrey units were present as were the Mayor and Mayoress of Guildford and civic and church dignitaries. Music was provided by the band of the 3rd West Surrey Regiment under Bandmaster Gardner.

After inspecting the parade Colonel Hercy paid tribute to the high standards of efficiency and zeal of the Battalion and said he was confident that the town of Guildford would give help and support to the Volunteers. The Mayor said he believed the corps was worthy of such a building and that he looked on it "as one of the bright corners of the district (cheers)". The remainder of the evening was spent in listening to pleasant selections by the band.

Thus began the history of Sandfield Terrace Drill Hall which was to serve the military and civil elements of Guildford for many years to come.

Sources - Surrey Advertiser and County Times 1891.

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## Surrey (Military) Times

An article in the Surrey Times of May 11th 1901, refers to a book entitled "The Military Medley", the second edition of which was published in 1768. The book, in the possession of Captain Hardy, describes its author as Thomas Simes Esq, Captain in the Queen's Royal Regiment of Foot, and governor of the Hibernian Society for the orphans and children of soldiers".

Extracts from the book comment on Army life of those days, particularly as regards that of the officers! Much reference is

made to matters of military dress, particularly that to be adopted on field days of which the entire regiment was to have two days a week. Officers were to be in regimental frock suits and boots with their hair queued..... The Surrey Times of 1901 comments that 'queued' hair would indeed be a novel sight in the current time (Let alone in 1999). But to the soldier of 1768 unauthorised cutting of hair was a disciplinary offence which could lead to confinement for disobedience of orders.

The list of clothing and accoutrements with which the 1768 officer was to equip himself was horrendous, ranging from cloaks and suits, to swords and sword belts and to a field bedstead with bedding. A travelling letter case was to be carried with pens, ink, paper and wax and instruments for drawing. A watch was also considered essential.

An ensign's daily expenditure was also calculated for him in detail. As regards food, 6d was allowed for breakfast, one shilling for dinner and a further 6d for wine and beer. Clothing wise, 2d per day was reckoned for 4 shirts, 4 stocks and 4 handkerchiefs per week, while to maintain good appearance one shilling a week was allowed for a soldier to shave and dress the hair of his master.

The ensign's total expenditure for a year for all purposes was estimated at £46.11s.8d and as his yearly pay was £54.15s.0d Captain Simes calculated that he should finish up with a balance of £8.3s.4d. plus £7.14s.3d of 'yearly arrears' due to him. The Editor of the Surrey Times wonders how far such allowances would go in his day of 1901. (He would wonder even more in 1999).

Obviously keen to attract recruits to the regiment, Captain Simes drew up a form of speech to be used by recruiting sergeants. A work of art in itself, it is quoted here in full:-

*To ill aspiring heroes bold, who have spirits above slavery and trade, and inclinations to become gentlemen, by bearing arts in his Majesty's regiment, commanded by the magnanimous, let them repair, to the drum-head (Tow row dow), where each gentleman volunteer shall be kindly and honourably entertained, and enter into present pay and good quarters: besides which, gentlemen, for your further and better encouragement you shall receive one guinea advance; a crown to drink His Majesty's King George's health; and when you come to join your respective regiment, shall have new hats, caps, arms, cloaths, and accoutrements, and everything that is necessary and fitting to compleat a gentlemen soldier. God save their Majesties, and success to their arms. Huzza! Huzza! Huzza!*

It is well known that in bygone days some unscrupulous individuals enlisted to get the "King's shilling" and then deserted, sometimes on a regular recurring basis. On Captain Simes' terms such men could have made a fortune.

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## A Prophetic Epitaph

A writer to the East Surrey Regimental News of May, 1924 reported that in 1897 in a small cemetery at the Nowong military cantonment in India there was a tombstone which read, "Sacred to the memory of Lilian Rose, Infant Daughter of Captain and Mrs.....6th Irregular Cavalry. Died 6th May, 1856, aged 1 year and 3 months. "Spared from the sorrows to come".

The "sorrows to come" were those of the Indian Mutiny of 1857 when the 6th Irregular Cavalry was among the first of the Native Regiments to mutiny at Meerut and murdered all its officers and their wives and children. Some officers were reported to have given their families a merciful death before dying themselves gloriously in action. The infant Lilian Rose had doubtless and thankfully a more peaceful end in the preceding year.

# Regimental Deaths

*Barrow* - On 16th December 1998, Sergeant 'Bill' Barrow, aged 85 years, 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment, served with the battalion in North Africa, Sicily and Italy. Wounded at Algiers in November 1942, he was later transferred to the REME.

*Blumson* - In June 1998 Captain T G (Tom) Blumson, aged 91 years, 2/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. (An obituary was published in the November 1998 edition of the Newsletter but sadly the notice of death was omitted. The Editor apologises for this omission to relatives and friends).

*Botley* - On 5th December 1998, Sergeant Frederick G Botley, 1/7th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment, 1939-1946.

*Burgess* - On 13th February 1999, Lieutenant Colonel John Howard Searles Burgess OBE, aged 71 years, The East Surrey Regiment, The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment and The Intelligence Corps.

*Day* - On 5th February 1999, Lieutenant Anthony Samuel Day, aged 69 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Dickason* - On 2nd December 1998, Company Sergeant Major and In-Pensioner Samuel Edgar Dickason MBE, aged 91 years, The East Surrey Regiment and The Royal Hospital Chelsea.

*Gee* - On the 6th February 1999, Captain Derek G Gee DL, The East Surrey Regiment.

*Hall* - On 2nd November 1998, Sergeant Fred (Nobby) Hall, 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Hayward* - On 6th December 1998, Sergeant Gordon Reginald Hayward MM, aged 83 years, 1/7th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. Hayward was awarded the Military Medal as a Private, acting Corporal. A pre-war Territorial.

*Holloman* - On 2nd April 1999, Lance Corporal Wilf Holloman, aged 82 years, 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. Long serving member of 5 OMA.

*Johnson* - On 11th April 1999, Sergeant Leslie Johnson, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Lynn* - On 14th April, M Lynn, 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Mandeville* - On 5th December 1998, John Mandeville, 2/6th Bn The East Surrey Regiment.

*Martin* - On 13th January 1999, Colonel Rodney Martin OBE TD, aged 90 years, The 23rd London and 42nd Royal Tank Regiments. Honorary Colonel 4th Bn The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment (TA)

*Munroe* - On 21st December 1998, Major Allen Hugh Munroe, aged 93 years, 6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Norris* - On 2nd September 1998, Kenneth Raymond Charles Norris, aged 79 years, The East Surrey Regiment, 56th Recce Regiment and RASC.

*Pounds* - Lieutenant Colonel Ronald Pounds, The Queen's Royal Regiment and The Army Cadet Force.

*Reeves* - On 31st January 1999, Captain Benjamin Anthony Reeves, aged 87 years, 2/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Robson* - On 5th January 1999, Corporal Fred Robson, 2/6th Bn, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Scriven* - On 23rd February 1999, Orderly Room Quartermaster Sergeant Arthur R Scriven MBE, aged 95 years, The East Surrey Regiment.

*Smithers* - On 28th March 1999, Corporal Ronald Smithers, 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Stockham* - On 29th December 1998, David F Stockham, The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment.

*Tidy* - In December 1998, Private Don Tidy, 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. Tidy served in Malaya and was a Signaller.

*Tite* - On 5th February 1999, Corporal Ivan (Tubby) Tite, 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. 'Tubby' was a regular attender at the 5 OMA dinners and was an active member of The Dunkirk Veterans in Essex. During the war he served in the Signal Platoon.

*Walker* - On 13th April 1999, William J Walker, 2nd Bn The East Surrey Regiment.

*Wells* - On 28th February 1999 Thomas G Wells, 2/7th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Wheatley* - On 14th October 1998, Joseph Wheatley, The East Surrey Regiment. Wheatley died in Adele House, Bungay, Suffolk.

*Willy* - In March 1999, Bill Willy, 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Wilson* - On 17th October 1998, Private Charles Henry Wilson, aged 76 years. The East Surrey Regiment and The Queen's Royal Regiment. He was admitted to The Royal Star and Garter Home in 1998.

*Wood* - On 5th April 1998, Sergeant Frederick James Wood, aged 86 years. The Queen's Royal Regiment. Served with the 1st and 2nd Battalions in China, India and Palestine. Emigrated to Australia in 1950. He was a member of the Victorian Police Force, Australia until his retirement.

# Regimental Families

*Forman* - On 27th November 1998, Mrs Daphne J Forman, beloved wife of Major (QM) G Forman, The East Surrey and Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment.

*Graeme* - On February 1st 1999, Mrs Emily (Bym) Graeme, widow of Colonel D Graeme Dickson, The East Surrey Regiment.

*O' Connor Thompson* - On 10th January 1999, Mrs Paula O'Connor Thompson, widow of Major R D O'C Thompson, The East Surrey Regiment.

*Saberton* - Mrs Janet Saberton, aged 98 years, widow of the late Hubert Saberton, The East Surrey Regiment.

# Obituaries

## The Revd P T Tracey



Thomas Patrick Tracey will be remembered by those who served in 2nd Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment between 1932-1942, initially in Aldershot and Parkhurst, as an outstanding bandsman - his musical talent, together with his other qualities which included excellent physique and fine bearing, had by 1939 distinguished him as a potential

Bandmaster and earned him a recommendation for a course at Kneller Hall; and subsequently, in Palestine where, on the outbreak of war, members of the Band were trained in Regimental Aid Post duties, as Medical Sergeant to Captain Peter Stewart RAMC under whom he served as such in the Western Desert, Syria and Tobruk.

It was no surprise therefore, following the move of the Battalion from the Middle East to Ceylon in April 1942, when Lieutenant Colonel J B P Phillips took over command, that Sergeant Tracey was selected for officer training. He was then commissioned in the Mahratta Light Infantry with whom he served for the remainder of the War, training recruits at the Regimental Depot at Belgaum for the nine Mahratta battalions which fought in East Africa, the Western Desert, Italy and Burma.

After VJ Day, by which time he had attained the rank of Captain, he decided to leave the Army and returned to England where he attended Salisbury Theological College. In 1956 he was ordained Deacon, and Priest the following year, thus beginning his twenty-five years of devoted Ministry in the Church of England within the Diocese of Oxford.

Following two Curacies, he was appointed in 1961 Vicar of Edlesborough in Buckinghamshire where he remained until 1971, before moving as Rector to Rotherfield Pepperel where he enjoyed a tenure of four years. His last appointment was that of Team Vicar at Dorchester-on-Thames from which he retired in 1981 to live at Long Hanborough.

In 1996, due to failing health, he was advised to move to Weston-Super-Mare and, the following year, to Gracey Court at Broadclyst in Devon where he died after a short illness.

He never married and is survived by his three nieces, Mrs Evelyn O'Brian and Mrs Ann Bell, the daughters of his sister Mary Louise, and Linda Tracey, the daughter of elder brother John, who served with him in 2/Queens and who predeceased him.

MF

## Captain Ronald Frederick Boulton MC



Captain Boulton was born on October 29, 1915 and was educated at March Grammar School before joining the East Sussex County Council.

Enlisting in the Royal Sussex Regiment in 1940 he was later commissioned into The Queen's Royal Regiment. He gained his Military Cross at Salerno in September, 1943

when he was in charge of a section of six-pounder anti-tank guns in the 2nd/5th Battalion which landed a few minutes after the first assault wave. Under heavy fire they knocked out two of three tanks which confronted them and damaged a third, thereby contributing to the halting of 16 Panzer. Coverage for the landings was being given by overhead Beaufighters, one of which was coincidentally being piloted by Boulton's brother who was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross.

After Salerno the Queen's advanced, via the German Winter Line and the battle for Monte Camino, to the crossing of the Volturno River where Boulton was wounded in his head and back and lost his left hand.

Following a long spell in hospital he returned to the East Sussex County Council and eventually became its Education Welfare Officer. He is survived by his wife Margaret, whom he married in 1939, and by a daughter and two sons.

LW

## Colonel R Martin OBE TD



Rodney Martin was granted a TA Commission in 1927, having joined the 23rd London Regiment at St Johns Hill.

In 1937 the Regiment became the 7th (23rd London) Bn, The East Surrey Regiment. Then, a year later, the Regiment was converted to Tanks and became the 42nd Royal Tank Regiment. When war broke out Rodney had reached Field rank.

In April 1941 the Regiment embarked for Egypt as part of the 1st Tank Brigade. After the postings and promotions of two Commanding Officers, Rodney, then second in command, was given command.

The nine months of desert war in which the 42nd was involved was bloody and hectic, covering Knightsbridge, the Cauldron and Gazala. Casualties in killed, wounded and missing and from those captured was high and so it was a tired but undaunted unit which returned to base.

The rest of the war was by way of an anti-climax. Re-equipped first with Matildas, and then with Grants, the Regiment pioneered the use of CDL - powerful searchlights fitted to turrets in place of guns for probing and blinding the enemy. An interesting concept, but probably only really suited to desert conditions, or a flat landscape.

A frustrating period followed and, though landed in Normandy in August 1944, CDL was never employed and in November the Regiment was disbanded. Rodney was demobilised in 1946 after a period with Military Government.

The 42nd was re-established at Clapham Junction in 1947 as one of the two Territorial Tank Regiments in the London area. When Jackie Wykes retired as CO in 1950, Rodney was invited to succeed him and commanded until his own retirement in 1953.

He handed over a flourishing and efficient unit which proved its worth in Exercise 'London Pride', the last Territorial Armoured Divisional Exercise, which was held in 1954. Sadly its tank days were numbered and in 1956 the unit reverted to its old Infantry role as the 23rd London Regiment. Many could not face the change and resigned, but those who soldiered on fought for the retention of the black beret; they had to be satisfied with a black lanyard.

In 1960 the 23rd London and the 6th East Surreys amalgamated to become the 4th Queens Surreys and Rodney was appointed its Honorary Colonel in 1961.

He worked tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure that the inevitable problems resulting from such recent amalgamations and changes were overcome. He remained Honorary Colonel until the Battalion again amalgamated in 1967 to become 6th Bn the Queen's Regiment (TA). Following that amalgamation he continued to support the Regiment as Honorary Archivist to the Battalion and his knowledge of the history of the Regiment was so encyclopaedic that he produced a 'family tree' which is still used as a point of reference to the TA Battalions.

One Regimental custom of the 23rd which was much appreciated by fellow officers from the 6th East Surreys was the smoking of clay 'churchwarden' pipes after a Mess Dinner. A direct legacy from Rodney who was determined to smoke his own beloved pipe at that time.

Though not one to suffer fools gladly, and combative in his relations with his seniors, as the Regimental history illustrates, he was a kindly man with a ready twinkle and he inspired deep loyalty and affection.

Our sympathy goes out to Terry, his wife and staunch supporter for over sixty years, and to his family

DHC

#### Lieutenant Colonel J H S Burgess OBE



Lt. Col. John Burgess, who has died aged 70, was awarded an MBE for gallantry in April 1967 following his service in Aden at the time of intense terrorist activity prior to its gaining independence. On completion of a hazardous tour as military intelligence officer, Burgess was driven by a colleague for his flight home. He received an urgent summons to the Ministry of Defence, immediately following his return, to be told that same colleague had been murdered and would he volunteer to return at once to Aden for a further tour in view of his experience. It was typical of Burgess that he should put his duty before his personal safety and, with the briefest of visits to his family, he went back to Aden. This pattern was to be repeated during later service in Northern Ireland. In Aden Burgess had opted to live outside the security of military barracks in order to carry out his work more effectively. He was personally connected with the capture of at least twenty six terrorists. These arrests, normally carried out at night, often against armed men, involved considerable personal risk. On one occasion, on his own initiative, he planned and led a small party of soldiers into a known terrorist area resulting in the capture of a quantity of arms and ammunition.

John Howard Searles Burgess was born in Essex on 30th August 1928 and educated in schools in Winchester and Kingston-on-Thames before finishing at Magdalen College School, Oxford, after being bombed out of his home in Richmond, Surrey. Commissioned in 1948 into the East Surreys, his father's old Regiment, his initial posting was to the Royal West Kent Regiment as platoon commander in the Home Counties Brigade Training Centre at Shorncliffe.

At the outbreak of the Korean War, 1st Battalion The Middlesex Regiment were deployed from Hong Kong to Korea, and Burgess flew out from UK with a company formed

to bring the Middlesex up to strength. He served as a rifle platoon commander and company second in command. His abiding memories of Korea were of the hardship of bitter winter weather without cover and the durability and humour of the British soldier. When the Middlesex returned to Hong Kong, Burgess remained with them for a few months before moving to his parent regiment, the East Surreys.

Between 1952 and 1956 Burgess served with 1st Surreys in Libya, the Canal Zone and Brunswick. During part of this period he was Battalion transport officer. Due to his efficiency and good nature he received none of the brick bats frequently directed at incumbents of that post and showed much enterprise in countering the skilled efforts of Arabs to liberate his vehicles.

His enthusiasm and approachable manner made him ideal choice for his next posting as instructor in the Platoon Commanders Division at the School of Infantry, Warminster between 1956 - 1959. He then returned for service with 1st Surreys in Cyprus, Libya and the United Kingdom. It was whilst serving in Cyprus that he met his future wife, Enid, then a captain in the Queen Alexandra Royal Army Nursing Corps.

Two further training appointments followed during the next five years: firstly with the all arms Junior Leaders Regiment and then as training major with 3 Queens Surreys (TA) at Guildford prior to him being posted to the Special Military Intelligence Unit in Cyprus. Here he provided such precise intelligence on Greek and Turkish dispositions for the United Nations Command that it became apparent to both sides that he must be the source of it. He was removed at some two hours notice for his own safety. His tours of duty in Aden followed.

His final infantry posting was to 1st Queens Surreys as Company Commander in Münster between early 1966 until his transfer to the Intelligence Corps in August 1967.

After Commanding the Intelligence Corps Depot from 1967 - 1969 he served three years on the staff in the Gulf, including Muscat and Oman. He then became an instructor at the Intelligence Centre and subsequently commanded the Joint Service Interrogation Unit from 1973 - 1975. Burgess was appointed to the Order of the British Empire for his operational services in Northern Ireland as Senior Military Intelligence Officer between 1975 - 1977. After serving as Deputy Director Intelligence Corps from 1977 - 1979, his final military posting was to Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe as Security Officer.

Retiring in 1983 after a distinguished military career, Burgess spent a further ten years in government service, which included four years in Northern Ireland. He attained the rank of Assistant Secretary.

John Burgess was a keen footballer, representing all the regiments in which he served, and was a life member of the Army Crusaders Football Club. He qualified as a Class I Army football referee. At the time of his death he was Secretary of his local Royal British Legion Branch.

John was a very kind man of cheerful disposition and warm and generous nature. It can truly be said that he was held in the deepest affection by all who knew him. His wife, Enid died in 1996 after a very happy marriage and he is survived by his son, two grand children and sister, to whom he was devoted.

JBR

#### Captain B A Reeves

Ben Reeves died peacefully in his sleep on Sunday 31st January last. He joined 2/6th Queen's in 1941 and remained with us, serving in the UK, India and Iraq, before being badly

wounded in the shoulder at Enfidaville at the end of the Desert Campaign in 1943. After recovering he was unable to rejoin the Battalion and ended his army career as a Staff Captain at GHQ Cairo before Demob.

It was in Cairo that he entertained GBC and myself in a luxury flat, staffed by a magnificent Sudanese servant, who washed our kit every day. Ben of course, was our advisor on where to drink and eat and was instrumental in arranging our temporary membership of the famous Gezira Club.

It was a great tragedy that he was unable to return to the Italian Campaign with us, after we had been re-inforced in Egypt after our pounding at Anzio; we needed him.

He was educated at Rugby School and Oriel College, Oxford, gaining a BA and MA. It would be difficult to find a nicer chap with an "above average" personality. He was a devoted family man and a devout Catholic, a complete gentleman.

His initial interests in life were in agriculture and horticulture, but he was eventually persuaded to read law and finally qualified and became a solicitor in the family firm. He also became a Liveryman of the Skinners Company and being a generous man set up Trusts to local charitable causes.

PMAT

#### WOII (ORQMS) A Scriven MBE MSM



Arthur Scriven was a pre-war regular soldier enlisting in 1920 and he served with 1 Surreys in Ireland, India, Hong Kong and the Sudan. He was in the Signal Platoon and rose to the rank of Sergeant before being posted as a PSI (Permanent Staff Instructor) to the 6th Bn The East Surrey Regiment

(TA) at Hersham. He served with the 1/6th Surreys in France, North Africa and Italy.

During the war he was promoted, becoming ORQMS. On demobilisation he re-joined the 6th Battalion as Chief Clerk (ORQMS) at their HQ in Surbiton. During the war he was awarded the MBE and shortly afterwards the MSM. This latter decoration is rarely awarded and only to those of the very highest standards of efficiency and conduct.

The comment that "he was a tower of strength" is frequently used but he was certainly this and more to his several Commanding Officers, Training Majors and Adjutants in the 6th Battalion. He thrived on efficiency, administration being his great skill. Nothing was ever too much trouble and he was meticulous over the smallest of details. It is only fair to say that after the war the smooth running of the 6th Battalion (TA) was largely due to him.

Arthur Scriven was a very keen fisherman and was the Secretary of Walton Angling Society for many years. He was also a keen gardener and an excellent cook. Several years ago, he was awarded a "Gloria Hunniford Hamper", after several of his neighbours wrote to the BBC praising him for his work in the community. He drove his car until three years before his death. He was a devoted family man and so proud of his two daughters, five grandchildren and his eight great grandchildren. He was a loyal and devoted member of The East Surrey Regiment and all who knew him will remember him with the highest regard and respect.

#### Leo Norbury Murphy - Ypres 1914-1951 by his son, Francis Murphy (late Intelligence Corps)

This well known personality was part of the British history of Ypres from 1914 until his death in 1951. Born in Manchester on 5 August 1891, he joined 1st Battalion, The Queen's Royal Regiment, and landed in France on the first day of World War One, 5 August 1914.

Halfway through the First Battle of Ypres against the Germans out of nearly 1,000 men in his battalion all but 30 were killed. He was one of the few survivors, and was later gassed twice in other battles.

He was subsequently transferred to the Intelligence Corps with the security identity of sergeant, Royal Fusiliers. While in the Intelligence Corps, he was awarded the French Croix de Guerre with bronze star and the Medaille Militaire, for bravery and initiative in rescuing and evacuating the population of Béthune by train, while the railway station was being bombarded.

On demobilisation he settled in Ypres in business as a tour operator, specialising in ex-servicemen and families visiting the battlefields, including annual visits by the Old Contemptibles. He was elected President of the Old Contemptibles Association Ypres Branch, which he retained until his death.

My father was the founder and curator of the Ypres Salient War Museum, which he built up item by item between 1919 and 1940 and which became the most complete and largest private 1914-1918 museum in the world. It was housed in the Vleeshuis (meat market building) opposite the Cloth Hall.

In 1932 he was invited by the Mayor of Westminster (London) to participate in the Armistice ceremony at the Cenotaph in November. The journey by ship from Ostend to Dover and Pullman train to Victoria Station was escorted by the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force. On the Armistice eve, the Bishop of Willesden said, in St Martin in the Fields Church 'anyone visiting the Ypres Salient War Museum will go forth and forever preach peace amongst nations'.

The Second World War started on 3 September 1939 and in 1940 the British Embassy informed my father that the invading Germans would learn that he had served in the Intelligence Corps and the family could therefore expect to be deported as slave-labour to Germany. The family fled to England with just a suitcase.

Father returned to Ypres after the war and found his business property and museum ransacked. He died in Ypres in 1951 and was buried as a special honour by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in the British Military Cemetery, near the Menin Gate.

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#### English Church at Ypres

The East Surrey Regimental News of February 1925 published an appeal under the names of Bishop Bury and Field Marshal Lord Plumer for funds to carry out the construction of an English Church at Ypres to be a memorial to those lying there and to be a focal point for visiting pilgrims. An indication as to the numbers of the former can be gauged from the fact that 600 men were employed by the Imperial War Graves Commission in tending graves in the No.1 Area (Ypres Salient) Cemeteries.

RF

## The Infantryman

"Let us be clear about three facts. First of all, all battles and all wars are won in the end by the Infantryman. Secondly, the Infantryman always bears the brunt, his casualties are heavier and he suffers greater extremes of discomfort and fatigue than the other Arms. Thirdly, the art of the Infantryman is less stereotyped and far harder to acquire than that of any other Arm".

Field Marshal Wavell

## A reminder to those on high

'The Army is not like a limited liability company, to be reconstructed, remodelled, liquidated and refloated from week to week as the money market fluctuates. It is not an inanimate thing, like a house, to be pulled down or enlarged or structurally altered at the caprice of the tenant or owner; it is a living thing. If it is bullied, it sulks; if it is unhappy it pines; if it is harried it gets feverish; if it is sufficiently disturbed, it will wither and dwindle and almost die; and when it comes to this last serious condition, it is only revived by lots of time and lots of money'.

Winston Churchill, *Daily Mail*, 17 December, 1904

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## Message from the Duke of Wellington to the British Foreign Office in London, Central Spain August 1812

Gentlemen

Whilst marching from Portugal to a position which commands the approach to Madrid and the French forces, my officers have been diligently complying with your requests which have been sent by HM ship from London to Lisbon and thence by dispatch rider to our headquarters.

We have enumerated our saddles, bridles, tents and tent poles, and all manner of sundry items for which His Majesty's Government holds me accountable. I have dispatched reports on the character, wit and spleen of every officer. Each item and every farthing has been accounted for, with two regrettable exceptions for which I beg your indulgence.

Unfortunately the sum of one shilling and ninepence remains unaccounted for in one infantry battalion's petty cash and there has been a hideous confusion as to the number of jars of raspberry jam issued to one cavalry regiment during a sandstorm in western Spain. This reprehensible carelessness may be related to the pressure of circumstance, since we are at war with France, a fact which may come as a bit of a surprise to you gentlemen in Whitehall.

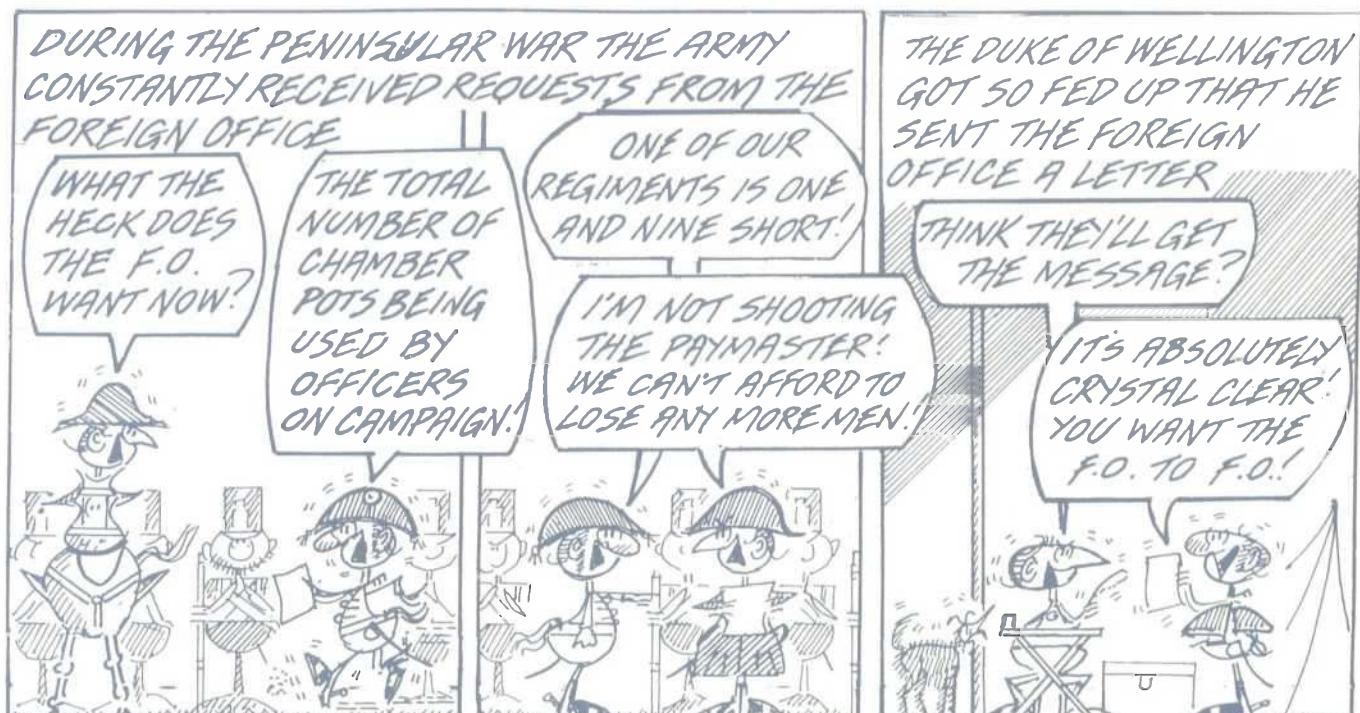
This brings me to my present purpose, which is to request elucidation of my instructions from His Majesty's Government so that I may better understand why I am dragging an army over these barren plains. I construe that perforce it must be one of two alternative duties, as given below. I shall pursue either one with the best of my ability but I cannot do both:

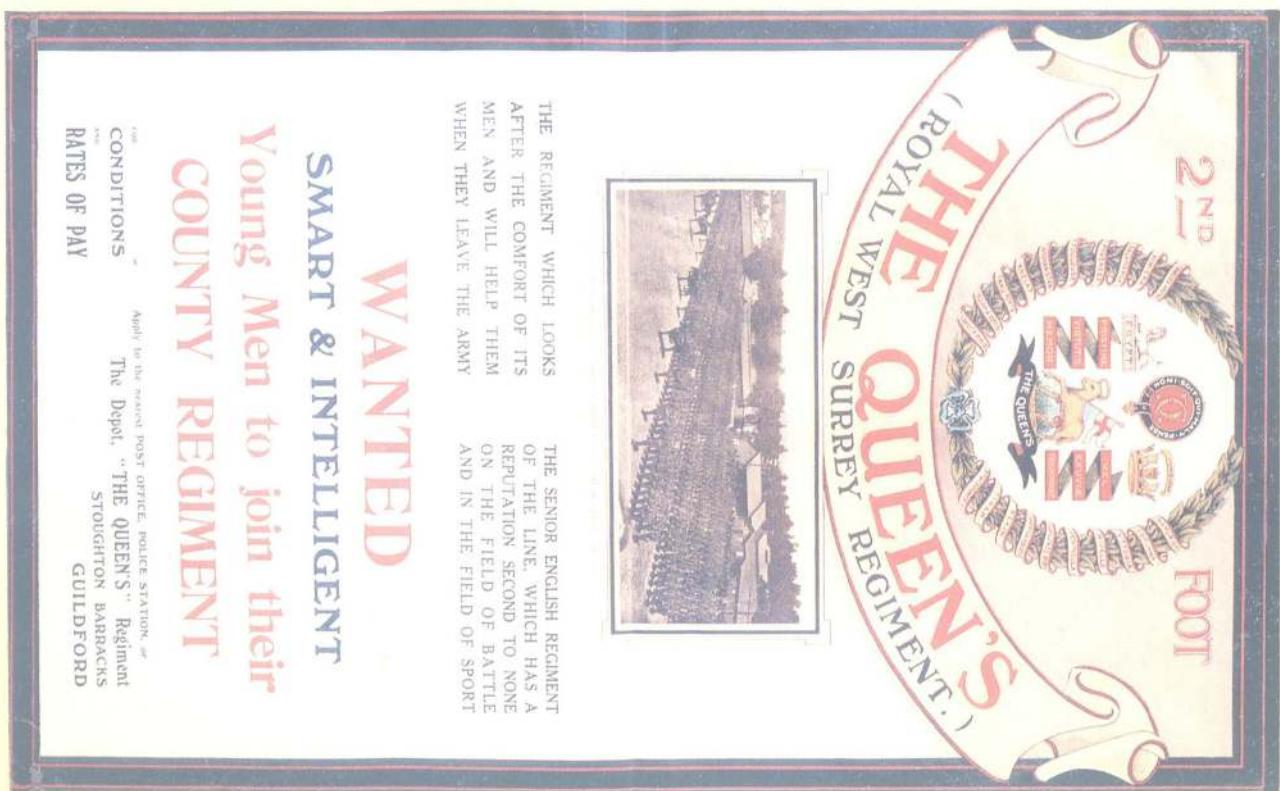
1. To train an army of uniformed British clerks in Spain for the benefit of the accountants and copy-boys in London or perchance.
2. To see to it that the forces of Napoleon are driven out of Spain.

Your most obedient servant  
Wellington

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Regimental History as seen by G Robinson





Regimental Recruiting posters from between the Wars

