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THE QUEEN'S ROYAL SURREY REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER





Regimental and Association Events



2000

20th December	BRITISH BATTALION DAY (1941).
2nd February	Queen's Surreys Regimental Council Meeting - Clandon.
10th February	SOBRAON DAY (1846).
4th-10th February	1 PWRR return to Tidworth from Kosovo.
10th March	Queen's Royal Surrey Regimental Association Territorial Trustees Meeting - Clandon.
10th March	Queen's (Southwark) OCA Annual Lunch Reunion - Union Jack Club, Details from Major J M A Tamplin MBE TD., 10 Hugh Street, London SW1
7th April	Queen's Royal Surrey Regimental Association, Charity and Officers' Club Meetings - Clandon.
18th-27th April	2 PWRR return to Aldershot from Bosnia.
23rd April	Ypres DAY (1915).
10th May	Golf Society Spring Meeting, Sudbrook Park.
16th May	ALBUHERA DAY (1811).
12th-17th May	Unveiling of Albuhera Memorial - Spain. Details from Major A J Martin RHQ PWRR.
15th May	Golf Society Annual Golf match versus the Royal Marines, North Hants GC.
19th May	Brick-givers Reunion (afternoon) - Guildford Cathedral. Including exhibitions, tours, teas and special service (4.30pm) with the Cathedral choir. Members who served in 1 Queen's, Malaya, will recall the efforts made to raise money and purchase bricks towards the building of the Cathedral and our lovely Chapel.
18th or 25th May (TBC)	President's Reception for Freedom Town Mayors of Surrey - Clandon.
18th-25th May	PWRR Regimental sailing week - Seaview, Isle of Wight.
1st June	THE GLORIOUS FIRST OF JUNE (1794).
9th June	Laying up of 5 Queen's Colours in Dover Castle, 1130 hrs. Details from Major A J Martin, RHQ PWRR.
17th June	Queen's Surreys Association Annual Church Service, Guildford Cathedral, 11 am for 11.15 am service. Further details in May Newsletter.
1st August	MINDEN DAY (1759).
9th September	SALERNO DAY (1943).
16th September	Museum Open Day - Meet your Mates - Clandon.
22nd September	6 Queen's (Bermondsey) OCA Annual Lunch Reunion, Union Jack Club. Details from Major M R Nason TD, 64 Westfield Road, Barnehurst, Kent DA7 6LR
5th October	Queen's Surreys Officers' Club, Ladies Luncheon - Clandon.
10th October (TBC)	Golf Society Autumn Meeting.
2nd November	Annual Reunion - Union Jack Club.
8th November	Field of Remembrance - Westminster Abbey - London, 11 am.
11th November	Remembrance Day Parades - Guildford - Kingston - Hailes Church, Camberwell - Southwark and the Cenotaph - London.
20th December	BRITISH BATTALION DAY (1941).

2002

9th June	Tercentenary year, raising of the Villiers Marines, later The East Surrey Regiment Tercentenary Church Service - Guildford Cathedral.
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Frontispiece: A toast 'Gentlemen - The Regiment'. The three pieces of silver in this photo have an interesting history. On the left is the XXXI Huntingdonshire Salt, an extremely attractive piece of silver, it belonged to the 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment. It was presented in 1911 some thirty years after the old 31st Regiment had ceased to exist. The cover depicts a third dimensional representation of the badge of the Huntingdonshire Regiment. Inscribed on the side of the Salt are the words "Semper Floreat Decio XXXI". Inside the lid, under a transparent cover were placed fragments of the Regimental Colors carried at the Battle of Sobraon. After many years, these fragments have disintegrated. The inscription inside the lid reads:- "Presented by Major F L A Packman to the Officers 1st Battalion The East Surrey Regiment 1911. Fragments of the Queen's and Regimental Colors given for insertion in this Salt by Colonel James Robertson CB who commanded No. 1 Company at the Battle of Sobraon when Lieut Tritton and Ensign Jones, who were carrying these Colors both fell mortally wounded. The Silver Salt spoon, which is an integral part of the piece, bears the Royal Cypher of Queen Anne. On Guest nights, the Salt was always placed in front of the Commanding Officer or Senior Officer of the Regiment dining in. Officers on joining the Regiment were invited to "Take the Salt" and after dinner signed the Salt Book.

The Claret decanter in the centre of the picture is one of four which were made for the 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in 1875 and presented in that year. The glass bodies of the decanter are etched with regimental insignia with a Lamb stopper. Each has a chased silver mount with three Sphinx supports.

The third piece of silver on the right of the photo, is the Dettingen Cup. On guest nights this cup was placed in front of the Second Senior Officer of the Regiment dining in, i.e. opposite the Huntingdonshire Salt. Around the cup are depicted scenes from the Battle of Dettingen while on the side is

inscribed:- "Dettingen June 27th 1743". Inside the lid is the inscription: "Presented by Lieut Colonel H L Smith DSO to his brother Officers on leaving the Regiment June 21st 1911. The 20th and 31st Regiments were sent into action by His Majesty King George II in person, who mistaking the Regiment for the 3rd Buffs, as their facings were similar, called out "Bravo Buffs" and when reminded it was the 31st, His Majesty rejoined, "Bravo Young Buffs". This name, valuable for the time and manner it was conferred was retained as a traditional title. It was the custom on the Anniversary of Dettingen, 27th June 1743, for all Officers at Dinner to drink from the cup the toast, "Success to the 1st Battalion The East Surrey Regiment".

* Colors as spelt on Salt.

Photo; Ben May

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President's notes

You will have heard the excellent news that the museum is to stay in Clandon Park until 2010. After some years of uncertainty this will provide the stability which is needed to update the museum and introduce the modern technology. This will be done over the coming winter. However the National Trust requires more space and as part of the proposal we will be required to share one of our present rooms. While not ideal I am certain that the Museum Trustees will provide a creative solution which will meet both our own and the National Trust's needs.

Coming with this edition is Brigadier Michael Clarke's excellent history of the Queen's and Surreys time in India. It is well worth reading and I commend it to you.

On all other fronts the Association is in good heart. Our benevolence work continues in the capable hands of our Secretary, John Rogerson, to whom we are all grateful and Les Wilson continues to provide us with our outstanding Newsletter. Our thanks go to both of them.

With best wishes
Bob Acworth

Editorial

The news that we have an extension until 2010 for our museum at Clandon, will be welcomed by all. As the President writes in his notes, this will allow a much needed refurbishment to take place during the coming closed period and the months ahead.

The final home for all our lovely artefacts and records still has to be resolved, but this extension of ten years will allow the Regimental Council and the Museum Trustees to work for a satisfactory solution, hopefully to maintain a regimental record in Surrey of our two forebear Regiments in perpetuity.

Brigadier Michael Clarke's history of our Regiments time in India from 1825-1947 accompanies this Newsletter. I hope all our readers will enjoy reading it. It is ironic, that the day printing commenced on the Supplement, an album of photos, (all of India from 1890-1907), was handed to our curator at Clandon! Some of these pictures may be published in a future Newsletter.

Our thanks go to Dr C J W Guerrier for his advice to our readers on the subject of skin cancer, (which may have been contracted whilst serving in the tropics). As a result, several of our members have been advised on treatment and received compensation.

Make a note in your diaries for forthcoming events in 2001 and the Tercentenary of the raising of Villiers Marines in 2002

Best wishes to you all
Take care, Les Wilson

The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment



The two Regular Battalions are now in the Balkans. The 1st Battalion in Kosovo and the 2nd Battalion in Bosnia. Their lives have been hectic and busy leading up to their deployment.

The **1st Battalion** deployment was advanced a month from September to August 2000. This of course has a knock on effect on the complex WARRIOR conversion training. This training involved company packages with the testing of WARRIOR drivers and the firing of the 30mm main armament in Lulworth. This was followed by TESEX, UNTAT training, live firing at Castle Martin and leave. Deployment was made in early August 00 and they return in February 01. They have been given their own Battalion area which is to the North East of the country. The situation is by no means settled and life is different each day. The various factions are still liable to fight like cat and dog but various lines have been drawn in the sand, Most of the population is Albanian and most of the Battalion tasks are protecting the Serbian minority.



The bulk of the Battalion is deployed forward into the area known as the 'Podeujevo Bowl'. A large area surrounded by high ground. The Battle Group is PWRR with

B Sqn - The Queen's Royal Hussars (Main Battle Tank - Challenger 1)

UN Bty - 1 RHA

8 Close Support Squadron RE (Armoured Engineers)



At present the local population is friendly. There is very close co-operation with other NATO members in achieving the long-term aim.

The **2nd Battalion** has now moved from Tidworth and has settled into Aldershot into New Normandy Barracks. This is a Barracks that was not designed for a Saxon Battalion. Therefore every available space, store or garage has kit in it. Before departing Tidworth the Battalion carried out a frantic period of training. Company groups were sent to Belize and

Botswana. B Company carried out Public Duties in London followed by Field Fire in Sennybridge and Warcop. All specialists' platoons have re-qualified and supported all the major exercises.

The Battalion deploys in the Saxon role to Bosnia in mid October 00 and return mid April 01. Everyone is looking forward to this deployment.

The 3rd Battalion continues to consolidate. They had a shared annual camp with 1 PWRR on Salisbury Plains Training Area. This boosted the manpower of the 1st Bn and also gave the TA soldier an opportunity to be in an Armoured WARRIOR role. Quite a number of the Battalion have served in other locations. At present there are a few with 1 PWRR there will be some joining 2 PWRR. Two soldiers joined 1 KOSB in Cyprus which also involved a tour down to the Falkland Islands. Formed groups and individuals have been on exercise to Romania, USA and Canada.

The Battalion was also privileged to host a group from the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada at Annual Camp. An exchange trip is planned. However they came in our summer it is planned for the exchange to take place in their winter!

B (The Queen's Regiment) Company The LONDON Regiment recently went on Exercise to Romania. An excellent opportunity to train in a wild environment.

C (The Duke of Connaught's Own PWRR) Company carried out annual camp with the remainder of this Battalion. This was the first time they had all been together since the Defence Review. The other companies forming the Royal Rifle Volunteers are

- 'A' Company - RGJ
- 'B' RGBW Company - RGBW
- 'C' (PWRR) Company - PWRR
- 'E' Company - RGJ

BN HQ and HQ Company are a true mix of all cap badges.

It was a successful camp. Our own Company has now settled into its new location at Peronne close at Hilsea.

The Regiment lives on

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Echoes from the past

On an Atlantic cruise in the *Queen Elizabeth II* in the autumn, former Clandon Museum curator Richard Ford found that it was not without incidents.

Urgent midnight knockings on his cabin door, and the influx of water, thankfully did not herald a second *Titanic* disaster but was due to a burst pipe in an adjacent cabin. A raging gale reduced many passengers to states of green faced inertia, seemingly not improved by Richard's hearty back slapping and tales of his experiences in "the old days" in the Royal Navy. Perplexity was caused at New York harbour when he passed through the security system and activated the metal detector. Removal of his metal walking stick and keys from his pocket did not solve the problem but the source was eventually traced to metal clips which he has had in his chest since undergoing a major heart operation in 1988.

Possibly exhausted by the miscellaneous adventures of her passengers, the ship departed for a major refit and refurbishment immediately after docking at Southampton.

Visit to 1st Bn The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment



1 PWRR Open Day, 1st July 2000. Queen's Royal Surrey South West branch learn how to cross 2 x 6' GP camouflaged tables.



Visit to 1 PWRR Open Day, 1st July 2000. L - R John Fosdyke, Desney Patmore, Steve Birchmore and George Lefevre (Kent), Gerald Webb, (obscured - Jean Lucas), Les Franklin, Gerry Patmore (London), Jock Stewart (Branch Secretary), Paul Edwards, Susan Stewart, Arthur Lucas, Margaret Kirk, Dave Kirk and Ted Brown. (Dr Gordon Charkin not in photo).



Regimental Chapel. One of the ladies from St Mary's Church Byfleet, putting the finishing touches to the flowers in the Chapel

Major J L A Fowler TD

Thank you once again for your kind assistance with both the Newsletter and our India Supplement.

Museum Notes October 2000.

Since the May edition of the Newsletter, there have been three events of particular importance for the Museum:~

* Colonel Mac McConnell relinquished the Chairmanship of the Museum Trustees on 1st July, when Captain Adrian Birtles took over the Chair.

* During August, the Museum heard from "Resource" (the new name for our old friends the Museums and Galleries Commission) that we had been awarded full registration under Phase II of their Registration Scheme.

* On 25th September, the Regiment received a fax from the National Trust's Area Manager for Surrey indicating that the Trust would be willing to continue to provide a home for the Museum at Clandon Park until 2010.

So what lies behind these headlines?

Mac McConnell took over the Chairmanship of the Museum Trustees from Colonel Peter Durrant in 1998 at a time of crisis, when Peter Durrant's strenuous efforts to find a new home for the Museum had been frustrated, the very continued existence of the Museum seemed to be at risk and some hearts were growing faint. Mac's principal objective, towards which he threw himself with immense vigour, was to achieve the relocation of the Museum to Centenary Hall in Guildford, since continued accommodation at Clandon Park at that time seemed unattainable. As reported in recent Newsletters, Centenary Hall was not to be, and this out-turn was a very considerable disappointment and frustration for Colonel Mac. But his work for this project nonetheless certainly carried forward a long way the resolution of the Museum's accommodation problem: It caused both the Regiment and the National Trust to focus more realistically on finding a solution, and it provided the foundation from which our President, Brigadier Bob Acworth, was able to launch his patient diplomacy which is now bearing fruit.

Colonel Mac did more than that though during his tenure of office. His characteristic leadership soon banished faint hearts and brought the Museum through its crisis in fine form, to deliver it in good shape to his successor. And, even if all his hopes were not realised, both the physical state of the Museum collection and the services delivered to visitors and enquirers have been improved very noticeably during those two years.

A small party was held after the Museum Trustees' meeting on 28th June, at which Trustees, Curator, staff, volunteers and friends thanked Mac for his leadership and achievements and wished him well for the future.



Colonel McConells farewell as Chairman. L - R: Richard Hopper, Adrian Birtles, Toby Sewell, Mac, Kate McConnell, John Woodrooff.

So, what of the future and the National Trust's proposal to continue to house the Museum until 2010? The Museum

Trustees welcomed the offer at their meeting on 29th September, and agreed to seek formal terms on those lines. It is worth remarking that (assuming agreement as expected), this will give the Museum a longer period of secure tenure at Clandon Park than ever before. The proposal does not, of course, resolve the Museum's accommodation needs for the longer term after 2010, which will remain high on the Trustees' agenda, but it should give a period of stability which will allow operations and improvements to be planned with confidence. The proposal is likely to lead to some changes in the shape and layout of the Museum, and more of this will be reported once details have been agreed with the National Trust.



Colonel Toby Sewell with Colonel Mac McConnell and his wife Kate

Firm plans are, however, now in place for some changes and improvements during the coming winter close-down period. Asbestos ceiling tiles are to be removed throughout the Museum, which will make possible the long-overdue overhaul of our increasingly unreliable electrical supplies. A new Museum Shop and Information Counter will be constructed and video displays installed in time for the opening of the new season. In parallel with these, planning for longer term improvements is being put in hand.



Receiving the medals of the late Major Ronnie Fairbairn TD, 1/7th Queen's, a long time member of the museum staff. L - R: Adrian Birtles, Michael Highton and Penny James.

The Phase II Registration by Resource may sound rather a dry subject, but in fact is extremely important for any museum; it makes us a part of the National museums network and opens the door to recognition, assistance and grants in many forms. Achieving this is the result of much hard work, notably in the forms of the Forward Plan produced by Mac McConnell and the slogan of the application itself produced by our Curator, Penny James. Registration is a recognition of the high standards of Museum Management and Collection Care achieved at the Museum, themselves the outcome of many people's work. It is pleasing to be able to report that the letter from Resource which accompanied the Registration Certificate contained some very complimentary remarks and, interestingly, the comment that being sited at Clandon Park was recognised as a considerable benefit to the Museum.

So much for the headlines. Day to day your Museum is doing very well, and reflects great credit on all concerned with its running. Our visitor numbers are holding up well at a time when many attractions across the Country are experiencing significant declines. Research enquiries coming in person, by 'phone and via the internet are growing, and broadening in their subjects. Direct access is now available at the Museum to the published details of all soldiers who died in the Great War, which is the subject of many enquiries. Our Web Site is attracting great interest (224 visits in one recent week alone).

The Museum relies entirely on its staff - Penny James and Roy Harding, volunteers and stewards to function. It was with great sadness, therefore, that we learned of the sudden death of Andy Cakebread in early September. Andy had served his National Service in The Queen's and was "captured" by Colonel Peter Durrant to become a most effective volunteer at the Museum; the Museum was well-represented at his funeral at Leatherhead. The Museum does need more volunteers and helpers; if you, or somebody you know (not necessarily a member of the Regiment) was able and interested in lending a hand please let us know; it is interesting and friendly work and "no previous experience required". Similarly, we are in great need of someone to help us take forward our Education Project, in this case school teaching or similar experience would be an advantage.



Visit to the museum of Guy Slater and his father. Guy Slater is the author of "My Warrior Sons", the story of the Borton family, which includes Lt Col A D Borton VC DSO., signing the visitors book.



Guy Slater and his father study the citation for the award of the VC to Lt Col A D Borton.

The months ahead will see the usual Winter shut down and clean up, with the added upheaval this year of the ceiling tile and electrical work already mentioned. They will see us looking ahead and planning in a very different and more positive frame of mind from that which was possible at the same time last year when the future was so clouded. There will be a great deal to do over the next year or two, and I hope that

by the time of the next Newsletter it will be possible to give more detail and to report good progress.



Roy Harding - up the Frontier!

Lastly, writing these notes as a new Chairman of the Museum Trustees, I have very rapidly become much more aware of the immense amount of support given to and work done for the Museum by members of the Regiment, both as individuals and through the more formal channels of the Regimental Association. There should be no surprise in this, of course, but I think it is worth saying publicly. This is the way that things are achieved, and how the future of the Museum will be secured.

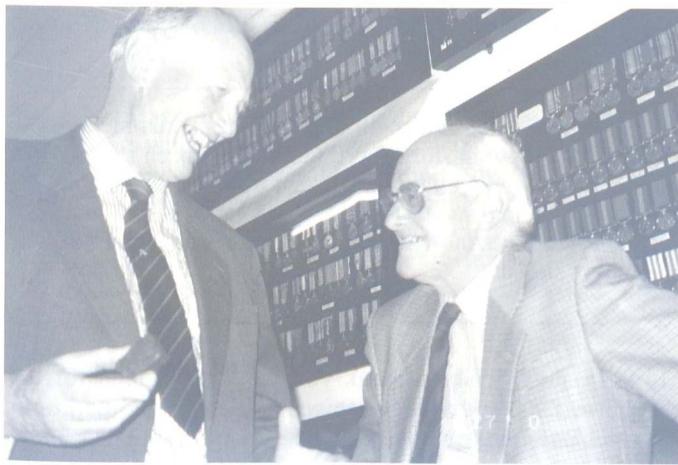
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Visit to the museum of Lt Col Eric Wilson VC. The top picture shows him with the curator Mrs Penny James and John Woodroffe about to sign the visitors book and below with Penny at the VC and GC display in room 2.





Major Bob Johnson & John Woodroff share a joke!?

Congratulations and Best Wishes



Golden Wedding Anniversary Congratulations to:-

Mr and Mrs Ralph Broicher - Azen on the occasion of their Golden Wedding anniversary 25th March 2000.

Ove and Annaie Neilson who celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary on 31st October 2000. Ove, a Dane, served with 1 Surreys and attends the Surreys reunion at Clapham Junction.

Wedding Anniversary Congratulations to:-

Major General and Mrs Mike Reynolds on 4th June 2000.

Vic and Alice Aukett who celebrated 56 years of marriage on 3rd November 2000. Alice celebrated by sending Vic to the Annual reunion at the Union Jack club.

Tony and Elsie Ramsay on 11th August 2000 - 55 years.

Birthday Congratulations to:-

Major General Mike Reynolds on his 70th Birthday on 3rd June 2000.

Herbert Cecil Smith on his 80th Birthday.

Frederick Potticary on his 80th Birthday, 16th July 2000.

William Perchard who celebrated his 96th birthday recently.

His Son writes:- I am writing on behalf of my father, former L/Cpl William Perchard, The Queen's Royal Regiment, to thank you for the handsome basket of plants sent to him on the occasion of his 96th birthday. It was a very thoughtful gesture by the Regimental Association and he was absolutely delighted with it. He is still in good condition for his age and fully aware of what goes on around him.

Mrs Rachel Roupell who celebrates her birthday on 7th November. For the record, Rachel first 'joined' the Surreys in 1930.

Len Jelley who celebrated his 81st birthday on 13th October.

Best Wishes to:-

Major General David Lloyd Owen who underwent major surgery recently. We all wish him a speedy return to good health.

Brigadier Charles Millman who had a period in hospital in the summer. He has moved from his cottage in Hythe and is now reorganising Captains Court Retirement Home in Hythe. It is rumoured that the residents parade daily for area cleaning!.

Major Sandy Sanders now recovering at home following a period in hospital.

Mrs Betty Cole, widow of Major Charles Cole has been very ill recently but is now in a convalescent home in Truro near her daughter Helen.

Bert Quickenden, now recovering at home from a slipped disc.



HMS Courageous

Courageous, built originally as a cruiser in 1916 and later converted, was sunk off the west of Ireland on 17th September 1939 by the German submarine U29 with the loss of 518 lives. Among the survivors was Engineer Commander Edward John Murray and later he, in admiration of the cruiser *Penelope*, named his daughter after her. The little girl finally became Mrs "Penny" James, our curator at Clandon Museum.



HMS Penelope

So if Commander Murray had not survived, U29 would not only have deprived the Royal Navy of a capital ship but would have deprived us of a capital curator.

RF

 **Telephone message from
Ted Josling in Western Australia**

*Greetings to all on the occasion of
The Glorious First of June*

Benevolence

Doreen Gould, RBL Welfare Secretary, Birmingham writes:- Thank you most sincerely for the most generous grant of £500 from the Queen's Royal Regiment for an electrical appliance. Mr A has now been informed of the grant, and I have forwarded on to him the Newsletter which was enclosed. Our grateful appreciation for the interest showed with this case.

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J Newlove SSAFA/FHS Divisional Secretary writes from Andover, Hants:- Thank you for your very prompt and generous cheque for £200 for Mr B I will ensure that he is informed of the source of the grant, and the money will be used towards the purchase of an electric scooter.

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P Tootal OBE, County Field Officer Kent writes:- Thank you very much for your letter dated 15 August 2000 together with your generous grant of £400 to Mr C for household debts and new bedding. Mr C will, of course, be advised of your kindness. As requested, in view of your increased grant, the Legion will now look at a grant towards reducing Mr C's credit card debt. Thank you also for the Association Newsletter which the caseworker will give to Mr C I am most grateful for all your assistance in this case.

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James Pitt writes to a SSAFA Secretary, copy to The Association:- I wish to thank you most deeply for all your concern, help and contribution to making my parents lives a little easier in their old age. Without people and organisations like yourselves, ex soldiers and their families would have a tougher time than they already do. I can't thank you enough. On last favour could you send me another copy of the Queen's Regiment prayer.

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Letter from Secretary SSAFA/FHS Surrey:- I am sending you a letter from Mrs D which you may wish to show to your Benevolence Committee. I have kept in regular touch with this lady. Since the death of her husband, and despite being in straitened circumstances herself, she has been a regular volunteer worker for CARE in Haslemere. Sadly her much loved dog developed a terminal illness and had to be destroyed two weeks ago. All in all she has had a bad year, but remained cheerful throughout.

Mrs D has been a credit to her husband's memory and thus, indirectly, to his Regiment. I would be most grateful if your Association could see it's way clear to providing her with a grant towards her expenses during the coming year.

I would like to say how much I appreciate the kindness shown to my husband, when he was alive and to myself over the past years. Would you kindly convey my most humble thanks to the Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Charity for the cheques I have received which have helped me through the most difficult time in my life. I know Jehovah God moves in mysterious ways his wonders to perform and I do feel my cry for help was answered through the Queen's Surreys Association and would like to say thank you again.

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Mr Brian Scott has passed on to me your letter to him dated 10th July 2000 advising details of the generous award that your Association has again made towards my mother's nursing home fees. On her behalf, may I thank you and ask you also to convey my thanks to your Grants Committee. My mother

remains in reasonable health and recently enjoyed her 99th birthday party.

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I must apologise for the length of time it has taken me to write to you. To cut a long story short, our son has been seriously ill and his health and welfare have taken up most of our time for the past two months. My letter of thanks to the ABF has also been delayed but is now on its way. Thank you again for your continuing support.

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My wife and I wish to thank you very very much for the cheque of £200 which we received, which helped us in our needs for different equipment. Thank you again most sincerely

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I am writing to express my sincere thanks for your kind grant of £400 for the settlement of household debts. I am very grateful for this.

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I obtained your name and address from Mr John Whiteley, Field Officer for The Royal British Legion. I am writing to thank you for the grant of £500 for my husband's electric mobility scooter, which was delivered last week. As senior citizens, struggling on a state pension, there was no way we would have been able to purchase one. Already it has made a terrific difference to my husband's life. Unfortunately he has Angina, Parkinsons, and three compressed discs in his spine, but now he can travel around the village, where he has lived for 78 years and also over the heath, which he loves a great deal. Thank you so much for your help in his regaining some independence.

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I just had to write to thank you for your very kind and generous assistance enabling me to purchase a four wheeled electric scooter. This has transformed my life from being housebound to being able to get out when I to and giving me independence. Thanking you once again.

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I am writing this letter to thank you for helping me to have the use of this lovely electrical scooter as I can get out and about and do my shopping and life is more worthwhile.

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Museum open day



Roy Harding, Adrian Birtles, Peter Henman and Major Julian Ladd, officer commanding A Company 3 PWRR, Farnham.

Infantry - the old and the new

Introduction

There have been many changes in the Infantry, particularly in recent years with the advent of new technologies and the vision of the digitised battlespace of the future. However, many basic things have not changed; the changes could be summarised by our symbol, the bayonet - we still have one, though its shape has changed, its role remains. In this article I will develop the theme of linking the old with the new, as I outline the current capability of the Infantry.

The combined arms battle

The major aspect that has not changed is our ultimate role, which is still to close with and kill the enemy; cold steel is ultimately required! This is illustrated by the current infantry mission, which is to close with and engage the enemy in all operational theatres and environments in order to bring about his defeat in concert with other Arms. This means that our role must always be placed in context within the combined arms battle, which is emphasised now more than ever before. However, battlegrouping is nothing new; one example of this working in the past was in Dukhovskaya, Siberia in 1919, when Colonel Ward of the 25th Middlesex Regiment was under command of a Japanese colonel and commanded an all-arms grouping of one of his own companies and machine gun section, one battalion of Czech troops, one company of Japanese infantry, 600 Cossack cavalry and a Royal Navy detachment of four 12-pounders on 2 armoured trains! It is the successful manoeuvre of combined arms, which is the deciding factor in battle.

Uniqueness

The Infantry has always had unique characteristics. Unfortunately, an anonymous Prussian cavalry officer once said that the most important thing of all is the cavalry officer, after this comes the cavalry officer's horse, then there is nothing, after that is the infantry! An immature response to this observation might be to quote Lieutenant-General Sir Ian Hamilton's comment on cavalry made during the Russo-Japanese War, who said that the only use of cavalry was "*to cook rice for the Infantry*", but this would destroy the critical need for effective combined arms cooperation to achieve success!

One critical requirement is the need to close with and kill the enemy, despite a manoeuvrist plan employing air power, guns, tanks and missiles. Against a well motivated and determined enemy, it is the Infantry, with support from other arms that must defeat the enemy at close quarters. This is a fact often forgotten by the media, but amply illustrated by the actions of Russian infantry in Chechnya in recent months. Tanks, helicopters, planes and quick firing artillery have made the infantryman more vulnerable, yet he endures as his role is essential. Firepower alone cannot decide tactical issues.

The infantryman is the most versatile, flexible and adaptable of soldiers operating over a variety of climate and terrain. He also has to operate across the complete spectrum of conflict; Military Aid to the Civil Authorities, peace support and Internal Security at one end to mobile operations in general war at the other. In all roles, the Infantry is able to march across all types of terrain in all weathers, maintaining what Liddell-Hart called loco-mobility. We maintain other unique features, as well as our variety of dress! This includes our numbers and reputation. We still make up 26% of Army manpower and the British Army has historically gained its reputation from its infantry. As Marshal Soult said after his defeat from some of our forebears at Albuhera (Buffs, East Surreys and Middlesex), "*There is no beating these troops in spite of their generals: I always thought them bad soldiers, but*

now I am sure of it: for I turned their right and penetrated their centre: they were completely beaten: the day was mine and yet they did not know it and would not run". This reputation of our Infantry remains intact today, as has been witnessed by foreign observers in the Gulf, Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Sierra Leone. Our operational commitments also remain high, as 92% of the Infantry were either deployed, about to deploy or were recovering from operations last year (the figure was 47% across the Army as a whole). Also, the Infantryman needs to be tougher than other soldiers, as he is likely to suffer the worst conditions; he needs to be fitter than others and even today his basic skills are to be able to march, shoot and dig.

Roles

The basic role of the infantryman has not changed, but the battlefield on which he fights is hugely different. For example, the introduction of the Warrior vehicle has not changed our roles, but enhanced our ability to carry out our roles more efficiently and effectively. The aim may be, as Sun Tsu said to defeat the enemy without loss, but at some stage someone has to be committed to closing with him, whether it be to find him fix him or strike him. That is the Infantryman's role.



Warrior

One of our major tasks is to conduct offensive operations in a combined arms environment. Warrior allows us to do this most effectively and there are now 9 Armoured Infantry battalions (eg 1 PWRR) equipped with this vehicle, as a result of the Strategic Defence Review. It keeps pace with armour, has excellent protection and impressive firepower with its 30mm Rarden cannon and 7.62mm chain gun. Mechanised Infantry battalions (eg 2 PWRR), of which there are now 6 are equipped with the Saxon vehicle, which has some strategic and tactical mobility, some protection, but no significant firepower. Air Assault battalions, of which there are 3, are lightly equipped and will work closely with the awesome firepower of Apache in the next few years. At present, they can form



Saxon

aviation and airmobile/airborne battlegroups with the anti-tank equipped Lynx helicopter regiments. The remaining 22 battalions of the Regular Infantry (not including the Home Service Royal Irish Regiment battalions and the Combined Arms Training Centre Battlegroup) form Light Infantry. All of these different types of battalions are equipped with varying numbers of similar equipment, depending on their role. This varies the balance between firepower, protection and mobility.



I PWRR in the Congo

Weapon systems

All battalions are equipped with Milan, which is a wire-guided anti-armour missile with a maximum range of nearly 2000m. There is also the 94mm Light Anti-Armour Weapon (LAW), which is a single shot throw-away item with a battle range of 300m and can be issued to almost every man. In the combined arms environment, these anti-armour weapons supplement the fire from other direct fire weapons, such as from tanks and helicopters and indirect fire from artillery and mortars.

All battalions are currently equipped with nine 81mm mortars, the Commanding Officer's only guaranteed indirect fire asset. high explosive, smoke and illumination can be fired out to various ranges up to about 5½ kms. Rifle platoons have the 51mm mortar, which is not dissimilar to the old 2 inch, but has a much greater range and can also fire high explosive, smoke and illumination rounds (800m).

Non Armoured Infantry battalions have a Sustained Fire Machine Gun Platoon (SF PI), which employs nine 7.62mm General Purpose Machine Guns (GPMG). Further GPMGs are available in the light role to supplement the 5.56mm Individual Weapon and Light Support Weapon (LSW). Eight teams of snipers are also available and their firepower outweighs their small numbers, as has been proved in history and continues to be affirmed on operations and on tactical exercises with laser simulation equipment.

In Armoured Infantry battalions, the Recce Platoon is equipped with 8 Scimitar vehicles, whilst Mechanised Infantry use Sabre and Light Infantry are land-rover or foot borne. Both the Scimitar and the Sabre are equipped with the same 30mm rarden cannon as Warrior. The Recce Platoon finds the enemy, providing the intelligence that determines the commander's plan. However, it rarely does this effectively on its own; its work is done in conjunction with aviation, engineers, artillery and air assets. In addition, Electronic Warfare may provide further information.

All of these weapon systems working in conjunction with combined arms allow the infantry to participate effectively in offensive, defensive and delay operations, as well as their transitional stages, such as the advance to contact.

Light infantry

Light Infantry remain invaluable for many of these tasks, despite their lack of armoured vehicles. They make best use of their advantages, such as for defence in close country (built up areas and forests/woods) and any dismounted role. They are always needed for many of the less glamorous roles, such as prisoner of war guarding in the Gulf War. Their employability was again illustrated in the advance into Kosovo, when light infantry were used by 5 Airborne Brigade to pique the routes into the country.

Territorial Army

The TA has now been dramatically cut from 33 battalions to 15 and The Regiment is lucky to be one of only two to maintain its own cap-badged battalion (3 PWRR (V)-4 PARA (V) is the other). The emphasis within the TA has shifted from the Cold War infantry support to logistic Combat Service Support. The TA infantry supports all of the regular activities mentioned, but on a much smaller scale than in the recent past, as its reduced size and limited support weapon capability indicates.

Commitments

Whilst the size of the Infantry has reduced, its commitments have increased in recent years. We still maintain the capability to operate in desert/arid, jungle and cold weather environments. However, the Royal Marines are now the only troops able to operate in extremely cold weather conditions (there is no longer an infantry battalion permanently committed to the Allied Command Europe Mobile Force (Land) AMF (L)). Our parachuting skills have also been reduced, as there is now only one in role parachute battalion. However, the United Kingdom still has many international commitments and seeks to maintain its key role in various organisations such as the United Nations and NATO, with the capability of projecting force worldwide, using the Joint Rapid Reaction Forces (JRRF). Our Infantry are, therefore, more operationally committed than ever before.

The future

The Infantry continues to change in shape. It has been recognised that in a warfighting role in the future, the Infantry will have to be able to provide more effect than it does in current structures; greater firepower and larger battalion structures will be required. Equipment is becoming increasingly complicated and the amount of information being transmitted around the battlefield is becoming more complex and difficult to handle. Boundaries are also becoming blurred. In order to cope with these changes, command, control, communication and information systems need to be better coordinated and to be able to cope with this plethora of data. This situation will lead to the digitised battlespace. A future Infantry battalion of 2010 will need a duplicate battlegroup headquarters, secure communications, a sophisticated information, surveillance and target acquisition system, more crew-served weapons and an additional rifle company in order to fight effectively. Already these structural changes are beginning to occur.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the Infantryman still needs to be able to close with and kill the enemy; he still needs to be able to march, shoot and dig! However, this will only be successful if he works closely with other arms and develops his capability to operate within the digitised battlespace of the future.

A Man of Twenty Summers

The above heading is the title of "a personal account of a young infantryman's experiences in India and Burma during World War II (1939-1945)" by Royston Gumbrell, 1st Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment (Royal West Surreys). Recently received by the Editor it vividly describes the wartime life of a soldier, so typical of that experienced by many of our readers.

Roy Gumbrell was a youthful entrant to the Army, enlisting at the age of 14½ as a band boy in The Queen's at Stoughton Barracks, Guildford, in May 1938. By the Band Master's choice, he was trained as a Cornet player although finding the instrument difficult to master.

Within a year he was bound for foreign service, sailing from Southampton in the troopship *TS Somersetshire*. An uncomfortable six week's sea voyage followed with stops at Gibraltar, Valetta, Haifa and Port Said before passing through the Suez Canal and eventually on to Bombay "the gateway to India"

Onward journey by train did not show much improvement in comfort but after a slow and tortuous journey of 4-5 days the troops eventually de-trained at Allahabad in what was then known as the United Provinces. Under the very hot conditions of the monsoon season, the band boys were not sorry when they were transported to the cooler air of the Himalayan foothills at Chaudharia. The end of that summer season saw the outbreak of war on September 3rd 1939. Three months later Roy and his colleagues celebrated their first Christmas in India where all the usual customs were observed, including Christmas dinner served by the officers. By that time, in cooler weather, the troops were down on the plain but in Spring, as temperatures rose, they returned to the hills where a reasonably relaxed atmosphere was enjoyed.

That the elements and wild life were ever present dangers was emphasised by two tragic incidents of the times. In one of them the Anglo-Indian fiancée of one of the British soldiers was struck dead by lightning while he was dining with her and her family. A resulting mental breakdown caused him to be discharged from the Army. In the other a drummer was out walking with his pet dog when the animal was seized and killed by a black panther. The rogue big cat later took to attacking people but was eventually shot by an officer, the skin being retrieved as a trophy.

But there were human perils as well as animal. Constant watch had to be kept for warring tribesmen who were always lurking in various places ready to launch murderous attacks on British troops. Security of arms and ammunition was vital as such weaponry was highly prized by the enemy if they could seize it.

By March 11th 1941 Roy was 17½ and considered fit for "man's service" so was issued with a rifle and took part in active operations, usually as a stretcher bearer which was a common duty for bandsmen in those days.

For transport purposes in such hilly terrain mules were mainly used, carrying baggage, supplies and arms, including the heavy guns of the Mountain Batteries. Aircraft were beginning to play an increasingly active part in operations and were particularly useful in observation duties when they could give troops warnings of impending ambushes. A large scale action in the summer of 1941 took place over a period of 4-5 weeks and involved a whole fighting Column with hundreds of mules, mountain batteries, heavy artillery and some motor transport.

After suffering a wound to his left knee and an attack of malaria Roy eventually succumbed to a bout of bronchitis

which disappointingly landed him in hospital over the 1941 Christmas period. On discharge he returned to the Regiment at Peshawar, a comparatively large city with considerable commercial interests, much of which was conducted through the bazaars. Goods were transported by camels and by rail, the line connecting with the Khyber Pass railway which was reckoned to be one of the world's finest feats of engineering.

Training was maintained, often involving long route marches which took place either at night or in the morning before the heat of the day. The possibility of a German invasion through the Khyber Pass caused it to be occupied by the Queen's men who became involved in heavy defensive measures. A malaria relapse caused Roy to be sent back to Peshawar for treatment and then to the Murree Hills for convalescence.

Christmas 1942 and the following New Year saw training being undertaken for a forthcoming invasion of Burma.

After a long rail journey across the Indian Plains the Queen's reached the jungle training areas of Chindwara and Ranchi in the state of Nagpur. The conditions and topography of the country were similar to those soon to be encountered in Burma and training proceeded apace. New weaponry and equipment were issued, a notable distinction being that the traditional topees were exchanged for bush hats. Roy's role as a bandsman and stretcher bearer ended with his transfer, at his own request, to a 2" mortar team. Simulation of battle tactics was realistic, with live ammunition being used. Artillery participation included the use of Indian Mountain Batteries of the type already well known to Roy and his colleagues. Night crossings of a large lake were made, using collapsible boats and aircraft effected mock attacks by using flour bags as "bombs".

On the leisure side there were ENSA performances and Army Kinematograph shows as well as occasional trips into town on the "liberty trucks".

But training soon gave way to reality and after an exhausting and lengthy train and river steamer journey the troops arrived in Burma in the Teknaf area where camp was made. While there Roy became what he calls "a sort of bodyguard and batman" to one of the officers of the Company. Days were spent in patrolling the Teknaf Peninsula, well aware of the fact that the Japs were just across the Naf River at an estimated distance of about a mile and a half. Guard duties became a regular chore. Sampans sailing on the river were stopped and searched for illegal firearms and other equipment likely to be of use to the enemy. Aircraft, both Allied and Japanese, sometimes flew overhead.

10th November 1943 was the starting date of the campaign for the Queen's. Roy no longer a batman/bodyguard, was issued with a .303 rifle with a telescopic sight as well as an Army long range telescope so it looked as though sniping may become part of the action.

After surrounding heights had been secured by 5th and 7th Indian Divisions and 33 Brigade, the Queen's carried out extensive patrols and soon encountered Japanese forces in a noisy and brisk engagement. Forced to withdraw, and in some confusion over communication difficulties, the Queen's suffered casualties including Captain Hamilton who, while acting with great gallantry, was badly wounded. He was rescued from a perilous position by a party led by Corporal Wright. Captain Hamilton was later awarded the Military Cross and Corporal Wright the Military Medal.

On 18th December 1943 another engagement took place in a drive towards the major destination of Rathedaung. The Japanese seized some positions but were eventually beaten off by the use of grenades. One Japanese was dispatched by the

Commanding Officer's revolver. Lieutenant Colonel H G Duncombe retrieved the Nippon Flag from his victim and later bequeathed it to the Regimental Museum at Clandon Park, Guildford. It was in the middle of the attack that Roy was overtaken by an embarrassing bout of dysentery which necessitated medical treatment. Morbid tasks of burial of both British and Japanese dead followed.

Due to operational commitments in atrocious jungle conditions, Christmas Day 1943 was not actually celebrated by the troops until Boxing Day. Traditions were observed as far as possible. A concert party paid a visit and the Chaplain held a Carol Service. Roy had great respect for Army Chaplains and the humane, spiritual and valiant work they did, often under dangerous and hazardous conditions.

By the New Year Roy was suffering further dysentery troubles so was transferred to the Chittagong British Military Hospital en route to India. Returning to his unit later he was still far from fit and eventually collapsed. By now seriously ill, he was eventually transported by hospital ship to Calcutta where he was told that, with others, he was to be repatriated to England. After some delays and a long train journey via the well known stop at Deolali he and other troops, as well as Italian prisoners of war, sailed from Bombay bound for England.

After arrival at Liverpool they were transported by Army lorries to a transit camp at Aintree Race Course where they were granted leave and given railway warrants to their homes.

The England which greeted Roy was vastly different from the country he had left in 1939. Transport and communications were severely restricted so he was unable to send any advance notice of his arrival to his parents in Hindhead, Surrey. There were joyful scenes when he arrived unannounced at their home. On the 5th June 1944, a momentous preparatory day if he had but known it, he went to London to see a young lady with whom he had corresponded while overseas. The following day, while staying with the young lady and her parents at their London home, he heard the news of the invasion of Europe. Looking around him at the devastation caused by the blitz he could see evidence of what suffering the Home Front had endured while he had been away, and it was not yet over. London and South-East England were to suffer attacks from deadly flying bombs and rockets until their launching sites were overrun and captured by Allied troops on the Continent.

After leave he returned to the Army at Colchester and from there went to Preston Park Barracks at Brighton which he found to be the home of The East Surrey Regiment.

With many troops departed to the Continent, and the danger of invasion of our own country now removed, Roy and other troops were engaged on the comparatively enjoyable tasks of dismantling camp sites and fortifications. In the evenings local dance halls provided entertainment.

Other postings to Ashford in Kent and to Dover followed. Flying bomb and rocket attacks were still taking place and Roy found himself in the thick of it in what was known as "doodlebug alley". At Dover there was the added menace of long range shelling from France. A direct hit on Dover Priory railway station caused much damage and many casualties one of whom, a soldier from Roy's company, was killed while on his way home on leave. Later, masses of aircraft overhead, were indicative of the passage of airborne troops to the ill fated Battle of Arnhem.

A transfer to Maresfield in Sussex and the type of training encountered there presaged forthcoming active service on the Continent. It was while at Maresfield, quite by casual encounter in a pub, that Roy met retired Major Lynch Staunton the father of Captain Lynch Staunton who was one of Roy's

former battalion officers. Interesting conversation, supported by rounds of drinks followed.

A recurring bout of malarial fever while on leave resulted in Roy missing the first draft to the Continent and being somewhat unfairly punished by fourteen days suspension of pay for being AWOL (absent without leave). Eventually he sailed from Dover on 22nd December 1944 only to suffer a further bout of fever on landing on European soil. Removal to the British Military General Hospital at Ostend followed and it was there that he spent Christmas Day. Not surprisingly, he found the Christmas fare unpalatable. Bad weather with snow falling, followed. War news was depressing with the Germans making initially successful counter attacks in the Battle of the Bulge at the Ardennes Forest. Fit or unfit, Roy was hastily discharged from hospital and with a hurriedly collected miscellaneous assortment of troops was sent forward in Army lorries as reinforcements for the battle. Travelling through snow, fog and freezing temperatures they eventually reached Louvain and the Reinforcement Holding Unit. After some medical treatment for circulatory troubles with his feet, Roy was back on duty again by New Year's Day when the German attacks were being repelled. There were troubles with disguised German troops in American uniforms infiltrating the Allied lines. Some were apprehended, four of them being disarmed and arrested by Roy and his colleagues. There was constant air activity, one attack resulting in Roy having the heel of his boot shot off. Recurring bouts of malaria and dysentery prevented him re-joining his Regiment and he eventually left Louvain on being posted to Dendermonde in Belgium. In his last days in Louvain he saw some of the reprisals being taken against women who had fraternised with the Germans. A sad sight was the exhumation and formal re-burial of the bodies of resistance members who had been killed by SS Gestapo units.

On the 8th May 1945 came the long awaited victory with joyous celebrations all round. Regrettably some Air Force personnel were drowned when they became drunk and fell into a canal. There were memorable re-unions between some of the local people and sons and relatives who had disappeared into captivity during the war. Some of those returning were in deplorable physical states and some did not long survive their freedom.

Two months later, when stationed at Engheim, Roy was found medically unfit for further active military service and was sent on fourteen days leave to the UK where he married his young lady of two years standing at St Anne's Church, Wandsworth. Returning afterwards to England he continued service for a time in the Royal Army Medical Corps where he became a fully qualified male nurse. Still suffering from recurring malarial fevers, however, he was sent back to England in a seriously ill condition and was hospitalised in Leicester where his wife visited him. On recovery he later served in a Casualty Reception Centre at Westbury in Wiltshire. In a local Prisoner of War Camp there was a surgeon who previously had been the personal surgeon to Erwin Von Rommel in the desert before being captured.

Roy was invalided out of the Army in early 1949 after nearly eleven years service. In his 75th year at the time of writing he recalls memories of happy days with the men with whom he served and mourns the loss of those who did not return to spend, as he did, a loving life with a wife and family and grandsons. Of the future and the "final day of departure" he summarises all in the concluding verse of Charles Wesley's hymn:-

"That having all things done and all your conflicts passed ye may at last through Christ alone stand secure at last".

Babbington Nolan of the 70th Foot

John Babbington Nolan (1786-1850) was the father of the famous Louis Edward Nolan, of The 15th Hussars, who carried the fatal order to Lord Lucan which resulted in The Charge of The Light Brigade at Balaclava. Babbington Nolan was the son of an Irish Trooper in The 13th Light Dragoons. An orphan, Nolan was cared for by the Army, General Francis Craig, Colonel of The 13th Light Dragoons, secured for him a "Bounty" from the Queen, resulting in a commission in The 61st Foot in 1803. In 1804 Nolan was transferred to The 70th Foot, known as "The Glasgow Greys", most of the rank and file being Scots.

On 1st January, 1804, the 70th left for Antigua, the Shirley Heights, with a strength of 27 officers and 466 Other Ranks. Yellow fever resulted in the deaths after one year of twelve officers and 152 men. Nolan was made lieutenant in The 70th on 15th June 1804. In 1807, when Denmark was drawn into Napoleon's blockade, the 70th became the garrison of the Danish Island of St Thomas's.

The two years the Regiment was stationed there were very quiet, the Regiment's returns reveal a continuous picture of absent officers, varying from 6 to 13 at a time, on one occasion both surgeons were away together. The efficiency of the Regiment did not suffer, apparently, when Brigadier Fitzroy McClean inspected the garrison in October, 1809 the 70th numbered 570 all ranks. Babbington Nolan was then returned as 23 years, 6 months old with 6½ years service to his credit. McClean was very satisfied with the uniforms and soldier like appearance of the Regiment but because of low numbers and inexperience of reinforcements, the Regiment was "by no means fit for war".

In 1810 a combined military and naval attack was mounted against Gaudaloupe in which the flank companies of the 70th took part. The Light Company was particularly commended for dislodging the enemy from overlooking batteries. Several little actions were the closest that Nolan ever got to active service. Colonial service then held little attraction for potential recruits, and Infantry recruitment, carried out at home, had to be continuous.

In December, 1809 the C in C West Indies retained six companies each of The 70th and two other Regiments, the remaining four companies being sent home. In June 1810 the party from the 70th left for the Regimental Depot at Ayr, consisting of four Captains, two subalterns, 21 NCO's and eleven drummers, to absorb the recruitment party already there. 218 rank and file were left in the West Indies.

Nolan remained with the Regiment in St Thomas's, where as senior subaltern he commanded Captain De Coursey's company. He soon fell sick and was absent from duty for the next few weeks. Meanwhile, orders were received to reduce still further the 6 companies of the 70th in the West Indies. Officers, NCO's and drummers of two more companies were ordered back to Scotland, "together with the Senior Field Officer, Regimental Staff, Colours, Music and whatever constitutes HQ", following the death of two Captains. Nolan became in charge of all four companies still abroad, but after spells of sick leave he was sent home on board the transport *Ellen* when he heard of his promotion to Captain, dated 30th Jan. 1812.

Later that year Nolan joined the 70th at Stirling, posted as OC No. 8 company. Wellington's Peninsular Campaign was reaching its climax but the 70th remained on the fringe of events. In January 1813 the Regiment was ordered North to deal with riots in Montrose and Dundee, and in February moved to Perth. New military barracks had been erected in Perth, which included a handsome Officers' Mess with a fine

pediment bearing the National Arms. The barrack square was large enough for the evolution of a thousand troops. There the 70th foot moved, complete with Depot and Nolan was there three years. A new prison had been completed in Perth to hold seven thousand French prisoners of War, the Regiment on Guard duty found them a lively crowd! War had broken out between Britain and America, Canada was under attack, and among seven Regiments of The Line sent there was the 70th, who embarked at Cork in August 1813. Nolan was left behind to command the Regimental Depot. He was now 27, a widower. Depot duties were not unduly onerous, Nolan administered the Depot as a single unit, and was an energetic recruiter. Years later he claimed to have "raised" over 600 men at a time when recruitment was particularly difficult. Whilst Nolan remained at Perth enjoying his command and his new domestic life (he had married again) the 70th Foot, after eight months at Quebec, slowly worked their way on a frozen surface by sled, and in December, 1815 the war came to an end. Nolan embarked at Leigh on 22nd April 1816 with two subalterns and a party of recruits. In July he reached Canada and reported to HQ at Kingston. Nolan was Senior Captain of the Regiment, commanding No. 5 Company. He served two years in Upper Canada, most of the time the Regiment was scattered in small garrisons.

On 4th January 1818 his second son, Louis Edward, of Balaclava Fame, was born. In June 1819 the 70th were still concentrated at Kingston. Nolan returned to England and an exchange to half pay was soon effected. Babbington took the place of an officer on half pay in the West Indian Regiment, receiving "the difference" of £300 on the sale.

Nolan's active military career was now over. The Nolans moved to Italy, and Babbington applied for re-employment. He seems to have occupied various unpaid posts as a Consular Official in Milan and elsewhere. He apparently signed himself as "HM Vice Consul in Milan", incurring the wrath of the Foreign Secretary of the day, Lord Palmerston, who enquired as to Nolan's authority to act, (he was describing himself as "Major" then). After the death of the British Consul in Venice, Nolan without authority took over the post and further incurred Lord Palmerston's ire. He never held a permanent, approved civil post and died in 1850.

Source: "Nolan of Balaclava, and his influence on the British Cavalry" by H Moyse Bartlett, Leo Cooper 1971.

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Two daughters of the Regiment, Jean Shanks (nee Atkins) and Pamela Grant (nee Stiles) at the Annual Church Service.

Salute the soldier and his traditions

Saluting has always been an integral part of Army discipline and procedures so it will be interesting to see how the various forms have evolved, together with some other notable Army practices and traditions.

The simplest form of salute, that given by hand to, and returned from, a superior officer has various theories of origin. One is that it was once a gesture of removing the hat "*with a flourish*" while another is that was the custom of knights to raise their visors or remove their head-dress with an upward movement of the hand. The "*eyes right*" (or left) arises from the privilege of the man-at-arms to look his superior in the face instead of averting his eyes like the serf. The present day salute is a form of greeting, mutual trust and confidence, initiated by the junior rank but with no loss of dignity on either side.

The officer's salute with the sword is most interesting in its origin and is a relic of the days when Crusaders kissed the Cross before going into battle. The hilt of the sword represents the Cross. The first motion, the recover, recalls the kiss, while the second motion, the lowering (of the guard) indicates an attitude of trust. A further kiss is performed at the second recover. Saluting with the sword on the march is thought to descend from the practice of lowering pikes, again by "*a graceful turn and flourish*".

The "*Present Arms*" with a rifle is a token that when the weapon is so held it is harmless and it is even considered to be a token of submission. A Field Officer receives the full salute while those of lesser rank receive only the first motion of touching the disengaged hand.

Sentries do not "Present" after dark because at one time it was dangerous due to difficulties of distinguishing between friend and foe. In modern times even tanks have a form of salute when in motion by lowering their upward pointing guns towards the ground. (In the days of the Indian Army, elephants were trained to perform a similar motion with their trunks).

Royalty and officers of high rank are saluted by firing a number of guns. This is symbolic of the days when such actions effectively unloaded the guns and rendered them passive. In the Royal Navy ships salute by dipping the ensign, a relic of the days when a sail was lowered, allowing a ship to be overhauled by a superior vessel. (In the writer's days at Rosyth in the Second World War "*superior*" ships were saluted by the crews of "*inferior*" ships coming to attention and facing towards them while appropriate salutes were either piped or sounded on bugles). Adverting to sentries, their duties are many and varied, including turning out the guard on proper occasions and to certain people, but meanwhile maintaining security, and taking appropriate action in case of fire.

Turning out the guard at Reveille and Retreat harks back to the days when attack was likely to occur at these times of poor light. (A similar move in the Royal Navy was "Down Action Stations"). The word "Tattoo" has nowadays come to mean a military display but originally it was "Tap Toe", ie time for soldiers to return to barracks. At a certain time drummers marched from post to post in the town, beating their drums. Their circuit commenced with the "First Post" and ended with the "Last Post".

Ceremonial drill, en masse, has its origins in history. The "Advance in Review Order" was a rehearsal of an attack for the benefit of the reviewing General. It was a method of testing preparedness for war. The inspection concluded with a Royal Salute.

Another form of Royal Salute, with weapons, is the firing of the "Feu de Joie" when firearms are discharged in succession. A different significance attaches to the firing of volleys at military funerals. Somewhat pagan in origin it is supposed to

ward off devils. The Last Post is the farewell note to the deceased but there is an implied promise of the "Great Reveille" by the Archangel Gabriel.

"Trooping the Colour" is an old guard mounting ceremony in which the Queen's Colour is the symbol of the Sovereign and the Regimental Colour the emblem of the Soul of the Regiment. Doubtless familiar to all our readers by way of the Annual Television feature on the occasion of The Queen's Birthday it needs no further description here.

Flags were used as rallying points in battle as far back as the days of Babylon. They continued that function for many years until in more modern times they became the symbols of loyalty to the Crown and of Regimental honour. No more fitting description and tribute could be paid than in the quotation, "*They fly not only for the living but for all who have died in the Regiment for the King, not only as an augury of battles to be won, but a token of every field of the past*".

A focal point and virtually the heart of any Regiment is the Officers' Mess, and Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess, here tradition and customs are maintained and formed, and here the bonds of loyalty, comradeship and Regimental spirit are fostered.

It has often been said that an Army marches on its stomach, which may well be true, but there is no doubt that a touch of music helps it on its way. To this end Army bands in some form or another were formed as far back as feudal days when minstrels were employed. Plentiful information on bands and on some of their distinguished musicians are contained in other columns and editions of the Newsletter.

It has always been necessary to distinguish the soldier from his civilian counterparts and, even more important, from his enemies on the battlefield. At first this was accomplished by the use of brightly coloured and gorgeously decorated uniforms, of which the red coat in the British Army played a prominent part, but as time progressed and battle tactics changed concealment became more important than flamboyant display.

Khaki originated in India, with hastily improvised dyes, but really attained importance and practice in the South African War when highly skilled sharpshooting Boer marksmen were enemies to be respected and not to be presented with human targets in brilliant technicolour. Succeeding wars and campaign conditions saw developing use of khaki and eventually the design of the present day camouflage issues. Ceremonial dress has been kept in some instances for special units and special occasions. Household troops appear in resplendent glory when on ceremonial duties and most Regimental bands appear in ceremonial traditional dress.

Ranks in the Army, both as regards officers and men have developed over a number of years and often very appropriate to the tasks of those who bore them. For example while the Captain General was the Commander-in-Chief, the 2nd in Command and Assistant was the Lieutenant-General (he could act "in lieu" as it were), the officer who carried the Standard or Colour was designated the Ensign while among the NCOs the man who looked after the Bombard or Mortar was the Bombardier.

The vocabulary, traditions and procedures of the British Army derive from many sources and often for very practical reasons. Although the process of the time will demand many changes it is to be hoped that the bedrock principles will always survive, forming foundations on which future generations may build.

Far and Wide

In these days of perpetual cuts and reductions in the Armed Forces a document dated 1854 and entitled "*Stations of the British Army*" makes interesting reading. The total numerical strength shown is 148 Regiments of which 26 were Cavalry, 116 British Infantry and 6 Colonial Regiments such as The Ceylon Rifle Regiment and The Cape Mounted Rifles.

The list of stations garrisoned by our own forebears and those of later closely associated Regiments is worthy of note. The second named places (where shown) were the locations of the Depots.

2nd Foot (Queen's) Cape of Good Hope; Templemore.

31st Foot (Surreys) Corfu, Brecon.

37th Foot (Hampshires) Ceylon; Chatham.

57th Foot (Middlesex) Corfu; Tralee.

70th Foot (Surreys) Cawnpore, Bengal; Chatham.

97th Foot (Royal West Kents) Windsor.

3rd Foot (Buff's) Malta, Naas.

35th Foot (Royal Sussex) Portsmouth.

50th Foot (Royal West Kents) Dublin for Turkey.

67th Foot (Hampshires) Antigua; Dover.

77th Foot (Middlesex) Glasgow for Turkey.

Stations of the British Army 1854

(Where two places are mentioned, the last named is that at which the Depot of the regiment was stationed).

1st Life Guards	Windsor	14th do	Limerick	62nd do	Cork about to embark for Malta
2nd do	Regent's Park	15th do	Ceylon; Mullingar	63rd do	Dublin
Royal Horse Guards	Hyde Park	16th do	Jamaica; Castlebar	64th do	Bombay; Chatham
1st Dragoon Guards	Newbridge	17th do	Dublin	65th do	Australis; I. of Wight
2nd do	Dublin	18th do	Burmah; Chatham	66th do	Quebec; Guernsey
3rd do	Longford	19th do	Tower of London	67th do	Antigua; Dover
4th do	Dundalk	20th do	Plymouth	68th do	Malta; Newry
5th do	Ballincollig	21st do	Dublin	69th do	Barbadoes; Aberdeen
6th do	Ipswich	22nd do	Rawalpindee; Chatham	70th do	Cawnpore, Bengal; Chatham
7th do	Cahir	23rd do	Portsmouth	71st do (1st Bat)	Corfu; Depot, Chatham
1st Dragoons	Manchester	24th do	Sealeote, Bengal; Chatham	Do (2nd Bat)	Canada
2nd do	Nottingham	25th do	Bangalore; Madras; Chatham	72nd do	Fredericton, N.B.; Limerick
3rd do	Exeter	26th do	Gibraltar; Sunderland	73rd do	Cape of Good Hope; Jersey
4th do	Canterbury	27th do	Enniskillen	75th do	Umballah, Bengal; Chatham
6th Dragoons	York	28th do	at sea for Turkey	76th do	Nova Scotia; Chatham
7th Hussars	Piershill	29th do	Meerut; Bengal; Chatham	77th do	Glasgow, for Turkey
8th do	Dorchester, for Turkey	30th do	Corfu; Fermoy	78th do	Aden, Bombay; Chatham
9th Lancers	Umballah, Bengal; Maidstone	31st do	Corfu; Brecon	79th do	Portsmouth
10th Hussars	Kirkee, Bombay; Maidstone	33rd do	Dublin for Turkey	80th do	Burmah; Chatham
11th Hussars	Dublin	34th do	Preston	81st do	Bengal; Chatham
12th Lancers	Under orders to proceed from the Cape to Madras; Maidstone	35th do	Portsmouth	82nd do	Stirling
		36th do	Barbadoes; Chester	83rd do	Kurrachee, Bombay; Chatham
13th Light Dragoons	Birmingham	37th do	Ceylon; Chatham	84th do	Trinchinopoly, Madras; Chatham
14th do	Meerut, Bengal; Maidstone	38th do	Chatham	85th do	Mauritius; Bristol
15th Hussars	Under orders to proceed from Madras to England	39th do	Cork; Charles Fort	86th do	Poonah, Bombay; Chatham
		40th do	Australia; Waterford	87th do	Perozepore, Bengal; Chatham
16th Lancers	Dublin	41st do	Malta; Mullingar	88th do	Bury
17th do	Hounslow, for Turkey	42nd do	Gosport	89th do	Cork, Fermoy
Grenadier Guards (1st Bat)	Portman St. Bks	43rd do	Under orders to proceed from the Cape	90th do	Dublin
Do (2nd Batt)	St. John's Wood	74th do	to Madras; Chatham	91st do	Dublin
Do (3rd Batt)	at sea for Turkey	44th do	Gibraltar; Chatham	Do (2nd Battalion) Cape of Good Hope	Cape of Good Hope
Coldstream Gds. (1st Bat)	at sea for Turkey	45th do	Cape of Good Hope; Chatham	92nd do	Corfu; Galway
Do (2nd bat)	Chichester	46th do	Kilkenny	93rd do	Devonport, for Turkey
Scotch Fusilier Gds. (1st Bat)	at sea for Turkey	47th do	Malta; Birr	95th do	Weedon
Do (2nd Bat)	Wellington Bks	48th do	Corfu; Carlisle	96th do	Iahiore, Bengal; Chatham
1st Foot (1st Bat)	Newport	49th do	Malta; Cork	97th do	Windsor
Do (2nd Bat)	Depot B irr, Corfu	50th do	Dublin for Turkey	98th do	Dugshaei, Bengal; Chatham
2nd Foot	Cape of Good Hope; Templemore	51st do	Under orders to proceed from	99th do	Van Diemen's Land, Chatham
3rd do	Malta; Naas	94th do	Madras to England	Rifle Brigade (1st Bat)	Dover
4th do	Edinburgh; for Turkey	52nd do	Bengal; Chatham	Do (2nd Bat)	at sea for Turkey
5th do	Mauritius; Chatham	53rd do	Shub, Kudder; Chatham	1st West India Regiment	Jamaica; Chatham
6th do	Cape of Good Hope; Newcastle	54th do	Quebec; Londonderry	2nd do	Demerara; Chatham
7th do	Manchester	55th do	Gibraltar; Templemore	3rd do	Jamaica; Chatham
8th do	Deesa, Bombay; Chatham	56th do	Bermuda; Chatham	Ceylon Rifle Reg	Ceylon and Hong Kong
9th do	Cork, about to embark for Malta	57th do	Corfu; Tralee	Cape Mounted Rifles	Cape of Good Hope
10th do	Wuzerabad, Bengal; Chatham	58th do	New Zealand, Jersey	Royal Canadian Rifle Regiment	Canada
11th do	N S Wales; Winchester	59th do	Hong Kong; Kinsale	St Helena Regiment	St Helena, Isle of Wight
12th do	Belfast	60th do (1st Bat)	Jullinder, Bengal; Chatham	Royal Newfoundland Cos	Newfoundland; Chatham
Do (2nd Bat)	Cape of Good Hope	Do (2nd Bat)	Cape of Good Hope; Buttevant	Royal Malta Fencibles	Malta
13th do	Gibraltar; Clonmel	61st do	Subattoo, Bengal; Chatham		

Editor's note: The spelling of place names and abbreviations have not been altered from the original.

Loyal Volunteers-1/6th Bn The East Surrey Regiment

Volunteer units have always played important parts in British military history and the importance of such contributions can well be assessed by looking at the record of the 1/6th Battalion The East Surrey Regiment and its forebears.

As far back as early 1700 there was a Richmond Detachment which was directly descended from the Richmond Trained Band. By 1804 the Chertsey Local Volunteers were in force.

In 1862 the 2nd Surrey Administrative Battalion was formed with detachments of Surrey Rifle Volunteers Esher, Richmond, Wimbledon, Chertsey and Egham.

In succeeding years further detachments of Surrey Rifle Volunteers were formed and added in various parts of the County. The title of the Battalion was changed in July 1880 to 5th Surrey Rifle Volunteers and again in December 1887 to 3rd Volunteer Battalion East Surrey Regiment. Uniforms followed the pattern of the Regular Army 60th Rifles being of full dress form only until the issue of khaki for working purposes in 1901. The value of khaki dress, first used in India, had been enhanced by experience in the South African War in which many members of the Battalion had participated. In recognition of its valuable contribution to the conflict the Battalion was granted the honorary distinction of "*South Africa 1899-1902*". Serving mainly with the Regular East Surrey Regiment and the City Imperial Volunteers, members were present at such actions as Elandslaagte and Allemans Nek as well as being employed with Colonel Rimmington's Mobile Column and on communication and blockhouse duties. They eventually returned to England in 1902, arriving at Southampton in July. Sadly left behind were some of their comrades who had either been killed in action or died of wounds or disease.

1908 saw the formation of the Territorial Force into which the former Volunteer Units were absorbed and the title of 6th Battalion The East Surrey Regiment adopted, later becoming the 1/6th in India in 1915.

The county of Sussex seems to have been popular for training purposes as between 1908 and 1913 camps were held at such places as Brighton, Arundel, Crowborough, Lewes, Eastbourne and Patcham. Within Surrey itself new Drill Halls were opened at Kingston and Richmond in 1910-1911, causing an influx of recruits. In 1913 a drive for recruits, including Recruiting Marches, was instituted leading to an intake of nearly 400 men which brought the Battalion strength to over 900.

A welcome aspect was that 80% of the Battalion volunteered to accept the liability for Foreign Service. This number later increased to 93%, with promises of more to follow, with the result that King George V gave the Battalion the right of "Imperial Service" under its Battle Honours.

New Drill Halls opened at Hersham and Egham brought in more recruits. All were soon to be needed.

At the beginning of August 1914 the Battalion was on exercises on Salisbury Plain but on the 3rd they received orders to cease training and proceed to their homes. Mobilisation orders were received at 9.30pm the following day and within eighteen hours over 98% of the men were at Headquarters. On the 5th August the Battalion, with a strength of 24 officers and 700 other ranks, left Surbiton for the neighbourhood of Chatham. Later in the month it moved to Canterbury. On the 17th October orders were received for the Battalion to proceed to India with a strength of 30 officers and 805 other ranks.

Prior to departure His Majesty the King visited Canterbury to bid farewell to all units of the Home Counties Division under orders to proceed to the East. The Battalion, at the ordered

strength, embarked at Southampton on 29th October under the command of Lieutenant Colonel A P Drayson.

Bombay was reached on 2nd December and on the following day the Battalion entrained for Fyzabad where it formed part of the Allahabad Division. While in training in the vicinity of Mirzapore at Kotwa in early 1915 the Battalion underwent "Kitchener's Test" with commendable results. They left Fyzabad on 14th March 1915 for Rawalpindi which they reached on the 18th. Shortly afterwards they were re-armed with the short Mark III rifle.

During 1915 two drafts, totalling one officer and 48 other ranks, were despatched to The Royal Norfolk Regiment in Mesopotamia while other various details went to the Signal Corps and (sign of the times) to the Flying Corps. A severe outbreak of paratyphoid was suffered in April 1916, resulting in fifty cases of which one proved fatal. In the hot season 50% of the men were attacked by malaria.

By this time the Battalion was very much depleted by the supply of drafts to other units but the situation was remedied when they themselves received drafts from England totalling 7 officers and 390 other ranks, 8 more officers arrived from England in November 1916 and for once the Battalion was over strength in officers. But the drain to Mesopotamia and elsewhere continued, particularly as regards specialists. Still maintaining something of a Surrey connection, a draft of 100 other ranks was despatched to the 1/5th Queen's.

While in India the Battalion received consistently good Inspection Reports. But their stay was not to last. On 1st February 1917 they sailed from Karachi in HMT *Egra* for Aden which they reached on the 7th. There they relieved the 1/4th Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. Headquarters and half a Battalion were then stationed at the Crater and half at Steamer Point. The history of the Aden Campaign had really begun in July 1915. Before then, apart from the possibility of an attack from the sea by the German cruiser *Konigsberg*, things had been quiet both for the inhabitants and the Garrison. But within a few days short of the first anniversary of the declaration of war troops of the Yemen Army Corps of the Turkish Army, under Said Pasha, came through the pass in the hills, visible from Aden, with the evident intention of taking Lehej which they did. Urgent despatch of troops from Aden was too late to save the situation and the soldiers had to return from whence they had come. In the boiling heat of the desert there were many casualties from sheer exhaustion.

The Turks occupied Sheik Othman, 10 miles from Aden, but were soon driven out when reinforcing troops arrived from Egypt. From this time on no important changes took place in the military situation, apart from a few minor offensive operations, so there had been virtually no alterations by the time the 1/6th East Surreys arrived.

Flying Column duties were commenced at Halwan in February 1917. Commencing with "C" Company it was operated on a Company rotation basis. On 27th September 1917 a political mission was despatched to Shukra, a small town of about 5000 inhabitants on the Arabian coast some sixty miles east of Aden. The mission was escorted by one officer and 50 other ranks of the Battalion. Following a demand for assistance from the Sheik of Shukra further troops were sent and from then on until the end of the year there was almost continual activity against the Turks in the region, particularly around Sheik Othman and Hatum. Besides the East Surreys several other units were involved including the Malay States Guides Mountain Battery, the 38th Dogras and the 7th Rajputs. The Turks were shelled by artillery at the Wadi River and Hatum Ridge.

A congratulatory report on operations by the General Officer Commanding Aden Field Force included the comment. "the reconnaissance of Hatum by the East Surreys under Lieutenant Colonel Drayson was particularly useful". For

actions on 20th and 22nd December, Company Sergeant Major W Hawkins and Sergeant W Featherstone received the Distinguished Conduct Medal and Military Medal respectively, both having shown personal examples of bravery and coolness under fire.

Heavy fighting took place around Hatum on 5th January 1918 resulting in casualties of 2 officers wounded, 2 other ranks killed and 22 wounded, of whom 2 died later. For his part in this action L/Cpl G Privett received the Military Medal, having brought his Lewis gun into action under heavy enemy machine-gun fire. On the morning of 8th January 1918 the Battalion embarked in HMT *Aronda* for Bombay which it reached on the 11th and where they received orders to proceed to Agra for garrison duties. Major General J M Stewart expressed his regret at losing the Battalion from Aden while His Excellency the Commander in Chief India welcomed their return. Both paid tribute to the work they had done in Aden.

Arriving in Agra they relieved the 1/5th The Hampshire Regiment. Lieutenant Colonel A P Drayson, as Senior Officer in Agra, took over command of the station in March and remained as such until 15th December 1918 when Agra was formed into a brigade on account of the great increase in the strength of the station. The garrison alone consisted of 10,000 troops. This number was unfortunately reduced by sickness when an influenza epidemic resulted in 300 cases in the Battalion, 14 deaths occurred in one week. This was followed by an outbreak of smallpox which resulted in one death.

Annual Inspection Reports on the Battalion in 1918 and 1919 paid tribute to its excellent standard of efficiency. Internal troubles in India in March 1919 resulted in the Battalion being called on for security duties and in May the Afghan War broke out. Many personnel were then engaged on railway transport work and escort duties. At the end of July orders were received to proceed to the Frontier but these were later cancelled.

Demobilisation for the Battalion was delayed as it was required for Army of Occupation duties but on the 21st October 1919, as a complete unit, it left for England on HMT *China*.

Before leaving India the Battalion received an appreciative farewell message from General C C Monro, Commander-in-Chief in India who in his closing remarks commented, "As an old Commander of a Territorial Division at home I am proud to have again been associated with this Force in India". Remembering those who would not return, the Battalion placed a Memorial Tablet in St George's Church, Agra.

The Battalion disembarked at Devonport on 9th November 1919 and were dispatched to a dispersal camp at Sandling, finally proceeding to demobilisation on 11th and 12th November 1919. Warm welcomes home were extended at Kingston and Richmond where representatives of the Battalion were entertained to luncheon by the Mayors and Corporations of the two Royal Boroughs. A cadre was retained at Kingston for cleaning up duties and this had been completed before the end of the year. The 1/6th Battalion The East Surrey Regiment could then thankfully think that "for them the war was over". They could also proudly reflect that they had done their duty and done it well, leaving behind them proud memories and records of service which in later years their successors would be able to follow.

The Regiment returns to Aden 1961

Although the 1/6th East Surreys thankfully shook the dust of Aden off their regulation Army boots in January 1918 it was not the end of the Surrey connection there. Under orders for Aden in late 1960, the main Advance Party of the 1st Battalion The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment left England on 7th November 1960 aboard the TT *Dunera* to be followed by the balance of the party by air on the 23rd. The move in itself was

indicative of the increasing shift from sea to air travel for trooping purposes.

After Christmas leave at home the main body of the Battalion embarked on 4th January 1961 in TT *Dunera* who was making her last voyage as a troopship. The Commanding Officer was Lieutenant Colonel M A Lowry MC, with Major J B C Palmer MC as Second-in-Command, Captain M N O'D Pereira as Adjutant and WOI (RSM) F B Oram as Regimental Sergeant Major. The Battalion arrived at Aden on 22nd January to relieve the 1st Battalion The Royal Highland Fusiliers. Accommodation was in Waterloo Lines, Singapore Lines and, for B Company, the outstation of Mukeiras near the Northern frontier with the Yemen.

When 1st Queen's Surreys arrived the Internal Security situation and the border were generally quiet although there were a few outbreaks of violence. For its one year tour of duty the Battalion was organised into HQ Company, Training Company and three Rifle Companies each of which consisted of three Rifle Platoons and a Support Platoon of 3-inch Mortars, Mobat Anti-Tank Guns and Vickers MMGS. The Battalion was based in Aden with a detached Company at Mukeiras, each Rifle Company staying at the outstation in turn. In addition to the Company group the garrison consisted of a Company of Aden Protectorate Levies and an RA Troop. Accommodation was tented and entertainment limited.

In Aden proper, a stringent programme of acclimatisation and fitness training was soon adopted and on Sobraon Day, a Guard of Honour was mounted at Government House for Earl Mountbatten of Burma. In early March a large scale amphibious exercise was mounted involving HMS *Bulwark*, two RM Commandos, C Battery Royal Horse Artillery the 3rd Dragoon Guards and the 11th Hussars. Many useful lessons in desert warfare were learned and new tactical techniques were practised for the first time.

There were further connections with ships of the Royal Navy, sometimes official and sometimes social. The Glorious First of June was celebrated as usual with dinners, parties, a beach fair, donkey racing and sports.

The Kuwait crisis in June and July meant many extra heavy tasks for the Battalion including staging of troops and freight and rebuilding a transit camp. Major C S Fitzpatrick and four other ranks represented the Battalion in Kuwait and Bahrain.

During the hot weather the completion of the new air conditioned Barracks at Waterloo Lines in July brought much appreciated climatic relief. From then on until November much time was given to the Tercentenary Celebrations. The Officers' Mess at this time commissioned a large silver tray bearing the signatures of all serving members. Much of the preparatory work for the celebrations fell on RSM Collman who had relieved RSM Oram on his departure to the 4th Battalion (TA).

The second Christmas in Aden was appropriately celebrated and soon afterwards the Battalion stood down from the Kuwait commitment and prepared to leave Aden for Hong Kong. They left in HMT *Oxfordshire* on 19th February and arrived in Hong Kong on 5th March to take over from the 1st Battalion The Royal Northumberland Fusiliers. This was the last troopship voyage by a Battalion of the Regiment since such movement ceased at the end of 1962 when the vessels *Oxfordshire* and *Nevassa* were returned to their owners. Ironically the final voyage to Hong Kong saw the 110th anniversary of the loss of the troopship *Birkenhead* on 26th February 1852. Happily no such disaster befell the 1st Battalion The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment.

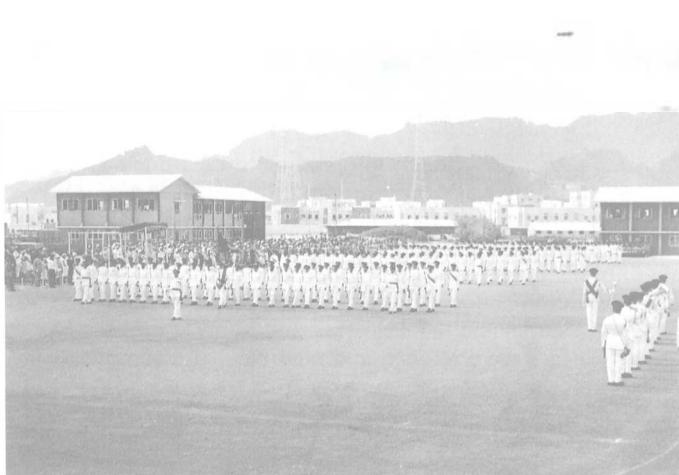
Source: "History of the Regiment 1959-1966".

LW

From the past



Maalla, Aden 1961



Trooping the Colour, 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment, Waterloo Lines, Aden 1961

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A Bassingbourn "Belle"

Many of our readers may recall Regimental associations with Bassingbourn in Cambridgeshire but if any of them watched the dramatised documentary film "Memphis Belle" on television in July they may not have realised that there was also a connection with the location.

In 1942 Bassingbourn airfield was taken over by the United States Air Force for operational purposes. "Memphis Belle" was a Flying Fortress bomber whose crew was the first to complete a tour of duty of twenty-five missions. They were presented with decorations by Brigadier Ira Eaker, Commander of the 8th Air Force Bomber Group, at a special ceremony laid on for the benefit of the Press.

RF

Source:- "British Military Airfields then and now" by Leo Marriott.

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Correction

In a letter to the Editor regarding the column "So There We Were" in the November 1999 edition, Lieutenant Colonel John Wyatt corrects my assertion that the 1st Queen's were on North West Frontier duties in India on the outbreak of war in 1939. He correctly states that they were in Allahabad, United Provinces, at the time and did not move to Razmak, North West Frontier until October 1940. So "There They Really Were". My thanks to Lieutenant Colonel Wyatt for the correction and my apologies for the error.

HMS Excellent

Our Regiment has had long connections with the Royal Navy, particularly HMS *Excellent* on Whale Island at Portsmouth. So what do we know of this distinguished establishment and its products?

In the late 18th and early 19th Centuries Naval gunners were not lacking in courage or determination in serving and firing their guns, as such battles as the Glorious First of June and Trafalgar were to prove. But there was no standardisation of training, much of it being left to individual ships' captains.

In 1829, with the idea of improving things, Commander George Smith sent the Admiralty a "prospect of a plan for the improvement of naval gunnery, without any additional expense". (Doubtless these last words added force to the argument). As a result authorisation was given in the following year for a gunnery school to be established at Portsmouth with Smith as the first captain.

Location was in the ship HMS *Excellent* which was moored in Portsmouth Harbour from whence guns could safely be fired across the mudflats without endangering anyone. Here all aspects of gunnery, weapons and ammunition were taught. The status of gunners was recognised and improved by the grant of special increments of pay.

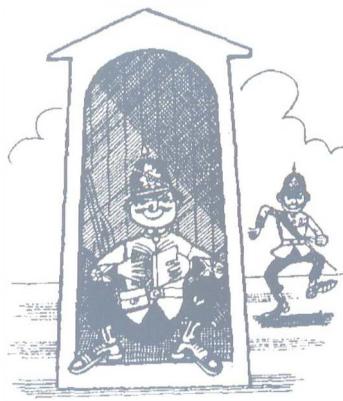
Captain Thomas Hastings, who succeeded Smith in 1832, was an outstanding leader, teaching by example rather than pressure. When guns were being fired a red flag was flown over the mudflats. Used shot was recovered from the flats, at a profit, by civilian scavengers or "mudlarks" who sold it back to the Royal Navy. One such family engaged in this business were aptly named "Grub".

By the 1880s the gunnery school was outgrowing its old floating habitat and was gradually moving ashore on to Whale Island which had been constructed by convict labour from mud and spoil excavated from the new docks and dockyard extensions. The move was completed by 1891 and the establishment remained in occupation thereafter, producing many generations of gunners and gunnery officers. The gunnery officers were a breed unto themselves. Belted and gaitered, hard as nails and tough as old boots and with voices like foghorns they could strike terror into many a young Naval rating's heart. But from the writer's own experience they were men who commanded the utmost respect. Masters of their craft, they were always discipline wise fair.

The story must end on an amusing note. The writer's first Naval Christmas during the war was spent at HMS *Royal Arthur*, a training establishment at Skegness. The Gunnery Officer was a bull of a man who was "GAB AND GAITERS" personified. As we ate our breakfast he stormed into the dining hall, jumped on to a chair and roared, "Today is Christmas Day. As hard as I am, as tough as I am, today I tell you BE HAPPY". And we were - "Guns" had said so.

RF

Source - *The Oxford Illustrated History of The Royal Navy*.



Book Reviews

Pen & Sword Books Limited



Long Range Desert Group by David Lloyd Owen

This book was first published under the title *Providence their Guide* in 1980, and is being republished this year to mark the disbandment of The Long Range Desert Group Association, which was formed by David Lloyd Owen in 1945 and of which he has been Chairman since its formation.

Formed in 1940 at the opening of the Western Desert Campaign the purpose of the Group was to penetrate behind enemy lines, gather intelligence information and engage in sabotage and disruptive activities.

David Lloyd Owen joined the Group in 1941 and two years later, at the age of twenty-six, he took command of the unit until its disbandment in 1945. The author, a distinguished Queen's officer, educated at Winchester College and the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, was familiar with the Middle East, having served with 2nd Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in Palestine in 1938-39.

One of his first duties with the Group was road watching. By keeping concealed observations on coast roads much useful information could be gathered from the movements of enemy traffic, its amount, types, nationalities, vehicle marking and even the headgear of the personnel. Lloyd Owen is the first to admit that in the initial stages he was very inexperienced when compared with his colleagues.

Vehicles had to be used with care. On one occasion, sinking into deep mud nearly led to capture and in any case caused much exertion in unloading vehicles to effect their extrication. Some operations were carried out in co-operation with the Special Air Service, but generally the two organisations kept apart, their roles being completely different. From North Africa the Group went to the Dodecanese, Italy and the Balkans. A new specification for their role became effective.

They were to operate in small patrols for distances of up to 100 miles behind enemy lines and carrying their supplies on their backs. High degrees of physical fitness and resistance were therefore required. German and Greek languages had to be learnt.

As the war progressed, increasingly combined operations involving the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force took place. In June 1945, despite being considered for further service in Asia, the Group was disbanded, proud of the work they had done and of the service they had rendered to their country. Rommel

himself said that they had inflicted more damage on his Afrika Corps than any other unit of comparable strength.

Their worth was reflected in the future career of their Commanding Officer. Major General David Lloyd Owen CB., DSO., OBE., MC., in post-war years held appointments that included those of Military Assistant to the High Commissioner in Malaya (1952-53), last Commanding Officer of 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment 1951-1959, Commander 24 Infantry Brigade in Kenya (1962-64), and GOC Cyprus District and Near East Land Forces (1966-69).

It is a most interesting book full of fascinating stories of this special Force and will be of interest to many of our readers who served during the Second World War in Africa, Italy and the Balkans and to the many Queensmen who served with General David Lloyd Owen.

The Long Range Desert Group is a book that can grace any bookshelf with distinction. ISBN-0-85052-712-0 - Price £19.95 - Hardback, Illustrated, 238 pages.

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Pen & Sword Books Limited



JOCK LEWES Co-Founder of the SAS by John Lewes Foreword by Lord Jellicoe

Credit for the formation in 1941 of the Special Air Service, today the World's most respected special force unit, has traditionally been given to David Stirling. This, as those 'in the know' acknowledge, is only part of the truth. Jock Lewes, a young Welsh Guards officer, was at least equally responsible and yet, until now, his character and contribution have never been closely studied.

Drawing on hitherto unpublished personal journals, this account of Lewes's life, tragically cut short on 31 December 1941 during a SAS deep penetration patrol, makes for compelling reading. Brought up in the Australian outback where he learnt self-discipline and self-reliance, he went on to have a brilliant career at Oxford University; as President of the Boat Club he was instrumental in the dramatic 1937 victory against Cambridge. Thereafter he spent time in pre-war Berlin where he was at first seduced by Hitler's socialist policies and by a young Nazi supporter, one of the two loves of his life, but soon became disillusioned, establishing links with opposition factions.

Despite his lack of military experience, Jock quickly proved himself a radical tactical thinker and brilliant leader and trainer of men, a rare combination. He also developed, and gave his name to, the lethally effective Lewes Bomb. His exceptional talents found expression in the development of the SAS concept and ethos. Without his and David Stirling's partnership there would have been no Special Air Service; as Stirling later chivalrously admitted, 'Jock Lewes could far more genuinely claim to be the founder of the SAS than I'.

As well as being the long overdue biography of this highly gifted and complex individual, *JOCK LEWES, Co-founder of the SAS*, is a major contribution to the bibliography of British Special Forces.

ISBN: 0-85052-743-0 - Price: £19.95 - Hardback, Illustrated, 224 Pages.

Rupert in the nick

As you read this a convoy of trucks is making its way from the south coast towards the museum with a fresh supply of 'Rupert's Progress'. The book has been such a tear-away success that it has been difficult to keep up with the demand. Double shifts are now the order of the day at the printers. So if you want to get your own copy and avoid having to cadge off a friend – do get your order in as soon as possible. The museum is under strict orders to operate a 'first come first served' principle and no amount of bribery will persuade them to deviate from this rule. Those in the know now admit that the price of £5.00 plus .50p for postage and packing was a big mistake and it should have been set much higher. So get your order in before they come to their senses. All profits go to the Museum fund. This is another mistake, since I argued most strongly for the entire trunk of loot to be made over to the 'Rupert Retirement Fund.' But 'you know who' shouted at me and threatened all sorts of alterations to my delicate little body. So I gave in. A special order form has been included in this Newsletter.

The other day I was persuaded to go on a visit to a Young Offenders Institute. Or to you and me a jail for those not old enough to be sent to an adult prison. I spent about three hours visiting every part of the prison. Wherever you went there were doors to be unlocked and locked. I suppose that is not so surprising in a prison, but even so the locking and unlocking is quite constant. Every authorised visitor and member of staff carries a bunch of keys, together with a whistle, on a chain around their waist. The inmates were of two kinds – those on remand and those under sentence, with those on remand being allowed to wear their own clothes. The cells measured about nine feet by six feet and this was for two inmates. Each cell had two bunks and a lavatory. Most of their time was spent in these cells with time out for education, exercise and 'association'. The latter seemed to consist of playing pool on one of the landings. It all seemed very depressing and somewhat pointless, the only real achievement being that some very unpleasant young men were kept away from society. All in all it was a dismal depressing place and I was glad to see the back of it.

I liked the look of the 20ft high wire fences topped with razor wire and those cells with the peep holes seemed a very good idea but best of all was the idea of keeping them in small groups where they couldn't be a threat to anyone – none of these things had been available to me when I commanded the Junior Soldiers Company at Canterbury. But what I had, which no civvy nick could match, was 4 Warrant Officers. There are not many Company Commanders who have four Warrant Officers in their Company – I was privileged and lucky. First there was the Bandmaster Don Pryce and with him was the Band Sergeant Major Brian Matlock. The young Drummers were taken care of by 'Drummie' Clark MBE (his brother was Bandmaster of 5 Queen's). The Company Sergeant Major was Don Lay who had taken over from Alec Palmer. Now, with that lot you don't really need razor wire.

Junior Soldiers stayed in the Company from the age of 15 ½ until they were 17 ½ and if I give the impression that they were a difficult bunch of malcontents – I lie. They were sensationaly keen, active young men, with a sense of humour that sometimes cut to the bone. Given the opportunity of education, sport, hobbies and adventure they blossomed into young soldiers with character, and I hope we passed on young men to their battalions who would in their turn become a credit to the Regiment. Mind you they weren't angels all the time.

"Right Sergeant Major who have we got for orders today?" "Just one case Sir – he was absent from education." CSM Lay then marched in the unfortunate who gave me a long, and I

have to say a very moving account of why he had not been able to attend his education class. "*It was this dog sir. I was trying to get to the education centre, I really was, when I came on this dog – real big it was Sir. Well, I tried to walk slowly past it, when it suddenly went for me and bit my arm. My arm really hurt and it was bleeding, so I went to the medical centre and the Doctor bandaged it for me – Sir.*" After a couple of additional questions I asked that he should wait outside. I rang the doctor and he confirmed that the lad had definitely been bitten on the arm by a dog. Re-enter accused. Case dismissed.

Two weeks passed and again the young man was brought before me on a similar charge. The dog had apparently got it in for our friend and he had been assaulted for a second time, this time the other arm, which he had apparently been using to defend himself. Once more I contacted the doctor. He assured me that there was nothing suspicious and that, strange as it sounded, he had once more been bitten by a dog. This time I asked CSM Lay to wait outside and invited the lad to take a seat. For some time I just looked and then I quietly suggested to the young man that what had actually happened was that he was deliberately trying to avoid education classes. He admitted that this was true. He then went on to admit that he had caused the wounds by biting himself. Sadly, we later found that the Army had missed the fact that he had a history of mental illness. I suggested to the Doctor that he should go on a bite recognition course. He was not amused.

Some things were sent to try me. New regulations about pay and conditions of service had been published and the order was that the Company Commander should personally address their soldiers and explain the new rules. All well and good you may think, exactly what a Company Commander should do. The small fly in this particular ointment was that 2 days before I had had an operation on my tongue and I was left with 5 or 6 stitches in the offending organ which made speech somewhat difficult. I stood up to address the boys in the Band Practice room. They looked eager and expectant. I began – "*Oigh um rekired to ret you know abart fe noo pay regoorations.*" It was proving harder than I thought and the concentration was beginning to make me dribble. I looked at my audience – what was wrong with them – here was a really good opportunity for them to make fun of my delivery and yet not even the smallest titter, just fierce wide eyed concentration. I gave up the unequal struggle to make myself understood and handed over to CSM Lay. Sometime later I found out that CSM Lay had spoken sweetly to the little angels about their future on this planet, if there should be the slightest sign that any of the little darlings found my presentation anything but normal. I thought things had been a little too good to be true.

We went climbing and canoeing in Wales; we went cycling and camping in Belgium; we went sailing in Dover; we played football, hockey, cricket, squash and rugby; we built cars, furniture and boats, went fishing and developed films in the dark room. In other words life was as full as possible. The climax of the year was probably the 'Open Day' when about 10,000 people could be expected to visit the Depot and they expected a show. All through the year I would have been booking events and getting small committees to be responsible for various parts of the show. One year the Junior Soldiers, as their contribution, built a driverless Landrover. They had doctored an old Landrover so that it could be steered and controlled by a very small, concealed driver, using levers. We would then have the usual clown act where the apparent driver parted company with the vehicle but it managed to continue on its intricate way. All good fun.

Each year I would squat on the edge of one of the upstairs windows overlooking the arena and from this position do the commentary. Being commentator was a varied task. One moment you were getting the crowd to look out for the free fall

parachutists and the next you had to take a roving microphone and interview the bathing beauties for the 'Miss Canterbury' competition run by the local newspaper. You can see it wasn't all fun.

In my final year I was asked to be the commentator for the Dover Tattoo. Fame at last. This was a very professional affair and I even had my own commentary box. That particular evening the guest of Honour was Sir Robert Menzies, one time Prime Minister of Australia. I would have to look to my laurels. I was at my desk looking over the commentary script for details of the next event. I could see they were lined up behind the arena gates and ready to enter the arena – my finger hovered over the microphone button. At that moment a friend of mine looked in to the commentary box and when he saw the name of the next event – "The Romford Drum and Trumpet Corps" – said "Golly that's not easy to say!" His timing was superb. I now hesitated and in that instant I was lost. All I could think of was "The Dromford Rum and Crumpet Corps." Now once an idea like that hits you, there is no going back to the real thing. I just could not speak. All eyes were on me. Like a dying man I pushed the microphone button and shrieked "Here they come!" When, after the show, I was introduced to Sir Robert he said little but I distinctly saw a grey bushy eyebrow raise itself quizzically and he let out a small "Hurrumph." I wonder what that meant?

I have a dream. One day. All young men, whether white or black can work together. I have this dream – that one day – these young men can be taught by men with the calibre of those who used to be instructors at the Junior Soldiers Company. That they could then be shown that there is so much more to life than they ever imagined and that there is a much better alternative to crime, drugs, violence and graffiti. I have a dream that our politicians can see what could be done to encourage the young men languishing in prison with constructive alternatives. Not 'short sharp shocks' or other gung-ho phrases but a regular way of training and correction that would become the norm for any youth who strayed from the standards set by society. Funny – there used to be something called National Service and in those days the crime rate was less than one half of what it is today. There was much to be said for a scheme which filled that awkward transition from school to getting a job. It also allowed the individual to see other people and other sights, sometimes even other lands and learn a great deal about himself. One day.

But hang on a minute. Now just whoa there. What was it like to be one of those Junior Soldier's. Were you in the Junior Soldiers Company at Canterbury? If so, let's hear from you and find out what it was really like. Maybe I have painted too rosy a picture of life as a JS – well here is your opportunity to tell it like it was.

Rupert

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Slouching

An unusual side effect in England from the Boer War was that in 1903 the Devon Constabulary, together with three other Forces, adopted the bush slouch hat as part of their uniform in place of the normal helmet which was losing favour as allegedly being too similar to the Prussian military model.

At the funeral of General Sir Redvers Buller VC at Crediton, Devon, the police detachment, commanded by the unusually ranked "Police Sergeant Major" wore "slouches" so doubtless the old veteran of South Africa would have been pleased.

Return to the helmet was made in 1908.

RF

Source - Policing the Peninsular by Simon Dell MBE

Admiral Earl Howe

More than 200 years ago, Langar born Earl Richard Howe vanquished the French Fleet at the Battle of the Glorious First of June.

And every year, a small celebration is held at Langar Hall, a high class restaurant and hotel, built on the site of his great mansion home.



Victor: Admiral Earl Howe

The gathering this year included Langar Hall's present owner Imogen Skirving, naval historian Stephen Howarth, Commander Judith Swann former commanding officer of HMS Sherwood; and acting Cdr Rachel Farrand, the present CO.

The celebration is organised by the 1805 Club, a group dedicated to preserving monuments, memorials and artefacts associated with Lord Nelson and the Royal Navy in the Georgian era. Before lunching in Langar Hall's restaurant, a short service is held in the nearby village church where Earl Howe is buried. The Naval Prayer is read and then champagne and laurel leaves are sprinkled on his tomb.

Although Earl Howe came from landlocked Notts, his naval career is one of the most remarkable on record.

A Captain at the age of 20, he saw action in the War of Austrian Succession (1739-48) with France and Spain and forged his reputation during the Seven Years War. He was treasurer of the navy before becoming an admiral in 1770 during the war of American Independence.

He later took command of the Channel Fleet and then, in 1783 became first Lord of the Admiralty under Prime Minister Pitt the Younger. By 1793, when Britain once again went to war with France, Howe was in his sixties and of uncertain health, but King George begged him to take command of his fleet, culminating in the Battle of the Glorious First of June in 1794 when the British Fleet tried to prevent a grain convoy from America getting through to the starving French.

The battle was a triumph of naval strategy and directly influenced the tactics later employed successfully by Nelson. But the battle's principal aim was not fulfilled as the grain got through.

Because of his failing health, Howe was forced to return to shore duties at a time when discontent among ordinary Seaman led to the Spithead mutiny. Howe's concern for the men led to an honourable solution and no victimisation of the mutineers. In 1797 "Black Dick" Howe as he was known, became the first naval officer to be made a Knight of the Garter, Lord Lewin, was appointed.

Lord Howe died only a year later and his body was brought from London to Langar for burial where an elaborate tomb was created. A monument can also be found in Westminster Abbey. The family left Langar Hall soon after and for 20 years it stood empty. It was pulled down in 1820 and the present hall was built in 1835, incorporating part of the old Kitchen.

Acknowledgments to the Nottinghamshire Evening Post for permission to reproduce this article.

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Private Janes Progress

An interesting document has come into the Editor's possession, as such documents frequently do, and, in diary form, it tells the story of one man's experiences in the Second World War, as a fighting soldier and an escaped prisoner of war. The diary was found after the old soldier's death in 1998 by his son.

Private Janes of The East Surrey Regiment had been living at home in Claygate, Surrey, before being called up for Army service in January 1940. One strange feature is that before his departure from civilian life he had to make arrangements for the safe stowage and maintenance of his privately owned firearms, including a .45 revolver. Firearms seem to have been something of an obsession with him as throughout his story there are frequent references to his handling and acquisition of weapons and ammunition, most of it extra to his military issues.

He entered the Army at Richmond Barracks where he went through the usual confusing joining routines and from there went to Chatham, a town with a strong Naval and Royal Marine presence. After kitting up, further transition was made to Chattenden. Food and living conditions were not particularly good and were not improved by the ghastly cold winter weather of early 1940. A period of heavy training followed and, despite himself, Private Janes began to find that he was enjoying Army life.

But England was not to be graced by his presence for long and soon there were rumours of forthcoming embarkation for France. At about this time Janes was appointed batman to a Captain a position which entailed some extra duties but which also had the attractions of certain perks and privileges. Due to the comparative proximity of his home in Surrey, Janes was able to enjoy a few leave spells. These revealed certain inclinations towards the company of members of the opposite sex.

Inevitably the day came when the coast of England was being viewed over the stern of a departing troopship and Janes and his comrades landed at Le Havre on 28th April. Within weeks, following the invasion of the Low Countries and France by the German Army, the newly arrived soldiers found themselves involved in the retreat towards the coast. Conditions were horrendous. Death and destruction were everywhere. Roads, clogged with fleeing refugees, on foot and in all forms of transport, were littered with dead bodies of humans and animals, particularly horses. Finally, in the shattered ruins of St Valery En Caux, the British Forces were forced to surrender to a vastly more powerful enemy and Janes became a prisoner of war. A march into captivity began but for Janes it was not, as such, to be completed.

Passing through a French village, he was literally snatched from the ranks by a young girl who took him behind a wall where she gave him some civilian clothes to put on. Suitably dressed, she then took him to a house where its numerous occupants sheltered him and gave him coffee and rum. His time as an "escapee" had begun.

Passed on to another shelter he had an early unpleasant alarm when two Germans knocked at the door looking for billets. He escaped detection by jumping into bed. (He later became quite good at "bed hopping", usually with charming female companions). The house was run by a certain Monsieur and Madame Terry and soon other escaped prisoners arrived. Monsieur Teddy was actually British and he was subsequently arrested and sent to Germany but the organisation continued.

After the surrender of France the house was in a comparatively unoccupied area and German security seems to

have been lax. Janes and others moved about quite openly and he was able to buy food and drink, often of the alcoholic variety. Jane's liaisons with French women and girls were so numerous and involved that it is difficult to keep track of them. Other escapees were obviously similarly minded and this led to tensions. One girl became pregnant by another soldier, a Royal Engineer, and this eventually led to an arranged abortion.

Scraps of news of the war in general were obtained via concealed radios. Janes was pleased to hear of Royal Air Force fighter and Bomber successes against the enemy but was saddened when he heard of the loss of HMS Hood as his brother, who did not survive, was in her. German initial successes in the invasion of Russia were depressing but the feelings were reversed in tempo with the news of the successful Russian resistances at Moscow and Stalingrad. But things were moving towards repatriation for Janes and his colleagues. (At one stage he seemed a bit hesitant about this which, considering the romantic time he was having, is understandable).

Following arrangements by a British Intelligence Officer, however, the day of departure arrived. Surprisingly, by this time Janes was in possession of a gun and ammunition. He also seems to have been drinking quite heavily and the two things together could have been disastrous, but luck was on his side. The first stage of the journey, for what was by now a small group of escapees, was by foot and then by train to Tours-a-toun near the demarcation line between Occupied and Unoccupied France. There German troops and Servicemen and women abounded but there was no challenge to the escapers. After further rail travel via Toulouse and Marseilles, a long and hard climb by foot into the mountains of the Pyrenees en route for Spain began.

Guides were of doubtful loyalty and were mercenary minded. The physical and mental hardships began to take various medical tolls of the weary travellers but they pressed on. The beauty of the mountainous ridges in sunlight was noted by Janes but probably at that time not fully appreciated.

Having arrived eventually in Spain the escapees gave themselves up to the Civil Guard. They were not exactly welcomed. Under escort, and lodged in various uncomfortable and insanitary places of detention, they were transported to the border with Gibraltar, where to their utter joy and relief they were handed over to the British authorities.

After going through formal entry and repatriation routines, they awaited a ship to take them home to England. Most of the waiting time seems to have been spent in getting drunk, although Janes had a short spell in hospital suffering from athlete's foot. It was while he was in Gibraltar that news of America's entry into the war was announced. Christmas was spent on the Rock but shortly afterwards embarkation was made in the Polish ship *Batory* which was to take them home.

In post war days the *Batory* was the subject of an international incident when she was stopped from leaving the Port of London with an illegally held Polish prisoner on board. But that was all to come in the future. As far as Janes was concerned he was a willing passenger and was "going the right way".

Arriving in England he went through the usual transit and medical routines, had some leave, renewed acquaintances with past lady loves and eventually went to the Depot at Canterbury, apparently destined for The Royal Suffolk Regiment. Private Janes was home. He had had an adventurous experience of war and one feels thankful that he saw fit to record it all on paper.

Dunkirk - Retreat to Glory

Dunkirk - The name still stands embellished in British history and in the memories of many people of an older generation as part of what Winston Churchill described as our country's "finest hour". Ironically Dunkirk was a retreat and a technical defeat, so what was it that made it so famous and significant and gave rise to the term "the Dunkirk spirit"? In one word - heroism. Heroism of the soldiers who fought their way back to the beaches, heroism in the way they waited and embarked, heroism of those manning the vessels that snatched them to safety, and finally the heroism of those who remained behind, sacrificing themselves, often fatally, that others might survive.

Both The Queen's and Surreys were deeply involved. Late on the evening of 28th May, after heavy fighting, the 1/5th Queen's were told to move via Brigade HQ to Mont de Cats where the 44th Division were to concentrate. All transport was to be left behind and companies were to move independently. Mont de Cats was reached in early morning where defensive positions were taken up.

1/6th Queen's made their way through heavily congested roads. Originally intended to muster at Mont de Cats, the order was later cancelled and they were instructed to go straight to Dunkirk. Transport was blown up by the Royal Engineers. Carriers were heavily shelled and bombed. They reached Dunkirk at about 1600hrs on 29th May. Beaches were lined with men while off shore was a motley collection of ships and craft, some sunk and wrecked by the heavy air attacks to which they were being subjected. The effects of bombing and shelling on shore were lessened to a degree by the soft sand.

At Mont de Cats the 1/5th Queen's were under heavy attack from the air and from artillery and mortar fire. Lieutenant Colonel Palmer was wounded and 2nd Lieutenant R Hopkins was killed. There were numerous other casualties.

At 0800 hrs on 29th May the acting commander of 131 Brigade, received orders for an immediate move to Dunkirk so at 1000 hrs the 1/5th Queen's thankfully left the Mont de Cats en route for Dunkirk via Poperinghe. Through mixed towns and countryside, and under constant attack, they eventually reached Uxen, five miles east of Dunkirk, where, completely exhausted, they rested.

Dawn on 30th May found the 1/6th Queen's still on the beaches at Dunkirk and very hungry. Lieutenant Colonel Hughes and Captain James found some food but there was no time to eat it as the greater part of the battalion was quickly and thankfully embarked on the destroyer HMS *Malcolm* which landed them at Dover two hours later. (HMS *Malcolm* survived the war and was finally scrapped at Barrow in 1945). The remainder of the battalion, further down the beach, escaped by rowing themselves out to transports. *Perfect discipline prevailed throughout. During the same time (May 30th) the 1/5th Queen's, marching through areas of heavy devastation and existing on bully beef and biscuits, reached Malo Les Bains and finally the beaches where the majority were embarked by 2100 under Major East, and reached Dover at 0600 on May 31st. Several smaller parties embarked later in the day.

*Two years later, on the 1st June 1942 the following message was received by Lieutenant Colonel Palmer from Admiral Sir G H D'Oyly Lyon, Commander-in-Chief, the Nore. "As a former officer of HMS *Excellent*, it gives me great pleasure to receive and return the compliments of the day. The bearing, good order and discipline of The Queen's Royal Regiment on its return from Dunkirk was an example and inspiration to us in the Royal Navy". It is understood that this high tribute was particularly concerned with Major East's party of the 1/5th Battalion.

The strength of the 1/5th Queen's on 31st May was 23 officers and 604 other ranks. Considering the heavy fighting, losses had not been severe; one officer (Second-Lieutenant R Hopkins) and 19 other ranks had been killed, 4 officers (Captains H B

Watson and A G Neale and Second-Lieutenants H C Carpenter and R O Jenkins) and 56 men wounded, and 45 men missing.

Honours gained by the two Battalions during the campaign were:

1/5th Queen's: Major Lord Sysonby, the DSO; Captain H Merrimen and Second-Lieutenant D U Clark, the MC; Sergeant Wynn, the DCM; and Lieutenant Colonel G V Palmer, Major L C East, Second Lieutenant R P Cowen, Rev R T Brode, and RSM Coldman, Mentioned in Despatches.

1/6th Queen's: Lieutenant Colonel I T P Hughes, the DSO; Second Lieutenants A J S Cox and G L M Works, the MC; and Privates Kershaw and Jones, the MM. In addition Captain A R Trench received the MC and Sergeant Horwood the DCM for a very gallant escape from the Germans. (he later won a posthumous VC in Burma in 1944 as a Lieutenant).

On arrival at Dover an excellent organization took charge. Parties were given a meal and entrained at once for many scattered destinations.

Other battalions of the Queen's were also heavily committed, the 2/5th, 2/6th, 2/7th all having active parts to play. As part of the 35th Brigade the 2/5th Queen's reached the Abbeville area on 18th May to be followed there on the 19th by the 2/6th and 2/7th after a confused journey via Arras which had taken them thirteen hours-when they were sustained only by some biscuits.

On the 20th May heavy air raids occurred, followed soon afterwards by the appearance of enemy panzer units. The 2/7th soon came under attack when in position covering the Doullens road. A withdrawal was made to the village of Auchelles where German units swept past. The 2/6th meanwhile were at Drucat. The 2/5th in the region of Bellancourt suffered losses in attempts to cross the Somme. Defensive positions on the Somme proved ineffective against armoured units and heavy bombing which destroyed bridges was also experienced. Withdrawals were eventually made across the river, mainly by swimming, and some men were drowned.

On the evening of 26th May the 2/5th, 2/6th and 2/7th Queen's entrained for Blain from whence they marched to Chateau Port where they were engaged on defensive work before re-entering at Blain for Cherbourg. There they were embarked in SS *Vienna* which took them to Southampton where they arrived on the evening of 7th June before being taken by train to Newcastle.

The 1/7th Queen's were at Bouvelles and training hard when the invasion of Holland and Belgium began. As part of the 50th Division they were ordered to the River Dendre. Crossing the old Vimy battlefield they eventually reached Ninove. The threatening German advance forced them to withdraw across the river, blowing bridges as they went. From then on withdrawal continued in confused circumstances until, via the Bassee Canal which they crossed in barges, Dunkirk was reached. Embarkation was commenced on 30th May and continued throughout the next few days.

Honours awarded to the 1/7th Queen's for the campaign were: Lieutenant Colonel G A Pilleau Mentioned in Despatches. Major R H Senior the DSO, 2nd Lieutenants E H Ibbetson and N J P Hawken the MC. Sgt Baker and Ptes Brook and Prior the MM.

From then on a long period of re-grouping and re-forming began for the Queen's who were later to serve in many and varied parts of the world.

The Surreys were no less heavily involved in the titanic struggle. By the 27th May the 1st Battalion was fighting in the traditional battlefields of Flanders where their predecessors had fought before them in the First World War. The task by now was to make a fighting retreat towards the coast to try and keep open the port of Dunkirk for evacuation purposes. Chaos prevailed along the roads where military troops and traffic

were mixed with civilian refugees, not all going in the same directions. The presence of French cavalry and artillery horses did not make things any easier. The Battalion marched thirty-two miles in twenty-eight hours before, exhausted, they reached the Divisional rendezvous at Crombeke where they were ordered to destroy transport. Colonel Boxshall wisely decided to hang on to vehicles until the last minute. Other stores were destroyed. (On the "plus" side, however, some cases of champagne turned up, allegedly having been donated to the Carrier Platoon, under 2/Lt Jackson, by some Belgian individual!).

On the 30th May the Battalion reached Oostdunkirk and took up defensive positions among the sand dunes. The evacuation process had now begun and orders were received for non essential personnel and those without equipment to leave.

Communications in some form or another were maintained but signallers without equipment were among those to be evacuated. 2nd Lieutenant R C Taylor, Signal Platoon Commander, made his way, under orders, with remnants of the Platoon to Dunkirk to await embarkation, which he personally eventually made by taking a last minute and dangerous jump from a mole into a ship that was already pulling away to sea.

By the 31st May the 1st Battalion was at Coxyde Bains where surprisingly they found some seaside hotels open and still doing trade. But holidaying was not for the Battalion as they were sent forward to reinforce 10 Infantry Brigade near Nieuport where the 1/6th Surreys were in a dangerous position while trying to hold a brickworks. A Battalion counter-attack stabilised the situation. What was left of the depleted battalion mustered in sand dunes at La Panne where one particular dune was christened "Surrey Hill", from there under orders, they went on to Dunkirk where the evacuation was already in full swing.

On arrival Colonel Boxshall and Captain P G E Hill went aboard the destroyer HMS *Esk* to arrange embarkation of their troops but to their fury the vessel immediately departed, carrying them away from their men. Colonel Boxshall demanded to be returned to the shore but his request was refused as the ship's Captain had been ordered to go to the assistance of a sinking ship, *Scotia*, where the lives of many French troops were lost. HMS *Esk* arrived at Dover on the late afternoon of 1st June. (She was sunk two months later when she was mined in the North Sea on 31st August).

Surviving members of the Battalion returned by various means but sadly many others were lost, among them being Lieutenant D A Bird RAMC who had returned from a damaged ship to the beach to look after the wounded and was never seen again. The nucleus of the Battalion re-formed at Axminster in Devon.

During the campaign 1 Surreys had suffered many casualties. 4 officers and 32 other ranks were killed; 6 officers and 146 other ranks were wounded. 3 officers were wounded and captured and 81 other ranks missing of whom the majority were also wounded. In connection with the operations in France and Belgium in 1940 the following awards were made to members of the Battalion, Captain B du B Finch White, Lieut D R Bocquet, the MC. Sergeant W Cole, and PSM J Watson, the DCM.

Mentions-in-Despatches were awarded to:-

RSM A H Adams, Captain T H Bennett, Lt Col R A Boxshall, Captain T A Buchanan, CQMS W G Clarke.
PSM A R Gravett, Pte G P Hofman, Bds E Lenihan.
Pte J W Mays, L/Cpl G F C Moore and Pte J Steer.

The 1/6th Surreys landed in France in April 1940 and went to the Belgian frontier. Taking up a position at Vilvorde, they came under heavy bombing attacks. Withdrawal from Vilvorde took place on 17th May and a stand was made at the Escout Canal on the 19th May. Further resistance to the enemy was made at Neuville on 23rd May but withdrawal was eventually made to Oost-Dunkirk, Nieuport and La Panne. Embarkation was finally made at Dunkirk in a destroyer and a paddle

steamer for transportation to Ramsgate. Lieutenant Colonel Armstrong, who showed zealous leadership throughout the campaign, was awarded the DSO.

The 2/6th Surreys sailed from Southampton on 21st April and their stay in France is described in the Regimental History as a "Tragic One". Constantly on the move between 18th May and 12th June, with few opportunities to fight except in rearguard actions, they showed determination and gallantry at all stages before being ordered into St Valery on 11th June. There, after a spirited resistance they were finally overpowered by superior forces. 15 officers and 251 other ranks were taken prisoner.

The miracle of Dunkirk lay in the evacuation of so many troops by sea by so many and so varied ships, a motley and mixed armada whose numbers included Royal Naval ships, merchant vessels, trawlers, fishing smacks, yachts and pleasure boats and even the fire float Massey Shaw of the London Fire Brigade. But there was a price. Against the 338, 226 men who were rescued (plus 27, 936 who had escaped in preceding days), 68,111 men were lost, either killed, wounded or taken prisoner.

Shipping losses, both Royal and Merchant Navies and civilian craft were estimated at 235 but this can only be an estimate as such, due to the number of unidentified "little ships" perishing. In material, the losses were 2,472 guns, 63,879 vehicles, 20,548 motor cycles, 76,097 tons of ammunition, 416,940 tons of stores and 164,929 tons of petrol.

And for the successful organisation of the whole maritime operation, credit must go to one man to whom full recognition was not given at the time. Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay, Royal Navy, made an incalculable contribution to the Allied effort during the Second World War, not only taking troops off the beaches at Dunkirk in 1940 but in putting them back again at Normandy on D-Day 1944.

Tragically killed in 1945, he never received adequate recognition of his work during his life-time but thankfully it is now, belatedly, being appreciated and plans are being made to commission a commemorative statue of him to stand on the former Admiralty Lookout and Signal Station at Dover Castle. The monument will also commemorate those who lost their lives in the operations. Such courage, stoicism and heroism, corporately and individually, truly deserves to be remembered.

Sources:- Regimental Histories of The Queen's Royal Regiment and The East Surrey Regiment. The Final Years 1938-1959 (East Surrey Regiment). Operations of the 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment in the 1939-45 War by Major P G E Hill. Personal account by 2nd Lieutenant (later Major R C Taylor former Signals Platoon Commander, 1st Battalion The East Surrey Regiment.



Taken by Major W D Marshall June 2000. Sign on an unoccupied shop in Wernigerode, a well preserved ancient town in Eastern Germany.

Army Life 1942 - 1945

The above title could refer to the experiences of many of our readers but an interesting article on the effects on the life of one particular former Queen's man has been received by the Editor.

December 3rd 1942 was a day never to be forgotten by Pte 14374763 Stewart as he was then, as a newly joined recruit, that he marched through the gates of Gibraltar Barracks, Bury St Edmunds. Aged 18 years and 3 months he had previously served in the Home Guard so khaki uniform and heavy boots were not new to him. But they were about the only things that weren't as he was soon to find out. Sauntering nonchalantly across the "main square" on this first day, his thoughts were rudely interrupted by furious shouting which was found to be emanating from the lips of an enraged RSM Chalk about whom more was to be heard later. Other NCO's with whom Pte Stewart quickly made contact in his platoon were Sgt Le Fanue, platoon sergeant, Cpl Berry, the full corporal, and "Injun Joe", the lance corporal. The latter had acquired his nickname from several years service as a regular soldier in India.

After six weeks arduous training, during which everything seemed to be done "at the double", a very smart platoon marched past the CO, Colonel Gadd, at the Passing Out parade and Sgt Le Fanue was complimented on his efforts.

From Gibraltar Barracks the next move was to "West Lines", just down the Newmarket Road, where the recruits became part of The Suffolk Regiment for twelve weeks infantry training. During this course Pte Stewart qualified as a Carrier (Bren) driver and proudly put a "drivers wheel" emblem on his sleeve. One other advantage of being at Bury St Edmunds was that he was near enough to his home to make evening visits on a bicycle and be back before evening roll-call at 10pm.

But the proximity to home was not to last as the next move was to Caterham Guards Barracks in Surrey to become part of the 6th Battalion Beds and Herts Regiment.

At this Guards' Depot Stewart's Army life really seemed to start. The stentorian voice of RSM Chalk seemed but a whisper when compared with the lung bursting efforts of the Guards NCO'S. Pte Stewart was not enamoured of the place, which he describes as "horrid", but even he admits that after weeks of training all the recruits were fitter than at any time in their young lives. Doubtless Pte Stewart wasn't sorry when a move was made from Caterham to Wolfs Castle near Castle Martin, Pembrokeshire. Here he made friends with members of the local congregational chapel and with some local farmers who, amongst other things, were a welcome source of supply of fresh eggs.

At about this time ten fresh, but experienced, "old soldiers" joined the Company, presumably to act as "stiffeners", and their expertise was greatly appreciated and welcomed.

Training in Wales was hard but realistic with live ammunition being used on exercises. Much of the ground traversed was very boggy and one poor trainee lost his Bren gun in the mud. It was never recovered and inevitable disciplinary charges followed. One welcome off-duty break was a trip to the beaches at Milford Haven. Unused to such luxuries, every man suffered a sore back from sunburn.

On a route march a CSM Savage was in charge and he certainly lived up to his name. Offended by the soldiers' rendering of a song which referred to what RSMs could do with passes, he doubled the whole squad all the way back to barracks. The situation worsened when, on arrival, one

unfortunate individual was found to have a loose bootlace. This resulted in "bootlace drill" by numbers. Watching NAAFI girls were displeased at the sight and loudly voiced their opinions on the matter.

The next move, far from Wales, was to the vicinity of Crystal Palace near Penge. An unusual break was the granting of 28 days "agricultural leave" to Pte Stewart to enable him to assist on a local farm. A six weeks signallers course followed and its successful conclusion led to the adornment of crossed flags on the Stewart sleeve.

While at Penge Pte Stewart worshipped at the Congregational Church in Beckenham High Street where he made new friendships, including that of the Minister and his family. Life at Penge came to a close in April 1944, by which time it was generally realised that something important was afoot, and tension heightened when the deadly flying bombs began to arrive. When a notice on the detail board called for volunteers for Dog Handling or Special Services Pte Stewart put his name forward but later withdrew it on receiving advice "*never to volunteer for anything*". The advice was good, as was his reaction to it. The job was mine clearance on the Normandy beaches and none of those who joined the force survived.

Early in June the Battalion marched to East Croydon station and then entrained for a holding area near Newhaven where they were held under active service discipline and mail was subject to censorship. Departure to war was now obviously imminent, it being D Day + 12, so Stewart, Christian minded, read aloud the 91st Psalm from his Bible while others listened. Afterwards the Lord's Prayer was spoken. A sergeant, arriving with movement orders, waited until the prayer was finished.

Dawn the following day saw them on an LST in the Channel en route for France where after some delay, they eventually landed on a Mulberry Harbour. No immediate action was apparent, although distant gunfire could be heard, so the troops moved on to their final destination near Bayeux.

Surprisingly, after a meal, they were allowed into Bayeux where Pte Stewart entered the great cathedral and prayed to the Good Lord for protection in the days ahead.

The following day was to be one of destiny. Marching inland, they were met by a Major of the 1st/6th Queen's who informed them that they were to be reinforcements for the battalions C Company who had suffered heavy losses at Caen. At a stroke, they buried their Beds and Herts insignia and became Queen's men, as Stewart comments, "*part of a very famous Regiment*".

Debussing at dawn the troops moved into their new position, digging themselves in and acting as infantry in support of tanks. Gains made by the tanks in daylight had to be consolidated by infantry at night to prevent enemy counterattacks. It was at this time that the old soldier "Simmo" was killed by Spandau machine gun fire. No padre being available, Pte Stewart read an appropriate burial prayer from his Bible. The Bible was beginning to acquire quite a place and status among the active service troops.

On Cpl Bob Casey being wounded by machine gun fire, treacherously delivered under the cover of a white flag, Pte Stewart became L/Cpl (unpaid).

Listening and fighting patrols became a necessity sometimes with either amusing or tragic results. Mysterious bumping on one of the former at night revealed a farmer milking his cows. A Corporal, returning from one of the latter, was shot by one of his own sentries when he failed to answer a challenge.

A welcome relief was a visit to a mobile bath unit where clean underclothes were issued. An added bonus was the fact that a little reconnaissance and foraging by one member resulted in

the reward of a jerry can full of cider. (The forager later became completely drunk). Describing further movements across Caen Plain L/Cpl Stewart recalls the horrors of seeing the numbers of graves, both British and German, which he and his comrades encountered.

A Canadian Division which the Queen's had to relieve had the reputation of "taking no prisoners" so care had to be taken not to be captured in case the enemy was minded to enforce reciprocal action.

The Bocage country made tank warfare difficult. High thorn hedges and sunken ditches often concealed well dug in enemy Tiger tanks which could only be effectively destroyed by rocket firing Typhoons. Enemy "Moaning Minnie" (six barrelled mortars) fire killed two of Stewart's mates and only narrowly missed him. Another narrow escape was occasioned when a burst of Spandau fire splintered a gate post near which he had been moving. By now he was feeling an increasing need for the reassuring presence of his Bible and its 91st Psalm.

European news by radio seemed good, claiming that the Americans were making great progress. This seemed to be in direct contrast to the Queen's men's experience where, on their front, German resistance was very stubborn. Weather-wise the heat of August caused drinking water problems but thankfully food supplies were maintained. Mid August saw German pressure increasing, the opposing forces being SS infantry.

There were heavy casualties on both sides and a large calibre shell landing near L/Cpl Stewart wounded him and blew three other men to pieces. Shrapnel was embedded in his body and also in his Bible. Resulting from his injuries he was evacuated via Bayeux and Arromanches and by sea to England.

The white cliffs of Dover were a welcome sight and for the casualties, who were of mixed nationalities, the initial destination was Farnborough Canadian Hospital. Three days later they were taken by train to Manchester where they were placed in the Royal Infirmary. Both of Stewart's legs had been badly shattered and extensive surgery was needed to remove the shrapnel. One piece remained behind his right knee until it emerged of its own accord many years later.

A pleasing encounter for him was when he found that a visiting Minister, the Reverend Snell, was a friend of older members of his family. This led to later visits to tea and the acquaintance of the Minister's daughter. Meanwhile, in hospital the nurses and staff of the Manchester Royal Infirmary, particularly in Gyn Ward under Sister Keron, merited high praise from their patient.

A welcome spell of home leave followed before Stewart returned to the Army at Milton Barracks, Gravesend, where training was undertaken in preparation for return to units.

He was still walking with a stick and was excused heavy boots. From there it was onward transmission to Brighton for specialised training for wounded soldiers. Partially recovered, he later returned to Milton Barracks where he met one of his former comrades, an old soldier, who had been wounded and who was making avowed intentions not to return to active service.

Eventual discharge followed and Ken Stewart, the man who had walked through Army barrack gates in 1942, returned home, a wounded ex soldier who was thankful still to be alive. Later, not without difficulties, he received appropriate Army pensions.

In 1999 he put down his experiences on paper, forming a valuable record of an ordinary soldier's view of war and its experiences. It is to be hoped that the words of his favourite 91st Psalm, promising the Lord's protection, will continue meaningfully to apply to him in peace as they did in war.

Creatures great and small

As a ballotted member of the POSH (P&O Shipping) Club, Richard Ford was privileged to visit the new P&O cruise ship *Aurora* at Southampton a fortnight before her departure on her unhappy maiden voyage. Despite her initial misfortune of a breakdown, he describes her as a beautiful ship and a worthy member of the famous and historic line whose flag she bears.



Aurora



Sobraon

P&O have had longstanding connections with the Army by way of their trooping activities. One of their early troopers, built at the time of the South African War, was the aptly named *Sobraon* and it is interesting to compare some of her statistics with those of *Aurora*.

	<i>Sobraon</i>	<i>Aurora</i>
Date	1900	2000
Builders	Caird & Co Greenock	Meyer Werft, Germany
Cost	£160,515	£200,000,000
Gross Tonnage	7,382	769000
Length	137m	270m
Breadth	16m	32m
Service Speed	16 knots	24 knots
Passengers	170 civilian or 2,000 troops	1870 regular or 1950 maximum

To *Aurora*'s original cost of £200,000,000 must be added that of free champagne, refreshments and a souvenir wrist watch which Richard received on his visit.

Warrant Officers and Sergeants Association



Warrant officers' and Sergeants' Association, The East Surrey Regiment Executive Committee 1957/58

Back row: T G Burgess, D L Boorer, W G Wernham, A R Scriven MBE, A E Gilbert, S Bowell, W H Arnold, P Johnson, RSM C J Davidson. Front row: Major W G Gingell MBE, MM (Vice President), C H Tatum (Hon Asst. Sec), G W C Prosser MM (Hon Treasurer), W Dorsett (Chairman), CSM D Clemens (Vice Chairman), S Bays MBE (Hon Secretary). Absent: J W Glen, C Williams, RSM W Woolley, RSM F Smith.

Celebrating the Golden Anniversary of the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants Association



The top table: RSM Appleby, Lt Col Foster Herd, John Izant, Joyce Izant, Major John Rogerson, Mrs Olive Rogerson.



Cliff Martin, Major John Rogerson and Mrs Olive Rogerson



The Chairman of The Association, Lt Col Foster Herd TD JP DL, and John Izant, Chairman The Warrant Officers and Sergeants Association.

5 OMA Reunions



Bill Petch, Doug Mitchell and Stan Blay at the 5 OMA Lunch held at the Refectory, Guildford Cathedral, 22nd October 2000.



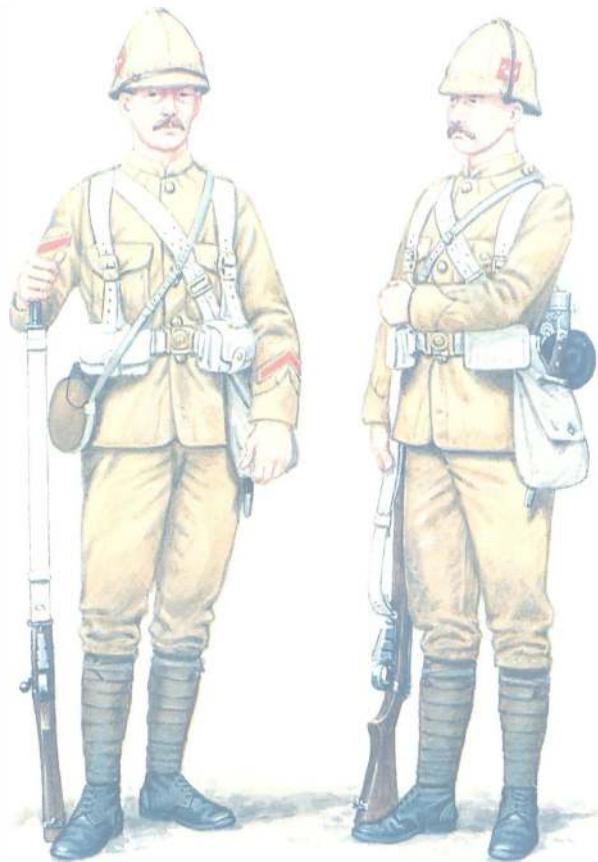
Bill Longley, Verdon Besley, Major Derek Watson and their Ladies



C W Sharp receiving a book from Brigadier Richard Holmes. The book, a present from various friends, features C W Sharp on the front cover.

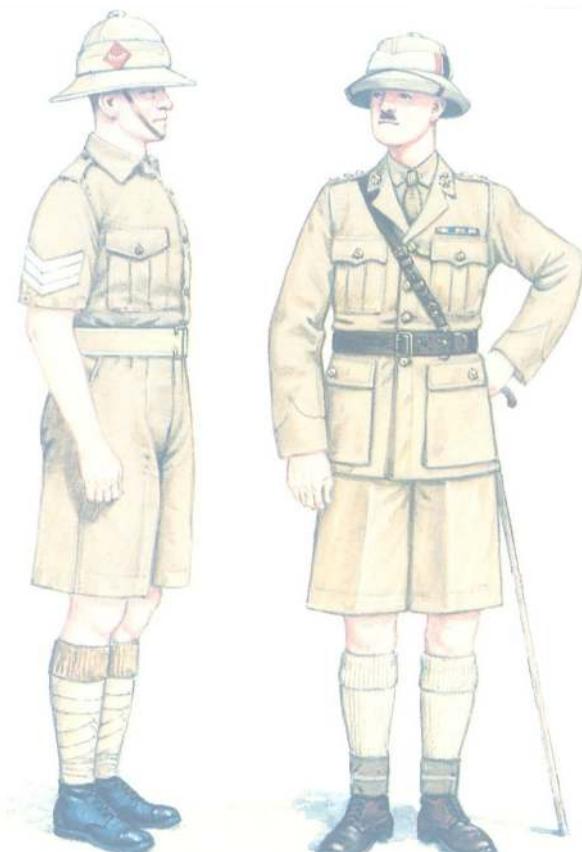


Ron May who retired as Treasurer recently holding the engraved tray presented to him to mark his long and devoted service to 5 OMA.



THE QUEEN'S (ROYAL WEST SURREY) REGT - 1881

THE EAST





SURREY REGT - 1881 THE QUEEN'S ROYAL SURREY REGT - 1959



Captions to the centre pages

Centre top: The Regiments at the time of the Cardwell Reform, 1881. In the middle a Regimental Sergeant Major of The East Surrey Regiment. **On the left:** the Bandmaster of The Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment; a Drummer of The 1st Bn the East Surrey Regiment. **Top left:** A Lance Corporal of The Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment, South Africa, 1899; a Private of a Militia Battalion of The East Surrey Regiment, South Africa, 1899. **Top right:** A Lieutenant Quartermaster of The Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment, 1910; a Private of The 6th Bn The East Surrey Regiment, 1914. He is wearing the Imperial Service Badge of a volunteer for foreign service. **Insert left:** H M King Edward VII. **Insert right:** H M Queen Elizabeth II.

Bottom left: World War I. A Corporal Signaller of The Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment, as Despatch Rider, 1917; a Private of The East Surrey Regiment, 1917. **Inside bottom left:** Sergeant, 2nd Bn The Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment, India 1921; Officer 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment, Khartoum, 1936. **Inside bottom right:** World War II. A Corporal 2nd Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment, 1943, Chindit Column; Officer The East Surrey Regiment, Dunkirk 1940. **Bottom right:** Drum Major 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment, 1962, Aden; Regimental Sergeant Major, Depot The Queen's Royal Regiment, 1959.

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Annual Reunion, Union Jack Club



Ron Wildgoose and Les Wilson reflect on past sessions in the beer bar!



Charlie Hardingham, Steve Birchmore, George Lefevre, Derek Mills.

East Surrey Old Comrades Reunion



Colonel Derek Bishop and Major John Clarke discuss in detail the sausage rolls! Not as good as Rileys haversack rations.

The President with Tony Ramsey, who organises the reunion.



Officers Club Lunch



John Rogerson shows how large the fish was to Paul Gray and Mrs Valerie Fowler.



LETTERS



It pays to read the Newsletter, particularly 'Pay Attention'.

Skin Cancer

In the last Newsletter a short note was included giving vital information concerning skin cancer which may have been caused by service in tropical climates. This information was passed to us by a member, Dr C J W Guerrier, a Consultant Dermatologist.

The Editor has received five letters from readers who have taken Dr Guerrier's advice. All have received help, assistance and varying sums of gratuity. On behalf of our readers, the Editor thanks Dr Guerrier for his assistance and one such letter is printed below.

Bryan Matlock writes from Birchington:-

May Newsletter - Pay Attention! Skin Cancer

Once again many thanks for a first class Newsletter. I took note of your item about skin cancer as I have been having treatment for the last five years. I decided to contact the Pensions Agency at the end of May. They were most helpful, not only sending me forms to complete but also ringing me at every stage to inform me as to what was happening. I was visited at home by one agency doctor on the 18th July and on the 25th August I received a letter stating that I was to receive a lump sum of £4,098 by the 30th August.

I am most grateful to Dr C J W Guerrier for giving the Newsletter this useful information. If there is anyone considering claiming and needs help with the forms, I am most willing to help! Please use this letter in any way you consider helpful.

Dom Papworth writes from India:-

Thanks very much for sending so quickly the May 2000 Newsletter, and the marvellous Supplement on Bands, Drums and Music of our Regiments.

The Newsletters are always of a distinction that keeps in remembrance of past deeds and comradeship. The 'Bands and Drums Supplement' goes far beyond summoning again those years the Army was a profession in the service of our Country. The individual standards attained within Regiments, on the parade ground, on the outcome of battles and fair surveillance in security - speak through the centuries.

Given half a chance I would proceed today to Guildford and re-enlist - which, come to think of it may not really be what Les Wilson had intended. But we are much indebted to Colonel Wilson and all those whose assistance contributed so much to give, like the music, so inspired a Supplement. For those who served in and remember still the Regular Army, it's tradition and history, all will indeed be grateful.

Pat Patmore writes:-

When the Queens Surrey's were in Hong Kong in 62/63 several of us Orderly Room and Company Clerks attended a clerks course at the FETC Nee Soon Camp Singapore. So the Patmore's holiday this year would again be in South East Asia, to visit the 'Bridge on the River Kwai' in Thailand, before we call in at Singapore for a few days.



Kanchanaburi, Thailand

Mr Ron Riches of The Burma Star Association (Edmonton Branch) on hearing of our plans, asked if we would lay a wreath on behalf of the Burma Star Association at the War Memorial in the Kanchanaburi War Cemetery this we were very proud to do. The picture shows Gerry and Desney Patmore having just laid the wreath. At the Kranji War Cemetery, in Singapore we laid many small memorial crosses on the graves of the men from The East Surrey Regiment, a deeply moving experience but one that we were very proud to do.



Kranji Cemetery, Singapore

Bob Edwards writes from Swansea

May I through the usual channels, the Regimental Newsletter, pass on some information that maybe of some interest to readers especially members of the Queen's of the 1950's.

On returning from a recent visit to relatives in Australia I decided to break the homeward journey by spending a couple of days in Kuala Lumpur and then spending a couple of weeks in Singapore. The sole aim in Kuala Lumpur was to spend time in the military cemetery to pay respects to a few of my old Queen's Royal Regiment comrades who were buried there while serving with 1 Queen's 1953 to 57. In particular my old platoon (No 2 Pl A Company) commander 2nd Lt. Townsend, killed in Selangor on the 25th July 1954, the one and only time

I had been to that cemetery was as a member of his funeral party. I also intended the same at the grave of my training squad corporal (Bob Jones) who, with Sgt. Watson, had the dubious task in Stoughton Barracks, Kohima Platoon, Jan 1953 of turning raw recruits into some sort of disciplined soldiers in the 16 weeks time allotted. Unlike Lt. Townsend, who was like many others just doing his duty as a National Service conscript, Bob Jones, promoted to Sgt. and on patrol with C Company when he was killed, was a regular soldier who I believe had served in Kohima among other places in World War I.

Unfortunately I did not do my homework too well, I assumed there was only one military cemetery in the south of what was Malaya in which all serviceman would be buried but this is not so. As I said earlier, having been on the funeral party for 2nd Lt. Townsend I knew that cemetery was on the outskirts of KL. but not exactly. Again wrongly, I assumed it would be fairly well known, even the Malaysian tourist centre was unable to direct me, in fact I was disappointed in their rather cold and care attitude but they did give me the 'phone number of the British Embassy who were most helpful, even giving me the exact location of the officers grave but had no trace of Sgt. Jones. It seems there are no military cemeteries as such but part of local Christian cemeteries have been assigned as Commonwealth Cemeteries and so I was unable to locate his particular plot, should anybody ask to undertake a similar quest then I suggest they write to the Commonwealth Graves Commission before they go to confirm all the details.

I am glad to say that visiting the area containing the grave of Lt. Townsend my wife and I were very impressed with the standard of maintenance which is of the quality one can expect from the Commonwealth Graves. I have several photo's and some video of individual graves of Queensmen buried there as well as of the whole area. Should anybody be interested in a copy I would be only too pleased to forward one. Apart from Lt. Townsend, there was a Private D A J Braybrooks (16th April 1954), Private H M A C Duff (25 September 1954) and 2nd Lt. I V Mack (30th November 1952).

I am puzzled by this last name and the date because the Bn Advance party did not leave the UK for Malaya until the end of 1953 and yet this officer, Lt Mack, was killed in November 1952, a whole year before the advance party left. Anybody with an explanation? Incidentally the taxi driver who took us to the cemetery told us of another ex British soldier who had hired him in the previous month to be taken to the army camp in Kajang, 10 miles or so out of KL where 'A' Company was based June/July 1954. It would seem that the old camp is still there now used by the Malaysian army. Could that soldier be also an ex Queensman looking up old haunts?

During the few days we spent in Kuala Lumpur I was able to read the local news in the Straits Times and some points that caught my eye may interest others who served in the Malayan Campaign.

* A report 15 April 2000 that the Armed forces hospital in Kem Kinrara will be replaced by a modern state of the art building as the old one (BMH Kinrara to us old soldiers) is over 50 years old and the main structure, being of wood, is severely damaged by termites.

* A dragon boat race to be held on the Sungai Muar, a river very close to the hearts of many ex A Company.

* Kotta Tinggi (the old FARELF Training school) is now a theme park.

* A car rally to be held in and around the Kuala Pilah Pass. Not a place to hang about when travelling in convoy in the old days.

After the few days in KL we flew down to Singapore for a few days R & R, rather like the old days except the trip used to be

made in a 3 ton Bedford or armoured truck. As many know, the island has prospered and changed almost out of all recognition. RAF Changi is a super modern International airport, many of the old buildings have been demolished to make way for wider roads and very tall skyscrapers but there are still a lot of recognizable landmarks, including Raffles Hotel, where I was able to satisfy a long held ambition of a Singapore Sling in the Long Bar, this being out of bounds to all servicemen and was subject to a major refit during my last few visits. Selarang Barracks still exists now used by the Singapore Armed Forces. But for all the changes the island is still a great place to stop over, the attractions are different to those in the 1950's but are, nevertheless, still great.

Editors note: Lt Mack was a NS Officer commissioned into the Queen's. He was posted to 1st Bn The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment and was killed on patrol.

James A Norman writes from 220 Cedric St. Balcatta, West Australia 6021:-

I have to thank Mr Turrell of Mandurah, West Australia for the copy number 55 of your Newsletter. I was not aware such a magazine existed and have found it excellent reading. The regimental names have changed, but I am sure we can all live with that. Its the camaraderie that counts after all.

I enlisted into the 1/6th Surreys, Xmas 1944, and I served until mid 1948, in that time I was stationed in various places in England, Italy, Greece, and Egypt. As you can imagine, I was privileged to see many places of interest, got fired upon by the best of people, perhaps the Elas came closest!

I seem to have lost touch with all my friends, no doubt running away to Aussie was the reason for that. Often my little group would talk about what to do when demobbed, almost unanimously we decided on the beaches of Bondi and girls in mini-skirts, unfortunately I seem to be the only one who took up the challenge after returning to Civvy life.

Born in London and going through the Blitz, then on to far and distant horizons, well London did seem a little dull after my excursions to the Middle East, and trying to find a job in London was almost impossible, besides the sun shines about 355 day of the year here!



Me, bottom right

Your Newsletter brought back many wonderful memories, and the chance for me to contact mates I had during those three and a half years. I am enclosing a photo of our group taken in Salonica, Greece. Its a copy, I cannot post the original in case it gets lost. Remembering those days in Athens, Salonica, Kalamaki, Rome, keeps me young and your Newsletter did that. Perhaps I should join the team and subscribe.

J A Graves writes from Thousand Oaks, California:-

Thanks very much for forwarding on the Newsletter and Supplement edition. I realise of course its expensive to send it out air mail that's why I'm enclosing the £10 note to help over expenses and to guarantee me the next Newsletter.

It really is interesting to read about the history of our famous regiments. As a result of my letter which was published in the Newsletter last year when I joined, I received a letter from a Mr Nielson in Copenhagen, who served with me in the East Surreys in Egypt, we had quite a few Danes in our Battalion. We plan to meet up at the reunion at Clapham Junction on October 14th.

Arthur Chambers writes from Norwich:-

I hope this finds you in good health and enjoying the nice weather we have been getting recently. If I had been a young teenager once again I would have been in the harvest fields running rabbits for a pie or stew, but the old legs won't go to that now, nor the eyes good enough to use a gun to shoot one. Still I am alive and kicking that's the main thing. Thank you and all who get the Newsletter together very much, and the book on all the Bands with the last edition made it very good reading as always and I can't wait for the next edition to arrive on the doorstep.

I am still keeping in touch with Don Challis who lives the other side of Cambridge, in fact I owe him a letter. I heard from Lt Bantock and Sgt Maj Puddephat last Christmas as usual and returned the seasons greetings to them.

Well Sir this seems to be all I can think of at this time. The thoughts and memories of my time with the 1 Queen's are often going through my head and thinking of the chaps I knew and wonder where they are today. I wish them and you all the very best. My kindest regards to you all.

Don Challis writes from Foxton, Cambridge:-

The item on sporting records on page 38 of the excellent Newsletter No 67 (what a joy it is to receive them) brought back memories to me of my time with the 1st Battalion at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. Boxing was a favourite sport of RSM Joe Simmons who took a young 'Darkie' Samples under his wing and encouraged him in many ways. 'Darkie' who was an MT driver and no mean boxer, rather enjoyed the patronage of the RSM!

Mention of the "Lambs Tail" - I was associated in its production - carried pictures of the successful Queen's football team who regularly played matches at the fine stadium in Bangkok. Prominent in the side was Cpl Rigby who later played for Peterborough United.

Readers who have not visited the Imperial War Museum site at Duxford, which is close to where I live, may like to know that in addition to a large exhibit of army equipment from the second world war, there is now a section on Far East warfare, which includes a Queen's bush hat, complete with the red flash. I still have mine. Best wishes to you all.

Leslie Franklin writes from Gloucester:-

As a recently joined member of the Queen's Royal Surrey Regimental Association, I was contacted by the Southwest area representative, Mr Harry (Jock) Stewart, and was warmly welcomed. During the conversation, we discovered that we only lived nine miles apart, Jock currently lives in Cheltenham and I in Gloucester and more coincidentally he was working with my daughter at Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue HQ, in Cheltenham - small world! We arranged to meet up on Remembrance Sunday at the war memorial. After the service and act of Remembrance, we retired to the local Royal Naval Club and swapped a few yarns of our service with the Queen's.

I was very interested in the Regimental Association Newsletters that Jock supplied to me, especially the two backdated copies, numbers 63 and 64, which depicted the events of the Berlin Airlift in 1948 in which I played a very small part. I was serving with 2 Queen's at Dortmund in the Signal Platoon at the time, but I was away from the battalion on a course, in Göttingen, at the actual time of the move to Berlin. We heard of the move of course and of the problem the battalion was experiencing getting through the Helmstadt checkpoint. After finishing the course, I was moved to Hanover to await a flight to Berlin, which I duly caught. I arrived over Berlin in an electrical storm aboard a Dakota which to say the least was rather hairy, especially as it was my first time in any aircraft.

I duly arrived at the battalion in the Olympic stadium and reported my arrival, at muster the following morning I was detailed by RSM Noke who informed me that as he was very short of senior NCO's, I was to be the next Guard Commander the next day. In the event, all went well, and the day was fairly uneventful until late evening at approximately 2330 hours. It was then that all the lights went out. At this precise moment, the Orderly Officer of the day decided to turn out the Guard. Everything was in darkness, including all the perimeter lights, which surrounded the stadium, and the alternative lighting - i.e. two torches - for some reason could not be found. This was my initiation to twenty four hour guard duties and the rest of this saga is best left unsaid and left to your own imagination! - except to say I was not held responsible for the fiasco that followed (no names, no pack drill).

Referring again back to the two Newsletters which I read avidly, and the photographs which brought back memories of people, places and events long forgotten. I also remembered the football match, mentioned in the article by the late Major John Sutton. I can remember the crowds pouring through the stadium gates and the disturbance caused by the two Russians but, there my memory fails me. I know I was watching this from somewhere in the vicinity of the guard room, whether I was part of the Guard or not, I am, after fifty two years, unsure, the memory begins to play tricks on one after such a long time.

For the record, I joined the Queen's at Shorncliffe, after six weeks primary training at Invicta Lines, Maidstone and then commenced twelve weeks Corps training. It was after this that the whole platoon was transferred into the holding company awaiting a draft. I was drafted to West Camp, Crowborough, to serve with 2/Queen's who were then in transit to BAOR from India. Our job was to prepare West Camp for their arrival and replace many of the men who were due for release. We worked quite hard to get the camp up to Queen's standard, the previous occupants of West Camp was a Canadian regiment which was anxious to be repatriated. The battalion arrived eventually and we were reformed into a well co-ordinated unit, during this time I joined the Signal Platoon.

The next move was to BAOR by troopship from Harwich to Cuxhaven in Germany. I remember well the docking and disembarking; we were all assembled on deck then let off the ship down the gangplank. The band was playing and the Battalion Colour Party was led by the CO, Lt Col East in the fore and so to Dortmund.

My time spent with 2 Queen's was a happy time and a Regiment I was very proud to have served with.

Well done Rupert

At the risk of being conjoined with Rupert in certain libel actions, I must express my appreciation of his excellent book "Rupert's Progress". It is a gem. The only mistake I made was in starting to read it in bed at 11 pm and thus being stuck with it at one o'clock in the morning, unable to put it down. The incidents and characters described in it are so true of Service life and are so well illustrated.

No doubt Rupert's account of his entry to Army life at Guildford will bring back memories to many of our readers, as will his descriptions of officer training courses. His initial adventures on being commissioned or "getting his pip" as he describes it, are an education for those who, usually early in their service, believe that things never go wrong for officers.

For the technically minded, imbued with their ideas of their own perfection, the story of the heat seeking anti-tank missile being diverted from its intended target to a steam driven train is a "must", as are his recollections of his service at home and overseas, both with his own Regiment and on attachments to other "foreign" armies.

Some of the "characters" are known to us only too well and are most accurately described. One such is our Editor, Lieutenant Colonel Les Wilson MBE. One feels that there is a tongue in cheek somewhere when it is stated that "*his voice was still as quiet, his manner still as shy as ever*". But of particular appeal is the warning never to think of writing a letter to the revered Editor as it *"is to lumber yourself with a lifetime commitment to contribute articles for publication"*. (The comment is heartily endorsed by the present writer who allowed himself to become similarly entrapped years ago).

Rupert's struggles for promotion, and the hazards attached thereto, make one thankful for his sense of humour. Without it he would never have survived. But happy memories always win in the end and it is obvious that it is with much pleasure that he attends annual reunions and meets old friends.

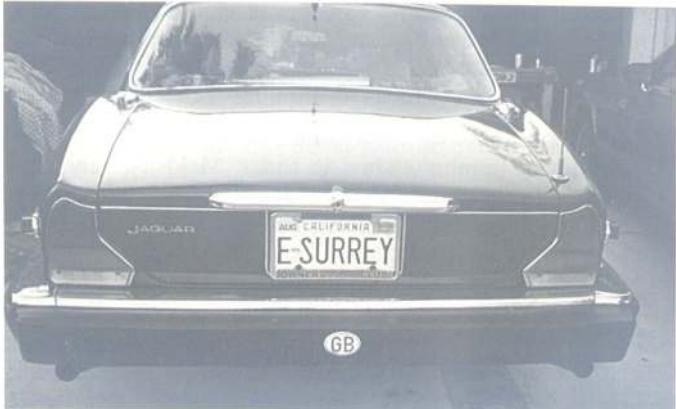
I am pleased to add this book to my shelves.

Aware of the perils of "*too much freedom of information*", I do not intend to identify myself but merely sign myself

ANON

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The Surreys in California - 2000



The Regiment 'spreads its wings'! America 2000

From the past



Introduction to the Regiment, the thoughts of 'Chairman Ron' being imparted to new recruits.

The Glorious First of June - an inside story

The basic facts of the story of the Battle of the Glorious First of June are well known among Queen's men and members of successor or associated Regiments, but an interesting personal description of the action is to be found in the account of fourteen year old Midshipman William Henry Dillon who was serving in HMS *Defence* at the time. Full of youthful enthusiasm, with excitement taking precedence over fear, he leaves but little to imagination in his active and accurate portrayal of the scenes he witnessed. There had been some intermittent actions by the ships of Lord Howe's Fleet in the month of May and by the 29th action was becoming imminent although somewhat interfered with by weather conditions. By the 31st the opposing Fleets were within five miles of each other and on the following day, the Day of Destiny, battle was joined.

The *Defence*, well handled and under a full head of sail, made great speed through the water and forged ahead of the main fleet to such an extent that at one stage she stood in danger of becoming isolated. Young Dillon's action station was below decks commanding three guns' crews. Determined fire soon caused damage to enemy vessels. Dillon, anxious to see what was going on, caused one of his gun ports to be kept open a fraction too long with the result that he got a soaking from an incoming wave. But it was not only waves that were coming inboard. A gunner named John Polly had the top of his head shot off although Dillon remarks, with gruesome detail, that "*the tips of his ears remained*". Several men were wounded, one losing an arm, and the gun deck became so clouded with smoke that the men could hardly see each other. The guns became so hot that there was a danger of premature explosions. On the upper deck things were no better as the main mast had come crashing down. After two hours hard fighting the guns' crews were becoming fatigued and an agitated officer drew his sword to urge them on to greater efforts. At one stage Dillon was knocked down by blast but thankfully suffered only a cut cheek from a splinter.

The ship had by now become completely dismantled and unmanageable and it was feared that she would be boarded by a closing Frenchman, but thankfully the vessel passed by with only a few parting shots. On action ceasing at some time after noon Dillon was able to take stock of the situation. At his quarters he had had 14 men killed and wounded, exclusive of himself, and he was smothered in blood from the casualties. Two of his fellow Midshipmen were similarly bespattered although uninjured. The proximities of the opposing vessels during action were manifest from the number of musket balls littering *Defence*'s upper decks. If that was not enough it was established that at one stage, in the confusion of battle, she had come under "*friendly fire*" from HMS *Royal Sovereign*.

Commenting on the actions of senior officers Dillon states that "*Lieutenant Boycott of the 2nd Regiment, Queen's, was severely wounded. He was a remarkably fine young man*".

Shipwise, there had been much damage in the Victorious British Fleet. Queen Charlotte herself, flagship of Lord Howe, had lost all her masts. Emergency repairs were carried out as far as possible and then the battered Fleet returned home to the thanks and acclaim of a grateful nation. Both houses of Parliament voted their thanks to Lord Howe and his officers and seamen. On board his ship at Spithead the King presented His Lordship with a diamond-hilted sword.

And for The Queen's, whose troops had participated in the battle in a marine capacity on board HM ships, the 1st June 1794 became a day of honour, commemoration and glory.

Source: William Henry Dillon - "Commence the Work of Destruction".

The Glorious First of June 1794.

PAY ATTENTION CAN YOU HELP?



R K Swan OBE writes from "Rathmore", Horsell Vale, Woking, Surrey GU21 2QU: Congratulations on the "Bands, Drums and Music of The Queen's Surreys". It was excellent. On page 65, Cpl Togwell is shown with the 2 drums presented to the 1/6th Queen's by the town of Boston, Lincs in September 1940. I was there, a very Junior Subaltern having been commissioned some 4-5 weeks previous.

My letter re the 1/6th Armoured Car Unit appeared on page 38 of Newsletter No. 61, May 1997. No replies were received. Are there any survivors of the Drum Presentation Ceremony? Although I am now 81, I feel sure there are others who recall this event.

Any reader who can remember this ceremony please contact Ken Swan at the address above.

Ken Munday writes from 20 Larch Grove, Paddock Wood, Kent TN12 6LA:- I write to thank the editorial team on a further superb Newsletter with its accompanying Regimental Bands Drums and Music, a valuable keepsake and reference work.

The bottom right hand picture on page 59 of the latter publication, 1/ Queen's 1961 Mukeiras includes Drummer Doug Dennett whom I was friends with in Iserlohn 1958/9 and lost contact since. We were paired on the famous initiative test of the time and had quite an adventure together, with the French and US Armies and fell foul of the German Police in both Stuttgart and Constance on the Swiss border.

I would very much like to contact Doug and if you can assist it would be very much appreciated.

Looking forward to seeing you all at Union Jack Club in November.

If any reader is able to help, please contact Ken at the above address

Philip A Batt of 12b Riverdale House, Conway, Dunmurry, Belfast BT179DD. Tel: 02890 622198:- is anxious to trace comrades of his Grandfather, Private Gilbert Frederick William Batt who was serving with D Company, 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment and died as a result of enemy action on 16th November 1940. He is buried at Bournemouth North Cemetery. Batt was a regular soldier, who had enlisted in 1935 and served in Fyzabad and Khartoum with the 1st Battalion. He had served in the BEF in France and Belgium before being evacuated from Dunkirk.

If any reader can assist Mr Batt please contact him at the address or telephone number above.

T Cooke writes from 16 Maybourne Grange, Turnpike Link, Croydon, Surrey CR0 5NH, Tel: 020 8680 3276:- I served with the 5th East Yorkshire Regiment in the BEF in 1940. On the 23rd May, having fought with a unit of the French Army at Arleux, we retired to La Bassee where we

contacted the 1/7th Queens and were attached to the platoon commanded by 2nd Lieut N A Keith. I have researched the Regimental History and war diary of the 1/7th but neither of them have the detail of the actual location of Keith's platoon, though I think it was Givenchy.

Would any of your readers have any information on this platoon?

On the 25/26th we pulled back to Aubers and the following day took up positions at Neuve Chapelle in a barn in the small road just across the road from the Indian WWI Memorial. The planned counter-attack did not materialise and we were ferried back to Neuf Bequin by the Manchester Regiment.

If any reader can assist please contact Mr Cooke at the address above.

R J Rhone writes from 4 Holford Road, Bridgewater, Somerset TA6 7NR, Tel: 01278 433264:-

Any Queensman that served between 1958/60 and those who were attached to the East Surreys "D" Company in Cyprus and North Africa who would like to participate in a reunion please contact me at the above address.

Ron is 4th from left in back row standing.



K C Maberley writes from 4 Grasmere Road, Streatham, London SW16 2DA. (0208 677 9035). He served with 57th Anti Tank Regiment during the war in Somerset, Dunkirk, Western Desert, Sicily, Italy and finally Trieste. He is keen to contact old comrades. Any reader who also served with 57th A/Tk Regiment please contact Mr Maberley direct.

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Joe Gooden, celebrating his retirement!

Jump suit needs pressing Joe!

A Day at War - Lake Comacchio and the Argenta Gap



The author, J H Day

After a fortnight at the Adolf Hitler Barracks we received some reinforcements, plus some of the wounded, which included George Kelly and David Adamson. 'A' Company was reformed. We then received orders to move. Before the move a pal of mine in Fifteen Platoon, who had a brother serving with the New Zealanders, invited this brother and his fellow New Zealanders to a party in return for their hospitality, and a good night was had by all.

We moved to Lake Trasimene in the middle of Italy in the province of Umbria. The whole Brigade moved down, as we were to carry out a special mission which required specialised training. The training at Lake Trasimene was concealed from the local civilians by a high camouflaged fence and, when we were actually practising, a thick smokescreen completely obscured our movements. Our Brigade had been detailed for an amphibious operation on Lake Comacchio. The plan was to take the enemy by surprise, with an attack by 40th Royal Marine Commando up the spit between Lake Comacchio and the sea at the eastern end of the lake, to be followed by a right hook across the lake by the 169th Brigade, using Fantails (known as Buffaloes in other theatres of war). Fantails were amphibious troop carrying tanks, lightly armoured, armed only with a Browning machine-gun, but capable of carrying a fully equipped infantry platoon. They had an excellent performance in water or over normal country, but unfortunately in deep mud they came to a standstill. We entered these vehicles up a ramp at the back, and there was a gangway down the middle with a long seat on either side, which we sat on until it was time to disembark. Then the ramp went down and we ran out, those on the right turned right at the bottom and ran for cover on that side of the vehicle, whilst those on the left hand side turned left and did the same. We practiced this day after day for a week.

We were bivouacked around the lake, and not allowed to wander away. There was definitely no fraternizing with any civilians. The weather was getting warmer. Tables and forms were set up outside on the edge of the lake, and we were kept happy with a good supply of cigarettes and vino.

We finished with a dress rehearsal for the landing we were going to make, with the 2/5th Queen's and the 113th Field Artillery, who fired from a flank, also using Fantails. Just before we had our dress rehearsal a new CO joined us, Lieutenant Colonel P H Richardson, OBE. Nearly all COs seemed to get the OBE, or Other Buggers' Efforts, as it was widely known. Our old CO, Lieutenant Colonel A L Renshaw, DSO, MC, affectionately nicknamed "Jimmy the One", had been posted back to the UK for reasons of ill health. We heard later that he had been promoted to Brigadier. He owned a chocolate factory, and he always said to us that any man who fought in his battalion would have a job if ever he needed one.

Morale was high as we set off on the 10th April 1945 to meet



Lt Col A L 'Jimmy the One'
Renshaw DSO, MC

up with our Fantails. We were singing in the back of the truck that refrain which went :-

*Oh! What a beautiful rhyme
Sing us another one, do*

We then took it in turns to sing a ditty as a solo about a town, or place, or a person, on the lines of

*There once was a Guardsman from Reading
Wore spurs on the night of his wedding
His poor little wife
Got the fright of her life
As he tore a big hole in the bedding.*

Followed again with the refrain

*Oh! What a beautiful rhyme
Sing us another one, do*

Then someone else might sing

*There was a young lady from Pinner
Invited one night out to dinner ... etc, etc*

However, our truck broke down, and by the time our driver got it going again (most of our drivers were driver mechanics), we were way behind the others, so the driver decided to take a short cut. Judging from the way we were thrown about in the back, it must have been a cross country route, because it certainly stopped our singing. Cursing the driver took its place. We finally arrived back on a road, where we stopped while the driver and our Platoon Officer studied the map with the aid of a torch. Suddenly some trucks came by. It was our convoy, and we were ahead of it! And so we arrived without any further incident at our RV with the Fantails.

We mounted our Fantails and waited for orders to move. Finally orders came through to move, some one and a half hours later than planned, and we set off across Lake Comacchio. 'D' Company and ourselves were the two leading companies, and we landed within minutes of each other in front of our objective, the village of Longastrino, without meeting much opposition, and captured a few prisoners.

We were then confronted with a wide ditch, which the Fantails were unable to negotiate. However, the Fantails carried assault boats, which we used to cross this ditch. Smokescreens were laid in front of us, and we advanced inland, capturing our objectives, together with some more prisoners. We then looked back. The Germans had started shelling the landing area, and the troops of the reserve companies that were then landing were having a rough time. The whole area was a swamp with very little dry ground. We heard that the Royal Marine Commando, who had landed further up to seize the bridge north of Menate, was meeting considerable opposition. All in all, we were glad that it was the others catching it and not us.

Our next task was to link up with the 167th Brigade. As we advanced we kept stopping, either to take more prisoners, or to take part in the skirmishing. I was so tired that when we stopped I fell asleep. By the time we met up with the 167th Brigade we had been 48 hours without sleep. We then had a rest before we moved off again.

Now our objective was to capture a group of houses. Tanks from the 1st Armoured Division provided our armoured support. They were no way as good as our old friends the 7th Armoured Brigade. Since it was completely open country, our Platoon Officer, Lieutenant "Long John" Common, wanted them to go forward, whilst we would follow up behind. The tank commander did not want to know! Eventually smoke was laid, while they fired their 75mm cannons and machine-guns from a safe distance, and we splashed across the wet fields. The tanks, of course, fired from and drove up and along the dry pathways and dykes. There were plenty of dead around, some

Germans and some civilians. We reached our objective, only to find the Germans had gone, and a few terrified civilians were left. We dug in just beyond our objective and waited until the next company came through us.



Fantails approaching the shores of Lake Comacchio under a smoke-screen.

Another of our objectives was to retake a house which the 2/5th had lost to an enemy counter-attack. As we moved up, our aircraft bombed and strafed the enemy positions, and we were covered by a smokescreen. While we walked through the smoke, smoke shells were still dropping among us. We were lucky that no one was hit by these shells. However, we had a good laugh when one dropped so close behind a Cornish chap in our platoon that, when it burst, it scorched his backside! He jumped around smacking his backside and crying out, "Ouch!"

We came to rest in a ditch. We could just see the enemy trenches through the smoke. Long John gave us the order to fix bayonets. When in the line there are no rules laid down about how you carried your bayonet. Most of us carried it down the side of the small pack, including myself. This was convenient, and it did not get in the way. Ninety nine times out of a hundred I could have taken my bayonet out of its scabbard without any problem, but this occasion was the hundredth time! The position I was lying in prevented me from reaching my bayonet properly, so I decided to fix it after we got up and were on our way. Long John looked at his watch and then gave us the order to advance. We scrambled out of the ditch, and as we moved along I hurriedly tried to take my bayonet out of its scabbard. After a couple of fruitless attempts as I was stumbling along, I decided to leave it. I had ten rounds in my magazine, and, if I ran out of ammo, I would club them to death with the butt! As we advanced I did notice that Long John was last out of the ditch with our Wireless Operator, Jimmy Richards. I could remember the time when he would have been the first up and leading the attack!



Men of the 2/6th Battalion land on the boggy shore near Longastrino

As we came out of the smoke we saw the enemy trenches. Bert opened up with his Bren gun, which then jammed. Whilst he cleared his gun, I stopped with him and fired my rifle at the trenches. I could see my bullets skimming the top of the

trenches as I fired from the hip. Bert cleared his gun, and we both rushed at the trenches, firing like mad. The trenches were empty, so we dropped into them. I kept watch, and noticed people moving across the path further down the side of a wood. I asked Bert if there were any of our companies further forward than us. He said that there were not, so I pointed out to him what I had seen. He looked, and exclaimed "Teds!" We both opened up at them. There was no movement for a few minutes, then up went a Red Cross flag, out came their stretcher-bearers, and carried off their casualties. We watched them carefully. When they had finished the flag came down. We must have hit 4 or 5 of them, but one could not be sure.

We then carried out another attack with tanks, but this time we advanced behind them. There was the inevitable smokescreen, and we soon captured the objective and dug in. There were partisans all over the place, armed with rifles. I took the first 2 hours rest, and Bert had a job waking me. When I finally got to my feet, I found that he was talking to a partisan with a rifle on his shoulder. Suddenly a crowd of refugees came rushing by in a state of panic. "Come, come," they shouted, "Germans on tanks are coming!" They were surprised when we told them we were staying. Our partisan friend went off to hide his rifle!

Bill Mills was our Piat Gunner. He only had one box of three bombs with him. We were issued with a box for each section to carry, but there was always an argument about who was to carry them, and everybody dodged this chore. I had introduced an easier way of carrying a box by tying string on the handles, and slinging it over the shoulders. This left both hands free. Because I was the inventor, I would be left carrying the box for ages, but I could see no reason why I should carry it all the time. On this occasion I passed it on to Tubby. An argument ensued, and after he had carried it for 5 minutes he wanted to offload it, and there was another argument. Eventually it was put on the back of the tank which we were following, and conveniently forgotten. So now we wanted the bombs, and Bill lay there with his Piat with just the three. "What are you going to do when you run out of ammo, Bill? Fix your bayonet and charge?" we yelled. "No," was his reply, "I will just lie here and go Bang! Bang!" Fortunately the tanks turned out to be our own, with prisoners sitting on them being taken back to a PoW cage.

On the 16th April we were required to capture a bridge over the Fossa Marina, the main canal running north-east from Argenta. In order to do this we had to cross open ground which was flooded. It was too boggy for the tanks to help us. As we half walked or half trotted over this flood, we were heavily shelled. Men were going down like flies. Fortunately the state of the ground helped to keep the casualties down, since the shells dug into the soft ground before exploding. We finally took cover under a hedgerow. As we lay there sweating (it was a warm day) a check was carried out as to who was a casualty, and who was present. One man was unaccounted for - Maenamara. He had been just behind me when we had started off. I was told to go and find him. There were our survivors laid up under cover, whilst I had to go back through that barrage again! I was not too pleased.

I had not gone far when I spotted our fighter bombers coming over to our aid. I heard the guns open up from where there was an enemy battery of 88mm mounted on half-tracks. They had seen the aircraft at the same time as myself. The shelling then ceased. They must have beat a hasty retreat. The fighter bombers were Typhoons, and they were soon bombing and strafing our tormentors. I was then able to continue my journey trouble free.

I retraced our tracks, looking at the dead as I passed. We must have been lucky, as there were none that I knew. I did not have the time to ponder who they were. I got as far as a German dugout, which had been made by them as a refuge against air

attack. I stood near the entrance. I knew that there was someone in there. One can sense these things. I shouted, "Is that you, Mac?" No answer! I had heard that German bazooka men sometimes hid as we advanced past them, in order to lie in wait for our tanks, and then would try to knock them out. As I was on my own, I was not going to take any chances by going into the dugout, since anyone inside can see you, but you cannot see them. I therefore took a grenade off my belt, pulled out the pin, and was about to throw it in, when my gut feeling told me that it was Macnamara in there. I gave him, whoever it was, the benefit of the doubt, and put the pin back in the grenade, replacing it on my belt. Instead I looked for Mac's pack, since I knew that he had been carrying the bulk of the section's sugar, and it should be somewhere near him.

As I looked around I was surprised at the number of dead Royal Engineers from the 78th Division. I thought to myself, "I wonder what the 78th Divisional Engineers are doing here?" I never did find out.

(Editor's note - The 78th Division had come up on 169 Brigade's left and the 1st East Surreys had passed through 2/7th Queen's. They secured a crossing on the left of the 169 Brigade axis. 169 Brigade's axis had been flooded by the enemy and heavily mined and booby-trapped, so permission was obtained to use the 78th Division's crossing until their own axis could be made passable. It is probable, therefore, that John Day's route on his return journey passed close to this crossing, and so he discovered the bodies of the sappers who had been killed whilst making good the crossing on the previous day).

When I got back as dusk fell, we moved forward and then dug in. The sooner we dug in, the sooner we could have a rest. Alas! That was not to be. We were ordered to escort a troop of tanks to their leaguer. We went down the road to RV with the tanks. It was dark, and we were fuming. When we arrived the tank commander was very apologetic. "Sorry about this, lads. I know you've had a hard day's fighting and you must be very tired." "We are, sir," we replied. "Never mind, lads. This has to be done. We don't want to lose any tanks, and we won't with you around." We did not mind so much after that.

We walked in single file on either side of the road, searching the ditches and hedgerows. Any bazooka men who might have been lurking about would have got out of the way when they spotted us. We were itching to shoot them had they stayed around. When we arrived at the tanks' rest area, the officer thanked us very much and wished us good luck. With his being so nice and so grateful, we returned to finish the digging in a much happier frame of mind.

Next day our tanks rejoined us. We formed up behind them and went into the attack. The main objective was Argenta. We had various objectives to take north-east of the main town. We took all our objectives and captured some prisoners. Once again we dug in. Our casualties were surprisingly light. I suppose that this was due to the poor resistance put up by the Germans, who were now ready to surrender as soon as we arrived.

Later we were ordered to a new concentration area. It was getting dark as we were moving towards this area, and we passed some dugouts occupied by Italian civilians. Since we were the leading platoon, we gave these a quick check for Germans. In fact the Eyeties would have told us had there been any there. Major H.F. Hales, our Company Commander, and his HQ Group were up with us. We had not gone far when a rifle shot rang out behind us. We stopped, and Major Hales told me to go back and check it out. When I arrived at the dugouts there was a wounded civilian being taken out of one of them. "Who fired that shot?" I asked. There was a new reinforcement standing nearby. I only knew him slightly. He said, with a cocky manner, "I did." "What for?" I asked again. "I thought they were Germans," he replied. "You thought they

were Germans!" I was furious. "We have just passed by. Don't you think we checked? If there had been any Teds, they would have told us. You just wanted to shoot somebody, but you don't shoot civilians." I then gave him a big shove with the heel of my hand, and he staggered back. "You don't shoot civilians," I told him again. "Do that again I will shoot you, and I will get away with it." I went back and told the Company Commander what had happened, and what I had done and said. He nodded his approval, and we continued our journey.

On the 19th April we moved again to another area and were told to dig in. Where Bert and I were told to go there was a big rut in the ground. "Lovely," we thought, "Our trench is half dug." The only snag was that we would be facing the wrong way! "What did it matter? We were only in a concentration area, weren't we?" We had just got nicely started when up came Major Hales. He looked at Bert and myself, and asked us which way the enemy was. We knew perfectly well, but pretended we did not! He then pointed in the right direction and told us to dig the trench facing the enemy. We were not pleased. But he knew something that we did not know. The Germans were counter-attacking the 2/7th. If they broke through, we would have to stop them, and if we were facing the wrong way we would be no earthly use whatsoever.

Major Hales and his HQ watched us for a few minutes whilst we started digging again facing this new direction, and then moved off. No sooner had they moved when a salvo dropped on us. We dived to the ground, and when it had finished exploding round us, we picked ourselves up and saw the damage. Both Major Hales and the Sergeant-Major had been wounded. As far as Sergeant-Major Jones was concerned, it was good riddance to bad rubbish. After some of the daft things that he said and did, most of the Company thought it was a mystery that he ever retained his rank. However, Major Hales was a great loss.

Another casualty was a stretcher-bearer who had just joined us as an exchange for George Kelly. I never knew his name as we used to call him Johnno. It appears that infantry units stationed in the Middle East had been asked for volunteers to exchange with front line soldiers who had been wounded, and then, on recovery, the wounded man would go to the Middle East battalion. How many they got from this scheme, I do not know. Five of these exchange men came to our Battalion, with Johnno joining us as our Company Stretcher-Bearer, detached from our Medical Platoon in HQ Company. George Kelly was lucky, since he had only been wounded twice. He then had been sent to The Royal Sussex.

Johnno was sitting up with his stomach ripped open. His intestines were hanging out. He kept saying, "I knew I would get killed." If he had kept his head he would have lived. We were told later that they could have put his intestines back and stitched him up, and he would have been as good as new! But he willed himself to die. I came across this a couple of times.

Once we had finished digging our trench, I collected the section's water-bottles and went to the water cart to fill them up. On the way back I saw Colour-Sergeant Gunn standing on the top of a high dyke. He had just brought up 'D' Company's hot meal. I stopped and had a few words with him about rugby. We were rivals for the position of wing three-quarter. I had just walked away from him when another salvo crashed down around us. When it was finished I picked myself up. There were quite a few casualties, and the stretcher-bearers were running about. Where C/Sgt Gunn had been standing there was a squaddie shouting for the stretcher-bearers. I climbed up the bank and looked down into the ditch, and there lay the mangled body of C/Sgt Gunn. I waved back the stretcher-bearers who were running up, told them to forget about him and see to the other wounded. As I looked at the Colour-Sergeant's body the only thought that crossed my mind was

that I would not be competing with him for the wing position in the rugby team!

I looked up and could see a tower in the distance. I was willing to bet that was where the German OP which was harassing us was located. When I arrived back at the section with our water-bottles, we were moved to a safer area and had to dig in all over again. However, at least we were out of sight of that tower. With regard to the counter-attack on the 2/7th, they must have contained it, as we heard no more about it.

Next day we continued our advance. After capturing our new objectives we found ourselves in an area where the ground was too hard to dig in. We had to look around for rocks or any other materials to build sangars with. Whilst we were looking around, David Adamson was just standing there smoking with his hands in his pockets and with no intention of helping. I went over to him and remonstrated with him about his reluctance to help, when suddenly, Whoosh! Whoosh! Shells started to burst all around us. When I picked myself up David still lay on his back, with the cigarette smouldering between his fingers. I went to him and gave his boots a kick, and said, "*Come on, Dave. Are you going to lie there all day?*" He never moved. I took a closer look. He was stone cold dead. The only mark on him was a cut across his nose. Also killed was Fourteen Platoon's Wireless Operator, Waters. He was a tall, thin, bespectacled fellow with a crew cut. He was standing in the doorway of a house, drinking a cup of tea, when a piece of shrapnel went into his mouth and he choked to death on his own blood.

The Battalion was given the task of capturing the village of Gambulaga. We moved forward with tanks from the 1st Armoured Division. We did not trust them anymore, since they showed a tendency to back off at the least excuse. This day was no exception. We had not gone far when we came across a deep, wide ditch with high banks. The armour was delighted. "*We'll cover you from here, as we can't get across,*" they told us. So we had to take the village without any armoured support, not knowing what opposition we were likely to meet.

We ran down the bank and leapt across the ditch. We all made it except Tubby. As we scrambled up the opposite bank, Tubby was yelling at us to help him, as he was in over his waist in the water. I turned round and told the others that I would see to him. There was a bush growing out of the bank. I threw my rifle out to him, giving him the butt end while I held onto the muzzle. When he had got hold of it, I told him to hang on until I got a grip of the bush. Did he hell hang on! He started pulling on the rifle until I overbalanced, and fell in the water too. I was soaked. In the line, if you were wet, you stayed wet. There was no change of clothing, and although it was warm during the days, the nights were cold. To say that I was annoyed was putting it mildly. I lifted my rifle up intending to smash the butt down on his head. The others all stood on the bank laughing. It was Bert Moore who brought me to my senses. He yelled, "*John. Don't!*" He knew exactly what was on my mind - that I intended grievous bodily harm to Tubby.

We waded out of the water. By this time I was wetter than Tubby was. He kept well out of my way in case I took a pot shot at him. We spread out into formation and started our advance on the village. We had almost reached the outskirts of the village when suddenly the church bells started ringing, and around a corner the villagers came out, carrying Italian flags, and what I presumed were village and local area flags. They were led by a smartly dressed man with a goatee beard, whom we guessed to be the local squire. They shook our hands and made us welcome. We dug in on the far side of the village.

When we moved on again we came across the work of our Desert Air Force, as it was still called. There were large numbers of dead horses and knocked out transport vehicles. I was surprised to see the amount of horse drawn transport that

the Germans used. There were also dead Germans all over the place. One was lying by the roadside. His head and bands had been eaten away. All that was left was his skull and the bones of his hands. To add insult to his remains, a direction sign was propped up on his body. There was the usual sickly sweet smell of death hanging around everywhere.

Our advance took us through a farm. We were advancing in our usual arrowhead formation, well spread out and with our weapons at the ready. We passed a hayrick which had been hollowed out to hide a Spandau nest. We had just passed it when I heard a movement in the rick. I did not hesitate, but spun round and fired my rifle from the hip. I had always been a good shot from the hip, and that occasion was no exception. I heard a "*Baa*" and heard something fall. I had shot a lamb! I felt very bad about it, but Bert kept on saying, "*How were you to know the farmer had his sheep in the rick? They could have been Teds waiting to ambush us.*" I felt a bit better then.

Once again we were told to dig in outside a village. Bert and I got into a German dugout. It had a stick with straw wrapped round it sticking up in the air, marking it an air attack shelter, so that their troops would know where to run to when our aircraft attacked. We pulled the sign down and threw it away, and took over this dugout, which saved us a lot of digging. However, by doing this we were positioned further forward than the rest of the platoon. It was not long before a German tank came along the road! It certainly was not a Tiger. It may have been a Panther. Behind the tank were a dozen or so infantrymen. Some had steel helmets on, whilst others had their usual soft hats with a large peak; a good design for keeping the sun out of their eyes.

Bert suddenly crawled out of the dugout, saying, "*Come on. I'm going to knock that tank out, so cover me!*" He crawled forward a few yards and then crawled back. "*Come on,*" he said, "*They will have got by by the time we get there.*" He then crawled forward again, and I realised that he really was determined to knock out that tank! I crawled to a position behind the infantry and set up the Bren, hoping that they could not hear my knees knocking. Bert lay in wait further up the road. The idea was that as soon as he leapt out to throw a grenade into the driver's visor, I would open up at the infantry. I was not relishing that moment one little bit. I could see myself and Bert both dead men in the next few minutes. Suddenly Boom! Boom! Shells started falling just short of the tank. The shells were being fired by our own tanks from behind some houses. All the Germans beat a hasty retreat. I let them go by. I was not going to risk opening fire, as the tank would probably have spotted me and opened up at me as it passed. I would have been a sitting duck. I crawled back to our dugout. Bert was already back, and was most annoyed. I was greatly relieved!

We stopped in the square of a small town to rest, and queued up for a meal. I had just got mine, and walked to a quiet corner to eat it, when a Messerschmitt 109 fighter dived out of the sky and machine-gunned us. The square was empty in seconds. We snatched up our weapons and waited for him to return. When he came back we all opened up at him. The only trouble was that it was not the Messerschmitt, but one of our fighters who was after him! He waggled his wings and flashed his lights at us in annoyance. What a mistake! There we were, several of us ex-LAA gunners, who were supposed to be well versed in aircraft recognition.

We finally withdrew for a few days rest. We were not in the least surprised that our rest area was in the middle of a very active and noisy artillery line! After our so-called rest was over, we moved to a concentration area in preparation for the crossing of the River Po in Fantails.

Italy 1943/44. A visit to Salerno, Monte Camino and Monte Cassino

"It is right and proper that this Brigade, which was one of the last to leave France three years ago should have the honour to be one of the first to return to Europe....."

Introduction

This quotation is an extract from a Special Order of the Day issued by Brigadier L O Lyne DSO to his brigade, 169 (Queens) Brigade, prior to the landings at Salerno on 9th September 1943. The Regimental Journal has featured a number of articles about this campaign over the last few years, often inspired by the choice of 9th September as the Founding Day of the new regiment in 1992. After all, not only were there 3 battalions of The Queen's Royal Regiment in 169 Bde, but also 3 battalions of The Hampshires in 128 Bde; both brigades had leading roles in the landings. In addition, both regiments provided Beach Groups to help organise the landings and 3 additional Queen's Royal Regiment battalions were later to relieve 169 (Queen's) Bde on 19th September as 131 Lorried Infantry Brigade. I was, therefore, particularly fortunate to visit Salerno, as well as Monte Camino and Monte Cassino in December 1999, as one of the organisers of the Joint Services Command and Staff College Army Junior Division's (AJD) Staff Ride to Italy. This article is not a history of the battles that we examined, but rather a series of vignettes or personal reflections of the experience.

Setting the Scene

The Army Junior Division always attempts to conduct an annual staff ride for the Directing Staff (DS). 1999 was to be no exception; two of us volunteered to organise the event and our destination was Italy and the battlefields of Salerno, Monte Camino and Monte Cassino. One of our first tasks was to set the scene for the Event and there is no real substitute for personal experiences. Two days prior to departure the DS listened to a captivating briefing from both Brigadier Geoffrey Curtis OBE, MC, who had been a platoon commander with 2/6th Queen's at Salerno and had seen action at Monte Camino and Anzio and Colonel John Buckeridge, who had been a platoon commander on Snakeshead Ridge, Monte Cassino with 1st Battalion The Royal Sussex Regiment. Our studies in Italy were to be based on battlegroup and brigade level, but both guest speakers effectively set the scene with their descriptions and perspectives of the face of battle. We were all to remember their vivid and thought-provoking comments as the Tour progressed, particularly those concerning hardship, command and control and coordination of firepower; many of their comments echoed problems experienced today.

Salerno

"Salerno Remembered" by Geoffrey Curtis is one of the best books in which to read the detail concerning the landings. Salerno today is an extremely busy port, which has expanded and is very different to the 1943 model, however, the coastal features remain and it is easy to imagine 169 (Queen's) Bde at Sugar Beach and 128 (Hampshire) Bde at Uncle Beach. A poignant moment was seeing "Hampshire Lane". It was there that 5th Hampshires was attacked by German tanks and infantry within the confines of narrow lanes near Magazzeno. They were taken by surprise and suffered heavy casualties; in addition, 300 men were taken prisoner. It is one thing to read about the incident, but more poignant to stand at the site; a plaque was erected on a building by the lane in 1993 in memory of those who fell.

We also visited Montecorvino Airfield, which is now partly occupied by the Italian equivalent of the Army Air Corps. This was one of the critical allied objectives in the first few days of



Salerno Cemetery, paying respects



the Battle; many of the old airfield buildings still stand and we could imagine Geoffrey Curtis firing at departing German aircraft, as 2/6th Queen's advanced!

Another poignant moment was the laying of a wreath at the Salerno Commonwealth and War Graves Commission Cemetery by our Commandant, Colonel Geoff Silk (late WFR) on behalf of AJD in memory of all who fell at the battle. I believe that all of our forebear regiments are represented at the Cemetery and the fallen are not just from the Salerno battles. Some unusual headstones were those for casualties from the 67th East Surrey Anti-Tank Regiment RA.

Monte Camino

Monte Camino is not as well known as the other studied battles, but is one of the actions, which occurred after the landings at Salerno and prior to Monte Cassino. The allies battled to cross the Volturno River in horrendous wet weather and stiff opposition and then pressed on to the hills and mountains around the Mignano Gap. As in Salerno, the American General Mark Clark's 5th Army was again involved, along with 10th (Brit) Corps, which included 46 Div and 56 Div. Simultaneous to this movement on the Tyrrhenian coastline, Montgomery's 8th Army advanced beside the Adriatic coast to the north.

An attempt to capture the Monte Camino feature failed in November 1943, but between 1st and 9th December 1943 the attack was successful; 46 Div captured the southern peak, whilst 56 Div secured the main part of the feature. This was Point 963 (Monastery Hill), which was captured by 169 (Queen's) Bde on 6th December. The assault was synchronised with American attacks at San Pietro and Italian assaults at Monte Lungo.



Summer on today's Queen's Bde beach!

The weather was clear when we saw Monte Camino; it is an impressive site and we wondered how any formation was ever able to capture the feature. The Germans were well prepared with excellent observation and could make the most of reverse slope positions. Our forebears achieved amazing victories, but as we moved through those hills we wondered which side had the initiative; the Germans only withdrew when they had to, leaving few men behind. The "soft underbelly" of Europe, as Churchill described Italy had developed into a "tough gut", as the Germans developed a most successful delay action, rarely becoming decisively engaged and buying time. The next major stand was to be at the Gustav Line and at Monte Cassino.

En route, our group stopped at San Pietro to see the remains of the old village, which serves as a memorial to the local Italians and heard about the offensive actions of the American Regimental Combat Teams. Their armour advanced against the village in less than ideal terrain and suffered accordingly. The famous film director, John Huston, immortalised the village in a documentary during the War. We also stopped at the small museum and Italian Cemetery at Monte Lungo; Monte Lungo was the site of the first major Italian attack on the Germans since their change of allegiance; it must have been a strange experience for those Italians to don British uniforms and to attack a former ally.

Monte Cassino

No pictures or preconceptions can prepare a visitor for the awesome site of Monte Cassino. It totally dominates the area around it, as the all seeing eye. There were 4 battles surrounding the feature, which were fought in the period January to May 1944. The first coincided with the allied landings at Anzio, to the north and included the attempted crossing of the River Rapido. We saw the locations where 36 (US) Texas Div attempted to cross the River, this was a total disaster with poor infantry/engineer cooperation and ill-prepared troops attacking a well-fortified position manned by a competent enemy. In under 48 hours, there had been 1681 casualties and 500 Americans had been taken prisoner; the failure of this crossing led to a Congressional Inquiry after the War. Basic procedures failed and the Rapido holds many lessons for us today about how not to cross an obstacle!

We also visited the German Cemetery at Caira. Caira served as one of the start points for the resupply of allied soldiers on the Cassino hill features and for Snakeshead Ridge and Monte Cassino itself. A whole brigade of infantry was involved with the movement of supplies up the hillsides by mule or carried by soldiers. This was no mean feat and our DS loggies knew that even today DROPS vehicles would not have been a substitute for the movement of supplies in that sort of terrain!

The Americans were unable to capture the Monastery of Monte Cassino in the 1st Battle or the more important higher feature

at the end of Snakeshead Ridge, Point 593. The 2nd Battle involved their replacement by the 4th Indian Division on the Ridgeline and further attacks by that division and the New Zealand Division.

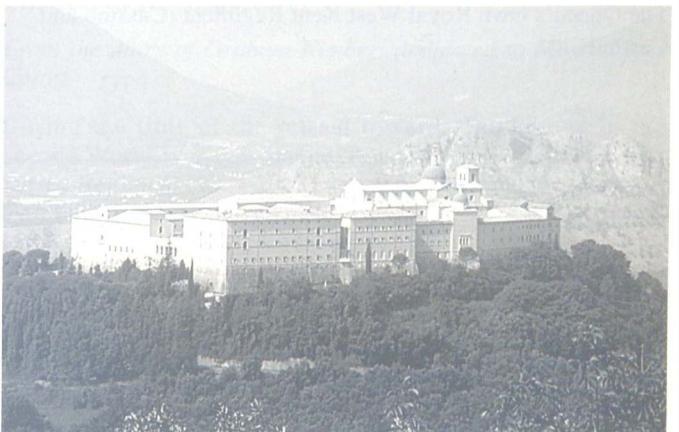
We had an amazing experience, when we visited Point 593 and the Monastery. The weather was foggy at the base of the Hill, in Cassino, but as our coach gained altitude towards the Monastery we drove up above the cloud to clear blue skies, with the tops of the mountains penetrating the cotton wool effect beneath. There then began a fascinating walk around the area, as we relived Colonel John Buckeridge's experiences. 1st Royal Sussex was the lead battalion of the 4th Indian Division on Snakeshead Ridge and Colonel John commanded the lead platoon! We could imagine the close-quarter fighting with the German paratroopers amongst the rocks and the psychological importance of the Monastery. We could also imagine John Buckeridge's surprise and joy, when he saw waves of allied bombers destroying the old building. However, the fighting in the area continued for months until the allies had amassed enormous odds in their favour and launched the French Expeditionary Force through the mountains.

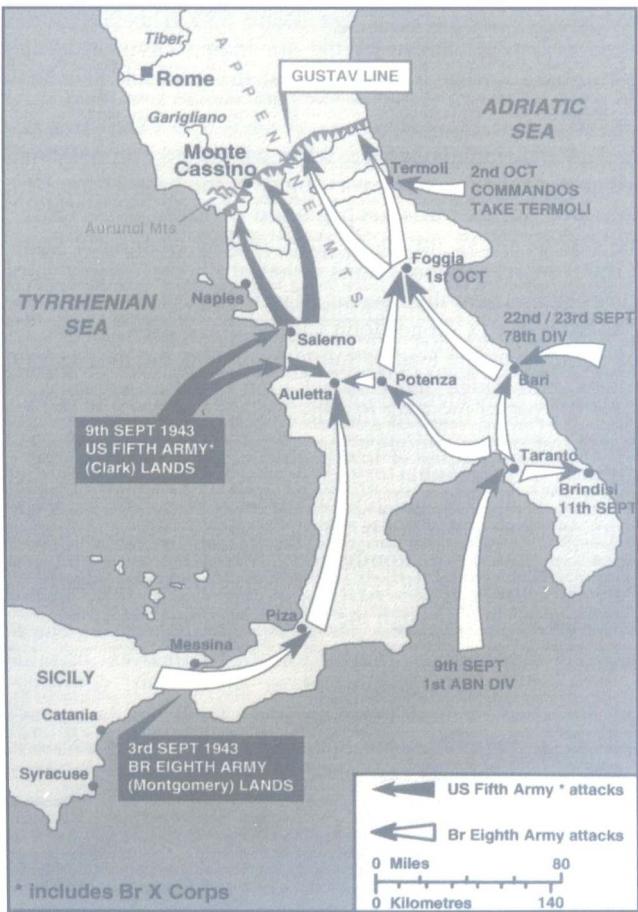


The Abbey at Monte Cassino



Two views of the Abbey of Monte Cassino from point 593





Conclusion

This was not a history, but a series of vignettes. The Battlefield Tour or Staff Ride is an invaluable tool for learning many lessons, which can no longer be learned as easily on exercise or can be experienced on operations. One can learn a lot from reading, but reading is no substitute for seeing the ground. The whole experience was made even more poignant for me, because of the involvement of our forebear regiments. My thanks, again to Brigadier Geoffrey Curtis and Colonel John Buckeridge.

Battle Honours Awarded

Salerno - The Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey).
The Hampshire Regiment

Monte Camino - The Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey)

Monte Cassino-

The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment) (Cassino II)
The East Surrey Regiment
The Royal Sussex Regiment (Cassino II and Monastery Hill)
The Hampshire Regiment (Cassino H)
The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment (Cassino and Castle Hill).

PTC

In 1906, at Portsmouth Naval Barracks, an insubordinate muster of stokers were given the order "*on the knee*" by a tactless Lieutenant in charge of them. Although actually an old gunnery drill order, it was misinterpreted by the stokers as an attempt to humiliate them and they eventually dispersed simmering with discontent. Aggravated by other matters within the next twenty-four hours, the incident escalated and eventually erupted into full scale mutiny and riot which spilled out of the barracks and into the town itself. It required the efforts of Royal Marines from Eastney, detachments of other sailors from ships in the harbour and civil police, some mounted, to restore order.

At a subsequent court-martial several ratings were sentenced to imprisonment and the Lieutenant responsible for the original inflammatory order was reprimanded. The incident did not affect his career, however, and he did not seem to have learned much from it. His name was George Collard and twenty-two years later, in the Mediterranean Fleet in 1928 and by then a Rear-Admiral, his notoriously bad temper sparked off the infamous "Royal Oak Affair", reported in the Regimental Music Supplement under the heading "A Sour Note".

Source: *Men from the Dreadnoughts* by J. Baynham.

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Brooke Barracks, Spandau, Berlin



These photos were sent in by David Gow now living in Ontario, Canada. They show the entrance to what was the barracks of I Queen's in 1948-49.

Photo above shows the building which was Battalion Headquarters, and below, the entrance to the Barracks with the Guardroom on the left. David reports that the buildings are now used as an Auto repair depot and the area is now weed ridden!



On the knee

Pictures in Clandon Museum and in some of its albums and publications often show officers and other ranks in an "*on the knee*" position for various reasons such as weapon firing or, on more auspicious ceremonial occasions, receiving Colours. Thankfully the posture never seems to have resulted in such an explosive situation as once resulted in the Royal Navy.

Serving in Korea with 1st Bn The Middlesex Regiment

I served in Korea at a different time and in a different unit from Maj-Gen Mike Reynolds (article Newsletter May 2000), and, as he and I have discussed, our experiences were markedly different. Mike's broader points need to be seen in context. Five years after the Second World War, Britain was still not far from bankruptcy, had many other military commitments and although, South Korea apart, national ground force contribution to the Korean campaign was second only to the Americans, it still amounted at maximum to little more than two thirds of a (Commonwealth) division. Given the overwhelming preponderance of the American military contribution and command structure, it was hardly in the British gift to dictate the conduct of operations.

The Americans did not lack operational imagination. Prior to the Chinese intervention, the brilliant success of the amphibious assault, airlanding and break-out at Inchon which threw the whole North Korean Army into disarray showed that. The major strategic error was to push on through North Korea towards the Chinese frontier, provoking Chinese retaliation on a massive scale. Given Chinese numbers and the hilly and broken nature of the ground, it is difficult to see how even an Alexander or Wellington could have prevented the decline of the campaign to defensive stalemate.

Mike's experience was that the Army had not learned much from the Second World War and had become poorly equipped and trained. In equipment, because of national poverty, we certainly suffered by comparison with the Americans, particularly in clothing, vehicles and lack of an SLR. Perhaps the best that can be said is that, except in winter clothing, the Chinese were even worse equipped!

I did not share Mikes's experience regarding the standard of training. My own service was with 1st Middlesex in 27 Commonwealth Brigade. The Brigade was a typically ad hoc British creation. Starting with 1st Middlesex and 1st Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders sent from Hong Kong at the outbreak of the war, over a period of a few months it added an Australian and a Canadian battalion, a New Zealand field artillery regiment and an Indian field ambulance. The company in which I served was equally ad hoc. It was formed to provide 1st Middlesex with a fourth rifle company. None of the five officers, three Surreys and two Middlesex, had known any of the others before. I came from 1st Surreys, recently returned from Greece and Italian Somaliland. (I was glad to take with me two other Surrey volunteers, the well-known hard men Messrs Card and Bradfield, the sort of soldier no platoon should be without - in war at least!) Most of the soldiers were National Servicemen drawn from across 1st Queens in Iserlohn and had not been a formed company.

The new company was organised and started training in the Pusan bridgehead. My experience was typical. I was blessed with excellent NCOs and I was hugely encouraged at the spirit of comradeship that quickly emerged and at the intelligent and thorough way battle drills and skills were developed. All this derived, of course, from the quality of earlier basic training. This competence combined with the tactical common sense, pragmatism and frequent appearance up front of brigade and battalion commanders engendered a strong spirit of mutual trust and confidence within the brigade that held good throughout our time together. Not the least benefit was that the brigade suffered far fewer casualties than others experiencing the same degree of operational activity. This point is made by Max Hastings in his book 'The Korean War' when, describing an action which typified the general conduct of Brigade operations, he wrote: "27 Brigade won much professional admiration from their allies for the fashion in which they broke the Communist attack north of Chongchon-ni. It is a typical irony of history that, because their battle ended in success at small cost in Commonwealth lives, it is little remembered."



Sgts' 'Nobby' Saxby and 'Busty' Humphries. This photo was taken whilst on R & R in Japan. Both left 1 Queen's as part of the draft which re-inforced 1 Middlesex. They were members of C Coy 1 MX. Both have sadly since died.

Prior to this battle, the Brigade had gone through all phases of war. The defence of the Pusan bridgehead; an airlift to Inchon to take part in the break-out and advance against the North Koreans towards the Yalu River; defensive operations when the Chinese entered the war; withdrawal under unpleasant conditions of winter weather and large-scale Chinese outflanking movement with disintegration of morale among many of our flanking allied units; more defensive operations and limited advances which eventually led to stalemate.

Of course, we made mistakes, but these mostly arose from the fog of war, not deficiencies in training or failure to apply the lessons of experience. Unlike some of our allies, at no time did the Brigade lose control or its self-confidence. Sound training and the consequent ability to adapt were the bedrock of our existence; in the given conditions, courage and willpower alone would not have sufficed.

DRB

Erratum, Veterans Memories.

Major General Mike Reynolds has written to correct a number of errors which occurred in our report of his video interview. He was NOT commissioned into the Black Watch. His first choice was ALWAYS the Queen's Royal Regiment. He never served in Berlin and he did not hold an appointment at the Royal College of Defence Studies - he was a student there. He also points out that his remark that the Army "*lurched from one crisis to another*" did not refer to the Korean War but to the period 1945 - 69. Furthermore, that he did not think of leaving the Army "*at the time of the Korean War*", but rather, AFTER he had served there and been wounded.

The Editor apologizes to General Mike for the misquoting of his video interview.

The Search for Nicollette

From the diary of Graham Kimber, dedicated to Mr and Mrs Cattez.

During the time of the retreat towards Dunkerque in the Second World War, Joe Stanley Rood of the 1st Battalion East Surrey Regiment (1927-1942) was sheltered from the Germans by a French family named Cattez in a house in a village called Leers close to the Belgian border.

It was while he was sheltering there that Mrs Cattez gave birth in a cellar to a baby girl, to be named Nicole or Nicollette, and Joe had to assist in stifling the cries of the mother during birth so as not to attract the attention of German troops who were making a house search. He successfully returned to England

where he was eventually discharged medically from the Army in 1942 suffering from gastritis. He and his wife had two sons and a daughter, the latter being named Nicollette in memory of the French experience but sadly dying at the age of two months. The younger son, Graham, many years later received from his mother a large collection of photographs and papers which had belonged to his father. With consequent interest aroused he decided to set off in search of the French girl Nicollette, by now obviously a lady of maturity.

By way of the Internet he traced the locality of the village of Leers on the French/Belgian border near Lille. After further enquiries he sailed from Dover on the Cross Channel Ferry and eventually arrived at the village of Leers-Nord in Belgium at 3 o'clock in the morning. He then slept until 7.30a.m in the van in which he was travelling.

Awake and breakfasted he commenced his enquiries, looking initially for the Rue Marceau which was where the Cattez family lived. He was directed to Leers which was actually a village a few miles away in French territory and distinct from Leers-Nord. Over the years Leers had grown from being a village into a small town. He located the address he was seeking but the current occupant had only been there for five years and could not assist him with information regarding the Cattez family. A search of records at the information centre of the local authority office proved more fruitful and indicated that a member of the family, a daughter Jocelyn, had moved to a village called Nechin just over the border in Belgium. Telephone enquiries to Belgium elicited the information that Jocelyn was living in Nechin at 164 Rue de la Station. After a night's sleep in a hotel, Graham, now hot on the scent, renewed his quest and by this time he was assisted by a lady named Mrs Willems who thankfully was something of a linguist. The search was now attracting the attention of the town's Mayor and, not unnaturally, the Press. Two journalists arrived to cover the story and a Press conference, with photo shots, was held in the Mayoral rooms. Further photographs were taken of the original house at Rue Marceau.

Back in Nechin the Rue de la Station was located, now occupied by interested groups of people aware of what was afoot, and the appropriate address was approached. The visitors were received and ushered inside by Jocelyn who turned to a rather nervous lady saying "*Nicollette!!*". The search was over. Graham had found *Nicollette*.

Joyful emotions followed with fulsome conversations and recollections (despite some language difficulties) and the production of photographs and papers. A visit to town for a meal followed.

The following day there were sightseeing trips with Nicollette and her family, including a call at an Equestrian Restaurant where the training of horses in a riding school could be watched while eating. The beautiful city of Lille was also visited.

After a welcome night's sleep at his hotel Graham renewed his acquaintance with the family and further journeys were made to the coastal area near Dunkerque. The day being sunny the facilities of the beaches were greatly enjoyed (presumably much more so than in Graham's father's days). On return to Jocelyn's house a full celebration family meal was happily and heartily consumed.

The following day saw the return to England for Graham and there was an emotional farewell to Nicollette and her family. Graham determined to re-visit and if "*old Joe*" had been looking down from "*the heavenly barrack room*" he would no doubt have been pleased and proud.

Conduct unbecoming

It seems from various historical records that on some occasions Army officers, not finding enough of the Sovereign's enemies to fight, sought combat among themselves.

At a General Court Martial convened at Gosport Barracks on 3rd November 1806 Captain James O'Reilly, 2nd Battalion, 31st Regiment was arraigned on charges of challenging Captain William Lodge to a duel, using opprobrious and abusive language to him, striking him with a horsewhip, and attempting to draw his sword on him, in which effort he was thankfully prevented by the Sergeant-Major. Worst of all, most of these alleged offences were committed in the presence of other officers and men. All charges, except the sword issue, were found proved and Captain O'Reilly was sentenced to be cashiered.

Surprisingly, despite the verdict, the Court made a recommendation for mercy to "*His Majesty's Royal Person*" in view of the youth and former good conduct of the accused. On grounds of insufficient evidence His Majesty did not confirm the charge of challenge to a duel but confirmed all the others and refused mercy.

The Commander in Chief directed that the charges, sentences and "*His Majesty's pleasure thereupon*" should be read at the head of every regiment and inserted in the orderly books.

In later years another officer of the 31st Regiment showed himself to be more interested in finance than feuding. At a General Court Martial assembled at Umballa on 5th June 1843 Captain George Dobson Young was arraigned on charges of having, with others including his own servant, effected unlawful entry into a "*Tykhana*", or place under ground, in the fort of Khytul and removed portions of treasure therefrom, such treasure having been "*unwarrantably extracted*". The unlawful entry was by digging through a wall.

The Court only found the Captain at fault for having failed to report his find, deeming this to be an error of judgment rather than an act of criminality. He was honourably acquitted on all charges.

The Commander-in-Chief, although unable to reverse his findings, was obviously displeased and in his remarks on the case said he "*could not concur with the Court in attaching no criminality...*". In other comments His Excellency made it clear he considered the Captain's conduct and excuses "*unworthy of an old officer*". Perhaps the Captain was so old that he was merely trying to make provision for his retirement.

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5019 Group, Shorncliffe Camp, November 1950



*This photo was sent in by J E Dunn who served with 1 Queen's in Iserlohn and now lives in Porthtowan, Cornwall.
Does anyone remember?*

Getting High

On the 3rd May 1937, five soldiers of the 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment, showing considerable courage and initiative set out on a private venture of seemingly impossible dimensions. Corporal R Ridley, together with Lance Corporal J Williams, J Bull, L Hamilton and Private S Hillier left Rhaniket in India with the intention of conquering the 25,447 feet high Mt. Kamet in the Himalayas. Their optimism must have been extreme for they were inexperienced, ill equipped and operating on a financial shoestring of their own resources. Their experience is detailed in a diary kept by Corporal Ridley and published in The East Surrey Regimental Journal of November 1936 - May 1938.

Their clothing was generally Army issue, with some adjustments, such as the inclusion of bazaar purchased sunglasses and their tentage consisted of the small Army twenty-one pounders. Good sleeping bags were rightly considered essential. Their food provisions sounded like a list of adverts from a grocery catalogue, including such things as Bovril, Horlicks Malted Milk, Cadbury's Chocolate and Bourn-Vita. Present day anti-smoking campaigners would have been horrified to know that tobacco was considered to be of major importance so packets of Player's were taken to supply the need. To provide photographic records Agfa cameras were carried.

Granted special leave for the project, the first stage of their journey was a 200 mile trek of three weeks duration to take them to their base camp which they established in the Raikaina Valley at a height of 14,500 feet on the 24th May. There the porters retired to Goting. The weather was thankfully perfect and Juniper bushes provided fuel for fires.

Porters returned on the following day and preliminary reconnaissance of the next stage took place. Unfortunately Hamilton became ill with stomach pains on the 26th May and had to be returned to Joshimath to rest.

With everyone carrying heavy loads, Camp One at 16,000 feet was reached on 27th May and the weather was so much improved that two members of the party were able to sleep in the open air. Progress to Camps Two (17,000 feet) and Three (18,000 feet) became progressively more difficult and cold with snow and ice presenting problems and the sounds of distant avalanches giving cause for alarm. Thirst was experienced and when Ridley tried to satisfy his by eating snow he suffered from toothache. Altitude was also beginning to take effect.

When the Camp Three, Second Position, was reached on 1st June it was decided to dispense with the porters, who had given excellent service, and proceed alone.

So, carrying their own loads, the mountaineers made their way steadily upwards to reach Camp Four, First Position (20,000 feet) by 4th June. By now hard going and deteriorating weather conditions were beginning to take their toll, but time was pressing as food supplies were running short. By the 9th June at Camp Four, Fourth Position, blizzards were so bad that the climbers were confined to their tents.

Reaching the last slope of Kamet on 11th June, a decision was regrettably reached that a final assault on the summit could not be effected and would, in view of the exhausted physical conditions of members of the party, be foolhardy and dangerous. So having gone as far as possible they commenced the return journey.

Re-tracing their steps through previous camp sites, they gradually met improving climatic conditions, better food supplies and supportive company of various villagers. By the

18th June Tapoban was reached, with the welcome luxuries of baths and "smokes" and the expedition was virtually over. Although the original objective had not been achieved, much had been learned and, above all, standards of endeavour and determined perseverance had been a credit to the participants themselves and the Regiment to which they belonged.

They could take comfort from the fact that Mount Kamet had only once previously been conquered, that being in 1931 by a strong party of climbers under the leadership of F S Smythe.

It had defeated such experienced mountaineers as Generals Bruce and Meade. So the efforts of the ambitious other rankers were certainly not to be derided.

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24th Bn The London Regiment (The Queen's)

My father J C Nye, then a corporal in the 24th LONDON Regiment, The Queen's, served in the Volunteer Service Company with the 2nd Battalion in South Africa at the turn of the last century and never forgot the experience. Although he also served in France 1914-18, he always sang the Boer War version of what is usually thought of as a World War I song "*I Wanna Go 'Ome*", including the lines "*I don't want to go on the veldt any more*" and "*Take me over the sea, where Johnny Boer can't get at me*".

He was particularly proud of the fact that the battalion never had a man taken prisoner; and he fully reciprocated General Buller's high regard for the Queen's.

After the relief of Ladysmith Colonel Baden-Powell established a course to train selected troops to counter the Boer "*hit and run*" tactics with what we would probably consider something like Commando/SAS techniques, to which he gave the name 'Scouts'. (His Army manual on this system was entitled 'Scouting' and it served as a model for his later work- "*Scouting for Boys*").

Corporal Nye and his great friend, Sid Aubrey ("Strawberry") completed the course successfully and were awarded the silver fleur-de-lys badge (the prototype of the later, Boy Scout badge) which they wore until it was phased out in about 1921. His badge remained with his medals until lost during the 'Blitz' in Croydon. I have won many a pint by claiming that Father was one of B.P's scouts long before the founding meeting at Brownsea Island!

On returning to the battalion, the two Volunteers proudly displayed their badges and their slouch hats, whereupon Colonel Pink ordered the CSM to march them off parade and issue them with 'soldiers' hats! At about this time an Army Order allowed beards to be worn in order to conserve water supplies and Father often recalled seeing a Guards' Sergeant Major wearing a naval "*full set*".

However, Colonel Pink refused to allow the Order to apply to his battalion, reputedly announcing "*The Queen's may die of thirst, but they'll die properly shaved*". I've often wondered if Gerald Kersh had this phrase in mind when he entitled his book on the Guards, "*They died with their boots clean*".

For some reason which I've never discovered, the Boer War was always referred to in our home as the 2nd South African Campaign, and I can still recall my surprise as a ten-year-old on realising that the two conflicts were one and the same!

A E Nye

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Honouring an old soldier

June 27th 2000 was an eventful birthday celebration day for an old soldier of The Queen's Royal Regiment and the emphasis was on the old.

Jim Burton, aged 102, veteran of the First World War and now living in Canada received, somewhat belatedly, the French Legion of Honour for his services in that country in the conflict of 1914-18. Presentation of the Honour was made by the Consulate General of France, Mr Michele de Jaegher, in a moving ceremony at Cedarview Lodge in Lynn Valley in the presence of Mr Burton's family, friends and fellow Cedarview Lodge residents. Tributes were paid to Mr Burton by the local MP, Mr Ted White, and by other civic dignitaries and by members of the family. There was also representation from the Royal Canadian Legion, the Lynn Valley Bowling Club and Veterans of World War II.

Happily receiving the decoration, Mr Burton could certainly look back on a long and interesting life. A Dr Barnado's boy, he was trained as a baker, a trade that he followed until his eventual retirement at the age of 75, a total of 63 years.

On February 18th 1917, he enlisted in The Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment and embarked for active service in France in April of the same year. While overseas he was later transferred to the Army Service Corps. Discharged in 1919 he emigrated to Alberta, Canada where he continued his calling as a baker, later moving to Port Arthur (Thunder Bay).

In 1925 he married his wife Susan and moved to Ottawa where he operated two bakeries. In 1957 the Burtons moved to British Columbia where Mr Burton, an avid lawn bowler, was honoured with a life membership of the West Vancouver Bowling Club.

His wife unfortunately died in 1999. He now lives in Cedar View Lodge, Lynn Valley and it is to be hoped that he will spend many more happy days in the company of his recently awarded honour.



If It Moves Salute It

Another typical and welcome soldier's story, under the above title, has been received by the Editor. Written by Len Powell it tells of the author's experiences when conscripted into The Queen's Royal Regiment during the Second World War.

Aged 18½ years at the outbreak of war, Len was at first in a reserved occupation as a trainee plumber but he was eventually called up in 1942. Arriving at Chichester Barracks, which was an Infantry Regiment Training Depot, he found himself among the usual bemused intake of new recruits undergoing joining routines but soon settled down to Army life and became accustomed to it.

An intensive training programme, which included weaponry, followed and Len comments that not least among the techniques to be mastered was that of saluting. He was told, "It's not the man you're saluting but the uniform" but he humorously remarks that he noted that it was the man who reacted and not the uniform to any failings. An important feature, doubtless remembered by many of our readers, was Church Parade on Sundays when the young soldiers were marched to Chichester Cathedral behind a band. Night manoeuvres took place and on one occasion, during inclement weather, Len was glad of the shelter of a pig sty.

Training completed, he was posted to the 2/6th Battalion of The Queen's Royal Regiment, in D Company then stationed at Long Melford in Suffolk. Arriving there, he says that "*one had the unmistakable impression that one had joined the professionals*".

From then on, he says, training seemed more purposeful and included such things as marching and jogging in full battle kit, sometimes wearing respirators, and the rudiments battle order and movements. As was to be expected, he met some "characters". One was the explosives officer who, while warning of the dangers of his craft, gloomily predicted that he himself would probably one day fall victim to his own materials. He was killed eventually - but in a motor-cycle accident. Another character was a man who was trying to "work his ticket" by pretending to be deaf. Some of the NCO's were trying to catch him out but Len eventually lost track of him so never knew the outcome.

Grant of fourteen days leave indicated impending embarkation for overseas service. Indications proved true and in August 1942 the Battalion sailed from Liverpool in the SS *Franconia*.

The soldiers soon became acclimatised to shipboard life although many of them, including Private Powell, suffered from sea sickness in the Bay of Biscay. Various activities, some of a training nature and some of leisure, were devised to keep the troops occupied. Lifeboat drills, as was to be expected, were frequent.

After several days at sea the sight of land and a stop at Freetown in Sierra Leone was welcome. A refreshing change to the shipboard diet was effected by way of purchase of fruit from native vendors who came out to the ship in boats. But after a day's respite it was back to sea again. Appointed a Mess Orderly in the Officers' galley, Len found a distinct improvement in his daily menu.

The ship's next stop was at Capetown where traditional South African hospitality was enjoyed. Servicemen were generously entertained, often being taken to people's homes and messages on their behalves were often sent back to anxious relatives in England. Most welcome experience of all for Len was the fact that there he met his brother Bert who was serving in the RAMC. Unbeknown to each other, the two brothers had been travelling in different ships in the same convoy.

Onward transport was into the Indian Ocean where an appropriate "crossing the line" ceremony was celebrated at the Equator. Porpoises and flying fish were seen before reaching the next port of call - Bombay. Here, with the "mysteries of the East" becoming apparent, the troops disembarked from the *Franconia*. A railway journey took them to their new home, a camp about the size of an English village, where accommodation was in large airy buildings which contained about twenty occupants each. Unusual comforts were supplied by Indian bearers who, for a few Annas, provided tea and also cleaned boots and equipment.

But such luxuries were not to last and before long the troops found themselves entrained for Bombay and embarkation on a ship crewed by Lascars which took them onwards to Basra.

Of this place, Len's lasting initial memories are of the heat and the innumerable flies which infested everything. A bumpy journey by lorry took them to their next encampment from which they later set out on what Len describes as "a marathon overland journey".

Their onward progress continued to Baghdad, through Palestine, across the Sinai Desert, over the Suez Canal and into Egypt to a place called El Tamag which was not too far from the Nile. Here Len transferred from D Company to the mortar platoon and underwent the appropriate training. Another lorried journey took the troops across the former battlegrounds of the Eighth Army in Libya. Here the time images of war became apparent as the debris of the engagements were sighted. A trail of burnt out tanks, damaged lorries and crashed aircraft continued for miles. The sands were littered with thousands of rounds of ammunition. The depressing scenes were relieved by arrival at Derna where the blue Mediterranean sea provided an entrancing backdrop to the white painted houses and lush green surrounding palm trees and other vegetation. But the generally grim atmosphere soon reassured itself on arrival at Tobruk where there was ample evidence of the past bitter fighting. Acquisition of desert camouflaged transport from the 51st Highland Division, who were going home, suggested to the Queen's men that they had come to stay, but soon afterwards the German Forces capitulated and a significant and hard fought period of the war came to an end. This fact was emphasised by the sights of columns of German prisoners of war marching towards their detention compounds.

But to Len and his comrades there were clear indications that for them the fighting was not yet over. Intensive training followed, including exercises in sea borne assault craft. The implications were obvious, an invasion was in the offing. Supposition was soon replaced by reality as a landing was made on Italian shores. The day previously, Italy had surrendered but there was to be no respite. The Germans were fighting on in a resolute and determined manner.

The Queen's men eventually found themselves at Monte Casino, where the monastery was under attack from Allied bombing forces. Later pulled out from this position the ever mobile Queen's were withdrawn to Naples where they were embarked with their transport for transfer to the Anzio beach-head. While at sea they saw that the Royal Navy cruiser HMS *Penelope*, which had been preceding them, had been sunk with heavy loss of life. Rescue efforts revealed appalling sights among survivors, some of whom were taken aboard Len Powell's ship, an LST (Landing Ship Tank). Among those saved coincidentally was a Royal Marine named Tom who had been a school friend of Len's. A happy though tragic re-union.

The Anzio beach-head is described by Len as "an absolute hell-hole" and it was here that he went sick - seriously ill with typhoid. As a result he was evacuated by hospital ship to Naples.

Trouble followed trouble as while in hospital at Naples he developed diphtheria so was transported, as a stretcher case, by

train to the Adriatic coast at Bari where he underwent a spell of hospital treatment and convalescence.

On eventually rejoining his unit he found that they were making steady but difficult progress up through Italy where the Germans were still putting up stiff resistance. Particular difficulties were experienced in certain positions where enemy snipers were firing on fixed lines. Traversing rivers often meant tricky manoeuvres with lorries across poorly constructed inadequate bridges and there was at least one resulting fatal accident.

The war for Len's unit effectively ended with their entry into Venice from whence they progressed to Trieste where more relaxed routines followed. Len became Company Clerk and was doubtless glad of an inside job as the weather was cold and fuel was scarce.

An onward move to Pola on the coast of Yugoslavia heralded the start of a long but welcome journey home for Len and his eventual return to civvy street. He had learned a lot during his Army service not the least being the old maxim:-

*If it moves, salute it.
If it doesn't move, pick it up.
If you can't pick it up,
Whitewash it.*

○○○

From the past



An ATS provost sergeant adjusts the armlet of a corporal at the South Eastern Command Training Centre in September 1941

○○○

The price for murder

An undated newspaper cutting from the Canadian Review reports the execution of a soldier of the 70th Regiment, named Leslie McCall in the village of Niagra for the murder of his wife. The principal witness against him was his stepdaughter of about ten years of age. It was understood that he privately confessed to the crime before meeting his death.

But McCall was not the only soldier in the Army's history to commit wife murder. One achieved an anonymous form of fame. Trooper Charles Wooldridge, Royal Horse Guards, was hanged at Reading Prison on 7th July 1896 for the murder of his wife at Windsor. His Army service certificate later recorded him as being discharged "on conviction by the civil power of the crime of wilful murder". He was, in fact, the unnamed prisoner whose execution formed the main theme of Oscar Wilde's "Ballad of Reading Gaol".

RF

One of Five

Pte G E Wilson recalls the night Sgt Frary won his Distinguished Conduct Medal. The extract below is from 'The Surreys in Italy pages 55 and 59.

"On 1st November a German patrol of some strength attacked a ruined farmhouse on D Company's front. The attack was repulsed but D Company lost five men killed and eleven taken prisoner - a severe loss for a rifle company. Another house in D Company's area was garrisoned by a platoon commanded by Sergeant F J Frary. The routine was for the platoon to remain in the house during daylight and at night to occupy the slit trenches in the vicinity, a small reserve remaining in the building. One night in late November, a German fighting patrol attacked the house, but was delayed by the men in the slit trenches. Sergeant Frary and his reserve then emerged from the house firing automatic weapons and routed the enemy. For his fine leadership Sergeant Frary was awarded the DCM."



The building was a typical small Italian farmhouse, one room up and one room down, with an open type lean-to type of barn against the back of the house.

The upstairs was reached by an internal staircase, this being unusual, as most farmhouses had an outside stair made of stone, this ironically could have made a difference to the German attack, which will be explained later on. (Casa Bernardi) was situated some 500 yards into No Mans Land forward of D Coy HQ, which was housed in "Casa Aquabona". The occupation of Casa Bernardi was not advertised to Ted (Ted a name given to the Germans by our troops, short for Tedesco, Italian for German) it was used for various duties, listening post and advance warning, and sometimes a start point for a patrol. By day everyone stayed in the house, no fires or cooking, smoke would have given the game away, at night defensive positions were taken up, two slit trenches manned with Brens, three of us stayed upstairs in the house, the rest of the platoon downstairs.

At the back of the house was a track leading up from the river, and the other trench covered the front of the house, which faced back towards D Coy HQ. There was no means of entry into the house from the back, the only door was at the front, rations brought up by men from Coy HQ each night, mules not used to save making any noise. The house was situated on flat ground between the base of "Monte Spaduro" and the Sillaro River. Surrounded by a few trees and bushes, and overgrown agricultural land through lack of tending, all civilians had been evacuated from the area, the house would normally have been reached by a dirt track from the river. The platoon was well down in strength, about twelve men one Sgt and one Corporal, even with the addition of men from C Coy on its disbandment, now three Rifle Cos instead of four.

The Germans normally sent their patrols out with upwards of twenty men, there was no way of telling how strong this one was, it can be assumed to have been in excess of twenty, it was the usual crowd 1st Para's (Fallschirmjager) this was known from the equipment discarded and found the next day, I think their intent was to blow up the house, thinking it to be unoccupied, they did not scout it out first, came straight up to the building.

The lads in the trenches held their fire, possibly hoping that Ted was just passing through and not wishing to give away the occupation of the house, but Ted had other ideas, while some set about preparing the explosives, others made their way to the front of the house. That's when the Brens opened up,

alerting us in the house, who took up positions and opened fire from the windows. I am given to understand that someone actually fired through the door when Ted tried to kick it open. This could possibly have been Sgt Frary, for he had taken up position by the front door, the three of us upstairs were limited in our field of fire as Ted concentrated more to the end and rear of the building. If there had been an outside staircase with a stone work bannister wall Ted could have used this to his advantage, to take cover behind and help him to gain access to the upstairs, as it was, the only entry was the one and only door at the front. Accuracy of shot from upstairs was very difficult, leaning out of the windows and firing to the right made one fire left handed, not an easy thing to do.

There was quite a bit of firing from both sides, a few stick grenades thrown by Ted who tried to lob them through the windows. The Germans as usual evacuated their wounded, so we had no idea for sure how many had been hit but going by the equipment discarded we knew that some had, like a Paras steel helmet with chin strap cut through so that it could be removed and various pieces of leather straps from their equipment.

Bearing in mind the action took place in the dark all we could see was fleeting shadows, Ted taken by surprise, retreated to the back of the house, possibly to take stock and consider their next move, which gave a lull in the firing. That's when Sgt Frary gathered five of us together and with a quick briefing dashed out of the house and took the fire fight to Jerry, enough was enough, they took to their heels and were gone, I wonder if they had known that there were only six of us whether they would have put up more of a fight. There was a double risk at leaving the house, our own lads in the trenches could have mistaken us for Ted, say no more, all was well.

After a check around the area and making sure that the lads in the trenches were OK we made our way back to the Farmhouse to take stock of the situation after morning stand to, although we had been at stand-to since the attack. We had a better look around the area now that we knew that Ted knew we were there, secrecy did not matter, that's when we found the explosives in the barn, placed against the wall of the house, which incidentally included a glass mine, a type of Teller Mine, but because it was made of fibreglass and few metal parts it made it difficult to detect, we were told that it was one of the first found.

Ted, to show his displeasure later that morning, gave us the benefit of a mortar stonk, one bomb did make a direct hit on a disused slit trench, but we all survived with no casualties. Whether we continued to occupy the house after that I don't know, as we relieved the following night and did not return there again. Our platoon finished off the winter on the summit of Monte Spaduro sending out patrols most nights.

On a more personal note regarding Sgt Jack Frary, one night Pte Ron Kirby (a lad from the RA) and myself were in a forward OP position, a slit trench just into No Mans Land, on top of Spaduro when Ted dropped half a dozen Mortar bombs on us (they must have spotted the trench in daylight). Before the last bomb had landed Sgt Frary was there to see if all was well, he had to cover open ground whilst the bombs were dropping to get to us.

Later on in the Argent Gap he led us through a mine field for two days including a night stay in a very heavily booby trapped farm house with only one casualty, a Pte Avery who stepped on a Schu Mine with the loss of his foot. Unfortunately, Pte Avery (another lad from the RA) was, or wanted to be a professional footballer, but for Sgt Frary's leadership I am sure things could have been a lot worse.

GEW

“With their Musket, Fife and Drum”

Introduction

It is said that old men sit and dream, through glassy eyes, in the twilight years of their lives. I have not quite reached this time-zone that, I hope, is yet to come. But as I read through Les Wilson's excellent Supplement about the Bands, Drums and the Music of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment, I could not help but reflect upon the history of the Corps of Drums, those music makers who play with just a bugle, fife and drum, and their role in regimental life, both in peace and at war.

In the beginning

One wonders how those music makers, whose pivotal instrument is made up from two pieces of pig skin, that are wrapped over the top and bottom of a hollow tube and then stretched tightly with rope and lugs and beaten with a pair of wooden sticks, can have played such an important part, regimentally, in the history of the British Army. What is equally amazing is how the Corps of Drums has continued to remain key players within regiments, against the background of a rapidly changing Armed Forces and to have survived for so long in an army where the pace of change has been dramatic, to say the least, over the last four decades.

An instrument of war

In the beginning, at the Creation, the drum must have been the first instrument invented by man. Its past is associated with conflict and, as such, the drum is classified as an instrument of war.

The drum ought to have become obsolete when gunpowder, invented by the Chinese in the fourteenth century, became part of the armoury of the battlefield.

Prior to the invention of gun powder, messages and orders on the field of battle and on ships of the line were carried out to drum beatings. These tribal beatings, from this instrument of war, not only inspired friendly forces, they also sent fear into the hearts of the foe.

The sound of cannon fire against the background of drum beatings, caused much confusion on the battlefield and the bugler took on the role of the messenger on the field of play. Today, many years later, the sound of bugle calls remain very much a part of barrack life.

Looking back over the past four decades and forward to this computer dot com age, it is surprising that the Corps of Drums has managed to survive in their traditional form and remain, on the one part, good musicians and, on the other, a first class fighting force.

They are a contradiction in that they move with the times but remaining traditionally the same. When the forces changed over from a National Service to a professional Army, the Corps of Drums closed ranks and became, overall, better musicians.

They didn't exactly go with quite that swing in the “Swinging Sixties”, when so called with-it commanding officers, in some regiments, put pop groups on the drill square, much to the horror of un-with it regimental sergeant majors. They fell back and regrouped at home bases on the breakup of the British Empire, the collapse of communism and the fall of the Berlin Wall, and said sad farewells on amalgamation parades to old famous regiments of the line that had been ‘baptized under fire’ and were rechristened with new titles. Their message stayed the same as semaphore, the morse code and the computer's own enigma variations - that fast track way of sending post by e-mail, the fax and goodness knows what.

The ceremonial duties of the Corps of Drums have remained unchanged and are timeless. They march at the head of victorious armies, muffled drums beat and ‘*Bugles calling from sad shire*’ (Wilfred Owen) sound when the nation is in mourning. New Colours are consecrated on piled drums and drummers are there, in lofty cathedrals, when the old Colours are laid up, reverently, to rest. Regimental Church Services are still held around drum altars in hollow square. The phrase ‘*to follow the drum*’ is still with us, in spite of the jet plane. When in barracks, as regularly as clockwork, throughout most regiments of the line, daily routine bugle calls are still played and at 6pm each night, Retreat is sounded and as the last note of the call fades, gates are closed and sentries mounted - the Last Post is played before lights out at the end of the day - in this nothing has changed.

They are good at public relations, waving the flag and keeping the peace, at marching in the streets, to let the locals know who they are and they Beat Retreat and rap out Victory Beatings and become some of our best ambassadors abroad.

In spite of the digital clock and the march of time, in all our regimental messes we still dine on time, when the occasion merits it, to the sound of buglers playing dinner calls. We do so because we have always done such things this way and may this continue to be so.

Wrapped in myth, paintings, poetry and tradition

Depicted in paintings, Lady Butler's painting of the boy drummers standing boldly next to the Colours at the battle of Albuhera is a good and moving example of this. Lady Butler, the artist, had the reputation for getting the smallest detail, correct, such as the colour of uniform, rank and stance.

There are two well known poems that are closely associated with the drum. The first of these is C. Wolfe's poem, ‘The Burial of Sir John Moore at Corunna’. The opening lines of the poem spell out the gravity of the scene before us and the rest of the poem hangs upon these words:-

*Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corpse to the ramparts we hurried;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O'er the grave where our hero was buried.*

The other piece of verse that comes to mind is a poem by Sir Henry Newbolt, regarding Sir Francis Drake's drum, of legendary fame, that is said to beat when England is in peril. The sound of drum beatings, reputed to be from Drake's drum, was last heard by sailors of the British fleet coming from the direction of the English Channel during Britain's darkest days, of the Second World War ‘*Our finest hour*’, to quote Winston Churchill. The myth about Drake's Drum is entwined in lines of Henry Newbolt poem who wrote:-

*Take my drum to England, hang it by the shore.
Strike it when your powder's runnin' low;
If the Dons sight Devon, I'll quit the port o' Heaven.
An drum them up the channel as we drummed them long ago.*

There are also those familiar words in the opening lines of the song; ‘*Soldier, soldier won't you marry me with your musket fife and drum*’ and of course the march ‘*Little Drummer Boy*’ still remains a favourite with military bands and audiences alike.

Conclusion

As a former drummer boy, I still feel a strong affiliation with the drummer and, in particular, with The Corps of Drums. For me, there is some truth in the phrase ‘*once a drummer always a*

drummer'. But that affiliation is not tied to just the drummer dressed in a scarlet tunic, in The British Army. I am a universal drummer and I feel the same kinship with my opposite number, be it the man, who beats his drum as a Zulu Warrior, the steel drummer in the Caribbean, the Red Indian, the pigmy and, of course, those drum beaters of the Household Division.

Perhaps I, like that ancient warrior Odysseus who having fought in the Trojan War and then went on his voyage in the search of knowledge, look back upon my life as Odysseus must have looked back on his, through glassy eyes.

When looking to the future, if the past is anything to go by, you can forget all that Darwinism stuff about the survival of the fittest. Within the regimental system, in spite of the many reorganisations within the Armed Forces, under phrases such as 'Sharp Sword', 'Sweep Clean', 'Fresh Start', and 'Options for Change', The Corps of Drums has rolled with these changes and yet has remained the same and, most importantly of all, it has survived and is still very much at the heart of regimental life.

In this dot com age, their traditional survival rating is sustainable, the past has proved this. If I were a betting man, I would be willing to wager you a shilling a day upon it, that as the British Army continues its march from red tunics and clay piping, blanco, brasso, khaki and goes 'dot com ,@ Broken Pattern, Brit Army UK.' the Corps of Drums will still be beating for the '*files on parade*'. (apologies to Rudyard Kipling).

In the unlikely event that those faceless blokes at Whitehall get their way and send to the wall the stick man with his skin beaters, buglers and those blowers of the penny whistle, the Corps of Drums will not be the only casualty at the wall. They will take with them much of a regiment's pride and quite a large chunk of its heart as well. In their wake, at the wall, they will have left their mark and historians of the future will have a field day should they come across, and dust down, Les Wilson's excellent Supplement about the Bands, Drums and the Music of The Queen's Royal Surreys.

They will have much to feast their eyes upon. I wonder if these future historians could possibly come to understand the part played by the Corps of Drums in regimental life and the British Army as a whole, flag and empire and all that. But you, the reader, must remember that I am looking back through glassy eyes and, as I do so, I recall that well-known phrase from the novel, 'Catch 22', '*Don't give me those negative vibes*', the Corps of Drums has come this far and they ain't going away. They ain't going away because there is no conflict between their role on the battlefield and their regimental duties in barracks. Their commitment in recent operations such as Northern Ireland, the South Atlantic, Desert Storm, Bosnia and Kosovo is proof of this.

As to their other role, long may the Corps of Drums continue to be the custodians of custom and practice and part keeper of regimental tradition and the givers of that invisible thing, that little extra, that makes each regiment, within the British Army, feel that they are that much better than all the rest of the other lot put together. Could this just be the reason why Britain came to hold the largest empire the world has ever seen or is likely to see in the future. Am I really saying that regimental tradition and some drummers beating sticks on pigskin and playing bugle and fife marches held The British Empire together. No, I'm not saying quite that, exactly. My main point is that within a regimental system, the Corps of Drums is the glue that binds a regiment into one. Long may they remain that tactile.

This article was written by Drummer Fife.

What petrol crisis?



John Elcombe, seen in Canterbury during the fuel crisis. How long have you had the license John?

Acknowledgments to the Kentish Gazette for permission to reproduce this photo.



Major Ron Morris unveiling the Middlesex Drummer boy in Dover Castle.

Annual Church Service

The Annual Church Service took place at Guildford Cathedral on Sunday 4th June.

The day was dull but medals still glittered as members gathered and renewed and remembered old acquaintances. Numbers were disappointingly down but this could have been partly due to the coincidental Dunkirk Veterans' Remembrance Services.

Members were welcomed by the Very Reverend Alexander Wedderspoon MA BD., Dean of Guildford, who also gave the address. The Lesson was read by Brigadier R W Acworth CBE, President of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regimental Association, and the Collect of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regimental Association was spoken by the whole congregation standing.

The Prayer for the Army Cadet Force was offered and the Service ended in the traditional way with the singing of the last verse of "Eternal Father Strong to Save" followed by the National Anthem.

Royal Hospital Chelsea



George Lefevre with his old platoon sergeant, In Pensioner George Deacon, Royal Hospital Chelsea.

Memorial Plaques and Scrolls

Many visitors to Clandon Regimental Museum will have seen the individual bronze plaques and documentary personal scrolls commemorating those who died in the First World War. The way in which such tributes came into being is a matter of considerable interest.

In October 1916 the Government set up a General Committee to consider the question of the provision of a memento for the relatives of the fallen. The Secretary of the War Office, Sir Reginald Brade MBE JP was appointed Chairman. There were thirteen members, representative of both Houses of Parliament and of appropriate Government Departments such as the Admiralty, War Office, India Office and Colonial Office.

Having decided on the form of the plaque in principle, a competition was announced for the design. Prizes, totalling not more than £500, were to be awarded to the winner and leading competitors. The winner was a Mr Charles Wheeler of Sandon Studies Society, Liverpool who was awarded £250. The remaining £250 was divided proportionately among five other worthy contestants. The winning design featured mainly Britannia and a lion, the latter to be depicted as "striding forward in a menacing manner". Seemingly he did not come up to all expectations as the Chairman and the Head Keeper of Clifton Zoo, Bristol, described him as being "a lion which almost a hare might insult", and certainly not as fine a specimen as they themselves possessed.

The scroll, headed by the Royal Arms, was worded "*He whom this scroll commemorates was numbered among those who at the call of King and Country, left all that was dear to them, endured hardness, faced danger, and finally passed out of the sight of men by the path of duty and self-sacrifice, giving up their own lives that others might live in freedom. Let those who come after see to it that his name is not forgotten.*" (Although both plaque and scroll were initiated in the male gender, there is reason to believe that suitable alternative versions were made for members of the opposite sex).

Production of both plaques and scrolls was delayed until after the cessation of hostilities, many of the former being later manufactured at Woolwich Arsenal and former munitions factories. On looking at these mementoes in the museum one is tempted to ponder on the physical sufferings of those who merited them and the mental anguish of the grieving relatives who eventually received them.

RF

Death of an Obituarist

Those of our members who regularly read and study military obituary columns in the Daily Telegraph will doubtless be surprised and saddened to hear of the death, at the age of 86, of the man who wrote many of them.

Philip Warner was an outstanding military historian and for the last thirteen years was the Daily Telegraph's peerless Army obituarist. He had had personal and tragic experience of Army life himself, having been taken prisoner at Singapore while serving with the Royal Corps of Signals.

He suffered terribly in Japanese hands, one of his extreme hardships being work on the notorious Railway of Death. His weight dropped from fourteen stone to four and a half.

After a post-war brief period in the Civil Service, he joined the staff of the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, into whose various activities he entered with enthusiasm. His most important memorial at Sandhurst is the Department of Communication Studies, dating from 1973 when he started courses for Cadets on how to present themselves to both the Army and the media. He died in harness, rightly commemorated in glowing tributes in the obituary columns of the Daily Telegraph.

RF

Regimental Deaths

Armstrong-MacDonnell MC - On 21st October 2000, Lieutenant Colonel John Randall Armstrong-MacDonnell MC, aged 89 years, The East Surrey Regiment.

Benn - On 10th May 2000, Major Edward Glanvill Benn, aged 94 years, The East Surrey Regiment.

Blackman - On 20th June 2000, Major Anthony Strickland Blackman, aged 79 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Boga - On 8th June 2000, Colonel H Toni Boga MBE, The Queen's Royal Regiment. He was Hon Colonel Sussex ACF.

Boniface - Recently, Sergeant James Boniface, aged 80 years, The Royal Sussex and The Queen's Royal Regiment.



He was taken prisoner at Dunkirk. During his captivity he and a fellow soldier planned and successfully staged their escape with two other POWs. Boniface with one other soldier returned to UK via Czechoslovakia, the other two via Switzerland.

On leaving the army on pension he worked for British Rail as a fitter. He married Betty in 1945 and raised three daughters.

Bridgeman - On 30th June 1998, Sergeant Alfred Bridgeman DCM, 2/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Alf Bridgeman joined the 2/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in 1939, serving with the BEF, before being evacuated through Cherbourg, after the fall of Dunkirk. After a spell in England, he went with the Battalion to Iraq, then on to North Africa. Taking part in the landings at Salerno, he served through to the end of the campaign in Italy, during which he was wounded once. He was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal in April 1945.

Alf Bridgeman had suffered with Multiple Sclerosis for 25 years, for many of which he was confined to a wheelchair. His funeral was held at St Peter's Church, Berkhamsted, attended by family and friends and representatives of the local branch of the Royal British Legion. Bill Titchmarsh and Alf Warder represented the Regiment.

ACW

Buckle - On 2nd February 2000, Sergeant Ken Buckle, aged 81 years, 2/7th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.



Buckle enlisted at Guildford in 1939 and served with the 2/7th throughout his service. He was wounded at Enfidaville but remained with the battalion to Trieste. A quiet unassuming man but very dedicated to his Regiment and in his later years as Chairman of the 8th Army Veterans. He was at the time of his death also Secretary of the Sussex branch.

Cakebread - In September 2000, Private Andy Cakebread, aged 71 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment.



He joined the 2nd Battalion in Dortmund in 1948, later served in Berlin during the Airlift and left after the move to Iserlohn. He was in the Signal Platoon. In recent years he has been a helper at the museum at Clandon, where his work has been much appreciated by trustees and fellow helpers. We extend our deepest sympathy to his widow Denise and family.

Green - On 17th August 2000, Captain Jimmy Green. The Royal Artillery and 2/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Head - On 25th August 2000, Sergeant George John Head, aged 86 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment. He enlisted in 1932 and was discharged to pension in 1958. He was a very good boxer and represented his battalion on several occasions.

Jenkins - On 14th May 2000, Frederick W Jenkins, The East Surrey Regiment and The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment TA.

Johnson - On 6th June 2000, Major James Leslie Johnson, aged 84 years, 2nd and 1/6th Bns The East Surrey Regiment. Major Johnson served in Italy with the 1/6th Surreys and took part in the battles around Cassino. He was a solicitor for over 50 years and practised in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Jones - On 9th April 2000, Francis Edward Jones, aged 81 years, 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. He was a member of the Carrier Platoon

Julian - On 5th August 2000, Michael Julian. Although he was not a member of the Officers Club, probably because he came to us from The Middlesex Regiment, Michael Julian was a National Service Officer who served under my command in Iserlohn when I was commanding First Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment. He was an accomplished artist and, when I gave up command before amalgamation, I was presented with a wonderful oil painting done by him of the Drums of the Battalion on the occasion of the floodlit Tattoo during the week-long celebrations of The Glorious First of June in 1959. It is a fine work about two and a half feet high and two feet wide. It hangs in my study still.

The silver plaque on the frame reads: "Presented to David Lloyd Owen by his Officers 13 October 1959". Michael Julian lived in Portugal for many years and he died there. He sent me a Christmas card every year designed by himself

DLO

Kelly - On 1st June 2000, Colour Sergeant Bert Kelly, aged 86 years, The East Surrey Regiment. Kelly served for many years at Clapham Junction as MT Sergeant. He also served with 42 Tanks, 23rd London and 4th Bn The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment (TA).

King - In Australia Bill G King, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Lamkin - On 5th March 2000, Colour Sergeant Tom Lamkin BEM, The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment.

Lancaster - On 12th August 2000, Corporal Victor Francis Douglas Lancaster, aged 81 years, 1/7th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Lugg - On 28th June 2000, Captain Albert Roy (Ronald) Lugg, aged 83 years, The Hampshire Regiment and 1/7th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Monk - On 23rd February 2000, Sergeant Charles George Monk, aged 86 years, He enlisted into The Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment in 1932, transferring to 2nd Bn The East Surrey Regiment in 1934. He later served with the 1/6th Surreys in North Africa, Sicily, Italy and Greece.

Newman-Knott - On 5th June 2000, Conway E S Newman-Knott, The Queens Royal Regiment. 'Lofty' Newman-Knott served in Berlin during the Airlift and worked in the Orderly Room. He served with the Royal Artillery as a territorial until 1962.

Poulain - On 21st April 2000, Ray Poulain, aged 89 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment and The Hampshire Regiment.

Punter - On 30th July 2000, Sergeant Ray (Buck) Punter, 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. Punter joined the Territorials in 1939 and served throughout the war with the battalion. He was a long serving member of the Old Members Association and The Normandy Veterans Association. Both Associations were well represented at his funeral.

Rawlings - On 27th June 2000, Company Sergeant Major Barry A Rawlings, The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment and The Queen's Regiment.

Read - On 13th August 2000, Sergeant Joseph Read, aged 87 years who served in the 2nd Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment from 1933-38 and from 1939-1945. He boxed as a welterweight, was a good footballer, and a good all round sportsman.

Sopp - On 4th June 2000, Company Sergeant Major Ernest Frank Sopp, 1/7th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Thomson - On 4th June 2000, Major Thomas Alexander Thomson MC TD CA., aged 88 years, 2/6th Bn The East Surrey Regiment.

Vickers - On 19th August 2000, Colour Sergeant Ronald Charles Vickers, aged 74 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment and The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment.



Vickers enlisted in 1944 and served with the 2nd Battalion in India, Dortmund and Berlin. He served with 1 Queen's Surreys in Aden and Hong Kong. He was an Instructor at Mons Officer Cadet School. Discharged in 1966 he then worked for Johnson Matthey Metals in the Security Department for twenty years.

Warren - On 10th July 2000, CSM William (Bill) George John Warren, aged 73 years, The East Surrey Regiment, The Parachute Regiment and The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment.



Bill Warren joined the army in 1945. He served with 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment followed by a tour of duty with 3rd Bn The Parachute Regiment and in 1959 following the amalgamation he served with 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment and 1st Bn The Queen's Regiment. He served as a PSI in three territorial battalions, 6 Surreys, 3 Queen's Surreys and 5 Queen's.

His service took him to Palestine, Libya, Cyprus, Tek, BAOR Aden, Hong Kong and to Northern Ireland serving as RQMS in 3 Brigade HQ and Signal Squadron. Bill was married twice, first to Eileen. Following her death he married Shirley who pre-deceased him. He was a very loyal member of the Sergeants Mess, and a great supporter of The Warrant Officers and Sergeants Association and all regimental reunions.

A great regimental character, he is sorely missed. To his brother Peter we extend our deepest sympathy.

Regimental Families.

Bailey - On 2nd October 1999, Mrs Phyllis Bailey, beloved Wife of Ex-Corporal (Ginger) Bailey, 2/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment and 2nd Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Gibbons - On 3rd May 2000, Mrs Clarissa E Gibbons, Widow of the late CSM J H Gibbons, The East Surrey Regiment and Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment.

Mornement - On 16th July 2000, Mrs Yvonne de Casabianca Mornement, Mother of A P Mornement (dec'd), The East Surrey Regiment.

Stephens - On 17th August 2000, Mrs Pamela Margaret Stephens, Widow of the late Major Ron Stephens, 23rd London and 4 Queen's Surreys.

Addendum

In the May 2000 issue the deaths of Bert Bodman, Ron Velrick and Captain Sid Messenger was reported. All served with the 2/7th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. The Editor regrets and apologises that this important detail was omitted.

Obituaries

Lieutenant Colonel J R Armstrong-MacDonnell MC



John Armstrong-MacDonnell was commissioned into the East Surrey Regiment from the Military College, Sandhurst, in August 1931.

He served in the 2nd Battalion in the UK from 1931 to 1933. During this time he was a Transport Officer, horses playing the major part, officers chargers, heavy horses to draw the wagons, and lighter horses to draw the four-horse limbered

wagons. They won a number of prizes at the Shorncliffe Garrison Horse Show, to the delight of his Commanding Officer!

He joined the 1st Battalion in India and then in the Sudan, from 1933 to 1938. Whilst in India he was detached from the Battalion for a time to transport large sums of money between the trigger happy and not always friendly tribes in Waziristan. His appointment was that of Field Treasure Chest Officer and he received the North West Frontier Medal. Later, wearing this then little known medal at a formal dinner of the Saddlers Company in the City, he was assumed to be part of the Romanian Ambassadors delegation and was treated with great deference!

In April 1940 he went to France with 2/6th Surreys, part of the ill fated and very ill equipped 12th Division. The battalion fought valiantly against overwhelming odds and for his gallantry before he was captured he was awarded the Military Cross. He was incarcerated in a POW camp for the rest of the war.

After the war he attended the Staff College and whilst there, met his future wife, Phoebe Roupell. They were married in 1947 and enjoyed a marvellously happy and devoted partnership.

He was DAMS HQ MELF from 1946 to 1948, DAAG HQ E Africa Command from 1949 to 1951 and a company commander of 1 RWK from 1951-1953. He commanded 1 Surreys in MELF, UK and Germany from 1953 to 1956, sadly ending his command in some pain having slipped a disc.

He retired from the Army in 1957 and thus spent almost half his life in most happy and much enjoyed retirement, during which he carried out a considerable amount of charitable and voluntary work, including many years as Chairman of the Greater London Branch of SSAFA.

He was in every sense, a very gentle man, wise, very kind and considerate of others, he had a keen sense of beauty and a great appreciation of everything about him and of his own good fortune.

He was a devoted family man and our sympathy goes out, in particular, to Phoebe, their son Edward, their daughter Susan and their families.

Major H Tyler

Major Roy Thorburn writes from Australia:-

I note in the May Newsletter the record of the death of Major Hugh Tyler. I first met Hugh Tyler when General Wingate's Chindit Columns were disbanded, and the two Queen's Chindit Columns came together again as 2 Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Hugh ('Tiny') Tyler (he was over 6' tall) and I became very good friends in 2 Queen's, and this friendship continued after the War ended. Although he returned to UK, and I to Australia, Tiny and his wife Helen and I and my wife Moya corresponded regularly. They eventually moved to an early 1800's home at Bishopthorpe near York.

We never did get over there to see them, nor did they get out here. After Helen died, we continued correspondence with Tiny until a few months ago, when a friend phoned to advise his death. He loved dogs, looking after those handed on to him by the RSPCA. The dogs and a visit to the Ebor for a few drinks with friends were his life. We'll sadly miss corresponding with Tiny.

Major E Glanvill-Benn



Major Glanvill Benn was born on December 31st 1905, the second son of Sir Ernest Benn Bt and was educated at Harrow and Cambridge.

Interested in both politics and journalism, he joined the family firm of Benn Brothers, publishers, in 1927 and later became a member of the Board. The firm expanded and took in several subsidiaries.

This brought him into contact with personalities of Fleet Street and provincial and Commonwealth newspapers and periodicals. He joined the Army on the outbreak of war in 1939 and was subsequently commissioned in The East Surrey Regiment, going on to serve in Egypt, Palestine and Syria. As a Brigade Major, 138 Infantry Brigade, he saw action on the Gothic Line in Italy, and was mentioned in despatches in 1944. He was then GS02 Land Forces Adriatic. He later wrote of his war experiences in '*Long Lease of Life*' (circulated privately), a brief autobiography.

In 1945, while still a serving officer in Italy, he was elected chairman of Benn Brothers.

After the war he returned to the publishing world where he was responsible for many progressive developments. He was a director of Exchange Telegraph, the news agency from 1960-1972, being the Chairman from 1969.

He devoted much of his life to good works and public service. In 1967 he was awarded the Mackintosh Medal for services to advertising, and in 1982 he received the Commonwealth Press Union's Astor Award for advancing the freedoms and interests of the Commonwealth Press.

A shy, retiring man, Glanvill Benn ("Glan" to family and friends) enjoyed golf and was a founder member, and later captain, of Tandridge golf club, near Oxted in Surrey. In retirement he and his wife went to live at Aldeburgh, in Suffolk.

He married, in 1931, Catherine Newbald, who became one of the six founders of the Women's Voluntary Services (now WRVS), and was later chairman of the English Ladies Golf Association. They had a son, who has made his career in the family business, and a daughter.

Major T A Thomson MC TD CA

On 31st January 1930 Major Thomas Alexander Thomson was commissioned into the 6th (Lanarkshire) Scottish Rifles which his uncle Colonel J C Hay MC then commanded.

In 1937, having obtained employment in London, he transferred to the 6th Battalion The East Surrey Regiment where he was made Signals Officer. Early in August 1939 he was posted to 2/6th Battalion to command HQ Company. On the outbreak of war he was sent to Chatham to defend Naval establishments and installations including the railway bridge over the Medway.

In 1940 he went to France, the infantry then again being primarily deployed on docks sentry duties. On being evacuated from France Captain Thomson and Lieutenant John Redfern, both wounded, escaped to England on the last hospital ship to leave St Nazaire.

Back in England Captain Thomson spent some time in hospital. Any worries which he may have had were increased by the fact that his parents' house in Surbiton was demolished by bombing and they had to be dug out of the wreckage.

Returning to duty, he was appointed Adjutant of the 30th Battalion The 1st West Yorkshire Regiment on coastal defence at Falmouth. Later posted to the 1st Battalion The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment he went to Italy and commanded "B" Company on the Battalion's advance North from Rome to Florence.

Further wounded in an attack on German positions near Monte Scalari Major Thomson was evacuated to Naples where he was pleased to meet Major Anson Squire of The East Surrey Regiment and they spent a day together. His wounds being serious enough to warrant return to England, he was sent to hospital in Oxford and finally was posted to Leeds where he had the task of training former prisoners of war for combat against the Japanese. After the war he moved to Hertfordshire and then Oxfordshire and later became President of the 2/6th St Valery Association. For his gallantry at Monte Scalari he was awarded an immediate Military Cross.

Major A S Blackman

Tony Blackman who died in South Africa last July, at the age of 79, was educated at Tonbridge, and commissioned into the Queen's Royal Regiment in 1940 from 161 OCTU (Royal Military College).

He was with the 2nd Battalion, detached to the Brigade Anti-Tank Company, at the Battle of Sidi Barrani in December 1940, which eliminated the Italian threat to Egypt; in 1941 for the bitter Syrian Campaign against the Vichy forces, and then later for Operation Crusader (the break-out from Tobruk) when he commanded one of the anti-tank guns protecting the Ed Duda corridor, 'which repulsed many local counter attacks, firing over open sights'. From 1943 to 1944 he was in Burma as Rifle Company Commander in 22 Column of the Chindit Force, when he was 'Mentioned in Despatches', and his distinguished War Service is highlighted in Volume VIII of the Regimental History.

From 1945 to 1948 he was an Instructor with 163 O.C.T.U. (Artists Rifles), where as a newly commissioned subaltern I had the good fortune first to know him and have his guidance and support. Thereafter he served twice with the 1st Battalion in Berlin and B.A.O.R., with the 5th Battalion from 1949 to 1952, and finally from 1954 to 1956 as GS02 (Training) at HQ Malaya Command and with the Federation of Malaya Forces.

It is now over 45 years since I last saw him, but memory of his leadership, meticulous appearance, and engaging quizzical sense of humour, is as fresh as yesterday. To his Family we tender our sincere condolences.

MPY

Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Golf Society - Spring Meeting held at Sudbrook Park, 16th May 2000.

The **Millennium Spring Meeting** happily coincided with the 70th Anniversary of the formation of the Society in March 1930. An excellent response from members resulted in 31 players competing in the restricted programme of one morning round, followed by the putting competition for the Harry Adcock Trophy. This was followed by a leisurely lunch at which the Club was generous enough to treat the Society to the house wine in celebration of our anniversary.

It was a great pleasure to be joined for lunch by John Clark, former Captain and stalwart of the Society, Basil Crutchfield, a former Hon Secretary, Mike Doyle, a former President of QRSRA, without whose generous support over the years the Society would almost certainly not have survived, Michael Clarke, David Froud, Paul Gray, Richard Davies and Richard Hill, all of whom have hung up their clubs but made a special effort to attend this happy occasion.

We were disappointed that Les Wilson, who so kindly finds space in this excellent Newsletter to report our activities, was unable to attend, but Regimental Headquarters was represented by John Rogerson who joined in the golf. Before the prize giving and AGM the outgoing Captain, Tony Hole, indulged in a little nostalgia and recalled a few memories of the past, and paid particular tributes to the five Hon Secretaries, the late Jeffrey Drane, Clive Summers, Basil Crutchfield, Vic Shepherd and the present Hon. Secretary Foster Herd, who between them have served the Society so admirably since 1947.

At the AGM after the prize giving Christopher Surtees was elected Captain for the next two years.

Winners:

Challenge Cup Senior Division

Major S J Petzing 80 gross

Dodgson Cup Junior Division

Lt Col F B Herd 73 net

Heale's Memorial Trophy Stableford

W J T Ross Esq 37 pts

Veteran's Halo

Col J W Sewell 40 pts

Harry Adcock Trophy Putting

W J T Ross Esq

Society Sweep

1st J R L Wells Esq

2nd Col J W Sewell

3rd Major P A Gray

The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Golf Society

V

The Royal Marines Golf Society

The Annual match against the Royal Marines was played in perfect weather on 16 May 2000 at the North Hants Golf Club. The occasion was greatly enjoyed by everyone, and resulted in a win for the Queen's Surrey by the handsome margin of 8 matches to 2.

Col John Davidson, Lt Col Peter Roupell and Major Mike Farrell each recorded two victories, as did Tim Ross, Malcolm Howard and Christopher Surtees, the newly elected Captain of the Society. Maj Ron Green, Mike Power, Mick Rivers and Richard Wells each won once. But there was no luck that day for Lt Col Foster Herd.

Although the Royal Marines have only won once since 1992, they still lead overall by 14 matches to 13, with 5 halved matches, since the first encounter in 1969.

QRSRGS v RMGS
16 May 2000 at North Hants Golf Club

Am Greensomes

QRSRGS	Pts	RMGS	Pts
Foster Herd	0	David Hunt	1
Michael Power		Sharp	
John Davidson	1	Alan Gordon	0
Peter Roupell		Tony Cook	
Tim Ross	1	Tony Harris	0
Michael Rivers		Silvester	
Michael Howard	1	John Francis	0
Christopher Surtees			
Michael Farrell	1	John Hunt	0
Ron Green	—	Pat Kay	—
	4		1

Pm Greensomes

Foster Herd	0	John Francis	1
Ron Green		Alan Gordon	
Peter Roupell	1	David Hunt	0
Michael Power		John Hunt	
John Davidson	1	Sharp	0
Christopher Surtees		Silvester	
Tim Ross	1	Tony Harris	0
Richard Wells		Tony Cook	
Michael Farrell	1	Pat Kay	0
Michael Howard	—		—
	8		2

0 0 0

7th Armoured Division Memorial, Thetford Forest

Recently, Major General Michael Forrester visited the Desert Rats Memorial in Thetford Forest.



The tank is a Cromwell, with which the armoured regiments were equipped for the Normandy invasion.

131st (Queen's) Lorried Infantry Brigade, comprising the 1/5th, 1/6th and 1/7th Battalions of the Queen's were part of this famous Division and were stationed in West Norfolk, in and around the towns of King's Lynn and Hunstanton.

The Memorial owes its being to the initiative and enterprise of Trooper Leslie Dinning of the 4th County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters).

Congratulations to
The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Golf Society
on their 70th Anniversary



*The Golf Society was formed by The East Surrey Regiment in March 1930. The first meeting was held at Sudbrook Park on 2nd and 3rd November 1933
The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Golf Society was formed on 5th May 1960.*