

MAY 2001



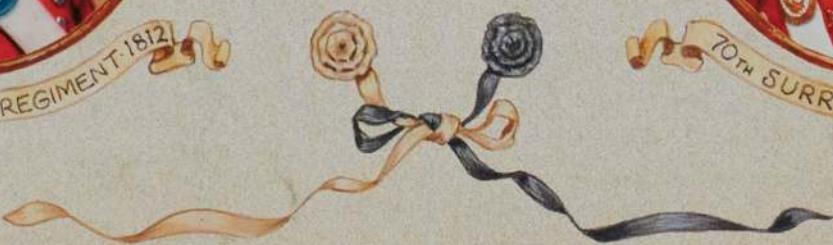
THE QUEEN'S ROYAL SURREY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

President
Brigadier R. W. Acworth CBE
Chairman
Lieutenant Colonel F. B. Herd TD JP DL
Honorary Secretary
Major J. C. Rogerson
Assistant Secretary and Editor
Lieutenant Colonel L. M. Wilson MBE

Regimental Headquarters
The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment
(Queen's and Royal Hampshire)
Howe Barracks, Canterbury
Kent CT1 1JY
Tel: Canterbury (01227) 818053

NUMBER 69

NEWSLETTER





Regimental and Association Events

2001



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 I Queen's, Malaya, will recall the efforts made to raise money and purchase bricks towards the building of the Cathedral and our lovely Chapel.

25th May

President's Reception for Freedom Town Mayors of Surrey - Clandon.

26th May

5 OMA Annual Dinner, Drill Hall, Farnham. Details from I Chatfield, 13 Wood Road, Farncombe, Godalming, Surrey GU7 3NN. Tel 01483 429425.

1st June

THE GLORIOUS FIRST OF JUNE. (1794).

9th June

Laying up of 5 Queen's Colours in Canterbury Cathedral, 11.30am.

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

27th June

Freedom Parade, Kingston-upon-Thames. Details from RHQ, PWRR.

1st August

MINDEN DAY (1759).

1st-5th August

Canterbury Cricket Week.

9th September

SALERNO DAY. (1943).

16th September

Museum Open Day - Meet your Mates - Clandon.

22nd September

2/6 Queen's OCA Annual Lunch Reunion, Union Jack Club. Details from Major M R Nason TD, 64 Westfield Road, Barnehurst, Kent DA7 6LR.

1st October

Queen's Surrey Officers' Club Ladies Luncheon - Clandon. (Details with this Newsletter).

10th October

Golf Society Autumn Meeting.

13th October

East Surrey OCA Reunion, Clapham Junction. Details from F A W Ramsey MM, 20 Lavender Road, Carshalton, Surrey SM5 3EF (0208 401 2070).

2nd November

Annual Reunion - Union Jack Club. (Details with this Newsletter).

8th November

Field of Remembrance - Westminster Abbey, London, 11am.

11th November

Remembrance day Parades - Guildford - Kingston - Hailes Church, Camberwell - Southwark, Bermondsey and the Cenotaph - London.

23rd November

PWRR Officers' Club Regimental Dinner, Cavalry and Guards Club, London.

20th December

BRITISH BATTALION DAY (1941).

2002

Tercentenary year, raising of the Villiers Marines, later The 31st Regiment and East Surrey Regiment.

9th March

Queen's Surreys Territorial Trustees meeting - Clandon.

23rd March

Queen's Surreys Charity and Association meetings - Clandon.

March - June

200th Anniversary of the Treaty of Minorca (2 PWRR Parade, King Carlos of Spain and Duke of Gloucester in attendance. (TBC)

9th June

Church Service - Guildford Cathedral.

Illustrations front cover:-

These are water colour miniatures, painted by Bryan Fosten and depict Battalion Company officers.

Top centre, the 2nd or Queen's Regiment of Foot c 1797.

Bottom left, The 31st Huntingdonshire Regiment c 1812.

Bottom right, The 70th Surrey Regiment c 1797.

The Gorget in the centre is a general issue pattern.

Editorial

Perhaps the most difficult task as Editor of your Newsletter is collating and preparing the deaths column and the obituaries for each edition. It certainly is without doubt, the saddest task, because in many cases, you have served for long periods with members who have recently died. Others, you have come to know well from meeting at annual reunions, and other regimental functions, over the years.

The President has mentioned by name, several of our well known and distinguished personalities, but a look at the number of old comrades who have passed on since our last issue, will bring home to all of us how many our regimental family has lost. To all their families on your behalf I extend our sincere condolences.

I am most grateful to all members who have notified the Secretary, or supplied me, with service details and date of death of our comrades. Compiling obituaries is not easy but it has been made easier by the help I have received from all ranks. To those individuals, thank you.

The President has also written concerning the museum. This is good news and we all know that the new refurbishments will enhance our Regiments standing, particularly in Surrey.

Readers will note that this edition is smaller than previous issues. This is in line with reducing the size and historical content of future Newsletters. Future Supplements are in the pipeline and will be published shortly. This does not mean that your articles, letters and particularly photos are no longer required because they are. We will always try and publish letters and photos of interest.

I hope to see a good turnout at the Association Church Service this year

Take care

Les Wilson

President's Notes

My notes this time start with some sad news. First you will have heard the very sad news of the death of General David Lloyd Owen the last and much loved Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion, the Queen's Royal Regiment. He was one of our most distinguished and respected soldiers and will be greatly missed by all who had the privilege to serve with him but even more especially by his family to whom we send our deepest sympathy.

Another distinguished and much loved soldier, Sergeant 'Darkie' Isaac, has also sadly died. He too will be greatly missed and we extend our deepest sympathy to his family in St Helena.

We have also lost three of our best known In-Pensioners, Albert Whiting, John Kershaw and George Deacon. I had the privilege of being present when the ashes of Albert Whiting and John Kershaw were interred on one of the wettest days this winter in the Royal Hospital plot at Brookwood Cemetery at what was a simple but moving ceremony. To all their families we offer our deepest sympathy.

I do not normally comment on the deaths of members of the Regiment in my notes, but these people were all distinguished and widely known and represented the true character of our Regiment.

I am delighted to report that the National Trust has agreed to grant the museum a lease at Clandon until 2010 which is the date we plan to wind up the Association. This is very good news and major plans for refurbishment have already been drawn up by the Museum Trustees. Funding has now been approved by the Charity Trustees and we hope work will start soon. We also hope that if a successful partnership with the National Trust can be established over the next few years we might secure a permanent home at Clandon but of course there

is no guarantee that this will happen. What is clear is that unless we provide an outstanding and up to date museum no partnership will be forged. I have every confidence that the plans put forward by the Chairman of the Museum Trustees will provide an outstanding result.

Our affairs have been dominated by concerns about the museum for long enough and it is now my intention to devote more of our time and resources towards the branches of our association which do so much to keep former members of the Regiment in touch.

At the recent meeting of the Regimental Association branch secretaries I was asked what would happen to Regimental Funds when the Association winds up in 2010. The Trustees accepted Brigadier Doyle and his committee's recommendations made as a result of their review last year which in essence were that:

- adequate funds should be provided for the ongoing care of our old soldiers and their dependants as a priority task
- funds should be provided for the continuation of the association and its branches in a form not yet possible to identify.
- provision should be made to endow our museum and for safeguarding our archives and records
- provision should be made to endow our regimental chapels as permanent memorials to the Regiment and other activities that perpetuate the memory of the Regiment and its forbears.

It is clearly not possible to put figures to these recommendations but each year the Trustees will review the situation and as circumstances become clearer so actual sums will be allocated to each priority. Any balance of funds remaining in 2010 would be used to the benefit of our successor regiments.

I very much hope to see you at the annual service at Guildford Cathedral on 17th June. This will be followed by a buffet lunch the cost of which will be borne by the Association and there will be a bar. Do try and come.

With my best wishes
Bob Acworth



Mrs Brid Hancock who retired as the Mayor's Secretary of Kingston upon Thames in January 2001. Over the years she has been a very good friend to the Regiment and we wish her and her husband a long and happy retirement. With her in this photo, taken at the Presidents Reception is In-Pensioner C Clark.



The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment

The last Newsletter stated that the two Regular Battalions were in the Balkans. By the time that readers receive this Newsletter both of them will have returned.

The 1st Battalion returned from Kosovo in Mid February after a very successful tour.

They faced some of the worst out breaks of violence in the NATO administered territory. Most notable was the so called "Battle of Mitrovica" on 1st February when the Battalion saved the day by calming down a very angry mob of Kosovar Albanians who had attacked French Forces with grenades and missiles. The Albanians had accused the French of being biased towards the Serb enclave of the town. The Battalion went in force with their Warrior vehicles and fired baton rounds, which were very effective. Because the fair use of force was used early, the Albanians developed a healthy respect for all cap badged PWRR soldiers. The street was cleared in 25 minutes. After front line negotiations by Lt Col Stephen Kilpatrick and the Albanians, all roadblocks were lifted and the streets cleaned up. This use of early force should have taught the French and the on looking Americans a lesson. Various overt/covert operations resulted in 85 rifles (MGs, five heavy weapons and thousands of rounds of ammunition. They also seized 13 wanted Albanian guerrillas.

The Battalion is now back in Tidworth on well-deserved leave (POTL) and on stand-by to assist in the foot and mouth epidemic.

The 2nd Battalion returns from Bosnia on the 30th April. They have also had a very successful tour. The situation in Bosnia is now quite firmly established with daily routines and most parties behaving themselves behind the well defined lines drawn on maps after the recent war. There is still a constant hunt for illegal weapons. In a recent hunt the Battalion found 2 x T54 tanks and an aircraft gun - difficult things to hide! They are also constantly looking for ammunition and arms and have had good successful results.

On return they go back to their Barracks in Aldershot. This time perhaps they will stay longer, as they only spent a few months in them before departing to Bosnia.

The 3rd Battalion has said goodbye to Lt Col P P Jones who has moved to Germany on a staff job and welcomed Lt Col P Crowley. The Battalion has had soldiers serving with 1 PWRR and 2 PWRR on short-term engagements in the Balkans. This is excellent as these soldiers return with medals and a vast amount of experience that they can pass on to their TA counterparts. Annual Camp this year will be in Belgium.

'B' (The Queen's Regiment) Coy The London Regiment and 'C' (The Duke of Connaughts Own PWRR) have spent interesting months consolidating and are looking forward to their various annual camps to Cyprus and UK.

In summary the Regiment is in fine form. The recruiting figures are going very well and the aim is to be up to strength by the end of this year. An amazing feat if achieved.

AM

o o o

Museum Notes

The last "Museum Notes", for the November Newsletter were written just before the close of the 2000 visiting season; which in the out-turn was another successful one for your Museum. Visitor numbers were steady, research enquiries rising and, of course, there were the two good news items of the extended lease at Clandon Park from the National Trust and the Museum's successful re-registration with "Resource". The winter closed season of the last few months has, however, been

very different from those of past years, with a lot going on both in front of and behind the scenes, and some excitements and a few frustrations for the Museum Trustees and Staff.

Brigadier Bob Acworth's patient negotiations on the Museum's new lease from the National Trust have moved steadily forward and, although legal agreements sometimes seem to take a long time, a satisfactory conclusion now seems to be in view.

The predicted removal of asbestos ceiling tiles to overhaul the electric wiring started at the beginning of February but, once the tiles had been removed, a much bigger job was revealed than had originally been expected, and it is still going on at the time of writing in mid-April. The bigness of the job hit us right from the start, when at two weeks notice a large proportion of the Museum exhibits had to be removed to allow the specialist asbestos removal contractors to do their work; this was all achieved on time by heroic work by the Museum's staff, Penny James and Roy Harding, ably assisted by some of our regular volunteers and by volunteers from 3 PWRR at Farnham and some of the National Trust Staff at Clandon.

At the time of writing these notes, the Museum is barely recognisable, appearing as a cross between a bomb-site and an electrician's wiring nightmare. The good news is that the National Trust is making a very thorough job of the wiring and the new ceilings, which will stand the Museum in good stead for many years to come. The bad news is, of course, that our reopening for the 2001 season is much delayed, the date at present still being uncertain.

The other major, behind the scenes activity, has been the planning by the Museum Trustees for the re-ordering and refurbishment of the Museum. This is aimed at providing for some shared operational use of Room 1 of the Museum with the National Trust, in line with the new agreement, and improved display cases and the updating of the displays, all in line with current museum practice. Outline designs for this work were commissioned from specialists, and were considered by the Trustees in March; the designs are now in the process of being finalised ready for implementation as soon as practicable.

We have, as so often in the past, received a very sympathetic response from the Trustees of the Regimental Charity. I am delighted to be able to report that, owing to their generosity, it will be possible to put the refurbishment of two of the rooms at the Museum in hand as soon as the electrical work has been completed later this Spring, with the other two rooms following during the winter 2001/02 closed season.

If you have read this far, you may be wondering when you will be able to visit your Museum again! At the time of writing a definite date cannot be given, but it is not likely to be before the Glorious First of June. Please check the current situation before making a special trip to Clandon, either by phoning our recorded message on 01483-223419 or by visiting the Museum website on www.surrey-online.co.uk/queenssurreys. When we do re-open, it will as usual be 1200 to 1700 on the same opening days as the National Trust house - Sundays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays, plus bank holidays, up to 4th November inclusive. When you arrive at Clandon Park this year, you will find that the National Trust has built a new Visitor Reception point in the car park, through which all visitors must pass. This does not affect charges, and nobody needs to buy a ticket to visit the Museum only, or the National Trust Shop and Restaurant.

Finally, the Museum Open Day this year for members of the Regimental Association is on Sunday 16th September, and we shall be open for that, come what may. So please come along; see what we have been up to, and meet friends old and new.

AB

The "Noble Football" and its Footballers

Football, apparently, has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. For its "promotion of harmony between nations", it has been put forward for the ultimate accolade by a Swedish politician who believes it "promotes a better understanding between people".

Those who, probably through no fault of their own, have become involved in football hooligan clashes, or witnessed them on television will no doubt give cynical smiles or pass caustic comment.

But the sport has known happier days and even its moments of gallantry and glory. One such occasion was when The East Surrey Regiment, at the head of a courageous charge, kicked footballs into the enemy trenches during the First World War. Two of the balls survived and are held in Regimental Museums at Dover and Clandon Park, Guildford.

An outstanding player of his time, who served in the 2nd Surreys during the First World War, was Sydney Puddefoot, familiarly known as "Puddy". Showing early talent, he was selected for the England Schoolboys' team but later disqualified as being four days over age. He later joined West Ham United, known as the "Hammers" and from then made steady progress in the realms of national and international football, being associated with several clubs, particularly the Hammers, in the process. After some scouting work for Southend United, he retired in 1963 and died on 2nd October 1972, a couple of weeks short of his 79th birthday.

It was during Puddefoot's time that the Surreys acquired a new nickname. During a match between Sheffield United and West Ham, with Puddefoot playing, enthusiastic cries of supporters to "The Irons" were taken up by the Surreys and became something of a "war cry" for them at future football matches.

West Ham Football Club, the "Hammers" and the "Irons", originated from the Thames Ironworks and Shipbuilding Company. Formed in 1846, they built some 800 ships and lifeboats between then and 1913. Among them was HMS *Warrior*, the Royal Navy's first ironclad ship and still to be seen preserved at Portsmouth.

o o o

A touch of India

Brigadier Clarke's interesting account of "Regimental India 1825-1947", gives fulsome information regarding the activities of the famous East India Company. Their influence extended far and wide and even touched Surrey.

The first Chief Constable of the newly formed Surrey Constabulary in 1851 was Captain H C Hastings, aged thirty-eight years, he had been educated at Eton before entering the East India Company's service and later becoming aide-de-camp to Sir Harry Smith the famous military campaigner. He laid down solid foundations for the Force (strength 70) and, with little experience and precedent to guide him, had welded it into a respected and efficient service (strength 231) when he retired nearly fifty years later in 1899. He had served the County of Surrey well.

RF

Major J L A Fowler TD

Thank you once again for generously supplying the paper for the production of this Newsletter

**Congratulations
and
Best Wishes**



Diamond Wedding congratulations to:-

Leslie and Nellie Barnard who celebrated their Diamond Wedding anniversary on 11th December 2000. Leslie served with the 2/7th Queen's from 1940-1946.

Howard and Kath Carter who celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary on 8th February 2001. Howard celebrated his 86th Birthday on 19th April and Kath celebrated her 80th on 21st March. A vintage year!

Maurice Howard and his wife who celebrate their Diamond Wedding on the 28th June. Maurice celebrated his 81st Birthday on 9th January and his wife celebrated hers on the 28th April.

Golden Wedding congratulations to:-

Colonel and Dene Durrant who will celebrate their Golden Wedding on 14th July 2001.

Birthday congratulations to:-

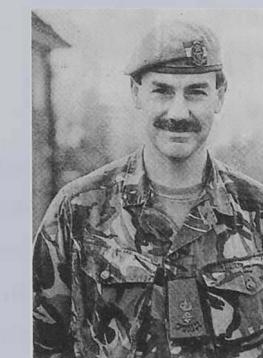
Major General Rowley Mans who celebrated his 80th birthday on 16th January 2001.

Lieutenant Colonel Peter Taylor who celebrated his 88th birthday on 25th January 2001.

Best wishes to:-

Vic Farrant, he is well and is in the Cottage hospital at East Cowes. Stuart Browning visited him recently and reports that he is in good form and hopes to return to his flat in June. Vic sends his best wishes to all who remember him.

Congratulations and Best Wishes to:-



Lt Col Patrick Crowley who has taken over command of the 3rd Bn The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment. HQ is at Canterbury with A (Queen's Royal Surrey) Company based at Farnham with a platoon at Camberley.

Colonel Crowley hails from Guildford, he is a keen military historian. Before assuming command he was Chief of Staff at HQ School of Infantry in Wales. He

served in 1 Queen's before the amalgamation and has seen service in Belize, Zimbabwe, Northern Ireland and Gibraltar.

Association Affairs 2001

The Regimental Council

Brigadier R W Acworth CBE - President of the Association.

Lieutenant Colonel F B Herd TD JP DL - Chairman of the Association and Chairman of The Queen's Surreys Territorial Trustees.

Brigadier M J Doyle MBE - Past President.

Colonel J W Sewell - Past President.

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

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

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

Colonel J W Francis.

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

Major P C Aitken

Captain A Birtles - Chairman, The Museum Trustees.

Major M J Jarratt - Honorary Legal Adviser.

Major J C Rogerson - Honorary Secretary.

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

Trustees of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Charity:

Brigadier R W Acworth CBE - Chairman
Lieutenant Colonel F B Herd TD JP DL
Colonel A C Ward OBE
Colonel J W Francis
Major P C Aitkens
Colonel D J C Dickins MBE
Major D A Robinson MBE TD JP DL
Major J C Rogerson - Hon Secretary
Major M. Jarratt - Hon Legal Adviser
G A J Cameron Esq - Hon Treasurer

Trustees of The Queen's Royal Surrey Territorial Trustees

Lieutenant Colonel F B Herd TD JP DL - Chairman
Brigadier M J A Clarke MBE
Lieutenant Colonel L M Wilson MBE
Captain A Birtles
G A J Cameron Esq - Clerk to the Trustees

Branch Secretaries

5th Bn OMA-QRR: I Chatfield Esq, 13 Wood Road, Farncombe, Godalming, Surrey GU7 3NN
6th Bn OCA-QRR: J T Brown Esq 6 Lawrence House, Millbank Estate, London SW1P 4ED
7th Bn OCA-QRR: Major J M A Tamplin MBE TD 10 Hugh Street SW1
2/6th Bn OCA-QRR: Major M A Nason TD, 64 Westfield Road, Barnehurst, Kent DA7 6LR
2/7th Bn OCA-QRR: Colonel D E Blum OBE, 85 Thameside, Staines, Middlesex TW18 2HF
East Surrey Reunion: F A W Ramsey Esq MM 20 Lavender Road, Carshalton, Surrey SMS 3EF
WOs and Sgts Assoc: P Henman Esq 35 Downside Road, Sutton, Surrey SM2 5HR
60/70 Assoc: W L Soffe Esq 19 Gale Close, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3QG
2/6th East Surrey St Valery Assoc: Maj A J Redfern MC TD Courtlands, 12 Kent House, Sheen Rd, Richmond, Surrey TW10 5AV
QRS Kent Branch: R F Harper Esq 7 De Havilland Close, Hawkinge, Kent CT18 7FE
QRS Suffolk Branch: D J Gardner Esq 106 Oakes Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP32 6QS
1st Surrey Rifles: T W Young Esq BEM 38 Stanstead Manor, St James Road, Sutton, Surrey
QRS Southwest: Mr H Stewart, 1 Evenlode Av, Waddon, Cheltenham, Glos GL52 5NR

Trustees of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Museum:

Captain A Birtles - Chairman
Colonel J W Sewell
Lieutenant Colonel F B Herd TD JP DL
Lieutenant Colonel G L A Squire MC, TD
Lieutenant Colonel L M Wilson MBE
Major R B Johnson
Major P C Aitkens
Major R I Hopper - Hon Treasurer
Mrs P James - Curator - 01483 223419
Mr R Harding - Museum Assistant

Secretary's Benevolence report

During 2000 a total of two hundred and twenty seven cases were investigated and two hundred and four individual grants-in-aid were approved. In the majority of cases the grants were for home furnishings and debts, particularly gas, electricity, rent arrears and travel. The Association helped provide twenty eight further wheelchairs or mobility scooters, sixteen sets of orthopaedic furniture and contributed to twelve convalescent holidays.

We continue to administer thirty five ABF Annuities and the ABF generously contributed £45 per month per case. During this period we have renewed or arranged for twelve Nursing Home Fees of £624 ABF and £154 Association Annual grants per case to be paid for our old soldiers or their widows to be looked after. We have one resident in Gifford House, with one other member in on short stay during the year.

The Charity paid out £48,248 as grants-in-aid. Of the 23 cases not receiving a grant, nine were assisted by local councils/charities or other regimental charities after we had contacted them. Five cases were not receiving such allowances as attendance, mobility or rent rebate. The ABF total grants and annuities in support was £20,628. Association branch secretaries have the SSAFA and Forces Help Half Yearly Handbook, for them to deal direct with the local case workers.

The Trustees would again like to pay tribute to the Army Benevolent Fund who are always extremely helpful with prompt action and advice. SSAFA Forces Help Society and The Royal British Legion investigate the majority of our cases and to their case workers we are particularly grateful for all their assistance. During this last year we have also assisted St Dunstaners and members who are being cared for by the Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society, Combat Stress, The Officers' Association, The Hospice Care Centres and The War Pensions Agency.

Letters of appreciation

Fred and Gladys Potticary write: My wife and I thank you and the Regiment for the donation you have given us towards my wife's hip replacement operation.



Her operation is on 13th November 2000, so by the time you get this she will be in hospital. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you.

Toby Lase SSAFA/FHS writes: What a great pleasure to receive your letter and cheque for Mrs A. I know she is the sort of person who will be somewhat shocked but quite delighted with the grant and it will be thoroughly appreciated by her. We will, as requested, certainly make sure that the money is spent wisely and on herself! Once again many thanks.

Major David Watson, County Field Officer, Somerset, writes: Please excuse this quick note, but computer down, and

no PA! Thank you so much for the wonderful donation of £500 to assist Mrs B she will be delighted.

Mrs Janet Brazier, SSAFA & FHS writes from the Isle of Wight:- I am writing on behalf of Mrs C. Please thank everyone concerned at The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association for their generosity of this most generous gift. It has given her great peace of mind with the security it brings. Mrs C was thrilled to receive the added Christmas bonus and card, it was most unexpected and very much appreciated. Mr C enjoyed the Newsletter and Supplement, he found them most interesting. Thank you once again for all your assistance, they are extremely grateful.

Sylvia Bolton, a SSAFA and FHS case worker writes:- I write to thank you for the cheque to the value of £600 - an ABF Annuity - in respect of Mrs D. I would like to thank you for the M & S Voucher which has been trying to find a home since before Christmas. I will ensure Mrs Watts, the daughter of Mrs D, is aware of the source of this very welcome boost to her mother's income. Assuring you of my continued assistance.

We write to express our sincere thanks for the generous grant which you sent to us recently, to help towards our moving costs. We are now all settled into our new, purpose built warden controlled flat, and are very pleased with it. While the practical help you have given us has been invaluable, it is also refreshing to be treated with such respect, dignity and kindness. So, once again, thank you very much.

I wish to thank you for your very generous grant. I feel sure my husband will be very thankful that I am being cared for so well. It is four years since he passed away and I miss his loving care, now more than ever. Thank you once again.

The following letter has been received from **Mr F Walker** who served with the 1/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. Mr Walker is now a resident at Whymark House Rotherhithe:-

I am writing on behalf of my friends and myself to thank you for the grant of £100 to help make our Christmas one to remember, the grant did just that, and we will never forget what The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Charity Committee did for us. Sadly Captain Jacobson RN, our SSAFA Secretary, was unable to visit but perhaps we will have that pleasure some time in the future. Once again many thanks from us all - we wish you all a happy new year.

Mrs E one of our dependants writes:- I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all most sincerely for the money recently passed on to me via Mr Tony Case of SSAFA. I appreciated it very much and send to you my very grateful thanks.

Mr F from Old Woking, Surrey, writes:- I am writing to thank you very much for the help you have given us recently, regarding the donation and installation of our cooker. It is very comforting to know that after all these years, there is still someone there who can help us with our needs.

D G Challen writes:- I am writing to you on behalf of my Mother-in-Law, Mrs G of 32 Garden Close, Shamley Green. The Cranleigh branch of the Royal British Legion informed us

of your Regiment's kind donation toward the cost of carpeting her new home. She has requested me to convey her sincere thanks as she is so happy with the work carried out. May my wife and myself also express our gratitude for the kind donation, very many thanks.

Mr H writes:- Many thanks for the lovely scooter, and to the people who have helped me in any way. I am very grateful to all concerned. Thanks again.

Miss Michelle Jones writes:- Your Association recently provided funds to help with the cost of my Grandfather's funeral, Mr I, who very sadly passed away on 23rd January 2001. I would just like to express my thanks to your Regiment from myself and my family, it was of great help to us. Thank you once again.

Writing on behalf of my husband (Mr J) for all the wonderful help you gave us in getting the scooter for him, we do thank you very much indeed, and do appreciate everything that has been done for us. We did not realise there was so much help around. It is a great help to him, having the scooter, as now he can go out longer distances and not be in so much pain which has made life easier for both of us and looking forward to the nice weather coming, so that he can use it more often. Many, many thanks to you all. As you probably know, we got all the information through SSAFA/FHS.

Donations and Legacies

The Cranleigh Territorials (1939) held their final meeting in March 2000. At this meeting it was resolved that the balance of monies held by their fund should be donated to The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Charity. Accordingly, a cheque was received by the Secretary for the sum of £1178.90 (one thousand one hundred and seventy eight pounds and ninety pence).

The late George Alfred Hardie left a legacy of £1000.00 (one thousand pounds) to The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Charity.

Major Peter Hill sent a donation of £200 to the Charity fund.

The sum of £1400 was received from donations in memory of the late In-Pensioner Albert Whiting.

P T Newton Esq., forwarded a donation of £250 in memory of the late Major Teddy Giles.

An anonymous donor sent a donation of £3333 to assist old comrades of The East Surrey Regiment.

Donations were received from Major Taylor, L E Bishop, N Mathews, D Atkinson, T Young, C J Davis, J Clark, D C Bennett, R Ford and a Mr Tutrell all to the memory of old comrades.

In addition to those mentioned above, a considerable number forwarded the 'extra pound or two' when paying subscriptions. The Trustees wish to thank all those who have sent donations to our Charitable funds.

Compensation - Japanese Prisoners of War

Members please help the WPA to find surviving Far East Prisoners of War or their widows.

You will no doubt be aware that there has been an announcement by Dr Lewis Moonie, Under Secretary of State at the MOD, that in recognition of the unique circumstances of their captivity, the Government had decided to make a single ex-gratia payment of £10,000 to the surviving members of the British groups who were held prisoners by the Japanese during the Second World War. In cases where a person would have been entitled to the payment has sadly died, the surviving spouse will be entitled to receive it.

THE WPA (War Pensions Agency) is anxious to find all entitled persons and needs to pass the word not only to members of the ex-Service organisations but beyond. Please spread the word to your friends and neighbours and ensure you tell them about how to apply.

In a statement to the House of Commons, Dr Moonie said:

"The experience of those who went into captivity in the Far East during the Second World War was unique. We have said that this Government believes the Country owes a debt of honour to them. I hope that I am speaking for everyone when I say that today something concrete has been done to recognise this debt."

"Those who will be entitled to receive this payment are former members of HM Armed Forces who were made prisoners of war, former members of the Merchant Navy who were captured and imprisoned, and British civilians who were interned. Certain other former military personnel in the colonial forces, Indian Army, and Burmese armed forces, who received compensation in the 1950s under UK auspices, will also be eligible. Where a person who would have been entitled to this payment has died, their surviving spouse will be entitled to receive it."

The War Pensions Agency which is based at Blackpool, is responsible for administering the ex-gratia payment scheme.

Further information on this and all pension matters can be obtained from:

- a. The War Pensions Agency, Norcross, Blackpool, FY5 3WP. Helpline 0800 169 22 77. Mon-Thur 8.15am - 5.15pm. Fri 8.15am - 4.30pm.
- b. Overseas Helpline: (local code) 44 125 386 6043
- c. e Mail: warpensions@gtnet.gov.uk
- d. Web site: www.dss.gov.uk/wpa

Homes

COBSEO - Confederation of British Service and Ex-Service Organisations.

You have heard COBSEO mention ESHRA before and now it is a reality. If you need information about Care Homes for any ex-Service member or their dependants contact ESHRA. (Ex-Service Homes Referral Agency), RING 020 7839 4466 FOR HELP AND ADVICE. OR WRITE TO:-
PO Box 31096, London SW1Y 5ZR

ESHRA also has a website (WWW.eshra.com) which includes details of all the ex-Service Homes in the country.

ESHRA has been set up specifically to provide information to the ex-Service Community and their dependants about nursing, residential care and specialist homes. It operates a help line

between 10.00 am and 12.00 noon, 2.00 pm and 4.00 pm on weekdays.

The help line advisers also have immediate access to commercial databases that contain details of the 19,000 or so registered charitable and commercial homes in the United Kingdom. These include sheltered housing complexes and independent living arrangements for the elderly and disabled.

The advisers are also able to offer advice (or details of whom to contact) about Local Authority, Social Services and Government funding available in certain circumstances, to support the elderly in homes and sheltered housing.

ESHRA is funded by seven ex-Service charities: King George's Fund for Sailors, Army Benevolent Fund, Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, Royal British Legion, Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen Families Association - Forces Help, St Dunstan's and British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association.

Skin Cancer

As a result of the advice given by one of our members, several of our readers have now claimed, and received compensation for the effects of skin cancer, contracted whilst serving in the tropics, two of these are printed below:-

Michael Clamp writes from Weymouth, Dorset:-

Throughout most of 1952 and 1953 I served with the East Surreys in Libya and Egypt. In 1993 I developed a malignant melanoma on the back of my neck. This was removed by surgery, which involved a skin graft.

Last year, I read your article containing advice from Dr Guerrier, pointing out possible connections between service in a hot climate and skin cancers. I contacted the War Pensions Agency, and just before Christmas I was granted a lump sum gratuity of £7,169.

May I express my grateful thanks to yourself, editorial staff, and Dr Guerrier for your combined efforts in helping myself and others.

John Dunne writes from Sevenoaks:-

I have now heard from the War Pensions Agency that they have considered my claim and have awarded me a gratuity of £4097 for the malignant melanoma that I may have contracted in Malaya.

I should like to thank you, as Editor of the Queen's Royal Surrey Association Newsletter, and Dr Guerrier for bringing to the attention of people like myself the opportunity to pursue such claims.

It is emphasised that any member who thinks he may have a claim should contact in the first instance his own doctor and claims should then be made to The War Pensions Agency (WPA) Norcross, Blackpool FY5 3WP.

The Drill Hall, Sandfield Terrace, Guildford

The former Territorial Army drill hall is to be demolished and twenty-four luxury flats built on the site. The area surrounding the site is to be re-developed. It is hoped that the Lambs, which were part of the new development in the nineteen fifty's will be preserved and handed back to the Regiment.



Book Reviews

Tobruk The Great Siege Assessed

Mention the name Tobruk and one other word automatically comes to mind - "Siege". And Siege it was, the longest in British military history, when Allied forces successfully not only held out against the Afrika Corps for a prolonged period of time but, in fact, inflicted the first defeat on the almost legendary Field Marshal Erwin Rommel.

An excellent book under the above title by Frank Harrison who was a participant in the events has been published. Full of skilfully analysed informative material the book has a special regimental interest as the 2nd Queen's were one of the Regiments involved. The book is divided into three main parts viz:- the siege itself, the break-out and an appraisal of Rommel.

Tobruk was an important port on the North African coastline and of great strategic importance as whoever held it would have the benefit of essential seaborne supplies and communications. Isolated from the remainder of the British Army in early 1941, the main defenders were the tough fighters of the Australian 9th Division supported by British armour and artillery and with the Royal Navy supporting from the sea and the Royal Air Force from the air. The list of participating units contains some rather old fashioned and unusual titles for modern warfare eg Royal Horse Artillery, Indian Cavalry (acting as infantry) and the Bulk Storage, Butchery and Bakery Units.

Defences were in the form of three lines - Red, Blue and Green, which included wire, mines, anti-tank ditches and gun emplacements. In command was General Sir L. Morshead, a veteran of the First World War who had fought at Gallipoli and in Flanders. While the "besieged" were strengthening their defences the "besiegers" were not inactive, making two attempts to break in in April and May. Both were repulsed, either initially or by way of counter-attacks.

The Royal Navy continued to bring in men and supplies, often under air attack, and magnificent barrages were put up by the anti-aircraft batteries. But in August 1941 it was decided to evacuate the Australian Division and replace them with the British 70th Division. The relieving troops were landed from destroyers whose numbers included *Havock*, *Jaguar* and *Kipling* all of whom were later lost in action in the war who also took out the Australians. Among the newcomers were the 2nd Queen's as well as some Czech and Polish troops.

Disembarkation and re-embarkation were effected in record time. Pack equipment was heavy, an extra 24 hours rations of bully beef and biscuits having to be carried. Due to shipping losses the 2/13th Australians and men of 20th Bde HQ could not be embarked and they were left behind at Tobruk, the 2/13th eventually staying until the end of the siege. One who knew them later described them as being (understandably) "bloody minded". A photograph in Harrison's book shows British troops patrolling with Tommy guns. Apparently such weapons were subject to difficulties with sand - of which there

was no shortage. A table in the book shows the names of some of the Regiments involved in the new deployments and, not for the only time, refers to The Queen's as "The Queen's Own". They were not to be confused with the "King's Own" who were similarly brigaded. Meanwhile a new Army, named the Eighth Army, was being planned for North Africa and it came into being at midnight on 26/27 September 1941 under General Sir A Cunningham.

But the Tobruk siege mentality had been steadily replaced by ideas of "break-out" and this took place on the night of 20th November 1941. The plans had been typed on an old Oliver typewriter by the Orderly Sergeant. Infantry, artillery and trucks moved into position in the dark. At 0300 a burst of gunfire announced the start of operations and The Queen's commenced a diversionary role. At first the night was quiet, the enemy seemingly asleep and unaware of their peril. But not for long. Once alerted they reacted furiously with artillery fire, some of it wrongly ranged. Fighting was bloody. Harrison comments that "Death would never be far from the men who fought over the holes of the wretched scrap of desert".

Areas with such code names as Jill, Tiger, Tugun and Bondi were quickly taken, the spirit of bagpipes being heard as Scottish Regiments advanced. A second break-out resulted in the seizure of an area known as Wolf. By the 9th day of the break-out its objectives had been mainly achieved and by then the 70th Division were well into 8th Army operations. The final success was the capture of El Adem.

The stories of the siege and the break-out and the turning of imminent defeat into victory have been adequately chronicled by Harrison. He concludes with an appraisal of Rommel. Subject of myth, legend and mystery, known as the Desert Fox, Rommel was undoubtedly a great military commander who was admired by friend and foe alike. Tragically eventually falling from grace with Hitler, and suspected of being involved in the bomb plot on Hitler's life, he was taken by car from his home in Germany under military escort on 9th October 1944. Shortly afterwards he was lying dead on the road, his death a disgrace to the country he served so well.

The 70th Division acquitted themselves well in North Africa. Originally formed as the 6th Division in Egypt in 1939 they soon saw action in the Western Desert and in June 1941 the Divisional HQ was moved to Palestine to take command of the 5th Indian Infantry Brigade. On the 10th October 1941, after relieving the Australians at Tobruk, the 6th were redesignated the 70th Division as a security measure to deceive the enemy over the position's occupation. After the break-out, and on joining up with the 8th Army, the Division was withdrawn from the Western desert to Palestine where it transferred to India Command. The 6th Division badge, a red four pointed star on a white background was proudly retained when the re-numbering took place.

Some interesting comments have been made by ex RSM Tommy Atkins, Queen's, who as a Platoon Sergeant in the 2nd Battalion was personally involved in many of the actions including Tugun where he took out patrols. He does not disguise the fact that some of the experiences were "bloody". It was war as seen through the eyes of a front-line soldier. From his own memory of patrols he queries the accuracy of the mention of a Sgt Munns, allegedly of The Leicestershire Regiment. There was an identically named Sergeant of The Queen's in the same area and engaged in the same activities of the time.

One or two other apparent errors have been spotted by Tommy, such as one confusion between The King's Own Regiment and The Queen's. Doubtless in the prevailing chaotic and hazardous conditions complete accuracy was virtually impossible.

Summary

All told, this is a good factual book and worthy of the attention of the serious student of military history.

VIDEO



A Legend Remembered

Produced by Denis Huett, who was a gunner on a Sherman 'Firefly' of the 5th Royal Tank Regiment, this video tells the story of how this first and only Memorial to the 7th Armoured Division - "The Desert Rats" - arguably the most famous Division of the British Army, all came about.

It includes the finding of the fifty year old derelict Cromwell tank, its renovation, and installing on its plinth, the digging of the first turf, and of course the final unveiling of the Memorial in October 1998 by Field Marshal Lord Carver, a former Desert Commander.

Also included are some wartime newsreels and many photographs taken by the Producer between Normandy and Hamburg, never before seen on public display.

In all, a unique momento of this most eventful occasion, dedicated to ensure that the story of the Desert Rats lives on in the hearts and minds of visitors to High Ash Woods for many generations to come.

The Memorial can be seen at the entrance to the old campsites of Ash Wood and Shakers Wood, two miles north of Mundford, Norfolk, on the A1065.

○○○

Veteran of the month

A former Queen's man, now living overseas, has been honoured with the title of "Veteran of the Month" by a local branch of the Royal Canadian British legion.



Henry Lewis and Marge Scruton at Government House at Ottawa, Canada on 20th October 2000.

Henry Lewis was born in Czechoslovakia in 1924 and in 1939 was sent to England by his parents after the German occupation. In March 1944 he enlisted in the British Army, serving first in the Pioneer Corps and then The Royal West Kent Regiment. Later trained as a battalion signaller and interpreter he served with The Queen's and was among the earliest of troops to enter Germany after the cessation of hostilities.

He served as an interpreter with the British Government in Detmold, Westphalia, in 1945. Holding the rank of S/Sgt, he was awarded the France and Germany Star and the War Medal 1939-45.

He met his wife Pat, serving in the A.T.S in Germany, and they were married in 1950 in London. They emigrated to Canada in 1952. She unfortunately passed away in 1992 after they had raised three children.

He has been a member of his Legion Branch for 33 years.

A Day at War - The Final Offensive



The Author, J H Day

(Editor's note - The crossing of the great River Po had long been visualised as probably the hardest operation that the Allied Armies in Italy would have to face. German propaganda had constantly stressed its dangers; the width and swiftness of its currents; and the difficulty of bridging it. The Germans particularly liked to shell Allied units with propaganda leaflets, sometimes with surprisingly accurate descriptions of unit casualties and POWs. On occasions the German copy-writer's English was amusingly inaccurate, and some soldiers started to collect the leaflets; rather like collecting stamps! However, even before the assault it was clear that the difficulties of crossing would not be as difficult as had been feared. The Desert Air Force had done terrific damage to the retreating Germans, and the 167th and 24th Guards Brigades had fought their way towards the Po with far more ease than had been anticipated. The 2/6th Queen's was therefore ordered to "bounce" a crossing in every type of craft available, Fantails, Dukws, assault boats and rafts.)

In our concentration area near Copparo, about 1,000 yards behind the forward troops of the 167th Brigade, Jerry was bombarding us with pamphlets, letting us know what to expect if we dared to set foot across the River Po.

We were supported by a squadron of the 7th Hussars in DD tanks, which were water-proofed floating tanks. Since we still had little faith in the 1st Armoured Division units, we boarded the Fantails and set off across the Po regardless of our armoured support. It was a wide river.



Fantails crossing the River Po

Upon arriving on the other side, the ramps went down, and we ran out. I was the third one down on the right hand side. Much to my surprise, there was a German soldier standing there at the bottom of the ramp with his hands in the air! I pushed him out of my way, ran round the Fantail, and then ran like mad for the cover of the bank. The ground was sandy, like a beach, which slowed us down, what with all the equipment and ammunition that we were carrying, and it seemed a lifetime running to that bank. All the time I was looking for folds in the ground as potential cover to dive behind when we came under fire. But the small arms and machine-gun fire never came, and we all reached the cover of the bank safely. We lay there getting our breath back while the rest of the platoon assembled.

Once we were all assembled we climbed up this bank. In fact it was a double bank, terraced half way up. We climbed the first part and waited on the ledge until the whole platoon caught up.

Then we went over the top of the bank and moved forward through a wood. We found a pair of jackboots standing up with the two legs still in them. Nearby was the body. The man had been sliced off at the knees, poor fellow. We suddenly came under mortar fire, and two of the lads were wounded. We dug in while the rest of the Battalion passed through us.

At dusk we moved up a road towards a brick bridge. Suddenly we saw a cyclist riding towards us. We hid behind the walls of the bridge, and allowed our unknown cyclist to cross. As he reached our side we stepped out. He fell off his bike in surprise, and immediately stuck up his hands. He was wearing a forage cap, with a haversack slung across his shoulders. We searched him, taking his money and his watch. In the haversack there was some type of German chocolate and biscuits. No doubt he had been going to visit his Italian girlfriend for the last time, or maybe he intended to desert and hide there. Who knows? Anyway, he now was destined to spend some time in a barbed wire compound.

Our Company Commander was now Major W.A. Mills. He had been in command of 'A' Company at Gemmano, receiving a nasty wound on his forearm. The scar ran from his wrist to near the bend of his elbow. The reformed A Company was now commanded by our old officer from the 101st LAA, Captain O'Connell, or Connors, as he was known to us, so Major Mills came to C Company. He decided to send out a recce patrol in order to size up the land and try to find out where the enemy were. Who was detailed to go? Corporal Bill Wright and myself, of course!

It was dark, but the searchlights were operating and gave us enough light to work with. We walked up the road, until I noticed some German trenches in a nearby field. Since we were walking up the middle of the road, I grabbed hold of the Corporal and asked him who was in front. "Only Teds!" was his answer. "Only Teds", I said. "Well! How about checking them trenches?" "There's no one in them," Bill Wright replied. "How do you know? You haven't checked. There may be someone at the bottom hiding!" I then went across and checked. There was nobody in them, as it happened, but there certainly could have been. Bill continued walking up the road.

I ran after him and asked where he was going. He smiled and told me, "You have to be bold!" "Yes! Bold, but not stupid. Get over the hedge and walk in the shadows," I told him. He started looking for a gate to climb over. "Break through the hedge," I told him again. I found a low part of the hedge and leapt over. Bill followed me. We then came across some houses. I told him that I would cover him whilst he checked them out. If there had been any Teds about they would have seen us a long time before. He went off and only found a few civvies, who told him that the Teds had long gone. Thankfully we returned, and reported that the area was clear. We continued our advance and then dug in. The 2/5th came through us and captured Rovigo.

At dusk the next day we moved into Rovigo, and waited for our Echelon vehicles to catch up. Whilst we waited we fraternized with the locals. One friendly girl was letting off her body for bars of chocolate. When I saw the size of the queue, I did not bother. I saw her later laden with chocolate. She would have made a fortune on the Black Market - or maybe she liked chocolate!

After dark we were ready to move across the River Adige. The 2/5th and 2/7th Battalions had already crossed. However, there was a postponement of our advance for a few hours, so our Company Commander told the acting Sergeant-Major to organise a brew-up so that we could have a mug of tea whilst we were waiting. The acting CSM went and told the Cook Corporal, a miserable NCO who never served out seconds but threw away everything left over and would refuse to issue a

late meal unless you had a written reason signed by a senior rank, what was required. He was sitting in the cooks' truck, and refused to make any tea on the grounds that the stove and burner were packed away in the back of the truck. The CSM went back to the OC and reported what the Cook Corporal had said. Major Mills's hat nearly blew off his head at the news. He almost flew to the cooks' truck, and stood at the back of the truck bristling with rage. He ordered the Cook Corporal out of the truck and yelled at him, "When I give an order you jump to it, and don't ever refuse again or you will be in deep trouble. Now, get that stove out and get brewed-up!" Well! The Cook Corporal could not get the burner and stove off the truck fast enough. He was one of our attached personnel from the ACC. If he had been one of the battalion cooks, he would have been kicked out, given a rifle, and sent back to a rifle company.

We moved out of Rovigo next morning. Our transport had been taken over for other duties, so we had to march in order to relieve the 2/5th, who had been advancing on the backs of the tanks. Whilst we were marching along our transport passed us carrying Croats. These Croats were wearing German equipment, so we presumed that they had surrendered and were being taken to a POW cage. We yelled at them to come back with our transport. They could not understand us, and just sat in the back of the trucks scowling. They looked a tough bunch of fellows, as villainous a crowd as you could clap eyes on. I read some years later that they had surrendered to us since they would have all been shot had they fallen into the hands of Tito and his partisans. However, it was then alleged that Harold Macmillan, who was the Minister Resident at Allied Force Headquarters, authorised them to be handed over to Tito anyway, so, indeed, they were all shot. As a result I never had much time for Macmillan.

The day was hot and we were sweating buckets, what with the weight of our equipment and the ammunition that we were carrying. We arrived at the River Adige, to find that the Engineers had not completed the Bailey bridge, so we had to be ferried across in Fantails.

On the far side we set off again, but now in single file on either side of the road in what was known as anti-aircraft formation. It was still hot, and at each halt Major Mills came round and made us put our berets on in the regulation fashion. However, when we moved off we pushed them onto the back of our heads until the next stop! My pouches were fully loaded with Bren gun magazines and began to chafe my hip bones, making them very sore. At one of the stops I got a stretcher-bearer to cover these sores with patches of cotton wool, and stick them in position with plaster. This did the trick.

As we were marching and sweating along the road, the Artillery passed us, sitting in the back of the trucks which towed their guns, all nice and cool. One wag shouted at us as they passed, "Now, what about the Second of Foot?" We replied with curses in no uncertain manner.

We marched twelve miles to Tribano, passing on our way the formidable Adige line, with its wired emplacements and networks of trenches. We then realised what a hard nut it would have been to crack if the Germans had been able to get into position before we had reached it. Another Cassino or Gothic line, most likely. At Tribano our transport caught up with us. Before it did so we had to take over about 30 German prisoners which had been rounded up by the partisans. There were also some Fascists to see to. Some of the lads took watches and money from these Fascists. They complained, under the Geneva Convention, that they were being robbed. The Company was paraded, and our platoon was identified as being responsible. About three of the platoon were found to be the culprits, and were made to return their ill-gotten gains. I hasten to add that, although I was there, I did not take anything

off the prisoners. We then boarded our transport and made our way towards Venice.

We heard that the 2/5th Queen's were in the outskirts of Venice, and that a race had developed with the New Zealanders as to who would enter the city first. The result was a tie, even though the New Zealanders were mobile, while the Queen's Brigade were slogging it out on foot. However, the official records have credited The Queen's with the honour of being the first into Venice.

On the 1st May 1945 the 2/6th Queen's entered Venice. Except for about three journeys in transport, totalling some fifty miles, we had marched or fought all the way from Lake Commacchio. The Battalion had lost twenty-six officers and men killed, and forty-eight wounded on the way.

The day we entered Venice we learned that the Germans in Italy had surrendered.

Farewell to The Queen's

We boarded a boat and sailed down the Grand Canal. Much to our surprise the bridges and the sides of the canal were packed with cheering Venetians. Never in my life, before or since, have I been cheered so much. I felt very proud.

We carried on through the city, leaving it behind us, and sailed into a gulf. We began to wonder where we were going. Then we reached a little island called The Lido. Here we disembarked from the boat onto a solid concrete pier, and marched through the gates across a road to the Hotel Pensione Riveria.

Our room was the top room, and from the windows we could see down two roads. By then our section consisted of Cpl Bill Wright, L/Cpl Fred Collins, Bert Moore, the Scotsman Jim Lafferty, Tubby Smith and myself. The room had a double bed and a single bed, both with mattresses but no bedding. Three slept in the beds, but I elected to sleep on the floor - after all the floor had been my bed for most of the previous eighteen months! I was comfortable enough and slept well.

When we were not on guard we explored the island. There was a single-decker electric tram which went round The Lido. The Lido was only a small island, so all there was to see could be seen within an hour. Off duty we went to the mainland or took trips around Venice itself. We would go on the waterways in gondolas, which we could well afford, since we could get 800 lire to the pound, although the gondoliers were only charging us the pre-war 40 lire to the pound, if I remember correctly! Before we left another 0 or two was being added to their prices!



Men of the 169th Brigade on the Grand Canal, Venice

A dance was organised at the hotel. There were plenty of girls to dance with. I was amazed at the number of girls living on

The Lido. They certainly kept out of our way whilst we were roaming around the island! I had a dance for the first time since my leave in September 1943. What surprised me was how well the girls could dance with us, since the Italian dances were very different from ours. Also, several of the lads such as Pat Kilgannon, Bert Moore and Johnny Miller came up to me at various times during the evening expressing great surprise at my ability to dance. God bless the girls of the Messengers' Club, who had taught me when I was with the ARP before joining up!

I spotted Conners at this dance. He had been made up to the rank of captain again, and had a group of the old 334th Battery around him. He was the only officer left from the Battery, as indeed Jackie Colman was the only sergeant, and, as far as I can remember, Johnny Miller was the only junior NCO, left serving in the Battalion. I had a few words with them. Conners looked at me strangely. It seemed as if he was going to say something, but he kept silent. What with the officer looking so curiously at me, and the fact that I had always been an outsider with them, I felt a bit embarrassed; and so I moved on, as I wanted another dance anyway. As I walked away I heard Conners saying, "You know, he has surprised me!" and he kept on telling them why, but I was out of earshot by then. I would have loved to have known why I surprised him! But I kept on my way and found another girl to dance with.

Our stay in Venice did not last long. We had to move out, as Tito wanted to occupy Trieste, and had demanded that General Freyburg and his New Zealanders should get out of that city. Freyburg had replied by putting tanks at the street corners, and had told Tito to come and try to chase them out! We moved closer to Trieste to support the New Zealanders.

Unfortunately I had to say 'Cheerio' to a little Italian girl. She was about ten years old. She was well dressed, and her hair was in ringlets, which is what first took my eye. She would come to see me; we would talk; and then I would give her a bar of chocolate or a few sweets, and send her home. The day that we moved, her father came round to see me and invited me to dinner. And she had an unattached sister around about my age, too! But my luck was out!

We moved to a farm just outside a village not far from Trieste. We were billeted in the loft. There were also some of Tito's partisans in the village, which was probably the reason why we had been sent there. We got on with them alright. We were courteous to each other, and always nodded to each other as we passed on the street.

Guards were plentiful, but we were short of cigarettes. On the 8th May we were sitting in our billet, passing round our last cigarette, each taking one drag and passing it to the next one. Suddenly our Platoon Officer, Long John Common, came up to our billet to tell us that the War was over. Nobody seemed very interested, because morale was low due to the shortage of cigarettes. We told Lieutenant Common that if we were going up to the line, they would be showering us with cigarettes; but now that the War was over no doubt our cigarettes were no longer a priority, and were probably stuck on the other side of the River Adige! He opened up his cigarette case and gave us what he had to share amongst us, which was very kind of him. He was not a bad officer.

A rest camp was set up on the coast, and every company took it in turns to spend a short leave there. We could hardly believe our luck when we were told that our ACC Corporal Cook was to be the cook in charge there. Major Mills made a special trip to Battalion HQ to let them know that he did not want him back in his Company again. For the few days that we would be on leave, we were quite prepared to put up with his lousy cooking - but only for those few days!

I was on guard when the new cook started. I woke him up. By now the weather was hot and we were in KD. The cookhouse was outside in the farmyard. He put his dixies on to boil, and when they boiled he mashed some tea, milked it, sugared it, and let it stand. After a few minutes he asked me if I wanted some tea. I said, "You bet we do!" We were back to normal! I took the tea to the guard, and then came back with the tin opener on my jackknife at the ready, and asked him which tins he wanted opening. He pointed to those he needed. From then on he left the tins out, with the water that he wanted boiling in the dixies, and the last stag would prepare everything while the cooks slept on, so that all they had to do was to get up and cook the breakfast. Our meals improved, and there were always seconds. We also gave up some of our chocolate ration so that he could make us chocolate blancmanges, etc. Things certainly improved in the cookhouse.

By the time it came for our turn at the rest camp it was very hot. The camp was a large house near the beach, and there were some Italians there. There was a very pretty young girl there. Of course, our God's Gift to Women, Jimmy Richards, was chasing her from the moment we arrived. But her family chaperoned her well, and there was always someone around. They knew what he was up to.

We had a very pleasant few days by the sea, lounging on the beach and swimming. Of course, there was the inevitable guard to do. My stag was the middle one, two o'clock until four o'clock in the morning. When I was relieved it was so warm and humid that instead of turning in, I went for a swim in the Adriatic Sea. The water was lovely. I forgot to mention that it was a moonlight swim, and it was a beautiful moonlit night. After this refreshing swim I turned into my blankets and slept on until breakfast.

Back at the farm in the village, we paraded one morning outside the company office to learn about our demob numbers. Those in front of me were coming out of the office with numbers in the twenties and thirties. When it came to my turn, my number was given to me as fifty! I almost had a fit. When I got outside again and told the lads, they all laughed at me and pulled my leg. After the parade I went back again to make sure that there was no mistake. There wasn't! I found out later that I was not on my own. Some of the others with higher numbers included Jimmy Richards, Tubby Smith, Ginger Parry and Charlie Haynes in our platoon alone.

A church parade was held. There were many troops at this parade; whether it was a Divisional Parade, with selected men from each regiment, or a Brigade Parade, I cannot remember. It was certainly the biggest church parade that I had ever been on. During the church parade our MO was tiptoeing about taking photographs. He must have come on his motor-cycle, as he still had his crash helmet on!

On the 26th May it was my 21st birthday. Where was I? On a 24 hour guard, of course! Although the war had been over for three weeks, our troubles with Tito still remained. He was still hell-bent on getting his hands on Trieste. However, next day when I came off guard, I was met with a pleasant surprise. The lads had laid on a party for me. During the day they had ordered vino, and got the cooks to make a buffet. I was overwhelmed to think that I had such good pals. It was held in our loft billet. The officers, including the OC, Major Mills, were invited, and they all came. The Italian family of the house came up too, and a good night was had by all.

After the party was over we laid out our blankets, to discover that one of the lads was missing. His blankets were laid out, but he was not in them. A search party went out to look for him, just as it started to pour with rain. He was found sitting in the garden in the pouring rain, with his underclothes soaked through. Apparently he had gone to bed, but had been taken

short. He jumped out of his blankets and dashed down the stairs in his underclothes to the toilet, but by the time he was finished, the Italian family had returned downstairs. He sat down to await the time when the coast would be clear, so that he could slip back in again. The rain then started, and that is how we found him, since he was too embarrassed to come in until the coast was clear!

I woke up next morning with a sore head and a stiff neck. My neck was stiff as I had been using the Bren gun as a pillow! Bill Mills was also missing by then. He was absent for most of the morning, but we eventually tracked him down. He was hiding in an out of the way corner of the loft nursing a king-sized hangover.

While we were billeted in this village Bill received a letter posted to him in 1943! It had been posted when he was in hospital in Sicily, but just after the 50th Division had left for England; so it had gone back to the UK. As a result it had taken two years to reach him. It had Field Post Office franks stamped all over it. I wonder if he kept it as a souvenir?

The day after my party I was walking past the CO. As I saluted him, he stopped me and asked why he was not invited to my 21st birthday party. I was absolutely flabbergasted. I never thought that he knew me, never mind knowing that I was 21. I told him that I would have done so, but that I did not think that he would come as he did not know me. He told me that he knew me alright, and that he would have been delighted to come! I felt disappointed and ashamed of myself but it had never occurred to me that he knew who I was.

One evening we were on guard. It was still daylight, and I was having a crafty smoke. We carried out the guard in pairs, and my partner was keeping a look out whilst I smoked. Along came Sergeant Bob Pearce, our Platoon Sergeant. He was still with the Battalion, having served continuously in it from the outbreak of the war. He was one of the few survivors. He must have had a charmed life. I put my cigarette on a high gatepost. Bob, being tall, spotted it, and inquired whose it was. We informed him that we knew nothing about it. "It must be mine," said Bob, and went off smoking it!

Since CSM Jones had been wounded, he had not been replaced, and we only had acting CSMs. He did not return to us, not that we wanted that nitwit back anyway! They had reformed the 1st Welch, the battalion that he had originally come from, so perhaps he had rejoined them. I never found out. However, one day Johnny Miller came dashing up to me. "Have you heard who our new Sergeant-Major is?" he asked me excitedly. "No. Who is it?" I asked. "Jack Colman," he said. "Jack Colman!" I exclaimed, "I'm getting a transfer to another company." Johnny Miller took a step back, with his mouth open in amazement at my reaction to his news. All he could say was "Why?" "Because I never got on with him in the 101st. He was always getting on to me. I am still supposed to be under open arrest for being late on parade before I transferred to the Anti-Tank Platoon. My life will be hell if I stay." "Don't be silly," said Johnny, "Them days are over. He'll look at you different now. Stop where you are."

Jackie Colman was from the Manchester area. He was even shorter than myself about 5ft 2" or 5ft 3", but he was broad shouldered and heavier. He was baldheaded and was probably in his early thirties. When he arrived I went up to him and shook his hand, saying "Congratulations, Jack." He replied, "Thanks, John." He surprised me by knowing and calling me by my Christian name.

As Johnny Miller had predicted, life was better for us amongst those few still left from the 334th. I remember one lad, who had just joined us, calling him Jack. He was told in no uncertain manner that when he spoke to the Sergeant-Major, he

called him 'Sergeant-Major, or Sir!' The lad then said of me, "But he called you Jack." Jackie replied, "I know he did, because he is privileged, as we fought together." Life is full of surprises!

The compound was beginning to fill up with deserters. Among them were Taffy Evans, our heavyweight boxer, Macnamara, and, much to my surprise, little Taffy, who had deserted with Geordie at Montecassiano and had been on the loose for six months. I was on guard when these three came in, and just nodded to big Taffy. However, I asked little Taffy what had happened to Geordie. He did not know, as he had fallen out with his girlfriend and moved on. He had picked up with another girl and lived with her. Then he had made the mistake of trying to buy cigarettes from some squaddies, whereupon they had reported him, and he had been caught.

I also had a word with Macnamara. I told him that I had had to go back for him through the enemy barrage, although I omitted the fact that our aircraft had arrived and saved my bacon! He confirmed that he was in the shelter, and I then told him that I was about to throw the grenade, but gave him the benefit of the doubt that he was not a Ted. He said that he was grateful for that, but that he could not face the barrage and could not go on. I replied that all I was really interested in was the sugar in his pack, not bringing him back to the platoon! As far as I was concerned he could do what he liked.

One day on parade some names were called out, mine being amongst them. Ginger Parry, Tubby Smith, Jimmy Richards and Charlie Haynes were also on the list. We were told that we were to join the 5th Royal West Kents, who were in the 8th Indian Division, and were going out to the Far East. It was explained to us that The Royal West Kents was a sister regiment to The Queen's, and their recruiting areas were adjacent in the Caterham/Westerham districts of the two counties. Consequently there was to be a swap of personnel. All those in a high demob group, who had been abroad for 18 months or less in the Queen's Brigade, were to be exchanged with men in the 5th Royal West Kents with a low demob group number, who had served abroad for more than eighteen months. Since I was in a high numbered demob group and had served just over seventeen months abroad, I fell into the category of those who were to be transferred. Another month and I would have been in the clear. However, this was not to be, so once again I was on the move.

After we had been told about this change-over, one of our corporals came to me and informed me that Long John Common had called him into his office and asked him to read a report about one of the lads in the platoon, who had been written up as unfriendly, quarrelsome, and, in fact, a thoroughly bad soldier, who could be considered a potential deserter. "Do you know who it was?" he asked me. "I've no idea." I replied. "It was you," he said. "Me!" I said in surprise. It had been written by someone in the 101st LAA. I was aware that I did not get on well with them. They had behaved like chickens, when a new young chicken had come into the run, always pecking at the newcomer. All I could say was, "I didn't think I was that bad!" The corporal said that he could not believe it, and nor could Long John. Long John told him that he was going to tear it up and write a true report on me. Whether he did so or not, I never found out.

I am pleased to say that Harry Smith returned to us before I left the Battalion. Harry had been wounded early on in the final offensive, just after we landed at Comacchio. I believe that he received a shrapnel wound in his thigh. I remember that as we passed him groaning on the ground, we all remarked to each other, "Lucky bastard!"

Harry told us a story about his wife. Apparently after the operation to get the shrapnel out of him, he was able to write a

letter to his wife, who was a semi-invalid. In the letter he flowered up the part about his wound, making a big joke of it, so that the news would not upset her too much. The trouble was that his letter arrived at Todmorden, his home town, at the same time as the letter from our Platoon Commander, Long John Common. Not recognising the handwriting, and wishing to leave her husband's letter until last so that she could read it slowly and lovingly, she opened Long John's letter first. She read the first words, which were, "I am sorry to inform you that your husband has been....." and promptly fainted! She had expected it to go on to say that he had been killed, not wounded. Harry's flowery letter was all in vain!

I went to see Butch, our dog, before I left. Except for a few weeks whilst I had been at the BDRA, I had served all my time abroad with him up to now. I shook his paw. His tongue hung out in pleasure. I was sorry to leave him. Later, when Bert Moore wrote to me to tell me that Butch had been run over by a tank transporter and killed, I felt as sad as if I had lost one of my best friends. In fact, I had lost one of my best friends, even though he was only a mongrel bull terrier.

The night before we left, a party was organised for those of us who were leaving. Once again everybody was invited, and a good time was had by one and all. As we boarded, our trucks, everyone was there to cheer us off. They all wanted to shake our hands and wish us good luck. Our Platoon Sergeant, Bob Pearce, told me to write to him. I told him that I would. As we pulled away the lads were running after the trucks, shaking our hands, and cheering. It was a very touching scene indeed, which I will never forget.

○○○

Editorial footnote

Shortly after joining the 5th Royal West Kents that battalion was sent to Naples to await transport back to England, there to receive reinforcements and prepare for their move to the Far East. The battalion eventually took passage in the troopship Georgic, and was sent to Louth in Lincolnshire. It was then decided that the 8th Indian Division should only consist of regular battalions for its British infantry component, which was one British battalion in each Indian Infantry Brigade. The 5th RWK was therefore replaced by 1st Hampshires, and John Day was one of those transferred across to the Hampshires. However, before 1st Hampshires received orders to move to the Far East, the war with Japan ended, so the battalion was sent to garrison Benghazi instead. After six months in Benghazi it moved to Palestine to join the British forces policing that country during the conflicts and acts of terrorism being perpetrated by the Jewish and Arab communities.

Whilst with 1st Hampshires John Day decided that he had done enough soldiering as a Bren gunner in a rifle company, and volunteered to become a stretcher-bearer in the Medical Platoon. He was accepted, and eventually became the medical platoon clerk. Even when he was time-expired for overseas service, and returned to the Hampshire Depot at Winchester before demob, most of his duties were as a medical orderly. He was demobbed after almost five years conscripted service. In hindsight he bitterly regretted not having signed on for a regular engagement, an option which he had been offered, with promotion prospects. In the event the whole of his colour-service had been as a private soldier. He never did a day's CB nor detention; in fact he only faced one charge, for which his case was dismissed!

John Day theoretically had three years of his apprenticeship to complete, but under the government's Broken Apprenticeship Scheme he was required to do only eighteen months on a wage of £3 per week. In 1954 John Day was admitted to the Boilermakers' Union, and took a welder's card. Unfortunately, owing to a decline for the demand for gas welding, he failed to

obtain a Full Technology Certificate on Welding, although qualified through City & Guilds. He worked as a blacksmith for the Hull Kingston Corporation and then as a welder in a small shipyard for a number of years.

Shortly after leaving the Army he met Irene, and after a two year courtship they were married. They have two daughters and a son, with a total of four granddaughters, two grandsons, and a great granddaughter.

For a couple of seasons John played Rugby League, but after suffering injuries he gave up playing before getting married. He continued in the game as a referee until 1955. During the summer months he played cricket.

By chance in 1953 John took part in a cross-country run with the slow pack, organised by the East Hull Harriers. This led to his joining the club as a serious runner. He is now a Life Vice-President of the East Hull Harriers, a member of the Club Committee, and runs the canteen. At about the same time he took up swimming, and is the Treasurer of a small swimming club called the Dolphin Swimming Club.

In 1963 he happened to see a notice outside the local RASC (TA) drill hall proclaiming 'Join the TA and Learn to Drive. Since he could not drive, and could not afford the lessons to learn, he duly applied. When he told the sergeant that he was a plater welder, he was informed that the REME Workshop attached to the 522nd Company RASC wanted a welder, and would also teach him to drive. He was therefore introduced to the PSI Sergeant of the workshop, Tommy Leahy, and formed a firm friendship with this fine Irishman from Tipperary until Tommy's premature death at the age of fifty four. John served with that unit for five years, being promoted to corporal.

In 1968 the TA was reorganised, the RASC became The Royal Corps of Transport and the 218th Squadron RCT was formed, which included a new REME Workshop. John Day was not required as a corporal, but was offered the rank of Vehicle Mechanic (3rd Class), which he accepted. By 1970 he had been promoted to Lance-Corporal because of his versatility as a member of the recovery team, and as a stand-in for the metalsmith's job, in addition to his duties as a vehicle mechanic. In March 1972 he was awarded the Lord Lieutenant's Certificate for loyal service. Unfortunately, a few weeks later he reached the maximum age for the TA. Although his unit applied for an extension, he nevertheless was discharged, and so, finally, ended his service in the Army.

At the age of sixty-three he started working for a boilermaker called Ken Riley, who had started a flourishing fabricating business near Hull. John states that it was the best job that he ever had. He finally retired when he was sixty-six.

With advancing years John Day suffers badly from arthritis in both knees, which restricts his mobility considerably. However, he has been to Italy twice to visit the battlefields of Gemmano, Croce and Savignano, as well as the cemeteries at Coriano Ridge, Gradara and Argenta Gap.

The campaign in Italy after the capture of Rome was totally overshadowed by the Normandy landings on D-Day and the subsequent operations in North-West Europe. Although the Eighth Army and its associated Desert Air Force never regarded themselves as A Forgotten Army (the title appropriated by the Fourteenth Army in Burma), there was nevertheless some resentment that after having been stripped of many of its best and most experienced formations for operations in North-West Europe, many considered that they had had an easy war. Such jibes as 'Where were you on D-Day?' did little to smooth ruffled feathers! With droll humour they coined a new expression, "The D-Day Dodgers", and by adding new words to the song which they had already stolen

from their enemy, "Lili Marlene" a sarcastic ditty was sung in many a canteen in memory of those comrades who were no longer with them.

We sat out in Cairo. We loved the flies and heat.
We then went on to Roma, and there put up our feet.
We were the ones with brasses green,
The biggest shower you've ever seen.
We were the D-Day Dodgers
From sunny Ital-ee.

Go into the mountains, through the mud and snow,
You'll find the battered crosses, no matter where you go.
Heartbreak and toil and suffering gone,
The boys beneath them slumber on.
They are the D-Day Dodgers
Still out in Ital-ee.

RBJ

Rupert goes to the dogs

Regular readers to this column, and I am told by a reliable source that there are now more than eight, will know that I am very keen to educate the young mind of the up and coming officer. So this should be of special interest to those of you who are still at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst or those who have only held their commission for a limited time. Why will it be of interest? Well, these little hints and tips are designed to get you to the very top of the ladder in the shortest possible time, with the least amount of academic effort. Some of the less charitable amongst you may ask why it is that I never made it to the top or even near the top. Here I have to admit that it surprised me too. I can only suppose that those who did the picking were of limited intelligence and could not see a good thing when it was right under their nose. But, be that as it may, I will continue to give those who need it, the benefit of my experience and wisdom. Recently the Chief of the Defence Staff was nearly heard to say that if it had not been for these helpful articles he would never have made it beyond Lieutenant General. So if you are paying attention, we will begin.

The first thing is to be noticed. It is no good being 'whatsisname' or 'old thingummy' you have got to have a character that is known and recognised and the best way to achieve this is to get yourself an animal. But having said that, the animal has got to bring a certain something to the party. It has got to add an extra dimension to your persona. There are obvious examples of animals that will give you added allure and there are animals that will do nothing to accentuate your promotable prospects. Let me explain by looking at two examples - a Bulldog and an Airedale. Now you don't need to have a diploma in psychology to see which owner is going to go furthest up the ladder of achievement. That's it, you are getting the hang of it already. The Bulldog owner became a General and the Airedale owner did not. Both very charming people but one knew which mutt went with promotion and which one did not. So lesson one - no Airedales. They are scruffy, somewhat smelly and not instantly identifiable with Britannia. Bulldogs on the other hand slobber, waddle, fart and show off bits of their anatomy that you would rather not see; but they are synonymous with 'John Bull, the spirit of the blitz and Winston Churchill.'

So we have got to do some more research into what makes the best animal accoutrement for promotion purposes. A friend of mine, in Her Majesty's Regiment of Grenadiers, thought that he had found success with an African Grey Parrot. Now I have

to admit that I am not too fond of Parrots. They have a nasty look and seem to be planning how best to remove an ear. So sitting in the Mess Anteroom and watching this beast edge its way along the back of the sofa towards me was not a pleasant sight. I decided to distract its attention from my ear by offering it a matchstick. The Parrot took it and then with a flourish, snapped the match in two and spat out the remaining pieces. Happily I had found out how to distract it, so offered up more matches. All went well until, in snapping the last match, it accidentally got the match head between its beak and the resulting tweak had the match instantly ablaze. Pandemonium - the parrot screamed and took off to alight on the lamp standard where it screamed obscenities in Parrot at everyone around, all the while spitting furiously to try and remove bits of burnt match from its mouth. It finished by defecating all over the standard lamp and surrounding carpet and then being sick. So lesson two - no birds.

Whilst serving on secondment with the Trucial Oman Scouts I watched with keen anticipation as one of the officers who had made his living by being a professional eccentric, set about buying his own camel. At one time I think he had been a member of the Beaufort hunt and it was obvious that the desert had brought on withdrawal symptoms that could only be dampened by owning his own steed. He was very pleased with his purchase and spent the rest of the day riding in ever-wider circles around the camp. I was interested because this looked like the ultimate in a young officer's status symbol. But sadly, the next morning the camel had gone. Eventually with some more money changing hands the camel was found and returned. But the whole procedure repeated itself several times before Richard realised that he had bought a homing camel, which earned a healthy amount for its original owner. So I am afraid that camels are not to be considered, besides - they have some very unsavoury habits.



He had bought a homing camel

In Mukeiras, just short of the Yemen border, one of the young officers had a Chameleon, which was kept on the cross bar in the Mess tent. This got him bonus marks for originality but little else. Watching a chameleon is not exactly riveting stuff. It moves very slowly; independently swivels its eyes once or twice, moves slowly again and then spits its tongue out at any fly stupid enough to loiter nearby. For the first evening we sat transfixed and immobile, with beer in hand, waiting for the beast to swat a passing fly. It was not an exciting way to spend the evening. Of course its most famous ability is to be able to change colour to suit its background. I think it was Sgt Terry who thought up the idea of putting the chameleon down on a Tartan rug. Its subsequent efforts of merging with the background caused the poor thing to have a nasty migraine attack. So Chameleons are boring and will not enhance your character.

Neither will snakes. Having kept a Royal Python, I speak from experience. No one will come within twenty yards of you. But,

there was an up side. When driving into Freetown it was customary to hire a small boy or boys to look after your car. If you failed to observe this local etiquette, you would return to a car that had 'go faster stripes' etched with a nail down both sides of your car. However, on parking I would call the clamouring throng of boys over to the car and show them the snake lying on the back seat. Instant terror and loud shrieking. I would then open the windows slightly and leave, knowing that none of them would come anywhere near my car.

Now another good ploy that can earn bonus points is to have an animal that can give a performance which will attract the eye of the passing senior officer. For it is this individual on whom our sights should be set. Take Colonel Tony Ward, as a young officer he complemented his quiet, shy, retiring nature by owning a spaniel called Tiffany. A pleasant, well-behaved dog with no obvious vices but it did have one great bonus. When a suitable crowd was gathered Tony would turn to the dog and ask, "What do girls do for diamonds?" Tiffany would look up at Tony with a suitably cute expression and then suddenly roll on to her back with her paws in the air - instant success and acclaim. So let us remember to put a clever spaniel high up on our list of possible pets.

Of course an animal can be used for other things. It can, for instance, be used to keep people from getting too close to those things that you would rather remain unmolested. Take RQMS Rippon, mind you I think they were called Technical Quarter Master Sergeants at the time, but I could be wrong and it might not have been him at all. I never really got close enough to find out who it was or what it was that he did. Let me explain. If you went into his office and he was not there, you would advance a step towards his desk, where the required ledger lay; when out of the corner of your eye you would detect movement. A large, a very large, pointy eared Doberman; one of those really scary ones, had risen and was making imperceptibly small freeze frame movements towards you and as it did so you could see a small corner of its lip fold back to reveal some very white ivory. It is said that the record for getting out of his office was .0875 of a second. Auditors and casual callers quickly found other places of interest to visit.

But on balance I think that the young would-be General would be well advised to follow in the footsteps of those well-bred young men in the Cavalry. They are country men at heart and understand what impresses those in the higher echelons of society and they do it all with such relaxed poise that only years of selective breeding can achieve this - with of course the odd mutant throwback. Take my friend 'Planks' Round of the 11th Hussars, always known as 'Planks' because he was as Well you get the idea. I was walking with him and his young dog to the Hussars Mess in Munster. I made a suitably complimentary remark about his young Labrador. 'Planks' paused in mid stride and commented "Bloody dog, it's chewed through every single lead I possess, so I am reduced to using the neck strap from me pony." Now there you have it in a nutshell. That comment tells you everything about the man and his position in life - something he could never have achieved if he did not own a dog.

So the outcome of this lesson is get yourself a dog and for preference make it a Labrador. They are also trained to complement any group photograph with their ability to take up position on the exact centre spot of any given photographic composition. The next decision you have to make is on colour - should it be black or yellow. I have it on the best authority that this year regiments are tending to favour the yellow. But fashion is a fickle thing. Now having chosen the breed and the colour we come to a vitally important topic - what are we going to call it. Many a reputation has been destroyed at this hurdle, so proceed with great caution.



Bulldog called 'Allenby'

Choose the name with care - it cannot be of the 'Spot', 'Scamp', 'Fido' variety. Oh dear no, that will not suit the ambitions of our dedicated promotion candidate - at all. The name has got to project your ambitions and potential place in society. It should be a signal to all that you are cultured, have a finely turned sense of humour and shortly will become one of life's leaders. The previously mentioned Bulldog was called 'Allenby', which has just the right ring to it, to suit the upwardly mobile. Generals and Battles can provide a rich source for ideas, but choose carefully. Running round the barracks shouting 'Ladysmith' at the top of your voice could get you noticed for all the wrong reasons.

Happy walkies.
Rupert

Cartoons drawn by Chris Collins

Interpretation

The Ministry of Defence is concerned at the different interpretations being given by the armed forces to everyday words. To test the extent of the problem, the Ministry gave each of the three services a theoretical exercise based upon the word "secure", a word thought to be in common military usage. The requirement was to describe how a certain building, as detailed in the instruction, should be secured.

First to reply was the Army, in the form of an operation order. A squadron of tanks would secure the approaches and provide smoke while support engineers blasted open the front door. At the same time, the SAS would land on the roof from helicopters, break through the ceilings and suppress the upper-floor occupants with stun grenades. Finally, a company of infantry assaults the ground floor, kills or arrests any surviving enemy, and then organises an all-round defence against counter-attack.

The Navy advised that they would first change all the locks, double bar the windows, install an electronic alarm system, then lock all entrances before leaving the keys with the police and proceeding on leave.

The Air Force plan differed again. They would first ascertain the name of the agent acting for the owners, negotiate a ten years lease and pay the first three years in advance.

Looking Back

I joined the Indian Army Holding Detachment in March 1945, 14A Platoon attached to the Queen's at the Seaforth Barracks in Maidstone, for my Primary Training. Under Lt Glen, who had been wounded in Burma, the platoon sergeant was a Sgt Hardy and a L/Cpl Stevens, we finished our Corps Training. The RSM was small, but large in voice, Mr Tasker could see out of the back of his head!! Before embarking for India all those in F Company (Indian Army Cadets) were photographed with the famous and visiting "Auk", General Auchinleck, in May 1945.

We shipped out in the condemned Trooper "Yohan Oldenbarnaveld" from Southampton to Bombay, and spent a mosquito ridden night at Colaba Camp and our first experience of the "Charpoy" to sleep on.

A most fascinating journey south took us to the Officers' Training School at Bangalore. I must have scratched a mosquito bite on my forehead and picked up a 'bug' from the "Chai wallahs" that flocked to the side of the carriages, which developed into my face, scalp, ears and neck covered with impetigo! I was spotted many days later by a Brigadier whilst watching our field exercise out on the maidan, as I was bright purple, standing out like a beacon, covered in gentian violet. I was ordered into hospital at once and nursed back to health by some wonderful Italian POW nurses. I just scraped through, and was posted to The Queen's Royal Regiment attached to the 6th Gurkha Rifles at their Regimental Centre in Abbottabad, North West Frontier Province, April 1946. With a spell in Calcutta being 'looked after' by the super Gurkha Regimental Band I returned after an horrendous train journey to Delhi, part of it in the engine cab, as the driver would not pass through areas of his opposing religion that were rioting, another story, without my presence on the footplate.

'Partition' sent me with hundreds of the cross section of Indian Army, civil and military administrators etc in the *Georgic* who were Blighty-bound and I to Cairo. I was then posted to the Royal Engineers Movement Control at Port Said HQ Petras House. From there I worked with the Principal Sea Transport Office HMS *Stag* manned by RNR and RNVR officers, as the only "Pongo" amongst them, now aged 19! I requested to rejoin the infantry, and I was posted to the 2nd Battalion The East Surrey Regiment, and had the good fortune to have as a CO Lt Colonel Duncombe, he was a grand character popular with all ranks. My first 'civvies' night at the mess I lost my tie which joined other unsuitable ones over the mantlepiece. With my platoon we cleared the Camp out at El Ballah, and our camp at Moascar at night, with German POW's supervising the search lit perimeter! One of the duties of the battalion was "Operation Lightning". We provided personnel together with an RAF dog attachment to lie in wait for the natives to arrive with their camels to cut the copper wires joining two of the Foreign Office Masts out in the nearby desert. Cut in two places, an end was attached to the camels who with a burning brand were encouraged to pull the wire out. I did not, however, go on that very cold duty.

The battalion was shortly after put into "Suspended Animation" and some of us were posted to the 1st Battalion in British Troops Greece, in Salonika which we shared with the "Ox and Bucks". I was sent with the Company to train up in the mountains, near Mt Kortiatis. Our camp was astride the active Roman Aqueduct supplying Salonika with some of its water still.

I remember that a Major Mason, and a Captain Courtney Bennet were there, ex Japanese railway prisoners. Having reached my three years abroad point, I was sent home on 'Python' leave and to Kingston Depot, where I decided that as everything was crowded with so many of us awaiting orders, I would take my overdue release, going to Persia after training, as an assistant Oil Driller.

After some years, having settled down in a steady job in Kent, and living in Sussex, I joined the Royal Sussex TA. Our CO then was Lt Colonel Langridge. After he left, the TA was being amalgamated into 4/5th Bns in some regiments, so we became the 4/5th Bn The Royal Sussex Regiment, Cinque Ports TA.

C Company Commander was Major Malcolm MacNicol, and a real character. In the rank of Company Sergeant Major was Sam Weekes, who is now a Chelsea Pensioner. What happened thereafter became history; in retrospect I had the honour to serve with such wonderful men, as a very undistinguished member.

MJAM

o o o

Woking's Hotel

Freeman of the Borough of Woking, Major David Robinson saw his quarter of a century dream fulfilled in early April when the four star Holiday Inn in the town opened its doors and he became its first guest. He was presented with a bottle of champagne and celebrated the evening with dinner in Hugo's Bar and Brasserie.



Manager Debbie Hulme and David Robinson toast the new hotel

A stalwart campaigner for a four star hotel in Woking since the late 1970s, he remembers various sites being suggested but it seems that the present one could hardly be bettered. The building contains 161 rooms, training and conference facilities and a superb restaurant.

Major David Robinson MBE has had a long association with the Regiment. He served for many years as a Territorial officer, initially with the 5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment, then 3rd Bn The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment and then 5th Bn The Queen's Regiment. He is one of our Trustees of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Charity.

Acknowledgments to the Editor The Woking News and Mail.

o o o

Airborne to battle

A former Queen's man who parachuted into battle in France and was killed is commemorated in a "From the Archives" series in the Surrey Advertiser of 29th December 2000.

Les Hammond of Guildford joined The Queen's Royal Regiment at Stoughton Barracks in 1939. He became a Commando and at one time was erroneously reported as having been killed in Sicily or Italy. On D-Day 1944, with No 3 Commando Parachute Regiment, he parachuted into France to hold up German reinforcements and assist in the beach landings. He was killed the following day and is buried at Ranville Cemetery in France.

Troopships and Trooping

The Early Years

Great Britain being an island of Northern Europe, has relied to a large extent on chartered passenger ships carrying her troops overseas to meet her military commitments.

Towards the middle of the 19th century, steam was beginning to replace sail and the first steamship used for trooping was the *Enterprize*, a wooden paddle steamer of 479 tons completed in 1825.

The first ships built for trooping were five specially designed vessels, *Crocodile*, *Euphrates*, *Jumma*, *Malabar* and *Serapis* all built in 1866 to carry troops between Great Britain and India. These ships were magnificent looking rigged screw transports of 6,211 tons with a speed of 15 knots, each designed to carry a complete battalion of troops. The Indian Government paid the costs of running the service but the Royal Navy operated the ships.

For almost thirty years these ships maintained the routine Indian trooping service becoming familiar to generations of British soldiers. At the end of the 1800's these ships were replaced by ships of the P&O and BI Lines on charter.

The Boer war of 1899 to 1902 involved the transport overseas of the largest force ever to leave Britain, resulting in the Admiralty Transport Service having to draw in the ships of virtually every major shipping company.

Thus, in addition to the companies already in peacetime trooping, P&O, British India and Bibby Lines, ships were requisitioned from the Cunard, Anchor, White Star Line and Allan Lines in the early months of the campaign.

Between 1899 and 1900 P&O had built the *Sobraon* with a tonnage of 7,400, its triple expansion engines gave it a speed of 16 knots. So that the troops could parade and exercise, the ship had a wide deck clear of obstructions and was convertible into an immediate passenger liner when not required for trooping. The *Sobraon* was completed by Caird and Co, Greenock, in 1900 and made her maiden voyage to Bombay.

The First and Second World Wars, the Government had to charter ships mainly from British India and Bibby Lines to cover the Middle and Far East and Cunard to cover the North Atlantic runs. Point of note: British India line, their vessels mostly ended by the letter A (*Nevasa*, *Uganda*, *Kenya*, *Dunera* and *Devonia*) whereas the Bibby Lines ended the names "shire" (*Lancashire*, *Devonshire*, *Warwickshire*, and *Oxfordshire*).

The battalion was posted to Aden and sailed on the *Dunera*, her final journey before becoming an educational ship. Particulars: 12,615 gross tons; 517 x 63 x 25ft; builder Barclay Curle and Company Limited, Glasgow 1937; speed 14 knots. Capacity 123 first class, 95 second class, 100 third class and 831 troops.

Dunera had a major refit in 1951, ended troop service in 1960/1961 refitted for educational cruising until 1967, sold to Spanish shipbreakers and scrapped at Bilbao.

The Later Years

At the beginning of the 1950's, Britain still maintained significant commitments, both politically and strategically, throughout the Far East, Africa and within the Mediterranean. To transport troops between Britain and the Empire, a fleet of troopships were managed by British shipping companies on behalf of the Ministry of Transport. Many of these ships were ageing German war prizes, while the remainder were pre-war

British vessels that had seen strenuous war service. To replace and supplement these vessels in 1952 the British Government entered into an agreement with Bibby and British India Lines. Each company would build a ship specifically for troops and their families.

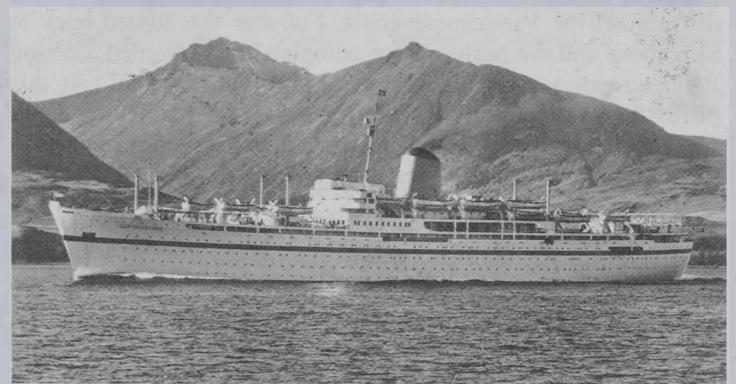
The first ship to enter service was British India's *Nevasa*. Completed seven months later, Bibby Lines *Oxfordshire* began her career on 13th February 1957.

The British Trooper that became Australia's favourite Cruise Liner "Fairstar"

HMT *Oxfordshire* was built by Fairfield Shipbuilding and Engineering Company yard 775:20,586 GRT; 186-9 x 23.8m 613 x 78. 1ft; Parsons geared turbines. Fairfield; 17 max 21 knots. Passengers 220 first class, 100 second class, 180 third class, 1,000 troops and 409 crew.

Oxfordshire was the last purpose built British Troopship and to the majority of ship enthusiasts "The ultimate troopship", the cost of her construction being shared between Bibby Line and the Ministry of Transport. Her livery colours had to be a white hull with a blue relief band, yellow and black funnel as laid down by the Ministry of Transport.

On completion, *Oxfordshire* was placed on a twenty year charter to the Ministry of Transport and worked year round carrying service personnel and dependants to and from Britain and the Mediterranean, East Africa and the Far East.



Photograph courtesy of Roger Jennings. Leaving Aden, on the Oxfordshire. Note regimental flag flying from the main mast.

In 1962 after only five years of duty, the trooping career of HMT *Oxfordshire* came to an abrupt end. The contract held by Bibby was prematurely cancelled and new work was sought. *Oxfordshire* brought British trooping to a close (until the Falklands conflict of 1982 when *Canberra*, *Uganda* and *QE2* were requisitioned) when she arrived at Southampton from Malta on 19th December 1962 and laid up in the River Fal (Cornwall). She was offered for charter or sale by Bibby Line.

In May 1963, the Italian Sitmar Line took *Oxfordshire* on a six year charter, with an option to purchase. Sitmar ran a service from Britain to Australia carrying assisted passage migrants on the outward leg and fare paying tourists on the return.

Oxfordshire being a considerably larger, faster and more modern ship, was seen as the ideal vessel with which to expand and revitalise their fleet. *Oxfordshire* was dispatched to the Wilton-Fijenoord shipyard in Holland for rebuilding.

In March 1964, due to the extent of the alterations being made, a dispute arose between Bibby and Sitmar which was resolved by Sitmar purchasing the ship outright. *Oxfordshire* was then renamed *Fairstar*. Shortly after purchase a further dispute arose, this time between the shipyard and Sitmar, resulting in final conversion work being completed at Southampton.

As refitted, *Fairstar* could accommodate 1,868 passengers all in one class and a crew of 460. Her 488 cabins spanned six decks, 420 having private bathrooms. Up until 1970 *Fairstar* did the migrant runs via the Suez Canal until the Suez Canal was closed in 1967 and had to divert southward via the Cape of Good Hope, returning to Britain through the Panama Canal. This type of cruising had only limited success since losing the Australian contract for migrants, which the Chandris Line won in 1970. Sitmar decided to cruise purely around Australasia and became very successful.

From Sitmar to P&O

From *Fairstar*'s entry into cruise service up until the mid 1980's P&O proved to be Sitmar's major rival in the Australian cruise trade. Over these years P&O successfully placed *Himalaya*, *Oransay*, *Arcadia*, *Sea Princess* and finally *Oriana* into permanent service from Sydney. (Do you remember these wonderful Liners berthed in Aden, except for the *Sea Princess*?).

Fairstar always maintained her popularity and, after *Oriana*'s retirement in 1986, virtually had the Australian cruise market to herself. Ironically, soon after P&O withdrew *Oriana*, *Fairstar* was to become a P&O ship.

Adrift in the South China Sea

In June 1991, *Fairstar* had left Singapore after an overhaul with 1,500 passengers and crew on a one month cruise to Japan, Hong Kong, Korea and to her port in Sydney. Three days out on the voyage, the boilers failed and *Fairstar* began drifting off the Vietnamese coast. *Fairstar* was towed back to Singapore and the boilers were completely overhauled, costing P&O an estimated £5m in repairs and lost revenue. (At this point do you remember when the battalion on board the *Oxfordshire* had to ride out a somewhat frightening storm in the South China Sea for three days and nights?).

Fairstar's last few years saw her sail exclusively around Australasian waters carrying around 40,000 passengers annually. *Fairstar* consistently maintained her position as the most successful cruise ship operating from Australia. Sadly, the *Fairstar* was suffering from mechanical fatigue and breakdowns and P&O decided that a refit and new SOLAS regulations (Safety of Life at Sea) meant it was not viable to continue in service. *Fairstar* made her last cruise on 21st January 1997 after carrying almost a million passengers and many thousands of troops and families as the *Oxfordshire*.

For a small cruise liner, the *Oxfordshire*/*Fairstar* outlasted the *Canberra* by four years and was ungraciously beached in India in February 1997 after forty glorious years and like the *Fairstar* the *Canberra* could not meet the SOLAS Regulations.

0 0 0



Bob Hatcher and Roy Harding. They had last met in 1956 when they served together in 8 Platoon, C Company 1 Queen's in Malaya.

The humble private

Under the heading "The thoughts of a humble private of The East Surrey Regiment", the Editor has received an interesting account of the war time experiences of a new member of the Association, Fred Reynolds.

Serving first as a Civil Defence cyclist messenger in Birmingham at the outbreak of war, and later in the Home Guard, Fred became a young soldier in The Dorset Regiment in May 1941. In August 1942, at the age of twenty, he was transferred to the 10th Bn The East Surrey Regiment at Tavistock, Cornwall, and seven days later was drafted to the 1st Battalion at Alloa in Scotland.

The Battalion still had a number of regular soldiers in its ranks and they were somewhat sceptical of the newcomers. Some weeks of extensive tough training followed before embarking in October in the *Viceroy of India* for foreign service. Destination at the time of embarkation was unknown but it was soon discovered as being Algeria and Morocco where joint operations were to take place in company with American troops. As the result of a successful landing west of Algiers, the objective of Kolea was reached and occupied after the peaceful departure of French garrison troops.

Occupation of Algiers was effected later the same day following some resistance by French troops, mainly snipers. American Forces then began to move in and the Surreys, both by way of marching and movement by mobile transport, crossed the Tunisian border. On continuing to Terbourba they met increasing German resistance and came under heavy tank and air attacks. In defence, 25 pounders and Bofors Ack Ack guns were used.

An attack by German troops to secure positions on nearby heights resulted in a counter-attack by the Surreys in which Fred Reynolds was wounded in the leg. Assisted by comrades he got back to Terbourba in what was part of a general withdrawal. In continuing movement to the rear in a Bren gun carrier he was further wounded and was captured by German troops to become a prisoner of war.

With other wounded he was taken to a hospital in Tunis, and later to Tunis Airport for onward transmission to Naples. The transport plane carried both German and British wounded. Before leaving Tunis Airport, Fred saw German reinforcements arriving in large numbers. He spent the next two and a half years as a prisoner, somewhat embittered by his feelings that he and his comrades had been let down by lack of support from the Americans who did not appear in his sphere of action at all.

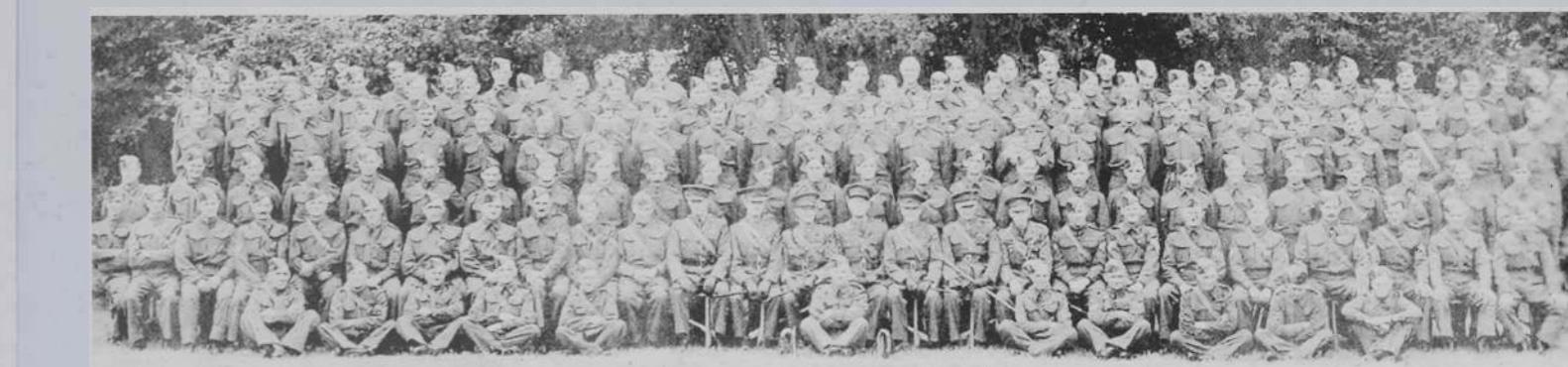
His opinion of his reputed Allies was not improved by what he saw of them in Prisoner of War Camps where he considered their standards of conduct and discipline to be far below those of British and Commonwealth troops.

He was freed in April 1945 and returned to England in May. After a period of leave and rehabilitation he rejoined his Regiment and later, at his own request, transferred to the Royal Armoured Corps in which his brother was serving.

Although wearing RAC shoulder flashes, he and transferees like him, were allowed to retain their Regimental cap badges. Fred was demobbed as a Corporal in September 1946.

He concludes by saying that his experiences made him proud of his Regiment and of being British - sentiments which he rightly still enjoys.

Father rushed home from holiday to join The National Defence Corps



Another group mobilised to defend Britain during the Second World War was the National Defence Corps. W B Clinton of Pirbright writes: "Those who formed the NDC were for the main part, veterans of the First World War. They were called up a week before War was declared in September 1939. I well remember my father rushing home from our seaside holiday leaving my mother to get us home to Woking. They were mobilised in company strength to guard strategic points from fifth columnists, IRA and Nazi sympathisers. Places included the Guildford railway tunnels for which they were quartered in the Women's Institute hall in Chestnut Avenue, off Portsmouth Road, the railway power station at Woking, Pirbright railway junction, Bramley ammunition dump near Basingstoke, and finally the airport at Croydon during the Blitz."

By this time they had been absorbed into the Queen's Royal Regiment as the 11th Battalion, though I doubt it was ever battalion strength. My father, Sgt A G Clinton, was fairly typical; aged fifty when war broke out, he served about three years and returned to the City in time for VIs and V2s. Most of the men in the photograph sport First World War medals. I recognise Cpl Steggles (or Steggalls?) and also remember the name of Sgt Jack Phillips, though I cannot identify him, and Sgt Maj Hoad. I have never heard this force mentioned since the war. They were certainly no Dad's Army and I hope they are not completely forgotten."

With acknowledgments to the Editor of the Surrey Advertiser.

Caption to the centre pages

A Soldier's Life - circa 1890

In the 1890's Richard Simkin, the renowned military artist, published a book of sketches entitled "A Soldier's Life - Everyday Incidents in Camp, Field and Quarters". The pages are entitled "In Barracks, Under Canvas, In Camp", etc. The subjects cover many activities and duties of which many were still relevant during the life of the Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment and its forebears.

There is not space here to replicate all Simkin's sketches so I have selected those which may amuse and require fewer 'extras'. I leave it to the reader to flesh out the scenarios with additional characters as required.

At the top left the Duty Buglers of the Queen's sound reveille in camp. Simkin shows the Quarter Guard turned out in guard order, all dressed in greatcoats, at attention in front of a standard bell tent.

In the centre an Orderly Officer and Guard Commander Sergeant are inspecting a sentry of the East Surrey's. He would have heard their approach and would have duly made his challenge. Simkin showed the same three characters in camp, in the pouring rain, during the "silent hours".

On the right are two individuals of the Queen's just arrived, perhaps off a furlough or a posting, obtaining their bedding from store. They are wearing serge frocks and seem to have trouble controlling their palliasses. There is always the one (isn't there) who always gets it wrong.

On the left hand side at the bottom, again wearing serge frocks, are two East Surrey's humping coal for the barrack room. A fatigue not always appreciated notwithstanding the later benefit enjoyed in a warm billet. These tasks were known as "Regimental Sports". This vignette was adapted from a photograph not from Simkin's album although the message is the same.

Second from the left we have another fatigue not over enjoyed and more often than not a punishment for some misdemeanour. The soldier could be from either of our regiments in shirt sleeve order. The Corporal cook might well have had half a dozen 'helpers' at the thankless task of 'spud bashing'. I seem to remember that it was always done in an open ended shed in the freezing cold with puddles of water all over the floor.

Meals were sometimes taken in the barrack room and a detail was ordered to collect the rations from the cookhouse, the idea being to get ahead of the queue and to get back with as little spillage as possible before the food chilled. The two Queen's privates in serge frocks have the right idea but the soup may not make it!

Lastly, in the dining hall the Orderly Officer catches a Lance Corporal of the East Surrey's in mid-mouthful as he asks the usual question, 'Any complaints?' The Sergeant waits, poised, for some reaction. By the time the mouthful has disappeared, his eyes watering, his face red and the rest of the occupants of the table enjoying his discomfort, he may just get out his answer.

Bryan Fosten





Ken Barber writes from Crawley:-

I enclose belated cheque to cover subscription for 2000-2001 and hope there will be some left for those less well off.

Thank you for the Newsletters, long may they reign. Best wishes to all for 2001 and hope those of us who are left keep going for a very long time!

Mrs Rachel Roupell writes:-

I am deeply touched by the kind thought and the generosity of the gift of the truly beautiful basket of flowering plants that arrived to greet my birthday today. I am proud to feel that these flowers through me, are above all a remembrance of my husband.

With all kindest regards to you and to all Regimental friends.

Bob Edwards writes from Swansea:-

Again as usual, I must offer my congratulations to all involved in managing to produce such a really good magazine every edition.

I would like to write about an incident that occurred last September that may be of interest to older readers who served in the Queen's Royal Regiment.

While taking a few days break in the Isle-of-Wight a fellow guest and his lady companion both slightly older than myself, and I exchanged the normal good mornings at the breakfast table but it was on the last day of the older couple's holiday I noticed he was wearing what looked like a Queen's regimental tie. On enquiring he indeed confirmed this was so, he joined the Queen's in 1932 eventually seeing service in Tientsin and Quetta, including the earthquake and he was with the regiment until about 1942 when, being on the provost staff, he was transferred to the Royal Military Police with whom he saw the rest of his service.

Moreover, he went on to say that despite being eighty-seven years old he is still on "active" service with the army. Living in Aldershot he "does" in the local army church. Even at this age he is very bright and much to my pleasure was able to discuss with me my late Uncle, who also served with the Queen's at the same time. He completed his service in 1946 with the same regiment leaving as CSM Bill Doncaster, the first person I have ever come across who was really able to talk about my Uncle Bill.

The old soldier's name is Edward (Ted) Parsonage and I am sure all readers will support me in offering congratulations to him on his forthcoming wedding later in the year 2001. The lady companion on holiday with him was his fiancée and they hope to spend their honeymoon in the same small hotel, hopefully we will meet with him there as we plan to take the same break.

Jack Parkinson, Secretary 57th/67th (East Surrey) A/Tk Regt RA writes:-

I really meant to write to you as soon as I received the May issue of the Newsletter, but kept putting it off, and now I have the latest issue. Forgive me.

I wanted to say how much I enjoyed reading "The Bands, Drums & Music, etc." and congratulate you on such a splendid supplement to the Newsletter. It was nice to see the photos of 5th Surreys band. I first heard them at the 1939 T.A. summer camp at Tilshead (although by then they were actually the 57th Anti-Tank Regt. band), and I remember asking someone the name of the tune they were playing. That's "A Southerly Wind & a Cloudy Sky", I was told, and I thought: what a great title. In our photo-album at Clandon there's a photo of the band taken while Beating Retreat at Tilshead. On the back, there's a little note written by Sgt Jack Harwood, my first drill sergeant, and it says: 'Great to have been a part of it all.' And it was too, Les.

In the photo of the last parade of the 5th Bn Drums on p.16, I am actually in touch with one of the "?s", who was Boy Fred Ockenden (though I'm not sure which "?" he is). Fred was weeded out with the "Immature" early in the war. He joined the RAP, and as an air-gunner flew missions in Lancasters over Germany. He is now one of the people dedicated to raising and identifying aircraft which crashed into the Bristol Channel, and they have been able to confirm identities of crew-members for relatives all over the world. Not a bad retirement job for a former Surreys drummer-boy.

My battery, 268 of 67th A/Tk, supported the Queen's of 169 Brigade at Salerno, and I am proud to have fought alongside them. I was therefore somewhat saddened to notice (on P.39 of issue no.67) in J H Day's piece, reference to him being a guard for the deserters. I was in Forli (picking up one of our Troop commanders from hospital), and saw a party of these unfortunates under C.M.P. escort. Not realising the situation, I went over to greet one of them, whom I knew well from our trooper "Franconia" days - and was gently but firmly discouraged by one of the redcaps.

Ray Goodacre dropped by for coffee the other day. He has almost completed his history of 57th Regt., and has been dealing with the actions of 228 Bty 82nd A/Tk Regt. (which included many of the original 5th Surreys) fought around Kohima and Imphal.

Our Association, as such, is moribund, but individual members stay closely in touch, even if only for a cuppa at each other's houses. The telephone is a great boon for this, if for little else.

Mr Skerry writes from Dorking in Surrey:-

The Newsletter as welcome as always especially the Surrey Connection, India 1825-47. It encouraged me to check my family Army History to see if any of them met up with any Surreys!! My Great, Great Grandfather served 1821-1844 Ensign later, Captain British European Regiment at Siege and capture of Bhurtpore 1824 and was 2 i/c of the local Battalion at Mhairwara. He died at Allahabad in 1844.

My Great Grandfather was Lieutenant 1858 Bengal Artillery, Afgan War 1878-80 Kabul to relief of Kandahar 1880, medal

two clasps and two Mentions in Despatches. Retired in 1896 as a Major General with a CBE.

My Grandfather joined The Dublin Fusiliers 1885, Bengal Military 1886, Burmese Expedition 1887-9, Medal with Clasp. 1897-98 Semana, N W Frontier Flying Column, Kurram, Medal two Clasps, Tirah one Clasp. Promotion to Colonel in the 15th Ludhiana Sikhs 1911-1919. My Father was a Lieutenant Commander Rava in the Great War.

Whatever happened to my commission during six and a half years of World War Two. They must all have turned in their various graves World Wide! Still, I suppose *Sergeant*, four *gongs* and a *Mention* is better than nothing!!

Mary Churchlow writes from London:-

I am enclosing my subs for the beautiful Newsletter. I have just received No 68 and the Regimental India Supplement. What a delight they are to me, what memories of my darling wonderful dad - Mr Charles Churchlow - memories of ages long past. I was born in the last year of the First World War and when I am asked my age I reply "I was a First World War baby" and I am proud of that statement!

My dad instilled 'pride' in us. He was a hard working man, proud of his Regiment, proud of his country. He once walked us all the way to Bermondsey to see his Regimental Colours and the Memorial to his Regiment. I was barely three years old and can see it now. There was a huge gun on a trolley being pulled by horses and pushed by soldiers. It was a huge plaque, although in 3D similar to the monuments in the War Museums. My mum pushed two babies in the pram, I sat on Dad's shoulders and the eldest and I took turns at walking. I remember what a huge day it was for us and how happy Dad was.

When we were young there were three distinct 'classes', the poor, the middle class and the rich. The rich didn't think it mattered, but they rarely mixed, we were so different to each other.

When my dad was in the First World War he saved the life of an officer. When I was three years old the officer visited us with his wife and baby girl and he crouched down to speak to me and said "*Your daddy saved my life*", they were so rich she even wore perfume and she and the baby were so beautifully dressed. I was so proud of my dad.

I do go on don't I? Thanks again for the Newsletters and Supplements, they are a godsend to me and I read them from cover to cover, so how must the men who were in the Regiments feel - so proud and not forgotten and the comradeship from friends who they served with.

Jimmy Patterson writes:-

I have always enjoyed reading the items by Rupert in the 'Newsletter', and I have just finished reading 'Rupert's Progress', which I enjoyed immensely. I was particularly intrigued and amused by his experiences when he was posted to the 1st Bn. The East Surrey Regiment at Bury St. Edmunds just prior to the amalgamation of our two Regiments. I did know a little about some of the problems associated with the amalgamation as I had the honour of having lunch with then Major Rowley Mans at Stoughton Barracks on the same day that Major Gill, whom I had known since I attended the Cadre at Queen's Camp in 1941, arrived back from Wemyss Barracks at Canterbury, where he had been sorting out accommodation and other matters.

It was the fact that the CO of the East Surreys took exception to Rupert wearing his Queen's Royal Regiment badges, which brought back memories, although in this case, it was the Royal

Sussex Regiment that caused the trouble. My eldest son, David, had joined the Regiment as a Junior Leader, badged Queen's Royal Regiment.

On passing out from the Junior Leaders at Oswestry, he was posted to Wemyss Barracks as the amalgamation had, by then, taken place. He eventually joined the 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment in Hong Kong, where they had just arrived from Aden.

David was a prolific letter writer home and it was obvious that he was enjoying the life tremendously. His younger brother Stephen avidly read David's letters and decided he wanted to join him in Hong Kong. I pointed out to Steve that the minimum age at the time for Far East service was eighteen years, and that by the time he was old enough, the battalion would have moved on to pastures new. However, he had made up his mind, and went ahead and joined up.

He did his basic training at Wemyss Barracks and, in due course, Molly and I attended his passing out parade. After some leave, he returned to Wemyss Barracks, but he was later sent to Shorncliffe and attached to the Royal Sussex. I only found out about this when he came home for a weekend leave, wearing Royal Sussex flashes on his tunic. You can imagine that I blew my top. I instructed him to arrange an interview with his OC and to inform him that I wished to see him wearing his Queen's Surrey flashes on his next leave home. On the Monday morning I telephoned General Fergus-Ling and told him what had happened. He told me to leave the matter to him.

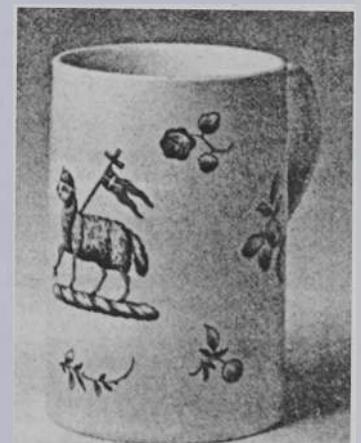
Needless to say, on the following weekend, Steve arrived home, proudly wearing the Queen's Surrey flashes again. He told me that, after he was marched out of the OCs office, the Sergeant Major said to him, "*You never told me you had friends in high places!*"

Not long afterwards, the age limit for Hong Kong was reduced to seventeen and a half years and Steve was on his way to join his brother in the 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment.

Phillip Haythornthwaite writes from Lancashire:-

Knowing your interest in all matters relating to the regiment, I thought the enclosed might be worth sending, even though it probably has nothing whatever to do with The Queen's.

I was looking through some old papers recently and came upon this advertisement which appeared in The Antique Dealer and Collectors' Guide, June 1986 (!). The Paschal Lamb is such an infinitesimal chance that the tankard shown had anything to do with the regiment, either commissioned by a member of The Queen's or made in commemoration of it.



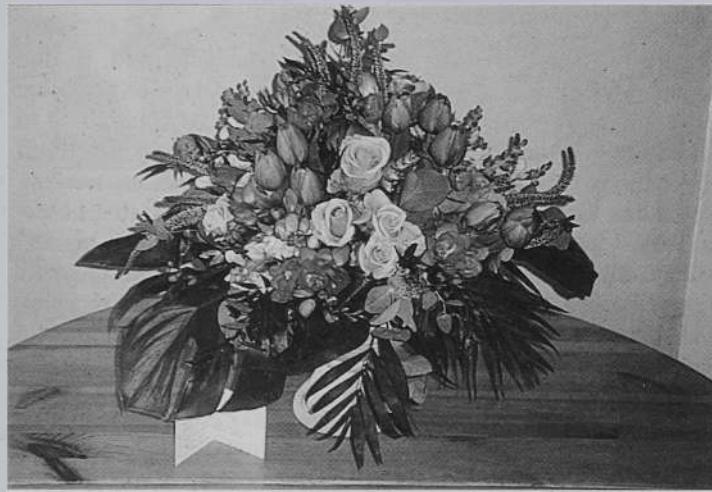
An extremely rare Worcester tankard painted in underglaze blue with a Paschal Lamb flanked by floral sprigs. Probably the crest of Sir John Davie (1731 - 1792). Height: 5½ inches. About 1772-75. Perfect condition.

someone with a red crest might accept it in blue, but surely the Lamb would be positioned correctly?

That said, there is probably no (or very little) chance that the tankard has any connection whatever with the Regiment. I'm not sure of the exact date that the Queen's lamb took on this form - on the 1795 Colours I believe it is shown without the flag and halo - so the tankard is probably too early. (I'm sure I read an article on the evolution of the lamb as a regimental badge, but I can't lay my hand upon it to check!)

However, even though there is probably no regimental connection whatever, I thought you might be interested to see this picture: I can't remember ever seeing such a crest upon anything before this piece.

Ove and Annie Nielsen write from Denmark:-



Thank you very much for the beautiful flowers we had from the Association on the day of our 50th anniversary. Please see the enclosed photo. Once again thank you very much to the President and all members of the Association.

Councillor Bill Bellerby writes to the Editor from Guildford:-

Dear Les

I should have written to you long before this to say how much I enjoy reading the Newsletter you regularly send me. It is so well produced and the photographs add to the pleasure given by the articles and letters which in themselves are fascinating.

The news items too, sharpen up a memory and bring with them enjoyment and sometimes a little sadness. I am sorry I am not able to participate in regimental events as much as I would like due to local commitments which are ongoing and due to my inability to drive a car which is also ongoing.

However, I am sure we shall meet one of these days, probably at Clandon Park.

Dom Papworth writes from India:-

Many thanks for the Newsletter of November - accompanied by 'Regimental India'. How can one continue the praise of both Newsletters and Supplements, with now Brigadier Clarke's and Les Wilson's 'Regimental India', without running out of genuine superlatives - in short, they are magnificent!

On page two of the Newsletter, it is interesting to learn of the deployment and training of various battalions of the PWRR by AM. In the security context pertaining to India these would definitely be classified under the 'Rimmington Eye Only' category and referred to Delhi. Sorry, just a thought!

Please convey my very best regards to Les and, not least, the pleasure in receiving 'Regimental India'. To counter some of

the utter rubbish we have to put up with from the BBC and others, it brings a true perspective - at last.

With good wishes and regards

Arthur Hitchcock writes from Rickmansworth:-

D Day and The 1/6th Surreys

Among the duties which I acquired while serving with 1/6th Surreys was the up keep of a large European situation map to be displayed when and wherever possible. To keep everyone informed, I also produced a daily News sheet based mainly on the BBC's 9am Dictation Speed News Broadcast.

Early in the morning on 6th June 1944, I picked up a brief newsflash which quoted the German radio as saying that the invasion had started. Unfortunately I seem to have mislaid that brief note but I still have one of the original 9am News broadcasts which I rushed out to all companies of the battalion who were actually in trucks along the side of a road ready to move off to go to the North of Rome. I didn't even stop to correct typing faults so that the news would be spread as quickly as possible, which was well received. I am sending a photocopy of this slightly crumpled sheet for inclusion in our Regimental Association Newsletter.

BBC News 0900hrs Tuesday June 6th 1944

Invasion!!

The German Overseas News Agency made this announcement about 2hrs ago. *"Early this morning the expected Anglo-American invasion began when airborne forces were landed in the area of the Seine Estuary. Le Havre Harbour is at present being exposed to fierce bombardment. German naval forces are engaged in fighting with landing craft off the shores".* A spokesman of the Supreme Allied Expeditionary Force broadcast early this morning an urgent warning to people in German occupied Western Europe. It was that a new phase of the Allied air offensive had begun and people living within twenty-two miles of the coast were particularly affected. The German News Agency said later *"Allied landing craft and light warships have been seen between the Seine Estuary and the E. Coast of Normandy. Anglo American parachutists are being dropped from numerous aircraft on the Northern tip of the Normandy Peninsula".* The spokesman of the Allied Supreme Command in his broadcast this morning said a warning will be given in advance wherever possible in towns in which certain objectives will be intensively bombed. The German News Agency in a further flash said, *"Strong bomber formations attacked the Calais and Dunkirk areas coinciding with the Anglo-American invasion. The German air defences immediately went into action. No Allied landings have so far been reported at these points".* RAF bombers went out from Britain in strength last night to continue their attacks on German occupied territory. These operations followed an all day attack on enemy communications and radio installations in France, including attacks by over 500 American heavies.

In Italy the vanguard of the 5th Army has already left Rome and is pushing North. Further inland the 8th Army is fighting its way forward against stubborn resistance.

J B Massey writes from Exeter:-

I have just finished reading the fascinating story of the Surrey Connection in its long service in India. Congratulations on an excellent and absorbing history.

It was loaned to me by a neighbour, Major Jimmy Reid, originally a Buff and latterly of the Queen's Regiment. I was particularly interested because of another link with India by the Queen's Royal Regiment in that it sponsored the Indian Army Cadet scheme in training the Cadets in England. Queen's

Cadets, as we were called, trained in Maidstone (six weeks Basic at The Barracks and thirteen weeks Continuation Training at Invicta Lines) prior to going to Bangalore for final Officer Cadet training and eventual posting to an Indian Army Regiment. In my case, I joined 17 Platoon in May 1945 - near the end of the scheme - and was seconded to the Rajputana Rifles in July 1946, for all too short a stay there!

Although the company and Platoon Commanders came from the Indian Army and the barracks were Royal West Kent's, all our NCOs and Instructors were from the Queen's Royal Regiment, we were cap-badged Queen's and had the old regimental numbers rather than the 8 digit Army-wide system. Mine was 6109009. This contribution to the Indian Army by the Queen's Royal Regiment must represent a very interesting and valuable addition to its long years of gallant service in pre-partition India.

A Binnie writes from Aberdeen:-

I was very interested to read the notice in Saga magazine about the Queen's Royal Regiment reunion dinner in May and as a former member of the 1st Battalion I couldn't resist the temptation to write to you.

You are probably wondering how a Scotsman came to be in the Queen's immediately after the Second World War. Well I was training in Canada to be a Fleet Air Arm pilot when V-E Day was declared and almost overnight we became redundant, as many surplus-to-requirement but experienced, RAF aircrew volunteered to transfer to the FAA for service in the Far East.

Back in Britain, the Indian Army was looking for potential officers and scores of us left the Navy to pursue that career intention. After a short spell at Maidstone (where I was to spend part of my honeymoon almost 50 years ago), I found myself early in 1946 in 20 Draft, India Cadet Company, training at the Guards Depot at Caterham, and hoping to go on to Bangalore and a commission.

However, as it became clear some months later that India would soon get its Independence, once again my mates and I were redundant. By then, most if not all of us just wanted out as we'd had enough of training, and although I could have transferred to a Scottish regiment I opted to serve out my time until demob with the India Cadet Company's parent unit, which was the Queen's Royals.

Although I hadn't long to go, I was posted to the 1st Battalion in Singapore (rather than the 2nd in Germany, which was my preference) and I joined them early in 1947 at Selang Barracks, Changi. The seven or eight months I was there proved to be quite eventful.

- a. We got a new CO (his name was Lt Col D L A Gibbs, if I remember correctly) and he immediately endeared himself to the men by abolishing pack-drill as a punishment.
- b. The Battalion was presented with new Colours in a "bush hat, bull and blanco" ceremony on the Padang, Singapore.
- c. We started up a battalion newspaper and as battalion stenographer and a junior reporter in civvy street I was expected to help out.
- d. We converted a former gun emplacement at Tanjong Pasir Laba (?) on the island into a weekend leave base.

I wonder if any of those likely to be at the reunion served with me then and just might remember the lone Scot in their midst. Although I still have a few pictures from those days, I have long since forgotten the names of the people in them, although it would be nice to hear from any old comrades.

If I didn't live so far away and wasn't recovering from a heart attack last month I would have considered the dinner. As it is, I can only extend my best wishes for a successful and enjoyable evening, which I am sure it will prove to be.

Editors note: The letter from Arthur Binnie is one of thirty from old comrades in response to an appeal launched by Stuart Browning BEM, to find not only more members for the Association, but to increase the numbers of the 5th Old Members Association Dinner which is now held in Farnham TA Centre.

As a result of Stuart's appeal, not only has he recruited more for the Dinner but he has increased the Association membership Well done Stuart, Congratulations.

0 0 0

Old Comrade remembered in Suffolk.

The village of Whepstead near Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk (population 250), recently dedicated a new War Memorial in memory of sixteen villagers who gave their lives in the service of their country during the two world wars of the last century. Amongst the sixteen named was Private Harry Hurrell of 7th Bn Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regt, who was killed, aged 29, during the recapture of the village of Tergnier south of St Quentin, France, on the 23rd March 1918 - the same battle as his Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel C Bushell DSO, won the VC. Private Harry Hurrell has no known grave and is commemorated on panel 14/15 of the Pozieres War Memorial, France.



At a short and moving service conducted by the village Priest, wreaths were laid by representatives of all the Regiments of Units of the sixteen being remembered. A wreath in memory of Harry Hurrell on behalf of the Regiment was laid by Lt Col Geoffrey Mason MBE.



PAY ATTENTION CAN YOU HELP?



Robert Thompson DeGavre writes:- My Father was Lt Col R O V Thompson, commanding officer of the 1/6 Battalion The East Surrey Regiment. He was killed in Italy in June 1944. I was four years old at the time and have no recollection of him. After the war my family moved to America and thus I grew up without any contact with the officers and men who served with my father. More than fifty-five years have passed since then, and I fear the memories of these men must be growing dim. I would be very interested in corresponding with the Regiment's veterans who served with him and remember him. Could you please put an appropriate request in your next Newsletter? My address is: Robert Thompson deGavre, 5783 Cattle Point Road, Friday Harbor, WA 98250 USA. Tel: 360 378-3605. e-mail: degavre@interisland.net Thank you very much.

If any of our readers can assist, please contact Mr DeGavre direct.

Pte E N Penrose was clerk to B Coy 1st Bn Surreys in 1939/40: A number of battalion documents and personal letters have been found in Ghent (Belgium) and are now in the care of the museum. If Pte Penrose is still alive, we would like to return the letters (if he wants them).

If any reader can assist please contact Mrs Penny James at the museum at Clandon - 01483 223419.

Major Dennis Burton writes from Felton Park, Felton, Morpeth, Northumberland NE65 9HN:- He has been collecting GSM Medals awarded to men who served with the 1st Battalion the Queen's Royal Regiment in Malaya. All the medals have the bar to Malaya.

I am very keen to find out what their job was in the battalion and which company and platoon they served in. Could I ask you to publish this list in the Queen's Royal Surrey Association Newsletter, and ask members if they can furnish me with some answers. Replies should be sent to my home address as shown above.

22799387 Pte H G T Cable	22875365 Pte B M Dixon
25782780 Pte R C Boxall	22919515 Pte E J Berry
23214442 Pte M F K Young	22486576 Pte M J Limbert
23296869 Pte W F Weston	22953480 Pte D V Honeysett
22830683 Pte A T Waring	23267340 Pte R A Benton
23468779 Pte A A Smith	22890768 Pte R F Morgan
23267333 Pte A W Kirby	

John Coldstream writes:- I have been appointed by the estate of the late Sir Dirk Bogarde as his official biographer, and am writing to you in the hope that you will be able to help with a crucial part of my research for the book, which is to be published by Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

If his own memoirs are correct, Derek Van den Bogaerde was commissioned into the Queen's Royal Regiment on 1st April 1943 at Sandhurst. It would be most useful for me to have sight of any background information on which the Regiment might be able to provide about his Army career, in the form either of

official documents and photographs, or of journals and memoirs kept by those who served in the Regiment and in which, he is mentioned.

If any reader can assist will they please contact John Coldstream at 11 Abbey House, 1a Abbey Rd, St Johns Wood, London NW89BT. Tel: 020 7266 3779.

Belgium and France 1940

The author Hugh Sebag-Montefiore would very much like to get in contact with any soldiers from the 1st/6th and 1st battalions of the East Surrey regiment who took part in the actions in Belgium/France 1940 at Vormenzele near the Ypres-Comines line and at Nieuport/the Dunkirk perimeter. He would also like to get in touch with veterans of the 1/5th and 1/6th and the 2/5th, 2/6th and 2/7th battalions of the Queen's Royal Regiment who took part in any of the following actions:- on the road to Strazeele, East of Hazebrouck and in and around Abbeville. He would also be very interested in speaking to the families of soldiers who have memoirs about these actions.

This is in connection with a book commissioned by publishers Viking and Penguin which he is writing focussing on the rearguard and the heroic actions of the British Expeditionary Force in France in 1940.

Hugh Sebag-Montefiore is the writer of Enigma: The Battle for the Code which came out in hardback last year and in paperback earlier this year. Publisher: Phoenix/Weidenfeld & Nicolson, Price £7.99.

Please contact Hugh Sebag-Montefiore at 21 Rochester Terrace, London NW1 9JN. Work Tel no: 020-7-267-5533, Home Tel no: 020-7-284-0016.

0 0

14650 Private A L Bonsey 1915 - 1918

In a small autobiography of the relative period entitled "My War Service 1915-1918", A L Bonsey, formerly 14650 Private, East Surrey Regiment, tells in poignant manner of his experiences in the First World War, both in the front line and as a prisoner of war. Enlisting on 25th October 1915 at Sutton Fire Station, which was acting as a recruiting office, he was kitted out at Kingston Barracks. A few days later, with about a hundred other recruits, he was sent to Shoreham-on-Sea which he found to be a pleasant place and very much to his liking. There, normal infantry training of the times was undertaken including parades, drill, weapon practice, musketry and route marches into the Sussex countryside and tours accompanied by the band. (Doubtless something of a recruiting measure itself). Days finished early at about 1500 or 1600hrs and relaxation could then be found in the YMCA or on the miniature rifle range. A welcome break was seven days Christmas leave.

Afterwards the Surreys were transferred to Witley Camp in Surrey. This was a large establishment housing a number of military units and it boasted Salvation Army and YMCA canteens together with a row of galvanised iron shops known as 'Tintown'. So it was common practice in leisure hours to go 'up Tintown'. (Tintown was demolished in 1919 by rioting Canadian soldiers who were dissatisfied with their demobilisation arrangements). But all was not leisure. Increased training took place, often in the form of long forced marches where heavy iron weights were carried in packs to simulate ammunition. Some ill feeling existed apparently between troops and local farmers who claimed compensation for damages to their trees and hedges. This resulted in a general levy of one shilling a week on all troops.

A further move to Blackdown near Frimley was effected by way of a route march and it was here that Pte Bonsey

encountered some soldiers of slight stature who proudly called themselves "the Bantams". They were Welshmen and, traditionally had a white goat for a mascot.

But 'foreign fields' were beckoning and after four days leave embarkation took place at Southampton. A quick night-time unmolested dash across the Channel landed the troops safely at Le Havre. From thence an onward journey was made by slow moving train to Bethune in Northern France where billets were established in empty sheds and barns. The front line was then about twenty five miles distant. The village was still inhabited by some French people, mostly old, and some small shops were still available for the purchase of sweets, tobacco and occasionally bread.

A continuing problem, surprisingly, was the supply of clean fresh water and Bonsey was appointed company waterman. His duty was to proceed with other watermen to a suitable source of water supply and there fill two water carts. Sometimes a shortage of the precious liquid necessitated rationing. Chloride of lime was added as a purifying agent.

After about a month the troops went 'up the line' for the first time, eventually arriving at the village called Les Brebis, which was only five miles from the firing line. There they found that they and the remaining villagers were subject to enemy shelling and to bombing from aircraft.

Rations became short and any foodstuff left around was subject to attacks by numerous rats. An enemy sniper, located at a disused coal mine shaft, was quickly disposed of by artillery fire. Arriving eventually just north of Loos, the Battalion found that they were within fifty yards of the German lines. Although Bonsey had to continue with his water supplies, the trenches ironically were very wet and some men suffered from the notorious trench feet.

Loos itself had suffered badly in the war and British casualties were numbered at 25,000. The stench of death, not surprisingly, was everywhere. Royal Engineers, many of them former coal miners, were busy tunnelling under the German positions which they eventually blew up, thankfully before their German counterparts could inflict reciprocal measures.

There was considerable marching and counter marching round the villages at the time and at High Woods, as it was called, one of the Sergeant Majors won the Distinguished Conduct Medal when, although wounded himself, he rescued other men from a bombed dug-out. More gallantry was afoot soon afterwards when the battalion, under heavy artillery fire, captured the village of Villers Plouich. Here the famed 'Tiny' Foster won his Victoria Cross for a sole brave attack on German troops when he single handed carried and fired a machine gun.

Taken out of the line the battalion then rested for a while at Gouzercourt Wood near Fins. In fine weather some sport was enjoyed but all too soon it was back to the line. Gas attacks were now experienced to add to the miseries of the troops. At Fins, British observation balloons were being freely shot down by German aeroplanes until counter measures were adopted by arming the balloon crews with machine guns. Water became so short at that time that on occasions the water carts were guarded by sentries with fixed bayonets.

It was beyond Bapaume that Pte Bonsey first encountered American troops - an engineer unit constructing a light railway line to the front. Such lines were a welcome addition to the transport system.

Christmas Day 1917 was spent at the small town of Suzanne, near the Somme, in cold and cheerless dug-outs surrounded by barbed wire. A nearby large valley had earned itself the name of "Death Valley". Cold weather, with frozen water supplies,

made the tasks of the watermen even more difficult. Rations had to be carried up to the front in sandbags on the backs of slipping and sliding mules, often ending up in muddy shell holes. It was at that time that the Regimental Sergeant Major, together with four other soldiers, was killed when a large shell fell right on top of them. Bonsey missed the battle of Cambrai, being home on leave at the time, but on his return he saw ample evidence of the carnage which had resulted. A short spell behind lines was enlivened by the performance of a good concert party.

In April 1918 near the village of Armentieres, an overwhelming German attack under heavy shell fire took place and in the resulting fog and confusion of battle Pte Bonsey and other troops, including some Portuguese, were taken prisoner. For them, as the saying goes, "*the war was over*" but not for the better they were to find. Food was to become a perpetual and agonising problem and the shortages among the Germans themselves could be gauged from the fact that as soon as their horses were killed the cooks appeared to cut meat from the carcasses.

The long journey into captivity followed, partly on foot and partly by rail. Food consisted mainly of rye bread and watery cabbage soup, all supplied without utensils. Often the soup had to be consumed from steel helmets. The eventual prisoner of war camp was reached at Dullmen in Westphalia.

After three weeks of bad and little food Pte Bonsey fell sick with dysentery and was taken to the poorly equipped and insanitary camp hospital known as the "Lazarette". On his discharge, and in weakened condition, he was unbelievably selected for work in the coal mines. His protests fell on deaf ears.

The shifts, starting at 5am, were fatiguing, work consisting mainly of pulling heavily loaded trucks away from the coal faces where the more experienced professional miners were actually hewing the coal. Empty trucks had to be similarly returned. Twenty-eight to thirty trucks were moved on each shift, all this to be done irrespective of weaknesses brought about by sickness and near starvation. A twenty-four hour strike over bad food brought no improvements. The Germans themselves were in dire straits.

Not surprisingly Bonsey was soon sick again, this time seriously with pneumonia. Taken to a large civilian hospital, he thankfully never went down the mines again. To be in a real bed with sheets and pillows must have seemed like Heaven on earth to him. Also the food was much better, though in his weakened condition he could not eat much. Most of his time was spent in sleeping, conversation must have been rather limited as many of his fellow prisoner patients were Russian. A form of influenza known as "Spanish Grippe" was prevalent. For various reasons there were many sad journeys to the nearby large German cemetery. Corteges were normally accompanied by a band.

At last conceding that Bonsey was unfit for further work in the mines, and realising he was a seriously sick man, the Germans nominated him for repatriation as an exchange prisoner. During further hospital treatment, at which time he was the grateful recipient of Red Cross parcels, he heard the welcome news on November 11th 1918 that the war was over.

Discharged from hospital to a prisoner of war camp at Münster, he was later repatriated via Holland and by embarkation and sea voyage to the Humber. After re-kitting in a resettlement camp at Ripon he was soon homeward bound by train arriving, as he says, "*in time for tea*". Never could a meal have tasted so beautiful. After two months leave he went back to the Regimental Depot at Kingston and from there to Crystal Palace where demobilisation was completed. And so indeed to all intents and purposes was Pte Bonsey's war-time story.

Like a lamb to the slaughter - the story of Billy McGuire

The Editor has received a copy of a sermon delivered in a Roman Catholic Church in Boston, Lincolnshire, by a former East Surrey's soldier who later entered the Church. Beginning with some amusing references to the Army life of more recent years, the theme later concentrated on the First World War and in particular on the life and death of a young soldier Pte William (Billy) McGuire, East Surrey Regiment.

Billy's father, Michael McGuire, was one of many Irish labourers who came to England to find work. Michael and his wife lived in an area of Boston noted for its poverty and deprivation. They had a son, William Michael, and probably other children, and doubtless the family were regular church goers.

As time progressed William went to Kirton Grammar School, probably at great sacrifice by his parents, and on leaving entered the service of a local drapery firm, becoming the first "white collar" worker in the family. How proud they must have been of him and even more so when he left for London to further his career in the pre-war business world. But all was soon to be shattered.

With the outbreak of war in 1914 there was a vast increase in Army manpower but soon it was insufficient to meet the seemingly increasing demands from the Front. Like so many young men Billy enlisted, the East Surrey's being the Regiment of his choice, and almost immediately was drafted overseas where he was wounded and died ten days later.

His family, like so many others of the time received the dreaded War Office telegram which no doubt shattered their lives forever. Billy McGuire was gone, his promising young life sacrificed on the altars of love and duty.

These were the points which the sermon sought to emphasise together with the importance of remembrance. It was appropriately delivered at a Mass of Remembrance on Remembrance Day 2000. Doubtless its simple tragic story achieved its purpose in a very positive way.

○○○

The Queen's (Southwark) Association

The Association has carried out its usual activities during the past year as well as it can in spite of our falling numbers. On reflection it is astonishing how the Association founded after the Great War in 1919 has continued on its steady progress for over eighty years. With its aim of maintaining links with those who served in the Battalion, and in remembering those who fell in the Great War and later in the second world War, we feel we have not failed in our duty to those who went before.

The Annual Reunion Luncheon was as usual at the Union Jack Club in Waterloo Road on 18th March 2000. The President took the Chair and presided over a good attendance. The Toast of Absent Comrades was movingly proposed by Mr Ted Bussey, and that of the Guests was ably proposed by the President which was responded to by Major Norman Burrell, MBE, this was followed by the Regimental March of 'Braganza'. The Toast to The Association was proposed by Alderman John de Cuyper of Sint Niklaas. The Belgian delegation had earlier placed a floral tribute at the Regimental Memorial in Kennington Park as a mark of their respect to those members who had fallen in two World Wars.

The Midlands Reunion: Due to falling numbers it was not held this year. Originally run by Frank Wilkins, and in recent years by Horace Lott at Broughton, time and falling numbers due to age and death, have taken their toll. Great credit is due to the late Frank and in the past few years to Horace for seeing this through; their remembrance of these happy occasions remains.

Sint Niklaas was visited in September by a party of Comrades led by the President; it was a particularly good year, and in spite of difficulties with trains, a good number attended. It was fitting that the President and Mrs Playfoot attended and also that Mrs Freda Griffiths was able to be present. As always the party was welcomed in Sint Niklaas by the Burgomaster and Council.



Some members of 1/7th Queen's at Sint Niklaas in Belgium in September 2000. The Battalion liberated the City in September 1944. At the Memorial to the Resistance members who were killed are: Major S Playfoot MC, Mrs Les Cooper, Mr Ted Bussey, Mr Jim Allen MM, Major Norman Burrell MBE, and Mr Joe Rowe MM.

Remembrance Sunday was held as before. Again with transport problems our numbers were reduced, but parade we did, and those present did their duty to our former Comrades. After the ceremony we marched back to Braganza Street and the RBL HQ, to whom we are very grateful for their hospitality.

The Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey in November. A party was present at the commencement of the ceremony, as always there was a large number attending and it is a good and worthy occasion. All are welcome in future years at the Plots of our former Regiments.

○○○

2/7th Queen's reunion

The 55th annual lunch and reunion of the 2/7th Battalion Queen's Royal Regiment was held on 31st March at the regular venue The Ebury Arms at Pimlico. It was attended by members of the battalion with six guests, thirty-six from the 2/6th Battalion and the Queens Bays.

The Chairman of the Old Comrades Association Col David Blum welcomed all members and read several letters from comrades unable to be there. The Loyal Toast was proposed by the Chairman and the Toast Absent Comrades was proposed by Colonel Toby Sewell. A message was read from Capt Oates who lives in South Africa. Graham Swain, a member of the battalion and also National Secretary of the Italy Star Association, gave a review of the activities undertaken in the past year and items of interest for the future.

A most excellent meal was served and members had ample opportunity to reminisce. Mention should be made of Mick Selby who despite being badly incapacitated made the journey from Dorset and bravely mounted the stairs to the dining room.

Sadly there is a footnote to this report. Eric Catton, a most popular member of the battalion, who had never missed a single reunion in the past fifty four years had been seriously ill and advised the Chairman that he would not be attending this year. However it transpires that on the morning of the reunion he got up and told his wife that he intended to go, and made arrangements for a taxi to take him to London. Sadly whilst getting ready he collapsed and died immediately. Charlotte his wife, knowing what the attendance meant to Eric tried to telephone several members without success because all were already travelling. We therefore held the reunion talking about

him and other absentees not knowing that he had died a few hours earlier.

His funeral was held on 5th April and was attended by members of the battalion and the Italy Star Association.

GS

○○○

The East Surrey Regiment Officers' Annual Reunion.

The Surreys officers' reunion, which is held annually on the Friday closest to 'Ypres Day' (23rd April, also Saint George's Day), was held this year on Friday 21st April in the Officers' and Warrant Officers' and Sergeant's messes of The London Regiment in Saint John's Road Battersea.

We were very pleased to welcome Lieutenant Colonel James Cunliffe of The Royal Green Jackets, commanding The London Regiment, as a guest in his own mess!! As The London Regiment embodies forty two predecessor units, not only must he command the regiment, but also respond to the requirements of all these predecessors. We are therefore more than grateful to him for allowing his regiment's facilities to be used for both The Surreys officers' and all ranks' annual reunions.

The turnout represented a true cross-section of the Surreys officers. The pre-Second World War and wartime were typified by Peter Hill. Not only was he in France before Dunkirk, North Africa, Sicily and Italy, but he was also with the 1st Battalion when they repulsed the Fuzzy-Wuzzies in the Sudan (albeit in Korda's pre-war version of 'The Four Feathers'!). The younger wartime contingent were represented by John Clark, whilst Derek Bishop was the first of the regiment's post-war regular officers to emerge from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

Some quarter of those present were ex-National Service chaps, amongst whom it was great to see one of our first, "Jasper" Gray, who joined 1 Surreys in Salonika and Tony Thorne, one of the last who served in Brunswick and Bury-St-Edmunds. His book 'Brasso, Blanco and Bull', originally titled 'A Service to the 'Nation' is not only a good laugh, but also emphasises gratefully how those two years of close regimental life have stood him and his compatriots in good stead.

Next year will be the tercentenary of the Surreys' birth as Villier's Marines. By popular acclaim, and by kind permission of James Cunliffe, we will celebrate the event once more at Saint John's Hill.

GS

○○○

"And they said it would never last" - That was 41 years ago

Having been demobbed at Canterbury on 19th November, 1959, a small group of ex-soldiers fell out of the train at Waterloo, in the early evening, much the worse for wear, as a result of celebrations to mark the event. We had just completed two years' National Service with the 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment, which had recently merged with the East Surreys, and had spent the last two months of our time carrying out bomb clearance work in the Dover area, following a twenty-two month tour of duty in Iserlohn, West Germany and Cyprus.

Despite being totally under the influence, it was agreed by all that a reunion would take place exactly one year on and we would meet under the clock at Waterloo Station, at 6.00 pm. Remarkably, one year later, ten lads turned up, as agreed, and painted the town in jubilation - the like of which had not been seen in many a year. Names and addresses were exchanged and the decision was made to continue the reunion on an annual basis. A number of the lads came from the Surrey area and for

many years it became customary to hitch a lift on the 4.00 am milk train (a service long since gone).

The reunion moved away from London to the tranquillity of a Surrey venue as youthful exuberance gave way to age and a more mellow approach. As the saying "from little acorns...." goes, that first reunion was to be the start of what is now a bond of friendship between all involved, together with wives and families. Not only is the reunion, which is still held every year, as strong as ever and considered sacrosanct, during the year various events and long weekend breaks are organised. This gives the wives the opportunity to get together as well. Apart from breaks in the U.K., trips to Spain and France have been made over the years.

On Saturday, 18th November, 2000, at Louis' Restaurant, in Hampton Court, we gathered together once again for the annual reunion, but this one was a little special because it marked the 40th anniversary of that first gathering, back in 1960 at Waterloo Station.

In April, 2001, together with wives, we will set off to Bruges for a four day break to commemorate the occasion, and no doubt there will be much nostalgia and reminiscing of the past taking place. "And they said it wouldn't last," well the wives did - bless 'em. As we always said, "Never under-estimate the spirit of comradeship established in the services (now referred to as bonding, I believe).

As life members of the Queen's, Surreys Regiment Association, we also attend the Association reunion held at the Union Jack Club, in London, every November.

AP

Editors note: Wheeler was in C Company and later COs driver, Lee was in the Drums, Lidyard and Verico the Mortar Platoon, Cable was in D Company and was BAOR Swimming team champion 1958, Homer spent six months in Cyprus with 1 Surreys, Perkins was MT, Cheeseman was in B Company and Cpl Ken Munday was in the QM Tech Dept. Photo on back cover.

This group would welcome news from any of their mates who joined and served with the 50th Intake. Their comment is "it is never too late to join the faithful few".

○○○



Tommy Atkins and Roy Harding at the 5 OMA Dinner last year

Proposed memorial at Kampar

Association members might be interested in the background to the enclosed Press cutting from a Malaysian Newspaper "The Star" dated 14th December 2000.

THE STAR NATION

Thursday 14th December 2000

Fight to preserve battle site pays off

By FOONG THIM LENG



PRAISE SOUVENIRS Chee showing some of the plaques he received from visitors to the Green Ridge battle site

KAMPAR Retired teacher Chee Kooi Loong's 5-year efforts to secure recognition for Green Ridge here as a historical site have finally borne fruit

The ridge was the site of a fierce battle between the British and Japanese armies during the Malayan War in 1941-42

Chee, 71, said that Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Dauk Abdul Kadur Sheikh Fadzir had notified him, through a letter dated Dec 1, that the Perak State Economic Planning Unit had agreed to preserve the ridge and seek the state's permission to acquire the site which is a private property

The ministry would provide the basic amenities at the historical site where the last issue had been resolved, he said

He added that the Perak Museum had also agreed to publish the second edition of his book *The History of British Battalion - Malayan Campaign 1941-42*

"I am happy that the Government is showing interest in the historical site. It should be preserved as it is the nation's heritage. Battle sites in some countries have become main tourist attractions," he said

The Green Ridge was one of the sites where the British battalion kept the Japanese at bay for four days from Dec 30, 1941, to Jan 2, 1942. The battle was also fought at the Green, Thompson and Cemetery Ridges which overlook the main road from Ipoh

Trenches, machine gun and mortar positions, artillery observation posts, a bunker and communication trenches can still be found on the Green Ridge

Through the years, Chee has given talks on the battle to war veterans from the British and Japanese armies, military officers, soldiers, stu

The bombing by the Japanese of Pearl Harbour, Shanghai, Singapore, Hong Kong and Manila, their sinking of two capital ships of the Royal Navy, and their invasion of Thailand, Indo China and Malaya, between 7th and 10th December 1941 all without warning or formal declaration of war are well known facts. What is less widely known is how an ad hoc English Infantry Battalion stopped the Japanese at Kampar during four days of the bloodiest hand to hand fighting encountered by the enemy throughout their campaign.

2nd Surreys and 1st Leicesters, the only British Battalions in 11th Indian Division, were in separate Brigades that bore the brunt of the enemy onslaught. They fought a series of battles on the retreat from Jitra through Alor Star and Gurun, and like the rest of the Division suffered 50% losses. The Surreys on arrival in Ipoh were reduced to 10 officers, none above the rank of Captain and 260 Other Ranks. The Leicesters were only slightly more numerous. Accordingly on 20th December the Division was reorganised and reinforced, stragglers rejoined and the two Battalions were amalgamated and called "The British Battalion". Of its rifle companies A and B were Leicesters and C and D were Surreys.

Kampar is a tin-mining town that lies in the State of Perak on the western coastal plain of the peninsula. It straddles the main road and rail line between Ipoh and Kuala Lumpur. In December 1941 the east side of the peninsula being less developed, more mountainous and covered with dense jungle, the western coastal plain was deemed the most likely primary axis of the Japanese advance. The area to the north of Kampar had a number of features and obstacles which suggested it as a viable defensive locality. To the west of the town lay open cast tin mines, rubber plantations and swamps, and to the east were steep sided mountains covered with dense jungle. From the mountainside protruded four, more or less parallel and equidistant, scrub covered ridges. The British Battalion was ordered to occupy and hold the area with the other two Battalions in reserve.

The Battalion moved into position on 23d December and with the help of local labour dug in. Having virtually no air cover,

preparation of the defences was all too often under the observation of enemy aircraft. The front ridge was cleared of scrub but unoccupied. The next (Thompson's Ridge), the only one to span the main road, was occupied by two Companies, C to the left of the road, and A to the right. The third ridge (Green Ridge), somewhat deeper than the others, was occupied by B Company and a MMG platoon of Malay Volunteers. D Coy and Battalion HQ occupied the fourth ridge (Cemetery Ridge).

The battle of Kampar commenced with artillery duels on the morning of 30th December. Over the next four days and nights were added aerial bombardment, and attacks by wave after suicidal wave from two crack Japanese Infantry Regiments, the 41st and 42nd. A Japanese Regiment being of approximately the same size as a British Infantry Brigade, the British Battalion was therefore outnumbered by six to one. Every Japanese Battalion was at one time or another committed to a ferocious assault on the British defences. Each and every frontal attack was repulsed with heavy loss to the enemy, but the enemy, on four separate occasions, secured footholds in the jungle to the right of the British FDLs thus threatening Thompson's and Green Ridges. On each occasion the enemy seized a foothold it was counter attacked. On the first two occasions the situation was restored by the bayonets of D Coy, gallantly led by their Company Commander Captain Vickers (East Surreys). Unfortunately half his Company were killed or severely wounded in these operations so the next two counter attacks had to be mounted each by one of the other two Battalions in 6th/15th Brigade. For leading the counter attacks Captain Vickers received an immediate MC, and his CSM Johnny Craggs a DCM. Pte P. Graves of D Coy who had guided the counter attacking platoons to their start line, through enemy lines and who throughout the day had brought in wounded comrades under heavy fire though wounded himself, received the MM.

By 3rd January 1942 the enemy, enjoying both Naval and Air superiority, had landed at several places on the coast to the south of Kampar and had moved inland in considerable strength thus threatening the rear of 11th Division. The British Battalion though undefeated was ordered to withdraw. Thus ended the Battle of Kampar in which the Japanese lost over 500 dead and the British 100 during the four days of ferocious battle. The British dead lie in Taiping Military Cemetery to the North East of Ipoh.

A fuller account of the battle is to be found in the official Regimental History, but the most moving and extraordinarily detailed and illustrated account of the battle, indeed of the whole ill-fated campaign, is in a book called "The British Battalion, Malaya, 1941-1942" by the gentleman referred to in the Press cutting, Mr Chee Kooi Loong (known to his friends as "KL"). He is a lifelong resident of Kampar, a distinguished historian, and friend of many Surreys and Leicesters. Though only a schoolboy at the time, he witnessed the preparations for, and the aftermath of the battle, and has painstakingly researched the campaign from the Japanese as well as the British view-point and has led numerous official and unofficial battlefield tours. A copy of his book is in the Regimental Museum at Clandon, and a second edition will soon be in print. His unashamed affection for the British soldier is apparent on every page.

KL (who was presented to the Queen on her recent visit to his Country) has for many years tried to persuade the Perak State and Malaysia National Governments to prevent further development of the part of Kampar which saw such ferocious fighting and loss of life between 30 Dec 1941 and 2 January 1942. Since the war the ridges have been levelled and developed as housing estates, but MMG and Mortar positions, artillery observation posts, trenches and a bunker can still be found on Green Ridge. KL's lonely mission to have the battle commemorated appears, at last, to have met with the success it deserves. Just before Christmas he heard from the Minister of

Tourism that the State Economic Planning Unit has agreed to preserve what remains of Green Ridge, and acquire the site from its present owners. The ministry will provide "the basic amenities" when the site has been acquired.

It is heart warming to know that the government of a former colony is willing to honour the memory of our comrades, soldiers of its former rulers, in this way. It is comforting to think that their heroism will be commemorated and may be made known to a wider public. We can but hope that the Memorial will be complete by the 60th Anniversary of "British Battalion Day" the 20th December 2001.

WEMCC

0 0 0

Japanese history

More stories of the hardships endured by Japanese prisoners of war rightly continue to come to light and, even more rightly, the question of compensation is belatedly being considered.

One East Surrey veteran, former Lance Corporal John Wyatt aged 80 years has, according to the Kentish Messenger, welcomed news that he will receive £10,000.

Taken in the fighting for Singapore after being wounded in the shoulder, he witnessed the horrors in hospital of seeing Japanese soldiers turning their weapons on patients. Later he was sent to work on the notorious "death railway". Death, he said, was everywhere including from an outbreak of cholera. He was later packed into a vastly overcrowded prison ship to be taken to work in Japan.

He has made a TV programme about his experiences including witnessing the Hiroshima bomb and how he felt when the war was over.

0 0 0

To HMS Warrior at Portsmouth

No billowing sail, no blackened smoke,
Stout ironclad ship with heart of oak,
Lie quietly here at the dockyard wall
As a Naval jewel beloved by all.

No bugle call, no booming gun,
Your travels o'er, your duty done,
Remember the seas and the oceans wide
And the flag you bore with the nation's pride.

Proud Warrior ship with a warrior's soul,
May your life be long in your peaceful role.

Richard Ford.

HMS *Warrior* was the world's first iron-hulled warship. Launched at Blackwall, London, in December 1860 she was the most formidable fighting ship of her day - the pride of Queen Victoria's Royal Navy. She was capable of propulsion by either sail or steam and an economically minded Admiralty directed that the former means should be used in preference to the latter in order to save coal.

In 1863 she escorted the Royal Yacht *Victoria and Albert* bringing Princess Alexandra of Denmark to England for her marriage to the Prince of Wales, the future King Edward VII. The ship's performance brought forth favourable comment from the Yacht.

In the 1970's and 80's *Warrior* was rescued from derelict decay by enthusiasts and restored to her former glory at Hartlepool before being ceremoniously brought to Portsmouth where she now lies as a tourist attraction and well worth a visit.

Sea Gallantry

It is not often that a member of an inland County Militia receives awards for gallantry at sea, but such a feat was effected not once but twice by Major James Elyard, 2nd Royal Surrey Militia.

On 20th October 1869, Captain (later Major) Elyard, Honorary Secretary of the Broadstairs Royal National Lifeboat Institute, together with crew members, launched their self-righting lifeboat *Samuel Morrison Collins* to go to the aid of the barque *Frank Shaw* who had lost her masts and rigging in a gale and broken in two as she struck on North Sand Head off the Kentish coast.

Both the Broadstairs and Ramsgate lifeboats themselves grounded on the Goodwin Sands. Despite this initial set back they eventually managed to save twenty-one of the barque's crew of twenty-nine, the other eight were drowned.

But a single act of gallantry was not enough. On 12-13 March 1876 Major Elyard with an incomplete crew, and again in the *Samuel Morrison Collins*, went to the aid of the Goole schooner *Lion* who was in distress in a heavy gale off Broadstairs. The lifeboatmen took her with her crew of four in tow safely to Dover Harbour. It is recorded that Major Elyard was out on service eighteen times and helped to save forty-nine lives from different wrecks.



His efforts rightly received recognition in the form of the Sea Gallantry Medal for services to the *Frank Shaw* and the *Lion*, and the RNLI Medals in Silver and Gold for his services in 1869 and 1876 respectively.



Both the RNLI silver and gold medals were presented to Major Elyard on appropriate military occasions.

He was a man who the 2nd Royal Surrey Militia could be proud to number among their officers.

Acknowledgements to C J Dixon Ltd for supplying the photos and allowing us to use parts of the article from their Spring 2000 Gazette.

Not so Invincibles

The Editor has recently been sent an interesting article from the Eastern News, Norfolk, concerning a surviving ship from the Battle of the Glorious First of June.

Many distinguished ships took part in the battle in 1794, notably among them of course being HMS *Charlotte* of Regimental connection. Among the others, fighting with vigour and engaging the French ship *Juste*, was HMS *Invincible*. She survived the battle but her eventual fate was destined to be at the hands of the elements rather than at the hands of an enemy.

In March 1801, recently refitted and laden with stores and ammunition, she sailed from Yarmouth in a hurry in an effort to catch up with the main British Fleet which, under Admirals Parker and Nelson, was bound for the Battle of Copenhagen. But she was never to get there. Strong winds and tides forced her off course and at about 2.30pm on March 16 she struck Hammond's Knoll, a sandbank just east of Haisbro Sand, and was wrecked and sank. Two thirds of the crew of about six hundred perished, including the Commanding Officer, Captain Rennie.

A court martial later blamed the loss on the incompetence of two Yarmouth pilots but they were unable to defend themselves as they had perished with the ship. For some reason or other the subsequent events became shrouded in secrecy. Bodies that were washed ashore or otherwise recovered were, in the main, buried without record. Certainly, remains of about one hundred and nineteen men were later uncovered in Happisburgh churchyard but there is no indication as to what happened to the other two hundred and eighty who perished. It remains a mystery. Perhaps one day new evidence will come to light or perhaps we shall have to wait until the sea gives up her secrets.

Much interest and investigation is still maintained in Norfolk, particularly due to the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the tragedy.

The name *Invincible* did not die with the ship but through the years eventually passed to a modern aircraft carrier. Tragedy also appeared again in the nominal history.

At the Battle of Jutland in 1916 the battle cruiser *Invincible*, flagship of Sir Horace Hood, blew up, broke in two and sank leaving only six survivors. Ironically, Admiral Hood's namesake ship, the battle cruiser HMS *Hood*, met her fate in an almost identical manner when engaging the German battleship *Bismarck* in the North Atlantic in May 1941. She blew up, broke in two and sank leaving only three survivors.

At the time of the building of the great iron ships such as the *Titanic*, man thought he had conquered the sea but future events have proved him wrong. The years have shown that he and his ships are just as vulnerable as they were when the sea claimed the *Invincible* off the Norfolk coast in 1801.

RF

0 0 0

Slapton Sands

The apparently covert disposal of the bodies of HMS *Invincible*'s crew in 1801 is not the only case of its kind in British maritime history.

At 0200 on 28 April 1944 eight landing craft (tank) and two pontoons carrying American troops on an invasion exercise at Slapton Sands off the Dorset coast were 'jumped' fifteen miles off Portland Bill by groups of enemy E-boats. Two of the

LCTs were sunk and a third damaged in an encounter of utter confusion and blind firing in the night. American casualties amounted to 638 killed and 89 wounded.

The bodies were secretly disposed of and the facts did not emerge until well after the war.

RF

Source:- 'Engage the Enemy More Closely' by Correlli Barnett.

0 0 0

What they said

Reported comments on Service matters by notable personalities in the 1920s.

Field-Marshal Earl Haig - on horses in 1925

"I believe that the value of the horse and the opportunity for the horse in the future is likely to be as great as ever..... I am all for using aeroplanes and tanks, but they are only accessories to the man and the horse, and I feel that as time goes on you will find as much use for the horse - the well bred horse - as you have ever done in the past." Somewhat class conscious, Haig was obviously careful to distinguish between the "well bred horse" and any lowly common or garden nag. As late as 1997, however, troops of the King's Royal Hussars forsook their armoured vehicles in Bosnia to be re-mounted on horses in their former cavalry role. The difficult terrain, unsuitable for vehicular traffic, was better traversed on the hoof".

The Head of the Naval Personnel Committee - on pay

"Undoubtedly the lower deck are well off. Some of the higher ratings keep motor bicycles and can afford to take the more expensive seats at local entertainments and their meals at places which officers patronise. In some cases they are able to buy their houses". Attitudes like this led to reductions in Naval pay in 1925 and proposed further reductions in 1931 resulted in the Invergordon Mutiny.

Commander (later Admiral Sir) Edward Charlton on board HMS Orlando on New Year's Day 1900.

".....a salute was ordered by the Rear-Admiral under the mistaken impression that 1st January 1900 began a new century".

0 0 0

Iserlohn 1952



This photo was taken at an All Ranks dance in January 1952, when the then Major David Lloyd Owen was commanding a Company in 1 Queen's BAOR. Also in the photo are Privates' Plummer, Rafferty and White.

Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay (A return ticket)

"Thus much is certain; that he that commands the sea is at great liberty, and may take as much and as little of the war as he will".

Bacon.

Never in the history of our "Sceptred isle" has command of the sea been so important as at the time of the Dunkirk evacuation when thousands of British, French and Allied troops were brought back from the beaches of the war-torn continent to the safety of the Mother Country. The man charged with the Naval duty of organising, effecting and maintaining command of the operation was Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay, Flag Officer Commanding Dover. Joining the Royal Navy at the turn of the century, his first experience of war and combined operations was in 1903 when, as a Sub-Lieutenant in HMS *Hyacinth*, he took an assault party in through the surf of the Somali coast to a landing on open African beaches.

In the First World War, after a short period as Flag Lieutenant in HMS *Dreadnought*; he eventually commanded HMS *Broke* of the Dover Patrol, providentially excellent experience for the mammoth task which was to confront him over twenty years later. Rising to the position of Captain of the Battleship *Royal Sovereign*, and later becoming Chief-of-Staff to the Home Fleet with the rank of Rear Admiral, he had some periods on half-pay before being retired in 1938 but not for long. The Munich crisis of the same year saw him being recalled to active service to report on the state of Dover. In September 1939 he became Flag Officer in charge, Dover, responsible for the protection of shipping in the English Channel and its approaches. A priority was the protection of troop convoys to France. He probably didn't realise how soon the practice was to be put into reverse.

The fall of France and the Low Countries in May 1940 resulted in the withdrawal of British, French and Allied Forces to the Channel ports of which Dunkirk and its surrounds became the principal point of evacuation. Naval operations were under the direction of Ramsay and at first the brunt of the task fell on British destroyers whose losses were heavy. As the task magnified, however, all types of vessels, large or small, and variously owned and manned were pressed into service. Merchant vessels, hospital ships, cross-channel ferries and Dutch "skoots" literally "rubbed shoulders" with fishing smacks, yachts and even the pre-float Massey Shaw of the London Fire Brigade. For all this miscellany of ships hurrying to and fro and often under heavy fire, Ramsay and his staff had to organise routes and charting, provide crews and supplies, especially fuel, and arrange for docking and repair facilities.

Administered from what had been the "dynamo room" in the fortification tunnels in the chalk cliffs, the whole evacuation was eventually code named "Operation Dynamo".

The initial evacuations had begun by 28th May and the whole operation, steadily magnifying in intensity, continued until at 0340hrs on June 3rd the destroyer HMS *Shikari* pulled out from Dunkirk, being the last vessel to leave, "Dynamo" was finished. Over 338,000 British, French and Allied troops had been rescued and what had been a defeat had virtually become a victory in British eyes and, as such, was to pass into legend and history.

Admiral Ramsay became something of a hero, being invited to Buckingham Palace and knighted by the King, and with his picture being cheered by audiences in cinemas. He received letters of thanks from soldiers and their relatives. Meanwhile he carried on with his task of guarding the Channel and its approaches. But his talents were soon to be extended further afield. Having shown himself to be a genius at taking troops

off beaches he was soon to show himself equally adept at putting them back on again. He planned and supervised the Anglo-American landings in North Africa, code named "Operation Torch" in November 1942 and seven months later similarly planned "Operation Husky" the invasion of Sicily which resulted in the award to him of the KBE.

But his greatest test was still to come - "Operation Neptune" the Naval part of "Overlord", the invasion of Europe. Admiral Ramsay was Allied Naval Commander-in-Chief, responsible for the massive invasion force which left English ports on D-Day (June 6th 1944) and in succeeding days and weeks. The movement of such gigantic numbers of men and materials in a variety of craft could only have been organised by a mastermind.

Thankfully it was there in the person of Admiral Ramsay. His last active task was the command of the amphibious landing at the mouth of the River Scheldt where troublesome German troops had to be dislodged by a force of Commandos.

Ramsay's duties afterwards became mainly administrative and it could have been hoped that it would eventually lead to a long and happy retirement. But it was not to be. He was tragically killed in an air crash whilst en route to Brussels for a conference with Field Marshal Montgomery. With his travelling companions he was buried at St Germain-En-Lay New Communal Cemetery, a few miles west of Paris.

For a time he seemed to be inadequately remembered by his country but the advent of Dunkirk 60th Anniversary commemorations in the year 2000 brought his memory to the fore again and as a result of a public appeal for funds, a statue of him has been erected and unveiled at the Admiralty Lookout at Dover, facing towards the sea he loved and defended. If the Admiral himself is looking down from that "great Dynamo Room in the Sky" he probably smiles ruefully to himself and thinks, "If only I had had the Tunnel" .

Sources: *The Nine Days of Dunkirk* by David Divine. *Battlefields Review* An appreciation of Admiral Ramsay by Mike Paterson.



Regimental Deaths

Abbitt - On 13th November 2000, Drummer Barry T Abbitt, aged 65 years, 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. He served with the battalion in Malaya 1954-1956.

Beney - On 24th March 2001, Company Sergeant Major Harry Leslie Ronald Beney, aged 86 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment. Beney served with 2 Queen's in Egypt, Syria, India and Burma during the Second World War.

Blackstone - On 27th December 2000, Lieutenant Colonel Peter Leonard Blackstone TD, aged 87 years, The Lincolnshire Regiment and 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. Peter Blackstone was a pre-war Territorial serving with the Lincolns. He was wounded in France in 1940 then evacuated via Dunkirk. He landed again on D Day and was wounded again. He rejoined the TA after the war when he was living in Surrey and finished his service commanding 5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Burnett - On 29th January 2001, Lieutenant Colonel Keith Burnett, The East Surrey Regiment, Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment and the Intelligence Corps.

Carpenter - On 25th February 2001, Sidney A J Carpenter, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Catton - On 31st March 2001, Eric James Catton, aged 77 years. Catton served in the Rifle Brigade, Ox and Bucks Light Infantry and then 2/7th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Clark - On 13th October 2000, Major Louis M Clark TD. Clark also served with the Indian Grenadiers, Royal Artillery RASC/RCT (TA) and The Queen's Regiment and RAOC (TA).

Cogswell - On 2nd March 2001, Arthur H Jackson Cogswell, The East Surrey Regiment.

Cole - On 18th February 2001, Sir Alexander Colin Cole KCB, KCVO, TD, FSA, aged 78 years. He was Garter Principal King of Arms from 1978 to 1992 and Honorary Colonel of 6/7th Bn The Queen's Regiment from 1981 until 1986. During the war he served as a Captain in the Coldstream Guards.

Coles - On 5th April 2001, Company Sergeant Major David (Chick) Coles, MM, aged 80 years, 22nd Bn The London Regiment (The Queen's) and 1/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Collison - On 12th November 2000, Corporal Herbert W C (Bert) Collison, aged 83 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment. Collison served with the 1st Battalion from 1936 until 1940. He served with the 2/6th Bn before being transferred to the Royal Artillery. He then served as a gunner on North Atlantic convoys with the Maritime AA, RA. In 1945 he was posted to 15 Company Royal Pioneer Corps. He was a most loyal member of the Association and attended all reunions.

Cook - On 15th November 2000, Private George E Cook, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Cuttress - On 4th November 2000, Major John Stephen Cuttress MC JP, aged 80 years, 111 Field Regiment Royal Artillery. Cuttress was awarded the MC for his part in the German occupied port of Savande, Albania in November 1944. Cuttress also served in support of the Queen's in Italy.

Davies - Recently, The Rev Arthur V Davies MBE, RACHD, attached 1st Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Deacon - On 1st February 2001, In Pensioner George Alfred Patrick Deacon, aged 87 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Dukelow - On 25th January 2001, John Vaughan Dukelow, aged 74 years. He served with 1/6th Bn The Queen's Royal

Regiment and later transferred to the MPSC. He served in Egypt, Palestine and the Lebanon before transfer to the MPSC.

Elcombe - On 7th April 2001, Sergeant John Elcombe, aged 73 years. The Royal Sussex, The East Surrey, The Queen's Royal Surrey and The Queen's Regiment.

Finbow - On 29th December Dennis Pymer Finbow, aged 101 years, The East Surrey Regiment. Finbow was only 14 at the start of the terrible conflict and thus was spared many of the battles that nearly destroyed a generation. However, in 1918 he was posted to France with the East Surrey Regiment only to be recalled in September of that year after being hit in the right arm by a sniper's bullet whilst on sentry outpost duty, a wound he bore for the rest of his life. Along with other surviving veterans, Finbow was awarded the Legion of Honour in 1999. His funeral, a celebration of a long and fulfilled life, was attended by members of the Royal British Legion and the Western Front Association.

Flower - Colonel William Digby Flower died in March 2001. He enlisted in the 22nd Bn The London Regiment (The Queen's) at Bermondsey on 8th May 1936 and it was in early 1940 that he left the battalion. His later service took him to N. W. Europe where he was Mentioned in Despatches. His death ends a family connection with the Regiment in that his father Lt Col V A Flower DSO commanded the 1/22nd London Regiment (Queen's) 1915.

Giles - Recently, Major Edward H Giles MC and Bar, The East Surrey Regiment. Teddy Giles served with 1 Surreys in North Africa and Italy. In carrying out a very successful counter attack at Djebel Djaffa he was awarded the Military Cross for gallant leadership of his platoon. Later in Italy in June 1944 while commanding A Company he was awarded a bar to the Military Cross for his outstanding leadership at Citta della Piave. Teddy was an officer who earned the respect of all ranks of the Battalion and was a good friend of mine.

'Windy'.

Glanville - On 23rd February 2001, Private Ernest John Glanville, aged 85 years, The 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment and RASC. Served in UK, Ireland, North Africa, Italy and Austria.

Goddard - On 23rd December 2000, Private John D Goddard, aged 60 years, 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment. He served in Aden and Hong Kong with the battalion and was a member of the Honour Guard in Korea in 1963.

Griffiths - On 23rd October 2000, WO1 William J (Bill) Griffiths, aged 82 years. He served with 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in France and Belgium in 1940 and was evacuated from Dunkirk. Shortly after his return to the UK he was transferred to the APCT and in 1941 was posted to the Middle East where he spent most of the war years. After the war he served with 6th Bn (TA) as a WO2 APCT and in 1961 when the regiments were amalgamated transferred into the 3rd Bn The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment (TA) attaining the rank of WO1 before he retired from the Territorial Army in 1967.

Halliday - On 29th October 2000, Major F M J (Mike) Halliday, The East Surrey Regiment.

Hart - On 27th December 2000, Harry Hart MM, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Heppell - On 5th April 2001 Captain Edward Arthur Heppell, aged 90 years, The East Surrey Regiment.

Humm - On 30th November 2000 Captain Dennis Raymond Humm, aged 83 years, 2/7th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment and Headquarters 169 (Queen's) Brigade 1940-1945.

Isaac - On 26th March 2001, Sergeant Frederick Cecil Isaac MM CPM, aged 81 years, The Royal Fusiliers, The Queen's and Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment and the St Helena Police Force.

Jackson - On 2nd March 2001, Private Arthur Harold Jackson, aged 80 years. He was a Territorial before the war and then served with the 1/7th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Jones - On 30th October 2000, Private Thomas Jones, aged 84 years, 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. Jones served with the battalion throughout the North African and Italy campaigns. He landed with the 1/5th in Normandy and a month later he was wounded. He returned to the battalion whilst on operations in Holland. He was a member of the patrol on the outskirts of Hamburg when the Mayor and other civilian dignatories approached the patrol offering the surrender of Hamburg.

Kershaw - On 4th November 2000, In-Pensioner John Arthur Kershaw, aged 83 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment and Military Provost Staff Corps.

Lloyd Owen - On 5th April 2001, Major General, David Lanyon Lloyd Owen CB DSO OBE MC, aged 83 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment and the Long Range Desert Group.

Mandeville - On 17th December 2000, Dennis D Mandeville, aged 81 years. Mandeville was a Dunkirk Veteran and served with C Company 1/5th Queen's Royal Regiment.

Nicholls - On 1st June 2000, Private Terence Edgar Nicholls, The East Surrey Regiment. Nicholls also served with 63 (Oxford Yeomanry) Royal Artillery and the Military Mounted Police. He served in N Ireland, France, Belgium, Holland, Egypt, Palestine and Libya.

Nuttall - On 8th December 2000, Robert (Nutt) Nuttall, REME attached 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment from Normandy to Berlin and the end of the war in NW Europe.

Perchard - On 28th February 2001, Lance Corporal William Frances Perchard, aged 97 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment. Perchard served with the 1st Battalion from 1922 until 1930. He re-enlisted in 1940 into the Northamptonshire Regiment and then transferred into the Royal Armoured Corp until 1945. During his service he served in China and Malta and the UK.

Ruffles - In December 2000, Private John Ruffles, 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Savage - Recently, Major Robin Savage, aged 85 years, 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment and Commandos.

Sayce - On 31st August 2000, David Sayce, The Queen's Royal Regiment. He was a life member of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association.

Sears - On 11th April 2000, Private Bernard James Sears, aged 81 years, 2/6th Bn The East Surrey Regiment. Sears was taken prisoner at St Valery-En-Caux on 12th June 1940 and remained a prisoner of war until being released on 1st May 1945 in Munich.

Slater - On 7th December 2000, Sergeant Victor Slater, 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. He was a regular attender at all the Association functions and he had an active life as a Musical Director for a number of Orchestras in Horsham and Sussex area.

Sumner - On 4th February 2001, Corporal Thomas Charles Sumner, aged 85 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment. Sumner served with the 2nd Battalion in North Africa, Tobruk, Syria, Ceylon and Burma and was then transferred to the 1/5th Bn and served in Holland and Germany.

Wadge - On 18th August 1999, Lance Corporal Joseph William Wadge, aged 80 years, 1/7th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. Wadge served throughout the war with the 1/7th Bn in the Middle East, Italy, France and Germany. He was an active member of the 1/7th Association and regularly visited Sint-Niklaas in Belgium. A very loyal member of the

Regiment and the various associations of which he was a member.

Whiting - On 27th November 2000, In-Pensioner Albert H Whiting, aged 95 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Whymark - On 6th February 2001, Sgt Arthur G Whymark, aged 83 years, 22nd Bn The London Regiment (Queen's) & 1/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. He enlisted in 1936 following in the footsteps of his elder brother. He was severely wounded whilst serving with the 1/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in the early part of the war. An active member of the 6th (Bermondsey) Battalion Old Comrades Association for many years, he was to restrict his activities in recent years, when forced by ill health, to take up residence in a nursing home.

Regimental Families

Favelle - Mrs Jean Favelle, beloved wife of Major Basil Favelle, The East Surrey Regiment.

Holman - On 16th April 2001, Mrs June Holman, beloved wife of Sergeant J Holman, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Mott - In January 2001, Mrs Claire Mott, beloved wife of Major Anthony Mott, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Obituaries

Major General D L Lloyd Owen CB DSO OBE MC



Major General David Lloyd Owen was one of a number of young officers of The Queen's Royal Regiment, 2nd of Foot, who won great distinction in the 1939-1945 War. His achievements, however, came when serving away from the Regiment as a member of The Long Range Desert Group (LRDG) first as a Troop Commander and rising to be Commander of the Group in November 1943.

The LRDG was set up in June 1940 as a result of an imaginative decision by GHQ in Cairo under General Sir Archibald Wavell. The Group's task was to exploit the trackless and largely unexplored desert stretching from Egypt across the whole of southern Libya, and through this to observe and harass the Italian Army threatening Egypt.

It has been said that "of all the special services the LRDG must rate as the most cost effective special force".

The LRDG by early 1941 had expanded to form two squadrons of patrols mainly manned by New Zealanders, Guardsmen, Yeomanry (from the men of the 1st Cavalry Division which had been deployed as the last horsed formation of the British Army to Palestine in late 1939) and Rhodesians. It was the Yeomanry Patrol which the then Captain Lloyd Owen joined in July 1941.

David Lloyd Owen was born on 10th October 1917 the son of Captain R C Lloyd Owen RN. After education at Winchester he went to the Royal Military College at Sandhurst and was commissioned into the Queen's in January 1938. He immediately went to join the 2nd Battalion of the Regiment. Later that year he went with the Battalion to Palestine as part of the force containing the Arab revolt. With the entry of Italy into the War in June 1940, 2nd Queen's were re-deployed to the Western Desert to become part of 4th Indian Division.

Lloyd Owen was by then commanding a Company which he led during General Wavell's remarkable destruction of the Italian Army following the victory at Sidi Barrani in December 1940. Soon, however, he had to be sent back to Alexandria as a result of sand-fly fever after which he was appointed to the newly formed Officer Cadet Training Unit in Cairo before being allowed to escape to the LRDG.

He undertook his first patrol in October 1941 driving across to the base at Kufra and then up to Siwa and from there to support the Eighth Army's offensive in November. It was then that David Stirling's SAS and the LRDG came together when the latter were tasked to recover the SAS parties dropped from aircraft to attack the two forward airfields at Gazala and Tmimi.

This SAS operation was a failure due to a very dispersed drop and poor weather conditions. From this experience grew subsequent plans for the LRDG to deliver SAS groups to near their objectives. From now on and for almost the whole of the next twelve months, which saw Rommel's Afrika Corps drive forward to El Alamein, LRDG patrols also kept a continuous watch and reported on movements many miles behind the enemy lines. For his leadership throughout this period and personal bravery, particularly in support of an abortive Commando attack on Tobruk in September 1942, Captain Lloyd Owen was awarded an immediate MC. Shortly afterwards he was seriously wounded by an aircraft attack near Kufra, and having been hit by a cannon shell was lucky to survive. He was only able to rejoin the LRDG in February 1943, and as tasks for the unit in North Africa came to an end it was pulled back to Egypt in March.

With war moving on into Europe through Sicily and Southern Italy the operations of the LRDG, after giving support to the ill-fated Aegean operations of the early Autumn of 1943, were directed to the Balkans with deployment by sea and air, still with the roles of gaining information and harassing.

Lloyd Owen during 1943 successively became a Squadron Leader, then Second-in-Command before being appointed to Command. As Commander he achieved conspicuous success in his direction and leading from the front during a number of offensive operations designed to cut German Army lines of withdrawal through the Balkans. He, too, on many occasions accompanied his patrols to the Northern Adriatic Islands and went forward to help them when in difficulties. In a final major operation for him in the Albanian mountains, in spite of fracturing his spine on landing by parachute, he remained on duty for five weeks before agreeing to evacuation. For all this action he was awarded the DSO, as well as being Mentioned in Despatches. Following discussions with the War Office and much to his regret, he was ordered to disband the LRDG in August 1945. Lloyd Owen then became Military Assistant to the Supreme Allied Commander in Italy, receiving in 1946 the Cross of Merit of a Knight of Malta, and then attended the Staff College in 1947. From here he went to the War Office in the Military Operations Branch before becoming MA to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Field Marshal Sir William Slim, at the end of 1949.

He was then transferred to be MA to General Sir Gerald Templer (with whom he achieved an immediate and lasting rapport) during his tour as High Commissioner in Malaya at the height of the Emergency there. For his work in this appointment Lloyd Owen received another Mention in Despatches and was appointed OBE. On return home he was for two years on the Directing Staff of the Staff College and then, as his injuries from the War were already beginning to trouble him, he was allowed a quieter two years commanding the Depot of his Regiment at Guildford. In November 1957 he regained the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel (although he had held the Brevet since 1954), in Command of the 1st Battalion of his

Regiment at Iserlohn in Germany. This was potentially a difficult and thankless period for him and the Battalion, as the impending amalgamation with The East Surrey Regiment had already been announced as part of the first major run-down of the Army. However, Lloyd Owen ensured that, in spite of the indefinite future, The Queen's Royal Regiment would pass into history after 298 years of proud service with honour and reputation enhanced, and that by imaginative training and activities the last two years should be both satisfying to and remembered by those who served under him. He succeeded fully on both counts.

With the formation of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment in October 1959 Lloyd Owen went on to command a College at Sandhurst followed by an important appointment as Colonel Military Operations (MO4) at the War Office. He was then selected to command 24th Infantry Brigade in East Africa. His tenure from 1962-1964 included deployment to Aden for the Radfan operations. From here he had a year at the Imperial Defence College before returning again to the Eastern Mediterranean, where his active service had started, to be GOC Cyprus District: during his tenure, from 1966-1969, this appointment expanded to become also GOC Near East Land Forces.

He finally finished his active military career in 1972 having served as President of the Regular Commissions Board for his last three years. He was appointed CB in 1971.

In retirement, based in Norfolk and in Angus, in spite of increasing infirmity due to his back, from the mid 1980's he was largely confined to a wheelchair which he drove with flair and panache and led an active life with a main interest towards country pursuits. He joined the Wildfowlers Association of Great Britain and Ireland in 1975 first as Membership Secretary, then Management Committee member and finally Chairman from 1979-1985, during which time the name of the organisation was changed to the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC).

Through having a cottage in Angus he also became interested in the work of Border Collies and Sheep dogs, officiating at and reporting on National and other Trials.

A later major interest was as Chairman of the Nancy Oldfield Trust in Norfolk, which helps the mentally and physically handicapped to sail and take part in all the activities available on the Norfolk Broads. In the Charitable sphere, too, he became a Vice President of CRAFT in 1992.

David Lloyd Owen married, in 1947, Ursula Barclay of a distinguished Norfolk family and they had three sons. He wrote two books covering his war-time military experiences - "The Desert My Dwelling Place" and "Providence their Guide".

JWS

In-Pensioner G Deacon



Although it didn't come as a surprise, nevertheless, I felt a sense of deep sorrow when I learned that George had passed away after a long illness. Vic Aukett and I visited at the Royal Hospital last November, and as usual he was putting on a brave front, and was his usual cheerful self. George Deacon was one of the very first members of the 2nd Battalion The Queen's Royal

Regiment, who I came to know so well from September 1937. Our friendship continued for the next sixty years or more.

During the first seven years of my service, I soldiered continuously in the company of George. This period covered the time of the 2nd World War. We both were members of the Motor Transport Section, and covered many miles of travelling in Palestine 1939-1940, The Western Desert 1940-1941, Syria 1941, and Tobruk. (Although still serving in the same Battalion, our ways parted from Tobruk days when I went back to duty, George continued in the MT).

During these particularly difficult days, George was an inspiration, and a perfect example of a true British soldier, capable of the most atrocious pranks, and devilment, often getting into many disciplinary scrapes, but always with a sense of fun and good humour. But when necessary as was often the case during the close contact with the enemy, George was an example to us all. A true soldier.

Over the many years of service and then onto civilian life he remained a good friend. We spent many a good evening at The Union Jack Club each year in November when the Regimental Association met for their annual get-together. Over these many years, names such as Bill Elkins, Sid Waldron, Viv Edwards, Jock Henderson, and now George Deacon have passed on; they are all names that I have mentioned in 'Toil, Tribulation and Triumph'.

I cannot think of a better way of saying farewell to George, and indeed those who have gone before him than to use The Queen's Royal Regiment Motto:-

Pristinae Virtutis Memor

TA

In-Pensioner J A Kershaw



John Kershaw was born on 25th September, 1917. He enlisted into the Queens Royal Regiment at Guildford on 7th March 1934, and after a spell of basic training at the Depot and a posting to Aldershot, he was drafted to Quetta, India, in 1935, and was present when the battalion carried out relief work following the Quetta earthquake.

The battalion then moved to Allahabad until 1940 and then went to Peshawar in 1942, where he spent a year building defences in the Kyber Pass. After this he underwent a spell of jungle warfare training, but was called home as one who had spent long service overseas.

Accordingly he sailed on the SS 'Athlone Castle' in June 1943. The ship was carrying torpedoed US seamen from the Far East to the United States via Capetown. He contracted typhoid in South Africa, recovered and finally reached the UK at Avonmouth in September 1943, after which he enjoyed fifty sixdays leave, the first since his posting to India in 1936. He transferred temporarily into the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment, with whom he went to France in the summer of 1944. He landed in Normandy, near Bayeux, and saw action as a Lance Corporal up until September 1944 when he crossed the Rhine at Arnhem with his unit, in an operation to relieve the airborne forces there. Together with most of his unit, he was taken prisoner.

He was a prisoner of war in Germany until 1945 when he escaped from the camp at Frankfurt, and met up with the

Russians at Dresden. He eventually reached Chemnitz where the US Army arranged a flight home via Berlin.

He was discharged in April 1946, but re-enlisted into the Dorset Regiment at Bulford in April 1947 and eventually rejoined the Queen's Royal Regiment at Shorncliffe. He transferred to the Military Provost Staff Corps and remained at Colchester until he was posted to Egypt in 1949 with the rank of Sergeant. He returned to the UK in January 1953 to the MPSC Depot at Colchester where he remained until he was finally discharged in February 1957 after twenty two years and six months with the Colours. He was a holder of the 1939/45 Star, the France & Germany Star, the Defence Medal, the 1939/45 War Medal and the General Service Medal (Cyprus).

John Kershaw entered the Royal Hospital Chelsea on 20th September 1982 and is fondly remembered as Snooker, Cribbage and Darts Champion, as well as a regular and loyal supporter of the In-Pensioners' Club, where he also worked as barman. He died at the Royal Hospital on 4th November 2000.

LW

In-Pensioner A H Whiting



Albert Whiting died at The Royal Hospital, Chelsea on the 27th November. He was so very proud of being an In-Pensioner and to be part of that unique establishment. He was to the last, proud to have served with the Queen's from 1923-1930, 1939-1945

The seven years (from the age of 18 to 25) with the 1st Battalion had a profound influence in his life. What he learned in that period stood him in good stead for the many years that were to follow. A profound inherent kindness; an ability to care for himself; a good discipline in standard of turnout and behaviour and an awareness of God, Sovereign and Country. There was a tough streak underlying all. He would not suffer fools. Inner contentment for certain, there was a kindly smile to the very end of his life. His life had been wonderfully fulfilled.

After leaving the Army in 1931 Albert became a grocer and later a premises and property manager until in 1939 he was recalled to the Colours and served with the BEF in France. After demob he used his gratuity to buy a grocers shop and later continued his property management career.

A first class horseman all his life he passed on his love of horses to his sons and grandsons. He was part of a loving family and was loved and respected by all. The Newsletter published a short thumbnail sketch in the November 1999 edition of this remarkable, old warrior, who at the age of eighty-five rode out on his sons Hungarian Lippizaner Carriage horse, looking so smart, sprightly and elegant. At the age of ninety-two he was the NCO commanding the Guard of Honour at his grandson's wedding, at The Royal Hospital.

A remarkable man, he had a very full life and loved every minute of it. He is sorely missed by his family and friends. A quotation to end, one of his favourites an adopted philosophy:-

*"Life is full of froth and bubble
But somethings are like stone
A kindness in anothers troubles
Courage in your own".*

DW & LW

39

The Rev A V Davies MBE

I first met Arthur in August 1944, when I joined the 1st Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment. It was resting after the victory of Kohima, in which it had played such a decisive part.

Arthur was the Padre. I don't think he had arrived until after the battle, but he must have been heavily involved with the many casualties who needed his services afterwards. In fact the battalion was so weak in numbers, that in September we moved to Shillong in Assam to reform and await reinforcements.

We remained there in almost peacetime conditions until March 1945, when we received orders to rejoin the Fourteenth Army. The Japanese were now in full retreat, but were fighting for their lives, whereas a lot of our reinforcements were inexperienced. After we had crossed the Irrawaddy and recovered the Oil Fields, we moved to the Pegu Yomas to intercept the Japanese coming from the Arakan. My Company had its first serious engagement at Bogon, when we were attacked at night. A tremendous fire fight resulted in some heavy casualties, but we were unable to help the wounded until first light, when Arthur arrived very fast from Battalion Headquarters and gave his services without a thought for his own safety.

We were then fighting for some months in thick jungle, and we could get little help from roads for vehicles, or landing grounds for aircraft. Arthur was involved in the difficult and dangerous task of getting the sick and the wounded back to Hospital, and I believe it was for that he was awarded the MBE.

In July, just before the atomic bombs were dropped on Japan, and the Japanese surrendered, Arthur and I received our repatriation orders, and we went down to Rangoon to wait for a boat to take us home. Unfortunately for us, after the surrender, all the prisoners of war received priority, and we had to spend many weeks together with absolutely nothing to do except play endless games of patience. Eventually we got our passage, but Arthur was very ill on the way home. In 1946 we were both demobilised, but we remained close friends.

HMWH

Lieutenant Colonel K Burnett



I was deeply saddened to hear of Keith Burnett's death. I had known him for nearly half a century and was looking forward to meeting him again at the East Surrey Officers' lunch in April.

I first met Keith in 1956 when I joined the 1st Battalion in Brunswick straight from Sandhurst. Keith was second in command of C company, then commanded by Stuart Ashby, to which I was attached before going off on courses in England. Keith quickly took me under his wing and I greatly appreciated his kindness, generosity and infectious sense of humour. He was universally known as Bumble, a reference to an apparent likeness to the eponymous strip cartoon character in one of the London evening papers. We later served together in 1 Queen's Surreys in Bury St Edmunds and Aden.

In the mid-1960s, Keith and I found ourselves at opposite ends of the island in Cyprus where Keith was joined on the staff of the headquarters by another member of the Regiment, Paul Gray. I still have one of the mugs bearing the Regimental crest which Keith had had made for each one of us by a local pottery so that our reunions could be properly celebrated.

Keith later transferred to the Intelligence Corps and when I followed this same route in 1973, I met Keith again while on a course at the Corps Depot. Keith was on the staff there and invited me to dine with him in his quarter. After dinner Keith took me into his garden to listen to a nightingale: a quite unforgettable experience.

AGS

Our paths crossed again in Northern Ireland in early 1979. Keith was second-in-command of a sensitive intelligence unit and I was to be his successor. He had carried out this appointment with enormous skill and charm: his sense of humour helped him to diffuse many a difficult situation. He was a hard act to follow.

Keith later served as a contract officer in the Gulf where he held an important intelligence appointment. On retirement to Suffolk, he became Chairman of Suffolk Coastal District Council in 1993 and the following year was appointed Commander St John in Suffolk. In his quiet, modest way he continued to serve his community to the end.

He regularly attended East Surrey Officers' dinners at Simpsons and later the lunches in Clapham. It was at the millennium lunch in May that I was to see Keith for the last time. He had obviously not fully recovered from a serious operation but had typically made a great effort to be amongst his old friends again. We will all greatly miss him when we meet this year on 20 April. Our deepest sympathy goes out to his devoted wife, Elvie, and his daughter, Anna, of whom he was so proud.

TR

Captain D R Humm



After early training at Barnard Castle, Dennis Humm was commissioned to The Queen's Royal Regiment in February 1941 joining 2/7th battalion at Hythe after their move from Faversham. Following a period with a Rifle Company and Battle Training at Woodbridge he became Battalion MT Officer for the move of 56th Division to PAIFORCE via Bombay and Basra. The Battalion transport was unfortunately sunk in the South

Atlantic and Dennis was detached at Cape Town with a large party of drivers to be sent separately and directly to Egypt for replacement vehicles, eventually rejoining the Battalion two months later at Kirkuk. It was a hard winter in Iraq with several demanding Divisional exercises which proved to be a great preparation for the 3,000 mile move to Enfidaville. It was a testing time for Dennis, with REME help, keeping his transport intact and immediately battleworthy after the long trip. With the North African campaign over, he was made Brigade Transport Officer for the move to Italy, another test of planning and training, including the necessary waterproofing of vehicles for the Salerno landing.

It was a long campaign up to Italy to the borders of Yugoslavia, and he was MTO at Brigade HQ until the cessation of hostilities and his demobilisation in 1946.

Dennis was a man of courage and tenacity and always acted with decision, determination and humility coupled with a pragmatic approach to solving problems as they happened. For his services in Italy from Salerno to Trieste, Dennis was worthily Mentioned in Despatches.

Returning to civilian life, he quickly picked up the threads of his legal studies, becoming a partner and eventually a consultant to a leading firm of West End solicitors. He was a loyal member of 2/7th Queen's OCA and served the Battalion Committee acting as Treasurer for the last twelve years. His humour and friendliness will be sorely missed by his comrades at all levels.

Our sympathy goes out to his wife Patricia and family, Timothy and Amanda, and to their families.

Captain E A Heppell

Arthur Heppell was commissioned in The Royal Sussex Regiment and after being posted to The East Surrey Regiment became the Signals Officer of the 1st Battalion. In June 1944 at Citta de la Pieve when wireless contact with C Company had been lost he went forward and found that the Company Commander, Major E S Bird, had been killed and the only other officer badly wounded and a number of other casualties had been suffered. The CSM, CSM W G Attewell was then reorganising the company into defensive positions. Heppell repaired the wireless set and reported the situation and was ordered to take command until the company second-in-command, who had been left out of battle, could join the company. Later Heppell was promoted and appointed second-in-command of B Company which position he retained until released after the end of the war. Arthur who had an imperturbable nature was a tower of strength and greatly respected by all ranks. He was a fine, loyal and good regimental officer.

'Windy'

Sergeant F C Isaac MM CPM



Sergeant Fred (Darkie) Isaac died in St Helena on the 26th March 2001, aged 81 years. He hit the headlines in July 1956 when his patrol of five national service soldiers killed five Communist Terrorists (CTs) in the Malayan jungle and Sergeant Isaac was awarded the Military Medal.

From leaving school he worked on the land in St Helena but volunteered for the Army at the outbreak of the Second World War. He was enlisted into the St Helena Defence Force and spent most of the war on the island. He volunteered for service in Burma in early 1945 but the war in the Far East ended while he was in transit to the UK. He then joined the Royal Fusiliers and after six years in the British Army serving in BAOR, he accompanied the 1st Bn The Royal Fusiliers to Korea. He served in Korea for the eighteen months tour and was wounded in an action on the Samichon' on river. He was posted to the School of Infantry as a weapon training instructor.

In 1954 he transferred for service with 1 Queen's who were then in Malaya. He was posted to B Company. From the outset of his career he was known universally as 'Darkie' of which nickname he was immensely proud and there was, of course, no question then of political correctness. His introduction of himself to a newly joined Second Lieutenant ran like this "Sir, I am Sergeant Isaac but all my friends call me Darkie and that goes for you too, Sir"! He was a gentle giant and an inspiring soldier. The account of his medal winning action in the regimental history speaks for itself:

"On 6th July a patrol of six men of B Company under Sgt Isaac had a spectacular success. They were on a routine patrol through the thick undergrowth of a rubber estate when Lance Corporal Hughes, who was leading, indicated silently that CTs were ahead. Sgt Isaac quietly deployed his patrol into extended line and ordered them to charge.

Four CTs started to run off, firing as they went; Sergeant Isaac completely ignored their fire and, keeping firm control, halted his men twenty yards from the CTs and ordered them to fire. One CT fell but appeared to be about to throw a hand grenade so was dealt with by Private Cooper. The patrol continued to advance, firing at intervals and had killed three more CTs when there was a shout that Private Purvis was hit. He and Private Millhouse then pursued and shot a fifth CT who in falling had shot Purvis who afterwards died.

By its resolute and skilful action this small patrol had killed five CTs but its success was shadowed by the sad loss of young Private Purvis who was buried with full Military honours in Singapore the next day.

Sgt Isaac received a well earned Military Medal".

On notification of the award, the commanding officer called him into his office to celebrate with a glass of champagne. On returning to the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' mess - where his friends were assembled to congratulate him - he drily remarked, "if I got the MM for Malaya, I deserved a 'K' for Korea!" He was invested with his award by the Queen at Buckingham Palace on July 23rd 1957.

He remained with the Queen's Royal Surreys, which the Regiment became on amalgamation with the East Surrey Regiment in 1959 until his retirement from the Army in 1963, serving in Germany, Aden and Hong Kong. On return to St Helena, he joined the Island police force and eventually regained the rank of Sergeant.

On retirement from the police force in 1981 he was awarded the Colonial Police Medal. He and his family moved to Ascension Island in 1981 and he became the camp administrator for Fairclough International Construction Company. He was in this post when the bulk of the Task Force, staged at Ascension to prepare the ships for the landings on the Falkland Islands. Isaac was on hand, and in his element advising on local resources and offers of help from Fairclough International.

He was loved and respected by all ranks and had a wonderful turn of phrase, almost invariably using his ebony coloured skin to embellish it. Two of his most frequently used expressions with the actual meaning in brackets after them were: "Man I'll put my big black boot up your little white backside" ("Soldier you are beginning to annoy me"). "Man, you drive me white" ("Soldier you have definitely overstepped the mark").

Darkie Isaac was irreplaceable. He will be sorely missed by his wife Evelyn, and by three sons and two daughters.

TLT & LMW

D G Coles MM



Dave (Chick) Coles died in Ghent on 4th April 2001 after a long illness, at the age of 80 years. He enlisted at Bermondsey in the 22nd London Regiment (Queen's) in August 1937, moving to 1/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment when its title was changed at the outbreak of war in 1939. He served for eight years and claimed to be

one of the few survivors who had served with the battalion for the duration of the war without leaving. His service took him to France and Belgium with the BEF, returning to the UK following the evacuation from Dunkirk. In 1942 he went with the battalion to the Middle East, taking part in many actions, as part of the famous 7th Armoured Division. At the conclusion of the war in North Africa, he moved on to Italy where he was awarded the Military Medal. From there he returned to the UK to take part in the Normandy landings, which took him through France and into Belgium for a second time.

On his return to civilian life he established his own Building Contractors business, which still flourishes in the capable hands of his son.

He served for many years as Chairman of the 6th (Bermondsey) Bn. The Queen's Royal Regiment Old Comrades Association, eventually giving it up in 1989, when he decided to take up permanent residence in Belgium. It was in that year that he was elected a Vice President, in

appreciation for the service he had given to the Old Comrades Association. He returned on a number of occasions to join us at our Reunion Dinners and other functions, but in recent years he had been prevented from doing so, by deteriorating health.

A sad loss, as yet another old soldier has faded away.

MRN

Sergeant J Elcombe

Elcombe enlisted into The East Surrey Regiment in 1953 having previously served as a NS soldier with The Royal Sussex Regiment. He served with the Surreys in Egypt and Brunswick BAOR until just prior to the amalgamation in 1959 when he was posted to The East Surrey Depot as Officers' Mess caterer. He then moved to the Home Counties Brigade Depot at Canterbury for a tour of duty. He rejoined 1 Queen's Surreys in Aden, serving with A Company at Mukerias and subsequently Hong Kong.

On the move of the battalion to Münster, W Germany, he became Sergeants' Mess caterer and former members at that time will remember his talents for organising excellent dinner nights and for the smooth and efficient day-to-day running of the Sergeants' Mess.

John Elcombe went to pension, having completed twenty-two years with the Colours in 1968. He and his wife Jean settled in Canterbury where he took up employment with the East Kent Omnibus Company finishing on retirement as an Inspector. He and Jean spent most of their retirement looking after stray animals and assisting people who were in need of help.

SL & LW

○ ○ ○

Michael Booker writes from Saudi Arabia:- just a brief note as promised enclosing some photographs taken during our recent visit to Sri Lanka.

The cemetery in Kandy is a little way out of town (but signposted from the main road) itself on a quiet back road. The hillside setting is really quite beautiful. Just over the road at the bottom of the hill from the cemetery is a shallow river. The chap in charge/on duty at the time of our visit was very helpful in showing us around and was keen to point out little tales re relatives who visited etc. I gave him a little additional information on The Queen's Royal Regiment too!



Trumpet's call

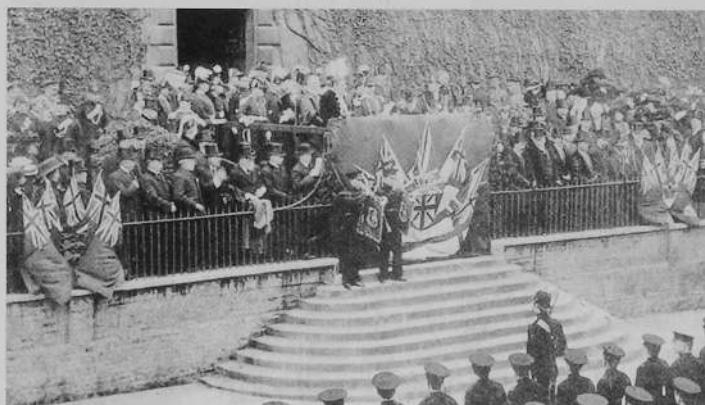


Henry Tunnell with his trusted trumpet

Trumpeters to the High Sheriff of Surrey and the County Assizes around the end of the nineteenth century were the Tunnell family of Guildford.

Builders by profession, they were also heralds to George James Murray of Mytchett Place, whose coat of arms was displayed on their trumpet banners. The eldest of the family was Henry. A native of Guildford, he served in the 2nd Surrey Militia for twenty-seven years and was its drum major for about sixteen years. (He is not, however, shown as being

present or involved in the incident when the band was scattered by an escaped and enraged bull while marching along Shalford Road, Guildford in 1885.



This would appear to be the proclamation of George V in 1910, on the steps of Holy Trinity Church, Guildford. Henry Tunnell had played at the proclamation of Edward VII on January 31, 1901 which was held on the balcony of the Guildhall.

Pursuing musical inclinations he was, at the time of his death in 1901, the bandmaster of the Guildford Temperance Band, the Old Haslemere Town Band and the Rowledge Band. The last occasion at which he officiated as one of the High Sheriff's trumpeters was on the proclamation of King Edward VII. It was believed that on that day he caught the chill from which he died. It is to be hoped that for him truly "the trumpet sounded on the other side".



Henry Tunnell (standing right) and his son outside the Borough Halls, circa 1886

RF

Information and photographs by courtesy of Surrey Advertiser and Guildford Museum.

Taps

We have all heard the haunting melody of Taps. It's the song that gives us that lump in our throats and usually tears in our eyes. But do you know the story behind the song?

Reportedly, it all began in 1862 during the Civil War, when Union Army Captain Robert Ellicombe was with his men near Harrison's Landing, Virginia. The Confederate Army was on the other side of the narrow strip of land. During the night, Captain Ellicombe heard the moans of a soldier who was severely wounded on the field. Not knowing if it was a Union or Confederate soldier, the captain decided to risk his life and bring the stricken man back for medical attention.

Crawling on his stomach through the gunfire, the captain reached the stricken soldier and began pulling him toward the encampment. When the captain finally reached his own lines, he discovered it was actually a Confederate soldier, but the soldier was dead. The captain lit a lantern and suddenly caught his breath and went numb with shock. In the dim light he saw the face of the soldier. It was his own son.

The boy had been studying music in the South when the war broke out. Without telling his father, the boy enlisted in the Confederate Army. The following morning, heartbroken, the father asked permission to give his son a full military burial despite his enemy status.

His request was only partially granted. The captain had asked if he could have a group of army band members play a funeral dirge for his son at the funeral. The request was denied since the soldier was a Confederate but, out of respect for the father, they did say they could give him one musician.

Back page photos:-

1. 41 years on - see page 30 The faithfull few, pictured at Louis' Restaurant, from left to right are:- Wheeler, Lee, Lidyard, Cable, Verrico (middle front), Homer, Perkins, Munday and Cheeseman. (unfortunately, missing from picture Private Mitchell).
2. The late George Deacon shares a joke with the President, Christmas 2000.
3. In-Pensioner Joe Norman and Les Wilson.
4. The Chairman, Lt Col Foster Herd with Les Wilson and In-Pensioners C L Cook and C J Sawyer.
5. Left to right: Laurie Costa, Bob Hoseley, Terry Jenkins, Richard Chapman, Albert Roskilly, Michael Parker, Harry Cookson and Alan Bennett.
6. Ron Harper, Charlie Helps and Charles Hardingham, the first time they had met since 1956.

Regimental History as seen by G Robinson



The captain chose a bugler. He asked the bugler to play a series of musical notes he had found on a piece of paper in the pocket of the dead youth's uniform. This wish was granted. The haunting melody, which we now know as Taps used at military funerals, was born.

Day is done
Gone the sun
From the lakes
From the hills
From the sky

All is well,
safety rest.
God is nigh.

Fading light
Dims the sight
And a star
Gems the sky,
Gleaming bright

From afar,
Drawing nigh,
Falls the night.
Thanks and praise
For our days,
Near the sun,
Neath the stars,
Neath the sky

As we go
This we know
God is nigh.

BC

Thanks Bob Caldwell for passing this along to us.

