

MAY 2005

# THE QUEEN'S ROYAL SURREY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION



President  
Brigadier R. W. Acworth CBE

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Lieutenant Colonel F. B. Herd TD JP DL

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NUMBER 77

## NEWSLETTER

### Hill 60





## Forecast of Events

	2005
5th June	The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association Annual Church Service - Guildford Cathedral.
23rd June	Talk by Col Sewell "The War in Italy": Regimental Museum. Tickets from Museum (Tel 01483 223419)
2nd /3rd July	"Spirit of the Regiment" - Dover Castle.
9th July	First Surrey Rifles meeting/supper.
10th July	National Commemoration of 60th Anniversary of end of WW II.
17th July	60th Anniversary County Service of Thanksgiving - Guildford Cathedral (3 pm). (Ticket holders only).
1st August	MINDEN DAY.
3rd September	6th (Bermondsey), 2/6th and 2/7th Bns the Queen's Royal Regiment OCAs Combined Annual Reunion.
9th September	SALERNO DAY.
11th September	First Surrey Rifles Church Parade.
25th September	Regimental Museum Open Day.
1st October	The East Surrey Regiment OCA 30th Annual Reunion - Clapham.
1st /2nd October	First Surrey Rifles Somme/Ypres trip.
3rd October	The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Officers' Club Ladies' Luncheon - Clandon.
5th October	Golf Society Autumn Meeting: Woking Golf Club.
4th November	The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association Annual Reunion - Union Jack Club.
1st December	First Surrey Rifles meeting/Xmas Draw.
20th December	BRITISH BATTALION DAY (1941).

**Frontispiece:** The picture is a section from a watercolour by Margaret Dovaston RBA (with a border and "Hill 60" in red superimposed). It shows CSM Reid of the 1st Battalion The East Surrey Regiment bringing reserves to the front line on 20th April 1915 during one of the battles for Hill 60. For this and two similar actions CSM Reid was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. Three members of the battalion were awarded the Victoria Cross for their valour at the hill. An account of the battalion's actions 90 years ago appears in the Newsletter.

**Back cover:** The 1st Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment was stationed at Quetta, India in 1935 when on 31st May at about 0300 hours the city was struck by a major earthquake. The photographs are all from the Regimental archive. Those at the top show Quetta Town Hall and Bruce Road before the earthquake; the centre picture shows Quetta General Post Office with the clock stopped by the earthquake; the bottom photographs show the Town Hall and Bruce Road after the earthquake. An account of the battalion's part 70 years ago in the subsequent humanitarian operation, actions during which resulted in the regiment's two George Crosses, appears in the Newsletter.



## Editorial

During the recent meetings of the Charity's Trustees and of the Regiment's Main Committee Brigadier Bob Acworth announced his intention to hand over as Association President to Colonel Tony Ward. Those present at the meetings recorded their grateful thanks for all his hard work and dedication during his extremely successful, long tenure. I would like to take this opportunity to express all Association members' very sincere appreciation to Brigadier Bob for all he has done, and on their behalf to welcome Colonel Tony to his new appointment.

We are justifiably proud of our forebear Regiments and this edition features two occasions, at Hill 60 and in the aftermath of the Quetta earthquake, when they particularly distinguished themselves. The Regiment's pride in our modern successors was recorded last November at our reception to mark the return from Iraq of 1 PWRR. Since then the battalion's outstanding tour has been recognised by a long list of richly deserved operational awards, including that of the Victoria Cross to Private Beharry; details are included amongst the following pages.

With all good wishes  
Tony Russell

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## President's Notes

In June I will have been President of the Association and Chairman of the Regimental Charity Trustees for 10 years. It has been an enormous privilege to have held this appointment but it is time for a change. I am handing over to Colonel Tony Ward on the Glorious First of June and I know he will serve you well.

Looking after our old members and their families who have fallen on hard times has always been our first priority. During the last 10 years over 2100 cases have been investigated and over 1730 grants made totalling some £450,000. This is quite a record and our thanks are due to Les Wilson and John Rogerson who have done so much work on our behalf to achieve this.

Our finances remain sound and we have slightly more invested now than we had 10 years ago. In that time we have spent nearly £1.2m on benevolence, £1.2m on the museum and a considerable amount on our annual grants. On the negative side our investment income has dropped from £125,000 per annum in 1995 to around £70,000 in 2004. We now have to meet some of our costs from capital but this was foreseen in the Doyle report and is very much under control. We are in a sound position to meet our commitments until the Association is wound up and will also be able to provide for ongoing benevolence and endowment of the museum after this time.

The Newsletter has changed since Les Wilson retired as editor but I am sure you will agree that it is still a first class production which helps enormously to keep people in touch. Our thanks for this go to Tony Russell.

Our 12 branches remain very active and my thanks go to the secretaries for the work they do to make this happen. It is very good to see our Guildford branch, 5 Queen's OMA, looking to the future and including amongst their members people who have not served in the Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment but have served in the Queen's Regiment and the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment. This must be the way ahead and I congratulate them on this.

During the past 10 years nearly 700 members of the Association have sadly died but I believe the Association is as strong as ever and now numbers around 1500 people and we continue to recruit new members.

The uncertainty over the future of the museum remains but the museum trustees with the Association are working hard to find a viable long term solution.

As I said at the beginning it has been a great privilege to be President of the Association and of course I will be sad to hand over but it is time for a new mind to take the helm. I would like to thank all those who have played a part in keeping the Association on the road, not least the Charity Trustees and Regimental Council and, particularly, Tony Russell who is an indefatigable secretary who keeps us all in order.

With my best wishes,  
Bob Acworth

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## Museum Notes

Every so often, it is helpful to take a mental step back from the everyday business of the Museum to get a better view of how (or if) we are meeting our objectives, and those which others set for us. Our own objectives are set clearly in the Museum Trust Deed, essentially "To perpetuate the history, deeds and traditions of the Regiment by making our collection of Regimental treasures widely accessible to the public". The Museum itself has been doing this throughout its life with, I think we may say, considerable success, but the establishment of the Regimental Website is now taking our history to a vastly wider audience, and is proving to be a very good investment of time, effort and money.

Of the others who set us objectives, the Ministry of Defence, with whom the Museum has a Service Level Agreement, is the most important. An address given last Autumn by the Adjutant General of the Army, Lieutenant General Sir Anthony Irwin, on the MoD's views on Regimental Museums like ours was, therefore, important

and it was an encouraging address. Too long to quote at length, the following are a few of the Adjutant General's key comments:- "There can be no doubt that keeping our great military history alive is an essential part of the business of generating fighting power and achieving success on operations", "An army that foresees its past is unlikely to be worth a damn", "We are determined to preserve the golden thread that links the past to the future through the present. Part of the golden thread is the network of existing museums". I think we may draw some satisfaction from these comments; our Museum is doing a proper job and going along the right road.

Coming back down to earth, we were all delighted when Ian Chatfield was appointed to be the new Curatorial Assistant at the Museum, filling the vacancy left by Sam Higgs's move. Ian is already well-known to many members of the Regiment through his work for 5 Queen's OMA, and as a long-time Museum volunteer. He took up his new post on 1st December, and has spent the winter, with Ian Mumford and Museum volunteers, getting everything clean and shipshape ready for the 2005 season, which opened on 20th March. We have been delighted too to welcome two new Regimental members to the Museum Management Committee; Lieutenant Colonels Patrick Crowley and Peter Swanson also are well-known to many members and they will add considerable knowledge and expertise to the management of the Museum.

Other results of the Winter work that can now be seen at the Museum include a new display on the Regiment's very long-standing connection with the Onslow family of Clandon Park - a connection which actually pre-dates the formation of the Tangier Regiment and is still going strong - and some subtle but extensive re-ordering of the main medal display to improve on the fairly hasty re-installation that was necessary after the 2003 burglary - almost needless to say, Roy Harding has played a major role in the medal work. All this has been enlivened by the installation of the National Trust's new lift just outside the Museum door, which is now virtually complete.

The Annual Meeting of the Regimental Main Committee was held at the Museum in March, and at a small ceremony before the meeting the Regiment was presented with the medals of Lance Corporal Leonard James Keyworth VC by Major John Tamplin, who had rescued them from a public sale many years ago.

The medals are now in the safe-keeping of the Museum. This is a most generous gift and an important acquisition for the Museum. Replicas of these medals of one of our Great War heroes should be on display at the Museum by the time you read this. The fact that it is replicas that will be on display is mentioned deliberately; it is a sad commentary on the age that all the prime medal sets awarded to members of the Regiment now have to be kept in a strongroom away from Clandon and replaced by replicas at the Museum, but the risk of doing otherwise

would be unthinkable in present circumstances. Fortunately, this does not detract from the displays at Clandon, nor from the heroism that won the original medals.



*The President accepts the Keyworth Medals from Major Tamplin*

Looking forward, the Museum is hoping for a busy Summer season and to a good many visits from members of the Regiment. Our Open Day in September is intended to be for regimental members. We are hoping too, that the long-planned improvement to the display on the Regiment's VC and GC holders will be carried out in the very near future, and should soon be on view. During the Summer, a series of talks is being organised on aspects of the history of the Regiment; the first of these, on Thursday 23rd June, will be on "The War in Italy" by Colonel Toby Sewell, who was there. Ian Chatfield will be launching the long-planned 'Friends of the Museum' organisation in the near future, something that will give more members of the Regiment easy ways to support the Museum, in addition to the present band of active volunteers. A 'phone call to Ian at the Museum will provide more information on all of these.

Finally, don't forget that the Museum Shop stocks a good range of Regimental items, as well as general military history and memorabilia, all available over-the-counter or by post; a 'phone call to Ian Mumford at the Museum will confirm stock and prices.

Adrian Birtles

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*Our thanks are due again to  
Major J L A Fowler TD  
for generously supplying the paper for  
the Newsletter.*



## The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment

(by Maj A J Martin)

The whole Regiment, past and present members, are extremely proud of the achievements of the 1st Battalion in Iraq with the numerous gallantry awards. These have dominated this period even though everyone else attends his or her normal duties.

### 1ST BATTALION

The Battalion returned from Iraq in October 2004. They then went on well-earned leave, came back to Barracks and moved to Paderborn in Germany where they have now settled in to (at least) a 10-year tour in the Armoured Warrior role. The main event was the publication of the honours and awards. This is given below:



### OPERATIONAL LIST 1st APRIL 2004 TO 30th NOVEMBER 2004

#### VICTORIA CROSS

PRIVATE JOHNSON GIDEON BEHARRY

#### DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER

MAJOR JAMES CHENEVIX COOTE

LIEUTENANT COLONEL MATTHEW PHILLIP MAER MBE

#### CONSPICUOUS GALLANTRY CROSS

SERGEANT CHRISTOPHER MARK BROOME

CORPORAL TERENCE ALAN THOMSON

#### MILITARY CROSS

CORPORAL MARK RICHARD BYLES

WARRANT OFFICER CLASS 2 DAVID GORDON FALCONER

MAJOR JUSTIN BURRITT FEATHERSTONE

SERGEANT DAVID ANTHONY HARRINGTON PERFECT

CORPORAL SEAN VITTY ERNEST ROBSON

PRIVATE TROY O'NEIL SAMUELS

LANCE CORPORAL BRIAN WOOD

#### MEMBER OF THE ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

WARRANT OFFICER CLASS 2 DALE EDWARD NORMAN

#### MENTION IN DESPATCHES

PRIVATE GARY COOPER

PRIVATE DANIEL SHANE CRUCEFIX

PRIVATE THOMAS JAMES FERGUSON

CORPORAL LEE STEPHEN GIDALLA

CORPORAL SIMON JOHN GOWER

## MENTION IN DESPATCHES

PRIVATE JOSEPH DOMINIC HARTNELL  
CAPTAIN ROBIN HICKS  
SERGEANT BENJAMIN LLEWELLYN KELLY  
SERGEANT DANIEL MILLS  
LANCE CORPORAL JOSESE TUNIDAU NATUMERU  
LIEUTENANT WILLIAM JAMES PASSMORE  
SERGEANT ANDRE PAUL JOSEPH PEPPER  
LIEUTENANT BENJAMIN UDO PLENGE  
LIEUTENANT ADAM PHILIP STYLER  
MAJOR SIMON CHRISTOPHER THOMSETT

## QUEEN'S COMMENDATION FOR VALUABLE SERVICE

MAJOR RICHARD TOBY WALCH

In addition 13 Joint Commanders Commendations.

Note: The battle group, commanded by CO 1 PWRR Lt Col M Maer, were also awarded an additional 4 x Military Cross and 2 x Mention in Despatches. Her Majesty The Queen and His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales awarded all medals over the period 27 and 28 April at Buckingham Palace.

The Battalion is now settling down to life of soldiering in Germany. Their next tour in Iraq is April 2006 (Op Telec 8).

## 2ND BATTALION

The Battalion deployed to Iraq in January 2005 and returns in July 2005. The Battalion is split and covers many tasks. Coys rotate with one Coy guarding Shaibah Logistic Base (SLB), one Coy guarding SLB and QRF, one Coy escorting, one Coy guarding tasks including locations in Baghdad. The Battalion's area recently increased with the inheritance from the Dutch Army who withdrew. In the first few weeks, the Battalion had 10 wounded due to a car bomb. All are now back at work. Road traffic accidents have taken their toll and some wounded are still under medical care.

The Battalion is in fine form. The Colonel of the Regiment visited them in Iraq in May. They arms plot to Northern Ireland in December 2005.

## 3RD BATTALION

Lt Col Tony Guthrie hands over command to Lt Col Adam Edmunds in mid 2005. Lt Col Guthrie goes on promotion to HQ 2 Inf Bde. He has had a very successful tour, which has seen the Battalion provide many TA soldiers in support of the Regular Army in Afghanistan and Iraq. This provision of support still goes ahead with a complete platoon joining the Royal Rifle Volunteers for deployment to Iraq in 2005. The remainder will complete Annual Camp in Tenby (South Wales).

## B COMPANY THE LONDON REGIMENT AND C COMPANY THE ROYAL RIFLE VOLUNTEERS

The Colonel of the Regiment has visited both the companies during drill nights. He was most impressed by both companies. They are supporting the regular units with both companies having at least 17 soldiers deployed in Iraq at any one time.

Annual Camp in 2005 for B Company will be Salisbury Plain Training Area and Oakhampton for C Company.

In summary the Regiment is now well established and as a result of the award of the Victoria Cross, and the plethora of other medals, everyone has now heard of The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment and they are all held up as fine example of that obscure mixture of courage and history and tradition that makes the British Infantry the finest in the world.

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## VICTORIA CROSS

### FULL CITATION

#### PRIVATE JOHNSON GIDEON BEHARRY THE PRINCESS OF WALES'S ROYAL REGIMENT



*Private Beharry VC after receiving his award from Her Majesty The Queen*

"Private Beharry carried out two individual acts of great heroism by which he saved the lives of his comrades. Both were in direct face of the enemy, under intense fire, at great personal risk to himself (one leading to him sustaining very serious injuries). His valour is worthy of the highest recognition.

"In the early hours of the 1st May 2004 Beharry's company was ordered to replenish an isolated Coalition Forces outpost located in the centre of the troubled city of Al Amarah. He was the driver of a platoon commander's Warrior armoured fighting vehicle. His platoon was the company's reserve force and was placed on immediate notice to move. As the main elements of his company were moving into the city to carry out the replenishment, they were re-tasked to fight through a series of enemy ambushes in order to extract a foot patrol that had become pinned down under sustained small arms and heavy machine gun fire and improvised explosive device and rocket-propelled grenade attack.

"Beharry's platoon was tasked over the radio to come to the assistance of the remainder of the company, who were attempting to extract the isolated foot patrol. As his platoon passed a roundabout, en route to the pinned-down patrol, they became aware that the road to the front was empty of all civilians and traffic - an indicator of a potential ambush ahead. The platoon commander ordered the vehicle to halt, so that he could assess the situation. The vehicle was then immediately hit by multiple rocket-propelled grenades. Eyewitnesses report that the vehicle was engulfed in a number of violent explosions, which physically rocked the 30-tonne Warrior.

"As a result of this ferocious initial volley of fire, both the platoon commander and the vehicle's gunner were incapacitated by concussion and other wounds, and a number of the soldiers in the rear of the vehicle were also wounded. Due to damage sustained in the blast to the vehicle's radio systems, Beharry had no means of communication with either his turret crew or any of the other Warrior vehicles deployed around him. He did not know if his commander or crewmen were still alive, or how serious their injuries may be. In this confusing and dangerous situation, on his own initiative, he closed his driver's hatch and moved forward through the ambush position to try to establish some form of communications, halting just short of a barricade placed across the road.

"The vehicle was hit again by sustained rocket-propelled grenade attack from insurgent fighters in the alleyways and on rooftops around his vehicle. Further damage to the Warrior from these explosions caused it to catch fire and fill rapidly with thick, noxious smoke. Beharry opened up his armoured hatch cover to clear his view and orientate himself to the situation. He still had no radio communications and was now acting on his own initiative, as the lead vehicle of a six Warrior convoy in an enemy-controlled area of the city at night. He assessed that his best course of action to save the lives of his crew was to push through, out of the ambush. He drove his Warrior directly through the barricade, not knowing if there were mines or improvised explosive devices placed there to destroy his vehicle. By doing this he was able to lead the remaining five Warriors behind him towards safety.

"As the smoke in his driver's tunnel cleared, he was just able to make out the shape of another rocket-propelled grenade in flight heading directly towards him. He pulled the heavy armoured hatch down with one hand, whilst still controlling his vehicle with the other. However, the overpressure from the explosion of the rocket wrenched the hatch out of his grip, and the flames and force of the blast passed directly over him, down the driver's tunnel, further wounding the semi-conscious gunner in the turret. The impact of this rocket destroyed Beharry's armoured periscope, so he was forced to drive the vehicle through the remainder of the ambushed route, some 1500 metres long, with his hatch opened up and his head exposed to enemy fire, all the time with no communications with any other vehicle. During this long surge through the ambushes the vehicle was again struck by rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire. While his head remained out of the hatch, to enable him to see the route ahead, he was directly exposed to much of this fire, and was himself hit by a 7.62mm bullet, which penetrated his helmet and remained lodged on its inner surface.

"Despite this harrowing weight of incoming fire Beharry continued to push through the extended ambush, still leading his platoon until he broke clean. He then visually identified another Warrior from his company and followed it through the streets of Al Amarah to the outside of the Cimic House outpost, which was receiving small arms fire

from the surrounding area. Once he had brought his vehicle to a halt outside, without thought for his own personal safety, he climbed onto the turret of the still-burning vehicle and, seemingly oblivious to the incoming enemy small arms fire, manhandled his wounded platoon commander out of the turret, off the vehicle and to the safety of a nearby Warrior. He then returned once again to his vehicle and again mounted the exposed turret to lift out the vehicle's gunner and move him to a position of safety. Exposing himself yet again to enemy fire he returned to the rear of the burning vehicle to lead the disorientated and shocked dismounts and casualties to safety. Remounting his burning vehicle for the third time, he drove it through a complex chicane and into the security of the defended perimeter of the outpost, thus denying it to the enemy. Only at this stage did Beharry pull the fire extinguisher handles, immobilising the engine of the vehicle, dismounted and then moved himself into the relative safety of the back of another Warrior. Once inside Beharry collapsed from the sheer physical and mental exhaustion of his efforts and was subsequently himself evacuated.

"Having returned to duty following medical treatment, on the 11th June 2004 Beharry's Warrior was part of a quick reaction force tasked to attempt to cut off a mortar team that had attacked a Coalition Force base in Al Amarah. As the lead vehicle of the platoon he was moving rapidly through the dark city streets towards the suspected firing point, when his vehicle was ambushed by the enemy from a series of rooftop positions. During this initial heavy weight of enemy fire, a rocket-propelled grenade detonated on the vehicle's frontal armour, just six inches from Beharry's head, resulting in a serious head injury. Other rockets struck the turret and sides of the vehicle, incapacitating his commander and injuring several of the crew.

"With the blood from his head injury obscuring his vision, Beharry managed to continue to control his vehicle, and forcefully reversed the Warrior out of the ambush area. The vehicle continued to move until it struck the wall of a nearby building and came to rest. Beharry then lost consciousness as a result of his wounds. By moving the vehicle out of the enemy's chosen killing area he enabled other Warrior crews to be able to extract his crew from his vehicle, with a greatly reduced risk from incoming fire. Despite receiving a serious head injury, which later saw him being listed as very seriously injured and in a coma for some time, his level-headed actions in the face of heavy and accurate enemy fire at short range again almost certainly saved the lives of his crew and provided the conditions for their safe evacuation to medical treatment.

"Beharry displayed repeated extreme gallantry and unquestioned valour, despite intense direct attacks, personal injury and damage to his vehicle in the face of relentless enemy action."

## Benevolence

Major J C Rogerson, based at RHQ PWRR at Canterbury, has continued to administer the Charity's individual benevolence activities. We are most grateful to him for all his hard work on behalf of the Regimental Charity and those in need.

During 2004 a total of 132 cases were investigated and 83 individual grants-in-aid were approved. In the majority of cases the grants were for household expenses, debts and rent arrears. The Association helped to provide 21 further electrically powered vehicles, 13 orthopaedic chairs/beds and contributed to four convalescent holidays. The Charity paid out £31,520 as individual grants-in-aid through RHQ PWRR and a further £525 was spent to purchase vouchers as Christmas gifts for 20 annuity holders and one Chelsea Hospital in-pensioner. The Army Benevolent Fund (ABF) provided a further £2,890 in General Grants. Of the 49 cases not receiving a grant, local Councils/Charities or other Regimental Charities assisted 30 after we had contacted them. Ten cases were not receiving such allowances as attendance, mobility or rent rebate.

Twenty one ABF Annuities were administered; the ABF generously contributed £55 per month per case. During this period we have renewed or arranged for 5 Nursing Home Fees grants, each of £780 from the ABF and £156 from the Association per year, to be paid for our old soldiers or their widows to be looked after. At their March 2005 meeting the Charity's Trustees decided that our Nursing Home Fees grant for 2005 would rise to £350 per case. We had one resident and two for respite holidays in Gifford House. The ABF total grants in support, including Nursing Home Fees, were £20,910. The Trustees would again like to pay tribute to the ABF which is always helpful with prompt action and advice.

Association Branch Secretaries, who are an extremely important part of the benevolence 'chain', have the SSAFA Forces Help biannual flag book for them to deal direct with the local caseworkers. SSAFA Forces Help Society and The Royal British Legion investigate the majority of our cases and to their caseworkers we are particularly grateful for all their assistance. During this last year we have also assisted members who are cared for by COMBAT STRESS (Ex Services Mental Welfare Society), the War Pensions Agency, and the Ex Services Fellowship Centres.

The Trustees are grateful to all those who have made donations and in particular for two substantial legacies received by the Charity.

Extracts from a few of the letters of appreciation for Major Rogerson's work and the Charity's financial assistance which have been received over the last 6 months are reproduced overleaf.

**A SSAFA officer writes:** Thank you for your most welcome letter which enclosed two most generous cheques in respect of the above ex soldier. I had great pleasure in informing Mr and Mrs A of your overwhelming generosity and can report that he was almost overcome with emotion. He kept repeating the word "why?" and I had to tell him that this was your way of thanking him for his service to the Regiments and the country. He asked me to write and express his most sincere thanks and appreciation for the grant. He is also very enthusiastic about and grateful for the Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association newsletter.

I have contacted the local Authority and they replied that they could start work within four weeks; Mrs A is really looking forward to being able to wash herself again. May I also express my appreciation for contacting the ABF on his behalf and for responding so quickly.

**A SSAFA officer writes:** I write to thank you for your kind donation for Mr B. He will be taken by a careworker to buy suitable clothing. I have given him the Association Newsletter which I am sure he will enjoy.

**A SSAFA officer writes:** I have just returned from France and was delighted to find your very generous cheque to enable me to continue to pay half of Mr C's gas bills. It was indeed very kind of your Benevolence Committee and would you please pass on my sincere thanks and the thanks of Mr C. I shall be seeing him in the next week and will ensure that he knows that the grant was made by the Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Charity. Finally, thank you for the Regimental Association Newsletter which I know that Mr C will enjoy reading.

Please accept my grateful thanks for all the help the Association and SSAFA have given to me, the widow of the late Mr D. Mrs E (from SSAFA) is handling the extra money for my telephone, which is so important to keep in touch with friends who have moved away as I do not want to lose contact with them. So thank you so much for all the help I have received; Mrs E has been a friend, I have no living relatives.

I would just like to offer my grateful thanks for the gift voucher provided for my mother this Christmas. My mother was 94 last September and is doing OK overall, even though she is getting slower and more frail with each year that passes. The voucher will provide her with a little extra and she was most pleased. Many thanks for always remembering my mother and may we both wish you a happy and healthy 2005.

I would like to thank you very much for the contribution towards the Invacare Scooter and Rise/Recliner Chair. They have been put to very good use and have made my life a great deal more pleasant. My wife and I are now looking forward to the warmer days when we will be able to go out together.

I would like to thank you for the donation you gave me towards the scooter. Having the scooter has made a great difference to the quality of my life.

At last I have got my head in some sort of order following my wife's stroke in 2003 and her death in 2004. Obviously my finances took a hammering so I wrote to the Benevolence Office and through SSAFA the Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment made me a grant. I would, although delayed, like to thank the Regiment very much for helping me to get through this difficult and heartbreakin period.

I wish to thank you and the Association for your help with my recent problem. I am so grateful for the help I received; now when it rains I don't have to worry and keep my fingers crossed that it won't come in.

## The East Surrey Officers' Reunion Lunch

On the 22 April last year 37 of us sat down to lunch, 39 having "signed up", but 2 fell by the wayside. This year 43 signed up, but again, unfortunately, 5 had to drop out late in the day. Nevertheless, any rise in numbers is encouraging. An interesting statistic is that the 10 Second World War veterans, who "signed up" were virtually balanced by 11 National Service officers. In the event 8 of each category turned up.

Lt Col Robert Lyle presided and, in asking Derek Bishop to propose The Queen's health, stressed the fact that it was Her Majesty's actual birthday. Peter Roupell proposed "The Regiment".

Once again the ambiance was great. Whilst the location, which is so easy to reach, is a great help, the actual mess is ideal for us, not only because of our ties with The London Regiment, but also for its size, its tasteful decoration and the willingness of its staff. Well done them! Once more we owe thanks to The Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Jeremy Mooney, for allowing us to use it.

Next year's reunion will be on Thursday 20 April.

Hill 60

In Spring 1915 The 1st Battalion The East Surrey Regiment probably achieved its finest feat of the Great War in the defence of Hill 60, near Ypres. During this action the Battalion won three Victoria Crosses, two Military Crosses and seven Distinguished Conduct Medals.



A black and white portrait of a young man with short hair, wearing a military-style cap with a prominent maple leaf insignia on the front. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera. The background is out of focus.

*Private  
Edward Dwyer*



*Lieutenant  
George Rowland Roupell*

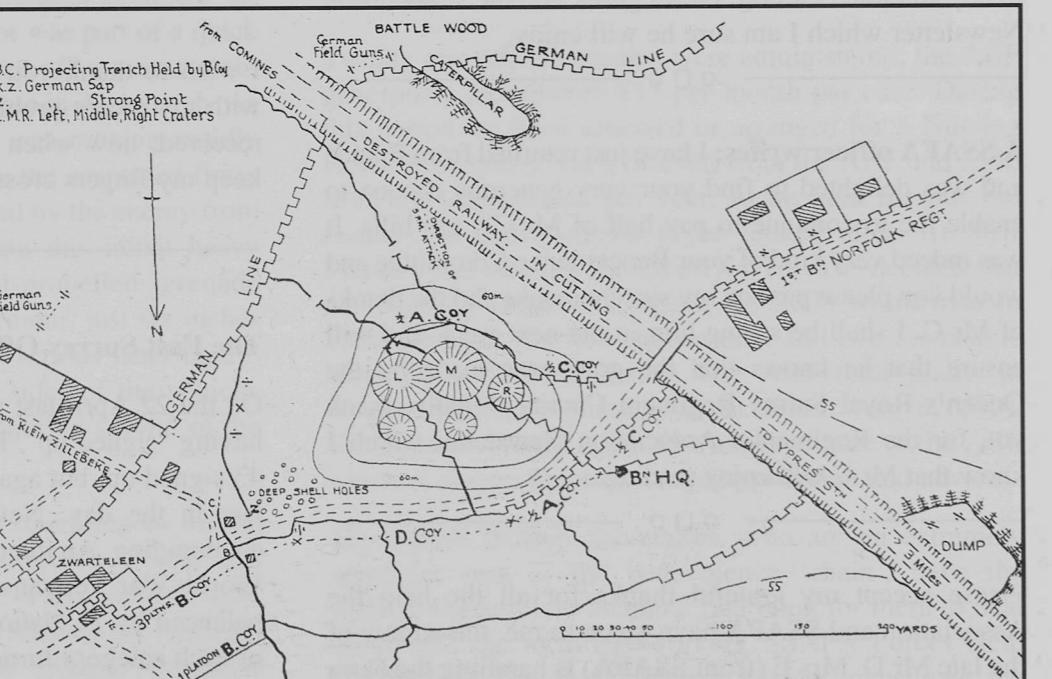


2nd Lieutenant  
Benjamin Handley Geary

Hill 60 was, in fact, merely a low ridge about 250 yards from end to end, formed artificially from the spoil of a 19th century railway cutting. It received its name from the British because of its height in metres on the contour map. It gave the possessor a dominating view towards Ypres.

The British had captured Hill 60 from the Germans on 17th April 1915 following the detonation of large mines under the German positions. The British were forced off the hill by German counter-attack but retook it on 18th April.

The following extract from the War Diary of The 1st Battalion The East Surrey Regiment records the Battalion's part in the subsequent defence of Hill 60:



SKETCH MAP FROM THE REGIMENTAL HISTORY OF THE 1ST BATTALION IN THE DEFENCE OF HILL 60.  
19TH-21ST APRIL, 1915.

*"April 19th 1915.*

About 2 a.m. the Battn. took over HILL 60 position. A Coy. and  $\frac{1}{2}$  C Coy. held the front trenches on the Hill, the other  $\frac{1}{2}$  C Coy. held the front trenches on right of hill up to and including the railway.  $\frac{1}{2}$  D Coy. were in support immediately behind the hill. The remaining  $\frac{1}{2}$  D Coy. held fire trenches on the left of Hill. B Coy. held fire and support trenches on left of D Coy. The Machine Gun Detachment had 5 guns mounted in the front line, one in C Co's trench, covering the right flank of hill; 4 in D & B Cos. fire trenches sweeping ground on left and front of hill. Throughout the day the position was shelled, especially support trenches and communication trenches behind the hill. At about 5 p.m. the Germans opened a very heavy bombardment of all the trenches which lasted for an hour but no infantry attack materialised. The trenches were badly damaged and the rest of the night was spent in repairing the damage and improving the communication between the hill and supports.

*In spite of continual shelling and bombing throughout the night the men worked magnificently and all damage had been repaired by the morning.*

April 20th.

A quiet time till 11 a.m. when heavy shelling of the hill, communicating and support trenches commenced, with great effect, the Germans scoring many direct hits with heavy howitzers. Trenches were blown in and many men killed and buried. During this time Capt. & Adjt. Wynyard seeing some men attending wounded men near a shelled spot, went towards them, moved the men along the trench away from the danger spot, attended the wounded himself and in doing so was blown to bits. During this time the Germans were crawling up their old communication trenches and flinging bombs into our fire trenches, but could make no headway owing to our hand grenades and rifle fire. On the death of Capt. Wynyard, Major Paterson, the Comdg. Officer, sent for 2 Lt. Dymott to take over the duties of Adjutant, temporarily. About 2 p.m. Capt. Wynter, Comdg. B Coy. went forward on to the hill to reconnoitre the trenches held by A Coy. before taking over after dark. During this reconnaissance he was wounded in the leg, and placed in a dug-out for shelter; soon afterwards the dug-out was hit by a shell which caused Capt. Wynter's death. About 3 p.m. the Germans in front of B Coy. attempted to assault that trench, but on rising from their trench were hurled back by hand grenades and rifle fire. In this action, Pte. Dwyer, B Coy. greatly distinguished himself by crawling up the parapet and flinging hand grenades at the enemy, he himself being under a perfect hail of enemy bombs. About this time Lt. Watson who was in the support trench was killed by a heavy howitzer shell. About 3.30 p.m. Lt. Darwell the Machine Gun Officer, was sent for by the Comdg. Officer to go to Bn. Headqrs to take over the duties of Adjutant to the Battn. On arrival there he found Major Paterson, the Comdg Officer, killed, and that 2 Lt. Dymott had been seriously wounded and carried to the dressing station. Now a most terrific bombardment of the position commenced, which lasted for two hours, the hill during this time being a mass of smoke, flame and debris. The enemy employed shells giving off asphyxiating gases freely. The result of this was every telephone line to the rear was cut and communication with the Artillery and Sector Headqrs. made impossible. By this time, every man from the support trenches had been sent to reinforce the fire trenches on the hill and still more men were wanted. In taking up these supports 2 Lt. Norton was killed by a heavy howitzer in the communication trench. Lieut. Roupell, wounded in several places, succeeded in reaching Sector Headqrs. when the bombardment was at its height, and explained to Colonel Griffiths, Comdg. Sector, the situation, asking for reinforcements. Corpl. Harding the Battn. Signalling Corpl. also managed to deliver a message asking for reinforcements to Sector Headqrs. An orderly was sent with the "S.O.S." signal to the Artillery Observing station on the "Dump". The reinforcements arrived about 6 p.m. and Major Allison, 1st Bedfords took over command of the hill position. The bombardment of front line lasted to about this hour and after this all their Artillery fire was directed against reserve and support trenches and lines of approach; this continued well into the night, and abated somewhat about midnight. Throughout the night until 3 a.m. the enemy repeatedly assaulted our trenches on the hill with bombs; only once did they succeed in gaining a footing and then they were immediately driven out. Once during the night the enemy attempted to assault the trench held by B Coy. but were immediately driven back by rifle fire. Lateral telephonic communication between Cos. was restored about 10 p.m. From 3 to 6 a.m. the situation was much quieter.

21st April.

At 6 a.m. the position was taken over by the Devon Regt. 2 Lieut. Davis, who was with his Coy. all through the night on the hill, was killed as he was being relieved. Capt. Huth was killed on the night of the 19th whilst superintending work on the trench held by his Coy. After relief the Battn, now under command of Lt. T.H. Darwell, marched to billets at KRUISSTRAAT, bringing with it the body of the Comdg. Officer, Major Paterson, which was interred later on in the day in the Convent grounds, YPRES. During the morning the following message was received from G.O.C., 14th Infy Bde.

*"Deeply deplore loss of your C.O., so many Officers and men but congratulate the Battn. on the gallant example they have set to all".*

Colonel Thesiger,  
Comdg. 14th Infy Bde."

*The Battalion remained in Billets throughout the day. Total Casualties between 19th and 21st :*

*Killed - Major W.H. Paterson; Capt. A.H. Huth; Capt. D. Wynyard; Capt. P.C. Wynter; Lieut. G.L. Watson; 2 Lieut W.A. Davis; 2 Lieut T.E. Norton. Wounded - Lieuts G.R.P. Roupell; G.H. Wigston; B.H. Geary; 2 Lieuts G.W. Kennedy; C.P. Emmett; C.B. Lugard; A.R. Abercrombie, R.W. Ourrey, - attached, and B.K. Dymott, Indian Army - attached, 42 other ranks killed, 158 wounded and 64 missing, believed killed."*

## Return to the Somme - 2005

(by Major Roddy Mellotte)

In fulfilment of a promise I had made to a couple friends some time ago, I found myself once again en route to the Somme and surrounding battlefields one chilly morning in early March. I have been there on several previous occasions but my fascination for them has not diminished and each trip has produced new, enriching and sometimes extraordinary experiences. This latest one was already proving to be no exception having by then already thrown up some amazing coincidences - and more were to follow.

I planned to show them the popular and well known sites on an itinerary which suited our time and convenience rather than any historically correct or logical route. We were booked into a hotel in Arras on the first and third nights and one in Albert for the middle one. I had set my friends some homework and given them some videos to watch to set the scene for them.

The first coincidence of this trip occurred a week before we set off when I was surfing the TV channels and fell upon a programme called "Time Fliers" on the Discovery Channel about a Sheffield Pals battalion and their training and preparation. A package within it was filmed at a recently opened B&B in Auchonvilliers (inevitably christened "Ocean Villas" by the soldiers) near Beaumont Hamel run by an English lady called Avril Williams. She had been renovating it when she came across some filled-in trenches in the garden and she found various war memorabilia in her cellar which had been variously a dressing station, a shelter and a chapel. Since then, she has refurbished both with the help of various historical societies and produced a glimpse into everyday life behind the front line. A quick search on the internet produced her full details and an e-mail exchange booked us in for a personally conducted tour.

The second coincidence occurred in my office on the day before we left when the Garrison Chaplain, who had no idea of my impending trip let alone my special interest in the First World War, called in to offer me a couple of items for me to "evaluate and keep or present to an appropriate place or museum". They had belonged to his great uncle and consisted of two booklets entitled "Knowledge of War - Every Officer's Handbook for the Front" which had cost 2/6d and "Instructions For The Training of Platoons For Offensive Action". Both were dated 1917, thus indicating that they were published in light of the experience of the Somme battles during the previous year. They are pure 'gold'. The former lists, for instance, "Officer's Kit for The Front" which had been annotated in ink by its owner; it includes some obvious items military kit but also some rather incongruous ones; "one suit of pyjamas, Sam Browne Belt and a Burberry". And this after 3 years of quite appalling life in the trenches. For a mere £20, an officer could be fully kitted out by Thresher and Glenny, and Moss Bros did a special price for 'officers on probation'. Otherwise the book has chapters on Discipline, Drill, Musketry, Topography, Trench Warfare, Billeting, Machine Guns, Interior

Economy and Military Law, Physical Drill and Signalling, in that order. It provides a fascinating perspective on the priorities of life at the time!

The second pamphlet, "Issued by the General Staff", covered organisation and tactics, training and general remarks. If nothing else, it showed that the Army was very much geared up for offensive action despite its enforced pre-occupation of defence in the trenches. The book is full of detailed direction and diagrams and reflects tactical thinking current at the time.

From Calais, we drove directly to Vimy Ridge, just off the E15. Sadly, we chose the one afternoon (Tuesday, then) which the Canadian student guides took off so denying us the opportunity of visiting the preserved underground trenches. In addition to that, the large and impressive memorial was under refurbishment and roped off thereby largely preventing us from seeing the militarily significant ground and view towards Douai - the key to why it became such vital ground to both sides.

Then on to Arras in time to do a tour of the town's ancient tunnels in which many soldiers and citizens lived and survived and which housed at least one hospital. This was a fascinating tour and revealed a particularly interesting document produced by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission but no longer in print. This was a large map of the Western Front with each of the 2500 cemeteries located and highlighted in red thus illustrating at a glance the scale of human sacrifice in that War. Like Ypres, Arras had been flattened during the war but the centre had been rebuilt in precise detail, including the Place des Heros and the beautiful Grande Place.

One guiding principle I have always tried to follow on my trips to the battlefields is to make a connection with some of the soldiers who are buried or remembered there. It adds great significance and meaning to the trip and honours a few of the thousands of graves and lists of names. I had therefore researched a number of casualties whose photographs and obituaries I had access to and we visited some of their graves by way of a small personal tribute. One particular visit was to an Irish Guards second lieutenant, Eustace Lord, aged 19, whose school obituary describes his burial beside apple trees in blossom adjacent to the dressing station where he died. The "small, pretty but ruined village" is rebuilt now but his grave still lies by an orchard with other recognisable features described by a fellow officer and the Chaplain who conducted and reported his funeral to his parents. It was a very moving episode. Indeed, it is such personalised aspects of these trips which discourage me from ever joining one of the many guided tours.

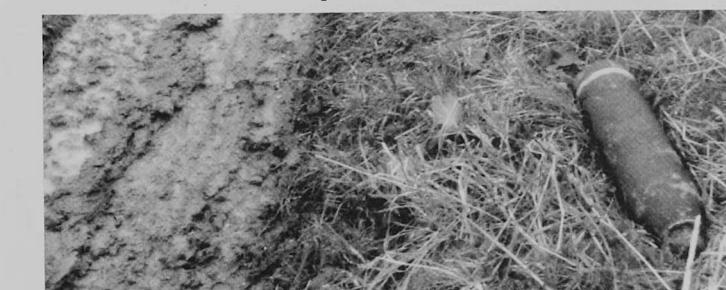
Day two saw us on a circuitous route towards Albert during which we passed through Serre and its rolling hills and making our appointment at "Ocean Villas". Here, we saw the names and regiments of some of its former occupants carved into the cellar walls. Thence on to Beaumont Hamel and its excellent new visitor centre manned by helpful and knowledgeable Canadian students. Another grave in the Y Ravine cemetery (2Lt Stonor

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers) and the site's well preserved trenches provided plenty of food for thought. At the nearby imposing Thiepval Memorial to the 73,357 dead of the Somme who have no known grave, I laid a Queen's wreath beneath the regimental tablet. It also has an excellent and brand new visitor centre offering all manner of memorabilia and shows three thought-provoking films which one can take away in DVD format, at least. Then on to the Tommy Café in Pozières, a rather scruffy and touristy place but contains some excellent trenches, probably recreations, in the garden complete with an amazing amount of genuine weapons and kit.

The nearby Lochnagar Crater at La Boisselle is well worth a visit, if only to give graphic substance to the lengthy tunnelling descriptions in Sebastian Faulkes' novel "Bird Song". We arrived in Albert, re-taken by the East Surreys at bayonet point in 1918, just in time to visit the basic but chilling tunnel museum which includes a mannequin model of Captain William Nevill of 8 East Surreys and his footballs about to go over the top. By then physically and emotionally exhausted, we fell into our hotel and later its excellent restaurant.

Day three was planned to allow us to go into some of the actions in greater detail. This led to the third extraordinary coincidence. We were sitting on the start line for the assault on High Wood reading from Lyn Macdonald's book, "Somme", which is full of veterans' descriptive and detailed descriptions of what happened during various actions. As I listened to my friend reading from the book describing the scene in front of us as it was during an attack, I glanced over and noticed that he was reading the words of one Captain Arthur Agius MC. I immediately recognised the name since he was listed as a survivor in the Downside School memorial book of its old boys who had fought in the war which lay on my lap. It had especial significance to me because I had grown up near to the family of his brother, Captain Tancred Agius MC, in Walton-on-Thames by then a retired Lt Col and a survivor of the Second World War; my first house master at Downside had been their nephew, Dom Denis Agius OSB and one of my son's close friends at School now is a great nephew, Harry Agius. Arthur Agius's raw description of the battle in all its horrific detail suddenly became so much more significant.

High Wood was also the scene of one of the last cavalry charges of the war which, not surprisingly, came to grief in the withering machine gun fire poured down on them from the objective. This prompted me to walk to a cemetery in an isolated position half way up the hill to see how many cavalrymen lay buried. On the way, I came across the shell in the picture which lay beside the track.



I had seen the "iron harvest" before but it usually lay at the side of ploughed fields awaiting collection by the local French or Belgium ATO. This shell looked as if it had just emerged from hiding after all these years. Another small but significant incident of our tour. Surprisingly, there were no cavalrymen buried in the cemetery.

We passed by the cemetery at Bernafay Wood near Montauban and laid a wreath on the grave of 2Lt William Daly of the Rifle Brigade, who was 19, after which we visited Flat Iron Cemetery to lay a wreath on the grave of Cpl Dwyer who had won a VC with 1 East Surreys on Hill 60 at Ypres. He was a brave man indeed but apart from him at that cemetery, it was moving to see the graves of two brothers side by side there although they are by no means unique in that war.

Thence on down to the new "Historial" at Peronne, which actually spent most of the war behind German lines. It is a museum of the whole war, impressively laid out but definitely on the "touch-feely" peace museum model and my unsolicited advice to would-be visitors is make it a low priority.

Our arrival back in our Arras hotel that evening effectively marked the end of our battlefield tour, leaving only the return drive the following morning. It had been a full two and half days packed with many experiences. The saying "time spent in recce is never wasted" could perhaps be updated by inserting the word 'internet' in place of 'recce' although it amounts to much the same thing. Other advice might include beware the tracks in wet weather in an ordinary car - we nearly got stuck - and beware the "genuine" memorabilia available in copious quantities at various sites. One of my friends bought two "WWI" shell cases to use by his fireplace. One later revealed a 1940s date and my ammunition technician at work researched their serial numbers, again on the internet, to confirm that they would have been fired by Sherman tanks!

Anyone who has visited the Somme will recognise much of what I have said. To others, I strongly commend such a trip there as a fulfilling and memorable experience and I would always be happy to offer any advice.

## Association Reception for 1 PWRR



The President presents Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Maer with a scroll  
(picture courtesy of Surrey and Berkshire Newspapers Ltd)



## Association Annual Reunion 2004

## Round The Bend - Yet Again

(by Dr AWG Court)

- though it could, I suppose, just as well be 'up the chaung', if that word still reverberates 60 years on in the minds of veterans. Most likely it will for survivors of the Queen's Royal Regiment in Burma in the Second World War.

When our draft joined the 1st Queen's at Shillong in November 1944 we heard from the seven-year men something of what the battalion had endured and achieved in the previous five years, first with 7th Indian Division on the North-West Frontier and then in the Arakan, on the Ngakyidauk Pass, at Ukhru, Kohima and a dozen other places, all hostile and often deadly.

We were told what to expect when we went down into Burma: ambushes and booby-traps, Jap jitter-parties, malaria, dysentery, jungle sores and foot rot, leeches and scorpions, slime and mud, half-rations and stagnant water when we could get it, and fanatical last-ditch enemies - thousand on thousands of them.

It didn't quite turn out like that. The war had moved on and southward since Kohima, and instead of the gloom and hidden menace of the jungle we had, to start with, the scorching sun and 100 degree heat of the semi-desert central plain and the barren, blistered oilfields. The thick bamboo jungle came later. Until then, the Japs were not lurking behind every tree: they had to be sought out by section patrols and brought to action by companies - not a popular activity, especially for the senior, experienced infantrymen due for repat and demob. The expected cholera, tetanus, typhus, dengue and blackwater fever didn't often materialise, though dysentery and prickly heat tried their hardest to make up for them. The coming of the monsoon about 15th April gave some relief from the heat, while of course bringing the aforesaid slime, mud, leeches, foot-rot and its own brand of liquid misery.

The regimental history tells that 'the battalion drove the enemy down the Irrawaddy' (and lost good men in doing so) 'and fought its last battle of the war at the end of July' in the Sittang Bend; and it was the memory of that historic event, working in my mind for over half a century, that pushed me into taking up the generous offer of the Veterans' Return and going back in November last by courtesy of Piers Storie-Pugh's Remembrance Travel and in his care.

Half-way through the fifteen-hour flight from Heathrow to Rangoon I felt I would gladly have traded it for the lower deck of the old *Athlone Castle* (1944 vintage), but we survived, and next morning, in Rangoon, we arose and shone at 6.30, and by 7.30 we were on the road for the 60 jolting miles to the Sittang Bend - "we" being John Puddephat of Barnsley (ex-1st Queen's, Waw and Thailand), my "carer" (American son-in-law Dennis, son

of a Pearl Harbor and Pacific War veteran), our Burmese interpreter, U Lwin Aye, our driver and myself.

The Sittang Bridge which carried the railway from southern Burma across the river to Pegu and Rangoon is now only a row of piers, for its girders have since been removed and, apparently, re-used to make a new bridge a mile or two upstream. The old bridge, however, holds an unique place in military history, for here, in February 1942, the Burma land campaign began, and by a remarkable coincidence, for the Queen's three and a half years later, this was where it ended. The first battle in 1942 was one of those events which, even in a time when every week brought some new military defeat, seemed to us tragic even beyond the expected disasters of war. The British division defending the east bank of the Sittang had to withdraw over the bridge in the face of overwhelming Japanese pressure, but before all the troops could be brought over, the bridge was blown and the rearguard of more than 1500 men were left to death or captivity. Whatever the rights or wrongs of the action, the story soon became part of army lore and created an impression which even the Fourteenth Army's own hardships could not wipe away.

Early July 1945 brought the Queen's to Waw, east of Pegu, and then by a seven-mile march through the flooded paddy-fields and along the railway track to the east bank of the Sittang, with the aim of cutting off the retreat of the broken Japanese army to Thailand. Our company occupied the village of Payabyo, which stands almost directly under the bridge and is crowned by a pagoda visible for many miles in this flat countryside. The monsoon was at its height and the War Diary for 13 July reported, "Very heavy and continuous rain for last seven days. Day spent on defences. Owing to the waterlogged nature of the ground, defence positions had to be built up above ground." As I recall it, the unrelenting rain and mud rotted the soles of our boots away from the uppers, and when we could take off our sopping socks, we scarcely recognised our feet in what looked like white lumps of sodden bread. Nevertheless, one day Cpl Bill Reed got through to us with a half-track or a Bren carrier, which we gazed at with wonderment and some gratitude.

Still, section patrols went out north and east day after day, on foot and knee-deep in the stinking mud or in the flooded rice fields or in sampans up and down the river, but returned with no enemy sighted. Some of this activity - though a pre-arranged version - was captured by an Army Photographic Unit which came and took about 20 stills, four of which appeared some weeks later in a SEAC magazine, *Phoenix*, and are now in the Imperial War Museum.

Then came a report that the enemy had occupied the village of Posabe on an island formed by an old meander of the river, the "Sittang Bend", and the Queen's were ordered to clear them from the west bank. Our company

was ferried across by "alligator" and we occupied Letpan-thon-bin, a village on the east bank of the island. I cannot detail the movements of each company, but only say that on 24th July, as an NCO in Lt Brooks's platoon, I took out a section patrol, with orders to confirm that the Japs were still in the village, and to reconnoitre but not engage; and the Japs unwittingly obliged us by sending out a patrol stepping high and visible on the bunds across the paddy.

I reported our findings, and the CO very humanely decided, according to the War Diary, "not to capture Posabe but to shoot it up and play a large-scale jitter role." His decision was influenced by the thought that "it was well-nigh impossible to evacuate casualties through four foot of water for seven miles."

A fighting patrol of two companies left Letpan-thon-bin, while the rest set out in the night of 26/27 July to shoot up Posabe, and did it "very thoroughly at 0500 hours" on the 27th; but "by one of those unpredictable chances of war a Jap company had decided to raid Letpan-thon-bin at the same time. Passing the outgoing patrol without either side realising it, at 0400 hours the Japs attacked the two British platoons." So much for careful planning. At 0530 the patrol base reported that the enemy were firmly established in the village. Two sections of HQ Coy and one platoon of 4/15 Punjabis were our only troops left. The CO decided then and there to force march back to Letpan-thon-bin and attack straight away - and this was before dawn, with no artillery support, not even mortars in this morass.

I have no clear memory of the progress of the attack, other than the "whish" of Jap LMG bullets overhead as we lay in the water under cover of a bund waiting for the order to advance. But it was over before the morning was out, if I remember rightly, and a patrol next day found that the enemy casualties included 33 killed. Yet the cost to the Queen's was heavy: 17 killed or wounded, among whom were men of experience. On the 28th a search party returned to Letpan-thon-bin and found the bodies of Sgt Jones and Ptes Jessop, Jeffries and Richards. They now lie in the military cemetery of Rangoon.

A few days later a report of the battle appeared in the *Calcutta Statesman*. Among much else, it said that "without any kind of support, the troops slogged forward. It was sheer copybook 'rough-housing', both sides going all out. In the words of Pte V. Abell, of Poplar, 'Bullets were coming all ways at us.' RSM Simmons, of Battersea, said, 'I have never heard so much lead flung about in my life. The air was thick with it and the noise was indescribable.'

"But the British troops continued their advance until after savage fighting the village was captured... The battalion commander said, 'I have been in attacks off and on during most of the war, but for such endurance and guts

I have never seen anything like it. I am very proud of my battalion.'

This was, I believe, the very last action fought by a British battalion in Burma, though "mopping up" - not without cost - continued right up to VJ Day and beyond.

I cannot tell the immediate sequel to the battle, because the following day I was evacuated to Rangoon military hospital, where I remained for three weeks, and after convalescence I remained in Burma and did not see the battalion again.

But though long distant in time and place, the Queen's and the Fourteenth Army (and the neglected Twelfth) have remained bright and clear in my mind. And that is why, nearly 60 years after the event, our little party brought back the Lamb and Flag to the Sittang Bend. We spoke the Kohima Epitaph and the Lord's Prayer and, although we could not cross to the island, laid a poppy wreath on the water of the Sittang in tribute to those whom we had left behind, "the lads who will never grow old."



While we were thus engaged, a little crowd of villagers had gathered to watch us, and there they stood, silent and shy, but gently smiling in their Burmese way that I recalled with pleasure from all those years before. "We were here as soldiers 60 years ago", I explained. "Sixty years?" said the headman. "I was not even born then" - which made us feel not so much ancient as grateful for having been given that long. May we hope that one day, when conditions are more favourable, a simple monument can be erected on the banks of the Sittang to the men who died in the First Battle of Burma and the Last?

The rest of the week took us to Mandalay and Maymyo - not Queen's country in 1945 - but otherwise the visits were enthralling: Mandalay Hill, the Ava Bridge, Mingun pagoda and great bell, hill-station Maymyo and the superb tropical landscape gardens. On Saturday, back in Rangoon, we attended an impressive memorial service in the cathedral, (where the memorial to 1st Queen's, erected by the regiment in 1945, still stands in the grounds, though it sadly needs more than a touch of white paint and black lettering.) After the service we were privileged to be guests of the British Ambassador, Ms Vicki Bowman, at a garden party, where she presented Veteran's badges to the Burma Star holders.

Sunday morning saw the culmination of our pilgrimage with early morning services in the two cemeteries, Rangoon and the larger Kyauktan.



With semi-formal dress, blazers and ties, we didn't need telling that the temperature was 100 degrees, but strangely enough it did not seem any more oppressive than a hot day at home. (Perhaps the week had brought not only memories but rejuvenation!). It hardly needs saying that the cemeteries are tended with the same care and devotion as those in Europe, all the more moving because they are so far from home, and the staff are helpfulness itself, so that one can find a particular grave in a matter of minutes. The Queen's graves are not grouped together but in both cemeteries, but John and I were able to find several comrades and friends we had known, including the Letpan-thon-bin men and John Fisher and my friend John Treays, and lay poppies and sprays.

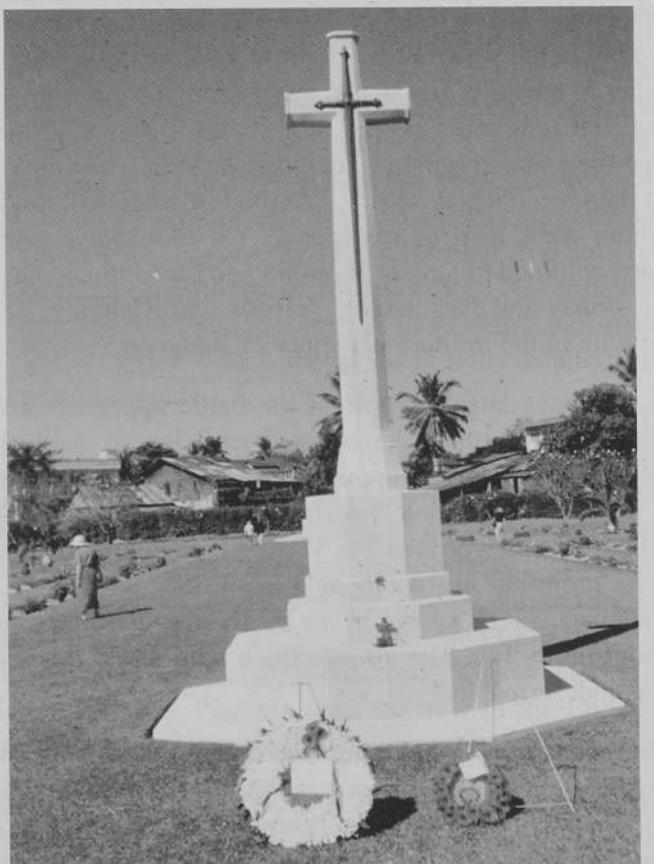


My Burma Star Association branch (West Somerset) had entrusted me with a wooden cross, suitably inscribed, and it was laid on the base of the Memorial Cross and then taken into permanent display. At the same time my carer Dennis laid a spray in memory of the men and women of Somerset who died in Burma.

On top of all this we also met one veteran resident in Rangoon (Yangon), Mr David Daniels, whose record of service in Burma is now probably unique, for he fired a Bofors ack-ack gun in defence of Mingaladon airfield under the first attack by the Japanese on Christmas Day 1941. It has been a privilege indeed to know this fine gentleman, a living and lively link with the long, long past.

For many of us this return to Burma has been as unforgettable as 60 years ago, and this time, of course, without a mortal enemy or "hard lying in kharab stations" or the danger of some deadly disease. Whatever your memories, if you go you will find that much is familiar and unchanged, but there is a flood of colour and vibrant life in contrast to the drab wartime years; and what will win you above all else is the universal friendliness and helpfulness of a devout and still unspoilt people. Whatever the charges against the present government, it has not, so far, allowed the Western world's blatant consumerism and exploitation to take hold.

Who can say whether we will ever go again? But it is something to hope for, save for and live for - so however old or young you are, let me recommend you to put your health and trust in the hands of Remembrance Travel and go ahead!



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### The Quetta Earthquake - 31st May 1935

In 1935 the 1st Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment was stationed in Quetta where, in the early hours of the 31st of May, an earthquake occurred resulting in very heavy loss of life among the Indian population. The subsequent Government of India Report into the Quetta earthquake noted that of Quetta's estimated population of 70,000 "... between 15-20,000 perished in a minute at 3 o'clock that fateful morning".

The earthquake occurred at three minutes past three, on the morning of the 31st May, at which hour the Battalion was on night operations and had just left Bateli Bridge on the Chaman Road on its way back to barracks. This bridge was subsequently found to have sunk three feet below road level. Marching along a good tarred road when the earthquake occurred, most of the Battalion either sat or fell down, and, resuming the march immediately, were not aware of the havoc which had been wrought in the city during that brief period.

On arriving in barracks at about six thirty it was learned that the Ammunition Depot was in ruins; the guard furnished by the Battalion on this depot sustained one casualty, a sprained ankle. Although much of the barracks themselves was more or less intact, the buildings were later declared unsafe and demolished. No serious casualties were incurred by the Battalion nor by the garrison as a whole, except the Royal Air Force which suffered very heavily.

At 7.30 a.m. the Battalion was called upon to proceed to the city for rescue work. On their arrival they found that the city was completely razed to the ground and corpses were lying everywhere in the hot sun; every available vehicle in Quetta was being used for the transportation of the injured.

The area allotted to the Battalion was the Civil Lines, which included the Residency, the post office, the civil hospital, and the western end of the city. Battalion Headquarters was set up in the Residency, company areas were allotted and the work of rescuing the injured and removing the dead proceeded. A party of fifty, later increased to one hundred, was despatched to the cemetery to dig graves.

The system was to search methodically from house to house looking for the injured and the dead; the injured were removed to the hospitals and the dead were laid out on the roadside and collected in carts. Europeans and Anglo-Indians, some unidentified, were taken to the British cemetery, put into trenches dug by our men, and covered over quickly whilst the Padre read the Burial Service. Indians were removed in the same way and taken to a burial ground outside Quetta.

In the search men could only be guided by faint cries or by relatives who reported having heard cries. Frequently men, women and children were brought out

alive; others were dead when reached; some unfortunately were killed by the fall of masonry during digging; some who had been buried were able to crawl out unhurt; others were so crippled as to be unable to move.

Owing to the narrow streets being full of bricks and rubble it was impossible to get ambulances up, and the men had long journeys carrying the injured over piles of bricks to the nearest point where ambulances could collect. At 8 p.m. it was dark and, with no emergency lighting, further rescue work was impossible. The men, having been on the go for nearly 40 hours without rest, marched back to barracks.

They were back in the city at first light the next day. It was a very hot day, the digging and burying was terrible and the smell was hourly becoming worse. The pitiful requests of the survivors and the sight of dead bodies added to the strain. There was still a party at the cemetery burying Christians- Mohammedans were taken out to their burial place by cart and the Hindus burned their dead at any convenient place.

On the third day the Battalion continued working in the city, still digging out live people, but fewer than before. The men now wore medicated pads over their mouths and noses. The chief job, however, was the removal of survivors from the city. It had been decided that Quetta was to be completely evacuated. A big refugee camp was opened up on the racecourse; tentage, water and food were supplied. By evening it was apparent that even if anyone was still alive they would never be found; practically all survivors had been evacuated and the city was empty except for military patrols.

On 3rd June, the fourth day, the city was sealed and no one was allowed in the city except on duty; a cordon of soldiers surrounded the area and for the next two days patrols were sent through the city clearing out anyone seen and shooting stray animals.

Between the 4th and 12th June all British women and children were evacuated, thousands of refugees left Quetta, and over ten thousand casualties were sent away by train and by air.

During the first day or two, when everything was disorganised, the knowledge that beneath those bricks thousands of rupees and valuables were buried attracted looters from as far as forty miles away; martial law was proclaimed which meant that looters could be shot on sight; a cavalry screen was posted outside the city to prevent them coming in, but even so some looters were caught.

In recognition of its services in connection with this catastrophe, the Battalion received a Certificate of thanks from Lord Willingdon the Viceroy and Governor General of India. The message read:

### "Quetta Earthquake 1935"

Deeply impressed by the gallant and devoted conduct of the officers and men of His Majesty's Forces in Quetta during and after the earthquake of 31st May, 1935, I, Freeman Earl of Willingdon, Viceroy and Governor General of India, record on this certificate the thanks of the Government of India to 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment for their share in the work of rescue and succour, which saved so many lives and mitigated so much suffering on that occasion."

The medal of the Order of the British Empire for gallantry was awarded to Lance Corporal George Henshaw and Private Arthur Brooks. These awards were later to be converted to the George Cross on the institution of that award in 1940.



Lance Corporal  
George Henshaw

Private  
Arthur Brooks

Certificates were presented to Sgt Chapple, Sgt Manners, L Cpl Dakin, L Cpl Gowman and Pte Rainsbury.

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### The Regimental Golf Society

(by Lt Col Peter Roupell)

The Society began as The East Surrey Regimental Golfing Society with a meeting at Fullwell Golf Club, near Hampton Court in 1930. Eleven members attended and the entrance fee for the two day meeting was 10/- (50p) which included green fees of 2/6d (12½p) a day.

General Sir John Longley was elected the first President, General Dodgson the first Captain and Major 'Halo' Heales the first Hon Secretary and Treasurer. All three

played an active part in establishing the Society and the happy and relaxed atmosphere its meetings have always enjoyed. The object of the Society was agreed as:

- (a) to encourage esprit-de-corp by bringing together serving and retired members of the Regiment.
- (b) to help maintain our close relationship with the Royal Marines, and
- (c) to encourage golf and to raise the standard of play.

After 75 years the Society can congratulate itself on (a) and (b) but (c) is dubious.

Three sons, pictured below, of founder members are playing members of the Society today, Peter Mason, Peter Roupell and David Dickins.



The first meeting of the Society at Richmond Golf Club, Sudbrook Park was in 1934 and since then the Society has met there every year except for 1939-1947 when there were no meetings. Meetings were held over two days, 36 holes each day and from 1933 two meetings were held each year.

With the Amalgamation in 1959 the officers and retired officers of the Queen's Royal Regiment were welcomed to the Society, to its continuing benefit. The friendly welcome they received was, and still is, much appreciated by those concerned. The Society was renamed The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Golf Society. The entrance fee for a meeting was still 10/-.

In 1965 it was agreed that, when the second day of the Autumn Meeting coincided with the Regimental Dinner, the afternoon round should be restricted to 9 holes "so as to give players time to array themselves suitably for attendance at the Dinner." (White tie and tails at Claridges). The Minutes show that, when the proposal was discussed, some (senior) members were initially "not disposed to agree"!

In 1972 it was agreed that both the Spring and Autumn meetings be for one day only. More recently it was agreed that meetings be restricted to one round, allowing a later start and a longer lunch.

The Society played its first match against the Royal Marines in 1930 and this has normally been an annual event and a relaxed and happy one. It has been agreed that the match in 2005 will be the last. The Society therefore has the unusual record of never having lost more than one match a year and frequently being unbeaten!

There are a number of keenly contested trophies at both the Spring and Autumn meetings and many distinguished names are engraved upon them, in recent years those of Peter Mason, John Davidson and Michael Power appearing with commendable regularity. In 1947 Major 'Halo' Heales presented the Veterans Halo for an unusual Stableford competition with an extra point awarded for every year over 65, now raised to 70. The first winner was Brigadier George Roupell who won it a further 5 times. Since then the chief winners have been Alec Mason, 14 times between 1953 and 1975, Geoffrey Drane, 14 times between 1959 and 1975 and, more recently, Toby Sewell, 11 times to date, starting in 1978.

Prizes have always included a golf ball for 'the hidden hole'. Recently the hole has been so well hidden as to have become lost and a ball is awarded to each competitor, making the Society very 'politically correct' with no losers.

In 1995 the Society celebrated its 65th anniversary and those attending received an engraved pocket knife by courtesy of Peter Mason. At times there had been speculation as to whether the Society would survive until the end of the century and it was gratifying that the AGM in 2000 had the highest attendance ever.

The Minutes of the AGMs have always included expressions of gratitude to the Trustees and individuals who have subsidised the Society and also expressions of gratitude to the Honorary Secretary and Treasurer, much abbreviated as it is they who wrote the Minutes.

Without doubt the Society's greatest good fortune has been those who accepted the task of Honorary Secretary and Treasurer:-

- Major 'Halo' Heales, 17 years from 1930 to 1947.
- Major Geoffrey Drane, 20 years from 1947 to 1967.
- Major CW Summers, 4 years from 1967 to 1971.
- Major Basil Crutchfield, 14 years from 1971 to 1985.
- Major 'Vic' Sheppard, 6 years from 1985 to 1991.
- Lieutenant Colonel Foster Herd, 14 years (so far!) from 1991 to date.

It is very remarkable that in its 75 year history the responsibility for running the Society has fallen on the shoulders of only six people and one can only hope that they were and are aware of how much their efforts are appreciated.

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### The 30th Annual Reunion of the East Surrey Regiment

The reunion (all ranks, all battalions) will take place at the New Drill Hall, St John's Hill, Clapham Junction on Saturday 1st October 2005 from 1300 to 1900 hours. Wives and guest are always welcome. Tickets, which must be shown at the door to gain entry and buffet lunch, are £5 each. Those wishing to attend should write to the reunion secretary (11 Sayerland Road, Polegate, East Sussex BN26 6NU) enclosing a cheque payable to "East Surrey Regiment Reunion Association".

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**PAY ATTENTION  
CAN  
YOU  
HELP?**



### Your help needed by The Surrey History Centre

Surrey History Centre, which looks after the regimental archive including photographs, is planning a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funding to enhance the collection and widen access to its wonderful treasures. The project has three main elements:

firstly to create a detailed catalogue of all the records so people wishing to research the regimental history or trace a former member can find their way around the collection more easily;

secondly, to enrich the collection by recording the experiences of soldiers of the regiment(s) who served in World War II, in Palestine after the war, in Malaya and elsewhere (both on active service and in peacetime);

thirdly to use copies of documents and photographs in the archives and extracts from the sound recordings to create a 'virtual archive' of sources relating to Surrey and the two world wars which will be mounted on the internet for both teachers and pupils to use.

If you served with The Queen's Royal Regiment or with The East Surrey Regiment during World War II or later and would be willing to talk about your experiences, whether of combat or of soldiering in more peaceful conditions, the History Centre would be delighted to hear

from you. Your name and the arena in which you served will be logged and if the Heritage Lottery Fund approve the project you may be contacted (probably in the first half of 2006) by a skilled oral history recorder to set up a meeting. Please don't be hesitant to come forward: your personal experiences of some of the most significant events of the twentieth century will be of enormous interest and importance to future generations and will form a vitally important component of the permanent archives of the regiments.

In addition Surrey History Centre would like to know if there are former members of the regiment who would like to assist with the cataloguing of the archive by numbering and listing in detail the contents of the 312 photograph albums, which stretch back to the 1850s and are full of wonderful images of life in the various outstations of the British Empire.

The work of cataloguing would take place at the Centre in Woking under the supervision and guidance of a professional archivist. You would not need to devote much of your time, but if you would be prepared to commit to a regular stint (perhaps one half day a fortnight) for a few months, the History Centre would be very pleased to hear from you.

Those wishing to put their names forward should contact:

Michael Page,  
Surrey History Centre, 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking,  
Surrey, GU21 6ND  
(tel: 01483 518756; email: [mpage@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:mpage@surreycc.gov.uk)).

Or the Association Secretary

private/corporal/sergeant with no link to their band role. He would be grateful for information to include name, rank, band and casualty/award detail together with the source of the information. He is only seeking details of musicians serving in established battalion, regimental or corps bands; this does not include drummers, buglers and pipers.

Contact: S Mason, 82 Southwell Road, Camberwell, London SE5 9PG



#### Lance Corporal M T (Mick) Duan writes:-

Could you please include in the Newsletter a 50th Anniversary photo of National Service intake 5503 Talavera Training Platoon passing out, Kingston Barracks, East Surrey Regiment Depot, April 1955.

Most of us joined the 1st Battalion at Shorncliffe, took part in the Royal Tournament. Then to Brunswick, Germany.



It was all a great experience and one I have never regretted, it has stood me in good stead all my life.

I am still proud to be a Surrey.

**Mr Stephen Hagen** is researching the Burma Siam Railway. He is particularly seeking information about Lieutenant Colonel GE Swinton MC who was commanding officer of the 2nd Battalion The East Surrey Regiment and was Senior British Prisoner of War in Thailand 1942-1945. He would be grateful for any information about the career and movements of this officer after returning to England in 1945 and about surviving family members. Contact: Mr S Hagen, 7 Constable Road, Gainsborough Park, Haverhill, Suffolk CB9 7FQ.

**Mr Stephen Mason** has been asked by the UK branch committee of the International Military Music Society to collate details of British Army musicians who died on active service or were awarded decorations. The aim is to publish this information to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall in 2007. A major problem concerns the rank shown on casualty records or in the London Gazette, where individuals may well be listed as

#### Henry Theobalds writes:

It is with great sadness that I read in the current issue of the Newsletter of the death of Lieutenant Colonel Walter Brown MC on 10th May last.

I joined D Company of the 1/6th Bn. The East Surrey Regiment at Cassino in the April as a Lieutenant and platoon commander when he was seconded to the East Surrey Regiment as D Company Commander with the rank of Major. He was great leader and gallant gentleman and very popular with all ranks. I served with him throughout the Italian campaign including our transfer to Greece during the civil war in December of 1944.

On 19th September 1944, the Company took the lead in the battle for a hill at the ridge of the mountain San Fortunato. I was wounded in the thigh and arms but the Company under the leadership of Major Brown took possession of the hill and took a number of prisoners. For that gallant leadership he was awarded the Military Cross. All those who served with him will be proud of doing so. He will be sadly missed.

#### Ken Tuson writes:

It was with sadness that I learnt in the Association Newsletter of the death of Alec Bromige. I first met Alec in 1951; we were both then 15 year olds employed by city stockbrokers and soon became firm friends. Alec was affectionately known as 'Brom' and we were both army mad. 'Brom' was in the Army Cadet Force in London and I was an army cadet in Essex.

When it was time for us to be called up for national service we both decided to become regular soldiers in an infantry regiment. 'Brom' was always keen to join the East Surrey Regiment and persuaded me, an Essex lad born and bred, to join him in what he described as "the finest regiment in the British Army". 'Brom' was slightly older than me and by the time I reported for basic training at the Depot in Kingston upon Thames he was already a lance corporal. We both became corporals and for the next year were instructors training numerous intakes of national servicemen.

I was transferred from the Depot in late 1955 to join the 1st Battalion in Brunswick, Germany. My last contact with 'Brom' was when he arrived at the battalion in Germany in 1957. He had been promoted to sergeant by then and I was leaving Germany for the Depot at Kingston for demobilization. I had signed on for 7 years (3 years with the colours and 4 years in the reserve). I believe 'Brom', had signed on for the full 20 plus years. After leaving Germany my knowledge of 'Brom' is vague.

'Brom' was a great character, always immaculately turned out, and was well liked and respected by all that knew him. I will always treasure the memory of the times that we spent together. My condolences go to his family.

## Regimental Deaths

**Blatch** - On 28th December 2004, Bryan Anthony Blatch who served as a National Service Officer with 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment 1956/57 in Malaya, Singapore and West Germany. He was in the Overseas Civil Service 1959-1970 and subsequently worked in university administration except for three years, 1977-1981, when he was in the Sudan as administration manager of a sugar project.

**Brown** - On 6th November 2004, Corporal J Brown who served during WW II with 1/5th Bn and 2nd Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

**Cluer** - On 10th December 2004, F Cluer (known as "Judge") who served with 6th Bn The East Surrey Regiment.

**Collins** - On 23rd September 2004, Brian J Collins.

**Comrie** - On 25th September 2004, Lieutenant James Fenn Comrie (see obituary).

**Cook** - On 26th January 2005, at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, In-pensioner Cyril Lawrence Cook who served with The East Surrey Regiment from May 1942 until April 1947, including in North Africa and Italy.

**Day** - On 29th January 2005, Major J T Day (see obituary).

**English** - On 13th March 2005 aged 90, Major Robert William English. Having been commissioned into The East Surrey Regiment, he joined the 2nd Bn in 1940, serving in China and Malaysia. In 1941 he joined the Special Forces. He served with them until 1945, including in China, Burma, India and Ceylon, and was with 204 Military Mission. He retired from the Army in 1946.

**Enwright** - On 20th January 2005, Staff Sergeant Stan Enwright. He enlisted as a boy soldier with The East Surrey Regiment in 1939, serving with the Regiment until transferring to the Intelligence Corps in 1949.

**Fowles** - On 22nd March 2005, after a long illness, Lance Corporal Jack Fowles who served with 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment during WW II.

**Garrard** - On 23rd October 2004, Ernest Frederick Ronald Garrard who enlisted into The Queen's Royal Regiment in 1942 and was subsequently posted to the Royal Signals. He was discharged in November 1945.

**Gaul** - On 10th October 2004, Corporal Alec Gaul who served with The Queen's Royal Regiment. He was amongst those evacuated from Dunkirk and his subsequent active service included the D-Day landings, Belgium and Holland.

**Geeves** - On 24th December 2004, Sergeant Walter Vivian Geeves (see obituary).

*Holder* - On 7th April 2005, Lance Corporal Frederick George Holder. He enlisted into the 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in 1939 and his service prior to his discharge in March 1946 included Burma and India.

*Kendall* - In January 2005 aged 90, Lance Corporal Bill Kendall who served with 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment during WW II.

*Morgan* - Tecwyn Cole Morgan who served with The East Surrey Regiment after enlisting in 1938.

*Morley-Clarke* - On 8th January 2005, Captain Ian Morley-Clarke (see obituary).

*Petch* - In Autumn 2004, J Petch. Having originally joined the Territorial Army at Cranleigh in 1939, he was subsequently a member of C Company 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. He was secretary of the Cranleigh Reunion until it was disbanded in 2003.

*Roadnight* - On 8th November 2004, Captain (QM) William Kennet Roadnight MBE (see obituary).

*Salenders* - On 4th December 2004 Major Richard Salenders who served with 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Swain* - On 28th March 2005, Graham William Arthur Swain. His service between 1942 and 1947 included a period with 2/7th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. He was for a number of years National Secretary of the Italy Star Association.

*Whittle* - On 15th March 2005, aged 89 years, J A Whittle. John Whittle enlisted into the Royal Berkshire Regiment in April 1940 and transferred to the 2/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in June of that year. After two years in the UK he went with the battalion to Iraq in August 1942, later moving into North Africa and Tunisia, where in April 1943 he was wounded; he was invalided out of the service in February 1944. Before joining the army he had spent nine years as a domestic servant to a number of influential people, including Lady Astor. After his discharge from the Army he went to Ruskin College, Oxford, where he obtained a Diploma in Economics and Political Science. He went on to become a Local Government Officer with Surrey County Council until retiring in 1977, after 27 years service. He is survived by a son and a daughter.

## Regimental Families

*Howard* - On 25th October 2004 aged 84, Rose May "Bubbles" Howard, beloved wife of Maurice Howard who served with 2/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Kealy* - On 13th March 2005 aged 92, Nancy Kealy, widow of Colonel John Kealy DSO DL and mother of the late Major Michael Kealy DSO.

*Morris* - On 21st January 2005, Pamela Daphne Morris, beloved wife of Captain Gordon Morris.

*Petch* - In Autumn 2004, Wyn Petch, beloved wife of J Petch who served with 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Ramsey* - On 20th January 2005, Elsie Ramsey, widow of Tony Ramsey MM.

## Obituaries

### Lieutenant James Fenn Comrie

Jim Comrie (as he was known) was born on 15th September 1919 in Vancouver, Canada. He was educated at North Shore College in North Vancouver.

At the outbreak of war, Jim volunteered and initially served with the London Scottish then with 9 Commandos. He was then commissioned and was posted to The Queen's Royal Regiment, joining the 2nd Battalion at Habbarani in Ceylon (now Sri-Lanka).

He was posted to C Company and commanded 14 Platoon, C Company under the command of the late Major Dick Merrit. They were attached to 51 Column R.A. and took part in Major General Orde Wingate's 2nd Chindit expedition into Burma in 1944. C Company later rejoined the 2nd Battalion in Burma. He was a highly respected officer who adapted well to command of soldiers in the jungle.

After being de-mobilised from the British Army in 1946 he returned to Canada and then continued soldiering happily with the British Columbia Regiment (Duke of Connaughts Own) from 1946 to 1954. He worked for Pacific Press from 1947 to 1978 where he was held in high regard.

He never forgot his comrades in 2 Queen's, maintaining contact with two brother officers up to his death. He subscribed to the Newsletter, and the Editor regularly received letters of appreciation and 'tit-bits' of his service with the Queen's. He died of lung cancer on 25th September 2004 at his home near Roberts Creek BC.

Our sincere condolences go to his family and we remember him as a Canadian, who adopted The Queen's Royal Regiment and served with great distinction with us.

LW

### Major J T (John) Day



Many who served with John Day will know little or nothing of the fullness of his life. Enlisting in 1947, he was soon an APTC Sgt Instructor at "P Coy", Airborne Forces Depot, Aldershot. I first met him in 1951, when 1 SURREYS were in Tripoli and John

was the PTI of 4/7 DG stationed nearby in Sabratha. I was immediately struck by his boyish enthusiasm and "officer-like" qualities. His tour with 4/7 DG was followed by a return to "P Coy", then commanded by Major SCAN Bishop of The Surreys who, also noting John's qualities, told him to "go for a commission" in The Surreys. This he did successfully, joining 1 SURREYS in Shornecliffe in 1954.

In BAOR in the summer of 1957 he managed 1 SURREYS' highly successful athletics team. Miriam, his wife, recounts that, at that time, their house seemed to be always full of young, fit, hungry officers. He was thrilled when the team won the BAOR Championships and came second in the Army Championships. Returning to Bury St Edmunds with the battalion John was introduced by David Froud and Hugh Greatwood to golf. He became a lifelong enthusiast.

Posted to Malta in late 1959, sailing became his passion. Next he was posted to Jamaica in 1961 where, because his family were keen on riding, he took over the Army stables, began playing polo and represented the island against teams such as Argentina and Texas. 1965 and on to Malaysia, to a new regiment the Rangers. This was a very busy period of recruit training, patrolling the Thai border and operating in Borneo.

In 1968 he became DOPT South East District then Chief Instructor at The Army School of PT. In 1973 he was asked to skipper "British Soldier" on the first leg of the Round the World Race from Southampton to Cape Town and later on the Cape Town to Rio race. In 1974 he became Deputy Commander and Chief Instructor of The Joint Services' Mountain Training Centre, where he learnt to climb and ski. Alas, he suffered a mild heart attack in 1977 and, fearing a bleak future of "desk jobs", he took redundancy, but continued sailing with The London Sailing Project (LSP) which helps young, often under-privileged, boys.

John and Miriam bought a hotel on the Norfolk coast, where he became secretary of the RNLI and bought a boat of his own. Built in Buenos Aires, he sailed it to the UK single handed. In "Sea Soldier" he and Miriam took holidays in the Canaries and the Azores and sailed the Atlantic. In 1992 the LSP chose John to skipper "Rona II" across the Atlantic to Puerto Rico and Boston to mark the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's voyage.

John's sailing included taking people from the charity "Sailing for The Blind" out on "Sea Soldier". Having to give up his work for LSP in 1988, when he was diagnosed with cancer, he nevertheless carried on sailing and playing golf, the latter with a dispensation at the golf club to wear his shirt outside his trousers to allow him to wear a chemotherapy pack on his back!

John, who died on 29th January 2005, was an enthusiastic man, who grasped every opportunity that

came his way and inspired so many youngsters. I am proud to have served with him.

GGS

### Sergeant Walter Vivian Geeves



Walter Vivian Geeves (Wally) was born on 24th April 1917, a member of a large family of six brothers and two sisters. He was always considered to be the quiet one of the family.

What was not so well known about him was the fact that he was a deeply religious man who always kept a bible near him and endeavoured to read it daily.

He was conscripted into the army on the 15th February 1940. After training, he joined the 1/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. He served with the BEF and returned to the United Kingdom after Dunkirk. He then moved to the Middle East with the battalion and was taken prisoner by the Germans in the desert. He was moved to Germany and spent the rest of the war as a POW.

He was demobilised in 1946 but he decided to re-enlist on 21st March 1947 and then joined 1st Bn The Queen's. He served in BAOR and moved with the battalion to Malaya, serving as a platoon sergeant in C Company then A Company. For his work as a platoon commander in the jungle he was Mentioned in Despatches in 1957. He was discharged from the Army in 1962 and was employed in a civilian capacity with the Ministry of Defence.

He was, and remained, a quiet man throughout his service: fiercely loyal to his Regiment he was a life member of the Association and subscriber to the Newsletter. His many friends in the Regiment will mourn the passing of this gentle giant.

LW

### Major WP Hughes D'Aeth TD



Major Peter Hughes D'Aeth who died last November aged nearly 92 served the Regiment with distinction during the 1939-1945 war. After school at Haileybury he joined the Royal Exchange Assurance Company in the city in 1932. He had already joined the HAC and then was commissioned into

The Queen's Royal Regiment in June 1939, joining the 2/7th Battalion. He remained with the Battalion throughout, in UK, in Iraq in the autumn of 1942, and on

in March/April 1943 to join the 8th Army at Enfidaville where in command of the Carrier Platoon he particularly distinguished himself.

At Salerno, as a major, he was in command of a company, and finally to Anzio in February 1944. Here 2/7th Queen's were ordered to relieve a US Army battalion, 2/157th Infantry, who were holding out well to the front of the existing F.D.L.S. and had become surrounded. The Battalion got forward to do the task, although incurring some 50 casualties mainly due to an air attack on the way in, but were then themselves cut off. Peter Hughes D'Aeth commanded his C Company during the operation with coolness and gallantry, initially clearing the enemy holding some farm buildings in the middle of the position. However with no re-supply and ammunition running low, after 48 hours the Battalion was ordered to get back as best it could. Only four officers and 17 ORs made it, and Hughes D'Aeth was amongst the many, as he described it, who became compulsorily "attached to the Wehrmacht".

On returning from being a POW he returned to the city, also rejoining the HAC as a major, serving with them until 1951. He then continued service by becoming a Special Constable in the Metropolitan Police, serving as such for 19 years; his duties included the special occasions of HM The Queen's coronation and Winston Churchill's funeral.

Following retirement from the city he took on the task of running the St Barnabas Homes (now College) for retired clergy. He did this for five years before retiring with his wife to Broadstairs. He had married on 'The Glorious 1st of June' 1946, and with his wife brought up a large family of one son and five daughters.

Peter Hughes D'Aeth was a very nice man, whose life was an example of selfless service. He was much respected, always calm and collected, coping with all situations with a special good humour and positiveness. He remained throughout his life a member of the Regimental Association, attending 2/7th Queen's Reunion each year while he was still able.

JWS

#### Captain I W Morley-Clarke

Ian Morley-Clarke was commissioned from the ranks into The Queen's Royal Regiment in 1946 having enlisted in 1944 whilst a pupil at Wellington College. In 1947 he volunteered for secondment to the Parachute Regiment with which he served until the early 1950s when he returned to The Queen's Royal Regiment. He was a training officer at Stoumont Barracks. His subsequent service prior to leaving the Army in 1955 included a period as a Ground Liaison Officer at RAF Gutersloh and active service in Malaya. He was an active sportsman, playing cricket and hockey for the Regiment, as well as representing the Army and Combined Services at hockey.

LW

After leaving the Army he embarked on a career in publishing, managing several independent companies which produced over 700, mainly hardback, book titles. Particularly renowned for military history, he also specialised in sport and music. He retired in 1998. He passed away on 8th January 2005 aged 77 after a short illness at the Royal Surrey County Hospital

#### Captain (QM) William Kennet Roadnight MBE



Bill Roadnight was born on 25th November 1905 into a large family. At seventeen he joined the East Surrey Regiment but could not settle to Army life and his father purchased his discharge. Two years later he rejoined, this time into The Queen's Royal Regiment. He joined the Signal Platoon of the 1st Battalion and moved with

them to China. He became a clerk in the Orderly Room and later was the Orderly Room Sergeant. He had an amazing memory for numbers and knew all the personal numbers of the soldiers in the battalion. This gift was present throughout his life and service career. He married his wife Lillie in 1935 and she went to India. Both were present when the Quetta earthquake took place.

He left India just prior to the outbreak of the Second World War and following further promotions was posted to the 2/5th Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment as Regimental Sergeant Major. With his Commanding Officer, Lt Col John Whitfield, they were among the first to land at Salerno. Later in the Italian campaign he was commissioned and moved to the 2/6th Battalion as Quartermaster. He remained with them until the last few months of the war when he was wounded.

Returning to the UK he was demobilised in 1946. When the TA was reformed, he again enlisted and was a Sergeant in the Quartermaster department of 5 Queen's. His civilian employment at that time was as an administrative officer. Later he was commissioned again and served for a number of years as QM to 131 Brigade at Surbiton. He had been awarded an MBE for his services during the war. His wife died in 1980. In retirement he lived quietly in Guildford, collecting stamps and cultivating his garden. He was a very patient man with a wonderful sense of humour. An excellent cricketer, he played for the Regiment and later qualified as an umpire. Above all, his pride in the Regiment and loyalty to it were major themes in his life. In 1996 he went into Gifford House at Worthing where he was very happy. He died at Gifford House on 8th November 2004. The Regiment extends their sympathy to his sister and other members of his family.

LW



## Publication

### Monty and Patton - Two Paths to Victory

by  
Mike Reynolds

has just been published. This is what it says on the inside of the cover:

"Of all the Allied generals who caught the headlines in the Middle East and Europe in WWII, two stand out. Neither held supreme command, but both had a magnetism and flair that set them apart from their contemporaries. Both achieved outstanding successes on the battlefield, both went out of their way to court the headlines and both made serious mistakes that attracted adverse publicity. Their names were Bernard Montgomery and George Patton.

There were numerous similarities in their early years. Born 'scorpions', two years apart, they had chequered careers at military academy, were commissioned within a year of each other and they were both wounded in France in WWI. However, there were important differences - one was born into the family of a Victorian churchman, the other into a wealthy American family; one became an infantryman, the other a cavalryman, and as such they displayed the basic characteristics of these two combat arms - Monty, for very good reasons, careful and meticulous; Patton dashing and devil-may-care. But despite these differences, Monty and Patton demonstrated similar traits throughout their lives - a total dedication to their careers, professionalism, selfishness, arrogance, a desire for the limelight and an unhesitating use of friends in high places to further their careers or achieve their aims. Neither was a particularly nice person - but then generals are not meant to be nice in war. Needless to say they did not like each other.

This book summarizes and compares the lives of that 'little fart' Monty and that 'foul-mouthed lover of war' Patton, but does not attempt to prove that one was a greater man or commander than the other. It shows clearly that they were both great generals and that they both made essential contributions to victory in Europe in WWII. Eisenhower said of Monty: 'I don't know if we could have done it without him. It was his sort of battle. Whatever they say about him, he got us there'; and of Patton he declared: 'His presence gave me the certainty that the boldest plan would be even more daringly executed. It is no exaggeration to say that Patton's name struck terror at the heart of the enemy'."

The book is available in all good bookshops at £25. If you would like a signed copy please send a cheque for £20 to Mike Reynolds at: 8, Grassington Road, Eastbourne, BN20 7BU

This will of course include postage and packaging.

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### Branch Secretaries

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# Quetta Earthquake 1935

