

MAY 2008



THE QUEEN'S ROYAL SURREY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER





Forecast of Events

2008

4th September	Regimental Golf Society Match against Royal Hampshire Regiment – High Post Golf Club
6th September	6th(Bermondsey), 2/6th and 2/7th Queen's Royal Regiment OCAs Combined Reunion.
9th September	SALERNO DAY
14th September	First Surrey Rifles Association Church Parade
20/21st September	First Surrey Rifles Association trip to France/Somme
4th October	The East Surrey OCA Reunion, Clapham.
6th October	The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Officers' Club Ladies' Luncheon - Clandon.
8th October	Regimental Golf Society Autumn Meeting – Woking
7th November	The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association Annual Reunion - Union Jack Club.
20th December	BRITISH BATTALION DAY (1941).

2009

10th February	SOBRAON DAY (1846).
23rd April	YPRES DAY (1915).
7th May	Regimental Golf Society Spring Meeting – Sudbrook Park
16th May	ALBUHERA DAY (1811).
1st June	THE GLORIOUS FIRST OF JUNE (1794).

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Covers:

The covers show selected photographs representing 100 years service of the Territorial Army whose centenary is being celebrated in 2008. The front cover top photograph shows Lt Col F D Watney TD and Officers of 4th Queen's in 1909: the bottom photograph (courtesy of Ian Greathurst) shows Lt Col Foster Herd leading the Veterans' contingent marching up Guildford High Street during the ceremonies on 5th April 2008 to mark the Centenary.

The back cover montage features in the centre the final trooping of the Colours at Woking football ground on 12th July 1963. They were the Queen's and Regimental Colours of the 4th, 5th and 6th Bns. The Queen's Royal Regiment (TA), the 6th Bn The East Surrey Regiment (TA) and the 23rd London Regiment (TA). The surrounding pictures are, clockwise from top left: 1/5th Bn Queen's Royal Regiment Machine Gun Platoon, Lucknow, 1915: Corporal R B Pass of 1/5th Queen's with Frank Gillard the BBC commentator (Corporal Pass was selected to broadcast on behalf of 21st Army group prior to the King's broadcast on Christmas Day 1944. A pre-war Territorial he had served in every major operation of the war. Tragically Corporal Pass was killed in the final fighting round Hamburg): D company 1/6th Bn The East Surrey Regiment, Rawalpindi, 1915: 1/6th Surreys on road to Gioiella: 1/5th Queen's in the Victory Parade in Berlin 1945: 3 Queen's Surreys Courage Trophy Competition winners, 1966: 1/6th Queen's entering Tobruk.



President's Notes

It was marvellous to see so many of our TA veterans on parade in Guildford to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the raising of the Territorial Army. Our Regiments' marching contingent led by our Chairman Lieutenant Colonel "Foster" Herd looked splendid, having climbed the hill up the High Street as they gave eyes right opposite The Guildhall. They looked as if they had done an hours drill every day since leaving the Army, such was their bearing. Well done the marching contingent. It was also very good to see so many of our Second World War veterans, looking so smart, as honoured guests in the front row during the short service. Thank you Ian Chatfield for getting so many together and for arranging the 'warming up' parade in The Royal Oak prior to the parade proper!

As a Regiment we can be very proud of our Territorial Battalions – at one time every town in Surrey would have had a TA Centre, now we have just A Company 3 PWRR in Farnham. Many of A Company have done tours in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Before the end of 1915, 23 TA Battalions from our former regiments were serving - how times have changed, today's TA infantry for the whole Army is just half that number. In the Second World War six Queen's and two East Surrey TA Battalions were in France in 1940. Our TA battalions all played a significant part in North Africa, Italy, the advance through Western Europe following the D Day landings and the final surrender of Germany. It was very right that 1/5th Queen's took part in the final victory parade in Berlin in 1945.

It is an opportune moment to thank our Territorial Trustees for their continuing support to our Territorial Army and Cadets.

You will see elsewhere in this Newsletter the obituary to RSM Tommy Atkins who died just before Christmas. His book "Toil, Tribulation and Triumph" (on sale in Museum £2.50) is one of the most humbling and moving autobiographies I've read. After a rotten childhood, he joined the Queen's at Stoughton Barracks where he set his heart on becoming RSM of the Depot. He achieved this ambition before retiring. He always looked on the Regiment as his family - it gave him everything and he was very proud of his Regiment. A couple of days before he died I went to see him in Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice in Farnham; he promised me that he would have the area cleaning sorted out up there before my arrival!! Such was his courage and cheerfulness!

Tony Ward

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Benevolence

Major Rogerson has continued to act as Benevolence Secretary at RHQ PWRR and we are most grateful for his work on our behalf. During 2007 89 cases were investigated and 69 individual grants-in-aid were approved (of these 12 cases were to former embodied Territorial members). The Association helped to provide 15 further electrically powered vehicles, two orthopaedic chairs/beds and contributed to nine disabled home adaptations. The Charity paid out £28,978 as individual grants-in-aid through RHQ PWRR and a further £400 was spent to purchase vouchers as Christmas gifts for annuity holders. The Army Benevolent Fund (ABF) provided a further £1,900 in General Grants. Of the 20 cases not receiving a grant, local Councils/Charities or other Regimental Charities assisted 10 after we had contacted them. Seven cases were not receiving such allowances as attendance, mobility, pensions credit or rent rebate.

Fifteen ABF Annuities were administered; the ABF generously contributed £60 per month per case. During this period we renewed or arranged for two Nursing Home Fees grants, each of £1,300 from the ABF and £500 from the Regimental Charity per year, to be paid for our old soldiers or their widows to be looked after. The ABF total grants in support, including Nursing Home Fees and annuities, were £15,300.

SSAFA/Forces Help Society and The Royal British Legion investigate the majority of our cases and we are particularly grateful to their caseworkers 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, BLESMA, Not Forgotten Society and the Ex Services Fellowship Centres.

The Regimental Charity Trustees are conscious of the continuing increases in the cost of living and of nursing home fees. From 1st January 2008 the maximum individual grant in one year which the Benevolence Sub-Committee can authorise without referring to the Trustees was raised from £750 to £1,000 and the annual Regimental Charity grant towards Nursing Home Fees to £1,000 per case.

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Donations

The Regimental Charity is primarily dependent for its income upon the dividends from its investment portfolio. However the Charity Trustees are extremely grateful for donations which are received from individuals from time to time. In particular a recent bequest from the estate of the late Vic Aukett was received: this legacy has paid for the two new engraved flagstones which were dedicated in the Regimental Chapel at Guildford Cathedral during last years annual Association church service.

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Frank's Story

(By Colonel Tim Rogerson)

Friday 25th April 2008. Anzac Day in Australia and New Zealand; the day we Australasians celebrate the bloody defeat we received in Gallipoli at the hands of Attaturk's Turks. Each successive year the crowds of mostly young people get bigger and bigger.

In Waikanae, my hometown, I joined the proud throng of veterans; colourful medals clanking on their proud but shrunken chests. We marched to the local War Memorial Hall where we were addressed by the Chief of Naval Staff. I wore my East Surrey regimental tie.

After the service the marchers were invited back to the Waikanae Club where free beer was being served. On the table behind ours was an octogenarian in a wheel chair. Frank Weston was his name. He had bright laughing eyes and his wife Doreen was solicitously in close attendance. He spotted my tie and said "I was with the 1st East Surreys in North Africa, Italy and Austria." Fascinated, I moved in to talk to him and agreed to meet him the following Sunday to hear his story.

My wife Joanne and I met Doreen and Frank at the Waikanae Country Lodge, the house where he is well cared for. Doreen visits every day from their nearby home. They are a beautifully attuned couple who have been married for over 58 years. The passing years had not put him in the wheelchair, but a fall in the kitchen at home where his head caught the edge of their metal stove. The fall damaged Frank's brain stem but his humour and early memories remain undiminished.

When we met him in his warm room he was sitting up expectantly, surrounded by dozens of photos depicting their son, daughter, daughters-in-law, grand children, and great grand children. On the table were copies of "Algiers to Austria" by Cyril Ray, the history of the 78 Division in the second World War, "The Monastery" by Major Fred Majdalany of the Lancashire Fusiliers, and an excellent booklet called "Cassino" describing the four battles of Cassino and the parts played by the 1st and 1/6th battalions of The East Surrey Regiment. Frank so obviously has an enduring love of his regiment.

Frank was born on 16 March 1924. Before joining up he was a dispatch rider in the Home Guard. He got a speeding ticket on one occasion and was fined. He joined up in November 1941 and was at Bone in North Africa aged 18.

When I asked Frank if he remembered his regimental number he rattled off 14319828 faster than a sten gun firing a short burst.

Frank's maternal grandfather, William Elsten was also in the East Surreys. There is a picture of him in the Clandon Museum.

Frank trained in Canterbury at Wemyss barracks, living above the stables filled with horses. Training was carried out in Shornecliff, Dover, Hythe, Durham and Scotland before sailing to North Africa. There were 7,000 troops aboard the SS Orion.

Frank and the East Surrey Regiment were part of the 78th Division, known as the Battleaxe Division after its distinctive yellow designation. The Division was part of General C W Allfrey's V Corps.



Arthur Weston

Frank served with the battalion in the last stages of the North African campaign then on to Sicily, up the East Coast of Italy with the long battle for Cassino and finishing with the battle of Sangro.

Until May 1944 the Commanding Officer was Lieutenant Colonel H B L Smith MC. Frank said the fighting was such that you often did not see the C.O. for a month at a time.



'Titch' Simper

Frank's best mate in the East Surrey Regiment was "Titch" Arthur Simper. They did everything together. In the latter stages of the Italian campaign Frank contracted hepatitis whilst on the front line and was evacuated to hospital in Florence. Whilst Frank was in hospital "Titch" was killed while out on patrol. Frank would certainly have been with him had he not been ill, as it was "always Weston and Simper".

Other East Surrey's whom Frank recalls are Bert Fleet who worked with Red Cross going into No Man's Land time and again to bring out the wounded. "He was," said Frank, "a very brave man". Two others were Cliff Martin and Gary Grant, both captured by the Japanese in Singapore.

After the fighting had finished, Frank served in Austria and then Greece. It was whilst in Austria that "we took over hundreds of horses that the Germans had used for transport". Although Frank did not ride he was dragooned into the newly formed horse company and challenged to ride from Vienna to Klostenneuberg, some 13 kilometres to the north. He took to riding as a duck does to water and was soon teaching others to ride. Frank's horse was an impressive 17 hands and the company, under Major Stewart-Francis, were engaged on patrolling the Yugoslav border.



Arthur Weston on board "Blaze"

On being demobbed in 1947 Frank immigrated to New Zealand, and after a stint working in the Huntley coalmines and then a timber mill in Hamilton, he pressed the Immigration Department to employ him in his original trade as a butcher. So it was that as a butcher this octogenarian raised his loving family with his lifelong mate Doreen alongside him.

As we left the Waikanae Country Lodge I turned to my wife Joanne and said, "Now that is just the sort of soldier I'd have liked to have had alongside me in a trench during any battle."

Frank would be delighted to hear from anyone he served with:

Frank Weston

Waikanae Country Lodge

394Te Moana Road

WAIKANA

Wellington, New Zealand

Eisenhower, Hannibal and the Surreys in Tunisia

"The author, Bryn Evans, is writing a series of articles on the campaigns undertaken by the East Surrey Regiment in World War 2, from Operation Torch and the invasion of Morocco and Algeria, through the Tunisian, Sicily and the Italian campaigns, and into Austria. Bryn is writing these articles in conjunction with visits to these countries and some sites of major battles. The articles will form the basis for a book that puts the Surreys' odyssey in the context of the countries, and the perspective of history. Where appropriate, and timing and space permit, we will publish further articles in this series in subsequent issues."

Frankfurt Airport – March 2008

While waiting in Frankfurt Airport for a late night flight to Tunis, it occurred to me that it was maybe from here in November 1942, that many German troops were airlifted via Rome, Naples and Sicily to hurriedly reinforce the Axis forces in Tunisia. On 7 November 1942 the first Allied operation of World War II, Operation Torch, had invaded Morocco and Algeria in North West Africa.

Why was I making the visit? The 1st Battalion of the East Surrey Regiment had been in the Algerian landing, with my father-in-law Harry Skilton amongst them. I wanted to get some understanding of what he and the 1st Surreys had achieved in the Tunisian campaign, and place their story in the context of the country and its history.

Invasion - The Eisenhower and Hannibal Connection

Earlier in 1942 the 1st Surreys trained as part of the 78th or Battleaxe Division, at first Holdom Castle near Dumfries, and then in the Trossachs bordering Loch Lomond. Then on leaving the Clyde, the invasion fleet sailed past the Ayrshire Coast and Culzean Castle. Sealed in a safe on each ship were their orders and destination.

No-one could have guessed that, after the war, Culzean Castle would honour the Operation Torch Commander-in-Chief by establishing the Eisenhower Museum. The Surreys also could not have known that they were beginning an odyssey that would take them over ground that had seen Hannibal's campaigns in the Second Punic War in 218 – 202 BC between the Romans and the Carthaginians. Indeed their first goal was to be Tunis, the site of ancient Carthage itself.

It seems incongruous to connect the names Eisenhower and Hannibal, for they conjur up images of epoch making wars, some two thousand years apart in Europe and North Africa. So why speak of them in the same breath? It is well documented that Hannibal was Eisenhower's boyhood hero. In Operation Torch, the 1st Surreys unknowingly embarked on a series of campaigns that would link the exploits of these two great generals.

From Algeria the Surreys and the Battleaxe Division would eventually fight their way through Tunisia, Sicily, the length of Italy and into Austria to the foot of the Alps. In many ways it would retrace in reverse much of the route of Hannibal's battles against Rome, as he led his army across the Alps then south through the Italian peninsula, before returning to Carthage to make his last stand.

African Landfall – First Algiers then Tunis!

"Nous somme les Americaines!" blared from a hand held loud-hailer. It was around midnight on 7 November 1942 as the 1st Surreys waded ashore a little to the west of Algiers. Unanticipated sea drift meant they were beached miles from their target area. Theirs was one of three landings in Operation Torch at Casablanca and Oran by the Americans, and at Algiers by an Anglo-American force. Attached to the 78th Division and the Surreys were a few American officers, who had been tasked with shouting a misleading identification claim, to give the impression that the whole force was American. Vichy France in collaboration with the Third Reich still controlled North Africa, and it was hoped that they may be more disposed to surrender to US forces.

The Surreys were fortunate to find no opposition in their own first amphibious landing of the war. Perhaps the American ruse had an effect, for they soon reached their objectives, the two villages of Castiglione and Fuka, and even a Foreign Legion garrison at Kolea offered no resistance. From there the Surreys set off on a 25 mile march to the Bois de Boulogne area north east of Algiers, to be ready to advance into Tunisia.

On 17 November the 78th Division, part of the British 1st Army, began its advance on Tunis, where German forces under General von Arnim were re-grouping. The French Resident-General was allowing German reinforcements from Italy to pour in, and by the end of November they were to number around 20,000.

The Surreys began a 450 mile forced march, that at the start on leaving Algiers "...wound through a country that looked like a garden" (Moorehead), but later took it through parts of the Atlas Mountains. As part of 11 Brigade with the 78th Division, the Surreys crossed the Tunisian border, and began to move down the Medjerda Valley. They would soon have to live up to that name, the Battleaxe Division.

Medjerda Valley Visit – March 2008

Even after having read of the rich fertility of the Medjerda River Valley in the travel guide books, I did not expect the lush green of the landscape. The drive of around 120 Kms south west from Tunis through the Medjerda Valley to the Roman site of Dougga, is often the first journey taken by tourists outside of the capital. It is claimed that the Medjerda Valley at one time supplied most of Rome's grain, and made Carthage the third largest city in the Roman Empire.

The valley floor undulates through continuous expanses of olive groves, vineyards, and the freshness of early Spring corn. Either side are hills and mountains, some cloaked with pine trees, many bare and rocky, and in winter snow-capped.



The Valley and rocky peaks

The Medjerda River Valley is still one of the most fertile in the world. In his celebrated accounts of the North African campaign, "African Trilogy", the war correspondent Alan Moorehead spoke of wildflowers in the valley's foothills growing "...in startling unbelievable shades of vermillion, canary yellow, sky blue, and in mad African luxuriance. Higher still snow gleams...right around the mountains." (Moorehead)

The Surreys take Beja

In November 1942, some 80 Kms down the Medjerda Valley the Surreys' incursion came up against Axis forces at the strong point of Beja. Following an initial assault by British paratroopers of Blade Force, the Surreys occupied the hilltop town without much resistance. Not far to the south lay the evidence of a much earlier invasion, the extensive ruins of the Roman towns of Bulla Regia and Dougga.

On my drive up the Medjerda Valley in the early Spring of March 2008, I caught a glimpse at Dougga of the startling scale of the Roman colonisation of North Africa. Although Dougga is a showcase Roman city, and now a UN heritage site, it reveals layers of previous civilisations. The town theatre is cut into the hillside in the manner of the Greek design, and it was originally a Numidian hill town. Yet on the lower slopes can be seen a Carthaginian mausoleum tower, with Phoenician, Persian and perhaps Egyptian features. Rome conquered Dougga, and built it into a fortress city that commanded the Medjerda Valley between Beja and Medjez El Bab.

I can only assume that the Surreys had scant time to appreciate the scenery and archeology as they pressed on down the valley towards Tunis, and in weather that was far different to the Spring and Summer seen by most tourists. At the time in World War II it was falsely assumed by many of the general public, and likely to be still so today, that the Tunisian campaign was fought in the desert. In fact the major part of the fighting took place in the mountains and valleys of northern Tunisia. Much

of it was in the winter rains, when the Surreys would have felt the icy chill of the Scirocco wind.

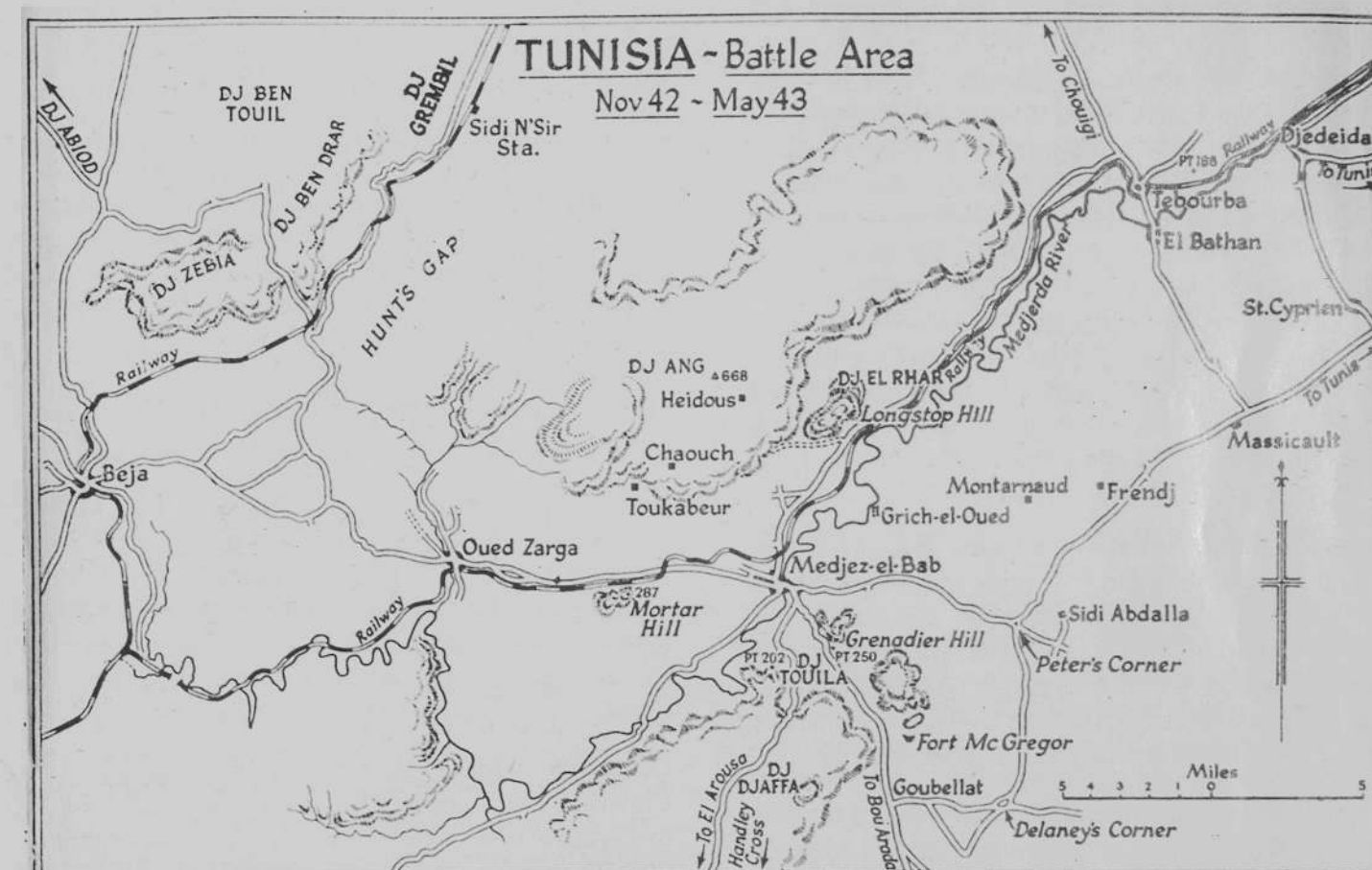
The Surreys take Medjez el Bab

But while the rain was holding off the Surreys forged on down the Medjerda Valley. Tunis had to be taken before German reinforcements could be established, and joined up with Rommels's Afrika Corps. The Battleaxe Division met serious defenders at Medjez el Bab, an ancient market town and a vital forward defensive outpost for Tunis. The Surreys' forward patrols took casualties, some fatal. In attempts to cross the Medjerda River and take Medjez, other Battleaxe battalions of the Lancashire Fusilliers and Northants were thrown back with heavy losses. But some 10 miles to the north at Djedeida, two light tank battalions from the British 17/21st Lancers and the US

Dougga to Medjez el Bab – March 2008

As you drive from Dougga to Medjez el Bab on a Spring day, with a clear blue sky overhead, and yellow and mauve flowers set against the green of the fields, you can see how the French painters of the "école de Tunis" in the 20's and 30's were so influenced by Tunisia's vivid colours. It would seem there could be no greater contrast with the desert farther south, or with the grey of wintery England.

In the WW2 Tunisian campaign of November 1942 to May 1943, there must have been many of those British and American troops, who would have silently wondered how and why they had come to fight and die in such a place of luxuriant life. If any of them had any time, however fleeting, to appreciate the beauty, and the colour



1st Armoured raided an airfield destroying more than 20 enemy planes. That setback together with the combined shelling and bombing of Medjez caused the Axis forces to begin a premature withdrawal of their lines. So on 26 November the Surreys led a further attack with a battalion of American tanks, and occupied Medjez.

It is claimed that Hannibal said, "Whoever has Medjez-el-bab has the key to the door, and is the master of all Tunisia," (Atkinson) or words to that effect. The Tunisian campaign over the next seven months would in many ways pivot around Medjez, and prove its strategic value to be as true in 1942/43 as it was in the days of Rome and Carthage.

of life around them, they surely must have confronted this horrific paradox. There surely could be no worse place to fight, and "...it is hard to imagine the din and the agony of bombs dropping, tanks burning, and men dying." (Tomkinson)

In the town of Medjez el Bab, you get the impression that there is probably no original building left from that time. Medjez el Bab and Longstop Hill to its north were strategic strong points, and fought over throughout the six month campaign.

On the outskirts of Medjez there is a cemetery of some 5,000 graves, immaculately maintained as usual by the War Graves Commission. As I walked along some of

the rows, it seemed to me that headstones of the Surreys were everywhere. Those that fought and died there and in the surrounding hills would not have known it, but their Tunisian victory coming so soon after El Alamein would confirm that the tide had turned.



The Surreys battle for Tebourba

Later on that same day of 26 November 1942, less than three weeks since they had landed near Algiers, the Surrey infantry had pushed out again north easterly 15 miles from Medjez el Bab. Many were new to being under fire, but despite the increasing casualties the pace could not be slackened. They were approaching Tebourba, another small town only 20 miles from Tunis on the north side of the steep banked Medjerda River, and in the midst of a flat countryside full of olive groves. The town, in ruins from heavy shelling and bombing, and the nearby bridge over the Medjerda at El Bathan, were only lightly defended. By nightfall both were in the hands of the Surreys. Tunis was only a day's march away.

So at first light the Surreys even found someone's eggs still sizzling in a frying pan – the night had hidden the last of the enemy's sudden flight, and in the dawn's sun they could see the distant minarets of Tunis. The Surreys, now reduced to around 500 men, hoped to be reinforced very quickly. General Eveleigh, the 78th Division commander, even had thoughts of entering Tunis on the next day.

But there was to be no time. By mid-morning of the 27th November the Germans counter-attacked with some 50 Panzers, and air support by Stuka dive bombers. With only an out-gunned Royal Artillery unit, the Surreys took heavy losses in fighting off the attack, yet destroyed eight enemy tanks, and sent the German armour into a tactical pull back.

Tebourba however lay astride the only route that German tanks could take through the hills from Tunis to attack Medjez. For the next seven days the Surreys, together with troops of the Northants and Hampshire Regiments, fought a series of desperate defensive battles against enemy armour. Eventually Panzers cut the road to Medjez, leaving the Surreys and Hampshires nearly surrounded. Orders to retreat had them slipping away in the night from around Tebourba, but "...a lot of men...were wandering everywhere, there was total confusion," so that those that could found their way back in twos and threes.

The Germans were committed to defending their build-up in Tunis, and intended driving the Allies back from both Tebourba and Medjez. Although superior German armour had driven the Allies from Tebourba on 4 December, "... the redoubtable tenacity of the East Surreys had enabled First Army to withdraw to Medjez...", and the immediate German counter attacks had been held. But in just a few weeks of combat since they landed in North Africa, the 1st Surreys had been cut in two. By 5th December when they regrouped in Medjez, the Surreys comprised only 23 officers and 350 other ranks. They had paid dearly in fighting the Axis forces to a standstill, losing more than half their original strength of 796 in casualties.

Though the audacious assault by 78th Division to move on Tunis was a gamble that was lost, the Surreys' bravery had gained time for the Allies to consolidate and hold on to Medjez. They would never lose it, and the town would prove to be a strategic strongpoint for the rest of the Tunisian campaign, and a start line from where the final offensive would eventually break through to Tunis.

Longstop Hill, the First Battle – December 1942

After the loss of Tebourba the Surreys fell back into reserve to regroup. The Allies however meant to press on, and made a decision that some months ahead would rebound onto the Surreys. The offensive for Tunis was to resume on the night of 23/24 December 1942, with a plan to capture Djebel el Ahmera, some six miles north of Medjez, and known as Longstop Hill. Until it was seized nothing could move down the valley to attack Tunis.

However heavy winter rains had arrived, "Not ordinary rain, but the wild torrential rain of Africa." (Moorehead) Tanks sank up to their turrets in the mud, and at times it was too heavy for even mules to move supplies. Although it brought about a cancellation of the Tunis offensive, it was decided that the attack on Longstop Hill must go ahead.

During the night of 23/24 December and the following Christmas Eve, Longstop Hill was taken, lost, retaken and lost again in fierce fighting by the Coldstream Guards and the US 18th Infantry. On Christmas Day morning after the second German counter attack, the Allies withdrew to Medjez with over 500 casualties.

The Germans named it Weihnachtshügel, Christmas Hill, and it would block any Allied advance in the Medjerda Valley for the next six months. In the end the Surreys and the Battleaxe Division would be called upon to shed their blood in a second momentous battle for Longstop Hill.

Eisenhower and the site of Hannibal's last battle

Meanwhile in his first forward move into Tunisia with his HQ staff from Algeria to be nearer the hostilities, Eisenhower met with General Anderson, commander of the British 1st Army on Christmas Eve at Souk el Khemis. Recent defeats and the calling off of the Tunis offensive had made Eisenhower dejected. In London and

Washington rumours were circulating that he was to be replaced. Churchill expressed his concern to Roosevelt of the "...unfavourable events in Tunisia." His chief of staff, General Allen Brooke, thought Eisenhower "... as a general is hopeless." (d'Este)

Souk el Khemis was 20 miles south of Beja on the north bank of the Medjerda River, and just 40 miles north of Zama, where Hannibal had lost his final battle to the Roman General Scipio Africanus that ended the Second Punic War in 202 BC. Yet here in a bizarre coincidence, where the Carthaginian General, the hero of Eisenhower's youth, had fought for the last time, Eisenhower was now only just beginning his very first campaign. On Christmas Day morning when he learnt of the loss of Longstop Hill, he must have thought of how close by was Zama, that final defeat for Hannibal.

Yet Eisenhower held onto his command. For the moment the Allies had gained the strategic upper hand, and their force build-up would continue. Could it be that the Surreys and the Battleaxe Division, had helped launch their commander on a path that would bring the Allies their ultimate victory? Only further battles lay ahead for the answer, but for now the rain had brought a winter stalemate.

The Visit to Chungkai War Cemetery at Kanchanaburi on the River Kwai

Ever since I had found some old documents in my mother's house after both my parents had passed away I had decided that one day I would visit a place that George had served during the war.

George was my mother's brother and had been a Private in The East Surrey Regiment, joining before the war had started and serving in the Sudan, China and finally being captured at the surrender of Singapore. Following their capture the Battalion was dispatched to Thailand to work on the infamous Death Railway. It has been almost impossible to trace where George was forced to work apart from just before he was sent for transportation to Japan via Singapore as a slave for the Japanese. After the war his Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel G.E. Swinton, wrote to George's mother explaining what he had discovered about his death. He also said that George had been with him for a short period at Chungkai prison camp near Kanchanaburi. I had always thought the letter was a wonderful act of closure both for the CO and for my Grandmother. I could imagine him writing many such letters after tracing as best he could what had been the final outcome for many of his men.

On a trip to New Zealand in February 2008, 64 years after his death, Rosemary and I therefore decided to stop off at Bangkok and visit Chungkai War Cemetery. I had obtained a poppy wreath from the local British Legion in Southampton and a suitable inscription was placed in

the centre explaining that George was not buried here but was killed on a death ship somewhere off Manila, but that he had passed through Chungkai and it was the last time he had been seen.



Kanchanaburi is where the famous bridge over the River Kwai (Thai spelling is Kwae) is situated and is not too difficult to get to from Bangkok. There are tours organized that will take you to see the tiger temples and the waterfalls and other tourist sites. Tourist will also be able to walk across the new bridge over the river. On the site of the old bridge which was destroyed by British and American bombers is a museum called the JEATH Museum. This is an acronym of Japanese, English, American, Thailand and Holland (the Scots, Welsh and Irish seemed to have been missed out). It stands high up on the banks and the main display is a hut made from bamboo similar to that built by the prisoners as their accommodation. The long hut is filled with photographs, paintings and letters from ex-prisoners. The drawings and paintings give a vivid picture of life in the camps and are very direct. Standing overlooking the River outside the hut is a life size statue of a Japanese who was an interpreter for the Japanese Military Police serving in the PoW camps. The inscription explains that after the war he became a Thai Buddhist monk and started a peace movement for Thai students.

We had decided that we would hire a taxi from Bangkok to drive us to Kanchanaburi as tourists no longer went to Chungkai. It was a very hot day and the 80 mile trip is fraught with danger from Thai drivers who appear to have little or no fear. The cemetery is an oasis of well kept lawns and blossoms, very neat and tidy lying just up from the banks of the Kwae Noi River. Now it is a very peaceful place with well kept grass banks sweeping down to the River. It was difficult to imagine what it was like 64 years ago. I would liked to think that George may have looked out at the same view we could see across the river at the distant hills, which looked so peaceful and beautiful, but I should think he would have had other things on his mind.

We placed the wreath on the main monument at the head of the cemetery and took some time to try and find any

references to the East Surrey Regiment. We could only find one plaque which was for Private R.W. Abrahams who died on the 27 July 1943 aged 29. There are 1,740 war dead in the cemetery made up of 1,384 British, 313 Dutch, 37 Malayan and 6 Indian. The Australians were exhumed and reburied in the Kanchanaburi War Cemetery towards the end of 1945. We found the midday sun very hot and I tried to imagine the conditions the men had to endure then.



On our way back to Bangkok we visited the Kanchanaburi cemetery which has now been engulfed into the developing town. Again it is beautifully kept with immaculate lawns and blossoms; the grass cut and smartly edged around the 6,982 stones. Again we looked for any references to the Regiment but in the short time we had available we could only find two; L/Cpl S.T. Sanders who died on 25 March 1945 aged 30 and Private E.G. Hookey, 9 February 1945 age 30. I am sure there are many others but we were unable to locate them in the short period we had available.

A total of 16,000 allied prisoners of war lost their lives when this railway was built along with 100,000 Asian slave labourers. 6,540 British soldiers, sailors and airmen were killed building the railway. It had been estimated by the Japanese that it would take five years to build the 414 kilometer railway through the jungle and difficult terrain. Construction of the railway began on the 16 September 1942 and was completed in only 16 months on the 25 December 1943. Every kilometer of railway cost the lives of 38 allies. It is worth noting that the British had surveyed a proposed railway linking Burma and Thailand

but it had abandoned the project owing to difficult terrain, endemic disease and high monsoon rainfall.

In Memory of 6458150 Private George William Cudd 2nd Bn, East Surrey Regiment who died aged 28 on Thursday, 21st September 1944 in the hold of the Toyofuka Maru, a Japanese slave ship, sunk by planes from an American aircraft carrier 80 miles north of Corregidor, Manila. George had served in the Sudan, China and Singapore. His name appears on the Singapore War Memorial in Kranji War Cemetery, along with 24,000 others who have no known grave.

Tony Clatworthy

Bangkok 12 February 2008

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Vevey (St Martin's) War Graves Cemetery

(by George Redfern)

In November 2007 I went to Geneva for a short holiday. My stay coincided with Remembrance Sunday and on checking local web sites I found that two services were available. The first seemed to be aimed primarily for the expatriate community in Geneva and the second was to be held at a Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery in Vevey, a town on the Lake about 100kms from Geneva. I decided to go to Vevey because a War Graves Cemetery in a neutral country seemed unusual.



Accompanied by my daughter and a grandson we arrived at about 1030 and soon some 10 or so others arrived including another family group, all properly sporting Poppies. At 1045 when there was no sign of officialdom we checked the Visitors Book and found that the Service had in fact been held on Sat 10 Nov. We therefore organised ourselves into a mini parade and held 2 minutes silence at 1100.

There are two Regimental graves in the Cemetery. One is for L/8964 Pte PS Hutchins of The Queens who died on 29 Oct 1918:



and the other for 204753 Pte AC Harris of The East Surrey Regiment who died on 18 Sep 1918.



The reason for the existence of the Cemetery in Vevey is explained in the following extract taken from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission web site:

"In the year 1916, agreements were made between the Swiss Government and the French, British and German Governments under which a certain number of wounded prisoners of war were interned in Switzerland. The first British prisoners arrived on Swiss soil at the end of May 1916 and the average number under treatment during the remainder of the war was 2,000. Of these, 61 died before repatriation and including other casualties, 88 British and Dominion sailors, soldiers and airmen, fallen in the Great War, are buried in Swiss soil.

During the 1939-45 War, Switzerland was again neutral and accorded asylum to refugees of various types; soldiers who had crossed the frontiers during operations, prisoners of war escaping German and Italian prison camps, civilians escaping from concentration camps or fleeing from feared imprisonment and frontier fugitives of the last stages of the war. Despite repatriation measures the number of refugees increased steadily and from 16,000 in 1942 they rose to 110,000 by May 1945. The Commonwealth graves of this period are therefore of either escaped prisoners of war or airmen who crashed in or near Switzerland."

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Centenary of the TA

(by Colonel W E McConnell)

The TA will be one hundred years old on the 1st April 2008 and I seem to have been at the 'crease' for much of the last fifty years, though cricket may not be an appropriate aphorism! Volunteer part time soldiers existed in this country for hundreds of years before the passing of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act 1907 which came in to force on 1st April 1908, and there were some who thought it appropriate that this was April Fools Day.

Before I had even heard of 6th Surreys or the Territorial Army, I had been accepted by the RAFVR for training as a pilot, but after a year waiting for the course to start I was surplus to requirements and, along with over 100 others, I found myself in the Army at Fort George, Inverness. It would be too strong to say that we were ill treated, but we were regarded with some suspicion having been 'released' from one of the Armed Services. So, it would be true to say that we were chased from pillar to post 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. I must have done something right, because I became a temporary local acting Lance Corporal. Next, after infantry training at a Young Soldier's Training Battalion, I was selected as a potential Officer, was sent to Pre-OCTU and after that, to 161 (RMC) OCTU at Sandhurst, from which I was subsequently commissioned 2nd Lieutenant in The East Surrey Regiment in January 1946.

From Sandhurst I was sent via Home Counties Brigade to Italy where I joined the 1st Battalion London Scottish. The TA had been put on hold at the beginning of the War, but now the War had been won, TA Battalions were discharging soldiers in preparation for that curious condition known as 'suspended animation'. However, before that illness overcame 1 LS we had to prevent Mr Tito from crossing the demarcation line and capturing one of the largest and most sophisticated ports in the world. The Battalion spent most of its time patrolling and standing to. In addition it mounted armed guards over a large number of installations. This involved the Duty Company usually supplemented by soldiers from other companies. I recall one amusing event that took place on the Barrack Square. The Old Guard were about to be marched off when the Orderly Officer realised their weapons had not been examined. He gave the orders that were necessary but was obviously in a hurry because one soldier, in clearing his rifle breach, squeezed the trigger and the explosion could have been heard in Venice! Worse, the roosting pigeons, in fright, released the contents of their bowels all over the Old Guard! Good luck for some!?

The London Scottish was starting to demob soldiers who had the longest service, and then effectively amalgamated with 1st London Irish and moved to Riccione- a pleasant seaside town on the Adriatic, south of Rimini.

From there I had the good fortune to be sent on a three month winter warfare course in the Salzburg Mountains.

During my service in the TA there were numerous ceremonial occasions of which one of the most memorable was the visit by the King and Queen to Kingston on 28th October 1948. This occurred before the 6th Surreys were even half recruited, and though there were insufficient 'bodies' to mount a Royal Guard of Honour about 40 paraded outside Guildhall. The CO was presented and The King seemed to be thoroughly understanding of our plight. Nobody was sent to the Tower!



*Visit of HM King George VI at Kingston upon Thames:
Opening of the Power Station*



*Visit of HM King George VI: Regimental Colour
carried by Lt John Sherrard*

Another Royal occasion was the Review by Her Majesty The Queen of the TA in Hyde Park in June 1958. I was very honoured to be selected to command the Detachment, and Colour Party from 6th East Surreys. The President of the Surrey Territorial Association gave a Reception and Ball a few days later in Dorking. It was a glittering occasion, until we realised that the police were stopping us. Indeed, they were stopping all cars and offering friendly advice to all drivers not to speed and to drive carefully. Apparently every car leaving Dorking that night was offered similar advice.



50th Anniversary Review of the Territorial Army by HM The Queen - Hyde Park, June 1958



*President's TA 50th Anniversary Ball 1958 - Dorking Halls
LtoR: Capt and Mrs W E McConnell, Major
and Mrs F J Reed*

In the early 1950's it was decided that National Servicemen should attend TA Annual Camps on 3 consecutive annual occasions. This enabled the Battalion to take part in fairly big exercises at Battalion and Brigade level. The exercises took place, necessarily, on the big training areas such as Stanford PTA, Salisbury Plain, Aldershot and Catterick, to name but a few. We often went to Camp 500 strong and once 600 strong.



Annual Camp 1953 at Stanford PTA



Annual Camp 1967

In 1961 National Service came to an end and 6th Surreys amalgamated with 23rd London to form 4th Queen's Surreys. Apart from a minority of the National Servicemen who had 'signed on' for the TA, the Battalion's strengths fell fast.

The foregoing commentary memoirs and anecdotes are my tribute to hundreds of TA soldiers I have had the privilege to command and to the Regiments in which I have had the honour to serve. The soldiers to my certain knowledge made considerable sacrifices and thoroughly deserved the title bestowed on them by Field Marshall Sir William Slim, "TWICE A CITIZEN".

6th (Territorial) Battalion The Queen's Regiment (Queen's Surreys) 1967 - 1969

(by Captain Adrian Birtles)

2008 marks the centenary of the formation of the Territorial Army; it is also the 40th anniversary of 6 (T) Queen's, a unit whose short life seems to lead to its being often overlooked in post-war Regimental history. In fact, it existed at a crucial period in the life of the TA, and I hope the following notes, which dwell on two events in which I was particularly involved, will give some idea of what was going on, and what it was like at the time.

The year 1966 saw a continuation of the re-organisation of the Regular Army with 1 Queen's Surreys becoming 1st Battalion of the new Queen's Regiment at the end of the year; less well publicised was Government planning to reorganise the TA. That some reorganisation and modernisation was needed cannot be doubted (the TA which I had joined in 1960 was recognisably in many ways still the army of the late 1940's), but when proposals started to leak out, they were for a wholesale reduction in TA strength, which for the infantry amounted to little short of a massacre - in Surrey, the two Queen's Surreys battalions were proposed to be reduced to a single company of a new 5 Queen's, with Bn HQ at Canterbury. This news brought large-scale protests across the country, and not only from "the usual Regimental suspects". As a result (and what with hindsight was obviously a purely political manoeuvre), the final plan was for a two-tier TA.

This resulted in the formation of A Company (Queen's Surreys) 5th (Volunteer) Bn The Queen's Regiment, based at Guildford and peopled mainly from 3 QRS, and 6th (Territorial) Bn The Queen's Regiment (Queen's Surreys), HQ at Kingston upon Thames with companies at Clapham Junction, Cobham and Croydon, which was formally an amalgamation of 3 & 4 QRS, and in fact achieved a good mix of the two. 5 (V) Queen's was to be "heavy" infantry with the role of providing direct reinforcement of BAOR if the Cold War balloon went up; 6 (T) Queen's was to be much more lightly equipped (only rifles and Landrovers) with the roles of home defence and duties in aid of the Civil Power.

One suspects that the Government would not have been unhappy if the "T" battalions had not got off the ground, but under the leadership of Lt Col Mac McConnell as CO and with a degree of general enthusiasm which might have surprised those who did not know the TA, get of the ground 6 (T) Queen's did, and in a pretty determined manner. Starting as it was intended to go on, a Colour Ceremony was held on the inauguration day of the new Battalion, 1st April 1967, at which the Colours of 3 & 4 QRS were paraded and handed into the keeping of CO 6 (T) Queen's; the parade was addressed by Maj Gen F.J.C. Piggott, last Colonel of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment and then Deputy Colonel (Surrey) of The Queen's Regiment. I was posted as a platoon commander to B Company at St. John's Hill, Clapham Junction, where the redoubtable Maj Jack Schofield was OC (later succeeded by Maj Tony Cutchner, who had been adjutant at the formation of the Battalion).

Annual Camp in 1967 was late Spring at St Martins Plain, Folkestone, and was a very traditional TA camp in company with other "T" battalions. By then though, the Bn had decided to send a team to that summer's Nijmegen Marches; I was appointed to lead it, and my main job at camp was to train and harden-up the "possibles" for that team. Thus we did much marching up and down the hills that lie behind that stretch of coast - a good bit of which is now covered by railway marshalling yards and the Channel Tunnel Terminal. I was ably assisted by (then) Lt Mike Butlin, whose son Marcus is now OC A Coy 3 PWRR at Farnham - keeping it in the family! Mike Butlin was not only very fit (which did help), but had an extensive repertoire of the more risqué versions of several marching songs, which probably helped us even more!

After more training in the Surrey Hills, the team set off for Nijmegen in July, travelling by public transport from Surbiton Station via London, Harwich and the Hook. In those days, military teams for the Nijmegen Marches had to take part in marching order carrying weapons of a specified minimum weight, and it is an interesting sidelight on changing times that we travelled in uniform carrying SLR's and not an eyelid blinked at the sight of a dozen armed troops on the Northern Line - or anywhere else along our route. The marches that year were made tougher by very hot humid conditions, but good training,

Annual Reunion November 2007



Relaxing after supper



Three wise men?



John Rogerson leads the posing

Jack Chaffer with raffle prize and bodyguard



Museum Open Day April 2008



The Museum Chairman accepts the medals of the late RSM Tommy Atkins

The family with the medals mounted for display



Royal Opening of the Lightbox (Woking) 28th February 2008



HRH The Duke of Kent talks with the Museum and Association Chairmen



HRH The Duke of Kent and Lance Corporal Beharry VC unveil the display of Regimental Territorial Army Victoria Cross recipients

good march discipline (which included adding salt to water bottles - horrible but effective), and good support won through, and we all collected our medals.



An invaluable item of support was our own team musician, Drum Major J.F.S. Wallace, who could play anything on the tin whistle he carried with him. "Anything" included marches of course, marching songs and popular songs, among which was the British Eurovision Song Contest winner of that year, "Puppet on a String"; this became our signature tune in a very literal sense and, after a couple of days, we became recognised to the extent that the Dutch village bands would strike up "Puppet" as we approached - a great boost to tired limbs.

Back home, all the usual TA activities went on but, soon after the turn of the year into 1968, the fact that the days of the Territorial battalions were probably numbered became obvious when annual camps for T battalions for that year were cancelled. Now, for TA units Annual Camp is very important; not only does it enable training not possible at other times to be done, but it plays a vital role in holding a unit together and in its morale. Therefore, it was decided to run our own camps, in fact three company camps in Scotland, Stanford PTA, and for us Yorkshire. Formally there was no support from the Army for these (but in fact, all three received invaluable assistance from local Regular units) and no pay; understandably attendances were quite low. Our camp in the second week of September 1968 under canvas on the North Yorkshire Moors was on an anti-terrorist theme but included a morning on the range provided by the Garrison at Strensall (North of York) at which we were able to try our hands at weapons not normally available to us, such as the GPMG



and Carl Gustav.



Lt Birtles with Carl Gustav

A small group completed the Lyke Wake Walk, 40-miles West to East across the moors within 24-hours. Altogether strenuous but a much enjoyed success. Returning South on 15th September, the mainly good weather we had experienced in Yorkshire changed to heavy rain as we approached London. Driving into Kingston to return stores to Bn HQ, we found flooded streets - the start of the Great Molesey Flood of that autumn; at the Drill Hall we also found news that the Territorial Battalions were to be disbanded. To paraphrase George Bernard Shaw, "The British soldier can stand up to anything except the British MoD", and the final irony was that the Bn was then partly mobilised for flood relief duties in aid of the Civil Power!



*Cobham Drill Hall 1968:
Party to mark the disbandment of 6 (T) Queen's*

The formal end came on 31st March, 1969, when the Bn was reduced to a small cadre, but 6 (T) Queen's effectively ceased to be an operational unit at the end of 1968.

Was it worth it? Certainly yes; good work was done at the time, and in due course the Cadres provided the foundation for re-expansion of TA units, and several Drill Halls were kept in being which might otherwise have disappeared in 1967. And me? - I was fortunate (with several others) to be able to transfer to 5 (V) Queen's and continue TA soldiering.



Ken Munday writes:

Fifty years since joining up for National Service duties at Stoughton Barracks in Guildford, Bryan Cheeseman, Bill Lee, Fred Lidyard, Alan Maynard, Gerald Mitchell, Arthur Perkins, Joe Verrico, Tony Wheeler and myself of the 50th Intake, The Queen's Royal Regiment, marked this year's annual reunion in a style befitting the occasion.

Arthur Perkins coordinated the arrangements for the celebration dinner/dance and cabaret held on 17th November at Bookham Grange Hotel, Bookham, Surrey. Wives and family members were cordially invited, with a total of 70 attendees in all. After dinner speeches were made, which included those given by the sons of departed members Phil Cable and Maurice Homer, following which the cutting of the Regimental cake took place.



The evening was a most joyous occasion, especially being the first time that whole families of the group had got together, whereas the wives seemed to have wheedled their way into past outings on a regular basis!!

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John Pollitt writes:

I was saddened to read, in the Regimental Magazine, that R.S.M. Tommy Atkins had passed away in November 2007 (I first met him at Stoughton Barracks in the summer of 1957 when I had passed out of the 44th intake a couple

of months before). I have been going to the dinners at Farnham (and the get togethers at the Union Jack Club) for some time and we often used to have a natter about bye-gone times.



Me and 'Tommy' at Farnham (2006)

During one such meeting we were reminiscing about 'the old days' and one particular event that will always stick in my mind... I was walking over to the NAAFI (from the permanent staff barrack rooms) just before 6 p.m. and, having had a quick look around to check that no-one was about, decided to walk across the corner of the square. BIG MISTAKE! As I put my best foot forward this thundering voice boomed out "POLLITT! GET OVER HERE AT THE DOUBLE!!!!"

Yes, you've guessed it... Tommy had seen me and was about to remind me (in no uncertain terms!) that the square was HIS between the hours of 07:30 and 18:00! "Go to the arms kote and get your rifle" he said "at the double!" I returned (with rifle in hand) and reported back. "Right... round the square three times with the rifle above your head! Off you go..."

I duly did what I was told and reported back whereupon he asked me if I had 'learnt' anything from all of this? "Yes Sir", I said, "Never walk across YOUR square between 07:30 and 18:00!"

"Correct!" he said. "Now good Evening Pollitt" as he turned and walked off in to the distance with a big grin on his face! Firm but fair was R.S.M. Atkins!

Tommy also mentioned the piggery in the last autumn magazine and I recall that this must have been one of his favourite inspections. I worked there for a while (with Dennis Rathbone*) before going to Germany and we would get at least two inspections a week by him. We used to hose the pigs down and scrub them with a large yard broom (they loved it!) so that they were gleaming and spotless and this always seemed to put a smile on Tommy's face. HAPPY DAYS!!!

I can honestly say that it was both an honour and a privilege serving with Tommy and I will always remember him and the fond memories I have of him.

* Dennis - I still live in the same road by the way! If you've ever down this way, it would be so nice to meet up again (my number is 01474 564063).

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Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Golf Society

The Society's Autumn Meeting

This took place in warm dry weather at Woking Golf Club's heather girt course on 10th October 2007. Trophies were awarded as follows:

Autumn Bowl: Colin Howard

Glasgow Grey's Cup (best net score):
Lt Col Foster Herd

Heals Memorial Trophy: Peter Mason

Veteran's Halo: Col Toby Sewell

Petrie Plate (Spring/Autumn aggregate): Colin Howard

The results of the sweep were:- 1st HP Mason,
2nd AF Price, 3rd SJ Petzing



*Lt Col Foster Herd with the Autumn Bowl
and Petrie Plate winner, Colin Howard*

Match v the Royal Hampshire Regiment

The first ever match against the Hampshires was played at Liphook Golf Club on 25th October. The regiment was represented by Brian Scripps, Foster Herd, Toby Sewell, David Dickins, Mike Power, Tony Russell, Peter Dorey and Barry Hoffman. The Hampshires, being less frequently and much less recently amalgamated turned out a younger team of rather better golfers, with the predictable result that the Queen's Surreys lost by 2 ½ to 1 ½ ! However, a good time was had by all; the Surreys' Salver, kindly donated for the match by the Territorial Trustees, was handed over to the Hampshire's Captain for the year, and a rematch is scheduled for 4th September 2008 at High Post Golf Club just outside Salisbury (Wiltshire, as it happens, but it is their choice this year). We shall be wanting a team of our best golfers so if you fall into that enviable category, please make a note in your diary, and let David Dickins know if you weren't able to be at the Spring Meeting.

PAY ATTENTION CAN YOU HELP?



Len Copsey would like to hear from anyone who knew his late father Colour Sergeant Albert (Bert) Copsey who served with The Queen's Royal Regiment. Bert was a member of the WOs and Sergeants Mess of 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in Bangkok in 1946.

Contact: L Copsey, 411 Brays Road, Sheldon,
Birmingham, B26 2RR

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J M Rowe would like to hear from anyone who knows of his late father John Albert Rowe who served with The Queen's Royal Regiment and may also have served in the Catering Corps. J A Rowe was born in 1910 but falsified his

age in order to enlist. His service in the Army is believed to have included time in Tientsin, China (when he was involved with boxing), and in Egypt and Palestine in the early 1940s. He is believed to have finished his time at the end of the war in the Aldershot area.

Contact: J M Rowe, 14 Finch Close, Knaphill, Woking,
Surrey GU21 2LF

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East Surrey Regiment Reunion

The 2008 East Surrey Regimental Reunion for all ranks, all battalions, will be held on Saturday 4th October at the New Drill Hall, St John's Hill (opposite Clapham Junction Station), starting at 1300 hours and finishing at 1800 hours. A buffet lunch is provided; wives and guests are welcome. Tickets cost £5 and can be obtained from: J Broom, 11 Sayerland Road, Polegate, East Sussex BN26 6NU.

The organizers are most grateful to individuals and to the Trustees of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Charity for the kind donations which enable the ticket price to be kept down.

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Regimental Deaths

Acheson - On 20th April 2008 aged 91 years, Canon Russell Robert Acheson. He joined 2nd Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in 1939 serving with it in North Africa, Syria, Ceylon, India and Burma (as a Chindit) before being discharged in the rank of Major in October 1945. After the war he was ordained into the Church of England. During his last post as Canon of Hereford Cathedral he was chaplain to nearby forces.

Archer - On 1st September 2007, W Archer who served with 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment from March 1934 until May 1942 and with 2nd Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment from May 1942 until March 1946.

Birdseye - On 27th April 2008 aged 89 years, Arthur William Birdseye. He enlisted in October 1939, joining 2/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. His wartime service prior to his discharge in October 1945 included France and Dunkirk, North Africa and Italy.

Curtis - On 10th January 2008, Norman Curtis.

Dolley - On 29th December 2007, Corporal Fred Dolley MM (see obituary).

Ewart - On 8th December 2007, Major Ralph Ewart (see obituary).

Faris - On 4th December 2007, Major Brian Faris. Brian Faris was commissioned into The Queen's Royal Regiment, serving with the 1st Battalion 1952-54 before going as a training subaltern to the Depot at Guildford. From there he went as an instructor at the Federation of Malaya Military College in 1957, returning to join 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment in 1960. He served with the battalion in UK and Aden before becoming Adjutant of the Hong Kong Regiment 1962-63. His subsequent service prior to retirement in 1983 included a posting with 1st Bn The Queen's Regiment 1968-70 during which he served in Bahrain, England and Northern Ireland, and tours on the Technical Staff.

Gilkes - On 18th January 2008 Maurice Gilkes.

Gunner - In February 2008 aged 83 years, Stanley James Gunner. He enlisted into The Queen's Royal Regiment in August 1944, joining the 1st Bn in Burma. He was discharged from the Army in February 1948.

Hodges - On 27th February 2007, David Langham Hodges. Commissioned into The Queen's Royal Regiment, whilst he was serving in Palestine with 1/6th Bn he was wounded when the vehicle in which he was travelling as commander of the company manning night road blocks was blown up by a mine near Rishon Le Zion. Following recuperation his duties included guarding PoWs in Norfolk. After returning to civilian life he became a solicitor in Dorking and served with C Company 5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Horton - On 6th April 2008 aged 75 years, Lance Corporal Trevor Horton who served with 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in Iserlohn, Germany from 1951 to 1953.

Jenkins - On 24th December 2007, Corporal Maurice Jenkins who served with 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment 1940-46.

Johns - On 22nd April 2008 aged 64 years, Selwyn Johns. He enlisted into 3rd Bn The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment in March 1965 and subsequently served with 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. His service prior to his discharge in March 1971 included Münster, Bahrain, Northern Ireland and Berlin.

King - On 25th January 2008, Frank King whose service with The East Surrey Regiment include France and Germany 1944-45 and Palestine in 1946.

Lee - On 16th May 2008 aged 81 years, Sergeant Reginald Henry Cyrus Datlen Lee who served with 1/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment from August 1944 until discharged from the Army in November 1947.

May - On 27th December 2007, Ron May (see obituary).

Nagle - In March 2008 aged 83 years, Corporal Edward Percy Nagle. He enlisted in August 1944, joining the 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in Burma. He was discharged in February 1948.

Newton - In February 2008, John Newton who served with The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Oram - on 28th February 2008, Major Frank Oram (see obituary).

Playfoot - On 4th December 2007, Major Alfred Stuart Sidney Playfoot MC. Stuart Playfoot first wore the regimental badge in 1930 when a cadet at the Royal Grammar School, Guildford; he was commissioned into The Queen's Royal Regiment in June 1940. He joined 1/7th Bn serving with it in UK and North Africa. He was wounded in action in March 1943. In September 1943 he became an instructor at the Middle East School of Infantry, Haifa from whence he moved to join 2/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in Italy in November 1944. He was awarded the Military Cross in April 1945 for his leadership of his platoon during the attack on Filo. After leaving the Army in 1946 he became a schoolmaster, but rejoined as an officer in the Royal Army Education Corps in 1952. He retired from the RAEC in September 1970 to become a schoolmaster again. He finally retired in July 1982. He was for a number of years President of the Southwark Branch of the Regimental Association.

Saunders - On 10th March 2008 aged 83 years, Major R C H Saunders TD. He joined the local Home Guard in Guildford at the outbreak of War, subsequently being commissioned into the Middlesex Regiment when he became old enough for normal military service. He saw action in North Africa, Sicily and Italy before being captured at Anzio. After release he was posted to Palestine with the Royal Military Police. Following demobilisation he joined 5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment at Guildford, serving with the TA until the mid 1960's when he left in the rank of Major.

Shaw - On 11th January 2008, James Arthur Shaw who served with The Queen's Royal Regiment and The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment.

Smith - On 29th November 2007, John Smith who served with 2nd Bn The East Surrey Regiment from 1939-46 and was held PoW by the Japanese for over 3 years.

Stevens - On 8th April 2008, Ron Stevens who served with the 4th Bn The East Surrey Regiment. He was on the committee of The Queen's Royal Surreys Regimental Association's Warrant Officers and Sergeants Branch, and was for a number of years the Branch Treasurer.

Strudwick - On 9th October 2007 aged 81 years, James Strudwick. He enlisted into the 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in May 1944, seeing action with the Battalion in Burma. He was discharged from the Army in September 1947.

Triggs - On 27th September 2007, John Herbert Triggs whose service with 2nd Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment 1947-49 included Palestine, Egypt and Sudan.

Weston - On 7th November 2007 aged 94 years, Arthur Ernest Weston (see obituary).

Waldron - On 29th February 2008, Sergeant Robert James Waldron. He enlisted into The East Surrey Regiment in 1938 and his wartime service included Italy and North Africa. He subsequently served with the Territorial Army which he left in 1961.

Woodhouse - On 15th February 2008 aged 85 years, Lieutenant Colonel John Woodhouse MBE MC. Commissioned into the Dorset Regiment in 1942, he won the Military Cross while serving with 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment in Italy. While commander of the unit's battle patrol, on 14th November 1943 he led a night attack using grenades and explosive charges on a group of buildings occupied by German soldiers deep behind the enemy's forward positions. For his leadership on this and many other daring patrols he was awarded the MC. He was wounded and taken prisoner in March 1944 while leading the unit battle patrol just south of Cassino. During the early 1950s he was selected to establish a selection procedure for the SAS; that system provided the basis for the selection and training of the modern SAS. He was appointed MBE in 1957 for his service in command of D Squadron 22 SAS in Malaya. He went on to command 22 SAS.

Woodroff - On 9th December 2007 John George Gold Woodroff. He was for a number of years curator of the Regimental Museum and subsequently a member of the Regimental Museum Management Committee.

Regimental Family

Durrant - On 21st December 2007, Mrs Dene Margaret Durrant much loved wife of Colonel PAWG Durrant OBE.

Faris - On 3rd February 2008, Mrs Daphne Faris, widow of the late Major Brian Faris.

Harvey - On 1st January 2008 Mrs Anne Harvey whose late husband had served with The Queen's Royal Regiment 1940-46.

Sykes Wright - On 7th February 2008, Mrs Betty Sykes-Wright widow of Brigadier J Sykes-Wright DSO OBE.

Obituaries

Arthur Ernest Weston

Arthur Ernest Weston, named after his father, was born in Luton, Bedfordshire on the 24th September 1913. He was one of 22 children, being the oldest from the second marriage and was one of twins, the other dying at birth.

In 1929 aged 16 he left home to work on a farm in Earlswood, Surrey undertaking many jobs such as milking and ploughing. He loved his horses and recalled their names very clearly. 1931 found him enlisting with The Queen's Royal Regiment at Stoughton Barracks, Guildford. He received the King's shilling, a knife, a piece of string and a weekly pay of 14 shillings a week. Volunteering for service abroad he embarked on the troopship Nevassa for China on his 18th birthday to join the 1st Battalion at Tientsin, arriving on Armistice Day. One of his duties was guard at the Peking Embassy, another the Great Wall of China. On a patrol they accidentally found themselves the wrong side and were in Manchuria but were lucky enough to be escorted back by guards. Two years later he sailed on the troopship Dulwara to Karachi in India, disembarking for Quetta. Whilst there on a 20 mile night route march in the hills the Quetta earthquake happened and devastation was found on the return. It took a week to dig out the dead and injured and erect shelters. From here Arthur went through the Khyber Pass and Allahabad, before being transferred to the Regimental Police. At the end of 1938 Arthur was home to Guildford to help training and was then posted to the 1/5th Queen's at Lincoln on the Wash where Arthur volunteered as a despatch rider attached to the carrier platoon.

In 1940 Arthur was given general duties in Uckfield where he met Edna and they married at Brighton Registry Office in May 1941. North Africa was the next posting in 1942, fighting as a Desert Rat with Montgomery in the battle at El Alamein, Medinine and all the way to Tunis, moving on to Italy and in 1943 the journey home. Next came the crossing to France where Arthur fought on Gold Beach, Normandy. He went on into Germany where he witnessed Montgomery make his speech and the end of war. After de-mob he took a job on the railway before starting work with Allen West in 1947 until he retired in 1978. All through his life Arthur loved sport. In China and India he played in the football and hockey teams amongst others and won many trophies and medals. He was even in the Regimental dance band playing the harmonica.

In 1957 Arthur joined the Territorial Army in Dyke Road, Brighton, then onto the Sussex Yeomanry and the Royal Sussex at Lewes until leaving in 1967. Edna died in January 2001 but Arthur quietly soldiered on. Up until 2006 Arthur continued to meet up with army pals at reunions which he so looked forward to. He was a quiet gentle man, with a wry smile and twinkling eyes. He took everything in his stride enjoying his family and life.

Corporal Frederick Dolley MM

Fred Dolley passed away on the 29th December 2007 and leaves behind three daughters (Sheila, Linda and Pat) and his sister (Dorothy Blanchard.)

Fred was born on the 29th April 1922 at No. 1 Oak Cottages, Stringers Common, Worplesdon, Guildford and attended Perry Hill School, Worplesdon, Surrey.

At the out-break of the Second World War he volunteered for the RAF but when his call-up papers eventually arrived he had been enlisted in the Royal Artillery as an anti-aircraft gunner. After his training he was sent to Plymouth, and there he met his sweetheart Barbara Brown, later to become his wife.

Fred was later transferred to the Infantry and parted from his sweetheart for the remainder of the war.

He started his infantry career with the 1/7th Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment. In 1944 he landed with them in France on the 7th June and fought with them through France to Panhill lock on the Maas (Holland), where he transferred to the 1/5 Battalion The Queen's and remained with them to the end of the war.

It was at Susteren he encountered a Tiger Tank. His section was sheltering on the first floor of a butcher's shop; at this time they were experiencing problems from a sniper in the clock tower. At this point the Tiger Tank pulled up outside of the shop and one of the crew opened the top of the tank. L/Cpl Dolley seized the opportunity and threw a smoke grenade into the tank which had the desired affect of making the crew escape and putting the tank out of action; for this he was awarded the Military Medal - he was presented with his medal by Field-Marshal Montgomery at a divisional presentation of medals at Weert (Holland).

After the war he returned to England and married Barbara in her home town of Dundee; they returned to Fred's home town of Guildford but eventually went back to Dundee in Scotland where they remained happily married for over sixty years until the death of Barbara in December 2005

Fred first worked for the Dundee Parks Department as a gardener for 8 years and later with D.C. Tompson Dundee printers for 22 years till his retirement.

Barbara and Fred were keen dancers and were seen most weekends at dances.

Gardening was Fred's life-long love; he kept an immaculate garden until his death and also had an

allotment for many years until he had to give it up due to ill health.

(Fred was interviewed just a month before his sudden death by Ian Chatfield the Curator of the Regimental Museum at Clandon Park who recorded Fred's memories of the war years he spent with the Queen's. This will be available to be viewed at the Surrey History Center.)

Major Ralph Ewart RAPC



Major Ralph Ewart who died in December 2007 occupied a special place within the Regiment. He served for just over 10 years continuously as Paymaster to 1st Battalion The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment and then 1st Battalion The Queen's Regiment. This service with the Battalion took him to Colchester, to Aden to Hong Kong, to Münster, to Lingfield,

to Bahrein, to Northern Ireland, and finally to Berlin. During this time he served and advised four different Commanding Officers. His loyalty and commitment to the Battalion were always of the highest order and the care, advice and encouragement he gave to everyone of all ranks was invariably sound, sensible and helpful.

Ralph Ewart was a proud Lowland Scotsman from Haddington, where he was born in July 1918. He came from a banking family and on leaving school he joined the Bank of Scotland, but with the out break of War joined the Royal Scots -- he liked to remind people that he had served in the First of Foot. After a year in the ranks he was commissioned and with his background was transferred to the Royal Army Pay Corps with whom his war time service was mainly in East Africa including British Somaliland.

After the War he returned to the Bank of Scotland for three years before transferring to the Colonial Service as a District Officer in Tanganyika. When Colonial rule came to an end in 1954 he returned to the Army and the RAPC, and so to 1st Queen's Surreys in 1960. After his long service with the Regiment he transferred to Airborne Forces as Paymaster for the Airborne Forces Depot at Aldershot, becoming resplendent in a Red Beret. He served with them for five years before retiring in July 1976, having amongst other things organized the Parachute Regiment Display Team, "The Red Devils", on to a proper business like footing.

On retirement he became Business Manager for the Brewery Arts Centre at Kendal, Cumbria and moved up there with his family. Two years later however he was invited to become Company Secretary of the Institute of Orthopaedics based at the National Orthopaedics Hospital at Stanmore. This involved a weekly commute by train,

leaving very early on Monday mornings and returning home again on Fridays; he continued with this job for 10 years, finally retiring aged 72.

Throughout his service with the Regiment Ralph Ewart was supported by his charming and beautiful wife, Adele, whom he had married in December 1947. Their shared commitment and friendship to everyone in the Regiment continued after leaving the Army, being very generous hosts to many who stayed with them in Kendal, either on holiday in the Lake District, or as overnight guests breaking their journeys to and from Scotland.

Ralph and Adele had four children who grew up with the Regiment as a background. Their eldest son, James, was commissioned into The Queen's Regiment in 1970, with which he served before retiring to set up a travel business.

Ralph Ewart was a great personal friend to very many in the Regiment and will be long remembered with great affection.

JWS

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Ron May

(Remembered by Ron Hill MBE)

Ron May - A man for all seasons. At once the unassuming countryman but that concealed a great intellect. Quiet, not easily ruffled, always very smart, possessing a whimsical sense of humour and blessed with an amazing memory, he was the youngest of four children, being born on 23rd June 1918. He went to the old Chilworth School until moving to Shalford School for his final two years before leaving at the age of 14. Ron's memories of Shalford School life are included in Margaret Deardon's masterly history of the school.

On leaving school Ron went to work for Guildford Cooperative Society in Hayden Place, a van boy soon to become a driver.

The big change in his life came in July 1939 when he was called up for the First Militia. It was to be for 6 months service, the first three at the Depot at Stoughton Queen's Depot and the final three at Lydd in Kent. It was as a fellow militiaman that I met Ron. With the outbreak of World War Two in September 1939 there was a dramatic change. The Militiamen became soldiers in The Queen's Royal Regiment and the projected six months in fact became almost seven years. From Stoughton we were posted to Sherborne to become members of the territorial battalion, the 1/5th Queen's Royal Regiment. From Sherborne to France in April 1940, eventually with the German advance into Belgium moving up to east of Brussels.

Ron had early been earmarked as a transport driver. I became the C.Q.M.S.: we were together, he driving and myself beside him. Cut off by the continuing German advance we began the long trek to Dunkirk together; a

curious experience - no clear rules, no sign of panic, just plodding soldiers who arrived at the sandy beaches. We waited our turn and came back on a destroyer to Dover.

Back in England we re-equipped. At one stage when stationed at Dover we suffered a direct hit on a moonlit night from a German bomber. Once again we escaped.

Eventually in 1942 we embarked at Greenock for the two months voyage on an American ship the *Cristobel*, round South Africa to end up in Egypt for the 8th Army Western Desert campaign. Together we fed and watered our comrades. So Ron was part of the entire campaign to Tripoli culminating in the victory parade. The 1/5th Queens had by then become part of the 7th Armoured Desert Rats Division and remained so until the end of the war.

After a brief regrouping the bloody campaign in Italy followed with the landing at Salerno and the subsequent action until withdrawal to return to the U.K. for the invasion of France on D Day.

Ron, with his truck, landed in France on D Day plus 4 and the steady advance began with many scary moments. It was to take Ron into Germany and the defeat of the Germans culminated in the memorable Victory Parade in Berlin. He had made the long and dangerous journey from 1940 to 1945. He was one of the honoured veterans to do so. He himself saw nothing remarkable in what he had experienced. He was still the same, if I might say so, amateur soldier who had amassed so many friends from amongst his comrades.

So in early 1946 he was in one of the earliest groups to return to the U.K. to be demobbed. I am still surprised at how well the change back to civilian life Ron accomplished. So it was back to the grocery delivery van bringing weekly orders to local families including our own.

Ron was a man of enduring friendships; never a spit and polish man but still very conscious of the 1/5th Queen's military heritage, Ron became one of the anchormen of the Queen's Old Comrades. For more than a quarter of a century he was its efficient treasurer. He was a familiar feature of the annual reunion dinners, first in Guildford and later the Farnham Drill Hall where he greeted everyone at the door. His great friend Doug Mitchell was the organizer and together they made it possible for those happy evenings to continue. Ian Chatfield took over and his friendship with Ian was treasured by Ron. Douglas and then Ian instituted and organised the very popular Lunches at Guildford Cathedral for our dear wives and ladies.

I am sorry I have not done fair justice to all those who worked so hard with Ron. I know of Ron's personal affection for Lt Col Les Wilson who he regarded as the real key stone in maintaining both the comradeship and the memories of the Regiment. Together we were part of the memorable visit to Dover Castle where we had a great day visiting the museum and the church.

It would be remiss of me were I not to recall the other aspects of Ron's life. He married Dorothy Southon in 1955. It was a very happy marriage. 'The Southons' were a remarkable family. Her father had assembled a breathtaking collection of vintage cars motor cycles and cycles. Ron was a keen motor cyclist all his life. Photographs show Ron riding a penny farthing around Shalford and he actually rode one down Guildford High Street during a carnival procession.

What made Ron unique was his encyclopaedic, crystal clear memory. This made it possible for early life in Chilworth and Shalford to be recorded. So in the autumn of his days Ron became the unequalled source of local history. He played golf at Bramley and had a special relationship with the Surrey Police Golf Club and was invited each year to their annual tournament day.

He and Dolly lived in The Firs. Everyone in Shalford knew them. His circle of friends grew during the last years of his life when he enjoyed membership of several retired groups. Last autumn Ian Chatfield came to give an illustrated talk about The Queen's and notably the 1/5th Battalion. With a very warming touch during his electrifying talk Ian included two slides of Ron May. One as a new recruit in civilian clothes outside the Depot Guard Room and the other was of a sand stained group in the Western Desert - Ron loved it.

Ron spent his final years at Albury House. His niece Norah and her husband looked after Ron after Dolly's passing on some five years ago. He never fully recovered from Dolly's passing. Now they are reunited.

Ron was a dear man with no enemies and a legion of friends. We miss him so much, this remarkable man for all Seasons. He has a special place in our hearts.

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Regimental Sergeant Major H (Tommy) Atkins



With his death on the 19th November 2007 the Regiment has lost one of its most loyal supporters and characters. Tommy joined The Queen's Royal Regiment on the 5th April 1937 and it was during his recruit training that his ambition to become the Regimental Sergeant at Stoughton Barracks was born.

After recruit training he was posted to the 2nd Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in Parkstone, Isle of Wight. The Battalion left for Palestine on 31st December 1938 arriving in Haifa ten days later. Tommy served with the 2nd Battalion during its tour in Palestine and then moved with them to the Western Desert, (during which period the battalion attempted to reach Crete by ship twice), Syria fighting the Vichy French, the siege of Tobruk and the breakout in 1941 and

then on to Ceylon for training in 1942 before moving to fight the Japanese in Burma as Chindits. He returned to England in 1944 with the rank of Colour Sergeant. He met and married his wife Rose whilst on leave and they were married in March 1945.

He served at the Depot, at that time No 2 Primary Training Centre from 1946 to 1948 and rejoined 2 Queen's in Dortmund in 1948. The battalion moved to Berlin in that year and were present throughout the Airlift during which time the 2nd Battalion laid down their arms and took them up again as the 1st Battalion. In 1948 the battalion moved to Iserlohn and Tom was selected for a tour of duty at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst where he stayed until 1954. He rejoined 1 Queen's in Iserlohn and moved with the unit to Malaya in 1954. He was appointed RQMS at Headquarters Malaya Command, in Kuala Lumpur from 1954 to 1956; he was Mentioned in Despatches for services in Malaya. He then returned to England to become RSM of The 6th Territorial Battalion of The Queen's. In 1957 he was appointed RSM at the Regimental Depot at Guildford, realizing his dream born twenty years previously. It was during his tenure at the Depot that the film 'Carry on Sergeant' was made and for a few minutes during the film he gave various commands and thus became a filmstar! He received then, and later, much ribbing from his contemporaries!

He was to be the last Depot RSM of the Queen's. When the Depot was established at Canterbury in 1959 he moved as the RSM but decided to retire in 1959.

In retirement he first became a milkman, a job he had before joining the Army, however, in 1961 a vacancy for a school caretaker occurred at a Roman Catholic Secondary School. He applied for the job and was accepted. The Headmaster had served before the war and during it and returned to civilian life with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He persuaded Tom to take on the duties of CSMI in the Cadet Force at the school and this started a secondary career with young people and the Army. He served with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Cadet Force until 1982 firstly as a Company Sergeant Major Instructor and then later as County Regimental Sergeant Major.

Tommy Atkins was a professional soldier, a first class instructor, excellent rifle shot and once again enjoyed the military environment he had experienced during his regular service. His time with the Army Cadet Force once again made him feel part of a happy family. He had not had a very happy childhood and was determined that his own children, Alan, Jean and Graham should have a happy one.

He maintained that he was part of a Regimental family which incorporated the Army Cadet Force and of course his own family of which he was immensely proud.

During part of his retirement he worked part time for a large catering firm in Aldershot which hired out equipment for functions. On arrival Tom was not impressed with the layout of the stores and the methods for issue and return of items. He set to and reorganized the stores and

woe betide any member of staff who upset his layout and methods. The owner was at times heard to murmur “who owns this shop anyway!”

Any résumé of Tommy’s life would be woefully incomplete without mention of Bridle Court, Aldershot (where his widow still lives) and ‘Dad’s Army’. On moving into Bridle Court for the second time (they were previously resident at No. 20), Tommy decided that the Communal Gardens, which totally surrounded his small block of flats, was sadly in need of some care and attention and that special organization that only an ex-RSM could introduce. He set out transforming what was a barren landscape into a festival of colour. In so doing he enlisted the help of two unsuspecting fellow block inhabitants who thought that the ‘Nice old Gent’ should be lent a hand. They were very soon labeled ‘Dad’s Army’, Tommy was Captain Mannering and his assistants dubbed Wilson and Pike (respective wives were not excused fatigues). Tommy would often spend from 0630 - Reveille in his terms - until dusk tending and improving the garden (he couldn’t start any earlier out of respect for those who were still sleeping). They very soon learnt as did the remainder of the community that idle and slovenly weeds would not be tolerated and flowers were to be grown in straight lines -wilting in the sun was to be discouraged at all costs!

The antics of ‘Dad’s Army’ could fill a book and provided hours of amusement to the locals. This work continued until shortly before his death.

There was a serious side though to their endeavours. Their efforts were rewarded with many prizes by Gardening Judges throughout the South East of England. Praise in itself. The most rewarding aspect for Tommy, though, was seeing a previously disjointed community mould itself into a single, motivated and above all else, caring group of people. Once again Tommy was able to indulge in his love of belonging and a sense of family!

Tom wrote a book of his life, ‘Toil, Tribulation and Triumph’ which has been reprinted. It is a very well named book and has been a bestseller in the regimental museum for some years. Regimental Sergeant Major H Atkins was a legend in his own lifetime. The writer always regarded him as a mentor and he is proud to have been his friend for the past sixty odd years.

To Rose, Alan, Jean, Graham and his six grandchildren we send our deepest sympathy. Regimental reunions at the Union Jack Club will never be the same again.

LMBW

Tommy Atkins’s will included the following: *TO ALL MY LONG STANDING FRIENDS OF OVER SIXTY YEARS OF THE QUEEN’S ROYAL REGIMENT. Very many thanks to you all. The comradeship and loyalty have been really magnificent and, other than my family, you all will take pride of place in my heart. The annual meetings at the Union Jack Club, the Annual Church Service at Guildford, the meetings at the Regimental Museum were all occasions of great happiness and joy as friends*

meeting, smiling and joking as they shook hands, swapped memories, and an atrocious joke or two were something to see, hear and behold. Nothing in civilian life can ever match the Regimental Comradeship, and I count myself very fortunate in being a member of the Regiment which gave me so much, particularly in my early day. THANK YOU ALL.

Major F B Oram

Frank Oram was born in Ismailia, Egypt in 1921. His father was Regimental Sergeant Major of 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment. Having attended school in India Frank Oram followed his father into the Army, initially joining as a boy soldier.

Frank’s Second World War service with The East Surrey Regiment included the Sicily landings and the campaign on the Italian mainland. After the war ended Frank Oram served with 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment in Greece, initially in Salonika and then in Athens where he was Company Sergeant Major C Company. In 1949 he moved with the battalion to Mogadishu, Somalia, returning with it to England in 1950. After a period away from the 1st Battalion he rejoined it in Brunswick. He reached the rank of WO1 in 1954 and was to hold it for 10 years. He was Mentioned in Despatches for service in Cyprus. He was the first RSM of the 1st Bn The Queen’s Royal Surrey Regiment on amalgamation. He went on to be RSM of the 4th Bn. Having been commissioned in 1964 he returned to the 1st Bn; his later service appointments included MTO of 1st Bn The Queen’s Regiment and five years as Quartermaster of the 5th Bn The Queen’s Regiment.

He retired from the Army to live in Dover in May 1976 after some 40 years service. His wife Winifred died in 2004. Major Frank Oram died on 28th February 2008.

*Thanks are due again to
Major J L A Fowler TD
for generously providing the
paper for the Newsletter*

The Territorial and Volunteer Units of Surrey

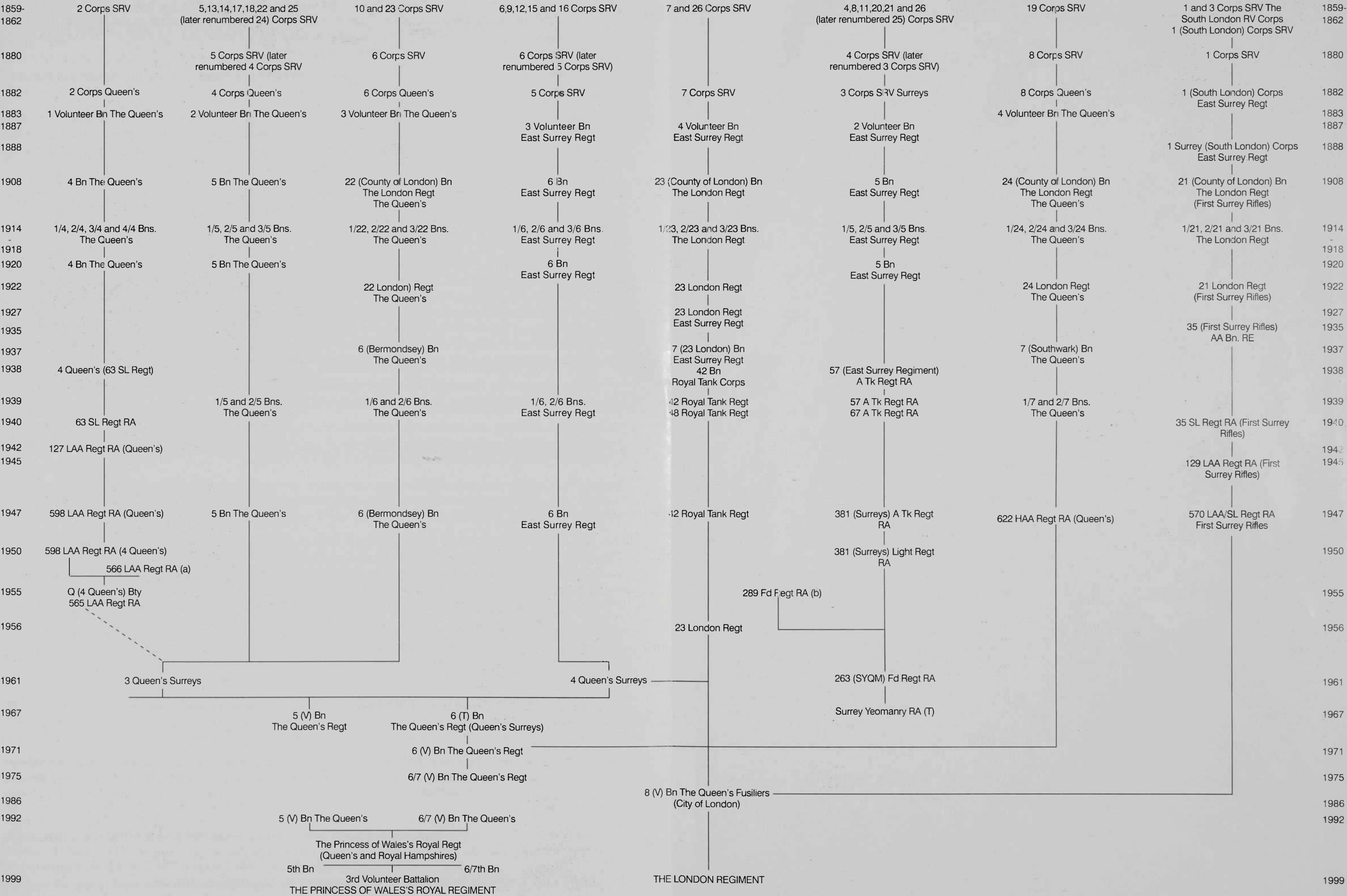
Notes to Family Tree

ABBREVIATIONS:

AA	Anti Aircraft
A Tk	Anti Tank
HAA	Heavy Anti Aircraft
LAA	Light Anti Aircraft
London	The London Regiment
Queen’s	The Queen’s Royal Regiment
Queen’s Surreys	The Queen’s Royal Surrey Regiment
R Tks	Royal Tank Regiment
SL	Searchlight
Surreys	The East Surrey Regiment
SRV	Surrey Rifle Volunteers
SYQM	Surrey Yeomanry Queen Mary’s Regiment

NOTES:

- (a) formerly 6 London (City of London Rifles).
- (b) formerly Surrey Yeomanry Queen Mary’s Regiment.



Surrey’s Territorial Infantry 1908-2008

(by Ian Chatfield)

The Territorial Army, or Territorial Force as it was then known, came into being on April 1st 1908 as one of the results of the passing of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act 1907 (commonly known as the Haldane Reforms). This Act revised and consolidated the provisions and conditions of volunteer and part-time military organisations then in being, some of whose origins were founded deep in history.

Under the 1907 Act the Volunteers and Yeomanry became the Territorial Force while the Militia was transferred to the Special Reserve.

The Queen’s (Royal West Surrey) Regt. were reorganised as follows: the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th (Volunteer) Battalions become 4th Battalion (TF); (Croydon): 5th Battalion (TF); (Guildford): 22nd (County of London) Battalion, The London Regiment (The Queen’s); and 24th (County of London) Battalion, The London Regiment (The Queen’s). The 3rd (Militia) Battalion became Special Reserve.

The East Surrey Regt. 2nd (Volunteer) Battalion. became the 5th Battalion (TF); 3rd (Volunteer) Battalion became the 6th Battalion (TF); 1st Surrey Rifle Volunteer Corps became 21st (County of London) Battalion The London Regiment (First Surrey Rifles); the 4th (Volunteer) Battalion became 23rd (County of London) Battalion The London Regiment.

Organisation and training of the new Force was based on local Associations, but strong links with the Regular Army were established and strengthened. Regular Generals commanded the fourteen Territorial Force infantry divisions and regular officers commanded nearly all of the infantry brigades. The Territorial divisions had appropriate supporting arms including artillery, engineers and ordnance. Although officially only formed for Home Defence, it did not need much imagination to assume that in any future war volunteers for overseas service would be forthcoming as in the earlier South African conflict. Financial remuneration for the troops had improved by this time, the payment being one shilling and two pence a day plus messing allowance of one shilling (5p) per day plus free rations.

In 1908 the award of the Territorial Decoration replaced the former Volunteer Decoration for officers. A similarly appropriate Territorial Efficiency Medal was instituted for other ranks.

On August 4th 1914 war was declared and the Territorials mobilised and were allocated to their respective stations. Artillery units manned coastal guns whilst the Yeomanry maintained mounted patrols in various parts of the country. Infantry were placed in strategic positions ready to repel any invaders.

But hearts and minds were focused abroad and, as expected, volunteers were soon forthcoming for overseas service. Members of the Territorial Force who so volunteered before September 30th 1914, and who actually served overseas, were later granted the Territorial Force War Medal which was instituted in 1920.

Many of our TA units went to far distant territories such as India and the North West Frontier to replace Regular Army Regiments who were being recalled for service on the Western Front but bitter winter conditions accompanied heavy fighting and heavy casualties during the opening months of the war and the territorials were soon fighting not only in France and Flanders but Gallipoli, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Palestine, Salonika and Italy winning many Battle Honours and personal decorations.

Before the end of 1915 twenty-three Territorial Battalions were serving alongside their Regular Army comrades and sharing their hardships and losses. After the cessation of hostilities the nation took time to draw breath and consider its future Army policies and strategies. The Territorial Force was re-organised in 1920 and in 1921 its title was changed to Territorial Army.

With the outbreak of the Second World War there was no need to ask for volunteers for overseas service as in the previous conflict. The Armed Forces Act, swiftly passed, embodied the Territorials into the Army as a whole, an Army in which they were to play a valiant and distinctive part in the years ahead.

The 1939-45 War resolves itself into three main phases: The BEF’s campaign in France and subsequent withdrawal culminating in the Dunkirk evacuation; the defence of the homeland, highlighted by the aerial Battle of Britain; and the final overseas assaults and battles which resulted in victory. Territorials, as full members of the Army, were involved in all three.

Six Queen’s and two East Surrey Territorial Battalions were in France in the BEF by May 1940 where they fought heroically; but along with the BEF they could not stop the German Blitzkrieg, and seven of the eight battalions escaped back to England to fight another day. Unfortunately the 2/6th Battalion The East Surrey Regiment had moved back to St. Valery where they surrendered along with the 51st Highland Division.

After reforming and training in England the territorials were off again in 1942; some joined the 8th Army and Montgomery just prior to Alamein and fought through to Tunis, others joined the 1st Army and landed in Algiers (Operation Torch) meeting the 8th Army in Tunis after the surrender of the German Army in North Africa.

169 (Queen’s) Infantry Brigade assaulted the beaches at Salerno, Italy and were relieved 4 days later by 131 (Queen’s) Brigade. 169 Brigade continued the bitter fighting up through Italy via Anzio and captured Venice where they heard of the German surrender in Italy before moving to Trieste on the Yugoslav border before disbandment. 131 (Queen’s) Brigade, with 1/5th, 1/6th, 1/7th Battalions returned to England in January 1944 to take part in the D Day Landings and from there fought all the way across France, Belgium, Holland, into Germany and on to Hamburg where they heard of the surrender of all German Forces.

The 1/6th Surrey’s land in Taranto, Italy and fought their way up to Cassino where they took part in the battle before later that year moving to Greece for operations against ELAS in Athens from where they were disbanded in 1946.

In 1947 the Territorial Army was once again reconstituted as follows;

Queen’s Territorial Battalions

4th Bn. Raised as 598 LAA Regiment RA (Queen’s)

5th Bn. The Queen’s Royal Regiment (West Surrey) at Guildford

6th Bn. The Queen’s Royal Regiment (West Surrey) at Bermondsey

7th Bn. 622 HAA Regiment RA (7th Bn. The Queen’s Royal Regt.)

East Surrey Territorial Battalions

6th Reconstituted at Kingston

In 1961 there was further reorganisation following the amalgamation of The Queen’s Royal Regiment and The East Surrey Regiment to form The Queen’s Royal Surrey Regiment.

The 3rd Battalion The Queen’s Royal Surrey Regiment was formed from the amalgamation of 565 LAA Regt. RA, (Late 4th Queen’s), 5th Queen’s, and 6th Queen’s.

4th Battalion The Queen’s Royal Surrey Regiment was formed from the amalgamation of 6th East Surrey’s and 23rd Bn. The London Regiment

In 1966 The Queen’s Regiment was formed from

- The Queen’s Surrey Royal Regiment
- The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment)
- The Queen’s Own Royal West Kent Regiment
- The Royal Sussex Regiment
- The Middlesex Regiment (Duke of Cambridge’s Own)

From that amalgamation the 5th, 6th, & 7th (Volunteer) Battalions The Queen’s Regiment were formed.

A Company 5th Queen’s was formed in Guildford from the 3rd Bn The Queen’s Royal Surrey Regiment (TA). It was roled as a NATO reinforcement battalion and remained so until the end of the Cold War when more amalgamations meant they changed title to the 5th Battalion The Princess of Wales’s Royal Regiment. They subsequently merged with the 6/7th Battalion to become 3rd Battalion The Princess of Wales’s Royal Regiment which they are today.

6th (Territorial) Battalion The Queen’s Regiment was formed in Kingston from the 3rd & 4th Battalions The Queen’s Royal Surrey Regiment but was short lived being reduced to cadre in 1969; but it was reformed in 1971 with its HQ in Wandsworth and a drill hall in Sutton.

The 7th (Volunteer) Battalion The Queen’s Regiment was also formed in 1971 with its HQ in Horsham and A Company in Farnham but that too was short lived as in 1975 it amalgamated with the 6th Battalion.

A Company (Queen’s Surrey’s) The 3rd Battalion The Princess of Wales’s Royal Regiment are based in the Drill Hall in Farnham and many of that company have been on active service with regular battalions to Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan continuing the service the territorials have given the country over the last century.



