

MAY 2009



NUMBER 85

# THE QUEEN'S ROYAL SURREY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

President  
Colonel A. C. Ward OBE

Chairman  
Lieutenant Colonel F. B. Herd TD JP DL

Association Secretary and Editor  
Major A. W. Russell MBE

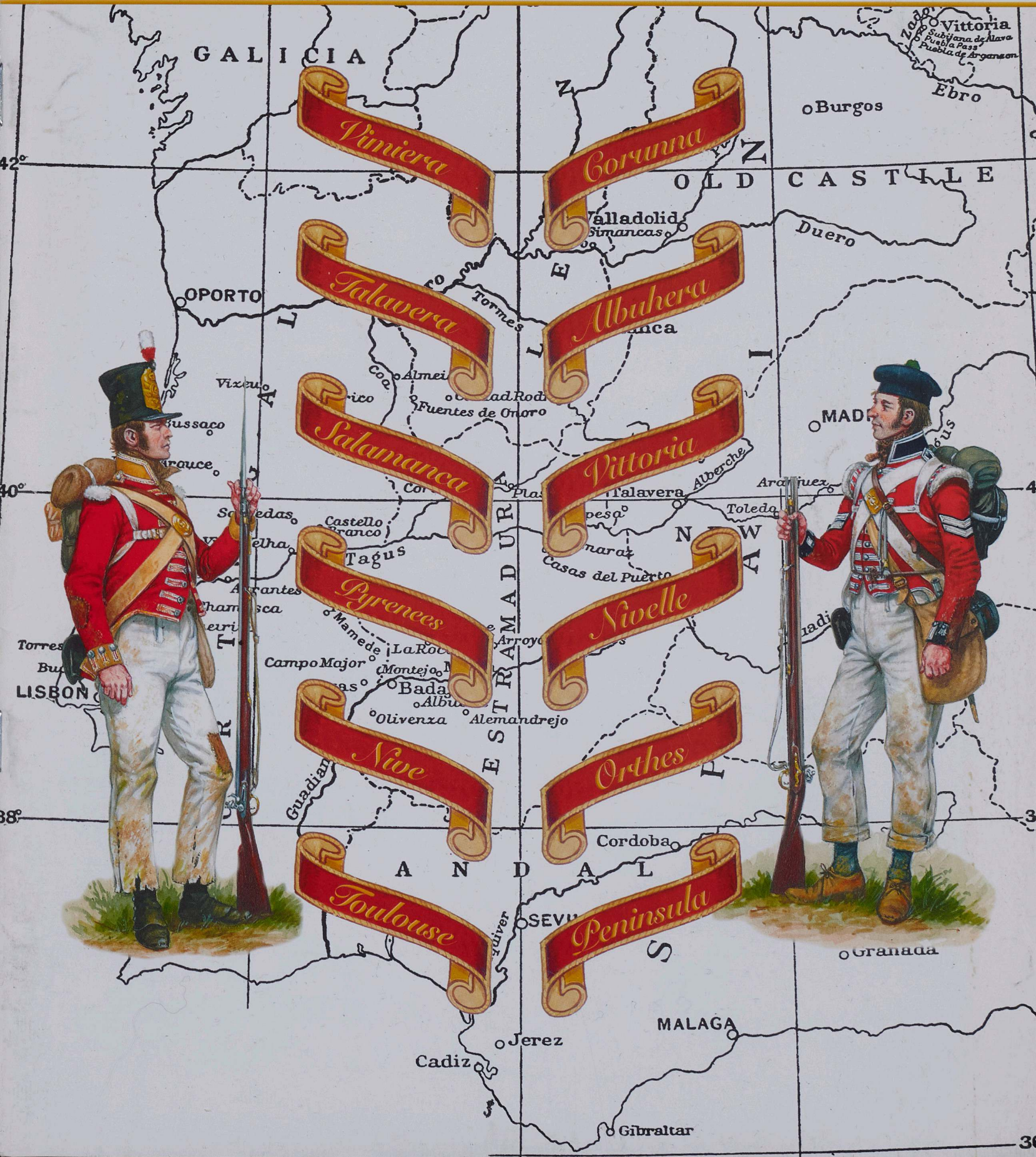
Benevolence Secretary  
Major J. C. Rogerson

Association correspondence to:  
42 Lincoln Drive  
Pyrford  
Woking  
Surrey GU22 8RR

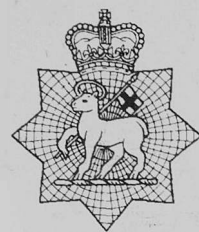
Telephone/Fax: 01932 344150  
E-mail:  
secqueensroyalsurreys@hotmail.co.uk

Regimental website:  
www.queensroyalsurreys.org.uk

## NEWSLETTER







## Forecast of Events

### 2009

15th July	1 PWRR parade, Guildford.
1st August	MINDEN DAY.
3rd September	Golf Match v The Royal Hampshire Regiment – Puttenham Golf Club.
9th September	SALERNO DAY.
12th September	6th(Bermondsey), 2/6th and 2/7th Queen's Royal Regiment OCAs Combined Reunion.
3rd October	East Surrey Regiment OCA Reunion – Clapham Junction.
5th October	The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Officers' Club Ladies' Luncheon - Clandon.
7th October	Regimental Golf Society Autumn Meeting – Woking.
6th November	The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association Annual Reunion - Union Jack Club.
20th December	BRITISH BATTALION DAY (1941).

### 2010

10th February	SOBRAON DAY (1846).
22nd April	The East Surrey Regiment Officers' Reunion Lunch.
23rd April	YPRES DAY (1915).
6th May	Regimental Golf Society Spring Meeting – Sudbrook Park.
16th May	ALBUHERA DAY (1811).
1st June	THE GLORIOUS FIRST OF JUNE (1794).
6th June	The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association Annual Church Service – Guildford Cathedral 1130 a.m.

o o o

### President's Notes

It is amazing how quickly the World has changed since the last time I sat down to write these notes for your Newsletter. The full force of the "Credit Crunch" has affected us all in some way, our soldiers have withdrawn from Iraq, Afghanistan and now Pakistan continue to appear an increasing long term problem - and I have not mentioned MP's expenses! Although the credit crunch has reduced the value of investments of your Regimental Charity – down to about £1.7million –you can be assured that the Trustees continue to put benevolence as our top priority. Last year we made benevolent grants and donations in excess of £40,000 and have made provision for a similar amount this year.

During the last year development of our website {<http://www.queensroyalsurreys.org.uk/>} has continued under the direction of Les Wilson. You can now access all our First World War Battalion War Diaries, which are a fascinating research tool, from it. Do have a look at the site; it is such a complete source of history of your Regiment. Thank you Les and your team for all the hard work.

2009 is the 50th Anniversary of the formation of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment. I know that Tony Russell our Editor is planning to look back at the events of that time in the November Newsletter and would welcome personal reminiscences of service with our three Regiments in general and of the period of amalgamation in particular.

May I yet again on your behalf, thank all those who organise our many re-unions and functions. Each year some more of our former soldiers seek to join our Association and attend our functions.

Now forget about the Credit Crunch, enjoy the summer and remember your years of Soldiering – That will bring a smile to your face!

Tony Ward



## Queen's/Queen's Surreys (TA) Officers Reunion

Bletchley Area, Wednesday 22nd April, 2009

(by Captain Adrian Birtles)

One of the strengths of our Regiment is the number of groups of old members which quietly exist and organise themselves; groups large and small, organised formally or informally, they all contribute to the Regiment's longevity and the maintenance of tradition and comradeship. One such, quite small and very informal, consists mainly of former officers of the TA Battalions of The Queen's Royal Regiment and 3rd Queen's Royal Surreys (TA), together with some others who were associated with those Units. Meetings take place from time to time at intervals of two or three years, when it seems to someone to be about time for another one, (I would not use the word "irregularly", as unkind souls might take that to have another meaning!).

The pattern of meetings has evolved over the years, but has settled into a day starting with a visit to a place of interest (not necessarily military), followed by a formal Dinner in Regimental style at a convenient hotel which can provide overnight accommodation. The previous meeting, in 2007, was centred on Dover Castle, and in April this year we went to the wartime code-breaking centre museum at Bletchley Park, close to Milton Keynes in Buckinghamshire.

Bletchley Park is fascinating, and going as a group, which gets you a professional guide, is to be recommended. Our guide was Ian Thompson (a former Metropolitan Policeman), a very enthusiastic and knowledgeable volunteer at the Museum, who gave us insights into the history and technicalities which a casual visitor could never get. Did you know that the famous German ENIGMA coding machine was originally developed for businesses which wanted to secure their communications against industrial espionage, and in the 1930's anyone who wanted one could buy it on the open market? - military versions were progressively souped-up, of course. Or, that it was the Poles who first developed machines for breaking ENIGMA code fast enough to be operationally useful? - they passed all their knowledge to Britain when war was looming. Or, that sloppy operating practices by the Luftwaffe made the lives of British code-breakers much easier than they might have been (this somehow seems to fit my image of Herman Goering).

ENIGMA codes were "cracked" by electro-mechanical machines which mimicked the way the encoder worked, but the German higher commands used the much more powerful "LAURENZ" encoders, which needed computing power to crack them. So the famous "COLOSSUS" computer was developed at Bletchley Park, and we were able to see the rebuilt COLOSSUS working. Much more impressive to look at than a modern computer, filling a room, with 2,000 large valves consuming as much electricity as two large electric fires;

a powerful and successful machine, albeit with only a fraction of the capability of a modern laptop.

After this excitement, we repaired to the Parkside Hotel at Woughton on the Green (pronounced Woolton, if you ever need to ask the way), which is an amazing rural enclave almost in the heart of Milton Keynes. There we were given a proper Regimental Dinner by attentive and helpful staff. After the Loyal Toast and the toast to The Regiment had been proposed by Brigadier Sir Miles Hunt-Davis and drunk with acclamation, there was a notable reluctance to leave the table or break-up the



party. In fact, the reminiscences resumed over leisurely breakfast on the following morning, before we went our various ways until the next time.

Attending were:- Major Richard and Mrs. Jane Asser, Captain Adrian Birtles and Mrs. Catherine Evans, Lt. Colonel Peter and Mrs. Jean Collyer, Captain Peter and Mrs. Sheila Dorey, Lt. Colonel Foster Herd, Major Richard and Mrs. Linda Hopper, Brigadier Sir Miles Hunt-Davis, Major Noel and Mrs. Christine Napier-Ford, Mr. John and Mrs. Elizabeth Pullinger, Major David and Mrs. Joy Robinson, Captain Barrie and Mrs. Patricia Sidwell, Captain Michael and Mrs. Helen Wigan, Lt. Colonel Desmond Wilson and Miss. Helen Naunton, Lt. Colonel Geoffrey Wright and Mrs. Gwen Jenkins



Identify the icognito imbiber  
(answer: Noel Napier-Ford)

o o o



## The Surreys are called in, and head for the mountains



The Germans had effectively blocked the east coast route to Messina. So as he had done in Tunisia Montgomery reverted to his alternative tactic of a left hook offensive, this time through the mountains to the north west of Catania, to assault Adrano and Randazzo. He aimed to split the final defensive line of the Germans around Mt Etna, and force them to retreat both on the north and east coasts to Messina.

However when so many units were depleted and in need of rest, the question was who in 8th Army could carry out the left hook. Despite Montgomery conceding to Patton that the Americans' advance on the north coast should be the main thrust on Messina, 8th Army needed some fresh troops to drive through the mountains and relieve the pressure on US forces.

Montgomery had hoped that the 78th Division, his most experienced mountain warfare troops recently proven in the Atlas Mountains in Tunisia, could be kept in reserve and rested for the campaign to come on the rugged Italian mainland. But it was not to be. On 20 July Montgomery called in the Battleaxe Division. After a pitching voyage below decks in LTI landing craft, commonly known as sardine cans, and seasickness that seemed to spare no-one, the 1st Surreys landed on 25 July at Cassibile to the south of Syracuse.

From Cassibile the Surreys drove by truck up to Palagonia, then from there on foot over tough terrain, in all a journey of some 40 miles to the foot of Monte Scalpello. In the heat of high summer the dust, mixed with the ever present sulphur fumes from Mt Etna, choked men's throats. Sicily's searing heat, and the dust covered bodies of the dead of both sides lying unburied on the rocky ground, were to become a soldier's common impression of Sicily. The Surreys' Frank Weston remembers how he could not help but think back to the freshness of the sparkling Mediterranean.

The forbidding goal of the 78th Division was to advance over the hills west of the Catania Plain, cross the Dittaino River, take Catenanuova, then the fortress town of Centuripe, then on to Adrano, Bronte, and finally Randazzo, so bisecting the German lines. On the night of 29 July a brigade from the 1st Canadian Division supported by the 5th Northants crossed the shallow summer stream of the Dittaino River for the attack on Catenanuova. Despite Luftwaffe strikes in the morning that destroyed Northants' supplies and transport inflicting significant casualties, enemy ground forces were overcome, and by sunset on 30 July the Canadians had taken Catenanuova.

The Surreys then took over 78th Division's lead at midnight on 30 July, and as they moved off, were caught under intense artillery fire. Their Major Hill recalled that they could, "...do nothing except lie down in the open where we were. It was 15 minutes before the barrage lifted – about the longest quarter of an hour I have ever spent." Later they were shocked to learn it was friendly fire.

Exploiting the Canadians' gains, the Surreys with the 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers, made their way into the hills around the right flank, and beyond the town's rear. Stubborn machine gunners and snipers were taken out, before the Surreys gained their high ground objective two miles to the north of Catenanuova.

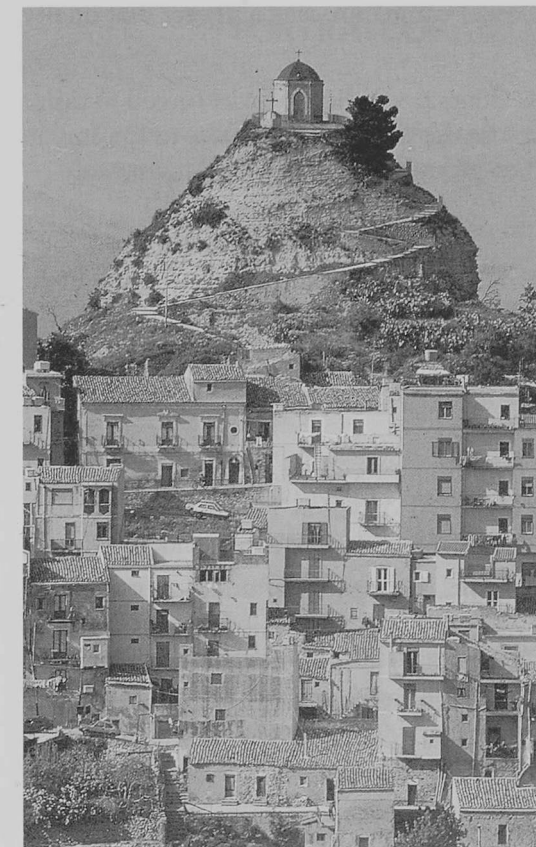
However as the Surreys had clambered up one side of a ridge, German paratroopers had simultaneously climbed the other, in what seemed at the time like a suicide attack. After a confused firefight, heightened by the arrival into the melee of a disoriented contingent of the 5th Royal East Kents, the Surreys repulsed the paratrooper attack. However the chaos of the engagement brought a piece of good luck.

The Surreys captured a German officer who carried plans for the order of battle for Centuripe's defences. The mountain fortress was to be defended by the Herman Göring Division and the 3rd Fallschirmjäger (Parachute) Regiment. The Germans meant to defend north east Sicily and Messina as long as they could. If Montgomery knew of Major Martin, "the man who never was", he must have doubted that the Germans had fallen for the deception ploy.

### Centuripe - battle for the sky!

The captured plans were a huge bonus, for Centuripe was a mountain stronghold, "...standing high on a razor-backed hill above a wild countryside of ragged peaks and narrow defiles," and resembled a medieval fortress. At over 2,000 feet it straddled the highest part of a sharp ridge, whose only approach was a twisting road of two miles along one of its flanks. The Germans had brought a nightmare to the road's every bend, laid mines, blown craters, triggered landslides, destroyed

every bridge, and from the town stared down their gun sights. They meant Centuripe to be the impregnable centrepiece in their Sicilian defensive line.



Standing next to the ancient, six sided shrine on the town's summit, and gazing down the 360° views of the surrounding valleys, you feel as if nothing can move without you seeing it. The Romans had thought that Centuripe's inhabitants like themselves were descended from the Trojans, and recognizing its commanding position made it "civitates liberae", a free city. More recently in his fight for Italian unification in 1862 Garibaldi called it "il balcone della Sicilia" (the balcony over Sicily), for its commanding views to Catania and Mt Etna. While 78 Division prepared to assail the heights of Centuripe, a few miles to the north west the Americans were locked in battle for Troina, originally an Arab-Norman stronghold, and at 1,120 metres the highest town in Sicily.

Despite Centuripe's daunting position, there could be no let up, no time for outflanking. To ease the pressures on US 7th Army to the north, and on 8th Army to the east, the German line had to be broken. On the night of 31 July the Surreys started out on their assault, once again up towards the sky. Their orders were to take a hilltop cemetery, or rather a German strongpoint set amongst a myriad of tall, marble tombs, and overlooking Centuripe across a steep ravine.

It was warm and dark as the Surreys began their two mile climb, up a twisting mule track, often having to clamber along the hillside, hoping the Germans did not hear them. When they gained the top of the ridge, they were able to engage the German troops dug in behind the tombs' cover. A heavy firefight ensued, but the Surreys' small arms and mortars had little effect on the cemetery's stone tombs. The Germans covered every possible

approach to the hill's crest with machine guns on fixed lines, so that the Surreys were now pinned down, and their attack was stalled.

Through all the next day of 1 August, the Surreys and four other battalions edged forward to hang onto their gains. But no supplies, food, water or ammunition were getting through, and the German machine gunners and snipers, using their flares to light up the night sky like New Year's Eve, gave no respite, and pounced on any movement. On the rocky hillsides with only small bushes or cacti giving the pretence of cover, the casualties were rapidly increasing.

The five battalions were now in a miserable position, spread across open ravines and ridges, and facing elimination by the Germans' long range fire in a battle of attrition. The near stalemate convinced Divisional command to pull back the Surreys and some other lead troops a little way, in order to launch the full strength of Divisional artillery onto the cemetery and Centuripe town. The battle was at a tipping point. The forward troops, hungry, thirsty and running short of ammunition, could not stay where they were.

But although the Surreys and their fellow battalions were suffering after 48 hours of continual combat in the open, the Germans, who had been engaged with the Battleaxe Division with no break for more than 4 days, had to be even more tired and also running out of supplies. The Division's commander, General Eveleigh, decided to make a daring and risky, surprise onslaught to topple Göring's paratroopers.

Leaving only one remaining battalion in reserve, Eveleigh brought in the four fresh battalions of the 38th Irish Brigade. By committing eight of his nine battalions, and by launching assaults on the town simultaneously from different directions, Eveleigh gambled that the massed attack would shock, confuse and over-run the German defenders. It was like placing all your chips on one spin of the roulette wheel.

Shortly before dark on the evening of 2 August on the back of the artillery barrage, the Royal Irish and Iniskilling Fusiliers stormed the fortress from the south and east and gained a foothold in the town. Throughout the night with a continual feed of reinforcements, they fought their way through the narrow winding streets. By dawn on 3 August the ferocity and skill of the Battleaxe infantry had taken its toll. The German defenders, stunned and confused by all out attack on a number of fronts, had been pushed out into retreat, and Centuripe was taken.

On entering the Centuripe town the troops came face to face with the horrific damage that the Battleaxe Division's attack had inflicted on its inhabitants and even their dead. "The enemy had used the large cemetery on the crest of the hill as a stronghold and the artillery barrage had opened many tombs and mausoleums," wrote Surreys' Private Hector Smyth. "Skeletons of long dead villagers lay strewn about. In one coffin I saw a skeleton draped with a few black rags which had once probably been a peasant buried in his Sunday suit. All afternoon a sad, steady procession of villagers carrying oblong wooden boxes containing the bodies of their kinsfolk killed during the fighting wended its way to the cemetery."



It had been a classic infantry attack, acknowledged by a grateful General Montgomery as a wonderful feat. The Surreys and the other battalions of the Battleaxe Division were firmly cementing their name as the 8th Army's elite mountain warfare troops. The taking of Centuripe, the first battle honour of the Surreys' Italian campaign, was a trigger that finally forced a German decision.

Two days after the conquest of Centuripe, a fifth American assault took Troina. General von Senger was forced to order Axis forces to retreat north of Mt Etna, and to begin an ordered withdrawal across the Straits of Messina to the Italian mainland. Nevertheless everyone knew it was not yet over, the Germans would re-group at every next hill town.

**The Allies reunite for the fall of Messina**

The Surreys and other battalions rested for a couple of days while the Irish Brigade pressed on towards Adrano eight miles to the north. Against the well drilled, retreating Germans, the Irish battalions fought costly actions to cross the Salso and Simeto Rivers. Many German units, entrenched in caves and stone houses overlooking the river, fought to the last man. A little before midnight on 5 August the Surreys again took over the lead of 11 Brigade, passing through the Irish and their bridgehead across the Simeto River.

The first contacts with Adrano encountered mines, shelling, machine gun fire, and infantry attacks, that destroyed three armoured cars, as the desperate German defenders tried to slow the Allies' advance. At dawn on 7 August the Surreys followed an aerial bombardment and heavy artillery barrage into Adrano town. The Germans melted away, and by evening the Surreys were in pursuit five miles along the road to Bronte at the foot of Mt Etna.

In the early hours of the next day, 8 August, the Surreys again led up the rocky hillsides towards Bronte. Despite encountering their first attack by the Germans' multi-barrelled mortar, the Nebelwerfer, the Surreys and the 2nd Lancers drove the Germans from the surrounding hills into retreat. The 5th Northants went through the centre, and Bronte was captured. Another nine miles of fighting culminated in the Surreys being first into Randazzo, where shortly after US forces also arrived.

The Axis forces were now clearly divided to the north and east of Mt Etna, and in danger of being cut off and surrounded. They were outnumbered by the Allies on land, sea and air. Leaving detachments to fight delaying battles on the north and east coasts, the Germans withdrew across the Messina Straits back to Italy. They had lost the battles for Sicily, but their typically professional retreat allowed them to extricate the greater part of their forces and materiel onto the Italian peninsula.

After the capture of Messina, the Surreys set up camp at the north coast fishing village of Gioia Marea, where they could rest and swim in the warm Tyrrhenian Sea. Most of those left in the depleted ranks of the original complement that sailed from the Clyde, had recovered from at least one wound in the Tunisian and Sicilian campaigns. They wondered whether they would survive the next one. The Allies had secured their first landfall in mainland Europe, and the Surreys must have thought they would have to fight their way back overland to England.

**Taormina - reflections at the top**



As he was following 8th Army up Sicily's Ionian Coast mid way between Catania and Messina, Alan Moorehead, the war correspondent, came upon Taormina, the jewel of Sicily, and wrote, "It was hot. There was a clear leaping brilliance in the sea, and at midday everything had turned into strident colour, red rocks, green vineyards, a blaring cobalt blue in the sky and then all the bright colours of the tumbledown houses along the shore."

With the Germans gone Montgomery established his HQ in one of Taormina's villas, and hosted a lunch for General Eisenhower, who had flown in from La Marsa in Tunisia. As they sat on the terrace gazing past the bougainvillea to the Ionian Sea, perhaps they mused that they owed much to Major Martin, "the man who never was". But perhaps even they did not know how much, for it was not until long after the war's end, that examinations of the archives of German

Intelligence disclosed that substantial German forces had been moved away from Sicily to Greece. In retrospect it does seem probable that Major Martin, the man they never knew, may have saved many lives of the Surreys and other Allied troops, and even averted a disastrous defeat for the Allied invasion.

**Major General Thomas Samuel Trafford (Nicolls)**

**PORTRAIT OF AN OFFICER WHO SERVED IN THE PENINSULAR WAR**

*'... his thoughts were on the times of triumph and glory of the Peninsular War. He raised himself up on his bed, and sang the air of God Save the Queen, waving his hand as if saluting with a sword, but solemnly and grandly ...'*

*(The following article is an abridged version, produced for the Newsletter, of a much longer work by James Baxendale OBE)*

Thomas Samuel Nicolls was born two years before the French Revolution on 15 February 1787, at Swythamley Hall, Staffordshire, the home of the Trafford family since 1541. He was the second son of Edward Nicolls and grandson of Sarah Trafford. He was baptised at the local church, St Lawrence's, Rushton Spencer, on 20 February 1787.

He joined the Army at the outset of the Napoleonic War, which lasted from 1803-1815. Aged just sixteen, he was appointed in 1803 an Ensign in the 31st Regiment of Foot (31st Foot). He was promoted to Lieutenant on 7 September 1804 and to Captain on 20 March 1806.

Thomas was part of the Second Battalion of the 31st Foot (2/31st) which was raised in 1804 when Napoleon threatened to invade England (the threat of invasion was removed the following year at the Battle of Trafalgar). In July 1808, Napoleon's brother, Joseph Bonaparte, was made King of Spain. A few months later, the 2/31st, with Captain Thomas Nicolls among them, sailed for the Iberian Peninsula, disembarking at Lisbon on 5 November 1808. They were part of a force of nearly 30,000 men, which were sent to aid Portugal, a long-time ally of the British. The Peninsular Campaign, Britain's main contribution to the Napoleonic War, lasted over five years until 1814.



Thomas, as a Captain, and latterly a Brevet Major in the 2/31st having been promoted to Brevet Major on 22 November 1813, took part in nine battles of this campaign, under the command of Wellington: Talavera, 1809 (where Thomas was noted in Dispatches as having been slightly wounded); Busaco, 1810; Albuhera, 1811; Vittoria, Pyrenees and Nivelles, 1813; Nive, Orthes and Toulouse, 1813-14. He was awarded the maximum (for the 31st Regiment of Foot) of nine clasps on his Military General Service or Peninsular Medal, which was issued in 1848: Talavera, Busaco, Albuhera, Vittoria, Pyrenees, Nivelles, Nive, Orthes and Toulouse.

Thomas particularly distinguished himself at Nivelles. Cannon's Historical Record of the 31st notes as follows:

... the British commander, looking down from the lofty Pyrenees on the well-guarded territory of France, resolved to carry the war into the heart of that country. The British army, early on the morning of the 10th of November, descended into the valleys on the French side; the division of which the 31st formed part entered France by the Pass of Maya, having sustained some loss in the capture of one of the enemy's redoubts.

... Marshal Soult's army was driven from his fortified position on the river Nivelles, and several guns and prisoners were captured. The French being pursued on the following day, retired to their fortified camp near Bayonne.

Captain Thomas Samuel Nicolls was promoted to the rank of Major in the army for his conduct on this day, and the 31st afterwards received the Royal Authority to bear the word "Nivelles" on the regimental colour and appointments, in testimony of the gallantry of the second battalion in that action.

**Marriage to Anne Rawson**

In 1815, Thomas, with the 31st Foot, was in Naples and Genoa. On 18 February 1816, the 31st Foot arrived in Malta from Genoa. Among the ten officers were Lt-Colonel Guy L'Estrange (commanding the regiment) and Thomas. The regiment stayed in Malta until 3 June 1818. However, Thomas must have returned prior to that date, since on 10 March 1817, he married Anne Rawson, the daughter of Benjamin Rawson at Deane St Mary, near Bolton. Guy married Anne's sister, Sarah, a few months later on 5 June 1817. Thomas's marriage would be key to the Trafford fortunes over the next 150 years. Benjamin Rawson was a wealthy industrialist from Bradford, who made his money in the manufacture of sulphuric acid (vitriol) in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Thomas and Anne had nine children.



**The Peterloo Massacre**

From 1818-24, Thomas appears to have been based with the 31st Foot in Manchester.

Thomas likely, therefore, took part with the 31st Foot in the Massacre of Peterloo in Manchester on 26 August 1819, although there is no firm evidence that he did. His brother-in-law, Guy, did, in command of over 1,000 troops on the day - six troops of cavalry of the 15th Hussars, seven companies of infantry of the 31st and 88th Regiments, and units of the Cheshire Yeomanry (with the exception of the Manchester Yeomanry which, oddly enough, was under the command of a distant relative of Thomas's, Major Thomas Trafford of Trafford Park (later Sir Thomas de Trafford)). Following an order from the magistrates to disperse the 60,000 strong crowd - many carrying banners and symbols of the French Revolution - the Hussars and the ill-disciplined Manchester and Salford Yeomanry charged, killing eleven people and injuring 500. Peterloo led to a wave of protest and condemnation and, in the end, to the Great Reform Act of 1832.

**From the 31st Foot to the 24th Foot**

In 1824, Thomas and Anne moved to live at the Gate House in Tenby, South Wales. They lived here until they moved to Germany in 1835. The Gate House was a three storey mansion, with gardens, stables and even an orchard with a beautiful view over the harbour and north beach.

Their move to Tenby was likely related to Thomas' transfer from the 31st Regiment to the 24th Regiment of Foot. On 24 April 1823, Thomas was promoted (by purchase) from Brevet Major to Major. In January 1824, he transferred very briefly to the 96th Regiment of Foot and then, in June, to the 24th Regiment of Foot (24th Foot), on half pay. He did not travel with the 24th Foot to Canada from 1829-1841, nor to the Indian subcontinent in 1846, when the regiment took part in the Second Sikh War, and where it remained, including during the Indian Mutiny in 1857. On 24 July 1830, Thomas was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel on half pay.

**Purchase of Panthowell**

Between 1833-35, Thomas and his wife purchased an 860 acre estate at Panthowell (Plas Hoel) in Carmarthenshire, South Wales, for £9,150, using money from a trust set up by his wife's father, Benjamin Rawson.

The timing of the purchase of the Panthowell estate was likely related to the sale of Swythamley Hall, the Trafford family seat since 1541. Since his elder brother, Edward Trafford had no male heir, the large estate should have gone to Thomas under the trust set up by their great grandfather, William Trafford, in his will of 1758. But Edward ended the entail of the estate, and sold it for £50,000 in 1831-32. None of this money appears to have gone to Thomas, (it was divided instead between Edward's four daughters) as is clear by the extent of the mortgages over Panthowell. Of Trafford money, Thomas appears only to have benefited from his father's will, to the tune of £1,000.

Thomas appears to have had hopes of buying Swythamley back. In a letter dated September 1840 to his sister, Frances, he wrote that his sons, Guy and Rawson, were determined to accomplish this. Through their mother, they would inherit very substantial Rawson money.

**Travels on the Continent, 1835-40**

From 1835-40, Thomas travelled with his family to the Continent. Over twenty letters from Thomas to his sister, Frances, survive from this period. The letters contain frequent mention of formal receptions, balls, meeting important people, reunions with the L'Estrange's in various places on the Continent - though no indication as to precisely what Thomas was doing. It does not appear, however, that the travels had anything to do with the 24th Foot. Clearly, the expensive lifestyle they were pursuing was being funded by Anne, rather than Thomas, who appeared not to have much money.

Sadly, their time on the Continent was disastrous in terms of health for most of the family, two of Thomas's daughters dying in Frankfurt, and much of the time from 1839 onwards appears to have been spent in spa resorts and recuperating in Italy.

**From Nicolls to Trafford**

In 1837, Thomas changed his name to Trafford by Royal Decree. Edward, Thomas's brother, died in March 1839, leaving only daughters, thus making Thomas the heir to the Trafford of Swythamley name, but without the estate.

Thomas returned with his family to London from Germany at the end of September 1840.

In 1841, they went to Guernsey, where they remained until Anne's death in August 1843, aged 50, a year before her father, Benjamin Rawson. Benjamin had left his considerable fortune in trust to be divided between his surviving grandchildren. Most went to Thomas and Anne's children, following the death of Benjamin Rawson's two daughters, Mary and Eliza,

who held life interests. Since Anne had died shortly before her father, her life interest lapsed. Thomas, therefore, having only a few years previously missed out on the inheriting the Trafford money, appears once again to have lost out on benefiting from the Rawson inheritance (apart, of course, from Panthowell, which had been purchased with Rawson money).

**A military family**

Thomas ensured that all his sons from his first marriage followed in his footsteps, by going into the Army:

Guy was commissioned on 12 January 1838, aged just 16, into the 65th (2nd Yorkshire North Riding) Regiment of Foot as an Ensign. He sailed for Canada in April 1839, taking part in the aftermath of the 1837-38 Rebellions there against the British colonial power. He retired from the 65th foot on 16 December 1845. However, when the Crimean War broke out, he joined up again, in May 1855, this time with the 2nd West York Light Infantry Militia, purchasing a commission as a Captain. He deployed with the militia to Gibraltar. Following the end of the Crimean War, Guy resigned his commission with the 2nd West York Militia on 9 November 1857.

Rawson, like his brother, Guy, joined the 65th Foot, aged 17, being commissioned as an Ensign on 22 May 1841, in Guy's place. He served in New Zealand from May 1846. On 20 July 1847, he fought in the battle of St John's Wood (Wanganui). He was promoted to Captain on 18 September 1851, retiring on 25 July 1853. At this stage, he appears to have stayed in New Zealand, becoming one of the early soldier settlers. He leased a property called Mingaroa' in Manawatu, where he was one of the first sheep farmers. In January 1859, he was recorded as living at Rangitikei, in the province of Wellington, and in September 1860, he was noted as Commanding the Wellington Militia and Volunteers.

Henry (known as Harry) was commissioned into the Rifle Brigade as a Second Lieutenant on 31 March 1849. On 17 October 1851, he transferred to the 51st foot as an Ensign, being promoted to Lieutenant on 6 June 1854. He served in Burma, during the Second Burmese War, from September 1852 until the end of the war. On 13 October 1854, Harry transferred to the 43rd Foot, which was present during the Indian Mutiny, marching 1,300 miles in seven months. Harry retired from the Army on 29 July 1862.

Bessie, Thomas's only surviving daughter from his first marriage, did not marry, but lived well into her seventies.

**Remarriage and a second family**

In November 1844, aged 57, Thomas married Maria Le Marchant, at St Peter's Church, Guernsey. Maria, 29 years Thomas's junior, was the daughter of John Le Marchant of Melrose, Guernsey. By Maria Thomas had a further eight children.

Thomas returned to Tenby with his new wife, staying at Glendower House while their new house at Panthowell was being built, building commencing in 1845. They must have moved in relatively soon, since their second son, William Thyrcel, was born there in April 1847. In 1846, Thomas was promoted to Colonel. On 20 June 1854, still on half-pay with the 24th Foot, he was promoted to Major-General, retiring six months later.

**Death of Thomas**

Thomas must have had an active retirement, surrounded by his large, young family. His youngest son, Frederick, was born less than a month before he died at Panthowell on 5 January 1857, aged 69. A letter, written by his son, Guy, to Rawson, in New Zealand, the day after his death, reveals a man of character, a soldier, even then, from a bygone age:

*My dear Rawson*

*Our father is no more - for the last year he has been ageing but up to two weeks ago he still enjoyed pretty good health. I and Caroline were here about three weeks ago when he was well enough to walk along the road with me while I shot the wood - but soon after our departure he became seriously ill, and we were called down here again, we arrived two days before his death. He passed away in peace on the night of 5th instant, surrounded by all his children that are in England. He suffered no pain while we were here, and though he talked rather ramblingly yet his thoughts were on the times of triumph and glory of the Peninsular War. He raised himself up on his bed, and sang the air of God Save the Queen, waving his hand as if saluting with a sword, but solemnly and grandly, a thing to move but not to shock.*

*He spoke many words in Spanish. I thought that too long a continuance of this would exhaust him and asked him if I should say a prayer; he listened and when I had done, he said one himself (the Collect for the 4th Sunday after Easter) and deemed more quiet. That he in that dark hour of death should utter cries of victory! May it not be a sign to us that an eternal victory is won! For some hours before his death he lay unconscious, but with a face in spite of his difficulty of breathing, as calm as a child's, and now all that is left of him in this world, lies in the next room, noble and beautiful looking like a marble statue of a Crusader. He was a good man, God grant he may now be reaping his reward.*

*Your affecate brother*

*C G Trafford*



The following notice appeared in The Welshman on 9 January 1857:

On the 5th instant, at his residence, Plas Pant Hoel, General Trafford, in the 70th year of his age. Deceased.



Thomas Trafford  
Reproduced by kind permission of  
E L Trafford

Thomas was buried in Trelech ar Bettws parish church. According to Eynon Lloyd Hughes, the youngest son of the Revd Eynon Hughes, Thomas was buried with full military honours. *‘The body was carried on a farm gambo from the Plas to the Trelech church. He was such a high ranking officer that 200 soldiers from his regiment attended the funeral and formed a guard of honour.’*

In the church, there is a plaque in his memory:

In Memory of Major-General Trafford, of Plas-Hoel in this Parish, a Magistrate of this County Carmarthen and the County of Pembroke, who died January 5th 1857 aged 70 years. He served under the Duke of Wellington in all the campaigns, the Peninsular, and France and received a medal with nine clasps to commemorate his services.

Panthowell passed to his eldest son by his second marriage, Major Edward Le Marchant Trafford of the 5th Northumberland Fusiliers, freed of all mortgages, though with the provision that Maria, his wife, should continue to live there, *‘as long as she remains a widow’*. She remained there until 1904, finally dying on 22 March 1908.

o o o

A Personal View Of the Peninsular War

Over 20 years ago the Regimental Museum received from Lieutenant Colonel F d'A Wilson MC, late RA, transcribed excerpts from the diary of his ancestor Captain John Alexander Wilson, who served in the Queen's in the Peninsular War. Captain Wilson was the second son of James Wilson (of Elgin) and Sarah Robertson. He was born in Kent on the 10th of October 1788. He married a Miss Elizabeth Hall on the 23rd February 1807. They had five sons and two daughters. He had three elder sisters, all of whom are mentioned from time to time in the diary, and their names were Maria, Elizabeth and Sarah (who went out to Lisbon to visit him during the campaign).

Lieutenant Wilson (as he was then) served with the Second Regiment of Foot (The Queen's Regiment) from about 1807. He took part in the ill fated Walcheren expedition of 1809, and, as can be seen from the diary entries, in the Peninsular campaign from 1811 to 1814.

The transcribed diary is now in the Regimental archive at the Surrey History Centre. Unfortunately the whereabouts of the original diary (or diaries) is unknown. The typed copy was made from the often faded characters of a copy of extracts only of the original made in 1864 by a grandson of the diarist. Nevertheless the entries provide a highly personal account of the monotony and minutiae of service in the war, and combine this with one individual's viewpoint of the high drama of battle. The following entries for a two week period in November 1813 provide good examples of both extremes.

- Nov: 6th Bought a mule for 100 Dollars as a great "favour". Got leave to join the army. Marched that evening to Renteria, 1 league. Lay in an old stable.
- Nov: 7th Marched to Zazuca (?) 5 long leagues across part of the Pyrenees.
- Nov: 8th Joined the division in camp. Near Virra, 2 leagues. Found the Regt: under orders for a storming party.
- Nov: 9th Busy making ladders and filling bags with fern to throw in the ditch of the Star Fort.
- Nov: 10th A general action! We marched from camp leaving large fires burning three hours before daybreak. About 5 o'clock at grey daylight the action commenced by our four Companies dashing on, in two strong parts, each independent of the other; the leading Companies carrying the bags of ferns and the others the ladders. Our Company led the second party. We were covered by a party of 12 volunteers who were to fire. We were ordered to use our bayonets and were unloaded. Having run down a steep hill we got close to the glacis when we halted to breathe. A few men were wounded in passing along. Whilst we lay down the Horse Artillery played as close over our heads as possible. One of the guns most improperly threw shrapnel l (sic) shells, which, bursting just over us, did us full as much harm as the enemy. We had 2 men killed and 10 wounded by our own guns. Having waited about 10 minutes, a staff officer rode down waving his hat, which was the signal

to attack. The word "Forward" was given and the whole advanced, rending the air with Huzzas, the whole Division cheering us on. The Duke looking on close by. The French, as soon as we commenced throwing in the bags and erecting the ladders, leaped over the parapet on to the very bayonets of our men. They had to run down a steep ravine and up a narrow road, during all which time we kept up a distant fire upon them. About 30 men taken in the fort, and of the rest, about 500 in number, very few could have escaped. They were all volunteers and Grenadiers, who had sworn to defend the place to the last man. Plenty of Brandy and Biscuit was taken in the fort and two guns. Having formed in good order, we advanced down the hill which was very slippery and dirty and covered with killed or wounded Frenchmen. We then pushed on to the village of Scirra which was obstinately defended, the houses being full of men firing from the windows. I was struck with a stone or piece of a shell at the fort, on the right hand, which bled all day. Our Grenadiers charged down the streets and cleared them. Many of the French threw down their arms, and as soon as they were passed took them up again and fired on us. Having cleared the village, we then moved on to the foot of the hill occupied by three lines of the enemy; the first entrenched, the second in regular redoubts. We had to ascend in files, winding our way up the hill exposed to their Artillery. Drove them at all points without firing another shot. I saw a French officer ride away with an Eagle, for fear of the Light Company of the 82nd Regt. Our Light Company, under Major Lugan, took two guns with their bayonets. Halted on a high point, having St. Jean de Luz just under us. Saw the French driven through in great style, while an English Brig of War kept up a smart fire on the town and Castle. Saw the 7th Division charging through a village and the 51st skirmishing, their bugles sounding advance, which they did not seem to obey. At 10 at night we moved down to the village, the men not having blankets as they left their packs behind at the storming. Myself, sent on piquet in a deserted house. Plenty of eggs, fowls and cyder. Total 12 killed, 29 wounded. 53rd; 21 killed and wounded. The French left upward of 80 pieces of cannon in their works. We marched past one of their redoubts, having the 88th French Regt: in it which surrendered to us. A glorious day!

- Nov: 11th Marched in a heavy rain at two o'clock. At dawn our four companies surprised the enemy outposts and drove them in and kept the ground. The French left their kettles on the fire with lots of eggs and bacon. They only had time to kick them over. Got some cyder from a house I was sent to occupy. At 10 our Companies sent to camp. Lay out without tents and very wet.
- Nov: 12th Baggage joined us.
- Nov: 13th Continued rain. Enemy retired behind the river Nive. Tent blown down in the night; washed out of my bed.
- Nov: 14th On Court Martial. Portugese put in quarters.
- Nov: 15th On Quarter guard. Camp knee deep in mud.
- Nov: 16th A tremendous night of rain. The camp distinguished by the name of "The wet camp."
- Nov: 17th Broke up and marched to Ascain. This is the town where a Spanish General wrote the Duke saying he was happy to inform him he had surprised it and had put man woman and child to death, and should soon have it burnt down. This honour was prevented. Not a soul in it when we marched in; the streets full of broken furniture and feathers. Cleaned out a house and was very comfortable.
- Nov: 18th Sent off No:2 and a letter to Maria.
- Nov: 19th Turned out to make room for the 20th Regt. Went to an empty house.
- Nov: 21st Divine Service. A mail.

The entry for the 10th is Wilson's view of the Battle of Nivelles. The enemy position covering the River Nivelles was protected by the great redoubt of St Barbe. The Regimental History description of the assault was as follows:

*‘The centre of the attack was led by the Battalion of Detachments consisting of the four companies of the Queen's with the companies of the 53rd Regiment. Deep ditches surrounded the ramparts of the redoubt, but these difficulties were overcome by the men carrying bags of fern to fill up the ditches. The men also carried scaling ladders to enable them to mount the high walls of the redoubt.*

*While the guns were pouring forth their stream of shot and shell, the gallant fellows of the Queen's and 53rd with a British cheer rushed forward, and surmounting all obstacles soon got into the works, the French not killed in the melee leaping over the walls and escaping.*

*A deep ravine, which was immediately in rear of the redoubt, prevented further advance of the Battalion in pursuit; they were, however, able to direct a sharp and telling fire on the retreating French, causing them much loss.'*

As for Captain Wilson, he later exchanged into the 60th Rifles, obtaining his Captaincy with them in 1815: he died whilst on service with that Regiment at Quebec in 1820.

o o o



## St George and Dead Soldier



*St George and Dead Soldier* (Copyright Scott Norwood Witts 2008) which is pictured above has been hanging in the Regimental Chapel at Guildford Cathedral since 14th April 2009 and is due to remain there until November 2009. The painting was stimulated by the deployment of British Forces overseas and the historical misrepresentation of St George. The patron saint of soldiers and England is shown battle-fatigued identifying another fatality of war - exploding the contrived mythical identity developed during the Crusades to reveal a man of sorrows.

As a high ranking soldier of the Roman Empire his conversion to Christianity was extremely dangerous, yet it inspired him to put down his weapons and personally confront the Emperor Diocletian over his brutal persecution of the Christian minority. A dissident pacifist, who paid for it with his life.

The painting was originally unveiled at St George's Roman Catholic Cathedral in Southwark on St George's Day 2008 and went on to be exhibited at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle and Lichfield Cathedral for Remembrance Tide. It is continuing to tour a number of English Cathedrals in 2009 and 2010 and will be for sale after the exhibition.

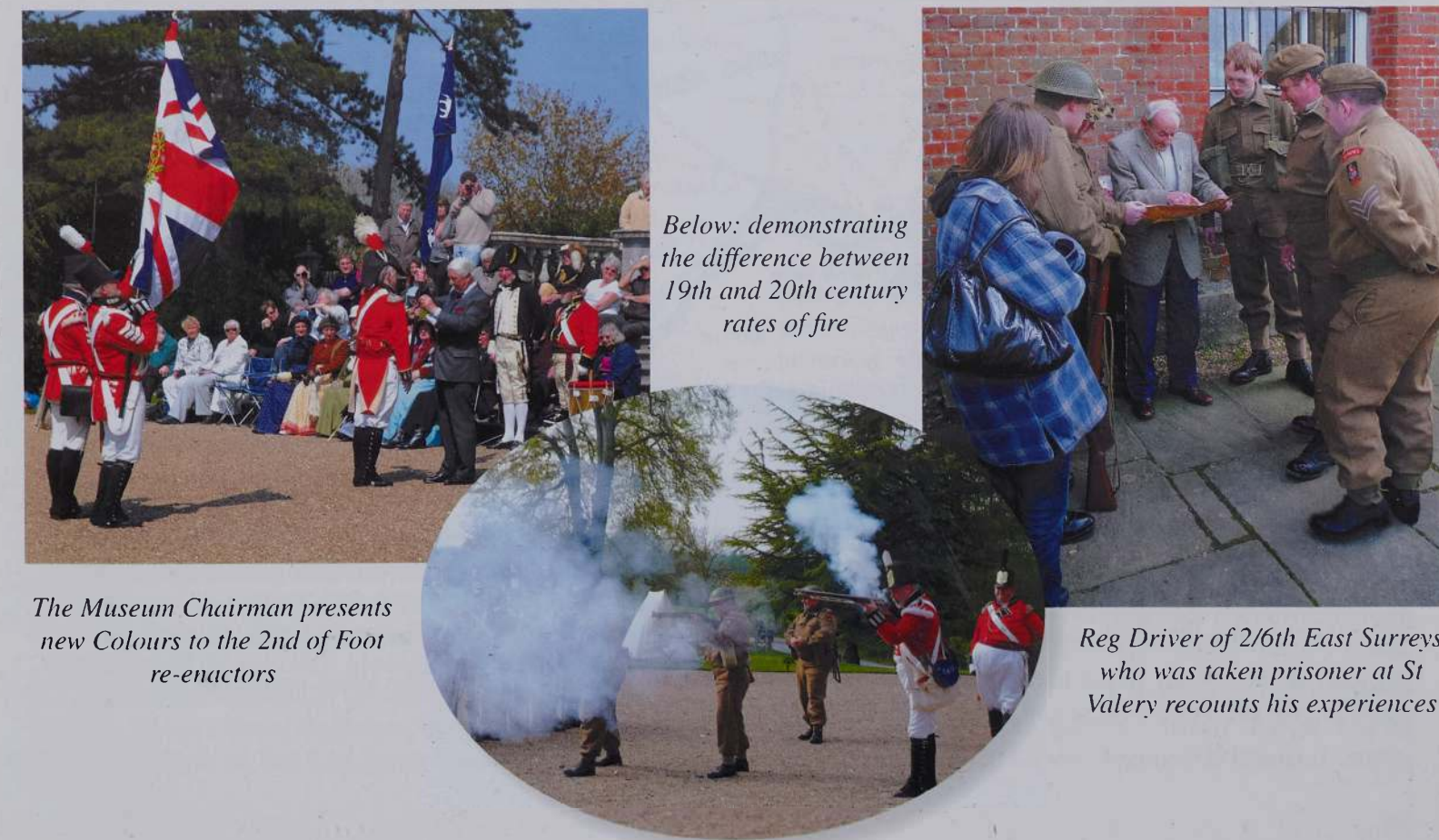
A copy of *St George and Dead Soldier* is also being produced for St George's Memorial Church in Baghdad (the only Anglican Church in Iraq) thanks to the support and interest of the resident priest, Canon Andrew White.

The artist Scott Norwood Witts has previously exhibited at The American Church in London and the Carmelite Friary in Kent. He has produced altarpieces for Dover Castle and The Royal Garrison Church at British Army HQ, Aldershot. He is currently working on three images of the life and death of Anne Boleyn.

## Annual Association Reunion November 2008



## Museum Open Day April 2009



*Below: demonstrating the difference between 19th and 20th century rates of fire*

*The Museum Chairman presents new Colours to the 2nd of Foot re-enactors*

*Reg Driver of 2/6th East Surreys who was taken prisoner at St Valery recounts his experiences*



## The Battle of Albuera: May 16th 1811

(by Ian Chatfield)



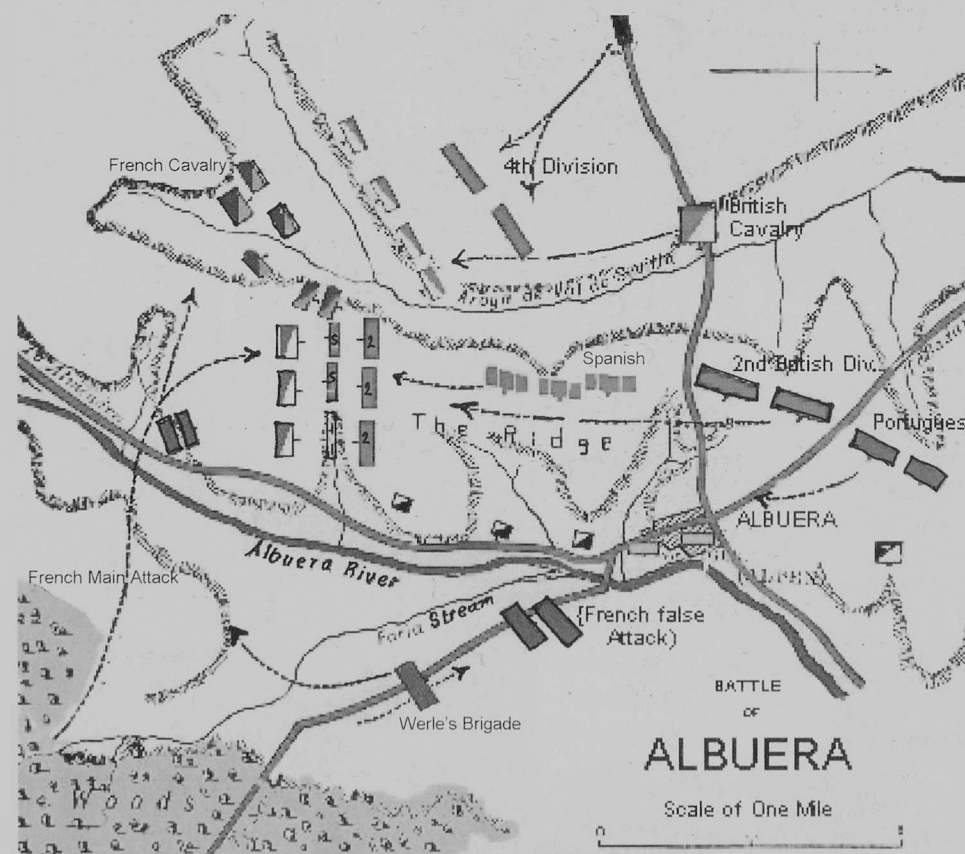
The Battle of Albuera was the action that occurred when Marshal Sault commanding a French force of some 24,000 men and 40 guns moved north to relieve Badajoz that an allied force under Marshal Beresford had laid siege to after the traitorous Spanish commandant had sold out to the French.

Beresford with a mixed force of British, Spanish, Portuguese and Kings German Legion (KGL) troops totalling some 35,000 men and 38 guns moved south to meet the French force and chose the Albuera ridge as a battlefield: although the river was no real obstacle it would make a cavalry charge difficult.

Beresford placed the KGL in the village with the Spanish force on the right flank with the British in the centre and the Portuguese on the left flank. The main Calvary force was in reserve along with the British 4th Division although they carried out picket duty along the river bank.

Sault attacked soon after first light with Godinots infantry brigade of 3500 men flanked by Briche's light cavalry up the road toward the village and at the same time Werlé's infantry brigade appeared out of the olive trees along with two brigades of dragoons but this was just a feint as the main attack would come from the allied right flank where Sault hoped to roll up the allied army. Sault did not know the Spanish division had arrived at Albuera at this time.

The day started well for the French with the Spanish force seemingly so mesmerised by the French forces to their front that they failed to realize what was about to hit them in their right flank where the main French force of two Divisions (Gazan and Girard) now appeared, with Werlé's Brigade wheeling left to join the main attack.



Beresford himself rode down to personally wheel the Spanish forces around before first an artillery barrage then a cavalry charge then the mass French infantry attacked, but they managed to wheel around and stand their ground until the British 2nd Division under Maj. Gen Stewart could come to their assistance.

It was Colborne's Brigade containing the 1/3rd Foot (Buffs), the 2/48th Foot (Northampton's), the 2/66th Foot (Royal Berkshires), and the 2/31st Foot (East Surrey's) that joined the battle first with Colborne thinking he would pass the Spanish forces now heavily engaged by French infantry and attack the French flank. But a very heavy rain and hail storm hit which reduced visibility virtually to nil and also made muskets inoperative; and the French Hussars and Polish Ulan Lancers led by General Latour Mauburg (a brilliant cavalry leader) took the opportunity to attack. The first three battalions 3rd,

48th and 66th stood no chance and were decimated. But the 2/31st who had practiced a new movement to form square instigated by their commanding officer at Albuera Major Guy L'Estrange faired better and stood their ground fighting off all attacks by the French Hussars and Polish Lancers until the Spanish Calvary, helped by British Dragoons, saw them off; but not before they had scattered the Allied headquarters staff and Beresford himself had unhorsed a Ulan Lancer.

As soon as the cavalry threat had receded French artillery began to fire grapeshot into the allied troops but the 2/31st moved to the crest of the ridge and joined in the battle against the French Infantry.

Following up Colborne's Brigade was Hoghton's Brigade containing the 1/29th Foot (Worcester's), 1/48th Foot (Northampton's), and the 1/57th Foot (Middlesex); these three battalions with the help of the 2/31st held back 8,000 Frenchmen but at terrible costs until first Abercrombie's Brigade arrived and then the 4th Division so long held back in reserve. The 4th Division was mainly made up of Fusiliers and because of the cavalry threat they had to move up in a box formation which took extra time. But when they arrived they joined the battle and along with the others already involved stood trading shots with the French Infantry - and at times caused casualties to the Spanish when the French Hussars and Polish Lancers rode between them.

This is thought to be to bloodiest battle of the Peninsular War with the infantry of both sides standing at close range trading shots. At times both sides wavered with the French officers stopping their men from retreating with swords but in the end the superior firing of the British and Spanish took its toll and the French broke and withdrew back down the ridge and away. Five regimental Colours were lost during the battle never to be recovered.

The lasting memories of the battle are Colonel Inglis of the 57th (Middlesex Regt.) laying wounded in front of his Colours calling "Die Hard 57th Die Hard" - a nick name to remain with the regiment to this day: then there was Lieutenant Latham of the 3rd Foot (The Buffs) who refused to give up the Kings Colour of his regiment and had his arm severed at the shoulder and his face terribly mutilated by French Hussars - after the battle he was found still alive and still with the Colour inside his tunic; and last but not least the 2/31st Foot The East Surrey's of whom Wellington said "There is one officer, Major L'Estrange of the Thirty-First whom I must recommend in the strongest manner for promotion in some way or other. After the other parts of the same brigade were swept off by the cavalry this little battalion alone held its ground against all the colonnes en masse".

This is a very abridged version of the Battle of Albuera: but an account in which I hope I have mentioned the vital roll the British infantry played in this very bloody battle in which several founding regiments of the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment fought with distinction.

*The time has come the General said to talk of many things  
Of Chutney Spoons And Pickle Forks  
(by Major Paul Gray)*

On the afternoon of 13th October 1959 a Regimental Silver Board assembled at Blenheim Camp, Bury St Edmonds to select silver for the Officers Mess of the First Battalion The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment to be formed the next day. Meeting in a bare storeroom in a wooden hut were Major General JY Whitfield, Colonel of The Queen's Royal Regiment, Brigadier George Roupell VC, Colonel of The East Surrey Regiment, Lt Col David

Lloyd Owen, CO 1 Queen's, and Lt Col Tony White, CO 1 Surreys, and CO designate 1 Queen's Surreys. In attendance were Maj Bryan Rae, Silver Officer 1 Surreys, and myself, a very-junior subaltern, Silver Officer 1 Queen's. (As to how I got that appointment please see my little piece about the Green Pocket Barometer in the last Newsletter).

Those with recent experience, even from only an armchair, of Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan, and other trouble spots, and reading this with mounting disbelief that it took a Major General, a Brigadier, and two Lt Cols to sort out a problem which would surely today be left to a couple of Captains, will just have to accept that things were different in 1959.

Hovering around in the background of the Silver Board was C/Sgt Archer, Officers Mess Sergeant 1 Queen's (and designate 1 Queen's Surreys). His only interest was to get the Board over as quickly as possible and the selected silver back in the Mess, for he had to have the Mess decorated and the table laid for a Regimental Dinner that night: the last occasion when the Officers of 1 Queen's and 1 Surreys would dine, and the first occasion when they would dine together prior to amalgamation the next day. Also helping the Board was Cpl "Ernie" Butler, Silverman of 1 Queen's and Cricket Umpire extraordinaire, who was to continue both appointments in the new Regiment.

The Board started with the Centrepieces. The Queen's had an enormous jardinière which had long since ceased to be used as a Centrepiece, and was normally put on a side table at cocktail parties to hold flower vases. The Surreys centrepiece, a lovely commemoration of the move from horse transport to mechanical transport, and showing a Vickers Machine Gun section equipped with both, was really rather large, difficult to move between stations; and in any case, the Officers had already decided to give it to the Museum; (where it now is at Clandon). The Queen's soup tureen, 1801, with Victorian restoration, normally set before the Commanding Officer at dinner would be used in the same way in the new Regiment.

Quickly various items of historical or traditional value were agreed to go to the new Regiment. The Surreys Huntingdonshire Salt, The Dettingen Cup, the Snuff Box (the only piece to have survived the loss of the Kent); the Surreys Sarcophagus, although having important historical value, was deemed to be an unnecessary reminder of the amalgamation of the 31st and 70th Regiments in 1881, and was consigned to the Museum. Knives forks and spoons of various sizes, designs and value were selected with about half coming from each Regiment. The 1 Queen's goblets, many of which had been presented by officers still serving, and would be serving in the new Regiment, were chosen; while some older goblets from 1 Surreys, although not normally used for drinking, were selected to keep things roughly equal.

After about 45 minutes the important pieces had been selected and C/Sgt Archer was happy that he had all the silver he needed for the Regimental Dinner. Looking



around the remaining silver I produced a pickle fork. The Surreys did not have a pickle fork, and Col Tony White (I think) said that we did not need a pickle fork in the new Regiment, an ordinary fork would be just as useful. General JY said that of course we must have a pickle fork, no properly constituted mess would be complete without one. There was then serious discussion about the merits of pickle forks while I carefully avoided catching Bryan Rae's eye for fear of laughing. After what seemed an age the pickle fork was not selected. I then produced a chutney spoon. Again the Surreys did not have one. This time General JY was quick off the mark and explained how important it was to have a chutney spoon and how much we needed one. By this time everyone was tired of argument, and the chutney spoon went forward to the new Regiment.

Which is why the Officers Mess of 1 Queen's Surreys and 1 Queen's (and to this day 1 PWRR?) had a chutney spoon but not a pickle fork.

Or was it the other way round?

## The Queen's Royal Regiment 1958-1960

50 Years On (by Harry Ulrich)

As 2008 was the 50th year since the 52nd intake was called up for national service, it was decided to do something special to mark the occasion. So in June 2008 a group of us met at the Union Jack Club for a two day celebration. Those that were able to attend were Ron Rhone, Evan Rees, Bob Salter. (SGT) Eric Lockwood, Harry Ulrich, and two of our old mates from U.S.A. Maurice Towner, Brian Weatherhill. The first day of our reunion was spent catching up on what we had been doing during the last year.

Next day after we had breakfasted we all went to Covent Garden and after walking around for a while we visited the Lamb and Flag pub to have a glass of the amber nectar (as one does). In the evening we had a stretched limousine collect us from the Union Jack Club and take us to the Gherkin building. We then were taken to the 42nd floor where we had booked a private room for dinner to mark the occasion.



It's amazing that six old soldiers together with their platoon SGT should still be able to get together after 50 years. To me this shows the esprit de corps that The Queens Royal Regiment instilled in us, when we were all young men, is still there today 50 years on.

## Glorious First of June 2008

Major Roddy Mellotte writes:-



As promised ages ago, please find copy of regimental flag flying at the sharp end of "HMS Queen Charlotte" (otherwise a Dutch style river boat) on Sunday the Glorious First of June 2008. A party of about 50 included myself (flag officer embarked, i.e. I own the flag) Anthony Beattie (flag lieutenant i.e. he doesn't) and John Acworth (No 1 and executive organising officer). We boarded at Bristol Docks and sailed down the River Avon to the Severn Estuary and back. Other Queensmen (in the broader sense) included Brigadier & Mrs Tony Pielow, the Jelfs, the Russells and General Fergus Ling's daughter Ginny with Naval husband Martin Knapp. A jolly time was had by all and a whole lot more people now know all about the Glorious First of June which on this occasion was rather overcast.

## PAY ATTENTION CAN YOU HELP?



Jackie Kimbell is looking for anyone who knew her father, Albert Leslie Kimbell, known as Tony or Tunny Kimbell.

Her father grew up in Chertsey in Surrey. He joined up in Guildford and was a private in the 5th Bn Queen's Royal Regiment. He was captured in France and ended up a prisoner of war in Poland at KP GEF Lager Thorn 13168, Stalag 13168 XX3. It is believed he was at Stalag 20B at Marienburg towards the end of the War. He did a bit of boxing in the Army she believes and he also was probably

known for being a good singer and pianist when he got the chance.

She would love to know what life in this particular camp was like and of course to speak to somebody who knew him would be wonderful.



In family papers are an army group in uniform: Her father is not in the picture but has written some names on the back which have been deciphered as: Colledge, Duffield, Lockwood, Richards, Beer, Oatley, Dodd (may have lived in Petersfield after the War) Browne, Pearce, Benesh, Parker, Harvey, Stanton, Flanagan, Wagg, Coombes, Jesson, True, Trott, Whitehead, Stone, Perkins.

Contact details are:

Email [j.kimbell@talktalk.net](mailto:j.kimbell@talktalk.net)  
Jackie Kimbell, 72 Coleman Court, Kimber Road,  
Wandsworth, London SW18 4PA.

Ron Harper would like to hear from all the signallers who served with the Regiment in Malaya 1954-57 with a view to arranging a reunion dinner: contact address 90 Osbourne Road, Willesborough, Ashford, Kent TN24 0EQ. (Editor: Congratulations to Ron and Maureen Harper who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on 21st March 2009, and to Laurie and Margaret Costa who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary in March as well).

Alan Elliot would like to hear from any Regimental veterans who were ex-Indian Army Wing at Wrotham and finally Caterham before it was disbanded in 1946 (contact via Editor).

## "The 1st Surreys' Last Eighteen"

Bryn Evans writes:-

I am currently writing a book, with a series of articles, on the campaigns undertaken by the East Surrey Regiment in World War 2, from Operation Torch through the Tunisian, Sicilian and Italian campaigns, and into Austria.

In conversations with Frank Weston in New Zealand, a veteran of the 1st Battalion East Surreys in WW2, Frank has stated that at the end of the war in 1945 when they reached Austria, he believed that there were only 18 men from the original complement still serving in the 1st Surreys, who had left UK in November 1942. From Frank's recollections and other research it is thought that the following 12 names were in that group in the 1st Battalion:

1. 'Tickey' Wright, 2. Harry Cox, 3. Bob Turner
4. Johnny Narney, 5. Ron Smith, 6. 'Titch' Glossop
7. 'Darkie' Berry, 8. 'Pony' Moore, 9. 'Tibbles',
10. Frank Weston, 11. Harry Skilton,
12. Lt Col J. Woodhouse

On 27 October 1942 the 1st Battalion embarked from Greenock in Operation Torch, with a complement of 35 officers and 761 other ranks, a total of 796 men. From examination of the Regiment's published statistics of casualties, during the Tunisian, Sicilian and Italian campaigns, there were 236 men killed and 1,065 wounded and missing, a total of 1,301 casualties.

On top of this number there would also be men transferred to other units for various reasons. So even allowing for some of the original 761, who may have been wounded and missing and later returned to the battalion, it would appear to be quite feasible that only 18 of the original complement of October 1942 were still there at the end.

I would be delighted to hear from anyone who can provide any information on the above names, or of any others who may have been there at the end in Austria. Also I would welcome any information or recollections of those campaigns, by those that served, or those that knew the ones that did, with either 1st or 1/6th Surreys, to assist with my research and as input to my book on the Surreys in WW2.

I am particularly keen to hear of any rememberings of everyday life of any kind, even what may seem trivial, to help paint a picture of those times.

Contact: Bryn Evans [bryn.evans@ozemail.com.au](mailto:bryn.evans@ozemail.com.au)

8 Nicholson Street, Wollstonecraft, Sydney 2065  
NSW Australia  
Tel 612 9438 1939  
Fax 612 9437 0481

## TA Drill Halls

To complete the website section on Regimental Depots and Barracks, Lieutenant Colonel Les Wilson is seeking information on the locations (including full postal addresses if possible) of all TA centres used by the Regiment and its forebears over the years. He is also seeking photographs of the buildings (with and without soldiers in the picture), and details of the units occupying



the centres at the various times. Known TA Drill Halls are: Wimbledon (St Georges Rd); Surbiton (62 Claremont Rd); Clapham (27 St John's Hill); Bermondsey (Jamaica Rd); Croydon; Coulsden; Purley; Guildford (Sandfield Terrace); Farnham; Camberley; Haslemere; Woking; Dorking; Reigate.

Those with information/photos are asked to write to Lt Col L M Wilson MBE, Braganza, 9 Langdon Close, St Margarets at Cliffe, Kent CT15 6JP: or to send the information via the Regimental Museum.

Ernest William Jefferies writes:

In 1946 as a private in The Queen's Royal Regiment, on completion of my training I was transferred to an O.C.T.U. camp in Marefield, East Sussex to join a demonstration platoon. Our primary task was to demonstrate platoon attack and defence, including jungle warfare, to officer cadets. We were a motley group of men. Half were miscreants, having spent time in army prisons; the other half- myself included – were youngsters compared to them. Our officer in charge, Second Lieutenant Michael Perrett-Young was assigned to us as a fresh-faced twenty year old. His duty was to turn us into a platoon to be proud of (which to his credit he did).

He was the only officer whose name I remember – because it was double-barrelled. I also admired him because he was the same age as myself - but back then in a different class system.

Imagine my surprise and joy when in 2006 at a Reunion held at the Union Jack Club (incidentally the first such reunion for me) I asked Lieutenant Colonel Wilson if he had ever heard of an officer called Perrett-Young and he replied "I was speaking to him only yesterday on the telephone." So sixty long years after our first encounter I made contact with Michael who had retired from the army as a brigadier.



In 2007 along with my German fiancée and two friends I visited him and his wife Doreen at their home in Yorkshire and enjoyed a wonderful, memorable reunion.

The Duchess Of Cleveland  
(by Colonel David Dickins)



You may by now have heard that the portrait, property of the Regiment, we had assumed to be of Catherine of Braganza, Charles II's Queen, by Sir Peter Lely is more likely to be of Barbara Villiers, Duchess of Cleveland.

Poor Catherine, who brought him Tangier as part of her dowry and us, the Regiment, into

existence, proved to be barren. It certainly could not have been Charles's fault as he is known to have fathered 15 officially recognised bastard children by seven different mothers. Barbara Villiers was his fourth 'mother', Lucy Walters being the first and Nell Gwynn the fifth.

Barbara was an attractive woman but not a very attractive character with a reputation for promiscuity involving, amongst many others, Charles himself, John Churchill, later Duke of Marlborough, an Earl, an actor and a tightrope walker, most of the time still being married to her husband Roger Palmer. She gave birth by Charles to

- (1) Anne, Countess of Sussex,
- (2) Charles Fitzroy Duke of Cleveland,
- (3) Henry Fitzroy Duke of Grafton,
- (4) Charlotte Fitzroy Countess of Lichfield,
- (5) George Fitzroy Duke of Northumberland, and probably
- (6) Dame Cecilia Fitzroy.

Two contemporary quotes regarding Charles II are apposite, the first by the Duke of Buckingham who described his King as 'father of his people' adding sotto voce 'at least of a good many of them' and a little verse by Lord Rochester

'Nor are his desires above his strength  
His sceptre and his \*\*\* are of a length  
And she that plays with one may sway the other  
And make him a little wiser than his brother.'

The third line refers to the regular and notorious attempts at interference in state affairs by the Duchess of Cleveland whilst his brother became, of course, James II, himself father of five acknowledged illegitimate children, and father the right side of the blanket of James Stuart, the Old Pretender and grandfather of Bonny Prince Charlie, the Young Pretender.

Interestingly almost all of the present Royal Family can trace their descent back to one or more of the 44

recognised illegitimate children of Kings of England (or to the Beaufort family via John of Gaunt), including Princes William and Harry who have five illegitimate Stuart descents alone through their mother Diana Princess of Wales, as do Princesses Beatrice and Eugenie of York through a similar number via their mother Sara Duchess of York. Meanwhile Camilla Duchess of Cornwall is a granddaughter of Alice Keppel, King Edward VII's third and final mistress.

Bastardy, it seems has not been a bar to progress in the world of the aristocracy although it was somewhat frowned upon by church and state for the children of lesser men. Queen Victoria put paid to most (but possibly not all) of that in consequence of her and Prince Albert's dislike of the marital and other affairs of her disreputable Hanoverian uncles and later of her son the then Prince of Wales, later Edward VII.

Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Golf Society

Winners at the Autumn Meeting 2008 at Woking Golf Club were:-

Autumn Bowl	
Colonel J G W Davidson	Net 74
Glasgow Greys Cup	
J R L Wells Esq.	Net 78
Heales Memorial Trophy	
C G Stanton Esq.	33 points
Veterans' Halo	
Colonel J W Sewell	43 points
Petri Plate (Avg Spring & Autumn)	
Colonel J G W Davidson	74+74=148

The sweepstake was won by FTA Hole Esq.,

2nd H P Mason Esq., 3rd Capt B L Scripps.

The Match against the Royal Hampshire Regiment will take place at Puttenham Golf Club on Thursday 3rd September 2009.

Guildford Cathedral Flower Gala  
1st – 3rd October 2009

"Of all the trees in England - oak, elder, elm and thorn-  
The yew alone burns lamps of peace, For them that lie  
forlorn" Walter de la Mare

The team of six ladies who will be decorating the Queen's Royal Surrey Regimental Chapel are going to do the Regiment proud. They will be using seasonal red flowers ~ dahlias, gladioli, roses and, of course, poppy petals to create a dramatic display using the Walter de La mare quotation. The Regimental Museum has kindly agreed to lend the Cathedral some drums. The drums will join an

eclectic mix of props around the Cathedral which will include chickens, butterflies and a policeman's helmet.

The Regimental chapel is going to be one of over seventy displays involving over three hundred flower arrangers from across Surrey and north east Hampshire.

As well as the flower displays there is going to be a large Market Marquee with craft, food and other stalls to make a visit even more interesting.

On Wednesday 30th September there is going to be a special Champagne Preview Evening with a limited number of tickets (£35 each) available only from the Cathedral ~ 01483 547878. Tickets to the Gala (£7.50 each) can be obtained from the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre Box Office on 01483 440000.

For any additional information please contact Janet Werner, Cathedral Development Officer, on 01483 547878 (or see leaflet enclosed with Newsletter).

Benevolence

We are extremely grateful to Major John Rogerson, based at RHQ PWRR at Canterbury, who has continued to administer the Charity's individual benevolence - albeit he has officially retired as a civil servant.

During 2008, 78 cases were investigated and 66 individual grants-in-aid were approved (of these 14 cases were to former embodied Territorial members). In the majority of cases the grants were for household expenses, debts and rent arrears. The Association helped to provide 10 further electrically powered vehicles, five orthopaedic chairs/beds and contributed to 10 disabled home adaptations. Of the 12 cases not receiving a grant, local Councils/Charities or other Regimental Charities assisted five after we had contacted them. Four cases were not receiving such allowances as attendance, mobility, pensions credit or rent rebate.

The Army Benevolent Fund (ABF) was not asked to provide any General Grants during 2008. Fourteen ABF Annuities were administered; the ABF generously contributed £60 per month per case. During this period we have renewed or arranged for three Nursing Home Fees grants, each of £1,300 from the ABF and up to £1,000 from the Regimental Charity per year, to be paid for our old soldiers or their widows to be looked after; the Regimental Charity Trustees raised the Charity's maximum annual grant towards Nursing Home Fees from £500 to £1,000 per case from 1st January 2008. The Charity paid out a total of £35,090 as individual grants-in-aid through RHQ PWRR and a further £375 was spent to purchase vouchers as Christmas gifts for annuity holders. The ABF total grants in support were £12,490. The Trustees would again like to pay tribute to the ABF which is always helpful with prompt action and advice; the Regimental Charity made a grant of £6,000 to the ABF.



# Regimental Deaths

*Bennett* - On 4 February 2009, Captain David Courtney Bennett. He was granted an emergency commission in the 8th Punjab Regiment in September 1941 and was subsequently taken prisoner of war by the Japanese at Singapore in 1942. After the war he initially served with 1/8th Punjab Regiment in India from March 1946 to March 1947. Having been granted a regular commission with The East Surrey Regiment he served with the 2nd Bn The East Surrey Regiment in Egypt and then with the 1st Bn from April 1948 to December 1951. He served with 3rd Bn The Malay Regiment from January 1952 until August 1954. He returned to the 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment remaining with it until December 1955 when he went to serve with the 1st Bn The Gold Coast Regiment. He returned to the Regimental Depot at Kingston in 1958 and retired from the army in November that year.

*Bruxner* - On 22 September 2008 in London, David Bruxner who served as a National Service officer with 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment in Greece 1947 - 1948.

*Chaffe* - On 16 January 2009 Frederick Chaffe who served with The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Clarke* - On 24 December 2008 Brigadier Michael John Aldford Clarke MBE (see obituary).

*Dines* - On 20th May 2009 aged 91 years, John Dines. He enlisted in May 1936 and initially served with the 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment. He subsequently transferred to the 2nd Bn with which he served in China and then in Singapore. He was captured by the Japanese in 1942. He worked as a prisoner on the Burma railway, including on the bridge at the River Kwai where he remained doing repairs after it had been completed until he was released from captivity. He was discharged from the army in May 1948.

*Ede* - On 19 December 2008, aged 87 years, Corporal Albert Ernest Ede. He enlisted into 1/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in April 1939 and went on to serve with 2/6th Bn and 1/7th Bn before being transferred to the Suffolk Regiment. His WW2 service included France 1940, Tunisia, Italy, Normandy, Belgium, Holland and Germany.

*Fagg* - On 2 January 2009, Harold Henry Fagg aged 90 years. Harold served with The Queen's Royal Regiment. He was taken prisoner of war while serving with the British Expeditionary Force in 1940.

*Gibbon* - On 13 November 2008, John Gibbon.

*Greening* - On 23 March 2008 aged 89 years Frank James Greening. Frank Greening joined the 2/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment shortly after the outbreak of WW2 and accompanied it to France in April 1940. At the time of the German attack in May 1940 Frank

was with B Company; he was part of a platoon which faced a German tank probing attack on 20 May, only to be outflanked. Withdrawing to the west for the night, he and his group took part in local counter-attack to break out next morning, however they found themselves surrounded by tanks and were forced to surrender.

He spent the next three and half years in captivity, mostly at Stalag XXA at Thorn in Poland, and was then repatriated due to ill health. As a non-combatant after repatriation he was transferred to the RASC but always considered himself part Queen's. For many years he was a member of the QRR Old Members Assoc, regularly attending the Annual Dinner in Guildford and Farnham until 2004 when he was prevented by poor health. A few years earlier he had been very pleased to learn that his grandson had joined the local successor TA Battalion and to discover that they were both attending the same dinner.

*Kennedy* - On 25 February 2009 aged 89 years, John Thomas Henry Kennedy. He enlisted into 2/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment and subsequently also served with 2/5th Bn. His WW2 service included France 1940, Iraq, North Africa and Italy.

*King* - In December 2008, Roland Arthur "Roy" King. Called up for National Service he reported to Stoughton Barracks in March 1958. After completing basic training he was posted to 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in Iserlohn, West Germany. In July that year he was one of about 100 Queensmen who were sent to join 1st Surreys for internal security operations in Cyprus. Following that he rejoined 1st Queen's in Iserlohn and completed his service with the battalion. He was one amongst a number of contemporaries who subsequently met annually for a reunion.

*Moss* - On 21 February 2009, Arthur J Moss who served with The Queen's Royal Regiment 1940-42.

*Parker* - On the 21st January 2009, Sidney John Parker aged 88 years. He joined the territorials in 1938 and was subsequently assigned to the 7th Royal Warwickshire Regiment, serving in France before being evacuated from Dunkirk in 1940. In April 1942 he was assigned to The Queens Royal Regiment and served in North Africa under the 8th Army. In 1943 he joined the campaign in Italy (Salerno). He subsequently served in France, Belgium and Holland following the D-Day landings, progressing to Berlin in 1945. In addition to his various campaign medals, he was awarded the Legion d'Honneur in 2006.

*Poole* - On 17 May 2008, S R Poole who served with The East Surrey Regiment.

*Scarff* - On 9 December 2008 Les Gordon "Bronco" Scarff who served with The Queen's Royal Regiment during WW2.

*Sherrard* - On 27 December 2008 Lieutenant Colonel John Francis Sherrard TD (see obituary).

*Storey* - On 27 January 2009, Corporal Norman John Storey after a long illness. He enlisted in October 1949 at the age of 15 years and went on to serve as a bandsman with the 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment, 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment and 1st Bn The Queen's Regiment. His overseas service prior to discharge in November 1969 included Malaya, Aden, Hong Kong and Germany; his UK service included Kneller Hall, Canterbury, Corsham and the Army Apprentices College. He represented the Regiment and Army at hockey.

*Willey* - On 23 April 2009, Major Peter Robert Everard Willey TD (see obituary).

*Williams* - On 16 December 2008 Eddy Williams who served with The East Surrey Regiment.

*Wilson* - On 23 December 2008, Lieutenant Colonel Eric Charles Twelves Wilson VC (see obituary).

*Woodcock* - On 14 February 2009 aged 94 years, Harold George Woodcock. He enlisted into 2nd Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in 1931, serving with it until 1938. He was recalled from the Reserve in 1939 for duty during WW2.

*Young* - On 14 April 2009, Captain Clive Desmond Young TD (see obituary).

□ □ □

# Regimental Family

*Clarke* - On 21 November 2008, Mary Catherine Clarke, beloved wife of Brigadier MJA Clarke MBE.

*Mason* - On 24 December 2008 Daphne Joan Mason, beloved wife of Lieutenant Colonel Geoffrey Mason MBE.

□ □ □

# Obituary

## Brigadier M J A Clarke MBE



Michael John Aldford Clarke was destined for the Indian Army, however the closure of the Royal Military College, Sandhurst at the beginning of WW2 meant that he was called up to The East Surrey Regiment in August 1940 and then received an emergency commission to the 15th Punjab Regiment in April 1941 after recruit training at Kingston and O.C.T.U. at Malvern. He joined the 6/15th Punjabis at Lucknow and moved with the battalion to Ceylon later that year where he trained

in jungle warfare. In May 1943 he became an instructor at the Tactical School at Poona and later that year, after a temporary operational attachment in the Arakan, at the new Tactical training Centre near Dehra Dun. He rejoined his battalion in December 1944 and in 1945 took part in the Meiktila operations in Burma and the subsequent advance on Rangoon by 17th Indian Division. At the end of the war against Japan he transferred to the 4/15th which was then brigaded with 1st Queen's, and served subsequently in Thailand and Malaya before returning to India in January 1947. He left India in March that year to join 2nd Surreys in Egypt, having previously received a regular commission in The East Surrey Regiment. Michael Clarke moved briefly to 1st Surreys at Salonika in Greece in April 1948 before returning to Egypt in August to become Staff Captain (Infantry) at GHQ MELF. In May 1949 he became Adjutant 1st Surreys who were then stationed at Aliko Camp outside Athens. He attended Staff College at Camberley in 1950 and in 1951-52 was a GSO2 at HQ North Midland District. He was Adjutant 6th Surreys (TA) in 1953-54, and then Brigade Major 24th Independent Infantry Brigade in 1955-56 during which period the Brigade moved to the Persian Gulf as part of the Suez operation. He was awarded the MBE in January 1957. After briefly returning to 1st Surreys in BAOR in March 1957 Michael Clarke attended the United States Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Virginia. He returned to 1st Surreys for a few months at Bury St Edmunds in 1958 before becoming Chief Instructor Old College at the RMAS in August 1958. He was a member of the Joint Planning Staff in the MOD in 1961-63 as a lieutenant colonel during which he was attached to Admiral Lord Mountbatten's staff for meetings of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington. He commanded 4 Queen's Surreys (TA) in 1964-65 and was Chief Instructor (Tactics) at the School of Infantry 1966-67. Following promotion to colonel he became Colonel A/Q Headquarters 2nd Division in BAOR in January 1968 and then AAG PS10(Army) in the MOD in January 1971. In December 1972 he became Divisional Brigadier The Queen's Division, which appointment he held until his retirement in July 1976. He subsequently spent 10 years at HQ UKLF where he was RO1 in charge of the Quartering Branch. During his regimental days Michael Clarke was a keen sportsman, and played rugby, soccer and cricket at regimental level. Whilst teaching at RMAS he was in charge of Academy Hockey. Subsequently he concentrated on sailing and continued to be involved in Service sailing for many years after his retirement from the Army. He was the first Commodore of the Infantry Sailing Club and from 1972-87 was Rear-Commodore (Dinghies) Army Sailing Association during which time he sailed for the Army on a number of occasions and was awarded Combined Services colours for sailing. He was



editor of the Army Sailing Journal and treasurer of the Association of Service Yacht Clubs. He had a number of other interests, was Chairman of his Parish Council 1980-94 and held various church appointments. He was Chairman of the Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Museum 1986-92.

Brigadier Michael Clarke died on 24th December 2008, his wife Mary Catherine who he had married in May 1950 having predeceased him on 21st November 2008.

o o o

#### Lieutenant Colonel E C T Wilson VC



Eric Charles Twelves Wilson had the unusual distinction of being able to receive and then to wear for almost 70 years his 'posthumously' awarded Victoria Cross, the citation for which had ended with the words "... Captain Wilson, fighting to the last, was killed".

Eric Wilson was the son of the Reverend C C C Wilson and was commissioned into The East Surrey Regiment in 1933 after education at Marlborough and Sandhurst. After initially serving with 2nd Surreys, in 1937 Eric Wilson went on secondment to the King's African Rifles thus beginning his personal association with East Africa, an association which he was to continue to develop after the Second World War; his grandfather had founded the Church Missionary Society station in Buganda more than 60 years earlier. In 1939 Eric Wilson was seconded to the Somaliland Camel Corps.

Soon after Mussolini declared war in 1940, Italian forces invaded British Somaliland which was virtually undefended except for the locally raised, lightly armed Somaliland Camel Corps in which Captain Eric Wilson was commanding the machineguns. Additional troops were rushed from Aden and East Africa for the defence of Berbera (the capital and main port) but little more than five battalions faced some 25 Italian battalions which also had armoured, artillery and air support.

Having helped to delay the Italian advance over the frontier, Eric Wilson's Somali-manned machineguns were deployed in the centre of the main defensive position at the Tug Argan pass which led to Berbera. He placed himself in the most forward gun position on Observation Hill overlooking the enemy's main approach. The citation for his VC, which opened with the words "For most conspicuous gallantry on active service in Somaliland", read:

"The enemy attacked Observation Hill on 11th August 1940. Captain Wilson and Somaliland machine gunners

under his command beat off the attack and opened fire on the enemy troops attacking Mill Hill, another post within his range. He inflicted such heavy casualties that the enemy, determined to put his guns out of action, brought up a pack battery within seven hundred yards, and scored two hits through the loopholes of his defences, which, bursting within the post, wounded Captain Wilson severely in the right shoulder and in the left eye, several of his team also being wounded. His guns were blown off their stands but he repaired and replaced them and, regardless of his wounds, carried on, while his Somali sergeant was killed beside him.

On 12th and 14th August, the enemy again concentrated his artillery fire on Captain Wilson's guns, but he continued, with his wounds untended, to man them. On 15th August two of his machinegun posts were blown to pieces, yet Captain Wilson, now suffering from malaria in addition to his wounds, still kept his own post in action.

The enemy finally over-ran the post at 5pm on the 15th August when Captain Wilson, fighting to the last, was killed."

He had, in fact, become a prisoner of war, but that was not known until Asmara was captured by 5th Indian Division in April 1941 and Captain Eric Wilson was found alive amongst the British prisoners in Italian hands. He had already learnt of his award from an RAF officer who had been shot down and taken to the same camp.

After his release Eric Wilson went on to serve with the Long Range Desert Group in the Western Desert in 1941-42. Following the end of the North African campaign, he went to Burma as second-in-command of a battalion of The King's African Rifles and took part in the advance of the 11th East African Division down the Kabaw Valley to the Chindwin. Having been hospitalised after contracting scrub typhus, he subsequently returned to East Africa where he spent the final months of the war commanding an infantry training centre in Uganda. After the war he was seconded again, this time to the Northern Rhodesian Regiment. Eric Wilson retired from the army as a lieutenant colonel in 1949 to join the Overseas Civil Service in Tanganyika, where he served until Tanzanian independence in 1961 brought his retirement.

After returning from East Africa, in 1962 he joined the staff of the London Goodenough Trust for Overseas Students as Deputy Warden of London House, the overseas students' halls of residence, where his fluency in Kiswahili, Gikuria and Chinyakusa proved useful. He became Warden in 1966, a post he held until 1977. He was the honorary secretary of the Anglo-Somali Society from 1972 to 1977, and again from 1988 to 1990; he organised relief for the famine that afflicted Somalia in 1975. Eric retired to Dorset, where he published *Stowell in the Blackmore Vale* in 1986.

He married Ann Pleydell-Bouverie in 1943. The marriage having been dissolved in 1953, in that year he married

Angela Joy, daughter of Lieutenant Colonel J. McK. Gordon MC.

Lieutenant Colonel Eric Wilson VC died on 23rd December 2008 aged 96 years. He is survived by his second wife, one of the two sons of his first marriage and one son of his second.

o o o

#### Lieutenant Colonel J F Sherrard TD



John Francis Sherrard, who died on 27th December 2008, was born in Kingston on 24th November 1919, the fifth of six sons of Eustace and Ida Sherrard. His Grandfather, Alderman George Clifton Sherrard JP, a solicitor, first came to Kingston in 1868 and started the family practice

there and at Clifford's Inn in London and was 3 times Mayor of Kingston and a Surrey County Councillor.

John was educated at Hurstcourt-Ore Preparatory School near Hastings and at Aldenham School in Hertfordshire, where he was in the 1st XI teams for Football and Hockey and was Cross Country Champion for two years running in 1936 and 1937. Although his father, two uncles and two of his elder brothers, as well as his grandfather, were solicitors, John joined the then Midland Bank on leaving school in 1937.

John was called up into the RAOC in February 1940 and had been promoted Sergeant in early 1941 before being posted to The South Wales Borderers for Pre-OCTU training at Brecon. He attended OCTU at Dunbar and was commissioned into The East Surrey Regiment in November 1941 and posted to the 2/6th Battalion at Henley-on-Thames. His mother's father, Major William Coleman, had served in The East Surrey Regiment from 1883 to 1904 and had served as an Assistant Press Officer in South Africa during the Boer War, being Mentioned in Despatches and receiving the Queen's Medal with 4 clasps.

John was attached to the HQ's staff of 7th Infantry Brigade, part of the 9th Armoured Division, in England in April 1942 before going to Italy in August 1944. John joined the HQ's staff of 10th Indian Division as a Liaison Officer in October 1944, being made GSO III in September 1945 and GSO II in February 1946. He was with the Division in Italy until December 1945 and then in India until May 1946 when he was demobilised as a Captain. John was awarded an American Bronze Star for his services as a Liaison Officer in Italy.

John returned to the Midland Bank where he remained until his retirement in 1979.

He joined the 6th (TA) Battalion on its reconstitution in 1947 as a Lieutenant, being promoted Captain in 1949 and Major in October 1950 before being promoted to Lieutenant Colonel on his appointment as Commanding Officer on 1st May 1960. After much planning in which he took a leading part, the amalgamation on 1st April 1961 with the 23rd London Regiment was very successfully carried out. John commanded the new battalion, 4th (TA) Battalion, The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment until his retirement on 1st April 1964 when he handed over command to Lt-Col M.J.A. Clarke. One of the highlights of his tour as Commanding Officer was the impressive parade at which new Colours were presented in 1963. John received the Territorial Decoration and bar for his service with the TA. He was Honorary Clerk to The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Territorial Trustees for many years.

John was an avid gardener and, always the perfectionist, specialised in growing some very fine Chrysanthemums. John was also a very able sportsman and continued playing football for some time before taking an equally keen interest in golf. He was forced to give up sport when his mobility was affected by a trapped nerve in his back. Subsequently, in 2002, John caught meningitis in Spain. On return to Kingston, he was in hospital for 6 months and was then confined to a wheelchair. Notwithstanding this disability, he continued to pursue an active life, with the help of his younger brother Stephen, and continued as a regular attendee at all Regimental functions as well as all the functions of his Livery Company, The Worshipful Company of Girdlers, of which he had been admitted as a Liveryman in 1961.

ES

o o o

#### Captain C D Young TD

Clive Young died following an operation for cancer on the 14th April 2009 after a typically well fought fight. His TA career commenced on his enlistment as a private soldier in 42nd Royal Tank Regiment (TA) at Clapham Junction Drill Hall. He was subsequently promoted Corporal and then commissioned. The 42nd Royal Tank Regiment became the 23rd London Regiment, an Infantry Battalion. The 23rd London amalgamated with the 6th East Surreys to form 4th Bn The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment (TA) in 1961.

The new Battalion inherited from its predecessors numerous sporting skills and Clive was a prime mover in many of them. He was 'anchor man' for the Battalion Tug of War team, he played cricket and enjoyed membership of the MCC. After a short time he became the Battalion MTO. He was a very successful business man - he worked for IBM as a top salesman, and later formed his own company. Although he probably found infantry soldiering a little tame after service in the Tank Regiment, he carried out his duties with exemplary aptitude and enthusiasm.



The ‘winds of change’ prompted Battalion HQ to find adventurous training outlets which involved rock climbing, canoeing and skiing. In the last two years of the Battalion’s life two ski trips were organised in the Cairngorms and families were invited to take part. It was at this time that Clive and his children added skiing to their sporting repertoire.

The same ‘winds of change’ were blowing strongly and the last TA camp was held at Plasterdown Camp on Dartmoor. The timing of the camp coincided with school holidays and for most people travel was extremely difficult. In consequence the CO decreed that on termination of the camp the Battalion would travel back to its various drill halls by night. This involved the MT Platoon in a complex series of orders which required that the MTO would be the last through the camp gates pointed homewards. Unfortunately the local farmer had failed to observe our warning, not to allow sheep or cows loose on the moor until after the Battalion had departed. Having seen the Battalion away, Clive and a cow collided!

WEM

Major P R E Willey TD

Peter Willey joined The Queen’s Royal Regiment in 1943 on an emergency commission. He served in North Africa, in Sicily and in Italy. He was badly wounded and taken prisoner at Anzio whilst attached to the Royal Scots Fusiliers. He was repatriated by the International Red Cross in early 1945 and was subsequently medically discharged; he was twice Mentioned in Despatches.

In October 1945 he returned to complete his studies at Christ’s College, Cambridge and then went on to be a master, specializing in teaching German, at Wellington College. Whilst there he became an officer in the CCF and went on to command the college’s contingent 1959-61. He retired as Senior Master from Wellington College in 1982.

He had had a number of interests running parallel to his career as a teacher. Between 1959 and 1982 he led 18 archaeological/historical expeditions to the Middle East, Central Asia, India and Pakistan, and in 1968 was awarded the Winston Churchill Memorial Fellowship in Exploration and Archaeology. A Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, several “lost” castles and historical sites were rediscovered as a result of his work and he became the world authority on the Ismaili castles of Iran and Syria. He wrote numerous journal articles and a number of books, including *The Castles of the Assassins* which is regarded as the standard work on the subject. He became a part-time lecturer in German art and architecture and in Islamic art and culture at Bristol University.

He was also involved with educational charities in UK and abroad. These included the GAP committee which he founded in 1970; an educational trust which found challenging jobs overseas for young people between school and university and arranged visits to the UK for young EEC citizens, for a number of years he was its Director and Chairman. Peter Willey died on 23rd April 2009.

Parade – Guildford: 15th July 2009

Following return from Iraq, 1 PWRR will have a series of Homecoming Parades by exercising the Regiment’s Freedom. These parades will include 11th July Worthing, 13th July Portsmouth, 14th July Southampton (a.m.) and Romsey (p.m.), 15th July Guildford, 16th July Lewes, 17th July Tunbridge Wells, and 18th July Canterbury.

The event in Guildford will include a march up the High Street, a service outside Holy Trinity Church and finally a reception in Holy Trinity Church. Veterans from PWRR forbear Regiments have been invited to participate in the parade, the service and the reception in Guildford. Those wishing to march should be at Millmead car park at 1130 a.m. on 15th July ready to form-up (please note there will not be any parking for cars at Millmead, so park elsewhere and make your way to the Millmead car park on foot). Step-off is expected to be at about noon with the parade due to be at outside Holy Trinity Church at 1230 p.m.; there will be limited seating outside the church for those veterans unable to stand. No tickets are required for the reception.

East Surrey Regiment All Ranks Reunion 2009

The East Surrey Regiment All Ranks Reunion will take place at the New Drill Hall, St John’s Hill, Clapham Junction from 1300 to 1800 hours on Saturday 3rd October 2009. Tickets £5 (to include buffet lunch) from: J Broom, 11 Sayerland Road, Polegate, East Sussex BN26 6NU

Our thanks are due to Major  
J L A Fowler TD for very  
generously supplying the  
paper for this edition of the  
Newsletter

The Covers

By mid-1807 Napoleon, after his victories over Austria, Prussia and Russia, dominated most of continental Europe. A significant exception was the Iberian Peninsula and he set about rectifying this by a combination of diplomatic and military moves. In November 1807 Napoleon invaded the Iberian Peninsula, ostensibly to attack Portugal which was still openly accepting British imports. General Junot led a French Army through Spain and into Portugal, occupying Lisbon on 1st December 1807. The Portuguese Royal Family fled to Brazil (then a Portuguese colony). In March 1808 Marshall Murat led a large French army into Spain; the Spanish King was deposed and Napoleon’s brother Joseph was ‘elected’ to the throne. There were insurrections in Spain and Portugal, and British assistance was sought to expel Napoleon’s armies.

On 1st August 1808 a British expeditionary force landed in Portugal. The subsequent gruelling, six year long campaign – The Peninsula War - helped turn the tide against Napoleon. By late 1813 the small British army, which had initially been bolstered by German and Portuguese troops, and later still by Spanish troops, had forced the French out of the Iberian Peninsula and crossed the Pyrenees into mainland France. In 1814 Napoleon, who had launched his disastrous Russian campaign in 1812 and now faced the combined forces of Austria, Prussia and Russia invading France from the east, abdicated.

The Peninsula War had seen the rise to fame of General Sir Arthur Wellesley, better known as the Duke of Wellington. Wellington had not, in fact, faced Napoleon (who relied on his marshals to prosecute the Peninsula campaign) on the battlefield during the Peninsula War. Elements of our forbear Regiments had played their part in the victory, with the 2nd Battalion of the 31st (Huntingdonshire) Regiment and The Queen’s (Second) Royal Regiment of Foot both earning Peninsula War battle honours. This edition of the Newsletter includes articles about individuals who served with our forbears in the Peninsula War and about the Battle of Albuhera (also spelt Albuera).

The backgrounds to the covers are contemporary maps from the East Surrey Regimental History. The front cover shows the Peninsula War battle honours inherited by The Queen’s Royal Surrey Regiment, flanked by (left) a Battalion Company Private 2/31st Foot and (right) a Light Infantry Company Corporal wearing a forage cap. Wellington was more concerned about the supply of arms and equipment than the Army’s appearance; these pictures by Bryan Fosten are therefore a representative view of the uniforms worn in the Peninsula.

The medal on the back cover is that of Sergeant John Poulter of The Queen’s (Second) Royal Regiment of Foot. The Military General Service Medal was issued in 1848 for services from 1793 to 1814. Sergeant Poulter’s medal, which bears eight bars on the ribbon, was presented to the Officers of the 2nd Battalion of The Queen’s by Captain L M Crofts on promotion on 28th August 1897. It is now on display at the Regimental Museum at Clandon.

Branch Secretaries

5th Bn OMA-QRR:	I Chatfield Esq, 13 Wood Road, Farncombe, Godalming, Surrey GU7 3NN	Tel: 01483 429425
6th Bn OCA-QRR:	Major M R Nason TD, 64 Westfield Road, Barnehurst, Kent DA7 6LR	Tel: 0132 2527017
7th Bn OCA-QRR:	Major J M A Tamplin MBE TD, 10 Hugh Street, London SW1	Tel: 0207 8340120
2/6th Bn OCA-QRR:	Major M R Nason TD, 64 Westfield Road, Barnehurst, Kent DA7 6LR	Tel: 0132 2527017
2/7th Bn OCA-QRR:	Colonel D E Blum OBE, 85 Thameside, Staines, Middlesex TW18 2HF	Tel: 01784 450483
East Surrey Reunion:	J Broom Esq, 11 Sayerland Road, Polegate, East Sussex BN26 6NU	Tel: 01323 489262
WOs and Sgts Assoc:	J T Izant Esq. Flat 6, Pegasus Court, Rivers Close, Farnborough, Hants GU14 6LZ	Tel: 01252 378707
2/6th East Surrey St Valery Assoc:	Maj A J Redfern MC TD, Courtlands, 12 Kent House, Sheen Rd, Richmond, Surrey TW10 5AV	Tel: 0208 9402191
Queen's Surreys (Kent) Branch:	R F Harper Esq, 90 Osbourne Road, Willesborough, Ashford, Kent TN24 0EQ	Tel: 01233 634719
Queen's Surreys (Suffolk) Branch:	D J Gardner Esq, 106 Oakes Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP32 6QS	Tel: 01284 753160
1st Surrey Rifles:	T W Young Esq BEM, 38 Stanstead Manor, St James Road, Sutton, Surrey	Tel: 0208 643 6189
Queen's Surreys (South West) Branch:	H Stewart Esq, 3 Wentworth Road, Springbank, Cheltenham, Glos GL51 0NS	Tel: 01242 239121





BORDEAUX

Garonne

Dordogne

Lot

Lot

Garonne

Aveyron

Tarn

E

TOULOUSE

Croix d'Orade

Portet

Ers

Cirtegabell

Arlege

Gers

Save

Garonne

Arbes

Adour

Vic Begorre

Pau

Luy de Beaur

Orthes

Garris

Bidaray

Nive

Roncesvalles Pass

Mayall Pass

Blassoa

S. Sebastian

Mayall

Montarri

deluz

St. Jean

Ustarits

Villefranche

Vieux Mougette

Bayonne

St. Jean

Ustarits

deluz

Montarri

Mayall

Blassoa

SPAIN

Pamplona