

NOVEMBER 2009

# THE QUEEN'S ROYAL SURREY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION



NUMBER 86

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## NEWSLETTER







## Forecast of Events

2010

15th January	The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Charity Trustees Meeting.
10th February	SOBRAON DAY (1846).
15th March	The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association, Charity Trustees and Officers' Club Meetings - Clandon.
22nd April	The East Surrey Regiment Officers' Reunion Lunch.
23rd April	YPRES DAY (1915).
6th May	Golf Society Spring Meeting – Sudbrook Park.
16th May	ALBUHERA DAY (1811).
24th May	President's Reception for the Mayors of Surrey – Clandon.
(date tbc)	5 Queen's OMA Annual Dinner – Farnham. Details from: I Chatfield, 13 Wood Road, Farncombe, Surrey GU7 3NN.
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.
1st August	MINDEN DAY.
9th September	SALERNO DAY
11th September	6th(Bermondsey), 2/6th and 2/7th Queen's Royal Regiment OCAs Combined Reunion.
2nd October	East Surrey Regiment OCA Reunion – Clapham Junction.
4th October	The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Officers' Club Ladies' Luncheon - Clandon.
6th October	Golf Society Autumn Meeting – Woking.
5th November	The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association Annual Reunion - Union Jack Club.
20th December	BRITISH BATTALION DAY (1941).

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### The Covers

*Fifty years ago on 14th October 1959 The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment came into existence with the amalgamation of The Queen's Royal Regiment and The East Surrey Regiment. Amalgamation Day in 1959 was marked with a short parade and ceremony at Blenheim Camp, Bury St Edmunds, exactly 298 years after the Tangier Regiment of Foot had first mustered on Putney Heath.*

*During the Amalgamation Day parade the Colonels of The Queen's Royal Regiment, Major General J Y Whitfield CB DSO OBE, and of The East Surrey Regiment, Brigadier G R P Roupell VC CB DL, passed the Colours of their old Regiments into the care of the new Battalion. The front cover photograph shows the two officers saluting the Colours on that occasion.*

*During its existence the men of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment safeguarded the spirit and traditions of their forebears. This has been continued in their turn by those serving with The Queen's Regiment and, more recently, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment.*

*The back cover photographs show The Queen's Royal Regiment exercising The Freedom of Guildford for the first time on 29th September 1945 and, below, the PWRR exercising the same Freedom on 15th July 2009.*



### President's Notes

I am writing this on 14th October 2009 –The Fiftieth Anniversary of the formation of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment from the amalgamation of The Queen's Royal Regiment and The East Surrey Regiment. You may be reading this Newsletter over the Christmas period. It was shortly after Christmas that the new Regiment had its first real set-back – I joined from Sandhurst!!! Who was the first to give this newly joined Rupert his first salute? Sergeant Paddy Hannigan apologising profusely for two years previously throwing me into the Guard Room at Kingston upon Thames for drinking on Guard Duty!

As one with no previous baggage, it was fun observing the two Regiments settling down. Battalion drill parades consisted of five minutes drill, followed by 10 minute smoke breaks under RSM Peachy Oram. It seemed that the only Phase of War the Commanding Officer knew was advance (to where?) to contact. Battalion route marches weekly, with the CO hiding behind some bush to see if your platoon was in step! Majors Palmer and Beattie (Colonel Anthony Beattie's father) baiting the CO by insisting on wearing brown boots. Lieutenant Paul Gray locking the CO out of his lesson on Mortar Fire control. Captain John Francis checking young officers to ensure they saluted Captains first thing each morning. Having to put away five Colours each night (The two Battalions' plus the Third Colour). Hours practising for the presentation of new colours by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh –laying up the "Old Colours" in the newly built Guildford Cathedral, where they still hang having recently been re-furnished by the Royal College of Needlework. I recall going to the College to collect them 50 years ago. Then the new Regiment receiving the Freedoms of Kingston and Guildford, marching through the streets to cheering crowds. By troopship to Aden, then to Hong Kong, back to Münster in BAOR where after just seven years the Regiment was re-named The Queen's Regiment.

It all seems so long ago – and yet; when Colonels John Davidson and David Dickins and I visited the 1st Battalion the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment in Paderborn last month so much was so familiar. The Third Colour was still on display in the Officers' Mess – many pictures and pieces of silver were very familiar. It was very obvious that many of the traditions the readers will recall have been carried forward to The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment – the most highly decorated Regiment in the Army. We witnessed a Battalion Parade at which a chest full of medals for both Iraq and Afghanistan were presented. All the soldiers seemed so much bigger and stronger. Many operational tours in Iraq and Afghanistan have really toughened up our successors. But these tough and hardened boys all said how humbled and moved they had been by the enthusiastic crowds lining the streets as they exercised their Freedoms of the towns in the South East.

And so at this Christmas time I ask you all to: remember your friends over the last 50 years (and before): be proud that our traditions have been carried forward to our successor Regiment –The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment. Please support them and pray for their safety. They are the future.

Gill and I wish you all a very happy Christmas and hope to see you at Association events during 2010.

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### The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment

After months of deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan the Battalions are now in their home bases. The 1st Battalion was one of the last units out of Iraq but also deployed men to Afghanistan. The 2nd Battalion continued to rotate company size groups through Afghanistan on continuous deployment as the Theatre Reserve Battalion. They are now back in Cyprus. They are preparing for Ceremonial Duties in London 2010. The really good news is that the Regiment is fully recruited.

Awards have been announced for action up to March 2009. We have had great success with 3 x Military Cross, 4 x Mention in Despatches and 8 x Joint Commander Commendations. The medals are predominantly for 2 PWRR but also reflect 1 PWRR involvement in Afghanistan. The MC holders are: WO2 BL Kelly - 1 PWRR; Sgt TEG Sorensen - 2 PWRR; L/Cpl CJ Spooner - 2 PWRR.

### 1 PWRR

The last 6 months have seen the 1st Battalion come back together after having been spread to the four winds during deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq. B Coy Group returned from a 7 month tour of Helmand in March, having spent the latter half of the tour in Musa Qala. Contact with the enemy was frequent as B Coy fought to push the Taliban further from the town; in doing so they gained the thanks and respect of the local population who had been living under the harsh regime of the Taliban. Recce Platoon also deployed to Afghanistan, returning at the end of April. Both groups were involved in particularly heavy fighting, and as part of a limited armoured force in theatre were in high demand. The remainder of the Bn deployed to Iraq on what was to be the last OP TELIC. A Coy made an invaluable contribution as part of the Strike BG and were involved in a number of varied tasks. Battalion HQ, Javelin Platoon and C Coy were split into smaller teams conducting MiTT (Military Transition Team) and force protection tasks. Often in groups as small as 16 men these teams embedded themselves with the Iraqi Army, assisting, training and living with the Iraqis in Basra City. Mortar Platoon and HQ Coy formed the Basra City QRF, an essential task supporting all troops in the city. As the hand over to the US progressed, all elements of





*The 20 Armoured Brigade Flag is lowered for the last time in Iraq*

the Bn returned to Germany, with the exception of C Coy who reformed as a complete Coy at the end of April. C Coy then conducted desert patrols to protect the mammoth logistic convoys extracting equipment to Kuwait. The Company also undertook the final UK patrol in Southern Iraq, at 0100 on the 11th May, more than 6 years after it had all started; Sgt Robson MC commanded the very last British vehicle across the border into Kuwait.

With the Battalion together in Germany focus was on the homecoming parades. The parades gave the Battalion the privilege of marching through towns in our recruiting area, culminating with a drum head service in Canterbury. It was the first time in eight years that a parade has been conducted and the response from the local population was a humbling experience. All troops involved were overwhelmed by the support and respect shown by the public, with thousands turning out at each location to clap and cheer their local heroes. In addition the Battalion collected over £35,000 for the Army Benevolent Fund by street collections. Parades were held in Worthing, Portsmouth, Southampton, Romsey, Guildford, Lewes, Tunbridge Wells and Canterbury. Minden Day was celebrated on the 1st August, which was the 250th anniversary of the battle and we welcomed the visit organised by RHQ of members of predecessor regiments. Minden Roses were presented to the 1st Battalion by wives and senior officers. The following day a large parade took place in Minden, which included many bands and the building of a Bridge of Friendship over the River Weser.

## 2 PWRR

The last 3 months has continued to see a significant Tiger's presence in Afghanistan as 2 PWRR remain the military's Theatre Reserve Battalion liable for deployment at the drop of a hat. A Company (with their share of Z Company attachments) and Battalion Headquarters returned from a busy 4 months in Battle Group (Centre South) in Helmand near a village called Nad-e-Ali. Our parting shot as A Company Group left was to expand the ISAF presence further in to Taliban territory by seizing, holding and then beginning to

stabilise a small village known as Zhagun Kalay. This 4 day battle group operation was meticulously planned and involved A Company Group advancing to contact against the Taliban with an Afghan National Army company alongside. The company successfully cleared the village and, with the Commanding Officer, were sitting down at a shura with the District Governor and local elders that night discussing security. There followed a brief stint of calm when the entire Battalion was together back in Cyprus enjoying the pleasures of Mediterranean living for the first time in a year. This was short lived however and in June the Commanding Officer redeployed back to BG(CS) to stand in as the CO following the tragic death of Lt Col Rupert Thornloe of 1 WELSH GUARDS who the CO had only recently handed over to.

Hot on the heels of the CO's deployment, B Company Group were warned to return to Helmand and within 24 hours of receiving the phone call were on the coaches to RAF AKROTIRI to embark on a 2 month deployment to MUSA QALEH to stand in for a Warrior Company whilst they took part in Operation Panther's Claw. The speed and efficiency of B Company Group's deployment impressed everyone and proved what a versatile, flexible and professional soldier the Tiger is. It goes without saying that during their tour they acquitted themselves



*Ready for a dusty patrol*

admirably. Meanwhile back in Cyprus, C Company has borne the brunt of Cyprus duties and continued to maintain their readiness to deploy should the need arise, whilst D Company have held the Battalion together and enabled the deployment of B Company to take place in good order. The CO and B Company Group are now safely back and the Battalion has handed over the TRB mantle to 2 LANCS.

## 3 PWRR

3 PWRR deployed on Exercise Tiger Clan in mid August as their 2 week Annual Camp. The exercise was located at Garelochhead and the Battalion worked out of Greenfields Camp for the duration. Tiger Clan consisted of a 3 way rotation consisting of Field Firing run by WO2 Elson, Patrols Ex run by WO2 Goodhew, and Adv Trg

run by WO2 Hawkins. An FTX was run by the Trg Maj over the final 4 days which incorporated all aspects of lessons learnt over the Patrols and live firing exercises.



*The Commanding Officer of 3 PWRR receiving presentation from US Maryland National Guard who sent observers to the Summer Camp.*

The weather and climate was exactly what we expected from Scotland, cold, wet and grey even though it was the middle of August. Qualifications were given out on certain events of the Adv trg and most of the troops made it to the peak of Ben Nevis. The patrols exercise was run with an Afghanistan background and tested all levels of command in as many scenarios as possible. Live firing included a combination of GPMG, UGL and grenades with the weapons being fired at day and night. The final Ex saw Kohima Coy deploy to a coy location and set up a patrol base. The Coy deployed recce and fighting patrols to locate the enemy. The FTX finished with Kohima Coy attacking a disused torpedo base that had been set out as an enemy compound. It was a fitting end to a hard, wet and cold FTX. After a hot shower and the G4 wash up, the battalion finished up with a curry supper followed by forced sleep before the long drive south. 3 PWRR had an excellent summer camp and it will be used as a good footing for training for future Ops.

## Memories and Thoughts on Amalgamation - 50 years On

*by Colonel Tim Trotman*

In 1956 the Tory government of the day announced the end of National Service and a reduction in the size of Britain's defence forces. In 1957 it was announced that The Queen's Royal Regiment would amalgamate in 1959 with The East Surrey Regiment. To me, commissioned into The Queen's only in July 1956, this seemed like the end of the world, just as I was stepping out into it. Meanwhile, however, for us young officers in BAOR, life went on as before, untroubled by military politicking. Every so often mess meetings were convened to keep us abreast of the deliberations of the Amalgamation Committee, mostly concerned with matters whose

significance had not yet dawned on us, if, indeed, we had ever heard of them! (See Paul Gray's letter in the last edition).

However, I remember vividly one such meeting which reported that the Committee had decided unsurprisingly, and presumably without too much discussion, that the abbreviated title - worn on our Battle Dress shoulder flashes and written in chinagraph on the talc over maps - was to be 'Queen's Surreys'. This was too much for an elderly QM of the very old school, who rose spluttering to his feet to complain that "At a football match we'll have half the battalion shouting 'Queen's' and the other half shouting 'Surreys'". He simply could not see that within less than a generation the whole battalion, including the Commanding Officer and the Regimental Sergeant Major, would have been commissioned/enlisted into the new regiment. The mood of the younger officers was captured by a bright young captain who got up to say exactly that, adding that "anyway, at football matches, all soldiers shout 'F\*\*\* the ref' "!!! Reason returned. The future was assured and we went out to celebrate at the 'Haferkiste' in Iserlohn.

In the summer of 1958 the Middle East erupted into yet another of its crises. The Americans sent troops into Lebanon and the UK committed its Cyprus-based Middle East reserve, 16th Parachute Brigade, to Jordan. Cyprus itself was in some disarray due to the pro-Enosis Greek-Cypriot terrorist movement EOKA. It was, therefore, decided to replace the reserve with 19 Brigade, from Colchester, one of whose battalions was 1 Surreys, who were to be reinforced by a fourth rifle company. What better source could there be than 1 Queen's, in BAOR, with whom they were to amalgamate some 15 months later?!

Thus D (The Queen's) Company was formed. For the record, the Company Commander was Captain Don Donaldson, Admin Officer Richard Hill, CSM WO 2 John Rogers, CQMS C Sgt Charlie Reynolds, 10 Platoon Paul Gray/Sgt Sid Lea, 11 Platoon Tim Trotman/Sgt Dave Wheeler, 12 Platoon Stuart Anderson/Sgt Eric Lockwood. Some of us still come to the Union Jack Club in November each year and 12 Platoon even has its own occasional extra gathering led by Harry Ulrich (See his piece in the last edition).

The company moved via Dortmund Hauptbahnhof giving a display of train mounting drill to words of command given by bugle. The German train driver, however, didn't 'do' English bugle and failed to stop the train level with D Company, which had to do an inelegant 'fifteen paces right close march' to get us opposite our coach. Complete in FSMO and kitbags this was an honourable, but complete and utter, shambles.

We arrived at Bury St Edmunds, having survived the Hook of Holland-Harwich troopship/ferry, to be kitted out with tropical kit by 1 Surreys rear party, including a bandolier of 50 rounds each! We were going to war! We



flew from Stansted - then only a runway and a couple of huts - in Vikings and arrived in Nicosia in searing heat and Battle Dress at 0100. We moved by TCV to our camp in a dustbowl in the North of the city. It had one advantage in that it was close to the Ledra Palace Hotel, but two disadvantages - first, it had been set up from scratch and left in a hurry by 2 Para, and, secondly, and more importantly, it had only three water taps for 800 men at the height of the Mediterranean summer. The iron bedsteads had no mattresses and we were issued with two blankets in lieu. But we had arrived in our new battalion, which was as unimpressed with its lot as we were, but we all just got on with it together! United in discomfort, you might say.

In those days several days' acclimatisation was considered essential and was carried out in pairs of companies. We were 'twinning' with B Company at an idyllic cove on the North coast, and ran up cliffs, swam, got sunburned and mercifully avoided the German annual training merry-go-round! We were also to make the acquaintance of Brevet Lt-Col 'Chalky' or 'King' White, OC B Coy, who was to command the amalgamated battalion, although we didn't know this then. He had a 180-pound tent to himself and would sit outside it, making caustic comments to and about anyone brave enough to get within range. I mention here two of his subalterns - Barry Hoffman, who comes to the Sudbrook Park golf meetings and Nick Suffield-Jones, who was long and thin and the unfortunate butt for many of 'Chalky's' sometimes rather cruel jokes.

Because we were part of the Middle East reserve we did all the odd jobs - cordons, whilst others searched, prison guarding, where the prisoners complained about their rations, which we would have gladly eaten rather than our own. Dave Wheeler whinge-ed hot and strong when our platoon was on guard duty at Kykko Camp. He was a bit of a closet gourmet! In camp, where, mercifully, we spent very little time, Geoffrey Strong was Adjutant, 'Peachy' Oram was RSM, Ron Morris was ORQMS, Paddy Hannigan was Provost Sgt with Bill Rippon as Provost Cpl. 'Peachy' and the CO, Lt Col Clive Wallis, a great bear of a man, used to do a daily tour of inspection of the whole camp with frequent stops to allow 'Peachy' to have a cigarette, emitting Red Indian-like smoke signals.

After two months or so the Egyptian threat to Libya (then our close ally) was deemed serious enough to warrant the reinstatement of Benghazi as a forward base. It had been reduced to an elderly Staff Captain Q and a NAAFI bulk store. We moved by LSL which, being flat-bottomed, caused severe seasickness for the voyage of three days. Upon arrival we were accommodated in the BMH which had been run down to one ward. Each rifle platoon was allocated both halves of a pair of semi-detached bungalows - erstwhile married quarters. Eight young officers got the Matron's bungalow, but without Matron!

Initially we did a lot of exploration in the Sahara Desert, every so often discovering World War 2 mines of British,

German and Italian origin. They moved about in the wind-blown sand and could have caused severe injury, but we were lucky. Then the real reason for our presence in Libya became clear. We were to build a more permanent camp on the edge of the town. The battalion 2ic, Major 'Pec' Andrews, was the Chief Engineer, as he had a technical, scientific qualification, 'Peachy' Oram was Clerk of Works and the National Service soldiers really came into their own. At a guess, at least 80% of those of the rank of Corporal and below were NS and many had apprenticeships and/or appropriate skills. For example, my batman, Brian Collis, was a plumber; Harry Ulrich was an electrician. The most pressing problem was to build a fat-and-grease soak away for the Cookhouse. Health and Safety had not then reached the extremes of today and I remember, as Orderly Officer, having to fill out a form which was designed to monitor the metamorphosis of a patch of desert into a sweet-smelling oasis without causing 'death by a thousand shits'. Eventually, when we were only part of the way through this enterprise, I Welch arrived for a 6-month tour to complete and occupy this 'Camp Paradise'. We sailed home in the troopship, Empire Fowey, to Southampton and Christmas with our families before returning to Iserlohn and our last few months as Queensmen.

After a wonderful celebration of the Glorious First of June 1959 we left Iserlohn and arrived as individuals in Bury St Edmunds in the late summer of that year. Somehow it didn't seem all that strange. I knew a quite a lot of people. Of the hierarchy, 'Chalky' White, no longer OC B Coy, was Commanding Officer, 'Peachy' still RSM, Paddy Hannigan was still screaming Irish oaths from the guardroom. There were also many faces which were familiar, although I had never known their names, or if I had, I'd forgotten them.

The first event was the Amalgamation Parade on 14th October. This was a low-key affair, involving a guard from each of the Queen's and Surreys with its Regimental Colour, carried by Paul Gray and Brian Hudson, who handed them to the Colonels of the two regiments, Major-General Whitfield and Brigadier Roupell, who, in turn, handed them to me and Tony Ridger who were part of a Queen's Surreys guard commanded by Captain Hugh Greatwood. A couple of months later, General Whitfield gave me his own sword which he had had inscribed to that effect, as he put it in his letter to me "in token of the fact that my last act as Colonel of The Queen's Royal Regiment was to hand over the Regimental Colour to you on parade on 14th October 1959".

Thus the amalgamation became a fact, but I'd already had hands-on experience of it. Geoffrey Strong was OC A Coy. The CSM was Les Wilson. We were a very happy company. It was a very busy time for everyone. We young officers continued to be hideously athletic. We endured weekly battalion route marches during which the CO and RSM used, suddenly and miraculously, to appear from nowhere to check our water bottle strings which had to

be blancoed which made them break! We also endlessly advanced to contact on Stanford PTA. No other phase of war was ever entertained!

Rehearsals for the Presentation of Colours by the Duke of Edinburgh took up a lot of time. Most were run by Captain Mike Pereira, the Adjutant, and 'Peachy' Oram, the RSM, who could not last for more than about 15 minutes without his nicotine, so we had smoke breaks. After these unscheduled pauses, the Provost staff would double the prisoners out to sweep the square clean and we would resume drilling. One morning the practice blanket colours were unfurled to reveal 'Battle Honours' - amongst them 'Drake's Café' (a notorious dive in Bury St Edmunds much appreciated and misused by the brutal and licentious soldiery) and 'Frog Hill' (the highest point in Stanford PTA, where all exercises culminated in a battalion attack). The perpetrator of this heinous crime was Paul Gray. We subalterns thought he was hard done by when he got a fistful of extra orderly officers for what most people thought was a harmless prank. I think, though, that the Adjutant felt that discipline had to be enforced and seen to be so. Happily, Paul didn't serve his full sentence, which, I think, may have got 'over-looked' by Mike Doyle, the Assistant Adjutant.

The Presentation of Colours Parade took place in glorious weather on 22nd April 1960. It was superb. All of those who took part were intensely proud of what we had achieved. Those who were present, whether as old soldiers, families, friends, or civic and military dignitaries, also felt a huge sense of pride in the day. The new Regiment had not just been born. It had been christened magnificently. We were worthy of our forbears!

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## 250th Anniversary of the Battle of Minden

by Colonel David Dickins

Shortly after their marches through the Freedom and other towns of their county areas, 1st Battalion the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, returning from Iraq to their home base at Paderborn, invited members of their predecessor regiments to help them celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the Battle of Minden. During the Seven Years War 37th Foot, later the Royal Hampshire Regiment fought at Minden in Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick's army against the French in August 1759. Moving forwards to battle troops picked roses from the hedgerows and put them into their hats as a form of identification. Both sides claimed a victory (making it an ideal battle to celebrate recent friendships between the French and Germans).

Thus a representative crew of comrades old and not so old assembled at the Union Jack Club or a service area on the M20 to be collected by an RHQ organised coach for the trip to that old military hunting ground Sennelager

Training Area where we were to be accommodated in Normandy Barracks not far from Paderborn.

RHQ had generously declared us all to be ranked as honorary Lieutenant. Thus we were all accommodated in comfortable blocks belonging to the NATO Officers' Mess and quickly settled in to change for the evening's entertainment in Barker Barracks, Paderborn, home of 1 PWRR. The coach dropped two parties off, one at the Warrant Officers and Sergeants Mess and the other for a Ladies' Dinner Night at the Officers' Mess, where good times were had by all! Readers will be pleased to know that the Messes still contain many artefacts from Queen's and Surreys including the Third Colour, silver goblets and a portrait of Queen Catherine of Braganza.

The next morning, a little too early for comfort after such a night, we re-assembled for the trip back to Barker Barracks. After restorative coffee in respective messes, the day began with a Battalion parade at which Minden roses were presented and worn by All Ranks, including the visitors, and Iraq campaign medals were formally presented to three members of the Battalion.



*Colour Party and the Battalion on parade.*



*Wives of the Regiment present Minden roses to all ranks*

A drop by the Tiger's Free Fall Team concluded the parade and the day ended with a barbecue lunch, free beer and a fun afternoon on the lawns opposite the All Ranks Dining Hall, which might once have been known as the cookhouse, but no longer. It is now nearer to an upmarket



motorway service area restaurant, run under contract by Naafi, complete with its own small supermarket. We were all impressed by the quality of the soldiers of 1 PWRR. Today's Corporals have the assurance of the Sergeants of our day, and whilst the parade was simple (they had had little or no time for rehearsals) it was smart and to the point. All ranks were polite and very friendly, and senior ranks were very be-medalled.

Our evening left us free to enjoy a bierfest in Paderborn city itself. Again, with some a little the worse for wear and after a long march to the Normandy barracks cookhouse (this was a cookhouse!) for Sunday breakfast we embussed for the journey along the autobahn, via the Minden Gap through the Teuterberger, complete with its denkmahl, a dominating statue of Kaiser Wilhelm II, familiar to any who served in BAOR, to the city of Minden itself. We crossed the River Weser 'deep and wide which washes it walls on the southern side' (words written of Hameln by Robert Browning, poet author of the Pied Piper, but equally applicable to Minden) and arrived at a large square outside the city museum, bedecked with the flags of all the European community countries.

Here a huge parade of bands, entertainments and much Eurocentric speech making had been organised by the stadt. A sign marked 'British Soldiers' reserved our seats in the front row, immediately behind us, a bevy of frauen dressed in period costume. The spectacle was a little tarnished by the much too long speeches by National and International representatives, all in German (including that of the Commander of the British 1st Armoured Division) and incomprehensible to most. There were five bands, including the Minden Band, but we only heard them play as they marched on and again as they marched off. This was a pity as it was a grand opportunity for an outstanding musical event. The French came on with a slow, impressive, rolling swagger, followed by the Bundeswehr, who slouched. Next was the Minden Band, much the smartest, followed by Dutch and Belgians, one at least bedecked with sousaphones which actually require the player to get inside his instrument (if you know what I mean!).



*The Dutch (or it might have been the Belgians) marching off*

Then we were off to the city centre for a welcome and thirst quenching bier, before ducking under the ropes of the enclosure offering free lunch, wine and yet more bier to assembled military and civilian dignitaries, many in uniform, others in period costume. Then after lunch international military contingents, led by the Minden Band, marched through the city, down the hill, through the park and across the river. By this time the President was beginning to behave badly, and we fell behind...



*The President behaving badly!*

... but arrived in time to watch the British engineer regiment (a locally enlisted territorial unit maintaining and operating old M1 bridging equipment, now largely obsolete owing to the removal of the threat from the Soviet Union) build a European solidarity bridge back over the river, across which, and after yet more speechifying and handshaking, contingents, bands and spectators returned to the city and their coaches.



*A very British bridge in the making*

Our final evening was spent by some in Paderborn, but by Colonels Davidson, Ward and Dickins at the very same trout farm we had visited from Sennelager in 1977 when 1 Queens with the entire 4th Armoured Division paraded, mounted in our armoured vehicles, before Her Majesty, the Queen in honour of her Silver Jubilee. So we again enjoyed grilled trout with almonds and buttered potatoes washed down with ice cold Moselle. A delicious end to a memorable visit.

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## The Berlin Parade 1948

*By Lieutenant Colonel Les Wilson*

The 2nd Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment left the United Kingdom in 1939 for active service in Palestine. Later in the war they served in North Africa, Syria and Tobruk. They left the Middle East in 1942 and garrisoned Ceylon for a year. They were then, later in the war formed into two deep penetration columns as part of the Chindit campaign in Burma. At the end of the war they moved back to India.

On 17th January 1947 the 2nd Battalion sailed from Bombay in the 'Highland Princess' en route for England, being greeted on arrival at Tilbury by a distinguished gathering of senior officers of the Regiment including Lieutenant Colonel L C East who assumed command from Lieutenant Colonel A J A Watson. After a short stay at Crowborough, in bleak and wintry weather, they moved to Dortmund in then West Germany where, among other activities, they undertook 'lumberjacking'. (Operation Woodpecker) to relieve the fuel situation.



*Taking over guard at Spandau Prison*

On the 7th June 1948 they started to move from Dortmund to Berlin but the transfer was interrupted when the Russians closed the bridge at Magdeburg allegedly for 'repairs'. The Russians stopped all communications to the city by road and rail. The Western Powers hurriedly introduced an airlift to supply West Berlin with essential supplies.

The airlift was a magnificent piece of organization both by the RAF who flew to Gatow airfield and by the Americans who landed at Tempelhof. In July an average of 170 planes a day (or 7 an hour) landed at Gatow. The effort continually increased until 16th April 1949, British and American planes flew in 12,000 tons, including more food by air than by rail and road before the blockade. In May 1949 the

Russians recognized defeat and lifted the blockade though the airlift continued rather longer. During the year it was in operation, 236,290 flights had been flown and nearly two million tons of stores delivered. In spite of this magnificent effort it was lucky that the winter was a mild one as conditions for the civilian population were grim in the extreme. Food was just sufficient in quantity but deadly monotonous and mostly 'ersatz'. Electricity was only available for four hours a day and other means of heating almost unobtainable. There was heavy unemployment and for those still in work the daily journey was a misery.

The move of the 2nd Battalion was completed by air and they were quartered in the Olympic Stadium where, needless to say, there were first class sporting facilities. They later moved to Brooke Barracks, Spandau. But there was little time for sport, the Battalion being engaged on guard duties for which about 100 men were required daily. In addition a Company provided guards for Spandau Prison where some of the most important Nazi war criminals were imprisoned.

Thankfully, despite their privations and hardship the people of West Berlin remained staunchly pro-West and openly showed their loyalty to the West, by a massive demonstration on the very day of the changeover of title from the 2nd Battalion to the 1st, and the last Trooping of the 2nd Battalion Colours.

The 9th September 1948 (Salerno Day) dawned bright and clear and there was a general feeling that the only problem would be the political situation.



*The Officers on disbandment of the 2nd Battalion*



The ceremony was to take place on the Olympischer Platz, a paved rectangle some 400 by 80 yards, sloping gently up to the Stadium at its western end and fringed by trees. On each of the eighty flagpoles surrounding the Platz hung a Union Jack where once had hung a Swastika. On the southern side had been erected the saluting base flanked by spectators' stands.

By 4.30pm the spectators had begun to arrive and by 5pm, when the troops keeping the ground marched through the gates of the Stadium, the stands were full. There were but few German spectators, perhaps because some 350,000 of the inhabitants of the Western Sectors of Berlin were gathered at an anti-communist demonstration outside the ruins of the Reichstagsgebaude. At 5.10pm the cased Colours of the 2nd Battalion were marched from the Stadium to the lower end of the ground, where they were uncased while the spectators stood. They were followed by the Colour party of the 1st Battalion, which halted facing them at the opposite end of the ground, the Colours remaining cased.

Headed by the Band and Drums, the 2nd Battalion, organized as four guards, marched through the gates at 5.20pm and formed up in line facing the saluting base. The evening was perfectly still. The only sound as the Battalion awaited the arrival of the GOC and the Colonel of the Regiment was the almost incessant drone of aircraft, to which we had become accustomed in the past ten weeks, carrying our supplies into Gatow. One could not help wondering whither the event which had brought us to this monument of Nazi Germany was leading us.

Major-General E O Herbert, CB, CBE, DSO, Commanding British Troops, Berlin arrived at 5.35pm, the Battalion being called to attention. At 5.40pm General Sir George Giffard, GCB, DSO, The Colonel of the Regiment was received with a General Salute. The Commanding Officer having asked permission to Troop, the ceremony began with the Band and Drums trooping across the front in slow time and returning in quick time. No. 1 Guard, the escort for the Colours, then moved in slow time up to the 2nd Battalion Colours, where they halted and the Colours were each in turn handed over by the RSM. After trooping them through the ranks of the Guards, they returned to their place at the right of the line.

We then bade farewell to these Colours which had been the 2nd Battalion's proud possessions for 89 years. It was a sad moment, particularly for those who had served with them for any length of time, as the Colours of the 2nd Battalion were marched in slow time to the tune of 'Auld Lang Syne' to the left of the line and then to their place in the rear of the Battalion, where they were cased, never again to appear in the ranks of the Regiment.

The Colonel of the Regiment then came on parade and, having given the orders '2nd Battalion ground arms' and '1st Battalion, take up arms', instructed the Commanding Officer to have the 1st Battalion Colours uncased and marched on. The 2nd Battalion had once again been disbanded and the 1st Battalion, which had been reduced to a cadre on its return from Singapore, was once again in full life and ready to continue in its 288th year of unbroken service.

General Giffard then addressed the Battalion as follows:-

*"My first duty is to read you the message which our Colonel-in-Chief, Her Majesty Queen Mary, has been graciously pleased to send by me:*

*'I am very sorry that the reorganization of the Army has made it necessary to disband the 2nd Battalion of my Regiment, and I send to you my sympathy in which must be to everyone of you a grievous blow.*

*The record of the Battalion in its ninety-one years has been magnificent. Raised in 1857, the Battalion saw its first fighting in the Burma Campaign of 1886-87. Its next spell of active service was in the South African War, in which it served from the beginning of 1899 until peace was declared in 1902.*

*Like most of the Regiments of the British Army, the Battalion fought on the Western Front in the First World War, but had a short spell in Italy. In the last War it was first in North Africa, where it was part of the garrison of Tobruk, and subsequently went to Burma to become part of Wingate's Chindits.*

*In all its campaigns the Battalion has been highly reported upon by the Commanders under whom it served, and has not only maintained the fine record of the Regiment, but has added many battle honours to its history. In one respect it is probably unique, as it still carries in its ranks the Colours with which it was presented when it was first raised.*

*This short message which I have charged General Sir George Giffard, the Colonel of my Regiment, to deliver on my behalf is to bid you farewell and wish you all good fortune in your future careers, wherever they may lead you. Wherever you may go, do not forget the motto of the Regiment 'Pristinae virtutis memor'*

General Giffard continued:

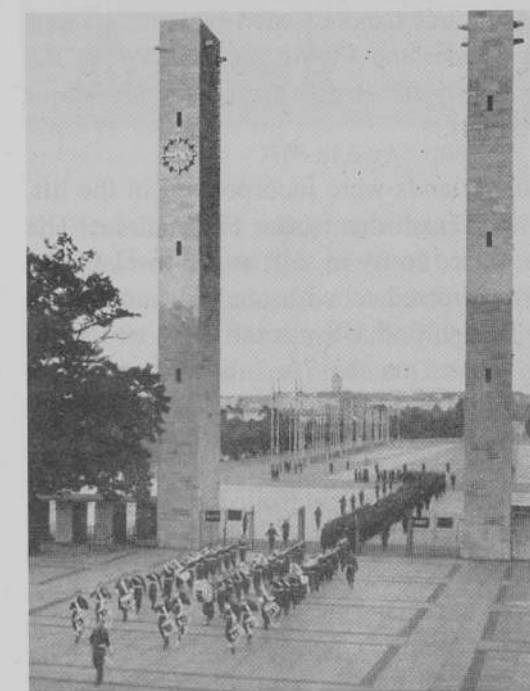
*"I want also to say a word or two on my own behalf on this occasion which for all of us is one of great sadness and regret, for there is no disguising the fact that the loss of the 2nd Battalion is a grievous blow. The disbandment of any battalion brings to an end a page of history, for it has inevitably played its part in peace and war in the events of its day. The 2nd*

*Battalion is no exception and has, in the 91 years of its existence, served, as our Colonel-in-Chief has reminded us, in most of the major campaigns of its time and been stationed in many garrisons all over the world. Both in war and peace it has made its mark; in war by courage and endurance it has added many honours to the long list already earned by the Regiment in its earlier years; in peace, by its smartness, efficiency, and good sportsmanship it has left a reputation second to none in all its stations. We can look back with pride upon its record and with thankfulness to the memory of those who made the Battalion what it is and handed down to us such a grand tradition. Today that passes into history and we bid farewell to the 2nd Battalion which goes home to be disbanded.*

*It is comforting to remember that in former days we had 2nd battalions raised for the Regiment and subsequently disbanded, and let us hope that one day this Battalion may once again form part of the Regiment. Now we hand the torch to the 1st Battalion, which must carry forward the reputation of the Regiment unaided by the 2nd. That it will do so with success I have no doubt at all, and it will do so the better for the memory of all that the 2nd Battalion has done.*

*I want you to remember, too, the gallant story of the landing at Salerno which we commemorate today. The Regiment owes a great debt to those six grand territorial battalions of the Regiment who formed 131st and 169th Infantry Brigades and added such glorious laurels to the record of the Regiment in that battle. Most of those fine battalions have also since been disbanded.*

*However much we may grieve at their loss and that of the 2nd Battalion today, we must always remember that whatever the number of its units the spirit of the Queen's Royal Regiment lives on, and it is the duty of each one of us to see that the fame of the Regiment shall never diminish nor its record be tarnished. It is a precious heritage.*



*The Battalion marches off*

*I know that the good name of the Regiment is safe in your hands and I wish you all good fortune in the future wherever you may go."*

After the Colonel of the Regiment's address, the Battalion formed up on the saluting base and marched past in column with the Colours of the 1st Battalion flying at the head and those of the 2nd Battalion cased in rear. They then re-formed line facing the saluting base and, after the advance in review order, gave a General Salute. Finally, the Battalion marched past in threes and then marched off into the shadows of the Stadium, the notes of 'Georgia' fading away into the distance.

As the sun disappeared behind the Olympic Stadium, the Drums sounded Retreat outside the gates. The Union Jack on its top and 84 surrounding the parade ground were lowered. The spectators stood in an appreciative silence, whilst in the distance could be heard the Band marching the escort to the Colours back to the Officers' Mess. It was a fitting ending to a memorable occasion.

The following letter, written by the Colonel of the Regiment before he left us, must surely express the feelings of all those who witnessed the parade:-

*"I cannot leave without telling you what an excellent parade it was yesterday. Ceremonial to be well done calls for great preparation and most careful attention to detail, and both of these were evident in yesterday's parade.*

*What struck me particularly and all those officers who expressed their appreciation of the parade was the perfect steadiness of all ranks. It could not have been bettered and I doubt if it could have been equaled. The arms drill and marching were of an equally high order. The Band and Drums played and marched splendidly and added that finishing touch which made the whole ceremony complete. The steadiness and behaviour of the troops lining the ground, a long, tedious, but very important task, was very well done. The whole parade was fully up to the highest standards of the Regiment and there can be no higher praise.*

*I congratulate you all on a fine parade."*

The 2nd Battalion had ceased to exist. At the time many believed it would be temporary but as we now know, it was to be the first of many 'cutbacks' in our Regiments' history.

The parade attracted thousands of spectators including high ranking officers of the Russian, American and French forces stationed in the city. The Battalion finally left Berlin for Iserlohn in November 1949 after an interesting but very important eighteen months.



## The Berlin Airlift

By Lieutenant Colonel Les Wilson

Officially the Airlift started on the 26th June 1948, when an aircraft headed for Berlin carrying food that could not be delivered by land or water routes. However, the build-up to the airlift began earlier in the year, when, on 1st April, the Russian Deputy Military Governor in Berlin announced that supplementary regulations would be enforced with respect to Allied military trains and vehicles operating between Berlin and the Western Zone. These regulations were resisted by the Allies, and on April 3rd the Americans stepped up the flight schedules from Frankfurt/Main to Tempelhof to 31 flights a day.

In June 1948 the Russians announced their intention of closing the Autobahn bridge over the Elbe for repairs. They said that there was no alternative route between the Elbe and Western Germany.

On Monday, 21st June, the Russians stopped all barge traffic between West Berlin and the Western Zones, and the last food train arrived in Berlin. Two days later part of the electricity supply for the Western Sectors was cut, endangering the water supply by reducing the amount of current available for pumping.

The following report appeared in the Soviet licensed A.D.N. News Agency on 25th June:

*"Because of technical difficulties on the railroad .... compelled to stop, during the night of 24th June, all passenger and freight traffic ... between Berlin and Helmstedt. All necessary orders for prompt repair work have been issued. It is impossible to reroute traffic in the Soviet Zone of Occupation."*



The Brandenburg Gate

On that day there were stocks of food and coal in the city of Berlin sufficient to last six weeks. Thus the RAF started an operation planned to fly in food and supplies for the British Forces in Berlin. By the 28th June the Air Ministry ordered 100 aircraft of Transport Command to the British Zone of Occupation. The expansion of RAF Gatow began on the 29th June. At this time Gatow only had two runways.

"Operation Carter-Paterson" started on 30th June, the first flight departing from RAF Wunstorf at 0600 hours - a Dakota bound for Gatow with three tons of flour. Gatow was to accept 10 aircraft an hour between 0500 hours and 2200 hours as a start, and later night trips at the rate of six an hour.

Avro Yorks started flying on the Airlift on 31st July. Their introduction caused a certain amount of confusion. One pilot complained that his Dakota had only just managed to take off and wouldn't climb at all. After his landing it was discovered that he had been carrying a York's load of 11,000 lbs instead of the 6,500 lbs Dakota load!

Backloading of German freight and mail began on 5th July: the Americans were to take mail, the RAF the freight. After one day it was decided that the RAF would also carry out the German mails. German freight was loaded into the last wave of Yorks to depart Gatow each day. This was in order that there would be no delay in turn-round. The amount handled soon became 30 tons a day. The first Sunderland Flying boat landed on the Havel, and was met by the British Commandant, Major General E. O. Herbert.

Next day ten Sunderlands were incorporated in the lift, operating from Finkenwerder to the Havel Lake. The Sunderlands were used to fly in salt, as the fuselages of these aircraft were treated to withstand salt corrosion. Altogether 420 British and US aircraft flew to Berlin. All crews were warned on the 7th July to stay within the corridors and above 5,000 ft. due to Soviet fighter activity.

At about this time the Russian-controlled press and radio were saying that it was the intention of the Allies to leave Berlin, and that food could be obtained by any West Berliner who cared to register in East Berlin. It was said that the British code name "Operation Carter-Paterson" was the name of a well known removal firm, and that the operation was intended to remove the British from Berlin.

The name of the operation was changed to "Plainfare" and British Families were asked to plant garden crops that would be harvested in the spring, to indicate to the Germans that the British intended to stay. Only a small percentage of Germans registered with the Soviets for food, and they were mostly Communist officials and their families.

Shortly after the start of the airlift it was noticed that the surface of the concrete runway was breaking up under the constant usage, and resurfacing was necessary. There was not enough cement in Berlin to do this, and it was decided to use a layer of stone and bitumen. At first this decision was treated with reserve, as there were no supplies of stone or, bitumen, but the engineers pointed out that when the Russians had handed over the Western Sectors at the end of the war they had removed most of the steel railway lines, leaving the ballast behind. This

ballast provided all the stone needed, but the problem of bitumen supplies remained. This was solved by tearing up the surface of streets in the bombed areas of Berlin, and in addition some bitumen was provided when East Berliners, under cover of darkness, would roll barrels of the substance over the Sector Boundary from a Bitumen factory just within the Russian Sector.



Typical Berlin ruins

The Russians had taken with them nearly all the steam rollers when they left, leaving only a few old, dilapidated models, and this naturally slowed down construction of the new surface, but the Americans helped by sending some bulldozers across, and an East German drove a modern steam roller onto the airfield from the Russian Zone! The original target date set for the completion of the runway was November 1st, but the work was complete and the runway in use on 16th July. Extra groundstaff were flown in on the 17th, and also on that day Marshal of the Royal Air Force Lord Tedder, accompanied by Lady Tedder and the AOC-in-C, toured the ground organisation.

The first loads of coal were flown into Gatow on July 19th by RAF Dakotas, and on the 20th it was decided to transfer the task of backloading German freight from the Yorks to the Dakotas, the amount varying between 30 and 50 tons per day. To avoid turn-round delays, loads were limited to 1,112 tons of German freight. By this time the RAF were using 40 Yorks and 50 Dakotas on the airlift, while the Americans were using 54 C-54s and 105 C-47s.

Liquid fuels were flown-in in drums at this time, but Flight Refuelling Ltd of Tarrant Rushton were approached, and on 27th July, Lancastrian G-AKDR took off for Germany with 8,800 gallons of MT fuel on board. This aircraft arrived at Gatow on 29th July. All liquid fuel flown to Berlin during the airlift came in British aircraft.

It would be reasonable to assume that aircraft movements at Gatow were restricted to "Plainfare" aircraft, but this was not the case. During the month of July there were 513 RAF movements and 155 BEA movements in addition to those connected with the airlift.

The original control point for the Sunderland operations was at Klara lake, on the American side of the Havel, but after a few days it was decided to have the control post on the Gatow side, and so it was moved into the RAF Yacht Club, which became Gatow Marine Base, and was christened "H.M.A.F. V. Deadalus".

Flight safety was of a very high standard, during the period from the start of the lift to 31st July, there were only 27 incidents involving British aircraft on the airlift. These incidents included taxiing accidents, vehicles colliding with aircraft, engine failure in flight, etc. When it is realised that there was a total of 12,066 aircraft movements during this period it speaks very highly for the skill of air and ground crews working on the airlift.

An American C-74 Globemaster landed at Gatow on August 17th, the largest aircraft used on the airlift. The Taxiways could not take this aircraft, so it reversed the pitch of its airscrews and taxied backwards down the runway to the hardstanding, where it unloaded 20 tons of flour. Because of its excellent cargo loading facilities (it carried its own cranes and had a cargo delivery hoist built into the fuselage) it was decided to use this aircraft type to carry in loads of heavy airfield equipment such as bulldozers.

On December 14th Sunderlands ceased to operate on the airlift due to the danger of ice on the alighting areas, but it was intended to renew the service in the spring. The Sunderlands had carried 1,200 Berlin children out of the city. The next day the Aquila Airways Hythe flying boats were withdrawn from the airlift and Finkenwerder was closed.

Before the end of the month a further 2,031 landings were made, the total sorties during December being 6,737. The airlift had been operating 187 days with an average of 278 landings per 24 hours, or every 5 min 10 secs day and night for six months, making Gatow the busiest airfield in the world, having handled 321,620 short tons of freight; one ton per 53 seconds.

On 1st March bad weather closed Gatow from 0200 hours to 1240 hours, but at 1300 hours there was a bad snowstorm and by 1440 only 13 aircraft had landed and 8 taken off. Snow was cleared at Gatow by equipment which had been flown in the airlift. The snow ploughs had to be cut up with oxyacetylene torches for loading into aircraft and welded together again on arrival.

The peak day of the airlift was April 16th, when 1,383 aircraft brought in 12,849 short tons, with a landing every 62 seconds. On this day the construction of the second concrete runway at Gatow was begun.

An official statement was issued: simultaneously in London, Paris, Washington and Moscow on May 5th in the following terms:-

*"The Governments of France, The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, The United Kingdom, and the United States have reached the following agreement: All the restrictions imposed since 1st March 1948 by the*



## The Regimental Chapel during the Guildford Cathedral Flower Gala



The Flowers in the Regimental Chapel were arranged by volunteers from St John the Baptist - Bisley, Holy Trinity - West End, St Mary the Virgin - Frensham, and St Thomas on the Bourne - Farnham, who took as their theme a verse by Walter de la Mare.

*Of all the trees in England,  
Oak, Elder, Elm and Thorn,  
The Yew alone burns lamps of peace  
For them that lie Forlorn.*

## October at Clandon



*The Corps of Drums Society introduce children at Clandon  
to the joys of making music*



*Relaxing in the Museum after the  
Officers' Club Luncheon*

## The Association Annual Church Service at Guildford Cathedral



*Chris Tuckwell is unconvinced by Jock Stewart's take on  
levitation*



*Maurice Nason also appears not to be convincing the clergy  
(the Precentor)*



*The Lord Lieutenant ensures that refectory rations are getting through to the Cadets after the service*

## The President's Reception for the Mayors of Surrey



*The Association President with PWRR speakers*



*Major General Mike Reynolds with the High Sheriff*



*Government of The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on communications, transport, and trade between Berlin and the Western Zones of Germany and between the Eastern Zone and the Western Zones will be removed on 12th May 1949”.*

And so the siege was raised, and a signal victory had been won by the West. The airlift did not, of course, cease overnight, but tailed off gradually until on 6th October 1949 the last aircraft, a Hastings, landed at Gatow. A total of 277,728 flights had been made by British aircraft (RAF and Civil), carrying 542,623 tons: During the operation 29 British subjects lost their lives.

There was, however, what might be termed a postscript to the operation. On the 23rd September 1949, no less a personage than Marshal of the Royal Air Force, Viscount Trenchard arrived to see the last airlift Dakota arrive at Gatow. On the following day, the 24th September, a wave of eight Hastings landed at three minute intervals, as they had been doing during the airlift, by way of a demonstration for Lord Trenchard. So ended the biggest air support operation ever mounted by the RAF in peace time and the vast organisation was gradually run down to normal operating size.

During May and June preparations were made for the transfer of all BEA scheduled flight operations to Tempelhof. This move took place on 9th July. On July 10th the Airlift Memorial in front of Tempelhof Central Airport was unveiled.

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## “A Bloodless Coup in Italy - but not for the Surreys at the Battles of Salerno, Larino and Termoli”

by Bryn Evans

### The Story So Far

In the Tunisian Campaign of World War 2 from November 1942 to May 1943, the 1st Battalion of The East Surrey Regiment, as part of the 78th Battleaxe Division, fought through brutal battles such as Longstop Hill in the country's north-east mountains before the Allies captured Tunis. Then in July the Surreys were called into the Sicily campaign, into battles for Centuripe and other mountain-top towns around the Mt Etna volcano. As the planning for the invasion of the Italian mainland gathered pace, the Surreys knew that their hard-won experience in mountain warfare would soon be needed again.

### Last Days at the Palazzo di Venezia

It was a hot humid Sunday in Rome, 25 July 1943, as Mussolini, Italy's dictator or Duce, sat at his desk in the imposing hall known as Sala del Mappamondo, in the Renaissance Palazzo di Venezia. His visitor was Shinrokuro Hidaka, the Japanese ambassador. A bead of sweat oozed from Mussolini's receding hairline, as he implored Hidaka to lobby Hitler in support of his request for more guns, supplies and materiel to resist the Allies, who were close to winning the Sicily campaign. Like everyone else he knew that the invasion of the Italian mainland would be next.

The previous evening Mussolini had endured hours of criticism from his Grand Council, the puppet body of the Italian Fascist regime, who had called for him to hand over power to the King and the military. Later that afternoon when he made a routine visit to King Victor Emmanuel at his Villa Savoia, Mussolini would have forgotten the Council's censure. He walked into that meeting with Italy's nominal head of state, with a hubris that came from more than 20 years as Italy's dictator. In only twenty minutes King Victor Emmanuel told him that he was finished, that Marshal Badoglio was taking over as head of the government, and then led Mussolini outside to be arrested by the military police waiting for that purpose. It was perhaps the quickest, bloodless coup of all time.

### First into Reggio Calabria – 8th Army in Operation Baytown

In early August the Germans withdrew from Sicily across the narrow Straits of Messina, taking all their remaining vehicles, guns, tanks and equipment with them, and so avoided a bitter fight to the end. It may have left some Allied Generals with a perception that they had run away demoralized, as some thought that Rome could be taken by Christmas. Such daydreams would soon be brought back to a brutal reality.

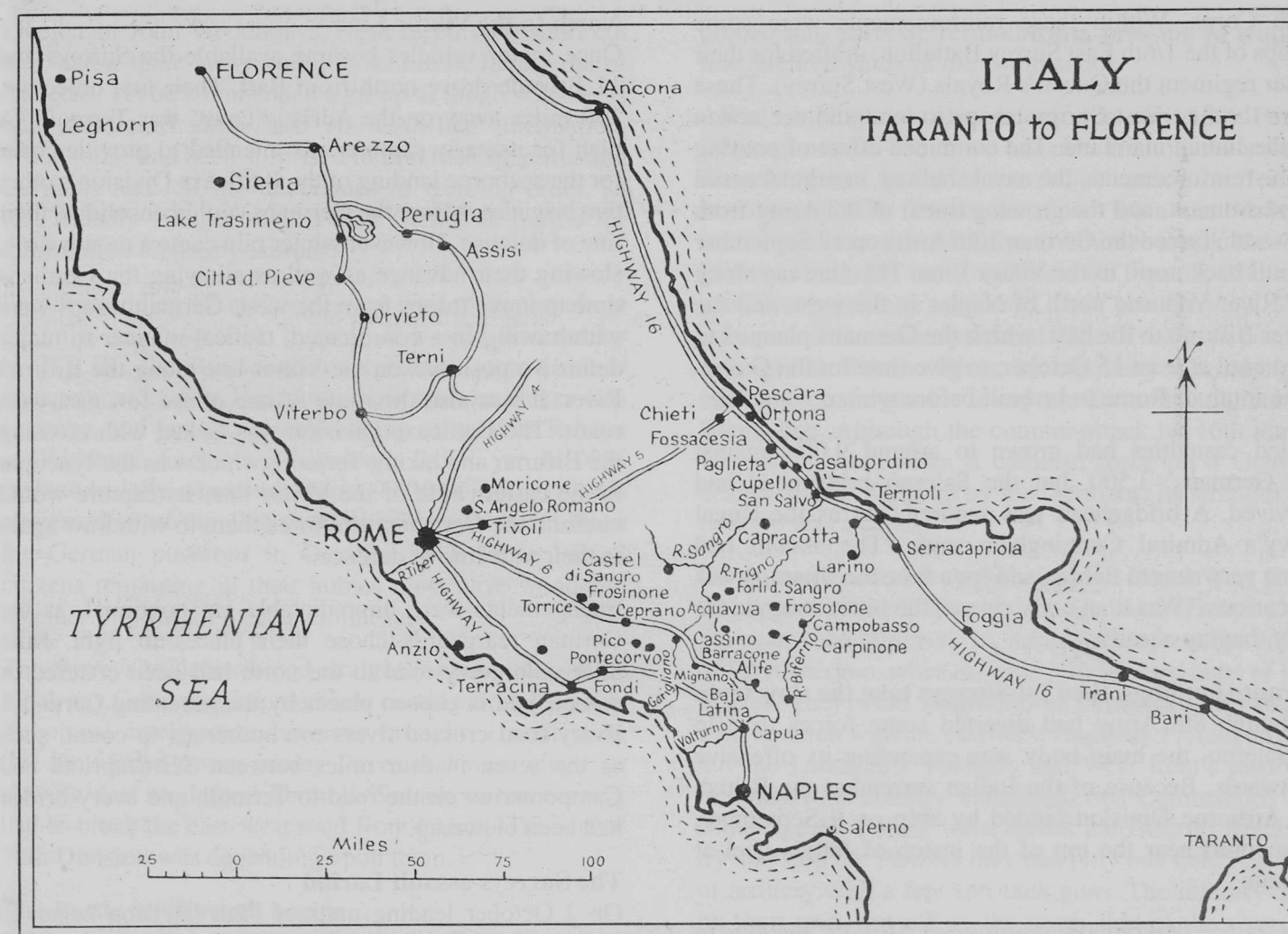
On 3 September 1943 the first Allied invasion of mainland Europe proper began. General Montgomery's British 8th Army in Operation Baytown was the first to go, landing uncontested at Reggio Calabria on the toe of Italy. The main attack would come a few days later. In a decision taken hastily after Mussolini's fall, General Mark Clark's Anglo-American 5th Army would land 30 miles to Naples south near Salerno.

### Salerno – A disaster threatens

On 9 September the Allied fleet, carrying 5th Army in Operation Avalanche, sailed past the Amalfi Coast to the north, and approached the Bay of Salerno. The Allies were taking a great risk. An initial force of only 55,000 men compared unfavourably with the 160,000 in the Sicily landings.

The night before the Salerno landings, 8 September 1943, Eisenhower announced on radio the surrender by the new Italian Government led by Badoglio and the King. Hitler was furious to lose his major ally, and fearful that similar revolts could spread to other Axis countries such as Hungary and Rumania. The Italians moved Mussolini from place to place, such as the islands of Ponza and La Maddalena, to keep his whereabouts secret. They feared that the Germans might attempt to rescue him, and re-instate him as Italy's dictator. Meanwhile for the Allied troops sailing through the night towards the Salerno beaches, news of Italy's surrender lulled some into a feeling that the invasion would be a walkover.

At first only small beachheads were gained against 16th Panzer Division, before Clark's 5th Army came under ferocious counter attack on 12 September from the Germans' 10th Army Group under General Heinrich von Vietinghoff. Although Hitler had approved a strategy



of gradual retreat to the Gustav line south of Rome, Vietinghoff was under orders to first try and throw the Allies back. Defying more than 6,000 sorties flown by Allied aircraft from North Africa, the Germans successfully brought in troops from Naples and Calabria.

The British 46th and 56th Divisions, near Battipaglia and at Salerno beach itself, took the initial brunt of an attack by the 14th Panzer Corps. In just the first two days 5th Army suffered over 1,000 casualties. The strength of the German counter attacks rocked the Allied troops, who had to fight desperately to get a little way inland. Vietinghoff sent his Panzers down the valley of the River Sele, to exploit the division between the British 10th Corps and the US 6th Corps. Such was the overall compression across the Allied salient from the German onslaught, that Clark feared that the US 6th Corps would be over run, and on 13 September, he called for plans to evacuate and re-embark with his HQ staff.

Eisenhower had reported to London and Washington, “I feel that Avalanche will be a matter of touch and go for the next few days.” On Churchill's orders, General Alexander, commander of Allied Armies in Italy, sailed into Salerno Bay on the night of 14/15 September. Before dawn he was aboard USS Biscayne listening to a briefing by Vice Admiral Kent Hewitt and his staff on withdrawal plans ordered by Clark. Alexander vetoed them, “Oh no! We can't have anything like that.” He and Hewitt then had breakfast with Clark in a tent on the beach. A subsequent private meeting between Alexander and Clark in the

American General's personal trailer, ended with new orders for 5th Army to hold the bridgehead at all costs.

A retreat from Salerno was too horrendous for the Allies to contemplate. Naval staff plainly stated that the troops could not be re-embarked. The landing craft had not been designed for embarking troops from beaches, and any attempt to do so would result in a killing ground. It would isolate Montgomery's 8th Army in Calabria at serious risk of being driven back to Reggio. Stalin's demand for a second front in Europe would be unmet, and the planning for Overlord would be deferred. As Alexander had insisted, 5th Army just had to prevail.

### Salerno – 5th Army, and some Surreys, make their stand

A naval bombardment by every ship, notably by the battleships HMS Warspite and HMS Valiant, and the cruisers USS Philadelphia and USS Boise, was mounted. Waves of bombing sorties by B-17s, carrier borne aircraft and supporting Spitfires from Sicily, were thrown at the German counter attacks to avert disaster. The Luftwaffe fought back too, sinking the cruiser USS Savannah and crippling HMS Warspite, with the first-seen radio controlled bombs.

Before Alexander had met with Clark on Paestum beach in the early morning of 15 September, he would have known that on the night of 13/14th paratroopers of the 82nd US Airborne Division had dropped into the American sector, and simultaneous with his arrival the British 7th Armoured Division began landing to support



10th Corps. Within these reinforcements were some troops of the 1/6th East Surrey Battalion, drafted for their sister regiment the Queen's Royals (West Surrey). These were the first East Surrey troops to land and see action on the Italian mainland. The combined effect of pouring in the reinforcements, the naval shelling, continual aerial bombardment, and the growing threat of 8th Army from the south, forced the German 10th Army on 17 September to pull back north to the Viktor Line. This line ran along the River Volturno north of Naples in the west, and the River Bifurno to the east, which the Germans planned to hold until at least 15 October, to give time for the Gustav Line south of Rome to be built before winter.

Allied casualties had grown to around 9,000 against the Germans' 3,500, but the Salerno bridgehead had survived. A bridgehead was secured, but as the Royal Navy's Admiral Cunningham said, "The assault had come very near to failure, and for a time the situation was precarious." Was it an early sign of the bitter struggle for Italy that lay ahead?

**Taranto landings, then 1st Surreys take the slow train**  
Although 8th Army had diverted some forces to help at Salerno, the main body was expanding its offensive eastwards. Because of the Italian surrender, the British 1st Airborne Division landed by ship on 9 September, unopposed near the top of the instep of Italy's heel at Taranto.

The Italian capitulation reinforced Hitler's resolve to rescue Mussolini, and restore him as head of a fascist government in Italy. The movement of German troops into northern Italy was accelerated, and strengthened Field Marshal Kesselring's determination to fight and hold the Allies south of Rome. The Germans disarmed the Italian armed forces, requisitioned manpower and all necessary supplies by force. Needing to counter the impression that the Axis was collapsing, and show that he was still in control, Hitler sent General Kurt Student, commander of the XI Parachute Corps, and an SS detachment under a Captain Skorzeny, to find and rescue Mussolini.

Following the German withdrawal from Salerno, and oblivious to Hitler's dilemma over Mussolini, 8th Army quickened its advance through Taranto, which it was using as a base port for moving up the Adriatic Coast. The 1st Surreys and most of the 78th Division landed at Taranto, a modern port connected to roads, rail and a nearby airfield. With the collaboration of the new Italian regime, the Surreys took a train north to the port of Bari.

At the numerous unannounced stops along the track, many men could not resist jumping off to grab bunches of grapes from the wayside vineyards. After the footslogging of Tunisia and Sicily it was luxury, yet a luxury that would soon be forgotten. The German strategy was to gradually retreat up the Italian peninsula, by way of pre-prepared lines of defence, usually aligned with one of the many rivers or mountain ranges. They chose when and where to make a stand, so as to force the Allies to pay a high price for every advance.

### North to the Viktor Line

Once motor vehicles became available the Surreys and 11 Brigade drove north from Bari. Their first objective, 150 miles away on the Adriatic coast, was Termoli. A plan for its early capture was intended to provide cover for the seaborne landing of the Battleaxe Division's other two brigades, before the Germans could consolidate their line of defence. However winter rain came a month early, slowing their advance as well as allowing the Germans time to move troops from the west. German troops were withdrawing in a coordinated, tactical manner to major defensive positions on the Viktor line along the Bifurno River. It was also the route of one of the few east-west roads. The Battleaxe Division was tasked with crossing the Bifurno and taking Termoli, which was the lynchpin to the eastern side of the Viktor line. Its capture would outflank the Germans, and force them to withdraw again to their next line of defence.

Engagements were unpredictable but continual, as the German rearguards chose their places to fight. Mile after mile every road to the north had been cratered or demolished in chosen places by the retreating Germans. Every road crossed rivers too numerous to count, such as the seven in four miles between Serracapriola and Campomarino on the road to Termoli, and every bridge had been blown up.

### The Surreys assault Larino

On 2 October leading units of 78th Division began to close within a few miles of the Bifurno River a little to the south of Termoli. However the Surreys, with orders sending them up again into the hills, left the main force at Serracapriola. They began a 13 mile climb to take Larino, a hill town at a height of 1,119 feet in the foothills of the Abruzzo mountain range, to secure the Division's western flank. The Abruzzo stretches across some 44,000 ha of the wild, central hinterland of southern Italy, from north of L'Aquila around 150 Kms south to the Bifurno River valley. The Parco Nazionale d'Abruzzo, which was until the late 19th century a royal hunting reserve, is one of Europe's finest nature and wildlife parks.

Some 12 Kms north of L'Aquila the Abruzzo's snow-capped mountain ridge of Gran Sasso d'Italia, holds Italy's highest mountain south of the Alps, Como Grande at 2,912 m. Mid-way up Gran Sasso d'Italia is the Campo Imperatore, a flat plain that is home to wild horses and sheep in summer, and ski resorts in winter. In August 1943 the national park hosted its most famous but unwilling visitor. When the SS Captain Skorzeny began to pick up Mussolini's trail, the new Italian regime transferred Mussolini from house custody on the island of La Maddalena, to the Gran Sasso's Hotel Imperatore. The King and Marshall Badoglio had plans to hand him over to the Allies, and thought its remoteness offered greater security.

The Axis Powers' political crisis was of no consequence to the Surreys. They climbed into the hills through rain, mud, destroyed bridges, and lost vehicles blown up by mines, until their special services battle patrol led the way into the unoccupied village of Ururi. The patrol's leader,

Lieutenant John Woodhouse, fresh faced with short cut hair, and a spare lanky build, looked to be hardly out of his teens. Yet he commanded a group of tough volunteers with field-craft skills and an 'SAS-like' inclination. Woodhouse had been surprised to find that the retreating Germans had left the telephones in working order, so that friendly villagers called their friends in Larino for information on their positions.

Larino straddles the main east-west road to Naples about 30 miles south-west of Termoli. It is said that nearby in 217 BC the Roman General Fabian won a minor engagement against Hannibal. Walk near to Piazza San Lorenzo, and you can clearly see the ruins of its Roman amphitheatre. Larino's population is 7,078, yet in 1656 it was virtually wiped out, when 9,625 of some 10,000 citizens died of the plague. As the Surreys closed in on the German positions in October 1943, those Larino citizens remaining in their homes must have wondered whether they might meet a similar fate.

The Surreys' orders seemed straight forward enough, to block any German reinforcements coming from the west. The local intelligence however brought a realization that they faced strong enemy forces that were intent on moving east to defend Termoli. Somehow the Surreys had to block the east-west road from Larino. The rest of 78th Division was depending upon them.

### The Battle for Termoli begins

While the Surreys sought to hold off a German counter attack at Larino, and the Lancashire Fusiliers headed north-east towards Termoli to wade across the Bifurno River, around 2 am on 3 October a Commando Brigade made an amphibious attack on Termoli's port and penetrated the town. By late morning the commandos had secured the harbour, and in places pushed out beyond the town's perimeter, to make contact with the Lancashire Fusiliers. They were followed up by another sea landing of 36 Brigade, who bulldozed shallow fords to drive vehicles across the Bifurno.

Today Termoli has a population of around 30,000, and its old town lies on a slim promontory on the north side of the Bifurno River. Its most prominent feature is Termoli Castle built in the 11th century by the Norman King Robert I, then restored by Frederick II in the 13th century. The town retains its walls, a 12th century cathedral, quaint streets and houses, many rebuilt and painted in a range of pastel shades. As you wander through the maze of narrow streets in summer, you can always glimpse the sea, a vivid blue against the ochre of an arch or a building's corner. To the north Termoli's fine beaches and resorts are thronged with holiday makers.

In October 1943 it was to be no holiday for the Battleaxe Division. An early occupation of Termoli, which was thought to contain only garrison troops, seemed to be only a few hours away. In fact the German forces in and around Termoli included substantial units of the 1st Parachute, 29th Panzergrenadier and 26th Panzer Divisions. By nightfall on 3 October some Panzers had

probed into parts of Termoli town, pressing to within a few hundred yards of the commandos.

Allied intelligence also knew that the 16th Panzer Division was on the move towards Termoli. As soon as Kesselring had heard of the Allies' attack on Termoli he ordered 16th Panzer to move from the Volturno on the western side of Italy, to counter-attack the 78th Division from the north and west of Termoli. The hope was that persistent rain must slow the German. With only part of the under-prepared 78th Division in position to cross the Bifurno River, Montgomery was taking an uncharacteristic gamble to capture Termoli and break the Viktor line. Although the counter-attack by 16th Panzer was anticipated, when it came in force on 4 October, despite a slow build-up by the Germans, its strength and ferocity was a shock.

On 4 October the 8th Argylls and 6th Royal West Kents had advanced north some five miles from Termoli along the coast road Highway 16, aiming to capture the village of San Giacomo, when they ran into forward units of 16th Panzer. They went to ground at the brickworks near a road junction with the east-west Highway 17, and on their left the Lancashire Fusiliers and West Kent's also dug in. Only four infantry battalions, two Commandos and some Special Forces were across the Bifurno River. To try and stop the Panzers they had only one field regiment of artillery with a few anti-tank guns. The infantry were on their own, cut off on the north side of the river. All that day and through the night of 4/5 October the Argylls, Lancashire Fusiliers and West Kents fought to hold on.

A torrid unequal battle, tanks versus exposed infantry, had commenced for Termoli. Devoid of armoured support, lacking anti-tank artillery and any reinforcements, the 78th Division infantry was being systematically killed and pushed back all around the Termoli perimeter. A Bailey Bridge constructed over the Bifurno did enable six Sherman tanks to cross before it collapsed from the rain and flooding river. But four of the Shermans were quickly destroyed by the Germans' superior Mark IV Panzers.

By the end of 5th October the defensive lines had been pushed back to within a half mile of the town. The dead piled up and field surgeons called for more help. In one case two surgeons had operated on thirty wounded, and faced a line of eighty more stretcher cases. Up against an armoured division the Battleaxe infantry, whose experience had been gained in mountain warfare in Tunisia and Sicily, was facing annihilation or ignominious retreat.

### The Surreys hang on at Larino

Three days earlier at dusk on 2 October the Surreys had come under fire, as they approached Larino. At dawn on 3 October after reconnaissance by Lieutenant Woodhouse and his battle patrol, companies A and B assaulted the Larino ridge. "With platoons and sections in open order we advanced up the slope as daylight emerged," recounted Private Lawrence Fish. "My platoon under Lieutenant Chips Louis approached its objective, a farmhouse on the crest of the feature, when we were suddenly engaged by



machine-gun fire, and we rushed the building to find the Germans had left. We cleared the farmhouse, checked the immediate area and fanned out along the ridge, but we were not able to make any further progress for several days."

Since German troops still occupied some higher ground on the ridge itself, the two companies were exposed and stuck in a precarious position. Supplies could only be brought up at night, and the men had to scavenge. Corporal Busty Capon knew they were there to stay, and first shot some escaped turkeys. Then he saw the pigs. "He killed and dressed one, hanging it in a fig tree to cure," remembers Lawrence Fish. "It seemed however that the carcass was visible to the Germans, and we were subjected to showers of mortar fire whenever the carcass was approached. After dusk it was taken down and the cooking process commenced. Later that evening everybody got a mess tin full of pork for supper which was very welcome, apart from the pieces of shrapnel with which it had been liberally peppered."

Private Frank Weston remembered that living off the land was essential to supplement a lack of rations, to sustain men's strength and will to keep fighting, and to just survive. "Shooting wild or farm animals, chickens, goats, sheep, and even on one occasion an oxen, when I had to deploy my butchering trade skills, was seen as inevitable and necessary plunder of war for us to get by." On 5 October the importance of the engagement brought the commander of 13th Corps, Lt General Dempsey, to the Surreys' front line. Dempsey forbade any attempt at further advance, to avoid any more risk of losing what was held. He impressed upon the Surreys that the Larino ridge had to be held at all cost, as the battle for Termoli "...was hanging dangerously in the balance."

If a German offensive broke through it would paralyse 78th Division in its left flank and rear, and cut all the overland supply routes from the south. This would isolate the Battleaxe battalions on the north side of the Bifurno River, where they would be easily driven back by 16th Panzer and very likely destroyed. So they fought it out. Men continuously went down to constant mortar and sniper fire, but the Surreys only knew that they had to hang on, for all they knew perhaps to the last man.

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### Towns in Belgium and Holland pay tribute to 1/7th Queens for their Liberation 65 years ago

*By Peter A Dear (Nephew of Bill (Dusty) Miller deceased)*

Sergeant Harry Buckland 6091564 [89] was the only one of the remaining few veterans of 1/7th Queens Battalion to make the trip to Sint Niklaas in Belgium and Heel in Holland to take part in the 65th anniversary of the Liberation of these towns by 1/7th Queens on the 9th September and 14th November 1944 respectively.

After a Remembrance Service in commemoration of the war victims and the liberation on Sunday 6th September, Harry took pole position behind the mass band where

he marched [adrenalin and emotion taking over] and was requested, as the representative of 1/7th Queens, to place wreaths at Memorials to The Belgium people and at the newly re sited Queen's Battalion Memorial. This had been moved from the beautiful park land, where it had stood for many years, to a very prominent position at the head of the Town Square to mark the spot where 1/7th Queens entered the Town on Liberation day. This would also enable more people to see and recognise the contribution of 1/7th Queens.

The large procession then followed the band and marched to the new Brigade Piron memorial. Later the party boarded three large coaches and were transported to Memorials of The British Airmen at Cemetery Tereken, the Fallen Resistance fighters at Belsele, before returning to Sint Niklaas to the Polish Memorial where Harry and the Polish Ambassador laid wreaths.

Having paid respect to all these people we entered the magnificent Town Hall of Sint Niklass and were shown to the ornate Banqueting Suite where over 250 people were seated. Harry, as guest of honour, was greeted by the Burgomaster and introduced to the Belgium Defence Minister and Ambassador from Poland. After several speeches, Harry was requested to rise, where on behalf of the Battalion he accepted sincere thanks for the Liberation of their town. Much applause was received. Most of the gathering then departed for a local restaurant where as guest of The Patriotic Committee a meal was served and once again there were complimentary comments made about 1/7th Queens and their actions. Exiting the restaurant the large market square was a hive of activity with over 40 hot air balloons in the process of taking off, being made ready or waiting their turn, to create a colourful and wonderful sight admired by the many thousand who had come to town for the day; a fitting finale to a great day.

Leaving Sint Niklaas on Monday we drove to the small town of Heel where the Memorial Committee met and made us welcome. Several of them were children aged 10 -15 at the time of their liberation and remember the condition they endured under German occupation and the euphoria of being liberated by 1/7th Queens. The whole party including Harry Buckland together with Brenda Cordery whose uncle Herbert John Robinson 6086497 was killed in action at Panheel, proceeded to the Town Hall. As we climbed the steps in brilliant sunshine, fittingly, 3 military jets flew over so as to give a low fly pass to us - but in fact they were participating in the National Ceremony in Roermond in honour of all the victims of the Indonesia war, 1947-1949 where many Dutch soldiers were involved.

Burgomaster Wilms welcomed us all on behalf of the town and took time to speak to Harry Buckland and Brenda Cordery thanking them for the freedom the 1/7th Queens evoked and remembering the loss of all those gallant men who fell or were injured in the action.

The party then bussed to Panheel Locks where on the 14th November 1/7th Queens secured the lock over-running

the German defences at the cost of lives and injury. It was essential that the lock gates on the canal west of Meuse River should be reached, secured and held against the enemy. If the lock gates had been blown by the Germans the water would have flooded the region causing havoc not only for Heel and Panheel but for the whole part of the province of Limburg up to the city of Venlo. Also the pontoon bridges that had been built specifically to carry the main attack force over the canal and further North would have been rendered useless.

The 65th anniversary was brought forward from the 14th November this year especially to enable veterans to combine the trip with that of Sint Niklass recognising that this could be the last year that a liberator may be able to visit. Sergeant Harry Buckland laid a Queen's Royal Regimental wreath at the plaque presented by the citizens of Heel & Panheel who wanted to honour all members of the 1/7th Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment who opened the door to liberty for them. During the evening dinner, speeches were made and thanks given once again, stating the town will continue to welcome veterans of the Liberation or family and friends as the town wishes to keep in contact and remember.

A specially commissioned painting of the lock bridge was presented to Harry in honour of 1/7th Queens Battalion and also a booklet titled "That we never forget" a detailed report of the action of Panheel including photos taken from the air before and afterwards. The evening concluded with everybody duly remembering such important and conclusive actions by 1/7th Queens Battalion.

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### 5th Queen's OMA

The OMA has had quite a busy year starting with the annual Dinner at Farnham where 170 members sat down for a very nice four course meal that was enjoyed by all including our great friends from the East Surrey's who are arriving in greater numbers each year.



*Ian Chatfield with guests at Farnham*

Our next get together was for the Veterans' Day flag raising ceremony at the Town Hall in Guildford on 22nd June - unfortunately we only got the invitation from the mayor's office a few days before the event and only a few could attend at such short notice. The Regimental Association annual church service in June was well

attended by the OMA and it is always nice to see the families at these events.

The next gathering was for the Freedom March by the 1st Bn of the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment on the 15th July and that was attended by many of our WW2 veterans and younger members who marched behind the Tigers to a wonderful reception from the populace of Guildford. It was especially nice to see Ken Honeyman amongst the veterans who, at 93 and not in good health, had with the help of his son made the trip from Essex. Ken passed away in October and will be sadly missed by all his old comrades.

In October we have the luncheon for the WW2 veterans and their families followed by the Regimental Association Annual Reunion at the Union Jack Club in London in November. The last event of the year will be the Remembrance Service and parade at Guildford; that will be followed by the usual buffet at the Royal Oak which all members of the regimental family are welcome to attend.

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## Congratulations and Best Wishes



Congratulations to **Mr and Mrs George Lefevre** and to **Mr and Mrs Steve Birchmore**; both couples celebrated their respective Golden Wedding Anniversaries in October 2009.

Congratulations to the **Association President Colonel Tony Ward** on his appointment as a Deputy Lieutenant for Surrey.

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## PAY ATTENTION CAN YOU HELP?



**Ann Hamlet writes:**

My late father, James Richard Middleton, was born in Battersea in May 1921 and was employed by the Great Western Railway at Nine Elms. Dad joined the Royal Artillery in April 1941. In January 1943, as part of 52AA Brigade Dad was posted overseas, he went out to North



Africa as part of Convoy KM8 arriving in North Africa a month later.



In June 1943 Dad was posted to 39th LAA and it seems stayed with this Division until North Africa was liberated. He was then in Taranto, Italy from December 1943 and then on until RA LAA were disbanded in February 1945 when Dad was re-posted to the East Surreys.

I have attached a photo in the hope someone may recognise him or perhaps served with him. I seek information for myself and his Grandson.

Additionally I am currently putting a book of memoirs together written by the Veterans themselves in order that their stories may live through the next generation and beyond. If any veteran of the Italy Campaign is willing to write about their experiences for inclusion in the book then I would be very pleased to hear from them.

Contact by phone 01342-844081 or write to Mrs Ann Hanilet, Tree View, 29 Redehall Road, Smallfield, Horley, Surrey. RH6. 9PX.

**Loraine Greer** is seeking information about an East Surrey Regiment soldier - Pte. Edward Buchanan Palmer - who was in the same PoW camp as her father, Arthur Greer, in Italy during the Second World War. Mr. Palmer was captured at Teborba, according to an interrogation report taken upon returning to England.

According to returning PoW interrogation reports they were being transported by train north, possibly to Germany after Italy "capitulated". PoWs during the journey were allowed to go to the toilet-three at a time. Three together took advantage of the opportunity, jumped a fence and got away, walking for three days and arriving in Switzerland. Palmer's report mentioned Sinall station which appears to be in Switzerland at St. Moritz. He said they crossed over at Como. Greer's report mentions Cernobbio (Italy) at Lake Como. Palmer's report said he got away with two others. Greer said it was Palmer from London and Dennis from South Africa.

Edward Buchanan Palmer was repatriated back to the UK from Switzerland. It is believed his next of kin was J. Palmer from 30 Fleming Road, Walworth, London E17.

Ms Greer seeks any information about Mr. Palmer, and if possible to contact him or his family.

Contact details: e-mail - lorainesplace@hotmail.co.uk  
Tel: 01263 824 748.

**Historian Hugh Sebag-Montefiore** is looking for accounts by soldiers who served in the East Surrey and Queen's Regiments, or any other regiment, during the July-November 1916 battle of the Somme. This is in connection with a book on the fighting on the Somme commissioned by Penguin which he is researching. The book will focus on the capture or attempted capture of the chain of villages and strongpoints which had to be overcome if the German line was to be broken and will cover actions involving the 1st and 8th East Surreys including its 8th battalion's 30/9/1916 "temporary" capture of portions of Schwaben Redoubt; and the 1st, 2nd, 6th, 7th and 10th battalions of the Queen's including its 2nd battalion's temporary capture of High Wood and its 7th battalion's 28/9/1916 temporary capture of parts of Schwaben Redoubt.

Contact Hugh Sebag-Montefiore at 37 Tanza Road, London NW3 2UA or on 0207-435-1035 or at [sebags@hsmontefiore.com](mailto:sebags@hsmontefiore.com)

**Museum News 2009**

The museum this year has received some very fine medal groups including the DCM and MM group of Sgt. Amos of the 7th Bn The East Surrey Regiment. Sgt. Amos was obviously a very brave man and the war diary contains several mentions of his good work in most of the battles of the 7th Surrey's. Pte Amos (as he was at the time) was awarded his MM in the same action that Sgt. Cater was awarded his Victoria Cross. We have also received the medals of three generations of the Hawkins family all of whom served in the 5th TA battalion of the Surrey's the older one volunteering to serve in the South Africa (Boer) War; another set is to Lt. Perry who was killed with the 1/6th battalion in North Africa 1943.

During the summer we held three open days where we were entertained by the 2nd Foot, the Wellington army group, who fired off their muskets and gave a first class demonstration of period drills - all after our Chairman Colonel Nicolas Davies had presented them with their new Colours. They were suitably accompanied by the Band of the Surrey Yeomanry who supplied 34 musicians who played very well in the warm spring sunshine. Next we had the 1/5th WW2 re enactors who gave their normal great display and FM Montgomery came along to inspect all and sundry; the days activities were accompanied by the Whitgift School OMA Corps of Drums.

The last group to come to Clandon were the Cinque Ports Corps of Drums who came for the first time in October on a damp day but still entertained the visitors most of the day; first outside on the gravel sweep, then they got the children playing on the lawn, then finally they played in the regimental room for these enjoying their afternoon tea in the restaurant.

**The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Golf Society  
Spring Meeting**

The Spring 2009 meeting was held at Sudbrook Park on 7th May. The results were:

The Challenge Cup	
Mike Rowney	Gross 91
The Dodgson Trophy	
Tim Trotman	Net 64
The Heales Memorial Trophy:	
Foster Herd	30 points
Veterans' Halo	
Tim Trotman	44 points
The Harry Adcock Putting Trophy	
Mike Rowney	1 under

**Autumn Meeting**

The Autumn Meeting of the Society was held on Wednesday 7th October at Woking Golf Club. With the forecast threatening rain all day, we were miraculously spared during the 18 hole championship round in the morning. It bucketed down during the excellent lunch, but who by then cared ? The results were as follows:

The Autumn Bowl	
Colin Howard	Net 75
The Glasgow Grey's Cup	
Peter Swanson	Net 76
The Petrie Plate (Aggregate score from the Spring and Autumn Meetings)	
Brian Scripps	76+72 Net 148
The Heales Memorial Trophy	
Brian Scripps	31 Points
The Veterans' Halo	
Chris Stanton (Society President)	32 Points

**Match versus The Royal Hampshire Regiment**

This annual event was held at Puttenham Golf Club near Guildford on Thursday 3rd September. The Queen's Surreys were roundly defeated by the younger Hampshire team 3 ½ matches to a ½.

Representing The Queen's Surreys were David Dickins (Captain), Christ Surtees, John Davidson, Christopher Allanson, Peter Dorey, Robert Acworth and Foster Herd.

**80th Anniversary of the Society**

The East Surrey's Golf Society was formed and held its first meeting in March 1920 at Sudbrook Park Golf Club, Richmond, just down the road from the Regimental

Depot. Apart from the war years it has met there at least annually ever since. It used to be a two day 72 hole meeting, culminating in the trip to Claridges Hotel for the Regimental Dinner. Reduced now (in deference to the age of the Society's members) to one 18 hole round, the next meeting, to be held on Thursday 6th May 2010, of the current Queen's Surreys Society will be its 80th Spring Meeting on the same course and members will lunch in the same dining room as their predecessors. The fathers of two present members played in the first meeting, HC Mason, father of Peter Mason and CH Dickins, father of the present Captain, who himself first played (illegally) as a National Service Lance Corporal in the 1958 meeting.

We hope for a really big turnout (one member it is hoped will come from France and another from Canada). Golfing or ex-Golfing officers, please do try to get there, either to play golf or just to enjoy the usual excellent lunch. The Annual General Meeting of the Society will take place after lunch at which, with all its members aged at least 70, we will no doubt need to discuss the future. This will be followed by the Harry Adcock Putting competition, open to all whether or not players in the morning's round, and a cream tea. All, including playing members of the Queen's and Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment will be equally welcome. If you are not on the Secretary's mailing list and would like to play, contact Lt Col Foster Herd. His address is in both the Queen's Surreys and PWRR address books.

**The Duchess of Cleveland**

*By Major Paul Gray*

In the last Newsletter, Colonel David Dickins wrote an article about the Duchess of Cleveland, one of Charles II's mistresses. By way of introduction, he wrote that a Regimental portrait of Queen Catharine of Braganza by Sir Peter Lely has now been identified as that of the Duchess of Cleveland by a much lesser artist, albeit in the style of Sir Peter Lely's workshop. I have been asked to give readers some background information about the portrait.

The portrait was given to The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment in 1961 by Mr. Hughes of Broadstairs, Kent. A brief report of the presentation was published in the Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Newsletter of May 1961 (available in the Museum). The portrait was kept in the Officers' Mess of the Home Counties Brigade Depot at Wemyss Barracks, and then at Howe Barracks in Canterbury; and when that Depot closed, the portrait went to the Officers' Mess of the Depot, The Queen's Division at Basingbourne. When recruit training there was to be moved to Catterick, The Regiment decided to keep a closer eye on the portrait, and asked 1 PWRR to look after it. When 1 PWRR moved to Germany, they asked 2 PWRR, then in Northern Ireland, to look after it; 2 PWRR then took the portrait to Cyprus.



Meanwhile the Trustees of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment, who were the owners of the portrait, needed to determine its future because The Regimental Association could close at end of 2011, and the Trustees were to dispose of all its "chattels", which amounted to the portrait. The Trustees were advised to obtain the provenance of the portrait and its value.

I was told to obtain these details. Having received a reasonably good digital "photo" of the portrait from 2 PWRR I went to the National Portrait Gallery, and the 17th century expert identified the portrait as that of the Duchess Of Cleveland. Our portrait is a copy of a portrait of the Duchess, now in a private collection in the United States of America. The "head" of the "American" portrait, is derived from the only known portrait of the Duchess of Cleveland by Sir Peter Lely, now in The Swindon Art Gallery; however the "Swindon" portrait shows the Duchess seated, and in a different dress. The "American" portrait shows the Duchess standing and is identical to ours; (or rather, ours is identical to the "American" portrait, as ours is the copy). It was not unusual at that time for paintings to be produced in this way, especially in a busy studio, such as Lely's, with the head copied from one source and the body taken from something else, perhaps simply a drawing of a studio dummy with a dress on it. The Duchess was probably not involved at all in the production of the "American" portrait or ours. Art experts consider that the artist of our portrait is unlikely to have worked in Lely's studio.

The portrait has now been returned to UK. Experts have examined it and confirmed the earlier assessment. As the portrait is not of Regimental significance the Trustees have decided that it should be sold and this will be done at auction by Christie's, South Kensington, on 28th October 2009. *Editor: the "hammer fell" at £5,000.*

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## Italy Revisited

*By Brigadier Geoffrey Curtis*

Quite unexpectedly I was invited by our good friend Dr Angelo Pesce to go out to Italy again this year. On the 50th and 60th anniversaries of the Salerno landings events were centred on and around Salerno. But on this occasion the focus was on Scafati some 25 miles north of Salerno, where Angelo was a schoolboy when 1/6th Queen's, commanded by Michael Forrester took the city on 28th September 1943. Last year the 65th anniversary of their liberation was celebrated and Michael Forrester's friends and relations together with Tony Russell were the city's guests.

This year the commemorations were primarily to remember the war correspondents who were killed during the battle for Scafati; two were British and one Australian. Their relatives had been invited for the occasion and we all stayed in hotels near Pompeii. This

time I was the sole military representative for the events of 66 years ago!

On Sunday 27th September after a reception by the Lord Mayor of Scafati the guests were invited to join the procession through the streets of the city led by a band of the Carabinieri. At the war memorial I laid a Regimental Poppy Wreath and we then moved on through enthusiastic crowds to the square where there was a large gathering to listen to the speeches of welcome followed by those of the guests. I was introduced as their liberator and was warmly applauded as the representative of The Queen's Royal Regiment.

After all that we moved to the bridge over the River Sarno which was captured intact by 1/6th Queen's, where a new memorial was unveiled to the three war correspondents. We then walked to the municipal gardens where we listened to the band which played a moving new composition to the Italian soldiers who had recently been killed in Afghanistan. By then we were all ready for the enjoyable open air buffet in the park.

The following day was the day for Salerno. First stop was at Montecorvino Airport – now a very smart regional airport quite unrecognisable from the shattered and dilapidated affair 2/6th Queen's had captured 66 years ago. But that day is commemorated by some very good murals in the building depicting the battle.

We then went to the British War Cemetery where we were met by the Deputy Mayor of Montecorvino Pugliano. After a prayer said by a local English priest I laid a regimental wreath at the Memorial Cross. Unexpectedly a piper stepped forward and played a lament while everyone stood with heads bowed. Then homage was paid to the war correspondents who are buried there, which gave me the opportunity to walk quietly among the many graves of the Queensmen who had been my friends and comrades.

Afterwards we had a tortuous coach ride into the foothills to Montecorvino Pugliano which 2/7th Queen's had reached on D+1. The "town hall" is located in a beautiful old monastery where we had delicious refreshments before going up to the roof of the building from where there are spectacular views over the old bridgehead area. Going back we skirted Point 210 which 2/6th Queen's held from D+2 until we were relieved by 1/6th on D+10. Little wonder that the Germans made such determined efforts to dislodge us because it became the vital ground which dominated the whole of the British Corps Bridgehead.

Once again I have been on a wonderful and memorable visit thanks to the generous hospitality and warm welcome of the Italian people, and to the valued friendship of Angelo who is the one who over many years "makes it all happen". His enthusiasm remains as infectious as ever and I am truly grateful to him.

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## Regimental Deaths

*Ashby* – On 25th June 2009 aged 79 years Arthur William Ashby. He enlisted into The Queen's Royal Regiment in September 1947. He went on to serve with the 2nd Bn The Middlesex Regiment and 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment prior to his discharge in September 1949.

*Cox* – On 11th February 2009, James H Cox who served with The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Downs* – On 31st July 2009 aged 91 years Edgar William Downs who served with The Queen's Royal Regiment from October 1939 to December 1945.

*Dunn* – On 24th July 2009, Leonard Dunn who served with The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Durrant* - On 3rd August 2009, Colonel P A W G Durrant OBE (see obituary).

*Goble* – On 12th October 2009, Hubert George Goble who served in The Queen's Royal Regiment and The Royal Sussex Regiment during WW2.

*Green* - On 24th September 2009 aged 88 years, William Green. A Private in 6th (Bermondsey) Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment at the outbreak of war his service prior to demobilisation in 1947 included Dunkirk, North Africa, Italy, Normandy, Holland and Germany.

*Harris* - On 16th June 2009 Captain Nigel David Jack Harris. After commissioning in 1962 Nigel served with The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment 1963-66 and then with The Trucial Oman Scouts 1967-68. His subsequent service before retiring in 1975 included tours at the Queen's Regiment Depot and with 2 Queen's.

*Harvey* – On 28th September 2009 Thomas Harvey who served with 2nd Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment 1945-46.



*Honeyman* – On 10th October 2009 Sergeant Kenneth Arthur Honeyman aged 93 years. He enlisted into the 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in April 1940. His WW2 service included North Africa, Italy, and Normandy following D Day. He was wounded during the fighting around Villers Bocage but was able to rejoin

the battalion subsequently and served with it into Berlin. He was discharged in April 1946 by which stage he had become the Battalion Provost Sergeant and also a PT instructor. He was later an active member of 5 Queen's OMA and of the Regimental Association.

*Inch* – On 28th August 2009 Malcolm Inch who served with The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Jourdiér* – On 18th October 2009 aged 91 years Major James Michael (Micky) Jourdiér late The East Surrey Regiment. He was commissioned into The East Surrey Regiment from RMC Sandhurst in January 1938. His Regimental service during WW2 included 1st and 2nd East Surreys, as well as a number of staff appointments in the UK, Middle East and North Africa. After the war

his service included depot tours and a number of staff appointments. His last regimental tour was with 1st Bn The East Surreys September 1956-August 1957. He retired from the army in 1959 and subsequently worked in publishing until retiring in 1979.

*Kettle* - On 16th March 2009 aged 90 years. Captain Kenneth D Kettle MC who served with 1/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in North Arica and North West Europe during WW2.

*Marsh* – In August 2009 L R Marsh who served with The Queen's Royal Regiment, 1939-42 and then the Seaforth Highlanders, 1942-46.

*Moody* – On 13th May 2009 after a short illness, Kenneth Frank Moody aged 72 years. Ken Moody, a 2 years National Serviceman, served with the 1st Bn The Queens Royal Regiment, in Malaya between 1955 and 1957. He was a member of the MMG Platoon, which in the Malayan theatre was largely used as a rifle platoon on jungle patrols. He was a talented sportsman and represented the Battalion at boxing and football with distinction. A native of Horsell, Woking, Ken continued with his football after his army service, and went on to coach and manage several local teams with great success.

*Snaith* – On 5th October 2009 Samuel George Snaith whose WW2 service with The Queen's Royal Regiment included Dunkirk, North Africa and Italy.

*Voice* – On 29th July 2009 Derek James Voice (see obituary).

*Wyatt* - On 27th June 2009, Lance Corporal John Augustine Wyatt aged 89 years. John Wyatt was conscripted into The East Surrey Regiment in June 1940 and joined the 2nd Bn. He fought in the Malayan campaign against the Japanese and was with the Surreys when they formed the British Battalion with the 1st Leicesters. He was a survivor at the Alexandra Military Hospital when over 300 patients and staff were massacred. He subsequently laboured on the Burma railway. He was transported on the Asaka Maru, which was torpedoed, and then on the Hakasan Maru to Japan where he survived the coldest recorded winter and the dropping of the atomic bomb before being released. He was discharged from the army in December 1945. Before his death his account of his experiences was published by Pen and Sword in his book "No Mercy from the Japanese" which he wrote with Cecil Lowry.

## Regimental Family

*Bevington* - On 13th May 2009 Mrs Rosemary Bevington, widow of Colonel J G Bevington who served with 1/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment and was Honorary Colonel 6th (Bermondsey) Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment 1955-61.

*Clemson* – On 22nd July 2009, Mrs I Clemson widow of P H Clemson who served with The Queen's Royal Regiment 1944-45.

*Finlay* – On 12th July 2009 Mrs Nancy Finlay, widow of Major J C Finlay MC who served with 2nd Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment during WW2.



**Hosken** – On 17th June 2009, Eileen Hosken beloved wife of Company Sergeant Major David Charles Hosken who served with 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment and then 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment between 1939 and 1960.

**Whittingdon** – On 20th July 2009, Eveline Whittingdon, widow of James Alfred Whittingdon who served with The Queen's Royal Regiment during WW2.

## Obituaries

### Colonel Peter Durrant OBE



Colonel Peter Durrant, who died aged 82 on 3rd August 2009, enlisted in The Queen's Royal Regiment as an Indian Army cadet in March 1944. He was subsequently commissioned at Bangalore into the 2nd Punjab Regiment in August 1945 and served at their Regimental Depot at Meerut, United Provinces. He was briefly attached to the 16th British Brigade as Staff Captain since it had been

decided that an Urdu speaking officer would be advisable in the event of riots.

In April 1946 he was appointed an ADC to Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck, the Supreme Commander in India and remained on his staff until the final withdrawal from India. This was a particularly busy time for the Field Marshal involving much travelling and presiding over the division of the Army and its equipment into the Indian and Pakistan Armies. Peter Durrant was re-commissioned into the British Army and The Queen's Royal Regiment in May 1948 and served with them as Signals Officer in Berlin during the Blockade. Following a staff appointment and service at the Regimental Depot he was appointed Adjutant of 1 Queen's and served with them in Malaya.

In 1960 he transferred to the Royal Military Police and served either in command of units or on the staff of formation headquarters in Kenya, Singapore, Germany, United Kingdom and Northern Ireland.

In 1981 he was invited to leave the Army and transfer to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in a newly created security appointment which was of intense interest and involved a good deal travelling. He retired from that second career in 1989 and in 1991 offered his services to the Regimental Museum at Clandon Park near Guildford. In April 1993 he became Chairman of the Museum Trustees in which appointment he continued until retiring from the post in July 1998. This was an appointment which he greatly enjoyed and enabled him once again to be closely associated with the Regiment for which he had a deep affection.

He was Mentioned in Despatches following the Regimental tour of duty in Malaya, appointed Freeman of the City of London in 1987 and appointed OBE in the New Year's Honours list in 1989. He married Dene in 1951 who predeceased him in 2007.

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### Derek Voice

(a tribute by John Izant)

Derek was a big man; he had a big laugh, a big sense of humour, a sense of loyalty, of honesty and of comradeship. Never one to pick a fault in anyone, he always looked for the best in people. He had a great capacity for kindness and thoughtfulness and concern for others, in spite of the many illnesses which finally overcame him.

He had a very difficult life as a youngster, virtually raising his siblings during the latter part of WW2 up till the early 1950s; he was called up and joined the East Surreys in 1952. He initially went to Tripoli, then on to Derna where he joined the MT Platoon. The Battalion then moved to Tel-el-Kebir, Egypt. It was here that Derek and this writer should have met; his office was no more than 200 yards from the Regimental Signals Office where I was operating from, but in all the time we were there our paths somehow did not seem to cross. In 1954 the battalion returned to the UK and Derek was demobbed. A few years later he married and had two lovely children. During his civilian life Derek became a trained Rolls Royce mechanic, a carpenter and an accomplished artist.

Sadly we never met until the WOs and Sgts Association moved to Sheerwater and he came to join us. We soon became firm friends. Even in the year that he joined us he was not a well man, having such breathing difficulties that he had to carry his own breathing equipment around with him. Nevertheless he quickly became well liked and noted for his wit. He offered his services as Treasurer when our faithful incumbent "Stevie" Stevens passed away. In 2005 he joined the "Canal Zoners" and went 'on parade' to receive his Scroll and Canal Zone Service Medal from Brigadier Wallace OBE; it was an occasion of great pride to him.

He was a funny man and a fun man, and to me a friend. He had many friends, I know, but to me he was like a brother I never had, and a man that I would hope to emulate should life get tough for me. He will be sorely missed.

*The Regimental Charity Trustees are  
extremely grateful to  
Major J L A Fowler TD  
who has very generously continued to  
supply the paper for the  
Regimental Association Newsletter*



### Major Roy Thorburn MBE writes from Australia:

I was one of the Australian officers who transferred to the British Army after service in the Middle East and the Islands north of Australia. On arrival in Calcutta I selected The Queen's Royal Regiment into which my commission was transferred. I had no prior knowledge of

the Queen's but selected it because, as the 2nd Regiment of Foot, it was top of the list of the regiments offered to me!! At that stage 2 Queen's had just returned to India from the Chindit Force in Burma and badly needed to be restored, so I was posted to it.

Then the "Unite India" campaign intensified, and sailors from the Indian Navy mutinied and seized a warship and the Naval Barracks in Bombay, starting a general anti-British upheaval. 2 Queen's was part of the force that gradually put down the riots after quite a period of living in and defending police stations, fire stations and all sorts of other places. We certainly saw all of Bombay – more than ordinary tourists would!

And then suddenly the bombs were dropped and Japan surrendered, the Indian riots were put down and Britain agreed to hand over the government of India to the Indians. So everything settled down and servicemen who had been in the India-Burma theatre for years were gradually sent home to Britain on leave – for many the first home leave for years.

After a little while I and a few other Australian officers were flown back to Australia and discharged from the British army. But it was an experience I, and I am sure the others too, will never forget. We will always remain Queen's men, and the Newsletter really keeps us in touch.

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