

MAY 2010

THE QUEEN'S ROYAL SURREY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION



NUMBER 87

President
Colonel A. C. Ward OBE DL

Chairman
Lieutenant Colonel F. B. Herd TD JP DL

Association Secretary and Editor
Major A. W. Russell MBE

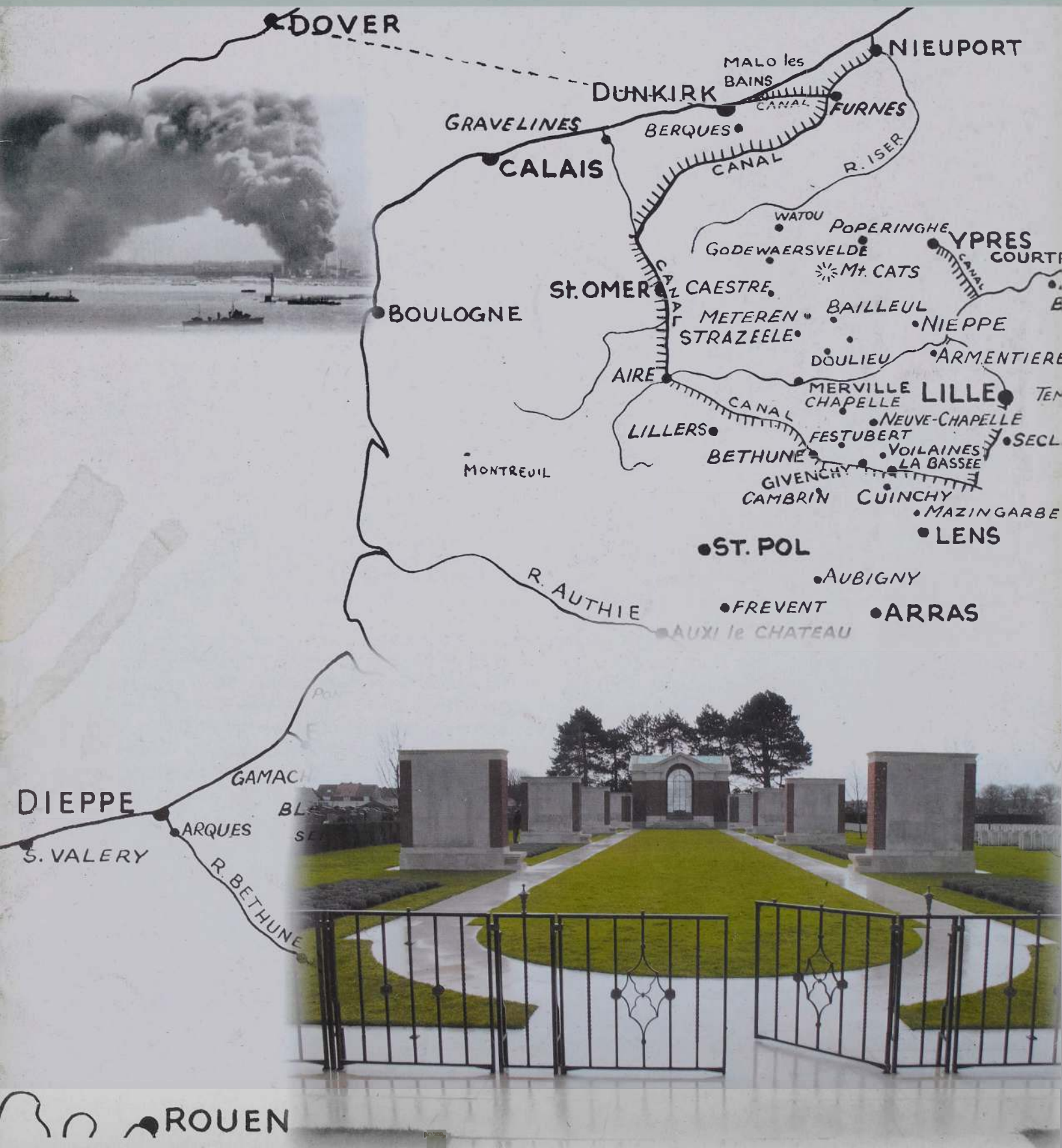
Benevolence Secretary
Major J. C. Rogerson

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

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

Regimental website:
www.queensroyalsurreys.org.uk

NEWSLETTER



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Forecast of Events

2010

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).

2011

10th February	SOBRAON DAY (1846).
14th March	The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association, Charity Trustees and Officers' Club Meetings - Clandon.
21st April	The East Surrey Regiment Officers' Reunion Lunch.
23rd April	YPRES DAY (1915).
16th May	ALBUHERA DAY (1811).
Date tbc	5 Queen's OMA Annual Dinner – Farnham. Details from: I Chatfield, 13 Wood Road, Farncombe, Surrey GU7 3NN.
5th June	The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association Annual Church Service – Guildford Cathedral 1130 a.m.

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The Frontispiece:- 2010 is the 70th anniversary of the Dunkirk evacuation. Operation Dynamo, as it was codenamed by the British, was the evacuation of Allied soldiers from the beaches and harbour of Dunkirk, France, between 26 May and 4 June 1940, after British, French and Belgian troops had been cut off by the German forces from most of the other routes to the Channel.

Operation Dynamo took its name from the dynamo room in the naval headquarters below Dover Castle; it housed the dynamo that provided the building with electricity during the war. It was in this room that Vice Admiral Ramsay planned the operation. He had initially sent destroyers and transport ships to evacuate the troops, but these ships were only expected to have time to lift off about 30,000 troops. Before long the harbour became partially blocked by ships which had been sunk during the repeated attacks from enemy aircraft. Thus it became necessary to take the troops off the nearby beaches as well.

This had been considered to be an almost impossible task because of the shallow water. It was in resolving this problem that the famous armada of "little ships" played a vital role. An assortment of small vessels, including motor yachts, fishing boats, lifeboats and paddle steamers came over the channel to assist in the evacuation. Many of the little ships were privately owned. While some of these little ships were taken across the channel by navy personnel, others were manned by their owners and other civilians. The primary role of these small vessels was to ferry the troops from the beaches to the naval vessels waiting offshore; nevertheless thousands of troops came all the way back to England in some of these boats. By the end of the operation more than 300,000 troops had been evacuated. At the time Prime Minister Winston Churchill described it as "a miracle of deliverance".

Amongst those recovered from Dunkirk were the remnants of the British Expeditionary Force (B.E.F.). Six Territorial Battalions of The Queen's Royal Regiment and one regular and two Territorial Battalions of The East Surrey Regiment had been amongst those deployed to face the German attacks. The 2/6th Battalion The East Surrey Regiment had been captured at St Valery; it was immediately reformed in England from rear details and drafts. The recovered units of our forebears would initially play a vital role in the defence of the United Kingdom against the threat of German invasion before going on to fight in the subsequent campaigns in North Africa, Italy and the operations following the D Day landings of 1944.

The front cover shows a photograph (crown copyright) of what was to be the last view of Dunkirk for many being evacuated and another of the Dunkirk memorial (courtesy of the War Graves photographic project) inset on a map of the area. Elsewhere in the Newsletter are some personal accounts of Dunkirk.



President's Notes

Yet again we had a really good 2009 Reunion at the Union Jack Club although it was of note that over the last two years demand for tickets has dropped. I look forward to seeing as many as are able to make it on 5th November this year.

The last six months have been a very busy time for the Regimental Association, Territorial Trustees and the Museum. First, our congratulations and good wishes to Captain Adrian Birtles on agreeing to become Chairman of the Territorial Charity Trustees. Our thanks to his predecessor Lieutenant Colonel Foster Herd for his tremendous contribution and commitment as Chairman of the Territorial Trustees for the last 10 years, and as a Territorial Trustee for many years before that!

As you will know the Association has been most concerned over many years as to how the future of the Museum could be secured. I am delighted to be able to tell you that a way ahead has now been agreed. The National Trust has offered to renew the lease at Clandon for another 25 years on most favourable terms. But it gets better! It has also been agreed that the management of our Museum will be taken over by Regimental Headquarters the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment and that for management purposes the museums at Clandon and Dover should merge. Colonel David Dickins has already been made a Trustee of the Museum Group to guard the interests of Clandon. There are still many details that Major Tony Russell will be busy sorting out for the merger to take place on 31st December this year.

Now that the future for the museum has been secured it has been agreed that there will be a major refurbishment prior to the merger. The Association has put aside £50,000, the Territorial Trustees £5,000 and Tony Russell and Ian Chatfield secured a grant of another £2,300. We are also seeking a grant from the Heritage Fund and additional funding from other sources. Detailed planning is now underway.

At our March Regimental Charity Trustee Meeting it was decided that the Regimental Association and Charity would hand over responsibilities to others at the end of 2011 – our 350th Anniversary. This does not mean that all the matters that Tony Russell does for us will cease. In spite of the Credit Crunch we have managed to maintain the level of our investments at just under £2,000,000. But due to current low return rates we have to use capital even more to pay for running costs. It is planned that we will handover £1,000,000 to RHQ PWRR which will, we anticipate, cover all future benevolence requests. RHQ PWRR will take over running the re-union at the Union Jack Club whilst a demand continues. Surrey Joint Service Charities will take over the running of our annual Cathedral Service. Money will also be passed to the Territorial Trustees to continue to fund our affiliated Branches and their events. The Officers' Club lunches will continue for as long as there is demand. So although

the Association will cease, the activities will continue (less the Newsletter) having been passed to others. Other former Regiments which make up the PWRR have already made similar arrangements. More details will be given in future editions of our Newsletter.

2011 is a milestone. It will be 350 years since our first parade on Putney Heath. We are busy planning events now. The major commemorative event will be the Association's Annual Church Service at Guildford Cathedral on Sunday 5th June 2011. The service will start at 11.30 a.m. and be followed by a reception in a marquee in the Cathedral grounds. Further details together with the application form for tickets will be in the November 2010 Association Newsletter – but put the date in your diary now!

I hope to see you all during the forthcoming year at our various functions.

Tony Ward

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Benevolence

Major JC Rogerson, based at RHQ The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (PWRR) at Canterbury, continues to administer the Charity's individual benevolence, albeit he has officially retired as a civil servant. We are extremely grateful for his continuing work on our behalf.

During 2009 77 cases were investigated and 63 individual grants-in-aid were approved (of these seven cases were to former embodied Territorial members). In the majority of cases the grants were for household expenses, debts and rent arrears. The Association helped to provide eight further electrically powered vehicles, five orthopaedic chairs/beds and contributed to 11 disabled home adaptations. Of the 14 cases not receiving a grant, local Councils/Charities or other Regimental Charities assisted eight after we had contacted them. Six cases were not receiving such allowances as attendance, mobility, pensions credit or rent rebate. The Charity paid out £32,900 as individual grants-in-aid through RHQ PWRR and a further £265 was spent to purchase vouchers as Christmas gifts for annuity holders and one Royal Hospital Chelsea in-pensioner.

The Army Benevolent Fund (ABF) provided General Grants totalling £298 during 2009. Eleven ABF Annuities were administered; the ABF generously contributed £65 per month per case. During this period we have renewed or arranged for four Nursing Home Fees grants, each of £1,300 from the ABF and £500 from the Regimental Charity per year, to be paid for our old soldiers or their widows to be looked after. We had one resident, on a short respite stay, in Gifford House. The ABF total grants in support, including annuities and Nursing Home fees, were £14,070.

Our Regimental Charity's Trustees would again like to pay tribute to the ABF which is always helpful with prompt action and advice, and the Trustees made a grant of £6,000 to the ABF. The Trustees are also extremely grateful for the benevolence work of our Branch Secretaries and for the invaluable assistance of SSAFA/Forces Help Society and The Royal British Legion and their caseworkers who investigate the majority of our cases.

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The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment

After years of continuous operations the Regiment is fortunate enough to have spent the last few months in their home bases (except a few individual reinforcements and a group from 1 PWRR deployed to Afghanistan). Everyone has been occupied with Training, Courses, Adventure Training and attempting to benefit from less commitments and a slower pace of life. The Regiment is still fully recruited and will be even though the supply of recruits has been purposely cut off as a cost saving. We are still recruiting but the take up of this supply is lower than normal.



*The New Colonel of the Regiment
On the 1st April 2010 Brigadier RW Dennis OBE, ADC (above)
took over from Lieutenant General P R Newton, CBE.*

1st Battalion

The focus for the 1st Battalion over the last 6 months has been retention through challenge in order to ensure we remain at full manning, through a number of diverse and exciting activities. The most dramatic of these was an extremely short notice deployment to Afghanistan of a 15 man team including, the Commanding Officer, Operations Officer and Regimental Sergeant Major. The group deployed with less than 3 weeks notice to support the OP HERRICK 11/12 Relief in Place providing vital in theatre training.



The former Colonel of the Regiment, Lieutenant General PR Newton (centre) clarifies a tactical point with Major Andy Flay & 1PWRR Advisory Team – Afghanistan

Back in Germany the pace of training has been relentless. All soldiers have conducted extensive live firing packages, starting with light role attacks and progressing to integration with the Warrior AFVs, firing 30mm canons and co-axial machine guns. The Javelin, Mortar and Recce Platoons have conducted cadres qualifying soldiers in the specialist weapon systems and the Battalion has enjoyed success externally with 32 soldiers completing courses at the Infantry Battle School and Land Warfare Centre. The Battalion has been successful in shooting competitions with the team achieving second place in the 20 Armoured Brigade Skill at Arms Meet. Three teams were also sent to compete in the Cambrian Patrol competition; of particular note is the Cambrian Gold medal won by the B Company team commanded by Sgt Pankhurst, an exceptional achievement.

Adventure Training and sport have presented a different but no less demanding set of challenges to the soldiers of 1 PWRR. 52 soldiers of the Battalion participated in boxing at various levels. The season started with a hugely successful and enjoyable Inter-Company boxing competition during which many first time boxers were blooded and some proved worthy of a place in the Battalion team. The Battalion team went on to lose narrowly in the semi-finals of the British Army (Germany) Boxing Competition and is currently on tour in the UK. In addition to successes in a variety of sports, over 70 members of the Battalion have participated in some form of Army skiing this season and we have qualified 5 ski instructors. The Battalion skiing team competed at the Infantry Alpine downhill championships in Val d'Isere, the culmination of which was a race on an Olympic standard course. The Football team currently sits at the top of their league and the Rugby team have recently won the British Army (Germany) Sevens Cup and Plate competitions. The Battalion now looks forward to the culmination of our training year in August when the 1200 man strong 1 PWRR BG, complete with Warrior, Challenger 2, Artillery and Engineers deploys on the multi-million pound exercise PRAIRIE THUNDER 3 in Canada.



The Battalion's Rugby Team Winners - BAG Rugby Sevens and Plate Competition

Honours and Awards - March 2010

OBE - Colonel DM Chalmers MBE - Afghanistan,

MBE - Major S Brooks – Palestine

2nd Battalion

Life in Cyprus continues apace! The Unit Move to Woolwich is getting closer and closer and the focus of the Battalion is steadily shifting towards the move itself and the drill required to undertake Public Duties. A recent Commanders' Recce to Second Fusiliers in Hounslow enabled key members of the Battalion to fully understand the complexities of guard mount at all the locations in London that the Battalion will get to know well after the summer.

The Parade Square was part of the handover-takeover between the outgoing RSM (now Captain) Steve Gaskell and WO1 Andy Lingham. Once the Battalion returns from Easter Leave, Drill will become a regular occurrence for all ranks from Private Soldier to the Commanding Officer himself. The All Arms Drill Instructors' course in Catterick is about to be swamped by Senior NCOs from the Battalion.

Apart from Drill, the Battalion remains responsible for the ongoing Cyprus Operations, which include the guarding of Troodos Camp, the highest point on the island. In addition to this, there is a requirement to provide manpower as a Public Order reserve to assist the SBA Police should the need arise. This has required training and liaison with the SBA Police – their methods of Public Order control are very different from those that used to be practised by the British Army in Northern Ireland and there is quite a bit of 'de-programming' required from the SBA Police instructors. The empty quarters within Dhekelia Garrison provide an excellent training area and most companies have undertaken some form of training with the Police.

In addition to Cyprus Ops, all members of the Battalion are making the most of the Adventure Training opportunities available on island. Parachuting remains very popular,

particularly among the WO's and Sergeants' Mess. The Water Sports centre within Alexander Barracks remains popular for Adventure Training as well as for Company sports afternoons.

On the sporting front, the Tiger Trophy inter-company sports competition is well underway which will be no doubt be a closely fought event. As the football and Rugby seasons draw to a close, the Battalion is rightly proud of its achievements, coming top of the Major Units Football League and all island Rugby champions.



Riot Training

3rd Battalion

The 3rd Battalion commanded by Lt Col David Mogg continues to be on good form, they have provided individual reinforcement to Afghanistan, attended civic receptions and have represented the Regiment in many activities.

Future Deployments

- 1 PWRR - Afghanistan August 2011 - March 2012
- 2 PWRR - To Woolwich August 2010 then Coy Groups to Falkland Islands
- 3 PWRR - Afghanistan with 1 PWRR & Cyprus March 2012

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



Bond of Friendship

A special meeting of Waverley Borough Council took place in Godalming on the evening of Monday 12th April 2010 to mark the signing of a Bond of Friendship of the Borough of Waverley, the Town Councils of Farnham, Godalming and Haslemere and Cranleigh Parish Council with the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment.

The Bond of Friendship

The Waverley Borough Council, the Town Councils of Farnham, Godalming and Haslemere and Cranleigh Parish Council wish to recognise the long and close association between the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, which incorporates the former Queen's Royal Regiment, later the Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment, and Waverley Borough, and to express their gratitude for the bravery and dedication of the troops serving in recent conflicts, and to affirm their continuing support for the Regiment and their wish to develop ever closer links between the whole of Waverley Borough and the Regiment.

In signing this joint bond of friendship, the current and future Mayors of Waverley, Farnham Town Council, Godalming Town Council, Haslemere Town Council and Chairman of Cranleigh Parish Council pledge in particular to do everything within their powers to support members of the Regiment and their families within Waverley Borough.

The bond of friendship was accepted on behalf of the Regiment by Colonel Patrick Crowley.



Colonel Patrick Crowley with the Mayor of Waverley



The Mayor with PWRR representatives

The meeting was followed by a reception hosted by Waverley Mayor Pat Frost. Amongst those attending were the High Sheriff, Colonel Tony Ward, members of the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment and about 20 representatives from The Queen's Royal Regiment and The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment.



Colonel Toby Sewell and Captain Jeff Brown at the reception

The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Golf Society

The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Golf Society met on Thursday 6th May at the Richmond Golf Club, Sudbrook Park for its Spring Meeting, the 80th at this venue, the first having been played in March 1920 by the East Surrey Golf Society. The day dawned overcast with a chilly breeze, but cheered up as the morning progressed becoming sunny and bright as players reached the clubhouse after 18 holes, then to be faced with the Harry Adcock Putting Competition, lunch and the Annual General Meeting. It was a well attended day, with Christopher Reeves having flown in specially from Melbourne and several non-players attending lunch including the Association's President and Secretary. Richmond Golf Club has always looked after us well and our 80th Anniversary was no exception. Much money and effort has been spent on the course in the last few years with new bunkers and water hazards springing up to further confuse the outcome, the results of which are shown opposite.

Challenge Cup	H P Mason Esq.	86 gross
Dodgson Trophy	Capt P J Dorey	73 net
Heales Memorial	Col J G W Davidson	34 pts
Veterans Halo	Col J G W Davidson	40 pts
Harry Adcock Putting Trophy	Lt Col P R P Swanson	-5

Sweep

1st	J R L Wells Esq.
2nd	Maj N Napier-Ford
3rd	H P Mason Esq.

(Colour photographs of the day are in the centre pages)
The future of the Society was discussed at the meeting and it was agreed that we should continue in existence as long as our tireless Secretary, Foster Herd was prepared to go on doing the organising. This, with our grateful thanks, he has agreed to do. We owe him much. Christopher Allanson was elected Captain for the next two years; the Autumn meeting will take place at Woking Golf Club on Wednesday 6th October and we expect to play the Annual match against the Royal Hampshire Regiment at High Posts Golf Club near Salisbury in early September.

50 Years On

(by Lt Col Geoffrey Mason)

Thirty eight members and their wives of the old 'B' Company Group, 1 QUEENS SURREYS, sat down to dinner at the Holiday Inn, Farnborough to celebrate the 50th Anniversary since they first came together in Colchester in 1960. This was just prior to the Company moving to Aden, in advance of the battalion, in order to take over from a company group of 1 RHF at the hill station of Mukeiras, some 7,000 feet above sea level on the Yemen border.

Amongst those present at the dinner were the Company Commander at that time, Lt Col Geoffrey Mason, the Company Second in Command, Major Paul Gray, and Sgt Lockwood of 6 Platoon. Also included in the gathering were two guests, Mrs Wendy Burgess, widow of the late David Burgess (Commander of 6 Platoon), and Mrs Carol Mould, widow of the late Cpl Roger Mould. Sadly a third invited guest, Mrs Pam Matthews, widow of the late Cpl Jim Matthews, was unable to attend owing to ill health. She was greatly missed as it was her late husband who had initiated and organised the many three-yearly reunions which had taken place over the years before he died. His place as the organiser was taken over by Cpl

'Tiger' Tyson and his wife Ann who have arranged the last three excellent reunions at the Holiday Inn.



Geoffrey Mason and Eric Lockwood

The tradition of holding company reunions began when the last draft of National Servicemen in the Company Group were leaving Aden in 1961 and agreed to meet at the 'Worlds End Pub' in four years time, on 2nd January 1965. Although this original arrangement was only made amongst some fifteen attending the 'demob' party (Regulars and National Servicemen) it was heartening to find that after four years twenty two of the old B Company turned up for the first reunion. The venue had been chosen for the name, but unfortunately it lived up to it; so after a quick 'warmer into the bank' a recce party was despatched to find another pub which could provide a suitable room for the celebrations. Fortunately this was found within a few hundred yards and the party moved to the more salubrious surroundings of 'The Man in the Moon'. A very good time was had by all and after the success of this first reunion it was agreed to hold another reunion at the same venue in three years time, and on 6th January 1968 twenty members of the Company met again and enjoyed another successful event.

Owing to the overseas postings of some of the regulars, some twenty years elapsed before one of the leading lights of the Company (Cpl Jim Matthews) contacted his old Company Commander and suggested that the reunions should be continued every three years. This was agreed and Jim Matthews volunteered to organise them. The first two were held at the Shepperton Moat Hotel. They were then moved to the TA Centre at Sandfield Terrace, Guildford for two reunions, followed by another two at the TA Centre in Farnham, and ending up with three reunions at the Holiday Inn at Farnborough organised by Tiger and Ann Tyson.

Sadly this will be the last reunion. Owing to old age and the dwindling numbers able to attend, it was agreed that the 50th Anniversary was a suitable occasion on which to end on a high note. However the Regimental camaraderie of the Company members was very evident at the last most enjoyable reunion and will continue amongst them whilst they still live.

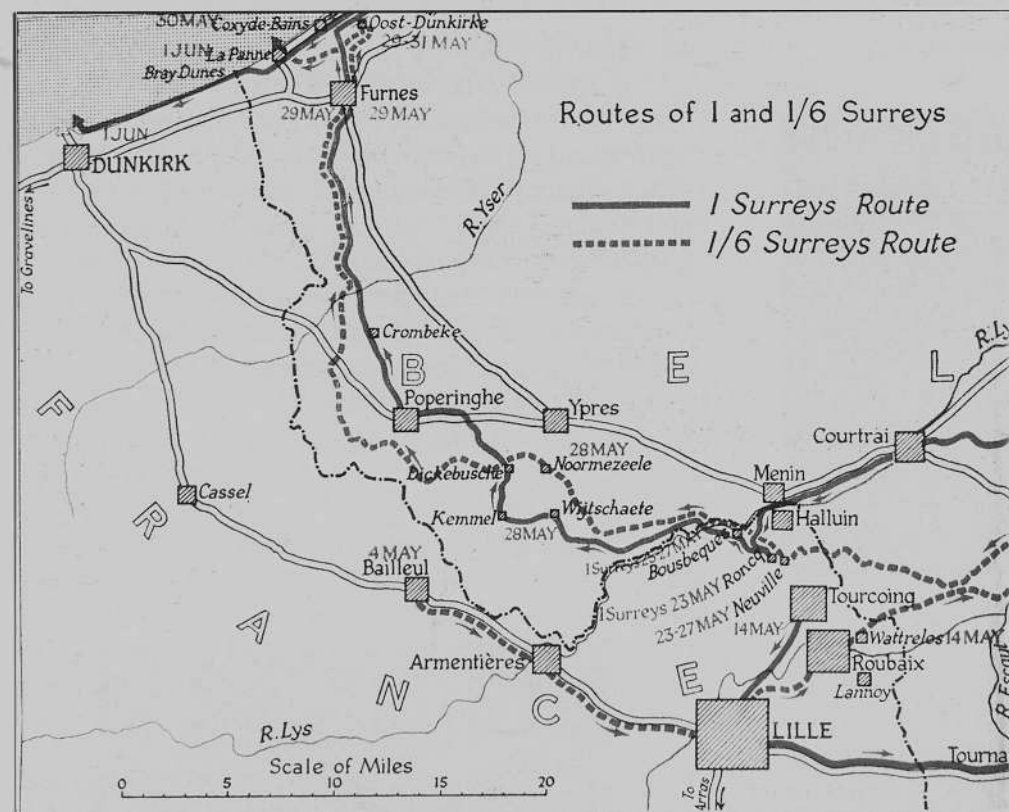
Dunkirk Remembered

The following personal account was written by Major R C "Toby" Taylor who at the time of Dunkirk had been 2 Lt Taylor and the Signals Platoon Commander of 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment which was part of 11 Bde, 4 Div with the B.E.F.

We were on the Escaut Lys Canal (23 May), watching the retreating, surrendered, Belgian Army march away to the west intermingled with numerous Germans – some even hitching lifts, when a Staff Officer from 4th. Div H.Q. arrived at Battalion H.Q. with the news that the B.E.F. was to be evacuated at Dunkirk.

We had been fighting all the way back from Brussels, dirty, and already quite exhausted after nights of marching and fighting. We had suffered considerable casualties and the news now received did little to relieve the increasing apprehension. I had been slightly wounded in the shoulder on the Escaut when a mortar bomb killed our French Liaison Officer (Lt. Maurice Flegg), and seriously injured Sgt. Streeting my signals expert. I had stayed with the Bn, but by now the Signals Pl. was only a little over half strength.

Obviously for some time things had not been going right for the B.E.F.; in spite of the continual reassurance "that all was going according to plan", clearly they were not, and now with this latest news thoughts of home began to dawn in our minds.



As Bn. Signals Officer I was sent back in my P.U. [Personal Utility Vehicle; one was supplied for each specialist officer in the battalion for his own use – later in the war replaced by the Jeep] to recce the route by which we were to enter the now forming Dunkirk perimeter. I drove as far as Fumes some 30 miles away then returned to march on foot through the night once again, leading the Bn. with the C.O. (Lt Col. R.A. Boxshall). In spite of my knowledge of the route that march was yet one more nightmare. Orders, and counter-orders, continuously held us up, as well as struggling French and Belgian troops crowding the roads. As already mentioned the whole Bn. was dog-tired and if we stopped for any length of time those who fell asleep at the roadside were often left behind, later to be rounded

up by the advancing Germans. As we were marching in our normal 3's it was sometimes possible for the centre man to sleep as he went along supported by his two comrades on either side.

In Kemmel we passed a badly shelled French horse artillery unit, smashed gun-carriages, dead men and horses blocking the road. A French cavalry Regiment of some strength also going our way did nothing to make things any easier, and in my rather dazed state on one occasion I remember walking half asleep straight into the backside and bristling tail of one of their very large horses.

Since my recce Poperinghe was by now a complete shambles and on fire, but somehow we managed to force a path through the rubble, burning vehicles, and endless tangles of electric and telephone wires which had fallen across the road.

As dawn was breaking we eventually reached Fumes which was by now being prepared as a front line defensive position. Here orders were received to march on to Coxyde (on the sea) which seemed to have been knocked about a bit – the usual rubble and telephone wires draped all over the place. No sooner were we there, and before we could settle down, a further order sent us a few more miles up the coast to Oost-Dunkirk to support our T.A. Bn. in 10 Bde. who were holding the advancing Germans at the eastern end of the perimeter this side of Nieuport.

So still no sleep, and after the usual 'O' group (Orders Group – when the C.O. issues his orders to his Company Commanders and specialists) I set about working out the signals arrangements and passing them on to what was now left

of my platoon. This was not easy as apart from the shortage of men we virtually had no worthwhile equipment. Luckily we were not heavily involved, and eventually withdrew back to Coxyde.

I now had time to snatch a bit of overdue sleep, so wandered off to find somewhere quiet, but as most of the houses were bursting at the seams with now surrendered Belgian soldiers all showing white flags this was almost impossible. Eventually I found a nice looking house and avoiding a few dead civilians lying in the street pressed the bell. After a long pause the door was slowly opened by a hesitant but very pretty girl of about twenty or so, in pyjamas and dressing gown. In I went and flopped into the most comfortable chair while she looked on in silence. After a few minutes when I was nearly asleep she suddenly asked in quite good English if I would like bacon and eggs? I nodded and soon she had produced for me an excellent breakfast. We spoke a little – what was there to say? For her, instead of the war being miles away somewhere up in Belgium it had suddenly arrived here on her doorstep; her peaceful world shattered and now fast disintegrating. There was nothing I could do about it – perhaps those were her parents dead on the pavement outside?

Suddenly the whole building shook and going to the window we saw a few miles to the west clouds of dense black smoke rising into the sky as the Dunkirk oil refinery went up. This thick pall of oily smoke hung over the beachhead throughout the evacuation and maybe acted as a guide when eventually the small boats began to arrive.

Now days, dates, and even time, became jumbled and confused, but I think we stayed in our position for several days waiting for orders – Sgt. Major Wilson and several others had been killed. It is difficult now to remember the sequence of events, but during this lull I do recall that 2/Lt 'Porky' Jackson (Carrier Platoon Commander) arrived at my H.Q. with a crate containing 12 bottles of 'Cordon Rouge'. At least I could have a decent drink with whatever rations there were – but somehow champagne did not taste quite the same out of an enamel mug.

Eventually our new Brigade Commander appeared; Lt Col. Horrocks (Middlesex Regt.) [Later, Lt Gen. Sir Brian Horrocks, who commanded an Army Corps under Montgomery] had just taken over 11 Bde from Brig. Ken Anderson [Later, Lt Gen Sir Kenneth Anderson, who commanded the 1st Army in Algeria and Tunisia], and he presumably gave the C.O. our embarkation instructions; part of the orders issued at the subsequent 'O' group were that all non-essential personnel were to be sent back to the rear – the 'thinning out' process. While giving out these orders the C.O. was so exhausted that he was difficult to follow, and I remember that while occasionally nodding off myself he kept falling asleep and with a thud banging his head on the table in front of him. This happened several times but he was a very good soldier and never admitted that he could have possibly fallen asleep – certainly not when giving out his orders.

The part of these orders which affected me were that I was to command these surplus soldiers no longer needed, and make my way back to H.Q. 4 Div. and await further instructions. When we assembled we were a strange bunch. Signallers with no equipment, drivers with no vehicles, cooks, most of the Pioneer Platoon, the walking wounded, all the 'odd bods' who could no longer take an active part in any future battle. I collected together about 40 N.C.O.s and men, names now forgotten except for my batman Pte. Pettit, and Kelly of the Pioneers.

We eventually found H.Q. 4 Div. near Bray Dunes, I believe, where a staff officer told us to wait for transport to take us to Dunkirk. So we sat around in the sand dunes watching the amazing scenes on the beach, and out at sea.

Some books and films on the evacuation of the B.E.F. from Dunkirk give the impression of chaos, muddle and inefficiency, but certainly to my recollection this was not so. In an unexpected, improvised operation on this scale involving tens of thousands of men who had to be taken off open beaches quickly by any means available, the planning required officers of the highest quality. There were too many unknown factors, and all continually changing, but nevertheless at my level I found the staff-work and the organisation of the evacuation most efficient.

In the sea were lines of vehicles making temporary piers, and lines of soldiers all in good order patiently waiting for orders when to move. Small boats came alongside these jetties ferrying them to larger boats off shore. Some boats could come nearer and to these men were swimming, but apparently still under orders. There were indeed small disorganised parties of men milling around as if wondering what to do, but I am sure they were not part of some mad scramble to get away, but presumably temporarily lost and searching for their units.

Wrecked boats were everywhere, burnt vehicles, bomb craters in the sand, while overhead an occasional Hurricane of the R.A.F. appeared to scare off the German stukas. A drama was unfolding before our eyes that can have had no parallel in history, before or since. I sat with my men watching it all unfold and wondering where we fitted into the evacuation plan. Once I did go down to a column of soldiers (Royal Fusiliers) neatly formed up waiting to take their place on an improvised jetty, but was politely told who they were and that my party of men would not be welcome unless we had specific orders to join them. Also, about his time a horrible, eye-watering smell spread over the dunes and shouts of "GAS", but as we had no respirators there was nothing we could do about it – except sit it out; it turned out to be a false alarm anyway, merely someone burning some unwanted stores.

Later that day (or was it another day?) we were put into 3 tonne trucks and driven to Dunkirk town, as we were to be embarked from the main mole in the harbour. Somehow our vehicles got through, the road being almost blocked with the usual abandoned trucks, fallen telephone and electricity wires, and other debris. (I remember passing a small hotel shaped like an ocean liner and called the ‘Normandie’ – returning thirty years later it was still there!). In Dunkirk we de-bussed and were told to go to the beach near the harbour entrance, again to await instructions. I took the men there as ordered where we hung about witnessing similar scenes as those we had seen at Bray Dunes, but the bomb craters were more numerous, and more general wreckage everywhere, including smashed up boats, and sunk ships out at sea.

As we had nothing to occupy our time I sent for some rather attractive deck chairs piled against the sea wall. With these we made a large circle in the sand and sat in comfort in the warm sunshine as though it was Brighton, or Margate at holiday time, although the billowing oily smoke still filling the sky, burning houses, and dead French soldiers soon made us forget all thoughts of sunny days on an English beach. Would we ever see home again?

On the promenade some soldiers were enjoying themselves in brightly coloured pedal cars which they must have found in a fun-fair. In and out of the wrecked vehicles they pedalled away racing each other as best they could. The British soldier can always make light of his difficulties and a bit of relaxation certainly did not come amiss.

Pte. Pettit getting bored left his deck chair to go in search of food, but he returned shortly afterwards with the news that our abandoned battalion transport was parked not far away, and was there anything I wanted from my P.U.? I told him to collect my pre-war service dress, cap, and sam browne belt. He was soon back also bringing for some reason my portable gramophone. I stripped off my filthy, stained, battle-dress, threw away my steel helmet and put on the correct uniform for an occasion such as this. Adjusting my sling I settled back into my deck chair.

My shoulder was by now quite sore so I thought I would also wander off to see if I could find a Field Dressing Station anywhere. I could not, but in one of the main streets I found a sweet shop of all things open, and bought several bars of that rather nice French milk chocolate – the kind that is wrapped in pale blue paper. The shop keeper was quite happy to do business, which was a godsend because we were all now rather hungry. On the way back I noticed a barber’s shop, and stepping over the rubble went in and asked in my best French for a haircut. This did not seem to take the barber aback and he was quite happy to be of service to a now smartly dressed English officer. He seemed quite unruffled by the situation in which he now found himself. For him, a first world war veteran, it was a question of ‘c’est la guerre, c’est la vie’. As I sat down in the chair I saw my face in his mirror; it was the first time I had looked at it for some weeks. It was dirty, streaked with sweat, and lined like that of an old man, and I was only twenty two.

Arriving back at the deck chairs I distributed the chocolate, but the men were now getting a bit fed-up. No orders had arrived so could they dump their rifles? “No”. Could they go and try to scrounge some food? “No”. Could Pte. Kelly now throw away the heavy Boyes Anti-tank rifle? “No”. We were still part of the Regiment and we did not abandon our weapons unless correctly ordered to do so.

In the evening and some hours later an R.A.M.C. officer came running up to us and asked who we were? On being told he explained that he was to collect up all the walking wounded he could find. At last I had received an order – and had a shrapnel wound to go with it. He told me there was a hospital ship (SS St. Andrew) just about to leave: it was tied up at the far end of the mole, and I with the few other wounded must try and reach it before it sailed. We did not need a second asking, so I handed over to the senior un-wounded N.C.O. and those of us who could ran as fast as we could with the doctor towards the harbour, and the mole. I was soon way behind, and as it was now quite dark getting a bit lost. Eventually I reached the beginning of the mole and could see at the far end (1/4 mile maybe) the gleaming and brilliantly lit hospital ship. The whole length of the mole seemed entirely blocked with wreckage, tangled wire and other debris. There were more dead French soldiers and strangely enough dead mules. It was an obstacle race made more difficult with one arm in a sling (all the men eventually reached U.K. safely by going on to the mole and joining any ship available).

When I was about 50 yards away from the so clearly visible ship I could see in fact that it was no longer moored: it was already en route to the U.K.! I now forgot the obstacles and entanglements blocking my way, and went even faster. Soon I could see that the St. Andrew was about 6ft clear; all ropes cast off, and the engines churning up the water. I reached the place where it had been tied up only a few minutes earlier, and noticed a sailor by the rail presumably watching to see if everything was clear. Seeing me he shouted “jump”, and jump I did. I caught the rail with my good hand, hung for a moment, then with a heave he pulled me over the rail and on to the deck. A few more seconds and that jump would not have been possible. I would either been in the sea, or helplessly watching the ship steam away.

This good sailor took me to a stairway leading down to one of the wards, and the sight I now saw before me was quite incredible; if I had just left outside an accurate representation of ‘hell’, then this was certainly ‘heaven’! I had suddenly left a world of carnage only a few yards away, and as if by some miracle was now in a world so far removed from it that I could hardly believe my eyes. A clean, bright, shining, hospital ward - immaculate nurses in starched uniforms stood by

neat beds with white linen sheets. The change could not have been more complete. Calm efficiency now took over, and soon I was between those clean white sheets and in a deep sleep.

We docked at Newhaven where we were cheered, showered with cups of tea, newspapers, and sweets. Then by train to hospital in Uxbridge where in between almost continuous sleep my minor wound was attended to. My smart service dress, sam browne belt, and cap were carefully stored away. A week later I was sent on sick leave only to find that my much loved pre-war silver cap badge had been removed while supposedly in safe custody! Never mind I was home at last.

(The following personal account of events at the time of Dunkirk is an extract from a letter in the Regimental Archive which Sergeant Alec Horwood, who had joined the 6th Bn The Queen’s Royal Regiment at Bermondsey in April 1939, wrote to his father on 3rd June 1940 from Aldershot. It was a somewhat understated account of his escape - for his actions Alec Horwood was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Alec Horwood was commissioned in December 1940. He was attached to 1st Bn the Northamptonshire Regiment and was serving with them at Kyauchaw, Burma when he was mortally wounded on 20th January 1944. He was awarded the Victoria Cross for his bravery during the period 18-20th January 1944 and his widow received the medal from HM King George VI on 4th December 1944.)

Dear Dad,

I expect that you have had news of me being missing. Was captured with about thirty others of B.Coy. on Tuesday 21st. We received orders to retire after 36 hours continuous shelling and machine gun fire from the Boche. Unfortunately the order arrived too late, as we were already surrounded. We were taken to Antwerp, where I escaped through a window with one of our officers on the Sunday 26th. We walked (after scrounging civilian clothes from some Belgians) to Nieuporte which is a few miles S.W. of Ostende. We were then well in Jerry lines, as they had been fighting there a couple of days previously. We dare not go any further as we should most certainly have been stopped and questioned, and then we should have been sunk. We decided that the only hope was to pinch a rowing boat, and row round Jerry’s lines into our own.

The coast of course was heavily guarded, and at the time it seemed almost suicide, but we were determined not to give ourselves up, and as we were almost out of money, it had to be done quickly. Thank goodness we risked it. We arrived at Dunkirk about midday yesterday (2nd June), and learnt that the last of the B.E.F. were leaving the same night. Had we left it a day or wasted any time on the way, we would have been in the soup. I don’t think Jerry is taking any more prisoners.

We walked a hundred and ten miles approx in four and a half days, and must have rowed something like fifteen miles. The boat we pinched was about 1 ½ miles down the river Yser, and as the water was so phosphoros we daren’t row as there were Jerries on both banks, so we drifted down with the tide. It took 2 ½ hours to do that 1 ½ miles.

There’s no doubt we’ve seen more Boche in those 7 days than the whole of the Army has seen during the war. Was only in a tight corner once; on Saturday night two Jerries walked into the empty house we were resting in prior to slipping out at midnight. They brandished revolvers over us, and gassed quite a lot, to which we replied with a few Ya’s and Nicht’s and apparently we must have persuaded them that we were merely a couple of homeless and harmless refugees. But what a chance of promotion they missed!

We rowed out about 4 or 5 miles and then went parallel to the coast. We expected to have to row until we could hear by the artillery fire when we were in our lines, but we actually had a better indication. At about 8.0.a.m. about fifty Jerry bombers swooped down and started bombing along the coast to our left, and immediately in shore from our position. It was an awe inspiring sight. Some shrapnel even came out as far as us and hissed into the sea!

After a couple of hours they packed up, so we landed, and found ourselves in the Froggy lines. They sent us about four miles south to Dunkirk. Jerry shelled and bombed this place all day. It is practically razed to the ground now, and burning like fury. We could see the flames when we left for about an hour. Ostende also is completely wrecked.

This air bombardment business is Hell absolutely. I don’t like H.E. shelling, but somehow I’d sooner put up with half a dozen Howitzers than one Heinkel. The Boche is very thorough, and relies more on his planes than his guns. The Blighters come over and drop everything and go back for more until there is hardly a building left standing.

I haven’t the foggiest notion what happened to the remainder of the Battalion. I sincerely hope Fred got out OK, although by what I could see of it at the time, A.Coy. got a hell of a shelling as they were quite close to Battn. H/Q.

Can’t write any more, have just had orders to remove to Division area at Oxford, I believe.
Will send address as soon as pos. Love to all.

Ally

**The 80th Anniversary Meeting of The Regimental Golf Society at The Richmond Golf Club
6th May 2010**



"I'm sure it was heading straight for the green when I hit it!" Mike Rowney steps forward as John Davidson urges his putt in



The Harry Adcock Putting Competition - or an attempt on the record for the greatest number of people on a putting area



Signing cards at the end of the round



The Society's President and Secretary at the AGM

The Association Annual Reunion 2009



The Regimental Museum



*These three photographs show the museum in action since the last Newsletter.
Above: Ian Chatfield accepts the medals of Colonel Peter Durrant.
Below: Spring Open Day 2010*



The Surreys slog their way to Tuscany – and the Gothic Line

(by Bryn Evans)

The Story so far

In the Tunisian Campaign of World War Two from November 1942 to May 1943, the 1st and 1/6th Battalions of the East Surrey Regiment, fought through mountain battles in the Allies' defeat of Axis forces. Then in July the 78th Battleaxe Division and the 1st Surreys were called in to the Sicily campaign, to take mountain-top towns around Mt Etna, to drive the Germans back to the Italian mainland.

On 3 September 1943 Montgomery's 8th Army crossed from Messina to Reggio on the toe of Italy. After an earlier bloodless coup that deposed Mussolini, on 8 September King Victor Emmanuel agreed to Italy's surrender. Next day the US 5th Army landed further north at Salerno, where the Allies' only narrowly averted disaster. Later in September the 1st Surreys and 78th Division landed at the captured port of Taranto, then headed north up the Adriatic coast into the Abruzzo region to the Viktor Line on the Bifurno River. While other 78th Division troops on 2nd October crossed the river to assault the port of Termoli, to protect the Division's left flank the Surreys attacked the hill town of Larino. When the 16th Panzer Division counter attacked, the fate of Termoli and 78th Division was in the balance. At Larino the Surreys' casualties mounted, but they had to hang on.



Mussolini rescued and re-installed as Duce

Three weeks earlier on September 12th the Germans had launched a daring commando raid to rescue the deposed Mussolini. On the mountain plateau of the Abruzzo's Gran Sasso, close to the Hotel Imperatore where Mussolini was being held in custody by the new Italian regime, a force of 120 paratroopers and SS commandos led by Captain Skorzeny landed in gliders. Mussolini's stunned Italian guards offered no resistance. Skorzeny grabbed Mussolini, shoved him into a small single-engine plane, and flew him back to their Luftwaffe base near Rome.

Two days later Mussolini flew to Rastenburg, the Wolf's Lair in East Prussia, to meet Hitler. By the end of September the ex-dictator was re-installed as Duce, head of an Italian puppet government based at Salo on Lake Garda. Hitler's message was clear - the Axis pact was still in place, and every inch of Italy would be defended. Battles like Salerno and Termoli were just the beginning.

The River Battles - Termoli to the Sangro

While Hitler and Göbbels scrambled to shore up the Axis Pact with whatever remained of Italy, in the south on the Adriatic coast 8th Army struggled to maintain its foothold across the Bifurno River. At Termoli, and in the hills at Larino, 78th Division and 1st Surreys fought desperately to hold off German counter attacks. On 6th October however, with the Battleaxe Division perhaps only 24 hours from defeat, the Irish Brigade reinforcements arrived by sea. The battle turned and Termoli was won. As the Germans pulled back to the north the Surreys occupied Larino, and prepared for the next pursuit. By mid-October, the 78th Division reached the next line of planned German defence, the Trigno River. The Germans intended to stand and fight on every large river or mountain ridge that led down to the Mediterranean and Adriatic coastlines. On an escarpment on the north side of the Trigno, in freezing rain the 16th Panzer Division waited for them.

To set up a bridgehead in late October the 1st Surreys waded across the Trigno estuary. The 8th Army's main attack went in on 3rd November on the town of San Salvo on the Trigno's north side. Bitter street fighting then ensued in San Salvo, Cupello and Vasto, before a second crossing further inland by the 8th Indian Division forced the Germans to again retreat. The northwards pursuit of the Germans continued until 8th November when the Surreys reached Paglieta, and looked down onto the Sangro River valley. Once again they knew that the Germans would be waiting, dug in on the high ground on the Sangro's north side.

The troops were continually freezing cold and wet from the constant rain, and the wading of river after river. It was misery, with the ever present fear of what would come next. Veteran Frank Weston found it painful to think back to those times, "It was hell. we lived like animals, cold, wet, mud everywhere, our feet, socks and boots always sodden. The Trigno and Sangro battles were the first real hard slog, the first of the big battles in Italy."

Because there was no cover for daylight operations, night after night from Paglieta the Surreys' patrols waded across the Sangro River holding on to low slung ropes. Although German patrols aggressively contested the no-mans land, their main strategy was to wait in their concrete emplacements and bunkers on top of a ridge some two miles away, and around the villages of Mozzagrogina, Fossacesia and Santa Maria.

"As the division slogged its way across river defence lines we went out, always at night, as a series of recce and fighting patrols," said Lieutenant Jock Woodhouse, who led the Surreys' Battle Patrol. "We tended to operate in patrols of four men, linking two four men patrols when more recce was required. Training as well as practice, made us more effective than patrols made up by the rifle companies, where patrols differed in their composition from night to night. An Italian ex-officer of their Alpine troops, Dr Guido Fano, had joined the battalion as an interpreter, and on 14 November with his help, I led the Battle Patrol at full strength on an 8 mile patrol through the German front to Piazzano station.

There was a small cluster of houses which we approached over an open field coming to a deep ditch between us and the first house. We watched carefully for signs of an outside sentry. We had been ordered to take a prisoner. After a time we crossed the ditch and waited just outside the house. A German soldier appeared on a path leading to the house. Without a sound we grabbed him and he stayed silent. We carried some captured German explosive charges, which we split up placing them on the shuttered windows of the house, and on an armoured vehicle. When we set them off considerable small arms fire erupted. We made a fast escape, our prisoner keeping up, in spite of wearing his greatcoat. The 8 miles back to Paglieta took just over three hours, returning at about 0400 hours." For this raid and similar previous actions Lieutenant Woodhouse received the Military Cross, and Lance Corporal L Wood the Military Medal.

While the Surreys were at Paglieta, Montgomery came forward to survey the Sangro and assess the challenge of fighting a way across it. "We were trudging along in the mud," recalled Frank Weston, "cold, wet and thoroughly brassed off. We called out, 'Give us a V, Monty!' The 'Vs' were horrible Egyptian cigarettes that Monty often handed out. Monty obliged and called us over to his truck, he was standing on the back of it. He spoke to us for some time, giving us praise and telling us what a fine job we were doing. We just stood and listened, then we trudged on."

On 21st November five battalions of 78th Division crossed the Sangro by a Bailey bridge, until it was submerged by floodwaters. That meant that that on 24 November the Surreys had to struggle across the river, hanging on to a suspended rope, and in racing currents of chest high and icy water. Over the next two weeks in dropping temperatures, constant rain and mud everywhere, the two armies slugged it out to gain the ascendancy. Like at Termoli the supposedly cautious Montgomery again belied his reputation.

"In spite of continuous rain and acres of mud," Montgomery said in his report, "I managed to get a good bridgehead over the Sangro; the trouble was to get my tanks and supporting weapons over, as the river was in flood and low level bridges merely disappeared. I took a good few risks. Twice I was pushed back to the river – once on my right, and once on my left. But we came again and refused to admit it couldn't be done. The troops were quite magnificent, and in the most foul conditions you can ever imagine; the Sangro normally is about 80 feet wide, and it became swollen to 300 feet and

rose several feet; the water was icy cold as heavy snow fell in the mountains where the river rises. Many were drowned. Eventually we succeeded.”

In the face of winter’s grip, and bitter rearguard fighting by the Germans at the towns of Orsogna and Ortona, 8th Army’s advance began to stall. On 9th December 1st Surreys and 11th Brigade climbed up into the mountains once more, to take over a front from 5th Division. Of course the retreat by the Germans was not all it seemed. Gradually the Allies realized the awful truth. They had reached the much spoken of ‘Winter Line’ just as the Germans had planned. As the cold, rain and snow broke over the troops, winter began to dominate the front.

The first winter in Italy’s mountains – Cassino looms

From December 1943 along the upper reaches of the Sangro River east of the Italian Apennines, and at times in thick snow and ice, the 1st Surreys held a ten mile front around the village of Forlì del Sangro. Movement was often only possible using skis, and supplies were portered up the mountains on foot or by mules.

During December and January General Clark’s 5th Army in the west made the first attempt to break the Gustav Line at Cassino, to capture the town and its nearby strongpoint of Monte Cassino and its monastery. Also in January to try and outflank the Gustav Line to its north and rear, the Allies carried out an amphibious landing at Anzio. The Casino attack was thrown back, and the landings at Anzio blocked.

The Second Battle of Cassino raged from 15-18 February 1944, but failed to exploit the massive Allied bombing raid that before the battle’s start had flattened the Monte Cassino Monastery. The Allies main objective was Rome, for which the Gustav Line had to be broken. To mass the forces to do that, the major part of 8th Army was to be secretly switched to support 5th Army west of the Apennines.

So by 19 February to reinforce the Cassino offensive, the 1st Surreys made a cross country trek through the mountains in icy rain, snow and blizzards south west to Capua. On 21 February their sister battalion, 1/6th Surreys disembarked at Naples, and two days later both battalions were thrown into the front lines around Cassino. Another build-up was immediately beginning for what would be known as the Third Battle for Cassino.

On 15 March a second gigantic Allied air raid dumped over 1,000 tons of bombs that this time demolished Cassino town. New Zealand and Indian Divisions followed up the air raid, with another attempt to burst through the Gustav Line. They gained parts of Cassino, its nearby Castle and Hangman’s Hills, but not Monte Cassino and its ruined monastery.

Cassino – the final battle 11 – 18 May 1944

Compared to the grand plans, the Third Battle achieved little. German troops emerged from the rubble, to defend strongly and counter attack, with heavy losses of men by both sides. By 20th March the Allies had to call a halt, and try and consolidate the relatively small gains they had made. Although the Gustav Line was now dented in certain places, it remained unbroken.

On the night of 11 May 1944, code named Operation Diadem and coordinated with a break out from Anzio, the fourth and final battle for Cassino and the Monte Cassino Monastery began. With the bulk of 8th Army now added to 5th Army, the Allies were planning to throw overwhelming force at the Gustav Line. Because the Normandy invasion was imminent, strategic and political pressures for the fourth attempt to succeed, and tie down German forces in Italy were immense.

Amongst the spearhead troops to first cross the Rapido River, were the 1/6th Surreys with 4th Division, while 1st Surreys waited to exploit the breakthrough. At 10.45 pm the evening silence broke apart, as the massed artillery of 8th Army opened up on the German positions on the far bank. Under cover of the bombardment, assault companies of 1/6th Surreys dragged their boats to the water’s edge. At 11.45 pm the guns ceased and they began their crossing of the Rapido.

Under a hail of German fire boats were lost, men shot or swept away to drown, but 1/6th Surreys got across, and fought their way to their objectives. Three days later the Poles had finally forced the Germans out of the ruins of Monte Cassino, and both Surreys’ battalions were through Cassino and onto Highway 6 in the Liri Valley, the route to Rome.

(NB: The experiences of the 1st and 6th Surreys in the Cassino battles were also covered in more detail in an earlier article in the December 2007 Newsletter.)

Rome to Lake Trasimene and Florence

Like a diamond cutting through German steel, the Allies streamed north on Highway 6 in pursuit of the retreating Germans, and within days broke through the secondary Adolf Hitler Line. However the simultaneous break-outs from both Anzio and Cassino failed to catch the German 10th Army in the planned pincer trap. Field Marshal Kesselring

declared Rome an open city, and accelerated the German retreat towards the Albert Line, which stretched from coast to coast and around the southern shore of Lake Trasimene.

While front line units such as the Surreys were putting in the unseen hard slog in Italy’s endless inland mountains, other more momentous events were taking place. On 5 June came the news of Clark’s 5th Army entering Rome, and on the next day it was the D-Day Normandy landings. The importance of the Fourth Battle for Cassino to break the Gustav Line, only three weeks before D-Day, could now be seen.

On 8 June despite the traffic jam of 8th Army’s trucks and armour, the Surreys managed to motor 65 miles up Highway 6, and by nightfall had entered Rome. There was no sightseeing however, just straight through to stop outside its northern suburbs. That same day further north on Highway 6, the 5th Battalion Grenadier Guards were pushing on through the hills a little to the east of Lake Balzana towards the hill town of Orvieto. Jack Chaffer in the 5th Grenadiers remembers the confusion and pressure to catch up with the retreating Germans.

“Highway 6 was head to tail with vehicles, tanks and thousands of soldiers. The Germans were in full retreat. On 8 June we were heading for Orvieto, when our Battalion was held up at Bagnioregio, where an infantry battle took place, my company took about 50% casualties, eleven killed and the remainder wounded. In my platoon four killed twelve wounded. Quite a blow to the system. On 11 June the Germans having withdrawn, we headed for Chianccana in an ‘Advance to contact’ mode.

It was here while being head of the platoon in No 4 Company I was wounded by an anti-personnel booby trap. The time was 1400 hrs 25 June 1944, implanted firmly in my mind. Because of our forward position at the time, stretcher bearers were unable to get to me until 2100 hrs. One of my Guardsmen had pulled me into a ditch to get me below ground level, for now we were under very heavy mortar fire. Thankfully after approximately thirty minutes it eased. Stretcher bearers carried me and three other wounded to an ambulance, approximately one mile away, a horrendous journey. I was dropped four to five times. I eventually arrived at Orvieto where the church in the market square had been turned into an Advanced Dressing Station.”

After their brief stop outside of Rome 1st Surreys, whom Jack would join after the war, were a day or so behind 5th Grenadiers, on the same route through Umbria. In contrast to the Grenadiers’ deadly firefights, the Surreys’ journey in the warmth of summer must have seemed an unreal interlude. In places cheering Italians lined the route holding out wine and flowers. When they got to Orvieto, perhaps some of the Surreys stood and stared at the Piazza del Duomo and its renowned Romanesque-Gothic Cathedral. Unknown to them Jack lay with other wounded in a drugged fever in a nearby church. However it would not be until after the war that they would meet, when the Surreys would welcome Jack into the regiment.

On towards the Tuscan nightmare – the Gothic Line

From Orvieto 1st Surreys headed north again towards the southern shore of Lake Trasimene, where 2,000 years before Hannibal had crushed a Roman army. Could 8th Army do the same to the Germans? In June and July 1944 both 1st and 1/6th Surreys fought for hill towns around Lake Trasimene, such as Citta della Pieve, San Fatucchio, Gioiella, Casamaggiore and Arezzo, incurring heavy casualties. In early August as the Allies pressed towards Florence, Kesselring pulled his forces out of the Tuscan capital, and headed north to the mountains.

Yet as the pursuit restarted once more, the Allies were not able to prevent the Germans consolidating again. This time it was to be on their strongest defence line of all in the Tuscan Apennines, the Gothic Line. With hindsight it can be seen as the awful destiny of the Italian campaign for both sides, the Gothic Line. Another winter of mountain battles lay ahead, and after that in the spring of 1945, more river wars in the dreaded Po River valley.

Author’s Note:

Many thanks to Jack Chaffer, Frank Weston, and Michael Woodhouse, son of the late Lt Col ‘Jock’ Woodhouse, for their contributions to the above. Many more of their personal stories, and those of other Surreys veterans are being included in a book on the two Surreys’ battalions in World War Two, provisionally titled “Fighting for Every Mountain” to be completed this year. Any additional contributions from veterans and their families will be warmly welcomed. Please contact:

Bryn Evans 8 Nicholson Street, Wollstonecraft, Sydney NSW 2065, Australia

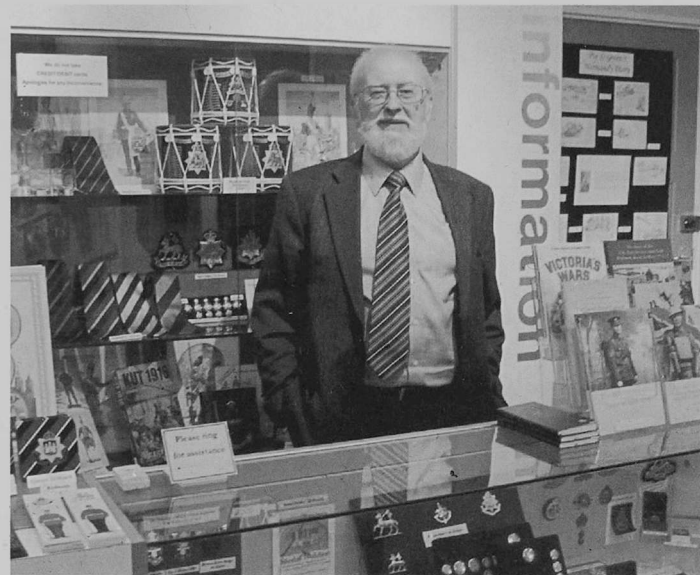
Tel 612 9438 1939 - Email: bryn.evans@ozemail.com.au

o o o

Museum News

(by Ian Chatfield)

I must first record my thanks to Ian Mumford (pictured below on duty in the shop) who has moved on to pastures new after more than five and a half years working at the museum. Ian was best known for his hospitality but I will remember him for his very effective and efficient running of the museum shop and his diligence in sorting the medal collection after the theft in 2003.



The museum opened for the 2010 season on 14th March and is now in full swing having had two 'Open Days'. The first was the Cinque Ports Corps of Drums with Drum Major Geoff Fairfax and his merry men who came along and entertained the visitors with their music and marching display. After their main arena display they played on the rear lawn where they involved the children who seem to love striking the drums and puffing on the bugles. We then had the 2nd Foot who came along and gave their very polished performance of Wellington's Army of the Peninsular Wars which included a commentary of the drill and tactics and of course the firing of their muskets. We will have some Victorian Soldiers and some vehicles appearing on 6th June after the Annual Church Service and another 'Open Day' is booked for 11th July.

We have received some very nice medal groups since the last Newsletter. One was from a Haslemere Territorial, Geoffrey Boxall, who passed away last year and who served in 1/5th Queen's both with the BEF 1940 and in the Western Desert where he was injured. Geoffrey worked for the film star Stewart Grainger who also lived in Haslemere. We have also received Lieutenant Cecil's group; he served in the 1st Bn. East Surrey Regiment and was killed at Tebourba after being awarded an MID for earlier action. We have also received a Military Medal group of Pte. W F Curtis of 7th (S) Bn. of the Queen's and a DCM awarded to L/Cpl. A T Childs of the 2nd Bn. The Queen's in Italy. L/Cpl. Childs had previously been Mentioned in Dispatches for his work as a stretcher bearer and medic and he was a very local man coming from Guildford.

To see these and the other donations we have received this year please call in to the museum where the volunteers and I will be more than happy to show you around.



My First Day In The Regiment

Major Paul Gray writes:-

I passed out of Sandhurst in December 1956 and was ordered to report to Stoughton Barracks just after the New Year 1957. During my first evening in the Mess, I was told that I was to report to the Adjutant (Captain Alan Jones) at 1000 the next day. I was not required to do anything before 1000 and was told to keep out of the way. Having discovered that I could have breakfast until 0900, I saw no point in getting up too early, and I went in to breakfast at 0845. The remains of the subalterns' breakfast was on the table, and the room was deserted but for a Major in battledress uniform sitting in an armchair, reading a newspaper.

I knew better than to say "Good Morning Sir", so I helped myself to cornflakes and coffee. The Major said

"Is it breakfast you want?"

I assumed that this was merely studied rudeness to a junior officer, and was something I was expected to accept at the time. I decided that a detailed explanation of why I was having late breakfast, because I was not required until 1000, was unnecessary. So I said

"Yes thank you Sir" and our conversation ended.

WHO WAS THE MAJOR? Answers to Paul Gray (Via the Editor - there may be a small prize on offer)

Major General Mike Reynolds writes:-

Tony Ward and a couple of others have suggested that I send this to you for possible inclusion in a future Newsletter! It is the offrs, WOs and sgts of C Coy 1 Queen's Surreys on 'Pond Jump East' in Camp Gagetown in Canada 1965. The names are (we think):



Top row: Capt Tim Rogerson, Lt Tony Ward, Sgts Prior and Maume. Next row: 2/Lt Roddy Melotte, Sgt Campion. Front row: Sgt Hope, CSM Jack Chaffer, Sgt Robinson, Maj Mike Reynolds, Lt Frank Le Maitre; C/Sgt Swift, Sgt Stredwick, 2/Lt Mike Goode.

Based in Munster, it was a very strong Company with three mech pls and a support pl.

PS. The shack on the right was a wreck of a hut which we found and rebuilt as a combined Mess!

Charlie Brown writes in December 2009:-

Having recently received the latest Newsletter it has prompted me to write about some thing that has happened to me this year.

I am at present employed to armour the M.A.N. trucks that are needed in Afghanistan. Whilst on a break I was looking in some of the sheds on site and discovered to my amazement the 432 I drove when in Munster in the 60's.



It's a bit worse for wear now but I must admit it brought back some memories of the A Coy mortar platoon. A few that come to mind: Mick Spooner, Johnny Clough, Johnny Alan, Buggsy, Pete (sid) Marshall, Eddie Egan, Steve Watson, and of course Sammy Scott.

Regimental Deaths

Brown – On 30th November 2009 aged 92 years, Lionel Douglas "Doug" Brown. He was conscripted into 1/6th Bn The East Surrey Regiment in January 1940. His WW2 service included North Africa, Italy (including the battle for Monte Cassino) and Greece. He was discharged from the army in January 1946.

Butler – On 10th December 2009 aged 93 years, Arthur Butler who served with The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Cheston – On 14th March 2010 aged 92 years, Major Arthur Gordon Cheston. Gordon Cheston was granted an emergency commission in The Queen's Royal Regiment in January 1940 and was posted to the 2nd Bn which was then in Palestine. In September 1940 the battalion embarked for Egypt and he became commander of the Carrier Platoon, seeing service in North Africa, Syria and at Tobruk. He was Mentioned in Despatches in July 1941. He moved with the battalion to Ceylon in March 1942 and then to India in February 1943. However he developed persistent malaria and was obliged to leave the unit, becoming a staff officer at HQ 5th Army at Bangalore in April 1943. He left the headquarters in December 1944. Subsequently he was briefly an instructor at 165 OCTU and then joined the Control Commission in Germany with which he served from May 1945 until April 1946. Having left the Army in May 1946, he qualified as a Chartered Accountant and worked in the City of London. He retired in 1980. For a number of years he organised an annual dinner for officers of the 2nd Bn. He is survived by his wife Catherine and two daughters.

Clark – On 10th January 2010 G Clark who served with The East Surrey Regiment.

Dare – On 18th March 2010, Cpl John Charles Dare who served with The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Dobson – On 30th November 2009, Cyril "Charlie" Dobson who served with The East Surrey Regiment during WW 2 and then remained on the Liaison Staff in Naples for two years after the war.

Foster – On 12th April 2010 aged 74 years, Michael Foster who was a National Service officer with The Queen's Royal Regiment 1953-55, serving in UK, BAOR and Malaya.

Gooch – On 10th January 2010 aged 90 years, Peter Philip Gooch. He enlisted into 2/7th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in January 1940 joining the Carrier Platoon. He transferred to the RASC in February 1945. His service prior to discharge from the army in April 1946 included Iraq, North Africa and Italy.

Herbert – Cyril E. Herbert on 9th December 2009 aged 89 years. He served with the Royal Engineers in North Africa, with 6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment and was an official of the Rotherhithe and Bermondsey Branch of the Royal British Legion for many years.

Humphries – On 28th January 2010 Corporal Dennis Henry Frederick Humphries. He enlisted into 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in March 1952 and was a member of B Company. His service prior to his discharge in March 1955 included Germany and Malaya.

Huntley – On 18th January 2010 Dennis Huntley who served with 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in Malaya and Germany.

Hyman – On 21st February 2010, Oliver Hyman who served during WW2. After the war he rejoined as a Territorial with The East Surrey Regiment, remaining a Territorial for 22 years.

Large – On 4th January 2010 at the age of 86, Captain Owen Victor "Bill" Large. He enlisted into the Rifle Brigade in January 1942 and having completed recruit training was posted to the 70th Bn The Rifle Brigade, serving with the Mortar Platoon. In December 1943 he was posted to the K.O.Y.L.I. in Italy as a Rifle Section Commander. In January 1945 he was commissioned into the Buffs and was posted to 12 I.T.C. Canterbury, where he was retained as an instructor. In October 1945 having completed a tour of duty on the instructional staff, he was posted to the 2nd Bn The East Surrey Regiment, where he was employed initially as a Platoon Commander and as Assistant P.R.I.; in December 1945 the Battalion was posted to Palestine, and in February 1946 he was appointed Intelligence Officer. He was promoted to the rank of Captain in March 1946, and was given command of a Rifle Company. In November 1946 he returned to the UK and was demobilized.

Lea-Wilson – On 30th April 2010, Captain John Lea-Wilson MC (see obituary).

Mills - On 16th April 2010, Captain William Mills who served with The Buffs, 6th (Bermondsey) Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment, 3rd Bn The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment, 6th Bn The Queen's Regiment and The Royal Signals.

Mineeff – On 11th April 2010 aged 89 years, Major Alexander Konstantin Mineeff OBE. During the early stages of WW2 he was twice wounded while serving in The East Surrey Regiment with the B.E.F.; he was taken prisoner by the Germans in 1940 and remained a PoW until 1945. In August 1946 he was given an Emergency Commission with The East Surrey Regiment, and later a SSRC in the Intelligence Corps with whom his service included BAOR, Malaya and British Guiana. He was awarded the MBE in January 1955. He retired from the Army in August 1965, joining the Diplomatic Service. He served in various diplomatic posts, chiefly in Germany, including as vice consul, and 2nd and 1st Secretary. He was awarded the OBE (Civil Division) in June 1975; he retired in 1986.

Mouncey – On 30th January 2010 aged 89 years, John William Mouncey who served with 1/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Neithercott – On 5th December 2009 at home in Arizona, USA, Peter Harry Roger Neithercott. He enlisted into 2nd

Bn The East Surrey Regiment in June 1940. He served in Malaya and then Singapore until it fell in February 1942 when he was taken PoW by the Japanese. He worked on the Thai/Burma railway and was later sent to Japan to work in the Kanos Carbide Factory 30 miles from Niigata Honshu. He was discharged from the army in June 1946.

Parker – On 30th November 2009 aged 76 years, Kenneth William Parker. He was enlisted into 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in May 1951. He was discharged from the Army in May 1953 having served with the battalion in Iserlohn, Germany.

Parkes – On 14th January 2010 aged 84 years, Captain Anthony John Parkes MBE. He originally enlisted on a regular engagement with the GSC in September 1943 as an alternative to becoming a Bevan Boy in a colliery, going on to serve with 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment; he was commissioned in January 1945 in India after attending the Indian Military Academy. He subsequently served with the Parachute Regiment. His service prior to leaving the army in 1949 included Burma (Sittang Bend), Siam and Malaya. He was awarded the MBE (Civil List) in 1979 for services to Devon and Cornwall Constabulary.

Peto – On 23rd February 2009, aged 87 years, Arthur Charles Peto. A Territorial in The East Surreys prior to WW2, he was called up in 1939 and served throughout the war firstly with The East Surreys and then with The Kings Own Scottish Borderers.

Powell – On 27th October 2009 at the age of 95 years, Major Francis Turner Powell MBE. He joined the 6th (Bermondsey) Bn. Queen's Royal Regiment before the start of the Second World War, and then served with the 1/6th Bn. Queen's Royal Regiment in Belgium and France in 1940. Later in the war he was involved in the preparations for D Day.

Ramsey – On 25th February 2010, Captain Brian Allan Ramsey TD. He initially joined the Buffs and was granted an Emergency Commission in 1947. He served with 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in Dortmund in 1947. On returning to civilian life he joined 6th Surreys, being awarded the Territorial Decoration in 1959. He remained a member of the unit until 1962 when he left on being sent overseas by his lifetime employer The Royal Bank of Canada from which he eventually retired in March 1987.

Taylor – On 26th March 2010, Lieutenant Colonel Peter Mandeville Aldersey Taylor MC and Bar (see obituaries).

Verrico – On 25th January 2010 in London aged 71 years, Joseph Edward Verrico. He joined The Queen's Royal Regiment for National Service in November 1957. Following basic training he was posted to the 1st Battalion in Iserlohn, Germany. On retirement Joe moved to Spain, where he joined the British Legion and made many friends, but still found time to attend annual reunions in England with fellow Queensmen with whom he had served; he will be greatly missed by all who had the good fortune to know him.

Waitimas – On 11th January 2010 aged 90 years, Charles Waitimas who served with 2/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment during WW2.

Wenn – On 2nd May 2010 aged 91 years, Captain George Grahame Wenn. He was wounded while serving with 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment with the B.E.F. in May 1940 and was subsequently evacuated from Dunkirk. He was granted an emergency commission in the RAOC in 1942. He was for a number of years a Trustee of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Museum and was Honorary Treasurer from 1988 until 1999.

Wiles – On 26th April 2010 aged 93 years, James Wiles who served with The East Surrey Regiment. During WW2 having returned to England after Dunkirk he was subsequently seconded to The Lincolnshire Regiment with which he saw service in Burma.

Williams – On 9th March 2010 aged 91 years, Mancel Rowland Williams. He enlisted into 1/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in January 1940. His service during WW2 included North Africa and Italy, and then Western Europe following D Day.

Regimental Family

Fleming – On 28th December 2009, Eileen D Fleming, widow of the late Thomas A Fleming who served in The East Surrey Regiment 1940-46.

Johnson – On 28th October 2009 Mrs L Johnson, widow of the late Pte Donald Johnson who served with 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment 1955-57.

Martin – On 6th October 2009 Mrs Joan Martin widow of the late RSM Cliff Martin of 2nd Bn The East Surrey Regiment.

Perrett-Young – On 7th February 2010, Doreen beloved wife of Brigadier Michael Perrett-Young, The Queen's Royal Regiment and Intelligence Corps. They married in Singapore on 9th June 1956 while he was serving with 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Obituaries

Lieutenant Colonel P M A Taylor MC and Bar

(Brigadier Geoffrey Curtis writes)



Lieutenant Colonel Peter Taylor, who died 26th March 2010, was a natural leader with an infectious enthusiasm. He joined the Middlesex Yeomanry before the Second World War and was commissioned into The Queen's Royal Regiment in August 1940, joining the 2/6th Battalion which was then

stationed on the Isle of Sheppey following the Dunkirk evacuation. He remained with the Battalion until its disbandment in 1946.

As part of the 169 Queen's Brigade in 56th London Division, the Battalion embarked at Liverpool in August 1942. After service in Iraq, and in Tunisia in the closing weeks of 8th Army's Desert Campaign, the Battalion landed at Salerno in September 1943. Peter was then the Intelligence Officer and his lively personality soon proved to be a great asset at Battalion HQ. But it was when he was appointed D Company Commander soon after the Salerno landings that his leadership qualities really came to the fore. He quickly gained the confidence of the company in which I was a platoon commander and later his Second in Command.

Peter was never one for "sticking to the book". We had been much impressed by the Panzer Grenadiers' infiltration tactics and he lost no time in training the company to use their individual guile and initiative to achieve surprise and reduce the risk of casualties. The first big test came at the crossing of the River Garigliano in which D Company had the task of taking a strongly held hill feature some 800 yards beyond the river. By skilful use of ground and inspirational leadership the company gained the objective with few casualties and then held off a determined counter-attack. Peter was awarded the Military Cross.

In February 1944 the situation in the Anzio Bridgehead had become so desperate that 56th Division was hurriedly deployed into the bridgehead from the main battle front. By that time both sides had virtually fought to a standstill. In the grim close-quarter fighting which went on day in day out Peter was awarded a bar to his MC for his "superb leadership... and personal bravery which inspired complete confidence in his men". By mid March the infantry had suffered so many casualties that the Division was withdrawn from battle to Egypt for reinforcement and recovery.

Some six months later the Division returned to Italy in time for the Gothic Line battles. With a newly constituted company mainly of ex anti-aircraft gunners Peter's brilliant leadership was once again demonstrated when he infiltrated his company in a silent attack and captured Monte Capella without a single casualty. Shortly afterwards Peter was appointed Second in Command and in January 1945 he became the Commanding Officer. However to his great regret just before the final battles of the campaign a more senior regular officer was posted in and he reverted to Second in Command. He was the only officer in the Battalion to be awarded a bar to his MC and one of a mere handful of officers to have served throughout the Italian Campaign with the 2/6th Queen's.

In July 1945 he was again given command of the Battalion until disbandment the following March. Then, like so many others, faced with the tedium of peacetime regimental soldiering in a reduced rank, and having

been granted a regular commission, he volunteered for Airborne Forces. He finally retired from the Army in 1961.

His first marriage from which he had two sons ended in divorce. He married secondly Barbara Hicks the actress and they took to the “good life” on the island of Elba. When their son reached school age they moved to England and settled happily into rural life in Essex. Here Peter indulged his three great loves – Family, Rugby Football and Real Ale. His sense of fun and his way with all manner of people were his special attributes. You just felt better to have him around.

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Lieutenant Colonel P M A Taylor MC and Bar
(Colonel Toby Sewell writes)

Peter Taylor’s career in airborne forces was unfortunately truncated. Having qualified as a parachutist, he went on to join 8/9th Bn the Parachute Regiment in 6th Airborne Division in Palestine for the difficult times leading to Israeli independence. He took command of the Battalion there outside Haifa for the final weeks in 1948, and brought it home for disbandment that summer. It was then again a time for reversion in rank, and Peter went to join the new 2nd Bn the Parachute Regiment, in the new 16th Independent Parachute Brigade in B.A.O.R. His service with them came to an abrupt end when he was severely injured captaining the Battalion rugby team.

As a result of his injury he was permanently medically downgraded and had to transfer to the R.A.S.C. - with them he at last achieved permanent promotion in command of 1(BR) Corps Transport Column, and finally returned to Airborne Forces as 2ic/deputy commander of the Airborne Forces Depot before retiring from the Army in 1961. Peter Taylor’s rugby career was distinguished. After education at Eastbourne College he worked in London and played scrum-half for Rosslyn Park, then in the amateur days one of the top clubs in the country.

He was a great friend to so many, and throughout his life he continued to be a great supporter of the reunions of 2/6th Queen’s, and of 56th (London) Division.

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Major R B Johnson



Robert Basil Johnson, who was always known as Bob, was born in Shanghai on 8th November 1929. He was evacuated from Shanghai with his family just before the War and went to St Edmund’s Prep School in Hindhead and then to Harrow. After school he went to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and was

commissioned into The Queen’s Royal Regiment in December 1949. He then joined the 1st Battalion in Iserlohn as a platoon commander.

Bob sailed with the Battalion to Malaya in January 1954 in the troopship Georgic. For most of his time with the Battalion during the Emergency in Malaya he was the Regimental Signals Officer and for a short period stood in as Adjutant. In 1955 he was posted on to the staff of HQ 63 Gurkha Infantry Brigade. He met his wife Eithne in Malaya and they were married in Ireland in March 1957. They had three daughters and one son during the period 1958 to 1967.

On return to the UK at the end of 1956, Bob was posted to The Queen’s Royal Regiment Depot at Stoughton Barracks. While he was at the Depot, the film “Carry on Sergeant” was made and Bob featured in command of the Company which included “the idiot actors’ platoon” at their Passing Out Parade. On leaving the Depot he was seconded to 1st West India Regiment in Jamaica for three years until May 1963. He was promoted to major in 1962. On return to the United Kingdom in 1963 he was posted to the staff of HQ 52 Lowland Division in Scotland. Then in 1965 he returned to regimental duty with 1 Queens Surrey’s, soon to become 1 Queens, at Munster where he served as a Company Commander. He retired from the Army in 1968, partly due to the special care needs of his recently born son, George.

On retirement, Bob and Eithne settled at Beaconsfield, and for 14 years he worked in Personnel and Training Management in the Potteries industry and then from 1985 to 1994 he became a Recruitment Consultant for the Officers’ Association. He retired finally on his 65th birthday on 8th November 1994. After his final retirement, he became a much valued helper at the Regimental Museum at Clandon, also becoming a Trustee of the Museum. During this time he wrote the book “*The Queen’s in the Middle East and North Africa 1939 to 1943*”. This is a detailed account of the service of all seven Battalions of The Queen’s Royal Regiment who took part in the operations in the Theatre, starting with the 2nd Battalion in Palestine and ending with the victory of the 8th Army in Tunisia in May 1943. The book received high praise from Major General Michael Forrester in his Foreword.

Throughout his service Bob was a charming, friendly and amusing colleague and as a soldier he was always sensible, efficient and supportive. He was a keen games player, playing for the Battalion’s cricket, hockey and rugby teams. Whilst in Malaya he also played hockey for the Malacca State XI.

Bob died on 2nd April 2010 having coped cheerfully with illness for some time. He is survived by his wife Eithne and his three daughters and son.

JGWD

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Captain John Lea-Wilson MC

(Brigadier Geoffrey Curtis writes)

2nd Lieutenant John Lea-Wilson joined 2/6th Queen’s in Italy some two months after the Salerno landings in 1943. It is hard to imagine a more traumatic experience for a young cavalry officer in the 10th Hussars than to find himself in an infantry battalion which was heavily engaged in an intense battle for Monte Camino in the most appalling conditions of torrential rain and thick mud.

John joined me as a platoon commander in D Company and we quickly established a close rapport which developed into a life-long friendship. I think it is fair to say that John was an unusual soldier, possibly even a reluctant soldier. But he settled remarkably quickly in the unexpected situation into which he had been thrust. His calm and placid nature was his great asset which inspired confidence in him as a leader, and in turn no doubt gave him an inner strength. Well do I remember seeing him in his slit-trench writing poetry! Really that says it all about

him. With Peter Taylor as our company commander we were a happy well-integrated team.

John survived as a platoon commander in all the many actions in which the battalion was involved including the Garigliano crossing and the close quarter fighting in the Anzio bridgehead. In the Gothic line, by then a captain, in September 1944 he took over the remnants of the combined A and B Companies in the middle of the fierce fighting for the key feature of Gemmano in which he was wounded. For this and subsequent actions in the final advance to Venice he was awarded the Military Cross.

He remained with 2/6th Queen’s in Italy until the end of the war and left the Army for civilian life on their return to England.

John died at home in the Cotswolds on 30th April 2010. Joanna, his wife for over 60 happy years, died a few months before him. and they leave two daughters and three sons.

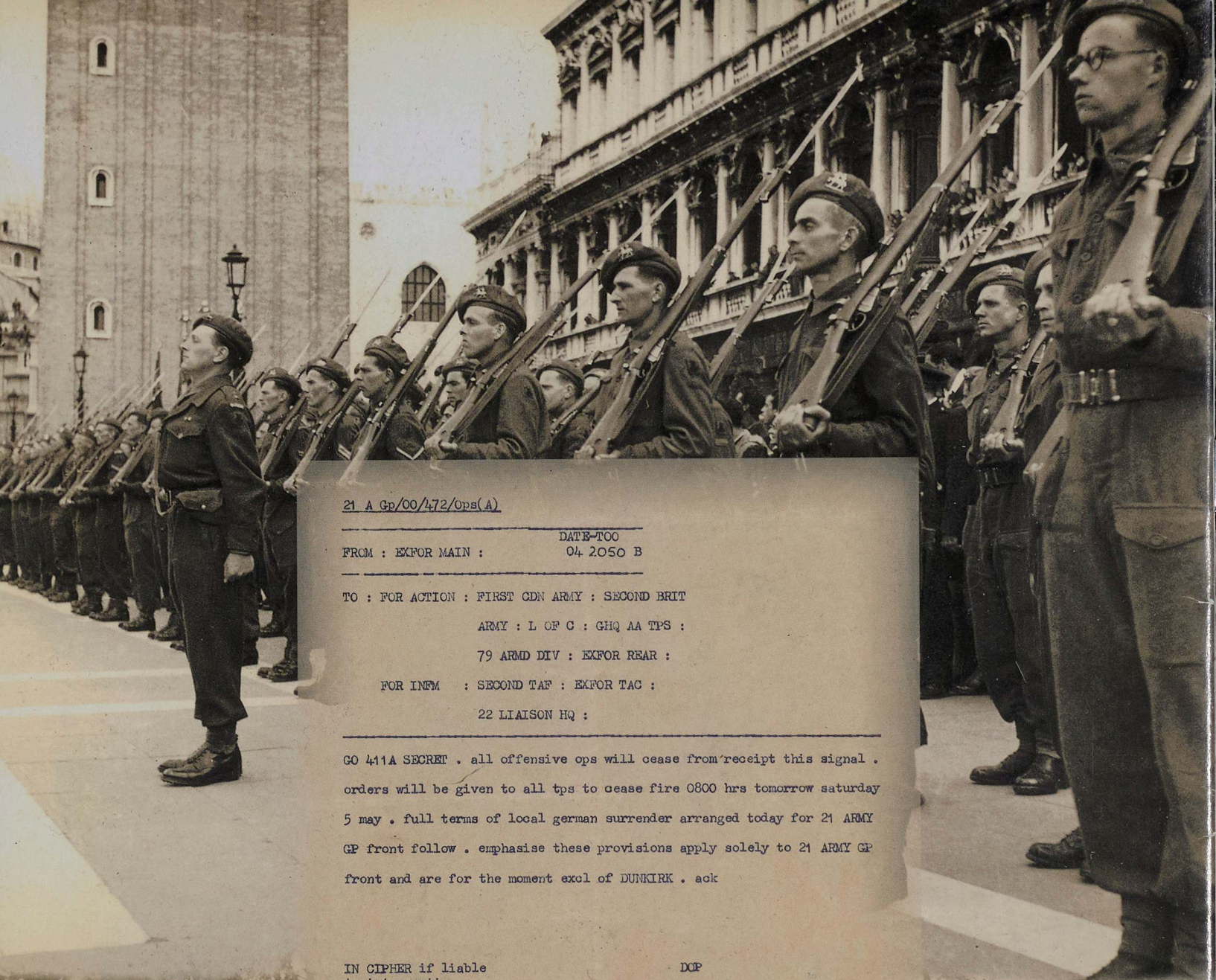
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Branch Secretaries

5th Bn OMA-QRR:	I Chatfield Esq, 13 Wood Road, Farncombe, Godalming, Surrey GU7 3NN	Tel: 01483 429425
6th Bn OCA-QRR:	Major M R Nason TD, 64 Westfield Road, Barnehurst, Kent DA7 6LR	Tel: 0132 2527017
7th Bn OCA-QRR:	Major J M A Tamplin MBE TD, 10 Hugh Street, London SW1	Tel: 0207 8340120
2/6th Bn OCA-QRR:	Major M R Nason TD, 64 Westfield Road, Barnehurst, Kent DA7 6LR	Tel: 0132 2527017
2/7th Bn OCA-QRR:	Colonel D E Blum OBE, 85 Thameside, Staines, Middlesex TW18 2HF	Tel: 01784 450483
East Surrey Reunion:	J Broom Esq, 11 Sayerland Road, Polegate, East Sussex BN26 6NU	Tel: 01323 489262
WOs and Sgts Assoc:	J T Izant Esq, Flat 6, Pegasus Court, Rivers Close, Farnborough, Hants GU14 6LZ	Tel: 01252 378707
2/6th East Surrey St Valery Assoc:	Maj A J Redfern MC TD, Courtlands, 12 Kent House, Sheen Rd, Richmond, Surrey TW10 5AV	Tel: 0208 9402191
Queen's Surreys (Kent) Branch:		
	R F Harper Esq, 90 Osbourne Road, Willesborough, Ashford, Kent TN24 0EQ	Tel: 01233 641330
Queen's Surreys (Suffolk) Branch:		
	D J Gardner Esq, 106 Oakes Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP32 6QS	Tel: 01284 753160
1st Surrey Rifles:	T W Young Esq BEM, 38 Stanstead Manor, St James Road, Sutton, Surrey	Tel: 0208 643 6189
Queen's Surreys (South West) Branch:		
	H Stewart Esq, 3 Wentworth Road, Springbank, Cheltenham, Glos GL51 0NS	Tel: 01242 239121

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Back Cover:- On 8th May 1945, almost exactly five years after Dunkirk, VE day would be celebrated. The back cover shows a copy from the Regimental archive of the 21st Army Group ceasefire signal of 4 May 1945 together with photographs of some of our victorious forebears in Venice (C Coy 2/5th Queen’s) and in Berlin (WOs and Sgts 1/5th Queen’s in Spandau Barracks) in May 1945. Others would continue to fight in the East for three months until VJ Day.



21 A Gp/00/472/Ops(A)

FROM : EXFOR MAIN : DATE-TOO
04 2050 B

TO : FOR ACTION : FIRST CDN ARMY : SECOND BRIT

ARMY : L OF C : GHQ AA TPS :

79 ARMD DIV : EXFOR REAR :

FOR INFM : SECOND TAF : EXFOR TAC :

22 LIAISON HQ :

GO 411A SECRET . all offensive ops will cease from receipt this signal .
orders will be given to all tps to cease fire 0800 hrs tomorrow saturday
5 may . full terms of local german surrender arranged today for 21 ARMY
GP front follow . emphasise these provisions apply solely to 21 ARMY GP
front and are for the moment excl of DUNKIRK . ack

IN CIPHER if liable
to interception

DOP
EMERGENCY

R. Belchem
BGS

Copy to: All Branches Main HQ 21 Army Group
War Diary (2)

/HAW

921

