



The Die-Hards

NEWSLETTER

No. 21

February 1973

PRICE 6p

Editor: Col. F. WALDEN, M.B.E., D.L., T. & A.V.R. Centre,
Deansbrook Road, Edgware, Middlesex.

The Editor much regrets the delay in publication
of this issue, due entirely to circumstances beyond
his control

REMEMBRANCE DAY CEREMONIES 1972

The Field of Remembrance

The annual ceremony at the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey took place on Saturday, November 11.

A large number of ex-members of the Regiment were present, as well as civic dignitaries, headed by Lt.-Gen. G. C. Bucknall, CB, MC, DL, Assistant Lieutenant of the Middlesex Area of Greater London and the Vice-Chairman of the Greater London Council.

All the boroughs, which lie within the old county of Middlesex, were represented, except Brent.

After the usual short service at the County Memorial in the Middlesex Guildhall, conducted by Prebendary G. A. Lewis Lloyd, MBE, Honorary Chaplain to 2/10th Battalion The Middlesex Regiment (DCO) OCA, a procession headed by R.S.M. R. G. Roberts, MBE, the Parade RSM, and Mr. H. W. Kent, carrying the Regimental Association Standard, formed up and moved to the Regimental plot.

On arrival at the plot Col. A. S. J. de S. Clayton, DL, Deputy Colonel (Middlesex) The Queen's Regiment, after saying "We plant these crosses today in memory of our fallen comrades of the Middlesex Regiment", planted the first cross. He then invited the Assistant Lieutenant of the Middlesex Area of Greater London to plant a cross. The Chaplain then planted a cross and was followed by the representatives of the undermentioned Battalions: 1st, Major A. E. F. Waldron, MBE; 2nd, Col. I. R. Burrows, OBE; 3rd, Mr. G. Leadbeater; 4th, Mr. C. Ashby; 7th (TA), Lt.-Col. J. D. Gunnell, TD; 8th, Col.

M. H. Summers, DSO, OBE, TD, DL; 9th, Mr. R. T. Meers; 1/10th, Mr. A. D. Scudamore, OBE; 2/10th, Lt.-Col. D. B. Watson, MC.

Crosses were then planted by the civic dignitaries present, followed by members of the Association and their relatives.

Regimental Service

By kind permission of the Home Postal and Courier Communications Depot RE our Remembrance Day service was held in the Garrison Chapel, Inglis Barracks, Mill Hill, on Sunday, November 12, and was followed by the ceremony at the Regimental Memorial. Both were conducted by the Rev. Robin Starkey, curate at St. Paul's Church, Mill Hill, who had served in the Regiment on his enlistment as a National Service soldier. After the ceremony at the Regimental Memorial at which our bugler, Mr. George Chacksfield, sounded "Last Post" and "Reveille", wreaths were laid in the following order: Regimental Association, by Col. A. S. J. de S. Clayton, DL; 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Battalions and Depot, by Col. I. R. Burrows, OBE; 5th and 6th (Militia) Battalions, by Major A. E. F. Waldron, MBE; "D" Company (MX), 5th (V) Battalion The Queen's Regiment, by Lt. T. C. R. Hutton; "A" Company (MX), 6th (V) Battalions The Queen's Regiment, by Major M. J. Beaumont, TD; Mill Hill Branch, The Die-Hards Club, by Mr. A. M. Mason; 9th Battalion Branch, The Die-Hards Club, by Mr. W. Fitzgerald; WO's and Sergeants' Branch, The Die-Hards Club, by Mr. G. P. Hurlock.

At the march past which followed the laying of wreaths the salute was taken by Col. A. S. J. de S. Clayton, DL, who was accompanied by Col. J. W. Holmes, RE, Commanding the Home Postal and Courier Communications Depot, RE.

After the parade those who had taken part or had been spectators made their way to the TAVR Centre, Edgware, where a most successful reunion was held.

DISBANDMENT OF ALBUHERA COMPANY

Much to our regret and sorrow the Army Board have decided that 4th Battalion The Queen's Regiment, Albuhera Company is to be disbanded towards the end of the year.

When this Company was formed at Risborough Barracks, Shorncliffe, on January 1, 1971, it was allocated the role of recruiting duties for The Queen's Regiment. It gave up this role later when the Company was moved to Canterbury to assist in the training of junior soldiers.

ALBUHERA DAY 1973

The Service of Remembrance this year will be held in the North Transept Chapel (The Baptistry) of St. Paul's Cathedral at 2.30 p.m. on Saturday, May 12.

Further details will be notified to all Die-Hards in due course.

ANNUAL REUNION 1973

Arrangements have been made to hold the Annual Reunion this year at Porchester Hall on Saturday, May 12, from 7 p.m. to 11.45 p.m.

Charges for admission will be as follows: Single tickets 15p, double tickets 25p (admitting lady and gentleman).

Further details will be issued in due course.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Date	Event
Friday, April 27	1/7th Battalion (1914-18) OCA Dinner at TAVR Centre, Edgware.
Saturday, April 28	1/7th Battalion (1939-45) Dinner at TAVR Centre, Priory Road, Hornsey, N.8.
Friday, May 4	Spring Golf Meeting at North Hants Golf Club, Fleet.
Friday, May 11	(1) Officers' Club Cocktail Party at United Service and Royal Aero Club. (2) 2/10th Battalion OCA Annual Dinner at Victory Ex-Service Club, Seymour Street, London, W.2.
Saturday, May 12	(1) Albuhera Service of Remembrance at St. Paul's Cathedral. (2) Annual Reunion at Porchester Hall, Queensway London, W.2.
Wednesday, May 16	ALBUHERA DAY.
Saturday, May 19	9th Battalion Branch Annual Dinner at Victory Ex-Service Club, Seymour Street, London, W.2.
Thursday, May 31	Visit to The Atholl Highlanders, Blair Castle, Perthshire.
Wednesday, June 6	Derby Outing.
Saturday, June 16	Depot Open Day, Bassingbourn.
Wednesday, July 18	Officers' Club Dinner at United Services and Royal Aero Club.

FREE NEWSLETTERS

The Editor wishes to thank Mr. W. J. Gilyatt MBE, Major L. T. Honeybun, Lt.-Gen. Sir Brian Horrocks, KCB, KBE, DSO, MC, LLD, Mr. L. A. J. Hosslen, Mr. A. M. Mason, Mr. F. H. Nash, MBE, and Lt.-Col. A. N. Overell for their generosity in paying extra subscription so that free copies of *The Die-Hards Newsletter* can be sent to deserving old comrades.

REGIMENTAL MUSEUM

Curator: Major R. W. J. Smith, MBE, T & A VR Centre, Deansbrook Rd., Edgware, Middx.

The following are recent acquisitions for the museum:

Regimental Order, 17th Middlesex R.V. 1883.

Relics of 25th Battalion The Middlesex Regiment.

Regimental Order 17th Middlesex R.V., 1883

This Regimental Order in the form of a small card 4in x 3in, which, as was the custom 90 years ago, was dispatched by post to members of the Rifle Volunteers to warn them for parade. The order reads: Volunteers Regimental Order. Headquarters 18 April 1883.

The Battalion Drill ordered for Saturday next will be under command of the Colonel at 6 p.m. Drums and Fifes to attend, Uniform, undress.

Drums and Fifes to attend on Saturday, the 28th inst.

The Commanding Officer requests every Officer and Member to attend these two Parades so that the Regiment may appear in an efficient state at the inspection.

By Order S.M. Gully, Captain R.S. Regiment, Acting Adjutant, 17th Middlesex M.R. Volunteers.

The 17th (North) Middlesex Rifle Volunteers were formed in 1859 and were originally numbered 29 Middlesex Rifle Volunteers, taking the designation, 17th Middlesex Rifle Volunteer in 1880 when many other Volunteers units were renumbered. In 1908-1909 under the Territorial Forces Act they became the 19th (County of London) Battalion, The London Regiment (St. Pancras) and subsequently in 1922 19th London Regiment (St. Pancras), in 1936 33rd (St. Pancras) A.A. Battalion Royal Engineers and in 1949 568 (St. Pancras) (M) LAA/SL Regiment RA. They are now part of the Royal Regiment of Artillery Territorial Force.

Until the reorganisation of the Territorial Army in 1936, this unit had always been shown as part of the Middlesex Regiment as can be seen by delving through old Army lists, also their dead from the war of 1914-19 are shown on our Regimental Roll of Honour. Many Officers of the Regiment have in the past held the appointment of Adjutant to the unit including Major W. H. Abell, the first officer killed in action in World War I. He was Adjutant in 1907.

At the time the above order was published Capt. Samuel Martin Gully of 2nd Battalion The Royal Sussex Regiment was taking over the duties of Adjutant from Major Edward Mills, late of the 57th (West Middlesex) Regiment.

Edward Mills had joined the 57th in the Crimea in December 1855, having been commissioned Ensign in February that year. Too late in joining the Army in the Field to take part in the fall of Sebastopol, in the capture of Kinburn he was not

awarded the medal for the Crimea. The expeditionary force which took part in the bombardment and capture of Kinburn were awarded the medal without a clasp. The three clasps awarded to the 57th were "Balaklava", "Inkermann" and "Sebastopol".

Returning to England after the war he rejoined the 57th in Bombay in 1858, and with the regiment went to New Zealand to take part in the Maori War at Pontoko where Ensign Down and Drummer Stagpole, DCM, both won a Victoria Cross; he was officer-in-charge of the South side of the Redoubt during the action. He was awarded the medal for New Zealand inscribed with the dates "1862-66", an extremely rare medal, only two being issued bearing these dates. He held the new appointment of "Instructor of Musketry", for six years, as a Lieutenant from May 1862 to November 1866, and as Captain from November 1866 to February 10, 1868. He returned by sale of his commission on October 30, 1869.

In February 1870 he was commissioned as Adjutant of 3rd Volunteer Rifle Corps and later Captain and Adjutant 80th Liverpool Rifle Volunteers. His next appointment was to the 2nd Yorkshire West Riding Rifle Volunteers in the same rank and office. In August 1879, he joined the 29th North Middlesex Rifle Volunteers, being promoted Major on October 24, 1879.

He retired in 1883 just after the publication of the Battalion Order quoted above. His retirement took place at about the same time that the Martini Henry Rifle was issued to the Volunteer Forces. As a keen qualified musketry instructor he may well have felt he was leaving the Volunteer Forces just as the arming of the Volunteers was falling into line with their brothers in the regular forces.

During the earlier years of his appointment with 17th (North) Middlesex Regiment Volunteers his Brigade Commander was Col. A. A. Logan, CB, who had commanded the 57th (West Middlesex) Regiment during the Maori War in New Zealand. He must surely have made the 17th Middlesex Regiment Volunteers an extremely good unit, having received favourable report from the Brigade Commander, himself a commander of note, viz., "The Best Inf Bde is unquestionably that commanded by Col. Logan, CB". That military martinet, HRH The Duke of Cambridge, also passed complimentary remarks on the drill and exercise of the unit during his annual inspection whilst Commander-in-Chief. These paeans of praise reflect great credit on Major Mills, who, as Adjutant, was responsible for the training of the unit.

The date of decease of Major Mills is not known.

Presented by Lt.-Col. R. C. Hutt.

Relics of 25th Battalion The Middlesex Regiment

The two items recently presented are a roll of the Battalion who were on board the transport *Tyndareus* when the ship was mined off Cape Agulhas on February 6, 1917, and a cutting from the national paper *Lloyds News* of April 1, 1917, headed "Soldier heroes sing in the face of death. Middlesex troops re-enact the Birkenhead's immortal story". Illustrations to the article show the *Tyndareus* settling down by the bows, a photograph of Col. John Ward, MP, the Commanding Officer, and a print of the *Birkenhead* sinking off Cape Agulhas after she had struck a sunken reef on the night of February 25, 1852.

The battalion fell in under the command of John Ward, who had years before soldiered in the ranks of Queen Victoria's Army. The Admiralty records say, "When the Assembly rang out, putting on his life-belt every man paraded in perfect order". An official record, not a romancer's story. It was then that one of the troops started to sing, "There's a long long trail a winding" and in a few moments everybody in the lined ranks was singing. This song was followed by another great favourite of World War I, "Tipperary". Not all were singing, six privates, who in civil life were engineers volunteered to quit the deck above sea for the engine-room below, exchanging khaki for overalls and going below to the engine-room to help out the ship's engineers.

Col. John Ward, CB, CMG, MP, formed our 18th (First Public Works Pioneers), 19th (Second Public Works Pioneers), 25th (Garrison) and 26th (Third Public Works Pioneers) Battalions. Born in 1866 he, at seven years of age, was working in the fields; later he joined the army and served in the Sudan, being awarded the Queen's Egyptian Medal with clasp "Suakin 1885" and the Khedive's Star. Taking his discharge he became a navvy and formed the Navvy's Union in 1899. In 1906 he became Independent M.P. for Stoke-on-Trent, holding the seat until 1929. The battalions he formed consisted of navvies and miners, most of the 18th Battalion being recruited from Stoke-on-Trent where in the Parish Church the Colours of this battalion hang. The 18th and 19th Battalions served in France and the 26th in Salonika. The 25th Battalion were men of B1 medical category, the "Bee-oners" as they were named, men of long service and sore years, one veteran holding the Kabul to Kandahar Star of 1880. The Battalion served in India, Singapore, Hong Kong and Russia where they fought the Bolsheviks, earning the Battle Honours "Dukhovskaya" and "Siberia, 1918-19", two of the 93 awarded to the regiment for World War I. Many of these men were recruited from Hornsey and surrounding districts, the Colour of this Battalion now being in the care of St. Mary's, the Parish Church of Hornsey.

The Battalion, although one of low medical category and second-class arms and equipment, that is the Long Lee-Enfield rifle and leather equipment with two large cartridge pouches, one each side of the "S" union, went to Russia and did a good job of work as can be read in John Ward's own account "With the Die-Hards in Siberia", published in 1920, also in "At war with the Bolsheviks", by Robert Jackson, a recent publication.

The last named also refers to No. 1 Special Company who went to N. Russia in 1919.

When recruiting began for the specialists, i.e. miners, tunnelling, etc., recruits were given to understand that they would receive a special rate, as did qualified Sappers in The Royal Engineers. With the 25th Battalion, this did not happen, which promptly produced a battalion song sung to the tune "D'ye ken John Peel". On the march the troops sang

"D'ye ken John Ward with his boys so gay

Three bob a week not three bob a day

Old John Ward is a . . . old fraud

And we won't be home in the morning".

It so happened that on one occasion, John Ward led the Battalion on a route-march, riding on his charger. During the march a couple of cheeky chaps started up with the ditty whilst marching at ease. To their surprise there was no violent response from the CO. At ten minutes to the hour, the column marched to attention, halted and fell out to the side of the road for 10 minutes' rest. On the hour, the whistle sounded and the troops adjusted their equipment and fell in at the "slope". Then the order "quick march" was given and the march continued. So did the position of the "slope"! At the next halt, Col. Ward turned to the column, smiled, made a slight bow and gave the order to "fall out". Old soldiers had been given a lesson by an older soldier of the line. The ditty was never sung again whilst John Ward commanded the column.

Col. Ward died December 19, 1934, recognised as a man of sturdy resolution, judgment and fighting spirit of a regular "John Bull". In addition to the honours already mentioned and campaign medals for the Sudan and World War I he held the Croix de Guerre of France, of Italy and of Czechoslovakia. He was also made a Cossack Ataman by his Tartar comrades, a great compliment and honour.

Documents presented by Mr. H. G. Gillman, son of the late Pte. George Gillman, "D" Company 25th Battalion.

DERBY SWEEPSTAKE

A sweepstake on this year's Derby is being organised in aid of the Regimental Association Charitable Fund.

Tickets, costing 5p each, or 25p for a book of five, will be available shortly.

Applications for tickets should be made to Major R. W. J. Smith, MBE, Regimental Headquarters (Middlesex Office), Deansbrook Road, Edgware, Middlesex.

The following prizes will be awarded: 1st prize, 25 per cent. of net proceeds; 2nd prize, 15 per cent. of net proceeds; 3rd prize, 10 per cent. of net proceeds.

The result of the draw and the amount allocated to the Charitable Fund will be notified to all concerned and published in *The Die-Hards Newsletter* in August next.

PERSONAL JOTTINGS

It may not be generally known that the present Right Honourable the Chairman of the Greater London Council, Frank Abbott, JP, is a former member of the 2/7th Battalion, having served with that Battalion as a subaltern and a captain during the 1939-45 war from July 1940 onwards.

He was, unfortunately, unable to be with us, as he had much hoped, for the ceremony at the Field of Remembrance last November, owing to a previous engagement that day.

We were very pleased to hear that Lt.-Col. F. G. Barber, who, before moving up to the Midlands, served with 8 Mx/11 Para Battalion, was recently appointed a Deputy Lieutenant for Huntingdonshire, and offer him our most sincere congratulations.

Major Alan Bissett, who spent some years in the ranks of the Regiment before being commissioned and transferred to the Army Catering Corps, still keeps in touch and recently sent his greetings to all those who served with him in the Regiment.

He is one of the keenest members of our golfing society and he will no doubt be taking an active part in the Spring Golf Meeting on May 4.

In his latest book entitled "George IV, Prince of Wales", Christopher Hibbert acknowledges the great help he received from Mr. Michael Brock, vice-president of Wolfson College, Oxford, who read the book in proof and made several valuable suggestions for its improvement.

Michael Brock is better known in the Regiment as Capt. "Minnie" Brock, who served in the 2/7th Battalion in the 1939-45 war.

On completion of his staff appointment as a GSO 2 at Headquarters, Northern Ireland, Major Gavin Bulloch has been posted to 2 Queen's.

Another of our old 4th Battalion veterans of Mons who recently got in touch with us is ex-Cpl. Albert Chinnery (L/12193). He enlisted on May 21, 1908, and for some time prior to 1914 he was with the Transport Section of the 4th Battalion. Later he transferred to a rifle company, and as a rifleman, he took part in the Battle of Mons.

He was one of the original members of the British Legion and belonged to the Unilever Branch in its early days.

The old veteran sends his best wishes to all Die-Hards and especially to those old comrades who remember him.

Capt. R. J. Claydon, who was serving with "D" (Mx) Company, 5 (V) Queen's, has transferred to the Regular Army Reserve of Officers Class II as Captain as from July 1, 1972.

In the Supplement to *The London Gazette* of November 13, 1972, it was announced that Col. A. S. J. de S. Clayton, DL, had relinquished the appointment of Deputy Honorary Colonel, 6th (V)

Battalion The Queen's Regiment, TAVR, on April 1, 1972, as his tenure had expired.

Major Andrew Cowing, on completion of his course at the Staff College, has been posted to HQ BALTAP (British Allied Forces Baltic Approaches).

In a recent letter, Cyril Cox (6200934), one of our Hong Kong veterans, sent his salutations to all old friends who served with him in the Colony.

Ex-Dmr. "Chesty" Cross (L/17721), who served with the 2nd Battalion in India and now lives at Downham Market, Norfolk, sends his greetings to all Die-Hards.

That stalwart of the 16th (Public Schools) Battalion, ex-Pte. Alf Damon (PS/963), whose home is in Launceston, Tasmania, was recently on a short visit to this country and, true to form, he got in touch with us and visited RHQ, at Edgware.

He tells us that he is in touch with another 16th Battalion veteran, John Gates (PS/2211), also in Australia after moving from Ewell in Surrey.

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Much to our surprise and without any previous knowledge we learned from the Supplement to *The London Gazette* of December 4, 1972, that Capt. "Taps" Estap had relinquished his Short Service commission on December 1, 1972.

One of our three octogenarians who celebrated their birthdays on February 17 was Major E. Featherstone, MC, who was 82. He served in the 1st Battalion during the 1914-18 war and took part in the battle at Villers-Guislain when the Battalion won the compliments of the GOC. He and Col. William Pringle both won the Military Cross that day and are the only two known survivors of the 1st Battalion of that battle.

We were very pleased indeed to get a quite unexpected visit from ORQMS Michael Flynn last October when he was in the throes of changing over his job. After nearly 13 years in the Battalion Orderly Room, ending up as Orderly Room Colour-Sergeant, he has now been posted as ORQMS in the Administrative Wing of the School of Infantry, where we are sure that he will be a great success.

He is a very keen member of our golfing society and we shall look forward to meeting up with him again at the Spring Golf Meeting on May 4.

The oldest serving officer of the original 7th Battalion is now Major Sir Harold Gillett, BART, MC, who celebrated his 82nd birthday last November.

As a former Lord Mayor of London the following was published by Peterborough in the *Daily Telegraph* on November 27 last in honour of this occasion, and is reproduced by his permission:

"An illustrious 'chain gang' will gather in the City tonight, at Whittington's wine cellar in College Hill, to celebrate the 82nd birthday of a former Lord Mayor, Sir Harold Gillett.

"Beside the present incumbent, Lord Mais, the party will include seven other former holders of the office, Sir Cullum Welch, Sir Denis Truscott, Sir Ralph Perring, Sir Lionel Denny, Sir Gilbert Inglefield, Sir Ian Bowater and Sir Peter Studd.

"Of these Sir Cullum and Sir Denis take seniority over Sir Harold Gillett, who was Lord Mayor in 1958-59. The atmosphere tonight will be Elizabethan with costume musicians strolling among the 70-odd guests. Their music will include a piece specially composed in Sir Harold's honour".

We send our heartiest congratulations to Capt. Peter Gybbon-Monypenny on his promotion to Major with effect from January 1 last.

News came to us recently that Lt.-Col. Roy Hutchings, who is employed in the Department of Environment, has been promoted from Principal to Assistant Secretary, and we offer him our heartiest congratulations on this important "step up".

A welcome visitor to Edgware on January 9 was ex-Cpl. J. Long (22542172) who served with the 1st Battalion from 1954 to 1968. During his period of service the Battalion did a tour of duty in Cyprus where he was employed as an MT Corporal.

He has joined the Regimental Association and, although he now lives at Blackheath, he is hoping to visit us frequently.

The popular secretary of our 9th Battalion Branch of the Die-Hards Club, Reggie Mears, who has been suffering severely from rheumatism for some time has recently undergone treatment in hospital as a result of which we are glad to know that he is better.

Ex-Pte. Percy Middleton (6200928), who served in both our regular Battalions before the 1939-45 war and, on call up from the Army Reserve in 1939, was posted to a unit of the 60th Rifles as he was not a machine-gunner, sends his best wishes to all his old friends.

Capt. Philip Murray, one of our former 8th Battalion officers, has recently emigrated to Australia, where his son is a doctor.

He will be much missed at our various functions, especially those connected with the Officers' Club, which he regularly attended.

We wish him and his family good luck and trust that they will be happy in their new surroundings.

Lt.-Col. A. N. (Lizzie) Overell wrote just before Christmas to let us know that, after the death of his second wife, he moved into Staffordshire but soon decided to return to his old hunting ground, Oxford, where most of his friends are.

When he left Hong Kong over 30 years ago he became involved in the running of the Hong Kong Association in England and, after all these years, he is still so involved.

Ex-CSM Arthur Page (6201260), one of our Hong Kong veterans, sends his best wishes from Chester to all his old comrades.

On November 29 last a lightning visit was paid to Edgware by ex-Cpl. John Pearce (14460037), who, whilst serving, was a driver in the Transport Pool at Headquarters British Troops in Egypt, Ismailia.

All his friends in the Regiment will be delighted to know that the Rev. Peter Pearce Gould has been appointed the Rector of Backwell, a parish in the diocese of Bath and Wells and only a few miles from Bristol.

His induction is due to take place on March 5, and we wish him every success on taking up his new appointment.

In a letter received recently ex-Bdsm. Joe Peters (6196359) sent his greetings to all those members of the Band of the 2nd Battalion who served with him in India.

Ex-Pte. Charlie Potter (6201244), who was wounded at Dunkirk whilst serving with "B" Company of the 2nd Battalion, has had another spell in hospital where treatment has been given with a view to relieving him of the pain from which he still suffers. In a recent letter he wishes all old comrades health, wealth and happiness for 1973.

Ex-Pte. Fred Shephard (6198766), another of our regular soldiers who, when called up from the Army Reserve in 1939, was posted to another unit because he was not a trained machine gunner, sends his best wishes to all his old comrades.

He was a survivor of the bombing of H.T. *Lancastria* in 1940.

Our heartiest congratulations to C/Sgt. Allan Stevens (22390259), the PSI on the strength of "A" (Mx) Company, 6 (V) Queen's at Edgware, on winning nearly £7,000 on Littlewood's football pools in January.

We are glad to know that this success has in no way affected his military efficiency!!!

A veteran of the 2/9th Battalion and Machine Gun Corps, who wrote and sent his greetings to his old comrades recently, is D. C. Stewart (TF/1307).

Although living in Dorset he still keeps much in touch with the Regiment and its Association.

OBITUARY

(Continued from page 10)

SWORD—On January 29, 1973, in an air crash near Kyrenia, Cyprus, Major Roderick William Denistoun Sword and his wife Mrs. Jean Sword.

After passing out of the RMC, Sandhurst "Roddy" was commissioned as a Second-Lieutenant in the Regiment on August 29, 1929. He was eventually posted to the 2nd Battalion on its return from foreign service and he served with that Battalion throughout the remaining years of peace and whilst it formed part of the BEF in France and Belgium. It was, in fact, when the Battalion was in Belgium that he gained his Military Cross. After the war he served in the 1st Battalion as Second-in-Command from 1945 to 1947. He retired on September 30, 1954, and eventually went to live at Coggeshall, near Colchester.

The following tribute has been paid by Brigadier A. E. Green, DSO, OBE, who was a very close friend of "Roddy" Sword:

I was deeply distressed to read of Roddy Sword's and his wife Jean's, tragic death in an air crash in Cyprus. Roddy and I had been very close friends since our cadetship days at Sandhurst.

We served together with the Battalion at Gosport and with the BEF in 1939-40 and it was in Belgium where he gained one of the first Regimental MCs of War II.

He always used to decry his gallantry saying that it was entirely due to his then CO, now General Sir Brian Horrocks.

When I commanded the 1st Battalion in 1945-47 Roddy was my Second-in-Command for all that period during which he gave me very loyal and able support. He kept me human

Ex-Cpl. D. W. Stopp (22308723), who last year emigrated to Australia (New South Wales), wrote at Christmas time and sent his best wishes for 1973 to all members of the Regimental Association.

A short time ago we received news that, on the staff of the Assistant Provost Marshal (Lt.-Col. Maurice Leonard), Hong Kong, is another old Die-Hard, Major Roy Tyler, RMP. He was a member of the Guard of Honour when the Right Honourable Leslie Hore-Belisha, MP, as Secretary of State for War, opened the Drill Hall at Edgware on April 7, 1938. At that time the 9th Battalion was the 60th Searchlight Regiment RE (9th Battalion The Middlesex Regiment (DCO)).

On Saturday, December 30, Christopher Weedon, son of Major and Mrs. Martin Weedon, was married to Miss Rosemary Ormond at St. Nicholas Church, Chawton, Hants.

We send them our best wishes for their future happiness.

A welcome visitor to the January meeting of the Mill Hill Branch was C/Sgt. Bill Wright (1462617), who is still serving. On the rare occasions that he is able to do so he always makes a point of keeping in touch by visiting us at Edgware.

during these difficult early post-war days in Germany with his keen and delightful sense of humour largely against himself. Roddy had failings like the rest of us, but to me he was a colourful and charming friend, sincere and ebullient—farewell old friend.

A.E.G.

At the funerals, which took place at Great Horkesley Church, near Colchester, on Saturday, February 10, the Regiment was represented by Major-General Sir John Willoughby, KBE, CB, Col. and Mrs. A. S. J. de S. Clayton, and Major R. J. P. Cummins, MBE.

WILSON—On January 15, 1973, Ethel, widow of ex-WO2 R. E. Wilson (G/20807 and 6191208). She was one of the wives of the Regiment who spent her service life in married quarters throughout the whole tour of her foreign service of the 2nd Battalion between the wars from 1919 to 1931, and at home until her husband's discharge at the end of the 1939-45 war. She always took the greatest interest in the life of the Regiment and, whatever was going on, she was always to be found helping in any way she could.

STOP PRESS

As we go to press news has been received that the following have died:

Major H. Sherwood, TD, late 9th Battalion.

Major D. L. Binder, TD, late 2/7th Battalion.

CORRESPONDENCE

From: Brigadier N. P. Procter, CBE, MC
Grove Two,
62 Church Road,
Fleet.
December 22, 1972.

The Editor, *The Die-Hards Newsletter*
My dear Fanny,

I have just received the November *Newsletter* and read the letter of Ernie Stebbing with delight.

As you know I had a most interesting letter from Aymar Clayton which solved my problem as to the other guest at dinner and added the splendid account of how the Mess received the news and in particular Phil Wray's actions or reactions.

Ernie Stebbing—a very familiar name to me—carries on the story from the "Captain's Cabin", the "Ward Room", to the "Quarter Deck" and reactions I could only guess at.

I had quite forgotten that the Band were away and none of my photos of the parade show any makers of music to jolt my memory.

The picture of R.S.M. Ward as being at any time, anywhere, on any occasion in doubt is, in itself, an almost inconceivable event. At least it took a Monarch to cause it.

It now remains for someone at the "Lower Deck" or final recipient end to provide their memories.

Best wishes to you all for 1973.

Yours,
PROGGINS.

From: Major R. W. J. Smith, MBE, Curator,
Middlesex Regimental Museum
Middlesex Regimental Museum,
Bruce Castle,
Lordship Lane,
Tottenham.

February 1, 1973.

The Editor, *The Die-Hards Newsletter*

Dear Sir,

Each year I receive inquiries as to the whereabouts of the graves of members of the Regiment who were casualties during the years 1939-45. It may be of interest to readers of the *Newsletter* to know the names on the Bayeux Memorial, France, of our casualties who have no known grave but were buried in that district. The names of the following 10 members of the Middlesex Regiment who have no known graves are to be found on panel 16:

Capt. A. J. Warren, 2nd Battalion, attached Royal Army Ordnance Corps	8.6.1944
Sgt. W. E. Ellison, 6207470, 1st Battalion The Middlesex Regiment	6.8.1944
Sgt. F. J. Faircloth, 6850275, 2nd Battalion The Middlesex Regiment	6.6.1944
Cpl. A. V. Symonds, 6211647, 1st Battalion The Middlesex Regiment	15.7.1944
L/Cpl. D. Collard, 6209851, 1st Battalion, The Middlesex Regiment	30.6.1944
Pte. A. J. Barlow, 621433, 1st Battalion The Middlesex Regiment	6.8.1944
Pte. W. J. Ford, 6203168, 1st Battalion The Middlesex Regiment	30.6.1944
Pte. J. L. Hobden, 6206492, 1/8th Battalion The Middlesex Regiment	16.7.1944
Pte. H. C. H. Jennings, 621673, Middlesex Regiment and No. 4 Commando	6.6.1944
Pte. E. Webb, 6925085, 8th Battalion The Middlesex Regiment	7.8.1944

The above list was sent to me by Mr. A. R. Drane, after receiving it from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission—a very helpful and thoughtful gesture on his part.

The 1st Battalion referred to above is the original 2/8th Battalion which became the resuscitated 1st Battalion taking the place of the 1st Battalion (the 57th and original Die-Hards) lost in Hong Kong.

Yours sincerely,
DICK SMITH,
Curator, Regimental Museum,
The Middlesex Regiment (DCO).

OBITUARY

It is with deep regret that we have to announce the following have died:

BATE—On December 12, 1972, ex-Pte. Aubrey Claude Bate (50423), aged 76. He enlisted on October 14, 1915, and served with the 26th (Service) Battalion in the Salonika Field Force, where he contracted malaria. As a result of complications which set in he was downgraded and, after the war, granted a disability pension. During the 1939-45 war he was employed as a clerk in the RE Records Office, Brighton.

He had been a member of the Regimental Association for many years and, although living at a distance, frequently attended regimental functions.

BLAXTER—On December 14, 1972, Capt. Augustus Pearce Llewellyn Blaxter, MA, aged 81. He was educated at University College School and St. John's College, Cambridge. On coming down from the university he entered his father's firm until August 1914 when he joined the 11th (Service) Battalion of the Regiment. He saw service in Egypt and Palestine and after being invalided home he was appointed an instructor at the Small Arms School, Hythe. After the war he rejoined his firm and, when it became public in the name of Dawson and Barfos some 20 years ago he became the first chairman until he retired in the late 1960s. He joined the Worshipful Company of Founders in 1920, became Warden in 1941 and Master in 1949.

BOWER—On January 14, 1973, Major Geoffrey Arthur Holme Bower, aged 84. With his death the Regiment has lost one of its most loyal Die-Hards, whose keenness and enthusiasm, especially on his old Battalion, remained to the end.

He was commissioned as a 2nd-Lieutenant in the 7th Battalion (TF) on May 5, 1909. Two months later he was the Colour Ensign when the Battalion supplied a Guard of Honour for HRH The Prince of Wales (later King George V), during his visit to Bisleigh. He performed a similar duty at the Sanctuary of Westminster Abbey when a Guard of Honour was found on the occasion of the Coronation of King George V and Queen Mary on June 23, 1911. He was promoted Captain on June 24, 1913, and appointed Battalion Instructor of Musketry. In September 1914, after the Battalion had reached Gibraltar, he was appointed Adjutant. He held this appointment until 1916, by which time the Battalion had joined the BEF and fought in a number of actions. He then became Staff Captain of 13 Brigade and later as a temporary Major, its Brigade Major. In July 1916 he was awarded the Military Cross and, by the end of the war, he had been mentioned in despatches three times.

When the Territorial Army opened for recruiting in 1922 he immediately volunteered to join

his old Battalion and was given command of a company. He eventually became Second-in-Command of the Battalion and retired as such on September 1, 1938, on reaching the age limit.

When second line TA Battalions were formed before the outbreak of the 1939-45 war he was allowed as a special case to rejoin and was appointed Second-in-Command of our 2/7th Battalion, an appointment which he held until August 1940 when he was posted to a home service unit. He was a tower of strength to the 7th Battalion OCA and, whilst his health permitted, he attended every parade and social function.

At the funeral service on January 19 the coffin was draped with the King's Colour of the 7th Battalion—the Colour which, as Colour Ensign, he had carried on many Guards of Honour. Included in the service were the following lines, written by John Dyden, which were particularly appropriate to Geoffrey Bower;

*He never knew what envy was or hate
His soul was filled with love and honesty and
what maybe is out of date—Modesty.*

COOK—On October 1, 1972, ex-Pte. Frederick Cook (6193667), aged 71. Freddy Cook was one of those colourful characters of the 2nd Battalion of the years between the two world wars. Small of body, great of heart and a dynamo of energy, he was one of those rare persons who had no enemies. A tough little boxer and fighter at bantam-weight he was quite willing to box at any weight and in his younger days he sparred with Tom Berry, the light heavy who held the British and British Empire titles. On completion of his Colour Service he returned to civil life and, as was common-place with ex-servicemen in the 1930s, he had a very difficult time until, by dint of his natural ability and great courage, he eventually established himself in his own florist shop in Watling Avenue, Burnt Oak, which, due entirely to his efforts, was a real "money spinner".

Outside business hours he encouraged the youth of Edgware to join his boxing club and himself taught them the noble art. Not only was youth cared for, but members of the old generation, especially pensioners, were the recipients of his generosity when they patronised his shop, for he sold them goods at much reduced prices. The regard in which this great-hearted little man was held was apparent by the large number of mourners of all generations who attended to show their regard as the cortège passed his shop in Watling Avenue.

In the chapel and at the graveside were senior officers and Die-Hards of all ranks, many of whom had travelled long distances in order to pay their respects. Freddy was laid to rest on October 9, wearing the tie of the Regiment of which he was so proud.

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DAY—On January 11, 1973, at the Infirmary, Royal Hospital, Chelsea, ex-Pte. William Venner Day, aged 85. He served with the Royal Fusiliers from October 1904 to November 1907 and with the Middlesex Regiment from March 1908 to March 1929. He had been an In-Pensioner at the Royal Hospital for the past two years.

DUIRS—Old members of the 9th Battalion who served in the East during the 1914-18 war, will be saddened to hear of the death of Capt. Frank Duijs, MC, early this year. He died in a nursing home in Falmouth having suffered great pain in his legs from frost-bite ever since serving with the Russian convoys during the 1939-45 war.

He was commissioned to the 9th Battalion shortly after the outbreak of war in 1914, served at Sittingbourne, proceeded with the Battalion to India in October 1914, was stationed at Dinapore, Dum Dum, Rawalpindi, Khanspur in the Murree Hills, Solon and Ambala.

He was posted to the old "H" Company, subsequently "D" Company when the four-company system came in, his Company Commander being Capt. A. G. Bartholomew. In 1916 "D" Company was sent on detachment to Fort Attock which guards the bridge over the river Indus, when he and his great friend A. F. H. Mieville (father of Major Christopher Mieville) were orderly officer practically every other day. When the Battalion proceeded to Mesopotamia Frank Duijs was in command of the transport section, took part in operations at Nejif, the attack on the Jebel Hamrin, the crossing of the Lesser Zab and the final round-up of the Turks at Shargat, when he was awarded the Military Cross.

Little is known of his activities in the 1939-45 war when he joined the Royal Navy, but it was on the Russian convoys that he suffered such severe frost-bite as a result of which his disability entitled him to a maximum war disability pension.

In the 9th Battalion he was a very popular and efficient officer who, amongst other things, created the Battalion concert party, which toured in Mesopotamia before the Battalion joined the Expeditionary Force. He was a man of charming personality, modest and most courageous. (With acknowledgments to Lt.-Col. G. L. Fox, TD, DL.)

EDMONDS—On January 3, 1973, ex-Pte. Frank Edgar Edmonds, aged 67. He enlisted in the East Surrey Regiment in October 1925 and served with that Regiment until April 1933 when he was transferred to the Army Reserve. He re-enlisted in August 1937 in the Middlesex Regiment and served in the 2nd Battalion until May 1939 when he was discharged as physically unfit owing to a foot injury.

At the time of his death he and his family were in occupation of 14 Albuhera Close, Enfield.

FIRMAN—On November 14, 1972, ex-WO2 Frank Firman (6200579), aged 55. He joined the 2nd Battalion on August 5, 1932, as an enlisted boy and, after three years' service as such, he came on man's service in 1935. A year later he was posted to the Regimental Depot at Mill Hill for a tour of duty. In 1940 he was posted to the 1/8th Battalion (TA), with which he served until 1944.

For the next two years he served with 1/7th Battalion (TA) and then to extra regimental employment. Posted to the Depot as Training CSM he was responsible for the training of the recruits for the Open Day Parade to mark the bicentenary of the 57th Regiment held on May 12, 1956. On completion of his tour at the Depot in 1958 he was posted to the 1st Battalion where he remained until he was posted as a Permanent Staff Instructor to 3rd Battalion Queen's Surrey Regiment (TA). He was then the senior WO2 in the Regiment. He retired to pension in 1963 but kept in touch with the Regiment as a member of the Mill Hill Branch, Die-Hards Club, and travelled from his home in Epsom to attend reunions when time and health allowed. His health had not been robust for the past nine years, but none the less his death at such an early age came as a shock to his many friends and comrades.

HOWS—On March 6, 1973, Ebb, widow of ex-WO2 Hows, MBE (6189724). A kind-hearted person, she will be remembered by a past generation of Orderly Corporals for the cup of tea with which she greeted them when delivering Battalion Orders at married quarters.

JEFFERSON—On July 16, 1972, Major Alan David Jefferson, aged 60. He was educated at Highgate School and was commissioned in the 7th Battalion (TA) in January 1933 and served in "A" (Highgate) and "C" (Hornsey) Companies before the 1939-45 war, when he was employed in the City Merchant Banking firm of Morgan Grenfell & Co. Ltd. During the war he served in France and Belgium, North Africa and Italy with the 1/7th and 2/7th Battalions. After the war he spent some years in Kuwait with an oil company before returning to the UK where he ran a hotel at Woolpit, near Bury St. Edmunds. Latterly he owned a restaurant in Hemel Hempstead.

KING—On May 24, 1971, Capt. Vivian Lyle King, MC, TD, aged 77. During the 1914-18 war he served with the 13th (Service) Battalion and won the Military Cross in 1916. Before that war he was an undergraduate at Keble College, Oxford, at the same time as Brigadier Neville Procter, and both played for the Varsity "A" XV at rugby. From 1920 to 1954 he was an Assistant Master at Cheltenham College when it appears that he was connected with the OTC, since he was awarded a Territorial Decoration for his services.

PETRIE—On February 19, 1973, peacefully at her home in Mill Hill, Ena, beloved wife of Capt. A. G. Petrie, MBE.

SASS—On November 14, 1972, Lt.-Col. George Cyril Bernard Sass, aged 57. He was educated at Beaumont College and was commissioned in the 7th Battalion (TA) on June 15, 1935. After nearly two years with "D" (Tottenham) Company he was granted a regular commission in the South Lancashire Regiment (Prince of Wales Volunteers). On retirement he was Regimental Secretary, The Lancashire Regiment (PWV) from 1959 to 1970 and The Queen's Lancashire Regiment from 1970 to 1972.

(Continued on page 7)

ASSOCIATION NEWS

Secretary's Notes

New Secretary

Major A. E. F. Waldron, MBE, relieved Col. F. Walden, MBE, DL, as Secretary of the Regimental Association with effect from January 1, 1973.

Benevolent Cases

During the quarter ended December 31, 1972, the sum of £728.55 was expended from the Charitable Fund in making grants to 37 ex-members of the Regiment, or their dependants.

Donations—Charitable Fund

The Secretary gratefully acknowledges donations to the Charitable Fund from Major P. G. V. Bellers, Major F. H. Blackburn, Mr. D. E. S. Cavill, Mr. J. C. Clark, Brigadier A. E. Green (in memory of the late Major and Mrs. R. W. D. Sword), Mr. J. J. Hambly, Mr. J. Knight, Lt.-Col. H. P. Lambert, The Lilley Benevolent Trust, D/Major G. A. G. Piper, 3RRF, Capt. J. R. C. Riseley, Mr. D. R. Sankey, Major J. A. A. Williams and Mr. F. E. Wooley.

Visit to Lille and Gondcourt

A party of 21 members, including wives, made the journey to Lille and Gondcourt from November 24 to 26, 1972, to take part in the ceremonies to mark the 29th anniversary of the death of Capt. Michael Trotobas (Capitaine Michele), who was killed by the Gestapo on November 27, 1943.

The ceremonies followed closely on the lines of those of the previous year, which were so well described by Col. Clayton in the February 1972 issue (No. 17) of the *Die-Hards Newsletter*.

The usual lavish hospitality of our French friends was in evidence throughout the visit. Not only were we entertained to luncheon on Saturday, the 25th, by the Mayor and Councillors of Gondcourt, but the two Resistance Groups closely connected with Michael Trotobas—Reseau Sylvestre and Resistance Fer—also entertained us royally, the former to luncheon before we left on Sunday, the 26th, and the latter to a banquet on the evening of Saturday, the 25th. Prior to the banquet we attended a reception at the offices of *La Voix du Nord*, the newspaper which had played a most important part in the Resistance movement, where champagne was liberally dispensed.

It was a most successful visit and was much enjoyed by everyone who made the journey.

A.E.F.W.

EALING BRANCH

This lovely British weather has nearly put an end to our Branch. The meeting of December had to be cancelled and all upright members had to be notified by phone or post.

Firstly, the Secretary was hit by acute bronchitis together with a minor heart attack, which put him in bed for a month, and he is still coughing his head off.

The chairman, George Ife, had a bad attack of the same sort and "Compo" White had the most serious of all, pneumonia. It is still touch and go.

Bobby Williams, the "Mighty Atom" of the branch had a black-out and sustained a "hair line" fracture of the right tibia, a broken nose and lacerations of the head. When I visited him in Claypotts Hospital he told me he fell in front of a motor-car so I suppose he can be considered lucky to be alive at all.

Finally, our dear old lady Mrs Ruston fell down the stairs and fractured her femur and pelvis. The doctors of King Edwards Hospital, Ealing, pinned her together and she is now walking about again. She was 94 on January 25. We heard news of Brigadier John White late of the 8th Battalion. He is in a nursing home at Hindhead, not very well, but I understand he is being visited by his wife and son.

Also a letter from Billy Cook, 8th Battalion Drums 1914-18, who is still happy and lives in Australia.

We look forward to our A.G.M. in March and hope all our invalids will be better by then.

Good wishes to all Old Die-Hards for 1973.

ALBERT WHITE

HORNSEY AND ENFIELD BRANCH

We extend our best wishes to all "Die-Hards" and their families for a very Healthy, Happy and Prosperous New Year.

I hope you have all got over the effects of the Christmas eating, drinking and merry making!!! Also that you are now looking forward to attending many Association and Branch functions this year.

We are still experiencing difficulty in getting members to come out of their "shells" and visit us, but who knows, perhaps this year will see a breakthrough. We are sending a questionnaire to all our members (with a stamped addressed envelope) asking for comments and suggestions, so let us hope I get some replies even if they are a bit "salty"!!!

I spent a very enjoyable week recently with ex-R.S.M. "Rocky" Knight (and our ladies of course) and am pleased to report that they have settled down very nicely in Penzance and are in excellent health. Incidentally they are both very active members of the local senior citizens community centre and are doing an excellent job organising and participating in a number of social activities. In fact I'm sure "Rocky" will eventually hold a "Drill Parade".

"Here's strength to your arm" whatever you are in 1973 and I hope to see a lot of you in good fettle!!!

LES HOSSLEN

MILL HILL BRANCH

Since the last *Die-Hards Newsletter* was published there have been visits by Father Christmas, infelicitous influenza, income tax demands and Alf Damon. The first and the last were welcome and brought pleasure, both travelled by air, the first

from the Land of Snow in his reindeer sleigh and Alf from Tasmania in a Boeing 707. Alf, who is one of the original members of the 16th (Public Schools) Battalion, was delighted to meet again Noel Peters who was a comrade in the trenches with him in France. He was hoping to meet another comrade of the 16th, Les Milton, who slept in the next bed cot to him during the Battalion's early days at Woldingham, but unfortunately was not able to do so.

Another welcome visitor who will now be attending our monthly meetings is Major Frank Waldron, who has succeeded Col. Walden as Secretary of our Regimental Association. He and Grace Waldron are well known to many of our members and this is manifest when they walk in the door during our gatherings. One incident in their regimental life is surely unique. When Frank was on the Depot staff at Mill Hill, Mrs. Waldron was out shopping wheeling their baby son Bruce in a perambulator when Col. Maurice Browne, the then Colonel of the Regiment, met her. He immediately insisted that he should wheel the baby and this he did. We chaps who served with Col. Browne and knew him for so many years can visualise the scene and would give pounds to have seen it.

A newly-joined member of the branch is ex-Cpl. Albert Chinnery, one of our veterans who fought at the Battle of Mons with "B" Company of our 4th Battalion. He was one of the men who carried his musket throughout the war with the same battalion. He also carried a bag of horse shoes as he was the battalion "Shoe-Ey". He enlisted in May 1908 and on Albuhera Day this year he will be celebrating his 83rd birthday. He now lives contentedly with his wife in Jersey, Channel Islands. The Channel Islands have seen the Die-Hards a number of times during the regiment's life. It was during the stay of 2nd Battalion 1907-1910, a Band Boy named the Islands as "Jersey, Guernsey, Cardigan and Socks" on his geography test—so I am given to believe.

Another freshly-enrolled member, one of a later generation, is ex-Sgt. Keith Lloyd, who served for 22 years from 1950, during which time he served in Malaya, Cyprus, Gibraltar, North Africa, Northern Ireland, Guyana, Germany, and Bahrain, ending up his service once more in Ireland which he declares started all the trouble! Readers of *Soldier* magazine and *The Die-Hards Journal* will no doubt remember his various articles and photographs published over the years. A versatile bloke he was for a time commentator and compere of the Forces Broadcasting Services sports programmes whilst stationed on the "Rock". Not only can he throw his voice, he can also throw a good right hand in the ring as his boxing trophies prove.

A number of our members were with the regimental party's visit to Gondécourt and Lille last November when we paid our respects to "Captaine Michel" who will be remembered in the 2nd Battalion as P.S.M. Michael Trotobas (6200958) and Mentioned in Despatches for his action in reversing the Vickers machine-gun on its tripod, so obtaining a high angle enabling him to bring down a German plane which was shooting up the column on its way to Dunkirk. On the next visit to Lille Major Philip Marshall, who has many personal recollections of Michael Trotobas as a member of his boxing team and in the actions fought in 1940,

hopes to be present. Major Marshall, whom I met recently, requests me to pass his greetings to comrades with whom he served.

Greetings to Die-Hards are also sent by "Cock" or "Cockney Bob" Groombridge from Adelaide, Australia, an old soldier of the 20th (Shoreditch) Battalion, and "Pip" Connor, MM, a veteran of the 21st (Islington) and 2nd Battalions from Ontario, Canada. We of the Mill Hill Branch send our greeting to all Die-Hards of every Branch and look forward to welcoming them at any of our gatherings they are able to attend.

MAJOR DICK SMITH

PORTSMOUTH AND GOSPORT BRANCH

Meetings have been held regularly each month since our last notes. There is nothing very exciting to report, though, as it is only the regular few who keep the Branch going—where are all those we knew? There are quite a few in this area. If you are one of these Die-Hards and read these notes give us a visit on the second Friday in each month at the RAF Club, Gosport.

We managed to muster a party of 14 to attend the Armistice Service at Mill Hill, and enjoyed the get-together after the Service at Edgware.

At our December meeting we had our usual exchange of gifts which was enjoyed by all present.

We are sorry to report that old pal Jack Deans is in hospital. Get well soon Jack.

Also Mrs. Buckle had a spell in hospital over the Christmas period having been knocked down by a car—but she is now out and we hope that she will soon be back on her feet.

Not much else except to wish all readers a Happy New Year.

MAC

9th BATTALION BRANCH

The Christmas season has gone and we are now on our way into 1973.

Most of us are too old in the teeth to make predictions for the future and experience has shown us that they seldom come off.

As for resolutions we believe that it is always permissible to state that we are still loyal to our God, Queen and Country, and that includes our own Middlesex Regimental Association.

At Christmas we received many cards and letters from the old comrades. They have been acknowledged and we are grateful for their wishes.

That old Die-Hard from Dorset, Major H. Sherwood, wrote, and seeks the company of the few of us who visited him last year. We shall be there.

Some other old Die-Hards, Percy Fice, Tiny Mellows, and the oldest of them all, C/Sgt. Cornelius King, now Her Majesty's guest at Chelsea, send their best wishes to you all.

The information put in the *Newsletter* a few issues back about Frank Woods of Preston, is borne fruit; several of the members have written to him and some have visited him. Besides that he has received great help from SSAFA in Preston, in receiving or perhaps the promise of two invalid chairs, one for the house and one for the street.

Col. F. Walden has done a lot behind the scenes and for this Frank is grateful and we are also.

If you should hear of any old comrade who requires help, please give the facts to Col. F. Walden and our Association will be there to help; in fact any old soldier who is in need should be helped.

I do not know if any of you when glancing through your national paper noticed that the 1/7th Gurkhas were mentioned as supplying the Guard at Buckingham Palace.

This splendid Battalion recruited from the Nepalese was a unit of the 53rd Indian Infantry Brigade in which the old 9th served whilst in Mesopotamia. We well remember them for their great fighting abilities.

The pleasing thought is that the Battalion did not receive the axe as we did; long may they live.

Perhaps it is a bit early to ask you to place in your diaries the date of our dinner this year, which is Saturday, May 19, at the same rendezvous, the Victory Club, Seymour St., W.2. You will be getting information of this later and we hope you will be able to be present, accompanied by your wife and friends.

On the Saturday previous is the Albuhera Service at St. Paul's Cathedral, and in the evening the Annual Reunion of the Association at Porchester Hall, Queensway, W.2. We do hope you will also support the Service and the Reunion.

All best wishes to you all.

R. T. MEERS

WOs AND SERGEANTS' BRANCH

Our last two meetings of 1972 were like previous ones for last year, well supported by our members. At the November meeting 42 members and guests were present and for our Christmas Draw meeting in December; despite illness which kept several away 62 members and guests came along to enjoy a wonderful evening. Although all could not be lucky in the draw I am sure no one was disappointed with the evening. We were very pleased to welcome Col. Ian Burrows at the December meeting. He said how happy he was to have met many old friends and remarked on the friendly and family spirit of the meeting. This was his first visit to this Branch and we sincerely hope that it will not be the last and that he will pay us many more visits in the future.

We were also very pleased to see Jack Meacock at our November meeting, although he has been a member since 1969. This was his first visit to the Branch. He is at present with the 3rd Queens in Cyprus, where he met up with C/Sgt. Bill Smith, whom he persuaded along with Sgt. Jack O'Sullivan, to join the Branch. We look forward to meeting all three when they return to England this year.

Since we last wrote, in addition to the above two, three other new members have joined us—ex-WOI A. J. DaCosta, ex-Sgt. J. Leat, BEM, C/Sgt. Stevens making a total of 15 new members for 1972.

We can, I think, look back and say it was a very successful year for which credit must be given to all those members who have regularly supported the Branch at the monthly meetings; to Charlie Banks and his wife who have not only prepared the room for our meetings but cleared up afterwards and ran the bar; to Peter Edwards and Stan Hurlock, our two committee men, to that supporter who

looks after the buffet and to all those who give gifts for the raffles. To them all I give my personal thanks, for the help they have given me, and their contribution towards making the Branch a success.

Now for 1973 when we hope we can carry on the good work of 1972. At our March meeting we are entertaining the Portsmouth and Gosport Branch when we hope to have a full house and meet up with some old friends we seldom see.

This year also welcomes in Major Frank Waldron as Secretary of the Regimental Association and we extend to him our sincere wishes for a successful term of office. We are, however, sorry that we have to say farewell to Col. F. Walden as Secretary, for "Fanny", as he was dearly called by all who served under him, was devoted to his work and to the Regimental Association and did so much for all the Branches of The Die-Hards Club. What more can we say than "thank you, sir, for all you did for us? We look forward to many visits to us at our future meetings, and we all wish you a happy retirement."

To Die-Hards everywhere we send greetings and best wishes.

LEN JOHNSON

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