



The Die-Hards

NEWSLETTER

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Deansbrook Road, Edgware, Middlesex.

THE SIXTEENTH

This narrative is gleaned from an unofficial, privately printed and published, history of a Battalion of Infantry which was one of a number raised by a famous Line Regiment—THE DIEHARDS—during the 1914–18 War.

From its formation on September 4, 1914 until its decimation on July 1, 1916, the Battalion was made up mainly of the original members, ie, those whose names appeared on Nominal rolls prepared at the time, together with Volunteers accepted for Officer Training, and an Other Rank element to assist in training and in regimental duties such as cookhouse, orderly room, guard and other chores. The Orderly Room Sergeant was in fact a Barrister-at-Law, having been "called" 10 years prior to the outbreak of war—and was indeed "an original".

On September 4, recruiting commenced for this unit, the formation of which had been authorised by a small committee. The organisers would be responsible for feeding, clothing and accommodating personnel at specified rates, pending the take-over of the unit by War Office. This same day notices appeared in the principal daily newspapers as follows:—

PUBLIC SCHOOLS BATTALION MIDDLESEX REGIMENT

"The above has been authorised by the Army Council and is composed solely of Public School men, who will serve together. Those desirous of joining should apply immediately to 24 St James's Street, SW, which is the only authorised office of the battalion".

The response to this advertisement was immediate and on September 12 every successful applicant received the following telegram:

"Parade Waterloo Station eleven o'clock Tuesday morning. Bring enough kit for 10 days and one blanket".

(Sgd) OC Public Schools Battalion.

Thus was born what might be described as a small private army, which was soon to become a "Service" battalion.

At 11 a.m. on that Tuesday, 10 officers and 700 men entrained at Waterloo and proceeded to Kempton Park to be accommodated under canvas. The unit's first CO was a Regular Officer of the Middlesex Regiment (DCO) in the rank of Lt.-Col. His second-in-command, with the rank of Major, was a Lieutenant, late Westminster Dragoons—and of the four Company Commanders one came from the 19th Hussars, one from the Natal Mounted Rifles, another from the Dublin Fusiliers and one from the Bombay Light Horse. The Adjutant was a retired officer of the 53rd Sikhs Frontier Force.

On September 15, Unit Standing Orders were issued, and a number of names from the four Coys were listed as having received temporary commissions. Among these was Pte H. Bury-Knight—to be Medical Officer, and graded as Captain. Non-commissioned ranks were also filled from those who had entrained at Waterloo the day before.

The Battalion immediately set to work on the various regimental duties involved in settling-in under canvas. Camp duties and fatigues were undertaken by men from public schools and universities, among them a triple Oxford Blue, footballers, boxers, fencers, cricketers and athletes. They represented, at that time, the best of England's manhood. From canvas to horse boxes, as the weather worsened, and then a move to Sutton, Surrey, where billeting was arranged for the battalion. A local newspaper reported the arrival of the Advance Party; it consisted of a number of motor-cyclists, and motorists, most of the former having big bundles strapped on the carrier or in a side-car attached to the machine. A furniture van, guarded by two soldiers with rifles, brought the kits of 200–300 men. In the event, Sutton was virtually a staging post, *en route* to the Battalion's new quarters at Woldingham, to where a party of 4 officers and 100 other ranks had pro-

ceeded by train. Extremely bad weather hampered the making of roads and general camp construction, and delayed the arrival of the main body from Sutton. It was not until the end of the year that 28 officers and 918 other ranks assembled at this new location. Up to this time the Battalion had already supplied 360 NCO's and men to the Army as officers with temporary commissions, of whom 39 had been selected for training at Sandhurst.

July 1915—a move was made to Clipstone in Nottinghamshire, then to Perham Down until November 1, whence 4 officers, 122 other ranks, 21 horses, 43 mules, 4 machine guns, 19 vehicles and 9 bicycles formed an Advance Party, en route to Le Havre, via Southampton. On November 17 the remainder embarked at Folkestone and disembarked at Boulogne the same evening. Once again the Battalion found itself under canvas. Mud was inches deep and there were ten or more men to a tent. The next move—by train—was in horse boxes and luggage vans, the journey taking seven hours instead of the anticipated three-and-a-half.

On Christmas Day 1915 the Battalion moved into trenches opposite La Bassée, and early in the New Year it was in action on a number of occasions, suffering casualties amongst all ranks, 2/Lts figuring prominently in the lists of those killed or wounded. Towards the end of April "the 16th" was brigaded with 29 Division (which had hitherto consisted entirely of regular battalions) replacing the 2nd Royal Munster Fusiliers in the 86th Infantry Brigade.

After a long and tiring march the Battalion was inspected by its new Brigade Commander who, after his inspection, wrote to the CO as follows: "I had no idea how damned bad my Brigade was till I saw your battalion". A compliment indeed.

At this stage, eleven hundred NCO's and men had left the Battalion for temporary commissions in other units, which was an indication of the quality and high standards of The Sixteenth and its originals, most of whom were still serving with the Battalion.

And so to the Somme, where the build-up was taking place for the attack on July 1. The Battalion, with others, provided raiding parties on enemy lines. General artillery bombardment began on June 24, and lasted for seven days. Early on the morning of July 1 an attack was launched on German Lines at Beaumont Hamel; but the long and intensive artillery bombardment had not achieved its purpose. For between 7.30 am and 8 am that day, out of a total of 23 Officers and 689 Other Ranks of The Sixteenth, 22 Officers and 500 Other Ranks had become casualties.

Amongst the officers killed were the four Company Commanders, each of whom had been accepted when applications were invited on September 4, 1914—and each had been commissioned within the Battalion. Casualties at Beaumont Hamel were of such severity that the night of that day, and indeed the following night, were spent by ourselves and the enemy picking up the dead and wounded in No Man's Land.

The Sixteenth, though decimated, were not yet finished. They re-appeared, after being rested, with new drafts on the Somme in October. At the third battle of Ypres the Battalion suffered more

heavy casualties. It was then placed in Divisional Reserve, and finally disbanded in February 1918.

The Sixteenth had a Pipe Band which puzzled many including HM The King and HRH The Prince of Wales. A student of history discovered that the 77th Regiment of Foot, later the 2nd Battalion, the Middlesex Regiment, had originally been a Highland Regiment. In fact two previous regiments had borne this number, and in each case they were Highlanders. The Highland Cuff was worn on the Mess Jackets of Officers of the Middlesex Regiment.

The Sixteenth, now a Service Battalion of a regiment which was in direct succession to two Highland regiments, sought War Office permission (which was granted) for the recruitment of a Band of Pipers, to preserve the Highland origin and associations of the 77th Foot. Following the disbandment of the 16th early in 1918, the Pipers were appropriately transferred to the 2nd Battalion with which they served until demobilization one year later. During the Flanders battles, three pipers were killed in action; one was severely wounded and one was taken prisoner.

The writer of the above narrative is Colonel W. B. Purnell, late Royal Army Dental Corps, whose uncle was an original member of the Battalion and was one of the four Company Commanders killed on July 1, 1916.

When forwarding the narrative he mentioned that he owes much to Mr T. W. Deeves, C.M.G., C.B.E., M.C., and to Mr N. J. Peters of Copnor, Portsmouth, to whom he was introduced by Colonel Walden, of the Regimental Association.

Mr Deeves served in the ranks of the 15th London Regiment until given a Commission as a 2/Lieut. in the 16th at the time of Passchendaele in 1917. It is from his copy of the privately published history—written by H. W. Wallis Grain, Barrister-at-Law—that the substance of this narrative is gleaned.

Mr N. J. Peters joined the 16th Battalion at Woldingham in April 1915. Now 75 years of age, he still retains memories of those early days, and a quote from a recent letter to the writer is indicative of his loyalty. "When we had been in France and had been in the trenches, about 40 of them took Commissions. I was detailed to cook for these men in that Battalion—I should have said 'Gentlemen'."

The official history "Die-Hards in the Great War" Vol. II, makes the following observation: "Throughout the War the diaries of the 16th (Public Schools) Battalion, Middlesex, were consistently brief and in no way explain the heavy fighting done by this battalion. The 16th were a very gallant crowd and it is a pity their records are so incomplete".

REGIMENTAL MUSEUM

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

Victoria Cross and medals of Captain A. M. C. McReady-Diarmid, VC, 17th (Service) Battalion (1st Football)

This group of medals consists of the Victoria Cross, 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal. They were presented to the Middlesex Regimental Museum by Mrs Hilda McReady-Diarmid at a special ceremony held at the Regimental Association Headquarters, Edgware, on Wednesday, May 9, 1973, when the 83-year-old widow handed them to Colonel A. S. J. de S. Clayton, the Deputy Colonel (Middlesex) The Queen's Regiment, the senior official representative of the old Middlesex Regiment.

At the ceremony were Colonel and Mrs A. S. J. de S. Clayton, Colonel and Mrs F. Walden, Major and Mrs R. W. J. Smith, Major and Mrs A. E. F. Waldron and Major and Mrs J. E. Pinfold. In his expression of the regiment's joy at receiving this illustrious decoration, Colonel Clayton told Mrs McReady-Diarmid that it would be a pearl among our treasures! This it undoubtedly is and will be hailed as such by all who have ever worn our badge.

Allastair Malcolm Cluny McReady-Diarmid (formerly Arthur Malcolm McReady-Drew), born March 21, 1888 was the third of four sons, all of whom were Captains of Houses, XI's and XV's, and shared among them most of the prizes at the sports whilst at Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Barnet. He later was at Ealing Grammar School and Victoria College, Jersey. He loved outdoor life and was a fine cricketer in addition to often making the most throw at throwing the cricket ball at sports meetings. He was a dead shot with a rifle but his love for animals was such that, until the war, he had never fired at any living creature. He was reputed to know the note of every wild bird. His parents wished him to continue his studies and take Holy Orders, but the outbreak of war in August 1914 changed his own and parents' plan. His own had been to go abroad.

On the outbreak of war he enrolled with the London University O.T.C. and on March 3, 1915 was commissioned into the regiment and posted to the 14th (Reserve) Battalion which had been formed on October 8, 1914. He was later posted to the 17th (1st Football) Battalion and with this first class unit served in the trenches. Until the time of his death he was almost continuously at the front, with the exception of four months in hospital. He had been blown off the firestep by the explosion of a shell, and after carrying on for some weeks was sent home. An operation revealed serious internal injury and

he was told he must never again throw a bomb. How he followed that advice we now know.

Letters from brother officers show that as a soldier, he had found his niche in life. One wrote, "Apart from his brilliant soldierly ability, he was a most charming companion in the mess. Cheery and full of humour, he was always keeping spirits up". As well as a charming companion in the mess, he was a leader of men in the field. On one occasion one of his three brothers, a Captain serving with the Royal Engineers, was near enough to visit him in the trenches. They only had a few minutes together, as Diarmid was about to lead a bombing attack; but what impressed his brother was the way the men "rushed out" after him the instant they knew he was to lead.

It was on the last day of November and the first of December, 1917, that he earned the Victoria Cross by "a feat unparalleled even by the heroes of old". The *London Gazette*, its references in similar words, said "a feat which can hardly, if ever, have been equalled in the past". On each day he had driven back the enemy 300 yards. Single-handed he had killed and otherwise disposed of 94 of the enemy, 67 dead and 27 wounded. The War Diary of the 17th Battalion, written at this time says, "This successful result was entirely due to the gallantry of this officer who himself killed and badly wounded at least 80 of the enemy". The citation published in the *London Gazette* March 15, 1918, says:—

"For most conspicuous bravery and brilliant leadership.

When the enemy penetrated some distance into our position and the situation was extremely critical, Captain McReady-Diarmid at once led his company forward through a heavy barrage. He immediately engaged the enemy with such success that he drove them back at least 300 yards, causing numerous casualties and capturing twenty-seven prisoners.

The following day the enemy again attacked. He drove them back for 300 yards, with heavy casualties. Throughout the attack Captain McReady-Diarmid led the way himself, and it was absolutely and entirely due to his marvellous throwing of bombs that the ground was regained.

His absolute disregard for danger, his cheerfulness and coolness at a most trying time inspired all who saw him.

This most gallant officer was eventually killed by a bomb when the enemy had been driven right back to their original starting point".

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, describing the fighting ("Cambrai: the second phase"), says, "There was



Photo by Rodney Breuster

Mrs. McReady-Diarmid wearing her late husband's decorations before presenting them to the Middlesex Regiment

no more wonderful individual record in that battle than that of Captain McReady-Diarmid of the 17th Middlesex who fought like a d'Artagnan of romance and is said to have killed some eighty of the enemy in two days of fighting before he himself at last met that fate from which he had never shrunk".

Mrs McReady-Diarmid had already written in her Will that she wished the regiment to have this supreme award for gallantry after her decease, but later decided to present it to the regimental museum as soon as possible. She has our everlasting gratitude to join that of her admiration for her heroic husband. The medals, plus the photograph and extracts from the *London Gazette* are now on display in the Victoria Cross case at Bruce Castle, Tottenham, where our museum is housed.

For the benefit of readers who may not have a record of the members of our regiment who have been awarded the Victoria Cross, a complete list is appended.

MAJOR DICK SMITH.

Sergeant	Park, J.	77th	5.11.1854 and 19.4.55	Crimea
Private	Wright, A.	77th	22. 3.1855 and 19.4.55	Crimea
C/Sgt	Gardiner, G. (DCM)	57th	22. 3.1855 and 18.6.55	Crimea
Private	McCurrie, C.	57th	23. 6.1855	Crimea
Ensign	Down, J. T.	57th	2.10.1863	N. Zealand
Drummer	Stagnole, D. (DCM)	57th	2.10.1863	N. Zealand
2/Lieut	Hallowes, R. P. (MC)	4th Bn	29. 9.15 to 1.10.15	Hooge, France
Private	Edwards, F. J.	12th Bn	26. 9.1916	Thiepval, France
Private	Ryder, R. E.	12th Bn	26. 9.16 and 23.10.16	Thiepval, France
Captain	McReady-Diarmid, A.M.C.	17th Bn	30.11.17 to 1.12.17	Moeuvres, France
Captain	Toye, A. M. (MC)	2nd Bn	25. 3.1918	Eterpigny Ridge, France

Ex-Sergeant Bob Ryder is our only living recipient of this most coveted decoration and now lives quietly in Hucknall, Notts.

THE MIDDLESEX REGIMENT GOLFING SOCIETY

Spring Meeting 1973

A most enjoyable and successful meeting was held on the course of the North Hants Golf Club, Fleet, on Friday, May 4, in bright, sunny weather but very windy conditions, which reached gale force in the afternoon and was undoubtedly responsible for some of the low scores in the Medal Competition.

A total of 24 took part—six more than last year—and we were particularly pleased to welcome as newcomers Capt. Peter Ingham and ex-Sgt. N. Taylor.

The chief features of this meeting were the successes of Capt. Michael Gedye, who was playing for the first time after a long absence abroad, and Lt.-Col. Tom Chattey.

The detailed results, each decided over 18 holes, were as follows:

Medal Competition—Scratch and Handicap				Scratch	Handicap	Net
Lt.-Col. T. W. Chattey (winner, handicap and Darjeeling Cup)	87	14	73			
Capt. M. S. Gedye (winner, scratch and Transvaal Cup)	82	6	76			
Major R. C. H. Bellers (runner-up, handicap)	100	24	76			
Capt. R. J. Tarrant	102	24	78			
Mr. G. Taylor	102	24	78			
Mr. T. F. Jones (runner-up, scratch)	91	10	81			
Lt.-Col. J. R. B. Worton	99	18	81			
Lt.-Col. C. N. Clayden	101	20	81			
Major G. Goring	103	20	83			
Major J. M. Hewson	107	24	83			
Major J. I. D. Pike	109	24	85			
Master Howard Clayden	115	30	85			
Capt. P. S. Ingham	100	10	90			
Mrs. H. K. Hardcastle	108	17	90			
WO2 M. J. Flynn	114	24	90			
Major A. R. Bisset	104	12	92			
Mr. H. J. Chillery	109	17	92			
Mr. N. Taylor	112	20	92			
Mr. E. Johnson	116	24	92			
Mr. D. Cretten	116	24	92			
Mrs. C. N. Clayden (Divot)	132	36	96			
Major H. K. Hardcastle	131	24	107			
Mr. M. R. T. Walden	NR	12	NR			

Stableford Foursomes

Stableford Foursomes	Points
Major A. R. Bisset and Capt. M. S. Gedye (winners, Cooper Cup)	33
Lt.-Col. T. W. Chattey and Major J. I. D. Pike (runners- up)	28
Lt.-Col. C. N. Clayden and Major R. C. H. Bellers	27
Mr. M. R. T. Walden and Mrs. H. K. Hardcastle	27
WO2 M. J. Flynn and Mr. T. F. Jones	26
Brigadier A. E. Green and Lt.-Col. J. R. B. Worton	25
Capt. R. J. Tarrant and Capt. P. S. Ingham	23
Major G. Goring and Master Howard Clayden	20
Messrs. N. and G. Taylor	20
Major J. M. Hewson and Mr. H. J. Chillery	13
Messrs. E. Johnson and D. Cretten	8

Hidden Holes Competition

Hidden Holes Competition		Score
Capt. M. S. Gedye (winner)	23
Lt.-Col. T. W. Chattey (runner-up)	24
Mr. T. F. Jones	25
Major R. C. H. Bellers	26
Lt.-Col. J. R. B. Worton	26
Mr. M. R. T. Walden	27
Lt.-Col. C. N. Clayden	28
Major A. R. Bisset	28
Mr. G. Taylor	29
Major J. I. D. Pike	29
Mrs. H. K. Hardcastle	29
Major J. M. Hewson	29
Capt. R. J. Tarrant	31
WO2 M. J. Flynn	31
Mr. N. Taylor	32
Major G. Goring	32
Mr. H. J. Chillery	32
Capt. P. S. Ingham	32
Mr. E. Johnson	34
Master Howard Clayden	34
Mr. D. Cretten	36
Major H. K. Hardcastle	36
Mrs. C. N. Clayden	36

Before asking Mrs. "Tossie" Worton kindly to present the prizes, Lt.-Col. Tom Chattey thanked all those present for supporting the meeting, and especially those who had come from a distance, namely Brigadier Arthur Green from Somerset and Major and Mrs. Ken Hardcastle from Norfolk. He also asked the secretary to read out a telegram received from Hong Kong from Mr. Richard Hardcastle, who has been a regular player at these meetings, regretting his absence at this meeting and expressing the hope that he will be back in time for the 1975 meeting. The secretary undertook to send a suitable telegram from the Regimental Golfing Society in reply.

FREE NEWSLETTERS

The Editor wishes to thank Mr D. G. Bennett, Mr T. E. Emerson, Mr F. C. W. Hammond, Lt.-Col. H. P. Lambert, Major C. L. Lawrence, MC, Mr W. E. Lockyer, Mr P. Maloney, Capt P. C. Prescott-Richardson, Mr J. P. Redmond and Mr S. F. Sibley for their generosity in paying extra subscriptions so that free copies of *The Die-Hards Newsletter* can be sent to deserving old comrades.

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PERSONAL JOTTINGS

Earlier this year Capt. Michael Ball, on completion of his secondment to the Sultan's Armed Forces in Oman, was posted to 1 Queen's.

Congratulations to Major Peter and Wendy Bellers on celebrating their silver wedding anniversary on April 24.

Shortly after the photograph appeared in the local press of Mrs. McReady-Diarmid handing over her husband's Victoria Cross to Col. Clayton we received a visit from ex-Sgt. F. W. Clark, an octogenarian living at Burnt Oak, who had served in both the 17th (1st Footballers) and 23rd (2nd Footballers) Battalions before being posted to the King's African Rifles, with whom he remained until he was demobilised in 1919.

Major Peter Clarke, who has been serving with 1 Queen's, was posted as an Instructor at the Nuclear, Bacteriological and Chemical School, Winterbourne Gunner, on May 7.

We were very pleased indeed to get a cheerful little note recently from that jolly Die-Hard, "Half a mug a man" D. J. Cook (6141207). He is still living at Basildon in Essex.

One of our veterans who has recently been in touch with us is ex-Bdsm. William A. V. Cox (265090 and 6195464). He enlisted in the 9th Battalion in 1911 and served with that Battalion throughout the 1914-18 war until it was disbanded in 1919. He returned to his old Battalion in 1922. In May 1932 he joined the Band of the 7th Battalion on its formation and remained with it until he was discharged in 1937.

Our best wishes to Lt. Bob Douthet, one of our Boer War veterans, who celebrated his 88th birthday on April 26. We are very pleased to learn that he is still going strong.

A recent welcome visitor to Edgware was Lt. David Everard, who has been home for a short while from Hong Kong, where he is working with the Outboard Marine International SA.

Recently we were delighted to receive a letter from Lt.-Col. Rex Fendick who, as a CANLOAN Officer (that is, one of the group of Canadian infantry who volunteered to serve with British regiments in early 1944) was posted to the 2nd Battalion shortly after D-Day in 1944. He served with distinction with the Battalion right through to VE-Day in 1945 and was awarded a C-in-C's certificate for good service.

He is very anxious to re-establish contacts with the Die-Hards and would especially like to hear from any of his old comrades in the 2nd Battalion who remember him. His address is 27 Mynarski Crescent, Ottawa K1K 2 EZ, Canada.

Capt. Brian Finch, on completion of his course at the Chinese Language School in Hong Kong, has been posted to 2 Queen's.

A new recruit to the Regimental Association is ex-Sgt. H. L. Fox (6200275) who, in 1931, joined the 9th Battalion. In 1939 he joined the newly formed 2/8th Battalion and remained with that Battalion until February 1941 when, on being medically downgraded, he was transferred to the Pioneer Corps, which later became the Royal Pioneer Corps.

That very dedicated 4th Battalion veteran George Garrett (L/9904) still keeps in touch and in a recent beautifully handwritten letter sent his kind regards to all Die-Hards.

Congratulations to Capt. Frank and Ruth Gladden on the birth of their first son, Daniel, on April 13 last.

At the funeral of one of our old comrades recently we met up with ex-Sgt. Frank Gribble (L/15537 and 6189121) who for many years after the 1914-18 war was a first-class piccolo player in the Corps of Drums of the 2nd Battalion. He is as dapper as ever, and looks remarkably young for his age.

Although he was unable to attend the annual reunion this year ex-RQMS "Jacko" Jaques (6200175) sent a telegram of good wishes to all Die-Hards.

Contact has been re-established with ex-Sgt. R. H. Jones (105885) who served with the 2nd Battalion from the days of the Barony in Dumfries until December 1946 when the Battalion was in Egypt and Palestine, retiring as Orderly Room Sergeant.

He is now a member of the WO's and Sgts Branch of the Die-Hards Club and hopes to join us at some of our "get-togethers" when he looks forward to meeting up with old friends.

WO2 (SQMS) C. T. Kingston who, before enlisting on a regular engagement, served in the 8th Battalion from February 1959 to June 1960, recently became a member of the WO's and Sgts Branch of the Die-Hards Club.

On the disbandment of our Regiment he transferred to the Royal Army Ordnance Corps and is now stationed at the Command Ammunition Depot, Kineton, Warwickshire.

With effect from June 11, Major Chris Lawrence is to be appointed DAAG (Recruiting) at Headquarters, The Queen's Division, Bassingbourn.

A newly enrolled member of the Mill Hill Branch of the Die-Hards Club is ex-Pte. Bill Lee (21674 and 6191867). He enlisted in the Regiment in 1920 and served with the 3rd Battalion until that Battalion was disbanded. He then joined the 2nd Battalion and

served in the Signals Section until the end of his Colour Service. After leaving the Regiment he joined the Metropolitan Police and served with that force for some years, earning the Police Long Service Medal and the Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation Medal.

Information has been received that Major Hugh Lohan, who is at present GSO 2, Military Adviser's Office, Teheran, is to take over as Second-in-Command of 1 Queen's early in July next.

We are delighted to welcome as a member of the Officers Club Wing Comdr. J. R. Marshall. He was commissioned into our Regiment during the 1939-45 war and served in the 2nd Battalion from April 1943 to May 1944 when he took over a staff appointment at Headquarters 1 Corps.

After leaving the Army he eventually took a commission in the Royal Air Force. He retired recently to take up the appointment of Secretary to the North Hants Golf Club at Fleet, Hants. As we hold our golf meetings at this club we shall hope to see more of our new member.

Lt.-Col. John Moore is due to terminate his appointment as Military Attaché at the British Embassy in that hot spot, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, in June.

As a result of a letter received from him recently, ex-Corporal W. Morton (14887197), who served in the 2nd Battalion from 1944 to 1948, has joined the Regimental Association and has enrolled as a member of the Mill Hill Branch.

Included with his letter was an interesting group photograph which he has presented to the museum and which will be duly acknowledged and described in the next Regimental Museum notes.

Although she would be unable to attend any of our functions over the Alubera Day period this year on account of her work, Mrs. Pat Newman, the widow of Major Percy Newman, writes to say that, after her retirement in August, she is hopeful of being with us next year.

She sends her best wishes to all Die-Hards.

Those who were serving in the 1st Battalion, when he was their popular Paymaster, will be interested to learn that Major Donald Peckham was re-married last October and has changed his address to 23 Dudley Lodge, Ferndale Close, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

Simon Pielow, the son of Col. Tony Pielow, has done well at the RMA Sandhurst. He has passed out 7th in order of merit and has been earmarked for 1 Queen's.

We have received information that an old Die-Hard of the 1914-18 war period, ex-Pte. Edward Minnell, and his wife celebrated their golden wedding in March, and we send them our heartiest congratulations.

After the war, in which he was wounded at the Battle of the Somme, he settled in Hastings and for

some years he was employed as a labourer by the Borough until he was forced to retire through illness.

We are delighted to get one of our oldest former officers, Major H. W. Thompson, to become a member of the Regimental Officers Club. He joined the 9th Battalion as long ago as 1908 and, except for a short period, served with that Battalion until it was disbanded in 1919. During the 1939-45 war he saw further service from the outbreak until 1944.

AN ASPIDISTRA IN BABYLON

Many Die-Hards who saw the above as a film show on various channels of ITV on the evening of Sunday, February 25, 1973, have complained vehemently about our cherished cap and collar badges being worn by the military members of the cast, especially by two unsavoury characters depicted as officers, one of whom was seldom out of uniform except to bed down in the Mess with a local prostitute and the other who was most disgustingly drunk at a Sergeants Mess dance.

The Editor has been asked to let all our readers know that, as a result of the strongest protests about this scandalous degradation of our regimental badge from the Deputy Colonel (Middlesex), Col. A. S. J. de S. Clayton, DL, to the Director of Public Relations (Army) and the chairman of IBA, Granada Television, who were responsible for the play, have admitted that it was a bad slip on their part and have apologised.

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CORRESPONDENCE

From: Brigadier N. P. Procter, CBE, MC
62 Church Road,
Fleet GU13 8LB.
May 4, 1973.

My Dear "Fanny",

I have an elderly stand-by—a retired joiner—who comes and puts in new sash cords, etc, when he can get round to it.

He arrived this week—at last—on one badly needed job. He had hardly started when he said: "You were in the Middlesex Regiment, weren't you? I watched them when they won the Army Cup. I watched every final on Easter Monday.

My memory not being encyclopaedic I let him go on, without interruption, whilst he told me he had lived in Victoria Road since 1907! His only move has been across the road to his present house. He worked with the RE in a civilian capacity, no doubt as a young joiner, but was never in the Army.

I got my Maurice Browne brochure of the Regiment and found, as I suspected, 4th Battalion, runners-up 1911-12, and I left him a note next morning to confirm that the Regiment were not winners. I met him as I came away. He agreed that he might be wrong, "but I watched it".

I estimate that he cannot have been more than, say, 12 in 1911-12.

I wonder if anyone who actually was connected with the Regiment still survives and watched that match.

If there is someone, I am sure my friend would like to know.

Yours,

N. P. PROCTER.

(Editor's Note—Any reader still alive who watched that match is asked to get in touch with the Editor.)

From: Colonel F. Walden, MBE, DL
11 Cyprus Road,
London N3.
May 14, 1973.

The Editor
The Die-Hards Newsletter
Dear Mr Editor,

I am writing to ask you to publish this letter so that I can express my heartfelt thanks for the wonderful gifts which members of the Regimental Association gave me at the Annual Reunion last Saturday on my retirement as Secretary. It came as a complete surprise to me and I was quite overwhelmed.

It has been a most stimulating experience for me to have been responsible for looking after the Regiment and its Association during the past 12 years, and I have enjoyed every moment of it, especially my meetings with so many of the "old and bold".

Whilst it has been a great wrench to give up the work now I am so glad that I shall be able to continue in a part-time capacity, to serve the Regiment, which has always meant so much to me.

Yours sincerely,

FANNY WALDEN.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Date	Event
Saturday, June 16	Depot Open Day, Basingstourn.
Saturday, July 7	Military Musical Pageant, Wembley.
Wednesday, July 18	Officers' Club Dinner at United Service and Royal Aero Club.
Sunday, July 22	Attendance at Annual Parade on Horse Guards of Belgian OCA in Great Britain.
Sunday, August 19	Party to Players' League Match at Lord's, Middlesex v. Hampshire.
Tuesday, August 21 to	Visit to Mons for ceremonies in connection with the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Mons.
Friday, August 24	
Sunday, September 23	Summer Outing—Visit to HMS <i>Victory</i> , Portsmouth.

OFFICERS' CLUB COCKTAIL PARTY

A total of 80, including official guests, attended the Club Cocktail Party held at the United Service and Royal Aero Club on Friday, May 11, 1973.

Following our usual custom the nearest relatives of former Officers were invited as official guests, and the following accepted and were present:—

Mr and Mrs F. A. Bicknell, son and daughter-in-law of the late Lt.-Col. H. P. F. Bicknell.

Mrs E. J. B. Budden, widow of Capt. E. J. B. Budden.

Mrs Enid Jackson, daughter of the late Col. L. C. Dams.

Mrs A. V. Weller, widow of Major A. V. Weller.

OBITUARY

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

BINDER—On November 6, 1972, of a cerebral haemorrhage, Major Denis L. Binder, TD. He was commissioned into the 2/7th Battalion from the Artists Rifles in 1939 and served in North Africa, at Anzio, in Italy, and Palestine. After the war he was Adjutant at the Depot in Mill Hill from 1946 to 1948 when he resigned his commission and entered the Colonial service. He rejoined the Territorial Army in Gloucestershire in 1950 and was awarded the TD in 1953. At the time of his death he was working for the University of Western Australia in Perth where he had been living with his family for over five years.

BYWATERS—On April 17, 1973, suddenly as the result of a heart attack, Major John Bywaters, MBE, aged 56. After 21 years' service in the Regiment he resigned his commission and joined the Professional Golfers Association as assistant secretary in 1961. He was made secretary of the P.G.A. in 1965 and handled the arrangements for the 1965 and 1969 Ryder Cup matches in Great Britain and also the return games in the United States in 1967 and 1971. In paying a tribute to him in the *Daily Telegraph*, Michael Williams states:

"His death will come as a sad blow to the P.G.A. for Major Bywaters was an extremely hardworking man and a friendly counsel to all. Indeed, his years of office have coincided with the Association's growth during the boom professional golf is enjoying in Britain".

The following tribute has been paid to him by Capt. Jack Riseley, one of his greatest friends:

"Johnny Bywaters was a man of great charm and sincerity. I first knew him in the 2nd Battalion, and later at the 26th MGTC, Chester.

"His motto was 'work hard, play hard', and whatever he did in this respect he thoroughly enjoyed. His sense of fun was a byword in the Regiment, and his interests ranged from music—he was a first-class and sensitive pianist—to every form of sport, with golf naturally as his first passion. He was an excellent cricketer and, until an unfortunate accident, was an outstanding wicket-keeper.

"His work as assistant secretary, and then as secretary to the Professional Golfers Association for so many years made it impossible for him to keep in touch with the Regiment and to his countless friends as much as he would have liked, but memories of the 'old days' would come flooding back at the mention of a name, or place, and his flair as a raconteur would enliven many an evening on these occasions.

"He always remembered a face, recognised a voice from many years ago, and he was a wonderful friend to those who had the privilege of knowing him.

"His death is a sad loss to the Regiment, his relations, and to his wide circle of friends."

CLARK—On October 4, 1972, in Barnet General Hospital, Grace, widow of Major A. W. Clark, OBE, former secretary of the Regimental Association.

GREEN—On April 26, 1973, ex-Cpl. Redvers Herbert Green (6190179), aged 73. He enlisted into the 51st (Graduated) Battalion of the Regiment in April 1918 and, on completion of his recruit training, he was posted to the Eastern Command Training Centre, Purfleet, where he remained until the Armistice. In December 1918 he was posted to the Depot and employed as a clerk in the Quartermaster's office under Major F. S. Steed, DCM. He was appointed a Lance-Corporal in 1919 and promoted to Corporal in 1920. In December 1921 he was posted to the 3rd Battalion, then serving with the British Army of Occupation on the Rhine, and later the Upper Silesian Plebiscite Force. On the disbandment of the 3rd Battalion in July 1922 he was posted to the 1st Battalion and served in "D" Company then under the command of Capt. B. G. Horrocks, MC. He later was again employed as a QM's clerk under Capt. V. E. Stock, MC, and transferred to HQ Wing under the command of Capt. H. W. M. Paul, OBE, MC. In October 1923 he returned to duty and was transferred to "B" Company, then under the command of Major M. Browne, MC.

He was a member of the Mill Hill Branch and an enthusiastic correspondent. He was greatly interested in all regimental matters and remained a dedicated Die-Hard until the day of his death.

GREEN—On April 4, 1973, Capt. William Ernest Green, aged 69. After 20 years in the ranks and becoming a Warrant Officer he was commissioned on August 24, 1940. He will be remembered as an outstanding instructor of musketry and a man who never suffered fools gladly. At the Small Arms School, Pachmari, India, as a Corporal, he qualified as "above average" in all weapons and instructional ability. His qualifying marks at the Machine Gun School, Netheravon, later, were at the time the highest ever recorded. In view of his instructional ability he was posted to the Machine Gun Training Centre at Blacon Camp, Chester, where he remained until the closing stages of the 1939-45 war. He was then posted to the Army in India and attached to No. 4 Training Centre, Royal Indian Army Service Corps, returning home for release in July 1945.

While he was still mobile he regularly attended regimental reunions and other functions, which he sorely missed during his last long and painful illness.

HAMMOND—On March 6, 1973, Capt. Walter Hammond, MC and bar, aged 82. He served in the 23rd (2nd Footballers) Battalion in the 1914-18 war in Italy and on the western front and was wounded on March 25, 1918.

PAMPLIN—On February, 27, 1973, ex-Dmr. Oliver Weaver Pamplin (L/12153 and 6188580) aged 84. He enlisted in October 1908 at Hounslow and was posted in error to the Royal Fusiliers. The mistake rectified, he joined the 4th Battalion prior to posting to the Far East to serve in the 3rd Battalion with his elder brother, a noted marksman in the Battalion. Returning to England in December 1914 he marched with the Battalion from Winchester to Southampton to embark and join the BEF in France. After the Battle of Ypres in April 1915 he went with the Battalion to Salonika and remained there until the surrender of the Turkish forces when the Battalion formed part of the Army of Occupation in Constantinople. He was transferred to the Army Reserve in 1919 and finally discharged in October 1920. After his discharge he worked for Callander's Cables at Erith for 37 years, retiring in 1956 and becoming a well-known elder citizen of Belvedere, where his family has lived for many years. Ex-RQMS F. G. Jaques represented the Regiment at his funeral.

SHERWOOD—On February 13, 1973, aged 77. Major Henry Sherwood, TD, was educated at Harrow School and was commissioned to the 9th Battalion in 1914 at the outbreak of World War I. He served with the Battalion at Sittingbourne until October 1914 when the Battalion went East for service in India and subsequently in Mesopotamia. In India he was stationed at Dinapore, Dum Dum, Rawal-

pindi, Ghora Dhaka, Khanspur, Solon, Sabathu and Ambala. He became quite acquainted with the Pindi-Nowshera road not only by marching back and forth on manoeuvres but also being with the Battalion at Hasan Abdal when it was acting in a demonstration role for a Nepalese contingent.

In Mesopotamia he took part in the Nejif operations, an attack on the Jebel Hamrin, the crossing of the Lesser Zab and the final round-up of the Turks at Shargat. After demobilisation in 1919 he served with the Battalion until 1935 or 1936 having transferred to the TA Reserve for a short period during those years. In 1939 he came back from Reserve again and served with the Gunners, first at Woolwich and then in the West Country.

He had quite a unique personality, and was very popular; a most loyal Die-Hard who would do anything for his Regiment, he was a most generous contributor to any regimental appeal, such as widows' flatlets, St. Paul's, the Regimental Association, etc. He was a devoted member of his old Battalion's Branch of the Regimental Association and could be relied upon to turn up to functions so long as he was fit enough to do so. Unfortunately, during the last year or more of his life he was suffering from ill health and had to restrict his journeying from home. He will be greatly missed by his old comrades.

(With acknowledgements to Lt.-Col. G. L. Fox, TD, DL.)

Secretary's Notes

Benevolent Bases

During the quarter ended March 31, 1973, the sum of £527 was expended from the Charitable Fund in making grants to 39 ex-members of the Regiment, or their dependants.

Donations—Charitable Fund

The secretary gratefully acknowledges donations to the Charitable Fund from Mrs. G. A. H. Bower, Major G. Bulloch, Mrs. J. H. Clowes, Mr. L. D. Eggleton, Lt. D. M. Eyerard, Mr. J. Gover, Capt. R. D. Jupp, Mrs. F. O. A. Lawrence, Major D. V. Littlejohn, TD, Mr. E. M. Malcouronne, Mr. Allan Moody, Miss Una Nunn, Mr. H. F. Stillwell and Major M. Wild, MBE.

A. E. F. W.

EALING BRANCH

It is with regret that I have to announce the death of another of our old members. Mr. Ernest Fisher (aged 81), late of our 2/8th Battalion and the Royal West Kents.

I cannot say much about Ernie's history in the 2/8th Battalion but his membership of Ealing Branch has been exemplary. He was usually the first to pay his subs, first at our meetings and first to put his hand in his pocket to help others.

He was on his way to collect his OAP when he collapsed and was found dead on arrival at hospital.

He was cremated at Breakspear Crematorium and my wife and I and Ernie Duffield attended on behalf of the branch.

Our chairman, George Ife, has had a bad time with the "old man's" complaint, bronchitis, and had to curtail his honeymoon after his wedding in February to Mrs. Alice Jones of Hanwell. I visited him last week and he looked ill but I prescribed a glass of my "home brewed" every night and I am sure we shall see him at our next meeting.

I have had a letter from Johnny Pryske in Somerset and one from Billy Cook in Australia. Both are well and send good wishes to all their comrades.

Our old home is being turned into a youth centre and the local council are making a good job of it. I hope we shall soon get official permission to meet there again.

We here are all pleased that the Editor is back on his feet again after his stay in the "Hilton", and plenty of power to his elbow in the future. Bobby Williams has made good progress after his holiday at Paignton and asks me to express his thanks to the Association for making his stay possible. We hope soon to arrange his future home to be a permanent one with someone to keep an eye on him.

Brigadier John White is still in a home at Hindhead his condition is stationary.

Now I go to my chair for a bottle of real "home brew", as it is 11.30 a.m. and time for an old boy to say cheerio, Die-Hards.

ALBERT WHITE.

Eighty Years Young

(Ode to Ealing Branch and others in this category)

There's nothing the matter with me;
I'm as healthy as can be.
My pulse is working, my blood is thin,
But I'm awfully well for the state I'm in.
I have arthritis in both knees;
When I talk, I talk with a wheeze;
My memory's failing, my head's in a spin,
But I'm awfully well for the state I'm in.
Sleep is denied me night after night,
But, oh, when I wake I find I'm all right.
I get up each morning and dust off my wits,
Pick up the paper and read the "obits";
If my name is still missing I know I'm not dead.
So I get a good breakfast and get back to bed.
The moral is this, as my task I unfold,
That for you and for me, who are growing old,
It's better to say "I'm fine" with a grin
Than to let folks know what shape you are in.

A. W.

HORNSEY AND ENFIELD BRANCH

The time has come round again to say "Hello, Die-Hards", and wish you all well.

We at Hornsey, along with you all I am sure, are very pleased to hear Col. Walden is out of hospital and wish him God-speed in a quick return to fitness once again.

As you will have gathered from my last few letters, we have been struggling a little at Hornsey, we sent a letter to all the names and addresses in our book, some 200-odd, and so far have received roughly 30 replies, including some subs. Pretty encouraging, but we do wish the "bodies" would come along and see us. We now meet the first Wednesday in each month and look forward to new faces turning up! Our AGM is on Wednesday, May 5; let's hope it is a bumper one.

On April 4 our meeting brought together Lt.-Col. Simpson, Bert Mellor, Stan Hurlock, Dick Stokes, who, incidentally, was 76 years "young" on the 5th (here's strength to your elbow, Richard), and a welcome return to Hornsey in the shape of Cyril Evans from Albuhera Close.

I hope this means we are going to see a few more faces more frequently.

The 1/7th are holding their dinner on Saturday, April 28, and you can rest assured we shall twist a few tails in an endeavour to get some of them calling in on our monthly get-together.

We all realise there are pressures of work on a lot of us, and in many cases distances between homes and Hornsey make a regular visit impossible, but we are pressing for an occasional visit.

In any case, I hope you all look at the addresses of all branches. Perhaps these are nearer to you; if so, drop in, for I'm sure you will be very welcome.

All for now, so from us all to you all—our sincere wishes.

As ever,
LES HOSSLER.

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MILL HILL BRANCH

Another Albuhera Day has come and gone, enabling a number of our members who live too far away to attend our monthly meetings to meet comrades and friends of yesteryear at the Regimental Annual Reunion now held after the Albuhera Service in St Paul's Cathedral. It is always encouraging to meet once again a chap you haven't seen for a decade or so and to relive the days when fences were made for jumping over whereas now we can only lean on them.

At St Paul's, the service was heard by Die-Hards of all generations and in our Baptistry there was a meeting of four 4th Battalion veterans of 1914-18, none of whom recognised each other but had interesting recollections once introductions were made. They were Major G. Stewart-Sutherland, ex-CSM J. Walker, MM, who had both been members of the battalion pierrot troop in 1917, Mr W. L. Walker and Charlie Ashby who was nursing the large Regimental flag which was flown from the high mast on top of the old Middlesex Guildhall on Albuhera Day, an annual procedure introduced by Colonel Walden in his early days as Secretary of the Regimental Association. "Wag" Hamlin who was in India with me when he was a young soldier travelled from Wallasey in Cheshire. I hope he did not have to walk the length of the promenade before he caught the train. It is seven miles long with one of its swimming baths, the largest in the world. Wag said he well remembered me when I returned to India from furlough. He said I had put on so much weight that when I got in the back of the tonga, I tipped the pony up in the shafts off the ground!; ex-Sgt. Ernie Crook, DCM, who won his decoration with the 17th (1st Football) Battalion on December 1, 1917, at the same action that Captain McReady-Diarmid won his Victoria Cross was another old veteran who met friends in the Cathedral. (The story of Captain McReady-Diarmid will be found in the Museum notes.) On the steps of the Cathedral ex-Cpl. Joe Price of our 12th (Service) Battalion showed me a copy of "Red Fox", the journal of the 5th Army (1916-18) Old Comrades Association in which was an account of his escapes as a POW, which I found excellent reading. Joe was hoping to meet Bob Ryder, VC, who now lives in Hucknall.

Captain W. T. Hughes, ARCM, was able to recall memories of her late husband to Mrs H. R. P. Anson, whose husband, Captain Anson, was killed whilst Adjutant of the 8th Battalion in May, 1915. Both Mrs Anson and Mike Hughes were in India with the 1st Battalion when her father, Captain T. Daw, was the Quartermaster and her husband the Adjutant.

At Portchester Hall two old soldiers who had originally served with the Special Reserve at Mill Hill in 1910 before joining the 2nd and 3rd Battalions respectively were Messrs. J. Shacker and A. S. Franklin. Here it was good to see so many Die-Hards who were making their first attendance. The evening ended with a good sing-song led by the dulcet tones of Harry Gribble, who with Don Bradnam was singing about some unfortunate sergeant-majors whose parents have had a sad lack of marriage certificates.

One veteran who can no longer travel around is

John Schlenker, DCM, MM, and bar, of the 4th Battalion. He is now blind but receives visits from Bert Trott, that fit octogenarian, and Ernie Olney, both 7th Battalion veterans. Bert Trott attends all parades and social occasions as well as visiting our Headquarters at Edgware every week.

On Albuhera Day itself, after the small wreath-laying ceremony when Colonel Walden placed a wreath to the memory of the Die-Hards who fought at Albuhera on our memorial in Inglis Barracks, a small party gathered in the canteen in the Drill Hall, Edgware, where the bar was ably served by Ernie Colebeck and refreshments including a succulent plate of curry and rice prepared by Charlie Banks, that gifted chef we are so lucky to have at Deansbrook Road. Present were Colonel and Mrs Walden, Major and Mrs Waldron, Captain and Mrs Don Jones, Charlie Ashby (and dog), Mrs Ivy Clarke, "Kate" Carney, "Tiger" Griffiths, Mr and Mrs Frank Hammond, Tim Harrison, Fred Hawes, Len Johnson, Alf Mason, "Mac" Mackenzie, Arthur Matthews, Tich Mellor, ex-Sgt. Moran, late 5th TA Battalion—NOT "Killer" Moran—Sgt. O'Rawe, in uniform and wearing the colourful badge of rank of an Army Recruiter—the old Colour-Sergeant's insignia—ex-CSM Partidge, late "A" Coy 6 Queen's Regiment, Reg Reubins, RQMS Freddy Rooke, ACF, Pippa Seldon, Les and Dot Shrubbs, John Soden, Ted Souch ("Ashby" de la Zouch), Aubrey Stapley, and C/Sgt. Stevens. Of course, Dollie and I were also there to raise our glasses to that incomparable regiment of men who bequeathed the imperishable soubriquet of "Die-Hards" to us grateful and proud members of the Regiment whose name is no longer shown in the Army List. An interesting meeting took place between Les Shrubbs, MM, and Ted Souch; it was thirty-three years ago that Ted Souch, then a stretcher bearer with the 1/7th Battalion, dressed the wounds and picked Les up when they were on the way to Dunkirk beaches. Ted a short time later was himself badly wounded. My introduction when they met was unnecessary!

The branch is still robust although by the end of the month of May a number of individual members are feeling rather frail. On behalf of all members of the Mill Hill Branch, I speed salutations to our brother branches and all who have had the privilege of serving in the finest regiment of any army.

MAJOR DICK SMITH.

WOS' AND SERGEANTS' BRANCH

What good news we have of the success of the Branch during the last three months is overshadowed by the loss of two of our members, C/Sgt. J. Meacock, 3rd Queen's Regiment and late 1st Battalion, and Capt. Bill Green, late 1st and 2nd Battalions.

Jack passed away suddenly on March 28 in Cyprus from a heart attack and was laid to rest in Tidworth Military Cemetery on April 6. Unfortunately, the final details of the funeral were not known to me in time for them to be passed on to members, and as I am unable to travel long distances we branch could not be represented at the service.

Jack did much to keep alive the traditions of the Die-Hards and maintain the interest in the Regimental Association of those of the Middlesex Regi-

ment who, like him, had been absorbed into the Queen's when our Regiment was disbanded, and was instrumental in getting Bill Smith and Jack O'Sullivan to join the Branch. From his many letters to me I saw he was a firm believer in once a Die-Hard, always a Die-Hard.

Bill Green, known by us as "Dodger" or "Ginger", passed away on April 11 after a long illness and was cremated at Golders Green Crematorium on April 17. Among the mourners present from the Regimental Association were the following members of the Branch: Pat Maloney, Alf Mason, Bert Beasley, Dick Smith, Frank Waldron and myself.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to the families of both our late comrades.

The good news is that since the last issue of the Newsletter we have welcomed in as new members Bert Callaghan, Bob Dyson, Dick Harris, Eddie Johnson, and Darkie Taylor, bringing our membership up to 70.

Attendances at our monthly social evenings are well above the average for last year and, though some regular faces are sometimes missing, there have been fresh faces to take their places. We look forward to the night when they all turn up together.

Unfortunately, the visit to our March meeting by the Portsmouth and Gosport Branch had to be cancelled by them, as through circumstances beyond their control only a few of their members could make the journey. Nevertheless, their visit is only postponed and we are hoping that they can make it in July.

We are all very pleased to see that Col. "Fanny" Walden is now out of hospital and able to get about a bit, even though only with the aid of two sticks, and sincerely hope that it will not be long before he can dispense with their aid. His lack of mobility has not prevented him from keeping up his interest in the branches for since his discharge from hospital he has not only visited our Branch but also the Mill Hill Branch.

By the time these notes are printed and published the annual service at St Paul's Cathedral and the Regimental Reunion will have been held. We all hope to meet up with some of our comrades at either or both these functions.

Before closing may I ask if any reader of these notes has any knowledge of the address of the families of 23040547 Cpl. R. Debley and 23146049 Pte. T. R. Thompson, who were killed in Cyprus whilst serving with the 1st Battalion in 1956 and 1957 and were buried in the Military Cemetery, Nicosia. I have coloured photos of their graves sent to me by Jack Meacock about a month or so before he died, and he thought their families may like to see how well kept their graves are and that they are not forgotten. If anyone can help it would be greatly appreciated.

Greetings to all Die-Hards everywhere.

LEN JOHNSON.

1/7th BATTALION (1939-45) OCA

1/7th Battalion (1939-45) Annual Reunion and Dinner took place at the TA & VR Centre, Priory Road, Hornsey, on Saturday, April 28.

Brigadier Rackham was in the chair and over 90 members attended.

The occasion was much enjoyed by all who attended. Major Frank Waldron was welcomed as the new secretary of the Regimental Association.

Messages were to be sent to Col. Walden, wishing him a full and speedy recovery from his recent illness, and of congratulations to Col. Kenneth Johnson on his recent marriage.

The chairman thanked the members of the committee for all their hard work in organising the reunion. We hope to increase the numbers attending in future years.

Members are sincerely requested to encourage other members of the battalion, with whom they are in touch, to attend.

The date is constant—the last Saturday in April, so in 1974 it will be Saturday, April 27.

7th BATTALION (1914-18) REUNION DINNER, 1973

It was my pleasure to be a guest at the dinner of the 7th Imperial Service Battalion veterans of World War I. These octogenarians and septuagenarians gathered on April 27 at the Headquarters of the Regimental Association, Edgware, under their chairman, ex-C/Sgt. J. A. Percival, a veteran of 82 summers. Of a total of 40 at the table, 25 were soldiers who slogged through the mud of Flanders during the terrible winter of 1915 and saw the poppies bloom during the following summers.

These veterans, who had been recruited from the towns and hamlets of North Middlesex six decades or more ago, reminded me of the description, also written years ago, "A wild and lovely country this in olden times, haunted by witches and warlocks, by Egyptians and conjuring folk, as well as kings and queens and the grim spectres that flitted around Combat Moat".

Their bright eyes and mischievous expressions convinced me that there were still some rare old conjurers about! After grace, which it was my privilege to say, a greetings message from Mrs. Bower, the widow of the Battalion's beloved Major Geoffrey Bower, was read before we took out seats. A delightful dinner, prepared by that excellent chef, Mr. Charlie Banks, was thoroughly enjoyed by all. The Loyal and Regimental toasts were followed by that most solemn of toasts "Our departed comrades". I am sure that although so many eyes misted over at the memory of those who grow not old, the backs of the veterans became that little more erect.

After dinner a chat on old times, and old comrades-in-arms, the grand volunteer soldiers of 1914 gave their deep-felt thanks to their secretary, Stan Edge, DCM, and after vowing to attend in 1974, when it is hoped to be a luncheon party, took their departure for home leaving behind at least one guest who felt humble and proud to have again met such grand chaps who had added so many battle honours to our roll of glory.

MAJOR DICK SMITH.

