



# *The Die-Hards*

NEWSLETTER

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No. 105

Spring 2011

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*Major D Bradley, Mrs Jenny Rowe and Lord Kerr prior to  
the Annual Remembrance at the Supreme Court*

*President* : Colonel R.M. Cain, OBE, DL  
*Honorary Vice President* : Brigadier B A M Pielow JP  
*Chairman* : Major C.L. Lawrence, MC  
*Vice Chairman* : Capt M.J.S. Doran, TD, LL.B.  
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## Forecast of Events 2011

7th May Association Albuhera Service of Remembrance  
Regimental Chapel St Paul's Cathedral London  
**Seated 10.20hrs Service 10.30hrs**

7th May Association AGM and Annual Reunion  
Union Jack Club, Sandell Street, London  
**Annual General Meeting 13.00hrs**  
**Reunion Lunch 14.00hrs seated 13.50hrs**

13th/17th May Visit to Albuhera for 200th Anniversary of the Battle

14th July Officer's Club Luncheon, Union Jack Club  
Sandell Street, London  
12.00hrs for 13.00hrs

9th November 7th Bn Middlesex Officer's Club Dinner

10th November Garden of Remembrance Westminster Abbey  
Service commences 10.50hrs

12th November Mx Ceremony of Remembrance Middlesex Guildhall  
Now Supreme Court of Justice  
10.30hrs Service 10.50hrs

13th November Remembrance Sunday

13h November 7th Bn Mx Remembrance Service Assemble 10.00hrs  
At Parish Church St Mary & St George Hornsey



NB Accommodation at The Union Jack Club is likely to be at a premium so early booking is imperative Reservation details:-Telephone 202 7928 4814  
E-mail: abo@ujclub.co.uk

**Tickets for guests at full price will only be sold if all the available seating is not taken up by association members. A reserve list of full price guest bids will be compiled on a first come basis and these tickets will be allocated after 25th April should seating still be available.**

**NOTE: The start for the Service this year is 10.30hrs and not 11.00hrs, please note and attend at the correct time.**

**Ticket Application Form Closing date 25th April 2011**

**MIDDLESEX ANNUAL SERVICE AND ALL RANKS REUNION  
7TH MAY 2011**

**MIDDLESEX ANNUAL ALBUHERA SERVICE**

**ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL LONDON  
SERVICE COMMENCES 10.30HRS**

**PLEASE BE SEATED BY 10.20HRS**

I will/will not be attending the Albuhera Service.....number attending

**MIDDLESEX ANNUAL ALL RANKS REUNION AT  
UNION JACK CLUB, SANDELL STREET LONDON SE1 8UJ**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AT 13.00HRS**

Questions in writing for the meeting must reach The Association Secretary  
14 days prior to the meeting.

**ANNUAL LUNCHEON AT 14.00HRS**

**SEATED BY 13.50HRS**

**MENU**

Prawn Cocktail

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Roast Rack of Lamb Served with Minted Jus & Red Currant Jelly  
Vegetables to compliment

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Middlesex Melba; Coffee & Albuhera Petit Fours

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**Cost £15.00**

I require .....tickets @£15.00

I require .....tickets @£30.00  
(see notes opposite and below)

Total £.....

A vegetarian meal is available if required please request when returning your application.

I enclose a stamped addressed envelope for the return of my ticket/s  
Cheques payable to PWRR Benevolent Fund Mx No 1 A/c

Rank ..... Name.....

Please remember that you will only receive subsidised tickets for one member and one guest i.e. Wife/partner /carer. We achieved a full house last year so additional guests at full cost will only be permitted if it is known that space is available.

**Should you intend to stay overnight early booking of accommodation at the Union Jack Club is recommended to ensure that you are not disappointed.**  
Advance reservations 020 7928 4814 Email abo@ujclub.co.uk



## THE PRINCESS OF WALES'S ROYAL REGIMENT

### 1st BATTALION PWRR BARKER BARRACKS PADERBORN GERMANY 1st Battalion Exercise Prairie Thunder 3 more than your average exercise.

British Army Training Unit Suffield (BATUS) offers more than the average in terms of opportunities for training. Once in a training area associated primarily with a conventional warfare mindset, it has now proven its worth in its ability to provide Hybrid Foundation Training. To start with, Adventurous Training (AT) facilities, located in the heart of the Rocky Mountains, are unparalleled within the British Army, truly testing and developing individual soldier's confidence and robustness in a non military environment. The list of outdoor sports available is wide, from Kayaking to Sky Diving and with each participant allotted five days to perfect their chosen skill, each became a master.

Once Exercise Prairie Thunder began, it was time to put our memories of the Rocky Mountains to the back of our minds and focus on the task in hand. The pace from the outset is punishing the progression of training rapid. This meant that it was crucial to learn new skills and SOP's to the vast spectrum of war fighting that Hybrid warfare encompasses. By the end of the Live Firing Package the order of the day was Company/Squadron Attacks, with live run-ins with our "Cavalry Cousins". However the true reality of Hybrid Warfare really kicked in with the advent of blank firing TES (Tactical Engagement System) phase. It was during this phase that the multi-purpose nature of Hybrid Warfare really hit home. Starting with a full Company/ Squadron Group attack, a sub unit could then find themselves doing a dismounted Strike and Search operation or acting as an Airborne Reaction Force, really testing the individual's ability to switch from conventional war fighting to a counter-insurgency mind set. With Hybrid Foundation Training behind us, the Battalion has now begun to change towards "Mission Specific Training" (MST) in preparation for future deployments. The key changes will include the ability to focus on one specific Theatre of Operations; an uplift in theatre specific kit and support combined with a tailored training programme that will be orientated to Afghanistan.

By Lt. J W Gregory OC. 2Pl. A Coy.

### 2nd BATTALION PWRR ROYAL ARTILLERY BARRACKS WOOLWICH LONDON 2nd Battalion Buckingham Palace Detachment of the Queen's Guard

The build up towards our first guard mount was intensive in drill as well as the preparation of kit and equipment. To be the Senior Sergeant at Buckingham Palace, knowing that I would be conducting a ceremonial parade and taking a major role within that, in front of thousands of people, was both a tense and exciting experience and a rare opportunity.



Once you are in your blues, fully dressed with boots like mirrors, final checks being done on everyone and after weeks of preparation, to be in charge of the guard and QRF guarding the Queen or any members of the Royal Family resident and also Buckingham Palace itself is an honour for anyone to be a part of.

As you march from Wellington Barracks towards the north gate of Buckingham Palace you are filled with pride. Thousands of people are all around you, the buses are packed with people hanging off the sides, and pavements crowded, camera flashing everywhere and they are here to see us and no-one else. We are the proudest people on that stretch of road as we march towards the north gate, everyone marching to the beat of the drum, ensuring that they have the swagger about them and knowing that they look smart.

The greatest satisfaction comes once you have conducted the parade and you know that weeks and weeks of preparation have paid off and everything went well. You then sit down afterwards and think "I did that, they came to see us, not anyone else, we were the centre of attention, and now I am guarding Buckingham Palace". At that point you realise what an honour it is to be doing ceremonial duties and the work starts again ready for the dismount in 48 hours.

It is pride within yourself, and the confidence that you know what you are doing, that ensures that you have the swagger!

by Sgt Grant Fassett, B Coy

### **3RD BATTALION PWRR LEROS TA CENTRE STURRY ROAD CANTERBURY KENT 3rd Battalion Urban OPS Weekend**

In May 2010 3PWRR conducted Urban Operations Training at Longmoor Camp in Hampshire.

The troops arrived from their respective locations on the Friday night to be warmly greeted by the Permanent Staff who booked them in to the finest accommodation the Patrol Base had to offer.

Saturday morning began with a scrumptious breakfast to set us up for a busy day. The groups took part in a "Round Robin" within the village complex. Scaling ladders, scrambling up roofs, lifting and shoving each other over walls. Hurling grappling hooks at open windows then diving for cover as they ricochet back at you- the training was fun.

We moved on to sandbag wall construction. Not the most exciting activity. But as we saw on the recent "penetration demonstration" during the field firing, a properly constructed sandbag wall will stop a bullet. Do it right it may save your life. Next

was an introduction to fortifying a building. A science for sappers, but good to know for all soldiers, you never know when you may need these skills.

When we started the room and building clearance phase it made all the difference. Real "bangs" and good drills, it was good to see the soldiers had remembered the lessons from their training. Practice makes perfect as they say and they had plenty of opportunity for practice. Then comes lunch, the high point of the weekend. Nouvelle Cuisine comes to 3PWRR. I am told that less is more. Minute exquisite portions of the finest.

There was an opportunity for weapon familiarisation. A good selection of foreign weapons was produced for us. After further training and revision the Battalion's exercising troops took over the Patrol Base and went into routine.

Dawn broke bright and clear over Longmoor a perfect early summer morning, blue sky brightening in the east, the birds starting their dawn chorus, the guys advancing towards the Line of Departure. That long wait as the minutes tick by to H Hour, then the peace was blasted by the Bat Sims. In went the assaulting troops to take the enemy occupied Forward Operating Base. The enemy were quickly overwhelmed and subdued. Their leader, a nasty looking man by the name of "Osama Bin Holley" (Aka WO2Holley) was very unpleasant and rude to us. A good, well planned and enjoyable exercise. Lots of basic skills learnt and revised. A chance for all ranks to practice their respective roles. Doing the things we joined the Infantry to do.

by Sgt Colin Tester, D Coy

The above articles are from the Journal of The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment and are printed by kind permission of the editor. They impart the varied roles in which the infantry are now engaged.

### **FREEDOM MARCHES**

During the summer of 2011 2nd Battalion Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment will exercise the privilege of marching through those boroughs and towns which have granted them the Freedom. The Middlesex Regiment was granted the Freedom of the Borough of Hendon (now part of the London Borough of Barnet) and as the successor Regiment PWRR proposed to march through Barnet in June. Sadly the offer was declined by the Council on the grounds of cost and the inconvenience of road closures.

This is a great disappointment to all of us and particularly to those who live in London or Middlesex since we shall be the only Regimental area without a march.

RMC



## Albuhera

Monday 16th May 2011 will mark the two hundredth anniversary of the Napoleonic wars bloodiest battle, fought just outside of the small Spanish village of Albuhera.

The bicentenary celebration of the Anglo-Portuguese victory over the French promises to be special, some of you may be joining the several thousand people who annually descend on the area to join in the services of remembrance, re-enactments and carnival atmosphere but things could have been quite different.

Most military historians and notably the great William Napier himself a General at the time, are of the opinion that Marshal William Carr Beresford in command of the allies at Albuhera made one or two costly blunders, resulting in excessive loss of life and almost the battle. There is no doubt, for the allies the reality of defeat was very close. Marshal Soult commanding the French was convinced that victory was his almost until the last volleys had been fired. Afterwards he was to express his disbelief at his defeat, and some time later criticised Beresford's tactics enquiring of a recently captured English soldier "have the British yet hanged the officer who commanded you at Albuhera?" Imagine if you will the ramifications if the allies had been defeated, May 16th would certainly not be a day for celebration.



*Viscount Henry Hardinge*

Albuhera in all probability would not be incorporated in the Middlesex cap badge nor be emblazoned on their colour, and would the exhortations of Colonel Inglis urging his men to "Die Hard 57th" have changed the name by which the regiment was called (the Pothooks) to the name by which it is now known throughout the world the Diehards. These suppositions could easily have become fact and were prevented only by the initiative and insistence of one man whose action stole victory from defeat. The day was going badly. A sudden deluge of rain and hail had soaked the powder of Colbourne's brigade in the front line rendering their muskets practically useless. Further complications were caused by the rain mingling with the gun smoke and

creating a fog which prevented Colbourne's brigade from seeing Soult's cavalry until they were actually being overrun. Marshal Sault's 1st Lancers of the Vistula Legion and the 2nd Hussars had been concealed in some woods on the heights to the left of the line and seeing their opportunity had charged, killing without mercy and massacring three quarters of the 1/3rd Buffs, 2/31st Huntingdonshire, 2/48th Northamptonshire and Berkshire regiments in under five minutes. A group of the Lancers also managed to get behind the British line where they attacked Marshal Berisford's party forcing them to defend themselves and scatter leaving the allies without command or communication.

Meanwhile the 1/48th Northamptonshire, 1/57th Middlesex, and Worcestershire foot regiments under Major General Houghton had moved to the front and had opened fire on the retreating French cavalry before being engaged by virtually the whole of the French force.

From a patch of high ground behind the British lines twenty six year old Major Henry Hardinge deputy quartermaster-general of the Portuguese army watched with growing concern.

The three battalions with the Middlesex in the middle were taking heavy fire and casualties were beginning to mount up, all officers above the rank of lieutenant in the Middlesex were down either dead or seriously wounded and although the regiment displayed remarkable courage and discipline the odds were against them. Hardinge undoubtedly knew some of the men now fighting desperately below him, he had served as a captain in the Middlesex himself and since leaving the regiment had seen active service at the Battle of Vimeiro where he was wounded, he was also at Corunna and was by the side of Sir John Moore when the latter was shot and had covered him with his coat as he lay dying. He had also fought at The Douro, and at Busaco.

Unable to watch any longer Hardinge made his way down to join his old regiment and was assisting by directing their fire, all the while aware that the situation was growing more desperate. Meanwhile some two miles behind the British line and unable to see what was happening because of the battlefield smoke General Lowry Cole's division of Fusiliers were being held in reserve and resting after a long march with explicit orders not to move unless ordered to do so by Beresford himself.

At this point Beresford and his staff were scattered to the wind and no line of communication existed. Back in the thick of the fighting Hardinge realized that unless Houghton's men were relieved quickly the position and the battle would be lost. The only troops available to reinforce them were those of Lowry Cole. Remounting his horse Hardinge rode as swiftly as possible to carry news of the situation back to Cole arriving on his lathered mount and contrary to etiquette addressed Cole with his sword still drawn. Cole it seems was reluctant to move without a direct order from Marshal Beresford and there appears to have been a heated discussion.

What followed next is unclear some witnesses say that following the discussion Cole was persuaded to advance by Hardinge while others say Hardinge accepted responsibility and actually ordered the advance himself. Whatever the case the eventual advance of the Fusiliers snatched victory from almost certain defeat. Two weeks later on the 30<sup>th</sup> May Hardinge was made Lieutenant-Colonel; Historian William Napier wrote "The advance of Lowry Cole's troops which saved the day for Beresford was ordered by Henry Hardinge.



Deputy Quartermaster-General of the Portuguese army and it was thus to him that the victory was due" another wrote "he (Hardinge) saved the day by taking the responsibility at a critical moment of strongly urging General Cole's division to advance".

Following Albuhera, Hardinge was present at both Sieges of Badajos and at Salamanca. He was later severely wounded again in the battle at Vittoria in 1813 but returned to serve at the blockade of Pampeluna and the Pyrenees.

In 1814 Hardinge commanded a Portuguese brigade at the storming of the heights of Palais and was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel 40th Foot. In April 1815 he was posted to Prussian HQ as Brigadier-General and on 16th June he lost his left hand at the battle of Quatre Bras preventing him being present at Waterloo on the 18th. Two weeks later however he was back at his post as British military commissioner to Blucher and was presented with Napoleon's sword by the Duke of Wellington.. After 1816 he held a number of posts both military and political.

In 1821 he was made a Brevet Colonel and in 1830 Major General. 1841 he was promoted again to Lieutenant-General and two years later in 1843 Hardinge returned to his old regiment the Middlesex this time as Colonel of the regiment, a position he retained until his death. It is related that he refused all offers of a transfer, declaring that "the 57th are good enough for me". In 1844 he went to India as governor-general and during the Sikh War waived his right to the supreme command and offered to serve as second in command under Sir Hugh Gough, at the end of the war he was created Viscount Hardinge of Lahore. In 1852 he became Commander in chief of the forces (taking over from Wellington). Two years later he was promoted to General and the following year became a Field Marshal. In 1856 on September 24th the Middlesex Regiment's most distinguished soldier died after suffering a stroke.

His death was a great loss to the country and Queen Victoria issued a general order to the army on the 2nd October which read "The Queen has a high and grateful sense of Lord Hardinge's valuable and unremitting services and in his death deplors the loss of a true and devoted friend. No sovereign ever possessed a more honest and faithful councillor or a more loyal, fearless, and devoted servant". It was also written that "He had the best of tempers and in difficult circumstances he always had such a manly bearing that he conciliated the whole of Lord Beresford's staff, being loved by those below him and respected by those above him.

During his after dinner speech at last year's reunion Colonel Cain mentioned the restoration of Drummer Dudley Stagpool. VC. DCM headstone in Hendon cemetery. Listening I thought briefly of Henry Hardinge. In which great Cathedral did he lay? Earlier that day I had wandered through St Paul's admiring the magnificent tombs of Lord Wellington, Lord Nelson and the like. Surely this eminent soldier who was their equal must be among them.



*Viscount Henry Hardinge's grave in a quiet Kent Village Churchyard*

At odd moments during the coming months I looked in all the wrong places for the answer and it was late summer in a quiet Kent village in the tiny churchyard of St Peter's that I found where Viscount Hardinge had been interred without fuss or ceremony at his own request. As I passed through the lichgate into the churchyard I noticed the faded poppy wreathes on the war memorial just inside and a few yards further on in a family plot lay Henry Hardinge, his tomb unadorned by any token of remembrance and with the inscription unreadable until I had brushed away some of the lichen which covered it. I stayed for about twenty minutes and as I left glanced at the poppy wreathes and wondered if the good people who had laid them realised that just a few short steps away rested one of England's finest soldiers and the Diehard who arguably won the battle at Albuhera.

A. Brown

## REMEMBRANCE

### Mill Hill War Memorial

An application for planning permission to move the Memorial to a site opposite St Paul's Church Mill Hill was prepared and submitted by the developers to Barnet Council as part of the planning application for the redevelopment of the whole Barrack area.

Unfortunately negotiations between the Council and VSM Estates are still continuing on how much the developers should contribute to the cost of such



facilities as a new school and a new Medical Centre. In the present state of the property market these negotiations are likely to be prolonged but until they are concluded permission to move our Memorial will be delayed.

This is, of course, a severe disappointment to ourselves and also to our numerous supporters in the community in Mill Hill but we are helpless in the face of obdurate bureaucracy.

Meanwhile although the Memorial is in close proximity to the Site Security Post and has not been damaged the weeds are growing and the whole area around the Officers' Mess building looks increasingly desolate and abandoned. We appreciate how distressing the situation is for many of you and can only ask for your patience. Rest assured we have not given up the struggle.

RMC

**Saturday 13th November 2010**

**Middlesex Regiment Ceremony of Remembrance at the  
Supreme Court of Justice Westminster.**



*The two minute silence, Mrs J Rowe, Lord Kerr, Col. R Cain, Rev P Tuft*

In keeping with recent gatherings of the Regimental Association numbers continue to increase, 55 persons were in attendance for our Annual Service for the act of remembrance, they were joined for the service by Lord Kerr, Jenny Rowe Chief

Executive of the Court and members of the Court's staff. The service was conducted by our Padre Reverend Patrick Tuft MA and commenced in good time, to ensure that the Last Post and the two minutes silence coincided with the eleven o'clock chimes of Big Ben. The short service followed the format which has been used for many years. Poppy wreaths were laid by Jenny Rowe on behalf of the Court and Colonel Rex Cain on behalf of the Regiment.



*Members of the Association waiting for the  
Remembrance Service to Commence*

The hospitality shown to our members was quite magnificent, the refreshments supplied by the court after the service were delicious. Martin Thompson a staff member of the court then organised a popular tour of this impressive building. The day was further enhanced by the court flying the Middlesex Regimental flag over the building.

**Reminiscences of an Old Diehard.**

I was born in East Finchley in November 1918 and at the age of 20 in 1939 I was drafted in to the army as a "Militia Boy" for six months training. I took the train to Chelmsford Essex where I met Harry Blackwood amongst a motley collection of young civilians awaiting to receive instructions and we were taken by an army truck to 2/8th Bn Middlesex Regiment recruit training area at Northolt Middlesex. Little did we know that we would be serving together for six and a half years. The battalion was to be later on, the resuscitated 1st Battalion, after the collapse of the original in Hong Kong.



After our initial 3 months recruit training, we were in the winter of '39 on guard duty at the West India Docks in London and then on to Belfast Northern Ireland, practising in various manoeuvres and training for the threat of invasion. I recall the demand for efficiency in training and I attended a number of courses as a junior NCO, i.e. Regimental Provost duties at Carrickfergus Detention Barracks Co Antrim, competition swimming in battle order in Port Rush Harbour Co Antrim Small Arms Course and MG in Dorking Surrey. Aircraft Recognition Course in Camberley: Gas Warfare Recognition at Winterbourne Dorset; Ack/Ack Course at Clacton Essex and finally Officers and Senior NCOs' 4.2 inch Mortar Instructors Course at Netheravon early in 1944 in readiness for the Normandy Invasion.



*No 13 Pln Mortars D Coy 1st Bn Middlesex Regt May 1944*

In May, my platoon no 13 D Company was in Hove Sussex and I remember taking a section in PIAT training on the Sussex Downs and then moving to Worthing, sleeping on bare floorboards fully clothed in an empty hotel on the sea front which was festooned with barbed wire as an anti invasion measure. Then off to Normandy and as the Platoon Sergeant riding a 500cc army BSA Motorbike which took me throughout the European Campaign to finally Lubeck on the Elbe in Germany.

My Platoon Commander was Lt. John Gerrard who received the MC and promotion to captain during our activities in the field and we had very many casualties. Cpl A Symonds was killed in action at Totmaville on 15th July '44, I recall burying him in a field there. Then my personal friend Sgt Frank Godfrey, Mortar section commander was killed in action together with Pte A Gleave in Montchamp Estry, Calvados, when Tiger tanks broke through our territory. I had some lucky escapes particularly when German Mortar shrapnel pierced my army blouse at chest level,

tore through a platoon diary and smashed my army issue watch to pieces, the hot shrapnel fell to the bottom of my blouse (the battered watch and piece of shrapnel are now in the National Army Museum, Chelsea).

Then prior to action at Caumont I was on my M/C by the side of the Lloyd carrier occupied by Harry Blackwood 2/Lt Richardson, Mortar Officer, and Pte Amelan, the driver, when we were blown up by a German personnel mine, Pte Amelan had perforated ear drums, Lt Richardson was injured and both were evacuated to England. Harry and I remained at duty but we did not hear for three days. In action in Mol, Belgium, Cpl P J Crowhurst DCM and Pte A Baker were killed on their mortar and Pte Owen Collins was severely wounded and evacuated. Then in Helmond, Holland, Pte F Francia was evacuated, blind, to England and in Germany Sgt. C Johl was killed in action in the Reichfold Forest and Pte H David was drowned at Grosserhansdorf, Germany. So many were injured that there were very few of the originals, which started out for Normandy left.

After the Rhine and the Elbe crossings we eventually finished at Lubeck. Harry and I were amongst the few originals. I was promoted to CQMS and Harry to A/CSM. I was proud to receive from the 15th Scottish Divisional Commander, Lt/General Barber at a ceremony at Lubeck, the Gallant Service Certificate for devotion to duty from Normandy to the Elbe 1944/5.

After the demobilisation in 1946 Capt John Gerrard had a distinguished career in the Metropolitan Police and finished up as A/Commissioner CBE MC QPM at New Scotland Yard. I returned to my civilian occupation as manager Hector Powe/Burberrys in Regent Street. Harry Blackwood who married when we were stationed in Portrush became a successful chicken breeder and farmer and also a successful band leader in Northern Ireland. Sadly both Harry and John are now deceased.

R Bishop

### Odd Jottings

Ten members from the Enfield branch were among those on parade at the Supreme Court formerly the Middlesex Guildhall on Saturday 13th of November for a service of remembrance followed by a short walk across Parliament square to Westminster Cathedral where crosses adorned with poppies were planted in the regimental plot

On the eleventh day of the eleventh month at 1100 hrs precisely Mr Jim Innes was once again on hand to represent the regiment by observing two minutes silence and placing a Poppy wreath at the foot of the Regimental Memorial still standing on the site of Inglis barracks at Mill Hill

The last social meeting of 2010 held on Tuesday 30th of November was a rather special one for the Enfield branch.



Both Fred Phillips and Joe Shore had recently reached Ninety years young and more than thirty members and a few invited friends came along to celebrate the occasion and congratulate the pair

The member's wives who always do us proud on social evenings by preparing a small buffet also provided a birthday cake for each of the birthday boys. We wish them many more.

Hounslow branch again paraded at Greenford with the Royal British Legion and other organisations on Remembrance Sunday where a large crowd gather for the service which is held at the local war memorial. After the march back to the Legion Hall, they adjourned to the Concord club for an enjoyable lunch.

The Enfield branch autumn break was once again a memorable weekend filled with the good humour and comradeship that seems unique to old soldiers and ex servicemen.

Sinah Warren on Hayling Island has become almost a second home to the Enfield members. Over the years we have grown accustomed to the lovely old building and its surrounding grounds filled with splendid pine and oak trees and its sea walks, there are also the added attractions of excellent meals, first class cabaret and dancing in the evenings plus bowls, shooting and many other activities for you to participate in if you so wish

The long weekends spent at Sinah Warren are considered by the members to be the ultimate reunion. It is a time when you may stay up or drink until the early hours without the worry of driving home or having to rise too early and despite the advancing years it is not uncommon to find the Enfield group still laughing and swapping yarns at midnight. Although our numbers have dwindled somewhat over the past few years there remains a close family atmosphere at Enfield and it is never more evident than when we are at Hayling Island. We shall be returning once again In July.

Taffy Evans who resides in Manilla recently celebrated his 95th birthday with family and friends, greetings were sent to him by all at RHQ, does this make Taffy the oldest living Diehard?

Heinz Johansen writes from Germany that he has a number of The Die Hard Journals to give away he is prepared to send them to anyone who wants copies. The issues available are No 49-49-51-55 2x56 2x57 58-62-82-85-86-87-89-90-91-93. he personally requires the following to complete his library Jan & Dec 1946, Jan 1947, Jan 1948, March & Dec 1951 and all copies from 1952-1977. If you require copies from Heinz or can help him meet his requirements his address is H Johannsen Mullenredder 5 , 24787 Fockbek, Germany.

## Obituaries

**Edwin Andrews** Sadly passed away in November 2010 no further details are to hand.

**Robert Cubitt** who was a Company Sergeant Major in the Regiment served as a PSI with the TA and lived in one of the Regimental Houses in Albuhera Close. He died in January 2011. That is all the information we currently have.

**Lt Col John Doyle** We have been advised that Colonel John Doyle the last Commanding Officer of the 9th Battalion has died. The funeral was held at the Catholic Cathedral Portsmouth on Thursday 24th February 2011. That is all the information currently available.

**Lt. Col (Retd) Reginald "Rex" Frost Fendick** died at home in Nauwigewauk NB on 23rd September 2010, at the age of 86. He served with the Canadian and British armies during World War 2 the Korean War and the Vietnam War as well as during peacetime. Rex was born on 11th April 1924 in Saint John the only child of Reginald "Dick" and Lily Alfretta Wilson. Rex graduated from Saint John High School and attended the University of New Brunswick for Engineering for one year. Very active in the Army cadets before WW2, he left UNB to join the Canadian Officer Training Corps in 1942. While serving with the Saint John Fusiliers he volunteered for CANLOAN a program where Canadian Army officers were loaned to the British Army to fill a shortage in their officer ranks. On the 29th June at the age of 20 he was given command of a machine gun platoon in the 2nd Battalion Middlesex Regiment and commanded it through the fighting in France, Holland and Germany until the end of the war. His CANLOAN and wartime experiences were highlights of service and his life and he published a book "A CANLOAN Officer" about the experience when he was in his 70's. After the war he returned to the Canadian army where he was a career officer with the Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. He graduated from the Royal Military College and later taught there. He was a staff officer at National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa and Deputy Secretary General at the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Vietnam.

He retired in 1975 as a Lt. Col. An avid outdoorsman, Rex was an accomplished target shooter and won the King's Medal in 1948 for top shot in the Canadian Forces. He was three times a member of Canada's National shooting team at competitions at Bisley, England, once as commandant of the Cadet corps. Rex was predeceased by his wife of 50 years, Jean, and he leaves a son Reginald James, a daughter in law Dr Sara Gordon and a grand daughter Grace.

The funeral was held at Holy Trinity Church, Quispamsis, NB with Reverend Peter Gillies officiating and internment was at St Peter's Presbyterian Cemetery Stanley NB.



**E Finn** who served with 1/7th Battalion during World War Two has died. We were advised by a message written on an envelope returned to the Middlesex Branch of the Queens Regimental Association. Nothing else is known.

**Captain A.I.F. Goldman** (Alfred) died on 9th September 2010 aged 90 years. He served with 2/7th Bn from early in the Second World War. Firstly in the UK, then North Africa and on to Italy via Sicily. He was a regular attendee at the 2/7th Bn reunions. He was for many years, a member of the Regimental Executive Committee and looked after the Association's legal affairs. The funeral was held in the West Chapel at Golders Green Crematorium on Friday 17th September last.

**Captain A R K Hardcastle** (Tony) died on Thursday 19th August 2010 aged 79 years. Served as a National Service Subaltern with 1st Bn in Korea and thereafter with MX TA. The funeral took place on the 2nd of September at St Lawrence, Chobham. He was a long serving member of the Chobham Parish Council and was a well respected member of the local community where he lived for some twenty years.

**Charles H. Hull** Passed away late December 2010. His funeral was held at Hanworth Crematorium on 12th January, amongst those attending were his sister Flossie, brother Peter, niece Yvonne and other family members and friends.

Born in 1919, the son of Sgt Busty Hull, Charlie entered the Gordon Boys School before joining The Green Howards during the Waziristan operations in 1937-39. He also saw service in Sicily and Italy. In 1955 Charlie transferred to the Middlesex Regiment in Cyprus as band sergeant. In 1958 he retired from the Army and settled with his family in Feltham.



**Major the Reverend William Edward Benjamin 'Guz' Jones, MA** 'Good food. Good wine. Good company. Dear Lord, we thank you' Major the Reverend Guz Jones was born on the 11 July 1919 in Dublin, and died on the 10 October 2010, aged 91. He graduated at Trinity College, Dublin in 1943 gaining a BA degree and subsequently an MA in 1953. He was ordained into the Church in 1945, following which he was appointed Curate at St. Thomas, Belfast until 1947. He then came to the mainland and took up the Curacy at St. Andrew's Church, Sudbury, Middlesex until 1950 when he joined the Army. He was commissioned on the 10 January 1950 into the Royal Army Chaplains' Department and appointed Chaplain to the Forces (4th Class) in the rank of Captain. He served with the Middlesex Regiment going with them to Korea. He left the army in 1954 and took up an appointment as Vicar at St. Peter's Church, Edmonton, moving on in 1959 to become Vicar at St. Cuthbert's, North Wembley.

It was about this time he became Padre to the County of Middlesex A.C.F, being re-commissioned into the Chaplain's Department on the 27 March 1972, as Chaplain to the Cadet Forces, with whom he served until his retirement in 1985. He was promoted to Chaplain (3rd Class) in the rank of Major, on the 1 November 1982. He was awarded the Cadet Forces Medal on the 25 June 1975 and the Bar on the 31 January 1984. When the County of London ACF and the County of Middlesex ACF amalgamated to form the Middlesex & N.W Sector GLACF, he became one of the three Sector Padres. It is a tribute to the success of their ministry that they very quickly became affectionately known as the 'Holy Trinity' and latterly as the 'Three Graces'

Whilst at Wembley he arranged an exchange visit, from January to September 1976, and went to the parish of Empangeni, South Africa. In 1981 he again moved to become the Vicar at Ripley, near Guildford, which included the appointment as Chaplain to H.M. Prison, Send. He retired in 1987 and moved to Reepham, Norfolk where he was given permission to officiate in that Diocese. In the early nineties he became the Honorary Chaplain to the Middlesex Regimental Association, a position he held for over ten years. In 1995 he celebrated his fiftieth year of ordination, the service for which was held at St. Mary's Church, Reepham, and at which the former senior Padre of the Sector, the late Major the Reverend John Vaughan, MC, took part.

Guz's funeral took place at St. Mary's Church, Reepham on the 19 October 2010, the service being led by Bishop Tony Footitt and was followed by a private committal at St. Faith's Crematorium. In attendance were his family and very many of his friends, including representatives from the Sector's Officers' Club. Major 'Guz' is survived by his loving wife Muriel, his daughters, Esther, Ruth and Rhoda, their husbands' and his grandchildren.

Major (Retd) Alan Pinnock

**W Neal** (Bill) sadly passed away 14th December last aged 79. Bill was a reinforcement to the Battalion in Korea from the KSLI..

**Brigadier D B Rendell CBE MC** Born in 1920, he died on 22nd September 2010, a few days short of his 90th birthday. Dennis Rendell was educated at University College School (Prep) and St Albans School. He joined the Army in 1939 and was commissioned into The Middlesex Regiment (DCO) in 1941. Shortly afterwards he was seconded to The Parachute Regiment.

In 1942 he with his platoon was dropped in Tunisia with regimental orders to destroy the enemy landing ground at Oudna Railway Station. After four days of fierce fighting, the Battalion was forced to withdraw leaving Rendell's platoon as rearguard. Despite being wounded, he fought on but finally the survivors were captured and taken to a German Regimental Aid Post. For his bravery and complete disregard for his own safety, he was awarded the Military Cross.





He twice tried to escape but was taken to Italy as a POW. In various camps in Italy he was an active member of the escaping fraternity and finally succeeded in September 1943 when the Germans had taken over all POWs from the Italians. He was in touch with the Vatican City and the legendary Mgr Hugh O'Flaherty from whom, through a series of couriers, he received money and clothing for distribution to the men and to the brave Italian who sheltered them. But they were betrayed and so Dennis decided to move his outfit to Rome which he did in December 1943 after an extremely hazardous journey. For his escape and subsequent activities he was awarded the MBE, the

details of which were said to be secret. He was, however, extremely proud of his MBE to the extent that when later he was elevated to CBE his MBE should have been handed in. But he went to the Central Chancery of the Order of Knighthood to enquire whether he might buy his MBE, the Secretary (an old friend) and Dennis agreed on a price; thus Dennis was enabled to retain the insignia of his MBE.

On return to the UK he rejoined 2 PARA and was later posted to India and the Far East where he served in Port Dixon, Singapore and Java before returning to Malaya in May 1946. After a time on the staff in 16 AB DIV, he rejoined his Regiment (1MX), then on public duties at Chelsea Barracks, as Company Commander 'A' Coy. The Battalion left for Hong Kong with 1A SH & HQ 27 Inf. Bde. to reinforce 40 Div out there. But in August 1950 was sent to Korea at very short notice to join the S Koreans and US troops fighting the N Koreans. At that time the UN forces were in the Pusan bridgehead. After a series of vicissitudes, UN forces crossed the 48th Parallel and were within 40 miles of the Yalu River before China entered the war (as one erroneous despatch had it "many men on white horses"). The Battalion left Korea in May 1951 and Dennis returned to the UK in 1952 to join MOD.

From there, Dennis joined the Royal Military Police and served in Aldershot, Germany, Woking, Edinburgh and Chester. It was in the last two that our paths crossed again with Dennis, as always, leading and Moore following.

In 1974 Dennis was promoted Brigadier and appointed Provost Marshal of the British Army - his was the 55th appointment to this ancient office. It was during this period that his special interest in the Mounted Troop and the Motor Cycle Section again manifested itself.

In 1977 Dennis retired and was elevated to CBE. He had previously been appointed ADC to the Queen. He joined the RAC with a particular interest in motor cycles. In 1981 a serious operation forced his second retirement but he then concentrated on charitable work and his Old Comrades Association.

Let me now turn to various anecdotes of a more personal nature. When we were both stationed in HQ Scottish Command, Dennis was sent a multitude of silent RMP16mm movies from all over the world with instructions to turn them into one coherent recruiting film with sound. We both settled into this task in his quarters with strips of film all over the dining room and were in the process of adding a commentary (from Dennis) and suitable music (from me). At a critical dubbing moment, Pan (their beloved corgi) would start barking or Mary would announce from the kitchen that supper was ready.

On to Selsey; in 1990 Dennis and 13 other retired officers of the Parachute Regiment parachuted into Poole Harbour. Their ages ranged from 70 to 81 and many had not jumped since the war. They raised £45,000 plus for Airborne Charities - a magnificent feat.

Dennis's serious illness and major operation in December 1981 was in fact a most debilitating and irreversible colostomy requiring frequent changes of bags which from time to time gurgled. Only Dennis could have christened them "Horace" and remarked with his grit and ever present sense of humour that "Horace requires attention".

Their Visitor's Book from Selsey and before shows 50 entries (a shaming number) for Moore whereas the converse sadly only shows 9 but one was in Izmir where Dennis remarked from my balcony overlooking the harbour that it was so good to see the whole of the Turkish Navy turned out in his honour - it was in fact for the Shah of Iran.

The Rendell's had lived happily at West Street House, Selsey for 33 years and made many friends. It is just not possible and would be invidious to name them all but an astronomer, an actor and a former member of MI6 do stand out in my memory.

Over 62 years have passed since the Rendell's and I first became friends. Dennis has been without doubt my very best friend and mentor whom I and so many others, particularly his family, shall miss terribly.

HJAM

**Frank Ryder** Died on the 7th January 2011. He was a regular soldier and served with both the 1st and 2nd Battalions. He was the son of Pte F Ryder who won a VC on 26th September 1916 at the Battle of Thiepval Ridge whilst with the 12th Battalion. The funeral was held at the Surrey/Sussex Crematorium on 19th January 2011

**Reginald Shorter** Sadly, Reg died on 31st July 2010 aged 89. He enlisted into the Middlesex Regiment at Uxbridge in April 1939 and served with the colours until January 1946. He saw action in North West Europe as a rifleman, machine gunner,



driver and despatch rider. In 1944 he crossed the Channel with the Regiment into Normandy and had a busy time until badly wounded by shrapnel in the right leg. His injury occurred when re-supplying a machine post during the fighting at the Rhine crossing. Throughout his life he was immensely proud of his regiment and the men with whom he served.

He leaves one son Clifford who served as a Lt Cdr Royal Navy, a grandson who served as a Lt Para in Iraq and a grand daughter Natasha.

The funeral was held at Mortlake Crematorium on 18th August 2010.

**Donald Haig Tait.** Passed away recently no further information is available.



**Major Jimmy Wild MBE** Jimmy Wild who died age 86 on 1st August 2010 was the last of that remarkable generation of Warrant Officers which emerged from the 2nd World War. Led by Pat Donovan, and including Tom McMillan, Bob Tarrant, Ernie Pike and Paddy Kendrick, they set the tone of the 1st Battalion and the Depot throughout the National Service Years of the 1950's.

Born Marcel Wild, his father was French, in Kennington on 5th January 1924 he chose to be known as Jimmy after the boxer Jimmy Wild and that is how we remember him. He volunteered for the Army in 1942, initially in the Suffolk Regiment, but by the end of 1942 he was in the 2nd Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment where he stayed, serving in North West Europe, Egypt and Palestine, until the amalgamation with the 1st Battalion in 1948.

Jimmy went to Hong Kong with the 1st Battalion and then to Korea as CSM of B Company. When the Battalion went to Austria A Company was the first to go to Vienna and Jimmy was the CSM. In 1954 at Zeltweg Bob Tarrant handed over to Jimmy as RSM of the 1st Battalion and he held this crucial appointment throughout the tour in Cyprus until in 1958 he exchanged with Tom McMillan to become RSM of the 8th Battalion.

In October 1959 Jimmy was commissioned as Lieutenant (QM) and joined the Nigeria Regiment serving with them during the UN intervention in the Congo which began in 1960.

On his return to our 1st Battalion he became the MTO, an appointment he held in Gibraltar, Northern Ireland and Guyana until in 1966 the Regiment became the 4th Battalion of the Queens Regiment. Jimmy was not happy about the amalgamation and when, in June 1970, the Battalion was reduced to Albuhera Company and he was offered a posting to Cyprus he decided to retire. Before he retired he was appointed MBE.

After retirement in March 1971 he went to live in the bungalow he had bought for his parents in Creech St Michael in Somerset. Sadly they had already died so Jimmy lived there alone although for several years Pat and Kitty Donovan were his neighbours and Jimmy and Pat became established regulars in the local pub where Jimmy had his own bar stool for the rest of his life.

He never missed St Paul's, the Reunion or the Korean Club Lunch and for years the table where Jimmy sat with the Donovan's and McMillan's was a rallying point for those of us who had served with them.

Jimmy Wild was held in great affection by all ranks and will be sadly missed and long remembered.

RMC

**Robin Yarwood** died on 15th January 2011. He joined the 1st Battalion in Korea as a reinforcement from the KSLI. Robin has been engaged recently in correspondence with an American Officer who picked him up on a jeep when he was wounded at Kuni-ri.

**G A Yeo** died in late 2010 or January 2011. We have nothing further at this stage.

We have been advised of the following deaths which occurred some years ago:-

**Ernie Case** and **Harold Kneebone** both of whom served together with 2/7th Battalion Middlesex Regiment in the 4.2 Mortar Company. Apart from service in the Sicily and Anzio landings they served with the battalion in North Africa, Syria, Beirut, Tunisia, Israel, and Palestine.

#### **Mattighofen Re-visited By K. Watson**

On 11th March 1955 in Mattighofen, Austria, a hundred men of 'C Company, following a sleepless night on manoeuvres were sleeping in a hay-filled barn. It was mid-day. Suddenly fire broke out engulfing the whole building in flames as the order was given to "Get out!" It quickly became obvious to onlookers that men of seven platoon were trapped in an upper room with a barred window their only means of escape. Franz Ornezeder, a part-time Austrian fireman, sprang into action before eventually dragging twelve men from the burning barn. Only eight men survived but had it not been for the prompt action and heroism of Franz, they too would have died. Already a recipient of the Iron Cross, Franz Ornezeder was awarded the British Empire Medal for his bravery.

Fifty-five years on Herbert Brandstetter, an Austrian fire brigade historian, was writing a book on the history of the Auxiliary Fire Service in the twentieth century. He decided to contact survivors from the quote, 'Mid-Essex' Regiment and was eventually referred to Keith Watson, author of 'Rough Justice'. In due course books



were exchanged and Herbert confirmed for himself the belief that had survived in Mattighofen for many years, as to the cause of the fire. Keith was invited to Mattighofen and at 11am on 12th September this year he and his wife Maureen were met by no less than fifteen people including Friedrich Schwarzenhofer, the Mayor, Franz Sonntag, the Town Chronicler, Alois Weingler, the Chief Fire Officer for Braunau and many others including the local English teacher, Karin Harrer who performed a magnificent role as interpreter. Karin requested a copy of 'Rough Justice' and confirmed she would use it to teach the children English and the history of Mattighofen.

Keith, on behalf of the Regiment, presented the Mayor with a hand-painted plaque depicting the Regimental Badge, a hard back copy of 'Rough Justice' and a document, written in German, that identified a list of the dead and injured together with revelations that have emerged, since publication of his book, together with a written 'thank you' from a grateful survivor, Bruce Grove who stressed he would have loved to shake the hand of Franz Ornezeder, had the story been told earlier.

The entourage then visited the grave of Franz Ornezeder and then on to the site of the barn before proceeding to the Badhaus Restaurant where a sumptuous lunch was provided for the entire party.

During the day members of the public emerged revealing their memories of that day in '55 including Franz's son-in-law who proudly produced a picture of Franz's medal ceremony and the fire at its height. The proprietor of The Badhaus



*Members of local fire brigades, Mayor, Writer, Mr & Mrs K Watson, local historian and teacher*

confessed that in '55 he was a butcher's apprentice, had gone to watch the action, burnt the sausages in the process and had his face slapped for being a stupid boy. It has since been revealed that the Mayor intends to name a memorial or street after Franz Ornezeder whose testimony, taken on oath at the Court of Inquiry, is detailed below for the first time.

### **Franz ORNEZEDER BEM**

#### **Translated Copy of Statement by Franz ORNEZEDER to the Investigation Department of the Landesgendarmeriekommando LINZ ...12th March 1955**

Franz ORNEZEDER, having been acquainted with the subject of the investigation and cautioned to tell the truth states the following:-

I have been employed as an unskilled labourer by the MATTIGHOFEN Brewery for the last five years.

About 1255 hrs on 11 March 1955, the driver Johann KLINGER and myself as co-driver were taking the bend near the Brewery, travelling from BRAUNAU towards MATTIGHOFEN, on the truck of the Brewery. Suddenly the farm labourer Friedrich BUTTENHAUSER, employed by the Brewery, came running towards us and crying, "There is a fire in the barn." I instantly jumped out from the truck and ran towards the first barn door. In front of the barn I saw WD vehicles parked. The first vehicle was just starting. On entering the barn door, which was right open, I saw on my left, above the lumber store, the hay loft burning. I saw three British soldiers endeavouring to extinguish the burning hay. On the burning hay loft there were about 20 to 30 soldiers jumping away partly over the fire and partly to the other side. I was trying to pull an empty hay cart out from the barn, assisted by Alois WILD, a labourer of the Brewery, who arrived in the meantime. It was hopeless to extinguish the fire. Due to the fire, it was impossible to remove the second cart standing behind the first one.

Subsequently I went into the stables to rescue the cattle. Engaged there, I heard detonations, the origin of which I could not explain to myself. It might have been exploding cartridges or burning asbestos. I rescued three heads of cattle. When entering the stables to rescue more cattle, I heard people calling that there were still men above the stables. I hurried for a ladder to reach the window on it. I intended fetching a ladder from the coopers' workshops, but could not get them because they were locked up. I forcibly opened the door of the coopers' workshop and took an improvised ladder. This ladder I took to the store below where the forage cutting machines were standing. I saw a hand hanging out from the grated window and I also saw two faces. I think a young man by the name of BUTTINGER was the first to climb the ladder but he was unable to do anything. Thereupon I climbed up and tried to lever the window grating out with an iron bar kept for this purpose, but I could not manage it.



In the interior I saw several soldiers, who were all black and partly burned, lying or leaning against the wall. With an axe I then broke out the bricks round the window frame. In this I was assisted by WIMMER, an employee of the Austrian Federal Railways. We finally managed to break out the whole window frame by means of the iron bar. I subsequently entered the burning loft rescuing three or four soldiers, whom I brought out to the men on the ladder.

Due to the fact that the flames were blazing around me, I was forced to descend from the loft and jump into the nearby brook. I almost could not breathe whilst in the loft owing to the lack of air. After this I again entered the loft together with the locksmith MEINDL of MATTIGHOFEN, I assisted in removing the remaining soldiers. Subsequently we threw down to the ground the uniforms, weapons and other articles lying around on the loft, then I searched the loft for any soldiers who might still be there, but I did not find any more. Afterwards I also took part in the other rescue work.

In conclusion I wish to state that I cannot give any hints whatsoever as to the cause of the fire, because I only arrived after the fire had broken out.

Signed by Franz ORNEZEDER

Statement Closed by Ray Insp. Johann KNOLL  
German original translated by Official Interpreter H. WALLNER

Keith Watson's Book *Rough Justice* is available from the publishers, [WWW.authorhouse.co.uk](http://WWW.authorhouse.co.uk) the retail price. The P/Back retails at £13.99-H/Back £22.99 or direct from Keith telephone number 01844 274039 P/Back £12.00-H/Back £20.00 including postage and packing.



*Cap badge of the Middlesex Regiment football battalions*

#### **Whistle blows once more for brave footballers.**

The mournful strains of *The Last Post* still floated in the air yesterday as Gareth Ainsworth, the Wycombe Wanderers player, stepped forward on a foreign field that will be forever England's. Ainsworth delivered a short blast on his whistle and a hush fell across the assembled throng, paying silent tribute to the Footballers' Battalions, who lost so many on the killing fields of the Somme.

More than 8,000 officers and men of the 17th and 23rd Middlesex were engaged in some

of the darkest days of the First World War, including players from West Ham, Chelsea, Liverpool and Clapton, (now Leyton) Orient and stars such as Frank Buckley, the Bradford City player who became Wolves manager. There was the celebrated amateur Vivian Woodward, a prolific scorer for England, Spurs' Walter Tull and Fred Keenor, who made light of shrapnel in the knee to lead Cardiff City to victory in the 1927 FA Cup final.

Many relatives of these brave footballers turned fighters, real heroes such as Manchester United's Oscar Linkson, also gathered in the hamlet of Longueval adjacent to muddy trenches and forbidding foliage of Delville Wood. Also at the dedication of a memorial to the Footballers' Battalions were representatives of more than 20 clubs and members of the Footballer Supporters' Federation, reflecting the hard work put in by fund-raising fans.

The driving force behind these moving, sunlit events was Phil Stant, currently of the Football League Trust and a respected pro from Hereford United to Bury, Lincoln City to Cardiff City. As a former member of the SAS, who saw service in the Falklands, Stant can keep football in its proper perspective.

"When I went to war for me it was an adventure" said Stant, "June 8, 1982, was the day I grew up. The Sir Galahad got blown up when we were 100 metres away. The terrible injuries, the attack that came in from the Argentinian jets, were frightening. When you've seen sights like that, people with their legs blown off, it's some thing you'll always live with. That's why this memorial is so important, for those guys who are still buried out there."

Stories of gallantry were legion. Joe Smith, the Chesterfield left-half, was badly wounded but carried on attacking. William Gerrish, the Aston Villa inside forward, was shot in the legs. Grimsby Town captain Sid Wheelhouse succumbed to gas. His team-mates wrote sorrowfully to the club secretary about their vainful attempts to reach his grave.

Yesterday, Ainsworth walked slowly, respectfully through the war cemetery at Delville Wood. "It's really important we never forget", he said. "Every footballer would be humbled by this place. I was told they chose me because I have connections throughout the game from non-league to Premier League. There's no Premier League no League Two out here, all these lads fought side by side. That's humbling, to be the person asked to blow the whistle for the two minute silence was a massive honour. That was the signal to go over the top and on the first day of battle thousands were wiped out."

Reading's Allen Foster was cut down by machine gun fire, Plymouth Argyle's James McCormick had his head blown open, skin peeling down, obscuring his vision, so he staggered on into German hands. Captain Edward Bell, of Portsmouth and Southampton, won an MC for conspicuous gallantry.



Moved by the myriad reminiscing, Stant would love clubs to bring academy kids out "to pay their respects" to the Somme. "It's a different type of player coming through now, brought up a different way and a lot of them haven't experienced hardship" said Stant. "Some don't appreciate how lucky they are. I've taken them on one side and said there's a real world out there." Out in the real world in 1916, one of the 17th Middlesex heroes was the keen sportsman Captain Ernest Parfitt, whose grandson John Matthews skirted Delville Wood, clutching a letter of Parfitt's to his wife. Matthews read as he walked: "We succeeded in taking a wood which is nicknamed Devil's Wood, and I can assure you that the name is very appropriate. We held the wood until yesterday, when we were relieved." Matthews shook his head in admiration, "I think of all the shelling he had been through, the whole maelstrom, and his handwriting is so good."

Stories were everywhere, William Jonas, a popular forward of Clapton Orient, left a note declaring "special love to my sweetheart Mary Jane and best regards to the lads at Orient." He was killed the moment he went over the top. "In football, someone gets injured or wants a transfer and we treat it like a big deal" said Greg Clarke, chairman of the Football League. "I'd support bringing young footballers out here, to give them a sense of perspective on what true sacrifice is all about. This is the most rewarding day I've had in the job. Walking round these graves, seeing people aged 17, 18, who ran into a wood with shells raining down on them. They kept going, they never gave up and that's truly humbling".

"My grandfather was left for dead on the Somme battlefield. He was carried off by the Germans, who took him to hospital, fixed him, and he was a POW for the rest of the war. Three of his brothers were killed. Most of his mates were killed. He survived."

As the gathering broke up, the exhortation read by John Matthews remained with all privileged to salute the Footballers' Battalions yesterday: "They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old. Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning: We will remember them."

The above article written by Henry Winter is reproduced by kind permission of The Daily Telegraph.

## Veteran makes an emotional return to Italy

Ken Brown made an emotional trip back to Italy where he lost friends and was injured in 1944. The lottery's Heroes Return scheme paid for him to take a trip back to Monte Cassino in Italy. Ken now 87 found the grave of a friend whose body he had carried on the back of a mule and recalled other painful memories of his part in the allied struggle against the Germans who were occupying the ruins of a mountain top monastery which had been bombed by the Americans.

He was able to show his son Keith and daughter in law Carole, who accompanied him, Snake's Head Ridge which he spent two weeks trekking up and down with mules, and a further fortnight perched atop manning a machine gun just fifty yards from the enemy. One night, Ken who joined the Regiment as a drummer boy aged 14 was blown off the cliff top by enemy fire and the machine-gun tripod fell on top of him, splitting his head. He was not discovered until the next day.

Ken who lives in the RBL Halsey House care home at Cromer was blown up on two other occasions in Italy so severely damaging his hearing that he was unable to pursue his love of music as an army bandsman and has now been completely deaf for 40 years. During the trip the family visited several memorials including the Commonwealth cemetery at Monte Casino which contains 4000 graves and where a further 4000 names are recorded of those soldiers whose bodies were not found.

Whilst touring the cemetery Ken was thanked and hugged by an Italian major visiting the sites where his father had fought. Ken, who also played the flute and bugle before becoming deaf, will shortly be undergoing treatment to see whether he would benefit from cochlear implants to restore some of his hearing. With a desire to hear the canons roar once more Ken, should the implants restore his hearing, will purchase Tchaikovsky's 1812 overture.

## The Lisbon Maru Incident - The Chinese Perspective

By Major (Retd) Brian Finch

Figures in brackets refer to notes at the end of the article.

Most readers of The Die Hards Newsletter will be familiar with the Lisbon Maru incident of October 1942, when some 1,800 POWs from Hong Kong, including 1st Bn the Middlesex Regt (DCO), were being shipped in this cargo vessel to Japan to work as slave labour. The Lisbon Maru, not being marked as carrying prisoners, was torpedoed by a US submarine off the coast of China near Zhou Shan. The Japanese battered down the hatches on the holds containing the POWs in the hopes that they would all perish when the ship sank. Many managed to escape, hundreds of who were rescued by the local Chinese fishermen.



There have been a number of accounts of the incident, the most detailed and authoritative of which is the book "The Sinking of the Lisbon Maru" by Tony Banham (ISBN 962-209-771-5), which is well worth reading for anyone interested in this tragic story.

All these accounts present the story from the angle of the British POW's. Now for the first time we have an account from the viewpoint of the Chinese fishermen who courageously risked their lives to save many of the prisoners.

In August 2005 the Chinese celebrated the 60th anniversary of the end of the War - to us the Second World War; to the Chinese the War of Resistance against Japan. In Zhou Shan, an event was held to commemorate the Lisbon Maru incident and the part played by the local fishermen. With the help of the Lisbon Maru Association in Hong Kong they managed to find a survivor from the incident, a coastal gunner called Charles Jordan and arranged for him to attend the event; and to enjoy an emotional reunion with those who had helped save his life. Following the revived interest in the incident, the Chinese set up a museum to commemorate this as well as other aspects of local life. The Dongji Museum of History and Culture opened in July 2010. It contains many pictures and artefacts connected with the sinking of the Lisbon Maru and has a Chinese language website which provides a detailed account describing the incident from the Chinese perspective. I have translated the website into English and the key parts of the translation are given below.

Notes on the translation.

1. *The place names may cause some confusion. Zhou Shan is a county in Zhejiang Province in eastern China, made up of a group of islands. Zhou Shan is also the name of the major island in the group. Within this group lies a sub-group of islands known as Dongji (which means 'extreme East'; it being the most easterly part of China). Dongji is also the name of the principal town or township. There are four inhabited islands in this sub group, two of which, Miaozihu and Qingbang, are referred to in the account.*
2. *Figures. The figures for casualties and so on differ in significant detail from those given in Tony Banham's book. I have consulted Tony Banham who says that oddly, the Chinese figures are taken from a Japanese source: the wartime propaganda newspaper called Hong Kong News.*

### The Sinking of the Lisbon Maru

Following the release of thorough scholarly research into and historic documents of the sinking of the Lisbon Maru, the history of the Lisbon Maru incident has gradually clarified. The Lisbon Maru was originally a postal service ship, 135.64

metres in length, with two reciprocating main engines, a maximum power of 4,684 horsepower, a speed of 12 knots, and a total tonnage of 7,053 tons. At the time of World War II it was requisitioned by the Japanese militarist government and later turned into a cargo ship. In 1942 it set out from the Philippines' capital Manila via Hong Kong bound for Tokyo in Japan.

On 27 September the Lisbon Maru was loaded with 778 officers and men of the Japanese army relief troops as well as 1,816 British prisoners of war and cargo. On 1 October, as the ship's route took it to the sea off Dongji (Qingbang Island), Zhoushan, it was hit by a torpedo from an American submarine; the ship's hold immediately took in water, which was extremely dangerous. The majority of the prisoners of war were in the ship's three holds; not only did the Japanese army not release them from the holds, they sealed the holds tight.

Through the constant battering by the prisoners of war using their whole strength, eventually they opened one hatch to escape. During the process of escaping, because they were tightly packed one can imagine the sounds of their desperate calling out (this detail comes from oral accounts of British prisoners of war who were saved). On the morning of 2 October the ship sank. At that time the prisoners of war jumped into the sea to flee for their lives; many fishermen from Miaozihu Island and Qingbang Island witnessed this tragic scene with their own eyes.

Large quantities of goods and prisoners of war were drifting on the surface of the sea. Dongji Township heard the news and, using all kinds of small boats did all they could to rescue altogether an estimated 384 British prisoners of war, and took them to the fishing villages for succour. On 2 October the Japanese army went to the island to track down and arrest them; the vast majority of the British were caught and taken prisoner, but three British men, Johnstone, Evans and Fallace<sup>1</sup>, were hidden by the local fishermen and, after passing through many places, escaped via Chongqing and returned to the UK.

### The Fall of Hong Kong

On 7 December 1941 Japan carried out a surprise attack on Pearl Harbour, and within hours launched attacks on a number of nations and regions in Asia, including Malaysia<sup>2</sup> (sic), Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore and Hong Kong. On 8 December US President Roosevelt declared war on Japan and the Pacific War officially began. At 8:00 am that morning, Lieutenant General Takashi Sakai<sup>3</sup>, stationed at 23rd Army Headquarters in Guangzhou, ordered the 38th Division to cross the Shenzhen River and invade Hong Kong.

At that time there were only 15,000 troops defending Hong Kong, and only five old usable military aircraft. Taken by storm, the British troops steadily retreated in defeat and Kowloon fell after 5 days. The Japanese army ceaselessly attacked the north Shore of Hong Kong Island by shelling and air attack, and on the evening of



18 December, six battalions of Japanese troops crossed Victoria Harbour in the dark. They landed in the area from North Point to Aldrich Bay and after a further five days they occupied Wongnaichung Gap, killing the Commander of the Canadian troops, Brigadier Lawson, and the British troops lost the last line of defence. On Christmas Day, 25 December 1941, the Governor, Sir Mark Young, surrendered to the Japanese army and Hong Kong fell under Japanese occupation.

In January 1942 (sic)<sup>4</sup>, when British Far East Headquarters had requested that two Canadian regiments [brigades?] be sent to reinforce Hong Kong, Churchill had considered this would be a meaningless sacrifice and raised objections; but in the end, reinforcements of 3,000 Canadian officers and men were sent; with the result that they had been in Hong Kong just two weeks when the Japanese attacked Hong Kong; and although the Canadian officers and soldiers, who were unfamiliar with the place, offered heroic resistance, under enemy bombing more than half were killed or wounded, the commander was killed, and the remainder were taken prisoner.

Just like in other Asian cities, after the Japanese occupied Hong Kong they carried out all kinds of atrocities, rape and pillage, massacring prisoners of war and civilians. Throughout the whole of Hong Kong about 2,000 defending troops were killed in battle, and more than 4,000 civilians were slaughtered; more than 10,000 soldiers became prisoners of war, of whom more than 5,000 were British prisoners of war, including the 1,816 young men later sent on the Lisbon Maru. None of these around 20-year olds knew that from that day forward they would have to pay a great price to survive each day.

This is Shamshuipo prisoner of war camp. After Hong Kong was occupied, the Japanese army set up the biggest prisoner of war camp here. Large numbers of British prisoners of war lived here. The prisoner of war camp was comparable to a refugee camp: sewage overflowed; disease spread, and food was in short supply. For every one the Japanese discovered who, unable to stand the suffering, tried to escape, they killed one; the gentlemanly bearing which the British officers still maintained at the beginning was gone after a few weeks; they traded their smart boots for cigarettes and food; that was war. Faced with war, the losing side has no dignity, quite a few prisoners died through lack of food; they got thinner every day, and became debilitated, and in the summer of 1942 the Japanese government decided to send the prisoners of war to Japan to work as coolies.

In 1942 the Lisbon Maru received its first transportation task. The Captain was Shigeru Kyoda, the 77 crew were responsible for taking to Japan 1,816 British prisoners of war, 778 Japanese army troops and 1,676 tons of cargo. On 27 September the Lisbon Maru, loaded with British army prisoners of war and cargo, left Hong Kong and sailed east. It passed the East Island Lighthouse off the northern tip of Taiwan and the North Yushan Island Lighthouse off Xiangshan County in Ningbo. The bodies of the prisoners of war on board were emaciated,

burdened by sickness; with dull expressions, these British youngsters did not yet know that they were headed for a calamity, sailing towards hell.

According to the recollections of survivors, the prisoners of war were locked up separately in three holds, each containing around 600 men. No 1 Hold, forward, mainly held sailors of the Royal Navy and an infantry regiment; the prisoners in No 2 Hold, amidships, were mainly from the Royal Scots; and those locked in No 3 Hold, aft, were mainly from the Royal Artillery. This arrangement created a crucial impact on the fate of each person when the Lisbon Maru sank. And before this, locked in any one of these unbearably crowded holds, there was no difference between them, it was not only space that was lacking, but even light became a luxury. No space, no light, not knowing the time; sweat, body odour, vomit and faeces, were even more suffocating; what the prisoners of war wanted most at this time was to be able to get out on deck. Not long after setting sail, the condition of the prisoners of war began to get more wretched. Dennis Morley<sup>5</sup> used the word "zoo" to describe the conditions in the hold at that time, in his recollection they were not as good as those animals in the zoo. In this dark and stinking space, he and his comrades could only watch as the shadow of death hovered above them.

In order to control the situation 2nd Lieutenant Wada got the Japanese army to begin nailing battens on the closed hold hatches. The commander of the British prisoners of war, Colonel Stewart<sup>6</sup>, immediately protested, demanding that the Japanese army should at least remove one batten to allow fresh air in so that they could breathe. As a result, Captain Shigeru Kyoda and 2nd Lieutenant Wada quarrelled; 2nd Lieutenant Wada insisted, saying: "It is very difficult to control 1,816 prisoners of war and I order the holds to be sealed." 2nd Lieutenant Wada issued orders for the three holds to be completely sealed with battens; there was no way for air to get into the holds, the prisoners of war in the holds were helpless; the air became more and more foul, the prisoners of war became weaker and weaker, and they began to get confused and lose consciousness. At this time, in No 2 Hold people had begun to die of sickness; the leaders of the British Army prisoners of war and their interpreters constantly demanded air and water, but the Japanese did not pay the slightest attention; in their eyes the prisoners were basically not human.

On 30 September 1942, a wet and windy night, in the waters in the region of Xiangshan County, Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, just as the USS Submarine Grouper was at the edge of its hunting ground in Chinese waters, the Lisbon Maru came into the field of vision of the USS Grouper's periscope. Everything was set for its doom: the Lisbon Maru was already completely exposed in range of attack by the USS Grouper. At this time the 1,816 British prisoners of war and the 778 Japanese troops on the Lisbon Maru did not know they had been locked onto by the USS Grouper; the lifespan of the Lisbon Maru was coming to its end; the torpedoes of the Grouper would decide whether it lived or died.



After several hours of pursuit, the submarine sailed rapidly in a straight line, and went ahead to await the ship's arrival. They got as close as they could to the field of fire of the torpedoes; but because it was not yet light, they had no way of accurately determining the torpedo range, the line of sight was not very good, so they could only sail ahead and wait in the water to fire.

At 7.04 am, three torpedoes were fired at the Lisbon Maru from 3,200 metres. After the three torpedoes were fired, the Lisbon Maru continued sailing intermittently, the commander judged that they had not hit the target, and without the slightest hesitation the Grouper fired the fourth torpedo, hitting the Lisbon Maru in the stern; after two minutes and 10 seconds a loud explosion sounded on the sea. Seen from the periscope the Lisbon Maru, which had stopped, showed no obvious signs of damage on the surface.

At 8.45 the Grouper fired a fifth torpedo from 1,000 metres but did not hit the target. At 9.38 they discovered a Japanese bomber flying towards them, whereupon they immediately fired the sixth torpedo, and the Grouper immediately dived to 100 feet. After 40 seconds there was the sound of the torpedo exploding: the Lisbon Maru had been hit again, and this time the ship had begun to list; and after midday the likelihood of the Lisbon Maru sinking became more and more apparent. Several Japanese destroyers sailed from Shanghai and carried out a rapid transfer of the Japanese military on board.

The six torpedoes turned the Lisbon Maru into an inferno. At the time of the calamity the British troops were tightly locked in the holds by the Japanese army; hopes of survival were uncertain; would they be able to see the sun the next day?

On 2 October 1942, the sun rose as usual; the prisoners of war who had all along been walled up in the leaking holds had to use the utmost strength to take turns in pumping out the water, some died from exhaustion whilst pumping; how tragic that was. When the morning came and the Lisbon Maru suddenly shook every prisoner was unnerved: they knew the last moment was coming. The holds took in more and more water, the air became more and more scarce; when the Lisbon Maru began obviously to list, hopes of survival became increasingly uncertain. The commander of the British prisoners of war, Colonel Stewart, decided that all efforts should be made to break out of the holds; at this time Lieutenant Colonel (sic) Howell<sup>7</sup> took a knife and volunteered to take the vanguard in the breakout; he not only opened No 2 Hold, where he was, but with others also opened No 1 Hold and No 3 Hold.

The first British Army prisoners of war to break out of the holds immediately came under rifle fire from the Japanese military; Lieutenant Colonel (sic) Howell was injured, Lieutenant Colonel (sic) Potter<sup>8</sup> was killed. Other men were blocked by the Japanese troops in the entrance to the hold and shot; more and more prisoners of war came out through the hatches, by now the Japanese military had no way of

preventing a bloody massacre; the deck became a scene of carnage flowing with blood. In the midst of this fierce battle, the Lisbon Maru once again violently submerged, and everyone realised it was about to sink; all the prisoners of war in the three holds broke out disregarding their own safety, and the most desperate were the prisoners of war in No 3 Hold.

The explosion had penetrated the Lisbon Maru precisely in No 3 Hold in the stern. Because of this the seawater gushed in there first and the fiercest. Because the personnel in the hold were already unbearably weak from having been locked in for a long time and rapidly pumping water, some people could plainly see that the hatch was open, but whilst the spirit was strong, the flesh was weak.

The breakout was already too late as far as they were concerned; over 200 people who barely had enough strength to move could only rely on mutual support to climb out. Just at this crucial moment, they heard a cracking sound coming from the wooden ladder in the hatch, and the ladder broke, and the more than 400 men in the hold completely lost all vitality. The Lisbon Maru listed heavily to port; like all the other soldiers, the soldiers from No 3 Hold instinctively surged towards the ship's bow after they emerged, or jumped directly into the sea. A few prisoners of war still struggling to climb out of the holds called out "Goodbye, Piccadilly; farewell Leicester Square; it's a long, long way to Tipperary....".

The Lisbon Maru went to its doom amidst the sound of the prisoners of war singing. The ship's stern sank completely, and at this time the more than 400 British prisoners of war still inside Hold No 3 had no chance of escape; a huge plume of water came out of the bow of the Lisbon Maru and after a few final struggles it slowly sank into the sea. All the more than 1,200 prisoners of war fell into the sea, maybe they were not destined to die. Unexpectedly there were witnesses to this maritime tragedy in broad daylight; who actually were they? When the Lisbon Maru sank, seeing the sinking with their own eyes were not only Japanese and British, but also Chinese; they were Chinese fishermen from Dongji Island.

On that morning, 2 October 1942, almost all the villagers saw the Lisbon Maru from the distance; it was in fact about to sink. Just as the people were watching from a distance, more than 1,200 prisoners of war, weakened beyond endurance, fell into the sea one after another following the sinking of the Lisbon Maru. Just at that time, Japanese troops on a warship were still shooting the prisoners of war who had fallen into the water; and the whole scene left the Chinese people dumbfounded. The Lisbon Maru incident happened during a rising tide in a northeast wind.

The prisoners of war, tormented by extreme hunger and sickness, basically could not control their direction and speed in the vast expanse of the sea, and only drifted with the tide, floating in a southwest direction. To the southwest lay Qingbang Island and Miaozihu Island of Dongji District. As far as the prisoners of war were



concerned they offered a slim chance of survival; if they could swim to the small islands in the vicinity and cling onto the rocks or even get ashore, perhaps they could still manage to escape death.

Before long, residents on the island first saw a large amount of cargo floating past on the surface of the sea, amongst this flotsam were prisoners of war struggling to save their lives, and floating corpses, as well as cargo. 67 years ago, the local residents lived in straw houses and lived off sweet potatoes; they had never seen foreign goods. Watching the goods float past on the sea, they still did not know that there were also people floating on the sea; and the gathering of foreign goods finally unexpectedly turned into rescuing foreign people, news that there were people in the sea quickly spread all over Qingbang Island and Miaozihu Island.

The fishermen spontaneously organised themselves, rowed out on dilapidated sampans; although in the huge sea they seemed extremely insignificant, yet in the life and death rescue that was developing in the Dongji Sea, they helped 384 British Army prisoners of war to become lucky ones in the rescue. And all this was seen by the Japanese, the Japanese warship(s) gradually went further away. And the Chinese fishermen were still rescuing the British prisoners of war in the maritime disaster, but their simple craft could not catch up with the speed at which the great sea swallowed up life, and when dusk arrived on 2 October not one person was left on the surface of the sea; and the Lisbon Maru had already gone forever.

At the crucial moment the small wooden boats of the Chinese fishermen had appeared. 384 British troops were saved and taken to Dongji Island; the 46 fishing boats launched by 198 Dongji Island fishermen made 65 journeys to sea to carry out the rescue. Amongst these 278 people were rescued to Qingbang Island, 106 to Miaozihu Island; this incident became big news on Dongji Island. Sheltering these 384 men, some young, some in the prime of life, presented tiny Dongji with some difficulty.

At that time Dongji Island had only 1,000 residents, there was little farmland on the island, and they grew only a small amount of sweet potatoes; the islanders lived in straw houses, and most years they were underfed. But when saving people no-one thinks so much, when there are so many refugees, first get on with saving them and leave the worrying till later.

384 British Army prisoners of war slowly walked into the fishing village(s) in Dongji Island and came to the doors of the homes of the villagers. Since conditions in the village houses were so cramped, some of the British Army prisoners of war were diverted to the Tian Hou (Tin Hao) Temple.<sup>9</sup> This mass of utterly exhausted British youth slept peacefully in this small temple in a foreign land far from home, whilst over their heads the oriental gods quietly blessed and protected them.

It was very lucky for them that they were able to sleep in the Tian Hou Temple in Qingbang Island; think of those of their comrades who jumped into the sea to flee for their lives and met death from Japanese barbarous fire, and others who climbed the sides of Japanese ships with great difficulty, only to be kicked back into the sea again. Those who were not saved and taken ashore had no hope of survival. That same evening, 1,432 souls were consigned to the Dongji Island seas<sup>10</sup>.

After the sinking of the Lisbon Maru, a section of the mast emerged from the water, as if this were a symbol of Death, a constant reminder that the problems for the British troops were not yet over. After the prisoners of war had been rescued and taken to the islands, they were finally able to recover their breath having been clothed and fed by the villagers. On Qingbang Island, the majority of the prisoners of war prepared to go to the Tian Hou Temple as temporary accommodation, some split up and lived in the fishermen's houses.

Nearly all the prisoners of war on Miaozihu Island lived in the fishermen's houses. The 1948 Dongji District, Dinghai County investigation report described it thus: "Residents of the two islands witnessed the sufferings of the British soldiers who were not only ill-clothed and soaking wet, many were even completely naked and in a miserable condition.

The fishermen voluntarily gave them clothes, cotton padded clothes, boiling water and food, and gave them shelter." Actually, the situation at that time in the fishing village which was so generous in helping to solve their difficulties, was such that they barely had enough for three meals a day, just half a bowl of rice; a person could not eat his fill. Suddenly there were two mouths to feed, was this not one disaster after another? But the kind-hearted Dongji people took the chickens and dried fish which they had collected and treasured and served them to the visitors. This could be described as using up all their resources. The British prisoners of war spent one night in Dongji and formed a dying friendship with the fishermen.

The Japanese troops could not ignore the prisoners of war who had been rescued by the Chinese people. So the next day at first light, more than 200 Japanese soldiers took 5 naval ships and went straight to Dongji Island and on the way in the morning light gave a demonstration of firing their rifles. The villagers, whose feelings had long been awakened, tried to find places to hide. But contrary to expectations there was nowhere to escape on this small desolate island, and running off to sea would be even more of a dead end. 200 Japanese troops began a house to house search, and the island filled with a tense atmosphere.

The prisoners of war who were hiding in secret places knew they would not be able to remain, and without any force, without any complaint, the prisoners of war gathered themselves together and went outside. To the survivors, disasters never come singly; this was the fate of the British prisoners of war on the Lisbon Maru and the summary of the destiny of people in war. Ordinary people, lacking strength,



have kind and courageous hearts; but they don't have the ability to resist firearms and bayonets. Under brutal armed force, the Japanese troops did not need to injure even one soldier, but simply seized and took away the British prisoners of war on Dongji Island; but what they had not reckoned with was ordinary Chinese saving other people in the face of the jaws of death.

Under the guidance of Tang Ruliang, the Qingbang Island fishermen took three British men to Xiaowandong, situated near Nantian Bay, and three men, Evans, Fallace and Johnstone, hid from the Japanese blanket search.

With the help of the villagers, the three British men hid in Xiaowandong by day and food was sent to them by the local women, and went back to Nantian Bay to spend the nights. Although the villagers did everything they could to take care of them, the three British men still got weaker by the day and started to become ill. Therefore the fishermen tried every means to get the three British men away as quickly as possible under the noses of the Japanese Army.

This needed to be done urgently, Shen Pinsheng, a prominent figure in Dongji Island, took personal charge and went to Hulu [Calabash] Island to ask for Liao Kaiyun. This Liao Kaiyun was no insignificant person; the area around Zhoushan had its own Japanese resistance force.

Once Shen Pinsheng had explained why he had come, Liao Kaiyun immediately went to Dongji and had a meeting with the three British men; seeing that they all had a fever, Liao Kaiyun made a quick decision immediately to make arrangements to move them. At dusk on 9 October he dressed the three British men in local fishermen's clothes, let them hide in the hold of a sampan and flee directly to Hulu Island.

Liao Kaiyun personally took his own forces to act as escort and did all they could to avoid the Japanese, making a dash to get to Hulu Island before first light. When the three British men got to Hulu Island, they were immediately sent into the home of Liao Kaiyun's father-in-law Yang Fulin.

The sick Evans lay on the bed of the head of the household, unable to stir. Just when they were busily clustering about in a group giving the three some hot water for a bath, cooking and changing their clothes, another boat silently crept into Hulu Harbour.

Originally Liao Kaiyun had made two decisions: one was to move the men immediately, the other was to send someone to inform his father-in-law, Yang Fulin, who was the town head where Shen's home was, and ask him to get a doctor. Because at that time the Japanese were watching everything very closely, Dr Li Qiliang, who was the appointed doctor, was not willing to go; Yang Fulin then gave a direct order calling Li Qiliang to Hulu Island, and Yang Fulin also took five gold

bars as a gift for him. Through Li Qiliang's diagnosis and treatment, the three men's sickness was rapidly brought under control, and by morning Evans' high fever had abated. After a few days, Liao Kaiyun sent Evans and the others to the 4th Regiment concentration area - Guoju.

Under arrangements made by Wang Duanneng, Commander of the 4th Regiment, the three British men were transferred via many places and finally were sent to Chongqing Radio Station, where they narrated the incident of the sinking of the Lisbon Maru, sharing with the whole world the atrocity of the Japanese bandits' slaughter of the prisoners of war; afterwards the three men were handed over to the British Embassy in China by the Guomindang11 government.; the survivors of the disaster returned to the UK.

#### Notes

- 1 William Johnstone, Arthur Bill Evans and Jim Fallace, the details of whose escape is recorded on pages 112 and 143-144 of Tony Banham's book "The sinking of the Lisbon Maru" (trans).
- 2 Malaysia did not exist until 1963(trans).
- 3 Sakai was Japanese Commander in Chief, South China (trans).
- 4 The website indeed says 1942, but this should clearly be 1941 (trans).
- 5 Private Dennis Morley Royal Scots, reported in "the sinking of the Lisbon Maru" (trans).
- 6 Lt Col Henry "Monkey" Stewart, Commanding Officer 1st Battalion Middlesex Regiment (DCO).
- 7 2nd Lieutenant Hargreaves Miles Howell, Royal Army Service Corps *ibid* (trans).
- 8 Corps Officer Alan Stanley Potter, St John's Ambulance Brigade *ibid* (trans).
- 9 A temple dedicated to Tian Hou (Tin Hao in Cantonese), Empress of Heaven Goddess of the Sea and patron of Chinese fishermen. Such a temple is an important feature of every Chinese fishing village (trans).
- 10 According to Tony Banham's book a total of 828 men were lost and 1006 survived out of a total of 1834 prisoners of war on board. Some of the survivor were picked up by Japanese naval ships, a fact of which islanders might have well been in ignorance (trans)

#### Life in the Army is Like That!

I think it was in the spring of 1945 that the first battalion of the Princess Louise's Kensington Regiment joined together at Lake Trasimino. Lieutenant Sandford joined our platoon and he told us that we were on our way to Alexandria in Egypt to be trained to go to Palestine.

When we arrived in Egypt, we were all given two week's leave. After a month though, our orders were changed again and the division was told we were to return to Italy. I was placed on a detail where I was put in charge of preparing the vehicles for our voyage back. While preparing, one night we stayed overnight at a NAAFI Institute about 20 miles outside Alexandria. That evening, we were having a few beers when a soldier appeared out of the night and asked if we were part of the Middlesex Regiment.

We belonged to the Kensington's so we responded in the negative. He said that his brother was in the seventh platoon of the Kensington Regiment and that he'd like to see him but unfortunately for Stacy, and for reasons unknown to us, his brother was still in Italy. We asked him where he was from and where he was going. He told us he was on his way back to his job in Cairo. Stacy joined us for



beers and after a few he decided he wanted to come to Italy with us. Having had quite a few beers ourselves by this time, we told him that we would take him on the ship with us - no problem. The next morning we put him on the bottom of a Bren gun carrier and covered him with kit bags. We took him down to the harbour and he was loaded on board. After we'd left the harbour, Stacy crawled out and joined us on the top deck - then later for a meal.

As we lined up for our meal, Sergeant Dingy Bell said, "I think we have a double shuffler on board." He asked me if I knew anything about how he'd come to be with us. Deciding I should tell the truth, I told him he had joined us last night. He then told me I was in very serious trouble and said, "He's a deserter you know and you aided and abetted him." But he conceded that there was nothing that could be done about the situation until we landed in Bari.

Upon arrival in Italy, Sergeant Bell said, "So now you'll need to speak with Major Doyle, the group commander, and let him know what you've done." So I took Stacy with me and repeated the story to Major Doyle. He let both of us know in no uncertain terms that we were crazy but that he couldn't do anything about it personally so he ordered us to take the Jeep to the MP station up the road, tell our story and see what they would say.

When I arrived at the station I explained what we had done and surprisingly, the MP's first words to Stacy were, 'Can you cook?' to which Stacy replied, "Sure." He then told Stacy to come with him, under arrest, - as their cook as they moved up the line. He ordered me to return to my unit.

That was the last I saw of Stacy until months later up the line. We were holding a farm house called Ripiano where we had stayed for the past month on a quiet front. Four of us had been given forty-eight hours leave to go to a town to get cleaned up and see a show. When we crossed the Bailey bridge a Red Cap stopped the Jeep and who should it be but Stacy?

We recognized each other immediately and I asked him why he was on guard duty since he was supposed to be a prisoner. He explained that there had been casualties and they had no one to guard him so he'd become part of the team. Later we learned that he'd also pulled some soldiers out of a town that had been regularly shelled and that he'd become a hero.

After that chance encounter we never met again and I'm still wondering whether he found his brother in the end - or made it home to England himself for that matter

Written by 6216241 Cpl. William (Bill) Batterbee, Cobourg, Ontario, Canada - January 2011 ex 70th Bn Middlesex Regt. Transferred to Princes Louise's Kensington Regt. 1943

## New members

The following persons have recently joined the Regimental Association

A F Banham	Depot MX 1955-57, then CCF Instructor 1957-85
W Davidson	1st Battalion
B Glassup	1st Battalion (Signal Platoon 1960's)
E E W Hunt	1st Battalion (1961-64)
D C Oakley	5 MX and 6/7 Queens

## Book Review

KUT 1916 Courage and failure in Iraq Colonel Patrick Crowley

The siege of Kut is a story of blunders, sacrifice, imprisonment and escape. The allied campaign in Mesopotamia began in 1914 as a relatively simple operation to secure the oilfields in the Shatt-al- Arab delta and Basra area. Initially it was a great success, but as the army pressed towards Baghdad its poor logistic support, training, equipment and command left it isolated and besieged by the Turks.

By 1916 the army had not been relieved and on 29th April 1916, the British Army suffered one of the worst defeats in military history. Major General Sir Charles Townshend surrendered his allied force to the Turks in Mesopotamian (now Iraq) town of Kut-al-Amara. Over 13,000 troops, British and Indian, went into captivity; many would not survive their incarceration. In Kut 1916, Colonel Crowley (a serving infantry officer) recounts this dramatic tale and its terrible aftermath.

## The book reviewed by Richard Holmes

The surrender of a British-Indian force of some 12,000 men at Kut-al-Amara in Mesopotamia (modern Iraq) in 1916 was a sharp blow to British prestige, although it had little long-term effect on the campaign generally. The war in Mesopotamia has been very flimsily covered by historians (the Western Front seems to scoop the pool) and there is no good modern account of the siege of Kut, of the desperate attempts to relieve it, or of the literally shocking fate of its brave garrison.



Patrick Crowley sets out to fill a yawning gap in the historiography, and does so very well. As he makes clear, this is in part a labour of love, for he is an officer in the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, which has accomplished three tours of duty in Iraq, and traces its descent from some of the regiments at Kut or in the relief attempts. He has himself served in Iraq, and when he describes the almost paralysing effect of its summer heat and the quite extraordinary difficulties created by its unforgiving landscape, he knows whereof he speaks.

I do not usually subscribe to the view that British soldiers of the First World War were 'lions led by donkeys.' But in the case of Mesopotamia it cannot be said that high-level British decision-making was inspiring. The campaign was initiated by the Government of India, and early seizure of the Basra area soon encouraged classic 'mission creep,' with the 6th (Poona) Division under Major General Charles Townshend setting off up the Tigris for Baghdad. Fought to a standstill at Ctesiphon, it fell back on Kut, in a loop in the Tigris, and stood siege, confident that relief would come. It is easy to see now that getting an adequately-sized force up the inhospitable banks of the Tigris, laced as they were with waterways, posed an extraordinary logistic challenge. One of the things that most sticks in my mind is the woefully under-resourced state of the medical services, and the awful consequence of this inadequate preparation upon the wounded.

Successive relief attempts (one of them a Boys' Own Paper scheme to run a steamer packed with supplies up the river past Turkish positions) foundered, and Townshend, who for all the criticism he later attracted, had kept his garrison in good heart till the end, surrendered only when his position was utterly hopeless. Although he himself went off to a gentlemanly captivity in a villa on the banks of the Sea of Marmara, the plight of the NCOs and men who surrendered was dreadful. They endured 'death marches' of the sort which would be grimly familiar in the Far East a generation later, and died like flies from ill-treatment and malnutrition: almost 6,000 perished.

Whatever the failings of politicians or the high command, it is impossible not to admire the regimental officers and men, British and Indian, who fought with a courage worthy of better plans. 1st Battalion the Seaforth Highlanders began one of the relief attempts with 962 men and emerged with just 103, losing 43 officers killed, wounded and missing in the same period. The Kirke report, which drew measured conclusions about British performance in the war as a whole, said of Mesopotamia that 'unless strategy, tactics and administration are interdependent, disaster will ensure.' There were moments, as I read Patrick Crowley's well-chosen words, that I sensed the powerful undertow of historical repetition.

The book is available from all good bookshops, Amazon.co.uk, or Marston Book Services 01235 465577 for direct sales. Price £25 Hardback

### Seeking information can you help?

I am researching my family and have found that my Grandfather's brother served with the Middlesex Regiment, 2nd Battalion during World War 2. Unfortunately he was killed in action on the 16th May 1940 in France. His name is John Francis Day and he came from Woodford Green, Essex.

I am hoping that there may still be some members who served with John and may remember him and be able to tell me a little about him and about their time in France and the Regiment. I am also hoping to find out more about the circumstances surrounding his death, i.e. where he was, and what he was doing at that time and what the Regiment's role would have been at this time.

My contact details are Mrs. Samantha Slater, Chief Clerk, QRH HHQ, Regents Park Barracks, Albany Street, London NW1 4AL. Tel 0207 756 2275 E-mail [chclk@grhussars.co.uk](mailto:chclk@grhussars.co.uk).



## REGIMENTAL GOODS

The following are held in stock and prices are available on request to the Regimental Shop, RHQ PWRR Howe Barracks Canterbury Kent CT1 1JY. Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to PWRR Account No 0566700 Telephone No 01227 818058.

### Blazer Badges

Ice Buckets miniature side drum with Regimental Emblazon

Ties (Old pattern maroon and gold)

Ties (New pattern with maroon and gold thin stripes)

Ties Officers Club (Silk)

Middlesex Regt. Cap badges good quality replicas

Old Comrades lapel badges

Regimental Beret Flashes

Prints "Steady the Drums & Fifes unframed - Large Print

- Small Print

### Middlesex Regimental Plaques

Middlesex Blazer Buttons Flat stay bright with engraved Middlesex Badge

Set 6 large buttons 6 small buttons

Individual buttons Large & Small

Regimental Cuff Links

Regimental Tie Grip

Regimental Tie Tack & Chain

Regimental Ladies Brooch



## REGIMENTAL GOODS

The following are kept in stock and where are available are retained at the Regimental Shop, West POWRI House, Barnack, Cambridgeshire, Northants NN16 9JF. Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to POWRI Account No. 8556700 Telephone No. 01227 610066.

### Blazer Badges

Two Buckle miniature with dress with Regimental Emblazon

Two (Old pattern buckle and strap)

Two (New pattern with enamel with gold wire strap)

Two Officers Collar (Old)

Midwest Regt. Cap badge good quality replica

Old Grenadier Regt. Badges

Regimental Band Pipes

Three "Steady the Drums & Pipes" emblems - Large Print

- Small Print

### Midwest Regimental Pigeon

Midwest Blazer Buttons. Two new single with engraved Midwest Regt. Badge

Set of large buttons of same buttons

Individual buttons Large & Small

Regimental Collar Link

Regimental Tie Clip

Regimental Tie Tack & Chain

Regimental Lateral Brooch