



# *The Die-Hards*

NEWSLETTER

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No. 107

Spring 2012

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***H.M. The Queen with H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh***

***The Regimental Association send congratulations  
on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee***

**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.  
**Secretary** : Major D. Bradley, BEM  
 RHQ PWRR  
 Howe Barracks  
 Canterbury, Kent CT1 1JY  
**Editor** : Mr M.J. Ward, BEM  
 21 Field Close, Cranford,  
 Hounslow,  
 Middlesex TW4 6LN

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## Forecast of Events 2012

12th May Association Albuhera Service of Remembrance  
 Regimental chapel St Paul's Cathedral London  
 Seated 10.15hrs Service 10.30hrs  
*Please note revised timings for the Service*

12th May Association AGM and Annual Reunion  
 Union Jack Club, Sandell Street London  
 Annual General Meeting 13.00hrs  
 Luncheon 14.00hrs

23rd June Diamond Jubilee Celebrations  
 Indoor Street Party  
 Union Jack Club Sandell Street London  
 15.00hrs to 18.00hrs

5th July Officer's Club Luncheon  
 Union Jack Club, Sandell Street London

8th November 7th Bn Middlesex Officer's Club Dinner

8th November Garden of Remembrance Westminster Abbey  
 Service commences 10.50hrs

10th November Mx Ceremony of Remembrance Middlesex Guildhall  
 Now Supreme Court of Justice  
 10.30hrs Service 10.50hrs

11th November Remembrance Sunday

11th November 7th Bn Mx Remembrance Service Assemble 10.00hrs  
 At Parish Church St Mary & St George Hornsey

KOREAN VETERANS WHO WISH TO SIT TOGETHER SHOULD TICK THIS BOX ☐  
 A RESERVED SEATING AREA WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE IF NUMBERS REQUEST IT



Ticket Application Form Closing Date 1st May 2012

**MIDDLESEX ANNUAL SERVICE AND ALL RANKS REUNION 12TH MAY 2012**

**MIDDLESEX ANNUAL ALBUHERA SERVICE  
ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL LONDON SERVICE COMMENCES 10.30HRS**

**PLEASE BE SEATED BY 10.15HRS**

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**

Farmhouse Terrine served with Melba Toast

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Roast Rack of Lamb, served with seasonal vegetables and baby Roast Potatoes

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Dessert Eton Mess

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Coffee, Mints and Petit Fours.

**Cost £16.00**

I require .....tickets @£16.00

I require .....tickets @£32.00  
(see note 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**

**KOREAN VETERANS WHO WISH TO SIT TOGETHER SHOULD TICK THIS BOX** ☐  
**A RESERVED SEATING AREA WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE IF NUMBERS REQUEST IT.**

## DIAMOND JUBILEE

Do you remember where you were when you heard that King George VI had died? I was serving at the Depot and in a tailor's fitting room when someone came in and said that the king had died and I would need black crepe armbands. And I did because London District observed the full period of Court mourning,

Then there was the Proclamation of the Accession at Hendon town hall. Are there any members of that guard still out there? That was followed by the concentration of Colour Parties at the Depot with a guardroom full of Colours and a buzz of excitement building up to the actual Coronation. I expect our 1 MX Colour Party remember how wet they got.

Here we are or some of us, sixty years later and in June we shall be celebrating a Diamond Jubilee - a unique event in anyone's lifetime. Elsewhere in this Newsletter you will see details of a party we shall hold at the Union Jack Club on 23rd June.

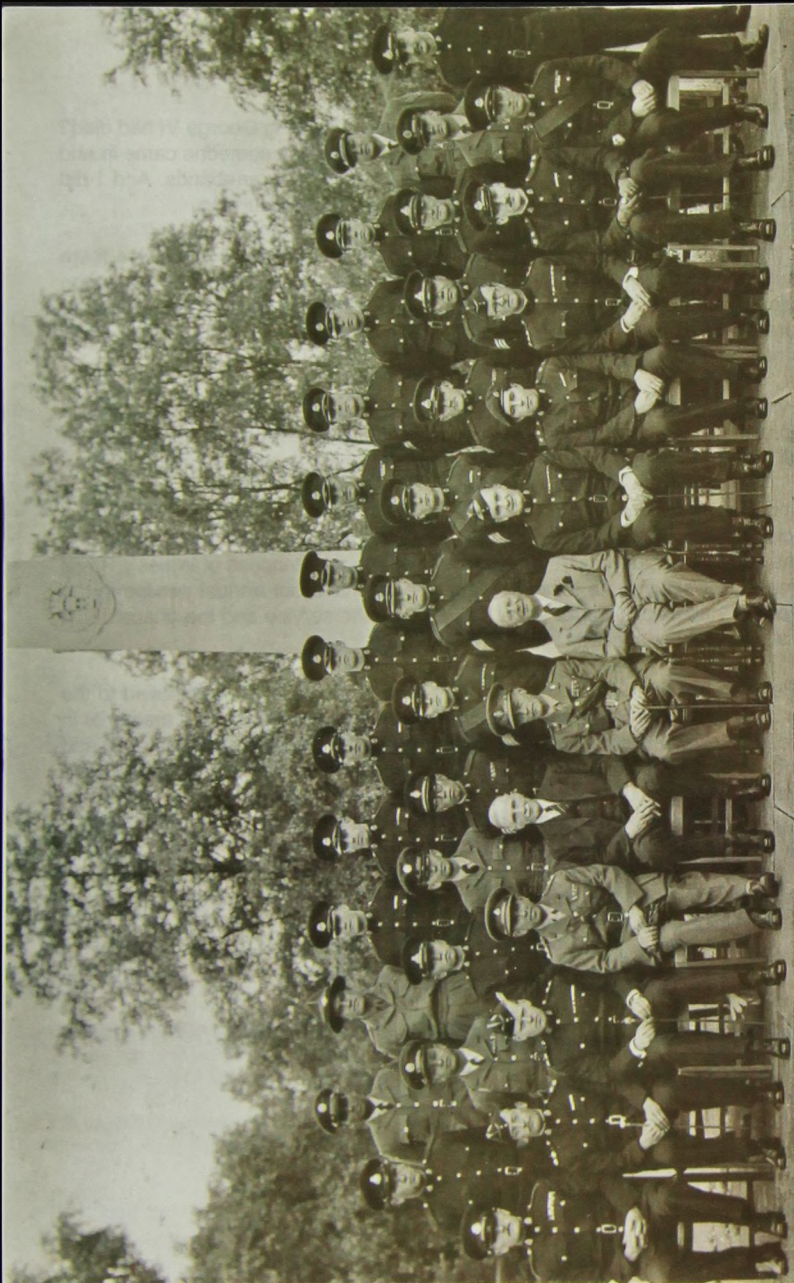
Looking back over the past sixty years much has changed for the Regimental Association. The Depot and the Battalions have gone, the Regiment merged first into the short lived Queen's Regiment and then into the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment. However, some things remain. We still have our annual service in the Middlesex Chapel at St Paul's and I believe both the service and the chapel have been significantly enhanced.

The Reunion has changed but has taken a new lease of life since it moved to the Union Jack Club. The Remembrance service at our newly refurbished memorial in the old Middlesex Guildhall (now the Supreme Court) has been re-established and expanded. The graves of two of our VC's (Ryder and Stagpoole) have been renovated; and now, after six years of lobbying and negotiating we have at last been given planning permission to relocate the Inglis Barracks war memorial to a site on the Ridgeway opposite St Paul's Church Mill Hill.

We do have something to celebrate in this Diamond Jubilee Year and I hope to see you at the Union Jack Club on 23rd June.

Rex Cain





The Coronation Party of The Middlesex Regiment with Allied Regiments  
5th June 1953

**Ticket Application Form Closing date 2nd June 2012**

**for**

**THE MIDDLESEX REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION  
INDOOR STREET PARTY AT THE UNION JACK CLUB LONDON  
23 JUNE 2012 1500 HRS TO 1800 HRS**

The Regimental Association will host an Indoor Street Party be held in the Gascoigne Room of the Union Jack Club on Saturday 23 June 2012 between 1500 hrs and 1800 hrs to celebrate Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee.

The aim is to emulate the old style of a Street party with Union flags and bunting.

A Six Piece Swing Band has been hired for the occasion which consists of a pianist and singer, percussionist, Bass and Sax or Trumpet lead. Their repertoire is appropriate i.e. war time songs, Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and classic swing band music.

The Menu is as follows; Assorted Sandwiches, Warm Sausage Rolls, Vegetarian and Lamb Samoso, Mini Quiches, Mini Salmon Tarts and Mini Welsh Rarebits

**Cost £10.00 per person**

The bar in the Gascoigne Room will be open throughout for those attending to purchase drinks.

I require.....tickets @ £10.00 per person

I require.....tickets @ £19.50 per person

**Total cost £.....**

**(See note below)**

I enclose a stamped addressed envelope for the return of my ticket/s.

Cheques payable to PWRR Benevolent Fund MX no 1 A/c.

Please remember that you will only receive subsidised tickets for one member and one guest i.e. Wife/ partner/ carer.

**Dress Smart Casual**





## THE PRINCESS OF WALES'S ROYAL REGIMENT

### 1 PWRR

The battalion with the exception of the rear party is deployed on Operation Herrick 15 Afghanistan where their prime effort is to provide Police Monitoring and Advisory Group (PMGA) and to provide three rifle companies and the Reconnaissance Platoon to other Battalions. Fire Support Company are based in Laskar Gah running the PMAG with other elements of 20 Armoured Brigade, A and C Companies are with 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland in Nad-e-Ali, B Coy with 5 Rifles in Nar-e-Saraj and Recce Platoon with QRH Battle Group at Patrol Base Attal. Sadly in November the Battalion suffered 1 dead and 4 wounded.

On return to Paderborn the Battalion will give up Warrior and re role as a Light Infantry Battalion.

### 2 PWRR

The Second Battalion is now switching roles from Public Duties to UK Ops and support to the 2012 Olympic Games. Last year saw the Battalion furnish many Queen's and Windsor Castle Guards, and also proudly line-the-route for the Royal Wedding of H.R.H Prince William and Miss Middleton. The Battalion also received a visit from the Colonel in Chief, H.R.H The Queen of Denmark.

Next the Battalion will form the core of a 1000+ Contingency Force for the 2012 Olympic Games, helping to ensure the UK's Main Effort of a successful Games is met. The Battalion will then start the long build up training for the next deployment to Afghanistan, using a six week deployment to Kenya in early 2013 as foundation for their training.

Life for the men has been incredibly busy but equally rewarding.

### 3 PWRR

The Battalion has had a full and busy year which has included two Lion Tours to Cyprus, a Training Team to Uganda, and the deployment of over 50 soldiers to Afghanistan with 1PWRR, 2 Mercian, QDG and various other units in theatre.

The Battalion was selected to provide a Training Team to train the Ugandan Army prior to its operational deployment, a unique honour for the Battalion. The first Cyprus trip occurred in May and was aimed at providing the troops deploying on Herrick 15 with some field firing and other operational training prior to going to Sennybridge to complete their training.



The Battalion is now looking forward to providing the Training Team to Uganda again this year. There is another trip to Cyprus to provide training for soldiers deploying on Herrick 17.

#### **PWRR JOURNAL Special offer**

A comprehensive record of PWRR's activities can be obtained by becoming a subscriber to the annual issue of the Journal of the Regiment which is issued in December. A special concession allows members to take advantage of an introductory offer of £5.00 in the first year and £10.00 per annum thereafter. In addition it also reports on the activities of the OCA's of the former Regiments. You will find it to be money well spent.

To subscribe write to the Editor, the Journal of The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, Howe Barracks, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1JY, enclosing your cheque made payable to PWRR Regimental Journal.

#### **Korean Club Final Reunion and Dissolution Saturday 17th September 2011**



*Members of the Korean Club at the last reunion  
Union Jack Club - September 2012*



Sixty years after leaving Korea, the Korean Club decided to call time on their annual reunion and lunch, due to the fact that the majority of the members are now over 80 or very close thereto. The reunion was well supported some members travelling considerable distances to be present. Dougie Francis was overcome with emotion when he announced to those present of the decision to dissolve the Club as with an ageing membership reality had to be faced.

Barry Reed MC presented a memento on behalf of himself and Chris Lawrence to Dougie to mark his sterling work for the club over the years. Those who were present recalled past members of the club now parading on that big square in the sky, before they sat down to enjoy a fine roast beef dinner, with all the trimmings.

Members started to drift away from the Union Jack Club in a heavy down pour of rain it was as if the heavens were expressing grief at the passing of the club into regimental folklore and of the Regiment's exploits in Korea.

#### **Remembrance**

Jim Innes journeyed to Mill Hill to lay a wreath at the Regimental War Memorial in the precincts of the old depot.

**Thursday 10th November.** The customary service was held at the Field of Remembrance Westminster Abbey and was attended by members of the Executive



## VISIT TO BRITISH CYPRUS WAR MEMORIAL, KYRENIA.

During the latter part of June 2011 my wife and I were again going on holiday to Kyrenia, Cyprus which is now situated in the Turkish portion of the island.

At the Annual Reunion in May 2011, at the Union Jack Club I was chatting with one of our members, Paddy Ryan, who now frequently holidays on the island, and he told me of the new memorial that had been built and dedicated at the old British Cemetery in Kyrenia. He kindly sent me a detailed map of how to find the cemetery, which is home to the memorial, and we subsequently visited this magnificent structure which bears the names of all 371 British servicemen who died during the time of EOKA's activities between 1955-1959.

The Memorial was built by a company of monumental masons in the Bury St Edmunds area. I was told by another visitor to Kyrenia. Apparently soon after it's erection it had red paint thrown over it, which fortunately was easily cleaned because the memorial is built of granite which is non-porous.

Included on the memorial along with the names of those who succumbed is a representation of the cap badge under which they served. There are two members of the Middlesex Regiment named, they are Cpl. Ronald Debley and Pte Terence Thompson and I suspect they will be known to many who served with the 1st Battalion on the island.



*The British War Memorial, Kyrenia, Cyprus*

The memorial was unveiled and dedicated on Remembrance Day 8th November 2009 in the presence of many dignitaries and Cyprus veterans from many of the regiments and corps and other services who had served during the troubles. A wreath was laid on behalf of the Regiment by an old Diehard, Terry May who lives on the island so I am told.

There is some confusion surrounding the absence of any other representation from the Regiment on this very emotive occasion. No one seems to know how we were omitted from the celebration of this opening of the memorial.

My wife and I took several photos and purchased a copy of a DVD entitled "Unveiling of the British Cyprus Memorial".

The maintenance of the memorial is now being handled by a branch of the RBL which was opened in September this year in Kyrenia. If anyone is visiting Northern Cyprus at any time I recommend that they visit the memorial.

Jim Innes

## THE MIDDLESEX REGIMENT BENEVOLENCE REVIEW DURING THE PERIOD 1 JANUARY TO 31 DECEMBER 2011

During the year a total of 20 cases were investigated and 14 individual grants-in-aid were approved. In the majority of cases the grants were for household expenses, debts and rent arrears. The Association helped provide 5 further Electrically Powered Vehicles (EPV's) 2 Orthopaedic chairs/beds and contributed to 1 Disabled Home Adaptations.

We administered 1 ABF Annuity and the ABF generously contributed £78 per month per case. During this period we have renewed no Nursing Home Fees.

The Charity paid out £3,880 as individual-grants-in-aid and the ABF provided a further £5,820 in General Grants. Of the 6 cases not receiving a grant, local Councils/Charities or other Regimental Associations assisted 4 after we had contacted them. 2 cases were not receiving such allowances as Attendance, Mobility, Pensions Credit or Rent Rebate. The ABF total grants in support were £6,756 (inc. Annuities and NH Fees).

The Trustees would again like to pay tribute to the Army Benevolent Fund who is always helpful with prompt action and advice. SSAFA, Forces Help Society and The Royal British Legion investigate the majority of our cases and we are particularly grateful to their caseworkers for all their assistance. During the year we have also assisted members who are cared for by The Ex Services Mental Welfare Society, War Pensions Agency, BLESMA, Not Forgotten Society, Combat Stress and the Veteran's Aid Centres.



## Obituaries

**Mrs Ann Bennett.** Ann widow of Major F J Bennett died on Wednesday the 15th of February 2012. The funeral was held at Mortlake Crematorium on Wednesday the 21st of March 2012.

**D F Butler** who was known as Kelly died in October 2011. The exact date is not known. He served in the 1st Bn in Korea in the MT Platoon.

**John Cairnes** died recently and that is the only information we have. He served with the 1st Bn and then moved on to 3 Queens. He left the Army in the rank of Sergeant.

**Vic Debenham** (Details to follow)

**John Doran** died in late 2011 or early 2012. He served in the Orderly Room of the 1st Bn and when he moved on to 3 Queens he became the ORQMS of that Bn. He eventually transferred to the Royal Logistic Corps and he left the Army in the rank of Major.

**Peter Dunkley** died recently the actual date is not known. He was a regular soldier and was believed to have been a L/Cpl with the 1st Bn in Korea. He was not a member of the Association so not much is known about him.

**Lt Col. Peter Galvin** died peacefully at home on 17th February 2012 aged 91 years. We were advised, after it had taken place, that the funeral was held on Tuesday 28th February 2012 consequently the Regiment was not represented.

**Tim Hardy** died in Belfast on the 16th of January 2012 after losing his battle against cancer. He served with the 1st Bn in Northern Ireland, Guyana and Warminster. When the 4th Bn of the Queens Regiment disbanded he went to the 1st Bn in Berlin and served on with them in Bulford, Germany and again in Northern Ireland. Early in his service he was in the Corps of Drums but he moved across to the Q M's as a carpenter with the Domestic Pioneer Section. Always willing to take on any task and no job was too difficult for him.

RM

### Major S L J Henshaw 1935-2011

Stewart Henshaw was a Londoner, born in Mill Hill and educated at Highgate School.

It was at Highgate, in 1947 that his long association with the army began when he joined the school CCF leaving, in 1953, as Contingent Sergeant Major.

This same year he was conscripted into National Service and reported to the Middlesex Regimental Depot at Mill Hill barracks. He passed his WOSB and, inexplicably, was posted to the Royal Engineers. He worked hard to achieve his transfer back to the infantry and meanwhile, was posted to Eaton Hall as a sapper. Subsequently commissioned he joined the Loyals, serving in Trieste and the UK, for the balance of his two years.

He joined, in 1953 the TA and served with the Parachute Regiment, 5th Bn The Middlesex Regiment, 6th and 6/7th Bn The Queen's Regiment.

His TA service ended in 1968 but his contribution to the TA in general and the Middlesex Regiment did not!

By way of various committees Stewart worked hard to further the interests of the Regiment and its old comrades. Indeed, at the time of his death he was serving on the Executive Committee of The Middlesex Regimental Association. His military association lasted for 63 years.

I knew Stewart since we both served in B Coy 5MX at West Ealing. He was a good thorough, imaginative OC. He was constantly encouraging us all to be as realistic as possible in the training of our volunteers. Stewart also had a successful business career as General Manager of Hallmark Cards, Seiko and finally of a private mint. He made sure that none of this interfered with the TA.

The illness which struck Stewart down, he endured for eleven years, the last few of which were extremely wearing. With the great help of his wife Diane he bore his illness with tremendous fortitude with never a word of complaint. He set a great example.

He was a good soldier and a good friend. He will be greatly missed by us all.

DJM

**Bert Kelly** died on the 18th of November 2011 after suffering a long illness and his passing was a merciful release. He was with the MT Platoon in Hong Kong and Korea.

**Don Knowles** Stemming from the recent distribution of the newsletter we were advised that Don has died. That is all the information we currently have. Sadly he only recently found the Association and had not long been a member.

**R K Lewis** a member of the Korean Club died during October 2011. That is all we have been told.

**J Louth** died 1st January 2012 at the age of 87, John was a member of the 1st Bn



mortar platoon throughout the Normandy campaign to the Elbe. Throughout his civilian career he was a miner in Yorkshire and a deputy underground, but he had suffered a number of illnesses associated with his occupation.

**Douglas Mortimer** who served with the 5th Battalion died on the 17th of July 2011. We were advised when Mrs Mortimer kindly returned the souvenir copy of the newsletter saying that it might be of use to another member of the Regiment. She reminded us that Douglas's brother Ken also served with the 5th Battalion. He passed away in July 2009.

**Fred Newman** who served with the Regiment in Korea and was a member of the Korean Club died in September 2011. The actual date is not known. He suffered for some years with cancer and his passing was a merciful release.

**Mrs Barbara Norton**, widow of Major Geoff Norton, died on Sunday the 7th of August 2011 after a long and courageous fight against cancer. A service of thanksgiving for her life was held at Brantham and attended by a large congregation of family and friends. The Regiment was represented by Colonel Rex Cain, Mrs Kay Lawrence, Mrs Cristina Battye, Mrs Moira Jeffcoat, Major & Mrs Tony McManus and Major & Mrs Peter Clarke.

RC

**K Pollington** passed away on 13th February 2012, after a long illness, suffering from cancer, which he bore with fortitude. Ken served with the 1st Bn whilst they were stationed in Austria.

**Mrs Corlelia (Corry) Shipster** widow of Colonel John Shipster CBE DSO died at her home in Woodbridge, Suffolk on the 20th of January 2012 aged 92. Corry was born in Amsterdam and met John while working for UNRRA after the war had ended and 1MX was stationed in Germany.. They were married in Eindhoven in 1948.

Corry's funeral was held in St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Church Woodbridge on Thursday 2nd of February 2012. The Regiment was represented by Mrs Christina Battye (also representing Colonel John Moore) Colonel Mike Ball, Lieut Colonel & Mrs Hugh Lohan, Major Tony McManus, Lieut Colonel Peter Packham, Major Pat Wollocombe.

Corry is survived by her sons Peter and Michael, her daughter Caroleen and five grandchildren.

RC

**W G Tovey** died in August 2011 no further information has been received.

## Odd Jottings

The Mortar Platoon of 1956 holds an annual reunion in March of every year which they have done since 1956. Their previous events, held on the occasion of their 40th and 50th anniversaries have been reported in the newsletter. They continued the custom in March last year to mark the 55th reunion at the "The Albert" in Victoria Street. Those attending were (L-R) Cyril Whitman, Keith Mc Guinness, Brian Manktelow, Derek Mulquin, John Eynon, Bob Holden and Peter Hayford.



*Members of the Mortar Platoon on the occasion of their 55th Reunion*

B(Queen's) Company, The London Regiment, held an Edgware Memorials ceremony on Tuesday 8th November last at the TA Centre Edgware. The drill hall houses the memorials of the 7th, 8th and 9th battalions of the regiment. The Reverend (Major) T Hutton TD conducted the service, after the wreath laying ceremony a buffet supper was served in the "Albuhera Room".

Harold Bell-Steele wrote to say how much he enjoys the Die-Hards newsletter he is unable to get to the Reunion or Remembrance Sunday, Harold was with the 8th Battalion in WW2 and served under Capt Ian Brotherton with whom he kept in touch as they were both "Radio hams".

Clifford Bilney, e-mailed Major Dennis Bradley to say that he is 92, he still keeps in touch with Heinz Johansen on a regular basis, and that Heinz accompanied by his wife still goes to the Middlesex graves in Hamburg Cemetery and places a wreath of red and yellow roses on each grave.



Mike Flynn has written to say that he and his wife have moved from their house in Dorfmark to a bungalow in Ahlden, he goes on to say that their new home is exactly what they had been seeking with almost the same floor space as their old house. The decision to move was partly based on having no more stairs or cellar steps to negotiate. The garden is also smaller more manageable and easier to maintain.

### **BANDSMAN REGINALD SMITH: A *Lisbon Maru* Survivor**

by Major (Ret'd) Brian Finch

Following the article in the Autumn 2011 *Diehards* Newsletter on the forthcoming visit to the UK by the *Lisbon Maru* rescuers later this year, I was contacted by Ray Smith, the son of 6203540 ex-Bandsman Reginald L Smith, who is a survivor from the *Lisbon Maru*. I went to meet father and son in early January.

Reg Smith joined 1st Bn the Middlesex Regiment in 1937. During the fighting in Hong Kong he acted as a dispatch rider rather than a stretcher bearer; and he recalls an incident when he was riding along the north coast of Hong Kong Island and had to change route very quickly when he came across a group of Japanese soldiers who had just emerged from the water after having crossed the harbour from the Kowloon side!

His experiences as a POW, and in particular on the *Lisbon Maru*, were clearly dreadful, as he continued to suffer from nightmares until a few years ago. He was one of those who swam to shore. He helped a fellow prisoner, a wounded RN doctor, make it to Qing Bang Island. Both of them had to wait floating in the hold until the water was high enough to enable them to climb out. He thought he was going to be picked up by a Chinese fishing boat, but the fishermen in this particular boat only picked up those who could offer something of value, such as a gold ring. As Reg had nothing, he was left to fend for himself. Once they reached the island they were fed and clothed by the villagers. But Reg recalls that the following morning, when the Japanese came to pick up the prisoners, the villagers took back their clothes, leaving the men almost naked on the shore. Reg was subsequently taken to Kobe POW camp where he spent the rest of the war.

Reg left the Army in 1949 and later spent a few years in Canada as a prison officer, where his own experiences as a prisoner no doubt proved useful. After returning to the UK, he was taken ill and went into hospital in Essex, where he was operated on by the very doctor whom he had rescued from drowning in 1942!

Reg kept in touch with other survivors over the years, including the late Major Frank Waldren, whom his son Ray also knew well. The demand for a gold ring as the price of rescue throws a different light on the selfless actions of most of the fishermen. I mentioned this incident to Tony Banham, author of the book "The

Sinking of the *Lisbon Maru*", who told me that on his first visit to the islands he had been shown a gold ring belonging to one of the prisoners and was asked to try to return it to its owner

### **98th Anniversary of 1st Battle of The Marne - Mondement Pilgrimage 2012**

The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, Regimental Association, have extended an invitation to the Regimental Associations of regiments who fought in the first battle of the Marne in 1914 in which our Regiment participated with 8 Brigade 3 Div 11 Corps to join with them in the above pilgrimage.

### **The Dates are 30th August to 3rd September**

Anybody joining the trip will not regret it. Our Regiment were involved in the battle so it is right and proper to be represented at the commemorations. The cost of the trip is heavily dependant on numbers. The cost of the luxury coach is a fixed one whether a handful or the 49 seats are filled.

### **BACKGROUND: MONDEMENT - ANNIVERSARY 1ST BATTLE OF THE MARNE**

**BACKGROUND:** There is plenty of information about this decisive battle to be found in books and on the internet. Not to be confused with 2nd Battle of the Marne in 1918. It means so much to the French though because losing the war and the fate of France itself hinged on the outcome. Had the battle been lost and it was a close run thing at times the fate of the BEF can only be speculated upon.

So while back home volunteers were coming forward in their droves to be part of the adventure of a war that would be over by Christmas (!) and which they did not want to miss, the BEF was fighting for its very survival in France. Because the battle was fought on a wide frontage and in depth from the Marne to the Aisne and was fluid and moving unlike most of those that followed there are not the memorials and cemeteries you see elsewhere on the Western Front. The BEF did not wear steel helmets at this time and our French allies were still fighting in their blue tunics and red trousers.

After the Germans eventually stood on the Aisne the allied advance ran out of steam and both sides dug in. There followed the rush for the sea with both sides trying to outflank each other. The BEF ended up in Flanders where at the 1st Battle of Ypres they were effectively wiped out as a fighting force. That the BEF "did its stuff" and served our country proud is beyond dispute.

6 Div of 11 Corps embarked for France on 8/9 September so may only have seen late action in the battle, but would certainly have been involved on the Aisne. 1 RF were part of 17Bde.



Mondement is a tiny hamlet where the monument to the battle is, being in the centre of the start line on 5th September 1914. The upkeep of the memorial and the conscience of France in not forgetting the battle is entrusted to a doughty organisation called ASSOCIATION MONDEMENT 1914. .

It needs to be stressed that even after all these years on there is a genuine feeling of warmth towards us, not only for joining their commemorations, but because our former comrades stood and fought with them "pour France".

**ITINERARY:** The final itinerary is normally produced mid summer after our hosts have confirmed the arrangements etc. Barring minor changes however it will likely be as follows.

Thur 30th Aug. Our 49 seat luxury coach — with WC and tea/coffee facilities etc — leaves Balham Drill Hall in London at 0800. Cars can be left securely at Balham. Coach makes further pick ups at the Tower, Holiday Inn on the A2 and at Dover Harbour before catching noon ferry to Calais. It is a 180 mile drive to Epernay but motorway almost door to door so three hours sees us there late afternoon, in good time anyway for eating out etc.

Friday 31st Aug.. In the morning we attend a ceremony instigated by ourselves at La Ferte Sous-Jouarre to lay a wreath at the British War Memorial bearing the names of the fallen from Mons, the Retreat, Le Cateau, Marne and Aisne who have no known grave. The Mayor and dignatories attend and we are invited to a "vin d'honneur" afterwards. We return to Epernay by tea time. La Ferte incidentally is almost certainly where our former comrades would have crossed the Marne at some time.

Saturday 1st Sept. Late afternoon we visit Sezanne for the first of the Association Mondement events. Further wreath laying takes place followed again by "vin d'honneur". We return to Epernay in good time for the evening.

Sunday 2nd Sept. This is the big day. An open air church service at Mondement is followed by the main ceremony. Comprising raising of flags of all Frances's allies in WW1 - quite a long list! - and because of reconciliation that of Germany as well. Politicians and Military Attaches attend, speeches are made etc. More wreath laying takes place after which there is an exceptional "vin d'honneur" in the grounds of the Mondement chateau where fierce fighting took place in 1914. A truly excellent lunch is laid on nearby, all the more so bearing in mind how many attend it, at which the wine flows! In the aforesaid spirit of reconciliation we finally attend a wreath laying ceremony at the German cemetery. The German Military Attache and a group from Dresden who attend are deeply appreciative of this gesture. We return to Epernay early evening where like everywhere in France, contrary to what we are told, most bars and restaurants are closed! However a few are open for those that still have the urge to eat and drink.

Monday 3rd Sept. Coach leaves Epernay for Calais at 0900 aiming, after a supermarket shop in Calais, to catch earliest ferry we can. Arrival back in Balham is normally around 1900.

**COST:** including coach, ferry, 4 nights B&B in the Ibis Hotel, the lunch on Sunday, and coach driver costs which we must bear -namely everything bar beer money, lunch and dinner - will be close to £325 per person. As the major cost element is the coach which costs the same however many of us go, until final numbers are confirmed the precise cost cannot be given. Also exchange rate fluctuations might impact albeit minimally on the hotel cost. £325 is calculated on 30 people going and at present this should be achievable.

Should you wish to join the pilgrimage then contact.

Mondement Co-ordinator      Richard Adams  
46 Hawthorn Way Shipston-on-Stour CV36 4FD  
Tel 0608 662328  
richardadams5@hotmail.com



## 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 Central Charities Telephone No 01227 818058.

Blazer Badges

Ice Buckets miniature side drum with Regimental Emblazon

Plus postage and packing

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



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is for your  
reference only

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without the  
written consent  
of the  
author  
of the work  
to which it  
relates

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