

SOLDIERS OF THE QUEEN'S



UNCONQUERED I SERVE
1966-1992



QUEENSMEN WELL TRAVELED

THE JOURNAL OF THE QUEEN'S REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

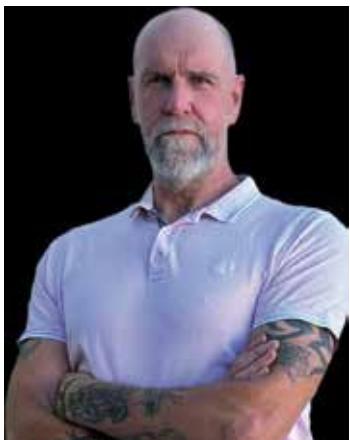
2025



FOREWORD

By Lt Col (Retd) Steve Wall MBE

THE EVE OF THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE QUEEN'S REGIMENT



For any regiment, sixty years is a moment to celebrate, but for the Queen's Regiment—whose official time in the Order of Battle lasted just twenty-six years—it is a testament to its enduring legacy, powerful bonds, and the unyielding spirit of the Queensman. As we mark our 60th anniversary in 2026, this is a time for reflection: not just on the years we wore the cap badge, but on the rich heritage we inherited from our antecedent regiments, and the legacy we were privileged to pass on to today's soldiers and officers.

For me, the journey began in 1981. I joined 5 QUEENS briefly before going to Bassingbourn Barracks for basic training and then on to 1 QUEENS towards the end of 1982. I had initially signed up for only three years' service but went on to wear the Queen's cap badge for eleven years. As a young private soldier, like many of you, I was immediately enveloped by a sense of belonging to a regiment with a reputation as fierce as it was famous. More than that, I found a brotherhood.

The soldiers and officers of The Queen's Regiment were truly exceptional - professional soldiers and accomplished sportsmen; tough, proud men with a touch of cheekiness and fun. They were almost roguish, and the bonds forged in serving alongside them created lifelong friendships - the true measure of our time together. The volume and frequency of our reunions stand as proof of that. We knew we were the inheritors of a proud history, and we carried that duty every day with pride and professionalism. That sense of identity became the bedrock of my career, shaping me from a soldier to a sergeant and carrying me through the amalgamation.

The spirit of the Queensman did not end in September 1992. It flowed directly and seamlessly, becoming the lifeblood of the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment. I was fortunate enough to continue my service for a further thirty-one years, rising to Regimental Sergeant Major and then commissioning, serving my final seven years as a Lieutenant Colonel.

The values instilled in those early years as a Queensman guided me through six operational tours - Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Iraq, and eighteen months in Afghanistan. They propelled me into leadership roles as a company commander three times and drove career highlights such as forming the Chief of the General Staff's Briefing Team and becoming its first Sergeant Major, and commanding the Joint Service Mountain Training Wing in Ballachulish. Even my two assignments at the Army Personnel Centre in Glasgow, where I helped shape the careers of my fellow soldiers, were a direct result of that initial sense of purpose as a Queensman.

This Journal is more than just a collection of memories; it is a living record and a tribute to our shared history, as well as a commitment to our future. It stands as a pledge that as long as there is a Queensman to tell our story, the Regiment's name and reputation will live on.

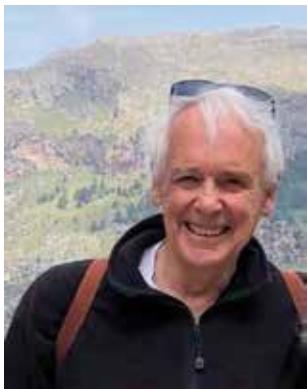
In this edition, you will read about our new legacy at the Kennel Field (*Ed: Now the Jon Wright Memorial Field*) our remarkable Corps of Drums, the impressive charity work of the QRRA, and some incredible tales from Ukraine. May we always remember our shared history, carry its pride and brotherhood into the future, and continue to draw inspiration from it all.



EDITORIAL

BY ASSOCIATION SECRETARY

MAJOR A M GOULDEN



The Branches have continued their hectic round of activities and my thanks to all the Branch officers for their continued efforts to keep the Association alive and functioning. Your hard work is much appreciated. Of particular note this year are The Corps of Drums who have drummed their way around Kent and the South-East keeping the name of The Queen's Regiment alive and in the public eye; also mention must be made of the contribution of the Riders Association who not only have after five years hard slog completed the Veterans' Rehabilitation Centre which is now open to all but also raised £5,000 for the Benevolent Fund taking their total to over £72K over the years.

Each year I have said that I thought that this will be the last *Journal*. I'm going to stop writing that as it's obvious from the responses I have received that there is a strong desire to keep the *Journal* going. So please don't prove me wrong by not continuing to send in

your articles, anecdotes and anything of interest! I really do commend to you all the different articles which show what an interesting and varied life some of us lead. This year has clearly shown me that The Queen's Regiment spirit is alive and well with members undertaking risky trips to Ukraine to provide much needed support and putting themselves in the way of danger taking photographs to record events in faraway places. As usual there is invariably a last-minute rush to submit material. Please don't wait for a heartfelt plea for material as publishing day gets closer, but whenever you think of a story, or you take part in an event, get writing and send it in with photos. The deadline to receive articles is 7 September 2026 but please don't wait till then. Send to queensregimentassociation@gmail.com

I must raise the question of costs, I'm afraid. The *Journal* does not come cheap, and postage is the killer. Regrettably, for those who live in foreign climes, I have come to the decision that they will have to be sent digital copies in future unless they are prepared to contribute towards the cost. For everyone else I do ask that you also contribute to the Benevolent Fund to help pay for the production. A form is enclosed.

As Lt Col Steve Wall says in his Foreword, next year is our 60th Anniversary. This is probably the last time we will get together *en masse*. Do please make the effort to attend. It would be great to fill the parade square!

My thanks as always to my three proofreaders: our President Anthony Beattie, Nick Keyes and the late Rocky Hitchcock. Without their input, the very high standard which I think the *Journal* achieves would not be reached. My thanks also to Mike Jelf who for the last 12 years has more than done his bit in the proofreading stakes!

FROM THE WEBSITE

Veterans Badge

You can get an Armed Forces Veterans Badge from the MoD if you've served in any of the UK armed forces - there's no fee. (You may also apply for one replacement using the same form if your badge has been lost or destroyed)



The Veterans' Lottery

For £10 a month you could win one of 43 cash prizes - from £5,000 to £120. Every draw also includes a rollover - this month's top prize is a tax-free £35,000! All players are also given a unique Veterans' Lottery card and a free membership to the Gourmet Society worth £79.99. Good luck in the next rollover draw!



CONTENTS

	Page		Page
FOREWORD	1	ITALY 2025	55-58
EDITORIAL	2	SOBRAON DAY AT TOC H	58-60
CELEBRATION OF 60 YEARS OF THE QUEEN'S REGIMENT	4	KELVEDON HATCH SECRET NUCLEAR BUNKER	62-63
A DAY OUT IN BELFAST WITH 2 AND 3 QUEENS	5-6	TALES FROM ACROSS THE POND – MY 15 MINUTES	64-67
NORTHERN IRELAND LEGACY DEBATE	6-10	THE PWRR AND QUEEN'S MUSEUM	68
OBSCURE MILITARY CERTIFICATES	11-16	SOLDIER OF PEACE	69
SOLDIER MAGAZINE	18-23	CAPTAIN LATHAM HIS STORY	70-71
AN EARLY LESSON LEARNT	24	A REDEDICATION	71-73
A COY 5 QUEENS (V) ON EX CRUSADER	25	ENVOI	74
NIJMEGEN MARCH JULY 1972	26-27	LIEUTENANT COLONEL ERIC GORDON BOWDEN MC MID	75-77
THE 'PADS' ALWAYS GOT THE BEST POSTINGS	28-30	BERMUDA AND THE 'LOST COMPANY'	77-79
JUNIOR CORPS OF DRUMS	30	THE LOSS OF THE EAST INDIAMAN KENT IN MARCH 1825	80-83
THE TRIALS AND NO TRIBULATIONS OF A UNIT EMPLANING OFFICER	31-32	THE BATTLE OF KOHIMA	84-86
THE TWO SIDES OF BELIZE	32	REUNIONS	87-91
THE REGIMENTAL SUTLER	33-35	REMEMBRANCE	92-95
HMS KENT VISIT	36	THE MORNING AFTER	96
MISS 1 QUEENS	37-38	PROJECT BRAGANZA	96-97
TALES FROM THE DESERT	39	BRANCH REPORTS	98-125
EMERGING FROM THE DEPTHS	39-40	THE QUEEN'S REGIMENT BENEVOLENT FUND	126-127
ADAPTABILITY	41-42	BOOK REVIEWS	128
THE GREAT TOMMY SLEEP OUT 2025	43-44	MINUTES OF THE QUEEN'S REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING	129-133
THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTORING	45-47	OBITUARIES	134-138
BY PICK-UP TO LVIV	48-50	IN MEMORIAM	139
A QUEENSMAN'S TRAVELS PART 1	51-53	ASSOCIATION BRANCHES	140-143
QUEENSMEN IN UKRAINE 3 - 2024/5	53-54		



CELEBRATION OF 60 YEARS OF THE QUEEN'S REGIMENT

20TH JUNE 2026

The Order of the Day on 31st December 1966 signed by Lieutenant General Sir Richard Craddock, the first Colonel of the newly formed Queen's Regiment, stated:

Today we become members of The Queen's Regiment, and we have every reason to be grateful for and proud of such a splendid name.

...it is now our duty to ensure that the traditions which The Queen's Regiment will make for itself are at least as fine as those we have been fortunate enough to inherit.

...it is our honour to continue the tradition of service to Sovereign and Country set us by our distinguished predecessors, and in this we must not fail.

...to all of you wherever you may be serving, go my very best wishes and my confidence that The Queen's Regiment will be equal to all the demands which may be made upon it.'

In the 26 years during which the Regiment found regular and reserve battalions for the Army's Order of Battle, I believe that we can reflect with pride that The Queen's Regiment not only fulfilled the direction of its first Colonel that 'we must not fail' but unequivocally rewarded his confidence by being **more than equal** to the demands placed upon it.

The 60th Anniversary of the formation of the Regiment falls next year and, after much consideration of options and dates (especially 31st December 2026), it has been decided, that we should, with the aim of gathering as many members of the regimental family together, bow to administrative practicality and celebrate this historic milestone on 20th June 2026 at Woolwich.

May I encourage as many of you as possible to place the date in your diary and, if you think at this stage that you will attend, please let the Association Secretary know with an idea of how many of your family will accompany you. Details will follow in due course. But let us make this occasion a reunion to be remembered and a fitting commemoration of the Regiment's exemplary service.

AAA Beattie
Colonel
President and Chairman
The Queen's Regimental Association

A DAY OUT IN BELFAST WITH 2 AND 3 QUEENS

By Peter Howe

Early in the morning of 10 May 1970 B Coy 3 QUEENS, led by Maj Paul Courtney with Lt John Salmon (OC 5pl), 2nd Lt Peter Howe (OC 6 Pl), along with - I'm embarrassed to say - an SNCO whose name has disappeared into the mists of time (OC 4 Pl), four respective platoons found ourselves in the centre of Belfast.

3 QUEENS had moved to Ballykinlar in April 1970. As a resident battalion we provided a reserve company in Belfast Sunnyside TA Centre which is where we were on 9/10 May.

After disturbances in Belfast, B Coy was moved to Girdwood Park TA Centre on the Antrim Road. The local area, the New Lodge, was part of 1 KOSB's TAOR. On the evening of 9 May, rioting broke out at the junction of the New Lodge and the Antrim Road and B Coy was deployed to contain the rioting with 5 and 6 Platoons in box formation up to the junction. OC B Coy with his Rover Group went forward to try and persuade the rioters to withdraw back down the New Lodge Road. Unluckily, he was hit in the face by a brick and had to be casevac'd.

OC 6 Pl, now in charge, moved the box forward towards the rioters and began pushing them back down the New Lodge Road. Sporadic rioting lasted until about 0300hrs, when on the orders of CO 1 KOSB, we withdrew to the junction of the New Lodge Road and Antrim Road and remained there until about 0600 hrs, when we were joined by a troop of 17/21 Lancers, who soon moved off.

We were then informed that we would be relieved by Sp Coy 2 QUEENS. At this stage a disturbance had broken out a couple of streets away, so we again moved forward in box formation. Elements of Sp Coy appeared and dealt with



In Box Formation © Belfast Telegraph



the disturbance, which turned out to be a milk float being raided by local women - both for breakfast supplies and to make petrol bombs!
Such were the joys of Belfast in the 1970s!



With 17th/21st Lancers © Belfast Telegraph

NORTHERN IRELAND LEGACY DEBATE

By Alasdair Goulden

On Monday 14 July, Queensmen, along with Tigers and veterans from the Royal Hampshire Regiment, joined many hundreds of veterans across the Armed Forces community who gathered in Parliament Square to protest against the Government's plans to repeal the Northern Ireland Legacy Act.



Queensmen John Powell, Alasdair Goulden, James Myles and Sir David Davis MP

In essence, the Act allows the continuation of legacy inquiries that have caused significant trauma to veterans and their families. These inquiries require veterans to revisit events from 30–50 years ago—events that have already been investigated, often multiple times, and for which no new evidence has been produced.

Over 175,000 people signed a petition demanding a parliamentary debate on the matter. The debate was held in Parliament and was attended by the QRA Secretary, Regimental Secretary, Colonel John Powell, in his capacity as a former Queensman, together with Major James Myles. While the debate was underway,

hundreds of veterans marched into Parliament Square to protest, accompanied by *Rolling Thunder*, the veterans' biking community.

A transcript of the debate can be found at:

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2025-07-14/debates/EF85E9A5-B0C4-4F47-AA30-303D0D456657/NorthernIrelandVeteransProsecution>

The full recording is available to watch online at:

<https://www.parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/52cf51ce-f547-4445-8ba9-e76c49ab9a0a>

While the whole debate is worth listening to, I recommend the last half hour from 19:00 onwards. This includes the final speaker before the Opposition's closing remarks, followed by Hilary Benn, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, summing up the Government's position.



Head of the march – Queensmen and Tigers to the fore



Some of the marchers

protest laying out the Government's position regarding the Northern Ireland Legacy Inquests. His letter follows. It is obvious that the protests in which we took part both online and in parliament Square have had a major effect on Government policy. This does not mean that members may not be called but what I want to assure everyone is that, if they are called to give evidence, we as an Association will provide as much support as is needed.

The fight goes on!

Notably, Mr Benn failed to offer the reassurances many were seeking. He maintained that the likelihood of any prosecutions is "*infinitesimally small*," yet he made no mention of the emotional toll on veterans subjected to these lengthy and often distressing legacy inquiries.

However, following the protest there was a government reshuffle, and Alistair Carns DSO, OBE, MC, MP, (late Royal Marine) was appointed Minister for the Armed Services which is very good news. Straight after his appointment he wrote to the Associations involved in the



Rolling Thunder



Ministry of Defence

ALISTAIR CARNES DSO OBE MC MP
MINISTER FOR THE ARMED FORCES

4-4-2-31/KJ

A handwritten signature in black ink that appears to read 'Alistair Carnes'.

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
FLOOR 5, ZONE B, MAIN BUILDING
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

Telephone 020 7218 9000 (Switchboard)

| 1st September 2025

Today, HM Government will announce a new framework for dealing with the legacy of the Northern Ireland Troubles. Firstly, I would like to thank you for your continued engagement on this matter, and to some who I spoke with just yesterday.

I know that this is an issue on which there is great strength of feeling among your members, and I wanted to follow up in writing to set out what we are doing to find a better way forward. We are putting in place a comprehensive new package of protections for veterans, as part of a fair and proportionate system which will allow bereaved Forces families to get answers and ensure no veteran who carried out their duty properly will face endless legal uncertainty.

As a veteran myself, I have some experience of the difficult choices that our veterans faced in extremely challenging circumstances, as they served to protect communities and secure peace in Northern Ireland. We are acutely aware of the stress that historic investigations can place on our veterans. Many who served in Northern Ireland are concerned by the prospect of new or repeated investigations, and of being dragged into processes which feel like punishment.

That's why we will introduce six new rights, safeguards and protections for any Northern Ireland veteran asked to engage with a legacy process:

- 1. Protection from repeated investigations** – The Commission will be under a requirement to not duplicate the work of any previous investigations unless there are compelling reasons to do so. Veterans will not be required to provide unnecessary testimony on historical context that has already been established.
- 2. Protection from cold calling** – Veterans will be protected from cold calling through a new protocol, ensuring they are only ever contacted with the support of the MOD.
- 3. Protection in old age** – The Commission and coroners will be required to consider the health and wellbeing of elderly witnesses – including whether it would be inappropriate for them to give evidence at all.

4. **A right to stay at home** – Changing the law to ensure no Northern Ireland veteran is forced to travel to Northern Ireland to give evidence to the Commission or to an inquest.
5. **A right to anonymity** – Ensuring veterans can seek anonymity when giving evidence.
6. **A right for veterans' voices to be heard** – There will be a statutory advisory group that will provide an opportunity for the voices of all those victims and survivors of the Troubles to be heard, including those from a service background.

In addition, the Commission will be required to take account of wider circumstances and the context surrounding incidents being investigated, and the MOD will put forward an independent advisor with operational experience to support investigations.

This will fundamentally change the experience for veterans and mean that the process can never again be used as a punishment. Instead, we will make sure that veterans are supported throughout any legacy process whilst lifting the cloud of suspicion from those who served honourably. Underpinning our new approach is a firm determination that there will be no rewriting of history. We are clear that the Armed Forces' actions in Northern Ireland saved thousands of lives and were crucial to bringing about peace. The vast majority of deaths were the result of terrorist action. There is no equivalence between those who served to protect life and the terrorist organisations which set out to kill people.

There have been some calls to reintroduce immunity. However, this would have given amnesty to terrorists and has been rejected by the courts, rejected by victims of terrorism, and rejected by the families of service personnel who were killed. There are families of over two hundred British Armed Forces members who were lost or murdered in Northern Ireland who had their police investigations closed overnight by the previous Legacy Act. Those families have a right to know what happened to their loved ones.

To that end, our replacement legislation will fundamentally reform the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (which will be renamed the Legacy Commission). The Commission will be the primary route for families to find answers: while a small number of inquests that were stopped in their tracks by the Legacy Act will be resumed, there will be no new inquests announced.

We have also secured unprecedented commitments from the Irish Government which will enable many more families – including families of service personnel killed by acts of terrorism – to finally obtain answers about those incidents. They have agreed to legislate to ensure the fullest possible co-operation of the relevant Irish authorities with the Legacy Commission. The Irish Government have also committed to establish a new legacy unit in An Garda Síochána, to investigate all unresolved Troubles-related incidents in Ireland. For the first time they will provide funding to support UK legacy mechanisms.



I know that easing veterans' concerns and anxiety will not just need the strong and meaningful protections we are introducing, but also clearer and better communication – about the importance of what the Armed Forces did in Northern Ireland and the value we place on their service. This is important not only for our veterans, but also for currently serving personnel, and prospective future members of the Armed Forces. We need to reassure the Defence community that the new system will make involvement with legacy processes easier, less stressful and far less hostile than has been experienced in the past. I believe that this historic deal delivers the ability for families to get to the truth, whilst treating veterans with dignity and respect, and not allowing the process to punish those that served with honour, courage and dignity. I hope that you will be able to help us in explaining to your members what we are doing, and in reassuring them about the impact of the reforms.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office or get in touch with me directly. I would also offer that once legislation is in place, your role in ensuring these protections' implementation is vital to their success.

You have my absolute commitment to all those who served with honour in Northern Ireland, and I look forward to continuing to work with you on this and any other issues which affect your members.

ALISTAIR CARNES MP

1970 BAOR Canoe Championships

One sporting achievement not recorded in last year's Journal was the 1 QUEENS canoeing success. They won the Final in both the Single and Doubles Sprint Championships as well as the Long-Distance Final. A remarkable achievement. It was during these Championships that I nearly thumped the Commandant of the Training Camp. We had been caught bivouacking on the side of the training area road with our 4-Tonner and landrover, because the barracks that we had been offered were so filthy. The Good Lord stayed my fist, but retribution comes to those who wait. The Commandant was cashiered a year later!

Rev Basil Pratt

OBSCURE MILITARY CERTIFICATES

We have all done obscure things in our military service. This is just a selection.

LÜTJE LAGE

Bill Knight-Hughes

Following a quick game to establish a loser, the officers of the Panzer Grenadier Battalion consigned this 'Loser' to drinking a tankard of beer through a bedsheets which had been thrown over his head and upper body. This game was called 'The Ghost' and it soon became apparent why, as the wet sheet began to mimic the officer's facial features like a comic Turin Shroud.

The fact that we found this so hilarious was in great measure due to the '*Lutje Lage*' competition that had preceded it. This certificate shows that I excelled at this Hanoverian skill of drinking a half litre of beer while, with the same hand, simultaneously pouring a double measure of *Korn* into the glass.

Contrary to popular opinion, the Germans have a rich variety of Mess Games, which are in every way as suicidal as those of the British, and much more besides, as anyone who has attended a *Mensurentag* will attest...

Anyway, thank you 2 QUEENS Officers' Mess for equipping me with this indispensable skill!



This is to Certify.

That Julian Stokes underwent a course of instruction at the N.C.Os. Tactical Wing at Brecon. He studied under CSGT P.M. Ennis, one of the finest instructors the British Army has produced. This N.C.O. has shown such qualities of control and leadership that he is recommended as a Ratcatcher a post fitting his obvious talents.

SIGNED CSGT P.M. Ennis GRADE "F".



EXEMPTION FROM NATIONAL SERVICE

Bill Knight-Hughes

At the end of my last school year, all my friends received their Draft notices. I didn't. I wrote to the SADF to ask why not. There was a nasty little bush war on the Angolan Border at the time, and my school pals were all glumly resigned to being sent off there.

Just after Christmas this letter arrived back. In a fit of pique I took the next Lufthansa flight to Frankfurt and London. Two weeks later I was a Driver in the RCT.

A sliding doors moment...

D.D. 2123 A.

Telefoon | 3-7751
Blyn Extension | 96

VERW. NR./REF. NO.
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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA.—REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA.

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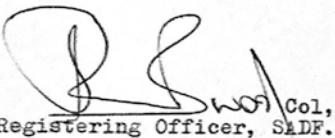
Registrasiebeampte SAW,
Registering Officer SADF,
Privaatsak
Private Bag | 281,
PRETORIA.

8 January 1970

No 69548667,
National Serviceman W.K. Hughes,
Private Bag 13187,
Windhoek,
SWA.

NATIONAL SERVICE

1. Your undated letter refers.
2. You have been exempted from national service on the grounds that you are not a S.A. citizen. You will therefore not be required to render national service as previously notified.
3. Your responsibility to notify this office of any future change of address terminates herewith.


Col.
Registering Officer, SADF.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY CERTIFICATE OF TRAINING

This is to certify that

MAJOR A.M. Goulden
500268

has successfully completed
training and qualification with the U.S. rifle M16A1,
qualifying

EXPERT

Given at NORTHAG, 59th Ord Bde
Moenchengladbach, FRG

ROBERT E. BURKE
LTC, FA
Chief of Element

DA FORM 87, 1 OCT 78 EDITION OF 1 JUL 74 WILL BE USED.

LEOPARD 2 DRIVER

Bill Knight-Hughes

Lying on my back, sealed in the driver's compartment, my Tank Commander guided me out of the Tank Park with a few terse orders. He straightened me up onto the Münsterlager Training Area and said just one more word: "Schneller!"

I accelerated and felt the Leopard 2 surge forward under me. But he said again, this time more insistently: "Schneller!" The ground was still quite flat. I put on more speed. Ahead I could see the usual expanse of ridges and troughs approaching. In my earphones came the Commander again: "Schneller!" I didn't speed up much, as I could see how rough the ground was. But once more he said, with clear irritation: "Schneller!" So I went faster.

We hit the bad ground, and I could hardly feel any difference. Anyway, at the speed we now were going, I was concentrating hard on just keeping the tank going straight. He spoke again: "Schneller!". I put the pedal down further, clinging on to the steering handle. Now I hardly had time to see the ground ahead as it raced at me through the periscope.



NORWEGIAN FIRST AID CERTIFICATE

William Kempton



The yawning chasm of a deep, steep tank-ditch flashed into sight. Before I could take any evasive action or slow down, he said again firmly: "Schneller!" "Okay." I thought to myself briefly, "I'm alright down here mate. It's your funeral!" I flattened the pedal to the plating as we hurtled to our certain destruction. The ditch vanished away under me somewhere and we careered on, quite out of control.

Finally, his voice came again, this time calmly: "Gut so. Halt."

OUTWARD BOUND CERTIFICATE

William Kempton



1 (BR) CORPS OUTWARD BOUND CENTRE (NORWAY)

*This is to certify that..... Lcp. W. KEMPTON.....
of..... 1 QUEENS.....
attended the 99th (Summer Course 3/69) course held at Isefjord
in..... July 1969*

*He completed the course and is entitled to wear the
Outward Bound Badge.*

Date 25 July 1969


Commandant
Outward Bound Centre
Norway

14F55/1000/6040/5/68

UNIT PROJECTIONIST CERTIFICATE

William Wilson

I was press-ganged into doing a Unit Projectionist course whilst stationed at Bulford in 1970. On returning to the Bn proudly waving my pass certificate I can honestly say that I was never once asked to use my newly honed skills to project any film of any description including training.

THE SERVICES KINEMA CORPORATION

HEAD OFFICE: 36, DOVER STREET, LONDON, W.I.

Certificate — PROJECTIONIST COURSE

*This is to certify that..... 24135762 PTE. WILSON.....
of..... 1st QUEENS..... attended and successfully completed
Course No. SPECIAL..... on 22nd May, 1970 at the Army Schools, Foxhill, Projectionist, Bulford, Wiltshire, and has been trained on 16mm Sound Film Projectors Models Bell & Howell / Cinetechnic D.16.*

Examining Officer 

Chief Engineer 

TAILHOOKER CERTIFICATE

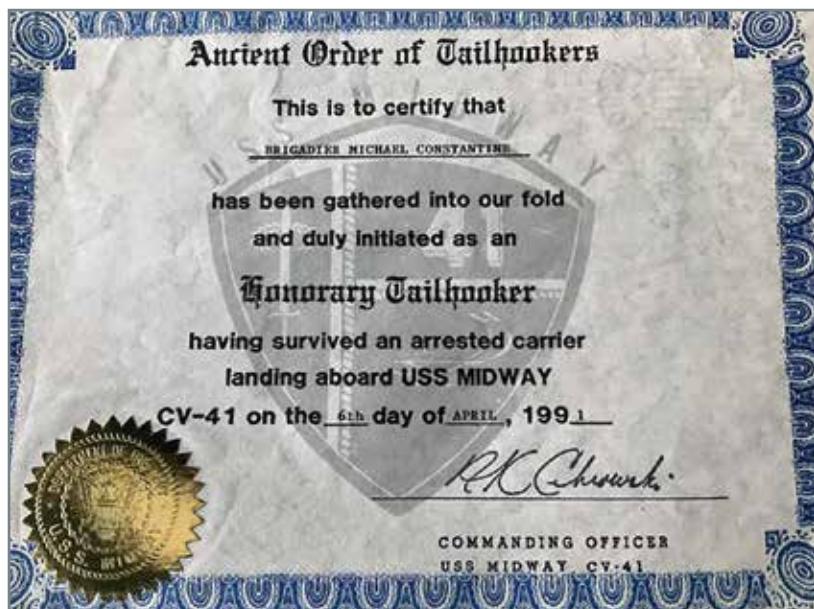
Mike Constantine

In 1991, I was stationed in Hong Kong. At the end of the first Gulf War all seven US aircraft carriers that had been deployed to the area returned to the USA, most calling in at Hong Kong on the way. Through a US naval contact, I was invited to visit the USS Midway some seventy miles out in the South China Sea.

The USS Midway was the oldest carrier in the US Fleet having been commissioned at the end of WW11 in 1945. My 'visit' necessitated flying out, doing a deck landing and take-off from this small carrier. To say landing on the carrier was 'high on excitement, and low on comfort' is probably something of an understatement - but it was a far better experience than the catapult assisted take off! At the end of a fascinating visit the Captain presented me with a Certificate and told me I was now a 'Tailhooker'.

In the English language to be called a 'Hooker' might be considered an insult - but to be called a 'Tailhooker' suggests all sorts of things! However, looking back I now feel proud of my certificate and suspect there cannot have been many other Certified Tailhookers in the British Army at that time.

Afternote. The USS Midway was decommissioned on return to its US base in San Diego which makes this Certificate a museum piece!



A TRIP TO BELIZE

In January 1976, 2 QUEENS set off for Belize. Even this apparently simple unit move was somewhat fraught as we had lately been the Spearhead Battalion, meaning we needed all our kit at hand. This was tricky as our G1098 for Belize was supposed to be shipped by sea, requiring considerable lead time. However, we were fortunately given the use of the Boscombe Down private Britannia for our cargo, so we were able to comply with both requirements. That was a load off my mind as I was the UEO! That problem sorted, we were organised into chalks, to be flown out to Belize via Gander.

I noticed that in the 2024 edition of 'Soldiers of the Queen's', Nick Keyes remarked on the habit of the RAF never to take off unless everything was absolutely in order with the aircraft. The following may refute this, though, as my son is now a Wing Commander, I may be just a little biased. As one would expect, we were all ready for tropical temperatures on arrival in Belize, but my chalk (blame the UEO) arrived in a very, very cold Gander to be told that a certain instrument on the aircraft was unserviceable, but not to worry as another chalk would arrive in the morning, bearing a new instrument. Well, we were duly shipped off to a local motel over thickly iced roads and, in the morning, back to the airport where the new instrument had obviously arrived and been fitted, as the rest of the trip was uneventful. But the punch line arrived very much later when I recounted this tale to an RAF officer whose response was quite unexpected. "Oh", he said. "You were on that flight, were you? What you didn't know was that when we took off, the new instrument was the only one working. All the others had frozen up!"

Chris Grove

When in Wainright in Canada as Padre to the 3rd Battalion, I was with the CO, Lt Col Gavin Bullock, talking to the Commandant who, although being English, insisted on Gavin understanding that he was a Canadian, thus denying his true nationality. He said that we should have been there a week before when we would have been able to see a historical pageant. Gavin, somewhat irritated by the Commandant, made the comment: "What happened after the first two minutes?" From that moment onwards we got the worst ranges, limited ammunition and no supplies, proving the fact that Canadians have a limited sense of humour!

Rev Basil Pratt

SOLDIER

AUGUST 22 1988

40 PENCE



2 QUEENS IN WEST BELFAST

THE MILL HILL POSTIES

CHUMS MEET QUEEN MOTHER

The battalion on duty in West Belfast has probably the most demanding role in the Province. Anniversaries and other events regularly provide the populace with the excuse to parade or demonstrate, providing cover and opportunity for terrorists of all shades. The summer marching season which stretches throughout July and August means long hours and intense activity for the troops involved. SOLDIER has been to see the 2nd Battalion The Queen's Regiment at work.

Queensmen Londoners discover West Belfast is

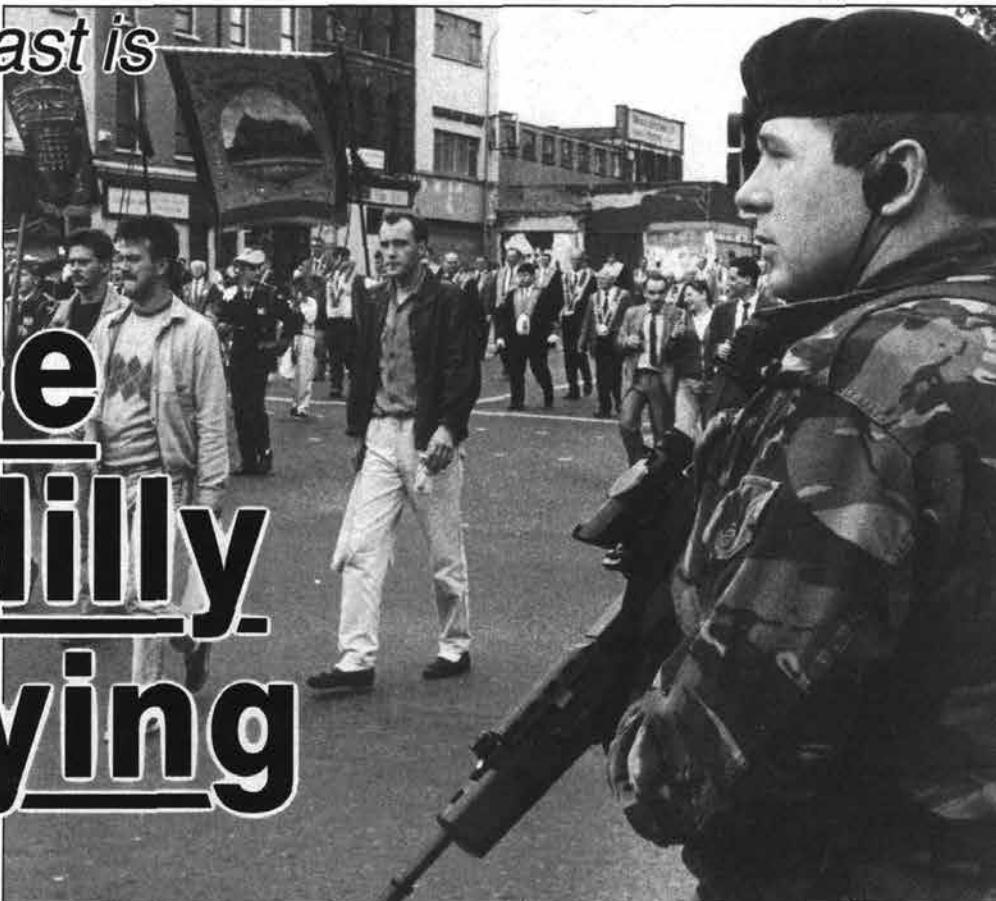
No place for dilly- dallying

Words:
Bill Moore
Pictures:
Terry Champion

THE population on both sides of the divide being entitled to a lie-in because of the public holiday, men of the 2nd Battalion The Queen's Regiment resigned themselves to doing without sleep. The night was noisy, the towering bonfires on the edges of the Republican areas set a couple of houses alight, petrol bombers and stone throwers came out and the RUC called for support.

By the time the patrols returned to their bases past staggering groups of drunks some streets were littered with bricks, baton rounds and the rubbish of makeshift barricades. It was nearly 4.30 am.

An hour or so later every man the battalion could spare from guard duties was out again clearing the routes to the city centre, ATO was checking out likely trouble spots, and a company of the Dukes from



An Orange Lodge makes its way to the meeting place at Belfast City centre under the gaze of a Queensman

Palace Barracks in Belfast was deploying in support.

Four-tonners blocked off the end of some streets and Queensmen swung massive fabric screens into position to spare resentful eyes the sight of the Big Parade. Belfast abounds in sensitive souls and a stout lady who summed up the character of SOLDIER's representative in a few sharp words was obviously moved by the occasion.

Perhaps it was the approach of the distant thudding heralding the appearance of the Orangemen with their Lambegs, side drums, fifes, accordions, drawn swords, lodge banners and orange lilies.

Fifty-nine bands and 1,700 bandsmen (according to local radio) led 3,700 Loyalists in the traditional celebration of William III's victory at the Boyne in 1690.

A lively version of the old

Cockney favourite: "My old man said follow the van . . ." shrilled from the procession but Londoners in 2 Queens (the battalion has quite a few), were not impressed. The West Belfast battalion never has any time for dillying or dallying.

The task of helping to keep the opposing factions apart and fighting terrorism in the turbulent city has changed over 18 years but it is still one of the most exacting facing the Army.

For 2 Queens the role is a re-make of an old documentary.

They were the residential battalion at Palace Barracks in 1969 and claim to have been "the first on the streets of Belfast".

"It took the colour sergeant four days to find us to feed us," said RSM Terry (Jack) Daw, who was then a very young soldier. We just scrounged what we could. No one knew

where anything was."

Today most people know where they are most of the time; radios are plentiful.

Saracens have gone though Pigs are still plentiful and some have had more birthdays than the young soldiers they carry. The battalion has its quota of armoured personnel vehicles built on a Land Rover chassis.

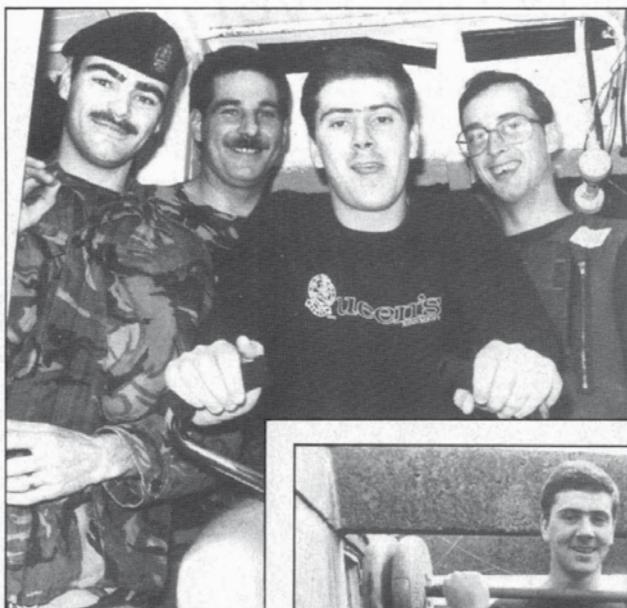
Some things don't change. In 1969 Lt Merrick Willis of 11 Platoon helped to establish an OP in Divis Tower overlooking a block of flats which has since gained a colourful reputation. He now visits it regularly as CO 2 Queens.

The OP has improved with age (at least as far as equipment is concerned) and so have most SF bases.

Though it has a distinctive air all of its own, especially in hot weather, even North Howard Street Mill is spotless

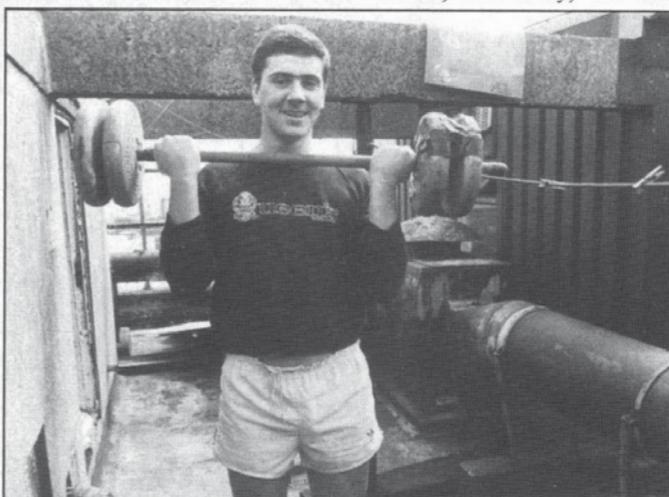
● Turn to next page

They're pedalling to Abu Dhabi – via the Divis OP!



Above – Abu Dhabi here we come. In their spare time the men who man the Divis Tower OP are "cycling" from London to the Gulf, which means more than 3,400 miles in four and a half months. Left to right are LCpl Kevin Croft, Sgt Steve Hannington, Pte Ryan Offer (in the saddle) and Pte Martin Swannell

Right – Recreation area on top of Divis Tower. Pte Ryan Offer with weights



YOU never know what sort of a welcome to expect if you arrive at the Divis Tower in a vehicle with the RUC confidential telephone number on the side. It could range from cool to warm or very warm.

The armed lift men wear uniforms more suited to a country life and residents met in the hall are apt to ignore strangers.

It is only when you reach the top floor and a cup of tea is thrust into your hand that you realise you are back among good old British eccentrics of which, fortunately, the 2nd

Battalion The Queen's Regiment has its share.

Eccentric? How else can you describe the antics of CSgt Tony Robinson and his crew who are combining one of the most important observation duties in Belfast with cycling from London to Abu Dhabi?

The detachment manning the OP is pedalling the 3,550 miles on an exercise bicycle (the second – the first wasn't up to it) parked at the end of a cupboard masquerading as a corridor.

In a sponsored ride to raise cash for the Acorn Trust which builds special homes for crippled children, the troops have so far covered more than 2,000 miles.

And this in their spare time, generally after having done a shift which requires all their attention.

The riders clock up around 30 miles a day and their problem is not punctures but finding something fresh to listen to on their personal stereos. Whitney Houston and Tina Turner are "in" at the moment.

"You've got to have something to take your mind off things," said Sgt Steve Hannington, 13 years a Queensman.

NO PLACE FOR DILLY DALLYING . . .

● From Page 21

with polished floors.

The troops call it "The Submarine" – among other things! They are crammed into small rooms with three tier bunk beds and with pipes running the length of the corridors and a minimum of natural light one can see why they feel submerged.

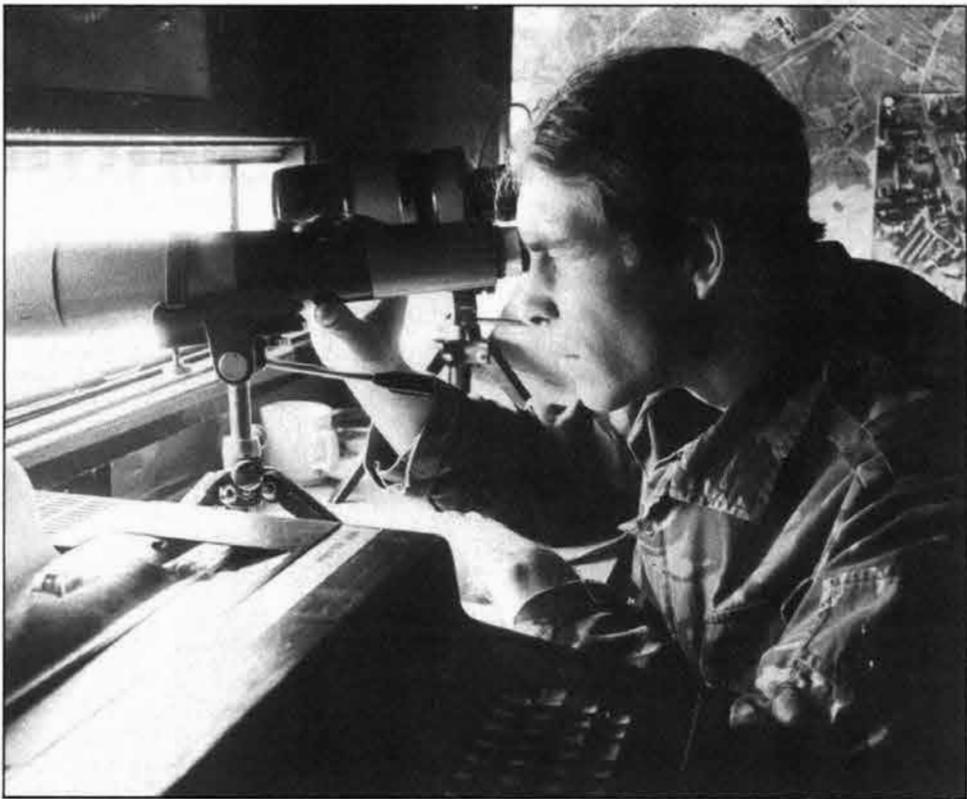
The presence of Capt Jim Hutton, Royal Marines, adds to the naval atmosphere. His attachment is mildly traditional and harks back to the time when one of the parent battalions of 2 Queens served on men o' war.

Officers still drink the Monarch's health sitting – in "The Submarine" round a table with a silver rearing horse centre piece dated 1935 inherited from another ancestor, the Royal West Kents.

Selected silver ware and regimental pictures are features



2nd Lt Tom Major checks a vehicle at a VCP. The WRAC member is on hand should a suspect woman be encountered



Eyes over Belfast. Pte David Laing on duty in the observation post on top of the Divis Tower

Service in the OP is demanding. The conditions are cramped, red hot in high summer and clammy in winter when a small paddling pool forms at one spot.

Apart from the Abu Dhabi ride the only other opportunity for recreation is on a roof criss-crossed with pipes and studded with brick boxes covering ventilation and lift machinery.

"I call this place a shore-based ship," said CSgt Robinson. "We can see all the places out there but can't go anywhere."

He and Sgt Hannington spend the whole tour "inside". The troops in the detachment (many from the 2 Queens Milan platoon) get breaks - doing street patrols.

One of these caught the blast of the bomb which killed two

civilians outside the local swimming baths. That hasn't stopped them carrying on. Or doing their 30 miles an hour stint cycling for the benefit of sick children.

Note: Suggestions by a certain officer that more funds could be raised by installing a rowing machine and returning from Abu Dhabi afloat have not been received with any enthusiasm!

Threat is never far off

LT COL Merrick Willis, CO 2 Queens, pinpointed a problem which faces all soldiers who serve with the West Belfast battalion.

"Belfast has become an unforgiving place over the years; terrorists want to take advantage of our mistakes.

"Sometimes it is difficult for soldiers to see that the threat is always there. When nothing happens it is only because they are doing their job well.

"The training for the tour is complex and thorough and there is great satisfaction for us all in feeling we are properly trained and doing a worthwhile and demanding job."

Finds made by his battalion so far include:

- three rocket propelled grenade launchers plus their warheads;
- nine rifles
- eight pistols
- four shotguns
- one drogue grenade
- five 36 grenades (Mills bombs)
- a nail bomb and more than 500 rounds of ammunition.

The 36 grenades did not take much finding. They were thrown at a Queens patrol but failed to go off.

of the company HQ messes reflecting a sense of style and hopefully having a civilising influence on the subalterns.

"Bull" is not a fetish with 2 Queens but their locations and billets are a credit to the men based there. It would be easy for them to make the workload an excuse for neglecting things but it doesn't happen.

The sight of CSM David Wilson making a quick inspection of the phone boxes at Musgrave on (his words) "dog-end patrol" explains why. From time to time smokers sweep the area.

A young rifleman at the Mill thought it "diabolical" to be kept from his bunk "to do the bogs" on return from patrol - but he would have more to say if CSM Dick Akehurst, who does his share on the streets, didn't keep the place up to Queens standards.

Living conditions are not

holiday camp grade. No one gets a room with a view at Whiterock, Girdwood Park or anywhere else. Blast walls a foot thick shield the windows.

At Woodburn the men have to squeeze into tiny rooms into which two double-tier bunks have been juggled. Body armour lined up to air streams in the sun. And to think there used to be a hotel on the site.

Platoons spend four or five days at a time at Woodburn - a month during their emergency tour.

The Twelfth is just one of the more interesting periods which the West Belfast battalion has to prepare for every year; there are plenty more to come.

The Queensmen are under no illusions as to the extent of the problem. A variety of weapons has been found, a number are known to be circulating, and "brickings" are becoming commonplace.

Driving past a police station 2nd Lt Tom Major pointed to a nasty rat hole which a rocket-propelled grenade had gnawed in the concrete sangar. White splash marks on the wall opposite showed where the RUC had returned fire. An RPG and a rifle were picked up by the Queens in the follow up.

No one needed to convince either Pte Jack Stedman or Pte Stuart Gordon of the difficulties to be encountered. The first was blown across the road by the blast from the bomb that killed two locals walking past the swimming baths. Pte Gordon tried to give the kiss of life to one of the victims.

A day or two later Pte Stedman, not the biggest Queensman, could be seen doubling past the same spot - back on duty.

Momentarily stirred by Pte Gordon's first aid attempt, local inhabitants returned his beret,

stolen while he was bending over their dying neighbour. The Press said his action had improved the atmosphere.

The fact remains that the half bricks are still being hurled, the bombers are placing small but powerful wire-controlled devices intended to cut down foot patrols and lure their comrades into snipers' sights and booby-trap situations. And the blast walls at the bases are not there to keep out the gnats.

Some soldiers will claim "No one likes it here." Others appear genuinely to enjoy the challenge. None of them gets much rest; all of them get stuck into it when they have to.

There is only one thing that beats the Londoners and many of the lads from Middlesex, Surrey and Kent - a call sign with the figure 3 in it. After all, 'ammersmiff is still 'ammer-smiff, even in the bleedin' province, innit?



CSM John Vann has a final word with LCpl Gary Leece before he sets out on duty with Matthew. Matthew, of mixed parentage, was training to be a guide dog for the blind but fell into the bad habit of fighting with other

Not such a guide dog!

dogs. Now he is a search dog. Good dog Matthew!

Mouth-water for The Midni



Belfast street scene – CO 2 Queens, Lt "shadow" Sgt Derek Kennedy

A sense of



Men of 10 Platoon, C Coy, 2 Queens under 2nd Lt Giles Clapp (extreme left), pause for the camera just as they were about to set off on patrol. These cheery Queensmen don't look as though they have been up most of the night...



Two Joannes – Pte Kennealy (left) and L the whole tour in the SF location working is a chance to attend the occasional F

ing prospect ght Team!



Col Merrick Willis with (right) his

EVEN in Turf Lodge the smell of cooking can make a soldier's mouth water.

As the CO of 2 Queens led a mobile patrol on a routine walk-about down a street where middle aged gardeners gave a guarded response to his cheery "good morning", whiffs of something savoury drifted from assorted kitchens.

It was a bit too much for LCpl Dusty Miller.

When one of his mates asked the time he replied spontaneously: "It's lunch o'clock."

But no one took the hint.

The patrol returned to its vehicles and set off for its next location with LCpl Miller sharing boiled sweets with the RSM and the rest of his crew.

RSM 'Jack' Daw has a lot of time for what is sometimes called The Midnight Team. LCpls Miller, John Carty and Bov Bovelle are black. They come from London or its environs and have a dry sense of humour that goes with their vaguely Cockney accents.

LCpl Carty has been a Queensman for 12 years, the others for around ten. All three are old Ulster hands.

In June LCpl Miller became the Army's Northern Ireland Athlete of the Year for the second time. This time his high jump equalled the Northern Ireland record.

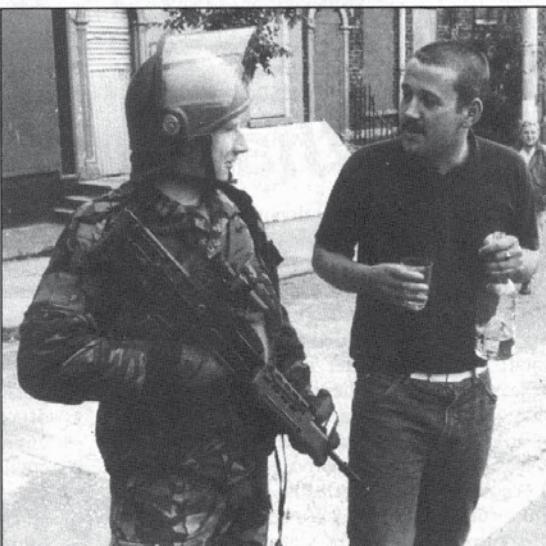


LCpl Dusty Miller, Queensman and Northern Ireland Army athletics champion

Humour comes in handy on the streets



Cpl Gilliot, WRAC, spending with the ACC. The only break RCT disco



LCpl Paul Carter politely declines a drink offer from a convivial holidaymaker on "The Twelfth" - an extremely busy time for the West Belfast battalion



Ops Officer Sean Duggan and watchkeeper Pte David Joy study the world through their remote controlled cameras



AN EARLY LESSON LEARNT

By Robin Clark

Near the end of the two-week TA Bassingbourn basic course, we had a night in the field out on the airfield training area. I don't think the instructors expected much of us; looking back, it was probably meant to be a light introduction to operating in the field in the dark. This taught us one expected thing, that it is very important to know 'exactly' where you are (no matter if it's dark or raining!). But, that night, it reinforced another aspect of military law/life that to us was unexpected.

It was particularly rainy and windy. This made the Autumn skies even darker than usual that night. It was difficult to set up ponchos to hide from the elements. We were supposed to be ready to fend off an attack with blanks, but perhaps because we were slightly lost, this did not happen (although we did hear blanks going off and shouting in the distance). One member of our platoon, let's call him 'C' for the purpose of the story, had signed out four rifles complete with BFAs to hurry the process of getting to the ready point and handed them out to his colleagues. Most of us were unaware that 'C' had done this. (*Ed: Not sure what the arms kote storeman was up to here!*)

In the morning, we were happy to hand in our equipment and walk to the railway station to return home as 'basic trained' soldiers. We were a little puzzled as to where 'C' was, as we expected him to take the train home with us. We later found out that, during the chaos of our first night exercise, one of the recruits with 'C's' rifle had dropped it in the dark and had been unable to find it.

'C' of course had signed for it and was arrested by the military police and was interrogated, being asked continually: *"What have you done with the weapon?"* He had handed in 'his' rifle and of course did not know what had happened to the others. While there, he noticed in between his interrogation sessions that there were soldiers in there being given pointless punishment tasks such as bulging up drinks cans! Luckily for 'C', a member of staff out walking his dogs on the training area found an SLR with BFA attached in a muddy rut and eventually took it back to the correct armoury. 'C' was released some four hours after we had left Bassingbourn.

We had been told many times how important it was to look after your weapon. 'C's unexpected incarceration really drummed it into us, not only responsibility for the weapons, but also, what you sign for is something 'you' are responsible for. Lesson learnt!



Robin Clark at Chelsea Barracks on an INT exercise weekend

A COY 5 QUEENS (V) ON EX CRUSADER

By Mark Weeks



The picture shows 2PI A Coy 5 QUEENS(V) at the outset of Ex CRUSADER 80 (mustering just two rifle sections and PI HQ). It must have been early in the exercise as we all look relatively neat and tidy. After eight days in a sandy slit trench (no revetting materials reached us), and the latter half spent in Noddy Suits, we were a fairly scruffy bunch when we 'retired'. It was raining that day - when did it never? There was a pause during the march back to transport. We stopped in what must have been a park (it was night, of course) and I settled on a handy park bench to rest weary legs and to take the weight of the 58-pattern webbing that pinched tight about the

waist and shoulders in the wet, especially when wearing a Noddy Suit. I was joined on the bench by our keen young single-pip platoon commander and our wizened platoon sergeant. The latter would regale us with tales about stoppages on a Vickers (MG) and how lucky were to have the 'simple' GPMG. The following exchange made me smile.

Keen young officer, "*I say Sergeant, with all this kit on, I do feel like a proper soldier!*"

Sergeant, glumly as the rain dripped off the front of his helmet, "*Well I feel like a tramp at Waterloo Station.*"

General Sir Anthony Farrar-Hockley was C-in-C AFNORTH in the 1980s. The HQ was in Oslo, but he had an office and a flat in Copenhagen where he entertained. Having been a prisoner of war in Korea, TFH was keen on his food and was an accomplished chef – he always cooked at least one course himself for any party. One evening, Queen Margrethe was being entertained to dinner in TFH's flat and all went well until the pudding – which was seen to be a delicious crème brûlée. This was not, however, a series of individual servings, but one large dish, which was offered to the Queen along with a silver spoon. Her Majesty gave the hard sugar crust a sharp tap in order to break it – nothing; another, harder WHACK; still nothing. WHACK WHACK WHACK! After several vain attempts to break through, the dish had to be whisked away, the crust broken in the kitchen and the dish returned. The Queen took all in good part – but TFH's face was a picture.

Jonathon Riley



NIJMEGEN MARCH JULY 1972

By Roger Lowans

I was still the relatively new boy on the block at Hornsey when the platoon was chosen to represent the Regiment at the 56th International Four Days Marches at Nijmegen.

I knew little or nothing about the Dutch town of Nijmegen. But when my father heard that I was going to Nijmegen, he was delighted because, during WW2, he had crossed the bridge there during the Battle of Arnhem (known to many as *The Bridge Too Far*).

My other connection with Nijmegen was that I was recruited as a teenager into the Dorset Regiment which was also involved in Arnhem as they tried to rescue the Parachute Regiment from the wrong side of the river.

In my early 20s, I transferred to 5 QUEENS and found myself serving first at Hornsey and later Edgware with soldiers mainly recruited in north London. I was given the role of training and leading the platoon at Nijmegen. We trained for the marches at the weekends prior to going to Holland. This was essential as we knew the distance to be covered and had heard about the summer heat in Holland. Furthermore, the Dutch organisers had laid down some rules like *"Be sure at all times you are in good physical condition to walk."*

As the Rhine Army News put it:

The team from 5 QUEENS found the marches demanded a high degree of stamina and determination. Although there are no winners in the event, there is a requirement to complete a total of between 30 and 50 kilometres per day which adds up to over 100 miles of hard marching during the four- day period. Teams must finish as teams or not at all.

I remember our first impression was that it was very hot and it remained so through the week. All of us found the heat exhausting. On the second day, I gave the order that we would start marching at 3am so at least there was a period when our team were marching at a cooler time of day. We followed a different route each day and had one soldier acting as a bicycle orderly who rode ahead and organised food, drinks and stopping places.

I had decided before we left for Holland that I would make sure the soldiers knew the story of *The Bridge Too Far* and relate my father's presence at Nijmegen during WW2. I also wanted to pass on my personal interest in the Dorsets and





their involvement in the battle. To help the soldiers as we marched along and to keep them going, I told them these stories.

Their interest was great, and unbeknown to me they arranged for the regimental band to lead us through the crowd on the last day. The other thing organised behind my back was for 'Miss Nijmegen' for that year to shave off my moustache in public! This took place in the main square with much laughter from soldiers and public alike.

One of the photos shows our celebrations outside the Mess on our return to Canterbury.

As a footnote, I recall on my return home that my father was very moved when he heard about our achievement and my storytelling.

I would also like to mention the supportive taxi driver who drove me on the final stage of my journey home and refused to take payment when he heard what I'd been doing that week.





THE 'PADS' ALWAYS GOT THE BEST POSTINGS

By Paul Gray

Throughout my service, I thought that the 'pads' (married soldiers) got all the perks, while we bachelors ended up with the worst jobs and the most inconvenient postings. However, I had two appointments for which the only apparent criterion was that I was a bachelor: four months in Nigeria in 1969–70 and a year in Korea in 1974.

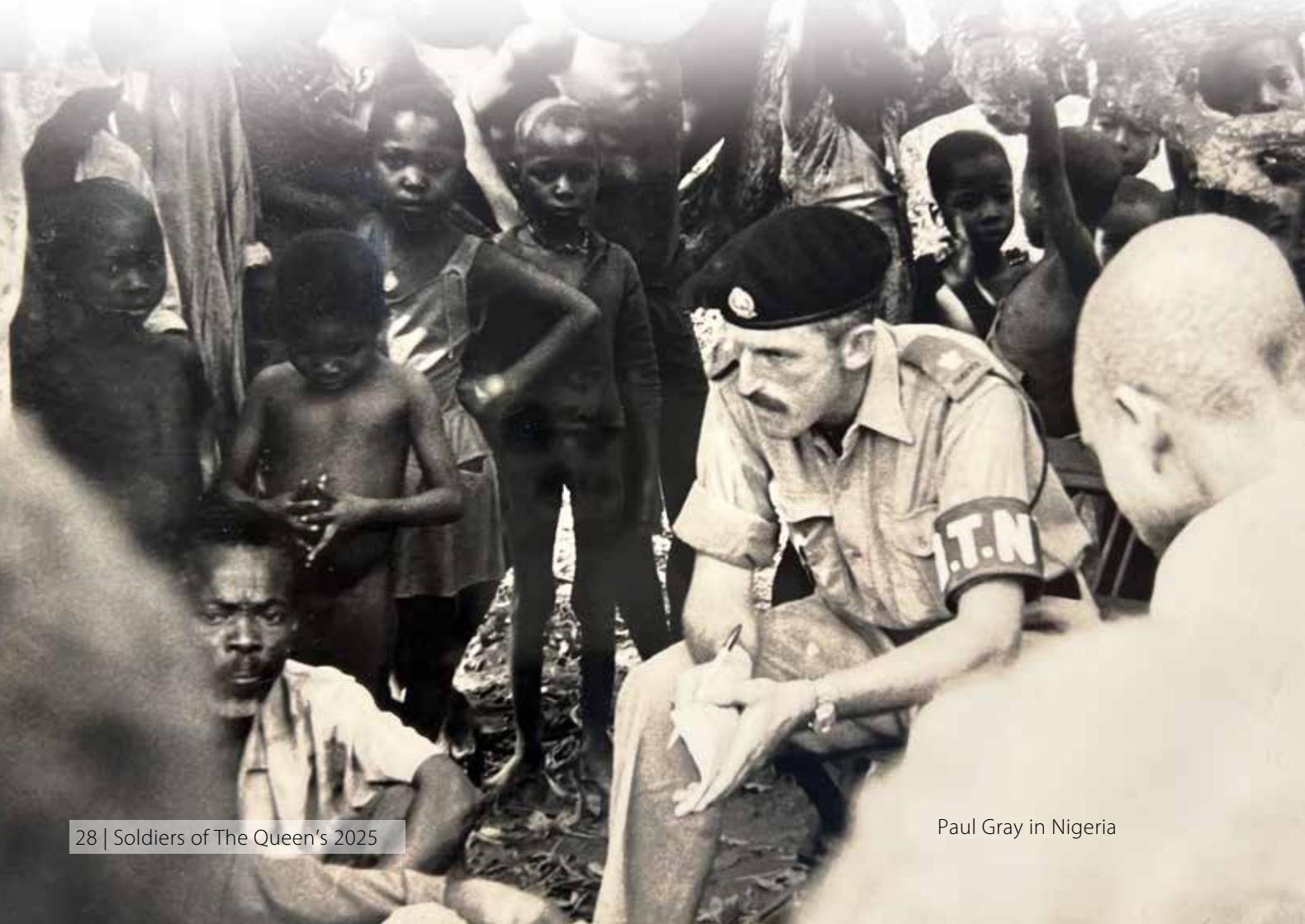
Nigeria: November 1969 to March 1970

I was posted to HQ Wales in Brecon in August 1969 - the very week that 1 QUEENS was sent to Londonderry at the start of the Troubles. I was disappointed to miss the action.

In early November, the RO responsible for MS matters in HQ Wales asked if I would like to go to Nigeria. I replied that I wouldn't mind - thinking it would be a change from Brecon, where I had already managed to upset both the GOC and the GSO1. A couple of hours later, he returned to tell me that I was "on" and that I *"should have been there last week!"*

That same day, Michael Dudding - then a Fusilier, a fellow member of my intake at RMAS, winner of almost all the prizes there, and at that time working in one of the manning branches of MOD - telephoned me with the details. I was to be the junior British observer on the Observer Team to Nigeria (OTN), paid at the FCO rate, and was to fly out in two days. Later, the FCO tried to avoid paying me, but Michael stood up for me, and I received the payment.

I had to be vetted by the West Africa Department of the FCO in London, whose only concern seemed to be that I was not a Roman Catholic. At the time, some Roman Catholic missionaries had been caught smuggling arms to the secessionist tribe - the Ibo - who were mostly Catholic, having been converted during the 19th century. But what



do you do if someone points a gun at you and tells you to put a few extra parcels on your supply aircraft going up-country?

OTN had been formed earlier in 1969, probably at the suggestion of the British Government, to counter propaganda from Marc Press, a Swiss PR company hired by the Ibo, which claimed that the Federal Military Government (FMG) was committing genocide. The previous FCO Junior Assistant Observer - a friend of some MP - had been sacked for telling people he was really from MI6, which was untrue. I was warned in no uncertain terms against making such comments.

In Lagos, we were billeted in the Federal Palace Hotel, a four-star establishment paid for by the FMG. When working up-country in and around the secessionist area, we were based in:

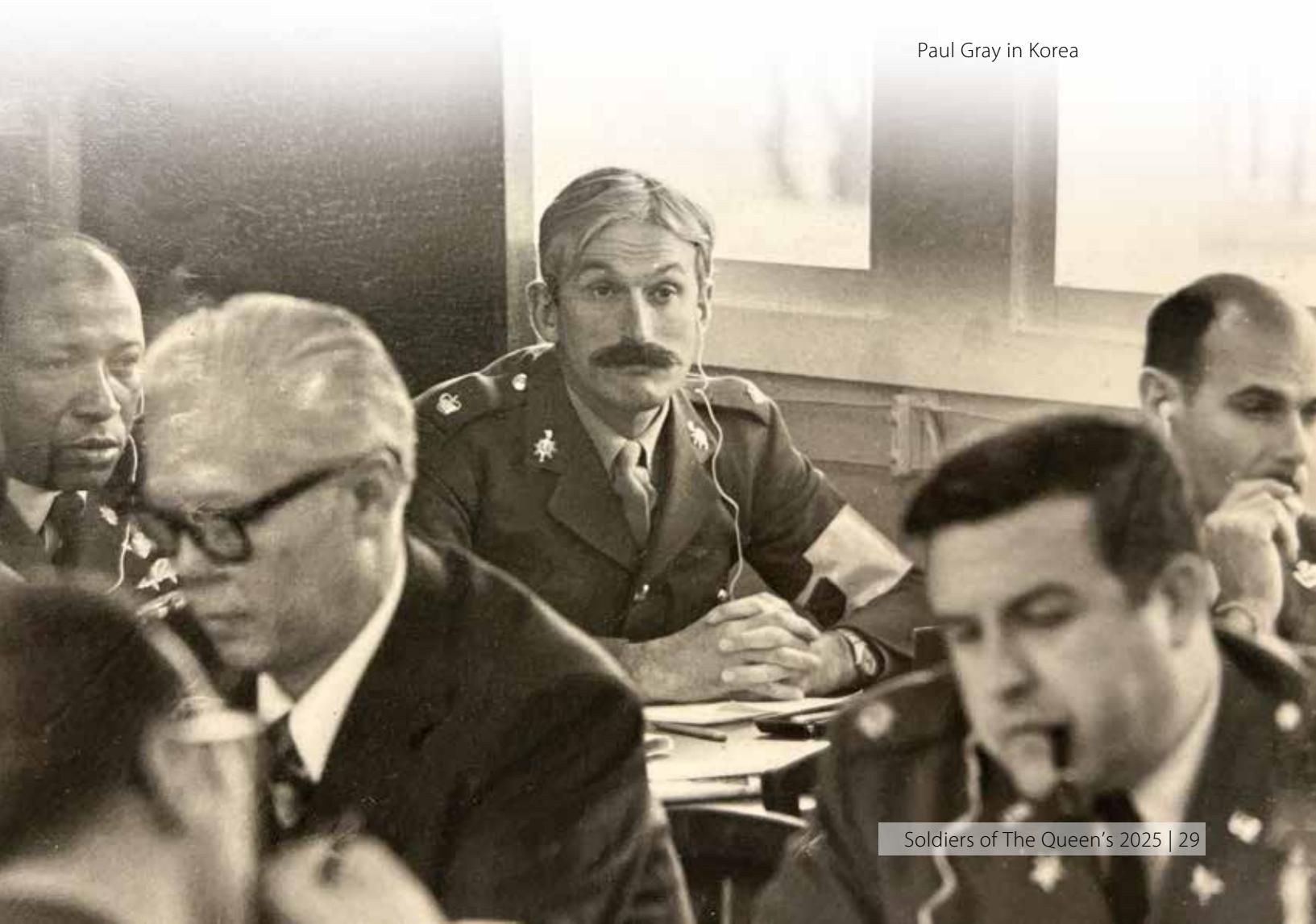
- **Owerri (west)** - a pleasant hotel with surprisingly good Bulgarian wine.
- **Enugu (north)** - the almost-derelict ex-pats' club, which in colonial days had been the British Club.
- **Port Harcourt (south-east)** - a derelict hotel where we essentially camped.

By the time I arrived, OTN had already determined that there was no genocide, but the FMG wanted the team to remain in place in case further propaganda surfaced.

We travelled up-country many times. We were actually in an FMG Brigade HQ when the civil war ended - purely by accident - after an FMG patrol, usually fired upon from a certain position, advanced without opposition into the secessionist area and found the enemy gone. Their commander, Colonel Ojukwu, had fled with his purloined Mercedes.

I recall being in the Officers' Mess of one FMG Brigade HQ when Colonel Effiong, who had taken over command of the Ibo forces and ordered their surrender, walked in. Everyone stood up, as if the civil war had never happened. That MS RO at HQ Wales would never have approached me on that fateful morning had I been married.

Paul Gray in Korea





Korea: January 1974 to January 1975

I was originally due to be posted as Brigade Major to the Abu Dhabi Defence Force in January 1974 - a good appointment. However, I have no aptitude for languages (I even failed A-level French) and dreaded having to learn Arabic. I was saved when the Commander - a Pakistani Brigadier - requested a Pakistani officer for the role.

At the same time, the bachelor officer from the Staff College due to go to Korea had his appointment changed. The posting was 'bachelor only' due to insufficient facilities for married officers, and was always filled from the Staff College. The selected officer - from the Brigade of Gurkhas - argued that he had spent his entire career in the Far East and ought to go to BAOR, Northern Ireland, or anywhere else. MOD agreed, leaving MS to find both a bachelor for Korea and a new role for me.

The solution was simple: *"Gray is a bachelor. Gray will go to Korea."*

I thus became the first non-Staff College officer to hold the appointment of GSO2 (Liaison Officer) to the United Nations Command - by then a rump of its Korean War incarnation (1950–53). My year in Korea turned out to be the best of my service - and I only got it because I was a bachelor.

I count myself fortunate to have had two highly interesting and enjoyable postings purely because I was unmarried. So, it wasn't just the pads who got the best jobs!

JUNIOR CORPS OF DRUMS

This was the last photo taken of the Junior Corps of Drums at Howe Barracks in 1968 before they were posted to the four battalions.



THE TRIALS AND NO TRIBULATIONS OF A UNIT EMPLANING OFFICER

By Henry Eagan

In 1979, whilst serving with 1 QUEENS in Werl, I had the grave misfortune of being appointed Unit Emplaning Officer (UEO) for Ex MEDICINE MAN in Canada. A horrendous task for anyone, but particularly so for a green acting captain and recently appointed assistant adjutant. The battalion second-in-command was the fearsome Peter Hubert and even more fearsome was the commanding officer, John Holman, neither of whom were likely to tolerate incompetence by the UEO.

The battlegroup was scattered far and wide across BAOR necessitating endless instructions and stultifyingly dull conferences. As if pleasing Peter Hubert wasn't hard enough, the Transport and Movement branch of the RCT set pooh traps at every opportunity (who would have thought that carbon paper was dangerous air cargo?) making life tiresome to say the very least. As the deployment approached, the battlegroup was assigned its schedule of flights and I duly issued the movement plan with threats of dire consequences for missing any of the key timings.

In the usual way of things, the RCT and RAF called for each flight hours ahead of the departure time (remember the Movement Control Checkpoints (MCCP) at 0330 hrs with a flight at 1030hrs? – not to mention the lowliest movement NCO shouting "*Right listen in; s'cuse ranks – Holman*"). On this particular deployment everything seemed to be going to plan – coaches, troops, weapon bundles and freight seemed to be heading in the right direction and more importantly at the appointed times. The penultimate flight of eight passenger flights was duly sent on its way and in close consultation with the RCT movements NCO I agreed to muster the final flight in Albuhera Barracks at 1300hrs the following day. Being a young buck, I thought that some R&R at the Teachers Mess in Menden would be in order and headed off in that direction confident that all was set for an easy run the following day – what could possibly go wrong?

I returned to Albuhera Barracks the following morning and sauntered into the Orderly Room to be greeted by Sgt Manji, the Orderly Room Sergeant, as if I were the Messiah at the second coming. He uttered words that still cause my blood to run cold "*Sir, your flight takes off from Hannover in three minutes*" (expletives deleted). "*Say again?*" squeaked I, having surely misheard the message – but no such luck. There are few things to match the feeling of knowing that I, the UEO, had been the only person of seven hundred in the battlegroup to miss his flight. There was the wrath of the CO and battalion second-in-command to face but worse still by far was the prospect of facing the mirth and endless piss-taking by all ranks for years to come.

To cut a long story short I flew back to Brize Norton later that day and then immediately transferred with two other random soldiers onto an empty VC10 that happened to be heading to Canada. It was an anxious journey even if it was uncharacteristically comfortable. On arrival, it was straight to Camp Crowfoot to present myself to the CO, who happened to be in breakfast in the company of most of battalion headquarters and the sub-unit commanders. A roar went up from all present along with a barrage of aspersions cast upon my military competence. Amazingly, no further action was taken, in the sure knowledge that the humiliation I had suffered would be far more of a lesson than losing my R&R or gaining untold quantities of extras.

In keeping with everyone at the time, you're probably not that





interested in why my flight was brought forward – it's simply enough to know that the UEO missed his flight. However, for my sins I was appointed the Unit Emplaning Officer for the battalion's move from Canterbury to Belize in 1980 and for the battalion's arms plot move from Omagh to Gibraltar in 1984. An infinitely and unspeakably worse punishment than 28 days of extra orderly officer.

(And with thanks to the ever perceptive and highly talented Paddy Ryan for his accurate depiction of the aforementioned event).

THE TWO SIDES OF BELIZE



PADRES

In 1974, 1 QUEENS were in Wainwright, Canada on exercise. We were given 5 days R+R at the end of the field exercises. Five of us (Jimmy Juhel, Barry Camille, Bob Owen, Arthur Shepard and John Taylor) under the guidance of our formidable CSM, Bill Marshall, decided to hire a car. There were no sensible cars left so we ended up with a 3.5 Cutlass Rocket which was very fast and a great joy to drive. Bill said we would do the hiring on his credit card and that only he and I would be doing the driving. On a lovely sunny morning we were driving out to a lake for a swim. The road was very long and very straight, so Jimmy smiled from the back seat into my rear-view mirror and indicated I should get a move on! We were cruising along nicely when the car took off and flew for a noticeable distance. At which point Bill Marshall asked what speed we were doing and as a good soldier, I told the truth: "115 miles per hour, Sir!" The error of my ways was made very clear to me, to the great amusement of my mates.

John Taylor

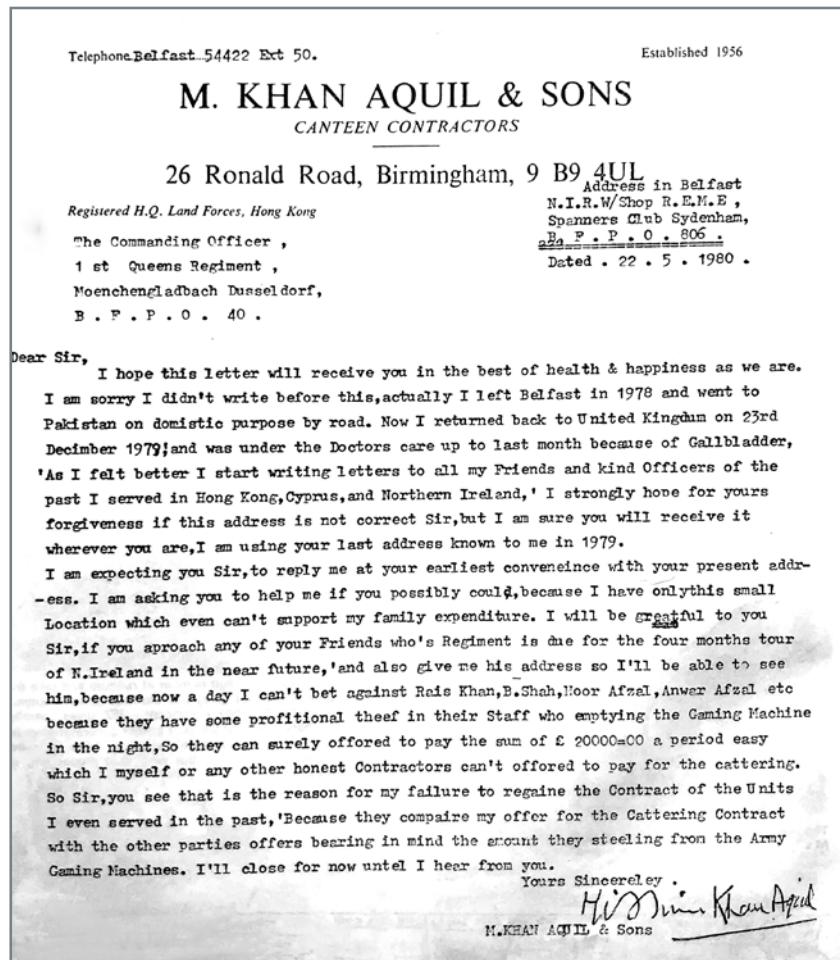
THE REGIMENTAL SUTLER

By John Powell

At the risk of sounding like a terrestrial TV channel showing 1980s comedy shows, I should point out that some of the language and events in this article reflect the times in which they occurred. If you are easily offended by what you might read – don’t!

One of the great ‘traditions’ we have lost in the Army over the years (along with a band for each battalion) is the Regimental Sutler. For most of us we would have come across them during Operation BANNER taking the place of NAAFI, who considered conditions too dangerous and onerous for their staff to work in. Each battalion would appoint its own sutler who would utilise extended family members to support the business model – which was very successful given the levels of rent the PRI received; indeed, such was the competition between rival sutlers that brigade commanders and commanding officers would occasionally receive letters alleging corruption on the part of Quartermasters or other officers involved in the letting of the contract in order to undermine the successful applicant. This was one such example!

In 1 QUEENS during the Omagh tour 1982-85, the Sutler was Anwar Afzal from Pakistan. His main outlet (colloquially known as the ‘Golly Shop’ or ‘Choggie’ - leading to phrases like ‘Choggie Burger’) was opposite BHQ and handy for those on Brigade Airborne Reaction Force (ARF) duty or staggering on in the battalion operations room or intelligence cell. In here, a wide range of goods and toiletries were available at a reasonable price. As well as the convenience of being in camp the shop was open 24 hours a day. Soldiers coming off patrol in the very early hours who didn’t fancy availing themselves of a self-cooked egg banjo in the Cookhouse would wake up the duty sutler for tea, coffee, choggie burgers, soft drinks and whatever else was on sale. Very often the duty sutler would have pulled down the shutters and be sleeping on a camp bed behind the counter, to be woken at 3am to the sound of fists banging on the hatch and yells of ‘wake up’ (the polite version); that they did so with good grace was always surprising to me, but I think they were probably making a fortune out of us.



Occasionally the Battalion would ask for additional help. In 1984 it was decided that the Third Colour was in need of replacement and Anwar Afzal tasked the women in his village to produce a new one. They did a fine job, for a princely sum, and that Colour is in use today with 1 PWRR in Cyprus.

For most of the soldiers (and officers) another attraction was the ready availability of black-market videos (which the ARF made maximum use of). No sooner had the latest film been released than it would be available at a reasonable price; the quality was a bit hit and miss, ranging from a good copy to one that was clearly filmed in a cinema with the occasional punter getting up to use the lavatory mid film!

The sutlers also did a line in dodgy pornographic videos which were another popular outlet for them. The fast turnover of black-market videos could lead to embarrassing situations though; one officer had rented the very latest James Bond



film for his family to watch at Christmas. This particular item was of good quality and the family enjoyed their 'treat' right up until the end of the film when the pornographic film over which James Bond had been recorded suddenly appeared on the family television; thankfully the officer concerned realised what was happening very quickly and managed to turn it off before the children realised what was being shown (I did think the officer was Alasdair Goulden but he denies it was him in this case). (Ed: *Indeed I do, but I do know who it was!*)

Sadly, all good things come to an end, and NAAFI waved their Royal Charter under the Army's nose demanding that they take over the role of the sutlers. We were promised that we would receive the same level of service, but it didn't take long for the SSVC outlet to restrict their hours for renting videos to 1030 – 1530 hrs.



The Battalion Guardroom, Lisanelly Barracks, Omagh. A sentry calls the faithful to prayer

The last time I came across sutlers was in Gibraltar after the Omagh tour. Here they managed to hang on in the teeth of NAAFI opposition and they could be found in both Lathbury and South Barracks – one of their main operations was tailoring and production of uniform items in addition to suits and jackets.

In 2011 Reg Hollis, who was serving with 2 PWRR in Cyprus, came across 'Charlie the Choggie' from South Barracks days. Not only could he remember the B Coy chain of command names (which would have included Major Anthony Beattie after he took over from Major Peter McClelland and WO2 (CSM) Brian Kelling) but he recalled Privates Michael Shipton and Danny Tillyer and their page numbers in his 'Tick Book'.

In 2012 when I was posted back to Gibraltar the remnant of the sutler system was still in place; having just lost the contract with the MOD for tailoring, he had set up an independent business. I used him for my No 3 and No 11 Dress – I think he's still there, but I suspect very few who use him today understand the history of the sutlers and the positive contribution they made in supporting the British Army in the 19th and 20th Centuries.

I often pass articles I write under the noses of friends for comment and Major Anthony 'Billy' Bolton offered this recollection:

Our sutler in South Barracks Gibraltar - each Company had one in their lines - took to sleeping on the pool table to deter the numerous break-ins. The most frequently removed article was the 'under-the-counter' tick book. The troops were allowed to run up a tab of £10, and 'we' undertook to remove that from their pay if they didn't pay it back. However, in the under-the-counter book, they could run up, in some cases, substantial debts; both the sutler and the soldiers knew that this was expressly forbidden. WO2 (CSM) (later Captain) Barry Camille in A Coy used to enjoy telling the sutler that he could f@!* off when he came grovelling for help to recoup his losses. After one such theft, my previous career (Ed:

Billy had served in the Metropolitan Police) was vindicated when I spotted that the main likely suspect's page was the only one removed from the book.

Extracts From Braganza 1983



The Golly Shop (proprietor: Mr. Anwar Afzal), Lcpl Ruffy, Sgt Rice and Csgt Carter drop in for a cuppa.



Members of 4 Platoon 1 QUEENS in a Choggie's in Northern Ireland. L- R Privates: Steve Day, Kev Dillon, Jim Gardener, Ivan Faith, Mick Melhuish, Clive Miller and Steve Gibbons.

Opinion is split as to location – it wasn't Omagh, it could be Strabane but looks too clean! Possibly it was taken at Bessbrook Mill whilst 4 Platoon were on a Brigade Reserve deployment to South Armagh to cover the changeover of the Armagh Roulement Battalion by assisting the Royal Engineer Search Team with a route clearance. During the operation Lance Corporal Dave Else found an empty hide in a dry-stone wall.



HMS KENT VISIT

By Julian Stokes

In late 1979, 2 QUEENS had just been posted to Colchester after a two-year tour in Gibraltar. HMS Kent, our affiliated Royal Navy ship, was due to deploy to the Mediterranean to exercise with RAF Buccaneer aircraft and carry out goodwill visits to various ports.

Volunteers from the battalion were duly requested, and I put my hand up at the chance to return to Gibraltar to visit some of my old haunts. I had also taken part in several exchanges with the Royal Navy while based there and thought this would be an interesting trip. Half a dozen of us from the battalion (including a very young 2nd Lt Newman) found ourselves in a minibus on the way to Portsmouth to meet the ship. At the same time, several members of HMS Kent's crew would be spending a month in Colchester with the battalion.

Once we got under way, the captain-keen to prevent us 'Pongo types' treating the trip as a cruise-made sure we became part of the seaman's watch. On watch, you might find yourself on the bridge wings as lookout, reporting sightings to the officer of the watch; down in the wheelhouse steering the ship (a multimillion-pound warship in the hands of young 'Percy Pongo'!); or on the flight deck beside the hangar door as man-overboard sentry, finger poised over the alarm button.

Being a naïve 19-year-old who believed everything the salty sea dogs told me, I was assured the flight deck was haunted. The story went that a man-overboard sentry had once failed to raise the alarm and a crew member had drowned. Each time the tale was told, the details grew more embellished.

A couple of weeks later, on the way back to Gibraltar to refuel, I was again on man-overboard watch. Picture it: a



HMS Kent

full moon, clear sky, warm and calm sea, the ship's engines humming as we turned up a glowing luminescent wake. Then, glancing up at the roof of the helicopter hangar, I saw the 'ghost' of the departed sailor floating above the flight deck! With my finger hovering over the alarm button, heart pounding, it took a few moments before I realised what was happening. The 'ghost' was in fact a mop wrapped in a sheet, suspended from the hangar roof by the off-duty members of my watch and mess deck. A fabulous wind-up!

During the trip I lived in 3E mess (the gunners' mess), whose members included several from the Field Gun Crew that raced at the annual Royal Tournament. With arms like my legs, they were formidable individuals-but I was made most welcome. During downtime we were encouraged to take part in sporting activities, and I recall 2nd Lt Newman very nearly went overboard while playing deck hockey for the wardroom (probably against the stokers or the gunners).

While cruising the Mediterranean, we conducted live firing with the onboard Marine detachment-not only small arms familiar to us, but also the 20mm Oerlikons beside the bridge wings. I was even taken to the twin 30mm gun turrets to witness them firing.

Exercising with the RAF was something else entirely. The Buccaneers used the ship as a target, trying to locate us in the vastness of the Mediterranean while we attempted to evade them and deploy electronic countermeasures. From the bridge wings I could see the aircraft approaching, with a running commentary from the radar operator piped through. As they thundered past, they flew lower than my position!

One mystery of the trip has forever baffled me.

On the final night at sea, before returning to Portsmouth, an 'Up Channel Night' was held. This included a 'Miss Kent' beauty contest, with participants in drag and the proceedings broadcast to the mess decks via onboard CCTV. The audience, fuelled by a few beers, thoroughly enjoyed the spectacle. The mystery is this: at the time the crew was entirely male, and we had been at sea for several weeks... so where did all that ladies' lingerie come from?

MISS 1 QUEENS

By Alasdair Goulden

In 1978, our esteemed President wrote to the West Sussex Courier Times in June 1978. This is the letter, and the lovely Tania Nicholls was the result.

Soldiers hunt for pin-up

THE 1st Battalion of the Queen's Regiment has moved to Northern Ireland for a four-month tour of security duty on the streets of Belfast.

While the Battalion is in Northern Ireland the men are hoping to find a "Miss 1st Queens" from their recruiting area of Kent, Sussex, Surrey and London — "Queen's Country".

It has become almost traditional for units serving in Northern Ireland to select a personality pin-up girl who can pay them morale-boosting visits during their tour, but the 1st Battalion has not yet found one.

Captain Anthony Beattie explained: "We are looking for an attractive girl who is over 18, lives in our recruiting area and could visit the Battalion as our guest while we are in Northern Ireland and again when we return to Germany. Any interested young lady should send a letter giving some details about herself and a full-length photograph to me and the selection will be made by a panel representing the Battalion."

Captain Beattie's address is: 1st Battalion, The Queen's Regiment, BFPO 801.

MISS 1 QUEENS



West Sussex County Times
30 June 1978

Tanya Nicholls

Not be outdone by my President, in 1984, in my capacity as Editor (*Ed: Yet again!!!*) for 'Braganza' for the Omagh Tour, I managed to get Samantha Fox to agree to be the next 'Miss 1 QUEENS' and had the pleasure of escorting her around the patch for the weekend with her equally delightful mother to meet the troops.

In December 1985 the following article appeared in The People Newspaper

Army is Barmy on Sam

THE ARMY went to war yesterday over topless stunner Samantha Fox. Lads of the 2nd Battalion, Royal Anglian Regiment, invited the busty beauty to their barracks to make her their official pin-up. But now a storm in a D-Cup is looming with the boys of The Queen's Regiment who say Sam is THEIR girl. The Anglians known as the Poachers, lived up to their nickname by whisking 19-year-old Sam to their Colchester HQ in a Fox armoured car. As the bubbly blonde signed autographs, Captain Tim Townley said: "The men agreed Sam was the one they wanted. We were going abroad next year and will invite her to visit us!" (*Ed: In their dreams!*)

Sam diplomatically sidestepped the battle over her charms. "I don't care how many regiments want me." she smiled. "I'm very flattered."



Sent to the Editor following her weekend with him



Pte Milsom showing concern about Sam's aim

(Ed: We can see where her loyalties really lay! Other photos are available!)

OFFICER'S COMPASS

I returned to the company location after leading a fighting patrol through dense fog at Sennelager one night. Leading the patrol, I disappeared off the face of the planet into the Schmindebeck Creek, (the very one that consumed a Centurion tank some years before). As I slowly sank into the mud, I turned expecting to see my loyal troops rushing to save me. No such luck! There was Cpl Barrel and Pte Bushby hysterical and helpless with laughter, which wasn't helpful as I sunk inexorably into the mud. Eventually, they reached in and hauled me out, and we made our way back to the night position. As I fell asleep over the louvres of the APC, I realised the only thing that remained of my prismatic compass was the lanyard ring and lanyard. It was tough to explain later to the QM, Les Wilson, just exactly what happened to that compass.



Mark Cowan-Aston

TALES FROM THE DESERT

By Trevor Millett

The day after St Valentine's Day - what seems like a hundred years ago - I, along with many others from the 1st Battalion, stepped out onto the tarmac at RAF Muharraq (now Bahrain International Airport) at the start of a nine-month Arab Gulf tour in 1968.

As we staggered through the searing heat, reflected up from the tarmac, desperately tearing at our neckties (we were the 1st Bn!), we passed groups of airport employees huddled in ex-Army greatcoats with collars up and cap-comforters pulled down over their ears. I wondered what I'd let myself in for. For them, of course, it was winter.

One of Recce Platoon's early attempts at adjusting to the environment involved driving to the south of the egg-shaped island of Bahrain. There, we practised adopting different vehicle formations at high speed across the salt flats. These manoeuvres were directed by our 'Dear Leader,' who had clearly spent much of his youth devouring tales of T E Lawrence. Standing bolt upright in his stripped-down landrover, arms flailing, he was driven flat-out by Jeff Payne.

Eventually DL's enthusiasm waned when his vehicle came to a bruising and sudden halt - wheels buried deep in what looked like salty jelly. Digging the landrover out was hot, hard work. On completion, we decided to cool off with a swim and wash away the sweat and sand.

Some of the boys amused themselves by splashing around naked, chasing large white sea snakes, while others tried catching small lizards that escaped by scuttling down burrows (on the seashore, no less!). One lad reached shoulder-deep into a burrow, only to scream and launch himself backwards faster than I've ever seen anyone move while prone. Seconds later, out waddled the occupant: the largest lizard I'd ever seen, over a metre long and at least 10–12 inches around.

Within a week, lads in the rifle companies were walking these giant lizards around camp on homemade leads. Sometime later in the tour, we discovered that those fat white sea snakes were in fact lethal - it should have been them chasing us!

EMERGING FROM THE DEPTHS

By Pete Lauer

After joining the 5th Battalion in 1984, serving in both the Queen's and PWRR, I became a Kent Police Officer in 1995.

On 6 September 1997-the day of Princess Diana's funeral-I was one of two officers on duty covering the Isle of Sheppey. While responding to reports of a nuisance motorcyclist, I was diverted to a major collision: four vehicles, multiple casualties, one car ablaze in a maize field, and chaos that no training could ever prepare me for.

I performed CPR on a young man I feared was already gone, his family clinging to me as I fought to save him. He died from catastrophic injuries, later described as similar to Princess Diana's. The echo of that morning's solemn broadcast haunted the scene. Afterwards, I shut down emotionally and carried on for 18 more years, burying every trauma deeper-until it finally surfaced.

On 15 July 2024, at my lowest point, I found myself overwhelmed by trauma and isolation. Despite reaching out for mental health support, I was told help would come slowly. As despair set in, I called the Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Crisis Line. My situation escalated rapidly, and a 999 call was made. At 19:02, two paramedics arrived at my home:



Toby Pierce and Ian Chedgey. Both turned out to be veterans-Toby, ex-PWRR, and Ian, a Royal Engineer.

As I sat defeated, explaining that I could no longer cope, Toby noticed my PWRR belt and beret. "Were you PWRR?" he asked, recognising his own past in mine. Ian then spoke words that still echo powerfully in my mind: "Come on, Mucker. I was RE. We're not leaving you behind."

They transported me to hospital, stayed with me as long as possible, and inspired me to hold on - for them, and for myself. Their empathy reached far beyond their clinical role, exemplifying the spirit and brotherhood that define our service. Their compassion, professionalism, and unwavering commitment to the core military value of 'never leaving a brother behind' quite literally saved my life, representing the highest traditions of honour, unity, and mutual care among veterans.

Because of their actions, I have now been sober for over a year.

(Ed: Help can be obtained from a number of organisations: Samaritans - call 116 123 or visit www.samaritans.org; Combat Stress - call 0800 138 1619 or visit www.combatstress.org.uk. Both provide support 24/7.)

Edinburgh Castle

A month guarding Edinburgh Castle: a great honour for B Company 1 QUEENS in 1981. We relieved 1 PARA, the resident battalion, mounted our first guard (I seem to remember the OC, Rocky Hitchcock, carefully selected the tallest man and the shortest for the first pair of sentries, but perhaps memory plays false) and settled down to protecting the Crown Jewels of Scotland as smartly as we were able. Soon the troops were charming the tourists and patiently translating for them the Latin motto carved over the gateway, NEMO ME IMPUNE LACESSIT, as 'Mind your Head'. On perhaps the seventh day, I visited the guardroom yet again. All was quiet but I found one soldier working hard. Was it the ineffably high standards the Battalion set in all things? Or was it the unutterable boredom that drove him? In that silent spotless guardroom, he was busy at the notice board...polishing the brass drawing pins. That night I rang my father - Private Patrick Keyes, B Company 2nd Battalion, Queen's Royal Regiment, 1938-40 and told him. He laughed, and said when he was in the Queen's, the first sign of madness was being seen polishing your small change.

Nick Keyes

ADAPTABILITY

Extracted from the East Surrey Journals of the 1930's.
acknowledgement to Major R.A.M Bassett MC -
The Queens Royal Regiment.



(Lance Sergeant Jones is told he is representing No 4 Platoon on Exercise and this is his story and we have all been there!).

*It was one September day, Sir, that they started the talk
About Brigade manoeuvres, and a Heathen war in York.
The League had done its best, Sir, but we knew it was to be:-
For the Battalion had been ordered to parade at half past three.
It was Do or Die that day, Sir, they took no count of loss
For the Company had been ordered to parade as strong as poss.*

*The men were all alert, Sir, we paraded pretty soon,
And the Sgt Major says to me "You're number 4 Platoon,
We're six in No 1" says he, "and eight in No 3;
The rest of 'em's imaginary, so it's easy as can be -
Just make believe you got 'em, yours not to reason why."
"That's alright Sgt Major," I quickly makes reply.*

*So, I stood myself at ease, Sir, and began to call the roll:
You'll be surprised to hear, Sir, we were present to a soul.
Then I ups and fixes bayonets and walks round myself a bit
And gave myself a caution, cos my 'quipment didn't fit.
I gave my neck a wrench, Sir, a very painful sort
By looking down my rifle when my arms were at the 'port.'*

*But you can't let them things worry you when you're marching as to wars,
So, I gave myself the orders to move to the right in fours,
And so, we marched off proudly prepared to meet our fate -
I was the first man through to open, and the last to shut the gate.
In our march through Richmond Town, Sir, we came to little harm
But the fun began in earnest near that awful Hilltop Farm:*

*It was there that I was detailed for a Death or Glory Role,
To take the platoon at night, Sir, out on Recce Patrol.,
(You'll note the abbreviation, Sir, I don't much like its look,
But I know it quite alright, Sir, I checked it in the book).
The first thing that I did, Sir, was to make myself a Scout,
To go in front of myself, Sir, in case the foe was about.*



*Then the scout must have support, Sir, (it says so in I.T.),
So, the leading section followed and that again was me.
Then being up to date, Sir, I couldn't ignore my flank,
So, I took a section there, Sir, also my Anti-tank.*

*Then the guns must go in action, so I loaded myself with these
(Being a full Lce Sgt, I could carry the lot with ease).*

*We started off together not a word was spoke,
But his wasn't necessary as I was the only bloke.
We hardly run a mile, Sir, when I made myself the runner
And told myself that I was engaged with a hostile gunner.
I doubled back to myself, Sir, I was mighty hard to find.
You see I'd left myself, Sir, some hundred yards behind.*

*We were just about to scrap 'em when my watch I chanced to look:
My God! It was half past one, Sir, and I was the Company Cook!
Gun Fire was due at two, Sir, so to the Transport Lines I flew,
What happened to the rest of myself, Sir, I'm afraid I never knew.
I thought I had done well, Sir, but I suppose I mustn't boast –
For the next morning, I was for Orders for deserting of me post.*

THE OLD TOWN

Nothing more charming in Germany, I soon discovered, than a stroll around the oldest part of a town: gingerbread houses, quaint churches, a bell tower, sometimes with a sort of cuckoo clock which sends out little figures on the hour. One half expects to see Landsknechten at drill, organ-grinders, apple-cheeked maidens with hair like giant pretzels: you get the picture. Anyway, yours truly had been sent off in a landrover to meet a young German officer at his barracks in Essen, to plan some joint training for my platoon. Modern camp, modern houses and shops on either side of the gates. Nice chap, we cracked the plan, put our maps away and he walked me out to the car park. And of course, I chirped up "Shall we go for a drink in the old town?" Pause. He looked at me and said (turn on heavy German accent): "Zere is no old town". Essen! How stupid of me. I had entirely forgotten about RAF town planning. What to do? Fire smoke, high-speed reverse. "Look, Heinz, there's a kaffee und küchen place, my favourite! Come on...!"

Nick Keyes

THE GREAT TOMMY SLEEP OUT 2025



On 5 March, 75 members of the Queen's Regimental Riders Association (QRRA), PWRR Cadets, Royal British Legion Industries (RBLI) staff, and members of the local community braved temperatures of -2°C (feeling more like -5°C !) to raise funds for the veterans' village in Aylesford and to highlight the plight of homeless veterans.

Hosted by the QRRA, the event raised over £4,500, with participants sleeping in a variety of tents, bivvy bags, and bashas. Entertainment was provided by the QRA Corps of Drums, who gave their usual excellent display, and live music came from the fantastic band Penny Spent.



The event will be staged again next year, on 21 March, when it is hoped that even more members of the Association and local community will join us in raising both money and awareness.





THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTORING

By Simon Wilson

I read with interest in one of the excellent updates we receive (RHQ PWRR Update 7–13 July) that there was a mention of mentoring; this set me thinking. After thirty-seven years in the Army and two as a consultant, I used Enhanced Learning Credits to study psychology at the University of Gloucestershire. My dissertation examined the lived experiences of British Army officer veterans from the 1980s, exploring how their insights could benefit future generations of young officers (YOs). A key theme that emerged was mentoring—or, more accurately, the lack of it. This prompted me to consider where the British Army stands today in relation to mentoring, and what proven models might be adapted for our use.

My Study

Although mentoring was not my original focus, it emerged organically through my interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). My aim had been to examine participants' subjective experiences, successes, failures, self-awareness, and relationships. Yet mentoring repeatedly surfaced as a theme that significantly influenced confidence, competence, and development.



1980's Leader

My sample comprised five former officers who had served as YOs in the British Army of the Rhine during the 1980s.

Their narratives revealed sharp contrasts. Those who benefitted from informal mentoring—such as Harry, whose future commanding officer supported his early operational deployment, and Dick, who was coached prior to Sandhurst—described the confidence-building guidance that helped shape their careers. Conversely, Tom, who lacked such support, recalled frustration, isolation, and early disillusionment, underscoring how even modest mentoring could have changed his trajectory.



The Sample

These findings showed that mentoring in the 1980s was inconsistent and largely left to chance. Its absence often hindered personal and professional growth, while its presence fostered assurance and capability. This became a central, exploratory by-product of my research, highlighting that structured, intentional mentoring could bridge the gap between Sandhurst training and the practical realities of leadership in the field.



IPA Analysis

Where the British Army Stands Today

The British Army has undoubtedly progressed since the 1980s, improving leadership training, welfare provision, and career management systems. Yet mentoring remains informal, sporadic, and reliant on personalities or regimental culture rather than embedded structures. While officers may receive career development discussions during command and staff appointments, this falls short of genuine mentoring, lacking both continuity and independence from reporting lines.



British Army Flag



For other ranks, mentoring is even less structured. Most personal development occurs through experience, peer support, and guidance from the chain of command, supplemented by leadership courses and occasional input from initiatives such as Women in Defence or Army LGBT+.

The absence of a formal, Army-wide mentoring framework represents a missed opportunity.

A structured programme spanning all ranks could strengthen leadership cohesion, enhance retention, and bolster morale. Crucially, mentoring outside the direct chain of command would provide trusted, neutral guidance from those who have successfully navigated similar challenges—encouraging openness and reducing fear of judgement.

Learning from the USMC Model



USMC Flag

During a year embedded with the United States Marine Corps (USMC) in Afghanistan, I saw first-hand their capacity for innovation while retaining strong cohesion. The Headquarters Marine Corps Mentoring Guide exemplifies a structured, values-based framework that could inform British Army practice.

The USMC formalises one-to-one mentoring relationships, defining clear roles for mentors, mentees, and supervisors. It integrates mentoring into career planning through individual development plans (IDPs), structured goal-setting, and scheduled reviews, all deliberately separate from formal reporting chains. This separation builds trust and encourages honest dialogue.

Adapting such an approach within the British Army could involve:

- a. Endorsement and Policy – Securing Army Headquarters backing and issuing a formal mentoring directive.
- b. Structured Pairing – Matching mentors and mentees across ranks, encouraging cross-regimental links to avoid conflicts of interest.
- c. Defined Roles – Clarifying responsibilities: mentors offer guidance and feedback; mentees commit to goal-setting and openness.
- d. Formal Goal-Setting – Establishing SMART objectives linked to Army values in the initial session.
- e. Regular Reviews – Conducting monthly or career-point check-ins (e.g., pre/post deployment or promotion).
- f. Training and Resources – Providing orientation materials, templates, and optional workshops for mentors and mentees.
- g. Evaluation – Collecting feedback via surveys and reporting outcomes to monitor the impact on leadership, morale, and retention.

By aligning such a programme with Army values and adapting proven USMC methodology, the British Army could significantly enhance leadership development, reduce attrition, and improve operational effectiveness.



USMC Mentoring in the Field

Conclusion

My research began as an exploration of the lived experiences of officer veterans, but it uncovered mentoring as a critical, under-utilised factor in shaping young officers' success. Today, the British Army continues to rely on informal goodwill rather than structured support. By adopting a USMC-style model, tailored to British culture and ethos, we could embed mentoring as a cornerstone of leadership.

Such a programme would provide continuity, trusted guidance, and meaningful development opportunities for all ranks, ensuring that future officers and soldiers are better supported, more resilient, and fully prepared for the challenges of modern military service.

(Ed: I would welcome any comments on this article from members of all ranks, perhaps for inclusion in next year's Journal.)

THE SQUARE

The following happened in Werl around 1977/78. The RSM WO1 Jameson had this ruling like most RSMs that the Bn square was sacred: no-one was allowed on it unless he said so.

I was A Coy Company Orderly Sergeant, and I was late for RSM's parade. Now, if I ran around the square I was guaranteed to get extra duties, but if I ran across the square, I would be on time, thus getting no extra duties. So, what do I do? In my thinking the RSM would be in his office so wouldn't notice if I ran across the square so I thought I would take the chance. I went to the edge of the square right opposite the main door of Bn HQ, thinking it was the shortest route, and away I ran. It didn't enter my head that the RSM would be late.

I got halfway across, and I heard the dreaded voice of the RSM: "L/Cpl Dell stand still! For every step it takes you to get off my square, you will get an extra duty!" Well, with my little legs, I was looking at about 50. I was thinking that was a lot of weekends.

Then I noticed two soldiers with a trolley going to the QM's. So, I called them to double in to me and I jumped on the trolley and told them to get me off the square. I got to Bn HQ before the RSM and I'm lined up with the other Company Orderly Sergeants trying to think up lots of excuses for my being on the square.

The RSM walked in, came straight up to me, and said: "I will give you that one laddie for using your initiative."

Rodney Dell



QUEENSMEN IN UKRAINE 2024/5

BY PICK-UP TO LVIV

By John Russell

Last November, I attended an inspiring talk on the charity 'Pick-ups for Peace', which described how volunteers raised money to buy second-hand pick-ups, then drove them to Lviv in Ukraine loaded with humanitarian supplies needed by the Ukrainians. The talk described how the pick-ups were principally used as logistical vehicles for which they were particularly useful due to their speed and manoeuvrability. However, while it was estimated that they only had an average life of 7-10 weeks before they were destroyed or otherwise written off, it was also estimated that each vehicle saved some 10 lives during its operational life. The talk caught my imagination and with adventures in short supply I and three friends decided to volunteer to acquire two pick-ups and join the twentieth convoy set to go to Lviv in May 2025.

We opened Just Giving pages (my sincere thanks to all those who contributed to my page) and emails sent to family and friends far and wide produced an almost immediate flood of donations, quickly enabling us to raise over £16,000, well in excess of the amount needed to buy two reasonable pick-ups. Our financial situation was soon greatly improved when a local farmer generously gave us an aged Hilux free of charge. My vehicle, an ex-utility company Ford Ranger bought through the charity, was sprayed matt green and received a full service before we loaded it with four new all-terrain tyres, a generator,

containers of engine oil and coolant, hundreds of old mobile phones (which the Ukrainians re-purpose as drone detectors), fire extinguishers, vehicle spares and medical supplies.

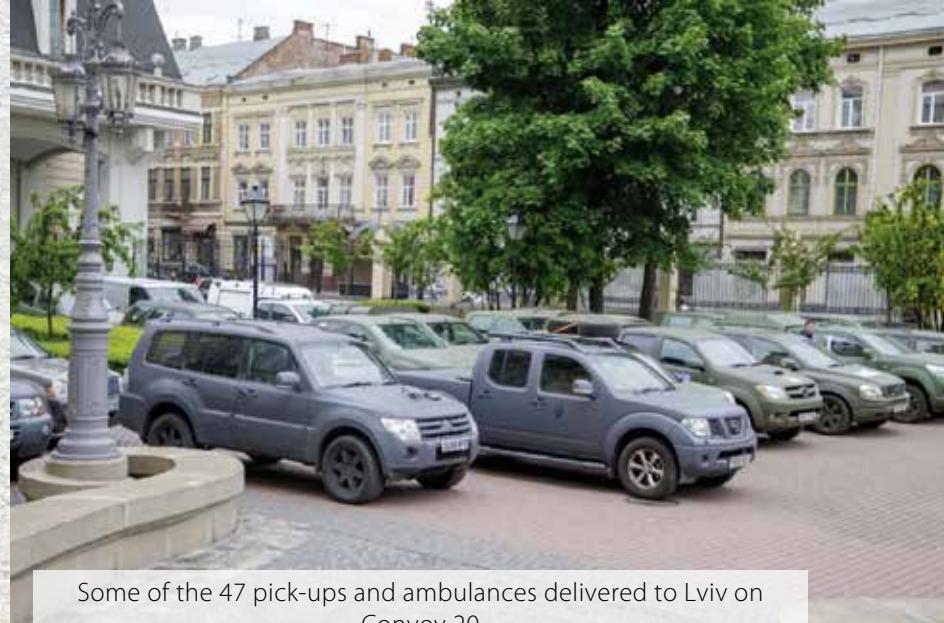
With our two vehicles loaded and also bearing cargoes of fruit cake, sausage rolls and flapjacks to sustain us on the 1320-mile journey, we set off on Tuesday 6 May as part of Convoy 20 comprising around 47 vehicles and about 90 crew members. As a Scottish charity, we were also asked to include a bottle of whisky to fortify the Ukrainians at the front! The first part of the journey to Wrocław in Poland was free-running for all vehicles and having crossed the Channel via the tunnel we drove to Eindhoven for our first night. The next morning, we set off early to drive to Podelwitz in Saxony. This destination was chosen due to its proximity to Colditz, which we all wanted to visit and was not far off our route.

Our night in Podelwitz was spent in a fine, moated schloss but with décor and furnishings still echoing DDR interior design chic! The next day we drove the short distance to Colditz and spent a fascinating morning visiting the former Oflag IVc. The castle is huge and in the relatively small part occupied by the PWs the Germans have established an excellent museum. It employs the latest in museum IT and you wend your way from room to room with a tablet giving you descriptions of the wartime





John Russell at Colditz Castle with friends



Some of the 47 pick-ups and ambulances delivered to Lviv on Convoy 20



Pick-up handover to the Ukrainian Army



John Russell with three Members of the Team



John Russell with two Ukrainian soldiers. The ambulance was driven from Jersey



Soldiers of The Queen's 2025 | 49



activity – of German guards and PWs alike – in each. Eventually you reach the attic where there is a full-scale facsimile of the famous glider plus a flight simulator to see if you can fly it to

escape to the meadow beyond the castle. We all failed miserably! There is also a museum within a museum with memorabilia such as fake uniforms, rope ladders and other escape paraphernalia.

As you can see from the photo the bloke on the left would have been useless chasing after any escapees! Following our visit and a well-deserved *kaffee* und *kuchen* in Colditz town square we set off for Poland and the city of Wroclaw, some four hours distant, which we reached at about 5pm. Here we married up with other vehicles and crews of Convoy 20 as part of the battle procedure for getting all 47 vehicles efficiently across the Polish-Ukrainian border the next day. There was a great feeling of camaraderie and a number of coincidences and surprises in terms of knowing mutual friends. Although naturally most of the crews were of 'a certain age' it was good to see also a few lads who were gaining a unique gap year experience.

We set off early the next morning for the seven-hour drive to the border. All was going swimmingly until we ground to a halt in a tailback from a fatal traffic accident, and here we sat for two hours awaiting developments. As we had to get to the border by early evening, we decided that the initiative had to be seized so we executed a three-point turn and, using the central gap created for emergency vehicles, we escaped the gridlock and reached a nearby exit, where the Polish police looked a bit surprised but waved us on our way. The rest of the journey to the border crossing went smoothly and we joined 12 vehicles to be processed through Polish and Ukrainian customs and border controls. From here on for the remainder of our journey, fun took a rear seat and the serious part began.

Following the formalities and the forming up of our packet we set off on the last 50 miles to Lviv, with a police car leading and the crews under firm instructions to drive fast, no stopping, not even for red lights or pedestrians, and no gaps allowed. Civilian traffic wisely pulled into the side of the road as we sped on our way and we reached our destination, the forecourt of the Potocki Palace, where we were met by members of the Ukrainian army. Here the vehicles and their supplies were secured for the night, and we walked to a superb hotel, which had been reserved for us in the centre of the city.

While the UK basked in a heat wave, in Ukraine the next day dawned cold with a bitter wind, fitting weather for our first visit, which was to the Field of Mars: Lviv's war cemetery for soldiers of the city killed since 2014. Every grave flies a Ukrainian flag, displays a photograph of the soldier and has a bench for mourners, of whom there were many. It was deeply moving and drove home, if any reminder were needed, the sacrifice the Ukrainians are making in defence of their nation and, indeed, Europe.

Following this sobering visit, we returned to the palace for the formal handover of our 47 vehicles, after the supplies had been unloaded. Here we listened to numerous speeches by civilian and military dignitaries. It was abundantly clear that our support was hugely appreciated although I sensed that, to the Ukrainians, the moral support represented by our being there, and the evidence that they are not alone, were almost as important as the equipment we had brought.

I have never before been in a country fighting for its survival and the atmosphere this engendered was tangible. After lunch we split into three groups: the first visited local farming projects as 'Pick-ups for Peace' is very much farmer-led, the second visited drone training while the third went on a tour of the city centre. I chose to go on the city tour and our small group had a fascinating time in this impressive city with its rich history and architecture, principally from its time as Lemberg in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. For me the most significant building was the baroque church of Saints Peter and Paul Garrison Church. Here weddings, baptisms and funerals of soldiers were in continual progress and in a side aisle displayed on boards were the photographs of thousands of fallen soldiers. Tragic and very moving.

That night we had a final dinner in the hotel and allowed ourselves a modest celebration. There were further speeches from Ukrainian army officers, and we were privileged to get some insights into how war is prosecuted in the era of the drone. We left Lviv at 0530 on the Sunday and were driven to the Polish border, which we crossed on foot following the same route as the waves of refugees in 2022. A bleak experience. We were then driven to the railway station at Przemysl where we caught the train to Krakow followed by EasyJet back to Gatwick. Six highly memorable days were over.

To conclude, to me it's black and white: the Ukrainians have been invaded, and they are defending their country, nation, their chosen way of life and Europe. They are losing a huge number of young men and women from a key generation, and they are short of everything. We are unbelievably fortunate in the UK and if we do not want

war to come to us, we should support the Ukrainians in whatever way we can and by making sure our own political leaders are not allowed to look the other way until there is a lasting sustainable peace.

I miss my pick-up and the team, and I are taking two further pick-ups to Lviv in September!

Slava Ukrani!

A QUEENSMAN'S TRAVELS IN UKRAINE

By Dan 'Willo' Williams

I joined the Army in 1973, passing out of Depot Queen's Division at Bassingbourn before being posted to 1 QUEENS, then based at Kiwi Barracks, Bulford. My first and only operational tour was in Northern Ireland, where I served in Girdwood Park. Sadly, following a serious road traffic accident that left me with head and leg injuries, I was medically discharged in 1978.

Much water has flowed under the bridge since then. The years that followed my discharge were turbulent: the so-called 'hippy years' when I lost my way and found myself in trouble, including time inside HMP Risley (aptly nicknamed Grizzly Risley) and a spell in HMP Preston.

But life changed dramatically on Friday 21st August 1992 at 10:30hrs. On that day, I trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour, under the ministry of Maj Ian Thomas RTR. That decision was the turning point-the springboard for a new life. Faith opened doors to adventures across the world: Thailand, Pakistan (twice), Africa, Beirut and Kathmandu.

More recently, my travels have centred on Ukraine, where I have been working with Aid Ukraine UK, a faith-based Christian organisation run entirely by volunteers. We deliver vital aid directly to Ukrainian pastors-one serving at the front line, and two supporting people at their point of greatest need.



Willo shopping in Poland for front line troops



The hospitality



Driving conditions were horrendous



On patrol in Girdwood

The 'craic' always begins with the packing before each trip. I've now made three journeys. Typically, six vehicles set out, each with two drivers, and one is left behind in Ukraine. Together we carry 10–15 tons of carefully targeted civil and military aid—everything from trench candles to medical supplies. I even donated some of my own personal kit, and often wonder who might be using it now, praying it serves them well.

Our convoys head out from Dover on a Friday, bound for the ferry. Driving through Eastern Europe is always arduous, with unpredictable weather and, strangely, a seemingly endless supply of McDonalds! Eventually we arrive at the final RV, about 10 km from the Polish border, tucked well off the beaten track. Here, we unload and meet the Ukrainian pastors who come to



Willo *et al* on a day's R&R



Willo and co supporters with a packed van



Willo passing out in 1974

collect the supplies. The hospitality we receive from the local church is always humbling—a pure delight, and a very welcome pit stop.

There is time, too, for practical kindness along the way. On one trip we spent a day shopping for a men's refuge in Poland, buying 100 trench wellies, 100 ponchos, and other urgently needed kit. At the same time, I found myself adopting an unusual role: checking vehicles for IEDs. Contacts had warned us that Russian sleeper cells operate in eastern Poland, recognising aid convoys and seeking opportunities to strike. Thankfully, there have been no incidents to date—and long may that continue.

The most poignant moment always comes at the end, as we wave off the donated vehicle, crammed to the roof with desperately needed supplies, heading forward towards frontline positions. Watching it being driven away, knowing the lives it might help save, is a moving reminder of why we go.

I can't wait for the next trip.

THIRD TRIP 2024/5

By Russ Feakins

Toretsk Centre Destroyed

I have made just two trips since my last report. The first was last October, with my daughter Anna. We teamed up with our friend Daniel, from *In God's Hands*, in Dnipro. We filled our van with food and medical supplies and, the next day, reached Pokrovsk - still a target of the current Russian offensive.

We moved quickly through the suburbs and on to Kramatorsk, where we delivered flour to a bakery still producing bread for refugees. Our former distribution point at Toretsk had been completely destroyed, so we met the people we knew from there in a nearby village where they had been evacuated.



They have now set up a new centre with space for elderly people, women, and children. We unloaded all our remaining supplies and shared coffee with them. It was moving to meet the families and children - all eager, excited, and keen to practise their English. When you meet these kids and their families, your heart goes out to them.



In the Underground School

But we had to leave for Odesa - arriving just in time for a missile and drone strike. The sirens and anti-aircraft fire cast a menacing shadow over this legendary, beautiful Black Sea city. The next day, we were up early, driving through Moldova and into Romania, before heading home.

Air Raid in Kyiv

The second trip was in April, this time with two Americans. We travelled with a vanload of supplies for the feeding station.

We reached Zaporizhia and stayed overnight, holding meetings with local contacts. We hope to set up a refugee school and hostel there. The next day, we continued to Dnipro, where we were shown a large underground school for refugee children. We also aim to establish an entrepreneur school there for badly wounded veterans, helping them start their own businesses.

From there, we returned to Kramatorsk to unload supplies at the refugee centre. We stayed a few days, sharing the hardships with these resilient people. All the while, constant shellfire rumbled in the distance.

Finally, we drove to Kyiv via Kharkiv, which was full of trucks with mounted machine guns. We dodged a few distant drone strikes before arriving in the capital. While my American friends were busy with meetings, I had the chance to wander for a few days, playing tourist. Another beautiful city in wartime!

I felt a bit like Hemingway in Madrid when, on the second night at 01:00, I was woken by a colossal explosion nearby. Over the next 40 minutes, I counted thirteen very loud and close explosions as drones and missiles struck the city. I considered going down to the shelter but instead ended up sleeping in the bathroom - away from the windows.

Getting a speeding ticket the next day in Romania on the way home felt like something of an anti-climax.

I hope to return in October 2025, taking a couple of other Queensmen with me. Watch out for further updates!

In the meantime, thank you - a real, heartfelt *thank you* - to everyone who has donated to my GoFundMe, *Queensmen in Ukraine*, with special thanks to the Gentlemen Rogues. Without your help, I couldn't keep making these trips. Believe me, you are making a difference, and it will not be forgotten.

Thanks also to the *Journal* for allowing me to keep writing these updates. I don't publicise or use the media for reasons of discretion and security. The *Journal* remains the only 'window' through which I can share our continuing work in Ukraine - and ensure it is not forgotten while the popular media look elsewhere.



With some of the children at the New Centre



With Anna on the outskirts of Pokrovsk



The Memorial to the Fallen. Maidan Square, Kyiv

ITALY 2025

By Joe Dorman

The aim of this holiday was to get together like minded 1 QUEENS veterans and their better halves, to have an adventure holiday, in Lake Garda Italy. Those taking part were: Ken Hames, Caro Hames, Dave Perkins, Paul Dormer (Joe), Dawn Dormer, Mick Saunders, Jane Saunders, Barry Azzopardi, Dawn Azzopardi (Myfanwy), Lee Bradley (Ding Dong), Hayley Quinn and Derek Locke (Padlock).

Day 1: We all set off from various airports in the United Kingdom and RV'd at Bergamo Airport. There we met for the third time, this time with partners and to our surprise Padlock, who we thought was a cancellation, arrived.



Front rank L-R Joe Dormer, Caro Hames, Dawn Azzopardi, Barry Azzopardi, Lee Bradley, Hayley Quinn, Dawn Dormer, Jane Saunders. Rear rank Ken Hames, Derek Locke and Mick Saunders. (Dave Perkins took the photo.)





Day 2: Breakfast and ascent of Monte Castello - which was an awakening to waist-lines and fitness.

Day 3: Via Ferrata (Iron path) was an epic all day climbing along a route that had metal cables to which you attached yourself. (think Go Ape). Exhausting but brilliant Day.

Day 4: Via Ferrata Sentiero Attrezzato Rio Sallagoni. Thanks to Ken Hames in keeping us safe with a thunderstorm looming outside the Gorge!







Day 5 : Beach/Rest Day on Lake Garda: beer ice cream and rugby.

Day 6: Summit Monte Tombea at 1,976 m (6,483 ft) from Cima Rest, very sweaty.

Day 7: Introducing some of the team to the world of e-Bikes for the first time including a wine tasting lunch and special guest Björk

Day 8: Volunteers who wanted to climb on a rest day, climbed Via Ferrata Colodri-Colt whilst Ken and Dave cycled Mount Pizzocolo.



Padlock doing his thing!

SOBRAON DAY AT TOC H

By Andrew 'Biff' Byford

Having written about a work trip to Copenhagen in the last issue, my European work tour continues. Last year, and again this year, I have spent a couple of weeks in Belgium restoring the furniture and artefacts at Talbot House, Poperinge - known as Toc H to the Tommies of the Great War. Today, it is both a museum and a guesthouse. Talbot House holds a very special place in the hearts of many.

It all started with a monk's chair. During a visit, I mentioned to the 'Innkeeper' (as the manager was known in the early days) that the rope across the arms of the chair needed repairing. He replied that he was looking for a restorer, and so the final hour or so of my visit was spent touring the house and creating a list of work.



The chair in the photo was dedicated to Archie Forrest, a Royal Engineer who had been baptised in the 'Upper Room' of the house (then converted into a chapel). Archie became a regular and valued comrade to all at Talbot House. Sadly, he died only six weeks later. His comrades somehow sourced (*Ed: a euphemism if ever I've heard one!*) a monk's chair—that is, a chair whose back folds down over the arms to form a table. The picture shows this very chair, complete with a silver plate inscribed to LCpl Forrest from his chums.

During this first visit, many items were repolished, repaired, and restored—including Padre Tubby Clayton's 'Groan Box,' the organ he carried into the field for religious services. Tubby Clayton, chaplain to the 6th Division in the First World War, founded Talbot House as a club for everyman. Rank was left at the door: inside, all were equal.

Another very special repair was made to the carving of the Last Supper. This piece was discovered in a house in Ypres in 1916. By now it was cracked, dry of polish, and missing disciples from either end. Carved from several large pieces of oak joined together, it required

two large clamps for the repair and three of us to take it down from its perch before returning it to its place on the second-floor landing.

I was invited back in February this year to carry out more work. One task was the flooring in Tubby's room. Matthieu, the house handyman, and I sourced a specialist wax from a local Belgian supplier. Matthieu made the arrangements (speaking in Flemish), and we agreed to go the next morning to visit the supplier. That evening, I came across an old copy of the Western Front Association's magazine *Stand To* in the house's magazine rack. An article titled *The Camera Returns* showcased 'then and now' photographs, including one of the roads through Vlamertinghe featuring the old Hop Store. Vlamertinghe lies on the main Ypres–Poperinge road, and I had often noticed the Hop Store from the roadside.



The Hop Store Cemetery

So, the following morning Matthieu and I drove to Vlamertinghe—only to discover that the wax supplier was based in the Hop Store itself! After completing our business, we were told about the building's history. During the First World War it had served as a field hospital, and the floor we were standing on had once been one of the main wards. From its windows,



Queen's Flag flying proudly on Sobraon Day



The Monk's Chair



patients could see the Hop Store cemetery-a sobering thought.

One fascinating detail we learnt was that the wooden staircase

had alternating worn and unworn treads. During the war, every other tread had been removed to allow orderlies to ascend more quickly to the upstairs ward. After the war, the unused treads were replaced-hence their unmarked condition today.

Most importantly, as a Queensman, I was at Talbot House for Sobraon Day this year. The Union Flag always flies from the front of the house, but there was also a spare flagpole. How fitting, then, to fly the Queen's flag from Talbot House! And so I did-with permission, of course!

(Ed: Corporal Archie Forrest RE died 26 August 1917 and lies at Wielte Farm Cemetery, a few miles from Poperinge.)



Last Supper Carving



The Hop Store 1916



The Hop Store today

FEELTHY ICE-A-CREEMA

A scorching August 1971 and A (Tangier) Company 1 QUEENS, commanded by Major Jimmy Reid with CSM 'Den' Prior, was enjoying one of the infrequent breakouts into the 'Zone' from the beleaguered fortress Berlin, at the ranges at Haltern for field firing. We were in tents deployed around an entrance and metalled road that would have done credit to Braganza Close, somewhere in Surrey. This meant that anyone entering the sacred enclave could be seen and heard by the whole encampment. Cut to early afternoon at the height of the day's heat and post delicious camp stew and dumplings for lunch. Night firing was on the programme so the company was, to a man, deployed in the supine unsupported and knocking out collective 'Z's which could have been heard back in Berlin. What better moment for refreshment? From nowhere appeared an Italian entrepreneur, Luigi, on a bicycle with an ice cream container on the front who, sensing the atmosphere, heralded his arrival by calling out in a gentle sing song: "Ice-a-Creema, Ice-a-creema!!" No one stirred, no eyes opened and a disconsolate Luigi, swearing under his breath, pedalling out of the dormitory with his melting provender, was stopped by 2Lt 'Rocky' Hitchcock who whispered in his ear. The next day is a mirror image of that I have described: night firing, curry for lunch I fancy, and a comatose company. However, there is vim and vigour in Luigi's manner as he appears at the camp. Taking a deep breath, redolent of Pavarotti limbering up for Nessun Dorma, he launches into a clarion call: "Feeelthy ice-a-creema, feeelthy ice-a-creema!!" The reaction was like stand-to! Sleeping and snoring angels shot bolt upright, wallets were scabbled for and fought over, those who only had BAFSV (British Armed Forces Vouchers which were issued in Berlin for exclusive use in the NAAFI etc) started a rapid currency exchange and Luigi was swamped. 'Den' Prior dispatched Pte Pizzaferro to secure him the cooling nectar, presumably on the association of the latter's name with the land of Luigi's fathers, and Luigi himself was sold out in minutes flat, and bicycled away with the Gondolier's hymn on his lips.

The next day...it rained.'

Anthony Beattie



KELVEDON HATCH SECRET NUCLEAR BUNKER

By Dick Scales

First, my thanks, on behalf of the West Surrey Branch, to the Benevolent Fund for the grant which significantly offset the cost of our visit.

We were not quite sure what to expect-and it came as something of a surprise! The bunker was designed to accommodate up to 600 people and sustain them for up to three months. It was constructed in just seven months and completed in 1953. Its purpose was to provide Command and Control of London Sector Fighter Command and to strengthen the UK Air Defence Network.

From the 1960s to the early 1990s, the UK Government (Home Office) maintained the bunker as an emergency regional government defence site. Eventually, in the

early 1990s, as nuclear threats were perceived to be diminishing, the bunker was sold back to the farming family who had owned the land in the 1950s.

As one might expect, communications were a high priority, and much of the original equipment remains-some still in working order. For me, the most impressive feature was the air-conditioning filtration and scrubbing plant; for others, it was the main communications room with row after row of teleprinters.

This museum is well worth a visit. The small cinema, with its loop of the *Protect and Survive* films, brought back memories of the *Protect and Survive* booklet we were issued at the time.





Non filtered air intake which could be switched to filtration unit in event of attack



Lee Atkinson and John Tucker about to go into the museum



Main Comms Room and Administrator Room



TALES FROM ACROSS THE POND – MY 15 MINUTES

By Toby Canham – Press Photographer

Sunday morning, 8 June 2025, found me sat at home with a cup of tea in my backyard, quietly wondering if the phone would ring. Downtown Los Angeles was in turmoil following Trump's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids on the illegal immigrant population and the controversial deployment of troops onto the city's streets.

This, of course, had inflamed tensions. Large crowds took to the streets, exercising their First Amendment right to free speech and peaceful protest (remember that one?). But, as these things go, it wasn't long before masked ANTIFA 'supersoldiers', militant elements of the Latino community 'La Raza', purple-haired warriors of the trans brigade, socialist worker placard-wavers, paid protestors, and the inevitable 'Free Palestine keffiyeh-clad Gen Z activists joined the fray. Throw in people who just don't like cops, plus Marxist indoctrinated anarchists (*Ed: other political opinions are available!*), and what should have been a lazy Sunday by the pool was shattered by an incoming shout from the New York Post pictures desk.

"Hello maaaaate! Can you work?"

"Yep" (groan).

"Probably going to be trouble. Protest starts 1400 hrs, City Hall."

OK - I had a helmet and respirator (I also own rifle-rated Level IIIa body armour, but I didn't think that would be needed).

With that, I set about getting ready. Two cameras, spare batteries, two lenses, press pass issued by the LA County Sheriff's Department, proper boots and sun-proof clothing, a bandana for my forehead (to stop sunburn and harder to swipe off than a hat), plus a day sack with water, snacks, and protective kit: ballistic helmet, impact-resistant glasses, and a trusty old S10 respirator, last used during the George Floyd riots of 2020.

I called a fellow snapper who lives downtown, arranged to meet at her place so I could park safely, and asked if she fancied covering the protest too. "Yes!" she replied.

City Hall

The day was *'hot as a mofo'*. I'm no stranger to heat - desert dry or the swampy humidity of South Texas, it matters not. My wife often asks why I garden in 110°F or get my steps in when it's in the high 90s. 'Mad dogs and Englishmen' aside, I like to stay acclimated. Nearing 60, I still hump gear and trot around the streets thanks to infantry training and mindset. My right knee protests, arthritis nips at my ankles and fingers, but generally, I get on with it. Thankfully, my back's still sound.

At 1400 hrs I was outside LA City Hall - a 32-storey Art Deco giant with neo-classical flourishes and a sweeping staircase. On top of it stood a line of police in riot helmets. Think Gotham City.

The crowd was huge, noisy, and - at first - peaceful. I moved automatically into work mode: finding angles, snapping shots, dodging people. Speeches blared from the platform, berating ICE, Trump, LAPD, and Republicans. Then word spread: the march was heading for the Federal Immigration Detention Centre, three blocks away.

Into the Melee

I got ahead of the march, found vantage points, and already heard detonations. A flank group had clashed at the facility. I pulled my helmet on and pushed forward.

LAPD had no shields but carried long batons and weren't shy about swinging them. Behind were baton gunners, pepper-ball launchers, and flash-bangs. Soon CS gas was rolling. My press pass helped, but I was in the melee. It reminded me of NI training - but here there was no shield line.

A baton gunner dropped the man next to me. Sticks swung. Flash-bangs cracked. I decided on a tactical retreat - a Russian ballet, the big *"f***-offski."* I pushed left through thinner traffic, regrouped with my friend Louise, then cut around the facility. Armed National Guard stood steady; police skirmish lines held both flanks. Helmet off. Water break. Back in.





The Freeway Block

Hundreds of protestors surged onto the 101 Freeway. Soon Californian Highways Police (CHP) 'robocops' arrived - fully armoured, respirators ready. Blocking a freeway is a felony, so I knew when they masked up it was time to *Foxtrot Oscar*.

From overwatch, I watched them baton, gas, and arrest protestors. Then a car fire grabbed my attention.

The Waymo Inferno

Autonomous Waymo taxis (Jaguar models) were ablaze. Lithium batteries erupted like volcanoes. Protestors smashed others with skateboards, petrol bombs followed, and more robot cars rolled in. A Mad Max scene. I shot images but retreated as toxic fumes choked the street.

A flash-bang detonated three feet away, shredding my trousers and deafening my right ear. Filming CHP below, I caught movement, then *WHAM* - I was down.

"I've been shot in the head!" I shouted. Dazed, I checked for blood. Luckily, my bandana absorbed most of the strike. Just a graze. People fussed. A young woman patched me up. Gear intact. Good to go.

Fifteen Minutes

That was enough. I called the desk, who panicked. I reassured them, pulled out, transmitted images, then retreated to Louise's for a beer and cigar.

Then came my '15 minutes.' Calls poured in. I was featured in the *New York Post*. My video footage hit 18 million TikTok views making my kids very proud: I was trending! CNN interviewed me live. My photo ran everywhere, spotlighting journalists being targeted.

It later emerged that 'hard impact rounds' to the head had been banned in California since 2021. Illegal use. Costly mistake.

Next day, I had a CT scan: no fractures, no bleeds. Two weeks later, the graze was gone. I live to fight another day.







THE PWRR AND QUEEN'S MUSEUM

By Curator Rachel Kitchenside

The museum has had a busy and productive year in 2025. We have been working hard on our Museum Accreditation return, which was submitted in July, and on updating the Second World War Gallery, which reopened in June.

We also secured funding from the Museum Development South-east Group to purchase archival-grade packaging for the museum archive. Our Museum Assistant has been working diligently to document the archive and has enlisted the help of two new volunteers as part of this project. This work will not only ensure the archive is stored and packed correctly for future generations but will also make it a usable and searchable resource for future research.

A new 'Soldiers of Surrey' display at Guildford Museum is also being prepared and developed for an exhibition scheduled to open at the beginning of 2026. As part of this project, three Drum Major's maces were sent to conservator Richard Rogers (ACR) in August. These maces, damaged in the fire at Clandon House, will be conserved and displayed as a focal point in the new exhibition. The images below show the maces before conservation.



We have also nearly doubled our Museum Friends membership this year and plan to expand our offer to Friends next year through local collaborations with other groups and talks. This will not only strengthen our connections with the community but also increase our support base. (<https://pwrrqueensmuseum.co.uk/membership/>)

In December, we will be introducing a new family trail and accompanying objects focusing on Christmas and New Year tins sent to troops—from the Boer War to Operation Telic. Come along and see how many Christmas tins you can find!

While in Wainright, Canada, the worst place in the world that I have ever visited, I was in a landrover in the middle of nowhere with the Battalion Medical Officer when we were run off the road by a lorry. Having stopped, a whole load of roughnecks jumped out of the lorry and dragged us out of the landrover, intent on beating us up. Fearing for our lives, I said to the thugs that if they were going to kill us, could they kill the doctor first and then as a priest I could bury him before they dealt with me? Thankfully it slightly defused the situation, and we were allowed to go on our way. It would appear that one of the boys had caused upset – as if!

Rev Basil Pratt



SOLDIER OF PEACE

By David Golden

*He walks through the fields where his children play,
Sun on his back at the end of the day.
Laughter and love, the soft evening breeze,
A soldier at heart, now a moment of peace.*

*He is a soldier of peace, standing tall,
Ready to answer his nation's call.
When duty knocks, he'll rise again,
Through blood and sweat, through fire and rain.
But tonight he holds what matters most,
His family close, his heart, his post.
He's proud and strong, yet soft inside,
A soldier of peace with love as his guide.*

*He wears no badge in his quiet home,
But strength and honour are carved in stone.*

*Memories deep of the battles he's seen,
Still he smiles where the grass is green.*

*He shows his pride so everyone can see,
But wonders, do they see the real me?*

*Now a veteran walking the street,
Knows that call can come in a beat.
Once a soldier, always a soldier still,
With steady hands and an iron will.
He is ready when the silence breaks,
For freedom's light and the steps he takes.*

*I am a veteran, steady and right,
Waiting for the call to come and fight.
No drumroll sounds, no cheers out loud,
But I carry my service and stand so proud.
I am a soldier of peace, through and through,
Marching with courage, loyal and true.*

*For the love I guard, for all I defend,
I'll fight again if called, to the end.*

*So let me rest where the sun runs free,
But know inside the soldier's still me.*



CAPTAIN LATHAM

By Martin Neame



Captain Latham

The remarkable bravery of Captain Matthew Latham was solemnly honoured and celebrated at a rededication ceremony for his monument in Blingel, France on Sunday, 7 September 2025.

Over the years, the memorial had degenerated. Ron Brown of the Isle of Thanet Branch, who had visited it, identified the need for it to be restored. He raised the issue with the Branch Committee who sprang into action with the assistance of RHQ PWRR.

The restoration was kindly funded by the Remembrance Trust and expertly carried out by Madame Sarah Garel-Laurin the French restorer. Two new information boards in English and French have also been installed, providing details of the Battle of Albuhera and Captain Latham's heroic actions, complete with images of him and his medals. This event marked 160 years since he died, and he continues to inspire serving soldiers and veterans alike.

Latham, then a Lieutenant with The Buffs (East Kent Regiment), distinguished himself with an act of extraordinary heroism at the battle of Albuhera on 16 May 1811. During a fierce engagement, where British troops were suddenly attacked by French Hussars and Polish Lancers, Ensign Walsh, carrying the King's Colour, was wounded and captured. Lieutenant Latham, despite the overwhelming onslaught, courageously rushed forward to seize the King's Colour, the flag so precious to his Regiment.

When called upon to surrender, Latham famously declared, *"Only with my life!"*, tore the King's Colour from its staff and thrust it into his jacket. He sustained horrific injuries: his left arm and half his face were severed, his body was pierced with lance wounds, and he was trampled by horses. Somehow, he held on until British cavalry arrived and saved the King's Colour from being captured.

Latham's bravery received significant recognition during his lifetime:

- After recovering from his grievous wounds, he was promoted to the rank of Captain and later commanded a company in the Canadian Fencible Infantry.
- His fellow officers of the Buffs raised 100 guineas to commission a gold medal in his honour, depicting his valiant action and defiant shout. This medal, which can be seen in his photograph, was presented in 1813 and is now displayed in the National Army Museum in London.
- In 1815, news of his exploit reached the Prince Regent, the future King George IV. Deeply



impressed, the sovereign offered to fund an operation by renowned London surgeon Carpe to repair his severe facial mutilations. This was pioneering plastic surgery, one of the first of its kind in Europe. (Ed: See "A New Nose for Matthew Latham" in the 2023 Journal).

Captain Latham retired to Blingel, France, where he married Célestine Mariancourt, a French girl, and started a large family, eventually dying on 27 April 1865 in the village which, after twenty years of war with us, had accepted this wounded enemy soldier as one of their own. His memory has been preserved in several ways:

- Following his death, officers of the Buffs erected a monument near his grave in Blingel's churchyard.
- After 1811, his actions were remembered annually by the Buffs and their successors on or around the anniversary of the Battle of Albuhera. The forebears of the East Surreys and the Middlesex Regiment also distinguished themselves at this battle, so when The Queen's Regiment was formed, this date was chosen as the Regimental Day, and the new Regiment adopted the Middlesex tradition of the Silent Toast to '*The Immortal Memory*' of those who fell at Albuhera. The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment carries on these traditions.
- His deeds are recorded in Regimental history and commemorated through paintings, statuettes and three magnificent solid silver centrepieces which have graced many a Mess dining table.

A REDEDICATION

By Colin Hurd

A successful sortie took place on Sunday, 7 September, by Messrs. Hurd and Purdy for the rededication of the monument to Lieutenant (later Captain) Matthew Latham of Albuera fame, in the pleasant French village of Blingel (pronounced *Blanjell*). This village, about an hour and a half south of Calais, is deeply rural. It was a long day - on the motorway before sunrise - but well worth it to honour a regimental hero.





We arrived an hour before the 13:00 event. It was hot, and the locals were clearly intrigued. The local gendarmerie had closed the road we were using, and the bar at the top of the road soon found its Sunday trade boosted. After a wander, we made our way there too and received a very warm welcome.

Eventually, the parade formed up: the PWRR Band; the 3rd Battalion's Colours marched on with Guard of Honour, Association Standards, and veterans. The march to the churchyard was short. From there we moved to the monument, where a service led by Rev Nick Sharpe was held, involving the local Madame Mayor, Brigadier Chris Davies, the Deputy Colonel, and other officials - including the chief of the local gendarmerie, who looked spookily young. The Deputy Colonel unveiled the restored monument. Wreaths were laid by us and our now-allies. Both our national anthem and *La Marseillaise* were sung. It was clear that our regimental heritage and a small French village had merged - a modest but meaningful contribution to the *Entente Cordiale*.





A short march back to 'Farmer's Boy'/'Soldiers of the Queen' followed, with an "Eyes Left" for the Mayor, the Deputy Colonel and officials, and then we dispersed to the magnificent Haras de Blingel equestrian centre - look it up - for a couple of speeches translated into both languages, a buffet, banter, a band concert, and the presentation of a picture of the battle to the Mayor, all in the growing heat. The buffet looked extremely light at first but gathered pace as more and





more plates of goodness appeared. I managed to resist the urge to trouble the Padre with two small fishes and five barley loaves comments. The locally brewed commemorative beer hit the spot.

Then it was back on the bus - this time by motorway to Calais. The trip down had been by rural roads through pleasant French villages, with wind turbines of biblical proportions to the right of us, the left of us, and on the horizon. Thence to Eurostar for more of the off-the-bus/on-the-bus routine and what seemed a glacial pace to the train. We dispersed from the adjacent Folkestone service hub under a splendid sunset on the motorway.

ENVOI

By Nick Keyes

In her reply to Brigadier Davies' speech at the reception, Mme Karinne Delannoy the Mayor promised us touchingly that "*Blingel will continue to take good care of Captain Latham*". Any member of the Regiment visiting Latham's grave at *Blingel* can be assured of a warm welcome at the *Mairie* (town hall) and in the café. The churchyard is easy to find. This charming little village is 90 minutes' drive south of *Calais* and is also about 5 miles south of the battlefield of Agincourt. The battlefield is clearly marked by a wooden observation platform at the roadside and commemorated in an excellent museum in the nearby village of *Azincourt*. Perhaps consider a visit to both if driving to and from *Calais*?

(Ed: The event was organised by Lieutenant-Colonel (Retd) Martin Neame, who dedicated countless hours as the Project Officer to ensure its success. I would like formally to express the Association's thanks for all that he did. It was a superb event.)

Hong Kong

The Gurkhas were having their annual cow-killing celebration, and I and my Support Platoon from Fort Stanley were sent to the police post at Lok Ma Chau on the border with China for 14 days to relieve the Gurkhas who normally occupied it, and 'keep an eye' on the border. It was not a very exciting task, so I thought it would be a good idea to try to enliven our duty. One night, I put an Army dustbin wrapped in a blanket on the parapet, in full sight of the communist guards on the other side of the border, whose duties were presumably much the same as ours, to see what reaction it might cause. I left it there all day and removed it during the next night. A few weeks after we returned to Hong Kong, the IO showed me some photos of the police post apparently taken from the Chinese side, showing what he thought looked like a radar on our 'look-out' position. The IO explained that intelligence had acquired the photo, with a date, which indicated that I was at the police post at the time. I pretended to study the photo in some detail and told the IO that I thought it looked like an army dustbin wrapped in a blanket. The IO was, or pretended to be, annoyed, and told me that my action had caused some alarm and concern in intelligence circles in Hong Kong and in London!

Paul Gray

LIEUTENANT COLONEL ERIC GORDON BOWDEN MC

11th Bn The Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment

By Alain Chissel



As many of you may know, I am a battlefield guide and over the years have taken many of you on short tours to the WW1 battlefield sites as well as to Berlin. As my former business was mainly schools, we had fairly set itineraries, visiting specific sites that fitted the requirements of the National Curriculum. It was a hugely successful company that was taking well over 400 schools a year when I sold it. Rarely, when time permitted, I managed to do some private 'wanderings' with fellow guides, visiting sites that we would not normally cover on school trips. It's hard to explain the sense of loss you feel when you see the number of cemeteries scattered over the fields of Flanders. If you've not been – I suggest you put it on your bucket list!

On one such wandering several years ago, I visited Cabaret Rouge Cemetery, north of Arras on the Somme. It was here that I stumbled across the grave of Lt Col Eric Gordon Bowden MC and MID. I was drawn to the text on the headstone, which normally only allows for a maximum of 64 characters – this one had nearly double



Bowden on his horse



Bowden's Headstone



that! He was one of ours – and a Lt Col aged just 24 years old! I was instantly captivated. At 24, I was a 2nd Lieutenant (and not a very good one either, before anybody else says it). I took a photo of the headstone in this beautiful cemetery, promising myself that I would research his story. Of course, work soon took over and it slipped further and further from my mind.

I must, however, have put it up on Facebook, because three weeks ago it appeared in my 'Memories' feed, and once again I was instantly captivated. I posted it on a WhatsApp group containing a clutch of subalterns from the mid-70s, who were all around 24 when we were in Werl together. It prompted a response from Alasdair Goulden: *"There's a story here – you'd better write something for the Journal!"* Assisted by fellow guide Nick Keyes, here is that story:

Eric was born and lived in Nunhead. He attended Alleyn's school, leaving in 1909 to become a clerk for a civil engineer. He served from November 1914 to February 1915 in the Alleyn Volunteer Training Corps, which was then disbanded. In July 1915 he applied for a commission, and left Aldershot with his battalion on 3rd May 1916, arriving in France two days later. Their first action was consolidating the position around Flers after the successes of 15th September (first use of tanks in numbers on the Somme), and they saw further action around Mametz Wood. He was promoted to Acting Captain in September, with a further promotion to Major in August 1917.

In the meantime, the battalion had seen action at St. Eloi and Westoutre, and on 24th March 1917 he was presented with the Military Cross by the Divisional General, Major General Lawford. His citation in the London Gazette (02/03/17, p.2192) reads

"Temp. Lt. (actg. Capt.) Eric Gordon Bowden, R.W. Surr. R. For conspicuous gallantry in action. He led a successful raid against the enemy's trenches with great gallantry and inflicted many casualties. He has at all times set a fine example."

It's fairly hard to picture exactly what that would have entailed in detail, but as soldiers we can imagine the kind of fighting in the close confines of a trench – hand to hand with trench clubs, fighting knives, knuckle dusters and entrenching



Lt Col Bowden MC



Cabaret Rouge

tools. As an officer he would have led that attack, armed with a revolver (my own grandfather used a knobkerrie and a revolver on trench raids, which he described to a teenage me as being like “*a bit of a melee*”). Brutal stuff indeed!

In November 1917 the battalion moved to Italy, returning to France at the beginning of March 1918. At the onset of the German March offensive, the battalion was in the Somme area and suffered nearly 380 casualties over the following two days. The Germans had released over a million men from the Eastern Front after the collapse of Russia, and this was their last-ditch attempt to win the war. They fired over a million shells in five hours along the entire front – a rate of 3,000 shells a minute. Aided by thick fog, their ‘stormtroopers’ swept around the new defensive systems of mutually supporting redoubts, and very nearly broke the entire line. It’s hard to imagine what effect both that bombardment and the attack had on his battalion, but the casualties sustained tell their own story. The line bent, but it never broke!

On 5th April they moved to Ypres, where Eric took over command of the battalion. The photos of him make him look in his mid to late 30s, which gives some idea of what effect the war had had on him. However, his command was not to last long. The battalion war diary records his death on 23rd July (as opposed to the 22nd, as recorded by CWGC): ‘*Batt front very quiet during the day...*’

He was killed about 12 noon riding his horse through Steenvoorde. Steenvoorde lies about 16 miles west of Ypres, well behind the lines, so the cause of death can presumably be attributed to shell fire. His grave was likely to be one of those moved after the Armistice, as he was originally buried in Steenvoorde Military Hospital Cemetery, at Hazebrouck. At the time of his death he was Lieutenant Colonel, commanding the 11th Battalion The Queen’s (Royal West Surrey Regiment), aged just 24. His Commonwealth War Graves Commission entry reads:

Lt. Col. Bowden’s headstone is engraved as a special layout containing the following additional information:

‘Age 24. Born 12th May 1894. Promoted on the field of action from 2nd Lieutenant, he was one of the youngest Colonels in the British Army. He has at all times set a fine example’

In all my visits to the cemeteries of WW1, I have never seen any that had so much written on their headstone. In his case, an exception was clearly made. A brave man and true leader indeed and an inspiration to those of us that followed. May he Rest in Peace.

BERMUDA AND THE ‘LOST COMPANY’

By Jonathon Riley

Not long ago, I had the good luck to visit the island of Bermuda. Many people think it is part of the West Indies. It is, in fact, well north of the Caribbean — a group of 300 islands, coral reefs and sandbanks, 700 miles from Halifax, Nova Scotia, and 300 miles from New York. It was colonised by the English from 1623, was for a time part of the Colony of Carolina and became an important station for supplying ships with fresh water and food. After the loss of the American colonies in 1783, it became the winter station of the Royal Navy’s North American squadron.

Over the centuries, with the development of the naval base, Bermuda became one of the most heavily fortified islands in the British Empire. Several of the islands strung across the south entrance of Castle Harbour were fortified in the earliest days of the colony. Its first permanent town, St George’s (then called New London), was placed on the north side of St George’s Harbour and

its fortress, the King’s Castle, was also quickly fortified and garrisoned by a standing militia. There were other forts and batteries commanding the difficult approaches to the anchorages, many of which survive to this day – not least because, unlike elsewhere in North America where fortifications were wooden stockades and earth ramparts, the Bermudas had a plentiful supply of limestone. This could be cut and shaped easily but hardened rapidly when exposed to the air. An Act dated as early as 1687 appointed a Captain and a Lieutenant for the King’s Castle and a Lieutenant for Paget’s and ordered that ‘a constant watch’ should be kept there.

I was fortunate to visit the barracks of the Bermuda Regiment and see something of the modern military there – very much connected with the regiments in the Caribbean and with the US Marine Corps at Quantico, Virginia. It reminded me of a strange story from our history – that of the ‘Lost Company’.



On 8 February 1701, Brigadier William Selwyn, Colonel of the 2nd, or The Queen's Royal Regiment of Foot, then quartered at Portsmouth, was ordered to embark one company in *HMS Lincoln*, lying at Spithead. At first no indication was given as to where this company was to go, only that it was to be fully manned and equipped. Captain Lancelot Sandys was appointed to command the company but shortly afterwards it became known that the company was destined for an independent role in the Bermudas. There was, therefore, some rivalry among the officers of The Queen's over the command - the climate was good, fresh food was cheap and plentiful, rum was distilled in large quantities and, of course, as we all know, happiness increases in direct proportion to distance from the Commanding Officer's HQ!

As a result, Selwyn was ordered that Sandys should cast lots with three other captains who had petitioned the King for the command: John Phillips, John Culliford and Robert Layton. Sandys won. The Lincoln sailed on 3 March and, after an arduous Atlantic crossing, arrived at St George's on 28 April. The company occupied the castle, with small detachments at other forts to defend the colony against pirates, privateers and the French. Its chief task, though, was training the militia, which by this time consisted of nine companies raised in the



Bermuda map

various parishes of the island and liable for training every month. In common with the militia in Britain and throughout the empire at this point, service in the militia was compulsory for every man between 16 and 60, with some exemptions - and, of course, money or corruption could buy you out. We think of compulsory military service as something recent in our history and confined to the World Wars - in fact, it provided the largest part of our military establishment for centuries. It was a model exported to the Americas, and the US National Guard is its direct modern descendant.

Captain Sandys died in 1704, and Lieutenant Richard Henley succeeded him, with Ensign Charles Selwyn, son of the Colonel of the Regiment, as second-in-command. Henley was, however, unpopular. In November, a petition signed by the majority of the NCOs and men of the company was presented to the Governor, Captain Benjamin Bennet of the Royal Marines, asking for Henley to be relieved: *“... the said Lieutenant is of such a morose, severe and treacherous spirit that they dread the continuance of his command over them.”* He was also accused of inciting the troops to plunder the civilian population. Henley made matters worse by threatening to kill the Governor. He was finally brought before the Assize courts on a charge of coining - minting fake currency - to which he pleaded guilty. He was fined the large sum of £500 - more than £100,000 at today's values - showing just how much Henley had made. The conviction was subsequently quashed by the Governor, who arranged for Henley, his wife and their five children to make a new life in Virginia while he took command of the company. The Henley family were all drowned on the way there. Bennet himself was later arrested on various charges, and one cannot escape the idea that Henley bought him off.

In 1709, several soldiers were tried by court martial for attempting to steal a ship and go pirating. The charge was not proven, but the men at once tried to steal another ship and desert to the French, with whom Britain was, as usual, at war. Their objective appeared to be to persuade the French to capture the islands by force. They were, however, detected - it was not easy to hide anything on so small an island. After another trial, three men were pardoned, two were severely flogged and another three condemned to death. These last three were reprieved by the Governor, much to the annoyance of the men who had been flogged!

In 1723, after almost twenty years of detached duty, correspondence with the then Colonel of The Queen's shows that the company was still very much regarded as part of the Regiment. This Colonel was Piercy Kirke the younger, whose rascally father had served in Tangier



A grenadier of the Queen's at the time of arrival in Bermuda - the image is that from the Carlisle figures

and commanded The Queen's when it re-mustered in England after the evacuation of that colony. He famously then commanded at Sedgemoor and joined the conspiracy in the Army against King James II. The elder Kirke had purchased his son a commission as Ensign in the Duchess of York's Regiment in 1684 when he was but one year old! Regular promotions followed (with his father of course collecting his pay and allowances) until he joined The Queen's in 1684. He commanded the Regiment at the Battle of Almanza in 1707 and, with most of the officers and men, was taken prisoner until exchanged.

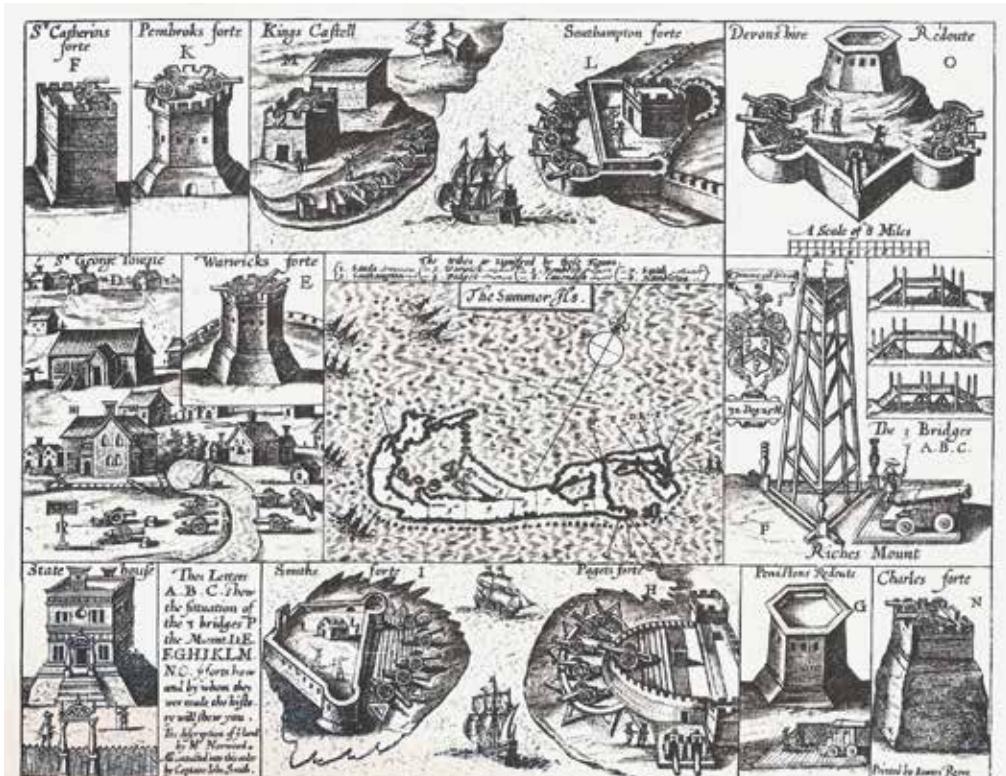
The company did not join the rest of the Regiment for the 1711 expedition against Quebec. Its strength thereafter slowly declined, as did the quality of its weapons, clothing and equipment, which by 1738 were reported as so worn that any attempt to fire any of the muskets would kill the firer.

Correspondence over the next years was a wrangle between the Governor, Kirke and the Board of Ordnance over who



The author with the officers of the Bermuda Regiment

should pay for new weapons, ancillaries and clothing for the men. As usual when bureaucracy is engaged, nothing happened. After nearly sixty years, in 1763 — the close of the Seven Years' War against France — the company was at last disbanded. Whether any of the original officers and men were still standing seems impossible to believe. Next time anyone complains about nine months in Estonia — think about sixty years unaccompanied!



An early set of drawings of Bermudas fortifications at the time the Lost Company was in residence



THE LOSS OF THE EAST INDIAMAN KENT IN MARCH 1825

By Roger Dence

Reproduced by kind permission of the Editor of 'Topmasts' the quarterly Newsletter of the Society for Nautical Research

On the morning of 1 March 1825, the East Indiaman *Kent* encountered heavy seas while crossing the Bay of Biscay. In the hold, one of the ship's officers checking the stowed cargo stumbled as the ship lurched suddenly. His candle lantern fell from his hands and broke. Within minutes, spirits from a leaking cask had ignited and the flames took hold and spread rapidly. The ship's crew and the embarked soldiers made vain attempts over many hours to contain and extinguish the fire, but that afternoon the order was given to abandon ship.

A passing ship saw the flames from the *Kent* and stood towards the vessel to give assistance. By that evening, the majority of the 641 persons on board had been evacuated by ship's boats. Early the following morning, on 2 March 1825, the vessel blew up and sank. In all, some 90 men, women and children lost their lives. Newspaper reports on the sinking, and the loss and the saving of so many lives, gripped the public imagination. Following these events, many examples of 'disaster ephemera' were produced.

The *Kent* was a classic East Indiaman design, a three-decked vessel of some 1330 tons burthen, built by Wigram & Green at Blackwall. It had been launched in 1820 for Stewart Marjoribanks, the principal managing owner and ship's 'husband'.¹ He was a prominent East India merchant with interests in the wine trade, in dock operations, and in banking and insurance, and, from 1824-5, in charter companies involved in agricultural development and settlement in Australia and New Zealand. Since 1820, he had served as one of two Members of Parliament for the 'rotten borough' of Hythe in Kent.

Two previous 15-month long, round-trip voyages undertaken by the *Kent* in 1821-22 and 1823-24 had passed without incident. The first had departed from Cowes in mid-March 1821, bound for Bombay and Singapore, and reaching Whampoa, China in late September. The return voyage started in late December 1821, and the ship arrived back in The Downs roadstead, off Deal in Kent, in late June 1822. On the second voyage to Whampoa, the ship sailed via Penang and Singapore, departing in early January 1823 and arriving back at The Downs in late March 1824.² On both voyages, the ship called at the South Atlantic Island of St. Helena, a routine call for East Indiamen on their homeward voyages.

On its third voyage, the *Kent* (Captain Henry Cobb, master since the maiden voyage) had left The Downs two weeks earlier on 19 February 1825, bound for Bengal and China. On board were 641 persons, comprising a crew of 148 men (including officers) and 493 passengers. The latter included 20 officers and 344 soldiers of the 31st (Huntingdonshire) Regiment of Foot travelling to India, together with 43 women and 66 children, and 20 private travellers. This routine transport of army personnel involved two regiments being posted to India: the Queen's Royal Regiment of Foot conveyed aboard several

chartered merchant vessels bound for Bombay, and the remaining men of the 31st Regiment on the East Indiaman *Scaleby Castle*, like the *Kent* also bound for Calcutta.

After the fire had broken out on the *Kent*, the ship was assisted by the brig *Cambria* (Captain William Cook). This ship, on passage from Falmouth to Vera Cruz, Mexico with 35 Cornish and Yorkshire mine workers and a cargo of



The Burning of the Kent

¹ Early registration records for the ship are in The National Archives (TNA), refs: BT102/33, C287, 23 Nov. 1820 and BT107/34, C25, 12 Feb. 1821. The second entry, only a few months after the first, reflected changes in the ownership structure of the vessel, including shares owned by the ship's master.

² The ship's journal for this voyage survives in the British Library's India Office Records, ref: IOL/L/MAR/B/41/1.

mining machinery, had seen the flames and distress signals and manoeuvred close to give assistance. While most of the crew and soldiers on the *Kent* were engaged in fighting the fire, others were taken off from the ship's bowsprit and stern cabin by the boat crews from both vessels, and as the fire spread throughout the ship, by descending by rope from the ship's spanker boom into the waiting boats. Inevitably there were casualties, including heart-rending stories of families being split up in the panic and lost, but some 550 men, women and children were saved.

Some persons, out of fear or unable to swim, took their chances and remained on the vessel, rather than attempt to leave the ship. As the fire spread, their plight worsened until early next morning the flames reached the magazine and the ship blew up. The explosion in the night was seen by another ship, the *Caroline* (Captain Bibby), bound from Alexandria to Liverpool. It found the charred remains of the *Kent* reduced almost to the waterline, but, miraculously, another 14 men clinging to floating wreckage who had drifted away were rescued and taken to Liverpool. Some 81 persons were lost in the fire and subsequent explosion, by drowning after jumping from the ship, or while being rescued from the water, or crushed between the ship and the ships' boats.

The majority of the survivors on the *Cambria* were taken to Falmouth, some 600 persons of necessity spending three days in cramped, insanitary conditions on the 200-ton vessel. Just a few hours after being rescued, one soldier's wife gave birth on the deck of the *Cambria*, some contemporary accounts stating that the child was a boy and others a daughter who was to be named after the ship. On arrival at Falmouth, the local population responded to the disaster with donations of clothes, food and money. Musical instruments were found and loaned to the 31st Regiment's band to take part in a fund-raising concert organised by a local musical society.

After a fortnight in Falmouth, the army survivors and families took passage to Chatham to join another ship to India. They departed on 10 April and arrived at Calcutta on 16 August, to rejoin the rest of the 31st Regiment in their new posting some weeks later than planned.

The loss of the *Kent* was inherently newsworthy and the ensuing media accounts of the sinking engaged the wider public interest. The rescue of the survivors by the *Cambria* was marked by the striking of a silver commemorative medal for those most closely involved and with copper-and-white-metal versions sold as public souvenirs.³ In the aftermath of the event and over following decades, numerous works of art, engravings and prints, verse and narrative accounts were produced, together with other items such as glass 'magic lantern' slides and blue transferware pottery with an image depicting the sinking.

A number of British and foreign artists painted their own interpretations of the tragedy for public consumption, and such works of art arguably provided the most tangible and perhaps most evocative reminders of the disaster. Today, several paintings depicting the

loss of the *Kent* are in the collection of the National Maritime Museum, including two works from 1826 by Thomas Luny (1759-1837) and one by Thomas Buttersworth (1768-1842).⁴ Other artworks include one from 1828 by Théodore Gudin (1802-1880) in the Musée National de la Marine, Paris and a much later 1900 work by Thomas Marie Madawaska Hemy (1852-1937) in the British Library. In 1937, a work by William Daniell (1769-1837) was purchased by the Sergeants' Mess of the Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment, having been last recorded at the 1828 Royal Academy exhibition.⁵ Some paintings were produced as engravings for prints for public sale. These included works by Daniell (National Maritime

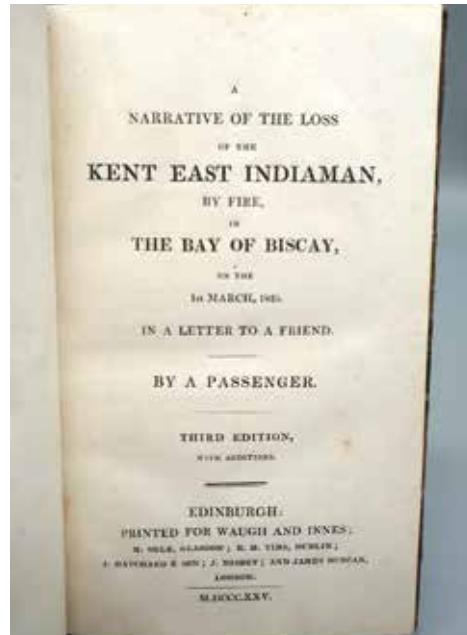


Kent Medal

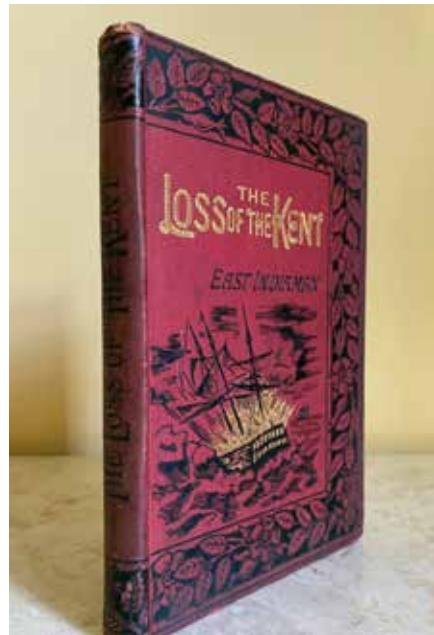
³ National Maritime Museum (NMM), ref: MEC2131, at: <https://www.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/rmhc-object-39571>, 16 Nov. 2024.

⁴ NMM, (Luny) refs: BHC2272, 3) at: <https://www.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/rmhc-object-13748>; NMM, (Buttersworth) ref: BHC3819 at: <https://www.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/rmhc-object-15292>. Both 16 Nov. 2024.

⁵ At: <https://www.queensroyalsurreys.org.uk/1661to1966/kent/burning-of-indiaman-kent.html> and <https://www.queensroyalsurreys.org.uk/regiment-in-india/loss-of-the-kent.html>, both 16 Nov. 2024.



Loss of the Kent Book Frontispiece



Loss of the Kent Book Cover

Museum Cornwall, Falmouth) and Gudin (Musée de Louvre, Paris), as well as those by often anonymous engravers and lithographers working for commercial print publishers.

In the non-visual arts world, a number of poems and literary endeavours were published. Many years after the event, the loss of the *Kent* was the subject of a poem by William Topaz McGonagall (1825-1902), in which he described the event as 'the most appalling tale of the present century' ⁶. Other more personal accounts were published, one in the aftermath of the sinking described simply as written by 'a passenger' and another several decades later by Lt. Gen. Sir Duncan Macgregor ⁷.



Burning of the Kent - Wm Daniell 1825

At the time of the incident, then Maj Macgregor was second-in-command of the troops on the *Kent*, travelling with his wife Elizabeth, sister-in-law Joanna and new-born son John. He wrote a brief note to 'commit our spirits into the hands of our blessed Redeemer', fearing 'the awful prospect of entering into eternity'. The note was placed in a sealed bottle and left in the cabin, before the family left the ship and reached safety on the *Cambria*. In the explosion that followed, the bottle was cast into the sea and was found on the coast of Barbados 18 months later on 30 September 1826. Macgregor, newly promoted in recognition of his conduct in the sinking, never reached India. Instead, he was posted to Barbados to command the 93rd Highlanders where the letter was returned to him⁸.

At the 200th anniversary of the loss of the *Kent*, it is salutary to reflect on the forces of nature, and how the risks and hazards of sea travel in a different age could impact upon the lives of ordinary sailors, of soldiers deploying overseas on long arduous voyages some with their dependents, and of civilian passengers proceeding to and from their personal, professional or official business overseas. Just as the *Kent* was the victim of a fire at sea, the 1825 William Daniell painting of that incident was lost in a fire ashore in April 2015 when much of the Surrey Infantry Museum's collection at Clandon Park was lost or damaged in the fire that destroyed this UK National Trust property.

Acknowledgments

With thanks to: Catherine Fabian, former Collections Officer, Surrey Infantry Museum for the image of the William Daniell 1825 painting of the *Kent* on fire; Major Alasdair Goulden, Secretary, and the Trustees of the Queen's Regiment Association for the use of the same image; and the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich for the use of the images of the medal marking the loss of the *Kent*. Other unattributed images derived from internet sources are acknowledged.

This article is reproduced from *Topmasts*, the newsletter of the Society for Nautical Research (February 2025, pp14-17), by kind permission of the Editor and the Society.

⁶ At: <https://www.mcgonagall-online.org.uk/gems/the-burning-of-the-ship-kent>, accessed 16 Nov. 2024.

⁷ Anon (by a Passenger), *A Narrative of the Loss of the Kent East Indiaman, by Fire in the Bay of Biscay, on the 1st March 1825, in a Letter to a Friend*. (Edinburgh: Waugh & Innes, 1825). MacGregor, D., *The Loss of the Kent East Indiaman in the Bay of Biscay, Narrated in a Letter to a Friend* [Shilling Illustrated Books for Working People No. 16] (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1875, 1883). From their titles and cover designs, these two books appear very similar, if not the same.

⁸ NMM, ref: MCG/1, at: <https://www.rmg.co.uk/collections/archive/rmgc-object-508415>, 16 Nov. 2024.

TRAINING AT BATUS IN CANADA

While stationed in Werl in West Germany 1 QUEENS undertook all arms training in Canada. This took place at BATUS near the town of Medicine Hat in Alberta and included the live firing of all the weapons in the battle group in a tactical situation. At the end of the training, the Battalion held a smoker funded by the money received from the Alberta Government for collecting bottles and tins on the prairie. The funds also covered the entertainers and their mobile home while they were on Camp. The Battalion were then given an R&R break and 6 of us decided to use the mobile home to travel up the Banff/ Jasper Highway towards the Athabasca Glacier. Our provisions for the trip were provided by the Camp cookhouse and included a box of frozen trout. We slipped one of these into the mouth of the glacier and then persuaded the north American tourists that it had appeared as a result of global warming and was thousands of years old! We left the scene quietly before they realised that they had been had!

Amédée Miéville



THE BATTLE OF KOHIMA AND THE HEADHUNTER WARRIORS OF NAGALAND

By Mike Scott

North-East India offers compelling travel opportunities, particularly for those with an interest in military and natural history. Thus, in November 2024, I travelled into this region. The state of Assam, bordering Bhutan, hosts Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. I had long wished to visit this park, both as a stronghold for the Asian one-horned rhino and for the chance to see 'Mr Stripes'. Besides, in Assam one can always rely on enjoying an excellent cup of tea.

Assam's neighbouring state of Nagaland, which borders Myanmar (Burma) to the east, played host to pivotal Allied battles against the Japanese in the Second World War. Most notably, the Battle of Kohima in April 1944 — during which Lance Corporal John Harman, Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment, won his Victoria Cross — will resonate deeply with our regimental fraternity.

A lesser-known feature of the campaign, seldom covered in history books, was the support given by the Nagaland head-hunters to the British war effort. Indeed, I had never heard of these warriors until my visit to the Kohima War Cemetery. By fortunate timing, travelling in November also allowed me to attend the annual Hornbill Festival, during which I learnt much more about these fearsome allies.

The Battle of Kohima

The battle and Harman's Victoria Cross are well documented in our regimental histories. Space precludes a detailed account here, but briefly: Harman first rushed a Japanese machine-gun crew and captured the weapon single-handed. Later, he charged another post alone, killing all five Japanese inside, but was himself killed by a burst of enemy fire. For those wishing to revisit Harman's gallant actions in detail, Patrick Crowley's *Infantry Diehards* (Chapter 12) is recommended.

For context, the ferocity of the fighting at Kohima and Imphal in 1944 matched anything seen in the Pacific or on the Eastern Front. The twin battles lasted two and a half months and resulted in a shattering defeat for the Japanese, reversing their advance through South-East Asia. The British 14th Army - comprising troops from India, Nepal, and Africa - was dubbed the 'Forgotten Army'. Some 16,000 British and Allied soldiers and 30,000

Japanese were killed. Though overshadowed by D-Day and the invasion of Europe, in 2013 the National Army Museum named Kohima Britain's greatest ever battle, ahead of Waterloo, El Alamein, and D-Day.

The Japanese invasion of Burma in 1942 had already forced Allied forces into a 900-mile retreat. In March 1944, when 80,000 Japanese troops under Lt Gen Renya Mutaguchi crossed the Chindwin River into India, the stakes were immense. At Kohima, 1,500 Allied troops on Garrison Hill held out against 15,000 Japanese. At one point, no man's land narrowed to the width of the Deputy Commissioner's tennis court. Meanwhile, at Imphal, 80 miles south, British and Indian troops fought with equal desperation. Mutaguchi expected to sweep Allied resistance aside, but his commander at Kohima, Lt Gen Kotoku Sato, eventually ordered retreat despite Mutaguchi's furious signal: "*Retreat and I will court-martial you.*" Sato's reply: "*Do what you please.*" This became the only retreat in Imperial Japanese military history. At Imphal, too, the Japanese offensive collapsed, and on 22 June the enemy finally capitulated.

The fighting was brutal: dense jungle, oppressive heat, monsoon mud, tropical disease, and often hand-to-hand combat. Yet moments of soldiers' humour remained, as General Bill Slim records in *Defeat into Victory*:

"... another party of the enemy in darkness broke into... and entrenched themselves in the mule lines. Our troops surrounded them and, with the help of tanks in several days' fighting, wiped them out. The slaughter of Japanese, and, unfortunately, of mules also was heavy. Bulldozers had to be employed to bury both."

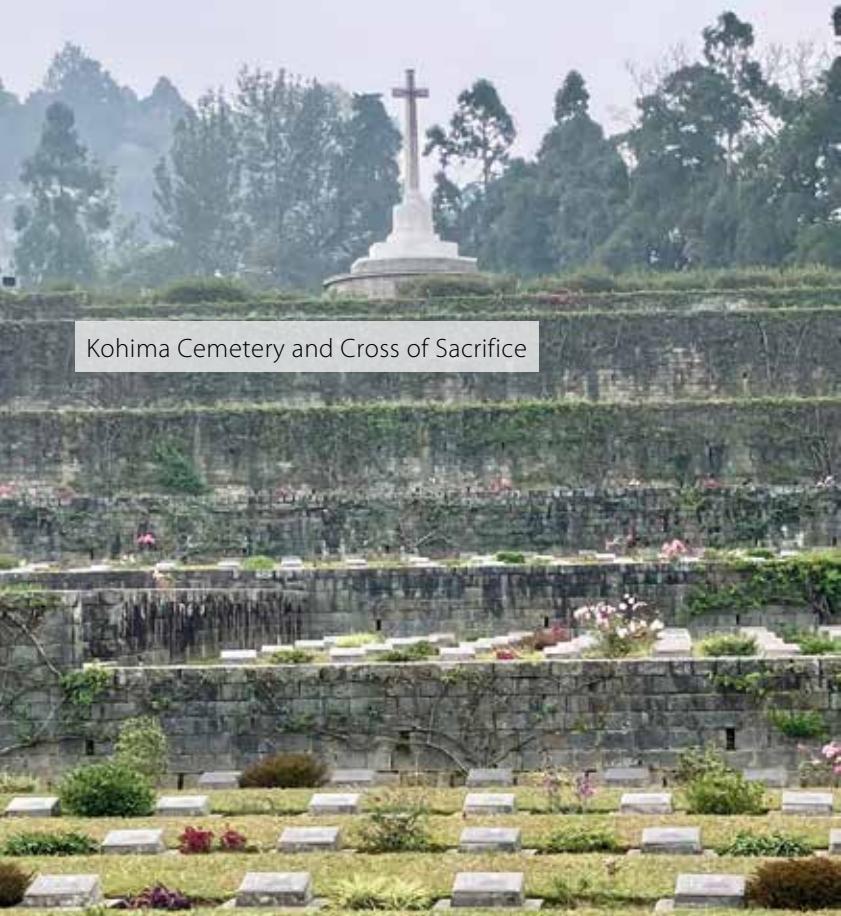
It was here that some Gurkhas were engaged in collecting Japanese corpses from the corners inaccessible to bulldozers when one Japanese, picked up by a couple of Gurkhas, proved not to be dead as expected. A Gurkha had drawn his kukri to finish the struggling prisoner when a passing British officer intervened saying, "You mustn't do that, Johnny. Don't kill him!" The Gurkha, with his kukri poised, looked at the officer in pained surprise: "But, sahib," he protested, "we can't bury him alive!"



Kohima Cemetery and Cross of Sacrifice



Mr Stripes



Konyak Veteran Headhunter Warriors



Asian One-horned Rhinos, Kaziranga NP



The Naga Head-Hunters

In Nagaland's vast mountains and almost impenetrable jungle, with its hidden passes, the British forged an invaluable alliance with the

local hill tribes. Of the sixteen major tribes, the Konyak were the most feared head-hunters. Warriors took the severed heads of enemies as trophies of honour, bravery, and status. The number of heads taken was recorded through tattoos on the face, neck, and chest, etched during elaborate ceremonies by the chieftain's wife. The skulls of their foes were proudly displayed at the entrance to the village *baan* (communal hall).

General Slim again paid tribute in *Defeat into Victory*:

... [we] stimulated the active support of the local tribesmen. These were the gallant Nagas whose loyalty, even in the most depressing times of the invasion, never faltered. Despite floggings, torture, execution, and the burning of villages, they refused to aid the Japanese or betray our troops. Their active help to us was beyond value or praise... Many a British and Indian soldier owes his life to the naked, head-hunting Naga, and no soldier will ever think of them but with admiration and affection."

Headhunting was officially banned by the Indian government in 1962, though raids continued into the late 1960s. Today, surviving tattooed warriors are in their eighties and nineties. The Konyak remain proud of their warrior heritage, keeping traditions alive through festivals and oral history.

At the annual Hornbill Festival each November, it is still possible to meet veteran Konyak warriors, adorned with tattoos and carrying their *daw* (long-handled headhunting knife), living symbols of their extraordinary past.

Kohima Today

Visiting the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery at Kohima is a deeply moving experience, all the more so because it is sited on the very battlefield where so many fell and where John Harman won his VC. The CWGC maintains the cemetery in immaculate condition. Standing on Garrison Hill, surveying the terrain, one gains a clearer perspective on the sacrifices made — and a deeper appreciation of the famous Kohima Epitaph inscribed on a memorial there:

When you go home, tell them of us and say,

For your tomorrow, we gave our today.



Cross of Sacrifice

REUNIONS

1 QUEENS WERL SUBBIES REUNION



L-R Rob Walker Lucy C-A, Mark Cowan-Aston, Rachel C-A, Neil Peckham, Alain Chissell Alex Cooper, Nick Keyes and Howard Beeston

3 QUEENS OFFICERS' MESS REUNION

By Peter Goulston

On 10 April 2025, former occupants of the Officers' Mess of the 3rd Battalion, spanning the generations, met for lunch at The Army & Navy Club, Pall Mall.

This was the fourth consecutive year that Guy Wood has expertly marshalled the old, the bold, and the not-so-old to gather for lunch — celebrating our shared history and catching up on the threads of our present lives. Whilst the temples of some had greyed a little more in the intervening year, decades melted away with firm handshakes and the unspoken understanding of times past.

The Club once again served a very fine three-course meal, after which Clive Meek gave a short speech reflecting on what makes our military memories and reunions so special. His quote from Tolstoy captured the spirit perfectly:

True happiness and fulfilment come from serving others and working for the greater good, rather than focusing solely on personal gain or happiness.'





The goodbyes were heartfelt, and the promises to meet again next year sincere, as we departed with a renewed sense of connection and unwavering comradeship.



FROM BERLIN 1971 TO LONDON 2023

By Rob Weaver

They say a picture speaks a thousand words, so let's see what these photos say.

Berlin, 1971: A Company, 1st Battalion The Queen's Regiment - more than fifty years ago.

London, 2023: standing tall and proud once again.

On a cold day in Berlin, four of us were pictured heading out - or perhaps coming back in: Raggy, Rob, Mitch and Des. (Andy has been added to the list, as he was likely on duty when the photo was taken - AK, Spandau, train duty or perhaps throwing bricks at the minefield at the bottom of camp.) Those with eagle eyes may spot a new addition in the picture; for those less eagle-eyed, it's a cloth badge from Northern Ireland.



Berlin, Bulford, Northern Ireland, Canada and more.

At one point one of the wives mentioned 'Green Shield stamps' - still a mystery to us (and the cause of much laughter!). We also reflected that too many good soldiers were left behind in Bulford.

Fast forward more than 45 years, and we gathered again to reminisce about the good and not-so-good times. The banter flowed as if no time had passed at all, rather than nearly half a century. Memories came thick and fast, with names too numerous to mention - Donnelly, Ansell, Trigger, Hewett, Chalky White - and stories of escapades from our many tours together:



It was, however, a wonderful evening. Huge thanks go to Des for arranging the reunion. Let's not leave it another 45 years - few of us will still be around by then - but it would be great to have even more old friends at the next meet-up. (Sadly, Phil Wedlake was working this time; another A Company, 1 Queen's man who would otherwise have been with us.)

Some of you may recognise us from the early photograph. When I look at reunion photos now, I can only identify a few faces - we're all getting older. (Jimmy Juhel, however, never seems to age!)

QUEENSMEN GATHERING AT THE ARBORETUM

By Eddie Dale

This year's gathering took place at the Arboretum and began at 1100 hrs with an informal catch-up. Attendance numbers were lower than usual as several members were unwell or had prior commitments.

The service commenced at 1200 hrs, officiated by Lieutenant Colonel Rowney due to the ill health of Mr Den Gallagher. Unfortunately, his deputy, Mr Eddie Dale, was unable to wear his formal attire owing to a forgotten suit bag and therefore attended in shorts and a regimental rugby shirt.

The Army Physical Training Corps (APTC) held their service prior to ours. It was a pleasure to meet with Mr Jack Goodwin and Mr Geoff 'The Tank' Chapman. Mr Brian Kitchemen's daughters attended in his absence while he undergoes cancer treatment.

The weather held fair, and the service proceeded smoothly. To increase attendance in future years, the next gathering will be held on 19 September 2026. Please put it in your diaries.





Work is underway to secure a discounted block booking with Ibis Hotels for those who attend. Following a review of the hotel and the adjacent public house, this venue appears to offer suitable accommodation and facilities. By contrast, the Premier Inn has become comparatively expensive and offers reduced value for money.

Further information will be published on our Facebook page in due course.



On 18 May 2024, I was heading to the last game of the season at the Etihad Stadium, Manchester. I contacted a fellow drummer, John McHugh, whom I hadn't seen for 40 years but had kept in touch with via Facebook and WhatsApp, to see if he was up for a meeting. Well, it turned out he was, and when we finally met in Oldham it was just like old times - the hug was so big it was brilliant.

He picked me and my 19-year-old daughter up, and I think she was shocked to see two old farts hugging on the station platform! When we got to John's house, I met his wife, daughter and grandkids. We swapped life stories, then moved into his back garden for the drinking to begin.

His daughter couldn't believe that we hadn't seen each other for 40 years, because we chatted like it was only yesterday.

I can honestly say it was a fantastic weekend up north. And to top it all off - we won the League!



Two Old Farts



As Drummers -
Dennis on the
Left, Me on the
Right

REMEMBRANCE





Pte Mark Birch Ex 1 QUEENS, Mrs Gaynor Birch and Mrs Dawn Pyne at Southend-on-Sea beacon lighting



Alan Ley being interviewed by ITV



QRRA at Essex Farm, Ypres

Lt Col Peter Swanson
in bowler hat leading
Bexhill RBL VE 80
Commemoration



Isle of Thanet Branch Albuhera Dinner



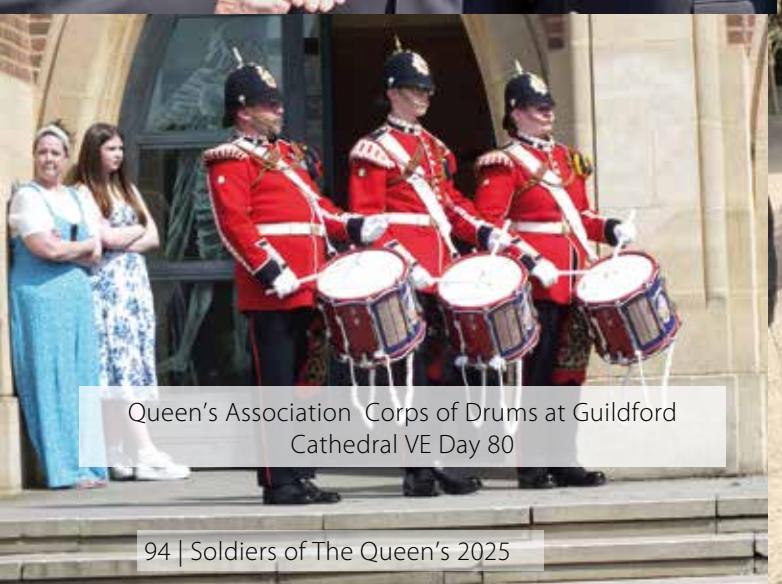
At the Cenotaph



Mike Hurman wearing his father's medals,
with two Oxted veterans on VE Day 80



Queen's Association Corps of Drums at Guildford
Cathedral VE Day 80



Sean Gough and Alan Ley VE 80 Day in Jersey





Middlesex Albuhera Day



The QRRA lay a wreath at the Menin Gate, Ypres



War Memorial, Oxted. Rev James Ashton with Oxted RBL branch Standard bearer and Oxted Veterans, local Councillors and Mike Hurman on the right VE 80



Pat Byrne lays a wreath on VJ80 for his Grandfather who was a POW of the Japanese



THE MORNING AFTER...

By Andrew Bickerdike



The Morning after



Jonathan Purdy receiving the painting from Biff Byford

the sacrifices made by so many young men, 8,000 miles from home.

At the Association reunion auction in March 2024, Jonathan Purdy made the winning bid for this painting, raising £250 for the Benevolent Fund.

In 1982, I was on secondment from 1 QUEENS to the Parachute Regiment. In April of that year, I was commanding 4 Platoon, B Company, 3 PARA, when we set sail for the South Atlantic on Op CORPORATE.

By 8 June we had tabbed across East Falkland and were preparing for the final push on the capital, Port Stanley. The night of 11–12 June was to be our assault on Mount Longdon, one of several rocky outcrops guarding the western approaches to Port Stanley. It proved a long, cold, bloody night of intense fighting before our objective was secured.

On 13 June we were able to take full stock of the battle. My platoon had suffered four killed, including my platoon sergeant, Ian McKay—who was awarded a posthumous VC—and 11 wounded, including me. It was a baptism of fire none of us will ever forget.

This painting by Andrew Byford depicts the view on 13 June, looking east along the top ridge of Mount Longdon towards Port Stanley. The upturned rifles mark the spot where Lance Corporal 'Doc' Murdoch, B Company, and Private 'Geordie' Laing, Anti-Tank Platoon, fell during the battle. It was the furthest point reached by B Company, after which A Company continued to the limit of exploitation.

Although victorious, there was little to celebrate. By 14 June the battalion had lost 23 men, with 43 wounded, in taking Mount Longdon. The painting is a poignant reminder of

PROJECT BRAGANZA

By Patrick Crowley (PWRR Deputy Colonel Heritage)

A great name for a project, I'm sure you'll agree! Until now, there has been no single consolidated record or central point of reference showing where our Regimental monuments are located. Project Braganza aims to fill that gap.

Its purpose is to record the location of regimental heritage sites and monuments. It is worth noting that our heritage underpins the Regiment's ethos, character, identity, and purpose. It reflects the Regiment's service and unique contributions to the culture, traditions, history, and character of both the Army and the United Kingdom, and helps explain the Regiment's standing within the Army.

One example is shown in the picture below - the recently refurbished Bexhill-on-Sea Joint Cadet Centre for the Sussex Army Cadet Force and the RAF Air Cadets, where you can see the cap badge of The Royal Sussex Regiment. Other examples include roads named after PWRR Tigers killed in Iraq and Afghanistan; the Queen's Regiment memorials at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas and in Leros Barracks, Canterbury; and the Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment's Chapel in Guildford Cathedral.

This information has never before been brought together in one place, and some Regimental Sites have been forgotten as we have transformed from 12 Regiments of Foot into the single regular battalion and two Army Reserve battalions of today. While many of these sites are in our London and South-East recruiting area, others are located across the UK and overseas.

A group of volunteers, representing each of our counties, is working to identify Regimental Sites and to consolidate the information in a user-friendly format. This record will then be made compatible with other historical IT systems. I am extremely grateful for their efforts and, once the information is publicly available, I will share it with you.

An example of this is:

Taunton has a road called 'Tangier Way'. Few may be aware that this is in memory of the Tangier Regiment- the Queen's 2nd Foot who were there in 1685 to hang the Monmouth rebels they had defeated at the Battle of Sedgemoor in that year.'

In the meantime, if you know of any Regimental Sites, please pass the details to Alasdair Goulden at queensregimentassociation@gmail.com. The best way to do this is by filling in the following template:

Monument	Type of Memorial	Location	Contact	Brief Description	Comment





BRANCH REPORTS

1 QUEENS

By Joe Dormer



Pat Byrne, Joe Dormer, Andrew Lee Andrews, NK

The year is dominated by three events: the Herne Bay Reunion, the Italian trip and poppy collection.

Although it is primarily a 1 QUEENS reunion in Herne Bay, this has become more popular over the years and we welcome all Queensmen, forebears and PWRR veterans. Increasing numbers give testament to this claim with 104 people attending this year.

The trip to Italy reported earlier was an outstanding success, and this year we had the pleasure of taking our partners, all of whom completed some very arduous mountaineering. Please see the article for a full report earlier in the *Journal*.



L-R Lee Bradbury, Hayley Quinn, Barry Azzopardi, Dawn Azzopardi, Ken Hames, Caro Hames, Jane Saunders, Mick Saunders and Derek Locke



Derek Locke



Dawn Dormer, Caro Hames, Jane Saunders, Dawn Azzopardi, Hayley Quinn

By the time the *Journal* comes out, we will have supported the RBL in their Poppy Appeal and my thanks to Kev Milsom and Martin O'Dell who joined me in selling poppies at the Herne Bay Sainsbury's.

The 2026 1 QUEENS Annual Reunion will be held at the **Ex-Servicesman's Club, 35 William Street, Herne Bay Kent, CT6 5NR on Saturday 23rd May 2026 starting at 17:00hrs.** There will be entertainment, including a Northern Soul session, DJ by the legendary Dave (Ginge) Smyth and the Queen's Regimental Association Corps of Drums (luminous stick display). Do join us!



Derek Locke, Mick Saunders and Dave Perkins



Andrew (Ginge) Taylor, Martin Wheeler, Joe Dormer, Ram Sharma



Rear: Joe Dormer, Mick Saunders, Martin O'Dell, Martin Kent, Front: Duncan Smith, Kev Milsom, Jon (Geordie) Allison and Peter (AK) Klucznik.



ALBUHERA

By Steve Wall

As at year-end, the Branch membership stands at 33, comprising 17 members resident in mainland Spain, 12 in Gibraltar, and 4 in Portugal. Membership levels have remained stable throughout the reporting period.

The Branch's primary focus remains the provision of virtual support to members, supplemented by localised social meetings and participation in commemorative activities on historic battlefields. Due to the significant geographical spread across the Iberian Peninsula, opportunities for wider in-person activity remain limited.

The principal Branch activities continue to be centred on La Albuera, with two key annual events: the Battle of Albuera commemoration held each May, and the Remembrance Service held each November at Elvas British Military Cemetery, Portugal.

During the reporting period, the Branch provided welfare assistance to two members and continued to offer remote emotional and practical support to a further member. The Branch maintains effective links with RBL Branch Community Support Officers, RBL Caseworkers, the Queen's Regimental Association, and the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment Association, ensuring access to appropriate welfare support mechanisms.

The Branch continues to welcome new members from across the Iberian Peninsula. Individuals resident in, or owning property within, Spain, Gibraltar, or Portugal who wish to join are encouraged to contact Lt Col (Retd) Steve Wall MBE (steve.wall@hotmail.co.uk) or Mark Truman-Davies (mtrumandavies@gmail.com) for further information.

(Ed: NB. 'La Albuera' is the Spanish town. When referring to the battle, we follow the English spelling ie 'The Battle of Albuhera').

CHICHESTER

By Dave Tilley

With three new members joining this year, the Branch continues to go from strength to strength.

Events

The Branch concluded 2024 with its Christmas Dinner at the Masonic Hall. All who attended greatly enjoyed the food and company. In May, the Branch held its annual Albuhera meeting. Graham Booker gave a brief talk on the events of the 1811 battle, and members toasted '*The Immortal Memory*.' Presentations were made to Dave Tilley and Eddie Drew for their outstanding contributions to the Branch. On 13 September, the Branch held a Quebec Veterans' Lunch which was well attended. Dave Tilley then led the group in singing "*Sussex by the Sea*" before everyone departed in good spirits.

The Branch will end a very busy and successful 2025 with its Christmas Dinner on 16 December. Members of the Chichester Branch extend their best wishes to every Queensman for a very Happy Christmas and a bright, healthy 2026.



Meetings and Administration

The Branch AGM was held at the end of March, at which Tyrone Power was elected as the new Chairman. Members passed a vote of thanks to outgoing Chairman, Dave Tilley for his valued service over many years.

Commemorations

Branch members joined the Royal Sussex Association to celebrate St George's Day at Chichester Cathedral and to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the 1965 Aden operational tour. They then proceeded to the City Club for refreshments.

A wreath was laid at Litten Gardens to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of Victory in Europe.

In August, Branch members again paraded at Litten Gardens to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of Victory in Japan, with Simon Penny laying the wreath.

In November, the Branch held its Remembrance Service Parade and laid wreaths at the Litten Gardens War Memorial in Chichester.

During the August Bank Holiday, Branch members met representatives of the Friends of Speyer at the Assembly Rooms. The Chichester Branch has twinned with a town on the Rhine which has a Veteran Pioneer Group, making us the only corporate membership in the group. A visit is planned for 2026.



Visits and Trips

On 9 August, a coach trip was arranged to visit the Worthy Down Royal Ordnance Museum. The display was excellent, including Lord Mountbatten's Rolls Royce on parade. The remainder of the day was spent exploring Winchester and sampling Hampshire ale at the Jail House



Looking Ahead

The Branch is looking forward to the 60th commemoration at Woolwich in 2026 and hopes that the weather will be as favourable as it has been in previous years.



I am still visiting the Bexley nursing home on a weekly basis to see a Mr John Worthy, who will be 99 years old on 26 January 2026, and to my knowledge is the oldest member of the East Surrey Regiment.



Members of the Regiment meet up for lunch approximately once every 6 weeks at the Carvery at Ewell, and catch up on old times.

On Saturday 4 October, The East Surrey Regiment has its annual reunion. This year is the 49th and we hope around 80 people will be present. I, along with my partner and an army friend, will be going to Risquons-Tout on the Belgium/French border in September to an East Surrey Memorial in honour of the men from the East Surreys who were left as rear guard in 1940. They stayed behind so that the battalion could make for Dunkirk. We will be placing a wreath for them as they all perished.

Finally, we will attend the Remembrance Parade at the Cenotaph where a wreath will be laid for the East Surrey boys.



The Society concluded the 2024 season with Chris Paul earning the prestigious title of Champion Golfer of the Year at the End of Season Dinner (EOSD). He triumphed over strong contenders Chris Stroud and Mark Thorne. The EOSD event itself was won by Mick Beale, whose impressive form has carried through into the 2025 season.

Beginning of the 2025 Season

The 2025 season commenced with the unveiling of newly designed Society shirts. Under blue skies and with the clocks moved forward for spring, Top Meadow served as the venue for the first major, the First Knock. Thirty-four members gathered for a pre-match bacon roll—a chance to reconnect—before meeting at the first tee to dust off their clubs and embrace the start of a new golfing year. The challenging conditions were reflected in the scores, with Nigel Cavagliari securing victory with a modest 37 points.

Barkway Event

The next match saw a small Society team venture across the Essex border to Barkway Golf Club in Hertfordshire. Once again, the weather was excellent with minimal wind; the course was in good condition, and the hosts provided a warm welcome and fantastic food.

Spring Swing in Kent

The Society's next social event took place in Kent, at Pedham Place, for the Spring Swing. This competition, featuring a new trophy and a blind pairs format, was won by Chris Stroud and Peter Burbidge. Despite the damp and grey start, with light showers, the weather ultimately worked to the players' advantage by slowing the greens.

May Matches and the AGM

As May arrived with pleasant weather, a small team represented the Society in Essex for a home fixture against Barkway Golf Club at Mardyke Golf Club. Unfortunately, Barkway prevailed once more. An impromptu match was also played against Hythe Golf Club in Kent, where the Society received a warm welcome.

Annual General Meeting

The second major of the season, the Annual General Meeting (AGM), was held in late May at Upchurch River Valley Golf Course. The all-day event began with a Full English Breakfast, followed by a nine-hole warm-up and a light lunch. The main competition—a full 18 holes—included numerous trophies across ten categories, such as the coveted wooden spoon



Chris Paul champion golfer of the year



Mick Beale Winner 2025



AGM Banners



and the nine-hole blind pairs. Prizes for the longest drives and nearest the pin added extra excitement. Mark Angelillo emerged as AGM champion, scoring an impressive 46 points. The AGM concluded with a meal and a presentation ceremony.

Summer Competitions and Charity Events

Subsequent matches included fixtures against Sussex Police at Tilgate Forest in Surrey, a new venue for the Society. The team then claimed victory in the Divisional Triangular Match for the fourth year in a row. The third major of the season, the Captain's Fun Day at Chestfield Golf Course, was won by Mick Beale with 40 points. The event also raised £912 for the Captain's charity (split between the QUEENS and PWRR Benevolent Funds).

Inter-Battalion Challenge and Rainy Weather

While the sunny weather had mostly been on the Society's side, hopes for rain to soften the greens were eventually met—though not always at ideal times. As water companies declared hosepipe bans, the skies finally opened, and the Inter-Battalion competition at Cobtree Manor began in a downpour that soaked all participants. Eventually, the clouds lifted and the sun returned. This contest, pitting the PWRR against the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Battalions of The Queen's Regiment, saw the 1st and 2nd Battalions outnumbered and trailing. The 3rd Battalion put up a strong fight for second, but the youthful PWRR team ultimately lifted the trophy.

Memorial and Social Matches

The Chuck Cullinane Trophy—organised by former Society Captain Steve Richards—was held at Woldingham Golf Club, raising £350 for the Heart of Kent Hospice in memory of John "Chuck" Cullinane.

A recently introduced match against Kingsnorth Golf Club took place at their course, where the Society was warmly received. A subsequent match against Lewes Prison Service Golf Society resulted in a Society victory. At the time of writing, the team still looks forward to facing Canterbury GC, Cottesmore GC, Kent Police GS, the EOSD, and concluding with the Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Trophy.



Tower of London Dinner



Group photo



Winners Inter Divisional Triangular Match 2025

Operation ULTIMATE – Horsham Branch Battlefield Tour to Normandy, May 2025

In memoriam John Hercules Delatour Ross V.R. ('JR' to all): late Royal Artillery, RAF, 6/7 Queens and PWRR, sometime yachtsman, historian, and battlefield guide.

Nothing quite puts a downer on battlefield tour planning like the sudden passing of the professional historian and tour guide you were relying upon to undertake the research and deliver the stands — while yours truly runs around in panic mode trying to make sure everyone's on board the coach on time and we haven't left someone propping up a local bar. [Note to self: why is it that a veteran's speed of advance towards a bar is so much quicker than their speed of withdrawal back to the pick-up point when it's time to leave?]

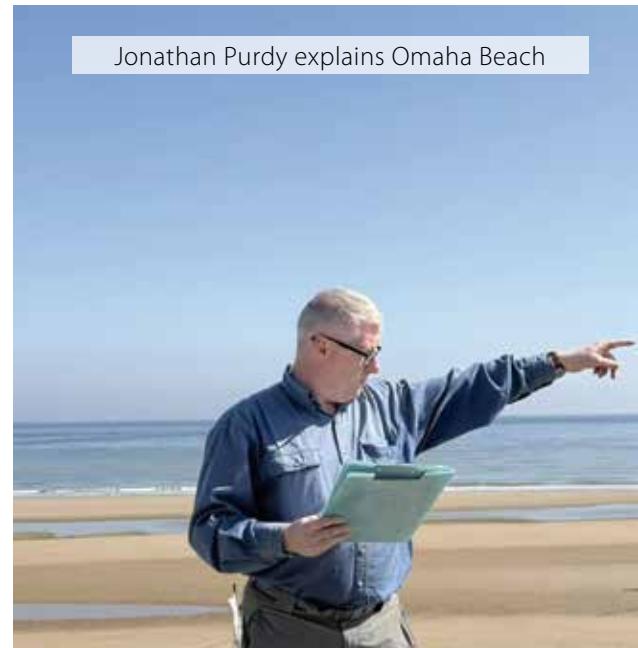
Unfortunately, this was exactly our situation in December 2024. But, as with all operations, the job goes on. Steve Bell and Geoff Muir came to the rescue and together we planned and reconnoitred the stands, wrote the scripts and ensured our 2025 BFT went ahead as a fitting tribute to JR.

With a 0500hr start a six-hour crossing from Portsmouth seemed like a good idea at the planning stage - more time on the ferry, less time on a coach. Indeed, a long crossing gives everyone time to have a few drinks, have a little snooze, sober up a bit, and then have a few more drinks.

Disembarking at Ouistreham, we turned to the serious business of the BFT. Our first stand was the Merville Battery, taken by night-time assault in the early hours of D-Day by 9 PARA. The casemates here are intact and accessible and the site has now been turned into quite a good museum. One weakness, however, is that the ground has been levelled and the bomb craters that once dotted the battlefield have been filled in.

As it was 16 May this felt like a very appropriate and atmospheric location to conduct the Silent Toast and remember the fallen of Albuhera as well as those of more recent conflicts. Thanks to Colin Hurd for proposing the Toast and to Marc Harrold for draining the cup.

The following day saw us work our way through eight stands including a couple of US Airborne actions that were new experiences for many. Steve Bell walked us through the Brécourt Manor assault made by 14 American paratroopers under the leadership of Lieutenant (later Lt Col) Richard 'Dick' Winters of E Coy 2/506th PIR. This is still taught at West Point as a classic example of small-unit tactics and leadership in overcoming a larger enemy force. What I found interesting is that it is also a good example of the 'fog of war': less than 100m away from the battle, which lasted more than two



Geoff Muir Jonathan Purdy Steve Bell on a cold Utah Beach



Mike Cattell quality controls the beer at St Mere Eglise



hours, were over 200 US Paras sitting at Regimental (Brigade) HQ waiting to be given orders. Everyone there could hear the exchange of fire but only nine came to help.

At La Fière, we stopped at the bridge across the Merderet River. Given his history of pointing out bridges during BFTs, this was a most suitable location for Adrian Smith to deliver a short eulogy in remembrance of JR, after which port was consumed.

We finished the day at the Bayeux British War Cemetery for a wreath-laying and act of remembrance. Sunday saw an equally full itinerary — including the RAF (yes, RAF!) landings on Omaha Beach — before we boarded the ferry to return to Portsmouth.

If I could sum up the BFT in a way that anyone who knew JR would appreciate, we came, we saw, we remembered those who had come before us, we had a good lunch. Finally, I must thank Steve Bell and Geoff Muir as well as staff photographer Andrew Byford, without whose invaluable assistance our BFT simply wouldn't have happened.



St George's Day Chichester 2025



Mike Cattell, Mick Courantage and Colin Hurd of the Horsham Branch at Chichester Cathedral on St George's Day 2025



Albuhera Dinner 2025

The past year has been a busy one for the branch, especially during May and June 2025. Meetings are held once a month at the RNA Club in Ramsgate, normally on the first Saturday of the month. This can sometimes vary, so please contact the branch for details of upcoming meetings and events.

Since our last journal report in 2024, we have celebrated Sevastopol, Salerno and Quebec Days. Members attended a Battle of Britain Dinner hosted by the Ramsgate RAFA. For Remembrance Sunday, members paraded in Ramsgate, Broadstairs, Margate, Birchington, and at the Cenotaph in London. Our Standard was on parade at Margate. In December, we held our Christmas party and attended parties at the RNA and RAFA clubs. We brought the year

to a close on 31 December with a Forming of the Regiment RV, when we raised a glass of port to the Regiment and absent friends.

At the start of 2025, we said goodbye to one of our last Buffs, Bryan Hazard, who passed away in late 2024. Bryan served in 1 Buffs and 5 QUEENS, and he will be sadly missed. In February, members visited HMS *Prince of Wales* in Portsmouth, a visit arranged by our shipmates from the RNA. In Ramsgate, members and our Standard Bearers paraded for Op FULLER. This was the first of several parades to remember actions of WWII that took place in and around Ramsgate.



Bryan Hazard at Albuhera

May began with the Army vs Navy Game, hosted at the RNA Club with brunch followed by some pre-match drinks. Unfortunately, the men's match didn't go our way this year, but plenty of good-natured banter was had with our shipmates. On 8 May, we held a VE Day Lunch RV at the Royal Victoria Pavilion, the largest pub in the UK. On 16 May, we held our Albuhera Dinner at a new venue. It was a great night with many QUEENS and PWRR veterans in attendance. We also enjoyed a display from the QRA Corps of Drums and were able to raise



Bryan Hazard meeting HM Queen Margrethe II



funds in support of them. On 18 May, we took part in the first of three parades commemorating the 85th Anniversary of Op DYNAMO and

the little ships leaving Ramsgate for Dunkirk. The second and largest parade was held on 20 May, led by the Band of the Royal Marines. The Duke of Kent inspected the parade and took the salute during the march-past. A fly-past by Naval aircraft and a Spitfire followed. A third parade was planned for 26 May to welcome back the little ships, but this was cancelled due to bad weather, as the vessels were unable to leave Dunkirk. On 31 May, we held a joint commemoration curry night with the RNA to mark the Battle of the Glorious First of June 1794.

June began with members attending the grand opening of the QRRA Veterans' Horticultural, Rehabilitation, Social and Community Clubhouse. It was a wonderful day, and we caught up with many old friends, some of whom we had not seen for years. The branch presented the QRRA with a picture of Lord Howe on the deck of the *Queen Charlotte*, 1 June 1794, to mark the occasion. On 6 June, we held a D-Day Breakfast RV. For the second year running, members and our Standard attended events in



Channel Dash Parade 2025



Margate parade



March at the Arc de Triomphe

Conflans-Sainte-Honorine, France, with which Ramsgate is twinned. The Standard was on parade at the Arc de Triomphe, on a boat in the River Seine, and in Conflans itself. On 28 June, we paraded on Armed Forces Day, bringing a very busy two months to a close.



Visit to HMS Prince of Wales

July and August were quieter, with only branch meetings, a lunch RV in Broadstairs, and a VJ Day lunch in Ramsgate. September, however, will see us on parade for the Latham Memorial rededication in Blingel, France. This has been organised by our President, Martin Neame, on behalf of the PWRR, with the aim of involving the town and refurbishing the Memorial. Ron Brown, who was instrumental in pressing for this event, was sadly unable to attend the re-dedication due to ill health.

Also in September, the first Veterans' Boxing Sessions were held. These are run by our member Chris Daley, ex-1 QUEENS. Chris, a boxing coach at the Hornets Boxing Club in Ramsgate, now runs weekly sessions every Wednesday to promote veteran wellbeing, mindfulness, connection, and fitness.

For the remainder of the year, we look forward to Remembrance Sunday, celebrating regimental days and RVs, and on 31 December, marking the anniversary of the Regiment's formation. In 2026, we are excited to celebrate the Regiment's 60th Anniversary and look forward to meeting up with you all in Woolwich.

LONDON

By Kevin Hibbert

The past year has seen the Association continue to grow and prosper while grappling with a changing world and how we can still deliver great opportunities to get together, even as circumstances seem to conspire against us.

Chief among these challenges are the rule changes surrounding the annual Army vs Royal Navy rugby fixture at Twickenham. For many years this was one of our centrepiece events, but the move to e-ticketing has robbed us of the ability to bulk-buy tickets and have us all sit together as we did in the past. This, along with increasingly strict rules about what may and may not be done in the car parks (all seemingly aimed at driving punters into the stadium earlier and earlier), has meant we are engaged in a significant rethink of how we can support this event going forward.

As the Army vs Navy fixture has run into difficulties, one of our other centrepiece events – the Cenotaph March on Remembrance Sunday – goes from strength to strength. This is exactly the type of occasion the Association wants to provide: opportunities for old comrades and new to share a few drinks and a bite to eat and get those lanterns swinging! Unfortunately, it has proved impossible to book Walkers of Whitehall again for this year, but we hope to return in 2026. Instead, we have secured another nearby venue, The Coach House on Oxendon Street, and hope to accommodate even more of us. The invitation is open to all marchers and spectators, including friends and



Tony Dutton with RNA members Café de Paris, pre-parade drinks



Cpl John Moore visit home from San Francisco



WO2 Mark Spicer trip home from Arizona



family. Keep an eye on our social media as we get nearer the time for details.

2024 was a sombre year for the Association as we marked the 20th



After Pte Lee O'Callaghan's Memorial Service



Lee O'Callaghan's grave



Cpl John Moore visit home from San Francisco



Pte Lee O'Callaghan's Memorial Service - Camberwell Cemetery

anniversary of the loss of Pte Chris Rayment and Pte Lee O'Callaghan. Events were held at the Tower of London and at Camberwell Cemetery to remember them. Turnout was superb for both occasions, and I know the families remain deeply appreciative of the love and support they continue to receive from the Regiment and fellow Tigers.

We continue to organise various 'snap' ambushes throughout the year, from drinks events – usually at my grandmother's former pub, The Anchor at Bankside, due to its convenience for London Bridge – through to get-togethers when Tigers now living abroad come home for a visit.

Memorable visits this year have come from WO2 Mark Spicer and Cpl John Moore, both now resident in the USA. We're happy to extend our net and would love to hear from ex-Tigers or Queensmen with a connection to any London hosteries we could visit to help fill the coffers in these difficult times for the industry.

Finally, it would be remiss not to mention two stalwarts of the committee, Dennis Sharrocks and Adrian De Villiers, who both stepped back this year. Both have contributed seismic efforts to getting the



Pte Chris Rayment memorial service - Tower of London

Association up and running and into 'normal jogging'. My sincere thanks – and I'm sure yours as well – go to the two of them for a job mightily well done. I look forward to seeing them both, and all of you, at an event very soon.

MIDDLESEX

By Trevor Canton

Our Chairman, Mr Trevor Canton, and our President, Maj (Retd) Derrick Harwood MBE, TD, MA, attended the rededication service for Cpl John Owens, which took place on 15 October 2024 at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Anzio War Cemetery in Italy. The service was organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC). Cpl Owens was a soldier of the Middlesex Regiment who lost his life in Italy during the Second World War and was recently identified, with his grave rededicated 80 years after his death.

On Wednesday, 16 November, B Coy 4 PWRR held their Memorials Parade at the Edgware ARC. The event was supported by Branch members, as well as by the DL of Barnet, Mr Martin Russell MBE, the Mayor and Mayoress of Barnet and other local dignitaries.

Unlike previous years, it was agreed that B Coy 4 PWRR and the Branch would hold their 2024 Remembrance Day Parade at the former Garrison Chapel of the Middlesex Regiment, St Paul's Church, Mill Hill. However, we continued to support the service at Hornsey, our previous



Cpl J A Owens Rededication



Silent Toast

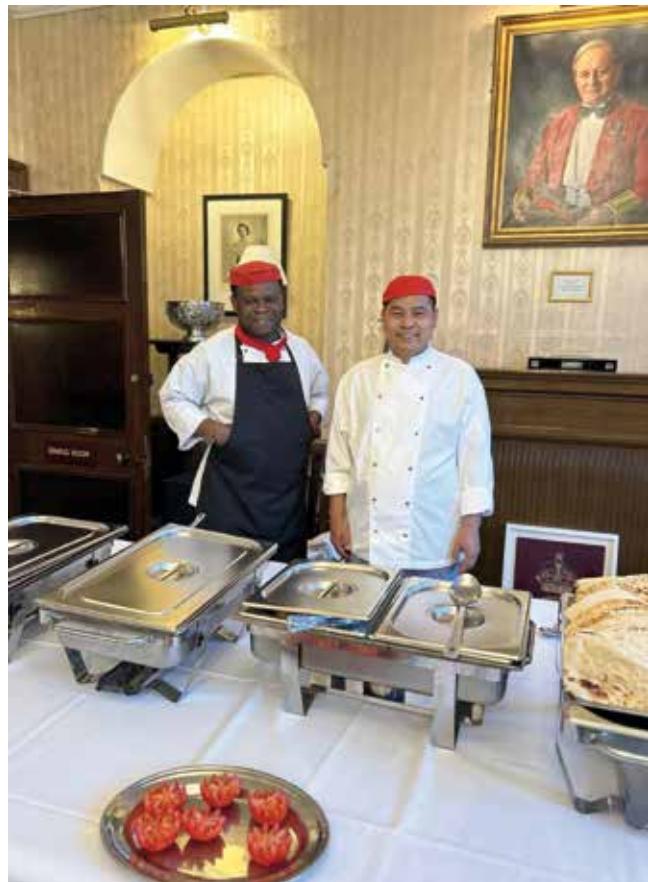
location. After the parade, lunch was provided back at the Edgware ARC.

Our annual New Year's Luncheon was held on Sunday, 12 January 2025, with an attendance of 24, including Branch members, their wives, partners, and guests.

A rather depleted AGM was held on Wednesday, 18 March, at the Edgware ARC, with members attending both in person and via Zoom. As in previous years, attendance—both physical and virtual—was disappointing, and it remains a constant struggle to motivate members to support the Branch.

The 214th anniversary of the Battle of Albuhera was marked with both the Silent Toast, held with B Coy 4 PWRR personnel, and our annual Albuhera Dinner. At the Silent Toast event, the account of the battle was read by B Coy 2IC, Capt Tommy Edgar. After the Toast, a curry supper was held in the Officers' Mess for all attendees.

Our own, somewhat belated, Albuhera Dinner was held on Saturday, 24 May, and attended by 26 members, their wives, partners, and guests. Unfortunately, numbers were down this year, probably due to the later date. However, the menu was excellent.



Curry afterward



Portsmouth Trip

The 2025 Branch tour once again focused on museums, following the success of our 2024 trip. This year we centred on Portsmouth, with our hotel less than a five-minute walk from the Historic Dockyard. Most attendees spent the week exploring the Dockyard and, naturally, some of the local hosteries. A few ventured farther afield to visit other museums in the area.



Albuhera Dinner

QUEEN'S REGIMENTAL RIDERS ASSOCIATION

By Wired (Secretary)

The QRRA has been exceptionally busy over the past year, and some exciting milestones have been achieved with more to come.

It's just over a year ago that I stepped forward to support the Regiment through the QRRA and within a short time took on the Secretary role setting up many background required changes to the way we operate. The QRRA has gone from strength to strength and now is poised to start the big milestone of Operation PROJECT VETERAN.

We had a very rocky end to the year 2024 with 'Donk' our President deciding that he wanted to move on to join another bike club, but our thanks go with him for all he did with the build. Glad to say in normal Infantry spirit, we got drunk and reset the team, with Hobo taking presidential role. The new committee has gained intensity and experience as it came together and with that, we have built stronger relations with external teams such as Homes 4 Heroes, the Royal British Legion Industries (RBLI) and others. We are also pleased to see some old members rejoin us and new ones come forward. A reminder to all reading this that we need you to support us and join if you're on two or four wheels – we even accept those on three!

February saw the long hard slog to complete the build of the clubhouse with building control sign off. We showed what it was all about by being told by the Head of Building Control *"You should be proud of yourselves, I have seen professional builders not meeting this standard"*. This was a great thing to hear and a testament to all those that built and supported the build.

Soon after this, we started to see the potential for the future of the building and the QRRA needed a remap and so planning meetings internally brought two further phases for us:

Phase 2 Op PROJECT VETERAN – Mission: *To provide a safe environment so that people can develop themselves with skills and wellbeing confidence.*

This is broken into 3 elements:



- Wellbeing – this is an opportunity for people to come together and enjoy time either socially or through activity. We have now had several Veterans' Breakfasts as an example, and these are growing in numbers.
- Mindful Support - this is where we look to our partners to assist and signpost those in need be it financial advice, accommodation or other including the welfare team at RHQ PWRR.
- Training - we have linked up with several training providers and this will allow training in either recreational classes or more work certified courses.

Part of the training element is further development of the building. We eagerly await a grant from Faversham Town Council, so we can turn the workshop into a working part of the building, with a mechanical workshop, woodworking areas and more.

A reminder that this is open to all Queensmen and PWRR Tigers and others. Please come along to events, breakfasts and of course the One Aim Rally. We really look forward to seeing people. We are very proud of the Clubhouse and those who visit are often amazed at the place.

Phase 3 is the land and horticultural activity. As you may be aware, we maintain the land on behalf of the Benevolent Fund. This is a full-time job at its best and 'Boots' Scully has a vision, so we are told, of what it's going to develop into. Park Run being one.

The land is a great asset, and we have been using it to advantage with hosting with the funds going straight back into the building upkeep and used to support the '*One Aim Rally*' which raises funds for the Benevolent Fund. Some of the other events we have hosted include:

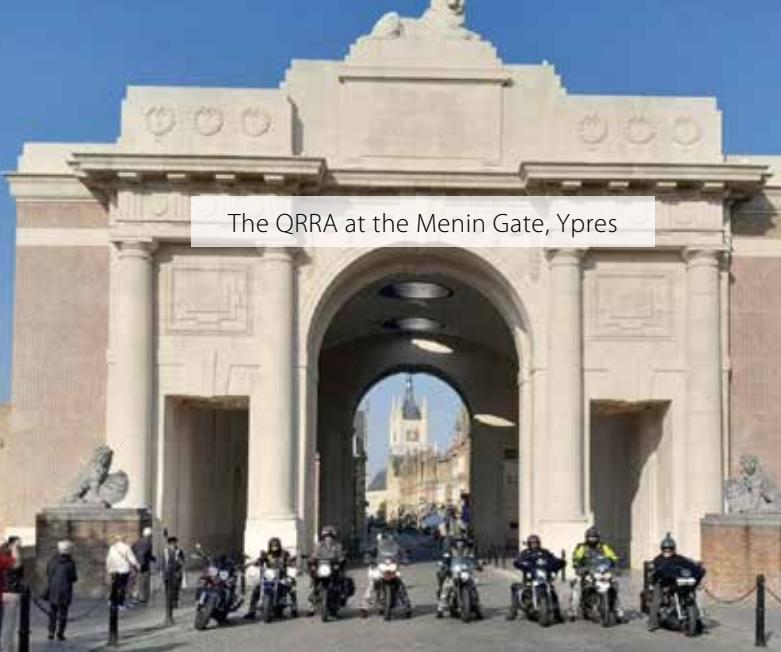
- The Great Tommy Sleep Out in March and we plan to rehost on behalf of Kent on 21 March 2026 to raise money for the RBLI Veteran's Village in Aylesford. You would be very welcome to join us – we have a band booked and the bar will be open. Just bring your tent!
- Tri-Veterans meeting April
- Open day June
- Pagan wedding in August
- Tri-veterans meeting in September

On The Glorious First of June, we were honoured to have Lady Colgrain, Lord Lieutenant of Kent and the High Sheriff of Kent formally open the Rehab Centre. It was a great day and the sun shone on our enterprise.

July saw the 10th Shot One Aim Rally and thankfully the weather held for most of it. We had great support from the local community and other bike groups, nine bands played over the weekend, and we saw lots of beer go down the range with a quick resupply needed. The event was not well attended by QUEENS or PWRR and this was disappointing as we managed to see an increase in revenue this year, raising £5,000 for the Benevolent Fund taking our total to over £73,000 over the years. We hope more of you will join us next year 1st Weekend of July. We introduced 'Glamping' thanks to Nigel Fairhead who brought tents and donated them for us to use. It was great for those less able to camp and added some funds to the total raised.

"Hang on I thought you were a bike club" I hear you say. Well - yes, you would not think so with all the above going on, but we still had time to make several ride outs. One of our favourites so far this year was when the Latham dedication in April fell through. Our plans were not lost as we continued to ride out and an outstanding ride was planned by QRRA Road Captain Tiny.

We set off on the ferry, with a small advance party heading out by rail, we landed, and the weather was with us and morale was high. We made a very big mistake by putting an ex-officer in the front of the pack to map read (*Ed: well that*





narrow it down!), off we set to meet at the RV with Bandit and Lee. We rode out the terminal and back in, yep some geographical errors, not to worry, off we went again!



Soon we got our bearings and joined up with all. We stopped several times at memorials before meeting Col Alain Chissel who kindly offered to guide us through the various Memorials. He had set a route to Ypres via several sites with a mindset of using dressing and medical stations used by allied troops through the war. He had us all captivated with his knowledge, stories and facts as we stood amid the white graves and settings. I gazed at our club members and realised I was amongst brothers again.

As we rode through the lanes and roads, our back patches on show, I could not help but notice heads turn as we passed people, and when we rode into Ypres our bikes roared through the streets and people stopped and waved, I could understand how the locals must have welcomed the troops in the past!

We had a quick beer and then Alain had arranged for us to take part in the Menin Gate ceremony to lay a wreath. Boots, Nuts and Wired stepped up to lay the wreath. We all felt rather nervous to get it right for the QRRA and Regiment; a quick practice then we were off. I have had many a proud moment in the past but wearing the cut of the QRRA that day with two fellow brothers beside me and with others watching on was a great moment.

That night we drank, and locals sat with us, and we all knew that we had had a great day.

The following day started with us driving through the Menin Gate and spread out across the road for a photo op to the applause of those standing by! We pushed on through the hot day with our cloudy heads, stopping at many



Cheque Presentation to the Benevolent Fund by QRRA President Howard Copsey, to Simon Wright, brother of the late Jon Wright

sites and cemeteries including the death cells and execution site in Poperinge.

As we left this site, it was time to wind up the acceleration, riding hard back to the Port of Calais before we departed back to Blighty.

We have had many more great days on our bikes including Rolling Thunder, Lee Rigby Memorial, Brands Hatch and countless local events, as well as the more sombre days when we support our fallen and their families on that final ride.

The QRRA hope that many more projects in the making come to a head and hope that you will join us for one of our events.



One Aim Rally



Lady Colgrain, Lord Lieutenant of Kent at the Grand Opening



Queensmen lead the 'Justice for Northern Ireland Veterans' march



2025 has been an amazing year for the Drums. When Tony Philpott had the crazy idea of starting up a Corps of Drums back in 2013, who would have thought that twelve years later we would still be going-stronger than ever! We still thank our lucky stars for that chance meeting with Donk Parsons in 2013, who took us under his wing. Combined with the support of the QRA President and Secretary, we continue to go from strength to strength.

We kicked off our performances in February, supporting our friends from the Ramsgate Royal Naval Association for their Channel Dash Memorial Service. We then travelled to Surrey for a very special performance at the wedding of Olivia, daughter of the late Queensman Major John Barr.

In March, it was fantastic to see everyone at the AGM at the Union Jack Club. (*Ed: At the AGM, Amy's hard work and dedication to the Drums was recognised with a well-deserved 'President's Commendation'-presented to her to her great embarrassment!*) We then supported the team at the Great Tommy Sleepout at Kennels Field.

May was incredibly busy for us. We had the pleasure of performing at the Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Reunion before heading back to Margate for a performance in their VE Day celebrations. This was followed by an invitation to be part of the Guildford Cathedral VE Day Memorial Service. May also saw us perform for the Ramsgate Branch annual Albuhera Dinner and the 1 QUEENS Reunion in Herne Bay.

The Ramsgate Branch's Glorious 1st of June Dinner started the month, as did the opening of the Veterans'

Horticultural Rehabilitation Centre with the QRRA, in the presence of the Lord Lieutenant of Kent, Lady Colgrain. Appearances at the Folkestone and Ashford Military Show, Eastling School Fête in Faversham, Ramsgate Armed Forces Day, Newnham Village Fête, and a special performance of Last Post with the Handelian Choir in Deal completed June's marathon.

We had a blast at the QRRA One Aim Rally in July, followed by a special performance in the magical Hole Park Gardens for the ABF, alongside a Beating Retreat from the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas. We had a fantastic evening with the guys from 2 QUEENS at their annual family camping event in Ashford before rounding off July at the Family Military Festival and Country Fair in Betteshanger for the Hill 112 Memorial Foundation.

In August, we were invited to perform at Military Odyssey in Kent, arguably the biggest military show in the country. It had long been an ambition of ours to perform there, and to be personally invited by the organiser felt like all the hard work over the last 10 years had been worth it. It was great to see old friends and make some new ones! We have already been invited back next year to perform over all three days-something we are really looking forward to. We ended August at the Doddington Village Fête with the QRRA, where three of the drummers escorted Sir Jonathan Neame, High Sheriff of Kent, to officially open the event.

The end of the year will also be incredibly busy. We're looking forward to helping at a family fun day fundraiser for the PWRR at Headcorn Airfield in September, marching with the Mayor of Ramsgate for the town's civic parade in October, celebrating Bonfire Night in Eton Wick, Windsor, at the beginning of November, before







performing at a Festival of Remembrance concert in Birchington and leading the Ramsgate Remembrance Parade. We also have the Ramsgate Town and Westgate-on-Sea annual Christmas lights switch-on in December, before ending the year with a visit to the QRA Weald Branch Christmas

Dinner.

Next year's diary is already filling up fast and looks set to be as busy—if not busier—than this year! We're hoping to bring something a bit different to our repertoire, though it's still a work in progress.



Tony and I would like to thank the drummers for all their hard work. Without them volunteering their time, giving up their weekends, and even booking time off work just to perform, none of this would be possible. We have had many personnel changes over the last 10 years, and every drummer we've had has been amazing, but the team we have now is the strongest it has ever been.

QUEENSMAN LODGE No. 2694

By Chelsea Hall

This year's entry offers a moment to reflect on the past twelve months and to celebrate how far Queensman Lodge has come. In my previous article, I allowed myself the indulgence of recording my pride at being installed as the first Master of this remarkable Lodge from the 1st Battalion, taking the chair on the Glorious 1st of June 2024.

Since then, the Lodge has gone from strength to strength. We continue to attract ex-Queensmen who are already Freemasons and enjoy the company of like-minded old comrades who don't take themselves too seriously, as well as newcomers looking for something more in life. Our Festive Boards (you'd recognise the format from a regimental dinner) are renowned for their humour, warmth and camaraderie.



History in the making - the first Chelsea Pensioner and Worshipful Master of Queensman Lodge

New Brethren and Old Bonds

Among this year's new initiates is the inimitable Danny Tillyer – well known to many and still every bit as lively as ever. I had the privilege of initiating Danny in March, a year after he first approached me (reasonably sober, both of us!) at the Union Jack Club. When I asked what had prompted him to join and what he hoped to gain, his reply rang true for many of us:

"I'm looking for something more in life. Going on the lash with old B Coy mates is great, but..."

This sentiment has fuelled Freemasonry membership for centuries. After the Great War, the number of Lodges nearly

doubled, from 3,000 to almost 6,000 between 1919 and 1924, as men who had served in a citizen army – once the euphoria of survival had faded – began to miss the camaraderie they had known in uniform. Many found that sense of belonging in Freemasonry. The same happened, though to a lesser degree, after the Second World War.

Military lodges still tend to thrive because that shared bond endures. At Queensman Lodge, we are not restricted to former members of the Queen's Regiment: alongside Danny we've welcomed a former REME member and a serving PWRR soldier. It's especially good to see PWRR members joining us, as many of us have served in both regiments – some with great distinction. However long you served, the fact that you did places you on a higher plane already.

Passing the Gavel

All good things must come to an end, and my year as Master passed quickly. On 7 June, with mixed emotions – sadness it was over, relief at having completed it, and a touch of nerves about getting the ceremony right – I had the distinct honour of installing my good friend and Brother, Terry Crosby, into the Chair of King Solomon.

Terry is now an 'In Pensioner' of the Royal Hospital Chelsea – a Chelsea Pensioner – and he certainly brings a splash of colour to our meetings! We're looking forward to a great year with him as Master.

An Open Invitation

If you're reading this and thinking about joining us, you're never too old. Queensman Lodge offers camaraderie, tradition and good humour in equal measure. For more information, please contact our hard-working Secretary, John Edwards:

* Secretary2694@outlook.com

* 07976 268151

We look forward to welcoming new faces, old friends and anyone seeking 'something more in life,' to Queensman Lodge No. 2694.

WEALD

By John Grinham

Sadly, our Branch President Col Richard Lea has stepped down after many years although he will support us and continue to attend our meetings, but he felt that a younger person needed to take up the reins. Geoff Finnelly, ex 2 QUEENS and Chief Fire Officer has taken on this challenge. Welcome Mr President!

This last year has been challenging for the Branch trying to encourage younger members to join and attend meetings and get involved. It would be good if Regimental Officers joined our ranks, since they are sadly lacking!

We had a good turnout at our Christmas dinner held at the Masonic Hall. Barry Crocker, Brian Batchelor and I keep the branch updated with emails, post and our Facebook pages.

Barry and I attended the Albuhera dinner held by the Ramsgate Branch to which they had kindly invited us. This was a great event in a great venue with drinks flowing until the early hours.

We supported the QRRA's One Aim Rally putting up a gazebo to advertise the Branch but sadly had no takers.



Christmas



At the BBQ



The Branch held our Kohima lunch at The Masonic Hall Tunbridge Wells to honour the men of the Royal West Kents who made the ultimate sacrifice.

This was well attended by members and their good ladies. Members from the Sevenoaks British Legion joined us again this year, with brilliant service and food served to us by Emma and her team.

We had some excellent raffle prizes donated by local businesses after a little bit of arm twisting and I am always amazed at their generosity.

The Branch BBQ was again well attended by members, Queen's veterans and their families. It was a great success and will be held again next year at the same venue with the agreement of Queensman Martin Wilson and his wife Jenny. We can't thank them enough! Some of the old and bold pitched a tent for the weekend, and after few beers reminisced, and retold some war stories.

The Weald Branch Standard was paraded in Tonbridge on both Remembrance Sunday and Monday 11/11/2024 at Tonbridge Castle. My thanks to Barry and Brian our Standard Bearers.

Recruiting younger members is still a priority for us. We hope to hold an open evening at The New Telegraph Club in Priory Road Tonbridge Kent TN9 2AS, just a short walk from Tonbridge rail station (date to be announced). If you live in the area, please come and join us.



As always supported by our better halves



Kohima Dinner



Summer BBQ

WESSEX

By Billy Bolton

This year the Branch has been well represented on various trips both at home and abroad, and those members seen on a regular basis report themselves to be mostly in reasonable health. The majority of our number are now enjoying their well-earned retirements or are looking forward to joining them shortly.

After a good fifteen-year innings, the Branch has decided to furl its banner for the final time and draw stumps. Accordingly, the Wessex Branch of the Queen's Regimental Association held its closing dinner in Salisbury on 21 June.

All that remains now is to wish the Association every success and best wishes for the future.

"Unconquered We Served"

Like previous years, the Branch is well supported and continues to have the benefit of A Coy 4 PWRR ARC for our monthly meetings.

Our first event of the year was our annual Picnic in the Park at Frimley Lodge Park, when we were once again blessed with good weather and our unique "Free Raffle"!

Remembrance Sunday was well attended by Association members, with Nick Bryan parading our Branch Standard. Unlike previous years, it was decided not to hold a Christmas Party but instead to start the New Year with a Branch meal. This was held early in January at The Gloster, Farnborough, located on the site of the Royal Aircraft Establishment (RAE) Farnborough—hence the name. Back in the day, several Branch members worked there. It was an excellent evening, courtesy of the Gloster Hungry Horse Team.

There is mention elsewhere in the *Journal* about our trip to Kelvedon Hatch Secret Nuclear Bunker. For those of you not familiar with this museum, located in Essex, it has particular relevance to the period and to the 6/7 QUEENS Home



The OMA Regimental Lunch in May



The Albuhera Memorial



Our Wreath at Albuhera



Defence role at the time. The weather on the day of the visit was poor, and the entrance

through the bungalow was less than impressive—but of course, that's the whole point! Inside, however, was impressive and a fitting tribute to the UK Government's response to the Cold War.

We attended Farnham Town Council's Armed Forces Week flag raising, but sadly only a limited number of members could be there. As you can see from the photo, though, we were 'small but perfectly formed.' Again, Nick Bryan was our Standard bearer. Neither Sharon, our Branch Treasurer, nor I could attend, as we were in Spain on a car touring holiday. However, part of our route included an overnight stay in Badajoz. Therefore, before arriving there we drove to Elvas, where we laid a wreath on behalf of the Branch at the Albuhera Memorial.



Armed Forces Flag Raising

THE ROYAL SUSSEX REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

By Barry Lane

It has been a very busy year for the Association, with all our major events well attended and fully covered.

The first event was our annual St George's Day Service in Chichester Cathedral, during which we interred the ashes of the Colours of the 1st Battalion (1857–1927). These Colours were no longer viable to be hung. This was a new form of service for most attendees, who had previously attended the laying up of Colours but not their cremation and interment.

On the way back from having its newly restored hood installed, Von Arnim's staff car made a detour to Ashford Hill in Hampshire for a special wedding. The groom, Alexander Welch, had informed us that he was to marry Joanna von Arnim, the granddaughter of the General. As a surprise for her, she was driven to the church in her grandfather's staff car.



Von Arnim Wedding



St George's 2025

There was a full attendance at the Officers' Lunch at Pashley Manor, where our hosts were the owners, Jim and Angela Sellick.

Most of the Branches had members attend The Royal Sussex Stakes at Goodwood Racecourse. Sadly, the usual Association Box had to be abandoned due to low numbers, making it unviable. However, this did not detract from an excellent day out for all, including members from the Chichester QRA Branch. The President and his wife presented the trophy to the winning owner.

Our main event of the year was the four-day return to the village of Priez in France to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the unveiling of our monument. Day 2 featured a battlefield tour led by Col Peter McClelland from the QRA. His tour followed the route of the 2nd Battalion from the Marne to Priez in 1914 and also covered the actions of the 4th Battalion just south of Soissons in 1918 during the Advance to Victory. In the evening, we hosted a dinner for the councillors and the Mayor of Priez.

The following day saw the commemoration itself, held in the church at Priez and at the Memorial in the centre of the village. Once again, the people of Priez proved to be wonderful hosts.

Most branches had a full programme over the Remembrance period, with many laying wreaths at five or six memorials within their areas. The Chair and three members attended the opening of the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey.

2025 is the 60th anniversary of the last operational tour which was in Aden in 1965. Therefore, the focus of the annual St George's Day Service was on veterans from that tour. They formed up outside Chichester Cathedral and marched in behind the Standards. A section of seating was set aside for them and as they passed the font, they were all presented with a lapel badge to commemorate the tour.



Chelsea Pensioner Mick Kippin and
Dave Tilley - Aden Veterans



Aden lapel badge



THE QUEEN'S REGIMENT BENEVOLENT FUND

ANNUAL OVERVIEW

By Diane White (RHQ PWRR)

The Queen's Regiment Benevolent Fund exists to support those facing financial, mental, or physical challenges. It provides relief from hardship and distress and offers crucial support and signposting when unexpected circumstances arise. The charity is here for Queen's Regiment veterans and their families.

Activity Summary (1 September 2024 – 31 August 2025)

During the reporting period, 58 cases were submitted, and 46 individual grants were approved. Of the 12 cases not receiving grants:

- Four were declined as they did not meet the benevolence criteria.
- Four had their needs met by other military charities.
- Two had already received the maximum grant for the same request.
- Two were withdrawn by the applicants.

Areas of Support

Most grants were awarded for:

- Household items (17 cases)
- Funeral costs (5 cases)
- Electrically powered vehicles (EPVs) (5 cases)

Additional grants supported:

- General needs (5 cases)
- Priority debts (3 cases)
- Training courses (3 cases)
- Specialist furniture (3 cases)
- Essential house maintenance (2 cases)
- Home adaptations (1 case)
- Advance rent (1 case)
- Mental fitness support (1 case)

Case Studies

Case 1

Background: After a period of homelessness, this veteran was living in temporary accommodation. Proud and reluctant to accept help, he was also struggling with mental health issues but is now receiving support. With family assistance, he moved into a one-bedroom council property and required essential household items.

Grant Awarded: £500

Additional Support: £500 from the ABF and £700 from TRBL

Case 2

Background: This veteran, previously assisted by the charity, now resides in the RBL Village, living on benefits and pensions. With limited mobility and daily carer support, he relies on an EPV, which required servicing and a new battery.

Grant Awarded: £205

Additional Support: £200 from the Royal Artillery

Case 3

Background: Following the unexpected and rapid deterioration of her husband's health, this widow faced significant challenges despite strong family support. Living in a rural location left her somewhat isolated. As her husband had managed household affairs, she required extensive assistance, particularly with funeral costs.

Grant Awarded: £1,000

Additional Support: £500 from the ABF and £300 from TRBL

Conclusion

This summary is not an exhaustive list of the financial assistance provided by the Benevolent Fund during the past 12 months, but it demonstrates the scope of support available.

Veterans and families are encouraged to seek help when needed. Please contact SSAFA, The Royal British Legion, or the Association. If further assistance is required, reach out to PWRR RHQ. Following the process unlocks a wide network of support for financial and other needs.

The Benevolent Fund remains committed to assisting you.

BENEVOLENT FUND DONATIONS DECEMBER TO SEPTEMBER

The following members are thanked for their very generous donations:

Alex 'Mac' McIvor	April Tippett (In Memory Alan Tippett)	Ian Jones
Mark Cunningham	Andrew Byford	Elgon Hunte
Nadine Lenssens	Jim McKeown	Bill Opie
Mike Cattell	Martin Ede	Robert Bird
Mike Constantine	Ricky Mattioli	John Stott
R Moore	Mick Richens	Tony Kitchen
Shaun Bartlett	Jonathon Purdy	I Jones
David Martin	Dave Shipley	Keith Croucher
John Langhorne	Patrick Crowley	Andy Har
Marc Harrold	Lawrence Shillingford	Dominic Rossi
Roger Bird	Rachel Trotman	Alasdair Goulden
Robin Crosher	John B	Kerry Chanter
Andy Hunter	Nik Fields-Carre	Grant Wallis
Arthur Duniface	Michael Prime	Colin Pitchers
Kevin Brown	Adrian Smith	David Muckley
Derek Morley	Bob Rust	Tony Robinson
Patrick Murphy	Colin Dawson	Pat and Ron
Steve Yeomans	John Collingridge	Richard Martin
Adrian Birtles	Clive Robinson	Paul Capell
Steve Richards	Ian Legrove	Robert Acworth
Barry 'Brakes' Smith	Howard Copsey	Daniel and Lucy Judd
Michael 'Wing Nut' Copelin	Terence Rolfe	Louise and Andrew
Steve Scott	Mike Hurman	Tony Ward

If anyone has been left off, please accept my abject and sincere apologies

BOOK REVIEW

HALF A BANANA

By Peter Kemmis Betty

The diary of a Gurkha officer imprisoned by the Japanese during World War Two. Amidst starvation, disease and brutality, the creation and tending of vegetable gardens became a vital lifeline, a testament to the resilience of the human spirit.

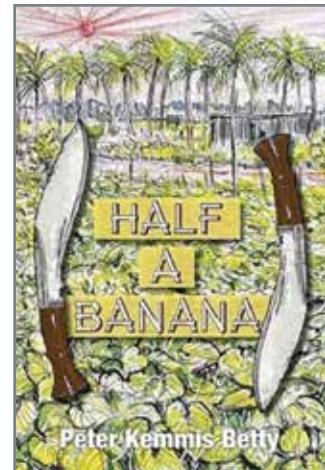
'Half A Banana' tells the unusual wartime story of Peter Kemmis Betty and Alec Ogilvie, childhood friends who as Gurkha officers found themselves captured by the Japanese in 1942 and marched to Changi prisoner-of-war camp in Singapore. Two of the few who remained for the whole of their captivity in Singapore, they helped to manage the gardens that produced food for thousands of fellow Allied prisoners.

During these years Peter Kemmis Betty kept a diary of life at Changi, where with no sense of an ending the prisoners – some from the Middlesex Regiment - did everything possible to maintain morale, developing a deep loyalty to each other. Their enterprising spirit was epitomised not just by the hard work on the gardens but by the many efforts prisoners made to lead a 'normal' life. Despite the toughness of their lives Peter harboured no bitterness towards the Japanese.

Published for the eightieth anniversary of VJ Day, the diary paints one of the most complete pictures of what life was like in Changi from 1942 to 1945.

Profits from this book are being donated to the Pahar Trust Nepal, a charity set up by two Gurkha engineers to support schools in the foothills of the Himalayas.

Title: 'Half a Banana' - available online at Amazon, Waterstones and WH Smith.



During an exchange program to California in April 1982, A Coy 1 QUEENS was preparing to go out on an exercise as opposing enemy against the US Army Engineers. While formed up on the drill square (rifles loaded), a US platoon Sergeant could be heard yelling "Baumkirchner, where's your goddamn magazine!" to which the forgetful soldier replied, "Gee Sarge, I left them in the barracks!" It was not without minimal restraint that we British guests erupted into fits of laughter, reminding our hosts who the real Aces were in this game. Needless to say, from that moment on the meme of the day was 'Baumkirchner...' We never did reveal that we also had one or two 'Baumkirchners' within our own ranks too. But it was those beloved 'Baumkirchners' that made our time so unique and our memories so awesome. So, Thank You, for always taking it on the chin and always being the first to laugh at yourselves.

Kerry Chanter

MINUTES OF THE QUEEN'S REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE

UNION JACK CLUB ON 1 MARCH 2025

Attendance:

Chairman: Colonel Anthony Beattie, Secretary: Major Alasdair Goulden, Association Members 51.

1. **Chairman's Opening Remarks.** The Chairman expressed delight that so many members turned up with 130 sitting down for lunch noting that this was a reduction from last year but believed that it reflected constraints on members' budgets. A special welcome was given to our Chelsea Pensioners of whom we currently have six – soon to be seven. He also welcomed those who had not been to an AGM before or not for a long time. He thanked all those who have kept the name of the Regiment alive whether it is by organising branches or just organising events and get-togethers.

2. **Confirmation of the Minutes of the AGM Minutes.** The Minutes of the 2024 AGM were distributed prior to the meeting and comments requested. None were received and so the minutes were taken as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. **Points arising.** There were no points arising.

4. **Update on QRA activities**

The Chairman reported that the Association had a good year and appeared to have emerged from the difficulties caused by COVID. He made the following points:

a. The Association membership stands at 2,729 members down 19 on the previous year and that this was the first drop in numbers in the last 13 years since figures were monitored. He reiterated that it is estimated that there are still several thousand ex-Queensmen who are not registered. Members were encouraged to contact anyone they know who are not members and encourage them to register.

b. The Chairman noted that the Secretary had drafted a letter for members to send to their MPs to request a meeting between representative veterans and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland with a view to redressing the balance when dealing with legacy inquests. As part of that email there was a request for every member to write to their MP. A template was provided. A show of hands indicated that several attendees had already sent a letter to their MPs. The Chairman urged all to take part in this initiative.

c. The build of the Veterans Horticultural Rehabilitation, Social and Community Centre, at Kennels' Fields, Faversham, had come on leaps and bounds with sign off by the Building Inspector expected shortly. A grand opening will take place on The Glorious First of June and members were encouraged to attend. It will start at 1200 with a formal opening by the Lord Lieutenant of Kent, Lady Colgrain at 18.00hrs.

d. The One Aim Rally organised by the Riders in 2024 raised £6,500 for the Benevolent Fund taking the aggregated total that they have raised to just short of £70,000. Members were urged to support the Rally this year. It takes place on 4-6 July

e. The website and social media continue to be developed with the expert support of Lindsay Parsons. Grateful thanks go to her.

f. There have been occasions when funerals have taken place, at which the Regiment was represented but the details had not been passed on to the Secretary and so people who would have liked to attend were unaware. The Secretary needs to be informed of the date of death, the person's last rank and details of battalions or regiments in which they served, unless, of course, the family has asked for no Association involvement. If any other details are added he will try and include them in the post to members. There is a simple template on the website entitled 'Notice of Death' which can be found at <https://queensregimentalassociation.org/publications.html>.



5. Finance and Benevolence.

a. **Finance.** The Secretary reported that the Benevolent Fund had a total income of £88,074, an increase of £20,955 over last year. This was, in the main, from investment income and donations. Total expenditure for the year was £66,683 down from £79,850 last year. The main elements of our expenditure were our share of benevolence payments, The Journal costs, Association Secretary's salary and office running costs. Therefore, in the day-to-day running costs, there was an excess of expenditure over income of £5,247 for the year, a great improvement over last year's excess of just over £32,000. Investments increased by over £265,000 in value but this included a donation of £122,558 from the Royal Sussex Association. The real increase therefore was £143,119. As at 31 December 2024, the total fund stands at £1,881,631, an increase of 15.4%. The Chairman expressed satisfaction with the current state of the fund and considers that we are able to meet our objectives henceforward.

b. **Welfare.** During the year a total of 61 cases were submitted and 50 individual grants were approved, an increase of 18 and 15 respectively over the year. Out of the 11 cases not receiving grants: 5 cases were declined as they did not meet the benevolence criteria, 3 cases had already had the need met by other military charities, 2 had substantial savings and 1 case had already received the maximum grant for the same request. The majority of cases received grants for household items (16), Electrically Powered Vehicles (9) and funeral costs (7). Seven cases received grants towards general needs, 4 cases for advanced rent and a further 2 for training courses. Financial assistance was also provided for essential vehicle repairs (2), priority debts (1) and removal fees (1). The final grant was provided for respite care. The Queen's Regiment Charity paid out just over £25,000 as individual grants, the ABF contributed £16,000 in general grants whilst TRBL contributed £34,000 in grants. The assistance provided by the Army Benevolent Fund which has been extremely helpful with prompt actions, advice and guidance was acknowledged. Also, thanks were given to SSAFA and The Royal British Legion which are the main organisations who investigate the majority of cases. Overall, the Benevolent Fund dealt with 142 cases distributing £88,900 of assistance. 204 cases referred to the charity: 21 were declined for not meeting the criteria, 14 had their needs met by another charity, 16 were from another Regiment, 5 had already been assisted to the maximum permitted, 4 had substantial savings and 2 were withdrawn.

6. **Rededication of the Latham Memorial.** Kev Minnis briefed the meeting on the rededication of the Latham Memorial providing details of the outline of the day and how tickets could be applied for.

7. **Arboretum Reunion.** Den Gallacher gave details of the proposed Arboretum Reunion on 21 September. Members are asked to contact him to book in via <https://www.facebook.com/groups/693799365399633>

8. **The Journal.** The Chairman acknowledged that The Journal is expensive, but he continues to support its production while it acts as a real stimulus to membership engagement, as an addendum to the Regimental history and as a principal medium of annual communication. Particularly pleasing is that £3000 to date has been donated specifically as a result of the journal.

9. **Dover Museum**

Henry Thomas, PWRR Area Secretary and Curator of the Museum gave the following report:

- a. Appointment of new Curator Rachel Kitchenside who took up the appointment in Dec 24.
- b. Potential project with Canterbury Christ Church University, Verbal History – volunteers required to talk about their military careers. Contact neil.osborne248@mod.gov.uk
- c. Need for Volunteers to help at the Museum. (Maintenance, help at event days and looking after the collection).
- d. Engagement from members of the Queen's Regiment regarding potential items to tell stories of the Regiment when we do eventually manage to move forward with the re-vamp of the Museum. Plans are we will have a large area to tell the history of the Queen's Regiment. This will need the input of both stories and artefacts if it is to be effective.

- e. The Surrey Infantry Collection. Due to the deterioration of the collection whilst at the Surrey History Centre, it has now been moved to the PWRR and Queen's Museum to be stabilised and because there is no longer a dedicated member of staff in Surrey.
- f. Items which were involved in the fire at Clandon House will not be displayed with other items held by the Museum, to protect from cross-contamination.

10. **60th Anniversary of the Formation of The Queen's Regiment.** As 2026 marks the 60th Anniversary of the formation of the Regiment it is thought that we would all wish to mark the occasion suitably. Any ideas as to how we approach an appropriate commemoration would be welcomed. The Chairman suggested that, as our Regimental Memorial is at the NMA a full day event with perhaps a Service of Commemoration, a reception and lunch and Beating Retreat might be an appropriate occasion and possibly replacing the Arboretum Reunion (Item 7) for that year. All were asked to let the Secretary know if they had any other ideas as these things need planning well in advance. The Chairman emphasised that any major event would benefit from coordination of transport between branches to keep the overheads at a minimum.

11. **Branch Reports.** The Branches all gave a short brief on their activities. The Chairman was encouraged to note the scale of activities that have taken place over the last year and heartened by the plans for the coming one.

12. **Update on PWRR Activities.** Colonel John Powell (Regimental Secretary) gave an update on PWRR activities.

13. **Any Other Business.**

- a. **RBLI Great Tommy Sleepout.** The Secretary briefed on the RBLI Great Tommy Sleepout on 1 March and encouraged as many members as possible to join in this excellent initiative.
- b. **The Combined Irish Regiments Association Cenotaph March.** The Combined Irish Regiments Association has once again invited all members of the Queen's Regiment to take part in their annual commemorative march past the Cenotaph on Sunday 8 June. Once again this is a singular honour being afforded to us and the Chairman urged as many members as possible who served in Northern Ireland to take part. Details will be sent out by email nearer the date but basically just turn up at 09.30 on 16th June in King Charles Street at which further instructions will be given. There will be a reception at the Civil Service Club nearby afterwards. Please let the Secretary know if you want to attend.
- c. The Chairman offered his appreciation on behalf of the Association to Henry Thomas, who was attending his last AGM as our Honorary Treasurer and thanked him for his stewardship of our accounts over many years.
- d. The Chairman thanked the Secretary not only for all the arrangements for the AGM and Reunion but also for the considerable amount of work he does outside the technical remit of his appointment, much of which is unseen.

14. **Date of Next AGM and Reunion.** 7 March 2026 at the Union Jack Club (*Ed: because of the 60th Anniversary celebration 20 June 2026 the March AGM and Reunion will not take place*).

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12.50pm

Alasdair Goulden

Alasdair Goulden, Association Secretary

Distr:

President

Secretary

All Members via email Website

Attachment:

Income and Expenditure Account Year Ending 31 Dec 24

Profit and Loss

The Princess of Wales Royal Regiment
For the year ended 31 December 2024

Account	Designated - QUEENS Regiment	2024	2023
		2024	2023
Turnover			
Armed Forces Convenient - Kennels, field & Build	124	0	
Journals	0	480	
CAR BADGES SALES	150	158	
COIN SALES	24	0	
Investment Dividend - Designated	66,691	43,579	
Misc Donations	18,794	20,143	
Reunion Income	2,260	2,747	
Interest	36	17	
Total Turnover	88,079	67,124	
Cost of Sales			
Membership			
Ex Services Association	100	100	
Anglo-Danish Society	200	200	
Canterbury Cathedral	25	25	
IOD Membership	711	711	
Wolfe Society	6	6	
Welfare Grants - RBL & SSAFA	25,601	18,400	
Total Cost of Sales	26,643	19,442	
Gross Profit	61,436	47,682	
Administrative Costs			
Investment Fees	0	1,904	
Accountancy	4,396	3,222	
Accounts prep by Auditors	2,500	2,500	
Association President Expenses	279	610	
Bank Charges	15	0	
Consultancy Expenses	23,329	26,524	
Grant - Association Branches			
Middlesex Branch	1,161	0	
Farnham Branch	300	0	
Thanet Branch	200	1,033	
QRRA	2,375	0	
Weald Branch	980	1,750	
Horsham Branch	0	1,175	
Chichester Branch	0	500	
Queen's Drums	735	280	
Grant GENERAL	1,380	7,200	
Golf Society	300	300	
Hospitality	4	25	
Journal Costs	19,832	20,262	
Office Expenses	696	1,182	
Parking	0	6	
Presentation Costs	200	236	
Remembrance cost	57	623	
Reunion Costs	4,348	1,917	
Small equipment	600	0	
Telephone & Internet	52	94	
Travel & Subsistence	1,979	1,425	
Website Maintenance	966	7,082	
Total Administrative Costs	66,683	79,850	

Operating Profit	-5,247	-32,168
Profit on Ordinary Activities Before Taxation	-5,247	-32,168
Gain/Loss of Revaluation of Investments	265,677	68,385
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	260,430	36,217
 Assets	 2024	 2023
	£	£
Investments	1,877,732	1,612,055
Bank	3,899	17,965
Debtors	0	0
Prepayments	0	0
Accrued Income	0	0
Total	1,881,631	1,630,020
 Liabilities		
Creditors	0	0
Total	0	0
Net Worth of Fund	1,881,631	1,630,020
 Fund gain or loss 2024		+15.4%

Please note that these accounts have yet to be audited. Fully audited accounts will be available on 16 May 2025.

A NEW GERMANY

In 1979, the local German Jäger battalion kindly invited 1 QUEENS officers to a cocktail party in Service Dress at their Offizierheim, a very jolly affair. While chatting to a couple of lieutenants, I spotted a large empty space between pillars. Had the Colours gone for cleaning, I wondered? I tactlessly asked them what was usually there. They shuffled their feet and looked embarrassed. Eventually they coughed up: before the party, they had been told to remove their large painting of Kaiser Wilhelm II in case we were offended. I laughed and said we wouldn't have minded a bit. They soon got rid of me by introducing me to their Second-in-Command, a charming major. As he regaled me with his perfect English, I couldn't help noticing he had three medal ribbons. I looked at him. Surely you can't be that old, I thought. I plucked up my courage and asked him what they were. He smiled - and I kid you not - he said (turn on heavy German accent) "Zis is for representing ze battalion at football. Zis is for hockey. And zis one...". That faint rumbling sound was, I think, Rommel and Guderian turning in their graves.

Nick Keyes



OBITUARIES

LT COL LES WILSON MBE - A PERSONAL APPRECIATION

By Col Tim Trotman



The death of Les Wilson on 24 September at the age of 93 ends an era of regimental history spanning over sixty years. Les was an institution. Everyone knew Les. Les knew everyone. Les lived and died for the Regiment. To many, Les was the Regiment. And yet,

for all his extrovert personality and noisiness, Les was a very private man.

I first met Les when he was a young sergeant in the Signal Platoon in 1957, in Iserlohn, where I joined the First Battalion after its return from Malaya. In 1959 I was a platoon commander in A Company of 1 Queen's Surreys when Les was the CSM. He was appointed RSM in 1965 when I was Adjutant in Munster. I was C Company Commander of 1 QUEENS when Les was Technical Quartermaster in the 1970s. In the early 80s I was Chief of Staff of HQ The Queen's Division and Les and his wife Ella were at 5 QUEENS and RHQ. Over the years, Les and Ella were close friends of ours and we corresponded lengthily on a wide variety of issues.

Les was always reticent about his early life. His father owned a building business. But he and his father never really saw eye to eye and it was no surprise to his mother and three sisters when he joined the army, signing on as a regular in The Queen's Royal Regiment in September 1947. After basic training and a signals course he was posted to the 1400-strong Second Battalion in Berlin in 1948 at the time of the Airlift, which was a poignant and stressful time both in world and regimental affairs. The Russians had blocked the land routes to the city and access was subjected to delays, threats and harassment. The blockade resulted in a human battle for survival in a bitterly cold winter, reminiscent of the war that had ended only three years before. Regimentally, the two regular battalions were amalgamating. Les recalled

the parade on the Olympischer Platz and the words of command "*Second Battalion, ground arms; First Battalion take up arms*". He told me proudly, "*No allowance was made for conditions. There was often no electricity for several days on end, but we were still expected to have our tunics and trousers pressed*". Being one of only four regular private soldiers in the battalion - all the others were conscripts - Les came under the eagle-eyed, personal scrutiny of the CO, Lt Col Lance East himself, who was a stickler for high standards in everything - "*The Queen's lead; the rest of the Army follows suit*". This led to Les's promotion to Acting Sergeant at the age of 19 - an almost unheard of happening in those days, when most sergeants would have had World War Two medal ribbons. His regimental spiritual home from that early, impressionable age became the Sergeants' Mess wherever he was.

He served almost his entire service with the Regiment, most of it with the First Battalion. He was away twice. First, in Korea, for seven months in 1951/2, as an Acting Sergeant, on attachment, initially to the Korean Battle Training Centre, and subsequently to 1 KSLI. He was part of a composite draft originally destined for 1 Middlesex, but which got diverted and split up several times. He even got as far as, at one stage, being rebadged Glosters, but was luckily reprieved! His only other tour away from the Regiment was from 1962 to 1964 as RQMS of the Trucial Oman Scouts. He benefited hugely from both his 'absences', but he was glad to get back home after each of them..

His service record speaks for itself, but is a woefully inadequate testimony to his achievements. He was the last RSM of 1 Queen's Surreys and the first RSM of 1 QUEENS. Under his relentless drive and leadership 1 QUEENS were the Army Boxing Champions three years in a row, from 1978-80. His last serving appointment was as Quartermaster of the 5th Battalion, during which he was made a MBE in the New Year's Honours List of 1981 and was promoted Lieutenant Colonel (Quartermaster) in June of that year. There are only six serving lieutenant colonel quartermasters in the infantry at any one time. It is a highly prestigious appointment. He retired for the first time in 1983 and became a Retired Officer at RHQ in Canterbury, looking

after the affairs of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment and running the Association. He organised the move of The Queen's Regiment's museum to Dover Castle in 1986/7 and then ran it. This was in addition to his already considerable involvement in the reorganisation of the Queen's Surreys' Museum at Clandon Park. He was a Trustee of both museums for many years,

It is quite impossible to delineate clearly between his 'active' and 'retired' and 'post-retirement' lives! After his second official retirement, in 1995, and the reorganisation of RHQ, Les undertook much regimental work on a voluntary basis. Nothing and no-one was too much trouble for him. The pains he took to arrange a high-profile regimental event were matched by the infinite attention to detail in pursuit of welfare assistance to a widow or old soldier in need, right away from the glare of publicity, and when only they saw the benefit of what he was doing, and probably didn't know what it had involved.

Not content with his involvement with our regimental affairs, he masterminded the regimental web site. Although, to some extent, this followed naturally from his researches into regimental music, regalia, his broadcasts for Forces Radio and the Overseas Service of the BBC and, of course the editing and production of the regimental journal, it was a huge, personal undertaking involving much time and effort.

Behind a loud, blustering and, at times, fierce exterior, Les hid a compassion for and an interest in people which transcended seniority, age, gender, wealth, power and all other criteria by which human beings judge and are judged. He made friends across the spectrum of ranks. Many a Colonel of the Regiment has asked and been grateful for his advice; and many a depressed, frightened young soldier or junior officer has been cheered up by a timely word of encouragement, not always, it must be said, recognisable as such at the time! I remember Les saying to me at Charles Millman's funeral, "*I am very proud of my friends from all ranks of the Regiment, even if I do shout at them!*"

Examples of his impish sense of humour abound. The following incident took place in 1959 during a week long exercise, conducted mostly in the rain. Evening meal arrives at last and CSM Wilson is encouraging the soldiers to show some enthusiasm for the unappetising sludge lurking at the bottom of the containers. "*Come on, lads, Colour Sergeant's lovely all-in stew*". As the first rain-soaked platoon arrives Les reaches into the container and fishes out a stew-sodden grey army sock to demonstrate the delicacy of the meal. We all knew, and he knew that

we all knew, that Les had dunked the sock in the stew only minutes beforehand, but his sense of timing was always immaculate.

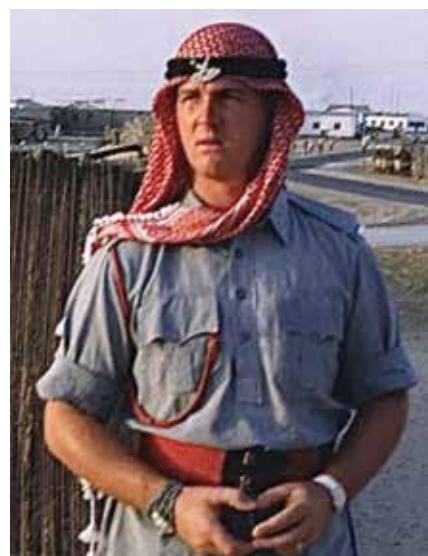
No account or appreciation of Les would be complete without some, however inadequate, mention of Ella. She and Les were a wonderful team. She was always there, quiet and watchful. Many is the time, after some major outburst of Les's, I heard Ella softly say: "*He'll be alright in a minute - just you wait*". Les was distraught when she died in 1986, after 34 years of marriage, and he threw himself even more fervently into his activities, when he might reasonably have slowed down.

Although Les Wilson always made the Regiment a part of his family, very few of us were privileged to penetrate the innermost sanctum of Les and Ella, and their children Jane, Anne and Mark and their six grand-children. Les doted on them and they on him. It was to them that he turned after Ella's death and they kept him going in a wonderful way. To them now I offer our sympathy in their loss.

I am very conscious that this contribution is very short on fact - what Les Wilson did. But I and many others remember Les with gratitude and affection for what he was and what he meant to all of us, both as individuals and as members of our Regiment. We shall all miss him.

Pristinae Virtutis Memor

(Mindful of the Gallant Actions of the Past)



As a Trucial Oman Scout



LT COL FOSTER HERD JP TD DL

20 NOVEMBER 1935 TO 4 DECEMBER 2024

By Lt Col Peter Swanson



Lieutenant Colonel Foster Herd, who died on 4 December 2024, had a long and distinguished career as a volunteer within The Queen's Regiment and forebear units. Born in Rangoon, Burma, his father was an oil engineer. The family returned to UK pre-war prompted by his mother's polio diagnosis which left her wheelchair-bound for over 50 years. Having planned to study veterinary science after A-levels in June 1954 this was curtailed when Foster was called up for National Service. As his father was from Scotland, he opted for the infantry in Scotland and went through the rough and tumble of training with other National Servicemen as a Queen's Own Cameron Highlander before being selected for officer training, after which he spent his commissioned service with the South Lancashire Regiment until discharge in October 1956.

Foster's family were by now in Woking and his father had gone into the hotel business so Foster opted to join the family business. However, he was determined to learn from the bottom up so cycled to Paris where he worked his way up from waiter to commis chef at La Grande Maxville, a restaurant in Montmartre, enjoying cycling holidays across Europe. Returning to his family's business in 1958, he met his future wife Susan Owen whom he married in March 1967. Foster took over the family hotel when his father retired and ran it until his own retirement from this part of his life in 1991, whereupon his family moved to the New Forest. Within his hotel, Foster had been legendary for his hands-on approach to everything and an excellent employer.

Foster's distinguished Territorial Army career began after he returned from France in 1958, when he joined 5th Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment. After amalgamation with the East Surreys, he served as Recce Platoon commander with 3rd Battalion The Queen's Royal

Surrey Regiment in Woking, then later, after formation of The Queen's Regiment, as a company commander with 5 QUEENS (V) in Guildford and 7 QUEENS (V) in Horsham before reaching the pinnacle of his volunteer service as commanding officer of the 6th/7th Battalion in 1978. During his TA service Foster had won the Courage Trophy and Chuck Wagon Trophy when with Recce in 1966 and, as an excellent shot with both rifle and pistol, he led his battalion shooting team. He was awarded the Territorial Decoration and Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal during his service. Foster's old comrades and TA friends noted that he led with integrity and purpose, mentoring some, saving careers for others and ultimately inspiring respect. And into retirement from the TA until a few years ago, he would be seen proudly leading the Remembrance Day Parade of Old Comrades at Guildford Cathedral, donning his bowler hat and medals.

Foster's external interests were not limited to the TA. His active involvement in the Woking Community was recognised with him being invited to become a Justice of the Peace, and he sat as a magistrate at Woking Crown Court between 1980 and 1991 and subsequently after his retirement to the New Forest in Lymington until 2005. In 1980, he was selected to be a Deputy Lieutenant of Surrey in recognition of his distinguished service to the community. He was an active Rotarian, involved in his local community, and loved foreign travel, jazz and making balsa wood model aircraft. He was an enthusiastic player and watcher of cricket and a good golfer. In this last pastime, he pursued his own love of the sport and continued to contribute to the Queen's Surreys as secretary and treasurer of the Golfing Society, a task which he loyally and very efficiently carried out from 1992 to 2016. He also maintained his dedication to the Regiment for many years as a trustee of both the Queen's Surreys Museum in Clandon (prior to the fire) and of the TA and later Combined Charities.

As his son summarised at Foster's funeral, he was a decisive man, knew his own mind, would set a course and stick to it. He was confident, kind and generous with his time and his antics. He was fun-loving, a never-say-never kind of man, fearless and a great friend to all, a truly devoted husband, father, father-in-law and grandfather. He lived his life to the full with a remarkable dash and set of adventures. His smile and the glint in his eyes will be sorely missed.

COLONEL MIKE BALL

By Col John Powell



Mike Ball had been diagnosed with a brain tumour before Christmas 2024; his decline was rapid, and he died at home surrounded by his family on Sunday 19 January.

Mike was the last officer to be commissioned into the Middlesex Regiment (Duke of Cambridge's Own) before it amalgamated with the Queen's Royal Surrey, Queen's Own Buffs, and Royal Sussex Regiments to form The Queen's Regiment. He served as Adjutant in the 1st Battalion, as a company commander in the 3rd Battalion and commanded the 1st Battalion.

As a Captain, he deployed to Oman in the 1970s, where the British-led Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) battled and defeated a formidable Marxist guerrilla movement in the southern province of Dhofar. Among his many experiences, Mike successfully mortared an Arab dhow—a tale he would often regale successive Mortar Officers with when he became a commanding officer. For his service, he was awarded the *Midal Jura'at us-Sultan ul-Battuli*, or Sultan's Bravery Medal.

Mike assumed command of 1st Battalion The Queen's Regiment in 1985 as it moved from Omagh to Gibraltar. The Battalion relocated to Tidworth in early 1987 and then deployed on a demanding but successful tour of South Armagh, taking over from the Royal Hampshire Regiment (who were also the Battalion's neighbours in Tidworth). The Queen's Regiment was the first battalion to deploy on operations with the newly issued SA80 rifles—complete with their attendant teething problems.

In retirement, Mike became the Regimental Secretary for an impressive eleven years, from 2001 to 2012, working to three Colonels of the Regiment:

- Brigadier Richard Holmes CBE TD JP (1999–2007)
- Major General Paul Newton CBE (2007–2010)
- Brigadier Richard Dennis OBE (2010–2016)

It is in this role that Mike is best remembered by generations of officers and SNCOS of the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, who benefited from his guidance and sage advice. Even after he finally retired, Mike continued to maintain a close interest in the Regiment, often contacting the current Regimental Secretary for a chat.

The huge regimental turnout at his funeral was a mark of the love and respect he inspired in those with whom he served.



PRIVATE DONALD ROSE

By Col Tony Ward



Private Donald Rose, the oldest member of our forebear regiments, sadly died at the age of 110 years and 199 days.

Don was brought up in Westcott, near Dorking in Surrey, the youngest of four brothers (two of whom had served in the Queen's during the First World War) and three sisters. He enlisted on 26 July 1940 in Guildford and undertook his training at Stoumont Barracks, Guildford. He was then posted to the 1/7th Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey), which, together with the 1/5th and 1/6th Queen's, formed 131 (Queen's) Brigade undertaking anti-invasion duties in Kent.

In early 1942, having been inspected by HM The King, they sailed to North Africa and joined the 7th Armoured Division (the 'Desert Rats'), taking part in the battles of El



Alamein, Medenine, Tripoli, and the advance to Tunis. They later took part in the Salerno landings in September 1943, after which, in October 1943, they returned to England.

On D+3 of the Normandy landings, Don went ashore, where he was wounded in the leg. He fought in the bocage, Operation GOODWOOD, and in the September breakout through France to St Nicolas and Ghent in Belgium, and on into South Holland. By December 1944 the battalion was exhausted, and Don was posted to a battalion of the Wiltshire Regiment.

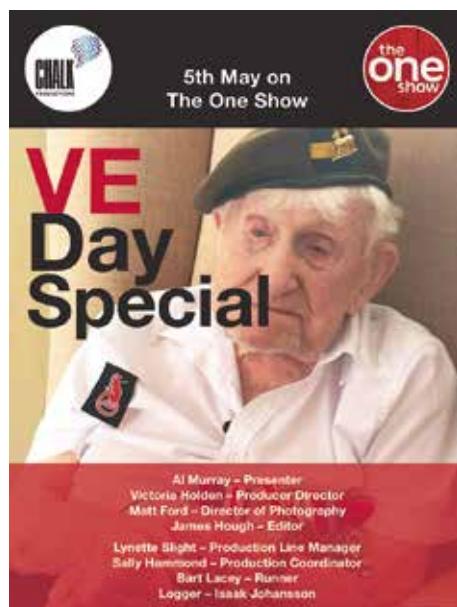
He ended the war with the relief of Bergen-Belsen, where he met his future wife, Zania Rudin, a Jewish inmate. She changed her name to Jeannette when they married.

Don remained a private throughout the war. At various times he served as a sniper and, in Europe, as a Bren gun carrier driver. Among his medals, he was also awarded the Légion d'honneur — France's highest honour.

Don and Jeannette married on 23 November 1946 at St Joseph's RC Church, Dorking, Surrey. Don continued working into his early seventies, holding jobs as a labourer, gas board worker, lorry driver, and bin man.



Don Rose in Normandy



Don on The One Show © Chalk Productions



Donald Rose with Col Tony Ward

After Jeannette's passing in 2000, he moved to Derbyshire to be with his son David. In 2020, at the age of 105, he entered a care home in Ilkeston, Derbyshire.

The Regiment sent many cards for his 110th birthday, which he greatly appreciated. He also appeared on The One Show on the BBC during the VE80 celebrations, when Colonel Tony Ward presented him with The Queen's Paschal Lamb badge.

More than 1,000 people lined the streets of Ilkeston for his funeral. His hearse was escorted by the Lord-Lieutenant and High Sheriff of Derbyshire, along with nearly 200 motorbike riders. The National President of the Royal British Legion Women's Section attended, and the Regiment was represented by Brigadier Christopher Davies OBE, Deputy Colonel PWRR.



IN MEMORIAM

The following is a list of our comrades who sadly have passed away since the last Journal. Members are requested to keep the Secretary informed of those who have died so that the list can be updated, and other members informed. Please email queensregimentassociation@gmail.com or write to The Secretary, 5 Alfred Square, Deal, Kent, CT14 6LU, ideally giving the date of death, rank, when they left the Army, battalions in which they served and any details of the funeral.

Date	Name	Battalion/Regiment
2025		
9 Oct	Maj Dave 'Dykie' Richmmond	2nd and PWRR
24 Sep	Lt Col Les Wilson MBE	1st, 5th, QRR and QRS
23 Sep	Maj Rocky Hitchcock	1st
23 Sep	Cpl Vic Murch	3rd and R SUSSEX
13 Sep	Sgt Trevor Pidgeon	6, 6/7th, 8QF and Queen's Coy The London Regiment
04 Sep	WOII Martin 'Jack' Russell	3rd and PWRR
27 Aug	CSgt Kevin Keegan	2nd, PWRR and Para
24 Aug	Sgt Tony Dreyer	5th
13 Jul	LCpl Del Langston	1st
11 Jul	Pte Donald Rose	QORWK
6 Jul	Sgt Tony Rylands	1st
6 Jun	CSgt John William Balfour 'Gig' Young	1st, 4th and MX
6 Jun	Pte Trevor St Claire Bovell	2nd
4 Jun	WO2 Alan Jones	5th
9 Apr	WOI (RSM) David Ormerod	1st, 2nd, RM, MX, R ANGLIAN and RRF
4 Apr	Cpl Kit Wiltshire	2nd
1 Apr	Pte Michael Shreeve	1st
27 Mar	Sgt Anthony Perry	5th, 7th and 6/7th
22 Mar	LCpl Don Fagg	5th
21 Mar	Lt Col Michael Butler	2nd, QOB and QOH
20 Mar	Pte Prince Alvaranga	1st
4 Mar	WOII James (Jamie) Lower	6/7th, PWRR and QOH
27 Feb	Pte Peter Holman	2nd and QRS
24 Feb	Pte Anthony Paul Revelle	2nd and QOB
21 Jan	Pte Tony Awcock	3rd
19 Jan	Col Mike Ball	1st, 3rd and MX
11 Jan	Pte Francis (Frank) Wellard	2nd
4 Jan	WO1 (RSM) Sid Lea	1st, 2nd, QRR, East Surreys and QRS
2024		
31 Dec	LCpl John Myles	3rd
19 Dec	Maj John Ross	6/7th and RAF
16 Dec	Lt Simon Fraser	2nd and QOB
11 Dec	Sgt Peter 'Hovis' Brown	1st
11 Dec	Cpl David Welch	1st
05 Dec	Maj Richard Thornton TD	5th and HAC
4 Dec	Lt Col Foster Herd TD JP DL	5th, 7th, 6/7th and QRS
24 Nov	Cpl Bill Hazard	5th
18 Nov	Pte Charlie Toomer	2nd and QOB
10 Nov	Sgt Jimmy Leefmans	1st
02 Nov	Sgt Ray Harwood	2nd, Buffs and QOB
31 Oct	Lt-Col Peregrine (Peter) Barrow	2nd, PWRR and QRR



ASSOCIATION BRANCHES

ASSOCIATION CONTACTS

President and Chairman - Colonel AAA Beattie, Barn Cottage, Fisherton de la Mere, Warminster, Wilts BA12 0PZ

Secretary - Major Alasdair Goulden, 5 Alfred Square, Deal, Kent CT14 6LU

Mobile: 0771 484 4069

Email: queensregimentassociation@gmail.com

1 QUEENS

The 1 QUEENS Branch meets on an ad hoc basis and all past members of the Queen's Regiment, or their associate Regiments are very welcome to attend any event. The annual reunion will be held on the weekend of the Spring Bank Holiday. All are welcome to attend. Details are posted on the 1 QUEENS Branch website.

For more details of the branch please contact:

Joe Dormer:

Email: dbdormer@hotmail.co.uk

Web: 1queens.co.uk; www.facebook.com/groups/61525655230/

ALBUHERA

Based in Spain but encompasses all members who wish to join who live in Spain, Portugal and Gibraltar.

For more details contact:

Chairman - Steve Wall, Partida Barranquet 40, 03792 Parcent, Alicante, Spain

Mobile: +447958 596 598

Email: steve.wall@hotmail.co.uk

CHICHESTER

The Chichester Branch meets on the last Wednesday of each month at 7.30 pm in the City Club, North Pallant, Chichester. They hold an annual Albuhera Dinner and always march with their Standard at the Chichester Remembrance Day parade.

For more details of the branch, please check the website or contact:

Chairman - Tyrone Power

Email: typower7@aol.com

Treasurer – Dave Bingham:

Email: binghamd17@gmail.com

or use the 'email us' facility on the website: <http://www.freewebs.com/qrachichester/>

EAST KENT

This branch is part of both Regimental Associations and welcomes everyone who served in the Queen's, PWRR and forebear regiments.

More details can be found at:-

www.facebook.com/groups/3068692916477013

EAST SURREY

The branch meets on a monthly basis at the Union Jack Club in London and holds an annual dinner. For more details please contact:

Chairman - Ken Bowden: - Tel: - 07710 815791

Email: kjbowden@icloud.com

FRIMLEY AND CAMBERLEY CADET CORPS

The Frimley and Camberley Cadet Corps, which started over 100 years ago, rebadged back to the Queen's Regiment and continues to parade with their Queen's Colour. Boys and girls from a variety of backgrounds, aged 6 to 13, are instructed by volunteer staff in their personal development based upon military procedures and discipline. Their HQ is at Caird Hall, Camberley. They are fully self-funding as they are not supported by the Army, Army Reserve or ACF.

For more details of when they meet and how to get involved please contact:

Nigel Ferris - 1 Ffordd Dol y Coed, Llanharan, Pontyclun, CF72 9WA:

Mobile: 07836 726236

Email: nigelferris21@outlook.com

HORSHAM

The Horsham Branch meet four times a year at the Horsham Cricket Club.

For more details of membership and events please contact:

Chairman - Colin Hurd:

Email: ckh494@outlook.com

Secretary - Jonathan Purdy

Email: j.purdy1@btopenworld.com

ISLE OF THANET

The Branch meets at the Royal British Navy Association (RNA) Club, 9 Church Street Hill, Ramsgate, Kent CT11 8RA on the first Saturday of every month at 1800hrs for a branch meeting, social get together, drinks and fund raising. Teams is used for members who can't attend in person. We also hold an Albuhera Dinner on the 16th May each year; hold a social event along with the RNA for the Glorious First of June 1794 and an Annual Dinner in November. We will also be holding a QUEENS and PWRR Breakfast RV, and Branch Social RVs. Please see the branch Facebook page for upcoming dates and timings. Former members of the QUEENS, PWRR, forbear regiments, Armed Forces or serving personnel are welcome to join us.

For more details please contact: The Secretary on either:

Email: QRARamsgate@outlook.com

QRA Ramsgate on Facebook

LONDON BRANCH OF THE QUEEN'S AND PWRR ASSOCIATIONS

The two London Branches of the Associations have a combined branch and meet informally quarterly. In addition, the branch meets at Twickenham for the Army vs Navy match and after the Cenotaph Parade on Remembrance Sunday. All past members of the Queen's, PWRR or their forbear regiments are very welcome to attend any event.

For more details of the branch, please contact:

Chairman - Kevin Hibbert: - Email: kevinhibbert75@yahoo.com



MIDDLESEX

The Middlesex Branch consider themselves the senior local branch of the Queen's Regimental Association, having formed in 1985. We currently have around 100 members. Most of our events are held in the Army Reserve Centre, Edgware, Middlesex currently home to B Company 4 PWRR, with whom we have a close relationship. Our functions include a New Year's Luncheon, a formal regimental dinner to commemorate the Battle of Albuhera in May, an annual battlefield tour in the summer and various remembrance services in November. We also hold a monthly breakfast club which is very popular. Membership includes access to our Facebook group 'Albuhera Company' as well as receiving our excellent newsletter 'Dispatches' which is sent out three times a year.

If you are interested in joining the branch, please contact the Chairman:

Chairman - Trevor Canton: - Tel: [020 8368 0407](tel:02083680407)

Email: queensman67@outlook.com

Secretary – Post vacant

QUEENSMAN LODGE 2694

Queensman Lodge 2694 is a Freemasons Lodge within the Metropolitan Grand Lodge of London and also a member of the Circuit of Services Lodges. Membership is open to all members of forebear regiments, Queen's, PWRR, Queen's Division and any attached personnel. Membership application is by being proposed and seconded, and by interview.

For full details please visit the website or contact:

John Edwards: - Tel: [01462 834134](tel:01462834134)

Mobile: - [07976 268151](tel:07976268151)

Email: johnedwards518@sky.com

Web: <http://queensmanlodge.co.uk/>

QUEEN'S REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION CORPS OF DRUMS

The QRA Corps of Drums meets on a regular basis and performs for the benefit of the Queen's Regiment Benevolent Fund whenever possible but primarily in Kent.

To discuss an event or to join please contact:

Tony Philpott or Amy Holden: - Mobile: [07568 630024](tel:07568630024)

Email: qracorpsofdrums@yahoo.co.uk

THE QUEEN'S REGIMENTAL RIDERS ASSOCIATION

This Branch is open to all ex-members of the Queen's, PWRR and forebear regiments who own and ride a motorbike or trike, and want to raise money for the Benevolent Fund. For more details please contact:

Secretary: Pat Byrne

Mobile: - [07564 075008](tel:07564075008)

Email: Please use the Contact Form on the QRRA website

Web: www.qrra.co.uk

THE PWRR GOLF SOCIETY (QRA BRANCH)

Upon amalgamation we morphed into the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment Golfing Society. We play annually for all the cups and trophies associated with The Queen's Regiment playing in the South-East and Home Counties. For more details please contact the two Queensmen currently running the Society:

Captain: Dave Body: - Email: d-body@sky.com

Secretary: Tony Harwood

Email: ice501@btopenworld.com

New members of all abilities are most welcome, just call for a membership form, and come and play.

THE ISLE OF THANET BRANCH OF THE QUEEN'S, QUEEN'S OWN BUFFS AND ROYAL WEST KENT REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

The Branch meets at the New Telegraph Club, Priory Road, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 2AS and they meet every 2nd Wednesday on alternate months starting in April.

For more details please contact:

Chairman - John Grinham:

Mobile: [07765 673262](tel:07765673262)

Email: John@grinham.me.uk

Secretary - Barry Crocker: - Email: barrycrocker@hotmail.co.uk

WEALD

The Branch meets at the New Telegraph Club, Priory Road, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 2AS and they meet every 2nd Wednesday on alternate months starting in April.

For more details please contact:

Chairman - John Grinham: Tel: [0776 5673262](tel:07765673262)

Email: John@grinham.me.uk

Secretary - Barry Crocker: Tel: [01732 366048](tel:01732366048)

Email: barrycrocker@hotmail.co.uk

WEST SURREY (was previously Farnham)

The West Surrey Branch meets every third Tuesday at the Farnham TA Centre, Guildford Road, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 9QB and all past members of the Queen's Regiment or their associate Regiments are very welcome. For more details of the branch, please contact:

Chairman - Bob Hill: - Tel: [07991 009024](tel:07991009024)

Email: bobhill@sky.com

Secretary - Dick Scales

Mobile: [07530 690861](tel:07530690861)

Email: dsl9421@gmail.com

Treasurer - Mrs Sharon Scales:

Mobile: [07455 981672](tel:07455981672)

Email: 35scales@gmx.com

NON-AFFILIATED GROUPS which have contact with ex-members of the Regiment

QUEEN'S ROYAL SURREYS

Secretary - Dee Hutchison:

Email: qrsinform@gmail.com

FRIENDS OF THE QUEEN'S OWN BUFFS REGIMENT

<http://friendsofthebuffs-rekr.com/>

THE ROYAL SUSSEX ASSOCIATION

Chairman - Barry Lane:

Email: barry.lane@uwclub.net

Secretary - Ian Smith:

Email: iansmithbn1@gmail.com



PLEASE READ!

COST OF THE JOURNAL

I hope you have enjoyed this Queen's Journal and the previous editions. Each copy costs about £9 to produce and post to your UK address or up to £20 if living abroad. The Association will continue to support the Journal, but are you able to help? If so, please send a cheque made out to The Queen's Regiment Benevolent Fund to:

The Secretary

5 Alfred Square

Deal

Kent CT14 6LU

Alternatively make a BACs payment to:

The Queen's Regiment Benevolent Fund

Sort Code: 16-19-26

Account Number: 10486823

Ideally, if you can Gift Aid your donation, the Fund gets a further 25% from the Government! A Gift Aid Form is enclosed with your Journal.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEXT JOURNAL

If you want another *Journal*, we need your stories and your photographs! Please send them as early as possible, and please well before the deadline of 7 September 2026 to queensregimentassociation@gmail.com. Please send articles as a Word document and please send photographs in as high a resolution as possible separately NOT embedded in the article.

IF YOU NEED HELP

The whole reason for the Association is to be there when you need help. It is often hard to reach out for support but there is a wealth of assistance available if you are struggling. Please don't wait until everything is on top of you. Reach out if you need assistance. The PWRR Welfare team are there to support you. It's easy to access it. To make things quicker always reach out to SSAFA first who will assess the requirement and then get hold of the organisations who will help. Here are some numbers:

SSAFA – Call 0800 260 6780 or www.ssafa.org.uk where there is live chat available

RBL – Call 0808 802 8080 or www.britishlegion.org.uk and click on the 'contact' tab

Samaritans: Call 116123 or www.samaritans.org

Combat Stress: call 0800 138 1619 or visit www.combatstress.org.uk

QRA Secretary: call 0771 484 4069 or email queensregimentassociation@gmail.com



Royal British Veterans Enterprise

Real Support. Lasting Impact.

Royal British Veterans Enterprise (RBVE), formerly RBLI, is a national charity that empowers veterans and people with disabilities by creating jobs, providing homes, and building communities.

Who We Are

Since 1919, we have supported thousands of ex-servicemen and women to rebuild their lives, many overcoming injury, disability, or long-term unemployment. For more than a century, we've helped them find safety and stability.

We know that employment is the key to independence. But to succeed in work, people need more than a payslip. They need a safe home and a supportive community.

That's why RBVE brings employment, housing, and community together, creating opportunities and spaces for Britain's bravest to truly thrive.

Empowering Our Bravest



We don't just encourage employment.
We create jobs.



We don't just raise awareness of veteran homelessness.
We provide homes.



We don't just support individuals.
We build communities.

Help Us Go Further

By donating to RBVE, you're directly supporting veterans and people with disabilities to thrive in life.

Donate today to help us create more jobs, provide more homes, and build stronger communities.

rbve.org.uk/donate



Registered Charity Number
England & Wales 210063
Scotland SC048795



Charity No 1024418

www.queensregimentalassociation.org