

SOLDIERS OF THE QUEENS

UNCONQUERED I SERVE



1966-1992

THE PERIODIC JOURNAL OF THE QUEEN'S REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

2013

FOREWORD



BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE QUEEN'S REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

COLONEL AAA BEATTIE

In introducing what I hope will be the first of many Association journals, I would like to thank all who have contributed to it with articles, photographs and anecdotes. I must also record my sincere thanks to Lieutenant General Jonathon Riley, our regimental historian, and Alasdair Goulden, who has worked tirelessly as Editor, seeking and chasing the material included in the journal. The idea has been to represent every Queen's battalion by taking a snapshot of one of them in each year of the Regiment's existence.

As only the second President of the Association in our 21 years since amalgamation, I must acknowledge the debt of gratitude we owe to Brigadier Mike Constantine, President for 17 years, to the Regimental Secretaries of the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, to Major Steve Bream and to those of you who have not only continued to fly the flag in the Branches, but who have set up websites and communication links, all of which have kept the spirit of the QUEENS alive.

The Queen's Regiment itself was richly blessed by the generosity and interest of its four forbear Regiments. It is to the lasting credit of the trustees of those same Regiments that their engagement and involvement with the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment was as strong and dynamic as it was and still remains. However, I sense that this very involvement and engagement of the forbear Regiments directly with the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment had, in some measure, the effect of side-lining the Queen's Regimental Association, rather than it being seen as the natural lead successor, with the Royal Hampshire Regiment, with forbear regiment status. If this were the case, I have no doubt that it was unintended. But I remain especially concerned about the several thousand ex-Queensmen who served exclusively under our badge and who, as a consequence of perception, have felt we were 'in the wilderness', and hence the relatively small numbers of listed, active members of the Association.

This journal then is part of an exercise in re-establishing communication: we have launched a new website; the annual regimental reunion will move to a lunchtime event allowing longer for socialising and properly catching up; we are creating an Association handbook to encapsulate all that the Queen's stands for; and we are in the early stages of a project to have our own Queen's Regiment Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum.

In conclusion, I urge you to support your Association in any way you can imagine. Our Branches are increasing in number, albeit slowly. If you know of other Queensmen - and those of other arms and services who served with us in our battalions - who are not aware of what we are doing, please enlist their support and make it clear we are here in body soul and spirit. I trust you will enjoy this journal.



EDITORIAL

By Association Secretary

Major A M Goulden



Greetings and welcome to the first of what I hope will be a regular re-vamped Queen's Regimental Association Journal! First, may I say a huge thank you to those who allowed themselves to be bullied into writing articles to get this publication off the ground; the President and Mike Jelf for their proof reading and Steve and Lindsay Parsons for their unstinting support usually when I phoned late at night! Thank you also to the many who supplied short vignettes to illustrate humour and life within the Regiment, but also apologise if your particular story didn't make the final cut – they will be held as memories for the next one. Almost all were extremely funny and reflected the great sense of humour that was demonstrated throughout the Regiment's history – unfortunately, quite a

number of them were quite unprintable – the temptation to produce an unexpurgated version of the stories is enormous! Please note that the Memories neither reflect the date of the page they appear on nor the battalion being featured - their position is dictated by size!

The journal is designed to reflect the experiences of one of the battalion each year throughout the Regiment's history from 1966-92 through the eyes of those who served. I have tried to be even-handed between the different battalions and have tried to cover all theatres of operation. Branch information and reports from some of the branches are also included. I hope that I have got the balance right.

Contributors have been asked for their personal recollections. You will note that there are a few years which are unattributable. This is because I was unable to persuade anyone to take on the task for that year. In those years an article has been cobbled together from assorted archives and by one or two press-ganged men. The accuracy of the contents is therefore not guaranteed. The stories reflect events that took place from between 21 and 47 years ago. Memories and archives seldom reflect the whole truth! If your recollections are different or your experiences have not been covered, then the answer is to write an article of between 850-1000 words and send it to me before 7 September 2014 with up to six high resolution photos not embedded into the article. Should anyone decide to challenge the accuracy of any article or photo without providing an alternative then the editorship of the journal will pass to them! The Association is your association and if you wish the tradition of producing a journal on a regular basis to continue, then contributions need to be submitted and in time.

I urge you to read all of the journal and not just those sections in which you took part, because the one thing that has shone out as I have read what has been submitted is that the exhortations of General Craddock, our first Colonel of the Regiment, to continue the service and traditions of our forebear regiments; and that of General Reynolds, our last Colonel of the Regiment, to help provide the building blocks of the new Regiment have been carried out in the finest traditions of the British Army by every officer and soldier who was proud to serve wearing the badge of the Queen's Regiment.

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1966

FORMATION OF THE QUEEN'S REGIMENT

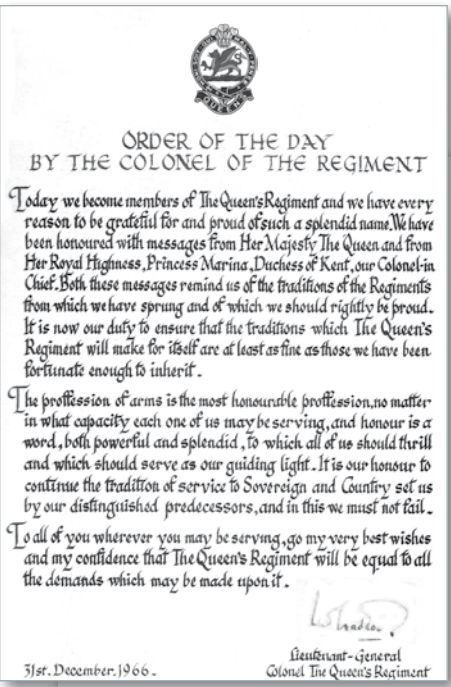
It was as early as July 1964 that the Council of Colonels of the Home Counties Brigade – composed of the Queen's Royal Surreys, the Queen's Own Buffs, the Royal Sussex and the Middlesex – met and decided that they would “examine the action required to effect reorganisation of the Home Counties Brigade on a Regimental basis should it become necessary.” It might well become necessary, and many people thought it highly desirable, as it was the declared policy of the then Army Board in London that the Infantry should move away from regiments of one regular and one or two TA battalions, towards large regiments with many battalions. There was no actual arm-twisting at this point and by no means all Infantry regiments felt that this was the way they wanted to go. But some did and at about the same time as the Council of Colonels began their examination, the lead was taken by the East Anglian Brigade, which later became the Royal Anglian Regiment. It was followed by the Royal Green Jackets, the Light Infantry, the Irish Rangers and the Fusiliers.

The declared aim of forming a large regiment was to give more flexibility in increasing or reducing battalions; the Army Board had promised that in theory at least, large regiments would be no more liable to cuts than small. But experience showed that cuts were more likely than increases and it would probably be easier for media and public opinion – and therefore MPs – to swallow the loss of battalions of a large regiment than the extinction of an old and famous name.

By early 1966, with defence spending cut by the Labour government to what now seems an amazingly generous 5% of GDP, the Council of Colonels decided to go ahead on their own terms rather than being forced. They decided to create a regiment to be called The Queen's, after the oldest and most senior of its antecedents. Princess Marina agreed to become Colonel-in-Chief and there were two Allied Colonels-in-Chief, inherited from the antecedent regiments: King Frederik IX of Denmark and Queen Juliana of the Netherlands. The senior Colonel of the Home Counties Brigade, General Dick Craddock of the Queen's Own Buffs, became the first Colonel of the Regiment.

On New Year's Eve 1966 – perhaps a mildly eccentric date – the new regiment was formally vested at a ceremonial parade in Howe Barracks, Canterbury, its headquarters and depot. On parade were the permanent staff and recruits from the depot and a detachment of the 4th Buffs (TA). Being mid-winter, the weather was of course howling and the parade had to be moved into the gym. This was at first a disappointment but as it turned out, those watching felt much more part of things in what became quite an intimate ceremony. General Craddock gave a short speech, the flags of the Home Counties Brigade regiments were lowered, the flag of the new regiment was raised and the parade marched off to its new quick march, Soldiers of the Queen. At the same time, similar parades were being held by 1 Queen's Surreys in Oxford Barracks, Münster, Germany; by 1 Queen's Own Buffs in Gun Club Barracks, Hong Kong; by 1 Royal Sussex in Stornaway Barracks, Lemgo, Germany and by 1 Middlesex in Palace Barracks, Holywood, Northern Ireland (then still at peace).

The TA was also affected by this regimental reorganisation but on a two-tier basis. For The Queen's Regiment, one new “Volunteer” battalion, the 5th, was created with four companies, each of which was to have a war role reinforcing its counterpart regular battalion. The new unit's



Regimental Headquarters
The Queen's Regiment
Howe Barracks
Canterbury
Kent

31 December 1966

ORDER OF THE DAY

Today we become members of The Queen's Regiment and we have every reason to be grateful for and be proud of such a splendid name. We have been honoured with messages from Her Majesty The Queen and from Her Royal Highness, Princess Marina, Duchess of Kent, our Colonel-in-Chief. Both these messages remind us of the traditions of the Regiments from which we have sprung and of which we should rightly be proud. 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.

The profession of arms is the most honourable profession, no matter in what capacity each one of us may be serving, and honour is a word, both powerful and splendid, to which all of us should thrill and which should serve as our guiding light. 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.

R.W.CRADDOCK

Lt-Gen Sir Richard Craddock KBE, CB, DSO
Colonel, The Queen's Regiment

HQ was at Leros TA Centre in Canterbury and its companies spread across the Home Counties in Guildford, Broadstairs, Hastings and Hornsey. It would be some years before the battalion received a role as a unit and a place in the order of battle of I (BR) Corps in Germany. The remaining “Territorial” battalions were reduced in number by amalgamation and given a home guard status: these were 6 (T) Queen's, formed from 3 and 4 Queen's Surreys; 7 (T) Queen's, formed from 4 and 5 Buffs; 8 (T) Queen's formed from 4/5 Royal West Kents; 9 (T) Queen's, formed from 4/5 Royal Sussex; and 10 (T) Queen's, formed from 5 MX By 1970 these battalions had all ceased to exist and had been reduced to a cadre of eight officers and men.

During the parades that vested the regiment, the regimental pioneers were hard at work: all sign boards were changed and the marks of the new replaced the old. But as they marched off, these changes seemed cosmetic – not least because battalions retained their old names as subsidiary titles and the badges of the new regiment did not begin to arrive for three months. As with the TA, more radical change did not come about until 1970.



1967

3 QUEENS LEMGO, BAOR

Five years after the Cuban missile crisis and with international politics dominated by a policy of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD), the role of a 432 APC equipped battalion in 20th Armoured Brigade was serious indeed. Inclusion for BAOR based units in Northern Ireland roulement was some way off, so we were able to concentrate purely on our mechanised role within a Rhine Army of three divisions.

On the edge of Lemgo, a small Westphalian town, our pre-war barracks were comfortable enough and being on our own, civil relations were generally very good. The German-built married quarters and messes were excellent; sports facilities were at least adequate and the surrounding countryside provided good walking. The town itself was attractive with a useful range of shops and a market.



The year would begin with selecting soldiers for particular cadres so that key roles were filled in time for the exercise season. At least one opportunity for live firing, probably at Sennelager, would be programmed and a battalion exercise would precede the main Field Training Exercise (FTX) in the early autumn. Meanwhile Battalion HQ would have been participating in Command Post Exercises (CPXs) at brigade level with a new form of secure radio communication called Bid 150. Exercise areas needed to be approved in advance by submitting a 'Form 443' but we had remarkably easy access to the countryside having the right in those days of exercising almost anywhere in the West German countryside. The scale of the main FTXs, especially during 1 (BR) Corps FTXs when all 55,000 troops would be on the ground, resulted in much damage caused by the tactical movement of armoured vehicles, all of which was monitored by Damage Control Teams ahead of the resulting farmers' claims!

Equipped with a Ferret scout car, which was regarded as ideal for recce purposes, my role as RSO was to find sites for Battalion HQ with suitable VHF communications back to Brigade HQ. On one occasion during a radio silence phase, having occupied a farm complex for a Battalion HQ, I remember the farm owner knocking on the door to retrieve something from his study which we had taken over! Some of our German neighbours were very understanding!

Anyone who was keen enough had plenty of skiing opportunities afforded by a programme of 'Snow Queen' exercises in Bavaria based in Lenggries south of Munich. During the summer months, exercise commitments permitting, small groups managed to get away from barracks onto the 'Windfall' yachts based at the British Kiel Yacht Club. Copenhagen was also a much visited port where we made good use of the new Regiment's connection with the Danish royal family. The Royal Danish Life Guards were always extremely hospitable, even at very short notice! Overall Germany in '67 was a pretty good life for everyone enabling us to settle into a new future with a new regiment.





1968

1 QUEENS IN BAHRAIN

A Subaltern's View

by Bob McGhie

Prologue

The Kingdom of Bahrain is a small island archipelago situated near the western shores of the Persian Gulf with the largest island being Bahrain Island at 34 miles long by 11 miles wide. Saudi Arabia lies to the west. Iran lies 124 miles to the north of Bahrain, across the Gulf. The peninsula of Qatar is to the southeast. The population of 1,234,571, includes 666,172 non-nationals and has a Shia majority although the Al Khalifa ruling family are Sunni Muslims.

In the late 1800s, following successive treaties with the British, Bahrain became a protectorate of the United Kingdom. Following the withdrawal of the British from the region in the late 1960s, Bahrain declared independence in 1971. Formerly a state, Bahrain was declared a kingdom in 2002.

I was at Sandhurst in 1966/7 with The Emir's son Hamad, now titled the King of Bahrain. When he and I met again in 1968 in his father's palace he was a Brigadier while I was the battalion's youngest 2nd Lt, not surprising then that he is now a King while I am a retired Lt Col.

Deployment

1 QUEENS deployed from Hobbs Barracks, Lingfield, to Hamala Camp in the North West of Bahrain in February 1968 ferried over six days by The City of Ayr aircraft from Caledonian Airways with the deployment complete on 16 February. When the aircraft doors opened on the hot tarmac at Manama joint RAF and civil airport the heat after an English winter was stifling. I commanded 11 Platoon in C Company under the command of Major John Davidson with Capt Paul Gray as 2IC, WO2 Warner as CSM and CSgt Lea as CQMS. Sgt Wharmby was my platoon sergeant and Corporals Tickner, Morris and Rundle were ably assisted by LCpls Russell, Roots and Juhel. None of my platoons 20 private soldiers had been abroad before and many were not immediately impressed by so much flat, hot sand in all directions with, as Private Shiel announced, 'not a chippie nor a girl in sight'. Each platoon lived in a single Twynham hut and the camp was well catered for with messes, a cinema and a much used swimming pool. The heat was extreme and Capt Richards the MO raised a flag over the medical centre to indicate what outside activity was permissible; when the skull and crossbones

went up to mark 50 degrees all external training ceased. However, it didn't take long to acclimatise and we became desert fit very quickly as, other than training, there was little else to do.

Over the next nine months until we handed over to The Cheshires and returned to Lingfield in November 1968 the companies trained both in the southern empty desert area of the island and in the Trucial States. Before Lt Col Sewell handed command to Lt Col Millman in April he led the complete battalion including man-packed 81mm mortars and Vigilant anti-tank guided missiles on a major advance to contact exercise across ten featureless miles of the south of Bahrain island. I led the navigation party in the centre of the battle group with three of my soldiers as pace men while I glued my eyes to the faintly luminous compass needle – every fifteen minutes or so the CO would appear at my side in the total darkness of the desert night to ask if we were still heading in the right direction – fortunately for my nascent career and my pulsating blood pressure we arrived within 50 metres of the designated FUP on time and ready for the assault phase.

Each company went on training camps in Fujairah at the southern end of the Gulf in the Trucial States bordering Oman and the Indian Ocean having flown down in RAF aircraft to Sharjah where the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers was based. Wadi Shawkah, a large oasis in the foothills became the base for the rifle company deployments in this arid landscape full of large camel spiders whose bite anaesthetised human flesh which they then started to chew as Private Kavanagh discovered when waking to find part of his lip missing. These training deployments were great opportunities for companies and platoons to gel together with live





field firing by day and by night at platoon level. The local tribesmen would run into the beaten zone of the machine guns and dig out the bullet lead almost as it impacted into the sand. How none were killed amazed us all. On one deployment C Coy endured and escaped – just – the Bithna flood where a wall of water cascaded from the mountains and swept all before it in a furious torrent through the wadi taking with it drowning animals, wrecked burustis (indigenous huts) and a parked Gazelle helicopter, fortunately no-one was hurt. Later in the year Lt Col Millman exercised the battalion using the Trucial Oman Scouts as enemy forces and we in C Coy were introduced to picketing the knife-edge hilltops by helicopter leapfrog while the main body moved through the low ground to the final objectives.

Training including beach assaults by C Coy onto YAS Island from HMS INTREPID. On one occasion Private Murphy, the 11 platoon radio operator leapt off the front of a Royal Marine landing craft only to disappear into ten feet of water weighed down by his A41 radio as we had hit a submerged sandbank rather than the actual beach. Murphy was not amused when he spluttered to the surface to see the rest of the platoon convulsed with laughter. Live firing Forward Air Controller training on uninhabited Yas island with the Hunter jet fighter Squadron from Manama was also excellent training. A Royal Military Police helicopter pilot used to take me fishing in his Bell Sioux, for sharks where he would hover over immense dark shapes beneath the surface while I tied the line on the skids and lowered the bait. We caught one small one which we dragged onto the beach but it got away when the line broke. Platoons were sent on long OMEX pipeline protection patrols in the United Arab Emirates desert south of Dubai and Capt Gray turned night into day for C Coy who trained only at night for a week. We had honed our individual and collective Infantry skills, we were fit, we were tough, we were acclimatised and we had excellent battalion and sub unit tactical cohesion – we were a match for anyone and ready for conflict but none was to be had.

We enjoyed other diversions too. Platoons built projects - 11 Platoon built a raft for the R&R camp on the most southern point of the island which later floated away unlamented

towards Qatar. We celebrated the Glorious 1st June with potted sports against the Royal Navy including winning the Donkey Polo match despite Lt Hyatt's donkey carting him away from the field of play to the Jufair roundabout and Lt Brown's steed mounting one of the opposition in sexual frenzy. We put on a Tattoo which depicted tableaux from the Regiment's history from 1661 including the 1914 Christmas Truce football match, much rehearsal but great fun to do and enjoyed by all ranks. We ran Casino Nights which punters would fly in from all over the Gulf to attend and where I earned the soubriquet that laid the basis of my future career – the Officers' Mess had two entrances and I was in charge of the non-VIP one and was designated from then on as 'OIC Fishpond Entrance'. We enjoyed Combined Services Entertainment Shows, Kirke's Company competitions where C Coy won the trophy in resounding fashion, company parties at sea on Arab dhows with musicians from the band accompanying us, novices boxing competitions (I was knocked senseless by LCpl 'Typewriter' Wilcox the Support Coy clerk in the light heavyweights), tennis tournaments, swimming galas, athletics tournaments, sailing cadres and some platoons were fortunate enough to escape the desert on military adventurous training - 11 Platoon went to Malaya while Lt Tuckwell and 10 Platoon participated in training in Kenya and almost invaded Uganda. Capt Ridger ran a subalterns' riding cadre at the Sheikh's stables starting at 5 am daily. My Arab stallion, Guilfawn, dumped me amongst the poisonous sea snakes in the sea on the day we were first allowed to leave the paddock.

These were challenging, enjoyable, exciting and professionally rewarding days for a young 20 year old commanding his first rifle platoon and I hope that the NCOs and soldiers who marched with me in 11 Platoon felt the same thrill of it all. The only aspect missing during our Gulf tour was the baptism of fire that our fellow platoon commanders, NCOs and soldiers experienced some 35 years later just up the road in the hot sands of Maysan Province and the foetid alleys of Al Amarah in Southern Iraq. However, little did we know on our return to the wonderfully green lanes of Surrey that only nine months later our operational time would come in the backstreets of the infamous Bogside in Londonderry and then later, for the next twenty years, in Belfast, in Mid Ulster and in the border badlands of Fermanagh and South Armagh.

MEMORIES

"I went AWOL for 1 month over the Christmas period. On my return whilst waiting to go in front of the CO, the RSM said "Did you get your leg-over whilst absent?"

"No Sir." - "Then it wasn't worth it, was it you twat?!". How true!

Pte Dormer

1969

2 QUEENS

The Troubles - Day 1 Belfast

by Mike Jelf

There had been an underlying tension and eager anticipation for some weeks that the Army might have to be deployed in Northern Ireland 'In Aid of the Civil Power' as rioting increased in Belfast and Londonderry during July with civilians killed and injured, much property burnt down and the RUC stretched to its limits.

The 2nd Battalion had been in Palace Barracks, Holywood since May 1968, a 'hunting, shooting, fishing' posting after Hong Kong (via Lingfield), or so we thought. I had arrived from Sandhurst still smelling of polish and bull-shit at the very beginning of 1969. We had spent that great summer guarding VPs across the Province; pipelines, power stations and reservoirs, quite blissful tasks for a young platoon commander with his first platoon, 5 PI, B Coy.....but that was all about to change.

In July B Coy commanded by Maj Bryan Ray deployed to HMS Sea Eagle (later Ebrington Barracks) in Londonderry, quite expecting to be deployed to help the RUC. Instead, we just watched helplessly, no word coming for us to deploy whilst across the water the RUC was mauled and Londonderry burnt. We had been practising our 'box formation' drills for weeks back in barracks and we were eager to test ourselves.

And then it happened – rapidly convened Orders Groups, lots of rushing around and loading of 4-tonners with personal kit, knife rests and barbed-wire. It was Friday the 15th August 1969. We were to deploy onto the streets of Belfast and for the first time I felt a degree of panic. I kept it to myself. Generally, there was a surprising coolness about our whole approach. It was as if we had regularly been deployed to assist the police sort out rioters – the difference was, this was not Aden or British Guiana or Hong Kong – it was the UK and Belfast! Battalions were on their way from Southern England, the World was looking on with interest. Won't last long we thought, the marrieds hardly bothered to say goodbye to their wives and children – a weekend's excitement! How wrong we were!

The Battalion convoy with B Coy leading (was 5 PI really the lead platoon?...seems hardly possible now) drove out of Palace Barracks at 1800hrs with the RUC escorting us as we swept through every set of traffic lights to the Shankill Road. Ahead of us were 1 RRW – where had they come from? Past Unity Flats...now where was Percy Street?...there's Boundary Street...Dover Street... 'stop, stop, stop...debus'. The lads positively flew off the backs of the two 4-tonners and at the top of Percy Street 5 PI was in box formation ready to march down to the Falls Road before the PI Comd had got out of his landrover! There were LCpls Winter and Daw, Ptes Firth and Shaw, Pte Pemble had the radio, Ptes Walpole and Obbard, Gerald, Sharpe, Digby, Fagg and the redoubtable Bernier. What a lot of rogues, what a good lot to be with!

A pause - 'Move now' came the calm voice of Bryan Ray over the C41 radio and with sharp words of command from Sgt Moss off we stepped at the 'high-port', banner ready to unfurl, eyes anxiously looking out for trouble, loud speaker at the ready. I do not think we knew much about what to expect but we felt rather vulnerable filling the street in box formation; and then a Belfast woman a hundred yards down Percy Street shouted out – 'Hey youse...you don't want to go down there like that....them Fenian bastards got snipers in Divis..' – and that was all we needed to break ranks and get into the sides of the street.

We worked our way through the debris of stones, bricks, glass and burnt out vehicles, to pick our way round a bus and mini-bus used as a barricade between Protestant and Catholic areas, now all burnt out. The air was thick with those dreadful smells of burning paint and rubber, burnt out shells of houses and cars. It was clear that there had been no exaggeration of the mayhem that the people had endured in this part of Belfast for some nights. A number of people had died including a child in Divis Tower, and many had been injured. No one told us that Percy Street had been in one of the worse areas of the fighting.

All of a sudden people came to their doors clapping and offering tea, so relieved to see the Army at last. To



us the sectarian divide was not important. We seemed loved by all and it felt fantastic – it was a proud moment. We had to get down to the Falls and establish a strong presence at the end of

Percy Street to prevent further sectarian rioting, and this we did, using the entrance to the bank on the corner as Pl HQ and with sections deployed left and right linking up with our neighbours, 6 and 7 Pls to our left, C Coy beyond them, the RRW to our right under the still burning paint factory further up the Falls. Barbed-wire barriers were erected and soldiers stood guard or gently patrolled our narrow frontage, chatting to locals, providing reassurance; at first hesitantly accepting the tea and soda bread, cakes and sandwiches that people generously offered. Before too long the media were about and the national and local papers had a field day, and we had to be careful what we said and how we presented ourselves.

Cpls Cornick, Redman and Robertson were the Section Commanders, a finer group I could not have asked for, and they soon sorted out some temporary accommodation in abandoned houses or spare bedrooms along the Falls Road. Our meals were delivered in hay-boxes by CSgt 'Noddy' Riddlesone-Holmes and we ate out of mess-tins on the streets as discreetly as we could....Bryan Ray and CSM Tony James walked around the company area – it didn't take long. Bn HQ was in the Hastings Street RUC Station....the CO, Lt Col Jack Fletcher accompanied by the RSM, George Brown soon came to see how we were. Some encouragement here and reassurances there; a few RSM type observations and we were ready to soldier through our first night on the streets. What a day it had been!

In July 2007 Op BANNER finally came to an end after 38 years.

MEMORIES

"16 August 1969 saw 2 QUEEN'S deployed as the first military presence on the streets of Belfast. As a young platoon commander my orders began with GOC Northern Ireland's preamble -

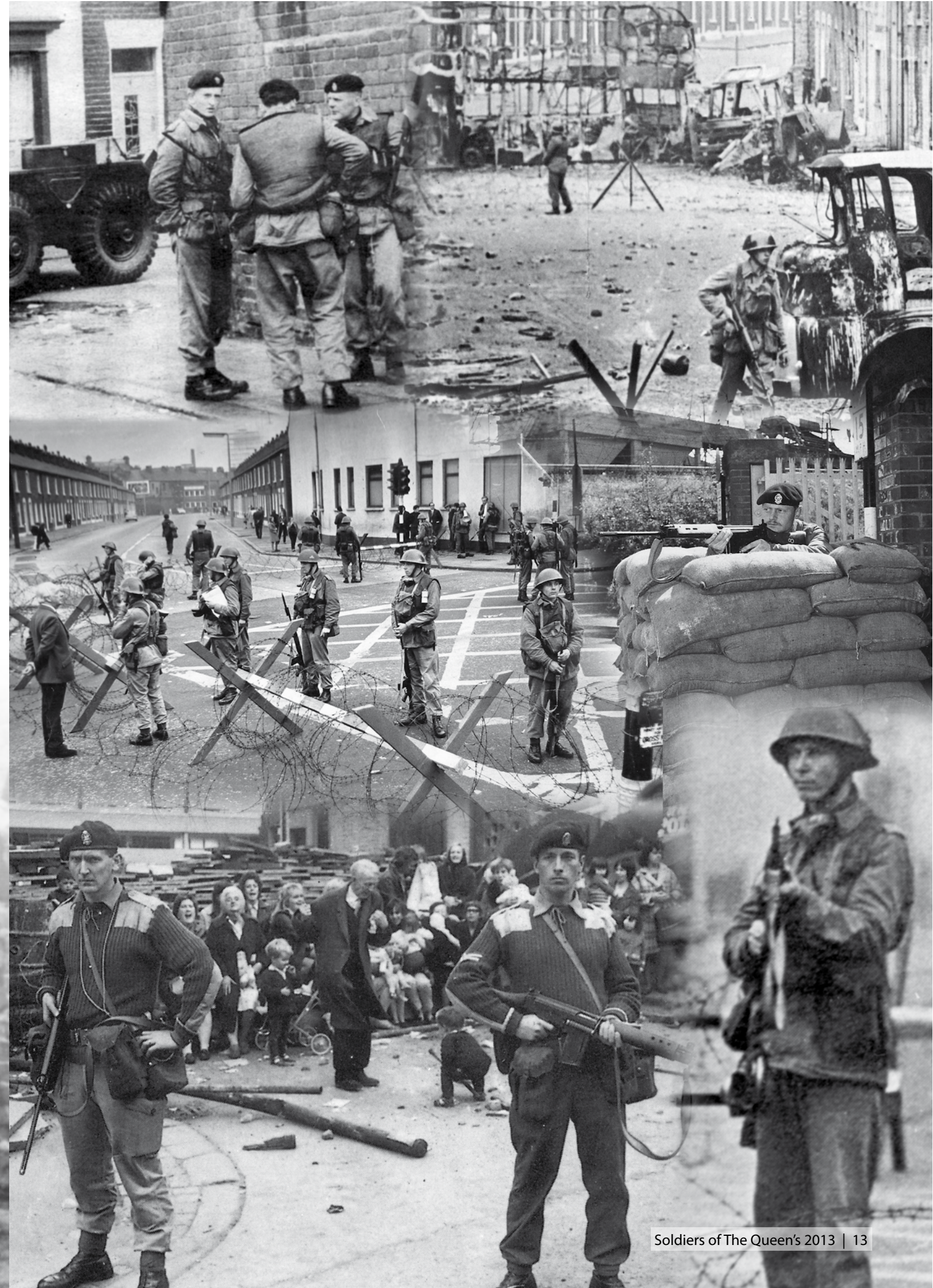
"The deployment will allow the RUC to rest and reorganise - with military presence on the streets not expected to last more than 48 hours."

Raymond Low

MEMORIES

"The Catering Officer stubbing out his cigar in the Sheikh's golden incense bowl after a dinner at the Palace whereupon the Sheikh's retainers drew their knives threateningly at this insult as the UK Political Resident, ambassador equivalent, apologised to the Emir.

Bob McGhie





1970

4 QUEENS

4th Battalion The Queen's Regiment (4 QUEENS) was formed from 1st Battalion, The Middlesex Regiment (1 MX) at the founding of the Queen's Regiment on 31 December 1966. 4 QUEENS had a life of only four years, being reduced to one company (Albuhera Company) in December 1970 which was itself disbanded in 1973. 4 QUEENS spent half of its life in Northern Ireland, at Palace Barracks, Holywood, just outside Belfast and half of its life as the Demonstration Battalion at the School of Infantry at Warminster and Netheravon beside Salisbury Plain. Being a garrison battalion in Northern Ireland before the start of the troubles and then acting as Demonstration Battalion at Warminster were, at that time, generally considered within the Infantry to be among the least appealing postings for any regiment and, coupled with a universally unwelcome amalgamation, could have spelt disaster through loss of morale and a reduction in strength as disappointed soldiers sought their discharge. As it happened, there was neither a loss of morale nor a reduction in strength as the "Diehard" spirit flowed seamlessly from 1 MX to 4 QUEENS. I write from experience because I served in 4 QUEENS throughout its short life, having the privilege of commanding the Recce Platoon in Northern Ireland and then being the Regimental Signal Officer for the first half of our tour as Demonstration Battalion and, for the final year, commanding Support Company at Netheravon.

A few days after 1 MX was formerly re-named 4 QUEENS, the Battalion was visited by the Colonel of the new Regiment, Lt Gen Sir Richard Craddock. In order to demonstrate our loyalty to our new Regiment, the CO, Colonel John Shipster, ordered all the officers to wear the Queen's Regiment tie in the Officers' Mess. We all somewhat reluctantly

complied and gathered in the ante-room to greet the General who walked in wearing his Buffs tie! This actually rather endeared him to us and helped me to realise that the success of a regiment depends on the attitude of mind of its members; 4 QUEENS would be every bit as good as 1 MX and so it proved to be.

With the Recce Platoon in Northern Ireland I recall roaming in landrovers across the whole Province and sleeping in barns on local farms, often being given milk, eggs and bread by farmers to supplement our army ration packs. I also remember two particular Battalion exercises; one when the whole Battalion conducted an advance in contact, on foot, for 100 miles from the SE corner of Ulster at Ballykinler to the NW corner at Magilligan Point





and the other, an escape and evasion exercise when the Recce Platoon spent four days and nights crossing the Province and living rough while being pursued by the remainder of the Battalion with helicopters in support. This

was but one year before the start of the troubles. We never experienced any form of hostility from the local population and we had no idea which areas were predominately unionist and which were republican. It was one of the most carefree periods of my service and great fun.

On a personal note, I recall accompanying four soldiers on a 4-day trip on a submarine, HMS Walrus, during which I remember the captain complimenting the action of the bowman as the submarine edged into the quay at Liverpool. What the skipper didn't know was that the bowman was a 4 QUEENS soldier who the crew had dressed as a sailor and had challenged to heave the bowline to the shore. 4 QUEENS was relieved by 2 QUEENS at Palace Barracks and, shortly after we left, 2 QUEENS became one of the first Army units to be deployed onto the streets of Belfast at the start of the Northern Ireland troubles.

For most of our two years as The School of Infantry Demonstration Battalion we all knew that 4 QUEENS, in one of the many Army reductions we all lived through, would be disbanded at the end of the tour and that everyone would then be dispersed to the other three Battalions. Nothing could be more likely to destroy a unit's morale than to face disbandment for well over a year; this would really be the end for the old Diehards. But a sort of defiant spirit and a "we'll show 'em" attitude spread throughout the Battalion which was uplifting and was well recognised by the School of Infantry. The main role of the Battalion was to provide the troops for School exercises on Salisbury Plain so that students on courses could practise (and usually cock-up) command, control and admin appointments at platoon and company level under the supervision of the school

directing staff. It was little wonder that life on exercise on Salisbury Plain could be pretty grim for the average soldier with student commanders getting lost, becoming harassed, losing stores, ordering soldiers to dig trenches in the wrong place and generally incurring the wrath of the directing staff, much of whose frustration re-bounded onto our soldiers. But the soldiers made a point of supporting their students and maintaining the typical "squaddie's" humour in the face of every exercise calamity and, by so doing, became well liked by both students and staff. The soldiers also liked the way the CO, Colonel Nick Carter, made the junior officers of the Battalion deploy on exercises as soldiers within sections which prompted a "spot the officer" habit by the students hoping for help. This amused the soldiers who kept our officers well disguised and busy carrying the heaviest weights and doing much of the trench digging. It also proved to be helpful in maintaining good will between the School of Infantry directing staff and the Battalion as a whole.

4 QUEENS approached the end of its tour as Demonstration Battalion on a high. Therefore, it was a terrible anti-climax and very sad to watch the Battalion being disbanded over a period of weeks at the end. We handed over our role at Warminster to 1 WFR and the rump of 4 QUEENS moved a few miles down the road into the nissen huts of Knook Camp to arrange the final disbandment. There was no final parade, no ceremony, no high-powered visit; just a tapering off for which I acted as Adjutant and found the whole thing most depressing. Many soldiers opted for discharge rather than re-assignment to another Battalion and, ironically but typically, the MOD decided to re-establish one company, to be called Albuhera Company, after most of those being discharged had already left the Army. The majority of soldiers being re-assigned went to 1 QUEENS which potentially generated the "them and us" syndrome within that Battalion. However, when I joined 1 QUEENS three years later, I met many old friends and noticed that most of the problems that go with amalgamation had dissipated and, once again, heads were held high.

MEMORIES

"LCpl Mitchell came to attention on a battalion parade only to hear his SLR magazine fall to the ground. RSM Wilson swung around to face the Provost Sergeant at the Guard Room "Open the doors, he's coming fast."

The embarrassed Lance Corporal needed no further command to double away to spend the next few hours in the 'black hole of Bahrain'."

Bob McGhie

1971 1 QUEENS BERLIN



The Battalion was always liable to be called out on the emergency deployment exercise "ROCKING HORSE" Dispensation was granted for special occasions such as regimental days. Clearly, this wasn't thought through on one occasion for the battalion was called out at about 0230 Hrs on 2nd June, with the various mess dances still in full swing celebrating the Glorious First! Happily and eventually, Brigade was persuaded to allow us to stand down on the grounds that most of the chain of command, at least, was in no fit state to go to war. Now that's what you call health and safety!

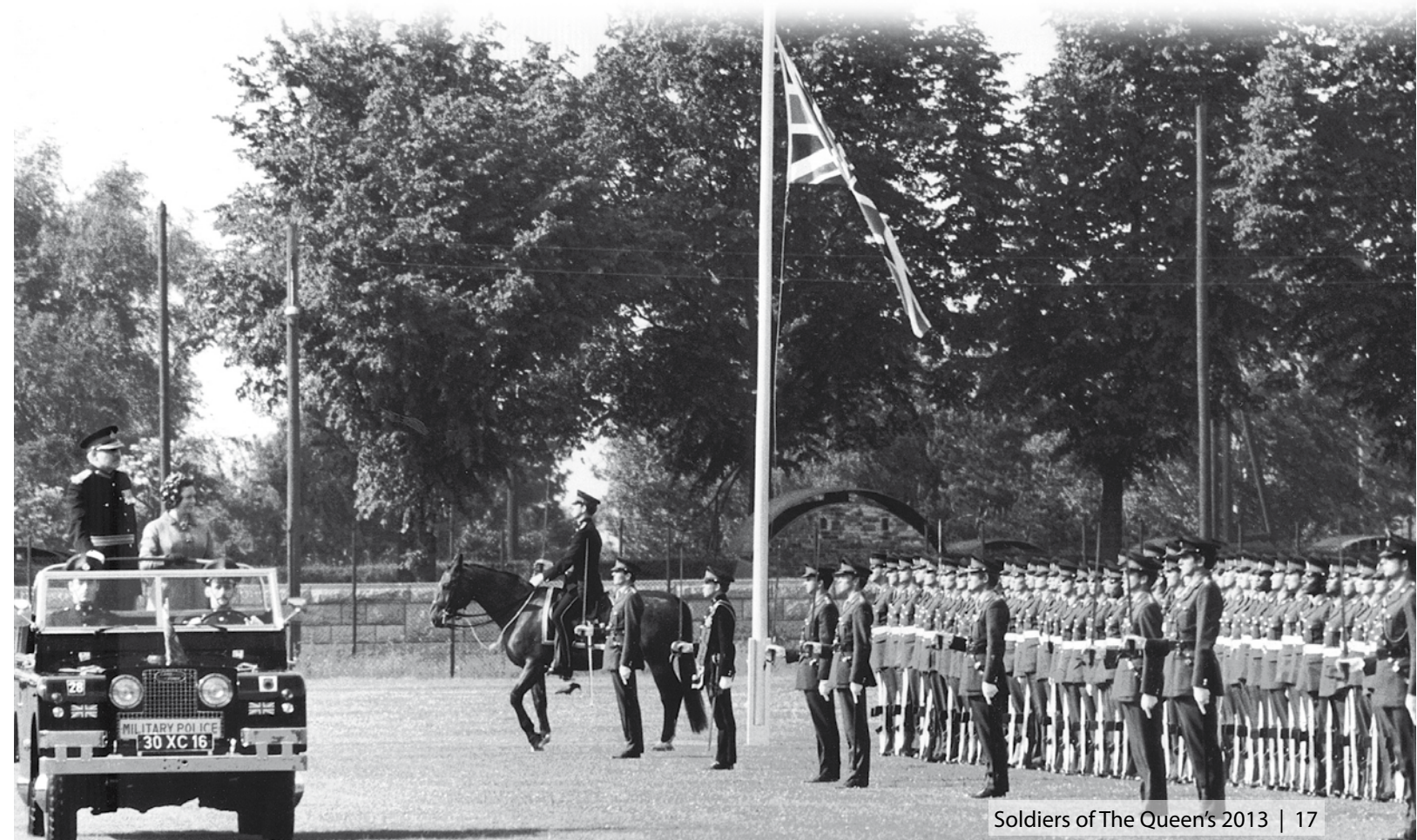
The Battalion used to have to supply the OC and guard of the Military Train every third or fourth month. Any delay, even the slightest one, had repercussions at a very high level with potential for an international incident. It was an adjutant's nightmare at the best of times with several subalterns who didn't do punctuality. Malcolm Howard comes to mind!

We provided officers to do 'flag tours' into East Berlin in order to exercise our right of access. They were driven by

professional RCT drivers and the cars, although apparently basic models were specially equipped, not least with powerful engines and extra large fuel tanks, which meant that they could outlast the inevitable tail which one picked up on going through Check Point Charlie. They normally had simple intelligence tasks to complete but first one needed to lose one's tail. One of the favourite ways was to lead it to a large roundabout and then speed up until you were following it and then whiz off at great speed. It was great fun!

For many, Drum Major Max Maloney epitomised Berlin. Apart from fronting many ceremonial events, he inherited the 4th Battalion's steel band, happily becoming an anonymous back row drummer in a colourful Caribbean silk shirt! The Drums were always in great demand in Berlin - with or without the Regimental or steel bands - providing a spectacular display in their own right using the drummers' tap and illuminated drums and sticks.

Because the British Forces enjoyed occupation status in Berlin, individuals were not subject to German laws, West





or East. In consequence, traffic offences such as speeding or jumping traffic lights etc were dealt with internally. Offenders appeared before the Commanding Officer or Adjutant, depending on rank, where they were faced with novel penalties such as X number of shirts for Battalion rugby or football teams roughly equivalent to the civil fine they would have paid. They were, of course, always offered the alternative of a formal procedure and, in many cases, appearing before the Bde Comd!

Currency was always challenging. With BAFS (British Armed Forces Sterling), 'FRIS' (Family Ration Issue Service) and the 'issue' haus fraus, the PX (US \$) and the Economart (F Fr) together with the use of Deutsche Marks and Pound Sterling not to mention 'East Marks' for journeys into East Berlin made a multi pocketed wallet essential!

Road access to Berlin was solely by the badly maintained autobahn between Check Point Alpha at Brunswick and Checkpoint Bravo on the western edge of The British Sector. It had a speed limit of about 60 mph which made it a very boring 2 hours. The way to cheat was to persuade the duty RMP NCO to book you out early and then avoid

being caught speeding by the East German police in which case, one had to demand to see a Russian officer. This actually happened to us a few years later when my NATO headquarters demanded that I should have an RMP escort because of my job. We agreed that we would drive at 100mph but the RMP Range Rover escort disappeared at some stage and we were confronted by a road block and a platoon of armed soldiers which forced us off the road into a lay-by. After the inevitable stand-off, the cavalry (the RMP) appeared again from nowhere and waved us on through the road block.

No-one would ever have known that I had fallen off my horse during a rehearsal on the Maifeld for the Queen's Birthday Parade on which I was Parade Adjutant but for a tell-tale green stain on my riding breeches. Whilst everyone else was 'As-you-were-ing' at the front, I was passing the time cantering up and down the vast area towards the Olympic Stadium. Suddenly, Cicero, my handsome charger otherwise a West Berlin Mounted Police horse, was spooked by a deep, black hole in the grass whereupon he reared and I gently slid off ending up on one knee. No-one noticed my indignity so allowing me to quickly re-mount

and carry on but an eagle-eyed subaltern did in the Mess at lunchtime. It was probably Beattie or Acworth if they were back from visiting the cookhouse on one of their many extra orderly officer duties! Nevertheless, it became a very expensive one for me! By way of a post script to that parade, the Quartermaster demanded that I hand in my regimental saddlecloth, it being a starred item. I said I would when the Commanding Officer handed his in. It has decorated my office desks ever since!

One of Max Maloney's instant traditions was sounding Reveille outside the CO's and Adjt's houses on Regimental days. Because of the time taken to march the Corps of Drums between the two, the latter got a particularly early call. By a happy coincidence, Albuhera Day 1972 dawned but a few hours after the birth of our first child, Georgina, making it an extra special dawn. I don't know about our German neighbours but our laid back Irish doctor and his wife, Nigel and Joyce Digges, were certainly not over amused at such an early call. However, at least it paid them back for the apple pie beds and other booby traps which had greeted me and my bride a year previously!

The Battalion took its turn with other major units and the three occupying powers guarding Rudolph Hess in Spandau Prison, a large old dilapidated 19C Prussian building of which he was its only inmate. The military guard was superimposed on the quadripartite team of prison officers. The soldiers duties were onerous and apparently scary as many claimed it was haunted and to have seen ghosts of former prisoners etc. We had no direct contact with Hess, indeed were forbidden to talk to him, but saw him often, especially in his exercise periods in the prison garden, and certainly sometimes exchanged looks. Perhaps equally memorable were the formal ceremonial changing of the international guards. I experienced one in which we took over from the Russians. After the ceremony, there was the formal lunch and the unique opportunity of meeting an opposite number in the great Soviet Army. Of course, although it amazed us at the time, we discovered young Russian Infantry officers were blokes just like us – although it took a few drinks to relax us both to realise!

MEMORIES

"An idle Lieutenant whilst walking past the busy sign-writers outside the QM's office passed comment on the fact that Afghanistan on the Regimental Colour Board had been spelt with two 'fs' and that a mistake had clearly been made. Said idle officer ended up with five extras for insinuating that the QM was an idiot and couldn't spell Afghanistan. I am reminded every time I see Afghanistan on the news (with one F by the way).....".

Alain Chissel

MEMORIES

"As a new 2nd Lieutenant, I took part in Novices Boxing. At the start of the first bout Sgt Issacs told Pte Ansell, my opponent, that as I was an officer he was to hit me with respect. And so he did - all round the ring!"

Alasdair Goulden



1972

2 QUEENS OP MOTORMAN

In 1972 the 2nd Battalion The Queen's Regiment under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Mike Reynolds was stationed in Albuhera Barracks, Werl, some 50 miles to the east of the major garrison town of Dortmund. As a mechanised Infantry Battalion it was part of 6 Armoured Brigade which had moved to Germany in 1971 from the United Kingdom to replace a Canadian brigade. In Ulster the "troubles" which the Battalion had witnessed starting in 1969 whilst on a 2 year tour in Holywood, N Ireland had got considerably worse. Internment in 1971, an attempt to round up known terrorists, had failed badly in its aim, merely exacerbating the inter community strife and lack of trust in the authorities from the catholic minority. The Westminster (UK) government tired of the local government efforts from Stormont to solve the problem but in turn did little practical to help the situation. As a result various republican areas in both Belfast and Derry / Londonderry became virtual no go areas within which

the terrorists imposed their own form of rule and from which they ventured forth with a degree of impunity to bomb and murder civil and military targets.

In January 1972 two RUC policemen were brutally murdered in Derry and efforts to re-impose rule in the area led to Bloody Sunday and the killing of 13 civilians by the British Army. The situation worsened and in March 1972 Westminster declared Direct Rule. The Westminster Government considered various ways of trying to restore the rule of law but eventually became convinced that only a significant military operation would work.

In late July 1972 2 QUEENS was warned off in great secrecy that they would deploy to N Ireland within 48 hours and an advance party immediately flew to Aldergrove airport and then on to Ballykelly to await further orders. The battalion swiftly followed in a huge troop lift of men and equipment from BAOR into the province.

On the night of 31 July 1972 almost 22,000 security forces participated in the largest land operation since Suez. A significant amount of pre-warning was given of a possible operation which had the probably desired effect of most terrorists taking an enforced stay in Buncrana and other towns inside the Republic. Royal Engineer AVRE's were used to dismantle the significant barricades which had been set up. These were found not to have been mined and booby trapped as had first been thought. 2 QUEENS having initially been kept in reserve for operations Province wide moved to Derry on 5 August and into their TAOR which within the overall 8 Infantry Brigade orbat was to be the northern half of the relatively modern Creggan estate. Accommodation was limited with school buildings being utilised, which did not improve relations with the people of Derry. As Intelligence Officer having put aside my Soviet orbat I discovered that not a lot of reliable information was initially available to us. It quickly became apparent after numerous searches that those who might be of interest to the RUC were not in residence and nor to any great extent were the armoury of weapons supposedly hidden within the terraced and semi-detached houses.

In general the civil population was subdued and in most cases unwilling to show any support to the Army, which initially flooded the streets with foot and vehicle patrols and temporary VCPs, in addition to undertaking frequent

house searches. Three permanent VCPs controlling the main roads into the city were also established as platoon tasks. Nor was very much information forthcoming to the heavily guarded and brave RUC officers who patrolled with us.

There was an urgency to get the Army into more permanent accommodation and as overall troop numbers reduced the battalion was given an ever increasing TAOR which included the whole of the Creggan estate and elements of the Bogside using bases in Brooke Park, Blighy's Lane and a purpose built camp for two rifle companies affectionately known as Piggery Ridge to be formally named Creggan Camp. The Battalion was eventually to complete a 4 month emergency tour before returning to Werl. The rule of law had been re-imposed. However, during the 4 months bombings and sniper attacks built up as the IRA infiltrated back into the community and provided an added dimension to the daily aggro, usually minor sometimes serious with stoning and bottling often involving children.

It was in the Creggan that Lieutenant Colonel Reynolds devised and instigated the concept of multiple patrolling in an attempt to deter and defeat snipers with their escape options severely restricted. This proved to be a very successful tactic which was adopted Province wide.

MEMORIES

"11 Platoon found an empty Twynham hut and purloined the key to use it as a platoon office always locked and curtained to avoid prying eyes. As the CO and RSM appeared on a surprise tour of Coy lines they found the door unlocked. RSM Wilson ordered the maps and tables and chairs to be removed on the spot- "Rifle platoons don't have offices" were his first and last words on the subject".

Bob McGhie

MEMORIES

"As a Private in NI in 1978 our brick got shot at in Forkhill. Whilst running over the gardens my magazine pouch came open and spilled my magazines for the LMG all over the floor with me having to stop in the middle of a contact and collect them all - embarrassment and the gunman got away!".

Terry Price 3 QUEENS





1973 5 (V) QUEENS

Although it is hard to remember now, there was a time when general war was a real possibility and therefore general mobilisation was also well on the cards. It was not that long ago and the whole history of our regiment throughout its existence was geared to that scenario. This was especially true of the 5th Battalion. The regular battalions changed role, went to and left Germany, did sunshine tours or public duties; but the 5th Battalion was from its beginning to its end geared for only one role and one set of circumstances: reinforcing the central front in Germany in the event of a Soviet attack. Whether it would have got there or not is a different conversation – and at least a two-bottle one.

The battalion came into being after the formation of the Regiment, on 1 April 1967. It had an administrative battalion HQ and a very small HQ company. There were four of these, one in each of the counties of Surrey, Kent, Sussex and Middlesex and each had a subsidiary title that reflected this. Each company, as well as its three Infantry platoons, had a strong headquarters and signal section and a support platoon of anti-tank guns (later Milan missiles), 81mm mortars and MMGs. It also had a generous allocation of regular PSIs – up to three in each company – and staff; there was often a regular CO unless a suitably qualified Volunteer Officer came forward, as well as Training Major, Adjutant, QM and RSM.

In the event of war, the battalion would not go off as a formed unit, but each company would muster with its corresponding regular battalion, forming its fourth company. That meant overseas camps, interesting exercises and lots of paid training days. But to qualify for bounty, the men had to meet a quota of training days – fifteen in camp and 12 out of camp, as well as completing all the mandatory annual training tests – and this was rigorous and strictly enforced. Because of its role, the battalion recruited strongly from the start – especially in comparison with its poor cousins, the home-defence Territorial battalions. When these were folded in 1969, many of their soldiers moved over to the 5th, giving it a boost of trained manpower.

Of course there was an economic incentive too, for in the late 60s and early 70s the economy was in marked decline as militant trades unions and outdated industry struggled to cope with a changing world – struggled and failed. The officers and men of the battalion included lawyers, bankers and stockbrokers, teachers, hoteliers, civil servants and executives of all sorts; men in the motor trade,

railwaymen, bus drivers, lorry drivers, postmen, market gardeners, customs officers – they were all there. Many of the older NCOs had regular or national service experience. Ethnic minorities were still largely invisible but some new Commonwealth immigrants and were accepted on entirely equal terms. For married men, the demands placed by the level of commitment were considerable, especially at a time when “togetherness” was very much replacing “follow the drum” – and everyone was being urged to make love, not war. A few marriages doubtless foundered, many other – who knows – may have benefited both financially and from the husbands getting a little light relief from the demands of family life – not that the relief would have been very obvious to the wives concerned.

For many Volunteers, therefore, there was a social advantage to their service as well as financial and motivational. Many businesses and professions valued employees with military service; some provided extra leave so that the men could attend camp. And of course there was the mess life, the company parties and so on to be enjoyed. But all that said, no-one should go away with the idea that Volunteers did what they did for the pay and the partying; they did it because they believed very strongly that it was their duty to their country.

The early camps were at Sennybridge and Catterick but as early as 1968, one company went to Germany for two weeks with 3 QUEENS at Lemgo and Lüneburg. This set the pattern for the next few years: at least one company, usually a composite, going abroad to Germany, Cyprus or Gibraltar, with a camp for those who could not meet this commitment somewhere in Britain. In 1975 the battalion went to Germany for the first time as a formed body, putting 470 men in the field – 90% of its posted, effective, strength. This camp marked a turning point. From the autumn of 1975, the battalion would cease to be simply a pool of companies for regular battalions – whose establishment was changed to provide for a fourth rifle company – and became a field unit in its own right. Its HQ Company was increased accordingly. To underline the change, the battalion was assigned to a regular formation – 16 Parachute Brigade. There was, amazingly, still one member of the battalion who had served with the airborne forces during the Second World War: the Paymaster, Major Houghton, who had been a glider pilot, then RSM of 1 Royal Sussex and later, Mayor of Bexhill. The brigade commander, Geoffrey Howlett, late of the Queen's Own, was suitably impressed on his first visit.

by Jonathon Riley

MEMORIES

“One night when the late Max Maloney was CSM of Sp Coy in Flax Street Mill we entered a bar full of heavy drinking Protestants, mostly hard-core UDA men, in the Silverstream area of North Belfast. Max slammed his rifle butt down on the nearest table and in a parade ground voice bellowed “Stand up, there’s an officer present” the bar went instantly silent and sheepishly they all stood up”.

Bob McGhie

MEMORIES

“During NITAT training CQMS Chalkie White was due to be held up in a CPV on CPTA on an illegal VCP serial. The enemy got the location wrong and at 0200hrs carried out the IVCP on the main Folkestone – Dover Road near the Black Horse Pub – they also got the wrong van. The driver was surprised to a pistol being pointed at his head – 1 QUEENS was surprised when a police tactical response unit deployed to the area”.

John Powell

MEMORIES

“At the time we had several thefts from the Officer's Mess in Canterbury– it transpired it was a local yob who sought revenge because I had given him a kicking for riding his motorbike across the training area whilst I was out running”.

Jonathon Riley

MEMORIES

“CLF came to visit. I was QRF commander and was waiting with the CO, Adjutant and RSM outside Bn HQ for the staff car to arrive. When it was about 10 minutes late the CO sent the RSM to the Guard Room to see if there was a delay – CLF was there but couldn't get in because Pte Milligan was refusing entry because he hadn't got an ID card. Quite right too!”.

John Powell



1974

PRESENTATION OF COLOURS

After the formation of the Queen's Regiment in 1966 it was decided that new Colours should be presented as soon as possible, however operations in Northern Ireland and the sad death of King Frederick IX of Denmark meant that this could not happen in the early years of the Regiment's history.

By 1974 the requirement had become urgent and the Regimental Council invited Queen Margrethe II, as Allied Colonel in Chief, to present new Colours to the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th (Volunteer) Battalions of the Regiment on the 4th May. As the 2nd and 3rd Battalions were serving overseas the main organisation fell to the 1st Battalion which were stationed in Kiwi Barracks, Bulford, with representation from the other Battalions coming from COs, QMs, RSMs and Colour Parties. The selected venue was the Artillery Ground of Armoury House in the City, overlooked by a particularly unpleasant modern block of flats, but had the advantage of allowing the Regiment to exercise its Freedom by marching through the City of London after the parade.

Various recces were carried out by the 1st Battalion whilst serving in Belfast and a format for the parade was devised, ensuring that the hallowed Armoury House cricket pitch was not invaded and some weeks later various contingents centred on Kiwi Barracks. Sizing parades, drill and uniform inspections took place before the whole parade moved to Woolwich for the main event. Officers' shirt and oatmeal sock uniformity proving to be particularly difficult and only being solved by various subalterns exchanging the same items once they had been inspected and passed onto the back of the queue. Medals also proved a challenge as many soldiers had been awarded a GSM but the Medal Office failed to provide them in time. The QM produced, as the 'strange but correct procedure', cardboard strips covered with ribbon, however one officer decided to defeat the Medal Office by going on parade with a 50 pence coin as his in lieu medal – discovered on the day of parade and much to the fury of the Adjutant.

On a grey city day Lieutenant Colonel Mike Hayward marched on the parade in front of 2000 spectators and, in a clear and firm voice, gave the command for the parade to execute a right turn, meaning that the entire parade would face the rear. Not one countermanding order came from the warrant officers and the entire parade correctly carried out an immaculate left turn. The rest of the parade proceeded without a glitch!

In the grisly block of flats a gang of anti-military protesters had gathered with loudspeakers and intended to block out the parade with loud and unsuitable jungle music. However a strategically placed Metropolitan Policeman had his finger on the mains fuse box – history does not relate if he actually flicked the switch.

The Parade followed the usual pattern for the Presentation of Colours with the most poignant part being the Marching Off of the Old Colours as the forebear Regiments finally passed into history. Her Majesty then presented New Colours to the eight ensigns, followed by a march past, advance in review order and Royal salute. The only slight oddity being the sight of a senior regimental officer (who should have known better) spearing his medals as he sheathed his sword for the presentation and then seeing them sailing into the crowd during the recovery.



by Mike Ball



As Her Majesty inspected the 1000 strong Old Comrades and 5 living Victoria Cross and George Cross holders the Regiment exercised the Privilege with the Lord Mayor taking the salute at the Mansion House. The thwarted protesters from the flats had lined the streets outside Armoury House with bags of flour. Ready to throw, they quailed when confronted by a bowler hatted and splendidly moustachioed veteran, brolly in the en garde position, shouting 'throw that and I will have you sent to the Bloody Tower'!

The renowned artist Terence Cuneo was commissioned to record the event and produced a painting reflecting the actual presentation (and unfortunately including the wretched block of flats). Perhaps not one of the Regiment's most treasured artefacts it did contain a splendid, almost life size, image of Lieutenant Colonel John Stephenson – CO 5 Queens. Regimental folklore says that he took the rights out on all reproductions!

Perhaps the last words of this momentous day should be left to Her Majesty who, during lunch, summed up exactly what the Presentation of New Colours meant:

'When the Old Colours of the four distinguished regiments were marched off parade today, many of you must have

felt sadly that this was the end of an era. But I will ask all of you to look forward, and to regard the new Colours as an embodiment of the same traditions as the old ones, and to guard them and all they stand for to the best of your ability.'

As Colonel in Chief of our Regiment's successors, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, I am sure that Her Majesty would echo the same sentiments today.

The Colours that she presented on that day now hang in the cathedrals of Canterbury, St Paul's, Chichester and Guildford.





1975

6/7th (V) QUEENS

The return of a Conservative government in 1970 led to the revival of the TA. The cadre battalions were therefore to be the basis of an expansion of the TA, or the TAVR as it was now called, for home defence. In The Queen's Regiment, two new battalions, both now called "Volunteer" rather than "Territorial" were to be formed – the 6th and the 7th. These were to come into being on 1 April 1971, formed by expanding cadres and by transferring platoons or even companies from the 5th Battalion, which would then itself reorganise and replace its losses by recruiting.

The 6th Battalion formed its HQ and HQ Company (Queen's Surreys) on the 6 (T) Queen's cadre; A Company (Middlesex) was formed by the 10 (T) Queen's cadre. Its remaining sub-units were all re-roled artillery batteries and retained their status as batteries even in the Infantry role: D (Greater London RA), C (21st London) and D (Surrey Yeomanry). The 7th Battalion's HQ, C and HQ Companies (Royal Sussex) formed on the cadres of 8 and 9 (T) Queen's; A Company (Queen's Surreys) formed at Farnham by transfers from 5 Queen's and elsewhere; and B Company (Queen's Own Buffs) formed from the 7 (T) Queen's cadre.

After a little more than three years it was clear that it would be very difficult to keep on with recruiting and manning two full battalions – the numbers of officers, NCOs and soldiers were simply not coming in to make the units viable. Camps concentrated on recruit training

and if possible, collective training for one composite company. On 1 April 1975, therefore, the two battalions were merged into the 6th/7th (Volunteer) Battalion. Its HQ and HQ Company were at Horsham; A Company (Queen's Surreys) was at Farnham and Camberley; B Company (Middlesex) at Edgware and Hornsey; C Company (Royal Sussex) at Haywards Heath and Crawley; and D Company (Queen's Surreys) at Wandsworth, Sutton and Camberwell.

6th/7th Queen's was a success story. It received its Colours in 1981; undertook overseas exercises, exchanges and camps; took its place in major home defence exercises; provided the basis for the creation of the 8th Battalion and then recruited and replaced its losses. It lasted until the end of the life of The Queen's Regiment and still has a strong battalion association. Its character – and its characters – were legendary and are much missed by those who served. Max Maloney as RSM, CSgt Wren – who had served with 1 R Sussex in Aden; "Soapy" Lambert, a lorry driver who managed to win the TA soldier of the year trophy; SSgt Lightowler the armourer – an outstanding Bisley shot; Mike Adler the company commander at Farnham and Piers Storie-Pugh at Brighton; David Sime the Honorary Colonel. Too many to name them all and so these few snapshots must suffice for all.



MEMORIES

"In 1978 I volunteered for 6/7th (V) QUEENS in absentia. School friends Muir and Budd encountered a recruitment stand in Horsham, and put my name down as well.

Budd phoned to ask if I was free Thursday, promising cheap beer at the Drill Hall... so I became Pte 24465766".

Pte John D Salt

by Jonathon Riley



1976

1 QUEENS LONDONDERRY

The Battalion, at that time based in Werl in BAOR, undertook an operational tour to Londonderry from 9 Jul 76 to 16 Nov 76. The Battalion was commanded by Lt Col John Davidson. The Battalion's strength was approximately 41 officers and 590 other ranks. Londonderry was new to the battalion, apart from a short tour at the start of the troubles in 1969, and the experience would be very different from Belfast. A number of new skills had to be learned, not least because we were unable to bring our own vehicles and equipment with us from Germany and had to make do with rather tired equipment from the local stockpiles.

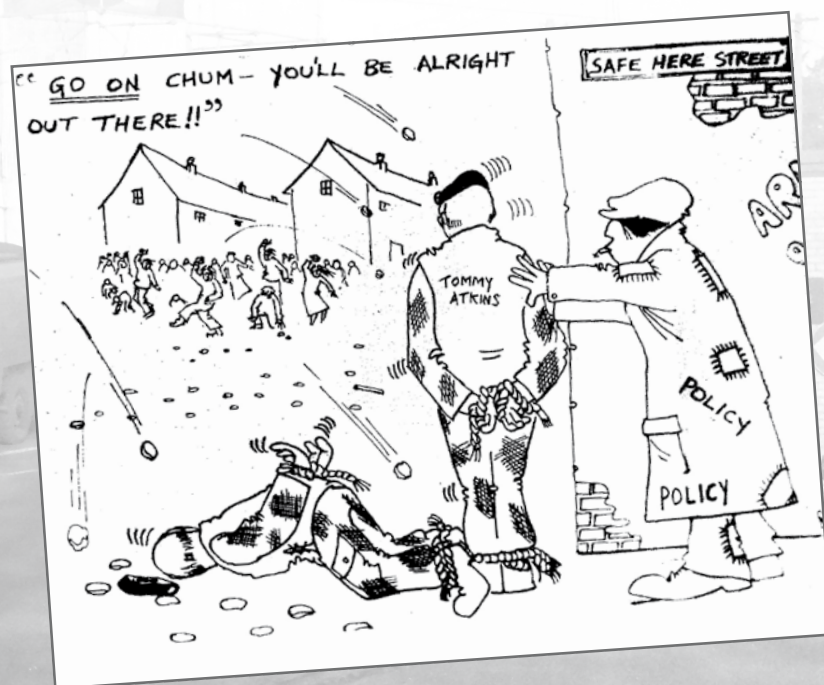
The Battalion's main areas of responsibility were: Rosemount (A Company, commanded by Maj Tony Ward); Shantallow (B Company, commanded by Maj David Dickens); the Creggan (C Company, commanded by Maj Buster Carlston); and the rural areas of the Enclave (Support Company, commanded by Maj Roddy Mellotte). In addition we were responsible for a number of permanently manned VCPs.

From the very start of our tour we were subject to a vicious propaganda campaign. Every unsavoury means was used to try to discredit us and cause us to over-react. This posed a significant dilemma: the extent to which community relations should be allowed to dictate the operational profile. If we were to lower the profile, in the

face of significant escalation of violence in Londonderry, the locals would be happy and the level of abuse and aggro would drop and we would probably have had a peaceful and uneventful tour; in the eyes of some a successful tour. However this would only have been a superficial "success" for us. In reality, it would have been a success for the IRA who would have used the period to reorganise, plan and re-equip ready to react with more violence when the time was right for them. Our policy therefore was to seek out terrorists, regardless of the consequences, whilst at the same time making every effort to ensure that our activities were directed only against those involved in terrorism.

We, and more importantly "Higher Authority", considered that our tour was very successful. We found and recovered 25 weapons and a considerable quantity of ammunition and explosives. We thwarted a number of IRA mortar attacks and command detonated devices. We also arrested 37 people who were later charged and convicted of terrorist offences. Less tangible, but more important in our view, were our intelligence successes. We recruited a number of sources including two who were potentially very high grade. Our concentration on intelligence was a major factor in judging the success of the tour.

Despite some 70 shooting and other attacks against us, we were fortunate to have survived the tour without any fatal casualties. Four soldiers were wounded, but of these only LCpl Britten had serious wounds to his stomach and thigh from an Armalite rifle. He was evacuated very rapidly from the scene by helicopter and his life was saved although he had to be medically discharged from the army and required, at the age of 21, a hip replacement.



by John Davidson





1977

3 QUEENS FIREFIGHTING

by John Salmon

In early August 1977, the 3rd Battalion returned to Somme Lines, Catterick, on completion of a six-month operational tour in Belize. After two weeks' "block leave" it re-assembled to prepare for an Arms Plot move to Dover at the end of the year, and to train for its new role in the newly constituted 6th Field Force (formerly 16 Para Bde).

Before the end of his first week back in the office the Adjutant was ordered by the CO to draw up a list of all those in the Battalion who had a current HGV licence, regardless of rank or appointment – and to do so without advertising the fact. After a few more days of "secrecy", it became clear what was afoot; the Fire Brigades' Union would soon be calling its members out on a national strike in a dispute over pay and conditions, but its Shop Stewards on Merseyside were hell bent on jumping the gun, and intended to take precipitate action. Forgetting about the imminent move to Dover, and its forthcoming role in defending Schleswig-Holstein from Russian incursion, 3 QUEENS crossed the Pennines, collected its "Green Goddesses" from Altcar TA Training Centre, formed the "3 QUEENS Merseyside Fire Brigade" and deployed. Interestingly many years later





1978

2 QUEENS GIBRALTAR

Gibraltar was seen as a 'sunshine tour' and a much deserved break for a battalion starved of warmer climates since Hong Kong in the late sixties and the all too brief six months in Belize in 1976. So it was with much anticipation that the 2nd Battalion took on a two year tour at the southern tip of Europe. The weather was great and the Gibraltarians were very friendly. However, the border was closed and there were a great number of duties!

A popular escape from the Rock were the regular 10 day adventure training runs to Morocco via the ferry to Tangiers. I got the opportunity to take a party from the Anti-Tank Platoon and with two three-quarter ton landrovers cleverly disguised in white paint we toured Morocco. I remember a really attractive country with dramatic scenery and the strange site of ski lifts on the side of mountains in Northern Morocco in temperatures well above 80°F.

We visited cities such as Fes, Marrakech, Casablanca and Rabat, but I couldn't help feeling the boys were holding out. Even though they enjoyed the open road and space, the weather and of course no duties they were definitely holding out. Yes, there it was in the south stretching for miles, the nudist beaches at Agadir! What a surprise, but this was as far as we could go because at that time we were not allowed to go any further south because of the security situation in the south bordering the Western Sahara and claimed by Morocco.

In the late seventies, when the Royal Navy still had plenty of ships amid a continuing Cold War threat, visits from Royal Navy ships and other NATO navies were quite frequent. Invitations from visiting warships were common and reciprocated. There was though particular fondness for the battalion's affiliated warship HMS Kent. As a County Class destroyer I believe she was flagship for a flotilla on a South Atlantic tour in 1979 to show the flag (not sure if that included Argentina). Their return visit en- route to Portsmouth was notable for the navy practising their newly acquired Brazilian cocktail recipes on unsuspecting officers in the Wardroom. The cocktails went down very well but you knew something was up when the ship's surgeon late in the evening was seen walking around taping pain killers to the foreheads of the most inebriated knowing they would find them in the morning when they most needed them. I should know I was one of them – and boy did they work!

An embarrassing event I am often not allowed to forget was an appearance on Gibraltar TV in a quiz show competition - up against HMS Rooke (naval reservists on

the rock) and being beaten despite having Captain John Partridge, a Cambridge University graduate on the team. This defeat was probably not helped by my inclusion in the team. For example, in answer to a music question I confidently identified the group as the Supremes but it wasn't - it was the Bee Gees! Oh dear!

The big downside of service in Gibraltar of course was the duties. Apart from all the obvious ones (not helped by the battalion occupying two barracks) there was a particularly tedious duty on the Spanish border. The border with Spain was closed in the 1970s and as resident battalion we had to maintain a platoon on border duties. This was particularly dull but it helped having the Anti-Tank platoon with me as I did my turn - CSgt Denny and NCOs such as Cpl Fearon and LCpl D'Aguila all helped to ensure there was never a dull moment!

The Royal Navy links must have had an effect in Battalion HQ. In 1979 the CO decided to send a 16 strong party on a Royal Navy aircrew survival course in the New Forest in Hampshire. Since the anti-tank threat on the Rock was considered somewhat low, I was selected to lead a party of officers, SNCOs and soldiers on what was the first course entirely from the Army. Amongst the team were Lieutenant Wayne Harber and the Chief Clerk - C/Sgt Mick Tombling. A week in barracks learning the finer arts of survival was followed by a week being chased around the New Forest with no food whatsoever. An Oxo cube had never tasted better as soup and followed by being given live rabbits (because we couldn't catch them ourselves) to cook and eat. After six days with almost nothing to eat except what we could catch or find, rabbits never looked or tasted so good! Returning to Gibraltar after two weeks I doubted our ability to turn a parachute into an improvised sleeping bag was going to be of much use on the Rock. Still, it had been quite an experience and the boys all enjoyed it.



by Andrew Roberts

1979

3 QUEENS SOUTH ARMAGH

In 1979 the 3rd Battalion was stationed in Dover as part of the 6th Field Force (later renamed 1 Infantry Brigade), or the UK Mobile Force, with a war role in Denmark or Schleswig Holstein in Germany. It was an experienced battalion with a great deal of operational experience in Ireland under its belt, as well as tours in Belize and in 1977, fire-fighting. The CO, Gavin Bulloch, had not only experienced and highly competent company commanders in the shape of Richard Graham, Mike Constantine and Mike Ball; but also tough and equally experienced company sergeant majors like Jenkinson, O'Sullivan, Garton and Saunders; and under them, many first-class sergeants and corporals. In March 1979 it was ordered to what was then the most dangerous place in which British soldiers were serving: South Armagh.

The pre-training for a tour in NI was a well-worn groove by now: shooting and tactical training at Lydd and Hythe ranges - including the famous Tin City and then a rural package at Stanford, all under the guidance of NITAT. The battalion moved out in early March.

It was in South Armagh that the heaviest levels of IRA activity were taking place against the security forces; police primacy had made almost no headway and police stations, heavily fortified, were regularly attacked. Tac HQ, the Echelon, C Company, D Company and various attachments went to Bessbrook Mill, taking over from the Grenadiers. A Company went to Crossmaglen and B Company to Forkhill. Crossmaglen was a particularly

tough spot, where a soldier had been killed or injured every month for seven years. So strong was the fear of the IRA among the locals that no-one dared even to return a casual "good morning". Soon after the battalion arrived, two harmless elderly people were murdered by the IRA for the crime of speaking to British soldiers: in doing so, they were marked as informers. To this hostile battlespace could be added cramped living conditions - 18 men slept, when they could sleep, in a space only 20 feet by 10; observation duties in places like the Baruki sangar; a rigorous patrol and search programme; and all the usual guards and duties.

The area remained remarkably quiet during the battalion's tour: there were only two casualties, Pte Murdy of the RAMC and Cpl Avery of the Drums. When a battalion had a quiet tour in a dangerous area, the explanation was always the same: the IRA took a good look at how the unit operated and realised there was too much risk for them in taking this unit on. The IRA, unlike modern jihadis, could be deterred by a unit that was unorthodox, unpredictable, and just plain professional. Better to wait for the next lot and hope they were not so hot, was the general feeling among the opposition. HQNI knew this well and recognised the fact in the high level of awards made to the battalion - an MBE, a BEM, two MiDs and three Commendations. Yet another successful tour under the Battalion's belt!

MEMORIES

"Pte Smith 21 discovering that trying to obtain a 2 for 1 session in a Malaysian brothel resulted in being clobbered hard across his big end by a giant economy sized talcum powder tin for which hospital treatment was needed".

Bob McGhie



1980

1 QUEENS BELIZE

Belize. Through the heat haze, memories surface. Palm trees – and 1 QUEENS soldiers painting them white all the way up to the gate of Airport Camp. “Sergeant Yoa why are they painting the palm trees?” “Cos I had a spare tin of paint sir.” Of course they all died and the Brigade Commander was furious. He was furious too about the hurricane. Shortly after the Battalion arrived – platoon commanders and sergeants had come out three weeks before for a jungle course run by the SAS – we received a hurricane warning and everyone in Airport Camp went into shelters to sit it out. 6 Platoon found themselves in a concrete bunker – the Ladies Changing Room of the swimming pool. Quite! Yes all right thank you. Then we opened the Emergency Hurricane Kit an MFO box full of tinned food but of course no tin opener. You’d think a platoon of Infantry would have a tin opener between them wouldn’t you? So it was quickly decided that yours truly was going out to get one. We struggled to open the

metal door against the wind. Outside it sounded like all the devils of hell howling for their breakfast. I remember hanging on to the railings, the wind blowing me off my feet, dragging myself along to the Gents Changing Rooms to ask another platoon. Through the noise I heard a big door banging, banging and then the banging stopped and I wondered if it was coming my way. When it was all over trees down, Landrovers in ditches, wriggly tin all over the place. I recall going to an O Group where some RAF chap explained that actually we had been one point short on the Richter scale and what we had survived wasn’t a hurricane just a tropical storm really and the Brigadier was livid. Airport Camp was Guards and Duties – some very dull jobs like guarding an ammo compound but close to the shabby delights of Belize City – thank heavens for the swap halfway through the tour when C Company came across to take over and B Company went west to Holdfast Camp and started to patrol the border, a mixture



by Nick Keyes



of pleasant jungle and the almost European terrain of Mountain Pine Ridge. Such was the story for Battlegroup North commanded by the Bn 2i/c, Major Rod Arnold. Meanwhile down south was Battlegroup South with the CO, Lt Col David Dickins MBE Battalion Headquarters, HQ Company and Major Roger Gancz’s A Company based in Rideau Camp. It’s hard to think of Rideau without hearing that theme from M.A.S.H with which the Camp radio station began each day as they mustered for the dreaded early morning run. The south was very different country, much denser, wetter jungle but places of great beauty like Cadenas OP perched on a knife edge ridge overlooking the river, the border and a Guatemalan army camp. I recall lying on the warm wriggly tin roof and watching a flying lesson as Mr and Mrs Eagle taught their chicks to fly just below us. And then swimming the river and crossing

the border to play in an International football match, us against the Guatemalan soldiers (we seem to have a regimental tradition of playing football against the enemy!), the whole aim being to find out as much as we could about what weaponry they had, so while they piled up the goals, we spent a lot of the game trying to clear the ball into a big marquee tent. At last it went in and I rushed in to get it, to be confronted by a .50 machine gun on its tripod. Needless to say the powers that be decided that we were getting too chummy with the Guats rather than appreciating all the intelligence we were gathering! A Company did some pretty serious jungle patrols – and some less serious patrols of the bars of Punta Gorda – Bobby’s and the Miranma spring to mind – and indeed Lt Gary Bourne’s platoon achieved an impressive first by walking the whole length of the country. Also under command of the battalion was a company of Gurkhas based in Salamanca Camp, but I only met them once, during a big exercise up north. We dug in round the enormous Hawkesworth Bridge spanning the Belize River. The trenches had room service – children from the village sold us fruit, fried chicken and beer – and I recall the CO and his party standing behind me to watch the attack



on the bridge. It was all a bit like A Bridge Too Far I thought proudly – then to my horror, I saw my forward section abandoning their positions for some bizarre reason and falling back across the bridge,

and despite our pathetic counter-attack, the umpires gave the bridge as lost. Then we withdrew and marched for most of the night. "Here's a section of Gurkhas" I was told "Take them with you." They must have dozed off at one of the rest stops and when the sun came up they were nowhere to be seen. Days later they stumbled out of the jungle, starving and bewildered.

But it is jungle patrols inserted by Puma helicopters that are the strongest memory of all. These were a great experience: dropped into a sea of green, no other humans for miles and miles, snakes, flies, huge blue butterflies, more flies, drinking from cut vines when the water ran out, and then cutting a landing site, bringing down great trees with explosive, clearing with machetes and calling up the helicopter. "Don't mess about" the Company 2i/c, Captain Les Edwards told me, "Put up the balloon and light a smudge fire, make it easy for us to find you." So we did. And when the helicopter arrived, the downdraught fanned our tiny fire and suddenly set the whole jungle alight, the helicopter sheered off and we ran for our lives as boxes of rations rained down on

us, chucked out of the door of a chopper that wasn't going to hang around.

Back in Holdfast Camp, I remember the animals. On the first night, I remember hearing a great racket coming from the company lines. I found a huge spider and a scorpion fighting in a pit and around them the whole company who had caught the unfortunate beasts, cheering them on and fistfuls of Belizean dollars changing hands. And the snakes: Major Rocky Hitchcock started a snake zoo and soon all the rabbit hutches were full of the brutes, and their breakfasting on live chicks became a spectator sport. And I remember the parrot. The end of the tour was approaching and handover to the Gordon Highlanders. And so the Sergeants Mess acquired a parrot, with the aim of teaching it to say "Stag On Gordons." But the parrot wouldn't cooperate and said nothing, whatever was said to it – until one day, it looked up from its seed tray and squawked F**k Off. Liking the phrase, it said it again and again. For weeks. After several weeks of continuous high-pitched F**k Offs, even the Sergeants Mess said it was hard to bear, so the cage got a cover and the parrot fell silent, unless someone needed to hear just the one F**k Off and lifted the drapes. Then we had a last party, and the coaches arrived, and someone found the Company Sergeant Major and we left Belize – and the parrot – to the Gordon Highlanders, and flew away with a suntan and fly bites and a jungle hatful of memories.

1981

6/7th QUEENS PRESENTATION OF COLOURS

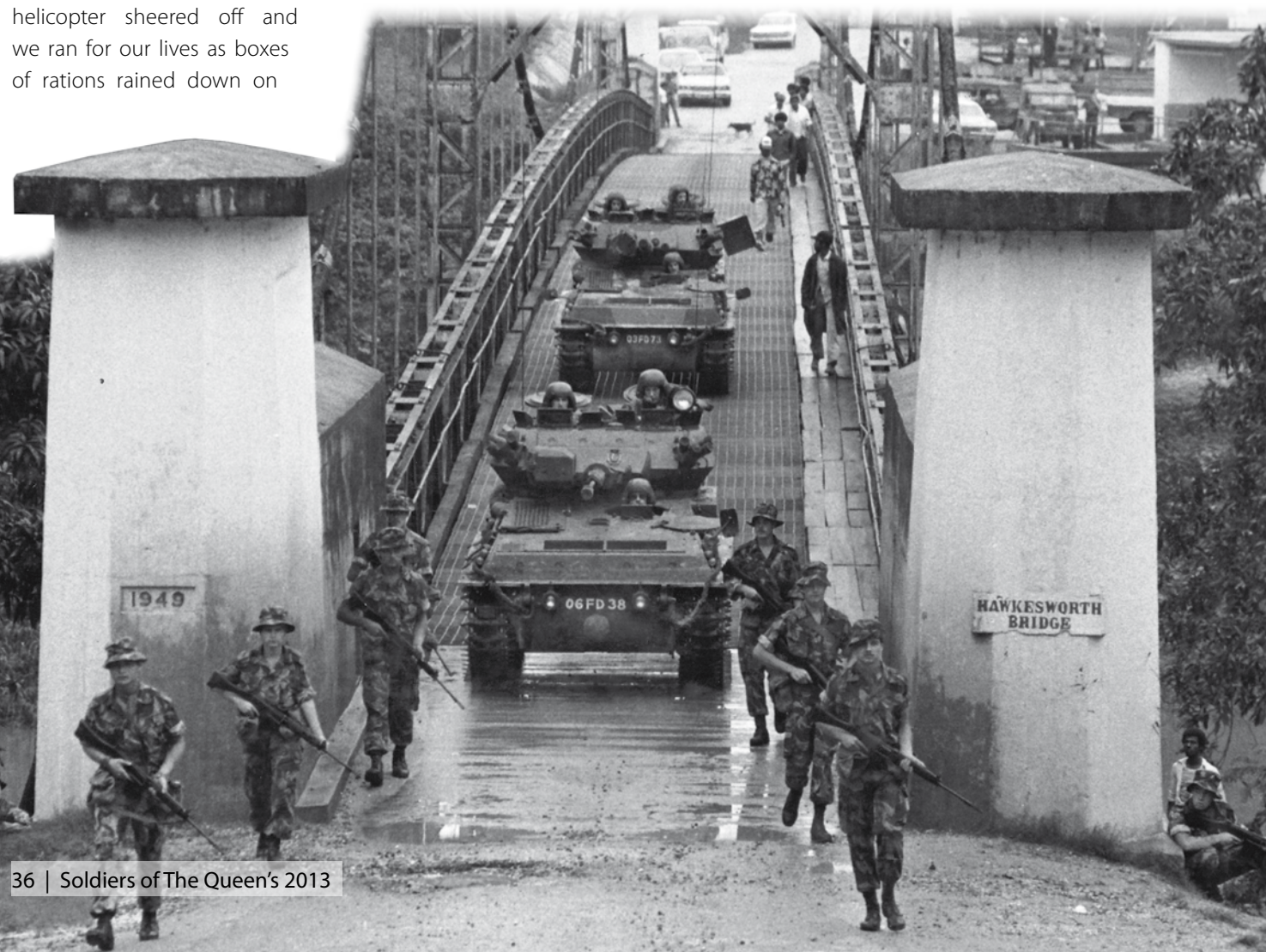
by Richard Putnam

This event marked the culmination of four years dedicated work and the 10th Anniversary since the formation of the 6th & 7th Battalions in 1971 that had been amalgamated in 1975. Preparation had begun four years previously under the guidance, dedication and inspiration of Regimental Sergeant Major Max Maloney BEM who had gripped the need for good parade ground performance in 1977 when the battalion's attention had shifted to ceremonial for the Queen's Silver Jubilee. He had trained Colour Parties and all who formed a contingent to line part of the Strand for the Queen's journey to St Paul's for the Jubilee celebration service on 7th June. On 30th June the same contingent took part in the Royal Review of the TAVR at Wembley.

By 1981 the battalion had reached a good standard in drill and turn out and the Presentation of Colours took place during Annual Camp and Lavinia, Duchess of Norfolk consented to make the presentation. The battalion assembled at Crowborough on 4th July. Although every man had undertaken ceremonial duties during the previous year this was the first chance for the Regimental Sergeant Major, WO1 Bernard Lively, and the Drill Sergeants, WO2 Bowen and CSgt Holmes to drill the whole battalion together. Every man was tested in foot and arms drill and 4 Guards each of sixty-six soldiers were formed.

Each evening a videotape of the day's work was reviewed by the RSM and the Project Officer, Major Putnam, who was also responsible for all the other preparations. After four days preparations had advanced enough for the battalion to be joined by the Regimental Band and Corps of Drums of the 1st Battalion followed three days later by the Regimental Band of the 2nd Battalion and the TA Band. The dress rehearsal took place at the South of England Show Ground, Ardingly on July 14th and unbeknown to everyone on parade, the Duchess was watching from the main pavilion, as she was as anxious as everyone else that things should go to plan on the day.

On the following day, 15th July, the battalion moved to Ardingly and put up 1,000 feet of marquees, positioned 6,000 chairs and laid up tables while contractors delivered signs, flowers and shrubs. The day of the Presentation dawned grey and overcast in contrast to the previous 8 days which had been the hottest for five years. The threatened rain held off until the





end of the day and, despite the lowering weather, the setting was perfect and the arrangements impeccable. 5,200 people attended the parade, including battalion families and old soldiers.

After the parade had marched on, the first of the main guests to arrive was the Honorary Colonel, Colonel David Sime, who was received with a General Salute. A fanfare by the TA Band heralded the arrival of the Colonel of the Regiment (Major General Rowley Mans) and a second signified the arrival of Lavinia, Duchess of Norfolk. Her Grace was also received with a General Salute, after which Lieutenant Colonel Mike Dudding, the Commanding Officer, reported the parade ready for inspection. After the inspection the massed bands and corps of drums, led by the senior Drum Major, WO2 (Drum Major) Smith of the 1st Battalion, trooped in slow and quick time. The Old Colours were then received by the Escort Guard and under the command of Lieutenant Leonard, were trooped through the ranks for the last time. Following the laying up of the Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Colours, the only remaining stand held by the battalion was that of the 4th/5th Battalion the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment. To the tune of 'Auld Lang Syne' these old colours were then marched off parade by their Ensigns, Lieutenants Chapman and Harwood. The parade then formed a hollow square and the drums were piled. The Quarter Master, Major Lucas, then uncased the new colours and laid them against the piled drums for the short service of consecration which was conducted by the Chaplain General, the Venerable Archdeacon W F Johnstone. With the consecration completed, the two Ensigns, Lieutenant Wray and 2nd Lieutenant Guthrie, came forward, knelt and received their Colours from the hands of the Duchess.



Her Grace then addressed the battalion, remarking that the Colours which she had just presented served to confirm the battalion's identity as a well-established unit of the Territorial Army. The Commanding Officer replied and then the battalion received its New Colours with a General Salute. The Battalion then reformed into line and marched past in line of Companies in quick time, a remarkable achievement of drill in only eight days of rehearsal. This was then followed by the Advance in Review Order and the uncommanded halt, the final Salute and three cheers for Her Grace.

After the march-off came lunch and during the speeches which followed the Honorary Colonel presented the Duchess with a jewelled Regimental brooch. So ended a remarkable day, which was the culmination of years of work and a notable achievement for a single Territorial battalion.

Two days later the battalion marched through Maidstone to lay up the Old Colours of the 4th/5th Queens Own. On the 31st July Colonel David Syme relinquished his Honorary Colonelcy and he was succeeded by Lieutenant Colonel Colin Cole, Garter Principal King of Arms, a former Second-in-Command of the 6th Battalion. At the same time Lieutenant Colonel Mike Dudding handed over his command to Lieutenant Colonel Richard Putnam.



1982

3 QUEENS BAOR and BATUS

The 3rd Battalion returned to BAOR in 1981 after a long absence. After conversion, it moved into St Barbara Barracks in Fallingbommel – variously known as Effing B or Falling Bar-stool – on the edge of Lüneburg Heath. Fally itself had some amenities such as a safari park, outdoor pool and golf course; it was also close to Hamburg and Hannover; but it was essentially a garrison town and its social life was all home-made. The work side of life however was demanding: training at Soltau, the RCDS and Staff College demonstrations, Command Post Exercises (CPXs) and support weapons concentrations in the first year. There was also "Snow Queen" in Bavaria, run by Micky Hurman. On taking command, Richard Graham instituted the Quebec inter-company competition, which from then on ran almost every year.



In the latter part of January '82 A Company spent a week with the Dutch Army near Arnhem. The company carried out battle inoculation training and a battlefield tour of Arnhem. C Company was able to go south to the 7th US Army Training Centre at Grafenwohr in Bavaria. In February the battalion shooting team qualified for Bisley against some pretty stiff opposition which had nothing to do with the fact that the battalion was sponsoring the Divisional Rifle Meeting! The team, trained by WO2 O'Sullivan, was CSgt Wakeman, Sgt Hunting, Sgt Bowdrey, Cpl Collins, LCpl Fisher, LCpl Wombell, Ptes Spicer, Hall, Harrison, Bird, Weekes, Stenner and Shepherd. Platoons also undertook patrols with the British Frontier Service and the Bundesgrenzschutz (see map included in 1985)

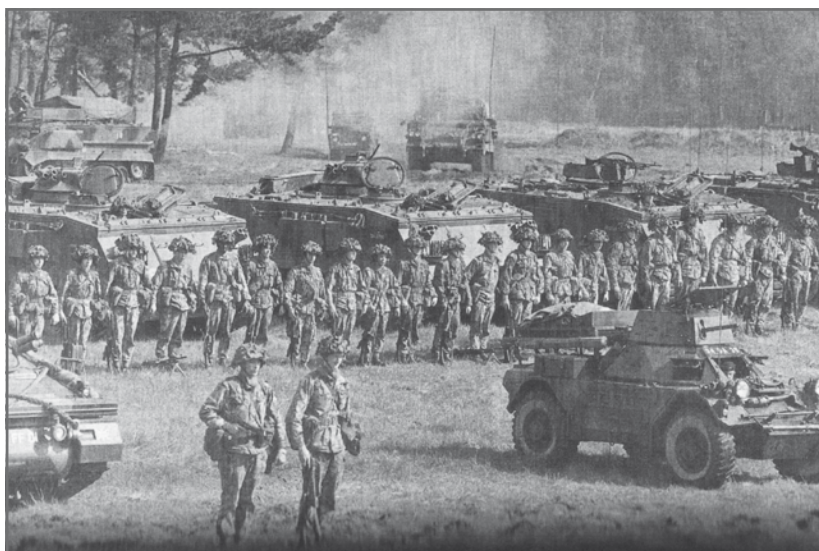
The summer months were spent in preparation for battlegroup training on EX MEDICINE MAN at the British Army Training Unit Suffield (BATUS) in Canada. A Company went with 3rd Tanks Battlegroup on MED MAN 7, Under Richard Graham's command the 3 Queen's BG on MED MAN 6. consisted of Battalion HQ with B and C Company groups; the Echelons; two squadrons of 3 RTR; a battery of 1 RHA; and detachments of anti-tank helicopters; Blowpipe air defence artillery and an RCT Troop, a total of some





1,000 troops. Before anyone was allowed anywhere near the prairie, however, there was extensive tactical work-up training in the mud of Soltau and plenty of shooting, as BATUS in those days, before the arrival of simulation, was all live-fire. After all that plus two months on the prairie – and of course some adventurous training in the Rockies and some R & R, the battalion was in very good shape indeed.

This was put to the test in the third year in Fally when after a winter of cadre training and company level beat-ups, the brigade commander descended for the ARU inspection and Operational Readiness Test – both passed with flying colours – then shooting camp at Sennelager under canvas followed by some training in Denmark and in the Netherlands. The big event of the year was a brigade and divisional exercise, Eternal Triangle, which as well as mechanised manoeuvre included a fifty-mile night infiltration on foot for the majority of the officers and men. Thanks to BATUS the battalion acquitted itself in the finest tradition of the Regiment.



1983

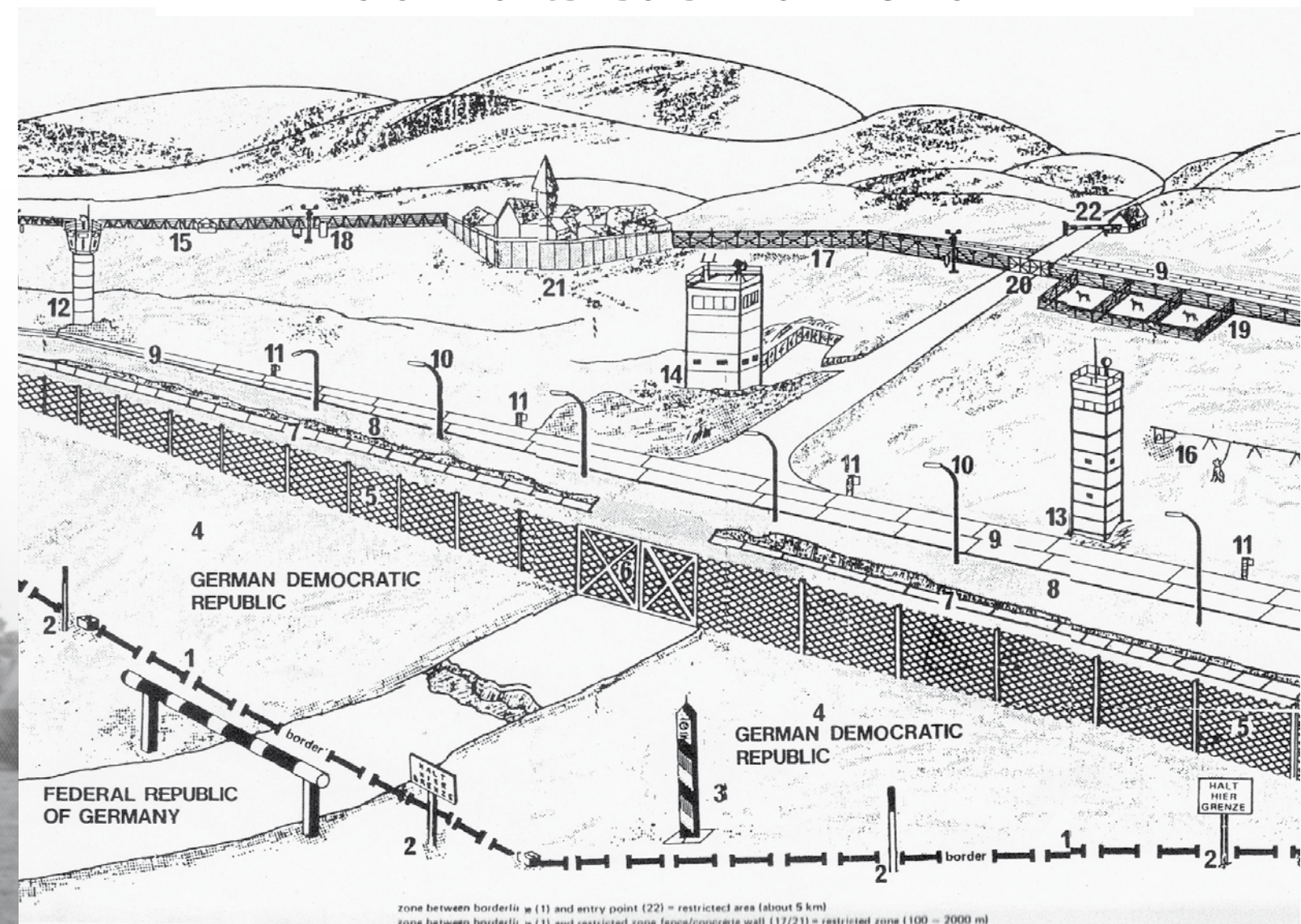
5 QUEENS BAOR

by Alain Chissel

When I was asked to write for the journal about the BAOR Exercise in 1983, my initial reaction was to say no. It was such a long time ago now but the more I thought about it the more determined I was to jog the brain cells and try and write. As I write now, I remember the exercise being called Ex RAGING BULL, as we were part of 33 Armd Bde and the bull was their emblem. It was indeed a great honour for a TA Bn in the days when the TA was ten times the size it is now (remember that far back?). We were just one of a handful of TA Infantry battalions picked for roles with regular Army formations, and we considered ourselves better than anyone else. In many ways as I look back, I think we were.

I was in B Company and this is a reminiscence of my time with them. B Coy recruited its rifle platoons from a 180 degree angle on the south coast. As a result, we were never the size of Guildford's A Coy, but after the legendary (and now sadly late) Richard Holmes left to go to the Wessex, we considered ourselves to be the best company by a country mile! As OC I was well served by a brilliant team with Steve Thompson as my 2i/c (who always left his rifle lying around), and Alan Jones as my CSM, whose hatred of dogs including my own gentle Golden Retriever was as a result of his being a postman in civilian life. Faces appear to me now as I write and shamefully I have difficulty in remembering the names. Jock Short, and Brian Brazier spring

SYSTEM OF GDR BORDER FORTIFICATION





to mind (saw him at Brigadier John Holman's funeral last year), along with Rick Staves and Nic Fields (best platoon commander I ever knew). Tom Lynch as PSOA kept me in line and curbed some

of my more outrageous excesses and Andy Franklin as CQMS who was also a gifted artist, whose portrait of my wife hangs with pride in our drawing room. Cpl Ellis, who became one of the best section commanders I had even though technically he was badged REME. Recruiting as we did close to Howe Barracks, Connaught Barracks and Shorncliffe we had a high proportion of ex Regular soldiers, men like Cpl Cleese and his mate, both ex Green Jackets who had gained their depth of experience in numerous Op Banner tours in the 70s.

Ex RAGING BULL went the way of most BAOR Exercises of the period. We flew out to Germany and dug in. For us, we were in the Sibbesse Gap and B Coy was the cork in the bottle in the village itself. Our role was FIBUA and to force the Soviet hordes to dismount and fight on foot, thus delaying them. The hills above the village hid over 20 Milan firing posts to give you an idea of the importance of that particular piece of ground close to the old IGB (Inner German Border for those that have forgotten – see map). On a recent trip to Poland I took a diversion to go via what would have been the front line in WW3, which was a strange experience indeed. The village looked prosperous and peaceful – how different it could have been! We won of course and the Soviet threat was averted. The rest of the Exercise merges into so many others. I know we carried out a night exfiltration that I asked the CO to do to fill in a 24 hour gap in the programme. We would have all had a

fair amount to drink and almost certainly Chris Argent (OC C Coy) and I would have had supper together in Paderborn and fallen asleep (again) over the food, having put the world to rights.

B Coy, like the rest of the TA of that time was never tested in battle – we were lucky. As an amateur historian and WW1 battlefield guide I often wonder how we would have done. I look at the exploits of our Regimental forebears in that citizen Army of 3.5 million men who eventually won that war, who were experts at what they did. The Army of 1918 was the best led, best trained, best equipped and best motivated army on the battlefield and the only army capable of winning that war. Like us, they were as Shakespeare would have described them "Warriors for the working day". I realise now that we would have been as good as our grandfathers in WW1, our fathers in WW2 and in many cases recently as our sons and daughters in Iraq and Afghanistan. I often look at the endless acres of names on the Thiepval Memorial on the Somme and at Arras (that forgotten battle of 1917) and on the Menin Gate in Ypres and I see names of relatives of those Men of Kent I had the privilege to command.

Throughout a long career as a Territorial, who went on to command and eventually retired as a full Colonel, I regard those days with B Coy as the best in my soldiering life. The gifts they gave me when I left hold pride of place in my study and office, and serve to remind me that I was once a soldier and young and had that pride of leadership and comradeship that those who have never been soldiers can never begin to understand.

MEMORIES

"Bet between Maj Trueman OC Sp Coy and the BN 2IC, that we couldn't take a wombat anti-tank gun up to the 2IC's office.

Quite a feat, but we took a gun up the stairs along the corridor to the 2IC's office putting barrel first through the door and under his nose.

The 2IC totally nonchalantly looked straight down the barrel and stated 'it's dirty', then looked back down and got on with his work. At least we won the bet for the OC".

R G Denny

1984 FREEDOM OF THE CITY OF BELFAST

by Jonathon Riley

During 1984, a unique coincidence occurred when all three regular battalions of the Regiment were on active service in Northern Ireland at the same time. The 1st Battalion was doing a two-and-a-half year stretch in Omagh, covering Tyrone, Strabane and Fermanagh, as part of 8 Infantry Brigade; the 2nd was doing a two-year residential sentence in Londonderry, also under 8 Brigade, looking after parts of the city and the enclave; and the 3rd arrived in January on a four-month roulement tour in West Belfast. All the battalions had TA soldiers from the two Volunteer battalions on attachment, so it can reasonably be said that every battalion was there.

The Regiment had inherited the freedom of the City of Belfast from the Royal Sussex Regiment, originally raised in Ireland as the Earl of Donegal's Regiment in 1701; the

present were the Commanding Officers of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, Lt Cols MRI Constantine and D Beveridge. Coincidentally these three officers had served together in 1 Royal Sussex, the battalion on which the freedom of the city had originally been conferred. Also on parade were the three Regimental Sergeant Majors, WO1s I Budgen (who tragically died later that year), Taylor and Garton, along with the bands and drums of the 1st and 2nd Battalions. The parade was inspected by the Lord Mayor, Cllr A Ferguson.

That evening, the TV news carried the report that "traffic in Belfast city centre was brought to a standstill when armed soldiers converged on city hall." Usually, such a report might have then detailed some big security operation; this time, however, it described how the parade had marched

from the Royal Belfast Academical Institution in Wellington Place, to the City Hall, where the plaque commemorating the raising of the 35th Regiment is still to be seen.

Considering the intensity of operations in all TAORs – PIRA for some reason didn't feel the need to reduce activity during this important event - it was a remarkable event and one that is remembered by all who took part.



Royal Sussex had continued to recruit in Northern Ireland right up to 1966. The Mayor and Corporation, after discussions with the Colonel of the Regiment, decided that whatever the security situation, the Regiment would exercise the freedom of the city. On 30 March therefore, each battalion found a guard of twelve men with the three regimental colours – the first (and only) time these were on parade together since presentation. The parade was commanded by Lt Col PV Panton but also





1985

2 QUEENS

FALKLAND ISLANDS

'What have we acquired? What, but a bleak and gloomy solitude,..... stormy in winter and barren in summer, where a garrison must be kept in a state that contemplates with envy the exiles of Siberia; of which the expense will be perpetual and the use only occasional' Dr Samuel Johnson, 1771

One great advantage the 2nd Battalion had over that illustrious man of letters is that we, at least, visited the islands in 1985-6 and could report that much had changed. Yes, the islands were both stormy and barren but the image of a forgotten and dispirited garrison was far from reality and remains so today, nearly 30 years on. Our ever shrinking world brought the Falklands within reach, while the telephone and mail system kept us closely in touch with life at home, particularly with our long-suffering families. Phone bills did rocket but as ever the unfailing support of families contributed in no small way to the successful outcome of that tour.

The Battalion was in Oakington Barracks, Cambridge and we needed something for Lt Col Peter Cook and his Battalion to get its teeth into, and the Falkland Islands was it, just 3 years after the Falklands War. Luxury coaches and BA 747 Jumbos got us to the South Atlantic in a matter of hours rather than days or weeks.

The Falkland Islands and South Georgia proved to be an outstanding experience for us all and it was a great deal more enjoyable than sceptics had expected. Fortunately it was their summer, although that took a lot of believing at times. We never quite got used to the strong, ever present wind but we all returned with ruddy, weather-beaten faces

and a very high standard of fitness from tramping the hills on settlement patrols, live firing, the 'Death March' (as the Battalion Exercise became known) or simply fishing and bird watching trips.

The companies enjoyed a degree of independence rarely experienced by an Infantry battalion in those days and we were able to carry out operational tasks, battlefield tours and adventurous training with the fullest support of inshore patrol vessels and an impressive variety of helicopters. Without them, movement was laborious and painful, such were the staggering loads that had to be carried. Packs averaged over 80lbs with the poor radio operators and mortar men having to carry well in excess of 100lbs over the difficult and sometimes treacherous terrain. There were injuries of course but less than expected and luckily none really serious.

Company locations varied considerably. Fox Bay, a portacabin camp on West Falkland had plenty of wildlife and marvelous scenery. Both A and B Companies spent approximately two months there, while C Company was at Kelly's Garden by San Carlos Water throughout, acting as the QRF. They shared the facilities with the four Chinook helicopters and crews of 1310 Chinook Det. This became a very happy 'marriage' which greatly contributed to the support we received from them. There was however an understandable reluctance for visitors to stay overnight at Kelly's Garden. A particularly repulsive RAF drink called the 'Hooby' caught a number of us unawares while the rest sensibly kept away. Finally Bn HQ, HQ Company and one Rifle Company (B and A Companies for two months each) were at



Stanley with accommodation on the infamous Coastal 3, a floating hotel for an assortment of nearly 850 servicemen. The Rifle Company endured fatigues and the Guard when not on training or patrol. It therefore proved a good decision to swap over the companies half way through the tour

We certainly must not forget the Recce Platoon (+) in South Georgia who spent four months away on this most striking of islands, the 'Gateway to Antarctica', with its impressive peaks, numerous glaciers, long since abandoned whaling stations and memories of Shackleton's epic journeys. There were 40 in the party commanded by Maj Bob Wilby, including R SIGNALS and RE dets and a doctor, RM Mountain Leadership Instructor and some administrative staff.

Our bosses at HQ BFFI, a rather large Joint Services HQ situated in Port Stanley itself were most supportive of our ventures and



frequently visited their only Infantry battalion at Company locations and out in the 'Camp' as the locals call the areas outside Port Stanley. HE The Governor and Mrs Gordon Jewkes, who came from Kent, were also frequent guests and kind and generous hosts. Principal among our visitors from UK was the CGS, General Sir Nigel Bagnell GCB CVO MC whose excellent three day visit to the Battalion included overnight stays with B and C Companies and a generous glass of the 'Hooby' which was taken quite unflinchingly. Perhaps our most unexpected visitor was Jacques Cousteau, the renowned underwater explorer and conservationist.



The Battalion counted itself very lucky to have had the chance to operate in the Falklands and South Georgia as we did. Neither of our sister Battalions got a similar chance. Many may be relieved about that, but we were very much the wiser from our experiences and could now at least speak with some authority on the whole Falklands question.



1986

3 QUEENS – A BUSY YEAR!

1986 is not a year that anyone who was serving in 3 QUEENS at the time is likely to forget! In January the Battalion moved back from Fallingbowl to Howe Barracks, Canterbury, initially as part of 2nd Infantry Brigade, before joining 5th Airborne Brigade in the role of an airlanded battalion. Almost immediately Lieutenant Colonel Bob McGhie took over from Lieutenant Colonel David Beveridge MBE as the Commanding Officer and the Battalion began preparation for a six month tour in Belize which it deployed on at the beginning of April. On return to Canterbury in September and before going on leave the Battalion was warned for a four month Op CARA CARA tour in Northern Ireland along its border with the South which it deployed on in January 1987. Despite completing two operational training packages, three moves and four changes in establishment, the Battalion still managed to complete the normal unit tasks such as the Annual Personal Weapons Test, Tickle Competition, career courses and the Quebec Inter Company Competition. It was also awarded the 1986 Wilkinson Sword of Peace for the support that it provided for the community during its tour in Belize. As the citation said "Above all the men of the 3rd Battalion The Queen's Regiment provided a tangible, concerned and friendly relationship between the Governments and Peoples of Belize and Great Britain."

Howe Barracks was being redeveloped as the Battalion arrived. 22 new town houses had been completed for the soldiers each consisting of three six-man flatlets with a self contained kitchen, baggage room, communal room, ablutions and drying room. They all had Yale locks and door bells but the Quartermaster, Captain Mick Aylward MBE, retained the master key! The families were not so lucky initially as their new accommodation had not been completed and 108 of the 228 families were given married quarters in Dover, Shorncliffe, Chatham and Rainham instead. In good PSA fashion the new houses came on line while the husbands were in Belize leaving the wives to pack, clean their quarters and move to their new homes without their support! The Families Officer, Captain Hugh Besson, and the Rear Party certainly earned their pay over the period!

Having changed to a four rifle company establishment each with its own Milan, Mortar and CONBAT detachments and reinforcements from our TA battalions and other units in the Queen's Division the Battalion moved to Stanford

where the temperature seldom rose above freezing. The companies still managed to carry out a variety of training including: long marches with heavy loads, field firing, jungle navigation (of which there is a lot in Stanford!), ambushes, attacks, helicopter drills and watermanship most of it in the snow! On return to Canterbury the Commanding Officers changed over. Lieutenant Colonel David Beveridge's departure went slightly astray as the RSM WO1 Barry Moss summoned the helicopter carrying the Recce Platoon "hit squad" before the Commanding Officer had finished his final address to the Battalion! Some swift footwork was required to recover the Commanding Officer and to remove the handcuffs so that he could complete his speech before he was flown away. Luckily his sense of humour was at least partially restored after he was reunited with his wife Janet, the company commanders and the Battalion's warrant officers when he was dropped off in Leros Barracks for a farewell drink!

Four days later the first soldiers, those going on the jungle warfare course including Captain Guy Wood, left for Belize where the temperature was over 40°C and humidity over 80% – quite a shock after Stanford where temperatures were as low as -12°C! Two weeks later the Battalion flew in and took over from 40 Commando RM. Belize is a country about the size of Wales and in some areas is equally mountainous. The difference is that the hills are covered in the main with dense jungle and the temperature and humidity are considerably higher! The country is bordered by Mexico in the North and Guatemala in the South and West. Off the coast are the Cayes, small sandy desert islands along a coral reef, which is second only in size to the Great Barrier Reef in Australia. Communications across the country are difficult with only short stretches of metalled road. Most roads are dirt tracks the condition of which depends on the weather! It rains a lot in Belize very heavily, sometimes 10 inches in 12 hours, and the road and the rivers quickly turn into raging torrents. This can be rather unpleasant particularly if you are dug in on a river bank guarding a Reserve Demolition as members of Fire Support Company manning a ford across the Mopan River in San Ignacio found out! The best way to move around is by helicopter which made the RAF Puma Squadron and the Army Air Squadron extremely popular with the jungle patrols, particularly when they were short of water or lost!

by Amédée Mievill





Battalion's annual confidentials. While on the island on one occasion, a report that an armed terrorist was going to cross the border west of Holdfast Camp where C Company,

commanded by Major Gouda, was based. The Battalion 2IC met the RAF Puma and Harrier Squadron Leaders in Airport Camp Officers Mess and planned a cordon and search operation to try and catch the individual round an air photograph at the bar. This was not how the Staff College would have tackled the problem but it suited the situation! Unfortunately the terrorist stayed in Guatemala but needless to say the Commanding Officer was not impressed with being left out of the planning for the only operational incident of the tour!

Holdfast Camp is situated west of San Ignacio in the North within sight of the Guatemalan Border. Situated in open cultivated land it had a very nice swimming pool and a plentiful supply of tarantulas! It was not far from Baldy Beacon, an open area on Mountain Pine Ridge which was an ideal location for field firing training. Situated at well over 2000 feet the air was much cooler and fresher and a welcome break from the oppressive humidity and torrential rain in the jungle lower down. Company attacks were carried out supported by RAF Harriers, Royal Artillery 105mm Light Guns, Milan, CONBATS and fire from the 30mm Rarden guns on Scimitars which were crewed



by the 14/20KH. Fire power demonstrations were also laid on for the Deputy High Commissioner and other dignitaries including the other services. A number of Milan missiles gave a passing demonstration of Rapier as, having been stored in an ISO Container for several months their electronics had been affected by the high humidity. As a result they could not be controlled by the firer and disappeared into the distance never to be seen again! Humidity was always a problem and items stored in containers had to be treated with caution when they were finally used, as the IS Platoon from the West Indies Guard Ship HMS Ariadne discovered. The Platoon, made up from cooks and mess stewards from the Ship were issued with makrolon shields and put through their paces at Holdfast Camp. Sadly the shields had gone through some form of chemical change and even soggy mangoes which were being used in lieu of bricks went straight through them! This training was followed up with a night in the jungle and the following morning there was a long queue of sailors asking their Captain if they could go back to their normal duties on board their ship immediately!

Patrolling in the jungle was a serious business because, as well as the heat, humidity and wild life, the terrain was extremely challenging. Regular water sources were in short supply and navigation and communication extremely difficult. Pte Shane Cox of Quebec Company became the only serious casualty of the tour when he was badly injured by a falling tree while clearing a helicopter landing site in the jungle. The response by everyone involved in his evacuation to Miami and ultimately to hospital in England was superb. From Cpl Millen, who subsequently received a C in C's Commendation for his action, who looked after Pte Cox at the site of the accident to the RAF Puma pilot



who hovered in darkness in the tree tops to allow Pte Cox to be winched out, to the surgeons at Airport Camp who kept him alive and stabilised him for his flight to Miami, to the doctors in Miami who prepared him for his flight to England, there can have been no better example of inter-Service cooperation. Sadly he was paralyzed by this horrendous accident but was moved from the spinal injuries unit at Odstock Hospital to Canterbury for the presentation to Cpl Millen's of his C in C's Commendation by Commander 2nd Infantry Brigade, Brigadier M R Lee OBE. He also met up with his friends from Quebec Company who had raised a large sum of money in a series of events including a relay race from Salamanca Camp to Airport Camp. The money has been used to try and make his life more comfortable as he comes to terms with the limitation in his mobility caused by the accident. A plinth was raised by his Company at the site of his accident before they left Belize.

The Battalion survived the hurricane season although a team, including Major John Pratten, was sent on a 10 hour RAF Puma flight to Jamaica in case reinforcements had to be sent to the island to help in the clear up after the hurricane. Fire Support Company was also warned to prepare for IS duties in the Turks and Caicos Islands but although loaded onto a Hercules they did not actually deploy. The Battalion also fielded a visit by the Editors Abroad scheme, a TVS team who filmed a variety of activities for the Coast to Coast programme and Soldier Magazine. Upgrading cadres, TEWTs, Potential NCO Cadres were also crammed in and a Beating of Retreat by



the Corps of Drums marked Quebec Day in typical fashion. Nevertheless the Battalion was pleased to see the advance party of the Cheshire Regiment and to demonstrate their fitness to the Army Athletics champions! HQ 5 Brigade had insisted that all fitness tests had to be done by the Battalion at the times set for Parachute units in UK which meant that after six months in the heat and humidity of Belize everyone was extremely fit!

In September on their return to Canterbury from Belize everyone was met by the Commanding Officer as they got off the buses and told that they would be going on a four month Op CARA CARA tour in Northern Ireland in January 1987! This was tricky news to have to explain to the families after six months away! Following some leave, training started immediately for the tour and Lt General Sir John Akehurst KCB, CBE, Commander UKLF Field Army, visited the Battalion to present LS&GC medals to CSgt Cooper, CSgt Vickers and LCpl Cummings and to try to explain to both the Battalion and the wives why the Battalion had been selected from a cast of 52 Infantry battalions to go to Northern Island so soon after returning from Belize! Needless to say the Battalion turned to its right and got on with the operational training courses and cadres which, with a short Christmas and New Year break continued up the end of January when the Battalion deployed. The Army certainly got value for money out of the Battalion in 1986 and its officers gained a wide range of skills and experiences that stood them in good stead for the future although the wives and families probably would not have agreed!





1987

1 QUEENS SOUTH ARMAGH

1 QUEENS deployed on Op BANNER from Tidworth (as part of 1 Bde) to South Armagh from June to October 1987. It was to be one of the last operational deployments by the British Army of 4 ½ months duration (with a weekend for R&R) before the new 6 month deployment (and 2 weeks R&R). 1 QUEENS were the first major unit to deploy to the Province with the new SA80 rifle.

Thoughts of the forthcoming tour exercised Battalion Headquarters whilst the Battalion was still in Gibraltar (Jan 1987). In particular the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Mike Ball realised that he had a shortage of Lance Corporals with which to command patrol teams. To that end he tasked me with running a short and sharp (2 weeks) cadre to identify those with the necessary robustness, leadership skills and Infantry experience to command in, what was at the time, the most dangerous theatre of operations for the British Army. This was achieved through a combination of sleep deprivation, non stop activity and Northern Ireland focussed tactics (the Battalion was lucky in that most of the Battalion had served in Omagh Co Tyrone between 1982 and 1985 and there was a wealth of experience – although those selected for promotion had to attend a fully fledged NCO's Cadre on return from South Armagh. None of those selected were found to be wanting on the tour (and indeed some went on to become commissioned officers).

After the usual pre-NI Training in Mooltan Barracks, Salisbury Plain and at the Northern Ireland Training Advisory Team at Lydd and Hythe, Shorncliffe, the Battalion deployed in June. Bn HQ, HQ Coy and the Close Observation Platoon (COP) were based in Bessbrook Mill along with HQ Sp (Surveillance) Coy (Maj Robert Knight, Capt Mick Bernier, Capt Robin Cope (R Anglian att)) and a Company attached from the Royal Green Jackets (one of whom was sadly to die in a helicopter accident during the tour and another in the Battalion was shot in Beleek). The Bn 21C was Major John Harcus, Adjt Capt Simon Deakin, Ops Offr Capt Jezz Ashton, RSO Capt Matt Brown.

A Coy was based in Forkhill (Major Tony Russell, Capt Gary Bourne, Lt Billy Bolton, Lt Jon Wright, 2Lt Simon Burnett). They also manned an observation tower on the hill overlooking the village (G40).

B Coy was based in Crossmaglen (Major Anthony Beattie, Capt Paul Corden, Lt John Powell, Lt Richard Owen, 2 Lt Nick Moore, Lt Julian Perry, WO2 CSM Brian Kelling). Sp (Surveillance) Coy manned 3 observations towers (G10, G20, G30) in B Coy's AOR (these were effectively tall surveillance platforms defended by a WW1 style trench system with underground accommodation for the crew and a visiting patrol multiple of 12).

C Coy (Major Malcolm Lawson (an attached officer for 2IC), 2Lt Gordon Fotheringham, 2Lt Norman Woodhill (RAPC att). Don't recall much what they got up to – I did once support them in an operation – interesting planning which even managed to leave ATO as the last off the field! – I can still see the ECM trolley being defended by a pistol waving JNCO as my helicopter took off!

As a Battalion we worked hard but the IRA had had the wind knocked out of them by the SAS ambush at Loughgall in May 1987 (among the dead were Michael Lynagh and Seamus McElwaine whom we had come up against in East Tyrone during the first part of the Omagh Tour) – the level of attacks was therefore remarkably low. The new SA80 rifles probably put them off as well – the accuracy far exceeded the SLR, particularly at long ranges and we made sure enough children got to look through our sights so they could report back our, exaggerated, capabilities. It is worth noting that the Range Wardens at Lydd complained that we were destroying their old style wooden targets at a greater rate than the SLR and were in danger of running out of Fig 11s/12s.



Major incidents that stick with me are the mortaring of G30 (I think at Glassdruman) – the IRA hid the Mk10 mortars in a wagon of hay bales. After the first salvo, which landed on top of the underground accommodation doing little damage, the hay bales caught light and initiated the second salvo in situ blowing the roof off the local post office.

B Coy dealt with 2 x murders. One a result of the INLA feud which saw us recovering a body on the border near the western end of the Concession Road. I remember two things – the body had rigor mortis and once ATO had cleared it of booby traps we had to drag it down the road with the leg sticking up in the air to recover it. The other was the execution of an informer from Dublin on the eastern side of the Concession Road. The body was taken away by a local undertaker before we got there but we still had to clear the area. The night infiltration was complicated with one platoon getting stuck in the bogs clearly seen by the Adjt (Deakin) with P4 in the PUMA over-watch.



Vic Ebbens was QM and there was a fire in the stores at Bessbrook. It was amazing how many items ended up being written off. The design of the store must have had the same TARDIS like qualities as the Atlantic Conveyor off the Falklands in 1982!

There are a lot more stories of course – most of which are unprintable – but this was a truly challenging tour and one which certainly honed our Infantry skills.





1988 FORMATION OF THE 8th BATTALION

THE QUEEN'S FUSILIERS (CITY OF LONDON)

Increase the size of the TA – sound familiar? It certainly did in 1984, except then we had a government that meant what it said. The TA was increased that year to 86,000, a target to be reached by 1990. Among the new units identified was a light-role Infantry battalion to protect the corps artillery brigade in I (BR) Corps, a three-company battalion with no support weapons, to be formed in London District, largely by transferring formed companies from existing battalions, which would then have to take up the slack by themselves re-forming and recruiting new companies and platoons.

Thus the 8th Battalion was born – or to give it its full title, the 8th (Volunteer) Battalion The Queen's Fusiliers (City of London). It was to be a joint battalion formed by two regiments, The Queen's and the Fusiliers, but it formed part of the order of battle of The Queen's and there it appeared in the Army List. The Adjutant General, no less, laid down that if and when Colours and Drums were issued, they would be those of The Queen's.

CORPORATION OF LONDON



LUNCHEON

to mark
**The Formation of
8th Battalion The Queen's Fusiliers
(City of London)**

at Guildhall
Monday, 21st May 1990

The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor
Alderman Sir Hugh Bidwell, GBE DLitt.

Sheriffs
Mr Alderman Paul Newall, TD, MA, DL.
Derek Edwards, Esq., JP

Chairman of the Reception Committee
John Minshull-Fogg, Esq., TD.

As it was to be formed in London, all the new battalions TA Centres and Drill Halls were within reasonable reach of Battalion HQ. This gave it something of the feel of a close-knit, pre-war London TA units – but meant that the company commanders could not escape the scrutiny of the CO, 2IC, RSM and Adjutant. The formation started with the formation of a new HQ and HQ Company in the old 23rd London drill hall at Clapham Junction – plenty of room, as it had once housed two squadrons of Sherman tanks. The Duke of Kent, Colonel-in-Chief of the Fusiliers, opened the refurbished barracks on 15 July 1987. More refurbishment went on at one of London's oldest drill halls, Flodden Road, Camberwell. This had been home to an over-recruited platoon of D Company 6/7 Queen's and it became A Company (1st Surrey Rifles) of the new battalion. B Company 6/7 Queen's, at Edgware and Hornsey, also moved across to the 8th Battalion – appropriately on Albuhera Day 1988, since it was a Middlesex company. C Company – the Fusilier Company of 5 RRF at Balham – transferred on the same day as B Company and later opened a detached platoon location at Orpington in Kent.

Lieutenant Colonel Nick Brunt of the Fusiliers was the first CO, with Sir Greville Spratt as Honorary Colonel. Lieutenant Colonel Peter McLelland of The Queen's succeeded him. Queensmen who helped to get the

battalion going included Major Pat Gwilliam as Training Major, Major Webb as 2IC, Captain Wall as PSAO, Major Bateman as QM, RQMS Jordan and RQMS (NRPS) Hamill, CSgt Layzell as a PSI and Pte Ayers as driver.

by Jonathon Riley

Because it was formed largely from already extant units, the new battalion was up and running very quickly. It went to camp in 1988 and then sent soldiers on Exercise Bold Grouse in Denmark; it went to Germany for its first camp abroad in 1989 as well as undertaking a full-scale defensive exercise on the Plain; and in 1991 held camps in Devon and in Cyprus.

On 21 May 1990 the Battalion was honoured by a luncheon to mark the Formation in Guildford hosted by The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, Alderman Sir Hugh Bidwell, CBE, DLitt on behalf of the Corporation of London.

For all that, its life was short. With the fall of communism and the reorganisation of defence that followed, it was greatly reduced. What was left went into the London Regiment. The 8th Battalion therefore ceased to exist on 31 March 1992.

1 QUEENS DENMARK and UKMF

by John Acworth

What a great year for the 1st Battalion. Having recently returned from Northern Ireland, the Battalion had to convert rapidly becoming a Saxon Battalion as part of the United Kingdom Mobile Force (UKMF). The aim was to be operationally fit in time for Exercise Bold Grouse in Denmark in the autumn – not an easy task as the corporate knowledge of exercising "BAOR" style was by this time limited. However, through a series of work up exercises including Saxon Queen and Wiltshire Pheasant, the Battalion was ready for the deployment. Once in Denmark we worked closely with the Danes including our sister regiment The Danish Life Guards. The Danish Army is a Home Guard force and all the soldiers kept their weapons at home including anti-tank guns with their ammunition! They know their operational areas intimately which was wonderful except when they were the enemy force!

One memorable event during the exercise was when Queen Margrethe came to a very smart lunch in the field. While enjoying lunch with the Band in scarlet and the table laden with food and silver, Tangier Company was attacked in the woods about 200yards away. Danish fighter jets then attacked, all the lights fused but we continued to entertain Her Majesty. She left in good heart to witness Tangier Company rounding up prisoners after a successful defensive battle.

Despite all the hard training culminating in Bold Grouse, May saw Tangier Company deploy on Op Cutter, in support of HM Prisons at Rolleston Camp. Holland Company and the Quebec Band with the Corps of Drums fielded Freedom Parades in June in Guildford, Reigate and Banstead, Ramsgate and Maidstone. A team from Tangier Company took part in the Nijmegen Marches and a number of adventurous training exercises took place. The usual champion company (Kirke's Company), won by Sobraon Company, commanded by Maj JP Riley with CSM WOII PK Tidey as CSM, took place and the sports teams were revitalised after our previous time in Northern Ireland.



1989

5 QUEENS BAOR

By the summer of 1989, the Battalion was very nearly fully recruited and had just completed an incremental training programme culminating in a battalion level exercise called Potent Terrier. Every single member of the Battalion was conscious, and proud, of the Battalion's new role as part of 20 Armoured Brigade in Detmold. The Battalion Headquarters with some elements from the companies had already taken part, as a fully-fledged formation within 20 Brigade, in the 4th Division CPX in April. 5 QUEENS was eagerly looking forward to the 20 Brigade FTX due to take place in September. This would be Annual Camp for that year. It is worth noting that 20 Brigade, under command of the then Brigadier Mike Walker (later to become Chief of the Defence Staff) had, on 5 QUEENS becoming part of the brigade the previous year, taken every care to ensure that the Battalion felt that it was a welcome and valued part of the brigade. This attitude enormously helped the Battalion command structure and was a huge encouragement to every soldier in the unit.



by Philip Pearce

The then current plans called for the Battalion to be reinforced on deployment by six MILAN platoons from other (Home Defence) battalions, in the event, two of them (5/8 KINGS and 3RRW) were able to join the Battalion for this exercise. The MILAN Platoon commander, Captain Mark Whelan, was a very happy man indeed! It was thus a very strong Battalion which deployed to Germany on Friday 8th of September and was delighted to be hosted and administered by its comrades from the 2nd Battalion. Sunday 10 September was, of course, Sobraon Day and the 2nd Battalion generously invited the 5th to take part in all the commemorations and celebrations. Many old friendships were renewed, new ones forged, and indeed all those in the know were keenly aware that 2 QUEENS were to play enemy to the 5th over the following exercise. Friendly rivalry indeed!

During the exercise the Battalion was tested in nearly every phase of conventional warfare. After some warm-up training carried out by the Battalion, the main FTX saw them training in defensive operations which, coupled with a great deal of patrolling, was an excellent introduction to the Battalion's first FTX on the Continent for five years. During this phase, Battalion Headquarters was extremely comfortable established in a barn of considerable proportions. The Quartermaster, Major Bill Marshall, had discovered that it was one of the places earmarked for Corps Headquarters in a real deployment. He promptly got permission to use it which made us the envy of the other battalions.

At the end of the defensive phase, the Battalion withstood a major set piece attack carried out by 11th Armoured Brigade. The umpires reported that the Battalion acquitted itself extremely well, and the Battalion as a whole was looking forward to the next phase of the exercise.

This was to be an extremely active one; one of the things which the commanders of 4th Armoured Division and

20th Armoured Brigade wanted to test was the ability to move non-mechanised Infantry soldiers around the battlefield as quickly as possible. As a result the Battalion hardly drew breath but thoroughly enjoyed a phase during which they launched a helicopter assault in Chinooks (shades of Apocalypse Now!), executed opposed and unopposed river crossings and two companies were at one stage moved by riding on Chieftain tanks. The exercise culminated in the clearance of a large wooded feature to secure the Start Line for a major armoured attack. It was slightly frustrating that ENDEX was called just as the Battalion was about to launch a full-scale attack, so before standing down the CO authorised a *feu de joie*. It could well have been unfortunate for him and the Battalion that the Divisional and Brigade Commanders appeared at that very moment; however as the Divisional Commander wanted a small favour from the Battalion all was well. Both these officers seemed extremely pleased with the Battalion's performance.

20 Brigade had taken a good hard look at the Battalion; every man in it, from the CO to the most newly joined private soldier, was fully tested and none were found wanting. Battle drills at every level were perfected and it was with a sense of pride and accomplishment that the Battalion prepared to return home. Little did any of us know that almost exactly two months later the Berlin Wall was to fall, and that we had taken part in the very last 443 area FTX of all.

This FTX was not only extremely valuable training, but gave every single member of the Battalion the confidence to know that they had the necessary skills for their role. The Battalion returned home looking forward to another FTX in Germany in 1990, a 4th Division FTX this time. The rapid changes in Europe and the financial stringency imposed, meant however that this was never to take place.

MEMORIES

"Ted Parker the QM was a tad surprised to be visited by newly joined 2Lt Andre Ramsey who had been sent down to be measured up for his body bag!"

John Powell



1990

6/7th QUEENS

The battalion entered the year with its reorganisation complete and with the battalion strength raised with a series of recruiting campaigns coinciding with a national campaign in the press to 605 all up including eighty HSF, some seventy-three short of establishment. Although disappointing this was in fact a major achievement in the light of the dire recruiting environment added to an annual 30% turnaround in personnel.

Three officers and eight soldiers took the opportunity to serve one year attachments with the regular army, the bulk with the 1st Battalion in Minden, W Germany and the remainder with the 3rd Battalion in Cyprus. With the loss of the Middlesex and Camberwell Companies, the battalion's centre of gravity shifted markedly and for the first time since 1975 Battalion HQ was centrally placed – in Horsham. Needless to say nothing stayed constant and "Options for Change" blew an ill



wind and it was obvious that the TA establishment would decreased – it was a time for reduction but with the whims of government some made bets that in time the decision would be reversed. That however was in the future!

In the early part of 1990 C and D Company had the opportunity to take part in an initial exercise held in the new "German" FIBUA village in Salisbury Plain, a very exciting new development in realistic training at the time. This long-awaited complex of eighty-seven buildings of all kinds, including mouse holes and rat runs through the roofs and beneath the streets provided those training with a real opportunity to engage in realistic street fighting. Perhaps we had forgotten how nasty and difficult this form of warfare is to conduct efficiently. This exercise reminded us of reality! The new facility stretched all personnel physically because of the requirement not just to move under fire from house to house but to fight from room to room and to think laterally how to move using cellars and roofs to try and outfox the enemy. This was considered one of the most realistic exercises that elements of the battalion were to be involved in.

Elsewhere the annual inter-platoon competition for the Builders' Merchants Trophy was won by A Company. The shooting team recorded its

best result at Bisley coming third in the TA Skill-at-Arms Meeting. The main event of the year was a very successful camp at Otterburn in September field firing for a week before taking part in a four day Exercise Border Riever in the Kielder Forest run by HQ 2nd Infantry Brigade; fast moving it was not the type of exercise Home Defence battalions were used to. The Recce Platoon became adept at inserting and extracting OPs behind enemy lines using Gazelles while Rifle Companies enjoyed riding into the attack in RAF Pumas. A Echelon had their capabilities exercised and stretched by having to maintain a 30 mile resupply line on road conditions in the forest that were far from ideal.

All in all 1990 was an eventful year with much change but the Battalion was in a good state for the events that were shortly to take place.

MEMORIES

During one of the visits by the General, Kiwi Carter took him to see one of my sections with CO and Adjt in tow. There he met Pte Cusack. Kiwi introduced him stating that Cusack 'had recently married a nurse'. 'Why did you marry a nurse', asked the General? 'Well sir, she wears her webbing in bed and you've got to get your kicks where you can' replied Cusack. The resulting fallout looked like something out of the 'Biggus Dickus' scene in Monty Python's Life of Brian.

John Powell

MEMORIES

At Catterick I received a phone call at about 1800hrs from Brigade. The Brigadier will carry out his annual inspection of the Battalion the following day starting at 0700hrs. The Battalion is to parade on the square in PT kit for a ten mile bash. Two miles into the bash I was overtaken by the ambulance. Lying in the back was Major Dicky Waite smoking a fag. I joined him. On a bend half a mile from home we debused. Crossing the finishing line the Brigadier smiled and said "Well done Dicky, well done Ted."

Ted Parker



1991

3 QUEENS CYPRUS

Transition, transition, transition. The Battalion left a distinguished history in NI behind for a well-deserved posting to Cyprus and changed role, climate, attitude, equipment and orbat. Cyprus was all about balancing the opportunity to take advantage of Mediterranean climate, location and culture while keeping the Battalion operationally effective in a complicated political climate and tri-Service fish bowl: work hard, play hard, be an ambassador. The main events were support to the first Gulf War, commitment of a reinforced company to the Falklands for 4 months and overseas exercises in Egypt, Sardinia and Portugal. On island commitments focused on protection of the Troodos station and the Eastern Sovereign Base Area. Guard duties were tedious but every soldier got the opportunity for demanding overseas exercises or 4 months solid training in the South Atlantic and most were awarded the Gulf support medal. 3rd Battalion drill was also sharpened up considerably under RSM TonyShrubsall for three full-blown Queen's Birthday Parades and countless guards of honour.

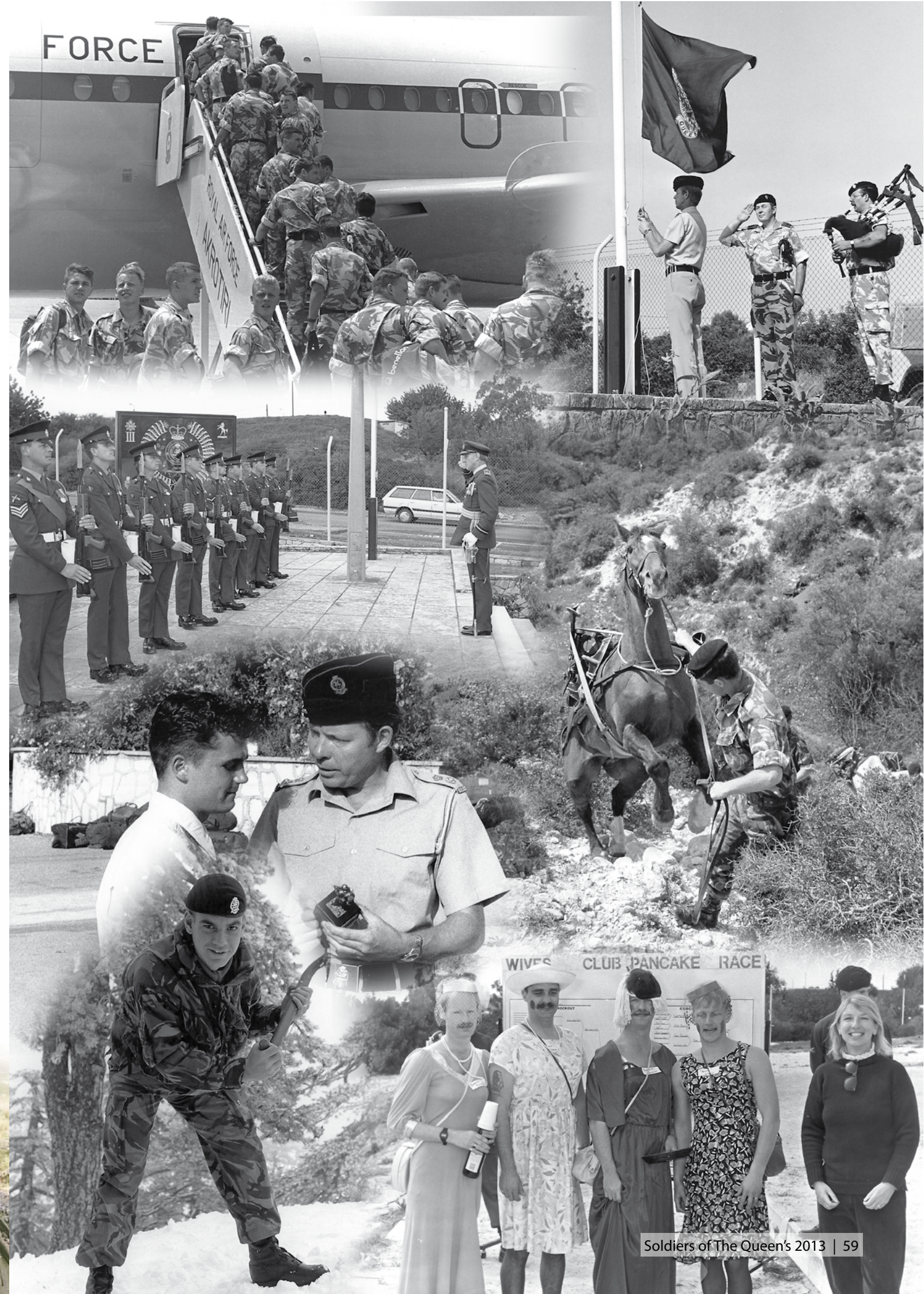
Cyprus offered a reasonable degree of continuity which allowed family life to recover and sport and social life to thrive. Queensmen and their families got the chance to ski, go-cart, ride, freefall, hang-glide, and undertake all adventure training activities especially water sports below and on the Med. All messes ran events throughout the year and 3rd Battalion hospitality, always generous and focused on the guests was able to flourish. It was a single man's paradise, Agia Napa was in bounds and provided a Mediterranean holiday in a day while a shorter night out generally involved 'the strip' in Limassol and the 'Crazy Parrots' became the other ranks' unofficial mess. 3rd Battalion soldiers have always understood how a perfect night ends in bed and not in a cell and their reputation for discipline and courtesy ensured they made the most of every social opportunity...for a soldier boy is a lady's joy...maybe!

The Gulf War and Falklands commitment reminded the Battalion of the need to keep operationally sharp up to the last day of handover even while running down and thinning out. Arguably one of the Battalions greatest achievements was to keep on top of all commitments, go out in style, and provide a faultless handover while way under strength with nothing more to play for. Morale remained extremely high. The key was to allow the rifle companies to run down to essential cadres for guards and training while reinforcing admin, welfare and logistic departments. HQ Company, specifically the QMs, MT, Orderly Room, Families Office and Adventure Training Wing, were all reinforced, notably from a particularly strong sergeants' mess, to ensure the battalion functioned professionally day to day but, as importantly, left the island and arrived in Canterbury or Colchester properly administered.

The final cocktail party and beating retreat, attended or watched by the whole Battalion, was immaculate and emotional. Drum Major Coskin, on impulse, threw the mace and caught it bang on the final halt. No-one wanted the Commanding Officer, Anthony Beattie, to allow the band and drums to march off for 'the last time Sir please' but he had to. Sussex by the Sea rang through Happy Valley for the last time as the orange lanyards disappeared. The event typified the Battalion's existence; professional and immaculate on duty, charming and understated as hosts.



by Mark Rayner





1992 DISBANDMENT

"MAY GOD FORGIVE THEM FOR I NEVER SHALL"

For the Queen's Regiment, the prospects for the future had been bleak for some time. Faced by a prosperous economy with high unemployment in London and the South-East, as well as the taking over of its traditional recruiting areas in London by an incoming immigrant community on the one hand and well paid businesses looking for staff on the other, the Regiment had to fight for manpower. Strenuous efforts were put into recruiting and especially retention, but these were negated by Service Pay, which had again slipped well behind civilian equivalents in the South-East and by severe limits on recruiting by the Ministry of Defence.

By early 1991, according to the Director of Infantry's figures, the Regiment was undermanned by a fifth of its establishment peace-time strength.

Despite the difficulties in the worsening economic climate of the 1990s, the Regiment would have been able to recruit itself but for the imposition of recruit capping by the MOD. Yes we were undermanned but we were set up for a fall by the MOD policy which restricted our recruiting in order to reduce redundancies and pave the way for amalgamations and disbandments which would become necessary due to the proposed savage cuts in the armed forces. Yet again, it seemed that

having accepted the Army Board's invitation to go large in '66 the large regiments such as The Queen's Regiment would automatically be the first to lose battalions in order to maintain titles and save the face of mealy-mouthed politicians and senior personnel's personal agendas.

There was one alternative, put forward by the Royal Hampshire Regiment, which was to combine the 3rd Battalion and the Hampshires to form a new regiment representing Sussex and Hampshire. This was rejected because of the practical difficulties of carrying out this plan apart from the 3rd Battalion's view that it was adamant that it was part of the Queen's Regiment and that's where it wanted to stay.

The news of 23rd July 1991 that the whole Regiment was to be amalgamated with the Hampshires on equal terms and the four battalions reduced to two came as a complete surprise. Initial feelings were that the Regiment





had been misled, tricked even, to cover up for some last minute lobbying on behalf of expected reductions elsewhere.

A massive campaign took place led by the Colonel of the Regiment but to no avail. On 13th September 1991 the CGS wrote to General Reynolds stating that all the points that he had raised had been examined and taken into consideration and further that it was not in the interests of the Army that further explanations of the reasons behind the choices should be made and with that he refused to justify the decisions taken – thus confirming the suspicions in the minds of all within the Regiment.

This was a bitter blow and, to all those who were serving or had served, incomprehensible. The Colonel of the Regiment immediately wrote to all Officers of the Regiment stressing that everyone must now begin to consider the future. In true Queen's fashion this is exactly what happened and

plans were duly made to make the amalgamation a success – which without a doubt it has proved to be.

Over the next months the Battalions worked hard to ensure that soldiers were, wherever possible, posted to the battalion that would best suit them, messes were packed up and silver returned to RHQ, bases were prepared for closure, and disbandment parades organised and executed. Each battalion paraded in the finest tradition of the Regiment and gave the Regiment the send-off that it deserved.

The final words must remain with our last Colonel of the Regiment, Major General Mike Reynolds. At the disbandment of the 1st Battalion in Minden on the Glorious 1st of June 1992, General Mike said as he gave permission for the Battalion to march off parade for the last time "May God forgive those who have destroyed my Regiment – for I never shall!" and with that the Battalion marched off to the strains of "Soldiers of the Queen" to face a new future.





MEMORIES

"Lt Col Les Wilson to Maj AC Mieville before getting command "Never forget the "Q"side because the other side won't work without it" and "It is difficult particularly in a Mechanised Battalion – but never forget the soldiers on the ground. They are your bread and butter!"

MEMORIES

Whist on patrol in Cookstown we got lost and I will never forget Dave Kirby hanging off a moving milk float trying to get directions whilst the rest of the team were running behind trying to be tactical!

Darren Shade

MEMORIES

"Nick Moore (4 Pl Comd) was a rather rotund short individual (known as Rodent) not known for his outstanding levels of physical fitness – during the tour he approached LCpl Holt the PTI and asked if he could knock him up a PT timetable since he wanted to go back on R&R 'a lean mean sex machine'! 'Certainly sir when is your R&R' replied the NCO – "next week" admitted Nick. Said Rodent went on R&R unchanged and returned unfulfilled!"

MEMORIES

"When logging the arrest of someone for being armed with a bread knife – 'presumably for loafing about' – 2 Extras!"

Jez Ashton

CHICHESTER BRANCH

by Paul Daines

The Chichester Branch has been quite busy this year. We were invited to go to Headley Court by WO1 RSM Allen Drew whose father is a branch member. The day out was very good and to see how the staff look after our service personnel and to talk to them was indeed a privilege. I know all the members came away with the sense of pride everyone had felt for the way that both the service personnel and the injured at Headley Court looked at life.

In May we held our annual Albuhera Dinner at the Beach Croft Hotel in Bognor Regis. This was well attended, with over 60 people there. The Guest of Honour this year was Colonel Peter Bishop OBE DL. It was good to see so many could attend this year as it shows that the branch is still as strong as ever. Peter Alner as always puts on a great Albuhera Dinner for us, and I would like to say a great thank-you to him for all the hard work he puts into it.

About 10 of the Branch Members who are Ex Royal Sussex Regiment went to the Annual Royal Sussex Dinner, where all had a great time and to see all our old friends who come along to the dinner.





HORSHAM BRANCH

by Jonathan Purdy

2013 has been another good year for the Horsham Branch. The core activities of our Branch year once again revolved around our four reunions (in March, May, September and December) held at the Horsham Cricket Club.

In addition to these, at the beginning of March members of the Branch attended the Regimental Association's Annual Reunion Supper and AGM at the Victory Services Club and over a long weekend in May members once again supported the excellent trip to Risquons Tout (Mouscron) run by the Farnham Branch. The company and the hospitality of the local Belgian Parachute association (who have their own bar!) was first class.

After parading in Mouscron, the party went on to Ypres for the Menin Gate Ceremony. In September members and guests enjoyed our annual dinner night at a new venue in Horsham. The food was outstanding and the company even better. I can see the dinner at its new venue becoming a firm fixture of the Branch's calendar. The annual Branch barbeque took place in June on the beachfront at Selsey and in brilliant sunshine. The Branch Secretary who doubled as head chef for the day was almost as scorched as the steaks!

A highlight of the year was the invitation extended to all Branches to march with the PWRR on its series of

Freedom Parades in the regimental area. As a Branch we focussed on supporting Chichester and Arundel parading our Standard for both events.

Albuhera

The Branch held a very successful Albuhera commemoration at the Horsham Cricket Club on Monday 13th May 2013. There were about 30 members in attendance. After the reading of the history the branch drank the Silent Toast to 'The Immortal Memory.' The Horsham Branch 'loving cup' was passed around from member to member, the silence only broken by the "glug glug" sound of the cup being recharged with champagne at appropriate points. After the Silent Toast a curry supper was served which was followed by a great deal of banter and catching up from the members.

The Branch's 2014 Albuhera commemoration will be on Monday 19th May at the Horsham Cricket Club and we would welcome any who have served with the PWRR, Queen's or other forbear regiments and who are in the vicinity of Horsham to join us on that night.

We welcome all members and guests to participate in the Silent Toast and to the curry supper afterwards





1 QUEENS and QUEEN'S REGIMENTAL RIDERS ASSOCIATION

The www.1Queens.com website has now been running for over three years. With the initial idea of getting a lot of the guys back together again, I really hadn't anticipated the overwhelming response and joining the Association was a natural progression, giving scope for a much wider communication network.

This year's activities started off on May 25th with the Annual 1 QUEENS Reunion in Herne Bay, ably organised yet again by Paul "Joe" Dormer, with an attendance of over 330 Queensmen.

David Lear brought along The 1st Cinque Ports Rifle Volunteers Corps of Drums, all ex-Military drummers, including several Queensmen which really made the night.

Profits from the sale of merchandise plus a collection, totalled £154.30 for the Benevolent Fund.

The busy weekend was rounded off with a Queen's Regimental Association Stand at a Napoleonic Battle re-enactment in Kent, with an interesting lesson on "skirmishing" given to us by the dedicated Buffs re-enactors.

More recently, we started up The Queen's Regimental Riders Association, which is open to all ex-Queensmen who own a motorcycle or trike, with the aim of getting us together and also fundraising.

We have regular social meet-ups for weekends and attend events such as the annual Ride To The Wall to the National Memorial Arboretum.

We will be holding a charity event next year to raise money for the Queen's Regimental Association Benevolent Fund, which will be open to everyone. "The One Aim Rally" will take place on 4th-6th July 2014 at The Share & Coulter PH & events ground near Herne Bay. Please see separate leaflet.

As well as live Bands (including military), we will be having a Hog Roast, numerous stands and stalls, entertainment and games. This will be a family orientated weekend with camping, combining a regimental theme, complete with Army tents and camp-beds! We hope that as many of you as possible will come along and enjoy the fun for this worthwhile cause.

Volunteers are most welcome for marshalling and generally helping out over the weekend.

Full details can be found at www.qrra.co.uk at a later date.

The next annual 1 QUEENS Reunion will take place on Saturday May 24th 2014 at The HBFU (Formerly The RBL) Central Parade, Herne Bay, Kent.



MEMORIES

"During the Belly Dancer's spot at a CSE show the audience booed and shouted for Sgt Ali Ibrahim the Provost Sergeant to show her how to do it. He obliged, to rapturous applause from the troops and shouts of "encore Ali Bey."

Bob McGhie

by Steve Parsons



THE VIPERS



The Vipers were one of the first groups to spring up after the amalgamation in 1992. Blue Cooper, an ex-Pioneer from 3 Queens, having served all his time in the Regiment did not feel like “moving on” as had been suggested. Proud of being a Queensman and wanting to maintain his links with other like-minded Queensmen he formed the Vipers so that he could keep in touch. The name Vipers comes from the anti-mine Viper that was deployed by the pioneers to clear a path through the minefields of North West Europe. He started with 12 veterans and grew the club to an amazing 541 members. He has a stalwart group of 22 who help him fund the club out of his own pocket.

Over the years the Vipers have helped over 280 Viper lads and other Queensmen with welfare problems, helping them get advice about pensions, medals, DHSS problems etc. Blue runs a monthly Forces advice surgery at the local Canterbury community centre.

In addition to running the advice centre and the Vipers as a whole, Blue also, along with his committee, runs an annual reunion to celebrate Quebec Day. It starts with a gathering at the Queen’s memorial in Howe Barracks and ends the following day with a visit to the Queen’s Museum in Dover Castle. This year some 78 members came together in the University of Kent, Canterbury for an outstanding dinner, which started with a superb display by the Vipers’ Pipes and Drums and which included a raffle to raise funds.

by Blue Cooper

QUEENSMAN LODGE 2694

by John Edwards

Way back in 2010 Steve Simmons Ex 3rd Battalion, Eddy Paul and Mark Syrett, all Masons in the province of East Kent and Bedfordshire, had the notion of perhaps considering the setting up of a Queens Regimental Masonic Lodge. They therefore decided to send an open letter to MQ Magazine (A Masonic Publication) in order to gauge what interest if any there might be for such a venture.

It soon became very apparent that there was a thirst to form a Regimental Lodge and after some correspondence between those who had identified themselves as existing Masons an initial meeting was convened in London to explore the possibilities. It very quickly became apparent that we would not be permitted to form a new Lodge in London as many were already having difficulties with membership but we were advised that if we had sufficient numbers we could consider, taking over a London Lodge and renaming it.

A lodge was identified and another meeting was organised with the existing members of that Lodge and a group of Ex Queensmen. Following further discussion and many emails it was decided that some 27 Queensmen would join Justinian Lodge 2694, with a view to changing the name to Queensman Lodge. This duly happened in December 2011 and the first Queensman Worshipful Master was installed in June of

2012. At the same ceremony we officially renamed the Lodge.

Following negotiations with RHQ we were granted permission to use the Queen’s Regimental Badge as our Lodge logo and it was also decided that as part of our Lodge Ceremony the badge in the form of a framed flag would play a part in the Lodge Ritual.

Since that date we have had the luxury of having an exceptional number of ex Queensmen requesting to be considered for membership of our growing Lodge. The procedure for membership acceptance whilst not onerous is to initially obtain a Proposer and Seconder and then attend a Committee Meeting of the Lodge for interview; if successful the membership application is presented to the full Lodge Membership for consideration. Due to the numbers that have shown an interest it can take between 9 to 12 months for a candidate to be called for initiation.

The Queensman Lodge is going from strength to strength and is earning itself a reputation for the way it conducts its ceremonies. Some ceremonies are passed to other lodges to enable the younger masons to progress fairly quickly through the degrees in order to reach the rank of a Master Mason.





THE GIBRALTAR REUNION JUNE 2013



Funnily enough the idea of a reunion in Gibraltar came about while Stewart and Angie Streeting and Dave and Dawn Body were sitting having a drink in a beautiful tavern called Bubba's in Santa Margarita, Spain last year. As they enjoyed the sunset their eyes were drawn to the view of Gibraltar which developed into reminiscences of days of yore and tales of daring do. As the drinks progressed the idea of a reunion to see the Queen's Birthday Parade in 2013 followed by a drink in Bubba's was born.

Hard work by Dave Body and official approval from head honcho, John Powell and Roger Ali ensured that the trip could take place. And so on the 7th June Kev Milsom, June Brooker, David Smythe, Les McCartney and his partner Dorothy Williams formed the Advance Party to meet with our sponsor Roger Ali and ensure that the bars and taverns of Gibraltar and Spain were ready for the return of elements of The Queen's Regiment!

Rapidly following over the next couple of days were Terry Jenkins, Neil Tunstall, Lee Bradley, Jez Davison, Chippy and Bernie Wood, Chris and Kim Agate and their daughter Shelley, Stich Azzopardi and family, Nick Duke and his partner, Ian Gotch and his wife, Dave Harris, Dave Lear and his partner, Charles and Denise Thomas, Pompey West and his wife, with John Powell, Mike Ball, Anthony Beattie and Ant (Billy) Bolton representing the "Ruperts"! Added to this motley crew were John O'Shea and his wife Silvia who having been 1st Bn had retired to Spain, discovered we were there and joined us!

So what happened – apart from having one or two drinks in Bubba's, the Trafalgar Bar, Britannia House, the Queens Hotel, the Bristol Hotel and the Horseshoe Bar? We partied, gate-crashed the wedding of Carlos and Edith MacDonald who had flown into Gibraltar with us; had a BBQ that we organised at the last moment at which no one got food poisoning; toured the Gibraltar tunnels hosted by the Gibraltar Regiment; attended the Queen's Birthday Parade; held a Beating Retreat hosted by the WOs and Sgts' Mess of the Gibraltar Regiment with the Band of 3 PWRR, Terry Jenkins resplendent in his scarlets which still fitted acting as Drum Major, Mike Ball taking the salute and The Queen's Regiment flag flying once more in Gibraltar.

What an awesome party with wonderful people. Thank you to all who helped organise the trip. Next year in Albuhera!

by Kev Milsom

ASSOCIATION BRANCHES

1 QUEENS BRANCH

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.

An annual reunion is held in Herne Bay once a year on the last Saturday in May

(It is normally held on the Saturday of the May Bank Holiday).

All are welcome to attend. Details are posted on the 1 QUEENS Branch website.

For more details of the branch please contact:

Steve Parsons

Mobile: 07926 201 040 - Email: steveparsons@1queens.com - Web: www.1queens.com

www.facebook.com/groups/61525655230/

CHICHESTER BRANCH

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:

President - David Beveridge

Tel: 01243-513483 - Email: davidbeveridge@onetel.com

Prospective members should contact

Chairman - Barry Cobbold

Tel: 07816-205034 - Email: barrycobbold@gmail.com

Secretary - Paul Daines

Tel: 01633-872132 - Email: paul.556daines@btinternet.com

or use the "email us" facility on the website:

<http://www.freewebs.com/qrachichester/>

EASTBOURNE BRANCH

This is a new branch and is just forming. For more details please contact:

Ron Stevens

Email: theredlionstonecross@yahoo.co.uk

FARNHAM BRANCH

The Farnham 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 - Ricky Bowden

Tel: 01252 711304 - Mobile: 07721 926481

Secretary - Annie Bowden Tel: 01252 711304

Treasurer - Dick Scales Tel: 02380 694974 - Email: annericky@aol.com



HORSHAM BRANCH

The Horsham Branch meets quarterly generally on the first Mondays of March, September and December plus the Monday closest to 16 May (for Albuhera).

For more details of the branch please contact:

President – Colonel Richard Putnam

Chairman – Steve Bell

Secretary – Jonathan Purdy

Email: j.purdy1@btopenworld.com

LONDON BRANCH

The London 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.

For more details of the branch please contact:

Secretary - Major RGC Thornton, TD,

Queen's Regimental Association, 4 Courtlands, 3-11 West Hill Road, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex, TN38 0HR

Tel: [01424 434002](tel:01424434002) - Mobile: [07956 586444](tel:07956586444) - Email: thorntonrgc@hotmail.com

MIDDLESEX BRANCH

The Middlesex Branch holds four or five events a year and usually meets at the TA Centre in Edgware and all ex-Queensmen are very welcome.

For more details please contact:

Chairman - Trevor Canton

Tel: [0208 368 0407](tel:02083680407) - Mobile: [07891 577119](tel:07891577119) - Email: queensman@orangehome.co.uk

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 members of the Forebear Regiments, Queensmen, PWRR, any one who has served as attached personnel to the Regiment or PWRR or any Members of the Queens Division. Membership Application is by being Proposed and Seconded and by interview in the first instance. For full details please visit the website or contact:

John Edwards

Tel: [01462 834134](tel:01462834134) - Email: john@bedsib.fsnet.co.uk - Web: <http://queensmanlodge.co.uk/>

SHEPWAY BRANCH

The Shepway Branch meets the last Friday every other month starting February at the Old Sgt's Mess, Shorncliffe Camp. For more details of the branch please contact:

Secretary – Charles Miller

Email: charles@cmiller1.orangehome.co.uk

THE QUEEN'S REGIMENTAL RIDERS ASSOCIATION

This Branch is open to all ex-members of the Queen's Regiment who own and ride a motorbike or trike.

For more details please contact:

Steve Parsons

Mobile: [07926 201040](tel:07926201040) - Email: steveparsons@1queens.com - www.1queens.com

THE QUEEN'S REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION IN WESSEX

The Queen's Regimental Association in Wessex, known as the Wessex Branch, is a new branch which went live on the Glorious First of June 2013. For more details of membership and any events please contact:

Secretary – Captain Anthony (Billy) Bolton

Tel: [07530 429926](tel:07530429926) - Email: Queensmen1661@gmail.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/QueensWessexBranch>

VIPERS

The VIPERS' 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.

For more details of the branch please contact:

Blue Cooper,

43 Suffolk Road, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 1SA

Tel: [01227 453810](tel:01227453810)

FRIMLEY AND CAMBERLEY CADET CORPS

The Frimley and Camberley Cadet Corps who started over 100 years ago are proud to announce they are rebadging back to the Queen's Regiment, under whose Colour they have continually paraded since 1913.

Boys and girls from a variety of backgrounds aged 6 to 13 are instructed by totally unpaid 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, TA or ACF but have become the newest Branch of the Queen's Regimental Association.

For more details of when they meet and how to get involved please contact:

Nigel Ferris

13 Jesse Close, Yateley, Hampshire GU46 6AH

Email: nigel@fdi-european.com - Mobile: [07836 726236](tel:07836726236)

ENFIELD BRANCH OF THE MIDDLESEX REGIMENT ASSOCIATION (Affiliated Branch)

For details please contact :

Mr Alfie Burford

Tel: [01323 733983](tel:01323733983)

Non Affiliated Groups but which have contact with ex-members of the Regiment

www.2queens.co.uk

www.1royalsussex-3queens.com

Soldiers of the Queens



Britons once did loyally declaim,
About the way we rule the waves,
Ev'ry Briton's song is just the same,
When singing of our soldier-braves.
All the world has heard it, Wonders why we sing,
And some have learn'd the reason why
We're not forgetting it,
We're not letting it fade away and gradually die,
Fade away and gradually die.....
So when we say that England's master
Remember who has made her so



It's the soldiers of the Queen, my lads
Who've been, my lads, who've seen, my lads
In the fight for the England's glory lads
Of it's world wide glory let us sing
And when we say we've always won
And when they ask us how it's done
We'll proudly point to ev'ry one
Of England's soldiers of the Queen

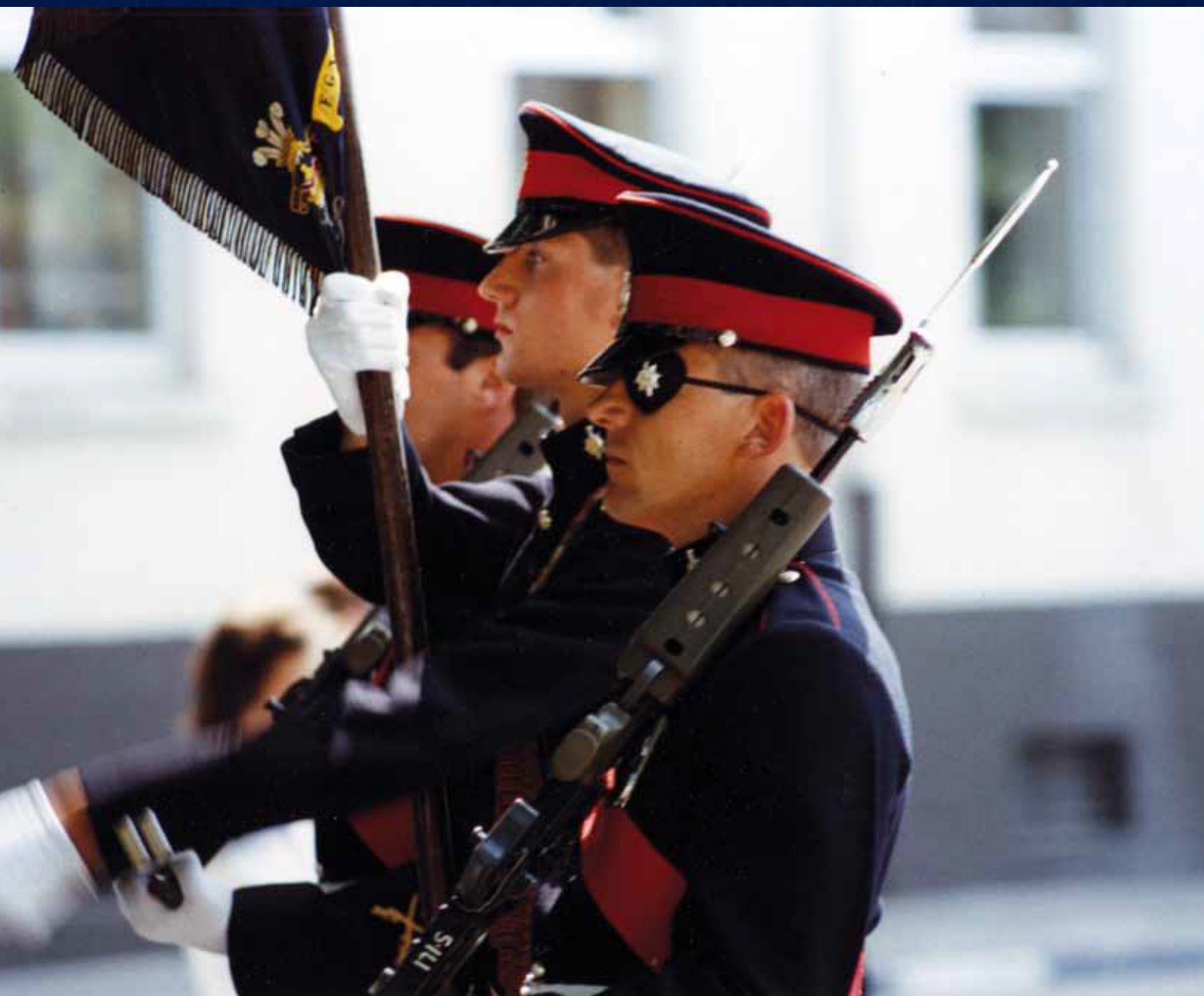


War clouds gather o'er ev'ry land
our treaties threaten'd East and West
Nations that we've shaken by the hand
Our honour'd pledges try to test
They may have thought us sleeping thought us unprepar'd
Because we have our party wars
But Britons all unite
When they're called to fight the battle for
Old England's common cause
The battle for Old England's common cause.....
So when we say that England's master
Remember who has made her so

~ Refrain ~

When we're roused we buckle on our swords
We do deeds to follow on our words
We show we're something more than Jingo
The sons of Merry England answer duty's call
And military duty do, and tho' new at the game
They show then all the same, an Englishman can be
a soldier too
An Englishman can be a soldier too.....
So when they say that England's master
Remember who has made her so





Charity No 1104172

www.queensregimentalassociation.org