SOLDIERS OF THE UEEN'S

UNCONQUERED I SERVE



1966-1992

OPERATION BANNER
The Personal Stories

THE JOURNAL OF THE QUEEN'S REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

2019



FOREWORD

BY COLONEL TIM TROTMAN

I was honoured to be asked to write the foreword to this Irish edition of the Journal in the 50th anniversary year of the Regiment's commitment there. In the following pages, you will read lots of 'I Was There'(IWT) accounts of service - some serious, some amusing - which speak for themselves.



I would like to look briefly at two questions, which have always teased me over the fifty years since, as a company 2IC in 1 QUEENS, I flew into a rioting Derry in Aug 69. 2 QUEENS were already committed in Belfast. The RUC had lost control. The first question is, how was the Army's supporting role seen, and the second is what did we achieve in the thirty-eight years of the Troubles?

A distinguished British Ambassador to the Republic of Ireland told me, in '85, and I quote: "I think the aim of Her Majesty's Government (HMG) in Northern Ireland is, always has been and probably always will be to keep HMG's Irish problem the Irish side of the Irish Sea". That stands up to any critical analysis of events and looks very plausibly into the future, including even Brexit and the Irish backstop! It explains why Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness (and many others, some well-known to many of you!) were allowed to move freely round Northern Ireland, but were barred from mainland UK, because their presence was 'not conducive to the public good'. Terrorism was dealt with under criminal law. For lack of hard evidence many 'hoods', who we knew were probably guilty, walked free, only to taunt the very squaddies who had arrested them. Convicted terrorists were locked up in the Maze prison and not dispersed to mainland prisons, where there would undoubtedly have been protest meetings by human rights crowds, hunger strikes and a generally heightened security risk. Even the so-called 'miscarriages of justice' successfully kept hardened terrorists out of the game, because there was insufficient evidence to convict, but the length of time taken by the judicial process to release them meant that they played no further part in the terrorism, despite their espousal of it.

So what did almost forty years of soldiering in Northern Ireland achieve? From an all-time high in the early '70s, the level of violence gradually reduced. This was hugely welcomed by the vast bulk of the population and the terrorists eventually lost their vital support. It was formalised by the Good Friday Agreement of '98, but had its serious beginnings in the early '90s, when the American Irish, at last enlightened, started to turn off the cash. Today you can take a Black Taxi tour of the terrorist areas of Belfast and Derry, and a SUV tour of the 'hairy' bits of the Border with the Republic. You will still see graffiti reminding you of the traditional 'religious' prejudices; there is still a huge dividing wall between the Falls and Shankhill Roads in Belfast, and don't expect smiles in Crossmaglen, Dungannon or Newry! The level of terrorist activity today is very low and mostly inexpert, but it is still a destabilising factor that needs watching - and it is watched!

There is, of course, a tragic human cost. The statistics speak for themselves and are spelt out in detail later in this journal. In summary, in 29 tours of duty, 12 Queensmen and an attached cook were killed and countless wounded. But look back on the hours, days and weeks that you patrolled the dreary streets, manned OPs on the border, or chatted up the locals. Forget that it was always raining, most locals hated you, there seemed never to be a policeman around after 10pm, and there was almost anywhere you would rather have been than where you were!

Whilst not obvious at the time, your resolute efforts tour after tour contributed to the more peaceful and prosperous Northern Ireland of today than the one you served in; roulement tours are things of the past. More than anything, you did a frustrating job superbly well, one that no other nation or army could possibly have done. And the Irish problem remains on the Irish side of the Irish Sea, hopefully not just waiting for the moment when, as Gladstone is alleged to have said: "Woe betide the man who reckons he has found the answer to the Irish question, for the Irish will then change the question!" Unconquered we served!





Greetings and welcome to the 2019 'OPERATION BANNER - The Personal Stories' edition of The Queen's Regimental Association Journal. I believe that this edition of the Journal is probably the most important of all the recent Journals because it records many memories of those who served during the 29 tours in which we took part, providing a vital record of our history. For a Regiment which only lasted 26 years 8 months to have had personnel on operations for 17 years 10 months is a pretty impressive record. We were among the first troops into the Province, and with the contribution of our successors in both battalions of the PWRR, we hold the unique honour of being the only regiment to have personnel serving from Day 1 cessation of operations. Sadly we lost fellow Queensmen and many were injured and this edition is dedicated to them.

As with every year, I have tried to include elements of all the material that has been sent in, but space and editing dictate that unfortunately not every word

written can be included. Your efforts have not been wasted though, because any material – especially the anecdotes – that has not been used will be filed as the start of the collection for next year. I might say though that the sudden rush after my last email produced an avalanche of material. It would have helped if it had come when I first asked for it and then it could have been included! Please don't hold back until the last safe moment – if you have an article or anecdote, send it to me as soon as the thought crosses your mind!

To my long-suffering proof readers, Anthony Beattie, Mike Jelf, Nick Keyes Merrick Willis and Amanda Hathaway I offer the usual heartfelt thanks for all their hard work in helping to get the Journal to the printers. If there are any mistakes or typos, they are mine as I had the final read!

Once again, there have been a number of fundraising initiatives this year. Yet again a few stand out. The first is the continuing and magnificent efforts of the Queen's Regimental Riders Association – an all-battalion group – which has raised over £12,000 for the Benevolent Fund this year. The second plaudit goes to our Drummers, who have not only been raising awareness of the Regiment in the Kent area, enhancing our reputation, but at the same time have raised significant amounts for the Benevolent Fund and the Museum Fund. They give of their time freely, purely for the love of the Regiment and drumming, and the thanks of all of us should go to them. Congratulations to Nick Goble for raising over £5,700 in his sterling attempt to conquer Mont Blanc. The Queensman Lodge also deserves a significant mention for their very generous donations to the Benevolent Fund and the Museum. Thanks too to all those who put their hand in their pocket to support these efforts. All the money collected goes into our Benevolent Fund to benefit all ex-members of the Regiment who are in need.

You will see the latest report from the Museum. We are still desperately in need of artefacts. Please do dig out all your old buckshee kit that you have for which you and your family will have no use, once you have shuffled off this mortal coil, and send it to the museum with a story attached. The response to this request continues to be poor so far, with the odd exception, and unless items start appearing, then the chances of us having a meaningful exhibition of our heritage will be slim.

The deadline for articles for next year is 7 Sep 20. Please do not wait until the last minute to send in your article, but get writing and send it in straight away. I've already started collecting.

With every good wish for the coming year. Keep safe, keep healthy and I hope to see you at the next QRA reunion at the London UOTC on 29 Feb 20.

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OP BANNER PROLOGUE

By Tony Osborn

On and on, ten thousand days and more Together, we served in that longest of tours.
Walked again and again
Through the lanes of Armagh
On the beautiful borders where birds would sing
And bullets could hiss, and hit Or miss.

On and on we walked, together, and in fours
Down long terraced streets, past graffiti walls,
Red with brick and anger,
Hatred and blood – but also a hope
That one day, some day soon
Someone, somewhere might
End this.

"The Troubles", they called it,
"The Conflict" – an "irregular war".
And we – we carried on.
On and on and on
Through those familiar names and places ...

Crossmaglen, Springfield Road, Divis Street Flats, Bessbrook Mill, Craigavon Bridge, and Warrenpoint.

On and on, we walked through the endless weeks ...

Through Shankhill and Falls Road and Ballykinlare Through New Lodge and Short Strand and the Creggan Estate.

Through the bombs and barricades,

The bullets and the hate

Through the bleak winter greys

And the soft summer greens

Trying to keep a peace that would not come

Year after year, on and on

For so very long.

We kept the faith, stayed the course
And stayed together ... until,
On a Friday, 38 years on,
Our long long journey ended in an infant birth:
This fragile peace.
And our job was done.

Long, long may it prevail.

This poem, reproduced by kind permission of the Royal British Legion, was read by Lieutenant General James Bashall CB CBE at the start of the Op BANNER 50 Commemoration held on 14 August at the National Memorial Arboretum on 14 August 2019.



THE FALLEN

2nd

2nd

3rd

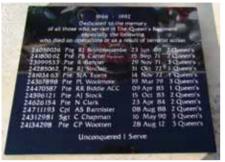
1st

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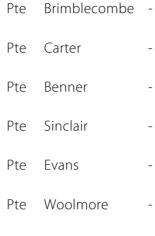


The new Memorial plaque

Jake and Jon Wootten

unveil the plaque









Pte Clark 2nd

Cpl Bannister 2nd

Pte Wooten 3rd

Chapman

Sgt



The Wootten family with CSM John Butler and Maj Douglas McCully



Grace and Ruby lay their wreath and posie

PRIVATE COLIN WOOTTEN

Colin Wootten was a member of 2 Pl, A Coy, 3 QUEENS, during the battalion's West Belfast tour in '71. Early in Feb that year, there was considerable rioting in the New Lodge area and for the first time a military water cannon (C/S Neptune), manned by 17/21 Lancers, was deployed and put under command of A Company. It was reasonably effective and gave some of the locals a much needed bath. 2 Pl was deployed on the Antrim Rd covering the junctions with Hillman Street and Duncairn Gardens. At 01.20hrs on 4 Feb Colin's patrol were engaged by a Provo gunman and they received a burst of fire from, what is believed to have been, a Thompson sub-machine gun. They returned fire and wounded the gunman but he escaped although he was apprehended later. Four soldiers were wounded; Colin was critically injured having received a round to his head. That he managed to make it more or less alive to the RVH Hospital was entirely due to the very competent and timely First Aid rendered by CSM John Butler. Sadly Colin was left paralysed down one side and unable to communicate. His remaining life would be spent in a wheelchair, totally dependent on others. He finally died on 28 August 2012 having never recovered from the injury he received over 40 years before.

The name of Private Colin Wootten was added to the Regimental Memorial on Remembrance Sunday, 10 November, in the presence of Colin's family.



JUNE 1968 - DECEMBER 1970 2ND HOLYWOOD RESIDENTIAL

DAY 1 - BELFAST 15 AUGUST 1969

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 to 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 bullshit at the very beginning of '69. 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 Pl, 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.

In the week starting the 11th August, the situation deteriorated rapidly. The Ulster Special Constabulary, commonly called the B Specials was deployed. In their para-military role they were more heavily armed and not trusted by the Nationalist community. Rioting continued for much of the week; casualties mounted, many with gunshot wounds and eight people died. Number 10 and Stormont talked. Our moment was imminent

And then it happened – rapidly convened orders groups, lots of rushing around and loading of 3-tonners with personal kit, knife rests and barbed-wire. It was Friday 15 Aug 69. 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. The CO, Lt Col Jack Fletcher, had ensured that we were fully prepared and confident. It was as if we had regularly been deployed to assist the police in sorting out rioters – the difference was, this was not Aden or British Guiana or Hong Kong – it was the UK and Belfast! A brigade headquarters and 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

Maj MNDL Gilham directing the riot control

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and children – a weekend's excitement! How wrong we were!

The Battalion convoy, with B Coy leading (was 5 Pl really the lead platoon?... seems hardly possible now) drove out of Palace Barracks at 1830hrs with the RUC escorting us. We swept past the great yellow cranes of Harland and Wolff and through every set of traffic lights in the City, up North Street to the Shankhill 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... debus'. The lads positively flew off the backs of the two 3-tonners, and at the top of Percy Street, 5 Pl was soon 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 LCpl 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 Sqt Moss, off we stepped at the 'high-port', bayonets fixed, 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 f***** 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, and picked our way round the shell of a bus and minibus being 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 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. Noone told us that Percy Street had been in one of the worst 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, a cordon sanitaire at the end of Percy Street to prevent further sectarian rioting, and this we did,



Fred Cutts, Ann Cutts, Helen and Dave Perry, and Brian Terry before it all kicked off



Road Closure



En Garde



The Hooker Street OP, Belfast, scene of many battles. Manned by C Coy L-R LCpl Burford, LCpl Stickler and Pte German



using the entrance to the bank on the corner, PI HQ and sections deployed left and right linking up with our neighbours, 6 PI (Nick Cann and Sqt Blanchette) and 7 Pl (John Huskisson and Sqt Relf) to our left, C Coy beyond them, the RRW still with

'scrim' in their helmets to our right under the still burning paint factory further up the Falls. Barbed-wire barriers were erected, and soldiers stood guard, bayonets still fixed, gently patrolling 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, the national and local papers had a field day, and we had to be careful what we said and how we presented ourselves.



Fred Cutts and Brian Terry

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, David Shepherd, the Coy 2IC and CSM Tony James walked around the company area – it didn't take long. Bn HQ was in the Hastings Street RUC Station.... 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!

THE BATTLE OF SHORT STRAND

By James Myles

It was on the last weekend of Jun 70 and the rifle companies of the 2nd Battalion were not all on summer leave as hoped but deployed once again into the City as the Brigade Reserve. On the Saturday, the battalions deployed across Belfast and became stretched to the limit as companies were deployed to counter rioting and looting as it broke out. B Coy, commanded now by Maurice Dewar, was moved from a simmering situation up the Crumlin Road to East Belfast in response to rioting based on the Catholic enclave on the Newtownards Road. This came to be known as the Battle of



LCpls Mockler and Bernier, and Pte Walpole assist a local during the rioting on 28 June

Short Strand, a hugely significant milestone in the development of the Provisional IRA and a major entry into the narrative of the Nationalist cause.

Republican folklore has it that the Army stood by and did not intervene to stop the Protestant mobs, including gunmen, attacking the Catholic streets, centred on St Matthew's Catholic Church. In an obituary of Billy McKee published in The Times in June this year the situation is summed up as follows: '... shortly after the start of trouble, the area was attacked by loyalists and British troops failed to intervene. The desperate residents appealed for help from Billy McKee, the commander of the Belfast Brigade of the fledgling Provisional IRA. McKee and his colleagues moved in with all the weapons they could muster and took up positions around St Matthew's Church. The ensuing gun battle lasted into the early hours, or so the republicans claim. McKee was shot and badly wounded but he achieved heroic status and the IRA achieved a standing amongst the nationalist community... 'Billy McKee died aged 97 years in June this year. The IRA defended the area and engaged Protestant gunmen in a battle during which five Protestants and possibly three Catholics were killed and a number wounded.

As with so many legends, there was a strong element of truth, except, as most of us hold, the strong belief that many things that are claimed as deliberate conspiracies are usually cock-ups. The paucity of soldiers on the streets was quite simply that there was virtually no-one left to deploy, particularly with two companies of the Province reserve on leave.

By the time B Coy arrived from West Belfast, several Catholic houses and



2Lt James Myles with OC, Maurice Dewar, and RMs from 45 Cdo on the Crumlin Road earlier in the day

businesses in the vicinity of St Matthew's Church had already been set on fire. The fire was spreading through shops and houses and a crowd of about 2000 Protestants was intent on burning out the church itself. A number of people had already been seriously injured. Two of our B Coy platoons, 5 Pl, commanded by Mike Jelf, and 7 Pl commanded by the author, who had only recently joined the battalion, were mounted in Humber Pigs and Saracens respectively. We were ordered to get the rioting Protestant crowd back down the Newtonards Road away from their attempts to burn out the Cattholic church.

An angry Protestant crowd of about 2000 was not easily dissuaded from their malicious aim. They were not open to debating the rights and wrongs of civil unrest, so talking to a mob of 2000 seemed unlikely to succeed. This was the evening of a long warm Saturday in Belfast. Their blood was up. A show of intent seemed more appropriate, so we were ordered to move up to the crowd with three Saracens abreast, the dismounted platoons in close proximity. The vehicles looked and sounded ugly and threatening and we were relying on the psychological effect of the army wanting to impose law and order on the streets. What we achieved was to give both both sides a new target for their anger. The crowd turned on us and we received a barrage of rocks and countless petrol bombs. The crowd then broke and





moved back. As per the plan, my PI Sgt, Sgt Bartlett, then held that line alongside 5 PI, whilst I reversed into the churchyard, thereby establishing a British Army presence. In reversing back at enthusiastic speed, I smashed open the gates. This all adds to the perception of the 'bad Brits' even though we were on fire and under quite effective enemy fire from both sides at the time; both sides seemingly hating us for either spoiling their plan or appearing to help the other side. "On fire and under fire, out!" was the only way I could describe the situation to Coy HQ and the OC. I believe it has since gone down in 2nd Bn folklore!

We had managed to get between the mob surrounding the church and the church grounds. However, there was little we could do. The remaining two Saracens and the 'Pigs' of 5 PI hovered and made further menacing moves towards the crowd when they attempted another attack. We were subjected to continuous petrol bombing from the front by this large hostile, Protestant crowd, while the fledgling Provisional IRA gunmen were firing from behind us at both Protestants and down onto our vehicles.



A 7PI Saracen on the Newtownards Road

The warm summer breeze kept reigniting the glowing embers of the canvas and wood stretchers that we carried on the outside of the Saracens. The sugar, grease and petrol combination would repeatedly re-light with a 'whoosh'. I was using the rear top-hatch and the vehicle commander was using the turret. The repetitive whoosh shackled our ability to control anything. It was not doing much for my night vision let alone my eyebrows. Sitting still was not a good option as the rioters would then have the initiative.

We knew that if we moved out without changing the situation, the mob would get into the church and in any case, trying to move armoured vehicles around in such a situation would have caused more casualties. So we had to maintain this presence. I was rapidly using up all my fire extinguishers and I was most uncomfortable, being the target for both the Protestants and Catholics. Bde HQ refused to give permission for us to open fire at either set of gunmen, a decision which was galling at the time but which in retrospect was probably correct.

So with judicious use of the other armoured vehicles moving abreast up the Newtownards Road at the crowd, we withdrew and resorted to dominating the area using snatch squads. We slowly reduced the mass and the aggression from the rioting crowd, denying them a chance to reach the church. We pushed the crowds into the side streets and broke up their cohesion. It worked.

The IRA myth had a strong element of truth to it but ignored the part played by B Coy and our soldiers that prevented the situation from getting even worse than it would have done if a Protestant mob had managed to torch a Catholic church. There could have been many more dead. What has so often been forgotten was the work done by the soldiers, at considerable risk to themselves, to treat and evacuate as many as possible of the civilians who were shot during the battle.

Like a policeman intervening in a domestic dispute, no one would thank us and both sides would blame us. The malice of the Protestant crowd was quickly turned on us. The Catholic gunmen probably thought we were aiding the Protestant attack so we were fair game to them too. It was a good introduction to the flavour and complications of Ulster politics and street violence. Welcome to Northern Ireland, young Myles!

I ATF TO THE BATTLE

By Mike Jelf

At lunchtime on that Saturday in June, I was in Dublin with an Army Cricket X1 at the end of a 5-day tour! Yes, in those days there was no restriction on driving south for the weekend, astonishing as it may seem. Driving back across the Border with Sqt Jim Arnold REME, we switched on the car radio just before 5pm to hear the news that all was chaos in Belfast. We increased speed and on arrival back in Palace Barracks found only a small guard left. The battalion had gone and there was no means of getting

into the City. There was no option but to change, grab my kit and drive myself into the chaos. How I knew that B Coy was by now in East Belfast, I do not recall but the Hillman Imp started first time, surprisingly, and I 'raced' past Harland and Wolff swung left into the Newtownards Road and parked up a side street. Five minutes later, I had found 5 Pl and the resourceful Sqt Moss, who had brought my pistol in the hope that I would eventually turn up!

FAILING TO COMPLETE MY TASK – BELFAST 1970

By James Myles

The scene is the streets of Victorian West Belfast down in the area of the Falls Road/Grosvenor Road. Orders were about to be given. The pl comds, Coy 2IC and the freshin-post OC, Maurice Dewar were becoming annoyed. The brigade-level cordon and search operation was scheduled to go ahead fairly shortly and for the third time the O Gp was broken up by well-aimed fire. As a result, the sequence and clarity of orders were a bit patchy. That is no excuse; however, it was a factor.

Life was already disrupted as in the fog of war: one coy from a Scottish regiment, earmarked for the cordon, had turned up dressed and equipped for riots, carrying shields and batons, and still wearing Glengarries! We were held in position whilst they went away to re-equip. This was definitely not a riotous event. It was, however, an operation to rid the area of a fresh batch of weapons

that had arrived into Belfast. Earlier that afternoon, one GLOSTER pl comd had already found that there is nowhere to hide in the street when you have only riot gear and the opposition turn out with Thompson submachine guns. He was hit as he tried to flatten into a doorway. Just one round did the damage. The cheeks of his bum were never the same. One round... two entry wounds and two exit wounds. Ouch!

In B Coy 2 QUEENS, we were clear about our task. We were to forge our way up into the centre of the cordoned area. Sp Coy was to secure the Start Line. The Yellow Card rules were firmly in force and we were not to enter houses until authorised to do so; later that order was changed. On the basis that an Englishman's home is his castle, we were heavily restricted from entry. That rule alone took its toll upon us with the gunmen able to



skip in and out of the houses and, unless we were in hot pursuit, we could not do the same. Our A41 platoon radios rarely worked in that area and comms were appalling, so we just got on with it.

Once we were underway, the IRA gunmen were intent on inflicting as much damage as possible. There was precious little cover on the streets of the Victorian terraces. I had given up the four armoured Saracen sixwheeled APCs earlier that week and so most of us were deployed without armour and on foot. 5 Pl still had Pigs driven by Royal Marines who were without respirators. Big mistake!

At one particular junction, the crossfire was fairly intense. We were expressly forbidden from putting down covering fire. "Aimed rounds at identified gunmen only" was the order. So, having failed to get armoured vehicles in intimate support, I lined up my sections one by one and ran them across the junction. It was dark with just one stubborn street-light not shot out. Fire came in from both left and right but the intense fire was from ground-level on my right.

As the PI Comd, I had given the instruction not to fire below knee level as the local women and children would be put down on the floor for safety. (7.62mm rounds can do terrible things in confined areas). That, on reflection, was well intentioned, but it was not a good order.

I had crossed that gap with the first two sections and returned for the third. I lined the last section up and, as I ran them across, the bursts of fire were suddenly intense and the round that hit me was fired from ground level. Oops!

The soldiers returned fire but for me that was a bit too late. I had crossed that junction more than half a dozen times before being shot. I was clearly pushing my luck. The round picked me up and threw me across the road (a fabulous amount of energy in those beasts). It hit me in the right arm, smashing the shank and tumbling across my chest, exited just to the right of my breast bone - messy and painful. It was stopped on the way out by my flak-vest; useful things if they are in the right position, but the fashion then was not to wear armoured vests on the arm. I have to confess to being a bit dazed by all of this. I then went and sat in the only pool of light in the street; not a bright place on reflection, as it turned out, as it attracted some very active shooting from the terrorists.

I was hurting. My head was exploding with unbelievable levels of pain. Up until that time, I had assumed the cowboy film scenario of being hit was about right. The bullet hits you and you grit your teeth and get on with it. That was not the way I felt right then. I had been gripping my smashed right arm with my left hand but the pain just built and built. My head seemed to be exploding with pain, so I moved the grip up onto my head and with it clots of blood. They ran down the side of my face. As one of our section 2ICs said later, "He had blood coming out of his chest, his arm and his head. I thought, it's not worth taking a bet on him surviving this one."

Eventually during a lull, one of the corporals came across, picked me up and then placed me into the back of a 'Pig' APC. The knees and weapons I met as I was shoved in caused what one might call a little more discomfort. From there, I was transferred into a house for a short period. I was beginning to get empty of fluids by then. Soon afterwards Raymond Low, the IO, appeared. I was hoiked out into the street under effective but intermittent fire and taken to the Royal Victoria Hospital (RVH), fortunately just a few hundred yards away. During that period, at least three people stuck their morphine syrettes into me to relieve the pain. It didn't, but I was as high as a kite for many hours until it eventually worked.

I suppose, aged 20, I was a little bit more inclined to shyness and a little more sensitive to appearances than now. 2 OUEENS had been in the role of the Belfast 39 Bde Reserve; a travelling road show to assist other battalions when rioting was getting out of hand. We seemed to have been on the streets for about two weeks, moving from location to location, so there was little time for personal administration, dhobi etc. I had managed to run out of clean civilian Y-Front type underwear (nowhere to dry the stuff and no surety of returning to the same location). I had resorted to my last supplies, the armyissue 'Drawers Dracula', those very large, wide aertex pants designed to be worn under huge tropical shorts. The army had a surfeit of tropical gear and this 'had to be used up' despite not being deployed to the tropics.

As I was casevaced towards the hospital, I was taken to the (RVH) underpass entrance. In the casualty department, I was held upright by the medics when the most beautiful House Doctor appeared in front of me. She was about 23/24, confident and very much in charge of the team. She was giving orders to cut off my flak vest/jumper/ shirt etc. As they cut off the flak vest, the flattened and spent round tumbled out onto the floor and with it just one source of pain thankfully eased away.

This stunning blonde then issued the order "OK cut off his trousers". My injuries were to the arm and chest. It looked very bloody down there but then, blood runs downhill. Knowing what I was wearing underneath, I challenged the requirement! "Do you really HAVE to?" She fixed me with a stern gaze from deep blue eyes and said in a rich Ulster accent "Wee fellah, leave the orders to me. I am in charge here". As the medics cut off my combat trousers, I stood there in a splendid pair of blood-soaked deep green 'Drawers Dracula', blood-sodden and gripping my legs all the way to my knees. She grinned and said "Oh I see what you mean. Well it's too late now!" My hopes of ever chatting her up disappeared over the hill as my blushing deepened. Credibility?... Absolute zilch! We became firm friends later but she never forgot those 'Drawers Dracula'.

Life then suddenly became busy. The usual run-around of fluids being whacked in (I was a bit empty by then), clean-up, X-rays etc. The flurry lasted for a good while and then I was transferred to the only ITC bed available at that moment - ITC at Women's Surgical! Not many of us can say that they have been in bed, in the same location, with that number of women!

I came-to the following morning. I suppose I was still high or somewhat dislocated from the morphine, the RVH meds and 'events'. I could hear a booming voice fading and returning like a slow rugby stadium announcement in the distance. I opened my eyes and looked into the perfect blue eyes of a beautiful blonde. This angel seemed familiar but my drug-befuddled brain just could not make the connection.

She smiled sweetly...heavenly.

OK, I thought, this is it – heaven! I have gone to heaven. Then the smiling angel spoke, "Hello, are you with us?" I recognised the voice as it seeped through to my brain. Yes I had heard it before. Then it slowly dawned, it was the House Doctor from the previous evening. I was in hospital not heaven. The distant booming voice? Well that was the Sky Shout helicopter announcing the restrictions in the area.

I suppose the biggest feeling of emotion I had at that time was of a sense of failure. I had been given a task of leading my platoon through effective fire but I had not completed the task. I had been carried off the pitch horizontally, leaving my team to complete the task. In the next four months in the RVH and in Musgrave Park Hospital that thought was to return often. Once you leave the team, despite visits from your mates, you are 'out of it' and cannot really appreciate what has changed, what is changing and the fact that you are no longer an influence within the battalion.

Without doubt the most hateful aspect of soldiering to me is fighting where the civilian population is right there. In a snap decision, you cannot always make the right call. As a result, people, who should not be injured, killed, frightened or traumatised, are deeply affected. Until the 1st Gulf War and the activities in the civil war in the Balkans, nearly all my soldiering had been trying to fight an enemy moving, as Chairman Mao said, like fish moving through the civilian population. When you are hunting for the fish, it is hateful to know civilians have their lives so blighted.

Final thought on injuries: we are taught to reassure the patient, to tell them it will be alright. In other words, under 'transactional analysis', reduce the patient to a child-like state. Please don't do this. It is frustrating to be talked down to and not to be taken seriously as an adult when injured. Listen to the casualty, and be realistic... well perhaps not as realistic as Bernie the sect 2IC. "Not worth a bet he'll survive this one!"

In Oct '69 I was working at Castlereagh Police Station as a watchkeeper at 49 Bde Tac HQ at the time of the Hunt Report, which made 49 recommendations, one of which was the disbandment of the Ulster Special Constabulary, commonly known as the B Specials. On the morning following the publication of these recommendations, I visited the Police Control Room, which had a picture-window overlooking a large portion of Belfast. I could see a large plume of smoke in the area of Shorts factory (now Belfast City Airport). One of the policemen wondered what the fire was. I ventured the opinion that it might be the B Special uniforms. I was driven out of the control room by various hurled objects and a great of abuse. Thankfully relations weren't impaired!

Simon Elliott



AUGUST - DECEMBER 1969 1ST LONDONDERRY

DAY 1 - LONDONDERRY 1969

By Tim Trotman

The peace of mid-summer in Lingfield was shattered by the need to raise the force levels in Northern Ireland, where serious civil commotion in Belfast and Londonderry had led to the inability of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) to cope; and their reinforcement by the B Specials, essentially a border protection force, had made the situation worse, because they were being committed to a task for which they were untrained and, it has to be said, completely unsuited by politics and attitude.

2 QUEENS as one of the resident battalions there had already been committed to riot control duties in Belfast, when 1 QUEENS were ordered to move to Derry by a combination of air, civilian ferry via Liverpool/Belfast and Landing Ship Tank (LST) from Southampton via the Lizard and Irish Sea to Belfast in a force 9 south westerly gale. The LST was flat-bottomed, the weather made most passengers extremely sea-sick. The voyage lasted 3 days!

Having arrived in Derry, the battalion was accommodated in HMS Sea Eagle (then an Atlantic submarine base, subsequently Ebrington Barracks), the TA centre up the hill and sundry temporary lodgings in empty married quarters. But within 24 hours, we were deployed into the city to relieve 1 PWO who had been committed 4 days earlier and were ready to go home! They had therefore not bothered to settle in and what we took over was primitive - they slept on the pavement - and not remotely weather-proof! A and B Coys (Mike Hare and John Francis) were based in the bus station; Comd Coy, which was all the battalion odds and sods under Brian Faris, with me as his 2IC as a newly-promoted major, was based in part in the primary school on the city walls with Coy HQ and an OP on the top of the Tower Ballroom. Bn HQ was in the RUC Div HQ.

Our whole policy seemed to be to avoid antagonising the natives. The Catholics in the Bogside were adamant that we should not enter 'their' territory and initially we dutifully obliged. They even drew up a list of dos and don'ts - mostly don'ts! Meanwhile the Protestants, whose Orange Hall dominated the Bogside from which it was divided by a huge wall, were incensed that 'their' army (us!) should be protecting and supporting the Catholics and acceding to their every demand!

One of my quite enjoyable tasks was to organize dances for the soldiers in the RN Club by the river – pimping you might reasonably say! It was quite simple: tapes of pop music and buses for the women, many from the Bogside, but there was about a 50/50 split between religions. Booze was limited and bringing your own hard stuff was prohibited and made difficult by an effective system of random search. The functions had to be over by 23.30, but well before that there were fights between Catholic and Protestant women, 'Grimmies' of both religions, and many sex-starved squaddies with a bit of drink had spent time with some 'lucky girls' in the shadowy area by the perimeter wire. It says a lot for our discipline that by midnight, all the participants in this multi-cultural extravaganza had returned home, and by morning, you wouldn't have known what had been going on there a mere 12 hours before.

I will leave it to others to tell their war stories but to me Derry/Londonderry in '69 was an experience to be remembered, which for 50 years I had failed to do. In '69, we had naively imagined that it would be over by Christmas. I realise now that my experiences then stood me in very good stead for my subsequent tours in the Province - if only to appreciate that whilst in most places there may be often two or even three ways of looking at a problem, in Ireland there are at least four or even five, and not necessarily through the bottom of a glass!

GETTING TO LONDONDERRY

By Hugh King

We travelled to Southampton and boarded the troop ship but had to stay on board for a while as we had no accommodation to go to at that time. C Coy was put into the Bus Station in the centre of the town under canvas and

was required to use the underground toilets in the centre of the main road just next to the Masonic. We did three hours on and four hours off for nine days before going to HMS Sea Eagle over at the Waterside for a short rest.

THE START IN LONDONDERRY

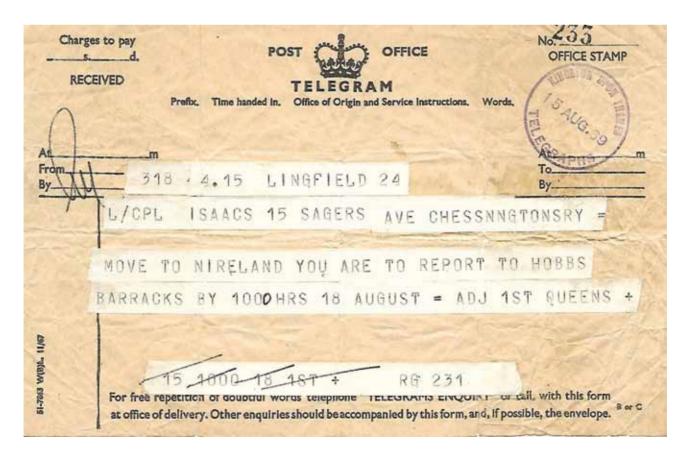
By Philip Mabbett

In 1968, the 1st Bn was in Bahrain, engaged in what was ironically known as IS (internal security) training for disturbances/ riots, as the British Army had left Aden and it gave us a base in the area. I was a member of the Corps of Drums. We returned to the UK and were stationed at Lingfield Barracks in Surrey in early '69. As Strategic Reserve, we were ready for any situation!

In July, the news was full of disturbances in Northern Ireland. At the forefront of the news were 21-year-old Catholic MP, Bernadette Devlin and the Protestant Rev Ian Paisley. Its root was the inequality between the two communities. Towards the end of July, things were getting more serious with riots, serious damage and injuries on both sides and the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) was under serious pressure. I was on a long weekend leave in Wales with my girlfriend. Just as my weekend started, I received a telephone call from my mother to say that there was a telegram instructing me to return to barracks. I had mixed emotions of not only missing a weekend of joyful anticipation, but also going into what was already a complicated and potentially dangerous situation.

Having returned to barracks, we were briefed, rushed around, moved here and there, suddenly to find ourselves on the streets of Londonderry. We were initially deployed on almost every corner of the town ie where we could see another colleague both left and right of us. There was no central barracks or establishment for us to go to at this time, so we deployed straight onto the streets. We were somewhat unprepared, still wearing tin hats, plain green combat suits, rifles with bayonets, large A41 radio sets (like a small house on your back with what felt like a 20-foot aerial) and nowhere to sleep. We started with a system of 4 hours on and 4 hours off and slept in alleys, doorways, sheds and empty shops.

As the days went by, we had the occasional riot which meant that our previous Middle East training was brought into play, sooner than expected. Unfortunately, it wasn't that effective, so variations had to be made. Unfortunately too, by separating the two opposing factions, they became too far away from each other to be effective, but we were perfectly



The telegram sent to LCpl Terry Isaacs on 15 Aug 69 recalling him from leave to deploy to Northern Ireland



Field cooking Derry-style



Resting after a patrol



Recce Platoon at a VCP



Joint 1 QUEENS and RMP patrol - Early days in the Bogside



Bogside barrier



Bogside from Penthouse OP

in range. I was given the task of radio operator/first-aider/photographer and still carried my rifle. I was pleased that I was excused carrying my drum!

Eventually things calmed slightly; we had put out white lines and barbed-wire barriers around the Bogside and other segregated areas; and accommodation improved with the central market becoming a rest area (known as the 'Wriggley Tin Hotel'). We also had use of HMS Sea Eagle, the land-based naval unit where we went every nine days for R&R, a shower, proper sleep, hot meals and even a rum ration. It was also a time where you could rendezvous with someone who 'might' have been 'P Checked' while on the streets. Arrangements were surreptitiously made as strangely, considering what we were there for, we were able to go out of town to a dance hall where you could meet your new 'friend' again for dancing and hopefully other activity. There was a lot of love in the air at this time (women to men ratio 8-1). (Ed: Regrettably in the

future, this addition to R&R had to be restricted following the murder of an off-duty soldier caught in a PIRA honey-trap.)

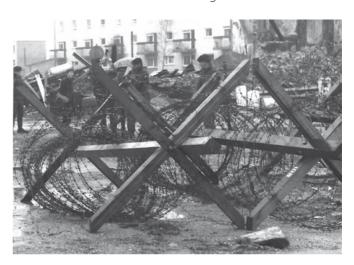
As time went by, we were moved about, trying to keep the peace. We had Observation Posts (OPs) on high buildings, in upstairs windows and all along the Londonderry wall. One day on the city wall, we watched as inflated condoms floated across the wall from one side to the other; sent over by the Protestants to annoy the Catholics.

It was an unusual climate for British troops as there had not been much serious action for many years and here we were in the United Kingdom with live rounds in our magazines and hostile British subjects, some as young as 5 years old, at 3 o'clock in the morning spitting and swearing at us telling us to "f**k off and go home". As the winter drew on, we were guinea-pigs for various items, one of which was the pullover. We had three different ones before settling on the then current NATO pattern. We continued with the plain green combat suit (not the painting by numbers camouflage style), '37 pattern belt and gaiters and '58 pattern webbing.

At this time, I was a young 21-year-old (with the vote). I was confused and saddened by the situation then, and now 50 years later I am even more saddened that the self-same situation continues.



Barriers in the Bogside



RIOT IN LONDONDERRY

Transcript of an interview with Maj Gen Mike Reynolds

Suddenly, over the radio came a message saying that there was trouble in the Diamond. So I drove straight down to the Diamond to find a huge stone-throwing, bottle-throwing mob – Catholics against Protestants. Mr John Hume, founding member and leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party, was in the mêlée. I drove straight into the middle of the riot to get beside him. "Major, you'd better get some people here and get more troops here, this is getting out of control!" He then stood on top of my landrover and appealed to the mob to disperse. Needless to say they didn't! It was the occasion when a Protestant had been kicked to death and so there was a great number of very angry people about. So we stood in the middle and suddenly they all stopped throwing everything to listen to Mr Hume and the British Army Major with his landrover. Suddenly both sides rushed the landrover and I got hit in the head with a bottle and a rock hit my hand. I ended up in a pool of blood on the floor, which taught me a lesson: never get between a Catholic and a Protestant in a riot! I managed to get a message back to Battalion Headquarters, and at least one if not two companies came marching to the rescue and the crowd eventually dispersed. I was patched up. The injuries weren't serious, but I did appear in the Daily Mirror on the front page with blood all over my face!

Later on in that tour, I was on the phone to my family when a bus-load of Catholics were rioting outside the barracks. My children were about to go back to boarding school and my wife rang up for them to say goodbye to Daddy. At that precise moment just outside the window, there was an Ulster bus that had been hijacked by a mob of screaming Catholics, who were threatening to burn it unless, I don't know what, unless something! I mean you couldn't tell. I remember that they had this awful chant "When you kill a British soldier, clap your hands, clap your hands" and they were all singing that – spine-chilling and thoroughly unpleasant! I had to pretend to my little daughters who were still on the phone that there was nothing untoward going on while that was happening. Thankfully, they were not able to hear what was being sung.

FIX BAYONETS!





As those who served with me know, I had a pretty undistinguished military career but there is one incident for which I was partly responsible.

2Lt (just!) Hitchcock commanded 6 Pl with Sqt Fred 'fire bucket' Lees as his platoon sergeant. On 25 Sep 69, we were based in the bus station on the Strand Road in Londonderry with Coy HQ on the 'pissoir' at Waterloo Place. In the evening, a short but violent riot between Protestants and Nationalists broke out in the centre of Derry's walls by the Diamond.

The first officer on the scene was Major Mike Reynolds (later CO 2 QUEENS and Colonel of the Regiment), the Bn 2IC, along with John Hume (who would later be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize) the leader of the SDLP, a moderate nationalist party.

They tried persuading the crowds to disperse, but the two sides decided that it was more satisfying stoning each other than listening to an army officer and a politician so they recommenced the battle. Maj John Francis and CSM Bill Rippon arrived shortly afterwards with 2Lt Peter Swanson and 4 Pl. The situation was becoming more and more confused, so after Mike Reynolds got hit on the head - and therefore earned fame as the first casualty in the battalion - 6 Pl was ordered into the melee. By then, the CO, Charles Millman, had arrived to take charge and he ordered Hitchcock to move down the road between the warring factions.



... and the 2nd Bn were at it too on the Falls Road Belfast

In '69, it was mandated that all internal security drills had to be done in a 'smart and soldier-like manner' and having only just left the 'Officer Factory', Hitchcock tried to remember the words of command to get his men, who were in two lines across the road, to advance forward. All he could think of that could fit the bill was – "No 6 Platoon will Advance in Review Order; By the Centre; Quick March". With that they were off! Sgt Lees called out the numbers and on reaching 13 - 14, -1 -2, the next word of command was 'On Guard' and like a flash, every rifle had a bayonet affixed.

The crowds said words to the effect

of 'blow me down, they've got bayonets' and promptly dispersed. The next morning, the Northern Ireland edition of the 'Daily Mirror' headlined with 'Troops Fix Bayonets on Rioters' with pictures of the troops with bayonets and Mike Reynolds and by lunchtime, there were no bayonets on any soldier in Ulster; they were all returned to armouries where they stayed unused, apart from being counted every week, until '82 when the units going out to reclaim the Falklands discovered them again.

Our new chaplain in the 1st Bn in '69 in Londonderry while walking along was accosted by a group of aggressive youths wanting to know if he was a Catholic or a Protestant. Not knowing what religion of convenience to adopt, smartly after a pause, he announced that he was a pedestrian and walked on briskly while they tried to work that one out.

Chris Parkinson



APRIL 1970 - DECEMBER 1971 3RD BALLYKINLER RESIDENTIAL

ON THE PEACE LINE - PERCY STREET, BELFAST SEP-DEC '71

By Martin Mills

4 Pl was on the Peace Line that separated the warring factions. We were billeted at the church hall in Percy Street, along with Coy HQ, with the brewery on our flank. I was MT attached to the company. I can still remember that beautiful aroma that would drift over us when the brewery was infusing the malt with their brew. That smell was quite addictive. The hours were long and sometimes most repetitive. On those days when I wasn't taken up with MT type duties, I'd help out in the company ops room as radio or telephone operator and even tea boy. The OC was Major Hayward, the CSM was Allan Prince and our 2IC was Capt John Westing.

The hall was in the arch of Divis Flats, so the windows in the accommodation hall had been painted out to stop nosey parkers with guns nearby from peeping in. This also meant we couldn't peep out and if that had been possible, we would have

spied on Divis Flats to our not too distant front. I recall on one occasion some jerk did fire at the windows and shots did fall in the platoon accommodation area. He very nearly got our telly! We all hit the deck and I definitely remember someone calling out for someone to crawl forward and "turn the telly up!"

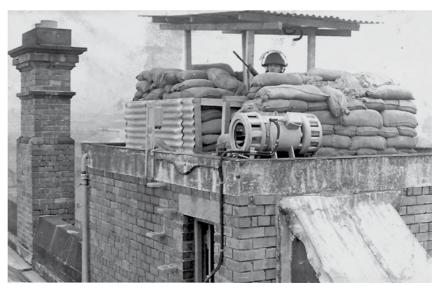
On one occasion, the OC decided to give 4 Pl a respite from patrolling and Coy HQ provided the patrol that night with the OC as patrol commander, the 2IC Capt Westing as patrol 2IC, the CSM with me and Jonah (Bob Jones) bringing up the rear. All was well and it was a bit strange with most of the street lighting switched off but we were able to operate. It was a refreshing change to the run-of-the-mill existence I had up to then encountered.

We hadn't been out for long when the CSM stepped off of the kerb on to the road and misjudged the depth of the kerb causing him to twist his ankle guite badly; he began hopping about on one foot, uttering forth some choice Anglo-Saxon expletives. Jonah was sent to get the OC's Rover so that the CSM could be returned to location, as it was too far for anyone to hop!

Everything was quiet and still until the crack and thump of a round in-coming



Accommodation Percy Street Church



Assault pioneer sentry at Battalion HQ



from the flats sparked us up. "Contact! Wait out!" as we took cover. Unfortunately for John Westing had got there first and he pulled rank on me, telling me to go "find some other place" or some such words. I

quickly selected a new pitch and made for it at great speed. What I hadn't seen was the small but deep hole in the road that someone had carved out. It was about 7 inches deep and just the right size to take a size 10 boot. The darkness of the street had kept it hidden from view. Placing my foot well and truly in this hole, down I went in great pain. As I lay there, I



Sgt Creighton and Maj Douglas McCully with bullet hole

could hear more shots and saw the fall of every round hit the road near me. I quickly realised that the only thing I could do was to lie perfectly still, in the hope that the sniper would think that he had killed me. That was difficult to do as there



was a heavy necessity to roll about in pain – at least Allan was allowed to hop. The others thought I had been hit too. When it had all died down (quite quickly really), Capt Westing came to where I was lying prostate. "Are you OK?" he asked. The pain in my foot was most intense. I did answer him but as the pain was so bad, I did so through tightly-gritted teeth. He didn't hear me, so he asked again "Are you OK, Corporal?" This time he bent down closer to me to hear any answer, and as he did so, a fully-charged 7.62mm magazine slipped from the breast pocket of his flak jacket and hit me square on my forehead above the nose. So, having twisted my ankle, been shot at and been smacked in the face, it was obviously not my day! As you can see from the photographs, it wasn't anyone's day really!



While on sewer patrol in Belfast:

Policeman: "We're now moving out of the Protestant area into the Catholic area."

Me: "How the hell do you know down here?"

Policeman: "It's the change of smell."

Make of that what you will!

Roger Gancz

I was in the recce platoon posted to the Crumlin Road jail as escort to ATO. We secured the area around the suspect package and my job was to look after the officer. He gave me a polaroid camera and told me to take a picture of the device. Obeying orders, I snap shot the package and brought the picture back to ATO safely crouched down behind a 4ft wall. I'm sure that wasn't how it was supposed to work!

Dave Tilley



AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 1971 2ND BELFAST

OPERATION "DEMETRIUS"

By Raymond Low

In the latter part of Jul 71, the Battalion was undergoing combined arms training on the Soltau Training Area under our new CO, Lt Col (later Maj Gen) Mike Reynolds, when the training was cut short. We were told that instead of the block leave we were expecting, we would be returning to barracks in preparation for an unexpected emergency tour to Northern Ireland, but no reasons were given. Back in Werl, we had a couple of weeks to hone up our Northern Ireland skills under our own resources, not having a clue whether to prepare for rural or urban operations.

On 5 Aug, the advance party deployed, and so began what can only be described as probably the most disjointed tour undertaken by any battalion at any time in Ulster. This was not, I hasten to add, because of any lack of professionalism on our part – but because the situation on the ground was in such turmoil, and I suspect the deployment and use of emergency 'out-oftheatre' reinforcements had not been properly thought through.

At dawn on 9 Aug, just as our main body began arriving into RAF Aldergrove, OP DEMETRIUS commenced, aimed at arresting and interning all known or suspected terrorists, both Catholic and Protestant. The first that the advance party knew of the events was on the radio as we waited for orders in Shackleton Barracks, Ballykelly. The CO had been briefed the previous afternoon, but was not allowed to inform anyone until 9am on the day - by which time we had been listening intently to the BBC. We were then told that the battalion would act as Province Reserve, based at the Old Torpedo Factory in Antrim where the main body would join us.

We took no part in the operation itself and the Advance Party moved towards Antrim via a circuitous route, being diverted time after time as confusion reigned over Province-wide reports of incidents, gun battles, bombings, demonstrations and riots. Internment had done more than anything to give both sides of the

divide a common enemy, ie us - that said, they still took every opportunity to have a go at each other.

The CO then took us on a quick recce towards Belfast, which of course from our previous tour was home territory, but then was surprised to find that the companies, as they arrived, were being committed to under command other units. We were subsequently directed to move to Mountpottinger RUC station in East Belfast where Tac HQ would assume responsibility for its own Tactical Area of Responsibility (TAOR) in Ballymacarett.

There, together with our B Coy and another company from the Duke of Wellington's Regiment under command, we hastily hit the streets. This in itself summed up the reactive 'patching up' that was going on - it is difficult otherwise to explain why we were joined by a sub-unit from another battalion while our own companies were deployed elsewhere. The situation on the ground was, to put it mildly, fluid, but good consequence planning should have foreseen many of the challenges.

The end result as the sun set on Internment Day was apparent chaos, and although my own memory fails me, a glance at Mike Reynolds' autobiography (Soldier at Heart) and the Regimental Magazine of the time shows: Tac HQ and B Coy at RUC Mountpottinger; A Coy to 2 PARA in Ballymurphy; C Coy in the air as their first aircraft had broken down and then on arrival, deployed to various RUC stations and key points (KPs), and SP Coy to under command 1 RGJ at the Albert Street Mill.

What I can recall of that evening, is the sense that the whole of Belfast was ablaze, with smoke all over the skyline, an acrid background smell of burning and CS, and the constant sound of explosions and shooting. In Ballymacarett, our new TAOR, a well-known interface area between Catholics and Protestants, both sides were involved in the violence: shootings, bombings, burning buses and barricades – not to mention crowds

with petrol bombs and stoning. Much of the 'aggro' was directed at each other, until they saw the Army or the RUC, at which point we became the targets.

Elsewhere in Belfast, some areas were really hot! For instance the repercussions of what went on in Ballymurphy remain current to this day. A Coy joined 2 PARA in the mayhem that was taking place, where, as in other Republican areas, there were sustained shooting and IED attacks by the IRA. There, it is alleged that the military knowingly killed some eleven supposedly unarmed innocent civilians. As I write (almost exactly 48 vears later) an Inquest into those deaths is taking place. with some veterans being interviewed under caution. Certainly more than one Queen's soldier, me included, has been required to give a written statement.

In my case, although nowhere near the events in Ballymurphy, the Coroner was seeking a feel for the wider context in which the shootings in Ballymurphy occurred. It was assumed that as I was the Intelligence Officer of the battalion providing reinforcements that I would have a good idea of what was going on in 2 PARA's TAOR. You must be joking, the situation was so confused that I had very little idea of what was going on in our own TAOR, let alone anyone else's!

The fact is, we had not inherited our area from another unit and were seeking intelligence on the hoof. Here there was pressure - Brigadier Frank Kitson, the fierce and somewhat icy comd of 39 Bde had one priority and that was Intelligence – with a big 'I'. He must have been disappointed at the 2 QUEENS meagre offerings.

Eventually the dust settled, and most of our companies had changed their residences and allegiances at least four times during the tour, finding themselves under command of different units on a regular basis. The Bn TAOR continued to be based in Ballymacarett, with Tac HQ and two companies. The Battalion was also responsible for quarding numerous RUC stations and KPs, one of which was the Royal Victoria Hospital on the Falls Road. It was here that Private Carter, an Officers' Mess waiter, was shot dead whilst on escort duty for a Quartermaster detail. It was also where Lt Merrick Willis was badly wounded in a drive-past shooting incident.

Excitement there was in plenty – even for us, a seasoned unit that had spent nearly a year and a half on intense operations on our previous tour. We had a full mix of incidents - one comes to mind which involved Dmr Ward inviting two members of the public to kindly remove a car they had parked under his sangar. This they did, and it exploded shortly afterwards.

The tour was short and after only six weeks, on 17 Sep we returned to Germany. There, on arrival, we were told that we would not be departing on leave, but were just in time to take part in the Divisional FTX – such were the mixed priorities of BAOR soldiering in the early seventies.

In retrospect, OP DEMETRIUS can only be described as an abject failure. It was not thought through politically and the situation on the ground did not merit such drastic action; the intelligence was not accurate and many were not picked up who should have been, while many others were picked up who certainly should not have been.

There was an imbalance between Protestants and Catholics with the vast majority of internees coming from the Republican base; and because it took so long for the intelligence agencies to sort out who should remain behind bars and who should be released, this further exacerbated tensions. All this heightened Catholic contempt and hatred for the Crown and security forces - polarisation was complete.

The statistics tell a tale:

- From the beginning of the Troubles in Aug 69 and prior to 9 Aug 71 - ten Army (no UDR) and four RUC had been killed.
- From 9 Aug until the end of 71 a further 34 Army, 5 UDR and 7 RUC were killed.
- The next year, '72, was the worst year for Security Force casualties and saw 108 Army, 26 UDR and 17 RUC killed.

For us, the OP DEMETRIUS Tour was as I have described it. But what we did not realise was that we had been in the Province at a pivotal moment in the history of the Troubles. Only subsequently would we appreciate that the actions at that time are now recognised as one of the principal reasons for the rise of the IRA and the support by the Republican minority for violence - no action could have done more to boost IRA recruiting. It was also an indirect cause of Bloody Sunday early the next year and for the growth of 'NO GO' areas which would require yet another intervention by 2 QUEENS in '72 on OP MOTORMAN - but that is another story.



Pte Paul Carter was murdered by the Provisional IRA on 14 Sep 71, just three days from the end of the six-week emergency tour. One gunmen armed with a Thompson sub-machine gun opened fire while Paul was on guard outside the Royal Victoria Hospital. It has been

reported in the past that a hostile crowd tried to make off with his body and weapon, but were prevented from so doing. This is in fact a myth. Two civilians immediately carried him into the hospital for treatment. Sadly, he died of his injuries a little while later. Paul Carter was the Regiment's first fatality caused by the IRA.

I went to Paul Carter's funeral while I was on sick leave (Ed: Merrick having himself been shot earlier in the tour). Two fellow subalterns, not serving with the battalion at that stage, but both serving at the Junior Infantry Battalion at Shorncliffe, John MacWilliam and John Huskisson, picked me up from my parents' house in Crowhurst and we drove to Brighton. They had both known Paul well and he had been in Johnny Mac's platoon. Mike Jelf and others came down from the Depot.

The Bn, based in BAOR and in the closing stage of the tour, was not able to send a large presence. Military funerals were still a relative rarity in the very early 70s as there had been very few fatal casualties in Ulster until then, and they had been a rarity at home since the Korean War twenty years before. When we arrived at his house, we found that all was in place for a formal military funeral with local and national media in attendance.

His father asked us if we would walk behind the coffin with him to the church. We walked immediately behind him - he showed great dignity - through large crowds lining the streets of Brighton to pay their respects. There was a guard of honour from the Regiment at the church, with a bugler to sound the Last Post. I remember vividly the almost universal gasp that the congregation gave as the guard of honour fired a volley over the grave - they had not expected it, and it was followed by what I can only describe as a shocked cry of anguish from the family and most of those present. It was spooky and quite awful.

Over forty years later, I accompanied Paul's sister and mother at a ceremony, also in Brighton at which they were awarded the Elizabeth Cross, the medal that was introduced to be awarded to the next of kin of soldiers killed on operations. It was a privilege to be present along with my old friends Mike Jelf and Peter McLelland from the Bn in the early days of Belfast, who both remembered Paul well, as well as Brian Terry who had been his sect comd in 10 Pl.



Pte Carter's funeral following his murder by the IRA on 15 Sep 71 just 3 days before the end of the tour



FEBRUARY - MARCH 1972 3RD BELFAST

A SPEARHEAD DIARY

By Bill Kempton

30 Mar - The day started with normal training - pokey drill then cleaning of best kit. Then at 1200 the news the Bn is moving to Ireland! Spent all afternoon packing, drawing flak-jackets and visored helmets, weapons and ammo. I suppose we had to expect it in a way. Move by coach at 1630 to RAF Lyneham, had a meal and at 2130 flew by Hercules to Aldergrove - oh you stinking Emerald Isle! 3-tonner to HMS Maidstone, had another meal and finally got to bed at about 0330.

Fri 31 - Nostalgic somehow to sleep again in those cramped bunks. Paraded with IS kit and sorted ourselves out: putting together webbing etc. (On operations in Ireland we stripped the yoke and back pouches from our normal battle-order webbing because they would not go under the flak jacket. We carried water-bottle, respirator and ammunition pouches only, all attached to the belt.) We were not actually on Maidstone (which still had internees aboard) but on another boat alongside, the 'Hartland Point'. We still ate on Maidstone though, and used the Naafi there.

Drew up IS stores and loaded them on the Pigs, which are driven this time by RCT drivers.

At 1830 all NCOs went to Albert St for a briefing for tomorrow's operation. We were under command the RHA (Royal Horse Artillery). Then at 2130 the whole coy paraded by the wagons for the OC to check.

1 Apr - Up at 0600 and out by 0730 for foot patrols in the city centre, from a firm base at Musgrave St Police Station. I had three men, and the main job was to check parked cars for bombs – quite a job (no car may be left unattended in the city centre now). One went off while we were there, in Church Lane. Completely demolished the street, hell of a bang. We had passed this once on the way to our patrol area - the bomb was set in a hearse! We were relieved at 1300 by other patrols. Back for a meal, then had a shower and a sleep. Had briefing for tomorrow in the evening, then went for a couple of beers in the bar.

2 Apr - Did not have to make an early start, so we had ammo and equipment checks. At 1130 the Coy went to Divis bus depot, Andersontown, as reserve for the two IRA parades in the Milltown cemetery over the road. Had haversack lunches and lazed about on empty buses. It poured with rain and the parades were peaceful. Finished 'SS General' by Sven Hassel. Quite a boring day. Returned to the ship at 1700. Went to the bar on the Maidstone with Paul and sank quite a few beers.

3 Apr - The Company was on patrol in the city centre (another area this time) from 0800 - 1200. I took the patrol from 0800 - 1000 with three men, in the area around the Europa Hotel. It rained a lot, but we did quite well for cups of tea from various places. After lunch the Company was in reserve in streets south of the Newtonards Road as standby for a Prod football match. It was peaceful and we came back to the boat at 1700. Saw "The Dirty Dozen" in the ship's cinema, then had a couple of beers.



Belfast. Interior of the Hartland Point. Jim Laker, Boeg, Jim Hedger



Divis Bus Depot, Andersonstown. 4 Pl's Pigs.



4 Apr - At 1030 Company went to Flax St as a general reserve for the RRW, who were there at the moment. Spent most of the time on the Pigs in the big car-park

getting bored. Ate in the cookhouse there. At 1900 4 PI went to a burnt-out school in Chief St to cover it. There were a few mobs of youths about, but no real trouble. My section stagged on outside there. Later we rushed out to deal with a non-existent crowd in Woodvale Rd, then back to the school. Left at about midnight.

5 Apr - Back at 1000 to Flax St to do exactly the same as yesterday. After lunch 4 Pl were back in Chief St, though my section was patrolling that side of the Crumlin as several groups of stone-throwing youths were about. They soon lost interest when we came near them though. Went back to the ship at about 1700 and the usual chaos started when we handed in IS stores for the move back tomorrow. Spent ages stealing bits of kit that were missing. Finally had a shower and got to bed at 0300.

6 Apr - We were up and rushing about early, but as usual there were delays. Transport was late. Boarded the LST, troopship or whatever, at about 0830, and it sailed at 1000 hrs. The bunks were comfortable and I slept most of the day. Did lifeboat drill. Meals were in shifts, though no-one took any notice of the schedule and there were huge queues. Big clean-up operation before we left - we could not leave till it was immaculate, and some of us were ages scrubbing bootmarks from the canteen floor, although how they thought a battalion wearing rubber boots, crammed into a troopship, could avoid making bootmarks on a lino floor? Boring coach journey (5 hours), handed in weapons and ammo, and got to bed about 0400 hrs. Another tour, albeit short, completed – no casualties.



Maidstone and the Hartland Point



Divis Bus Depot, Andersonstown. 4 Platoon card school



Divis Bus Depot, Andersonstown. Steve Terry on Stag



On the LST





JULY - AUGUST 1972 3RD LONDONDERRY

MY BAPTISM OF FIRE

By John Russell

1972 in Northern Ireland would turn out to be the bloodiest year for the British Army. After packing our weapons and equipment, we went to Liverpool docks and boarded the Sir Galahad, a flat-bottomed LSL, which would transport us across the Irish Sea to Belfast. I'd be telling a lie if I said I wasn't worried, because I was but I consoled myself with the thought that I was in the hands of veterans who had just spent 2 years in the Province. The ship wasn't exactly a cruise liner, more like a tramp steamer. On the deck were numerous portakabins and below was full of Chinese crew. There were no cabins for us passengers so we just lay down where we could, with me in the hold sprawling over large packs and kit bags. We travelled through the night, and in the morning, the iconic Harland and Wolff cranes could be seen looming into view. Once we disembarked, we were loaded onto trucks and driven out through the gates where the 'reception committee' greeted us with a bombardment of bricks and bottles, with some of the missiles finding their way through the canvas flaps. How lovely of them to make the effort so early in the morning!

The wagons rolled out of Belfast and made their way to Londonderry where we passed through the Creggan and arrived at Piggery Ridge. Well, what a surprise! We clambered out of the trucks and we were amazed to be confronted by a cook slaving over his No 1 burner surrounded by barbed wire. Was that it? Where were the barrack rooms and bullet proof walls? The guestion of barrack rooms was soon answered when the portakabins arrived, the same ones that were on the LSL! It suddenly dawned on me that there was a lot of work to be done here. And I wasn't wrong. Our emergency tour at Piggery Ridge turned out to be one of the most gruelling tours of my career. If you weren't patrolling the streets, you would be on guard duty, and if you weren't on guard, you were filling and carrying thousands of sandbags. If you weren't doing any of those things, then you would be providing protection for the Royal Engineers as they laid the infrastructure for the new-born camp. And for those of you who thought spud-bashing died out with National Service, I can assure you it was alive and well and thrived at Piggery Ridge. Sleep? It felt like a luxury that didn't exist in this part of the world.

The street patrols weren't as bad as I had imagined. It was a bit like patrolling through the streets of Coventry, except you were wearing a uniform carrying a rifle and everyone was hostile. Whenever we took any verbal off the locals, I never took it personally; the uniform was



the 'wanker', not me, surely? I remember one particular young lady, whom we passed most days, very pretty with a shy smile. I grew guite fond of her in a funny sort of way, so I thought I would give her a kindly greeting next time I saw her. Sure enough, we passed her again one day. "Good morning." I said cheerily. "Fuck off youze British bastard" she replied and spat at me. What a shame as she really was quite pretty.

Someone not so pretty was a hard-faced housewife who never did see eye to eye with us, and you wouldn't want to tackle her in a wrestling match. We met her walking down the street while on patrol. "Feck off home ye British bastards!" she screamed, "You don't belong here!!" It just so happened that John Docherty was leading the patrol, who was born and bred in Northern Ireland. "But I am home" he said in his unmistakable accent. The poor woman nearly had a fit. She was stuck for words for at least two seconds. "You.. you feckin' traitor!!" she bellowed. And that's all you could hear as we continued our happy little patrol.

We had the joy of taking part in OP MOTORMAN and we were there to clear up the no-go areas. The locals had sealed off areas by putting up barricades of burntout vehicles, barbed wire and other rubbish, and it was about to come to an end. Sgt Joe Kaye-Lesser (affectionately known as K-L or Big Joe) was our platoon sergeant and he gathered us together in the early hours of the morning and told us that MOTORMAN was about to begin. The engineers would clear the bigger obstacles with their Scooby Doo vehicles, and we would deal with the smaller things like the barbed wire. "If anything will stop a Saracen, it's barbed wire" he told us. "It punctures the

tyres." Joe often amazed us with his broad knowledge. He decided the best way to remove the wire was to reverse the Saracen up to it and drag it away with a piece of rope and a grappling hook. Off we went under the cover of darkness and found our first entanglement of wire. The vehicle guickly reversed up to it and Joe leapt off with the grappling iron. He threw it in there and leapt back onto the vehicle, shouting "Go!" The driver put his foot down and we went down the road with a shower of sparks in our wake. We dumped that onto some waste ground and went in search of more. We reversed up to a second pile of wire and Joe jumped out and did his thing. "Go!" he shouted as he stepped aboard. But Joe wasn't as guick as he thought and he underestimated the reflexes of the driver. The Saracen roared off with Joe's foot still in the wire. We all looked on in amazement at Joe's boot and its shower of sparks trailing behind our wagon. Laugh? We nearly told the driver to stop...

Eventually my baptism of fire in Northern Ireland drew to a close. The Coldstream Guards had arrived to take over and we sat on a truck waiting for our sniper patrol to return. When it did, we would all be transported to Belfast docks and board the LSL. We were still in the truck when a shot rang out. A sergeant in the Coldstream Guards had been shot and killed. Our sniper patrol returned fire but were unable to confirm a hit and so it was with a tinge of sadness that we left Piggery Ridge.

Finally, just to put the record straight, when the sandbag wall was completed, it appeared in the Guinness Book of Records as the biggest ever built and was credited to the Coldstream Guards: we built most of it!

I was a Pl Sgt in A Coy with Roy Barnes as the Pl Comd (the senior sgt) and I was on my first tour joining the 2nd Bn on OP MOTORMAN ('72), having just come from a posting as an instructor at IJLB Oswestry. The Coy Comd was Major "Blinker" Boucher, named such as he had very thick glasses and always seemed to be blinking; on one early morning search in Londonderry's Rosemount area, my platoon was in a house which had a large moose's head on the hall wall. Apparently when Blinker came in with the CSM Dave Ormrod, he saw the head on the wall and said "Good morning". Whether it was because he thought it was someone standing there or because he was taking the mickey, my lads thought it was a result of his eyesight!

John Hamill



JULY - NOVEMBER 1972 2ND LONDONDERRY

A FAILED OP

By Bill Knight-Hughes

In '72, the lower part of the Creggan Estate in Londonderry was dominated by a large school building of at least three storeys - perhaps four, making it the best vantage point on the whole estate.

This fact had long been well appreciated by the civilian population as well as the police and the Army. But the school was considered a sensitive facility and it was strictly forbidden to use the grounds for any military purpose whatsoever. The principal of the school was an important person in the community and enforced this ruling through the Town Hall and the Brigade Commander assiduously. All this notwithstanding, we eyed the school jealously as a possible OP.

One day, intelligence indicated that something was imminently afoot on the Creggan, probably a shooting. We were all especially alert. The CO, Mike Newall, was obviously prevailed upon, likely against his better judgement, to put an OP in the school over the weekend. I was chosen for this mission and it was made quite clear to me at the briefing how sensitive the operation was and how vital it was that we were not discovered.

All this was long before the advent of Close Observation Platoons and specialist units for this sort of duty. This anecdote will surely show why they became necessary.

Quite excited by the change to our usual routine of street patrols, dawn cordons, garden searches and trashing people's homes in the middle of the night, we prepared quickly for our insertion on a Friday evening. I can't remember exactly who I took with me, but it would probably have been my PI HQ brick comprising LCpl Vinnecomb my FV 432 driver, Pte Clark my radio operator, and perhaps Pte Bishenden..... the blind leading the blind then...

Apart from the necessary surveillance equipment, we took only dry rations and as a slight treat, fresh milk from our sutler's store in bottles to drink. That night, hidden in a Saracen, we were spirited up to the school. The insertion went smoothly, and by Saturday morning we were lying on the floor of a classroom in an excellent position looking down on the whole estate.

Nothing happened. We were only slightly alarmed on the first night when all the lights went on for about half an hour. They were obviously on some sort of timer switch. I think we witnessed a traffic accident on the Sunday.

The problems started when we realised that we had nothing to pee into. True to form, I had completely overlooked this pretty obvious eventuality. Well... we had some empty milk bottles. So we used those. But to generate more capacity, we had to drink even more milk. This vicious circle took a entirely foreseeable course and soon all the bottles were emptied and refilled and we were all still busting!

We extracted late on Sunday night having achieved nothing. Before leaving, I crawled around the classroom floor in the dark, checking to see that we had left no litter. Back at Bligh's Lane, we were debriefed by the duty ops officer ... I think it might have been Malcolm Montgomery, our A Coy 2IC. We washed and went to bed.

The next day, Monday morning sometime, I was called urgently from my bunk to the Ops Room where Gavin Bulloch asked me very seriously "Bill, the CO has been summoned to meet the Headmaster of the school. He needs to know now! Did you leave anything behind in the OP which could be traced back to us?"

"No, sir!" I replied with practised but unjustified confidence, "I personally searched the OP before we left!"

I had hardly got back to my billet and nodded off before I was again summoned, but this time by the CSM and told to get myself into good order and report. I arrived in the Ops Room to find my very angry and red-faced CO.

"Bill" he said grimly, "I have just seen the Headmaster. He asked if we had any soldiers in the school at the weekend and I said absolutely not. He then asked me where these came from"

The CO produced two milk bottles full of cold, yellow urine and placed them on the table for us all to admire in uncomfortable silence. Nothing more need be said!



OCTOBER 1972 - FEBRUARY 1973 BELFAST

BELFAST 1972/73

By Roddy Mellotte

This tour in Belfast, actually my only one in that city, was dramatically different to Londonderry in '69 when we were seen as the saviours of the Republican/Catholic community, whilst at the same time the friends of the Loyalist/Protestant community. In Belfast but four years later, we were seen as the enemy or at least the opposition by many of the Republican/Nationalist/ Catholic community and certainly as the same by some hard-liners of the Loyalist/Protestant community. In short, we were legitimate targets for both, albeit the IRA was the main source of trouble.

We had maps of Belfast that were shaded green (Nationalist), orange (Loyalist) and white (mixed/neither). The Bn's patch included such places as New Lodge Road, Divis Flats, Crumlin Road and the Falls Road, all hot-beds of IRA activity. Bn HQ was based in an old, in both senses of the word, police station in North Queen Street, which was dingy, cramped and heavily fortified. Such daylight that could find its way in was dulled by anti-mortar nets and the like.

As Adjutant, my life carried on pretty much as before, with routine business which had to go on but I was also doing shifts in the main Ops Room, running the Bn radio network and listening in on the Bde and police networks.

In the evenings and sometimes earlier, I would go out with Mike Hayward's 'Rover Group', visiting company and other locations, enabling me to do adjutantal business with people I needed to see and also sometimes conduct CO's orders, disciplinary and other interviews and matters. In this case, the RSM and I would 'ride shotgun', if only because there was no room elsewhere with the CO's signaller and close protection. The reason for standing up was to be the eyes and ears of the Group, and therefore more able to identify any incoming shots, return fire, and see what was going on. On one occasion, Keith Yonwin was standing alongside me when he was shot in the chest. Happily, it was not very serious. Ironically, the shot came from the direction he was facing, so although I heard it, I was facing the other way

and didn't know where it came from. I probably wouldn't have seen the flash either. We were in semi-protected landrovers which had fairly small holes in the roof in which we stood so our bodies were close, more or less, against each other, so I felt the impact on his body as he slumped down. That gave me something to think about!

We did sustain a few other injuries besides Keith, but none very serious or fatal on that tour. However, on the plus side, we put several of them, the players, out of the game. On 4 Feb 73, we had intelligence that there was going to be some movement of arms and so we set up a couple of snipers and offered 'come-on' targets. Over that evening and in the early hours of the following morning we reaped our reward. In the evening NIREP, we claimed five hits but this actually translated into eight killed - all the bodies were taken to the local hospital and all, who were anyway known to us, were given death notices as brave volunteers 'Killed in Action' in the local nationalist paper. There were a further three casualties with local addresses who were taken to hospitals outside Belfast with gunshot wounds.



Landrovers in NI with top-cover

It was always slightly amusing to be accused of killing innocent citizens just going about their business and being gunned down by us immediately after the incident, only for them to be given IRA obituaries a few



days later. It is worth noting that a total of eight terrorists killed was many more than most units, including ourselves, took out of the game in a whole tour let alone one night! All eight were known or suspected of being active IRA insurgents. That evening's total must have sent a few shudders through their system but also perhaps made us more likely to be targeted by way of revenge.

Shifts in the Ops Room usually lasted six hours and were invariably very busy as we juggled the numerous means of communication up and down the chain of command.

- 1. Brigade Radio Net handset not visible
- 2. Battalion Radio Net handset not visible
- 3. GPO telephone with privacy device.
- 4. GPO telephone.
- 5. Police Radio Net.
- 6. Internal intercom
- 7. Brigade Secure Net
- 8. Digital clock!

It was OK, as long as they didn't all go at the same time.



Captain Roddy Melotte on shift in the Battalion's Operations Room

BUSTER - PART ONE

By Amédée Miéville

There is always something or someone that reminds you of your Northern Ireland tours. Every unit probably has one and in the case of 1 QUEENS, the person who certainly fits the bill is Maj Buster Carlston.

Buster, formally of the Northern Rhodesia Regiment, joined the British Army in 1964. In '65, he was posted to 1st Bn the Middlesex Regt, which became 4 QUEENS when the Queen's Regiment was formed. A natural second-row forward, there were few in the scrum who ever volunteered to lift him and everyone was glad when he joined the opposition and took up refereeing! He joined 1 QUEENS in Berlin and at one Dinner Night proved that his bulk was too much for the iron chandelier and the ceiling in the Officers Mess! He moved with the Bn to Bulford in '72 where they prepared for the tour in Belfast.

The Bn deployed to their company bases in the City. Buster, now OC C Coy, moved into Brown Square adjacent to Unity Flats, a Catholic stronghold, and the

staunchly Protestant Shankill Road. There they carried out foot patrols around Unity Flats and part of the city centre, and mobile patrols in the docks area. He led the company in a robust manner as befitted someone over 6 feet and equally broad! He treated friend and foe in the same manner and his subalterns made a point of staying out of range when they pushed their luck too far! He was determined to appear on the local TV station but didn't manage it until close to the end of the tour when he was taking part in an incident involving a petrol tanker with a bomb in it which, rumour has it, he moved to a slightly safer position (This became a habit!). It was either in the run-up to that event, or one at the Unity Corner/Shankill Road flash point, that he fell into a coil of barbed wire and had to be extracted by his officers! But he did not let the subalterns get away with the embarrassment of the moment, threatening to call in the SIB when his personal stash of magazines vanished from under his bed. Luckily, these were returned to their normal position just before he was about to carry out his threat!

During the Bn's second tour in '72/3, I was a Sect Comd with B Coy based in Carnmoney, North Belfast. I was tasked to patrol the Catholic-inhabited part of White City in order to show a presence, in an attempt to deter UVF/UDA intimidation. This was a mixed-religion estate built after the war for slum clearance. My 2IC was Bill (The Old Man) Jones. I also had Pte Harry Lancelly. A burst of eight to ten rounds was fired into a fish and chip shop as my patrol rounded a corner. The gunman escaped in a vehicle onto the main drag. VCPs were deployed but were unsuccessful.

Bill secured the area whilst I entered the shop. There were five very young Catholic children still standing in a queue paralysed through fear and unable to speak. One girl had a gunshot wound and had lost the bottom part of her chin and jawline. I applied a field dressing. I then noticed that the shock had made some of them involuntarily wet themselves, which was very embarrassing for them but not surprising.

All these years later and on the few occasions that I have fish and chips, I still wait at a distance outside the chip shop and get my better half to go inside!

UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE

By Amédée Miéville

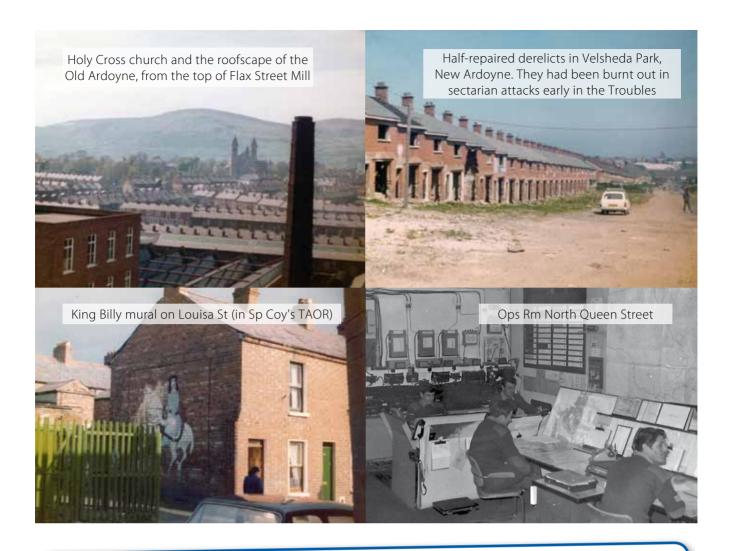


In Sep 71, I was posted from Berlin to RMCS Shrivenham to study for a BSc in Civil Engineering. I quickly realised that I would miss out on a number of operational tours and the Regimental history that went with them while I studied for my degree. I asked if I could be attached to 1 QUEENS in Belfast and I was delighted when this was agreed. I joined them in Dec 72 over the Christmas break. I spent most of my time with C Coy in Brown's Square adjacent to Unity Flats, a Catholic stronghold, and the staunchly Protestant Shankill Road. I carried out regular foot patrols around Unity Flats and mobile patrols in the docks area.

I also help provide the screen between the Catholics and Protestants at the potential flash point where the Shankill Road passed Unity Flats. The Protestant marches were often several thousand strong. The Catholics were, I am sure, intimidated and so were we, standing between them!

There were lighter moments during my stay. I was filmed by local TV at the scene of a car bomb in the docks on my second day in the Province, something that my Coy Comd, Captain Buster Carlston, had failed to achieve up to that point in the battalion's tour. I was embarrassed at the Christmas CSE show when the magician produced doves from various parts of my anatomy. I managed to avoid further public performances until, as Commanding Officer, some 22 years later, a 10-foot Python was draped around my shoulders by a scantily clad "lady" in the Warrant Officers and Sergeants Mess!

Life in Belfast was certainly very different from studying for a degree!



It was the early '70s. We seemed to follow 42 Commando around in the Arms Plot and were due to relieve them in the New Lodge area of Belfast. We had all been told about their Most Fearless Warrior, Cpl... a renowned sniper and all-round killing machine. We had heard stories...

Sure enough, he turned up to show us the ropes on our first area familiarisation patrol. Our jaws dropped in admiration at 6' 3" of romping stomping manhood wearing black gloves and a Para smock which we were sure concealed at least a pistol and commando dagger. He appeared amongst us lesser mortals, his SLR looking like a twig in his beefy hands. His steely eyes regarded us and the world with detachment, if not outright contempt. His granite face portraying that he had experienced things we couldn't even imagine. We set off in an open landrover, toward unknown dangers, our hero providing top cover and calling out directions to the driver. At an obviously dangerous intersection, we stopped, dismounted and quickly ran for cover. As our tame monster jumped off the Rover tailgate, his rifle magazine disintegrated and 20 shiny 7.62 rounds scattered across the road, some landing at the feet of amused locals, some teetering on the edge of open drains. Our panicked hero, calling for help, was on his hands and knees like a desperate mother hen gathering her wayward chicks and after a frantic bullet count, we soon made a hasty retreat back to the safety of the fort. Oh how are the mighty fallen!

Anon because the author thinks he'll get killed by the fearless warrior!



OCTOBER 1973 - FEBRUARY 1974 WEST BELFAST

TIGERS BAY, WEST BELFAST

By Mike Hurman

On 22nd Jan '74 at Kiwi Barracks, Bulford, 1 QUEENS rear party CSM shouted down to the assembled muster parade from the balcony of the Bn HQ building: "Hurman! You're 18 today! Get your kit packed, you is off to Belfast"!

The train took me to Liverpool where I was taken to the docks to catch the overnight ferry to Belfast. The MT driver took me to Bn HQ where I was told that I was posted to 6 Pl, B (Holland) Coy. B Coy was based at Dunmore Park in Tigers Bay, a Protestant area. My section commander Brian Kelling told me I would have to go to Ballykinler for training before being allowed on the streets.



Cpl Millet in the New Lodge

NIRTT (Northern Ireland Reinforcement Training Team) took me through patrolling and riot control procedures. Having been taught the 'box formation' at Oswestry during basic training, I thought I knew it all! "Forget that." they said, "We don't do that anymore"! Two weeks later, which included a day with another battalion patrolling the Falls Road, I was back in Tigers Bay.

Patrols on the ground consisted of moving from teastop to tea-stop provided by the grateful locals. As far as I remember, our area was relatively quiet. We would lock the peace-wall gates during night hours between Duncairn Gardens and the Catholic, New Lodge area, a flashpoint of trouble. The sound of bombs and shots fired in the distance was a regular pattern of life. Gate guard, sangar sentry and guick reaction force (QRF) were all part of our rotation of tasks. I also remember taking part in a battalion task to help cordon and protect the area around the Crumlin Road Courthouse during a speech given by the Rev Ian Paisley.

Occasionally whilst on mobile patrol, we would be tasked to drop off items to Bn HQ. I remember one night in the semi-darkness seeing people with sandbags over their heads, handcuffed, standing in small cubicles



New Lodge



waiting to be taken in for questioning. (Ed: Illegal activity which was discontinued shortly afterwards including the use of white noise, extended

stress positions, deprivation of sleep and deprivation of food and drink). It was a stark reminder of the reality of the situation.

At the end of February, we handed over to 3 PARA and moved back to Bulford. We arrived by troop train in the sidings near Tidworth and were met by the Band and Drums playing 'Soldiers of The Queen!



Searching the derelicts

ON ME 'EAD

By Peter Archer

I deployed on my first tour to Northern Ireland and arrived in Belfast in Oct 73. I was in C Coy and we were in the New Lodge. As was the norm, we were tested as a newly-arrived unit by rioting in the area of Hillman St, Lepper St and Duncairn Gardens. I do not recall any vehicle hijackings on this occasion but we were severely stoned and bottled in the evening.

I carried a baton gun as well as my rifle. CSM Bill Marshall told me to load the baton gun but not on any circumstances to fire it until he gave the order. I was hit on the head with a brick that dented my helmet and made my ears ring. I asked permission to fire but my request was denied.



The New Lodge Ladies' Delight

Baton rounds were fired but not by me, but after the riot, I managed to pick up one of the rubber bullets that had been fired and not picked up by one of the young ladies of the New Lodge. I may not have fired my baton gun on that occasion but at least I got a couple of souvenirs which now reside in the museum in Dover.

I visited Belfast in March 2019 with my partner Heather, regaling her with stories of my bravery, and we walked along North Queen Street and round the bottom end of the new Lodge and Spamount Street. It was extremely surreal!



Sgt Archer's helmet following the riot

I was tasked to take-over and secure the Harland and Wolff dockyard. This included a number of large Nissen hut-shaped sheds. With one of the dockyard managers, I inspected the contents of each shed and ensured that they were secure. Reaching the last one, I noticed that it had prominent radiation hazard warning signs. The manager swung open the door. I stepped inside to discover that it was full of dog food! Having secured the dog food, I mounted an armed guard at the entrance where we could monitor and search all vehicles and people entering. A pickup truck arrived, full of large gas cylinders. While the vehicle was being searched, I took out a full SMG magazine and, under the gaze of the driver, tapped each cylinder to ensure that they had not been filled with anything solid. Whereupon the Irish driver enquired: "Would that be some sort of special Geiger counter you're using there?" I smiled and replied: "Yes!"

Scrabble seemed to be one of the main forms of relaxation and I recall once feeling rather honoured being asked to make up a four with CSgt 'Noddy' Riddleston Holmes (who was rather good), Bryan Ray (OC B) and David Shephard (2IC B). I was the weakest link! And this game seemed to catch on, percolating through the company. David visited my platoon when a game was in progress between three privates and one LCpl. He looked down at the board and then pointing to a word said: "What's this then?" The answer came back: "ERUN, sir, you know, one of those big flappy birds which carries babies about." I recall David looking at me with tears in his eyes while trying to keep a straight face.

Nick Cann



Republican Youth with an Armalight



NOVEMBER 1973 - MARCH 1974 2ND LONDONDERRY

LONDONDERRY '73

By Bob Brewer

Prior to any tour in the Province of Northern Ireland, we would get training for the 'Troubles' in a training establishment called 'Tin City'. These were mock villages and there was one such training establishment in West Germany, where we were stationed, and another situated in the UK. The Tin Cities were made to represent the streets of Northern Ireland, and in '73 the training was bloody, with no guarter given or expected. The result of this was that quite often we inflicted more injuries on our fellow soldiers and colleagues during the training scenarios than were suffered at the hands of the Provisional IRA!

The battalion was posted to Londonderry in Nov 73. As I was still only 17 at the time, I remained in Werl and was assigned to the Rear Party for about a month. Two days after my 18th birthday, I joined my platoon at Piggery Ridge Base Camp on the outskirts of the Creggan Housing Estate in Londonderry (or Derry, depending on whose side you were on, Loyalist or Nationalist).

The camp held two companies and an assortment of headquarter staff, in total around 250 soldiers of varying ranks. It was built on the Sheriff's Mountain and overlooked Creggan Heights, part of the notorious Creggan Estate, a constant flashpoint.

The Creggan was like one of those lawless places that you see in the old Wild West movies, a sprawl of council houses, 100% Catholic and almost the same percentage Nationalist, and most of them hated the British Army. It was synonymous with the Bogside, which was situated a few miles away.

At the time, the camp's claim to fame was that it had the biggest sandbag wall in the country propping up the side of the camp which faced the Creggan Estate. The reason for the wall was because the camp was constantly being attacked by the Provisional IRA, with mortar or sniper fire coming from Creggan Heights, a few hundred yards away. Our barrack block where we kipped was directly next to the sandbag wall. Not sure if that was reassuring!

I grew up very quickly as the 'new boy'. I was always 'Tail-End Charlie' and had to be alert and worked twice as hard as the rest of the patrol. Tail-End Charlie, as the name implies, means you are at the rear of the patrol and have to learn to walk backwards providing protection to the rest of the patrol, as PIRA were not averse to shooting you in the back! Many a lamppost was collided into by the Tail-End Charlies – much to the amusement of the rest of the patrols.

Ulster was quite an eye-opener for me on my first tour. I got through it without too much trouble, growing up rapidly. The routine, which was 95% mundane and 5% adrenaline-fuelled action, consisted of patrols, where we patrolled the Creggan Estate in two seven-man foot patrols, running parallel and covering each other. A further two mobile patrols (four vehicles, each with three or four soldiers) would move around the foot patrols in total 28 soldiers. This would last approximately two hours, after which we would all return tactically to our base. Sometimes nothing happened, and sometimes we were bricked, petrol-bombed and occasionally shot at. During the course of one day, we would do four to six patrols, and in between patrols it was routine to sleep (or in the vernacular of the day kip or gonk) and eat. The cookhouse was always open, so you could eat whenever you wanted to and get yourself a hot cup of tea.

The next day would be guard duty which normally consisted of 'stagging on' for two hours, then two hours off, then back on stag for another two hours, then two off. This would be the routine for the day. The next day would be mobile patrols, doing exactly what we had done two days previously, only instead of patrolling on foot, we would patrol in a vehicle. The fourth day would be spent as the Quick Reaction Force (QRF), fully kitted, instantly ready to reinforce the troops on the ground in the event of an incident, with the requirement also to act as admin gofers for anyone who had a job to do that they didn't want to do themselves!

The fifth day was a day off – unless all hell broke loose or again someone needed a job doing that they didn't want to do themselves. But it was an opportunity to have a couple of beers (two was the maximum), get your dhobi (laundry) done and generally chill out. Then we would start the cycle again.

I completed my first tour of Northern Ireland and I don't think the battalion suffered any fatalities. As an 18-year-old, one grows up very quickly in the Army and this transition was accelerated when serving during the Troubles. Wouldn't have missed it for the world!

DOWN ON THE FARM - LONDONDERRY 1973-74

By Mike Jelf

The Winter Tour of '73-'74 to Ulster from Werl found the 2nd Bn Recce Pl deployed in the South Enclave outside Londonderry, an area running south and east to the border with Eire on the west side of the River Foyle (see map of South Enclave overleaf). We were entirely suited to the role of maintaining a reassuring security presence in the border area, both on foot and by vehicle. We were provided with stripped-down, long-wheelbase landrovers and a couple of Scout Cars.

The farmer at Mullenan House Farm justifiably had felt rather vulnerable and isolated, being just under a mile from the border, so early on during Op BANNER, he gave over his farm outbuildings to the military to establish a base. There were gains for all. The farmer and his family felt more secure in having such a military presence, and what could be more suitable for a recce platoon but to be living in the heart of its operational area! Furthermore, the farmer was surely recompensed for his generosity and the platoon commander enjoyed many a glass of Bushmills, sometimes by the fire!

The South Enclave was approximately 8kms north-south and 3 kms wide, but large parts were only crossed by farm tracks with the Killea border-crossing being the main crossing point into Eire. However, there were 13 further minor crossing points, many of which would allow a vehicle to cross. There were a number of isolated and vulnerable dwellings, and 7 kms of riverbank along the River Foyle. You can see from the map the limited routes available for vehicle movement. The most northern part of the TAOR to the Groarty Road is missing from the map.





Arriving in November, we were already into the winter months and patrolling on foot or by vehicle was a cold and dispiriting daily task. The winter evenings closed in early and the hours of darkness seemed interminable. However, the platoon recognised how well off they were compared to the rifle companies in the city and on Piggery Ridge. Vehicle patrolling had its advantages and rapid changes of scene whilst the accommodation was excellent and independent. About halfway through the tour, we welcomed a tp(-) from 14/20 KH commanded by Lt David Woodd. I never really understood why we were reinforced. The threat had not

increased but we were able to keep a better eye on the unofficial crossing points and keep the main routes patrolled to ensure that there were no culvert bombs, a favoured tactic of the IRA. We certainly made our presence felt but in spite of all our random check-points and the permanent one at Vedette 6 closer to Londonderry, I did hear recently on very good authority that certain senior members of the IRA did pass to and fro through the area into Londonderry for discussions with





Scout cars leaving Mullenan Farm

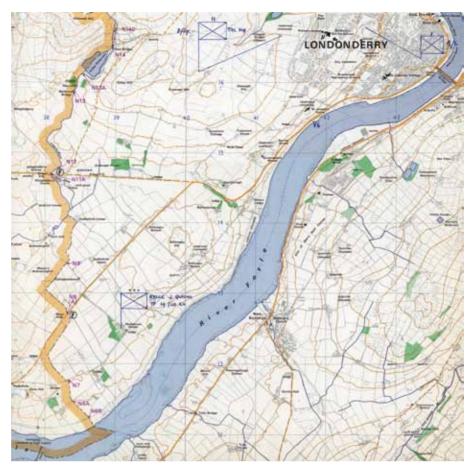
Recce out on the ground



Recce Pl 73-74 Tour Mullenan Farm

the SIS during that winter of 73-74. Well, well, well. Perhaps that is why we were not hit by any ambushes or culvert bombs making sure that troop levels were not significantly increased to watch those border crossings, instilling a more relaxed approach by patrolling troops. Chastening news really, to realise how much was going on during our tour in the South Enclave about which we were blissfully unaware!

Not surprisingly, platoon morale was good, and Jesse James the Pl Sgt recalled that the tour was the happiest of the many he undertook over the years. The sections that bore the brunt of the patrolling were led by Cpls Akehurst, Miller and Gittings. Characters abounded in the platoon and we integrated well with the cavalry troop. CSqt Tim Hayley reverted to being the CQMS for the base and oversaw our wellbeing, including, most important of all, ensuring that our



Map of South Enclave 73-74 Tour

excellent cook was generously provided with beers to sharpen him up! Sober, the food was awful!

PROVIDING FOR THE DONKEYS

By David (Jesse) Irving-James

Grizelda was a consultant at a children's psychiatric hospital near Derry. She lived in the South Enclave in a small-holding with her two donkeys, four goats, plenty of chickens, and at least five dogs inside the house. Grizelda was a lovely woman, quite eccentric and very proud to be British. She had no fear of the IRA and tended to be rather outspoken about the 'bloody troubles'. We were the first soldiers that had taken the time to visit her and show some interest in her wellbeing. She had great confidence in us and I was given strict instructions to keep an eye on the property when we could while she was at work.

I was always very aware that we should use covert measures to visit her at home and this was normally carried out under the cover of darkness. There was always a warm welcome from the dogs followed by tea and cake. Even my most roquish soldiers, Heath and Whitcher became very fond of her. My 2IC, Chad Bastings, kept the 12-bore shotgun, that she kept by the back door, well oiled and in good working order and showed her how to keep the cartridges safe and handy.

One very cold evening, just before Christmas, Grizelda told us that she was finding it increasingly difficult to get fodder for the donkeys. It wasn't that she could not afford it but hay seemed to be in short supply during this particular hard winter. To the rescue we came. We had identified in our travels around the enclave guite a few large barns filled with bales of hay.

In the still of the night, we paid each barn a visit and redistributed a couple of bales per vehicle so we could replenish the doctor's store of fodder in no time. We never did disclose that we had anything to do with this miraculous appearance of such fine fare for her donkeys and I doubt the bales were missed. I suspect she knew well enough how we had found the solution.



Late one Saturday evening in early '74, on stag in the Ops Room in Creggan Camp, my companionable browsing with the duty signals NCO (I think Barry Miller of the Signal Platoon?) of back copies of Penthouse was interrupted by the arrival of a large gent in plain

clothes who dumped an Ingram sub-machine gun on the table and asked to use one of our spare frequencies for an op he was running. Plain-clothes operatives were following a potential source to a meet and their primary comms were not up to the task - happy days! They'd hired him a car, but sadly he had no idea how to drive and had evidently taken



on board large quantities of Dutch courage. A growing audience in the ops room was reduced to near incontinence with mirth as the operatives described the individual over the net careering off parked cars, hitting a wall and finally crashing the car irredeemably into a ditch.

2 QUEENS Recce Platoon LCpl Barrett and CSgt Hayley





Londonderry

One of my several experiences of regurgitation whilst airborne took place in the first days of the same tour. I'd made an arrangement with one of our local AAC pilots, a keen squash player, that he'd pick me up and take me to Ballykelly for what would turn out to be the first of many enjoyable and competitive games. However, he hadn't warned me, as we returned to Creggan Camp afterwards, about the then-current practice of avoiding possible cowboy shoots at slowmoving Sioux helicopters by doing engine-idling vertical drops into SF bases in hard Republican areas from about 1000





A small gift which was presented to us with an assortment of bricks and bottles by the good people of the Creggan Estate to 3PI 2 Queen's L'Derry '73-4.





Neptune Water Cannon used in '72-3



LCpl Thomas and Pte Pilling plumbing the depths during a midwinter culvert clearance in Co Tyrone

Being a fresh-faced lad I only had to shave once a fortnight so on my first day in the Army, I only had a quick wash and returned to my bed-space explaining in my ignorance to the Corporal why my ablutions were so quick. I was informed that in the Army one had to shave every day and was sent back to comply. My shave was a rather bloody affair. Returning to the barrack room, the cockney wit in the next bed suggested that if I didn't want to die of loss of blood I had better leave the blade out next time. I followed this advice for the next 12 weeks and got away with my customary shave every two weeks or so.

Tug Wilson



MAY - JUNE 1974 1ST BELFAST

ULSTER WORKERS STRIKE

by David Pollard

In an earlier Journal, Mike Hurman described deploying to Ulster in Jun 74 for the Ulster Workers' Strike. Mike was, incidentally, a Pte in my platoon in 1 QUEENS at the time, and when I went to 3 QUEENS as B Coy Comd in '84, he was one of my subaltern pl comds. I had been in Belfast for a court case in the run up to the strike and whilst there, unbeknown to me, 1 LI had already been deployed (they had been Spearhead Bn) and 1 QUEENS was then moved up to take over and was also about to be deployed. As I was being taken to catch the Belfast to Liverpool ferry, the powers-that-be at Bulford decided I should be left to enjoy (endure more like!) the overnight ferry crossing to Liverpool rather than be flown back. When I walked into the mess at Bulford early the next afternoon, all the pictures had been taken down, everybody was in combat kit, and I was urged to get myself ready PDQ! At around 5 pm, we were transported (very slowly!) in Wilts and Dorset double-decker buses to the AMC at South Cerney. Once there and 'booked' in, we moved off to the mess. After dinner, we all settled down to watch TV and enjoy our post-dinner drinks, as we had been told we would not be flying from Brize Norton until the early hours. I well remember the BBC 9 o'clock News coming on, and the first item was that 'troops from 1 QUEENS are tonight being rushed to Ulster' for the strike. As you may imagine, the irony of the word 'rushed' was not lost on us as we enjoyed our drinks and recalled the pedestrian journey from Bulford! Coincidentally, my father that afternoon had surgery and had just come round from the anaesthetic to be greeted with that news about his son!

My other memories from that tour are arriving at Sunnyside TA centre and the ubiquitous Pye Pocket phones being distributed, but there were not enough for the rifle platoons! Instead we had to resort to our A 41s. On the first patrol, we got to the end of the road leading to the TA centre, turned right and at that point all comms were lost! B Coy did a lot of fuel delivery escorting to farms, and I can attest that a 'Pig' was not



a comfortable ride on long journeys! Before we could take on that task, however, C Coy were ordered to take over the Sydenham fuel storage complex. The plan was to scale the perimeter fence in the dark, as the reaction of the civilian guard force, if they knew the Army was about to take over, was unknown and could have been adverse. As I heard Bob McGhie tell it, the first of the boys had climbed almost to the top of the fence when one of the guards appeared saying, "Would youse boys like me to open the gate? To which the answer, after a brief pause was, "Nah, we may as well finish the climb!"

Our mission was to maintain essential services and maintain a patrol footprint in East Belfast. Bread delivery escorts from the Ormeau Bakery provided us with fresh cakes in thanks for our help. Fuel tanker escort duties to provide fuel for the outlying farms provided the opportunities for wonderful farmhouse teas of homemade soda bread and jam. These were some of the welcome, home-comfort, fringe benefits during the strike which saw the end of the Sunningdale Agreement. In just under two weeks with our mission accomplished, we were flown home. There were however some unpleasant scenes during the strike as can be seen from the photo.

My final memory of that tour was that Northern Ireland pay had recently been introduced, at the heady rate of 50p per day. To qualify you had to complete 14 days in the Province, whereupon it was backdated to your first day. However, both 1 LI and 1 QUEENS were flown out on Day 13! No wonder soldiers can be a touch cynical at times.

Casting my mind back to 1 QUEENS Belfast tour over the miserable winter of 1973/4. The scene: the junction of New Lodge Road/Lepper Street Belfast. It was raining (when wasn't it raining?!) and we were acting on the recent information that weapons were being moved and womens' long coats were used to disguise guns. Cpl Jock Hale had asked a lovely woman with well-bitten fingernails, already brown with nicotine, by the name of Sio***n McCo***ck, who was well known as a squaddie-hater, to undo the buttons on her overcoat and open the front of it. Lovely lady's response: "Youse can't do that to me; I'm a fecking lady!" Jock remained patient and impassive!

Tim Trotman

In a school somewhere in Kent during the visit of the KAPE team from Northern Ireland, all the paraphernalia was set out on tables; weapons, radios and the like, and the young adults were viewing all the apparatus set before them. "Feel free to ask any questions of the team," I said to the youngsters, forgetting that my LCpl was afflicted with a noticeable stutter.

Suddenly I heard a young girl ask this LCpl a question:

"Have you travelled far with the army?"

"Yes" he replied, "Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, in fact all over the fu-fu-fu-Far-East".

Anon



JANUARY - JUNE 1975 1ST BELFAST

GIRDWOOD PARK, WEST BELFAST

By Mike Hurman

Six months after the Ulster Workers Strike, we were back; this time covering the New Lodge area which was staunchly Republican. One of our tasks was manning an OP at the top of Churchill Flats overlooking the New Lodge Road. The OP was accessed via the top of the lift housing. We were provided with rations for the three day period that we were in residence.



Outside the Starry Plough in the New Lodge



Search operations on Donore Street in the New Lodge

When I was on stag, I remember watching Kung Fu on a TV in the next block of flats via a telescope from the OP - it was a very dull duty post!

We were on mobile patrol when a bomb placed by the UVF exploded at the Starry Plough Pub on the New Lodge Road. Our section helped carry the very seriously injured over the rubble up the road to a waiting ambulance while at the same time guarding our vehicles and keeping a growing angry crowd at bay.

Memories of those character-building times spring to mind such as carrying an SLR with a 6.5lb Individual Weapon Sight (IWS) night vision scope mounted on it for night patrols and covering my arc looking into a green haze in the pouring rain, wondering if I could return fire effectively; or standing on a street corner as part of a cordon and search operation for hours during a house search and hoping an urn of tea would be brought round; or mobile patrols at 2am on a rainy night, sitting in the back of the open landrover in a puddle of water as we covered our arcs. A quick de-bus for a snap vehicle check point (VCP) allowed the wet denims to warm slightly before jumping back in again.

One day on a mobile patrol, we were travelling behind a bus when the cushioned bench seats were lobbed out of the top back window in our direction. This gave us an opportunity to stop, pick them up and use them in the back for a more comfortable ride. How thoughtful of the bus passengers to help us like that!

A few days later while patrolling down the New Lodge

Road, we came across a young lad looking very sorry for himself. He was tied to a lamp post covered in yellow paint and feathers with a piece of cardboard hung around his neck inscribed 'I am a theef' (great spelling!). When the Int Sgt saw him he said "This is the first time that I've seen a four foot canary!" thus exhibiting the usual sympathy required on these occasions.

Foot patrols down the New Lodge Road were met with hostility, young children still in nappies were taught to spit on our boots, their welcome deteriorating as the age groups progressed. Despite the general hatred, there was one defiant household that continued to provide us tea that was not laced with ground glass in lieu of sugar! What was sad was that in the end the threats of violence brought these tokens of kindness to an end.

Late every alternate night, four members of C Coy Int Cell had to drive over to Bn HQ at North Howard Street in the centre of Belfast to exchange information securely with the IO. It also helped to stop us becoming too insular, tucked away in our company area. The downside was that the route was predictable and thus vulnerable to ambush. We could vary the time to some extent, but the only way we could vary the route was to get permission sometimes, at random, to cut through Sp Coy's area for the first few hundred yards; beyond that we had no choice but to rejoin the Crumlin Road to reach Bn HQ. There was a 'ceasefire' on at the time, but of course that is a comparative word in Northern Ireland, and there were still attacks on police and Army, and frequent sectarian and punishment murders.

At this time, there was no street lighting at all in this part of Belfast. Back in the really bad days of rioting in '71/72, the locals had stolen the time switches which most lamp-posts had then contained, for use as bomb timers: and then the remaining lights had been switched off centrally because darkness favoured the Army, with our night vision devices. For similar reasons of security, Army vehicles drove at night without showing any lights, and if a civilian vehicle caught an Army patrol in its headlights, then the civilian driver was required to switch his lights off and slow down until we had gone - and if he failed to do so, he could expect rifles to be pointed at him on the assumption that he was either going to shoot at us, or illuminate us for a nearby sniper.

In these circumstances, the regular jaunt to Bn HQ had an edge of tension - we all felt that we were more likely to get ambushed on this run than on the random route of an ordinary patrol. The night in question was very dark, relieved only slightly by the reduced amount of ambient light in a city without civic lighting. Sqt Jim Spicer was the front passenger, LCpl Keen was driving, LCpl Ted Simpson was standing head-and-shoulders out of the top hatch in the back of the macralon-protected landrover, and I was sitting in the open back door of it, as tail-end Charlie. We cut through Sp Coy's area on this occasion, emerging onto the Crumlin Road still some distance short of the well-known jail. We reached a point where there were just blank brick walls on the left, close up to the pavement, while on the right of the road the ground was more open, with a derelict filling-station, waste ground and some side turnings - guite suitable ground for a gunman. Our landrover picked up speed, and one or two civilian vehicles coming the opposite way dutifully switched off their headlights until we had passed by. The intense darkness closed in again. Then, with sudden violence, the landrover swerved hard to the left and I had to brace myself with all my strength to stay in the vehicle. As we flashed past, I glimpsed a long shape lying in the road, even blacker than the rest of the night.

LCpl Keen jammed his foot on the accelerator and got us clear of the immediate vicinity, then swerved to the opposite roadside and stood on the brakes; the four of us leapt out and scattered to the best cover we could find. Silence. No shots. No explosion. Just the hum of the city and inky blackness. No civilian vehicles even - was this sinister? Our eyes strained into the darkness towards that forbidding object in the road, hearts still pounding (at least, mine was).

"I think it's a body", said Keen. "I nearly hit it."

No-one stated the obvious fear that it could be a set-up. I do not now recall how long it was before Sqt Spencer and I decided to approach the object, nor just what precautions we took, beyond the covering rifles of the other two. I remember crouching near the black object.

"Yes, it's a body alright."

A body, but not a road casualty sprawled at random. As our eyes adjusted to the darkness, we could make out a corpse laid out traditionally, with the arms crossed on its chest, and lying precisely on the dotted white line down the centre of the road – slap on the symbolic frontier between a Catholic area and the Protestant Shankhill. Is there any hope for these people, I wondered? How can you be so hate-ridden by tribalism and territorial jealousies that you want to take this sick degree of symbolism even in dumping a corpse? Sqt Spicer was just reaching for his radio to report to Company HQ and summon the RUC and an ambulance, when we nearly jumped out of our skins.

"Ha was joost a weee Colooonial Bhoy!", sang an elderly female voice. The breath of the 'corpse' enveloped us in a stench of alcohol. The tension dissolved in an instant.

"Oh you silly old b____!" shouted Jim, in anger and relief. "You nearly killed us!"

Silence. "Eye want tha Arrmy!"

"We are the Army, you silly old b_____"

Silence again. "Eye want tha RUC!" So - she was a Protestant!



"Ha was joosht a weeee Colooonial Bhoy...", she crooned again.

"God, what a stench!" said one of the

others. "Come away sir, we're wasting our time. Let's leave her where she is."

"We can't let her be run over". I said, "and we can't stay in the road forever. We'll aet her to the pavement and have the police take her home."

"Sir, I'm not touching that!" said one of the patrol with emphatic finality. "Nor are we", chipped in the other two, looking her over. "We don't want lice". Oh, the burden of a liberal and Christian education! It would have to be me, at least at the head end. I took hold of her shoulders, and told one of the others to take hold of her feet.

This prompted her to sing again - just to regain the dramatic initiative, I thought.

"Ha was joost a weeee Colooonial Bhoy...", and a verse or two in the same vein.

"Who was?", I asked innocently.

Silence for a few seconds, then she took a deep breath and cried out at the top of her poor old lungs, "Theykilled my-son!"

The silence fell again, and now lay blacker than ever. Then she began to crawl back towards the centre of the road, saying she wanted to die. Cars were now swishing past occasionally, dimming their lights when they saw Army uniforms, which of course only increased the odds of her being hit. So I lifted her back to the pavement again by myself, and what I remember is the sad, slack nylon stockings on her poor scrawny old legs. In later years I would hear a veteran recall searching a German officer whom he captured in Italy in 1944, and saying he could still remember the exact feel of the braces under



A Protestant Bomb wrecked the Shamrock Club in the Ardovne. In the doorway are Ptes Young, Bassett and Austin. In the crowd Pte Loveland and Maj Tim Trotman

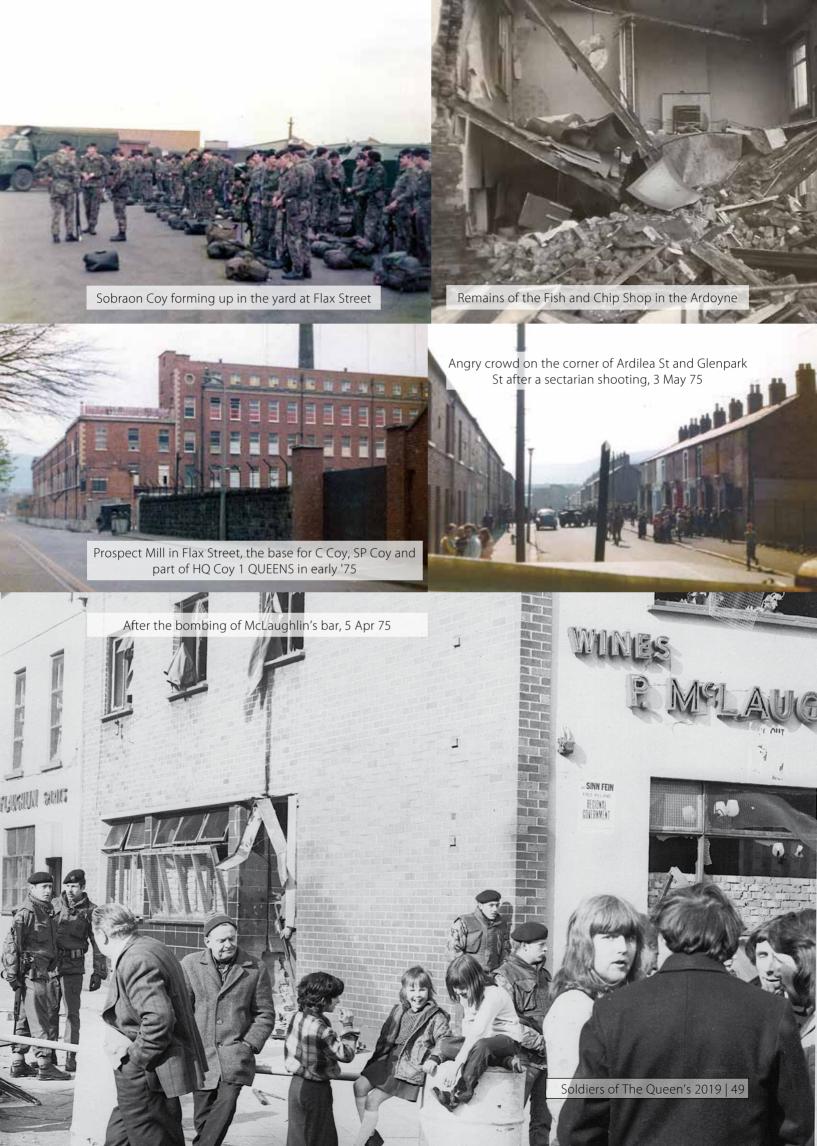
the man's jacket - a domestic detail which brought home to him that this might be the enemy but he was still a human being. Nothing so noble for my generation in poor, squalid Belfast – no trim German officers' braces, just slack nylons on a bereaved old seventy-something mother, suicidally sad and drunk -and not even our enemy, come to that. At this point memory fades. I suppose the RUC did come in the end and take over.

A few nights later, just a few hundred yards further north on the Crumlin Road, we were bombed and shot at, as feared – or rather, according to the official conclusion. we almost ran into a bomb intended to demolish some recently-reinstated traffic lights, which were forcing Protestant taxi-drivers to wait nervously, right next to the dark alleyways of the dreaded Ardoyne. But 44 years on, what I generally think of first, whenever Northern Ireland lurches back into the news, is that silly incident with old Mrs C, which somehow encapsulates the mix of mortal threat, farce and pity that was the Troubles.

I've added some photos that give a flavour of what was going on in the battalion's patch.

In the first four months of '75, C Coy 1QUEENS were in the Ardoyne in Belfast when a patrol reported a road traffic accident in the Crumlin Road in which a motorcyclist was injured. Police and ambulance were requested and duly organised by the Coy Ops Room. The patrol commander came up on the net to report that the motorcyclist had had a hand severed from his arm in the accident and the net went quiet. After a few seconds, somebody came onto the net without using his call-sign and said: "Send 'im to a second 'and shop!"

Tim McDermott





OCTOBER - DECEMBER 1975 BELFAST

THE PIONEERS GO SEARCHING

By John Russell

Sqt Bill Dixon was the Pioneer Sergeant and led the merry band of the battalion's pioneers whose main task was to conduct searches. We were based in Musgrave Park which was another one of those cosy camps full of portacabins, laid out in the grounds of the hospital, which was reassuring! Bill decided that the platoon would be split into two groups; one would be based in Belfast to conduct the house searches, while the other would be down in Long Kesh for the HGV vehicle searches. After two weeks, we would switch round. My first fortnight was in Belfast and any searches carried out were intelligence-led, with people tipping us off as to where arms or explosives were hidden.

Occupied houses were straightforward affairs but unoccupied properties were a different matter altogether. With people in a house, it was unlikely that you would come across a booby trap device, but if it was unoccupied, there could be anything in there waiting for you. Most of these searches were carried out in the early hours of the morning because Bill probably thought we were too ugly to be let out in daylight.

One day, under the cover of darkness, we left Musgrave Park and went to search a flat. We had the Drums Platoon acting as a cordon and they patrolled outside while we went in. The problem with a block of flats, even in those small hours, is that they knew as soon as you were in the building, let alone at the apartment door. So the first find of a weapon went to the Drum Major. As we entered the block, one of the occupants decided to part with his incriminating rifle and threw it out of a window where it came down at the Drum Major's feet. Drum Major Chapman complained that if it was a few seconds later it would have hit him on the head! Apart from that one weapon, the search yielded nothing but it was a nice find!

Another tip-off had us searching yet another dwelling but this one was a house. The householder wasn't too pleased about such an early wake-up call (4am), so he was more than a little grumpy as was the rest of the family. Terry Prosser was one of our team and, because he was one of the taller ones, it was decided that he and another tall bod would



"Nice light fitting. IKEA?"

search the downstairs rooms and out houses. Another short-arse and I would do the bedrooms and attic. This was a fine plan except that my fellow short arse and I got delayed searching the bedrooms (something to do with the meticulous detailed inspection between the pages of a porn mag).

So Terry and his mate made a start on the attic. While I was in the bedroom, having put away the artistic magazines, the householder came in with Nobby Clarke our section leader. "What about any damage?" he said. Nobby assured him that our team were professionals and knew exactly what we were doing. He also told him that in the unlikely event of any damage caused there were official forms to be filled out. At that point a leg came through the ceiling. We could hardly say that it wasn't one of ours because it wore combat trousers and had a big boot on the end. Not only that but it was making a desperate bid to retract itself and disappear back into the loft, probably hoping that if he did it quickly enough no one would notice.

After two weeks of annoying the neighbours, we went off to Long Kesh to relieve the other section. Not only was Long Kesh home to prisoners housed in the notorious H Block but it also had a hangar which was the HGV search centre. The Royal Military Police would escort the lorries in, we would search them and then we would escort them to the back gate and that was our routine for the next two weeks. On the last day, it was my birthday and we were due to head back to Musgrave Park where I was hoping for a couple of beers and to be able to watch 'The Exorcist' which was being shown that night.

Before we left, we had one more lorry coming in. We thought that we'd make a quick job of it and shoot off. The wagon pulled in and we opened the rear doors to peek inside. It appeared we had a lorry full of cows. But not whole cows, just bits of them. Row upon row of bins full of heads and stomachs, all destined for the pie factory. Rather than delve into the bloodbath before us, we decided to follow the lorry to the pie factory and supervise the unloading which would be less messy. At its final destination we all watched it unload, heads, legs and bellies all spilling out in front of our eyes and no weapons. After that 'The Exorcist' was nothing! There were times when we had to play our part in guarding the hospital. Obviously with the Army camped in its back garden it was always going to be a target. I was on the reception desk one evening when all hell broke loose: a helicopter was about to arrive from South Armagh carrying

injured soldiers. They were injured during a firefight in Forkhill and it didn't sound good. There was nothing we on the guard could do, it was all down to the medical staff. The helicopter arrived and the first soldier stretchered through was suffering gunshot wounds and I'll always remember him screaming for his Mum. The other two soldiers were carried through in silence. They were both dead. Realisation hit that soldiers often do make the ultimate sacrifice in times of trouble. Phone calls were made and grieving parents were flown out to Belfast. I'll remember that night for the rest of my life



Lt JDK Russell (no relation to the author) leading a foot patrol

One young lad was late back from leave and CSM Mick Pearson always gave them a chance to give a reason for their lateness.

"Well Sir" he said, "I was on the platform and the train was leaving so I went to open the door and the handle came off so I missed the train."

Mick said: "What a load of $b^{*******!}$ ", but the soldier produced the door handle from his pocket. He had found it sometime before and kept it for such an occasion. Mick gave him the benefit of doubt and he escaped gaol.

Terry Isaacs



JANUARY - FEBRUARY 1976 2ND ARMAGH

THE 2ND BATTALION IN SOUTH ARMAGH 1976

By Andrew Roberts

The battalion had returned to England in the autumn of '75 after many years in Werl as the 1st Bn replaced us in our BAOR role. With a tropical posting for six months to Belize to look forward to, battalion preparations included a period spent on Spearhead standby over Christmas and the New Year.

During a Junior NCO's cadre being run by Captain John Stirling in Kiwi Barracks in January, I was one of the platoon commanders involved. Along with Richard Harper in B Coy, we were out on Salisbury Plain one dark, cold night when I distinctly remember a landrover meandering around the exercise area with the urgent voice of John Stirling calling out for all patrol groups in the cadre to immediately return to barracks. I thought he must be lost but no, it was more serious. (Ed: This is strongly denied by the then Capt Stirling claiming that he never got lost!)

In what was called 'Bandit Country' in South Armagh, 5 Catholic workmen near Lurgan had been murdered and a swift IRA response on the Whitehill to Bessbrook Road in early January led to 11 Protestant workers in a minibus being ambushed and shot dead. As part of the government response, Northern Ireland was reinforced with more troops and 2 QUEENS were to deploy within 24 hours.

In the middle of the night on Salisbury Plain on a typically cold miserable night, I remember the cadre being called in for this emergency deployment of two companies to reinforce the Royal Scots in South Armagh. This was to be my first taste of operations in Ulster and I took my platoon to join a Royal Scots company in Forkhill who were good hosts and, not surprisingly, happy to have some help with all the extra patrolling.

Although it was only a short deployment it was my first. I also remember at a Corunna Majors' lunch in February being one of two recipients of a one third cardboard GSM replica to mark our first experience of operations in the Province! My only regret was that I didn't keep it!



Flown out by Hercules and helicopter, we returned to England in more sedate transport



Lts Reg Ford and Richard Harper on the dockside in Belfast



JULY - FEBRUARY 1976 1ST LONDONDERRY

FIND!

By Peter Archer

In the Creggan Estate in Londonderry on the evening of 24 Sep. I was patrol commander of C/S 31E. We had been tasked with checking outbuildings and sheds. To aid us in our task, we had a pair of bolt cutters. Moving behind the small block of flats on Lislane Drive, Pte Maund suggested cutting the lock off the door to the outhouse of No 19C. This we did and I went inside, out of the bright evening sunlight, into the gloom and lit my lighter. What you see in the photo was all piled up and I smelt the explosives immediately. Out went the lighter!

The find included a Garand.30.06 rifle with armour-piercing ammunition, a bombard anti-armour weapon, bags of explosive, and hand-made and commercial detonators. The flag wasn't part of the find!



Peter Archer's Find

BUSTER - PART TWO

By Amédée Miéville

The next instalment of Buster's story occurred in Londonderry in Jul 76. Buster was based in Creggan Camp on 'Piggery Ridge' overlooking the staunchly Catholic Creggan Estate. Once again, he commanded C Coy but to his dismay, he was

co-located with A Coy and Bn HQ, which included part of the Intelligence Section - a previous bêtenoire of his. However, he always managed to attend O Groups when refreshments were being served! He quickly gained a reputation with the locals for being a direct and robust man who took no prisoners! On one occasion, the PIRA parked a lorry on the open ground in the Creggan which contained 9 mortar tubes in the back.

These were aimed at Creggan Camp and, much as Buster did not like the others sharing the camp with him, in his typically impulsive and brave manner, he moved the vehicle so that it pointed in another direction. The incident did not end there as the new ATO disrupted the mortars rather too vigorously and the bombs were scattered around the estate! Each of these had to be cleared separately and C Coy with much if



O Gp L-R CSM Dickens, Maj Carlston, RSM Ormerod, CSM Bromfield, Maj Ward, CSM Jameson, Maj Dickins, Maj Mellotte, Lt Col Davidson, LCpl Lewis providing refreshments



A Coy kept on the ground for a protracted period of time while this was done. Not surprisingly Buster received praise and censure from above, including a Mentionin-Dispatches. However, those of us living in Creggan Camp at the time will always be grateful for his actions.



Buster's Creggan mortar lorry after it was moved.



Buster and his nemesis the IO Amédée Miéville, in the Creggan



Two British Thugs in the Shantallow - Maj David Dickins and CSM Charles Bromfield. Shortly after this Charles B was shot in the neck from an Armalite while riding shotgun on the Coy Comd's landrover. Happily he recovered from his injury.

After a longer break of 13 months, we returned to the Province, and I was now with the Recce Platoon. Our tactical area of responsibility (TAOR) was the 'enclave', the crescent of countryside outside of the City of Londonderry stretching out to the border, which included the manned and unmanned crossing points (by A Coy in addition to their patrol and guarding duties in Rosemount) and was separated from the rest of Northern Ireland by the River Foyle.

Our tasks during the tour involved mainly mobile and foot patrols within our TAOR. On 18 Jul on the Foyle Road, a serious machine gun attack against one of our mobile patrols took place when Simon Friend was shot in the waist. Following this we were up-gunned with a light machine gun (LMG) so that we had more firepower per half section. We undertook some extra weapon training, firing it on the pipe range, as this was not one of our normal weapons.

On occasions, we were tasked to plan and operate covert OPs for two or three days at a timeone of which was sited in the bushes on the far bank of the River Foyle watching for an expected shipment of weapons. On the third night, a small boat was spotted. NITESUN, the helicopter-borne searchlight with 1 million candle power, was deployed in support of



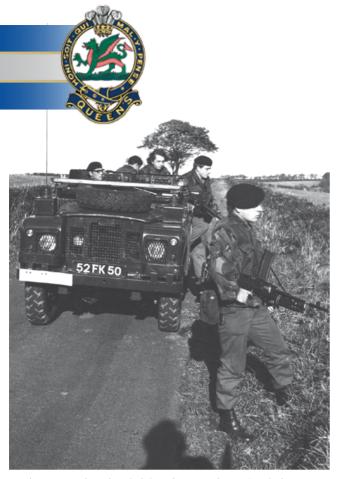
Chatting up the local farmer. Sgt Kim Leach and LCpl Hurman



Mobile Patrol

the Royal Marines waterborne Quick Reaction Force (QRF) and a salmon poacher was caught red handed!

On the second night during a covert OP, viewing an unmanned border crossing and watching out for weapons being brought across from the South, a vehicle was heard and we reported it stopping adjacent to our OP. We were hidden in the hedge line ditch next to the road. After a short time, the rather worn-out springs of the vehicle were heard squeaking to a rhythmic bouncing created by some energetic coupling. The QRF had already been deployed and arrived to ask the red-faced driver for his driving licence. The couple were asked to move away from the border



Enclave patrol with LCpl Smith 32 with LMG, LCpl Hurman debussing. Surrey Advertiser photographer with typical '70s long hair in the back. Pte Booker driving

but the rest of the vehicle was worn out too and failed to start - luckily for them the QRF were on hand to give them a bump start!

During tea-stops, we cultivated various friendships; one farm belonging to an exceptionally kind elderly couple. We noted that they had a small and very aged black and white TV. Another house that we frequented belonged to a minor player who thought he was getting good info from us, but didn't know that we knew of his connections! We spun some outrageous moaning made-up tales of our night coverage along the border, a task we were not happy about. He was a TV repair man and so we conned a nice colour TV from him in time to give the elderly couple a goodbye present. They were both brought to tears.

On one occasion, two faulty but potentially lethal roadside bombs were reported and found just after we had driven past whilst on mobile patrol. I might say that it rather concentrated our minds on how luck plays a role in life. One, a 20lb commercial explosive commandwire controlled device had a broken wire leading across the border. The other, a beer keg filled with a mix of ammonium nitrate and fuel oil (ANFO) had a commandwire leading some 1000m to the Shantallow housing estate with just a moped battery to power it. Luckily the voltage drop over such a distance saved us.

As a standard operating procedure (SOP), we regularly

carried out culvert clearances to combat the possibility of under road and roadside bombs. These devices were randomly sited in the hedgerows and therefore impossible to entirely combat.

Needless to say, crossing the border into the South was regarded as a serious event and had to be reported up to Brigade. When I inadvertently led a foot patrol over the border while checking a hedgerow ditch, a farmer asked me

if I knew we were in the South. I couldn't get back fast enough. Of course, I reported this event straight away on my return! Another occasion when navigating for the pilot of a Scout helicopter that was ferrying some tea urns and extra people to an ongoing search along the border, I pointed to a nice flat spot and said, "Land there"! "Are you sure" he asked? "Yes" said I. Rather pleased with myself, I got out, ducked below the rotors and ran to the fence where my company commander clearly very angry shouted "Get that helicopter up! You are in the South!" I was then given the nickname 'Stop Two', the Vengeful term for regular border crossers. (Ed: Vengeful was the computer terminal at manned border crossings linked to DVLA at Coleraine for checking vehicle registrations).



Rear vehicle of a mobile patrol in Macralon landrovers in the Creggan

Another memory I have of our Londonderry tour was regarding a young soldier from 5 Pl on his first tour who identified a noted OTR (on-the-run terrorist), during a snap VCP. She had been on walkabout for some two years or so and looked nothing like her photo in the top most-wanted list we all carried. It was only his insistence to his section commander that it was her, that on more detailed questioning her story began to fall apart. She was arrested and taken away for more questioning. His ability to facially identify, where others failed to see the likeness, led to success - beginner's luck? I don't think so!



I was manning a bomb cordon on the outskirts of Londonderry in '77, when a clearly drunk individual staggered in my direction. I told him that he couldn't go past our cordon. He looked at me and said: "I want to complain! What's your name?" He looked at my flak jacket and saw the first name and blood group of the previous wearer inked in above the pocket. "I know your name! It's Chris Apos isn't it?" I nod sagely and said "Yes it is." Happy that he had all the information he needed and he staggered off.

Mike Hurman

Portrait Artist of the Year Bob Small

Cpl Bob Small was Support Company Clerk in Londonderry in '76 and part of Maj Roddy Mellotte's Rover Group but occasionally he was allowed time off to produce portraits of various soldier's wives. He also did one of himself!



Bob Small Self Portrait



CPL RAYMOND 'PLOD' SPENCER CITATION FOR THE AWARD OF THE MILITARY MEDAL (MM)

Cpl Spencer has now completed four operational tours and one emergency tour in Ulster. All his operational tours were served in the most active areas of the Province.



`Plod' Spencer

On his 5th tour in Ulster, Cpl Spencer continued to display a level of determination, skill and courage far in excess of that normally found in section commanders. Throughout this tour, he operated during an upsurge in terrorist activity, where two of his company were seriously injured by sniper fire and 54 others required medical attention or hospitalisation, as a direct result of the daily stoning and bottling of patrols. Despite these casualties, he continued to expose himself to fire and act in a calm, determined and decisive manner. These examples of his performance come to the mind.

On the afternoon of 24 August 1976, Cpl Spencer was leading his section tasked to patrol with the aim of protecting an Ammunition Technical Officer and a cordon who were clearing an improvised explosive device. The clearance operation had been in progress all day and during the morning a patrol similarly tasked had come under fire. During the patrol Cpl Spencer noticed that a large crowd had formed and that it was moving into a position where it could interfere with the Ammunition Technical Officer's work. He quickly moved his section into a position to prevent this. The crowd became extremely aggressive and attempted to force their way past, but Cpl Spencer and his section remained firm. Suddenly the crowd moved to one side. Immediately suspecting an attack, he ordered his

men to cover. Within seconds his section came under fire from two gunmen and they returned fire. Subsequently, it appeared that they may have hit one of the gunmen. His follow-up action, although hampered by the crowd, was extremely swift but unfortunately the gunmen managed to escape. There is no doubt that Cpl Spencer's prompt and skilful action prevented casualties to his section and foiled what was obviously a planned attack on a vulnerable Ammunition Technical Officer and his team.

On the evening of 28 August 1976, Cpl Spencer was again tasked to protect an Ammunition Technical officer while he was dealing with a suspect improvised explosive device which had been reported by a local to be in some extremely thick bushes verging on a route sometimes used by patrols. The Ammunition Technical Officer was unable to use his remote equipment and after three attempts had still not located the device. Regardless of the danger, Cpl Spencer volunteered to try and find it. This necessitated crawling on his hands and knees through a very close tunnel in the bushes. Eventually he found the device and drew the Ammunition Technical Officer's attention to it. He had, at that time, no way of knowing that the device was in fact a hoax: indeed from the attitude of the normally recalcitrant locals who usually know of the existence of such devices, there was every reason to believe that the device was lethal.

On 6 October 1976, Cpl Spencer was leading his patrol on a routine check on a pool hall. As he entered he noticed a wanted man amongst the crowd. Immediately Cpl Spencer attempted to arrest him, but he was hampered by the crowd. The man ran out of the hall and into a nearby house. Cpl Spencer forced his way out of the crowd, quickly deployed two of his four men to cover the front of the house while he and his other men entered despite the considerable opposition from the 10-12 occupants. He found the man hiding under a bed in an upstairs room and arrested him. He then had to hold his prisoner and maintain control of the household until assistance arrived. It was entirely due to Cpl Spencer's determination and courage that the man, who was subsequently remanded in custody on six charges of causing explosions in Londonderry, was brought to account.

Time and again Cpl Spencer's resolution, skill, dash and diligence which resulted in several good finds, won the respect and admiration of all ranks of the company. Throughout the tour, his contempt for danger and his personal leadership were of the highest order and a shining example to his men. He fully deserves official recognition.

As a result of this citation Cpl Spencer was awarded the Military Medal.



FEBRUARY - JULY 1977 2ND BELFAST

WEST BELFAST '77

By Merrick Willis

It was during the '77 Belfast tour that the CO, Crispin Champion who was not always the swiftest of men, was seen to shift for once like greased weasel pooh. One of the platoon commanders, a remarkably robust individual who had recently returned to the battalion having spent a number of years on secondment to the Hereford hooligans, and who had mounted a 24 hour covert OP in Turf Lodge in an effort to intercept bombers taking their load into the City Centre, came up on the battalion net to give a sitrep. It was on the lines of: "I've just seen a youth armed with a handgun who is engaged in hijacking a car - am about to open fire". Crispin raced across the Ops Room to grab the handset and voice procedure went out of the window as the word "Nooooooooo!!!" echoed across the net.

As Adjutant, one of my tasks was to act as an air observer; this before the days of AAC-badged observers. On the first of a number of outings, the brief I received lacked some vital information. No-one had explained to me the effect of gyrostabilised binoculars, which, for the benefit of those who've never had the pleasure (!) of using them, fool your brain: as your body is telling it about one set of movements, your eyes are telling it something entirely different. The result after an hour or so of continuous use for those not prepared for this effect could be messy, as I happily or not so happily demonstrated to the pilot. His fault as he really should've warned me.

On Easter Sunday during one of my regular bids to escape from Fort Monagh as part of Crispin Champion's CO's 'R' Group, we found ourselves at RUC Andersonstown, a grim and embattled location familiar to many Queensmen over the years. The usual parade to Milltown Cemetery in commemoration of the 1916 Easter Rising proved to be a lively affair, for once not involving the security forces, who were kept off the streets for the day. The 'Stickies' (Official IRA) and the 'Provos' were having rival marches, and very thoughtfully the Provos were allowed to go first. As Crispin and I along with the RUC Divisional Commander watched their parade arrive at the cemetery gates just opposite the police station, we heard an explosion: they'd set off a bomb on the route of the Officials' parade coming up the Falls Road behind them, killing a child and injuring a number of others. As the Officials march arrived, understandably somewhat agitated, PIRA gunmen opened up from behind the cemetery walls. Some of the Officials immediately retaliated. It was the most surreal scene: we watched gunmen exchanging fire less than fifty metres away from where we stood behind the steel shutters

in the police station, and this huge crowd, several thousand strong, resembling nothing else than a murmuration of starlings, darting in absolute unison in different directions each time someone opened fire from first one side then another. Amazingly although a number of people were wounded in the exchanges, no-one else was killed, but that evening PIRA charmingly murdered the uncle of the child who had been killed, on the grounds that they "had to do so to prevent him taking revenge", a truly pathetic and callous act that typified so much of the terrorists' campaigns on all sides and gives the lie to the notion that this was some sort of romantic, justified 'war of liberation'.



Searching the derelicts



On the morning of 1 Apr 77 at the corrugated iron and breeze block fortification known as Glassmullin Camp

in the tranguil conurbation of Andersonstown, home to C and D Coys, 2 QUEENS, a rather angry phone call was received by the D Coy IO from a very senior officer at Lisburn, demanding to know "why the hell" he wasn't present for an important briefing at HQ 39 Bde.

Within minutes, the unfortunate Captain *** was seen emerging hurriedly from the D Coy portacabins, leaping into a landrover whose driver then drove at some speed towards the gates. At this point, the IO of C Coy, Capt James Myles, had to move rapidly to prevent the

panicked exit which was about to take place. Fortunately the landrover was prevented from continuing its frantic progress in the nick of time. I know about this, because I was the 'very angry senior officer' who made the call from 50 feet away in the C Coy Int office.

In my defence and in true soldierly fashion, I have to say that I was only obeying orders from Capt Myles and the CSM!

It wasn't the only prank that day. Higher echelons of the battalion had some involvement in the placing of several inflatable T-62s on Comd 39 Bde's lawn on the same day! He wasn't amused!

EXTRACTS FROM DIARY 1-15 APRIL '77

By Peter Barrow

Friday 1 April

The inflatable dummy T62 tank was set up on the lawn of the GOC's House as our contribution to April Fool's Day. It would appear that he approved of the joke and took some photos of it himself. His staff, however, were not amused. They go in fear and trembling of him and get a member of his house staff to phone through daily to his HQ to let them know of his mood. Today's message was not re-assuring to them. "The GOC has had a practical joke played upon him and we cannot guess his mood today". This had them all cowering under their desks when he arrived. I await the photos with anticipation. The opposition seem to have something planned for us tonight or tomorrow but we know not what and our sources are unable to give us a clue. Have done all we can to pre-empt events and now have to wait and sit it out. Again, the fear of the unknown and the future is daunting, but the actual event once involved will be easily surmounted.

Monday 4 April

A weekend of heightened anticipation that the opposition would mount a concerted effort against the SF based on intelligence. Whether it was our use of the intelligence and precautions taken, or whether they lacked the ability, will never be known, but nothing of great significance emerged or happened. Saw an armed robber shot by 1 D&D and one of his accomplices who was knee-capped by PIRA for committing the robbery without permission. Apparently, PIRA are looking for a third member of the gang to knee-cap him as well.

PIRA cannot be getting many recruits this way; they knee-capped another youth on Shaws Road on Sunday afternoon. C Coy shot at again to-day; round hit the 'Pig' low down and was probably from an Armalite. Hot pursuit revealed nothing and a further operation was mounted in the afternoon against four houses, which again revealed nothing. Company heavily stoned on withdrawal and several casualties taken.

Tuesday 5 April

Day started quietly enough and built up into a crescendo at midday with two operations based upon intelligence, neither of which produced any result. Used 64 men, 5 dogs and 4 search teams and got nothing in return. Very unproductive. We seem to spend our time fighting each other on the Int side between our intelligence, Special Branch and CID all after people for one reason or another and never tying up properly so that at the request of SB we go to arrest a man who is already held by CID. Anyway, the Riverdales was a pleasant operation, very quiet with only one rudeness by a woman who invited me to "drop dead". Others were quite chatty and friendly considering the pressures under which they live. Could be getting tea from some of the houses in due course!

Friday 8 April

Second Wedding Anniversary - 16 years now - separated from wife and family. What a life. By the end of this tour we will have done 10 months unaccompanied during the past 16 months, and without the benefit of being accompanied for the next two years while the Bn is in Gibraltar. Nothing much occurred in the Bn TAOR and the inhabitants are obviously working up to Easter weekend. We are being kind to them and doing no lifts or raids unless necessary.

Sunday 10 April

In the early hours of Sunday morning an attempt was made to destroy the Falls Road Bus Depot by fire and bombs. Bombs neutralised and fire put out but two double deckers destroyed, two other buses damaged and others scorched. What the purpose of their attacks is, no-one knows, unless inspired by the Falls Taxi Association to obtain more fares for the black taxis. Saturday evening, we discovered the dead body of one of the opposition who had been 'head-jobbed'; again for reasons unknown at present: probably considered a 'tout'. Seems strange that he never struggled before being shot, especially as he had been abducted some 24 hours earlier. Went off to a curry lunch with the Royal Engineers on Sunday; felt funny putting on civilian clothes for the first time since leaving Bulford. Drove to Antrim sitting on a loaded pistol, with CSqt Moat, feeling quite ridiculous. A nice lunch and have hopefully fixed up some sailing on Lough Neagh. Usual Army small talk of people (name dropping), places, moves and children. Retuned and had to wait at Echelon before moving up to Tac HQ at Fort Monagh due to OIRA and PIRA marches, which as usual clashed outside Milltown Cemetery gates

where jeering and stoning between the two inevitably led to shots. Shots later heard in the Turf Lodge and two locals admitted to hospital; one dead on arrival. Hopefully a PIRA/OIRA punch up but it now seems to have quietened down.

Friday 15 April

A negligent discharge with a pistol wounded one of our soldiers. Happened at Lisburn Drive when the Guard Commander decided to clean his pistol with a magazine on. Fairly deep wound to right thigh of injured soldier, who has had the wound opened up by the surgeon to allow it to heal more cleanly. There is no doubt that the pistol is one of the more dangerous weapons, as soldiers do not handle them enough and are inclined to play about with them as well. The area seems quiet enough except that we have had another two locals knee-capped for petty crimes; there are more to be done on the waiting list according to intelligence so no doubt we shall be lurking round the pubs in an attempt to catch the knee-cappers. Otherwise there appears to be an intelligence lull with little coming through. Whether they have managed to tighten their security or are not planning anything is not known. Certainly, they are more circumspect and run much smaller groups. It now appears that the Protestants are on the warpath and are threatening another strike for Home Rule by Stormont. Trust them to upset the apple cart!

A REFLECTION ON A YOUNG SOLDIER'S EXPERIENCE

By Colin Johnson

I recall my Northern Ireland experience in '77 with crystal clear memories as though it was yesterday. As a 19-year-old

soldier, although trained and from a legal point of view considered an adult, looking back I see myself as more boy than man. I was unsure of where I wanted to go in life and I didn't really have a plan or a clue.

Although at the time understanding the seriousness of my deployment to NI, I also saw this as something of an adventure even though I was apprehensive and nervous.

The day came for D Coy to embark on the journey to Belfast. There was a palpable underlying tension and anticipation in the air. Although there was some typical squaddie banter, there was also a sense of quiet reflection throughout the whole company, as I recall. At the back of my mind was the nagging doubt about the unknown; what if I screwed up, how would I cope if this or that happened? What was clear was the importance of teamwork that was drilled into me during my Army service and is one of the most valuable transferable skills I have taken with me

Arriving at Glassmullin camp in Belfast was a bit of a cultural shock. The camp was a fortress within a residential area and this was so alien to me and I found it hard to appreciate the effect on the local community then.



Fresh-faced



The routine in NI was a cycle of foot patrols, mobile patrols and guarding the local radio station; there were other duties too eq escorting prisoners to court. What I do recall with absolute clarity, was my first foot patrol. I was very nervous, with a fast pulse and rapid breathing, but then training and preparation

kicked in. I remember on that first patrol being more alert than I had ever been in my life, before or since.

A week into the tour, we heard about an IRA operative who had been transporting explosives; he had inadvertently blown himself up and had died, which rather focused the mind. The best bit was coming back after a patrol at 0300 in the morning, cold and dripping wet and we would head for the cook house for tea and an egg banjo while having a joke with our mates.



Ready to go and not so fresh-faced

In summing up my NI experience, I am actually glad I went through this as it taught me a lot about myself and about other people and I would not have missed it for the world. It also reinforced my capacity to see different perspectives, something that would help me in future life.

WATCHKEEPING AT BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS

In Apr 77, I returned from two years of loan service with SAF, which included a six month tour in Dhofar during the final phase of the war there. Like quite a few others I was told, on my return, that I was coming back to 'proper soldiering' - my prize was to be a six month tour as a watchkeeper at HQ 8 Inf Bde in Londonderry! So while the 2nd Bn trogged around the Belfast streets, watchkeepers did 12 hour shifts in the Bde Ops Room, and the night watchkeeper's shift was 8pm to 8am. At the conclusion it was off to the mess for breakfast and a wash and brush up, before returning to Bde HQ for the Bde Comd's morning briefing. First on was the watchkeeper to brief the bde staff on all the incidents in the Bde TAOR during the previous 24 hours. I was part way into the briefing one morning, when I got to an incident outside Magilligan Prison - "At around 0200hrs, the perimeter sensors were activated and the Quick Reaction Force (QRF) deployed, but all they could find were footprints on the beach leading toward the sea". I passed on to the next incident, but after a few seconds the Bde Comd (Andrew Myrtle, who was not renowned for an acute sense of humour!) stopped me, and asked if it was known who the person was. Without thinking, I replied that it was not known for sure but it might have been Reggie Perrin - for those too young to know, the subject of a BBC sitcom at that time and in the opening sequence he walked off into the sea! At that, I detected some stifled laughs from the rear row (the more junior members of the Bde staff) but as the Brig did not react I returned to the briefing. After a few more seconds, the Brig stopped me again, "Who is Reggie Perrin?" he asked sternly! At that point the stifled laughter became rather louder! Fortunately for me the DAA&QMG stepped in to say he would brief the Brig later. Miraculously, I survived this incident and served the rest of my six month sentence!

David Pollard



JUNE - OCTOBER 1978 BELFAST

GLASSMULLIN CAMP, ANDERSONSTOWN, WEST BELFAST AND COP

By Mike Hurman

I had been promoted to the rank of corporal and posted to the Close Observation Platoon (COP) for this tour. a specialised platoon, to be used when required for battalion tasks. We had undergone specific and in-depth COP training at Sennelager, West Germany. We were based alongside B Coy in Glassmullin camp. The camp was situated in the Catholic area of Andersonstown, in the shadow of Black Mountain. Glassmullin, also known as 'Silver City' by the locals, was built with portacabins behind a high corrugated iron fence. Constantly manned sangar-tower sentry positions sited around the fence provided the security. There was a path around the inside perimeter that we could use for running. It was something like seven times around which equalled a mile, so a five-miler required some determination. There were no Walkmans for music in those days. The camp had all the necessary facilities to provide hot food, showers, washing machines, reel to reel film shows, televisions and the ubiquitous but essential 'Golly shop' (no longer PC to say!) selling tea, burgers, chocolate etc and there were prepaid card public telephones for calls home.

We maintained the normal 24-hour patrol programme footprint to establish clearly the routine pattern of life and to be in a position to notice changes and react quickly. Eighteen hour days were common and a three day rotation of tasks was employed to minimise the reduction of alertness. The tasks were camp guard, consisting of sangar duty, gate guard and QRF, mobile patrols in cut down landrovers, ie no doors or roof and foot patrols with the RUC.

During the tour, as a specialised platoon, we were tasked to carry out covert OPs. One was positioned high up on Black Mountain watching the rear of a suspect's house, using high powered optical equipment. We were dropped off at night on a road running across the mountain top and silently walked cross-country loaded with heavy bergens to an RV position where we could drop them off to be guarded by two of us. The other two then quietly moved off to recce our final OP position. We found a suitable thick clump of shrubbery and

earth bank for our rest area providing some protection from potential ambush and a viewing position which was sited a couple of metres forward with good views of Belfast and the target's house. We returned to the RV and collected the others and occupied the OP. We established communications and set up the optics and ran a two hour on-and-off rotation of duty with one of us viewing and one guarding while two slept. All talking was kept to a whisper. The last two days of low cloud meant that we could rarely see more than a few metres, so we eventually closed down the OP making sure we had left no sign of occupation. We moved down the mountain to a pre-arranged pick up point and returned to camp. Most of the time nothing happened!

Two other examples of OPs - the first was on top of a block of flats in a Catholic high rise estate. Access was accomplished during the small hours via the lift, loaded with bergens of equipment and food. The second was in an empty mid-terraced house and potentially quite dangerous. In both, all movement and speech had to be kept to a minimum so as not to alert the neighbours.



Pte Barry Deakin arguing with a Tin Man at the local Anderson Town Nursery School



On the Belfast '78 tour, I was a search and patrol commander. Along with Lt Noble and two men from another search team, I was tasked to go to sea for two weeks with the RAF. Until

this time I didn't know that the RAF had any ships but

they do! Our task was to stop and board ships within the 3-mile limit and search the crew's quarters, bridge and any other likely places. We could only do cursory checks in the holds - it is not easy to search 3,000 tons of coal for instance. We also checked the crew manifests against who was on board, which was a good way of checking and deterring anyone trying to sneak across the North Sea. No weapons were found and I don't know if the crews manifests provided any good intelligence but it was a wonderful experience and a welcome change from the Twinbrook estate.



RAF Sea Otter



Ready to Board



Boarding near Belfast Lough



Cpl Archer checking the contours on RAF Sea Otter

We were given 3 days R & R in Campbelltown in the Mull of Kintyre. As we passed Rathlin Point, a full Atlantic gale came in. I declined to take the sea-sickness tablets. The vessel didn't have stabilisers and I took no notice of the ship's crew taking their pills. Big mistake! I knew then what it meant to want to die – I have never felt so ill in all my life. Never thought I would learn anything from the RAF either!



MARCH - JULY 1979 3RD SOUTH ARMAGH

MY FINAL TOUR

By John Russell

Bessbrook was a town in South Armagh where an old imposing mill stood. This was home to TAC HQ and C Coy and we secret squirrels of the Intelligence Cell had an office in the restricted area along with the Ops Room and the Signals.

Our battalion was responsible for the areas of Forkhill, Newtownhamilton, Crossmaglen and Newry. I had the Newry area while Bimbo had Newtownhamilton, Dougie had Crossmaglen and Martin had Forkhill. Ivan played in the darkroom. Because the battalion was under strength we had the Light Infantry in Newry and my job was to liaise with them. Captain Mills was our boss (IO) and Tony Gittins was the office manager. We also shared our small office with BIT and WIS (Bomb Intelligence and Weapons Intelligence). Our bomb int man was code named 'Hobbit' because he was a big Tolkien fan. His office was smaller than ours and he barely had space for his table, filing cabinet and telephone. They managed to squeeze a waste paper basket in there, but if he needed anything else it would require an extension being built.

Every now and again, we were expected to spend time in our respective areas, which is why Bimbo was at Newtownhamilton on 19 Mar. He was guite happily ensconced in the canteen when a mortar attack hit the base. Unlike the mortar attack a few years earlier in Belfast, these were on target so Bimbo, along with other troops in there, scrambled under the tables. Sadly one of the men was caught out in the open with nowhere to shelter and was killed outright when a mortar hit a landrover. The soldier was Pte Woolmore.

It later transpired that a few days before the attack, people posing as council workers had taken measurements around the camp. Shortly after, a flatbed lorry was parked over the road. This was their mortar baseplate Dougle was absolutely livid as the same tactics had been employed in his area of Crossmaglen prior to our tour, but he had not been told by his predecessor. If this information had been fed through to us, a warning could have been given and perhaps saved a life.

Staying under the roof of the Mill too long could send you nuts, so Tony and I went out in the unmarked car. Not much moved around South Armagh on wheels, - only us and rare supply convoys. Everything else was flown about in helicopters including the troops. This made Bessbrook the busiest heliport in Europe at the time, with Capt Maloney, the MTO, running it. Taking anything out on four wheels was dangerous to say the least so we had an unmarked Fiat saloon car. To make our mode of transport safe it would be sprayed a different colour every six months and the plates changed, but when we took charge of it the thing was a bright lime green! It was almost luminous! At night you could almost see the eerie green glow around the corner before it came into view. We convinced ourselves that, with so many coats of paint, it was bullet proof. And then there was our weaponry - the 9mm Browning pistol. Blokes like Tony, stocky built with a big jacket, could happily wear a shoulder holster but me, being somewhat skinny, it looked like I was smuggling a howitzer in my coat. In the end I had to make do with shoving it down the back of my waistband of my trousers and hoped it didn't go off or get dropped.



"Grab your weapon John!"

One night while on duty in the Int Office, we received a contact report; one of our patrols had come under



fire. I dropped everything and listened in to the radio net. After the initial report the patrol sent a zap number meaning someone had been injured. Every soldier had his own zap number, so that, in

the event of being injured, only his number would be sent over the air waves and not his name. I went straight to the list, checked through the numbers and found it was Corporal 'Budgie' Avery. But that couldn't have been right because it was Budgie on the radio. I thought maybe he'd made a mistake in the panic but no, it was indeed Budgie. He had been shot in the groin but to hear him over the radio you would never have believed it. I found that incredible. Thankfully, he survived his wound although it may have changed his life forever!

A few days later, back in Bessbrook, the Bde Comd appeared in our office. Well, he didn't just 'appear', the visit was expected which is why we were all looking terribly busy bashing our typewriters. I don't know about the others but I was frantically typing rubbish in the hope that the brigadier didn't come to see. The senior officer was chatting away to the IO when, suddenly, a huge blast rocked the building. The building shook so much that ceiling tiles fell about our ears. The brigadier continued uninterrupted while the rest of us stopped typing and waited for the second explosion. Bimbo, no stranger to mortar attacks, was under his desk. There was no second blast so Bimbo crawled out of his improvised bunker and we went to see what the noise was all about.

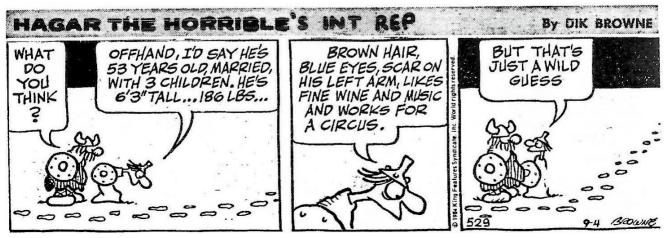


"Issue Int Section wiv a flak jacket?? You'll get it full of bullet holes!"

I suspected a car bomb at the gates but I was wrong. What we heard was a 1,000lb culvert mine being set off a mile away. Sadly, the RUC lost several of their number that day.

The above is just a taste of some of the things that happened on the tour. There was a lot we did in South Armagh which even now I don't talk about, but we were successful in our work. After six long months we left Northern Ireland and the battalion wouldn't go back again until '84. But for me I wouldn't be going back... ever.







MARCH - JULY 1980 2ND ARMAGH AND TYRONE

COP IN NORTH ARMAGH

By Clive Newell

I was happily enjoying being a rifle platoon commander in sunny Gibraltar when I was told I was being sent on the Unattended Ground Sensor Officer (UGSO) course in Netheravon, Wiltshire. On the first night there, on meeting the other students who were all senior captains, I realised that a mere second lieutenant should not really be on what was the Close Observation Platoon (COP) Commander's course. It was obvious that, although no one had thought to tell us, the battalion was destined for Northern Ireland and had been allocated a place on this Northern Ireland specific course. On Day One of the course, there were a number of telephone calls to Gibraltar and the conclusion was that if I passed the course, then I would command the COP during the forthcoming tour. After weeks building covert observation posts (OPs), lying in hedges, producing detailed sets of orders and being instructed in photography, I successfully completed the course and returned to Gibraltar as the COP expert!

As the battalion's orbat did not have a Reconnaissance Platoon, plans were laid to run a COP selection cadre on the battalion's return to Colchester from which to form the COP. A three-week cadre was run that concentrated on fieldcraft, intelligence and fitness. The selection process provided at its conclusion a platoon of eager, motivated soldiers. In-camp training then started, prior to all members of the platoon attending a plethora of, primarily, photography courses. CSgt Miller was my 2IC, who also had to attend the COP Commander course subsequent to me. All of this preparation ran in concert with the battalion in-camp Northern Ireland training. While the COP attended the Lydd and Hythe range package, our confirmatory NITAT training took place at St Martin's Plain Camp in Shornecliffe where we were tested in a number of observation task scenarios. While operating from covert OPs was the main task of the platoon, efficient insertion, resupply and extraction by covert vehicles was essential to each operation.

In late Mar 80, we flew to Aldergrove, and having been fully briefed on the various threats, it was somewhat of a surprise to travel to our final destination in a white Army

bus, protected by a RCT LCpl with a SMG fitted with a ten round magazine!

The battalion relieved 16 Light Air Defence Regiment RA in the North Armagh TAOR, covering 460 square miles in the counties of Armagh and Tyronne and working across K and M Police Divisions. The COP was based in Drummad Barracks, Armagh along with Bn HQ, HQ Coy and C Coy. A Coy were in Cookstown, B Coy in Middletown and Keady, and D Coy in Dungannon and Coalisland. The COP operated across the TAOR with tasks generated by the battalion initially, but having proved our worth, taskings then came from Bde HQ.

In the first weeks the COP eagerly awaited its first operation, but in order to familiarise ourselves with the TAOR, we embarked on a number of 'Farmers' Daughters' patrols primarily throughout the border areas. The first weeks were reasonably quiet although C Coy received shots at a sangar, and in early April a large CWIED was found on the Armagh to Middletown road. Hoaxes and Out of Bounds areas were common, and while there were some parades at Easter, they passed without incident.

The COP started to receive various tasks from Bde HQ, and after a number of successful observation tasks, we proved our worth and more jobs came our way. The members of the COP became very proficient at identifying signs of potential IED sites and also 'dicking', where individuals



Drummad Barracks



would attempt to identify our routine and in the COP's case, recognise our civilian vehicles, which we rotated as often as we could. Another threat to our operations was 'beating', when the hedgerows and other likely

OP locations would be beaten through to try to find our locations - a very tense time when hidden in the thick of a bramble bush.

During April, the battalion continued to experience a variety of attacks and made a number of finds. Notable was the 900lb bomb find by C Coy near Cappagh that was made safe and during the follow-up, they arrested two men. May saw a slight upsurge in activity with Stewartstown receiving a number of incendiary attacks, but on 14 May a proxy bomb was delivered to the south



Lt Clive Newell



Typical Culvert

sangar of Keady, a B Coy location. During the evacuation, the base came under fire from two firing points across the border. Fire was returned but there were no hits on either side. A spate of incendiary devices then occurred, targeted on the Dungannon Golf Club and the Derryvale Furniture Factory.

Just prior to the COP's R&R period, we received a tasking as part of a much larger operation involving a variety of other agencies. We were to stake out a licenced premises outside Dungannon, a location that was assessed as a bomb target. Following the study of air photographs and reconnaissance patrols, four potential OP sites were identified. A platoon insertion took place for a threenight operation. Little activity took place, but as we were preparing to extract, I received a message from CSgt Millar, who was running the operation from D Coy's location, that we had to stay in location. He would brief me when he carried out a resupply that night. Other locations had been compromised and it was assessed that we were looking at the eventual target. At about 3 o'clock that night, a vehicle slowly drove around the target building - the recce. After another two nights there was no activity and we were withdrawn to go on our delayed R&R – so close!

The COP operated in all company TAORs throughout the tour, and after the first month, we were either deployed or were planning our next operation. We provided a large amount of photographic evidence and reported on numerous locations that we hoped were put to good use. The battalion as a whole had a reasonably quiet tour although we were successful in dominating the TAOR, recovering more than 3,000lb of explosive, over half of which was in culverts, and three weapons. It was assessed that approximately 200 rounds were fired at our soldiers with around 400 returned, mostly by sangar sentries. We had sustained no significant casualties, but it was a tragic blow when, during the handover to the Royal Highland Fusiliers, Cpl Thompson of the relieving battalion was killed and Pte Ellis of 2 QUEENS was seriously injured, losing a foot at the permanent VCP at Aughnacloy. Both soldiers were investigating a suspicious car when it exploded.

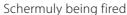
It is almost forty years since the 2 QUEENS North Armagh tour and I have deliberately only mentioned two names from the COP, my excellent 2IC and Pte Ellis. Sadly, while I can remember the characters in the COP, it would be wrong to single out any individual. We all worked as a team and I was extremely lucky and honoured to have commanded such soldiers. On return to Colchester, the COP was disbanded and my soldiers returned to the rifle and support companies.

I was in the 2nd Battalion and we were conducting Northern Ireland Training prior to a South Armagh tour in March 80 in the regular haunt of the Stanford Training Area (STANTA), which I believe is still being used today. I was a Section 2IC Lance Corporal commanding a brick of 4 men. Our mission was to go to the Bailey bridge in a vehicle, (a 4 ton Bedford lorry), attack the position causing as much hassle as possible across the water, and get out as quickly as possible. We practised all day, sitting in our positions in the back of the truck with the tailboard already down for easy dismount. The plan was that the vehicle would speed forward and come to an immediate halt just at the start of the bridge. There were around 15 of us ready for the attack in or around the bridge and truck. Once the vehicle stopped, we had seconds to dismount very quickly to get information either side of the truck and then fire into the enemy position supported by the Schermuly flares which lit the sky. Now ready, we had a kip until around 1.30am when we mounted up to go and carry out the attack.

It was 3am which was Zero Hour for the plan to take place. The truck sped towards the Bailey bridge and braked heavily to a halt. Schermulies (for those unfamiliar, these are 1.5 inch phosphorous rocket flares that launch into the air, explode in the sky, opening up a parachute that gives out a great deal of light) were fired into the air to light up the enemy positions. Just as we were getting into our position, I felt a massive thump on my chest. Adrenaline was obviously driving us forward but I felt blood start to stream down out of my mouth. My energy dissipated and I knew I had been hit. I immediately staggered back to the truck, shouted that I had been hit and was helped back up onto the truck by the team who had finished the attack and were boarding to go back to base. In the back of the truck, I was continually asked if I was OK, but the pain was immense. I was hit on the right of my chest just above the top pocket of my combat jacket. Hit by what though? Well, there was an imprint of a circle which was the same size as a Schermuly. I had been hit by one!!!

I was taken directly to Ely RAF Hospital nearby. The first thing they wanted to do was to X-Ray my chest. I stood upright against the back of a plate for the X-Ray and had to be caught as I nearly passed out. My injuries were a couple of fractured ribs and a collapsed lung. I spent 2 weeks in hospital with visits from the CO and another person who I found out was the person who fired the rocket. The culprit was a 2nd Lt from the Royal Artillery and he was ordered to come and visit me in hospital. Supposedly, he had been given a right bollocking and he brought me in a bunch of bananas! I didn't really speak to him much as I was very disappointed to learn that he had opened up the rocket illegally and cut off the parachute in order to be able to aim it at us in the night. Anyway, I left hospital with a horse-shoe shaped bruise and had a few more weeks off before returning to work again, on light duties initially. A bit of a scary incident, but I survived and then rejoined the battalion.







In its box



NOVEMBER 1982 - JANUARY 1985 1ST OMAGH, MID TYRONE AND SE FERMANAGH



Lisanelly Barracks

OMAGH BASED AND A RE-SHOW OF 'MORTARS MORTARED'

By Patrick Crowley

The Editor has ordered me to do a re-show of 'Mortars Mortared', a small piece I wrote for the 2015 Annual Journal; there is more to tell!

The 1 QUEENS Omagh tour from '82- '85 was a pivotal one for me as the Mortar Officer, having the privilege of commanding a mature and professional platoon, which was mainly in the normal rifle role for most of the two and a half years. It was where I matured as a young officer and I was one of only a few platoon commanders that completed the whole tour – John 'Province' Powell, being another one! I was also fortunate to be commanded by a highly professional CO, Paddy Panton, and an equally proficient Coy Comd, Merrick Willis, for most of the period. Another critical character was the late Gary Anglin, our extremely conscientious CQMS. The key personality, though, was my dogged and patient PI Sqt, 'Dolly' Walker.

The tour was, in Northern Ireland terms, probably a 'steady' one. There were certainly enough threats and incidents to keep us busy, but the threat was not as high as some other tours. We were fortunate that the battalion only lost one

soldier, Pte Richard Biddle of the Army Catering Corps, in '83; but one was one too many.

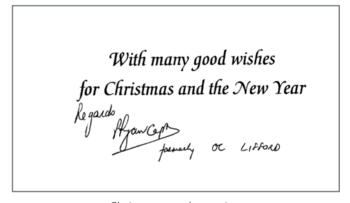
Most of the platoon's time, within Sp Coy, was spent on rotation with the other companies; Omagh-based guarding and local patrols, Tyrone-based patrolling, the operational roulement to South-East Fermanagh, then leave. Fermanagh was the focus and our mortar platoon became experts on the Roslea area and operations around the Derryard Permanent Vehicle Check Point (PVCP). Our platoon spent 8 months of its 2½ year tour down in Fermanagh. Derryard was to become infamous a few years later, in '89, when the King's Own Scottish Borderers were attacked there by an IRA fighting patrol; two soldiers were killed.

We patrolled using Derryard as our base most of the time, though the company was spread, simultaneously, across other PVCPs along the border, including those at Kilturk and Wattle Bridge. Coy HQ was based at Derryard and the only way for Merrick Willis to visit us was in a covert patrol car, with covert dogs 'Biscuit' and 'Crumble'; this always seemed a little risky as most of the so-called covert cars appeared to be similar coloured Vauxhall Cavaliers! Most of our travels for drop-offs and pick-ups to and from patrols were either at night in the back of covert patrol vans or in Lynx helicopters.

On a number of occasions, we had to cordon off suspect devices in the rural landscape, which involved long nights, dug-in, awaiting the Army Technical Officer (ATO) to finish his work. Both the Anti-Tank Platoon and the Mortars were huddled in trenches in Apr 83, around a 600lb explosive device, secreted inside beer kegs, shoved into a culvert, under a main road. This was at Coranny Lough, near Roslea, described as 'a popular fishing spot' by the IO who it was rumoured had been fishing there the day before! (You'd have thought that he might have



Captain Ryan's Christmas card



Christmas card greeting

spotted them putting it in!). Some of the soldiers holding the perimeter and/or patrolling from Derryard were 'Stitch' Azzopardi, Cpl Bailey, Cpl Dane, Cpl Harris, LCpl Russell and Ptes Bence, Brightmore, Burgess (Cartoonist), Burtenshaw, Covington, Dauncy, Davison, Dixon, Hunt, Merry and Taylor and Tiller.

A month later, two car bombs went off in Lisnaskea, one at the Ortine Hotel. We heard it explode and rushed to the scene; fortunately, there were no casualties. The Irish Republican Army stated that 'Crown forces who lived in built-up areas were putting civilians at risk'; an interesting point of view! In the same month, the RUC had to fire plastic bullets at a crowd outside the Donagh Bar, Lisnaskea.

The local Sinn Fein MP, Owen Carron, described plastic bullets as 'death bullets'; and condemned the Royal Ulster Constabulary for 'their unacceptability in Nationalist areas'; there was always tension on the streets and the company operations officer, Captain Neil 'Porky' Peckham, would keep us informed of developments.

Sp Coy seemed to have more than its fair share of incidents, particularly in the first year of the tour. Merrick Willis commented for *Braganza Magazine*:



'To date, the Company has been mortared in Strabane, has dealt with two attempts to blow up Sion Mills Police Station, a series of bombs in Strabane, and attended the scene as quest stars of the Carrickmore mortar attack. In our own patch, we have dealt with the Coranny Lough IED, the Ortine Hotel car bomb, Brookborough car bomb, found ammunition, and become experts at helping the sappers out of trouble when they try to cross border crossings.'

It was an interesting period. Now back to Mortars Mortared.

Sp Coy was given the responsibility for 'The Hump' or 'Camel's Hump' PVCP at Strabane at the start of the tour in '82, whilst most of the rest of the Battalion was in County Tyrone on operations around the Carrickmore area, centre of the failed 1956 IRA campaign. The base provided a great focus for us and I spent two months there, partly learning from the activity of the previous platoon located there; LCpl Russ provided the local communications expertise for me.

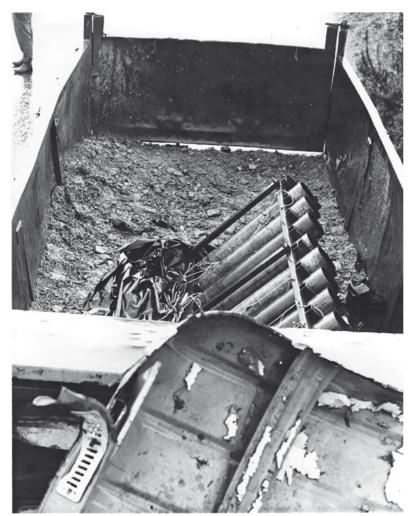
In mid-December, I received a Christmas Card from Capt P Ryan, formerly OC Lifford PIRA, addressed to the OC and Officers, Camel's Hump (I still have the original card); very pleasant of him, as I found out a few days later on 19 Dec 82. That evening, a lorry was hijacked in Co Donegal and a hostage taken. It was mounted with improvised mortar barrels and bombs and driven to Lifford and then the Hump, parking on the nearby border bridge at midnight. The Ulster Defence Regiment sentry saw this happen, but did not open fire as he could not positively identify a terrorist, though he saw a man run from the cab as the mortars fired.

Meanwhile, Crowley had his boots off and was getting into bed, having left Dolly Walker on the evening 'stag'. I could hear the classic crump as each barrel was fired, just as had happened in training, got under my bed quickly and waited for the incoming bangs. Simultaneously, other soldiers in the platoon were having baths (LCpl Russell) or showers (Pte Brightmore), and they also carried out immediate action drills. Blasts were then heard, though none appeared to have

landed in the base.

Eight mortars had landed, fortunately 50 metres short, some very close to gipsy caravans; another one only yards from the base plate,. Thankfully there were no casualties. We were lucky as the mortars and firing system were very sophisticated.

The brief silence was followed by the normal drills; Clear, Cordon, Control. The helicopter Nitesun was deployed, along with the Quick Reaction Force from Omagh, ATO and the Royal Engineer Search Adviser (RESA). Meanwhile, I zoomed out onto the ground, boots on although without socks, commanding the area, whilst Dolly Walker coordinated the follow-up activity from the small operations room, staying inside the camp. In the early stages, no one knew exactly where the mortars had landed or even if some had failed to detonate within the base boundaries. The clearance operation would go on throughout the night and the next day while wives and loved-ones heard the news of a Strabane mortar attack on the national news. Locally, over 20 civilian families living near the base had to be evacuated from their homes and were briefly accommodated in St



Strabane Mortar baseplate

Patrick's Church Hall. The local newspaper also reported that a 52-year old Strabane man, Mr Alan Greer, who lived nearby, suffered from a heart attack and sadly died shortly after the attack.

There is no doubt that the realities of Northern Ireland had been brought home to the Mortar/'Mortared' Platoon very early in the Omagh-based tour. Needless to say, there was little sympathy from the rest of the battalion. I did manage to pick up a few bits of shrapnel - now in the museum - and one of the IRA's mortar tubes which currently resides with Bn HQ of one of the PWRR battalions and soon also to be housed in the museum.



Capt Patrick Crowley

CUTTING MY TEETH IN OMAGH

By Mike Scott

Of the three Northern Ireland tours that 1 QUEENS deployed on between my arrival in '84 as a young officer, and our '92 merger and new PWRR guise, I experienced the Omagh and the South Armagh NI tours. By the time the '89 Belfast tour came around, I had flown to Africa to join the Mozambique Training Team and thereafter was destined for a tour as Adjutant of 5 QUEENS (now 3 PWRR), in Canterbury.

While at Sandhurst, we received a visit from Maj Peter Swanson, at the time a company commander with 1 QUEENS in Omagh. He had crossed the Irish Sea to brief the officer cadets during our NI module. Thus, those of us destined for



2Lt Mike Scott who should have been on patrol in Fermanagh, not slaughtering pheasants!



the Queen's Regiment contrived to stay alert in the Churchill Hall, while Peter exhibited the disquieting tendency of repeatedly 'fixing' us and seeking audience participation.

Graduating in the summer of '84 from Sandhurst, I found myself amongst a handful of Queen's Regiment subalterns. One of our number and destined also for 1 QUEENS was Anthony 'Billy' Bolton. When the time came to travel to the Province, Billy picked me up from home in Surrey and we set off for the Liverpool ferry.

1984 was well before the days of email or mobile phones, and we received only rather scant joining instructions from the Adjutant, Capt Rob Walker. We assumed this was some kind of initiative test, and did not seek further detail. Nonetheless, we made it across the Irish Sea and proceeded safely west across the Province. Upon arriving in Omagh, it was dark and, before the days of Google maps, we found ourselves speculating where exactly Lisanelly Barracks might be found. We decided to enquire at the hospital. We surmised that if by chance we should ask the wrong person and be shot, then at least we would very conveniently be sited at Accident & Emergency.

Amazingly, we made it to Lisanelly unscathed, to find that nobody expected us until the following week. This was a blessing in disguise. At the time the Officers' Mess 'livers in', spearheaded by Capts Lance Mans and Ken Hames, were in the habit of subjecting newly arrived subalterns to some rather disquieting initiation pranks - always imaginative in nature but nowadays unprintable. So for the next few weeks we kept our heads down, all the time feeling somewhat paranoid.

When joining B (Holland) Coy, under Maj Peter McLelland, the battalion was very well established in its tour. I had been assured at Sandhurst that upon assuming platoon command, one would benefit from the experience of a platoon sergeant. This I found to be somewhat wide of the mark. Sergeant Bob Goodman had recently been promoted and appointed as CQMS, and no successor as 6 Pl Sqt had been identified. But I need not have worried. WO2 Jimmy Juhel was CSM, I received a solid handover from Lt James Cameron, and my senior corporal was Bob Fisher who in his somewhat relaxed, but always professional, approach was all that one could have hoped for in a NCO. We both contrived to spend as much time in the field on patrol as possible, thereby avoiding having to 'stag on' in the Coy Ops Room. We both managed numerous week-long patrols, he with sniper rifle always in hand, dropping in upon the occasional PVCP only when we required rations. Fermanagh was notably wet and boggy, and I found my Degree in Agricultural Economics to be of surprising benefit; in 'chatting up' the local farmers, one could always knowledgeably discuss fertilizer and its alternative nefarious uses!

When not on patrol in Fermanagh, our company found itself in Lisanelly Barracks, engaged in guard, QRF, reserve tasks, and such like. Being a 'residential' rather than an 'emergency' tour, the battalion also found time for recreation, generally sport. Captain Neal Peckham's post-match 'take' on an 'English Country Garden' at the local rugby club, fuelled by the local potcheen brew, still echoes clearly after all these years. James Cameron's rendition of 'The Zulu Warrior' was a good effort, but less polished.

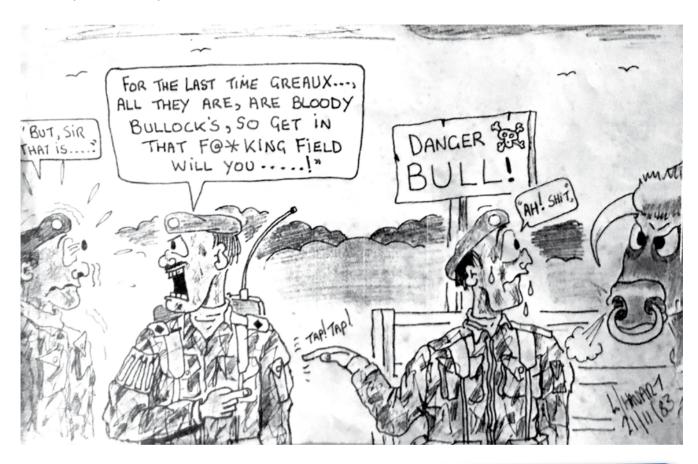
'Such like' also included company boxing. In my platoon was LCpl 'Jim Bob' Robinson whom, being a battalion team light heavyweight and therefore my weight class, I found to be a painful sparring partner. But not as painful as Cpl 'Lol' Cox from our company, a battalion team heavyweight boxer, who during some 'friendly sparring' managed to break my nose. Of course, many found this to be extremely amusing. Boxing would continue as a battalion 'firm favourite' into our subsequent Gibraltar tour, where one became reasonably fond of 'milling', perhaps because less skill was involved. And there one also recalls that Cpl John 'Skunk' Irwin, albeit seemingly the oldest man in the Company, was first to volunteer at the beginning of the season. Some suspected that he enjoyed it rather more than was entirely healthy. But I digress ...

Our RSM, WO1 Jeff Budgen, sadly died some three months before the end of the Omagh tour.

There were few terrorist successes, the vast majority we managed to thwart, but the most tragic was the result of an off-duty incident in which two of our attached ACC cooks were blown up by an IED under their car. Pte Richard Biddle was killed, and LCpl Parker very seriously injured.

All in all though this tour stood me in good stead for things to come!

In Nov 83 we were route checking on the Dash (Ed: a long straight road, named for obvious reasons.) close to Donagh and Sammy Greaux was flank protection. A herd of bullocks took interest in him and followed him across the field. The faster he moved, the faster they went. He ended up sprinting the last 50m, then jumping a 4ft hedge carrying a bergen and GPMG. To this day he swears they were bulls.



BIRTHDAY IN FERMANAGH

On my 23rd birthday, I was on patrol on the Fermanagh border. It was a really hot week and we'd been on patrol for a couple of days. We stopped to brew up and to eat; the pudding in my ration pack was the really stodgy one. I looked across at one of the others who had fruit salad. "I tell you what, Sir, as it's your birthday." "Yes?" I said my hopes rising, "You can watch me eat my fruit salad!" he replied.

John Powell

LEGGING IT

By Merrick Willis

My own sprinting powers were graphically demonstrated while in Fermanagh. A culvert IED had been discovered and – so we were assured – safely disarmed under cover of darkness. The firing point was being covered by COP guys who had been covertly inserted. It was decided that a 'normal' (Ed: which we in the Int Cell called a 'sacrificial lamb patrol!') patrol should enter the area in the forlorn hope on this occasion that the perpetrators might be drawn out. In the event, just as we arrived over the culvert, Chimp, Joker or whatever the thing we had with us was called, sounded a loud alarm. I'm proud to report that my finely-honed instincts for self-preservation kicked in as, to the great amusement of the watching COP guys, I led the patrol at high speed out of range.



Whilst deployed to Omagh '82-85, the 1st Bn had control of a company sized Tactical Area of Responsibility (TAOR) in South East Fermanagh that extended from Lisnaskea in the northwest (where Coy HQ was based) down to Newtonbutler in the south across to Roslea in the

west (skirting Clones in the Republic of Ireland home of boxer Barry McGuigan). The company patch was dominated by seven Permanent Vehicle Checkpoints (PVCPs) that stretched along the border (C/S PVs 1 - 7) providing a frame work to supplement patrols that emanated from Lisnaskea, Newtownbutler and Roslea RUC stations. Teams of 8 (and in one

location 6) soldiers would stag on for a month at a time getting to know the pattern of life intimately. In PV7 at Wattle Bridge (south of Newtownbutler) this aspect focused on those in the Republic driving to Newtownbutler to fill up with cheaper fuel.

I was in B Coy commanding 4 Pl. For most of the tour, B Coy was commanded by Maj David 'Kiwi' Carter. The CO and RSM, Lt Col Paddy Panton and WO1 (RSM) Jeff Budgen (who sadly died during the tour) were unrelenting in their supervision of the patch springing surprise visits on platoon commanders. Added to almost daily visits by the OC, Pl Comds and Sgts were kept on their toes (and in retrospect we probably needed to be).



CO - Paddy Panton, GOC - Lt Gen Sir Bob Richardson, 2/Lt Mike Scott, Lt John Powell getting a grilling for some misdemeanour

Like most rural tours, soldiering consisted of long hours on patrol or guard duty interspersed with the odd moment of excitement. During the tour, the battalion uncovered 2 x 1000lb culvert mines and had to deal with an IRA ambush on the Lisnaskea–Newtownbutler road, in addition to numerous small finds and the probable saving of many lives of off-duty RUC and UDR (of which there were many in the patch, some of whom sadly were murdered while off-duty by the IRA in a number of cowardly attacks, sometimes in the presence of their families).

For platoon commanders (separated from their sergeants who commanded other locations) the biggest challenge was the G4 war and ensuring that the PVCP was up to scratch for those surprise visits. Over a two-year period there were many incidents that helped lighten B Coy's time (and were no doubt replicated by the other companies):

- Surprise visit to Wattle Bridge PVCP (PV7) south of Newtownbutler by the CO and RSM. The RSM, having found a jerrycan parked behind a shed, took it to the platoon commander demanding, with an RQMS head on, to know where his POL point was. "In your hand" was the reply.
- OC B Coy, having realised that numerous visits from not only the battalion hierarchy, but also 8 Inf Bde and HQNI staff was having an effect on those trying to rest, declared Fermanagh a 'Christian-free zone' to prevent the padres from waking up resting soldiers.
- Kilturk PVCP (PV6) A JNCO carrying out a clearance patrol south of Kilturk (accompanied by Sage the adopted dog) knocked on the door of a house for a chat. "You're in the Republic, young man" was the initial reaction. "No I'm not', I'm in no man's land!" he stated as he pointed to the broad red line on his map that marked the Irish Border and covered the house's location.
- One of the issues in running the PVCPs was the provision of decent food. Clearly there weren't enough cooks to go around so it was decided that one soldier per team would be health, hygiene and basic cooking trained. This was not without its risks as Cpl Bill Dawson's section found out when their nominated cook ended up frying their chips in Fairy Liquid.

- On a high profile visit to the PVCPs by the GOC, Gen Bob Richardson, OC B Coy introduced a newly married soldier announcing that the soldier had married a nurse. "Why did you marry a nurse?" asked the GOC; "Well sir" the soldier replied "She wears her webbing in bed and you've got to get your kicks where you can".
- To get to the PVCPs the OC and other 'important' people would travel by civilian car, announcing their imminent arrival on the net so that the gate would be opened quickly on their arrival. On one occasion, wearing a donkey jacket over his uniform, one individual managed to forget to take his beret off and was spotted wearing it in Newtownbutler. A pl sqt, on hearing the news (which spread very quickly) organised an honour guard on the road for the already compromised vehicle.



John Powell and his patrol in Derryard PVCP '84 L-R: Standing - Pte Sammy Greaux, Pte 'Big Bird' Killick, Lt Simon Archer (Gurkha out for a jolly), Lt John Powell (Pl Comd). Kneeling: Pte 'Bill' Hayley, Pte Dann, LCpl Sid King, Pte Hollingberry

- In addition to the usual VHF Comms, each PVCP had a telephone line as back-up (often referred to as the land line or Lima Lima on the Net, to the irritation of the OC). The RSO was surprised to receive a monthly phone bill for many thousands of pounds for the use of the phones. It transpired that soldiers working through the silent hours were ringing pornographic chat lines in the USA and recording the conversation to share with their chums.
- Boredom on night stags was rife. One Company 2IC was surprised (having interrogated the Vengeful vehicle database) to find that his wife had been travelling extensively across the Province and into the South during his absence in Fermanagh (as a residential tour married officers and soldiers were accompanied living in Omagh). Bored platoon commanders (on stag in the company ops room) had falsely 'back sighted' his car's details into Vengeful.
- On patrol one day a JNCO stopped for a tea break. Having brewed up and settled down to enjoy his very welcome hot drink he spied some rubbish lying close to him. "Gungy Irish bastards" he is alleged to have said. Picking up a bag,

he was somewhat surprised to find a quantity of Semtex explosive fall out.

Fun though they are to recount, the events described do not begin to describe the long patrols in a usually very wet Fermanagh with a constant threat from what was considered a professional bunch of terrorists based in the Monaghan salient (where they could also turn their attention to nearby South Armagh). Only a few years after 1 QUEENS had finished this tour on 13 Dec 89, the PVCP at Derryard (PV1), north of Rosslea, was attacked by the IRA using heavy machine guns, grenades, rockets and a flamethrower. A relieving patrol which had just arrived, actually saved the day but not before the IRA left a van bomb behind which partially detonated. Two members of the King's Own Scottish Borders Regiment were killed and two were wounded.



Rural VCP SE Fermanagh with Pte Gid Cooper, Cpl Coomber, 2Lt Bolton, Pte Martin. Same vehicle stopped 6 times to get the photo right!

IT WASN'T ALL FUN FOR THE FAMILIES EITHER!





From '83-85 Bob and I lived in Lisanelly Barracks in Omagh with 1 QUEENS. One day in

the spring of '84, I was driving to Londonderry with my young children on a shopping trip. The road took us through Strabane past the cemetery. As we approached the town, the three or four cars ahead of me stopped for no apparent reason. As we sat waiting to move, we were faced with a wall of hundreds of people walking towards us behind a funeral party. I always had books and comics in the car and told the children to look at them and not look up or out of the windows of the car (James who was then 3 had a habit of pulling faces at anyone passing). This body of mourners slowly walked around our car, moving slowly to the cemetery. They were headed up by a dozen men and women in full paramilitary uniform, berets and sunglasses who I later found out were accompanying the funeral cortege of dissident republican Michael Barr. It appeared that the whole town was walking that day and it took almost 20 minutes for them to pass my car which had been surrounded all that time. The best way to describe this sight was like slow moving black volcanic lava seeping down the road. I must confess I was extremely relieved when the cars started moving again and we could carry on with our journey.

While 2IC of 1 QUEENS in Omagh, I was working very late one evening when the office phone rang:

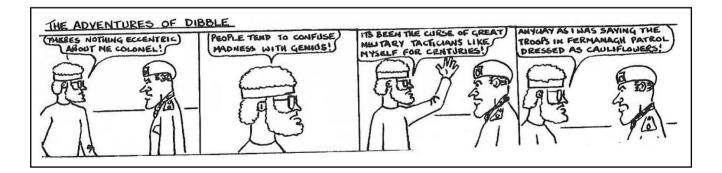
Me: "Who the hell are you to think that I should still be working at this time."

Silence followed by laughter!

Deputy Commander 8 Bde: "You're quite right, Roger. It's Mark Tarver, but since I've got *γου...*"

Roger Gancz

(Ed: Mark Tarver was originally Queen's Regiment and transferred to the RRF on being given command of a battalion.)



Whilst commander of Kilturk PVCP in Fermanagh, we had a visit from the CO. I was asked if the troops had practised putting up light at night in case we needed to. I replied that we hadn't, so he said that it was important as it was different firing them out of the sangers through the bars! That night Kilturk was like the 5th of November; we fired every single item of illumination.. mini flares, schemulies and 2 inch mortars. The resup request that night sent the CSM and CQMS into a tail spin as apparently I was only supposed to use one of each so the troops could see. Doh!

Steve Coker



JANUARY 1933 - NOVEMBER 1984 2ND LONDONDERRY

A TRIBUTE TO PRIVATES ALAN STOCK AND NEIL CLARK AND LIEUTENANT JULIAN GIBBS

By Wayne Harber

This article is based on a tribute to those who died during or as a result of injuries sustained during the 2nd Bn's tour of Londonderry between '83-84, written by Tim Scott, who commanded 11 Pl, C Coy, with assistance from his fellow subalterns at the time, who all still meet annually to remember the tour and those who were killed

The bn moved from Colchester in late '82 to take over from 1 R ANGLIAN and settled into a familiar operational roster routine, with a company based west of the River Foyle with Coy HQ and one platoon in Fort George and platoon locations in Rosemount and Masonic, while the other companies were on a mixture of leave, quards and duties, training and reserve deployments across the brigade and wider Province



The Bogside from the City Walls

area. The battalion base was in Ebrington Barracks, east of the River Foyle, sitting alongside the Headquarters of 8 Inf Bde and overlooking the river and the City with the Guildhall and Craigavon Bridge in clear view.



11 Platoon in Rosemount '83

Londonderry had always been a flashpoint from the first Civil Rights marches and, with the 'Battle of the Bogside' and 'Bloody Sunday', had a reputation of being a difficult and busy deployment. While operations were the focus of attention, lives for both our soldiers and their families were also restricted due to the threat. We all got used to driving to Ballykelly, Limavady and Coleraine for shopping and some social life, while the pads kept the Altnagelvin Hospital maternity unit busy with guite a number of births during our two years there. It was a tour to be remembered for so many reasons.

Private Alan Stock

Pte Alan Stock, from Hounslow in Middlesex, was aged 22 and married. He was killed on a typically drizzly 'Derry Saturday night on 15 Oct 83. C Coy was deployed in the City, with 10 Pl, under Lt Duncan Strutt and Sgt Dave Munday at Rosemount, Lt Mike Newman's 9 Pl at Masonic and 11 Pl, under Tim Scott at Fort George. Cpl Derek Kennedy was Stock's team commander, but was unable to take the patrol out that night due to a football injury. He later attended Alan Stock's funeral and hosted his father's visit to the bn when they had moved to Oakington.

The company had heard that there was a bomb ready to go in the City and the narrow footpath in the middle of the Gobnascale area, near to a building project where known 'players' worked, was placed out of bounds. On that Saturday evening, there were two mobile patrols out, one commanded by Tim Scott in the Gobnascale and a 10 Plone-this latter patrol of the Gobnascale and a 10 Plone-this latter patrwas the one that got hit. On the radio came "Contact – Lonemoor Road" and Tim Scott's patrol raced across the Craigavon Bridge, arriving via a small road that linked up from the Lecky Road near the Derry City football ground. The other patrol



had limped back to Rosemount, but there was debris all over the road and a hole at the top of the stone wall by the cemetery. A 7lb bomb had been in a gas cylinder placed against the grass where it met the top of the wall, detonated

using a 350-foot command wire running up into the cemetery and a click box mechanism found at the firing point was concealed behind a headstone.

Shots were also fired by a gunman set up by the cottage near to the cemetery gates. The lead vehicle sustained two casualties; Pte Stock received blast injuries and gunshot wounds that killed him and the Team Commander, LCpl McGarry received serious facial injuries which affected his hearing and sight. Two women who were walking by at the time were also hurt. In the follow-up, one man was arrested.

Actions followed the usual routine; an ICP was set up, further troops were deployed to assist with the cordon, the coy comd, James Ewart, deployed as did ATO and a helicopter using NITESUN to give extra light. However, bad luck meant that NITESUN went down so low that no-one could hear anything with the noise and then the radio link with it failed – which meant that the helicopter returned to its base in Ballykelly and ATO went back to Fort George to return in the morning.



Kilo Sanger Fort George



Gazelle landing Fort George

A long night on the cordon loomed. The troops were attracting some attention from the locals by this time and some petrol bombs were lobbed and the cordon was also shot at. At about 4 am, Lt Julian (Jules) Gibbs's platoon (6 Pl, B Coy) deployed from Ebrington Barracks to take over the cordon. Tim Scott recalls briefing him in the back of a freezing cold Pig before returning to Fort George.

Private Neil Clark

Neil Clark, aged 20 from Margate in Kent, had been a Junior Leader and was an excellent soldier. He was engaged to be married and his Best Man was a very close friend, Alan Ley from Edgware. I remember when both appeared on CO's interviews, about to attend a course. Going on courses was a useful way of getting soldiers back to England for a break and they were encouraged to apply for any course that interested them. When asked, they said that they were off to do a Fencing Instructor's Course at the Army Physical Training Corps School. Interested, I enquired how long they had been fencing, only to discover that neither had ever picked up a sword and that they just liked the look of it! Needless to say, I had a phone call from the APTC when they arrived, but they were sympathetic and let them stay. They both returned with glowing reports, saying how well they had taken to the sport and how hard they had applied themselves, even though they hadn't made instructor level! Alan Ley later went on to do some serious fencing at international level and became a coach, now living in Jersey.

Easter weekend '84 was a busy one for A Coy. On the Saturday, a double mobile patrol from 3 Pl was ambushed by a car bomb with three troops wounded and one IRA terrorist killed by flying debris. However, a more ambitious attack was being planned and Neil Clark was killed in that attack on Easter Monday, 23 Apr. His platoon, 2 Pl, was being commanded by Sqt Lee Tanner, with Cpl Dunstan as acting Pl Sqt. Clark was in the rear landrover of a double mobile patrol that was, unusually, also carrying a foot patrol of 8 blokes in each vehicle. The patrol was driving up Bishop Street Without towards the City walls when the rear vehicle was heavily petrol bombed and crashed. Two or three gunmen then opened fire from under an arch going through houses to the left side of the road. One weapon, an Armalite, fortunately jammed. Two of the weapons were later used in a five-gunmen attack on the Rosemount base.

Private Adrian Bovelle, although on fire from the petrol bomb, nevertheless returned fire, aiming at the muzzle flashes. Private Grant, another good friend of Clark's, was also badly burned about the face and hands. His former Pl Comd, Jon Dixon, remembers visiting him in Woolwich Military Hospital and failing to recognise him at first due to his injuries. Cpl Jordan, despite a wound to the foot, took charge of the situation, getting Grant into a house where they doused his burns with water. Although the gunmen managed to escape down the rear of the houses to the Lecky Road, Cpl Jordan was later awarded the Military Medal for his actions.

In all, some six soldiers were hit or received burns, with Neil Clark being killed. The IRA claimed that about a dozen of its volunteers were involved and 30 shots were fired. Although several minor 'hoods' were later charged and sentenced for petrol bomb and other offences, the gunmen were never caught and charged. One of the suspected gunmen was later killed in '87 in the Creggan when a bomb he was carrying exploded prematurely.



Rossville Flats

Neil Clark was buried at Shorncliffe Military Cemetery with full military honours which included a piper from 5 UDR, our neighbours in Ballykelly, playing a lament. The funeral was well-attended by his family and friends, including his previous PI Comd, Stanford Jeffrey.

Lieutenant Julian Gibbs

Jules Gibbs was commanding 6 Pl, B Coy, when he was hit on the back of the head by a paving slab thrown from the Rossville Flats in '84. Although he was knocked unconscious, he could so easily have been killed. Ray Heathfield was in his team and with Paul Wren and others, they carried Jules on a steep climb back to Rosemount via Creggan Cross where he was picked up by ambulance.

Jules was a good bloke and his arrival on joining the battalion in Derry was something to remember. It was the tradition to spoof a new subaltern, so on the day of his arrival, something naughty was placed in the boot of his car, which was then 'discovered' at the gate by the Guard Commander. Tim Scott was the Orderly Officer and was called to the 'incident'. Jules was placed under Mess Arrest, with an officer in Service Dress and sword on guard outside his room at all times! Mike Newman and CSM Forrester led the 'interrogation' long into the night!

When the battalion moved to Oakington after Londonderry, Jules became 2IC B Coy and was good friends with Jon Dixon who was a fellow 2IC in A Coy, a friendship that continued after they both left the Army. Jules left the Army in '85 and I remember him taking the time to visit me in Headley Court where I was undergoing some serious physiotherapy prior to attending Staff College. Although Jules recovered well enough from his injury to resume soldiering, it was to plague him with terrible headaches for years afterwards until his sad and untimely death in 1998 from a brain haemorrhage.

Up early, we were a team made up of a clerk, a Cpl storeman, a Sigs Pl Cpl and an ATk Pl Sgt as Comd. We had our brief and were given the montage of the lift-on-sight terrorist we had to arrest. We departed from Fort George and made our way to the Gobnascale Estate arriving at the address at 05.30. The front light was on and there, through the window, up a ladder, was a chap painting. As the junior member of the team, I was called forward and told to arrest him although I could see, having looked at the montage, that he wasn't the target. Who am I to argue with senior soldiers and higher ranks? I knocked on the window, he came down the ladder, opened the door and before he said anything, I arrested him. We bundled him into thw back of the landrover, with him protesting his innocence in his strong NI accent: "I'm not whom you think I am, you bunch of idiots" or some such words. We radioed the Int Cell to say that we had got our man and handed him over. We dispersed and needless to say shortly afterwards he walked out through the gate. Funnily enough our team were never asked to do another lift-on-sight!

Steve Richards



FEBRUARY - JUNE 1984 3RD BELFAST

NEW BARNSLEY POLICE STATION, WEST BELFAST

By Mike Hurman

Recently promoted to captain, but still commanding 5 Pl, I was given the task of running the outlying base at New Barnsley police station with another platoon attached from the Province reserve, found by the resident battalion. Our TAOR included the Ballymurphy estate amongst others. This tour was fundamentally different from previous tours in that 'Police Primacy' was key. Basically, we were there to support the RUC on the beat. The way we did this task had not changed militarily. We planned our patrols following the route of the beat given to us by the RUC. My task was to protect the police; they were now the main target - so I walked next to the Constable and provided all round protection with a multiple number of 'bricks' of four men. I could rarely see the other bricks but I knew where they were via our radio comms and the pre-prepared and carefully briefed route planning for each patrol.

Various events during that tour spring to mind. One day a woman was swearing and shouting at us to "Go home". As we walked towards her, I asked the Constable her name, I smiled, ignored her babble and addressed

the woman by name with a cheery "Good Morning!" The Constable asked me how I could act like this day after day. My response was "I was here 10 years ago and I don't want to be here in another 10 years"!

Another day as we walked up the road, dustbin lids were banging, and a small crowd starting to form. I told them to back off and go home! A misguided woman jumped on the back of the policeman, knocked his hat to the ground and was beating him around the head. I grabbed her by the scruff of her neck, threw her to the gutter and said "When I say go home, I mean go home"! All went quiet and we continued on our way.

Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness were regularly in the Ballymurphy area. The first time I stopped Adams in his car, I requested that he show me his driving licence to establish his identity, much to his irritation. Another time I stopped them both, whilst we were manning a bomb cordon in the centre of the Ballymurphy opposite the Sinn Fein Centre. Adams complained to me that we were stopping people going about their rightful way! I







explained the situation by radio to David Pollard our OC at the incident control point. He told me to send them on down to him. As they departed, a local chap digging his front garden,

who had heard the exchange, asked me why I hadn't just told them to **** off! A small example of how attitudes towards us were changing.



Springhill Estate with Black Mountain in the background. The ubiquitous Pig armoured vehicles in the foreground

During the tour we had a range of incidents to deal with in our patch from a shooting, an RPG 7 attack and a command wire IED, which kept us busy. The occasional brick thrown at our vehicles was an expected norm!

For this tour, we had extra anti-bomb technology to carry. I think the local players knew more about it than we did. The equipment could pick up local frequencies used by Citizens Band radio devices and so we could hear "They are coming around the corner now." Young boys employed as watchers known as 'dickers', provided an extra element of concern that we tended to ignore but made us alert never the less

Some months into the tour, I felt I needed a break and asked the OC if I could stand down from the early morning patrol of Divis Flats, since Dave Covey was well capable of handling what was traditionally a quiet gig. The following morning, I woke to learn that his patrol had fired several baton rounds to extract from some pretty major aggro. I was sorry to have missed it!

One night, a crowd gathered at our camp back gate, a petrol bomb was lobbed over the high perimeter fence and caused a little fire damage to our building. Sgt Kev Bowdrey was on duty. He had the fire hose run out, extinguished the blaze, opened the back gate and ordered the baton gunners to fire at the crowd which dispersed them and sent a sitrep (situation report) to Coy HQ. Then he came and woke me up to show me and brief me on the event and the further precautions he had set up. I asked if Cov HQ had been informed, thanked him and went back to bed. The soldiers in my platoon were excellent, working 18 hour days, but maintaining high standards and being polite but firm with the local population. One evening, I was chatting with some locals in the Ballymurphy and they expressed their genuine sadness in our leaving them at the end of the tour. I could not have asked for a more pleasant and memorable end to what was my sixth and final tour of duty in Northern Ireland over a ten-year period.

RUPERT ON TOUR

I commanded 7 Pl, C Coy, 3 QUEENS in West Belfast in '84. This was my first tour and I was blessed with a really strong team of Sgt 'Ginge' Wilson and Cpls Dave Baird, Andy Murray and Dave Covey.

It was a quiet tour in comparison to others before and after. One RPG was fired on the Springfield Road but that was about it. The biggest challenge was adjusting to the tempo of the RUC, who tended to take a longer (slower) approach than the rest of us.

Sgt Wilson was as good a platoon sergeant as anyone could ask for, and he bailed me out on many occasions. But one afternoon he was patrolling backwards on the Springfield Road when - being at well over 6' tall - he cracked his head against the awning of the fruit and veg shop opposite the RUC station. At this point he stormed into the shop and ranted at the owner about the height of the awning. Now I had been on the wrong end of a few of Ginge's bollockings, and I didn't envy the owner at all!

Steven Kilpatrick



JANUARY - JUNE 1987 3RD OP CARA CARA

OP CARA CARA

By Amédée Miéville

3 OUEENS, under the command of Lt Col Bob McGhie, deployed to Northern Ireland in Jan 87 on a 4-month operational tour. As an Incremental Reinforcement Battalion (IRB), it was spread across the Province from Strabane in County Londonderry to Ballykinler in County Down. The Bn had no Tactical Area of Responsibility (TAOR) of its own and its platoons and companies were split between 14 separate bases under operational control of five different major units.

The Bn flew into Aldergrove and dispersed to their bases throughout the Province. Battalion HQ and Fire Sp Coy were due to be moved by Chinook helicopters. However, the weather closed in and so they were given a few rounds each and were driven to Armagh in the back of yellow civilian pantechnicons!

Bn HQ was situated in Drumadd Barracks Armagh, monitoring and providing support to its sub-units as opposed to having a command and control role. Sp Coy (Maj John Pratten) was also based in Drumadd Barracks with platoons operating in the cities and towns of Armagh, Middletown, Keady, Newtownhamilton, and the surrounding countryside. B Coy (Maj John Russell) was based in Ballykinler with platoons working from Bessbrook Mill and Rathfriland. C Coy (Maj Mark Rayner) was based in Rockwood but also operated from RUC Castlederg and Strabane. A Coy (Maj Wayne Harber) was based in Omagh and also covered police stations in Carrickmore and Plumridge.

There was plenty of success during the tour. Skilled patrolling led to a number of finds of bombs and weapons throughout the area. Sp Coy was also involved in the cordon that was in place when the SAS carried out a major ambush at the RUC Station in Loughgall where eight members of the Provisional IRA were killed. This was PIRA's biggest loss of life in a single incident during the Troubles.



Drumadd Barracks Armagh

The Bn was relieved by 40 Cdo RM. During their recce, the Bn 2IC was tasked to show their CO around the area by Gazelle helicopter. During the flight the forthcoming amphibious landing exercise due to take place in November was discussed. The Bn 21C asked which idiot had chosen to carry out the exercise on the west coast of Scotland at a time when the weather was likely to be extremely poor. The CO in the front said: "It was me!" There is little room in the back of a Gazelle to hide and there was little conversation for the remainder of the flight!

NO PEACE FOR THE WICKED

By Mark Rayner

OP CARA CARA was a weird one. It wasn't planned or on the Op Tour list but drummed up at short notice as the RUC was stretched, morale was apparently suffering and the injection of troops would provide vital security and help get the RUC back on their feet. So the 3rd Bn returned from Fallingbostel to Canterbury in early '86 only to go to Belize without unpacking and were then told on return from 6 months in the jungle that a NITAT package awaited them after block leave. Recognising that this was a bit much, we were visited by no less than C-in-C Land Forces to explain why our name had come out of the hat - or why our name was the only one put into the hat! Some were plausible; op tours, arms plot moves, role changing etc. Some less so. I could sense disbelief in the ranks as it was explained that one battalion



On the border again



Rayner being covert



Yet another visit from Felix

was receiving new Colours and another was trooping its Colour (own up now the soldier behind me who said in a loud voice "we've got Colours too, mate") and some were recovering from recent tours (not the most convincing thing to say to a battalion just back from 6 months in Belize). I'm not sure it helped and to this day I think the soldiers of the 3rd Bn would have taken it much better if he'd just said "It's rubber-dicking time, boys - and guess how much support you got from 5 Brigade!"

But we were a great infantry battalion of the Line and we got on with it. Unfortunately for BHQ, and I felt very sorry for them, the four companies were sent under command of resident battalions and operationally detached from our own chain of command. Fortunately for me, we were short of proper majors and I was given command of C Coy - absobloodylutely marvellous! My previous operational experience included a very successful rugby tour of Berlin so I was just the man. Quite wisely, I was given the legend that was Drum Major Baker as CSM, the guiet but superb CSqt Fidge as CQMS and Sqt Queenie Toms as Search Advisor. That, combined with three experienced and very capable platoon commanders with equally seasoned platoon sergeants gave me exactly the back up that such a shy and youthful company commander needed. It was a great team with a company of experienced and very professional soldiers. And, from time to time, we had a laugh.

We saw very little of the other companies: A Coy was in Omagh under command 6 UDR, B Coy was in Armagh, alongside but not under command Bn HQ, and Sp Coy was deployed Province wide in support and surge ops (forgive the broad and possibly inaccurate lay down – it was a long time ago). C Coy was also under command 6 UDR but detached and isolated over in West Tyrone. We had a headquarters in an old mill in a small place called Rockwood from where we mounted rural platoon ops and patrols in West Tyrone. Another platoon was in Castlederg with the remit to patrol the village and provide a permanent patrol presence around Border Check Point (BCP) 242. Traditionally the IRA had come over that border crossing point to mount mortar attacks, close quarter attacks (CQAs), illegal vehicle check points (VCPs) and the whole spectrum of rural terrorist activity around Castlederg and the nearby villages. Sion Mills was a very brave community that had a mixed school and a very tolerant perspective..and was frequently punished for just that. The Irish border problem was quite different then.

The third platoon was in the police station in Strabane. Strabane was a typically hard Republican town; we were acutely aware that East Tyrone PIRA had mounted a few successful attacks and the West Tyrone boyos were very keen not to be left behind. There was always something going on in Strabane; routine nastiness in the 'Head of Town', shootings, frequent electronic counter measure (ECM) alerts, a number of come-ons and several improvised explosive devices (IEDs). The Ammunition Technical Officer (ATO) visited so often that we got to know the crews guite well. We were stretched; we had to settle for the less than ideal two-brick patrols in Strabane simply to keep the required presence on the ground; R&R hit patrol numbers hard and took up any reserve we had; patrol bases were routinely empty or were just being used for sleeping and admin; there was no genuine down time and I'm not sure anyone watched a single TV programme. This was a company in top gear for four months and I' m not sure that I, or the military planners that sent us out there, deserve the superb commitment, unstinting concentration professionalism shown by every man in that company. This was apparent when, the day before we handed over, there was a significant weapons find by an alert patrol sniffing out the unusual; the boys were still on top of their game.

It was a fascinating mix of rural and urban areas and the platoons rotated every month, which kept them on their toes, but allowed them to understand each patch really well. We could have been better equipped. The whole spectrum of ECM was at play in the TAOR but without the detailed intelligence to know which to carry, we had to cover the entire potential spectrum. It was a calculated risk every time we went out. We tried to dominate the Castlederg salient and a number of BCPs but without any decent surveillance equipment, night observation devices or effective water-proofing.

Having done several tours from '75 to '98, I think I've seen the many faces of the RUC/PSNI from the times in the '70s when they rarely took to the streets and only then hunkered down in the back of our vehicles to the late ' 90s when we were asked to withdraw from time to time to allow them to go it alone. I' d put the Strabane force as ahead of the game for the mid- '80s. They were pro- active and definitely led in all matters. They drew up patrol programmes and deliberate operations and tried to get onto the front foot. We provided a safe environment in which they could crack on. But, as has

so often been the case over the years, they did seem to view us as an inexhaustible comfort blanket, just there to give them close protection and cover the night shifts. It was a painful process trying to persuade them that we could do our job without necessarily sitting on them; that we preferred to be given the task and working out how to achieve it rather than -" Give us two platoons"; and that I didn't have any more soldiers hidden away to take over when these were on their chin-straps.

We had two notable visitors. The first was an interesting reunion. Comd 8 Bde, Brig Mike Constantine, had been my company commander on the '79 tour of South Armagh, so we were no strangers to rural border ops. He was not famous for letting me get away with anything so I gave the briefing a lot of thought and rehearsal. I managed one word "Ground" before he interrupted " I' ve walked every inch of it, Mark – get on with it". But there was a grin on his face and I can't pretend that it did us any harm having such an ally in high places.

Finally, Gen Sir Robert Pascoe, the GOC Northern Ireland. His MA had rung me to say the general wanted to visit the men at their 'place of work' so I said "That' II be the Head of Town or BCP 242 then". Apparently not, and he came to Rockwood for a riveting tour of the ops room, cookhouse and CQMS store. It ended with a coffee, during which he asked me if I had had any requests or complaints and I took off on my hobby horse of soldiers having to spend a lot of their own money to keep vaguely warm and waterproof (the Monaghan Bog is not a great place to set up a lurk or OP and this was life pre Gore-Tex) as Army kit was either non-existent or inadequate. His reply was to tell me that, at Sandhurst, he was issued a greatcoat and blanket and never complained. Well, that was me back in my box!

On reflection, it was a tour too many. The battalion had had two years in Canterbury between two significant arms-plot moves and deployed on two emergency tours (Belize and Op CARA CARA) in that time with all of the attendant reorganisation and training. All credit to Bn HQ for holding it all together. I still marvel at how our soldiers take these circumstances and put in such a professional shift – and I don' t begrudge them a good old 'shimf' once it's over. It was great for me; I had a fabulous team and a demanding patch with something happening nearly every day..and getting paid as a major!



JUNE - NOVEMBER 1987 1ST **SOUTH ARMAGH**

CUTTING ONE'S TEETH IN SOUTH ARMAGH

By Mike Scott

In Jan 85, 1 QUEENS deployed to Gibraltar for two years, and there in mid '86 the CO, Lt Col Mike Ball, was informed that the battalion was destined for an 'emergency' tour in South Armagh, from Jun to Oct '87. Thus, upon our move to Tidworth in the following January, the battalion commenced NI training in earnest, although individual training had commenced well before then. I was to be the Battalion IO for the tour. Only a month previously, I had been summoned to the CO's office to be informed that I had been selected for a two-year attachment to 40 Commando Royal Marines. Well, evidently things had changed! With NI on the horizon, the battalion required all its officers. Thus one door closed, and another opened. This revised assignment meant acting captaincy with pay.

I was dispatched to Templer Barracks, Ashford, the then home of the Intelligence Corps, where we had a friend at court, Paddy Panton, in his new guise as chief instructor. Before receiving any specific NI intelligence training in Lisburn, I had to attend the full-blown Brigade & Regimental Intelligence Course. Still in the Cold War era, scenarios were based upon Soviet confrontation, inclusive of extensive Soviet vehicle recognition training. One was conscious that the IRA received support from the likes of Libya, but I hadn't realised that they were to be found cruising around South Armagh in BMP and BRDM! Oh well, perhaps the basic intelligence principles would hold true regardless.

My Int Pl, 32 strong, deployed to South Armagh some weeks ahead of the rest of the battalion to take over from 1 R HAMPS. Pl HQ was based at Bessbrook Mill. Besides the CO, comrades in arms there included Mai John Harcus (Bn 2IC), Capts Simon Deakin (Adjt), Jeremy Ashton (Ops Offr), Matt Brown (Sigs Offr), and Mike Rowney (BUZZARD). The QM was Vic Ebbens.

Our intelligence sections were based with the outlying company locations: Forkhill (A Coy, under Maj Tony Russell), Crossmaglen (B Coy, Maj Anthony Beattie), and Newtownhamilton (C Coy, Maj Malcolm Lawson). Sp (Surveillance) Coy, under Maj Robert Knight, was deployed in the observation towers - Ops MAGISTRATE

and CONDOR - along the border with the Republic. One recalls also that barely any of the young bachelor officers escaped a 'Dear John' letter. Ladies could be so fickle. No sooner had we deployed to fight for Queen and Country than they made themselves scarce! However, if nothing else, it provided amusement for the boys when they were posted on the notice board!

One month prior to our arrival, the SAS gave the IRA a very bloody nose in an ambush at Loughgall, killing all eight terrorists. Thus the IRA tended to keep their heads down during our tour. Nonetheless, they attempted a shooting attack against Cpl Berry's hilltop OP, Point 799, but retreated when fire was returned. Otherwise they endeavoured to take us on by way of IED and mortar attacks (notably Glassdrumman OP). We were also entertained by an INLA feud, chief amongst them Dessie O'Hare (the 'Border Fox'), in which the terrorists were more intent and successful in killing each other than us. The Bn returned with all who had deployed. However, one of our attached RGJ companies lost two soldiers killed; LCpl Thomas Hewitt, shot in the head by a sniper while on foot patrol in Belleek, on 19 July; and LCpl Edward Jedruch, struck on the head by the rotor blades of a helicopter, on 31 July.

The intelligence role highlighted the perennial frustration inherent in NI work. Infantry battalions, with their soldiers primarily involved in framework and surveillance operations, tended to be contributors to the intelligence pot rather than recipients of the product. The well-established (and quite correct) principle of 'need to know' meant that high-grade and actionable intelligence was held by specialist agencies. Only the CO was briefed (ordinarily direct from Bde) when there was something sensitive in his area. Thus 'Out of Bounds' areas, marked on maps in Coy Ops Rms, tended to remain frustratingly that - 'OOB' - and the domain of specialist agencies and COP soldiers.

My partner in crime, as Assistant IO, was CSgt (later Sgt Maj) Mike Woodward, and one could not have been blessed with a more capable, dependable, or sage wingman. In plain clothes, we drove a silver Opel Manta

(doubtless long before 'compromised'!) around our patch, with HK53s in side-door pockets and pistols holstered, liaising with the various NI intelligence agencies; and to us all seemed right in the world. Unashamedly, I relied upon Mike Woodward to drink more than his fair share of Bushmills with Special Branch. My liver has forever since been grateful. Towards the end of the tour, Brigade Intelligence offered me an assignment in HQNI, Lisburn. But our CO had already offered me a more compelling role as Battalion Recce Platoon Commander, with Mike Woodward as my 2IC. Moreover, with the consummate professional, Henry Eagan, as our Company Commander, I made the right call.



Capt Mike Scott - on the ranges



CSgt Mike Woodward - on the ranges



Forkhill RUC Station taken from the Foxfield OP



Bessbrook Mill



Op MAGISTRATE tower



Mortar attack



This photo was taken in the last few weeks of the tour of Crossmaglen in '87 at about the time I was handing over 6 PI to Digby Williams. Anthony Beattie was the OC.



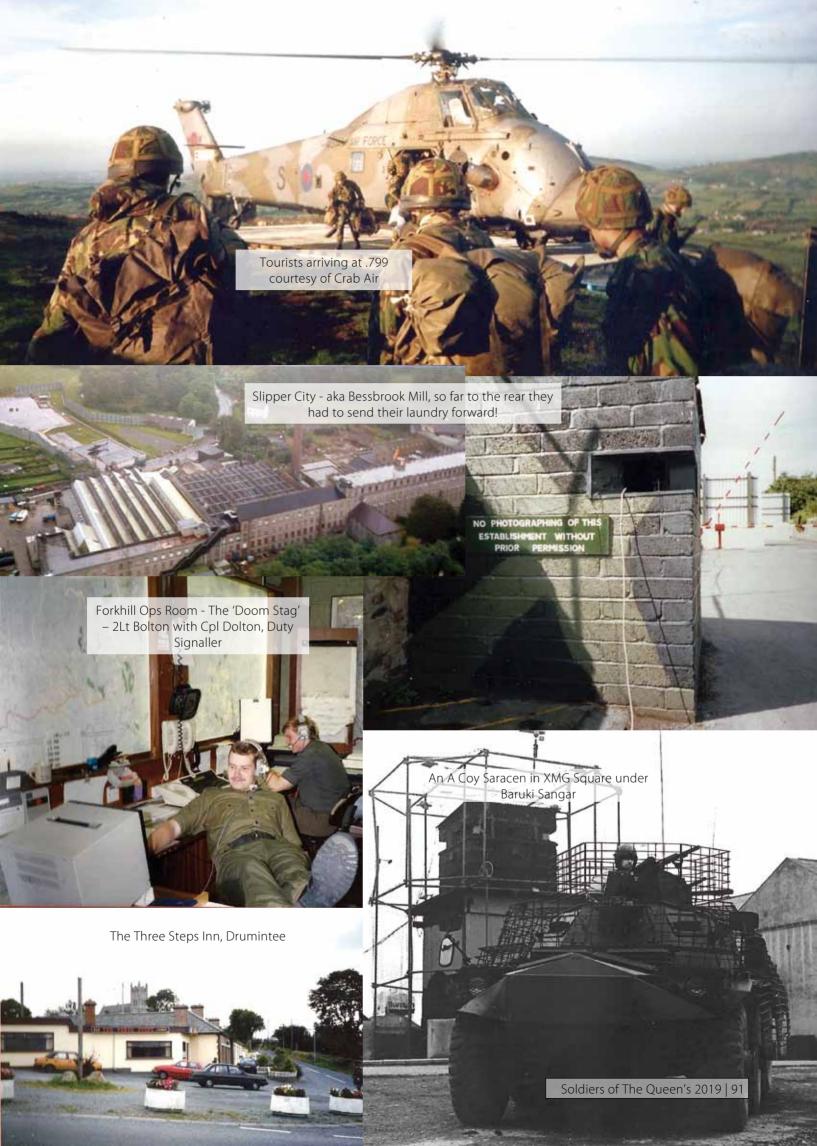
XMG '87

L -R Pte Pete Johnson, an ex-Betteshanger miner, (which is why he was in my team, because he could dig a fire trench in a matter of minutes), Pte Ross Bassett from Wales (he admitted joining the QUEENS because he had been persuaded by the ACIO that because the Queen's Regiment had the Welsh Dragon in its cap badge there were lots of his countrymen in the Regiment – as he complained to me "I'm the only one" (Ross Bassett is carrying a grenade launcher in addition to his SA80); Lt John Powell (mortar officer but back with a rifle coy to give it some experience); 2Lt Digby Williams – as the newbie, Digby was made to carry the heaviest ECM equipment we had.

We were the first battalion into the Province with the SA80 series of weapons. That said, Pete Johnson had a LMG (or Brown Bess as the blokes called it); he was very proud of it and I'm convinced he went to bed with it. It was his undoing one day as he tried to negotiate an electric cattle fence on patrol. I think his barrel caught the wire as he tried to pass under it; the shock made him stand up suddenly allowing his ECM antenna to pull the wire up with him. Sadly it was the last section of the fence and the end pole sprang free with a force that allowed the wire to wrap around the hapless soldier. His subsequent tap dancing as he tried to free himself from multiple electric shocks caused huge amounts of mirth in the patrol. No one raised a finger to help; we were all helpless with laughter. He eventually got himself free.

Pete Johnson was an inveterate smoker and couldn't get out of bed before he had 'lit one up'. Sadly he died in an accident in '91; he was serving with 2 QUEENS on exercise in Canada when a Schermuly flare was fired uphill at too low an angle and struck him; all very tragic as he was a tremendous soldier and great fun to be around. As an ex-Betteshanger miner, he was a tremendous Arthur Scargill fan.

Our NAAFI manager in Crossmaglen was half-German and it came to pass that those in 6 Pl who were off duty were watching England v East Germany. In a room full of England supporters, there was only one German supporter who, on East Germany's victory, started taunting the lads. Incensed, Pete Johnson and one other (whose name I shan't





An aerial view of .799 showing .799E (East) in the foreground and the main OP beyond. The two were connected by a rickety walkway constructed from forklift pallets protected by a couple of lines of barbed wire. Not a place to go wandering around after dark!



Forkhill



CSE dancing girls

reveal since he is still with us) grabbed the NAAFI manager, bundled him into a mattress liner, took him to the Pipe Range and carried out a mock execution; apparently the manager's last words would have been "Don't shoot Kameraden".

They then left leaving him to his own devices, having taught him, in their minds, a thoroughly good lesson. Said NAAFI manager went AWOL on the very first Wessex helicopter into base the next morning. It didn't take long for B Coy to realise that the NAAFI was not secure and the stock was 'taken into safe custody'. A new manager arrived within a day or so and organised a resupply of stock. To get the stock to the NAAFI (which was upstairs from the helipad) required a line of soldiers passing the boxes from the helicopter up the fire escape and into the NAAFI. One enterprising soldier organised a 'branch line' which diverted some stock away from the NAAFI to a private store somewhere. Pete Johnson and the other soldier duly appeared in front of Anthony Beattie on orders and the stock was re-directed back into the NAAFI.

I was a member of the COP in Armagh waiting for a covert vehicle to pick us up very early in the morning. We saw it pull up and so we waited for the all clear signal to get in the back. The driver got out and looked around and then opened the back doors and lit a cigarette, That was the signal to mount-up so we all piled in the back. It took a few minutes to realise that we had just got in to a van that had broken down and the driver was absolutely crapping himself. After reassuring him that we were not the IRA, we helped him sort his vehicle until ours arrived. Definitely not a passive compromise but bloody funny!

Ian Stewart



JANUARY 1983 - MARCH 1990 3RD **ALDEGROVE AND PROVINCE-WIDE**

IDLE JOTTINGS OF A COMPANY COMMANDER

By JDK Russell

Commanded by Bob McGhie, the battalion deployed to Aldergrove from Canterbury at New Year '88 and took over Alexander Barracks next to the airport. Seemingly the barracks were not built with a long campaign in mind as the main construction material was similar to compressed cardboard and, unsurprisingly, most of the buildings were gently rotting, with their attractive flat roofs a particular advantage in a uniquely damp part of the British Isles.

When we first arrived, we had two ops companies; one was deployed to support 4 UDR in Co Fermanagh and operated from St Angelo camp, while the other was in Dungannon supporting 8 UDR. In Fermanagh, we mounted patrols into the border country and had responsibility for guarding Kinawley RUC station and running Gortmullan and Mullan Bridge PVCPs on the border. The PVCPs were a routine but high profile task and, as potential name-losing events, visits by brigade commanders or their deputies were quaranteed and somewhat nerve-racking. In fact, as the visits were a certainty, for the company commanders they were probably more nerve-racking than a possible attack by PIRA and involved much rehearsing of the PVCP crew. One company commander, who will remain nameless but was cannier than the rest of us, reduced the risk of a disaster by putting NCOs and SNCOs in the sangars posing as private soldiers. While it was a bit chancy, not surprisingly, he and his company always came away with glowing reports.

The PVCPs were resupplied by the CQMS on a weekly basis and, for the purpose, we were issued with a supposedly covert civilian van, which happened to be painted in a distinctive and particularly unpleasant brown. One day, we decided to run the van through Vengeful as none of us had ever seen this type and colour of van and were curious about it. The answer came back that there was only one in the Province and that it belonged to the Army. Perfect! Until we managed to get it exchanged, we decided that it was better not to tell the COMS as this news would not have done much for his morale.

The Dungannon task divided the company between protecting Coalisland and Pomeroy RUC stations and operating from 8 UDR's battalion base in Dungannon. Pomeroy was a particularly bleak task, based in the small police station in what was then a mean and menacing village up in the hills of Co Tyrone. Hopefully it's now charming! I seem to remember that the police station's guard force was supplemented by a number of geese that would squawk like fury if anyone approached the perimeter.

At the end of our first year at Aldergrove, the Army had a major change of mind and altered the brigade boundaries to create a border brigade, which was given responsibility for the entire border less, I think, the Londonderry area. 3 QUEENS were extracted from the 4 and 8 UDR tasks and given responsibility for the Aughnacloy company base and Keady RUC station. I think we might also have had a multiple operating from Clogher UDR base, but memory might be playing tricks. Also included in our TAOR, and our responsibility to protect, was the stately home of the Earl of Caledon and the stately Earl contained therein. Aughnacloy was not the most exciting of deployments and it was not long before the soldiers christened it 'Och, No Joy'. The accommodation was pretty basic and squeezed into a cupboard with us was the 'choggie shop', possibly better referred to in these PC days as the char wallah. Anyhow, the wizened occupant of the cupboard sold grim hamburgers, a welcome morale boost when the cookhouse was shut, until a health and hygiene check by the medics found quantities of desiccated rats also resident in the cupboard. End of choggie and shop. Once when deployed to Aughnacloy, we took part in a two-company operation to support the RUC in preventing shots over the coffin at the funeral of a high profile member of PIRA. We were due to be moved by Chinook and I remember being pleased with myself when I found the perfect HLS in the playground of the local secondary school. It remained perfect until the moment the Chinook arrived and its downwash relocated tons of the loose gravel surfaces to the playing fields. For some reason, there was no complaint.



Life back in Aldergrove was not hugely exciting and was divided between guards and duties, leave and training. During one training rotation, we got away as a company to Garelochhead training

area; a welcome relief from routine in the Province and the endless security. I can't remember much about our training but I do remember being intensely happy when it was time to leave as it brought to an end being eaten

alive by midges. I also remember going on a visit to a Polaris boat in nearby Faslane and being alarmed to see that in the control room, parts of the nation's nuclear deterrent were held together by black masking tape. I suppose it must have been nearing its end of service but even so...

I served for 15 months with the battalion in Aldergrove before being posted, about a year before the battalion went on its arms plot move to Cyprus. For me it was 'stag on' as my next posting was to HQ UDR in Lisburn.

ALDERGROVE

By Stephen Kikpatrick

I had the good fortune to be the Adjutant of 3 QUEENS from our deployment from Canterbury in Jan 88 until my departure to Sandhurst in November. We had had a busy two years beforehand with tours to Belize in '86 and an Op CARA CARA tour in '87. On deployment, we were quite heavily undermanned and we had had to draw upon troops from several other infantry regiments.

Bob McGhie was the CO and the battalion reflected his character: no nonsense, hard working, and hugely professional but with a sense of humour. He was a soldier's soldier and it was a privilege to work for him... apart from the first 4 months when he gave up smoking, which were a nightmare!

John Russell has covered the operational side of life but my business was manning and discipline. The battalion did its best to keep me busy in the most bizarre ways, usually involving some pretty senior officers.

Early in the tour, we were warned that the GOC, suffering from a bad back, would come every weekend to use the station swimming pool. Accommodating his visit became an operation in itself, and inevitably I was called to explain one drama or another, often involving the temperature of the pool. Then one morning the Brigade Commander, Mike Constantine arrived unannounced to inform the CO that he had been appointed OBE for his performance in Belize: fantastic news. But pride comes before a fall, and in the following week, the Commander Land Forces visited C Coy in Auchnacloy. Climbing the steps of the first sangar, he struggled to open the hatch since there was a dead weight of a sleeping soldier



Dungannon Base

on top. Back came the Brigade Commander to give us a good wigging, and it was back to business as usual - until Nick Sharples, the COP commander, went to the cinema in central Belfast. On leaving the cinema, he encountered a multiple patrol from 2 QUEENS who were based in West Belfast at the time, and who reported that his car had been stolen and was now being used for a joy ride around Divis Flats. Nice one, Nick.

Once every month there was a disco in the junior ranks club and ladies would come from across the Province to the event. I tried to avert my gaze from these events in the hope that all would pass by without incident, but after a while I noticed that the subalterns were competing to fill the duty roster for these Fridays. When they started turning up in Number 1 Dress, I had to intervene. I really didn't need a fight over a young lady between a soldier and an officer. But talking of fighting, I remember well young Private Kilgour who had a habit of over-staying on leave. We would have to send the RMP round to collect him, and on his return he would go to the gaol. All seemed fine until I foolishly entered the Novices' Boxing competition, and found myself staring across the ring at him. He needed little motivation, and very little time before I hit the canvass, to the roar of 400 soldiers. Credit to him, we are still in touch and he is still boxing, although he has faced many tougher opponents than me.

All good memories of a 'WILCO' battalion which simply got on with a difficult job without fuss.



Bob McGhie during an IED clearance in Fermanagh



John Russell at a different IED clearance in Fermanagh



Pirate Party L-R Tim Carr, Lou McGhie and Mike Williams



HRH The Duchess of Kent having tea with the wives and families being greeted by Lt Col Bob McGhie



APRIL - AUGUST 1988 2ND BELFAST

AN 'A' COMPANY PERSPECTIVE

By David Wake

Memory is a strange faculty. It has differing natures: selective, false, short or long-term, photographic and fallible to name but six if I remember correctly. I can recall very little of '88, but from my increasingly fallible memory, I know that it was an Olympic year (Seoul), Wimbledon beat Liverpool in the FA Cup, and the Canadian chanteuse Celine Dion won Eurovision for Switzerland, singing in French! These memories are the stuff of quiz teams, Trivial Pursuit and pub bores, of little consequence except to those directly involved.

Much more vivid and important in my memory are the events leading up to and through the 2 QUEENS tour of West Belfast between Apr and Sep 88. In Mar 88, an SAS team shot dead three members of a Provisional IRA Active Service Unit in Gibraltar. At the funeral of the terrorists, at Milltown Cemetery in Belfast ten days later, a Protestant paramilitary attacked the mourners, killing three and wounding 70 in a gun and grenade attack. Three days later, two Royal Signals corporals were abducted, beaten and shot dead by the IRA after inadvertently driving into the funeral cortege of IRA members killed in the earlier Milltown Cemetery attack. These events set the context of the 2nd Bn's tour in West Belfast in that otherwise largely forgettable year.

As a consequence of the events in March, West Belfast was in a febrile state. Furthermore, before deployment, we received intelligence that the IRA had received a resupply of weapons and explosives and that there was a competent bomb team active in the area.

Many members of the Regiment will be familiar with some of the locations to which the battalion was deployed: North Howard Street Mill (NHSM), Fort Whiterock, Girdwood Park, and Musgrave Park Hospital (MPH) were the locations for Tac HQ, the rifle companies and echelon respectively. In this article however, the focus will be on NHSM where Bn Tac HQ and A Coy were based.

In the company Tactical Area of Operations (TAOR), there were patrol bases in support of the RUC at New Barnsley,

Springfield Road and Grosvenor Road. Additionally, the company manned permanent OPs atop the Divis Flats and at Broadway. NHSM was an imposing building on the Protestant/Catholic interface between the Shankill and Falls Roads. It had a main entrance and one extremely dodgy foot patrol exit, factors about which we could do very little but which were to have a significant impact on the tour.

The company was significantly enhanced owing to the size and complexity of the TAOR. We totalled over 230 personnel, mostly Queensmen of course, but augmented by at least ten other cap badges including RM, RA, R ANGLIANS, GORDONS, A&SH, REME, RCT, RPC and WRAC. The company also had attachments from both the Mortar and Anti-Tank platoons.

Without exception, this strange amalgam of cap-badges performed extraordinarily well throughout a difficult and demanding five months of operational highs and lows. During the tour, the company received numerous attacks from terrorists, including three command wire bombs and 21 separate shooting attacks. One of these resulted in the death of Cpl Alex Bannister, shot in the back in July whilst patrolling in support of the RUC from New Barnsley police station and tragically dying nearly a month later in MPH having initially shown signs of recovery. He was a fine soldier and much missed.

One of the command wire bomb attacks also resulted in tragic deaths. First, an initial bomb in the basement of the Falls Road Baths was detonated by the IRA and inadvertently claimed the lives of two locals. In the subsequent follow up and investigation, our Ammunition Technical Officer (ATO), WO2 John Howard RE, was murdered when he stepped on a concealed pressure switch, triggering a fatal secondary explosion.

Fortunately, the other two IED attacks had less serious consequences. In one, Cpl Parker of 3 Pl narrowly missed being cut in half; a blast, emanating from a disused factory complex in the Beechmount area, launched a metal window frame across the road, breaking his arm.

In the other, Lt Gavin Jones rightly earned the soubriquet of 'Bomber Jones' when a bomb, hidden behind a wall in North Howard Street, caused a stream of bricks to be fired across the road in front of him. One of the bricks hit him on the helmet, so no damage was noticeable! Having a limited number of exits led to two of these attacks.

These were the main lows of the tour and will never be forgotten by those of us who knew those who died. The highs don't compensate for the losses but they do validate the many admirable qualities of our soldiers.

The most notable high was the successful capture of a complete four-man IRA terrorist team, as they were intent on attacking the security forces entering the Royal Victoria Hospital. A joint Army and RUC operation was planned and executed with resultant capture of the ASU and their weapons, including an RPG-7 with rocket and a selection of other weapons.

The other main high was the way the company conducted itself during the events that surrounded the successful extradition of Robert Russell from the Republic of Ireland into Northern Ireland. Russell was an IRA member who had escaped from imprisonment in the Maze and was later captured in the Republic. His extradition sparked a weekend of significant violence in West Belfast. The company was under sustained attack for over 16 hours. There was continual rioting and petrol bombing of RUC and Army, interspersed with over 11 shooting attacks and a series of bomb hoaxes. At one of the bomb incidents, the driver of a white van pulled up against the front wing of one of our Humber 1 tonne 'Pigs' that was acting as a road block. The driver jumped out of the vehicle fleeing, screaming "There's a bomb in the van" or similar less restrained words. Having already endured several confirmed hoaxes, the following conversation between a colleague in the RUC and me who were standing nearby went something like this:

Me: "Do you think this one's for real, lan?"

Ian: "Probably not...WTF!"

At this point, the very real bomb in the van detonated, sending the engine block several hundred feet in the air, and the blast bowled the pair of us over, fortunately without damage except to our dignity.

Meanwhile, around the corner Cpl (Acting Sgt) Daldar Singh was commanding another roadblock. In addition to being shot at on several occasions by IRA gunmen hidden in a pub up the hill on the Falls Road, Singh had to contend with rudimentary barrel bombs rolled down the hill towards him and his section. His stoicism and bravery that day were to be recognised by the subsequent award of the Military Medal. The supporting actions that day of Sqt Gary Pedder were also recognised with a Mention-in- Dispatches.

Perhaps the most satisfying episode of that August weekend was when we were subsequently tasked to clear all the roads of the burned-out vehicles and restore the highways to their original purpose. This was a major operation, requiring detailed liaison with the RUC, considerable heavy duty Royal Engineer lifting equipment and extensive anti-IED support, plus the efforts of most of my company, still dirty and sweaty from our prolonged deployment. The highlight came when, jointly with my RUC colleagues, we decided to pile a lot of the burned out buses and vans up against the walls of the pub from which the IRA had shot at us, much to the chagrin of the Republican landlord, as entrance and egress was thus denied to all. Simple pleasures.

So, there it is; '88 was a memorable year for the 2nd Bn. Just as well that I can still just about recall it. Oh, and Yazz and her bleedin' Plastic Population were Number 1 for most of the tour!



2Lt Gavin Jones injuries following a CWIED on 13 May 88 junction Falls Road and Howard Street



"All Call Signs this is E0D enter Divis"

Read any book that has been published since Op BANNER ended; you will find that our Regiment barely gets a mention. It was never our style to boast about our achievements.

What was unique was that all battalions manned the OP on Divis Tower. In fact the CO, Lt Col Merrick Willis, (19 years previously as a platoon commander, in '69) helped establish the OP. Apr 88 saw 2 QUEENS back in West Belfast with a team manning the OP, at a time of high tension in the aftermath of the Gibraltar shootings and the murder of the two Royal Signallers.

The Divis complex has been described as a social experiment that had badly gone wrong. Just after Easter, Sgt Steve Hannington and I climbed into the OP as part of the pre advance party, we were to take over from 1 RS and complete the takeover by the time the advance party arrived.



LCpl Dusty Miller. CO Rover Group and Northern Ireland Army Athlete of the year for '88

The role of the OP were to provide top cover for patrols on the ground, gather intelligence, a secure site for some sophisticated devices, to provide a firm base for other agencies to mount operations, give the RUC an overview for police matters and act as a deterrent against offensive action targeted against SF.

The handover period was complicated by the 1 RS commander disappearing to help with identifying suspects from recent incidents, with the help of a COP team in situ. The RUC greatly assisted us in getting to know the area and who was who. One old RUC hand told us "It's arand up here, never been shot at" but more on that later. We found the 'Jocks' did not know many of the faces, something we would rectify for our team, and this paid dividends when we were out on the ground.

A Coy was commanded by the charismatic, unflappable Maj David Wake. We operated in two 4-man teams, consisting of LCpl Croft, Ptes Swannell, Offer and Laing, and LCpl Ash, Ptes Motellier, Jacques and Steadman, the



Divis Tower team clocking up the miles on the exercise bike during their spare time to raise cash for the Bn charity L-R LCpl Kev Croft, Sgt Steve Hanning



Out on the ground



Checking out the locals



LCpl Carter declines an offer of a drink, while covering 'The Twelfth' March



Sgt Del Kennedy watching over an Orange Lodge, on the Twelfth

Photos courtesy of Army Media and Soldier Magazine

majority from Milan Platoon; we were left very much to our own devices.

We took ownership of the OP, and in true QUEENS tradition did a clean-up of graffiti left by the Jocks because of their love of the English! Then the battalion fully took over operational control and at last we heard the sound of Southern accents over the net. By the time Steve and I had been up there for a month, we had sore eyes from observing, with four more to go!

What was life like 200 ft on top of the tower? Think of 'Big Brother' with four people getting rotated back to NHSM every two weeks to patrol, with Steve and I escaping for R&R and for a break. Conditions were cramped, at times hot, with a feeling of isolation, with some respite in TV, videos and some fitness equipment. One thing we decided, it would be very much open house. We were not COP and our regiment was famed for its hospitality.

There was no set routine as this was dictated by incidents and the constant stream of visitors, from the top men of the Armed Forces to some shady characters named John, Paul or Ringo, and our own chain of command that frequently came up.

There were some light hearted moments, The QM called: "You're living too well, and you're over spent on your rations!" This did not stop us having a turkey meal at the end and coming in on budget. We had an exercise bike and some of us used it to keep fit. Maj James Myles with his public relations hat on suggested we cycle from London to Abu Dhabi 3,550 miles as part of one of the many fund raising events for the battalion's charity, the Acorn Trust. Off we went, completing it just in time. One officer suggested rowing back on a rowing machine! You can imagine the reply!

The OP was involved with the many incidents that took place in our area, ironically starting on Friday 13 May. A few were directed at our CS - Pte Stedman being blown across the road by a blast bomb as he passed the swimming pool on the Falls Road on patrol; the anniversary of internment provided incoming small-arms fire into the OP. We were briefed in situ by HQNI that it would be guiet! A number of arrests were made from



our observations of certain players with Steve topping the board with the most.

30 August, our last day, had arrived and the clock was ticking away. The OP Comd

for the Guards was in place but they cocked up their

flight plan, so we would be relieved by A Coy, much to the annoyance of David Wake. Due to my posting from 6/7 Queens prior to the tour, Minden was not yet home. I suggested I remain, which he strongly rejected. "Their cock-up, not yours". Well that was not the only thing ticking away. A proxy bomb had been delivered to North Howard Street Mill which had failed to detonate. A lucky escape!

CLOSE CALL

By Merrick Willis

A potentially nasty moment took place during my final tour in West Belfast when I was CO. The RSM, Jack Daw, and I were pottering about with our team as one did of an evening when a contact report came over the net. A patrol had opened fire on a car that had apparently attempted to run a soldier down. Now, much as I sympathised with the



Merrick Willis and team

young NCO brick commander and the soldier concerned, a brush-past involving no injury from what was probably a car stolen by yobs disappearing up the street was not a situation in which the yellow card would have been a relevant defence. For once, I hoped our soldiers' marksmanship had been found wanting. Alas, on this occasion it wasn't, and a few minutes later there was a report of an abandoned car being seen a few streets away with bullet holes in the boot. Jack and I set off, hearts in our boots, and readers will understand our huge relief when an examination of the upholstery of the car under torchlight didn't reveal any blood.

So many mixed memories of the times spent during Op BANNER: a very few folk saw lots of action, but for most of us it was long hours of boredom in ops rooms and

tiredness on the streets, endless routine tasks, but comradeship and yes, some lighter as well as exciting moments too.

I'VE SOLVED THE OVER REACTION PROBLEM SIR!





OCTOBER 1939 - FEBRUARY 1990 BELFAST

THE BATTALION'S LAST TOUR BUT THE WAR HADN'T ENDED

By John Powell

1 QUEENS deployed to Belfast on 23 Oct 89 for a tour that ended on 28 Feb 90. This was to be one of the last 4 month emergency tours that had an R&R period of a few days; the new 6-monthers were about to start (albeit with two weeks of R&R) and as I remember it, we were guite pleased that this was a short tour. The battalion had not deployed in an urban setting in Ulster for over a decade (and Strabane during the Omagh 82-85 tour probably doesn't count). The AOR had changed markedly since those days (and SNCOs could be heard regaling the youngsters with tales of bases long since gone and how much more dangerous it was in those days, which resulted in some serious yawning from some) but it remained, even after 20 years, a dangerous place to operate.

The CO was Lt Col Chris Charter, RSM WO1 Tony Farrow, 2IC Maj Nigel Russell, Adjt Capt Patrick Crowley and Ops Offr Capt John Powell. Bases were: A (Tangier) Coy in Girdwood in the north also with responsibility for the Crumlin Road Gaol (Maj Henry Eagan), B (Holland) Coy (along with BHQ) North Howard Street off the Falls Road (Maj Robert Knight), C (Kirkes) Coy Fort Whiterock (Fragglerock - Maj Jonathan Riley then Maj Jeremy Ashton), Ech at Musgrave Park Hospital (Maj Joe O'Gorman) – Sp (Qebec) Coy was split across the battalion and its OC (Maj Nick Keyes) became IO. The battalion also consisted of a company of 3 PARA attached from the resident battalion at Palace Bks who would rotate every four weeks or so and were based in Woodbourne RUC station. There were outstations at Springfield Road RUC station, RUC Oaks, RUC Old Park, RUC New Barnsley and OPs in a funeral parlour, Divis Tower and the Broadway (the latter was very popular since it looked into adjacent flats that were nurses' homes for the nearby Royal Victoria Hospital (RVH)).

During the handover from 42 Cdo RM – OC B Coy, Maj Robert Knight and Pte Potter-Edwards were shot at with about 6 rounds - they were lucky not to have been killed. Major Knight was to be awarded the MBE for his work on the tour.



Belfast Ops Room

The battalion had experienced about two and a half years worth of rural operations in NI during the '80s, which was probably best summarised as long hours/days of patrolling and guarding with the occasional moment of intense excitement. This tour was to prove very different from the beginning, with hijacking and petrol bombs; bomb hoaxes and Soviet RDG grenades, and our first IED to deal with. It may not have been as intense as the early days of the Troubles but we were up against an enemy that far more professional in their operations and it would have been a mistake to underestimate them. The tour started with:

23 Oct – car hijacking and petrol bombs thrown.

24 Oct - robbery, armed hijacking, bomb hoax and unconfirmed shooting at a mobile patrol.

25 Oct - two Soviet RDG grenades were thrown at a B Coy foot patrol on the junction of Springfield Road and Springfield Avenue. Both landed inside one team of soldiers and functioned - amazingly not a single soldier was injured but one unfortunate 54-year-old lady received leg wounds and had to be taken to the RVH.

29 Oct - we dealt with our first IED - a couple living in Mica Drive had had their house taken over whilst an IED consisting of 2.1kg of explosive was placed at head height in a wall in the nearby cabinet works; the device was cleared the next day.



So the tour was off to a busy start. Rarely did the NIREP report a quiet day and, with the exception of one day, a belated entry had to be put in for incidents of which we were unaware of at the time

(most often knee-cappings just before midnight).

All incidents were potentially serious, but the battalion managed to complete the tour without a serious casualty; that there was an element of luck, in some cases, is beyond dispute but the sheer professionalism and enthusiasm for the job in hand by all ranks created our own luck too. What follows are just a small selection of some vignettes surrounding the tour:

6 Nov – Girdwood SF Base – A taxi driver was hijacked by armed men who put a beer keg in the boot. The driver then took his vehicle to the rear of Girdwood base in Highfield Drive (as instructed), causing A Cov to carry out proxy bomb drills. However, a resident of Highfield Drive (who was drunk at the time) decided that he didn't want his house damaged and so drove the vehicle to waste ground at the front of Girdwood. ATO dealt with it there and declared a hoax. The aftermath of this incident caused mirth and annoyance in equal measure. The Brigade Commander had refused to allow ATO to deploy to the waste ground since he feared a 'come on' attempt on ATO's life; he wasn't amused to be told that ATO hadn't actually deployed from Girdwood but controlled his wheelbarrow equipment remotely from a sangar that overlooked the waste ground.

8 Nov – RUC Old Park – Another proxy bomb cock-up (thankfully). A green Vauxhall Cavalier was driven to the rear gate; as the RUC carried out their drills evacuating through the front gate, 20 rounds were fired at the rear gate. After the driver had been de-briefed, it would seem



Maj Eagan briefs the Secretary of State, Tom King

that he was supposed to go to the front gate with the IRA anticipating a rear gate evacuation. Brigade ordered the battalion not to react, fearing a come-on again. This left RUC Old Park unprotected and set back relations with the RUC – ATO later declared the device a hoax.

16 Nov – Andersonstown – A suspect member of an IRA punishment squad was found with a bullet wound in the ankle; after initially believing that he had himself been punished, it transpired that he had had a negligent discharge and shot himself.

17 Dec-Laurelglen Bar – A man was admitted to RVH with gunshot wounds to the thigh. Initially it was thought that he was the victim of a punishment shooting but it transpired that he was an armed robber on the way to a job when he shot himself.

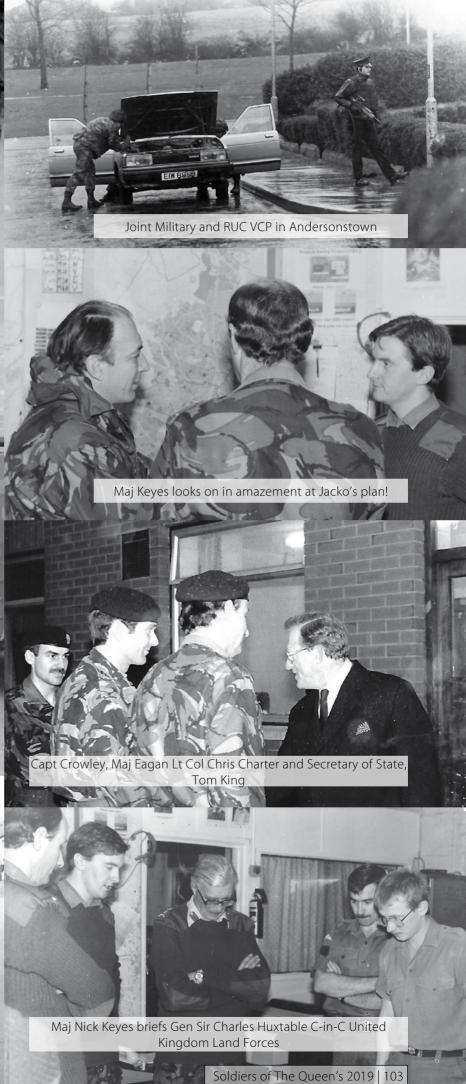
25 Dec – North Howard Street Mill – As is traditional. the soldiers were served their Christmas lunch by the officers. North Howard Street Mill had though been recently bombed in a previous tour with a large device that shifted the top floors a few inches. As a result, there would be an occasional influx of sewerage/ grey water into the kitchen area. On this occasion, the officers were wading through effluent carrying plates to take the soldiers their Christmas lunch. On this day, the Brigade Commander paid a visit. On entering the Ops Room, accompanied by the Ops Offr, he saw that the Watchkeeper (Capt Jon Wright - RSO) had vacated his post to deal with a call of nature. Sitting down, Brig Jackson then began to run the Battalion's operations for about 10 minutes. During this time, he received a phone call from A Coy Ops Offr on the Brinton secure phone who, not recognising the voice at BHQ, demanded to know who was speaking; "Brig Jackson the Bde Comd" was the reply; there was a pregnant pause whilst this was digested and, sensibly for the officer in question, there was no smart Alec response, which considering it was reputed to be Billy Bolton, is surprising!

3 Jan – Etna Drive – three soldiers received minor wounds when an IED functioned. During the follow-up, a member of PIRA was seen with a pistol and engaged but he got away. The device was hidden behind a water tank in a garden belonging to a derelict house. It was initiated by a fishing line that was attached to a mercury tilt switch and ran back into the derelict. One of the soldiers who was injured had gone up to the water tank and had a look and was walking away when the IED detonated; it would seem that the fishing wire snagged at first before freeing itself - a lucky escape.











7 Jan – Carrigart Avenue - Probably the most significant event of the tour. Alexander Lynch an alleged IRA informer was being interrogated by the IRA prior to execution. After Lynch went missing,

the RUC mobilised the bn to help look for him. When he was found in Carrigart Avenue, it transpired that Danny Morrison, the Sinn Fein Director of Publicity, was found in the next door house and was thought to have run from the house where the interrogation took place. Morrison was later convicted and sentenced to a long spell in prison, but was released on appeal. As a result of Morrison's arrest, the RUC moved to search the Sinn Fein offices in Andersonstown and the Falls Road. The Falls Road office was in sight of the North Howard Street Mill security cameras and Maj Robert Knight (OC B Coy) could be seen with an angle grinder, cutting through the security bars on the front doors!

8 Jan – Poleglass Roundabout – a patrol from Sp Coy 3 PARA spotted suspicious activity and gave chase – unsuccessfully; however a command wire and firing pack were found which led to the position of a 10kg device's position aimed at hitting a mobile or foot patrol. ATO dealt with the device on 9 Jan. The CO admitted that that particular route was often used by his R Group when going to Brigade HQ.

10 Jan – Springfield Road – two Improvised Anti Armour Grenades (IAAGs) were thrown at an APV – only one grenade managed to land on target with a glancing blow, and all occupants (including the RCT driver) suffered minor injuries.

24 Jan – Ardoyne – during a city-wide VCP operation, a car was stopped and found to contain 200lbs of explosive and 2m of det cord.

7 Feb – Monagh Bypass – a mobile patrol had a CWIED detonated against them. No injuries and a swift follow up recovered the firing pack and a suspect was arrested (he was found in a bath with his clothes in a washing machine to get rid of the forensic evidence)

10 Feb – the 144th anniversary of the Battle of Sobraon. Sgt TJ Sullivan was Sobraon Sergeant. This was not terrorist related.

As with any tour, there are stories that bring the tour to life – Semtex, the ops room pet cat whom the RSM



loathed, the B Coy nightly sauna sessions, the occasion when two IAAGs were thrown close to North Howard Street but mistaken for Snatch landrover doors banging in the wind, all examples of many such tales across the patch. The CO did, however, come down to the Ops Room one morning complaining that he hadn't slept well - the phone in his bunk kept ringing with anonymous soldiers making requests for more blankets. It would seem that during a reinforcement phase by 1 BW (who were based in Ballykinler) the soldiers were arriving in dribs and drabs throughout the night - the B Coy storeman had gone on R&R and had 'accidentally' diverted his phone to the CO's bunk!



Capt Crowley is introduced to Gen 'Muddy' Waters GOC NI



Hearts and Minds - Cakes for Victoria Hospital Children's Ward



Cartoon given to Robert Knight by the RUC following the search of the Sinn Fein Office



FEBRUARY - APRIL 1992 2ND EAST TYRONE

THE FINAL OUEEN'S OP BANNER TOUR

By Neal Peckham

In Feb 92, 2 QUEENS was Spearhead Battalion. During the week 3-7 Feb, it became clear that a Spearhead deployment was likely. The battalion deployed over the weekend of 8-9 February with the Advance Party lifting off the square of Howe Barracks, Canterbury, Kent, in a Chinook, destined for Drumadd Barracks, Armagh and then onward by 'covert' pantechnicon into East Tyrone.

In all the excitement, the RAF forgot to demonstrate the immersion suits before take-off. They only remembered as we approached the Welsh coast, resulting in a hilarious battle to put them on whilst squeezed between the seats and the pile of bergens and bags that were stacked down the centre of the aircraft. The subsequent suit removals were even more of a challenge as the pilots had decided that nap of the earth flying was necessary across South Armagh.

The bulk of the battalion was destined for Cookstown but A Coy was seconded to 6 UDR and based in Dungannon, 15km to the south. The rest of the company arrived soon after and we rapidly swung into the NI rural routine of patrols, VCPs, cordons and searches. Our AOR was predominantly to the East of Dungannon and included the town of Coalisland, where we had a platoon based at the police station in support of the RUC.

Sunday 16 Feb started off as a quiet day,but as midday approached, it was clear from the increasingly tense radio traffic from HQ 3 Bde that something was afoot. In mid-afternoon, I was summoned to take a secure call from Bde HQ and was directed to arrange the removal of the entire Coalisland platoon from the police station on a 'rural patrol' at last light without alerting the police to our actions. This seemed both impossible and mad to me and I said so. But, as we all know, 'orders is orders' and I duly gave the necessary direction to the platoon commander. Within an hour of the platoon moving out, I received an even more tense counter-order to 'put them back' ASAP, with the additional direction that 'whatever happened, they were to take no action'.

As history shows, and in the words of the 'Relatives for Justice Report': On Sunday 16th February 1992 at 10:45

p.m. members of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), among them Kevin Barry O'Donnell (21 Years), Peter Clancy (21 years), Sean O'Farrell (23 years) and Patrick Vincent (20 years) carried out an attack on Coalisland RUC Station.

They had mounted a 12.7-mm Russian-made (Dagtyarev – 'DshK') heavy machine gun on to a hijacked lorry and had also taken several AK 47 rifles with them in another car. The IRA opened fire on the RUC station, using the machine gun as well as the rifles. They shot at least 30 rounds at the RUC station causing minimal damage to the building and no injuries. The concrete behind the red-brick cladding of the station is approximately a metre thick and a steel mesh encased this fortified military installation.

After the attack was finished, the IRA men left the area and drove to the car park of St Patrick's Church in Clonoe, approximately 2 miles away, to dismantle the gun, put the gun and the rifles into one car, which was supposed to bring the weapons to a safe place, and then disperse themselves into waiting cars from the car park. The cars would then have had to exit the church car park on one of the two streets leading to and from the car park.

Although the IRA men fired at least 30 shots at the RUC station, there was neither return of fire from the RUC station nor were they pursued by RUC or British army members after they left the scene. It was later revealed that British soldiers patrolling the area in cars were ordered to stay away. The area of Washingbay and south Coalisland had apparently been cleared over six hours before the shooting of all regular 'security force' patrols and movements.

However, when the IRA men reached the church car park at approximately 10:45 p.m. they had no opportunity to follow their plan of disposing of the weapons and leaving in getaway cars. Members of the British army, which according to newspaper articles belonged to the SAS and 14th Intelligence Company, were lying in wait behind the hedges, which at the time framed the perimeter of the car park area. According to statements from these British army units, they had been in place from approximately 7pm on the evening of February 16th 1992.

When the IRA men arrived at the car park, the SAS opened fire before the lorry stopped. Witnesses described the shooting as sustained gunfire. It was said that the shooting went on for a long time and that there had been tracer bullets lighting the sky. A total of 514 spent cartridges were later to be recovered at the scene, all of which were declared to be belonging to the British soldiers' weapons.

The SAS soldiers gave no warnings and therefore left the IRA men no chance to surrender. This belief has been fuelled by the evasive behaviour of British 'Security Minister' at the time, Brian Mawhinney, who answered the question of whether the IRA men were actually given the chance to surrender only by referring to the extent of the weaponry removed from the scene, as well as claiming that the IRA men had been on a 'murder mission'. In addition, villagers heard the first shots within seconds of the lorry arriving at the church.

From A Coy's perspective, the Coalisland-based platoon followed orders in not reacting. The operational Out of Bounds area was swiftly collapsed following the ambush and A Coy platoons then cordoned the incident site until the RUC follow-up was complete.

As a background to the demise of this particularly violent Active Service Unit, Kevin O'Donnell, to all appearances a quiet student pursuing a degree in poultry husbandry in England, had been arrested with two loaded Kalashnikov rifles after a high-speed chase through North London in Mar 91. He persuaded a jury that he was a devout Catholic who opposed the IRA, had been shocked to find the rifles in his cousin's car and was trying to throw them away.

Both he and Sean O'Farrell had been best friends since primary school. They were arrested again in Aug '91 at a Gaelic Athletic Association club in Coalisland, after police found guns and rocket-launcher components in an associate's car but were released, with unexpected swiftness, after a week.



Google View of Coalisland RUC Station today



12.7mm on truck with RUC



Clonoe Chapel



Coalisland RUC Station



Coalisland RUC Station bus stop in the rain

THE REGIMENT'S FINAL TOUR BUT MY FIRST





Fresh out of training, a 'One Pip Wonder', I walked into the 2 QUEENS NI emergency tour briefing; the MT shed

was flooded with the adrenaline of 600 excited men. I'd been delayed in the Officers' Mess by a plausible Lt Paul Tyson, who convinced me and my fellow rookie that we had to wear red berets because we were B Coy, the lead element, 5 Airborne Bde. We were almost the last in. Tyson led us to the front, proudly walking past 600 men, ushered us to the two free armchairs at either side of the front row aisle. What a nice welcome to the Bn, I thought! "Sit-up!" came the booming scream from the back of the shed. Rigid arms stretched to either knee, head high and braced backwards, innocently listening through the cave-like silence to the two tap-dancing footsteps getting louder and louder until..... surprisingly, through grinning faces, the CO and RSM politely asked us to vacate their comfy chairs; I think they were sufficiently surprised and struggling to contain their laughter that being polite was all they could do - thankfully! On that long, long walk to the back of the shed, I noticed that not a single soldier had a straight face looking at our berets. Tyson was standing smugly at the back now wearing his blue Queens beret, laughing at our faces - the same colour as the berets...'welcome to the Regiment!'

The briefing received by the Bn, on Spearhead duties and reduced to two hours Notice-to-Move (NTM), told of heightened tension across the Province, with increased terrorist activity over the last few months. We were going to East Tyrone to help support the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) to increase ground presence and bolster Army numbers. B Coy, based at Dungannon Police Station, was distinctly remembered for having the best choggy shop in the Province!

Our role was to support the RUC, conducting daily patrols over a large TAOR. Living in portakabins up next to the HLS, the minimum sleep we got was 'broken' by what seemed the continual chop and whir of rotor blades. However, this accommodation was luxurious compared to that of the rest of the multiple. They were in the police station gym, in triple bunk beds, stacked 1m apart, running in rows the length of the gym - even more broken sleep! However, in the usual 'I don't give a - well you know what - way,' they made it their home.

Lt Paul Tyson was 'Buzzard' on the radio, controlling all helicopter pick-ups; he tells me a certain Lt who will remain nameless, now a Lt Col still serving, asked for a heli pick up by giving an 8 (!) figure grid reference... in the middle of Loch Neagh! Three times he was asked

to clarify and three times he adamantly gave the same grid reference... I believe Paul, having lost his patience and sense of humour, exclaimed "that's in the middle of Loch &@&£@@& Neagh!" Apparently, it was Buzzard and all the pilots who were confused!

In the Lt's defence though, in one of the few helicopter drop-off confusions, I do remember our multiple being dropped off at our pick-up point.... 12 km away from our start-point, and I don't mind admitting I was lost then! My fantastic 2IC, Cpl Danny Mills, and I knocked on the front door of the most 'friendly' looking house (there were none in this village) to tell the occupants we were doing a house check and needed to confirm the residents' names and full addresses!! I think they eventually gave us the address just to send us away!!

The patrolling was daily and great fun, albeit wet! The only break we got from going out on patrol was when we were on Quick Reaction Force (QRF). This involved fattening ourselves on burgers and overdosing on caffeine from the choggy cabin whilst on 15 min NTM. Reacting to incidents, our multiple had a bit of a jinx; there was an incident on all three of the nights on which we were QRF!

We weren't sent out to the roadside bomb that detonated in Strabane, with thankfully no casualties, thought to be a 'come-on' and turning out to be a 'mistaken' detonation. We were sent out to clean up a Mk 16 mortar attack in Dungannon town: and a blue on blue where PIRA missed the RUC car and hit the car behind, apparently carrying a player's family member.

The most interesting operation we were sent out on was to the aftermath of an IRA attack on Coalisland police station. Lt Jim Smith, based at Coalisland, was thought for a moment to be the only friendly casualty that night. Gunmen in an armoured Hino lorry had fired at the police station with a 12.7 mm DShK anti-aircraft gun and a few AK47s. The initial view was that Jim and his multiple were unhurt. However, immediately after the attack, Jim could not be found and, on checking his room, the shocking sight of 'blood' sprayed up the wall thankfully turned out to be Jim's perfumed, bright red shampoo, where a round had penetrated the armoured window! Jim was apparently raiding the kitchen at the time!

The impact of a successful security forces operation was felt across the Province and certainly in East Tyrone. IRA activities were significantly reduced to the extent that we were no longer needed to bolster roulement forces and were returned home after three short but exciting months.



A WIFE'S STORY LATE '70s TO EARLY '90s

By Ginny Russell

Northern Ireland dominated our married life from the late '70s through to the early '90s and during this period, I lived there three times when my husband John was either on resident battalion tours or on the staff. We also experienced the very different character of short tours when he was there on his own. Well, not completely on his own! It all now seems another world and age away, one that I hope we never go through again, but that said, it was not without many happy memories.

My first experience of Northern Ireland was in '79 when John went to Portadown for six months as a watchkeeper with 3 Inf Bde. We had been married for only a year and he went there at a horrible time as Lord Mountbatten had just been assassinated and many Parachute Regiment soldiers killed at Warrenpoint. We were living at Shorncliffe, where John had been posted to the Infantry Junior Leaders Battalion, but fortunately the 3rd Battalion was just up the road at Dover and I soon made many friends as we were living on the married patch near St Martin's Plain camp. Our first quarter had orange carpets, stretchy nylon loose covers in disgusting swirls of colour which clashed with the carpets, and curtains all with different patterns, ill-fitting and none lined! I kept myself busy during John's time away by working as a paediatric nurse at Folkestone General Hospital and then training as a Health Visitor, a profession to which I subsequently belonged for nearly 30 years. I don't seem to remember being unduly concerned about him being in Northern Ireland as I knew he was working in a headquarters and the IRA had yet to start mortaring the bases. When he returned in '80, he rejoined the 3rd Battalion and we continued to live in Shorncliffe. Happy days. A number of officers from NITAT also lived on the patch and I thought they belonged to an organisation called 'Night Out' as they spent so many nights away from home. Well, it seemed logical to me! Our daughter was born in '81 just as we moved with 3 QUEENS to Fallingbostel.

The next experience of Northern Ireland was in '87. We had just got back from two years in Australia, John returned to the 3rd Battalion, by now in Howe Barracks,

and we lived in Chaucer Avenue. As the battalion had just deployed to Northern Ireland, John immediately went to join them, leaving me, and by now a son and daughter, in Canterbury. Neither I nor John will forget the start to his R&R as I had mixed up the timings and found him standing despondently at our locked front door where he had been waiting for an hour or so. Canterbury was a great place to be and most of the families had relatives within range, which meant there was not so much need for the wives' club, although we did run some trips and activities.

In the autumn of that year, the battalion started training for Northern Ireland all over again as it was to start a tour as the Aldergrove resident battalion in early '88. In October, while the battalion was starting its training at Lydd, the Great Storm blasted in. A night to remember and East Kent was hit particularly hard. I remember that night we went downstairs and took shelter in the centre of the house as we were worried that the roof was about to disappear or a chimney stack come crashing through the ceiling. Luckily neither happened, although our garage roof relocated to the garden and I remember the next morning, with the wind still ferocious, the issue cherry tree in front of the house writhing like a thing possessed.

Aldergrove as a location was not the best of postings. Our quarter felt as if it was made of cardboard - it probably was - and it had a coke-fired boiler, which you had to riddle and keep fuelled if you were not to freeze. The garden was boggy, with an evil red soil, which our dog, an Australian cattle dog called Noosa, endlessly brought into the house. The quarter was on a small patch called Ardmore Drive (otherwise known as 'More Ard' Drive), which was on the edge of the station, so it felt a bit exposed. Fortunately many of our friends were there as well and we all kept ourselves cheery and tried not to worry. Our children happily hopped on the school bus to Crumlin, where they learnt to speak in a broad Ulster accent. One of the advantages of sharing the camp with the RAF was that you could always tell when it was the week-end by the flow of bubbles down their drives.



Because of the rotation of the companies to Fermanagh or Tyrone, the husbands were never all at Aldergrove at the same time, so life was rather odd. Our third child was born in Lisburn the day after the

murder of the two Royal Signals corporals in West Belfast, a very unpleasant period. At the time John was deployed with his company in Dungannon and my mother had come to stay. When the time came for me to go to hospital, she drove me to Lisburn in the pouring rain, late at night, not knowing the car had a slow puncture. She left me at the hospital and headed back to Aldergrove in a car behaving more and more erratically. Not a nice drive for her over some pretty desolate countryside. John arrived at the hospital later that night and attended Tom's birth with a pistol - hopefully discreetly - stuck in his trouser waistband.

Although Aldergrove was far from attractive, we had good times away from there on the Antrim coast and we took the battalion's wives on shopping trips to Belfast and to other local delights. They were very stoical and made the best of the circumstances. The most memorable wives' club event I organised was an evening starring South Wales's answer to the Chippendales. It did not exactly have a slow start when the spindly, spotty manager came on stage to give a warm-up to the main event and had to flee clutching his Y-fronts having had the rest of his clothes removed by the wives, who were already in overdrive. Mercifully this was years before smart phone cameras and we got through the evening without some horrendous scandal, although I could have done without the request from one wife who wanted the wives' club to pay for the drycleaning to remove baby oil from her clothes!

In '89, John was posted from the battalion to HQ UDR for 2 years, where we lived 'behind the wire' in Lisburn. Life

was very different from Aldergrove as I was able to work as a health visitor in the local community. I suspect my cover story that my husband was in advertising probably had a credibility shelf-life of seconds. However, my work colleagues were always very tactful and never pressed me on this and it later transpired that many of them also had very close connections with the security forces. It was while working at the health centre in Lisburn that I had my closest encounter with the Troubles. I was weighing a baby when there was an almighty bang close by as a car bomb went off in the town centre, where the health centre was. The baby flew up in the air, I caught it and we all fell to the floor. Mercifully nobody was hurt. I remember looking out of the window and seeing a pair of trousers from McCalls, the local gents outfitters, gently floating to earth having been blown high into the sky and inflating on the way down. Surreal.

Lisburn had a very strange vet. His surgery was absolutely filthy, he had a long grey beard and he once gulped down a fistful of pills he had just prescribed for our dog declaring that they were also excellent for his own heart. Despite the vet and the bombs, Lisburn was a great posting, and when we left in '91, we did so with more than a tinge of sadness and headed to Minden to join the 1st Battalion.

We returned to the Province in 1993 for another two years when John commanded 1 PWRR in Omagh, but that's another cap-badge...

My memories of Northern Ireland are of the friendliest of people, beautiful scenery, and good times with the battalion. But, that said, there was always an undercurrent of unpleasantness and however good it was in Ulster, it was always better when one set foot back on the mainland. Perhaps we were not aware of the constant if low-level of stress of living there and this only became apparent when we got home.





2007 THE BRITISH ARMY'S FINAL **OP BANNER TOUR**

CLOSING THE MILL

By J W Phipps PWRR

In late 2005, 2 PWRR moved to Ballykelly to complete the final residential tour of Op BANNER. As the operation gradually wound down and troop numbers were reduced, we would move out of our L/Derry area of operations and the tour would include deployments across the Province including South Armagh and Belfast.

Our standard rotation was through patrolling tasks, training and manning a multiple-sized outstation in L/ Derry, Victor 7, next to the Bishop's Gate and overlooking the City walls. In Mar 06, A and B Coys were deployed to South Armagh and took on responsibility for Bessbrook Mill and the remaining outstations of Newtownhamilton, Crossmaglen (XMG) and the 'Golf' and 'Romeo' Towers. Over the course of this deployment, we gradually watched the infrastructure which had been in place for many years get stripped away by the RE. Bessbrook was a hive of activity, constant aircraft and commotion, as Chinooks laden with containers of rubble and metal were regularly flying in. Patrolling was still a constant, covering much of South Armagh in support of the police with all movement by air.

In Feb '07, A Coy returned to South Armagh and 3 Pl A Coy took over XMG, by this stage a small patrol base with no HLS. We conducted extensive patrolling in support of the police, living not now in the mortar-hardened accommodation but in portacabins on the edge of the now closed HLS. With the HLS at XMG now closed, we were using several hasty HLS in the fields surrounding the town. Whilst normality was fast setting in even in South Armagh, there was still the need to support the police in their routine activities - even the most basic policing task involved a multiple of soldiers, helicopter insertion and extraction and a lengthy patrol. This time though, we conducted some of our patrols using vehicles rather than moving by air.

In Jun '07, 3 Pl returned to South Armagh for a third time, this time to Bessbrook Mill. As a platoon, we took responsibility for the mill and were to be the final troops out of it. The mill was by now a shadow of its former self with most of the rooms empty; we lived in what had been the headquarters on the ground floor my room had previously been the CO's office and one section lived in the Int Cell. We embarked on a process of checking the rooms to ensure that there was nothing left behind and that there was nothing dangerous that would be left for the contractors who would move in after us. This was a fascinating process as teams moved around the vast building, in areas which were closed off during our previous times there. On the weekend of 23 Jun, the final flight, a Lynx, left the HLS at the Mill which had once been the busiest heliport in Europe.

When it came time to leave on 25 June, we loaded everything that was left into our vehicles and cleared out of the buildings for the last time. There was a huge group of assembled press and politicians outside the gate. We assembled for photos in front of the buildings with a military photographer and provided quotes which would be in the press releases later that day. As we left the gate in our convoy of Snatch landrovers, the final sentry closed his position and mounted the vehicles. Pte Mason and I closed the gate behind us. We thought we were away, but we were asked by the press officer to drive out again and close the gates again because some of the press had not got the shot they were after; we left Bessbook Mill a total of four times that day!

As we finally drove away, it was clear that this was a significant moment. We were leaving Bessbrook Mill; not long before we had been in XMG, both iconic locations and now both closed. L/Derry soon followed and we closed Victor 7 after a final rotation with the bunker gone and the walls coming down. Lt Dave Thomas of 1 Pl, A Coy was the final platoon commander there.

On 31 Jul 07, we were in Ballykelly when Op BANNER formally ended after almost 38 years. The Regiment in one form or another had been there from Day One to Endex. Nothing was different on 1 Aug but it was a big moment for the British Army and an even bigger moment in the peace process.

The following Spring, the battalion moved to Cyprus and we set our sights on tours of Afghanistan; we were not disappointed. A Coy soon found itself on multiple tours engaged with a very different enemy in Helmand; these were a very different experience but our performance was enhanced with the lessons learnt in Northern Ireland.



NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM OP BANNER 50 COMMEMORATION 14 AUGUST 2019

By Alasdair Goulden



In the rain Remembering the Fallen

Twenty-four hardy souls braved the weather on the 50th Anniversary of the start of Op BANNER to attend the Royal British Legion's commemoration at the National Memorial Arboretum. We started the day at our own Memorial where we remembered our Fallen in a guiet and dignified ceremony.

We then sloshed our way back to the relative warmth of the café to refresh ourselves prior to venturing out to where the RBL were holding the commemoration in the lee of the Armed Forces Memorial. The rain brought back many memories of our time in Ulster. However being switched on, a few of us managed to bag seats under-cover which ensured that we were able to enjoy, if that's the right word, the commemoration.



Veterans at the National Memorial Arboretum during
Op BANNER commemorations

Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Defence



Jeremy Coke-Smyth at the Armed Forces Memorial on the occasion of 'OP BANNER 50' Photo courtesy of Getty Images

The commemoration started with the reading of the prologue 'OP BANNER 50' which is reproduced at the start of this journal. The day was compered by Alastair Stuart and consisted of a number of very moving and poignant memories from some who were there on the first day, kindly mentioning the 2nd Bn's involvement, families who lost loved-ones, the UDR, the RUC, Fire Service and Royal Marines among others.

This was probably the last occasion when OP BANNER will be commemorated in such a way and it was a real privilege to attend and combine our own commemoration to our Fallen with the chance to share memories with veterans, who like us, had 'done their bit'.

MARCHING SEASON WITH THE IRISH!

By Anthony Bolton

On a blustery, yet surprisingly warm and occasionally sunny, morning in early June about fifty members of the Queen's Regiment, bolstered by the very welcome addition of some of the Old & Bold of our former Regiments, mustered in Whitehall for a very special occasion. The Queen's Regimental Association had been very kindly invited to take part in the Annual Commemorative Parade and Remembrance Service of the Combined Irish Regiments' Association at the Cenotaph; first, in specific recognition of the fact that the Regiment provided some of the first troops on the ground in Ulster in '69, secondly the sheer number of OP BANNER tours in which the Regiment took part and lastly for the support that we, as a Regiment, gave to the Ulster Defence Regiment and R IRISH. Having years ago fought against PIRA whilst all the time being wary of OIRA, it felt slightly odd to be falling in with CIRA, but, 'Hey! Only the Irish', as they say.

The Combined Irish Regiments' Old Comrades Association, to give it its full name, traces its history back to 1922 and the establishment in London of the Regimental Association of the Royal Irish Regiment (18thof Foot). This fine body of men was disbanded as a result of Partition and the creation of the Republic of Ireland. The Association now preserves the history of some twenty-nine former Irish regiments, North and South, and welcomes members from them all, as well as from the two remaining ones, the Irish Guards and the Royal Irish Regiment.

The annual parade is held by Royal Decree; on 12 June 1922 King George V invited the five Infantry regiments from Southern Ireland to Windsor Castle to hand in



CIRA March Col John Powell in command followed by Capt Bolton



Battling two Bass Drums!

their Colours for safe keeping as well as a Regimental engraving from the South Irish Horse, as they possessed no Colours or Standards. At the ceremony, the King made the following solemn promise: "I pledge my word that within these ancient and historic walls, your Colours will be treasured, honoured and protected as hallowed memorials of the glorious deeds of brave and loyal Regiments." It should be borne in mind that this was a period of great turmoil in the British Isles – the War had just ended, the Depression was just around the corner and Ireland was undergoing Partition; this last meant the necessary removal from our ORBAT of the Regiments associated with the Free State, or Eire.

This was a hugely upsetting time for many as the English, and later the British, Army has always relied on vast numbers of Irishmen to swell its ranks – look no further than 1662 and the composition of our own forebears, the Tangier Regiment.



Wellington, the Iron Duke and born in Ireland himself, commanded an army comprising nearly one third Irishmen and during the Great War, about half a million Irishmen (a figure that represented then about one eighth of the total population of the island of Ireland!) volunteered to fight in the British Army. The last War saw over 200,000 Irishmen volunteering to fight German-inspired tyranny and indeed most of the Army's Field Marshals hailed from the Emerald Isle, including amongst others, Alanbrooke, Auchinleck, Alexander, Dill, Gort and Montgomery.

So much for the history lesson, so why were we there? Well, here comes another history lesson... As you will have read elsewhere in this publication, 14 Aug this year marked the 50th anniversary of the start of Operation BANNER and you will also read about the enormous and valuable contribution made by our Regiment during that 38-year-long campaign, predominantly in Northern Ireland – I say predominantly as I for one will now own up to having strayed occasionally across the border from time to time, either because of the poor map-reading skills of others, or because quite simply it was just bloody quicker to nip across 'that stream' or 'through that field' than go the long way round, especially in Fermanagh or South Armagh, but I digress...

Col John Powell, under the watchful eye of his 'Adjutant' for the day, led the marching party of nearly forty stout regimental stalwarts. The parade formed up in King Charles Street, just off Whitehall at the Downing Street end, and stepped off at 10 o'clock sharp, turning left into Whitehall, up around the Women's Memorial (that seems completely devoid of irons, make-up or shopping bags) back down for an 'eyes left' to the VIPs and an 'eyes right' to the Cenotaph before a short Remembrance Service led by Padre Keith Barry and wreath-laying. After the National Anthem, we once again did a lap of the Cenotaph, and marched back to where we started. The parade was led by the Pipes and Drums of the London Irish and a large party of historic standard bearers, read that whichever way you will.

This year's parade was also remarkable in that, for the first time, the Republic of Ireland sent a significant marching party of uniformed serving members of its Defence Force who in turn were joined by a good number of Irish Army veterans, many of whom were wearing UN berets. Following the parade, there was an inspection that was wholly Irish in character and a few short speeches, the best by a retiring Colonel who remarked that he was well aware that he was all that was standing between those of us on parade and a well-stocked bar! The Queen's Regimental Association marching party, it has to be said (given that it wasn't just made up of the 1st Battalion), was extremely smart both in turn-out and bearing – we were in step for most of the way round, most of the time, but, without being too uncharitable, the base drummer on occasions did seem to want to present us with a bit of a challenge. We then stepped off with renewed vigour and purpose in the direction of the Civil Service Club around the corner for a glass of something refreshing and a display of advanced lamp-swinging and sandbag relocation! All in all, a great day out – and once again, another occasion that made one feel prouder than ever of being a Queensman. Faugh A Ballaugh!

COUNTY ARMAGH MEMORIAL WALL

By Tony Baker

On Trinity Sunday 16 Jun, the Dedication took place of the County Armagh Memorial Wall at St Mark's Church, Parish of Armagh, Northern Ireland. The Memorial Wall has been built to remember those former members of the Armed Services, Royal Ulster Constabulary GC and the Northern Ireland Prison Service who were murdered in County Armagh or murdered elsewhere but were from the County. There are 345 names inscribed on the Memorial Wall, two of whom were from the 3rd Battalion.



Mick Collins, James McKeown, Joe Arnold (QRRA) and Tony Baker MBE

Pte R H BENNER 29.11.1971

Pte P L WOOLMORE 19.03.1979

Fundraising for the memorial wall commenced in Oct '15 and was led by the County Armagh Phoenix Group Ltd with a five year target. Due to benevolence and generosity, the memorial wall was designed and built ahead of schedule.

The service was conducted by the Rt Rev'd The Lord Eames OM and was attended by many VIPs and some 750 family and relatives of those whose lives were so violently taken.

Following the service, the Rt Hon The Earl of Caledon KCVO JP, Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for County Armagh, unveiled the Dedication Plague.

James McKeown, Joe Arnold, Mick Collins and Tony Baker MBE represented The Queen's Regiment Veterans (NI). A large floral bouquet containing orange lilies, remembering the 35th Regiment of Foot or Earl of Donegall's Regiment, raised in 1701, and was the original forebear regiment of the 3rd Battalion. This was kindly sourced by Mrs Marilyn McKeown in remembrance of our two Fallen represented on the wall. The only regiments to place wreaths were the Devon & Dorset



County Armagh Memorial Wall

Regiment and the Queen's Regiment. The wreath was laid and respects given in a most exemplary manner by Joe Arnold of the Queen's Regimental Riders' Association.

The afternoon, which was very well organised, had given our small group the opportunity to pay respects on behalf of the Regiment to two young Queensmen who had made the ultimate sacrifice many years ago.



Joe Arnold of the Queen's Regimental Riders Association lays the wreath

RECEIVING 'OI DE GLORY' ON THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF D DAY

By John Boston



We have no British Legion interface here in California and I have been privileged for several years to be a member of the American Veterans Association, a privilege and honour as I am able to learn so much more of America's battles in Korea and Vietnam and of course today's special day – the 75th Anniversary of 'D' Day.

I was honoured here to accept 'Olde Glory' for resting overnight in a place of rest before rising again at Sunrise on 6 June. A special coin from America's Civil War was bestowed upon me for being the only British veteran in the ranks.

Pictured left: John Boston receives Olde Glory on the 75th Anniversary of D Day

Congratulations!! to Colonel Patrick Crowley who has this year been appointed Deputy Lieutenant of the County of Surrey. He served with distinction in the 1st Battalion and thereafter with 1 PWRR before commanding 3 PWRR.

He is Deputy Colonel of the PWRR and Chairman of the Regiment's Heritage Committee, driving forward OP REVITALISE to improve our museum in Dover. Currently he is Chief Executive of the South East Reserve Forces and Cadets Association. Not bad for a 12-year-old Cadet and Old Welbexian but what do you expect from a Queensman?





DOVER MUSEUM

By Cory Clover, Assistant Curator

The PWRR and Queen's Regiment Museum has seen a great deal of change behind the scenes this year. I took up my post in April and have been continuing Catherine's work to update and improve the museum for visitors and researchers. I can happily report that Catherine's project to create a new research centre and community space (which was mentioned in the past two copies of the Journal) is now complete, and has proven a great asset to our visitor interaction in the museum.







Trench Art Main Case Whole Display

This August, the museum has marked the 50th Anniversary of OP BANNER with a brand-new display about the Queen's Regiment and PWRR's service in Northern Ireland. With the help of a grant from South East Museums, we have been able to redisplay two cases in the museum with new objects and stories of the Queen's Regiment's experiences.

The first case is designed to tell the stories of Queensmen who served in the Province. This case, which includes the roll of honour of both the Queen's Regiment and PWRR, explains why OP BANNER was necessary, and the situations which soldiers handled while on tour, from riots to mortar attacks. Objects on display include a bible found in a bombed-out house, which was collected by a soldier from 2 QUEENS during the very first tour of Belfast, and Sgt Tom Creighton's beret and cap badge, which saved him from a sniper bullet.

In the second case, we have been able to showcase a wide variety of the good humour and artistic talent shown off by the Queen's Regiment by creating pastiche works of a wide range of cartoons and captioned photographs. The artwork and written comedy pieces which were published in the Braganza and Invicta magazines gave us plenty of material to work from, and the case is complete with a photograph of Sgt Frank Sullivan marshalling a helicopter landing, which for many years was displayed in HQ Northern Ireland. Visitors have particularly enjoyed this case, and we have had lots of positive feedback about the photo!

This new display is the first part of our museum's revitalisation, and a new strategy which puts objects and their stories at the front and centre of our interpretation. In the next few years, we hope to continue our work to revitalise the museum, dedicating far more of our exhibition space to the work of the Queen's Regiment. We want to tell more of the stories of soldiers who served in the Regiment and the PWRR, as well as our forebear regiments, both as part of the new permanent exhibitions and in a new temporary display area. To do that, the museum will need your help.

Our OP BANNER display was only possible because of donations from retired members of the Regiment. Five of the objects in the display were donated to the museum earlier this year. However, we still need your help to tell your story. Whether you served in Northern Ireland, Cyprus, Belize or West Germany (to only name just a few!), we would be delighted to receive objects which tell the story of your service: whether you have photographs, medals, certificates, or other objects (though we do have enough uniform for now). We are interested in depicting all aspects of life in the army. The more objects we receive, the bigger our Queen's Regiment display can be!

If you have an object with a story behind it which you would like to donate to us, we would love to hear from you. Please contact the museum at 01304 240121, or email us at pwrrqueensmuseum@btconnect.com.

SURREY INFANTRY MUSEUM Report on the year to October 2019

By Stephen Johnson, Curator



The Museum has made good progress over the last twelve months regarding the processing of artefacts recovered from the fire. The vast majority of items have now been returned from our restoration company who now hold only a small number of medals and decorations, Colours that are too fragile to move and approximately thirty other pieces are currently undergoing repair work. These thirty represent a range of items including bladed weapons, silverware and accoutrements such as badges and helmet plates. These have been selected for restoration because of value, rarity or historical significance; most importantly, the cost of restoration is totally covered by insurance There are many other items where the cost to repair is in excess of their insurance value. A good example is the sword belonging to the

Khan's adjutant captured during the storming of Khelat in the

First Afghan War. The sword was insured for £250 but the restoration cost is £2400. These items will be kept in store until the Museum's financial position is resolved and the insurance claim settled.





Many of the other pieces returned from Farcroft are either duplicated or irretrievably damaged. Volunteers currently working through these items, scrapping those that are beyond repair whilst re-uniting fragments of incomplete objects (such as the mace head, and the Lewis gunner who formed part of the 'Farewell to the Horse' table-piece. There have been a number of developments regarding the project to move the Surrey Infantry Museum (SIM) into an expanded and





refurbished Guildford Museum (GM). The scope of the project has significantly increased with a more ambitious revised design to provide more exhibition space on multiple floor levels. Whilst this is a positive change, it has resulted in a longer time-scale which means that office space for SIM will not be available before spring 2020 and the whole project is now scheduled for opening to the public in 2023-24.





Centre's 'Surrey in the Great War' project in Dorking Halls; plus our regular appearance at Henley Fort on the Sunday of Heritage Weekend. The emphasis of the material on display has moved away from The Great War to include the centenary of the East Surrey's campaign in Northern Russia

Meanwhile, SIM continues to use two cabinets for exhibitions in the 'Industrial Room' on the first floor of GM, although essential maintenance work starting in June 2019 has resulted in the closure of the building for at least three months.

2018, being the centenary of the end of The Great War, meant that SIM was involved in an unusually large number of events and commemorations during the year. 2019 has been much quieter, but SIM has still been 'on the road' a few times this year, including a Family History Day in Woking; Brookwood Cemetery Open Day; the very wellattended finale of the Surrey History



and the 75th Anniversary of both Regiments' actions in the first six months of 1944.

The Friends (FOSIM) continue to support and promote the Museum with its series of quarterly Lecture Lunches and, in June, a behind-the-scenes tour of RMA Sandhurst. Plans are well advanced for next year's FOSIM Tour in May 2020 to the battlefields in Belgium and Northern France fought over by both Regiments as part of the BEF in 1940.









As in previous years, the Museum continues to benefit from the donation of 'new' material including a number of medal groups. Other items included a Great War trench mirror pierced by shrapnel, an East Surrey trophy drum found on a cattle station in Australia and a large plaster Paschal Lamb of unknown and anonymous provenance.

Vel Exuviae Triumphans



Cpl Paul 'Shirley' Shilling and Ms Kim Staveley's wedding, 12 September

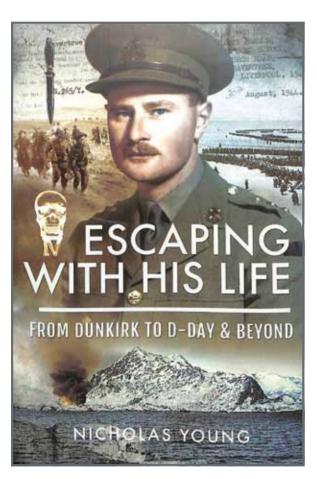
2019 WEDDINGS OF THE YEAR



Soldiers of The Queen's 2019 | 119

BOOK REVIEWS ESCAPING WITH HIS LIFE

By Nick Young



Very few British soldiers could lay claim to such a full war as Major Leslie Young.

Young served in the Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment from June to December 1944, where he commanded A Company, 1/6th Battalion, during the fighting in Normandy (where he was wounded, but continued at his post), Belgium and Holland through to the German border. He was repatriated at that point, when his battalion was amalgamated with 1/5th Battalion due to the heavy losses they had sustained.

Before that, his military career took him to northern France as part of the BEF, and the retreat to Dunkirk, with the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment. He then volunteered for the newlyformed Commandos and took part in their first major operation, the raid on the Lofoten Islands. Returning to the Bedfords, where he thought he would see more immediate action, he fought and was captured in Tunisia. Imprisoned in Italy, he escaped from his POW camp at Fontanellato before it was taken over by the Nazis after the September 1943 Italian armistice. He then spent six months on the run in the Apennine Mountains, aided by many brave Italians who were risking their lives in helping him. He eventually reached Allied lines at Anzio, but not before one of his helpers was tragically killed by a German patrol in noman's-land, and another was shot by an American sentry.

On returning to England he immediately volunteered for the invasion of North-West Europe, and was posted back to the Queen's Royal Regiment.

He was twice Mentioned-in-Despatches.

Like many soldiers of his generation, Young said little or nothing about his wartime adventures but, after his death in '86, his son Nick found a scribbled diary that his father had kept in Italy - and that led him on a lengthy search to uncover Major Young's distinguished wartime career. The story is told in Nick's excellent book Escaping with his Life, recently published by Pen & Sword (RRP £25), and available on Amazon (ISBN 978 1 52674 663 4)

BOOK REVIEWS

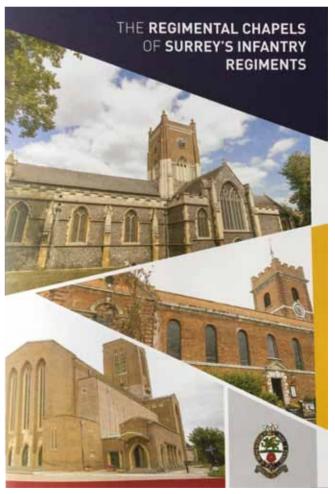
NEW REGIMENTAL BOOKLETS

These two excellent booklets, compiled and written by Colonel Patrick Crowley using the original research by Colonel Toby Sewell and Lieutenant Colonel Les Wilson MBE, both stalwarts of regimental heritage, are available from RHQ PWRR. They would be a valuable reference for anyone interested in the history of our forebears.

MORE THAN TWICE A HERO

THE STORY OF SGT BERNARD MCCABE, THE SOBRAON SERGEANT





THE REGIMENTAL CHAPELS OF SURREY'S INFANTRY

BENEVOLENCE

By Diane White, Welfare RHQ PWRR

The Queen's Regiment Association is here to help you and your families relieve hardship and distress and provide support when the unfortunate or unexpected happens. It helps us to help you.

Last year we helped 66 individuals with grants totalling just over £26,000, as part of nearly £100K of benevolence covering a wide array of assistance. Some individuals had basic needs such as food and clothing whilst others required assistance towards priority debts. Personal help was also provided in terms of contributions towards occupational therapy reports, mobility aids, specialised furniture, community alarms and funeral costs. Funding was also provided for training courses, initial rental payments and household items.

This is by no means a comprehensive list but what is clear is that support is out there and if you are in need, we will try to help.

CASE STUDIES

Background: This veteran is in a lot of pain and has tendencies to black out and subsequently fall. He has a community alarm system because of this and is seeking assistance towards the annual fee.

Grant: £228.80

Background: This lady is living in a Royal British Legion property and is in frail health both physically and mentally. Her husband has unfortunately passed away and she is requesting assistance towards the cost of his funeral.

Grant: £500 - Almonised: £900 from the ABF

Background: This gentleman was homeless, down on his luck and struggling with drug and alcohol issues. Working closely with the NHS and a rehab centre, he managed to get a spot on a rehab programme. Assistance was being sought for accommodation to get him off the streets during rehab, as well as travel to and from rehab.

Grant: £110 - Almonised: £210.96 from the ABF

Background: This veteran is finding it increasingly hard to move around due to numerous medical conditions. He has a manual wheelchair but finds it difficult to use and his wife also struggles to push him around. They are seeking assistance for an electric-powered vehicle.

Grant: £200 - Almonised: £1,000 from the ABF

Background: After being down on his luck, this veteran was able to find a place in a hostel and is requesting assistance towards his meals, the service charge and a mini fridge for his room. This is because he is expected to fund his own lunch and dinner while he gets himself back on his feet.

Grant: £420.50

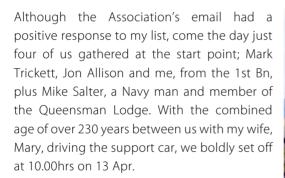
Background: This gentleman is returning to work after a long spell away. He is on probation for 6 months in a new job, but is looking likely to be accepted in his new role. In order to retain the post. However, a specific qualification is required.

Grant: £500 - Almonised: £1,000 from the ABF

This is by no means an exhaustive list of the financial assistance that the Queen's Regiment Association benevolence has provided over the last 12 months, but it gives an idea of the support that is available. Do not be afraid to ask for help and reach out to SSAFA, The Royal British Legion or the Association. If all else fails, get in touch with RHQ PWRR. There is a system to follow but this ultimately opens up a huge network of support whether for financial reasons or other. The Benevolent Fund is here to help you.

It was late Oct 18 and I had just completed a challenge to walk 100 miles during that month. I then wondered what next and that's when it came to me, - why not walk the Tan Hill march route? I had done the hundred-mile challenge for charity, so why not do this as well, but this time for the Regimental Benevolent Fund?

First, I put out a call to a couple of groups on Facebook to see if anyone would like to join me, but it was later when the Association came onboard that the numbers rose. I did as much ground work as I could from where I live in Kent, but one thing that worried me was the finishing point. Where I recall the walk originally ending had nothing there! As I intended it to be a casual walk through the Dales, making it more of a social thing, I decided that the route would be from Arkengarthdale to Tan Hill Inn and back. It worked out that the distance was about 7.5 miles each way and I knew we could do each leg in just over two hours at a normal pace.



I had originally walked the route in '77, during the Warcop training camp - the final part of the final exercise before passing out and joining our respective battalions. In '93, while on holiday in Keswick, I drove the route which meant that my fellow walkers regarded me as an expert. It turned out none of them had done it before. Consequently, I got the usual, "Are we nearly there yet?" jibes. I retaliated with something my platoon sergeant said to me, saying, "See that hill over there on the horizon?" When they acknowledged, I would reply, "Well, that's not it!"

I did admit to them that I had driven the route the day before, but what they didn't know was that I had kept landmarks in mind, so I knew when we were close. The banter between us along the route was as you would expect - up to the usual standards, especially Mike Salter's jokes. They were just bad!



Nearly there



First sight of the Tan Hill Inn - England's highest pub



Showing the flag at the Tan Hill Inn. L to R Jon Allison, Mark Trickett, Paul LeMasonry and Mike Salter

The final hill was longer than I remember and it was a hard climb. However, as we rose over the apex and the Tan Hill Inn came into view, there was such a sigh of relief, knowing we were going to be taking a break, getting something to eat and drink and just relax for a while. Mary had taken our orders on the road and gone ahead in order to have our drinks on the table waiting for us.

After an hour at the Tan Hill Inn, we set off back the way we came. Looking back along the road, we felt we were covering the distance at a quicker pace when we saw how far we had travelled. However, as we progressed, we had forgotten that some of the gradients we had walked down, we now had to climb. One we had encountered on the outward journey was a small dale with a stream at the bottom. It had a 12% gradient one side and 20% on the other. On the outward journey, climbing the 20% gradient didn't seem that bad, going back we were now fighting it the other way round; this really pulled on those already tired leg muscles.

The last mile or so were the hardest for me with aching legs and sore feet, but as we returned to the start point nearly six hours after we left, the sense of achievement was incredible. Rejoicing, we all piled in the CB Inn for a drink, where I concluded this must have been the longest pub crawl going, but earning the Benevolent Fund £614.50 in the process.

The next attempt will take place on 24 Apr 20. If you're up for it contact Paul LeMasonry at tanhill20@aureum.co.uk

ORRA ONE AIM RALLY 6th SHOT

By T-Bar



QRRA 6th One Aim Rally 6th Shot Team

On a warm day in July, the QRRA once more held its 3-day rally to raise money for the Benevolent Fund. We had 17 great bands over the weekend including the 12-piece Little Boy Blues Brothers. The days and evenings ran smoothly with the local bike clubs and Queensmen/PWRR in attendance making this, once again, an amazing event. We had the usual food stalls on offer with a good selection of beer and soft drinks from the NAAFI tent. This event gets bigger every year and we would encourage all Queensmen and PWRR to come and support us as all money raised goes to our Benevolent Fund.

We presented a cheque for over £12,000 to the Association Secretary at Dover Castle on 19 October. All the members of the QRRA give their time to put on this event with some amazing hard work and dedication and special mention should go out to the officers of the club for all the work behind the scenes that is required to put on the Rally. Special thanks to all the bands that played who also give their time for nothing to support all Veterans and those still serving. Friday night closed with the great AC/Dizzy with much merriment continuing until the early hours and the Saturday was closed by the fantastic Ignition. Once again the Association Corps of Drums entertained on both nights to the great enjoyment of all especially the Jack Civvy B*****s.





Chichester Branch

By Eddie Drew

It was another busy year for our Branch with the members attending various events organised by the Branch, and as usual Pete and Macrina Alner helped organise the various raffles throughout the year. Some of the many events attended by members included the traditional St George`s Day service.



Dave's Mystery Coach Trip - waiting for the coach to arrive

Our main social event, the Albuhera Dinner in May, was held for the 12th year running at the Beachcroft Hotel in Feltham. This was well attended and a good evening was had by all.

The mystery coach trip organised by the Chairman, Dave Tilley, took us to the QRMG for a visit. However, in all his excitement to get back on track, he didn't do a headcount when we left the garden and we ended up with one more passenger than when we started!

We were joined by members of the Royal Sussex Regimental Association at our Veterans Lunch in August at the City Club. We were honoured to have Colonel Rod Arnold as our guest; sadly he has since passed away after a short illness. We will miss him.

In September, we had a day at Goodwood Races and attended the Annual R SUSSEX Regimental Association dinner at Lewes where we caught up with a few old comrades.

In November, we have our Remembrance Day Parade and this year Richard Jenner will be representing the Branch at the Cenotaph. Richard hopes to raise money for the Benevolent Fund by abseiling down the Spinnaker Tower in Portsmouth.

We end this year with our Christmas Dinner on 9 Dec at the City Club.

East Kent Branch

By John Redfern

In January, many members of the Branch attended the historic PWRR Memorial Wall blessing and dedication at Leros ARC with the Colonel of the Regiment, Lt Gen Doug Chalmers, in attendance. In spite of the cold conditions, it proved to be a truly memorable occasion.



Ted Jones MM and Shane Williams at Buffs Sunday

David Robinson and Shane Williams represented the Branch at the QRA AGM and the QOBs Memorial unveiling at the National Arboretum. Some members attended the QRRA event at Wingham.

In May, we welcomed the appointment of our PWRR Association County Colonel Chris Luckham OBE and we look forward to working with him in the future.

The PWRR Colonel of the Regiment awarded his commendation in recognition of the much hard work and

dedication in both the Branch and the Association to Majs John Redfern and John Bennett. John Bennett handles our welfare cases and is one of the Association's mental heath advisors.

During Buffs Sunday at Canterbury, the Branch Chairman and County Colonel presented Rick Bamford with a framed Latham bronze silhouette in recognition of the many occasions he carried our Branch Standard.

Geoff Anderson and Colin Wilson, after many years' service on the Committee, have decided to retire.

We as a Branch thank them for their contribution over the years.

The Branch now has 174 members (not all local to Kent!) and is keen to hear from ex-Queensmen, PWRR and members of our forebear Regiments, who might like to join.

Please contact John Bennett our Membership Secretary at Johnbennett@pwrr.co.uk

Middlesex Branch

By Les Vial

The Middlesex Branch report begins with an item that was too late to be included in last year's journal.

To commemorate the centenary of the ending of the First World War, the branch presented a magnificent memorial to B Coy, 4 PWRR. The memorial consists of a replica SMLE rifle marking the position of a fallen soldier and is dedicated to the 12,694 Diehards who were lost in the Great War. Our Chairman, Trevor Canton was instrumental in creating the memorial.

As is customary, our social calendar began in January with our New Year's Luncheon attended by over 40 members and guests. Maj Peter Clarke, a former regular officer in 1 MX and Adjutant of 5 MX presented a cannonball recovered from the battlefield of Albuhera. This now stands in pride of place in the Officers Mess at the Army Reserve Centre at Edgware alongside the fragment of the Colour carried by the 57th Regiment of Foot.

At our AGM in March, I took over the role of Branch Secretary to relieve our Branch Treasurer John Sajdler who had been wearing two hats for several years.

In May, we joined the resident unit – B Coy, 4 PWRR for the ceremony of the Silent Toast and held our own Albuhera Dinner in the Officers Mess at Edgware.



Trevor Canton with the Branch Standard on Armed Forces Day parade at RAF Museum Hendon



The Company Museum at Edgware

In June, 16 members of the branch travelled to Normandy to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of D-Day. This five-day tour with the battlefield tour specialists, Leger Travel, included visits to all the major places of interest including the five landing beaches, Pegasus Bridge and Ste Mère Eglise. We were fortunate in being able to visit the new Normandy Memorial that was unveiled at the Chelsea Flower Show. The memorial shows a D-Day veteran thinking back to 6 June and visualising his comrades storming ashore.

The Branch was also present at the Armed Forces Day parade, which this year was held at the Royal Air Force Museum at Hendon.



A new Branch initiative was the creation of a 'Breakfast Club'. We meet at 09.30 on the first Friday of the month at the Toby Carvery in Borehamwood, Herts. Over a large full English and several cups of tea, we put the world to rights. If any other like-minded Queensmen who live in the Borehamwood area would like to join us, you will be made very welcome.

As these notes are written, the branch is preparing for a reunion luncheon at Edgware in September with our sister branches at Horsham and West Surrey and the QRA Corps of Drums.



The Albuhera Cannonball presented by Maj Peter Clarke

The small band of former company members who 'parade' on a Wednesday drill night with B Coy have rebranded themselves and we are no longer the 'Museum and Projects Team' but are now the 'Veterans Platoon' with the official blessing of B Coy, 4 PWRR.

This team maintain the excellent company museum at Edgware as well as managing both the Officers' Mess and the Albuhera Bar on behalf of the resident Company.



The WW1 Centenary Memorial

Sadly, we have lost two former comrades – CSgt Richard 'Tubby' Isaacs and Pte Pat 'Para' Conway both of whom served in 6/7 Queen's (V).

To close this account of the branch activities, we would like to say how fortunate we are in having such close ties with B Coy, 4 PWRR and being able to use the accommodation and facilities at ARC Edgware. The branch has

supported B Coy's own social events including their Christmas dinner and summer barbecue. At the All Ranks Dinner in July, the Branch presented a magnificent Tiger statuette to OC B Company, Maj Heath Craster, as a token of our thanks for his continued support.

Queen's and PWRR Golf Society

By Bob Jeffery

This year the Queens Division Triangular Trophy was played for at Shirley Golf Course in Solihull in Birmingham. The match is a triangular competition played annually between the Queens Regiment, the Royal Anglian Regiment and the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers. This year's hosts were the RRF. We provided a team of 10 players and the scoring was 3, 2, 1 in the order of finishing in each match. Having won this trophy in 2017 for the first time in 17 years, it was abandoned in 2018 due to adverse weather so we retained it another year. We returned victorious again having won with 21.5 points scored, R ANGLIAN 17.5 and RRF 15. Just one of a number of great days out.



Team Photo L to R

P Whistler, B Hamnett, P McLachlan, T Reddick, M Beale, S Richards (Capt), B Jeffery, D Sharland, M Angellilo, J Davison.

Since our last journal report, the Lodge has continued to grow. We now have a good number of 1st Battalion lads coming on board as initiates, with a few more in the pipe line.

So as not to keep those waiting that wanted to join us, with the assistance of Pyefleet Lodge, we held what is described as an Emergency Meeting in Colchester where a few of us live and also belong to local lodges in the town. A good meeting was had by all.

Our new Worshipful Master for the year is James Burgoyne who, while never having served, has very strong family ties with the 2nd Battalion and its forebear regiments. (Look up his name and see if you can work out the connection).



The Worshipful Master James Burgoyne

Steve Simmons, our very first Master, has now taken on the role of Director of Ceremonies, which is a bit like being the RSM, and I have moved into the Secretary's slot for my sins, which is a bit like being the Company Clerk!

We have a good few 3rd Battalion in office as well, and by the next report Ged Deutrom will most likely be installed as Worshipful Master with both Stuart (Monty) Clarke and Terry Crosby in the wardens office, with Rich Mooney and Leigh Thomas as Deacons.

Our contributions to many charities, including the Queen's Regiment Benevolent Fund, still continue and our brethren are always generous.

Next year, we are planning to visit our Masonic brothers on the Isle of Man. It's still in the planning stage and dates have yet to be finalised, but we hope to take a good few from not only our Lodge, but from the Queen's Regiment as well.

The Lodge currently has a membership of 98. As with any organisation, some brethren have departed due to work or family commitments, but even on leaving, once a Mason always a Mason.



Seven Initiates L-R in white aprons Bros Reece, Mick, Stewart, Jon, Lyle, Dennis and Louie

Queen's The QRRA have a pleasure to v

Queen's Regimental Riders Association

The QRRA have had another excellent year in 2019. We have had many new members and it's a pleasure to welcome on board the PWRR guys who have joined us too. In June, we visited the RBL Dementia unit in Broadstairs where we spent time with the residents some of which are from our forbear regiments. They enjoyed seeing the bikes and telling their stories and

for us it was a great day and we look forward to another visit soon. On a sad note, our oldest member Owen 'Grandad' Harden died on 14 Oct and full representation from the club provided a guard of honour at his funeral. Sadly, Neville Stringer also passed away and the QRRA held a fund raiser for his family.

We carried out a ride to Normandy to pay our respects to those that fell on D-Day and had a great day with solemn moments, remembering that horrific but necessary operation and we salute the men who made the ultimate sacrifice.

On a lighter note, we held our annual Easter egg hunt when all the eggs were donated by our members for the benefit of anyone who wished to attend, including the local village children. There were free ice creams and a bouncy castle as well



The QRRA with the Easter Bunny

as fun and games for the kids from our own Stephen Kemp (Cut Throat) and Ian Millard (Milly) dressed as a large Easter Bunny.

Sadly, we held our 'leaving Wingham party' as we will be relocating in the near future. The owner of the present land has sold up and we need to move on, but every cloud as a silver lining and we hope to be up and running with a new clubhouse in the near future. But we are still in operation and encourage any new members to visit http://www.grra.co.uk and join us.

The Wessex Branch

By Billy Bolton

The Wessex Branch has enjoyed another steady year since our last report. There have been several get-togethers in Salisbury, with a belated Christmas 'do' in a fine establishment vaguely appropriately named, 'Bill's'. Sadly, it closed down soon after our visit but we are not accepting any blame for that! It is due to reopen as 'The Dancing Moose', so we've crossed that off our list of future venues for fear of unsettling some of our stouter adherents. Other low-key 'socials' have

been held in and around Salisbury, and we've welcomed a few more regulars to the fold; the lure of beer seems to do the trick.

Members of the Branch have continued to cross the Channel to visit our Fallen on the Western Front. Trips to the Somme and to Ypres have again taken place. We now have Salerno in our sights and hope to storm the bars, sorry, beaches of western Italy in September next year.

The Branch was well represented at the 1st Battalion's annual reunion in Herne Bay once again. The 8th Battalion's Albuhera Day gathering including the Silent Toast and lunch at Warminster, however, was unusually sparsely populated by



Col Clive Newall reads out the Order of the Day

Queensmen; thankfully Col Clive Newall was on hand to read the Special Order of the Day. We were blessed with fine weather and held the ceremony outside in the fresh air - a pleasant change and a return to the ways of old; I recall being dragged in off the 'area' whilst on PCD in '85, still covered in cam-cream, to join in the Silent Toast. 3 PWRR very kindly lent us their Latham Centrepiece and Loving Cup, which added to the sense of history.

The Regimental AGM in London was attended by several members; this is a good meeting, helps knit the wider Regimental family together and needs to be better supported by all. The venue is easily accessible, lunch is cheap and the beer and war-stories flow freely. The Branch Secretary and others made a further trip to the capital in June to participate in the Combined Irish Regiments Association annual parade. This took place in Whitehall at the Cenotaph and is reported on in more detail elsewhere in this publication.

West Surrey Branch

By Dick Swales

In September last year, members attended the New War Memorial Ceremony in the grounds of Guildford Castle. The memorial is dedicated to those from the local community who died whilst serving since 1945. An entertaining ten minutes was spent with the Lord Lieutenant Michael More-Molyneux and his wife whom we met on the way back to the car park! In December we held a very well-supported branch Christmas party at the Holiday Inn Farnborough.

In March this year, following an invitation by Farnham Town Council with whom we have forged a good relationship, members attended the Commonwealth Flag raising ceremony.

June saw the Branch being represented, again at the invitation of the Town Council, at the Armed Forces Day flag raising ceremony. This was followed by a short service at the town War Memorial. I have to say that when the vicar fired up his mobile to find the prayer he wanted, I was slightly gobsmacked! The Branch was also represented by members attending the Armed Forces ceremony at Guildford. The second event in June was a Branch visit to Bletchley Park. This was a very rewarding day. We all had some idea of the history either from the film, television or books but visiting it brought it alive. A visit there is highly recommended.

In August, we held a very successful Branch BBQ at Frimley Lodge Park consisting of 3 x gazebos, 7 x dogs and 34 humans of varying ages; successful means it didn't rain and nobody had food poisoning!

Finally, the amalgamation of 5 QUEENS OMA and the West Surrey Branch has, thanks to the admin teams on both sides, been a remarkable exercise in cooperation.



West Surrey Branch outing



IN MEMORY OF MAJOR ROGER JENNINGS, LATE QUEEN'S REGIMENT 21ST DECEMBER 1932 - 22ND JANUARY 2019

By John Davidson



Roger's military career began as a National Serviceman with the 1st Battalion the Queen's Royal Regiment. He then signed on as a regular in 1953. I first met him at the beginning of 1954 when we both sailed to Malaya for a threeyear tour on jungle operations, fighting the communist

terrorists (CTs). I was a very green 20-year-old 2Lt and he, also 20, the youngest sergeant in the Regiment. He was an outstanding sergeant; in those days, it was extremely rare to have a sergeant under the age of 30. Furthermore, as the battalion was short of officers, he was given command of a rifle platoon.

Operating and fighting in the jungle was tough and dangerous and he and his platoon achieved some outstanding successes. Indeed, he was one of very few officers and men who were honoured with the award of a Mention-in-Despatches during the tour.

In late 1955, he was posted to the Depot in Guildford as a training sergeant before returning in 1957 to the 1st Battalion in Iserlohn as Anti-tank Platoon Sergeant. On the Battalion's amalgamation with the East Surrey Regiment to become 1 Queen's Surreys, he moved with the Battalion to Bury St Edmunds, and thence to Aden and Hong Kong where he was promoted to WO2 as CSM of Training Company, missing the rank of CSgt. From Hong Kong, he was posted to Mons Officer Cadet School as a CSM, the first non-guardsman to fill the post. By then the Regiment had again been amalgamated with the regiments of Kent, Sussex and Middlesex to become the Queen's Regiment. After Mons, he returned to 1 QUEENS

in Munster as a CSM. After two years, he was promoted to RQMS and posted to 3 QUEENS in Lemgo. He then became the Battalion RSM.

On being commissioned, he was posted to 2 QUEENS in Werl as MTO in '71 and later returned to 3 QUEENS, initially as Tech QM and then as the QM. With 3 QUEENS, he went to Catterick, Belize, did a tour in Northern Ireland and returned to Catterick from where the Battalion operated as fire fighters using Green Goddesses during the firemen's strike in '77, before moving to Dover. In this bizarre role, a major problem was the severe lack of showering and laundry facilities so necessary for the filthy work being undertaken by the men performing as firemen. His then Commanding Officer has told me that Roger did an amazing job ameliorating this problem.

He ended his outstanding career with the rank of Major Quartermaster, retiring from the Army in Apr 80. He then took up a Retired Officer appointment with the Sultan of Oman's Land Forces for some three years. It was at that time that he bought his first home in Richmond, North Yorkshire, and after that, his final home in York.

From a young age, Roger had a fascination with railways and indeed had planned to become a railwayman. But National Service gave him other ideas and so the Regiment got the benefit of his change of plan. In retirement, he devoted much of his time working voluntarily for the National Railway Museum in York and also for SSAFA, as well as developing his own railway collection.

Roger married Kay Miller on 21 Oct 61. She died four months before him on 24 Sep 18. They had two daughters, Shirin and Karen, and four grandchildren, who survive him.



The following is a list of our comrades who sadly have passed away since the last Journal. Members are requested to keep the Secretary informed of those who have died so that the list can be updated and other members informed. Please email queensregimentassociation@gmail.com or write to The Secretary, 5 Alfred Square, Deal, Kent, CT14 6LU, ideally giving the date of death, rank, when they left the Army, battalions in which they served and any details of the funeral.

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DATE	NAME	BATTALION
2019		
9 Nov	Maj Alan Stocks TD	5th, 7th, 6/7th and R SUSSEX
26 Oct	Pte Simon 'Acky' Atkinson	1st
14 Oct	Cpl Owen 'Grandad' Harden	QOB and QRRA
11 Oct	LCpl Colin Crawford	1st and MX
8 Oct	WO2 Raymond Jenkinson	3rd and QOB
29 Sep	LCpl Eric Ernest Whicher	2nd
6 Sep	Pte Steve 'Bill' Bailey	3rd
6 Sep	Sgt Rick Staves	5th and PARA
17 Aug	Col Rod Arnold	Ist, 3rd, UDR and 4 Queen's Surreys (TA) attached 1 R Sussex
26 Jul	Maj Graham Garnsey	5th and QOB
22 Jul	Lt Col John White	2nd and QOB
17 Jul	WO2 Brian Brazier	1st and QRS
2 Jul	Cpl Arthur Goodridge	2nd, QOB and RWK
28 Jun	Sgt Bob Weare	2nd
6 Jun	Pte Kevin Lishman	6/7th
5 Jun	Mark Williams	3rd
Jun	Cpl Ron Millerick	5th and RSX
24 May	Dmr Stephen Murphy	2nd
18 May	Cpl Robert 'Ginge' Enoch	1st
5 May	Capt Ken Beale MBE	4th and MX
24 Apr	LCpl Neville Stringer	1st and PWRR
Apr	Lt Col Geoffrey Mason OBE	1st, Albuhera Coy 4th and QRS
14 Mar	Cpl Bob Jones	3rd
11 Mar	Pte Malcolm Turner	5th
11 Mar	Drum Major Peter Solley	5th
2 Mar	Sgt Barry Stevens	2nd and QOB
16 Feb	Julian Martin	5th
13 Feb	Lt Col Robin Chappell OBE	4th, 11 UDR and R SUSSEX
1 Feb	Pte Mo George	6/7th
25 Jan	Pte Ron Mills	4th and MX
21 Jan	Maj (QM) Roger Jennings	1st, 2nd and 3rd and QRS
14 Jan	Sgt Eddie Kavanagh	5th and 7th and 5th MX
2018		
21 Dec	LCpl David Mountford	1st
18 Dec	WO2 John 'Chuck' Cullinane	2nd
13 Dec	CSgt Richard Isaacs	6/7th, 8QF
10 Dec	LCpl Paul Humphries	2nd
3 Dec	Pte Steve 'Flipflop' Furlotte	1st
23 Nov	Sgt Bob Penfold	1st
18 Nov	WO2 Harry Cook	5th, 2RTR, 5PWRR and 3PWRR
31 Oct	Cpl Donald 'Rags' Ryder	3rd
21 Oct	CSgt Johnny Knowles	2nd
26 Sep	Joseph McAughlan	3rd
09 Sep	Pte Dave Simpson	2nd
1	•	



ASSOCIATION BRANCHES

ASSOCIATION CONTACTS

President - Colonel AAA Beattie, Barn Cottage, Fisherton de la Mere, Warminster, Wilts BA12 0PZ

Secretary - Major Alasdair Goulden, 5 Alfred Square, Deal, Kent CT14 6LU

Email: queensregimentassociation@gmail.com

Mobile: 0771 484 4069

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. The annual reunion will be held on the weekend of the Spring Bank Holiday. All are welcome to attend. Details are posted on the 1 QUEENS Branch website. For more details of the branch please contact:

Steve Parsons: Mobile: 07392 572 312 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:

Chairman - Dave Tilley, 3 Mumford Place, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 2BG - Email: davetilley@hotmail.co.uk

Secretary - Eddie Drew: Tel: 01243 866887 - Email: edwindrew@btinternet.com

or use the 'Email us' facility on the website: http://www.freewebs.com/qrachichester/

EAST KENT BRANCH

This branch has agreed to be a part of both Regimental Associations and welcomes everyone who served in the Queen's, PWRR and forebear regiments. They meet informally in Canterbury on a regular basis.

For more details please contact:

Chairman - John Redfern TD: Tel: 07989 582211 - Email: JohnRedfern@castleinterim.co.uk

Membership: John Bennett VR Email: JohnBennett@pwrr.co.uk - FB: 5th Battalion the Queens/PWRR Regiment

Web: www.pwrr.co.uk

FRIMLEY AND CAMBERLEY CADET CORPS

The Frimley and Camberley Cadet Corps, which started over 100 years ago, rebadged back to the Queen's Regiment and continues to parade with the Queen's Colour. Boys and girls, from a variety of backgrounds, aged 6 to 13, are instructed by volunteer staff in their personal development based upon military procedures and discipline. Their HQ is at Caird Hall, Camberley. They are fully self-funding as they are not supported by the Army, Army Reserve or ACF.

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

Nigel Ferris

1 Ffordd Dol y Coed, Llanharan, Pontyclun, CF72 9WA

Email: nigel@fdi-european.com - Mobile: 07836 726236

HORSHAM

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 OF THE QUEEN'S AND PWRR ASSOCIATIONS

The two London Branches of the Associations have combined and meet informally quarterly. In addition the Branch meets at Twickenham for the Army vs Navy match and after the Cenotaph Parade on Remembrance Sunday. All past members of the Queen's, PWRR or their forebear regiments are very welcome to attend any event.

For more details of the branch, please contact:

Chairman – Kevin Hibbert Email: kevinhibbert75@yahoo.com

Queen's Secretary - Dennis Sharrocks Tel: 07771 957 574

Email: dennissharrocks@aol.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 - Mobile: 07891 577119

Email: queensman67@outlook.com

Secretary - Les Vial Tel: 0208 363 8322 Email: lesvial@btinternet.com

QUEENSMAN LODGE 2694

Queensman Lodge 2694 is a Freemasons Lodge within the Metropolitan Grand Lodge of London and also a member of the Circuit of Services Lodges. Membership is open to all members of forebear regiments, Queen's, PWRR, Queen's Division and any attached personnel. Membership application is by being proposed and seconded, and by interview. For full details please visit the website or contact:

John Edwards Tel: 01462 834134 - Email: johnedwards518@sky.com

Web: http://queensmanlodge.co.uk/

QUEEN'S REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION CORPS OF DRUMS

The QRA Corps of Drums meets on a regular basis and performs for the benefit of the Queen's Regiment Benevolent Fund.

To join please contact:

Tony Philpott or Amy Holden Tel: 07715 135 238

Email: qracorpsofdrums@yahoo.co.uk

THE QUEEN'S REGIMENTAL RIDERS ASSOCIATION

This Branch is open to all ex-members of the Queen's, PWRR and forebear regiments who own and ride a motorbike or trike. For more details please contact:

Secretary - Terry Price

Mobile: 07912 845 279 - Email: Please use the Contact Form on the QRRA website

Web: www.qrra.co.uk



QUEEN'S REGIMENT/PWRR GOLF SOCIETY

We are the original Queens Regimental Golfing Association. Upon amalgamation we morphed into the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment Golfing Society. Our home has always been Canterbury Golf Club and we still play annually for all the cups and trophies associated with The Queen's Regiment. For more details please contact the two Queensmen currently

running the Society:

Captain: Mr Steve Richards - Mobile: 07843 259112

Email: stevechelski@yahoo.co.uk

Secretary and Treasurer: Bob Jeffery, Mobile: 07779 084570

Email: rj276016@gmail.com

New members of all abilities are most welcomed, just call for a membership form, and come and play.

SCOTTISH BRANCH OF THE QUEEN'S AND PWRR ASSOCIATIONS

The Scottish Branch meets on an ad hoc basis. All are welcome. For more details contact:

Chairman: Steve Wall - Email: steve.wall@hotmail.co.uk

Secretary: Dave Lee, 36 Katrine Drive, Paisley, Renfrewshire, PA2 9BS.

Mobile: 07724 942680 (evenings only)

Email: dgldavelee@gmail.com

WESSEX

The Queen's Regimental Association in Wessex, known as the Wessex Branch, meets on an ad hoc basis in the Salisbury area.

For more details of membership and any events, please contact:

Secretary - Captain Anthony (Billy) Bolton

Tel: 07530 429926

Email: Queensmen1661@gmail.com

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

WEST SURREY (was previously Farnham)

The West Surrey Branch meets every third Tuesday at the Farnham TA Centre, Guildford Road, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 9QB and all past members of the Queen's Regiment or their associate Regiments are very welcome. For more details of the branch, please contact:

Chairman - Bob Hill: Tel: 01276 501644 - Email: bobhill@sky.com

Secretary - Dick Scales: Tel: 02380 694974 - Email: dickscales284@btinternet.com Treasurer - Mrs Sharon Scales Tel: 01962 826088 - Email: sturner@biopharma.co.uk

NON-AFFILIATED GROUPS

NON-AFFILIATED GROUPS which have contact with ex-members of the Regiment

Website: www.1royalsussex-3queens.com

SIGNIFICANT DATES FOR 2020

29 Feb - Association Annual General Meeting and Reunion London UOTC

3-5 Jul - Queen's Regimental Riders One Aim Rally (Fundraiser)

4 Apr - 6/7th (Volunteer) Bn 45th reunion, Army and Navy Club. Contact Colin Hurd, emuz424@outlook.com

12 - 15 May - Friends of Surrey Infantry Museum Battlefield Tour

- Trooping the Colour 13 Jun

- Combined Irish Regiments Cenotaph Parade to which we are invited 14 Jun

8 Nov - Remembrance Sunday

1 OUEENS Branch

- Annual reunion, Herne Bay Angling Club, 59 Central Parade, Kent CT6 5JG 23 May

Chichester Branch

16 May - Albuhera Dinner at the Beachcroft Hotel, Bognor Regis

6 June - National Arboretum

17 Aug - Veterans Lunch - VJ Day

Sep TBC - Goodwood Races

Sep TBC - Lewes Annual Dinner

7th Dec - Christmas Dinner

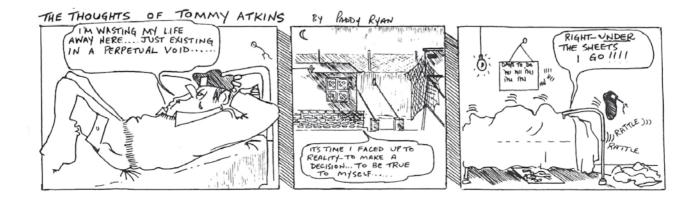
London Branch

- London Branch Army v Navy Rugby, Twickenham 2 May

Queensman Lodge

28 Mar - Lodge Meeting

1 Jun - Installation Meeting



Soldiers of the Queen

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





🕽 t's the soldiers of the Queen, my lads Mho'be been, my lads, who'be seen, my lads In the fight for England's glory lads Of its world-wide glory let us sing And when we say we've always won And when they ask us how it's done Me'll proudly point to eb'ry one Of England's soldiers of the Queen

> Har clouds gather over 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

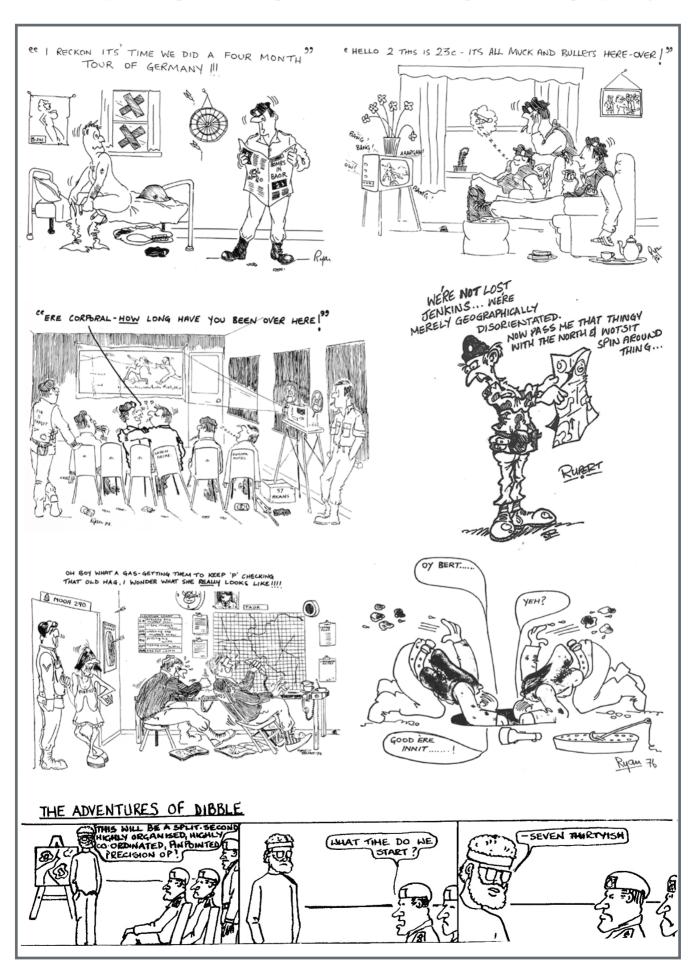


When we're roused we buckle on our swords We do deeds to follow on our words He show we're something more than Jingo The sons of Merry England answer duty's call And military duty do, and tho' new at the game They show then all the same, an Englishman can be a soldier too

An Englishman can be a soldier too..... So when they say that England's master Remember who has made her so



AND NOW FOR THE LAST LAUGH!





We provide an NHS service exclusively for veterans with arthritis.

The service is open to those who have served with the UK military, including National Service, and treats arthritic lower limb problems, especially those requiring hip and knee replacements.

The service is led by Lt Col Carl Meyer, a consultant military orthopaedic surgeon who has been a consultant at RJAH for over three years. A graduate of Birmingham University Medical School, Lt Col Meyer of the Royal Army Medical Corps completed his orthopaedic training on the Oswestry/Stoke rotation, before his consultant military appointment in 2011. Lt Col Meyer has served as a Medical Officer in both the Gulf War and more recently in Afghanistan, where he was involved in treating local civilians, as well as injured troops. He has special clinical interests in hip and knee replacement and in trauma and being a military consultant has helped him understand the experiences and expectation of veteran patients.



Veterans who are serving or have served with the UK Military, including National Service, who require treatment for arthritic lower limb problems, especially those requiring hip and knee replacements.

When is the Veterans' Orthopaedic Service clinic held?

Twice a month on a Tuesday morning, usually between 9.00 – 12pm.

Who will I see?

Lt Col Carl Meyer, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon; Mr Christos Oikonomou, Speciality Doctor in Veterans' Arthroplasty; or another clinical member of our Veterans' Orthopaedic Service team.

How can I be referred to the Veterans' Orthopaedic Service?

Via your GP (except in Northern Ireland, where different rules apply), who would have to follow the guidelines in place within your local area. In some areas, patients may be required to go through a triage service in order to assess their clinical need before being referred on to our team.

For more details on how to access our services go to: www.rjah.nhs.uk/Our-Services/Orthopaedic-Surgery/veterans.aspx

Please remember all transport cost are your responsibility. If you are eligible for hospital transport you should arrange this with your local service prior to admission.

The British Legion may support travel costs if you are a Veteran and you can arrange this with your local branch prior to your appointment. Remember to make arrangement for your return journey home as well as your admission.

Who should I contact for more information?

Lt Col Carl Meyer's Medical Secretary, Rebecca Jones, by Telephone: 01691 404344 or Fax: 01691 404067



VOS Appeal Team



Lt Col Carl Meyer, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon and SSqt Rebecca Warren



Lt Col Carl Meyer and Dr James Neil in Theatre.



WHAT IS VETERANS' GATEWAY?

Veterans' Gateway is for any ex-service personnel and their families looking for advice or support – whatever they're dealing with.

We provide the first point of contact to a network of military and non-military partner organisations to help you find exactly what you need, when you need it - whether you're in the UK or overseas.

We cover seven key areas:

- Housing
- Employment
- Finances
- Living independently
- Mental wellbeing
- · Physical health
- Family and communities

After I had done my duty and served my country I was disappointed that there was no duty to provide the support services I needed. Veterans' Gateway will make it easier for veterans to find the support they need.

Gareth Jones, 49

WHENEVER YOU NEED US, WE'RE HERE



Call us anytime day or night 0808 802 1212



Text us on 81212



Visit us online veteransgateway.org.uk



Get in touch via livechat – you'll find it on our website

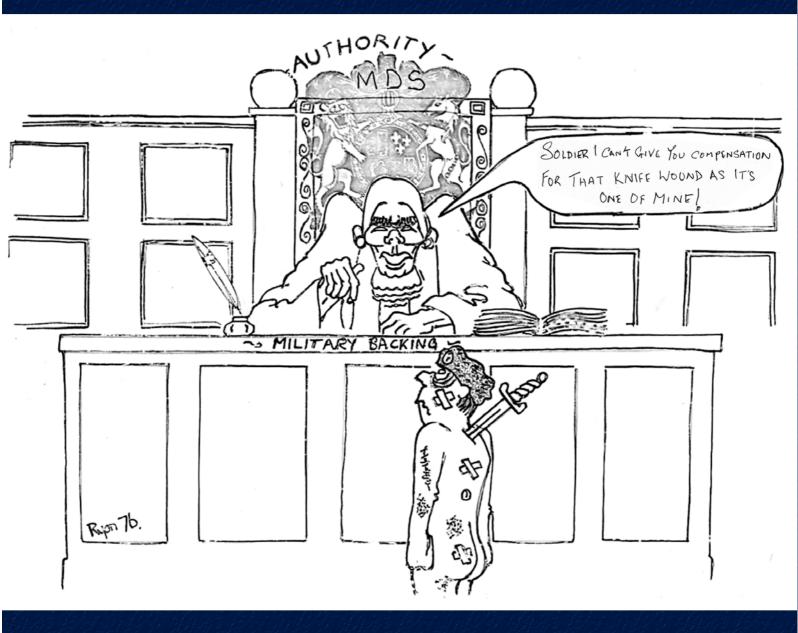


Submit a query using our online form





Paddy Ryan MM said it all in 1976



NOTHING CHANGES!

Charity No 1024418 www.queensregimentalassociation.org