

# **SOLDIERS OF THE QUEEN'S**

**UNCONQUERED I SERVE**



**1966-1992**

**The 55th/360th Edition**

**THE JOURNAL OF THE QUEEN'S REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION**

**2021**



# FOREWORD

BY COLONEL JOHN POWELL OBE

REGIMENTAL SECRETARY THE PRINCESS OF WALES'S ROYAL REGIMENT



I was honoured to be asked to write the forward to the Queen's Regiment Journal this year - and somewhat surprised! Our President was my company commander in B Coy 1 QUEENS during a tour of Crossmaglen in 1987; he would quite often comment on the standard of my written English and the paucity of detail in my patrol reports ('flew out, got wet, had a brew, tabbed back, NFTR').

I am conscious that many veterans do not know me, either because we didn't serve in the same battalion or served at different times. My career in the Regiment started with 19 Pl, E Coy, 5 (V) QUEENS, based in Tonbridge, in 1980. I remain grateful for my time in the TA which confirmed my desire to join the Army. I joined the Regular Army as a soldier in April 1981 and went off to the Depot at Basingbourn; whilst there I passed the Regular Commissions Board and so spent the remainder of my time in a form of purdah in the Training Wing (mostly de-leading the 30m range

and trying to avoid a certain Cpl Bob Fisher) before going to Sandhurst and then joining 1 QUEENS in 1982 (with Frank Lewis as my platoon sergeant); just in time for the training to start for the residential tour of NI in Omagh (where Bob Fisher and I became re-acquainted)!

Nearly 40 years later I find myself employed as the Regimental Secretary for the PWRR. Twelve of my thirty-five years of service were with the Queen's Regiment, and I count myself hugely privileged to remain in a position where I can continue to act for the good of the regiment.

*The Queen's Regimental Journal* has been an enormous success. I make sure it gets seen by many very senior officers who often comment on the standard of articles, recognizing the capture of hitherto untold stories which might otherwise be lost forever. They are also surprised that a disbanded regiment, even though amalgamated, remains so active in ensuring that its veterans are supported. They shouldn't be; the Journal reflects the spirit of a proud and successful regiment that is determined that it won't be forgotten. It is also a result of the work that the Editor and his team put into it for which I offer thanks on your behalf.

Sat in my rather grand office in the Tower of London, I am struck by the levels of co-operation that now exist between the Association and other Regimental associations, who I often refer to as the Regimental family. Many Queensmen will have served in the Queen's Royal Surrey, Queen's Own Buffs, Royal Sussex or Middlesex Regiments and have gone on to serve in the PWRR where they helped build the foundations of a very fine regiment; it is heartening to see old rivalries being put to one side for the good of all (as an example, a Royal Sussex Regiment WW2 veteran was recently helped by the concerted actions of the regimental family).

I am conscious that there is a separate 'Welfare Report' in the journal that summarises the work of the RHQ PWRR welfare team and QRA. However, one message that needs reinforcing is that if you don't have written proof of your service in the form of a service record, then apply for it now – for free. Most of us will never need it, but it really does help prevent unnecessary delay in obtaining help.

Enjoy your journal, I'll steal the Editor's sandwiches by making a plea to keep the stories coming in. The Benevolent Fund trustees have agreed in principle that the journal will continue in its current form for as long it continues to attract contributions; so, dig out those photographs, dust off those memories and put pen to paper – it really is worth it.





# EDITORIAL

BY ASSOCIATION SECRETARY

MAJOR A M GOULDEN



Greetings and welcome to the 2021 edition of *The Queen's Regimental Association Journal*. COVID has continued to curtail our activities. However, I am delighted to report that Queensmen cannot be kept down by something as mere as a pandemic. Sadly, we have lost a few members to the dreaded virus although not as many as I had feared. What continues to hearten me though is the way that members have kept in touch with each other, either through branch officials keeping a weather eye on their flock or just individuals looking out for a mate. All it takes is a friendly voice just to let someone stuck at home know that there is someone out there happy to have a chat. It makes such a difference - so 'Thank you!'

The encouraging news is that, although we have had lost a number of our compatriots, we have more members at the end of 2020 than we have ever had before. We are still not quite up to 3,000 strong so do try and persuade any person who has served with the Queen's or its forebears to join. We are keeping the name of The Queen's Regiment alive – a not insignificant achievement considering how long we were in existence and how long it is

since we were so cruelly dealt with. This is an achievement that soldiers and officers from other disbanded regiments I have spoken to have expressed their admiration for – so 'Thank you!' again!

Three new branches last year. This year, relations with the Royal Sussex Regimental Association have been strengthened and we look forward to continuing discussions as to how we can work together closely. As you can see later in the Journal, they have written an article included in the Branch Reports. Let's keep these interactions going.

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 because any material – especially the anecdotes – that has not been used will be filed as the start of the collection for next year. I keep trying to say that this will be the last Journal, but it seems by the amount of material sent in this year that you still want to continue with it. So be it! If you want a Journal next year – start writing!

Fundraising has continued to take a battering this year unfortunately. The QRRR 'One Aim Rally', although fully organised, had to be cancelled 10 days before the event as the Covid restrictions were not lifted in time. Others though have been out and about - notably John Bennett and his cohorts 'Sleeping Out' and Radar Cope attempting yet another epic ride in support of the Benevolent Fund – see 'The Kindness of Strangers'. Our thanks go to them and to all those others who quietly go about raising money to help us assist our members in need. Do read the Benevolent Report which shows how the fund assists and ensures that your money goes to those who are deserving and entitled. To that end, could I once again ask you please to consider making a small monthly donation which can be gift-aided to make the Government give us an extra 25%? It can be as little as £2 – less than the price of a cup of coffee – and would make a huge difference if everyone did it. A form is included in your pack. Please just fill it in and send it back. Alternatively, please consider making a one-off donation to cover the cost of the Journal. Thanks!

The AGM/reunion at London UOTC is on for Saturday 5th March. A booking form is enclosed. Fill it in and let's get together at long last.

To my long-suffering proof-readers, Anthony Beattie, Mike Jelf and Nick Keyes, I offer the usual heart-felt 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!

This Journal comes to you with every good wish for the coming year. Keep safe, keep healthy, don't cough, look after yourself and each other and I hope to see you sometime in the next year.

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# EVERYONE HAS A STORY

Dedicated to homeless veterans everywhere

*You see me sittin' here, I know what you're thinkin'  
Is he takin' drugs, that man or has he just been drinkin'?  
Just lookin' at the clothes I've got, my worn and broken shoes,  
Three days growth upon my face, it must be crack or booze.*

*But you see these lines upon my brow, see the worry in my eyes.  
Just sit down and talk to me and you may get a surprise,  
I can tell you 'bout Crossmaglen and the back streets of Belfast  
Of damn close things with mates of mine, but that's all in the past.*

*So just sit down and talk to me, there's nothing I want from you,  
Except you hear me out sometime, 'cos you ain't got a clue  
Why I'm sitting here alone, watching people passing by.  
I'd like you to understand, like you to ask me why?*

*I was brave and I was strong, did my duty, served my time,  
Those were the days my friend, I was young and in my prime  
I did my bit for you and yours, now give me the time of day,  
Just sit down here and talk with me, hear what I have to say.*

*So while I'm sitting here alone, you never will have guessed  
That underneath this overcoat there are medals on my chest.*

By John (Sandy) Catanach

# MEMORIES OF A ROYAL MARINES LIEUTENANT ON SECONDMENT TO 1 QUEENS

By Richard Madeley RM

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When I was first told that I was being seconded to the Army for two years, I wondered what I had done wrong. I was 22 years old and four years into a full career commission, having completed three years as a troop (platoon) commander and most recently had passed a troop of recruits for duty at Lymestone under the inscrutable eye of Prince Philip, our Captain General. The Army didn't fit anywhere in my plans for advancement, quite the reverse in fact and I had years of inter-service prejudice firmly planted in my head! That I am writing this report for the Queen's Regimental Journal 40 years later, speaks volumes about the experiences I gained, the friends I made and the overall quality of comradeship and soldiering that I enjoyed.

I was informed that the Queen's Regiment, or rather one of its predecessor regiments, had previously served as marines on board ships and hence the close friendship with the Royal Marines. I wondered how much of that maritime connection remained after they had clearly stepped aside for the professionals, and I set off for Werl in the summer of 1979 with some trepidation. I also realised that for the next 2 years I would represent the Royal Marines in everything I did and was determined not to let the Corps down. I remember driving out to Germany with all my kit, wondering what awaited me. I arrived at a deserted Officers' Mess the day after what had evidently been a very good summer party with a cowboy and western theme. Well, I had been warned that the Army could be a bunch of cowboys, but even this surprised me!

As events transpired, I had by great fortune joined a battalion that was on top of its game, having been operating as a mechanised battle group for over four years. Led from the front by John Holman, an outstanding, charismatic, no-nonsense CO, with a rich team of characters from Les Wilson, the QM, to Les Baynham, the Chief Clerk and outstanding No 8 in the scrum, the unit had an esprit and sense of purpose about it which instantly made me feel at home. Mech warfare was an eye-opener, and the battalion were very proficient, giving me many valuable lessons for later life when, as Adjutant, I ran 42 Commando's CP from tracked over-snow vehicles in Norway. You could cover great distances quickly and use the ground and speed to tactical advantage. However, as I soon discovered,

sitting in the back of an APC could be very disorientating, and so a greater weight of responsibility rested on the officers and NCOs whose heads were sticking up in the turrets and could actually see what was going on. The result was a motivated and switched-on cadre of leaders but sometimes some less enthusiastic, disoriented and seasick soldiers in the back.

My platoon sergeant, Sergeant (stripes and spots) Potts, was a colourful cockney with a wry sense of humour and he and I got along famously, at least that's what he told me! I recall the driver of our vehicle was Private Bob Fisher, a big bloke with a straightforward approach to life. It was he who introduced me to a new cooking regime using the boiling vessels (BVs) in the back of the vehicle, how to deal with boiling batteries inside the APC (the pungently acrid smells are still memorable after all these years) and less enjoyably, how to re-attach a thrown track, which always seemed to happen at the least opportune moment! We had many amusing moments together, including one occasion when we were waiting in our APCs on the start line for a night attack. I was dozing on the engine louvres (a nice place to keep warm) when the signal finally came through. I was half asleep and leapt up, only to fall off the side of the vehicle. Unfortunately, the radio headset and microphone unit were hanging around my neck, which then acted like a hangman's noose as I went over the side. I bit my tongue half through, so when I opened the back of the APC door to give the orders, I was frothing blood and must have looked truly wild.

I was keen to try and make 7 Platoon a bit different and we painted fouled anchors on the vehicles, and we started to use a few RM expressions to confuse others. I was also keen to give the soldiers a break from being driven everywhere and we took every opportunity to go on foot patrols, that in the featureless desert that is Soltau training area, was always a challenge. Corporal Hayes, one of the section commanders, proved to be a very competent map reader which was fortunate and by no means to be taken for granted, given that tracked vehicles very quickly made a nonsense of most features shown on a map. The 'Vasco de Gama' prize for map reading incompetence, however, went to Lieutenant Justin Orde, our close recce troop commander from the 15th/19th Hussars. Following him was entertaining



at times and often more out of curiosity than any real confidence that he knew where he was going. The CO seemed to have grown used to 60 tanks and armoured vehicles trying to make a

U-turn in narrow forest rides in the middle of the night! One of my last sightings of Justin was in the middle of a large swamp, slowing sinking in his Scimitar, as the rest of the battle group bypassed the bog and continued on its way.



Endex at Soltau training area with Lieutenant Rob Walker



Major Charles Joint - OC C Company on Exercise RED GAUNTLET



Dinner Night Aftermath. The Padre's car laid for breakfast in the Werl Officers' Mess.

The BAOR exercises were on a different scale to those I had experienced before with the military effectively able to drive wherever they liked, using actual towns and villages in a tactical way as if in a real war. Needless to say, the damages paid out to the locals could be significant, but it led to a far more realistic approach to training, and we would regularly train over the actual ground that would be our responsibility if the Soviets poured over the Inner German Border (IGB). I later went on a special IGB patrol where we would monitor the 'Wall' from the west and see all the automatic machine guns, minefields and watch towers. It is hard to imagine now just how hostile and alien it was. The East German guards seemed particularly interested in me and my green beret, probably wondering how I had managed to get so lost!

Albuhera Barracks, our home in Werl, a small German village in Westphalia, looked a bit more 'post-war functional' than anything seen these days but was well placed for the trappings and distractions of Dortmund, Hamm, Menden and elsewhere. Down the road was the Möhnesee and the dam that had so famously been bombed by the Dambusters during WWII. It was not unheard of to see a group of enthusiastic (and slightly inebriated) subalterns marching in goose steps over the dam, whistling the theme tune from the movie, much to the bemusement, or perhaps irritation, of the locals. Socially, life was full and the availability of very cheap alcohol in the NAAFI and the messes meant that the camp became much more of a home for its inhabitants than would normally be the case in a UK-based establishment. As subalterns, we were constantly pushing the boundaries of behaviour and adventure (plus ça change) but generally acted just within acceptable limits (*Ed: being party to the reminiscences of the subalterns over the COVID period Zooms, this statement isn't exactly accurate!*). Carrying the padre's Mini into the dining room was borderline and certainly the oil stain it left on the carpet cost us all a chunk of our pay the following month. But high spirits were the name of the game, and we were all up for it and I was determined not to let the Royal Marines down. Sometimes my desire to show the way did not end well. My demonstration of how to dismount from the roof of the mess by doing a forward roll off the gutter somehow played out better in my head than it did in practice! But in all this bravado and juvenile activity, we subalterns became great friends and whether playing rugby against the nearby unit, on a 'run ashore' to the local pub or competing to see how fast we could consume a pizza, we supported each other unquestioningly.





A sign showing the actual line of the IGB with two East German Border guards watching on



A view of the Inner German Border showing the cleared mine strip, fences and automatic machine guns in the Harz mountains area.



Inspecting a Russian T62 tank at Albuhera Barracks in 1979 with Lts Andy Bickerdike, Mark Cowan-Aston and Henry Eagan



Exercise RED GAUNTLET in the Harz mountains



On patrol of the Inner German Border with an IGB border officer



Guard of Honour for HRH Prince Charles at HMS Excellent. Maj Rocky Hitchcock and B Coy Guard





One major distraction for me during the winter was skiing and I joined the Ex SNOW QUEEN team in Wertach, Bavaria, as part of the annual adventure training programme. For most soldiers, this was their first experience of skiing and was normally accompanied by plenty of alcohol, an abundance of enthusiasm and blind (generally misplaced) optimism. It was and remains a great tonic and an important tradition. Having competed in the past for the Royal Navy, I was fortunate to be able to head off to the Divisional and Army championships with fellow subaltern Alex Cooper



With Cpl Andy Layzell and our trophies  
1 QUEENS Ski Team 1979

and Corporal Andy Layzell who together made up the 1 QUEENS Ski Team. The races were very competitive and for most were their introduction to downhill racing. The speeds, adrenalin and excitement of those races, not to mention the spectacular crashes, are a story on their own. However, we came home with a pile of silver for the Battalion display cabinets, some great memories and more importantly an invitation to return the following year.

Life in Germany proved to be a wonderful tonic for me at every level. Professionally, I learned a great deal from my introduction to mech warfare and the speed and distances across which battle groups and brigades could

respond and I had developed considerable respect for the quick thinking, clear leadership, and soldiering competence across the unit. So much for the Pongo stories I had been fed on back at home! I was also at ease with my fellow officers, and the camaraderie we enjoyed then and still enjoy 40 years later remains very important. The move back to Canterbury in mid-1980 was both welcome but also marked the end of the special cohesion we had enjoyed in BAOR and a number of new appointments, including a new CO, marked a fresh start. However, the immediate goal was a 6-month tour in Belize and specialist jungle training.

Professionally, this was an interesting transition for the soldiers, who had to adapt from being delivered in an APC to the enemy objective and instead had to patrol on foot through dense jungle. The Belizean jungle was all secondary, that is to say it was thick with undergrowth and smaller trees which had to re-grow after each hurricane hit it. Belizean jungle was particularly thick and dirty, and one feature was a very unpleasant tree which had 2 inch spines all over the bark. We called it the 'bastard tree', because invariably if you lost your footing and grabbed out for support, you would find a bastard tree and hence the exclamation. The spines could be very dirty and would cause bad infections if not removed.

The first phase for all platoon commanders and NCOs was a training camp with the local SAS troop. Three weeks in the jungle was a great way to get into a routine and we all adapted quickly, oblivious to the growing and penetratingly awful smell which we acquired over the period through sweat, dirt and a 'no washing' policy. Rations were predominantly tinned but occasionally we would get something fresh. On one occasion, we cornered a baby wild pig and were closing in to finish it off when 'mummy' appeared around the corner, sending us diving for cover as she clearly wasn't amused! We did get resupply drops from time to time and I remember one such drop when mail was also delivered. I was the only person not to receive any correspondence at all, not even a bank statement or 'Dear John' letter. I had clearly alienated all girl friends at the time and even my parents evidently! Incidentally, in good military form, a rather cringing 'Dear John' letter was shared around which helped soften the blow for the unfortunate recipient.

Throughout Belize there were Mayan ruins, many of which had been salvaged from the jungle. These magnificent temples would suddenly confront you on patrol rather like something out of 'Raiders of the Lost Ark' and it made for a special experience. Snakes and spiders were less welcome, and Belize had plenty. It was not uncommon

to share a shower stall with a large tarantula and as I can attest, they often jump when provoked, which can be a big surprise first time! Other creepy crawlies made for amusing tricks at night in our bashas. One poor chap (I wish I could remember who it was!) had a very vivid imagination and so we would pretend to be wild pigs in the undergrowth near his hammock. We probably risked being shot as we larked around, but it kept us amused even if it wasn't very tactical sometimes. Rather unfairly we laid a jam trail up to his hammock on the last evening and watched the electrifying commotion as his hammock, bedding and clothes were overrun with ants in the middle of the night.

Barrack life in Holdfast Camp, that is in the northern part of Belize, was rather restrictive with little outside amusement. We would arrange expeditions to the local town, San Ignacio, which had a massive Mayan temple in its centre. There was also a nearby river, complete with rapids and waterfalls, that made for a good R&R barbeque and overnight stop. Soldiers are reasonably easy to please, provided there is enough beer. Airport Camp by contrast was much more diverse in its attractions. Belize City was a bit of a dump in 1980 and I am not sure how much it has improved since then. But there were local markets and shops and plenty of distractions for young soldiers. More interesting were the islands on the big



A patrol led by LCpl Hartley near Holdfast Camp



Building a helicopter LS in Belize



Lt Nick Keyes, CSgt Camille, Lt Gary Bourne and Sgt Rick Malam during jungle training



Deplaning hopefully on the right side of the Guatemala border





Time off during the SAS jungle training phase



Maj Raymond Low (OC C Coy), Capt Nick Tucker RHA and Capt David Diggins RH



The Mayan temple at Xunantunich in the Northern Battlegroup territory



Time off near the Guacamolo Bridge in northern Belize

offshore reef that ran the full length of the country. These islands were idyllic, with shanty bars and dive centres on most of them from which to explore the reef that was truly spectacular. I also enjoyed plenty of water skiing in the offshore mangrove islands. These natural and calm waterways made for perfect water skiing provided you cleared them out first of any sharks or crocodiles that wanted to rest there. This was normally easy enough by driving the ski boat up and down the main stretches a couple of times. However, there were a few occasions when dolphins liked to play along with the ski boat which could be very unsettling if you happened to be the guy on the end of the rope. I must also take this opportunity to apologise to Captain Nick Carter who I towed into the mangrove bushes after he rather uncooperatively failed

to let go of the tow rope. I recall he needed a dozen stitches in his backside.

All too soon and after a trip back to Europe for skiing, the Belize tour drew to an end. But just before we were about to leave, the locals decided to start rioting and disrupting the generally peaceful life in Belize. I don't remember the reasons, but a state of emergency was declared and we were all posted to different parts of the city. All too soon riots started and everyone became quite excited, especially the local police force who saw this as a chance for some pay back. But tragically while I was sitting in one of the police stations, a visiting inspector failed to unload his pistol correctly and discharged a round into a young constable sitting opposite. There then followed a tragic farce of incompetence as paramedics and colleagues tried

in vain to insert a drip into his arm while he meanwhile lost consciousness and then a few minutes later, died. It cast a sad shadow on what had otherwise been a varied and interesting tour.

We returned to Canterbury in the spring of 1981 and my secondment was coming to an end. But there was still time for me to take a group of volunteers off to Lymptstone to complete all four of the Royal Marines Commando tests in one week. The tests comprised the 'Tarzan/Assault course', an agility and ropes course; the 'Endurance' course, a 7-mile run through bogs and tunnels; the 9-miler completed as a formed body in 90 minutes; and lastly the 30-miler across Dartmoor, completed in under 8 hours. These are tough tests by any measure and how proud I was that everyone passed as I was back under the sceptical gaze of the Royal Marines family and wanted to show them what Queensmen could do. My last responsibility was to run a JNCO cadre, and it was great to see the young talent coming on up through the ranks, even though I did my best to outwit and exhaust them!

My 2-year stint with 1 QUEENS was and remains among my most enjoyable and memorable periods of service. Far from the 'Pongo' stories I had been fed from birth, I found a welcoming and highly professional battalion with a proud history. The unit was rightly regarded as one of the best mechanised units in BAOR yet adapted incredibly quickly to the demands of dispersed operations and the individual skills of jungle warfare. Along the way, everyone seemed determined to enjoy themselves and there was a vibrant sense of humour and a pride about being a Queensman. In fact, I was left with the clear impression that the 1st Battalion regarded itself as different (and rather better) than the other units in the Division and probably by extension the rest of the Army! Forty years later, I now enjoy regular fortnightly Zoom calls with my friends from that time, reminiscing in a way that only ex-servicemen will understand, pricking pomposity and teasing mercilessly! I couldn't wish for better memories and am proud to wear my Queen's Regimental tie as an 'Honorary Queensman'.

*Reading Bill Knight-Hughes's note on The Perils of Joining the Regiment reminded me of a story (perhaps apocryphal, but quite possible) about another young unfortunate, not one of ours but a Gunner Rupert, fresh from Sandhurst. On arrival at RAF Gütersloh, he was told he needed to have a medical inspection, led into a room, told to undress to his bare skin and move next door into the next room to await the medic. His case and all his clothing were then handed to subalterns from his Artillery Regiment who then set off for their barracks, leaving this chap stark naked and without any money. After a while, he sussed what was happening, asked for a newspaper, wrapped it round his waist, walked out through the concourse, got in a taxi and instructed the driver to drive to the barracks of the Regiment he was joining. At the gate, he announced himself to the sentry and asked for directions to the Officers' Mess. On arrival there, he went inside, instructed a member of the Mess staff to pay the taxi fare, walked into the ante room, where 20 or so Officers were having their morning coffee, unwrapped the newspaper, sat in an armchair and started reading it. The story goes on that he served as Community Relations Officer for his regiment in NI and later married one of Pan's People of Top of the Pops dancing fame.*

Tim McDermott



# THE REAL MEANING OF BROTHERHOOD (RESPECT)

By Robert Denny

The year 2020 has been a bad year for most people with the pandemic but also the division in the whole country. It had come to a head with Brexit, and it showed that large numbers of people did not believe in democracy. But it did not stop there. It then continued with the BLM protest, and this brought back a memory.

As a child and young man, I was part of an enlarged family. My parents use to care for children of parents studying to become doctors, mostly from Nigeria, and back then in the fifties and early sixties, I had no pre-conceived ideas or prejudice - I didn't think about it one way or the other.

In early 1977, during an Op BANNER tour based in Glassmullan, my section was on base guard duty. That night, I was called to the main gate as there was a person trying to get in on the pretence of seeking medical help as he had, as he put it, fallen into the razor wire around the outside of the base. On arrival at the gate, the sentry informed me of the situation. By then I had also had info from one of the sangars that this guy had tried to get through the wire onto the base and as a result ended up with a few scratches. I opened the gate to confront him and recognised him to be the PIRA intelligence officer for that area. On asking him what he wanted, he stated that he needed medical treatment, so I told him to go to the hospital as he was not coming in.



After some time, he tried barging into me to get through. That's when the rest of my section, who were not on stag but with me, moved as one and closed ranks with me. This huge hand came over my shoulder, grabbed his clothes, lifted him off the floor told him: *"Don't barge into my corporal and when my corporal says leave, you leave."* and threw him backwards. When I looked, it was Pte Jackson, who had muscles on his muscles.

Later, I thought back on what had happened. What stuck in my mind was the word 'my'. It made me realise that when those men closed ranks with me, and Jacko said, *"My Corporal"*, I was part of something unbreakable - a Brotherhood. I have no idea what Jacko's life experiences were, but he and the rest of my men had gathered around me in support, and they had my back and I had theirs. It made me realise that all the training to work as a group came to this no matter what we went through or what colour or creed we were. We all had respect for each other, and this brought us to this point: we were brothers. Why is this so? It's because we had to do and see things we should never have had to, and we will wrestle with that for the rest of our lives.

I have never forgotten that lesson from all the men that I have ever served with, that for the rest of my life I was a member of an exclusive club, a brotherhood that could never be broken. Civvies will never understand.



# AFTER 35 YEARS, OFFICERS OF 3 QUEENS, FALLINGBOSTEL, MEET UP IN CHIPSTEAD, SURREY

By Mike Hurman

Members of a WhatsApp group, born from the ashes of a Covid-19 destroyed 3 QUEENS lunchtime reunion, planned to be held at the Army and Navy Club in 2020, have met up in Chipstead, Surrey.

A 3rd Battalion lunchtime reunion organised by Guy Wood was sadly cancelled due to the Covid lockdown restrictions and the pre-paid deposits that were held by Guy were later voted by all attendees to be given to the regimental Association to help our Regimental colleagues in need. Ian Raynes later offered to form a WhatsApp group for anyone interested in keeping in touch. Eight members continue an almost daily chat covering a wide range of threads from historical battles, through balanced socio-political events of the day, wild camping, gardening, holiday walks, family, books, films and other 'woke' and slightly 'non-woke' topics.

All eight members are held together by the common thread of having served with the 3rd Battalion in Fallingbostel in the 1980s. David Greenfield who runs his own hard-working business of garden services in West Sussex, he is our group Monty Don. Mark Smallwood retired from a career in finance, now runs his own consulting company and recently completed his glider pilot licence. He is our socio-economic and political advisor. Jeremy O'Connor retired from a career in IT and enjoys wild camping and walking huge distances - he provides a witty commentary on most subjects. Mark Dunham is semi-retired and provides narration for audio books - he recently became our ad-hoc news provider for the G7 conference at Carbis Bay. Simon Wilson, having moved onto a career with the Royal Military Police, is now retired and studying for a degree in psychology; he is our woke contributor and also provides the historical statement discussion of the day. Ian Raynes is employed by the Brecon Beacons National Park, from where he provides insights on Star Wars personalities. John Collingridge, an ardent Empire exponent, semi-retired and living in Western Australia, sings with an up-and-coming sea shanty group called The Anchormen, and acts as a Bush Tucker Tour guide. He is our man from Crocodile Dundee. Myself, I am retired and create or edit historical Wikipedia pages of interest. I provide dull and highly uninteresting research for the daily topic provided by Simon Wilson. Amazingly, the subjects often then lead to continuing thread discussions.

I wrote to John Russell recently saying how much our group had enjoyed his book "Theirs, The Strife" which covers forgotten battles in 1945 after the Rhine Crossing from both a British and German perspective. He began the book over 40 years ago when



Concurrent Activity, Exercise Honed Blade - David Greenfield sharpens our shears, loppers and secateurs Mark Smallwood looks on



Standing - Mark Dunham, Mike Hurman, Simon Wilson, Mark Smallwood Sitting - David Greenfield, Jeremy O'Connor



our Adjutant in Fallingbostal. He replied saying that he was amazed that we could actually read! He had of course provided many of our group members and fellow platoon commanders with copious quantities of extra duties for various misdemeanours. We regularly reminisce over some of those follies of youth such as:

a. Poor night navigation into the Natur Schutzgebiet on the edge of the Soltau Training Area whilst leading a full combat team with an attached troop of Chieftain.

b. Falling asleep as duty officer after receiving the call for Ex ACTIVE EDGE call out, and the NATO inspection team arriving in St. Barbara Barracks to find the resulting lack of frantic activity of loading our APCs ready for war.... perplexing.

c. The mounting of the Guard by Johnny Rowland on horseback dressed in his blues uniform. Johnny was a very popular platoon commander, always up for a bit of fun. He was later posted as our exchange officer to The Royal Marines. He was sadly killed some years ago in a road accident.

Jeremy O'Connor kindly invited the group to a lunch party at his house in Chipstead on 27 June. The event, held on a lovely British Summer's Day of cloud and rain, was made special by his wife Chiara, who produced a delicious lunch. Dress was to be relaxed wear but to be prepared for a photo opportunity with a regimental connection. Simon Wilson wore



The group raise a glass to John Collingridge and Ian Raynes (inset)

his cut down bikers' jacket with regimental memorabilia from his extensive career, and his Soltau-stained Queen's beret. David Greenfield wore his gardening combats (reminiscent of an Africa Korps soldier), combined with knee pads and secateurs in holster. The remainder of us brought along our regimental ties. Our absent members, Ian Raynes and John Collingridge joined us remotely. John was in side-hat and tie.

Concurrent activity was of course provided, including a garden safari with a weed identification quiz. A blade-honing exercise and some advanced skill-at-arms training on the 51mm plastic mortar, with handling of blinds and mid-air catching skills all provided by Simon Wilson. Dog handling was introduced by our host Jeremy who asked us not to throw sticks, which of course we did, as soon as his back was turned. It was

more a barrage of sticks and he now has a PTSD dog!

Simon Wilson provided a QM's supply level of Brew Dog non-alcoholic beer and I believe that the only alcohol consumed during the eight-hour lunchtime ensemble was one glass of wine (guilty!). How life has changed in thirty-five years! I think that driving from Dorset, Gloucestershire, Guildford and West Sussex had something to do with the choice.

The main point about this story is that, despite thirty-five years passing by, The Queen's Regimental spirit is still strong. I know that there are many other groups that stay in touch as we all have a common bond from our younger days.



John Collingridge and The Anchormen!

# FROM THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN WHEATBELT TO THE BRITISH ARMY

By John Collingridge

I lived my childhood with the Union Jack flapping under tropical skies in Her Majesty's Crown Colony of Mauritius during the fading years of the British Empire. Grandfather Collingridge had come out to Mauritius from Northampton in England in 1905 to put railways through the sugar cane plantations; my Great-Grandfather Taylor on my mother's side, had come out in 1879 from Kingston-on-Spey in far north-eastern Scotland. The King's African Rifles (KAR) from British East Africa garrisoned the island, and the Royal Navy manned HMS Mauritius, a signal station on the island. Every year we would go down to Port Louis to attend The Queen's Birthday Parade: a thrill of awe and pride would descend upon me as His Excellency the Governor's motor cavalcade, with the Union Jack flapping on the bonnet of the stately black Austin Princess, would arrive on the Parade Ground. The band would strike up God Save The Queen, the Parade Commander would roar *"Parade! Royal Salute! Present Arms!"*, there would be the sound of crisp crunching as the KAR as one body would present arms with fixed bayonets, the sun glinting off the blades, and the Governor would take the salute up on the dais in his white plumes, bicorne and navy-blue uniform. We were British, and British to the core!

Fast-forward 17 years. The Empire had been dissolved, and my family, with many others, had left for more secure habitats, we to Perth in Western Australia, where I finished school at Trinity College, and then did a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Degree at the University of Western Australia, specialising in Indian History, and then a Diploma in Education.

My father had always encouraged me to join the Forces to do my bit for Queen and Country, as had many other members of the family, male and female. At school, I had been in the Army Cadets. On Dad's prompting, I joined the University of Western Australia Regiment, the equivalent of a TAVR regiment.

Study over, I spent some time in the Western Australian wheatbelt, working on wheat and sheep farms, and on the wheat bins near Wongan Hills (Kondut), north-east of Perth. I enjoyed the active, open-air life. But it was time to get a serious job. I was offered a teaching post by the Education Department in remote Tardun.

Teaching? I think not; something a bit more adventurous perhaps! In the meantime, I had contacted the British High Commission in Canberra to see if I could apply for a commission in the British Army, serve the Crown and see the world at the same time! Much more appealing! I was interviewed by a British Army Officer in transit through Perth. After a chat and offering me a whisky (of course!), he gave me the thumbs-up to the Ministry of Defence. In due course, I received a letter from the MOD, inviting me to travel to London at my own expense, to attend a medical and to join as a Potential Officer. I was to report in person on 7th January 1978.



Leaving Perth Airport to join up

At my medical in London, the Medical Officer asked me which part of the Army I wanted to join. I replied, the infantry. He replied, "Any particular regiment?" I responded that I didn't know enough about the British Army regiments to make a choice. He responded, "I'll put you down for The Queen's Regiment. They're a good regiment."

## And, so my adventure with the Queen's began.

I was instructed to report to the Queen's Division Depot at Basingbourn Barracks. Train to Royston. There I joined the fold of the Training Support Wing (TSW) as Pte Collingridge. They were a cheerful team, headed by Major Pat Gwilliam (with spaniel and pipe) and Captain Lamb (R Anglian). C/Sgt Oliver (R Fusiliers) and Cpl Tony Farrow, later Lt Col Farrow!.. who took me under their wing. One of our tasks was the preparation and management of the pre-RCB cadres and tests. It was while doing this that I first met Jeremy Maltman who came through to do his





pre-RCB; we were later at Victory College at Sandhurst together, and served together in 3 QUEENS, Jerry in A Company and myself in B Company. Since then, we have been close and lifelong

friends to this day. Good old Clam! (Jerry's 3 QUEENS nickname). It was also here that I first met John Barr, a dashing young officer, little knowing that we would serve together and become friends after I joined the 3rd Battalion as a fellow officer.

In due course, my turn to attend RCB at Westbury arrived. Much to my relief and surprise, I passed and was on my way to Sandhurst. Direct Entry Course No 14, Ypres Company, Victory College, RMAS, January to July 1979. Bulling kit late in to the night, early morning PT in the freezing cold, numb fingers out on exercise in the snow, popping into have a morale-boosting chat with Jerry Maltman (also bulling kit late into the night!), cheery pints in the College Mess after dinner, Final Exercise on the Brecon Beacons... and... I got through!!... Passing Out Parade, with fellow cadet Jerry Maltman as the parade commander. My parents came out from Perth, Western Australia to attend the Passing Out Parade. Dad was so proud! I was so pleased to have done that for him.

Posted to Connaught Barracks in Dover, in August 1979, we reported to the CO's Office to be met by a stern John



John Barr



Graduation from Victory College, RMAS, July 1979.  
2Lt Jeremy Maltman, second right centre row; 2Lt John Collingridge, second from right, back row.

Russell who was later to become Adjutant, and then given a somewhat warmer welcome by the CO, Gavin Bulloch. Mike Cooper, as senior subaltern, inducted the three of us into mess etiquette and ritual. To this day, when the senior member of my work team (these days, Helen Lee, the founder and owner of Bushtucker Tours, and my current CO!) or a lady enters the room or leaves the table, I have an instinctive reaction to stand up in respect! A rare quirk in the much more informal Australian society!

I joined 3 Platoon, B Company. A very strict and stern Mike Constantine was my Company Commander, Sgt Stan Cochrane my platoon sergeant. From memory, Corporals Russell, Deal and Drummond were the Section Commanders. Before I knew it, I was on a whirlwind cycle of a three-week NATO Exercise in Northern Germany, snow-trekking in the Norwegian Highlands, Cyprus and back to Dover, and within a couple of months we were off to Wainwright Camp in Canada for two months of live-firing exercises on Ex POND JUMP WEST, my first experience of exercising with live rounds.

It was always a delight to return to England. From the air as we approached for landing, England looked like 'The Shire' in JRR Tolkien's Lord of The Rings, so quaint and pretty, with her green and pleasant land, and her charming and evocative villages and stately homes.

Not long after returning from Canada, I was tasked with reconnoitring and leading an Adventure Training Exercise, Ex AUTUMN ISLE, around Loch Nevis off Mallaig on the far north-west coast of Scotland. I stayed at a little hotel in Mallaig where the staff treated me to haggis for dinner! Mallaig was beautiful: big blue skies, colourful fishing boats coming in and out of harbour, the smell of kippers, and the water on the loch like plate glass. Around 20 personnel from the battalion participated in the exercise. We were based at a built camp developed by an ex-SAS chap, and we trekked around Loch Nevis, east of Mallaig, seeing many red deer and seals, lots of tarns, spectacular views, and breathing in the clean, crisp air of the maritime Scottish Highlands! An unforgettable experience!

I very much enjoyed our time at Connaught Barracks. My room in the Officers' Mess had a fine view overlooking Dover Harbour, the township below and Dover Castle off to the left, and I so enjoyed the camaraderie of the Officers' Mess in Dover and Fallingbostal. I made friends during this time who are still close and valued friends to me to this day, 41 years later! The regimental dinners, ladies' nights and curry lunches were wondrous, unforgettable and extraordinary occasions, reliving the

pomp, splendour and confidence of the British Army while Great Britain was at her zenith. The mess silver, the Colours, the dimmed lights, the polished table, the exquisite servings of courses, the oil paintings, the Band and Drums in full ceremonial dress, the passing of the port for our Loyal Toast, the playing of the Dutch and Danish National Anthems, the cigars, the chat, the revelry in the anteroom after the dinner, the early morning breakfast of kippers, bacon, eggs and the works as dawn broke after having been up in revelry all night! Unforgettable.

I made very good use of my leave periods, using the Forces British Rail Passes with which we were issued to go adventuring, travelling from one end of the country to the other.

A few months after our return to Dover, we received news that the Battalion was being posted the following May (1981) to Fallingbostal in northern Germany. So, it was pack up and off we went to the North German Plains into the former Wehrmacht barracks at St Barbara Barracks, Fallingbostal. Goodbye foot soldiering, hello the mechanised infantry role. To be frank, it wasn't much my cup of tea: being bumped and tossed around in a dimly lit APC, trying to decode radio messages, while navigating these hulking machines for the platoon in the dark. It didn't quite gel with a history graduate!



Exercise Autumn Isle on Loch Nevis, October 1980.  
L-R: Ptes Cook, Scorer, Bird, Gibbs, Warwick, Cloute,  
and Capt John Barr.

My operational time in Fallingbostal was cut short. Just before going off on exercise, we had a mess dinner. After dinner, with spirits high and a lot of vino and port, we were playing cavalry charges across the anteroom. I was the rider, Charles Lambert my horse. A melee ensued. All of a sudden, the melee collapsed, and I was underneath, but my ankles were still gripped by my sturdy horse. Crack! Very ouch!! I hobbled upstairs to my room. Next morning my ankle was badly swollen and extremely





painful and three months before I could start walking normally again. With cooked breakfasts, morning teas, two course lunches plus stilton, afternoon tea, and three course dinners, and inability

to exercise, this has been the only time in my life when I put on weight! By the end of the three months, I could barely do up my Service Dress trousers!

The great sage for the subalterns was Captain Max Maloney, our MTO, regularly dispensing pearls of wisdom to us subalterns, regaling us with tales from his long career in our forebear Regiments: an unforgettable character, a gentleman and a jolly good fellow!

Towards the end of 1981, my Short Service Commission term was nearing its completion. I was called upon to participate in some poor squaddie's court martial, and then sent off on a border patrol that was fascinating! Great chunks of ice were floating down the River Elbe; the temperature dropped to -15C and, with

the trees sparkling with ice and frost, I had my first taste of gluhwein from a roadside kiosk (warming and delicious!). We were billeted with an old German farming couple who served us home-made bacon for breakfast. It was thought-provoking to see fellow human beings across the fence with whom we were forbidden to communicate, another of the myriad examples of the lunacy of humankind's actions strewn across history. In the words of that old 60s protest song, "When we will we ever learn?"

And then it was farewell to my fellow officers and the lads in the platoon, and off to the Queen's Division Depot in Basingstoke for my 'demob': full circle. This time I was accommodated in the elegant Officers' Mess in contrast to the squaddies' quarters.

For many years after that I missed the regiment, and the sense of belonging. I would often have powerful dreams of returning, doing another stint, and being back in the regimental family.

In September 1993, I returned to England, having been invited to attend the wedding of Jerry and Julie Maltman, a great joy and a great honour. A gorgeous English wedding in the church in the grounds of Dover Castle. And, as I walked toward the church, there, one after another were my brother officers: Max Maloney, Charles Lambert...what a joy to see them again.

In 2016, Jerry organised the greatest honour of my life: a lunch reunion in the Regimental Headquarters Officers' Mess in the Tower of London: the heart of the heart of England! What a joy and a thrill it was to see and meet you all again! Jerry Maltman (of course!), Charles Lambert, Mark and Janet Dunham, Stephen Cooper, Alan and Ro Weston, Bob Wilby, Stephen Parker, Micky Hurman, and Gofy. Some I had not seen since January 1982... yet, it was as though we had only seen each other the previous day.

On my return to Australia in 1982, I was somewhat surprised to realise that service as a British Army officer didn't seem to hold much value among Australian employers. However, looking through the local newspaper, Bushtucker Tours were advertising for a Bunbury-based part-time tour guide to run winery and brewery tours into the Ferguson Valley, 20 minutes outside of Bunbury. I have now been working for Bushtucker Tours,



Farewell cartoon presented to me on my departure from 3 QUEENS, sketched by Cpl John Russell





Bushtucker Tours!

on and off, for close to 10 years. A great job: one to three tours per week (long days!) taking a bus load of holidaymakers to the wineries and breweries of the Margaret River Wine Region, and serving a “bushtucker lunch”...smoked crocodile, smoked kangaroo, bush foods. My British Army training has come in very handy indeed with this job: attention to detail, scheduling, people management and leadership.

Only last week (20 March 2021), just on the cusp of my writing this article for the Journal, I met my first ex-Queensman in Australia since leaving the battalion in early 1982: ex Private Simon Taylor, who had served as a

TAVR volunteer in 6/7 QUEENS in Horsham around 1991-1993. Simon was a passenger on my tour. He had entered as QUEENS and departed as PWRR to follow work in the North. He said that he had only been in 6/7 QUEENS part-time for a short time. I replied, “Once a Queensman, always a Queensman!”

I still maintain regular contact with my 3 QUEENS community via email, Messenger, the occasional phone call, and, more recently, by being included in the 3 QUEENS Reunion WhatsApp group.

Queen’s Forever, Forever Queen’s!



With former Pte Simon Taylor, 6/7 QUEENS, while on a Bushtucker tour, 20 March 2021.



# A FUNNY YEAR PART TWO

By Mike Hurman

After my arrival at the guard room as a Junior Soldier, during September 1966 and after we met a very verbal corporal in the guard room, we all got herded together outside the training block, very worried and wondering what was going to happen.

It was now September 1966, with a slight chill in the air. World Cup fever had been heralded into history. The Beatles were all over the news, but that is where it all stopped. The reality was, 'What the hell was I doing here, and did I really want to be a soldier?'

It was not long before a very smart colour sergeant and a corporal walked towards us. *"Right, you horrible lot, follow me!"* he bellowed. We went upstairs into a very large dormitory with beds and lockers each side of the room. *"Right"* the Sergeant said. *"This is going to be your home for the next sixteen weeks, these are your beds, go pick one, it's yours for the duration. It is now teatime; the Corporal will take you over to the canteen. Enjoy tonight because tomorrow the real work begins."* That was our introduction to Sgt Wildish and Cpl Jeeves. There ended the first day. Well, that wasn't so bad was it? What a nice bloke.

The following morning at 6am, my whole world came crashing around me to the tune of *"HANDS OF COCKS AND ON WITH SOCKS!"*, with the sound of a dustbin crashing over the floor. So apart from the near heart attack the corporal was screaming: *"Up you get! Stand by your beds gentlemen!"* The name of Sgt Wildish and Cpl Jeeves, our training instructors, will live on in history.

I am now a 70-year-old veteran, so please forgive me if I ramble a bit. Prior to my arrival at the barracks, I went to a civvy hairdresser to have a haircut. Since 1965, I had the appearance of a hippy: long shoulder length hair, droopy moustache and an attitude that went with it. Ban the bomb, flower-power and make love not war. My stepdad hated me, mother tolerated me, but I lived for the day in 1966.

I decided then to make my own way in life, as I gazed into the barber's mirror, and I watched my locks of hair fall from my head. *"Mr Frank"*, Luigi said, *"are you sure you want this, your mother will kill me."* *"No, Luigi"*, I replied, *"my mother will thank you."* When I returned home that day, my mother nearly fainted. *"Oh my God, are you really my son? I haven't seen that face in eighteen months."*

So, forward in time. Here I am sitting in the Army barbershop, Howe Barracks, September 1966. Well, I

considered my hair short enough, thank you, but more hair was falling off in clumps as the barber did his duty. Short back and sides. I am sure most of the hair ended down my back which started a manic back scratching exercise.

Next visit was to the QM stores. We all arrived in some sort of formation and paraded outside the stores, being led in one by one. I was given a large kitbag. Then like a methodical machine, I was given what I can only describe as a huge amount of clothing. Battle dress, fatigue dress, KF shirts, PT kit, hobnail boots, gaiters, belts, webbing and brasses. Even underpants. You name it, it was in the kit bag. I was then given a very peculiar square piece of kit called a 'housewife for the use of.' What on earth was that?

Back into the Training Wing with all these piles of clothes that had to be put away. All had to be ironed. We had an ironing room, a blanco room, and a drying room. The clothing had a very defined smell of mothballs and a newness that didn't seem quite right.. I noticed dates on some clothing stamped WD-1955.

The good corporal came into the dormitory shouting: *"Welcome to the army! Right, get out of those civvies and put on the following"*, showing us article by article what to wear. My first reaction to wearing a KF shirt for the very first time was what the hell was this piece of clothing? (having just dumped my Ben Sherman). It was itchy, it was stiff, it was hairy, it had that slight odour, and it was bloody uncomfortable. Eventually, we all resembled a sack of shit. Some shirts were too big, some were too small, as with most of the clothing we were issued with. But this was all sorted out one way or another by swapping or going back to the QM stores only to find them shut.

Another pain whilst in training was the boxing of bed sheets and blankets. All bedding had to be boxed Monday to Friday. We were taught to blanco belts, webbing, and gaiters. Of course, all the brasses had to be polished as well. Then the crème de la crème - the bulling of boots that were stiff and hard. What a nightmare that was. Hour upon hour of spit, polish, and more spit, but it also had to be Cherry Blossom Kiwi polish, nothing else would do. Most or all of our equipment came from National Service and left-over gear from the Second World War. The webbing certainty came from Noah's Ark. Then we were issued with BD: battle dress, for the uninitiated. Now, if you thought the KF shirt was bad, imagine thick itchy material that consisted of, or felt like, sandpaper



between your legs. This was worn by Second World War soldiers and National Servicemen; large baggy trousers, a short tunic that buttoned onto the trousers and around the waist a blankoed belt with very shiny brass buckles. How the soldier in the war wore this stuff was beyond any logic? Who on Earth thought that this uniform was comfy, and above all, who chose the material? I still shudder to this day.

Being just 15 during September 1966, it never occurred to us that we had to carry on schooling. After our first very confusing week, we were welcomed by the Royal Army Education Corps for three hours a day. Our tutor was a Major Austin who was a great storyteller. He had been captured by the Japanese during the Second World War, and he told us of his many adventures as a prisoner of war.

As the weeks went past, we drilled, marched everywhere, had PT, did road runs and walked around the Kent countryside. Payday as I recall, was on a Wednesday. We had to march to a desk, and say name, rank, and number. I was given £1.00! In civvy street my first week's wage was £6.10s, so I was somewhat short to my eyes.

We were then introduced to the SLR, LMG, the GPMG and the SMG. We learnt about field craft, how to camouflage and before I knew it five weeks had gone by. We were allowed a weekend pass home. Once home it felt positively weird. My mother said I had changed. Gone was the hippy long-haired yob. She was very proud of me. All of us returned to the barracks late Sunday night with tales of naughtiness with girlfriends and drunken states of stupor. I'm sure I was the only virgin in the Training Wing with the amount of gossiping that was going on. But strangely enough, I felt at home again with the lads.

Winter was very soon upon us. Early frosts cold, wet and miserable. We played rugby, with a freezing wind blowing at our red knees and up our baggy shorts. Then came murder ball, which was very interesting, a few bloody noses and crushed rib cages. I'm sure the PT instructors had a sadistic streak in them. They reminded me of Dennis the Menace from the comic book. After that came the obligatory boxing. Three two-minute rounds. Well, I had never boxed in my life. As far as I was concerned, it was still 'make love not war'. I had had a few playground fights in my time, but this was a whole new ball game. Of course, my opponent could box. I lasted about 30 seconds before I hit the deck with a bloody nose which made my eyes water a bit. Some bright spark shouted, "He's crying"..... "No, I'm not!" I bellowed.

Most Monday mornings, we had drill parade. Not my favourite. We donned battle dress uniform, sharp creases down the sleeves, trousers immaculately pressed, boots bulled and belts and gaiters blankoed to perfection. I still remember very cold weather and each rank being very

carefully inspected. Not once was I singled out for being scruffy. Looking back, there were some boys, that no matter how hard they tried, always looked like they had been dragged through a hedge backwards.

Very soon, we passed out from Junior Soldier training. A very proud moment for all our friends and family. The boy was turning into a man at last. After leave, we returned to barracks feeling like old sweats and watched the next intake of boys walking nervously through the gates. We then had to make a choice of what we wanted to do next. I chose the Corp of Drums. Our drum instructor at that time was a LCpl Rick Baker and very soon I was a side drummer and a pretty good bugler as well, under the superb direction of Drum Major Windsor Clarke MBE. We did a few shows and a few Beatings of Retreat. I have very fond memories of DM Clarke. I think we all did. I got promoted to J/LCpl. I felt very proud with my first stripe and a small pay rise that went with it.

During 1968, I formed a band. Dave Birch was the singer, Steve Snoad on drums, with me on guitar. We played 10 songs during the string quartets interval at our Christmas dance. Our opening song was, 'It's all over now' by the Rolling Stones, followed by, 'Hole in my Shoe' by Traffic. That string quartet never came back on stage, and we played the only ten songs that we knew over and over again. We were allowed us to wear our scarlet drummers' tunics for the evening, I think trying to look like the Beatles – we failed!

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## ADVERTISEMENT



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# ONCE A QUEENSMAN

By Simon Wilson

I joined the Army as a Gentleman Gunner in 1981. In 1984, I was commissioned into the Queen's Regiment, joining the 3rd Battalion in Fallingbommel. Seven years later, I decided to leave... but ended up transferring to the Royal Military Police. So having been bullied/asked by Mike Hurman, I now present a truncated and personal account of my life in the Army.

Each element of that – my – career was uniquely different. The first encapsulated basic soldiering and observing and experiencing how to be led. The experiences of a first tour in the Falklands in 1982, in the aftermath of the conflict, was brought into more recent focus in 2014 with the award of the South Atlantic Medal following the Sir John Holmes independent medal review.

The honour of being commissioned and permitted to lead some of the finest soldiers in the world in the 3rd Battalion was a dream realised. The fun and sheer exuberance of being fit, in great company both in the platoon and the mess, and embarking on a career I had always wanted, was heady stuff. Combine this with the fast-paced life of mechanised infantry\*, operational tours in Belize and Northern Ireland - life was very good. (\*OK, fast-paced was perhaps stretching it as we limped across the North German Plain)



Interlaced was a stint with the Infantry Junior Leaders Battalion (IJLB) and, as the 1990s loomed, a time with the Armoured Infantry Training and Advisory Team in Sennelager. No longer a callow youth, other demands began to play. A near miss with marriage (at that time) and appreciating that life and times cannot be replicated, I sought a new challenge.



This led me to a fresh career with the Red Caps. It wasn't a defection, or an act of disloyalty, rather an opportunity to develop. When I transferred, the Army was not as busy as it had been. To a degree, it was more settled than it had been for a while. While still dangerous, Northern Ireland had lost some of its febricity and nearly a decade earlier the United Kingdom's persona as a tough opponent had reasserted its place in the world. Life was settled and I was married to a wonderful wife, the slower pace was enjoyable and JHQ Rheindahlen a great posting for a first-time non-academic staff officer. Early command of a Provost Company again in Rheindahlen followed which ensured stability. Well as the saying goes '...just when you think you have it cracked', things change. The second part of the 1990s was somewhat busier. Tours in South Africa (where I met up with an old comrade Les Edwards), Sarajevo, Banja Luka and Kosovo followed. Regimental and staff appointments gave a breather at the beginning of the Millennium, but Iraq interceded in 2003 and again the next year. Then by the end of the decade and while in command of 5th Regiment Royal Military Police I went as Provost Marshal





with my brigade which formed Joint Force Support (Afghanistan) and a couple of years later was back, this time attached to the United States Marine Corps (USMC) as an advisor to a Special Police Brigade.

After a few interesting appointments – the Badger Cull, a short attachment to the Cabinet Office and ending in the ARRC - 37 years had shot by. And that was it – gone in what seems a blink of the eye with retirement.

So, what is this non-academic doing now? Well, after working for a couple of years in Government departments as a consultant, this highly non-academic former officer is now enrolled as a full-time mature student. You never really leave though, do you? Links with comrades from my first battery and the mess in Fallingbowl keep it all real and great memories accessible. The Queen's Regimental Association does such a good job in keeping us all in the zeitgeist and fundraising for the Royal British Legion is always engaging.

Oh, and "Why the title?" you ask. Well, being a Queensman defines me and all those I had the privilege to serve with. QFFQ!

# JUNGLE TRAINING CENTRE BELIZE

By Joe Dormer

As a young private soldier in 7 Platoon, 1st Battalion The Queen's Regiment, our tour of Belize was only topped off at the Jungle Training Centre, (JTC) because this was the be the be all and end all for the reputation of your platoon. At JTC, you were tested to the maximum on your jungle skills by the staff, who consisted of Jimmy Juhel, Chopper Harris, Barry Camille, Martin Guilfoyle, and others.

The entire two weeks consisted of patrols skills, tracking, jungle shooting skills, navigation, and survival. I remember eating snake, widgey grubs, and making peppermint tea from some god-awful plant that did not taste of anything.

Weapons were checked daily and anyone with the slightest bit of rust was condemned to carry a rock

called 'Wille the Weapon Rock', in their bergen for the day. Also, if you left a piece of litter in the jungle, you were punished with 'Ronnie the Rubbish Rock'. I can happily state that no-one in 7 Platoon ever carried the rocks - we were that good!

The final exercise was extremely hard, and the culmination consisted of attacking the Jungle Headquarters of the JTC staff. Unluckily for them at this time, we had Lt Richard Madeley, (Royal Marines) who defied convention and trained the platoon to carry out a night attack on the base. This was unheard of, as tactically you just could not see a thing at night. Navigation to the JTC HQ was a feat of unbelievable skill that I had never seen before and as the platoon runner I saw how Madeley did it. He and I carried out a recce and he placed broken twigs every pace in large



Ginge Taylor and Joe Dormer in the water. Jimmy Juhel standing





Stephen Hibbert and Cpl Mark Addison



LCpl Ken Ansell who knocked out the Assoc Sec during Novices Boxing!



L-R Benney Bence, Joe Dormer, Martin Wheeler, Gary Aylott, Malcolm Wilkinson, Jimbob Robinson, Ginge Taylor, Lindredge and Worzel



Gary Aylott topless at the JTC



Joe Dormer



plant leaves from the HQ to our forming up point. That night we held each other's webbing and he felt his way to the ambush/attack position. The attack went well, and I remember Benny Bence setting off a trip flare, but we were already in position. I remember Chopper Harris running to the radio to DF the position, but he was 'shot' immediately.

The ENDEX call: the greatest words I had heard at that time, and I remember just being so physically exhausted.

I had been bitten, cut, eaten, infected and had more Bastard thorns in my hands that the actual bush I grabbed whilst falling. I lost about a stone in weight, but it was also one of the greatest achievements a private soldier could attain at that time.

My greatest memory was seeing Jim Bob fall into the shit pit and run at full pace to the nearby river to wash off the disgusting substances all over him. Greatest days ever.



Cpl Roderick Smith



Lt Richard Madeley RM



Joe Dormer with the SLR and Rod Smith



Cpl Roderick Smith



Joe Dormer and Malcolm Wilkinson





# GARRISON COMMANDER SOUTH GEORGIA

June - November 1991

By Ian Raynes

The South Georgia Garrison for the first half of 1991 was formed by the 2nd Battalion from Canterbury under the command of Major Bob Wilby (his second tour there) with Capt Holmes as OC Recce. In June 1991, I took over as OC accompanied by Lt Mason with his Recce Platoon from our posting in Cyprus. At least the penguins and other wildlife were getting some form of regimental continuity.

South Georgia was a fantastic posting, with a real sense of adventure. Everything about the place is stimulating: the history, the wildlife, the geography even the daily chores of functioning in such an environment. Part of its charm and its peril is its remoteness. During our tour, a young soldier, whose name escapes me, was struck with acute appendicitis whilst on patrol. First, he faced a gruelling 6-hour evacuation back to King Edward Point, through deep snow. There our doctor, Major Steven Cade, decided that he needed hospital treatment including an emergency operation. This required the duty frigate, based in the Falklands, to steam at maximum speed towards South Georgia until they were within helicopter range. This took 48 hours. The helicopter then flew to King Edward Point where a lucky break in the weather allowed a landing. The casualty was then loaded aboard, reaching hospital facilities at Mount Pleasant another 48 hours later. He recovered completely from his ordeal, but there was always the possibility of a worse outcome.

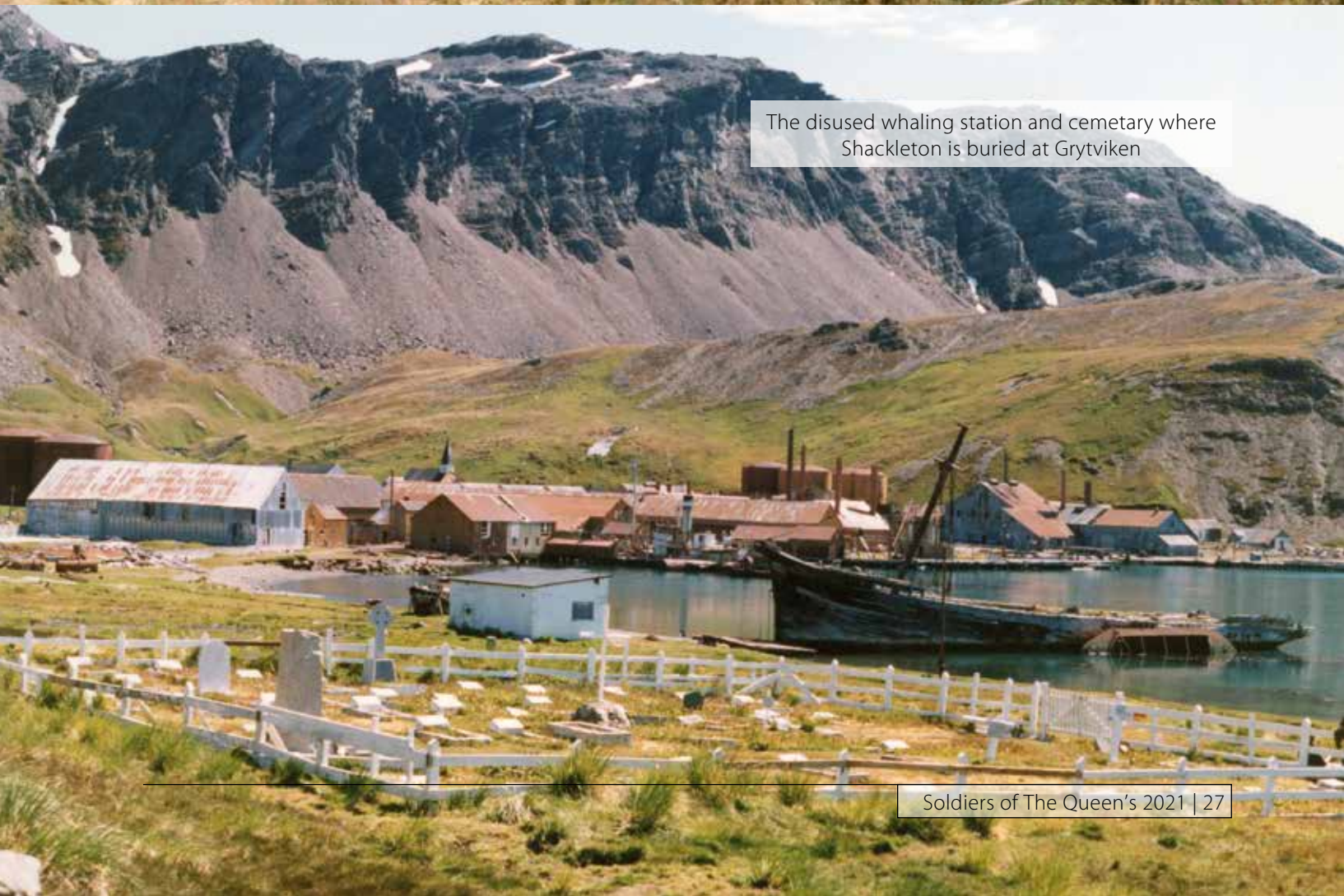
Part of my duties as Garrison Commander, together with the civilian harbour master, was to manage the foreign fishing vessels that plied the rich fishing grounds around the island. These were mostly Russian or Polish. I was also the island's coroner, an office I was called on to exercise just once in my tour. A Russian fisherman had been knocked into the sea while hauling in nets. A boat was lowered to him immediately, and he was still conscious when he was reached. His waterlogged winter clothing meant that he was too heavy to lift into the boat, so he was towed back to the ship, which replaced the water that had been slightly warmed by his body with fresh, freezing water. By the time he was hauled from the sea he was dead. He had been in the sea, which at that time was around - 2 degrees Celsius, for barely ten minutes.

Centuries old whale bones on the shore of  
King Edward Cove





Shackleton House out at King Edward Point with Grytviken in the background



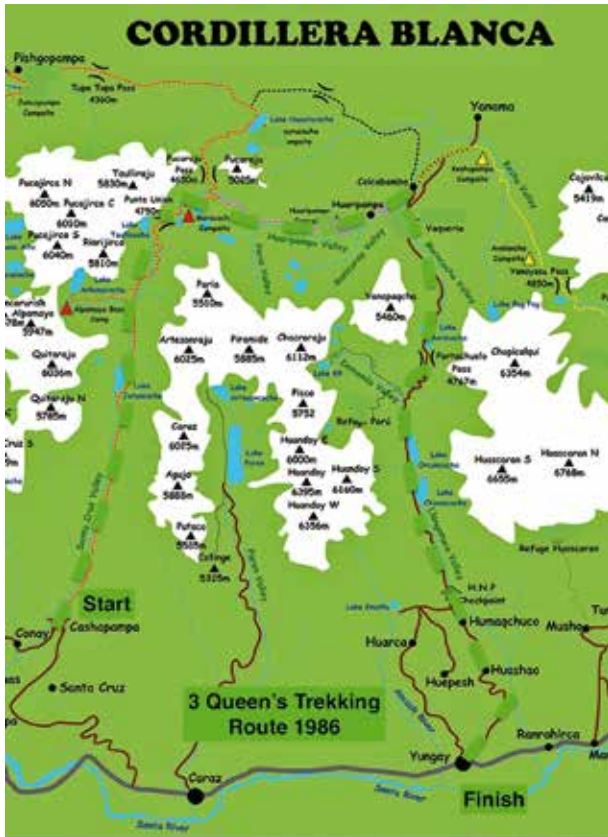
The disused whaling station and cemetery where Shackleton is buried at Grytviken





# EXERCISE HIGH CONDOR, PERUVIAN ANDES EXPEDITION, 1986

By Mike Hurman



3 Queen's Trekking Route Peru 1986

Ex HIGH CONDOR was a three-week, high altitude trekking expedition mounted from Belize by one officer and seven soldiers of the 3rd Battalion over the period 19 July-9 August 1986.

The aim of the expedition was to undertake a high altitude 62 km trek in the above 10,000ft Cordillera Blanca Range in the Andes and then to travel south and visit the ancient Inca City of Macchu Picchu.

Initial planning began in Canterbury before departure for our 6-month tour to Belize. Funding was raised from Army Adventure Training funds £600, Headquarters' The Queen's Regiment £400, 3 QUEENS PRI (£400), raffle takings in Belize (£520) and £2920 (£365 each) from the participants. In addition, we were given 100% cash-in-lieu-of-rations (CILOR) at £2.02 per man per day.

The team selection was voluntary and open to the whole Battalion. Deposits were taken to imbue a sense of serious commitment. Medical training and medication were provided by the doctor at Airport Camp in case of mountain sickness.



Me at Punta Union Pass at 15,500 Ft and feeling the effects



Mike Hurman on a train to nowhere  
Aguas Calientes



Day 9 Trek Donkeys



The Caracol Ruins 2017. In 1986 when our Recce Platoon were tasked to protect the site from armed looters, the site was almost totally jungle covered.



Our original route for trekking was denied three days before departure due to recent activity by the Sendero Luminoso (The Shining Path Guerrillas). Frantic signals with 'immediate' precedence were dispatched to the Defence Attaché in Lima. A new route was planned, and official agreement was given to proceed with just 24 hrs to spare. Flights by civ air had already been booked and paid for.

We flew from Belize to Miami, Florida, had an overnight stay in Miami, with a flight the next morning to Montego Bay, Jamaica and a new flight on to Lima. Of course, some of our baggage got delayed by 24 hrs. We were met and transferred to our hostel accommodation by a member of the Defence Attaché's staff. Re-connected with the missing rucksacks, we caught an overnight bus to Huaraz and found another hostel for our £1 a night luxury accommodation. Huaraz is at 3050m or 10,000ft, an ideal height to begin three days of acclimatisation walks before going higher to minimise mountain sickness. Pulse rates were recorded and were regularly at 120 per minute.

Three days later we met up with our 'arriero', a muleteer, to carry the bulk of our rucksacks for the next two days as we began the trek and continued to acclimatise. The mountains around us were immense. Two days later, the mules headed back down. Onwards and upwards in the thin mountain air in bright sunlight where the ultraviolet rays can cause eye damage below and above the snow line; eye protection was important.

Our daily progress ran something like this: 16 km in 7 hours, 12 km in 6 hours, 13 km in 7 hrs up to the Punta Union Pass at a height of 4150 m or 15,500 ft. Despite our efforts to acclimatise, I and others were experiencing the unpleasant effects of mountain sickness and in my case dysentery. We were now on a descent phase down to 3300m that took longer due to sickness. I decided to shorten the trek and get back to the town of Yungay where a visit to a doctor confirmed our diagnosis and I

was given an anti-spasmodic injection (*Ed: A medication that relieves, prevents, or lowers the incidence of muscle spasms, especially those of smooth muscle such as in the bowel wall, but perhaps that's too much detail*).

Two days of recovery saw us back on schedule and this was followed by our bus journey back to Lima to fly south to Cusco again at an altitude of 3300 m. Cusco is an ancient Aztec city and the wall construction in the town is amazing. The next day we took the train to Aguas Calientes, a small spa town with hot springs. Spa town is a rather grand description for a fairly basic and filthy-looking town close to the railway lines with old rusting steam engines left to die.

We left early the next morning, crossing the railway line for the climb up to Macchu Picchu, arriving before any other visitors. This mid-15th to mid-16th century Aztec citadel perched on the top of a steep mountain ridge was found by the explorer Hiram Bingham in 1911. I can only describe the site as 'awesomely iconic', an amazing feat of engineering and building skills. We felt so lucky to be there. We had stretched ourselves mentally and physically during the trek phase and now were enjoying a UNESCO world heritage site almost entirely on our own. It is a memory that I, and I am sure all the team members, still cherish today.

Our return to Lima was not without a little drama. The train was full and the station master would not let us board. Timing was tight so we simply bribed him with American Dollars. We were on the train, floor space only and heading back to Cusco for a flight back to Lima, followed by our return flights via Montego Bay, Miami and so back to Belize.

I believe our expedition aims were achieved and the experience gained by all was immense. The fact that



Day 9 Lake Jatuncocha



Day 18 Aguas Calientes



Mike Hurman at Macchu Picchu



Above Macchu Picchu at Aguas Calientes  
Standing: Nick Bryan, Nick West, Mike Hurman and Simon Penny. Kneeling: Baz Baeza, Mark West and Rob Fahy



Map of Peru

we had a fluent Spanish speaker in Pte Baz Baeza was also of huge value. Our team accountant was Cpl Nick West RAPC, our medic Pte Mark West, our photographer Pte Nick Bryan, the remaining team members LCpl Laird, Pte Simon Penny, and Pte Fahy.

## FROM SUSSEX WEEKEND WARRIOR TO OPERATIONAL INTERROGATOR

By Les Trott

I joined 9 Platoon, C Coy, 6/7 QUEENS in 1981 at the Haywards Heath drill hall, after attending my recruit's cadre at Basingbourn. An NCOs cadre followed, and with Senior Brecon under my belt, I served as platoon sergeant and subsequently C/Sgt platoon commander of 9 Platoon for some years finally being promoted to CSM of C Coy, 6/7 QUEENS based at Crawley. Then along came the amalgamation of the Queen's Regiment with the Royal Hampshire Regiment to become the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (PWRR).

It was decided that the Crawley drill hall was to close. Luckily for me, I was offered the opportunity of joining 145 Brigade Specialist Training Team (STT) based at Malta Barracks in Aldershot. I joined the team as the CSM of the Potential Officer Wing. While serving with the STT, I was encouraged to add a string to my instructor's bow by helping on the Conduct After Capture Wing, and to attend several courses at the Intelligence HQ in Ashford, Kent, which would enable me to qualify as

an instructor teaching various related subject over the course of a couple of years. So, I attended the Conduct After Capture Course, the Prisoner Handling and Tactical Questioning Techniques Course and the Regular Army Long Interrogation Course.

Courses completed, I was then asked by the Int Corps to accept an attachment to the Joint Services Interrogation Organisation (JSIO). Due to political correctness, sometime after I joined the team, we were told to drop the word interrogation from the title and instead use the word 'intelligence'.

JSIO handled all aspects of preparing UK Armed Forces and some intelligence agency personnel in the event they were ever captured by enemy forces or taken hostage. The types of units and people who were deemed to be 'prone to capture' such as SAS, Pathfinders, SBS, Marines but also Army, RAF and Naval air crew were included. There were also some more shady units



that need to go unmentioned. It was mandatory for all of them to undergo this type of training. We were also involved assisting the Long-Range Recce Patrol (LRRP) School in Germany, training NATO troops.

A typical exercise would follow on from an escape and evasion exercise. The trainees would be captured and brought to an interrogation centre. These centres in the main were permanent buildings (some purpose-built) located around the country under the cover of existing barracks/bases. The trainees would be held for a period of 24 hours and be totally under the control of JSIO. Troops on SAS selection spent more than the usual 24 hours in captivity and in the main were treated more physically harshly than other trainees, as you might expect.

There would be a guard force attached to JSIO for each exercise, typically consisting of RAF Regiment, RMP, Parachute Regiment personnel or the like, depending upon the location and the identity of the trainees. The guard force would always have dogs attached, which heightened the feeling of reality.

During 1994 whilst working with JSIO, I attended the Former Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) Handlers Course at Ashford. A handler in human intelligence (HUMINT) terms is rather like a police officer gaining information from informants. Following my successful completion of the course, I was asked in a gentlemanly manner in accordance with the Int Corps way if I would like to be posted on an operational tour in Bosnia. I readily accepted.

We worked as a small multi-national team in Bosnia. We were based independently at Tuzla air base with the American forces and the team was made up of around 20 British, American and Norwegian military personnel. We worked in 4-man teams; one of the team would be an interpreter. The interpreters were British or American. We wouldn't use locals as most of the intelligence gained was 'NATO eyes only'. There were also problems if you had a Croatian interpreter, for example, as they couldn't travel into Serbia and vice-versa, so it made sense to have our own.

We would travel out each day in our 4-man teams in two vehicles and visit our informants, attend information gathering meetings with 'persons of interest' or carry out recces of 'locations of interest'. During the evenings we would write up the reports as intelligence summaries.

One of the most memorable of these meetings was with a high-level local government official. After the obligatory one hour wait, my American interpreter and



Les Trott on a visit to the Polish Para Brigade QRF

I were shown into a large office with a massive wooden table, behind which sat an imposing figure flanked by a guard on either side of him in uniform carrying AK47s with a large national flag hanging from the ceiling behind. I was there to gain an understanding of the current political situation in the town and hopefully to find out some more about a reported foreign fighters training camp in the nearby hills that the CIA were desperate to locate. But no! I was subjected to an absolute tirade as to why the NATO tanks were driving over his roads damaging the tarmac and when were we going to undertake repairs. I have to say, however, that the following hour or so was an interesting and fruitful meeting and one I will not forget.

Halfway through that tour, eight of us were moved and took up residence in a private house around two-hours drive from the base in Tuzla. We rented it for cash from a local dignitary. The house was close to an area that was of great interest to the powers-that-be within NATO. It was checked for bugs regularly by our CIA friends and we had enough ammunition, arms, and ordnance to start a small war if need be. We also had a quick reaction force available to us who came from the Polish Parachute Brigade and were stationed around 10 miles away. We used to carry out a readiness drill about once a month. One of us would call the Polish Paras from the sat phone and say "*Birmingham, Birmingham, Birmingham*", then hang up. It would usually take around 20 to 25 minutes and the road outside would be crawling with Polish paratroopers with an American Apache hovering over the back garden, always a very comforting and welcoming response.

After returning from Bosnia, I continued working with JSIO as an active member working in the UK, Germany, Norway as well as a couple of other countries.

And that in a nutshell is how a Sussex Weekend Warrior became an operational Interrogator.



# MEMORIES OF EXERCISE LIONHEART 1984

By Alastair Cooper

It is definitely true that we get nostalgic with age. I am not sure if it is more so for those who have been in the military, but I do see the evidence in Facebook posts on the various military groups I am a member of. This got me thinking about Exercise LIONHEART in 1984 and set me off to the cellar to dig out any memorabilia I still had. I found a map, a couple of copies of the LIONHEART newspaper, an Orange Forces recognition guide, some photos and my diary. Unfortunately, I only had a cheap 110 instamatic camera in 1984, so the photos aren't great. I also googled Exercise LIONHEART and found the official exercise newsreels on YouTube. I had never seen them before, and they brought my memories to life and added some context to the content of my diary. They are well worth a watch and 5 QUEENS is mentioned in one of the episodes.

LIONHEART was the biggest ever British Army exercise and the biggest mobilisation since the Second World War. It involved a massive 131,565 UK personnel - regular, reserve and Territorial Army. The MOD chartered civilian aircraft and ferries to move over 50,000 personnel to Germany. A total of 290 flights left the UK transporting 32,000 personnel. This was followed by 150 sailings across the North Sea and the English Channel using civilian ferries, which carried 23,600 personnel with 14,000 vehicles and trailers. Providing the OPFOR (Orange Forces) was a force of more than 10,000 mainly German, Dutch and American personnel.

All this was way over my head at the time. For me it was my first exercise as a trained soldier, having only just completed my recruit cadre at Basingstoke in April. I



My Lionheart memorabilia



was a private soldier in 11 Platoon, D Company, 5 (V) QUEENS based at Maidstone TAC.

### **Saturday 15th September**

My Ex LIONHEART started with a civvy flight to RAF Gutersloh. It was memorable for a couple of reasons. It was only the third time I had been on a plane, and it was my 19th birthday! Clearly, I didn't tell anyone it was my birthday, even at that age I wasn't totally stupid. I do remember that we took our weapons onto the plane and placed them in the aisles, something that would be unthinkable these days. We moved by train from Gutersloh to Paderborn, but I only have vague memories of being on a train at night in an old-fashioned coach with compartments.

I was in Cpl Peter Rowswell's section and being 'the prog' I had the misfortune to get lumbered with the 84mm Carl Gustav anti-tank weapon, plus my SLR. No 'smudge gun' for me. One of my lasting memories of Lionheart is of lugging that ungainly metal tube around Germany and getting it caught up on anything and everything.

### **Sunday 16th September**

I have no memory of deploying from Paderborn, but I do recall the 10km tab into our positions. Quite a few of my platoon had diarrhoea, including my section commander Pete. Courtesy of the cookhouse at Paderborn, I assume. Tabbing along in an NBC suit with CEFO, a full bergen, rifle and a Charlie G was hard enough, but I was grateful I was not one of those stepping off the path in response to a bowel movement warning! We eventually arrived at our positions and started to dig in. This was my first experience of digging and living in a trench and it is etched on my memory for reasons I will expand on later. In my trench were Cpl Rowswell, Pte Mark English and me. Our position was on a forward slope overlooking a road that ran up the valley. On the other side of the road was a wood and Cpl Ira Hornigold's section were digging in there. I assume they were acting as some sort of blocking position. The other half of my section (LCpl Mick Jeffries and Pte Tony Hibbert) were in a trench to our left and Cpl Mark Garton's section was to our right, slightly further up the slope. I can't picture where Pl HQ was, but it consisted of Lt McMahon, Sgt Derek Whitethread, Cpl Lee Elvin and LCpl 'Jack' Hawkins. We were a few kms northeast of Alfeld am Leine, near Sibesse. Having watched the LIONHEART videos on YouTube I now realise that 5 QUEENS was part of the force defending the Sibesse Gap, which was on the main axis of advance for Orange Forces.



Pte Cooper during the march into D Coy's first positions



Pte Cooper taking a break from digging in. You can clearly see the black painted cap badge we were issued for the exercise



Our trench. The sleeping bay was at the right-hand end of the trench



### Monday 17th September

We spent the day digging and putting the finishing touches to trenches. The highlight of the day was when CSgt Rod Stockford crashed the landrover carrying our evening meal and we had to move it up to our positions by hand. Cpl Hornigold's section were dead chuffed since the landrover crashed adjacent to their positions and they got their grub first with minimal effort on their part. During the day, Cpl Rowsell had heated up some water - for tea, Mark and I had assumed. We used it to make a brew and offered some to Pete. He declined - which we thought was strange. He told us later that he had heated the water to wash his soiled underpants in! Pete brings this incident up each time we meet at the Kohima Reunion in Maidstone. Some things you can never put behind you. We had finished our trench, and to be fair, had made a pretty gash job of it. It had overhead cover, but we had piled too much earth over the sleeping bay. Mark was a bit claustrophobic, so he decided to sleep outside and just Pete and I slept in the sleeping bay. That night it rained, and the weight of the wet soil bent the pickets in the roof and it started to cave in - or so it felt. I must have gone to sleep with this in my mind because I woke in a panic, sat up and cracked my head on the bent picket. This woke Pete with a start and we both burst out of the sleeping bay with visions of being buried alive. I still have recurring bad dreams about being trapped underground, courtesy of a poorly constructed trench in 1984.

### Tuesday 18th September

This was a day of waiting, interspersed with some moments of humour. This included the moment when we were overflowed by an enemy aircraft and had to mask up. WO2 (CSM) Karl Dye chose to dive under a landrover. As our SPSI, WO2 Rickerby, was telling us we were too slow at masking up, the Rover drove off exposing a red-faced CSM Dye - without his respirator on! In the afternoon, some local kids appeared on our positions to see what we were doing and were persuaded to bring us back some beer. The beer was a highlight of the day closely followed by watching the REME wrecker recovering the crashed landrover.

### Wednesday 19th September

First contact! German Panzer Grenadiers in Marders and heliborne troops attacked our positions. Cpl Hornigold's section took the brunt of the attack, which went right

through their position. The remainder of the platoon provided fire support from the ridge, but Ira's section was put out of action. At one point, I had to move to a neighbouring trench occupied by Ptes Adrian Rickersey and Ken Cole. When we came under artillery bombardment, Ken was closest to the entrance to the trench and the umpires declared him a casualty. This hacked Ken off no end as I had taken his spot inside the trench and effectively got him killed. Oops! Ultimately, we were overrun by the Orange Forces who carried on their advance westwards, while we spent the rest of the day filling in our trenches.

### Thursday 20th September

Thursday found us back in action against the German Panzer Grenadiers, this time in a small village. The umpires were out in force selecting casualties, which helped indicate who was winning and ensured that the casualty evacuation process was practised. From the YouTube videos, I now know that some soldiers were taken right back through the lines to the field hospital and beyond. I don't think they did this with TA units since we had to be back at work on 1st October! I ended this engagement at the dressing station with a tag on my webbing saying that I had lost an arm. I really wish that I had kept the tag! At this point, the battalion was stood down and we rested for the afternoon, while the staff worked out what to do with us for the next few days. What followed was a definite highlight of LIONHEART for me, not from a 'pure' soldiering perspective but from an unrepeatable experience point of view.

### Friday 21st September

We were tasked with conducting an escape and evasion by sections. We were told that the Germans were patrolling and that the march needed to be tactical. We were each given something from a 10-man ration pack, and I got a tin of sugar. Brilliant! I popped it in my respirator haversack and thought no more about it. My diary says it was supposed to be a 30km tab, but for our section it was nowhere near that, as I will explain.

I think we started out with good intentions, but the march soon turned into an epic adventure that I still marvel at today. We headed off as a section towards the River Leine, but our intended crossing point proved to be an unpassable utility pipe rather than a bridge. Undeterred, we turned left along the riverbank towards Alfeld. Clearly these were different times and the sight of a section of British soldiers wandering the streets fully armed didn't raise too many eyebrows. We avoided a patrolling Fuchs armoured car and ended up outside



a brewery. It was a hot day and some kind soul brought out a crate of beer for us. Beer by half sections, followed by a quick stop off for burger and chips. A successful escape and evasion is all about making the most of the opportunities that present themselves. In this case it was a school bus that was going roughly in the direction of the first RV. Cpl Rowswell had a quick dialogue with the driver and then we were on the bus. The kids were intrigued, but less than impressed with the smell. We got out at a place called Coppengrave and Cpl Rowswell knocked on the door of a house and asked if we could come in for a shower. Unbelievably, the answer was yes, for DM 5 each we could all have a shower. Scrubbed and polished we headed for the first RV, where there was an air of suspicion at our speedy arrival and fragrant air. We left the RV and 2 km down the road we managed to jump on another bus. Cpl Rowswell took off his combat jacket and sat there in his T-shirt trying to blend in, whilst the rest of us lay out of sight on the floor. About 10 mins into the journey, Pete shouted for us to get up and look out the back window of the bus. We all jumped up and there was Cpl Garton and his section trogging along the road. I can still see the look on his face when he saw us waving at him from the bus. He was not happy! We got off the bus at a place called Salzhemmendorf. We were 19 hrs early and needed a place to lie up until the following day. We found a friendly farmer, who had served with the Afrika Korps, and he let us stay in his barn. The barn was close to a hotel bar, and we decided to go in by half-sections for something to eat. I remember walking up the road and looking through the window to check before going in. Inside were Lt McMahon, Sgt Whitethread, Cpl Elvin and LCpl Hawkins which scuppered our plans for dinner. Through the power of Google, I have since managed to identify the hotel as the Gasthof Ratskeller and it hasn't changed a bit.

### **Saturday 22nd September**

We left our comfy barn and made our way to the Battalion RV, where we were told we had become mechanised. In practical terms, this meant we were being transported in 4-tonners rather than walking everywhere. We mounted up and headed to a large town called Witessin. At least that's what it says in my diary. I have never been able to find it on a map, so have clearly misspelt it. We spent the night in a large cycle shed at a school.

### **Sunday 23rd September**

Sunday morning found us still in the town called something like Witessin. We had the obligatory Church Parade before some more hurry up and wait. The highlight of the day was when Sgt Whitethread negotiated for the platoon to use the facilities of a nearby German house. Unbelievably they had an indoor swimming pool and a sauna! It was fantastic. We rotated through by sections and reappeared back in the cycle sheds clean and fresh-smelling. The rest of the company



11 Pl D Coy 5 (V) QUEENS. Left to right. Front row: LCpl Faulkner RIP, Cooper, LCpl Jeffries and Lower. Back Row: Rickersey, Hopps, Cpl Hornigold and English



11 Pl D Coy 5 (V) QUEENS Left to right. Sitting/squatting: English, Cpl Rowswell, Hopps, Cpl Garton, LCpl Jeffries, Cooper, and Sgt Whitethread RIP obscured



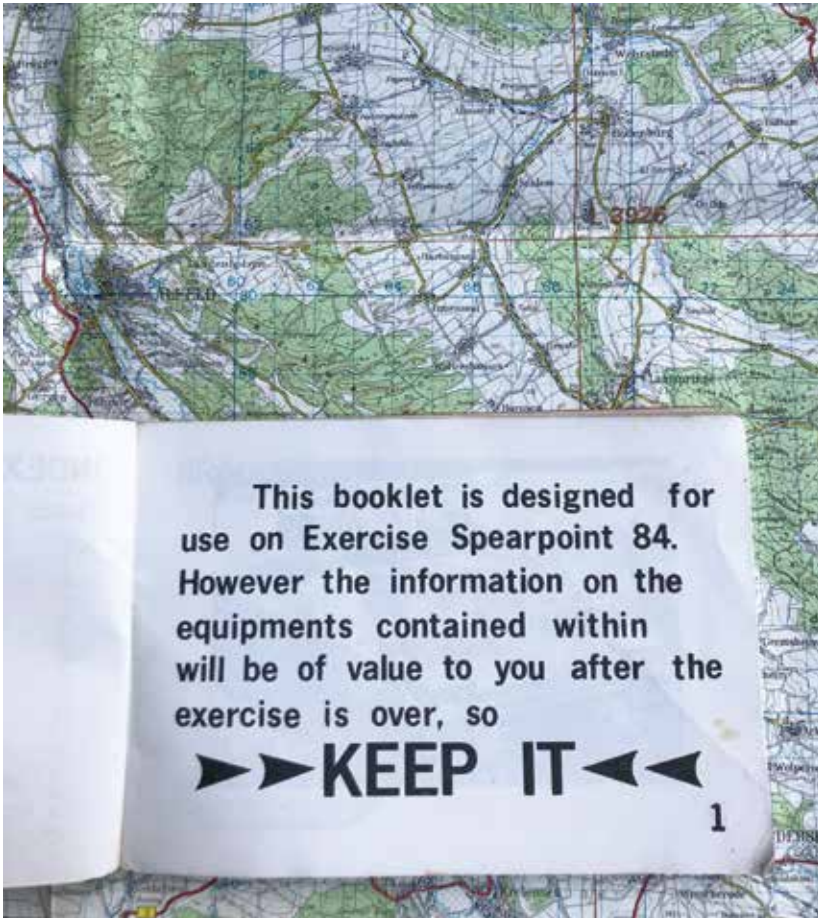
were totally oblivious to our frolics in the schwimmbad. For my section, this was the second shower in two days. We probably showered more in that week than we did at home!

### Monday 24th September

We left the cycle shed at 02:00 for Wessel to defend a bridge. This was another town I cannot find on the map! Clearly my spelling in the 80s was not up to scratch. On reflection, I wonder if I meant the River Weser, which does make some sense. When we got there at 0600 hrs the bridge had been 'destroyed'. Not sure if it was a reserve demolition, but in my diary it says that '10 Para had let the bridge get blown up'. According



Gasthof Ratzkeller Salzheimendorf



I doubt they expected anyone to take this instruction quite so literally!  
Page 1 of the Orange Forces Recognition Guide

to my Orange Forces Recognition Guide, 10 Para were part of the Orange Special Forces brigade in Week 1 of the exercise. We took up a couple of positions in a town and then moved again to take up positions guarding another bridge. This one was over the Mittelland Canal and there was a steady stream of barges travelling up and down the canal. It was pouring with rain as we dug shell scrapes in the fields either side of the raised road that led to the bridge. There was some sort of hut near our positions that miraculously became unlocked and occupied by PI HQ. I assume the bridge was deemed blown because there was a pair of RHA regulars living in a small tent on the bridge preventing troops crossing it. I remember eyeing up their cold weather DPM parkas enviously as I sat shivering in my soaking wet NBC suit.

### Tuesday 25th September

After a cold wet night, I treated myself to a change of NBC suit. This was first and only time that putting on an NBC suit has been a welcome action and it lifted my spirits. This breakout of personal morale didn't last long. We were overflown by a couple of jets and had to mask up. Surprise! I donned my respirator and discovered that one of the lenses had been smashed by the tin of sugar stored in my respirator case. A hard lesson learnt! This lesson was followed hot on its heels by an attack on our positions by a unit of Leopard tanks. I was lying in my shell scrape engaging the tanks with my 84 and could hear a hissing sound over the gunfire. Unbeknown to me, an umpire from the QLR had tossed a thunder flash onto our position to simulate the impact

of HE rounds from the attacking armour, and it had landed right next to my leg. Bang! The T-bang went off next to my left thigh ripping a hole in my NBC suit. I jumped up, holding my leg shouting and hopping around in pain in the middle of the firefight. "Get down you \*\*\*\*!" was the sympathetic response from my comrades! I was taken back to Company HQ where my wound was looked at. The double layer of combat trousers and NBC suit had saved me from



more serious damage. My thigh was heavily bruised, but the skin was not broken. WO2 Rickerby demonstrated he had not been paying attention during first aid training by applying the worst field dressing ever. I returned to my position at 1800 hrs limping slightly and found the wet NBC suit I had thrown away the previous night to replace my dry, but damaged trousers.

We received orders for a platoon fighting patrol that night and boarded a 4-tonner to take us to the start point. It was pitch black and the driver nearly tipped the truck into a ditch on two occasions. We were extremely glad to get out and start the patrol. It was raining quite hard as we moved slowly through the open farmland. At one point we halted, and I heard Lt McMahon say "What's this .....aarrghh!" which was followed by the reply "Electric fence, Sir" from Cpl Garton. We sniggered quietly in the darkness. We could hear armour moving in the distance, which sounded almost prehistoric, but we saw nothing.

### Wednesday 26th September

ENDEX was declared at 0815 hrs and was accompanied by a celebratory smoke grenade that landed at the feet of the platoon commander, who was not best pleased. We left our bridge at midday on an overloaded 4-tonner, which would never be allowed these days. After a long, cold, and very wet journey we arrived at Athlone Barracks, Sennelager, where we spent the night in the tank sheds.

### Thursday 27th September

R&R was due to start at midday, so we were up early to clean weapons and equipment in preparation for the recovery back to the UK on 28 September. The afternoon, evening and early morning was spent sampling the delights of Paderborn, which was swarming with squaddies. It was quite an eye opener for a teenager who had only just left school.

LIONHEART felt important and exciting at the time. But looking back now I realise we were actually part of something historic. It was a huge exercise, the like of which we are unlikely to ever see again. It took place at a time when there was a genuine risk that the Cold War would become a hot one. It proved the British Army could successfully mobilise and deploy reinforcements to 1 (BR) Corps in response to a Soviet attack.

I am still in the Army Reserve and in the 37 years since LIONHEART I have worn 5 other cap badges (RA, PWRR, RE, R Mon RE, Gen Staff), served on operations and commanded a Regiment. However, LIONHEART remains one of the standout experiences of my service and I know that I am not the only one who thinks like this. I still see the lads of D Company, 5 QUEENS at the annual Kohima Reunion at Maidstone TAC (now ARC) and at some point, during the evening, we will always regress and reminisce about Exercise LIONHEART 1984.

*One morning in Werl, I rashly knocked on the QM, Les Wilson's door clutching a pair of DMS boots, in the hope of being allowed to exchange them. I saluted smartly and stood there. Les looked up briefly and said "Get out" in that incomparable way he had. I saluted again and returned somewhat crushed to the C Coy office. On entering, the company clerk was holding the telephone receiver at arm's length, to avoid being deafened it seemed. After a few moments, the line went dead and he replaced the receiver. "Quartermaster's compliments, Sir," he said, without a flicker, "and please report to his office." Back I went, more bemused than ever. As before I knocked on the door, opened it and threw up a salute. As I did so, new pair of DMS boots hit me in the chest. "Now f- off...oh and I'll have a beer waiting for me at lunch time!" This was Les's way of being kind without showing anything that might be interpreted as weakness! What made it all the more impressive was that the boots were my size.*

Jonathon Riley



# MEMORIES OF BELIZE

## 1977

By Mark Dunham

Having attended RMA Sandhurst for 3 weeks at the beginning of 1977, and now qualified for a Short Service Limited Commission (SSLC – also known as the cornflake-packet commission), my first experience of regimental life in the 3rd Battalion was being greeted at the airplane's steps by a group of photographers wanting to know our opinion on Guatemalan attacks that had taken place that very morning. Suspecting a 'set-up', I kept my council, letting my colleague do all the talking. We later discovered that the group had come from the Sergeants' Mess to frighten the new 'Rupert'!

Sent to man a jungle outpost, and having survived the (luckily dead) 'jumping tommygoff' (the lethal Fer de Lance snake) that was placed by the platoon in the doorway of my bunk, we were flown onto the observation post at Cadenas by helicopter. It was here, new to the Army, new to the battalion, that I heard the two best 'soldier quotations' of my time in Belize. When asked why he wasn't using 'Twiggy', our night-vision scope, a soldier replied:

*"Sir, the f\*\*king f\*\*ker's f\*\*king f\*\*ked!". And when one soldier was asked by his mates why he hadn't put up his mosquito net, he philosophically replied: "If you get bit, you get bit. If you don't, you don't. That's the way I see it."*

There then ensued two months of living in a clearing in the jungle, where the Officers' Mess comprised of a simple hut, with a full-size female tarantula pinned to a board by the entrance.

During this time, training with the SAS was a real bonus. One jungle clearance patrol (clearing the jungle for

a helicopter landing) saw a competition to relieve the boredom of cutting down trees. The hunkiest of our corporals was pitted against the medic in the SAS brick, a small but very square-shouldered monster, aptly nicknamed 'Horse'.

Two trees of similar girth had been chosen. The whistle blew. Our corporal leapt forward and set about his tree with sweat springing from every pore. Horse strolled up to his tree, examined it calmly, made 3 powerful strokes with his machete, and down came the tree. That is why he was in the SAS.

Two months of adventure training and sunning ourselves on the islands then followed.

For our final two months, we enjoyed the pleasures of being in a camp near the border with Guatemala. It was a very rainy night in July when we were suddenly moved to alert state Amber Red (the threat of invasion by Guatemalan forces was imminent). Everyone would deploy except the infantry. Out went the SAS, out went the artillery and out went the engineers. I handed back my platoon to a properly trained officer. The Colonel arrived and explained that at this point he should send me back to the UK as I had not completed my training). I said that I hoped that he had forgotten about me. He agreed to and I stayed.

Four days later, having made the headlines in the UK papers, we welcomed the arrival of Britain's Harrier 'Jump Jets' from No 1 RAF Squadron. Having re-fuelled in mid-air, and after a quick cup of tea in the Officer's Mess in Belize City, in order to let the Guats know they had



Cadenas OP viewing down into Guatemala. Only reachable by helicopter. LS top left



The Tommy Goff or Fer de Lance.



arrived, the Squadron Leader led two planes to 'buzz' the border. History records that they hovered at the border crossing point with landing lights on. A clear message to Guatemala to desist from their aspirations of invasion. It worked!

The Harriers also 'buzzed' the camp for a laugh. Health & Safety wouldn't allow it today. But having a Harrier jet just 100 feet above all the hats thrown in the air in the

central aisle of the camp, knocking us all off our feet, was truly an unforgettable sight.

Two more weeks of topping up the tan prepared us all for returning to the UK. And so, whilst the battalion made plans to help with the firemen's strike, I set my sights on university. My time in Belize was truly memorable and a part of history in the making. Typical really of service with the Queen's Regiment.

# PETER HUBERT'S PILOT

By Howard Beeston

I thoroughly enjoyed reading the 2020 edition of the Journal and I was particularly interested in Paul LeMasonry's account of his 1979 helicopter crash in the company of Peter Hubert. Paul may not be aware that there was another wire strike incident involving the same pilot only the day before Paul's crash.

Since the pilot and I had been cadets in the same platoon at Sandhurst, I knew him reasonably well. To preserve his anonymity, I will call the pilot 'Rupert' (Paul – for a modest bribe, I can reveal his true identity).

My memory is a little hazy about some of the contextual facts, it was 41 years ago after all, but I remember the incident as clear as day. A Coy combat team had leaguered up somewhere on Soltau (thanks Paul; I had forgotten it was Soltau) and we were attending a firepower demo, or something similar, on the far side of the training area some distance away from the company position. We included my fellow platoon commanders Ken Hames and Andy Bickerdike. By chance I bumped into Rupert at the end of the demo and after catching up about what we had done since we last met, Rupert offered a lift back to A Coy in his Gazelle (definitely not a Sioux). Faced with the alternative of a drive back in a Bedford, easy decision.

As we all strolled towards his Gazelle, Rupert casually commented *"This is the fastest you'll ever travel this close to the ground unless you're in an F1 car."* With hindsight, this was the juncture when we should have reassessed the situation and headed back to the Bedford.

Anyway, we jumped in the Gazelle, me in the front with Rupert and Ken and Andy in the back seat. I had a headset so could hear and talk to the pilot, but Ken and Andy did not; this subsequently proved to be important! We took off and Rupert demonstrated some 'standard

procedures' en-route. Some of these procedures seemed to me to be pretty nonstandard verging on hazardous but hey, what do I know?

For his final stunt, Rupert climbed to several thousand feet and uttered, and I will never forget his exact words: "This is what we do when faced with an engine failure at altitude." At this point he turned the engine off, pointed the nose of the helicopter into what seemed like a near vertical dive and 'auto-rotated' towards the earth at a speed I was previously unaware can be achieved by a helicopter. I knew what was happening, but Ken and Andy had absolutely no idea. I confess I was feeling somewhat anxious, but I turned around to see mutual last rites being administered in the rear seat. I think they may even have been holding hands!

Anyway, Rupert turned the engine back on in time to avoid denting the training area and we continued on our way. I knew Soltau pretty well, so I navigated for Rupert. The conversation went like this:

Me: *"Follow this road, Rupert."*

Rupert: *"Wilco."*

Me: *"Rupert, look half left and you will see a pylon line in the distance."*

Rupert: *"Seen."*

Me: *"Turn towards the pylon wires."*

Rupert: *"Wilco."*

Me: *"When you hit the pylon line, turn right and follow it."*

Rupert: *"I don't hit pylon lines."*

Next day he did!



# THE ARMOUR'D RECONNAISSANCE PLATOON OF THE 3RD BATTALION

By Mike Hurman

## Fallingbostel, W Germany

The role of infantry close recce is to provide an eyes and ears function for the Commanding Officer. To see without being seen. This function had been integral to the Infantry battalion since the days of Attila the Hun. Then some wise guy in the MOD, probably of the cavalry persuasion, decided that both close and medium reconnaissance should be brought under one roof. So, in the late 1970s, our recce platoons were disbanded, and the cavalry took over the provision. It was not long before commanding officers realised what they had lost and fought for their return.

I had previously been in the then landrover and later Ferret-borne Recce Platoon, led by Captain Nick Carter with the 1st Battalion in Werl, and had developed a good understanding of the role.

In the summer of 1983, my Company Commander, Major Amédée Mieville, knowing my past and that the recce function was returning to the battalion and this time with the Scimitar fighting vehicle advised me to ask for an interview with the outgoing CO, Lt Col Richard Graham and request that I be considered to take on the command of this new role. So on the basis of 'don't ask, don't get', I asked, was considered and I received. I was soon dispatched to join an exercise in Southern Germany with the 9th/12th Royal Lancers to learn the tactical use of the CVRT Scimitar. Later in the year, amongst training for the forthcoming tour to West Belfast, I also attended the RAC Close Recce Commanders' CVRT Gunnery training course, Bovington. On return from Belfast, the Armoured Recce Platoon began to form.

Sgt Alan Songhurst was our Driver & Maintenance Instructor for the platoon and so he, I, and WO2 Steve Hinton my 2IC, along with the other vehicle commanders, travelled to Munster in Germany to the Armoured Delivery Workshops. We were able to choose which eight vehicles that we wanted from a long row, held in a massive vehicle hangar building. They were then delivered to our barracks, and we were provided with our own garage in the battalion armoured vehicle park. Call signs 21,21a, 22,22a, 23,23a, 24, and 24a were now on site in Fallingbostel.

My first task was a shake-out training exercise. I planned a ten-day practical training exercise and selected a patch of land some 200 square kilometres in size and had it 443d (*Ed: The clearance by which we were able to rampage over the German countryside causing untold amounts of damage and for which the Secretary was responsible for administering for two years.*). We were not too far from the Inner German Border and local landowners were, within reason, friendly towards us.

This land was in private or public ownership and under our remit based in West Germany, with the correct planning, we could use it to train on. This ground was more realistic than our normal armoured training area on Soltau/Luneburg Heath. We practised navigation, advance to contact, rearward passage of lines, observation post screens, command and control, reporting, and many other basic skills to bring us up to a battle state of readiness. At that time, track mileage was not such a problem, so we packed in the miles.

Amongst other training commitments, we were to showcase ourselves in front of the battalion for the Royal College of Defence Studies (RCDS) demonstration of an Armoured Battle Group. The notes in the Queen's Journal at the time describing me 'pulling my hair out' refer to our CO, Lt Col David Beveridge, wanting us to speed across a recently ploughed, slightly uphill, soft area of sand from a standing start hidden in the woods. We were to be closed down and rock to a stop in front of the stands of observers. Then each further element of The Armoured Battle Group followed behind us.

Try as we might the soft sand put a huge torque demand on the engine and gears. After the third complete engine pack failure and subsequent change carried out during the night after each day's rehearsal, the REME showed me a bent piston rod and said that this is what was happening. I took the piston rod, put in my pocket and on the next briefing from the CO who was, again, getting very agitated about our slow speed, I diplomatically showed the piston rod and said if we continue there will be no engine packs available left to change, and



we would not be able to take part. A big climb down occurred, and all went well.

To enable the Scimitar vehicle to work in a wartime scenario, a team effort was required. We worked in sections of two vehicles, and two sections made up a half-platoon group. One half was commanded by me and the other by WO2 Steve Hinton. The two half-platoons would work as an overall single group but were semi-autonomous. In general, we would form a screen 2-3 km in front of the battalion. We would work as an early warning, then drop back to form a flank protection force or rear protection against airborne assault.

3 QUEENS wartime role was under command of 7th Armoured Brigade (The Desert Rats) positioned forward within the 1st Armoured Division Tactical Area of Responsibility (TAOR). Our main defensive position was south of Hannover. The Medium Recce Regiments formed the covering force, fighting a delaying battle, buying us time to dig in and form the main defensive position.

Our recce platoon would be the first to see and coordinate the covering force moving back through our position and they would hand over the remnants of the enemy lead recce to us in order to continue the reporting and identification of the enemy's main axis of advance.

Often on training exercises, we would work all day in the advance to contact, marking Forming up Points (FUPs) for the attacks and move to provide flank protection. At night, when not route marking for night moves, we would form a night screen of observation posts. It was exhausting work. Having said that, we had a lead role in the armoured battle group's capability and survivability: we knew that we had to produce the goods!

Since re-forming of the infantry recce platoons throughout BAOR in 1983 and 1984, many of the regimental recce platoons had not been judged well on their range live firing. Equipped with the Scimitar vehicle and its 30mm Rarden Cannon main armament, I was determined that we would change that when it came to our turn.

We had to play the RAC at their own game. They were the gunnery instructor gurus of the Army. I discussed this with WO2 Steve Hinton, and we also had a good briefing of what to expect from the 9th/12th Lancers. We swept the firing points clean, the vehicles were immaculate, they were lined up on the firing point with precision. Steve Hinton coerced the Quartermaster's sign writer to



I (BR) Corps Map



9th/12th Scorpions firing to our left



23A Live firing

produce regimental signs such as indicating the entry point to the range, the ammunition point, waiting area, feeding area. It was crazy, we almost had signs for signs! Signboards marking areas also taped off with white mine tape such as: 'Designated Smoking Area', (albeit about 1 metre in diameter so only one person at a time could smoke!), Visitors' Area, and a sign for an area called TATOD. And when the Range Reporting officer asked: "What is TATOD?" Steve H quickly replied: "Well sir that's where we talk about the old days". They were most impressed and as all infantry men know, bullshit baffles brains. We did everything, and more, the cavalry way rather than a 'we are Infantry and we run ranges this way' type of mentality. So, with that stage production style of approach, we had to back it up with some superb gunnery skills. The 30mm Rarden Cannon is no easy weapon to master. It takes a great deal of training. We were given some first class help from the 9th/12th Lancers, they brought their training system over to our barracks so that we could practice each gunner and commander for each of the 8 vehicles. We practised for weeks to get to a decent standard.



This would be our first time firing since our Rarden Gunnery courses at Bovington and Catterick the previous year.

The vehicle had two weapons, the 7.62m coaxial machine gun and the 30mm Rarden cannon which fires high explosive (HE) rounds, armour piercing (AP) rounds and smoke rounds. For each target identified, the commander directs the gunner onto the target, states which type of round and how many to fire. When you have the Inspection Team listening to each command and then assessing the accuracy of each round fired, it is quite a pressured environment. I do remember my Gunner, Rudie Hodge, hitting targets more accurately when we were masked up for the Nuclear Biological Chemical (NBC) phase. The firing was from static positions, and some from fire and manoeuvre, so my driver, Simon Penny, had his work cut out as well. He was responsible for the vehicle maintenance and had to listen to my commands on which positions to move to next, whilst battened down, just viewing through the armoured glass periscopic vision slits. No easy task.

Our Recce Platoon received an outstanding report from The Royal Armoured Corps Gunnery Wing after our week of firing on the Bergen/Hohne ranges in January 1985. We were judged to be as professional as the best of the highly experienced RAC Recce troops. In less than a year of training, this was high praise indeed coming from the RAC Gunnery Instructors. I believe that we were the only platoon in BAOR to receive an outstanding report that year. A true reflection of a great team effort. I gathered later, that it was this achievement by the platoon, that put me at the top of the list for a two-year posting to The Royal Armoured Corps Centre at Bovington, Dorset, as the Infantry representative and Close and Medium Reconnaissance Instructor so 'Thank you boys!'



Recce Pl, 3 QUEENS, 1984/85 Gunnery Course



Hohne Ranges 1986  
On front louvres REME: Wilf Reynolds and VM.  
On top: Don Davidson, Nigel Brittain, Simon Penny  
Sitting on the grass: Mick Lawler, Tim Gates



C/S 21 and 23A night firing



Firing the co-ax



RCDS demo



Loading onto rail flats





Mike Hurman cleaning the co-ax machine gun after firing with WO2 Steve Hinton assisting



HQ BG N



Puma landing in the jungle



Jungle Training: Stephen Kilpatrick and Ian Hunter RM

By early 1986, our time in BAOR had come to a close with a unit move to Canterbury. Our Recce Platoon had proved itself both on the ranges and tactically on the ground as a quality reconnaissance asset in support of our Commanding Officer, and his ability to utilise the armoured battlegroup effectively. Our Battalion's reputation at Brigade level was high, and we were a worthy element of the 1st Armoured Division. Infantry armoured reconnaissance remains a potent grouping and we were part of that function and proud of it.

### Recce Platoon tasks in Belize 1986

By March 1986, the 3rd Battalion had been posted to Canterbury and then on a tour in Belize. I was then the Battalion Intelligence Officer (IO). The CO, Lt Col Bob McGhie, made it clear that no-one except he or I would give the Recce Platoon any tasking. They would undertake specialised work such as patrols to combat illegal arms supplies apparently moving through Belize from Guatemala to Mexico. Another one-off task was to combat grave thefts by armed gangs near the excavation of the Mayan city of Caracol deep in the Jungle near the Guatemalan border. These tasks were all highly political and the potential for an exchange of fire was high. The CO needed to be sure that he had the best men on the job. The platoon also helped in the running and training requirement for the Battalion



Map of Belize



NCOs' Cadre, utilising their skills and abilities to set a high standard.

**Falkland Islands, South Georgia and Bovington  
1987 -1989**

After my time as IO, I was posted out of the battalion in January 1987 to Headquarters British Forces Falklands Islands (HQ BFFI) for four months working on the J3 Army desk in the Joint Headquarters commanded by an Admiral. I was solely responsible for the livelihood of the 42 men based on South Georgia and many other army related tasks in the Falklands. Re-supply of food and mail to South Georgia was an alternate visit each fortnight by landing ship logistic (LSL) or parachute drop from an RAF Hercules. I liaised with both forces to ensure the requirements by OC troops were met. The Hercules air drop was often delayed by the fast changing weather patterns off King Edward Point near Grytvikken. The parachute air drop was into the sea and coordination for the rigid raider borne pick up had to be timed perfectly before it sank! Communication was by telex message



1987 The LSL moored to the new jetty. Grytvikken in the background



South Georgia

which I only sent once the Herc was ready for the run in. OC troops would then launch the rigid raider with the crew dressed in immersion suits. This air drop would sometimes take 2 or 3 days to complete due to the weather, the RAF never gave in.

Because of my South Georgia responsibilities, I was tasked to visit the island, situated 800 miles from Port Stanley, to the remote base near the old whaling station. I travelled on one of the monthly voyages by LSL. This was a 10-day round trip with 3 days at Grytvikken mooring on the newly completed jetty at King Edward Point allowing us to walk ashore. It was a demanding role for the troops based there, tasked to create a delaying battle in the face of another invasion. Most battalions used their most experienced men from their recce platoons and we were no exception.

The remoteness of the location required a doctor to be included in the 42 men based there. A casevac would take approximately 3 days using a Naval ship and helicopter shuttle service. The OC troops was also the Local Harbour Master, the Postmaster (South Georgia has its own Royal Mail stamps) and Justice of the Peace. During my visit, I inspected the pre-dumped ammunition supply up in the mountains behind the base. I went along with OC Troops for dinner with the Captain of a Soviet 'fishing vessel' that for some reason had its own KGB minder! Much vodka was consumed toasting one another!

I had a busy but interesting job in the Falklands and during a troop drawdown assisted in getting our numbers below 1900 men and women. This was a political requirement to have fewer military personnel than the number of Islanders. I was also LO to the British Antarctic



The Falkland Islands





1987 King Edward Point where the troops were accommodated, and the LSL moored alongside the new jetty in Cumberland Bay



Grytviken Whaling station and the Soviet fishing vessel taking on fresh water. Shackleton's grave on the left side.

Survey, the Postmaster and Minister for Tourism. I was responsible for the battlefield tours which were run by the Infantry and Gunners. I visited Goose Green, Pebble Island, Mount Kent and many other places. My 3-day R&R was spent on board the Naval Frigate being collected by their on-board Lynx helicopter. I certainly believe that I got the most out of my 4 months in the South Atlantic.

From the Falklands I was posted to Bovington where I spent two years instructing Close and Medium Reconnaissance tactics courses to the Infantry and Cavalry NCOs and officers at the Royal Armoured Corps Centre. By the end of my posting, I had spent nearly 6 years involved with the Recce role in some form or another.

# 1 QUEENS MORTAR PLATOON SHORT STORIES 1976 – 79

By Gary Walker

I must start by saying why I joined 1 QUEENS Mortar Platoon. It was 1974 and the 1st Battalion was in Wainwright, Alberta on Exercise POND JUMP WEST. I was serving with B (Holland) Coy at the time, and the company was halfway through a gruelling 10-mile combat fitness test in 30-degree heat. I remember as we took a five-minute water stop in a ditch on the side of the road, two open-top landrovers dragging trailers passed us, the occupants of which were giving us stick and shouting obscenities. I remember asking: "OK, who the hell are they?" and the reply was: "The bloody mortars!" came the reply.

Well, I thought, I'll have some of that! A week or so later the battalion had arranged a fire power demonstration. The battalion was all sat on a hill and the mortar officer Capt Carter stated, that as Lt Rocky Hitchcock was due to become the next mortar officer, he would be conducting the first fire mission. The two mortar barrels were sited off to our left as we looked out over the impact area. He gave them their fire mission orders and two rounds bedded in the baseplates. Rocky then gave us a description of the target to be hit, which was the middle of three separate earth mounds from left to right approximately 300 metres apart. He confidently sent his orders to the mortar line. A few minutes later, the adjusting round that should have landed somewhere around the middle mound, to everyone's surprise, landed on the right mound! No worries - just give a correction. Left 150 was the order. Shot, and that round landed on the extreme left mound! Lots of mumbling amongst the battalion onlookers followed. The mortar officer quickly went out of earshot, to find out what the hell was happening on the mortar line. After a 15-minute interval, another shot rang out and it landed smack on target. It turned out that the wrong charge was put on the first round, sending it further on. No harm done!

After returning from an Op BANNER tour of Londonderry, I started a mortar cadre. We were in Werl, West Germany, and of course part of a mechanised battalion and were trained in both ground and mech roles. The AFVs 432 became our homes for the next 4 years. Because I had been promoted to Lance Corporal a year or so earlier, I was at first a 'Number One', basically putting an elevation on a number 15 sight and turning a big wheel on a rotating disc for the bearing in



the back of the 432. We spent most of our time training either with the battlegroup on the Soltau–Lüneburg training area or Soltau and Munsterlager live firing ranges.

One day, during a long exercise, I was an assistant command post operator (ACPO) and during a fire mission my driver asked if I wanted a hamburger for lunch. Ever the gullible one for home cooking and bloody hungry, I accepted. He also asked if I wanted mustard with it.

Mmmm, I thought, yes, why not! Hamburger arrived - well of sorts. You know 10-man rations, out of the tin, and fried on a boiling vessel lid in margarine, then placed between two slices of stale bread. He said just before he passed it to me *"Here's the mustard"*. Now, I'm no chef, but a pint of yellow water served in a pint black plastic mug wasn't looking like any form of mustard that I had ever seen. I remember asking him: *"What is this?"* *"Mustard of course!"* came the reply. *"Rubbish! Show me the recipe."* He pointed confidently with his finger, and I read. 'How to make a pint of custard!' It went over the side. What I never understood was at the end of each phase of a battle and prior to moving to the next battle group location, the civilian blue burger van owned by a man named Wolfgang would be there in situ long before us set up and be awaiting our arrival. How could it be? How does he know where to go? Well, of course he had the latest radio system on the van floor and was listening to all of the exercise moves. I remember thinking: 'Never mind 3rd Shock Army trying to locate us. You just keep an eye out for Wolfgang with the black smoke rising from his van and you'll find us!'

What I could never get my head around was that towards the end of the year's allocated supply of ammunition, and the day's live firing, all rounds had to be fired off, as no ammunition was allowed to be returned to the ammunition bunkers. This was because if your yearly quota wasn't used up, then the following year's would be reduced by that amount (a case of use it or lose it). We then had to fire live ammunition into the impact area and, thanks to the heavy fog, not see the fall of shot. Great for the mortar line, though crap for the MFC.

Some regular work and tasks that had to be fulfilled were for the Royal Artillery. At that time, they had a mortar locating radar system. This was called Green Archer, was in service until the mid-seventies and was replaced by a system called Cymbeline. Even though they were the Royal Artillery, they didn't have any mortars, therefore they relied on the infantry units to fire for them. The ammunition that was fired was from their own allocation, and of course it was a week or so away from the barracks. The only small annoyance was with the amount fired. Because they were in training and trying to locate us, you would fire one round and then sit around for an hour or so awaiting the next shot! You never had any corrections; they were not interested in the adjustment, they just wanted you to fire a round so that they could locate the firing point. When they got bored, we would pack up and go home.







L to R: Brian Mortimer, Dutch Holland, Smugger Smith, Dave Lovell, Pinny Pinson, Glen Perkins and Johnny Lightfoot



Corporals Mess 1977 Leaving Function



German barmaid, Pte Dick Mathews, Cpl Dutch Holland, Sgt Phil Beard and Me.

and every so often, he would sing it. One day, after another rendition, an officer came up on the net and gave us all a right Royal bollocking, telling us what would happen to him, if the culprit got caught. All went quiet for one minute, then. *'Mahna, Mahna'*! You had to laugh.

Some of the platoon members were great characters, with never a dull moment. I have inserted a few pictures of the platoon members of the time. In the photo sat on the ground, is one of the last photos of Brian Mortimer (extreme left) who sadly was killed in a road traffic accident. If my memory serves me right, we were on one of the rare personal weapon range day exercises. Most members of the platoon were keen to assist and please. Weeks would go by without having to shower on exercise, just shave and strip wash. One day, the Royal Army Ordnance Corps organised a mobile shower unit. Five minutes that's all, in and out. Now where was my Larry Large Pack, with my freshly pressed combat kit, smelling of Germany's finest soap powder? The CQMS would arrive with it during a replen. First, fuel. If you were lucky, it would be issued from a tanker truck. The force from the nozzle was extreme. If you were unlucky, 20 or more jerricans would be tossed at you and it's hopper time. You, of course, were issued your 10-man rations, all of the same menu. No good complaining, all you would be told is swap it with someone. Oh yeah, swap an 'A' for an 'A'!



4 Div Exercise Convoy LCpl Walker and John Lightfoot, Ptes Pinson and Driver

Now I have just gone over my allocated 1500 words and I am happy to try again with another instalment of 1 QUEENS Mortar Platoon recalls. However my memory is not working as well as it used to. I therefore ask for your help with this. Just email me your memory, along with a photo or two, and I will try to include it in a future post.

Next 1980–82 to include memories of Canterbury, Belize and Fort Ord, California, USA

Gary.walker785@gmail.com



# EX POTENT GAUNTLET (1989): RECOLLECTIONS OF A BABY 'STAB'

By Barry Alexander

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In the late 80s, I was studying for A-Levels at Eastbourne Sixth Form College. Before moving to Sussex, I had been badged Queen's Regiment as a cadet in South West London ACF, so when it came to taking the next step, joining my local TA infantry battalion seemed a logical one. With a blind eye being turned to my age, I had started parading unofficially with 8 PI, C Coy, 5 QUEENS shortly after my seventeenth birthday. By the summer of 1989, I had turned eighteen and went on my first annual camp; a two-week NATO Exercise in BAOR.

8 PI was commanded by WO2 Barry Lane, with Ian 'Dutch' Holland as PI Sgt. I always felt (and still believe) that our platoon fostered high standards due to three ex-regular soldiers commanding our rifle sections: Iain Staines (ex-COLDM GDS), Chris McMahon (QUEENS) and Tim Castle (ex-LI). The months prior to our deployment had been spent doing lots of PT, weapon handling and NBC training. I will never forget LCpl 'Coops' Cooper presenting an NBC lesson backed up by OHP slides that he had meticulously hand-illustrated with the most hilarious cartoons of Russian soldiers, one of whom was named *Ivan Jerkabollokov*. It helped to take the edge off what was a deadly serious subject and still ranks among the best presentations I have ever seen given; and this from a chap who, like many in the platoon, was a tradesman in civilian life.

Ex POTENT GAUNTLET took place in September 1989, and I recall feeling very grown up when I had to submit a request for extended holiday to my Sixth Form College. When asked by teachers where I was going on holiday, it felt great to give the response: *"NATO exercise in Germany, sir."*

Getting to Germany was a massive task in itself. We paraded at Eastbourne and were driven by Bedford to Coy HQ in Hastings. Lots of 'hurry up and wait', interspersed with haranguing from OC C Coy, Maj Mike Rumsey, the CSM, WO2 Dave Peters, and various of our PSIs. After a fitful sleep on the parquet floor of the TA Centre, we were up at dark o'clock for the onward journey, first to Bn HQ in Canterbury and then on to RAF Brize Norton via South Cerney, a place from which eleven years later, I would deploy on the first lift for a tactical air landing operation into Sierra Leone (but that's another

story). A humorous incident occurred in which the guard had failed to wake OC Milan PI, Capt Whelan, who was sleeping in his store. Somehow, the good Captain managed to make it to Brize Norton, but separated from his kit, and later, he found that he was separated from his car. Throughout the exercise, with a sparkle in his eye, the CSM would refer to him as Capt 'I've lost my kit, my car and myself' Whelan, which aroused many a chuckle among the troops. Not for the last time in my life, as a junior private, I was 'dicked' for baggage party and spent a couple of hours throwing kit from the baggage carousel onto baggage wagons. Perhaps unsurprisingly, some of the party were a little less careful with the kit belonging to less popular officers and SNCOs.

After a flight to RAF Gutersloh, we were transported to a delightful transit barracks in Minden and were eventually reunited with our baggage and settled into accommodation to shake out and prepare for deployment. Weapons, ammo, rations, maps, and all manner of consumables were issued and after a day of activity, we received our initial orders. We deployed to our concentration area early on a damp Monday morning, our Bedfords making slow progress eastwards among the rush hour traffic on the autobahn. We were in location several hours later. The rain cleared and the afternoon was warm, just what you needed to make being NBC sentry that little bit more pleasant. My memories are a little hazy now, but within 24 hours we moved forward up the Sibesse Gap, with my section under Iain 'Sticky' Staines providing a guard for a reserve demolition on the enemy side of a minefield gap near the village of Alferde. We dug in and prepared to defend our ground. That we were the most eastern element of the battalion was a source of excitement and pride (apparently the Brigade Commander knew that 'Sticky's section' was charged with defending this piece of vital ground). It was all exciting to an 18-year-old schoolboy, but in hindsight the reality of the situation is clear – had this been for real, we would have been nothing more than an expendable trip wire to slow the advance of the Soviet hordes.

We spent the best part of a week in that defensive position. The CQMS would bring container meals before



dawn and after dusk, with the usual hard tack and cheese possessed for lunch. As well as the exercise picture, we also had to contend with the 'real time' G2, that a PIRA so-called Active Service Unit

was at large in Europe and was conducting CQAs in Germany. The prospect of facing down an armed terrorist with my SLR and blank rounds was not an inviting one, and my imagination would run riot when on stag at night. Towards the end of the week, we were joined by a troop of Challenger tanks which screened ahead of us and provided some flank protection, the chemical threat level ramped up and we spent an inordinate amount of time masked up. It was around this time that I remember we were visited by WO2 Scully from 1 QUEENS who was one of the exercise marshals, who complimented us on the standards of our position.

Shortly after this, our section was withdrawn behind the minefield back to the company's main defence position where we were held in reserve and had the luxury of moving into trenches that had been pre-dug. The following dawn saw the forward elements of 'Orange' Forces (provided by the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders) appearing on the horizon. Rumour control claimed that our MILAN posts had been well sited and would have defeated the attack, but that the Argylls had to complete the attack on our positions for the sake of the exercise scenario – (*Ed: never fight the pink!*). 8 Platoon's forward trenches were assaulted first, and the affair was quite jovial; one of our lads, Pte John Kenward (who would later serve in 3 QUEENS) told us that the Argylls had cleared their trench and offered out cigarettes before moving through. The same was not true when 7 Platoon's positions were cleared. Although our section was called forward to reinforce, Sticky held us back. I later discovered that this was because the exercise play had degenerated into a proper scrap between our lads and the Argylls; with fisticuffs and liberal application of 'Glasgae kisses' all round – apparently there was blood and snot everywhere.

With the Argylls having moved through, we were then put to the task of cleaning up the village – filling in trenches and picking up brass. One of our lads gave a handful of empty cases to a German farmer and was given a bottle of ice-cold apfelkorn in return. This was shared among the section and gave us a nice glow while we completed the clean-up.

Leaving Alferde at dusk, we then endured the most hideous road move that I ever experienced. The whole

platoon was crammed into a seatless Bedford for a trip that lasted 8 hours. The back of the truck was a confused knot of kit, weapons, arms, and legs. We did our best to sleep, but tempers began to fray and attempts to shift position to get comfortable were met with threats of violence. When dawn rose, we had stopped and many of us found we could barely move due to pins and needles in our legs. I have no idea where we were, but we spent the weekend in a harbour area and had a chance to go non-tac and have some beers and a barbecue, courtesy of the CQMS.

The second week of the exercise was spent on the offensive, supposedly pushing the enemy back whence they had come. My memories of this are now all very vague, save for the fact that we did a lot of tabbing, due in part to being dropped at the wrong location after the OC hitched us a lift by support helicopter, and that we took part in an assault crossing of the River Weser at night. During a lull in the exercise, I recall an incident in which someone started throwing small stones from a gravel track at members of another section. The hostile act was reciprocated with larger and larger stones until Gordon Prior, a 'long-serving' private, snapped and threatened to shoot the stone thrower. This led to half the platoon falling about laughing, while 'Sticky' Staines and Tim Castle had a quiet word with Gordon and calmed him down.

ENDEX saw us basking in the early morning sun on a beautiful autumn day having breakfasted on the new-fangled boil-in-the-bag ration packs. The final weekend of camp was spent cleaning weapons, de-kitting and enjoying a company smoker and some other 'cultural' activities in Minden that, among other things, involved alcohol consumption and the avoidance of further hostilities with the Argylls.

At the end of that exercise, I returned to my studies with an air of maturity and confidence. Service with C Coy, 5 (V) QUEENS and PWRR formed the foundation stone for my subsequent service as a regular soldier and officer in the Army Medical Services, particularly when I found myself working in support of a rifle company from 1 R ANGLIAN on Op HERRICK 6. That early mentorship from Barry Lane, 'Dutch' Holland, 'Coops', 'Sticky', Tim Castle and Chris McMahon has served me well. I have very fond memories of those years and have always felt a bond of kinship whenever I have met other ex-Queensmen, both regular and reserve.

This article is dedicated to the memory of Gordon Prior and Phil Miles of 8 Platoon, C Coy, 5 (V) QUEENS, both of whom passed too soon.



# THUNDERBIRDS/ IT 'AINT 'ALF 'OT, MUM

By Martin Wilson

## What have the names of two TV shows from the 1980s got to do with the Queen's Regiment?

The answers: in 1980, 6/7 (V) QUEENS sent 150 of its finest for two weeks training with the Oklahoma National Guard at Fort Chaffee in the next-door state of Arkansas. As the Oklahoma Guard units' shoulder patch displayed the Native American mythical Thunderbird, our 150-strong unit adopted the title of Thunderbird Company and borrowed *Thunderbirds are Go!* from the TV series readers may remember.

*'It Aint 'alf 'ot, Mum'* should be self-explanatory...it was hot, damned hot for our two weeks there with day temperatures reaching over 100 F (about 39C) and not much cooler at night. And that, I suppose, was part of the aim of the trip...to see if a British TA unit in European weight combat suits could function in heat like that. We could and we did but we did stop wearing Shirts KF under our combat jackets and swapped our combat trousers for 'trousers LW'. However, the major change we made to our usual routines was NOT to make the contents of our water bottles last for 24 hours: the Guard insisted we drank as and when we needed and refill our bottles from the water containers hanging on just about every tree on the training area. If the thought occurred to any of us about what might happen in real life combat --who would hang up the water containers then-- we must have been too polite to mention it.

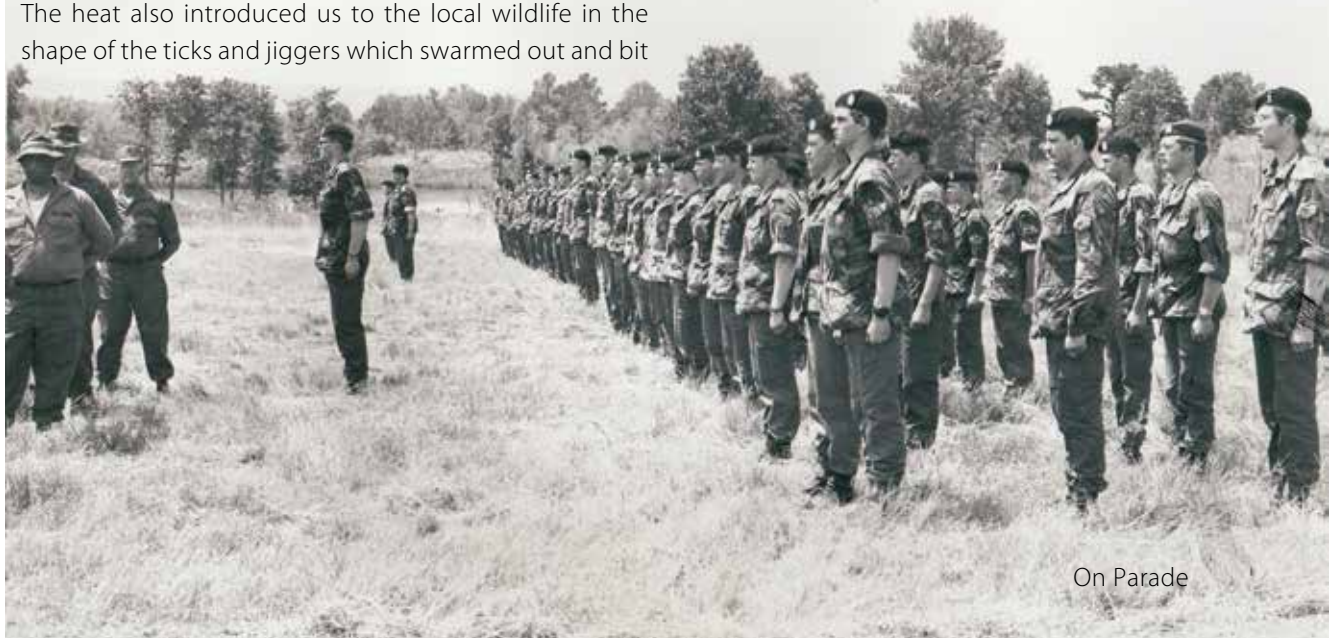
The heat also introduced us to the local wildlife in the shape of the ticks and jiggers which swarmed out and bit

us in all sorts of places and needed removing rapidly and frequently.

The other main aim of the trip was for us to have a sight and use of American weapons and familiarise ourselves with their infantry tactics. The Guard were rather disappointed that we hadn't brought any of our weapons from England! But far less easy to quantify was getting to know each other and operate as seamlessly as possible - something I had observed two years earlier on a joint RN/USN exercise in the Pacific, when I was there as a civilian not as a TA officer.

Thunderbird Company was commanded by Maj Mike Mercer with Capt Alastair Meldrum as his 2IC. The four platoon commanders were Lts David Wray, Peter Gibson, Tim Downey and Robin Smith. I was there to deal with the PR aspects, ably assisted by Cpl Trevor Munday. The British presence in this part of America attracted a great deal of TV and press coverage; and as many people there had never met anyone from Britain, in addition to speaking to a number of local civilian groups, I was frequently tasked with finding soldiers who could be interviewed, and most importantly understood, by the viewing American public.

We had a number of visitors from the UK. Our own CO, Lt Col Mike Dudding accompanied by Training Major Ewen Christian, flew over to see how we were doing and Maj Gen Sandy Boswell who I think was Director



On Parade



of Volunteers, Territorials and Cadets at the time also made an appearance, which led to my having to explain no end of times to the National Guard that not all British generals wear Tam O'Shanter's, and that only those who had served in Scottish regiments did.

The General had started his career in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

The Americans were generous hosts: you could get a helicopter trip round the training area for a Queen's cap badge! I can only assume the pilots needed to meet their allotted flying hours. Some of the Thunderbirds even managed to bum a ride from the Texas Air National Guard who were going back home for the middle weekend of camp and treated them to an overflight of the South Fork ranch - 'Dallas' was big on British TV screens at the time. We were all made honorary citizens of Oklahoma with a certificate to prove it and, delightfully, each and every one of us was made an honorary colonel in the Oklahoma National Guard with a printed commission to boot! My framed commission is on the wall of my office in my home in Florida next to the one beginning "Elizabeth the Second".

Thunderbird Company's trip was all of 41 years ago now. To set that in context, we were there when the absurdly young-looking governor of Arkansas (he was only 32, younger than I was for heaven's sake!) was running for re-election. He lost, but readers will certainly remember his name - William Jefferson Clinton. Also running for office of the President of the United States was a retired Hollywood actor, Ronald Reagan. 'Hmm', some of us thought at the time.

Something I also remember was the price of fuel. Because of whatever was going on in the Middle East at that time, the price



Cpl Trevor Munday - Asst Photographer and PR Man Friday



Armed MPs at Pay Parade.



David Wray being interviewed



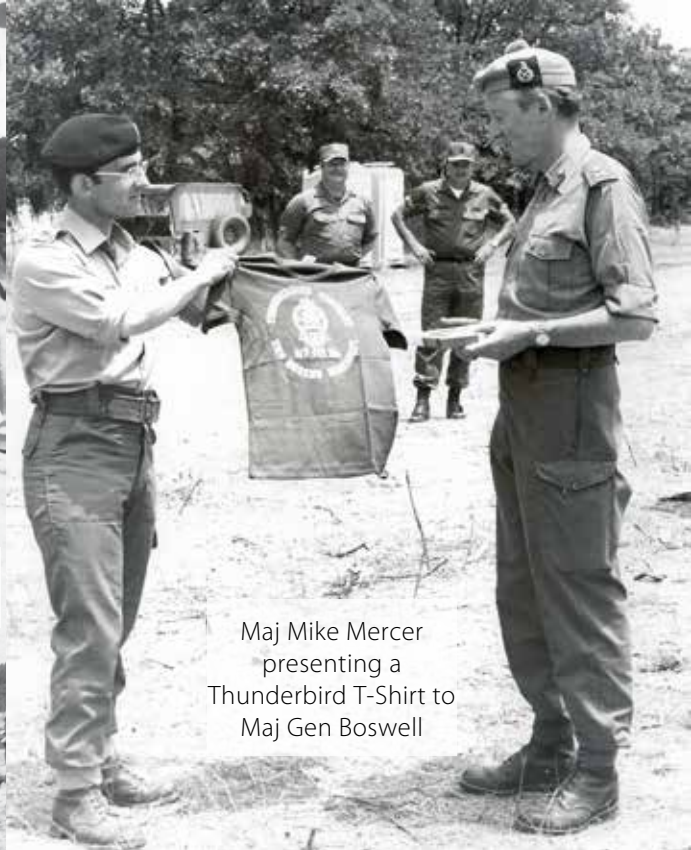
1978-Mercury-Cougar

of gasoline rose to (shock horror!) over a dollar a gallon. The pumps at gas stations could only register a price no higher than 99 cents! A dollar would have been 42p at the 1980 rate of exchange while folk in Britain were being charged 132p a gallon.





Lt Tim Douney and Maj Gen Officer Commanding Oklahoma National Guard. Note Thunderbird patch



Maj Mike Mercer presenting a Thunderbird T-Shirt to Maj Gen Boswell



Getting on Parade



Lt Peter Gibson with XM 203 Grenade Launcher



Search and Destroy - Jiggers and Ticks



Water replen in the field



Cpl Hicks being interviewed by local TV





Many in Arkansas were so shocked at a 'dollar a gallon' that they bought smaller cars like VW Beetles and sold their gas guzzlers at knock-down prices, to the delight of the numerous British-trained nurses working in Arkansas and who could now drive cars they could never have afforded before, simply because they knew that a 'dollar a gallon' was not alarming at all. One of them was kind enough to loan me her Cougar-A/C., stereo player, electric controlled windows/wing mirrors/seats and lights that came on even when you opened the door. A rude shock awaited me on returning to England to find the bright red MGB GT I had so proudly splashed out on a few months before now looking so...what's the word I'm looking for... primitive !



Hitchhikers in Dallas - Thunderbird Travel Courtesy of Texas Air National Guard



Martin Wilson awarding a Queen's badge to a local TV Rep!



Thunderbird T-Shirt



# NIGHT EXERCISE

By Paul (Chalkie) White

Sometime in late September/early October 1978, I arrived at Connaught Barracks, Dover to join 6 Pl B Coy 3 QUEENS. During my second week, B Coy had organised a night exercise behind the Officers' Mess. We were put into groups of 4 men and the object of the exercise was to get from Point A to Point B without being caught.

My group consisted of Ziggy Sigsworth, Dave Mills, Jim West and me. Jim West had joined as a boy soldier and was less than 6 months away from completing his 5 years. He was, as far as we were concerned, an old sweat. He was courting a young lady in Dover and was planning to marry as soon as he got out. This night he was supposed to be seeing her but couldn't because of the exercise. As we set off from the start line, he had a suggestion to make: *'who would like to go for a pint that night (on him) and still finish the exercise?'* We all sheepishly agreed and off we set.

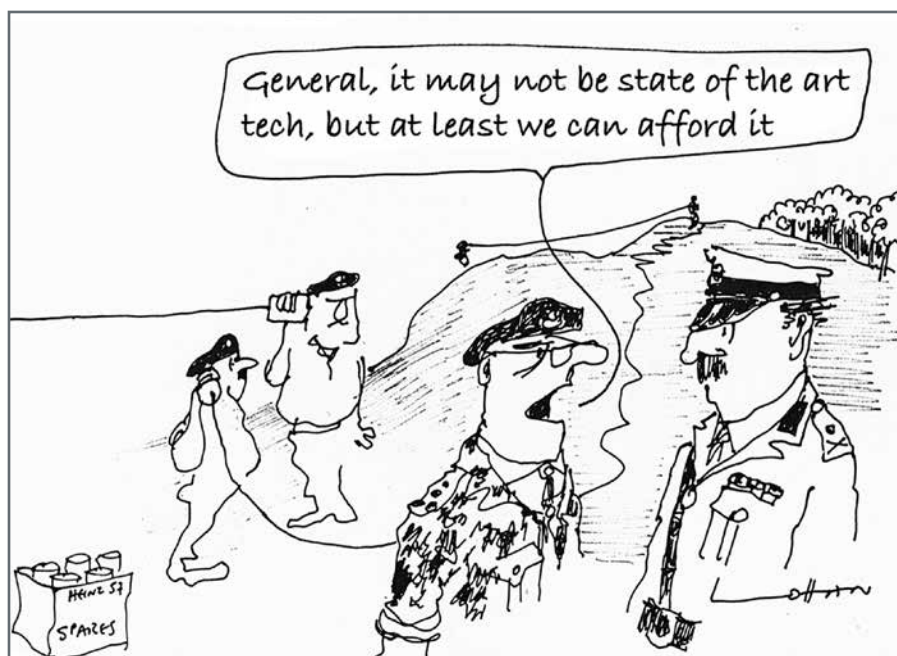
Being the newest of the four of us, I had no idea what trouble I would be facing if we were caught. But being young, naïve and full of bravado, I followed on. We headed away from the Officers' Mess to the bottom of

the small valley where there was an 8ft fence which we climbed over; then, as I remember, another, and on to the railway lines. We walked on the main line railway to the North end of Dover - about a mile - till we came to a bridge. We climbed up and onto the main road, and over to the pub which was directly opposite.

The four of us walked into the pub in full combats and cam cream and were greeted by Jim's fiancée and parents. We spent about half an hour there, time enough for a pint and a smoke.

A good night from Jim and we set off back to the barracks. We arrived at the finish line, the last group in, having evaded the junior NCOs trying to catch us. We were congratulated and Jim West was singled out for his leadership and experience. We all shuffled away as quickly as possible, trying not to breathe near anyone and give the game away.

The next three years followed a similar path. Fortunately, I was never caught for anything and never had to do more than a couple of days locked up. How? I'll never know. Luck I suppose.





# THE 2ND BATTALION IN THE DOLOMITES

By Mike Hurman

Exercise COMICI QUADRANT in the Dolomites from 27 August - 5 September 1990 was an adventurous training expedition for twenty-seven soldiers and officers from C Company 2 QUEENS based in Minden, West Germany. For many it was their first time in mountains at heights of between 8-10,000 ft.

This expedition was almost cancelled before it had begun by Headquarters BAOR in Rheindahlen. In order to take so many men, I had to write two identical expedition requests. I was telephoned by the HQ and told that this was too many men: *"They will get drunk and cause trouble!"* I said that they would be too tired and at 8000 ft up a mountain there was no beer. I said that I was leading the expedition along with three JSMEI qualified platoon commanders and guaranteed that there would be no problems. Agreement was duly provided.

No sooner had we left Minden by train enroute to Trento in Italy and were approaching the border, one of the NCOs came to tell me that one of the lads had left his passport behind. *"But don't worry sir, we will smuggle him in."* We were all in 6-seat style carriages with a sliding door. They hid him up on the luggage rack behind their rucksacks and acted up rowdy and drunk, offering the customs chap a can of beer whilst showing their own passports. The inspector could not move on fast enough. It worked!



Via Ferrata



My bivvy in the rocks



My group on the ladders



Me on one of the many ladder sections



On one of the routes



We spent our first night in a campsite in the town of Molveno at an altitude of 2,720ft. The town is situated below the central part of the Brenta region of the Dolomite Mountains. We left the next morning for an arduous ascent of 5450 ft up to 8170ft near the Rifugio di Tosa, a mountain hut that we only used to purchase extra liquid supplies. Despite some moaning, we all made it before it got dark. We bivvied up amongst the nearby rocks and boulders. This would be our base camp to which we would return. The next day, we broke up into our 6/8-man groups and sampled the delights of the Via Ferrata. Some days we took all our kit to bivvy up elsewhere, and some days we would take in circular routes returning to our base camp. The appeal of our base was that bottles of local wine could be purchased from the Rifugio for a drink in the evenings.

The Via Ferrata has routes around and up the mountains using fixed climbing aids of wire ropes, rungs, pegs and ladders. Some routes are easier than others, allowing us a varied and progressive choice of introduction over the next five days. The sheer cliffs drop away from narrow routes cut into the sides of the mountain. We wore seat or chest harnesses with short 'cows-tail' slings and karabiners to attach to the cables or ladder rungs for safety. Some stretches required ascending metal ladder sections to reach a new level of footpath. Often when one looked up from the base of the ladder, it disappeared from view over a bulge in the rock face, adding to the sense of trepidation. Many of these ladders were buckled, having been hit by lightning in the mountain storms, a storm level which we would sample early one morning from our bivvy site. I was leaning against a large boulder chatting to a few of the lads, it was raining, and we had watched as lightning bolts were striking the nearby mountain tops with explosive force. Suddenly a lightning bolt struck the top of the boulder



Breakfast



Another ladder section



The group clipped on



Me attached with "cow's tail" for safety



An evening of war stories fortified by the local wine



Molveno campsite

I was leaning against, leaving the smell of freshly shattered rock. Quite an experience. Soon the weather cleared to blue skies, and we were on our way trying out new routes. By the end of the 5 days in the mountains, there were plenty of war stories to be told and we descended back down the mountain to Molveno.

I had planned for two days R&R before our return journey to Minden. Most of the group were happy to spend the next two nights in the campsite with fees paid and some cash for food. To account for the DRSA monies, I needed receipts for the food. I think the lads mugged a few old ladies for their shopping receipts outside the supermarket and spent their money on beer. I chose to visit Verona and Venice. We all met up two days later at Trento rail station for the trip back to Minden with no one missing, arrested, or lost. The soldier missing his passport managed to re-enter Germany without any fuss: I don't remember the exact method used but he made it. By the end of the 10 days, we had all pushed our psychological boundaries in the mountains, definitely achieving the aim of an adventurous expedition.



My group on one of the walks



A small glacier that we had traversed

*There are many ways of describing an officer who has taken on too much alcohol. Let us say that when Major Tim Trotman, as OC C Coy 1 QUEENS in Belfast in 1975, boarded his aircraft to fly home for his R&R, he was in such a state. Those of us who know him are aware of his brilliant wit and enthusiasm. Well, apparently, he was in good form on this flight. So much so that a young subaltern from a different regiment felt it incumbent upon him, as a fellow officer, to tell Tim to calm down. He had the nerve to say something along the lines of "If you don't start behaving, I shall report you to your Company Commander!", whereupon Tim replied "I am the Company Commander! Go away!" – or words to that effect.*

Tim McDermott



# MEMORIES OF THE ANGLO-GERMAN SEMINAR, SCHLOSS MARKSBURG KOBLENZ 1981

By Mark Dunham



Schloss Marksburg, Koblenz

The 3rd Battalion had just arrived in Fallingbommel in April 1981. Somewhat to my surprise, my then 'O level' German qualified me, a young lieutenant, to represent the battalion at the annual 'Anglo-German Seminar', for two weeks. This is when a dozen British officers, under the direction of JHQ Rheindahlen, met with 12 German officers to discuss burning issues, such as *'women in the Armed Forces'*...

Alternately run by the British (at Rheindahlen) and the Germans, this year we were hosted by the Germans at Schloss Marksburg, Koblenz, where the River Mosel meets the Rhine. Mostly majors and captains, young Lieutenant Dunham performed the role of junior officer with grace and ease.

The Germans were generous hosts. However, sauerkraut for breakfast, sauerkraut for lunch and sauerkraut for dinner soon made the local Kentucky Fried Chicken a favourite with the British contingent. We all enjoyed the experience of headphones and listening to an interpreter to help the debates along and each day saw us grapple with the thorny issues of the day which affected the Armed Forces...battlefield logistics, civilian perception of the Armed Forces, etc.

One evening, in pursuit of real cultural exchange, and much to the UK contingent's delight, we were given a German wine-tasting course. Each officer was allocated a table and given a laminated 'cheat sheet' with English on one side, German on the other. Four per table. A large basket of torn bread chunks was provided to clear our palates after each wine. We were taken through the 'Liebfraumilchs', the 'Kabinetts', then the 'Kabinett mit Praedikats'... and so on up the scale... in that order. However, each table was asked to 'drink the rest of the bottle' before progressing on to the next wine. After the first four wines, each officer had effectively drunk a bottle of wine. By the time we reached the quality dessert wines such as 'Auslesers' and 'Eisweins', all hopes of a genuine understanding of the tastes had disappeared completely.



JHQ Rheindahlen

Our hosts were commanded by a very Teutonic colonel who kept referring to the 'shippermen' on the rivers Mosel and Rhine. Consequently, he was presented with a 'gift' from the British Army of a painting of the boats on the rivers below, with a brass plaque declaring that 'The Shippermen Return'.

Twelve hungry officers then returned to their own units...



# THE PARIS GUARD

or THE DAY I RECEIVED A SALUTE FROM PRESIDENT CHARLES DE GAULLE

By Bill Kempton

In mid-October 1968, while stationed in Lemgo, Germany, I was selected along with six others in B Company, 3 QUEENS, to form a platoon-strength squad within the battalion to be called the Paris Guard. We were to be sent to Paris to take part in the November 11th parade to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the end of World War One. During the next few weeks, between one large APC exercise and other duties, we were called upon for practice drill and uniform inspections on the square, variously by the RSM or Lt Joint, and accompanied by the Corps of Drums.

On 8 November in the early morning, we left camp by coach - our kit travelling separately by 3-tonner - and headed via Liege and Huy in Belgium for the French border. We finally arrived in Paris at 1.00 am, for a late supper and accommodation in the barracks at Fort de Vincennes, home to a French alpine regiment.

Breakfast the next day in the cookhouse was ham, omelette and - beer! Beer and wine, we discovered, was served liberally with all meals in French military cookhouses. We then practiced drill under a Scots Guards RSM. The complete British contingent in the parade consisted of a platoon each of the four countries making up the United Kingdom. So, along with us representing England, there were the Scots Guards, the Inniskilling Fusiliers and a Welsh infantry regiment. We were to be led by the band, pipes and drums of the Scots Guards.



French alpine troops at Fort St Vincennes, the barracks we stayed at

We did further rehearsals in the afternoon, but nothing too arduous, and the rest of the day was left for sight-seeing - for me, just a random walking around the city with a few mates. I managed to impress them in a bar by successfully communicating to the waiter in my schoolboy French: *"Quatre bières, s'il vous plait"*.

Early the next morning, on the 10th, the entire parade - that is, one platoon from each country that fought in WWI (except the Germans, who weren't invited!) - met on a deserted road for a full dress rehearsal. After this, we enjoyed a celebratory lunch in the barracks cookhouse, at which we were served this time not only beer and wine, but champagne. We fraternised very well with our French hosts there, never mind the language barrier, and so were none too sober when we took off in the afternoon on a guided coach tour of Paris. Some of us, myself included, lost the coach after the first stop at the Eiffel Tower, but weren't too concerned. After taking way too many pictures of the tower, I made my way back to barracks on foot and by the Metro.

There was no early start on parade day, the 11th. We spent the morning shining up our best kit, before the parade at 12.15 pm. Coaches took us into the middle of Paris, where first we lined the route along with all other members of the contingent. There we had a 45-minute wait, until President de Gaulle and his entourage drove slowly by. As he did so, we presented arms. When he had gone by, we formed up in the road in columns of six and marched through the city, each national platoon in the order of which country entered the war on the allied side. Before long we passed the podium where President de Gaulle stood and, yes, he saluted as we marched by, us saluting him back with an eyes left. The noise was tremendous, not least the Band, Pipes and Drums of the Scots Guards, but also the crowds of Parisians cheering us from the roadsides for the entire hour it took for us to march our route. Some even threw flowers at us. I remember being hugely proud of being British during that moment. The noise did have its downside, however. It was so loud that the subaltern leading us (Lt Joint, I think) dared not give the planned order for 'change arms' at any time during these three miles of ceremonial marching for fear we wouldn't all hear it at the back of our column. When the Colours were marched off



at the end, few people could move on the command 'Present Arms' because our arms were locked rigid in the Shoulder Arms position.

And that was the end of duties for us. Several of us walked back into Paris in the evening to watch the massed bands marching through the streets. We were then back on

the coach at 07.30 am next morning, for the long drive back to Lemgo, getting back there at 11.30 pm to a late cookhouse meal of egg and chips - but no beer or wine. Never mind, it was a tiring trip and a busy few days, but we few from the 3rd Battalion certainly felt privileged to have been chosen to represent all the English soldiers who served in World War One.

# OPERATION GRAPE-PICK

By Bill Kempton

There is a general military maxim that states 'never volunteer for anything'. But there is an exception to this wisdom, if what you are volunteering for gets you away from the dull routine of barracks life. So it was that while in the 3rd Battalion stationed in Lemgo, Germany, in October 1969, I saw the intriguing invitation posted on Orders to go and assist for two weeks with the grape harvest in the Moselle Valley, and so put my name down for it. I never did learn the story behind this; perhaps it was a public relations exercise between BAOR and the German government.

Two 3-tonners worth of volunteers were driven the 250 miles down south to the town of Bernkastel, on the Moselle River in the midst of the German wine country. We had no idea what to expect, and assumed we would all be billeted together in some hall or barracks. This was not to be. Instead, it was like a cattle market where we were the cattle. We were greeted in the town square by a gathering of local farmers, who had been given permission to take their pick of us - one each. The biggest and strongest were naturally snapped up first, and I was eventually taken away by Herr Peter Port to his family home in the town. I was a bit nervous at first because 'pub German' was my limit of the language, and of the Ports, only one of Peter's two grown sons spoke just a little English. But it didn't matter - they were a lovely, warm family who made me feel right at home, and sign language easily worked well enough at mealtimes and to give me instruction.



The daily routine, after a breakfast of bread rolls and corned beef, was to drive out of town with the tractor and trailer, up the steep surrounding hillsides of grape vines to one of the several plots owned by Herr Port, and pick grapes all day long, a process I noted as being 'easy but boring'. The entire family worked on this, including the wife and young son



of one of the brothers. Schools were closed during grape harvest, such was the urgency of getting the grapes off the vine as soon as they were ripe and before they began to rot. Some of the time we were assisted by a couple of elderly ladies from the town, hired part-time for the job. As well as picking grapes, it was often my job to dump the full buckets into a large hod fitted with shoulder straps, and struggle with it either up or down the steep hillside to empty it into the large bin on the back of the tractor. Lunch was 'stew, bread, coffee and wine', though on very cold days we were also treated to 'glühwein', wine made into a hot toddy.

We finished only when it began to get dark, or if the tractor bin was full. This was transported back to the house and tipped into a large, circular grape press kept in the basement. Then all night and the next day, machinery gradually pressed the juice from the grapes. Wine was not made on the premises, but the juice was taken elsewhere to what I believe was a co-operative winery operating for a large group of these farmers. Most if not all of the local vineyards were owned by small family businesses like the Ports, handed down from father to son. There was just one product made at the house, from the hard-caked grape skin residue which we broke out of the press daily and dumped into a pit in the garden: moonshine! Herr Port called it 'schnapps', but in reality it was nothing but a potent, colourless alcohol he distilled at home for his own consumption. On cold mornings, he'd always give me a glass of this before we started up the hillside.

It surely says something for the resilience of this twenty-year-old squaddie that except for a very few evenings when I was just too tired, after supper I'd head down into the town with a few mates locally billeted in neighbouring farmers' houses - among them Nobby Phillips, Phil Fisher, Tom Pennie, Paul Griffin and Pete Cabuche - and we'd do our best to paint the town red. Bernkastel had a good selection of pubs and discotheques, favourites of ours being the Alte Laterne, the Anaconda, and Gerde's Bar. We often pub-crawled till the early hours, sometimes taking the piss out of the American DJ in one of the discos. We noted a lot of Yanks in town, so possibly an American unit was stationed nearby.

We'd been told we were not going to be paid money for this work outside our normal military pay, but a couple of times Herr Port pressed a DM 50 note upon me. Also, on leaving, I was given four bottles of their wine, and - best of all - a bottle of that special 'schnapps', which was a great hit with my APC crew during an exercise shortly after getting back to Lemgo.





# 360th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

On 16 October, 120 serving soldiers, veterans, cadets and re-enactment soldiers descended on Putney Heath to celebrate the 360th Anniversary of the formation of the Earl of Peterborough's Regiment, the forerunner of the Queen's Regiment and from which we claim our right to be known as the 2nd Regiment of Foot and England's Senior Infantry Regiment of the Line. As part of the celebration, the President addressed the parade and as can be seen the PWRR Colonel of the Regiment, Lt-Gen Doug Chalmers took the opportunity to have his photo taken with the Regimental Riders who turned up in force to take part in the event. Later at the reception, the President presented Gen Doug with a tankard, in appreciation of all the support that he has given the Association during his tenure as Colonel of the Regiment. At the same time the Secretary announced the award of Life Membership of the Queen's Regimental Association to Ms Lindsay Parsons for her unstinting assistance over the years to the Association and its members.



The QRRA at the Parade



The President addresses the parade



Col Patrick Crowley presents the history



The President presenting Lt Gen Chalmers with a tankard in appreciation of his support



The Assoc Secretary announces the award of Life Membership to Lindsay Parsons



The Assoc Sec arrives for the 360th!



# 2021 IS OUR 360TH ANNIVERSARY – or is it?

By Jonathon Riley

This year marks the 360th anniversary of the officially recognised origin of the Queen's Regiment and thus its precedence as the Second Regiment of Foot. Its raising and first muster on Putney Heath is dated as 14 October 1661 and was in direct consequence of the need to form a garrison for the new colony of Tangier – but in fact, things were not nearly as simple as this official narrative likes to portray – for which we largely have the simplistic account by the nineteenth century historian Cannon to thank.

What, then, was the reality? King Charles II's coronation took place on 23 April 1661. He told Parliament of his intention to marry on 8 May and on 13 May the Portuguese Ambassador, de Mello, wrote to the King of Portugal with the news that both Houses of Parliament had voted addresses of congratulation. It was another month before the marriage treaty was signed, on 23 June 1661. Article III ceded the city and castle of Tangier to the Crown of England – not the nation or its parliament – thus saddling Charles with costs that were to prove near-ruinous over the next twenty years – with all its rights, territories and profits; it was to be taken into possession by Lord Sandwich's fleet, which would then return to Lisbon to collect the *Infanta*.

Article XI ceded Bombay (Mumbai) in India on similar terms to Tangier. To engage the commercial benefits offered by Tangier and the Indies, two companies were formed by Royal Charter, along the lines of the Dutch East and West India Companies and the earlier Virginia Company, as the basis for beginning trade and founding a new empire on both continents. While the Honourable East India Company did just that until its administrative function was wound up after the Great Mutiny in 1857, Tangier became a liability that was maintained only with enormous difficulty and expense until 1680; and the Royal African Company, set up under James, Duke of York, collapsed during the Anglo-Dutch wars in the 1670s.

The final articles detailed what Charles would give in return. Article XV committed the King of England to provide a fleet of ten ships to assist Portugal if she were invaded; also, to send a brigade of two regiments of foot and one of horse to fight in the Portuguese war of independence against Spain. The regiments of foot were taken from the disbanding Protectorate garrison in

Scotland and the horse formed in Dunkirk from former royalists and Protectorate men. Their story is told in the book *The Last Ironsides*.

The English fleet under Edward Montagu, Earl of Sandwich, took possession of Tangier in January 1661, but it was not until January 1662 that an English garrison was embarked and sailed for the city. Embarked in the ships were four regiments of foot. These included, first, the regiment that had been raised in October 1661 which was that of Henry Mordaunt, Earl of Peterborough, who was to be Governor of Tangier. It consisted of ten companies, each of 100 men, besides officers. The original target had been 1,500 but when recruiting began on 12 October, the Venetian Ambassador in London, Francisco Giaverina, one of the most important sources for the period, noted that:



Henry Mordaunt 2nd Earl of Peterborough

*'They are daily beating up in this city to get troops to go under Peterborough's command to garrison Tangier but there is no great rush, as everyone fights shy of that employment, and they would rather all stop at home than go to so different a climate'.*

By 28 October, two weeks after the first muster on Putney Heath, Giaverina again wrote that Peterborough had: *'... got together 1,000 foot here but all inexperienced country men who will die fast, but few old, disbanded soldiers having cared to take up a service reputed unlucky.'* This statement is probably untrue, for there were six recently disbanded Protectorate regiments in London – including Peterborough's own regiment – about 6,000 men without counting unemployed former Royalist soldiers and others from regiments disbanded outside London, who would have made for London to seek work.

All that said, we know little of the officers and men, and only the names of the field officers and captains are recorded. Three of them are known to have served



in the Army of the Protectorate, six were confirmed or probable Royalist veterans. We must assume that the non-commissioned officers, and the soldiers, were for the most part members of the disbanded Protectorate regiments, left without a livelihood and therefore willing to re-enlist.

The second regiment sent to Tangier was an entire Protectorate regiment, drawn from the English garrisons of Tangier and Mardyck. These places had become English colonies in 1658 in return for an alliance between Cromwell and the French, to fight the Spanish in their territories in the Netherlands. The regiment of the Governor of Dunkirk, Sir Robert Harley, had been formed in April 1657 as Lillingston's and had fought at the Battle of the Dunes and throughout the campaign in the Low Countries. It had then remained in garrison, with ten companies of 100 men, until ordered to Tangier.

The third and fourth regiments were Irish and had originally been raised as regiments of Catholic exiles fighting for Spain – since Spain, France and the Netherlands all had treaties with Britain by which they were permitted to raise regiments. They had also served on the other side of the Civil Wars, with Charles II in exile in the war in the Low Countries, since Charles had been granted sanctuary by the Spanish, and in return his small army of exiles had fought in the Spanish Army under the command of the Duke of York, later King James II. These two regiments were those of Colonel John Fitzgerald and Colonel Lewis Farrell. The date at which Farrell's Regiment was raised for service with the Spanish is uncertain, but in 1653, the regiment had been sent against the French and had changed sides. In the winter of 1657, the regiment was in garrison, under Marshal Schomberg, in the fortress of St. Ghislain, about thirty miles from Brussels. The fortress was invested by the Spanish in March 1657 and the Earl of Bristol, who had just deserted the French service for the Spanish, summoned them to the embryonic royal army. The regiment immediately obeyed the call. The Irish regiment of Colonel John Fitzgerald had also been raised in the Spanish service around 1653, had served in the Spanish Army under the command of the rebel French general Condé and arrived to join the Royalist army at Dunkirk soon after the Restoration. After the Restoration in 1660, these two regiments were drawn into the garrison of Dunkirk - and were brought up to strength by the disbandment of two small Royalist regiments – the Irish Regiment of Colonel Richard Grace and the Scots of the Earl of Newburgh where they remained until they were shipped to Tangier.

It can easily be seen that the mix of former enemies in the garrison of a small place like Tangier could be incendiary – and it duly was, with fights, brawls and duels common. A council of war, for example, had to order the former Royalist Captain Bryen Farrell to apologise to the Roundhead Captain Harris, 'for having caned him at the head of the parade.' In 1663, Peterborough was succeeded as Governor by Andrew Rutherford, Earl of Teviot, who had been Governor of Dunkirk. Charles II had soon found that he could not afford to run



Sir Palmes Fairbourne at Tangier



Memorial

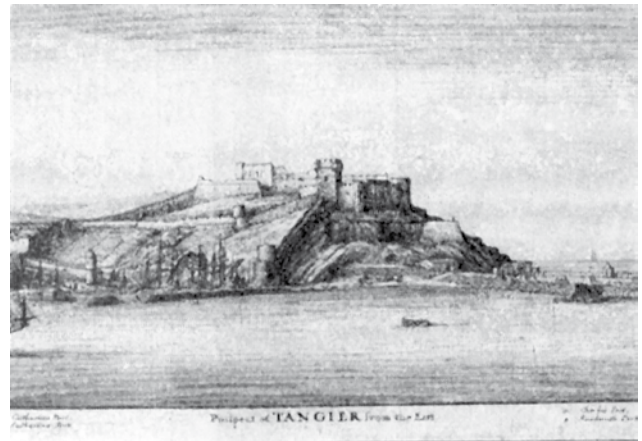


both Tangier and Dunkirk and had been offered a large sum to sell Dunkirk to the French and keep Tangier – something he undoubtedly later regretted. Teviot arrived with reinforcements from

his own regiment and that of Colonel Roger Alsopp – both again former Protectorate regiments. He found the garrison already reduced by sickness, desertion and above all, drink, and immediately reorganised it into two large regiments, one Irish and one English.

On 4 May 1664 Teviot, along with 400 of his officers and men, was killed in a Moorish ambush while conducting a grand forage outside Tangier. Colonel John Fitzgerald became acting Governor. When Lord Belasyse arrived as Governor the following year, the two regiments were again reorganised in order to remove the distinctions between English and Irish. The two regiments were now to be known as the Governor's and Lieutenant-Governor's. A few reinforcements also arrived from the West of England; another reinforcement arrived when the war in Portugal ended, in 1668, and 400 officers and men were sent from the brigade there to Tangier. Sir Henry Norwood, who was Governor by then, had enough trouble feeding his own men at the end of a fragile supply line from England and was at his wits' end as to how to provision the new arrivals.

Casualties from fighting the Moors, who now closely besieged the city, from disease and from drinking rum in heroic quantities, continued to erode the strength of the garrison and in January 1668 it was reduced to a single regiment of twelve companies, including those who arrived from Portugal. This was known as the Governor's Regiment and in 1679 it received four new companies, making sixteen, divided into two battalions.



Tangier from the east, Wenceslaus Hollar 1667

In 1680, financial pressures being very great, it was decided to evacuate Tangier. A large reinforcement was sent from England to complete the destruction of the fortifications and the great harbour wall, or mole, so that neither the Dutch nor the Moors could make use of the place. It arrived in the nick of time to save the city and the garrison from a determined assault by the Moors. The Governor's Regiment, now under command of the rascally Colonel Piercy Kirke, was also known at this time as the First Tangier Regiment; a Second Tangier Regiment, later the 4th Foot, had been raised in England and sent out with the reinforcement.

It was, however, the Governor's Regiment of eleven companies that in 1684 returned to England and was taken onto the Establishment as 'Our Most dear Consort, The Queen's, Regiment'. The date of 14 October 1661 makes sense, therefore, as a marker of our formation – somewhat arbitrary, perhaps, since three of the original four antecedents were already in existence. But it is a firm fixed point at least. What we can also say, with some pride, is that the origins of the Queen's lie, uniquely in the British Army, on both sides of the Civil Wars and as far back as perhaps 1653.



The 1st Battalion officers gather at the 360th Anniversary

L to R: Messrs Swanson, McDermot, Powell, Crowley, Wright, Riley, Goulden, Bolton, Acworth, Beattie and Keyes



# THE SINKING OF THE LISBON MARU

By Brian Finch

On 27 September 1942, the *Lisbon Maru*, a Japanese armed freighter with Japanese troops on board, sailed from Hong Kong bound for Japan. It also carried 1816 British prisoners of war held in atrocious conditions. Cramped, airless, and in unimaginable squalor, they were incarcerated below deck in three cargo holds. The freighter bore no markings to indicate their presence.

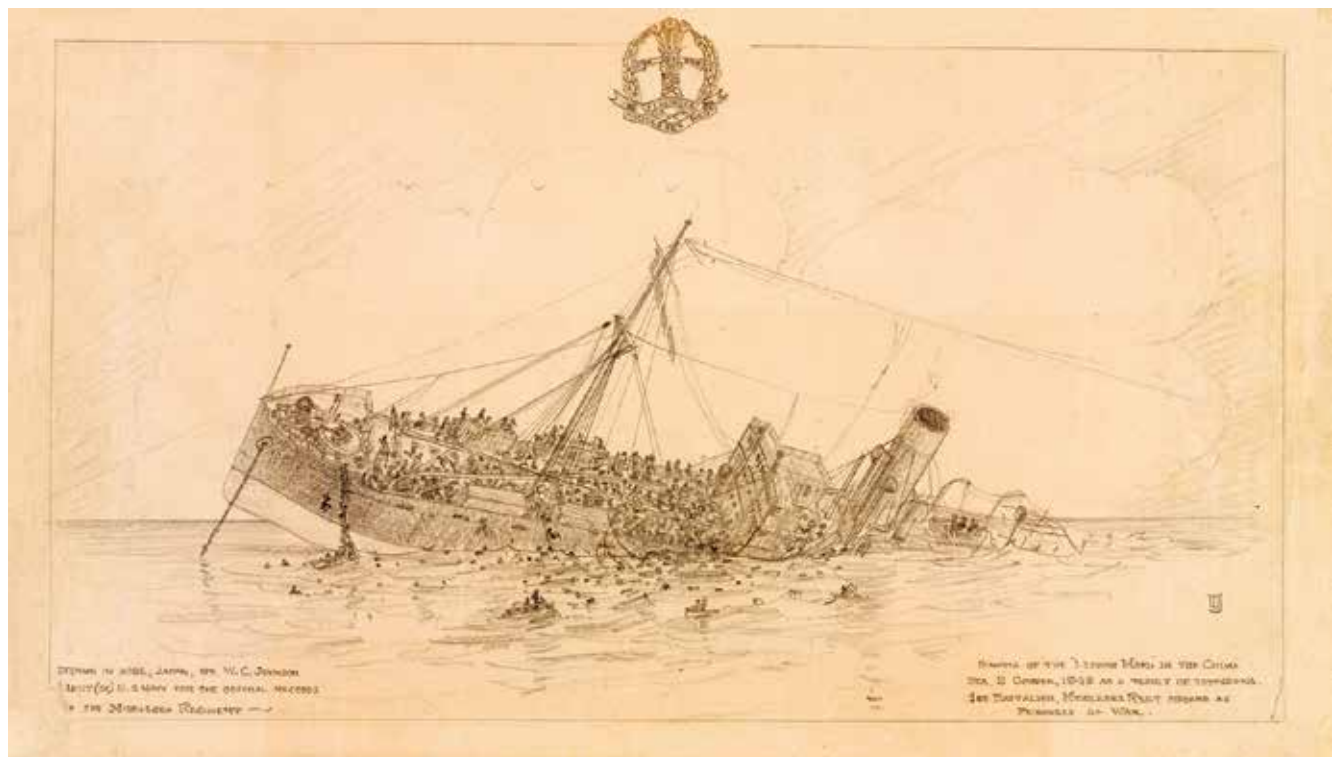
On 1 October, an American submarine, the *USS Grouper*, on patrol off the Zhoushan archipelago in the East China Sea, engaged the *Lisbon Maru*, holing it below the waterline. Although initially taken under tow, the line snapped, and the ship drifted and foundered. The Japanese evacuated their troops, battened down the hatches over the holds and left a guard force to prevent the prisoners from escaping. For 24 hours the prisoners were held in sub-human conditions in darkness with no food, water, fresh air or sanitation; and dysentery was rife.

There was a breakout before the ship sank the next day and many of the prisoners of war escaped from the two forward holds, some of whom were cut down by machine-gun fire. Most of those in the third hold, by then below the waterline, tragically drowned.

Those who did escape were shot at in the water as they attempted to swim to the shore; many were killed or wounded but local Chinese fishermen courageously rescued 384 of the survivors. Later, the Japanese recaptured all but three.

'Monkey' Stewart, Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion the Middlesex Regiment and in charge of all POWs, earned this tribute from his officers: "... his behaviour and example was an inspiration to the eleven hundred men in the hold. By his calmness, he was largely instrumental in preventing panic, and ... it was his order, timed perfectly, which resulted in the hold being burst open by Lt Howell RASC, thereby saving the lives of a great many men."

Of the original 1816 men on board, 828 died in this terrible atrocity and a further 200 or more succumbed from their sufferings within a few months.



Sketch of Lisbon Maru Foundering by Lt WC Johnson US Navy. Image courtesy of the National Army Museum

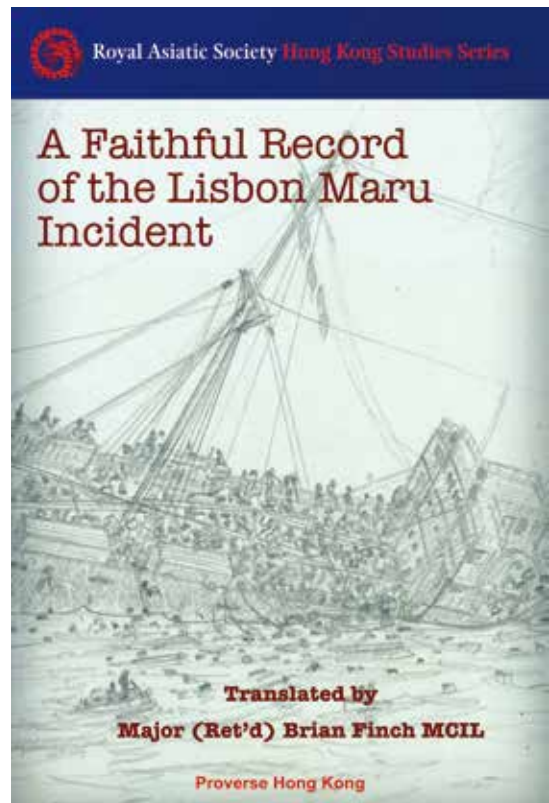


358 members of The Middlesex Regiment boarded the *Lisbon Maru*, 152 perished on that day and 53 later died in captivity.

Diehards will remember with affection one of the survivors of this atrocity, Frank



Location of the Lisbon Maru atrocity



Lisbon Maru book cover

Waldron, who became Quartermaster of 1MX, then Secretary of the Regimental Association and later editor of *The DieHards* Newsletter.

On 3 October, a new Memorial was dedicated by the Reverend Canon Roger Hall MBE at the National Memorial Arboretum, Lichfield and unveiled by Vice-Admiral John Henry Stuart McAnally, CB, LVO. Over 670 relatives, including 99 from the QRA representing the Middlesex Regiment, were present.

# RELOCATION OF THE PINWE MEMORIAL

By Barry Lane

The Pinwe Memorial was originally unveiled on the 9th November 2012 as a lasting tribute to the men of the 9th Battalion, The Royal Sussex Regiment and those who fought and died in the Burma campaign. The unveiling was in the presence of about 80 people including the late Stan Coombe and Ron Charrington BEM who were both veterans of the battle and instrumental in the concept and design of the memorial, along with Pinwe Club veterans and their families.

The central feature of the Memorial is a stone which was collected from a remote and heavily forested 'chaung' (riverbed) in Northern Burma (now Myanmar) code-named 'STOURBRIDGE CHAUNG', and the scene of a ferocious action as part of the bitter three-week battle for the village of Pinwe, in which the 9th Battalion was heavily involved on 9 November 1944, which broke

the back of Japanese resistance in the Northern Burma sector.

In December 2020, the Royal Sussex Regimental Association was approached by Eastbourne Borough Council to see if we had any objections to the Pinwe Memorial, which is located within the Pavilion Gardens, on Eastbourne seafront, being relocated. The council were proposing to re-landscape the Gardens opening them up and giving a better vista to both the gardens and the Memorial. Having looked at the plans, it became obvious that although the move would be minimal, it would provide a better location for the Memorial to be viewed from the seafront and the road.

The landscaping and relocation was completed with a much better view, as can be seen from the photo with



all the surrounding hedgerows drastically trimmed back and replanting of the borders.

A more detailed description of the Battle of Pinwe follows:

### THE BATTLE OF PINWE NOVEMBER 1944

#### Background

After their exertions in the second Arakan Campaign, the 9th Battalion Royal Sussex, along with the rest 72nd Brigade of 36th Division were resting at Shillong, when they learnt from General Slim, the Commander of 14th Army, that the Division was to be detached from the Army and come under the command of the American General 'Vinegar Joe' Stilwell who commanded the Northern Combat Area (NCA) in the far North of Burma.

They were to be the only British Division in this Sino-American Army operating at the junctions of India/Burma and China. General Slim, who had the Japanese Army on the run after defeating their offensive at the twin battles of Imphal/Kohima, wanted to bring them to battle on the Burmese plain, between the rivers Chindwin and Irrawaddy. As he moved south, he required the NCA to advance down the railway line and accompanying road between Myitkyina and Katha and cross the Shweli River to Lashio, to cover his left flank as he advanced, reopening the Burma Road in the process.

The 9th Battalion accordingly left Shillong for Ledo, from where on 10 July they were airlifted into Myitkyina, which was now in allied hands after a gruelling 79-day siege by the NCA. After assembling, the Division moved off southwards and, some 10 miles south of Mogaung, came across the 'Chindits' of 3 West African Brigade who had been held up for six weeks at a heavily fortified Japanese feature at Hill 60, which dominated the entrance to the valley.

After several company attacks with full artillery support, the feature was finally taken on Aug 5 by D Coy and after handing over to the 'Chindits', the 9th Battalion resumed their advance.

Clearing small airstrips where possible, the 72nd Bde, taking turns with Brigadier Stockwell's 29 Brigade to supply the advance guards, the advance continued, following a regular routine until the next engagement at the village of Thaikwagon which was captured by A and C Coys.

72nd Bde was then relieved, having been in almost continuous action for 3 weeks. The 29th Bde then took up as point formation but encountered minimal opposition. They covered 47 miles in a fortnight, which gives an indication of the low level of resistance.

#### PINWE

Operations began on 9 Nov with a routine order to resume the advance down the axis of the railway line, with the South Wales Borderers (SWB) astride the road on the Bn's left, the objective being to occupy Hpapan and Pinwe and push towards the rail junction at Naba.

8 Pl A Coy cleared Hpapan without too much trouble and the rest of A Coy moved up to secure it.

D Coy passed through A Coy and then advanced, but was held up by heavy fire from a dry river bed codenamed STOURBRIDGE, 1,000m south of the village, and withdrew.

Next day, C Coy tried unsuccessfully to achieve what A Coy had been unable to do, and withdrew. After a concentration of artillery and heavy machine gun fire, A Coy under Major Dickson, was ordered to make a right flanking attack via a dry riverbed about a half-mile to the west which ran into STOURBRIDGE, and advance to the railway line. The attack was carried out to such good effect that most of the enemy were caught outside their bunkers and destroyed. From the bridge, Maj Dickson was able to direct the last stages of the attack flushing out the remaining bunkers.

On 11th November, C Coy continued the advance, but was stopped about a mile from Pinwe station by heavy mortar and MG fire. The CO set up a battalion box astride the line behind them with A Coy forming a perimeter



Pinwe Memorial



halfway between C and the box. At 1155 hrs, C with B Coys on the left flank were ordered to make a frontal attack which was beaten back and were ordered to withdraw to the box through

A Coy. At 1545 hrs, A Coy's perimeter was pounded by mortar and artillery fire. Within minutes, fifteen men had been wounded and A Coy were withdrawn to the safety of the battalion box.

The rest of the day and the following two days were spent in active patrolling with losses on both sides. The next day at 0710 hrs, in the middle of the CO's O Group, the box was attacked by the largest force of Japanese seen so far, with orders to annihilate it. The CO had learnt the lessons of Arakan well and the box was very tight with a Bren gun every five metres. A section of Manchesters with their Vickers MMGs was positioned on the railway track with perfect fields of fire north and south, and inside the box were mobile patrols ready to deal with any enemy who broke through. The attack and mopping up lasted five hours, at the end of which sixty dead Japanese were counted, with one HMG, two LMGs and one prisoner captured. The R SUSSEX casualties were three dead, fifteen wounded and one missing.

The next to run into trouble were the SWB on the road to left of the R SUSSEX, when they found a roadblock between themselves and the rest of the Brigade. D Coy

9th R SUSSEX unsuccessfully attacked the roadblock on the 17th with three men wounded. The battalion moved up behind the SWB with the roadblock between them. Lt McArthur got a patrol with thirty-nine mules through thick jungle to re-supply the SWBs. Meanwhile, the Glosters attempted a left hook on Pinwe itself which was a disaster with heavy officer casualties but turned north and attacked Gyobin Chaung. This time they were successful but suffered many more casualties. The SWBs then moved south to join them.

On the morning of the 24th, 9th R SUSSEX prepared to attack Bridge Chaung to the south of Gyobin Chaung, with B and D Coys advancing either side of the road. D Coy were held up almost immediately after crossing the line of departure, but B Coy under Maj Bobbie Cash advanced to their objective, with the OC being severely wounded. B Coy were now in trouble as the Japanese had infiltrated back to their old bunkers between them and C Coy who were following behind. Despite every effort to extricate them, it was 48 hours before they were brought to safety. At 0900hrs on the 28th, B and C Coys left A Coy's perimeter and re-joined the Battalion. A Coy then withdrew through the RSF who had relieved the Glosters. After 20 days of ferocious fighting, 72 Brigade had still not set foot in Pinwe. On the 29th, 29 Brigade walked in without a shot being fired: the Japanese had had enough, and their remnants withdrew. Brig Stockwell was the first to acknowledge that the victory belonged to 72 Brigade.

*Overheard after the Regiment's 360th Anniversary parade:*

*"Which one is General Chalmers?"*

*"He's the one in Blues, looking about 13 and with loads of medals!"*

*Particularly good to read two accounts of the boxing vs RN in 1978 in Gib, an unforgettable occasion which could never be repeated today. The 2nd Battalion vs an escort fleet accompanying Hermes on her final voyage, consisting of more ships than the entire Navy could actually put to sea at one time now – not to mention an aircraft carrier that actually had planes on board, Phantoms and Buccaneers! Fantastic atmosphere with the ring on the flight platform, Beating of Retreat by our Band and Drums and the on-board RM band and drums beforehand, boxers being 'marched on' by our drummers and the Marine drummers, all of us in mess dress or Navy blues fuelled by drinks parties in the various messes and wardrooms beforehand – amazing and unforgettable.*

Merrick Willis



# A FITTING CLIMAX

By Merrick Willis

Having sworn that I wouldn't allow myself to be conned again by our editor, I've weakly agreed to look through old photos for inspiration. Two that I've found rekindled memories of sport in BAOR and particularly Minden during my time there from 1988 to 1990 with the 2nd Battalion.

Most of my first year there was taken up by a tour to West Belfast. In common with most battalions, we were heavily reinforced for the tour, and a number of soldiers who were due to leave on completion of their term of service during the year volunteered to stay on for the tour, or in a few cases were held back from leaving. But so it was that our over-strength battalion, at least seven hundred strong, re-mustered after post-tour block leave way below established strength at under five hundred. Many readers will recall the manning problems our regiment was having in the late 80s, sadly.

I took what I thought was a sensible unilateral decision, based on both overall manning prospects and the availability of both officers and SNCOs, that it would be better to have two well-found mechanised companies rather than three skeletons. However, I swiftly found that this common sense approach wasn't shared by either the BAOR hierarchy, whose general deployment plans for war were spoilt by the deletion of a combat team from the 1 (BR) Corps ORBAT, or HQ Queen's Division, who blamed me for the grief that was dumped on them by the chain of command. I found myself the centre of what has since become known as a shitstorm...

Having achieved this lasting popularity (not!) in both UK and Germany, I then decided that I needed to keep the soldiers we had left in good spirits if we were to retain them. I'd comprehensively blown any chance to win many plaudits on the purely military side, but I was certain that we could do well in sport and adventure training and have some fun as well.

I was to have an uncomfortable hour or so in my office near the end of my time in Minden explaining to the Divisional Commander and a NATO monitoring team why we couldn't hit the requirements of the four-hour call out system that many readers will remember with little affection, Exercise ACTIVE EDGE. So many of our boys were away on adventure training that we couldn't even drive the two companies' worth of Mk I 432s, that we were supposedly manning by then, out of the camp gates.

Anyway, we set off to ensure that we had the requisite qualified instructors so that we could take advantage of the fantastic adventure training opportunities offered by BAOR. Many Queensmen at all levels got involved, but one name I must mention is James Myles, who selflessly took a virtual sabbatical from command of HQ Company to gain sailing qualifications which would have qualified him for a round the world race. James not only built a future career on sailing, but helped many of our soldiers learn to enjoy life on the water. He recalls that an amazing 132 soldiers undertook sailing courses or expeditions.

On the sporting side, we were able to build on the excellent foundations laid during my predecessor Peter Cook's tenure, in particular in Nordic Skiing. In 1987, the team had entered competitions as novices and achieved excellent results. Of particular note were Cpl Crossland Page and Privates Ferber, Harkness and Pearson, who went on to the Army Championships, a feat matched only by two other battalions.

So the basis was in place for further success. The team leader role was taken on by Captain Jim Hutton, our RM attached officer. Jim, typically for a Marine, was a lean racing snake. I hope Sgt Best, our attached RAMC SNCO, will if he ever reads, this not mind if I say that he was rather less so. But he volunteered to fill the SNCO team slot and to his great credit proved a stalwart member of the team, joining with the others to shout, when I joined them very briefly for training in Austria, *"Do at least try and keep up, Colonel!"* to my embarrassment.

We were able to enter teams in both the novice and senior competitions of the Infantry, Divisional and Army Championships. After training in Norway, the team won the Infantry Championship, with LCpl Ferber winning every race he was entered for, remarkably. The team went on to gain twelfth place in the Army Championships, an excellent result for newcomers, given the number of semi-professional teams involved.

The senior team was, in addition to Messrs Hutton and Best, LCpl Ferber, Pte Attard and Pte Harkness. The novice team was Capt Holmes, and Ptes Varrall, Cowling, Brennan and Newcombe.

The following winter, with the core of the team still in place but with a changed leadership of Capt Alastair Holmes and CSgt Macaulay, the team retained the Daily Telegraph trophy at the Divisional Championships and



an even higher placing was achieved at the Army Championships with tenth place. Other members of the squad were Cpl Sweetland, LCpl Ferber, Ptes Harkness, Bell, Attard, Hall, Pearson and Munday.

In those days, long before smartphones and digital cameras, the 1989 team photo was taken by my wife, Béatrice. I asked the Duke of Kent who was visiting Zwiesel as President of Army Skiing if he'd join a picture of the team. He looked slightly baffled when I tried to explain the family connection, how his Mum had been Royal Colonel of the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment, etc. But he cheerfully agreed. We met up with him and the attendant flunkies from the BAOR hierarchy in the early morning en route to the start line for the finals. Poor Béatrice was told she risked a fate worse than death if the photo didn't come out – fortunately it was a cracker that was good enough to go onto the back cover of the Regimental Journal.



QUEENS Nordic Ski Champions with HRH The Duke of Kent

The other picture I found was of the boxers. We had two successful seasons, winning the Divisional Championships at the second try with some gutsy displays by an inexperienced bunch of boxers who more than lived up to the regimental tradition in this sport.

Another major success was in rugby. We were blessed to have the enthusiasm of Les Baynham as team manager and coach. He'd had to take off his red and white hackle on arrival as UFO but he fitted in so well that his son would go on to a distinguished career in the PWRR. Les coached a very successful XV who came close to winning the BAOR title, but the major success was in seven-a-side, where the team reached the BAOR final in 1989 and won the competition in 1990. They were deprived of a slot in the final of the Army Championships in the same year by a couple of injuries to key players in games up to the semi-final stages in Aldershot. I should also give a shout out for Les's wife Cath who mothered the teams to the extent of even washing all their playing kit! She was a star.

Locally around Minden, we won virtually all the sporting competitions we entered. We were particularly keen to triumph over the battalion that arrived in late 1988 to take over from our friends in 3 R ANGLIAN. The Argyll and Bolton Wanderers (for it was they!) were quite full of themselves, but the only sport we failed at was football. We even managed to beat them soundly in the 11 Armd Bde military trophy, during which, to the alarm of the Bn 2IC (and my successor) David Wake, I decided that we'd enter a team in the inter-company speed march from Bn HQ, in the full and certain knowledge that this would embarrass my opposite number in the Argylls. It duly did, and we managed to beat a couple of their company teams.

I have so many happy memories of our successful sport in Minden, and I hope that some of those reading this edition of the Journal may share them. And as for the adventure training, I'm certain James Myles wasn't the only one in whom a





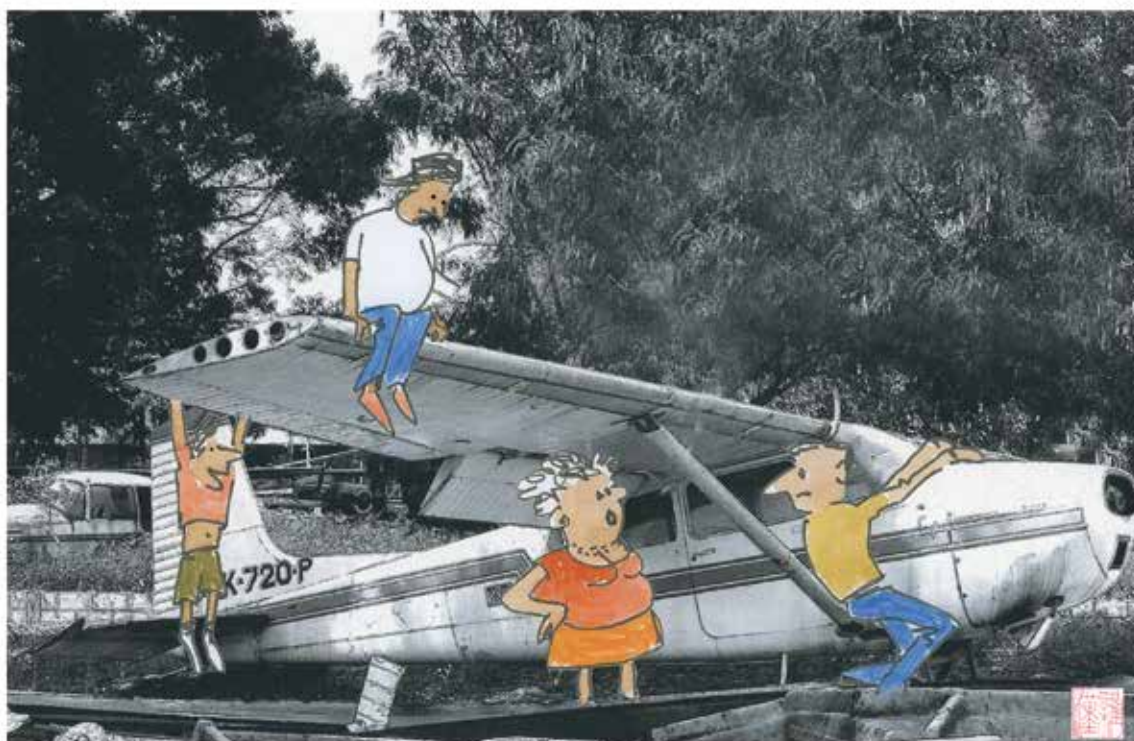
Armd Div Boxing Champions

PTE BROWN, PTE HUGHES, LCPL CARNEGIE  
 LCPL BASTABLE, PTE RICHMOND, LCPL SMITH  
 LCPL MCCARTHY, PTE SHUBERT, LCPL MCCARTHY, WO1 (RSM) M E GAUNTLETT, LT COL M C WILLIS OBE, SSI G MILLS APTC, LCPL POPE, PTE LAWRENCE, LCPL YEXLEY

lasting love of those outdoor activities was developed. Above all, I recall the sense of pride I shared with so many of all ranks who got involved. I'm certain that our manning problems would have been even worse if we hadn't had some fun!

Was I right to take the decisions I did? It helped that I'd long before decided to leave the Army after the privilege of command and therefore felt I could take some risks. If I'd been staying, there'd have been little chance of my finding a field marshal's baton in my proverbial knapsack anyway, but if there had been, by now it had definitely fallen out! And I hope that I didn't queer David Wake's pitch too badly in the time that remained for the battalion in Minden.

But above all else, was anyone really taking the threat of 3rd Shock Army 3SA) in Magdeburg seriously in the very late 80s, as communism in the East was so clearly crumbling?



"I warned you about booking our return flights on the Internet."



# CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

By Steven Kilpatrick

After 34 years a soldier, I was very fortunate to be accepted by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) as an armed forces delegate, responsible for the organisation's approach to talking to commanders of military forces and armed groups worldwide. The ICRC is a tremendous organization with a mandate to reduce the suffering of those affected by armed conflict. Like the infantry, it is an organization that was born and operates most effectively on the battlefield. Many of its characteristics are not so different from the professional military, including the unity of purpose of the employees and their selfless commitment to carrying out their role to the full. It is a great organization to work for. But, for all its qualities, there are ways in which the ICRC – and no doubt other humanitarian organisations – lacks many of the true characteristics of a modern military force, such as the focus on leadership and management of the workforce.

In my early months with the ICRC, I realised that a key to this was the absence of senior NCOs of quality who essentially provide the backbone to the British army. Many would agree that, no matter how good your officers, if you take away the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess, at best you will struggle, at worst you are sunk without trace. It is not simply the sergeants' tactical role in the field that you miss, it is all of the associated functions that are simply removed: the attention to morale, the logistic support and, arguably most critically, the rock solid advice and support to officers in every rank from second lieutenant to general.

I guess this is a very roundabout way of saying - if I did not say it at the time - that probably the most important thing in my development and survival as an army officer was the prominent and selfless role played by a variety of senior NCOs, from the moment that I arrived at the gates of the 3rd Battalion in Fallingbowl in 1982 to the moment that I shuffled out of the army 34 years later. Individually and collectively, they counselled me, galvanised me, inspired me, terrified me,

protected me and humoured me in equal measure. Occasionally, I hang my head in shame when I think of the times when, at the head of a fighting patrol on Soltau, I just couldn't make the map fit the terrain and find the enemy position, or in BATUS, when I sank my APC to the top of its tracks in a 'dried' lake. On each occasion I was rewarded with a wry smile and a sound plan although I deserved far worse. Like so many of my colleagues, I was blessed to have the support of professional, capable, patient and resolute soldiers who, as if their own were not demanding enough, had to shoulder the burden of others', no less complicated, lives.

So I write from the ICRC's HQ in Geneva where, for the time being I am stuck, unable to join in person the reunions or remembrance services but cheered and amused by the exchanges on Facebook and LinkedIn sites where the flak and banter of the messes reverberate, punctuated by the occasional sadness at the news from our regimental secretary at the passing of another of our 'good men and true'. Occasionally I try to explain to my humanitarian colleagues how a successful army depends almost entirely on its Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess to function, and not on the sort of bloke they see before them. They just don't believe it; and why should they? Sometimes, looking back, I think it was just too good to be true.



SK, South Sudan



# MORTARS, SAILING VESSELS AND AIRCRAFT – WHY THEY SHOULDN'T MIX

By John Powell

This article was prompted by a conversation I had with a member of my local sailing club, who was talking about the difficulties of keeping sailing vessels out of restricted areas (in this case underneath the display area for the Eastbourne Air Show). I then mentioned something that happened when I was in Gibraltar with the 1st Battalion in 1986.

In those days, Gibraltar had its own residential infantry battalion and supporting arms and services. The border with Spain had remained closed since 1969, only reopening in 1985 (so that Spain could join the EU). Nevertheless, a year later, both sides maintained a high readiness posture with their military (the Spanish even had a battery of surface to air missiles positioned on the high ground overlooking Gibraltar).

For a young infantry officer Gibraltar was quite a fun place to be. There were plenty of water sports available (I learned to windsurf); in those days I was also into sport parachuting and used to drive up to Seville with an RAF SNCO to go skydiving (ironically using a Spanish Air Force Base); the working day wasn't too onerous (lots of Orderly Officer and ceremonial duties though) and there was a low-level training area and rifle ranges at the south side of the Rock. Occasionally we were sent off the Rock to exercise abroad: Portugal (good) and the Brecon Beacons (not so good).

I was the battalion's mortar officer to a commanding officer (Lt Col Mike Ball) who had used mortars to some effect in the Oman in the early Seventies when he engaged some Arab Dhows. He was quite keen on his mortars firing out to sea!

One of the challenges of commanding the Mortar Platoon was that it is very rank (Senior NCO) heavy, and the private soldiers are amongst the most experienced in the battalion. To misquote Proverbs, 'Idle soldiers are the devil's workshop' and one way to overcome this was to deliver imaginative, challenging and ultimately professionally satisfying training. Doing this in Gibraltar was going to be challenging, but with the added impetus of a mortar-savvy CO I did some thinking.

Sitting with my SNCOs one morning with a cup of coffee, I was mulling over the latest training safety directives. We had just been issued with a new type of fuze (L127 from memory) and it appeared that there had been occasions when the rounds had prematurely detonated in mid-air, close to the mortar crew, when fired in heavy rain on maximum charge. This led to me thinking that if rain can detonate a round then the Mediterranean would do the same at all charges.

My predecessor in the post, Patrick Crowley, had previously fired mortars in the direct fire role at floating barrels, which led to an incident with a ship appearing out of the fog – but that's his story to tell. I was fortunate therefore that some of the safety considerations had already been addressed; nevertheless, it was a bit more complicated than setting up on Salisbury Plain Training Area:

- Firing had to take place to the east of the Rock. To the west was the Bay of Gibraltar and, within range, Spanish Algeciras; to the south the Strait of Gibraltar which was one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world. The area to the east though was where tankers used to wait to fuel or offload and they had to be moved out for the day.
- There is an international airport at the northern end of Gibraltar. Mortar rounds can travel to a height of about 10,000 ft so direct communications had to be established with the RAF Air Traffic Control to ensure that firing ceased during an aircraft's approach and landing.
- It occurred to me that, if the L127 fuze was so sensitive, rounds would detonate on the water, and then we could use the 'Polar Mission' technique (Indicating Round Technique to the very old and bold) that did not require a grid to be identified in the target area. The problem here was that Polar Missions required a Handheld Laser Range Finder (HHLRF) to work, but they don't work well over water. This was solved by co-opting the local Royal Artillery Radar Battery, equipped with landrover-mounted radars commanded by a Major James Bond, who confirmed that they could detect surface detonations for us.



- What to fire at though? I was then told that the Navy had something in their store called a HSTAR (acronym city-don't ask, but it was radar reflecting, floated, could be

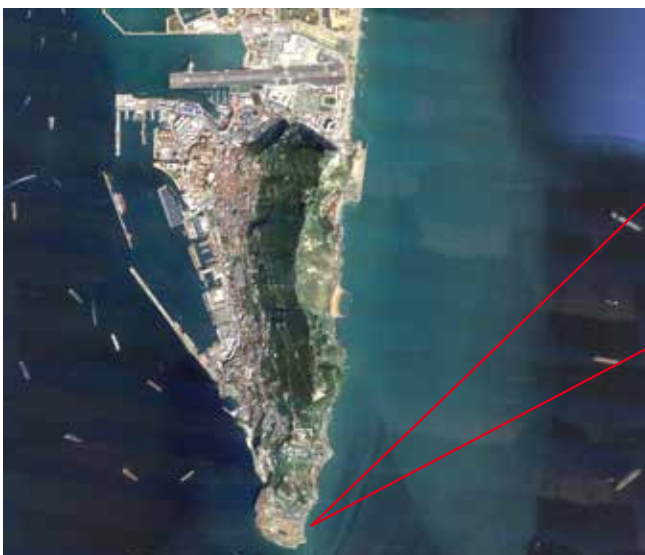
towed a few kilometres out and was used by the Royal Navy for target practice for their own direct fire systems). We then worked out that the towing tug could have a long enough cable to be out of the impact area whilst the HSTAR was being engaged.

- The MFCs, the Radar Battery and I developed a technique whereby they could predict where a target might be going to, send an 'At My Command' fire mission for that point, wait until the target was approaching the predicted point minus the distance that would be covered during the time of flight, and fire - 'Bob's your uncle'.

So, it all came to pass. We set up on the southern tip of Gibraltar on Europa Point at a place known as the Brewery Crusher (close to where a mosque is nowadays) firing east out to sea. There was a road about 40ft behind us and this became a popular place for the locals and media outlets to gather to watch.

Slightly worryingly, the Army Commander on the Rock at that time was a Royal Artillery brigadier. Like all Gunner officers, he viewed with suspicion a system that allowed mere infantry soldiers to play with dangerous weapon systems that they regarded as their domain. That said, with a beady eyed Deputy Fortress Commander Gibraltar watching our every move, we got on with it.

The danger area which required designated NOTAMS for aircraft and Notices to Mariners were then sent out.



The approximate location of the mortar impact area to the east of Gibraltar. Airport to the north, Strait of Gibraltar to the south - shipping moved out for the day.

Two RN coastal vessels (owned by the Gibraltar Naval Squadron) patrolled either side of the danger area (each with a soldier on board manning our radio safety net – but the distances involved meant that they couldn't be everywhere at once). As a final precaution, a safety NCO was placed on the top of the Rock from where he could see the complete setup.

It was all a complete success; which grew legs. On subsequent occasions, we ended up tabbing over the Rock to the airport with all our weapons and ammo to catch a helicopter to fly us back the 5kms we had just covered (only in the Army), the local Gibraltar Regiment 105mm gun battery joined in as did the Milan Anti-Tank Platoon (to the delight of the rest of us, they once missed the target (each missile costs about the same as a new VW Golf)). Finally, the Machine-Gun Platoon, masquerading as the Drums Platoon, wanted to come to the party.

One thing we hadn't considered was smaller vessels such as RHIBs, dinghies and even windsurfers transiting down the east side of the Rock close to Europa Point. The Gibraltar Squadron boats were too far out to react quickly, and our safety sentries would, rightly, put a stop to the firing until the incursions were out of the danger area. In a fit of ire, I sounded off about the delays caused to our training (think Henry II and Thomas Becket 'who will rid me of these troublesome @\*@@\*'). Someone in the Drums Platoon heard me and decided to act.

On this particular day, it was a moderately windy and very sunny summer day on the Mediterranean. By now we had carried out this or similar exercises quite often and were getting very slick with our drills and, most importantly, wrecking the HSTAR targets. The air of normality was reinforced by dwindling crowds coming to watch.

Suddenly, over the radio safety-net tannoy, came the message: "CHECK FIRING SAFETY! CHECK FIRING SAFETY!" With a long time of flight, immediate check firing didn't immediately make the danger go away. Looking out to sea, we could see the water around the HSTAR erupt with explosions (about twenty rounds would land within a few seconds of each other). Nothing untoward there but looking down from the cliff top where we were firing from, we could see a windsurfer making his way north. To this day I remain surprised that a windsurfer was there – it wouldn't have been an easy sail!

There was a short pause followed by the sound of one of the Drums Platoon's GPMGs in the sustained fire (SF) role opening up – a line of red tracer could be seen





Firing 81mm mortars from the Brewery Crusher



Europa Point today – the Brewery Crusher is to the bottom left of the picture (Atlas Mountains in the background).



Lt Col Mike Ball points out something of interest to Maj Rocky Hitchcock (OC Sp Coy). Behind him is Maj Anthony Beattie (future CO 3 QUEENS). The very eagle eyed will spot Potential Officer Brennan Dwyer sitting on the trailer (future CO 3 PWRR).



Lt John Powell (right) talking with Sgt Steve Dane at the mortar line on the Brewery Crusher

arching across the sea about 200 metres in front of the windsurfer. He got the hint, reversed course, and went away not to be seen by us again. A SNCO rocked up looking very pleased with himself whilst I wildly looked around to see if anyone important had seen what had just happened.

Thankfully it looked like we had got away with it, but, in a place as small as Gibraltar, it was not to be. Word got out and a few days later I was taken to task. Ultimately though, the Commanding Officer was very pleased with the training put in place and he didn't bang on about the Oman every time we fired but...



# 1992 FENCING CHAMPIONS

By Alan Ley



The Six-Man Fencing Team

The team then represented the Army at the Inter-Services Fencing Tournament at the Royal Tournament in 1992 where they won 'Silver' medals presented by Wilkinson Sword – a notable sporting achievement.

The team were presented their Battalion Colours for Fencing by the Commanding Officer, Lt Col David Wake, at a Scale 'A' Battalion Parade later that year.



The Silver medal



Army Champions



At the Royal Tournament,



# THE COURAGE TROPHY COMPETITION

By Les Vial

The Middlesex Territorial Army Tough Training Competition was inaugurated in the late 1950s and, as its name implies, it was open to all TA units in the old County of Middlesex. The competition was a two-day test of fitness and military skills.

The start was at the Guards Depot at Pirbright and the finish sixty miles away at Alexandra Palace in Wood Green, North London. Tests included two forced marches of thirty miles, a river crossing of the Thames, a night march, shooting and an assault course at Mill Hill Barracks. An old Pathé News newsreel is on You Tube and features the 1961 competition and is titled "Tough on the Troops (1961)", [www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFp4Nuh2LFU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFp4Nuh2LFU)). Twenty-seven teams from the Greater London area entered this competition.

The competition was renamed the Territorial Army Marathon in 1962, with forty teams entering the competition which was held in March. This included a forced march from Brighton to London.

In 1964, the teams were waved off from the start point at Maidstone Barracks by the famous 'Carry On' star, the lovely Liz Fraser. A video of this year's competition can be viewed on You Tube and is entitled "Terriers' Marathon (1964)", [www.youtube.com/watch?v=0UUSdbZ0b0w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0UUSdbZ0b0w)

In the late 1960s, the competition was renamed once again, becoming the Courage Trophy Competition on account of sponsorship and a silver trophy presented by the well-known brewery.

The Courage Trophy was open to all TA units in the Greater London area and used to regularly attract between 30-50 teams from all arms and services from the SAS and Paras, Commando Gunners and Engineers, Infantry units including the Queen's, Fusiliers, Greenjackets as well as the London Jocks and London Irish to supporting services such as the RCT, as well as all female teams from the WRAC, QARANC and First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY).

The format of the competition changed little over the years. In the early 1970s, each unit would enter a team composed of a marching element and an administrative element for the two-day event. On the first day, the marching element would complete a set-piece march

with obstacles or tests along the route, while the administrative element was tested in driving, cooking and setting up a camp. Both elements would join up for the evening meal, rest and undertake a night navigation test. The second day usually consisted of shooting, navigation and military skills with a forced march to the finishing point of the competition.

By the 1970s the teams were composed of 8 men led by an officer and mounted in two stripped-down ¾ ton landrovers. The events were held all over the Greater London area at drill halls and places like Woolwich and Mill Hill Barracks, with watermanship training on Wimbledon Common or Hampstead Heath. The events usually included map reading, first aid, field cooking, an assault course, watermanship, and a march and shoot plus some unusual events. Held in March, the Courage Trophy was important in raising the profile of the TA/T&AVR in the public eye.

Specific units were allocated to run each stand and usually devised interesting and challenging events such as having to manhandle a 105mm Pack Howitzer around a course courtesy of the Royal Artillery, or driving a landrover fitted with a trailer around a cross-country course laid out by the Royal Corps of Transport, or building an improvised raft set up by the Royal Engineers.

The scoring system was always a mystery and resembled the antics of the voting panels of the Eurovision song contest. It was no secret that a stand run by, for example, the Royal Engineers would see any Sapper teams receiving a more favourable mark and then there was the fact that everyone hated 10 PARA and would mark their efforts harshly.

Some units, notably 10 PARA and 21 SAS had dedicated teams who trained all year round for the prestige of winning the competition; other units started training with a team of willing volunteers a few weeks before the event; but for most units it was a case of having eight pressed men being told to turn up for the competition on the preceding drill night!

Courage, the sponsors, also entered a team who usually did quite well although they didn't have to wear CEFO as we did. One year Courage came up with the testing stand entitled 'Roll Out The Barrel'. This involved unloading a



brewer's dray lorry with 30 full kegs of beer and rolling the barrels about 100 yards and then loading up another dray – absolutely knacker! Courage set the bogey time that was something like 9 minutes – most teams took about half an hour or more!

Another year, a number of rubber tyres were deposited over Wimbledon Common. These ranged from small car tyres suitable for a Mini, through ever increasing sizes up to a couple of tractor tyres about 6 feet in diameter. The team had to recover as many tyres as possible in a given time, the catch being the bigger the tyre the more points you scored, but the larger tyres were further away. The 10 PARA team decided to go full macho mode and targeted the tractor tyres about half a mile away – they failed miserably and were in fact beaten by the team from FANY who collected all the smaller- sized tyres that were much nearer. Sometime during the late 1980s, the emphasis moved away from a trial of strength and fitness to one based more on military skills, with stands reflecting more realistic scenarios such as a road traffic accident to test first-aid skills.

B (Middlesex) Company 6/7 QUEENS did reasonably well. We never disgraced ourselves and usually ended up in the top third. I always felt that the ideal team needed to win the competition would be composed of one 'Brain' (the officer) and seven Annie Oakleys. ('Annie' Oakley was an archetypal infantryman – hard, fit as f\*\*\* but cerebrally challenged...)

My theory regarding the 'Brain' was shot down in 1976 when on the watermanship stand, we followed the building instructions to construct our raft given by Lt David Austin, the 6 Pl commander. We lashed a number of scaffold planks to the oil drums provided on the edge of the lake and successfully launched the craft in the water – it floated! We began to clamber aboard. Unfortunately, we had made the raft too buoyant, and the collective weight of the team created a high centre of gravity – the inevitable happened – the raft turned turtle, throwing us all in the water – as a safety precaution we had tied our empty water bottles with string to the trigger guards of our rifles to act as a sort of marker buoy if the rifle fell overboard – luckily, no one lost their rifle, but we ended up swimming across the lake towing/pushing the raft behind us.

The same year, we had to undertake the infamous assault course at the Guards Depot, Pirbright in Surrey. One of the most challenging obstacles was the 'Queen

Mary' the widest rope swing of any assault course in the British Army with a span of about 10 metres. As with any obstacle of this type, two things were important: first, get a good grip on the rope and secondly, try to get as high up the rope as possible.

Several of us had successfully negotiated the obstacle when it was LCpl Richard Isaacs' turn. He began well enough until he was halfway across, when the effect of gravity took hold. Almost in slow motion, he began to lose his grip on the rope and slowly slid down to the big knot at the end. Sadly, his parabolic arc was now insufficient to cross the chasm safely and he hit the far bank with a resounding thud and fell into the stagnant pool of water below. leaving a visible impression in the concrete wall. I drew a cartoon of this event that appeared in the 57th Variety, the company magazine.



During the 1980s, we would throw a scratch team together inevitably being told on the Tuesday night before the weekend that they were 'the team'. It was frustrating knowing that we had the right guys (of which there were many) and with a little training we could have achieved far more.

Further changes came in the mid-1990s when the format of the competition changed to that of an infantry patrols competition. With a number of fit young officers and good soldiers in the company we began to realise that with a little bit more preparatory training, we could get amongst the medal places.

The team from B (Queen's) Company, the London Regiment won the trophy in 1996 for the first time. They then repeated this success in 1997 and 1998 making them the first team in the history of the Courage Trophy to win the competition three times on the trot.

B Company also won the competition in 2002 but soon after, enthusiasm for the competition amongst London units as a whole started to dwindle. To counter this, the competition was given a makeover, that included an archery competition, billed as the original APWT and other events that were more akin to Jeux Sans Frontiers/



It's A Knockout. There was also a pub-quiz on military general knowledge and a beer tent – sadly, the rumours of a karaoke event were unfounded.

As far as I am aware, the foot and mouth outbreak in 2008 and the involvement of many units on Operation TELIC (Iraq) and Operation HERRICK (Afghanistan) sounded the death-knell for the competition and as far as I know it was not revived.



The winning team from B (Queen's Regiment) Company, the London Regiment led by Lt Maynard Williams with the Honorary Colonel Sir Paul Newall TD



B (Queen's Regiment) Company, the London Regiment winners of the Courage Trophy Competition 2002



B (Albuhera) Company, 8 Queen's Fusiliers on the 'Queen Mary' rope swing, the assault course at Pirbright in 1990.



The 1962 team from B (Enfield) Company, 5th Battalion, The Middlesex Regiment: LCpl Peter Drage, Pte. J. Fergusson, Pte D. Edwards, Pte. John Yates, Pte. Ken Brunton, Cpl. Derrick Harwood, Lt. G Young and Sgt. Vic Hill.



B (Albuhera) Company, 6/7 QUEENS on the assault course at Pirbright in 1988.

*On the Belfast tour '75, Ted Parker, as 'Kestrel', seemed to be full-time Bn HQ watchkeeper. On one occasion a call-sign was nagging him to acknowledge some trivial message they had sent, and he laconically replied '...I rogered you five minutes ago'.*

Mark Rayner



# STALWARTS OF 6/7 (V) QUEENS

By Mike Dudding and others

2021 marks the 50th anniversary of the formation of 6 and 7 (V) QUEENS Battalions. This article pays tribute to the valiant service over many years of a representative number of stalwart volunteers of both battalions and of 6/7 (V) QUEENS.

## Major Peter Chapman TD



Peter started his National Service in 1955 in the Royal Engineers. Afterwards, with 209 Field Park Squadron in Brighton, he qualified as a crane operator. He transferred to 9 (V) QUEENS in 1967. In 1971 he joined the new 7 (V) QUEENS in a Home Defence role, first as a platoon sergeant in C Company at Crawley, later becoming CQMS and then CSM. He was commissioned in 1976 as a Quartermaster, serving

as MTO, and awarded one of the battalion's three Silver Jubilee medals in 1977. Having started as a bricklayer, he was later contracts manager for a building firm.

Peter proudly carried the Regimental Colour on several occasions, notably marching it off at the Presentation of New Colours to 6/7 (V) QUEENS in 1981. But he will be remembered most for taking over as QM at annual camp in 1987 when Major Ted Parker was unable to attend. A truly optimistic 'wilco' soldier!

He always had firm ideas about issues, both military and political. His views were succinctly put, usually with a splash of humour. He had no enemies, everyone liked and respected him, and he always thought of others.

## Major Derrick Harwood MBE TD



Trained as a toolmaker, Derrick joined 7th Battalion, The Middlesex Regiment (DCO) in 1958, and was promoted Sergeant in 1962. In 1975, his company was transferred to 6/7 (V) QUEENS, a NATO reinforcement unit. In 1967, Derrick was promoted CSM,

aged 27. Early on, his company was in Hornsey TA Centre before a parade when the police arrived and arrested a soldier for non-payment of a fine. Derrick arranged a quick collection, and the miscreant was released.

In 1971 his company was transferred to 6 (V) QUEENS, a Home Defence unit. Derrick and his fellow SNCOs had to work hard to retain soldiers, disappointed by their new role, and recruit newcomers. But they succeeded and Derrick was commissioned in 1978.

Appointed Battalion Messing Officer, based at Horsham, in 1979 as a Captain (QM)(TA), in 1984 he was posted back to B Company as Second-in-Command – a rare reversion from QM to combatant officer. Two years later, he became Company Commander. B Company became part of 8th Battalion, The Queen's Fusiliers (8 QF (V)) in 1986, with Derrick appointed OC HQ Company, at Clapham Junction.

In 1993 that battalion joined the new London Regiment. Derrick was awarded the Queen's Regimental Medal in 1990 and the MBE in 1993. He retired in 1996, but remained closely involved with the Reserve Forces until 2010. He has been President of the Middlesex Branch, Queen's Regimental Association for over 20 years.

## Major Alan Stocks TD



Alan joined the King's Regiment (TA) at university in Liverpool. On returning home, he joined the Royal Sussex Regiment. After formation of the Queen's Regiment, he served in the 5th and 7th (V) Battalions between 1966 and 1975, as a platoon commander in C Company at Crawley, then as Second-in-

Command. Promotion to Major as OC C Company in 6/7 (V) QUEENS followed. After the presentation of new Colours to the battalion, he asked Charles Stadden, a renowned military artist, to produce a painting of the parade; prints decorate many former TA soldiers' homes today. Some years later Alan filled a TA staff appointment



in HQ 5 Airborne Brigade. All the while he was running a successful business selling books to schools.

In 1984, he formed the new Home Service Force (HSF) company in West Sussex and Surrey. The HSF recruited former Regular and Territorial soldiers to guard key points against saboteurs and enemy special forces. E (Dunkirk) Company was very effective under Alan's determined leadership. It was mentioned in a 'Times' article in September 1985 about Exercise Brave Defender.

Alan was kind, considerate and generous; he had an easy way with people of all backgrounds. He was generally unflappable, but could get cross; such as when required to blow up a hand-grenade which had not exploded, only to find that the pin had not been pulled out!

### WO2 Dave Bowen



After service with the Grenadier Guards, Dave joined the TA and had short periods with the 4th Battalion, Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment (TA) and the Royal Corps of Signals (TA) before being appointed CSM of, first HQ Company, 6 (V) QUEENS and then of

D Company 6/7 (V) QUEENS at Wandsworth. He was a tall, well-built larger-than-life character who didn't suffer fools gladly. An enthusiastic member of the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess, he could be guaranteed to be the life and soul of any party.

Drill was his forte. Lord Mayor's Shows, Remembrance Sundays and similar events saw him, a wizard with a pace-stick, leading smart, well-rehearsed contingents. A particular high spot was when D Company provided a half-company guard to line the route for HM The Queen's Silver Jubilee procession to St. Paul's Cathedral.

His highlight was as Battalion Drill Warrant Officer at camp in 1981 when 6/7 (V) QUEENS received new Colours from the Duchess of Norfolk at the Ardingly Show Ground. He had been heavily involved in the planning of the parade over the two preceding years with the then 2IC (Major Putnam), and successive RSMs Maloney and Lively.

The battalion had barely a fortnight to rehearse and enact the parade. Each evening 2IC, RSM and Drill WO met to discuss progress. Dave did so much to keep the soldiers motivated and they responded. The result - an outstanding achievement.

### Captain Rob Thornton MBE TD



Rob worked for British Telecom and joined 71 (V) Signals Regiment in Brighton in 1970. He transferred to 7 (V) QUEENS in 1971. His specialisation was signals and he ran many courses for both TA and Regular soldiers. Rob came across as 'the cheeky chappie' with a quick and irreverent sense of humour. Having earned the Territorial Efficiency Medal, he was awarded an MBE in 1991 shortly after being commissioned and appointed MTO – not his dream job. But in 1984 he was back in the signals world as RSO.

A notable camp was in 1992 at Thetford when 6/7 (V) QUEENS became 6/7 (V) PWRR. The padre was late for church parade, so Rob gave the troops an hilarious impression of the padre's habit of seeming to reach a conclusion to a prayer but then adding other subjects. Egged on by laughter, Rob had continued, but the padre walked in behind him. Rob sensed something, looked behind and stared into the padre's face. Rob said: "Oh dear" and the Padre said: "Mmm". The rank and file laughed.

When 6/7 (V) PWRR was disbanded in 1999, Rob transferred to 103 Battalion (V) REME, again as RSO. After 40 years in the TA/Army Reserve, Rob retired in 2011. He was a founder member of the Horsham Branch of the Queen's Regimental Association and made a considerable contribution to its newsletter, battlefield tours, and home barbeques.

### WO2 Terry Young BEM



Terry was a bachelor who worked in the City of London. In 1970, he joined the Surrey Yeomanry (TA) in Sutton. In 1971 that unit joined 6 (V) QUEENS as D (Surrey Yeomanry) Battery RA. One year later the Battery became an infantry company. For



many years Terry was part of the pay team of 6/7 (V) QUEENS, 8 QF and the London Regiment, either as a member of the Royal Army Pay Corps or the Adjutant

General's Corps (SPS).

Whilst with 6/7 (V) QUEENS, Terry was a regular commuter to Horsham for drill nights. He was awarded the BEM whilst serving with 8 QF, having also earned the Territorial Efficiency Medal.

Captain Stephen Clerk remembers being monitored on his annual fitness test in 1983 by Terry in his Ford Cortina. As Stephen came round a bend, he found the whole battalion, including the CO, by the side of the road. Terry shouted to him: "It's all right, Sir, you can hop in the car again when we are round the corner!"

Terry could appear gruff and argumentative. But he was not one to sit back and relax. He was an active member, treasurer, secretary and chairman of many small organisations. He served on the Middlesex Branch Committee, Queen's Regimental Association for a number of years.

### Philip Pearce – An Anecdote

*Sadly, Philip Pearce and I never served together at RD, but the impression he created at Washington Dulles Airport one Friday evening in November 1982 singled him out as a friend for life.*

*As two knackered adults and three bemused children plus thirteen pieces of luggage, a carrycot and a pushchair struggled off the RAF flight from Brize Norton en route to Montreal via Baltimore, there in Arrivals was the instantly recognisable and imposing figure of the regimental officer for whom I was desperately looking. What relief we felt!*

*"I am so sorry, but my car is in the garage", quickly followed our initial greetings. My heart sank, fearing the two-taxi solution. "But don't worry, I have a solution, I have my general's staff car and driver instead", he said proudly, grinning all over his face. Major Philip Pearce, newly transferred to The Queen's Regiment had indeed the solution – there was the brand-new maroon Buick staff car of his general with Sgt Wright RCT standing guard outside the Arrivals Terminal! And the General had yet to travel in it!*

*Aghast, I helped Philip and Sgt Wright load the car. The boot was so full it had to be secured half-open with borrowed string, whilst the front passenger seat was so loaded with luggage that we all had to squeeze into the back, leaving Sgt Wright to drive us (all asleep) the two hours round the Belt Way to Baltimore Airport, there to see us safely on our way.*

*Philip in the meantime caught public transport home! Never have I been so grateful to a fellow officer. No wonder he was the MA. How lovely it would have been to have served alongside him somewhere during the years that followed.*

Mike Jelf



# CHRIS OAKLEY'S FIRE PIT





# HOLY TRINITY CATHEDRAL RANGOON, THE CHINDITS AND THE QUEEN'S ROYAL REGIMENT

By Piers Storie-Pugh

Although the great Buddhist Shwedagon Pagoda in central Rangoon was not included in the 'New Wonders of the World', many believe it should have been. Less than quarter of an hour's walk away is another Rangoon wonder - the imposing Christian Holy Trinity Cathedral. In 1886, the foundation stone was laid by Lord Dufferin, Viceroy of India, of which Burma was then a part, and the building was designed by Robert Chisholm, a Madras-based British architect. The first choral celebration of Holy Communion took place at 7.30am on Sunday, 18 November 1894.

The East window depicts the Epiphany, Baptism, Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension. The Sanctuary is paved in marble and the groined roof—the intersection of two barrel roofs—is a real feature of this magnificent building. The bell, weighing 840 kg, was first rung on 18 August 1914, a week after the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) crossed the Channel heading to the Western Front and the Great War. Above the Cathedral tower, the spire rises to a magnificent height of 200 ft; and in thoughtful recognition of the Burmese climate, the roof entrance underneath the tower is an adaptation to shelter worshippers from the torrential rains experienced in this country.

During the Second World War, the Japanese occupied Rangoon and the Cathedral used as a brewery; and during this period the High Altar, organ and stained-glass windows were destroyed. In 1945, Royal Engineer units of the British Army set about repairing the Cathedral and a Forces Memorial Chapel was created.



A front view of the cathedral

Many military plaques of units that served at sea, on land and in the air during the Burma campaign are displayed in this chapel, which is especially dedicated to the memory of Major Hugh Seagrim GC DSO MBE, 19th Hyderabad Regiment and 20th Burma Rifles. Major Seagrim, nicknamed 'Grandfather Longlegs', was notable for his outstanding bravery in leading the Karen rebels against the Japanese; and upon capture, he was executed. He is buried in the Rangoon Cemetery and a memorial service was held in Holy Trinity Cathedral. A page in the Book of Remembrance, containing the Roll of Honour of those who died in Burma 1942–45 and the units that served, is turned every day.

In the Cathedral grounds is a memorial to the officers and men of the Queen's Royal Regiment (the 2nd of Foot). The 1st Battalion, commanded by Colonel Duncombe, fought in the Arakan on the west coast of Burma in 1943, then at Kohima in 1944 and was still fighting in July 1945 at the Battle of the Sittang Bend in Southern Burma.

The 2nd Battalion, commanded by Colonel Metcalfe, had fought in the Middle East before being sent to Brigadier Bernard Ferguson's 16th Chindit Brigade, part of General Wingate's Operation Thursday. This battalion, divided into 21 Column and 22 Column, each of 400 men and 75 mules, left India in February 1944 and marched back into





Memorial today



Burma, passing through the Naga head-hunters' territory before crossing the Chindwin River and heading for their destination, the Aberdeen Fortress. On 22 March 1944, the column under Major Close ambushed a Japanese lorry convoy, killing 80 Japanese for the loss of five killed and four wounded. Major Close was awarded the DSO and Pte Burke, Medical Orderly, the MM. This intrepid journey took the battalion 94 days, of which 70 were actually on the march. They covered almost 600 miles, slogged up to heights of 6,000 ft and received 19 air drops of supplies, ammunition, food and cigarettes.

Ferguson's 16 Brigade, responsible for guarding General Stilwell's right flank was the only one to march in, the remainder being delivered by glider. Stilwell's huge American/Chinese army advanced southwards from China and the Chindits thus did much to keep them committed to the Burma front. The Chindits also frustrated the Japanese strategic objective of reaching Imphal, Field Marshal Bill Slim's enormous base for reinvasion. The Chindits were finally flown out of the jungles of Burma to Imphal on 1 August 1944, their job done.

The plaque to The Queen's Royal Regiment is amongst those which proudly hang in Rangoon's Holy Trinity Cathedral Memorial Chapel to this day; as does a photograph of the Guard of Honour, provided by the Queens's Royal Regiment and which was presented to the Cathedral in 1996.



Piers Storie-Pugh at The Queen's Royal Regiment Memorial before it was restored

Whenever I bring out a group of war widows, relatives and veterans to Burma, our pilgrimage always ends with a service in Holy Trinity Cathedral. Over time, some of the beautiful stained glass in the Cathedral's east-facing window had deteriorated. Poignantly they were repaired by David Knowles, former chairman of the Royal British Legion and a good friend, during a Remembrance Travel pilgrimage of war widows and relatives of men who lost their lives in Burma, including in the Chindit operations. The 1st Battalion was still fighting at the Battle of the Sittang Bend in July 1945.



# DIEHARD STEEL BAND

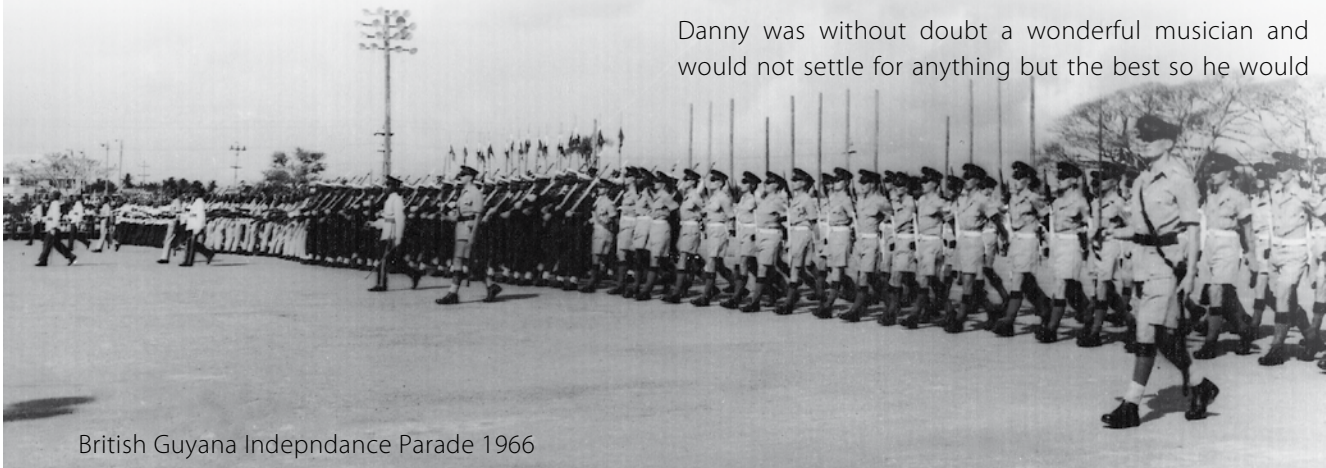
By John Taylor

Once upon a time 55 years ago, the 1st Battalion The Middlesex Regiment (later 4th Battalion the Queen's Regiment) had been posted to British Guyana as it was then and some music lover in the battalion thought the battalion could do with a steel band! We young drummers were looking forward to a few strolls through the jungle when surprise, surprise, we found ourselves under the guidance of a young Ghanaian steel band expert called Danny Sandiford. Danny quickly adapted to our sense of humour and with his broad infectious grin and enthusiasm for life had us off all over the

place acquiring by one way or another, approximately 34 x 35-gallon oil drums.

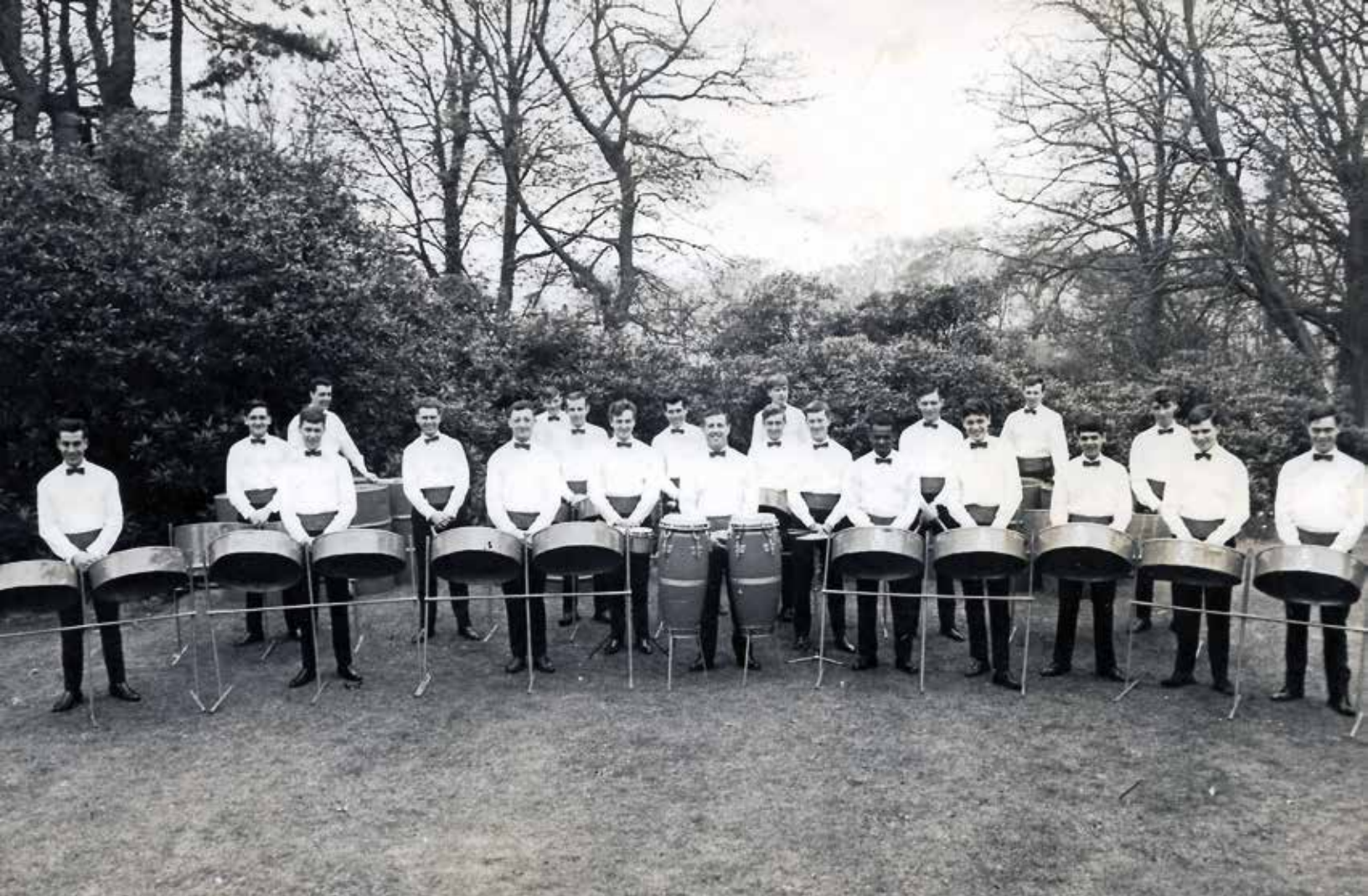
Once the oil drums were acquired, we were put to work cutting off the bases to the required sizes and heating them over very hot fires in a very hot climate so Danny could then tune each pan using a punch and 2lb hammer. We then had to get the stands made from tubular steel constructed by locals, followed by the drum sticks which we made of wood cut into bits about a foot long with a half-inch diameter; these were topped off with strips of bicycle inner-tube wound around one end to produce the required tone for Danny's very attuned ear.

Danny was without doubt a wonderful musician and would not settle for anything but the best so he would



British Guyana Independence Parade 1966





Pictured above: In Mufti  
Pictured below: Palace Barracks N Ireland 1967







sit and listen to records for hours at a time humming while arranging each steel pan requirement in his head and, as Danny did not read or write music, all the arranging

for all the pans (lead, second, Yamaha, treble and bass) was done by his individual teaching to each of us drummers in turn until he got the collective composition he wanted!



JT's 21st Birthday 1967

When Danny had us up to his required standard (which was high) we could play for three hours without repeating a record and in the dark, if need be, as no electrics were required! The first record I remember was 'Downtown' followed by 'Ferry Across the Mersey', then a



Danny just enlisted 1966

great many others before we moved onto some light classics like 'Rhapsody in Blue'.

We then returned to Palace Barracks, just outside Belfast, where we became very popular and played a concert in Belfast City Hall, Liverpool's Bunny Club and at many mess functions and other venues across the UK. The forerunner of Britain's Got Talent was Opportunity Knocks and in 1967 we appeared on this TV programme, the same week as Mary Hopkins first appearance; she was only about 16 or 17 at the time but very nice to us soldiers, so we did not mind when she won and knocked us into third place.

The Steel Drum Tradition carried on after the 4th Battalion disbanded in 1969 and continued for many years in the 1st Battalion.

# PHOTO OF THE YEAR

Trish and Raymond Low  
(Don't ask!)





# BOOK REVIEWS

## DHOFAR VOICES

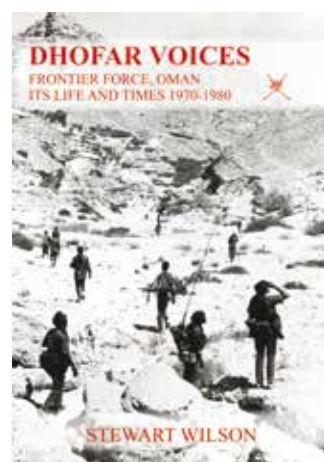
By Stewart Wilson

Dhofar Voices is an oral account of the conflict in Dhofar, Oman during that country's struggle against communist forces in the years 1970-1980. It is told through the 'voices' of over fifty participants in the events of those crucial years. The conflict is examined by way of the activities of a Baluch regiment, The Frontier Force. The story tells this regiment's tale and of its interactions with all the other major units and support forces of the Sultan of Oman's Armed Forces.

'Dhofar Voices...is a story of young men in combat; it is a story of failures and successes, of tragedies and triumphs; but above all it is a story of real people who came together from different parts of the world to fight for the future of a country, and who in doing so made a lasting difference. I had the privilege to know some of them, and I am delighted that their contribution has at last received in this splendid book the recognition it so richly deserves.' – MRAF The Lord Stirrup KG GCB AFC

*The 'fog of war' leaps out from every page – Major General Andrew Pringle CB CBE*

Anyone keen on getting a copy should contact Stewart Wilson at [dhofarvoices@gmail.com](mailto:dhofarvoices@gmail.com).



## A FAITHFUL RECORD OF THE LISBON MARU INCIDENT

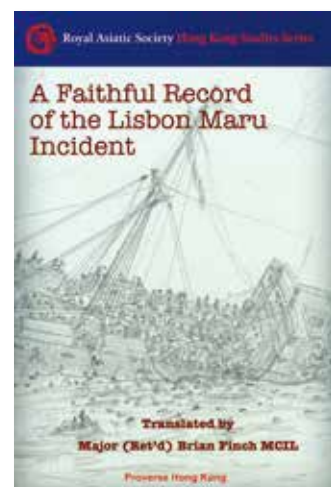
*A Faithful Record of the Lisbon Maru Incident: translation with additional material by Brian Finch of the original Chinese book published by SoftRepublic*

In the 80th anniversary year of the sinking of the Lisbon Maru, A FAITHFUL RECORD OF THE LISBON MARU INCIDENT is a recent translation by Brian Finch, ex-Middlesex Regiment formerly and the Queen's Regiment, from an original Chinese publication covering an important chapter in Hong Kong's wartime history. It gives details of the Lisbon Maru Incident of 1942, seen through the eyes of the Chinese fishermen who rescued hundreds of British prisoners of war from Hong Kong, whose ship had been torpedoed. The Japanese had tried to keep them in the holds as the ship sank so that they would drown, and then shot at them as they tried to escape. These courageous fishermen not only prevented hundreds more deaths, they also hid three prisoners under the noses of the Japanese until they could be sent secretly on a journey across more than 1,000 miles of China to reach Chongqing, from where they could tell the world what had happened. The book also recounts the visit to Zhoushan in 2005 of one of the survivors of the sinking and his emotional reunion with those who saved him; as well as a visit to Hong Kong in the same year of the last few remaining fishermen who had taken part in the rescue.

Of the 828 who perished between 27 September and 5 October 1942, 152 came from the Middlesex Regiment with a further 53 dying in captivity afterwards.

*"Today, this human tragedy – and the heroism it inspired – is no longer forgotten" – Tony Banham*

This book can be purchased from Amazon or contact Brian Finch for a signed copy at [bfinch1941@gmail.com](mailto:bfinch1941@gmail.com)





# HM QUEEN MARGRETHE'S ARTISTIC TALENT

The Anglo-Danish Society Newsletter



Fredensborg Castle in winter

It is not surprising that, while snow and Covid puts a dampener on everyone's activities, HM Queen Margrethe continues her prolific output of all types of artistic expression.

Over many years the Queen has acted as the in-house set designer for the Pantomime Theatre in Tivoli, Copenhagen. She has designed costumes and scenery for many varied productions of theatre, opera and ballet including *The Nutcracker*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Thumbelina*, and *The Steadfast Tin Soldier*.

However, the Queen's abundant creativity also includes pictorial art such as portraits, floral symbolism, and landscapes. Queen Margrethe's famed watercolour artwork was displayed on Greenland's postage stamps.

*"I've always loved the landscape, and as a child what I really wanted to do was draw landscapes when we had drawing lessons," says the Queen of her lifelong desire to paint.*



An avid and passionate reader, HM Queen Margrethe translated, in collaboration with her French-born husband, Prince Henrik, Simone de Beauvoir's 1946 novel, *All Men Are Mortal* and illustrated several books. While still a Crown Princess, Margrethe illustrated *Lord of the Rings* with drawings printed under her pen name Ingahild Grathmer. JRR Tolkien had no idea the artwork had a royal provenance and went on to use them in both British and Danish editions.







Vestment from behind. Photo: Inga Rasmussen



Danish Church London. Photo: Inga Rasmussen



Altar Vestments



Vestment. Photo: Pallesgaard Pedersen

HM has also been a prolific creator of religious robes and fabrics for churches throughout Denmark, Norway, and Germany and, most recently, the Danish Church in London.

A true Renaissance monarch, Queen Margrethe has been a lifelong, largely self-taught student of art – as well as archaeology and political science as an undergraduate at Cambridge.

The following podcasts featuring three interviews broadcast during the Corona crisis can be found at <https://podcasts.apple.com/dk/podcast/dronningen-og-kunsten/id1537110266?l=da> which encompass:

1. A talk with Nicolaj Koppel about 'The Nutcracker' – a ballet for which the Queen provided both costumes and stage design
2. 10 performances designed for the stage in Tivoli including 'Romeo & Juliet'
3. Pictorial art including portraits, floral symbolism, landscapes of Greenland



HM hard at Work



# LIFE IN CIVVY STREET

By Hugh Lohan

When I was at HQ South-East District in Aldershot, working on a staff job for which I was neither trained nor suited, I realised it was time to leave the army. I was 47 and suspected that as it would be quite difficult to find employment after 50, better to act now rather than later. My PVR request was approved, and I left in December '82. I soon discovered that it was a waste of time sending in CVs with sensibly short covering letters. Nobody read them, nobody answered, and nobody cared. It occurred to me that perhaps I should have found a job before leaving, but the desire to start a new life as soon as possible was very strong. Does any of this ring a bell? During the 60s, 70s, and 80s I do not recall anyone talking about retirement. The word 'redundancy' came up occasionally, but it was all a bit complicated and never seemed to concern my age group.

I discovered the obvious. Unlike those who served in the REME, Sappers or Royal Signals, who brought with them valuable commercial skills and were always in demand in civvy street, it was not quite the same for an infantryman, although a few found their way into the emergency services or security work or local government.

These days the job interview process can be an awkward confrontation, especially when a trained member of the company's Human Resource (HR) Department carries it out. There is a blank look by the HR member when the ex-military candidate mentions that he is a hard worker, can lead others, is honest, loyal by nature, learns quickly and is able to think outside the box when under pressure. In response, he gets a lecture driven by an LGBT enthusiast. He hears about the needs to recognise issues arising from biphobic, transphobic and homophobic hate crime.

Finding employment is even harder in the 21st century. Hundreds of good men and specialist women fought hard and with great bravery in the Middle East and western Asia. Many deployed to a war zone more than once, placing strain and stress on themselves, their families and their relations. On leaving, they faced a different type of pressure, ignorance and very little understanding of how and why combat experience can unbalance or even wreck one's life. The fact is, you cannot really understand combat unless you have taken part. And if that involvement has taken place again and again...

Anyone glancing through this article has probably already retired for a second time, so I will get back to my subject. But in case someone approaches you for advice, it's worth noting that there are some excellent articles on the internet about job hunting. Try 'Glassdoor.co.uk' and their article '*7 things to research before applying for a job*'.

On leaving, I worked for nothing for Major Mike Rose, an old army friend, who was trying to start up a company. He had both legs blown off by a landmine in Dhofar. We needed to raise a great deal of money and learn all about Computer Aided Design and Manufacturing (CAD/CAM). It was a struggle that we eventually lost, and I had to get a paid job to help pay the mortgage. With a bit of help, I found a small company in Southampton called British Defence Market Intelligence (BDMI). It took on work from the international arms industry and bigger research companies. To my surprise, I was offered a job. The pay was not that good, but better than nothing. My first task was to write about likely development and costs for submarines and all related weaponry over the next ten years. My project partner in crime was an ex-RN Lieutenant Commander, Peter Goodin. We were introduced and he informed me that he and his wife were just going away for a fortnight's holiday. Tricky start. I enjoyed the team and was loathe to walk out, but after two years I felt that I had to make a bit more money so that we could take our first holiday since leaving the army.

For a while I worked for the Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT) at RAF Fairford with whom I was volunteer. Being a charity, the pay was modest, therefore swallowed up by the commute. Then, in 1987, thanks to my old friend Lt Col Peter Packham I got an interview with a firm up in London, Control Risks. The job involved travelling the world and advising companies and families on the management of already kidnapped members. In 1999, I had to retire again on reaching 65. However, some nine months short of the critical date I left, formally established my own one-man company PMDG Associates and carried on the same work. Finally, when deployed to Dubai working on a Somali-driven maritime hijack, I felt that I was slowing down, taking a touch too long to provide solutions; it was time to stop work. At 80, I then became a photographer and lived off my pension and a few sales. Freedom!

As I approach 90, I look back to see what I did right. Let's take a look at the key issues: you need to monitor your



basic health, physical and mental agility. Fairly obvious. You can't stop growing old, but you can do a lot to slow down the aging process. So, what is missing? Well, all the things that impact on your morale. Are you happy? Content? Fulfilled as a citizen? Are you meeting up with local friends, old chums from army days? Are you checking out those who are in hospital or in care? What about widows and widowers? Doing something for others makes you feel like a useful citizen.

It follows that it is essential to retain your mobility if possible. If things are going wrong anywhere in your body, get in the NHS queue to get it looked at. The usual "No I'll be fine!", to your partner is not a wise response. So, number one rule is **LOOK AFTER YOUR HEALTH**.

Yes of course you will slow down, and the brain can get a bit muddled; three typos per email line is my average. But spellchecking soon sorts that out. Memory becomes a bit of a problem too. You: "Who was that bloke who called last weekend?" Wife: "Your eldest son!" And so on. But knowing this, a quick think before speaking might help. But hang on a minute! Can't the brain be exercised? Yes, it can. I do a lot of photography and really enjoy using YouTube to watch teaching videos on Lightroom and Photoshop post-production work. Depending on your taste there are crosswords, card games in the pub, anything creative connected with music, gardening and helping the community. Therefore, **TRAIN THE BRAIN**.

You should take eating seriously and find out what helps keep your body and your mind in reasonable shape. Go for fresh food not ready meals. Eat plenty of fruit. Go for **HEALTHY FOOD**.

If you can't abandon your roll-ups, you can cut back: **CUT BACK SMOKING**.

Be honest about your unit intake. Last December, I worked out my alcohol unit intake without doing the maths. The doctor was pleased, but recommended I bring 28 down another ten. This time, I googled the system, finding metric measurement the easiest. On a normal day (no celebrations or pub lunch meeting), I drank a glass of good red wine at lunch and another with supper, seven days a week. That's  $2 \times 200\text{ml} = 400$ , multiply by seven days  $400 \times 7 = 2,800$ , multiply by the label % (14%) that's  $2,800 \times 14 = 39,200$  and finally divide that sum by 1000 which equals 39.2 units a week or 5.6 units daily. That is way over the top! **CUT BACK DRINKING**.

You might have noticed that I haven't suggested giving up smoking and drinking. Why not? Well, this is entirely a personal view, but vowing to give something up that you enjoy and are addicted to is only good for making you miserable, bad-tempered, impossible to live with and nobody's friend. It then becomes more unlikely that you will succeed, so you start cheating on yourself and feel even more miserable. With Plan A, you tell yourself you are going to cut down, head for 'near zero' but will have a smoke or a drink on special occasions. Try it. The money you save should surprise you. **TRY PLAN A**.

I will end up by suggesting that the most valuable action you can take is to meet up with old friends from your time in the forces and reminisce over the old days when life was a touch less expensive, and you had much more social freedom. The best part of retirement is finding the time to locate and meet old friends. Good luck.

# IT'S A SMALL WORLD

By Peter Stewart

My military service started when I enlisted in the TA, Headquarter Company, 5th Battalion, The Royal Hampshire Regiment based in Eastleigh, Hampshire when aged 17 yrs 6 mths. Meanwhile, I had been an apprentice studying for my City and Guilds in Southampton. on completion of which I received my call up papers for National Service. I promptly presented myself at the recruiting office in Southampton where I stated that I wished to join the Middlesex Regt (DCO) thus upsetting the sergeant who was a 'Tiger' loyal and true. On being asked: "Now why would a *SWEDE* be wanting to join a London Regt?" my reply: "I was born in Potters Bar" was accepted with some enthusiasm!

The appropriate date found me on Mill Hill, and yes, I did walk up that hill, unlike most others, and presented myself at the Guard Room, Inglis Barracks. After the formalities, I then moved at a considerably smarter pace to my quarters, having seen the RSM Paddy Kendrick closing in fast behind me. Mmm, bed and board, let us just say it was different from home and leave it there.

The following day having visited Lou, the hair stylist, I arrived at the QM's stores to be kitted out. My future battalion was deployed in Cyprus at that time. The QM, a Captain Sam Weller, was talking to a boy of about 4 years and a girl some years older. They apparently were



his children. That then was the start of 22 years of a very happy time, eventually joining 1 QUEENS, followed by 17 years in the MOD Police.

In 2006, a new hobby found me at a local college having joined a 'Wines of the World' class where each week we explored, tasted and learnt about viticulture. In the long summer holiday, we hold BBQs and each fortnight, concentrate on the wines of different countries. At the

start of 2017 term, a new member enrolled and on being asked his name he replied: *"Martin Weller"*. I looked at him and asked: *"Was your father Sam Weller, a Diehard?"* "Yes," he replied, a little taken aback, *"How do you know?"* I then explained. After a few minutes the teacher called a halt to our chat. Martin is still a member of the group and takes a great interest in the Middlesex and has many items of memorabilia on show in his pad.

So, from seeing Captain Weller and his 4 yr old son in 1957 to meeting the same son in 2017, some 60 years later, proves that it is indeed 'a small world'.

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## MANAGEMENT OF THE PRINCESS OF WALES'S ROYAL REGIMENT (QUEEN'S & ROYAL HAMPSHIRE) BENEVOLENT FUND

### Transparency

The Charity Commission requires all charities to be as open to its donors and beneficiaries as possible. The Benevolent Fund recently went through a Governance Review with the Confederation of Service Charities (COBSEO). It was agreed that the publication of the accounts on the Charity Commission website and the publication of those accounts on the PWRR weekly sitrep (which is also shared by the QRA to its members) achieves this – if you have not seen them, accounts can be accessed here: <https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/1024418>

Using the latest audit report as an example (for 2020), the Trustees' Report is very detailed, giving seven pages of background to events, decisions and future projects. Additionally, the detail of where money came from and where it went is broken up for all to see (this will be particularly pertinent to ex-Queensmen since it can be seen how monies raised for the QRA sit in a Designated Fund and are used only for the purpose of supporting the QRA). The Benevolent Fund is therefore considered to be transparent by the Charity Commission regarding its operations and decisions.

### Trustees

The trustees are required by law to:

- Ensure that activities are for the public benefit. This means that the Benevolent Fund is only operating for the purpose for which it was set up. In this case:
  - o Relief of hardship or distress of former and serving members of the Regiment or former members of the former Regiments and their dependents.
  - o To promote the efficiency of the Regiment in such ways as the Managing Trustees from time to time see fit.
- Comply with the Governing Document and the Law.
- Act in the Charity's best interests.
- Manage resources responsibly.
- Act with reasonable care and skill.
- Ensure the Charity is accountable.



Whilst the interests of individuals are, of course, considered, the overriding legal requirements have to be met.

Turning to the appointment of an OR as a trustee, trustees are required to have most of the following skill sets:

- Business acumen
- Campaigning
- Change management
- Digital
- Finance and accounting
- Fundraising
- Strategic Planning
- Governance
- Knowledge of the organisation's operating environment
- Knowledge of the sector
- Human resources
- Information technology
- Legislation in relation to the organisation's work
- Marketing
- Monitoring and evaluating performance
- Policy
- Property and estate management

The current trustees consist of:

- The senior element of the Regimental Council (Colonel of the Regiment and Deputy Colonels -five in total)
- A Late Entry Commission Officer (currently a Lieutenant Colonel)
- Chair PWRRRA
- President QRA
- Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment rep (and experienced trustee for other charities).
- Ex-CO of a TA Battalion (who worked in the investment world)
- A civilian businessman

Note regarding meetings:

- Commanding Officers are no longer trustees since there is a perceived conflict of interest (they are recipients of grants). They are however present at meetings to give advice; very often they are accompanied by their RSMs.
- The Honorary Colonel of 3 PWRR (Sir Lloyd Dorfman CBE – well-known businessman and founder of Travelex) is present as an advisor.
- The Regimental Solicitor is present.
- The Treasurer is present – an ex WO.
- The Deputy Regimental Secretary is present – an ex WO.
- The Regimental Secretary acts as Secretary and de facto CEO. He previously worked as operations manager for a national charity with offices across the United Kingdom.



# BENEVOLENCE AND FUNDRAISING

## BENEVOLENCE

By Diane White, Welfare RHQ PWRR

To say 2020 was one of a kind is an understatement. To many, the global pandemic brought various challenges whether those were mental, physical, or financial. Yet it would seem Queensmen were steadfast and well prepared. It was anticipated that with the onset of Covid-19 and the lockdowns there would be a significant rise in benevolence cases, however this was not the case.

Over the last year the Queen's Regiment Charity assisted 48 veterans with grants totalling around £22,500. The grants went towards a wide variety of needs; mobility aids, personal safety, priority debts, household items and funeral costs to name but a few.

### CASE STUDIES

Background: This veteran has mobility issues and was finding his home difficult to navigate for his needs. He also has some health concerns and was struggling with his mental health. He was offered tenancy in the RBL Village and was seeking assistance towards the advance rent, removals, and house clearance.

Grant: £500

Almonised: TRBL provided a grant of £1100.

Background: This veteran was released from an open prison, to supported accommodation but was soon to move to privately rented accommodation. He had worked hard in prison to gain qualifications and prepare for life post-release and had secured a job. Requested assistance towards advance rent, household items and clothing.

Grant: £500

Almonised: ABF provided a grant of £2000. *(Ed: charity grant provided by another organisation.)*

Background: This veteran has an EPV that was previously funded by the military charities. It was serving him well but malfunctioned. Requested assistance towards a service, new battery and replacement tyres.

Grant: £345

Almonised: Not required as the total need was met.

Background: This veteran and his wife were struggling with their finances as she was off work for health reasons. He was struggling physically and mentally. He requested assistance to purchase a bike and sundries which would help everything; his health, both physically and mentally and their finances saving money from his commute.

Grant: £350

Almonised: Not required as the total need was met.

Background: This veteran was a self-employed crane supervisor who was unable to work due to the pandemic. He subsequently lost his home and had been sofa-surfing since. He was helped into temporary accommodation by SSAFA and was seeking assistance towards advance rent for a room.

Grant: £500

Almonised: TRBL provided a grant of £500.

Of course, these examples and the figures quoted at the beginning of the article do not include those that were supported in other ways by the Association, whether that was guidance and signposting to those who could help or simply a check-in phone call. The Queens Regiment Association, along with RHQ, are always on hand to offer advice, guidance and support, and, on the odd occasion



Les White at the Middlesex branch trying out the new stair climber bought by the Benevolent Fund.



that they are unable to help, they are able to signpost to other organisations that can. They are here to help you and your families, to ensure hardship and distress is relieved and that support is given when the unfortunate or unexpected happens.

Do not be afraid to ask for help. Reach out to SSAFA, The Royal British Legion or the Association. If all else fails, get

in touch with PWRR RHQ. There is a system to follow but this ultimately opens up a huge network. The Queen's Regiment Charity is here to help you, our Queensmen.

*(Ed: The President would like to pay tribute to Diana for all the work that she does on our behalf ensuring that the Secretary is kept informed of any welfare issues that need addressing.)*

## THE KINDNESS OF STRANGERS

By Radar Cope

Saturday 24th July 2021 - Forth Valley hospital, Larbert, Scotland

*"I have some bad news I'm afraid you've broken your collarbone!"*

Those words ended any hope of me completing my journey and would impact my life in so many ways in the months to come.

My journey had begun just over 7 weeks ago in Kent, itching to do something after enduring several months of lockdown. I planned to cycle from Reculver on the North Kent coast up the Pennine Cycleway (PCW) to the most northerly point in the Outer Hebrides at the 'Butt of Lewis', return to Scotland and visit Loch Ness before climbing Ben Nevis and returning home via Route 1 on the East coast. My intention was to eschew all the creature comforts and wildcamp along the whole route, only visiting campsites for an occasional shower and to charge my mobile phone etc.

So it was that on the Glorious First of June, I set off from Waltham Abbey after accepting a lift from a mate. The sharp-eyed amongst you will no doubt spot that Waltham Abbey is not on the north Kent coast but as I didn't particularly want to cycle through London, and I was in charge so let's not argue the toss.

After being dropped off, I set off North to find the start of the PCW at Etwell near Derby. Following the Sustrans cycle routes and clocking up around 40 miles a day through Luton, Milton Keynes, Northampton and Leicester, after four days of easy riding through mostly flat countryside (much of it along canal towpaths) I reached Etwell and found a spot to wildcamp not far from the start of the Pennine Cycleway.

The PCW is a 327-mile route along the backbone of England. It starts in Etwell, ends in Berwick upon Tweed and roughly runs parallel with the Pennine Way which had just been conquered by Chris Broome and his team of plodders.

After setting off, it soon became clear that the PCW was going to be no picnic. I quickly learned that any town along the route that had the word 'bridge' in its name generally meant that it would be followed by some





serious hillage that even with a very small granny gear would inevitably result in me pushing the bike over numerous false crests; and you know how much we hate false crests!

At times, it was a seriously draining experience for this 64-year-old knackered ex-squaddie and the hills just kept coming; but at least I had the weather on my side, and at times the scenery reminded me of what a beautiful and diverse country we live in.

At Settle I turned left, and leaving the PCW, I cycled over to Cartmel in the Lake District for a few days R&R at my friend Pam's house. I first met Pam in 2015 whilst cycling around the coast of Britain where I stumbled across Cartmel and discovered that it was, among other things, the home of sticky toffee pudding. The area around Cartmel is a walker's paradise and a great place to stop and recoup and it was good to get out and stretch my legs. However, after four days of luxury, it was time to move on and so with a heavy heart, I said my goodbyes and Pam gave me a lift over to Kendal where I set off to re-join the PCW north of Sedbergh.

After two days on the PCW, I struck NW towards Carlisle, and after waiting for the result of the England v Scotland game, crossed the border at Gretna Green. Three days later, I stopped in Paisley for my second bit of R&R with Dave and Pauline Lee.

Paisley to Oban was almost exactly 100 miles and the route took me along the shore of Loch Lomond to Tyndrum past the 'Green Wellie stop' and some stunning scenery, before heading west to Oban where the plan was to get a ferry out to Barra.

On my arrival in Oban, I discovered that due to COVID restrictions the campsite was not accepting tents and the hostel was full, so I found a spot next to the castle and wild-camped. The ferry crossing to Barra takes just under 5 hrs and gave me a chance to relax and charge my mobile ready for the next phase.

On arrival in Castlebay with its iconic castle guarding the entrance to the harbour, I headed South to Vatersay and set up camp on a deserted beach. After a glorious sunset and sunrise, the next item on the bucket list was the unique Barra airport where passenger aircraft land and take-off on the beach.

What followed was an island-hopping adventure from the bottom to the top of the Outer Hebrides. Each island has a unique feel to it, and I quickly ran out of superlatives whilst trying to describe the landscape, mountains and beautiful, almost deserted beaches that I visited enroute.

After an overnight camp at the Callanish stones which predate Stonehenge, I finally made it to the lighthouse at The Butt of Lewis. After a few happy snaps with the Queen's flag I was carrying with me, I set up camp next to the lighthouse.

The next morning, I rode around to Stornoway. My intention was to catch a ferry to Ullapool, however, due to COVID, there were no spaces available on any ferries for up to two weeks.

Whilst contemplating my fate, a guy appeared and asked me about my trip. After I'd given him a run down so far, he asked me where I was headed next. Upon hearing my tale of woe, he simply said *"Well get your arse down to the harbour at 4 o'clock tomorrow morning and I'll take you over to Lochinver on my yacht."*

After the 44-mile crossing, I cycled down to Ullapool, across to Inverness, and after camping on the shore of Loch Ness, I made it to Fort William.

A few days later I climbed Ben Nevis and unfurled the Regimental flag on the summit.





Job done; mission complete - apart from the small task of cycling back home that is. Over the next few days my good luck continued and after visiting Glencoe, I spent a few days at a caravan park kayaking and chilling out before heading South to visit the Wallace monument at Stirling followed by a brief trip to Bannockburn.

Then it all went pear-shaped. I came off my bike near Linlithgow on a single-track road in the middle of nowhere. Luckily for me, it was witnessed by a farmworker who had a van sent down to take me and all my gear back to the farm, where I met Audrey. Not only did she take me to A&E for treatment, but she also then picked me up, took me back to the farm, gave me a bed for the night and then arranged a static caravan for me to stay in while I organised my somewhat chaotic return home.



I had cycled 1400 miles in total and raised a sizeable amount for the Benevolent Fund (*Ed: over £1700, on top of the many hundreds of pounds raised last year with Bob Fisher.*) as well as raising the flag at various points along the route but my overwhelming memories of this journey will always be the spontaneous acts of kindness, I received from complete strangers whom I cannot thank enough.

What sums it up for me is a quote from Graham who ferried me back to the mainland: *"Nice to have met you and to be of assistance. Pass on the favour to someone else and little by little we'll make the world a better place."*

## OPERATION SLEEPOUT

By John Bennett

On the 31st July, a group of nearly twenty Queensmen and women took part in a 'wild sleep out' in woods and open areas right across the South of England, from Dartmoor to East Kent. The aim of this was to raise money for our benevolent fund and 'Scotty's Little Soldiers' in equal amounts. The latter helps the children of soldiers who die in service, supporting them well into their 20s.



John Bennett

The idea for this came from a random thought on how a group of veterans who can't walk miles, swim the Channel (unless they are Bob Fisher!) or cycle very far can raise a sensible amount of money to support those in need. The one thing we all could do was to 'lie down' so the idea of sleeping wild seemed to be the answer. Some weeks later the organiser noticed on his social media feed an advert for Scotty's Little Soldiers which ran a slideshow of parents whose children were being supported. He noticed that one of them was someone he had served with for many years. After some research, another member of the regimental family popped up.

After that it was downhill, as they say. The impetus increased and a plan was formed. This was this to be a mainly individual event as Covid was still rife in the early part of the year. It was advertised across all regimental social media, weekly updates and on BFBS radio and Forces TV for three months prior to the event.

The weather was favourable that night and everyone survived boasting sore joints, bad backs and some sense of humour failure. It was worth it, because as at the time of writing, over £2200 has been raised with more sponsor money still to be collected.



If you would like to donate to the cause, it's not too late. Please contact Major (Retd)) John Bennett on email to arrange a donation. John can be contacted on [johnbennett@pwrr.co.uk](mailto:johnbennett@pwrr.co.uk).



Pictured above: Jan Collyer  
Pictured left: Richard Morgan

## Perils of Amalgamation

*In early 1967, shortly after the amalgamation, I was home on leave in Croydon, from pre-troubles Palace Barracks, Holywood. Before returning, I thought it prudent to go to a local barber for a hair-cut. My conversation with the barber went something like this.*

*Barber: "It's unusual for a young lad like you to be getting a short back and sides these days. You in the Army then?"*

*Me: "Yes"*

*Barber: "What, mob you in then?"*

*Me: "Well I was in the Middlesex Regiment; it's now called 4th Queen's."*

*Barber: "Oh yes, I remember 4th Queen's. I watched them march out of Mitcham Road Barracks, when war broke out, on their way to France."*

*Me: "No, that would have been the old Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment, that amalgamated with the East Surreys a few years ago. They were their TA battalion. But the old Queen's are now 1 Queen's."*

*Barber: "Well you're in 4 QUEENS?"*

*Me: "Yes but my 4 QUEENS used to be the Middlesex Regiment."*

*Barber: "Well what happened to the 4th QUEENS that I saw?"*

*Me: "Well they are part of 5 or 6 QUEENS."*

*Looking at a very confused barber in the mirror, I thought it best to change the subject. "So how do you think Crystal Palace will do this season? Think they'll get promoted?"*

Rodger Bourne





# MUSEUMS

## DOVER MUSEUM

By Cory Clover, Assistant Curator

We had a tricky end to 2020 and start to 2021, but work didn't stop at the QUEENS and PWRR Museum during lockdown; we visited at least once a week to check the collection and continued working at home.

In March, we welcomed the University of Kent, who brought a film crew and a group of re-enactors to film a pair of short films. The films were part of the Age of Revolutions project, looking at the changing world between 1775 and 1848. Our films looked specifically at the Napoleonic Wars, and the Curator was invited to speak about the battle tactics used by the Queen's Regiment's forebears at the Battle of Albuhera, and its importance to our regiments ever since. We'll be publicising the films when they are released.

We have even kept on collecting. At the beginning of lockdown, we purchased an exceptional 19th century medal set, including an award so rare that only two were ever issued; a Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) for combined service in Crimea and China

during the 1860 Second Opium War. This had been awarded to Sergeant George Leach.

Sergeant George Leach DCM served in the 31st (Huntingdonshire) Regiment of Foot (which became the East Surrey Regiment in 1881). Leach was born in Huntingdonshire – now part of Cambridgeshire – in 1825. He joined the army at eighteen in 1843, where he served for 22 years and 37 days before retiring at the age of forty.

Leach served 12 years and 5 months of his army career abroad. He fought at Sobraon in 1846 alongside Bernard McCabe, and then served in the Crimea, where he fought at Sebastopol. After garrisoning in the Mediterranean, the 31st were sent back to India in 1858, and from there, to China in 1860. Leach then fought in the Second China War (1856-60), helping capture the Taku Forts, and against the Taiping Rebellion (1850-64).

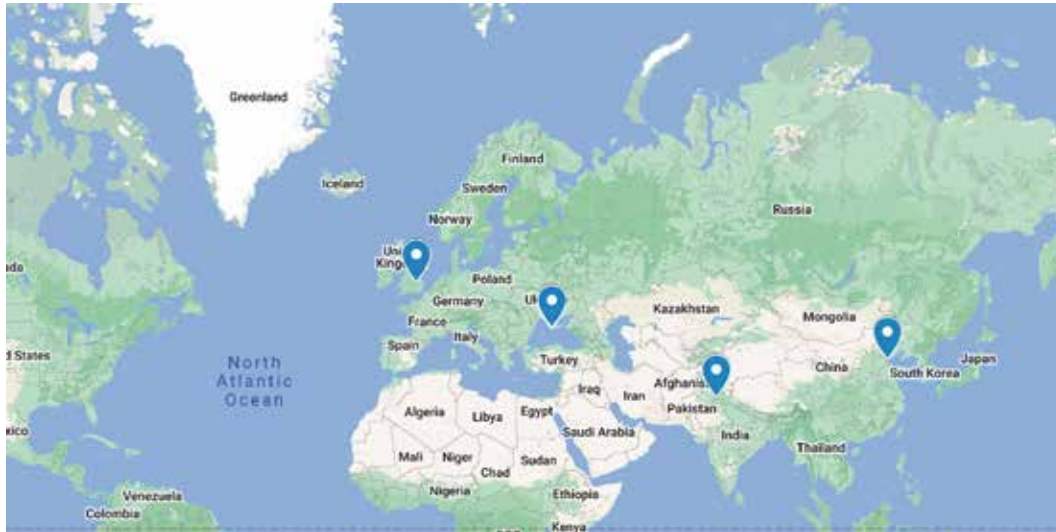
In his discharge papers, Leach is noted to be of 'very good conduct'. On the other hand, his name was also written

Dover Castle in the snow





up in the Regimental Defaulter's Book six times, which means that on six different occasions he was subject to a punishment beyond six days' drill or seven days confinement to barracks. He was also court-martialled once, though that was not particularly uncommon: in 1865, nine percent of the serving army were court-martialled for small infractions. We have no record as to whether he was found guilty or not, or what he was accused of. We can only presume it was nothing too terrible.



Sgt Leach's deployment map



Re-enactment soldier

Sgt Leach's DCM nomination was submitted on 9 February 1866, after his retirement. A small number of DCMs were granted to sergeants who were specially recommended for an award. Unfortunately, there is no record of the conduct for which Leach received his medal: citations were not published for recipients until the First World War. The award also included a £10 annuity, added onto his pension, worth about £600 a year now, at the time the equivalent of 50 days of a skilled labourer's wage. The claim of sixpence extra per day on his pension was written onto his discharge forms.

When we collected these medals, I was struck by the distance that Leach had travelled during his career. The army advertises its travel opportunities to potential recruits now: then, military service was the only way many young men would get to see the world. He must have spent months on the march and on ships, travelling from camp to camp. Through these medals, we can see one exemplary soldier's journey around the globe, from battle to battle, campaign to campaign, before he returned home to Huntingdon.

Meanwhile, we stayed at home. I went to Dover once a week to empty the dehumidifiers. The Museum finally opened again on 17 May.

Our Second World War Room is now available again for visitors. All the objects we had to cover over for safety reasons are now on open display again. We're thrilled to have had a successful summer season welcoming so many visitors through our doors.

If you have an object from your service that you would like to donate to the museum – though we don't collect uniform or musical instruments anymore– please contact us at [info@pwrrqueensmuseum.co.uk](mailto:info@pwrrqueensmuseum.co.uk).



In May 2021, I started a new position as Collections Officer for the Surrey Infantry Collection, taking over from Steve Johnson who retired as the manager of the Surrey Infantry Museum in September 2020. I have been very warmly welcome by a dedicated team of volunteers, as well as by the PWRR RHQ and the museum team in Dover, and I am very much enjoying getting to know the collection.

One of the biggest aspects of my role is to undertake a full collection review. This is a SPECTRUM procedure that enables an in-depth assessment of a collection, with each item considered individually and reviewed under specific criteria. For the Surrey Infantry Collection, the main objective of this review is to understand the contents and significance of the collection following its damage during the devastating fire at Clandon Park in 2015. The review will also enable us to establish specific conservational requirements within the collection, to identify aspects of collection storage that require improvement, and to make recommendations for how the collection could be displayed in the future.

After completing the pilot review in July, I am now several weeks into the full review of the collection, with the assistance of several museum volunteers. There is still much to be uncovered, but there have already been some very interesting and rewarding finds.

The collection can largely be divided into two categories. Firstly, there are items that survive from the fire at Clandon Park, many of which are badly damaged. But the rest of the collection consists of items that have kindly been donated since the fire by members of the public who wish to support the museum and help us to rebuild the collection. Within the latter half of the collection, there are many new stories to be uncovered and told. One of the most rewarding aspects of the review so far has been discovering these stories and their corresponding objects.

A particular favourite discovery of mine so far is a small personal collection that belonged to Hugh Bertram Denny (1895-1966). Denny joined the 20th Battalion The Royal Fusiliers as a private in November 1915 in France and served there until February 1917. He was then commissioned into The Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment in August 1917. After a brief period with the 3rd Battalion, he returned to France and joined the 1st Battalion in September 1917. During his service with the 1st Battalion, he was awarded the Military Cross, for 'conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty' whilst holding an exposed position with his platoon until severely wounded. He relinquished his commission in September 1921 on completion of service, retaining the rank of Second Lieutenant, and then served as Quartermaster for the Artists Rifles until his retirement in 1927. Upon his retirement, he was awarded with the Freedom of the City of London, and married Helena Mary Barbara Dawson. The couple had two children, Susan and Martin, and Denny worked as a partner for the family rice and maize milling business until 1958.

Denny's medals were donated to the museum in 2008 by his granddaughter Joyce, including his Military Cross, and also a 1914-15 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal, Defence Medal, Territorial Efficiency Medal, and Special Constabulary Long Service Medal. Archival material was also kindly donated in 2008 and 2010, including a certificate for his Military Cross, and a set of letters written by Denny to his sister, Doris during WW1. One of the letters contains a drawing of Denny by one of his colleagues, dating from New Year's Eve in 1917, whilst Denny was serving with the Queen's in France.

More recently, in 2020, Denny's relatives donated some more of his possessions. These include a silver cigarette case, gifted to Denny upon his retirement from the Artists Rifles in 1927, which Denny had filled with trinkets from his time in service; a Queen's tie pin (with a pre-1923 lamb); six Artists Rifles blazer buttons; a Royal Fusiliers brooch; a miniature dominoes set; a silver teaspoon; a sweetheart brooch of the Royal Artillery; and a miniature set of medals, which corresponds with some of the medals he was





awarded. These items, alongside his medals and his surviving wartime correspondences, can be used to tell the story of Denny's life in the service, together with his personal experiences and his valuable contributions to the regiments in which he served, including the Queen's.

As I continue the review, I hope to uncover many more stories like this, thanks to the generosity of those such as Denny's family who have made donations to the collection.



Cigarette case contents

*Self-employment brings many challenges, including that of working alone and needing a bit of assistance from time to time. As a furniture restorer, the collection of large items makes this very clear. I had viewed a dining table in a country home that is surrounded by a large and well-looked-after garden. Having discussed the work with the owner I started to dismantle the table to put in the car. The customer told me that her gardener would be arriving shortly, and she was sure he would give me a hand with moving it.*

*On arrival the gardener looked at me, I looked at him, and he said:*

*"3 QUEENS?"*

*"No, 6/7" I said.*

*"I was your Adjutant" he replied*

*"Captain Greenfield, how the devil are you?" I said.*

*Indeed, he was our Adjutant, but that was around 1985. This was 2011. 26 years had passed, and much beer has passed together since!*

Andy Byford





# BRANCH REPORTS

## 1 QUEENS BRANCH

By Eddie Dale



Unfortunately, the usual reunion that takes place in Herne Bay had to be cancelled because of COVID yet again but plans are already afoot for the 2022 Reunion. This will be last one that Joe Dorman is organising and so we hope that as many as possible will come to say thank you to Joe for organising this for so many years. This does not mean that the 1 QUEENS Reunion is going to fold. On the contrary! It is planned to hold the 2023 reunion at the QRRA Clubhouse at the Veterans Rehabilitation, Social and Community Centre in Faversham so put so put 14 May 2022 AND 13 May 2023 in your diaries!

Did this mean that we didn't get together? Not at all!

On 25th September, Den Gallacher and a few stalwarts arranged to hold a reunion at the Queen's Regiment Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) near Litchfield. Needless to say, no plan survives contact with the enemy and so it was that we had to use the squaddie attitude of adapt and overcome when we were informed that the kitchens where we were staying weren't in operation. Thankfully there were a number of great hostelrys close by so on the day before we gathered together to sample some real ale and grab some scoff.

The following morning, we gathered at the NMA and found our way to our magnificent memorial which still looked great in the overcast day.

The day consisted of a short Service of Remembrance led by Den Gallacher. An obituary was given for Colin Wootton who died of his wounds 40 years after he was shot by the IRA. This was followed by a Roll Call of the Regiment's Fallen and the list of members of the Regiment who have died over the last 12 months. These were read out by:

1st Bn Phil Dobson

3rd Bn Eddie Dale

2nd Bn Ted Simpson

4th Bn Tich Riches





The Act of Remembrance followed, with the playing of the Last Post and the Rouse and Peter Swanson ended the service by reading the Regimental Collect.



*The event was attended by*

Peter Swanson	Mark Trickett	Mick Milsom	Roland Riggs
Dave Hammond	Ken Wilson	Ted Simpson	Geordie Britten
Jim Coomber	Carl 'Blossom' Noel	Maureen Dunning	Ian Dunning
Dave Lovell	Caroline Ross	Ann Dale	'Fast Eddie' Dale
Burnett Rafael	Jock Hail	Bob Gardener	Phil Dobson
Bill Dawson	Pat Coffey	Tich Riches	Den Gallagher

It is intended to repeat the event on the 3rd Saturday in September each year and it is hoped that members from all battalions will attend.

## CHICHESTER BRANCH

By Eddie Drew

Early in the year we lost two of our members, our Honorary President Captain Len Butt and John (Basher) Bailey. Members of the Branch supplied a Guard of Honour at their funerals.



Dave Tilley, Bill Dixon and Maj Nigel Russell, at the Sussex Cricket Ground

During lockdown on 23rd April, we managed to have a small gathering at Chichester Cathedral to celebrate St George's Day and offer our prayers for those who gave their lives in war and those who had passed away during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Life is much better now that we are managing to get out and about. In June, we had our first Branch meeting. It was great that after 15 months we were finally able to socialise.

In May, Bill Dixon, who is terminally ill with asbestosis, was treated to a day out at the Sussex Cricket Ground. Major Nigel Russell and Dave Tilley kindly arranged this for him.

Bill then had a live wake in the form of a BBQ at the George in Eartham village and this was well attended. Bill has since given up public duties.

On 7 August, members of A Coy (Quebec Coy) 3 QUEENS organised a BBQ at the George in Eartham and several of our members attended.





The Chairman with guests Col Beattie, Maj Goulden , Mayor and Mayoress of Chichester and Councillor Keggen MP at the 25th QRA Chichester Branch Anniversary Lunch in the City Club.



Dave Tilley at Chichester Cathedral

On 16 August, we had a lunch for 42 members and guests in the City Club to celebrate our 25th Anniversary as a branch. We were privileged to have the Association President, Col Anthony Beattie, and the Regimental Association Secretary, Maj Alasdair Goulden, the Mayor and Mayoress of Chichester and Councillor G Keggan MP amongst our guests. Col Beattie and John Bingham exchanged memories of when they were platoon commander and private soldier some



At the George Pub in Eartham

51 years ago! The food was great, the company was great, and to finish off everyone joined in the singing of 'Soldiers of the Queen' and 'Sussex by the Sea'.

In September, we joined the Royal Sussex Association at their 7th Goodwood race day and their annual dinner in Lewes Town Hall on the 11th. In November, we had the usual Remembrance Services and parades. We will end the year with our annual Christmas dinner at the City Club.



Tony Ward and Les Wilson share a drink



## HORSHAM BRANCH

By Jonathan Purdy

The Horsham Branch, in common I am sure with other branches, found Autumn 2020 and Spring/Summer 2021 to be disappointing due to the necessity of cancelling or postponing planned events. Nevertheless, the Horsham Branch has had a good year and continued to meet on 'Zoom' during the periods of full lockdown.

With the removal of some restrictions on 17 May, we were very fortunate to be able to muster 22 members that very evening to commemorate Albuhera. We held a socially distanced Silent Toast (to which everyone brought their own goblet or tankard) on the cricket pitch. This was followed by splitting into informal groups for a curry supper. On their first day of re-opening for business, the 'management' of the cricket club became increasingly 'twitchy' as members swapped about between what were supposed to be socially distance tables every 10-15 minutes to meet up with others! It was a really great evening, having not seen each other for a year.

The battle to save the iconic Horsham Drill Hall from demolition by Horsham District Council has continued behind the scenes. The Branch is supporting the Royal British Legion in their bid to take over, if not the entire drill hall, then the old junior ranks club and bar. Their desire is to reclaim the last part of the Drill Hall as a meeting place and welfare hub for veterans in Horsham.

The Branch was represented at the commemoration of the 105th anniversary of the Battle of the Boars Head on 30 June. Our Standard was paraded at the Richebourg Memorial in Beach House Park, Worthing where Andrew Byford read the words of Laurence Binyon and the Kohima Epitaph to the mayor and other dignitaries who had gathered for the event.

Unfortunately, we had to postpone the reunion in Chichester to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Presentation of Colours to 6/7 QUEENS. The Colours are laid up in the Cathedral and the powers-that-be in the Church decided that they were not going to let us congregate in early July. This is now in the diary for next year, so please put Saturday 23 July in your calendar. The event will be advertised next spring and Association Members from across the regimental family are welcome to join us.

August Bank holiday weekend saw the Justice for Northern Ireland Veterans March in London which drew the support of a number of Branch members. It was really good to see a number of Queen's badges on parade and the speeches that preceded the march were well received. I will not get too deeply into the politics, but suffice to say, the present treatment of our Northern Ireland Veterans is quite appalling. On a lighter note, what I remember of the post-march pub crawl was great fun.

Present Tankards - Albuhera 2021







Pictured above: Justice for Northern Ireland Veterans  
Dennis Hutchings addresses the assembled marchers at the Duke of York's Column before setting off.

Pictured below: Jonathan Purdy, Jim Wilson and Steve 'Dolly' Grey in front of Buckingham Place during the march







Queensmen and women who served with the 6/7th Battalion

The Branch is planning a number of events for 2022, in addition to Chichester, including the long hoped for battlefield tour to Normandy – if the French ever get

themselves sorted out. I suppose if push comes to shove, we might have to 'borrow' a landing craft and go for a full-on re-enactment!

## ISLE OF THANET BRANCH

By Kev Minnis

Sadly, soon after our last report was penned for the Journal, our Chairman Alan Buddle passed away. Since



Alan Buddle

then, we have lost two more members: John Hobday, an honorary member who was ex-RAF and Eddie Gillespie an ex-Buff. They will all be sadly missed. We elected a new Chairman, Richard Morgan QVRM, and started in October 2020 to hold Zoom meetings. We have still managed to operate even if in the virtual world. On Remembrance Sunday, three members, consisting of the Chairman, Peter Steel

and Kev Minnis attended the Ramsgate wreath laying ceremony at St George's Church, Ramsgate. Peter Steel, Roger Banks and Kev Minnis attended the Armistice Day wreath laying ceremony on the 11th at Ramsgate Cemetery.

To keep in contact, we held 'Swing the lamp' meetings on Zoom. We ended the year 2020 with a Zoom party to celebrate the forming of the Regiment and New Year's Eve.

2021 has started with new challenges especially with a new lockdown being implemented. Our Zoom meetings continue, and we have supported the Association by parading our Branch Standard for members who have passed away. We have two members in a care home in Margate, Ernie Ralf and Vic McCoy: Vic being 103, an ex-Buff and Burma Veteran. Our Welfare Officer, Bryan





Armed Forces Day RV



Bryan Hazard



Zoom Silent Toast Albuhera



Branch Meeting 07-Aug-21

Hazard is in contact with them. Our Albuhera Dinner was cancelled but we held a Silent Toast on Zoom on the 16 May. Our Welfare Officer Bryan was in hospital for Albuhera Day, but this did not stop him from marking the day in hospital with his son Billy, who is also a member of the branch. We were looking forward to Armed Forces Week and Armed Forces Day. An event was to be held on 26th June to celebrate Armed Forces Day and this would have allowed us to get together, but with the extension to restrictions, all events in Ramsgate and Thanet were cancelled.

Our first meeting since March 2020 was held on 7 August. This was held as an AGM to elect the Branch Committee. Many members attended in person and those who

could not attend on Zoom. We were looking forward to supporting the London Buffs by parading at the Tower of London on 5 September, but unfortunately the Tower authorities limited the parade to 40, so only the London Buffs attended. We are looking forward to our branch annual dinner in November, as well as to parading for Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday. Over this period, we have gained seven new members, which takes us to 38 at time of writing.

We look forward to 2022 focusing on recruiting, social events, and parades, and returning to pre-lockdown activities. If you live in or around Thanet, please contact us if you would like to join the branch.

*In 1977, I was entrusted to take the Colours in their black metal boxes from Catterick to Airport Camp in Belize. Ted Parker, as Asst Adjt, briefed me and finished "...and if you lose or mislay them, there's quite a simple procedure - just find a private place somewhere and slash your wrists."*

Mark Rayner



## LONDON BRANCH

By Dennis Sharrocks



Chairman, London Branch  
Maj (Retd) Kevin Hibbert

The year has been extremely difficult for all members, not just the London Branch, but all branches of the Association. Many planned events were cancelled due to the restrictions put in place by the government for our safety.

The Branch still engaged with its membership by sending out regular updates. The branch has grown now in strength to officially over 200 members on our database, which

has made it clear that many veterans still wish to keep updated in what the regiment is doing by keeping their ear to the ground.

The Branch is looking forward to more activity during the latter end of 2021 and increasing during 2022. The first of these events went ahead on 25 September at the Liberty Bounds Pub, Tower Hill. With London Tigers meeting up, just having that interaction gave us an opportunity to catch up with those who have walked the walk.

The Branch will also be looking forward to the Albuhera Dinner in May 2022, which is normally held at the Union Jack Club, Waterloo, London and of course the annual unofficial Army Reunion (with a side Rugby match) at Twickenham on the 30th April 2022.

The Branch is looking forward to representing the Association and the Regiment at this year's Cenotaph parade in London. This will be a benchmark event in 2021, post restrictions. This will also present an opportunity to catch up with many friends from London and the Home Counties and even some from further afield.

The Branch Committee is motivated to ensure the membership grows and gives support to those soldiers going through the transition to civilian life. The branch will back the assistance given by the Association and the Regiment, and all those other organisations who provide support.

The London Branch is led by Maj (Retd) Kevin Hibbert who served with both 1 and 2 PWRR

If you wish to join the branch, please contact Capt (Retd) Dennis Sharrocks, the Branch Secretary. Please also contact him if you wish to receive the branch newsletter twice a month.



At the Cenotaph 2019

## MIDDLESEX BRANCH

By Les Vial

The trials and tribulations caused by lockdown and other restrictions due to Covid-19 have seen the Middlesex Branch's usual calendar of events torn up in little pieces. Despite a lack of activity, we have seen our membership (Full and Associate) increase over this time last year with about ten new members joining, to give us around 85 fully paid up members. It is pleasing to see a healthy increase in the number of serving officers and soldiers from B Coy 4 PWRR being badgered into joining what in effect is their local branch of the Association.

Our New Year's Luncheon was the first casualty in January, but on 15 March we held a 'Virtual AGM' using

Zoom. We had about 20 members attend – a slight increase over the number that normally attend the face-to-face meeting.

On Wednesday 12 May 2021, the 'Veterans Platoon' was invited to join B Coy 4 PWRR for the Albuhera Silent Toast Ceremony at ARC Edgware. Individual glasses were used for the toast rather than a communal loving cup, in the circumstances

On Albuhera Night, our Chairman, Trevor Canton presented the Maloney Trophy tankard, awarded



annually to the best recruit in the company. This year it went to Pte Euan O'Sullivan-Biggar.

On Sunday 16 May at 20:00 hrs, the Branch commemorated the 210th Anniversary of the Battle of Albuhera with our President - Maj (Retd) Derrick Harwood reading an account of the battle. The toast- 'The Immortal Memory' was undertaken in silence but collectively.

In June, we resurrected the B Coy Breakfast Club (BCBC). This event goes from strength to strength, with well over a dozen former soldiers meeting in July at the Toby Carvery on the A10 Great Cambridge Road, Enfield for a full English and to put the world to rights. This has now become a breakfast and beer club, as following breakfast a few pints are sunk (mainly to keep Dave Saunders company). We even have two members, George Miller and Barry Law, who drive up from Dorset (Weymouth and Sandbanks, Poole respectively).

If any QRA members living around the north London/ Enfield/ Herts area would like to join us, we meet on the first Saturday of the month at 9.30am. If interested, please drop me an email on [lesvial@btinternet.com](mailto:lesvial@btinternet.com).

In August, the branch held a summer luncheon in the Officers' Mess at the ARC Edgware which was a really enjoyable affair with over 30 attending. We thank Maj Heath Craster, OC B Company, 4 PWRR for allowing us the use of the mess and the Albuhera Bar.

Whilst I'm pleased to report that all of our members have managed to remain on the right side of the earth so far, two of our founding members have sadly suffered from serious ill health. Brian Williams, a former Branch Chairman, was diagnosed with myeloma (cancer of the bone marrow) in September last year which led to several fractures in his spine and breastbone. Brian was treated with chemo and had to endure wearing a full body brace for several months to ensure no further breaks occurred.

In the last few months, we learned that Les White has been diagnosed with motor neuron disease. Our President was looking at mobility solutions to allow Brian and Les as well as a number of other members and partners to surmount the staircases at the ARC Edgware where our functions are held when the Association stepped in and purchased a stair climber for which we are very grateful.

Looking ahead, we hope that things will return to a level of normality with the various Remembrance Services in

November, a Christmas function with B Company and our traditional New Year's Luncheon in January 2022.

All in all, the Middlesex Branch is in fine fettle and our membership is growing slowly but surely, with a target of having 100 paid members by the end of the year.



The July Breakfast Club Meeting



Chairman Trevor Canton presents Pte Euan O'Sullivan-Biggar with his tankard



The Silent Toast



## THE PWRR GOLF SOCIETY (QRA BRANCH)

By Dave Body

I must say that after the COVID break, it is great to be back out on the courses.

First, I would like to thank the outgoing Society Captain, Steve Richards, and the Secretary Bob Jefferies for their hard work in promoting the Society over the past six years.

The Society represents of all our forebear regiments, including the PWRR.

Our membership is 75 strong and growing each year. We have golfers from all levels from the hacker to the semi-pro player, but it is all about going out to play and rekindle the bond that we have as veterans. There's plenty of banter along the way.

As a Society, we play matches against other regiments: against the Army Concrete Company at Aldershot Golf Club, and we have our traditional Divisional Triangular match against the

R ANGLIANS and the RRF. Currently, we are the Divisional Champions.

We play at Canterbury Golf Club using this as our home course; however, we do move around the Home Counties to play other clubs and societies.

We hold several in-house competitions to have more fun. We play for the Chuck Cullinane trophy and the Terry Moore Trophy where we compete as a society. On Sunday 18th July, 37 members played our first inter-battalion competition. The weather was horrendous as it lashed down all day, but we managed to play all 36 holes, with the 3rd Battalion, captained by Bob Hamnett, being victors for this year. We are in the process of commissioning a 'Lest We Forget Trophy' which will be played annually in November to remember our Fallen members.

This year, I held my first Captain's fun day at Chestfield Golf Club in Whitstable, where as a society we raised money for my chosen charity, 'Veterans Growth'. This year's dress code was loud golfing clothing, the brighter the better. After the round of golf, we had a meal and held a raffle for the charity and society funds. All members were asked to provide a raffle prize, be it golf-related or not.

We have a varied list for the year. We kick off the season with the First Knock where we play at Top Meadow in Essex to shake out for the season and a first get-together of the year. We finish off the year with an end of season dinner and dance, with a round of golf thrown in.

We are always looking out for new members, so if you have the time and want to get on the course with the Society and meet up with mates and have some fun, membership is currently £30 per year. The Regimental Association provides

the society with a grant, which we use to offset the green fees for the matches and provide fair and balanced reduced golf for all members. You can play as much as you want or as little as you want. We have members that travel from Manchester and come up from Hampshire to play. It really is all about the bond we have. Going forward, I would like to involve all battalions and associations in order to have a proper Regimental Golf Day.

If you are interested in joining or would like more information please do not hesitate and get in contact with either myself or Ron, we would love to hear from you via Facebook, messenger, or email.



Pip King winning First Knock 2021 at Top Meadow



Society Captain Dave Body receiving the silver plate from Col Swanson -Queens Surreys





Dave Body Presenting to Chris Paul and Colin Lockwood



PWRR V Kent Police at Canterbury Golf Club



Tom Reddick receiving the wooden spoon



Steve Coker Giving Mortar Directions to Colin Lockwood and Tony Harwood



PWRR vs Queen's Surreys



Michael Gauntlet saying thank you to the Captain





## QUEEN'S REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION CORPS OF DRUMS

The drums have been very quiet during the past year for various reasons. However, the good news is that we now have a new home to practice in at RAF Manston History Museum. We have been there since mid-August and are gearing ourselves up to get back out on parade to start raising more money for the Benevolent Fund.







The Drums helped out at the Museum's Cockpit Day in mid-September, an event that was thoroughly enjoyed by both young and old. It was the first time any of the Drums had put their uniforms on since December 2019, so there may or may not have been some breathing-in to get those tunics done up!

We also successfully recruited two more members with three others interested in joining which is great news! Looking to the future, the Drums are expecting to be very busy in the New Year and are hoping to recruit even more new members. If anyone is interested in joining or knows anyone who would be please email [qracorpsofdrums@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:qracorpsofdrums@yahoo.co.uk)

## QUEEN'S REGIMENTAL RIDERS ASSOCIATION

By Danni Streeter

With the easing of the national lockdown, the club has, in a small way, been able to resume some of its normal duties in and around the Kent Sussex and Surrey areas. Unfortunately, some of these duties were funeral escorts of fallen brothers and ex-Queensmen. The club has been able to supply riders to funerals as far as Oxford, Canterbury, Whitstable, and Thanet. We actually did two funeral escorts on the same afternoon at two opposite ends of Kent, which took some doing, but was worth it judging by the reaction of the families. Unfortunately, we have other funeral escorts booked in already at the time of writing and it never seems to end, but so long as we can, we will supply escorts as and when families ask us.

On a lighter note, we have been able to get out and about and do a couple of ride outs. One was a local ride around the Canterbury area which resulted in a rider down when he misjudged the camber in the road – he's now known as 'Camber'! He ended up in Margate Hospital for some minor injuries but later recovered with only a few scratches and bruises and the loss of one tooth and a serious ticking off from his Mrs! The second ride out was to Milton Motorbike





Museum in Bashley which was a great success for all who attended apart, from me, as my bike broke down just outside the New Forest and had to be recovered back to Sussex - not a great end to my day! We have had other ride outs which resulted in neither crashes nor breakdowns!

The build of the rehabilitation centre has finally started to pick up again after the lockdown. Unfortunately, materials are hard to get hold of post-COVID and the price has risen some 30% so progress has been a little slow. We also were required to get a further structural report that delayed putting the roof on by almost three months which was extremely frustrating. We are pushing on and as I write, the plans to put the roof on at the weekend are coming into place. We had stockpiled quite a lot of kit which, now that

it's at a premium, means that we have had to place a permanent guard on at Camp Dragon (as the field has begun to be known as) 24 hours a day to guard the site, which has been quite tough going for all members concerned especially as they juggle work and home requirements as well.

Now restrictions are slowly being lifted, the Club has been able to return to various bike events and bike nights around the Kent, Surrey, and Sussex areas where we will continue to



Funeral Escort for Bob Fisher



Ride Out

support other clubs with their own charity events. The One Aim Rally had to be cancelled; although the event had been fully planned, COVID restrictions were not lifted in time. However, next year we are determined that the rally will go ahead, so I ask you to put the weekend of 1-3 July in your diary now and come and support the Association's current major fundraiser of the year. We hope to see you all soon at the centre when it's complete, but until then perhaps we will see you on the road somewhere.



Club night





Milton Motorbike Museum Bashley



Whoops!



Club night



Stix exploiting child labour to plant the new hedgerow



Entrance to the Centre



The newest member





It's been a long layoff, but it appears that we are finally getting back together to continue our masonic journeys. We have been fortunate in that everyone seems to have fared reasonably well during this terrible time. Obviously, all masonic activity has been curtailed during the pandemic so as we start to return to our lodges, we need to shake off a few cobwebs and get back into the ritual mode.

We are looking forward to moving to the Union Jack Club for our Festive Board, where we dine following our meetings. They not only offer us good value for money but also many of our members stay there overnight when attending. We also look forward to returning to the Pillars on Great Queen's Street for some refreshment where many Masons meet before and after the meetings.

As we return, we are looking forward to welcoming a few new members from the 1st and 2nd Battalions so increasing our membership.

Later in the year, we will also be holding a White Table meeting at which our wives and partners will be able to attend our festive board and dine with us. Any non-masons that wish to join us are more than welcome.

If you would like to, please contact the Lodge Secretary. We are also hoping to hold an extra meeting on St George's Day, 2022 in Maidstone to catch up with some of the outstanding work.

All this, of course, depends on COVID's progress.



The Pillars, London



Cass at the Festive Board



Multiple initiations



The last year has been a tremendous challenge for all businesses and organisations across the UK. The Royal Sussex Regimental Association is no exception to this, with all our activities postponed since March 2020. We are now slowly emerging with most of our activities for the latter part of 2021 now continuing.

However, the work has gone on, checking on our vulnerable members and helping out where necessary with shopping etc.

Work has continued with our re-organisation albeit very slowly due to the public sector taking to the hills and still dragging their feet over returning to their desks. We await a letter of non-objection from the Cabinet Office over our use of the word 'Royal' in the title of the new organisation (we've only been using it since 1910!) and Companies House won't begin incorporation without this letter. Once we eventually receive the letter of non-objection, we will want to incorporate the new Company and merge the two charities, so still a fair amount of work to do.

In the meantime, as well as launching a new Association website, [www.theroyalsussexregt.org.uk](http://www.theroyalsussexregt.org.uk), we have amended our Articles of Association and Trust Deed, branches have agreed on the new Association rules, and we have formed Nominations, and Finance and Governance committees. We have also appointed four new directors to the board.

During the debates whilst formulating the Working Group Report, it became clear that the branches wanted more involvement in decision-making and, to this end, we have ensured full participation of branch members. Of the four new director appointments, two are from the branches as well as three members of the Nominations Committee and one now sits on the Finance and Governance Committee.

Although we had to cancel the St George's Day Service at Chichester Cathedral in April of this year, we have managed to hold an officers' lunch at Pashley Manor Gardens and a summer BBQ at the Sussex County Cricket Ground in Hove, both of which were a great success. During August, we also commemorated the formal centenary of the ending of WW1. We now look forward to The Royal Sussex Stakes at Goodwood racecourse and the Annual Regimental Reunion at Lewes.



Pashley Manor terrace



100th Anniversary of WO2 Butcher's death



Officers and their wives at Pashley Manor Gardens



## WEALD BRANCH

By John Grinham

The last two years have been very challenging. Barry Crocker and I have tried to keep the branch together with the aid of emails, post and our Facebook page. Sadly, we lost one of our older members but were able to give him a good send off to the final RV. Both of our Branch Standards were on parade for Remembrance Sunday in Edenbridge and Tonbridge with several members attending.



A large contingent of Queensmen attended a memorial parade where we planted trees and dedicated plaques to the memory of WO2 John Cullinane and Cpl Robbie Gorse, both of whom served in the 2nd Battalion.

We re-opened the Branch as soon as it was safe to continue, and after several delays we held our first Kohima lunch, which was very successful. We managed to raise much needed funds for the branch with the support of local businesses that donated all of the raffle prizes. Our thanks to them.

We have also been involved with the Friends of the Buffs who have arranged the Canterbury reunion on Buffs' Sunday, the Maidstone Reunion and the Christmas Dinner in Canterbury which are always well attended by our branch and members of the 2nd Battalion.

Hopefully we will continue to increase our membership and arrange more events in the coming year.

## WESSEX BRANCH

By Anthony Bolton

The Wessex Branch, along with the rest of the world, had a somewhat subdued year in 2020. Much of our activity was low-key and consisted of keeping in touch with and checking on those who needed it. To our knowledge, we all made it through the pandemic relatively unscathed, but feel tremendously sorry for those who were more dramatically affected.

Once the curtain had been lifted, (and in one case, just before so...) the Branch stirred back into some semblance of normal life with some more overt activity; the highlight so far was a trip to London for a weekend in July. Several members met up in the Union Jack Club on the Friday evening for some elementary lamp-swinging. Whilst there, we were delighted to

bump into In-Pensioner (IP) Ted Heath (no relation, apparently) from the Royal Hospital, in the bar. Ted, who is our first home-grown Queen's IP, served with the 2nd Battalion... he probably told me when and where but, and I'll put it down to old age (mine not his), I appear to have forgotten the finer details. The 'main event' of the weekend was a lunch in Covent Garden's 'Lamb & Flag' pub, where we were joined by Frank 'Stud' Sullivan, temporarily stuck in England, his haunt these days being Papua New Guinea (don't ask) and Alain Chissel, our new honorary member and history consultant. In an attempt to bring the average age down enormously and to keep us in check, Mike Woodward brought his delightful daughter Alice along too. Also on parade, together with the author were, Derek 'Padlock' Locke, Charles 'Tommo'





Thomas, Peter Dunncliffe, Gordon 'Queenie' Jaycocks, Lee 'Brecon' Bradley and Barry Dixon.

The Branch is now gearing up for the rest of the year and whatever it might hold.

Just as the lockdown was coming to an end, the branch was pleased to welcome onto our manor a 'confusion' of officers who had served with the 1st Battalion in Tidworth during the late '80s. Self-styled 'the Wild Boys' (from a contemporary Blackadder quote), they, at first

glance, appeared somewhat more subdued, thinner and more sensible(?) than would have been true just over thirty years ago. A trip across the Plain to view Mooltan Barracks, the Ram and various other crime scenes was conducted on the Saturday morning before retiring to a restaurant in Salisbury for an anti-socially distanced supper in the evening; there followed much hooting and braying. Those present included Digby Williams, Alastair Nelson, Simon Deakin, Jon Wright, Matthew Brown, Ian Wright, Ant Bolton, Steve Brann, Shane Elliott, Dan Brown, and Tom Major from the 2nd Bn.







## WEST SURREY BRANCH

By Dick Scales

First let us deal with the elephant in the room. All in all, a miserable eighteen months for many of our members. Fortunately, no serious issues arose from the pandemic but there have been the same problems for us as for the rest of the country, family access and schooling being just two examples. No member has directly asked for support, but contact has been maintained with members who might be struggling.



Branch trip to the National Memorial Arboretum



Bomber Command Memorials





The English 'Dambusters' bridge

What has become clear is how the branch members have missed the monthly meetings at Farnham ARC. That will change on September 19th when our monthly meetings will be reinstated and I for one cannot wait.

Regarding branch activity, this was non-existent until June when a small number of us attended the Armed Forces Day flag raising ceremony with Farnham Town Council. It was also good to see A Company permanent staff there.

August has been a particularly good month. On the first weekend, we had ten members on a coach trip to the International Bomber Command Centre, Lincoln. The mission of the centre was: 'To mark the service and sacrifice of World War II aircrew, ground crew and support staff who lost their lives while serving with Bomber Command.' The following day we went to Derwent Water to see where 617 Sqn ('The Dambusters') practiced their low flying approach to the target in preparations for the raid on the Ruhr dams in May 1943. On the way home on Sunday, we paid a visit to the National Memorial

Arboretum to pay our respects at the Queen's Regimental Memorial, the memorials of those who served alongside the Regiment, and to spend a couple of hours walking the grounds and contemplating.

Finally, on 22nd August we held our now annual 'Picnic in the Park' which produced a good turnout by members and their families, the first chance to catch up in over a year.

Looking forward, we have a Christmas Party coming up in December with good numbers booking in so far.



Bomber Command Centre



# OBITUARIES

WO1 (RSM) BOB FISHER

By Barry Harris



Bob will march through the regimental psyche as not just a Queensman, but also as a Tiger, who loved his country; not necessarily a political man, pragmatism was his creed; a Kentish soldier, a Man of Kent, a man's man. Remembering him will always evoke fond memories in all who served with him, either by his side or even in the most fleeting of contact, because he forever left a positive impression.

He wore an invisible and unbreakable lanyard of strong moral fibre, indestructible strands of all the right things in life. He might not have been an angel, but he had virtues and combated the evils of society, having no time for

racism or other base divisions. His strength was to lead many away from these evils. In doing so, he imparted fairness in all with whom he dealt, and in all that he did.

Bob's legacy is unique in the hidden depth of the man, his complexity, but also straightforwardness that could not be thought of as simplicity. Dual perspectives pervade his memory. His steadfast perseverance in being the best he could possibly be in anything he turned his mind to, and his uncompromising determination to achieve excellence in all that he did, be that in learning a new skill or sport, taking on an unfamiliar role, or forming a new friendship or love. He will come to symbolise so many things, to so many people: rugged and robust, fearsome, friendly, military service and a sense of duty, even the Queen's Regiment itself, noted as a man of excellence through his appointment as the Sobraon Sergeant, awarded to the Battalion's most outstanding sergeant of the year. Bob will become, over time, in the truest sense, an icon



Bob Fisher's Wake



of the regiments which he served so loyally for thirty years. For many, an entire way of life will be epitomised in his eyes and an unfailing smile that peered knowingly at us lesser soldiers he surveyed. His voice, too, will be etched in our collective memory, from the simple commands of drill movements and instruction, to firm advice, and friendly mentoring. His social skills, calmness, directness, truthfulness, friendliness, even joke-telling and prank-playing, will be a whole lost world which will be summoned whenever we think of Bob, born David.

Bob's robustness is now often viewed as the symbol of a bygone era; he marched a narrow path, he had a consistent approach that furthered his stature and generated the respect we all have for him. He knew it, too. He never went out of his way to look for trouble, but if a problem found him, Bob would always deal with it, and then that trouble, in whatever form it took, never had the bad sense to cross his path again.

He never tricked anyone out of malice, but he was never above playing tricks, joking, pranking, and being the master of banter – he skillfully used this glue to bind friends, and units, alike, even families. This all evidences

an enduring love for Bob that will surely stand the test of time.

Generosity is another value that can be assigned to this man. Bob gave generously to many military charities; he always gave time to people with an open door and an open mind: time was then cruelly taken away from him in the end.

If there was ever still water that ran deep, it was in this man's huge heart a bottomless reservoir of duty, service, love, wrapped in a great sense of humour, all guided with a moral compass calibrated from his life experiences and the impact of friends and loves on him. Although a multi-faceted character, he was an uncut diamond and in that duality lay his beauty.

Bob came to symbolise fairness, military service, strong values, and love of family, friends, his regiment, his country, and above all others, his loving wife, Dawn, and his daughters.

Bob wore his heart on his sleeve when it came to 'his girls' and revealed, not a soft side, but a man who valued love above all else. He was a son, brother, a father, a husband, whom we are all proud to call a friend.



## MAJOR TED PARKER

By Kiwi Carter

There are many better than me to write a full obituary, but what a warrior and a very proud member of the Buffs and the Queens' Regiment! He was a sergeant on operations at a very young age in Kenya circa 1953, further operational service in Aden 1958 aged 25, then British Guiana in 1964 and further with the Queen's Own Buffs in Borneo in 1966. All interspersed with postings to the UK and BAOR and the inevitable trips to Northern Ireland. Ted had also been the senior weapons instructor at Sandhurst and eventually was appointed to be RSM of 5 QUEENS.

On commissioning, he served with 3 QUEENS until becoming QM(T) of the 1st Battalion which was shortly after I had arrived from New Zealand in 1977. He then became QM(A) until he moved to 6/7 QUEENS until after the formation of the PWRR. It might fairly be said that Ted served in every battalion of the Queen's Regiment as the Queen's Own Buffs became the 2nd Battalion

in Hong Kong, if I remember my reading correctly, although I don't know whether Ted was still there for the amalgamation.

Sergeant Ted Parker appears in the following Pathé News clip, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=0WPf4BYx-5U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0WPf4BYx-5U), which covered the Presentation of Colours to the Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment) at Canterbury Cricket Ground in 1955 (you can see him between seconds 17-24).

The Colonel-in-Chief at the time was King Frederick IX of Denmark, father of our own Colonel-in-Chief, Queen Margrethe II. The Cricket Ground was also the location for the presentation of Colours to 1, 2 and 3 PWRR and commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of the formation of the regiment in 2017. Ted Parker was briefly a member of the PWRR before he retired.



# 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

Mobile: [0771 484 4069](tel:07714844069)

Email: [queensregimentassociation@gmail.com](mailto:queensregimentassociation@gmail.com)

## ALBUHERA BRANCH

The new Albuhera Branch is based in Spain and caters for the whole of the Iberian Peninsular, although anyone abroad is welcome to join. For more details please contact:

Chairman: Steve Wall: - Mobile: [07958 596598](tel:07958596598)

Email: [steve.wall@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:steve.wall@hotmail.co.uk)

## 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: [davidtilley47@hotmail.com](mailto:davidtilley47@hotmail.com)

Secretary - Eddie Drew: - Tel: [01243 866887](tel:01243866887)

Email: [edwindrew@btinternet.com](mailto:edwindrew@btinternet.com)

or use the 'email us' facility on the website: <http://www.freewebs.com/qrachichester/>

## EAST KENT BRANCH

This branch is part of both Regimental Associations and welcomes everyone who served in the Queen's, PWRR and forebear regiments.

More details can be found at [www.facebook.com/groups/3068692916477013](https://www.facebook.com/groups/3068692916477013)

## EAST SURREY REGIMENT

The branch meets on a monthly basis at the Union Jack Club in London and hold an annual dinner.

For more details please contact:

Chairman - Ken Bowden: Tel: [07714 844069](tel:07714844069)

Email: [kjbowden@icloud.com](mailto:kjbowden@icloud.com)



## FRIMLEY AND CAMBERLEY CADET CORPS

The Frimley and Camberley Cadet Corps, which started over 100 years ago, rebadged back to the Queen's Regiment and continues to parade with 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

**Mobile:** 07836 726236

**Email:** [nigelferris21@outlook.com](mailto:nigelferris21@outlook.com)

## HORSHAM BRANCH

The Horsham Branch meet four times a year at the Horsham Cricket Club. For 2022 our dates are 7 March, 16 May (for Albuhera), 5 September and 5 December. We hold other events during the year and our main effort for 2022 will be the commemoration of the 41st Anniversary of the Presentation of Colours to the 6th/7th Battalion at Chichester Cathedral on Saturday 23 July 2022.

For more details of membership and events please contact:

**Chairman - Colin Hurd Email:** [ckh494@outlook.com](mailto:ckh494@outlook.com)

**Secretary - Jonathan Purdy Email:** [j.purdy1@btopenworld.com](mailto:j.purdy1@btopenworld.com)

## ISLE OF THANET BRANCH

The Branch meets at the Royal British Legion (RBL), 16 Cliff Street, Ramsgate, Kent, CT11 9HS on the first Saturday of every month at 1800hrs for a branch meeting, social get together, drinks and fund raising. Zoom is used for members who can't attend in person. We hold an Albuhera Dinner on the 16th May each year and an Annual Dinner in November. We will also be holding a QUEENS and PWRR Breakfast RV, and Branch Social RVs. Please see the branch Facebook page for upcoming dates and timings. Former members of the QUEENS, PWRR, forbear regiments, Armed Forces or serving personal are welcome to join us.

For more details please contact:

**Chairman - Richard Morgan QVRM**

**or Secretary - Kev Minnis: Mobile:** 07846 739472

**Email:** [QRARamsgate@outlook.com](mailto:QRARamsgate@outlook.com)

[QRA Ramsgate on Facebook](#)

## LONDON BRANCH OF THE QUEEN'S AND PWRR ASSOCIATIONS

The two London Branches of the Associations is a combined branch and meet informally quarterly. In addition, the branch meets at Twickenham for the Army vs Navy match and after the Cenotaph Parade on Remembrance Sunday. All past members of the Queen's, PWRR or their forebear regiments are very welcome to attend any event.

For more details of the branch, please contact:

**Chairman - Kevin Hibbert: Email:** [kevinhibbert75@yahoo.com](mailto:kevinhibbert75@yahoo.com)

**Queen's Secretary - Dennis Sharrocks: Mobile:** 07771 957 574

**Email:** [branchsec.london@aol.com](mailto:branchsec.london@aol.com)



## MIDDLESEX BRANCH

The Middlesex Branch consider themselves the senior local branch of the Queen's Regimental Association having formed in 1985 and currently has around 100 members. Most of our events are held in the Army Reserve Centre, Edgware, Middlesex currently home to B Company 4 PWRR, with whom we have a close relationship. Our functions include a New Year's Luncheon,

a formal regimental dinner to commemorate the Battle of Albuhera in May, an annual battlefield tour in the summer and various remembrance services in November. We also hold a monthly breakfast club which is very popular. Membership includes access to our Facebook group 'Albuhera Company' as well as receiving our excellent newsletter 'Dispatches' which is sent out three times a year. If you are interested in joining the branch please contact our the Secretary email:

**Chairman - Trevor Canton:** Tel: [020 8368 0407](tel:02083680407)

Email: [queensman67@outlook.com](mailto:queensman67@outlook.com)

**Secretary - Les Vial:** Tel: [07713 150191](tel:07713150191)

Email: [lesvial@btinternet.com](mailto:lesvial@btinternet.com)

## 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](tel:07392572312)

Email: [steveparsons@1queens.com](mailto:steveparsons@1queens.com)

Web: [www.1queens.com](http://www.1queens.com); [www.facebook.com/groups/61525655230/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/61525655230/)

## QUEENSMAN LODGE 2694

Queensman Lodge 2694 is a Freemasons Lodge within the Metropolitan Grand Lodge of London and also a member of the Circuit of Services Lodges. Membership is open to all members of forebear regiments, Queen's, PWRR, Queen's Division and any attached personnel. Membership application is by being proposed and seconded, and by interview. For full details please visit the website or contact:

**John Edwards:** Tel: [01462 834134](tel:01462834134)

Email: [johnedwards518@sky.com](mailto: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:** Mobile: [07715 135 238](tel:07715135238)

Email: [qracorpsofdrums@yahoo.co.uk](mailto: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 use the Contact Form on the QRRA website.

Web: [www.qrra.co.uk](http://www.qrra.co.uk)



## THE PWRR GOLF SOCIETY (QRA BRANCH)

We are the original Queen's 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: Dave Body: Email: [d-body@sky.com](mailto:d-body@sky.com)

Secretary: Ron Stevens: Email: [bosnniaron1957@gmail.com](mailto:bosnniaron1957@gmail.com)

New members of all abilities are most welcomed, just call for a membership form, and come and play.

## THE WEALD BRANCH OF THE QUEEN'S, QUEEN'S OWN BUFFS AND ROYAL WEST KENT REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

The Branch meets at the New Telegraph Club, Priory Road, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 2AS and they meet every 2nd Wednesday on alternate months starting in January.

For more details please contact:

Chairman - John Grinham: Mobile: 0776 5673262 - Email: [John@grinham.me.uk](mailto:John@grinham.me.uk)

Secretary - Barry Crocker: Tel: 01732 366048 - Email: [barrycrocker@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:barrycrocker@hotmail.co.uk)

## WESSEX BRANCH

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](mailto:Queensmen1661@gmail.com)

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

## WEST SURREY BRANCH (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](mailto:bobhill@sky.com)

Secretary - Dick Scales: Tel: 02380 694974 - Email: [dickscales284@btinternet.com](mailto:dickscales284@btinternet.com)

Treasurer - Mrs Sharon Scales Tel: 01962 826088 - Email: [sturner@biopharma.co.uk](mailto:sturner@biopharma.co.uk)

## NON-AFFILIATED GROUPS which have contact with ex-members of the Regiment

### QUEEN'S ROYAL SURREYS

Secretary - Dee Hutchison - Email: [Fosim@btconnect.com](mailto:Fosim@btconnect.com)

### FRIENDS OF THE QUEEN'S OWN BUFFS REGIMENT

Web: <http://friendsofthebuffs-rekr.com/>

### THE ROYAL SUSSEX ASSOCIATION

Chairman - Barry Lane - Email: [barry.lane@uwclub.net](mailto:barry.lane@uwclub.net)

Secretary - Edwin Drew - Email: [edwindrew@btinternet.com](mailto:edwindrew@btinternet.com)

# IN MEMORIAM

The following is a list of our comrades who sadly have passed away since the last Journal. Members are requested to keep the Secretary informed of those who have died so that the list can be updated, and other members informed. Please email [queensregimentassociation@gmail.com](mailto:queensregimentassociation@gmail.com) or write to The Secretary, 5 Alfred Square, Deal, Kent, CT14 6LU, ideally giving the date of death, rank, when they left the Army, battalions in which they served and any details of the funeral.

Date	Name	Battalion
<b>2021</b>		
9 Oct	LCpl Danny 'Nobby' Foster	5th
24 Sep	CSgt Bill Dixon	3rd and R Sussex
12 Sep	Pte George Gee	1st and QRS
8 Sep	Cpl Colin 'Mac' Mackenzie	1st
3 Sep	Dmr Gerald 'Joe' Birchall	2nd
3 Sep	Capt Steven Anderson	5th and PWRR
2 Sep	WO1 (RSM) Frank Lewis	1st and PWRR
16 Aug	CSgt John Geoffrey Palmer	2nd, 3rd and R SUSSEX
10 Aug	CSgt Bill Butler	2nd, 3rd, 4th and MX
6 Aug	Cpl Paul Hicks	5th
2 Aug	Cpl Joseph Barry Molohan	1st and QRS
15 Jul	Cpl Josh Gerald	2nd
14 July	LCpl Sidney Levy	Queen's Royal Regiment
11 Jul	LCpl Trevor Morris	2nd
7 Jul	A/LCpl Patrick Schwab	5th
7 Jun	Maj Bob Bartlett	1st, 4th and MX
3 Jun	Cpl Alan Matthews	2nd
2 Jun	Cpl Malcolm 'Mac' McRobbie	3rd and R Sussex
1 Jun	Lt Col BA 'Buster' Carlston	1st, 2nd, 4th and MX
25 May	Cpl Gary Craig	2nd
12 May	Pte Alan Hayman	1st
7 May	WO2 Bob Jones	1st, 4th and MX
29 Apr	WO1 (RSM) JAC Burr	2nd, 6/7th, QORWK, QOB and 8 CTT
Apr	Cpl Jim Hanniford	4th, MX and 21 SAS
16 Apr	Pte Dave Knox	6/7th and PWRR
3 Apr	WO2 Peter Clinker	6/7th, PWRR and Crawley Cadets
23 Mar	Cpl Peter Oliver	2nd
20 Mar	Pte Wayne Robson	1st
20 Mar	Pte John Tiller	1st and QRS (Home Counties Bde)
15 Mar	Cpl Peter Kemp	2nd
11 Mar	Pte Daniel Bisco	2nd and PWRR
17 Feb	LCpl Paul Farrugia	3rd and R Sussex
11 Feb	WO2 Marriott	5th, RASC, PARA, and 4/5th R Sussex
7 Feb	Cpl John Adlam	2nd
03 Feb	WO2 Reginald Smith	2nd, 5th and QOB
29 Jan	Sgt John 'Bill' Bailey	3rd and R Sussex
18 Jan	Cpl Nigel 'Nige' Handley	2nd and QOB
15 Jan	LCpl Richard Grover	1st
12 Jan	Cpl Mick Redgrave	5th Corps of Drums
11 Jan	Cpl Colin 'Banzai' Brett	1st
06 Jan	Cpl David John Pearce	2nd
03 Jan	WO2 Terry Isaacs	1st and QRS
01 Jan	Cpl Tony 'Pip' Shields	5th, 5 PWRR and RLC
<b>2020</b>		
24 Dec	Pte Christopher Bettles	2nd
23 Dec	LCpl William Lynas	1st
20 Dec	Revd Canon (Lt) Peter Moseling	4th, 5th and Depot
12 Dec	Pte Steve Newman ACC	2nd
6 Dec	WO2 (RQMS) John Walker	3rd
1 Dec	Maj Ted Parker	1st, 3rd, 5th and 6/7th
23 Nov	Sgt Martin Mills	3rd and R Sussex
22 Nov	Sgt Michael Goodwin	5th
13 Nov	Cpl Bob Mumford	1st
11 Nov	WO2 Dan Archer	3rd and R Sussex
11 Nov	Pte Richard Martin	2nd





# VETERANS ORTHOPAEDIC SERVICE

## AN APPRECIATION OF THE VETERAN'S ORTHOPAEDIC SERVICE

By Brad Reader

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The Veteran's Orthopaedic Service (VOS) is very well supported by the nursing, administrative and enabling staff at the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt (RJ&AH) Hospital. Brian Kilty, a veteran himself, is the Head of Patient Support & External Liaison, who supports the staff and patients alike. With a support team of veterans, he is fully committed to the ongoing care of patients and acts as a liaison POC between the hospital staff and the patients. The information below was kindly provided by Brian.

The RJ & AH Hospital was established in the immediate aftermath of The First World War and thus, has a legacy as a military hospital that pioneered orthopaedic treatments for injured military patients. For many years, RJ&AH has been treating both serving personnel and veterans from all the Armed Services.

In 2014, the Veterans Orthopaedic Service (VOS) was formed and is a bespoke service, pioneered by Lieutenant Colonel Carl Meyer, a serving officer in the Royal Army Medical Corps, and a highly experienced consultant surgeon in trauma and lower limb arthroplasty. He has four operational tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, where he treated both serving military and civilian trauma casualties. It was Colonel Meyer's initiative, leadership and inspiration that not only established VOS, but has led it to become the go-to choice of veterans from every corner of the United Kingdom.

The VOS provides world class patient care and operates out of the RJ&AH Hospital in Oswestry. They specialise in providing an NHS service for veterans with arthritis, which encompasses treating lower limb problems, and the related surgical procedures, including hip and knee replacement operations. Ex Regular, Reservists and National Service personnel are all eligible for treatment.

In a nutshell, referral is via your GP, you should request to be referred to the Veterans Hip & Knee Surgery service, with named referral for Lt Col Meyer.

Contact for information **Email: [brian.kilty@nhs.net](mailto:brian.kilty@nhs.net)** . **Tel: 01691 404527/4401**, **Fax: 01691 664889**. Your records at your GP needs to be annotated with the NHS issued codes for military/veterans, take photocopies of your red discharge book/MOD90(for reservists), because they will ask for proof that you're a veteran.

The (VOS), is a world renowned Centre of Excellence for Orthopaedic clinical care and research that treats patients from every part of The United Kingdom.

Since the establishment of VOS, there has been significant expansion and demand for treating veteran patients. In 2019, the service had 2463 patients, including over 300 surgical procedures.



### My Experience:

Back in 2020, the QRA Secretary forwarded the membership details of the VOS. I had been waiting for the green light for both of my knees to be replaced by the NHS for almost three years. I obtained a referral from my GP, contacted the VOS, went up for an initial consultation, including X Rays. The surgeon that examined me concluded that as soon as I felt that my lifestyle was being significantly impacted, that they would consider me for the operation. Six months or so after that, and after having being pushed back again by the NHS in Cambridge (they gave me a cortisone injection), I requested a consultation with Col Meyer. On examining me, he concurred that I needed the operation ASAP and six weeks after that I attended a pre-op assessment.



30 Jun 21, I was operated on by Lt Col Meyer who carried out a total knee replacement

On arrival at the hospital the required administrative support was super-efficient, as was the briefing by the anaesthetist, who provided details of the pre-op procedure, including options available.

Every aspect of the treatment was remarkable. I cannot recommend it highly enough. From the porters, health care assistants, student nurses, physiotherapists, ward sisters/nurses and of course the highly skilled team of surgeons supporting Col Meyer. Their consummate professionalism at all levels reassured me and put me at ease post op.

During my initial recovery, the physiotherapists were hard at work the day after the op until the day I was discharged, guiding and motivating me, regarding what I needed to do to ensure that the injury healed correctly leaving me with a fully functioning knee. Prior to my discharge, they contacted my local NHS hospital to book me in for physiotherapy post discharge. All in all, I cannot recommend the VOS highly enough. If you have hip or knee problems, I recommend you get a referral as soon as possible.

### The Future-The Headley Court Veterans Centre:

Lt Col Meyer's drive, passion and skill has driven on the development of the VOS, pulling together an amazing team and providing an outstanding service. This is the first of its kind, catering for patients from across the UK as well as from overseas. The service was initially aimed at veterans with hip and knee arthritis but will grow to involve other orthopaedic subspecialties. Col Meyer has supported fund raising events, and has engaged with Headley Court, securing funds of over £6,000,000. This will be used to build a two storey veterans centre, specifically designed to provide the highest standards of care to veteran patients. Facilities will include a state-of-the-art Outpatients Department that will be responsible for a range of orthopaedic treatments, rehabilitation and welfare services. There will also be a number of educational, training and research facilities; together with administrative space for key personnel, which are vital to the efficient running of the overall Veterans Orthopaedic Service.

This will provide a veteran's footprint within an NHS Centre of Excellence. Whilst the Centre primarily provides Veterans Outpatient Services necessary to cope with the expanding demand, importantly it will also house a Veterans Hub that will allow a range of support and advice on welfare issues, including mental health, PTSD, homelessness, debt and benefits. VOS will work with Shropshire County Council and United Kingdom Military Charities within the Centre to provide this support. Whilst VOS is the first of its kind in the United Kingdom, our strategic ambition is to enable other centres of outstanding NHS practice to develop similar Veterans Services; thus, establishing a network of Veterans Secondary Healthcare Services throughout the United Kingdom. It is planned that the Headley Court Veterans Centre will open in the summer of 2022.

The links below provide more information and artists' impressions, of the new build.

[Shropshire News Headley Court Veterans Centre](#)

[BBC Reports Headley Court Veterans Centre Gobowen](#)





# VETERANS' GATEWAY

## 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](https://veteransgateway.org.uk)**



**Get in touch via livechat –  
you'll find it on our website**



**Submit a query using our  
online form**



**@Veterans Gateway**

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# WE CAN HELP.

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Charity No 1024418

[www.queensregimentalassociation.org](http://www.queensregimentalassociation.org)