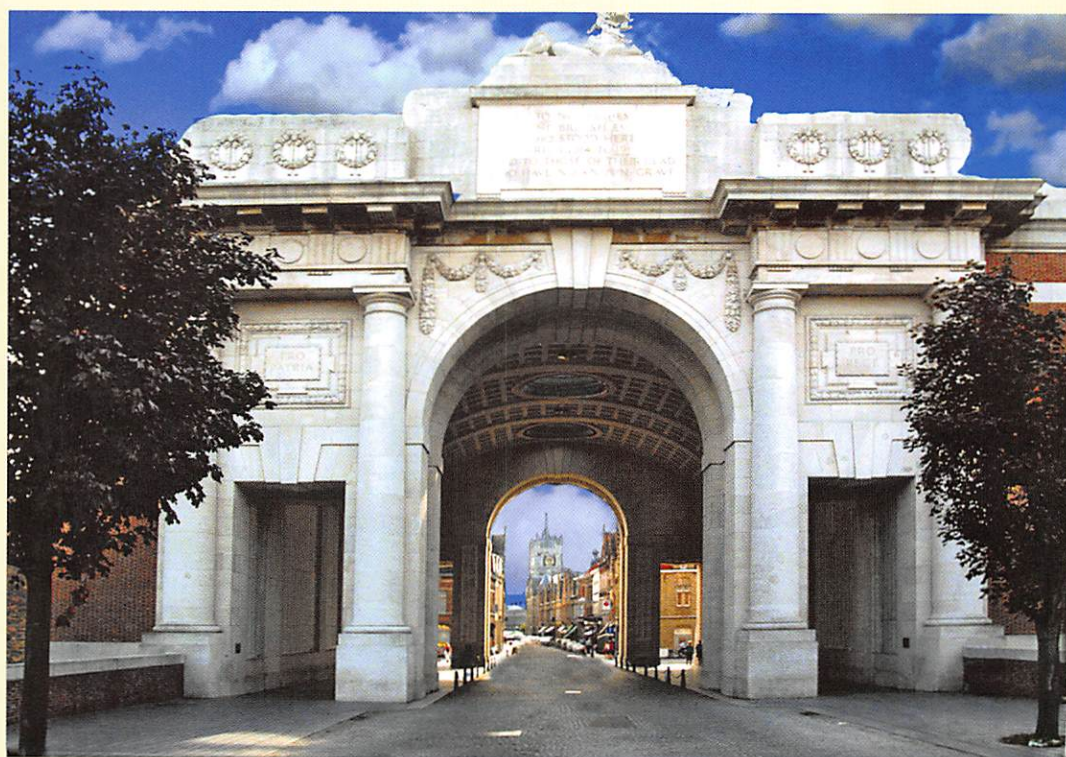


**The
Regimental Association
of
The Queen's Own Buffs (PWRR)**

The Menin Gate

Eightieth anniversary of the inauguration on 27th July 1927



They are not missing....
They are here



THE JOURNAL

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THE MENIN GATE

Inaugurated 27th July 1927

This year sees the 80th anniversary of the inauguration of the Menin Gate, Ypres, Belgium.

The gate is situated on the site of the old Hangoert Gate, later called the Antwerp Gate. This original gate was marked by two lions standing on either side of the roadway which cut through the old walls.

Ypres is strategically located along the roads leading to the Channel ports in Belgian Flanders. With the German failure at the Battle of the Marne in September 1914 and the subsequent Allied counter attacks, the "Race to the Sea" began.

This so called race ended at the North Sea coast after each army attempted to outflank the other by moving north and west. This area of Flanders, described by one historian as having the dreariest landscape in Western Europe, contained the last gap through which either side could launch a decisive thrust.

By October 1914, the Allies had reached Nieuport on the North Sea coast. The Germans, as a prelude to General Erich von Falkenhayn's Flanders Offensive, captured Antwerp and forced its Belgian defenders back to Nieuport, near Ypres.

Under the command of Field Marshall Sir John French, the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) retreated to Ypres after Antwerp fell. They arrived there between 8th and 19th October to bolster the Belgian and French defence. The Allied position around Ypres took the shape of a small salient in the trench lines because it could best be defended from the low ridge of higher ground to the east, but it was vulnerable to superior German artillery. The BEF held a thirty-five mile long line in the centre of the bulge while the French Army in the area, commanded by General Ferdinand Foch, manned the flanks to the south of the city.

In the course of the next four years the Ypres Salient was the scene of 3 major battles. The first, which commenced on 14th October 1914 and the second which opened on 22nd April 1915 were launched by the Germans. The third battle, part of General Haig's offensive, commenced with a barrage of over 3,000 artillery pieces firing over 4,250,000 shells. In the third battle of Ypres alone the British suffered 310,000 casualties and in the three battles lost over 250,000 killed

Countless thousands of British and Colonial troops passed through this gateway, a great many never to return, on their way to the front line trenches of the Ypres Salient. Like the other gates this one was under continual bombardment as they had been registered accurately by the German gunners and every man, horse, mule, gun and vehicle had to run that terrifying gauntlet.

By the armistice in November 1918 the beautiful town of Ypres had been nearly totally destroyed. My father recalled marching past the old Cloth Hall whilst it was burning on his way to the front marching beside his brother. Unlike the 100's of thousands who paid the ultimate price in the fight for freedom, they both survived.

It was later resolved that here at Ypres a memorial would be erected to commemorate the thousands of soldiers, 54,896 of which over 1,000 are Buffs and Queen's Own, who had made the final sacrifice but who had no known grave. That figure only includes



**The upper picture shows the Cloth Hall in early 1914.
The lower photo shows the ruins of the Hall which
was rebuilt in the 1930's**

those who were killed between the outbreak of war in 1914 and August 1917. The 34,927 who fell between August 1917 and the armistice on November 11th 1918 and who have no know grave are commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial.

On July 24th 1927, at 10.30am the magnificent Menin Gate was inaugurated by Field Marshall Lord Plumer G.C.B., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., G.B.E., in the presence of King Albert of the Belgians. In closing his speech Field Marshall Plumer comforted the considerable number of family and relatives of the 'missing' who were present by saying:-

"....the most tragic feature of the Great War was the number of casualties reported as 'Missing believed killed'. To their relatives there must have been added to their grief a tinge of bitterness and a feeling that everything possible had not been done to recover the bodies of their loved ones and give them decent and reverent burial. That feeling no longer exists; it ceased to exist when the conditions under which the fighting was being carried out were realised.

But when peace came and the last ray of hope had been extinguished the void seemed deeper and the outlook more forlorn for those who had no grave to visit, no place where they could lay tokens of loving remembrance.

A memorial has been erected which, in its simple grandeur, fulfils this object, and now it can be said of each one in whose honour we are assembled here today:

He is not missing; he is here"

Immediately after the conclusion of the inauguration ceremony in 1927, The buglers of the Somerset Light Infantry sounded The Last Post and pipers of the Scots Guards played a lament.

The simple ceremony of sounding the Last Post every night at 8pm was conceived by Mr P. Vandenbraambussche, the then Superintendent of Ypres Police, soon after the unveiling. The buglers of the Ypres Fire Brigade co-operated with the police chief and early in the summer of 1928 the nightly ceremony began. In October of that year it was discontinued until the following spring. The Last Post Committee was formed and soon afterwards the Brussels and Antwerp Branch of the British Legion announced their wish to present Ypres with four silver bugles. In 1935 the British Legion of The County of Surrey subscribed £400 to go towards a fund to fulfil the aims of the Committee

which were.

'To ensure the sounding of the Last Post each evening for all time at the British Memorial at The Menin Gate in honour of the soldiers of the British Empire who fell at Ypres or in the neighbourhood during the war of 1914 - 1918 and in addition to do everything that could increase the significance of this tribute to the Armies of the British Empire'.

Thus was born a tradition. Ever since November 11th 1929, except for the break during the German occupation of Ypres from May 20th 1940 to September 6th 1944, it has continued.

On the day the Germans left Ypres in September 1944 at about four in the afternoon, the bugles were retrieved from their hiding places and at 8pm once again The Last Post sounded in the evening air.

Two more silver bugles were presented by the Old Contemptibles' Association of Blackpool and Fleetwood and, in 1959, Colonel J. Whitaker presented two silver trumpets in memory of former Cavalry and Artillery men and himself who served in the Salient.

Each night, at least two of the firemen take up their positions in the centre of the road beneath the Salient face of the gateway after the traffic has been halted. Then in a simple but very moving ceremony, the pure tones of the silver bugles ring out and then echo away, never to a deserted scene. On major anniversaries and ceremonies involving the British or Ypres Municipal celebrations, up to six firemen blow the Call and Reveille. The Chaplain of St George's and perhaps the Dean will say prayers before a congregation of hundreds and wreaths will be laid on the stairways.

The simple ceremony is most moving and the atmosphere has to be experienced to be believed!



PRW

EDITOR'S PAGE

Welcome to the Spring 2007 issue of The Journal which is by any standards a 'bumper' issue with a record number of pages. Many thanks to those of you who have contributed, it really is very satisfying to see how much material is coming in for publication.

The request for subscribers to complete the Standing Order form has been well supported with over 150 forms received to date-many thanks, it really does relieve the administrative burden considerably. For those that prefer not to pay by this method-no problem at all but please make sure that you keep the payments up to date. Once again we have quite a few who are over two years in arrears and the final batch of reminders will be posted shortly. After that no more reminders and if individual subscriptions are not kept up to date then after a reasonable time the 'red pen' will have to come out.

This issue sees that final instalment of the late Major Geoffrey Cox's article 'How we Won the War'. It is rather sad really as it is as if we are finally saying goodbye to a gallant 'Buff' and a highly respected comrade. In fact just as I was typing out the final few words I was contacted by John Armstrong who was Geoffrey's batman in Italy. John has only just been introduced to The Journal and I am delighted to say that he is now a member of the Association and a subscriber, back copies of The Journal with all of Geoffrey's articles have now been sent to him.

Each year we celebrate one or more really important anniversaries. This year sees the 300th anniversary of the granting of the Tudor Dragon badge to The Buffs and July sees the 80th anniversary of the official unveiling of the Menin Gate. Next year sees the 90th Anniversary of the ending of the 1st World War an historic event which will be duly marked by our Association undertaking a very special 2/3 day visit to Ypres.

So that we can gauge the interest from subscribers who are not necessarily members of branches then, if you are interested, please complete the form enclosed and send to me ASAP. This is NOT a booking form and does not commit you in any way but we have to start somewhere. If there is sufficient interest and the trip does take place those who completed the 'Interest Form' will be given priority on booking. The trip will be subsidised by the Association and a grant is also being applied for

from the Lottery Fund. This will help to keep the cost down considerably. So if you would like to participate please get your interest registered. More details will be published in the next issue in December.

It was with considerable sadness that we have heard that four of our stalwart members had lost their wives in recent months, Liz Breining wife of Andrew Breining, Secretary of the Denmark Branch, Pam Hills wife of Frankie Hills, Chairman of London (Buffs) Branch, Molly Kirk wife of Geoff Kirk, a member of London Buffs Branch and Chairman of 141 Regt RAC (The Buffs) and Greta Addy wife of Alf Addy a long time member of Canterbury Branch. All four ladies played a very active part in the life of their relevant branches and the Association as a whole. We will miss them deeply and send our sincere condolences to Geoff, Alf, Andrew and Frankie.

In this issue we welcome the members of the new branch, The Weald of Kent Branch, to our fold. The inaugural meeting was held in January in Tonbridge and since then 49 members have been recruited. What a fantastic result and we look forward to their participation in Association events in the years to come.

In the last issue I mentioned that three diaries of Signaller F. H. Hawkins, 2/4th Royal West Kents, covering Gallipoli, Mesopotamia and the advance on Damascus would be serialised. This serialisation will start in the December 2007 issue as there has been insufficient copy space so far.

My contact details are: 54 South Eastern Road, Ramsgate, Kent CT11 9QE. Telephone 01843 580914, but please only during the day, by email: thejournal@peter-white.go-plus.net . If you are on Skype then my contact name is peterw81863.

I hope that you enjoy this issue.

The Editor

ASSOCIATION BRANCH NOTES

RAMSGATE BRANCH

SECRETARY: M. F. Millham 185 Bradstow Way
Broadstairs, Kent. CT10 1AX

Tel: 01843 867786

MEETING PLACE: The Royal British Legion Club,
Allenby House, 14/16 Cliff Street, Ramsgate.

MEETINGS: 3rd Friday in the month, 19.45 hrs.

Friday 1st December was a dull overcast day and it was with heavy hearts that the majority of our branch, along with many other representatives, assembled at Christ Church in The Vale in Ramsgate for the funeral of Horace Cook, The church was full with many town organizations represented. The eulogy was given by Major Peter White MM. After the church service Horace was buried in Ramsgate Cemetery, in a plot adjacent to the War Graves.

There were ten standards on parade, The Regimental Association branch standards of Ramsgate, Canterbury, Maidstone and Denmark, together with those of The Royal British Legion (Ramsgate), The Royal Artillery Association (East Kent), Dunkirk Veterans, British Army Association (Ramsgate), 'A' Company, Kent Army Cadet Force and the Bulldog and Ferret Association.



The standards dipped in a last salute as The Last Post sounds and Horace is laid to rest.

Last Post and Reveille were sounded by a bugler from 3rd Battalion PWRR. I think Horace would have approved.

Unfortunately we have to report the death of another of our branch, Vic Lemare. Members of the branch attended his funeral and his son in law came to our February meeting to personally express the family's appreciation.

Since our last report we have held a very successful Christmas Social and raffle. This was followed by attendance of some of our members at the annual Carol Concert arranged by Canterbury Branch, once again a brilliant event.

Like everybody else we are now well into the new year with plans going ahead for all the usual events of the year. But it hasn't been all plain sailing, we suffered a defeat at darts by the Ladies Guild, I plead not guilty, as darts are not my thing.

Talking of plans, we have two important changes to branch events this year. Firstly our Branch Christmas Social is now being held on Friday 7th December and is at the normal place. Our Annual Dinner Dance has had to be brought forward to Saturday 20th October, with a change of venue to North Foreland Golf Club, which is in College Road, Kingsgate. Should any planning to attend not know where the club is then please contact me and I will send you a map and directions. For those who like to stay over on the night of the dinner, may I point out there is a new Travel Lodge open at Westwood Cross on the outskirts of Broadstairs.

By the time you read this both the branch and the association will have held their AGM's, the years events will be flying by and then it will be time for the two reunions, we look forward to meeting you there.

MFM

SITTINGBOURNE BRANCH

SECRETARY: Mr. A Chesson. 16 Cedar Close,
Sittingbourne, ME10 4TV

MEETING PLACE: The Ypres Tavern, West Street,
Sittingbourne

MEETING: 1st Tuesday in the month at 19.30 hours.

Greetings from Sittingbourne Branch.

The Branch has continued to run fairly smoothly over the past few months, sadly we have lost one of our stalwarts, George Antrichan senior, who died recently.

George, a member of the Association for many years, was one of those who joined the original Past and Present Association of The Buffs and for a number of years was the Branch Chairman. Unfortunately failing health prevented him from attending the meetings for the past year or so, but he always kept in touch through his son, George Junior, also a member. At his funeral, both the Branch and The British Legion formed a large Guard of Honour at the Church, and at the internment. Our thoughts and condolences go out to his family at this sad time. He will not be forgotten!

The Branch Annual Dinner and Dance was held on 17th February and as usual was a resounding success, the food was excellent, the after dinner speeches were very good and short!! The entertainment and dancing were absolutely first class, especially the community singing session. A good time was had by all. Our thanks must go to the Branch Committee and especially to Paul and Jenny Fleming, our Events Secretary and his wife, who work so hard throughout the year to make all our events go off so splendidly.

On Saturday 14th April, the Annual General Meeting of the Regimental Association was held at Sittingbourne and following a fairly lengthy meeting, the annual Darts Match between Branches was held and I am very pleased to report that Sittingbourne Branch team, led by Mike Matson, managed to retain the Trophy for another year, Well done Lads. The A.G.M., was followed by a Supper, Social and Dance, a very enjoyable evening in all respects, once again organised by Paul and his wife.

Finally, plans for our Annual Pilgrimage to Ypres are now being finalised, this time we will be staying overnight in the town, and will be attending various events that are being organised by the locals to commemorate the 90th Anniversary of the Battle of Paschendael, but more news of that in the next edition of The Journal.

Best Wishes to all Members of the Association., we hope to see you at the reunions this year.

GD

LONDON (BUFFS) BRANCH

SECRETARY: Mrs. Betty Correa 34 Homer Road, Shirley, Croydon, Surrey CR0 7SB Tel. No. 0208 655 3040

MEETING PLACE: Ives Lounge, The Royal Hospital Chelsea.

MEETING: 3rd Saturday in the month at 19.00 hrs.

Well so far 2007 has been quiet at the London Buffs. However, I am glad to say we are still thriving although age is becoming a major factor on membership. In view of this Ron Hills and Ray Cox arranged for an article to be featured in the Kent local free newspaper quoting a brief history of the Buffs and the branch etc. This has generated several new branch and association members so was well worth the effort.

The branch standard has been resting since September 2006 but will soon be given an airing attending events during 2007 and is always carried with pride by Joe Correa (Standard Bearer).

The London Buffs have three outings coming up starting on the 2nd May 2007 turning the page in Canterbury Cathedral then on 16th May we have a trip to Bateman's, Burwash, East Sussex which was owned by Rudyard Kipling. In June 2007 30 branch members will be going to the Trooping the Colour on Horse Guards Parade London. Later on in the year we look forward to meeting you at the Annual Reunions

Finally, best wishes to all members of the association from The London Buffs.

BC

CANTERBURY BRANCH

SECRETARY: Mr. Henry G. B. Delo.

38 Reculver Avenue, Minnis Bay, Birchington CT7 9NU. Tel: 01843 842357

MEETING PLACE: The Chaucer Club, Chaucer Hill, off Military Road, Canterbury.

MEETINGS: Last Thursday of the month at 20.00hrs

Regrettably I have to start this report once again by announcing that we have lost another staunch member of the branch in John William Scott. John joined the army in May 1957, he completed his basic training at Canterbury, after which he joined the 1st Bn The Buffs at Dover and went with them to Aden. He was demobbed in May of 1959. John served the Branch as an escort to the Standard he also served on the rota of the Turning of the Page. John passed away in the Pilgrims Hospice in March, he will be sadly missed.

Eddie Williams is now home from the nursing home but is still unable to make Branch meetings and other activities. Norman Elgar is still unable to attend meetings but is keeping fairly well in health. Sid Pullman keeps his beady eye on him or is it the other way around.

The final months of 2006 kept the Branch quite busy with an excellent Carol Service at the Franciscan Study Centre, Canterbury with the Invicta band providing superb music for the carols. The service was conducted by Canon Noell Hall of St Paul's Church. Four Standards were present but this year we will be changing the arrangements and only one standard will be on parade. Colonel Champion accompanied by the Lord Mayor of Canterbury and the Mayor of Maidstone along with members from other branches were present. We thank George Croxford BEM and his wife Tina for their organisation of the service.

2007 started off with January being a very quiet month with the Branch making preparation for its Annual General meeting in February. At our AGM all Branch officers were returned for another year with just one change, Colin Smith stood down after 13 years faithful service as the Branch Standard Bearer. Colin was thanked for his outstanding contribution. His position has been filled by Sammy Supple, one ex Drum Major for another.

A lengthy discussion with regards to the arrangements for the Canterbury Reunion Parade took place after which the meeting gave the Chairman many points to raise at the Association's Annual General Meeting.

All points were conveyed to the Association's Annual General meeting at Sittingbourne for which we thank Sittingbourne Branch for their organisation of not only the meeting but the Darts competition and Social evening as well. "Well Done" We were very pleased with the outcome of the discussion with regards to the Canterbury Reunion Parade 2007. Back to Square one.

The darts competition, well what can you say about that, rules were broken and the person or persons who

broke them embarrassed the darts organiser Mr Paul Flemming who does such a good job for us all. How does the old rhyme go?: - *'When the master scorer comes to write against your name, he will write not that you won or lost but how you played the game.'* Think on!! Well done to our darts team who were runners up in the competition.

On the 29th April some members along with their wives/partners will be taking part in a sponsored charity walk in aid of the Pilgrims Hospice, a well deserved charity. Those boots were made for walking, but not mine. By the way there should be 13 studs on each boot one missing and its a 252.

The Branch members along with their wives/partners attended the Ghurka band concert at Dover, and this year the Ghurkas had invited the band of 3 PWRR to join in with them. What an excellent concert. Our tickets were organised by Maurice Samson for which we thank him.

The Branch have recognised the services of Alf Baker, a member of the Royal Naval Association, by making him a Honorary Life Member of the Branch. Alf parades many times throughout the year in support of the branch, to ring the Canterbury Ships Bell at the commencement of our Page Turning Ceremony each day.

A charity band concert will take place at the Herne Bay bandstand by the Invicta Band on Sunday 3rd June 2007. The collection will be shared equally between the band and our Association (Not the Branch). No admission fee is charged and all members their wives and families will be made most welcome.

TRUE STORY;

We now have in the branch a set of twin 'water babies'. Well you might ask, what's this all about?, read on. Two member of the bowls club (Branch members) were digging holes for fence posts at the bowls club when all of a sudden there was a water spout, a fork had been put through the main water pipe. Names have been omitted for security reasons but neither of the twins will admit to who did the evil deed. Your guess is as good as mine. In future flippers and waders will be supplied to bowling club members just in case something happens when they are playing.

To all readers far and near we send our very best wishes and hope to see you all at the Canterbury Reunion.

HD

BROMLEY BRANCH

SECRETARY: B L Bartlett. 185 Park Crescent, Erith, Kent DA8 3EB. Tel: 01322 346053

MEETING PLACE: Sundridge Park W. M. C. 134 Burnt Ash Lane, Bromley. BR1 5AF

MEETING: Last Monday in the month at 12.30 hrs.

You will notice that we have changed the venue for our meetings and the time as well. Thankfully life has been quiet of late. Bert Godsiff's wife, Mavis, has been in hospital for major surgery and we are told that she is well upon the way to full recovery. By the time you read these notes we will have had our AGM. No proposals have been made to change the officers of the branch so it looks like Alan Wright and I will continue in office. Funeral attendance has been much less than usual, must be the mild winter. In November I attended a Memorial Service at Junior King's School for former Band Sgt. Bob Freydanck who had been the school Sergeant up until his death. The service was truly remarkable, he must have been a very popular man. The school choir sang and it was a very moving experience for all who attended.

The Association AGM has now come and gone. Some proposals were liked, others not so popular-life is ever thus. The social and parade season is now in front of us and it is hoped that we all meet many old comrades at the reunions to come.

From Bromley-greetings to all members wherever you may be.

BB

MEDWAY BRANCH

SECRETARY: Marilyn Devonshire, 136 Brompton Lane, Strood, Kent ME2 3BA

MEETING PLACE: The R.A.F.A. Club, Riverside, Chatham, Kent.

MEETING: 1st Wednesday in the month at 20.00 hrs.

THE WEALD OF KENT BRANCH

SECRETARY: Lt. Col P P B Critchley, Chainhurst Oast, Chainhurst, Kent TN12 9SX. Tel: 01622 820353

MEETING PLACE: The Royal British Legion Club, Tonbridge.

MEETING: 2nd Tuesday in May, July, September, November at 19.00 hrs

The Weald Branch is now fully up and running. With over fifty registered members with service dates ranging from 1937 to 1993 we have members who have served in just about every part of the world and in almost every campaign over the past sixty years. We meet on the second Tuesday in alternate months at the Tonbridge Royal British Legion Club. Our next meeting is on Tuesday 10 July at 1900 hours. We have just held our third meeting, a most enjoyable evening. Nearly thirty members attended and many war stories are promised for the future. We hope to have contingents at both the Canterbury and Maidstone reunions and to be represented at other Association occasions. If you live in the area or know someone who does come along and enjoy the 'crack', you will be sure of a warm welcome.

PPC

COLCHESTER BRANCH

SECRETARY: G. Arnot. 30 Cairns Road, Colchester, Essex, CO2 8UZ. Tel: 01206 520145

MEETING PLACE: 3rd Sunday in the month. Please contact the Secretary for venue.

MAIDSTONE BRANCH

SECRETARY: Mrs. D Hall-Richardson, 31 Bychurch Place, Waterloo Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 7UQ

MEETING PLACE: The Eagle, Upper Stone Street, Maidstone.

MEETING: Third Tuesday in the month at 19.30 hrs.

HYPHE & FOLKESTONE BRANCH

SECRETARY: Mr. S C Macintyre, Quarry Lane Cottage, Hythe, Kent CT21 5HE. Tel: 01303 266778

MEETING PLACE: The Royal British Legion Hall, St. Leonards Road, Hythe

MEETING:
Second Thursday in the month at 7.30pm.

SANDWICH BRANCH

SECRETARY: Mr. D G Hogben 75 Burch Avenue, Sandwich, Kent CT13 0AN. Tel.: 01304 612920.

MEETING PLACE: The R.A.F.A Windsock Club, The Market, Sandwich.

MEETING: 2nd Wednesday in the month (except August), at 19.30 hrs.

DENMARK BRANCH

SECRETARY: Andrew Breining, Kildehojen 15, DK 4690 Haslev, Denmark.

MEETINGS: Contact the Secretary for details.

LADIES GUILD (RAMSGATE)

SECRETARY: Mrs. Molly Webster
11 Turnden Gardens, Cliftonville, CT9 3HB.

MEETING PLACE: The Royal British Legion Club, Allenby House, 14/16 Cliff Street, Ramsgate.

MEETING: 4th Friday in the month (except Oct. & Dec.), at 19.45 hrs.

From the Editor: will branch scribes please ensure that branch notes are submitted by 15th November 2007 for the next issue.

THE DRAGON'S TRI-CENTENARY



This year, 2007, sees the 300th anniversary of the Regimental Dragon. Registered at the College of Arms as a "Dragon Proper on a Mount, Vert", it was awarded as a mark of distinction by Queen Anne in 1707 to her consort's "Prince George of Denmark's Regiment" in recognition of "gallant conduct on all occasions" and has been used continuously since then by their successors including The Buffs, the Queen's Own Buffs (on the Regimental Colour), the Queen's Regiment and the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment.

The Tudor Dragon, a Royal badge, was selected in recognition of The Buffs origins in 1572 during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, who had a Dragon as right-hand supporter of her Coat of Arms. Possibly it also reflected the regiment's service in the Low Countries

until 1665 when it returned to England and was named "Our (or Royal) Holland Regiment", because a Dragon emblem, seized in Constantinople during the Crusades, was kept in Bruges and later Ghent. The Dragon awarded was green (shaded pink), probably as the regiment's earliest Colours were green, and this was reflected in the regiment's motto, "Veteri Frondescit Honore" (With it's ancient honour it is ever green).

Dragons have been symbols of power, strength and wisdom throughout history. They were used, for example, in various shapes and colours by the Celts, the Romans, King Harold at Hastings in 1066, Edward III at Crecy in 1346, Henry VII when he seized the English throne at Bosworth in 1485, and the subsequent Tudor monarchs including, as already mentioned, Queen Elizabeth I. The City of London and the Welsh also still use heraldic Dragons and differences of design and colour over the years have little significance.

Former members of the Regiment who wear Tudor Dragons on their blazers, and those now serving in the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment who display it in the centre of their badge, can be equally proud of this ancient and distinguished honour.

(Further details may be found in Appendix C to the Historical Records of The Buffs (1814-1914)

JJW

THE MINUTES OF THE 38TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION OF THE QUEEN'S OWN BUFFS(PWRR)

HELD AT SITTINGBOURNE ON SATURDAY 14TH APRIL 2007

Present

Colonel C. G. Champion	Regimental Association President
Major D. Bradley BEM	Regimental Association Secretary
Lt. Col. P. Critchley	Chairman Regimental Association (East Kent)
Major P. Gwilliam	Chairman Regimental Association (West Kent)
Major P. White MM	Vice Chairman Regimental Association (East Kent) & Journal Editor.
Major J. Barrell OBE LL TD	Vice Chairman Regimental Association (West Kent)
Colonel P Bishop OBE DL	President of Sittingbourne Branch
Mr T. Chessun	Secretary of Sittingbourne Branch
Mr. G. Dunk	Chairman of Sittingbourne Branch
Rev B D Foulger	Padre of Sittingbourne Branch
Mr P Fleming	Social Secretary of Sittingbourne Branch
W Pledger	Life Member of Sittingbourne Branch
Mr. L. Crouch	Sittingbourne Branch
Mr F. Hills	Chairman of London Branch
Mrs. B. Correa	Secretary of London (Bufs) Branch
Mr. J. Correa	London (Bufs) Branch
Mrs J Allen	Secretary of '62 Club'
Mr H Delo	Secretary of Canterbury Branch
Mr H Crooks	Chairman of Canterbury Branch
Mr J Ferneyhough	Chairman of Ramsgate Branch
Mr. H E J King	Treasurer of Ramsgate Branch
Mr. M. Milham	Secretary of Ramsgate Branch
Mr B Bartlett	Secretary of Bromley Branch
Mr J Burr	Chairman of Colchester Branch
Mr. G. Arnot	Secretary of Colchester Branch
Mr. T Mitchison	Colchester Branch
Mr. J. Nankevis	Chairman Maidstone Branch
Mrs. D, Hall-Richardson	Secretary of Maidstone Branch
W T Hazard	Member of Ramsgate Branch
W M Hazard	Member of Ramsgate Branch
M Samson	Member of Canterbury Branch
B Supple	Member of Canterbury Branch
R Cox	Member of Canterbury Branch
A Addy	Member of Canterbury Branch
B Dudman	Member of Canterbury Branch
A Lee-Frost	Member of Sittingbourne Branch
B E Coleman	Member of Sittingbourne Branch
D W Brierley	Member of Sittingbourne Branch
J E White	Member of Sittingbourne Branch
	Apologies
Mrs J Lamborne	Secretary of 6th Battalion QORWK
W Woolven	Vice Chairman 62 Club
Mr P J Gawler	Vice President Canterbury Branch
A Marchant	Treasurer Canterbury Branch

There were others in attendance. However, their names were unable to be deciphered.

1. Welcome by the President

- a) Colonel C G Champion welcomed all Members to the AGM and thanked the Sittingbourne Branch for once again agreeing to host the event.
- b) The President spoke on the following subjects: -
 - i) The newly formed Weald of Kent Branch (going well, meeting with approximately thirty Members)
 - ii) Publicity via radio, press, journals etc.
 - iii) The handover to Maidstone Borough Council of the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Museum.
 - iv) Upgrading of the Canterbury Museum.
 - v) The President requested that a vote of thanks be recorded to the Association Secretary for his work during 2006.

2. Minutes of the 37th meeting held on Saturday 22 April 2006.

- a) The minutes of the 37th meeting, having been previously circulated, were confirmed as a true record.

Proposed by J Ferneyhough

Seconded by J Nankervis

Carried unanimously

3. Accounts

- a) The meeting resolved to approve the following accounts, the Secretary having given an overview of the Benevolent Account and Association Account, which are administered by RHQ PWRR.
- b) The Membership agreed to support the PWRR Trustees in moving the accounts possibly to Gerrards.

Proposed by G Dunk

Seconded by H King:

Carried unanimously, with a vote of thanks to Miss Pam Howie, RHQ Finance Secretary and Major D Bradley, Association Secretary.

4. Benevolence Review

Copies of the summary of Benevolence were distributed, outlining how funds have been spent, and the Secretary gave an overview of Benevolence in general. Letters of appreciation have been sent to the Army Benevolent Fund, SSAFA and Royal British Legion.

Proposed by P Fleming

Seconded by T Chesson:

Carried unanimously, with a vote of thanks to Major J Rogerson for his work throughout this year, with best wishes for a long and happy retirement.

5. Association Grants 2007

The following grants were agreed, subject to approval of the PWRR Trustees: -

- | | | | |
|----|--|---|-------|
| a. | Canterbury and Maidstone reunions | - | £4000 |
| b. | Canterbury Branch Ypres trip | - | £ 250 |
| c. | Sittingbourne trip to Ypres and Menin Gate | - | £ 500 |

d.	Possible Band Concert	-	£ 250
e.	Donation to Canterbury Cathedral	-	£ 100
f.	Donation to All Saints Church, Maidstone	-	£ 100
g.	Donation to The Band of the PWRR	-	£ 300
h.	Cost of Annual General Meeting	-	£ 200
i.	Donation for Canterbury Branch Carol Concert	-	£ 200
j.	Sittingbourne Memorial Project	-	£ 250
k.	Colchester City Memorial Plaque	-	£ 250
	Total Expenditure	-	£6,700

The Cricket Tent Club was discussed. However, it was decided not to make a donation. The Committee would reconsider their decision if the membership were widened to take in the Sergeants' Mess or other Military Organisations.

Proposed by B Bartlett

Seconded by H Crooks: Carried unanimously

6. The 50th Anniversary of the Queen's Own Buffs Regimental Association 2011.

The Association will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary in 2011. It is only right that, as an Association, we should celebrate our half-century!

Our Anniversary also coincides with the 200th Anniversary of the Battle of Albuhera (16 May 1811)

The Committee of Management has therefore agreed in principle to the following: -

- a. To visit Albuhera in 2011 in conjunction with RHQ PWRR arrangements. Possibly a four-day visit which, hopefully, will include a Regimental-type dinner and silent toast as well as the usual Albuhera and Elvas celebrations.
- b. A Drum Head Service/Grand Reunion for all of the Association – venue to be selected – which will be the focal point of the Anniversary Celebrations.
- c. Band Concert.

Conclusion

Obviously we are open to proposals and suggestions from Branches, which should have been discussed at meetings and voted upon. These should then be forwarded to the Association Secretary for discussion and a subsequent decision.

Proposed by F Hills

Seconded by J Burr: Carried unanimously

7. Association visit to Ypres (Menin Gate), Popperinge and surrounding areas.

- a) It was agreed that the Association visit the above for a possible two or three day visit in June 2008.
- b) It was agreed that Major P White MM should coordinate the visit with the assistance of a small committee.
- c) It was also resolved that the Association apply for a lottery grant under the Awards for All scheme in the hope of keeping costs down.

Proposed by G Arnot

Seconded by H Delo: Carried unanimously

8. Canterbury Reunion 2007

Major Bradley outlined the arrangements for 2007, which included a display of a skirmish by the South East of England Re-enactment Society.

The possible provision of fifteen white plastic tables was also mentioned.

Timings and Administrative points area on page 12.

9. Canterbury Reunion 2007 – Order of March

After a lively but democratic debate, it was resolved that the following procedures be adopted for 2007

- a) All branches are to march behind their own standards .
- b) The Band are to countermarch at the West Gate and then march into the Cathedral at the rear of the parade. This should allow all on parade to hear the bass drum and therefore maintain the step!
- c) The parade to be formed in three ranks.

Proposed by J Ferneyhough

Seconded by H Delo: Carried with 1 (one) against and three abstentions.

10. Maidstone Reunion 2007

Major Bradley outlined the arrangements for 2007, which included the change of caterers for the Reunion luncheon.

A résumé of the outline plan is at Annexe B.

Mrs Jackie Allen presented the President with a cheque for £100 from the '62 Club', to be used towards funding the Maidstone Reunion. This gesture was received with thanks and applause.

11. Association Secretary Administration Points

The Secretary briefed the Meeting on the following administrative points: -

- a) All Branch secretaries are to ensure that the Secretary is informed of members' change of addresses, 'phone numbers and e-mails.
- b) All members are requested, when visiting RHQ, to make an appointment. This will ensure:
 - i) That the Association Secretary is available to see people .
 - ii) That he can allocate time to people.The same applies when visiting the PRI shop.
- c) If Association standards/flags etc are loaned for funerals, please ensure they are returned. The Association Secretary does not have the time to chase people.
- d) The Association Secretary requires an annual update on every Branch's membership broken down by the Regimental Members i.e. Buffs, Queen's Own Royal West Kent and Associate Members. The Director of Infantry now requires him to submit to him an annual return as part of the justification of the post of Association Secretary.
- e) The Association's bank has now been changed from Lloyds to the Royal Bank of Scotland. This allows us to maximise interest. All of our money now sits on deposit until a cheque is cashed. This new system also cuts down administration.

f) If you are aware of any ex-member of our forebear Regiments that form our Association who requires assistance, whether financial, welfare or advisory, then please do make the Association Secretary aware. If he does not know, he cannot help.

12. Standard Bearers Competition 2007.

After debate, it was resolved that: -

- a) Branches submit nominations for the competition one month prior to the event.
- b) That if 5 (five) nominations to participate were received, then the competition would go ahead. If 5 (five) could not be achieved, then the competition should be cancelled.
- c) The Secretary is to monitor the situation .

Proposed by H Crooks

Seconded by J Nankervis: Carried unanimously

13. The President spoke on the future of the Association.

- a) He stated that the Membership was not in a mood to draw down at present.
- b) He stated that he would speak with the Regimental Secretary to ask if a close affiliation of major Branches could be linked closer to PWRR, with a view to them becoming PWRR branches in due time.

14. The Journal

Major P White MM, Editor, briefed the Meeting as follows: -

The new style Journal is now into its 6th year of publication. During that time it has kept in the black and, indeed, made a profit for the Association. One of the problems is the collection of subscriptions, and to that end regular reminders have been sent out. Since the last reminder, over 40 subscribers have been deleted from the mailing list as they have not responded to the reminder and are in excess of 2 years in arrears. This has had a radical effect on the cash flow that we can expect in. To counteract this, and to adjust for printing and postage price increases, it was decided to raise the annual subscription to £10 with the guarantee that no further subscription increases would be levied. Since the last meeting, we have increased both the UK and Abroad subscription list by 11 and 2 subscribers respectively whilst the Branch subscription list has reduced by 10 and the complimentary list has been reduced by 2. This has resulted in an overall reduction of only two in the last 12 months.

Standing Orders completed forms received to date	149
Current Subscribers	575
Projected Current Annual Income from all sources	£8,405
Projected Current Annual Expenses – Journal and Cards	£4,800
Projected profit 2007/2008	£3,605

Web site: Number of visitors since 2002 = 15,550.

It was resolved that a vote of thanks be recorded to Major P White for his work as Journal Editor and to Mr. Mick Mills for his work on research.

Proposed by D Bradley

Seconded by P Bishop: Carried unanimously

15. Date and Venue of Annual General Meeting 2008

Saturday 19 April 2008 – Sittingbourne Paper Club

There being no further business, the Meeting was closed at 1812 hrs.

CANTERBURY REUNION

SUNDAY 5 AUGUST 2007

TIMINGS:

1. 12 noon Parade Form up: Christchurch College Car Park, Longport Street next to HM Prison
2. 12.30hrs March Off:
3. 13.00hrs Remembrance Service: Canterbury Cathedral
2. 14.00 hrs Reunion Leros Barracks

OTHER DETAILS

3. Band The Band of PWRR
4. Guest Preacher The Venerable Stephen Robbins QHC. (Deputy Chaplain Gen. H M Land Forces)
5. Principal Guest The Lord Mayor of Canterbury
6. President's Table; (The Lord Mayor etc in Officers' Mess (Buffet Lunch)
7. Buffet Drill Hall, 2 x serving points – Tickets/food.

Menu: Curry or Lasagne or similar dish – Ticket only.

Gateau

Cost: £6.00

8. Bars 3 x bars each with two barmen. Drinks at a very competitive price.
9. Picnic areas are available – new marquee, more tables and chairs (we have purchased 250 white plastic chairs and loaned 100).
10. Wet weather programme - Drill Hall
11. First Aid Room allocated
12. Band Concert 14.30-15.30 hrs * Invicta Band
13. Skirmish Display 15.30-16.00 hrs * South Eastern Re-enactment Society
14. Retreat Beating 16.30 hrs * The Band of PWRR

* All timings are approximate

15. It is anticipated that we will be running a PRI Shop.
16. There will be a control tent with a microphone.

Note: Tickets will be available from Mr H Delo, 38 Reculver Avenue, Minnis Bay, Birchington, Kent, CT7 9NU.
Please complete the form enclosed.

MAIDSTONE REUNION

SUNDAY 9TH SEPTEMBER 2007

1. 10.30hrs Form up Brenchley Gardens
 2. Wreath laying ceremony Brenchley Gardens.
 3. March Off
 2. Church Service All Saints Church, Maidstone
 3. Guest Preacher The Reverend Norman W F Setchell (Ex QOB and RACH'D)

 4. Kevin Kay Bradley Instrumentalist

 5. Venue The Hazlett Theatre, Maidstone

 6. Band Concert The Band of PWRR

 7. VIP Guests Councillor M Fitzgerald – Mayor of Maidstone

 8. Buffet Menu Self Service
 9. It is anticipated that the Ladies Flower Group from All Saint's Church will produce a display in the church.
- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Mini filled wraps of Ciabatta rolls | Savoury mini turnovers |
| Buttered French bread & cheese platter with pickles | Spinach and ricotta cheese goujons |
| Prawn parcels with seafood dip | Pizza triangles |
| Spinach and ricotta plaits | Crisps election |
| Oriental Dimsums | Seasonal fruit platter |
| Spicy chicken dippers | Cost = £6.00 |

Note: Tickets will be available from Mrs. J. Allen, 3 Sermon Drive, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7HS.
Please complete the form enclosed.

A Battalion at War

The story of 2nd Battalion The Buffs

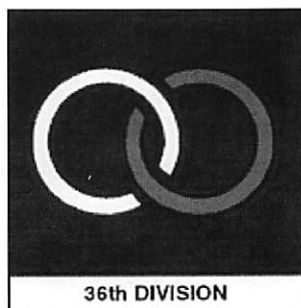
Part 3 Burma 1944-45

(I am very grateful to Mrs. Phylis Daniels, widow of Pte. Ginger Daniels, a well know member of 2nd Bn, for the loan of pictures and documents which her husband had compiled and maintained over the years. The concluding part of the story starts with the following notes which give an overview of 36 Div. of which 2nd Buffs were part. These notes are followed by some Dragon notes from 1945.

Whilst reading this article we remember also the heroic defense of Kohima by 4th Bn. The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment the story of which will be retold in the next issue. The Editor):-



General W. (Bill) Slim



Notes on 36 British Division 14th Army from 3.S.A.C.

Consisted at one time of British, Indian, American and Chinese troops.

Men, weapons and equipment all being flown in from Ledo. The advance down the Railway Corridor began

August 1944. During monsoon the only reliable means of communication was via the railway by Jeep trains. Jeeps adapted for rails by fitting rail wheels to them by Divisional Engineers.

River Irrawaddy crossed at Katha December 1944. First British troops to cross the river now the furthest British fighting troops from England, joined by 26 Indian Brigade. Bitter fighting at Myitson (2.6 Brigade). Flame throwers used by Japanese for the first time and more artillery than ever before against this Division. Fighting taking place in dense jungle at few yards range, at least 500 Japanese dead on the battlefield. An outstanding feature of this battle was the supply dropping by 12 Combat Command U.S.A.A.F. into the small perimeter field held by our forces across the River Swheli who were running short of food and ammunition. The river crossing was continually under artillery and mortar fire and small arms making evacuation of wounded very perilous and often fatal.

Everything depended on a good drop. Without the accurate and skilful flying of the American pilots throughout the battle under continual AA fire a withdrawal might have been unavoidable.

Mongmit and Mogok were captured after a speedy advance over mountainous country, first contact with civilization and a tarmac road. Link up with Chinese Independent Regiment on Burma Road at Kyaukme. Down Burma Road to Maymyo to come under command of 14 Army on to Mandalay and plains of Meiktila towards Kalaw. Men of the Division had advanced through monsoon, heat, jungle, swimming rivers and chaungs, climbing over mountain tracks and crossing desert scrub of plains. British and Indian Engineers laid over 6,600 feet of bridging including Mountbatten bridge over Shweli River at Myitson 765 feet long all built with local material. Infantry has marched over 1,000 miles. The whole campaign was fought without any support from Carriers, Armoured Cars, Tanks or Medium Tanks. An example of what can be achieved by good British and Indian Infantry supported by artillery. During the campaign the Royal Corps of Signals laid over 6000 miles of cable.

EXTRACT FROM THE DRAGON 1945

2nd BATTALION IN BURMA.

A period of rest gives me the chance of telling you a little about the Battalion's doings during the past two months.

The Battalion has been in action almost continuously for a month and the cost of the undoubted success gained in that period has been heavy. Our deepest sympathy goes to the relations of officers and men who fell in the battle; their service will not be forgotten.

After a long and arduous journey, which included a trip by air, we found ourselves spending Christmas in a Burmese village. Not quite the same Christmas as we had enjoyed in Iraq, but a generous issue of rum and the last minute arrival of a bottle of beer per man did a lot towards producing the right atmosphere.

We were quickly introduced to the country we were to operate in by a full programme of routine patrolling. At first we could not understand the popularity of our arrival with other units until we realised that it was a rest that they were looking forward to—a factor which we can appreciate much better now.

Our mules and M.T. had parted company with us early in the journey; the former eventually turned up, the drivers looking extremely fit, having walked an incredible distance. Our M.T. had not arrived yet and we shall no doubt find it parked on the quay at Rangoon, including the Colonel's station wagon which, we hear, has been smuggled by devious means a good part of the way.

The Battalion took over the advance at the end of January and were the first in the Brigade to make contact. Good progress was made, a feature of which was a very successful airstrike, the first time the Battalion had used this type of support.

"D" Company followed it up from an uncomfortably close distance with great success and accounted for the Jap opposition. After five days we struck our first obstacle in the form of a swift flowing and tricky river. An attempt was made to cross in daylight which very nearly succeeded, but the Japs built up their positions too quickly and the Battalion was ordered to withdraw. The stories of the crossing and the withdrawal are legion, but let it suffice by saying that many in the battalion got a wet shirt.

After three days in reserve the Battalion was again committed and had the uncomfortable experience of being divorced from its B echelon for over a week. The Japs had put in a counterattack on the L of C and our administrative staff became very operational for a few days. There are some good stories about that, too, as you can imagine.

We were supplied by parachute during this period with every conceivable form of hard ration. The improvised administration worked manfully and the Pioneers in particular turned themselves into beasts of burden with the greatest cheerfulness.

During this period the Japs did their best to shift the bridgehead with counter-attacks, but got no chance at all. And we have the satisfaction of knowing that though our casualties were considerable; the enemy suffered very many more.

To turn to individuals. Jesse Paine, our quartermaster, is back again after a spell of sickness. We hear that Brian Craig, Godfrey How and David Cobbold are making good recoveries from their wounds. Ian Percival and Mick Nelson are commanding companies, both Majors; and Palmer, Herbert, Nolan and Turner have been promoted Captains.

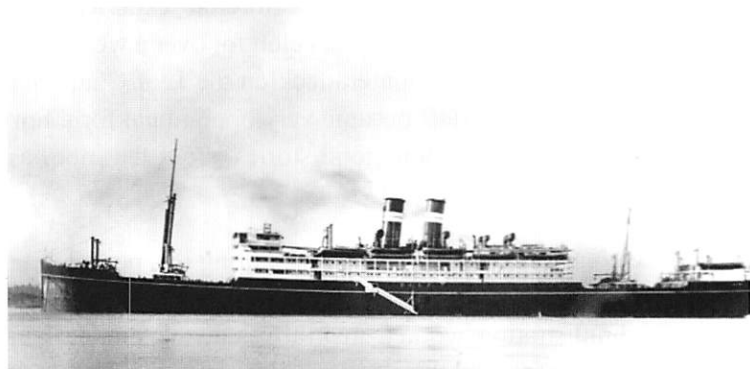
We welcome the arrival of Captain W. Stl. Appleyard, and Lieutenants G. Johnston and R. H. Gibbins who have been posted, the first two to "C" Company and the latter to "B" Company. We hope the time will not be long when they come to appreciate their change of Regiment. Promotion in other ranks bring Shilling and Steward in as W.O.'s, Baker and Nash to Colour-Sergeant and many new Sergeants and Corporals.

Of other Buffs, Lieut.-Colonel Humphrey Williams has visited us and we were pleased to hear that his brother, who commanded us in Egypt, is in good fettle.

A BATTALION AT WAR

THE STORY, IN PHOTOGRAPHS, OF 2ND BATTALION THE BUFFS AT WAR

PART 3. Burma 1944-45

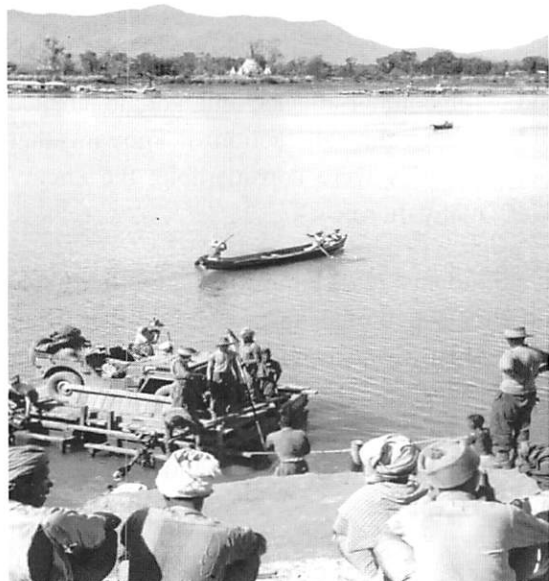


H.M.T. Talma

The ship, pictured left, transported the Battalion from Persia to India leaving on August 1st and arriving at Bombay on Friday 11th August 1944.

Her sister ship, Takliwa, was torpedoed in the Arabian Sea on November 23rd 1942.

The Battalion arrived to join 36 (British) Division in their advance against the Japanese down the corridor towards Myitson



The Battalion crossing the Irrawady at Katha, which can be seen in the background, in early January 1945.



Re supply was a constant problem due to the climate and geography of the country. The Battalion relied heavily, in the early stages of the campaign, on air drops by Dakotas of the 10th USAAF. The Battalion had been flown in by the same aircraft flying from Ledo in Assam.



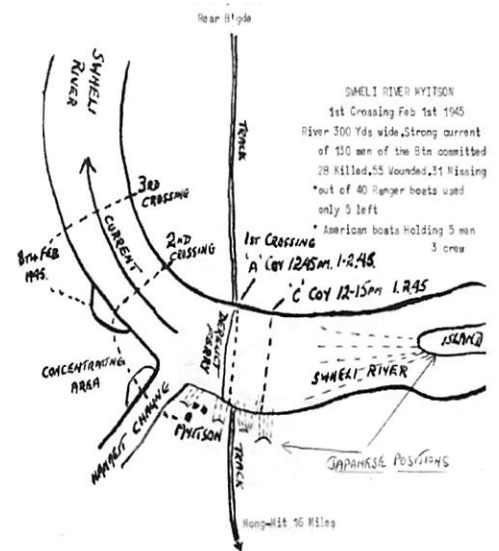
For close support, the Battalion relied on Royal Artillery 25 pounders, pictured at left, and their own 3" Mortar platoon. Picture on the right shows Pte Harris from Deal, Pte. Tassell from Deal and L/Cpl. Fletcher from Birchington, whilst the close up photo below left shows Pte. Tassel and L/Cpl. Fletcher again.



Assault boats being unloaded prior to the Shweli River crossing



The Shweli River crossing under fire



A plan of the operation



The photo above is of an 'O' Group prior to Battalion's advance along the Myitson-mong Mit road. Lt. McGrath, Majors Percival, Cobbold and Hews



RSM Martin briefs a patrol



Advance to contact



A platoon preparing to assault a Jap position after an air strike

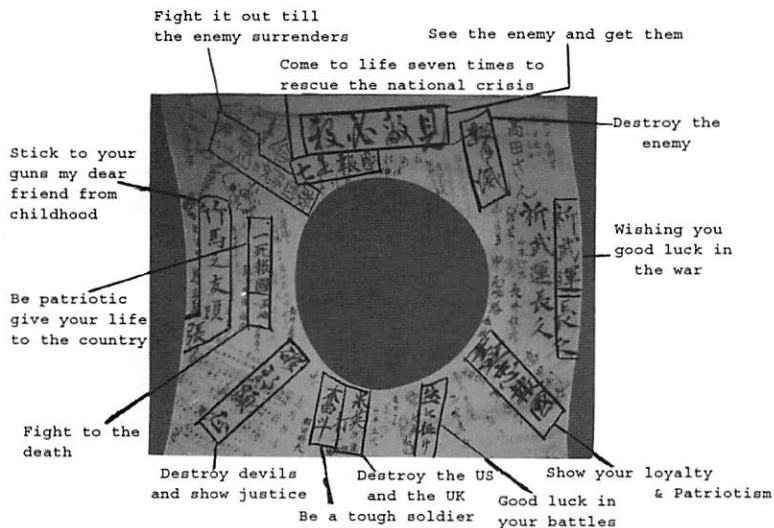


A section waiting to advance; left to right: Ptes. Sharp and Brown both of Stanmore Middlesex with Pte. Palmer from Southall.



A welcome break.

Translation of some of the characters on the flag
Other characters are names of persons on the flag



Pte. Adams, pictured above, who was presented with the flag in recognition of the fact that if he had not spotted and killed the Jap the Battalion could have sustained many more casualties.

An unusual picture of a Japanese prayer flag which was found on a Japanese sniper who was completely camouflaged hiding in a foxhole. The Jap was killed by Pte Adams after a short action.



Lt. Gen. Dan Sultan, Commander of US Northern Area Combat Command, with Major General Festing, Commander 36 Div, crossing the Shweli river under fire.



A Japanese defender



Above: Lord Louis Mountbatten with General Festing watching the bombing of a Japanese held island in the River Shweli.



Stretcher bearers of 'C' Company carrying Pte. Ward who had sustained a leg wound attacking a Japanese bunker.



Medical Orderlies attend a casualty at the RAP



A jungle airstrip



A temporary cemetery in a teak forest on the Myitson Road where members of the battalion who fell during the first and second crossing of the Shweli River and subsequent actions were buried.



Major General Festing, visiting the Battalion. Seated at the rear right of the passing vehicle, with his hand on the tailboard, is Pte. Charlie Speed who was subsequently wounded near Myitson on 17th February 1945. He was killed a short time later whilst being evacuated across the Shweli River.



Pictured left is Captain Morris Russell RACHD who was padre to 2nd Bn throughout the Burma campaign.

Morris died last year in Auckland, New Zealand. His obituary appears in Last Post and some of his memories are published in 'Reflections'.

On the 1st May the Battalion emplaned at Meiktila for Imphal and from there to India and a period of reconstitution began. In the 5 months since it had arrived in Burma the Battalion had suffered 215 casualties including 78 killed.

On 3rd May the Fourteenth Army entered Rangoon and on the 14th August 1945 the Japanese surrendered.

During the 2nd Battalion's operations in Burma there were many examples of gallant and selfless conduct. Some of these acts were duly recognised by awards.

The following citations are published as a tribute, not just to those cited, but to all of those who fought with the 2nd Battalion The Buffs in Burma.

Military Cross (MC)

Captain. (T/Major) G. R. D. Hews.

On the 1st February, 1945, Major Hews' company was the first to cross the River Shweli at Myitson with orders to establish a bridgehead to cover the crossing of the remainder of the battalion.

The company succeeded in establishing a small bridgehead during daylight in spite of receiving a number of casualties to men and boats from enemy fire on the opposite bank.

Due to the severity of the enemy opposition, lack of boats and to difficulties in navigating the river, the next two companies received heavy casualties and only a few of those who got across were able to link up with the bridgehead company.

Eventually the crossing was discontinued and it was decided to evacuate the bridgehead troops back across the river during the early hours of the following morning. This entailed Major Hews' company being left on its own on the far side of the river for a period of about 15 hours against ever increasing enemy opposition.

During this period the company was hemmed in, subjected to a number of small infantry attacks, and was continually under fire from enemy snipers and grenade discharges. When the time for evacuation came there were about 12 able bodied men, 14 wounded and remainder killed. All except the killed were successfully evacuated, the wounded by boats and the remainder by swimming or wading. The initial gaining of the bridgehead, and later its successful retention and evacuation, was undoubtedly due very largely to Major Hew's influence and exertions.

Throughout most of the period he was in wireless touch with the Battalion H.Q.'s on the opposite bank, but at no time did he ever suggest the possibilities of evacuation until orders were finally given for him to do so.

In wireless conversation his calmness and general grip on the situation was very noticeable, and he himself in the intervals of going off to deal with emergencies, one of which included a direct assault on his slit trench, personally directed and gave excellent fire orders for close support from mortars on the North Bank.

Since the evacuation, all ranks who were in the bridgehead with Major Hews have emphasised how his coolness, resource, encouraging demeanour and leadership helped them to keep going, and that his efforts were mainly instrumental in keeping the position intact and finally in executing the evacuation.

Military Medal (MM)

6291366 A/Sgt. F. A. Stephens.

During the crossing of the River Shweli on 1st February, 1945, Cpl. Stephens, then a Section Commander, was in charge of a Ranger boat containing three I.O.R. paddlers, three B.O.R.'s and himself.

In midstream the boat came under heavy fire. One I.O.R. and two B.O.R.'s were killed and another I.O.R. injured. Because of the casualties from heavy fire it was not possible to paddle the boat, whereupon Cpl. Stephens and one other got out of the boat and propelled it by swimming. Cpl. Stephens pulling it with a rope in his teeth. Eventually the boat was beached on the enemy bank near two others, but at a point remote from where a small bridgehead had been formed. Cpl. Stephens immediately started getting out the wounded from the boat, including the Battalion Second-in-Command. As the casualties were being carried up the bank, a further man was wounded by a sniper from 15 yards range. Cpl. Stephens killed the latter with two bursts from his T.M.C. Some of the party then found a bunker, and this N.C.O. himself carried most of the wounded to it although still under fire. He then made several sorties back to the boat for equipment, ammunition and water.

For the rest of that day and most of the following night, Cpl. Stephens spent his time in looking after the party. He organised the defences, he dug slit trenches for two of the wounded for whom there was no room inside the bunker; he obtained Japanese blankets and greatcoats; he helped organise the defence of the bunker; he obtained water and himself remained on sentry the whole night.

Towards morning the bunker was in the area of our own shelling and mortaring, one shell landing on the edge of it and killing one of the party. Throughout this period Cpl. Stephens remained standing and on the look-out.

In the early morning, after orders and signals for withdrawal had been given, this N.C.O. was chiefly instrumental in getting the party away in boats under cover of mortar smoke and the early morning mist.

Throughout this period he was completely calm and very cheerful. By his actions he was able, not only to be instrumental in saving lives, but also to restore the morale of five able-bodied men and make them, in spite of the presence of one wounded officer and seven wounded O.R.'s, into as effective a fighting force as was possible.

6294043 Cpl. (P/L/Sgt.) J. W. Tarrant.

During the advance South to Myitson this N.C.O. took over command of his platoon when its commander had become a casualty, and at a time when held up by enemy opposition. By his encouragement and example of how to move forward although under fire, he led his platoon on to the enemy position. Later he took his platoon forward under enemy machine gun fire to a position from which he could neutralize the enemy fire, thereby enabling another platoon to advance and drive out the enemy.

On 25th and 27th February, 1945, this N.C.O.'s company was again in action South of Myitson. On the first day, although his platoon was on reserve, he organised and conducted diversions against the enemy and acted as a fire controller for mortars on to an enemy L.M.G. post. He repeatedly went forward and offered his services to his company commander.

On 27th February, Sgt. Tarrant's platoon was engaged throughout the day against a strong enemy position which included three L.M.G.'s. During this action he never spared himself and appeared to have no thought for personal safety. He went constantly from section to section urging and encouraging them. His fine example steadied his platoon at a time when they had become somewhat jaded and tired.

In every action this N.C.O. (P/A/Sgt.) had shown qualities of courage and perseverance far greater than could be expected of a soldier of his rank. In addition, his technical ability and continual pugnacity had a very marked effect upon the men.

6296213 W/Cpl. (A/L/Sgt.) F. Latter.

During the advance South to the River Shweli, Cpl. Latter's platoon was held up by a M.M.G. and L.M.G. on the far side of a clearing. In the absence of orders from his platoon commander, who was wounded, Cpl. (now Sergeant) Latter led his section round the right flank while still under fire and, by occupying a commanding position, enabled an assault on the left flank to overrun the M.M.G. post.

On 27th February, 1945, Cpl. Latter's company was in action South of Myitson against strong enemy opposition. When his Platoon Commander became a casualty he took over command at a time when the platoon only nine strong, had become disorganised. He steadied the men, and by his example and leadership led them to a small feature overlooking the enemy position. His platoon resisted a strong counter attack and accounted for at least 14 of the enemy. When

ordered to withdraw a short time later, Sgt. Latter, who was the last out of position, saw a wounded man unable to move. Without hesitation he went back and brought the wounded man in, crawling with him some 30 yards before getting under suitable cover,

14358974 Pte. H. J. Buckwell.

(Editor's note: There is no mention of Pte. Buckwell's award in the Regimental History)

During a withdrawal across the River Shweli from the South bank in the early morning of 2nd February, 1945, Pte. Buckwell was on an improvised raft, the occupants of which contained a number of wounded men. The raft split in three sections, two of which drifted downstream, but that containing the wounded men stuck on a sandbank. Pte. Buckwell immediately dived into the river from one of the drifting sections and swam to the South bank, which he knew was occupied by the enemy and which was being heavily shelled by our own guns. He walked along the bank and emptied two ranger boats of their equipment but found them to be unseaworthy. He thereupon swam to the raft on the sandbank.

About eight minutes later, Pte. Buckwell swam out to an empty ranger boat drifting downstream ; he was unable to manage it and was swept past the stranded raft. Later, with the help of an Indian Sapper and Miner, he rowed back to the raft and took off the wounded.

There is no doubt that but for Pte. Buckwell's prompt and fearless action the wounded men would have been left stranded and at the mercy of enemy fire.

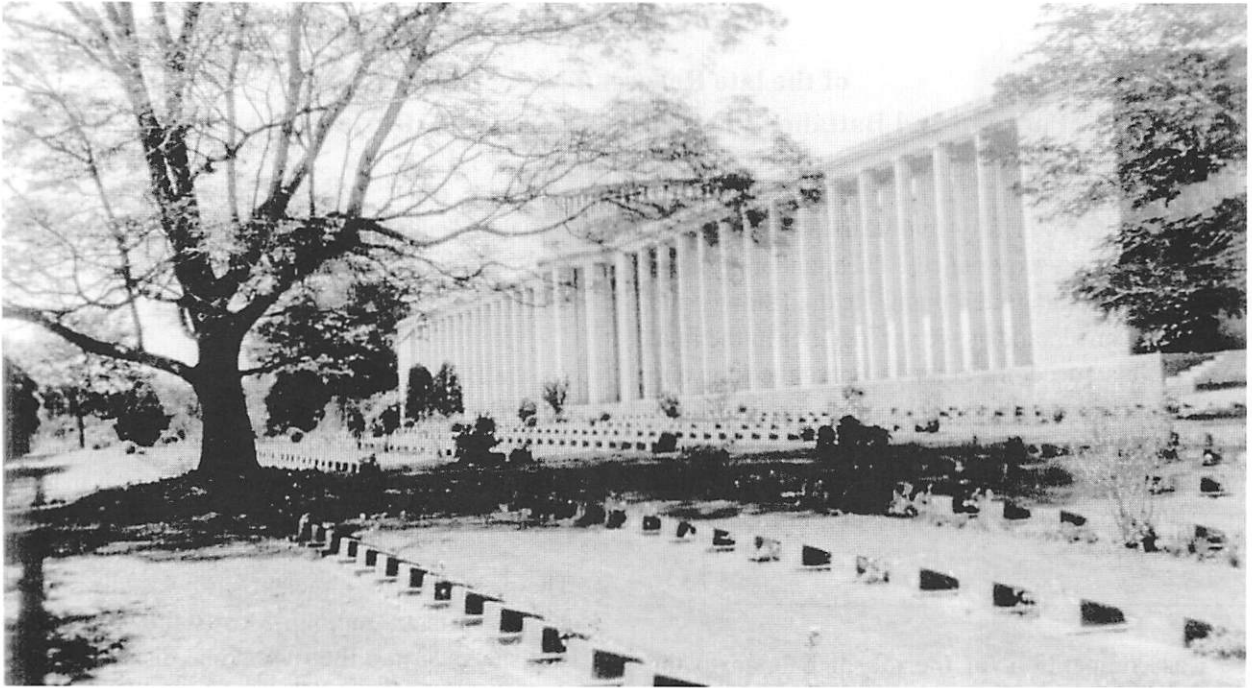
6286823 Pte. L. C. Oliver.

(Editor's note: In November 1944 Pte Oliver was attached to Special Service Troops in the Arakan.)

At Hinthaya, Arakan, on 23rd November, 1944, this young soldier in action for the first time, in his excitement got ahead of his sub-section. A party of some ten Japanese crossed his front. He engaged them with his T.M.C., wounding their leader, who was an officer.

He then saw an enemy section post about 30 yards to his left, manned by four men. He threw a grenade at them, stunning one, and then killed the other three with his T.M.C. This enabled his sub-section to capture a prisoner, who was not much hurt and who gave most valuable information.

His skill at arms and his dash were a magnificent example to the men of the sub-section.



The Taukkyan War Cemetery, Rangoon.

Situated 21 miles north of Rangoon, this is the largest of the three war cemeteries in Burma. The total number of the fallen buried here being 6,368 including fifty men of 2nd Battalion The Buffs. The Rangoon Memorial which stands in the centre of the cemetery commemorates the 26,380 men, including 29 Buffs, who fought and died in the Burma campaign who have no known grave.

ROLL OF HONOUR

The names of the 50 men of the Battalion killed in action in Burma buried in the Taukkyan War Cemetery.

Pte. L. V. Andrews, Pte. J. G. Angus, Pte. C. Ashdown, Pte. J. W. Biggs, CSM. W. R. Bird, Pte. R. I. Birt, Pte. A.H. Biswell, Pte. E. A. Blain, Pte. L. F. Boorman, L/Cpl.. H. P. Bowler, Pte. W. T. Brown, Pte. W. J. Clarke, Pte. F. S. Davey, Pte. H. J. Dawes, Pte. P. Dunn, Pte. H. Garnham, Pte. G. W. Garnick, Pte. C. Guthzeit, Pte. C. F. Harwood, Pte. R. A. Hickmott, Pte. G. R. Jackman, Lt.. W. L. Jackson, Cpl.. L. W. Jarvis, Pte. A. E. Jennings, Pte. C. Laine, Pte. W. G. Lipscombe, Captain R. M. Macintosh, Pte. D. Manning, Pte. K. M. Martin, Pte. A. L. Masters, Pte. P. Mordecai, Captain K. M. Munro, Sgt. W. W. Penn, L/Sgt. J. Runley, Pte. A. P. Russell, L/Cpl.. A. T. Ryder, Pte. H. V. Saunders, Cpl.. T. H. Savage, Major G. G. Sharpe, Pte. H. Simmonds, Cpl.. A. J. Smith, Pte. C. J. Speed, Pte. A. W. Stevens, Pte. J. Tittler, Cpl.. S. H. Tomkins, Cpl.. G. Tucker, Pte. G. F. Whiffen, L/Sgt. E. A. Wilkins.

The names of the 29 men of the Battalion killed in action in Burma who have no known grave. Their names are inscribed on the columns of the Rangoon Memorial.

Pte. B. Allen, Pte. R. C. Amos, L/Cpl.. G. Braund, Pte. J. C. Burton, Pte. C. Castleton, Pte. R. F. Crane, Pte. J. Cronin, Pte. E. Dennis, L/Cpl.. G. Dimmick, Cpl.. A. H. Gates, Cpl.. L. F. Hardy, CSM. J. G. Herbert, Pte. F. C. Hiscock, Pte. J. W. Hunter, Cpl.. A. Kendall, Pte. J. T. Lake, Pte. G. W. F. Lubka, Pte. L. F. Mascia, L/Cpl.. C. J. Pearce, L/Cpl.. R. Plumridge, Pte. J. Read, Cpl.. C. H. Sharman, L/Sgt. J. F. Smith, Cpl.. A. V. Stickings, Pte. M. A. Stoneham, Pte. L. C. Swinnard, Pte. F. W. Tomkins, Pte. F. J. Williams, Pte. A. Wright.

2nd Battalion The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment) were awarded the following Battle Honours for operations in the Far East

SHWELI, MYITSON, BURMA

VETERI FRONDESCIT HONORE

REFLECTIONS

of the late Reverend M. C. Russell.

Padre to 2nd Battalion 'The Buffs'. Iraq and Burma 1944 - 1945.

by Alan Bland

Alan Bland writes- For fifty-five years Morris did not speak of his wartime experiences. Then, under pressure from family, he began to tell them. He died slowly and bravely from cancer, and as we sat together in the final long weeks, his anecdotes helped to pass the time and to give us things to discuss. He much preferred the humorous situations to the grim ones. They are light on names, places, and dates, but it would have been unfair to push him too hard. So here they are, in memory of Morris.

There was competition for the job of batman to the padre. Many saw it as a cushy number, light work, a few perks, and a better chance of conning the padre than other officers. A bright, sharp eyed, cockney private named Alfie got the job, expecting a quiet war. He had a surprise coming.

Whenever the Buffs attacked, Morris and Alfie followed directly behind. Morris gave last rites to the dying, they helped the medics and stretcher bearers, and they buried the dead. This was no easy task because the jungle undergrowth contained a mass of roots, while the open ground was extremely hard. In the tropical heat it was exhausting work and to make matters worse the Japanese left snipers in the trees.

Fortunately they were far from being crack shots.

"We were digging a shallow grave for a poor bloated lad when an unseen sniper began firing at us. We dug furiously. Then Alfie gasped, "Padre, I fink I've worked out ow we can get this man buried quicker".

"Dig fasters dig faster!" I puffed.

"It's the feet sir. Is bloody boots stick up so we ave to dig the ole grave deeper just to cover is feet"

"So what's your bright idea, batman?"

"Well sir, if we puts is elmet over is feet instead of at the ead end we wouldn't ave to dig so deep and we could get the ell out of ere".

I considered this for a moment and was about to make a speech on respect for the dead when a snipers bullet whistled past my head:

"An excellent idea, Alfie", I said. "It was a technique we were forced to use often after that".

As the Buffs advanced up the peninsula, the Japanese dug in on the northern side of the Myitson river. A crossing was made after fierce fighting, but artillery continue to bombard the main body as it made its way across in boats.

Their artillery was ancient, firing shells so slow you could see them coming. Mostly they were inaccurate and splashed into the river some distance away so we were not too worried. There were a dozen in our boat including the colonel, while an officer standing up in the front gave a cheerful commentary on where the shells were going to land, *'High and left, well short, etc.'* Then his voice changed. *'This one will be close, very close. My God its got our number on it!'* We all ducked, but were otherwise helpless, waiting for the end. The shell splashed into the water a few feet behind us. As we disembarked I said to the colonel, *'I feel very stupid sir. I've wet myself'*. The colonel replied, *'Don't worry about that padre, we all have!'*

Once across the river it was the padres job to account for the dead, wounded and missing and report to the colonel. The medical officer gave him the tally of wounded, and he removed the dog tags and personal possessions from every man in the long line of dead.

"At the end of the line was a heap, nearly as high as this room, of mush, unrecognisable as being humanity, and impossible to identify. I told the Colonel, who ordered the posting of sentries and told me to take a roll call. I was never more depressed in my life at the awful silences as the names were called. Our battalion had been reduced to less than 400 able men. Over a hundred failed to answer their names."

Morris parcelled up the belongings and wrote personally to the loved ones of every man killed.

"I offered to provide more detail if they wished it but did not receive a single reply. I've never understood why".

I replied *"Well Morris, they would have got the dreadful telegram shortly before your letter arrived. In those days there were no trauma councillors, you just had to get on with it. Your letter would have been a closing, like a funeral." There was no need for a reply.*

"I'd like to think so, maybe you're right", he said.

"Are you alright, Morris?". None too bright a question to ask a person who so obviously wasn't. He was sitting in his lazy boy chair, rug around him, ancient little dog on his lap. His eyes were closed and he had begun to murmur.

"Yes, OK thanks. I was feeling a bit low so I was saying the twenty-third psalm to myself. It gives me great comfort, and once it saved my life".

Here was a chance to take his mind off his discomfort so I asked him how this came about: He explained: - "Despite our reduced numbers we advanced again to establish the river crossing. I followed up alone in a state of utter exhaustion. Before long I became disorientated and without realizing, ahead of our front line. Before me was an empty trench, dug by the Japanese as a defensive position. I tumbled into it, lay down, and went immediately into a deep sleep.

When I awoke it was dark and there were voices, some so close they seemed on top of me. Japanese voices. It seemed certain that someone would look into the trench and shoot me. I knew there was no point in jumping up and surrendering because they did not take prisoners. So I lay there, very afraid. It was then that the twenty third psalm came to me;

'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want, He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil. For thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me'.

I can never explain it but peace came over me, and before I had finished repeating it a second time I had gone back to sleep.

It was daylight when I next woke, staring up into the muzzle of a rifle. It was a wonderful relief to hear a cockney voice say,

'Gawd, I nearly shotya!. wotcha doin down there padre, you're s'posed to foller the attack, not lead it!'"

One day a Buddhist monk asking for 'A man of God' was brought to Morris. The monk explained that their temple lay just ahead and he pleaded that it should not be shelled. They went to the Colonel who agreed to a detour when told that there were no Japanese there. Later Morris was taken to the temple by the monk and was greeted as a hero.

The monks had no earthly possessions, but maintained the temple through the sale of rubies which they mined nearby. To show their gratitude they presented him with a tobacco tin filled with large rubies, and insisted he take them. Unsure how to keep them safe he hid the tin in the chimney of a damaged building. Next morning the battalion was ordered to move out at speed and he did not have time to collect his rubies or an opportunity to go back for them.

This was the only story which Morris told from time to time, and was his favourite. The monetary value of the rubies meant little to him, and he did not notice the wistful looks of others who felt that those rubies would have made life easier in austere post-war England! In later years he romanced about returning to Burma and trying to find the spot, but he never did.

From HQ we received a message that for Christmas dinner 1944 the front lines would enjoy a menu of fresh chicken and fresh oranges. At first this seemed like an unkind joke, any fresh meat which had taken three days to come up the line would be a sitter for food poisoning, especially chicken. Then we were advised that the RAF would drop our dinner into a clearing nearby - the chickens would be live!. We half expected to see a flock of chickens fluttering down from the skies, and went to watch the fun.

The plane circled the clearing while we cheered and waved, then dropped three containers with commendable accuracy. Unfortunately the parachute intended to give the oranges a soft landing failed to open, and as the crate hit the ground we were treated to a spectacular orange coloured eruption before our pulped pudding settled into the dirt. The chickens landed hard too, both crates breaking open on impact and those birds left uninjured running and flying into the jungle, chased by excited soldiers. The birds proved to be no match against Jap hunters, and all were despatched within ten minutes of landing. So we ate our fresh chicken Christmas dinner after all.

"We all had lovely feet, beautiful feet," he said, enjoying my surprise. He explained "Someone in Whitehall had correctly surmised that feet were important, and as we fought and marched up the peninsula we were supplied with fresh socks every day. However, the underwear department was not so hot, and when we finally reached Rangoon we had not had a change for eight weeks. Fresh underwear was distributed and we were marched to an ornamental lake. The Colonel ordered everyone to 'Strip Off,' throw our grotty rags into a pile for burning, and bathe for half an hour before donning the clean gear.

The lake was in a park. On one side was the Navy admin, building with Army admin on the other, and commuters came and went via a bridge across the lake.

As we relaxed in the cool water, a WREN, immaculately turned out, and apparently preoccupied with her thoughts, stepped onto the bridge. Her look of astonishment and embarrassment was a sight to behold, and for just a moment she faltered then someone whistled, and next second four hundred baboons were jumping up and down, cheering and whistling.

I've always admired that girl. She had a message to deliver, and deliver it she would. She put her shoulders back, eyes forward, and marched across the bridge to a thunderous ovation from a large, highly appreciative, and stark naked audience. It must surely have been the highlight of her war, perhaps her life.

The war against Japan ended on 15th August 1945. Morris longed to get home, and was concerned at letters from Daphne, advising that five year old Hilary had become a very naughty little girl and was out of control. Then an order arrived from London instructing that Morris was to remain in theatre for a further six months. In the officers mess Morris bemoaned his bad luck to his friend, the doctor.

"It's completely unfair, Morris. You've been through hell and back and have been here longer than most of us", said the M.O. Then he thought for a minute. *"The first ship out of here leaves in ten days and I can get you on it. It will be unorthodox, that's all".*

Morris confirmed he would do anything to be on that ship.

"Well, the wounded and insane are part of the first complement. I shall certify you as insane. It will mean

being locked up with the loonies, but you'll be home in six weeks".

Morris continued: - "I was marched on board with my fellow nutters. It wasn't too bad. Some were tragic cases, a few were dangerous, but most had simply opted out under the strain and become total alcoholics. We were stowed on E deck where the heat and smell was enough to turn a man potty, if he wasn't already. We ate with our fingers, it being considered too dangerous to give us knives and forks.

On the second night out I decided to get some fresh air and avoiding the guards, reached the main deck. The night air was wonderful, and I was leaning on the rail thanking God for my good fortune when a voice shouted "*Stop, stand still!*".

A man ran up, apparently thinking that I was about to throw myself overboard. I recognised him as a fellow padre and shook his hand.

'What are you doing Morris you shouldn't be up here in your state?'

I calmed him down and then explained, finishing with, *'and I'm perfectly sane'*.

"Yes, of course you are old chap. That's what they all say" he replied and calling a guard, he steered me in kindly fashion, back down to E deck".

Meantime Daphne, unaware of the deception, had been counting the days to a wonderful reunion. While soldiers and loved ones embraced on the dock she looked anxiously for Morris, and eventually sighted him being loaded into an ambulance. She ran to the borrowed Morris 8 and followed it to a military hospital on the other side of London. There she was told that her husband was insane.

Two days later they were reunited. Like thousands of his comrades he wore a standard ill fitting demob suit and carried his honourable discharge papers. But Morris, as usual, was different. Unlike his comrades he also carried a document issued by an irate medical board, certifying that Captain Reverend Morris Charles Russell was completely sane!

Alan Bland.

New Zealand

September 2006.

HOW WE WON WORLD WAR 11 OR

"IF ONLY HITLER HAD KNOWN"

By the late Major Geoffrey Cox. MC.

In April 1945 we moved northwards, with a view to eventually entering the line. We stayed for one night in a town somewhere north of Rome and whilst the battalion was moving into the transit area, I made for the Allied officers' club where I was to sleep. Having settled in I returned to the barracks to see how the battalion was faring and I was surprised to see a line of British CMPs drawn up outside the entrance. On enquiring what was up, the sergeant in command said, "*It's them Ities inside, some of 'em are getting a bit stroppy*". I went in to see what the trouble was and was confronted by a mob of soldiery all armed and very excited. Getting hold of my interpreter, I learnt the cause of the trouble. The battalion ration truck had broken down some hours before and the soldiers had not fed for nearly twenty four hours. Not only had their officers taken no action to obtain food but to aggravate the situation they had sat down at tables nicely covered with white table cloths and were tucking into a meal in full view of the troops. I told the soldiers to disperse and that I would find them some food. Commandeering a three ton lorry, I drove to a British DID (Detail Issue Depot) which I had seen signposted up in the town. In charge of the food store was a British Corporal and I explained the situation to him saying that I needed emergency rations for a thousand men otherwise we could have a riot on our hands. "Well sir, you will have to sign for them," he replied, which I did most readily and he had the three tonner filled up with tins of spam, bully beef, biscuits and odds and ends. Loading completed I returned to my Italian soldiers, who broke out into spontaneous clapping and cheering, shouting out, "Bravo Majore Inglesi!" That was the end of the trouble but I got hold of the CO and tore him off a hell of a strip.

We moved on to an area not far from the beautiful old city of Sienna and it was whilst we were here that the news of the end of the war in Europe came through. I remember we went into a small church nearby our billet and rang the bell so hard that eventually the rope broke. We then set out to celebrate in the officers' club in Sienna, where we ate a good meal and had more than enough to drink. On the way back David McNab would insist on riding on the bonnet and whilst doing so broke off both the windscreen wipers. Back in our billet I recall vividly how he chased me with a loaded revolver

and I remember thinking, "Here am I having survived the war only to be killed by a drunken Scotsman!" Next morning he had completely forgotten the incident.

Our next move was to Lake Como, where we occupied a luxurious two storey villa situated right on the lake. There was a lift from the ground floor to the first floor and another down to the lake below, where I used to bathe in the clear but cold water. Whilst we were there we got to know a charming Italian family who insisted that we should come back to their villa and meet their old nanny who was English, so one day we went for tea. We were greeted by nanny who in a broad Lancashire accent said, "*Ee lads I am right pleased to see thee.*" She had been with the family for close on thirty years and could speak very little Italian. When war broke out between Italy and England, she was interned but the head of the family, who was an Italian general, demanded her release, which was immediately granted and she had spent the war with the family to whom she was devoted.

Whilst at Como, I decided to take some leave and visit Venice. On hearing this my interpreter, a delightful young lieutenant by the name of Alex, insisted that I should stay with his mother who lived in the country not far from the city. Mama, who I discovered later was a lady in waiting to the Queen of Italy, lived in an enormous villa, which was most beautifully appointed. She gave me a great welcome and apologised that she could not entertain as she would have liked because the Tedeschi (The Germans) had stripped them of everything. However it is the only time that I have ever been served my breakfast in bed by a butler, bearing a silver dish laden with eggs and bacon. I wondered what life could have been like before the German occupation. She was quite charming and I lived for a few days in great luxury. When in Venice I was able to use the magnificent Hotel Danielle, which was the Allied Officers club.

In September I received a posting to 1 Buffs, who were in 24 Guards Brigade, part of 56 Infantry Division, stationed in the Trieste area. Before I left, the officers of the Italian battalion dined me out. The CO said that he would guide me to the restaurant, which we tucked away in a remote village, but unfortunately en route he was

involved in a minor accident so suggested that I should go on ahead and that he would follow later. I found the restaurant, which looked most un-prepossessing from the outside with strings of beads hanging down in the entrance. On entering I found a small cafe, sparsely furnished and with one of those Espresso machines on the counter that hissed as it dispensed scalding hot water for Cafe Espresso. However I was promptly ushered into a back room, where all the officers were gathered and here I partook of an exquisite meal, which was most expertly served. The proprietor spoke very good English, so naturally I asked him if he had been to England. "*Oh yes sir,*" he replied, "*I was the head waiter at Clariges in London, for many years.*"

I Buffs were commanded by Lt Col Guy Oliver, who had been 2IC 5 Buffs in North Africa and Sicily. On joining I was given HQ Company, with as C.S.M. Jumbo Excell, who had been with the Battalion all through the Desert campaign. One thing I discovered was that the company had very little company funds, unlike the other companies, so something had to be done to obtain some money. With C.S.M. Excell's support I organised a weekly football pool and soon the money came rolling in and in no time the account was looking very healthy, which enabled us to hold a most successful company party when Christmas arrived. The main task of the Battalion was to patrol part of The Morgan Line, which was the boundary between Italy and Yugoslavia and to maintain a number of road blocks and defence posts on the frontier. This was a tiresome job and sometimes very tricky, as the Yugoslavs or Jugs as they were nicknamed were very awkward and un-cooperative.

The Battalion was stationed in a small village named Lazzaretto, which was five miles south of Trieste. We were housed in reasonable buildings right by the sea, so we indulged in plenty of swimming and sunbathing; the only hazard was huge jelly fish, which packed a formidable sting. Not far away, along the coast, was the wreck of the Italian liner "Rex", which had at one time been the jewel of their mercantile marine. She was bombed and sunk by the RAF.

At the end of September 1945 the CO and I received an invitation from the 5th Battalion to visit them in Austria. Having spent the summer in widely scattered detachments on the Italian/ Austrian frontier, the 5th Battalion was concentrated in Vienna, where they were the only British Infantry battalion. One of their duties was to provide the daily guard at General McCreery's HQ, which was located in the very beautiful and

impressive Schonbrunn Palace. We made an early start from Lazzaretto in the CO's Staff car, accompanied by his batman and driver. This necessitated a long journey through the Russian Zone of occupied Austria and I remember Colonel Guy carefully briefing the driver that if we were stopped by Russian sentries to do so immediately as they were reputed to be very trigger happy. The difference between the Russian and British Zones was most marked. Once in the Soviet Sector there was a very grim atmosphere. The streets in the villages and towns were virtually deserted except for the noticeable presence of Russian soldiers and every now and then we would come across convoys and also trains loaded with machinery and goods, which had been stripped from Austrian factories and buildings and were en route for the USSR. As the day wore on we still did not see any signposts indicating Vienna (Wien), but there was a name which was featured very prominently but not shown on our map. It was not until we arrived in Vienna, that we discovered that the mysterious name was the Russian equivalent for the city. The 5th Battalion entertained us lavishly and at a guest night in our honour they unveiled The Colours, which had been especially flown out from England in anticipation of a parade in Honour of Marshall Koniev, the Russian C-in-C. Unfortunately the parade was cancelled. One morning when Colonel Guy and I were walking to a cafe for a drink we heard the sound of horses hooves and from behind us appeared a half squadron of Russian Mongolian cavalry. In the heart of one of Europe's oldest and most beautiful cities they presented a grim sight as they clattered past with their expressionless oriental faces and long, heavy swords hanging down their sides. It recalled my school days when we had a master, who was always harping on about the "yellow peril". We had considered him to be an over-imaginative old fool but now I thought otherwise.

Shortly after our return to Lazzaretto, the Battalion received a visit from Major F W B Parry, a pre-war regular officer, who had been taken prisoner in France in 1940 whilst serving with the 5th Battalion. He was en route for the 5th Battalion in Austria to take over 2IC and so called in on his way through Italy. We were expecting a new 2IC, Major H R Grace, who had also been a POW since 1940, when serving with the 2nd Battalion. Now Colonel Guy and Joe Parry were great friends, so Colonel Guy went to Corps HQ and had the two postings exchanged. As a result when Raymond Grace arrived a few days later, he was told that there had been a mix-up in the postings and he was destined for the 5th Battalion. Later on both

these officers commanded the 1st Battalion, Joe Parry taking over the 2nd Battalion on 1st March 1948 which subsequently became the 1st Battalion in Hong Kong on 23rd September 1948 and Raymond Grace taking over the 1st Battalion in Kenya on 11th February 1954 from Colonel John Connolly.

In early November I was given a month's leave in UK; this leave was known as LIAP (Leave in lieu of Python, python being the codename for permanent posting back to England). I boarded the leave train at Trieste and sat on it while it steamed through Northern Italy, Switzerland and France, eventually arriving at Boulogne, where we transferred to a troopship across to Folkstone. The main things that stick out in my mind about this journey were the witticisms, often extremely crude, which had been chalked on the outside of the carriages, mostly relating to Lady Astor and the blown up French letters which festooned the length of the train. The reason for lampooning Lady Nancy Astor was for a remark she was alleged to have made referring to the 8th Army as "D Day Dodgers" and also suggesting that wives of 8th Army men should refuse to sleep with them on their return, as most of them had been guilty of frequenting brothels and cavorting about in general!

I returned to the Battalion shortly before Christmas 1945 and was greeted with the news that the Battalion was to move shortly to an unknown destination. We were sorry that we would be leaving the Trieste area but glad to know that we would be leaving the querulous Jugs behind. Very soon after Christmas we entrained at Trieste for a long journey down to Taranto and we were piped out by The Pipes of the Scots Guards, who together with the Coldstreams made up 24 Guards Brigade. The Brigadier (Malcolm Erskine, who was later to lose his life in Malaya), the Brigade staff and many friends were at the station to bid us farewell. As Colonel Guy was away in the UK, we were commanded by Joe Parry, the 2IC, and for about a fortnight we hung about the Taranto area, until on 20th January 1946 we embarked on the P & O liner Carthage for Salonika. Now during the course of its travels in Italy the Battalion, in common with all other units, had picked up a motly crowd of dogs who became great pets. Before embarkation orders were issued that all dogs were to be destroyed and this caused great sadness. All the dogs disappeared but miraculously they all re-appeared again in Greece. The reason for this miracle was that with the help of the medical staff, they had been chloroformed and placed into the Post Corporal's empty postbags in which they were carried on board.

On disembarking the Battalion moved up to the small town of Kilkis, which was about twenty two miles north of Salonika and twenty miles south of the Yugoslavian border, so we had swapped the Jug's northern boundary for their southern one. Here we were part of 12 Brigade, which was part of 4 Division, which had been sent to Greece earlier to assist the government there to overcome the Communists. The countryside was very barren and the people mostly extremely poor, especially having endured nearly four years of German occupation. This part of Greece still had a very eastern atmosphere, having been part of The Ottoman Empire for generations and this is reflected in their music and many of their customs and one encountered camel trains occasionally. The area abounded with tortoises and birds of prey would pick them up in their talons, drop them from a height so as to break their shells to enable them to peck at the flesh.

The Greek Orthodox Church provided a bishop for Kilkis and it was his house that we requisitioned as an officers' mess. I remember he was an impressive man who had the traditional black beard and wore the characteristic tall black stovepipe hat. He was not too pleased to lose his house and called frequently in the hope of regaining possession. On one occasion he was nearly knocked down at the front door by Gregory Blaxland, who was holding a birthday party, rushing out to be violently ill in the garden. I don't think he took a very Christian view of us but this feeling was reciprocated by Joe Parry, who when attending a service in the local church caught one of the locals trying to pick his pocket!

I was billeted on the local bank-manager, a very charming man but lacking any sense of humour. One day he invited me, together with a number of other Greek guests, to dinner. We partook of a fine spread all diving into the various dishes on the table with our own knives and forks. After dinner, he suggested we played a game of guessing one another's ages and looking at me he said in a loud voice "Forty five". Being only twenty six at the time, I suggested he tried again so without batting an eyelid he shouted out "Fifty". I think that one of the factors that lead him to this figure was that practically all majors in the Greek Army were about this age. He had a small daughter, who was very spoilt and whom I tried to avoid as much as possible. One day I sent a DR into Salonika to buy me some scrumptious cream cakes, which were sold at a superb shop called Flockas. On receiving the cakes I took them up to my bedroom to eat in solitary delight. As was my custom I had saved the best ones until last, when there

was a knock on the door and in walked my host, before I had time to hide them. He had come to ask me to join the family for a drink so I had no option but to take the remaining cakes with me. Naturally I offered them to the little girl, who selected my very favourite but after taking a bite or two she pushed it aside saying that she did not like it. I was mortified.

In addition to the famous cake shop in Salonika, there were a number of good restaurants which specialised in fish, especially oysters. These were highly popular but alas they were placed out of bounds by the medicos on the grounds that they were unhygienic and constituted a health hazard. This we believed was a ploy by the RAMC to corner the oyster market, for from then on these particular restaurants appeared to be commandeered by the doctors who were always to be seen stuffing themselves.

One afternoon I was returning to Kilkis from Salonika in my jeep, together with my driver L/Cpl Brown and my batman Private John Armstrong, when we had a puncture. On putting on the spare tyre, we discovered it was flat so we stopped a civilian vehicle and Armstrong climbed aboard with instructions to go into the M.T. and bring back another tyre. As Brown and I were waiting in the jeep, a Greek shepherd appeared and kindly asked us to go into his cottage for a glass of milk. On entering the building we found that the family lived in one end and the sheep in the other. Bidding us to sit down, he went over and milked the sheep, giving us each a glass. It tasted revolting but with determination I managed to finish mine; Brown would not touch his. Sternly I ordered him to drink it for the honour of The Empire, whereupon he said that even if I was to have him court-martialled he would not drink it. In the end, when no one was looking I drank it, handing my empty glass to him!

Our divisional commander was Major General Colin Callander, who had been gazetted into The Royal Munster Fusiliers and when that regiment was disbanded transferred to The Leicestershire Regiment. On his retirement he moved down to Rolvenden and when I was commanding The Depot in Canterbury, became a member of The Regimental Canterbury Cricket Week Club. One day I was summoned to Divisional HQ where he told me that he wanted me to form a Divisional Battle School. This meant leaving Kilkis and moving into the outskirts of Salonika. My chief instructor was a great character by the name of John Deighton, who was a Northumberland Fusilier. John was a fine cricketer and after the war captained

both The Army and Combined Services; his best feat was probably when playing against The South Africans for Lancashire as a bowler, he managed to score 80 in both innings.

Whilst on the subject of cricket, Gregory Blaxland who commanded a rifle company in the 1st Battalion bet John Price, captain of the Regimental side, that his company could beat the Regimental side. John said that if Gregory would like to strengthen his company side with a few guest players, he would accept the challenge. Accordingly Gregory picked himself as skipper of the company side and assembled ten guest players, including John Deighton and myself. We drove up from Salonika to Kilkis, partaking of an excellent picnic lunch en route and had little trouble in seeing off The Battalion side. This was the foundation of a very jolly club, known as the KBNCC and we subsequently played practically all the other unit teams in 4 Division and only lost one match against the 30th Field Regiment RA, who beat us by fourteen runs in a low scoring game. KBNCC stood for Kiss me Baby Necktie Cricket Club, Gregory having seen an advertisement for such ties in an American Forces newspaper. The ties were reputed to have luminous lettering, guaranteed to light up in the dark! We sent off for a supply but to date they have not yet arrived.

I was lucky enough to be picked to play cricket for North Greece v South Greece and the match was played in Athens, which gave me a week's leave and a chance to stay in The Hotel George V, which had been commandeered as an officers' leave hotel. I flew down in a two seater air OP plane and as we flew very low I was able to obtain a good view of the country and follow the route on the map. Although the Germans had surrendered several months before, they had made such a thorough job of demolishing the railway tracks and road bridges that travel by land between the capital and Salonika was still not possible. All troop movements were carried out by using a battered old cargo ship, called the King David. Bunks were erected in the holds and corrugated iron ablutions were built on the decks and everyone had to queue for meals with their mess tins. It was the height of discomfort and I felt sorry for the Jewish settlers, when I heard some months later that the ship was used to transfer them to Palestine.

In the autumn I returned to the Battalion, who had moved from Kilkis to the outskirts of Salonika, prior to being posted home. I handed over command of the school to an officer in the DCLI by the name of Grey Read; later he was to serve in the military mission in Washington

DC. Grey Read, I remember, had a particular party trick, with which he would amuse his friends. In a Greek restaurant he would fill his mouth with petrol, produce a cigarette and when the ever solicitous Greek waiters rushed forward with a cigarette lighter he would blow out, thereby emitting a sheet of flame much to the alarm of the waiters. One evening unfortunately he sucked in and badly burnt his face. He was rushed to the hospital where they attended to his burns and wanted to detain him but as the Divisional Commander (Major General Down) was inspecting the school the next morning he insisted on being discharged. They bound up his face so that all that could be seen was his eyes, nose and mouth and he went back to the school. When General Down, a hard man, saw him he said, "*What the hell have you been up to?*" Grey Read answered, "*When I was making my early morning tea this morning, the primus blew up and scalded my face,*" to which the General replied, "You want to be more careful in the future!"

The Battalion's time was taken up with guard duties, some training and sport, A field sports meeting was held and being tall, I was amongst the favourites to win the officers' 100 yards. I tried to dissuade them from betting on me as I have always been, quite useless in sprinting and true to form I came in last. The Division also held a number of horse race meetings, as when the Germans capitulated we acquired several horses. It was not generally known at home but a very large part of the German army transport system was based on horse drawn vehicles. Our outstanding rider was Gregory Blaxland, who was a regular attender at all race meetings with his horse "The Flying Chetnik"!

One final reference to cricket. In the Battalion side we had a very talented slow bowler by the name of Albert J Stringer. Stringer was a real character, a cockney with a great sense of humour and considerable powers of leadership. Unfortunately he was always in trouble, largely for pinching things. In a desperate attempt to deal with him Colonel Guy decided to make him up to a Lance Corporal and for a time the experiment worked until one time when he was part of a guard on an ordnance depot and a number of tyres disappeared. On another occasion when we were playing against a naval side, Albert J was the perfect host seeing that our visitors were all seated and provided for - then he slipped out and was caught going through their pockets in the changing room. When I asked him where he learnt to play cricket he told me "*Borstal*" and volunteered that his father had also done a spell on The Moor. He was undoubtedly involved in black market activities in

Greece and when the Battalion moved down to Athens, as Joe Parry stepped off the gangway at the docks, a shady civilian character sidled up to him and said, "*Pst, where is Jimmy The Sixty?*". Sixty was the number painted on all the Battalion vehicles. After the war one of our ex postwar time subalterns who had been with us in Salonika was travelling home from work in the City of London, when he saw Albert J in charge of a fruit stall outside the station. Albert greeted him, "*Allo Guv*", and insisted that he joined him and his old mother for a drink in The London Bridge Tavern. So hospitable was Albert, that our ex-subaltern woke up in a taxi outside his home in Tunbridge Wells, with the meter ticking away like mad. The inside of the cab was strewn with fruit. "*Where am I?*" he enquired. "*Ome*", replied the taxi driver. "How on earth much do I owe you?" was the ex-subaltern's fearful inquiry. "*Nothing*", replied the driver, "Albert's paid" .

Later on in 1961 when I had left The Army and was working as a brewery representative in Brighton, I went into a pub and sitting at the bar was Albert J. "*Hallo Albert*", I said, "*have a drink.*" "*No Guv, you ain't my commanding officer now, you 'ave one with me.*" As a result of our meeting, I persuaded him to join the Brighton Branch of The Buffs Past and Present Association but after attending a few meetings, he stopped coming. I guessed I knew the reason, he was doing a spell inside. Sure enough I saw him some months later and he confirmed my suspicions. I noticed that he had a large scar on his face and when I asked him what had happened he told me that, he had been worked over. He said "*the old profession*" now had a nasty, vicious element in it and he was getting out of it. I have never seen him since.

At the end of the year, shortly before the Battalion moved down to Athens, I was posted home and was later appointed as Adjutant to the 4th Battalion Buffs (TA) who were due to be re-formed on 1st March 1947. Colonel Guy Oliver took over command in May on his return from Greece and our quartermaster, Major Tom Burt, was a pre-war R.S.M. of the 4th Battalion and later a quartermaster in 5 Buffs. So began in earnest my post war Army career, which continued for many enjoyable years until I retired on 28th February 1961. On 1st March, The Buffs amalgamated with The Queen's Own Royal West Kents and formed The Queen's Own Buffs.

THE QUEEN'S OWN BUFFS

The Royal Kent Regiment

Within a matter of days of the Presentation of New Colours Parade on 23rd June 1962, little time was lost before the battalion was off to Cyprus. Based in a tented camp at Dhekelia on the southern coast, no sooner had they arrived before they deployed into the mountains of northern Cyprus to take part in Exercise 'Bellepheron'. Four weeks later after a short break on the coast it was back to the UK and a spell of well deserved leave.

In September the battalion moved from Shorncliffe to Meaney Barracks Colchester as part of 19 Brigade. In November 1962 the battalion was visited by the Rt. Hon. John Profumo MP.



What goes in has to come out!



Mr. Profumo talking with Pte. Adams. Lt. Gerelli looking on.



**One way or the other.
Cpl. Alan Moss taking the easy route!**

The battalion then took part in Exercise Morning Flight as part of their air mobility training at RAF Lyneham and Manston.



HQ Company getting ready to emplane.

In February 1963, 1st Battalion Falsterske Fodregiment from Denmark visited Colchester reinforcing the already strong links that the regiment enjoyed with Denmark.



**The Commanding Officers of the two Battalions:
Lt. Col. H. B. H. Waring and Lt. Col. C. Asmussen**

Both battalions later deployed, in freezing and snowy weather, to Stanford PTA where 1st Bn. Queen's Own Buffs acted as enemy on Exercise 'Magic Carpet'. for the Danish Regiment.



Pte Henley and Cpl. Wildish dug in and waiting.



Comparing L. M. G's



Drummers Williams and Duck with two members of the Falsterskest Fodregiment's Corps of Drums



Major Eric Ford MC seen here with Major A.S.B. 'Jimmy' Juul MC, 2i/c of the Falsterske Fodregiment. They served together with 5th Bn The Buffs at Anzio. (Major Juul still subscribes to The Journal). Major Eric Ford passed away in October 2006

PHOTO GALLERY



5th Bn. The Buffs (TA) Wilsons Hall, Ramsgate. 1961

**Back row: Capt Jones, Sgt Cook, Sgt. Granie, RSM R. J. Palmer, WO 11 Mirams, ?, Capt. R. J. (Dickie) Holmes, Lt. Bingham, PSI Wally Woolgar
Front row: Captain Reggie Morgan (Adjutant), Lt. Col. David Cobb (CO), Major Bill Baddeley**



**Support Platoon, 'B' Coy, 1 QOB's
Presentation of Colours June 23rd 1962**

**L to R: Prof Warner, Ken Mead, Jack Rose, Johnny Rolf, Dave Bourston, Ray Chambers, Mick Major,
Taffy Evans, Barry (Tomo) Thomas, Cyril Elms**



On a recent visit to Malaysia, Lt. Col Richard Talbot was presented with his Pingat Jasa Malaysia Medal by Maj-Gen. Dato Fadhi Bin Sheikh Ahmad at HQ MINDEF in Kuala Lumpur. Richard is seen here with his old friend from Sandhurst (Dettingen Intake 28) JEN (B) TAN SRI ISMAIL HJ OMAR, the retired Chief of the Malaysian Defence Staff, and Maj-Jen Dato Fadhil Bin Sheikh Ahmad. *(Please note Richard is 'Flying the Flag' by wearing his regimental tie and association lapel badge.)*



The Standard of 'A' Company, 1st Battalion (The Buffs), Kent Army Cadet Force that was on parade at Horace Cook's funeral. This standard was presented to the unit when Horace was with the ACF.

Photo courtesy of Malcolm Milham



Allan Quinnell (ex 1st Bn. QORWK) has sent in this photo of Iban Dongoa Taken in KKB circa 1953.

EVERY DAY A BONUS

By Ken Clarke

(Continuing Ken's remarkable account of his service with the QORWK's)

Not everyone in the Battalion was destined to return to England. When we reached Port Suez 300 men who had only served about 2 years or less in India left the boat for a further journey to Haifa where they were to join the 2nd Battalion of the Regiment which was on its way out to Palestine. As the Dilwara and the troopship Dunera with the 2nd Battalion aboard passed within a short distance of one another in the Suez Canal many men of the 1st Battalion, including myself, carried out the ritual tradition of throwing their topees overboard.

We had our band instruments with us and gave a number of performances on board and impromptu concerts were also organised by a group of tough sailors, also on their way home from the China Station. Most of them had served as stokers and were a real hard bunch but they certainly livened up our journey home. After passing through the Suez Canal we stopped for a day at Port Said where we were again besieged by bum boat wallahs. This time we were allowed to go ashore and spent a couple of interesting hours discovering the sights and sounds of the bazaars and the French Quarter. Having taken on fresh supplies and refuelled we were on our way once more in the evening into the Mediterranean and our next port of call-Malta.

At that time Malta was a busy British naval station and warships of every description from great battleships to small naval pinnaces were entering or leaving the harbour, tied up at moorings or the many berths in the docks. This was a fascinating place but unfortunately only the officers were allowed to go ashore. The Governor of Malta, Sir Charles Bonham-Carter, who was also the Colonel of the Royal West Kent Regiment, came aboard to visit the Battalion. Leaving Malta we were escorted for some of the way by the Flagship of the Mediterranean Fleet, HMS Warspite.

As we entered the Bay of Biscay a storm blew up and the Dilwara began to pitch and roll which resulted in the portholes being secured and all troops battened down below decks. Ropes were strung across to enable men to move about as it was impossible to stand up. Makeshift meals were organised and that night we swung from side to side in our hammocks but at least I was not seasick as I had been on the voyage out.

After a day and a half the sea calmed down and we were again allowed up on deck and spent a pleasant last few days before the coast of England came in sight. We reached Southampton on Thursday, 13th January 1938, almost five years since I set off from there for India on the 4th February 1933. The 1st Battalion Royal West Kent Regiment had served continuously in India for eighteen years and arriving home with us was our old soldier Nobby Esplin who had served abroad with the Regiment since 1904. He had gone to India with the 2nd Battalion, fought in Mesopotamia during the war and when the 1st Battalion went to India to relieve the 2nd in 1919 he had transferred to them and remained in India ever since.

On our first day back in England it poured with rain but we were happy to be back as we travelled by train to Shorncliffe, near Folkestone, where we were to be stationed. I remember standing in the corridor of the train for almost the whole journey just looking and enjoying the green fields and trees of England that I had almost forgotten existed after five years of seeing mainly parched and dry brown earth. A large crowd of relations and former members of the Regiment were on the platform to greet us as we arrived and then led by the Band of the Royal Fusiliers we marched the mile or so to Napier Barracks.

For the first few days we were busy settling in and exchanging our Indian kit for home service uniform and in our free time visiting Folkestone to get ourselves measured for civilian clothes ready for the impending month's leave. All our band instruments had to be exchanged for low pitch instruments as those we had used in India were of the now obsolete high pitch variety.

In a few days, dressed in our smart new civvy suits, we were off on leave which I spent partly in Warminster and partly in London, but all too soon it was back to Shorncliffe and army routine. Our band's new instruments had arrived although before I could make much use of mine I was offered a place at the Royal Military School of Music and on 31st March 1938 I again packed my bags and set off for Twickenham and Kneller Hall.

Kneller Hall, K.H., as it was and is universally known, was a whole new experience for me. After a comparatively peaceful five years in India here it was long hours of instrumental practice, band rehearsals and studies, and as Junior pupils we were also given various chores to carry out. I was attached to B Company and allocated to a room along with four other new arrivals including Ginger Drage of the Royal Scots Greys and namesake Nobby Clark of the Lifeguards, both trumpet players with whom I soon became good pals. It took some time to get used to the long hours which also included homework to be done after our last class finished at 8.30 in the evening. After a month or so things started to take shape and I began to enjoy my life at K.H.

Our day started with a parade before breakfast under Regimental Sergeant Major Underwood of the Grenadier Guards, whose bark was worse than his bite and who was known to the pupils as Beefer. After breakfast band rehearsal began at nine o'clock and continued until lunch time. Civilian professors attended to give individual tuition and we were each allocated a half hour lesson once a week. Small brick built huts stood in amongst trees in the grounds and were used for these individual lessons. My clarinet professor was a Mr. Owen, who, like almost everyone else connected with the army had a nickname and was known as Ticker.

Band practice during the summer on fine days was held on the large open air bandstand and in the winter and on wet days in the practice hall. After lunch the afternoon was usually taken up with sport of one sort or another unless you had been given extra practice, in which case you had to assemble down by the lake and spend the afternoon practising under the trees. One of the students would be on duty to supervise what was known as serenading the swans. At that time there was an attractive lake in the grounds with a rustic bridge connecting to an island in the middle. Swans and ducks swam on the lake making it a very pleasant spot even if you were doing extra practice instead of playing cricket or hockey. There was also a nine hole golf course in the grounds but this was for the exclusive use of officers and senior students.

My particular chore was cookhouse fatigue which meant that about every three weeks I, along with two other pupils, had to spend the day assisting in either the pupils' or students' cookhouse. This entailed potato peeling, washing up and generally cleaning up the kitchens and pots and pans after the cooks had finished, not a job that complemented training as a musician.

It did have its compensations, however, in that you fed very well by having the pick of whatever was on the menu, the civilian cooks made sure of that to ensure getting the work done. On one occasion in 1938 I was on duty when that great Yorkshire cricketer, Len Hutton, was scoring his record innings in a Test Match against Australia and I was able to listen to it all day on the radio in the kitchen. About every half hour I would dash down to the bandstand to keep everyone informed of the latest score - even the Director of Music was interested.

The Director was Major Hector Adkins who had been D.O.M. for 20 years and was held in awe by most people at the School. He was known as 'Adco' and on days when we were rehearsing for a summer concert he would be seated in the middle of the lawn wearing a panama hat, a microphone hanging down from a stand at his feet and his large Alsation dog sprawled beside him. The band of some 170 musicians would be arrayed on the tiered bandstand in front of him. Erected over the bandstand were two large cone shaped loudspeakers and whenever he wanted the band to stop playing he would whistle into the microphone and this would come shrieking through the speakers bringing everyone to a sudden stop. Perhaps he had heard a wrong note, an early or late entry or someone playing too loud in a piano passage and he would come down on them like a ton of bricks. Often the luckless offender would be punished with a week or two's extra practice. We had metal windirons to hold the music down on the stand on a windy day and if they were accidentally knocked off they would hit the concrete bandstand with a loud clang. '*Give him a fortnight*' would come the voice of Adco bellowing through the speakers. This led me to draw a cartoon taking the mickey about a dropped windiron incident and this was published in the School magazine. I half expected some repercussions from above but none came.

On Wednesday evenings during the summer and on one Sunday evening a month we gave concerts to which the public were admitted. The items on the programme were conducted by different students as part of their training and they were responsible for the full band rehearsal and also taking the various sections individually. Sometimes, if we had a particularly tricky piece for our particular instrument we would have to go over and over it until we got it right.

On concert nights everyone wore their regimental full dress uniforms which made quite a colourful sight. Guardsmen, cavalymen in ornate uniforms complete

with spurs, riflemen in their dark green, Scots in tartan kilts and trews and infantrymen in their red tunics with white blanched belts and card cases, The students added gold aiguillettes to their blue uniforms and pupils like myself who had recently returned from abroad and were without full dress uniform were issued with the students' uniform. After the concerts all these colourful young men were quite an attraction for the local girls which led to their being escorted home by one of the pupils, provided of course that they didn't live too far away.

One thing we always had to remember was that concert or no we still had a certain amount of homework to complete by the following day. Having spent most of my adult life up to that point away in India my contact with the opposite sex had been nil but getting to know one or two of the local young ladies, I realised later, was a distraction from my studies without which my musical ability might possibly have been much greater!

However, having been of a somewhat shy disposition before going to K.H. I think that the effect of female company also had its benefits. My first girl friend, Babs, was tall, dark haired, attractive and partly French. She was an extrovert who would laugh out loud at almost anything and travelling with her on the No. 33 bus to go to the cinema in Twickenham often left me red faced and embarrassed.

A few days after arriving at the School I was told to attend for choir practice and was informed by the choir master, Student 'Durzi Taylor' (Durzi is Hindustani for tailor) that I would be singing soprano. When I replied that I could not sing soprano he turned to me and said 'Boy, I am 34 and I can sing soprano and so can you and with that I joined the soprano section. The main function of the choir was to take part in the weekly service held in the fine chapel at the School. Each week a different student would be responsible for arranging and conducting the service as part of his bandmaster's examination. He would choose his orchestra and rehearse them with the choir and also make his own arrangements of the voluntaries and some of the hymns. On Sundays the choir and orchestra would be seated up in the balcony whilst the Director of Music was seated down below, notepad on knee, making his assessment of the service.

On one occasion he was not too pleased that during the intonation of the Lord's Prayer, when we came to the passage 'as we forgive them that trespass against us' some of the choir said 'against' and others 'agenst'. It

should be pronounced 'agenst' he insisted and no doubt docked some marks from the poor student in the hot seat. To make sure that this did not occur again the word AGENST was painted in large letters on a card and hung on the wall behind the orchestra. During the service, as we got to the vital place, the conductor would point his baton at the notice and we would all loudly proclaim 'agenst us'.

After rehearsal the choir for Sunday would be chosen together with two reserves to take the place of anyone who dropped out at the last moment. The reserves were always those with the worst voices and so I became an almost permanent reserve. On Sunday mornings the choir would take their places in the balcony, half on each side, with one reserve standing outside each door. As soon as the Director gave the signal for the first notes of the ingoing voluntary to start the doors would be closed and the reserves would vanish like lightning. I developed quite a technique, which was to have my civilian shirt and tie on under my uniform jacket and to be wearing civilian shoes. I would dash down the stairs, shedding my army jacket on the way to my room, where I did a quick change of trousers, grabbed my sports jacket and was on my way down the outside iron fire escape in two minutes flat. Just round the corner in Whitton Road was the No. 33 bus stop and I was usually on my way up to London before the ingoing voluntary had finished.

Each week day evening after tea the last lessons were aural training and harmony. In charge of my class at first was Student Chaffoo, an Iraqi known as Albert, who later returned home as Lieutenant Director of Music to the Iraq Army. He was followed by Student 'Jigs Jaegar' of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, a fine musician and a well liked character. 'Jigs became senior Director of Music to the Brigade of Guards and later Director of Music at Kneller Hall.

At the end of lessons we would be set eight bars of harmony to do as homework which had to be handed in for marking the following day. It was not unusual to go into the washroom in the middle of the night to find one or more pupils, who had been out late, burning the midnight oil to get their homework done. At weekends we were set an essay to do, usually the history and function of one of the instruments in the military band and were expected to write about four pages giving full details of the instrument and to include excerpts of music written for it.

By the time we returned to our rooms after the last lesson there wasn't a lot of time left for social activity unless, of course, you had a date with one of the local girls. In that case the procedure was similar to that adopted by the choir reserves on Sundays, often with one innovation the origin of which I don't remember. Some of us had acquired a false roll neck pullover front, probably knitted by someone's mum, which consisted of the roll neck with a short rounded front and back which just tucked down inside a jacket and could quickly be pulled over the head to hide an army shirt.

All the pupils with dates could be heard clattering down the iron fire escape within minutes of the fall out bugle call. For those without a date there was a small NAAFI canteen for the pupils, the students having their own mess. There was no bar in the canteen so if we wanted a drink the nearest available pub was the Lord Nelson in Whitton. The Duke of Cambridge right opposite the School gates was for some reason out of bounds to all at K.H. A regular call on the way back after an evening out for most pupils was Ted's Cafe just round the corner from the School. Generations of pupils had called in for a cup of tea and pie and chips and Ted knew most of us by name and many who had been before us.

Saturday mornings were devoted mainly to care and cleaning of instruments, after which we had to parade with them for inspection. After inspection a bucket of Condy's fluid (Potassium permanganate) was placed at the end of each row of pupils and as we dismissed we had to dip our instrument mouthpieces into the fluid to disinfect them. We were then free for the rest of the day and about once a month had a weekend pass which gave us Sunday off as well.

A daughter of my former foster parents in Warminster lived with her husband, Len, in Moorgate in the City of London and they kindly gave me the use of a bedroom in their flat. This meant that when I had a weekend pass I could go up to town and see a show or a wrestling match with Len, who had been a heavyweight boxing champion of the Life Guards, and stay the night.

During the football season some of us would catch the train to Brentford on Saturday afternoons to support the Bs who played in the 1st Division in those days. Although I played a certain amount of football and cricket and enjoyed swimming, my main sporting interest was in hockey which I had begun to play as a boy in India. After playing a few games for 'B' Company, I was selected for the School team which

introduced me to club hockey, for which I have been ever grateful. Playing against clubs in the area such as Lensbury E.G. gave me an insight into the enjoyable atmosphere that existed within them. Before leaving Kneller Hall I was delighted to be awarded my School colours for hockey. I was reported in the School Journal as also being awarded colours for cricket but I think that this award actually belonged to my room mate and namesake, Nobby Clark of the Life Guards, who was a very good fast bowler.

The School was involved with the Twickenham Musical Society and a number of musicians from K.H. assisted that orchestra and also provided some members for the choir, with the School Director of Music conducting. Each year the Society put on a performance of a major work which was known rather disparagingly as the Twick Lurg. Some of the rehearsals took place in the School practice hall but the actual performances were given at a hall in Twickenham. When these took place all the pupils were detailed to attend to swell the audience, so many at each performance. On the opening night which I attended the orchestra played the introduction. Major Adkins brought in the choir, but after about eight bars he suddenly cut them off. Silence. Idco turned and addressed the audience saying *'those of you who are following the score will have noticed that the opening bars for the choir are marked double piano. We will start again and see if we can sing it double piano.* With that he turned back to the choir and orchestra and calmly started again from the beginning.

On another occasion the School band was booked to play at the Albert Hall for a London Hospitals Charity Concert. This was supported by royalty and a number of well known artists were on the bill including the comedienne singer Gracie Fields. She came down to the School for rehearsals and was an amusing personality off stage as well as on it. On the night we joined forces with a well known stage orchestra of the day, the Louis Levy Orchestra, and famous organist Reginald Forte. Items on the programme included Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue and Ravel's Bolero. Gracie contributed amongst other items The Biggest Aspidistra in the World and, of course, her signature tune Sally.

For some reason an unusual name was used at the School for anyone considered to be over studious and who spent all his time practising or studying. They were known as Beezahs. I know that back in pre First World War days an entertainment group operated at the School and were known as The Beezahs, but what, if any, connection existed between them and the over-

keen types of our day I never discovered. At least I never qualified for the title, although perhaps I should have done.

Unfortunately, despite Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's Peace in our time piece of paper, war clouds were still gathering over Europe and this began to affect our lives at K.H. The War Office had evidently decided that Kneller Hall would become an Operations Headquarters for Home Command and a telephone exchange was erected in the yard. Engineers moved in to install telephone points in all the rooms and in addition to our musical activities we were now employed digging trenches in the grounds and filling sandbags for use in the event of air raids.

Having completed my pupil's course I returned to the regiment at Napier Barracks, Shorncliffe, in May 1939 and took my place once again in the Band of the 1st Battalion, R.W.K. Regiment. Most of that summer was spent playing on seaside bandstands, at regimental functions and concerts and we also performed on BBC radio. Not far from our barracks was a site at Dibgate, now the site of the Channel Tunnel terminal, which was used by Territorial Army units for their annual fortnight's camp. When the Terriers arrived at Shorncliffe railway station they would be met by the band of one of the local regiments who would then play them out to Dibgate Camp. On one occasion we met a party of TA men from the Royal Army Service Corps and following the long established tradition of the British Army we began to play the Regimental March of the R.A.S.C. as we neared the camp site. This was a tune called 'Wait for the Waggon', quite a short piece of music, only about sixteen bars, which took less than a minute to play. Having started it we just had to continue. Over and over and over we played 'Wait for the Waggon' as we approached the gateway into the field where the tents were erected, then halted and repeated it as the long column of soldiers filed past. Gradually half the band stopped playing and left the other half to continue grinding out the short melody and after a couple of times through we would swop over and the other half took a breather. Needless to say 'Wait for the Waggon' is a little melody I have never forgotten and I was not surprised to learn that in later years an additional tune was added to the R.A.S.C. march which considerably increased its playing time.

By this time I had also learned to play the saxophone and had begun to play in the Regimental dance band. We played in the drill shed which was decorated with bunting and flags for regimental dances, items such as

'Song of India', 'Dinah', 'Somebody Stole my Gal' and 'Whispering', a tune which I later used as the signature tune for a camp band I formed in a POW camp in Germany.

We also performed as a separate combination during some of our military band concerts. Our jazz tenor saxophone player from Indian days, 'Goojee' Kettleband, was still the star performer in our Shorncliffe band and was always happy to ad lib a solo when required.

In between banding activities we were also training for our war time roles in case they should be needed in the months to come. Some members of the band would be required to act as anti-aircraft gunners and we visited the RAF Station at Hawkinge where we trained with a camera gun mounted on the back of a 15 cwt truck. A training plane would fly slowly over and we had to judge its distance, adjust the gun sight and fire five rounds. When the film was developed it showed a target on each exposure and the aircraft was shown at the point when the trigger was pulled. I am afraid that on occasions there was no aircraft at all on some of the film.

Another training exercise in which we took part was antitank firing on the ranges at Lydd. We took up positions on the firing point and the tanks would suddenly appear from behind cover or depressions in the ground and travel a few yards before disappearing again. We had to spot the tank, judge its distance and fire before it disappeared. The tanks were in fact wooden framing covered in canvas and were operated by being pulled across the range by a wire hawser. With hindsight, a .303 bullet from a Lee Enfield rifle would not have been a lot of use against the German armour we later encountered.

While I had been away at Kneller Hall the new Bren gun had been introduced and members of the band had been trained in its use in an anti-aircraft role, but I continued my training in first aid and as a stretcher bearer in which I had qualified during my service in India. By August we were once again digging trenches, this time around the perimeter of the sports ground adjoining the camp, although we still managed to fit in quite a few band engagements.

We were booked to play on The Leas Bandstand at Folkestone and for two weeks spent our afternoons and some evenings entertaining large audiences of holiday makers, these being the days before package holidays

when most people spent their summer break at the seaside. Our next engagement was to be at Broadstairs and the latter part of August was spent rehearsing programmes for this visit which we were due to start on Sunday, 3rd September. However, despite all the preparations and the rumours, and newspaper reports of impending war with Germany, most of us thought that somehow it would be avoided and our band instruments, music, stands, band full dress uniforms were all packed ready for the trip, but on that Sunday morning we listened to the radio in our barrack room and heard the sombre voice of the Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, telling us that all the talks with Adolf Hitler had failed and that we were now at war with Germany. So it was not to be 'Peace in our Time' as he had announced on his return from Germany the previous year.

Once the news had sunk in all thoughts of Broadstairs quickly vanished as our private belongings were packed up and labelled with home addresses and all spare items were handed in to the stores. While I was in the stores the air raid siren sounded and the storeman and I looked at one another then dived down in between some of the wooden boxes containing the larger band instruments. Things would never be quite the same again.

We were all confined to barracks, weapons and equipment were assembled and preparations made for an immediate move. This came the following morning when the battalion was paraded on the barrack square and Royal Army Service Corps lorries arrived to transport us out to billets in the village of Elham, about ten miles away, to complete mobilisation. We reverted to our wartime role as stretcher bearers and anti-aircraft gunners. The latter were lucky in that they travelled on 15 cwt trucks with their bren guns mounted on the back. As stretcher bearers we had to footslog.

At Elham we were allocated a billet in a farm yard which turned out to be a pigsty, windowless, with a brick floor and stable door. By the smell and state of it its previous occupants had not long left and our first job was to scrub it out with disinfectant and collect fresh straw from the farm to use as bedding. It was not a particularly auspicious start to our war.

During the next few days more reservists arrived, amongst them many old familiar faces from our days in India, together with additional vehicles, weapons and stores. The new style battle dress was issued but there were not enough to go round so many of us continued to wear the old style service dress which was, in fact,

much more comfortable and practical as we were to find out later.

We carried out first aid and stretcher drill, anti-gas practice and even en-training and de-training exercises. The latter was designed to give us practice in getting on and off trains and stowing our kit and equipment quickly in orderly fashion. A field was marked out with white tapes to represent railway carriages and we marched alongside on to an imaginary platform. Two men from each section stepped into an imaginary compartment and stacked rifles, packs and equipment as these items were passed through an imaginary carriage door. When the stacking was completed the rest of the section filed in and sat down in the imaginary carriages. No doubt this was a very useful and necessary operation but I suspect that it caused a certain amount of amusement for the local population as it did for us, with the wags amongst us shouting 'pass along the car' and 'tickets please'.

We guessed that another move was in the offing when 48 hour passes were granted. After enjoying a brief change of scenery I arrived back at Elham a couple of hours late having missed a train connection to Folkestone. I was put on a charge and brought up before the company commander, Major Sinclair-Brooke next morning and charged with being absent. The Major, who had known me since my Boys' Service days in India and had in fact been the officer responsible for Boys in the Battalion, accepted my excuse and the matter didn't go any further.

We were not allowed beyond the confines of the village and during our off duty periods there was little to do except sit and read in our pigsty by candle light.

It was with some relief that we eventually put our en-training exercise to the test and boarded a train bound for Aldershot on 3rd September to join up with 10th Infantry Brigade as part of the 4th Division commanded by Major-General D.G. Johnson V.C. We were quartered in Albuhera Barracks and from there carried out various brigade training exercises on nearby Laffans Plain. We practised the new anti-aircraft drill with each alternative section of men marching in staggered formation on opposite sides of the road which made it easier in the event of an air raid for sections to disperse and take cover. On one occasion during an exercise our section of eight or nine men was marching in file when a brigadier and other staff officers appeared and asked us where we were going. We replied that we had no idea and the brigadier then asked if we knew what

the object of the exercise was. Again we all replied that we didn't and so he said *'as far as you are concerned you might just as well be marching in the opposite direction'*. Our combined reply of 'Yes Sir' gave him cause for concern as he shrugged his shoulders and told us to carry on.

On September 27th the 4th Division was paraded in Aldershot for a visit by King George VI and Queen Elizabeth and a few days later we entrained for Southampton on our way to join the British Expeditionary Force in France.

In the evening of September 30th. we embarked aboard the SS Duke of York and joined a convoy of troopships assembling off Portsmouth. Conditions on board were somewhat cramped with hundreds of men herded below decks along with their weapons and equipment. Later that evening we set sail for France and after an uncomfortable night arrived at the port of Cherbourg the following morning. This was my first visit to France and the thing that I particularly noticed was the smell of French tobacco. After disembarking we marched to the nearby railway sidings and climbed into cattle trucks marked 'Hommes 40-48, Chevaux 8'. I was to travel many hundreds of miles in similar trucks during the coming months. We swore that they had square wheels.

After a railway journey of some hours we arrived at Le Mans where we de-trained, formed up and marched to a small market town called Noyen-sur-Sarthe. We settled into our billets and received quite a lot of attention from the local population, being amongst the first British soldiers to have arrived in France. Our battalion transport had travelled by a different route from Avonmouth and when they rejoined us they brought with them some of our band instruments which enabled band members to gather together again and give concerts in the town square. We spent a week or so in Noyen then on 8th October we were on the move once more by cattle truck to Carvin in the north of France.

Here we were billeted in a deserted woollen mill which did not have a lot to offer in the way of home comforts. We obtained some straw to use as bedding and knocked a few nails in the walls to hang our equipment on. Shortly after our arrival in Carvin we began preparing defence positions as part of a line of fortifications and tank traps that were being constructed along the length of the French/Belgian border. Each morning after breakfast we climbed aboard our battalion transport and travelled

out to what became known as the digging area. The battalion transport, apart from some 15 cwt trucks, was made up with butchers' and bakers' vans and coal and builders' lorries which had been commandeered at the outbreak of war and shipped to France. Although they had been sprayed with Khaki paint and had divisional and regimental markings added the names and occupations of the previous owners could usually still be seen through the paint on the sides of the vehicles such as John Smith, Family Butcher,

The French Maginot Line extended some 200 miles along the French-German border from Switzerland to the Ardennes Forest at the Belgian border and was considered by France to be impassable. Huge fortresses were connected by underground railways, miles of tank obstacles and hundreds of massive guns but at the Belgian border it came to a stop. From north of the Ardennes along the whole of the Belgian-French border to the Channel coast virtually no defences existed. The British Expeditionary Force who now came under the command of French Generals were given the task of fortifying this sector to be known as the Gort Line after the British Commander in Chief, General Lord Gort V.C. We were employed digging trenches and preparing sites on which the Royal Engineers would build pill boxes.

The French army and civilians alike did not appear to show a great deal of interest in our activities and their general attitude seemed to be that the Maginot Line was impregnable and that the Germans could not invade France again as they had during the Great War of 1914-1918. No French troops or civilians ever appeared to be involved in the preparation of defences. The weather at this time was pretty foul, it seemed to rain more often than not and the digging areas were a sea of mud. We dug tank traps which were about ten feet deep with a sloping face on the Belgian side and a vertical face on the French side reinforced with interwoven revetting, similar to wattle hurdle, the idea being that if a tank ran into the trap it could not get up the other side.

We were always glad to get back to our billets in the evenings to dry out and have a meal and then we usually went into the town to visit our favourite estaminets. Carvin was a small quiet town and our band lads' favourite haunt was the little Bellevue estaminet in a corner of the cobbled square, run by two sisters. The younger, Georgette, was a small, dark haired attractive woman whose husband was away in the Maginot Line. She always called me 'Bel Angel' whatever that meant! There was a table football machine in the bar which

became the centre of much keen competition and after a while we became quite expert.

The battalion acquired a quantity of rubber slip-on shoes which we were allowed to purchase and wear off duty. It was a great treat to get out of our wet muddy army ammunition boots after a day's digging.

Occasionally parties of men were taken into Lille in the evenings for concerts given by ENSA, a services entertainment department who came out from England to entertain the troops. The concerts were often amateurish and were used by many as an excuse to get into a large town and see the bright lights. Although the blackout was strictly enforced in England, in France the lights shone in the big towns where the cafes, cabarets and bars were open at all hours. When the R.A.S.C. lorries arrived at a cinema or hall for an E.N.S.A. concert some of the men would jump out of the lorries, go into the hall and then find the back way out and be away into town, returning after the concert was over. It was soon discovered that the concerts were being given to half empty houses so Military Police were put on duty at the doors to make sure that those who went in stayed in. After that they had a job to fill up the concert trucks.

Towards the end of November we had orders to move and a group of us went down to our local Bellevue estaminet to say goodbye to the friends we had made there during our two months stay. After farewell drinks and many handshakes most of the lads made their way back to the billet but two of us, myself and a band pal, Jim Piggot, who I think were the favourites of the two sisters, stayed a bit longer. After a few more drinks we were not too bothered about being last on parade but when we eventually got back to our billets all we found was two sets of webbing equipment and two rifles lying in the straw and not another soul about. The battalion had moved out and we didn't have a clue where they had gone.

We hurriedly put on our equipment, grabbed our rifles and set off up the street. We came to the house which had been used as the Company HQ and found an R.A.S.C. lorry and a couple of men loading up the last of the office files. We cadged a lift from the driver and eventually arrived at the battalion's new headquarters in Wattrelos, near Roubaix, a couple of hours later. The next day we were up before the Company Commander and were lucky to get away with being given only extra guard duties.

The new billets in Wattrelos were a great improvement on the Carvin wool factory. I was still attached to battalion headquarters and was billeted in the Penguin Restaurant, part of a large sports complex. Other companies were in factories in the area. Across the road from the Penguin was a well-appointed football stadium, Le Stade Amidi Provost, where the regimental aid post (RAP) to which I was attached was housed.

Guard duties meant doing two hours on and four hours off, marching up and down the pavement outside the main door of the restaurant. Just down the road were a number of factories where many of the local people worked. They started work about five o'clock in the morning and when we were on early morning guard duty the French workers would stream down the road with 'Bonjour', 'ca va', cold isn't it, etc. Most of these were women as the men folk had been called up into the army and they often stopped to give us a drink of coffee from a thermos flask, or sometimes something a bit stronger -very welcome on a cold wintry morning. The weather had by now become bitterly cold with snow and ice on the ground which hampered our movements and the digging parties which had continued following our move to Roubaix.

Another of our duties was to accompany the French 'Garde Mobile' on night patrols. These were the border police who were on the look out for anyone attempting to cross the border illegally from Belgium into France. We patrolled the border with them, perhaps having a chat with their Belgian counterparts and then usually found our way into a nearby cafe to be served with hot coffee and cognac. I don't remember anyone ever paying and we were served whatever time of the night we called. I don't expect they were going to argue with four armed men knocking on the door in the early hours of the morning.

There were many workers crossing into France and from France into Belgium and it would have been fairly easy for any Fifth Columnist to get through as security seemed very lax. I quite enjoyed these night patrols and managed to learn a smattering of French but it was soon forgotten during the following years.

At this time we were issued with leather jerkins to wear -long sleeveless jackets with serge linings, although not particularly smart in appearance they were certainly very welcome during the severe cold weather at that time, particularly when we had to man the concrete pill boxes on the Belgian border for up to a week at a time.

The entrance to these was only about three feet high and with snow and ice outside soon became a quagmire. Getting in and out encumbered with a full set of equipment (gas mask, rifle, bayonet, tin hat, gas cape etc.) wasn't very pleasant, particularly in the dark. It was almost impossible not to tread on at least one of your comrades who was trying to get a few hours' sleep on a heap of straw which served as bedding. It was difficult to keep warm and during the day we used to stoke up a brazier outside the pill box which helped thaw us out. We collected water from nearby houses for brewing up.

The 1939-40 winter was bitterly cold and snow and ice hampered our movements and the digging parties which continued following our move to the Roubaix area. Our battalion officers had taken over a large house in Wattrelos as their mess and had decided that the band would reassemble to play during a dinner at the Officers' Mess on Christmas Eve. The roads around the billet were like glass and digging was cancelled on the day before Christmas. Consequently most of the Company was taking it easy, lying around in the billet, reading or playing cards. About 2 o'clock the Company Commander and the Sergeant Major arrived and enquired what we were doing. We explained that we had the afternoon off and had had to give up our evening as the band had been called together to play at the Officers' Mess. *'Find these men something to do, Sergeant Major'* said the Company Commander and with that we were marched off to the cookhouse where we spent the afternoon cleaning and polishing the pots and pans.

All the band members were furious as the rest of the Company was enjoying a lazy afternoon and would be free to enjoy Christmas Eve in the town and we decided that the officers would regret having ordered the band to play during their Christmas Eve dinner. As soon as we could get away we made for the nearest estaminet with our instruments under our arms and set about making up for the festivities we would miss. By about 7.30 we were all in good spirits and set off for the Officers' Mess where we were due to start playing at about 8.p.m.

We formed ourselves into a crocodile with bass player, Bill Worsley, at the head with his large tuba reversed to enable him to push it along the icy road. We skated along, each of us hanging on to the one in front, singing at the top of our voices and slipping and sliding all over the road. Our instruments must have collected a few dents during the journey from the estaminet. The Band

Sergeant wondered whatever was happening when we arrived and the chaos that ensued as we tried to put up our music stands. Sheet music was scattered all over the floor, stands were knocked over and eventually a mess waiter came out to the ante room where we were to play to say the officers were complaining about the noise we were making.

Eventually some sort of order was restored, the officers sat down to dinner and the band started to play. What a noise. I'm sure we weren't all playing the same pieces of music and there were squeaks and squawks and wrong notes galore. After a few items a junior officer was sent out to tell us to pack up and go away, which we did with a certain amount of satisfaction. Next day, Christmas Day, Tom Sweeney, Percy Gifford and myself, all from the stretcher bearers' section, visited a French family in Wattrelos and had an enjoyable day. I can't remember their names, only that of their pet white poodle which was called Ghookette.

On Boxing Day I was ordered to parade at the Company Commander's office with Bill Worsley and Jim Piggot as we had been picked out as the ring leaders of the band's revolt on Christmas Eve as the Company Commander wanted to know the reason for our disgraceful conduct. We explained about what we considered to be our unfair treatment in the afternoon and also that banding activities were no longer part of our official duties. However, the OC. was not amused and ordered that we be sent on pill box duties for the next 8 days, which is how I came to see in the New Year of 1940 in a concrete blockhouse on the Belgian border.

We were glad to get back to our more comfortable billet at the Penguin after a week in a freezing pill box. Some training exercises were carried out whilst the weather was too severe to dig tank traps and we began to get used to the new anti-aircraft method of marching with sections staggered in single file on alternative sides of the road. When passing through towns and villages we marched on the pavement instead of in the road and a favourite trick was to pull the bell ropes that hung outside many of the houses. The lady of the house would appear to be greeted with raised tin hats and a chorus of *'Bonjour Madame'*.

Invariably when out on these exercises we cheered ourselves up by singing, usually the standard army songs, but as a regiment with a high proportion of Londoners one of the favourites was a little ditty that went:

We are the West Kent Boys, We are the West Kent
Boys,
We know our manners, We spend our tanners,
We are respected wherever we go.
When we're walking down the Old Kent Road,
Doors and windows open wide,
Then you'll hear the Sergeant shout,
Put that blinking Woodbine out,
'We are the West Kent Boys.

We made many friends amongst the local civilian population and most men were invited at some time into the homes of local people. There was a large Polish population in the Wattrelos and Tourcoing district where most of the men worked in the many coalmines in the area. I enjoyed an occasional Sunday dinner at the home of a Polish family with whom I became friendly.

The town of Roubaix was only a short tram ride from Wattrelos and we often spent our free evenings there in one of the large cafes that had bands playing or other entertainment. Two or three local estaminets near our billet soon became firm favourites with the lads and most of our old band members used to meet at a cafe in the Rue d'Oran, known to us all as 'Josh's, the French proprietor having been rechristened Josh. He was helped by his wife, son Serge and daughter Ginette. Beer was one franc a glass except on evenings when a local three piece band played. Then the price of beer went up to one franc, fifty centimes to pay for it.

In 1939-40 the British soldier was in much the same situation in France as the American forces were when they came to Britain a few years later. Compared to the French troops we were well paid besides having much smarter uniforms.

One incident I recall happened during an evening at Josh's when the band was playing and there was dancing in a small room at the rear of the cafe. A friend and I had joined a couple of local girls at a table and despite having two left feet I had partnered one of them for a dance in the back room. When we returned to our seats I found that our Company Sergeant Major had arrived, and had taken my seat at the table. I explained to him that I had been sitting in that seat with the rest of the party but was told in no uncertain terms to clear off. He then took one of the girls to dance. When he returned and went to sit down I pulled the chair away and he sat down with a bump on the floor to a howl of

laughter from the lads. Hopping mad, he put me on a charge and fell me in with an escort and I was marched back to the billet and put in the guard room. However, he didn't press any charges against me the following morning and the incident was forgotten.

The time soon came to say our goodbye's to Josh and our other friends and on January 22nd we moved to Lille where Headquarters personnel were billeted in a girls' high school, Ecole St. Marie. It was within easy walking distance of the town centre and we made the most of the night life that Lille offered. The blackout wasn't taken too seriously and although we often had air raid warnings and heard our own and enemy planes overhead, no bombs were dropped. Anti-aircraft guns would pound away at a plane caught in the beam of searchlights but they just droned on without coming to any harm.



Musicians of QORWK in the trenches

Cafes, bars and clubs seemed to keep open until the small hours and although we were supposed to be back in billets before midnight it wasn't too difficult to get in unobserved. Leave parties to England were started and names were drawn out to decide those lucky ones who would be going home for ten days. Our stay in Lille lasted just a month and then once again we packed up and were on the move. Transported to the railway sidings we again climbed aboard the now familiar 'hommes 40, chevaux 8' railway trucks along with the men of other regiments in the 10th Infantry Brigade the 2nd Bn. The Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Regt. and the 2nd Bn. The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry.

We travelled south east and our eventual destination on 18th February was Metz in the Saar Region where

we were able to enjoy the luxury of hot showers in the pithead baths of one of the many coalmines in the area. The Battalion then moved on up to the fortified area of the French Maginot Line where security began to get much tighter and we travelled in a convoy completely blacked out. None of us knew where we were heading and after many starts and stops we arrived in the small hours of the morning on a pitch black night at the village of Monneren which was completely deserted. Pots and pans, beds and linen and other household effects had all just been abandoned when the occupants left their homes. Blackout had to be strictly observed, guards were-doubled and it was with some difficulty that we eventually found our billet in a house at the end of the village.



Brewing Up.

After a few hours rest everyone had to stand to at dawn for half an hour and again at dusk, a procedure which was repeated every day as these were the times when an attack was thought to be most likely. We found that we were now some miles in front of the Maginot Line, in no man's land between it and the German Siegfried Line, an area known as the Ligne de Recueil. We spent ten days here and made our billet fairly comfortable by transferring items from other empty houses, particularly fuel to keep the stove going. One innovation was the issue of an evening rum ration. We queued up at the quartermaster's store and received about a quarter of an enamel mug of rum from a large stone jar. Once issued it was an offence to save it and it had to be drunk. We found that standing our mugs of rum on the stove and heating it up made a very good warming drink.

We gathered that the area was subject to visits by German night patrols and so had to be on the alert at all times. During the following days we were able

to visit parts of the so-called impregnable forts and other defences that made up the Maginot Line. The French had spent five years constructing the Maginot Line which stretched 350 kilometres from the Belgian border to Switzerland covering the entire French-German border. Massive concrete fortresses connected by tunnels housed a small underground railway system which moved troops, supplies, ammunition etc. from one area to another. On top of the fortresses were huge steel turrets concealing guns of all sizes and searchlights. There were also underground barrack and recreational areas for the French troops, ammunition stores, power units and hospitals. Above ground and in front of the forts was a network of anti-tank ditches and obstructions and further forward a trench system manned by infantry units. The French fortress troops wore a round badge on the lapel of their jackets depicting a gun emplacement and the words 'On ne passe pas' (they shall not pass). Some of the British soldiers acquired these and pinned them to their battle dress but once we came out of the line we were made to remove them.

On February 28th our battalion moved up into this forward area, the Ligne de Contact, in order to get some battle experience. We were then manning the forward trenches and outposts in the region of other abandoned villages, Sizing, Grindorff Ewig and Halstroff, some six or seven miles forward of the Maginot Line and about the same distance from the German Siegfried Line. This was a mainly wooded area and much of the patrol activity took place in the forests around these empty villages. As we approached the forward area a large sign announced 'Take care: you are under enemy observation at this point'.

The sound of heavy gunfire and shells screaming overhead was a bit frightening at first but gradually became taken for granted. One side would open up and shell for about half an hour and as soon as they stopped the other would retaliate, most of the shells dropped harmlessly in woods, open ground or abandoned villages and we soon realised why the whole area was completely deserted apart from soldiers hiding in holes in the ground.

One fine afternoon we were enjoying a quiet spell when a French horsedrawn artillery battery suddenly arrived behind our positions. We looked at them with some amusement as they ambled about, dressed in assorted uniforms, smoking and chatting as they unhitched the horses from the guns and ammunition limbers. Having

found a suitable site they lined up the guns and stacked the shells alongside while one of the

French soldiers led the horses away. After about half an hour of inactivity the French gunners suddenly leapt into action, ramming the shells into the breach and all three guns barking out in quick succession. A dozen or so rounds were fired from each gun then the Frenchmen turned and ran as fast as they could, leaving their guns smoking and unattended. Within minutes the Germans had pinpointed the position and we heard the explosions and whistle of shells heading in our direction as the Siegfried guns began to retaliate. For the next half hour we were on the receiving end of the German bombardment and crouched as low as we possibly could in the bottom of our slit trenches. It stopped as suddenly as it had started and once again it was a peaceful afternoon. The French artillerymen came ambling back leading their horses which they hitched up to the guns and limbers and as casually as they had arrived they drove off. These French units became known as gypsy batteries.

As a stretcher bearer I encountered my first battle casualty here. Our forward fighting trenches were surrounded with trip wires to which were attached tin cans to give warning of enemy patrols in the area. Sometimes a rabbit rattled the wire and came to grief when a Bren gun or three or four rifles opened up in the direction of the noise. Often it would be a German patrol and we heard the sounds of a skirmish going on up in the forward trenches. About five o'clock one morning we were woken up by the sound of shooting, and then came a call for stretcher bearers. Three others and I grabbed our medical haversacks and stretchers and set off up to the forward trenches.

We made sure that we knew the current password which was changed every day, as it was still dark and any position which we approached wouldn't ask twice if we were challenged and failed to identify ourselves correctly. With crisp snow underfoot it would have been almost impossible to approach any position without being heard. We negotiated our way through the wood passing a number of other battalion front line positions and identifying ourselves and eventually found the section that had sent out the emergency call. We climbed down into their trenches which looked exactly like something from the Western Front of WWI and made our way along the zigzag which was designed to confine the blast from bombs or grenades to one section of the trench. At the end was a covered dugout lit by a single hurricane lamp and lying in a corner was

our casualty, a French Liaison Officer attached to one of our forward companies who had taken the full blast of a grenade and was badly wounded.

It appeared that there had been an alert with noise coming from the wire area and the section had opened fire. The French officer had pulled the pin from a grenade and lobbed it over the parapet of the trench, but by a trick of fate it struck a young sapling just in front of the trench and was catapulted back where it exploded and he received multiple wounds. Fortunately this officer was the only occupant of that particular section and the zigzag formation of its construction had done what it was designed to do and saved anyone else from the blast.

Trying to patch up our casualty with so many different wounds was difficult in the confined space of the dugout but we managed somehow. Manoeuvring the stretcher back along the trench and over the parapet was also a problem and I'm afraid our patient had rather a rough ride. By now it was beginning to get light and we knew that with the coming of daylight we would be in view of the German forward positions. It was quite a relief to get back to our Regimental Aid Post and hand the French officer over to our Medical Officer, Lieut. McKelvey of the R.A.M.C.

In March the battalion was relieved by another unit and we marched back behind the Maginot Line and entrained for the journey back to our old billets on the Belgian border at Watrelos.

My name then came up on the list to join a leave party and we set off for Boulogne where we spent a night in a transit camp before going aboard a troopship en route to Southampton. I was intrigued by the soldiers of the Army Pioneer Corps who manned the transit camps and worked at the ports. They were mostly reservists who had been recalled and were dockers and stevedores from places like the London docks who had been called up at the outbreak of war to carry on their civilian jobs in the army. They seemed to be a law unto themselves, many of them tough casual cockneys who didn't give a damn for anyone and were certainly a completely different breed of soldier from the parade ground regulars that I was used to.

After ten days spent partly in London and partly in Birmingham, which went all too quickly, I was back on the boat train to Folkestone and a troopship bound for Calais. We encountered a few floating mines as we approached the French coast which the gunners

on board fired at but failed to explode. We also passed the superstructure of a couple of ships sticking up out of the water that hadn't managed to avoid the lethal mines.

Once again in Wattlelos it was back to the old routine of digging, guard duties and visits to Josh's. The snow had now given way to rain and the digging areas were a sea of mud.

In April 1940 the 4th and 5th Battalions of the QORWK Regt. along with the 1st/6th Bn. East Surrey Regt. crossed to France as 132 Brigade, part of 44th (Home Counties) Division, and were billeted at Bailleul. The powers that be then decided to transfer a regular infantry battalion into each of the Territorial brigades that were being sent to France to join the BEF to strengthen them, as many of these TA battalions were only partly trained.

We received orders for another move and on May 4th we left 10th Infantry Brigade and were transported by the R.A.S.C. to Bailleul to change places with the 1st/6th East Surreys. In doing so we formed a complete Queens Own Royal West Kent Brigade, 132nd Brigade. We exchanged our 4th Division broken red circle sign for the red oval sign of 44th Division. This was the first time in the history of the Regiment that a complete Queen's Own Brigade had been in existence and to celebrate the occasion various events were organised.

The Corps of Drums beat retreat and gave marching displays in the town square and we collected our band instruments and played for a Brigade church parade and service on Sunday, May 5th, which was held in the Bailleul cinema. The town had been rebuilt after being almost completely destroyed in WWI and some roads had been repaired with discarded shell casings which made them interesting but a bit bumpy. It was decided to arrange a grand concert in the cinema as part of the Brigade celebrations and the Band was to take a major part in the proceedings. We held a couple of practices, leaving our instruments afterwards in a store room at the cinema which we did following a rehearsal of the programme on May 9th.

We were due to hold a final rehearsal the following day but Friday, May 10th, dawned to the sound of heavy gunfire in the distance and an unusual amount of air activity. As we went from our billets to the cookhouse for breakfast it became obvious that something big was happening. Planes were criss-crossing the sky, anti-aircraft guns were pounding shells at them and the

sound of bursting bombs could be heard all around. We soon heard the news that the Germans had invaded Belgium and Holland at 4.50 a.m. and we were told to be ready to move within a couple of hours.

Once again our band instruments were abandoned and thoughts of band practice turned to something much more serious. Our concert was fated not to materialise. I heard later from some of the Battalion who passed through Bailleul during the retreat to Dunkirk that the cinema had received a direct hit during an air raid on the town and I assumed that our band instruments and drums all went up in smoke, but have never discovered whether or not this was correct.

Our move into Belgium went ahead straight away as the combined British and French Plan D was set in motion. About midday on the 10th May we left Bailleul and, abandoning the defensive positions of the Gort Line which we had laboured for some eight months to construct, marched to the frontier where customs barriers were lifted, and entered Belgium. In the event of a German invasion of Belgium or Holland Plan D called for the British and French armies to advance into Belgium and take up positions on the River Dyle. As part of 44th Division, 132 Brigade were included in III Corps and had orders to march up to the River Escaut and prepare positions for a second line of defence.

Those units in 1st and 2nd Army Corps who were part of the first line of defence of Plan D moved up in transport and quickly took up their positions on the River Dyle. We, however, had to march along the cobbled roads WWI style. We passed through Kemmel, Hollebeke, Zandfoorde and Geluwe with the local Belgian people standing in the streets waving and cheering as we passed. It was evening before we halted and found billets for the night having covered some 22 miles. Possibly because of the fear of air raids we rested the next day then set off again in the early evening and marched through the night. We headed in the direction of Courtrai passing through St. Eloois-Winkel, Lendeledede, Vichte and Grotenkeer, a distance of some 30 miles, before stopping at a farm on the outskirts of Wortegem. We remained at the farm the next day and the arrival of a mobile bath unit meant that we were able to enjoy the luxury of a shower. For me it would be the last I would get for many months but fortunately I didn't know that at the time.

to be continued

LAST POST

HORACE LEONARD COOK



Horace passed away on Friday 17th November 2006. Horace had been an active member of Ramsgate Branch of the Association since 1947 and since then had held the office of Chairman for 11 years, President for 2 years and Vice Chairman for the last 10 years.

Horace was born on 2nd May 1921 in Ramsgate which was to be his home town for the next 85 years. On 7th December 1937 Horace enlisted into 4/5th Battalion The Buffs TA despite being only 16 and a half and on 27th August 1939 was called out under the Reserve and Auxiliary Forces Act, 1939, Territorial Army.

In 1940 Horace, with 5th Battalion The Buffs, was sent to France. In May of that year the 5th Battalion, with 6th Battalion The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regt were deployed in the Doullens area, near Arras with the task of delaying the German advance. Both of these battalions was totally ill equipped, completely over stretched and under trained, nonetheless these two battalions delayed the advance of two German Armoured Divisions for several hours. The vast majority, including Horace, were taken prisoner and transported to Poland where Horace was to spend much of the next 5 years. Initially Horace was posted as 'Missing' and it was not until 25th July 1940 that his parents received the welcome news by telegram that German Wireless had announced that he was a Prisoner of War.

In early 1945, in the face of the Russian Advance, the POW camps were evacuated and the prisoners marched many hundreds of miles to the west. In appalling winter weather with little food, minimum clothing and with disease rampant these desperate columns slowly made their way westwards and ultimate liberation.

At the time of his capture Horace had, in his small pack, a white shirt which he promised to wear on the day of his liberation and not before. Horace loved to tell how, when he was eventually liberated in a small German town it was on fire and under heavy bombardment by

the retreating Germans. In the town square, despite all that was going on around them, Horace found a Salvation Army Canteen. Looking forward to that first cup of tea he found much to his dismay that they had run out of tea but had a good supply of white shirts which they were giving away.

In 1947 Horace rejoined 4th/5th Battalion The Buffs TA which had been reformed and also the Ramsgate Branch, as it was then, of The Buffs Past & Present Association. When the Battalion was remustered as Royal Tank Regiment Horace decided that he should change direction and was commissioned into The Army Cadet Corps in which served for many years.

On Trafalgar Day, October 21st 1950, Horace and Margaret (Peggy) Sharpe were married. A few years later twins were born, Steve and Patricia. Peggy has always been great support to Horace especially in his involvement with the many ex service associations. In her own right Peggy has been Chairman of the Ramsgate Ladies Guild of the Queen's Own Buffs Regimental Association only retiring last year to be with Horace at a time when he most needed it.

To the Buffs Past & Present Association, which ultimately became the Queen's Own Buffs Regimental Association, Horace gave his all becoming known as 'Mr. Buff'. He was also a member of the Royal British Legion, the Dunkirk Veterans, the Normandy Veterans and the Army Association holding many offices in these organisations. In 1994 Horace was Parade Marshall for



the Combined Services Associations for the parade through Ramsgate to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Normandy Landings. A great many of those standards and representatives of those associations that you see in the photo were present at Horace's funeral demonstrating the affection and respect in which he was held.

Horace's passing has left an enormous gap in the lives of his family of whom he was so proud, especially his grandchildren; Edward who is studying for his Master's Degree in History, Andrea who is at Beijing University studying Chinese, Catherine and Robert who are awaiting their 'A' Level results.

Horace's family have every reason to be as proud of him as he was of them.

PW

REVD. EVAN WALTER EVANS MBE BA CF.

Walter Evans, Padre to 1 Buffs in Kenya, UK and Wuppertal, passed away on 9th March 2007 aged 90.

REVD MORRIS CHARLES RUSSELL



Morris Russell died on 8th January 2006, four days short of his 92nd birthday. Born in 1914, he became a tall, strong, energetic man who's heart often ruled his head. Prior to WW2 he was an Anglican curate in London, and married Daphne Allen in 1938. During the war he served in the Army Chaplains Dept and was

Regimental Padre to 2nd Bn. The Buffs in Iraq, India and Burma. After the war he was vicar at Thomham, Newmarket, Ipswich U.K. and finally St. Matthews in the City, Auckland, New Zealand, where he played a major part in the rescue, renovation, and rebirth of that beautiful inner city church. When Morris arrived at St. Matthews he found the hierarchy considering bulldozing the lovely stone church because it was so far gone. He and the vestry opposed this and started an appeal using the vicars warden, a Kiwi of some note, as the front man. They realized that the sum needed was far too great to raise by standard donation, so they went

as a pair to big businesses in Auckland. and "leaned" on them. The church was saved thanks largely to these two tough characters, Morris Russell and Air Chief Marshall Sir Keith Park!

He was a "larger than life" character, and could be quite a handful at times, especially to his dutiful daughter, but his long illness brought out the best in him and his family loved him dearly.

Just before his death Morris's family persuaded him to say something of his Burma experiences as a Chaplain to the Regiment. These 'Reflections' are published in this issue.

WILLIAM (Bill) HENRY SHARP MM.

We have only just been informed that Bill Sharp passed away on 7th February 2004 aged 82. During WW2 Bill served in the RWK's and won the Military Medal on 18th April 1945 in the assault on Boccaleone, his citation read:-

'German machine guns opened fire from a farmhouse. Major Stewart was wounded in the leg. While he lay helpless in the open, Lance Corporal Sharp, a signaller who had remained with his Company Commander although his wireless set was an obvious target, ran to him and helped him to safety. The whole area had abruptly blazed into life, and Major Stewart continued to direct operations from a house nearby in spite of his wound.'

The description of the action continues: - Major Stewart immediately called for smoke from the artillery and sent a platoon to deal with the enemy in the farmhouse. This platoon was led by Lieutenant Cooke with such dash that it quickly overran the post and captured ten prisoners. Another platoon and two tanks then moved up the main street. Within an hour fifty more Germans had surrendered.

During the whole battle the battalion had captured 143 prisoners, while its losses had been five killed and fifteen wounded.

Major Shaun Stewart was awarded a second bar to his MC for his stirring leadership. If L/Cpl Sharp had not risked his life to rescue him it is doubtful if Major Stewart would have survived.

L/SGT WALTER HENRY MILLER.

Ex 4th Battalion and 7th Battalion The Buffs and 141 Regt. RAC (The Buffs).

Walter lived all his life in Sandwich Kent. He was born at 11 Cottage Row on the 11 December 1918.

Being a member of the local Territorial Army unit 4th Battalion Buffs, Wally was called up on the first day of World War Two, and posted to the Town Sergeant's Office Nantes.

Being on leave at the end of May 1940 he was travelling from Dover to Calais, on the day that the retreat was ordered from Dunkirk. Having reached Calais where he found chaos, he tried to reach Nantes by using any transport that was available. He boarded the ill fated Troopship 'Lancastria' on the 17th June 1940. As a survivor he landed at Plymouth and was in hospital for six weeks, being unidentified.

After a weeks leave, he was allocated to the newly formed 7th Battalion Buffs, which subsequently became 141st Regiment RAC (The Buffs). He returned to France and served throughout Europe.

Wally passed away on the 28 October 2006 aged 88 years at his home 121 St. Bart's Road, Sandwich following a long illness.

RICHARD WILLIAM BOWYER

Richard's son David writes:

Richard passed away on February 9th 2006, one day short of his 86th birthday, He was fiercely proud of his association with The Buffs having served with 1 Buffs ('D' Company) in North Africa and throughout the Italian campaign including the Anzio landings and beyond.

He was born in Bolton, Lancashire and returned there on discharge in 1946 and married his wife Claire whom he had met on Christmas Eve 1939. They had four children (3 daughters and 1 son). Richard worked in industry and took early retirement in 1982. He had many interests including gardening, caravanning and golf, but his real love was his family to which he devoted his life.

In his final years his health deteriorated and he became a St. Dunstonian. Although he was a member of the Regimental Association he was unable to attend the Regimental reunions due to the distances involved. He did however make a pilgrimage to the Anzio war cemeteries in 2000.

Up until his death he always wore his blazer with Buffs badge with great pride.

We will all miss him greatly remembering his as a thoroughly good and very likeable man with a great sense of humour and duty.

DB

ALFRED JOHN CARPENTER MM

At Alfred's funeral the eulogy was given by Canon Michael Anderson.

"We have come to thank God for Jack's life- a long life (he'd just celebrated his 94th birthday).

When I became Vicar here in 1980 Jack was the Parish Treasurer. I recall a quiet, efficient gentleman and although others have attested to all of those things there was more to Jack than that.

Jack was born in Sittingbourne in 1912. He was an only child, the son of a grocer who owned other properties in the town. He was educated at King's School, Rochester where he was a border in School House.

His working life was spent with Barclay's Bank where he was Chief Clerk and, on occasions, Acting Manager. A former colleague recalls him as a kind and helpful man. I've always said God's timing is spot on, and it's interesting to note that Jack died at five minutes to nine on a Monday morning, just the hour when bank's are preparing for business. When he first worked for Barclay's Bank, Jack had lodgings in Broadstairs but he settled in this town, living in Canute Road for many years and worshipping at St. John the Evangelist. He gave this parish many years of faithful service.

He retired early from the Bank to care for his elderly mother.

During the second world war he enlisted in The Buffs, the 5th Battalion. He reached the rank of Cpl, Acting

Sergeant and was captured in 1940 at Doullens and spent 5 years as a POW in Poland.

Before his capture Jack was awarded the Military Medal, the citation reads: -

Corporal Carpenter was acting Platoon Sergeant of No. 10 Platoon, 'B' Company, 5th Bn. The Buffs at Saulty-L'Abret when the platoon area was attacked by a force of German Armoured Fighting Vehicles. Corporal Carpenter engaged the enemy with the Boyes Anti-Tank rifle which he operated himself. He succeeded in putting two light tanks out of action and held up the German advance.

He later received instructions to withdraw his platoon and remained to the last to cover the withdrawal to the next position, and finally only withdrew on the direct orders of his Company Commander. Corporal Carpenter, by his example of coolness and devotion to duty, had a great steadying influence on the men in his platoon, which was in action for the first time.

When Jack left the army his discharge book said:

“Military conduct exemplary, an excellent NCO who served 5 years as a POW. He is smart, zealous, loyal and punctual of temperate habits and most trustworthy. He was awarded the Military Medal for distinguished service in the field.”

Let those words serve as Jack's epitaph now. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.”

MA

GEORGE WILLIAM ANTRICHAN

1918-2007

George Antrichan Junior writes: -



Dad was born in April 1918 in East Brighton which was his mother's home town after having met and married George's father at the Brighton Pavilion. This was being used as a military hospital at the time. His father had

been wounded whilst serving with The Buffs in France in WWI and his mother worked in the laundry there.

The family moved to Sittingbourne six months later, where he was to call home for the rest of his life. The eldest of eight children George left school at 14 years of age to work in the brick fields. Learning to drive at 15 he was put before the magistrates for under age driving.

He joined the 4th Bn The Buffs (TA) in 1936 much against his father's wishes; this resulted in George not being allowed to take any of his military kit home. Instead he had to leave it at his friend's house and pick it up on the way to drill nights. After completing a year with the supplementary reserve, he returned to work in the Sittingbourne paper mills until September 1939, when as the youngest Sergeant in the Battalion he was mobilised for war. Bill Pledger is one of the few survivors of that time who still remembers how George had made all of his troops run around wearing their respirators. After three years of ill-feeling between him and his father about George serving in the TA, the day came when he had to go home to say his 'good-byes'. His father helped to carry his kit to the station, gave him ten shillings and cried as they parted. Throughout the war his father kept him supplied with hand soldered tins of little luxuries. George was kept at the depot when the battalion went to France, and after the evacuation was shortly to join the 70th. Bn. The Buffs and the 'Special Scouting Section'.

George become one of the founding members of the Reconnaissance Corps in 1942, being posted to the Derbyshire Yeomanry just before the Normandy invasion where they were the Reconnaissance Regt. to the 51st Highland Division. He was in Caen whilst the RAF was bombing it, in which they then fought their way out of the pocket following the coast through Rouen, Le Havre and Dieppe; each town having its own story to tell. The Highland Division was placed so that it would be the first allied troops back into St. Valery, where the Highlanders had been forced to surrender in 1940, to restore their honour. Due to a tired gunner/operator not picking up the messages to halt, as the Intelligence troop knew that the Germans were not going to defend this small town, George 'bashed on' seeing the enemy withdrawing up the other side of the small valley. As they entered the town the church bell started to ring (this to an Englishman meant that the invaders are coming) George pulled up his armoured car outside the church, entered and dragged the Pastor out at pistol point with the intension of shooting him

as a Quisling. Only after the rapid intervention of his driver, who understood enough French to clarify the situation that the Pastor wanted to celebrate his liberation. George's troop pulled up by the harbour wall for a brew whilst the Highlanders brought up the pipe band to lead the liberation. There is a single sentence entered in the Highland Div. History that states that an 'English' reconnaissance unit had got there first.

After the failed attempt to relieve the 1st British Airborne at Arnhem, time was spent liberating Holland this side of the Rhine where he was wounded by mortar shrapnel in a town called Goch. At the start of the German Ardennes offensive they were rushed south to bolster up American forces. This done, they returned to Holland to prepare for the clearing of the Reichswald, Venlo Pocket and crossing the Rhine at Xanten. Chasing the enemy across the northern plains taking Bremen and Bremerhaven. Advancing on Hamburg, again the RAF was still bombing their line of advance George had to get the local population at gun point to clear the debris from the road to allow their cars through. Turning north George's war ended in a small German town of Stade, on the German surrender (twinned with Hythe).

George voluntarily deferred his demobilisation until he joined the Control Commission of Germany as a transport manager, based in Essen and Mulheim; where he was to meet his unit interpreter, Hedwig, on her 21st birthday, who was to become his wife. Returning from Germany in 1951 to a land less than 'One Fit for Heroes', he rejoined the Royal Artillery TA at Sheerness as a Staff Sergeant. Soon after 'B' Coy. 4th Bn. The Buffs were to return to Sittingbourne, where George was to transfer to, and rapidly became C.S.M., a post he was to hold for about ten years, retiring in 1966.

George trained cadets for a short time but found that teaching survival skills to the senior scouts was far more rewarding. He also managed 12 years in the Observer Corps before being discharged as too old. He retired from Shell research after 14 years service and for many years was the Sittingbourne Parade Marshall.

Age finally took its toll and after about three years of steadily declining health, George passed away in Sheppey Community Hospital at Minster surrounded by his loved ones, aged 88 years.

His guard of honour was formed by 46 members of the Sittingbourne branches of the Queen's Own Buffs Regimental Association, and Royal British Legion. George lies buried in his full Buffs Association blazer,

badges and tie, proud to the end of the Regiment that he loved. His coffin was draped in the Union Flag with his service cap, medals and Sergeant Majors stick upon it. Our thanks go to Lt.Col. A. J. Edmunds, Band Sergeant Major Gary George of the 3 PWRR for allowing Sgt. Peter Bryan to play the Last Post and Reveille at my father's funeral.

GA

MAJOR A.F.A. (Francis) AUSTEN. MC

Amyas Francis Allan Morgan, the Paymaster of the Queen's Own Buffs in Hong Kong, passed away peacefully at Threshfield Court N/H. Grassington North Yorkshire on 5th March aged 89 years. Husband of the late Betty (nee Martin), eldest brother of Francis and the late Alwyn, uncle to Belinda and Jonathan.

MRS. JUNE MORGAN Widow of the late Major Reginald John Steward Morgan MC passed away on 31st January 2007.

LT. COL ROBERT BUTLER MBE MC., passed away on 20th April 2007. (An obituary will be published in the next edition)

TERRY DEERY

Terry, an ex Buff passed away on 11th June 2006 aged 69 years.

MAJOR ERIC FORD MC

Information has been received that Eric Ford, who served with 5th Buffs in the 39-45 war, passed away in October 06.

JOHN SCOTT

John an ex member of 1 Buffs in Aden (Mortar Platoon) passed away on 19th March 2007 aged 69.

FREDERICK EDWARD MIDDLETON

Fred who served with 5th Battalion The Buffs throughout the Italian campaign, passed away on 28th February 2007 aged 83.

RICHARD (DICK) CRIBBEN.

Dick, ex 1 Buffs, passed away on the morning of 27th December 2006 at Darent Valley Hospital, Dartford after a long illness.

CAPTAIN JOHN BONHAM.

John Bonham passed away on Saturday 23rd December 2006 aged 85. He served in The Buffs from 1940-46.

BILL MOUNT

Bill, a member of Sittingbourne Branch, passed away on 24th December 2006.

MAJOR W D (Bill) BADDELEY TD

Information has been received that Major Bill Baddeley TD, ex 5th. Bn. The Buffs, passed away in May 2006.

CSM. F. (Fred) POTTS.

We have been informed by Fred's daughter, Theresa, of his passing. He served in the Royal West Kents, the Queen's Own Buffs and 2nd Bn. The Queen's Regt.

MAURICE BEESLEE

We have been advised by Bill Franklin of the death of Maurice. Maurice and Bill joined up in the same intake and served with the Q.O.R.W.K. Regt in MALAYA, in the Mortar Platoon. 1954 having finished his 2 years National Service.

Maurice lost his battle against leukaemia and died on the 23rd July 2006 in Cornwall .

Bill remembers Maurice as a very good friend, always with a smile. He will be missed by his family and old army comrades.

JOHN WOOD

Ex Buff passed away at the Star & Garter Home

RONALD BLAND

Ronald who served with the Buffs from 1947 until 1952 passed away in February 2007.

VICTOR (VIC) LEMARE

Ex Buffs passed away earlier this year.

CHARLES HILL.

Charlie passed away, aged 86, on Good Friday at the QEQM Hospital, Margate. Charlie served in the R.A.M.C. during WW2 and took part in the Torch Landings in North Africa. He was attached to 5th Bn The Buffs and served with them throughout their North African, the Sicily landings and the Italian campaign. For over 30 years Charlie was a member of Ramsgate Branch of the Regimental Association. He will be greatly missed by us all.

CHARLES LIST

Charles fought with 5th Bn. The Buffs at Doullens and was subsequently evacuated from Dunkirk. He passed away in March 2007.

ROY COLLINS

Roy was a member of 'A' Squadron, 141 Regt (RAC) The Buffs. For sometime he was the driver of Sergeant Taffy Lewis.

JOHN SMITH

John served in 'B', 'C' and D' Squadron of 141 Regt (RAC) The Buffs. In 1995 he wrote a book of his experiences called 'In at the Finish'.

ROBERT TAYLOR

Bob Taylor, ex 'C, Squadron 141 Regt (RAC) The Buffs died on 12th January 2007 aged 84 after a long illness. Bob was a real Normandy Veteran in every sense. He was one of three remaining members of 'C' Squadron who took part in the initial invasion of Normandy on the 6th June 1944 on Gold Beach (Jig Gree, Le Hamel).

Bob must be one of the few who survived being 'bazookared' twice in two different tanks within 5 minutes.

JF

FINOLA PECKHAM

Finola, wife of Lt Col Alan Peckham, died peacefully at the Royal United Hospital, Bath on 21st April.

We have been informed of the passing of the following members of 141 Regt (RAC) The Buffs.

LES WRIGHT:

FRANK BELL:

H. J. BULLARD:

W. MOLYNEUX:

G. T. (TERRY) ALLNUT.

KENT ARMY CADET FORCE

KENT A.C.F. GOES FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH!

It has been a busy start to the year for the Kent Army Cadet Force. H.R.H. the Duke of Kent KG was the guest of honour when he opened the new £3.7m Army Cadet Weekend Training Centre (WETC) at Dibgate Camp in Folkestone, Kent.

The 150 bed centre is now being used for cadets and adults for weekend training and exercises and is a fantastic new facility which will benefit those across the County. The Duke took a tour of the Centre and was guided around by cadets and officers. The new centre has two classrooms, a kitchen, dining room and a four-lane indoor small-bore rifle range.

K.A.C.F. has seen some high profile appointments recently including the Vice Lord Lieutenant of Kent, The Viscount De L'Isle MBE DL, of Penshurst Place, near Tonbridge, who has been appointed Honorary Colonel of Kent Army Cadet Force (A.C.F.).

Lord De L'Isle succeeds Lieutenant Colonel Richard Dixon TD DL, of Goudhurst, who steps down after 12 years as Honorary Colonel.

Kent Army Cadet Force (A.C.F.) also has a new County Regimental Sergeant Major (R.S.M.). Company Sergeant Major Steve McGowan of D Company, has been promoted to the rank of Regimental Sergeant

Major and has assumed the role of County R.S.M. after the official hand over from the outgoing R.S.M. - R.S.M. C. Morris.

A Canterbury cadet was chosen as the High Sheriff's Cadet for 2006. The High Sheriff of Kent, Mrs. Amanda Cottrell, presented the Badge to Colour Sergeant, Adam Brown, 17.

Over 500 cadets had a very enjoyable and successful Camp in Sennybridge in Wales, the cadets and instructors took part in many exciting activities including exercises and helicopter rides. K.A.C.F. looks forward to camp at Westdown in 2007.

We also have one adult instructor and one cadet going to Camp Argonaught in Canada on a 6 week exchange visit, more information will follow on our website.

The new marketing suite will be out and about at various events throughout the county. The county has also taken delivery of a mobile climbing wall to enhance the adventure training programmes.

We also have a new website: www.kentarmycadets.com and newsletter, (which can be viewed on the website) and a new media team to promote the successes and achievements of the county. Case studies from cadets and adults can also be found on the website.

TURNING THE PAGE

On Wednesday 18th April 4 members of 141 Regt. RAC (The Buffs) paraded at the Warrior's Chapel to perform their annual ceremony of 'Turning of the Page'. On parade were Geoff Kirk, Charlie Hewitt, Standard Bearer, Fred Blackley, who turned the page and Bill Harrison.,

After the ceremony, as is the custom, everyone adjourned to The Three Tuns for lunch and a pint of course.

Pictured right is Fred Blackley and below left are from left to right Geoff Kirk, Charlie Hewitt, Bill Harrison and Fred Blackely.



On Wednesday 2nd May, London Buffs paid their annual visit to the Warrior's Chapel to Turn the Page and to lay a wreath in the memory of Pte. Ginger Marsh who was killed in Aden in May 1958.

This year, Ted Chappell, pictured left, Turned the Page and Frank Hills, Branch Chairman, laid the wreath.



Above Frank Hills laying the wreath



Above: Ted talking to the duty Minister, The Revd. Matthew Forrester after the ceremony.



Left: The duty Virger, Sally Hayward who is getting married in August. Many congratulations Sally from us all



The Supporting Cast

From Left to right: Joe Correa, Ron Hills, John Field, Henry Parker, Ray Cox, Ted Chappell, Cyril Mantelow, Bob England and Frank Hills

A FOOTNOTE TO HISTORY

by Dominic Walsh

The upsurge of interest in the fate of the Titanic in recent years has meant a repeated airing of one of the most enduring images of that disaster: the youthful news vendor on a London street corner holding a poster announcing the disaster.

Though the loss of life from the sinking of the ship in 1912 is well-documented, the picture hides a private tragedy. Six years later that young man - my great-uncle, Ned Parfett - was killed at 22 during a German bombardment while serving in France, just a few days before the Armistice.

He had enlisted in the Royal Artillery in 1916, serving for a period as a dispatch rider before being assigned to reconnaissance duties. He was mentioned in dispatches and awarded the Military Medal for his gallant conduct during a series of missions.

After his death, the officer who recommended him for the award wrote to one his brothers: "On many occasions he accompanied me during severe shelling and I always placed the greatest confidence in him."

Ned, after whom my father was named, was one of four brothers from Cornwall Road, Waterloo, who served their country. One served in the disastrous Dardanelles landings in 1915, surviving to become part of the army of occupation in Germany. Another emerged unscathed from the slaughter of the Somme, only to be wounded and gassed at the third battle of Ypres.

Of the four brothers, only Ned failed to make it. He died on October 29, 1918, near Valenciennes, when a shell landed on the quartermaster's stores just as he was collecting some clothes before going home on leave. If he had survived the attack, he would have been at home when the Armistice was signed. He lies in the British cemetery at Verchain-Maugre.

The famous image of Ned on the corner of Trafalgar Square has assured him a place in history. His medals and the gravestone in a corner of a French cemetery ensure that his bravery will not be forgotten by his family, despite the passing of the years.

(Dominic, Many thanks for permission to publish this fascinating article The Editor.)



FROM THE WEB SITE

www.the-queens-own-buffs.com

Subject: Major E J HUDSON
From: W A Franklin
Email: w.franklin@btopenworld.com

I recently visited my brothers and wife's graves in the little village of Ham in Wiltshire and in looking at head stones nearby noticed the head stone of:

Major E J HUDSON .OBE
late of

THE QUEENS OWN ROYAL WEST KENT REGT
Born 23rd Nov 1879 died 10th Sept 1943.

I lived near the village in the late 40's/50's and the HUDSON family had a large house in the village and were said to own Hudson's Soap makers.

It would be of interest to know of his service record.

REPLY from Mick Mills.

Ernest John Hudson was born on 23/11/1878 at Highbury Grove, the son of Francis (a provision merchant) and Mary.

The earliest I can trace him is when he was ordered home from Aden on 12/10/1901 whilst serving with the 1st Bn Queens Own Royal West Kent Regiment. He had previously been sent there from South Africa in April 1901 suffering from malaria. He was considered unfit at a medical board in London in April 1902 and resigned his commission in June 1902 on account of ill health.

He volunteered again in August 1914 and was appointed to the 6th Bn as a 2nd Lieut. In August 1915 another medical board in France declared him unfit for service; he was showing symptoms of a nervous breakdown. By now he was a Captain. Amazingly he was deemed fit again in October 1915 and appointed adjutant of No. 1 Infantry Base Depot. He was appointed to the staff of GOC reinforcements at Havre from 10/2/1917.

He was discharged on 19/2/1919 and he stated his occupation to be farmer with an address at Prosperous Farm, Hungerford. His rank was Captain (brevet Major).

Subject: Sydney John Jarvis
From: John S. Jarvis.
Email: john.jarvis13@btinternet.com

I am interested to know what happened to the 1st Buffs as my father was killed in action in Lybia, North Africa on December 14th 1941 whilst serving with them.

I was born in 1940 so never knew him, only from pictures and letters written to my mum.

REPLY from Mick Mills:

You'll need to do some research on the bigger picture but here is what the Regimental History states for the 1st Buffs on the 14th December:-

"On this day, on Pt. 204, the Buffs had under command:-

31st Field Regiment R.A.

2 Troops 73rd A./Tk. Battery R.A.

1 Troop 57th L.A.A. Battery R.A.

1 Squadron Central India Horse.

1 Section 18th Field Company Royal Bombay Sappers and Miners.

There was considerable enemy shelling during the early morning hours, and any sign of vehicle movement brought an intensification of fire, the preliminary to an attack from the west which was launched about noon. Whether this was intended to be no more than a reconnaissance in force it is not possible to say, but there is reason to believe that this was the case. Whatever its object, it afforded the 31st Field Regiment an opportunity for excellent practice before the enemy withdrew. Very shortly afterwards, to the accompaniment of a further heavy bombardment, a force of approximately thirty Stukas carried out a low-level bombing attack on the position with considerable effect, D Company being the chief sufferers, losing 2/Lieut. N. F. Strangeways-Lesmere killed and a number of men wounded.

Shortly after this raid, about 2 p.m., the enemy put in a second attack from the same direction as before with about twenty tanks and lorried infantry, backed up by intense artillery fire. The assault was pressed with great determination but resistance was extremely tough, the

31st Field Regiment doing tremendous execution and the anti-tank guns playing their part most effectively, Corporal G. Abel of the Buffs keeping his gun in action till the enemy were within a hundred yards before he withdrew to cover. Influenced probably by the sight of eleven British I tanks which appeared on the southern horizon just when they had succeeded in over running a 6-gun troop of the 31st Field Regiment, and when the situation seemed desperate, the enemy withdrew shortly before dusk, leaving behind six tanks out of action, and taking with them a number which were damaged. The position was still intact and casualties in the Buffs had once more been comparatively light. Losses in vehicles, however, had been serious.

During the course of this day Brigadier Russell had been at Battalion H.Q. and Colonel King had explained the situation to him, stressing the need for some form of ground activity from the south to distract the enemy's attention from Pt. 204, and for air attack on a reported concentration of German armour. He also asked for ammunition to be sent up after dark. The brigadier informed him that 7 Armoured Division was working round the enemy, and that it was hoped that it would reach Halegh-el-Eleba by noon the next day: every effort would be made for the R.A.F. to deal with the German armour, and ammunition would be sent up during the night.

Throughout the night patrolling was kept up and the promised ammunition arrived, as, earlier in the evening, did five of the I tanks which had come on the scene in the distance during the afternoon. Such support as they could give would be welcome in what all realized might well be a critical test on the morrow!"

Subject: Henry Rawdon Pte. 5605
From: M Adron
Email: michaelardron@homecall.co.uk

I have recently been given a birth certificate for my paternal grandmother who was born to Henry Rawdon while serving in Malta in 1904. the certificate is headed command 1st Battalion R.W. Kent Regiment. I wonder if anyone knows where I could find more info on Henry.

REPLY from the Editor:

Michael I suggest you contact the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regimental Museum in Maidstone you will I am sure help. Their contact details are:

Maidstone Museum and Bently Art Gallery, St. Faith's Street, Maidstone ME14 1LH. Tel: 01622 602846. Web Site: www.museum.maidstone.gov.uk

Subject: Ronald Bland
From: Jane Thomson
Email: janethomson324@msn.com

My Dad, Ronald Bland, served with the Buffs from 1947 until 1952 when he went into the Queens Royal Regt and then on to the Queens Surreys, He had served for 13 years and 20 days, and never at any point did he regret his time, his love for the Buffs continued right up until his death this month 02/2007, where we discovered his army book. You may find this strange, but my father would never let it out of his sight, this included his pay book, cap badge and a smaller badge which he always wore on his belt. My Dad received medals for the Malaya, Korea and United Nations for which we are so proud. On reading his red book, we discovered that he was not just a brilliant Dad but a great soldier, who's love for the British Armed Forces never waived, We do have a photo of my father and his comrades we believe to be in Africa.

Now 52 years later my son is following in his footsteps and is in Kenya and like his grandad he has a love for the army, which I know will make him so proud as we are of him.

I would like to say to all you Buffs keep going strong, you have so right to be proud of everything you have achieved and I am so proud my Dad was one of you.

Subject: Harry Hirt
From: John Messent
Email: john.messent@btinternet.com

I'm looking to research information on my Grandad, Harry Hirt, who served in the REME attached to The Buffs I would appreciate if anyone could offer some advice on where I could start looking to find out what he and his regiment did during WW2. All I have so far is the stories he told me about fixing tanks and. On his wedding certificate it states he was with The Buffs. Any help would really be appreciated.

Many thanks.

WRITE TO REPLY



Colonel K. W. Langridge
121 Wexford St.
Winnipeg
Manitoba, Canada
R3R 0R6

119 Sturdee Avenue
Gillingham, Kent
Tel: 01634 575943

Dear Editor,

Dear Editor,

The last issue of The Journal was very good indeed and most interesting. Regarding Andy Marwick's request for information on his Father which featured in the 'From the Web Site' article in the last issue.

I recalled that I was in the same squad as his father in 1937-38 and sent him a copy of the squad picture, one by email and one by airmail to make sure he got it in Australia. He replied back that he was sending one on to his mother in the UK. That was a real pleasure.

The Army is keeping me real busy these days and it has been a tough winter, very cold but I get lots of exercise blowing snow.

Best regards

Ken.

The following message has been received from Andy Markwick.

Just letting you know that Colonel Ken Langridge ex Buffs has contacted me from Canada and kindly sent me a photo of the 1937 Rangoon Squad which includes my father Herbert George (Bert) Markwick and Col. Langridge.

Our sincere thanks to Ken and to your Journal for your help.

With kind regards

Andy Markwick

I have just been introduced to The Journal by a friend and former colleague. I was a volunteer member of the Regiment being part of 70th Battalion from 1941 until disbandment.

I read with avid interest especially about the CO, affectionately known as 'Wingy' by the lower ranks and of Lt. John Warren as I was in his Platoon (20 Platoon 'D' Company) How he was deserved being given command of such a band of hooligans has always puzzled me. He ruled us with an Iron Hand in a Velvet Glove and two days before we marched out he took the majority of the platoon to a Public House and bought all of us a pint of Kent's Best Cider. We were all bound for different Corps and Regiments.

His platoon was, at first, all volunteers including a number of Borstal Boys. At one time I slept next to a boy who had been detained for murder, reduced to manslaughter. During my time we guarded Manston and Lydd aerodromes, relieved the RAF in gun pits, provided Fire Picquets, Gate Guards and laid miles of barbed wire around the perimeters and shifted ammo for the AA Bofors Guns until the arrival of the RAF Regiment.

Later on as a Signaller in the Royal Corps of Signallers I came across the 5th Bn. The Buffs in Italy,

I have often thought of the Platoon and especially of Lt. Warren, a true gentleman. It is now 66 years since the days of 'Wingy', John Warren and R.S.M. Southwell. If any of the readers remember those days please get in touch.

Yours sincerely

Peter J Sams.

32 Colin Blythe Road
Tonbridge, Kent
01732 360464

Dear Editor,

With reference to the enquiry by Lionel Dombert in Australia which was published in the last issue of The Journal.

Lionel's service details maybe a little inaccurate. The period 1943-45 would have been his service with the Royal Corps of Signals.

70th Bn The Buffs was formed in the summer of 1940 and disbanded in 1942. 'D' Company, 70th Bn The Buffs had the following officers. OC, Major Brown, Lt. Cobb, Lt. Warren and Lt. Brownlow, there may have been others but I am unable to bring them to mind.

Lt. Warren was awarded the George Medal for his efforts in recovering an injured woman from a bombed house in Dover. This is mentioned in the late Major Cox's story of his war service which has been featured in The Journal.

I had an interesting conversation with Major Cox at a Buffs reunion in Canterbury in 2002 and he mentioned that Lt. Warren was captured on the island of Leros. Unfortunately after returning home unscathed at the end of the war he was killed in a traffic accident.

Yours sincerely

Bob Kempton

(Editor's note: The following two letters of appreciation were received by Major John Rogerson at RHQ in respect of grants made from the Benevolent Fund. I have withheld the names and addresses)

Dear Sirs

I'd like to thank The Regiment for the contribution towards the new scooter purchased for my use.

Since the scooter I had on loan was returned to its owner I've been unable to do many of the things I became accustomed to. Therefore I am so grateful that you have been able to help me in this generous manner.

My late husband served in the Buffs would be pleased and proud that you continue to support widows and close family members in this way.

Thank you so much

Dear Sirs

On behalf of my father, an ex RWK, I would like to convey his sincere good wishes and many thanks for your kind gesture of the grant for the chair.

My father is a proud man caring at home for his wife who has alzheimer's disease. I am very proud of him so please accept our thanks and good wishes to you all.

2 Ash Road, Sandwich
Kent CT13 9JA.
Tel. No. 01304 619095
or E-Mail rob@rmiller44.freeserve.co.uk

Dear Editor,

My father, Lance Sergeant Wally Miller, who served with 4th and 7th Bn The Buffs and later with 141 Regt RAC (The Buffs), passed away in 2006. I would be grateful if any reader could supply any information regarding 'Flame Throwing Tanks' in particular where they were used in Europe, and would be delighted to hear from anyone who served with my father.

Yours sincerely

Rob Miller

61 Northall Road
Barnehurst
Bexleyheath
Kent DA7 6JF

Dear Editor,

Some friends of my late husband, Cpl Roy (Joe) Chapman all of whom served in 'D' Company 1st Bn. QORWK Regt in Malaya 1952-54 would like to hear from anyone who served with them.

Five of them meet regularly to keep in touch and they are always talking of incidents and mentioning names. They all say, "I wonder what happened to them and where they are now?"

It would be so good to hear from some of the ex members of the battalion again so that we could arrange to meet up.

The members of our group are:-

Cpl. John (Dusty) Miller
Cpl. Jack Carney
Roy Maryan
and Albert Jays , known as (Flu)

Hoping to hear from someone soon.

Yours sincerely

Betty Chapman

Heath Cottage
Piltdown, Uckfield
East Sussex TN22 3XB

Dear Editor

I refer to the article covering the climbing of Mount Kilimanjaro.

For the record each platoon climbed Mount Kilimanjaro in 1961 except the Signal Platoon, Jimmy Reid and myself who were on flood relief duties at the time.

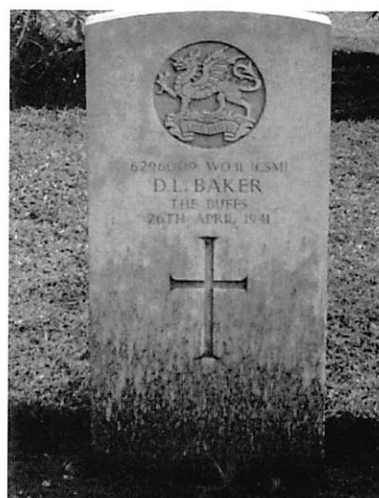
Best wishes

Ham Whitty

PO Box 14662-00800
School Lane,
Westlands, Nairobi, Kenya

Dear Editor

Following my invitation to move to Kenya to set up a Facilities Management company I was surprised and delighted to discover that the Royal British Legion has a very active Branch here.



On Friday 10 November they organised a "Poppy Ball" which I attended and which was spectacular and raised a considerable sum of money for the Poppy Appeal and Branch funds.

I was asked if I would like to join them at their Remembrance Service at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery here in Nairobi – an invitation I had no hesitation accepting.

Whilst there I came across the grave of WO2 (C.S.M.) D. L. Baker who, as you can see from the photograph, lost his life on 22 April 1941 whilst fighting here in Kenya.

I have been unable to unearth any other information in respect of him, like – what on earth was he doing fighting in Kenya in 1941, so maybe you could add to these details from information held at the Buffs Regimental Museum.

The mere fact that this Service is held at the cemetery each year, plus the attendance of so many old boys (Kenyans) brought home to me a fact that is so readily and easily ignored by the post war generations and that is that, so many of our then Commonwealth brethren fought and died alongside us both here and in Europe.

Lastly, if it is any comfort to those on Parade at the Cenotaph in London that day, it was absolutely chucking it down here and then like divine intervention, at about 10.50 and just as we started to make our way on parade it stopped to start again precisely 3 minutes after the service was complete!

Brian Wright

44 Stratford Road, Holland on Sea
Essex CO15 5DX
01255 814481

168 Hillcross Avenue, Morden, Surrey SM4 4ET

Dear Editor

I served with HQ Coy MT Sect Erskine Camp KKB Selangor, and Bentong Pahang in 1953/54 and then with the Bn. advance party to Luneburg, Germany. I am sending this photo of Iban Tracker Dongoa which was taken in KKB circa 1953. (please see photo Gallery) Seeing the picture I can't believe that 53 years have gone so quickly. As a matter of interest re the photo of 2 platoon, I think the L/Cpl bottom row 2nd left is L/Cpl Spanswick (Spanner) something clicked but it's only a reaction.

Best regards
Allan Quinnell

Dear Editor

May I use the columns of The Journal to thank those who loaned me a Buffs flag to cover the coffin of my father, Frederick Middleton, and for the wreath that you sent for him.

My Dad was a true soldier and was so proud to have served in The Buffs. On the day of his funeral I hope that he was looking down, he would have been so very happy.

As you can imagine his passing has left all his family heartbroken but we have wonderful memories of him

Thank you, once again, for making his day so very special.

Teresa Watson.

REGIMENTAL MUSEUMS UPDATE

by

Colonel Crispin Champion, The Regimental Association President

I am writing to let our readers know what is happening to The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Museum in Maidstone and also what might happen to The Buffs' Museum in Canterbury.

Maidstone: Ever since amalgamation in 1961 (46 years ago) and the closure of the Depot in Maidstone the Queen's Own Regimental Museum has been housed in Maidstone Museum and run as a registered charity by Trustees, all of whom served in the Regiment. In recent years it became clear that the Trustees were unable to run the Museum effectively and the death of Colonel Blick Waring, who devoted much of his time to the Museum, only went to confirm this. The Trustees therefore sought the advice of the Charity Commissioners and as the result they are transferring trusteeship to Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) Under this scheme the Museum remains a registered charity, with the same aims as heretofore. A Regimental representative is being appointed with the duty of making periodic inspections and consulting with MBC. The formal Handover Day is set for 20th June 2007.

The Trustees are confident that this is by far the best way to ensure the future of this Regimental Museum and are very pleased that they are able to hand over to Mr Simon Lace, the Museum and Heritage Manager, and his staff at Maidstone, all of whom see the Regimental Museum as an important part of the main Museum and who have been immensely helpful. I think you will

realise that I am in favour of this solution as it will preserve the museum as it is and it will almost certainly be there long after the last of the Queen's Own have finally hung up their boots.

Canterbury: As you know, some time ago, The Buffs museum was handed over to the National Army Museum (NAM) who agreed that the items now on display in Canterbury could remain there as long as the building (The Beany Institute) remained available. However Canterbury City Council (CCC) are considering moving all items, civil and military, into a "trail museum". As currently proposed I understand that this would mean breaking up the Buffs' collection and placing them alongside civil items by historical periods, at two or three different locations. One of these is proposed to be The West Gate which is poky and has no disabled access. Clearly we would far rather keep the Buffs' collection together, and this has already been very strongly represented to both NAM and the City Council". I understand that card carrying members of The Association would have free access.

However we still do not have any firm proposals and until then we would be wise not to upset our relationship with The City authorities, remembering that we no longer own any of these items which are now the property of The National Army Museum. In military signals terminology; "Wait Out".

NOTICE BOARD

NEW MEMBERS OF THE REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

Mr. D. C. Light	Bufs/QOB	58-68
Mr. S. Hitchcock	2 Qns/ 2 PWRR	86-93
Mr. R. E. Tower	1 Queen's	73-82
Mr. Alf Baker	RN	43-48
Mr. R. M. Denyer	RWK/Bufs	46-48
Mr. P. G. Wadey	2 Queen's	61-71
Mr. A. B. Wells	QORWK's	58-59
Mr. J. G. Armstrong	RWK/Bufs	42-47

AWA(Army Widows Association)
Mrs. Heather Saunders OBE
Holt Mill
Melbury Osmond,
Dorchester DT20LX

Dear Sirs,

Our Association was formed in 2004 by a group of widows, myself included, with the aim to offer comfort, support and friendship to other Army widows and widowers. All the members have lost their spouse under different circumstances and are able to offer support and sympathy to those who have been recently bereaved.

We are a totally independent organisation and we work closely with both the MOD and The Army Welfare Policy Branch, (Army PS4). The Army Benevolent Fund is also very supportive of our work. However, despite all our efforts to contact newly bereaved widows and widowers there are a lot of widows/widowers who never hear of us. This is probably due to a number of reasons and since we are restricted by the Data Protection Act it does make it difficult for us to talk directly to them in the first instance.

We are very aware of the importance of protecting the privacy of the individual who is in the early stages of grieving, so we are simply asking if your Association could help us to reach others by passing on our details to those widows and widowers within your particular Regimental Association. Sadly as more of our young soldiers are being deployed all over the world more are being killed, leaving young widows and young families behind. Despite the wonderful support of the War Widows Association, there is a need for an organisation which deals with widows and widowers of all serving soldiers

If you require any information please do not hesitate to contact any of those listed below.

Yours sincerely,

Heather Saunders
Chairman.

Heather Saunders (Chairman) 01935 872983
Ros Dillon-Lee (Vice-chairman) 01202 301929
Amanda Limb (Secretary) 01869 810341
Eileen Kelly (Treasurer) 01507 568801

VETERANS DAY 2007/FALKLANDS 25 R.E. MUSEUM CHATHAM Saturday 16th June 2007 11.00 hrs-17.00 hrs

Veterans Day 2007/Falklands 25 is to be marked in Kent on Saturday 16th June 2007. Tri-Service events are being organised in Chatham and Sheppey by SSAFA with presence from the Lieutenancy of Kent. The Lord Lieutenant is the Representative of the Queen in Kent. The drumhead service in Chatham is being conducted by the Royal Engineers and is open to all veterans and the public. Medals should be worn and you are asked to be seated by 10.45 hrs. Visitors arriving by road will be directed, in the first instance, to the car parking area in the Black Lion Field opposite the RE Museum entrance in Prince Arthur Road. During the course of the day there will be themed lectures and displays arranged by the Royal Engineers Museum.

Enquiries: Lt. Col (Retd) John McLennan 01634 822409; email: infon@reahq.org.uk.

CALLING ALL DRUMMERS

Were you a drummer? If so the Corps of Drums Society needs your help. It is the national umbrella body for corps of drums and a registered educational charity. Would you like to take up your drum, flute or bugle again? If so, it can offer opportunities for playing. Do you have the time and the interest to help out with leading and teaching? If so, the Society has places to be filled - in its new demonstration corps and helping to inspire and instruct the young. For more information visit www.corpsofdrums.com or telephone 01580 242855 for a chat.

INFANTRY JUNIOR LEADER BATTALION ASSOCIATION

The Infantry Junior Leader Battalion (IJLB) was formed at Tuxford, Nottinghamshire in 1952. Initially it was called the Infantry Boys Battalion, later the Infantry Junior Leader Battalion. This Unit moved to Plymouth, Oswestry and then Shorncliffe and trained over 15,000 Junior Leaders. It was in existence until the 1985 Defence cuts. Its stated aim was to provide the future Warrant Officers and Senior Non Commissioned Officers for the Foot Guards and the Infantry of the Line. There has been an IJLB Association for some years with over 480 members but has recently undergone a major re-launch and has a new website and forum at www.ijlb.co.uk. We are actively recruiting new members. Should anyone not have access to the Internet and still wishes to join the IJLB Association they should contact Dave Midcalf, Membership Secretary, The Mailings, Pound Street, Warminster BA112 8JR. Tel. 01985300919.

One of the aims of the Association is to build a memorial in Cae Glas Park in Oswestry, near to where the ILJB was stationed. Oswestry Council has given the land and the go-ahead for planning permission. We hope to include on this memorial a list of all those ex Junior Leaders who died whilst on active service. To help compile this list we would be grateful for any information you may have in your own Regimental archives or from Regimental knowledge of any ex Junior Leader who died in defence of his country as the MOD has informed us that they do not have this information.

Should anyone want any further information about the Association please feel free to contact me, Graham Fowler, on gfwler@blg.co.uk or telephone me on 07778 354188.

CAPTION COMPETITION



The cartoon was drawn by Mike Gibson whilst at the Menin Gate with Canterbury Branch last year and was the subject of a caption competition as detailed in the last issue.

There were only two entries for the competition and the winner, which was submitted anonymously is:-

"Sydney Pullman I hope that the trumpet or whatever it was that you blew in the band was more effective than the one in your bloody ear."

FINAL WORD

I hope that you have enjoyed this issue. The production of so many pages cannot be guaranteed in future issues which no doubt would be a great relief to your postman!

You will find quite a few inserts in this issue, sorry about that. Personally I hate publications that have loose bits of paper as they always finish up all over the floor. However it is the only way we can get the information from you that we need, i.e. orders for Notelets, and Reunion ticket requirements, so please bear with us.

Talking about the reunions, every Spring issue we publish a clarion call for your support. This year is no different. The maintenance of the reunions at their present level and format depends entirely on the support that is forthcoming. Each year we see a fall in numbers attending and marching. If can possibly make the 5th August at Canterbury or 9th September at Maidstone or both then please do so. Your presence will be very welcome and support much appreciated and what is more you will have a day to remember

If you have not, as yet, arranged a Standing Order for your subscription then please fill out the enclosed mandate form, yes one of those wretched bits of paper, and let me have it as soon as you can.

Don't forget the London (Buffs) Remembrance parade and service at the Tower of London on 2nd September. If you want more details then please contact Betty Correa, Secretary of Branch, contact details in Branch News.

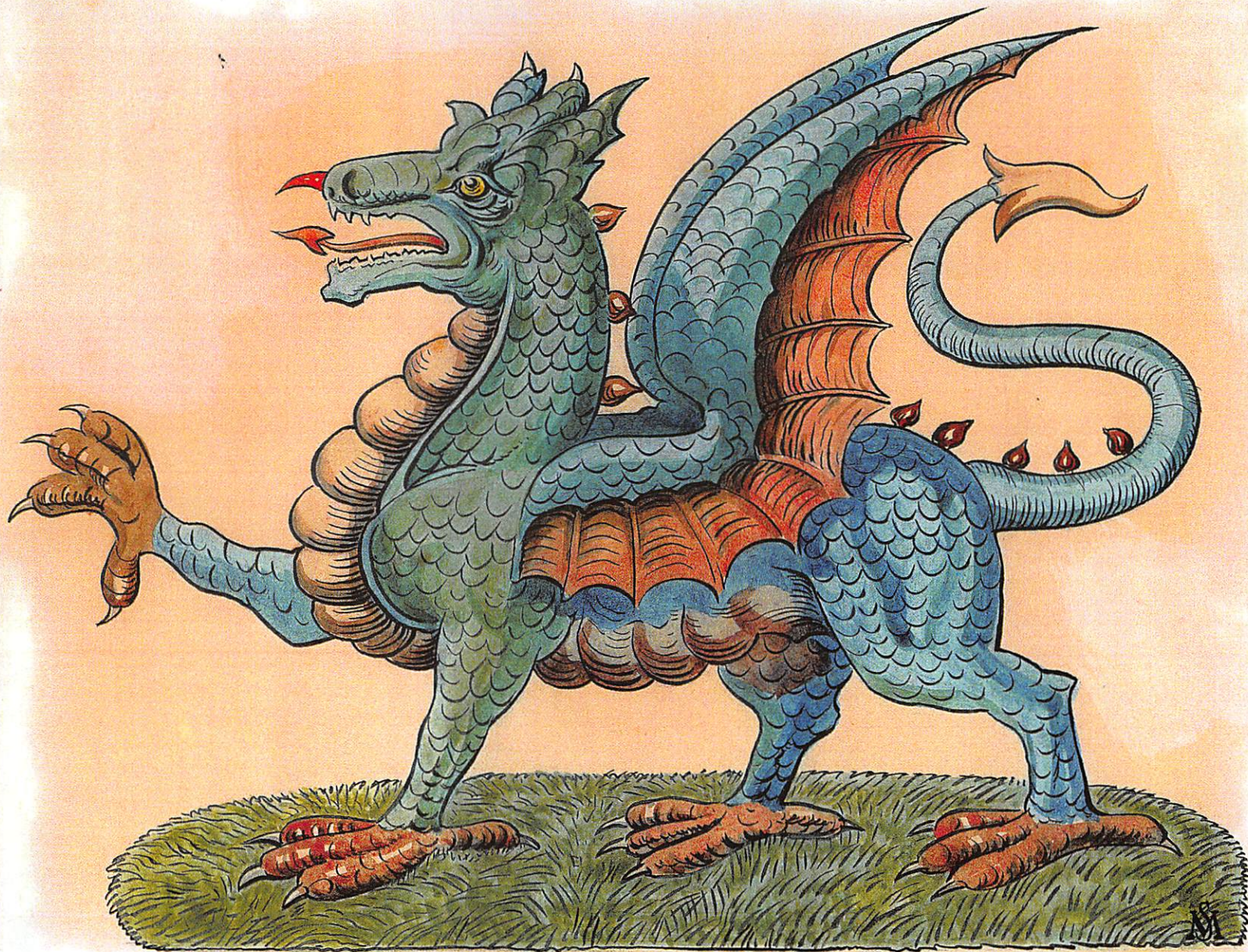
Looking forward to seeing you at the reunions, until then take care.

The Editor

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - 2007

APRIL	14th	Association AGM, Darts Competition, Buffet Dance at Sittingbourne.
	18th	141 Regt RAC (7th Bn The Buffs) Turning The Page Canterbury Branch.
	20th	London Branch QORWK Business Meeting
	21st	Ramsgate Branch AGM
	DTBC	Danish Branch Luncheon Meeting Keoge
MAY	4th	Albuhera Buffet
	12th	Canterbury Branch Annual Dinner
	15th	Albuhera Day
	19th	Colchester Branch Albuhera Dinner
JUNE	3rd	Canterbury Branch Annual visit to Ypres, Belgium.
	15th	London Branch QORWK Summer Social
JULY	DTBC.	Colchester Branch Outing
AUGUST	5th	Canterbury Reunion
	DTBC	Danish Branch Summer Meeting - North Zealand
SEPTEMBER	2nd	London Branch QOB's Tower of London Service
	9th	Maidstone Reunion
OCTOBER	20th	Ramsgate Branch Annual Dinner and Dance
NOVEMBER	8th	Festival of Remembrance in the Garden of Westminster Abbey
	11th	Remembrance Sunday
	11th	Canterbury Branch Armistice Day Luncheon
	30th	London Branch QORWK Christmas Social
DECEMBER	4th	Sittingbourne Branch Christmas Party
	7th	Ramsgate Branch Christmas Social
	9th	Canterbury Branch Carol Concert
	15th	Canterbury Branch Christmas Dinner and Social
	15th	Colchester Branch Christmas Dinner and Social

NOTE: Some of the above dates may be subject to alteration. You are advised to contact the relevant sponsors to confirm prior to making any arrangements.



Based on a Drawing made for The Regiment by The College of Heralds in 1881