

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



**Private Johnson Gideon Beharry VC
1st Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment**



THE JOURNAL

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VICTORIA CROSS

PRIVATE JOHNSON GIDEON BEHARRY

THE PRINCESS OF WALES'S ROYAL REGIMENT

At an investiture at Buckingham Palace on Wednesday 27th April 2005 Her Majesty The Queen decorated Private Johnson Beharry with the Victoria Cross.



25-year-old Johnson was awarded the ultimate military honour after saving more than 30 of his fellow soldiers from death in two incidents during bitter fighting last summer in Iraq. He is the first person to receive the award since the Falklands War in 1982 and the first living soldier to be given it since 1969.

Despite still recovering from serious head injuries he went to Buckingham Palace to receive the rare medal. Emigrating from Grenada at 18, he originally intended to go to college, but after working as a builder, he decided to join the army.

The citation reads:-

Private Beharry carried out two individual acts of great heroism by which he saved the lives of his comrades. Both were in direct face of the enemy, under intense fire, at great personal risk to himself (one leading to him sustaining very serious injuries).

His valour is worthy of the highest recognition.

In the early hours of the 1st May 2004 Beharry's company was ordered to replenish an isolated coalition forces outpost located in the center of the troubled city of Al Amarah. He was the driver of a platoon commander's Warrior armoured fighting Vehicle. His platoon was the company's reserve force and was placed on immediate notice to move. As the main elements of his company were moving into the city to carry out the replenishment, they were re-tasked to fight through a series of enemy ambushes in

order to extract a foot patrol that had become pinned down under sustained small arms fire, heavy machine gun fire, improvised explosive device and rocket-propelled grenade attack. Beharry's platoon was tasked over the radio to come to the assistance of the remainder of the company, who were attempting to extract the isolated foot patrol.

As his platoon passed a roundabout, en route to the pinned-down patrol, they became aware that the road to the front was empty of civilians and traffic - an indicator of a potential ambush ahead. The platoon commander ordered the vehicle to halt, so that he could assess the situation. Multiple rocket-propelled grenades then immediately hit the vehicle. Eyewitnesses report that the vehicle was engulfed in a number of violent explosions, which physically rocked the 30-tonne warrior.

As a result of this ferocious initial volley of fire, both the platoon commander and the vehicle's gunner were incapacitated by concussion and other wounds, and a number of the soldiers in the rear of the vehicle were also wounded. Due to damage sustained in the blast to the vehicle's radio systems, Beharry had no means of communication with either his turret crew or any of the other warrior vehicles deployed around him. He did not know if his commander or crewman were still alive, or how serious their injuries maybe. In this confusing and dangerous situation, on his own initiative, he closed the driver's hatch and moved forward through the ambush position to try to establish some form of communications, halting just short of a barricade placed across the road .

The vehicle was hit again by sustained rocket-propelled grenade attack from insurgent fighters in the alleyways and on the rooftops around his vehicle. Further damage to the warrior from these explosions caused it to catch fire and fill rapidly with thick, noxious smoke. Beharry opened up his armoured hatch cover to clear his view and orientate himself to the situation. He still had no radio communications and was now acting on his own initiative, as lead vehicle of a six-warrior convoy in an enemy-controlled area of the city at night. He assessed that his best course of action to save the lives of his crew was to push through, out of the ambush. He drove his warrior directly through the barricade; not knowing if there were mines or improvised explosive devices

placed there to destroy his vehicle. By doing this he was able to lead the remaining five warriors behind him towards safety.

As the smoke in his driver's tunnel cleared, he was able to make out the shape of another rocket-propelled grenade in flight heading directly towards him. He pulled the heavy armoured hatch down with one hand, whilst still controlling his vehicle with the other. However, the overpressure from the explosion of the rocket wrenched the hatch out of his grip, and the flames and force of the blast passed directly over him, down the driver's tunnel, further wounding the semi-conscious gunner in the turret. The impact of this rocket destroyed Beharry's armoured periscope, so he was forced to drive the vehicle through the remainder of the ambushed route, some 1500 metres long, with his hatch opened up and his head exposed to enemy fire, all the time with no communications with any other vehicle. During this long surge through the ambushes the vehicle was again struck by rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire. While his head remained out of the hatch, to enable him to see the route ahead, he was directly exposed to much of this fire, and himself hit by a 7.62mm bullet, which penetrated his helmet and remained lodged on its inner surface.

Despite this harrowing weight of incoming fire Beharry continued to push through the extended ambush, still leading his platoon until he broke clear. He then visually identified another warrior from his company and followed it through the streets of Al Amarah to the outside of the Cimic house outpost, which was receiving small arms fire from the surrounding area. Once he had brought his vehicle to a halt outside, without a thought for his own personal safety, he climbed out into the turret of the still-burning vehicle and, seemingly oblivious to the incoming enemy small arms fire, manhandled his wounded platoon commander out of the turret, off the vehicle and to the safety of a nearby warrior. He then returned once again to his vehicle and again mounted the exposed turret to lift out the vehicle's gunner and move him to a position of safety. Exposing himself yet again to enemy fire he returned to the rear of the burning vehicle to lead the disorientated and shocked dismounts and casualties to safety. Remounting his burning vehicle for a third time, he drove it through a complex chicane and into the security of the defended perimeter of the outpost, thus denying it to the enemy. Only at this stage did Beharry pull the fire extinguisher handles, immobilizing the engine of the vehicle, dismounted and then moved himself into the relative safety of the back of another warrior. Once

inside Beharry collapsed from sheer physical and mental exhaustion of his efforts and was subsequently himself evacuated.

Having returned to duty following medical treatment, on the 11th June 2004 Beharry's Warrior was part of a quick reaction force tasked to attempt to cut off a mortar team that had attacked a coalition force base in Al Amarah. As the lead vehicle of the platoon he was moving rapidly through the dark city streets towards the suspected firing point, when his vehicle was ambushed by the enemy from a series of rooftop positions. During this initial heavy weight of enemy fire, a rocket-propelled grenade detonated on the vehicle's frontal Armour, just six inches from Beharry's head, resulting in a serious head injury. Other rockets struck the turret and sides of the vehicle, incapacitating his commander and injuring several of the crew.

With the blood from his head injury obscuring his vision, Beharry managed to continue to control his vehicle, and forcefully reversed the warrior out of the ambush area. The vehicle continued to move until it struck the wall of a nearby building and come to rest. Beharry then lost consciousness as a result of his wounds. By moving the vehicle out of the enemy's chosen killing area he enabled other warrior crews to be able to extract his crew from his vehicle, with a greatly reduced risk from incoming fire. Despite receiving a serious head injury, which later saw him being listed as very seriously injured and in a coma for some time, his level-headed actions in the face of heavy and accurate enemy fire at short range again almost certainly saved the lives of his crew and provided the conditions for their safe evacuation to medical treatment.

Beharry displayed repeated extreme gallantry and unquestioned valour, despite intense direct attacks, personal injury and damage to his vehicle in the face of relentless enemy action.

All members of The Queen's Own Buffs Association join me in extolling the extreme bravery of Private Beharry and also the highly professional and dedicated service given by all members of The 1st Battalion. Their tour of duty in Iraq has put the excellence of The Princess Of Wales's' Royal Regiment firmly in the public eye. They are indeed most worthy successors to both our former Regiments. We wish Private Beharry a full recovery from his wounds.

*Crispin Champion, Colonel.
Association President.*

THE PRINCESS OF WALES'S ROYAL REGIMENT



The whole Regiment, past and present members, are extremely proud of the achievements of the 1st Battalion in Iraq with the numerous gallantry awards. These have dominated this period even though everyone else attends his or her normal duties.

1ST BATTALION

The Battalion returned from Iraq in October 2004. They then went on well-earned leave, came back to Barracks and moved to Paderborn in Germany where they have now settled in to (at least) a 10-year tour in the Armoured Warrior role. The main event was the publication of the honours and awards. This is given below:

OPERATIONAL LIST 1ST APRIL 2004 TO 30th NOVEMBER 2004

VICTORIA CROSS

PRIVATE JOHNSON GIDEON BEHARRY

MEMBER OF THE ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

WARRANT OFFICER CLASS 2 DALE EDWARD NORMAN

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER

MAJOR JAMES CHENEVIX COOTE

LIEUTENANT COLONEL MATTHEW PHILLIP MAER MBE

CONSPICUOUS GALLANTRY CROSS

SERGEANT CHRISTOPHER MARK BROOME

CORPORAL TERENCE ALAN THOMSON

MILITARY CROSS

CORPORAL MARK RICHARD BYLES

WARRANT OFFICER CLASS 2 DAVID GORDON FALCONER

MAJOR JUSTIN BURRITT FEATHERSTONE

SERGEANT DAVID ANTHONY HARRINGTON PERFECT

CORPORAL SEAN VITTY ERNEST ROBSON

PRIVATE TROY O'NEIL SAMUELS

LANCE CORPORAL BRIAN WOOD

MENTION IN DESPATCHES

PRIVATE GARY COOPER

PRIVATE DANIEL SHANE CRUCEFIX

PRIVATE THOMAS JAMES FERGUSON

CORPORAL LEE STEPHEN GIDALLA

CORPORAL SIMON JOHN GOWER

PRIVATE JOSEPH DOMINIC HARTNELL

CAPTAIN ROBIN HICKS

SERGEANT BENJAMIN LLEWELLYN KELLY

SERGEANT DANIEL MILLS

LANCE CORPORAL JOSESE TUNIDAU NATUMERU

LIEUTENANT WILLIAM JAMES PASSMORE

SERGEANT ANDRE PAUL JOSEPH PEPPER

MENTION IN DESPATCHES

LIEUTENANT BENJAMIN UDO PLENGE

LIEUTENANT ADAM PHILIP STYLER

MAJOR SIMON CHRISTOPHER THOMSETT

QUEEN'S COMMENDATION FOR VALUABLE SERVICE

MAJOR RICHARD TOBY WALCH

Note: Other members of the battle group, commanded by CO 1 PWRR Lt Col M Maer, were awarded an additional 4 Military Crosses and 2 Mention in Despatches.

Her Majesty The Queen and His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales awarded all medals over the period 27 and 28 April at Buckingham Palace.



Their next tour in Iraq is April 2006 (Op Telec 8).

2ND BATTALION

The Battalion deployed to Iraq in January 2005 and returns in July 2005. The Battalion is split and covers many tasks. Coys rotate with one Coy guarding Shaibah Logistic Base (SLB) one Coy guarding SLB and QRF, one Coy escorting, one Coy guarding tasks including locations in Baghdad. The Battalion's area recently increased with the inheritance from the Dutch Army who withdrew. In the first few weeks, the Battalion had 10 wounded due to a car bomb. All are now back at work. Road traffic accidents have taken their toll and some wounded are still under medical care.

The Battalion is in fine form. The Colonel of the Regiment visited them in Iraq in May. They arms plot to Northern Ireland in December 2005.

3RD BATTALION

Lt Col Tony Guthrie hands over command to Lt Col Adam Edmunds in mid 2005. Lt Col Guthrie goes on promotion to HQ 2 Inf Bde. He has had a very successful tour, which has seen the Battalion provide many TA soldiers in support of the Regular Army in Afghanistan and Iraq. This provision of support still goes ahead with a complete platoon joining the Royal Rifle Volunteers for deployment to Iraq in 2005. The remainder will complete Annual Camp in Tenby (South Wales).

EDITOR'S PAGE

Welcome once again to the pages of The Journal. The challenge now is to produce an issue with a reasonable number of pages. Do not think that is because there is not enough material coming through far from it. This issue started life with nearly 70 pages and it has had to be edited down quite drastically. So many thanks for your support and keep the articles coming. It may take a few issues before you see your handywork in print so please be patient.

If you are coming to the re-unions this year then please fill out the appropriate form, enclosed, for your lunch tickets. As far as the band concert is concerned there are very few tickets left now so don't delay.

The Regimental Association Christmas card this year will feature the Warrior's Chapel and will be available from August. Please fill out the enclosed 'Order Form' and let me have it ASAP.

Do not forget the annual subscription is:

£7 per year (UK),

£9 (Europe),

£12(USA & RSA)

£13 (Australia & New Zealand)

if your sub is due may I please have it soonest.

If you need to contact me the details are given below

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email: thejournal@peter-white.go-plus.net

You will be only too aware of the historical facts repeated in the following article. However in this the 60th Anniversary year of the end of the WW11 maybe we can just pause and reflect for a moment.

The Editor

LEST WE FORGET

May 1945, and the war in Europe comes to an end. A few months later and Japan surrenders. So ended a period of 6 years when the territorial expansionism and sadistic brutality of the Nazi thugs and the Sons

of Nippon, supported by Italy and other opportunists, cost the lives of more than 40 million people and traumatised countless more millions.

Despite the passage of 60 years the images of those times are indelibly marked on the memories of those that took part in the war and, thanks to modern media, their children, grandchildren and future generations to come.

None of those wartime images are more horrific than the gut wrenching pictures of the liberated prison camps, especially Auschwitz and Bergen Belsen, which have been shown recently on television.

By late 1944 it was becoming increasingly evident that Nazi Germany had aims and objectives other than territorial expansion. The Allies' setbacks of 1940 and 41 and the subsequent victories, although vivid then as they are now in the memories of those who took part, had already passed into history. The passing of 60 years has done nothing to diminish the debt of gratitude that is owed to those whose brave deeds and sacrifice brought victory. Neither have those years diminished the memories and images of the slave labour, prison, extermination and concentration camps.

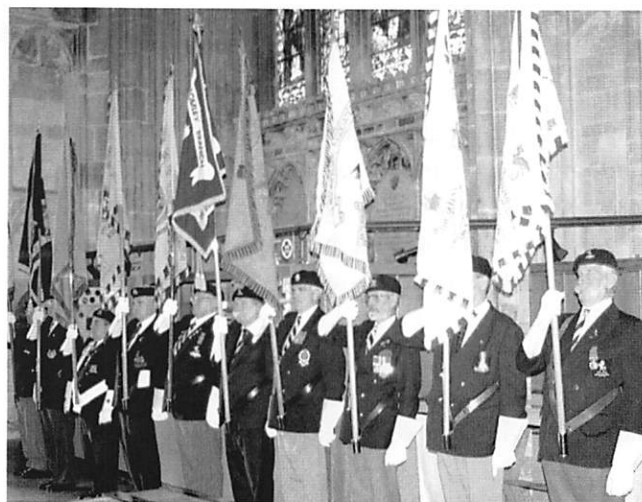
On July 24th 1944 Soviet troops discovered the abandoned Majdanek extermination camp followed by the discovery of the camps of Belzee, Sobibor and Treblinka in August of that year. The vast slave labour and extermination camp at Auschwitz, the inmates of which included 2,400 British POWs in the slave labour camp, was reached by Soviet troops on January 27th 1945 and the real scale of Nazi atrocities and human degradation started then to emerge.

On April 29th 1945 American troops liberated Dachau and later the horrors of Buchenwald were seen at first hand by American soldiers of the 9th Armoured Infantry Battalion. On April 15th 1945 the concentration camp at Bergen Belsen was reached by British troops.

These are the more infamous of over 6,000 camps, detention centres, extermination, slave labour and POW camps scattered throughout occupied Europe in which tens of millions were detained, abused, executed, gassed, worked or starved to death.



Auschwitz 2005



Canterbury 2004

In the Far East captured allied service men and interned civilians fared little better at the hands of the Japanese. The conditions experienced by those who were imprisoned under dreadful conditions, ravaged by disease, with little or no medicine, starvation rations and still forced to work, by the Japs, are well documented.

In the preceding years other massacres had become known - the murder of 97 men of the Royal Norfolks and other regiments on the outskirts of Dunkirk in 1940- the slaughter of the innocents in reprisal at Lidice in June 1942, and the execution, in early 1944, of the recaptured prisoners of war who had escaped, from Stalag Luft 111 at Sagan in east Germany (the Great Escape). These are just a few of the many such events that history records but even they were just a precursor to the scale of suffering found by the troops in the liberated camps.

Prisoners of the Nazis, like our soldiers, were each given a distinctive uniform or badge and a number. Our soldiers can still recall, regardless of their age, their service number. For those in Auschwitz they could not ever forget as their number was tattooed on their arms. Like wartime veterans at re-unions, survivors of these camps attend their liberation memorial days wearing, with significant pride and defiance, their stripped prisoner's hats as they stand in silent tribute to their families, friends and colleagues who did not survive. They also stand in tribute to those who fought and the many who died to save them.

Sadly that cost was high- nearly 500,000 British casualties, 3,000 of which were Buffs or West Kents,

paid the supreme price. Since then our veterans' ranks have been depleted even further. Like the survivors of the concentration camps the responsibility of remembrance falls on a diminishing band and to their 'younger' colleagues. That remembrance, since 1945, has been reinforced with the hope that such things would never again be allowed to scar the human conscience. In some areas of the world that has proved to be a forlorn hope but at least some of the perpetrators of new horrors have been brought to account.

The survivors of the liberated camps, together with the survivors of the Japanese Internment and POW camps, ask only that the world never forgets how they suffered and how much their liberation cost and what you, the veterans, who wear your berets and medals with the same pride as they wear their concentration camp striped caps, really fought against.

A contemporary philosopher wrote: -

"Those who forget history are doomed to repeat it"

The Editor

BRANCH NEWS

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.

A very successful half-year for the branch since the last report appeared in the "Journal"; the monthly meetings are still very well attended despite the enforced change of venue. There was an excellent turn out at the Remembrance Day Parade, with our contingent being one of the largest. Unfortunately there were some complaints as so many attended (which is good) that the ex-service associations were pushed away to the rear. We hope that will be improved on next year. Also the local press did not give the event much coverage. Mike Matson's wife, Ellen, wrote to the paper and the editor apologised and promised to do better next time. Our youngest member, Dan Price, laid the wreath on our behalf and did it very well indeed.

We were saddened by the death of one of our stalwarts, Bill Jewiss. Bill has been an Association member for a very long time, and attended most of the re-unions, parades and social events. Bill was a forthright character who believed in calling a spade a spade. He was also a most active member of The Royal British Legion, a Chairman of the local branch at one time, and had he lived a few more months would have served as organiser and collector for the annual Poppy Appeal for 60 years. His standing was recognised at his funeral, which was attended by many members of both The Queens Own Buffs and Royal British Legion. Both standards were on parade and the form of service reflected the pride he had shown in his regiment and past service life. Bill was due to receive a Veterans Certificate of Service at the Annual General Meeting but sadly died before the event. The Certificate will be framed and presented to his son at a later date. An obituary by the Rev. Bernard Foulger appears elsewhere in this "Journal".

Our annual dinner and dance again proved a great success and to me it seemed better than ever. Everybody who had anything to do with this event

deserves a vote of thanks. Our guests, who included Colonel Champion, Colonel Critchley, Major Dennis Bradley, Major Gwilliam, Major Peter White, and their wives, seemed to enjoy themselves. The meal was excellent and served up very nicely. Personally I think the decision to change from dance band to a disco was a wise one. Everyone's tastes seemed to be catered for; I even shook my walking stick in time to some of the music. In short, Paul and Jennie and helpers take a bow. We should ensure that the format carries on in the same way next year.

Following on with another social occasion, the Association A.G.M. was a pleasant affair. It is nice to get together with other branches and friends and everything went with a swing. Thanks again to our social committee. The A.G.M. itself is no doubt reported by our admirable Editor, Peter. We did not win the darts competition - again! I think it must be due to lack of practice since moving from the "Ivy Leaf Club", but there's always next year. Congratulations to the Maidstone branch for lifting the trophy.

We had been looking forward for a long time to seeing our Branch President, Colonel Peter Bishop, in his uniform as Deputy Lieutenant of Kent and at the A.G.M. we saw him in all his glory looking rather splendid. Quite a quick-change artist too, first as a civilian, then in full uniform, and back again in civvies, all in a very short space of time. Peter was there to present Certificates of Service to those veterans who did not attend at the luncheon at Canterbury last August. Among those to receive a Certificate was our own Gerry Cork, who, it was revealed, had served at one time with the "Special Operations Executive". He had kept quite about that, hadn't he?

At our own Branch A.G.M. the officers in situ were voted back en bloc; no surprise there then. They all do a grand job, not easy at times.

Now that the lighter events are coming we hope that those members who are wary of coming out after dark will be able to attend the meetings. I'm alright Jack, I get a lift, otherwise it might be the same for me.

Looking forward to meeting everyone at the re-unions in August and September; won't be long now - time goes too quickly for me.

Finally, please note that we have altered the dates of our meetings. They are now on the FIRST Tuesday in the month.

EAW

RAMSGATE BRANCH

SECRETARY: M.F.Milham. 185 Bradstow Way. Broadstairs. Kent. CTIO 1AX

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

MEETING: 3rd Friday in the month 19.45 hrs

Those who read through the branch notes will spot a change of style from Ramsgate, this is because our regular correspondent Jim Peall, is in hospital having suffered a stroke. Also in the QEQM hospital at Margate is Terry McClean, suffering from a virus, although we hear he is now out of intensive care and in Sandwich Bay Ward. Everybody in the branch wishes them both a speedy recovery. Whilst dealing with the news of those in the branch less fortunate than the rest of us, we also had the sad news that Chris Hirst has died.

Turning to much happier news; we congratulate both Eddie Gilliespie and Stan Matthews who have just celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversaries.

Our AGM has just been held, with 28 in attendance, The majority of the committee and officers were returned for a further stint. Before the AGM our Secretary, David Jones had decided to stand down and Peter Grevatt had to give up the post of Social Secretary owing to pressing home commitments, also John Phillips was finding difficulty carrying the standard on parades, although he could cope with funerals. All of them were thanked for their service to the branch and with good wishes for the future. As a result Malcolm Milham has taken over as Secretary and Deric King has added further to his duties as Branch Welfare Officer by taking on the job of Social Secretary. The Standard Bearer situation for parades will be sorted out in the near future.

Planning for our visit to the General's Rehearsal Parade and the Tower of London Service of Remembrance are now at an advanced stage it would seem that both will be well supported. At the time of

writing we are still awaiting more details for the various Lord Lieutenant's Victory Parades which are due to take place this summer.

On the social side, our annual dinner on 20th November was a total success, with 106 in attendance. Our main Guest, Col Peter Bishop OBE. DL. found several people he had served with at various tables and was able to refer to them during his speech. After the dinner Colonel Bishop presented two World War 11 veterans, Harry Pearce and Jack Lumpkin with their Certificates of Service.



Our Ladies Guild put on a lovely buffet for their social evening and were even polite enough to allow us to win at darts. Our Albuhera night social was held at the Odd Fellows Club, Ramsgate on Saturday 7th May and a cracking evening it was too. The music was just right and very well supported with plenty of dancing, the buffet was one of the best we have seen - all in all a great evening, enjoyed by all and incredible value for money to boot.

As I only found out I was 'volunteered' for this job two days ago and I am off on a cruise in 48hrs. I think it's a good time to end, as the packing still requires attention. But I am really making a good start as Branch Secretary, I return from holiday the day after the next meeting, sorry guys!!!!

Malcolm Milham

LONDON (BUFFS) BRANCH

SECRETARY: Leroy Gittings, 4 Prospect Cottages, Wandsworth, London. SW18 1NW.

Tel No. 0208 870 7290

MEETING PLACE: Ives Lounge, The Royal Hospital Chelsea.

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

After a pretty ropery few months I am at last feeling a lot better and after treatment can walk properly again. The treatment consisted of an injection normally given to expectant mothers, I hope I don't finish up giving birth.

I have now retired from an active part as a branch committee member for London Branch. At our last meeting, which was also our Annual General Meeting, the branch members really did me proud. I was presented with a Certificate of Merit by Major Patrick Gwilliam and the branch gave me a model of a Buff Standard bearer in full colour, an engraved silver tankard, a painting of Pte. Moyse, the Buff who would not Kow Tow to the Chinese and as a result had his head chopped off, and a cheque which will be enough to take my wife on holiday, I was, and still am, lost for words.



Bill and Betty Pinder

**We wish you both every happiness,
with our thanks for the support you have given
the Association over the years**

Anyway enough about me. At the branch Annual General Meeting, the following appointments were made:- Henry Parker as Chairman in place of Geoff Kirk who has stood down, Leroy Gittens took up the mantle of Secretary and Betty Correa was appointed Treasurer.

The Branch has asked to Turn the Page at the Warrior's Chapel on Wednesday 4th May. We had a great time last year when we visited Canterbury and Ray Cox turned the page. Ray was so proud to represent the branch that if he had not been wearing his white gloves I am sure that he would not have washed his hands since.

The Tower Service will be upon us before the next issue of The Journal comes out, so please make a note in your diaries. We are, as always, extending a sincere

welcome to all you old Buffs out there and of course any friends and relations who would like enjoy a very special day out. As usual we will be having a carvery lunch at the Tower Hotel afterwards

BP

CANTERBURY BRANCH

Secretary: H G B Delo, 46 Ulcombe Gardens, Canterbury, CT2 7QZ

Meeting Place: The Chaucer Club, Chaucer Hill, off Military Road, Canterbury.

Meeting: Last Thursday of month at 20.00hrs.

Regrettable the notes this month for Canterbury will be very sparse due to building work etc at home and having to change my old computer for a new one, we are all getting older and things do get worn out in time with being over worked as you all know.

Our sick list is very small at this present time with Norman Elgar still progressing well at home and Eddie Williams is now getting about better, he doesn't miss anything if he can help it.

Unfortunately, in April, we lost a very dear friend and colleague, Nobby Clarke. Nobby was a very staunch and keen member of the Association and the Branch, he will be sadly missed especially with his video camera at all the functions. Many members attended his funeral along with the Canterbury, Denmark and Ramsgate Branch Standards.

Many activities are planned for the Branch this year, our Annual Dinner in May at which Major Peter White and his wife, Vivienne, will be our guests, Visit to Ypres in July, Branch Holiday to Italy, Two reunions, Tower of London service, Band Concert at Leros Barracks, and this year we are holding a Christmas dinner and social at the Canterbury Golf Club, and with the three Services and Parade's throughout the County to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the end of WW11, this year will be a year to remember.

HD

DENMARK BRANCH

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

MEETINGS: Contact the Secretary for details.

BROMLEY BRANCH

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

MEETING PLACE: Bromley United Services Club.
33 London Road, Bromley.

MEETING: Last Saturday in the month at 20.00 hrs.

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.

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.

HYTHE & 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.

COLCHESTER BRANCH

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

MEETING PLACE: The White Hart Public House,
West Bergholt.

MEETING: 3rd Sunday in the month at 10.00 hrs

RAMSGATE BRANCH

(Ladies Guild)

SECRETARY: Mrs. Molly Webster, 11 Turnden
Gardens, Cliftonville, CT9 3HB . Tel 01843 295005

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

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

THE MINUTES OF THE 36TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION THE QUEEN'S OWN BUFFS (PWRR) HELD AT SITTINGBOURNE ON SATURDAY 12th MARCH 2005

PRESENT

Colonel C G Champion
Colonel P Bishop OBE DL
Lieutenant Colonel P P Critchley
Major D Bradley BEM
Major P White MM
Major P A Gwilliam
Mr G Arnot
Major J R Barrell OBE TD LLB
Mr. J Ferneyhough
Mr P Fleming
Mr H Delo
Mr H Crooks
Mr B Tresadern
Mr J A Jarrett
Mr G Dunk
Mr J Earl
Mr J H Read
Mr J Nankervis
Mrs D G Hall-Richardson
Mr B D Foulger
Mr H C J King
Mr C D Jones
Mr T Lane
Mrs O B Lane
Mr E Crouch
Mrs L J Crouch
Mr M K Ralph
Mr T G Johnson
Mr G T Cowling
Mr J M Tresadern
Mr T P Phillips
Mrs J E Lambourne
Mr D G Hogden
Mr A Moss
Mr A J England
Mr W J Pinder
Mr J Correa
Mr A Chesson

President
Sittingbourne - President
Chairman - East Kent
Association Secretary
Committee of Management
Chairman West Kent
Secretary - Colchester Branch
London Branch
Vice Chairman East Kent
Vice Chairman West Kent
Secretary - Canterbury Branch
Chairman - Canterbury Branch
Chairman 20 London RWK
Sittingbourne Branch
Sittingbourne Branch
Sittingbourne Branch
Chairman - Sittingbourne Branch
Chairman - Maidstone Branch
Secretary - Maidstone Branch
Sittingbourne, Padre
Ramsgate Treasurer
Ramsgate Secretary
Sittingbourne - guest
Sittingbourne - guest
Sittingbourne - guest
Sittingbourne - guest
Ramsgate Branch
Ramsgate Branch
Blackheath QORWK 20th London
Blackheath QORWK - Secretary
Ramsgate Branch
QORWK
Sandwich Branch
Sandwich Branch
London Branch
Chairman - London Branch
London
Secretary - Sittingbourne Branch

Mr P G Grevatt
Mr. R Cox
Mr. H M Parker

Ramsgate Branch
Canterbury/London Branch

APOLOGIES

Mrs J Allen
Mr B Bartlett
Mr J Burr
Mr B Mitchison

Secretary 62 Club
Bromley - Secretary
Chairman - Colchester Branch
Treasurer - Colchester 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.
- b. He thanked all members of the Sittingbourne Branch for hosting and arranging the AGM.
- c. He thanked the Committee of Management for their work during the past year.
- d. The Association Secretary was thanked for his work throughout the year.

2. THE RESTRUCTURING OF REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS AND ITS ROLE

Colonel C G Champion welcomed and introduced Colonel M J Ball who addressed the meeting on the undermentioned subjects:

- a. The future infantry structure.
- b. The locations, roles and activities of the PWRR battalions.
- c. The re-organisation of Regimental Headquarters
- d. Control of finances and its effect upon the Association.

Colonel Champion thanked Colonel Ball for his address, which received hearty applause from the members.

3. TRANSFER OF FUNDS TO PWRR

Proposed by Colonel P Bishop OBE DL
Seconded by Mr H Delo

I would like to propose that the Benevolent Fund be transferred (ring fenced QOB) to PWRR at the earliest convenience and that the General Account be transferred to PWRR (ring fenced QOB) on 1ST January 2006. Charity Commission Reference SM/341856/AFC gives authorisation.

The proposal was carried unanimously.

4. MINUTES OF THE 35TH MEETING.

The minutes of the 35th meeting having been previously circulated were confirmed as a true record with one minor amendment to the attendance list.

Mr L A Gittons to read - London Branch not Sittingbourne.

Proposed Mr W Pinder

Seconded Mr J Read

Carried unanimously.

5. ACCOUNTS FOR PERIOD ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2005.

Extracts of the independently examined Regimental Association accounts were distributed amongst the representatives, salient points were outlined by the Secretary. No points, comments or observations were raised. The Chairman thanked Major Bradley for his work on the accounts.

(Note: Branches who did not have a representative at the AGM may obtain a copy of the accounts by contacting the Association Secretary.)

Annual Independent Examination of Accounts.

a. The meeting resolved to approve the following accounts:

- (1) Benevolent Fund
- (2) Memorial Fund
- (3) Regimental Association Fund
- (4) Chairman's Fund

Proposed: D Hogben

Seconded: J Nankervis

Carried unanimously

6. BENEVOLENCE

Copies of the summary of benevolence were distributed outlining how funds had been spent. Letters of appreciation have been sent to the Army Benevolent Fund, SSAFA and the Royal British Legion.

Proposed: Major P White MM

Seconded: Mr J Ferneyhough

Passed unanimously with a vote of thanks to Major J Rogerson (RHQ) and the Association Secretary.

7. ANNUAL GRANTS

- a. £75.00 each from the Benevolence Fund to both Canterbury Cathedral and All Saints Church Maidstone.
- b. £300.00 to the Kohima Band £150.00 - Canterbury Reunion £150.00 - Maidstone Reunion.
- c. £200.00 - 3 PWRR (purchase of table/chairs).
- d. £200.00 Queen's Own Buffs Journal - £100.00 = travelling expenses.
- e. £200.00 - Cricket Tent Club
- f. Association Band Concert - £6.00 per head - Association ED pay.

Proposed: Mr W Pinder

Seconded: Mr D Jones

Carried unanimously.

8. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMEN

The President thanked the outgoing Vice Chairmen for their work over the last three years.

A presentation was made as a token of the Associations gratitude to the outgoing Chairmen By the President.

The President then appointed:

Major P White MM - Vice Mr J Ferneyhough as Vice Chairman for East Kent .

Major J Barrell OBE TD LLB - Vice Mr P Fleming as Vice Chairman for West Kent.

9. CANTERBURY REUNION 2005

The President outlined the arrangements for the 2005 reunion. Major D Bradley gave the detail, which included amendments to the catering plan additional entertainment and a speaker system. He stated that the amendments would improve the overall standard of the event.

A résumé of the outline plan is at Annex A.

10 MAIDSTONE REUNION 2005

Major D Bradley outlined the arrangements for the Reunion 2005. He explained that an apology and refund had been received from the Haslett Theatre caterers in respect of the failed buffet 2004. Discussions have taken place in the hope of improving the standard of catering.

A résumé of the outline plan is at Annex B.

11. MAJOR EVENTS 2005

June	25th	ASSOCIATION BAND CONCERT LEROS BARRACKS
July	5th	LORD LIEUTENANT PDE (60th Anniversary Parade) ROCHESTER
July	7th	LORD LIEUTENANT PDE (60th Anniversary Parade) MAIDSTONE
July	9th	LORD LIEUTENANT PDE (60th Anniversary Parade) CANTERBURY
July	10th	WWII CEREMONIES - LONDON
August	7th	CANTERBURY REUNION
Sept.	11th	MAIDSTONE REUNION
Nov	10th	GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE WESTMINSTER ABBEY

A complete itinerary of dates to remember is shown at Annex C to these minutes.

12. ASSOCIATION SECRETARIES ADMINISTRATIVE POINTS

The Association Secretary briefed the membership on the following subjects:

- a. Branch Nominal Roles/Association database
- b. Communicating
- c. "Spirit of the Regiment", Dover Castle.
- d. London Commemorative Event 60h Anniversary WWII
- e. Malta Commemoration trip 'Not Forgotten' Association.
- f. Funerals.

13 ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

Major P White MM Journal Editor gave a report and distribution breakdown on the Journal.

Distribution breakdown:

UK	404
Overseas	35
Branches	159
Complimentary	25
Total	623

Unfortunately there are at present approximately 48 non-payers who will have to be deleted from the distribution list. This will reduce the total distribution to 575. To the immediate future we will continue to produce two quality journals per year.

14. LORD LIEUTENANT OF KENT WWII COMMEMORATION PARADES

The Association Secretary communicated the available information to the membership.

- a. Dates of Events - see para 12.
- b. Timings for all events (approximate at present)
 - (1) Form up 1000 hrs.
 - (2) Step off 1015 hrs
 - (3) Pass Saluting Dais 1040 hrs.
 - (4) Cathedral Grounds - Dismiss 1045 hrs
- c. Cathedral Services 1100 hrs. Tickets will be allocated to branches with the priority going to WWI and WWII veterans marching parties.
- d. All branch members are invited to take part in the parade.
- e. Bands. The Parachute Regiment and Kohima Band are to lead the parade.

15. REPORT ON SALES OF ASSOCIATION CHRISTMAS CARDS

Sale of Christmas cards in 2004 equalled £850.30. The production and postage costs were £448.83, which gives a profit of £401.41. To which can be added the value of current stock, which equals £110.00 giving a total of £511.41 Christmas cards will again be on sale this year and we are looking to produce a new design depicting the Warrior's Chapel.

16. ITEMS FOR SUBMISSION BY BRANCHES

No communication on this subject had been received from Association Branches.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a. In answer to a question raised by Mr H Delo, Secretary Canterbury Branch, concerning the luncheon arrangements of partners on the 'Spirit of the Regiment' Day - Major D Bradley gave clarification.
- b. A copy of the new book 'Royal West Kent History' was issued to all Branch Secretaries present.

18. DATE AND VENUE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2006 SATURDAY 22ND APRIL 2006

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 1810 hrs.

ANNUAL INTER BRANCH DARTS MATCH AND SOCIAL

Saturday 12th March 2005

As is customary, after the Association's Annual General Meeting, a dance, social and inter Branch Darts Match was held. The Sittingbourne Branch laid on a really great evening which was enjoyed by all and our thanks must go to Jim Read, the Branch



Chairman, Tony Chessun, Branch Secretary and the committee for all their hard work. Special mention must be made of Paul Fleming who tirelessly works to ensure that we all have a good time. Well done Paul.

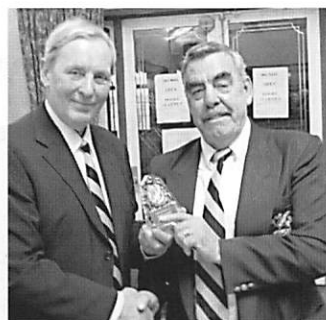
The Darts match was won by Maidstone Branch, who's recent recruiting campaign seems to have paid off producing some new younger members



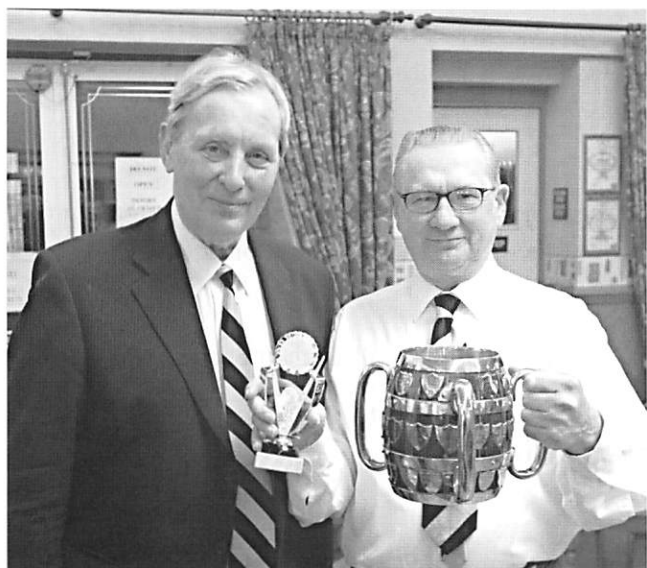
Some of the members of Ramsgate Branch Darts Team



Ivor Sedge receiving the Shield and his individual trophy on behalf of Maidstone Team.



Colonel Champion seen here with Len Holman with his trophy for the highest individual score.



Jim Nankervis, Captain of the winning team and Chairman of Maidstone Branch, receiving the Winner's Trophy and individual trophy from Colonel Champion



Ramsgate Team Captain, Peter Grevatt, receiving the runners up trophy from Colonel Champion

who are also such good dart players. Ramsgate Branch were the runners up and Len Holman of Canterbury Branch achieved the highest individual score.

After the Darts match and before the social got under way several presentations were made. Colonel Champion presented each of the outgoing Vice Chairmen, Paul Fleming (West Kent) and John Ferneyhough (East Kent) with a set of Regimental cufflinks and sincerely thanked them for their hard work during their term of office.



Colonel Champion with, on the left, Paul Fleming and, on the right, John Ferneyhough

A special presentation of a Meritorious Service Certificate was then made by the President to Bill Pinder to mark his forthcoming retirement as Secretary of the London Buffs Branch a post which he has held for many years during which time he has also unfailingly selflessly supported the Association.

In August last year the Association honoured 25 veterans of our Association who served during World War 11. At a special luncheon they each received a Certificate of Service

from the Lord Lieutenant of Kent, Mr. Allan Willett CMG. Due to the restriction on numbers at that lunch subsequent presentations have been made and will be made over the next few months to other veterans who could not attend. Two members of Sittingbourne Branch fell into that category. Very sadly, before a presentation could be arranged one of the veterans, Bill Jewiss, who had served with 5th Battalion The Buffs, passed away.



Bill seen here receiving his Meritorious Service Certificate from Colonel Champion

The Deputy Lieutenant, Colonel Peter Bishop OBE DL presented Bill's Certificate of Service to the Chairman of the Sittingbourne Branch, Jim Read, who will pass on the certificate to Bill's family. On a happier note Gerry Corke, the second veteran, was present with his son to receive his Certificate of Service from the Deputy Lieutenant. Gerry joined The Buffs in 1942 and after training was posted to 9th Battalion. From there he

volunteered for service with the S.O.E and with them served behind enemy lines supporting Italian and Yugoslav partisan groups. In the closing stage of the war he was transferred to 1st. Bn. The Buffs in Trieste and later went with them to Greece. He was demobbed in 1947.



Gerry Corke receiving his Certificate of Service from Colonel Peter Bishop OBE DL

HOW WE WON WORLD WAR 11

OR

“IF ONLY HITLER HAD KNOWN”

by The late Major Geoffrey Cox MC

As I was a sergeant in the 5th Battalion The Buffs (TA) I was called up a few days before war was declared. I packed my kit bag, assembled my FSMO (Field Service Marching Order), bade farewell to Mrs. Brown, my landlady, and caught a bus into Ashford where I reported to the drill hall. Here there was a scene of great activity, weapons were drawn and cleaned, ammunition, extra clothing and stores issued. The Company Commander sent for me and told me that I was to take my platoon over to Wye, where we were to guard a small petrol storage installation, adjoining the station. We were issued with three white bell tents, a cooking stove and an assortment of cooking utensils, which we loaded, together with ourselves, into two civilian requisitioned lorries and set off for our battle station. On arrival I met the installation manager who showed me round and suggested where we might pitch the tents; he also made available a large garage, which served as a mess hall and cookhouse. We had no trained cook but one lance corporal, an ex-regular soldier, said he knew a bit about it so he got the job and proved to be very successful. There was no system for supplying rations and I was told that we should draw stores from the local village shop up to a value of three shillings and sixpence (17½ pence) per man per day. Every day I went shopping accompanied by a soldier and we would stagger back, each weighed down with two huge wicker baskets - there was no transport!

At 11 am on Sunday 3rd September 1939, the Prime Minister Mr. Neville Chamberlain spoke to the nation telling them that as the Germans had not replied to the British and French ultimatum to stop fighting in Poland, we were at war. This announcement was followed immediately by an air raid warning. Thinking that German aircraft would soon appear I gave the order “Strike the bell tents!” as I felt certain that such a target would prove irresistible to the enemy. A few minutes later the all clear sounded and we erected our tents again. The next day some camouflage paint arrived, so we painted them and felt much more secure. A few days passed before I was confronted with my first major crisis in the war. It

happened at lunchtime. One of the soldiers, an ex farm labourer and not very bright, put a slice of tinned pear into his mouth having failed to notice that a large wasp was also enjoying the fruit. The wasp, infuriated, stung him in the mouth. How was I to react to such a problem? I rushed to a nearby public telephone box, looked in the directory for the district nurse and rang her up. Fortunately she was in. She told me to make the victim sick and that she would come at once. Minutes later she arrived on her pushbike complete with basket on the front holding her surgical bag. The soldier was saved, although some weeks later he was discharged as he did not possess the necessary intelligence to be an efficient infantryman. I am sure he served his country better on the farm. Three or four days later we were visited by Captain Sir Charles Tuff, a member of the 6th Battalion The Buffs, who were made up from old soldiers mostly from the 1914-18 War - I noticed that he carried his badges of rank on the sleeve of his service dress, as was the custom in the early part of that war.

We were relieved and returned to the Ashford drill hall. We were all billeted out. My billet was The Victoria Arms at the top of the road. Here accommodation was very limited for not only did I have to share the same room as one Sgt Clark but also the ~ double bed! All our meals were provided by the George Hotel in the High Street and three times a day, breakfast, lunch and high tea we paraded and marched up to the hotel. Soon however we were on the move again, this time to take over guard duties at the radar station at Dunkirk, near Faversham. Great mystery surrounded these radar stations and no one knew what they were for. One popular rumour was that they controlled a mysterious ray, which would bring down enemy aircraft; it was alleged that motorists in the vicinity of these stations had reported that their engines cut out for no apparent reason! Here we were given a 2nd Lieutenant as our Platoon Commander but he was completely useless and was later either cashiered or dismissed the service.

In October 1939, I was told to report to Battalion HQ in Canterbury with all my kit as I was to be posted. On reporting, I found that I was to go as a Sergeant Instructor to the Army Gas School at Fort Tregantle in Cornwall close to Tor Point, just over the River Tamar from Devonport Dockyard. The fort was a grim building, surrounded by a moat, one of the many defences built to defend England from a threatened French invasion under Napoleon. It was reported to be haunted and after the War (in 1954) I met Major General Charles Lamplough (Royal Marines) who told me of his encounter with the ghost whilst he was serving in the fort. He had gone to bed and woke later to find a man standing by his bed. He asked him what he wanted, whereupon the man leapt at him and tried to strangle him. After a terrific struggle Lamplough managed to beat him off and the man took refuge in a cupboard but when Lamplough opened the door it was empty. Next morning he reported sick with injuries to his throat and neck. He told me that several years later he was recounting this story to some friends whilst lunching in his club when someone at the next table came over and apologising for overhearing his conversation said that he had had a similar experience whilst stationed at Fort Tregantle. Later The War Office issued an order that the bedroom was not to be used any more as a bedroom and it became a store. The origin of the ghost is not known for sure but is believed to be that of a subaltern who, at a riotous mess night, had been impaled on the entrance door to the fort. Unfortunately his drunken friends had forgotten all about him and in the morning he was found to be dead.

Three things stick out in my mind when I think of Fort Tregantle. The first was the effectiveness of the naval patrols in quelling disturbances in Plymouth and the high speed at which they cleared out drunks from The Long Bar in Union Street. The second was seeing the light cruiser HMS Exeter, heavily damaged with her bridge shot away, tied up in Devonport after her victorious encounter with the German battleship Graf Spee in the Battle of the River Plate, off Montevideo in Uruguay. The third was a long night train journey from Plymouth to Paddington travelling on leave for Christmas 1939. The train was packed with service personnel, standing in the corridors, no lights, no refreshments but much ribald humour. After I had been at the Gas School for a couple of months I applied to the Commandant (Col Toye VC, The Middlesex Regt) to be considered for a commission; I had previously applied in the 5th Bn The Buffs soon

after war was declared but my papers had been lost. This was probably fortunate for me as I might well have found myself commissioned into one of the unfortunate battalions which were overwhelmed during the German blitzkrieg in France in 1940, and ending up as a prisoner of war for the duration.

In March 1940 I reported to 163 OCTU in Farnborough, Hants, which was situated almost opposite The Queen's Hotel. In the hotel were three bars one Officers' Only, one Cadets' and one for Other Ranks. During my time in 163 OCTU I remember King George VI visiting the unit and watching us at PT. Shortly before we finished the course, France was overrun by The Wermacht and the air was alive with rumours and counter rumours. However we were duly commissioned, kitted out in our smart Service Dress uniforms complete with Sam Browne and swagger stick and despatched to our units. As a Buff, I was posted to 12 ITC in Canterbury, where I reported in early June.

12 ETC was born from Depot The Buffs and had a strength of approximately 2000 All Ranks in 1940, whereas the strength of the Depot pre war was less than 100. The ITO was commanded by Lt Col G R Howe who, whilst being a first class soldier, was a very kind and considerate man. The unit occupied four barracks, the original old Depot, the Cavalry Barracks, Chaucer Barracks and the New Barracks (after the war renamed Howe Barracks in honour of Colonel Howe), modern Belisha buildings which were not completed until the end of 1939. Just before I joined the ITO, due to the Germans overrunning Northern France in May 1940, raw recruits had to be deployed to take up defensive positions in East Kent in case the enemy invaded. One company of ill equipped and untrained men under Lieut G A H Proctor was ordered to defend a vast area of coastline in the Reculver area with, in support, one field gun from World War I. He was later relieved by Major (later Lt Col) T N Penlington who was staggered to find such a force commanded by a subaltern, but later confessed to Colonel Howe "that the defensive positions had been sited with great skill". Another amusing episode involved 2/Lieut T Beevers, who was told to take a platoon of recruits down to Margate in requisitioned transport and to defend the pier. This he did, but before he could move his men into position, the official in charge of the turnstile on the pier insisted that he paid one penny per man before they would be allowed on. He managed it with

difficulty as a junior subaltern's pay then was only 11/- (55p) per day and 3/6d (17½p) made a large dent in this! The pier turned out to be a popular post as, once they had erected their sandbags and sited their only Bren gun, the troops were able to relax by watching "What the butler saw" and playing the various pin tables, which proved quite lucrative for the Margate Borough Council.

Having been an instructor at the Army Gas School I was appointed Gas Officer, which also included Passive Air Defence. To help me I had two assistants, one Sgt Parrott, a former Provost Sergeant, and the other Mr. Halliday, a civilian who was a dedicated member of St John's Ambulance. Nothing pleased the latter more than to bandage casualties either real or imaginary on exercises. Both were the butt of much innocent fun from the crowds of young subalterns who passed through the Depot. On one occasion Sgt Parrott, assisted by Mr. Halliday, gave a demonstration on the correct way of dealing with incendiary bombs. Sgt Parrott lit a practice bomb and then in loud voice said, "What you must never do is to throw a bucket of water on the bomb as it will explode into many parts as I will now demonstrate". He threw the contents of the bucket on the bomb and it went out like a light! Red in the face he then lighted a second bomb, which he tackled in the approved manner with a stirrup pump, Mr. Halliday pumping. Unbeknown to both, the audience of subalterns had stuffed up all the holes in the pump so nothing happened and the bomb blazed merrily. Next on the programme was the correct way to save a person from the roof of a burning building. A volunteer was called for and he shinned up a ladder, collected the dummy and brought it down very efficiently. Not perfect however, so Parrott announced that he would demonstrate the correct method. Collecting the dummy he said he would be coming down - he did! Missing the first rung of the ladder, he dropped the dummy, just managed to grab the ladder and slid down on his eyebrows. However when the New Barracks were bombed in 1943, after I had left, I am told that Mr. Halliday was most courageous and did his duty well.

Being on the direct route from France to London, several bombs were dropped on East Kent, either in deliberate raids or more often by enemy planes jettisoning their loads whilst attempting to escape from RAF fighters or having been hit by Ack Ack fire. One such unexploded bomb landed in the churchyard of St Martin's church, which was just below the New

Barracks, a few hours before one of our subalterns, Thomas Bruce, was due to be married. As a result the wedding had to be switched to another church at the very last moment. I was an usher and as Thomas's father was a very elderly retired admiral, a number of rather ancient naval officers attended. I asked one of them on arrival whether he was to be placed on the bride or bridegroom's side, to which he replied, "Put me on the starboard side, boy". This worried me slightly as I did not know whether this was left or right but fortunately I made a correct guess.

Still on the subject of air raids, after I had left and was serving with the 70th Battalion in Folkstone, I suggested to my fiancée, Dreda, that we should go over to Dover to see the film "Gone with the Wind", which she was keen to see. However she thought that Dover was a bit too prone to attack so was not too keen to go there. Then I discovered that the film was on at The Regal Cinema in Canterbury, so over we went on the bus. As we came out of the cinema at about 5 pm, the air raid siren went so, telling her it was probably a false alarm, we set off down the High Street in search of tea. A few minutes later a German Messerschmitt flew over us machine gunning the street. We hit the pavement rapidly and as I looked up I could see the swastika markings on the plane and the pilot clearly. There was a clatter as spent cartridge cases landed all around us and Dreda remarked that there was something rather hot in front of her face, was one of them. Later that evening we were intending to have dinner in the city but when darkness came again the sirens sounded. Believing there would be another raid, we decided to return to Folkstone immediately, which was just as well as the city was bombed that night in the first of the Baedeker raids.

To familiarise people in wearing gasmasks, on Monday mornings they had to be worn for a half an hour. Making my rounds I noticed that this was a popular time for people to have their morning rear, so the following week I let off tear gas cannisters in the lavatories. Doors burst open and men appeared fully dressed, with tears streaming from their eyes. From then onwards the gas mask half hour was not a particularly popular time for going to the lavatory.

In August 1940 I remember watching German bombers going over in mass, tight formations to deliver the first daylight bombing attack on London. It wasn't long before our fighters got in amongst them, scattering them in all directions and shooting a

number down. They did not try the same tactics again. During "The Battle of Britain" several shot down Luftwaffe personnel were brought into the barracks and put into the guardroom cells before being taken to RAF interrogation centres in the London area. A few were arrogant, most were resigned but on one occasion we did see a prisoner in tears when he was taken out of his cell - the Corps of Drums were practising and he thought that this was for his benefit before he was taken out and shot. Many were astounded to see London so intact, for Nazi propaganda had told them that it had been devastated and some thought that they were taken along special routes to hide the ruins from them. During this time no large, planned raids were made against the barracks but on one occasion during a hit and run raid a bomb was dropped in the vicinity of Chaucer Barracks, demolishing one of the company offices. There was concern as inside were a clerk and an ATS girl. Fortunately they dived under one of the WD very stout, wooden tables and although the roof crashed down, the only casualty was to the clerk who sustained a black eye. This, everyone reckoned, was given to him by the ATS girl under the table. On another occasion my friend Tim Bevers, hearing a bomb dived under the Adjutant's desk and as he did so he received a colossal thump on the neck. He thought he had been hit and indeed he had by The Manual of Military Law and Kings Regulations as they fell off a shelf.

In addition to being Gas Officer, I was also Assistant Adjutant and Sports Officer. With a strength of 2000, we were able to field useful sides and we were particularly strong at rugger, having one potential Cambridge Blue and two Gloucester players in the team. We were well on in the season, having won most of our games, when one day there was a knock on my door and in came a stocky, little RE sergeant. He wanted to fix up a match. I asked him what his unit was and he replied "201 Tunnelling Company RE". Well I knew that such a unit numbered just over a hundred men, so in rather a superior tone I told him we had a very full fixture list and we were pretty strong. This did not deter him and he felt sure his side would give us a good game, so very condescendingly I agreed to fit them in. We played and they beat us by over forty points to nil! It transpired that the Wigan Rugby League side had volunteered for the war and had joined the 201 Tunnelling Company RE en masse. Later they saw service in The Middle East here a number were killed and wounded. Amongst other

opponents were the RN Barracks at Chatham. We took over Rugger, Soccer and Hockey teams but the highlight was the Boxing Tournament in the evening followed by, for the officers, a hilarious guest night in the Ward Room. Although we were successful in the field sports, we never succeeded in winning the boxing. As the naval hospitality was so tremendous I persuaded Colonel Howe, an abstemious man, to allow a return fixture at Canterbury, to be followed by a guest night in the Officers' Mess. This was on the clear understanding that our guests should leave at a reasonable hour and in a sober condition. I remember long after dinner playing darts and my partner, Jeremy Pym, hitting the doorknob with a dart, shouting "Double Top" and then passing out. I was carried to bed shortly afterwards. Apparently our naval friends finally departed in the early hours of the morning, seen off by Colonel Howe, who expressed his sorrow that they were leaving so soon.

On another occasion we took an officers' squash team over to play the Ward Room at Chatham. We won easily by five games to one. Afterwards, before dinner we were playing "Dart Bowls" on the lawn in front of the Mess and were winning handsomely when the air raid alarm went. Immediately we trooped off to the shelters, as it was a strict rule that during raids, all personnel not engaged in active defence should take cover. As soon as we arrived there the "All Clear" went. Later at dinner the Duty Officer of the Watch came up and apologised for the inconvenience but said he had noticed that the Ward Room were getting hammered so thought he should do something. He sounded "The Alert" and thousands took to the shelters. That night we stayed at "The Sun Hotel" in Chatham. I shared a room with Tim Beevers and on waking, rang for tea. Nothing happened so I went downstairs to rouse some one but found the hotel strangely deserted. Apparently during the night Chatham had suffered it's worst air raid to date but we had slept right through it.

I spent about two years at The Depot and a very happy time it was. There I learnt to drive a truck and a motorbike (only brigadiers and above did not have to know how to ride motorbikes, as they were allowed to ride pillion). I was also taught how to cross Dannert (ie Rolled) Barbed wire fences, by rushing up to them, leaping in the air with one's arms outstretched and held in front of one's face, on to the wire. The effect was quite amazing and it felt like falling onto a foam

mattress. Fortunately I never did it in anger as I don't think the idea was very practical.

During my time at Canterbury I was sent on two courses. The first was entitled a "Roof Spotters Course", which really boiled down to aircraft recognition. It lasted for a week and was held at de Havilland's works in Hatfield. I was billeted in Hertford on the local wine merchant, who looked after me extremely well. Also billeted there was an extremely attractive member of the FANNYS (First Aid Nursing Yeomanry Service) which made my stay all the more pleasant. It was not a very strenuous course and we spent our time studying silhouettes of aircraft, films and models. When we came to take our exam at the end of the course, it was a very light hearted affair. Each student was invited to put five shillings in the kitty and the chap who correctly identified the highest number of aircraft scooped the jackpot! My second course was on "Bomb Disposal", which was held in the former TA Drill Hall, in Southborough between Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells. When I heard about the course I was terrified, convinced that I was about to be blown up at any minute but in fact we seemed to spend most of the time travelling around West Kent, peering down holes watching little men dig out UXP (unexploded) bombs. Fortunately I never had to diffuse a live bomb.

Having been an instructor at the Army Gas School in Tregantle I was called upon to form a demonstration team, which toured round SE Command giving instruction in Chemical Warfare to all types of unit. The team consisted of myself, a sergeant and about ten men and we visited every imaginable type of unit within the command. Sometimes we would perform in front of a complete battalion and on other occasions we would demonstrate to a small outpost on sentry duty, eg beneath Dover Cliffs. It was tremendous fun and as a result I widened my knowledge of army, naval and air force units considerably. We spent about two months travelling all round the Command Area and when it was over I received a very complimentary letter from the Army Commander thanking me for our efforts. Having read it and passed on the contents to my team, I crunched it up and threw it into the waste paper basket. I wish now that I had kept it, for it was signed by no lesser person than B L Montgomery, Lieutenant General, Army Commander!

I have very happy memories of "The Beerhawks", a club we formed in the mess and largely centred round

the craze at the time for playing bar billiards. Amongst other sporting activities undertaken by the club was a cricket match played on Boxing Day 1941 against The Sturry Fire Brigade in the snow, after which we all adjourned to The George and Dragon, Fordwich for liquid refreshment. One of the favourite pubs for club members was The Saracen's Head at the top of Burgate Street (alas since pulled down), which was kept by a redoubtable lady called Mrs. Bristow and her daughter Min. Both showed great hospitality and kindness to us and we spent many happy evenings there, eating, drinking and singing round the piano. In common with many other cathedral cities, Canterbury has (or had) a great number of pubs. One evening Tim Beevers and I set out to tour most of them but only succeeded in getting to the bottom of Military Road some four hundred yards. Instead of having a half pint in each pub, we had several pints, in amongst others The Little Wonder (demolished), The Leopard's Head and The Royal Dragoon.

The subject of drink reminds me of an RAMC doctor, who was under close arrest prior to a court martial for passing dud cheques. Each day the duty officer had to take him for a walk and one of his favourite routes was across The Old Park to Fordwich (and a drink or two in The George and Dragon) and back along the main Sturry road. One day when returning along the road, the doctor flagged down a car for a lift. It was only a Divisional Commander, who obliged little knowing that his passengers were a prisoner and his escort. The doctor's escapades eventually came to the CO's notice, who ordered that in future he couldn't spare officers to sit with him so a guard of an NCO and ORs was placed in the adjoining room. Little did they know that at night, our imaginative doctor used to knot his sheets together and climb out of the window, in order to visit his favourite hostelrys. One night it was raining and he could not climb back up, so undaunted he went in through the guardroom, telling the dosey NCO not to worry as he had only slipped out for a pee.

If the Germans invaded, Canterbury was to be a strong point and the Depot personnel were to form part of the defensive troops. Various weapons pits etc were dug and parts of the ancient city walls were reinforced with sandbags to accommodate LMG positions. The local Home Defence units contributed to the defence and every now and then we had to turn out on Sundays, which was not very popular, on exercises to test the efficiency of the plan. One Sunday, a special

that there was a full turn out on the follow up exercise. General Horrocks, who was later to achieve great distinction as one of FM Montgomery's Corps commanders, had his divisional HQ in Chaucer Barracks, Canterbury. One night he was invited to a guest night and also invited was an elderly, retired Buffs officer Capt Harry Baird, who had been one of Horrock's instructors at Sandhurst many years before. All the young officers were standing politely in the anteroom awaiting the general's arrival. As he entered the room, Harry Baird greeted him in a loud voice "Hello young Horrocks, never thought you would get as far as you have done!" From then on the party went with a great swing, ending up with the usual uproarious games, which are the fashion on such evening and the general entered fully into the swing of things.

During the war both the 1st and 2nd Battalion bands were stationed at The Depot, under their two first class bandmasters "Doc" Foster and Salmon. The former was a great character and a fine sportsman; the latter was commissioned after the war and conducted one of the RA bands. The combined band was a great morale booster and we had many splendid concerts. Having both bands under his command was a source of much pleasure and pride to Colonel Howe, as military bands and music were one of his principal interests. He wrote a small book entitled "Drums and Drummers". One day a very brash, young subaltern arrived from overseas

and that evening at dinner seated himself on the Colonel's left, a place which had for years been occupied by a delightful character, Major (retired) "Flash" Peareth who was editor of The Dragon. In no way embarrassed the young officer engaged the CO in conversation, saying in a loud voice "that in my last unit, colonel, the CO was absolutely potty about his band". The next day he was posted.

A last reminiscence of The Depot. As I have remarked earlier, I was the unit Gas Officer. One lovely summer's day the Colonel sent for me and told me that there was a wasp's nest in his garden and suggested I took some of my gas and smoked them out. Accordingly I selected a large container of "DM Gas", a non-lethal but highly unpleasant, toxic substance. I approached the nest, shoved in the cannister, lit the fuze and retired. Unfortunately I had not checked for wind direction, with the result that a cloud of thick gas drifted off down Military Road. This was the only time I believe that an English city was threatened by gas. Luckily no damage was done, except that an elderly woman who was crossing the road, carrying a jug in which to collect her daily "Guinness" from The Little Wonder, was taken bad, but not seriously. As for the wasps, they loved it and flew round breathing it in. They were eventually burnt out.

To be continued:

A PASSAGE TO ADEN

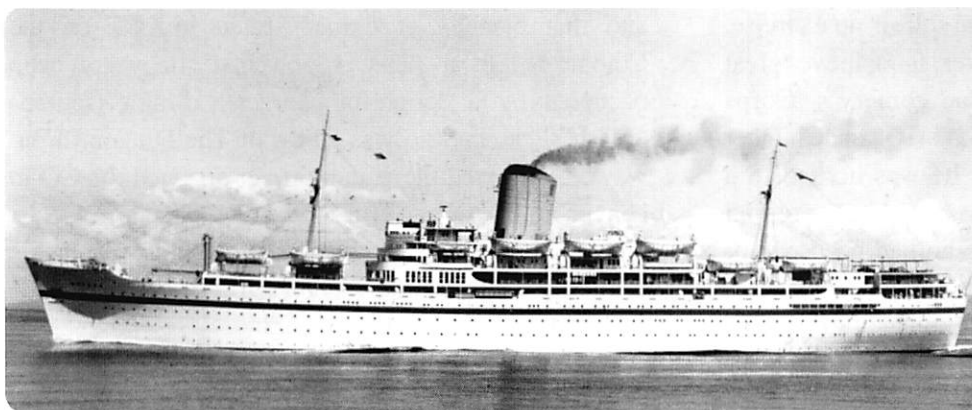
by 'Frondescit'

With a hiss of escaping steam and squealing brakes the train arrived at Southampton Docks. Emerging into the afternoon sun we saw looming above us British India Lines' finest - the SS Nevasa. Gleaming white with a blue band from bow to stern and a single yellow funnel, she would take us on our journey to the Middle East and be our home for the next fortnight. Earlier that day we had set out from Depot, The Buffs, en route to 1 Buffs in Aden. Most of us were new to this troopship game but our leader, Sgt 'Dickie' Bird, who joined us as we left Canterbury, was very experienced. He promised to keep us well informed as our journey unfolded.

Clambering up the gangway we were met by an imposing reception committee led by the ship's RSM.

But the stand out was a Royal Navy Master at Arms who headed up the ship's police, a collection of law enforcers from each of the services collectively referred to as the SS. With a flattened nose that stretched from ear to ear, his qualifications for the job were self evident. We piled our baggage, less a sea kit bag containing our on board requirements, and were swiftly despatched to our accommodation.

In accordance with the customs of those times Officers and their ladies travelled first class. All other ladies, and Sgts Mess members, occupied the second class. Cpls and below travelled in the bowels of the ship - cattle class. Settling in took no time. It involved nothing more than selecting a bunk and stacking the sea kit bag in a metal rack. Later we were summoned



SS NEVASA

by tannoy to the NAAFI to be given the daily routine and allocated our cleaning tasks for the duration of the voyage. Dickie was there and appeared relieved not to be put in charge of our 24 man fatigue party given the dubious task of cleaning the NAAFI daily! This distinction was given instead to an overweight S/Sgt in the REME. As the proceedings finished Dickie gave a cheerful wave, promised to drop in from time to time, and disappeared in the direction of the second class accommodation.

We quickly settled into a routine which remained unchanged throughout our journey. Fatigues followed by a daily Captain's inspection. Cleaning the bar was an unrewarding task. Mopping floors and wiping tables wasn't the problem. What took time was the insistence of the ship's authorities that all cigarette burns be removed from the floor, daily, with steel wool! Just to make things really easy the floors consisted of an off white soft plastic material carefully selected for its ability to generate dark brown spots, half an inch in diameter, when fag ends were held within a foot of it! Eventually all would be ready. With plastic bags filled with the previous night's empty cans carefully stacked outside the door, we lined up for inspection. The Captain's procession entered. Fingers and hands fondly caressed tabletops and counters, eagerly looking for grot, whilst a junior ship's officer went on hands and knees to examine the floor. Eventually satisfied the cavalcade moved on. The plastic bags were jettisoned over the stern of the ship and it was time for lunch. Afternoons were more pleasant affairs, with 'fun and games' organised by the ship's resident PTIs.

Before long our first stop, Gibraltar, loomed ahead. A few hours before we arrived Dickie put in his first appearance. Later we learnt that, despite earlier

assurances, his visits to the lower deck would be confined to a single briefing on the delights of the next port of call. "Not much in Gib", confided Dickie, which was just as well. We were to get only four hours ashore. All we managed was the ritual walk and a few beers along Main Street, a dash to the top of the rock and back through the Casemates

(home to a company of 1 Buffs in the 1920's) to the waiting ship. That evening we set sail for Malta.

Once in the Med the weather became warmer and the afternoons were given over to a number of pastimes, of which deck hockey proved the most popular. It was played with conventional sticks and a rope ring instead of a ball. The rules were basic. Our first match, with the Lancashire Fusilier draft, was a vigorous exchange. There had been a confrontation in the NAAFI the evening before, the origins of which remained obscure. The assembled company had rapidly divided into two warring tribes and Buffs and LF's found themselves on opposite sides - and opposite each other. Before things got entirely out of hand the SS appeared to ensure fair play and things quietened down. Nonetheless small feuds were carried over into the hockey. Considerable damage was inflicted on both sides but, as we neared Malta, rivalries were forgotten and everyone looked forward to the next stop.

We slipped into Valetta's Grand Harbour with the morning sun glinting on its Byzantine splendour. We were to stop over for 24 hours which held the promise of a reasonable 'run ashore'. The NAAFI was cleaned in record time and, right on cue, Dickie appeared. "The Gut", said Dickie, rubbing his hands together and limbering up in anticipation, "Is the place to go". He then described the various forms of entertainment to be found in the narrow streets and mean houses, stacked against the slope beyond the quay. Fully briefed we jumped into the launch and headed for dry land. Some went to the Gut - and stayed there; some saw the Gut and moved on to the city; whilst others ignored Dickie's delights altogether and pursued other interests. The following day we set off again - heading this time for Cyprus.

That same evening the setting sun suddenly moved from the stern of the ship to the front end! A glance at the wash to the rear confirmed we had just completed the fastest U-turn in maritime history. The Nevasa was returning to Malta and rumours swept through the ship. A 'rogue' Russian submarine lay in wait for us; WW3 had started; the engine room was on fire; Dickie had been left behind. Later the truth emerged. King Faisal of Iraq had been assassinated, US Marines had landed in Lebanon and Krushchev was threatening to put the Red Army into Egypt to balance things up. Presumably because our presence in the region could tip the military scales in favour of the Americans we were to remain in Malta until the diplomats and politicians decided if our collective skills might be helpful. Within hours of leaving we found ourselves once more in the familiar surroundings of the Grand Harbour.

We stayed for three days, spending mornings cleaning the ship and afternoons ashore. Suddenly, with little warning, we were given the order to sail. Apparently our collective skills were not required further along the Mediterranean and we were to continue our journey. Our rapid departure caused dismay for the LF, just preparing for their next run ashore. Not to be denied, two of them dived into the harbour and struck out strongly towards the quay. With some amusement we watched their progress and, before they reached halfway, two bulky RMPs positioned themselves at the likely docking point. On arrival the LFs were hauled from the water, placed into a launch, and returned to the Nevasa where they received a hero's welcome. They gave everyone a cheerful wave before being escorted below by the SS. We thought the incident showed commendable spirit and LF and Buffs became firm friends. Once more we set out for Cyprus.

The following morning the various fatigue parties went to the stern to dispose of the assorted plastic sacks of rubbish which, together with any 'portholed' stray kit found lying around during the daily inspection, probably drifted to the north coast of Africa where the locals doubtless found a use for it. At that moment it dawned on us that the allocation of onboard duties had been less than equitable. The navy got the nautical things, such as running lifeboat drills and cleaning, the army got cleaning (exclusively) whilst the RAF got the poncey jobs like library orderly and galley orderly. Pay back time came when deck hockey resumed. With teams carefully selected

to contain an appropriate mix of hockey experts and thugs, the navy and army launched ferocious attacks on the RAF, hitherto champions, who soon ran out of players and subs! The carnage was serious enough for various subalterns and senior NCOs to be sent below to persuade their guys to ease up a bit. It was to no avail as the navy, whose hierarchy had apparently decided that nothing untoward was amiss, felt unrestrained. Not to be outdone the army followed suit. Deck hockey was suspended.

We anchored offshore at Limassol, which had no deep water facility, and said our farewells to those about to disembark. The airmen remaining on board breathed a collective sigh of relief as the LF cheerfully climbed over the side of the ship into the waiting lighters moored alongside. Slowly the craft made their way to the distant port laden with stores, baggage, the LF and a group of apprehensive RAF personnel clearly worried at the prospect of meeting the LF in the Cyprus hockey championships - or on a night out in Limassol. We then turned south and steamed towards Port Said and the Suez Canal. We would not be going ashore but nevertheless Dickie put in another appearance. We gathered round as he recounted tales of his experiences with 1 Buffs in the Canal Zone in 1950 and the delights of the region. We would smell Port Said, he told us, long before we saw it. He also said we would see the odd carcass (and more) in the sea as we approached. He was right on both counts.

In 1956 President Nasser had helped himself to the Suez Canal. He blew up the statue of de Lesseps (who built it in 1869), denied access by littering the canal with sunken ships and annexed the Suez Canal Company offices before settling back to decide his next move. British and French forces occupied the canal zone but were withdrawn after a controversially brief stay. Eventually the canal was re-opened. These events were fresh in the mind as the Nevasa took her place in the southbound convoy. Things were still fairly sensitive in the region as the US Marines continued to consume vast quantities of ice cream in Lebanon and photography was banned. Just to make sure everyone complied, a few surly Egyptian military were taken on board whilst we travelled through the canal. In the gathering gloom we moved slowly past the blown up statue (intact from the knees downwards!), the remains of a few sunken hulks, the desolate and decaying Suez Canal Company offices, the ubiquitous bum boats and into the night.

The following morning we were well on our way. Our leisurely passage through the canal was slow enough for locals on bicycles to easily keep abreast of the convoy. The banks of sand looked uncomfortably close as we glided towards the Great Bitter Lakes, the large inland stretch of water where the north and southbound convoys passed before continuing their journeys along the narrow man-made waterway. Apart from endless sand there was little to see. The tedium was broken by one local who, as the convoy sailed its majestic way past him, and to roars of approval from all on board, raised his galabiya to reveal a specimen of manhood one can only dream about! He certainly was a class act. The buzz was still going as we reached the lakes around midday and waited. The cooling system and water supply got fed up with the wait and decided to go absent!

Later that afternoon the northbound convoy appeared, complete with the homeward bound Devonshire, a sister troopship. As she sailed past the exchanges were noisy, raucous and cheerful. With water and cooling restored we continued our journey and a few hours later Nevasa reached the southern end of the canal. The Egyptian militia, which had given little sign of enjoying the journey was dumped, along with

the pilot, at Port Suez. We eased into the Red Sea and picked up speed for the final leg of our journey to Aden.

The weather was now much hotter. The onboard hierarchy decided that fitness training, weapon training and live firing off the back of the ship should be increased - just in case things turned nasty in the Med and ice cream ran out in Lebanon. Sleeping on deck (no harder than the bunks below) became both permissible and welcome. Our thoughts were turning now to Aden, drawing closer with each passing day and Dickie was seen more frequently, anxious that we should be well turned out on arrival.

After days of endless blue sea we awoke one morning to find ourselves at anchor, surrounded by the 'barren rock of Aden'. Now it was our turn to clamber down the gangway and into the open topped 3 ton vehicles drawn alongside. With the Nevasa receding in the distance we set off through the smell and clamour of Steamer Point, along Ma'alla, past the Causeway and into Singapore Lines. There, amongst the wooden huts, tents, sand, glare and open drains the journey came to its end.

6348085 PRIVATE ALBERT TRUE

6th Bn. QUEEN'S OWN ROYAL WEST KENT REGIMENT

The following letter is from a Mr. Gunn which was passed on to me by Major John Rogerson. It concerns the murder of Private Albert Trueby by a German officer just a few days before the end of the war in Europe.

"Dear Sirs,

In 2002, two nephews, a grandson and a family friend visited the village of Putlitz in Germany to visit the grave of their uncle Pte. Ronald Jackson of the Green Howards, who they thought had died whilst a POW in Germany. On arrival at the cemetery they found 6 graves in total, Pte. Jackson's together with one of a soldier from the Black Watch, one from the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regt, 6348085 Pte. Albert True, one from the Kings Regiment attached to the Royal Pioneers and two graves of Indian soldiers.

Whilst they were looking at the graves two German ladies approached them and asked them in broken

English to wait whilst they found someone in the village who spoke good English. They returned with another lady, Maria Schmidt, who spoke excellent English. She told the visitors of the story of the shooting of these six men by an Officer of the German Field Police.

This group of prisoners came from a small POW camp situated behind the railway station in Putlitz. Most of the prisoners worked in the village and it was customary for prisoners to visit the butcher's shop to barter for food to supplement their meagre rations.

On April 24th 1945, just a few days before the end of the war, the Russian Army was fast approaching and there were already white flags hanging out of windows the population fearing the approach of the Russian Army. The German soldiers that still remained were distinctly nervous. On that particular day this small party of prisoners visited the village as usual to get food. They had just about reached the

courtyard of the castle in Friedrichstrasse, which is nowadays named Karl-Marx Strasse, when a motorbike of the German Military Field Police approached and the German officer opened fire on the group. Albert True along with his comrades were all killed.

From that day the people of the village of Putlitz have cared for those graves.”

Putlitz is a small village in the Brandenburg region about 80 miles North West of Berlin. The graves were only discovered by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission after the reunification of Germany. Up until then the villagers of Putlitz had cared for the graves. Although the CWGC now have the responsibility for looking after the graves the villagers still tend them.

The details of those buried here are:

Private Albert True, 6th Bn. QORWK Regt
Killed 24/04/45 aged 28.

Sepoy Gasam Ali, Indian Army
Killed 24/04/45 age unknown.

Private James Clarkin, Black Watch (Royal Highlanders)
Killed 24/04/45 aged 25.

Private Ronald James Jackson, Green Howards (Yorkshire Regt)
Killed 24/04/45 aged 26.

Sepoy Kisan Sugk, Indian Army.
Died 26/04/45 age unknown (Probably died of wounds suffered on 24th May.

Lance Corporal Gordon Pollitt, The Kings Regt (Liverpool).
Killed 24/04/45 aged 40.

(Editors note: The relevant Regimental Associations of the above, with the exception of the two Sepoys have been informed of this information. I regret that I can find no reference to the German Officer being held to account of these murders so regrettably cannot report on his punishment.)

NOTICE BOARD

WORLD WAR 2 VETERANS REUNITED EVENT AT DOVER CASTLE

**“THE SPIRIT OF THE REGIMENT”
2/3 JULY 2005**

The above event will be held at Dover Castle on Saturday and Sunday 2nd and 3rd of July 2005. The aim of this event is to host our World War 2 Veterans, to mark the 60th Anniversary of the ending of war in Europe (8th May 1945) and in the Far East (15th August 1945); to give young people the opportunity to learn about your experiences; for young musicians to attend a Music Workshop with the Kohima Band and for the Castle visitors to enjoy our programme and to have an informative and enjoyable day out in Dover castle.

Details: Whilst we will welcome family and friends we can only cater for you, our forbear regiment WW2 Veterans.

Dress/ Travel /Reception: Please wear your medals and regimental badges, aim to arrive between 1030hrs-1130hrs and check in at the Dover Castle public entrance. Cars and mini buses should drive to the top disabled car park and drop off, vehicles driven by non-veterans should then drive back down and park on the public car park.

Veterans will be met by our Regimental Recruiting Team on the Disabled Car Park. Please note that there is a Castle Church Sunday service between 11.00 hrs-12.00hrs and there will be limited space on the disabled car park during this period.

If you are a veteran of World War 2 and would like to attend please contact Mrs. Brenda Hunter at RHQ on 01227 818058 for an application form.

NEW MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

Captain R C Hill The Devonshire Regt 44/45
Mr. C. Heaver 1 Buffs 56/57
Mr. J. S. Smith

LONDON BOROUGH OF REDBRIDGE

60TH ANNIVERSARY OF VE & VJ DAYS

The London Borough of Redbridge has developed a programme to mark the 60th Anniversary of VE & VJ days. The Mayor of Redbridge asks that any of our Veterans who live within the Borough which covers, Ilford, Wanstead and Woodford contact the Mayor's Parlour on 020 8708 2110.

Proposed Programme

May 7th Street Party in Town Centre
May 8th Parade and Church Service
May 11th Gala ENSA Show performance
July 10th National Commemoration Event
August 14th Church Service at Snaresbrook
August 15th Service and Wreath Laying, Ilford War Memorial.

The Austrian Ambassador AUSTRIAN EMBASSY.

18 Belgrave Mews West, London SW1X 8HU

Dear Sirs, London, 11 May 2005

On 15 May 2005 Austria will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Austrian State Treaty in the Belvedere Castle in Vienna. It is only fitting that this event should not only be celebrated in Vienna and Austria at large but also in Great Britain, and London respectively.

Therefore, the Austrian Embassy will be holding a reception on 15 June 2005, with British veterans sharing their memories of post-war Vienna in a panel discussion entitled "Vienna Under Allied Occupation".

I would like to invite to this evening reception those members of the British Armed Forces who served in

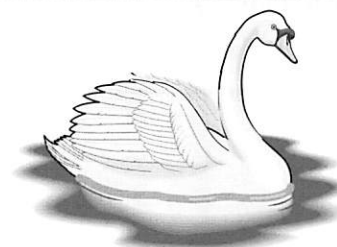
Austria in the last days of the Second World War and during the time of Allied Occupation. Therefore, may we kindly ask for your assistance forwarding this invitation to the respective members of your Association.

The reception will take place at the Austrian Residence, 18 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PX on 15 June 2005 from 7-8.30 pm. Veterans who would like to attend this event are asked to confirm their participation to Ms Waltraud Strommer (Tel: 0207 344 3252, Fax: 0207344 0292 or Email: waltraud.strommer@bmaa.gv.at).

We appreciate your kind assistance and are looking forward to celebrating this important event together with British veterans

Yours sincerely,

(Dr. Ernst Sucharipa)



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PHOTO GALLERY



RATION STORE TEAM;

SHORNCLIFFE 25th APRIL 1950

Back Row: Tug(now Revd.) Wilson, Captain (now Lt. Col) Eric Ransley MC.

Second Row: Pte. Lynn, L/Cpl. Jackson, Cpl Bob Adams(Buffs), Standing: Len Wilson (R. Fus).

Photo courtesy of 'Tug Wilson'



**1st Bn. Buffs Band
Re-Union in 2003**

**Standing(L to R) :P. Grevatt,
P. Weatherall, A. Barnes,
D. Scroggins, S. Harrison,
C. Satterwaite, L. Ormiston,
D. Moore, A. Coe, F. Rabbatts,
E. Gornall, D. Peshak, S. Supple,
J. Holden, R. Jones.**

**Sitting (L to R) J. Holmes,
T. Lynch, J. Underhill,
S Pullman, A. Young.**

PHOTO GALLERY



**Pipers of 4th Bn. The Buffs TA Band, the
'McBuffs'**

**L to R: Pipe Major Cpl. E Judd, Piper G Judd,
Piper J Mckenzie and Piper F Barton**



**Pte. Alf Sadler, third from right with side cap,
pictured here in Saubsdorf POW camp,
Sudetenland in July 1941. Alf who served in 4th Bn.
The Buffs was captured along the coast of France in
1940 just after Dunkirk.**

Picture courtesy of Mrs Sadler



**2nd Bn. The Buffs in Hong
Kong 1947/8**

**Can anyone provide more
details please. See a letter from
Mrs M J Scott in Write to
Reply in connection with
Captain K M Cole.**

**The picture right shows RSM Sharman carrying
the Regimental Colour during the parade to
celebrate the granting of The Freedom of
Ramsgate to The Buffs in 1959. The Ensign
carrying the colour had fainted. Few amongst the
spectators noticed RSM Sharman's extraordinary
fast reaction.**

Photo courtesy of James Lunn



PHOTO GALLERY

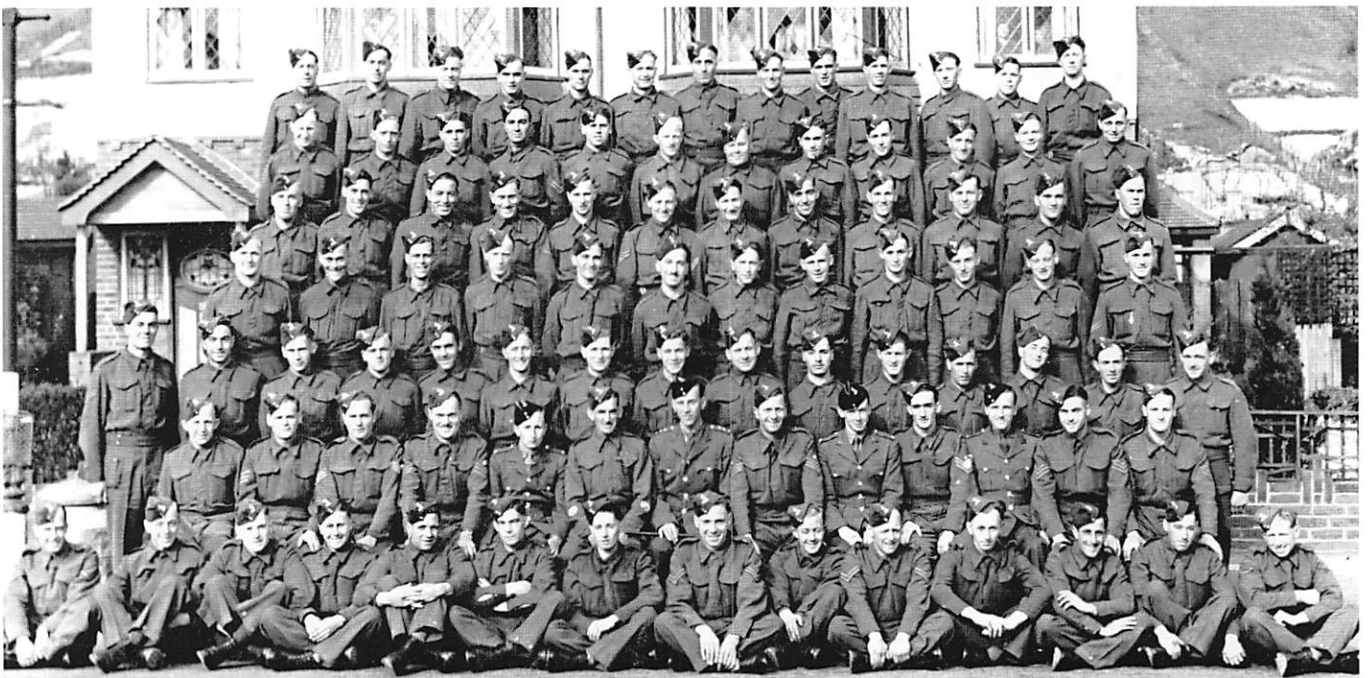


MESSINE SQUAD, MAIDSTONE 1937

L to R: Back Row: King, Barton, Eley, Bowden, Shrubb, Butler, Valance, Luichesi

Middle: Chamberlaine, Teder, Gear, Galbraith, Axtell, Oxenford, Bunday, Barnett, Sparks, Hewett, Dixon, Priest.

Front: Stone, Lee, L/Cpl Wells, L/Cpl Parks, Sgt Woodcock, Capt. Soraell, Cpl Watts, Norwood, Vine



'C' Company, 5th Battalion Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment

**This photograph was taken just after Dunkirk when the battlion was at
West Butterwick nr Scunthorpe, Lincs.**

Photo courtesy of Mrs. Doreen Charlesworth

PHOTO GALLERY



**WO's and Sgts Mess Dining out
of RSM Fred Turmaine:**

**Photo above: Dick Cribben, Jimmy Arnold
and Tony Moore**

**Photo above left: Dennis Mills, Pete Floyd,
Ben Lyons, Ernie Streeter, Derek Naylor**

**Photo left: RSM Fred Turmaine, ORQMS
Colin Webb, Lt.Col Edlmann OBE MC and
CSM Wally Mann**

Photos courtesy of Tony Moore



Warrant Officers and Senior NCO's. 1st Battalion The Buffs, Wuppertal, Germany 1957

THE LAST POST

BRIGADIER PAUL CROOK CBE DSO MA:



Paul Edwin Crook was born on April 19 1915 at Croydon, Surrey. After finishing his education at Emmanuel College, Cambridge where he read Classics and Law he was commissioned. in 1935, into the Queen's Own

Royal West Kent Regiment.

He went with the 2nd Battalion to India as a platoon commander and later, prior to the outbreak of war, he served in Palestine.

After attending Staff College he was posted to 147 Infantry Brigade and with them went to Normandy and took part in the savage fighting in the bocage country and in the capture of Le Havre. He was subsequently posted to the United States Command and General Staff School.

In September 1945 he was posted to Singapore and was present at the signing of the Japanese surrender. He commanded HQ 2 RAPWI (Repatriation of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees) and was faced with organising the feeding, clothing, identification, care and repatriation of nearly 50,000 released prisoners and internees. He was appointed OBE and promoted to full Colonel.

After a period as an instructor at Staff College he rejoined the QORWK's in Malaya as a company commander in operations against the Communists. During this tour he was for the third time Mentioned in Despatches.

In 1954 he commanded 3rd Battalion the Parachute Regiment which he took to Cyprus where the battalion took part in operations against EOKA.

In 1956 he commanded 3 Para Group which dropped at Suez just after dawn on November 5th coming under mortar, machine gun and rifle fire from an Egyptian battle group. By that evening opposition had been overcome and a large quantity of ordnance was captured. Crook was awarded a DSO the citation of which stated that: 'his gallantry under fire, his inspiring leadership and the skill with which he

handled his force made an immeasurable contribution to the success of the action.

Subsequently becoming Commander and Chief of Staff of the Jamaica Defence Force at the end of the three year tour he was advanced to CBE. There followed a final assignment as Commander Rhine Area. He retired from the Army in 1971 in the rank of Brigadier.

Brigadier Crook was ADC to the Queen from 1964 to 1967. He was Honorary Colonel 16(Lincoln) Independent Parachute Regiment (TA) from 1974-79; Deputy Honorary Colonel 15 (Scottish) Parachute Battalion (TA) from 1979-83 and 4th (Volunteer) Parachute Battalion 1984-85. He held the US Bronze Star.

He wrote a book in 1989, 'Came the Dawn', an account of his 30 years of soldiering.

He loved sport and was a fine vocalist. During his life he had sung with some great names, including Stephan Grappelli.

WILLIAM (BILL) S. REID-MILNE

Bill Reid-Milne passed away on Tuesday 4th January 2005 aged 94 years. Bill was born in India the son of a service family. The Army was in his blood, so at the age of fifteen he too decided to join the army, to enlist in his father's regiment, The Royal Ordnance Corps. He put up his age to eighteen, and presented himself at the recruiting office. The recruiting sergeant turned him down, with the remark that he was knock-kneed. It may well be that the recruiting sergeant had seen through Bill's deception. But he was also aware that Bill was bitterly disappointed, so he told him to go out through the front door and come back in by the back and try again. That was how Bill joined the Buffs, the Royal East Kent Regiment. He served for seven years, representing the regiment at soccer, shooting and many other activities.

On leaving the army he spent three years in the hotel business. He went from there to work at Smithfield Market, the world famous meat market. Here Bill worked for forty years, a remarkable record.

Bill was a man for all seasons. For many years he was branch chairman of the Transport and General Workers Union. He worked closely with Ernest Bevin

who was then the general secretary of the TGWU. Bill remembers him as a very sincere man.

When the Queen Mother visited Smithfield Market, it was Bill who was her guide and who afterwards accompanied her to the Guildhall for a Lord Mayor's banquet.

Bill rejoined the Buffs in the Second World War serving for six years as an instructor. It was after this that Bill met Joan and began to visit Deal from time to time. He and Joan married in September 1974 and later gained what to him was a very precious gift, a daughter, Lynda. Later on he became the proud grandfather of three grandchildren and how they loved him. In the meantime he and Joan remained as a very active couple in the service of St Leonard's. He served as a churchwarden and was a deputy warden and vergers and continued as a sides person. He and Joan were still active up until a time when Bill was forced to retire through ill health.

Bill joined the Sandwich Branch of the Buffs Regimental Association now The Queen's Own Buffs and served as Social Secretary from 1976 later becoming Vice Chairman in 1996. Bill was Branch President in his last few years.

During his years in Deal he was a founder member of the Downs branch of the Royal British Legion, here he served as Vice-Secretary and later he became the Vice-Chairman. Bill at a later date during his active life was a source of help to many people in many ways. He was active within the membership of the Civil Service Retirement Fellowship. He was its local chairman for more than six years; he then became the East Kent chairman for the same number of years. Bill certainly dedicated his time and energy to voluntary work through most of his life in Deal. One of the most important things Bill was called upon to make, and a service he was proud to give, was the turning of the Book of Remembrance in Canterbury Cathedral.

Bill was always a military man. His upright bearing and the way he got things done in the least possible time, were always a joy to behold. But above all else, Bill was a gentleman in every sense of the word. Always polite, always ready to be of assistance when needed, and he seemed always to have that lovely sunny smile of his.

We give thanks for all the service, the joy and the love that Bill added to this life. And we ask God's blessing

upon him. May he rest in peace, for he is a servant well worthy of his rest.

Revd: Peggy Fishlock

Dennis Hogben Secretary of the Sandwich Branch of the Regimental Association writes.

This was indeed a very sad start to the New Year. Bill, a soldier through and through, had served our Branch and Association selflessly for many years. We have lost a comrade and friend and he will be greatly missed with great affection by us all .

DH

COLIN ROBERTS

Colin died on 31st December 2004. He was well known to the younger members of the Association and served with the 1st Battalion RWK's in Germany and Cyprus up to the time of amalgamation. On the Battalion's return from Kenya and with the ensuing re-shuffling of Senior NCO's he was posted to the Royal Anglian Regiment where he distinguished himself until his retirement from the service. On his retirement he came to live in Maidstone with his wife Kath. Up until the time of his illness he worked with Colonel Blick Waring in the Regimental Museum in Maidstone.

MARTIN PRIOR

Revd. Tug Wilson writes: Martin, an ex member of 6th Battalion The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment, died on 29th December 2004. A long time enthusiastic member of the 62 Club he was the best salesman of Xmas draw tickets I have ever known. Martin lived in the Royal British Legion Retirement Home, Maurice House, in Broadstairs. The 62 Club was represented by Peter Clarke who is also a resident of Maurice House. Branch Standards of Ramsgate and Bromley, carried by John Phillips and Brian Bartlett respectively were also on parade. I received the following letter from Martin's son: - *"On behalf of the family Prior, I would like to thank all members of the 62 Club for your friendship and comradeship to Dad over the years. We gave him the "send-off" that we think he would have liked - simple with just a touch of pageant - and hope that it set him off on the road with a smile. God Bless you all."*

Tug

VERNON BAXTER

Tug Wilson writes: Vernon died on 21st November 2004. He served in the 1st Battalion The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment during the war and was, I think, 92 when he died. His friend Danny Heskett wrote to me about Vernon and I can do no better than repeat his letter here: *"Sixty one years is a long time to stretch the memory, but the incident that has featured Vernon Baxter in my constant memories of the Italian Campaign is the fact that his prompt response saved my life. The action was during an attack on a high feature south of Florence. There was heavy mortar and small arms fire when I received a serious shrapnel wound. Vernon was on the spot with his stretcher- bearer companion, Tich Gorman, and got me safely to a pill box that had been established as a temporary first aid post. Thank you for asking me to place on record my memory of "One of The Very Best."*

RICHARD (HUMPO) HUMPHREYS

Humpo died on 15th December 2004. He served with The Buffs and the 5th Bn. The Queen's Own and finally with the 6th Bn. The Queen's Own in Austria.

ERIC McFARLAND

Eric died on 27th November 2004. Eric served with 1st Bn The Queen's Own in 'A' Company and HQ Company in North Africa. His long time friend Trevor Parnacott remembers him as a most amiable man and a very good friend and comrade.

NANCY DOROTHY MARY ELGAR

Nan, wife of Norman, passed away suddenly on 28th January 2005.

MAISIE RANSLEY

Mother was born on 22 June 1921 in Tyler Hill near Canterbury Kent. She was one of nine children of Thomas and Hilda Philpott and until her death she was the last surviving member of her family, which was a very close one.

In early 1940 there was a key event in her life when she met a young handsome Army Corporal called Eric Ransley who was serving in The Buffs The Royal East Kent Regiment. The second World War made their courtship very difficult especially as my father, who later retired from the Army as a Lt. Colonel, was fighting for his country many thousands of miles from home and it was to be April 1945 before they met again. However, in 1942 mother joined the Wrens and served at the Motor Torpedo base at Felixstowe Suffolk and later in London during the feared Doodlebug era.



Maisie, a tireless worker for charity, pictured here surrounded by her 'Teddies for Tragedy'

On 28 July 1945 my mother and father were married by the Archdeacon of Canterbury and very soon the first of many enforced separations began. In March 1947 she joined my father in Tripoli, Libya and it was there in 1948 that I was born. The young family of three returned to the UK to Shorncliffe, Kent when in January 1950 my brother Terry was born. In March 1953 a third son, Nick was born, but true to form father soon packed up his kit bag once more to leave for Kenya. It would be a further two years before father returned home, but during his absence with sole responsibility for three children under the age of 5 mother worked as a SSAFA visitor to other Army families. This concern for others would continue throughout her life.

In 1955, mother travelled with us to Germany on a ferry from Harwich to the Hook of Holland to join my father and his Regiment in Wuppertal where we would spend two happy years together. Following our return to Kent in late 1956, we had a period of relative stability until 1961. However, it was during this period in Kent that mother finally achieved what she had wanted for many years, her daughter Elizabeth was born in October 1958. Male domination in the family had come to an end.

In 1961 mother was again left alone with her children for nearly a year when my father returned to Kenya during their extensive floods. After a few months, mother became an Army "widow" again when father

served in British Guiana during the riots and inter racial strife. Upon return to the UK, plans were made in 1965 for the family (except me as I was now working and Nick, who was at boarding school) to move with the Regiment to Hong Kong. Even during the Hong Kong posting, father and mother were again separated when father had to go to Borneo during the confrontation with Indonesia.

It was late 1967 when the family returned to the UK for a more settled life, first in Kent and then in Aldershot, eventually setting up home in Farnborough. This would be another chapter in mother's life as she immersed herself in the life of the local community.

Mother was always at the heart of our family. I am certain that coping with four children single handed while father was away was never easy, especially as mother gave so much time to other families in the Regiment who needed help. She was the classic homemaker and her love for the family always extended to support for her sisters and brothers, her nephews and nieces. She was blessed with seven grandchildren Claire, Tim, Jason, Gavin, Matthew, Steven and Kevin and of course her great granddaughter Ella. She derived huge pleasure in seeing her family develop their individual personalities and careers and we will miss her.

It will not have escaped your notice how many times I have referred to my father's absence from home. Absence certainly does make the heart grow fonder and in a marriage that was due to reach 60 years in July this year, it is evident to everyone around them how much love and devotion mother and father had for each other. They were a great partnership.

During her recent illness she drew real comfort from her Christian faith and I know that she was associated with a variety of roles in the life of St Marks Church and the family are so grateful for the fellowship of the congregation and for their kind messages of love and sympathy. You will not be surprised to know that in the last few hours of her life, mother was very clear that we should not be sad through her passing but give thanks for a great life.

We have been very touched by the many letters and cards friends and family have sent. What struck me is the variety of ways in which friends have expressed how they felt about mother. Having a wide circle of friends has always been a feature of my mother's life. These have come from many sources, Regimental, the

Church, the Women's Institute, The Townswomen's Guild, the Ladybyrds Club, the Children's Society to name but a few. Mother was very loyal to her friends and I know that many who have known her for 30 40 and even 50 years are here today. Mother had an insatiable zest for life, bags of energy and always looked on the bright side of life. She enjoyed travel through varied holidays. She tended her garden which was full of summer colour. She loved flowers and her craftwork. Fun was high on her agenda. With her good friend Nancy, mother spent considerable time organising various coach trips for her many friends. Indeed there is a party going to the Holiday on Ice Show at Brighton next week. In reading the many letters to my father I was reminded of the happy time we spent in Germany when at the Regimental Fancy Dress Ball mother and father won first prize. Mother (then in her mid thirties) was dressed in a gym slip, black stockings, boater, complete with Hockey stick. The mind boggles. She was Monica to Dad's Archie Andrews on roller skates. Only the older members of the congregation (including me), will remember Peter Brough and his dummy Archie Andrews.

And so to close. There are many family and friends here today, all who loved mother, someone who always thought of others before herself. Reverting to Micah, mother always did what was just, she showed constant love and lived in humble fellowship with her God.

How can I capture in words the essence of her wonderful life? Thinking about my mother, I was drawn to the Book of Micah Chapter 6 v 8:- *"The Lord has told us what is good. What he requires of us is this: do what is just, show constant love and live in humble fellowship with our God."*

God Bless you mother.

RR

LEONARD PETER PAVITT

Carol Young, Len's daughter writes: It is with deep regret that I have to tell you of my father's recent death. He greatly enjoyed reading The Journal and keeping in touch. He was extremely proud to have served his country as a member of The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment. Before the war my father joined the TA at the age of 19 and on a hot summer's day in 1939 a knock on the door summoned him to

active service. He was billeted in Dorset and was subsequently sent to France where he was one of the lucky survivors from Dunkirk. Later he served in the Western Desert as part of Monty's 8th Army (The Desert Rats) and it was in North Africa that he was wounded and sent home to recuperate. I write these short notes with fondest memories and love for my father and an old soldier.

Carol Young

RICHARD JOHN (NOBBY) CLARKE

Nobby Clarke passed away on Wednesday 5th April 2005 in the Kent & Canterbury Hospital. His funeral took place at Barham on Friday 15th April. How he will be missed.

ROY CHAPMAN

Roy, who served in Malaya from 1951 to 1953a member of 12 Platoon, 'D' Company, 1st. Bn. the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment, passed away on 23rd October 2004 aged 73 years.

GEORGE TAYLOR

We have been advised by his widow that George passed away on July 23rd, 2004. I have no further details of his service etc.

ARNOLD JOHN (JACK) WATERS

Colonel J. W. Sewell writes:-

Having served pre-war in the Artists Rifles Jack served from the outbreak of war in 6th Bn. The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regt. and took part in the ill fated defence of Doullens. Against overwhelming odds and ill equipped the defenders of the town were reduced to small groups scattered over a wide area. Three platoons, one commanded by Jack Waters, managed to avoid capture and lived off the country for 10 or more days. Jack's group actually reached the coast near the mouth of the Somme before being captured. For his actions at Doullens Jack was awarded the MC.

In civil life Jack became a solicitor and practiced in London. Always a keen golfer he played in the

Queen's Own Buffs sides and ran and organised the Artists Rifles/21 SAS Golf Society.

Jack passed peacefully away on 21st March 2005 at Greenbanks Nursing Home, Liphook. His funeral was held at St. Luke's Church, Milland on Friday 8th April 2005, the day which would have been Jack's 94th birthday.

WILLIAM JOHN JEWISS

Bill was a local lad born in Milton Regis on the 22nd April 1922, the elder of two boys and is now survived by his brother, Alf.

On completing his school education Bill obtained employment with the Bowater Paper Corporation at their Sittingbourne mill. Come the Second World War (1939 - 1945) Bill enlisted in the Army and joined the Royal East Kent Regiment "The Buffs" and he was posted abroad. He saw much action in the North African Campaign and in the Italian Campaign, where he was wounded. He was moved to a field hospital and then transferred to Malta and later was flown home to the United Kingdom.

Bill spent a long period in hospital. He was then discharged from the Military Hospital and enlisted on a government re-training programme where he trained as a painter and decorator. Came the end of the war and later he was discharged from the Army.

Bill was later to meet a local lass, Dorothy. They started a friendship, courted, fell in love and were married in Holy Trinity Church, Milton Regis in 1952. They had a very happy marriage - a family of two children - son David and daughter Marion - two grandchildren - grandson Michael and granddaughter Terri and son-in-law Gary. Sadly his wife Dorothy died in 1992 which left a big gap in Bill's life, having been married for 40 years, but with the help and love of his family he was able to continue with his life.

During his working life Bill worked for local builders, E Wraight & Son and Murphy Building Contractors. He then rejoined Bowaters at their Kemsley site as a painter and finally he was employed by A Betts of Teynham, where he remained for 18 years until his retirement.

A life member of the Sittingbourne and Milton Regis branch of The Royal British Legion - this year would have been his 60th year of loyal, honourable and

distinguished service. He was a former chairman and poppy organiser for many years.

He was also a member of the Queens Own Buffs Regimental Association (Sittingbourne Branch) for some 15 years.

Bill's health started to decline towards the end of last year - he continued with daily life, thankful for each day he could spend with his family and friends. Taken ill at home, his condition deteriorated and he was admitted to Medway Maritime Hospital on 13th January where sadly he died on 16th January.

Bill was a very much loved and treasured Dad - Granddad - Brother - Relative - Friend and Neighbour. For myself as Padre to the ex-service associations he was a much valued friend and comrade who will be greatly missed.

Rev. Bernard Foulger
PADRE TO SITTINGBOURNE BRANCH

We have been advised of the passing of the following members of:

141 Regt (The Buffs) Regimental Association.

JACK BATEMAN.

HARRY CHERRINGTON

DON MCKENZIE

R. R. (BOB) JONES.

SNAPSHOTS OF LIFE WITH

1ST BATTALION THE QUEEN'S OWN ROYAL WEST KENT REGIMENT IN MALAYA 1952-54

by Major (retd.) Richard Neve MC.

STANDBY PLATOON

In 1952, in some forty miles north of the capital Kuala Lumpur you forked right onto the road to Fraser's Hill, off what was then the only main road running the length of Malaya, within a mile you passed a military camp set on the left of the road on the western edge of the small town of Kuala Kubu Bharu. Here were housed Battalion Headquarters and two rifle companies of the 1st Battalion The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment. Just past my 21st birthday and commissioned for only eight months it was my home for nine months.

Amid the rows of some forty single storey palm leaved huts the one used as the Officers' Mess ante-room, where the officers gathered before meals and took their coffee afterwards, lay only ten yards back from and parallel to the road. At night the brightly lit gaps that served for "windows", left unshuttered to allow more air to circulate, stood out like the

portholes of an ocean liner within the long low silhouette of the hut. Lights hanging centrally from the bamboo rafters cast a row of rectangular silver patches on the coarse grass outside while the tops of the heads of officers could be seen above the sills as they relaxed studying the UK newspapers after dinner.

By ten o'clock that evening the anteroom was deserted. There was not the slightest breeze and the moist tropical air hugged the whole camp in a sticky embrace. It was not an evening for any activity.

Flying insects zigzagged at random under each light. An occasional flash reflected from a whirring wing, soft moths frizzled against the bulbs and fell to the floor whilst hard-shelled insects every so often pinged against the enamel lampshades. A dozen or more lizard-like little geckos, randomly scattered at different angles, clung with curious small pads on the end of each toe to the white washed asbestos sheets

that lined the inner walls. Hoping for a passing insect to come within range they had emerged from their homes behind the framed prints of regimental battle honours of previous centuries that decorated the walls of the empty room.

Two fans hanging from the apex of the roof wobbled noisily as they spun at full speed. The warm air circulated aimlessly over the furniture lifting the corner of a carelessly discarded newspaper on one of the tables.

The only sign of recent occupation was a pint sized silver goblet left on one of the small tables set between the wooden armed easy chairs lining the walls. The shine round the lower third of its side was dulled by condensation droplets that still marked the level from which the last occupant of the room had drained his ice cold beer before he retired for the night. In the moist tropical air the droplets had coalesced and trickled down the stem to form a pool around the base.

Without bothering to button up his white monkey jacket, it was unlikely an officer would appear at this late hour, the duty barman roused himself from his hidey-hole in the adjacent small servery and entered the anteroom. Slowly and methodically he went round the room gathering up the newspapers from the tables and chairs where the officers had discarded them. On the large table up against the end wall he first carefully piled several copies of the local "Straits Times" where they would remain until just before lunch the following day when the new ones arrived from Kuala Lumpur. He then carefully arranged the English newspapers in date order so the titles were visible: Times, Daily Telegraph, Daily Mail, Daily Mirror, Daily Express. Daily Sketch. It was the custom to retain them for a full week after they arrived from the UK on the new Comet flights. By the time they made their way up country they were already two or three days old. This procedure gave officers who were on patrol out in the jungle a chance to read them on their return. He also tidied into neat rows three or four back editions of the English magazines that came by sea: The Illustrated London News, The Field, Country Life and Punch.

He picked up the empty goblet, wiped the ring of water from the table and, after pausing at the controls to slow the fans as he passed, returned to the servery. Here he removed his white monkey jacket, which he

hung carefully on a hanger on the back of the door, and loosened his bow tie. After a quick mop of his brow with the bar cloth he took an ice cold beer from the refrigerator before he began to prepare the night tray of drinks for any thirsty officer who might come in late.

A quick glance at the bar day sheet showed that Captain Allen had had five beers that evening, so he marked him up for a sixth. He had learned this trick from his predecessor the day he arrived.

Officers almost never noticed, and on the rare occasion one did, it was a simple matter to apologise for the error and charge it up to someone else. One memorable Sunday afternoon after the officers and some of the neighbouring rubber planters and their wives had enjoyed a particularly heavy pre-curry lunch session, he and another barman had spent a pie-eyed afternoon on the beer and marked one to the account of every officer present and two each down to "Mess Guests". Some fifteen officers had been there and not one had noticed.

Though it was a familiar enough scene; I was aware of none of this at the time. All I wanted to do was collapse on my bed, mosquito net down, with a readable book and a not-so-weak whisky and water from the bottle I kept in my room, contrary to Mess Rules, until I was ready to fall asleep. I just could not be bothered to make the effort to go to the bar to ask for some ice for my drink. Malaya affected you like that after only a few months.

I was the commander of No. 8 Platoon of C Company and we were the 'Standby' platoon for the whole Battalion, ready to move at a moment's notice to anywhere in the Battalion's operational area. Besides the fifteen men of my platoon there was a tracker dog with handler, our usual Iban native tracker, a Chinese interpreter, and a signaller with a high frequency radio who would come with us into the jungle. Also on standby were an armoured Scout Car and two armoured vehicles with drivers and escort to get us there. Opposite my bed my jungle green webbing belt hung around the back of the chair where Barber my batman had placed it early that morning when I assumed duty. Slung from it were two full water bottles, a pouch of three magazines, each full with 22 rounds of .300 inch ammunition, a prismatic compass in its padded pouch, and an un-primed No. 36 High Explosive Grenade. Against the wall beside the chair

rested my US made M2 carbine with a loaded magazine already clipped in position, but of course no round in the chamber. My 1944 pattern pack fully laden with mess tins, four days rations and a change of clothing; was propped just inside the door ready to be picked up a moment's notice.

The intermittent high pitched buzz of a mosquito vainly pressing the outside of my mosquito net was occasionally interrupted by fragments of sound from a military camp coming to the end of its day.

"You are to patrol the perimeter in pairs. You are not to open fire unless fired upon first....

"You are to raise the alarm by.....

"Any questions?"

Snatches of the guard commander reading out orders to the sentries as they came on duty were drowned by the unmistakable sound of the tread of a Landrover's tyres drumming on the tar macadam of the road leading to the camp entrance. The pitch varied as the vehicle passed the gaps between the huts. Who could be out this late? All civilian traffic had long since ceased, as the locals were reluctant to venture out on the roads after dark because of the terrorist threat.



'Three Iban trackers attached to 1 RWKs'

The majority of soldiers were already in bed if not asleep. Only the MT platoon hut in Headquarter Company lines had its main lights on. Elsewhere, the odd man still awake was reading a paperback or writing a letter by the light of his bedside lamp. The olive colour of the issue pattern mosquito net gave a green sheen to their faces and bare chests as it sloped down to the foot of the bed from the single metal pole that rose from the centre of the bed head.

"G'night 'arry! Night Joe!", carried clearly across the still night air as the Orderly Sergeant turned out a

couple of late-to-bed cooks from the NAAFI canteen on the other side of the camp. Its bar had closed long before. A dog barked in the town. There was silence.



Ready for the off

The signal centre was nearly fifty yards from my hut but I clearly heard the buzz of the night alarm as a flap dropped on the ten-line magneto exchange. A few seconds later the bell rang on the field telephone in the Officers' Mess. Shortly afterwards the duty barman knocked on the door of the Intelligence Officer's room two doors away from mine.

"Sir, CO wants you up the ops room straight away."

"Thank you Jones, call the Guard Room and warn the Duty Driver to bring his vehicle straight to the front of the Mess will you please." There was not even a tinge of exasperation in his voice for he was used to being disturbed at odd hours when new information came in. The Commanding Officer had been dining with the District Officer at his bungalow on the edge of the town. Would this be one of those fifth whisky and soda late night ideas or would it be it real information?

"Sir." replied Jones. I heard his footsteps retreat.

The pattern of the atap leaves in the roof above my room became visible as the IO turned on a light, which faintly illuminated the space above the partitions dividing the rooms. I glanced at the watch propped up against the spine of a book on my bedside table. It was 22.45 hrs. I half heard the IO get out of bed and start to dress. Then I fell asleep.

It seemed like only a few minutes later that I heard the sound of the bugle: Da, diddly-ah, diddly-ah-ah, daa, daa, daa; the regimental call followed by three 'Gs', the call out for the Standby Platoon.

Immediately fully alert and with heart racing I lift my mosquito net, switch on my bedside light, drop my sarong to the floor, grab my army issue luminous watch, and note it is 0300 hours while I struggle for a few seconds to fasten its frayed cloth strap before dressing hurriedly. It takes less than a minute. A further minute is needed to put on and lace up my calf height jungle boots, although I had been careful to leave them open and ready to put on. It took time and practised care to zig-zag the laces alternately up the hooks on each side to the top of each boot, pass them twice round my calf, tie them in a double bow and tuck the ends into the top of the boot. It was important to get that right first time.

I would get annoyed with soldiers who held up a patrol to make an adjustment because they had not tied their laces properly. Indeed, having discovered how few soldiers knew how to tie a double bow, I made sure every new arrival in the platoon was shown the way I wanted it done. It was one of those seemingly trivial but in fact very important little things that set the tone for the whole platoon. So far as I was concerned it ranked alongside taking the daily anti-malarial paludrine pill and keeping weapons spotlessly clean as a sign of a well run properly disciplined outfit.

The new arrivals would grumble to themselves and give me that look so well practised by soldiers that says "I will do it that way (Sir), (very much in brackets) because you are the officer and have told me to, and I do not want to get into trouble. But I think it is stupid and typical of the army to lay down the law over such a petty detail." Later they would understand the reasons for my insistence and appreciate being in a properly disciplined platoon.

I put on my belt and pack, grabbed my carbine and set off, waterbottles bouncing on my backside, to run the twenty yards to the guardroom at the entrance to the camp. As a very junior officer my room was the most distant from the communal rooms of the mess which also made it the nearest to the Guard Room. What has happened this time, I wonder to myself as I run.

I arrive to find the IO and a Malay policeman in uniform waiting on the verandah of the Guard Room hut. As I report to him my Company Commander arrives dressed in the white shirt and fawn cotton slacks he had worn for dinner that evening. He has

not bothered to put on a tie and is wearing flip-flop slippers. This surprises me, as normally he is a stickler for observing the conventions of mess dress whatever the circumstances.

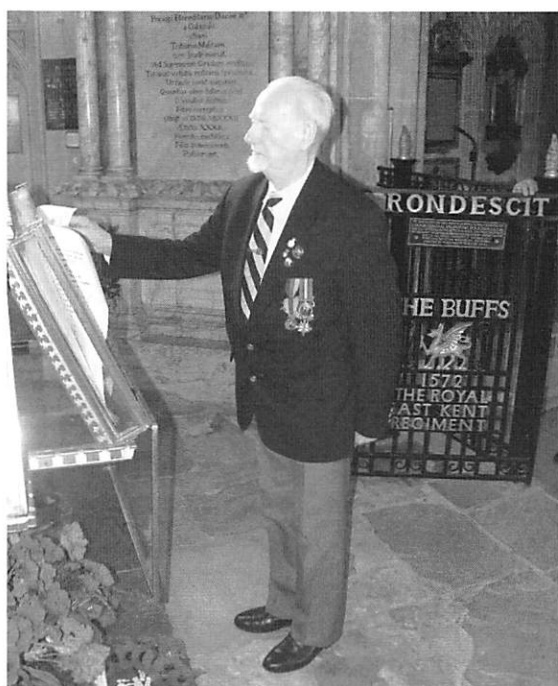
The IO briefs us both simultaneously. It appears that earlier that evening the police constable saw three armed and uniformed terrorists approach the wire of the new village at the 2nd Milestone on the road leading to the Kerling rubber estate. They had cut the wire and removed from some nearby bushes three large bags of rice. The constable would lead us to the exact spot. I was to use the tracker dog to see if we could pick up their scent and follow them back to their camp.

I had already carried out a meticulous inspection of my platoon together with the attached signaller, interpreter, Iban tracker and dog handler earlier that morning. So after confirming with my Platoon Sergeant that every one, including the escort for the empty vehicles on the return journey, was present I gave the order to board the vehicles. My Company Commander wished me luck and had already turned to make his way back to bed as we drove off.

Like so many such deployments nothing came of it. We arrived at the village ten minutes later, went to the spot where the wire had been cut and set the tracker dog to work. He soon picked up a trail. We set off at a good pace only to find the scent lead straight back across the road and down to the river where the local Malays came to wash each day. We waded the waist deep river and cast both ways along the far bank but it proved impossible for the dog to pick up any scent. I waited until daylight and with the help of the Iban made a thorough search for fresh tracks for over an hour; again with no result. I called a halt and while the platoon brewed up breakfast made my report over the radio. A few minutes later the Company commander called back to say he was sending transport to the village main gate to pick us up. An hour later we were back in camp.

To be concluded:.....

TURNING THE PAGE



Jim Peall, President of Ramsgate Branch, Turning the Page. Jim has recently suffered a stroke and is in QEQM Hospital, Margate. Jim we all send you our best wishes for a speedy and full recovery.



Ron Hills, London Buffs Branch, Turning the Page on Wednesday 4th May



London Buffs Branch at the Warrior's Chapel supported by Sammy Supple, Sid Pullman and Norman Elgar of Canterbury Branch.



John Brough, 141 Regt. RAC (The Buffs) Turning the Page on Wednesday 13th May.

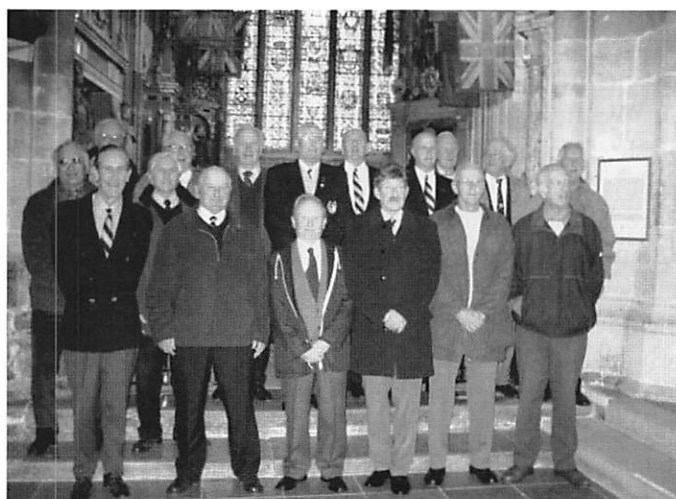
(See separate article on 141 Regt)



At left: Sid Pullman and Norman Elgar. Norman has been under the weather for the past few weeks but was determined, with Sid's help, to support London Branch. This picture brings a new meaning to the term 'Stick Orderlies' but none were ever as smart. Well done, it is great to see you out and about again Norman.



Norman Shonk Turning the Page on the 50th Anniversary of his joining the Buffs

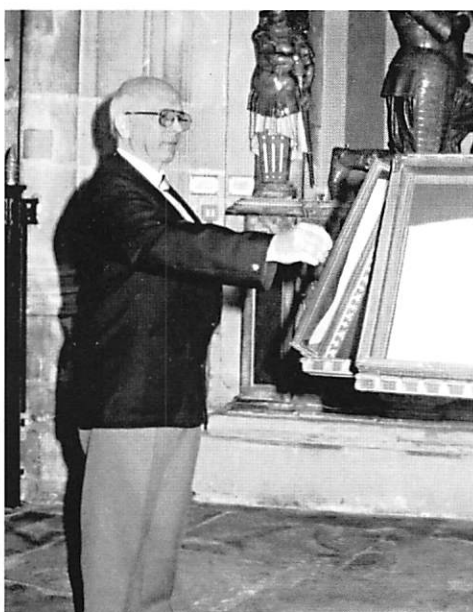


Members of Toulouse and Peninsular Platoons with supporters

Charlie Apps, John Laming, Colonel John White, Sid Maxted, Peter Roach, Brian Clifford, Norman Shonk, Dave Law, Fred Scales, Tom Wood, John Hopkins, Mike Matson, Ken Foreman, Harry Longley, Ivan Vicary

In January a group of former "Buffs" and their wives, met at the memorial chapel at Canterbury Cathedral to commemorate the 50th anniversary of joining The Regiment on the 20th of January 1955, for the ceremony of Turning The Page, this was performed by Norman Shonk, Norman was batman to Padre Evans, in Wuppertal Germany from 1955 to 1957.

The group first met as recruits and members of Toulouse and Peninsula platoons during their basic training at Howe Barracks and were re-united thanks to a letter from Fred Scales published in The Journal in April 2003, they have had many happy "Get Together's" since then.



Stan Wooldridge, Canterbury branch, who regularly turns the page



Brain Bartlett, Secretary of Bromley branch, who turned the page late last year.

141 REGIMENT RAC (THE BUFFS)

On Wednesday 13th April members of The Payboys of 'B' Company 141st Regt RAC (The Buffs) made their annual pilgrimage to Canterbury to Turn the Page. Of the original 367 there are now but a handful of survivors. Those that made the trip this year were supported by a group of wives and widows of past members. Major Dennis Bradley and I were privileged to have lunch with them afterwards. Geoff Kirk passed to me some interesting mementos of their quite unique service in 1944/45 wearing the silver dragon. Here are a few of those mementos:

Extract from "THE KENT MESSENGER" dated 10th November 1944.

KENT REGIMENT LED FIERCE ATTACK ON CROSS CHANNEL GUNS

"It can now be disclosed that it was the 141 RAC- the men from Kent- who paved the way with their tanks for the Canadian Infantry to capture the German cross-Channel guns at Cap Gris Nez, Calais and Boulogne.

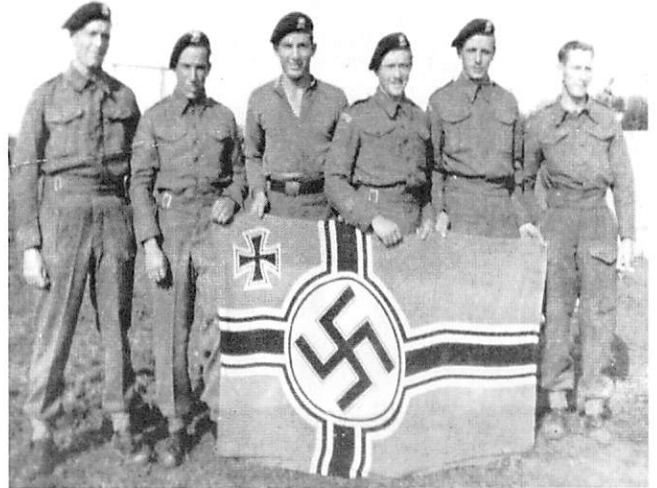
Soldiers, whose families had suffered, in "Hellfire Corner" from the incessant shelling, ferreted the Huns from their hideouts, and shot them out of their gun emplacements. While the battle roared, the Huns were sending their last shells across the Channel to Dover, which maddened the attacking forces even more.

In the British ranks were men who had been granted compassionate leave when their homes had been wrecked by the shells. There were brothers from Dover, men from Folkestone and it was to one of their officers that the garrison commander at Boulogne surrendered. It was the same at Cap Gris Nez, as a Herne Bay officer went in his tank to the fort and negotiated the capitulation with the German second in command.

CAPTURED FLAG FOR DOVER

One Squadron of tank men captured the German standard which was flying at Cap Gris Nez. It is hoped that shortly an officer from the Regiment will present the captured standard to the Mayor of Dover, with the compliments of all the men of The Buffs who took part in the assault.

Their Commanding Officer said "the Regiment has fought with almost every Division in the British Army, assisted the Americans at Brest and had been engaged with the Canadian Army. My men have been complimented by nearly every Corps and Divisional Commander for their grand work. Ever since D Day



LtoR: George Whalley, "Darkie" Nash, Len Brown, Alf Fregue, Fred Bass and Dick Goodburn with captured standard.

they have been in continuous action and in all have been engaged in about 70 battles. in the forefront of the attack every time."



Members of 'C' Squadron 141 Rgt RAC (The Buffs) with US infantry which they had supported during the attack on Brest



Another trophy

A BUFF'S STORY

R.S.M. G. Brophy

George Brophy's daughter has recently sent in some interesting photos and documents concerning the career of her father together with a detailed description of the actions of 2nd Bn. The Buffs in France in 1940 written by Lt. Col. ELC Edlmann OBE MC.

George Brophy joined the regiment in Canterbury 1919 and subsequently served in Ireland, Gibraltar, Constantinople, Egypt, India, Burma and France. He finished his service in the rank of WO 1 (RSM) in 1947.



Sgt & Mrs Brophy on their wedding day.

On January 25th 1929, whilst the 2nd Bn. was in Bombay, he married his wife in St. John's Church, which was also known as the Afghan Church.

Sgt. Brophy was a Machine Gun instructor of considerable repute. The photo below shows part of 'S'



The above picture was taken at Kangyi, Northern Shan States, Burma in January 1936. Only three can be identified: 1st Left: Lt (Later Brigadier) R. F. Parry, Captain (later Lt Col. J R (Tit) Willows who in 1941/42 commanded 50th Bn. The Buffs, 4th from left CSM Tom Burt, 3rd from right: Sgt. George Brophy.

Can anyone identify the others please?

Company who left Maymyo on Monday 12th January 1936 and marched to Kangyi viw Wetwyn, O-Ma-Thi and Nawngkhis. They, and their mules, arrived 4 days later where they then went into camp for machine gun range courses.

By 1939 George had become RSM of the 2nd Battalion. Just prior to George's promotion personnel of HQ Company entrained at Pembroke Dock for France. Due to the eagerness of the train driver to get under way the adjutant and the the RSM, who was at that time RSM Ransley, were left behind on the platform. Major Willows came to the rescue and took both the Adjutant and RSM to Tenby to join the train.

Lt.Col. E.L.C. Edlmann OBE, MC, a member of 2nd Battalion now takes up the story.

As RSM, George Brophy held a key role in the Headquarter Company(HQ Coy) which was trained to take on a fighting role,--similar to that of a Rifle Company--when on Active Service. The RSM, however, still remained the Commanding Officer's (C.O.)right-hand man where the efficiency and discipline exercised by the Warrant Officers(WO's) CSM's and Sergeants was concerned, and operationally in the defence of Battalion HQs.

The Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel George F.Hamilton (a man well-known in the Regt for his bravery in the First War when he twice won the Military Cross as a young officer) embarked at Southampton on 16 September 1939, sailing to France a bare fortnight after war was declared. In Pembrokeshire since 1937, it had been independent and specially trained in battlefield engineering tasks,- eg mine laying & lifting, use of explosives, wiring, the construction of defensive works etc, and its first and rather mundane task on arrival was to guard large ammunition, explosives.and petrol dumps in NW France near Nantes, with Battalion HQ in the small town of BLAIN. This task was unpopular with all ranks, and it was a great relief to everyone that only a few weeks later the Battalion moved to NE France to join the main British Expeditionary Force (B.E.F.) as a normal fighting Infantry Battalion in Major-General Alexander's 1st Division (the General was to become

Field-Marshal Lord Alexander of Tunis in due course).

The next six months,-to May 1940,-known nationally as "the Phony War",was spent in training and preparing for any offensive moves which the Germans might launch to the West. Poland had already been overrun, and rumours abounded as to Hitler's intentions towards France and neutral Holland and Belgium. The assumption, which was proved correct) was that Hitler would be unlikely to attack in force until the Spring. A very hard and bitter winter set in, and like all the "front-line" Battalions, 2nd Buffs found the task~ of constructing defences along the frontier with Belgium a challenging one in low-lying country affected either by frost or flood; for weeks on end the radiators of vehicles both wheeled and tracked (the Battalion was equipped with a number of small armoured "carriers") had to be drained daily against the frost; the driver who failed and thereby put his vehicle out of action faced a court-martial. In other ways and in general, it was very important to foster morale, and RSM Brophy did much to ensure this. During these months of hard work, training, and "waiting & wondering", the Battalion was centred on the villages of COBRIEUX and GENECH, some ten miles south-west of LILLE.

At last the Spring, 1940, a fateful one, arrived; in April the Germans invaded Denmark and Norway, and on 10th May launched their main "Blitzkrieg" simultaneously into Holland, Belgium, and France. A bare week before this, the Battalion was suddenly moved from the 1st Division to the 44th(Home Counties) Division, a Territorial and not fully trained one, ostensibly to strengthen one of its three Brigades; this, it so proved, had unfortunate results. At all events, at dawn on 10th May the Battalion was concentrated at LA CRECHE a few miles south of BAILLEUL, poised to move into Belgium under a Brigadier and his staff whom it hardly knew and had never trained with Plans, kept Top Secret, had long been made by which, if Belgium was attacked and asked for help, the French army and the B.E.F. would move into Belgium and take up defensive positions along certain river-lines. Thus, by 16th May, 2nd Buffs marched via MENIN and COURTRAI to its allotted positions near OUDENARDE (the Regt had won a battle-honour here, under the Duke of Marlborough, 230 years before). -The six preceding days had been spent, apart from marching eastwards, in numerous guard-duties consequent upon

rumours, all unfounded, of enemy paratroop landings on Belgian airfields or installations. The general situation was one of increasing tension and panic among the civil population, and refugees, increasing daily. soon began to slow-up road movement and thereby delay the start of work on our defensive positions. The river ESCAUT(SCHELDT) proved to be a largely ineffective obstacle, not very deep, and sunken barges assisted its crossing. The Battalion was allotted a very wide front) one which could be penetrated by an enemy attack in strength. While the Battalion was digging in, following receipt of orders on 16th May, German observation planes regularly hovered above, doubtless photographing our positions, unopposed as the RAF was heavily engaged elsewhere. Battalion HQ established itself in the village of PETEGEM, making use of cellars under a house, RSM Brophy greatly assisting in its organisation. The weather was beautiful, sunny and dry, but the whole countryside was empty, save for livestock and cows groaning for want of milking. Everyone had fled, or been forced to, and an eery silence prevailed, awaiting the storm.

During the night of 19th May truckloads of our own troops drove through from Oudenarde having crossed the river bridge, prepared for demolition, having been fighting on the line held further East and then ordered to withdraw through us. The German Panzer Divisions had broken through the French in the south, were heading for the Channel ports behind the B.E.F. and the strategic withdrawal from Belgium had begun. The men whom we saw passing through were dead tired and battle weary. We knew it was our turn next. At dusk in the evening next day,-20th May,-the Germans attacked very strongly, making much use of tracer bullets from machine-guns. In the dark they gained a footing across the river, and penetrated the position held by the Queens Regt on the Buffs right, followed by a very determined attack which virtually overwhelmed one of the Buffs forward Companies.

A counter-attack failed to regain the ground lost, and our casualties were very heavy, but we held on and beat back enemy attempts to remount attacks all the next day. In this the men of HQ Company were closely involved, the RSM being conspicuous. It later transpired that the German High Command had selected the junction of the position held by the Buffs and that of the Queens battalion for their main offensive thrust across the Escaut river.

A general withdrawal to the West followed during the night of 21st/22nd May, and within a few days the Buffs were back in France, reorganised to help in securing part of the southern approaches to Dunkirk in the area of BAILLEUL. The Germans were slow to follow up, and for several days the Battalion was subjected only to shellfire and to air attacks by Stuka dive-bombers. Battalion HQ was now close to the village of MERRIS, and here, as he did during the withdrawal from Belgium, RSM Brophy set a fine example of steadiness and calmness in handling the men of HQ Company defending the HQ and ensuring the supply of food and ammunition.

By May 27th/28th the enemy were closing in from the west, and increasing their pressure towards Dunkirk. Orders to the Battalion were to hold its ground and not to withdraw until further orders were received. Soon after dawn on 29th, enemy pressure intensified, our forward positions being heavily attacked. It soon became clear that other units had withdrawn northwards (towards Dunkirk) during the night, and that our position was isolated. We had received no further orders and were unable to contact Brigade HQ. (In fact, as we heard long afterwards, a liaison officer on a motor-cycle had been sent to contact us with orders to withdraw, but had been captured en route).

The C.O., realising the extreme seriousness of the situation, now led a withdrawal northwards, but we soon ran into enemy holding positions around METEREN and BAILLEUL. There were no signs of any friendly troops anywhere; abandoned vehicles, guns, and stores etc bore evidence of other units having been pulled out. We were coming under fire from machine guns and mortars from all directions except the south, constantly suffering more casualties as we endeavoured to break out. We paused behind a railway embankment to collect and give first aid to the mounting number of wounded, and to split up into small groups with a view to evading capture. One of the wounded, who was unable to struggle on further, was RSM Brophy who had been hit in the foot, his heel and tendon badly damaged.

By pure chance a single British vehicle (a 15-cwt Truck) was seen speeding along a road beyond where we lay, and seeing us, its driver pulled up. The driver was a Royal West Kent from our Division; he was lost, and was clearly relieved we were not Germans. All our own transport, except one motor-cycle, had been withdrawn the day before, and we seized this

opportunity at least to help the wounded, filling the truck to capacity with the worst cases, of whom the RSM was one. We instructed the driver to find his way to BAILLEUL, seek its hospital, and if, as was most likely, the Germans were in occupation, to surrender our wounded. (This, we learned long afterwards, is exactly happened). Soon after this, a large force of German troops surrounded the remainder of us and forced surrender. Thus, in the words of the Regimental History, "this hard-pressed remnant of the 2nd Buffs passed into captivity". When, five years later, the Colonel was released from a POW camp one of his first steps was to recommend certain men for awards. One such was a Mention-in-Despatches for RSM George Brophy.

Mrs McNee continues:

My father was held as a POW in Camp E344 at Lamsdorf and he, along with thousands of other prisoners, were marched, during the bad winter of 1945, from there to Pardubice in Czechoslovakia where they were eventually liberated.



RSM Brophy seen here (holding flowers) with officers of the liberating Russian Army together with Czech officials.

RSM Brophy died on 3rd December 1957. In an obituary printed in the *Dragon* published in January 1958 written by Lt Col J R Willows the penultimate paragraph reads:

"A more cheerful, willing and smart example of the backbone of the old British Army I have yet to meet."

THE REGIMENTAL REUNIONS 2005

CANTERBURY REUNION

The Canterbury Service of Remembrance and Reunion (Buff's Sunday) will be held on Sunday 7th August 2005.

The day starts with "Fall In" at 12 noon, followed by an inspection by the Association President. The parade then marches to Canterbury Cathedral led by the Kohima Band. This will be followed by a formal service in the Cathedral starting at 1pm, including an act of remembrance together with the laying of wreaths at The Warrior's Chapel. After the service there will be a march past and parade through Canterbury and after the parade has returned to Longport and fallen out members and their families make their way to Leros Barracks for a buffet lunch and an afternoon of entertainment.

There will be slightly different arrangements this year to ensure a more efficient and comfortable event. These are:

The Official Guest party will be served lunch in the Officers Mess.

There will be two serving points in the dining hall as opposed to one.

There will be more seating and tables available for picnics.

A Tannoy Loudspeaker system will be in place to allow for more efficient communications:

The Invicta Band will play music of the 1940's during and just after lunch.

The afternoon's entertainment will close with the customary Beating of Retreat by The Kohima Band & Corps of Drums.

Buffet Menu (Self-Service)

Choice of: Curry or Lasagne

Gateaux

Cost £5.00

SECURITY:

All members attending the lunch etc at Leros Barracks will need to carry their Association Membership card or some other form of identification.

To order lunch tickets please complete the proforma enclosed and send with a stamped addressed envelope to the Secretary of Canterbury Branch, Henry Delo, 38 Reculver Avenue, Minnis Bay, Kent CT7 9NN.

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MAIDSTONE REUNION

This year the Maidstone Reunion will take on Sunday 11th September and will commence in Brenchley Gardens at 10.30hrs, with "Fall In" followed by an inspection and the laying of wreaths at the War Memorial.

The parade will then move off to All Saints Church, led by The Kohima Band, where there will be a formal service and Act of Remembrance and Turning of the Pages of the three Books of Remembrance. After the service members and their families should make their way to Kent Hall for lunch.

During the afternoon there will be a band concert by The Kohima Band, the Standard Bearers competition and a Grand Raffle.

Buffet Menu (Self Service)

Assorted Rolls

Savoury Puff Pastry Canapés

Sausage Rolls

Mini Quiche Selection

Cocktail Vol-au-Vents

Deep Fried Cocktail Sausages and Dips

Cost £5.00

To order lunch tickets, please complete the enclosed proforma and send with a stamped addressed envelope to the Reunion Secretary, Mrs Jacky Allen, 38 Sermon Drive, Swanley, Kent BR8 7HS.

WAR - NEVER AGAIN

by

Lt.Col. E Ransley MBE MC

This was the theme adopted by the Municipality of LEROS for the ceremonies to mark the 61st Anniversary in 2004 of the battle for Leros in November 1943.

The event should have taken place in 2003, the 60th Anniversary of the battle, but the local authorities were unable to mount it that year.

The Leros authorities invited veterans from Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Italy, German and Greek Special Forces to witness and take part in events planned from 20th to 26th September. The invitation and programme were sent out very late which left very little time to organise a goodly number of veterans who could travel at this time.

We totalled 17 including relatives and carers and because the small aircraft serving Leros daily could not provide enough seats on the same day half of the party flew out via Athens from Heathrow on 22nd September and the remainder on 23rd. I was unable to travel on the first flight, but by courtesy of the Special Forces flew out on the 23rd. This was a very tiring flight leaving Heathrow at 22.15 arriving in Athens four hours later. We then left Athens at 11 am on the 24th arriving at Leros at 11.30. We were all pretty tired by then but fortunately our first commitment was not until 6pm.

Various events had already taken place starting with lectures on the battle to all the schools on Leros on the 20th September culminating in the opening of the Garden dedicated to the twinning of Leros with



The British Military Cemetery, Leros

**Colonel M. Blatherwick MBE GM, David Dixon (nephew of Major Dixon killed on Leros), Senator J Harte (RIF), Mrs Harte,
Roy Hewett (his brother was killed on Leros, Don Bush (RN), Mrs Arger (whose husband Arthur LRDG was too ill to travel), Reg Nees (King's Own), Reg Talbot (King's Own),
Major P. Marsland-Roberts (HAC) Carer**

Ascheim in Bavaria. On the 23rd September there was a public dedication of a monument to the German fallen in the battle. After a rest in our appointed bed and breakfast hotel we joined our Greek hosts and

existed among former enemies and Major General Jeremy Phipps CB, whose father, a Royal Naval Officer, was killed on Leros, spoke on the role of Special Forces.



Leros Harbour

L to R: Jim Patch-LRDG, Lt Col. Eric Ransley MBE MC-The Buffs, Reg Neep-King's Own, Senator Johnny Harte-Royal Irish Fusiliers, Reg Talbot-King's Own, Roy Hewett -RAF

other veterans and guests in the lecture theatre in the Crithonis Paradise Hotel at 6pm for an International Symposium. Most of the proceedings were in Greek with parallel translations through head phones. Colonel Mark Blatherwick MBE GM, Military Attache in Athens, spoke of the friendship which now

On Saturday 26th September a re-enactment of the battle which had been planned to take place in the north west of the island was cancelled owing to helicopter problems.

Three Remembrance Services followed at hourly intervals. The first at the British War Cemetery at Crithoni, Alinda Bay, the second at the Italian memorial in the port of Lakki and the last, also at Lakki. In all cases wreaths were laid by numerous dignitaries from the Municipality and by the veterans or other representatives. A large number of wreaths were provided by the Greeks but our two contingents brought and laid Royal British Legion poppy wreaths.

The service in the British Cemetery was organised following our usual Remembrance liturgy by Colonel Blatherwick with short prayers intoned by the Greek Bishop. The lesson was read by Jim Patch, a veteran of the LRDG, and Mrs. Joan Arger, whose husband



**LEROS CEMETERY
ALINTA BAY. LEROS**

Here lie many of the Buffs and Royal West Kents who died defending the island

photo courtesy of Don Bush

was too ill to attend, delivered The Exhortation. Flanked by two veterans either side I laid a wreath at the front of the memorial cross. Both Major General Phipps and Colonel Blatherwick laid wreaths at the Greek memorial in Lakki.

On Sunday 26th September a short memorial service was held in the Greek Orthodox Church, the Church of St. Nikolaus, at 10.30 am in the capital Platanos. We then had to scoot very quickly to the port of Lakki to be at the two services the first at the monument to the Greek Destroyer Adrias, sunk in the Aegean near Leros and the second at the monument to the Greek Destroyer Queen Olga sunk in Lakki harbour.

Following these services the veterans boarded a Greek Nay Minesweeper which put out to sea and wreaths were cast upon the water in memory of those lost at sea, both sailors and soldiers. I was particularly conscious of the loss of 7 Officers and 128 men of the Buffs when HMS Eclipse was sunk by a mine on the night of 24th October 1943, on the way to Leros.

On disembarking we took our place along the quay side ready for the march past of the veterans preceded by hundreds of school children beautifully dressed in their coloured school uniforms, girls and boys separately, by classes and the younger ones first. Ages were from 5-17. Good they were too.

The march was led by a Greek Marine Band the salute being taken by the Mayor and other dignitaries. Following this climax to the day's events all the veterans and other guests adjourned to the garden of the Leros naval Headquarters where our Greek hosts provided a sumptuous buffet and drinks.

On Monday 27th September I accompanied veterans of the Special Forces on a tour of the island commenting on various aspects of the battle which had lasted five days. I was able to give a more detailed account of the part played by the Buffs. Hank Hancock, a former member of the S.B.S. recounted how he was able to carry out his role as a sniper by using the parachute and harness of a dead German paratrooper nearby. Subsequently he was able to escape from the island via Parthini Bay in the north west.

That evening members of the Cumbrian Veterans Association met for a supper in a restaurant at Alinta Bay and toasted absent friends including all those lost in the Aegean campaign. Our joint Hon. Secretaries,

Raymond and Maureen Willimas were also toasted, Raymond being too ill to join us.

And so ended a memorable visit to beautiful, peaceful island.

ER

Don Bush ex RN writes:

In September last year I took part in the trip back to Leros. Unfortunately, my good friend Sid Bowden, ex RWK's and veteran of the battle, was not well enough to make the trip.

I was in the Royal Navy and serving on a Hunt Class Destroyer, HMS Dulverton, and never saw the island of Leros in daylight. We landed a detachment of Royal West Kents, including Sid, stores and ammo. On 12th November 1943, when Leros was attacked, HMS Dulverton with HMS Belvoir and HMS Echo returned to Leros to try and prevent a seaborne landing. Unfortunately we were attacked off the island of Cos and my ship was sunk by glider bomb. Over 80 of our shipmates were killed and many taken prisoner. I was one of the lucky ones and was picked up by HMS Echo and landed in Turkey.

I enjoyed my trip back to Leros we very well treated by the Greek people. I was very impressed by the service in the British Cemetery which was also attended by Lt. Col. Eric Ransley MBE MC of the Buffs.

Yours sincerely

Don Bush & Sid Bowen.

(Readers may recall a letter from Don Bush that was published in the April 2003 issue. Sid Bowen also escaped from Leros after the surrender. Part of a small group of 7 including 2 members of the LRDG, one Italian, 2 RE's and one Indian soldier and Syd, they managed to borrow a small boat and row to Turkey and eventually made their way back to Alexandria. The Editor)

KENT VETERANS' WEEK

4TH-9TH JULY 2005

Three special parades will be held this year to celebrate Kent Veterans Week as follows:

TUESDAY 5TH JULY AT ROCHESTER

(SERVICE IN ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL).

THURSDAY 7TH JULY AT MAIDSTONE

(SERVICE IN ALL SAINTS CHURCH).

SATURDAY 9TH JULY AT CANTERBURY

(SERVICE IN CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL).

PROGRAMME

For each of the parades the programme is the same:

0930 hrs Parade assemble

1015 hrs Parade forms up.

1015 Parade moves off

1045 hrs Parade passes saluting base: Salute taken by the Lord Lieutenant.

1100 hrs Parade arrives at Cathedral or Church.

1115 hrs Service of Commemoration and Thanksgiving begins.

1200 hrs Service ends,

1215 hrs Reception

PM Local events in the city or town.

ASSOCIATION RECEPTIONS

It is intended to host a reception in each location after the parade. The Association plans to fund the cost of the buffet, which will be organised in local venues.

SEATING IN CATHEDRAL/CHURCH

Admission to the services will be by ticket only; Absolute priority will be given to veterans of WW2, uniformed Armed Services and Home Front Organisations.

PARKING AND DISABLED PARKING:

This will be organised by local authorities.

BIDS TO TAKE PART

You are invited to bid for:

- a. Registration of a contingent to take part in the parade.
- b. Seats in the Cathedrals or Church for World War 11 Veterans of Service and Home Front members.
- c. Seats, if space permits, for a spouse or partner to accompany a World War 11 veteran at one of the services.
- d. Seats, if space permits, for post World War 11 veterans to attend services.

Specific details for the individual parades can be obtained from Major D. Bradley BEM on 01227 818052 to whom all applications are to be submitted at your earliest convenience.

FROM THE WEB SITE

www.the-queens-own-buffs.com

Stone grave of Lieut.colonel Charles Stewart of 50th Rgt found in Spain.

Name: Email: manuelviola@terra.es

Message: This is to inform you, that today 1-2-05 we have found a hidden stone grave in Coria's Cathedral, South western Spain near Portugal, with this inscription.

Memoriae Sacrum Militis Suae Patriae

Optime Meritis

CAROLIS STEWART

Lieut.Colonel 50th Rgt

Regis Britannici Servicio

Decefsit 11mo Decemberis anno Dom 1812

Aetatis XLVI

If this is of your interest please contact me by email

Manuel Viola Nevado

Reply from The Editor:

Message: Thank you very much indeed for your message on our Regimental Web Site concerning the stone grave of Lieut. Col. Charles Stewart. I will inform the Regimental Museum and will publish your message in the next issue of our Regimental Journal. Is there any chance of obtaining a photograph of the stone. I will try and find out the circumstances of Lt. Col. Stewart's death and I will let you know.

Once again many thanks, we are very grateful.



Reply from Senor Nevado:

I will send you a digital photograph as soon as possible, besides I will try to find the location of the grave, looks like it was situated in the cemetery of the cathedral situated on the west side of the building, this area was removed in 1970 and perhaps with occasion of these modifications the stone grave was moved. As I have read in your exhaustive historical information and trough the date of the stone grave it is possible Lt. Col. Charles Stewart was wounded in Almaraz's brigade battle in dec-1812 where the 50th Regiment was present and brought to Coria, were he unfortunately died.

Reply from Colonel 'Blick' Waring:Regimental Museum, Maidstone:

The Regimental history says "The 50th Regiment was now quartered in the village of Robledo, where Charles Stewart, the Colonel of the Regiment died. Here they speedily recovered from the hardships of their retreat, which Sir W. Napier calculates cost the allies (including the siege and the retreat from Burgos) not less than 9,000 men, with baggage. The regiment, now commanded by Colonel J.B. Harrison, moved to the town of Coria on the 30th, where Colonel Stewart was buried."

Seeking a comrade

Email: cialis1@estart.com, leeside34@yahoo.ca

Message: Does anyone know the whereabouts of Ronald Glanville ? Mortar Platoon. I was in A Company. We served together in Hong Kong - 1948 - 1949.

Any others who were there at that time feel free to contact me.

Brian W Cialis

Royal Kent West insignia.

Email: Nic.bax@sympatico.ca

Message: Can anyone tell me what this insignia is. Royal Kent West with a crown and lion above the word "Kent". It is identical to the insignia shown on

this website except it has a crown and lion rather than the horse.

These insignia were my late Grandfathers, Lt. Col. Guy Leslie Hazeon C.B.E. D.S.O.

Nic Bax

Grandfather and Malta

Email: steve_neil_phillips@hotmail.com

Message: Apologies, it looks like I am another in the long list of people searching family history. My Grandfather was a volunteer in the Royal West Kent Regiment I believe who was sent to Malta, then somewhere else where he became a POW .

Would anyone be able to point me in the right direction of where I could find more information, as I am looking to visit Malta this year. His name was Charles(Charlie)Phillips but people did call him Bill as well.

Calling National Servicemen Suez 1952/53- Freddie Alexander 'A' Coy?

Email: mark@alexanderautomatics.co.uk

Message: Did anyone serve with my late father FREDERICK (FREDDIE) ALEXANDER(d.1987) during the early days of the Suez Crisis. He was originally from Battersea, S. London and trained, I believe, at Shorncliffe during 1951/2.

I think he may have been in 'A' Company. Sadly his early death at 55 (1987) was attributable in the main to the legacy of contracting TB and 'Lupus' from swimming and bathing in the 'Sweetwater' Canal. Any information would be fantastic! Many thanks!

Mark Alexander

Pyrenees Platoon Wuppertal 1955

Email: dawn.dray@wanadoo.fr

Message: Looking for members of HQ Company who served with me -Number 23073016. Or who trained at Canterbury as a rifleman during National Service intake 016.

Names to ring bells -

Provost Sgt Smisson - RQMS Rose - Lt Col Grace -

If you served in Germany, or if a family member served with the 1st Battalion I'd be interested to hear from you.

Dray Edward

Tony Prudence

Email: Chris @ wurzel.demon.co.uk

Message: I served with Tony Prudence as a boy soldier at Plymouth in 1955. He became the Boy RSM of the Infantry Boys Bn and passed out to the Buffs in 1956. I would be very interested to know something of his subsequent career and, if possible to contact him again. Can anybody help?

Chris Edwards

141st and infantry :

Email: fink.77@osu.edu

I have seen some pictures of The Buffs in action at St. Joost in January of 1945. They show the Churchill Crocodile tanks of 141 RAC moving in support of infantry. Could the infantry in the pictures also be The Buffs? Does anyone have info on the action around St. Joost?

I recently Graduated from The Ohio State University in the US with a military History degree, and still I have some trouble figuring out the particulars of the British Army. Thanks for any help!

Steve Fink

P.S. Great site! I wish all the Regiments had a site this extensive.

THE SWORD OF STALINGRAD

Email: show52@btinternet.com

Message: My father Bert Saban was a member of the 2nd Battalion the Buffs, he served in wwII between 1939 and 1945. Before he passed away he told us about being present at the presentation of the Sword of Stalingrad, we have not been able to confirm this can anybody help.

Richard Saban

WRITE TO REPLY

'Upmeads'
Stoke St. mary
Taunton
Somerset TA3 5BY

8 White's Lane
Farnborough

Dear Editor,

Dear Editor,

From time to time my name has been published as 'the last Commanding Officer of 1st Bn. The Buffs', which is incorrect. I was indeed the last to complete a full term of 2½ years as Commanding Officer. I was then succeeded by Lt. Col. Richard Dendy, my very excellent 2nd in Command, who subsequently became the first Commanding Officer of the amalgamated Battalion of Buffs and RWK's - the Queen's Own Buffs (The Royal Kent Regiment).

Yours sincerely

Lt Col ELC Edlmann

(Colonel please accept my sincere apologies, The Editor)

SSAFA
18 Gorse Farm,
Llandrindod Wells
Ponys, LD 1 5SH
Telephone. 01597 823497.

Dear Sir,

I am writing on behalf of John Edward Westlake who served in the Royal West Kent Regiment from 1945 to 1952. He spent some time in Malaysia in a place called Kuala Kukra Baru and would very much like to be put in touch with some of his old friends.

If anyone does remember John I would be very grateful if you would get in touch with me.

Yours sincerely

J. E. Lubran
Divisional Secretary
SSAFA, Forces Help, Radnor

The Journal gives me an opportunity to thank those of The Buffs and our forbear Regiments who came to Farnborough, many from a considerable distance, on 12th January, to say goodbye to my beloved Maisie.

There were many who were unable to come and who showed their kindness and support in the many letters I received.

The giving to Children's Society in memory of Maisie totalled £1,675 which reflects the love of so many friends and colleagues for Maisie and for her untiring work in the Community.

My sincere thanks to you all.

Eric Ransley

International Military Music Society
82 Southwell Road
Camberwell, London
SE5 9PG

Dear Editor,

I have been asked by the UK Branch Committee of the above society to collate details of British Army musicians who died on active service or were awarded decorations. The aim is to publish this information to coincide with the 150th anniversary of The Royal School of Music, Kneller Hall in 2007.

I would therefore ask if any of the readers of The Journal know of such musicians and that you let me have the details. My major problem concerns the rank shown on casualty records/medal rolls or London Gazette. They may be listed as private, corporal or sergeant with no link to their band role. If at all possible could you let me have details of their name, rank, band and casualty/award detail together with the source of your information. Please

note that given the nature of my task I am only looking for details of musicians serving in established battalion, regimental or corps bands; unfortunately I am excluding drummers, buglers and pipers.

My email address is: Manston@yahoo.com or you can write to me at the above address.

Thank you very much for your assistance.

Stephen Manston

Mr. J. R. Pitchers
7 Troys Mead,
Hollingbourne, Maidstone
ME17 1UB

Dear Editor,

I was in Nicosia, Cyprus from 1956 to 1959 with the RWK's. In September 1958 a Staff Sgt in REME or RAOC was shot dead by an EOKA terrorist just after saying goodbye to his wife and leaving for work. On the following Monday our Company Commander, Major Monkton, paraded all married and living out personnel and told us officially. This was followed by a special Safety Order.

Is there anyway I can check the exact date of the shooting? I believe it was between 17/09/58 and 20/09/58.

I would be most grateful if anyone can help.

Yours sincerely

J Pitchers

21 Albert Road
Wilmington
Dartford
Kent. DA2 7DL

Dear Editor,

There never seems to be any mention in The Journal of the 1st Buffs tour of duty in Egypt from 1951-52.

Are there any readers who were there who could put pen to paper and write an article for you?

Best regards

Ken Page

(Ken, please see the letter from P Hogan below. The Editor)

12 Leasway
Putnoe, Bedford

Dear Editor,

With reference to Ken Page's letter in the December 2003 issue. I too was in 1st Bn. The Buffs when we rushed off to Egypt in November 1951. I believed we sailed from Portsmouth on November 4th, I remember that Remembrance Day parade was held on board HMS Illustrious in the Med. During the service the Captain was presented with a pennant bearing the 3rd Infantry Division insignia and he said that it would always be flown at the masthead.

We landed in Cyprus about two days later but as Mr Page stated we were only there for a couple of days before we were packed off to Egypt on the aircraft carrier HMS Triumph. We sailed all night and on the way we were issued with a bandolier of 50 rounds each and issued with Will forms which we had to sign. I remember that caused quite a stir.

When we arrived at Port Said the locals were not happy to see us. We left for the other end of the Canal, Port Suez. We were fired on during the journey but no one was hurt. I was in 6 Platoon, 'B' Company at the time.

We spent some time, including Christmas 1951, at the Water Filtration Plant just outside Suez and we got shot at now and again especially over the Christmas period- but that did not stop us from enjoying ourselves.

We left Egypt in October 1952 and wintered in England then in late March 1953, the Battalion was ordered to Kenya to take part in operations against the Mau Mau.

I hope this fills in a few gaps Ken.

Yours etc.

P Hogan.

‘Niani’
164 St. George’s Road
Sandwich, Kent CT13 9LD

Dear Editor,

I am writing to say how much I enjoy reading The Journal. I was glad to see Horace Cook featured in the last issue and his outstanding record recognised.

I knew Ben Hogbin very well during our time at St. Lawrence College Ramsgate, and I was extremely interested to see him in the 1949 Ramsgate photograph on page 28. I was also pleased to see my friend, Revd. Bernard Foulger on page 14.

Thank you for your efforts.

Kindest regards

RA Garden, Lt. Col.

32 Colin Blythe Road
Tonbridge,
Kent

Dear Editor,

I was a member of 70th Battalion The Buffs which was formed shortly before, or just after, Dunkirk. All infantry regiments formed a 70th Bn.

We were mainly employed on aerodrome defence in Kent until the summer of 1942 when the RAF Regiment took over.

D Company then left Manston and marched to Shorncliffe Camp during a heatwave this was shortly before the ill fated raid on Dieppe. Major Cox was our adjutant between 1941 and 1942 if my memory is correct. He was a most impressive sight on his Adjutant’s parades.

Upon the disbandment of the 70th in December 1942 I transferred to the Royal Armoured Corps and served with the 49th RTR and the County of London Yeomanry as a gunner on a 17 pounder Sherman known as a ‘Firefly’.

I really look forward to receiving The Journal and keeping in touch as it were.

Kind regards

Bob Kempton

(Great to hear from you Bob, hope you can make the re-union on Buffs Sunday 7th August. It would be good to see you there. The Editor)

61 Northall Road
Barnehurst, Bexleyheath
Kent DA7 6JF

Dear Editor,

I am sorry to have to tell you that my husband Roy Chapman passed away on 23rd October 2004, he had been suffering from Motor Neurone Disease.

I would like to carry on receiving The Journal as both Roy and I thoroughly enjoyed reading it.

Yours sincerely

Betty Chapman

(Betty, all who knew Roy, especially those who served with him in Malaya, will join in sending their sincere condolences to you and your family. The Editor.)

32 Huntfield Road
Bournemouth
Dorset BH9 3HN

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the last issue of The Journal. It was good to see a photo of the Buffs Band in 1953. I was a member of that band from 1944 to 54, first under Band Master Salmon then Doc. Foster in Hong Kong and then in Khartoum when Band Master Trevor Sharpe joined us. I was his Band Sgt for my last 3 years leaving the Band when the Battalion was in

Kenya in 1954. I then transferred to the Welsh Guards Band for a further 17 years.

At the Coronation in 1953 only 2 medals were allocated to The Buffs Band, Trevor Sharpe got one and I got the other. I still believe it belongs to a 'whole group' of guys. In the picture I am just out of sight behind one of the bass players but can recognise most of the men with Fred Larkin clearly seen on the bass drum. He followed me as Band Sgt in 54.

Yours sincerely

T Lynch

19 Hovendens
Sissinghurst
Cranbrook. Kent TN17 2LA

Dear Editor,

I regret to say that my husband George Taylor died on July 23rd 2004. He always looked forward to all the news of the Queen's Own Buffs.

I am sorry that I did not let you know earlier but I have been moving house to the centre of Sissinghurst as I am unable to drive my car any longer.

Yours sincerely

Mrs B Taylor

(Thank you for letting us know the sad news of your husband's passing. We all join in sending you our deepest sympathy. The Editor)

29 Agra Crescent
Khandallah
Wellington 6004
New Zealand

Dear Editor,

Thank you so much for your recent letter which also enclosed 2 of the latest copies of The Journal. After all these years I am delighted to be in touch again with new and older members of The Buffs, particularly 2nd Bn which took part in the Battle of El Alamein and later was

transferred to Iraq and finally to Burma and the crossing of the Shewli River.

The reference to our visit to Tehran and the guard duties referred to in The Journal brought back memories. 23rd November 1943 was Winston Churchill's 69th birthday- celebrated by a dinner party at the Legation at which the honoured guests included President Roosevelt, Stalin, the Chiefs of Staff and Sarah Churchill. The silver salver mentioned in The Journal was a birthday present for Winston from the 2nd Battalion.

My wife Jocelyn has been my constant companion since our marriage in May 1964. We have made several visits to Britain in the intervening years but our daughter Rebecca and husband Brian have now moved to Sydney which is much easier to get to than Heathrow.

A lot of my friends were killed in Burma in late January 1945- I was D Platoon commander and wounded before we reached the River Shweli crossing.

Warmest greetings to all your readers. I would be delighted to hear from any who might remember me.

Yours sincerely

Godfrey Howe.

(Readers may be interested to know that Godfrey published his diary covering the period 1940-46 entitled 'Diary of an Infantry Officer Second World War'. It is an excellent read and I know that Godfrey has had more copies printed. The Editor)

Heath Cottage
Piltown
Uckfield, East Sussex
TN22 3XB

Dear Editor,

My mother would love to know if anyone can tell us what has happened to Private Hake who was my father John's batman in Haifa with the 2nd Battalion RWK's in 1938 and who (so she tells me) taught me to walk!

Yours sincerely

Ham Whitty.

9 Rowlings Road
Weeke
Winchester
Hampshire
SO22 6HH

30 Edward Street
Southborough
Tunbridge Wells TN4 0HA
Tel: 01892 544425

Dear Editor

Does anyone remember by brother Raymond Croft of 'A' Coy, 1st Bn. The Buffs. He was killed in action on 24th March 1943 aged 23yrs and is buried in an unmarked grave near Wadi Akaret, his name is recorded on the Medjez-El-Bab memorial, Tunisia. I still have the wonderful letter sent to my late mother by Major Rollo at such a sad time for her. I would like to find out more about his service- perhaps someone can put me on the right course.

Sincerely

Sheila Gates

30 Castle Hill
Kenilworth
Worcs. CU8 1NB
Tel: 01926 852866

Dear Editor

My husband served with the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment in the 14th Army at the siege of Kohima.

Fortunately he was one of the survivors and for his 80th birthday (2 years ago) he was given a pair of cuff links showing the Regimental badge. A little while ago he had a nasty fall and both cuff links were damaged.

We also have a picture of a shield showing the RWK badge and across the top is the inscription "The Siege 5th-20th April 1944".

I would very much like to replace the cuff links and to know more about the shield.

Can you help

Many thanks

Marjorie Wykes.

Dear Editor

A group of ex-Buffs have a number of photos of the 1st Bn The Buffs in Wuppertal in 1955 to 1957 which we are willing to share copies, we would also like to add to our collection.

Does anybody have photographs of Sgt. John ("Charlie") Smissen? he was Provost Sergeant when he retired in about 1956.

We would be pleased to make contact with any ex Buffs.

Yours sincerely

Fred Scales

Mrs M J Scott
Red Cottage, Bridge End
Newport, Saffron Walden
Essex CB11 3TH

Dear Editor

I am trying to find some information about my father, Kenneth Montague Cole, who served in the 2nd Battalion The Buffs as a Captain in Burma. I am enclosing a photograph of 2nd Bn. The Buffs in Hong Kong and believe that my father may be on the photograph. I would be thrilled to hear about his service.

Yours sincerely

Jo Scott

(The photo that Jo refers to is featured in the Photo Gallery. The Editor).

FINAL WORD

This year seems to be going by so quickly and once again we are on the threshold of another set of parades and re-unions. It goes without saying that this year, the 60th Anniversary, is a very special time for our members who are veterans of the last war. In each Spring issue we ask for maximum attendance at the re-unions and this year is no different. Well that is quite incorrect- this year is different - very different - for it is the last time we will see any National celebrations of the historic events of 1939-45.

I am sure that you would agree with me that we owe it to our veterans to really push the boat out this year. So if you can possibly get to Canterbury on August 7th and/or Maidstone on September 11th then please do so.

Many thanks to all of you who have sent in articles, photos etc. I think I have enough for several issues at the moment but don't let that stop you from sending items in. Also if you do submit articles and photos etc don't be disappointed if they are not published straight away, we do have finite space, so be patient.

The Regimental Web Site will be revamped this year and will include many more photographs. I am particularly keen to include photos of The Canal Zone, Cyprus, British Guyana, Hong Kong and Kenya. Whilst mentioning photographs does anyone have photographs of a parade in Hong Kong in 64/65 held at the China Stadium to celebrate the official birthday of Her Majesty The Queen.

The Journal is now subscribed to in Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, Denmark, Austria, Germany, France, Spain, Portugal, South Africa, America and Canada and Eire as well as the UK- so wherever you are take care and have an enjoyable, healthy year.

The following poem was written by David Lidstone who served in The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regt in World War 11, was captured in 1940 and spent the rest of the war as a POW. He re-enlisted in the Gloucestershire Regt and fought with them in Korea.

David's story of his time as a POW will be published next year. I am grateful to Diane Lidstone, David's

widow, for permission to reproduce the poem and for allowing one small alteration.

I can think of no better way to conclude this issue.

The Editor



ABSENT VETERANS

*Would that you could wander still
Through grassy fields, by wooded hill
When morning bird-songs fill the air
And yet another spring is here.*

*If only you could still feel sun
Upon your face when winter's done,
And smell sweet scented flowers fair
When yet another summer's here.*

*But Fate decided otherwise
And you, beneath foreign skies,
A gallant band of comrades lie,
Your duty done, your merit high.*

*No changing seasons can erase
That once familiar name, that face
Which comes and lingers in each
thought
Of those with whom we lived and
fought.*

David Lidstone



DATES FOR YOUR DAIRY

2005

MAY	14th	CANTERBURY BRANCH ANNUAL DINNER
	14th	COLCHESTER BRANCH ALBUHERA DINNER
	14th	RAMSGATE BRANCH ALBUHERA DAY SOCIAL
	16th	ALBUHERA DAY
JUNE	TBC	CANTERBURY BRANCH TRIP TO YPRES
JULY	5th	LORD LIEUTENANTS PARADE (ROCHESTER)
	7th	LORD LIEUTENANTS PARADE(MAIDSTONE)
	9th	LORD LIEUTENANTS PARADE(CANTERBURY)
	TBC	COLCHESTER BRANCH BBQ
AUGUST	7th	CANTERBURY REUNION
SEPTEMBER	4th	LONDON (BUFFS) BRANCH SERVICE AT THE TOWER OF LONDON
	11th	MAIDSTONE REUNION
OCTOBER	11th	FOLKESTONE & HYTHE BRANCH ANNUAL DINNER
NOVEMBER	11th	REMEMBRANCE DAY
	19th	RAMSGATE BRANCH ANNUAL DINNER
DECEMBER	3rd	COLCHESTER BRANCH CHRISTMAS DINNER
	3rd	RAMSGATE BRANCH CHRISTMAS PARTY
	8th	FOLKESTONE & HYTHE BRANCH CHRISTMAS SUPPER
	14th	SITTINGBOURNE BRANCH CHRISTMAS PARTY
	TBC	CANTERBURY BRANCH CHRISTMAS PARTY

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.



Regimental Association Christmas Card, 2005