

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



THE JOURNAL

Number 13

Autumn 2006



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*Front Cover: James Bradley and Jake Vincent holding The Queen's Own Buffs Regimental Flag at the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro.*

# Ist Battalion The Buffs storming the Chateau de Flandres, 1915



## EDITOR'S PAGE

Once again a year in the life of the Association has been marked by many anniversaries. In June we celebrated the 80th Anniversary of the Turning of the Page as reported in our last issue. On March 1st 1961, 45 years ago, The Queen's Own Buffs The Royal Kent Regiment came into being and starting from the last issue a series of articles will be published charting the short life of the regiment. The 50th Regiment of Foot were formed 250 years ago and that event is covered in this issue. In December 1966, 40 years ago, The Queen's Own Buffs passed into history. Apart from this last anniversary each of the others have been remembered within the pages of the Journal. The passing of the Queen's Own Buffs has been marked in a very special way. Read on.

In 1961 a party of soldiers of the Queen's Own Buffs, led by Major Tom Williams scaled the heights of Mount Kilimanjaro and flew the regimental flag from the summit. The passage of 45 years precluded the possibility of any of those in the original party undertaking another expedition this year to repeat the process.



**The Summit Party(1961).**

James Bradley, son of the forebear regiments secretary, visited Tanzania this year with a party from his school to support a local charity. His report, 'My Experiences in Tanzania' is featured in this issue. To help raise funds for the school to undertake such a worthwhile project sponsorship was sought and our Association assisted with a small sum. Part of the group's itinerary was an attempt to climb Mount Kilimanjaro, James undertook to take with him a Queen's Own Buffs flag and if possible to fly it at the summit. As you will have seen on the front cover, after

an eventful and testing climb James did just that. Well done James and thank you from all of us.

In every issue mention is made of arrears of subscriptions etc. Arrangements have now been made with R.H.Q. for us to utilise a Standing Order system. You will find enclosed a Standing Order Mandate which I would ask you to complete and return as soon as possible. The time spent and cost of processing individual cheques has proved to be quite prohibitive and it is hoped that nearly all of you will use this system for the payment of your annual subscription. To cover increased postal, administration and printing costs the annual subscription has been raised to £10 for the UK, £12, Europe and £15 for USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and RSA, this includes postage. These increased charges will be ratified at the next AGM. There will be no more increases during the life of The Journal.

Our area branches are always well supported by the wives and families of the members. Ramsgate Ladies Guild is now our only formally constituted Ladies Guild Branch and their Chairperson for many years, Peggy Cook, has recently decided to hand that responsibility over. Peggy, on behalf of us all, many thanks for what you have done for your Guild, Branch and the Association.

Whilst talking about support from 'the ladies' mention must be made of the ladies of Canterbury Branch. Each year they hold all sorts of events to raise money to contribute towards the costs of various trips organised by Canterbury Branch. This year so far they have raised over £800. What a superb effort.

In the last issue I mentioned that three diaries of Signaller F. H. Hawkins, 2/4th Royal West Kents, would be serialised. These diaries cover the Gallipoli landings, the campaign in Mesopotamia and the advance on Damascus in the 1914-18 War. This serialisation will not now start until the December 2007 issue as there will not be sufficient copy space available until then.

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

I hope that you enjoy this issue.

The Editor

# BRANCH NEWS

## RAMSGATE BRANCH

**SECRETARY:** M. F. Milham. 185 Bradstow Way Broadstairs, Kent. CT10 IAX

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

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

As the Journal goes to press we have to report the very sad news that our Vice Chairman Horace Cook passed away at 3am on Friday 17th November. Horace's passing will leave a great gap in our branch as he was such an active and very experienced member. Our thoughts are with his wife Peggy at this time. Since the spring issue of the journal we have also lost a further two members of our branch, in April, Ken Todd died and then in the following month of May, Fred Cook passed away. We know that they will be sadly missed by their nearest and dearest but also by the members of the branch who knew them.

We have been joined by two new members, Ron Dean ex RAMC and Ray May, both of them are welcomed to the branch.

After the hustle and bustle of 2005 we all thought that this year would be quieter. In fact 2006 has flown by with as much activity as the previous year. The very successful parades at Canterbury and Maidstone were both well attended by our members and we were once again joined by Canterbury Branch for our annual trip to the Tower of London to support London Buffs' Service of Remembrance, which was followed by a trip to Kew Gardens.

We managed to square the annual darts competition with Canterbury Branch, both teams winning their home fixture, as for the final leg, well the less said the better, but well done Canterbury.

Our annual Dinner and Dance was held on Saturday 18th November at the San Clu Hotel, Ramsgate. It must rank as one of our best ever. Our Guests of Honour was Colonel and Mrs. Mike Ball, the Regimental Secretary and over 100 sat down, including a strong contingent from Canterbury Branch, to a really excellent three course meal. The other guests were Colonel and Mrs Crispin Champion, Lt. Col. and Mrs. Phillip Critchley. After dinner Colonel Ball brought us up to date with

what was happening in each of the three battalions of The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment and the future deployment plans. Colonel Crispin's speech contained some highly amusing poetry which entertained everyone enormously. Later in the evening Henry Delo presented Mrs Rose Denton with a large bouquet of flowers from both branches to mark her 90th birthday.



**Many Happy Returns of the Day- Rose.**

John Fernyhough our Chairman must be congratulated for organising such a superb evening.

In the coming few weeks we look forward to the usual round of Christmas events including the Canterbury Branch Annual Carol Concert and then 2007 will be upon us.

In signing off we wish all association members, wherever they are, a happy Christmas and a peaceful, healthy and prosperous new year.

MFM

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## COLCHESTER BRANCH

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

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

A warm welcome goes to all readers from the Colchester Branch. It seems only like yesterday that I

was writing the notes for the summer edition of the Regimental Journal.

Since the last notes from the Branch, we have had our summer activities and what great weather we have had this year.

We started by holding our annual Albuhera dinner which went ahead this year at a new venue but still only attended by the old faithfuls. This was followed by a day trip to Southend for members and their wives in June.

The two reunions soon followed and as usual it was first the turn of Canterbury which we felt this year was a lot better, so let us hope that each year gets better although we were not happy about the Standards leading the Parade to and from the Cathedral and not their Branch, please let us revert to the old way.

The Cocktail Party to celebrate 250 years of the formation of the 50th Foot later the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment, was very well organised and well attended by the Branches. It was a pity about the heat though I suppose this was an excuse for all to drink that little bit more.

This was soon followed by the Maidstone Reunion, I wonder why this was so well attended this year, was it because of the free buffet I wonder? We need to thank our two Reunion Committees for arranging these events for us to enjoy. In October the Branch members were invited by the Colchester Branch of the Malaya and Borneo Veterans Association to the Unveiling Ceremony of a Memorial Stone for those who fell during these Campaigns and our Standard was one of the many on parade.

This past week we heard the sad news that Brian (Doc) Breach had passed away after his courageous fight against cancer. I think someone must have had a word in Brian's ear as this year he attended both reunions assisted by his daughter to whom we send our deepest sympathy as only last July Brian's wife Patricia passed away.

Our sick list remains much the same with John Rolfe, Brian Mitchison his wife Pearl on our long term sick list, but as usual 'Scouse' has been busy visiting others who have been able to shake off their ailments. I do not expect it will ever happen but it would be nice to report a clean bill of health. Whilst on the subject

of health, I am very glad to hear that I have been given the 'all clear'.

We now look forward to this year's festive parties so without more ado may I wish all readers a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all at the Colchester Branch.

GA

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## CANTERBURY BRANCH

**SECRETARY:** H G B Delo, 38 Reculver Avenue, Minnis Bay, Birchington CT7 9NU Tel: 01843 842357

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

**MEETING:** Last Thursday of month at 20.00hrs.

First of all regrettably we have lost two more of our members. Mr Peter Bartlett who served for many years with the Kent Ambulance service before taking up the post of chief mechanic (permanent staff) with the TA in Canterbury until his retirement also Major Jack Smithers TD. who served in the Buffs. They will be sadly missed.

Mr Eddie Williams is still in the nursing home at Herne Bay and is progressing slowly and Mr Norman Elgar is still not fit enough to attend Branch meetings but is able to get about in his car, but only during daylight hours.

Our visit to Ypres in July was very successful taking place this year on a Saturday instead of Sunday. All the arrangements were again organised for us by Mr John Bishop for which we thank him; he always does us proud.



Ypres 2006

The Menin Gate ceremony was a bit different this year to what we have been used to in the past, a local band was in attendance and played hymns during the ceremony, this was very moving. The Canterbury, Denmark, Ramsgate and the Canterbury branch standards were on parade and poppy wreaths were laid at the memorial.



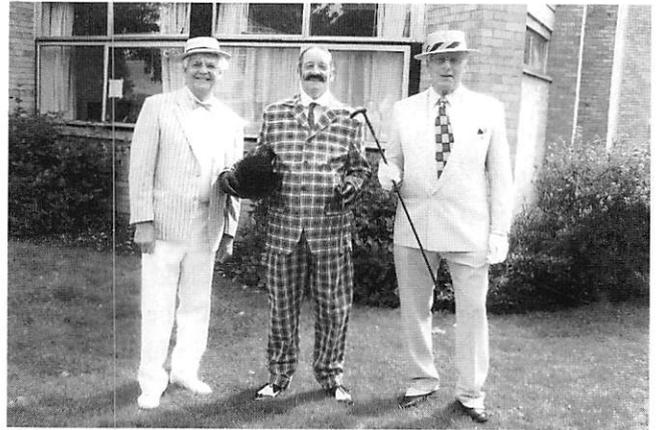
**The above cartoon was drawn by Mike Gibson whilst at the Menin Gate. Can you provide a suitable caption? Henry Delo is offering a prize of £20 for the best entry. Entries will be judged by Henry and Mike and should be submitted to the Editor by January 31st.**

Well, what can you say about the Canterbury reunion this year, many thought it was one of the best for many years with as yet no complaints. We thank Major Dennis Bradley BEM. the Regimental Secretary and Major Peter White MM. and his reunion committee on a job well done.

Yes, Sittingbourne, more chairs and hopefully next year more tables. The Lord Mayor of Canterbury thoroughly enjoyed the reunion in the afternoon and he also thought the Parade and Service in the Cathedral was very moving especially the March Past with the Old and Bold marching still as smart as ever. We thank the Kohima Band for the good steady pace.

The Tower of London service on 7th September was very good and well organised by London Branch although the marching on the cobbles was a bit hard on the feet, perhaps this could be looked at for 2007. "Well done London". Members of the Branch travelled to London on the Ramsgate Branch coach,

we thank them for their hospitality. In the afternoon we were taken to Kew Gardens where we had lunch and had a look around which again had been organised by Ramsgate Social Secretary. All in all, a great day.



**'Putting on the style'  
Bernard Miles, Brian Dudman and  
Harry Crooks at the Branch Summer BBQ**

The Maidstone reunion took place on Sunday 21st of September. The Brenchley Gardens wreath laying ceremony was well attended by members. The Church service was very good especially with the Kohima band playing the music for the hymns. The Page Turners and wreath layers in the church were organised by Mr John Ferneyhough and were perfect in my opinion. The solo singing by Mrs Mave Bradley was well appreciated by all in attendance. The Reunion in the Kent Hall in the afternoon was well attended perhaps it was because of the 250th anniversary of the QORWK Regiment or maybe the free buffet, possibly a combination of both. We will look for the same support in 2007 when we have to pay for lunch. All members who attended from Canterbury enjoyed the whole day and especially the band concert in the afternoon by the Kohima band.

Following the branch meeting in September we played Ramsgate Branch in the final leg of the inter branch dart tournament. The Dick Hickmott trophy for the winners was again won for the second year by Canterbury. Sorry Ramsgate better luck next year. The ladies of the Branch really did us proud by laying on a large spread for which we thank them.

On Saturday 14th October our Social Secretary, Bernard Miles, organised a quiz evening with a buffet at the Chaucer Club. A very good evening was had by all who attended. The Quiz was won by the team led by Bob Gawler and his wife, Major Allan Marchant

and his wife and Mr Ted Johnson and his partner. Someone had the knowledge but "who". Well done team. We thank Bob (Bamber) Cook and his wife for devising the questions.

Our Armistice weekend commenced with the dedication of the Royal British Legion Cenotaph in the Longmarket, High Street, Canterbury. The Lord Mayor along with service associations planted poppy crosses followed by a short service of remembrance. Last Post and Reveille were played by a bugler from 3PWRR.

On Saturday 11th at 10.30 hours Mrs Mary Miles laid a wreath on behalf of the Branch at the Buffs War Memorial in the Dane John. The exhortation was given by Alf Mathews. It was noted that the bayonet on the rifle of the statue was again missing. This was not the original as this was stolen many years ago but a replica. Perhaps the thieves did not know this. At 11.00 hours the Page was Turned in the cathedral by Bob Gawler, our Vice President, he also turned the page of the book of life of the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada which is only turned three times a year. Wreaths were laid in the chapel by Major Allan Marchant on behalf of the Association, Sid Pullman on behalf of the Branch, Maurice Samson on behalf of the Queen's Association and Sammy Supple on behalf of the Officers and men of PWRR. Brian Reynard laid a poppy cross on the 'Book of Life' of the Kent Yeomanry which is kept in the chapel.

On Sunday the Branch took part in the Remembrance Parade and Service in the Cathedral this was followed by the march past through the city centre with the Lord Mayor and the Lord Lt. of Kent taking the salute. This was followed by 57 of our branch attending the Canterbury Golf Club for a hot carvery lunch. This luncheon has now become an annual event for the Branch.

Over the whole of the Armistice weekend the Branch Standard along with the Denmark Branch Standard were paraded.

Forty members along with their wives/partners attended the Annual dinner of the Ramsgate Branch at the San Clu Hotel, Ramsgate. A very good evening was had by all and we thank Ramsgate for inviting us.

The next item on the calendar will be our Annual Carol Service on Sunday 10th December at the Franciscan Study, Giles Lane Canterbury at 14.30

hours. All members of the Association are invited to attend. On Saturday 16th December we will be holding our Annual Christmas Social and Dinner at the Canterbury Golf Club. This takes us up to the Christmas festivities so on behalf of the Chairman and all members we take this opportunity to wish everyone near and far a Very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous and Healthy New Year.

HD

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### 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.

Sittingbourne Branch continues to thrive although, as with other Branches and Associations, age is now becoming a major factor on membership numbers.

Our Secretary, Tony Chesson has had a rough time regarding his health for a good portion of the year, but thankfully following an operation he is progressing well and feeling much better.

Members of the Branch attended the Band Concert at Leros Barracks and had a great evening, all felt that the Musical Director and the Band were at their finest, the Curry wasn't bad either. Congratulations to Canterbury Branch on making it such a success.

Again a fairly large contingent attended the Canterbury Reunion, many of them marching. The weather was kind once again. A most enjoyable time was had by all, and members were much appreciative of the availability of chairs - Well Done Dennis! I did find it a bit disconcerting to discover on arrival at Canterbury that the old Meeting Place was closed, however I feel the new venue is much better.

The Maidstone Reunion, celebrating the 250th Anniversary of the formation of the 50th Foot, was also well attended, and the meal served at The Kent Hall was absolutely first Class, congratulations to Maidstone Branch.

Our Annual Pilgrimage to Ypres took place in early September and was a great success, although it did start off on the wrong foot when we discovered that the favourite 'wine stop' was closed when we arrived at Calais. Many of the Members remained on the coach when we arrived at Ypres and were taken on a conducted tour of the local battlefields and cemeteries, including the German Cemetery. This tour was made extremely interesting and informative by a commentary by George Antrichan, junior, one of our members who is a World War 1 history enthusiast. Thank you George, it was brilliant. We just made it back to the Sword Restaurant for a meal, having run into a large organised Cycle Race around Ypres, and having been made to detour around it. The Service at the Menin Gate was as always very moving, the wreath was laid by one of our members, Les Crouch, he himself being a survivor of many World War II campaigns including the Battle of Kohima. It was then back to Calais and a fairly rough Channel crossing before reaching home in the early hours.

Finally Congratulations must go to the Regimental Committee for the most enjoyable Cocktail Party at the Maidstone Museum, part of the commemoration of the formation of the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment, What a wonderful evening!!!

Best Wishes to all members of the Association from Sittingbourne Branch

GD

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### LONDON (BUFFS) BRANCH

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

**MEETING PLACE:** Ives Lounge, The Royal Hospital Chelsea.

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

Well 2006 has been a trying year for the London Buffs but we are survivors and long may we be so. Meetings have been well attended although numbers have dwindled and we are always looking for new members or those of you Buffs that have not been able to attend our meeting so far, please come along you would be surprised at how entertaining they can be.

Sadly we have lost 4 members this year Mr Ronald (Dixie) Dean, Mr James Charles Jackson, Mr R W Bower and Mr Charles Seymour Watts. Their names have been entered in the Book of Life in the Chapel of the Tower Of London.

The Branch Turned the Page at the Warrior's Chapel in Canterbury Cathedral on the 3rd May 2006 and the Revd. Vernon Collins, whilst here on a visit from Australia, enjoyed turning the page and also the hospitality and friendship he received whilst here. Also in May our member Ray Cox arranged a visit to Sandhurst Military Academy where we had a great time however the weather was not good to us but we did manage to have our picnic in the cricket pavilion so all was not lost and it turned out to be a great day.

The Service at the Tower Of London and the Luncheon on the 3rd September 2006 was a great success and was well attended and we are grateful for the continued support of Ramsgate and Canterbury Branches. At the lunch our President Ray Baker was presented with an engraved tankard from the Branch, in recognition for his long support and service to the London Buffs.

The London Buffs would like to thank all those involved in organising the two reunions at Canterbury and Maidstone, both were enjoyed by all who attended.

Social events for 2007 are well in hand including a visit to the house of Rudyard Kipling house in Sussex. Visits to other places of interest are in the pipeline.

Well that's all folks except to wish everyone on behalf of the London Buffs a VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR let's hope 2007 is good to us all.

BC

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### 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.

Sorry to have missed the last few issues but health has been a bit of an issue in its own right. Life at Bromley continues along its usual path. In March, at our AGM, Alan Wright and I were voted back into office unopposed, what are we doing wrong!!?

A party from the branch travelled to Folkestone recently to help John Bushell celebrate his 65th birthday and we all had a great time. Apart from our involvement in our own Association's events, during the year we have also supported other associations at various ceremonial parades and the inevitable funerals.

At the Maidstone Reunion I was overwhelmed to be presented with a beautiful pair of regimental silver cuff links to mark 40 years of service to the Association. May I take this opportunity of thanking you all most sincerely, I am deeply grateful.

I was also very honoured to represent the Association at the Garden of Remembrance ceremony at Westminster Abbey. That weekend we were involved with the usual Remembrance weekend ceremonies.

On Sunday, the 12th November, our standard was present at St. Nicholas Church, Sturry, for the Service of Thanksgiving for the life of ex Band Sergeant Bob Freydanck of the Queen's Own. Recently he had been the much respected School Sergeant at The Junior King's School in Canterbury. In the past, and I seriously doubt in the future, will I ever experience such a moving service.

To all of you, wherever you are, from all of us in Bromley Branch- happy Christmas and a healthy New Year.

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#### **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.

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#### **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.

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#### **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.

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#### **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.

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#### **DENMARK BRANCH**

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

**MEETINGS:** Contact the Secretary for details.

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#### **LADIES GUILD (RAMSGATE)**

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

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

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

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# THE PRINCESS OF WALES'S ROYAL REGIMENT

by

Major (Retd.) A. Martin

With battles raging on two fronts with Iraq and Afghanistan, the services are rarely off the front pages of all newspapers. With our scarce resources, limited manpower and failing equipment it is amazing how efficient we are proving. The resourcefulness and bravery of the British soldier has always won the day and this seems to be evident. At last the senior officers also seem to be supporting the soldiers where in this open society the press run rampant over every day actions, some times supporting us, other times not too complimentary. We wait and see how the recent turmoil reflects in deployment and senior managerial skills!

The **1st Battalion** is in Iraq. They deployed in May 2006 and return in November 2006. The tour has been characterised by change. Op Telic 8 was advertised as the tour that would realise force level reductions and this would be achieved through transition in the provinces to Iraqi control. Al Muthanna province was transferred in July 2006. DH 1 QAR transferred in September and Maysan will eventually be handed over to Provincial Iraqi Control (PIC). It is a difficult period and is by no means completely successful. Force levels reductions have not been achieved. The Battalion has conducted border operations escort duties and even rescued an Iraqi Army Battalion that was mutinying and disintegrating. After a short time the backbone was put back in them. Operations continue in Basra City in one contact for 3 hours - 3000 rounds was expended - unaccountable number of enemy killed.

On return the battalion will move back to Paderborn and hopefully have a quiet 2007 - no tours are planned (at present!).

The **2nd Battalion** is in Ballykelly (NI). HQ 8 Brigade moved out in August 2006 and now the battalion is under command 39 Inf. Bde. Force levels have reduced and by 1st August 2007 the war will be officially over. No more medals (GSM) no more extra finance. The province should revert to pre 1969 force levels and life?!!

The battalion obviously continues at a high state of readiness, manning a permanent post in Londonderry and always on standby. They sent a company group to the Falklands Island in July/August, which made an interesting break.

They have recently trained as a battalion at Stanford Training Area - a rare feat in today's overstretched army.

Ballykelly is an old air force base - called Shakleton Barracks after the Shakleton aircraft which was based there during their Submarine Atlantic Search Missions during the cold war. It was with surprise that they saw a Ryan Air passenger plane land on the closed airport one morning. The pilot had confused the airstrip with Londonderry. After an amusing scene the passengers were bussed out and the plane removed by a different pilot! The battalion will remain there until the end of 2007 and then move to Cyprus for a 2-year tour.

The **3rd Battalion** has increased in size. They have now inherited the Company at Portsmouth, which is now called 'D' Company. This Company has lost the IOW platoon to the RLC. The Battalion has also been authorised to form up a new Company in Rochester. This is excellent news but it will all take a bit of time to consolidate. The Battalion had a very successful annual camp in Okehampton and have at present up to 30 All Ranks serving with 1 PWRR in Iraq. There are constant manpower demands on the Battalion, which is coping very well and recruiting well.

'B' Company the **London Regiment** is now administered and run by the **Guards Division**. They are still capbadged PWRR but support the Guards Divisional Flash on their uniforms. It seems to be working and poaching has not taken place! Annual Camp this year was in France at La Courtine in the Massif Central. This was training for Somme Company, which will be a composite Company that will deploy with the 12 Mechanical Brigade to Iraq in Spring 2007. Member of 'B' Company will be part of that Company.

The Regiment is in good form. Recruiting is a problem and everyone is working at it. We are under strength along with everyone else. A strong effort is being made to make up the shortfall.

Pte Beharry VC is now an L/Cpl having been promoted in October 2006. He is still Y listed and will soon commence work with the Central Recruiting organisation in London. He recently published his own book, which is good reading.

AM

# A BATTALION AT WAR

## THE STORY IN PHOTOGRAPHS OF 2ND BATTALION THE BUFFS AT WAR PART 3 MIDDLE EAST

On the break up of 44 Division, 2nd Battalion The Buffs were moved from Egypt to Syria under the command of Lt. Col. Percival.

Although the Battalion was engaged on essential and vital duties it was side-tracked from the main theatre of active hostilities. It was considered likely that, subsequent to the German's success of their South Russian offensive, the oil fields and communication links in the Syria, Iran and Iraq areas were at risk. Hence the build up of forces. It fell to The Buffs to go to Iraq after they had been little more than a month in Syria. Orders were received for 36 Brigade, which included 2nd Buffs, to join Paiforce, as it was called.



**Marshal Stalin, President Roosevelt & Winston Churchill at the British Legation, Tehran 1943**

Travelling by way of Damascus and Baghdad the Battalion arrived in the middle of January 1943 at Khaniqin, in northern Iraq close to the Persian border. On 23rd November orders were received to move immediately to Tehran to guard the British Legation and airfield for the period of the Three-Power Conference at which Marshal Stalin, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill were to be present.

At the Russian Embassy on 29th November 1943, Winston Churchill presented the Sword of Stalingrad, the gift of His Majesty King George VI, to Marshal Stalin. The Guard of Honour and escort to the sword were furnished by 2nd Buffs with Lieutenant K. A. Horder as sword-bearer. The Guard of Honour consisted of Major Falloon and 16 O.R.'s. The Russian



**Lieutenant Horder, holding the Sword of Stalingrad, prior to handing the Sword to Mr. Churchill who can be seen on the left. Marshall Stalin who received the Sword is on the right of the Russian Officer.**

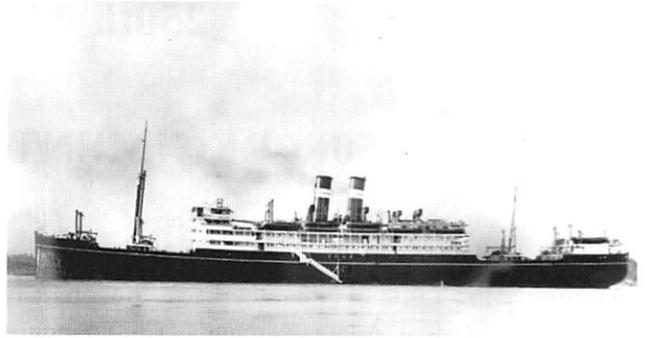


**CSM R. P. Calloway, centre, holding the silver tray that was presented to the Prime Minister**

Guard of Honour of an identical number formed up opposite the Buffs in the large room prepared for the occasion. On arrival of the two great leaders Lieut. Horder marched forward and handed the sword to Mr. Churchill, who then gave it into Marshall Stalin's keeping with the words "Now it is in the Russian Army."

On 30th November, in celebration of his 69th birthday, CSM R. P. Calloway presented The Prime Minister, on behalf of the Battalion, with a silver tray of Isafhan work. In his speech of thanks Winston recalled how he had served along-side The Buffs on the North West Frontier in 1897. Later that same day a number of NCO's of the battalion paraded and were inspected by Winston Churchill. (See picture below)

By 1944 the risk to the Middle East had diminished and the area was considered to be immune from attack and consequently there was a distribution of troops to other areas. So it came about that 36 Brigade embarked at Basra at the end of July 1944, bound for India and subsequently Burma.



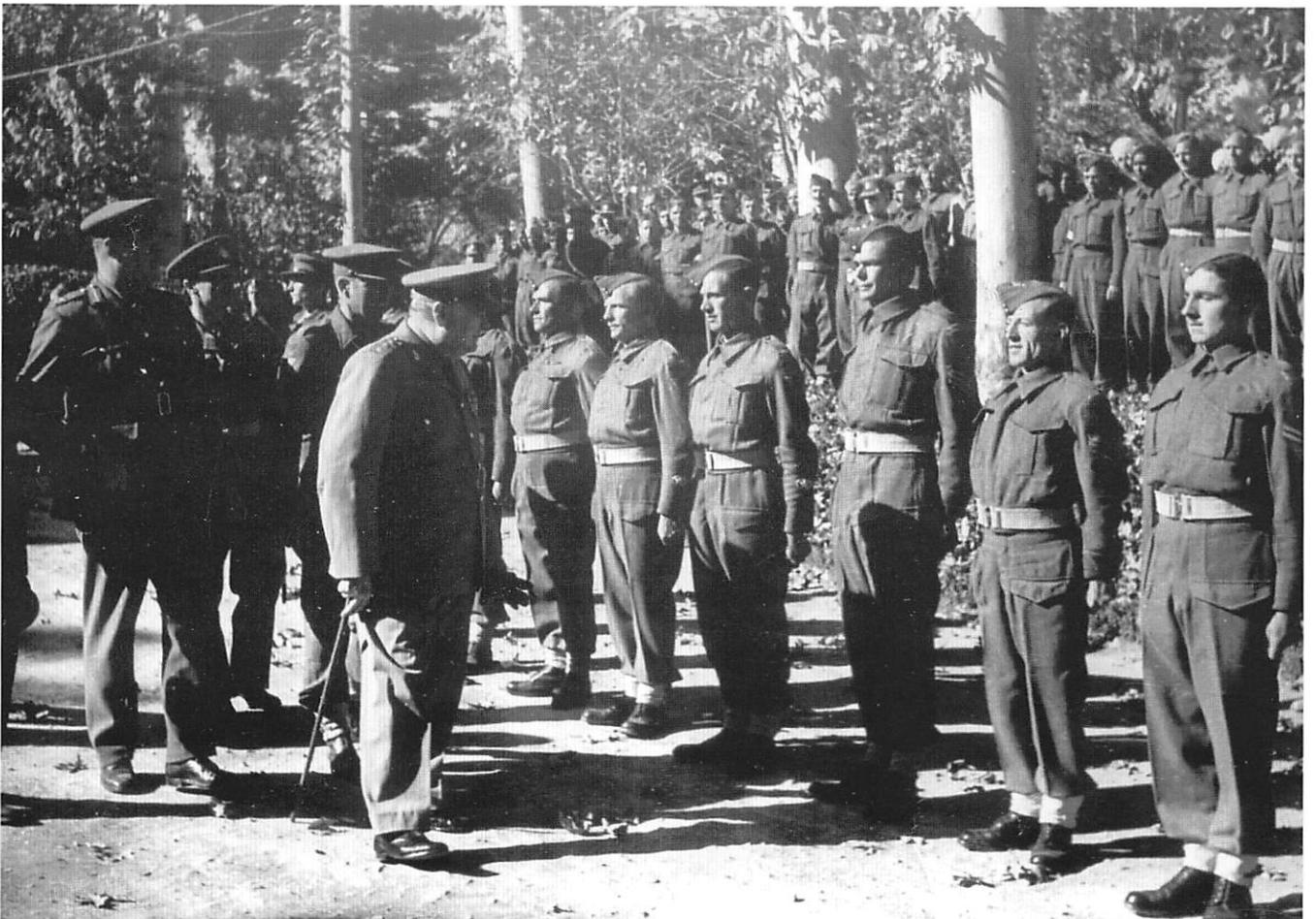
**H.M.T. Talma**

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

In the last few days of July 1944, the Battalion embarked on H.M.T. Talma for the Far East. This ship transported the Battalion from Persia to India leaving on August 1st and arriving at Bombay on Friday 11th August 1944.

The 2nd Battalion was destined to join 36 (British) Division in their advance against the Japanese in Burma.

*to be continued.*



**Prime Minister Winston Churchill seen here inspecting some NCOs of 2nd Battalion The Buffs.**

*(If anyone can identify the Buffs pictured above please let me know. The Editor)*

*The above pictures are published by kind permission of Mrs. Phyllis Daniels, wife of the late Ginger Daniels of 2nd Bn. The Buffs, who compiled the photo album from which these pictures are taken.*

# 250th ANNIVERSARY of 50th REGIMENT of FOOT (1806-2006)

The 250th anniversary of the formation of the 50th of Foot was marked by a cocktail party at the Maidstone Museum on Wednesday September 6th 2006. Those invited included the Worshipful Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Maidstone, the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Canterbury, Mr & Mrs John Horne, the past Mayor of Maidstone, Lt. Col Adam Edmunds, Commanding Officer, 3rd Battalion PWRR together with other civic dignitaries. Representatives of all our Regimental Association Branches also attended.

Despite the heat everyone thoroughly enjoyed the atmosphere, refreshing drinks, good company and a really excellent buffet.

In his speech of welcome, Colonel Champion thanked the following:

The Director and Staff of the Museum for allowing the party to be held there and for all the support that they give the regiment. The Worshipful Mayor and Mrs Fitzgerald, The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Canterbury for attending. the Councillors of Maidstone Borough Council who give such good support to the RWK Room.



**Two members of the Re-enactment Group  
guarding the entrance to the Museum.**



**Left to right: Mr. John Horne, Brigadier John  
Holman, Mrs Holman and Mrs Horne**



**Colonel and Mrs Champion with the Worshipful  
Mayor and Mayoress of Maidstone to their right  
and the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress  
of Canterbury**



**Left to right: Mrs. Vivienne White, Lt. Col Adam  
Edmunds, Colonel Crispin Champion.**



**Musicians from the Band of 3 PWRR  
entertaining the party goers.**

Lt Colonel Adam Edmunds, CO of 3 PWRR for his kind permission for the appearance of the Band of 3 PWRR and for all the support he and his staff give to the Association throughout the year, the 50th Foot re-enactors, the caterers and all those who attended. He particularly thanked the Forebear Regiment Secretary, Major Dennis Bradley BEM for organising the event. Colonel Champion then went on to outline the history of the Regiment:-

*“After several false starts the 50th Regiment of Foot was formed in 1756 at the start of the 7 years war. In 1782, by order of King George III, the 50th were linked with West Kent taking the title in brackets.*

*The Napoleonic wars saw the 50th fighting alongside the young Captain Horatio Nelson RN in the successful capture of Corsica, and with him again in the hugely successful campaign defeating very large French forces at Alexandria and subsequently capturing Cairo.*

*In the Peninsula Wars the Regiment earned every pauldrit at Vimeiro and then at Corunna under Sir John Moore. Wellington described the 50th as “Not a good looking regiment but devilish steady”, earning particular fame at Almaraz, Vittoria and the battles in the Pyrenees.*

*In 1831, King William IV liked what he saw and commanded that the Regiment should be styled The 50th or Queen’s Own.*

*Later in India the Queen’s Own were instrumental in winning such battles as Punnjar, Ferozeshah and Aliwal, battle honours displayed on the Colours which now rest in All Saints here in Maidstone. In the Crimea the Regiment fought with great fortitude and bravery at battles such as Sevastopol, Alma, Balaclava and Inkerman.*

*By now the 97th Regiment had been formed and they too fought with great gallantry throughout the Crimea earning several VCs. They were destined to join the 50th in the Cardwell Reforms of 1881 to become 1st and 2nd Battalions The Queen’s Own (Royal West Kent) Regiment.*

*At the end of the 19th century these battalions were to fight in Burma, Aden and the Boer Wars before the ‘War to End All Wars’ of 1914-1918. During the first World War the regiment lost 6,866 men, mostly on the Western Front but also at Gallipoli, in Palestine and Mesopotamia. The ceremonial keys to Jerusalem were surrendered to two astonished Privates of 2/20th London Regt (RWK) outside the city who were looking for water to ‘brew up’.*



**Representatives of Sittingbourne Branch soaking up the 'atmosphere'.**

*General Allenby, riding into the city, was said to be peeved as he expected them to be presented to him with great ceremony at a formal surrender. Those keys are on display here in our Museum.*

*In the 2nd World War, 1939-45, the Regiment saw action in nearly every theatre of conflict from Dunkirk to the deserts of North Africa with Battalions serving in both 1st and 8th Armies. From there to Italy where at one time three of our battalions were holding the front line at Monte Cassino. However it was the 4th Battalion, a TA unit recruited almost entirely in West Kent, and from the Tonbridge and Maidstone areas in particular, who will always be remembered for their defence of the key hill station of Kohima, the gateway for the Japanese to invade India. For 15 days this under strength TA Battalion of 500 men held off a Japanese division of 13,000, fighting hand*

*to hand across a tennis court with L/Cpl Harman winning the Victoria Cross. The defence of Kohima gave time to the 2nd Division to redeploy and relieve them. They emerged from the shattered remains of Kohima described as 'Walking Scarecrows'; Wellington would again have said 'Not a good looking regiment but devilish steady'.*

*Post war the Regiment moved to Malaya for a bloody, but very successful, 3 year tour operating against Chinese insurgents, taking grievous casualties but killing 106 terrorists,*

*As a newly arrived young officer I attended a ball in London, graced by our then Colonel in Chief, Princess Marina. That very night the 1st Battalion were at sea preparing to land at Suez where again they drew many plaudits for their excellent work. Finally the Battalion was to serve for 3 years in Cyprus during the EOKA emergency, earning high commendation from the Governor, Sir Hugh Foot.*

*In March 1961 the Queen's Own amalgamated with The Buffs, The Royal East Kent Regiment, to form a single county regiment, The Queen's Own Buffs, The Royal Kent Regiment. After action in Borneo and a tour in British Guyana they were soon to become part of The Queen's Regiment and since then to be further amalgamated to form the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, now the most highly decorated regiment in the British Army. The 1st Bn PWRR is now serving yet again in Iraq, while the 2nd Bn. now back from Iraq, are garrisoning Northern Ireland with two companies already detached to the Falklands. Our TA Battalion, 3rd Bn. PWRR, whose excellent Kohima Band are here today, have not been slow to reinforce Iraq, notably reinforcing The Argylls on their last tour who were desperately short of soldiers.*



**Major Dennis Bradley, Syd Watler, a Queen's Own WW2 veteran, Colonel Crispin Champion, L/Cpl Lee Andrews PWRR and Les Crouch, a Queen's Own Kohima Veteran.**

*As you have heard YOUR Regiment remains busy, really too busy, in the Service of the Nation; part of an Army once again severely overstretched, being starved of resources both in people and equipment - you may well ask "What changes?"*

*Ladies and Gentlemen please raise your glasses  
- The Regiment."*

# EVERY DAY A BONUS

by Ken Clarke

(Continuing Ken's remarkable account of his pre war service in India with the QORWK's)

A few days before we were due to return to Trimulgherry my fever and high temperature returned and I found myself back in dock, army slang for hospital. The detachment returned without me and a couple of weeks later when I was discharged from hospital the medical officer decided that I needed a further three months up in the hills to recuperate. As the new party had not yet arrived at Hill-San I was sent to join the detachment from the Suffolk Regiment who were stationed at Hastings Barracks and was attached to a group from their signal section. They made me very welcome and I joined in some of their classes learning morse code and semaphore, so the unofficial practice that we had been doing instead of band practice came in useful. Hastings Barracks consisted of nine or ten low brick bungalows housing about 20 men in each.

After a few days the new detachment from Trimulgherry arrived at the main barracks and I was sent off to join them. There was only one other boy amongst them, a trumpeter from the Royal Horse Artillery named Lund. All boy trumpeters in the R.H.A. were called Badgie at that time and probably still are, so he was known as Badgie Lund. We were given a room to ourselves and got on well together and became good friends.

As we did not take part in the usual training and drill parades with the men we were given the job of acting as orderlies at the Detachment Commander's office which entailed delivering messages around the barracks. The telephone system was not widely used at that time.

My clarinet had been returned with the other band instruments to Trimulgherry so my musical training came to a halt and I spent a very leisurely three months. Sometimes Badgie and I collected our rations and the two of us went off hiking and exploring in the hills or joined larger parties to go further afield. This was probably the most peaceful three months I spent during the whole of my army service. All good things come to an end and in September I was on my way back to join the regiment in the burning Deccan but it was good to get back with my friends and to be reunited with my clarinet. I had got rather rusty as far

as my playing was concerned and had to get down to some serious practice to catch up.

A new large swimming pool had been opened at Trimulgherry and became a popular venue. I passed my intermediate and bronze medallion life saving courses and spent as much time as possible at the baths.

At Hyderabad was the large Husain Sagar Lake where there was a sailing club. Some of our officers were members and we occasionally had the opportunity to act as crew for them and have a good swim in the lake.

Hyderabad City, built on the banks of the River Musi, was a large independent state ruled by the Nizam. Reputedly the world's richest man, his wealth originated from the diamond mines of Golconda which had once been the capital of Hyderabad State. It had been connected by an underground tunnel five miles long to Hyderabad City which became the capital of the area in 1763 when the Deccan Nizams seized power. The Nizam's palace, called the Basherbagh Palace, was a magnificent place of marble pavilions and ornamental lakes and gardens. The Nizam had his own mint and his money was known as Alisika and not rupees as in the rest of India.

One of the most prominent buildings in Hyderabad was the Charminar, a granite gateway 184 feet high with a minaret on each of the four corners, built in 1591. Charminar means four minarets, char being the Indian word for four.



The Charminar

Most soldiers in the area were confronted with pictures of this almost every day as Charminar was the name given to a popular brand of cheap cigarettes which had a picture of the temple on the front of the packet. Whereas in England men would say 'have a Woodbine', in Trimulgherry it was 'have a Charminar'. Adjoining the Charminar is the Mecca Mosque, one of the world's largest, which took almost 100 years in stages to construct.

There were many other interesting places to visit in the area. Not far from Gough Barracks were a number of rocky outcrops almost bare of vegetation and rising up to between 80 and 100 feet. Two of the larger ones had temples built on the top of them and were reached by climbing up dozens of stone steps cut into the rock. The larger one was called Burra (big) Moulali and the smaller one Chota (small) Moulali. Outside the temple of Burra Noulali was an iron grating covering a deep pit. Dead bodies would be laid on the grating to be eaten by vultures and the bones which remained were bleached white by the hot sun and dropped through the grating down into the pit. It was a rather eerie place to visit and was known as the towers of silence.

In November 1934 the Battalion took part in Divisional exercises at Homnabad, which entailed a march of over 100 miles. During this time the boys, the sick and a small rear party were the only personnel left in the barracks. Indian Service Corps lorries returned to the barracks to collect supplies and both

vehicles and men were covered with a fine red dust from the area in which the troops were training. Apart from having to load and unload trucks we had a very peaceful period until the Battalion returned. As the long column of men marched back into the barracks it looked as if they had all been sprayed with red brick dust.

We had a number of deaths during our time in Trimulgherry and because of the extreme heat bodies had to be buried the same day. It was quite an uncanny feeling to be burying someone in the evening when you might have been speaking to him earlier in the day. The band would lead the procession playing Chopin's Funeral March as we slow marched the mile or so to the British Cemetery.

About half a mile from our barracks was a large fort where another infantry unit was stationed, initially the Suffolk Regiment who were later relieved by the North Staffordshires. The barrack rooms were similar to ours but were inside a tall fortified wall and surrounded, by a moat with a large stone gateway at either end, each with a drawbridge crossing the moat. The main road, unmade and dusty, ran through the centre of the barracks and we had to pass this way to reach the local bazaar at Trimulgherry. The bazaar was a jumble of wooden, canvas and corrugated iron huts and lean-to's but was a busy and useful place to visit. I had a pair of shoes made in this bazaar and they were about the most comfortable I have ever owned. The shoemaker drew round each of my feet on to an old newspaper, cut out a template, and having taken other measurements produced my hand made shoes in about two days. They fitted like a glove, cost two rupees (two shillings) and lasted many years.

An interesting sight was to watch the toddy tappers at work. They would climb to the top of palm trees by means of a rope around their middle and around the tree, slit the trunk and attach chatties, earthenware pots, in which to catch the sap. This was then fermented and turned into a spirit known as toddy, which was the main tippie for the poorer Indians and occasionally for hard-up soldiers.

A number of Hindustani words were finding their way into our vocabulary as well as the many army slang words. A rifle was always a bundook, bread became roti, water pani, bed a charpoy and paper coggage. As a lot of men in the Regiment came from South London, usually pronounced Saaf Landen, rhyming



slang was also commonplace, boots and feet becoming daisy roots and plates of meat. Indians employed around the barracks were all known by the jobs they did, bheesti (water carrier), mehtar (sweeper), dirzi (tailor), malee (gardener), bobajee (cook), dhobi (laundryman). The company office was known by all as the dufter, derived from the Hindustani word dafter, meaning office, and Blighty came from belati which means home.

In April 1935 we set off yet again for our annual visit to Wellington with which I had by now become very familiar. One of the places which we had not previously visited was Pykara, situated at one of the highest points in the Nilgiris. We crossed ravines by means of primitive suspension bridges and looked down on Pykara Falls, a spectacular waterfall. An inviting looking reservoir enticed us in for a swim but this didn't last long when we discovered that it contained leeches which clung to our skin.

There was a cable railway at Pykara which dropped thousands of feet down to the Nysore jungle to a large electricity generating station. The cable cars, just an open bench on four wheels, had swivel seats and were used to take employees down to the power station which, from high up on the mountain, looked like a postage stamp. Standing on the roof of the cable house we could look down across miles and miles of thick jungle although the countryside at the top looked very English with its green rolling hills, small clumps of trees and made an excellent picnic spot which we visited a number of times.

A different regiment had taken over the barracks at Wellington since our last visit and the Somerset Light Infantry had handed over to the King's Own Lancaster Regiment. A number of friends that I had made during previous visits were no longer there. We quickly settled into a familiar routine and renewed our acquaintance with the Soldiers' Home and billiard hall in our spare time. When the detachment was due to return to Trimulgherry we were told that as our regimental band was coming up with the next party we would remain and join them for a further three months. While we were pleased to be extending our stay in the Nilgiris it meant that we would be under much stricter discipline than usual during our stay in Wellington.

The arrival of our Bandmaster, Band Sergeant and other NCO's put an end to our casual instrumental

practice and we had to attend organised band practices which were held in the gymnasium. It was decided that the band would give concerts for the troops and so serious rehearsals of a programme began.

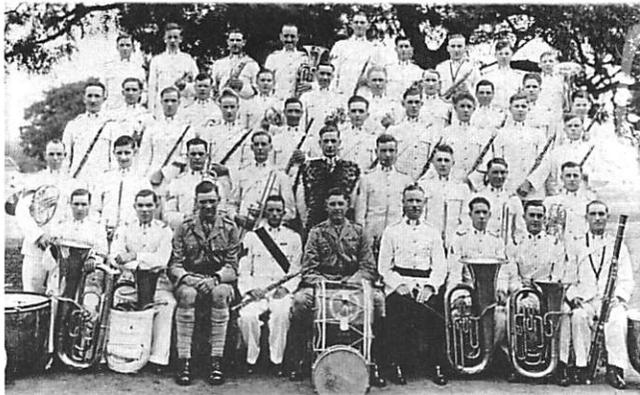
Our Thursday hikes in the hills still continued and a number of the band members joined with us on these excursions. It was at this time that a small party of us decided to hike the whole way down to Mettupalaiyam and each armed with a bottle of water, a haversack full of food and a stout stick we set off early in the morning. We made good progress for the first ten to fifteen miles, stopping for a drink and a splash in the clear cold water at small streams on the way. As we got further down the hillside so the sun gradually became hotter and our progress a little slower. After twenty or so miles we reached the plains in the middle of the afternoon when the sun was at its hottest. There was still another five miles to go along dry, dusty tracks, the hardest part of the journey, before we reached the railway station at Mettupalaiyam where we had a welcome drink and rested our tired feet in the shade before catching the train back up to Wellington.

There was not a great deal for men to do in their spare time in the evenings apart from visiting the Soldiers' Home, the tin cinema, the billiard room or the wet canteen, so the band concerts for which we had been rehearsing were given in the gymnasium to packed audiences and included items by our now popular dance band.

The wet canteen was the other ranks bar located on high ground up a very steep flight of steps. Whether or not this was planned deliberately to make men careful not to drink too much I don't know. Boys were of course not allowed to drink here but rules were made to be broken and some of us would occasionally sneak up and sample a pint. The wet canteen was basic in the extreme with a few bare wooden tables and benches and a barrel of stout in the corner covered with wet sacks to keep it cool. An Indian bearer would be on duty to serve customers who would just sit and reminisce as they drank their pints of stout. There was no other choice, it was stout or nothing.

It became quite cool in the evenings and we wore our home service khaki serge uniforms or, if we possessed them, walking out blues. These were navy blue jackets, trousers with a red stripe down the side, black shoes and blue peaked cap with a red band. The

'blues' had to be bought by the individual and could be worn when off duty for walking out or attending regimental social functions. As far as the boys were concerned, with our pay at one shilling a day purchasing a set of blues was out of the question although I did acquire a set later after reaching the age of eighteen and starting on man's service. When I was later appointed bandsman and was also receiving proficiency pay on qualifying as a marksman with the rifle, my pay rose to the princely sum of three shillings and sixpence a day.



**Battalion Band  
Trimulgherry 1936**

(Ken is third from the right centre row:)

Card schools were a popular pastime and whilst we sometimes played for real money - usually on pay day - we often used buttons as currency. On one occasion, when one of the boys was short of money, he short changed the char wallah by two pice. There were four pice to an anna which was slightly more than one penny. Repeated asking failed to get the debt repaid and after a couple of days the char wallah sat on the veranda in the evening just outside the door where the boy slept and began to chant 'Two pice you owe me sahib' over and over again. Doors and windows were never closed except in the monsoon season so when everyone was trying to sleep we were kept awake with the char wallah's repeated chanting. At first there were shouts of 'clear off' or 'shut up' but all to no avail. The char wallah continued his chanting. A few boots and other missiles were thrown at him but he was not to be deterred and kept up the demand for his two pice until quite late. The next evening he reappeared and recommenced his chanting despite dire threats from boys trying to sleep. Eventually the boy who owed the two pice was told by the rest of the occupants of the room to pay up or things would be made difficult for him. He did so and we all got some sleep.

The weeks soon passed and for the last time we marched down the Ghat Road to Wellington station and boarded the little mountain railway carriages for another three day journey back to Secunderabad. Shortly after our return to Gough Barracks we set off again for the annual camp at Ghatkesar and as usual the band, in addition to their role as stretcher bearers, were required to give concerts to entertain the troops. Bandmaster McKenna decided to put on something spectacular and settled for the 1812 Overture as a grand finale. Rehearsals all went well and it was arranged that in addition to one or two extra bass drummers and cymbal players to provide the sound effects for the battle scene a party of men would be secreted in the bushes and would fire blank rounds at the appropriate moment.

The concert had been a great success with all the officers and men of the Battalion sitting round enjoying it. Came the grand finale and the moment for the drums to bang and the blank rounds to be let off. The battle scene began with a crescendo of sound and suddenly all hell was let loose. Charging into the midst of the band and the audience came a number of frightened mules, knocking over music stands and scattering men and instruments in all directions, bringing an abrupt end to the evening's entertainment. The mules had been tethered in the transport lines just behind the area where the band had chosen to play and the sudden noise and firing had caused them to panic and break loose from their tethers. They were eventually all rounded up with no serious damage done and we all had a good laugh about it later.

Back in barracks after camp we began to look forward to Christmas. With other boys I was again given the job of decorating the Headquarters dining room to see if we could again win the trophy for the best decorated mess as we had in the previous two years. At home it was the year when Mr. Hoare Belisha was Minister of Transport and introduced Belisha crossings. We decided to use this as our theme and erected a full size traffic island with flashing Belisha beacons on yellow and black striped posts. The lights on all the tables were miniature beacons and the whole colour scheme for the paper chains was yellow and black. We had a very clever cartoonist in the Company, Oliver Hill, who painted appropriate subjects to adorn the walls and the final effect left us in no doubt that it would take some beating. That year we were awarded joint first place with one of the other Companies.

A few weeks after Christmas I celebrated my 18th birthday and in the army's eyes stopped being a boy and became a man. I was now ranked as a private and began my nine years regular service to be followed by a further three years on the army reserve. I moved into the band bungalow where I joined many of the bandsmen who had served with me as boys during the previous three and a half years. My pay rose to three shillings a day and I was now entitled to privileges which were denied to boys such as being allowed to smoke, to drink (officially) and to associate with women. The latter was a somewhat dubious privilege as in Trimulgherry available women were very few and far between.

Man's service also entailed being issued with a rifle and bayonet, a full set of equipment and being required to fire and pass an annual musketry course in order to obtain a further sixpence a day proficiency pay. The rifle ranges were about a four mile march from the barracks at a remote area called Lallaguda where, if you missed the target, you were not likely to hit anything other than a passing kitehawk.

After some weeks practice, and getting used to firing .303 ammunition instead of the .22 that we had used on our Thursday morning shoots on the miniature range, I began to feel fairly confident of passing the course. We were trained to shoot at distances ranging from 200 yards to 500 yards and apart from straightforward target shooting there were various other categories. Snap shooting at 300 yards consisted of a red disc about 18" in diameter suddenly appearing for a few seconds, in which time we had to locate the target, aim and fire. The grouping practice required us to put five rounds on a target at 200 yards all in close proximity, irrespective of where they were on the target.

Then there was ordinary target shooting at ranges up to 500 yards when a six foot square target looked like a postage stamp and heat haze and wind all had to be taken into account. The markers, men in the butts operating the targets, would give signals to indicate to the instructors and men back at the firing point where the shots had gone. What none of us wanted to see was a flag being waved backwards and forwards indicating a washout - the bullet had missed the target. However, when we fired the course proper my score was high enough to obtain my extra sixpence a day proficiency pay and also to qualify me as a marksman. I felt quite

proud of myself when I stitched the crossed rifles badge to the sleeve of my tunic.



### Musketry

My instrumental playing had also improved and I was appointed to the rank of bandsman which added a further three- pence a day to my pay. About this time the Bandmaster suggested to me that I should consider taking the entrance examination of the Royal Military School of Music at Kneller Hall in Twickenham. This entailed going before a board of Bandmasters to be examined for instrumental ability, theory of music and a certain amount of aural knowledge. At first I was a bit overawed at the prospect but after due consideration decided to put in an application. As the examination would not be held for some months it gave me the stimulus to improve my musical ability which at the same time I found gave me more pleasure from playing in the band. I was eventually examined and passed for a place at Kneller Hall and it was then just a question of waiting for a vacancy. One of our regular band engagements was playing at the officers' guest nights and because we would be on duty until about midnight bandsmen were provided with a special supper. On these occasions we wore our white drill uniforms and the regimental side caps which were dark blue with light blue piping around the edge. Only officers and bandsmen wore these caps, other ranks wore the regulation khaki issue. The Battalion also wore dark blue felt backing behind their badges when wearing the khaki drill uniform, but when the band wore their white uniforms the badge backing was changed to red and during the day white helmets were worn.

Members of the band did not usually take a turn at providing men for regimental guard duties except for one period each year when the companies were involved in intensive weapons training. One extra man than actually required was always detailed for guard

duty and had to be prepared in the event of someone becoming sick or otherwise unavailable. When the guard was mounted it would be inspected by the Orderly Officer who then selected the man he considered to be the smartest on parade. This man would then fall out from the parade and become what was known as Stick Orderly for the day. This entailed attending at the Battalion orderly room, complete with regimental cane, to be available to take messages to the various officers and company offices and was much better than standing on guard duty for two hours at a time during a twenty four hour duty and having to turn out in cases of emergency or whenever the Orderly Officer or other top brass appeared. I managed to be selected as Stick Orderly on a number of occasions, which meant that I got a night's sleep instead of pacing up and down outside the guardroom,

Water was, of course, at a premium and many of us kept a Chati, or earthenware pot, beside our beds for holding drinking water. It also kept the water cool. Outside the washroom there was a cement pit about ten feet by four and three feet deep into which all the water from the showers and wash basins drained. This was used by the mali, the gardener, to water the plants around the bungalows. One of our band members, Bill Baynes, was in charge of the malis. He had been transferred to the band from a rifle company on the understanding that he was a musician, being the owner of a violin which he produced from time to time to entertain the rest of the barrack- room with a few well known tunes. After being transferred to the band it was soon discovered that Bill didn't know a note of music and his repertoire was limited to three or four tunes that he had managed to learn by heart. He was simply looking for a cushy number so he was 'appointed' to be responsible for the gardens around the bungalow.

One day Battalion Orders announced that Brigadier General D.G. Johnson, VC, DSO, NC, Commander of the 12th (Secunderabad) Infantry Brigade, would be visiting the Regiment and would inspect our barrack rooms. A day or two before the visit there was a lot of spit and polish going on, every bit of equipment being polished or blanco'd and every bed space tidied up except one - Bill's. The evening before the General's visit hardly anyone left barracks. We were all busy putting the finishing touches to our cleaning and polishing and debating about when Bill would make a start on tidying up his scruffy bed space. He had made friends with a local Indian family, known rather disparagingly as Down-homers, and was paying

his usual evening visit to their home. When by lights out he had not returned to barracks we began to speculate about the possibility of his being hauled off to the guard room and probably getting fourteen days confined to barracks. Reveille sounded next morning and to our surprise where the night before there had been Bill's bed, kit box, equipment etc. there was just an empty space with no sign that anyone had occupied it -and of course no sign of Bill.

At least the NCO in charge of the barrack room was relieved when on completing his inspection the General congratulated him on the smart turn out of the men and their equipment. The General departed, we all went off for lunch and then returned for the afternoon siesta. There was Bill, directing a group of Indian malis who were lowering an iron bedstead, kit box etc1 on ropes down from the flat roof of the veranda where they had hoisted them in the early hours of the morning. A balustrade about two feet high around the edge of the veranda roof had concealed Bill and his kit as he calmly lay there reading during the General's visit.

Being on man's service also meant that I did not have to get a special pass to leave barracks and could go off into Secunderabad. in the evenings or on days off. Evening visits were mostly to go to the cinema, which we did once or twice a week, but during the day it was interesting to visit the bazaars and street markets which were usually packed with people buying and selling.

Secunderabad, like most large towns in India, was a mixture of large ornate buildings and run down shanty areas, some fine gardens but also barren waste land.

A lot of sporting events took place in the evenings and there was much inter-unit rivalry between regiments in the area which included, besides the West Kent Regiment, the Suffolks, 17/21st Lancers, 'N' battery, Royal Horse Artillery and 'L' Company of the Royal Corps of Signals. Later the Suffolks and 17/21st Lancers were replaced by the North Staffords and the King's Dragoon Guards. Most weeks there would be at least one big event involving the battalion teams at hockey, football, swimming, boxing, cross country running etc. when most of the Battalion would turn out to cheer on their teams.

Even many of the Indians employed around the barracks came to support. Sometimes they trapped kitehawks by laying an old blanket on the ground with

food on it. When they swooped down to grab the food the hawks caught their long claws in the blanket which prevented them from taking off again. The Indians then wrapped the blanket round them and fixed paper streamers in the regimental colours to their feet. During a match they were released to swoop about over the field with the coloured streamers trailing behind.



**The Band Hockey Team  
Trimulgherry 1936**

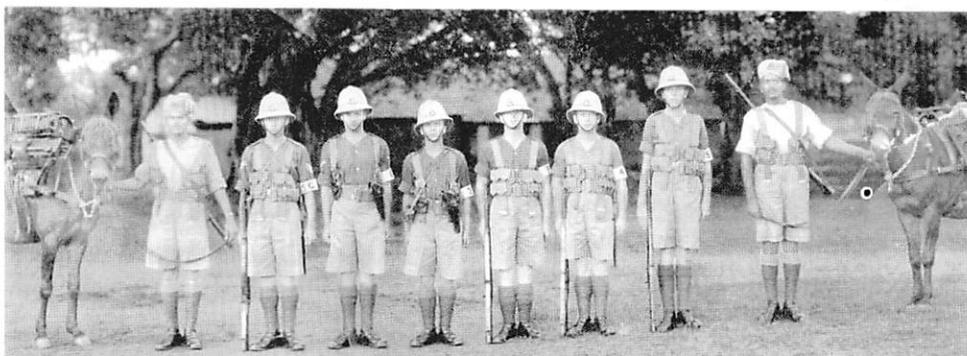
There were also many inter-company and inter-platoon sporting events at which the band teams usually did very well, particularly hockey, cricket, swimming and football. This was mainly, I believe, because they had been together for so many years. Almost all had joined as boys and then went on to serve at least another nine years, whereas most of the duty men in the companies had joined for seven years and five on reserve. They would have served some of their time with the home battalion and when they came out to India would in all probability be transferred from one company to another during their service, whilst the bandsmen would remain with Headquarters for most of theirs.

When not in use all weapons had to be under lock and key, with the bolt and magazine of the rifle removed and padlocked in our kit boxes. There was a rack for rifles with a chain that passed through the trigger guards, which was also padlocked to a metal ring fixed in the floor. Thieves, known as 'loose wallahs', were known to get into the barracks and apart from a loincloth would cover themselves with ghee (fat) which made it difficult to hold them should they be

discovered. Apart from the char wallahs and others who traded around the bungalows there were many other workers employed in the barracks such as cooks, sweepers, grooms for officers' horses and canteen workers. One of the less savoury jobs was that of the low caste Indians who cleaned the toilets which were of the wooden seat and bucket variety. They came round with a bullock cart on which was a large tank into which they emptied the buckets. This was known as the Bombay Mail and could be smelt almost from one end of the barracks to the other.

The Battalion also had a section of Indian troops who wore similar uniform and badges to ours except that they wore turbans instead of the topi or pith helmet. They were mule drivers who drove the Battalion's carts used for transporting kit and ammunition and the mules were also used for carrying the heavy Vickers and Lewis machine guns.

Towards the end of 1936 we heard the news that the Battalion was to move to Karachi in an exchange with

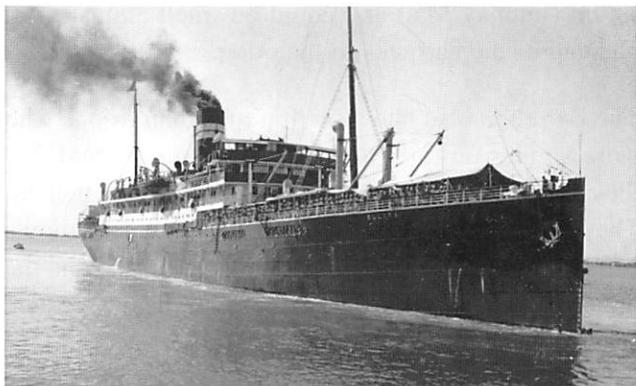


**Machine Gun Section, 'D' Company.**

Sepoy Drvr. Cpl. Gardner, L/Cpl Byrne, Ptes. Welch, Gready. Hall & Willis, Sepoy Drvr.

the West Yorkshire Regiment. After a number of farewell parades and concerts by the band we marched out of G-ough Barracks, Trimulgherry, which had been the Battalion's home for the past four years. At Secunderabad railway station a long line of military coaches were waiting to take us on a three day journey to Bombay, back along the same route that I had taken in February 1933. At Bombay we boarded the SS Ellora for a further three day journey up the west coast of India to the port of Karachi. As we marched from the docks and through the town we were pleasantly surprised to see many western type shops, cinemas and cafes in the main streets. We moved into Napier Barracks, large two storey barrack blocks built in 1847 on the outskirts of the town and quickly made ourselves at home.

Unlike Trimulgherry, where doors and windows were seldom if ever closed, here we found that being close to the sea and also on the edge of the Sind Desert it was necessary to close doors and windows to keep out the sand. The climate was very different from the burning Deccan and in the evenings it became quite cool. It was only a short walk into the town and we very soon began to explore the area to see what Karachi had to offer.



**SS Ellora**



**Disembarking at Karachi**

In the main streets of Bunder Road and Somerset Street, bullock carts, camel carts and hoards of cyclists vied with tongas, taxis and tram cars for room on the dusty roads. There were many shops selling ornamental brasswork, carved ivory figures, inlaid wooden boxes and a great variety of Indian trinkets, together with banks, bookshops, sports shops, photographers and cinemas. A number of smart looking cafes were also there to tempt us, something that was non-existent at our previous stations. It wasn't long before we were sampling the mixed grills, freshly caught fish and of course the local curries on offer.

This was a whole new way of life for us, particularly being able to use some of the local clubs. There was a

large Goanese community in Karachi which had a well appointed club just off the main street, known as the KGA (Karachi Goanese Association). Many of us began to use the KGA where I spent many a convivial evening. The in drink at the club was called a Blue Nile which consisted mainly of gin and was quite potent.

Napier Barracks was rather stark compared with our barracks in Trimulgherry, two storey buildings with no surrounding gardens and everything covered with a layer of sand, but with so many other attractions on hand that didn't bother us unduly. We had been in Karachi about a couple of weeks when a clerk from the Battalion orderly room came into the bandroom one morning and told me that I was wanted on the telephone in the office. Rather surprised I followed him back to the orderly room, picked up the telephone, and a voice said 'Is that you Kenny?'. The only person who called me Kenny was my brother, Fred, and on enquiring what he was doing on the other end of the telephone he told me that he had himself just arrived in Karachi. He had joined the Royal Air Force a year or two earlier and had now been posted to the R.A.F. station at Drigh Road, a few miles outside Karachi. There were plenty of taxis for hire in the town and so that evening I took a trip out to Drigh Road and met Freddie again for the first time since leaving St. Andrew's Orphanage in Reading six years earlier. He was working in the wireless-telegraphy section on the airfield. We had a lot to talk about as I had already spent four years in India and he had also moved around quite a bit since leaving St. Andrew's so we visited one another regularly during the next few months.

After only a month at Napier Barracks we were on the move again but only a short distance to a hutted camp called Bhurtpore Lines on the outskirts of Karachi. The camp had been constructed to house refugees from the earthquake at Quetta which had occurred on 31st May 1935. 20,000 people died, plus another 6,000 in neighbouring villages. Our regiment had been due to move to Quetta but as all the military installations had been destroyed we had moved into the vacant Napier Barracks in Karachi. Napier was now required for the 1st Battalion, The Royal Scots Fusiliers who were moving from Nasirabad, and as the West Kents were due to return to England within the year we had to move out into the temporary accommodation which consisted of single storey huts and a number of tents. The only permanent building

was the dining hall which catered for 200 men in relays.

There were no recreational facilities at all in the camp so when the day's parades and duties were finished Bhurtpore Barracks would be almost empty whilst the town of Karachi would be alive with soldiers, airmen and occasionally sailors visiting the port. The Union Jack Club, known as the U.J. was a popular venue with bar, restaurant and swimming pool, where our band gave occasional concerts. On one notable occasion we were playing to a full house and the major item on the programme ended with a loud crescendo from the band and a great crash on the cymbal. We made our crescendo, the bandmaster cut us off and pointed his baton dramatically at the drummer, Jack 'Flop' Read. Having been standing, arm raised, for some minutes ready to strike the cymbal this was Flop's moment of glory. With a mighty swipe he brought down the stick, missed the cymbal and struck his music stand, sending the music flying in all directions. A deathly hush followed and poor Flop, who later became a major in the Royal Engineers, took a very long time to live that down.

Across the bay opposite Karachi Harbour was a long stretch of sandy beach known as the Lido which was ideal for swimming, sunbathing and where we could hire canoes. Occasionally we would get the use of the regimental bus, take some rations with us, load up the back with a few crates of bottled beer and spend a very pleasant day by the sea. It was also possible to get there by gharry, a horse drawn carriage or on the tram, which was another innovation Karachi had to offer. Quite often there were Indian dhows anchored near the shore and we could swim out to them, climb aboard and use them as diving platforms, We had to be on the lookout for jelly fish although the larger ones could usually be seen and avoided. If you swam into a shoal of small ones, called Blue Devils, you could be badly stung and this could cause paralysis. Although I don't recall any men of our regiment being badly stung a number of local Indians were reported to have drowned as a result. Jelly fish or not, they did not prevent us from enjoying our free days at the Lido.

In addition to our normal parades the band were kept busy with a variety of engagements and one particular occasion that comes to mind was playing at a Parsee wedding.



### The Lido

This was a very grand occasion with the women and girls dressed in multicoloured silk saris and wearing gold and silver bangles and strings of coloured beads. The turbaned men in high buttoned embroidered coats and wearing garlands of flowers around their necks were served cool drinks by uniformed bearers.

After playing a couple of pieces our bandmaster told me to move up to the lead clarinet stand with one or two other younger members of the band to take over the leading parts for our particular instruments. 'We can treat this as an opportunity to give some of the younger members a bit of experience' he said. 'These people won't know the difference'. The next couple of items included a few wrong notes along with some missed entries which resulted in not particularly musical renderings. At this point two very richly attired and bejewelled young men approached the bandmaster and one of them, in impeccable English, asked whether we could play Lilac Time by Franz Lehar as it had been one of his favourite pieces while he was studying at Cambridge University. Bandmaster McKenna, somewhat taken aback, agreed that we could but quickly decided to reshuffle the band members back into their usual places.

Alongside Bhurtpore Barracks was Karachi Racecourse at which regular meetings were held. On big race days the band would be engaged to play on the bandstand alongside the prize ring. These were always pleasant occasions and we would be provided with jugs of cold fruit cup and the opportunity to have probably the best view of the races for free. Our oboe player, Jeff Jeffery, would collect bets from the band members and then dash across to the tote to put them on. Our tips came from the jockeys themselves when they were parading round the ring before the race and as they passed the bandstand we would ask them which horse was going to win. They would often tell us the number of the one which was expected to win

and they were often right. A number of the jockeys were British or Australian, some of whom had been warned off the turf in their own country and were making a living in India until they could return home to ride.

One of the Indian jockeys was known as Sherrif by reason of his large bushy moustache. He often led the field and everyone would think he could not be caught, then in the last hundred yards the whole field would pass him and he would finish last. It was not often that we put our money on the Sherrif.

In Karachi Harbour was a base for Imperial Airways' Sunderland flying Boats which, amongst other things, brought the mail from England. The flying boats would circle the camp at Bhurtpore Lines and within a short time the bugle call for 'mail up' would sound and we would all wait expectantly to find out if we were one of the lucky ones. Letters from home meant a lot to most soldiers after many years abroad.

Out in the bay was Manora Island, joined to the mainland for most of the time by a long sandy causeway. A leave camp had been set up on the island consisting of a number of huts and large tents and parties of men were granted leave for two weeks at a time. Our turn came eventually and we left our band instruments behind and were taken over to Manora. The tents, furnished with charpoys (cane and string beds) were set up on the beach with the sea lapping the shingle only yards away. There were no parades and we could get up and turn in when we felt like it and could also wear civilian clothes if we wished. Most of the time we dressed in just shorts and sandals or bathing trunks.

We would get up in the mornings, run down the beach and straight into the sea, then after breakfast one of our favourite pastimes was to go fishing. For a few rupees we could hire a sailing boat complete with crew, usually the owner, and a small boy who would sit out on the end of a plank to keep the balance. We would sail out to Oyster Rocks just outside the harbour entrance, climb on to the rocks and lay flat on the top where on the seaward side there was a sheer drop of 25 or 30 feet. No conventional fishing this with rod and tackle, just a long line with about six hooks on the end to lower down into the sea.

Around the rocks was a breeding ground for a great variety of fish of all shapes, colours and sizes. There were cat fish, dog fish, eels, blow fish and even

hammerhead sharks but also some edible ones as well. No great skill was required, the hardest job was to keep your balance on the smooth slippery rock surface. Most of what we caught was returned to the water but during a morning or afternoon we could produce quite a haul, the bulk of which we would leave for the boatman just picking out one or two good specimens to take back to camp and get the cook to fry them up for us. Quite a lot of the time on Manora was spent swimming or lazing in the sun which was nothing like as fierce as the blazing sun on the Deccan Plain. There were also tennis courts, clock golf and a reading room or we could just go and explore the island where ruins of an old fort constructed in 1795 and surrendered to the British in 1839 could still be found.

After our leisurely two weeks leave it was back to our basic quarters at Bhurtpore Barracks and the resumption of our normal duties. While we had been away Bandmaster McKenna had been taken to hospital but whilst there he had been far from idle and had been composing a bugle march which he called 'Secunderabad' after our previous station and where no doubt he originally started to write the music. He was then in the process of arranging the parts for military band and would send along the manuscript parts for us to practice. When Mac, as we called him, though not to his face, returned from hospital we spent hours marching up and down playing 'Secunderabad' with bugles, without bugles, altering a bar or two here and a bar or two there until it was eventually to his satisfaction. The march 'Secunderabad' was later published by Boosey & Hawkes and is still performed by military bands to-day.

Occasionally British or foreign warships berthed at Karachi's Kiamari Docks and the band would be required to play on the quayside. On one occasion the Battalion provided a guard of honour when the Admiral commanding the Fleet arrived aboard HMS Norfolk with the Sultan of Muscat also aboard. We always had a good audience as there were inevitably hundreds of people squatting on the quayside with their bundles and tin trunks waiting to catch a boat.

We carried out brigade training on the Sind Desert at a site called Háb River, about a 20 mile march from Karachi. This was a desolate area where everything was covered in red dust, surrounded by rocky outcrops and barely a sign of water in the river bed. No doubt in the monsoon periods it became a swollen

torrent for a few days but during our stay it was just a shallow stream in a wide, dry river basin. The winds blew the sand into our eyes, clothes, boots, tents, bedding, even into our food. Occasionally a long string of camels loaded with sacks of grain or spices would plod past us on their way across the desert towards another Hyderabad on the far side of Sing Province.

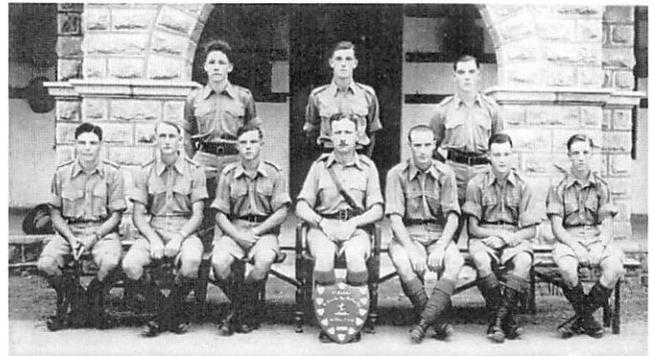
I, like most if not all of the Battalion, was very pleased to set off on the march back to Karachi's civilisation after two weeks of desert warfare training even though playing a clarinet on the march under the hot desert sun with sand swirling around kicked up by hundreds of marching feet was not all that enjoyable.

Back at Bhurtpore Lines the monsoon caught up with us with a vengeance, Torrential rain fell for days on end and the monsoon ditches around the perimeter of the camp quickly filled up and overflowed as the water rose higher and higher. After two days it overflowed into our bungalows and all our belongings were piled up on our beds or roped up to our equipment shelves. Wires were strung across the bungalows from side to side on which to hang clothes and blankets. Very soon the water was lapping about halfway up the bed legs and we were paddling about in bare feet. To get across to the dining hall for meals meant struggling through about two feet of water. Practically everything came to a stop - no parades or band practice or the usual daily routine of barrack life. The town itself was flooded to a depth of about two feet which brought most of the traffic to a standstill.

After four days of incessant rain it stopped as suddenly as it had begun and the water level began to fall. The sun came out and we began to dry off as the water disappeared for another year leaving tide marks all round the inside and outside of our barrack buildings. Life quickly got back to normal and once more in the evenings the usual long line of gharri wallahs would be queuing up at the camp entrance awaiting customers to take into town.

One of the pranks we sometimes got up to was for two or three of us to call a gharri and ask his price to a particular destination. If we thought we were being overcharged we would climb in one side and out the other. The gharris were usually enclosed with the driver sitting on top watching to see how many men were getting in and not noticing that we were jumping out of the other side. When everyone had climbed in

we would shout 'OK gharri wallah' and he would crack his whip and start off at a gallop and was often well down the road before he realised that he hadn't got any passengers on board. Meanwhile we had negotiated with another gharri for a lower fare and were on our way to town before he got back to look for us.



**The Band Swimming Team  
Regimental Champions Karachi 1937**

Although there was a great lack of sporting facilities at Bhurtpore Lines at least we were able to keep up our swimming at the Lido and the Union Jack Club. The Battalion's inter-platoon swimming sports were held at the UJ Club and was won by the Band's team of which I was part. The dusty parade ground also served as the hockey pitch and football pitch and the Band also won the inter-platoon hockey and football trophies.

Towards the end of 1937 a number of men whose service was coming to an end were sent home to England and then in December the rest of the Battalion prepared to follow them. Than Bahadur Jan Mohammed, known to everyone in the Battalion as John Mohammed or 'Mister', who was the Regimental contractor and had been connected for so many years with the Regiment, treated us all to a supper and cinema show. With everything packed we set off for Karachi Docks for the last time on December 24th 1937, boarded the troopship ENT and set sail for home on Christmas Eve with John Mohammed waving goodbye on the quayside.

*To be concluded:*

# HOW WE WON WORLD WAR 11 OR "IF ONLY HITLER HAD KNOWN" by the late Major Geoffrey Cox MC.

We left Cassino in mid April, exhausted and mud stained and went back to a rest area near Capua, some thirty odd miles behind the lines. I thought that I had never seen such a beautiful spot, everywhere a luscious green, brightly decorated with Italian spring wild flowers of many colours like Jacob's coat - and peace, sun shining and birds singing. Here we had a week of complete rest, combined with sports, ENSA concerts and trips to Naples, which was less than twenty miles away. I was given a few days leave and Hugh Collins, the Adjutant, and I went to stay with Colonel McKechnie who had a temporary staff job in Naples whilst recovering from his wounds and before taking command of a brigade.

One night we went off to "The Orange Grove", an officers' club situated in one of the more pleasant suburbs of Naples, high up and overlooking the Bay. Here we joined a jolly party, consisting of John Prestige and other officers from the battalion occupying a table on the balcony overlooking the dance floor. We were knocking back drinks, bolstered by NAAFI issue whisky, when a very irate APM appeared and told us that it was quite wrong to bring in issue drinks and to get rid of it. This we did by pouring out enormous whiskies and inviting him to join us, which he declined to do. Eventually things deteriorated (I remember dropping a chair on Hugh Collins when he was dancing) and the APM ordered us out at the same time placing us under open arrest. Hugh and I returned to our billet where we told Colonel Mac and Colonel Hamish Taylor (8 Argylls) of the evenings happenings and later the four of us set out for The Orange Grove to confront the APM with his high handed behaviour but fortunately he had left the scene. Later after we had returned to the Capua area, we were hauled up in front of Major General Charles Keightley, 78 Division commander, together with two officers from 11 Brigade and twenty two from the Irish Brigade! We were formed up behind a cactus hedge, three company commanders of 5 Buffs and the adjutant and we were marched before the Divisional Commander, who was seated at a table by his caravan. We marched smartly forward led by Hugh Collins who failed to notice a mole hill just before we I reached the General, with a result that he fell over

and the rest of us piled on top of him. Sorting ourselves out we turned to our right and waited for the General (who was trying hard to control his laughter) to speak. His opening words were "*Which of you is Cox?*" to which I replied "*I am sir*" at the same time putting up my hand in a very un-military manner. He then went on "*The evidence says you threw a chair at Collins*" and turning to Hugh he said "*Did you need this chair at the time?*" to which Hugh replied "*Not really sir*". Then the General asked "*Which of you is Prestige, who appears to be one of the arch villains in the case?*" (Prestige having threatened to sue the APM.) However Prestige was not present being many miles away on a course at Benevento. Then the General asked "*Was the APM unpleasant?*" to which we all replied with alacrity, "*Yes sir!*" After a slight pause he then said "*I know you have all had a very hard time but behaving like hooligans doesn't make my job any easier. Behave yourselves in future, case dismissed*". Many years later when I was DAA and QMG of 63 Gurkha Brigade in Malaya in 1952 and General Sir Charles Keightley was C-in-C Farrelf, he visited the Brigade. When I was introduced to him he said "*I think we have met before haven't we?*" to which I replied "*Yes sir, when you were commanding 78 Division*".

After the Orange Grove incident and before returning to the battalion, Hugh and I searched Naples seeking suede boots, as worn by officers in the African Desert campaign and commonly known as "Brothel Creepers". We were unsuccessful, so settled for some rather smart brown and white shoes, which before the war were usually referred to as "Co-respondent Shoes". We hoped to set a new fashion. The day after our purchase, we set out for Sorrento proudly wearing our new shoes. As we were passing a rather pompous looking and corpulent full colonel, obviously a base officer, he stopped us and told us to report back to our unit and get ourselves properly dressed. Cheerfully we set off, having no intention of complying with his order, when rounding a corner we bumped slap into another full colonel. Without noticing our shoes but focusing on our cap badges he exclaimed "*Ah Buffs ~*" and engaged us in animated conversation as to which battalion we belonged to, etc, etc. He was

Colonel Charles Knight, himself a Buff and author of *The Historical Records of The Buffs (1814-1914 and 1919-1948)*. Later that evening we attended a dance in the company of a rather inebriated commander in the US Navy to whom we had earlier spoken of our episode over the brown and white shoes with the staff colonel. It so happened that the same colonel was at the dance and we pointed him out to our naval friend. Without further ado he went up to him and said "*Say Colonel, I reckon your attitude to my infantry buddies was un-democratic and unconstitutional and I demand an apology!*" The colonel took it all in good part and laughed heartily. After the dance returning to Naples we were speeding down the autostrada, with Hugh driving, when we suddenly took off into space. The Italian authorities had taken the road up for repair but forgotten to erect warning signs; fortunately we came to no harm.

On our return to Capua, we spent the next few days training for the battle that lay ahead. This involved co-operation with tanks and river crossings over the Volturno. On 17th May, we left our beautiful surroundings and moved forward to San Angelo where we were told that we would relieve the London Irish. Cassino had fallen and the Monastery captured by the gallant Poles. Early the next day we pushed on towards Acquino, in the Liri Valley, which formed part of the Hitler Line. We advanced some three miles, which involved digging in three times, and on the night of the 18th we occupied positions on the edge of Acquino airfield, thoroughly exhausted. In the early hours of the morning of the 19th, Brigadier J G James, our new Brigade Commander, arrived in my company area and asked me to take him to Battalion HQ. I had only a vague idea where this was situated and lost my way but knowing I was in Y Company area (commanded by Edward Body) I located Edward and asked him if he could guide the Brigadier. Brigadier James was very angry with me for not being able to locate Battalion HQ and told me in order to practice finding my way I was to find his driver and jeep and bring them to him. This I did and arrived about an hour later to find that Colonel Max Monk, our CO, had called an O Group for an attack on Acquino.

The attack was scheduled to start at 5 am but too little time had been given for us to reach the start line, with the result we did not move until 6 am, an hour after the artillery barrage had finished. To make matters worse a heavy mist, which covered our advance across the airfield suddenly lifted and we were exposed to enemy positions on the high ground to our right and very quickly we were subjected to heavy artillery and

mortar fire. The leading tanks were rapidly knocked out whereupon the remainder withdrew. To add to our troubles the enemy opened up accurate machine gun fire, supported by the awesome nebelwerfers, SP guns and tanks. Sadly Colonel Max was killed instantly when a shell hit his carrier and Tony Pratt, the signal officer and the wireless operators were all wounded. Thus all communications between Battalion HQ and companies and Brigade HQ were cut but Squire Curtis, our gunner battery commander, was able to re-establish contact with Brigade. Colonel Max was a great loss; a young man in his mid twenties he had joined the battalion after Guy Oliver had been wounded and assumed command in November 1943 when Colonel Ginger McKechnie became a casualty. His death caused much gloom for he was liked by all ranks and had the gift of knowing practically every man by name.

With no tank support and under heavy enemy fire, we withdrew and Ned Wirideatt (The Devonshire Regt) our 210 came up from B Echelon to assume command. The 6 RWK moved up to hold the line and as I was lying in a ditch with my CSM (CSM Johnson MM) one of their companies under Major Kennedy passed through. Seeing us lying in the ditch and thinking we were part of his company he told us to get on our feet and move on, whereupon my CSM, who was completely exhausted replied "*Fuck off!*" Seeing who we were Bill Kennedy apologised. Bill was one of three Buffs WOs, the other two being Lovejoy and Delves, who had landed with 5 Buffs in North Africa and had subsequently been commissioned in the field and transferred to 6 RWK. Kennedy and Lovejoy both became company commanders and were awarded the Military Cross. In return we received three excellent chaps from the Queen's Own, Messrs Bengel MM (later to win a MC), O'Brien (killed in the mountains overlooking Bologna, having taken over temporary command of B Company from me) and Richardson MM (in civilian life a golf professional), We moved back to B Echelon where we rested and reorganised. When we arrived I remember going to sleep by a hay stack and I didn't wake up for about twelve hours. Whilst we were in the area we were visited by Lt Col Rufus Parry, CO of 2 Buffs, who was in Iraq, prior to moving out to the Far East. Shortly afterwards Lt Col. Joe Tuff arrived from 1 Buffs, who were in the Anzio bridgehead, to take over command and Ned left to command a battalion of Sherwood Foresters. We were all sorry to lose Ned, as before joining us as 2i/c in Cassino, he had been our Brigade Major for a long

period since taking over in North Africa from Joe Kendrew, the former England rugger international.

At the end of May, 78 Division was advancing up the Liri Valley, 36 Brigade moving up Route 6 with 38 Brigade (The Irish Brigade) on our right. 5 Buffs was the leading battalion in the brigade, with my company B acting as advance guard. Our objective was the village of Ripi and moving across country we reached a ridge from which we looked down on a concentration of enemy vehicles, including tanks, who were obviously completely unaware of our presence. Unfortunately I was out of wireless touch with Battalion HQ but I had an FOO from 138 Field Regt RA with me. We decided to smarten the enemy up and passed back the target to the gunners. It was a tense moment as we waited. Firstly the distant reports of the guns, then the swish of shells overhead and the crash of shells right on to the target. We called for repeats as we saw the enemy running in all directions and tank lids closing down. I left the forward position to reorganise the remainder of the company and as my batman and I were walking across a field, I received a great wallop in the back and we were both flung to the ground. As I lay dazed I was aware of someone coughing beside me and my batman (who in civilian life had been a footman in the employ of Lord Hothfield) said, "*Excuse me sir, permission to speak sir, I think we have been hit sir*". How right he was. He was in a very bloody state having been hit in the cheeks of his behind and I had stopped some shrapnel in the chest. A short time later the company stretcher bearers picked us up. They deposited me on the stretcher in the shade of a barn where I was to remain for some hours as we were out of contact with the battalion. Eventually in the evening a jeep with CSM Jeffery arrived and took me back to the ADS (Advanced Dressing Station). Whilst I lay on the stretcher, I was having some difficulty in breathing and I kept on coughing up blood as one of my lungs had been pierced by a piece of shrapnel. During the whole of this time, a dear old Italian peasant woman, sat by my side gently fanning me and keeping off the flies. I shall never forget her kind, old wrinkled face just like a walnut and how she murmured soft, soothing words. How I would have loved to have returned to thank her but alas it was not to be. The journey back to the ADS was bumpy and CSM Jeffery told me that if it hurt I was to hang on to his arm. Shortly after reaching the ADS, I underwent an emergency operation. Next day I was lying on a stretcher and on one side of me was a very young soldier. When the surgeon came round to look at us

the young lad, who was very cheerful, said to him, "*Thank you very much for all you have done for me sir, you've done a great job*". He had had both hands amputated. After a few days I was backloaded to a base hospital in Naples and I and another very badly wounded officer were driven down in an ambulance by an Indian, who spoke no English. He drove like the hammers of hell and we were tossed about all over the place. We shouted to him to slow down but the more we shouted the faster he went, with the result that when we arrived at the hospital we were in worse shape than when we left the ADS. After I had been there a few hours a nurse asked me if I would like a shave and she would fetch a barber but I told her I would rather shave myself. Well I made a pretty good mess of it as I had difficulty in holding the razor and later when I had a meal I found that I could not hold my knife. I reported the fact to the sister and it was discovered that I had a dropped wrist and the fingers of my right hand were incapable of gripping anything. The reason for this was attributed to delayed shock. I had my arm from the elbow to the wrist put into a plaster cast and then each day a physiotherapist came with a small box and gave me electric shocks which agitated the nerves. After about ten days I completely recovered the use of my hand. A day or two after my arrival I was operated on again to tidy up the emergency operation I had had in the ADS. After the operation I was moved into a large ward where there were about twenty of us. Opposite me was a chap who had been brewed up in a tank and every day he had to have fresh dressings on his badly burnt body. He was eventually repatriated but was told that he must never bare his body to the sun. We were a very jolly crowd and led the nursing sisters a real dance. If anyone wanted a bedpan or bottle we would all shout out in unison and the sister would bring the receptacle and at the same time reprove us, "*Sorry Sister*", we would chorus and as soon as she was out of the room up would go the cry, "*Bedpan - urgent!*" The most popular anaesthetic used was pentathol which caused chaps when they came round to be completely unaware of what they were saying. This led to a number of amusing incidents, two of which I recall. The first was when one man came round and the sister, who was a wonderful woman but rather plain, was standing by his bed when he woke. The first thing he said was, "*Good God here I am just back from the dead and the first person I see is you's*". The second was when the chap in the bed next to me just covered with a sheet, woke up and seeing a sister pulled up the sheet, displaying all his wares, and shouted, "*I bet you would like to be in here with me*". The officer who had

travelled down with me deteriorated and he lost the will to live. The surgeon was so worried about him that he came to our ward and explained the situation and said that as a last resort he was going to move him out of his single bedded room and put him in with us in the hopes that he would snap out of his depression. It worked. Soon we had him laughing and eventually he recovered sufficiently enough to be sent home.

When I reached the 92nd General Hospital in Naples I still had my denim trousers and the WD Ingersol watch, which was the standard issue. Unfortunately it had stopped but I managed to get it repaired at an exorbitant price of about £5, so I reckoned that as I had paid more to have it mended than it was worth the watch was now rightfully mine. The very next morning after I had received the watch back from the menders and had it propped up on my bedside locker, the Italian orderly who brought my tea knocked it over and smashed it. I was so angry I threw my cup of tea at him. The poor fellow was most apologetic but I decided honesty was the best policy and returned the watch to the QM's stores eventually for a replacement.

Having recovered sufficiently to be allowed to get up and walk about, I heard that CSM Jeffery, who had picked me up after I had been wounded, was himself a casualty in the same hospital, so I went to see him. Fortunately he had not been too badly hurt and when we were talking he asked me if I remembered that he had told me to hang on to his arm if I was in pain during the journey back to the ADS. "*Only too well*", I replied. "*Well*", he said "*you bloody nearly broke it!*" Clarence Jeffery was a fine soldier, who won the DCM in North Africa. I had known him when he was in the 4/5 Buffs (TA) before the war but he was unable to go to France with 5 Buffs as he was under age, so he was posted to 70 Buffs (Young Soldiers). After the war he joined the Police Force in Eastbourne, eventually reaching the rank of inspector. Whilst there he showed gallantry on more than one occasion, during Beachy Head rescues. Sadly he died suddenly in 1981.

On leaving hospital I was sent to the Villa Angelina, a convalescent home, which was delightfully situated on the coast at Sorrento. This was run by the British Red Cross. One day, soon after I had arrived, I was dozing on my bed in the early afternoon when there was a loud knock on the door and in came a pre-war friend of mine, Rodney Eden, who was commanding a mine sweeper in Naples. He told me that he had managed to borrow the Admiral's yacht, a sleek and

comfortable sailing ship which had been taken over from the Italian navy and he suggested that I packed my toothbrush and spent twenty four hours aboard. I replied I would love to but I would have to get permission from the BROS commandant first. Gayly I trotted to her office and knocked on the door; obviously I had disturbed her afternoon siesta because she told me under no circumstances I could not go. Needless to say I went and had a glorious time, sunbathing, bathing and being the recipient of much traditional naval hospitality. Curiously enough the commandant never discovered my absence, as a number of people covered up for me.

At the end of my convalescence I was posted to an Infantry Reinforcement Training Depot in the Salerno area, where all the 78 Division ex-hospital personnel and new drafts were held pending the return of the Division from Egypt. After the battle for Lake Trasimene, some hundred miles north of Rome, The Division had been withdrawn from the line at the beginning of July 1944 for a complete rest, with the intention of their moving on to Palestine for two months training. However after a very brief stay in Egypt, fresh orders were received for 78 Division to return to Italy as it was required urgently to take its place in the battle for the Gothic Line. At the IRTD, each brigade in the Division had its own company and I was in charge of the 36 Brigade company. We were supposed to carry out a training programme but I got together with my two counterparts and we decided to do the minimum, with the emphasis on swimming and sport. The most popular part was an evening route march into Salerno, which was very near, where we used to fall out and we all dispersed to our various clubs for a few hours, before returning back. Our gentle routine was shaken when a reinforcement arrived from England, a regular East Surrey major, and took over the 11 Brigade company. He was extremely keen and determined to embark on a programme of strenuous training, with plenty of exercises. He showed me his programme, which filled me with alarm at the thought of so much hard work and I contacted immediately my opposite number in the 38 Brigade company (The Irish Brigade) and we decided something must be done at once. We hit upon a plan. Together we went to see our East Surrey friend and told him what a first class programme he had devised but alas there was one grave fault, he had planned his exercises in an area littered with mines, which the enemy had sown in anticipation of the Allied landing. We ourselves had thought along almost identical lines to him but for the safety of our

troops had reluctantly decided to abandon the idea. We succeeded in convincing him of the danger and continued with our leisurely training until the time came for us to rejoin the Division, which had disembarked at Taranto on 16 September 1944.

Early in October 78 Division, now part of XIII Corps once more (in the US Fifth Army), moved up into the Apennines to an area round Castel del Rio/Gesso, about thirty five miles north of Florence. The country was extremely mountainous, with sheer bleak and barren slopes, deep gorges and a marked absence of any good main roads. Such roads as there were, were not designed to carry the volume and weight of an army's vehicles and they disintegrated rapidly and soon maximum reliance had to be placed on jeeps and the ever faithful mules. To make matters worse the Americans from whom we took over did not worry too much over road maintenance, with their mechanically efficient four-wheel drive trucks, so when they were replaced by our two-wheel drive 3 ton lorries, the logistical problem for the staff planners was enormous. The lack of suitable flat surfaces also provided the gunners with a nightmare in finding good sites for their guns and they had to be squeezed into any nook and cranny they could find. The weather was appalling, torrential rain causing quagmires everywhere and in due course snow. Added to all this was a stubborn and determined enemy who resisted every attack we made with great courage and subjected us to intense artillery fire, making excellent use of mobile guns.

Major General Keightley, the popular commander of 78 Division, had left the Division in Egypt to take over 5 Corps and he was succeeded by Major General Butterworth. The latter had not seen action since commanding a battalion in France in 1940 and his arrival was not popular with the battle hardened brigade commanders. However two months after his arrival and before we went into action he left the Division, owing to ill health, and Brigadier Arbuthnott, the commander of 11 Brigade, took over as acting divisional commander. His appointment was confirmed a month later, when he was promoted to Major General. He was to hold his command until almost the last days of the Division in Austria and proved himself to be a commander of the highest calibre. He was greatly admired and loved by all ranks and it is doubtful if any other officer could have led a very weary division through to the end of the war with such distinction. I quote two examples of his common touch and lack of pomposity. On the front of the bonnet of his jeep he had a large cut out of "*The*

*Crusader Cutie*", a popular blonde pin-up from the 8th Army's Sunday newspaper. When asked why he had this, he replied, "*Well they don't always see my flag but they never fail to see this*".

The second example arose when we were bogged down in The Appennines, in the very barren and exposed area around Castel del Rio. Movement on the roads, in many cases little more than mountain tracks, was further hampered by the ghastly weather conditions. The logistic situation was critical and all units had to provide working parties to keep the roads open. One day, without any visible badges of rank but wearing his Black Watch bonnet, the General joined one of the parties and was busily shovelling away when a staff officer from Corps appeared and asked him the way to Divisional HQ. "*Up the road,*" said Butty (as he was affectionately known in the Division), at the same time pointing in the right direction. "Don't you usually salute?" replied the staff officer. "*Sorry*", replied Butty, saluting. Somewhile later the staff officer, much to his embarrassment, came face to face with the Divisional Commander.

We were occupying a reserve area, when orders came through that we were to move across and take over from an American battalion, I went forward with the Recce Group when darkness fell and after about an hour's walk over difficult terrain we reached the American position. They were occupying a very exposed salient and in capturing the feature their CO had been killed and some of their companies were down to under seventy strong. When we arrived at the Battalion HQ the Executive Officer who had assumed command said, "*Am I glad to see you guys*". Realising what a tough action they had taken part in I later said to him, "*Colonel, how did you succeed in capturing this position?*" "*Well Major,*" he replied, "*the CO just lined us up and said, 'Go for it boys', which is what we did.*" The scene in the Command Post was rather like an extract from the famous World War I film "*Journey's End*". The Executive Officer, who had been wounded had a blood stained bandage round his head and was seated at a make shift table, on which were two wine bottles each holding a lighted candle, from which the wax was trickling down.

In spite of holding such a precarious position, which could only be supplied with difficulty after dark, the Executive Officer said, "*Say fellows, it's my birthday, how about a piece of cake?*" whereupon he produced an iced cake on which were two candles. As we were going round the company positions, a wireless message came through calling the relief off and telling

us to return to our own battalion. We were delighted and we couldn't move out fast enough; we had to move quickly as dawn was approaching and we had no wish to be caught in the open. I will not forget the Americans' intense disappointment.

On the night of 18 October 1944, the Brigade attacked Monte la Pieve, which 11 Brigade had failed to capture earlier. The attack was preceded by a heavy barrage and we went forward with trepidation for it was a most formidable feature. To our utter astonishment we captured our objective without opposition, the enemy having withdrawn. The following night C and D companies attacked the north end of Acqua Salata and were repulsed, withdrawing through my company B and Y company. Early next morning the Brigade Commander, Brigadier Packard (RA), ordered that B and Y companies should resume the attack. When Colonel Tuff gave us our orders I pointed out to him that the attack was not on, as to repeat the previous night's performance, which had proved a failure in daylight, was suicidal. Colonel Tuff agreed and the attack was called off. Shortly afterwards we withdrew and took over some rear positions held by 6 RWK. We took over Bill Kennedy's company position and I shall always remember his kindness in providing a razor, hot water and whisky; the same night his company went forward and he was killed. He was a splendid officer. A few nights later a strong fighting patrol under Lieut Jackie Moss attacked a building known as Gully House, which was the key to securing the Battalion objective Camaggio Ridge. Although they succeeded in capturing the house it was at the severe loss of twelve casualties, both Jackie and his sergeant being killed. The enemy made repeated attempts to recapture the position but it was successfully held through the gallant leadership of one Private Rose, who was known to his friends as Rosie. Every time the Germans attacked, calling out to the harassed defenders to surrender, Rosie shouted out, "*Oh do go away!*" following his remarks up with a burst of automatic fire. He was deservedly awarded a Military Medal. At the end of October, Colonel Tuff left to take up a staff appointment at Fifth Army HQ and he was replaced by Lt Colonel Odling-Smee from the Royal Sussex Regiment. About the same time Hugh Collins relinquished the job of adjutant and was succeeded by Nick Dracopoli. Nick was a delightful character, who prior to the war had been working in Hollywood, USA. When war broke out, being a patriot, he returned to England and joined the RAF to become a fighter pilot. For some reason he was grounded and

transferred to the Army, eventually landing up in 5 Buffs.

One night shortly after the new CO had taken over, he called Nick up on the wireless and said that he wanted the officers' valises sent up from B Echelon. Nick, thinking this was an extraordinary request, queried the order, which was confirmed. Now Nick when he got excited, stuttered, so he replied, "*You w-w--want the 0-0-officers' valises sent up, you must be f-f-fucking well mad!*" Soon afterwards he was relieved of the duties of adjutant and posted as a liaison officer to The South African Airforce, a job for which he was highly qualified.

Life during October and November in the Carre, Casetta and Acqua della Sellata area was very depressing and morale was not at its highest. This was reflected when a L/Cpl stretcher bearer, who had been with the Battalion since the very beginning of the war, deserted. However as soon as he had reached the base areas he gave himself up to the Military Police and demanded to be sent back. When he arrived back the new CO decided that he should be court-martialled, which was a very unpopular decision as the L/Cpl was a very respected man who had quite literally come to the end of his tether and should have been treated as a war casualty. His past record was a fine one. During the evacuation from France he sailed on The Lancastria, which was torpedoed and sunk and whilst in the water for a long period, being a strong swimmer, he had saved several of his colleagues from drowning. Again his prowess as a swimmer was demonstrated when he rescued another man from drowning when the Battalion was at Hammarnet. All through the North African, Sicilian and Italian campaigns he took part in every battle and was never once a LOB (left out of battle). He had been wounded twice and awarded the Military Medal. I was detailed as prosecuting officer, a task I took on reluctantly and Ken Courtney was the defending officer. Shortly before the trial I realised there was a fault in the charge, which if exploited could possibly result in his failure to be convicted for desertion, so I pointed this out to Ken. At the trial Ken drew attention to this error, which resulted in his client being stopped twenty eight days pay but even this was a travesty of justice as the charge should never have been brought in the first place.

About this time, I heard that I had been granted a regular commission back dated to 1941. During that year, when I was assistant adjutant at The Depot in Canterbury, I had appeared before a Regular

Commissions Board but as I had heard nothing since I assumed I had failed. I too now left the Battalion (nothing to do with being granted a regular commission) and was posted to 56 British Liaison Unit, which was with the Italian Army, attached to the Divisione Mantova. When the Italians capitulated in 1943, the Italian units not in areas occupied by the Germans transferred their allegiance to the Allies and the poor wretched Italians, who thought that their fighting days were over, found that this was not so but that they had merely changed sides. Attached to each Italian combat division was a British Liaison Unit, whose duties were to supervise their training, including instruction in Allied weapons and also to accompany them into action, if and when that time arrived. In command of each BLU was a full colonel and his job was to work alongside the Italian divisional commander and with each battalion was a British major.

These officers had authority in action to take over command if the Italian commander proved to be incompetent but I never heard of such an occasion arising and in fact those Italian units that did become committed acquitted themselves satisfactorily. Luckily for me, we were never put to the test as the war in Europe finished shortly before we were due to go into the line, although I have no doubt that the Divisione Mantova would have proved reliable should they have been called upon.

With my batman, Private Armstrong (a butcher in civilian life) I travelled down by Jeep to Benevento in Southern Italy where Divisione Mantova was assembled. En route we stopped off for two nights in Rome, which gave me a chance of a quick sight seeing tour of the Holy City. After I had been wounded at Ripi, 5 Buffs had advanced up the Liri Valley but had never actually had a chance of spending any time in Rome as they swept through in troop carrying transport in the direction of Lake Trasimino following up the retreating Germans. I was told of an amusing incident as they drove through the city as dawn was breaking. Passing the celebrated Forum, one of the soldiers who I doubt had ever heard of the famous ruin remarked, "*Cor, old Jerry ain't 'aif knocked that about a bit!*"

On my arrival at 56 BLU, I was pleased to find that the CO was Aubrey Gibbon, a pre-war regular Argyll, who for a short time had been 2i/c of 5 Buffs, when Max Monk was commanding. Another familiar face was David McNab, holder of an MC and bar, who had been with 8 Argylls. I was assigned to an Italian

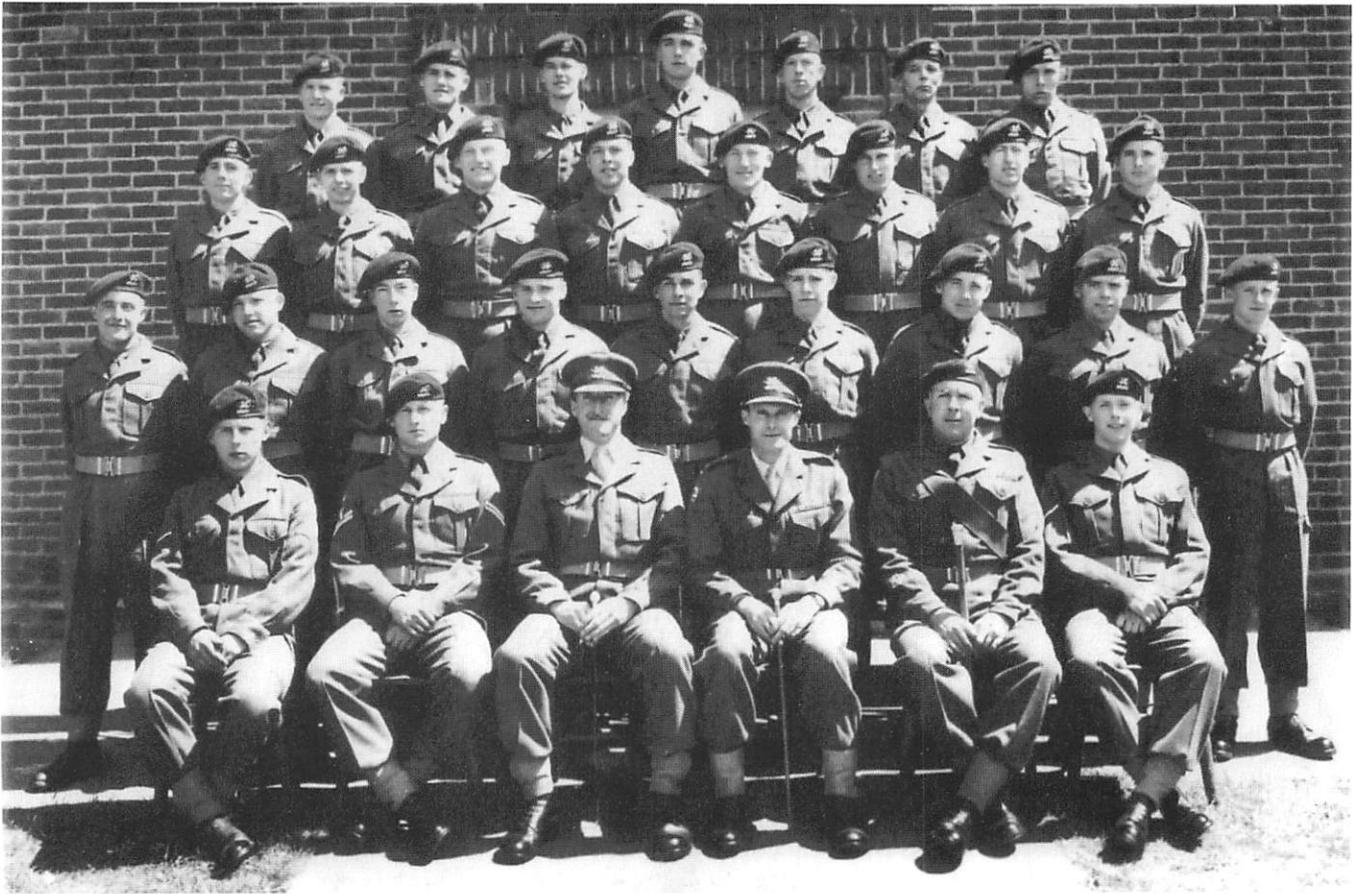
battalion and found everyone very friendly and co-operative. The weather was pretty cold and I felt sorry for the soldiers who were poorly clothed, having to carry out hours of weapon training. At night they only had two thin blankets, their rations were adequate but not plentiful, their main meal being one of pasta at midday. They were paid a pittance by our standards. However they were reasonably cheerful and did not complain.

One day my tin baggage trunk, which I had not seen since I disembarked in Algiers in May 1943, turned up. Inside was my spotless pith helmet with which we had all been issued before we left England - they were never worn. Our billet was a small farmhouse, which was inhabited by a number of rats, of which I am terrified. One night, having turned out the light, as I was about to go to sleep I felt something jump on to my camp bed and crawl over the blankets. I knew what it was so in a cowardly fashion I pulled the blankets over my head and shouted out to my colleague with whom I shared the room that there was a rat. Being indifferent to rats he promptly got out of bed and switched on the light to look for the creature. It was nowhere to be seen but just as I was about to put out the light I saw it suspended from the electric light cable on the ceiling, staring down at me. My friend said he would knock it down and I was to hit it when it landed. He did his part but I missed. It ran across into a room opposite and we closed the door intending to deal with it in the morning but when the moment came it had disappeared.

Going into the nearby village late one afternoon, I ran into a communist demonstration. Everywhere there were posters, Viva Stalin, Viva Lenin, Viva Comunismo and the mayor harangued the populace about the benefits of communism. The people shouted their approval and raised their clenched fists, whilst the band played The Red Flag - a scene of great enthusiasm. Next day Prince Umberto, the Crown Prince of Italy, was due to come and inspect the division. Early that morning little men were rushing round the village pasting over the communist signs with new posters Viva Il Re, Viva Il Principe. Later the mayor appeared and gave an impassioned speech on how proud they were to receive the Prince, the same band played the national anthem and other royalist tunes, whilst the populace demonstrated their loyalty to the monarchy - all very Italian.

to be concluded:...

## PHOTO GALLERY



### SICILY PLATOON

#### Depot The Buffs (May 1957)

Back Row: O'Brien, Heath, Brungen, Burns-Thompson, Dray, Burrows, Jarret  
 3rd Row: Holt, Molseley, Forward, Clark, Evans, Drayson, Haward  
 2nd Row: Dominic, Astell, Bishop, Lynch, Gordon, Elliott, Gilmour, Jones, Cannon  
 Front Row: L/Cpl Smith, Cpl. Wells, Lt. Lea, Captain Thorneycroft, CSM Champion, L/Cpl Fisher  
 (Please see 'Write to Reply').



Old friends meet up for the Canterbury Reunion. Colonel Ken Langridge and Kay Weeks pictured here outside the Warrior's Chapel after 'Turning the Page'.



The Guard Room (Charlie's Ranch), Wuppertal 1955/56. Named after the Provost Sergeant, John Smisson who was know as 'Charlie'.



### SIGNAL PLATOON

#### 1st Battalion The Buffs, Khartoum 1950

Back Row:

Pte. R. Morley, Pte. A. Cheek, Pte G. Dunk, Pte. R. Fanjat, Pte G. Bean, Pte. B. Hollands, Pte. H. Futter, Pte G. Sweeney, Pte. B. Nurse

Centre Row:

Pte. J Waas, Pte. F. Vidlor, Pte. P. Perrin, Pte F. Coppard, Pte. P. Tuohy, Pte. A. Morris, Pte. A. Martin, Pte. J Mcallum, Pte. I. Naime, Pte. A Chuter

Front Row:

Sgt. R. Wright, L/Cpl R. Bushell, L/Cpl W. Dorey, L/Cpl E. Brwon, L/Cpl O Hibburd, Cpl. V Walker, Sgt. G. Streams

Photo: Courtesy of George Dunk

*Please see 'Write to Reply'.*



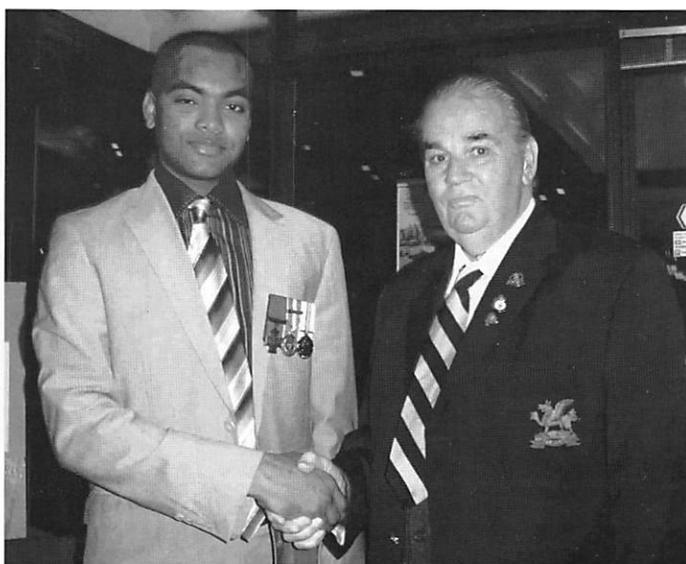
### The Radfan

An ambush cover group pictured here back at base after a follow up patrol during which one member, Pte. Sullivan, was wounded. Cpl. Milham, now Secretary of Ramsgate Branch, on the left next to the radio operator.

Picture by kind permission of The Imperial War Museum



**It's not what you know - it's who!!!  
Fred Scales pictured here with the Chancellor,  
Gordon Brown, at the Cabinet War Rooms  
June 27th 2006**



**Henry Parker (London Buffs) pictured here with  
L/Cpl Beharry VC at the recent launch of  
Colonel Richard Holme's latest book**



**'Wuppertal Buffs' lunch at the Victoria Hotel, Canterbury on 19th July 2006, organised by Norman Shonk,  
to celebrate several of the group's 70th birthdays.  
Back Row: Brian Clifford, Dave Munday, Charlie Apps, Tommy Wood, John Adams, John Laming, Dave Law.  
Front Row: Fred Scales, John Hopkins, Ivan Vickery, Norman Shonk, Mike Manson.  
A total of 27 ex Buffs and their wives attended the lunch.**

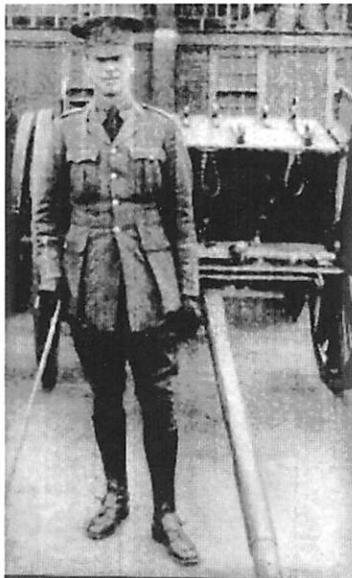
**Editor's Note: If any Buffs who served in Wuppertal would like to make contact with this group  
please contact Fred Scales on 01892 544425**



**Artillery Section of 'A' Coy. 1st Volunteer Battalion The Buffs, Deal 1918**  
 (Please see the letter from Mr. E. Stratford in Write to Reply)



**Frankie Hills, Chairman of London Buffs talking with the HRH the Duke of Edinburgh at Westminster Abbey**



**Lieutenant James Edwin Stratford R.A., who helped train 1st Volunteer Battalion The Buffs.**  
 (Please see Write to Reply)



**'Band of Brothers'**  
 The above photo taken about 1937 shows the four Adams brothers: Bert at right, RWK's, Jim (on the left) The Buffs  
 Mrs Adams holding John who later served in The Buffs and below David who served in the RAF



**HRH the Duke of Kent inspecting The Buffs at Deal in 1936**  
 Can anyone shed any light on exactly when and which battalion.

Photo courtesy of Malcolm Milham



**The Deputy Colonel of the Regiment decorating Sgt Ted Phillips with the Meritorious Service Medal. August 1962**

## VISIT TO YPRES, 2006

Leaving Canterbury at 7am on a bright clear and very warm day, the coach was soon at Dover and before we knew it we were bound for the continent. There was the usual controlled, purposeful and brisk 'stroll' to the cafeteria for an 'All English Breakfast' by some but not all and then we had docked after a very calm crossing.

The trip to Ypres through the flat Flanders countryside is always interesting and this day was no exception. We arrived at Ypres just in time for lunch which had been arranged at a local restaurant by John Bishop who had indeed organised the whole day. An excellent



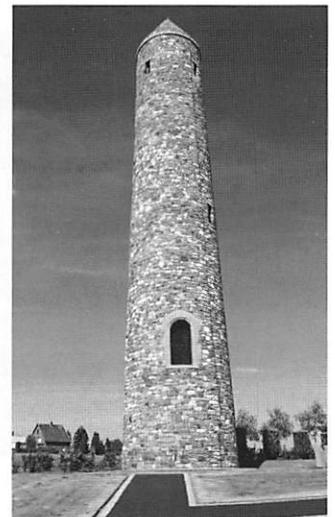
Enjoying a 3 course lunch and the odd glass of 'water'.

lunch was enjoyed during which the Editor managed to dangle his tie in the soup, it was whisked away, washed and hung out to dry by the lady of the house in time for our departure, what service!

This year we broke with tradition and made the trip on a Saturday rather than a Sunday. Thus allowing the ladies to shop in Ypres. The remainder were taken by coach to visit Messines Ridge and a few of the cemeteries in the area including the Irish Memorial Peace & Reconciliation Park memorial.

The Memorial Peace Park, to all the Irishmen who died in the First World War, was inaugurated by the Irish President, Mary McAleese and HM Queen Elizabeth.

It was here, near this spot, where the 36th Ulster Division and the 16th Irish Division fought side by side.



The Peace Memorial



The Memorial Stones;

The memorial to the men of the 36th (Ulster) Division, 32,186 casualties, the 16th (Irish) Division, 28,398 casualties & 10th (Irish) Division, 9,363 casualties



The entrance to The Messines Ridge War Cemetery in which 1,503 soldiers are buried, only 549 of whom could be identified. In this cemetery is a memorial to the missing New Zealand soldiers killed in action in and around Messines in 1917-18



Mick Mills (centre) who undertakes so much research for the association with Ann & Harry Denton from New Zealand. Ann is the granddaughter of Pte. Wilfred Sunderland, 2nd Bn. The Buffs who was killed in May 1915.



Bernard & Victoria Miles at the grave of a distant relative, Cpl Burbridge of the Lincolnshire Regt who was killed on the 3rd day of the attack on Messines Ridge.



The grave of Rifleman A. E. French Kings Royal Rifle Corps Killed 19th June 1916 aged 16 years (the youngest of the fallen)



The Buglers



The Queen's Own Buffs contingent drawn up with the standards of Ramsgate, RA Association, Denmark and Canterbury dipped in salute. Henry Delo (centre) who gave the exhortation.

It was as ever a very interesting, moving and thought provoking visit and the Last Post ceremony at the Menin Gate brought it to a very suitable and it must be said, emotional end.

A very tired group returned to Canterbury at 10.30pm happy that they had once again paid their respects at the Menin Gate. Our thanks to John Bishop for his excellent organisation and the arrangements he made on our behalf.

# THE QUEEN'S OWN BUFFS

## The Royal Kent Regiment

After amalgamation 1st Queen's Own Buffs took the operational place of 1st Queen's Own, becoming part of 19th Infantry Brigade. Within one month of the birth of the new battalion two months notice was given that the battalion would move to Kenya for a six month tour of duty.

On May 6th, the Freedom of the Borough of Folkestone was conferred on the Regiment, an unique honour that had never before been given to any regiment. The parade was held at Folkestone Cricket Ground with no less than five stands of colours, those of The Buffs, the Queen's Own, 4th and 5th Battalions The Buffs and 4th/5th Battalion Queen's Own. There followed two weeks leave and on May 26th, the Battalion started the move to Kenya.



Left to right: Major J. D. Norton, Captain (QM) E. Hoggart, WO11 D. Mills, Lt. Col. Dendy and the GOC



The GOC in C inspecting the Guard of Honour

By 30th May the battalion had completed its move and had set up home in Gil Gil camp, 6,584 feet above sea level and some 70 miles north of Nairobi, a tented camp with a few permanent buildings.

There followed a period of climatisation to overcome the breathlessness inflicted by the high altitude. Training for their new role was interrupted by trips to game reserves and to Lake Baringo. C Company was the first to be deployed on an operational detachment to Thomson's Falls to combat intimidation of the locals by the Land Freedom Army.



The GOC with WO11 (Drum Major) Clarke

A 'Flag March' was organised which involved visiting nearly 250 farms in the area to reassure the locals.

The battalion were alerted to move to Zanzibar and then Kuwait where Iraq was threatening to invade. The threat diminished and consequently the battalion was not needed.

In October the Battalion was visited by the GOC in C Middle East Command, Air Marshall Sir Charles Elworthy KCB., CBE., DSC., AFC., MA.

In the last 2 months of 1961 several parties from the Battalion climbed Mount Kilimanjaro and on one occasion the regimental flag was flown from the summit (See Editor's Page.)

Most of December was spent preparing for the move back to England. C Company flying home and the remainder of the Battalion sailing back on H.M.T. Oxfordshire. So after an eventful, interesting and on occasions, exciting few months the Battalion returned to Moore Barracks, Shorncliffe.

Richard and Allan & a younger brother Albert who is married to Jenny and they have children, Jackie, Judy, Jamie and Shaun. While living with Aunt Aggie, Brian did a variety of jobs until he was old enough to join "The Royal West Kent Regiment". He served in the Army for 24 years with distinction - rising to the rank of WO 11.

He became a medic and it was in this role that he continued and developed. More of that later, one day Brian found himself in Colchester and went into a coffee shop - this was a good move for it was there that he met Trisha - his fate was sealed and they were married in 1963. In due course daughter Sharon was born.

The family maintained a flat in Manchester Road but also lived at different times in Colchester and Canterbury - while Brian was pursuing a military career. In later years, when Sharon was at college, she had a friend Sue who, in due course was (unofficially) adopted by the family - a sister for Sharon. Now back to the Army and just one of the postings that Brian had during his service life - when he was posted to Central America later to Northern Ireland.

Another really important job that Brian did in the army was to become a cricket umpire - an involvement that he loved. The Army was a very special part of his life - it was his other family - in addition to Trisha, Sharon and Sue. When he left the services Brian maintained contact with his regiment, even after he retired. Trisha would go with him to the reunions and have a really good time and Sharon and her fiance Keith had the privilege of attending one of the last Regimental Reunions that Brian went to in Maidstone.

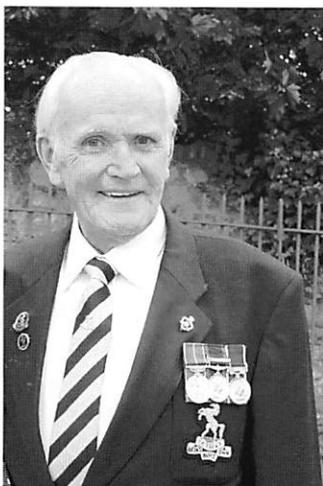
When he left the Army, Brian went to work for Western Geophysical as a paramedic and health and safety officer - he worked mostly in Africa. When he left that job he was head hunted to work in Pakistan as a health and safety officer with Zia ul Haq who did catering for oil companies. At 64 he retired.

Sadly, his retirement was relatively short and contained much sadness, Trisha died in the middle of July after a brave fight against illness - Brian followed her just three and a half months later. He had been told in May that he had six months to live and the estimate, for once, was pretty accurate. He said that he was fine and he never complained. He was so saddened by Trisha's death but faced his own with the

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## LAST POST

### WO 11 BRIAN BREACH B.E.M.



Brian passed away on 31st October 2006 at the age of 66 after a short illness. Brian served with the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment, The Queen's Own Buffs and 2nd Battalion The Queen's Regiment.

Brian was born in Safad in Palestine and the family moved to India when he was 2.5 years old. He then sailed to England, on his own, when he was 17 years old. He lived with his Aunt Aggie in Kent, until he joined the Army. Brian was the middle brother, he has an older brother Norman who is married to Philo and they have children, Tracey,

equanimity that you would expect. In hospital he was gracious - helping the trainee nurses - who described him as awesome!

*Colonel Crispin Champion writes:*

It was a great shock to hear that Brian Breach had passed away. I was talking to him at the Maidstone Reunion and while he admitted that he had medical problems he did not disclose how serious they were and we had a good chat about old times, especially about Belize and Gibraltar, where I got to know him well and to appreciate the outstanding work he did, not just for the battalion but for the local people.

In Belize he was a major asset in maintaining excellent relations with the local people, particularly the Central American Indian people who lived in jungle villages in Southern Belize. They had virtually no anti-bodies to protect them against (to us) such simple diseases as Scarlet Fever. Until he visited most died of it and it spread like wildfire.

Brian would stay several days in each affected village and he cured those who would otherwise have died, teaching them how to treat this and other medical problems. Such was their trust in him that they brought in family members to our jungle base where he or one of his medical team would treat them while we gained from them vital information about the Guatemalan forces who were threatening to invade the country.

When he was in charge of the Medical Centre at San Ignacio in the North West of the country he not only treated our soldiers when ill or hurt, but looked after the local Creole people. Amazingly he also gained the trust of some of the Mennonite farming community and was certainly instrumental in saving the life of at least one 11 year old girl with peritonitis.

Throughout he was his normal charming self and able to relate to all, being hugely regarded by every one who knew him from the Governor of Belize to the youngest of our soldiers, besides the many Belizean people who flocked to give him simple gifts when they heard the Regiment were leaving the country on return to UK. The award of the B.E.M. was hugely deserved and was welcomed by all.

Brain gave sterling service in Northern Ireland where several soldiers then serving in Belfast owe their lives to him. He certainly was instrumental in getting

Private Davenport in my Company, who had been shot in the stomach while on patrol in the Creggan Estate, to hospital safely and in time to save his life.

We will miss him greatly, remembering him as a thoroughly good and likeable man, expert at his job, never puffed up, and trusted by us all.

It will be a very sad time indeed for Brian's daughter Sharon as her mother Patricia passed away only recently I know that all of you who knew him would want to join me in offering our sincere condolences to Sharon and her family.

CGC

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#### **MAJOR D P R BARRETT:**

We have been advised by Mrs. Stella Russell-Jones of the death of her father David Peter Rigoud Barrett who died on July 17th 2006 aged 84 years.

David served with The Buffs for the majority of his career in India and Burma during the last war and Africa, Germany and the UK post war.

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#### **MR. MAURICE MANN**

The death of Maurice was reported in the last issue. The following is an extract of a letter from Colonel Ken Langridge has been received by the secretary of Ramsgate Branch of which Maurice was a member:

"I met Maurice in the early 1950s at a most unusual place, The Artillery Range at Shilo, Manitoba, Canada. I was serving with the 16th Canadian Infantry Brigade and was attracted to Maurice by his accent in conversation.

On speaking to him we discovered that we had both served in 2nd Bn. The Buffs and we knew quite a few of the rank and file of the period 1938-1945 and also the city of Canterbury. He told me that he had come to Canada to stay with his sister who had settled in Weyburn, Saskatchewan, and that he joined the South Saskatchewan Regiment which at that time was a Reserve Unit.

He was a popular young soldier, but I was not see him again. I enquired several times when I met South

Saskatchewan Regiment personnel in the following years until the unit was disbanded.

I was sad to see his name in the 'Last Post' section of The Journal, and of course I was curious as to what had happened to him in the years since we met as he had obviously remained a member of our Association. He will always be remembered as a bright young soldier in his younger days."

*(Editors Note: Ken, many thanks for your letter. Ramsgate branch are still in touch with Maurice's family and we will try and fill in the spaces for you.)*

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#### **CAPTAIN E J M (Ernie) HOGGART:**

Ernie Hoggart passed away on 11th September 2006. He joined the Q.O.R.W.K. Regiment in 1940 and after wartime service served in Singapore, Malaya, Germany, Cyprus and Kenya.

He was the last Q.M. of the Queen's Own and the first Q.M. of the Queen's Own Buffs after amalgamation. Ernie retired in 1962 and became a postmaster and an active member of the Royal British Legion.

All who knew and served with Ernie would wish to send their deepest sympathy to Kathleen, his widow.

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#### **MR. GEORGE HATCHER:**

We have been informed by George's grand daughter, Ms. Tracey Guest, that George passed away on the 11th September 2006.

George was a former sergeant in the 2nd Battalion of The Queen's Own. He saw service in Malta during the siege and later took part in the defence of Leros and was one of nine NCO's who escaped from the island after the fall.

He was immensely proud of serving in The Queen's Own and revisited the island of Malta on many occasions and Leros once, to pay his respects to fallen comrades. Although in later years he was blind he still enjoyed listening to any news of the regiment.

George's funeral was held on the 22nd September in Aldershot.

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We have been informed of the deaths of the following:

#### **MR. A. J. RUSSELL:**

Mr. Russell passed way on 30th April 2006.

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#### **MR. W VICKERS.**

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#### **MAJOR ALAN JACK SMITHERS:**

Jack Smithers passed away on 13th October 2006. An obituary will be featured in the next issue.

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#### **MR. ROBERT (BOB) FREYDANCK**

Ex Band Sergeant of the Queen's Own more recently School Sergeant of The Junior King's School, Canterbury passed away aged 64.

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#### **MR. HORACE COOK:**

Horace passed away on 17th November 2006. An obituary will be featured in the next issue.

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#### **MR. ARTHUR EWART STARLING M.B.E.**

Arthur, an ex member of 5th Battalion Q.O.R.W.K. Regt, passed away at the Ruttonjee Hospital, Hong Kong, on 8th November 2006 after a brief illness.

He had been the Administration and Project Advisor of the Hong Kong Tuberculosis, Chest and Heart Diseases Association having first joined the Association in 1987.

Over the years he had been closely involved in many matters concerning the affairs of the Association, Ruttonjee Hospital, Grantham Hospital, Freni Care and Attention Home and the newly established Chinese Medicine Clinic. He has also assisted development projects of the Association's institutes.

Our sincere condolences to his wife Anna, his children, grand children and great-grand children.

A memorial Service will be held on Tuesday 19th December 2006 at St. Thomas of Canterbury Church, Goring on Thames, South Oxon at 12 noon.

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## CANADIAN BUFFS

In The Buffs Chapel (also called St. Michael's, Warriors' or Holland Chapel) in Canterbury Cathedral, high in the centre of the South wall, are two laid-up Colours of the Canadian Buffs. On a nearby pillar below is a memorial to Lt W I Algie VC and six other Canadian Buffs officers killed in World War I.

It is often asked if Canadian Buffs was another name for the Queen's Own Rifles (QOR) of Canada, an Allied Regiment of The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment), which is mentioned at the 11am Turning the Page ceremony in The Buffs Chapel every weekday. The QOR, after all, is well represented in the chapel by one of the four Books of Life, a QOR drum, and two Maple Leaf badges in the great East memorial window. In fact, the Canadian Buffs was an entirely separate regiment, raised in Toronto in February 1916 as the 198th Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF).

To deal first with the QOR, it was formed as a Militia unit in 1860 and is thus the oldest Canadian Regiment. In 1910, their CO, Sir Henry Pellatt brought 633 men to England at his own expense to take part in the British Army autumn manoeuvres at Aldershot where, on 2 September, in full marching order, they went on a 13 mile route-march with The Buffs.

It was soon noticed that the bands of The Buffs and QOR were both playing the same "Regimental Quick Step of The Buffs", said to have been partly composed for The Buffs by Handel. Sir Henry claimed that in 1882 The Buffs had given the QOR permission to adopt their Regimental Quick March, which was indeed confirmed later in a document found in The Buffs archives.

This was doubtless a factor in the two regiments subsequently becoming Allied in 1914 which led to many mutually arranged activities over the years,

including visits by parties of all ranks and, at one stage, an exchange of officers on two year postings. The Alliance has been inherited by the successors of The Buffs through amalgamations, ie The Queen's Own Buffs, The Royal Kent Regiment in 1961, the Queen's Regiment in 1966 and since 1992 the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment.

To return to the 198th, why was this battalion called the "Canadian Buffs"? Like some other CEF units, it was permitted to adopt the name of a British regiment, although, in this case, only after considerable controversy. Apparently certain QOR officers and "Men of Kent" had helped to raise and organise the 198th in 1916 and so, perhaps on their unofficial suggestion, the CO, Lt Col J A Cooper, approached The Buffs for permission to use their historic name and Tudor Dragon badge. This was granted, but the QOR, by then Allied to The Buffs for two years, formally challenged the right of the 198th to these privileges, claiming that Col Cooper had made misrepresentations in his submission.

The dispute continued back and forth for some time, eventually involving Sir Sam Hughes, the Duke of Connaught, the Colonial Secretary and even King George V. The King finally decreed on 16 June 1916 that the 198th could indeed be called Canadian Buffs and allowed to wear the Tudor Dragon. This badge was initially used in both their caps and collars, although later the cap-badge was replaced by a Maple Leaf badge, with Tudor Dragons remaining only as collar-dogs.

As for the Canadian Buffs Colours, it was unusual for a war-time CEF battalion to have these but they were donated by Mr James H Goodersham, a prominent distiller in Toronto, and presented there by the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir John Hendrie, on 1 November 1916.

The 198th remained in Canada until 28 March 1917 when it sailed for England at a strength of 32 officers and 859 other ranks, arriving on 7 April. However, the battalion as such never went to France and it was soon absorbed into the Canadian 3rd Reserve Battalion which sent units at the front individual reinforcements. One of these was Lt Wallace Lloyd Algie who was killed in action on 11 October 1918 aged 27, exactly one month before the Armistice, while serving with 20th Battalion, 1st Central Ontario Regiment.

# MY EXPERIENCES IN TANZANIA

BY  
**JAMES BRADLEY**

He was attacking a village with troops who came under heavy machine-gun fire. Rushing forward with nine volunteers, he shot the machine gun crew and then turned the gun on other enemy positions, enabling his party to reach the village.

He then rushed another machine-gun post, killed its crew also, captured a German officer and ten men, and cleared the end of the village but was shot dead himself while leading reinforcements forward. For this outstanding gallantry he was awarded the VC and rightly his name is the first of those recorded with honour on the memorial in The Buffs Chapel.

On the disbanding of the 198th, Canadian Buffs asked the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury Cathedral for permission for their Colours to be placed in The Buffs Chapel for safekeeping. This was granted and the Colours were laid up on 24 May 1917.

Most unusually, they were taken out on 3 December 1918 by another Toronto battalion, the 20th, which carried them on a parade across the Rhine into Germany on 2 January 1919, before returning them to the Cathedral on 20 January, where they still hang today.

There is a happy end to this story. In Canterbury, HQ Company, 3rd Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment is called "Buffs Company" and the QOR is also now forming a "Buffs Company" in Scarborough, Toronto. So the famous name of The Buffs lives on, both sides of the Atlantic, and it can rightly be claimed that there are, once again, Canadian Buffs.

STEADY THE BUFFS

VETERIE FRODESCIT HONORE

JJW 01.08.06

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We arrived in Tanzania on an extremely warm evening, and an hour later made it through customs after over 15 hours on planes. We boarded a small, dodgy bus, which took us to a small dodgy hotel, which was as we all expected, terrible. The next morning we boarded another coach for a 7-hour journey to Usangi, a small village in the north Pare Mountains, where we stayed for 5 days. Whilst there we visited the school, whose grounds we camped in and played football with the local kids. We went on 3 acclimatisation walks in the mountains and reached the highest peak of 2113 meters on the 2nd day. Living in tents and cooking our own food was good fun and I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Leaving Usangi on a bus that was falling apart, overcrowded and unsafe, going at over 50 m.p.h. along the side of a mountain on a very bumpy, uneven road, we headed for the YMCA in Moshi. This would be our base whenever we were in the town. Once we arrived we spent the afternoon touring the town and in the evening we went out for a meal in a restaurant called Chris Burger, where I had the nicest burger and chips I have ever eaten. The next day we did all the prep for Kilimanjaro and met our guides and dropped off all the kit we wouldn't need on the climb at the tour company's head office.

At last the time had come to start the ascent of Kilimanjaro. It was a cold wet morning when we left Moshi and as we approached Kilimanjaro it got worse. When our coach arrived at the foot of the mountain we all put on our 'wet kits' and then after an hour's wait while signing on the mountain, we were off. A 3 hour walk through the mud and the rain before we reached the first group of huts where we spent the night and had an exceptionally nice tray of popcorn and biscuits. Something we would get after every walk. The next day we had a much longer walk and we broke the bottom cloud line which was already a big achievement as it meant we were over halfway up. We reached the main camp on Kilimanjaro, situated at approximately 3800 metres, in the early evening and had a nice warm meal and everyone was on a high.

Day 3 saw us reach Zebra rock 300 metres up before we descended and had an afternoons rest and a good nights sleep in preparation for the challenge ahead.

Days 4 and 5. We finally saw the top of Kilimanjaro with no cloud cover in the way. A 7 hour walk through 3 types of terrain and extreme hot and very cold and windy weather saw us reach Kibo hut right at the foot of the summit. Luckily we couldn't see the path to the summit, because of the cloud cover, as it was extremely long and very steep and would have been demoralising after the long walk we had just done. We had 5 hours rest in the hut before the final ascent leaving at midnight. The 6 hour walk in the extreme cold and pitch black was exceptionally difficult and painful. I have no idea where the 6 hours went or how I managed it but, short of breath, needing water and food, and lacking energy, I reached the summit at Gillman's point in time for the sunrise. The most amazing sunrise I have ever seen. A couple of hours later and we reached the other side of Kilimanjaro's huge crater and made it to Uhura Peak, the highest point in Africa, where Jake Vincent and I held the Queen's Own Buffs flag high. Looking down on the wilderness below is indescribable and being on the top of Kilimanjaro is something I will probably never 'top'.

2 days later and the mountain behind us we were back in the YMCA arranging our safari. We visited Lake Manyara and the Ngorongoro Crater, where we saw many elephants, lions, buffalo, hippos, zebra, giraffes, monkeys and the icing on the cake was to see one of only 18 black rhino in Tanzania. I never expected to see so many animals and such a wide variety, but was disappointed to see the excessively large amount of people in the park, as that is not good for the animals. On the way back to Moshi we visited a Maasai village and met the Maasai people who showed us their homes and were very friendly, but rather bizarre people. A way of life like none other on the planet.

Finally the most important part of the trip, going to the orphanage and doing work for them. We had a budget of over 3 million shillings (their biggest bank note is 10,000 and 3 million equates to approximately £1,150). As you can imagine they were overwhelmed when we told them this and the money got spent rapidly on paint, tools, hire costs for the carpenters, plumber and electrician. All the electrics were repaired and more lights put in. The plumbing was enhanced with a new toilet and shower being added and the carpenters made new dinning tables and chairs

as well as some cabinets. We re-developed and improved the kitchen for the orphanage, and made a dinning room. We also redecorated the adjoining room, where the kids watch TV, and in this room we replaced the tatty, broken sofas with new ones. When the kids saw the finished work they were over the moon and all of them had a smile on their face. The lady in charge could not stop thanking us, and the feeling of joy felt by all may never be exceeded again.

Overall the trip taught me many things about myself, African life, and a whole new world I have never seen before. It was something I will never experience again and I would like to thank the Queen's Own Buff's Association and everyone one else who helped me get there. Thank you, I am very grateful.

James.

## NOTICE BOARD

### NEW MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

Mr. F W Thomas	RAF	1946-72
Major N A Hallidie	1 RWK	1955-58
Mr. A W K Excell	QOBuffs/ Queen's	1962-71
Mr. T R Rutter	1 Buffs	1959-65
Mr. R. Skinner	QOBuffs	1954-66
Colonel P. Cook	QOBuffs/ 2 Queen's	66-2000
Mr. R F Nutley		
Major C.D.B Butler		
Mr. P. J. Linscott	QOBuffs	64-67
Mr. S. R. Brent	1 RWK	51-55
Mr. J Ellis	RWK/QOB/ 2 Queen's	60-69
Mr. F. F. Burrow	2 Glosters	44-47
Mr. A.G. Dean	RAMC	56-58

## SSAFA FORCES HELP NEEDS YOU!

The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association - Forces Help (SSAFA Forces Help) needs you.

There are over 10 million people eligible for help from SSAFA Forces Help, the Charity exists to serve anyone who is, or has been in the Armed Forces, Reserves and TA. They and their families can call on us for the rest of their lives.

More than 50 000 call on us each year and a much greater demand is anticipated in the future. Our army of 7 500 volunteers cover every village, town and city.

If you like being part of a very important team, please volunteer. Training is given and all out-of-pocket expenses are paid. You tell us how much time you can spare.

Your help could provide many of our comrades with a much better quality of life. The work is immensely rewarding.

Please contact:

Ann Needle  
Branch Recruitment Officer  
19 Queen Elizabeth Street  
LONDON SE1 2LP  
Telephone: 020 7463 9223

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### FOR SALE:

The Regimental History of The Buffs (3rd Foot)  
5 Volumes  
History of the East Kent Volunteers  
by Charles Igglesden  
Side Drum  
4th Battalion The Buffs  
Other items from Buffs and Indian Army pre 1947.

Please contact: Martin Brown on 01980 671232

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### LETTER OF THANKS

The following letter has been received by the Forebear Regiments Secretary, Major D. Bradley BEM from Colonel P C Cook DL, Regional Director Fundraising

Army Benevolent Fund( South East Region).

*Dear Dennis*

*What a magnificent contribution to the Army Benevolent Fund from those attending the Queen's Own Buffs Service of Remembrance in Canterbury Cathedral on 6th August. I am not sure how I pass on my thanks to all the contributors, perhaps a note in the Journal.*

*Again, very many thanks for a most generous contribution'*

*Best regards*

*Peter Cook*

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### THE REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION OF THE QUEEN'S OWN BUFFS WEALD OF KENT BRANCH

The inaugural meeting of the new Weald of Kent branch will take place at the Royal British Legion Club, Priory Road, Tonbridge, on Tuesday 16 January 2007, starting at 7.30 pm. The club is a short walk of some 400 yards from Tonbridge railway station and the telephone number is 01732 358 729.

The management committee of the association has for some time now been aware of a gap in its branch coverage between Maidstone and Bromley. It is our hope that the new Weald branch, based on Tonbridge, will go some way to providing a convenient meeting place for those unable easily to travel to other branches. At the first meeting part of the business will be given over to electing a chairman, secretary, treasurer and committee members.

Responsibility for subsequent events and activities will then be the responsibility of the branch officers and committee. This inaugural meeting is therefore of considerable importance so please make every effort to attend and encourage as many others as possible to be there too. We look forward to seeing you in January.

If you live in the area and have not yet expressed an interest in joining the new branch but would like to do so-just turn up you will be most welcome.

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# CANTERBURY REUNION

## Sunday 6th August 2006

As we have come to expect, the parade through the streets of Canterbury to the Cathedral took place in excellent weather. Led by the band of the 3rd Battalion PWRR, the parade marched through Canterbury arms swinging, backs straight and instep - a brave sight indeed when you consider that the average age is well into the late 70's now. This year saw the introduction of a new 'order of march', association members marching in one unit, with the standards marching together at the head of the parade, rather than in Branches. The parade was led by Canterbury Branch Standard followed by Denmark Branch standard escorted by Andrew Breining and Kay Weeks from Denmark.



**Andrew Breining and Kay Weeks escorting the Denmark Standard carried by Brian Dudman**

Marching with us also was Colonel Ken Langridge from Canada. All three of these very special



**The Invicta Band**

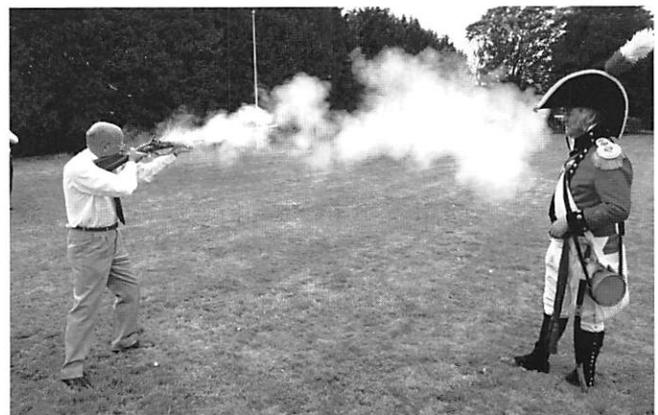
association members 'Turned the Page' later in the week. (See Turning the Page)

After the Service of Remembrance in the Cathedral and the laying of wreaths at the Warrior's Chapel, the parade reformed and marched past the Lord Mayor of Canterbury in the Cathedral grounds and then to Longport for dispersal. From there it was back to Leros Barracks for the reunion lunch and entertainment.

The re enactment group of the 50th Foot, dressed in the uniforms of the Peninsular War era, demonstrated



**The Lord Mayor of Canterbury-under instruction**



**Jacky Bannister-'Making Smoke'**

the loading and firing of the Brown Bess musket. Several of the spectators then tried their hand including a few who had, I know, attended the Small Arms School Course at Hythe- no comment- maybe the Lee Enfield was easier!!! Two of the veterans at the reunion were not just celebrating a regimental reunion but also a personal one. Ken Baker and Harry

Pearce have been best of pals for no less than 84 years. They grew up together attended the same school and served together in the Regiment during the last war.



**Ken and Harry  
'Two very steady Buffs!**



**Bill Pledger's grandson, Marcus, trying his hand.**

The Reunion closed with Beating of Retreat by the band of 3rd Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment. The Regimental flag was lowered by Pte. Phillips, now serving with 3 PWRR, grandson of Sergeant Ted Phillips who many of you will remember.

In conclusion our thanks must go to the members of the reunion committee and all those volunteers who just turned up on the Saturday just to help. They all contributed to a great day.



**The Band Beating Retreat**



**Rolling back the years-and a few pints!**



**L to R: Henry Delo, Stuart McIntyre, Wally Stoke, Pauline McIntyre, Colonel Peter Bishop, Lt. Col & Mrs John White .**



**Pte. Phillips, grandson of Sergeant Ted Phillips, lowering the Regimental flag (See Photo Gallery)**

# MAIDSTONE REUNION

## 17th September 2006

On Sunday 17th September the Maidstone Reunion commenced in Brenchley Gardens with a short service and wreath laying ceremony at the Cenotaph followed by the traditional march through Maidstone to All Saints Church where a Service of Remembrance was held.



**Above: Colonel Champion, President of the Association, greeting one of the West Kent Veterans.**



**Rev. Tug Wilson laying a wreath on behalf of the 62 Club.**



**Colonel Champion talking with David Young centre.**



**The Standards leading the parade through Maidstone.**



**Three Queen's Own veterans on parade: Sid Bowden, Frank McMurchie and Ron Barton**

photo courtesy of Michael Barton



**The Standards processing to the altar in All Saints Church.**

The re union in Kent Hall afterwards was very well attended indeed. The Kohima Band played during the afternoon and the members were also entertained by Kevin Kay-Bradley on the accordion.

This year's reunion must rank as one of the best in recent times. All of those who attended deserve a big 'thank you' for coming, some from considerable distances. The re-union committee are to be congratulated on the smooth organisation, a really superb buffet lunch and a quite stunning raffle.



**The Standards dipped in salute.**



**The Association President talking with Frank McMurchie who although well into his 90s, still makes the annual trip to the Maidstone Reunion. Frank enlisted in the Queen's Own in 1934 and served with the 2nd Bn. in Palestine, Malta from 1940-42, and finally on the island of Leros where he was captured.**



**Mrs Jackie Allen, Secretary of the Maidstone Reunion Committee, receiving a bouquet with our grateful thanks for a job well done.**



**Brian Bartlett receiving a set of silver regimental cuff links from the Association President, Colonel Champion. Brian has loyally served his branch and the Association for over 40 years and continues to carry the Bromley Branch standard at many events and the inevitable funerals. A very well deserved award.**



**Pictured left: Mrs. Mave Bradley receiving a bouquet from Colonel Champion. Mave's solo of The Holy City during the Service of Remembrance was very moving.**

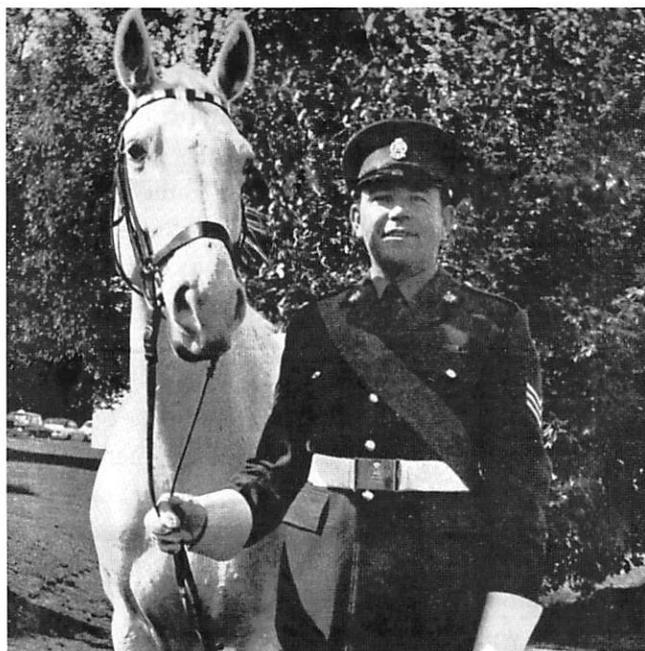
# TROOPING THE COLOUR

7th SEPTEMBER 1974 (Werl Germany)

The Trooping of the Colour Parade was held on Saturday 7th September; 1974 to honour the 119th anniversary of the siege of Sevastopol, the Regimental Day of the forebear regiment The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment.

A magnificent white mare, symbolic of the white horse of Kent, was led Sergeant Brian Breach, graced the parade for which she had been specially borrowed.

Sergeant Breach had spent numerous hours getting to know and becoming friends with the 17 hands of solid horse whose name was 'SKINDER'.



**Sergeant Brian Breach with Skinder**

The parade, taken by the Colonel of the Regiment and commanded by the Commanding Officer Lt.-Col. M. R. M. Newall, was held in the presence of the High Sheriff of Kent and Mrs. Barham; the Commander 1st British Corps, Lt.-General Sir Jack and Lady Harman; the Mayor and Mayoress of Canterbury, Councillor and Mrs. Castle; the Burgomeister of Werl, Frau Dr Röhrer and many other civilian and military dignitaries.

In bright sunshine and a blustery wind the colour, carried by Lt. R. F. Whithouse with an escort guard from 'A' Coy., commanded by Major Bulloch, was

trooped through the three other guards before about 2,000 spectators.

During and after the parade it is known that many of the spectators recorded this unique occasion by taking photographs. It is thought also that the parade was videoed.

Sadly WO 11 Brian Breach passed away a short while ago and his family would very much appreciate copies of any photos that were taken on that memorable day.

If you can assist please contact the Editor, any costs involved will be reimbursed.

o o o

**COLONEL FREDERICK  
CHARLES ROMER  
C.B., C.M.G.**

**8th Battalion The Buffs  
(Edited from the Regimental History by  
Frank Hills)**

At the end of summer 1914, Britain was in need of experienced officers to raise new battalions. Sixty-three year old retired Colonel Romer was offered any one of three battalions and he chose the 8th Battalion of the Buffs. Frank Romer was Honorary Secretary of Boodles Club of St. James and he approached other members of the club to volunteer. Six ex-officers, all well over forty years of age agreed to join him, plus two waiters.

In September 1914, they proceeded to Shoreham, where awaiting them was a Captain E. Norman (Adjutant), RSM Barton, four NCOs and a draft of five hundred men. By the end of September, the battalion was at full strength. Despite having no uniforms, arms or equipment, they began training.

Autumn that year was one of the wettest on record, the men were living under canvas and the camp was always flooded. On some nights they were marched out into the countryside to find somewhere dry to sleep. By this time also, most of the men were in rag

In December, things started to look up, they moved to new billets in Worthing and they began to receive new equipment although there were still many delays. In April they moved again, this time to Reigate, for trench digging training and in June they found themselves in Aisne Barracks, Aldershot for yet more training. This did however mean that they were by then, good enough to provide the King's Guard, when His Majesty visited Aldershot.

Almost a year later, on 1st September 1915, the 8th Battalion under Colonel Romer, landed in France and was billeted near Etaples for two more weeks of training. On 21st September, they marched out with the 72nd Brigade to take part in the build-up prior to the Battle of Loos. The march to Bethune took four days and was achieved mostly by night, with the Brigade covering twenty-two miles on the second night. The Buffs recorded only one man falling out, whilst some battalions lost as many as two hundred men.

At 11am on the day they arrived in Bethune, Colonel Romer addressed the men: "I am not going to make a speech to you", he said, "but I only ask you to remember that you are the Buffs!" The Battalion then moved forward towards the fighting line approaching Vermelles with orders for a night attack on Hulluch.

This attack was postponed in order to allow for artillery preparation. Lieutenant Robinson became the first casualty when he was badly injured and he died the following day. The battalion moved into what were the original German second line trenches and at 10.30 am the following day, the order came for the division to attack.

The Buffs went over the top to take part in action only weeks after arriving in France and without having had the necessary instruction under fire in the trenches. Their objective was the third line of the German fortifications. The 8th Buffs were in the second line following the 8th East Surrey's, to the left of the Surrey's were the 8th West Kent's, with the 8th Queen's behind.

All the battalions were under steady shelling until our men got to the depression South of Hulluch, where they then came under very heavy machine-gun fire. The further they advanced, the more severe it became. The entire 72nd brigade reached their objective, but they found the wire still intact and were unable to clear the obstacles.

The division to their right retreated and this caused our men to fall back to the trenches five hundred yards to the West of Hulluch, where they were subjected to heavy bombardment for the next four to five hours. After dark, search parties went out to recover the wounded, but in the meanwhile, the Germans had re-occupied their old trenches and the rescuers were unable to get to most of the dead and dying. Only a dozen or more of lightly wounded Buffs were able to crawl back under cover of darkness.

The next assault was made in daylight, over open country, with their objective over a mile away. Under heavy fire, the advance moved rapidly and soon the Buffs were within twenty-five yards of the enemy but could find no gaps in the wire and all attempts to cut it were to no avail. The order came to withdraw and with that, the hostile fire became more severe than ever and the number of casualties became even greater. The Buffs, or what was left of them, were relieved that night and rested in a field near Saily La Bourse and on 27th September they marched to Nouex-Les-Mines and bivouacked in very wet weather.

The casualties from that awful day were tremendous and that wonderful, gallant old soldier, Colonel Romer, although wounded in the shoulder, continued to lead the Battalion until he too died, shot through the heart on that horrendous day. Although not originally a Buff, this hero of sixty-four was indeed one when he died. In total, 24 officers and 610 other ranks were either killed, wounded or missing in action at Loos, which is on a par with the losses of Albuhera in the Peninsular Wars.

The 8th Battalion lasted two more years before being disbanded in 1918. In that time they fought with great distinction at Delville Wood, Messines and Pilckem Ridge.

## FROM THE WEB SITE

### LEONARD VICAREY

From: Tom Vicarey

Date Posted: May 8, 06 - 5:32 PM

Email: garrison999@ntlworld.com

I would very much appreciate if any of our older members might remember my father. His name was Leonard Vicarey. He was a POW and was liberated when the war ended. Has been known to have been a very good cook. I have been trying to gather information on him for some time now. So if there is any one out there who could help I would be very grateful indeed. Many thanks for any information that I might receive.

### REPLY

FROM: June Lawrence nee Fuller

Date Posted: Aug 15, 06 - 3:12 PM

Email: june@lawrence30.fsnet.co.uk

Hi Tom, I think your father was my uncle Len, brother to Gladys Rupersia Vicarey who was my mother. Were you brought up in Rye, Sussex? That is where my parents were married, my father was James Ellmer Fuller. I have done a lot of work on the Vicarey family tree, if we are related then I would be happy to share the information.

### REPLY

FROM: Tom Vicarey

Hi June. Many many thanks for getting in touch with me. Yes I was born in Rye 3 months after my father died. My elder brother Len can't give me much information as my Dad was not around a lot of the time. My father spent most of the war in a POW camp and in 1949 was run down by someone learning to drive and killed. My mothers name was Adeline May Doel who was from the Rondra Valley Wales.

My two sisters are Vera who lives in Sidney Australia. My other sister Shirley is deceased my 3 brothers are Leonard who lives in Perth, Australia, Vivienne who lives in Rye and Norman who is deceased.

My mother re-married Cyril Pierce in 1952. This is amazing. I did not think I would get an answer about my father as it's been so long. But to get someone who could be related to me is superb.

By the way. best be prepared for a large family. There is a lot of us still around in Rye.

Once again. many thanks and I hope I have given you enough information to be getting on with. If you use my msn address which is tom\_vicarey@msn.com then we can perhaps chat on line.

Hope to hear from you soon.

### REPLY

FROM: Connie Sharp

Date Posted: Aug 17, 06 - 6:37 PM

Email: drfinlaysbird@hotmail.com

Instant Messenger: sharpie36dd@tiscali.co.uk

Hi there Tom just read about your family well this how I fit in the equation. Your dad Leonard was my granddad's brother Edward Vicarey. Edward Vicarey, or Ted as he is better known, married Irene Daisy Palmer on 25th February 1939. Over the span of 15 years they had 8 children .One of which is my mum Irene Vicarey. Ted's oldest child was Beryl Vicarey, the others were David Vicarey, Ernie Vicarey, Kenneth Vicarey, Victor Vicarey, Irene Vicarey, Pamela Vicarey, Patricia Vicarey. My nan Irene Vicarey is still alive and living in Rye she is nearly 86 in November this year. She has 22 grand children which I am one of them. She has 49 great grandchildren which my 3 children are. if there is anything I can assist you with do not hesitate to contact me . I hope this helps with the search .

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Subject: **Private Herbert (Bert) G Markwick**

From: Andy Markwick

Date Posted: Nov 12, 06 - 9:31 AM

Email: markwick@aapt.net.au

I am seeking information about my late fathers Military Records Please. He was a Buffs Signaller - Regular Soldier prior to the WW1, his serial No 6286844. He was a prisoner in Stalag 1VB Dog Tag No 279655

Any help would be appreciated.

### REPLY

FROM: Mick Mills

As next of kin you are entitled to apply for a copy of his service record. Try writing to:-

Army Personnel Centre  
Historic Disclosures  
Mailpoint 400, Kentigern House  
65 Brown St  
Glasgow, G2 8EX

There will be a small charge and you may have to wait a while but it'll be worth it

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**AGENT ORANGE**

From: Bill Dixon-Dodds

Date Posted: Nov 10, 06 - 1:24 PM

Email: bill1324@ntlworld.com

Would any member of the 'Queens Own Buffs' who served in Base Gagetown, New Brunswick, Canada please contact me by email. This is in regard to the spraying of Agent Orange (Purple & White) whilst British Units were on exercise there.

Possible time frame (1960s onward)

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**JAMES ANTHONY HOGAN**

From: James O'Shea

Date Posted: Nov 2, 06 - 12:59 PM

Email: jamesoshea5@hotmail.co.uk

I am trying to find some information about my grandfather - James Anthony Hogan. He was a Private in the Buffs in the 8th Army during World War 2, from 1939 to 1946.

He served across Europe and North Africa. Including Dunkirk where he was injured and a short stint as Monty's driver in Africa until he lost Monty's maps....

I was hoping that if anyone has any stories or pics that you would consider sharing them I would love to get some info on his exploits.

---

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**ROBERT ERNEST CLEGGET**

**6th Bn. QRWK**

From: Simon Cleggett

Date Posted: Oct 25, 06 - 1:17 PM

Email: sicleggett@fsmail.net

This may be a long shot but, is there anyone out there who remembers my grandad Bob Cleggett? Algeria 1942, Djebel Aboid/ Green Hill (Djebel Azzaq) etc. Attempting to learn more of his role in Africa and

Sicily and, the role of his dog "Bob" who won the PDSA Dickin medal for Gallantry (animals VC) . Would be delighted to hear from anyone with any info. Many thanks and the best of wishes to all.

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**BUFFS VOLUNTEER BAND**

**Tenterden, 1890-1900?**

From: Sheila Windsor

Date Posted: Oct 15, 06 - 10:19 PM

Email: sheilawndsr@yahoo.com.au

I am seeking information on the 2nd Volunteer Band East Kent Regiment, under Bandmaster Batt.

The Band, of whom my grandfather Edward Pearce was a member; played at his testimonial meeting in Woodchurch in early 1901.

The meeting was held to say farewell Edward after he completed 36 years service with the Post Office.

Edward was also a member of the Tenterden and Woodchurch string Bands.

Any information would be welcome.

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**11th Bn (Lewisham) ROYAL WEST KENTS**

From: Alan Humphries

Date Posted: Oct 10, 06 - 9:17 AM

Email: alan.humphries@dti.gsi.gov.uk

I have just discovered that my G. Grandfathers younger brother ( G/9996 Pte W H J Humphries) was serving with this Bn when killed on 7th October 1916. His body was never recovered and he is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial. The Battalion were involved in an attack on Gird Lines, the assault was checked by machine gun fire from both flanks soon after advance began at 1-45pm.

Out of 16 officers and 465 other ranks who went into action only 4 officers and less than 100 men survived.

Does anyone have any background to this Battalion and/or anything on Pte Humphries.

**REPLY**

From: Mick Mills

William Humphries was born in Shigwell, Shropshire, he enlisted at Lewisham and had an address in Lee when he died.

Your Great Grandfather's younger brother's name is on the Thiepval Memorial because he has no known grave. This doesn't necessarily mean that his body was never recovered. He may, for example, have been buried and the original grave site was lost or he could lie in one of the many graves which simply state "A Soldier of The Great War. Known Unto God" ie. some remains were found but they were unidentifiable. Interestingly, my information states that he died of wounds which suggests that he was buried at some stage.

This may seem pedantic but it is something for you to consider. The 11th Battalion was raised in early 1915 by R Jackson, the Mayor of Lewisham and a local committee. Some experienced regulars were either transferred into the unit or brought out of retirement and by mid November the Battalion was at full strength.

Battalion went overseas in May 1916 led by Lieutenant Colonel AF Townshend (formerly of the Scottish Rifles) with Major AC Corfe 2nd in command. They blooded their swords in some minor actions in the Ypres / Armentieres area before moving down to the Somme area in August / September.

They were involved in one of the first tank attacks at Flers on September 16 and lost 443 men including Townshend who was killed. Corfe took over the command and a large draft of reserves brought the Battalion up to strength for its next action near Gueudecourt on 7th October with my own personal favourites, the 6th Buffs, on their right. I visited the battlefield last year whilst looking at the Buffs activities on that day and I would highly recommend it to you.

I hope this helps

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### EDWARD O'DONNELL

From: Trevor O'donnell

Date Posted: Oct 1, 06 - 11:04 PM

Email: trevorodonnell@btinternet.com

I am trying to find any info on my father EDWARD O'DONNELL who served in North Africa Italy and I think perhaps Persia. I think he was a company runner but not sure he was out in North Africa around the same time as the battle of El Alamein any info please.

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### CYRIL FRANK CLOUT

From: Ann Wilson

Date Posted: Sep 4, 06 - 12:40 PM

Email: aquariurs44@hotmail.co.uk

I need help to find out some info on my grandfather, Cyril Frank Clout. He served in the 1st Battalion of the Buffs between the years of 1922-1929, in India Gibraltar and Egypt. I would be most grateful for any help.

---

### CANTERBURY REUNION

From: Eric Deuters

Date Posted: Aug 20, 06 - 2:57 PM

Email: barrykate@btconnect.com

I have been asked by Eric Deuters to pass on his apologies for not being able to attend this years annual reunion in Canterbury, however this was due to the length of the journey in question.

Eric was there in both spirit and mind and hopes that the day was as successful as the previous year. Eric would like to pass on his thanks for the wonderful time that he had at this event last year and hopes to meet up with you again, sometime in the future.

*(We missed you Eric but hope to see you next year. The Editor).*

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### CAPTAIN W. C. O. PHILLIPS

From: Shaun Springer

Date Posted: Aug 4, 06 - 10:08 PM

Email: shaun@springerfamily.co.uk

I am doing some research for a school project on my great great uncle who was in the Queen's Own West Kents. He was killed on August 24th 1914. What research I've managed to uncover indicates that the West Kents were not in France so early in the war. However our family legend has it that he was a Lt. in the Boer War and then was recalled for the Great War. The legend then attests he was the senior officer of the battalion at the time of his death, the more senior officers apparently not having survived. Though the dates are probably inaccurate, the story runs something like this. Reg't arrives Aug 8th, Aug 12 Phillips is 2nd in command owing to casualties, Aug 20th Phillips in command, Aug 24th Phillips himself is killed. He is buried in Hautrage Cemetery in Belgium which became a German cemetery in August/Sept 1914.

Could anyone please either confirm, refute or add anything at all to this history.

### REPLY

From: Mick Mills

Captain Phillips went overseas with B Company of the 1st Battalion. On the outbreak of war they were in Dublin and having mobilised their reservists they sailed on 13th August, arriving at Havre on the 15th.

They first went into action during the Battle of Mons on 23rd August (the day after the first clash between the British and German armies). They were entrenched along the north side of the Mons canal. Having fought the Germans, off the British disengaged and retreated to better positions further south overnight

The next day, A and B Companies were sent forward to assist the Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) between Wasmes and Paturages, SW of Mons. Phillips was killed in the action that ensued.

There is nothing to suggest that he was ever in command of the Battalion (or second in command).

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### GEORGE HENRY KENCH

From: Wendy Kench

Date Posted: Aug 2, 06 - 8:42 PM

Email: wendyakb@gmail.com

Message: I am interested in any information on my Uncle George Henry Kench. Information that I have gained so far from CWGC as follows;

Rank; Lance Corporal.

Service No 6351071.

Death Date; 31-1-1943.

Age; 22.

Regiment; Q.O.R.W.K.R. 6th Bn.

Awards; MM

Cemetery: Beja War Cemetery, Tunisia

The following Information was received from the Keeper of Human History at Maidstone Museum as follows;

Enlisted; 20-6-1940, George is mentioned in the book of the Regimental history by Chaplin, where he is mentioned as leading a patrol while in Africa. The book also describes the battle in which George lost his life. George was living at Penshurst when he enlisted. Although I have visited Penshurst I was not able to locate a war memorial, does anyone know if one

exists? Do any photos survive of the 6th Bn in which George may feature? Could anyone advise on how to obtain his service records or other relating to him would be gratefully received.

---

### DOUGIE ELLIS

From: Tumble\_Weed

Date Posted: Jun 23, 06 - 2:07 AM

Email: Yan\_wilts@yahoo.co.uk

Message: I am trying to find information about my late farther. He never talked much about his early army career and now he has gone, my sons ask me questions about him that I just cannot answer so I have decided to put together a family remembrance book and CD to pass down the generations as he was far too a remarkable man to let his deeds be forgotten.

I am hoping that someone on this site may stumble across this post and recognise the name. Any information would be more than gratefully received.

Here's what I have managed to find out so far (the internet is a wonderful thing)

He was in 1 Platoon. A Company 1 Buffs. Dover Castle January 1958. He served in Europe (Airborne, (Gliders), Aden, Palestine, Kenya, Wuppertal then STC Silberhuete, Bahrain (Minasulman), back to Germany (Fallingbostel), 8 Bgd HQ & Sigs Londonderry and Grnd Liaison Grp. RAF Upavon.

There are a lot of gaps in the above, and even the places we know about, we have very few details, especially the early stuff.

His decorations where as follows:

1939 / 1945 War Medal,

1945 / 1948 Palestine campaign medal.

Kenya Campaign Medal

Long Service & Good Conduct

Medal Meritorious Service Medal

British Empire Medal.

Northern Ireland .

Unfortunately he was taken from us prematurely in 1998 having just retired from a civil MoD post.

If anyone could help out with any information about his service, or point me in the right direction of where to find it please feel free to email me.

## BAND CONCERT 2006

As the Band of the 3rd Battalion the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment underwent their annual camp in Leros Barracks this year we were lucky indeed to enjoy another fantastic Band Concert.



**Ready & Steady Cooks!**  
**Sgt. Mick Channon, 3PWRR's Gordon Ramsey,**  
**with his 'assistant' BSM Barry George,**  
**a man of many talents!!**



**(This one's for you, lad!!)**

### Some of the soloists



The evening started off with a really excellent hot buffet with a choice of Curry or Lasagne, followed by a dessert. Sgt. Mick Chandler and his assistant, Band Sergeant Major Barry George deserve a tremendous slap on the back.



**The Briefing by the Bandmaster(Chief Gunner).**



**The Battery Commanders**

The now customary 1812 overture accompanied by batteries of brown paper bags was once again an outstanding success even if some ran out of 'co-ordinated puff' halfway through.

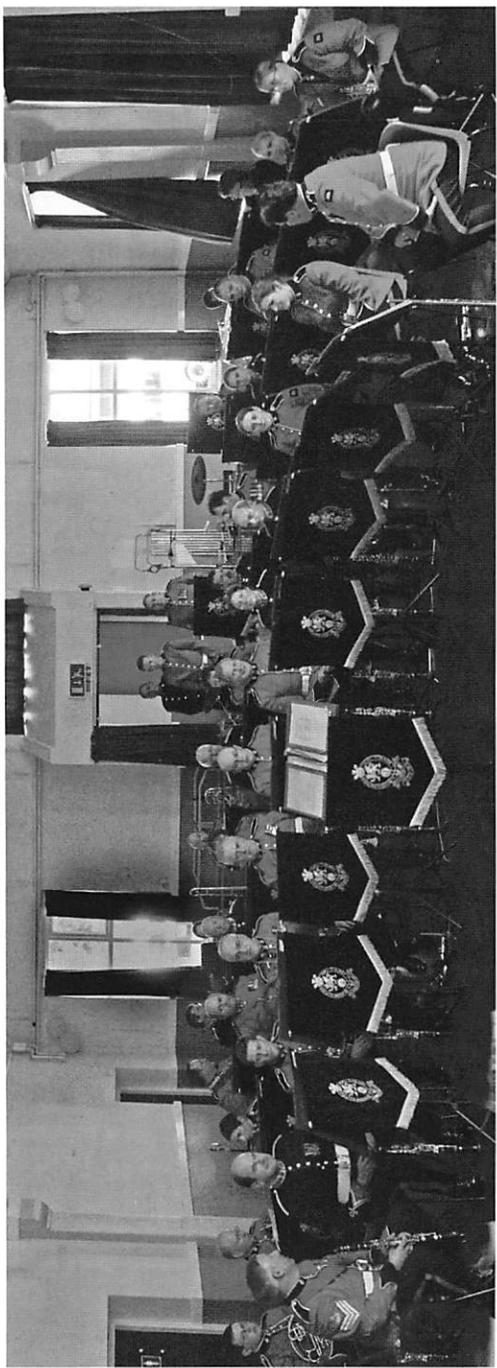
The bi-annual Band Concert by the Band of 3rd Battalion The Princess of Wales's Regiment is now very much a feature of the Association's calendar and each time the concert is 'Sold Out'. Is it any wonder? We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Commanding Officer of 3 PWRR, Lt. Col. Adam Edmunds and the Band Master and his excellent musicians.

Our thanks to you all.





**The 'Gunners'**



**THE BAND**



**The Corps of Drums**

## TURNING THE PAGE

On Tuesday August 8th, a special 'Turning of the Page' ceremony was held. Colonel Ken Langridge who had travelled all the way from Manitoba, Canada turned the page escorted by Andrew Breining and Kay Weeks, Secretary and President (respectively) of the Denmark Branch.

The Denmark standard was on parade carried by Maurice Samson and 10 members of Canterbury Branch were there in support.



**Colonel Ken Langridge turning the page escorted by Andrew Breining and Kay Weeks.  
Above right: Maurice Samson with the Denmark Standard**



**Colonel Langridge at the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada Book of Life**



**Lt. Col. J. White, Sammy Supple, Maurice Samson, Henry Delo, Peter Turney, Bernard Miles, Norman Gomm & Dick Hickmott  
Front Row: Andrew Breining, Colonel Ken Langridge, Kay Weeks, Bill Guldup & Alf Matthews**

## WRITE TO REPLY

20 Surf Parade  
Inverloch.3996, Australia  
e-mailaddress:dombret@dcsi.net.au.

65 Pochard Crescent  
Stillwater Park  
Herne Bay, Kent  
Tel: 01227 740628

*Dear Editor,*

Ref the article in the autumn 2005 by the late Maj Geoffrey Cox MC. The 2nd paragraph about 2 Lt John Warren. I was in the 70th Bn, D Company 20 platoon from 1943 to 1945 before being transferred to The Royal Corp of Signals . 2 Lt John Warren was our platoon office. Can anyone tell me if he survived the war also Sgt Franks who was served in WW1 and Corporal Adams who was a pre war territorial. Maybe Mick Mills can help, he seems to have his hand on the pulse of The Buffs.

Kind regards to all  
6297838 Lionel Dombret.

*(Editor's Note: The above enquiry was passed to Mick Mills for research. Here is Mick's reply:)*

*Dear Editor,*

I've searched the CWGC for 2 Lt Warren and it would appear that he survived the war. As you know, service documents for those that served post 1920's aren't in the public domain yet but as he's an officer I should be able to track him in the Army Lists. I'll track him down next time at Kew. As far as Franks is concerned, there are five possible contenders; Albert, Arthur, AJ, ES or SA – I think this is the more likely because he was still serving on 29/6/1922 when the rolls were compiled. He went overseas with the 2nd Battalion on 18/1/1915, transferred to the 6th Buffs and then to the 1st East Surreys before rejoining the Buffs. He ended up as a Lance Corporal. I estimate that he enlisted in autumn 1911.

Whichever Franks it was, he must have survived because no Buff with that surname died during WW2.

The only Adams that died from the Regiment was Pte Edmond Arthur Adams who died on 8/11/1940 so it looks like Cpl Adams survived too.

Regards  
Mick

*Dear Editor,*

I am writing regarding the photo in the last issue of 1st Bn Buffs Mortar Platoon taken in Hong Kong in 1949.

I think that the soldier standing in line with the driver, looking down to his left, maybe my late brother John Hills.

I know he was in D Company, can anyone confirm this please.

Yours sincerely  
Frankie Hills

---

25, Kingsdown Avenue  
South Croydon  
Surrey CR2 6 QG  
Telephone No. 020 8668 0328  
email.beeric@blueyonder.co.uk  
16th October 2006

*Dear Editor,*

Enclosed please find a copy of Sicily Training Platoon photo taken in May 1957.

Would it be possible to include this in The Journal asking if anyone recognises themselves could contact me either by phone, letter or e mail.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Yours sincerely  
Eric Clark.

*(The subject photo is published in the Photo Gallery. The Editor.)*

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77 Roseleigh Road  
Sittingbourne  
Kent ME10 1RP  
Tel: 01795 554228  
Email: gd006h6612@blueyonder.co.uk

*Dear Editor,*

I enclose herewith the photograph of the Signal Platoon, 1st Bn. The Buffs in Khartoum in 1950, (Please see Photo Gallery) together with the names of those shown on the photo, I know that Alan Martin and, I believe, George Stremes have passed away. I am still in touch with Victor (Johnny) Walker who is now retired and living in Weston Super Mare, (he was Best Man at my Wedding and has attending most of our wedding anniversaries up to the sad passing of my wife).

I also know that Alan Morris left and transferred to a Scottish Regt and then was a member of the London Scottish T.A., for many years, I left a message on their Web Site but heard nothing further. Although mainly we did our own thing most of the time, much to the consternation and sometimes annoyance of a number of Senior Officers, we were all there as an efficient and willing unit when the need arose, well, at least I think we were!!!

It would be very interesting to see if there are any other members still around, they were a marvellous bunch.

Your sincerely  
George Dunk

---

4 Forrester Close  
Canterbury, Kent  
CT1 1DY  
Tel: 01227 472023  
E-mail: barbara.hunt4@btopenworld.com

*Dear Editor,*

I am researching the names on the War Memorial at Littlebourne, Near Canterbury, Kent. As some of them were Buffs and West Kents, I wonder whether there might be some of your readers who can help me, either by supplying information or by pointing me towards people who might have information.

The names I am hoping for information on are as follows:

**World War I  
(Buffs)**

ARTHUR ERNEST SMITH  
ERNEST EDWARD WEBB  
WALTER E MARSH  
GEORGE E MAPLE  
JOHN HENRY FARRIER  
FREDERICK MORGAN  
WILLIAM JOHN KNIGHT  
STEPHEN WILLIAM THOMAS YOUNG  
CHARLES NEWING

**(West Kents)**

FRANCIS MOULL STORER BOWEN  
WALTER STRINGER

**World War II**

**(Buffs)**

JAMES ROBERT BLYTH  
JOHN ALFRED CADMAN  
ARTHUR ROBERT COOPER  
STANLEY ALFRED COOPER  
PHILIP WILLIAM GREENFIELD  
PETER MORDECAI  
ALBERT GEORGE STRINGER

**(West Kents)**

HORACE GEORGE RAYMOND BEER

Yours sincerely  
Mrs B J Hunt

---

7 Troy's Mead  
Hollingbourne, Maidstone  
Kent ME17 1UB

*Dear Editor,*

I would like to hear from anyone who was in the QORWK Regt. in C.B.S. Camp, Nicosia in 1958, who remembers Major Monkton, 'D' Company Commander. I remember Major Monkton getting us all on parade and saying: "A S/Sgt in the RAOC was shot this morning by EOKA as he left for work. To avoid the same thing happening to any of you, you are not to open the front door to your house until the transport arrives to pick you up, at the time agreed, he will alert you by sounding his hooter

an agreed number of times. If a vehicle arrives at the wrong time and gives the wrong number of 'toots' you are not to open your front door. It could be EOKA.'

If anyone remembers this please contact me at the above address, I will reply to all letters received.

Many thanks.

Jack Pitchers ex Cpl, 10 Platoon.

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Major E. S. Parker  
2 Luxford Close  
Horsham  
West Sussex RH12 4DL

*Dear Editor,*

I write concerning the top left photograph on page 42 of the last issue entitled 'En Route to Kenya'.

The Corporal on the left carrying the two Bren guns is Leonard Raymond Reeves. Regt. Number 22193162. I was his best man at his wedding to Pat Crampton at Folkestone in early 1953. We both wore Battle Dress but he went over the top by wearing 'brothel creepers'. He left the Army in July/August 1953 and I last made contact with him in the late 50's when he was a Police Inspector in Mombasa.

The Colour Sgt in the centre pushing the trolley is possibly "Rosie" Seymour. If that is the case, the group must have been part of HQ Company. Sorry can't help with the remainder.

Yours aye  
Ted

---

30 Edward Street  
Southborough  
Tunbridge Wells  
TN4 0HA

*Dear Editor,*

On June 27th 2006, four of us, Norman Shonk, John Hopkins, Dave Law and myself were invited to attend the Churchill Museum and War Rooms in London to celebrate the first Veteran's Day.

After a splendid cold buffet lunch supplied by the museum we went to a hall to meet with other veterans, present day service men and a number of school children aged about 9 or 10 who asked about life in the services.

While there the Head of the Veterans Agency arrived with Des Browne, the Forces Minister and also Gordon Brown the Chancellor who presented our group personally with our Veterans lapel badges. (See Photo Gallery)

On the way back to Charing Cross we stopped on Horse Guards Parade to take a few photos when we were approached by a rather heavily built and well armed policeman. Thinking that we were about to be arrested for some discretion or other we were pleasantly surprised that the policeman offered to take our camera and photograph the group for us. What a gentleman.

Best regards to all  
Fred Scales

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44 Trevoise Way  
Titchfield Common  
Fareham, Hants  
PO14 4NQ

*Dear Editor,*

Recently, I traced the Liberation Questionnaire that my father, RSM George Brophy, completed on release from a prisoner of war camp on 29th May 1945. I was astonished to discover that he had been sending back information of interest to I.S.9(M19) from various camps to two registered recipients in this country. Presumably Military Intelligence personnel decoded the letters after which they were sent on to the people to whom they were addressed,

My parents never mentioned this and it only came to light as a result of the notes made by the interviewing British Intelligence Officer on my father's release.

Although, because of his rank, he did not need to work he distributed Red Cross parcels to several camps which were part of Auschwitz Concentration Camp: Glewitz, Bleckhammer and Harnsdorf.

I wonder if any of your readers could, or would be allowed to, comment on the numbers of British and Commonwealth prisoners of war in Europe who were gathering military intelligence from prisoner of war camps or work parties.

I gather from the Intelligence Officer's notes that some of the information gathered was at the specific request of IS9 with whom my father was in direct contact.

I would be grateful for any information. May I wish all of your readers a happy Christmas and 2007.

Yours sincerely

Maureen McNee.

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'Balla'  
Church Road.  
Kennington, Ashford  
Kent. TN24 9DG

Telephone: 01233-623648

*Dear Editor,*

I am trying to trace Lt: Patrick O'Donoghue who was commissioned into Royal West Kent Regt. in 1953. He was posted to the first battalion in Malaya and later went to Germany in the June of 1954 (I think it may possibly be June '55) returning for demob in the September.

It is possible that on demob he went to U S A as his father had been Consul General in Philadelphia in the 50's.

It would appear that my one chance to locate him is that one of your readers is still in contact. If so I would be very grateful for any news.

Yours truly,

Robert F L Graham

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5 Cyclamen Road,  
Swanley, Kent  
BR8 8HH  
Tel: 01322 664995

*Dear Editor,*

I obtained your name and address from an Association journal (Spring 2005 edition). It was passed to me by Mrs Jacky Allen, of the 62 Club. I have been a close associate of Jacky in her position as secretary of our RBL branch of which I was president until last month. Having lived in Swanley for over forty years and with my connection with the RBL I have heard and learned much about the county regiments.

That explains the contact. My purpose in writing is the enclosed photograph. (See Photo Gallery) It shows the Artillery Section of A Coy of the 1st Volunteer Bn of the Buffs at Deal, December 1918. Although the regimental museum may already have information about it I am sure that a revived interest and some added information may be welcome. The photograph came to my notice some months ago when my older brother was going through some of my father's old photos. My father was in the Royal Field Artillery from 1894 until 1921. He was a Lieutenant training gunners at the time and I feel sure that it is he that is standing on the left of the Coy OC (The one with the SD cap). I know nothing about the occasion when this photo was taken but the fact that my father was stationed in Deal at that time, (my older brothers were born there in 1917 and 1919)! I assume that he was involved in training the Buffs as gunners. My father's full name is James Edwin Stratford. I enclose a separate photo of him in front of a limber similar to those in the group photo. (see Photo Gallery).

I would like to know as much as possible about the photo if such information is available and hope that one or more of your readers may be able to help.

Yours sincerely

E D Stratford

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## FINAL WORD

It falls to me to wrap things up again for another six months or so and the next issue. Many thanks as always for those of you who have contributed articles and photographs, please do not forget if you want the photos returned make sure you put your name and address on the reverse of each one.

Each issue I try to be even-handed and include articles from both of the forebear regiments. Occasionally this gets out of balance, due not to any bias on my part, simply because of the availability of articles and photos etc. So if any of our readers have a contribution to make to help me maintain that balance it will be greatly appreciated.

There are still quite a number of this year's Christmas cards available and also notelets. I have included an extra notelet, The Warrior's Chapel, so we now have three to include in the pack. From now on we will sell them in packs of twelve, three of each design. These notelets will be available throughout the year so a reorder form will be enclosed with each order from now on.

It is great to hear of the formation of a new branch, The Weald of Kent Branch, there can be few regimental associations that are in the fortunate position of expanding, most are going the other way. The success of that branch, like all our other branches, depends on the continued support of association members. So if you live in the Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells or Weald area and have not already expressed an interest in joining the Weald Branch then just turn up at the inaugural meeting at the Royal British Legion Club, Priory Road, Tonbridge, on Tuesday 16 January 2007, at 7.30pm, or contact Major John Barrell on 0116 244 8037 and let him know of your interest.

Many of you, including myself, are concerned with the number of 'Pop Up's' that have been encroaching on the Message Board of our web site. I am glad to say that arrangements have now been made to protect our site from such intrusion. Incidentally we have had 13,433 visitors to the site-that's a fantastic result. Not all of you however have internet access which is why selected messages are included in the 'From The Web Site' article in each issue of The Journal. If you need to reply to any of the messages featured and have no internet facility, please contact me.

I will leave you with this great piece of doggerel, which I, for one, can certainly identify with it.

### PRESCRIPTION FOR OLD AGE

There is nothing the matter with me,  
I'm as healthy as can be  
I've got arthritis in both my knees  
And when I breathe it's with a wheeze,  
My pulse is weak and my blood is thin  
"But I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in."

Arch supports I have for my feet,  
Or I wouldn't be able to be on the street,  
Sleep is denied me, night after night  
But every morning I find I'm alright,  
Yet my memory is failing, my heads in a spin  
"But I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in"

The moral is this, as the tale unfolds,  
That for me, as for you, who are growing old,  
It's better to say 'I'm fine with a grin,  
Than let folks know the shape I'm in.  
How do you know that my youth is all spent?  
Well my 'get up and go', has got up and went  
and I really don't mind, as I think with a grin,  
Of all the grand places, my 'get-up's' been in.

Old age is golden, I've oft heard it said,  
But sometimes I wonder, as I get out of bed,  
With my ears in a drawer, my teeth in a cup,  
My eyes on the table, until I wake up,  
When sleep comes o'er me, I say to myself,  
Is there anything else I should lay on the shelf?

I get up each morning and dust up my wits,  
Pick up the paper and read the Obits  
If my name is missing, I know I'm not dead,  
So 'I'm lucky I don't have to stay in bed,'  
Then I get a good breakfast and face the day,  
Shall I work, or shall I play?  
And when bedtime arrives, and I climb up the stairs,  
I'll be in the right posture for saying my prayers.

So all you young people, note what's in store,  
And face your old age without being a bore,  
Greet each new day and say with a grin,  
I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in.

My thanks to Ken Blake for sending this in.  
All that remains for me to do is to wish each and every one of you, regardless of the 'shape you are in' a really happy Christmas with health and prosperity in the year to come.

God Bless - The Editor

# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2007

<b>FEBRUARY</b>	06th	Sittingbourne Branch Annual General Meeting
	10th	Colchester Branch Valentine Dance
	16th	Canterbury Branch -Visit to the Mountbatten Festival of Music, Albert Hall, London
	17th	Sittingbourne Branch Annual Dinner
	18th	141 Regt RAC (7th Bn The Buffs) Turning The Page Canterbury Branch.
	22nd	Canterbury Branch Annual General Meeting
<b>MARCH</b>	17th	London Buffs Annual General Meeting
	18th	Colchester Branch Annual General Meeting
	31st	Bromley Branch Annual General Meeting
<b>APRIL</b>	14th	Association AGM, Darts Competition, Buffet Dance at Sittingbourne.
	20th	London Branch QORWK Business Meeting
	TBC	DTBC. Danish Branch Luncheon Meeting Keoge
	21st	Ramsgate Branch AGM
<b>MAY</b>	5th	Ramsgate Branch Albuhera Buffet and Dance
	12th	Canterbury Branch Annual Dinner
	15th	Albuhera Day
	19th	Colchester Branch Albuhera Dinner
<b>JUNE</b>	17th	London Branch QORWK Summer Social
<b>JULY</b>	Tbc	Canterbury Branch Annual visit to Ypres, Belgium.
	Tbc	Colchester Branch Outing
<b>AUGUST</b>	5th	Canterbury Reunion
	TBC	Danish Branch Summer Meeting - North Zealand
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>	2nd	London Branch QOB's Tower of London Service
	9th	Maidstone Reunion
<b>OCTOBER</b>		
<b>NOVEMBER</b>	8th	Festival of Remembrance in the Garden of Westminster Abbey
	11th	Remembrance Sunday
	11th	Canterbury Branch Armistice Luncheon.
	17th	Ramsgate Branch Annual Dinner and Dance
	30th	London Branch QORWK Christmas Social
<b>DECEMBER</b>	1st	Ramsgate Branch Christmas Social
	4th	Sittingbourne Branch Christmas Party
	9th	Canterbury Branch Carol Service
	15th	Canterbury Branch Christmas Dinner and Social
	15th	Colchester Branch Christmas Dinner and Social

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



The Association Standards dipped in salute during the Service of Remembrance in All Saints Church, Maidstone, September 2006