

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



THE JOURNAL

August 2003



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TURNING THE PAGE
THE WARRIOR'S CHAPEL
SATURDAY 2nd AUGUST 2003



Denmark Colour Party

L to R: Bendt Ole Arndt, Kay Weeke, Mogens Birch Neilson with Alf Baker (ex RN)

(During the Turning of the page Ceremony the Canterbury Bell is only rung by Ex-Royal Navy Personnel)

EDITORS PAGE

Dear Readers,

It has been, as always, a busy few months for everyone in the Association and we still have two big events to come. This issue will cover the Canterbury Reunion, The Maidstone Reunion and The Tower of London service will be covered in the next issue.

Some of the highlights since the last issue include, the unveiling of the memorial to 5th Buffs at La Herlière in France, the trip to Doullens and La Herlière on 7th June, Canterbury Branch's trip to Italy and Ypres, the Band Concert and the handing over of The Buff Cottages to the Haig Trust, the Canterbury Reunion and lots of events at the branches as well. All of those mentioned are written up individually or within Branch Notes.

Thanks once again are due to those of you that have taken the time and trouble to send in photographs and articles, and some very interesting ones we have this time as well.

On the financial front, subscriptions are coming in steadily but we still have quite a number who are outstanding. Some of these stretch back some years and so I am left with no alternative but to delete their names from the mailing list. This will reduce our list of subscribers down by quite a number and it may be that next year we will have to reduce the number of issues from three to two. But we will have to wait and see.

Several of you have asked if they can pay by Direct Debit. That unfortunately is not really the answer. RHQ have no mechanism for determining what the direct debits are for and so they would be credited to the General Fund and then we would have no idea if The Journal was self supporting or not.

For those of you who are computer friendly and have access to the internet, the Official Regiment Association Web Site was launched in June. There is still a lot of work to do but we are getting there. Considerable interest has been shown so far from all parts of the globe. This issue sees the inclusion of an Web Page article where some of the messages will be reproduced for those of you who do not have access to the internet. Just like The Journal we need photographs to put on the web site, especially photos

of the operations in Malaya, Kenya, Aden, Borneo, Suez etc etc as well as group photos. So dig out those old platoon and unit photos and send them in. They will always be returned to you.

I am delighted to say that the sale of the Association Christmas Cards is going well. Since the launch in the last issue we have sold over 150 packs and we still have the orders to come in from the branches as well as a lot of individual orders. We really need to sell about 200 packs to make it a cost effective exercise. So if you have not placed your order yet, please do not delay, you will find an order form enclosed, The finished article will be very impressive and the proceeds will be a very welcome addition to Association funds.

The Canterbury Reunion has come and gone. This year we were blessed with excellent weather and many old acquaintances were renewed. That's what it's all about really but this year's reunion was a sad occasion. Once again we lost one of our valued comrades, John Couchman of Sittingbourne Branch. John suffered a fatal heart attack whilst on the coach travelling to Canterbury. He will be missed so much by his comrades. The reunion was also a watershed for this was the last reunion that would be held at Howe Barracks. For so many of us our lives as Buffs started on the day we walked through the gates at Howe Barracks a day we will not forget.

Finally this reunion saw the surviving members of the Denmark Branch parading their standard for the last time. A very poignant and sad moment for them, for us individually and also for our Association, but a proud moment as well that their final parade was with us on a hot summers day in Canterbury.

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The Editor

BRANCH NEWS

LONDON (BUFFS) BRANCH.

SECRETARY: A. J Pinder, 162 Seymour Avenue,
Lower Morden, Surrey SM4 4QY.
Tel: 0208 330 2292. **email:** Pinder23.fsnet.uk

MEETING PLACE: Ives Lounge, The Royal Hospital Chelsea.

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

This year Buff Sunday dawned with a heat wave and sadly with the news of the death of John Couchman of the Sittingbourne Branch who passed away on the coach travelling to the reunion. He will be sadly missed by his family, members of the Association and in particular by his comrades in the Sittingbourne Branch.

The other sad occasion on the day was the handing over of the Denmark Branch standard to Canterbury Branch for safe keeping. We all hope that the remaining Denmark Branch members will keep in touch with us.

A contingent from France attended the parade complete with their standard. They had made us very welcome on our recent trip to Doullens and we hope that they enjoyed their day with us. When it was time to go home we gave them a conducted tour of Canterbury on their way back to the bus station.

The visit to Doullens was a great success thanks to the hard work and organisation that went into it. I am sure there will be a full report within this issue so I will leave it there, just to say a big thank you to all concerned.

Last Wednesday we attended a Military Band Concert at Kneller Hall. I was a bit surprised and disappointed at the lack of response from the associations. It was a beautiful evening, warm and still and the programme was "Last Night of the Proms" with three excellent bands and a fantastic firework display after the 1812 Overture. The evening started with an excellent picnic supper laid on my Major Brian Wright and his pet caterers. The food was very good and was washed down with wine or beer to your taste. This was an evening that was proposed after the Queen's Association lunch at the Duke of York's Barracks last year after the Cenotaph Parade when everyone seemed so keen, never mind the show was a sell out and all present had an evening to remember for a long time to come.

I was up at the Tower of London today to enter the names in our Book of Remembrance in the Chapel

Royal and at the same time confirm details for our annual lunch in the Tower Hotel. I travelled up by tube, and boy was it hot? I like a bit of sunshine but what we have experienced lately is beyond a joke, I am just glad I do not have to travel daily during the rush hour. Everything is now in place for our Tower service on 7th September and we look forward to seeing plenty of you there.

The following Sunday is the Maidstone Reunion which looks like being an even better day than last year as we have the Kohima Band. What would we do without them? I have been given the honour of laying the wreath at the war memorial on that day which makes me very proud.

Well that's all, till we meet again, stay healthy.

BP

RAMSGATE BRANCH

SECRETARY: David Jones. 91 Norfolk Road.
Margate. CT9 2HX.

MEETING PLACE: The RBL Club. Allenby House. 14/16 Cliff St. Ramsgate.

MEETING: Third Friday in the month at 19.45 hrs.

Hello, greetings from us all here in Ramsgate. There have been a few changes in the Branch since the last Journal and we have a new Branch President and Branch Secretary. David has very bravely accepted the office of Secretary, and we all wish him the best of luck, and long may he occupy this office. The Branch Committee and Members honoured me with an invitation to be their President, this was an invitation I could not decline, so I was both delighted and honoured to accept. I also agreed to be the Branch's Journal scribe again... so there it is. You are all lumbered. But in all seriousness, on behalf of the Branch our thanks are extended to Peter for the hard work he devoted to the Branch during his period as President and Secretary. By the way have you visited our new official Association website yet? I strongly advise you to make a visit. It is easy to enter and includes some very interesting material.

The Branch has been very busy in these last months, but first, the Return to Doullens trip. This was a very well organised and planned expedition, and our

thanks go to Peter White and Bob Chown for their hard work on our behalf. The journey through the Chunnel was a first time experience for most of us, how much more comfortable than that one in April 1940. As far as I was concerned it was a most memorial and poignant pilgrimage. Of the original 5th Battalion that went ashore at Le Havre only four of us were able to attend. I had intended to give a full account of the trip, but on checking our web-site I realised that there would be a full report in this issue of The Journal. Our thanks go to both Bob and Peter for a great and unforgettable day.

I am sad to have to report the deaths of two long standing members, Ivor Williams has not been able to attend meetings for some time, and suddenly went down hill very rapidly. Ivor served in Africa and Italy and joined the branch in March 1987 and played a full part in its activities, we extend to his wife and family our deepest sympathy. The other death had been anticipated for some time, Ernie Moody who had been very ill for some years, nevertheless he will be much missed, we also extend our sympathy to his family. Both funerals had a very good attendance.

We held our Albuhera Day Buffet at the newly reopened Regency Hotel. And it was a very enjoyable function, well attended and reports indicate that everyone enjoyed themselves. We also attended the Band Concert held in Canterbury, again well supported and everyone enjoyed an excellently presented program of music. The trip to London to attend the Dress rehearsal at Horse Guards was fully booked up and all those lucky enough to be able to attend had a very enjoyable time. We had a good contingent at the Canterbury Re-union, which went off in its usual smooth and well-oiled manner. We took the opportunity to remember our own Tony Pittuck, who died on duty one year ago; a wreath was laid in memory of him, and another in memory of all our other departed comrades. The weather was very kind to us again; we shall miss Howe Barracks in future, but thank all involved for the many pleasurable Re-unions held over the last years.

We were very sad to learn that a member of the Sittingbourne Branch, John Couchman, died on his way to Canterbury. All at Ramsgate extend their sympathy and prayers to his family and to Sittingbourne.

We hope to see you all again at Maidstone and Tower of London re-unions and Services. That's all for this session, it's too hot to think.

Best wishes to you from all of us here in Ramsgate.

Jim Peall.

SITTINGBOURNE BRANCH

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

MEETING PLACE: The Ivy Leaf Club, Dover Street, Sittingbourne.

MEETING: 4th Tuesday in the month at 19.30 hours

At last we have a President! We have not had one since the death some years ago of Major Ron Jarman. Now Colonel Peter Bishop has agreed to fill the vacancy and we are very pleased to have him. He and his wife Margaret visited us in May and they seemed to fit in right from the start and are on very good terms with us all. There is no doubt he will be a great asset to us.

We had a very welcome visit from Major Dennis Bradley and John Ferneyhough. Dennis gave us the latest news and views from Headquarters. He also gave a very interesting talk on the welfare and benevolent side, which was most informative. This subject is rarely discussed and it is good to learn that the powers that be are very aware that some of our members could fall on hard times. The trouble seems to be that people who really need help are too proud to admit it.

The social side is still going strong. A visit was made to the rehearsal of Trooping of the Colour and greatly enjoyed. Another great and colourful display. I thought the stars of the show were the marksmen. They stood at attention for over 2 hours in considerable heat and were deservedly applauded when they were marched off. It wasn't half hot mum!

A party of us went to the band concert at the Leros Barracks. What a good evening that was! The Kohima Band was marvellous. I have heard them before of course, but with only half an ear, as usually other things are going on at the same time, like eating, drinking and talking. What great musicians they are, a joy to listen to. The numbers were well presented and performed with humour and gusto. A good evening with nice food and cheap drink thrown in. To those who missed it, please go next time - you won't regret it.

Other events to come are the re-unions at Canterbury and Maidstone, and another trip to Belgium, going to Die Panne and of course the Menin Gate, where we

are sharing the service with the Somerset Light Infantry.

Bill Pledger reports that the trip to Doullens was a great success and he and his wife Iris thoroughly enjoyed it. Bill says that there were only 4 in the party who were there in 1940 but they were entertained and treated right royally by the hosts. Thanks go to the "Journal" and Peter White for organising the journey. There is, no doubt, a full report elsewhere in this issue.

The monthly attendance at meetings continues to be very good. At the July meeting 50 were present. There were also 3 prospective new members, which augurs well for the future.

At the time of writing Paul Fleming has not performed his sponsored parachute jump but I expect that again a report will be in this issue.

A corner of the grounds at Tonge Mill on the outskirts of Sittingbourne has been set aside as a memorial for the Ex-service Associations. Trees have been planted by the Royal Naval Association and the Royal British Legion. Our Association has been promised an oak tree, which we hope to plant at a ceremony before the end of the year. The wording of the inscription on the plaque is being worked out.

E A White

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.

Having invited our Editor, Peter White, to our Branch Dinner in May, we wanted to send him away with something unique. What could be better than this, the first report from our branch for some 20 years- yes 20 years- how time flies!!!

Headed by our President, Brigadier John Holman and Chairman Major Jimmy Worts, we have an active membership of around 20 members, but a bingo/supper night can swell our numbers to 45 plus.

Gilly Land, is retiring shortly as our standard bearer. He has served us well, always smart, on time and ever willing to go that extra mile. A hard act to replace, the advert is out for a pair of strong legs and arms, you need them when the wind gets up marching down Longport. Gilly has another talent, which he has promised to continue, and that is as our bingo caller. Legs 11 just would not be the same without him.



Folkestone & Hythe Branch

L/R:

Arthur Cruxe, Stuart Macintyre, Arthur Hopkins, Wally Stokes, Maj. Jimmy Worts, Gilly Lamb, Brig John Holman, Bob Gardiner, Jack Kesby, Albert Peters

Arthur Hopkins, a Dunkirk veteran, is our Welfare guy, visiting the sick etc and also, assisted by Gilly, runs our raffles. It's just a pity that his wife is always winning!

Wally Stokes, who once looked after General Craddock in the days when officers were mounted, is, at 91, our senior soldier. Wally still marches, albeit with a brand new knee, and is the lucky recipient of the "President's Pint" whenever they meet.

At the younger end of the branch we have Kenya veterans, Jack Kesby and Bob Gardiner, both of whose only claim to fame is that have two lovely wives who make a great job of selling tickets on Bingo nights-who can refuse them?

Our Association Secretary, Major Dennis Bradley BEM, lives locally and has just handed over his chain of office as Hythe's Mayor. What an excellent job he made of it, especially his fund raising for our young people. We look forward very much to his membership of our branch over the coming years.

On a less happier note our indefatigable Chairman, Jimmy Worts, has suffered a stroke and is now fighting battles all over again to get himself back into

harness. One of Hythe's great characters, he is renowned for his plant and book sales in support of the RNLI and the concern locally for his well being does him and his family proud. The help that Jimmy has given myself as Secretary and Treasurer over the last 20 years has been immeasurable and I look forward to reporting to him again soon.

To everybody we send our best wishes and, if you are looking for an active upbeat branch, then you could do well to visit us on the second Thursday in the month at the RBL, Hythe.

SCM

(Stuart, many, many thanks for these notes. I know how busy you are and am delighted that somehow you have found time to provide them. You have deservedly praised several of your committee members. Your members as well as many of us outside your branch are only too aware of the sterling work you do for your branch. The Editor).

CANTERBURY BRANCH

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

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

Meeting: Last Thursday of month at 20.00hrs.

To start these notes may I, on behalf of our President, Chairman and all members of the Branch express our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the late John Couchman. Our thoughts are also with his comrades from Sittingbourne Branch. His sudden death came as a great shock and he will be sadly missed by all who knew him. Our Branch Standard, along with members attended his funeral on August 18th.

At the meeting in May members stood in a minute's silence in memory of the late Dennis Hemsley who was a member of our branch although he lived in Sussex and also in the memory of the late Mrs Margaret Toms.

On Sunday 11th May the branch made its annual pilgrimage to Ypres where the "Cats Festival" was being held. On our arrival in Ypres we enjoyed a hot lunch at a local restaurant and in the afternoon moved on to the festival itself.

At 18.30 hours we attended a service in St. George's Church and Sid Pulman presented to the church a

special remembrance kneeler which had been beautifully decorated by Phyllis Daniels. After the service we enjoyed some refreshment in the Royal British Legion Hall and our thanks go to the Vicar of St. George's and his staff for making the arrangements.

Later we attended the Menin Gate ceremony along with our standard, carried by Sammy Supple, along with the Canterbury City standard carried by Brian Reynard and the Royal Artillery standard carried by John Bishop.

Our most grateful thanks go to Harry Crooks and John Bishop for all of their hard work in organising the visit for us.

On Saturday 17th May we held our Annual Dinner at the Canterbury Golf Club which was well supported by members and their wives. We had an excellent dinner, energetic dancing and a very impressive raffle. A really good time was had by all who attended and how the liquid refreshment flowed! The "Silent Toast" was taken after dinner by the menfolk and the "Albuhera Immortal Memory" was given by Major Alan Marchant. The Vice Chairman, George Croxford BEM, on behalf of everyone, thanked all who had been involved in the organisation of the dinner. The wine at dinner was donated by John Lane and the port for the toasts by Nobby Clarke. We thank both of them for their generosity.

Our coffee morning on 24th May was poorly attended and it seems that this venture has now run its course. It has been decided to look for other ideas to raise funds for the branch.

The holiday to Italy by members and their wives was a great success and they already asking for a repeat performance in 2004, so it must have been good. All who went have asked me to thank, on their behalf, Alan Marchant his wife and family for the time and effort that they expended in ensuring everyone's enjoyment.

On June 7th some of our members and their wives, with members from other branches, made a day trip to Doullens in France. This was a very interesting and enjoyable day and we are looking forward to the next "Journal Trip". Whilst making a detour to Cité Europe on the way home a certain wheelchair bound Deric King tried unsuccessfully to negotiate an escalator. Now none of us can recall ever seeing a wheel chair on an escalator before, neither have the French it would seem. However in the ensuing, panic, pantomime, call it what you will with Deric tottering

on the top of this very steep moving staircase several of our branch came to the rescue. The rescue would have been speedier if the first on the scene had not been struck in a rather sensitive part of his anatomy by one of Deric's crutches and the rest of us had not been overtaken with hysterics. It is difficult to see what one is doing when one is crying so much. Anyway Deric was saved from an uncertain fate and undoubted arrest, an international incident was avoided and the rest of us, less the injured one, soon recovered. For heavens sake keep him in Ramsgate next time!!

The band concert, held at Leros Barracks on the 14th June was really quite excellent. The Kohmia Band performed to its usual very high standard and the buffet was very good indeed. Our thanks to all for making it such a memorable evening, especially Ramsgate Branch for organising the raffle.

The first Sunday in August and its "Reunion Time" again. We were pleased to be joined this year by the Denmark Branch who led the parade. Each year our parade numbers less and less, but what we lack in quantity we more than make up for in quality.

In the afternoon the Denmark Branch formally handed over their standard to our branch for safe keeping. The standard will be paraded with pride by us on future Buffs Sunday's and on Remembrance Sundays. We are so proud of being asked by them to look after their standard as we have such a good and strong relationship with the Denmark branch.

On the previous day, Saturday August 2nd, the Danish members attended the 11 o'clock ceremony at The Warrior's Chapel. Their standard was on parade and Tom Jensen had the honour of Turning the Page. This special event was very well supported by our branch members and also others from Ramsgate. Following the ceremony the Danes were entertained by the Association to lunch in the Regimental Tent at the County Cricket Ground during which our friends, The Kohima Band played.

Our sick list at the time of going to press includes Jessie Matthews, who is still in hospital after suffering a major stroke and Peter Bartlett who has been in hospital for an operation but is now recovering at home. We wish all members of our Association who are unwell, a quick and speedy recovery.

With best wishes to all members, their wives and families from us all here in "The Holy City".

HD

141st Regt. (7th Buffs) R. A. C.

(*I am very grateful indeed to Geoff R Kirk for this article as it goes a long way to clear up any confusion there may be as to how a Buffs battalion came to be serving as an armoured unit. 141 Regt. RAC were a unique unit and enjoyed an enviable reputation with all of the units they supported. The Editor.*)

The 7th Battalion The Buffs was initially formed in Canterbury on the 4th July 1940 under command of Lieut Colonel T.R. Reid MC., The Buffs. The Adjutant was Captain A.S.K. Anderson and the Quarter Master Lt. F Marsh. They were joined by the following officers 2/Lt J.H. Dean, 2 Lt F.E. Barret and Lt. H.V. Duffy and on the 5th July 1940 by Lt. H. Luker, Lt. L.E.Glazier, 2 Lt. J.D. Allan. 2Lt. J.E.S. Carlisle, Lt. M.P.E. Harrison and Lt. C.J. Bremmer MC.

On the 7th July the Battalion proceeded to Maidenhead with a nucleus strength of 11 Officers and 68 O.R's. On 17th July and 24th July intakes of 205 and 210 were received respectively. These were followed by a further intake of 428 on the 26th July bringing the battalion up to a strength of 23 Officers and 958 O.R's.

On 26th August an advance party of 3 Officers and 50 OR's moved to St Germans in Cornwall with the rest of the battalion following on 28th August. The battalion was split up with HQ., 'A' and 'B' Companies, based at Fort Scraedon, 'C' Company at Fort Tregantle and 'D' company at Fort Wrinkle.

There followed the usual occupation of coastal defence against the anticipated German invasion, and on the 4th September a Fire Party was sent into Plymouth to help fight the fires caused by enemy bombing

On the 22nd of October we suffered our first casualty, L/Cpl Westall stepped on an anti tank mine.

For the following year the 7th Battalion was deployed in defence of the Devon coast from Plymouth to Dartmouth

In October 1941, the 7th Battalion moved to Eastbourne and was re-designated the 141 Regt.RAC (The Buffs). Lt.Col T.R.Reid MC wished us to carry on our connection with The Buffs and to retain the Buffs cap badge, but was told that this could not be allowed as all armoured regiments had silver cap badges, so we were all issued with a white metal Buff cap badge. All the tank crews were dispersed, according to tank trades for training and then moved



**'C' Company 7th Bn. The Buffs
Bigbury on Sea 1940**

Back Row:

**Major, Bull, Drew, Bishop, Edwin, Halson, Butler,
Scoltock, Gin, Davis, Franklin, Plamer, Kinnon,
Gore, Gin?, Harding**

Middle Row:

**Rutter, Burkitt, Hart, Gale, Mills, Fray, Murphy,
Dunn,**

Front Row:

Maisy, Reid, Homes, Newman, Gibbs, Grant.

to Eastwell Park near Ashford were they carried out further training and schemes until March 1944 when they were designated as a tank flamethrower regiment and started a more intense type of training on crocodiles.

"C" Squadron left Eastwell Park on the 30th April 1944 for the assembly area of Southampton ready for the invasion of France. 13 & 15 Troop took part in the assault on the Normandy coast on 'D' Day at H hour +45 and H hour+ 35minutes respectively, the time variation was caused by the time of the tide.

The rest of the Regiment soon followed but unfortunately we were never allowed to operate as a regiment and only on two occasions at squadron strength. This was necessitated by the British and Canadian army's demand on our Regimental services, we were the only flamethrower regiment in the whole of the Normandy campaign. The dispersal was even greater after the breakout, while "A" & "C" Squadrons were assisting in the capture of the Channel Ports and the big guns that shelled Dover, "B" Squadron were assisting the American Army to capture the Napoleonic forts around Brest. This dispersal was continuous until the regiment assembled at Rottenburg, Germany, in June 1945.

We lost our tanks in August 1945 and moved to Schleswig Holstein where we were guarding 250,000 German prisoners. In November 1945 the Regiment was disbanded and all the members dispersed to other regiments to await demob.

From 'D' Day onwards we lost many of our comrades and they are buried in 17 different Commonwealth War Grave Cemeteries throughout North West Europe. To those with military knowledge the title would seem a little incongruous in that the RAC is armour and the Buffs is infantry but that is the title on the headstones of all the members of our Regiment. There are two exceptions. those with no known grave in Normandy are on the Bayeux Memorial, Panel 10 Column 3 and are listed under 7th Battalion The Buffs. with no mention of 141 RAC(The Buffs).

The other is trooper Albert Lewis who has the RAC Mailed Fist on his headstone, but no regiment. I queried this with the curator in Grosbeck Museum, where they have recorded all the names of those who were Killed in Action from 'D' Day to the end of the war and I was told that Albert was in 152 Regt. RAC. I carried out research at the PRO and discovered that 152 RAC never left England. In the war diaries of 141 Regt. RAC (The Buffs) dated 8th March 1945, both troopers Anthony Uff and Albert Lewis are mentioned by name as having been killed while attempting to recover their tank. Lt. Douglas Peacock was in charge of the burial party and Charlie Brooks MM was in the burial party, and both remembered the occasion. The CWGC have now corrected the information on Albert Lewis but will not replace the Headstone as it states RAC.

Such was the spirit of the Regiment and thanks to the OPA (Old Playboys Association) and the Regimental Association, we are still a representative organisation with 71 of the original members with whom we are still in touch, plus almost as many widows, who play an important part in our organisation. We usually "Turn The Page" in Canterbury about the 1st Wednesday in April, the date is dependent on the date for Easter.

(Geoff, many thanks for taking the time to write this article. Readers may like to know that a book "In at the Finish" by J. G. Smith was published in 1995 by Minerva Press. Trooper Smith was in "C" Squadron 141st Regt RAC (The Buffs) and his book is a worms-eye view of the of the campaign of 141 Regt. in North West Europe. It is an excellent read but may now be out of print. You can always try your local library. The Editor).

THE CANTERBURY REUNION

3rd AUGUST 2003

Sunday 3rd August was a very hot day and for once we did not have to worry about the weather. The branches mustered at Longport, under the watchful eye of WO1 (RSM) Whyte, 1st Bn. PWRR, at the appointed time. With the arrival of the Sittingbourne Branch came the sad news that one of their members, John Couchman, had suffered a fatal heart attack on the coach en route to Canterbury. A very sad start to the day.

This was a special reunion for several reasons- it would probably be the last time the reunion would be held at Howe Barracks; the Denmark Branch were parading their standard for the last time and we were honoured to welcome André Coilliott and representatives of Le Souvenir Français who had travelled from the Doullens/Arras area to join us for the day. You can read more about André in the report on our trip to Doullens and the unveiling of the memorial to 5th Battalion The Buffs at La Herlière.



Le Souvenir Français-Arras

Once again we were led to the Cathedral by The Kohima Band and Corps of Drums. What a terrific band they are and how lucky we are to get so much support from them. Our thanks must go to the Commanding Officer of 3rd Bn. PWRR, Bandmaster Ian Harding and the members of the band and drums.

Pride of place was given to the Denmark Branch to lead the parade and how smart they were too.

The service of remembrance followed tradition lines Major (retd.) Patrick Gwilliam read the lesson and the Chaplain General gave the address. The guest of honour was the Lord Mayor of Canterbury with the Lady Mayoress.



At the Warrior's Chapel after the service. On the left Colonel Champion, The Lord Mayor, WO1(RSM) Whyte, John Ferneyhough, Horace Cook and Bill Pinder. Facing: Bendt Ole Arndt, Harry Crooks and The Chaplain General

The March Past was led by The Denmark Branch (pictured below) and the Lord Mayor took the salute.



By the time everyone arrived at Howe Barracks the temperature was even higher and finding a shady corner was the order of the day. During lunch The

Kohima Band played and entertained a very hot and thirsty audience.

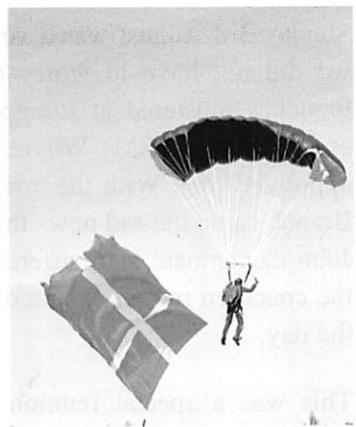


Shade and a cool drink were the order of the day

There then followed a small ceremony when the Colour Party of the Denmark Branch and the Colour Party of the Canterbury Branch, under Major Dennis Bradley BEM, marched onto the green in front of the band. With due ceremony Dennis, on behalf of the Association, received the Standard of the Denmark Branch and handed it to a Standard Bearer of Canterbury Branch for safe keeping. This was a very

touching moment and, hardly surprisingly, there were a few damp eyes.

The Spitfire Tigers then performed their parachute display, impressive as always and highly professional. Finally the Kohima Band and Corps of Drums Beat Retreat bringing to an end our last reunion to be held at Howe Barracks.



Our thanks are due to so many people, heading that list is Major Dennis Bradley, Henry Delo and the Reunion Committee, WO1 (RSM) Whyte 1st Bn. PWRR for acting as Parade Marshall and his support team. The Kohima Band & Corps of Drums, John Bushell for running the Shop, The NAAFI and The Spitfire Tigers.

Here's to next year, where? as yet no one knows but after all it is not the venue that makes a reunion so special -it is the people. Wherever it is- try and be there.



Major Dennis Bradley seen here (on the left) accepting the Denmark Branch Standard and (on the right) handing it over to Canterbury Branch Standard Bearer, Maurice Samson.



THE LAST PARADE

The Denmark Branch decided, a few weeks ago, that they would attend the Canterbury Reunion as a branch and parade their standard for the last time. The group arrived on Friday 1st August, some to stay for just three days, the majority for a full week.

A special programme had been arranged for them covering the Reunion weekend. At 11.00 am on Saturday 2nd August a unique "Turning of the Page" ceremony was held at the Warrior's Chapel.

Tom Jensen supported by his fellow Danes and colleagues from Canterbury and Ramsgate Branches turned the page in The Book of Life



Tom Jensen Turning the Page

At 11am the Canterbury Bell was rung by a Navy Veteran, the Colour Party dipped their colour and Tom stepped forward and Turned the Page.

At the end of the ceremony there was time for quiet reflection, a closer look at the Chapel itself and then the group were taken to the Regimental Tent at Kent County Cricket Ground for a celebration lunch.

As Kent had succumbed the day before there was no cricket but the atmosphere within the tent was great. With the regimental Silver, including the Latham Centrepiece, on display and with The Kohima Band playing during lunch, what more atmosphere could one ask for.

After lunch toasts were proposed to Her Majesty The Queen and Queen Margrethe of Denmark after which toast all remained standing whilst the band played the Danish Hymn, Guds Fred Med Vore Dode. It was the third verse of this hymn that was chanted by Danish patriots outside the Shellhuset, Gestapo Headquarters, whilst grillings, tortures and executions of loyal Danes were being carried out within.

Whilst coffee was being served Bendt Ole Arndt presented Colonel Champion with a commemorative plaque with the names of those Denmark Branch members present.

Tom Jensen then made a short, and emotive, speech on behalf of the Denmark Branch thanking Andrew Breining for all his hard work for the branch over the years and in particular for arranging the trip to Canterbury. The Danes then rose and drank a toast to Andrew whilst singing the Danish equivalent of "For he's a jolly good fellow."

All too soon the party was over and we all went our separate ways prior to meeting on the following day.



Bandmaster Ian Harding talking with ex Bandsman Erik Jorgensen



At the Warrior's Chapel



**Left to Right: Erik Jorgensen, Knud Passer Iversen, Kaj Madsen, Mogens Birch Neilson,
Tom Jensen, Kay Weeke, Bendt Ole Arndt., Andrew Breining.**

CANTERBURY BRANCH TRIP TO ITALY

By

Major (Retd). Alan Marchant

It all started with a casual conversation on one of our branch coach outings;

"You go to Rimini a lot then "?"

"Yes we have family there".

"Good then why not take some of us next time"?

"Well-----"

Several months later whilst waiting for the coach to take us to the airport I am wondering for the umpteenth time what will go wrong, what have I forgotten, and above all why didn't I pretend to be asleep that time on the coach?

In fact as it turned out nothing did go wrong, I certainly forgot many things but nobody seemed to notice and if I had pretended to sleep my wife and I would have missed one of our best holidays ever.

Twenty members and wives gathered to secure their places on the hotel terrace after an uneventful flight and transfer. Although it was fairly late in the evening the group settled down to the serious business of checking the bar prices, which proved to be a pleasant surprise even if the results the next morning were both unpleasant and predictable.

There were two more pleasant surprises the next day, first in a land famous for non event breakfasts our hosts produced a very substantial meal and second all our "territory securing" the previous night proved a waste of time as the hotel was exclusively ours for the next five days.

After a free day to explore the shops beaches and bars of Rimini the following day was an organised coach trip. The day started with a visit to the Coriano War Cemetery. The cemetery is near the site of the battle of Coriano/Saviagno Ridge where the 1st. Buffs played a notable role in clearing a way through to the River Po. As with all cemeteries it was kept immaculate but the setting in the Italian countryside made this one particularly beautiful and poignant. Two Italian campaign veterans, Ken Vine and Derek Rumsley laid a wreath together in an informal but moving ceremony.

After removing ties and jackets (the weather was very hot and sunny) the group continued to the castle town of Gradara and then the shops of San Marino. On the



**Coriano Cemetery wreath layers,
K Vine and D Rumsley**

way back to Rimini the group stopped at a country restaurant famous for its traditional country cooking. The limitless supply of food, free wine and "grappa" led to another predictably remorseful morning.

The next day was a free day but a tireless group led by George and Tina Croxford decided to try the local buses and visit the pleasant inland town of Santarcangelo. Intrigued and not a little worried that half my group were heading off to a place they insisted on calling St. Agnes, Sylvia and I arranged a lift expecting the worse. However we found them wandering around the market with all the assurance of "Italian contadini" and all made it back to the hotel in time for lunch.

The free days that followed soon established a routine, the "culture vultures" amongst us, John and Jan Bishop were off viewing masterpieces, the beach bums, Harry and Shirley Cooks off to the beach, the rest of us going from lunch to siesta to dinner with only occasional coffee breaks between. With everyone meeting up on "Buff's Terrace" in the evening to discuss the events of the day.

Sunday meant an early start for a coach trip to Venice, not the best of planning, it was a public

holiday and Venice was particularly crowded, noisy, smelly and sticky. However the sights were, as always, worth any discomforts and one or two members even managed the bank loan inducing coffee on St. Marks Square.

The next and final day there was just time for another excellent hotel lunch, a graceful surrender of our terrace to the incoming Italians and a sad farewell to the hotel family with whom we had all become firm friends. To avoid hanging around for the evening flight the coach took us first to Ravenna but unfortunately the bank holiday traffic meant that the time there was inadequate to do the town justice, perhaps next year?

"Next year" was a phrase that I kept hearing from the second day of the holiday that I did my very best to ignore. After two or three days of this catch phrase I

had to concede that there might be an Italian trip next year provided that:

- (a) Maurice Samson does not fall asleep on the coach before I can finish any sentence starting "In the Year ---".
- (b) Noreen Rumsley lets me, or at least someone else, get to the bar first, just for once.
- (c) Bob Cook stops discussing the stars aided by the magnification of the bottom of a whisky glass.

In fact deposits are already coming in for next years trip: there is an old saying that if you have had a near perfect holiday don't go back but hopefully we can still improve on this year's.

Alan Marchant



Coriano

L to R: H Crooks, D Rumsley, K Vine, G Croxford, J Bishop, R Cook, A Marchant, M Sampson



The Ladies at Coriano Cemetery

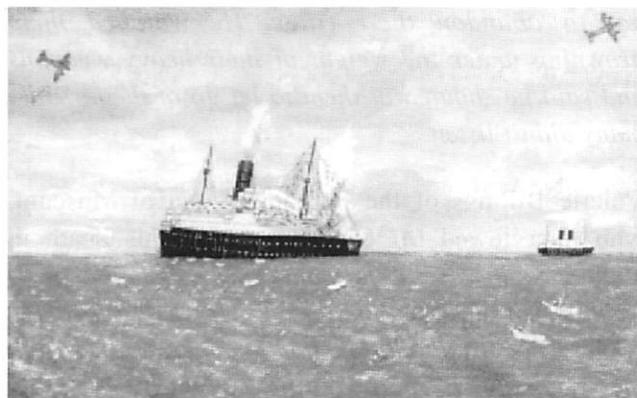
THE SINKING OF H.M.T. SS. LANCASTRIA

17th June 1940.

(In the last issue an article on the sinking of the SS Lancastria by Alan Benson was published. There has been quite a response to that article including a lady whose father went down with the ship and until she read the article had no idea what had happened to him. Alan has written again enclosing a copy of a painting which he painted of the ship just before she went down. I am delighted to be able to publish a copy of that painting together with extracts from a couple of the letters received. The Editor)

Alan Benson writes:

"Thank you for publishing my brief account concerning the SS Lancastria. I did not think you would have space for it otherwise it could have been a little longer. I am enclosing a copy of the painting. I am afraid I was not competent enough to show the details of the machine gunning and bombing. This is exactly as I remember the scene as I was swimming away. The next sight I had of her was her turning completely over. It is impossible to imagine how horrific it must have been for those poor souls trapped inside her."



There has always been some dispute over the actual numbers on board at the time of the sinking but I believe that about 2,500 survived. The other ship shown in the painting is the SS Oronsay who had slipped her mooring earlier and had left just in time."

George Francis BEM, a member of the HMT Lancastria Association writes:

"Ken Clarke an ex Royal West Kent man gave me a copy of your last issue of The Journal.

I was present on the 17th June 1940 on board the Oronsay. A member of the RASC, I had arrived at St.

Nazaire on the morning of the 17th June. Along with many others I eventually boarded a ferry and was taken out to the Lancastria which lay several miles offshore. On our way out we were attacked by a German plane which off-loaded a few bombs which missed. As we drew alongside The Lancastria a cry went up- they could take no more. How lucky for me. Instead we were taken to another boat of similar size, the Oronsay. Netting was flung over the side which we climbed and I found a space one deck down and made myself as comfortable as possible still clutching my rifle and lifebelt. After about an hour the Luftwaffe arrived and started to bomb us.

Amidst all of the noise there was an especially loud explosion and our boat bounced violently in the water. One chap took fright and started to shout "We've been hit". As he charged up the companionway stairs a sergeant hit him hard and knocked him back down. "Stand still everybody" he shouted. Everyone did as they were told and the bouncing of the boat eventually subsided. That Sergeant had undoubtedly prevented a stampede.

A group of us went onto the top deck of the Oronsay and assisted survivors from the Lancastria up the scrambling nets which had been slung over the side. But our Captain eventually had to make the decision to sail. We had ourselves been hit. The bomb had destroyed the bridge killing quite a few crew members and soldiers. It also caused the ship to list to port and under these conditions we finally limped into Plymouth.

On arrival at Plymouth, we were met on the dockside by cheering crowds, but on board we were quiet. We knew what we had left behind. Salvation Army girls came amongst us taking our names and address in order to send a telegram home saying we were safe.

(George also sent in some very interesting quotes, photographs and articles about the sinking and about The Lancastria Association. Some are published below. The Editor)

(Captain Rudolph Sharp, Master of HMT Lancastria)

"I was in my cabin when the officer on watch gave the alarm. I immediately went to the bridge and had just reached the wheelhouse when the ship was struck by a salvo of four bombs, which cut off all

communications and started fires fore and aft. I did not even see the aeroplane. The four bombs, which were all high explosive, struck the ship simultaneously in the most vital parts, one went down the funnel, the other three striking No 4, No 3 and No 2 hatches, shattering the hatch boards, which were covered with steel plates, timbers and ladders"

(Corporal Sidney Gaze on board Oronsay)

"Suddenly there was a tremendous explosion. The Lancastria, which was just getting under way, had been hit by several bombs and was already sinking rapidly. It was a catastrophic scene. In addition to the thousands of troops, many refugees, nurses and medical staff went down with the ship. We managed to pick up considerable numbers of survivors before leaving St. Nazaire and heading for home". The Oronsay, despite losing her bridge, navigational equipment and charts, steamed for England with the Captain using a pocket compass, a sketch map of France and using the manually operated auxiliary steering.

Churchill wrote in "Their finest hour"- "*I forbade its publication (of the sinking of HMT Lancastria) saying "The newspapers have got quite enough disaster for today at least. Events crowded in upon us black and so quickly that I forgot to lift the ban".*

The Ship

Launched on 31st May 1920, from the William Beardmore yard on the River Clyde, the elegant lines of the 16,143 tonnes SS Tyrrhenia joined the Cunard Fleet. Offering 580 luxury cabins, she was to serve on the Hamburg-New York and London-New York routes. Later she served as a cruise ship in the Mediterranean and Norwegian seas. In March 1924, against all sea-faring tradition, her name was changed to Lancastria, as American passengers found the original name too hard to pronounce.

In April 1940, the Lancastria was requisitioned as a troopship and immediately saw action during the evacuation of troops from Norway. On her return she was loaded with approximately 1,500 tonnes of fuel oil at Glasgow before heading for Liverpool, where she was due for a refit. Her crew were sent on leave but were quickly recalled, as the Lancastria was to take part in Operation Ariel. She steamed to Plymouth from where she sailed, for the last time, to France.

(*The above article has been taken from the Web Site-RMS Lancastria and written by Flight Sergeant David Curry*)

Frank Clements - Seaman, Photographer and Rescuer

In 1940 Frank Clements was a 30-year-old volunteer on board the HMS Highlander, a destroyer that was being used to ferry troops from Saint-Nazaire harbour to the anchored Lancastria.

Navy personnel were not allowed to take cameras on board but as a volunteer in the naval stores, he managed to keep his camera with him wherever he went.

Frank Clements' younger brother Arthur Clements, now 84, says: "*Photographs were his be all and end all. He was a photographic nut. He took thousands of 'prints' as he called them of his war experiences all over the world.*"

But as well as taking pictures he also played his part in the rescue operation, downing his camera to help survivors. "*He did all he could,*" recalls his brother. "*He even pulled a little baby out of the sea. He talked afterwards about the soldiers who had been ordered not to abandon their rifles. He watched them drowning under the weight of their heavy weapons and said he shouted at them to let go of them. Sadly many didn't listen.*"

Valerie Billings of the Portsmouth Naval Museum, who interviewed Mr Clements before his death in 1999, says *it was an enormous stroke of luck that he was able to take the photographs. It was an amazing coincidence, firstly that he had a camera on board at all. Secondly, he had no film for the camera but happened to meet a sailor on his way to Saint-Nazaire who swapped him a camera film for a pair of socks from the NAAFI stores and it was with that film that he took these pictures.*"

When he returned to the UK, Mr Clements handed over prints of his photographs to a man he met in a pub. The pictures were then sold to the press, although Mr Clements never made any money from them. The photographs are priceless "

Robert Miller of the Lancastria Association states: -

The pictures have now become invaluable to the Lancastria Association in their campaign to make the story of the doomed ship more widely known.

The Association's Robert Miller, who lead a pilgrimage to Saint-Nazaire on the 60th anniversary of the disaster in June 2000, says:

"The photographs are extremely important, priceless in fact, to us and to the whole fabric of the story. If it wasn't for the fact that Frank Clements was on board the Highlander and that he was a keen photographer, there would be no pictures of the disaster whatsoever."

Should any of our readers have been a survivor of this terrible disaster or have witnessed it and requires more information or would like to join The HMT Lancastria Association then please contact:- Mr. Robert Miller, 2 Ash Road, Sandwich, Kent CT13 9JA Tel: 01304 619095

Printed below are some of the photos taken by Frank Clements. I am indebted to The Lancastria Association for their kind permission to reproduce them. The Editor).



The Highlander



Troops arriving at St. Nazaire



The final moments. Those that had yet to abandon ship can be seen on the sinking ship



Queuing soldiers, patiently waiting their turn to board the Highlander to be taken out to the Lancastria



Some of the lucky survivors being transferred whilst under fire from German aircraft.

PHOTO GALLERY



SOMME PLATOON

THE DEPOT, THE QUEEN'S OWN ROYAL WEST KENT REGIMENT

Front row L-R: unknown; L Cpl Pete Tite; Cpl Rex Swan; Sgt Woolger; 2nd Lt 'Ham' Witty; unknown; unknown; unknown

2nd row L-R: Mick Ringrose; unknown; Martin Roberts; John Howcroft; Pete Rooke; Pete Trebell; M Hayes; Keith Davis; unknown; Richard (Dick) Mummery

3rd row L-R: unknown; Mick Townsend; unknown; Johnny Troy; Joe Broadley; unknown; Brian Kirby; J. Lewis; Dave Riddell; unknown; Brian Loney

4th row L-R: Frank Tuck; unknown; unknown; Alan Smith; unknown; Bill Lambert; Trevor Spicer

Back row L-R: unknown; unknown; Mick Rose; Brian Toon; Phil Sheridan; Arthur Stonham; Pete Spicer

Unknowns include: R. Edgehall?; R. Macain?; Eric Weston; ? Priest; B.A.J. Baldry; Bill Lawrence; G. Ashcroft?; M. Lyndsall; ? Stevens; ? Burden; M. Tye?

Can you help fill in the gaps or fit a name to a face? Please let the editor know

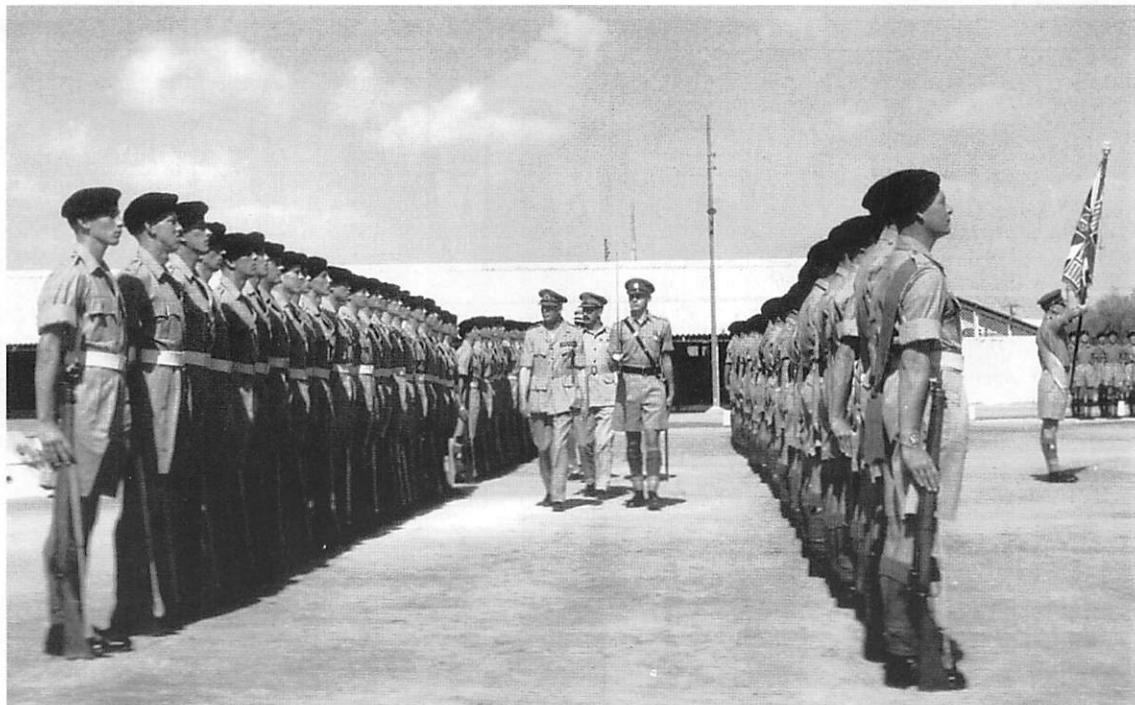
PHOTO GALLERY



Phyllis Daniels, widow of the late Ginger Daniels, seen here presenting a kneeler to St George's Church, during the visit of Canterbury Branch to Ypres on 11th May 2003



Lt. Col. E L C Edlmann MC seen here greeting HRH The Duke of Gloucester on the occasion of the Duke's visit to the 1st Bn Buffs in Aden. The Guard of Honour can be seen in the back ground



H.R.H. The Duke of Gloucester pictured here inspecting the Guard of Honour of 1 Buffs at Singapore Lines, 1958

The right hand marker seen here is C.S.M. Ben Lyons, 'A' Company

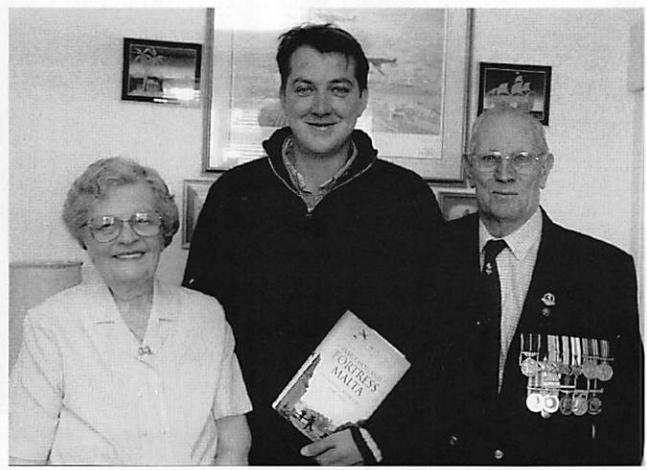
PHOTO GALLERY



"It's over to you"

Captain Bob Wells wishing WO 1 (RSM) Whyte every success as his replacement as RSM of 1st Bn. PWRR,

Congratulations to you both from all of us on your recent promotion



James Holland, the author of Fortress Malta (see Notice Board), pictured here with Mr & Mrs Frank Rixon BEM.



Pictured here at the Canterbury Reunion. The delegation from Le Souvenir Français- Arras et Environs. André Coilliot is centre back row.

PHOTO GALLERY



Harry Crooks seen here escorting **Deric King** and **Sue** back to the coach after a near international incident at the top of the escalator in Cité Europe Shopping Centre. Who in their right minds tries to push a wheel chair down an escalator. Ask Henry he should know!!



Lionel Dombert seen here with one of the guns which was supposed to defend Singapore Island.
(See website page for more details of Lionel)



L/Cpl. Lee Andrews, Sgt Roly Coleman (centre) and Paul Fleming waiting to board the plane for Paul's sponsored jump.

THE LAST POST

Major J.D.B. Bailey MBE,

QUEEN'S OWN ROYAL WEST KENT REGIMENT

John Bailey who died peacefully in his home in Godalming, Surrey on 14th June 2003 was one of the last surviving officers of the 1st Battalion Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment that, as part of the BEF, faced the onslaught of 'Blitzkrieg' in France and Belgium in 1940.

He was born on 14th November 1916, at a time when his father, a Captain in the RAMC, was engaged in the battle of Beaumont-Hamel on the Somme. Consequently, he was given the middle name of Beaumont. He was educated at Bradfield and Clare College Cambridge before gaining his commission in 1938. Following an initial stay at Shorncliffe he followed the Battalion to France as part of the BEF in September 1939. In an attempt to stem the German advance and to assist Operation Dynamo, the Battalion was moved to Oudenarde and by 12th May 1940 over a third of the officers and men had been killed. In his memoirs he wrote '....at 4.30am on 31st May 1940, near Armentieres the Adjutant gathered the remaining officers and declared that there had been a military disaster and that all should make their way to the coast in small groups.' Unlike the many fortunates at Dunkirk the majority of the men and officers of the Battalion were captured. John spent five years as a Prisoner of War at Laufen, Posen, Biberach, Warburg, Eichstaett and Moosburg. Following the alleged mistreatment of German prisoners after the raid on Dieppe, he was placed in handcuffs for seven months.

His time as a prisoner was not altogether wasted though, for he used it to further his linguistic capabilities. By the end of the war he had a sound knowledge of Russian and Chinese. He even earned the nickname of 'Pushkin' on account of his lecturing on Russian poetry. Following the War, he went on to gain a Master's Degree from SOAS in Modern Chinese. Language became a lifelong interest; eventually he achieved a solid grasp of Japanese, Chinese, German, French, Russian, Turkish and Italian. In the evenings after work, he would often be found listening to Radio Moscow whilst reading a Japanese or Chinese dictionary from cover to cover.

After the War, he held a number of international postings including time in Hong Kong and Australia working as part of the Headquarter Staff. In 1954, he

was posted to Austria on attachment to the Middlesex Regiment from where he was sent to GHQ in Singapore. In 1959, he was appointed LO to SOXMIS in Buende, West Germany. Until his retirement in 1971, he held a number of intelligence appointments in the MOD, though he continued to work as a civil servant in the same capacity until 1976 maintaining his interest in Chinese and Russian.

He is survived by his wife Margaret Ruth (nee Appleton) whom he married in 1946, five children and thirteen grandchildren. His son, commissioned into the Royal Artillery is currently serving as the Director of Doctrine and Development in the rank of Major-General and one his grandsons is a Platoon Commander in the Black Watch.

In Pensioner Sgt. Leonard (Tom) Atkins



Tom Atkins passed away in hospital on 16th April 2003 aged 75. Tom was born in Chiswick, London on 25th August 1927, and enlisted in the army in 1945 and was posted to The Royal Fusiliers, which he joined in Germany. He remained in BAOR until 1950 when he volunteered to go to the Far East. Here he was posted to The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment who were at that time in Malaya. In 1953 he was posted back to UK and there followed postings to BAOR, Cyprus and Aden. After a period as an instructor in the UK he returned to Aden in 1961 and to Cyprus in 1962. His final period of service was spent with the Territorial Army in East Kent and he was discharged after 22 years service in 1967.

In civilian life Tom emigrated to Australia where he worked in the Postal Service until 1983. Later he returned to the UK and, after a period working for Hornsea Pottery, he retired in 1992. He joined The Royal Hospital Chelsea in 1998 and assisted in the Royal Hospital shop.

Tom will be missed by all who knew him.

Doris May Herbert

We have been advised by David Brown, Doris's great nephew, that she passed away in July. Doris was the widow of George Ephram Herbert who served in The Buffs. Doris was a supporter of Sittingbourne Branch

and attended many of their functions. Our sincere condolences are sent to the family.

Ivor Williams



Ivor Williams passed away on the 8th June 2003. Ivor was born in Ramsgate in 1924 and joined 5th Battalion The Buffs (TA) in 1939 with several friends and two cousins. When the Battalion was mobilised in August 1939 Ivor, with the others, found himself guarding the railway tunnels at Dover. In early 1940 it was discovered that he was in fact only fifteen and had joined at

fourteen. He was labelled "immature" and was sent to a Searchlight Regiment R.A. with which he served in England and North Africa. Later he transferred to the Military Police and with them served throughout the Italian campaign as part of 78th Division, which included his old battalion, 5th Buffs.

After the war Ivor married Jenny and in the late 1950's they emigrated to Vancouver, Canada where they stayed for 10 years before returning to the UK.

A very tall man, over 6'3", Ivor was a loyal member of Ramsgate Branch for nearly 40 years and was a regular attender until illness prevented him.

He is survived by his wife Jenny, his two children, Sharon and David and his two grandchildren to whom we send our sincerest condolences.

THE BUFFS COTTAGES

The 4 Buff's Cottages were purpose built for members of the East Kent Regiment (The Buffs) who had been disabled in the South African War. The first two cottages were opened in 1902 in memory of H.H Prince Christian Victor of Schleswig Holstein. The second two cottages were opened in 1906. In the entrance hall to these cottages there is a copper plaque with the following inscription:

**Erected in memory of
Lt. Colonel Bryan Francis Holme
Late Commanding
1st Bn. The Buffs
who died at Shwebo, Burma
3rd August 1902**

in the second home the inscription reads:-

**Erected in Memory of
The Officers, Non Commissioned Officers and
Privates, 2nd Bn The Buffs,
Who died for their country
in South Africa, 1899-1902**

A tablet on the front of each pair of the homes bears the Regimental Crest of The Buffs with the year 1902 and 1906 respectively. The first two occupants in 1902, were Private Savin of Swanscombe who lost the use of both hands as a result of his wounds received during the attack on Belmont on November 19th 1900. The other original occupant was Private Benton of Gravesend who was wounded at Brakenlaagte on

October 30th 1901 and lost the use of his leg. As a result of the care and kindness which he received Benton was able to leave after three years and earn his own livelihood.

Over the past 100 years many ex members of the Regiment, or their widows, have enjoyed the security, comfort and financial benefits offered by these cottages. Now however the administration of regimental housing has become progressively more difficult as resources diminish year by year and it was felt by the Executive Committee of the Regimental Association that, following the example set by other regiments the properties, once refurbished, should be handed over to Haigh Homes.

Douglas Haigh Memorial Homes - now abbreviated to Haigh Homes- is a charitable housing association, founded in 1928, in memory of Field Marshall Earl Haigh who cared deeply and worked ceaselessly to alleviate the housing problems facing ex-Servicemen and their families after the first World War.

On Tuesday 24th June at the Royal British Legion Home, Maurice House, Callis Court Road, Broadstairs, the Buff's Cottages were handed over by Major (Retd.) Dennis Bradley BEM, Regimental Association Secretary, to the Mr John Parry, Chairman of Trustees of Haigh Homes in the presence of Major General P V R Besgrove CBE, Director of Haigh Homes, invited dignitaries and the current occupants of the cottages.



Major Dennis Bradley BEM handing over the keys to the cottages to Mr. John Parry, Chairman of Trustees, Haigh Homes

In his speech, Major Bradley welcomed those gathered and spoke of this “*very significant moment in the history of the cottages and the optimism that was felt by the Executive Committee of the Association that the new arrangements would give the cottages a new lease of life*”. He went on to say that “*We are confident that Haigh Homes will prove to be marvellous landlords for our residents and that there would be enormous benefits gained from being part of the largest housing association in the UK providing homes for the ex-Service community*”.

Major Bradley then paid tribute to Mr John Ferneyhough, Chairman of Ramsgate Branch of the Regiment Association who had worked so hard on the refurbishment of the cottages. Finally he thanked the representatives of SSAFA, Moat Care and Repair, the Citizens Advice Bureau for attending and Mrs Karen Wilkins, the Matron Manager at Maurice House for enabling the ceremony to be held there and the residents of the cottages for attending.

Major Bradley then handed over to Mr John Parry, Chairman of Trustees of Haigh Homes who then explained that Haigh Homes were this year celebrating their 75th anniversary. During that time the organisation had provided decent and affordable homes to rent to members of the ex-Service community. Mr Parry went on to say that the Trust owned over 1,200 properties located throughout the British Isles and that the Buff’s Cottages that had now been added to their portfolio had been renovated to a very high standard which reflected so well on the Regimental Association.

In conclusion Mr Parry welcomed the residents of the cottages and said “*that we will look after you very*

well and although it may feel a bit odd to begin with, you will soon feel at home with Haigh Homes! Before handing over to Major General Peter Besgrove, our Director at Haigh Homes, I would like to ask Mrs Rowlands, whom I understand has lived in the cottages for over 20 years and is the longest standing resident, to accept this token from us as an official mark of welcome,...” Mrs Lynda Stevens, General Secretary of Haigh Homes then presented Mrs Rowlands with a very large and beautiful bouquet of flowers.

Major General Peter Besgrove then took the floor and paid tribute to Mr. J T Friend who had given the land on which the houses were built over 100 years ago. That was a most generous gesture of friendship to the members of the Regiment and that friendship is the operative word at Haigh Homes. The General then went on to say to the residents that “*You will find all at Haigh Homes approachable, you will get to know Ian Lines our surveyor who will be responsible for these properties, our Tenant Liaison Officers Barbara Webb and Nahid Malik. We are all contactable by phone and particularly in the first few weeks, when things might seem a little strange, you must feel able to contact us.*” Finally the General added his thanks to those of John Parry, to Major Bradley who had successfully managed to steer a very calm path through to this satisfactory conclusion.



Mr. Colin Byrnes(Senior Estates Surveyor, Haigh Homes) Mrs Rodmell, Major (Retd) Patrick Gwilliam, Major (Retd) Dennis Bradley BEM, Mrs Rowlands, Mr John Parry (Chairman of Trustees, Haigh Homes), Mrs Larkins, Mrs Grevatt, Mr Grevatt, Major General Peter Besgrove CBE (Director, Haigh Homes), Mrs Nahid Malik (Tenant Liaison Officer, Haigh Homes), Mrs Lynda Stevens(General Secretary, Haigh Homes)

BAND CONCERT 2003

By kind permission of Lt. Col. A. P. Guthrie TD, the Commanding Officer of 3rd Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, a band concert by The Kohima Band and Corps of Drums was held at Leros Barracks on Saturday 21st June 2003.

The concert, organised by Major Dennis Bradley BEM, was in aid of our Regimental Association and was an undoubted success. The varied programme included, Days of Glory, The overture from Yeoman of the Guard, a miscellaneous selection "Ole Blue Eyes", solos for French Horn, Clarinet and Cornet Trio, a salute to Bob Hope, a selection of our Regimental Marches and a unique solo entitled "Sandpaper Ballet". This last piece demonstrated, with the kind sponsorship of B & Q who provided the sandpaper, the enormous flexibility and musical talent, not just of the entire band, but of three individuals in particular.

Everyone who attended thoroughly enjoyed a great and memorable evening's entertainment which was rounded off with an excellent buffet supper.

The band was conducted by WO1 Bandmaster Ian Harding who had originally enlisted into the Army as a trombonist and bass guitarist, joining the Royal Signals Staff Band, stationed at Catterick Camp,

Yorkshire. After successfully completing the 3 year Bandmaster Course at The Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall, in October 1983, Ian was promoted to Warrant Officer Class 1 and appointed Bandmaster of the 3rd Battalion, The Royal Green Jackets who were stationed in Celle, West Germany.

In 1985, the Green Jacket Bands reformed from three Battalion Bands into two large Infantry Bands, and Ian assumed the appointment of Bandmaster, the Peninsular Band, The Royal Green Jackets.

In 1987, he was awarded the Long Service and Good Conduct medal and in 1991, he was posted to the Gulf on active service where he served as Senior Warrant Officer to an Ambulance Group controlling the Medical Evacuation Chain. Ian completed his service in 1992 and returned in June 1997 as Bandmaster of The Kohima Band, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (TA).

The Kohima Band and Corps of Drums have unfailingly supported our Association and we are very grateful to them and to the Commanding Officer of 3rd Battalion PWRR, Lt. Col.A. P. Guthrie TD. who has recently taken over command of the Battalion. We wish Col. Guthrie, the Battalion and The Kohima Band every success in the future.



Ian Harding conducting the band and the three "Sandpaper Ballet" soloists. "Rough" on the right, "Medium" in the centre and "Smooth" on the left.

THE UNVEILING OF THE MEMORIAL TO THE FALLEN OF 5TH BATTALION THE BUFFS KILLED IN THE BATTLE OF 20TH MAY 1940

The area around La Herlière in the Pas de Nord Calais Region of France was the scene of a gallant delaying action fought by 5th Battalion The Buffs against 1 Panzer Division on May 20th 1940. One of those killed was a Private Lungley who, from his position at L'Arbet on the outskirts of La Herlière, held his position against infantry and later two armoured cars until he was killed. He was buried where he fell by the Germans but later his body was exhumed by the local people and re buried in the churchyard at L'Arbet. He has since then become somewhat of a local folk hero.

Monsieur André Coilliot, President of the local branch of Le Souvenir Francais had arranged for a memorial to be erected in the village of La Herlière where Private Lungley of 5th Bn. The Buffs was killed. The memorial commemorated not just Private Lungley but also the others of the Battalion who fell on that day. On May 17th 2003, the memorial was unveiled in a most touching ceremony. The Regimental Association of The Queen's Own Buffs were invited to attend and were represented on that day by myself, Major Dennis Bradley BEM and Mr (Nobby) Clarke who had served

in the 2nd Battalion The Buffs just north of La Herlière in May 1940.

The unveiling ceremony commenced at 14.30 hrs with a service in the local church. The church had been decorated with the Tricolour and the Union Jack and the organisers had even gone to the lengths of including in the service the hymns "Abide with me" and "Amazing grace", which the choir had practiced.

After the service, the parade formed up and led by a local band with no less than 20 standard bearers of local ex service organisations who were on parade, moved to the local cemetery of L'Arbet where Private Lungley is buried; a Union Jack was flying from a staff adjacent to his grave. There followed a short ceremony with the laying of wreaths, the firing of three shots by local hunters, last post and reveille and our National Anthem.

The parade then moved back to the main square in La Herlière for the official unveiling ceremony and the laying of wreaths on the town's war memorial and the playing of the Marseillaise.



André, standing next to the memorial to Pte Lungley and the other members of 5th Battalion The Buffs who fell in the battle of 20th May 1940

The unveiling of the new memorial was short but very moving, surrounded by the twenty French standard bearers, wreaths were laid by local dignitaries, the British Embassy, represented by Lt. Col. James Rutter, Army Air Corps, and by our own Mr (Nobby) Clark who laid a wreath on behalf of our Regimental Association. Major Bradley BEM gave the "Exhortation" which was repeated in French by a young boy from the village. This was followed by 25 pigeons being released and the sounding of the Last Post and Reveille followed by our National Anthem

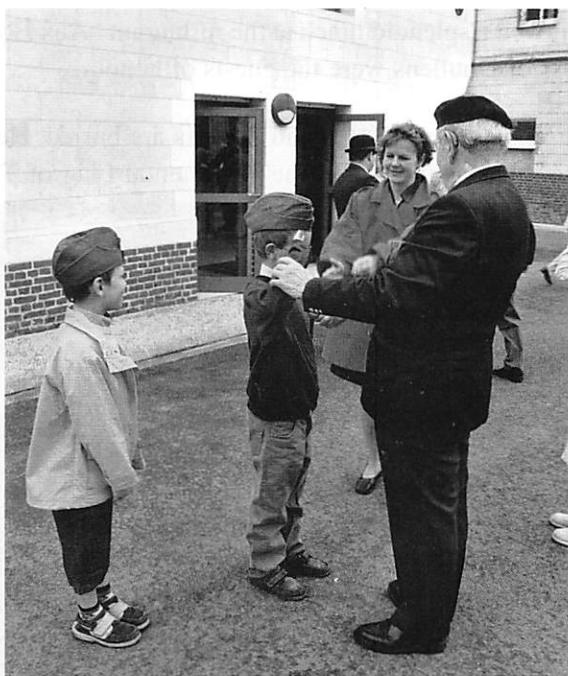
This ceremony was followed by a reception in the Town Hall and several speeches. On behalf of the Regimental Association, I thanked the Mayor, the Municipal Council,



Some of the French Standard Bearers surrounding the grave (partially hidden by the small boy on the right) of Pte. Lungley. The standards are being lowered during the playing of the Last Post.

Monsieur André Coilliot of Le Souvenir Francais and the people of La Herlière for the fine memorial, their kindness and for the honour that they had bestowed upon the fallen of 5th Battalion The Buffs. It was then

confirmed that a trip had been arranged to bring members of the Association, with four veterans of the battle, back to La Herlière on 7th June 2003 when we would hold another ceremony and how pleased we would be if they could all attend.



Nobby Clarke conducting a crash course in saluting. A little difficult as neither party could speak the others language. Just after this picture was taken one small boy dissolved into tears and had to be comforted by his mother much to the joy of the other little boy in the yellow jacket!!



The parade, led by the local band, returning from L'Arbet cemetery where Pte. Lungley is buried. The Union Flag, raised for the ceremony adjacent to his grave, can be clearly seen

A little later we took leave of our new friends, all three of us felt very touched by the effort that had been taken by André, his colleagues in Le Souvenir Francais and the people of a small French hamlet to commemorate the gallant and sad events of 63 years ago.

RETURN TO DOULLENS & LA HERLIÈRE

7th JUNE 2003

On 7th June 2003, a party of 55 made up of members of the Regimental Association their wives and partners and including 4 veterans of the battle on 20th May 1940 visited the area of Doullens, Mondicourt and La Herlière.

It was in Doullens on the 18th/19th May 1940 that 6th Battalion The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment and 5th Battalion The Buffs were deployed to try and stem the advance of two Panzer Divisions. Early on 20th May, 5th Battalion The Buffs were redeployed along the Doullens-Arras road from Pommera to La Herlière.

With little or no air cover, artillery and a few Boys anti tank rifles the two battalions gave of their best but by nightfall on 20th May the battle was over. Those of these two gallant battalions, who were not killed or taken prisoner, were trying to make their way to the coast. Many did not make it and were captured.

63 years later our group, with four veterans of the battle, Bill Pledger, Jim Peall, Bert Jones and Horace Cook travelled to Doullens. After an early start and a complementary trip through the Channel Tunnel, courtesy of Eurotunnel, the group enjoyed a splendid lunch at the restaurant "Aux Bons Enfants", the best restaurant in the town The Mayor and Mayoress of Doullens were the guests of honour.

After lunch the group were taken to Doullens cemetery where 17 Royal West Kents and 2 Buffs are buried. Here a short ceremony of remembrance was held. The Regimental call was sounded and the Regimental Flag of The



**The four veterans with the Mayor of Doullens
L to R: Bill Pledger, The Mayor, Bert Jones, Jim Peall
& Horace Cook**





The Queen's Own Buffs flag flies over Doullens Cemetery

L:R. Henry Delo, Terry McClean, Harry King, Michael McClean, Jim Peall, Jimmy Rose, Bill Pledger, David Jones, Joe Correa (partially hidden), Sammy Supple, Ron Clark, John Phillips, John Field (partially hidden), Horace Cook, The Mayor of Doullens, Sid Waller (partially hidden), Colonel Champion, Ray Jones (bugler)

Queen's Own Buffs was hoisted on the cemetery flagpole and the White Horse of Kent and the Buff colours once again flew over the graves of these brave men. The names of the fallen were read out by Robert Chown and crosses were laid on each grave by the ladies in the group supported by a few of the members. The first three verses of "For the Fallen" were then read out, the Last Post was sounded and the Regimental Flag was brought to half mast. The exhortation was read and Reveille sounded and the flag was once again brought to the masthead. The parade then fell out and it was time for quiet reflection.

Before leaving the cemetery a presentation of regimental shields of both The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment and The Buffs was made by Colonel Crispin Champion to the Mayor of Doullens. The Mayor was visibly very pleased to receive them and confirmed that they would be given pride of place in the Town Hall.

The group then enjoyed a conducted tour of Doullens, with a commentary by Robert Chown who had extensively researched the battle of Doullens. Robert had been able to identify a lot of the original buildings used by the two battalions, buildings that brought back many memories to our 4 veterans.

The next stop was at Mondicourt cemetery where 15 Buffs are buried. Here we were met by André Coilliot, President of the Arras branch of Le Souvenir Français and two French standards. A very short ceremony then followed, the names of the fallen were read out and crosses were laid on each grave.



**Members of Ramsgate Branch and their ladies at lunch
Mary Rose, Ron Clarke, David Jones TD, Jim Peall, Horace Cook, Peggy Cook, Jimmy Rose**



The memorial at La Herlière flanked by our standards from London, Canterbury and Ramsgate and four French standards.

resounding “Three Cheers” to André, the Mayor and people of this small French hamlet.

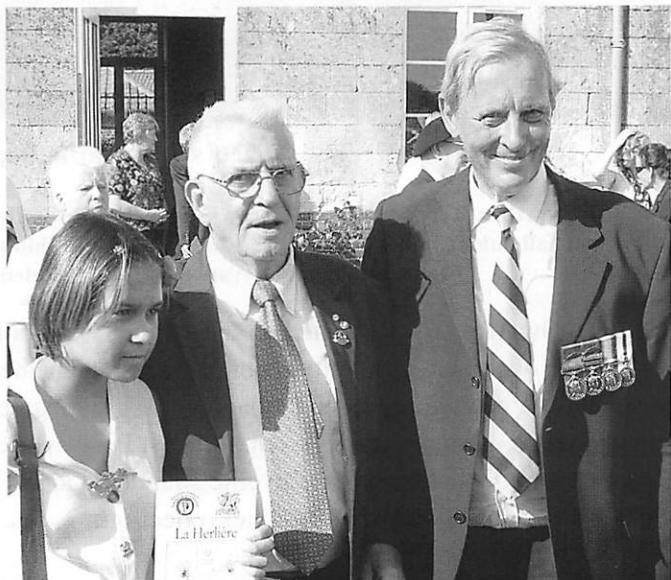
We were then entertained with a champagne reception and cold drinks, both of which were very welcome on what was, by any standards, a very hot day.

Before leaving, Colonel Champion extended an invitation to André, Le Souvenir Français, and the villagers, to come to the Canterbury Reunion on 3rd August. With that we took our leave each received a bottle of cold water to make our return trip more comfortable. A very welcome and extremely thoughtful gesture indeed.

The trip back to Calais passed very quickly and although by this time we were all very tired, there was

From Mondicourt the group then went to La Herlière to see the new memorial to Private Lungley and other Buffs who fell in the battle which had been unveiled three weeks before. The group was joined by 4 Standard Bearers from Le Souvenir Français and wreaths were laid on the new memorial and also on the adjacent French War Memorial.

Presentations were then made to the Mayor of La Herlière and members of the town council. Monsieur André Coilliot, who had been responsible for the provision, design and setting of the new memorial and who had on 20th May each year, for the last 63 years, visited the cemeteries at Mondicourt and at L’Arbet to pay his respects to our fallen comrades, was made an Honorary Life Member of our Regimental Association. André was presented with a certificate, a regimental tie and lapel badge. Our group then gave a



Colonel Champion pictured here with André Coilliot and Granddaughter who said the exhortation in French at Mondicourt Cemetery

still enough energy in the tank to enjoy some shopping, at Cité Europe. We were slightly delayed on our return trip through the tunnel but this did little to mar what had been a very enjoyable day.

Even allowing for a shopping break and a slight delay we were back on English soil in under 5 hours after leaving La Herlière. It is interesting to note that the four veterans travelling with us had all been taken prisoner on or within a few days of the battle and it had taken them 5 years to get back home.



Some very refreshing and welcome bottles of “Bubbly” on a very hot day

(THE BATTLE OF BARE RIDGE-ALUM HALFA)

3rd/4th September 1942

From Peter Goodwin.

There seems to be a lack of accurate and first hand information regarding the action of 4th and 5th Bn on 3rd September 1942 in the Western Desert. It has been referred to as an ambush but I suspect that the survivors of that night would probably describe it as one of the glorified "cock ups" experienced by the Army from time to time.

During August 1942, the 44th Home Counties Division, of which our Brigade consisting of 4th and 5th West Kents and 2nd Buffs, was part, was ordered to take over front line positions from the New Zealanders on the southern edge of the New Zealand Box at Alam Nayil just south of the Ruweisat Ridge.. At about that time Rommel was starting his last gamble to finally break through to the Suez Canal. We had only been in position for a few days when we were suddenly relieved one night and ordered to move to take over from a New Zealand Brigade on the leading edge of the Box.

Next morning we were told of Rommel's intention and that the Brigade was to undertake a night attack on the Axis positions to try and forestall him. What little recce was done was undertaken in broad daylight in full view of the enemy. In addition the commanding General demanded a silent advance to contact, in other words no preliminary artillery bombardment. Just before dusk fell we marched off to the start line, which was several hours away and, before reaching it, we enjoyed a hot meal which was provided quite surprisingly.



The attack was to be made on a Brigade front with the Buffs on the left, the 5th QORWK in the centre and the 4th QORWK on the right. On the right of 4th Bn was a battalion of New Zealand Maori troops who had been attached for the attack. I believe that the Buffs and 5th Bn. were separated by a small minefield. Our battalion, the 4th, formed up with three companies leading and one in reserve. In the rear were some trucks, bren gun carriers, 2 pounder anti tank guns, on their portees, and some tanks. How the leading elements stumbled into the enemy is conjecture, but something alarmed them and the opened up with mortars and artillery and quickly hit one of our trucks which caught fire and illuminated the immediate area. From then on it was absolute chaos. Surprise had been lost and the leading elements of the 4th, fully illuminated, found that they were in immediate contact with the enemy's foremost troops and withdrawal was impossible. As the enemy became aware of the size of the force attacking them their fire increased and became very intense with both small arms and heavier weapons. The area was so well illuminated by the burning trucks that one could not raise an entrenching tool to attempt to dig in without attracting heavy fire.

Gradually some withdrawal was effected and at daylight it was found that the enemy had also withdrawn. Although we did not know it at the time, that was the furthest any of Rommel's troops reached towards their goal of the Suez Canal. Later that morning the RAF found the Axis troops and beat them up very well indeed sending them on their way from whence they came. These troops were finally ousted at the battle of El Alamein a few weeks later.

It later transpired that we had "bumped" Rommel's elite 90 Light Panzer Division together with the Italian Folgore Parachute Division. The whole action had lasted probably little more than three hours but in that time we lost heavily. Apart from considerable quantities of equipment we also suffered some 250 casualties half of whom were killed and many of the rest were seriously wounded. A great many of our comrades, especially the seriously wounded, were taken prisoner. 5th Bn suffered even more so being in the centre, with only eight officers and 225 other ranks surviving, between us we had caught the full brunt. So ended the Battle of Bare Ridge and it is interesting to note that later General Horrocks acknowledged that we had every reason to be resentful about the events of that night.

JUST DROPPING IN

by

Paul Fleming

On the 5th August 2003, I received the long awaited phone call from Sergeant "Roly" Coleman, "Paul I will meet you at Headcorn at 11.00 hrs." Great, the phone call I had been expecting to get anytime for 2 long weeks waiting for good weather.

Off to Headcorn we went, en masse, my wife, daughter, family members and friends. On arrival at Headcorn the inevitable forms appeared requiring everything from inside leg measurement to the name of the family cat! Whilst filling them out I noticed that my hand was shaking, it was the first and only time I felt nervous.

I had absolute confidence in Roly who had skydived no less than 2,170 times and the third member of our party, the photographer, Lee Andrews who had 2,900 times. So despite the fact that this was my first time at fifty four years of age I really was very relaxed about it all.

It was soon time to get ready and by just after 13.00 hrs we were dressed in jump suits and harnesses. 30 minutes later we were called forward to the plane and it was "game on". There were 13 of us jumping in total and as we were due to be the last to jump we were the first to board the plane. When we passed 10,000 feet, Roly made the last adjustments to the harness that strapped us together. Although it was very tight it was still comfortable.

At 12,000 feet (2.25 miles) it was "doors open" and out went the first to jump, a young girl on her own. Next went three together, then a group of four followed by an instructor and a novice.

Then it was our turn and I must admit I was really looking forward to it. We stood by the door and I could see those who had jumped before free falling below us. We then jumped, for two or three seconds I did not know which way was up or down, then there was a tap on my shoulder and I crossed my arms over my chest into the freefall position. I then really

began to enjoy the experience, the views, the exhilaration and the roar of the wind. We were falling at 120 mph and Lee was only about five to six feet away from us taking photographs. 45 seconds later, another tap on my shoulder and Roly opened the chute. As the chute opened the harness began to cut into the top of my legs but that was soon forgotten. The view was absolutely breath taking with the little patchwork of fields getting bigger and bigger.

As we came into land everything seemed right, my knees were bent to my chest and the landing zone was right there in front of us. However the person who was supposed to catch the toggles to collapse the chute, missed them and I, all fourteen stone of me, ended up on top of Roly, poor reward indeed for Roly.

It was a great day, my thanks to Roly and Lee for their patience and expertise and to all of those who have sponsored me. Over £1,000 was raised for the Regimental Association to help pay for the two reunions this year. There is still sponsorship money coming in as I write so the final total could be more.

(On behalf of all our readers Paul, well done indeed. If anyone would still like to contribute a "post jump" sponsor then please do so. Please send to Paul Fleming, c/o Regt. HQ, Howe Barracks, Canterbury, CT1 1JY. The Editor).



Thumbs up from Paul

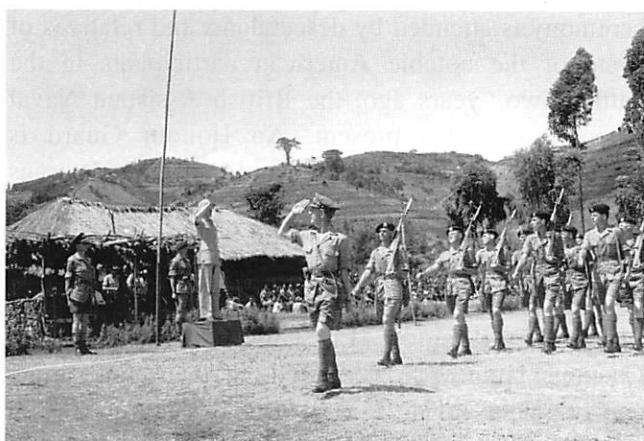
CORONATION DAY IN KENYA - 1953

(I am very grateful to Bill Abbott for the following article. Bill served with the Regiment in Kenya and is eager to contact any of his comrades who also served there. The Editor.)

In England on Coronation Day 1953, thousands of people were lining the streets of London hoping to see the procession to and from Westminster Abbey as our new young Queen was crowned.

In Kenya about 100 Buffs were on parade to celebrate the occasion and to demonstrate a "show of strength" to the indigenous villagers who were attending a Baraza, a kind of village fete, also in celebration of the coronation.

The following picture commemoates the parade. Major Rabenhill stands to attention (left of picture) whilst 2nd Lt. Holloway leads the parade. Sgt. Stokes, a few paces behind, leads 'C' Company as they march past.



Also on parade were many Askaris (native soldiers) and trackers; trained and led in the main by Kenya Police officers attached to each company. Those attached to 'C' Company were Sgts Clarke and Matthias.

Following the official business of the day, a sports meeting was held. This included the most unfair and unequal tug of war ever. When the Buffs eight found themselves pulling against a vast number of villagers who had unofficially joined in. It was great fun and a good public relations exercise- or so we were told.

During my time with 'C' Company in Kenya from 1-4-53 to 2-9-54, the company was permanently on detachment; patrolling the forests and mountains of the Abedare searching for and capturing terrorists, laying night ambushes in and around the original Treetops Hotel.



**Askaries and Trackers on Parade.
Coronation Day 1953**

These three day and ten day patrols in the bamboo forests were hazardous and tiring but also exciting when one came in very close contact, usually unexpectedly, with the largest of all the "Big Game", elephant, buffalo and rhinoceros.

Fifty years on my long memory serves me fairly well and is full of thoughts of by-gone days in what I regard as a forgotten campaign.

My regards to any readers who were also involved especially with 'C' Company; if there is anyone out there who wishes to make contact with me and a few others who keep in touch, then please contact me on 01322 525412

Bill (Bud) Abbott

8 Platoon, 'C' Company, 1 Buffs

(Many thanks for the article Bill, am very glad to hear that you have now joined London Branch of the Regimental Association and look forward to seeing you on 3rd August in Canterbury. The Editor)

THE BATTLE OF PLATTSBURGH

SEPTEMBER 1814

(I am very grateful to Roy and Jo Carter who have submitted this article. Jo is a direct descendant of Lt. Col. Willington hence the detailed research that they have made into the battle.)

Background

Once hostilities in Europe had ceased in 1814, The Buffs, together with several other regiments were ordered to proceed to America to reinforce the army there fighting the American rebels in what was to become known as The War of American Independence. Embarking from France in May 1814, the Buffs arrived in Canada two months later.

The Governor General of Canada, Lt. General Sir George Prevost, having received the reinforcements from Europe, assembled all his available forces for an attack on New York State. The Buffs formed part of that force.

Serving with the Buffs were Brevet Lt. Col. James Willington and his nephew Lt. Charles Walsh, Irishmen from Co. Tipperary, who had survived the carnage of Albuhera. Lt. Walsh was the ensign who had carried the King's Colour during this bloody battle.

By September the 5th 1814, the force had reached within 8 miles of Plattsburgh on Lake Champlain in New York State. On September 6th, the army advanced in two columns. The right hand column, including the Buffs drove the American regulars and militia from their positions and entered Plattsburgh.

During this engagement Lt. Col. James Willington was shot and fatally wounded. Ensign J. Chapman was also killed. They were both buried where they fell. According to a contemporary local account, Lt. Col. Willington's men "took the most valuable of his things" and literally tumbled him into the ground without ceremony.

A subsequent attempt to attack the enemy's fortified position on an elevated ridge by the Saranac river was aborted when the British naval forces on the Lake were defeated by the American navy. As a result the entire campaign was abandoned and the British army returned to Lower Canada. The unexpected American victory led to the signing of the Treaty of Ghent which ended the War on Christmas Eve, 1814. The Buffs remained in Lower Canada until June 1815 when they embarked for Europe.

After the Battle of Plattsburgh, the remains of Lt. Col. Willington and Ensign Chapman were reinterred by the Americans and subsequently reburied with full military honours by the officers and men of the U.S. 2nd Infantry, in the Riverside cemetery, Plattsburgh in 1843. The hitherto unmarked graves were inscribed with marble markers. In June 1844, Lt. Kingsbury was also reinterred and buried alongside his two comrades.

Memorial Weekend and Re-enactment

Each year in the second weekend in September, Plattsburgh commemorates the American victory and pauses to remember the dead on both sides. The weekend includes Battle re-enactments, Parades, Concerts and other activities. A Memorial service is also held to those on both sides who fought and died on land and sea at Plattsburgh, September 6th to 11th, 1814. The service is held at the Riverside cemetery where a number of the fallen American and British soldiers and sailors are interred and comprises solemn music, an invocation, benediction, wreath laying and "Taps". In addition to Plattsburgh citizens, the ceremony is attended by descendants and relatives of some of the notable American participants in the battle. Two years ago, the British Assistant Naval Attaché was also present. An Honour Guard is provided by various American and Canadian Veterans Associations.

Although the American markers have been refurbished or replaced over the years, the markers commemorating Lt. Col. Willington, Lt. Kingsbury and Ensign Chapman are now so weathered that their names, rank and regiment are no longer visible. Thus these men who gave their lives 'in some corner of a foreign field' now lie anonymously in unmarked graves.

(Many thanks to Roy and Jo for the above article. In the "Historical Records of The Buffs 1814-1819" written by C R B Knight Lt Col Willington is referred to as Lt. Col. Wellington. Readers will be interested to note that since the above article was written Roy and Jo have arranged for a local stone mason in Plattsburgh to replace the three grave markers mentioned above. The Regt. Association has agreed to pay for these new stones and Roy and Jo will travel to the USA this September to see them dedicated and to lay Buff wreaths on the graves. The Editor)

WRITE TO REPLY

3 Stallards
Braunton, Devon
EX33 1BP

Dear Editor.

On behalf of myself and my two daughters, I would like to thank you and Robert Chown for setting up, organising and conducting the recent trip to Doullens on 7th June. We had a great day in France and I am sure everyone on the trip was of the same opinion.

It was good to see the memorial to Pte. Lungley and the other members of 5th Bn. The Buffs who did not survive the battle. He was a very brave man and the people of La Herlière have never forgotten his sacrifice and have always kept his grave in good order. They also deserve our thanks for their wonderful hospitality, they helped to make it a day to remember.

It was a moving moment to shake hands with André Coilliot who was a schoolboy of 12 in L'Arbet when I was there in May 1940. He has done so much to keep the memory of our fallen fresh.

Yours sincerely.

Bert Jones.

(Bert, it was great to have you and the other veterans with us on that day and we are delighted that you enjoyed it).

57 Weatherly Drive
Broadstairs, CT10 2EE
01843 602032

Dear Editor.

Both John and I enjoy reading the Journal so much. I don't know if anyone remembers John, he was CSM with the TA at Tonbridge.

Unfortunately he now suffers with Parkinson's and so does not venture very far.

All good wishes to your readers.

Floss Collins.

(Thank you so much for your letter Floss, please give John our best regards. If anyone out there remembers John, please drop him a line he would love to hear from you. The Editor).

25 Balmichael
Isle of Arran
Scotland KA27 8DT

Dear Editor.

Many congratulations on another excellent issue of The Journal.

When I wrote to you several months ago I did not think that my letter would be published. I feel that I should perhaps clarify something in case my friends in the Regt. Association think that I'm older than I am!!!

I do miss the trips with the Dunkirk Vets every year. I miss them very much indeed. They are a great crowd of chaps.

However I joined in 1944, 4 years after the evacuation. I have a great friend who is a Dunkirk Vet and he invited me on the first coach trip after which I went on as many as I could.

The Arran Branch of the R.B.L. have now made me chairman, and I am still the Branch Standard Bearer.

I shall be at the Canterbury Reunion in August. It is a hell of a way to go but very much worth it.

Keep up the good work

Ted Godfrey

(*Ted, Once again your letter has been published. It is excellent news that you are coming to Canterbury, we all look forward to seeing you. Do try and make contact with me during the day. The Editor.*)

61 Norhall Road
Barnehurst, Bexleyheath
DA7 6JF

Dear Editor,

Can you please publish this letter in the next issue. My 2 pals Cpl. Miller and Cpl. Carney have kept in touch over the last 49 years. I would like to see if there are any other members of 12 Platoon, 'D' Company, 1st Bn. QORWK who were in Malaya in 1952-54.

If so, please contact me on 01322 527126.

Yours sincerely

Roy Chapman.

(*Roy, very pleased to publish your letter. I will also put a message on the Association Web Site for you. Let me know please if anyone does contact you. The Editor.*)

Lt. Col. G Dineley RAMC
14 Devonshire Gardens
Cliftonville, Margate, CT9 3AF

Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed my subscription to The Journal.

I joined The Buffs in 1957 and was commissioned in 1958 and am still serving with the Royal Army Medical Corps. However I also served in The Queen's Own Buffs, The Queen's Regiment and The PWRR before transferring to RAMC in 1996.

I was originally a life member of the now defunct Margate Branch and some Association

members will remember me as I was Parade Commander for 14 years at the Canterbury Reunion.

I thoroughly enjoy reading The Journal even though I read of so many deaths of comrades that I knew.

Yours sincerely

Gerald Dineley

(*Many thanks for your letter. Now that you have returned from the Gulf can we look forward to seeing you at this year's Canterbury Reunion? We hope so. The Editor.*)

6 Oriel Cove

Clogherhead, Co. Louth

Eire

Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed my subscription for The Journal and trust that you will note the change of address to that given above.

A suggestion by the Museum Archive Assistant prompted me to subscribe to your magazine as I had been researching The Buffs in North Africa. My particular interest was that of Captain Patton's part at Alam Hamza during The Buffs' famous stand which ended on the 15th December 1941.

Capt. Patton MC RAMC had been posted five weeks earlier to the 7th Armoured Division for Operation Crusader and I presume that, after their great losses, he was posted to The Buffs as their RMO.

I would very much welcome any comments or information on The Buffs's RAP when they were finally overrun.

Yours sincerely

Laurence K Moore.

(*Thanks for your letter Laurence, I will place this letter on our Web Site to see if that produces anything for you. Please let me know if you receive any information. The Editor.*)

17 Micklem Drive
Hemel Hempstead
Herts HP1 2P

Dear Editor.

Thank you for this Spring's edition of The Journal, the contents of which I will relish with much delight. This link with the past and of course the present association of The Queen's Own Buffs holds much attachment for me with great feelings of events and memories from so long ago, a past that will always be remembered!

Congratulations on such an excellent magazine, the envy of so many of my veteran comrades here.

"Time is like an ever rolling stream,
It bears so many things away!

But, memories of the Gallant Buffs of Kent
Will remain always on each and every passing day."

Best wishes and kind regards

Ken Blake
ex 4th Battalion The Buffs

(Ken, great to hear from you and to know that you are now back on duty (M&D) as it were after your health problems. Keep in touch. The Editor).

30 Edward Street
Southborough
Tunbridge Wells, TN4 OHA

Dear Editor.

Thank you for printing my letter in the April issue of The Journal- trying to contact old comrades. I received my copy on the Friday and the very next day, Saturday, I received a phone call from an old comrade who joined The Buffs on the same day, 20th January 1951, and was in the same platoon. We spoke for over an hour and will now keep in touch regularly.

I am most grateful for your help.

Fred Scales.

(Thanks for letting me know, who was your comrade, is he a member of the Association and does he subscribe to The Journal????? The Editor)

The Rev'd Duncan Wilson
Sleepy Hollow
19 Mohune Way
Chickerell, Weymouth
Dorset DT3 4NG

Dear Editor.

Many thanks for the latest issue of The Journal. I was very moved by the article by the late Sgt. Bernard Martin. Having gone through the war only to lose his wife so soon after coming home. But that's life I suppose.

I see that Hamlyn Whitty has given me a mention in his letter. He was one of some very fine adjutants I had the privilege of serving with. During my time as ORC/ORQMS, some 13 years in the orderly room with 1 QORWK, 1 Queen's Own Buffs and 2 Queen's I had the pleasure of helping nine adjutants through the intricacies of Queen's Regs and the good old Manual of Military Law as well as other things. It is a sobering thought that at least four of them have passed on to higher things.

I am sorry that I did not put in a piece from the 62 Club last time but will ensure that you get some news from us for the next issue.

Yours

Tug

(Tug, the readers will be very glad to hear that your health is improving so well after a difficult time. Take care and we look forward to reading your notes on the 62 Club, they are very important to us. The Editor).

Fairhaven
Send Hill, Send
Woking, Surrey
GU23 7HR

Dear Editor.

Thanks for the last issue of The Journal. Of particular interest this time was the article about "The Green Dragon". Oh yes, I remember it well along with the ACC jam tart. I was a member of "The Wracetettes", the third one in

on the conductor's right. Others are Fats Fuller, Pete Grevatt, Sid Pulman, Sgt. Munn and Bob Richards, can anyone name the rest. It was the only time a wore a skirt in public, at the age of seventeen when Trevor Sharpe tells you to put one on you didn't argue.

We all had a lot of laughs in those days and many happy memories, to play with stars of the future like Tony Coe and Les Reed was fantastic, not for them a computer they could actually play their instruments. I am looking forward to the website.

Yours

Alan (Ginger) Barnes.

(*Alan, I have to ask before anyone else does, when was the second time you wore a skirt in public?!!!, play on words. Thanks for your letter. The Editor*)

Brigadier C R Pickard QGM
Longfrie, 18 Station Road,
Riccall, York YO19 6QJ

Dear Editor.

I enjoy reading The Journal.

The poem in the April issue 'Just a Common Soldier' is , I believe, by A Lawrence Vain Court. I have an earlier copy of this poem sent to me by an Australian Army Officer. Whether or not the poet is Australian I do not know.

Best wishes to you and The Association.

Yours sincerely

Clive Pickard

(*Brigadier, Many thanks for your letter, my apologies over the confusion as to when subs are due. The Editor*).

5 Bentley Way
Metheringham,
Lincoln LN4 3EN

Dear Editor.

Thank you very much for sending me a copy of The Journal and for publishing the obituary of my husband, Sam Harrison, written by Wally Bujakowski. They had been friends for over 50 years.

I am hoping to attend the service in the Chapel at the Tower of London in September. I hope, Sam's name will be inscribed.

I am also writing to tell you that I have a copy of Gregory Blaxland's book The Farewell Years, The Buffs 1948-1967. It belonged to Sam but I would be happy to pass it on to a fellow member.

My husband was very proud to have served in The Buffs and he kept in touch with many of his pals. He is sadly missed.

Yours sincerely

Pat Harrison.

(*Pat, many thanks for this letter. I am very grateful to you for the book The Farewell Years which you kindly sent to me. It will be a much welcomed addition to the reference library. I am so sorry that I omitted to acknowledge its receipt. As promised I have made a suitable donation to Journal funds to enable some, who are not able to afford subscriptions, to continue to receive The Journal. I am sure Sam would have liked that. The Editor*).

5a Metropole Court
Folkestone
Kent CT20 2LT

Dear Editor.

I am sorry to have been so slow in contacting you since we met in Hythe.

I am hoping to join Canterbury Branch, of which my neighbour Major Derek Poulson is President, so we can travel together to meetings.

I was amused to see "at the Sign of the Green Dragon" in the April edition. Whilst my name did not appear in the programme, I was actually the Stage Manager for the event, a job which included many background activities including the printing of the programme. When asked, after the event, why I had left my own name out by Colonel Raymond Grace, I replied that I was insuring myself against any calamities that might occur on the night!

It turned out to be a magnificent evening which I believe all who attended will never forget.

Looking forward to seeing you all on 3rd August at Canterbury.

Yours sincerely

Roger Pilcher.

North Barrule
Port Lewaigue Close
Ramsey
Isle of Man

Dear Editor.

I began this letter to you on the very day that I received the last issue of The Journal which detailed the passing of several of those I knew and served alongside during my time with The Buffs. In particular Major Bill Dunglinson who, under Richard Dendy, was the OC Training Company, Depot The Buffs for almost the three years that I served as a Training Instructor in the old days of National Service. I got to know him well and he was a great OC with a gift for delegation.

It was in Wuppertal that I met Sam Harrison who became a friend and fellow Colour Sergeant both in Germany and Aden. The picture of him in The Journal was exactly as I remember him. Sam, he called himself the 'Good Sam Harrison', plied me with many a tale of derring-do, one of which sticks in my mind. It was in regard to his attempt to get proficiency pay for his knowledge of Swahili. Called before a panel of examiners Sam said that he was asked by one of them to translate the following "*Harraka, harraka, hyeenai, barraka*" which means "*more haste less*

speed". Sam thought for a moment before replying with "*Well Sir, I think it means "Hark hark, how the hyenas do bark"*"

Sam didn't get his proficiency pay!

I am sorry that I will not be able to attend the Canterbury Reunion this year, maybe next year, but my good wishes go to all especially those that I served with from 1952-1958.

Regards

Denis Cain

(Great to hear from you Denis, we will miss seeing you this year but please try and make it next year. The Editor).

105 Broadway
Gillingham,
Kent ME8 6DP

Dear Editor.

Just a short note to enclose my subscription for The Journal and to wish you all the best for the trip to Doullens on June 7th.

It was 63 years ago yesterday that we faced all those German tanks and shell fire. Those tanks were definitely not made of wood as we had been told.

Best wishes

Jim Steadman

(Jim, Many thanks for your good wishes. It was a great loss to our trip that you could not attend, but we thought of you. We all hope that you are enjoying better health.

Readers might like to know that Jim was a member of 6th Battalion QORWK Regt. that fought so heroically against the incredible odds of a complete Panzer Division on May 20th. Jim was captured on May 31st and spent 5 years as a POW. He wrote a book, "Life of a British POW in Poland" which is an excellent read. The Editor).

THE WEB SITE

www.the-queens-own-buffs.com

THE WEB SITE

Since the launching of the web site, just 10 weeks ago, the site has been visited on no less than 1,500 times. As a result the Association has gained a lot of publicity, a few new members and The Journal some subscribers.

I must first of all thank Phil Simpson, who is not a member of our Association, for setting the site up. Phil has spent an enormous amount of his time converting material into web readable form and for designing the site. Phil from all of us a very big thank you.

Secondly I must take this opportunity , on behalf of all of you, of thanking Peter Blanche who has been running The Buffs site, as part of the Canterbury site, for so long now. Peter's generosity has allowed ex-members of our regiments to keep in touch with each other, and with the help of Gordon Walker, has enabled many to find long lost friends and comrades. Once again many thanks to you both.

Below are published some of the messages Phil and I have received.

A BABY BUFF

From: Lionel Dombert. Inverloch, Victoria, Australia

I was a member of D Company 70th Battalion at Shorncliffe in January 1941. I transferred to Royal Sigs and became a wireless operator and served in India, Burma, ceylon and Singapore. I am 82 years of age and am delighted to have found the Association through the Internet. Thanks for making a "baby Buff" happy.

(I have been in contact with Lionel many times since receiving the above message. He is now a member of the Association and a subscriber to The Journal. Lionel lost his wife recently and we send our sincere condolences to you Lionel. Welcome back into the fold, it just shows that it is never too late, your membership card is on its way. The Editor)

L/CPL LES ROTHWELL

From: Pete Mason, 34 Rookery Way, Bishopstone, SEAFORD, E.Sussex BN252TD. Tel 01323 893096.

A friend in OZ, Jack Dodson, is trying to find a L/Cpl Les Rothwell, No. 6348658. Les was on HMS Jervis prior to landing at Leros and, concerned that his cap badge may finish up as a souvenir in a German's pocket, gave it to his friend Jack to keep safe. Jack still has the badge and feels that it is right that it should be returned to Les or one of his family. I have tried to trace Les with no luck at all. Would any of your readers have any information.

Many thanks

Pete Mason.

PRIVATE SYDNEY GRINDY

(THE BUFFS)

From Ian Grindy:

Dale House, Dalehead, Slaidburn, Nr Clitheroe, Lancs, BB7 4TS. Home phone: 01200 446188 Home email - Ian & Anne: ian@igrindy.freeserve.co.uk.

My late father joined the Regiment in 1937 and was a POW in France from 1940 - 45 in Stalag XXA at Thorn from 1940-1941, Stalag XXB at Marienberg from 1941 to 1943, Stalag XXA from 1943 - 1945. He also spent some time in the following work camps- Elbing Camp 41-42, Konitz Camp 44 -45. I am desperate to find other members of the regiment who may have known my father during this period. Can you please help. MANY THANKS

Regards

Ian Grindy

(Following on from sending Ian some back copies of The Journal this message has been received)

On behalf of myself and my brother and sisters, I would like to say a very big thank you for sending me the back copies of your Regimental Association journal. These make for fascinating reading.

Having gone through my father's service record again I can see that he was a Lance Corporal when he was taken prisoner in France. The story by Bert Jones - "A Prisoner of War in Poland" (December 2001), makes particularly interesting reading.

PRIVATE CHARLES SAWYER

From: Florence Hillman

Email: wayne@flohillman.freeserve.co.uk

I am enquiring on behalf of my father who was in the 4th Bn., served in Malta 1940-43, taken POW in Leros 1943-45. Does anyone know him or have any pictures.

RE: DICK GEARD

The Buffs 1940-1942

From: John Dickens

Email: johnmdickens@hotmail.com

It is with regret that Richard (Dick) Alfred Geard passed away Saturday 19 July suddenly. He had hoped to have been able to attend the reunion however due to ill health he was unable to.

The family would much appreciate if anybody who remembered him would get in contact.

(John, on behalf of all our members among whom they will be some of Dick's comrades, we send you and the family our sincere condolences. The Editor)

RE: NEW WEB SITE

From: Kevin Akehurst. USA

Email: gbkevin@aol.com

Just wanted to say that I am so pleased that there is a new web site just for us! Living in the USA for many years, the fact that I can still keep in touch with, and find some of the older guys is very important to me. See you all at the reunion!

RE: ALBERT JUSTIN GRINDLAY

From: Erica Rowyn in Australia

My great-grandfather Albert Justin Grindlay enlisted with the 1st Bn.. Buffs East Kent Regiment on November 14, 1889 in Canterbury (he travelled to India on the Britannia in December 1894). It was whilst he was in India with the Buffs that he married and had a family. Recently I had a chance to visit the Buff Museum whilst holidaying in the UK. A definite treat and a visit I would certainly recommend to others. I also enjoyed viewing the colours at the Cathedral.

RE: THE WEB SITE

From: Robert Jenkins Ballarat, Victoria. Australia

I really enjoyed your website. My grandfather was a Private in WW1. He served with The Buffs (East Kent Regt.) I would like to find out more about his service record. Can anyone help?.

(Robert, if you can provide more details such as Battalion, dates of service, rank etc we might be able to provide some background information. The Editor)

EDWARD HENRY WRIGHT

From: Susan Phyall nee Wright

My Late Father was in the "Buffes" and enlisted in Canterbury on the 15th November 1933 he always said he was in the Queens Own Buffs he was in Burma 1935-1936, India 1936-1938, & Palestine 1938-1939 he was wounded here, they drove over a land mine, he was manning a bren gun, I'm not sure if it's spelt correctly. I can't seem to find any info or reference on his time in the far east on any of the Buffs websites can you help?

(Details of the land mine incident are recorded in the Regt. History. A photocopy of the relevant pages have been sent to Susan. The Editor)

141 REGT. RAC (THE BUFFS)

From: Eric Golding Originally from- Bromley, Kent. - now Hamilton, Ontario Canada

As I am researching my Father's WWII history, I was interested to learn of this site and whether or not there would be more information to learn of him and his regiment. My Dad was with one of the Churchill 'Croc's' when they landed at Courelles, France, 23 June 1944. I would be interested if anyone would share their knowledge of this campaign. Many thanks for providing this site.

(Eric, I have passed this onto Geoff Kirk, an ex member of 141 Regt who may be able to help. The Editor).

NOTE: If any of our readers can help, and there are no contact details given please contact through The Editor

NOTICE BOARD

NEW ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

WO1 (BM) Arthur Healey QORWK

Mr L J R Chapman	1 Buffs
Mr. A Heckley	4th Buffs
Mr W Sharman	4th Buffs
BSM R Ship	1,2,3,4/5 Buffs
Mr D G Roberts	Royal Sussex
Mr P A B Fetter	Buffs, QORWKS, QOB's
Mr P W Pankhurst	QORWKS, QOB's
Mr. R A Condon	Royal Navy
Mr. B E Aylett	1 Buffs
Mr. D H Allen	Royal Navy
Mr. C.M. Bishop	Queen's Own Buffs

NEW BOOK REVIEWS

FORTRESS MALTA

An Island Under Siege 1940 - 1943
by James Holland

Published by Orion on 15 April 2003 at £20.

There are only a few defining moments in history. When against impossible odds, ordinary people stand their ground, they fight, they die, they become heroes and win, forever turning the tide of history.

This is the story of one such moment.

At the height of the Second World War, the Island of Malta - slightly smaller than the Isle of Wight - became one of the most strategically important pieces of land in the world.

It held the key to the War in the Mediterranean and North Africa following the dark days of Dunkirk and the fall of France. Without holding fast to Malta, the Allies would have lost control of the entire Mediterranean and with it North Africa, Suez and the oilfields of the Middle East. Churchill ordered that Malta be held 'at all costs'. And for three years, from 11 June 1940, the tiny island of Malta withstood the longest siege in British history, pushing the defenders to the limits of human endurance.

Malta remains the most bombed place on earth.

More explosives were dropped on Malta in two months than the whole of Britain during the entire first year of the Blitz.

From December 1941, Malta was bombed for 154 consecutive days, three times longer than the worst period of the Blitz.

British submarines and aircraft operating from Malta continually harried Axis shipping supplying Rommel's forces in North Africa. Without this vital contribution, the Battle of El Alamein could not have been won.

No Allied pilot shot down as many aircraft in a shorter period of time than Canadian fighter ace George Beurling did over the skies of Malta in 1942.

Operating from Malta, Lieutenant Commander David Wanklyn was the first British submariner to win a Victoria Cross. His boat, the HMS/S Upholder, was the most successful Allied submarine of the War.

Such was the heroism of the Islanders that George VI took the unprecedented step of awarding the whole Island the George Cross, the highest civilian award for valour.

FORTRESS MALTA follows the story through the eyes of those who were there: young men such as twenty-year-old fighter pilot Raoul Daddo-Langlois; submariner Tubby Crawford; cabaret dancer-turned RAF plotter Christina Ratcliffe and her lover, the brilliant and irrepressible reconnaissance pilot, Adrian Warburton. Their stories and others provide first-hand accounts of heroism, resilience, love and loss, highlighting one of the most extraordinary stories of the Second World War.

For further information please contact Helen Richardson: Direct Line: 0207 520 4449.

CHURCHILL'S FOLLY: LEROS AND THE AEGEAN

the Last Great Defeat of World War Two
By Anthony Rogers

Published by Cassell on 12th June 2003 at £20.00

Today many of the Greek islands of the Dodecanese are popular tourist resorts. However, in 1943 they were the scene of the last successful German invasion of World War two. This new book by Anthony Rogers, which draws on British, German and Italian records as well as statements by and interviews with former combatants on both sides, uncovers the truth behind this embarrassing and all but forgotten episode in British military history. It is the first comprehensive retelling of events in any language.

Most of the islands had been occupied by the Italians since 1912 but this was to change with the Italian Armistice of September 1943. After the downfall of Benito Mussolini, Winston Churchill seized the opportunity to open a new front in the eastern Mediterranean, thereby adding to the pressure being applied against Germany by the Soviets and at the same time providing encouragement for Turkey to

join the Alliance. Rejected by the Americans, it was a proposal fraught with difficulties and, ultimately, one that was doomed to failure.

Spearheaded by the Long Range Desert Group and Special Boat Squadron, British garrison troops occupied territory with the assistance of naval forces, but with little or no air cover. However, the planners misjudged their opponents and they came up against some of Germany's finest, including units of the élite Division Brandenburg, with ample air and sea support. In three months of operations, Britain lost an entire Brigade, plus numerous warships and aircraft, and the campaign ended in a British defeat, with the Aegean under German occupation until the end of the war. And all because the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill's enduring obsession with the region.

END OF AN ERA

Colonel Peter Bishop OBE retired as County Commandant of the Kent Army Cadet Force at the end of May this year, completing nearly 52 years in uniform.

Peter himself joined the cadet force at 13 years of age and at 16 became a boy soldier in The Buffs, The Royal East Kent Regiment. At the end of boys service he joined 'A' Company, 1st Battalion The Buffs just prior to their tour of duty in Aden in 1958.

Within 10 years he was a Company Sergeant Major and in 1969 he was granted a commission in the Queen's Regiment. Over the next 20 years Peter served in many theatres and rose to the rank of Lt. Colonel and was subsequently made OBE.

In 1989 he retired and started his own company, Challenger World, from which he retired as Chairman in 2002.

In 1991 Peter was made Commandant of Kent County Army Cadet Force and retired on 31st May this year.

Just prior to his retirement Peter completed 12 years adult service with the ACF and is pictured here receiving his Long Service Medal from the newest and youngest cadet at the Tenterden ACF Detachment, Cadet Daniel Apps.



FINAL WORD

As usual, many thanks to all of the contributors and in particular the letter writers. Each issue we manage to print more and more of your letters. Please keep them coming in, apart from being interesting they add a very welcome personal touch as well.

As we are now "on the net" don't forget we need material for the web page as well, especially photographs. Talking of which there seems to be great shortage of photo's from Malaya, Suez and Borneo. If you do have any please send them in. They will always be returned. Also, if you take photos of any of the events, let's see them, they will no doubt be better than the ones I take.

The last few months seem to have whizzed by, that is always the case when there is so much going on. Or is it that the older we get the earlier we go to bed and the later we get up. It then follows that the days pass much quicker!

Any that were involved in the unveiling of the memorial to 5th Buffs at La Herlière, and with the later trip to Doullens, could not help to be so very impressed with the time spent, work done and trouble taken by André Coilliot and Le Souvenir Français in planning and arranging for the memorial to 5th Buffs to be erected and the continuing commitment to the memory of the fallen.

As you will have read already, Colonel Champion, on the trip to Doullens and La Herlière presented André with a certificate making an Honorary Life Member of our Association together with a Buffs tie and lapel badge. Colonel Champion also extended an invitation to André to attend the Canterbury Reunion. André with a small delegation and one Standard Bearer duly travelled to be with us on August 3rd.

A letter from André has just been received, it reads: -

"My dear friends,

We arrived back from Canterbury at 1.30 in the morning. I do not know how to say how much we enjoyed our day with you all in Canterbury and we shall conserve the memory for a long time.

We were so proud to be among the members of The Buffs in the march. What honour you gave us, I do not think we should be able to have the same parade in France. When I see the good order of your veterans, the Standard Bearers with their Colours, I understand why the French are always at the rear of the parade in Dunkirk., and when I see the parade in Arras, I am obliged to say- What a pity.

So, I must on behalf of my colleagues, say a big "Thank you" to all the members of the Regimental Association of The Queen's Own Buffs for inviting us.

If in the future any of your members want my help in arranging a tour in France, or would like to visit my museum, please contact me.

All my sincere wishes

André

If you are ever in the Arras area and would like to see the museum give André a ring on 03 21 71 46 25. He will welcome you with open arms and it is well worth the trip. I understand that there may be a similar memorial erected to 6th Battalion The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regt at some time in the future. I will keep you posted.

A final reminder. Please order your Christmas Cards just as soon as you can, order form enclosed.

I will leave you with this thought:-

Don't forget - It's not how OLD we grow, it's HOW we grow old!

God Bless

Until next time.

The Editor

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2003

SEP 07	TOWER OF LONDON SERVICE -LONDON BUFFS.
SEP 08	SEVASTOPOL DAY.
SEP 14	MAIDSTONE REUNION
OCT (TBC)	COLCHESTER BRANCH DAY TRIP TO FRANCE
NOV 01	DUNKIRK CEMETERY FOR WREATH LAYING AND PARADE
NOV 09	MAIDSTONE REMEMBRANCE PARADE
NOV 06	FIELD OF REMEMBRANCE - ST MARGARET'S WESTMINSTER
NOV 09	REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY.
NOV 28	REGIMENTAL DINNER (PWRR OFFICERS' CLUB) LONDON.
DEC 06	COLCHESTER BRANCH XMAS BUFFET/DANCE.
DEC 07 (TBC)	CANTERBURY BRANCH CAROL SERVICE - ST PAUL'S CHURCH .
DEC 10	SITTINGBOURNE BRANCH CHRISTMAS PARTY.

SOME OF THE ABOVE DATES MAY BE SUBJECT TO ALTERATION. YOU ARE ADVISED TO CONTACT THE RELEVANT SPONSORS TO CONFIRM PRIOR TO MAKING ANY ARRANGEMENTS.

