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

THE JOURNAL

Number 8

Spring 2004

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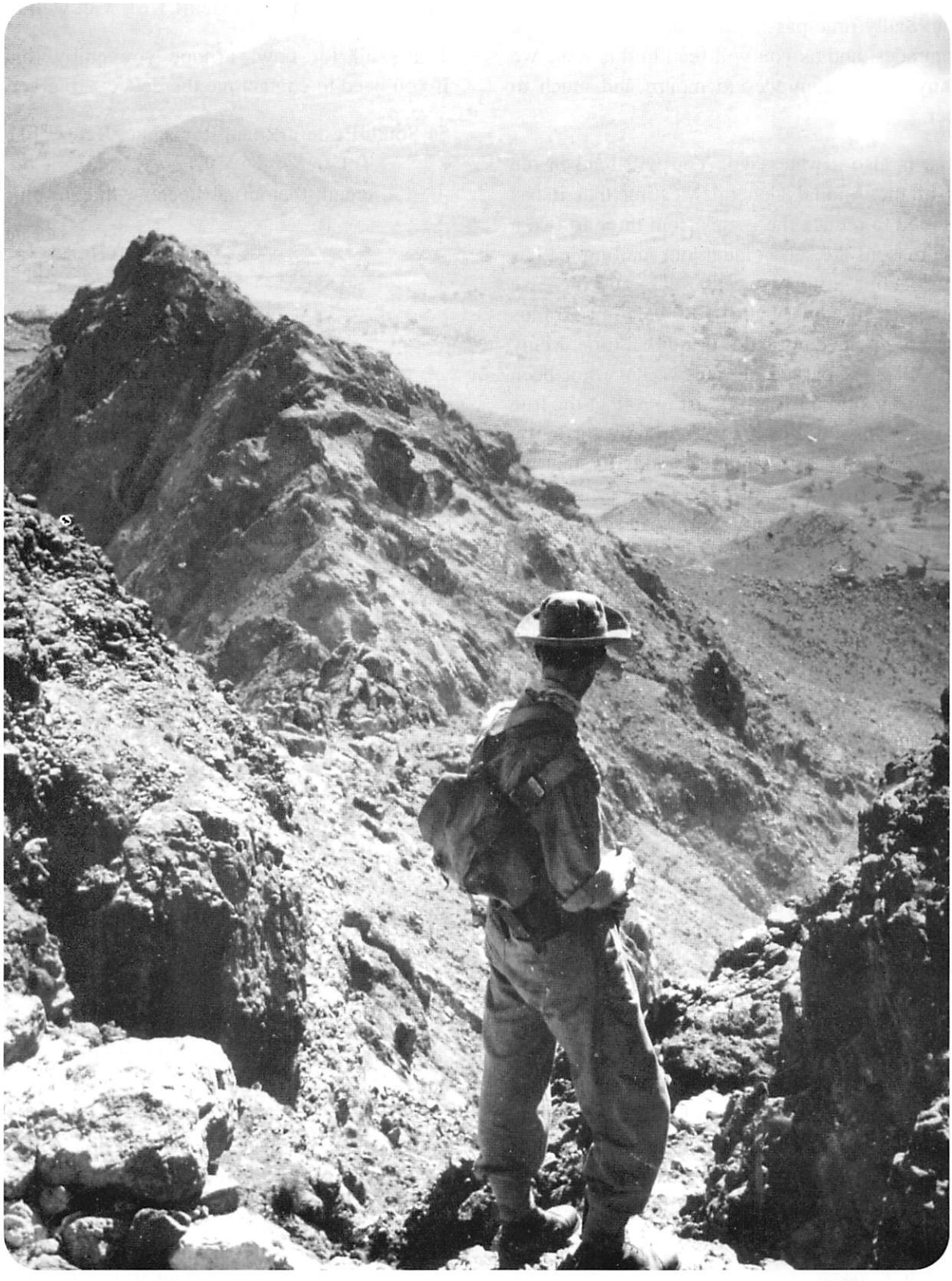
Front Cover: The Battle of Albuhera

From an original painting by W B Wollen

DHALA,
WESTERN ADEN PROTECTORATE
1958



A Buff soldier of 'A' Company looking back down the route used in the assault on the Jebel Jihaf.

Photo courtesy of Major R.T.P. Williams

EDITOR'S PAGE

Dear Readers,

No issue of The Journal would be complete without reference to the passage of time etc. This issue is no exception. Sadly time passing also means the passing on of comrades, and as you will read in this issue we have many of our comrades to mourn and much to remember.

This issue is also a watershed. You will read in the minutes of the Annual General Meeting that it has been decided to reduce the issues from three to two a year. The reasons are self evident, our mailing list has started to decline after two years of steady increase and I have had to adjust that list by deleting 50 plus subscribers who have not paid for quite a time. Many of those will have passed on and we have not been informed. Adjusting the mailing list to reflect the true state of affairs also means that we will have difficulty in breaking even unless we reduce standards, that we must not do, so from now on The Journal (with more pages) will be published in the Spring and Autumn.

This issue sees a pretty broad range of articles, we are a little down on letters in the Write to Reply section so get those pens out and of course we are always looking for photographs.

Last year the sale of christmas card was very successful and the Association made a good profit - full details in the minutes of the AGM. This year there will only be one design and the cards will be smaller, A6 size. You will find enclosed an order form and I look forward to receiving your order.

The website is proving very popular indeed and there are an increasing number of messages asking for information about the service of relatives etc. Research can be great fun and very rewarding providing you know where to look and who to contact. Unfortunately Regt. HQ who continually receive requests just do not have the time. In the next issue we will feature an article on historical research, where to go to get information etc. Although a lot of the service records were destroyed by fire during the last war but, nonetheless, there is still a great deal of information out there.

For the scribes amongst you the deadline for articles and notes for the Autumn issue is September 24th.

Several of our members have been on sick parade in recent months. To all we send our best regards and hope for a quick recovery, in particular to Major Geoffrey Cox MC and Geoff Kirk. Get well soon.

That's all for now, I hope you enjoy this issue. If you need to contact me the details are given below

54 South Eastern Road, Ramsgate, Kent CT11 9QE
Tel: 01843 850292
email: thejournal@peter-white.go-plus.net

The Editor

oOo

BRANCH NEWS

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 the A.G.M. in February this year all the retiring officers were voted in again except for the Vice-Chairman, George Antrichan Junior, who had to relinquish the post owing to not always being available due to work commitments. Ron Mannouch accepted the job. It is nice to see Ron being involved again; he has been an invaluable officer in past years. The branch officers and committee have once again done a really good job. They all deserve our thanks.

The Chairman, Jim Read, read out a list of departed members and unfortunately three more names were added this year, John Couchman, Peter Kent and Doug Clist. Peter Kent and Doug Clist died within a fortnight of each other, both valued members. Obituaries of both of them appear elsewhere in this `Journal`.

Peter, a popular member, died at the early age of 65. Some thirty members attended his funeral. Keith Hoult carried the standard and our Padre, Bernard Foulger, conducted the service.

Unhappily we did not know of Doug's death until two days before his funeral. He had been ill for some 1½ years and had not attended meetings in that time, but his death was very sudden. Even so 16 members managed to attend at his funeral. Doug was in the Hampshire Brigade during the War, as I was myself, and although in different battalions we both met and married local girls, staying on in Sittingbourne after the War.

We held our annual dinner and dance in February. A success as usual, but this one was voted one of the best. Good food, really excellent service, good company, and music to suit the, shall I say `mature` dancers. The guests included Colonel Crispin Champion, Major Dennis Bradley, and their wives, who were very welcome. Also nice to see our esteemed Editor, Peter White, and his wife. I know this happens time and again but we must give a vote of thanks to Paul Fleming, his wife Jenny, and band of helpers for the hard work they put in to make the occasion such a success. Unfortunately, owing to escalating costs, a question mark hangs over the form and scale of future dinners. Personally I hope they go on unaltered in style, but that is a matter for debate.

Good progress has been made on the plan to plant an oak tree at the ex-servicemen's Memorial Park at Tonge Mill. This will commemorate members of the Regiment who have fallen in action. The tree is in position, the plaque engraved and the stone made. The stone has been made and presented by Milton Pipes Ltd. The ceremony of dedication will take place some time in May and it is hoped that as many members of the Association as possible will attend.

On closing, I must report that during the past year it was proposed that we appoint a President, and we decided to ask Colonel Peter Bishop to take office. That was a good move. Peter has been a great asset to us, taking a back seat, never interfering in the running of the branch, but offering a great deal of good advice, information and encouragement.

EAW

COLCHESTER BRANCH.

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

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

MEETING: 3rd Sunday in the month at 10.00 hrs

The Colchester Branch would like to wish all the readers a belated happy new year and apologies for not having any notes in the last two publications of the Journal.

Our biggest worry of late is that our Chairman Jim Burr was taken ill just before Christmas and admitted to Hospital and discharged in January but is now making good progress, our thoughts were with his wife and family during this time. Another of our sick of late is Mrs Maureen McGrath who suffered a stroke but is now also progressing well, Maureen is the wife of Clive McGrath.

We would like to welcome the following new Members to the branch:- Bernard Lively, Mick Venmore and Michael Baxter.

Functions for the past year all went well and were attended in good numbers. The Albuhera dinner was yet again a great success as was our Christmas dinner, but as always our Valentines Dance provided us with the cash to boost up our finances. Our thanks for yet another successful year must go to Brian Mitchison who puts in a lot of hard work to get everything arranged and of course to our two ladies who sell the raffle tickets at these functions, Pearl Mitchison and Mary Arnot.

We now look forward to yet another year (doesn't time fly as you get older) starting with our Annual General Meeting which we have changed to 28th March owing to the 21st being Mothering Sunday.

See you all at Sittingbourne for the Annual General Meeting if not don't forget the reunions at Canterbury and Maidstone.

GA

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.

As this is the first report of 2004 it is with regret that I have to start these notes by recording the passing

away of 6 of our branch members namely Maj. Roger Pilcher, Jack Healy, Maurice Howard, Cyril Frier, Albert (Jessie) Mathews and Sid Reed MM. Our sympathies go out to all the families on their sad loss and they will all be greatly missed at the Branch.

+ + + + + + + + +

Well here we go at the start of another year where we are all looking forward to the events taking place ahead of us.

January was a quite month apart from getting over the New Year's festivities and the bad weather which I may add did not deter the members from attending the monthly meeting in force.

Bob Gawlor, retiring Chairman, and Eddie Williams seen here with Henry Delo holding their Honorary Life Vice President Certificates

Our Chairman along with other branch officers and Maurice Samson with the Denmark Branch Standard, attended at the Canterbury Detachment of the A.C.F. where he presented cadets with a Queen's Own Buffs Plaque and a Buffs wall clock also framed photographs to the two cadets who escorted the Danish Standard on the Remembrance Parade in November 2003. He thanked them for their help and co-operation and to show our appreciation to them we will be taking the cadets along with their instructor to Ypres on 27th June 2004.

February was our branch AGM which again was well attended with just one or two defaulters (252). The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Maj. Bradley (Regimental Secretary) and John Ferneyhough (Vice Chairman East Kent). The meeting took its usual format but when it came to the election of officers there were a few changes.

Our Chairman Bob Gawlor was retiring after 7 years of faithful and devoted service to the Branch and the Association. Mr Harry Crooks was voted in as the new Chairman. Bob was invited to become an Honorary Life Vice President which he accepted, he will now join with Eddie Williams who has been an Honorary Life Vice President for the past 7 years. Both were presented with framed certificates depicting their Vice Presidencies. The other changes in the Branch were Stan Wooldridge who takes over as Welfare Officer and Tom Glasgow who takes over as Social Secretary. Ken Vine has retired as Escort to the Standard and he was thanked for his years of service. Col.? (Sorry Ex Drum Major) Sammy Supple climbs the ladder and takes over from Ken. We wished them a long tour of duty.

In March, Len Holman took the Canterbury darts team down to Ramsgate Branch to play them in a darts match following their meeting. Sorry Ramsgate, although we won the match you can try and get your revenge in the return match in June. We thank you for your hospitality and you did yourself proud with the excellent buffet.

If this competition continues between the two branches each year I will have to look ahead for some silverware.

Arrangements are well ahead for our Annual Dinner which will again be held at the Canterbury Golf Club our guests at dinner will be Maj & Mrs O'Gorman, and we looking forward to their company.

Well that's all for this time. With best wishes for a happy and prosperous year ahead to all our friends far and near.

HD

RAMSGATE BRANCH

SECRETARY: D. Jones. 91 Norfolk Road. Margate. Kent.CT9 2HX

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

MEETING: 3rd Friday in the month at 19.45 hrs.

Hello, greetings from us all here in Ramsgate. So we start a brand new year of activities, just think of all these pleasures ahead - The Association AGM and

Darts Competition; Canterbury and Maidstone reunions and various Branch activities. It is with regret that I must report that we have lost an old and popular member with the death of Charles (Charlie) Bryant. Charlie served in the 2nd Battalion,. He served in Palestine and France (1939/40) and was a prisoner of war. We will miss him very much, although ill-health had curtailed his Branch activities in recent years. Charlie was interested in taking part in the "Turning the Page" ceremony. It is sad that he did not live long enough to fulfil this honour. I hope that all members will support Craig Wretham - He who will be running, and suffering, for the Association in the forthcoming London Marathon. John Ferneyhough will welcome any sponsors who contact him. We also welcome to our Branch Col. Brian Tearle who recently visited the Ramsgate Army Cadet Unit, Brian is Commandant of The Royal County of Berkshire Cadet Force. On the social side of our activities it is intended that our Branch Members will attend the April meeting of the Canterbury Branch, this will be, in effect, a return visit. We also will be playing the Canterbury Branch at Darts in June when we hope to avenge our recent defeat by these same villains (I can not read my scribbled note and I think that's what my source called them). Our membership still grows despite the occasional departure for that great reunion.

With regard to our walking wounded, some of them have trouble walking, but I am given to understand that Deric King is getting about now with only the help of a stick, and the arm of a blond if he is so lucky. His brother Harry has his worries as Pam is not at all well, but we hope all will be well. Pam Futcher is bright and cheerful after a long and worrying seven hour operation but is recovering well, and is happy that her son Peter will soon be taking up residence in Canterbury; nice and near to get his washing done by Mum!

Ramsgate Branch.

Association Darts Champions 2004

As we go to press, congratulations are due to our worthy Darts Team for success at Sittingbourne in winning the Association Grand Darts Tournament.

We are holding the laying up ceremony of our old and much loved Standard and dedicating our new one on July 4th, John has sent out notices of this event. If you would like to attend please give John Ferneyhough a ring on 01843 594007. The dedication service will be held at St. George's Church Ramsgate at 11 o'clock on the 4th July 2004

Ah well! That's all for this session. We hope you had a good Easter and will enjoy your forth-coming Summer Holidays.

Jim Peall

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.

I had a bit of a shock earlier this year, on a Monday morning I received a telephone call from Mr Jeff Bridgeman's daughter informing me that he had died, two days earlier.

I had another telephone call from Bill Fosters wife telling me that Bill had died, well what a shock, two of the oldest members of the branch passing on just like that, I just could not believe it. I called Joe Correa our standard bearer and as many of the branch that I knew would be able to attend the funerals including Major Gwilliam. They all turned out and the two families were very impressed and they both said that

that the two deceased would have been very pleased with the effort.

Next on the list was a phone call from Geoff Kirk's wife to tell me that Geoff had been taken into the north Middlesex hospital after suffering a stroke and that he had lost the use of his left arm and leg, 1 am glad to report that he is not doing too badly although he will probably be in hospital for a few weeks learning to walk again,

Before the end of that week I received another phone call this time from Brigitt Cox telling me that her husband Major Geoffrey Cox had suffered a stroke and had been admitted into hospital, I thought My God what on earth is happening they are all dropping like flies, however I am glad to be able to report that they are both on the road to recovery.

Last Saturday was the day of our AGM. it went very well and several things were discussed including our day in Canterbury on Tuesday 4th May when one of our members will be turning the page in the book of life in the Cathedral, the day coincides with the 46th anniversary of the death of Pte. Keith Marsh of "A" Company 1st Bn. Buffs. Keith was the last Buff to die as a result of enemy action. He suffered a fatal wound during the assault on the Jebel Jihaf in the Western Aden Protectorate. Ray Cox was one of the pall bearers at his funeral. It was proposed and passed at the meeting that subject to their approval we would ask Ray to turn the page.

Well I hope all you old Vets have been in touch with the agency help line on 08001692277 asking for your cheque to take you back to wherever you served? I have and I hope to go back to Italy next year, they have just woken up to the fact that there was more than one 'D' Day and so we all now get a look in.

This will be all for the present, stay healthy and keep taking the tablets.

BP

MEDWAY BRANCH

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

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

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

MAIDSTONE BRANCH

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

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

MEETING: Third Tuesday in the month at 19.30 hrs.

HYTHE & FOLKESTONE BRANCH

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

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

MEETING: Second Thursday in the month at 7.30pm.

SANDWICH BRANCH.

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

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

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

BROMLEY BRANCH

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

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

MEETING: Last Saturday in the month at 20.00 hrs.

THE MINUTES OF THE 35th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION OF THE QUEEN'S OWN BUFFS (PWRR)

HELD AT SITTINGBOURNE ON SATURDAY 3rd APRIL 2004

PRESENT

Colonel C G Champion	President
Lieutenant Colonel P P B Critchley	Chairman East Kent
Major P A Gwilliam	Chairman West Kent
Colonel P Bishop OBE	Committee of Management
Major D Bradley BEM	Association Secretary
Major P White MM	Committee of Management
Mr J Ferneyhough	Vice Chairman East Kent
Mr P Fleming	Vice Chairman West Kent
Mr B Bartlett	Hon Vice Chairman Association
Mrs J Allen	Secretary 62 Club
Mr H Delo	Secretary - Canterbury Branch
Mr H Crooks	Chairman - Canterbury Branch
Mr J A Jarrett	Sittingbourne Branch
Mrs D G Hall Richardson	Secretary - Maidstone Branch
Mr J H Read	Chairman - Sittingbourne Branch
Mr A Chesson	Secretary - Sittingbourne Branch
Mr P Barker	Treasurer - Sittingbourne Branch
Mr J Nankervis	Chairman - Maidstone Branch
Mr G Arnot	Secretary - Colchester Branch
Mr B Mitchison	Treasurer - Colchester Branch
Mr J Burr	Chairman - Colchester Branch
Mr W Pinder	Chairman - London Branch

APOLOGIES

Mr D Hobden	Secretary - Sandwich Branch
Mr S C McIntyre	Secretary - Hythe/Folkestone Branch

1. WELCOME BY CHAIRMAN

Lieutenant Colonel PPB Critchley welcomed all to the meeting.

2. OPENING REMARKS - COLONEL C G CHAMPION - PRESIDENT

a. He thanked the members of the Sittingbourne Branch for hosting and arranging the AGM.

b. He thanked the Committee of Management for their working during the past year.

c. The two reunion committees were thanked for their assistance in the organisation of two successful reunions.

d. All branch standards bearers were thanked and commended on their support of the Association at funerals. A special vote of thanks was given to Bryan Bartlett for his attendance at funerals, which is particularly frequent.

e. Major White MM was thanked for his work as Journal Editor.

f. The President informed the meeting of the Memorial Service which is to be held on 24th April at All Saints Church, Biddenden at 3.30 hrs, for Colonel Giles Bateman.

g. The Association Secretary was thanked for all his work throughout the year.

3. MINUTES OF THE 34TH MEETING

The minutes of the 34th meeting having been previously circulated were confirmed as a true record with two minor amendments to the Attendance List:

Mr Whittington to read Sittingbourne not Colchester.
Mr L A Gittons to read London Buffs not Colchester.

Proposed: H Delo

Seconded: T Chesson.

Carried unanimously

4. ACCOUNTS FOR PERIOD ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2004

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

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

Annual Independent Examination of Accounts.

a. The meeting resolved to approve the following accounts:

(1) Benevolent Fund
(2) Memorial Fund
(3) Buffs Cottage Homes Fund
(4) Regimental Association Fund
(5) Chairman's Fund

Proposed: J Burr

Seconded: H Crooks

Carried unanimously

b. Annual Grants. The following grants were approved.

(1) £250.00 From the Chairman's Fund to the Maidstone Reunion.
(2) £250.00 From the Chairman's Fund to the Canterbury Reunion.
(3) £100.00 From the Chairman's Fund to All Saints Church Maidstone
(4) £100.00 From the Chairman's Fund to Canterbury Cathedral
(5) £100.00 From the Chairman's Fund to the Kohima Band
(6) £100.00 From the Chairman's Fund to 3 PWRR.
(7) £100.00 From the Chairman's Fund to the Royal Engineers Band

Proposed: J Burr

Seconded: W Pinder.

Carried Unanimously

5. CANTERBURY REUNION 2004

The President outlined the arrangements for this year's Reunion 2004. Major D Bradley gave the detail and assured all present that Leros Barracks would prove to be a good venue for the reunion and that there would be no decrease in the overall standard of the reunion. It was proposed by J Burr that a donation of £100.00 be made to 3 PWRR as shown in para 4 B7.

The proposal was seconded by J Arnot and carried unanimously. A resume of the outline plan is at Annex A.

6. MAIDSTONE REUNION 2004

Major D Bradley outlined the arrangements for this year's reunion 2004. He asked for assistance from branches in recruiting two new members for the Maidstone Organising Committee. Mrs J Allen

presented a cheque to the President on behalf of the 62 Club for £100.00 to be used towards the cost of the Maidstone Reunion. It was agreed that a letter of thanks be sent to the Chairman of the 62 Club.

NOTE. Lieutenant Colonel P P B Critchley offered to provide a mini bus for use of the disabled for both reunions from Dover College. A resume of the outline plan is at Annex B.

7. BENEVOLENCE

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

Proposed: Major P White MM

Seconded: H Delo

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

8. ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

Major White, the Journal Editor, gave a report and distribution breakdown on the journal.

Distribution breakdown.

Subscribers: - UK	411
Overseas	35
Branches	169
Total	615

Of the above total15 are complimentary and with the current 50 odd non or very late payers.

Unfortunately there are at present approximately 50 non-payers who will have to be deleted from the distribution list. This will reduce the total distribution to 550. It was considered sensible to reduce the issues from 3 to 2 per year to eliminate financial loss and maintain the current high standard. To the future the two issues will be enlarged to ensure a solid passage of events; articles; news and obituaries.

9. STANDARD BEARERS COMPETITION MAIDSTONE

The branch chairmen present brought reports on this subject from their respectable branches. After discussion it was agreed that we continue with the competition.

Proposed: B Bartlett

Seconded: T Chesson

Carried unanimously.

10. REPORT ON SALES OF ASSOCIATION CHRISTMAS CARDS

Sales of cards equalled £1,359.00. The production and postage costs were £831.72, which gives a profit of £527.28. To which can be added the value of current stock, which equals £90.00 giving a total of £617.28. Christmas cards will again be on sale this year and we are looking at a possible two new designs.

11. ASSOCIATION EVENTS 2004

The major events are:

a. Canterbury Reunion Sunday 1 August 2004

b. Maidstone Reunion Sunday 12 September 2004.

c. Dedication of Ramsgate Branch Standard Sunday 4 July 2004

d. Garden of Remembrance Westminster Abbey. Thursday 11 November 2004

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

12. ITEMS FOR SUBMISSION BY BRANCHES

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

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a. The President informed the meeting that Major White had been appointed to the Committee of Management.

b. The meeting was informed of the pending retirement on 30 July 2004, of Major Joe O'Gorman, Finance Secretary of RHQ and former Association Secretary. It was agreed that we should make his retirement with a gift in appreciation of his service and assistance to the Association. The Secretary is to write to all branches requesting a donation based on the membership and wealth of the individual branch. Any shortfall in funds would come from the Chairman's Fund.

Proposed: J Ferneyhough

Seconded: H Delo

Carried unanimously.

c. The President raised the subject of Association representation at funerals of members of the Association and others who had served in the Forebear Regiments and

who were not members of branches or the Association. The provision of a Regimental Headquarters Standard carried by volunteer bearers to attend such funerals with expenses paid by the Association was discussed at length. It was agreed not to proceed with this suggestion at present.

It was proposed by Major White and seconded by W Pinder that a wreath bearing the badge of the relevant Forebear Regiment be provided by the Secretary at RHQ as a mark of respect for the deceased and sympathy for a Regimental colleague. It was further agreed that the Secretary writes to all branch secretaries for an overview on this subject.

Carried unanimously

e. The President informed the meeting that he was sending a cheque from the Chairman's Fund for £200.00 to St Paul's Cathedral, London, as a donation from the Association to the memorial fund for those who fell during the Malayan emergency and Borneo confrontation.

14. DATE AND VENUE OF AGM 2005

Due to problems of bookings at the present venue (Papermakers Club) and a wish to continue to use their facilities, it was agreed that once arrangements had been made, the Secretary communicate the details to Branch Secretaries by letter.

15. There being no further business the meeting was closed at 1735 hrs.

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THE QUEEN'S OWN IN IRAQ

by Major (retd) J. Barrell OBE

By November 1914 the oilfields of Basra had been captured by an Indian Expeditionary force and the strategic goals of securing oil, and safeguarding India from a threat in the Gulf, achieved. Reinforcements were needed to build on this success and most were to come from India. Thus it was that on 20 January 1915, whilst stationed at Nasirabad, the 2nd Battalion The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment (2 RWK) received orders to proceed to Mesopotamia.

Ten days later, following a two day journey by train, the battalion arrived at Bombay and set sail on the SS Elephanta. Calling briefly at Karachi to take on board No 3 Company, which had been on detachment at Hyderabad, and Headquarters of 12 Indian Infantry Brigade, the Elephanta sailed on to reach Basra on 6 February where it lay at anchor awaiting orders. Two days later, after transferring to the RS Salmi, the battalion set off up river. At daybreak on 9 February they reached Kurnah, at the junction of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, where the battalion disembarked to share a tented camp with the Oxfordshire Light Infantry just twenty days after leaving Nasirabad. That evening the rain set in.

The next day was spent preparing perimeter defences and, in the days that followed, digging redoubts. Although tedious to construct they at least offered a popular vantage point to watch shells bursting on the enemy positions some two miles distant, Rain continued to hamper work and the river level started to rise alarmingly. Soon everyone was working up to the waist in water and the camp area was a sea of mud. At the beginning of March the battalion returned briefly to Basra and set up camp opposite an American owned liquorice factory on the outskirts of the city. A fortnight later they moved up river to Khana, home for the next few months where the routine was digging, parades and fatigues, more digging, occasional football matches, sporadic shelling by both sides and yet more digging. Heavy rain persisted, but punctuated now with severe dust storms. The days were becoming very hot but the nights were still cool.

Early in July a force was sent to take Nasariyah but was held up some three miles short, where the Turks were in a strongly entrenched position either side of the Euphrates with each flank on a marsh. 12 Brigade, including 2 RWK, was sent to assist but an attempt to turn the enemy's right flank failed with the 24th Punjab Infantry taking heavy casualties. On the evening of 23 July the battalion received orders to lead a frontal attack to carry the enemy trenches at dawn. Private John Wood, of No 2 Company, described the feeling of elation. "Our chance had come at last! "Every man jack wanted victory or nothing". The Machine Gun Platoon departed to join a brigade concentration and the night passed quietly, with everyone wishing each other good luck for the following day.

The planned bombardment started promptly at 0500 and the battalion moved forward at 0530. The leading companies were initially held up by heavier than expected fire from the Turkish position, but the reinforcing companies gave fresh impetus. On the left Major Kitson led elements of 3 and 4 Companies into the enemy's right flank trench and carried it. A few moments later the whole line surged forward and reached the trenches. The attack was described in a letter to the Times by a British officer serving with the 90th Punjabis:

"The West Kents were up against a terrific fusilade from their front, and it was the most magnificent sight I have ever seen to watch those fellows going on under it, in spite of their casualties.....As soon as they got up to the trenches they wheeled.....to the right.... and then we lost sight of them. They got in with their bayonets and all we could see.... was Mr Turk running as if the devil himself were after him.... It was dirty work in the trenches, I can assure you."

Doubtless it was. The Queen's Own Gazette correspondent recorded that "We got in so quickly that we caught them like rats in a hole. We must have killed 400 in the trenches alone". Private Wood recalled "three bayonet charges we made and each one was a success" whilst Corporal Alan Hedge remembered standing" on top of trench after trench and (we) dug them out with our bayonets....until every man....was killed or taken prisoner".

The Turks broke and fell back to Kut-ul-Amara. with estimated casualties of 800 dead and 400 taken prisoner. It was impossible to tell how many were wounded. The strength of 2 RWK going into action was 17 officers and 470 other ranks of whom roughly a third were casualties. The brigade continued its advance and the following day made a triumphant entry into Nasariyah where the British flag was hoisted over the town with a 21 gun salute. Much of the credit for this success went to the battalion of which the GOC, Major General Gorringe, said, "The gallantry of the Royal West Kents, under Lieutenant Colonel Pedley, set an example which was followed by the rest of the brigade... Too much credit cannot be given for the splendid work they did during that eventful hour."

Testimony to the effort was the gallantry awards that followed. Two DSO's, two MC's, and six DCM's.

The battalion remained at Nasariyah for many months, its mission to keep the Euphrates open, and was inspected in September by the GOC who, again, was fulsome in his praise. He was also entertained with a band concert. Shortly afterwards two companies, under the command of Major Nelson, were detached and sent forward to Kut-al-Amara where they were deployed on the river flotilla. They were to share the deprivation of the four month siege at Kut before General Townshend finally surrendered to the Turks on 29 April 1916. 13,000 British troops, including the element from 2 RWK, went into a captivity from which few were to return.

On 14 January 1916 the GOC once more had reason to be grateful to the battalion. Whilst out with a patrol he ran into a large force of hostile Arabs and sent for help. HQ Company turned out to assist in the successful rescue of General Gorringe and escorted him back to British lines. Casualties were sustained, one being the Commanding Officer who was shot in the thigh. Major Woulfe Flanagan assumed command.

For the next two and a half years, having received reinforcements from 1/4th RWK, 1/5th RWK (who also served briefly in the theatre) and 1/5th Buffs, the battalion spent its time moving between a number of locations, sometimes lightly skirmishing with the Turkish army but mostly spending its time (as did most British battalions) training, helping with the harvest and building railways. However in October 1918 the war was reaching its conclusion as the battalion took part in a series of arduous engagements and prepared for a major engagement at Tekrit. This, though, never materialised as the Turkish army in Mesopotamia surrendered on 30 October.

Returning to their, by now, normal task - helping build the Mosul railway - thoughts in the battalion turned elsewhere. "We think", said the Queen's Own Gazette correspondent, "that after four years in this country we have earned a turn in India, if not in England, and hope it will not be long before that... most acceptable of orders, a move out of this country, are received".

Early in 1919 the battalion returned to the United Kingdom but, after a brief few months, were sent to Germany where civil war had broken out.

(I am grateful to Colonel HBH Waring OBE for his advice and assistance in making available material from The Queen's Own Museum in Maidstone. JB)

THE REGIMENTAL REUNIONS

2004

CANTERBURY REUNION

The Canterbury Service of Remembrance and Reunion (Buff's Sunday) will be held on Sunday 1st August 2004.

After careful consideration of all the factors it has been decided this year to hold the Canterbury Reunion in Leros Barracks, Sturry Road, Canterbury, the home of 3 PWRR our TAVR Battalion. This will provide the Association with:

a. Three separate bars.

b. An indoor eating area.

c. A picnic area.

d. Hot Buffet food.

e. Alcohol at sensible prices.

The day starts with the "Fall In" at 12 noon, at Longport as usual followed by an inspection by the Association President. The parade then marches to Canterbury Cathedral led by the Corps Band of the Royal Engineers under the direction of Major Edwin Keeley. This will be followed by a formal service in the Cathedral starting at 1pm, including an Act of Remembrance together with the laying of wreaths at The Warrior's Chapel. After the service there will be a march past and a parade through Canterbury and after the parade has returned to Longport and fallen out members and their families will make their way to Leros Barracks for a buffet lunch and an afternoon of entertainment during which the Corps Band of The Royal Engineers will beat retreat.

Buffet Menu (Self-Service)

Choice of:

Curry

Lasagne or similar dish.

Gateaux

Cost £5.00

Tea/Coffee/Sandwiches/Snacks will be available from a stall run by ladies of the Ramsgate Branch.

SECURITY:

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

For more information and to order lunch please contact the Secretary of Canterbury Branch, Henry Delo, 46 Ulcombe Gardens, Canterbury, CT2 7QZ.

Email : Henry.Lyn@ldelo.freeserve.co.uk

MAIDSTONE REUNION

This year the Maidstone Reunion will take place on Sunday 12th September and will commence in Brenchley Gardens at 10.30hrs, with "Fall In" followed by an inspection and the laying of wreaths at the War Memorial.

The parade then moves off to All Saints Church, led by The Kohima Band, where there will be a formal service and Act of Remembrance and Turning of the Pages of the three Books of Remembrance.

After the service members and their families should make their way to Kent Hall for lunch.

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

Buffet Menu (Self Service)

Assorted Rolls

Savoury Puff Pastry Canapés

Sausage Rolls

Mini Quiche Selection

Cocktail Vol-au-Vents

Deep Fried Cocktail Sausages and Dips

Cost £5.00

For more information and to order lunch tickets, please contact the Reunion Secretary, Mrs Jacky Allen on 01322 666007.

ANNUAL VISIT TO THE WARRIOR'S CHAPEL BY 141st REGIMENT RAC (THE BUFFS)

On Wednesday April 21st 2004 members of 'B' Squadron, 141st Regt RAC (The Buffs), known as 'The Playboys' paid their annual visit to Canterbury to Turn the Page in the Warrior's Chapel in Canterbury Cathedral.

With their Standard Bearer, Charlie Hewitt, on parade the page in The Book of Life was turned by John Brough supported by Fred Blakeley, George Claire and John Bull. Accompanying the 'Playboys' were Charlie's wife Dorothy, John Bull's wife Valerie and two widows of past members of 141st Regt, Eileen Dixon whose husband Arthur died aged 91 a few years ago and Violet Waters whose husband 'Muddy' died 12 years ago.

During the ceremony the names of those of 141st Regt, who had passed away during the last year were read out: Cpl. Ken Rodoway, Trooper Vin Brandi, Lt. Col. Nigel Ryle OBE MC, Pte. Ned Dixon RAOC attached to 141st Regt, Trooper Dennis Foxon and Trooper Vincent (VC) Davies. This very touching ceremony concluded with Ex. Sgt. Charlie Hewitt reading the exhortation.

Representatives of 141st Regt RAC (The Buffs), mainly 'B' Squadron, at The Warrior's Chapel: L to R John Bull, Fred Blakeley, George Claire, Charlie Hewitt and John Brough.

Afterwards the party together with the Association President Colonel Crispin Champion, the Association Secretary, Major Dennis Bradley BEM and the Editor adjourned to the Three Tuns for a very enjoyable lunch.

John Brough seen here Turning the Page

141st Regiment RAC (The Buffs) were a unique armoured regiment. Equipped with flame throwing Crocodile Tanks they operated supporting infantry, British, Canadian and American. George Claire, who was on parade at Canterbury on 21st April, was a tank driver of 8 troop of 'B' Squadron. B Sqn were supporting 1st Bn. 116th U.S. Infantry, part of the US 26th 'Let's Go' Division in the assault on the immensely strong Fort Montbarey, Brest, through deep minefields.

After two days hard fighting the Fort finally surrendered. In a special memorandum issued by 12th US Army Group praised the great courage displayed by the flame-thrower tank crews. As a result Lt. Ward received the US Silver Star Medal as well as a Military Cross and the Bronze Star Medal was awarded to Major, later Lt. Col, Ryle OBE MC, Captain Moss, 2/Lt. Hare, Sgts Morley and Cowe, Troopers George Claire the driver of 'Squirt", H Adams, Stan Harris, Tom Parry, Alan (Vera) Lynn and L/Cpl Rayman.

This is but one story of many in the short but very gallant history of a very fine unit, 141st Regt RAC (The Buffs)

ALBUHERA

Albuhera is a small village in the Spanish province of Badajoz. Just 13 kilometres to the south is the site of a famous victory won there on May 16th, 1811, by the British and their Portuguese and Spanish allies, under General Beresford, over a French Army commanded by Marshall Soult.

By this time, Portugal had been cleared of the French and Wellington now sought to secure the frontier and its fortresses. Wellington laid siege to Almeida while Beresford, with 10,000 Spanish, 9,000 Portuguese and 9,000 British was ordered to invest Badajoz.

Beresford was hardly in position when he was threatened by Marshall Soult moving towards him from Seville to the south with 27,000 battle hardened veterans. Beresford took up a covering position at Albuhera, astride the road to Badajoz.

The Allied troops were positioned along a series of small hills running north to south, parallel with the river Albuhera. Soult's army advanced from the southeast and on the morning of May 16th were drawn up ready for battle. On the right of the Allied line, held by the Spaniards under Blake, a considerable threat was developing. Soult had managed to cross the river in several places with nineteen battalions of infantry as well as a large number of cavalry, all of which had managed to approach the Allied right flank through this heavily wooded area without being seen. The French then launched an attack from these woods and the Spaniards turned south to meet them. The British 2nd Division, which included Colborne's Brigade of which The Buffs were part, were sent to support the Spaniards. However, Blake was still convinced that the main French attack had yet to be delivered and that it would come from the east. Consequently, Blake only deployed Colborne's Brigade of four battalions, the 1/3rd (The Buffs), 2/31st, 2/48th and 2/66th, to meet the French attack from the south. At about 10.30 am these battalions stood in the firing line pouring a withering fire into the left flank of the attacking French columns. A thunderstorm, which had been threatening all morning, finally broke and the black skies opened and torrential rain swept the battlefield reducing visibility down to just a few yards. The British infantrymen's muskets were quickly rendered useless as the rain beat against their faces and the drenched British did not see four regiments of enemy cavalry bearing down on them. Caught in line, unable to form square the infantry were an easy target for the cavalry, Polish Lancers and French Hussars, who attacked with virtual impunity against a line with few muskets able to function.

A dreadful slaughter followed. The Buffs fought bravely but the odds and conditions were hopelessly against them. Ensign Thomas, who was carrying the Regimental Colour, whose escort had been struck down, was called upon to surrender. Crying *"Only with my life,"* he was himself cut down and mortally wounded and the Colour captured. Of this brave young officer, the Earl of Londonderry wrote in *"Narrative of the Peninsular War", "Though young in years, and holding an inferior rank in his profession, his name will be recorded in the list of those whom England has just cause to be proud; and his example will doubtless be followed by others, as often as the chances of war may leave them only a choice between death and dishonour."*

The Earl of Londonderry also reproduces a letter from Captain Stevens of The Buffs who, writing of Thomas says:-

"He rallied my company after I was wounded and taken prisoner, crying out 'Rally on me, men, I will be your pivot.' - Thomas was buried with all care possible by a sergeant and a private, the only two survivors of my company, which consisted of sixty three men when taken into action."

The Regimental Colour was later recaptured by Sergeant William Gough of The Royal Fusiliers and returned to the Regiment. After the battle, commanding officers were authorised to recommend one sergeant each for promotion to the rank of ensign. The Royal Fusiliers selected for this distinction Sergeant Gough in recognition of his gallantry.

Around Ensign Charles Walsh, who was carrying the King's Colour, there was a similar scene. The pike of the colour had been broken by cannon shot, his escort had fallen and he was surrounded, wounded and about to be taken prisoner. Lieutenant Latham rushed forward and seized the Colour. He defended it with heroic gallantry with his sword, refusing to yield. A French Hussar seized the staff and rising in his stirrups aimed a sabre blow at Latham which seriously mutilated him, severing one side of his face and nose.

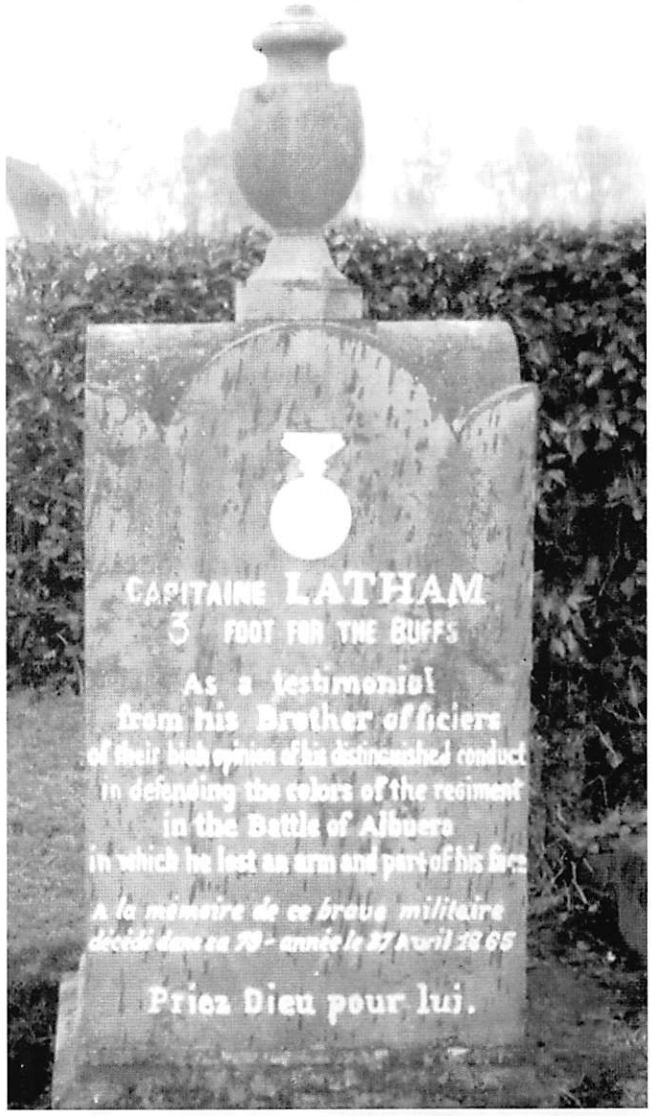
Latham still continued to struggle however crying out that only with his life would he surrender the Colour. A second sabre stroke severed his left arm, but dropping his sword he seized the staff with his right hand and continued to resist until he was thrown down, trampled on and pierced several times with lance thrusts. At this moment the British Cavalry, 4th Dragoons, arrived; the French troopers fled and Latham exerted the little strength left to him to tear the Colour from the staff and conceal it in his jacket, where it was later found.

The above is from an original water colour by Charles C. Stadden and shows Lt. Latham, sword in hand, defending the King's Colour.

The strength of the battalions of Colborne's brigade on the morning of 16th May, and their losses during the day are as follows:-

Regiment	Strength	Losses
The Buffs	728	643
2/31st	398	155
2/48th	423	343
2/66th	417	272
TOTALS	1966	1413

In spite of the severity of his wounds, Lieutenant Latham recovered and lived for many years to wear the gold medal presented to him by his brother officers in recognition of his heroic conduct. He also received special promotion to Captain. He retired from service in 1820 and settled in France where he subsequently died.



The final resting place of Captain Matthew Latham in Blingel, France.

Photo courtesy of Lt. Col. S Boucher

Footnote:

On May 16th 1923 at Kilia, in the Dardanelles an interesting historical, and possibly unique parade took place. 1st Battalion The Buffs together with 2nd Battalion The Royal Fusiliers jointly trooped the former's Colours to celebrate the anniversary of the Battle of Albuhera.

Before the ceremony the Colour, guarded by two Buffs was held by a sergeant of 2nd Battalion The Royal Fusiliers.The right half escort to the Colour was composed of Buffs and the left half of Fusiliers and the guards were alternatively Buffs and Fusiliers.

(My thanks to Roy Rushbrook for the above footnote. The Editor.)

PRESENTATION TO CANTERBURY ARMY CADETS

Army Cadets from Canterbury were recognised for their help during last year's Remembrance Day Parade when they were presented with photographs and wall shields by the Canterbury branches of the Queen's Own Buffs Association and the Royal Artillery Association.

The presentations were made at the ACF Detachment in Canterbury when Bob Gawlor, Chairman of the Canterbury Branch of the Queen's Own Buffs Association and John Bishop, Vice Chairman of the Royal Artillery Association met the cadets who were escorts to the Danish Branch Standard of the Queen's Own Buffs Regimental Association and the Canterbury Branch Standard of the The Royal Artillery Association during the Remembrance day Parade. They both commented on the smartness and dedication of the cadets and thanked them for their help.

The framed photographs showed the cadets, Adrian Brown, 14, Cpl Ben McKay, 15, Luke Pedwell, 14, and Sebastian Clew, 15, in their capacity as escorts.

Army cadets undertake training designed to promote the values of confidence, teamwork and citizenship. Any young person between the ages of 12 and 18 who would like to take part in activities such as adventure training, first aid qualifications, and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme should phone Kent ACF Headquarters on 01622 750328.

Further information:

2 / Lt. Madeleine Duffield

PR Officer, Kent Army Cadet Force

Tel: 01227 275058

Left to right:

Cadets Adrian Brown, Cpl. Ben McKay, Luke Pedwell, Sebastian Clew with John Bishop, of the Royal Artillery Association, and Bob Gawlor, of the Queen's Own Buffs Association.

PHOTO GALLERY

LONDON (BUFFS) BRANCH PAST AND PRESENT ASSOCIATION ANNUAL DINNER 1936

1 Platoon, 'A' Company, 1st Bn. Buffs

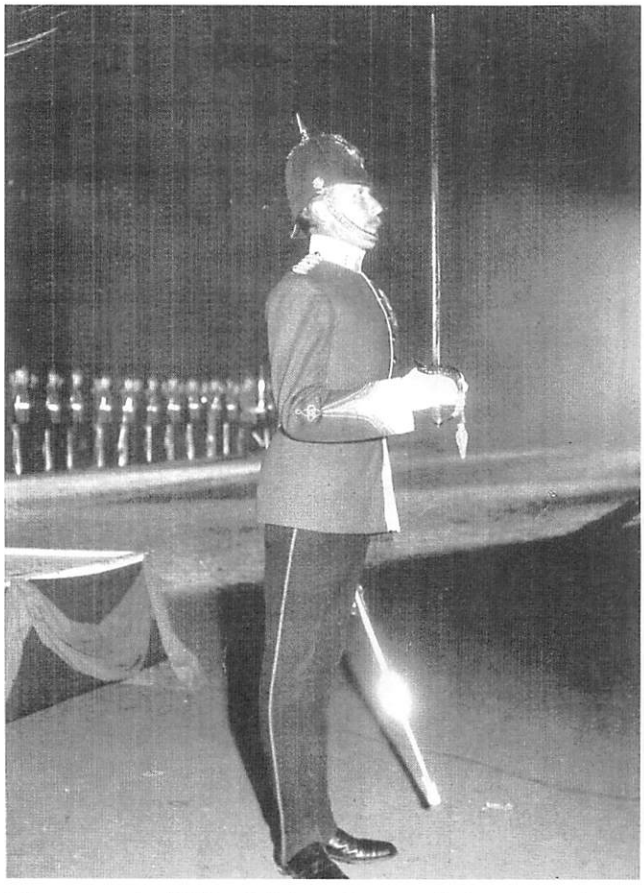
Dover Castle January 1958

PHOTO GALLERY

Remembrance Parade November 2003

L to R. Cadet Luke Pedwell, John Bishop RA Association Standard, Canterbury City Standard, Maurice Samson, Denmark Branch Standard and Cadet Adrian Brown

Who could fail to recognise the moustache. Brian Bartlett 26 years ago, at the Maidstone Reunion 2nd July 1978



Wuppertal 1955; Major Peter Critchley above taking part in a searchlight tattoo and right Major Geoffrey Cox pulling his weight on Albuhera Day.

Photos: J.M .Lunn

PHOTO GALLERY

Relaxation Sittingbourne style - Its only lemonade, really!!

Dave Brierley ex RN, Jim Read, Chairman of Sittingbourne Branch, with his brother Dick and Tony Chessun, Branch Secretary.

John Phillips, Standard Bearer for Ramsgate Branch seen here turning the page at The Warrior's Chapel.

The picture above shows King Frederik of Denmark presenting a new Queen's Colour to Lieutenant Roger A. Pilcher at Canterbury on May 9th 1955.

(Major Pilcher passed away this year)

Four of the many standard bearers on parade at Ramsgate for Remembrance Sunday Parade. Dick Ovenden and John Phillips at centre.

SNAPSHOTS OF LIFE WITH 1st BATTALION THE QUEEN'S OWN ROYAL WEST KENT REGIMENT IN MALAYA 1952-4

by Major(retd.) Richard Neve MC.

Many stories of life with the 1st Battalion in Malaya are not brought to light until after the third pint at the Annual Regimental Reunions. Most are probably best reserved for those events. However there are a few which might be of more general interest even to those who have never been to the country.

In my 18 months in Malaya nearly all the patrolling and ambushing we did was militarily uneventful. My platoon fired shots at terrorists on only four occasions. Two were the result of a terrorist surrendering and leading us to his campsite and two were against occupied clearings spotted from aircraft. My platoon did not spring a single ambush or have a single chance contact with terrorists during that time. Nevertheless life was far from boring, every day on patrol provided new trials, tribulations and frustrations not to mention the odd encounter with the local wildlife.

By itself each one of these incidents is so trivial in the context of the bigger picture that it would never be included in any Regimental History, and rightly so. But taken together they may provide a clearer insight into what life was really like on patrol in the jungle than any history book.

I can only tell of things that happened to me. There were hundreds of other similar tales many more worthy of telling than mine. So here they are then, a few snapshots of life in Malaya with 1 RWK 1952-4.

RN

The Logging Buffalo

For the past three days we had been ambushing a logging track terrorists were alleged to use to collect food from the village at the foot of the valley. Each morning two loggers had passed through our position on the way to work shortly after first light, to return each evening just before dark. That morning a thin Chinese woman of about 50 driving a water buffalo had passed through shortly after ten o'clock; apart from that nothing.

I took it in hourly turns with the bren gunner alongside me to keep watch. During my third turn I was having difficulty keeping awake in the heat of the midday sun. Suddenly out of sight up the track to my right I heard the sound of a female Chinese voice. The bren gunner's head was resting on his hands cupped over the butt of his gun. I tapped him on the shoulder to alert him.

A few seconds later a water buffalo came down the track. Squelching into the mud at every step, it was dragging a wooden sled, which supported the front of a three feet square and fifteen feet long slab of orange coloured timber. The back of the timber dragged along the ground. Alongside the timber, a long bamboo switch in her right hand and a cord tied to a ring in the buffalo's nose in her left, the Chinese woman I had seen earlier was controlling the animal by making sounds of encouragement and giving occasional flicks on its rump with the cane. I watched fascinated by the beast's strength as, knee deep in the soft mud of the track, it pulled the huge load with little effort.

Our position was in a bush about ten feet from the track. As it reached a point right in front of me, the animal stopped abruptly in its tracks, lifted its head and sniffed the air suspiciously. Not surprising as we had been there for three days and were no doubt smelling a bit ripe. After the second sniff it gave a loud bellow and, suddenly taking fright, set off down the track at a full gallop. Taken by surprise the old lady had the cord jerked from her hand. She set off in hot pursuit shouting at the top of her voice. The buffalo took absolutely no notice of her or the log it was dragging. It continued at running pace with the log occasionally bouncing right off the ground as though it were nothing but a match stick until it disappeared round the bend beyond our position.

Later the bren gunner at the far end of the ambush, who was almost on the track, confessed he had slipped

his change lever from 'safe' and taken first pressure as the animal came towards him; just in case it decided to veer off the path. I did not blame him. I would have done the same.

The Python

I was acting as leading scout for we were nearing a clearing in the jungle, allegedly terrorist occupied. I was following a pig track for I knew they liked to raid the crops on a clearing and it was leading in roughly the right direction. I thought I detected increased daylight through the tops of the trees in front, which might indicate the beginning of the clearing. The trunk of a fallen tree lay across the pig track. As I stepped three feet up on to it from the muddy patch where a concentration of hoof prints showed the pigs also jumped, my attention was fully on the jungle ahead rather than where I was placing my feet. Stepping softly down on the other side I moved a few yards ahead and paused to listen. After a minute I motioned to the bren gunner who was covering my progress to cross the log and join me before I moved ahead another bound.

Two yards short of the log he stopped dead and quickly took a couple of paces backwards. I raised my eyebrows. He pointed beneath the log. I moved the few yards back nearer the log and he whispered, "Have a look at this sir. But I'd go round if I was you."

I made my way round the raised roots of the fallen tree. There, a few inches from the spot from which I had stepped, beneath the log, which lay about a foot off the ground, were four neat oval coils of six-inch thick mottled black green and yellow snake. Each coil was five feet in circumference so it must have been at least 20 feet long. It was the largest python I had ever seen; obviously waiting for a pig for its lunch. As we stared at each other it remained motionless apart from flicking out its forked tongue. It looked me straight in the eye as if to say "I prefer to wait for a pig". Mentally kicking myself for my poor observation I left it in peace while the patrol made a detour.

The clearing turned out to be unoccupied, but the snake was enough excitement for one day.

Bootlaces at breakfast

To reach the routes to our frequent ambushes in the Kerling Rubber Estate from our Battalion Headquarters base at Kuala Kubu Bharu we had to pass along the road running immediately outside the floodlit perimeter wires of the villages at the 2nd and 4th milestones where many of the tappers who worked on the estate lived. The unmistakable sound of army trucks in the small hours of the morning immediately alerted them to our presence in the area. They in turn would warn the terrorists. We could be seen if we marched along the road. We had tried wading past at night waist deep in the river running close to the road. Not only had it been cold and tiring, but we had soon been investigated by roving dogs from the villages who promptly set every remaining dog in each village barking at the top of its voice. It had therefore been decided that C Company were to move to a permanent tented company camp beyond the villages at the 5th mile on the Kerling road. From there we would be able get in to the estate unobserved.

Making camp at 5th Mile Kerling. Person in foreground is Cpl Jim Sheren

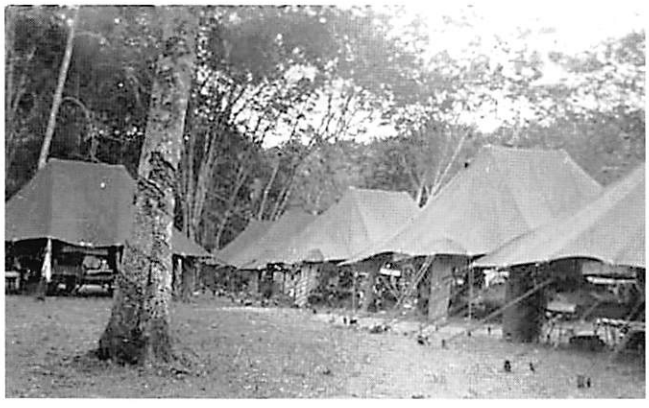
My platoon was chosen to build the camp. At the site selected we spent several days of hard physical labour clearing the undergrowth and erecting the tents in a level patch of disused rubber plantation. Before we started my Company Commander, Major Blick Waring, had handed me a copy of the Manual of Army Tentage he had obtained from the Quartermaster and instructed me to see our brand new Tents EPIP (Eastern (?) Pattern, Indian Pattern) were erected strictly according to the book. This was definitely not something I had been taught at Sandhurst. Since the tents were brand new each had been issued with its full complement of pegs, plus two spare. So following the manual to the letter we used a compass to line up all the tent pegs in dead straight rows. Using measuring sticks cut from the undergrowth we set each peg the correct distance apart before hammering them in. I can still remember the key bearing: 162°. Only then did we erect the tents. The camp certainly looked very neat and regimental. During the work we had disturbed a number of snakes, all slithered rapidly away.

Comfortable at last in our newly erected camp Pring my batman was late with my morning call. As he walked out of my tent after handing me a welcome mug of tea I noticed he had not laced up his jungle boots properly but just tucked the loose ends into the calf height top of each boot. I did not say anything.

At muster parade I detected an unusual air of suppressed amusement among the platoon. After dismissing them one of them said to me: "Cor, sir, you're lucky you still have a batman."

I called Pring over. "Well Pring what happened?" With a sheepish grin he replied: "Well sir it was like this. You know I overlaid and was in a hurry. So I didn't stop to lace my boots. I did not want to miss my breakfast. Well I felt something in my boot while I was eating and thought it was one of the laces I had tucked in at the top, which had worked its way down.

"I got back to my tent, sat on my bed to lace my boot, only to find the lace was still where I had tucked it. So I took my boot off, turned it upside down and out fell a bootlace snake!"



"C" Coy camp at 5th Mile Kerling. Tent walls were always kept rolled back except during heavy rain.

A bootlace snake or krait in Malay was a small but deadly black snake about the length and thickness of a bootlace. Hence its name. He was lucky not to be bitten.

The Buffalo Stampede

For some weeks life at Bentong had been mainly a boring daily routine of early calls for pre-dawn 'gate checks' at the town perimeter fence, interspersed with never sprung ambushes based on dubious 'information' in the neighbouring rubber estates. Eventually my Company Commander Major Bill Crumplin decided some gentle day patrols would be good for our morale and fitness. For lack of any positive information he allowed each platoon commander to choose any part of the company area to patrol.

I chose to go down the east bank of the Pahang River immediately south of Bentong. My reasons were: first, no patrol from the battalion had been there before; second, my map showed a convenient footpath following the river bank where the ground should be reasonably flat and easy going; third, I thought it might be useful to investigate any crossing places that could be used by terrorists. The river below Bentong was a few yards wider than the Medway at Maidstone. After heavy rain it was impassable but after a few days without rain it became fordable in some places known and used by the locals. It might one day be useful to know where they were.

We had been going a couple of hours under an overcast sky. The path had been easy walking and we had just breasted a low spur when the leading scout stopped and pointed ahead. Twenty five yards in front of us standing stock still alone in the middle of the path was the largest meanest looking bull water buffalo I had ever seen. At my signal the scout advanced a few more yards. The beast showed no sign of moving. Clearly dubious the scout stopped again. It so happened he was the one farmer in my platoon, observant and an excellent shot he was used to the ways of cattle. I noticed he had lifted his Owen submachine gun to the ready position. I too did not like the look in the animal's eye.

I decided we should make a detour. To my right twenty-five yards or so of rough swampy ground with a few sickly looking untapped rubber trees in it occupied the area between the riverbank and us. Not easy going, and we would be crossing the buffalo's route to the river. Fifteen yards to the left a twenty foot high escarpment, with an overhang where the flooded river had once carved into the bank, looked unscalable. It was uncomfortably close to the buffalo but the ground beneath was clear. We would go left.

After telling the leading scout to stand still where he was. I called the bren gunner forward from his position immediately behind me in the line of march. Pointing to a fallen tree I told him to set up and cock his gun with the change lever on automatic. If the

buffalo charged either the scout or me he was to kill it.

I set off to the left. As I moved carefully round the buffalo followed my steps with a malevolent gaze by turning its head without moving its feet. Its neck was nearly at a right angle to its body when it suddenly gave a loud snort and set off at a gallop for the riverbank. Sighs of relief all round.

It was only then I spotted through the bushes lining the riverbank a herd of twenty or more buffalo wallowing chest deep facing upstream in the middle of the river. Our lone bull gave a loud bellow as he ploughed towards them. With him alongside every beast in the river promptly set off upstream as fast as they could go. The stampeding herd was a magnificent and spectacular sight. Each animal created its own bow wave like a speedboat. The sound of splashing water even at our distance of fifty yards was like standing beside a waterfall in flood. How far they went I do not know. We all watched fascinated until they rounded a bend and passed out of sight.

The Ibans

Ibans are one of the many tribes of jungle dwelling natives of Borneo. Renowned for their jungle skills the British army had recruited them to assist in tracking down the Communist terrorists who had taken to the jungles of Malaya. Less than a generation earlier they had been headhunters. Some of their longhouses still had the skulls of their enemies hanging from the rafters.

When the Ibans first arrived at Kuala Kubu Bharu I was taken from 8 Platoon and told to train them up as a platoon. It had been a fortnight of limited success. Some so-called jungle warriors had been nothing but taxi drivers before enlisting. On the range others had a disconcerting habit of closing their eyes before puffing the trigger. It was decided they should be split up and allocated to Companies and Platoons as specialist trackers. Naturally I kept the two best, Cpl Menggong GM and Pte Dadop, for C Company and hopefully my platoon.

Cpl Menggong had been awarded the George Medal (Officially they were civilians) with the Manchester Regiment. He had taken charge of a patrol after its Sergeant had been seriously wounded in an action and lead it safely back to base. He was the son of a penghulu (chief), could speak good English, read and write well and was a good map-reader and an excellent tracker. I later used him unofficially as a patrol commander. The men were happy to accept his leadership. In Borneo in 1966 I heard he had risen to become a police inspector in Sarawak.

Pte Dadop on the other hand was a complete jungle man. With his long hair gathered in a pony tail, tribal tattoo at his throat, missing top two front teeth (ceremonially removed), other tattoos on his arms and ankle and amusing manner, in spite of his limited command of English, he was popular with the men who admired his jungle skills. He soon became a cherished favourite of the platoon. Here are some stories of his skills that remain in my memory.

(Insert photo of C Coy Ibans)

Crossing the Torrent

On our way back to camp from a patrol we had spent the morning following in the footsteps of Spencer Chapman, as related in his book the 'Jungle is Neutral' his wartime tale of Force 136, by walking along the top of the large pipeline that brought water to the town of Tanjong Malim. Provided one had a good head for heights, it was sometimes over 20 feet above the ground, it made an easy method of getting through the jungle. It stirred my imagination to think of him doing the same thing in very different and more dangerous circumstances ten years previously. Were we the first British soldiers to do it since then? Somehow I doubted it.

We jumped off the pipeline at a point only 200 yards through a rubber estate to the main road where our transport awaited us. Unfortunately a stream between the rubber and us barred our way. Normally no more than a foot deep it had become a five-foot deep raging torrent thanks to that morning's continuous downpour. There was no way we could get across without being swept away unless we first passed over a rope to hold on to.

I gave orders for all the 6 foot toggle ropes, we each carried one slung on the back of our packs, to be passed forward. I linked them together so the resulting rope was soon more than long enough to reach diagonally to a convenient tree some twenty-five feet away on the opposite bank.

Tying one end to a tree I moved to the riverbank holding the other. The water did look very violent. I

hesitated. Should I take my pack off? Common sense said yes, but that meant coming back again to collect it. While I was pondering this dilemma Dadop, who normally travelled two behind me in the line of march so his tracking skills were readily available, came up to my side.

"Tuan, I go!" He held out his hand for the rope.

"You sure Dadop?'

"OK Tuan. I go."

I gave him the rope and with one bound he leapt into the boiling torrent and disappeared completely below the surface. Suddenly his head broke out of the water. Pushing off the bottom in a huge forward bound he emerged as far down as his waist only to disappear again after taking a deep breath at the top of his bound. Whilst being swept diagonally down stream he repeated the action three more times until he rose grinning onto the far bank.

The rope was soon fastened and with some difficulty the rest of the platoon made their way across hand over hand struggling to keep their footing. Last to cross was the platoon sergeant. He had to hang grimly on to the end of the makeshift line while we hauled him over.

A bit late in the day I asked Dadop if he could swim.

"No Tuan, I not swim, but I cross river many times like that at home."

Dadop's novel technique of bouncing off the bottom was far superior to trying to wade and probably being swept off ones feet. I made a mental note. Fortunately I never needed to use it.

Water at 2500 feet above sea level

A new jungle clearing in the central mountains near the interstate border between Pahang and Selangor had been identified from an air photograph. Our task was to see if terrorists occupied it. It was in a valley up beyond a group of Sakai ladangs (aborigine clearings). If we approached that way it was likely the Sakai would warn the terrorists of our arrival in the area. To give us a better chance of reaching it undetected we had been dropped off that morning by helicopter in an adjoining valley. From there we set off to cross a 3000 foot high ridge and descend on our objective.

Halfway up the ridge an unfit newly arrived Corporal on his first patrol collapsed with heat exhaustion. After a wait for an hour while we took an early lunch it was clear he was a liability and not going to recover enough to complete the climb. So I sent him back to Bentong with a good Lance Corporal and two men as escorts. By the time we had set up the radio and arranged for the invalid to be met at the road head, another hour had gone by. So the approach of nightfall saw us still 500 feet from the top instead of being over the ridge and well down the other side. A convenient spur of level ground provided a rare chance of a suitable spot to base up for the night so I gave the order.

Rarely for Malaya, where it usually rains daily for a good part of the year, it had been a baking hot day with a cloudless sky. Although we had set off with two full water bottles each, most of us had drunk nearly all of it during the arduous climb. There had been no chance to refill as travelling along the ridge meant we had not crossed a single stream. A quick glance at my map showed the nearest stream 500 feet below our position.

With no sign of rain and only an hour until darkness it was unlikely a water party would get that far down and back again before nightfall. We would have to find some creepers or bamboo that contained water. Dadop would know where they might be found. So I sent for him.

"Ayer (water) Dadop, ayer'?"

"No ayer here Tuan"

"Can you find some?"

"Ada (yes), Tuan ada."

I gave orders for all waterbottles to be emptied into mess tins or waterproof bags. The bags were issued to keep ones clothes dry inside ones pack but were equally useful for holding water. The small water party of three men, Dadop and me then formed up; bunches of water bottles clanking as they hung from our belts.

While the water bottles were being collected Dadop had walked round the base area looking at various bushes. Spotting what he wanted, he cut off with a single blow of his parang a thin branch. He then chopped off two pieces each about three inches long.

Dadop leading, I gave the order to move off. He immediately placed the two pieces of wood in the palm of his hand so they formed a V pointing towards his fingers. With his hand held out in front of him he then set off at a fast pace down the side of the ridge. It suddenly dawned on me I was watching the Iban equivalent of water divining. After descending no more than 100 feet he veered off into a slight hollow about 30 feet across between two spurs. Hand still extended he stopped in the middle.

"Dig here Tuan"

We quickly dug down two feet with an entrenching tool and our parangs. The resulting hole soon filled with slightly muddy but drinkable water deep enough to submerge each water bottle in turn until it was full. In half an hour we had finished and were on our way back.

Next morning after another hour of steady climbing we finally reached the summit of the ridge. I was convinced we must be in virtually unexplored territory. I gave the order for a ten minute smoke break, chose a tree at the very highest spot to sit against, there almost buried in the leaves at the base of the tree were four label-less empty beer bottles; end of dreams of being an intrepid explorer.

We found our objective after lunch. It was unoccupied. But even worse I was furious to find from the rubbish they had left behind that it had already been visited by a platoon from A Company who had reported it as being in the next valley over. All that effort for nothing! But that sort of thing happened on operations in Malaya.

Talking to Gibbons

The one sound that takes me straight back to Malaya whenever I hear it on a television nature programme is the haunting echoing whoop whoop from a troop of gibbons as they call to one another across the treetops.

It was midday. I was between ambush sessions resting comfortably beside my basha on a seat I had just constructed from split bamboo. Any fool can be uncomfortable. While enjoying a brew of tea, a troop of gibbons who had been nearby all morning arrived in the tree top some 100 feet above my basha. They were chattering noisily among themselves as they moved around in the branches. I looked up to watch them. Seeing my interest Dadop came over.

"Why are they so noisy Dadop?"

"They are deciding where to go next"

"How do you know that Dadop?"

"I understand them Tuan. I speak to them." I did not believe him.

"Go on then, show me."

He looked up and started to make the same chattering noises at the gibbons above. Every one of the ten or so gibbons in the troop immediately ceased what it was doing and gazed down at us.

Dadop stopped and made some slightly different sounds then paused. A large gibbon in the middle of the group answered. Dadop made some more gibbon noises. The same gibbon chattered again. After a couple more similar exchanges the other gibbons began to move.

"They say they have seen some fruit in another tree. They are going over to it."

Promptly the whole troop moved off in a series of spectacular leaps to a tree some fifty yards away. "See Tuan, I right!"

'Dadop I just don't believe it. You knew what they were likely to do next"

"No Tuan. I listen, I speak."

Lucky Charms?

Round his waist Dadop always wore a rolled up piece of blue cloth tied at the back. From the way it bulged it was clear something was inside. Normally it was concealed under his jacket.

One day we were sitting on a log at the edge of a clearing sunning ourselves stripped to the waist while we waited for the RAF to drop us some more rations. I pointed to the roll and asked him why he wore it.

"I show you Tuan,"

He took off the roll and carefully unrolled it on top of a large tree stump beside me to reveal a series of small packages wrapped in polythene. They were accurately graded by size with the smallest at each end and the largest in the middle.

Unwrapping each one in turn he showed me the contents. Among them there was some balls of moss of different varieties, pieces of lichen, bits of various leaves, iridescent wings from dead insects, small stones, pieces of creeper, dried buds, colourful fragments of shell from freshwater mussels. He laid them neatly in a row.

He asked me for my jungle hat. Working along the row he took a small quantity from a packet and wrapped it in a piece of waterproof paper he tore from the wrappings of the rarely eaten biscuits in our rations. Some he ignored saying: "This one no good for Tuans". I did not like to ask why as he was clearly giving me things that were important to him. Then tucked each mini packet firmly into a loop on the hatband. As he did so he told me what it was for.

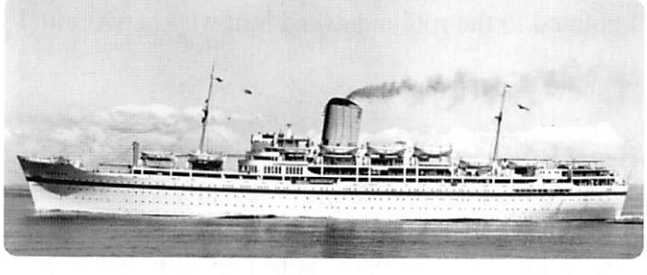
"This one gives you sweet dreams. This one makes the bullets miss you. This one make plenty children. This one keep you strong. This one keep you happy." and so on down the row until he had filled half a dozen loops from his dozen or so little packets.

I kept them there until we left Malaya. They worked!

oOo

1st BATTALION THE BUFFS OPERATIONS AT DHALA, WESTERN ADEN PROTECTORATE 1958

On January 28th 1958, the advance party of 1st Battalion The Buffs, including "A" Coy, of 16 Officers and 240 soldiers under the command of Major Dendy, left the doubtful comfort of Dover Castle for Southampton and duly embarked on SS Nevasa bound for Aden.



SS Nevasa

The main party under command of Major Geoffrey Cox MC, (the Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. E.L.C. Edlmann MC, had flown out to Aden a few days before,) left England on 28th February, entraining at Dover Marine bound for Liverpool to board SS Devonshire. As the train pulled out the Royal Marine band played Auld Lang Syne and the Standards of the Past and Present Association dipped in salute as the Battalion left to undertake, what was to be, their last operational tour.

The day after the main body left England "A" Coy arrived at Dhala. The Emirate of Dhala was then one of 14 such emirates that made up the Western Aden Protectorate. Dhala, an extremely mountainous and rugged country is situated in the North West of the Protectorate. The centre of a rocky plateau 4,500 above sea level, the town is dominated by the vast massif of the Jebel Jihaf which rises to 7,600 feet. The Emirate shared a common frontier of some 50 miles with the Yemen and contained the shortest and only practical motor routes from Yemen to the Colony of Aden.

The Emir of Dhala was advised by a resident British Political Officer. Support for the Emir, the Colonial Government and the defence of the frontier was provided by Tribal Guards who protected the Emir, Government Guards (GGs) who protected the frontier and parts of the interior through a series of forts and finally Aden Protectorate Levies, supported by British troops who maintained a reserve in fortified camps at Dhala.

The main party arrived in Aden on March 19th and the Battalion was once again complete. The main role of the Bn. was one of Internal Security and although

Two Bedford 3 Tonners negotiating the Kureiba Pass

the Colony had been quiet for some time. President Nasser of Egypt was doing his utmost to destabilise the region. He found a willing party in the Yemen and was supplying Russian arms to them in quantity. The Yemenis needed very little encouragement to make trouble, in particular in the area of Dhala.

Dhala Garrison was, apart from small items flown in by Pembroke aircraft, resupplied every fortnight by convoy along the "Dhala Road", the term "road" is used in its widest possible sense. In most cases it was a rutted track along boulder strewn wadis. The hills overlooking the road had to be picquetted along the whole route. The trip to Dhala from Aden and back took three days and was exhausting for the drivers. The REME mechanics, under the indefatigable Sgt. Jimmy Arnold REME, somehow kept the wheels turning and with the aid of their trusty Scammel were known to tow as many as six vehicles at a time. The biggest challenge for drivers, mechanics and passengers as well, was the navigation of the Kureiba pass that led directly onto the Dhala plateau.

In Gregory Blaxland's book "The Farewell Years" he describes this pass thus *"a hideous drop grimaced at the men immediately below the unprotected road side, to get round some of the bends the lorries had to go alarmingly into reverse for a second bite."*

In late April trouble started and a general strike was declared in Aden but despite this a very colourful Queen's Birthday parade was held as planned which included Aden Levies mounted on camels. The parade was commanded by Lt. Col. Edlmann MC and the Battalion colours were dipped in salute to the Queen's deputy, The Governor, Sir William Luce.

Meanwhile at Dhala the end of Ramadan signalled a rapid deterioration in the situation. From the Yemen Haidera Bin Nasr, the ex Emir of Dhala who had been removed in 1947, declared himself head of the "Liberation Army". Yemeni regular troops started to infiltrate across the border and established themselves on the high Jihaf plateau. Local tribesmen joined Haidera as did elements of the Tribal Guard force. Whilst this was developing, on April 19th the Political Officer, Mr. Fitzroy Somerset, left Dhala for the fort at As Sarir on the Jihaf plateau to negotiate with the local tribesmen. Despite coming under rifle fire he reached the fort which was manned by 53 Government Guards. Once inside the fort he was soon besieged by considerable numbers of dissident tribesmen. These irregulars were supported by members of the Royal Yemeni Army - the "Army of Liberation." had arrived.

Several attempts were made to relieve the fort along the old Turkish Road. On April 27th a further relief was attempted along the same route but opposition was too strong and it was obvious that a strong assault would have to be mounted.

There were only two routes from Dhala to the high Jihaf plateau. A direct but almost sheer climb of over 2,000 feet along a narrow path through a crevasse dominated by precipitous cliffs on both sides along its entire length, or by the old Turkish Road which was the old trade route. It was decided that the crevasse route was just about possible providing a diversionary attack could be launched along the Turkish Road which would draw most of the dissidents to that side of the plateau.

At the start of these operations the Dhala Garrison consisted of:

3 Coy. Group.1 APL

"A" Company Group I Buffs

2 Troops of Armoured Cars "B" Sqn. 13/18 Hussars

1 Section 41 Para Lt. Btty R.A.

By Monday 28th April reinforcements had been organised and the following troops had been assembled, moved and deployed for the forthcoming operation.

FORT AS SARIR:

Political Officer with 53 Government Guards.

DHALA:

Tac HQ. 1 K.S.L.I.

"B" & "C" Coys of 1 K.S.L.I.

"A" Coy 1 Buffs with support weapons.

3 Coy 1 A.P.L. with Support weapons

Two dets. 106mm RCL. 1 Buffs

Two tps. "B" Sqn. 13/18 Hussars

One sec. 41 Para. Lt. Bty RA

Det. 15 Fd. Amb.

ADEN:

(Reserve and to secure the Dhala road)

1 Yorks & Lancs.

7 Coy. 3 A.P.L.

Two tps. Life Guards.

ROYAL AIR FORCE:

(Air forces allotted to support the ground action)

2 Shackleton Bombers

8 Sqn. Venoms

84 Sqn. Valettas

Station Flight Kormaksar(Pioneers, Pembrokes, Helicopter)

Two Air Liaison Officers of 8 Sqn. were moved to Dhala.

THE PLAN:

The immediate plan was to establish a strong force on the Jihaf massif and to relieve the Political Officer and Government Guards locked in at Fort As Sarir. Enemy forces were strong in numbers and the ground extremely difficult.

DECEPTION FORCE:

"C" Company K.S.L.I. supported by one troop of armoured cars, a section of 3" mortars loaded on camels from 1 Buffs together with one of the Battalion's 106 R.C.L. The force, which was assembled on the day before the attack, was supplemented with a large camel train. On the actual day they were to advance at H minus 2 hours along the Turkish Road to draw the maximum number of enemy forces on the Jihaf away from the main assault route ie via the crevasse on the North East side of the Jihaf.

At 05.15 hrs on 30th April, the deception force moved off and advanced towards the start of the Turkish Road. The movement of such a force created great interest and before the force had cleared the town of Dhala was already coming under fire. Instead of continuing along the road the force, with the covering fire from the armoured cars and our own 3" mortars, scaled the ridge overlooking the road which outflanked the enemy forces who started to withdraw to alternative positions.

THE MAIN ASSAULT:

At 08.00 hrs the leading company, 3 Coy. A.P.L. crossed the start line and started the tortuous climb, which became increasingly steep, in single file, up the crevasse. Initially it looked as if the deception attack had worked as the column drew little or no fire but by 08.45 increasing numbers of enemy snipers were bring their fire to bear and the leading troops had several soldiers shot at very close range. There was absolutely no room for any fire and movement, the track being too narrow. By this time the enemy had started to hurl boulders over the top of the ridge and a few more soldiers were injured.

At 09.00 hrs "A" Coy, 1 Buffs under Major Graham Semmence crossed the start line with 1 Pl. leading followed by Coy. H.Q., 2 Pl. 3" Mortar section, an MMG section and 3 Pl. Apart from carrying its own support weapons the Buffs carried wireless stations, spare batteries, extra ammunition, 24 hour rations and each man carried two 3" mortar bombs or a liner of MMG ammunition as well as any container that could hold water.

By 09.40 hrs "A" Coy came under fire from the left hand spur overlooking the track. The company was in the open, in single file with little or no cover. There was no alternative but to keep moving. Four men were hit and eventually the company reached some shelter in a rocky outcrop.

"A" Coy crossing the 'Start Line"

By this time the leading A.P.L. Coy had been reduced to 21 men and little ammunition. Several uniformed Yemeni regulars were seen breaking cover and were duly despatched.

Having reached some cover "A" Coy were ordered to return fire whilst Major Semmence moved his Coy. H.Q. to try and get a better overview of the situation. This movement soon attracted more than its fair share of attention. A bren group from 2 Pln. moving to a better fire position seemed, in the words of an eyewitness, "to be skipping bullets all the way".

A Buff Vickers Machine Gun in support

The advance continued, the intense claustrophobic heat in the narrow crevasse brought the first cases of heat exhaustion and by this time the heavily laden men were extremely weary and the really steep ascent had only just started.

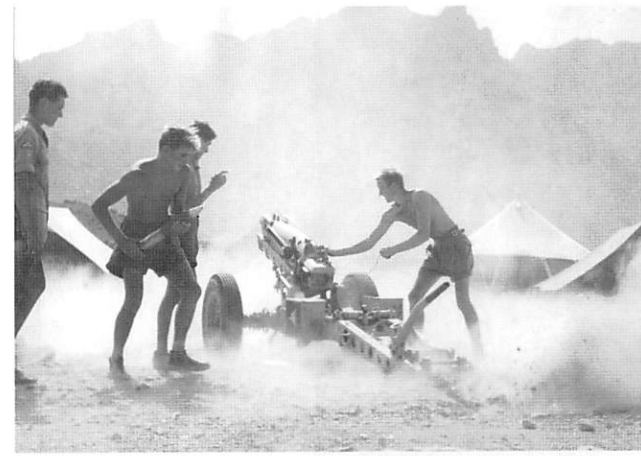
The advance was held up again, albeit for a short time, by the evacuation of a Levy who had been shot in both legs and one who had a serious head wound.

Finally the Levies, under Major Boucher-Myers gained the head of the pass after a tough and costly fight against many determined tribesmen which included Yemeni regulars. From that position the ground fell away towards the village of Shima.

After a reconnaissance by Majors' Semmence and Boucher-Myers it was agreed that 1 Pln. of "A" Coy, under Lt. R.T.P. Williams should seize the peak of Dar Al Khan from which fire was still coming. After a brief rest the platoon fixed bayonets and advanced under fire from both Shima and Dar Al Khan. RAF Venom's provided support and 1Pln. reached their objective to find that the enemy had fled.

2 Pln. under Lt. J R Reid were tasked with occupying the high peak above Shima and by 16.30 hrs the occupation of the head of the pass was complete. The Levies then advanced to relieve Fort As Sarir which was duly achieved at 18.15 hours. Throughout the advance the RAF Venoms had been straffing enemy positions and the mountain howitzers of the Para RA provided excellent support as did "A" Coy's MMG section under Sgt. Bill Histed.

One of the wounded Buffs, Private K. Marsh, a National Serviceman, died from his wounds a few days later, a loss that was felt by the entire company, especially his comrades in 1Pln.



Mountain Howitzers firing in support

Just before last light "A" Coy Group received an air drop resupply from RAF Valettas. A lot of the parachutes drifted over the lip of the escarpment and their loads could not be recovered and it was not until midnight that those loads that could be reached were collected. Even with the welcome supplies there were nowhere near enough blankets to go around and at over 7,000 ft above sea level the low night time temperatures denied much sleep to the exhausted soldiers dressed in thin Khaki Drill.

The following day the Buffs, from their lofty platform, enjoyed a grandstand view of RAF Shackletons bombing the Yemeni barracks at Kataba just a few miles away. That same day the Company received a very welcome visit by the Battalion's Commanding Officer, Lt. Col. E. L. C. Edlmann MC.

Over the next few days "A" Company with a platoon of Levies and a group of Government Guards started search operations mopping up any rebellious

tribesmen still hiding in the crags and local villages. The culmination of these operations was a cordon and search on the village of Shaab on the towering Jebel Jimjam. This was a very difficult operation and soon desolved into a fire fight. A section of 2 Pln. took over a position from a section of Government Guards, who then attacked an enemy sangar on the opposite ridge. During this attack the GG's lost two men killed and several wounded. It was during this engagement that the Buff section spotted and engaged a group of enemy at a range of 1,500 yards. At least one of the

"A" Coy. leaving Dhala
2 Platoon in the rear vehicle

enemy was hit and when the area was revisited later the same day freshly dug graves could be seen surrounded by armed tribesmen who had just buried one or more of their comrades. The FOO of the para artillery was asked to range his guns onto this group, which he did, the first round scoring a direct hit, dead centre of the group, inflicting more casualties.

On May 12th "A" Company handed over their positions to a company of KSLI and returned to camp at Dhala. After a further cordon and search operation they left Dhala on 20th May.

At Fort Tumier, halfway to Aden Colony, they met "B" Coy who were to relieve them. "B" Coy carried on the work of rounding up any remaining insurgents and also took part in several operations close to the Yemeni border. On one of these occasions a night ambush party under Lt. Mallalieu killed one insurgent and captured a second. They then came under considerable fire from across the border, miraculously suffering no casualties and equipment damage was limited to a few holes in their vehicles.

'A' Coy at Fort Tumier on their way back to Aden

"C" Coy took over from "B" Coy. at Dhala, on 28th September. They in turn enjoyed some excitement being shot up at night on more than one occasion.

On February 11th 1959, 1st Battalion The Buffs embarked on SS Dilwara, the same day that the Aden Protectorate became a Federation. On February 27th the Dilwara berthed at Southampton and The Buffs were home.

So ended the last operational tour for a Regiment that had such a long history of service to the country. A tour during which they Trooped their Colours for the last time. A tour which also signalled the last of many historical events in the life of the Regiment. The last time that a unit of the British Army went into action with the old and well trusted weapons of the last war; the Lee Enfield 303 rifle, 3" Mortar, Vickers Machine Guns etc. and the last Campaign Medal, GSM "Arabian Peninsular" to be earned by the Regiment. And finally during the assault on the Jebel Jihaf the Regiment suffered its last casualty, killed as a result of enemy action, Private Keith Marsh.

(In the preparation of this article information was drawn from The Farewell Years by Gregory Blaxland, The Infantryman August 1958, The Dragon and other sources. The Editor).

LAST POST

WILLIAM (JEFF) H. BRIDGMAN

Jeff died on 8th January 2004 aged 97. Born on 1st December 1906 in North London he was the eldest of 3 brothers and a sister and outlived them all. He signed up, at the earliest opportunity, in The Buffs.

Before the outbreak of World War 11 the Regiment was posted to Burma and it was there that he met his wife, Pat. At the time they met she was still at school but in due time they married in Lucknow, India in 1937. They also spent time in Palestine where their eldest daughter was born and sadly later died.

In later life, after Jeff had left the army, he would often travel to Canterbury for Regimental reunions and those occasions were always a great source of pride and joy for him. He was thrilled when he met Diana, Princess of Wales when she presented new colours to the regiment in the mid 1990's

The transition from army life to civilian life was not easy for Jeff but he soldiered on and he eventually started work for Sanderson Wallpapers where he stayed for 25 years and enjoyed a successful second career. Jeff and Pat had a strong Christian faith and were among those who were responsible for the establishing and building of Northolt Grange Baptist Church in the late 1950' and early 60's. Jeff became Captain of The Boys' Brigade company at the church and Pat was a Sunday school teacher for many years.

In the late 80's Pat became ill and in 1991 lost her brave battle against cancer. On his own Jeff found the Church to be a lifeline for him- a place of fellowship and support. Always fiercely independent and well turned out Jeff was a quiet and unassuming man. He was respected and highly regarded by all who knew him.

It was his depth of character that enabled him to 'soldier on' through periods of ill health and loneliness. He passed away quickly, without having been ill or having to go to hospital which he would have hated.

At his funeral on 21st January, the family were overwhelmed when members of the London Buffs Branch attended with their Standard Bearer. It meant that at the end of his very long life he had the funeral he would have wanted. He would have been immensely proud.

MAJOR STANLEY W. BILLETT

1933-2004

Stan enlisted into the Buffs at Shorncliffe in 1951 and after basic training and normal fatigues was posted to the 1st Battalion The Buffs. From there he was sent out to Egypt after King Farouk was deposed. During the tour he served at Port Said, Port Suez and Tel-el-Kebir.

In 1953 he was again on his travels, this time off to Kenya. A total of 20 months was spent in and around this part of the world. Three years later brought new changes, he married Margaret, had reached the rank of Sergeant and was posted to Wuppertal Germany, (BAOR). In 1957 he was posted to 5 Buffs Volunteer Battalion (V) in Ramsgate. Kent. Military speaking this was a particularly mundane 2 years with the exception of the birth of his first child Teresa, and learning to drive!

In 1959 the boxes were packed again and Stan was promoted to Colour Sergeant (CSgt) and posted back to 1 Buffs serving in Dortmund Germany (BAOR). This was a brief stay and in 1960 he returned to Shorncliffe. 1960 also saw the amalgamation of regiments and battalions. The Buffs were amalgamated with the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment to become 1 Queen's Own Buffs. The down side to this was that all those not in substantive ranks had to revert, so CSgt Billett, again became Sergeant Billett. In 1962 the battalion was posted to Colchester and he was promoted back to CSgt. In mid 1964 Stan was off to British Guiana, only to be flown back one week later as the move had been aborted. However,

two weeks later he was on his way back again to Georgetown, British Guiana and during the flight he was promoted to Warrant Officer Class 2 (WO2) and appointed Company Sergeant Major Headquarters Company (CSM HQ Coy). After 10 months of patrols and acquiring a taste for local rum, Stan returned to Colchester and later in 1965 with his family moved to Hong Kong.

During a two year tour of Hong Kong, Margaret and Stan had their second child Michael. Indeed, when Michael was born Stan was on active service during the Hong Kong riots. This was a busy time as he also spent 6 months in Borneo. During this time 1 Queen's Own Buffs became The 2nd Battalion the Queen's Regiment with the suffix Queen's Own Buffs. In 1967 the now Billett foursome was posted to Canterbury and Stan took up the post of Depot Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant (RQMS).

In 1970. Stan was selected for a Short Service Commission into the Queen's Regiment. (from W02 to 2nd Lieutenant and was posted to 1 Queen's in Berlin. In 1972 the battalion returned to Bulford. Hampshire and later entered the Northern Ireland scene. This was comparatively early in the Northern Ireland "troubles" and the Battalion was deployed to Belfast. In 1975 BAOR beckoned again, this time the Soest area.

In 1976 Stan was selected for a Regular Commission and having completed the normal Quarter Master (QM) and Messing Officers' courses joined 3 Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) in Ballykinler, Northern Ireland. Stan's daughter, Teresa also joined 3UDR. Stan thoroughly enjoyed his time there and it was with reluctance that he had to return to the Regular Army, returning to 2 Queen's as QM in Gibraltar for 6 months. Although a busy six months followed as a family they holidayed in Morocco, Casablanca and Marakesh, not to mention the day trips to Tangiers.

Later that year, (1979) the Battalion returned to Colchester and the normal UK routine was broken up with a United Nations tour to Cyprus. After four years in Colchester Stan was posted to 5 Queen's (V). the Territorial Army Battalion in Canterbury. Towards the end of 1985 Stan was asked for his preferred job for his final two years of service. He requested an extension with 5 Queen's (V), but this was not agreed by Queen's Division and he gave notice.

On the 31 December 1985, Stan retired from the British Army. He then went on to work for Head Quarters London District as a Retired Officer Grade 3 until his retirement in 2000. He was 67.

Stan was a particular man with an eye for detail and was a fountain of knowledge to his friends and family. Outside of work Stan listed his interests as reading, military history, crosswords, model making and DIY. He was much loved by all his family and will be sadly missed by all that knew him.

He is survived by his wife of 47 years Margaret, his daughter Teresa, son Michael and grandchildren Michael, Dharma and Torin.

Michael Owens, Grandson.
Royal Engineers.

DOUGLAS WILLIAM CLIST

Doug, a member of the Sittingbourne Branch, died suddenly on 9 February 2004.

He was born at Aldershot on 28 April, 1919, one of five children - 3 brothers and 2 sisters. Sadly his sister Helen passed away a week before his own death.

On leaving school he worked for Timothy Whites, the chemists. Doug joined the T/A in 1939 serving in the Hampshire Regiment. The regiment was stationed in Kent near Sittingbourne, where he met his future wife Edna. They were married in 1942 and had two daughters, Yvonne and Rita, also four grandchildren and last year a great-granddaughter. Doug served in Tunisia, Italy and finally in Greece. On his demobilisation he rejoined his old firm and became a shop opener. He worked for them and subsequently on its take-over, for Boots until his retirement.

Sadly Edna died in 1990. They had a very close marriage and Doug felt the loss very keenly. After three lonely years he decided to join the Royal British Legion for company, he was persuaded to join the Queens Own Buffs Regimental Association. A regular attender at meetings, he went on the social outings, also all the re-unions at Canterbury and Maidstone and the annual visits to Ypres. Unfortunately he had not attended a meeting for the past year owing to ill health.

PETER WILFRED KENT

Peter, a member of the Sittingbourne Branch, died on 30 January 2004, aged 65.

Peter had seen service in the Royal Sussex Regiment. A loyal member of the Queen's Own Buffs Regimental Association he attended meetings regularly and went on most of the parades and re-unions, also enjoying the social occasions.

Peter was born at Lynsted and lived there and afterwards at Teynham next door. A carpenter by trade he worked for several local firms and at his retirement only a very short while ago he was in charge of the maintenance unit at the Sittingbourne Research Centre.

He was one of three brothers who lived together. Peter never married but had a full life. A keen footballer he played for several teams including Teynham and Lynsted and Sittingbourne Wednesday.

JACK FAKLEY

Major Geoffrey Cox MC writes:

I was distressed to learn recently that Jack had died. I first met him when he was a Sergeant in the Anti-Tank Platoon of 5th Bn. The Buffs in North Africa in 78 Division. Later he was commissioned into the Regiment. He was a keen cricketer and after the war played regularly during the Regimental Cricket Week at the Depot. He was very proud of being a "Buff" and for many years was a stalwart member of the Hythe and Folkestone Branch of the Past and Present Association. He was a very loyal supporter of the annual Remembrance Service in Canterbury Cathedral, in later years still attending but by then wheelchair bound.

He will be very much missed.

EGC

WILLIAM (BILL) WALTER FOSTER

Sadly Bill Foster died on 15th January 2004, in his 82nd year. He had been unwell for a long time, including a lengthy time in hospital. Bill joined the Cadet Battalion, The Middlesex Regiment, in Hornsey, Greater London early in 1937 at the age of 15. When World War 11 broke out he enlisted into The Buffs in 1940 and joined 70th Battalion(Young Soldiers). Later he was posted to 5th Buffs and served with them in North Africa, Sicily and Italy. During the Italian campaign he was admitted to hospital in Florence suffering from frostbite, which indicates some of the extreme climatical conditions which prevailed in that very tough campaign. He was with the battalion as part of 36 Infantry Brigade of 78th Battleaxe Division in Austria where he finished his wartime service as a senior NCO.

After the war he joined the Metropolitan Police in which he served for 26 years during which time he was awarded The Police Medal. 12 years of his police service was spent in The Flying Squad during which he was involved in the investigation of The Great Train Robbery.

In 1975 he joined The Middlesex & NW Section of The Army Cadet Force and was posted to 218 Barnet Detachment as an Under Officer. Within a year he took over the 212 Wembley Detachment, eventually becoming a Staff Officer at 21 Group HQ.

On retiring from the Cadets, he continued in a voluntary capacity to train them in map reading and compass work. He was awarded the Cadet Force Medal in 1987 when he was a Captain.

Bill was a splendid soldier in every way, a good leader who possessed a quiet sense of humour. He was very proud of being a Buff and of being part of 78th Battleaxe Division. For many years he served on the committee of The Battleaxe Club until it was disbanded in 2000.

His funeral took place at Marylebone Crematorium on 23rd January 2004 and was attended by many mourners. In addition to the family there were representatives from The Police Force, The Army Cadet Force and Probus. A guard of honour was provided by The 78th Divisional Association and members of the Regimental Association. The Standard Bearer of The London Branch of The Buffs was also on parade.

Bill was a true and loyal comrade who will be greatly missed. Our sincere sympathy goes out to his wife Billee and his son Nigel.

EGC

MAJOR R J S (REGGIE) MORGAN MC

Reggie was born and educated in Ramsgate and was destined for a career as a Local Government Officer, first with Ramsgate Local Education Office and then as Chief Clerk at Dover in 1939, when his major task was the evacuation of school children. Hitler put an end to that and Reggie enlisted in The Buffs; after service in the ranks he was posted in 1941 from 166 OCTU to 10 Buffs on commissioning. The Battalion was in Devon working on beach defences and Reggie had his first encounter with the Vickers Machine Gun; each platoon area had one of these as well as other weapons including a vintage 6" Mortar.

Reggie was subsequently posted to the 1st Battalion arriving in the Western Desert in March 1942. Reggie commanded the MMG Platoon and took part in the July and August battles during which he was awarded the Military Cross for his gallantry, the citation reads:

"On the morning of 24th October 42, as dawn broke, the 3 RTR Group were concentrated in the gap in the enemy minefield and being subjected to heavy shell fire and A/T fire.

2/Lt Morgan was commanding a "Floating Punch" of one section MMG and a section of carriers, in front of the Group with the Crusader Squadron.

Despite the fact that he was in an unamoured vehicle he managed to push his MMG section forward onto the Miteiriya Ridge with the forward elements of the Crusader Squadron and brought his guns to bear on the ridge in front.

Although he was being subjected to heavy shell, MMG and mortar fire, he coolly selected his targets and killed all the crew of a German 88mm A/Tk gun at a range of 1,500 yards, thereby assisting the Crusaders to establish themselves on the ridge.

His action drew heavy mortar fire which knocked out his MG truck behind him and wounded all his NCO's but he himself remained directing fire and withdrew to reorganise only when ordered to do so.

2/Lt Morgan was then ordered to take forward his second MMG section to engage German Infantry in front. This section under the Pln. Sgt. was blown up on the minefield, but 2/Lt Morgan collected one gun off the destroyed lorry and took it up with the men on his bantam vehicle. This time he went forward to our own tanks, under heavy fire and firing the MG himself, he killed at least six of the crew of a second 88mm German gun.

This was the first time that this Officer had been in action and he behaved with such rare coolness, setting a great example to his men, which, in the words of the Commander of 3 RTR "probably saved 12 of our tanks from destruction". Throughout the following days 2/Lt Morgan continued to behave with complete indifference to danger, inspiring all ranks."

His decoration was personally presented to him by General Montgomery.

Reggie remained with the Battalion until wounded at Tarhuna in January 1943. On recovery he was posted to Middle East Infantry Training Depot and then to the Depot at El Ballah on the Suez Canal. Reggie returned to the UK in 1944 and was appointed Staff Captain(A) at HQ East Kent Sub District.

After the war he returned to his pre-war employment with the Kent Education Committee initially at Folkestone and subsequently at Thanet where he joined 4 Buffs (TA) and was later posted as a founder member of 5 Buffs (TA) on its formation in 1956 where he commanded HQ Coy. at Westwood TA Centre, Broadstairs.

The call of the army was too great and Reggie eventually left civilian employment and was appointed Administrative Officer 5 Buffs (TA). He took over the roll of Adjutant in 1959 and his first task was the Presentation of Colours by King Frederik IX of Denmark. He remained as adjutant until 5 Buffs was disbanded in 1967. He went on in the same role to form 7 Queens (TA) at Broadstairs, Deal and Folkestone only to face the disbandment of that Battalion in March 1969. On retirement he was appointed Knight of Danebrog.

Reggie then returned to civilian life but became Adjutant of the newly formed 7 Queens (V) at Horsham where he remained on the amalgamation of 6 and 7 Queens (V). In total a remarkable history of 34 years service.

Reggie was married to June for more years than either ever cared to admit. June always provided him with the perfect support and home that any man could wish for. Their marriage was blessed with two daughters and in 1979 the family moved to Poole in preparation for retirement.

In a profile published in The Queen's Regimental Journal in December 1979 *"Reggie has been respected by all- Commanding Officers and recruits alike; always the perfect gentleman and a complete master of his art. He has been the guardian of the Battalion and the saviour of many a troubled officer with his incredible recall of TA and TAVR Regulations and his manipulation of the many systems."*

The profile goes on to say *"It is very difficult to thank a man who has given so much to the Volunteers and who has so undoubtedly loved his work and its cause; nevertheless, we salute him and are all proud to have served with him."*

Reggie had a very happy retirement in Dorset and died in Poole on 17th February 2004, the day after his 84th birthday. He is survived by his wife June, two daughters Anne and Carolyn and two grand daughters Kate and Anna.

Mrs AC Marchant
(Daughter)

SIR JAMES COLYN-FERGUSSON Bt.

The 4th and last Baronet of Spitalhaugh, Sir James died on 9th January 2004, after a short illness, in his 87th year.

He had been commissioned into The Buffs (TA) in 1939, and was a platoon commander in the 4th Battalion which was in Western France in November that year. When the Germans invaded Belgium on 10th May 1940 the Battalion was moved to the area of Rouen, and came into action in early June against the German armoured divisions on the coast near St. Valery, alongside the 51st Highland Division. James Colyn-Fergusson was among those taken prisoner, spending the rest of the war in POW camps in Germany.

In captivity, when gramophone records were available, his talent as an amateur musicologist contributed much to the benefit of his fellow music-lovers. After the war he became an assistant to Dr. Beeching in the reorganisation of the national rail network. He did not marry.

ELCE

(Note: The following obituary has only just come into my possession hence the tardiness of its publication. The Editor)

CAPTAIN JOHN WALKER WRIGHT MC (ROYAL ENGINEERS)

An Officer who inspired his men at Kohima, but, failed to amuse Montgomery by demanding proof of his identity. Captain John Wright, who died aged 80 on 31st May 2002. He was awarded the MC in 1944 for his courage and inspiring leadership at the battle of Kohima. Kohima, a struggling town of timber huts in the Assam Hills, perched on the saddle of a 500 ft. ridge between mountain ranges, saw some of the bitterest-close quarter fighting in the Second World War. The town, together with Imphal, was the objective of the Japanese offensive, code-named "U-GO", aimed at forestalling the Allied drive into Northern Burma. If it had been successful, it might have led to the invasion of India. The fortitude of the heavily outnumbered 161st Indian Infantry Brigade in standing firm during the fifteen day siege was to prove a turning point in the Burma campaign.

On April 7th, Wright, then a Lieutenant commanding a section of the 2nd Field Company, Indian Engineers, received a call for support from Captain Donald Eastern, a Company Commander with the 4th Battalion, Royal West Kent Regiment. An assault by two companies of the Royal West Kents to clear Detail Hill to the south of Kohima had left a hard core of Japanese troops still holding out in a large building which was identified as a bakery. The building, with one brick wall and three bamboo walls under a tin roof, with slits for windows and containing six ovens, kept the Japanese relatively safe from grenades or automatic fire, whilst providing them with a deadly coverage of the Royal West Kents positions. The only way in which to dislodge them, Wright and Eastern decided, was to destroy the walls. Wright tied 22 slabs of gun cotton to a light-weight door and added a

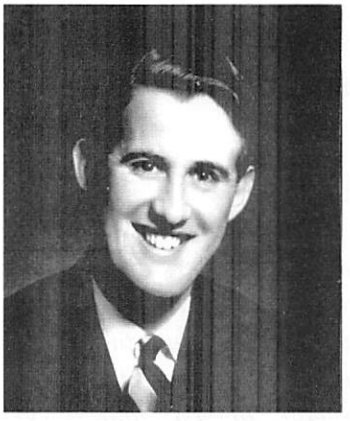
detonator and fuse, He and Eastern then charged up the hill carrying the door, slammed it against the brick wall that backed onto the ovens, ignited the fuse and ran back. A tremendous explosion resulted, and the survivors bolted from the building into the waiting guns of the Royal West Kents.

On April the 9th and 10th a succession of assaults, preceded by a heavy artillery bombardment, brought the enemy to within 20 yards of the garrison. Wright and his section were holding part of the perimeter when it came under intense gun and mortar fire causing trenches and dug-outs to collapse. Disregarding the shelling, Wright rallied his men, though dazed from the bombardment, they beat off the attack that followed. He was wounded later in the siege and after blood poisoning was hardly able to use his hands. He continued, nevertheless to keep up the morale of his men and to steady other detachments of troops that had lost their officers. He was awarded an immediate MC.

John Walker Wright was born on April the 12th, he went to 2 Training Battalion Royal Engineers at Ripon before going to OCTU at Aldershot. He was granted an Emergency Commission in the Royal Engineers and, a year later, after transferring to the King George V's Bengal Sappers and Miners, he was posted to Roorkee, India. Later he joined the Indian Engineers at Ruweisai Ridge where his unit was deployed in strengthening the British positions in the centre of the Alamein Line. At the battle of Alam Halfa and El Alamein his company was deployed as Assault Engineers. On one occasion whilst driving through the desert he came across a Humber Staff car which had broken down, the driver was peering under the bonnet whilst the officer, in a General's uniform, was striding up and down, and giving every indication of bad temper. Wright did not recognise Monty (who had only just taken over the 8th Army) and insisted that the General produced some identification before he would tow his car. Monty's brusqueness rankled with Wright, and on the return journey he deliberately took a short cut, off road, at a brisk pace enveloping his companions in clouds of dust.

After the Burma Campaign. John worked for the Public Works Department in Malaya, the World Bank and on United Nations development projects. He retired to Gloucestershire in1991 to a house atop a hill overlooking Stroud which he built himself.

LT. PETER O. R. GATEHOUSE



Peter Gatehouse died peacefully in a Salisbury nursing home on Sunday 7th March 2004, aged 73.

He was born in Simla, India, the second son of a serving officer in the Indian Cavalry. He was sent home to England for his education, which included prep school at Bigshotte in Crowthorne in 1941, followed by public school at Wellington College, Berkshire.

He was in the Fencing VIII at Wellington for three years, and then fenced for the RMA Sandhurst for two years, being Captain of Fencing in his last term. He won the Individual Foils Championship for the Army at the Royal Tournament, Olympia in 1950. He was a full Blue both in Fencing and in the Modern Pentathlon Team (Horse Riding, Fencing, Pistol Shooting, Middle Distance Swimming and Cross Country Running.) He was promoted to Cadet Sergeant ; he passed out in the Top Twenty of his intake ; and he was awarded an Officer Cadet Scholarship Prize. He was a member of the Colour Party on his Passing Out Parade. He was commissioned into The Buffs.

He obtained an A (Outstanding) grading on a Small Arms Course at the School of Infantry. Hythe and was therefore due to return to the school as an instructor. He then got an above average result on a 3 inch Mortar Course at Netheravon. He was clearly a promising young officer.

He saw active service in Egypt in 1952, and in the following year he carried the Regimental Colour as part of a detachment commanded by Major Geoffrey Cox, MC at the Coronation of HM Queen Elizabeth.

In 1953 he was posted to 1st Bn The Buffs in Kenya at the time of the Mau Mau troubles. There, when on patrol at a height of some 11,000 feet in the thick jungle country of the Aberdare Mountains, he was involved in a friendly fire incident with a member of his own patrol, and received severe gunshot wounds to the head. His body was seen from the air by the pilot of a spotter aircraft, and an all officer party was

-despatched to carry him back to the battalion. He was initially paralysed down the right hand side, and rendered speechless. He was flown from hospital in Nairobi to the UK for further surgery at the Wheatley Hospital in Oxford, and for treatment at Headington Hill Hall.

He spent a period attempting to recover from the effects of his wounds, largely through his own determined efforts, and in 1958 he joined the Bank of England to start a second career, mainly in the Stock Registrar Department.

In 1960 he married Juliet Wright from Folkestone. They had a son, James, and a daughter, Elizabeth. They lived initially in Seal, until they moved to Sevenoaks. They separated in 1970, and divorced in 1976. For a time Peter set up home with his mother.

In 1988 Peter retired from the Bank and he married Mary Darnell. They lived in Sevenoaks and in Frant, until eventually settling in a cottage in the Wiltshire village of Steeple Langford.

Peter remained a keen and enthusiastic Buff throughout his life, and he was one of the first post war regular officers to visit the site of the Battle of Albuhera. This and subsequent visits can be said to have sparked off the present interest of the forebear regiments in the battlefield, where a Regimental Memorial has now been erected to commemorate their part in the battle.

After he was wounded Peter's interests included Military History, particularly that of the Peninsular War period, and music. He owned a collection of many tapes of opera music, and all of the symphonies of his favourite composer, Joseph Haydn.

In July 2003 Peter suffered a debilitating stroke, the effects of which left him with little hope of recovery. He carried on cheerfully and with characteristic determination, however, until he died on 7th March 2004, exactly 22 years to the day after his mother.

His funeral took place at All Saints Church, Steeple Langford, Wiltshire on Tuesday 26th March, in glorious springlike weather and was attended by many friends and relatives including his wife Mary and several of Peter's regimental friends and colleagues.

After the funeral the officer who took over Peter's platoon when he was wounded wrote a perceptive and moving letter to say that he considered it was a funeral fifty years delayed, *"and what marvellous and gallant use Peter made of the fifty years granted him."* Peter married twice, and was a grandfather four times over. He overcame the worst of his injuries to make a second career for himself. "What a triumph it was for him!"

HG

C.S.M. FREDERICK GEORGE (BILL) BRADSHAW.

Bill Bradshaw passed away on January 7th 2004,aged 86 after a very short illness.

Born on 1st December 1919 Bill joined the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment at the age of 15, he had added on a couple of years of course. He served for 25 years and was a "Desert Rat" in the North African campaign. Later he served in the Special Air Service (SAS) in Malaya before returning to the Regiment.

Bill married his wife Sylvia on August 3rd 1944 and they had three children, Pat was born in 1947, Wayne in 1952 and the youngest, Christina, in 1962. When Christina was born Bill decided that her initials should be C.S.M. and so she was christened Christina Sylvia Margarita, and so to her day her signature is - C S M Bradshaw.

In the summer of 1990 Pat was tragically killed in a car crash. This had a profound effect on Bill, Sylvia and the rest of the family.

After his service Bill and Sylvia ran a pub in Gravesend, "The Prince Albert" from where they moved in 1975.

Always the most active of men, at 83 years of age he re-roofed a friends house and could often be found high up in a tree pruning the branches with a chain saw. He could even do the splits when he was well into his 60's.

Bill's funeral was a very special event, he had donated his body to medical science and he was agnostic. So it was farewell with a difference. Apart from his family, many of his friends and service colleagues attended and contributed to the atmosphere. Major John Norton, Revd Tug Wilson, Brian Kemp's rendition of "When this bloody war is over" was memorable in itself as were the humourous stories from Arthur Fricker in Australia and ex WO Ernie Dix.

Bill was an amazing man in many ways he had enormous will power and determination, quite fearless with a gentle side. He loved animals had a fantastically dry sense of humour always ready to tell a story against himself. Bill had a deep and abiding loyalty to his family, friends and Regiment and he will be sorely missed by all who knew him.

C.S.M. Bradshaw
(Daughter)

ARTHUR (CHARLIE) BRYANT

Charlie was born in Maidstone on 30th January 1913, the second youngest of fourteen children. His father, a railway worker, enlisted in the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry and served in France throughout the First World War reaching the rank of sergeant. Charlie attended St. Michael's All Angels School, Maidstone and at the age of 14 left school to make his way in the world.

In 1931 he enlisted the Royal Army Medical Corps (TA) in Maidstone but after trying his hand at several jobs over the following two years, in 1933 he volunteered for service in the regular army. Initially turned down by The Royal West Kent Regiment, as he was considered to be too short, he went to Canterbury to try his luck with The Buffs, this time he was successful. After basic training at the depot in Wemyss Barracks he was posted to Burma to join 'B Coy' of the 1st Battalion. In 1936 the battalion was sent to Lucknow in India remaining there until 1938 when they were sent to Palestine. After just over the year in Palestine it was off to Mersah Matru in Egypt but for Charlie this posting only lasted for just over the month as he was sent back to the UK to attend a vocational release course.

The declaration of war was to disrupt Charlie's plans for the future and he was soon off to join the 2nd Battalion The Buffs with the British Expeditionary Force on the Albert Canal in Belgium. The Germans pushed the BEF back and it withdrew to France. To his complete surprise, and not a little delight, Charlie was then sent on leave for two weeks.

It was on this leave, the 30th December 1939 that Charlie married his girlfriend Elsie Dorothy Bevis (Dot) who he had met four years before at a family christening. Two days later the honeymoon was over and on New Years Day 1940 it was back to France with 'B' Company, 2nd Bn. The Buffs.

The Battalion was ordered to hold up the German advance and to act as rearguard while other troops within the Saarbrucken area withdrew to the coast. In Charlie's words, *"we were lightly armed and could not withstand the German "blitzkrieg" for long. We did our best but with the front disintegrating around us and with no heavy weapons, hardly any anti-tank guns and with little ammunition and food it became impossible and those of us who were still alive were eventually captured."*

In early May 1940 2nd Battalion The Buffs had a strength of 25 officers and 732 men when they crossed into Belgium. By the 29th May the Battalion had lost 15 officers and nearly 400 men killed, wounded, missing or taken prisoner. Charlie was one of those taken prisoner. After an appaling trip in cattle wagons with little or no food or water for days on end those prisoners arrived at Stalag 20A in Thorn in Poland.

Subsequently Charlie was sent to Stalag 20B in East Prussia to a large camp at Marienburg.

During the latter part of 1944 the prisoners could hear the Russian bombardment which would herald the final assault on Nazi Germany from the east. On the 21st of January 1945, the camp was hurriedly evacuated and the prisoners started to walk south westward, so started one of the many "Death or Black Hunger Marches" from the POW camps in Poland and East Prussia. In Charlie's own account written after his release he wrote - *"we were still walking in May; we had lost two of our group, as they had not been strong enough to carry on. One day we heard that the*

Germans were defeated and we wondered whether we would get back home. By this time we were walking skeletons and I think that if we had been left another few days we would have all been dead."

Finally picked up by the American Army they were taken to Halle in Germany, where they stayed until we were strong enough to fly home.

Charlie got back to England, 5 years after being taken prisoner, on 12th May 1945 by which time he weighed just 7 stone. His wife, Dot, had been staying with her Mum in Chatham Street in Ramsgate. It was so marvellous to be home again after nearly 5 years as a POW".

Charlie was eventually discharged on 6th April 1946 and settled down to civilian life working with a Ramsgate builder for many years. Charlie and Dot had two sons, Bob and James, three grandsons, Stephen, Anthony and Daniel, one grand daughter Victoria and one great granddaughter Kayleigh.

Both of Charlie & Dot's sons joined the Royal Navy, Bob serving as a mechanic on HMS Gallatica and James as a signaller on HMS Minerva. Bob still enjoys a connection with the navy as a Lieutenant with the Ramsgate Sea Cadet's.

Grandsons, Stephen and Anthony both served in the army, Anthony in the Royal Horse Artillery and Stephen in the Corps of Drums of 2nd Bn. The Queen's Regiment.

Charlie regularly attended meetings of the Ramsgate Branch of The Queen's Own Buffs Regimental Association and took a full and active part in The Royal British Legion.

PW

AXEL HUNO H. Von HOLSTEIN-RATHLOU

Alex was born on 16th May 1921 in Charlottenlund and died 11th March 2004 in Copenhagen.

Axel was a private in The Buffs, 2nd Battalion in Hong Kong, 1946-1947, stationed in Stanley Barracks, and was one of the few privates who had his wife with him. In civilian life Axel was an employee of K.T.A.S.a telephone company in Copenhagen.

We are going to miss Axel, he was a good and generous friend, liked by everybody.

AB

JAMES (JIM) STEDMAN

Jim was born at Strood, near Rochester in 1919. At the age of 14 he left school to find a job and continued to work until the outbreak of war when he joined the army and was drafted into 6th Bn. The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment. It was with this battalion that he took part in the gallant defence of Doullens against overwhelming odds and was captured and became a Prisoner of War for just under five years.

He wrote an excellent book of his experiences, 'Life of a British POW in Poland' which described, in great detail, what life was like as a POW. In August 1989, Jim, and a large group of ex POW's, went back to Poland to commemorate the outbreak of war.

Jim was a gentleman and much respected by all who knew him.

PW

We have been notified of the passing of the following:

MRS. MAY FRANKLIN, wife of Lt. Col. A (Tony) Franklin on 29th December 2003 in her 81st year.

MR. JOHN HAYFORD

COLONEL GILES B BATEMAN OBE, passed away on Wednesday 4th February 2004.

MR. LESLIE R. SAUNDERS, aged 87

MR. F. J. SKINNER, passed away on 19th January 2004 at Woking Community Hospital

MAJOR ROGER PILCHER, passed away on Friday 26th April 2004. The funeral took place on Saturday 3rd April at Holy Trinity Church, Sandgate.

MAJOR JAMES (JIMMY) B. WORTS MC ERD, passed away on Friday 16th April 2004. The funeral took place on Wednesday 28th April at St. Michael's Church, Hythe, Kent.

MR. HAROLD LISTON, ex RWK's passed away on 16th April 2004.

Every effort will be made to provide detailed obituaries of the above in the next issue. of The Journal.

ooo

CORPORAL JAMES SMITH VC

(A profile by Roy Rushbrook)

(I am very grateful to Roy Rushbrook for submitting this article and I have included, in order to provide a background to the article, extracts from Historical Records of The Buffs by CRB Knight.)

BACKGROUND

On the North West Frontier in late July of 1897, masses of tribesmen descended on the forts protecting the Malakand Pass. Orders were issued to mobilize two brigades. 1st. Bn. The Buffs were allotted to 2nd Brigade commanded by General P. D. Jeffreys. The Battalion was at that time dispersed with six companies in the Cherat Hills and two more at Peshawar. There had been an outbreak of enteric fever, resulting in 15 deaths, and malaria was also present so the health of the Battalion was not of the best. By 1st August four companies under Major Moody were ready to move and having arrived at Nowshera they set out on a march of forty seven miles to the Malakand. So great was the heat that movement during daylight hours was impossible and all the marches were undertaken at night. An Indian regiment which had preceded The Buffs had suffered 21 deaths from heat stroke. The tribes made their submission and 2nd Brigade moved into Mamund country to Khan arriving on 13th September. On 15th September the Brigade pitched camp near a tributary of the Jandul River.

The Brigade subsequently started punitive operations in the Mamund Valley meeting considerable opposition during which The Buffs were heavily engaged. Over the next few hours the situation deteriorated and the Sikhs were hard pressed. 'D' Company of The Buffs were ordered forward to assist the Sikhs and they arrived on a ridge overlooking the Sikh position which was now in danger of being overrun. It was at this point that an unknown Sikh bugler, entirely on his own initiative sounded the "Charge" and Sikhs moved forward whilst from the ridge above "D" Company poured volleys into the tribesmen below, and the Mamund tribesmen fled.

At 3pm the order was given to the exhausted troops to return to camp. The Mamunds sought easier quarry and found it in the form of a group of some 30 sappers and a Battery of four guns, from No. 8 Native Mountain Battery, who had become isolated near the south side of the village of Bilot. Two companies of Sikhs were ordered to assist and General Jeffreys joined the small band to await the Sikh's arrival. A breakdown in communications led to the Sikhs not receiving the order and they continued with their withdrawal.

By this time a very heavy storm had broken out to add to the considerable discomfort of the troops who had been engaged since 6am that morning with no food and little water and who were reaching a point of exhaustion. Just as The Buffs passed through the village of Bilot Major Moody, in command of the rear guard. was asked to send some men to bring in a wounded officer who was lying in a litter some hundred yards away. 'G' Section (11 men) under Lance-Corporal James Smith went back to look for the litter which they could not find. They met General Jeffreys, the sappers and Indian gunners with the guns, completely marooned. The village was by now full of the enemy, who by the light of burning houses, took effective aim. Many mules were shot and to move the guns was impossible, to desert them unthinkable, but with the help of L/Cpl Smith's section they might still be saved from falling into enemy hands. Attempts were made, with whatever tools were to hand, to dig defensive positions but the enemy's fire from three sides became so intense that two Royal Engineer Officers, Lts. Watson and Colvin resolved to storm the village.

Led by these two officers 'G' Section of The Buffs together with some sappers charged in among the houses but the party was too small and the village too large for this to be effective and they were forced to retire. Over the next few hours the party, one by one, became casualties, General Jeffreys and Lt. Watson were wounded as were Privates Lever, Nelthorpe, Poile and Finn of The Buffs, whilst Privates Austin and Dod were killed. Eventually Smith himself was seriously wounded yet he continued to direct fire of what was left of his section. Nothing daunted they hung on taking what cover could be found behind rocks, dead mules and panniers. and the lightning and burning houses illuminated the grim scene.

Just after 2am help came in the form of two companies of Sikhs.

The fortuitous arrival of Corporal Smith's section was a stroke of good fortune which without the slightest doubt saved the guns from capture and General Jeffreys and his tiny party from annihilation. The gallant behaviour of these twelve men, under the most trying circumstances, soaked to the skin, hungry and worn out is one of the brightest pages in the history of the Regiment whose honour they upheld so splendidly.

The bravery of this section of Buffs was recognised by the award of the Victoria Cross to Corporal Smith and the Distinguished Conduct Medal to Private J. Lever, Private C. Poile, Private F. Finn and Private H Nelthorpe.

Lieuts. Watson and Colvin also received the Victoria Cross.

London Gazette 21st April 1899

The Queen has been graciously pleased to signify her intention to confer the decoration of the Victoria Cross on the undermentioned Non- commissioned Officer, whose claims have been submitted for Her Majesty's approval, for his conspicuous bravery during an engagement at Bilot, on the North West Frontier of India, on the night of the 16th-17th September 1897.

CITATION

On the night of the 16th-17th September 1897 Corporal Smith, with a party of Buffs, responded to Lieutenant Watson's call for volunteers, and following that Officer into the burning village of

Bilot, driving off the enemy with the bayonet. Afterwards, although wounded, he continued firing steadily and coolly and also helped to carry the wounded to the place prepared for them. When Lieutenant Watson left to fetch assistance for the wounded, Corporal Smith held the position till that Officer's return, exposing his life freely in watching the enemy and directing the fire of his men.

James Smith was born in Maidstone in 1871 and later enlisted in The Buffs. During his service in India he saw action during operations in the Malakand Field Force and during the siege of Chitral. He rose to the rank of Colour Sergeant but it is not known when he was discharged.

After his service he was employed by the Local Forces, Guernsey, stationed at Fort George and later became a member of the Corps of Commissionaires. He attended a Garden party given by His Majesty King George V at Buckingham Palace on 26th June 1920 and was also present at a dinner given by the Royal British Legion for holders of the Victoria Cross at the House of Lords, Westminster on the 9th November 1929.

James Smith VC, who was by then retired and living at 12 Wilmot Road, Dartford, died on March 18th 1946, aged 74, in the County Hospital, Dartford. The funeral took place on Monday 25th March 1946 at Christ Church, Dartford. The Revd. W. A. Walsh officiated and the hymns included "Forever with the Lord" and "Abide with Me". His widow was supported at the service by several family members and the Deputy Mayor of Dartford, Mrs E.C. Botten was also present.

The Past and Present Association of The Buffs were represented by the Colonel of the Regiment, Major General, The Hon. P.G. Scarlett CB, MC., the Secretary of the Association Major A J Peareth.

FROM THE WEB SITE
www.the-queens-own-buffs.com

We have now been 'live' on the internet for just on 9 months and in that time there have been just over 4,250 visits to the site. That is well over 450 a month and that figure is increasing.

Published below are a few of the many messages that are posted on the 'Message Board'. Quite a lot of these contain requests for information on relatives who have served in our regiments, some in the 1st World War and before. Those of you that use the internet and visit the 'Message Board' will see that a lot of these request for information are answered, in some detail, by Mick Mills. Mick is not a member of our association but has a great interest in history of The Buffs during the 1st World War and I would like to take this opportunity of thanking Mick for his considerable detailed work and the time he spends answering such requests.

MESSAGES:

Subject: ALBERT JARRETT:
Name: Damien Jarrett
Email: Tasdam@aol.co.uk

I need to find out more about an Albert Jarrett whose body was never found. He died at Cambrai in 1917 and I want to know more about him as he could be a late relative of myself.

Reply from Michael Mills:

Dear Damien,

Albert was a Private in the 6th Battalion of the Buffs. His service number was G/197. He was born and lived at Ash near Canterbury and also enlisted there.

At the turn of the century, Albert was living in Ash and was employed as a Market Gardener's Labourer. He was the son of George and Mary Ann Jarrett of Hill's Court, Ash and was aged 33 when he died.

Albert was killed during the Battle of Cambrai. This was the first time that tanks had been used effectively en-masse during the war, but the huge initial successes were reversed by a massive German counter attack on 30th November. Large numbers of Buffs were killed, wounded and captured on that day. 42 Other Ranks were killed.

You have a 20-30% chance of finding Albert's service record at the National Archives in Kew (the rest were destroyed in a fire during 1940). This would possibly give more information on him. You will also find his medal index card there which will tell you if he went overseas before the end of 1915. The card will give you a reference for is entry in the medal rolls which will tell you if he served in any other Battalions.

I hope this helps.
Michael.

Subject: BUFFS/RFC:
Name: Sean Debling
Email: apat98@dsl.pipex.com

My father told me that his Dad was in the Buffs during the first World War. I have a picture of him but I do not have his service number. He was gassed twice at Ypres I think and shot through the bridge of the nose. He attained the rank of Sergeant and was later transferred to the newly formed Royal Flying Corp as Gunnery Sergeant (?). How would I go about tracing any details and would this mean he was entitled to two sets of medals ? His name was Albert John Debling from Ramsgate.

Reply from Michael Mills:

Dear Sean,

Your grandfather would have been entitled to the British War and Victory Medals. Depending on when he first entered a theatre of war he may also have received a 1914 or 1914/15 Star. Regardless of how many Regiments or Corps a soldier served in, he only received one set of medals. His medal index card should exist at the National Archives in Kew. This will tell you his medal entitlement and service number. I won't comment on RFC / RAF service records, but if they exist they'll also be at the NA.

Michael

Subject: QOB / 2 QUEEN'S 1960 -71:
Name: Tony Baker MBE
Email: patricia.baker2@ntlworld.com

Look forward to hearing from any old colleagues from 1960 -71, Especially old A Coy, mortar & anti tank wallahs. Does anybody have George Brown's contact no? It all seems so long ago!

Reply from Pete Fretter:
Email: autolinedevon@aol.com

Tony I was in the battalion 1958 - 1964 Signal Platoon. Do you remember Cpl Dick Wallis he was i/c signals detachment "A" Coy and left in 1964 I am in touch with him and a lot of other signallers from our time. Please keep in touch.

Pete

Subject: JOHN WILLIAM KIBLER:
Name: Richard Hornsby
Email: richdawn.home@ntlworld.com

I wonder if you can help me find some records of my grandfather JOHN WILLIAM KIBLER born 1913 Islington london. I understand from my fathers birth certificate that he was a serving member of The Buffs in July 1944 as Corporal 6284695 Buffs Regiment I also understand that he was at Dunkirk and he joined the army at the age of 16 he passed away in the late 60s and any documents we had on him were destroyed in a fire in the late 80s can you help? or do you know where I can get help?

Reply from The Editor:

Dear Richard,

Many thanks for the email re your grandfather. I will publish your message in the next edition of our Regimental Journal. We still have many members who served in the Buffs battalions at that time and I am sure one of them may remember him.

The Editor.

Subject: JOSEPH PHILLIPS circa 1900:
Name: Stephen Brinkhurst
Email: s.brinkhurst@xtra.co.nz

I am trying to research my family and know that my Great Grandfather Joseph Phillips was in the Buffs stationed at Canterbury. I know he was a Corporal in 1899 and living in the Married Quarters. How can I obtain information on his service record or any other information that there may be about him or his family. I'm in New Zealand so it's getting a little difficult.

Thanks in advance
Stephen Brinkhurst.

(If anyone can help with the above please contact me or Stephen. The Editor)

Subject: ERIK WESTBERG (Denmark):
Name: Christian Westberg
Email: christian_w@orangenet.dk

I am looking for information conc. my late father (died 1996), who I believe was connected to the Buffs Regiment during the 2nd. WW or right after.

I would appreciate anyone who can provide me with information of where and when he served for the Buffs.

Yours sincerely
Christian Westberg

Reply from The Editor:

Dear Christian,

Many thanks for your email. For my sins I look after the web site and also edit the Regimental Journal. Many Danes served in our regiment during the last war and afterwards. We have a regimental association in Denmark. The secretary, Andrew Briening may well be able to help. His email address is babreining@get2net.dk

Please do contact him, and come back to me if you need to.

Subject: PTE. 6347571 LESLIE ARTHUR ASHBY:
Name: Donna Merritt
Email: donna.merritt1@ntlworld.com

I am doing my family tree and I am looking for any photo of my Grandad as my mum did not know him

because he was killed in action in 1941 in Tunisia. Any information,or photos would be very welcome. My mum has never seen a photo of him at all and she is very interested to see if there is any photos of him and his Regiment.

(If anyone can help with the above please contact me. The Editor)

Subject: PAT JACKSON:
Name: Frank Hills
Email: pamela.2hills@btinternet.com

I am trying to trace Pat Jackson (Jacko) who lived in Ramsgate and served in the 1st Battalion The Buffs from 1955 to 1958 in Germany and Aden. He may have emigrated to Canada or Australia.

Please telephone me if you have any information on 01227740628.

Subject: INFANTRY BOYS BATTALION:
Name: Pete Fretter
Email: autolinedevon@aol.com

On 30 Nov 1955 I joined The INFANTRY BOYS BATTALION at PLUMER BARRACKS, PLYMOUTH I served there until Dec 1957 when I joined my regiment The QUEENS OWN ROYAL WEST KENTS. I am a member of THE INFANTRY BOYS and JUNIOR LEADERS ASSOCIATION and regularly attend our annual reunions. We would like to hear from any ex boys who served at TUXFORD, PLYMOUTH or OSWESTRY between 1952 and 1975 please get in touch. Names I remember from my days in IBB are Ex Boy RSM TONY PRUDENCE (BUFFS) Brothers SAMMY and TOMMY MARSDEN (RWK) Please Email me or post a reply if you can help to contact any ex Boys or Junior Leaders.I am now back in close touch with mates from 48 years ago so lets hear from you!!

Reply from Colin Roberts:

Hi there, I was at Tuxford and Plymouth in the Infantry Boys Bn. and Junior Leaders. Then joined my Regiment - QORWK. Many years later I was posted to Junior Leaders in Oswestry. Started at Tuxford in December 1953.

Colin

Subject: 50th REGIMENT:
Name: David Wood
Email: david.wood63@btinternet.com

I am currently researching my family tree and I have discovered that my Great, Great Grandfather was in the 50th Regiment - certainly in the 1850's (that is all the information that I have) If anyone could give me some information about the regiment at that time or point me in the right direction I would be most grateful.

Reply from Colin Roberts, RWK's Museum:

Please email the full names of your relative and I will research for you, I am the researcher for the 50th of Foot.

Colin

Subject: TED (Buster) BROWN:
Name: Lisa Poyner .
Email: gnuman@ntlworld.com.

My Dad, Ted Brown served in the Buffs between 1958-1960. He was stationed in Germany (Munster), Aden, Dhala and was also in the Battalion boxing team. If anyone remembers my Dad could they get in touch as he would like to see the old gang .

(If anyone can help with the above please contact me. The Editor)

Subject: MICHAEL MERKIN:.
Name: Pauline Merkin
Email: paulinemerkin@telusplanet.net

My father Michael Merkin served with the East Kents during WWII and was in North Africa and Italy. Is anyone out there who may be an ex colleague from those time?

(If anyone can help with the above please contact me. The Editor)

NOTICE BOARD

LONDON BUFFS

Service of Remembrance

The Tower of London

This parade and annual service, organised by the London (Buffs) Branch of the Regimental Association has been held in the Tower for many years and is very much an event for the whole family. The service of remembrance is held in The Chapel Royal, St Peter Ad Venicular, HM Tower of London, in the Chapel is the Book of Remembrance, in which are placed the names of those members of the Regiment who have passed on. It was placed in the chapel in 1946 and was signed by King Frederick of Denmark, the then Colonel in Chief, and Major General Scarlet. The Chapel is also the final resting place for the Colours of 1st Battalion The Buffs that were carried by the Regiment from 1830 to 1848 and were present at the battle of Punniar in 1843.

This year the service will be held on Sunday 5th September with the parade assembling at the East Gate at 10.15. After the service and parade a carvery lunch is held at The Tower Hotel.

Should you wish to attend the service and/or lunch then please contact the secretary of London Branch, Bill Pinder on 0208 330 2292 or by email: Pinder23.fsnet.uk.

REGIMENTAL HISTORIES

OF

THE QUEEN'S OWN ROYAL WEST KENT REGIMENT

The museum of The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regt. has had the full range of it histories from 1756 to 1961 reprinted. The reprints are not hardback and the print is slightly smaller but in all other respects the contents are exact copies with illustrations, maps etc. The Museum will soon have copies available of all histories at the normal retail price. Copies will be available at the Museum shop or by post with cheques payable to 'Queen's Own R.W.Kent Regiment Museum.'

Author	Period	Cost	Postage
Colonel Fyler	1756-1881 (50th)	£24.00	TBA
Lt. Col Chaplin	1824-1881 (97th)	£15.0	£1.25
Lt.Col.Chaplin	1881-1914	£12.50	£1.50
Atkinson	1914-1 920	£24.00	£4.00
Molony	1914-1918 1st Battalion	£18.00	£2.50
Brown	1914-1919	£24.50	£2.25
Wenyon	8th Battalion		
Lt.Col.Chaplin	1920-1950	£18.00	TBA
Lt.Col.Chaplin	1951-1961	£12.50	£1.50
Geoffrey Barnes Dirty Half-Hundred in Malaya		£12.00	£1.50

For more details and up to date information on availability please contact the museum.

MEMORIAL PLAQUE

A plaque commemorating the fallen in The Malayan Emergency and Borneo Confrontation will be unveiled soon in the Crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral. The following letter has been sent to the Fund Treasurer from The Association President.

'Dear Mr. Godfrey,

I have pleasure in advising you that The Queen's Own Buffs Regimental Association, of whom I am President, have decided to subscribe £200 towards the Memorial Plaque that you are placing in the Crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral.

1st Bn. The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment, a forbear Regiment, served in Malaya with great distinction while 1st Bn. The Queen's Own Buffs served in Borneo during Confrontation.

Many others of both Regiments and also from The Buffs, the other Forbear Regiment, served for long periods in these theatres, mostly with Special Forces, Gurkhas, Malaysian and Brunei units or on the staff of various Headquarters. Indeed I was proud to be one of these.

I consider this to be a very worthwhile venture and wish you well.

Yours sincerely

Crispin Champion
Colonel'.

NEW ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

Colonel BC Tearle 5th Bn The Buffs (TA) 1959-63

Mr. C Langdon	RWK's	1946-48
Mr. G Smith	RAMC	1960-62
Mr. S A Kitching	RE	1972-01
Mr. E D Clark	I Buffs	1957-59
Mr. H R Westbury	5th Bn RWK's	1944-46
Mr. W A Franklin	1 RWK's	1952-54
Mr. P Matthews	4th Bn RWK's	1944-45

BENEVOLENT FUND

The following letters have been received by RHQ and are representative of the many that are received concerning Grants:

Sue Ryder Care
Nettelbed Hospice

Dear Major Rogerson,

Re: Mr. Harold Liston

Thank you so much for your Benevolent Fund's most generous cheque to assist us with the cost of care we have provided for Mr. Liston.

I regret to inform you that Mr. Liston died here, very peacefully, and with his family around him, on April 16th 2004.

I am afraid that your cheque and Journal did not reach here before Harold's passing, but I have passed them on to his son David, who was most appreciative and joins me in renewing our most grateful thanks for your support in this way.

Yours sincerely
Mrs. Jackie Taylor.

(Harold Liston served in The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regt.)

The Royal British Legion
County Field Officer

Dear Major Rogerson,

Thank you so much for your generous financial assistance on behalf of your Regiment towards payment for as Pilgrimage Tour for Mrs. Hutchinson to visit her father's grave at El Alamein.

Thank you once again for your support.

Yours sincerely
Lt. Col.(Retd) Mark Colacicchi.

RESEARCH BRIEF

The following addresses may be of use should you wish to research any service records:

Officers & OR's whose service ended 1921 or up to 1997.

Army Personnel Centre
Historic Disclosures
Kentigern House, 65 Brown Street
Glasgow G2 8EX
Tel: 0141 224 3303/2023
Email: apcsec@dial.pipex.com

Officers & OR's whose service ended before 1921.

Public Records Office
Ruskin Avenue
Kew TW19 4DU
Tel: 0208 876 3444
Email: enquiry@pro.gov.uk.

Other useful addresses will be published in the future

WRITE TO REPLY

Red House
Cooksmill Green, Chelmsford
Essex CM1 3SJ

Dear Editor,

I enjoyed reading the December edition of The Journal and particularly the article about the Maidstone Reunion. For me the reunion was a very happy experience as, thanks to Barry Richards, I met up with a fellow National Serviceman, John Smale, whom I had met almost 50 years ago to the day, when I joined 3 Platoon, "A" Company, 1st Bn. The Queen's Own, in Malaya, where John was already a bren gunner. We had last met at the last National Service TA Camp in 1955. Needless to say we did a great deal of reminiscing.

Yours sincerely,
Peter Morley-Jacob

---

29 Eden Road
Loydens Wood
Bexley DA5 2EQ

Dear Editor,

Reading through the last issue in which Greville Edgecombe is mentioned caused me to recall another cause of merriment at his expense during a 3 day patrol in the Abedare Forests.

During an evening stop, Mr Edgecombe produced a package from amongst his belongings and explained that we had been asked to "Field Test" hammocks. We cut back space between bamboo trees for a distance of about 7 feet leaving stumps protruding about 6 inches above ground.

Having tied the ends of the hammock to very stout bamboo, Mr Edgecombe tested the said hammock, having decided that if it could hold his weight it could support anybody's.

Getting him into the hammock was not easy, getting him out was easier because having taken the strain, the hammock slowly slid down to earth. Mr. "Low Level" Edgecombe, a nick name he earned later from his helicopter antics, managed to untangle himself just before meeting the stumps of the bamboo beneath him.

He was creased up in laughter and so were the rest of us. Later, on return to camp, I had to type up his report that hammocks were "No bloody good" in our present environment because bamboo trees do not have natural notches on the trunk nor branches above which to secure the item under test.

Yours sincerely
Bill Abbott

Soderstroms Vag D 51
S-179 61 Stenhamra
Sweden

Dear Editor,

Many thanks for sending The Journal, it is always a pleasure to read it.

I have looked at the new Web Site of the Association. I think the old one was much better. The new one lacks the dignity and taste that is needed for a Regimental Association. The 'Smileys" are completely out of place and should not be used. It is only now that I appreciate what a fine job that Peter Blanche and Gordon Walker made of the previous site. I send them my thanks and best wishes.

Yours sincerely,
John (Jack) Freeman

(Jack, Many thanks for your comments. I am sorry that you do not find the Regt. Association site "up to snuff". I take your point about the "smileys" and they will be removed. We are all grateful to Peter and Gordon for their hard work with the old site. The Editor)

FINAL WORD

With cricket, the Olympics, holidays and the reunions to look forward to, 2004 looks like being a very good year.

You will have read about 'B' Squadron 141st Regt RAC, (The Buffs) turning the page at the Warrior's Chapel on April 21st. It was a great pleasure to spend some time with these unique Buffs. We all hope to see them at the Canterbury Reunion this year and to see their Standard as well. 'B' Squadron's Association, 'The Playboys' have a membership card. Rule 3 states:

"It is a point of honour amongst members that once in every year they tear themselves away from the apronstrings of their wives, mothers and sweethearts and re-unite to drink wallop long and deep, and that once a year they remember also that charity begins at home and bring along their womenfolk."

Some wallop was consumed on the 21st and I am delighted to publish a photo showing that they did not come alone;

It was suggested, after the trip to Doullens last year, that another, but more ambitious trip in 2005 be organised. A 4/5 day trip to Copenhagen was suggested and costings are now being studied. The first two quotes were so expensive that they were discarded immediately, the third and final option is now being examined. This option would mean flying from Gatwick and spending 3 maybe 4 nights there. The biggest problem is that hotels in Copenhagen are prohibitively expensive. If we can do it have no fear it will be done. As a result of the request in the last issue for readers to register an interest 10 names are already logged in. Watch this space!!! The next Journal issue will be published this coming Autumn and should be out by the beginning of November. It will be, as this one has been, larger than usual so if you have a story, a photo or a letter that needs writing then please get stuck in and let me have your contribution by the end of September.

Finally a word about the Reunions. If you can make it then please do so, your attendance is important to us all. If you would like to come but have a transport problem let me know and it may be possible to arrange a lift for you with someone who is travelling down from the same area.

Looking forward to seeing you at Canterbury, Maidstone or The Tower

Until then take care

The Editor

'Playboys and Playgirls'

L to R: Violet Waters, John & Valerie Bull, Fred Blackley, Charlie Hewitt (Standard Bearer), George Claire, Dorothy Hewitt, John Brough and Eileen Dixon

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY
2004

MAY	
6TH	QORWK'S OFFICERS' CLUB LUNCH
15TH	COLCHESTER BRANCH ALBUHERA DINNER
15TH	CANTERBURY BRANCH ANNUAL DINNER
16TH	ALBUHERA DAY
26TH 27TH 28TH 29TH 30TH 31ST	CANTERBURY BRANCH TRIP TO RIMINI.....
JUNE	
.....CONTINUING 1ST 2ND	CANTERBURY BRANCH TRIP TO RIMINI
19TH (TBC)	COLCHESTER BRANCH BBQ
23RD	BAND CONCERT KNELLER HALL
27TH	CANTERBURY BRANCH TRIP TO YPRES
JULY	
4TH	DEDICATION OF STANDARD - RAMSGATE BRANCH.
AUGUST	
1ST	CANTERBURY REUNION
SEPTEMBER	
5TH	LONDON BRANCH SERVICE AT TOWER OF LONDON
9TH	COLCHESTER BRANCH DAY TRIP TO FRANCE
12TH	MAIDSTONE REUNION
OCTOBER	
14TH	FOLKESTONE & HYTHE BRANCH ANNUAL DINNER
NOVEMBER	
11TH	REMEMBRANCE DAY
DECEMBER	
4TH	CANTERBURY BRANCH CHRISTMAS PARTY
9TH	FOLKESTONE & HYTHE BRANCH CHRISTMAS PARTY
11TH	COLCHESTER BRANCH CHRISTMAS DINNER

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.

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The Lake, Sandwich, Kent

Regimental Association Christmas Card, 2004