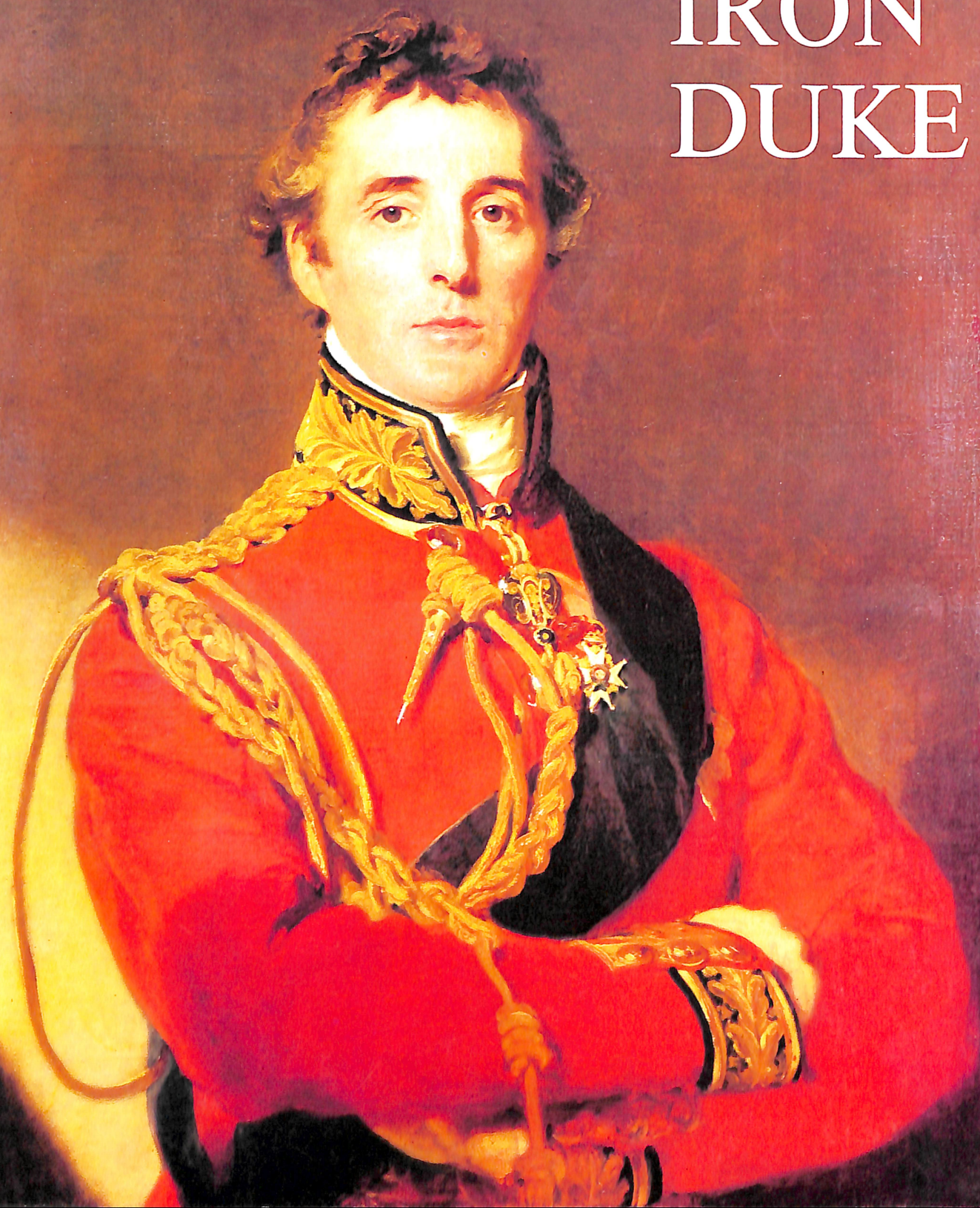


SPRING 2005
No. 257

THE IRON DUKE



THE IRON DUKE

The Regimental Journal of

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON'S REGIMENT

(WEST RIDING)

Dettingen
Mysore
Seringapatam
Ally Ghur
Delhi 1803
Leswarree
Deig
Corunna
Nive
Peninsula
Waterloo
Alma
Inkerman
Sebastopol
Abyssinia
Relief of Kimberley
Paardeberg
South Africa 1900-02
Mons 1914
Marne 1914, '18
Ypres 1914, '15, '17



Hill 60
Somme 1916, '18
Arras 1917, '18
Cambrai 1917, '18
Lys
Piave 1918
Landing at Suvla
Afghanistan 1919
North-West Europe
1940, 1944-45
Dunkirk 1940
St Valery-en-Caux
Fontenay-le-Pesnil
Djebel Bou Aoukaz 1943
Anzio
Monte Ceco
Burma 1942, '43, '44
Sittang 1942
Chindits 1944
The Hook 1953
Korea 1952-53

Vol. LXXX

Spring 2005

No. 257

BUSINESS NOTES

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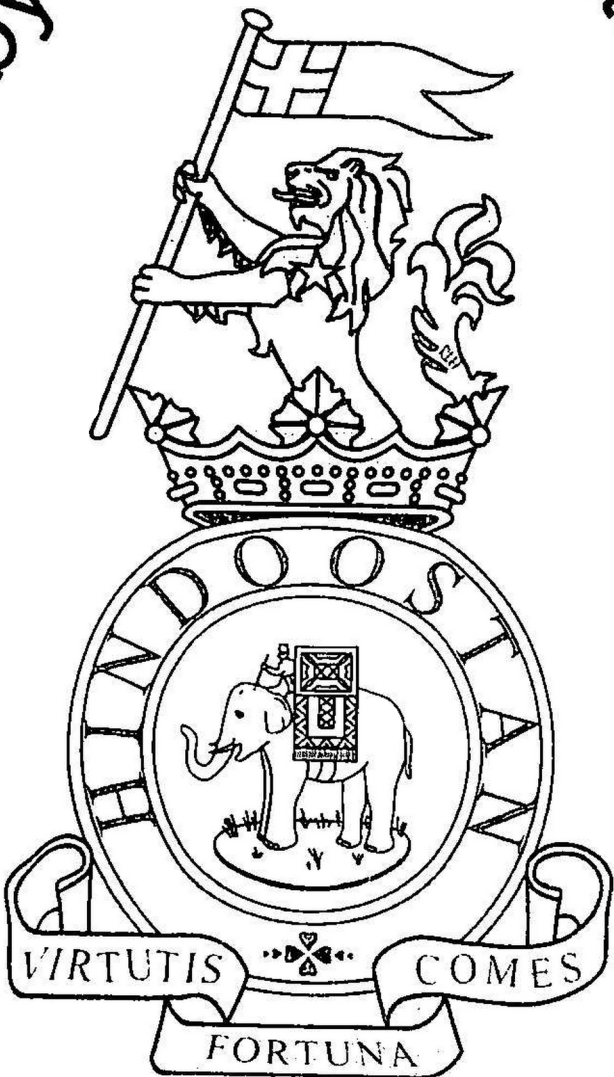
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THE REGIMENT

The Colonel-in-Chief

BRIGADIER HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON, KG, LVO, OBE, MC, BA, DL

Colonel of the Regiment

Major General Sir Evelyn Webb-Carter, KCVO, OBE

Regimental Headquarters

*Wellesley Park,
Highroad Well,
Halifax, HX2 0BA.*

Regimental Secretary: Major D. L. J. Harrap, LL.B.

Assistant Regimental Secretary: Major R. Heron

1st Battalion

*Belfast Barracks,
BFPO 36.*

Commanding Officer: Lieutenant Colonel P. M. Lewis

Adjutant: Captain J. A. Glossop

Regimental Sergeant Major: WO1 N. S. Wilson

East and West Riding Regiment

CO: Lieutenant Colonel M. A. Lodge

DWR TA Companies:

Ypres Company (West Yorkshire)

Deputy Honorary Colonel: Charles Dent Esq, DL

Officer Commanding: Major M. K. Hunter

Fontenay Company (South Yorkshire)

Deputy Honorary Colonel: Colonel J. Fox, TD, DL

Officer Commanding: Major M. R. Watson

ARMY CADET FORCE - DWR

Yorkshire (North & West)

D Company Detachments

OC: Major J. Greenlee

Halifax

Huddersfield

Spen Valley

Keighley

Mirfield

Skipton

Thongsbridge

Humberside and South Yorkshire

C Company Detachments

OC: Major I. MacFarlane

D Company Detachments

OC: Major A. Hudson

Barnsley

Darfield

Birdwell

Wath on Dearne

Wombwell

Endcliffe

Thurcroft

COMBINED CADET FORCE - DWR

Giggleswick School CCF

CO: Squadron Leader P. C. R. Andrew

Leeds Grammar School CCF

CO: Squadron Leader R. Hill

Wellington College CCF

CO: Major E. J. Heddon

ALLIED REGIMENT OF THE CANADIAN ARMY

Les Voltigeurs de Québec

*Manège Militaire,
805 Avenue Wilfrid-Laurier,
Québec, Canada. G1R 2L3*

Honorary Colonels:

Colonel Marcel Jobin, CM, CQ, CCSS, CD

Lieutenant Colonel Marc-André Bélanger, CD

Commanding Officer:

Lieutenant Colonel François Dion, CD

ALLIED REGIMENT OF THE PAKISTAN ARMY

10th Bn The Baloch Regiment

*Peshawar Cantonment,
Pakistan.*

Colonel: Major General Kaizad Maneck Sopariwala

Commanding Officer: Lieutenant Colonel Muhammed Siddiq Akbar

AFFILIATED SHIPS OF THE ROYAL NAVY

H.M.S. Iron Duke

BFPO 309

Commander P. Carden, RN



Bill Norman, 1920 - 2005
Once a Duke, always a Duke.

A MESSAGE FROM THE COLONEL OF THE REGIMENT

From: Major General Sir Evelyn Webb-Carter KCVO OBE
Colonel, The Duke of Wellington's Regiment (West Riding)



Regimental Headquarters,
The Duke of Wellington's Regiment (West Riding)
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West Yorkshire, HX2 0BA.

Tel: (01422) 361671
Military (94771) 8770
Fax: (01422) 341136

Members of the Regimental Association
Friends of the Regiment

17 December 2005

Dear Members of the Regiment and Friends

THE FUTURE OF THE REGIMENT

Yesterday we heard the announcement that the three Regiments from Yorkshire will be amalgamated to form a new Yorkshire Regiment (14th/15th, 19th, 33rd/76th Foot) of three battalions. These will retain their former identities by the use of the Regimental name in parenthesis, i.e. we will become the 3rd Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment (Duke of Wellington's). The formation of the new Regiment will take place in late 2005 and by the end of 2007 the three Yorkshire Regiment Battalions will be based as follows:

- 1st Battalion (Light) - Somme Barracks, Catterick
- 2nd Battalion (Light) - Alexander Barracks, Dhekelia
- 3rd Battalion (AI) - Tidworth or Warminster

The RHQ of the new Regiment will, in all probability, be in York and the current RHQ DWR will continue in one form or another until at least 2008.

These are the facts. It is a matter of some considerable personal regret that our fine Regimental name will leave the orbat of the Army as a Regiment. Yes, we will indeed retain as much as possible in the 3rd Battalion, but, let's face it, it will never be quite the same. On the other hand, our name has changed many times over the last 100 years, no doubt in the name of efficiency, rationalisation etc. In 1815 it was 33rd (1st West Yorkshire) and in 1854 it was 33rd (Duke of Wellington's), not all that different.

Very early on the Regimental Council concluded that a fight for the status quo was neither practical nor helpful to the serving and future officers and soldiers of the Regiment. We were, however, adamant that we should retain three battalions in the new Regiment and in this we have succeeded - but only just. If the Prime Minister and Secretary of State had not bought the 'Ranger' Battalion at the eleventh hour we would most likely be facing a very different situation. It was a very close call.

I don't expect it will have escaped your notice that the Scottish Regiments have succeeded in fudging the issue of Regimental names. This has infuriated me and the other Yorkshire Colonels. It has been a direct result of the political pressure applied on the Prime Minister. I have had a few hours to think about this and I have come to the conclusion that to create a hiatus about this is not a good way to launch a new Regiment. I am just pleased we stuck to our guns and insisted on our name being carried forward in our future battalion title. Meanwhile, we have to look to the future and do what we can to make a thorough success of the Yorkshire Regiment. I don't actually think this arrangement of titles is necessarily a good thing for the Scottish Regiments either. Let us not glance too much to our side and back and keep our eyes to the fore.

We now have a great deal of work to do in order to get the new Regiment on a sound footing before Formation Day, whenever that may be.* The Three Wise Men (the Colonels of the PWO, GH and DWR) are establishing a Formation Committee to be headed up by a neutral Chairman and a representative from each Regiment to decide on the plethora of detailed issues from cap badge (a white rose) to Regimental funds. I am happy to tell you that Brigadier Richard Dennis (late PWRR), Comd 15 (NE) Brigade, has agreed to be the Chairman.

I now need everybody in the Regimental family to accept what has happened and look to the future by supporting the new Regiment in every way possible. Of course it will not be easy and I hate the thought of the loss of the cap badge my father wore, but we have to move on. I must and I will tread this path to the future with optimism and confidence and I hope you will follow me.

Yours
Sincerely
Evelyn Webb-Carter

Major General Sir Evelyn Webb-Carter
Colonel of The Regiment

* *Afternote* : We now know that the formation will take place no earlier than July 2006 and no later than March 2007. Ed.

Regimental Headquarters

Regimental Notes

PROMOTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

We offer our warm congratulations to the following on their respective promotions and appointments:

Captain S. Caine on his Short Service Commission and on assuming the appointment of Unit Welfare Officer, having handed over to:

WO1 N. S. Wilson on his promotion and on his appointment as Regimental Sergeant Major of the 1st Battalion on 2 April 2005.

REGIMENTAL CHAPLAIN

We congratulate The Reverend Canon Roy Matthews, our Regimental Chaplain, on achieving, on 5 June 2005, fifty years' service since his ordination as a Priest. On that day the Vicar and Churchwardens of Selby Abbey will be conducting a Celebration Eucharist in the Abbey at 4.00pm to mark the occasion.

EDITORIAL

A Plain Man's Guide to the Restructuring of the Infantry

The Colonel of the Regiment's letters, published above and in our last Issue, No 256, have told the tale most graphically. However, we felt it might be helpful for those who have never been involved with the mysteries of the Ministry of Defence if we simplified some of the background to the restructuring of the Infantry of the Line.

The changes that were announced in December stemmed from the Army Board's intention to save both the expense of moving infantry battalions round the world *en bloc*, with their families, bags and baggage, and the early months in a new location, when a battalion is to some degree less than fully effective as it adjusts and trains for its new role. We have all been through it. The intention now is that most battalions should remain in a permanent location and be maintained by individual postings, in the same way as, for example, 35 Engineer Regiment operated for many years in Hameln and 7 RHA in Aldershot. There is good sense in this.

One obvious problem was how to post individuals between battalions that were themselves different Regiments. The Army Board's solution was to complete the process of forming large regiments that had begun some years ago with, for example, The Royal Anglian Regiment. The rest of us had already managed individual postings on a small scale and we all know of individuals who spent a year or two in each others' Regiments, swapping badges and buttons for the duration.

Therefore, without overt consultation, the Army Board ordered all the rest of the infantry of the line to form large regiments. They had already announced that four infantry battalions were to be cut from the order of battle, of which three had already been identified, and the problem for the Yorkshire Regiments was that the fourth cut might well fall upon Yorkshire. So, throughout the debate on what to do about the *fait accompli* of the formation of new large regiments, the Yorkshire Regiments didn't know whether they were considering a three-battalion or a two-battalion new Regiment.

The Councils of the three Yorkshire Regiments, having realised that there was no way in which the Army Board's decision, which affected all the single-battalion infantry regiments of the line, would be reversed, decided that the fight should be for the survival of three Yorkshire battalions, in order that the best elements of the character of three over-300-year-old Yorkshire Regiments might survive. The hanging threat of one more cut must fall somewhere else. This was the basis on which our own Colonel led the campaign, in which he was given stalwart support by many local Members of Parliament, and by local civic leaders, as well as individuals, such as Mary Lister, whose petition we highlighted in our last edition, and many others who wrote to their Members of Parliament and to the Press.

In the event, at the last minute, the fourth cut did not take place; instead, one of the battalions of the Parachute Regiment was taken out of the ordinary order of battle in order to re-role as a "Ranger" unit, with the task of directly supporting the SAS.

None of the above explanation means that we as a Regiment wanted the Army Board's solution and we complied reluctantly with its orders. That said, our clear duty now is to support in every way possible the formation of The Yorkshire Regiment, in order that it may prosper and carry forward the best traditions of the Dukes and our fellow Yorkshire Regiments, drawing

inspiration from their long histories and the Battle Honours emblazoned on their Colours.

Iraq

We make no apology for the extensive coverage of the historic operations of the 1st Battalion and of The East and West Riding Regiment in Iraq. We are delighted to include reports from Private Soldiers and NCOs, as well as several from the many cap badges in support; it is good to hear how others see us. All we, who are far from the scene, take this opportunity to wish them all a successful completion and a safe return.

Tsunami

We were all mightily relieved when we heard that Colonel Alistair and Carolyn Roberts had survived the ravages of the tsunami on Boxing Day. The wonders of modern communications allow us to include a report from each of them.

A British Lion

The poignant silence observed at Twickenham before the televised Calcutta Cup Match on 19 March allowed his friends across the world to share our sorrow at the death of Colonel Michael Campbell-Lamerton and to spare a thought for Christine and their family. We shall publish his Obituary in our next edition.

J.B.K.G.

"HANDS OFF THE DUKES" RALLY

In all the uncertainties for the future of Regiments under the Future Infantry Study, the one that threatened above all any scope for taking forward any of our Dukes' identity into the then proposed Yorkshire Regiment was the very real possibility that the King's Division would have to close a battalion from West of the Pennines as well as the East. A two-battalion regiment formed from the current three battalions of the Dukes, Green Howards and PWO would have offered no alternative but for us all to go into the melting pot. It was a battle the Colonel of the Regiment was determined not to lose and part of his campaign to achieve this and mobilise the support of our local politicians and councils, as well as the wider Yorkshire public, was to show the strength and depth of our ties to our home recruiting area. He called for a 'Hands off the Dukes' Rally in Halifax on Saturday 13 November.

It was a crisp, clear, autumn day and by 1100hrs well over a thousand people had gathered outside the Town Hall, the Rally start point. The marchers of course included many Dukes and ex-Dukes who had travelled from across the West Riding and well beyond to make their voices heard, but they were still only a small proportion of those who turned out with family, friends and local people, all there to join in with the Rally. The parade was led by a team from 'The Dukes' Dirt Track cycle team - with their cycles, and re-enactors from both the 33rd at Waterloo and, drawing up the rear, a further

team of WWII re-enactors together with their 'Wartime' jeep and, not to be forgotten, the Halifax Rugby Club in their team strip - a reminder of rugby battles of old. The March was headed by the Colonel of the Regiment together with Christine McCafferty, the MP for Calder Valley, who has throughout been a stalwart defender and promoter of our interests at Westminster. They were followed by the Mayor of Calderdale together with the Mayors of Kirklees, Bradford, Craven District, Skipton and Barnsley - a testament to our local support and heritage. The parade brought the town to a halt as it proceeded through the centre to the Piece Hall. Most noticeably it generated real support amongst those going about their Saturday tasks in town and many broke off from what they were doing to join in.

The Rally was addressed in the Piece Hall first by Christine McCafferty and then by the Colonel of the Regiment, whose uncompromising message was that he would not accept the cut of a battalion from Yorkshire to create a diminished Yorkshire Regiment and would only accept any future Yorkshire Regiment if one of its battalions could carry forward our name and connections to the West Riding.

As we all now know he got his way, but it was a close run thing and the rally was an important part in generating the public and political support to securing that end.

D.L.J.H.

“HANDS OFF THE DUKES” RALLY

THE ASSEMBLY :

Generals Huxtable and Isles

Pat Harley, Brian Eastwood
and Geoff Hill



THE MARCH :

David Peckover on
bugle with the 33rd
Re-enactment Group



On the way

THE RALLY AT THE PICEE HALL ... The Colonel speaking
... the crowd listening



THE REGIMENTAL ARCHIVE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

In April, 2004, RHQ received the good news that a small Lottery grant had been agreed to fund a small-scale oral history programme. Together with a further grant from the Calderdale Community Foundation, to cover travelling expenses, this enabled me, as interviewer, to travel around the region and record ex-members of the Regiment about their experiences of service life.

To date, I have interviewed around sixty veterans, covering service in many countries and theatres of war from the 1930s to the present, from ex-National Servicemen conscripted for the Korean War, to staunch, long-serving Regulars with many operational tours behind them. It has been a very rewarding experience for me, personally, especially as the support of interviewees, passing on names and addresses of their friends for me to interview, particularly the North-East contingent(!), and staying in touch afterwards has made the task much easier.

I have been overwhelmed by the very positive feelings towards the Regiment, emphasising the strong sense of the Regiment as a family. Another unexpected, but very welcome, result has been the donation of additional photographs, artefacts and memoirs to the Regimental collection.

The purpose of the programme has been to record memories of service life, particularly during the Korean War, so that at some time in the future, researchers or descendants wanting to know what life was like for their forebears, will find vivid examples of sharing hoochies with the rats, enduring freezing conditions in string vests and parkas, surviving in an inhospitable climate and the strain of going out on patrol or being under shell-fire, all documented in the archive.

The current programme will shortly come to an end and a web site is to be produced, featuring a small sample from those interviewed. It is hoped that further funding will be forthcoming to extend the programme and expand the web site to include a number of interviewees from other conflicts.

In the meantime, my thanks go to all those who made me so welcome in their homes and who have shared their memories, both painful and hilarious, with openness and honesty.

Tracy Craggs

BILL NORMAN. SEVENTY YEARS A DUKE

On Tuesday 18 January 2005, Halifax Parish Church witnessed one more of its many important Regimental occasions; for over two hundred people had assembled to celebrate the life of a redoubtable Old Duke - Bill Norman. With great sensitivity, but with a light touch, the Vicar, the Reverend Wendy Wilby, conducted the moving service, assisted by the Reverend David Cooper. The Colonel of the Regiment read the lesson and David Cooper, a Huddersfield man, who had become an Army Chaplain following discussions on the shooting range with Bill, led a succession of speakers who paid tribute to the many and varied aspects of Bill's remarkable life.

Major David Harrap, Regimental Secretary, outlined Bill's military career; Mr Raymond Bass spoke of wine making and hill walking; and Bill's granddaughter, Amy, spoke touchingly of Bill's enduring sense of humour. Mr Adrian Shaw, another man of Huddersfield, who had been taught by Bill to play the flute, sang *An Die Musik* by Schubert.

One measure of the importance of Bill's contribution to Regimental life was that not only the Colonel of the Regiment attended the service with Lady Webb-Carter, but also his three predecessors as Colonel, as well as a broad cross-section of all ranks who had known and, to a man, admired him. Non-Commissioned Officers and soldiers of the Regiment serving in the UK at present formed a smart Bearer Party, led by Colour Sergeant Jenkins and Mr David Peckover sounded Last Post and (at Bill's teasing request, for it is reportedly difficult as well as long) the Long Reveille.

It was a pleasure to meet Margaret and other members of Bill's family in the Causey Hall, next to the church, after the service and to exchange private memories of Bill, who had been not only a redoubtable soldier, but truly a gentleman too.

J.B.K.G.

We are grateful to Major David Harrap for his permission to use his Address as the basis for our formal Obituary on page 58 ... Ed.

1st Battalion

Commanding Officer's Introduction

We are now well past the half way point of the current tour in Iraq and, by the time these notes are published, we should be very close to returning. It will come as no surprise, therefore, that the 1st Battalion's notes are dominated by our most recent experience on Operation Telic V.

Whilst we have been here, however, the future of the Regiment has been announced and, as we all now know, we are to become the 3rd Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment (Duke of Wellington's). His Grace The Duke of Wellington was kind enough to write to me after the announcement to express his sadness at the news, but

wished it to be known that he wanted all ranks in the Battalion to continue to consider themselves as Dukes and to describe themselves as such. He went on to say; 'I hope this will, to some extent maintain our regimental traditions and retain the name of the 1st Duke in the army, despite the machinations of the Ministry of Defence and some senior officers'. This is of course the desire of all within the 1st Battalion and I have every confidence that those representing our interests on the Yorkshire Regiment's Formation Committee will see to it that we retain as much of our identity as possible.



The Commanding Officer meets the Prime Minister at one moment and local Sheikhs the next.



The tour has proved as challenging as we had imagined it would be. We have had our moments and have experienced the full range of terrorist activity. However, with the elections behind us and three months still to run, we cannot rule out the possibility of an intensification of attacks, particularly from those (and there are many) who do not want democracy to work in this country. Whilst Southern Iraq is often described as quiet compared to the North of the country, many of our soldiers will have a tale or two to tell of their experiences here for years to come.

The Duke of Wellington's Regiment can be proud of the fact that it has contributed more than most (Operations Telic 1 and V) to the safe and secure delivery of the first step towards democracy in Iraq. The elections have been a great success by anyone's standard and we have stood shoulder to shoulder with the Iraqi Security Forces throughout. Whilst the media's interest has been focussed on the process, the Regiment has come out of it well and we have received very favourable reporting from all those who have been embedded with us.

I expect most of us to be back in Osnabrück by the end of April and certainly no later than the first week of May. On return we will need to sort ourselves out and recover our vehicles and freight from the returning cargo ships. We will then take four weeks' post-tour leave starting on 20 May. As for the remainder of the year, the programme is already beginning to fill up. We have now heard that our Arms Plot move to Warminster is likely to take place before Christmas this year. Prior to that we are expected to have converted to the Bowman communications system and become fully digitized prior to assuming our new role as the Land Warfare Centre Battlegroup.

There is no respite for the Dukes and, rather disappointingly, no 'air-gap' between the end of the tour, arms plotting and stepping into the next role. We will of course deliver, we always do. It is going to be tight, but I have to say the boys are now looking forward to returning to the UK and that is all that really matters.

30 January '05 marked an important day in the history of Iraq and it was a privilege for the Dukes to have been involved in the process. Opposite is copy of the Special Order of the Day issued by our GOC, Major General John Riley DSO (his grandfather was a Duke):

SPECIAL ORDER OF THE DAY

by Major General J. P. Riley DSO

Commanding Multinational Div (South-East), Iraq

Yesterday, 30 January 2005, was an extraordinary day. Nothing in Iraq will ever be the same again. For the first time in fifty years, Iraqis had the chance to vote in a free election - something we all take for granted. Those of you who saw the mood on the streets do not need me to tell you of the emotions that the day, so long prepared for, aroused.

We prepared for the election for months. We rehearsed daily for several weeks. And, on the day, that showed. I want to thank and congratulate you all, on a magnificent achievement. No matter what you were doing on 30 January, no matter which nation you come from, you were part of history.

We should not forget that this was an Iraqi election and in the end, it was Iraqis who organised it and whose forces secured it. True, they could not have done it without us, but they had the guts to stand up and be counted. To have done that is a blow at everything the insurgency represents.

31 January 2005

ALMA COMPANY

Operation Telic V has reached the midway point and Alma Company has busied itself with a variety of operational roles and tasks over the last three months. The Company has been based in the Shatt Al Arab Hotel throughout and, as the only armoured company in the city, has been used extensively across the area of operations. We have been tasked with a number of roles, including the Battle Group Operations Company, a ground-holding company in the North and East of Basrah and, more recently, as the Company responsible for Security Sector Reform in the West and South of the city environs. The multifarious roles have permitted Alma the freedom to traverse the city and establish a good appreciation of the ground and the area's diverse issues. A number of other Iron Duke submissions will provide the reader with an insight into the daily machinations, trials and tribulations of team and multiple commanders here in Basrah, but it is pertinent to précis the many comings and goings on tour from a myopic Alma view point (the worm's eye view as Colonel Richard Holroyd once remarked).

Our arrival into theatre was particularly efficient, flying as we did on Icelandic Airways. Unfortunately, the last leg of the journey was coordinated by the RAF and predictably went for a complete ball of chalk. During the last leg to Basrah we must have visited more Arab countries than Lawrence of Arabia. Our eventual arrival saw us welcomed by forty degree temperatures and the luxuries of Shaibah Logistics Base. Little would appear to have changed in the last sixty years, since the Dukes were last there as a Battalion en masse. We appeared to have been accommodated in exactly the same tents as our forebears judging by their dilapidated state. The Reception Package was suitably uninspiring and appeared to last an interminably long time before

we were finally permitted to view the delights of Basrah, the Venice of the South. I have been privy to many a misnomer, but the Venice of the South is one of Baron Von Munchausen proportions. If one were to eradicate renaissance architecture, fine restaurants, smart boutiques and gondolas from Venice, add appalling architecture, abject poverty, crumbling infrastructure and fuel smuggling barges whilst squinting, one could almost see the correlation. On arrival we were met by the happy smiling faces of B Company 1 PWRR, the Cheshire's operations company. The Company had been widely employed in the preceding six months, sustaining the brunt of attacks in August 2004 perpetrated by a seditious organisation called the Muqtada Militia, the private army of a Shi'ite Cleric with a few issues. The situation had quietened down somewhat on our arrival, but one could sense PWRR's desire to leave theatre. That said, the handover was thorough and a credit to the PWRR, leaving us well versed in the environment we were about to be thrust upon. Our salubrious luxury tents with the ballistic protection of warm chocolate were a far cry from the Shaibah 'tents of pestilence' and it was with a sense of joy that we rapidly settled into the fascinating, yet alien, environment of Basrah.

From deployment on, time vanished in a trice, interspersed with the usual ups, downs and moments of levity that help to keep morale high. The Company is currently established to six formed multiples and an often-deployed Company HQ multiple. We have a large number of fixed tasks that unfortunately limits our freedom of action. The tasks include the obligatory guard duty, two Quick Reaction Forces, a Court Liaison Multiple headed up by the Company Second in Command, Captain Chris Adair, and two Patrols

Multiples (Rest and Recuperation dependant). The Company's recent role has seen us deploy into a fascinating area of the city known colloquially as the Shia Flats (Hyyaniyah). The flats are a ramshackle collection of run-down houses, tight winding streets, fetid souks and wretched poverty. A newcomer to the area could strongly argue that the Multi-National Force's two year presence would appear to have had little or no impact, but this would denigrate the huge efforts of previous units to improve the locals' situation. Sadly, 25 years of neglect cannot be reversed overnight and the numerous infrastructure projects barely scratch the surface. Even the rats are looking to relocate judging by their nightly exodus. The flats are a breeding ground for all manner of malcontents that export their particular brand of anti-establishment activity across the city. In one sense this is good for Alma as the flats are relatively self-policing. No one is insane enough to attack the area through fear for life and limb.

Alma Company entered this world with a degree of trepidation, perpetuated by tales from the outgoing units. Our first forays into the flats were met by showers of stones and debris of varying hues, some not too pleasant, as Private Woodhead found to his disgust and everyone else's amusement. Nevertheless, our presence has slowly become accepted and we are making positive inroads in the area. This has occurred through a twin-track approach of security patrols and civil aid projects. We patrol the area heavily at night and during the day help to identify projects to develop basic

amenities in conjunction with Martin Ness and his gang of merry CIMIC gnomes. In order to meet the heavy patrolling burden Alma has worked alongside the Iraqi Security Forces. The joint work is encompassed under our broad remit to facilitate Security Sector Reform, the aim of which is to train and mentor the Iraqi Security Forces to allow them to take Iraq forward in a secure and stable environment. This is an extremely frustrating but critical process, as we look to share knowledge, mentor the police and provide administrative support, to allow them to stand on their own two feet. Unfortunately, the local police are not always entirely receptive to our assistance and it can be a slow, at times painful, progression. Despite the frustrations, the soldiers have performed exceedingly well with some notable successes.

Alma has had a number of reasons to celebrate recently with laudable operations and personal achievements by members of the Company. Sergeant Clarke has become the proud father of a young son, Connor, and our warmest regards go out to his wife Andrea. As we go to press Private Nicholl's wife Carole is about to give birth and our prayers are with them both. Manning remains strong and we have recently benefited from some new additions and returnees. Following successful stints at the Infantry Training Centre Wales Lance Corporals Green, Daniel and Senior all returned having passed the Section Commanders' Battle Course at Brecon.



Alma Company meets visitors Lelani, Jaki Degg, John Barnes and James Fox.



Corporal Devanney gets a shirt signed by John Barnes.

Alma also welcomed Privates Keezer, Allen and Caldwell from the Infantry Training Centre, Catterick. All three arrived full of youthful exuberance and were rapidly subsumed into the multiples. The standard of training and their adaptability was a pleasant surprise and they are a credit to the training regime at Catterick. The Officer Corps also received a boost in the guise of the new Subbies' friend, Second Lieutenant Ben Redshaw. Redarse has become an instant hit with his peers and will doubtless be a regular on Battalion Orderly Officer judging by his initial forays into the Adjutant's office. Finally, Sergeant Major Carter has moved seamlessly in to fill the void left by Sergeant Major Cole as the Company Sergeant Major. Sergeant Major Carter's infectious enthusiasm will doubtless be tested to the full over the coming weeks, particularly during the forthcoming elections, but he is more than keen to embrace the challenge.

Alma bid farewell to two members of the command team, Sergeant Major Cole and Sergeant Sheehan. Sergeant Major Cole was an exceedingly capable Company Sergeant Major, who always had the interests of the soldiers at heart. He provided excellent support and advice to his Officers Commanding, Majors Fox and Robinson, and he will be sorely missed. He disappears into the murky world of G4 administration as the next RQMS and goes with all our best wishes. Sergeant Sheehan worked tirelessly as both the Platoon Sergeant and Platoon Commander in the lead up to, and subsequent deployment on, Operation Telic. He performed a commendable job, juggling the two roles at an exceedingly busy period for the Battalion. He has moved to the relative stability of the East and West Riding Regiment, where I am sure he will be an excellent addition to the team in Pontefract.

The news of the change to the Infantry structure went down like the veritable lead balloon in the Company, but the conceptual thinking underpinning the restructuring was hard to counter from a clinical accounting perspective. Unfortunately the changes paid scant regard to the morale component of fighting power, that of esprit de corps, and regional, family and emotional ties. Nevertheless, change is upon us and we must embrace it with a view to making the Third Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment (Duke of Wellington's) the best in the Infantry.

The elections draw near in Iraq and the situation is likely to become tense over the coming weeks. However, Alma will doubtless deal with whatever is thrown its way in inimitable Dukes' fashion, with professionalism and a smile underpinned by a grim determination to succeed.

Major Mark Robinson
OC Alma Company

DUKES' BATTLEGROUP COURT LIAISON TEAM

'The popular conception of a Court Martial is half a dozen blood-thirsty old Colonel Blimps, who take it for granted that anyone brought before them is guilty - damme, sir, would he be here if he hadn't done something?'

Field Marshal Viscount Slim of Burma, Unofficial History, 1959.

Though the above perception of Army Courts Martial may hold true for some, even today, the recently established Duke's Court Liaison Team is nothing to do with the Army Legal System! Rather, it was formed under the direction of 4 Brigade Commander, Brigadier Gibson, to establish transparency in the Iraqi Criminal Justice System (CJS) within Basrah City.

The Iraqi Police Service are doing a tremendous job, in difficult circumstances, and are being helped along the way by International Police Advisers from both Britain and America. Likewise, the Iraqi Prison Service is assisted by advisers who mentor their work and ensure the efforts of Prison Service personnel are focussed in the right direction. There has, however, been an information gap since mid summer 2004 regarding the processing of cases through the legal system. This is the task of the Court Liaison Team (CLT): to track cases from the point of arrest, through the investigation process to the court and eventual sentence or acquittal.

The CLT consists of Captain Christopher Adair and four members of the Royal Military Police. Together with a multiple from Alma Company they have established rapport with each of the four main court complexes in Basrah. This entailed first gaining an understanding of the Iraqi legal System, which differs somewhat from the British system. It is based, largely, on the French legal system and places a greater degree of reliance on the Investigating Magistrate than is the case in the United Kingdom. Other aspects remain similar; a legacy perhaps of British involvement in this part of the world in the first half of the last century. The idea of a District Court (UK Magistrates Court) and House of Justice (UK Crown Court) works in a similar way, with cases being referred from the former to the latter. Differences, however, are most evident in the investigation stages of procedures where responsibility lies with the Investigating Magistrate himself, rather than with the police or a CPS equivalent.

The initial concept for the CLT was that it would achieve results through 'Case Tracking': that is the following of cases from the point of arrest to the Investigating Magistrate and on to the House of Justice. This ensures that, regardless of a successful prosecution and subsequent conviction, the legal process is at least working. The CLT does not actively seek convictions or acquittals: rather that cases reach some sort of a conclusion and can then be closed. Presently cases under observation are those in which Mutli-National Forces were involved in the arrest stage of proceedings. This provided a convenient starting posture but the CLT is developing into a focal point for many other concerns held by those in the employment of the Iraqi Criminal Justice System; issues as diverse as court security, illegal Afghan aliens and a new carpet for Judge Yausuf's office have been raised. The CLT provides each request or questions its due regard and passes details on to the necessary agency, be it the International Police Authority (IPA) or Number 2 Company, The Welsh Guards, who deal with Policing and Regional Security issues respectively. Latterly the CLT, complete with Alma Company Troops, have been getting their hands dirty and helping the Facilities Protection Police at the main court build a new search bay at the entrance to the complex. As with most things in Iraq it is largely a case of self-help. This is a concept which unfortunately many locals do not seem to grasp.

With a little push in the right direction, however, they became keen to improve their lot and got stuck in. Old signs were recovered to the Shatt Al-Arab Hotel, repaired by the REME, given a lick of paint and painted in the necessary Arabic wording. Whilst not what the CLT was initially designed to do, it has certainly improved security for the Judges and Lawyers in one area of Basrah.

Though still in its infancy (albeit a Court Liaison Officer did exist during Operation Telic III) the CLT concept is working well in what is a very busy environment. Future plans include looking into the issue of prisoners on remand and their timely initial movement from police custody into the legal system. The initial signs are, however, good. The Judges appear independent-minded and impartial and Iraqi justice seems based on firm foundations. The principles and legal system exist and cases are being heard on a daily basis. The situation remains precarious, however. A recent strike by clerical assistants threatened to cause considerable disorder. The real key to success in the entire legal system has to be a proactive, independent Iraqi Police Service. Provided the Police continue and develop their ability to bring people, with the necessary evidence, to Investigating Magistrates, then the Iraqi Criminal will have his day in court.

Captain C. D. Adair
Alma Company

▲ MULTIPLE COMMANDER'S PERSPECTIVE OF OPERATION TELIC 5

I well remember arriving in theatre fresh from my Platoon Commander's Battle Course just two years ago, when the Battalion had been called up at the eleventh hour to take part in Operation Telic 1. A great deal of our efforts toward the end of that tour were spent trying to re-establish the then defunct Iraqi Police Force with the aim of maintaining law and order at the most basic level. In addition, the appalling state of the basic infrastructure meant marshalling chaotic water queues was another omnipresent task.

Nearly two years on and I am happy to say that the day to day life in Southern Iraq seems almost unrecognisable from that which we left at the end of Operation Telic 1. I am struck by no apparent food or drinking water shortages, schools and businesses that are all open again and a Police and National Guard service that appears to have made great strides forwards.

Despite these very positive changes, however, the security situation appears certainly less stable. We have had to deal with a great many terrorist incidents targeted at not only the Multi-National Forces but also the Iraqi Police Service. Clearly our primary aim during this operational tour has been to create and maintain a stable environment for the forthcoming January elections which has involved continued security sector reform work. On every patrol we will stop in at one of the Iraqi Police Stations in our area of responsibility and pick up as many policemen as they can spare to take them with us on task.

To a greater or lesser degree depending upon the area, this has been successful and Basra looks to be the model that the rest of Iraq will aim to follow. Certainly it has allowed the Multi-National Forces to establish an esprit-de-corps with our Iraqi counterparts which has helped lower barriers of mutual suspicion. In addition it has helped with the local area information flow greatly.



20A Multiple returning to the Al Hussein Police Station after a joint foot patrol with the Iraqi Police Service in the area.

The obvious language and cultural barriers mean that it is easy for important signs or pieces of information to slip through the net. However the ability to take local police on patrol with us and indeed a general ability to engage in regular 'chit-chat' with them has led to us being better able to maintain a grasp on what is happening out there on the streets.

There are of course problem areas and indeed the security sector reform process still has a very long way

to go. The forthcoming elections may well prove a stern test of those systems now in place and further highlight areas of shortcoming. It is however easy to be negative in an environment such as this, and it has been interesting to come back and see for one's self just how much progress has actually been made.

Lieutenant Andrew Shand
2 Platoon, Alma Company

A PRIVATE SOLDIER'S PERSPECTIVE

In July 2004 we started our OPTAG training package in Sennelager ready for deployment on Operation Telic V to Iraq in November. After completing the four week training package we were ready and set for deployment. I was then sent on pre deployment leave early as I was sailing out to Iraq on the Boat party. As you can imagine leave flew by and before I knew it I was back in Belfast Barracks packing my final items ready to move.

When it was time for the boat party's convoy to leave Belfast Barracks for the six month tour, we all mounted up and set out on our three hour drive to the port at Emden. By this time I was starting to get apprehensive. This was my first operational tour and everything I had seen on the news and heard on OPTAG made me pretty nervous. However, I still reassuringly had three weeks until we were due to dock at the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr and this period at sea actually helped me to get my mind round things. In addition to the adjustment period I had the rare opportunity to sail through the Suez Canal and got an unexpectedly close look at the Egyptian Army, who weren't happy with me using the SUSAT on my rifle as binos! An international incident almost ensued.

On arriving in Iraq I was met by Sergeant Wyeth and Corporal Anderson. We moved to Shaibah Logistics Base to join the rest of Alma Company to start our acclimatization package. As if I wasn't already used to the weather after three weeks of sunbathing on the decks on the boat! The package consisted of lessons, a bit of PT and it wasn't long before I was starting to feel ready for the long tour in this foreign country. A few days later all the sunbathing and ice creams were finished. It was time to move to the Shatt Al Arab hotel, our home for the next six months. We all lined up at Basrah International Airport to move in the early hours of the morning to our new base by Warrior Armoured Fighting Vehicle. By this time I was very apprehensive, as it was time to leave a relatively secure area for the streets of Iraq and I didn't know what to expect.

The next morning we were ready to go out on our first patrol and I was looking forward to it. It was a real eye opener seeing the streets of Iraq in daylight. I thought to my self 'What a state!' The houses were all smashed up and falling to pieces and the children were running around in bare feet screaming 'Mister Mister, give me dollar'! It was hard to keep focused on the job as I was engrossed in the surroundings and the way of life of the locals.

Christmas came fast and it was my first Christmas away from home so I wasn't looking forward to it. However, it wasn't too bad. Alma Company OC, Major Robinson, came round with Colour Sergeant Hollis dressed as Father Christmas to give us horrendous 'Gunfire' early morning drinks. An excellent start to the day! We had Christmas dinner in the cookhouse and were given two cans of Stella. After not drinking for two months they went down a treat! To end the Christmas dinner we finished it off with a food fight. I'm not sure the Officers found it funny but the Private soldiers certainly did! Christmas was starting to feel a bit more homely. A week later it was New Year's Eve and we spent the turning of the new year on a VCP at Green 12, an area in Basrah, one I will surely never forget!

The next big event for us to look forward to was the Iraqi Elections. Sky News, BBC News and ITN News all turned up. Now was our chance to get on TV and Lieutenant Shand certainly didn't pass it up! It wasn't long before he was all rigged up in front of the cameras, being interviewed. We were all ready for the elections and prepared for whatever was to be thrown at us. Emergency rations, Public Order kit were all on board our Warriors ready to go. Everyone thought the elections were not going to go smoothly. We were all out on patrol for very long hours at a time and it was very tiring. All the locals came out and helped block off roads in order to counteract the substantial vehicle-borne threat that was out there to try and turn the elections upside down. We took a member of the Iraqi Police Service out with us on all the patrols and they helped us massively in ensuring that the curfew was obeyed by the locals. In the end it seems that we and the Iraqi Security Forces all did a good job over the election period as they appear to have gone off far better than expected.

With mid-tour leave almost upon us I can already reflect positively on all that I have learnt and experienced out here. The job isn't over yet and I know we mustn't let our guard slip, but it does feel good to be half way through already, time has really flown by.

Private Paul Kelly
2 Platoon
Alma Company

BURMA COMPANY

OC	-	Major Phil Wilson
2IC	-	Captain Mark Crawford
CSM	-	WO2 Richard Hind
CQMS	-	Colour Sergeant Steve Blake
OC Drums Platoon	-	Lieutenant Bob Carmen
Platoon Sergeant	-	Sergeant Hinchliffe
OC 5 Platoon	-	Lieutenant Chris Carter (KORBR)
Platoon Sergeant	-	Sergeant Walkinshaw
OC 6 Platoon	-	Lieutenant Dan Holloway
Platoon Sergeant	-	Sergeant Barker

Burma Company deployed to Iraq ahead of the rest of the Battalion and grouped with the 1st Battalion the Welsh Guards during the acclimatisation process at Shaiba Log Base near Basrah. After what proved to be a very unpleasant, hot and sweaty week in the aptly named Bedouin Camp, we deployed to Camp Abu Naji in Al Amarah, the principal town of Maysan Province. We hadn't had an opportunity to recon Camp Abu Naji prior to the deployment and weren't quite sure what to expect. We were pleasantly surprised when we arrived as the facilities and accommodation far exceeded our expectations.

The PWRR Battle Group, who handed over to us, had experienced a dramatic tour. For considerable periods they had been engaged in 'warfighting' and the handover very much reflected this state of mind. We fully expected to face a very hostile environment and were prepared for the worst. As the days passed by it became apparent that we weren't going to get contacted on every patrol and very quickly the Commanding Officer, Colonel Ben Bathurst, placed the emphasis on mentoring the Iraqi Security Forces and delivering infrastructure development.

We deployed as a complete Warrior Company and provided the armoured element of the Battle Group along with seven Challenger II tanks from A Squadron the Royal Dragoon Guards. Initially our role was to provide the armoured support to the other company operations, provide security along the Route 6 MSR through Maysan province and a permanent quick reaction force. This was an incredibly busy period, along with continuous deployments we spent many long hours on the tank park maintaining the Warriors that needed a lot of TLC after such a long period of relative inactivity in Germany.

As time passed, it became clear that the threat which had been so evident on our initial deployment, although still considerable, had reduced to a level that enabled the Commanding Officer to re-focus the efforts of his armoured company. Consequently we were given a specific task to mentor the Permanent Vehicle Check Points (PVCPs) on Route 6, the Highways Police and the Traffic Police. As a result of the August Uprising, the Security Sector Reform and development of the Iraqi Security Forces had fallen behind schedule. The PVCPs on Route 6 were woeful; poorly equipped, lacking infrastructure and manned by extremely low quality policemen with non-existent morale. We

undertook a programme of patrols to visit regularly all eight PVCPs and to conduct limited training. Concurrently we set about establishing the condition of both the Highway and Traffic Police, the findings made for a depressing outlook. Across the board, the police lacked equipment and this was always the excuse for their poor performance, however this was only half of the story, as they also lacked motivation and desperately needed training in low level skills.

On deployment, in true Dukes' fashion, we were somewhat apprehensive of being battle grouped away from the Battalion. However, the Welsh Guards could not have done more to make us feel welcome. At every level, working with them has been a pleasure and we very quickly built up a wonderful working relationship. They were always glad to have the Warriors to hand as they deployed across the Area of Operations in their Light Role Vehicles and we appreciated the freedom they afforded us in our tasking. There has been a constant debate over flags; the Yorkshire Mafia was outraged when the Welsh Dragon was raised at the front gate. Subsequently the Flag War started with the cross of St George appearing on every available mast and antenna. In a gracious gesture the Welsh Guards raised a Yorkshire Rose on Christmas day, thus, with honour restored, the Flag War abated. We've had to get used to some peculiar ways; before the deployment, when information was scarce, we received a wonderful document that provided very detailed instructions on when to and when not to roll up and down our sleeves. The CSM spent many happy hours checking up exactly what the various numbers of dress actually were! However, despite the cultural differences between the finest Regiment of Line Infantry in the Army and the Guards, we have got on famously and formed a very strong bond.

The Town of Al Majarr Al Kabir (MAK) is situated 25 kms south of Al Amarah. It was the scene of the murders of six members of the Royal Military Police during Operation Telic 1, the infamous 'Danny Boy' contact during Operation Telic 4 and was declared as being ungovernable by its Governor prior to our deployment. On our arrival, no troops had patrolled in to the town since April 2004 and it had a reputation of being an extremely dangerous place for Multi-National Force Troops to operate. With the elections looming, it was clear that a lot had to be achieved if the people of MAK were going to get the opportunity to vote.



The Burma Dozen.

No matter what, it was essential that British troops gained access to the town in order to start the process of delivering infrastructure development and enhancing the security forces. The process started before Christmas when we were tasked to provide force protection for the rebuild of the MAK PVCP on Route 6. Once the rebuild was complete, we occupied the VCP for ten days in order to improve the capability of the local police and to provide a foothold from which subsequent operations could be launched.

The Commanding Officer engaged in a seemingly endless programme of meetings with the Town Council, local Sheikhs and Police in order to set the conditions for us to commence patrols into the town. Eventually consent was achieved and plans were developed for a visit to the Town Council building. Initially the patrols were Battle Group operations, with the Warriors providing outer security and being prepared to deploy in to the town if it all went wrong. Subsequently it became a Burma tasking, thus we took our first tentative patrols in Snatch Land Rovers through the town. We were well received and it quickly became clear that MAK needed a quick injection of assistance and money to improve the lives of the local population. In January planning for the elections began in earnest and we were given MAK with its satellite settlements as our area of responsibility. Our role was to guide the police and the Iraqi Army through the election security planning, with them taking the lead and us providing assistance and advice.

On 28 January the Company deployed forward for the election period. 6 Platoon, Commanded by Lieutenant Dan Holloway, deployed to the town of Al

Adel, where they occupied the local police station and conducted patrols to check on the security of the local election centres. The rest of the Company deployed into MAK. Initially we focussed on enhancing the force protection of the Police Headquarters. This took a huge amount of work but as the night's events proved, it was worth the effort. Once we had established our 'home' for three days we set about the business of ensuring the police and the Iraqi army were manning their positions. After much encouragement and an amount of persuasion, the town of MAK was secured for the elections. The Iraqi Security Forces finally engaged in the task and we were impressed with their efforts. It was on the night of the 29th, after a quiet day, that it all happened. At 0014 hours three RPGs were launched at the Police Station along with sustained bursts of small arms and machine gun fire. One of the RPGs hit a flat bed truck parked near to the building, leading us to believe initially that we had been contacted by a vehicle borne device. The situation was further complicated by an Iraqi Police patrol which, having heard the explosions, opened up in the general direction of where they thought the explosions had come from. This 'contact' was sustained for thirty minutes until the order to stop firing was finally actioned. The blokes were fantastic throughout the incident, they were professional and extremely disciplined, holding their fire as they could not identify any targets. In hindsight the event actually helped us, thankfully no one was hurt and it focused everyone on just how dangerous the situation was and how important it was to dominate the town.

The Election Day itself will live with me forever. The response of the local population was an absolute pleasure to behold. The joy on the faces of the men and women as they waited patiently to have their vote made it all worthwhile and incredibly rewarding. I don't think we had really appreciated just how much the elections meant to the Iraqi people. Most had gone to a huge effort on the day; one man explained that he had saved for six months to buy his Election Day suit. With the town effectively locked down to vehicular traffic, people walked for miles to have their say and vote as free people. I am not over-dramatising the events of the day, it was overwhelming and, to a man, we are incredibly proud to have been involved. The Election Day and the subsequent collection of the ballot boxes passed without incident and the Company recovered back to Camp Abu Naji on the 31st.

In January it seemed impossible that free and fair elections could be held in MAK. After a huge effort by the Battle Group, Burma Company, the Police and the Iraqi Army, the people of MAK had the opportunity to

vote. It was a hugely successful operation and Burma Company was at the forefront of the effort.

Our All Arms Search Team has been very busy. Under the guidance of the CSM, they have been deployed on four high profile search operations, finding a huge haul of arms and ammunition in the process. The Drums Platoon has also had its moments. Corporal Oxley was asked to sound the bugle for the departure of the Black Watch soldiers so tragically killed at Camp Dogwood and, on a lighter note, the Platoon did a display for Commander 4 Brigade on his dining out by the Dukes at the Shatt Al Arab Hotel.

It has been a busy and rewarding deployment so far. Burma Company has built a strong reputation for its professionalism and hard work. Being grouped with the Welsh Guards has been a pleasure and the tour is flying by. The effort now will be on maintaining security for the post election period and continuing to deliver relief to what is a very poor province of Iraq. There will be no let up when we get back to Germany with the Forecast of Events already filling up.



Burma Rover Group.

CORUNNA COMPANY

Operation Telic V - the first three months

Corunna Company is currently employed as the Brigade Operations Company, selected by the Brigade Commander himself we are told, and are stationed in Shaiba Logistical base. Our wide-ranging mission can be translated to doing "anything at anytime and anywhere" in the Brigade Area of Operations and this has proved to be an accurate reflection of what we have done thus far. The distances we have covered, the variety of tasks conducted and the agencies and nationalities with whom we have worked have been many and varied. Whilst OC 7 Platoon will provide an insight into these operations, a number of statistics

will provide a flavour of what we have done; each Warrior fighting vehicle has averaged 800km per month; we have conducted 27 discrete operations, ranging from 24 hour search and arrest operations, to seven-day OP operations on the Iran/Iraq border; ongoing Mentoring and Monitoring operations with the Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army; three-day route clearance and route security operations; a two-day 260 mile reconnaissance in force through the western desert to the Kuwait/Iraq and Saudi border; anti-rocket and mortar deterrence operations; helicopter EVCPs; logistical convoy security and CIMIC support operations.

Most recently, the Company has supported the Iraqi Security Forces during the National Elections. It was during this latter operation that the Company was bolstered by two troops of Challenger, two troops of Divisional Recce, an Engineer Recce troop and a section of RMP. The Company has worked with the Danish Battalion (and indeed were under Operational Control of DANBAT for two months); the Italian Brigade; the Iraqi Air Force and the US Convoy Brigade, as well as being cut to RDG, 1 DWR, and the Brigade Surveillance Company. It has worked with the Iraqi Army, Iraqi Police, Border Police and the Facility Protection Service.

The pre-deployment training has enabled the Company to operate within this framework in a flexible and confident manner, the boys have enjoyed the variety, but have craved routine - the last three months have proved the adage of "planning early leading us to plan twice", as the Company has often been re-tasked at short notice to move from one tasking to another, whilst concurrently planning a third and unrelated operation - this has stretched the G4 flexibility of the CQMS (Colour Sergeant Harris) and the ability of the Ops Officer (Captain Doug Nelson) to map the next patrol matrix using both Microsoft Excel and Witchcraft - but we haven't dropped a clanger yet!

Socially the Company has enjoyed a Ninja Turtle (utilising the Army sleeping bag) Race Night, a number of well-researched and extremely amusing quiz nights (including such quiz rounds as "Feel the Duke", "What Happened Next" (which bizarrely included semi-nudity and a bike), and "Guess the Duke", a couple of skits nights (in which the OC and WO2 (CSM) Scott Moroney were slated). Christmas Day and New Year's Eve were celebrated in style with the obligatory two tins of beer, a good meal, sundry entertainment and a viewing of traditional seasonal videos. High points were the Christmas present from the Queen, our Fijian Choir and Private Jessop's Christmas medley of songs. Low points being listening to the same medley of songs, when the New Year's Day Concert was cancelled due to a rocket attack and we were forced to spend two hours in a Danish bunker.

The beauty of an operational tour is the steady state of the ORBAT (less the trickle of R&R), however we have said farewell to Sergeant Peters posted to Burma Company, Sergeant Goddard who is attempting RMAS selection, and a temporary adieu to Corporal Robinson (PSBC), Corporal Roper (SCBC) whilst we have also welcomed Private McGowan from ITC Catterick - which is quite a good swap!

Major Malcolm Norman
CO Corunna Company

A Platoon Commander is allowed to speak

There was some confusion in early September when the original Op Order came out from Brigade as to the role of Corunna Company. Initially we were placed as a part of the Welsh Guards' Battle Group in Al Amarah, which allowed the lads to focus on their future deployment. However, several days later, an amendment to the Op Order was published that retasked us as the Brigade Surge Operation Company, directly responsible

to the Brigade Commander, based at Shaibah Logistics Base (SLB). This meant we had no such thing as an Area of Responsibility (AO), and would generally mount reactive operations to events that occurred throughout the British AO. This promised to be a challenging and full tour, with little in the way of respite.

Corunna Company began its deployment on Operation Telic V on 15 October, with the advance party flying from Hanover, via Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar, to Basrah International Airport (BAS) and then immediately transported by coach to Shaibah (SLB), about 15kms from Basrah city. Here, as with the rest of the Brigade, Corunna went through a four-day acclimatisation package (RSOI) which tried in some small way to prepare us mentally and physically, and I say that in the loosest sense of the word, for the next six months. The one telling point that came from the RSOI package was that we were glad we had come for the winter months; if the temperature could reach 39°C in late October, the summer months must have been hell.

Corunna took over the role of Brigade Surge Company from A Company, 1st Battalion, the Prince of Wales Royal Regiment (1 PWRR), who had just returned from a four month deployment to Al Amarah to help bolster the 1 PWRR Battle Group. A Company had quite obviously seen a lot of action whilst up in the north, notably taking part in two war-fighting operations in May and August. It was telling how different the younger soldiers were between the two companies, speaking to one of the other platoon commanders from A Company, he was shocked at how his soldiers had grown up in the last six months. The initial handover-takeover period lasted about a week, where the platoons intermingled, going on joint patrols and escorts down to the port of Umm Qasr and passing on experiences.

The first couple of weeks saw Corunna preparing our fleet of Warrior and Land Rover Snatch vehicles. Multiple commanders also recced areas in which they might later deploy; such as Al Amarah, the Welsh Guards BG; Basrah city, the Dukes' BG; and Basrah Rural, a vast expanse of desert. This was also an acclimatisation period, which encompassed inter-platoon rugby, volleyball and baseball competitions; as well as a race night and a quiz night, where some rather healthy rivalry between 7 and 9 Platoons came into effect, even going to the point of their platoon commanders trying to out lift each other in the gym. (Note from the Company Commander on reading this - I believe that I managed to explain this period to the Brigade Commander through such phrases as Mission Rehearsal, War Gaming and SOP development.) The 'acclimatisation programme' went to such levels that some of the other Dukes' companies, who shall remain nameless but are situated at the Shatt Al Arab Hotel in Basrah city, began to call the glorious Corunna "The Olympic Torch Company", that is, it never goes out! This was soon to change.

The Company was cut to the Danish Battalion (DANBAT) in early November, unfortunately for the boys, they soon realised that the rumours spread by OC 8 Platoon, 2nd Lieutenant Doug Hayton-Williams, of mixed saunas and copious amounts of Carlsberg were

far from the mark. We actually found ourselves being deployed on several varied and interesting operations throughout their AO. These have included search and arrest operations in Az Zubayr, training and mentoring the Iraqi National Guard (ING), now referred to as the New Iraqi Army (NIA), to the north of Basrah; deploying in Observation Points (Operations) along the Iranian border, and an advance to contact on possible terrorist camps in the south, along the Iraqi-Saudi-Kuwaiti border. We have also worked quite extensively with the Iraqi Police Service (IPS) and the Danish Military Police in Al Qurnah and Al Medinah to the north, training the IPS instructors in disciplines such as weapon handling, rules of engagement, vehicle check points, duties of a sentry and basic first aid. All in all, the Company has been responsible for training up to 600 policemen. This particular operation, known as Operation Cougar, allowed the multiples to spend a good deal of time with the IPS at their stations, which gave Corunna the opportunity to sample Iraqi life and build some friendships. In fact by late January, when Corunna parted with DANBAT, the Company had used all the mapping of the British AO and were, without doubt, the most travelled Company in the Brigade.

Other operations outside the jurisdiction of DANBAT have also committed and deployed Corunna Company, often back to back and at short notice. These have included working with the Royal Engineer EOD team in the Safwan area on the Kuwaiti border, helping the Royal Engineers establish Permanent Vehicle Check Points in Basrah, escort duties into the Italian Brigade

AO to the north, providing support to the Royal Dragoon Guards (RDG) in Az Zubayr, and helping other Dukes' companies in search and arrest operations in Basrah city.

The recent events of the election period have seen Corunna work endlessly to fulfil each task thrown its way; it has been challenging, not only for the soldiers, but also the vehicles (Corunna tracked over 12,000km in January alone). As with the rest of the Dukes, we were deployed permanently on the ground in Basrah during the build up and aftermath of the elections, working alongside the IPS and the NIA to provide security for the voting population. It is good to write that during the election period there were relatively few incidents to cause alarm to the multi-national forces, and in Basrah there was a hugely successful 80% voter turnout.

Despite this glut of tasks in the last two months, Corunna was able to have a very good Christmas back in Shaibah, with all the platoons providing their very own version of the Nativity story, and the usual Christmas lunch, which the Queen's Dragoon Guards (QDG), with whom we share our accommodation, were quite surprised to witness. Corunna is soon to move camp in a logistical re-shuffle, which will create something of an upheaval; however this will not detract from our hard work philosophy, and we will continue to give our best in all that is asked.

Lieutenant Chris Armitage
OC 7 Platoon

SOMME COMPANY

Somme Company deployed to Iraq in October as part of the Dukes' Battle Group in Basrah. The Company has been split, with Mortars and Reconnaissance Platoons based at the Shatt Al Arab Hotel with Company Headquarters and Anti Tank Platoon attached to Prince of Wales' Company, Welsh Guards based at the Old State Building in Basrah city centre. The Company has been operating as a ground holding company, responsible for the Al Maqil district in the north of Basrah and the Al Tannumah district east of the Shatt Al Arab river. In addition, we have been responsible for the overall force protection of the Shatt Al Arab Hotel which is home to the majority of the Battle Group.

Throughout the tour so far, the Shatt Al Arab Hotel has been under constant threat of attack from insurgents, particularly from indirect fire. When we took over from 1 Cheshires the hotel was being fired upon by an 82mm mortar team at least once a week. This reduced somewhat following our deployment and since we arrived there has been only one 82mm mortar attack onto the hotel. However, there have been two rocket attacks, one attempted rocket attack and our most recent headache has been a team of insurgents who have carried out four attacks with 60mm light mortars. Prevention of such attacks has been one of the main focuses of the Ground Defensive Area (GDA) patrols conducted by the multiples of Somme Company. By conducting such patrols we have undoubtedly thwarted a number of intended attacks.

As the Support Weapons Company we have also been able to utilise our specialist skills to assist in the task of preventing attacks onto the Shatt Al Arab Hotel. The guard commitment at the hotel has been split between four multiples, one from each company, all co-ordinated by our Ops room. Somme Company has provided a multiple to man the Tower OP, an adapted old Air Traffic Control tower on top of the hotel. Here, the experience of those who formed part of the Waterloo Company Brigade Surveillance Company in Kosovo in 2003 has proved invaluable. Reconnaissance Platoon has deployed into OPs and LUPs in observation of previously used firing points, often at very short notice and the Mortar Platoon has provided a nightly fireplan of 81mm illum lighting up the skies around Basrah. This latter measure has proved to be an extremely effective deterrent against attacks. Recently, we had an Iraqi policeman giving fire corrections over the phone from a police station which was being attacked, which successfully encouraged the attackers to flee.

Within the two districts we have spent of much of our time concentrating on Sector Security Reform (SSR) which has involved mentoring the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and giving them the confidence to conduct their responsibilities within Basrah. The majority of this type of work has been working alongside the Iraqi Police Service (IPS), which has been an interesting challenge to say the least. Of course, we are not policemen and therefore we have been accompanied on

many of our station visits by the Civil Police Advisory Training Team (CPATT) made up of former US police officers and the International Police Advisers (IPA) made up of largely British ex-policemen. However, these advisers are not allowed to patrol with the IPS out on the streets and therefore it has fallen to us to stand alongside them on joint patrols and at their Vehicle Check Points (VCPs) in order to instil the confidence in them to carry out their role.

A large proportion of the tour so far has been heavily focussed upon creating a secure environment for free and fair elections to take place. Rather than do all the work ourselves, we have encouraged, equipped, assisted and advised the ISF in order for them to do it themselves. This has been a challenging process which has demanded the ultimate levels of patience and hard work across the whole Company. We have done everything from teaching policemen how to clean weapons, to practising cordon operations and VCPs, to running CPX-type exercises. All of this has had to be achieved within the Iraqi ethos. It is a testament to the sheer professionalism and corporate experience of the British soldier when you see a British Private showing an Iraqi Warrant Officer how he should be organising his guard force or running an ops room or VCP. In the end all the

hard work paid off and with a heavy Dukes' presence on the ground for support, the ISF managed to provide the security for extremely well run elections without any serious injuries occurring.

In addition to the routine GDA patrolling, security tasks and SSR patrols, the Company has also carried out Eagle VCPs, Dolphin VCPs, route checks and a number of Company operations. One such operation was Operation Delve where, having found a number of items of UXO dumped in a waterway by locals, we deployed to protect a Royal Engineer diving team to retrieve any remaining munitions, 640 were recovered in total, ranging from RPG warheads to 130mm HE projectiles.

The first half of the tour is over and we await the fallout of the election results with eager anticipation. What the soldiers have achieved is phenomenal. Their dedication, professionalism and hard work has been inspiring and I am fiercely proud of them. No doubt there will be little time to reflect and the next three months will bring fresh challenges to the men of Somme Company.

Steve Lees
OC Somme Company



A Royal Engineers' Diver searching for munitions on Operation Delve.

IRAQ - A PRIVATE'S PERSPECTIVE

Lumocolor, talc, notebook "anything else"? "No"; and that was it, I was on my way to DSIC Chicksands, myself and a select group of the Battalion's greatest minds were boarding a plane back to the UK to attend the Tactical Intelligence Course Iraq. The Boss (Captain Kevin Price) had made sure we were all ready with a rigorous regime of CASTs, discussions and in-depth lessons of how the Ottoman Empire ruled the Middle East.

The first day was the customary meet and greet, followed by an assessment test on who was the current head of state in Iraq (Saddam Hussein) and the amount of pillars in the Islamic faith (five or six if you include Jihad). The course was progressing at a fast pace, with a memorable patrol brief given by Sergeant Stockbridge in the style of a hard-of-hearing Brecon instructor. At the end of the course I and the rest of the Dukes' very own Intelligence community felt fully confident that our Iraq tour would be a huge success.

By now it was rapidly approaching October and before we could say "Int indicates" we were on our way to Operation Telic V. Upon arriving at the airport in Basrah city after a gruelling twenty-nine hour journey we were met with the usual RAF confusion and complimentary tea and coffee.

My next stop was Shibia Logistics Base, home of the Reception, Staging and Onward Integration (RSOI) package, this consisted of a soul-breaking sixty minute Sunday walk around the camp before the sun had come up and various lessons on electronic counter measures and sexually transmitted diseases in theatre, but the pinnacle of the course was the section attack range (a pastime fondly missed by Hook Company personnel). All in all, the three day package both physically and mentally prepared me for the next six months.

My final destination was the Shaat Al Arab Hotel, arriving under darkness, donning body armour and helmet we were now firmly ready to tackle terrorism head on, not from the arm chair, but the front line.

The handover started the next morning with the 1 Cheshire Intelligence Cell wasting no time in subjecting us to a six-hour brief, only breaking for lunch. We all

picked up the basics quite quickly, with myself writing the Battalion Intsums; within a week Private "Al" Craven was producing detailed air photos and maps to the incoming multiple commanders and accounting for all confiscated weapons. Private "Wacker" took the responsibility of visual collation and weapon authorization cards, the Boss looked extremely busy doing Intelligence Officer-type-work from his new goldfish bowl. The hand-over was going smoothly until I read the reports from August, the period of the Cheshire tour that has been referred to as "the spike" (it read like a American novel on downed helicopters in a hostile city), which slightly concerned me.

After only four weeks of the tour I was offered the job to lead Somme Company's Intelligence Cell, which of course I grasped with both hands. On the first day of the new job, whilst in the process of rearranging the office, the OC popped his head round the door: "Hello I'm Major Lees; oh, by the way, the Brigade Commander is popping down shortly could you have a camp attack brief on stand-by", feeling slightly out of my depth I sprinted down the corridor, tail between my legs, back into the Battalion Intelligence Cell for help. Luckily for me the Brigadier was more concerned with Iraqi police stations that day. After this initial flap I returned to my office, hoping that it would be a one off - it wasn't.

Three months down the road I believe I have fitted into Somme like a long-lost brother. With elections now over, my main focus is to carry on the work started by the Cheshires and update data bases and help reduce the threat that hangs over us. So far I have found Iraq to be a very different place to that which I left after Telic 1. The once-happy and helpful people of southern Iraq have changed into weary and suspicious bystanders, the general mood within Basrah changes on an almost daily basis. But one thing remains the same - the constant request for chocolate by the children. With the elections over and the Iraqis now masters of their own destiny, we can hope to see a more positive Iraq.

Private Danny Quirke
Intelligence Cell, Somme Company

THE MORTAR PLATOON

The Dukes' Mortars have been particularly busy during the first few months of our tour in Iraq. In addition to the patrolling commitment as part of a ground holding Company at the Shat Al'Arab Hotel in northern Basrah, we are performing our traditional function as close indirect fire support to the Battle Group. This dichotomy of role is certainly making for an interesting tour.

To date we have fired over 2,000 illumination rounds in support of troops from across the Division and to act as a deterrent against insurgent attacks onto the various Dukes' bases within Basrah city. 81mm Mortars can fire illumination bombs that light up large areas at night; each bomb provides the equivalent of one million candle power. Mortar illumination is co-ordinated with the Surveillance Target Acquisition Plan (STAP), to

identify and shape the enemy and his intentions. We have fired from two mortar lines; the hotel in the north and Basrah Palace in the south of the city. The Palace light role mortar line is uniquely positioned in the forecourt of Saddam Hussein's former residence.

The sections have deployed light role, by Snatch Land Rover or boat and in their armoured vehicles (423 (Mor)). We have been used reactively in support of incidents, attacks and fire missions to assist troops on the ground. On Hogmanay I was tasked to co-ordinate a fire plan across the operational area to mark the New Year. The £30,000 fireworks display lit up the whole of Basrah and led to the calling card phrase "Mortars - Making Basrah beautiful for 33 sec per round!" Since then, the Platoon have been firing on a fire plan each night from two separate mortar lines and have successfully deterred several attempts on Dukes' lives.

There has been ample opportunity to test the versatility of the weapon system and its deployment. Not only have we "chucked them on a boat" with 200 rounds and sped off down the Shatt Al'Arab waterway to quickly deploy them in support of the Royal Marines Recce Troop, we have also fired more rounds operationally than most platoons since The Hook and still experienced no weapon failures. The MFCs (Mortar Fire Controllers) have been calling in and adjusting fire with patrols, from the top of buildings, holes in the ground, Rigid Raider boats and helicopters (despite the Lynx pilots complaining about excessive fuel consumption when flying with Corporal Ogilvie and Lance Corporal Wibberly!).

The mortar lines have experienced a number of "close shaves"; the most noticeable when two 60mm enemy mortars missed us by 100m at the Palace. On another occasion three bombs landed 30m from Corporal Rowlands and his team, who were enjoying

a cigarette during a break in the fire plan. Luckily they all landed the other side of a blast wall and the only damage sustained was to Private Gleadall's underwear.

On a more sombre note, the Platoon was shocked and saddened to hear about the death of Bill Norman. As many of you know Bill was the Mortar Platoon 2IC in Korea and had revisited the Platoon on his most recent trip to Osnabrück. He and WO11 Williams chatted for hours about the finer points of their trade and he had a great laugh with the lads. I personally knew Bill from several visits to RHQ in recent years. During one visit he presented me with one of his silver shooting medals from Bisley, which I wear with pride as a fob for my watch in Mess Dress. In my opinion he was an inspiration and the epitome of a Duke, he will be remembered fondly by all.

Captain Peter Lee
OC Mortar Platoon

RECCE PLATOON - CALL SIGN RS20B IN SEKEK

Our home for the six-month tour of Iraq was a five star hotel next to the Shatt Al Arab river, just outside the city of Basra; probably once a nice place for a short break, with beautiful gardens taking in the splendid view of the Shatt Al Arab. How times have changed, there were raging gun battles to the North, the night sky being lit up with tracer rounds and then all of a sudden the Shatt Al Arab Hotel was under mortar fire, with incoming rounds landing in the grounds of the hotel, thunderous explosions, not knowing where the next one would land. Three to four loud bangs and it was over. The Cheshires had warned us that they were being mortared at least once a week.

The location that the enemy mortar-rocket team operated from was a small area to the south of our base location called Sekek. The housing estate is some fifty years old, built for the employees of the nearby railway station. The population is made up of many tribes and is a peaceful community.

The area that they had used in the past was a football pitch, 1300 metres away that had a clear line of sight onto the hotel. The terrorists have had great success in the past within this area for a number of reasons; it takes about ten minutes to get there in our Snatch vehicles, as there is only one really good route into the estate from the hotel. There is a river obstacle between camp and their firing point, which is the biggest advantage for them, as Call Signs would be rushing towards them they would be making their escape in a southerly direction, creating a greater gap between them and us, driving towards the city and mixing with the ever-growing number of cars on the roads, thus making it impossible to locate them.

We had to start from scratch, covert patrols and talking to the locals to gather intelligence and generally building up a picture of the terrorists' activity. It was evident that the locals in Sekek were not happy with outsiders coming into their community and mortaring the British Army.

My Call Sign started to build up a bond of trust with the people of Sekek, using good hearts and minds patrols, giving the children sweets, learning the Arabic language and having conversations with the head-men of the village. A simple 'IS-Salam Aal aykum, Shl o wnak?' (Hello, how are you?) goes a long way. Their faces breaking into a welcoming smile, they are very happy that we have used their language and always happy to see British patrols in their area.

Many a patrol is spent drinking tea with the locals and gaining information from them. Most of the intelligence gained was useful, we even had one local brought into the hotel to give more detailed information, with the Battle Group Intelligence Cell interviewing the source.

Another good move by us was giving the main man of the area our mobile phone number so he could phone when these men were operating in the area, this proved to be successful later on in the tour.

Many hours were spent by myself and my team commanders planning and studying air photography, coming up with plans and recommendations as to how we can best capture this ever-successful mortar team. My recommendations were to conduct night-time Standing Covert Operations to get eyes onto them and call in mobile patrols to cut off their escape route and detain them. Basic finding and fixing observation operations, which is the Recce Platoon's main job in all operations of war. The window of the attacks was between 1800 hrs and 0200 hrs. Daytime covert recces were conducted and then it was time for our first operation in capturing this team.

After delivering detailed orders, ensuring that every member of the team knew what was expected of them, we deployed out on the ground. The main problem was not knowing which night the terrorists would pick to attack the hotel, having spent several nights lurking in ditches for anything up to eight to ten hours.

My intent was to continue this type of operation until we caught them, but with other taskings coming in we had to put this task on hold so as we could continue with

SSR (Security Sector Reform) type patrols. Inevitably, the terrorists would mortar the hotel again and make good their escape. Again our Call Sign deployed onto the ground for several days. Studying in great detail the air photos that the Intelligence Cell gave to us, diligently studying the shadow and tone effect of local features in the open area to put out other suitable observation positions.

One of the funniest things was one night at the end of Ramadan the night was still when all of a sudden the sky lit up with tracer fire from all around the city, a spectacular display. There was celebratory fire as close as 200m away from our location, with several bullets landing around our position. There was a man running about 20 metres to our front, from left to right, in the open area. Clearly thinking that he was in danger of being hit by a stray round, he pulled his jacket over his head as if to protect him and made his way to our right and onto the road; once there he pulled the jacket from his head, shrugged his shoulders and continued walking down the road. We all thought it was funny at the time.

With the light nights coming in, it was assessed and recommended that we deployed in the more traditional DPM dress and donning cam cream, as the areas we were operating were dark pools of shadows.

One evening a local from Sekek came to the hotel and stated that we were going to be attacked. Myself, the Company Commander and others were called to the Battlegroup Patrol Master's office, the Battalion 2IC, for a Sitrep. "Move now to cover the known mortar

base plate area." There was no time for any battle procedure; however, as we had done this type of operation many times in the past, we deployed and had eyes on within the hour.

Another time, having missed the mortar team by twenty minutes, we were observing from covert locations and, having seen the enemy recce group, we were called back in off the task for other overt Call Signs to patrol the area. Again the enemy fired their mortars and escaped.

Our lucky break came when one of the locals that we had given our mobile number to had spotted two suspicious vehicles in the area, the Battle Group QRF was tasked, commanded by Sergeant Wyeth (ex Recce), and an Alma Company Call Sign commanded by Captain Wilson moved into the area and detained the four men in the two vehicles; they were the enemy recce team, conducting their recce prior to an attack on the hotel. With all the hard work put in by members of the Recce Platoon and the liaison with other Call Signs within the Battle Group, not forgetting the help from the locals of Sekek, we captured a part of the terrorist mortar team.

Since the capture there have been no more attacks onto our camp. Hopefully the message and vibes sent out to the terrorists is simple: "Do not mess with The Dukes".

Sergeant Hill
2i/c Recce Platoon

VIRTUTIS FORTUNA COMES, CYMRU AM BYTH - WELSH GUARDS AND THE DUKES

Sitting in the Red Dragon Club in RAF St Athan, South Wales, a week of leave only a matter of minutes away, members of Number Two Company sat looking at the title slide of an Operation Telic brief: 'Virtutis Fortuna Comes'; "Fortune Favours the Brave", boys. Face it, it's just as cool as "Wales Forever". Reluctant acknowledgement was still accompanied by snorts of "bloody chippies", and "who the hell was Wellington anyway?". However, as the Battle Honours were read out and the history of the Battalion explained, all became aware that we would be deploying to Iraq alongside a historic and experienced Regiment - and one that boasts a lineage to match our own.

A day after Flag Change our first night patrol was blown up by a command-wire initiated improvised explosive device. It injured three Guardsmen, one seriously, and completely wrote off the vehicle in which they were patrolling. It was the Dukes' QRF that bailed us out, and the support received that night set the mark for the remainder of the tour - not just for operations in Basrah city, but also for the plethora of our logistical needs. We have received no less than the Dukes' companies - and, we suspect, a little more.

Perhaps the enduring memories of serving with the Dukes are related to the Privates themselves who, whilst not sharing our customs, struck a note with their calm conduct of affairs and ability to make light of matters.

Early in the tour the Shatt Al Arab came under mortar attack, and soon the recently fitted tannoy system crackled into life, and we heard a positively horizontal voice: "Mortars, Mortars. If yur not int 'ard cover, then get int 'ard cover. If yur not int 'otel then get int 'otel." Some Guardsmen have Welsh as their first language, and even those who have mastered English were still left scratching their heads. However, the Regimental Sergeant Major was equally confused when on Memoranda (Orders) our attendees, flanked by an escort, travelled about the Commanding Officer's office at twice the speed of sound, leaving a trail of broken map boards and furniture as they went.

Guards Battalions sometimes have a tendency to take themselves a little bit too seriously and, as Christmas approached, Two Company began the vexing task of thinking of something funny to do at the Dukes' Christmas Pantomime. Sitting around after O Groups, our Officers and Non Commissioned Officers alike all succeeded in thinking of skits that if performed would have doomed us to eternal mockery. The answer came in the form of a choir, and there began in earnest a week of compulsory choir practice. On the big night it would be no exaggeration to say that where our ability to sing Men of Harlech and Delilah left a lot to be desired, the capacity for the Dukes to put rank aside and throw caution to the wind more than compensated. We were

treated to a series of skits and a pantomime that had us all in tears. With a little port kicking around here and there, Christmas was made good.

Despite Basrah being relatively benign, our work has nonetheless been challenging and unique, and we feel the efforts of Welsh Guardsmen have gone a long way towards achieving a form of stability in the city. We are

very grateful for the welcome and support we have received from a fellow infantry battalion, and wish you well on return to Germany. Virtutis Fortuna Comes, Cymru Am Byth!

Major Giles Harris
Officer Commanding
No. 2 Company, The Welsh Guards

THE CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES

This has been the first Christmas away from home for the Dukes for many years and the consensus within the Shatt al Arab Hotel was far from positive about the prospect of doing so. Some undoubtedly hilarious, but perhaps a trifle unfeeling, messages from our predecessors on the walls of the portaloos only served to highlight the pathos of the situation. It was with this in mind that a 'Pantomime Steering Committee' was formed during the early days of the tour. Red Riding Hood was the chosen theme; a drama that lent itself to suitable adaptation, lengthening and general innuendo insertion. The cast was drawn from the widest possible of backgrounds, the ability to turn up to rehearsals far outweighing any acting talent in the selection criteria. Thus it was that Captain Danny Renihan found himself fulfilling the role of Red's Grandmother (a part far from inkeeping with his hitherto-distinguished acting career), Lieutenant Charlie Kent utilised her ample(ish) charms as Red, Staff Sergeant Baz Davies donned a fur coat to tackle the tricky role of Wolfie, Sergeant Dougie

Stroyen added local colour as a foul-mouthed sheik and Lance Corporal Tawakai (Mr T) gave free reign to his maternal personality as Red's mum. It was left to Captains Dan Pawson and Pete Lee to narrate this touching and thought-provoking story.

Christmas Eve night saw the hotel foyer thronged with eager spectators. This was largely due to the absence of anything else to do and the vague promise of mulled wine, but an audience is an audience. A variety of Company skits, skilfully knitted together by that comper par excellence Sergeant 'Liggy' Lister, set the place alight. The round-eyed throng goggled at the marvels of a Welsh Choir that didn't know the words to 'Men of Harlech', a magnificent Fijian band, a group of tone-deaf RMP singers and a variety of dramas of note. Back stage first (and only) night nerves were taking hold and Red shifted uncomfortably in her pop-up brassiere. Nerves were calmed by generous benedictions from the Padre whose contribution to the costume wardrobe should not pass without note. An expectant



The Cast.

hush was only partially rewarded with a tinny rendition of Darkness's 'A Thing Called Love' and then the players took to the stage.

What ensued can truly be said to have followed in the greatest of theatrical traditions. Danny Renihan's profound and somewhat avant garde depiction of an incontinent drunk won over the audience and provided much food for thought. Any gaps in dialogue were amply filled by frenzied pelvic thrusting from Wolfie and Red went down as we knew she would. Dougie Stroyen remembered his lines and Lance Corporal T didn't. The performance was able to justify its top billing, as it played host to surprise guest visits from Elvis (Colour Sergeant Bramwell) and the Fijian Band (again). All too soon a dramatic, if tasteless, re-enactment of a Chinese rocket attack marked the culmination of this thespian festival and the crowd dried their eyes or woke up, depending upon their persuasion. There was no call for an encore and one was not given. In this commercial age the rather sharp local Iraqi shop keeper was able to milk the general feeling of good will by publicly giving away free electronic goods to the cast members. The members of the Dukes Battle Group dispersed into the clear night air, remembering to don helmet and body armour and filled with festive happiness.

But the fun didn't stop there ...oh no! The tenure of our ex-Parachute Regiment Brigade Commander has coincided with a growing penchant for Gun-running amongst the upper echelons of the Battalion. This remnant of the Royal Tournament has blighted a number of Open Days in Osnabrück and was able to surmount international barriers to follow us to Basrah. Thus it was that a number of hand-picked teams limbered up for a battle royal on the morning of Boxing Day, bursting with pseudo-nonchalance. I shall not waste your valuable time by describing each close-fought round but a couple of outstanding contributions deserve mention. The AGC Detachment put a couple of Rifle Companies to the sword and Alma will find the coming months difficult. The number of penalties racked-up by QM Tony Sutcliffe's wilful destruction of the obstacles was only overshadowed by his colourful exhortations to the rest of his team to pull their fingers out. Your correspondent blushes to record that the Reconnaissance Platoon was victorious in this Blue Riband event, narrowly defeating a well-drilled but old Commanding Officer's team in a breathless final. Once again dodgy electronic goods were distributed and the great and good pontificated. Thus was the official end of the 1st Battalion's Christmas.

Captain Dan Pawson
OC Recce



The Quartermaster's Gun team before it started destroying any obstacles.

QUARTERMASTER'S DEPARTMENT

"cry havoc and let slip the dogs of war"

The Reconnaissance Platoon, having not had much success in catching the pesky mortar team that so blights our lives (not to mention our meal times), were in a state of befuddlement. What next? More lurks? More ambushes? What about tasking the SAS? Maybe we could ask the US Navy Seals. No, it's all been tried, our only option is to ... *task the Echelon Group*. So

cometh the hour, cometh the men. On New Year's Eve 2004, an intrepid bunch of super heroes were called upon to bring peace to the streets of Basrah.

Three twelve-man patrols were formed, one supplied by the QM, one by the MTO and one by the LAD. Each department head would lead their respective patrols. The last occasion some of the individuals had been on a



The Quartermaster's other team displayed, inexplicably, in an empty swimming pool.

patrol, they had carried Bren guns and Mills grenades. They had worn cap comforters and black pumps. They had celebrated their successful return from "no man's land" with the clink of chipped enamel mugs filled with strong tea and had smoked Woodbines. Even worse, not all the super heroes were Infantry or REME cap badged. Because of the veritable surfeit of dodgy knees, clicky hips, creaky backs and certificates of excused duties in perpetuity, volunteers were called for from the "other arms". And how they flocked to the colours. Stout postmen from the Royal Engineers. Fearless logisticians and drivers from the Royal Logistics Corps. Medics from the Royal Army Medical Corps, chefs, dog handlers, clerks, drivers, mechanics, our civilian tailor, even the (Territorial Army) NAAFI manageress, but this was deemed man's work. So her services were chivalrously declined.

So the three patrols, or "multiples" to use the modern parlance, were despatched over the next three nights, charged with ensuring the safety of the much-exhausted real soldiers of the Dukes' Battle Group, who were snatching some well-deserved sleep. How the real soldiers laughed as they opened the main gate to let us pass. "Don't panic Mr Mainwairing". "They don't like it up em". Was only some of the more printable banter I remember hearing as the now renamed Wild Geese, Kelly's Heroes and Dirty Dozen drove forward into the inky blackness, determined to smite the enemies of liberty and democracy. How the suicide bombers must have trembled, as, ghostlike, we melted in and out of the shadows. Only making our presence known when we

chose to mount vehicle checkpoints. Driving with headlamps off, using night vision goggles was a completely new experience. Especially whilst negotiating the bridge that connects Cigar Island with the east bank of the Shatt al Arab waterway. The map quite clearly shows the bridge in one piece, however in reality it is in fact only half a bridge. How we laughed when we realised (almost too late) that it had been precision bombed the year before. It was only some incredibly skilful (some said later it was sheer blind panic, accompanied by schoolgirl-like screams) brake work by Paddy (two combs) Buckingham, which prevented the Dukes' Ninja Night Patrol copying the antics of the Dukes of Hazard.

In all seriousness, the echelon multiples patrolling the local area are now a feature of normal life. Our presence on the ground has served to deter insurgent attacks on the Shatt al Arab Hotel. It has also served to give the rifle company soldiers a well-deserved respite from what is a necessary but routine task. In addition, Echelon soldiers man sangars and conduct watchkeeper stags on a permanent basis. All this and normal service expected. By the time these notes are read we will all back in the real world (hinshallah) worrying about other things. My thanks to all who contributed, they did it without complaint in the most part, in a professional and effective manner. They can all be proud, not only did they do their jobs, but they did some real soldiering as well.

A.J. Sutcliffe
QM

AM ALYETT SOUTT ALHORYA - OPERATION VOICE OF FREEDOM

We are currently four days away from a major step in Iraqi history as the people go to the polls to elect a National Transitional Government on 30 January 2005. Democracy and Iraq have not often been paired together favourably in one sentence, but it is going to happen and Inshaala (God willing) without incident. Without a doubt, the election is the major event during the Dukes' tour here and the planning process, which began more or less when we first arrived and has dominated the past month, has reached its final stages. Having been in the city today to witness preparation, it seems to be working. Fingers remain crossed.

Our task is to assist the Iraq Security Forces (ISF) in creating a secure and safe environment where free and fair elections can take place and to foster and facilitate engagement between the Governorates, ISF and the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI). We have been willing to help in any way that can make the process a success, but our security profile will purely be as 'overwatch' and reactive to any major failings, as it needs to be the face of Iraqi Security for Iraqis that reaches television screens around the watching world.

Notwithstanding what happens on the elections themselves, I think the lasting memory of many of the Dukes' Battle Group on the preparation phase will be our attempts to identify the polling stations. I could not begin to justifiably explain the difficulty of this task, which in order for us to be able to react and to assist in security planning, was a necessity. The best way to relay the picture to the reader is to perhaps compare with a similar situation at home. As in UK, the bulk of the stations are in schools. We have responsibility for 159 of them, given to us on a list with the name of the school and a brief description of its location in Basrah. How do we locate them?

At home, any uncertainty of location could probably be resolved by calling the education authority - the education authority here doesn't use maps and grid

references and nobody has yet been able to track down a street plan so they can only really give you the brief information you already have.

Consult Yellow Pages - very few people have a telephone that works, let alone any type of directory.

Find the school and look at the sign on the door - our original list was translated for us by the IECI from Arabic. Enough is lost in the translation to ensure that we find that we are naming the schools slightly differently and sometimes completely differently from their actual name. Also a number of schools changed names after the fall of Sadaam, which is not always reflected in the signs. Just to confuse further, there are a lot of children in Basrah and not enough real estate for schools. Therefore schools double and sometimes triple up. In the morning it could be a girls' school with one name and in the afternoon a boys' school with a different name. This can be combined with different days also, where it becomes a completely different school for a completely different set of boys and girls and, you guessed it: completely different names. Even if you've managed to overcome this, as in the UK there is more than one school of the same name.

Ask a local - on average any three locals stopped and asked will give you different directions. It has to be witnessed to be believed.

Ask a policeman - doesn't work. Try something else.

Look at records compiled by previous units - they encountered the same problems and fell into the same trap as us, leading to incorrect school names, grids, locations etc.

Despite these problems and numerous wild goose chases, a huge effort by everybody has ensured that we have identified them. (I say that tongue in cheek because even at this stage I'm not convinced we have them all.)

Captain John Frear
Elections Officer

HOOK COMPANY FORWARD

Most of the Company here on Telic are involved in some way or other in supporting the remainder of the Battle Group. Nothing different from the norm there, except we are currently a seven-company Battle Group that is spread over three locations in the city, where movement by the supporting elements is inevitably constrained by the need for security.

Additionally, we support numerous other troops geographically located with us and, as if being armoured infantry doesn't give us enough equipment, we are equipped for the dual role of war fighting and Internal Security, meaning twice as many vehicles, numerous different weapon systems, search equipment, public order equipment, ECM etc.

All this additional manpower and equipment brings with it the equivalent ratio of support requirements and problems for the G1/G4 staff. If the reader thinks that

this is some challenge, consider also each of the main departments has a patrolling multiple, doing the same tasks required of the Rifle Companies, albeit not as frequently. As well as that, we do our normal slice of Watchkeeper duties and guard commitments and most department heads are double-hatted in some way or other (I write as Quartermaster Technical, OC Hook Forward and Elections Officer).

Despite everything, all members of Hook have excelled in providing a first class service throughout, leading to very few administrative hiccoughs. We are over half way and there are signs of tiredness, but hopefully the forthcoming elections will pass without incident or aftermath and the tempo will settle slightly.

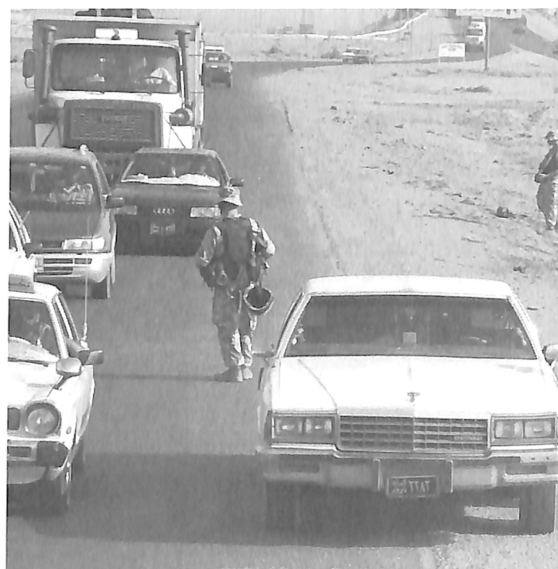
Captain John Frear
OC Hook Company Forward



A repr



The Iraqi recruits stand well clear of the extra applicant.



Normal routine.

ON IN IRAQ



Platoon



Hara brothers, who serve in different Companies, together at Christmas.

Private Watkinson.

OPERATION ENDURING FEAR

First British soldier in a joint Iraqi Air Force Operation.

As I sat busily working away trying to figure out what tricks Muqtadr and his band of merry militia might be up to next, a conversation between the IO, Captain 'Where's Paddy' Price and the AIO, Sergeant 'What d'ya want Boss?' Walsh (GH), caught my attention, it went something like:

"Sergeant Walsh, I've got another flight tasking for you"

"What's that Boss, P4?" (a term used for helicopter surveillance)

"Erm ...no (little chuckle) in an Iraqi Air Force plane, with an Iraqi and an American pilot"

A look of sheer horror from Sergeant Walsh "Come off it, Boss ...you're lucky to get me up in the helicopters; I've seen them locals spot welding down town. There's no way you're getting me up there with them; I hate flying." (Still shook up from the previous night's flying when the Helo had a 'lock on' from some form of weapon system and had to take evasive action and fire flares.) I let Captain Price chuckle it out for a while then offered my services, "I'll do it Boss".

I had let myself in for a flight on a new Recce flight over Basrah city in the dark.

I gathered the kit I required for the task, like radios, map and aviation shades and off I went to Basrah Air Station (APOD). I was met by a USAF Flight Lieutenant named Dan. He took me up to the briefing room where I was met by the Iraqi Air Force Pilot (student) - Hakim (an Ex MIG 29 Fighter Pilot). I was introduced to the pre-flight brief "you ready give your brief Hakim?" "erm, yeah, erm, it's here somewhere". Ok, so it wasn't exactly the air hostess giving a safety brief, but a local national telling of the complexities of Iraqi family planning and how he can determine whether he has a boy or girl with his wife. Hakim's English was very rusty and I was glad I had studied a little Arabic.

We headed out onto the airfield to the awaiting Iraqi Air Force ground crew (two nationals in Iraqi combats armed with a torch). I didn't know what to expect, but I was a little taken back when I saw the plane. It was like something from the '80s Oz soap 'The Flying Doctor'. After squeezing myself into the plane I watched the pre-flight checks (I started to get a little concerned), out came some A4 pieces of paper with a print-out of the checks - "Main power on - check, fuel pump - err, err, where's that? Oh, check!" and so it went on "Chocks away, tower permission to taxi - clear to taxi, landing lights check - er, er, not working" Hakim leans out of the window trying to shout at the two ground crew over the noise of the propeller. The two ground crew look at each other wondering, what the hell this guy is shouting. "Shut down, jump out, quick fiddle, back in start over".

It was Hakim's turn to do the take off thing, so off we went taxiing around the airfield. Normally airports are

lit up and you can actually see where you're going, on this occasion it was a case of trying to look over the front of the aircraft like a five year old sat in the front seat of their parent's car for the first time, trying to see where the tarmac had gone. Needless to say we didn't go in a straight line and cut a few nervous corners. "More power Hakim!! - OK"; up we went into the dark sky and into the bowels of Basrah city.

As the Dukes' Call Signs were conducting their patrols on the ground it was my business to provide top cover and identify any "bad men" who wished to conduct attacks against the lads. The flight over the city was fairly uneventful, if it was only to see me trying to wear the plane's headset, sticking a radio handset under one of the earpieces to monitor VHF comms and balance a PMR 'walkie-talkie' type radio on my shoulder, whilst trying to look out of the window into likely attack positions and reading a map. I remembered Sergeant Walsh's story of the 'lock on' whilst in the P4 flight and asked Dan "What do you have to detect or deter missile lock on?" "We don't have anything like that! So we won't know". Well, this just destroyed what little confidence remained. Whilst flying over Basrah Palace (one of the MNF locations) the plane began to head away into the direction of Iran 16km away, at which point images of being paraded on Al Jazeera television as POWs of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Council did race through my mind, and I began to wonder if a ten-week language course in Persian would have been useful? I could hear the US pilot saying "Ok, partner turn it around now!"

Four hours on and it was "time to go home" said Dan. "Can I land it?" my heart sank, the Iraqi pilot wants to take this bird down. I thought I'm sure he's more than capable of bringing down a MIG but I wasn't over confident on his light plane handling. Dan stated maybe it best if he did it as they had a guest - me! You can probably imagine my relief when Hakim reluctantly accepted. The landing was rather smooth and back we went to the awaiting ground crew who were wielding the old faithful right angled torches.

The aircraft and what it can achieve is actually rather useful in the role it is employed and will hopefully bring some good results in the aid of capturing 'the bad guys' during our tour in Basrah. An enjoyable evening was to be had, if not a little worrying and I believe I will be enduring more of these flights in the near future. I feel this is the beginning of the new Iraqi Air Force and, fun aside, I can see the Iraqi Air force playing an integral role in Iraq's future defences. Future joint operations of this nature will undoubtedly bring a closer working relationship in achieving that one goal - giving Iraq a brighter future. The importance of installing new armed forces able to sustain its own defence is crucial to the New Iraq.

Sergeant A. Roberts
Hook Company

A.G.C. DETACHMENT

In preparation for the tour, the AGC Detachment, while maintaining its desks as normal, attended Sennelager to complete all the necessary training. The Detachment managed to excel on the Fire Team Assessment and Pairs, with some obtaining Marksman scores. The LI NCOs who were running the range commented on the strength of the Detachment's shooting.

The run up to the MCCPs was hectic, several soldiers losing their passports and having to be shuttled to the Consulate at Dusseldorf for replacements.

Three months into the tour and the AGC Detachment is cracking on as normal, chipping in with sleep-in duty clerks, sanger duties and escorts, not to mention the daily running of the Admin Office. The Detachment is actually quite popular due to the number of soldiers

qualifying for their separation allowance bonuses, most of them having deployed on Operation Telic 1 and Canada in the last two years. All R&R is booked through the Admin Office, so there is a constant stream of favours being offered to the Clerks!

However the RAO, Captain Renihan, still finds time to become the champion of table tennis and the Detachment came sixth in the Gun Run on Boxing Day beating Number 2 Company, 1 WG, Alma Company, QMs and RMP. We are expecting our Detachment Commander, Lieutenant 'Half a Tour' Barker to return from her skiing holiday in Sweden at the end of the month. The Detachment is now looking forward to end of tour. 'Lisa get the beers in.'

Captain D. Renihan

REGIMENTAL AID POST

The intent to establish twice-daily sick parades quickly evaporated in the desert heat as the onset of bouts of diarrhoea and vomiting did not tend to stick to routine times. Having survived the initial epidemic, we set up a continuation medical training package including an interactive series of presentations. Everyone has also taken the opportunity to maintain and improve their fitness, using the gym facilities and volleyball court to the full.

The RAP consists of the RMO, Medical Sergeant, three Combat Medical Technicians (CMT, RAMC cap badge) and two Regimental Medical Assistants (RMA, DWR cap badge). We also have a medic attached to each of the companies. The RAP is detached from the main Battle Group, located within the Old State Buildings (OSB) working alongside the Prince of Wales's Company of 1 Welsh Guards and Milan Platoon of Somme Company. We keep in touch with the Battalion through regular visits from the Colonel and the Padre, plus the OSB is also the best place in town for lunch, so we often receive diners.

November saw the arrival of Corporal Thompson, freshly qualified from his RMA 3 course. He brought with him much morale and post from Keighley and 'Save the Dukes' stickers. At the same time we

unfortunately lost Corporal Lambert back to Blighty as a result of injuries sustained in a RTA whilst working with Corunna. The good news is he is due to return imminently. The move-around of medics found Corporal Chrysie attached to Corunna and Corporal Lingard tending to Somme Company.

Private Williams was the first to depart on R&R, taking the opportunity to wet his new baby's head. We wish him and Claire our warmest congratulations on the birth of Jessica. The RAP is now rotating through the leave plot.

The life of a medic is fortunately of a reactionary nature and thankfully we have had very little to react to. However, as a result of this and because of the RAP's close proximity to the internet suite we all now know that many useless items can be readily purchased on line. Dart skills are also improving - the RMO appears to have found a hidden talent, RQMS (T) watch out!

Fingers-crossed all will remain this way and we will be having to creep to the QM's Department for extra comfort boxes to get all these e-Bay and Amazon purchases back to Osnabrück.

Captain Anne Cross
RMO

OPERATION'S ROOM INSIGHT

Life in the Ops Room; I've been assured that this is as good as it gets and that there really isn't much else beyond it! I've already started showing signs of working here for too long - the pale skin and having to squint if I'm ever allowed out to see the sunlight. I faced rather a steep learning curve when I first arrived, straight out of Sandhurst and posted to a mighty infantry unit like the Dukes and the rather disturbing sight that greeted me of an Ops Officer that had actually turned crazy from being locked away for too long!

The day to day life of the Ops Room, as you would imagine, can be quite dull. Endless phone calls and LOCSTATS tend to fill the air, along with at least two

PMRs to listen to, ensures I don't miss the important messages. I haven't quite got to grips with listening to four things at once yet, but I'm sure I'll learn before I leave. I am concerned that I'll be made to stay until I get everything right - a very worrying thought. It can get pretty hectic in here and when it starts, it doesn't seem to stop! The atmosphere in the hub of operations changes dramatically and the newspapers have to be folded away and the brews put to one side as the Ops Officer attempts to save the city. The BG 2IC will then enter with an air of calm (except for when he's telling me off) and order comes to the chaos. The range of incidents has been widely varied, from the serious stuff

of mortars and rockets, to the IPS shooting themselves whilst trying to catch an 'Ali Barbar'. The sewage truck has also caused some concern but after finding explosives hidden within the truck, the search dog is now in favour again! Whether we'll ever get our toilets cleaned remains to be seen.

The highlight of the day for the very important people locked up within the Ops Room appears to be shooting birds on the extremely intellectual game on the Battle Group Engineer's computer. It seems to have reached quite a competitive level with visitors to the Ops Room being put through their paces and thrown out if they get close to beating the highest score. Rest assured that the safety of the Battle Group is taken seriously at all times! The competitive air continues with the pull up bar and you can almost smell the testosterone when the Alpha Males are performing!

The election period was a strange one for everyone and having a second Ops Room running alongside the

Iraqi Police Service (IPS) made it somewhat interesting. Trying to work out what was going on whilst the IPS were shouting down their radios and giving out the most contradictory stories was fairly challenging. It was a welcome relief to return to the sanctuary of the main Ops Room.

My time here so far has been enjoyable with the entertaining presence of the Ops WO, WO2 Smith, that is when he's not off to the gym or controlling the comings and goings of the many helicopters that visit our wonderful residence.

I'm fortunate that I am here for only a few weeks, as I fear that I may turn out like the Ops Officer if I stayed much longer! However, I'm sure that the rest of my short stay will be just as enjoyable as the last few weeks - providing I don't get all the graveyard shifts after writing this!

2nd Lieutenant Natalie Philips

THE DUKES' BATTLE GROUP CIVIL AND MILITARY COOPERATION TEAM

The Civil and Military Cooperation (CIMIC) team is a part of the Dukes' Battle Group Headquarters based at the Shatt Al Arab Hotel. The team consists of four members who have been brought together to conduct Force Protection related CIMIC operations for the duration of the Telic tour. The majority of the team's time is spent managing American and British funded rehabilitation projects within Basrah city. The Lines of Operation that we are currently involved in are Essential Services (water, sewage, power and drainage), Health and Education which includes refurbishment of community health centres, hospital wards, schools and kindergartens. We are also involved in Infrastructure and Trade and Industry, which incorporates commercial buildings, market areas and road repairs.

Basrah city has had little infrastructure maintenance or indeed development over the last thirty years and there are several districts within the city that are desperately run down and in dire need of outside help, just to provide the inhabitants with some very basic living standards. Sadly, many of the dwellings lack the bare essentials that more fortunate people come to expect and take for granted. They do not have access to such luxuries as power, proper sanitation or even running water. Our aim has and continues to be to target these areas and, working along side the Basrah Municipality, show the local population that we are here to help wherever possible until such time that the Iraqi people are able to cope themselves. It isn't doom and gloom by any stretch of the imagination. These people,

who have not experienced freedom as we know it for over thirty years, are keen to stand on their own feet and are willing to learn. As a result of their enthusiasm, lots of interaction and negotiation we now find ourselves essentially operating in a mentoring capacity to local Government representatives who are all-but running a localised rehabilitation programme.

The team is fortunately able to interact on a regular basis with the local population and has realised that if the people of Basrah were able to communicate with the outside world it would be extremely beneficial for all concerned. So, after several weeks of negotiating we have managed to organise the twinning of three Basrah schools with two in Halifax, West Yorkshire. This has proved to be fairly difficult, due to Iraq not yet having an international postal system or indeed a reliable international telephone network. We have, however, managed to overcome this problem in the short term by using the BFPO service to get correspondence to and from the Schools. This system is by no means ideal and we are now looking for outside assistance in moving this project forward with IT equipment.

Finally, the people of Basrah are ever mindful of the sacrifices that the Dukes are making in our efforts to assist them in developing into a democratic society. In particular they realise (and often mention) that we are separated from loved ones and they regularly ask for their gratitude to be conveyed to our families back home.

Captain Martin Ness
OC BG CIMIC

SUPPORTING THE DUKES ON OPERATIONS

The deployed LAD is responsible for in excess of 350 prime equipments in a number of locations. LAD Main, based at the Shatt Al Arab Hotel, supports both Somme, Hook and No 2 Company Welsh Guards, working on a wide range of vehicles from Warrior and Land Rover Snatch to Bedford 8T and Ambulance. Alma Company

Fitter Section, also located at the hotel, takes care of the majority of the tracked vehicles in the Battle Group. The mandated fourteen day safety checks on Land Rover Snatch generate a lot of work, which can only be expected as they regularly cover in excess of a thousand kilometres in the fourteen day period. At the time of

going to press, the Recovery Mechanics have 97 tasks in their recovery log. Many of these have been routine movement tasks, but the heavy rains and wet weather have also accounted for a number of taskings too. We are now pretty much "squared away" with the fleet and vehicles we do have VOR are routinely those awaiting spares (no change there then!).

In addition to the VMs in the LAD, we have two armourers, Sergeant Ferris and Corporal Smith, who are responsible for all the Battle Group small arms, less Alma Company. The operational Minimi and LMGs, along with various modifications and safety inspections have kept them busy. The two metalsmiths manufacture all manner of things for the whole camp, including gate repairs (courtesy of tired drivers!), 'Super Nikon' binocular stands for the Tower Sentry and the odd volleyball net stands! Corporal Bridgeman has been at the forefront of the development of Searchlight Brackets for the Battle Group Fleet of Snatch and has been rewarded £450 under the GEMS scheme. Also, within the LAD, we have a number of locally employed civilians (LECs). They are paid a basic salary of \$10 a day and work from 8.00am till 4.00pm on all the same equipment as we do (less Warrior). They have proved themselves extremely competent and very resourceful. This is probably due to their experiences when keeping their own cars on the road. It is certainly true to say a number of the vehicles we have seen on the streets of Basrah would definitely not pass a MOT! The LEC resourcefulness extends beyond Snatch Land Rover parts and we have often used them to locally purchase goods we are unable to buy within the confines of the hotel. Things such as paint and other items, which can make a six month tour slightly more comfortable, have all been bought 'down town'!

Christmas Day was a welcome stand down, of sorts! The LAD boys organised a charity casino afternoon, raising over \$200 for local Iraqi schools. This money has been put to good use, buying books and items of stationary. Corporal 'Wyn' Kimberley proved himself very resourceful, constructing a full size roulette table with wood 'borrowed' from the unsuspecting Turner's contractors on camp.

L.S.D. - NO DRUGS, JUST LOGISTICS

When I was told that I was going to spend the first few months of my tour (it has subsequently changed to being the whole tour) with 1 DWR BG I was pleased. I had worked with a Duke before, Colour Sergeant Yeadon, who was my Platoon Sergeant for the last two terms of RMAS, and had found the experience to be a good one. In an effort to try and ensure that things went smoothly before we deployed, I visited Osnabrück to try and meet some members of the QM's Department. Despite our poor timing (the few that were around were heading out on PT) I was able to have a quick chat with Captain John Frear (QM (T)), which I think went well. (I have since found that his response to this meeting was, "We'll see ...she might do.")

I hoped this good start would continue when I met the rest of the BG. However, after the journey from hell out to Iraq, partly due the illness of a certain Dukes' Ops

The LAD also forms part of the 'Echelon' commitment to the GDA patrol programme and one night a week we patrol the local area as a deterrent to any AIF activity. This has given many of the tradesmen an ideal platform on which to build their wider soldiering skills. It has certainly tested young Craftsman Murphy, who was only three weeks out of trade training when he deployed in October. The patrols are also important for the LAD to maintain an accurate picture of 'life outside the gate' and an appreciation of what the infantry boys do. This has helped to foster a firm mutual respect within the Battle Group. Indeed, the general standards of equipment husbandry displayed by all crews has increased significantly, due to the focused efforts and time dedicated to maintenance.

St Eligius Day (the Patron Saint of REME) was celebrated on 5 December and the Battalion Padre, Major Pat Aldred put on a service for us, which he did fantastically. Invites were sent out to the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Phil Lewis, and other notable (notorious!) personalities. The service was attended by the majority of the Fitter Section from our out stations and was a good chance to get together and discuss equipment support in the desert environment. (Only joking, we're not that sad!)

Further afield, in the Maysan Provence, Staff Sergeant Rob Rose has done a sterling job with his Fitter Section in support of Major Phil Wilson's Burma Company. The technical accommodation and infrastructure further north is not as good as at the hotel and this in itself has been a significant obstacle to overcome, with many a pack lift taking place on the dusty desert floor.

Staff Sergeant Bob Anderson has also had his work cut out with Major Malcolm Norman's Corunna Company. As the Brigade reserve, they have undertaken a variety of taskings in a number of locations, demanding flexibility throughout. Lance Corporal Martin Pearce and Craftsman Gaz Lester have had a good taste of Infantry life, augmenting some of the OPs during some particularly wet weather. They have opted to remain in the REME!

Officer, all of us on the advance party finally had the opportunity for introductions. The environment was not the most conducive. The RSOI acclimatisation programme had successfully made everyone even more tired and incredibly hot and sweaty, and not a lot else. However, the friendliness and welcoming nature of all I met in those first few hours has never abated and my experience of everyone else I have met has continued in this vein.

That was the start, and things have changed, only for the better. I am busy trying to ensure that the Operation Cleaver re-supplies coming up from Shiba Log Base run smoothly. I have not always been successful, with the occasional convoy force protection vehicle deciding that a ditch is its preferred route, rather than the straight road ahead. On the other extreme, rather than having problems trying to get all the vehicles in, there have

been occasions when vehicles will not leave. Yes, it has been known, (only once or twice!) that a vehicle has still been here when the rest of the convoy is disappearing into the distance. They obviously enjoy their time at the hotel too much!

However, my job as a Logistic Support Detachment (LSD) commander with the Dukes, has grown as time as passed. The posties, the EFI personnel and the water boys (the guys who go round and ensure that the hotel and TDAs - especially Alma's TDA 1! - have sufficient non-potable washing water) have all been taken under my wing. Yet, the responsibility that overrules all other is the movie nights. In an effort to get away from work issues, even for a couple of hours, has been a task delegated to me. The negotiating skills that I have learnt to try and keep the small audience happy with the choice of film will be essential throughout my time in the army!

My detachment and I have had the opportunity to go out on patrol with the QM's Department, the Tactical

Psyops Team (TPT), or the companies. This has been an excellent opportunity, as this may be the only time, as we are RLC, that we can go out on patrols with the infantry. It has also meant that we have got to see what Basrah is like, rather than relying on the eyes of others to see it for us. To operate outside the gates and communicate with the Iraqi people has been very interesting, and has given us a perspective on the situation we may not have had if we had stayed within the wire.

I have been very lucky that my first 'proper' job in the Army has been with the Dukes. At the end of the day, although RMAS teaches you a lot, experience and example teaches you a lot more. The example set by the officers and soldiers of the Dukes has been impressive and set a standard that I will use as a bench mark throughout my career.

2nd Lieutenant Charlie Kent
OC Logistic Support Detachment

THOUGHTS FROM THE BATTLE GROUP ENGINEER

What's it like working with the Dukes? Over the past year or so I have worked with the Dukes in two locations: once on the wide open Canadian Prairie during Exercise Medman 1 and now on the current tour in Iraq. During the Medman exercise I was an Engineer Troop Commander in charge of various assets to enable the BG to fight and win its battles against the RTR, which we did 7-nil. I am now detached from 21 Engineer Regiment and work as the Battle Group Engineer within the BG HQ.

My present surroundings are the windowless and cell-like walls of the BG ops room alongside the Ops Officer, Captain Ogilvie, and under the strict control of Major Monteith, who doesn't let me eat if I get things wrong. Fortunately I am allowed to go out onto the streets of Basrah, much to the distress of said Ops Officer.

We all work closely together throughout the Brigade; between the Engineers and the Dukes we have built the longest bridge since the Second World War over the Shatt Al Arab; emplaced an incredible amount of HESCO bastion to protect the soldiers guarding our locations; conducted boat, search and EOD Ops throughout the city; and managed to lock down Basrah during the elections - no mean feat. Throughout all this the Dukes have remained supportive and provided the protection without which the Engineers would not be able to complete the work.

As Engineers, we work with many different units on a regular basis, my limited experience of infantry has been mainly spent with the Dukes BG including the Welsh Guards and the Royal Highland Fusiliers who

came over to support us during the elections. From this experience both in Canada and Iraq I can say that I have felt welcomed and valued throughout. There is little pretence, all the soldiers I have met are always friendly with that edge of dry Yorkshire wit, and in addition, people within the HQ will move mountains to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the blokes on the ground - although it wouldn't always look that way, judging by the hours worked over the run up to, and during the elections.

And now a note on personalities with whom I work: when Major Monteith lets me eat, he is a nice bloke (he is also the Battle Group effing 2IC, something I shall never forget); if Captain Ogilvie speaks to me, he's actually alright, apart from the smell; WO2 Smith, Sergeant Spink, Private Dick, the signaller known only as 'Not Dicko' and Private Swanick down at Alma Company all let me make their brews, which is kind. I like to think that, at times, Mr T (Lance Corporal Twawacali the courses clerk) and myself are the glue that hold the Ops room together ... but it's not long before I am beaten back into place.

Finally, I have been accused by my own regiment of 'going native', I don't think there's anything particularly wrong with this, to be fully immersed in a job like mine you're bound to pick up a few Dukeisms along the way. Couple this with a healthy reliance on beer and rugby and I suppose it was inevitable.

Lieutenant Al Dawson
Royal Engineers

FEEDING THE 5,000 AT THE SHATT AL ARAB HOTEL - 1 DWR BATTLE GROUP

The Catering Department of the 1st Battalion the Duke of Wellington's Regiment is now little over three months into Operation Telic V and can now look back with pride to what each and every one of the Department has achieved so far in support of the Battle Group. The Department is spread afar, across the operational area from Shiaba log base with Corunna Company, to Basrah Palace in support of 3/29 Bty RA and the Old State Building with the Welsh Guards. The majority of the Department is located at the Shatt Al Arab Hotel and is heavily supported by chefs from other units.

The job in hand is as important to the morale of the Battle Group as any other, and for this reason it is essential that we get it right. The Department not only provides the soldiers with three meals a day, but ensures that any soldier going on patrol during the silent hours is fed on their departure or return with egg banjos and bacon butties. Thus in effect providing a twenty-four hour kitchen, seven days a week. The Adjutant, Captain Glossop, has also kept the RCWO, WO2 (SQMS) Asquith, on his toes with his last minute bookings for finger buffets and fork buffets for dignitaries, including the Prime Minister, General Sir Mike Walker and numerous Sheikhs throughout Basrah, not forgetting the dine out of the Brigade Commander, Brigadier Gibson. The Adjutant assures the RCWO he informs him the minute he knows, but this is



Mr Blair samples Battalion cuisine.

WO2 Asquith

debatable, with information and numbers being rather patchy at times to say the least!

Along with the feeding of the Battle Group comes the sheer volume of rations and water that is required to provide this service, the total number of mouths that have been fed throughout the Battle Group so far is 164,623 which equates to 493,869 meals, plus two Christmas dinners. The amount of water delivered and consumed currently stands at 4,938,690 litres, and the total amount spent from the food account at present is £660,703.38. The Battalion has eaten its way through 14,332 pies. Who says Yorkshire men love pies! Not to mention the phenomenal amount of curry the Battalion has eaten its way through, no thanks to the consumption rate of the QM (M) Captain Sutcliffe and the CO, Lieutenant Colonel Lewis, who is still in denial of his sweet tooth. The feedback on the food from the troops currently deployed throughout the Battle Group has been more than encouraging, with only one minor complaint from the QM (T), Captain Frear, with regards to watermelon pips in the fruit salad, apparently they don't agree with his false teeth! I can only presume that all is well with regards to the service currently being provided by the Catering Department and that each and everyone of us is living up to the motto of the Royal Logistic Corps, 'We Sustain'.

TWELVE EVENT - TWELVE MARATHONS IN SIX MONTHS

So, I hear you ask, where did this idea come from? Well there I was on Iron Anvil in Canada around the autumn of October 03 running the prairie once more on a sunny day, contemplating what arduous charity event I should undertake the following year. When it came to me that running the 100 km distance was the same old event that people had associated me with in the past, and it was then that the Twelve Event was born where I would run two marathons a month for one year; all I needed was a willing partner.

Sergeant Chris Penk, another chef at the time also with 1st Queen's Dragoon Guards, was my victim, easily convinced (well that was my opinion anyway), joined me in the mammoth task that lay before us. Little did we know how hard, at times, how challenging and sometimes soul-searching a year it would become.

We kicked off with a publicised event in Osnabrück Germany, around a two lap circuit that had been verified previously. This route passed by all the Military Camps, where support from all Catering Departments of 4 Armoured Brigade came out to cheer us on. After this we completed marathons as planned every two weeks,

and this saw us on official routes such as the prestigious European Hamburg Marathon and Holland's Encheida Marathon; and on the other end of the scale we completed routes in the drizzling rain of the Hythe-Hastings coast in Kent and the range roads of Hohne.

High and low points during this event have been varied, such as the Herford Half Marathon which became an emotional day for us, completing two laps of a very hilly route, to the amazement of competitors of just one lap. Also Chris achieving a time below the four hour marker after ten marathons completed to that date. Lowest point for myself was suffering a Hernia injury after completing twelve marathons and being half way, which caused me to be banned from running for three months for the process of surgery and recovery.

Chris, however, cracked on through the months with great credit and self-motivation achieved at times on his own. October 2004 saw me deploying on Operation Telic V and now serving with the 1st Battalion The Duke of Wellington's Regiment, where I still planned to complete my remaining twelve marathons by the end of tour.

We are located at the Shatt Al Arab Hotel in Basrah, and with the assistance of the PT Corps Man a route was laid covering twenty-six and-a-half laps of the perimeter circuit, I couldn't believe my good fortune at having this on offer-NOT.

Chris completed one marathon in Iraq and was then posted back to Germany as he had been successfully promoted, he however only had two more to complete, which he managed to do. My marathons restarted in November, and the first was an experience that I'm sure will never be forgotten. Due to work commitments each marathon starts around 0400hrs, armed with a head torch and a sense of humour. The Twelve Event has become a cult following, with a handful of people completing their first-ever marathons and even coming back for more. So I have created a T-shirt for competitors "I Ran A Shatt Marathon", for a modest donation to the two charities.

Six marathons have passed here in Iraq with only six more to go, and on my return in May Chris and I will complete another publicised event to finish our challenge and hopefully give the Army Benevolent Fund and the BBC Children In Need Appeal the money we have raised.

Staff Sergeant Carpenter



Staff Sergeant Carpenter

The East and West Riding Regiment

Commanding Officer's Introduction

As reported in the last edition, 120 Officers and soldiers of the East and West Riding Regiment are deployed alongside the 1st Battalion as the Force Protection Company for Multinational Division (South East) on operations in Iraq. Of these, forty-two soldiers are from Ypres and Fontenay Companies and proudly wearing their Dukes' cap badges. Normandy Company is experiencing a busy and exciting operational tour. As the only formed territorial sub unit in theatre they are attracting much publicity and many visits from politicians and senior military commanders alike. The Company role continues to be focussed on escort duties throughout the MND (SE) area, a role which all soldiers are thoroughly enjoying. As the half way point approaches and the R&R plan continues to operate almost perfectly, our attentions are now drawn to

welcoming the Company back from operations. Plans are being formulated for a medal presentation ceremony in late June in order to recognise the outstanding job the Company and every Officer and Soldier has completed.

With the Company away in much hotter climates, the Regiment continues to be on six hours' notice to move as the lead unit in Civil Contingency Reaction Force (South) area of operations. The war on recruiting has seen many battles recently won and an upturn in strength with many more soldiers being put through and successfully completing Phase 1 training. The future looks brighter and the possibility of a fully manned regiment is on the horizon. We must not falter in our efforts to achieve this mission and the Regiment is focussed in this effort.

FONTENAY COMPANY (SHEFFIELD)

It is 5am and we have just been woken. "Lads, you've been crashed out", shouts the guard commander who has sprinted across to our accommodation. Within seconds we are running towards our rover then speeding up towards the JHF compound, hoping the RAF police do not try to pull us over. As we arrive, our primary team is already running towards the Sea King, "There's been an RTA," one of them yells, "It's an American convoy." Our commander runs into the Ops Room, unfortunately for us we are not needed this time. A

couple of hours later we hear the various 'war stories' from the other team as they return, the only comfort for us being the fact that they are now rotating onto Guard and we are moving onto Immediate Notice to Move for the next twelve hours.

We have been in Iraq for over two months now and it has been interesting to say the least: a far cry from most people's civilian jobs. Not to mention being completely different from the typical TA weekend, and of course our build-up training. Actually, to be fair, we did receive

some good training under our own instructors at STANTA, however large parts of the OPTAG training were fairly irrelevant. It must be some sort of unwritten military rule that all exercises, regardless of what you are training for, must finish with a dawn attack. Sure enough, after training for escorts in Basrah, we finished the final exercise running across fields carrying out section attacks.

In theatre we have had some good tasks: 'C2s' (Armed Escort Services into Al Basrah, Az Zubayr, and Al Amarah) are the most popular; and 'C1s' (Armed Escort Services into rural areas and the provision of WIS QRF) have given people a few shopping trips in Kuwait. Individuals are often tasked to support CP teams and patrols from other branches at Division and

Brigade. It is not all fun however: the guard tasking at Divisional HQ tends to be universally despised by everyone, but I suppose someone has to do it.

Recently we have been tasked with providing two standby teams to support the Immediate Response Team; so far it seems like it will be a good tasking, especially with the elections approaching. The Royal Navy pilots are apparently keen to fly in all conditions and they have quick response times, so hopefully we can be the first on the scene of any major incidents in southern Iraq. Jumping out of helicopters also provides good photo opportunities. To be honest, once this tour is over, I am not sure how TA weekends are going to compare.

25109954 Private Thomson



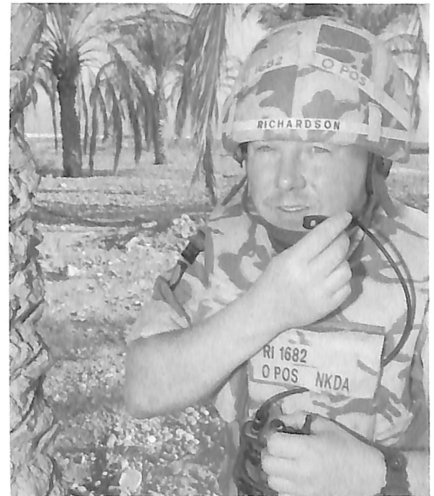
Damien



Simon



Operation Telic



Martin

YPRES COMPANY (KEIGHLEY)

It has been two months since I arrived and Iraq is not exactly the place I was led to imagine it would be! The constant bombardments and attacks we suffered in our training are a distant memory, and 'touch wood' I have yet to experience my first real mortar attack. The weather has not been what I expected either: I had

images of Saharan white sand and a scorching sun beating down. Yes, we have had some sun, but it is freezing of a night and it rains (that is right, it rains!) sometimes like it is not going to stop! They say it will get hotter towards March, so I shall be ready with my super factor sun cream.

We are living in two-man rooms, which are pretty comfortable. Our gym and company bar are close by, as are the internet and telephone facilities. When we first arrived, we stayed in tented accommodation. It was like living in Moon Base Alpha: very modern, and probably better than some of the accommodation back home!

At the moment our job here consists of a three day rotation: three days guard; three days 'C2' tasking (Armed Escort Services into Al Basrah, Az Zubayr, and Al Amarah); and three days 'C1' tasking (Armed Escort Services into rural areas and the provision of WIS QRF). This rotation is due to change soon as we are coming under command of 2 PWRR, and we are due to provide the ARF for the IRT.

Guard, our Main Effort, is not as boring as it sounds. The guard we provide is Force Protection for HQ MND (SE), and you would not believe the number of nations that work together there. At lunch we can eat with people of up to thirteen other nationalities: Japanese; Australian; American; Romanian; Czech; Italian; Dutch; Danish; Norwegian; Lithuanian; Polish; Portuguese; and Iraqi.

C2 tasks are what the lads enjoy the most, and we know the task more affectionately as 'Baz Cabs': taking whoever wants to go, wherever they want to go. It is a different experience every time you visit Basrah city: there is always something new to see. The place thrives with activity, and the aromas of city life waft by (some good smells, some bad smells); sometimes the air even smells perfumed. It is a city of children: they are everywhere; and once, whilst escorting some articulated lorries, I was followed by a group of them. At one point, the Platoon Sergeant called me the 'Pied Piper', as a long trail of nosey kids followed me as I tried to go about my job. The constant chatter of "Mister, mister!" will stay with me long after I leave this country.

C1 tasks take us further afield, sometimes even as far as Kuwait. We again provide an escort, but sometimes we provide individual soldiers to a variety of agencies as local protection. So it has not been too bad so far: it is not nice being away from home, but doing the job for real is an experience I would not have liked to miss out on.

25089023 Lance Corporal Hastings



"Mister, mister".

THE TERRITORIALS OF YESTERYEAR

STANLEY LANGLEY'S WAR

We bring Stanley Langley's story from Issue No. 256, page 146, to its conclusion and renew our thanks to Mr Brian Norris for compiling and editing the material and permitting its publication.

Liberation

Towards the end of April, our guards lined us up and announced that within forty-eight hours the Americans would be here. They hoped that when the war was over, we would not think of them too badly. They had only done what they had to do in a war. That was that, and off they went. We were free from then on.

Before the end, the Americans shelled Landshut. We, two or three hundred of us, were in the school. Sergeant Major Murdo McLeod suggested that I play the piano to cheer us all up. I started just as people were vanishing into the cellars. "Carry on!" ordered McLeod. There was an explosion and the blast blew in a side window. We dived to join the rest down below as the barrage

continued. During the night, I heard a young fellow, badly wounded somehow, calling out for his mother. We left the school at first light of day, although some shells were still coming over.

We found a storage place for tyres, under railway arches, and stayed there for a day and a night. We awoke on 1 May to cries of: "The Americans are outside!" There they were with their rifles, looking for German troops who hadn't, like our guards, escaped from the town. We walked down into the town centre to see the US 6th Army everywhere. General Patten had taken Munich the day before; now it was the turn of Landshut and Moosburg. His soldiers were giving out bottles of beer, cigarettes by the hundred it seemed - open arms. It was wonderful. A small group of us met an elderly German there who said he was taking a previously hidden radio back home. He invited us to his house, so presently we were sitting round his table with the family enjoying bacon and eggs. This was the first proper meal for a long time. Through the open window we saw a huge American tank rumble to a stop. A head popped out, saw us, and began to remind us that the Supreme Commander, General Eisenhower, had ordered that there was to be no fraternization with the enemy. We told him to inform the general what he could do with his order.

I met an old lady who said: "Good, now I can watch American films again, like Jeanette McDonald and Nelson Eddy". The civilians seemed happy that the Americans had come. My little group started going to a local hospital to get a regular bath, to soak in warm water - wonderful. Then off to the American PX, their NAAFI, where they couldn't do enough for us. Hershey chocolate bars, as many as we wanted. The food was magnificent. What struck me was the high standard of hygiene. When they washed plates, everything was sterilized; unlike in our army where you could be washing up in fatty water. Out on the street, a local said to me, amidst all the activity with transport, that he didn't know there was so much petrol in the world. A cinema was reopened; first film: Esther Williams in "Bathing Beauty".

The Americans were ruthless with suspected German soldiers hiding in civilian clothes. I saw one man go up to the Americans, asking for cigarettes and claiming he was Dutch. They roughed him up and took him away. They imposed a strict curfew from eight or nine in the evening. Russian POWs were often culprits, wandering around at night; some were shot. The Americans would shoot anything suspicious that moved.

VE - Victory in Europe - Day was 8 May. I was invited to play the piano at a party in a big house the Americans had taken over. One of them switched on the radio for my benefit and tuned into the BBC. The comedian Tommy Handley was on in "ITMA" - the first time I had heard it since 1939. It didn't make much of an impression on the American; it did on me. Then as I was going upstairs, someone gave me a drink. At the top they had a tin bath full of wine. They were ladling it out and a voice offered another glass. I protested that I had one. "You've got another hand, haven't you?" So I played the piano and drank the wine. Of course I couldn't take it, not having had a good drink for five

years. Later, I felt sick and had to retire for that reason. Early in the morning they drove me in a jeep to our base at the school. One of the soldiers generously gave me a fur jacket, which I managed to bring home. McLeod was waiting, agitated that I had been out in the curfew. "If you do that again lad, just let me know."

The Americans were amazing at organizing things. There was as much food as we could eat. They soon went into overdrive in getting us home. They somehow got all the records, deloused us, blew DDT over us, gave us new clothes - including fitted underclothes, the invention of which had bypassed our army - and any American items we needed.

About 12 May they were ready for us to leave. Around the school they had trucks lined up. We were split into groups of twenty-eight for each of them. Then, as we were about to move off, somebody at the gate saw that vile guard, Rudi Brueckner, on the street dressed as a civilian. A great shout went up and the Americans grabbed him. "What shall we do with him?" Many of our men shouted that he should be shot. The German was terrified. It was decided to take him out on the first truck. They secured him to a front wing, a rifle trained on him. Then someone had a bright idea: to put him on the last truck of the column. So we set off on a fifty-mile drive along dusty roads to the airfield at Straubing. It must have been an ordeal for Brueckner; he was covered head to foot with dirt when we got there. We never learnt what happened to him. Each batch of twenty-eight men was allocated to a plane in a flight of Dakotas, lined up and ready to go. Organization to the nth degree.

We flew to the French town of Nancy. It was typical of the Americans when we got there. In a huge hall they sat us down to a fine meal. They had brought in all the beautiful girls of the district to wait on us. The POWs had hardly seen young ladies - beautiful or otherwise - for up to five years. They moved us on to a RAMP camp - for Repatriated Allied Military Personnel - and again everything was laid on for us. We had some lectures, learning that when the US prisoners got home they would be out of it; when the British returned they would be back in the army. They gave us new American sleeping bags and blankets, put us on a train for Le Havre, and flew us in more Dakotas over the white cliffs of Dover to the secret RAF airfield at Dunsfold in Surrey.

Words cannot describe what I felt. To approach England, to see the trees and fields; everything seemed small compared with Poland, but greener; and this was home at last.

We stepped down from the plane and walked to a wicket gate. Two elderly Miss Marple-type ladies were waiting there, holding out packets of cigarettes. "Welcome home, boys." That brought tears to our eyes. We saw a red squirrel scamper up a tree. A meal was laid on for us before we had a medical check-up. The doctor complimented me on the hernia operation; he could hardly see the scar. We sent telegrams home, the first words from us since the long march began four months before. The train went straight up to Manchester. There I tried to ring Marjorie, but was so out of touch I couldn't make the connection. On the local train to Mossley I was the only passenger.

I stepped through the door to the welcome of my parents. I think my father and brother did not go back to work for three days. It was wonderful. I was now twenty-six but I looked younger. I had survived it well; they said I hadn't aged at all. And then Marjorie came; it was her twenty-third birthday. She had been working in the office of a cotton mill, a reserved occupation; she couldn't leave or join the Wrens, which she had wanted.

It was not a meeting like you see in films, where you fly into each other's arms. It was nothing like that. I was shy. Five years of captivity do something to you mentally. You don't realise it at the time; I do, full well, now. It took a bit of time to adjust. If I went on a bus, I was shy of asking for a ticket. Mixing with the civilian population generally was a bit of an ordeal. People didn't realise this, even Marjorie. She wanted to go dancing; I was too shy to get up on the floor. It was a condition known as being "stalag-happy". We had to make adjustments, but it was not a great problem. For some time I was troubled by a recurring dream, of being captured all over again. How long will it last this time?

I found that I seemed to speak nicer than I had done before. For years I had been with a mixed group of folk, and my friends were quite well educated people. Back in Mossley, the Lancashire accent seemed foreign to me. Now I found people I used to look up to spoke with a strong accent. They said to me, "Don't lose your accent!" I went to see my good friend George Pick in Walton Hospital. He was someone I could relate to. George laughed about a Bing Crosby record: "Don't fence me in". His father thanked me for what I had done for George in the war. I didn't know that I had done anything.

Heinrich Tobes, the exceptionally kind German soldier in the hospital at Posen, survived the war. Following up an address he had given me, I was able to make contact and I sent a few parcels. We corresponded for a while, and then lost touch with each other. The computer yields a single clue: in 1957 he was a missionary in Argentina, and was last seen in a distant, rural parish, riding around on a lady's bicycle. [*Iron Duke No 254 tells the end of this story on page 33 ... Ed.*]

Meanwhile, Marjorie and I were happy together, so much so that within a month we were married.

I was still in the army, enjoying six weeks' leave. My back pay came through; for all those years it amounted to a few hundred pounds. Unlike the returning Americans, we POWs received no medal for what we had endured in the camps; there was also no counselling, no psychiatric help, and no quick return to civilian life. I was sent to Otley, where I was expected to start a jungle warfare course for the struggle that continued in the Far East. Then came the atomic bombs on Japan in August, so that was that. I was posted for three months to Alexandria, beyond Glasgow, where Marjorie was able to join me for a while. I then had a brief stop near Morpeth before going to Ashton-under-Lyne barracks and demobilization in February, 1946. As well as a suit, the army gave me sixteen weeks of accumulated paid leave.

I returned to Mossley and to my job as a joiner with the Co-op. Six pounds a week seemed a reasonable wage at the time. I knew I hadn't lost my skills because

I had done lots of similar work in the army and in the Polish camps. Before long, Marjorie and I found a suitable house to rent. I was still stalag-happy. I didn't suffer fools gladly, and if somebody started to pick on me, I would let him have it. I had had quite enough of that in the war. Yet I had no feeling of resentment, no argument with the army, nobody to blame. On the contrary, I felt I had achieved something, was glad that I had done it. It was a testing experience and I had survived it. I had seen and experienced more in those five years, I thought, than my father (who had not been in WWI) had been through in his lifetime.

I am reflecting on what kept me going during the incarceration. To begin with, to be captured in 1940 was the most frightful thing you might imagine. It is frightening, you don't know what is going to happen, how long the war will last, and who will win it. So at the beginning the main thing is to survive. That first march in 1940 through France and beyond was horrible - worse than the final, longer march to liberation. It was hot; we were hungry, thirsty, weary, disorientated; and I was ill. Later that summer at Warthelager, the Germans mocked us as they held up a newspaper cartoon of John Bull sagging on the ropes in a boxing ring. It was all over bar the shouting, so to speak. Why didn't we throw in the towel?

Even then, I did not think we would lose the war. My optimistic nature told me: we shall win! The odds are stacked against us but we shall win eventually. Later my state of health improved and I felt better in myself. I couldn't see the light at the end of the tunnel, didn't know when I would see home again, but gradually my hopes strengthened. Churchill had become prime minister back home, and we knew about his speeches. From our hidden radio his words were written down and read in every hut. There was no question of defeatism there. They inspired me.

Music and reading helped a great deal to keep me going. I had been playing the piano since I was about ten. As well as classical music, I was very keen on British and American dance band music. At Fort Grolman and Andrespol we had a camp band, so I played in their concerts. Wherever I could find a piano, there was a chance to escape for a while. One scene flashes back to me: at Grolman, where we introduced an item picked up from a BBC programme. In "Mystery Voice" the radio audience tries to guess the identity of some prominent person who is trying to disguise his voice. So I am playing the piano whilst the curtains close in front of me. The mystery voice is to be my own - so I begin, more or less for the first time, to sing. Back came a voice from the audience: "Shut up Langley!"

Later in the war, books were easier to come by and I read a lot. Again, it was like an escape to enter another world. I had never read the more classic books before the war, although I had enjoyed the lighter, humorous kind, such as Thorne Smith's "Topper". In the camps I was reading - thanks to the Red Cross - Joseph Conrad (born Polish), Dickens, E.M.Forster, Galsworthy. I remember reading Margaret Mitchell's "Gone with the Wind", Hemingway's "For Whom the Bell Tolls", Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath". My mind was broadening with books and a good company of people. It was a kind of education that I didn't get in Mossley.

ROBERTS AROUND THE WORLD

All our readers will share in the relief that Alistair and Carolyn Roberts survived the Boxing Day tsunami and have been able to continue their epic journey around the world.

We are grateful to Carolyn for this first-hand account of the effects of the tsunami. Thereafter, Alistair continues his account of their journey.

Ten rally yachts gathered in the north-west facing bay of Phi Phi Don to celebrate Christmas at the Jungle Bar, a beach-side restaurant. The weather was beautiful, and we all had a lot of fun. The following day, Boxing Day, Carolyn and Alistair of *Nademia*, Peter of *St. Barbara*, and Jim and Lolly of *Condor* (who were staying aboard *St. Barbara* for a couple of days) were up early to take a taxi-boat over to the neighbouring island of Phi Phi Le. It was another beautiful day, and at about 11am we entered the inlet of Maya Beach, where the film 'The Beach' was filmed. The inlet is steep-sided and almost enclosed, and would be delightful but for the dozens of tour boats of all sizes that were manoeuvring in the bay, dropping off swimmers and snorkellers. We slipped into the water rather cautiously, as many of the speed boats were dangerously close to us. Almost immediately we became aware of a strong current dragging us towards the sheer cliffs, which was unexpected, given the topography, and we put it down to the backwash from all the power boats. Just a few minutes later the current changed direction and increased alarmingly, and we found ourselves being swept further into the bay, totally out of control. The current reversed a couple more times, and we were dragged back and forth, frighteningly close to the

cliff face, in water that had changed from crystal clear to muddy brown, until fortunately we all managed to struggle ashore in a tiny cove some distance from the main beach. We had no idea what was happening, except that at one moment the beach was many metres wide, with a few fish stranded on the sand, and the next moment a heavy surge of water up to three or four metres high covered everything, and we were forced to retreat into the jungle behind the beach, and, as the surges increased in height, we clambered a few feet up the craggy rockface at the back of the cove.

We were stranded in the cove, along with a French family, for a couple of hours as the water surged back and forth into the bay. There was a huge amount of debris in the water, including tree trunks that had been swept off the beach. Gradually the water became more stable, and powerboats which had retreated to the open sea began to edge their way into the bay to pick up the hundreds of people stranded on the main beach. There was no sign of our taxi-boat, however, and it was still far too dangerous for us to contemplate swimming out to the boats. Eventually a longtail boat approached our cove, and we struggled out to it through still-swirling water, to find our taxi-boat driver on board - his boat had been sunk, along with two or three others.



The tsunami - too close for comfort.

It was a sombre group that set off back to Phi Phi Don, through a sea that was littered with an amazing amount of flotsam, including two upturned kayaks and a couple more wrecked longtail boats. We were dreading what we would find back at the anchorage. As we drew near we saw that most yachts had put to sea, including *St Barbara*, who had been boarded by other rally people, and were standing off about two miles. As we rounded the last headland we saw *Nademia* - still afloat, and apparently undamaged. Our relief was beyond words.

It appears that the tsunami had surged into the anchorage and across the beach, devastating the resort. Two members of the rally were injured, two rally boats lost their anchors, and a couple of boats sustained other

relatively minor damage, but all had managed to put to sea after the first wave, which had swirled around the bay at a reported twelve knots. Somehow our own anchor had held, but once we were on board we put to sea immediately as there were reports that a second tsunami was expected, fortunately it did not materialize.

Reports of the effect of the tsunami, both locally and throughout the Indian Ocean region, have been relayed to us via VHF and BBC World Service. We were very, very lucky - I dread to think how many swimmers in the Phi Phi islands cannot be accounted for. As I write, we are at anchor north of the islands, trying to decide what to do, and feeling the utmost sympathy for the holiday-makers and local population who were less fortunate than ourselves.

LEG 5 - AUSTRALIA TO THAILAND AUGUST - DECEMBER 2004

The simple statement "We will be spending Christmas in Thailand" in the last paragraph of my previous report was deliberately written to induce extreme jealousy. Of course the reality was far from a dream holiday in Paradise. As you will know from Carolyn's account, she and I were extremely lucky. The restaurant where the rally had its Christmas lunch the day before completely disappeared. Despite this dramatic intervention, our round the world cruise continues more or less on schedule although we will not now call at Sri Lanka, also badly hit by the tsunami.

I last reported from Cairns in Eastern Australia. We had glorious sailing north inside the Great Barrier Reef - good winds, flat seas and beautiful anchorages. The only problem being that the water was firmly out of bounds for swimming - man eating crocodiles and sharks, box jelly fish, sea snakes, etc. We followed as much of Captain Cook's voyage as possible which made us all the more humble that he could have achieved so much without all our modern devices. Much of his surveying forms the basis for our current charts. In late September we reached Darwin where we prepared and provisioned for the cruise through SE Asia. Last time I was in Darwin was as a subaltern in Burma Company on our way to act as enemy to the New Zealand Army with Peter Mitchell as Company Commander and Bobo Chilvers as CSM.

SE Asia - Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand - has been another fabulous part of the trip. The sailing has been poor with very light winds but the exposure to the culture, often in remote fishing villages, has been a great experience. Despite all the warnings of piracy and anti-western feeling in the Moslem communities, we met nothing but delightful people, very pleased to see us and keen to show off their countries. There were many highlights - visiting the orang-utans' national park in Borneo, seeing the Komodo Dragons, one of which swam past our boat at anchor, and flagging down an Indonesian fishing boat to exchange diesel for coca cola in mid ocean (we wanted the diesel!), for example.

It hasn't all been straightforward - we had a fairly major engine failure on the high seas when there was no wind, no moon, strong tides and a deadline to meet our daughters in Lombok near Bali. We had to re-rig our fuel lines and cobble together a sea water cooling pump in the middle of the night so that we could limp to a bay somewhere near their guest house. The boat looked like it had had a triple heart bypass with wires and hoses sticking out in all directions. But it worked! We eventually arrived at the guest house RV on the back of a couple of mopeds driven by locals we had woken on the beach! Luckily we were able to get the engine fixed in Bali at a cost probably a tenth of UK. We have been constantly amazed at how cheap it can be to live and eat out in these countries.

Visiting Singapore and Malaysia reminded me of those distant days when we were posted to Hong Kong and we ventured down here for courses, sport, officers' education, etc. Singapore has changed amazingly but is a very exciting place to be for a short while. Boogie Street is now a smart shopping area. In Malaysia I thought back to Jungle Warfare School at Johore Baru. I attended with Alma Company, commanded by Duncan Lupton, CSM Tom Pickersgill and fellow subalterns Nick Newell and David Wonson. Joe Collins was one of our JWS instructors. My other main recollection was playing the Far East Rugby Final versus the Kiwis at Tarendak. Ian Reid was skipper with Mike C-L leading the forwards and we put twenty points on them in the first half from which they never recovered!

So, here we are in Thailand. 2005 has been welcomed in. Before the tsunami we had thirteen wonderful days cruising the spectacular islands of Phang Nga Bay, visiting Bangkok and Chiang Mai, and eating Thai food three meals a day. I even attended a Thai cooking course! We are now preparing for some major ocean crossings and serious sailing once more, first to Cochin in S India (1750 miles) to replace Sri Lanka, then to Djibouti (a further 1800 miles, including an enforced 700 mile rally convoy to deter pirates in the Gulf of Aden) and finally a hard 800 mile beat up the Red Sea to Egypt and the Suez Canal. We should pop out into the Med in late March.

UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER MISSION IN GEORGIA

We are grateful to Lieutenant Colonel George Kilburn for this article

I am currently on a UN tour in the Georgian rebel province of Abkhazia. As with many such places, it is broken; corruption and criminality is endemic and there are some 200,000 refugees in Georgia who have been 'cleansed' from their homes here.

UNOMIG monitors the cease-fire agreement between Georgia and Abkhaz. My area is about 2,000 square kilometres on the Abkhaz side. I have forty-five Observers - all officers, from the UK, Denmark, Greece, Turkey, Germany, France, Hungary, Russia, Poland, Ukraine, Switzerland, Sweden, Indonesia, Pakistan, Jordan, Egypt, Uruguay and Korea. There are also about thirty civilians who are not under my command and who, in some cases, don't seem to be under anybody's control.

We operate unarmed, but there is also an armed peacekeeping force provided by Russia. They have a mandate to protect the UN if required. It seems a bit strange to be protected by Russians, having spent so long being ready to do battle with them.

I live in a house in the town amongst the local population. The accommodation is basic but adequate. The electrical system is a case in point. A few weeks ago, in a very similar house, a chap went to let the dog in at 3.00am; when he touched the door handle he discovered that, in an attempt to find earth, the landlord had wired the door frame to the mains. He jerked about a bit and made a lot of noise until somebody came and turned off the juice. He was then thrown across the room and broke a finger in the process.

Equally the food is organic and fresh, sometimes so fresh that you see an animal on the way out of the house

in the morning and when you come back in the evening it is supper. The German medics bought a pig from a local farmer the other week. I discovered this when I heard an awful din from the refuelling area. I went to see what it was and saw three officers wrestling with a pig whilst a medic strapped it to a stretcher. It was eventually subdued and two days later at the sector party it had been turned into very good kebabs and roast pork.

The leave scheme is very generous and I have already taken ten days to look round Georgia. Penny, my wife, came out and we stayed with the DA in Tbilisi for a couple of days and then, having hired a car and driver, spent five days touring, including the Caucasus, the Minor Caucasus and the Black Sea Coast. I have seen enough churches to last me several months, but most of them are built within fortifications at strategic points. We therefore struck a deal: I would go into the church with Penny and admire the architecture and frescos; she would then walk round the battlements and pretend to understand what I was talking about when I outlined the military aspects of the place.

Working with the UN is very different from the norm, but all the more fun for that. The cultural challenge is enormous. Getting the best out of people who have been brought up in very different systems and keeping track of what is important to who is 'interesting'. I am enjoying the job thoroughly. I am mildly surprised that at almost 50 years of age I find myself in an operational and potentially dangerous area, commanding a very varied and disparate group of officers and finding the whole thing cracking fun.



Lieutenant Colonel George Kilburn with United Nations' Allies.

MEMORIES

by Arthur Johnson

We conclude Arthur Johnson's story, which we left on page 156 of Issue No 256.

To hospital

The next day saw me on my way by ambulance past Cattolica, where I saw the Generals going north. Jerry was on the move at last. Later that day I arrived at hospital near Pesaro, where I had my wound cleaned and dressed. I was taken to a tented hospital where I waited over a day, ready to fly south to Naples by Dakota, I was told. By now, I was feeling rough and was so sure that some kind of infection had set in.

The time came when about eight stretcher cases were loaded onto the plane. I was pleased to be moving as I felt I ought to be having more treatment. We were all strapped down. The climb was a bit rough across the airfield but it was worse later as we went down Italy to the south, over the Apennines. The attendant told us not to worry as it was only air pockets that we were flying through. At last we touched down at Naples. Then we moved on to the 4th General Hospital near Pompeii. The next morning was operating time, as the leg was infected and I was in a good deal of pain. When I came around the pain was still there but I was on another ward.

At last the Sister came and untied the top bandage to reveal two tubes showing through. She cleaned the openings and, with a syringe, injected penicillin. The result was magic; it was as though the pain-taking finger was going round in circles under the bandage. She replaced the bandages and gave me penicillin about three times a day. At last I was allowed out of bed and I was delighted to be able to get around the ward. After three weeks the wound would not heal properly and repeated skin grafts did not take either. Six weeks went by before I was discharged to a convalescent camp at Caserta. I still had a limp but the convalescent camp was home from home; 'Stars in Battle-Dress' and 'Mat Gonnella' came with the shows. The fighting was over in Italy now. I limped and swung it in order to stay at the camp for Christmas dinner.

Back to work

It was almost fourteen weeks since I came south and as my unit had been disbanded, I had hopes of staying on in the cook house. But no such luck - all the tank lads were taken to Rieti, a depot north of Rome in the mountains, near Terni. The next day I met up with the rest of the 145 Regiment in a silk factory. My old Sergeant-Major Goodwin was in charge and he looked after the B Squadron boys. He got us moved into a school which had an electric light! It was now real winter and guard duties were always to do. One was a POW camp at Leonessa where the Germans had destroyed all the village as a penalty for helping the Allies.

Training still went on. I did a 'Crocodile' course: tank flame thrower, and also had four days in Rome. During April about forty drivers were taken on two lorries to move a vehicle park from Foggia to Rome airport. I had

I had palled up with A. Gregory, it was no use being on your own. As we travelled over the mountains we came to the snow. Twenty men on a three ton truck for any length of time is no joke, without the weather playing up as well.

We arrived at the vehicle park late at night and with only one blanket plus our overcoats; it was a relief to see daylight. There was a good breakfast made by the RASC boys. We were told to pick a truck and make our way back to Rome via Capua. Easier said than done. Half of the lorries would not start; so it was bonnets up and get the slave battery starter to it. My lorry was a Dodge three tonner, with a jeep on, and I had not gone far before I had to chock up the wheels and tie it down more. I did not know if Gregory was behind or in front, so I carried on to the transit camp at Capua. After a while I found him, and we parked up together and went, in turn, for some food.

The camp had no real guard and thieves were at their best. We decided to wait for daybreak and get along up the road and have a couple of hours in a safer place. We stopped just after Cassino. When the sun came out we were as free as the birds. It was here I realised that I would need petrol and a pint of oil so, at the next RASC sign, I pulled in, filled up and signed in the name of 145 RAC (he did not know that the unit had been disbanded).

At last we climbed above Rome to the airfield which was the new vehicle park, with hundreds there. "Just park over there" we were told. No checking. I think I could have sold that jeep if I had wanted to. It was now a case of waiting again. The transit camp was welcome to get washed and cleaned up. At last the Officer arrived. No one knew where he had been, but he asked for twenty volunteers to do another trip. Many of the young lads had had trouble on the way with break-downs and theft. Gregory and I rested a day and then began the journey back to Foggia. There was now only ten or so to a truck and the journey was not so far, which made it more enjoyable. When we got back to Foggia, it was as before but at another depot. I was given a Dodge water truck and it proved to be a non-starter. I think that most of them were. The battery leads and plugs needed cleaning and it was a good job I had one or two tools with me, as all the spare tools had been stolen.

I could feel after a couple of miles that this was a good one, with a five speed gear box. I could have cut hours off the journey if I had wanted to, but Gregory and I kept together this time and we had no trouble. Back at Rieti, the weather improved and we had four days' leave at a camp near Jesi; very nice. I learned from my mates that they had done all kinds of jobs after disbandment: infantry, bridge building, mine removal. No one knew what had become of the kit bags, which had been left with the rear-party. I lost my store of cigs and personal things. I suppose someone made a good killing and plenty of Lira.

It was August and the war in Italy was over now. It was with some surprise that my pal and I were vetted to be sent to an experimental unit in a factory near Ancona. This only lasted for three weeks before it was also disbanded. Whilst we were there, on our day off we thumbed a lift to the cemetery neat to Cattolica, where our mates had been buried.

Back again to Rieti for a short while, and on the move again to Greece to join 40 Regiment RTR. The journey across to Athens did not take very long and after one night in a transit camp we found ourselves members of A Squadron at Corinth on the canal.

About this time we were due for leave, LIAP I think it was called. We wondered if we would qualify as we were both 31 years old and so would be released soon. It was here I had one of the happiest times of all, I was lucky enough to get the water-truck job. I was my own boss, I had to go about four miles into the hills to a well, fill up with water, put in the sterilizer and deliver round to the cookhouse, Sergeants' and Officers' Messes and two private houses of English-speaking people. One was the school teacher who had helped the Allies in 1940, when all seemed lost. I had gathered together, by now, a few more souvenirs but did not take them when leave came around.

Away we went again - Athens, Taranto and then by train right through Italy, Switzerland and France - for twenty-eight days' leave. This was November and we were due back in Greece by December. The leave was very enjoyable but we still had to return, even though many were being de-mobbed in groups according to age and service. We were both Group 24. As we passed through Dover, we met some from the returning 23 Group. There were three or four of us and we asked at each transit office, but were told to carry on back to our units.

On our way we went through Milan and down to Taranto. Here the order came for Group 24 to stay put. We still had time to help to load stretcher cases on to the hospital ship. Christmas was not far away and we were all hoping we would not stay there. At last, papers came from somewhere and we boarded the train for Rome. Again, I was at the airfield; which was a bit busier now. I had a medical and was told we would fly home. Three times we expected to go, but the fog stopped all of the flights each time.

On almost the last trip, we boarded a train and arrived at Aldershot via Calais and Dover. From there we went on to Woking for a rather smart suit, raincoat and trilby. None of them fitted very well but I didn't care. So I was

on my final army journey at last, and arrived home on the day before Christmas Eve, 1944, just before all movement was stopped. One of my pals had to wait until the end of February because his unit had moved around so much.

I enjoyed my four years and five months in the army, mainly because I was not married. On looking back, I could easily have been a cook, a Sergeant in the infantry or I could have had that bullet through my napper.

1986

My wish came true in 1986 when, in May, I returned to Italy, this time for a holiday. I went by coach overland with Wallace Arnold Tours. Our hotel was the 'Princip' which is situated on the coast road, half way between Riccioni and Rimini. About four miles inland lies the area where the action took place, over forty years earlier. I recognised many land marks but the motorway now cuts right through. I visited the war cemetery at Corriano, where there are 2,000 graves with many regimental signs carved in the headstones. It was all very well kept. White marble in a green park. The Canadian section of about fifty graves is in the bottom left hand corner. I noticed one of a North American Indian Soldier with the feathers of his tribe; I suppose they are renewed each year.

Of my mates, seventeen of them are in the top right hand corner. Up in the village that Saturday afternoon, we got into a conversation with two young men aged about 20 years. They asked if we would like to see an album of war photos and brought it from a friend's house. The photos were actual shots of the action around there in 1944. We had a great holiday, made possible by a very good driver (Eddie) and courier (Eugene). We also visited San Marino and Venice.

1987

In December of 1987, the plane which crashed at St Eval was recovered; over forty years later.

1988

In May of 1988, I went again to Cornwall on holiday and once again saw some of the places I had spent time at. Carnanton house near Column Minor, St Mirren, Naval Air Field, Padstow and, once again, I walked on the quay at Mevagissey, saw the house where we stayed and the harbour mouth, where the steel net was lowered. The hotels in Newquay were not empty and boarded up as before. The coast line, now without barbed wire, and Bodmin Moor, now without fires.

A BOY'S LIFE IN THE ARMY

We continue China Gill's story from page 157 of Issue No 256

Back to Mandora Barracks, Aldershot. Life carried on as usual, but I cannot say a lot about military training. Being in the Band and Drums, most of our time was spent in the barrack room; the Band had a good practice billet away from the barrack blocks. Again, being Boys, we did no military training except for drill.

The RSM had his drill parades for an hour early mornings; the Adjutant had his parade once a week; all

the Battalion attended these and occasionally the Band and Drums would play. On these occasions, Boys would attend with their instruments.

However, it was getting to the time for all ranks to fire their annual course on rifle and Lewis Gun. Although Boys did not attend, one afternoon it was arranged for Sergeant Burgoyne to take about half of the Boys to the miniature range and fire five rounds each, using rifles.

He had us in line and ordered us to slope arms and was astonished at the orderly way we did so. He asked where we had learned it and we replied: "with sweeping brushes". This was true, although we had occasionally borrowed Corporal Goodwin's rifle. Sergeant Burgoyne was equally astonished when he saw the targets after the shoot; there were some good scores. Again, in reply to his inevitable question, we replied: "with a broom"!

This was the year (1931) the Dukes won the Army Rugby Cup. In the six matches the Dukes scored 202 points with nil against. Seven of the team played for the Army and Corporal Townend had a trial for the England team. The NCO i/c Boys, Corporal Goodwin, was the Battalion full back. Drummer Bentley was on the right wing, a hefty chap and very quick.

One day, the Adjutant, Captain R. H. D. Bolton, came to the Drums' practice room. The Drum Major singled out myself and Boy Killeen to play a march called "Gladiator's Farewell". I played the B Flat Flute, Killeen the F Flute, with the Bass Drummer (Boon) and a side drummer (Wilson). We played the whole march; as we had practised it often we did it very well. I thought this was just an unofficial test by the Adjutant, but a day or two later the Drum Major told Killeen and myself that we were to be made 'full' Drummers. I think the establishment was for about twenty Drummers and there were two vacancies. We had not heard of Boys being made Drummers, but it appeared in Part II Orders. We were told we would also receive 2d a day more; our daily rate would be 1s 2d (7p in today's money). He also told us that on training periods we would have to do all military training exercises, ie: Battalion, Brigade and Divisional training. Whilst on training we would be allowed to smoke (Boys were forbidden). As I did not smoke, I asked if I would be allowed to buy a beer, but, as it turned out, I did not get much opportunity.

The range course had now finished. Incidentally, all Privates had to qualify with a certain score to be paid 3d a day. When good shots had scored enough to qualify, it was not unknown for them to fire the last practice on the target of someone who did not have good eyesight, to help him qualify.

Killeen and myself were allocated to the Intelligence Section (which was always provided by Drummers). I think there were about six or eight and we were provided

with Army cycles. Boys were not issued with packs, so we just had our haversacks. We started off with short exercises with our Intelligence Officer, Lieutenant Franklin. Soon a young officer came to the Battalion, 2nd Lieutenant Skelsey, and he took over. He was very enthusiastic and gave us map reading training. One day he had us on the Basingstoke Canal and one of his lessons was finding the width of a river. He asked if anyone knew the answer. I had been taught geometry at school and, remembering the theorems, I said: "yes". He had me at the blackboard and I spoke about equal and opposite angles etc, but I finished off being confused about congruent triangles.

Then we went on longer exercises and I got to know all the training areas around Aldershot. I remember one near Pirbright when I had a puncture; I soon had the tyre off, but instead of finding a hole in the tube, I found a two-inch slit. As I looked at it, one of our Companies came marching by, some of the men smiling, with comments like: "It's quicker by marching". I could see that if I didn't want to walk all the way, there was only one thing to do; so I completely cut out the split portion and glued one end of the tube inside the other with rubber solution and pressed it together for ten minutes. My inner tube was now about three inches shorter than before, but I managed to get it over the wheel and then the outer tyre. After ten minutes I decided to pump it up and I rode off, caught up with the marching Company and, putting two fingers in the air, rejoined my section.

Previously I mentioned an old soldier, 'Spud' Waller, Boys' Dining Room Orderly. On these exercises I found out what he did. We never saw a tank in those days and the Anti-tank Section was represented by a green flag. Spud Waller was given the green flag and was positioned where the anti-tank gun would have been located. I saw him in position sometimes for three days, coming into HQ for meals.

Other members of the Intelligence Section were Boon, Browne, Brown, Wilson, Nobbs, Miles and a few others that sometimes joined the Section. I am writing now of life some seventy years ago and it is difficult to put events in their right order. I have just remembered that 2nd Lieutenant Skelsey came to the Regiment later, possibly in 1933 or 1934.

... to be continued

THE WARTIME MEMORIES OF JACK ROBINSON

We continue Jack Robinson's tale, which we left on page 158 of Issue No 256

It was now a very busy time at the end of August/beginning of September 1939, searchlights had to be put on the hills around Huddersfield. Equipment such as searchlights and generators had to be collected from Mob Stores at Pool and Robertown and taken to sites and manhandled over moors and fields.

Our first casualty was very early in the morning of 3 September, a despatch rider hit a wall and broke his ankle. Two of us went out to collect his bike; the parents of the chap I was with had a pub in Moldgreen, when we called in we were told that war had been declared.

We were in bell tents in a field on Leeds Road and all the chaps on the searchlight sites on the hills around Huddersfield were in tents. On the first night there was a false alarm, the air raid warnings were sounded, all the searchlights went up, we all put our gas masks on and went to the air-raid shelter (a trench dug in a field). We were in the shelter for about an hour before the all clear was sounded.

We in the repair section were kept very busy. The generators, lights, trucks, ration vans and officers' cars required a lot of attention.

In October I got promoted to Corporal, but the office found out that I was still drawing 10/- per day for my bike - they soon put a stop to that, which made a big difference to my pay.

The winter of 1939/40 was a very cold one, it was bad enough for us at Leeds Road, but worse for those on the sites. We had a lot of sick people. Sometimes the snow was so thick that the ration vans could not get to the sites so the rations had to be carried there. Another of our troubles was that in those days we did not have anti-freeze, which meant that most of the vehicles had to have the water drained off at night. The generators for the lights had to be frequently started, which was a difficult task as it took two men to start a Lister generator.

My brother Norman was still a despatch rider and having a rough time of it. His main task was to travel between the sites and HQ with the colour of the day. When our aircraft flew over they had to flash lights so that the A/A knew they were ours, but the trouble was that to stop the enemy finding out the colours of the lights, they were continually being changed. Every time there was a colour change, the despatch riders had to dash around to inform the sites. They had great difficulty in the snow and bad weather. Norman had so many accidents that the Major said it would be best if he gave up being a despatch rider and worked with me instead.

We had a site on Standedge. One night a despatch rider's bike broke down and, as a few of them were lifting the vehicle onto the back of a truck, a car ran into them; the Sergeant was killed and the despatch rider very badly injured.

One night, I and two others were working in the repair shop, when a Major came in and told us that the general alarm would be blown at 22.30hrs. He said everyone must be on parade with the exception of myself and two helpers who were to guard the camp. The Major had arranged a march with full marching order at 22.30hrs, we knew this would cause a flap because everyone had to be back in camp for 22.00hrs, but a few always came in late by the back way. As soon as the Major had gone, we went into the billets and got the kit ready for those who we knew would be late.

Eventually, they all marched out of camp with someone at the rear carrying a red lamp and leaving the three of us to guard the camp. They marched through Moldgreen, on to Waterloo, and, as they were going on the road to Fenay Bridge, a car ran into the back of them resulting in a few broken legs and arms! We did not have any more night marching, that was the first and the last. About this time I was promoted to Lance Sergeant and then to full Sergeant.

October 1940, I was testing the engine's compression with the starting handle when the driver switched it on. The engine backfired and the handle caught me in the stomach. I had to have an operation and spent four weeks in St Luke's Hospital. When I came out we were

very busy in the repair shop. Besides the army vehicles the unit had a lot of impressed vehicles, these were civilian vehicles that the army had bought and for use if the enemy paras were dropped. Each site had one, including HQ; they were usually in a bad state of repair and there were so many different makes.

By now my wife, Lillian, was expecting a baby in June 1941 and I started with a very sore throat, so I was sent to St Luke's again where they diagnosed diphtheria. I was transferred to Mill Hill Hospital where I had to stay for four weeks and, while I was there, our daughter Pat was born.

I came out of hospital and had a few days' sick leave, before I had soon to go back to my unit which was moving to Hull, as they were being bombed every night.

In Hull the searchlights were located by the docks and around the city. I was in HQ at a place called Halsham, near Withernsea. The bombing of Hull was very heavy and it was practically every night. It was a very sad sight to see people with young children coming out of the city to spend the night in the fields away from the bombs.

When a searchlight went out of repair we had to go and fix it; we had some very exciting times. One of the worst was when Ranks Flour Mill was hit - it was burning on both sides of the road and we had to go on that road. We discovered that the bridge by the mill had disappeared and we had great difficulty turning around in the road to find another way across the water.

After being in Hull for about two months I was sent to an assessment board to see if I was fit to be trained as a Staff Sergeant in the 'Ordnance'. They said I was and sent me on a three weeks' test at a place called Gopsall Hall, near Ashby de la Zouch. There were about sixty of us on this course and we were tested on the use of hand tools, maths and the taking down of notes. This is where the training at David Browns and the correspondence course came in useful. Thirteen of us passed and went on a three months' intensive course at Gopsall Hall. We did a different subject every week and on the Friday afternoon we had an exam. If you did not pass this weekly exam, you had to take the subject again. If you failed twice, you were sent back to your unit. Eleven of us finished the course.

We were then sent to Leicester for a two weeks' administration course and from there I was sent to Arborfield on a two months' tank course. While I was at Arborfield they started instructing on a new tank called the Churchill, I was very interested in this tank because it was fitted with a David brown gearbox. I took a lot of notes which stood me in good stead later on. When the course was finished I passed out as a Staff Sergeant Armament Artificer Armoured Fighting Vehicles (AFV) and it was now 27 July 1942.

... to be continued

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From: 7 Becksde
Carleton
Skipton
North Yorkshire
BD23 3ET
25 January 2005

From: Elms House
The Street
Swallowfield
Reading
Berkshire
RG7 1RE
26 January 2005

Editor, The Iron Duke

Dear Sir,

Although we spoke in Halifax last week, I want to record what a great mentor Bill Norman was to all members of our Regimental family. I hope my memories of Bill never fade.

I sent the Order of Service from Bill's Memorial Service to one of the Dukes' Bisley Team, a National Serviceman, Robert Maxwell Parker, who lives in Colne, Lancashire. Robert had the privilege of out-shooting Bill, Major Sam Robertson and Major Derek Wood to win the Ozanne and Cox Medals in about 1960/61.

He came straight over to call on me with a tear in his eye. Like all of us, he can only praise Bill Norman.

Yours sincerely,
Ernest Ramsbotham

From: Starbarrow
35 Church Avenue
Farnborough
Hampshire
GU14 7AT
1 February 2005

Editor, The Iron Duke

Dear Sir,

I would like to contribute to the comments which I am sure will be made about a much-respected Regimental figure, Bill Norman.

Having recently been on two fascinating Regimental trips to Italy, it was a great pleasure to have been in the group with Bill and able to talk to him about so many topics.

My main sadness is that I have now lost my classical music mentor. Years ago, in the Seventies, when the Battalion was based in Mons Barracks, Aldershot, Bill came to the house with John and found me listening to Bruckner's 4th Symphony. Since then, either in person when we met, or via letters to John, he sent me suggestions of pieces of music, or composers to be heard. Some works I knew, others were totally new, but it was always a joy to have his advice and hear his comments.

The last composer he recommended, as he left Anzio last October, was Prokofiev. My music library will grow much more slowly without his thoughtful guidance.

Thank you Bill.

Yours sincerely,
Judith Greenway

Editor, The Iron Duke

Dear Sir,

Since writing about Freemasonry in the Dukes ("The Iron Duke" - Autumn 2004, No 255), another prominent Duke Freemason has come to my notice. He was Lieutenant General Sir Herbert Belfield KCB, KCMG, KBE, DSO, who was Colonel of the Regiment from 2 August 1909 to 23 January 1934 and was responsible for the establishment of the Regimental Chapel in York Minster.

He first joined Aldershot Army and Navy Lodge, No 1971, while serving as a Captain in the Royal Munster Fusiliers (101st Foot) in the Garrison in 1891. He had previously been a member of the Lodge of St John and St Paul, No 349, which still meets at Valletta in Malta. He resigned when he set out on the Ashanti Expedition in 1895, but re-joined as a Colonel on returning to Aldershot in 1903. He remained a member until his death in April 1934.

Yours sincerely,
Roger Jago

From: regsec.rapc@virgin.net
To: rhq@dukesrhq.demon.co.uk

I have just accessed your website through my own, www.rapc.co.uk, of which I am Regimental Secretary, with no little interest. I was your Paymaster 1976-78, a period of time in which I DWR was the most "abused and put-upon" Battalion in BAOR, having moved from Mons Barracks, Aldershot, to Minden, then being sent down in company strength to the American Sector, intermingled with an Op Banner tour, during which time I was OC Waterloo Lines (very apt considering your distinguished associations) and a Medicine Man in Suffield.

I did Op Banner duties, while my Div 2 Clerk did Canada, allowing me to be in Minden for the birth of my second daughter, shortly before I departed for home and the next job at RPO, Leicester. For us, they were happy times, despite the workload, and my wife and I have happy memories.

Major Paul Bailey works here, on site, so to speak and I met Brigadier John Greenway, the CO when I arrived at the Battalion, on the car park here at Worthy Down not so long ago. (*Yes, and he had me at a disadvantage, because he was hiding behind a gingerish beard!* Ed.) I have met every Captain and above with whom I served at least once since leaving the Battalion, except Major Vernon Davies (O I/C Rugby), and may have been able to help Lieutenant Colonel Nick Borwell gain some Fijian SPS Clerks a couple of years ago, after

the Battalion had to "share" some of those you recruited with under-recruited battalions in the King's Division.

In particular, I have served in the same HQs as Colonels Charles Cumberlege, Peter Mellor, Peter Gardner, Johnnie Walker (now Brigadier of course) and Simon Newton. Lieutenant Colonel Peter Andrews worked down the road at Flowerdown until he retired (I think it was retirement, at least). I used to meet Major Charles Bunbury, until he finally retired as a RO last year, quite regularly, as we were both Regimental Secretaries affiliated to the Adjutant General's Corps.

Last, but not least, I took over the room Don and Gilly Palmer had occupied at a hotel in St Jorioz earlier the same day, when we were "activity holidaying" near Annecy, France, a few years ago. You undoubtedly may recognize my name, although I quite liked "Badger". That's it really. *(Note 1: Not sure why he chooses to remain anonymous, unless it's for the same reason he grew a beard, but Simon Mansdew is an anagram of his name! Note 2: Speaking of Charles Bunbury, our eyes and ears in East Anglia tell us that CNStPB featured on the BBC's Antiques Roadshow recently, but we prefer to say that a pair of ancient spectacles featured on the Show; CNStPB himself being far from antique. Ed.)*

From: 51 Bushey Hall Road
Watford
Herts, WD23 2EE
5 February 2005

Editor, The Iron Duke

Dear Sir,

The Winter 2004 issue of the Iron Duke, No 256, carries on page 161 a letter and photograph from F. Forbes (Bamfitt) relating to the 9th Battalion DWR/146 Regiment RAC* in Ahmednagar in 1945. These were of particular interest to me as I was 14988946 Trooper Fred Richardson in this unit at the same time.

My time started in May 1945, when I joined the unit after its return from an assault on Arakan. At that time a state of transition existed, with the long-serving members, who had been together for a number of years, returning to the UK and the numbers being made up with drafts of ex-Royal Navy and ex-Royal Air Force personnel.**

Some glimmers of memory were lit by the photograph - after sixty years it is only a few:

Front row: Captain (QM) Layton, a long-serving regular soldier, referred to by the soldiers as "Chirpy" Layton.

Lieutenant Colonel Hetherington (CO); information via Tom Harper is that the CO lived in the Channel Islands and Tom kept in contact with him until the Colonel died about four years ago.

Third row: Right of picture: extreme righthand officer is thought to be Lieutenant Gibson, Troop Officer of No 1 Troop, C Squadron, my Troop Officer. The officer next to him is thought to be Lieutenant Hankinson.

Back row: Lieutenant Heary - information was that he had been at Arnhem; it can be seen that he is wearing wings above his right breast pocket.

Many new officers joined the unit at this time, mostly as 2nd Lieutenants and were promoted rather rapidly to Lieutenants and Captains. It is thought this was under a scheme known as War Substantive, which allowed the lower rank to be firm, with the higher ranks being temporary or acting.

Further recollections are that the unit had American Grant tanks which were withdrawn and replaced with new American Sherman tanks. The plan was to convert them into "DD" tanks for wading ashore at the re-taking of Burma, by fitting them with canvas screens and propellers to enable them to be driven through water. The DD stood for Duplex Drive. However, this was overtaken by the dropping of the atomic bombs which ended the war.

For the amphibious role it was also necessary for all ranks to be able to swim. As I held swimming certificates, including life saving, I was given the task of teaching. However, my method of starting the non-swimmers in the shallow end of the baths was not thought speedy enough and, with me declining to make chaps jump in the deep end and see what happened, someone else was given the job. Fortunately, with the dropping of the atomic bombs neither method was put to the test.

When Japan surrendered, my recollection is that we were out on the ranges at Ahmednagar. We were brought back to camp, paraded and given our DWR insignia - effectively reverting to 9th DWR. Our tanks were withdrawn, replaced by Canadian GMC "Fox" armoured cars, and we were put on internal security duties, as this was the time that India was pressing for Home Rule.

Much happened between this time and when the unit was disbanded, which can be reported in another letter.

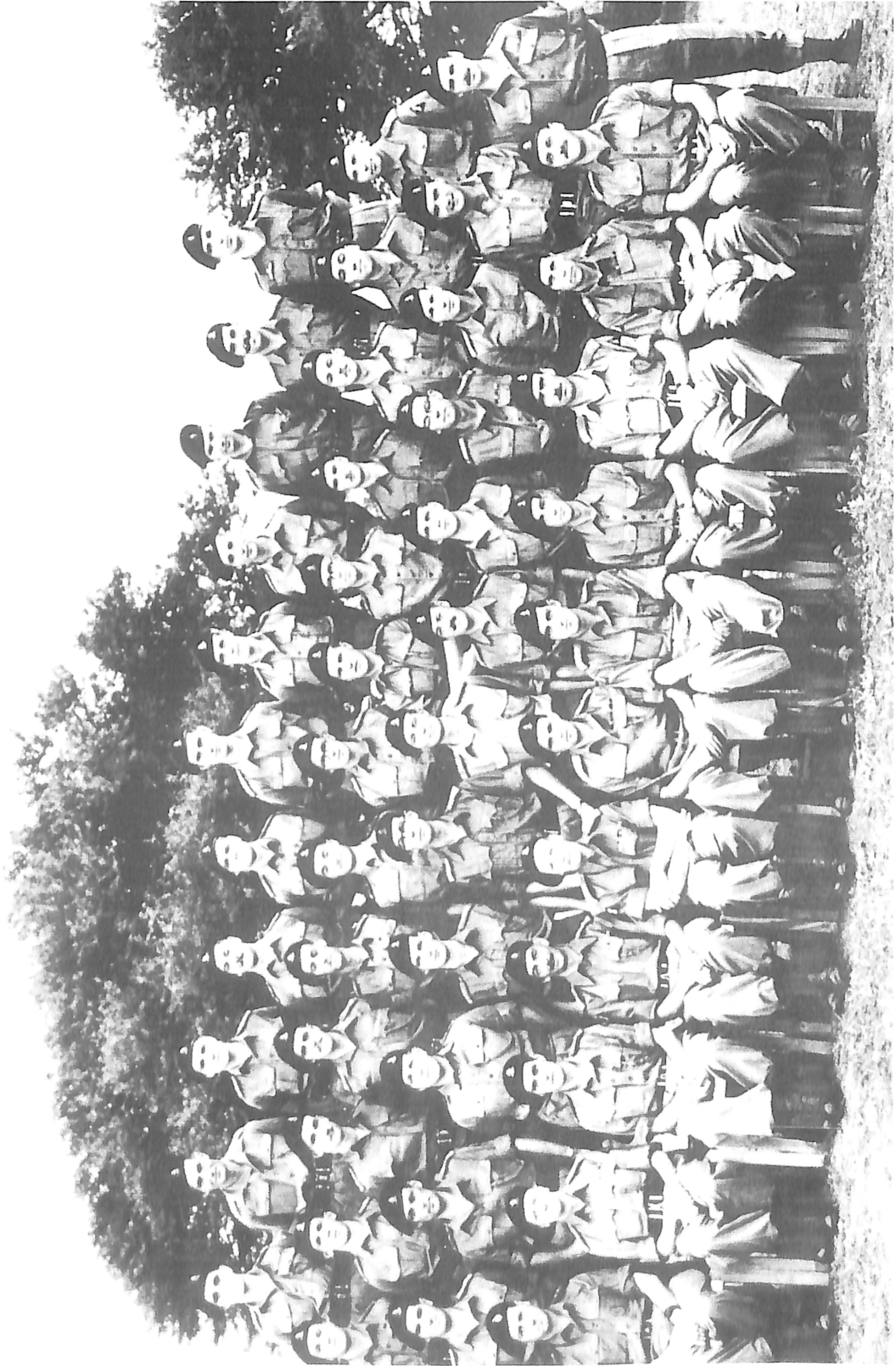
* The dual title came about by the Government realizing, early in the 1939-45 War, that the amount of armour should be increased and chose to convert infantry battalions, already formed, rather than start new armoured battalions. Each battalion was given a Royal Armoured Corps title; thus 8th Battalion DWR became 145 Regiment RAC, and 9th Battalion DWR became 146 Regiment RAC. Other infantry battalions were similarly re-titled.

** When our forces became established in Europe in 1944 the Royal Navy no longer needed to provide so many convoy escorts and other duties; the Royal Air Force transferred elements to the continent, reducing the numbers required; the Army needed larger numbers, so many of us suddenly found we were in the Army. I came into the Army after twelve months in the Royal Air Force.

Note: I have used the term "unit" to avoid confusion by at times using Battalion and at other times Regiment.

Yours sincerely,
Fred Richardson

We have reproduced the aforementioned photograph overleaf. Ed.



Officers of 9 DWR (146 Regiment RAC), Ahmednagar, August 1945.

Regimental Association

Patron: Brigadier His Grace The Duke of Wellington, KG, LVO, OBE, MC, BA, DL

President: Major General Sir Evelyn Webb-Carter, KCVO, OBE

General Secretary: Major R. Heron, Wellesley Park, Halifax, HX2 0BA.

BRANCHES

Halifax/Bradford: 8.00pm second Tuesday of each month at the Calderdale NALGO Social and Recreation Club, Northgate House, Halifax.

Secretary: Mr P. R. Taylor, 7 Amy Street, Ovenden, Halifax, HX3 5QB.

Huddersfield: 8.00pm last Friday of each month at WOs & Sgts Mess; TA Centre, St Paul's Street, Huddersfield.

Secretary: Mr J. Armitage, 23 Glenside Close, Edgerton, Huddersfield, HD3 3AP.

Keighley: 8.30pm last Thursday of each month at Pop & Pasty Public House, Bradford Road, Keighley.

Secretary: Mr C. W. Akrigg, 10 Eastfield Place, Sutton-in-Craven, Keighley, BD20 7EX.

London: 12 noon at the Union Jack Club on 19 June and 25 September (AGM).

Secretary: Mr K. Jagger, 26 Digby Road, Barking, Essex, IG11 9PU.

Mossley: 8.30pm first Wednesday of February, April, June, August, October and December at The Conservative Club, Mountain Street, Mossley.

Secretary: Mr G. Earnshaw, 32 Cawood Square, Brinnington, Stockport, Cheshire, SK5 8JS.

Sheffield: 8.00pm second Tuesday of each month at Sergeants' Mess, Endcliffe Hall, Sheffield.

Secretary: Mr P. Elwell, c/o Caretaker, Endcliffe Hall, Endcliffe Vale Road, Sheffield, S10 3AU.

Skipton: 8.00pm second Thursday of each month at The White Rose Club, Newmarket Street, Skipton.

Secretary: Mrs M. Bell, 39 Western Road, Skipton, BD23 2RU.

York: 8.00pm first Monday of each month at the Post Office Social Club, Marygate, York.

TERRITORIAL AND SERVICE BATTALIONS' OCA

5th Battalion. *Secretary:* Mr J. T. Payne, Flat 2, 24 Cambridge Road, Huddersfield, HD1 5BU.

9th Battalion (146 Regiment) RAC. *Secretary:* Mr T. Moore, 229 Rochester Road, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 4TW.

* * * * *

REGIMENTAL EVENTS 2005

As changing circumstances prevented the production of the normal Regimental Calendar, we repeat below the confirmed dates of events in 2005, which have been notified by letter:

Fri 6 May	Officers' Dinner, York
Sat 7 May	Regimental Service, York Minster
Sun 11 -	
Mon 19 Sept	Battlefield Tour, Tunisia
Sat 8 October	King's Division Normandy and Waterloo Bands' Concert in Huddersfield Town Hall
Sat 22 October	Reunion Dinner, Bradford <i>(Note: this is a change from the original planned date of 1 October)</i>

YORKSHIRE REGIMENT

We now know that The Yorkshire Regiment will not be formed before mid-2006.

VISIT TO GIBRALTAR, 17 - 24 MAY 2004

In May of 2004, I, along with other Dukes, plus members of other units who had served on the Rock in the last 300 years, were guests of the Gibraltar Government. All arrived at Luton Airport after travelling overnight from Manchester by coach. The flight was uneventful, with lunch served on board.

It is still a funny feeling landing in Gibraltar, with water at both ends of the runway. After being met by the Chief Minister, Hon P. R. Caruana, there was a photo call and press interviews for a few of the veterans. We met our guides for the week, Pat Murphy - a good Gib name, and Elka Azzopardi. We boarded the minibuses and headed for our hotel - the Gibraltar Retreat Centre. What a surprise when it turned out to be the old Sergeants' Mess at Lathbury Barracks, in which the Dukes stayed during their last tour of duty on the Rock. The barracks is now used to store vehicles for the UN.

There was no rest for the veterans, for in the evening there was a memorial service at the Cross of Sacrifice, which is close to the airport. An hour or so later we were dined by the Gibraltar Branch of the British Legion in a restaurant at the waterfront in the old dockyard.

The following day we visited the tourist sites including, Jews' Gate, St Michael's Cave and Upper Galleries. In the evening, dinner at Elliott Hotel, hosted by Gibraltar Tourist Board. Wednesday we had a visit to Trafalgar Cemetery and a walk round Casemates, which brought a lot of memories back to most of the Dukes party, for this was where their barracks rooms were. Then a tapas lunch in City Hall with the Mayor. Back to base and a quiet afternoon, before dinner with invited guests.

On Thursday 20 May our party went Dolphin Watching, but the weather was not too good, no dolphins but a look at the Rock from the sea. We also

visited Gibraltar Museum, which is quite small, but very good with plenty to see, and very informative. We dined at lunchtime as guests of the Gibraltar Regiment, in a restaurant on the waterfront.

Friday saw a visit to the Botanical Gardens, including a bust of the Duke, with a guide to tell us about the diverse range of plants. A ride to the top of the Rock in a cable car, visit the apes and lunch in a restaurant. In the evening a re-enactment of the Ceremony of the Keys by 'History Alive'.

Saturday was a break from eating and visiting so a little shopping was in order, with a look at the Gibraltar Classic Car Rally taking place at Casemates. This did fetch memories back; some of the Dukes who were stationed there could point out their barrack rooms, after getting located, for it is now full of small shops and cafes. Once again we were treated to lunch at the St Bernard's Club by the RBL Gibraltar Branch. I did not know you could get so many different fish on one plate.

On Sunday there was a church service for anyone who wished to go, then the highlight of the week was the march down Main Street, with the Keys Re-enactment group 'History Alive'. Tourists stopped to watch and applauded us, it made my chest swell with pride.



We had lunch in an Irish pub called the Clipper, and in the evening we dined at the Retreat Centre. Presentations were made to our guides, Pat and Elka, and the manager and his lady; speeches were made and a good night was had by all.

On Monday we had breakfast, finished packing and went down to the airport for the flight home. On a personal note it was a trip well worth taking and I saw

things around the Rock that I never seemed to find time to visit while we were there. The Retreat was a good place to stay, comfortable and clean, and the meals were good from breakfast to dinner. The visit did bring back memories, good and bad, but overall it was a great week, and I was glad I had the chance to go; plus there was no need to complain about the weather.

Gordon Bell
Skipton Branch

KEEPING IN TOUCH...

Communication

We are confident that, by the time you read this, the new Regimental Website will be up and running. We intend that the Website and this journal should be mutually supporting, sharing information as and when the editors see fit, as each medium will be contributing first hand information to our Regiment's lengthy history.

Monte Ceco

We are delighted to have received this photograph showing the Memorial on the summit of Monte Ceco, the unveiling of which was described for us on pp151 and 152 of our last edition by Major W. St M. Sheil.



Royal Navy 1. HMS Spartan

We have been glad to hear from Mr Geoff Smith, Secretary to Spartan Survivors, a party of whom visited Anzio in January to pay their respects at the Memorial to those of the ship's company who lost their lives when she was sunk on 29 January 1944. One shows eleven serving Royal Navy personnel attending the burial of the remains of two British soldiers in Anzio Beachhead

Cemetery, which had been found since our own similar ceremony in September; the other shows the HMS Spartan Memorial (high right) alongside our own, which we dedicated last September (see pp 120-123 of *Issue No 256*), with the President of the Anzio Beachhead Museum (*he was Mayor of Anzio in*

September 2004) beneath it, and Colonel Tom Huggan, who acted as interpreter for the Colonel in September at the rear. As in September 2004, the remains may, or may not, have been of Dukes' soldiers, but our 1st Battalion certainly fought over the area in which they were found.



Royal Navy 2

We were interested to read that it was **HMS Iron Duke**, returning from the Falklands, that saluted the courageous Ellen MacArthur as she headed south in the Atlantic in December 2004. The encounter will have given a great boost to her morale on her lonely, but ultimately record-breaking, solo voyage around the world.

Snippets - We have been pleased to hear from:

Douglas Emery DCM, BEM, aged 86 is a regular attendee at London Branch events and regular contributor to the Iron Duke. He has not been too fit lately, but is clearly still sparking on all cylinders.

George Wragg, aged 82, has been a regular contributor of articles to the Iron Duke. He has recovered from illness and has informed RHQ of his new address near Nottingham. George tells us that he joined the Dukes in November 1938, straight after his 17th birthday, from Stannington, near Sheffield. He wrote in strong terms (we have seen his letter) to five Sheffield MPs about the proposed changes to the Infantry. He received a polite reply from David Blunkett.

Michael Coatesworth, who served in Corunna Company in the Seventies and who is now a newspaper columnist in Bradford, has written a novel entitled "One tear is not enough", ISBN: 1-4137-1686-5. The book, he tells us, is an epic family saga spanning eighty years and is set against a panoramic background from England to India. It can be ordered from the publishers via WH Smith or Waterstone's. Michael has decided to donate all profits from the sale of his book to the Tsunami Appeal Fund, so do go out and order a copy, or visit his website at: <http://www.mikecoatesworth.co.uk>

Army Cup Final. On 2 March, your Editor, embedded with a posse of old codgers collecting for the Army Benevolent Fund, attended the Army Cup Final at Aldershot. He had an idea that he might be able to feed back a useful report to the 1st Battalion. It was a thunderous game, played out under floodlights in a snowstorm, between 1 R Scots, who turned out with three Jocks and twelve Fijians, and IRGBW who had five whites and ten Fijians. The tonnage of flying Fijians knocked lumps out of one another and IRGBW ran out winners by something like 31-21, it was hard to tell in the swirling snow. Luckily, your Editor is spared having to report in detail, because he was glad to find Captain Liam McCormick, from HQ London District, and Captain Andy Garner, from HQ Land, also on the touchline. Moreover, Majors Peter Cowell and Matt Stear were also there, playing for their Shrivenham Staff Course, who won the Minor Units' Final. So one of these younger observers will be able to provide a more valuable report than yours truly, who dates from the days of long shorts and only three points for a try.

Codgers. Incidentally, our five ABF old codgers ranged from 67 years and upwards, including one ex-RAF and one Ex-RN (who earned the Distinguished Service Cross at the Zeebrugge Raid); so nothing is ever quite what it seems. Since you ask: £250 was collected, mostly from the coachloads of uniformed IRGBW

supporters. 1 R Scots seemed to be supported only by a lone Piper and we couldn't prise his fingers from his chanter for long enough for him to dip into his sporran for us.

Chris Edwards. Chris will be remembered as a stalwart centre threequarter who played for the Dukes and for the Army in the Sixties. We hear from EJWW that Chris has for some years been based in Phuket, sailing, taking people on Wilderness Trips in the Indian Ocean and South China Sea and writing for the National Geographic Magazine. We are very glad to hear that he survived the tsunami, although, sadly, he and his wife lost many good friends from Thailand and the Sumatra, Andaman and Nicobar islands.

Anglesey. We are glad to hear that Major David Miller, erstwhile Assistant Regimental Secretary, and Bryant Fell, who has been a regular correspondent of late about his National Service days in the Fifties, both now living in Anglesey, have successfully undergone eye surgery recently. We wish them a full recovery.

London Group. This group continues to meet three or four times a year under the chairmanship of Simon Morgan (morgan33.76@btopenworld.com) and twenty or so ex-officers gather to sip something suitable, whilst making themselves available to other ex-Dukes who may be seeking job-opportunities. The last meeting took place in February in the King Henry VIII wine cellar in the MOD main building; the next will be on 29 June 2005.

Breathingspace. Alex Liddle and Richard Best attend the above group and are keen that all Dukes should be aware that Surfersworld has now merged with Breathingspace, so they look forward to: "seeing you in the surf, on a bike, up a mountain, in the snow, leaping off the cliffs, dangling in a cave, or perhaps just having a cold beer and enjoying some breathing space".

01271 890037, info@breathingspace.uk.com
or info@surfersworld.co.uk will find them.

Identifications. There has been a good response to our request for the names of those shown on parade in Hounslow on page 166 of our last edition. We took a helpful telephone call from the Guardroom at Belfast Barracks in Osnabrück and Sergeant Hill, 2i/c the Recce Platoon, offered left to right: Andy Duffy, Martin Lumber, Graham Summersgill, Paddy Buckingham, Stu Davidson, Eric Innis and Andy Williams. Alex Liddle (see above) agreed, but offered Wilson in place of Innis. Others have contacted RHQ direct. Our thanks to all. The next challenge is on the page opposite.

Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal. The RHQ team, working on the Regimental medal rolls, is trying to make a complete list of those in the 1st Battalion who were awarded this medal in 1977. The Commanding Officer, WO2 Parkinson, Corporal Waterhouse and Bandsman Barnes are known recipients; who were the other three? Names to RHQ please.

Dukes' Memorials. Dom Alberic Stacpoole (AJS) tells us that he had occasion to visit St Mary's Church, Hawnbly, near Helmsley, in November 2004 and discovered that a stained glass window, depicting

regimental badges, had been put in place by the Rev Hughes in 1918 to commemorate the death of his two sons in World War I in 1916 and 1917. They had been a Gunner and a Duke. Furthermore, in January, AJS visited a 12th century church at Holme-on-Spalding Moor and found a dozen RAF Commonwealth war graves. Standing separately is the war grave of a Duke: 135794 Private H. Harrison 29 October 1918 aged 36. He must have died within a fortnight of the end of the Great War. Buried next to him, on both sides, are other members of his family.

Dukes' Grace. We would be interested to hear if there are any other known Regimental Graces. The late Fred Huskisson regularly used the following:

For food that comes from land and sea,
For wine, the fruit of many a tree,
For Regiment number thirty-three
Give thanks to God and grateful be.

Correction. We are grateful to Tom Rothery for pointing out that, in our Obituary for David Borwell on page 112 of Issue No 255, Peter Guthrie, who was killed

at the Hook, was said to have been serving in D Company, when in fact he served in C Company.

UN Forces in Cyprus. Readers may like to be aware of a recent hardback publication by Pen & Sword Books Ltd; ISBN: 1 84415 0814 X; entitled 'A Business of Some Heat', by Brigadier Francis Henn, which covers the operations of the United Nations Force in Cyprus before and during the 1974 Turkish Invasion.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Mr P. C. Highe, Batley Hall Nursing Home, Old Hall Road, Batley, West Yorkshire, WF17 9AX.

Mr J. P. Simcock, 1 Blenheim Court, Blenheim Road, Clackton-on-Sea, Essex, CO15 1DW.

Mr E. Smith, 113 Albany Drive, Herne Bay, Kent, CT6 8SJ.

Miss M. Sumner, 18 Calderwood Close, Wrose, Shipley, West Yorkshire, BD18 1PZ.

Mr J. A. Weldon, Chessels, The Avenue, Guisborough, Cleveland, TS14 8DN.

NAMES TO RHQ PLEASE



Kenya 1994 - Sergeants' Mess Cocktail Party.

Obituaries

*We deeply regret to record the following deaths,
and on behalf of the Regiment offer our sincere sympathy to those bereaved*

Colonel G. S. Powell MC

Geoffrey Powell of the Green Howards, who died this January aged 90, will be well remembered by many of the older generations of Dukes as Brigade Colonel of the Yorkshire Brigade in the 1960s. A gallant soldier, who won the MC at Arnhem with the Parachute Regiment and of whom General Shan Hackett said was a "great fighting man in a great tradition, that of the company officer in a British county battalion of the line" had a rewarding career of some 25 years. Appointed brevet Lieutenant Colonel in 1955, he was given command of 11 KAR and, after his tour as Brigade Colonel, resigned from the army in 1962 and joined the Civil Service. He also became a distinguished military author, with several books to his name, including: 'Men at Arnhem', 'The Devil's Birthday' and 'Suez; the Double War'. These and other works ensured his election to be FRHistS. Above all, he was a kind and wise Brigade Colonel, who paid meticulous attention to the careers of all officers and senior warrant officers in the Brigade and, by his judicious posting policy, many of us had cause to be grateful to him. He had many friends in the Dukes.

D.E.I.

Bill Norman

Bill was a true child of the Regiment. He was born into the Regiment, enlisted into it at the age of 14, and last year we celebrated with him seventy years of service to it - a very special and unique achievement.

If you look at the front of your service sheet you will see two badges very familiar to all of us in the Regiment. On the left is the crest of the 1st Battalion and on the right that of the 2nd Battalion. Bill would be one of the very few to have fought in operations with both. But they also reflect his heritage. Bill's father was the Drum Major of the 2nd Battalion, which he joined in 1912 and he fought with them through the first two years of the 1st World War, not least at Mons and the Somme, until he was gassed and invalided out in 1916. After the war he re-enlisted and rejoined them in India in 1919 but his health never fully recovered and he retired on medical grounds in 1934 just as Bill, now a young 14 year old, was enlisting as a band boy in Sheffield, bringing with him from his father a lifelong passion for music. Bill's uncle also served in the Regiment, but with the 1st Battalion, where he was a renowned shot and bequeathed to the young Bill the other great passion that was to follow him through his life - rifle shooting.

The common thread between these two life interests, which have been the hallmark of all that Bill brought to everything he did, is that they are both serious pursuits requiring mental application, dedication and diligence - he was never one to let the grass grow under his feet.

After enlisting, Bill trained at the Regimental Depot in Halifax and was then posted as a young band boy to the 2nd Battalion, his father's old battalion, on the North

West Frontier of India. Then came the 2nd World War and Bill left the band to join the mortar platoon, a move that typified his service - as his great friend Walter Robins put it: "The only times Bill could be dragged away from his music and his rifles was war and its higher calls of duty", and war came on them faster than any of them expected and from an unexpected direction. In 1942 the Battalion was rushed from the deserts and mountains of the North West Frontier and the occasional exchange of shots with wily Afghans and Pathans across India by train and then boat to Burma, accompanied by a frantic re-quipping with more modern weapons enroute, to face a wholly different order of foe in the jungle.

His first major engagement was at the Sittang River where a hastily thrown together, outnumbered, British Force was trying to hold back the Japanese advance. It was a desperate battle and the start of the long retreat through Burma back to India. The 2nd Battalion was deployed, on the far side of the river, almost 1,000 yards across, when the British Commander decided he had to blow the bridge. In the highly confused fighting Bill managed to make his way back to the river, and then with a friend dropped their weapons in the water and, with a floating bamboo pole for support, swam for it. He made it; many others did not. But this was not the end of their fighting. Ahead of the Dukes and the residue of the British forces lay the long 1300 mile withdrawal from Rangoon to India fighting nearly all the way, under frequent air attack and the Japanese forces leap-frogging round them to set up road blocks, so they had to attack each of them to withdraw; with heat, dust, thirst and hunger their constant companions.

It is typical of Bill that the last article he wrote for this month's Regimental Magazine was to remind us of the unsuccessful citations for gallantry which, because of the nature of the difficult conditions, never achieved their due recognition. Bill himself, halfway through the withdrawal, broke his leg in an accident riding on a tank and was evacuated via a long ten-day boat trip up the Irrawaddy River to Mandalay and then flown out by Dakota to India.

Back in India, having spent eight years away from England, the maximum permissible 'tour' length, he was returned home to England. Once again in Sheffield, he was given what would have been to many a highly sought-after 'cushy' position with an officer cadet training unit. But it was not to Bill's liking. He was told he could not return to the 2nd Battalion, nor join the 1st - as they too were overseas, by then in North Africa, he heard that the Commandos were looking for recruits. Despite some considerable resistance he managed to secure an interview with their recruiting officer to be informed: "If you want to join us you are going to have to revert to Private". Bill was by then a Sergeant. He readily agreed and halved his pay for the privilege of doing his duty. But typically it was a decision he never questioned or resented.

He passed out top of his Commando Training Course, testament again to his fitness and commitment, and was awarded the prize of a commando dagger, of which he was always immensely proud. He served first with the Commandos in Albania in 1944 supporting the Partisans, and then in Italy, not least in the bitter battles in the north to dislodge the Germans at Lake Commachio and turn the eastern edge of the infamous Gothic Line.

After the war Bill returned to the Dukes, this time with the 7th TA Battalion who were part of the occupying forces in Germany. It was now that his shooting was able to come to the fore and he attended Bisley in 1947 for the first time. In later years he was six times in the Army Hundred, shot for the Army Eight in 1956, was third in the Army Championships that year - a fellow Duke was first, and many times represented the Army in full and small-bore competitions.

1951 found him back with the 1st Battalion in Germany where he met Margaret, who had seized the opportunity to travel by being a nanny with an Army Officer's family. War was again to interrupt his life, and his courtship, this time in Korea, and true to form Bill was most insistent that he should go. Again Bill was with the Mortar Platoon, though this time in their Observation Post - so he could see what was going on - is how he described it. He was once more to play his part in some of the most intense fighting of the war at the Battle of the Hook, where the Battalion held a key feature in the face of the heaviest shelling any British Army unit had seen since the 1st World War.

On return from Korea the Battalion went to Gibraltar and Bill at last was able to marry his Margaret and to follow a more peaceful Army life, commit himself to his shooting and music and in due course his two girls, Sally and Liz; though there were of course the interludes of emergency tours in Cyprus in 1956 and Kenya in 1960. Bill's final ten years in the Army were spent as a recruiter in Huddersfield and he retired in 1975 in the rank of Sergeant Major.

But this was not the end of his involvement with the Regiment. In 1985 his old friend Walter Robins was Regimental Secretary and asked him to take on the Regimental Archives which were in a dreadful state of neglect - an overwhelming collection of thousands of photographs, documents and diaries with very few records of what was what. Putting these into order was a huge task. Bill, with his usual dedication and commitment, started with one day a week and was soon working all seven, until Robbie slowed him down to two a week, and this is what he has done for the last twenty years, in between his host of other interests - music, shooting, travel and family.

And it is where over the last ten years as part of our Regimental Headquarters' team, I personally got to know him as a supremely loyal, dedicated, warm and compassionate man - always busy, but always able to find the time to do whatever was asked of him. Perhaps most valuable of all to us has been his encyclopaedic knowledge of names and events in all that the Regiment has done over the last seventy plus years. Bill hardly ever forgot a name, would remember the minutest of events, was a never-ending source of tales, all told with

his immense modesty and rarely about himself. This has been an invaluable asset especially in cataloguing the photographic collection - a photograph without names or places is of little value. It will be here perhaps that his greatest legacy to the Regiment lies. It is his labours and endeavours over that twenty years which have returned to the Regiment a detailed, lasting and useable record of its history. It is a timeless gift for which all of us in the Regiment will always be indebted to him and a testament to his seventy years' service to it.

Thank you Bill.

D.L.J.H.

Captain Steven Lancaster

Steven Lancaster, who had been unwell for some time, died, aged 76, on 4 October 2004, whilst on holiday in Spain. He joined the Dukes in Colchester in 1946 and completed his National Service, before taking up TA service with 673 LAA Regiment (DWR) and 383 Medium Regiment (DWR), moving in 1967 to The East Lancashire Regiment (V) and rising to RQMS. In 1975 he took over Skipton Detachment ACF in the rank of Captain. In 1990 he was a founder member of the Skipton Branch of the Regimental Association, which he supported until his demise. Throughout his life Steve was a shooting man, belonging to the Deer Society and to Keighley Pistol Club, shooting at the Drill Hall, Keighley and Leeds Service Rifle Club. He was also a founder member of the Dukes' Rifle and Pistol Club (Skipton Branch). He will be sorely missed, both as a comrade and as an expert adviser to new members. In civilian life he served as a Prison Officer at Leeds, Wakefield and Parkhurst prisons, later working at Rolls Royce, Barnoldswick, on the RB211; then becoming a civilian clerk with 4th Battalion East Lancashire Regiment (V), before retiring through ill health. He leaves his widow, Jean, three sons and four granddaughters.

E. Ramsbotham

Sergeant Harry Haldenby

Harry Haldenby died on Friday 7 January 2005, at the age of almost 92.

Harry first joined the Territorials in July 1932, the 4th Battalion of the Dukes, at Cleckheaton, near Huddersfield at the age of 19. In September 1934 he decided to join the Regular Army, without telling his parents (so he told me, more than once!) and reported for training to the Depot in Halifax. From May 1935 to February 1943 he was initially with the 1st Battalion in Malta, before joining the 2nd Battalion in India, where he remained for seven years and included a three year attachment to the Indian Army. In 1943 Harry returned to the UK and was posted to the 10th Battalion, then in Banbridge, Northern Ireland, before in 1944, being attached to the 2nd Battalion Essex Regiment and off on his travels again to NW Europe and Germany. Harry returned home in late 1946 and was transferred to the Reserves, but in 1950 he re-enlisted into the TA, this time the 7th Battalion at Elland where he served for the next two and a half years and then he transferred again, to the Royal Pioneer Corps. He was finally discharged in April 1960.

In summary, Harry served with the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 7th Battalions of the Dukes, the Indian Army, Essex Regiment and the Royal Pioneer Corps.

Following his service, Harry has been tremendously supportive of the Regimental Association. He was a member of the Halifax Branch and you always knew that Harry would attend any event associated with the Dukes. In our Tercentenary year, 2003, at the Dukes' Parade at Savile Park, Halifax, the crowd was amazed to see a young 89 year old Harry flying down the death slide! And of course, when the call came to support the Regiment at the 'Save the Dukes' Rally in Halifax last November, Harry was there.

Harry was also a member of that very unique association, the Huddersfield and District Army Veterans' Association, who, like members of the Dukes' Association, turned out in their numbers to say farewell to a very proud Duke at his funeral in Elland on Monday 17 January 2005.

Bob Heron

WO2 Colin Fleming

Ex-Company Sergeant Major Colin Fleming died on 25 February 2005. His obituary will be published in the Autumn edition.

Captain L. J. O'Sullivan

Pat O'Sullivan, who served in the 1st Battalion in World War 2, died on 25 February 2005. His obituary will be published in the Autumn edition.



Harry Haldenby taking part in the 'Save the Dukes' Rally a few weeks before his death..

RHQ has also been informed of the following recent deaths:

Colin Woodward, ex 1st Battalion, who served in Germany in the late 1970s, died on 11 February 2005.

Ron Ellis, ex 7th Battalion, died on 15 March 2005.



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49 Pall Mall, London, SW1Y 5JG. Telephone: 020 7321 2011 Fax: 08700 940795