

# THE IRON DUKE



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“James Huffam’s VC and miniature medals.”



“Marshall Foch, Generals Haig and Pershing in a model at the Imperial War Museum”.

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“James Huffam’s original miniatures, including the VC, was worn at Haucourt, Pas de Calais, worn by his grandson Mark, whose own son Robert was also present. Huffam’s actual medals were worn on parade by his son (Mark’s Father) at a ceremony in Dunblane, Scotland, on the same day. Stories inside”.

# 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*

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*Editor:*

Simon Morgan,  
9 Grange Farm, Grange Road, Tiptree, Essex, CO5 0QQ.  
Tel 01206 625375. mobile 07748 962350.  
E.mail: editorironduke@btinternet.com

*Business Manager:*

Major John Hogg, Regimental Association,  
The Duke of Wellington's Regiment (West Riding),  
Bankfield Museum, Boothtown Road, Halifax,  
West Yorkshire HX3 6HG.  
E.mail: dukesrhq@btconnect.com. Telephone 01422 356795

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# Editorial

## Change of Editor

There is a change of Editor. Simon Morgan takes over for the next, Spring 2019, edition and his contact details are on page 1, and a bit about him after the President's Column. If anything comes my way by mistake I will pass it on, but perhaps our readers could make a note of the new Editor's contacts and use them with immediate effect for anything to do with the Spring 2019 edition.

I have greatly enjoyed my twelve years in this chair. They have given me the opportunity to dig deep into our Regiment's history, and to feel in touch with what is going on. It is time for the privilege to be passed on. I have known Simon Morgan for a good long time and you could not be in better hands. Some details of his career appear later in this Journal.

## Hugh Le Messurier

This issue contains an obituary for Colonel Hugh Le Messurier. He was one of the great figures of the Regiment, giving over seventy years of service as a soldier and as a Retired Officer and was always a source of inspiration and advice. He landed in France shortly after D Day and fought through Europe, and was with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion in Korea.

Our obituaries are probably the most important part of this Journal, as the men who made the Regiment what it was pass away. From the lowest rank to the highest, all made a contribution to the Duke of Wellington's Regiment and we honour them for it. I hope that before long we will be able to access these brief insights into their lives and service online, to inspire us in our own lives.

## Victory!

On 23 August 1914 2 DWR stood behind the Mons-Condé Canal in Belgium, as ready as they could be to withstand the German onslaught. It had been a scramble to get there – the war had already started with the German invasion of Belgium on 4 August, and the French charging into Germany all along their shared frontier, only to be quickly knocked back – and the final position was changed quite late in the day when it was realised that the threat would come from the north through Belgium, not over the Franco-German border to the east. On 11 November 1918 that same battalion, which had rarely if ever been out of range of the German guns for four and a half years, had reach Presau, near Valenciennes, only about twenty miles from where it all started.

The cost of victory was terrible. Since 2014, I have

visited I don't know how many Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) cemeteries in France and Belgium, and walked along row upon row of headstones, or stood reading the lists upon the walls of the men who had no known grave and who were literally erased from the face of the earth.

"They went with songs to the battle; they were young, straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow. They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted, They fell with their faces to the foe".

The West Riding from which the Dukes drew their men in 1914 was not large. It sat, as of course it does now, in the sweep of the South Pennine Hills, with mills in the valleys and sheep up on the high ground. When called upon it offered its young men generously, to create eight territorial force battalions and five service battalions to add to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion regulars, all of those serving on the Western Front, and other battalions for home duties and to supply men to replace those who were casualties of war.

Men poured out of Yorkshire as a whole for the conflict. Whereas our men in CWGC cemeteries in France and Belgium total 7420, those of the West Yorkshires, for example, total 16224, drawing of course on a much larger population in their recruiting area and having more battalions of all kinds. The White Horse of Hanover badge appears alongside the Dukes' crest in many a cemetery.



*"The headstone of CSM Jones DCM is flanked by those of two men of the West Yorkshires at Marfaux, in the Montagne de Rheims region, Marne Department."*

Was it all worth it? History seems unable to make up its mind. It is perhaps enough for us to remember what all those men, those who died and those who survived and came home to a drained and seemingly uncaring nation, went through, and honour them for it. This year Remembrance Sunday has a special meaning: to celebrate what was achieved and not just to remember

those who were lost. After four and a half years of struggle against a formidable and determined enemy, a great victory was won. We will not forget our dead, but across the nation we will also be celebrating the end of that terrible war with church bells, and music and songs, and beacon-lighting and fireworks and a few other things besides.

## The President's Column



**Brigadier Andrew Meek CBE**

The history of the Regiment over the course of the First World War has been excellently covered in The Iron Duke over the past four years thanks to the splendid work of our editor and thus I do not intend to repeat any of it here. However the experiences of 5 DWR in September 1918 were brought into sharp focus at an event in Leamington Spa at which a memorial plaque to Private Tandy VC was unveiled. This ceremony was one of many across the country organised by local councils to mark and honour individuals awarded the Victoria Cross during the Great War. Whilst not gaining much national attention, these ceremonies have been an inspired way of honouring those whose bravery resulted in them being awarded the nation's highest award for valour and in a way that should ensure their individual actions are not lost to future generations. Many readers will know Private Tandy's history but for those who do not, his is a most remarkable story that resulted in him being the most highly decorated private soldier of the War. Like all these

events, the one in Leamington Spa brought together members of the Regimental Association, local dignitaries and family members in a short but most effective ceremony.

One of the sad realities of our Association is that our numbers will never increase and this salutary fact was brought into focus recently with the sad news of the death of Lieutenant Colonel Hugh Le Mesurier whose obituary appears elsewhere in this edition. His career with The Dukes started prior to the start of the Second World War and throughout his long life he was a great supporter of the Regiment. He will be sadly missed by all of us who had the privilege of knowing him.

Whilst the Association numbers might not increase, there continues to be a healthy level of activities organised across the year. However I have felt for some that in order to sustain all of this into the future the Branches and the wider membership needs to become involved with the running of the Association as a whole not least so that the views of our members can be heard and taken into account. It is with this in mind that I am establishing an Association Board specifically aimed at achieving this. The first meeting of this body will be held in late November. Although social gatherings form the main activities of the Association, there are always calls for us to be formally represented at events by our Standard Bearers. These are important occasions as they offer us the opportunity, in a formal setting, to remind a much wider audience of our existence. We currently have a small band of volunteers who undertake these duties (and do so extremely well) but as ever we would like to have a few more so that all the requests we receive can be met. John Hogg is coordinating this work and I am most grateful to him for all he is doing to increase numbers.

The project for the Memorial to the Regiment continues apace and as I write the actual piece is over half way to completion. Although I am of course biased, I have to say that from all I have seen we will have the most remarkable Memorial, one that will reflect the full history of the Regiment and at the same time be a work

of art in its own right. We have set a date for the unveiling in Halifax next year, Friday 17 May and I have no doubt that the day will be a major Regimental gathering in the very heart of our home town. I look forward to seeing many old friends on the day. Full details of the day will be published as soon as they have been agreed with Calderdale Council but in outline the intention is for the Duke of Wellington to unveil the Memorial in the late morning after which there will be a Regimental lunch in the Piece Hall.

My final point is a sincere message of thanks to our editor, Tim Nicholson, who has decided that the time has come to pass on the baton and allow a new person to take over the reins. I know that in thanking Tim for all his work over many years, I am saying so on behalf of the whole of the readership of the Iron Duke as well as everyone in the Association. The magazine is in so many ways a physical reminder to us all of the Regiment and its history. Tim's work in this respect has been second to none in particular his record of the Regiment through the Great War which required significant research and travel in order to ensure that all aspects were covered so brilliantly. As many of you will already know, Simon Morgan has agreed to take on the role, thus the next edition will be his first. And in continuing to support the publication of the magazine, the Trustees are acknowledging how important the publication is to us all.

### **Simon Morgan – Our new Editor.**

“Simon Morgan was commissioned into the ‘Dukes’ in September 1976 and spent the first two years of his service as a University Cadet at Oxford.

He joined the First Battalion in Minden in February 1979 and became OC 7 Platoon. He remained with Corunna Company until April 1981 when he was made



**Simon Morgan**

Regimental Signals Officer.

He left the First Battalion in Gibraltar in December 1983 and did not return until taking over Somme Company in Belfast in December 1987, by which time he had attended Staff College and got married to Sally.

In 1989 he was sent to Belize as Chief of Staff to British Forces Belize and his last posting before he took Phase 2 Voluntary Redundancy was as the Training Major of 5/8 Kings.

On leaving the Army he requalified as a solicitor, a profession he still, more or less, continues to practice whilst trying to leave time to indulge in his first love of writing. Simon's email address is [EditorIronDuke@btinternet.com](mailto:EditorIronDuke@btinternet.com) should any reader wish to contact him. He becomes editor after the publication of this issue, No. 285.

## **Dukes News Round-Up**

This edition of the Iron Duke is, not surprisingly, dominated by articles about the Great War. Some news items are in this section, and descriptions of the actions of our battalions appear, as usual, under the general heading of “The Dukes in the Great War”.

### **UNVEILING OF COMMEMORATIVE PAVING STONES TO HONOUR MEMBERS OF THE REGIMENT AWARDED THE VICTORIA CROSS IN WORLD WAR 1**

As part of the National programme to mark the centenary of the 1st World War, commemorative paving stones are being laid in the place of birth of all those awarded the Victoria Cross. Three stones have been laid

since the last issue of the Iron Duke each of which was unveiled on the centenary of the action for which they were awarded the VC.

### **Pte Arthur Poulter VC - 10<sup>th</sup> April at East Witton, North Yorkshire**

Arthur Poulter was born in East Witton in December 1893. Arthur was one of 11 children, 7 brothers and 4 sisters. He left school at 14 to work as a farm labourer like his father. In 1912 the whole family left East Witton for Leeds probably for the better employment opportunities to be found in a large city. There Arthur found work as a drayman for Timothy Taylors Breweries in Keighley.



**Arthur Poulter**

War broke out in 1914 and Arthur first applied to join the Royal Navy. However a minor dental issue proved a problem and in March 1916 he enlisted instead into his local regiment, the Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment. Notably his six brothers also joined the Army and all survived the war. It was in 1916 that he married Ada Briggs from Hunsley in Leeds. The prospect of him going to fight would surely have lent urgency to their decision to marry.

After completing his basic training Arthur joined the 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Dukes. The 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> were the Regiment's TA Battalion for Halifax and Keighley. It was with them that he took part in some of the heaviest fighting of the war including the Somme in September 1916, and Passchendaele in 1917 serving as a regimental stretcher bearer - a singularly dangerous job. It was the stretcher bearers who braved the machine gun and shell fire to go out and rescue injured colleagues and carry them to dressing stations at the rear where they would receive medical attention. Carrying wounded colleagues they were slower moving and often exposed making them easy targets on the battlefield. They needed to be especially brave, strong men. After the war he credited the time he had spent as a Timothy Taylor's drayman for building in him that physical strength.

In the spring of 1918 the German Army launched its last great offensive of the war seeking to seize the brief window of opportunity that lay between the capitulation of the Russians and with this the release of the German forces from the eastern front and the imminent arrival of forces from the United States who had just joined the war.

As part of the spring offensive, an assault was launched on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April in the Lys valley an area held by an under strength Portuguese division. Against overwhelming odds the Portuguese division quickly

collapsed. The 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Battalion were rushed in to plug a serious breach in the line at Erquinghem Lys. The 144 men of C Company, Arthur's company, were ordered to hold the outskirts of the village. It was flat open countryside raked by machine gun fire.

They arrived just in time to secure their position. But as the day wore on, heavily outnumbered and with the units on either side moving back, they too started to withdraw but this time in an orderly way. It was all achieved at a great cost but one that would have been much greater had it not been for Arthur Poulter's actions, to quote the Battalion history:

"... The rest of the company was suffering appalling casualties. The number of casualties were soon far greater than the company stretcher bearers could deal with. It was then that Private Poulter earned the highest decoration that a soldier can be awarded – the Victoria Cross. Hour after hour he toiled, in the greatest danger, tending to the wounded and carrying them to safety."

His Company Sergeant Major later wrote "Poulter automatically took charge of the stretcher bearers both regular and temporary and attended to a considerable number of wounded out in the open and brought several of them in to cover, and returned under fire and in full view of the enemy many times to bring in the wounded, carrying some and leading others who could walk; he was splendid and must have had a charmed life for most of the day. I think the culminating point was when he attended Lt Mackie who had his eye shot away; Unfortunately Poulter did it once too often and was himself seriously wounded."



**Katy Harrison, great-granddaughter of Arthur Poulter together with the Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire, Chairlady of Richmond District Council, Commander Catterick Garrison and Regimental Branch Standards in front of the East Witton War Memorial and the commemorative Paving Stone**

C Company that day went in with five officers and 139 men and came out with just one officer and nine other ranks all the remainder having been killed or wounded one of whom was Arthur.

Recovering in hospital afterwards Arthur in a letter to his wife made little of his injuries writing in the understated style of a true Yorkshireman:

Dear wife,

I expect you will know I am wounded by now but you will be wondering where I am hit. Well I am blind of my left eye but it will be all right in a week or so. I have had three stitches put in neck and three in cheek. When you write home you can tell mother to write and tell Rhoda and give her my address as I don't feel like writing myself at present. Well I do not think I shall get back to England, but I shall not get back to fighting in a month or two. Well I hope you are all keeping well and as for myself I am just middling but hope to be all right soon. Well I am not in much writing form, so now I will close.

From your husband,  
Arthur

Arthur was discharged from the Army as a result of his wounds. He finally arrived home in October that year and on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1918 he was invested with the Victoria Cross by King George V at Buckingham Palace.

After the war he worked first for a tailoring company in Leeds and then on the trams. He and Ada had a large family of 13 though sadly 3 children died in their infancy. Tragically Arthur was seriously injured in an accident when he was hit by a speeding car and spent the last of his days confined to the back room of his house as he was unable to get up the stairs. Arthur died aged 62 in September 1956 and was buried alongside his eldest son Arthur. Arthur, his son, had been deployed at the beginning of WW2 with the British Expeditionary Force. His entire battalion was captured while providing a rearguard for the evacuation at Dunkirk. He died in 1947 as a direct result of the privations he had suffered through 5 years as a prisoner of war.

### **Lt James Huffam VC – 31<sup>st</sup> August at Dunblane, Scotland**

(In the next article in the Journal "France Remembers" a report on the French version of this commemorative event will be found - Editor.)

James Huffam was born in Dunblane on 31 March 1897. He was the fourth son of the six children of Edward and Dorothy Huffam of Spittal, Berwick-on-Tweed. Edward was an Army Pensioner (Royal Highlanders) and High Bailiff. James was educated at Spittal Council



**2LT James Huffam VC**

School near Berwick-on-Tweed.

On 21<sup>st</sup> February 1915, just short of his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, he joined the 1/7th Northumberland Fusiliers as a volunteer and served with them in France for two years rising to the rank of Sergeant. He was then selected for commissioning. After going through the Officer Training Corps he was commissioned in January 1918 into the 5th Battalion the Duke of Wellington's Regiment. He was then attached to the Regiment's 2nd Battalion serving in France.

In the spring of 1918 the German Army launched its last major offensive of WW1 pushing back the Allies deep into France. By July 1918, the offensive had been contained. In August 1918 the Allies, bolstered by the arrival of the United States forces into the war, counterattacked. The counterattack, later to become known as 'the last hundred days', recaptured all the ground lost in the offensive and broke the German defensive Hindenburg line. This in turn led to the



*Robert Huffam by the Paving Stone placed in Dunblane to commemorate his Father James Huffam VC. He is with the Provost of Stirling Council and his granddaughter Olivia, daughter Louise, grandson James and his wife Nancy. Robert served as an officer in the Regiment in the 1950s.*



collapse of the German Army and the final Armistice in November 1918.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion was part of the forces in the Allies' counter-attack. The 'Dukes' were in the 4<sup>th</sup> British Division attached to the Canadian Corps at the centre of the counterattack. The battalion, advancing with its right flank on the Arras-Cambrai road and in heavy fighting, captured Haucourt on 29<sup>th</sup> August. The Battalion then continued its advance while the Germans withdrew eastwards to establish a line running through St. Servin's Farm. From there the German forces brought the 'Dukes' to a halt with sweeping machine gun fire which severely depleted their ranks as they attempted to cross the flat crest line approaching the farm. It was during this fierce fighting that Lt Huffam, with three men, rushed a machine gun post and put it out of action before having to withdraw back to his own lines carrying a wounded comrade. That night, under the cover of darkness, the attack was renewed. Taken by surprise the German forward posts were quickly captured. The 'Dukes' could now move on to assault the main positions. This was done in confused, hectic fighting in pitch darkness guided mainly by the flashes of machine gun and rifle fire. It was during this fighting that Lt Huffam once more seized the initiative, by rushing forward with two men to capture a key machine gun post together with eight enemy soldiers. With the machine gun post disabled the 'Dukes' quickly moved forward to infiltrate the German position, capture the remaining posts and secure the line of St. Servin's Farm.

For his actions in the fighting at St. Servin's Farm Lt Huffam was awarded the Victoria Cross. The Victoria Cross is the highest award in the British Armed Forces for gallantry "in the face of the enemy".

After the war he served for a brief period in India. On returning to England he was seconded to the RAF for four years, becoming a pilot. Following this he rejoined the 1st Battalion before being seconded to the West African Frontier Force, with whom he served for six years.

In October 1933 he returned to the 1st Battalion serving with them in Aldershot and Malta. It was while he was in Malta that he married Constance Marion Huffam. In October 1936, he was posted to the 2nd Battalion in India, with whom he served until 1938 when he returned to England to retire and take up the appointment as Civilian Adjutant at RAF Dishforth.

When the second war broke out he was recalled to the Army and went with the British Expeditionary Force to France as Deputy Assistant Provost Marshal to a HQ Med Base Sub Area. He was evacuated to England with

the BEF. He spent the remainder of the war in England in the Provost Corps, finishing as Assistant Provost Marshal, HQ 55 Division. After his retirement he was employed as an Army Recruiting Officer at St Albans.

He retired for the second time in 1945 and died at Burnt Oak in Middlesex on 16<sup>th</sup> February 1968.



**Robert Huffam with Dukes Dave Wooley, Derek Parkinson, Brian Searson, Andrew Drake and John Hogg**

#### **Pte Henry Tandey VC DCM MM – 23<sup>rd</sup> September at Leamington Spa, Warwickshire**

Henry Tandey was born in Leamington Spa, Warwickshire in August 1891. Just before his 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, in 1910, he enlisted into the Green Howards, and served in Guernsey and South Africa. Soon after the outbreak of war, he fought at Ypres and is featured in a painting well known in Green Howards history depicting the Menin Crossroads. In 1916 he was wounded during the Battle of the Somme. He was wounded again the following year at Passchendaele. On recovery he was posted back to France in March 1918 to join the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion the Green Howards. But they were to be soon disbanded, alongside the rest of its division, to provide reinforcements for other units and in July 1918 he was transferred to the 5th Battalion the Duke of Wellington's Regiment.

July 1918 was a critical moment of the war when the tide of battle was turning. In the spring of 1918 the German Army had launched its last major offensive of WW1 pushing back the Allies deep into France. By July the offensive had been contained. That August the Allies, bolstered by the arrival of the United States forces into the war, counterattacked. The counterattack, later to become known as 'the last hundred days', recaptured all the ground that had been lost and drove on to break the German defensive Hindenburg line. This in turn led to the collapse of the German Army and the final Armistice in November 1918.

It was in those heady months of that final offensive that Henry Tandey, in the space of just five weeks, was to earn the Distinguished Conduct Medal, the Military Medal and finally the Victoria Cross to make him the British Army's most highly decorated private soldier of the war.



**A Regimental contingent at the ceremony in Leamington Spa to unveil the Paving Stone to commemorate Private Henry Tandey's award of the VC. The Paving Stone was unveiled by Mr Chris Gordon, Henry's great nephew, centre of picture immediately beside the paving stone. Brigadier Andrew Meek, President of the Association, is fourth from left**

The 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Dukes was part of 62<sup>nd</sup> (West Riding) Division who were an integral part of that final 'hundred days'. When he arrived with the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion Tandey had been through almost four years of hard combat. He brought with him two invaluable qualities - the experience to read intense fighting at close quarters and to recognise those slivers of opportunity which could turn the tide of battle and, more importantly, the immense courage, initiative and daring to seize those opportunities. You can see this in the stories of the three actions for which he earned his medals.

On 25<sup>th</sup> August 1918 during an attack on a German trench system the leading bombing parties, teams of about 9 men tasked with using hand grenades to attack trench systems, had ground to a halt. Tandey, in a reserve bombing party, took the initiative and taking two others with him they crawled round the flank to get behind the enemy machine gun that was holding them up and attack it from the rear. They destroyed the machine gun post and captured alongside this 20 prisoners. This allowed the whole trench system to then be taken. For this he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Ten days later in the battle for the village of

Havringcourt he went out into 'no man's land', the gap between the opposing forces, under heavy shell fire to bring back a wounded soldier before immediately returning to help three more wounded soldiers. The following day as the attack continued he volunteered to lead a bombing party to attack and capture a machine gun post. Once the post had been secured his small party beat off a vigorous counter attack to hold the position. For this he was awarded the Military Medal.

Finally on the 28<sup>th</sup> September when the battalion was tasked with capturing the village of Marcoing and securing a crossing over the canal that lay beyond the village Henry Tandey once again played a critical part. It is perhaps best told in the words of a fellow private soldier who fought alongside him:



**Private Henry Tandey VC DCM MM**

"During the taking of the crossing over the canal at Marcoing, I was No 1 of the Lewis gun team of my platoon. I witnessed the whole gallantry of Private Tandey throughout the day. Under intensely heavy fire he crawled forward in the village where we were being held up by the enemy machine gun and found where it was. He then led myself and comrades with our gun into a house from where we were able to bring our Lewis gun fire onto the enemy machine gun and knock it out of action. Later when we got to the canal crossings and the



*The photograph is reproduced by courtesy of The Times*

**E. Tandy (left) and Major J. P. Huffam (right) seen with two other holders of the V.C., Brigadier Roupell and Captain White, at St. Martin-in-the-Fields for a service of Remembrance and Rededication for members of the Victoria Cross and George Cross Association**

**A photograph from the Iron Duke of October 1966, showing Henry Tandy and James Huffam together at a service for members of the Victoria Cross and George Cross holders**

bridge was down, Private Tandy, under the fiercest aimed machine gun fire, went forward and replaced planks over the bad part of the bridge to enable us all to cross without delay. On the same evening when we made another attack we were completely surrounded by a huge number of Germans and we thought the position might be lost. Private Tandy, though he was twice wounded very nastily, took the leading part in our bayonet charge on the enemy to get clear. Though completely faint he refused to leave us until we had completely finished our job, collected our prisoners and restored the line”.

That bayonet charge consisted of just eight men and resulted in the capture of 37 prisoners. He later led a further bombing party to capture another 20 prisoners. For his actions on that day Henry was awarded the Victoria Cross. He received his medal from King George V at Buckingham Palace on 17<sup>th</sup> December 1919.

After the war he continued to serve with the Dukes initially with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion in the Regiment’s Home

Depot in Halifax employed on recruiting duties and where he was promoted to Lance Corporal. In 1921 he was posted to the 2nd Battalion, an operational battalion. By this time he had clearly decided promotion was not for him and on arrival in the battalion immediately asked to revert to the ranks. With the battalion he served in Gibraltar, Turkey and Egypt until he was finally discharged in 1925. He then returned to his home town Leamington Spa where he remained for the rest of his life working for 38 years as Commissionaire with the Standard Motor Company.

He died in December 1977 aged 86. His funeral and cremation were in Coventry and his ashes were taken by his nephew Harry Gordon and old friend Cecil Beacon to be interred at Masnieres British Cemetery in Marcoing near where he had won his Victoria Cross, to lie alongside those of his comrades who had lost their lives in the fighting there almost 60 years earlier.

## PAS DE CALAIS REMEMBERS

A report by the Editor

I was fortunate enough to be asked to be the Regimental Representative to attend a ceremony in Haucourt – a middle sized village just off the main road (D939) from Arras to Cambrai – to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the action of Second Lieutenant Huffam, whose courage earned him the Victoria Cross. It was one of several such ceremonies to be held that day.

The commune of half a dozen villages had got together, beginning their planning two or three years ago, to organise events in each. A Canadian Corps captured these villages, and 2 DWR was under their command at the time. The individuals honoured had received the VC, or in one case the MC, in action on this day 100 years ago. Plaques, with an explanatory accompanying board, were unveiled, and flowers in great profusion were laid beside them.

To understand the depth and sincerity of the commitment by the French to these ceremonies, we should note that the D939, a very busy road, was closed for several hours on both Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> and Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> September; the Prefets (the French State's chief representative in a Department or Region, reporting to the Minister of the Interior) of two Departments attended, with seven or eight local mayors and representatives of various regional organisations, and, on the Sunday, of the Canadian and German Embassies; a good turnout of local people followed the progression from one village to another, along with a small detachment from the French Army, a dozen or more people in various uniforms – police, fire brigade, local service units - standard bearers from the French equivalent of the Royal British Legion, and trade organisations. In addition, a piper and several members of the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa were very much engaged in the day.

The day began with the naming of the main road (a section of the D939) into Vis en Artois “Voie Sacrée du Canada”, or “Canada's Highway of Heroes”. Next, in that village at the war memorial we remembered Private Claude Nunney VC DCM MM, the last two decorations earned at Vimy Ridge, of the Canadian Army but born in Hastings, Kent.

His Mother died in London and the family scattered and Nunney, with three of his siblings, was sent to Canada under the care of the Catholic Church. At the time of the action that won him the VC he was nominally under arrest for some major disciplinary breach but in the middle of a battle a soldier of such proven courage is hardly likely to have been locked away, and during the battle whilst under heavy fire he was well to the fore and



**On the D939 outside Vis en Artois the crowded assemblies, and the sign is unveiled**



went amongst his colleagues, leading by example and encouraging all near him. He died of his wounds 16 days later.

Then on to the Vis en Artois/Haucourt CWGC, a large cemetery containing 2369 burials and listed names; there are 55 Dukes buried there, and another 150 named on the stone walls. Here I was invited to give a short speech, (in what was generously described as “very good French” by our hosts!) about the Dukes in the Great War and lay a wreath to all those who fell 1914 – 1918.

Very much part of this was Julian Morely whose grandfather, Private Frank White, was with Huffam in these attacks on that day 100 years ago. Julian, in his address, also named Second Lieutenant Harris Anson and the other men who were killed here in the action. In his speech Julian described the events of that day, in both French and English.

We then went to Haucourt, a mile or so away only, to honour Second Lieutenant James Huffam of 2 DWR who captured St Sevrin's Farm, just outside the village, demonstrating extraordinary courage and tenacity on two occasions. He lived to the age of 83, and as we celebrated his gallantry in France, as reported earlier, his home town

of Dunblane did the same in Scotland. Huffam's son, wearing his Father's medals, attended the Dunblane ceremony, and grandson Mark, wearing the miniatures, was in France, along with his son.

From there to Eterpigny, which has such a beautiful, small CWGC cemetery, to commemorate the bravery of Captain Bowen MC, of the XX Lancashire Fusiliers. His wreath was laid by his nephew, Rupert Bowen, who turned out to have been in the same company at Sandhurst as the writer, although a couple of intakes behind. And then representatives of the Fusiliers laid a wreath to the fallen of the Lancashire Fusiliers in the cemetery itself.

The photographs and their captions complete the story of Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> September.



**Marching from the "Voie Sacrée" ceremony up to the village of Vis en Artois, and the Nunney Memorial**



The following day, taking a cross-country route from Arras to avoid the "route barrée" signs, we arrived at a field designated as a car park, and embussed to take the short drive to a large roundabout in the middle of the D939, about to be named the "7 Victoria Crosses" roundabout, after the seven Canadians who won that decoration all on or about 2 September 1918 in that vicinity.

As the photographs show, flagpoles had been erected, and are destined to remain with both the French and Canadian flags, and seven maple trees had been planted, at the foot of each was placed a photograph of one of the men. I gave a lift from Arras to a Canadian couple, Elizabeth and Bruce Robinson, who had come over especially as her great Uncle, Sergeant Metcalfe, who also survived the war, was one of those honoured. See photos on page 14.

The whole weekend had been very well conceived, excellently organised down to the last detail, and all of us who were guests from one country or another, were kindly and generously looked after. The war effort, and very large sacrifice, of Britain and her Empire is remembered with sincere gratitude.



**The writer and Julian Morley lay wreaths to the men of the Duke of Wellington's Regiment who lost their lives on the Western Front and are buried in CWGC Cemeteries, and those Dukes who lost their lives at St Sevrin's Farm**



**The wreath to the men of our Regiment**



the writer with Phillippe Dubus, the Mayor of Haucourt, and, on the right, Jean-Marie Dez, French Army major and local historian who did most of the research for all the events of the day



Mark Huffam and Phillippe Dubus after unveiling the memorial”



The Huffam VC Memorial in the village of Haucourt



Julian Morely, whose grandfather, Private Frank White, fought in the St Sevrin's action with James Huffam



The Plaque close up



*The village already had a memorial to a Second World War RAF Blenheim bomber crew of three, who were shot down near there in the Battle of Arras, 22 May 1940*



**The Memorial plaque for Captain Geoffrey Bowen MC in Eterpigny". 1857, Caption "A bandsmen's sheet music for the National Anthem, as the French soldiers salute**



**Eterpigny CWGC Cemetery**



**The 7 Victoria Crosses title for the roundabout on the D939**



**The Prefet addresses the audience, with the senior visitors on the stage behind him**



**Senior officials gather behind the floral tributes, laid around the maple trees, one tree each for the seven Canadian VCs**



## A CRIMEAN PORTRAIT AND KEVIN BARRY

Two reports from Major General Sir Evelyn Webb-Carter.

On a recent visit to Ireland which was focussed on aspects of the 1798 Rebellion and the 1916 insurrection I came across two nuggets of Duke's history. The first was a Crimean connection

### Lieutenant Henry Thorold

We visited Castletown House, an enormous house in County Kildare, the largest in Ireland still standing, which had once belonged to Tom Conolly, a considerable landowner at the time of the 1798 Rebellion and thus was of interest to us. Tom's brother John Augustus Conolly won a VC at Inkerman with the 49<sup>th</sup> Foot. Now in the hands of the State it is a house worth visiting. Although only some of the original contents are still there many objects have been brought in from other properties across Ireland. Whilst walking round our observant guide for the trip, Patrick Mercer, spotted a picture of an officer of the 33<sup>rd</sup>.



**Lieutenant Thorold**

The picture of Lieutenant Henry Thorold by Louis William Desanges (1822-1887) was painted after Thorold's death at the Battle of Inkerman on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1854, so a double Inkerman connection but I fear unrelated. Desanges is well known for his many paintings of Victoria Cross winners in the Crimea and in the Indian Mutiny. Sadly the 33<sup>rd</sup> received no Victoria Crosses although as we know from recent Iron Dukes, Private McGuire might have done but did not.

The 33<sup>rd</sup> only played a small part in the Battle of

Inkerman as being part of the Light Division they held the Victoria Ridge, protecting the Lancaster Battery whilst the Guards and others were in the thick of the fighting. It was a confused and bloody battle with early morning fog and gunpowder obscuring friend and foe alike, not helped by the similarity of grey greatcoats that both sides wore. Rightly termed "the soldiers' battle" the battle was fought at the lowest level but the tenacity of British infantry saved the day. The total British casualties were 2,640. For the 33<sup>rd</sup> it was a comparatively minor action with one officer and ten other ranks killed. The one officer was Lieutenant Henry Thorold. No doubt his family wanted an image of the young boy; he was just 19 years old.

Henry Thorold was born on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1835 near Grosvenor Square as heir to a large estate in Lincolnshire where his family, which goes back to the Conqueror, still live and farm. His mother was the daughter of Rear Admiral Robert Mansel. But his great grandfather, Major General John Mansel, achieved fame by commanding the victorious British Cavalry at the Battle of Beaumont in 1794 during the French Revolutionary War and was killed in the process. Incidentally this battlefield was fought over again in August 1914 during the Battle of Le Cateau at which 2 DWR were present.

There was another Thorold in the Regiment who served in the South African War and commanded the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion in India before the Great War. Interestingly his family came from County Kildare so maybe, just maybe, he was a relation.

### Kevin Barry and 2 DWR



**Kevin Barry**

The second story recalls the murder of soldiers of our Second Battalion in Ireland in 1920.

One of the "sites" our diligent guide took us to in Dublin was a fairly nondescript area north of the river. The junction of North King Street and Upper Church Street is nothing special but an interesting incident took place there on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> September 1920. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion in cadre form (ie 5 Officers and 60 other ranks) had returned from Germany in June 1919 and moved to Pembroke Dock where it was reorganised under the command of Lt Col RN Bray, who had to revert from commanding a brigade. In the process of demobilisation the Battalion expanded to 2,000\* or so. By June 1920 this reorganisation had largely been achieved when the battalion was sent to Dublin to reinforce the security forces during the Sinn Fein/IRA troubles of 1920-22.

The battalion was stationed at Collinstown Camp an uncompleted RAF camp to the north of Dublin on what is now Dublin Airport which was primarily used as a camp for IRA internees. The Battalion was later responsible for guarding another internment camp at Rath on the Curragh. On the 20<sup>th</sup> September 1920 an administrative party, probably from the QM's Department, travelled in a truck to collect bread from Patrick Monk's Bakery at 79-80 Upper Church Street.

At 1130 am the ration party consisting of a sergeant, a driver, two bandsmen all unarmed and an armed escort of six soldiers rolled up at the bakery as they did regularly at about the same time three times a week. Sergeant Arthur Banks and the two bandsmen dismounted and walked down the passage into the inner courtyard when a group of IRA emerged from the crowd with pistols and converged on the lorry shouted "hands up, hand over your guns". What exactly happened is not entirely clear but it seems some soldiers did drop their arms but at least one soldier opened fire and a general fire fight took place. The result was that five Dukes and three IRA men were shot but the IRA men ran off taking their wounded with them. However an IRA man had ducked under the lorry as his pistol jammed and in the mêlée he had not grasped that the remainder of the IRA party had run away. This man was swiftly arrested and his name was Kevin Barry, a 19 year old medical student at University College Dublin. He was a Jesuit and a member of H Company of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Dublin Brigade IRA and his name was destined to reverberate throughout the island of Ireland.

Of the five Dukes shot three were to die of their wounds, one, Private Harold Washington from Salford, a member of the escort died at the scene, shot through the chin, and it was later discovered he was only aged fifteen having lied about his age, a common practice in

an environment where employment was hard to find. Privates Marshall Whitehead and Thomas Humphries from Halifax, both from the ration party died later from their wounds. Whitehead was a re-engaged soldier from Catterick and may have served in the closing months of the war. Bandsmen Smith and Noble were only slightly wounded. The bullet found in Whitehead's body was of the same calibre as the pistol taken from Kevin Barry and furthermore the bullets were doctored similar to dum dum bullets. Very recently a new act, The Restoration of Order in Ireland Act (ROIA) had been passed in Parliament to deal with the prevalent terrorism. This in essence replaced magistrates' courts with courts martial where the IRA were concerned. In other words any IRA man charged with terrorist offences would be dealt with by a military court. At a time when terrorists are not regarded as soldiers there is a certain contradiction here. The Barry case was to be the first one to be dealt with under these powers and he was duly charged with the murder of Private Marshall Whitehead. The act was a half-way house to martial law which was eventually invoked in December 1920 in many parts of Ireland.

The due course of the law followed with appeals for clemency coming from several quarters of Irish society set against the desire to assuage military discipline as three soldiers had been killed and to enact the new act. Barry was tried by Court Martial at Marlborough Barracks on 20<sup>th</sup> October and found guilty and sentenced to death by hanging. Only made public on 28<sup>th</sup> October further appeals, one involving Erskine Childers, were made to no avail and on 1<sup>st</sup> November, All Saints' Day, Kevin Barry was executed at 8 am in Mountjoy Prison. However, the hanging of Kevin Barry was the first execution of a Republican since those of May 1916. It ignited a series of events including the assassinations of the 'Cairo Gang' by Michael Collins's gunmen on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1920 and the events of Bloody Sunday at Croke Park which followed later the same day and set the hurried tempo of Partition in 1922.



**Mountjoy Prison, a modern photograph**

Such are the facts but the event was turned into an IRA propaganda coup and to this day Kevin Barry being the first to be executed in the 1920-22 troubles is a hero of the Irish freedom movement. One paper described him

as 'The School Boy who Died' and generally he was portrayed as an entirely innocent idealist. The British authorities declined to counter the story and legend with the fact that three equally young men, one only 15, had been murdered and thus the legend remains articulated in a well known republican song.

In Mountjoy Jail one Monday morning, high upon the gallows tree,  
Kevin Barry gave his young life for the cause of liberty.  
But a lad of eighteen summers, still there's no one can deny,  
As he walked to death that morning, he proudly held his head high.

Opening verse the ballad 'Kevin Barry'

There are two sequels to the story. On 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1922 Sir Henry Wilson the recently retired CIGS who had supported the execution of Barry during the debates and discussions after the passing of sentence was himself gunned down by IRA assassins in Eaton Square, London. The Barry case was not necessarily the motive but Wilson was well known as an Ulsterman and fierce opponent of the IRA. In October 2001 ten IRA men including Kevin Barry were given a State Funeral in Dublin which was attended by the President and Taoiseach. Little thought was given to those three young Dukes who died doing their duty.

\*Editor's Note: The figure of 2000 as the strength of the Battalion seems extraordinary but it should be remembered that tens of thousands of men were still being discharged from the Army at this time, through dispersal centres all over the UK, including both Northern and Southern Ireland, and 2 DWR might have been a place to park some of them awaiting their turn. Whether this has any bearing on that number of 2000 is pure speculation, but a fascinating account of the demobilisation process, including the requirement to hand in your greatcoat at a railway station on your final leave in return for £1, and having a choice between a "suit of plain clothes" or 52s 6d (readers who have only known decimal coinage may need to look that up!), can be found in that excellent website [The Long Long Trail \(www.longlongtrail.co.uk/soldiers/a-soldiers-life-1914-1918/demobilisation-and-discharge/\)](http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/soldiers/a-soldiers-life-1914-1918/demobilisation-and-discharge/).

## **SALE OF EXCESS REGIMENTAL SILVER AND PROPERTY FROM RHQ**

Following the closure of the old Regimental Headquarters in Wellesley Park and the move of the Regimental Association Office to Bankfield Museum the Regimental Association Trustees have decided that the Silver and Property that was held in the old RHQ but now

no longer required should be disposed of. This silver and property will be offered for sale in the first instance only to members of the Regimental Association (all those who have served in the Regiment both Regular and TA).

All items to be sold will be made available for viewing on the Regimental Website. All items will also be put on display in the Officers' Mess in the Huddersfield Drill Hall, St Paul's Street, Huddersfield. This is to allow an opportunity for anyone considering a purchase(s) to see all that is available at first hand before making deciding. The specific dates when the Officers' Mess will be open for viewing will be published on the Regimental website and through Facebook.

Those dates (yet to be fixed) will be between 26<sup>th</sup> November and 7<sup>th</sup> December.

Items being sold will be placed in one of three categories:

1. Items offered for sale through a sealed bid auction but subject to a minimum price. Sealed bids will be required to be submitted to RHQ. This category will generally be items of silver where the minimum price will be the item's silver valuation by weight.
2. Items sold through a sealed bid auction but with no minimum price. This category will generally be attractive non-silver items of property.
3. Remaining lower value property will be offered at a fixed price on a first come first serve basis. Bids for these will need to be made through RHQ or can be bought directly on viewing days.

Proceeds of the Sale will go to the Regimental Memorial Fund.

## **JACK DONKERSLEY**

The Halifax Courier reported the story of Jack Donkersley who ran away from home in Oldham to join the Dukes in 1934. His son Brian has run that same 19-mile journey as a tribute to his Dad and to raise funds for the memorial statue that will be installed in Halifax to commemorate the Regiment. He was joined by retired corporal from the Regiment, William Hoyle, with the pair completing the run in three hours and 14 minutes. Brian said "We were worried about the smoke from the Saddleworth Moor fire and you could really smell it, but it didn't affect us really.

"We're both in pretty good shape as it turned out, so the initial climb wasn't too bad, and then we had a nice bit downhill to Denshaw with the breeze in our faces. I'd let Ripponden School know about the run in advance and their pupils all lined-up to cheer us on as we ran past, which was great. Then when we reached the bowling

club there was just a real sense of achievement. It really was a super day and we had some terrific support. The adrenaline was really pumping when we finished. All the way round there was never a thought of us giving up. It was there to be done, and we did it."

Brian had set a target of raising £500 but has raised close to £900 so far. Speaking of the statue he said "I think it's great for Halifax. It's very much known as the Yorkshire Regiment now, so this will put the Dukes into the public consciousness. I'm hoping to be there for the unveiling - if I get invited!"

To donate to Brian's cause, visit [www.justgiving.com/Brian-Donkersley1](http://www.justgiving.com/Brian-Donkersley1).



William Hoyle and Brian Donkersely (right)

### Her Majesty at the RAG

Wilf Charlesworth and son James met Her Majesty the Queen at the Army and Navy Club on the occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the WRNS and the WAAC.

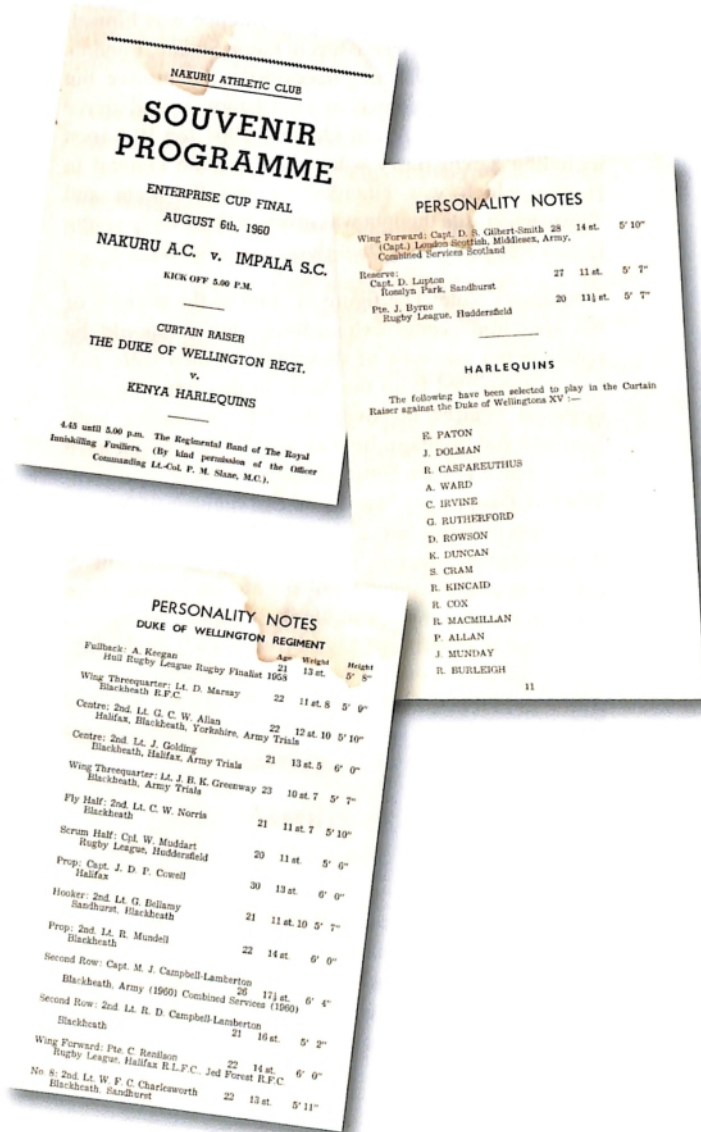


Her Majesty meets James (L) and Wilf Charlesworth

### Rugby in Kenya 6 August 1960.

Wilf Charlesworth also sent me a programme of a rugby match in Kenya, the Enterprise Cup Final between Nakuru AC and Impala SC, with the Dukes playing a Kenya Harlequins side. Wilf recalls that the Regiment won that match 20-0, and went on to beat every other club in Kenya, including, presumably, the Cup Finalists. The Regiment returned in 1961 and did the same thing.

Scans of the day's programme are below. It is hardly surprising that the Dukes were undefeated looking at the team list. Robert Campbell-Lammerton was about the same size as his brother and definitely not 5'2"! Big brother Mike, his second row partner, went on to play for Scotland and captained the Lions in New Zealand in 1966. David Gilbert Smith, wing forward, was already an international player and A. Kegan later played League for England, and there were three other League players in the squad.



### Presidential Look-a-like.

Readers may recall that in the Spring 2018 edition of this Journal (no 284) a gentleman wearing our regimental tie was spotted, but his identity was unknown. That excellent correspondent Joe Bailes, Korean Vet and champion marksman, called to suggest that it is the President of the United States of America. After checking with AHQ we can confirm that Mr Trump did not serve in the Dukes and is not a member of our Association, so that theory can be discounted. However, an observant reader sent in a new photograph, below. At least this time he looks pretty cheerful, but who can he be? There has not been such a mystery since the days when Jeffery Archer (Baron Archer of Weston-Super-Mare) attended court in one of our ties though it did not do him much good at the time.



## THE DUKES IN THE GREAT WAR

### Political Background

Before following our battalions through the final months of the war, we might note that the allies' improved fortune on the battlefields of the Western Front after Germany's spring offensives had failed was by no means seen by all, if indeed by any with total conviction, as the beginning of the end. For many that end – victory – was as distant as ever, and a quite widely held pessimistic view was that all the advance by the Allies was doing was to push to German armies back into more favourable, that is narrower and harder to overcome, positions.



David Lloyd George, Prime Minister 1916 – 1922

After the German attacks had been stemmed in 1918, 500,000 individual reinforcements and new units for the BEF were found, most of them from Britain but some from Palestine where they were no longer needed, and were shipped over to France and Belgium. Under Lloyd George's personal supervision the flow of men was stepped up from 8000 to 30,000 a day, an astonishing figure. Until then commanders on the ground were still worrying about their own situations and were thinking along lines of their own and national interest.

As the French and British armies tumbled backwards in April and May under the weight of the German onslaught, Haig was preoccupied by the threat to his supply lines from the Channel ports, whilst Foch's priority was to cover the threat to Paris. The latter, now enjoying the title though in reality little of the implied authority, "Commander in Chief of the Allied Armies", was required to present his strategies for consideration and comment to each government, and to national C in Cs on the ground, who all looked for solutions that, if they did not greatly benefit them at least did them no harm.

The times were not without amusement. Germany was supposed to have in its possession a "Black Book", containing the names of 47,000 British perverts. It is likely that high-placed individuals' consternation at this piece of intelligence was more against the possibility that they might be in it, with the consequent gossip and speculation on the nature of their particular peccadilloes that would follow disclosure, rather than any serious consideration of how this would, if true, assist the German war effort.



**Marshall Ferdinand Foch, Commander in Chief Allied Forces**

FM Sir Henry Wilson, CIGS in 1918, said in July that the decisive battles would be fought in July 1919; whilst Jan Smuts, a member of the Imperial War Cabinet in his capacity as Prime Minister of South Africa, told the Cabinet that the war would go on until 1920. Lord Northcliffe, appointed Minister for Information, was quoted as saying "none of us will see the end of this war". However, it fairly soon became clear that "Marshall Foch's perpetual cry of "attack, attack", and FM Haig's unceasing belief that a German collapse was just around the corner, might just about, and at last, turn out to be right", wrote AJP Taylor.

The allied commanders began to feel that the time had come to take the war to the Germans, even if there was plenty of disagreement about how it should be done, and how long it might take.

### The Dukes' war on the ground, July – November 1918.

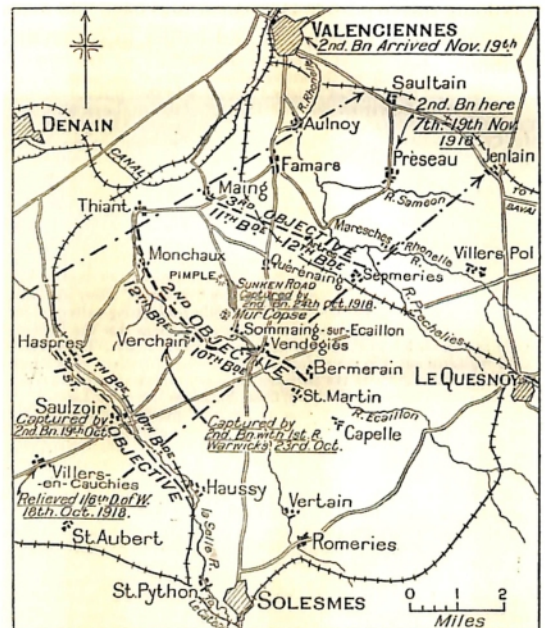
At one stage or another every Dukes' unit on the Western front was involved in the "100 days". Thus the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion and the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup> (Service) Battalions, were engaged; and our (now six) territorial battalions in 49 and 62 (WR) Divisions were very active in their sectors. The map should help readers to locate each of



The bold red line shows the position in March 1918, the red dotted line the limit that the Allied forces were pushed back in April and May, and the red dash-dot line where the Allies got to before the signing of the Armistice.

the described actions, designed to give an impression of the fighting in this period.

49 Division, with our three TF battalions in 147 Brigade, was very active in holding back the German assaults in the battles of the Lys through April 1918, although with very heavy casualties. In this it was finally successful but the Division needed time to rest and recuperate, as well as take in large numbers of battle



MOVEMENTS OF THE 2ND BATTALION, OCTOBER-NOVEMBER, 1918.

Map of the final weeks of the Advance to Victory. 2 DWR, 9 DWR and units of 49 WR Division were on much the same line at the end

casualty replacements. Nevertheless throughout this time it remained in or just behind the front line as events proceeded further south, and was eventually switched to a new line of advance running north east from Cambrai, and thus joined in the final advance in late September, receiving particular notice for actions at Villers-en-Cauchie and Saulzoir in October along the D119. It was again in action near Valenciennes on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> November, crossing the Rhonelle River and capturing the villages of Présau and Maresches.

Meantime 62 Division, largely recovered from its defence of Bucquoy, was placed under French command and moved to the Valley of the Ardres, south of Rheims, to take part in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of the Marne. The country was difficult, heavily wooded, with high crests and deep valleys, sunken roads and steep slopes. This is champagne country. There was hard fighting here, with 5 DWR excelling in the battle for the Bois de Petit Champ, where the men had to fight a determined enemy face to face. Two German officers, and 256 other ranks



**Typical countryside between Reims and Epernay, covered in the chardonnay grapes of champagne**

were captured, along with 41 machine guns, and Captain Cockhill MC was particularly noted for his courage and tactical skill.

In his book on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of the Marne, author Michael S Neiberg wrote;

On “22<sup>nd</sup> July the British attacked again using a rolling barrage that advanced at the same slow rate as the day before, 100 meters per ten minutes. The advance also received the support of five French tanks and numerous gas shells. ... (they) soon learned that they had been lured into a trap. Approximately 200 yards inside the Bois du Petit Champ the British hit a line of German machine gun nests, intentionally kept off the front line in order to protect them from the rolling barrage. They discovered two more machine gun lines within the next 100 yards.

Through bloody lessons acquired in places like the Bois du Petit Champ the British developed methods for advancing through such positions. (They) learned to attack machine gun nests by encircling them, using the woods to conceal their own movements. ... On July 23<sup>rd</sup> the 62<sup>nd</sup> Division cleared the Bois du Petit Champ and entered Marfaux, although the Germans were able to keep up a steady artillery fire on the town.”

On the 22 July 5<sup>th</sup> Dukes had taken 208 prisoners and captured 41 machine guns\*. On the 28<sup>th</sup> 186 Brigade made an assault on the Montagne de Bligny, with West Yorks 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion earning the admiration of British and



*Map of the Bligny/Marfaux area. Reims is about ten miles off to the north east. The whole of this area is covered in either vines (for Champagne) or, where the soil is not good enough, maize for cattle feed*



*Photo version of the map above*



**The Montagne de Bligny. The village is just visible in the bottom right corner of the picture.**

French alike, and the award of the Croix de Guerre. Scott Flaving's detailed article, somewhat abbreviated for space reasons, on this action follows this article. (The full article can be made available to those interested).

In these actions the 62 Division and 51 Highland Division, with which it worked in very close cooperation throughout, took 1200 prisoners from 7 different German Divisions, and completed an advance of over four miles. The cost was considerable; 3000 wounded and 520 killed, and 400 missing\*. On 30 July the XXII British Corps, which included 62 Division, was ordered to leave the command of the 5<sup>th</sup> French Army; the French Army Commander concluded his letter of appreciation with the words "Your French comrades will always remember with emotion your splendid valour and perfect fellowship as fighters".

\* (Editor's note, there is some disagreement on these numbers amongst the various sources)

These were bloody battles against a determined enemy. The Germans, in this sector at least, may have been in retreat but were far from beaten.



**Looking down from Bligny to Chaumercy; Marfaux is the next town along**



## The Battle of Bligny, 27<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup> July 1918.

By Scott Flaving

On 27<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup> July, 1918, the 62<sup>nd</sup> (Pelican) Division was ordered to attack the German positions at Bligny and the high ground to the west of the village. This it did, with the 8<sup>th</sup> West Yorkshire Regiment (Leeds Rifles) being singled out for the award of the Croix de Guerre by the French authorities for their determination and gallantry in pushing the Germans off the heights.

In 1918 the Division, as a result of the restructuring of the British Army in January of that year, comprised: 185<sup>th</sup> Brigade, with the 2/5<sup>th</sup> West Yorkshires, 8<sup>th</sup> West Yorkshires and 1/5<sup>th</sup> Devonshires; 186<sup>th</sup> Brigade, made up of 1/4<sup>th</sup> DWR, 5<sup>th</sup> DWR and 2/4<sup>th</sup> Hampshires and 187<sup>th</sup> Brigade with two battalions of KOYLI (2/4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>) and the 2/4<sup>th</sup> York and Lancaster Regt.

Lieutenant Colonel P P Wilson was in action at Bligny on that day and wrote an account of the battle, quoted in Major Tony Podmore's History of the Duke of Wellington's Regiment Volunteer and Territorial Battalions, page 96:

"A Corps conference was held on the 25<sup>th</sup> July which addressed the fact that no further advance should be made up the valley of the Ardre without first capturing the German positions on the high ground from which they commanded the whole area. The Corps Commander wished immediately to attack but his Divisional Commanders strongly advised that a day's rest and reorganisation was essential if any attack was to succeed. This was agreed and the date was set for the 27<sup>th</sup> July when the 51<sup>st</sup> and 62<sup>nd</sup> Divisions were to make a combined assault. To the south of the River Ardre the 51<sup>st</sup> Division and one brigade of 62<sup>nd</sup> Division were to advance on a three Brigade front; this plan placed the Highlanders' 153<sup>rd</sup> and 152<sup>nd</sup> Brigades on its left and right flanks with the Yorkshiremen of 187<sup>th</sup> Brigade between them. North of the river the front was held by the Dukes 186<sup>th</sup> Brigade whose attack orders simply instructed that it should throw forward its line in keeping with the southern advance. The start-line was crossed at 6am on 27<sup>th</sup> July after which the Hallamshires, 187<sup>th</sup> Brigade, were met by a weak enemy barrage and intermittent machine gun fire as they advanced.

Unknown to them, Ludendorff had instructed a general withdrawal of German forces along the whole front and this had taken place on the previous night. The 'insisted on' day of rest and reorganisation had unintentionally saved numerous British lives. The Dukes and Hampshires of 186<sup>th</sup> Brigade similarly advanced north of the river with 185<sup>th</sup> Brigade moving close behind in support. They also met sporadic enemy fire but this was

methodically dealt with and did not slow their steady advance forward. Indeed the advance went so well that the unheard of happened and the Corps cavalry was passed through the infantry. However the cavalrymen soon encountered stiff resistance when they arrived at the Montaigne de Bligny (Bligny Ridge) which was heavily defended and where they were joined by the Dukes who consolidated the new line.

At 10.30pm, Headquarters 62<sup>nd</sup> Division issued orders for the advance to be continued on the next day, 28<sup>th</sup> July. 186<sup>th</sup> Brigade was to clear the village of Bligny whilst the 185<sup>th</sup> Brigade captured Bligny Ridge, a high piece of ground on the other side of the river, which commanded the valley of the Ardre. If a further advance was necessary 187<sup>th</sup> Brigade was to pass through and continue the attack. The 186<sup>th</sup> Brigade's orders placed the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Hampshires on the left, the 2/4 DWR right and 5 DWR in support; zero hour was set for 4.30am. Twelve hours later, at 4pm, the Hampshires had captured their objectives by the method of discarding all surplus equipment and crawling forward using all possible cover so keeping up under the line of intense enemy fire, enabling the whole battalion to get forward relatively unscathed. Lieutenant Colonel P P Wilson's 2/4 DWR had a more trying experience:

"Meanwhile the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Wellington's, dead tired from their previous day's operations, had, at 4am, taken up their assembly position between the Bois de Dix Hommes and the Bligny – Chaumuzy Road. In this position they were much exposed and suffered heavily from an intense bombardment and from machine gun fire coming from the Bois de Dix Hommes, Arbre de Villers and the high ground north of the old French line. 'The men were suffering from extreme exhaustion and the advance became most difficult. But no one thought of giving in. The men forced themselves onward by sheer perseverance and dogged determination. One platoon, having marched round by the Bois de Dix Hommes, managed to reach the objective. At this period touch was not established with the French on the right but the position gained was held. Another platoon, by creeping forward first round the eastern and then the northern exits of Bligny, reached its objectives also. No further movement was possible until dusk, when the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Dukes as a whole advanced and consolidated the old French line – their objective."

To their left the 8<sup>th</sup> (Leeds Rifles) Battalion, West Yorkshires' attack was led by their Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel N A England who was formerly a Dukes' officer. Their role was to capture the strategic Bligny Ridge from which a determined enemy could dominate the whole area with fire and view. The battalion soon became involved in very stiff fighting and.

due to its recent heavy losses of officers, a large part of its battle was most effectively conducted under the leadership of sergeants and corporals. The efforts of this West Yorkshire battalion were especially recognised by the French who subsequently decorated the Leeds Rifles with the Croix de Guerre avec Palme en Bronze, the medal ribbon of which has been worn with great pride by its Territorial Army successors to the present day.

During the night of 28<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup> July 186<sup>th</sup> Brigade moved into Divisional Reserve when its positions in Bligny village were handed over to the 187<sup>th</sup> Brigade. At 4pm on the afternoon of 29<sup>th</sup> July Headquarters 62<sup>nd</sup> Division received a warning order from 22<sup>nd</sup> Corps Headquarters advising that the Corps was to be withdrawn and moved by train to another area.

### **62 Division's Further Operations.**

Released from French command on 30 July, the Division moved north to more familiar territory for rest and re-organisation, before coming under command of VI Corps. It was back on the front on 24th August near Achiet Le Grand, advancing slightly north of east in the general direction of the northern side of Cambrai. On 29 August 5 DWR was detailed to attack German held trenches that would defile a separate part of the general advance, an attack by 2/4<sup>th</sup> Hampshires on Vaulx-Vraucourt. The tactical plan for capturing these trenches is of interest, quoting from the 62 Division history.

“Two bombing platoons worked down each trench towards the trench junction, the first party to reach it firing three red very lights, in order to prevent one party bombing the other. On each side of each trench a Lewis gun team kept pace with the bombing platoons, forcing the Germans by their fire to keep their heads down and shooting Germans who attempted to get out of the trench. Two platoons, at a distance of 150 yards in rear of the bombing parties, followed for the purpose of establishing section posts about every 100 yards to protect the flanks as the attack advanced. Two more Lewis gun sections (4 guns) of the Support Company were distributed 50 yards north and south of each trench and 100 yards in rear of the leading company.”

The Division fought its way slowly forward, brigades passing through brigades and battalions through battalions, against strongly defended positions. By 1<sup>st</sup> September the Vaulx-Vraucourt positions and village was captured. The advance continued; by 10 September the Division was ordered to attack Havringcourt, which was last captured on 20 November 1917 in the Battle of Cambrai. The battle was concluded by 14 September and at last the Hindenburg Line was penetrated.

The next objective was Marcoing, on the canal, much

of which had been incorporated into the Hindenburg Line. The story of Private Tandey VC DCM MM of 5 DWR was addressed in the last edition of this Journal, in a review by General Sir Evelyn Webb-Carter of a book “One soldier and Hitler 1918”, and in this issue in the context of a memorial stone being laid in Leamington Spa, and it was in this action on 28 September that Tandey earned his VC. The 5<sup>th</sup> Dukes crossed the canal and came under heavy fire and their position became precarious as they now had their backs to the canal.

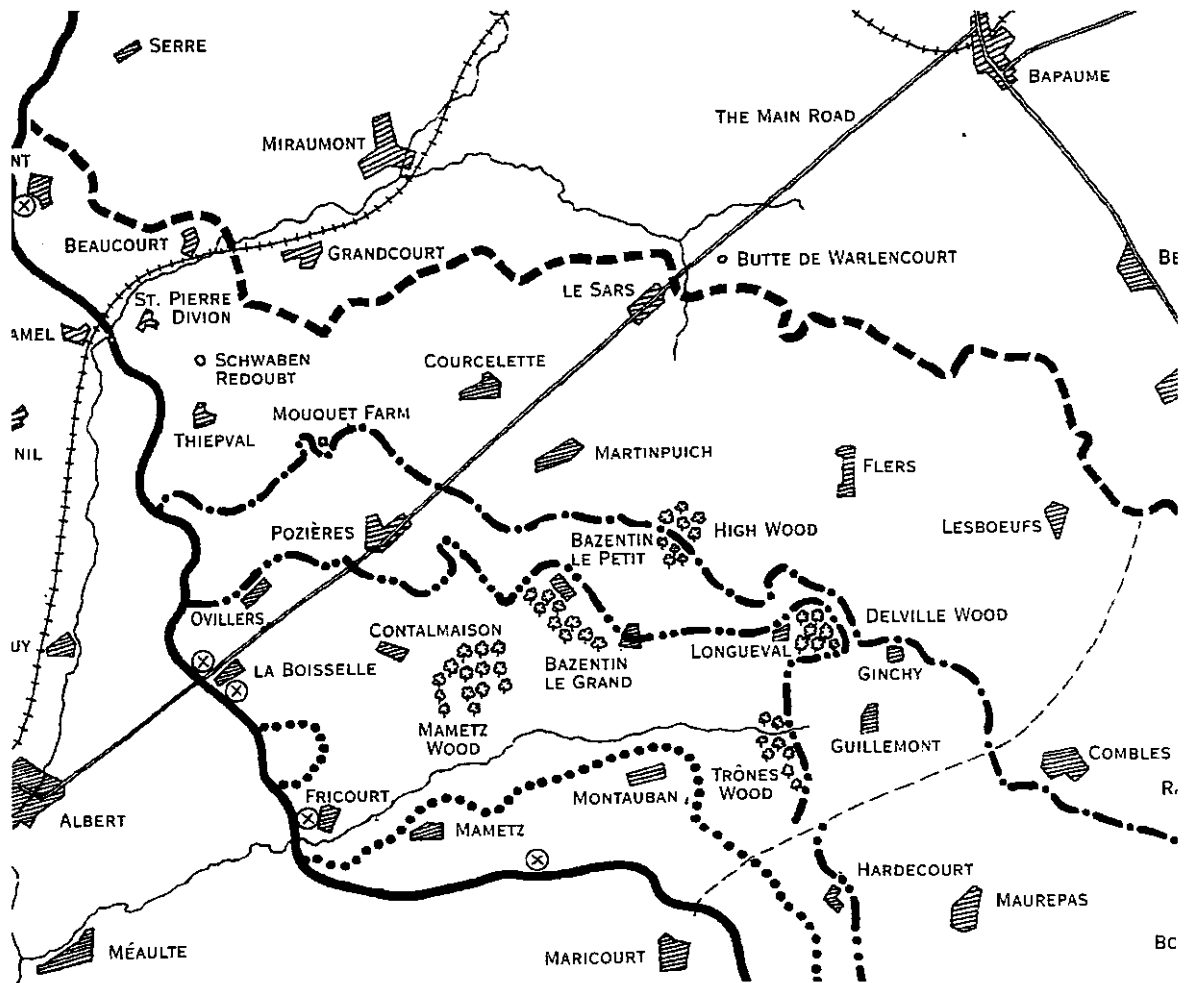
The battalion was ordered to attack forward, and all available artillery pounded the enemy positions. All four companies advanced on a one platoon frontage, to ensure depth to the attack, and took on the enemy bayonet to bayonet. It was confused fighting; a platoon was cut off and had to charge through a stronger force of enemy to find support: Germans who had surrendered found themselves unguarded, and picked up their rifles and fired into the leading British troops. The Division's historian wryly says that “the treacherous prisoners were adequately dealt with” by the reserve platoons”.

By any standards, 62 Division had “a good war”. It had been in some extremely difficult actions – at Bullecourt, at Bucquoy, and throughout the advance to victory. As the Cinderella formation at the start of the war, last in line for weapons, equipment and experienced instructors to train these keen territorial volunteers, it had endured frustration and disappointment. When chances came, they were taken with both hands.

### **9 DWR and the Advance to Maubeuge.**

9 DWR, 52 Brigade, 17<sup>th</sup> Northern Division (as it had been throughout the war) was not on the move until 24 August, after which it made steady progress through the end of the month and into September. From a start point North West of Albert, it fought through the old Somme battlefields, with a stern fight for Courcelette, through Gueudecourt and Flers, on through Le Transloy to Rocquigny and Ytres, and towards Gouzeaucourt. This last position was strongly held by the Germans, and several divisions were engaged in its capture. 200 gas cylinders were thrown into the village to try to reduce the enormous firepower of multiple machine gun positions. Despite being almost encircled the enemy continued to hold the village, and was to prove a considerable nuisance, firing into the flanks of units by-passing to other objectives.

The Division's casualties were heavy, but large drafts were arriving. The scene was set for the final stages. As the author of the 17<sup>th</sup> Division's history wrote “The greatest battle of the war had begun. On the Alsace-Lorraine front the German and French armies, in comparatively small force, still faced each other in



### The Somme battle area, only too familiar to those of our men who had fought here in July 1916

positions they had held for years. But westwards then northwards to the sea the Allied line was beginning to advance. The movement opened on the right where the new American armies were pressing forward on both sides of the Argonne and amongst its rocks and woods towards the Belgian border.

"Next the main mass of the French armies moved, on both sides of Reims and up the valley of the Oise, their left curving round to link up with the main British advance against the Hindenburg Line. Then still further north British, French and Belgians pushed on from the old Yser line into the Belgian plain. It was a long curving line lapping round the great enemy salient on a front of nearly 250 miles. Four days after the first move of the Americans all that tremendous front was ablaze from the woods and hills north of Verdun to the level lands by the sea" wrote A. Hilliard Atteridge, author of the History of the 17<sup>th</sup> (Northern) Division.

As is noted elsewhere in this Journal, the French at Reims included 62 (WR) Division.

Having started the war in France and Belgium in May 1915, when each of the three brigades had four battalions and each battalion four companies, 17 Division had seen action in most of the major campaigns. Towards the end of the "100 Days" it would find fighting as hard as any it had hitherto experienced during the crossing of the Selle. After Gouzeaucourt the Division expected a fierce fight to get over the Canal du Nord and into the Hindenburg Line. It was fortunate that on the line of advance for most of the Division the Canal ducked under ground for a stretch of several miles. Never the less there was stiff fighting, followed by a pause as commanders contemplated, and prepared for, what was thought to be the biggest test, the Hindenburg Line itself. Tanks and munitions in huge quantities had to be brought forward, the men given time to train and rest.



**An old Hindenburg Line map, showing BEF progression towards the main German defensive position**

On 9 September began a three division assault on a strong enemy defensive position in front of the Line itself, supported by a considerable force of artillery of various calibres and bombing aircraft. 52 Brigade, 10<sup>th</sup> Lancashire Fusiliers on the right and 12<sup>th</sup> Manchesters on the left, and 9<sup>th</sup> Dukes following up in support, went forward at 0400 hours. The NZ Division was to the north, and 21 Division south of the 17<sup>th</sup>. By 1830 the Brigade was on the enemy position, with all three battalions in line and the 9<sup>th</sup> Dukes on the left. Counter-attacks were repulsed. The weather deteriorated into hurricane force wind and driving rain, and the ground turned to mud. The territory gained was held.

During the night of the 11<sup>th</sup> September the 17<sup>th</sup> was relieved by the 38<sup>th</sup> Division and passed into Corps reserve. From the crossing of the Ancre on 21 August to 11 September the Division had suffered 479 killed and 2386 wounded, with 194 missing.

Eight days later the Division was back in the front for a set piece attack on Gouzeaucourt. In this intense battle gas was used by both sides, and one brigade commander was caught in machine gun fire and killed on the spot. Again the 17<sup>th</sup> was withdrawn on the 25<sup>th</sup> to recuperate.

On 28 September the Germans evacuated Gouzeaucourt, after holding off repeated assaults and being almost encircled, and began to fall back to the St

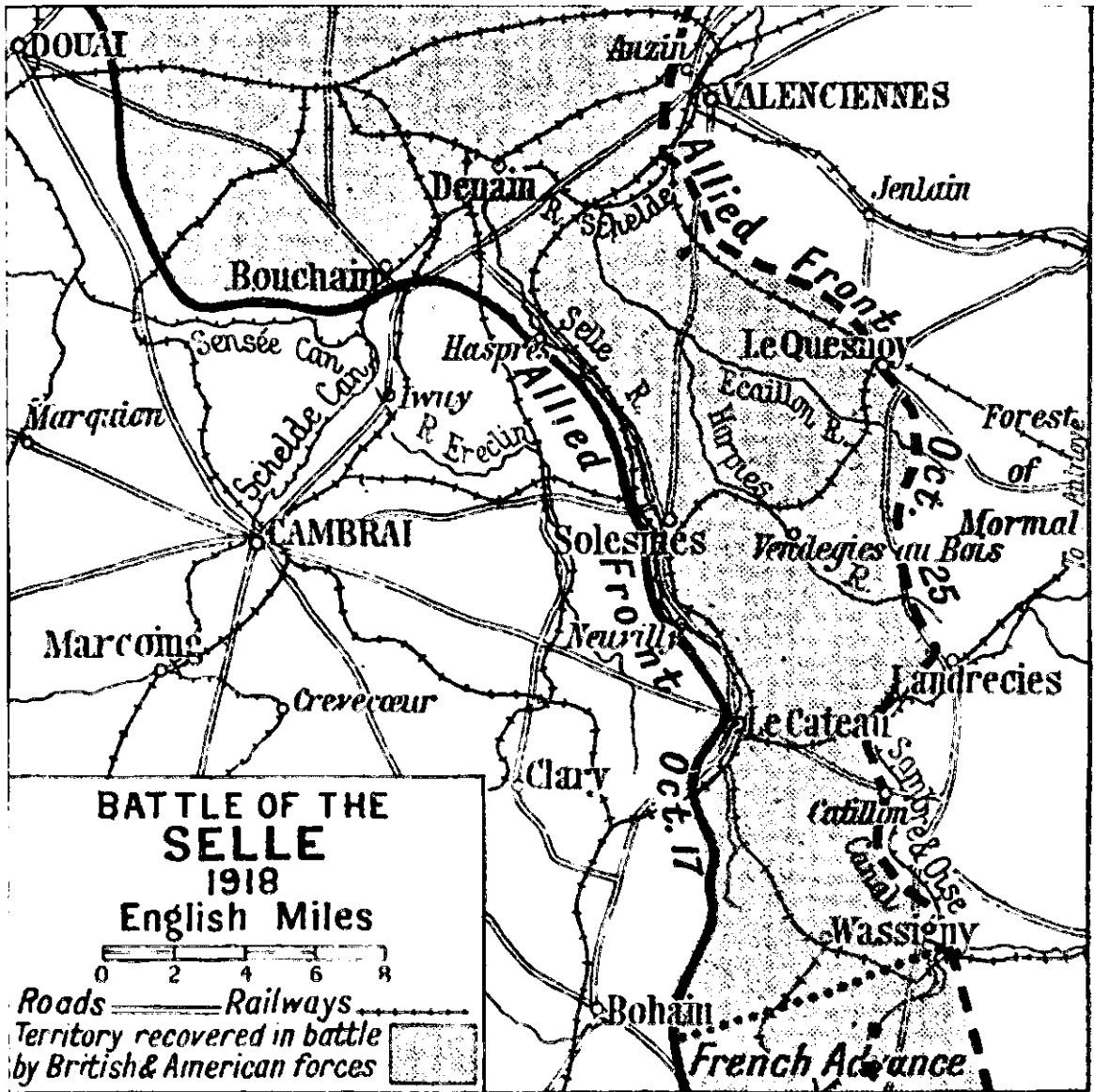
Quentin Canal. 52 Brigade remained in reserve as other divisions went forward into the Hindenburg Line, only to find, to their surprise, that in this sector it had been abandoned. The forward troops picked their way through the wire and other obstacles unopposed on 5 October. From here on there would be "the unfamiliar sight of towns and villages showing no trace of shell fire; woods not reduced to mere branchless stumps of trees". The population came out as the British advanced, old men and women and children for the most part as the young men had long since been sucked into the war. It became policy that so far as possible communities occupied by civilians would not be shelled; this proved difficult later when some villages were held as strongpoints, and were not shelled until it was clear that the population had gone.

Forward of the Line there were no more long prepared defensive positions. The retreating enemy still resisted, but had to use natural cover from fire and view. The allies began to swing north east towards Maubeuge, passing under Valenciennes. En route they would cross the line of the retreat from Mons in 1914. The somewhat flat countryside was deceptive; it was crossed by many streams, and some significant rivers, notably the Selle, L'Ecaillon, the Rhonelle, and, on the far side of the Fort de Mormal, the Sambre, mostly too deep to be forded, and often with steep banks. Crossing these obstacles was only by ferry or bridge.

Once clear of the St Quentin Canal the 17<sup>th</sup> encountered only modest opposition, a few rear-guard positions to delay the advance. By now the movement was brisk, and fraternisation with villagers as they passed along was common. The next objective was Neuville and the high ground east of the Selle, which would be a tough task if it was strongly defended. From the higher ground gunner officers could watch trains pulling away east, sadly out of range of their 18 pounders, and long columns of marching men on every road going east. Those within



**The River Selle; steep banks either side of a fast flowing river**



Map of the Selle and surrounding area

range were engaged by the field artillery, and they scattered into the countryside.

There remained a serious fight to cross the Selle, the last strong line between the BEF and Maubeuge.

52 Brigade crossed half a mile south of Neuville, at the dam of a watermill, where the water was fordable, and trees felled by gunfire offered some support to the wading men. Once on the far side a screen could be made to protect Royal Engineers who completed four light bridges, all under fire. As they crossed 9 DWR was caught in a German counter barrage, and losses in the rear company, who were on the bridges, were heavy.

They tried to push on through wire and machine gun fire, but were held up and pinned between the river and the railway, a little to the east, with enemy on the railway line itself.

Sunday 20 October was fixed for an all-out assault on the German positions, the Sappers assisted by the York and Lancaster Pioneer Battalion, having meanwhile constructed bridges strong enough for the guns to cross. The plan involved formations from both the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Armies, and the engagement is known as the Battle of the Selle, but for 17 Division all the action concentrated on Neuville. It was to be a night attack, with four lines

of objective, from west to east, blue, red, green and brown. The attack would be supported by huge artillery barrages and some bombing from the air. Timed to begin at 2.00 am, to catch the enemy by surprise (which it did). By the 22<sup>nd</sup> October the objectives were secured.

By the 26<sup>th</sup> 52 Brigade and 9 DWR reached Englefontaine, on the western edge of the Mormal Forest.



**The headstone of Private Satchwell, 9 DWR, at Englefontaine CWGC Cemetery, who died on 4 November 1918**

By now the Division was at best one third short of its full strength, casualties from the long contact during the advance with the enemy combining with an onrushing flu epidemic. On 4 November three Armies, 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> combined in the assault on a 20 mile front. 17 Division would go through the heart of the Mormal Forest, initial objective Locquinol, on the main west/east road, with 52 Brigade leading, all three battalions in line, the Dukes in the middle, each on a two company front. 51 Brigade would follow up and pass through, and then the 50<sup>th</sup>.

Fighting in thick forest was a novelty, and not a welcome one, with the gunners particularly challenged by very tall trees that could cause early ignition of their H.E. shells. A machine gun battalion was added to 52 Brigade's order of battle. The tactic was to try to move forward along the tracks and rides, getting in behind enemy tucked into deep forest. Opposition was fierce;

the battalion started with 15 company officers and 584 men; of these 13 officers and 226 men became casualties. After this effective strength in the front line was only about 200 all ranks, but the objective was reached, and 51 Brigade passed through. The forest started to thin, and the guns moved up. The 21<sup>st</sup> Division took the lead as the advance to the Sambre began.

There was only a brief delay on the Sambre. Crossing the Selle had cost many lives and taken up a great deal of time. By 5 November the Sappers had a bridge over the river and a bridgehead was secured. By dawn on 7 November the enemy had abandoned its positions on the high ground east of the Sambre and was in full retreat, although once again delaying parties had been left behind and put up stern resistance. 52 Brigade crossed the main road running south from Valenciennes to Avesnes on 8 November, and went forward, at last encountering no opposition. At Obrechies the river Solre would have to be crossed, but as they approached the village tri-colours could be seen flying from the roof tops.

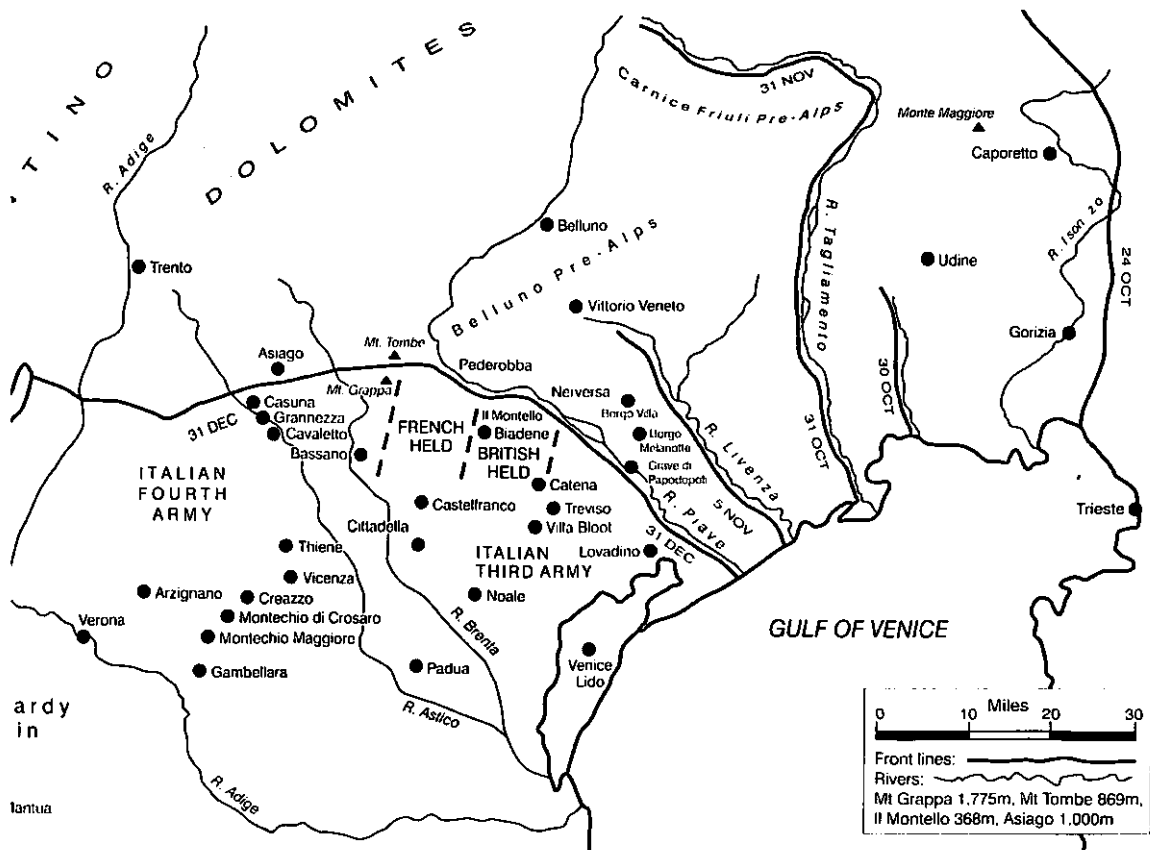
On 11 November 9 DWR was ordered to march back across the Sambre, to the eastern edge of the Mormal Forest. The war was over.

### **10 DWR in Italy 1917 and 1918.**

The 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion have been rather left out of the recent Great War narratives, mostly because they left the Western Front and were sent to Italy where there was fierce fighting against Austrian invaders, allied to Germany. Britain and France could ill afford for Italy to be overcome and knocked out of the war, so sent assistance. Along the rugged, mountainous, 350 mile frontier between Italy and Austria, the two countries grappled for supremacy. With arrival of the British and the French to reinforce the Italians the layout was as shown on the map, which has been taken from General Donald Isles' "History of the Service Battalions", as is much of the information in this article.

On eleven separate occasions the Italian Army took the offensive, and was defeated and pushed back, taking 500,000 casualties, 166,000 in the last and eleventh attack alone.

10 DWR had taken part in the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele) and were very glad to be out of that region going, somewhat erratically by train, somewhere new. They were met with great enthusiasm by the Italian population of all the towns and villages they marched through, but there was a great deal of marching, and as Major WN Town wrote "We marched for seven consecutive days and the long railway journey was no good preparation. Loaded too as the men were with steel helmet, box respirator and one blanket."



Italy, October 1917 - January 1918

After several moves without much action, by late February 1918 the Battalion found itself in the Il Montello sector (see map), between the French and the Italian Third Army. The task was mainly patrolling, and again there was little contact with the enemy. In March 1918 the Battalion was transferred to the Asiago front, hopping over the French to take up position on the other side of them, and again had little action.

On 15<sup>th</sup> June the Austrians attacked all along the front. Major Townend wrote "the enemy were repulsed with great slaughter. They followed 40 minutes after their barrage and penetrated the front of the Division on our left to a distance of 1500 yards. However they quite failed to take advantage of this and their attack was a complete failure." Beyond the Dukes' area the scale of this latest offensive was very large, and it was in part successful. However the Italian Army brought up reserves and the Piave river flooded and swept away many of the bridges over which the Austrians had attacked, cutting them off from their rear areas. Enemy casualties were estimated as 56,000 killed, 240,000 wounded and 24,000 prisoners.

Later that month Captain Kelly VC (won at Le Sars, Somme, 4 October 1916) led a raid on the enemy trenches. Major Townend again "The raiding party was thoroughly imbued with the 'spirit of the bayonet' and the greater part of the garrison was wiped out with cold steel after a slight resistance. All the dugouts were thoroughly bombed....With some difficulty the officers of the party were able to ensure that 31 of the enemy were brought back alive for identification purposes."

In August a large raiding party was formed, comprising 14 officers and 350 other ranks for a raid on the Vaister Spur. This was a complicated operation, planned down to the last detail, with artillery support. Once through the wire platoons each went for their individual objectives - a railway cutting, a collection of dugouts, particular trenches. According to the report it was a very quick in and out assault in strength against an enemy that was well prepared and fought hard. 5 officers and 60 other ranks, along with two machine guns, were captured, and at least 80 killed, at a cost of two men killed, five missing and 48 wounded, including five officers. A more detailed account of this action, extracted from an article prepared by Scott Flaving, follows.

## The Vaister Spur Raid

On the night 26/27<sup>th</sup> August 1918, the Battalion, commanded by Lt Col Lethbridge, mounted a raid on the Austrian front line, as outlined in the following extracts from the Unit War Diary:

**SECRET "A"**

**MINOR OPERATION**

**ORDER NO. FIFTY TWO**

BY LT COL F W LETHBRIDGE DSO

COMMANDING 10th BTN DUKE OF

WELLINGTON'S REGT Ref Map CAMPOVERE,  
1.10,000

1. **INTENTION** The Battalion simultaneously with a Battalion of the Forty Eight Div on the right, will carry out a raid on MANCHESTER and MIDDLESEX TRENCHES, the RAILWAY CUTTING, the QUARRY and all the dugouts, trenches, etc. in the area.

2. **COMPOSITION OF PARTIES** The raid will be carried out by three parties under the command of Capt R Bolton MC, Capt J E Payne MC and 2Lt W J Simpson respectively. The parties will be made up as follows -"A" Party 2Lt Simpson and 2Lt W F J Thomson with two platoons (seventy other ranks) of B Coy "B" Party - Capt R Bolton, MC, Lt A Neill, Lt A A Jackson, 2Lt G C Sugden & 2Lt E E Ison with three platoons (ninety other ranks) of A Coy and one platoon (thirty other ranks) of C Coy. "C" Party - Capt Payne, MC, Lt V Edwards MC, 2Lt E K Waite MC, 2Lt M A S Wood and 2Lt B Garside with three platoons (ninety other ranks) of D Coy and one platoon (thirty other ranks) of C Coy. The report on the raid was as follows.

### REPORT ON RAID CARRIED OUT BY 10th DUKE OF WELLINGTON'S REGIMENT ON THE NIGHT 26-27 AUG, 1918

1. The 3 raiding Coys formed up without incident about 300 yds from the enemy's front line.
2. At 10.40pm the barrage commenced and the raiding party advanced to the attack.
3. The movements of the various parties were as follows: (a) Left Company - after some difficulty with the wire which was insufficiently out, this Coy broke into the enemy front line at H.465.550. After mopping up an enemy post in the front line the Coy broke up into platoons with separate objectives. One platoon advanced and captured the railway cutting at H.460.583 and the proceeded to the road at H.462.586. About 12 large dugouts and shelters were cleared by this platoon, many enemy being killed and captured. One platoon mopped up the enemy front line as far as LITTLE SPUR, dealing with several enemy posts and a defensive flank was



The forming up point for the Vaister Spur raid



The position of Battalion HQ during the raid



Henry Bolton, great nephew of Captain Bolton MC who led the B Party, with Dr Bill Smith, who accompanied Scott Flaving on his visit to Italy and the Piave battlefields

established at LITTLE SPUR. Subsequently the enemy attempted a bombing attack from CANOVE, but was repulsed with loss by Lewis Gun fire from this post. One platoon attached the railway at H.470.580 but was met with very strong machine gun fire and only a few men succeeded in reaching the objective. One platoon remained in support.

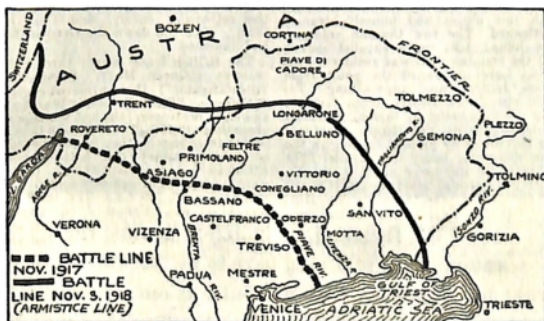


(b) Centre Coy - One platoon attacked and captured railway at H.47.580 and to road at H.490.590. This platoon cleared many dugouts, getting many prisoners and killing many more. One platoon took Quarry at H.485.576 in which only a few enemy remained alive. Two platoons attacked the railway cutting at H.493.573. This was very strongly held by riflemen and four machine guns. The first attack failed, both officers being wounded. The CSM then organised a second attack, which although pushed through with great gallantry did not succeed, the CSM himself being badly wounded. Eventually the two platoons took up a position in shell holes facing the enemy, and by rifle and Lewis Gun fire kept this position engaged.

(c) Right Company - All four platoons succeeded in reaching the trench and railway on POST SPUR. Several strong enemy posts were mopped up, and prisoners taken, but the main body of the enemy retired towards GAIGA N. From here and from CODA SPUR a most intense machine gun fire was opened on POST SPUR and this suffered considerably.

### The end of the Italian Campaign.

The front was quiet until the end of the month, when the allies mounted a major offensive to force passage of the River Piave. The river itself was deeper than expected and men were swept away and drowned, and considerable resistance was encountered, and the whole operation was carried out under artillery fire. . But the men pressed on, taking one objective after another, and capturing 1400 prisoners, two field guns, three infantry guns, 38 machine guns and quantities of stores. Three officers and 22 other ranks were killed, and 71 wounded. The advance continued with the enemy withdrawing before them, but still fighting, until 3<sup>rd</sup> November when an armistice was signed, stipulating a complete Austrian and German withdrawal from Italy, and free movement along Austrian roads towards Germany.



Map showing the ground gained from November 17 to November 18



This photograph shows the sprawling nature of the River Piave, which covers a wide area in a series of streams, and can flood quickly as water rushed down the high ground nearby. It was deeper and faster flowing during the crossings in October, 1918, where Capt Henry Kelly VC MC was awarded his second MC

### The Armistice

Marshal Foch, Commander in Chief of Allied Armies, summoned representatives of the German government to his railway carriage in the Compiègne forest to lay down the conditions for peace. On the allied side only the British, First Sea Lord Admiral Weymss with his Deputy; and the French, Foch himself and General Weygand, his Chief of Staff with a small staff were present. For Germany two politicians Erzberger and Von Oberndorff and General Von Winterfeld of the German Army.



Marshal Foch's train in which the Armistice was signed. The British were represented by the First Sea Lord, Admiral Rosslyn Weymss. None of the other allies were present, and the German delegation was relatively unknown. The Germans had some ideas of a negotiation but were firmly slapped down by Foch, who laid down terms and demanded that they be accepted.

This is not the place to set out the terms of the German surrender, but they were comprehensive, detailed and demanded total surrender. Quickly dispelling any ideas the German delegation had of any form of negotiation, Foch laid down his conditions. It was signed at 5.00 am on 11 November, to come into effect at 11.00 am.



**The Armistice representatives, with Foch and Weymss centre foreground**

## **WITH THE 76<sup>TH</sup> IN INDIA – THE JOURNEY HOME**

On 16<sup>th</sup> February 1806 the 76<sup>th</sup> Regiment embarked on the Lady Castlereagh, an Indiaman vessel belonging to the East India Company, captained by Thomas G Murray. It had been on campaign for eighteen years, with a remarkable record of success under the generalship of Force Commander General Gerard Lake and Colonel Monson. Whereas now we think little of international travel, hopping on and off aeroplanes with ease, long distance travel was both wearisome and often dangerous in those days. As was the custom the men were offered the option of staying in India by transferring to another regiment, and many took the chance to do so.

An Indiaman, laden with spices and other exotic and valuable cargo, was a tremendous prize for a French naval captain, and a French squadron lurked in the general area of Isle de France (now Mauritius) and thus posed a considerable threat. Every cargo had a great value and the Board of Directors of the East India Company were extremely loath to lose one. Thus their ships sailed as a fleet and had some ability to defend themselves, although the Royal Navy was frequently tasked with escort duties. On this occasion the fleet consisted of three other company ships, and then at St Helena they were joined by seven more East Indiamen, escorted by two ships of the line, Tremendous 74 and

Hindoostan 50, the former with the fleet's commodore on board.

On 20 April, with the coast of South African Natal in sight, Tremendous signaled "enemy in sight", and gave chase to the French vessel *Cannoniere*. By mid-afternoon long range shots were being exchanged, followed by close action, all at three miles and more distance from the 76<sup>th</sup> aboard the *Lady Castlereagh*. When Tremendous returned she seemed to be in some distress, having suffered damage to her rigging, whilst the Frenchman hoist all sail and shot away. On this occasion the Royal Navy, with greatly superior forces, did not distinguish itself.

Lieutenant John Ship aboard one of the Indiamen with a good view of the action wrote "The Frenchman tacked, turned and twisted, but it was of no use. He therefore resorted to his natural cunning, shortened sail, and at last backed main topsail and waited until the English vessel came within pistol shot. The Commodore, conceiving that the Frenchman was about to strike (her colours, ie to surrender) did not wish to injure her and therefore would not fire. The French captain availed himself of this interval and gave the Tremendous a whole broadside... (at which he) up helm and off he started. The Commodore at last got his ship's broadside to bear and nearly tore her out of the water... however she made good her escape.... Captain Brusée a French prisoner of war and a passenger (on Lt Ship's vessel), danced with ineffable delight, natural enough but not very pleasant to the sight of an Englishman".

After four months and twenty four days the fleet arrived at South Foreland, disembarked at Long Reach, and marched to Dartford. The Regiment's Indian adventure, for which it was raised and during which it earned great glory, was concluded. Our much loved



**HMS Tremendous in action against the *Cannoniere*; she is seen here to be attempting to rake her opponent with fire but was outmaneuvered and had the worst of the exchange. The other ship in the picture on the right is one of the Indiamen, although its presence at the battle is said to be artist's licence as the rest of the fleet was some miles away.**

elephant and the "Hindoostan" sub-title are a permanent reminder of its achievements.

### A FIRST HAND ACCOUNT OF WATERLOO

A letter from Ensign Short to his Mother, written on 19 June 1815.

It is four years since the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the great Battle of Waterloo, which brought peace to western Europe after twenty years of struggle against Bonaparte, and since this Journal carried any information of the action. Thanks to Colonel Peter Mitchell and the Odiham Society Journal we are able to reproduce the first-hand account of Ensign Short a sixteen year old officer in the Coldstream Guards, who was present at both Quatre Bras and Waterloo. This letter to his Mother was written on 19<sup>th</sup> June 1815, and not surprisingly Mr Short confines himself to events in which he was personally engaged, or saw directly for himself.

The Coldstream was formed on 13th August 1650, as Colonel Monck's Regiment of Foot, and the history of its campaigning through the succession of wars from the late seventeenth century onwards quite closely mirrors those of the 33<sup>rd</sup> and 76<sup>th</sup>. It was, for example at Dettingen and Fontenoy, was sent north to deal with the Jacobite '15, was engaged in the American War of Independence, and fought in the Peninsular, before deploying at Quatre Bras. The Regiment's name commemorates General Monck's raising of a small army at that fairly modest place on the north bank of the Tweed, in Scotland during the English Civil War.

Letter from Lieutenant CW Short, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards.

"My dear Mother,

I hope you will excuse my not writing to you before, but since we left Enghien on Friday morning at 3o'clock I have not had the least opportunity. We received orders to march at one in the morning, in consequence of Bonaparte's having crossed the Frontiers and attacked the Prussians. Col. Woodford was at a ball with Lord Wellington at Brussels when the news came and they all set off directly for their different posts and arrived at them about the time we were ordered to start, in their ball dresses. We marched at 3.o'clock (the 16<sup>th</sup>) thro' Brielle-Compte, where we halted for about four hours, and then towards Nivelles and were going to bivouac, when we heard cannon firing on the other side of Nivelles. We then marched forward and reached the place of action at Quatre Bras at about half past 7 - having marched 25 miles since 3 in the morning - the men were very much fagged indeed.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade of Guards being in the front, went into action immediately, and in a very little time lost 500 men and nearly 30 officers killed and wounded between the two battalions. Our Brigade was drawn up on a road on the left of a thick wood (Bois de Bopie) to be ready to

relieve the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade and about half past 8 we received orders to march thro' the wood in line and charge the French on the other side. However they retired, beat throughout the day by the English, Brunswickers and Dutch tho' not half our army had arrived. The Belgians ran at the 1<sup>st</sup> shot. We then retired to our position and I being the first for duty went on to the out-lying piquet, it being the first time I was on this duty and no one to direct me. I kept a sharp lookout and did the best I could by placing my Sentries to give the alarm in case any attack should be made.. The night however passed off very well, tho' the groaning of the wounded was rather disagreeable or so, for the first time.

I was very hungry the next morning having had nothing to eat since 10 o'clock the day before but a ship biscuit. I was called in about 4 o'clock. I then went to sleep and awoke about half past 5, when I found that Whittaker had sent me some Bread and Meat and a bottle of Brandy, which I assure you was a great comfort, not being able to draw Rations.

Lord Wellington, who had not pulled off his ball dress commanded and we found it necessary to make retrograde movement, rather to the left to communicate with the Prussians, who had been attacked and beat the French back, but they made an attack in the middle of the night with the whole of the cavalry and broke the Prussians who retreated in consequence. We also retreated (the 17th) to a position about 8 miles on the other side of Genappe in the direct road to Brussels. The name of the place I do not know, you will see it in the Gazette, and it will be remembered by Europe as long as Europe is Europe.

We had just arrived, pitched our blankets etc. and the men began to make themselves comfortable, when commanding was heard and the Rear Guard was engaged with the French. The Rear Guard was composed of cavalry who came up in the night. The French took up a position opposite ours. Our Right rested on a wood in which the Light Infantry of our Division was posted it being most likely that we'd be the point the French would make their the attack on. Our Brigade was on the right of the first line, on a hill above a wood. We were under arms the whole night expecting an attack and it rained to that degree that the field where we were was half way up our legs in the mud. I with another officer had a Blanket and with a little more Gin, we kept up very well. We had only one fire and you cannot conceive the state we were in.

We formed a hollow square and prepared to receive cavalry twice but it was a false alarm both times.

*Ensign Short's letter will be concluded in the next edition.*

## IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE REGIMENT – BY BONGO.

When I took on the editorship of the Iron Duke from John Greenway in 2006 I quickly realised that I would have to write quite a lot of the copy myself. Any vision I may have had of a full in-tray of articles from which to choose was rapidly dispelled. So I asked myself what would suit both me and the task of producing a twice yearly journal for the Regiment, then for the Association (no “company notes”), and came up with the happy idea of tramping round accessible bits of northern Europe – France, Belgium, Holland and the nearest corner of Germany, following in the footsteps of our Regiment, in its various forms from 1702 onwards.

A bit of forward scheduling enabled me to arrive, 100 years on in historical terms and 8 years on for me as editor, in the Spring 2014 edition with an article on Mons and Le Cateau 1914. From there I could try to keep pace with the progress of the war, so that now, in September 2018, I have been researching and writing about the end of the Great War. Waterloo 200 came in the middle of this, so 2015 was a bumper year for material, and Wellington’s great victory provided some relief for the awful events of 1915 on the Western Front. Some reflections on my 12 years of walking with the shades of our men in fields and woods (and quite often in new housing estates or round the perimeter fences of factories) and latterly visiting their graves in CWGC Cemeteries, mostly close to where they died, may appear in a future article.

Plenty has been written about all the earlier European Wars, and certainly lots of people know a great deal about WW1, forests have been felled for the books written about it and film and TV studios have produced all manner of excellent material, with rows of experts only too ready to tell the story. So to write something about all this for our Journal did not have to involve leaving one’s desk. But where’s the fun in that? My own ignorance was shameful, but how to change that at affordable cost, and enjoy it?

So I persuaded my son to go half shares in a Bongo. I have mentioned this friendly beast once or twice in my articles, notably when it broke down with a burst radiator in the pouring rain at night on the Antwerp by pass – surely one of the busiest stretches of road in northern Europe – when I found that I had invalidated my breakdown insurance by not telling them I was going abroad. Oh yes, and the satnav and clock had packed up due to an electrical fault in the lighter socket.

I did not condemn my old friend for a single failure; especially as it led to a pleasant night in a hotel in Antwerp, a large steak and a bottle of Malbec in an Argentinian restaurant. I may have mentioned this before but in the Cathedral, an impressive building filled with huge paintings by Antwerp’s favourite son, Pieter Paul

Rubens, hung one of his paintings of the Virgin ascending to Heaven. Captions in three languages, English, French and German. Thus....

The Virgin ascends to Heaven - La Vierge accède au ciel - Maria Himmelfahrt. Well it made me laugh. Still does!

A Bongo is, in short, a Mazda people carrier and they are imported to Europe (Russia, Poland and UK are the best markets apparently, which tells you something if you think about it) and is often converted here to a minimalist camper van. It offers a bed below and one above in a raised roof, both of almost adequate comfort, a sink and a cooker, hitched to a quite powerful engine and AWD. There are no “facilities”, which prevents the more fastidious members of one’s family wanting to borrow it for frivolous purposes, like weekends camping and holidays. Other men had sheds on their allotments; I had a Bongo. For somewhat south of £5K I was free to roam at modest cost, camping wherever there seemed little likelihood of being woken by a policeman or an angry farmer, demanding to know what I was doing there. Even supermarket car parks at times. They are very tolerant “over there”.

Tour de France following, load and bicycle carrying, golf group jolly with all the stuff, the Bongo is made for such things. And, most importantly, visiting battle sites. The furthest I got to were Dettigen, near Frankfurt, Willemstadt in the Netherlands on the Maas Estuary and St Malo (a rare right turn at Calais), as I vicariously fought in such wars as Spanish Succession, Austrian Succession, the Seven Years War, the Revolutionary Wars, the Napoleonic Wars, and of course the first and second World Wars. The very late and very early (and therefore cheap) ferries, starting just an hour down the road from here, got quite used to us.

All good things come to an end and my back was starting to quibble at hard lying, so I sold it last year to a keen young couple from Milton Keynes who, I sincerely hope, are having as much fun with it as I did. Having quite recently “downsized” houses with the loss of my veggie patch I now have an allotment, and find myself looking at sheds. Sad really.



**The Bongo – a friendly beast**

# REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

President: Brigadier AD Meek CBE.

General Secretary: Major J Hogg, Bankfield Museum, Boothtown Road, Halifax HX3 6HG.  
Telephone 01422 356795.

## BRANCHES

**Halifax/Bradford:** 7.00 for 7.30pm second Tuesday of each month in the Saville Room, North Bridge Leisure Centre, Halifax. Secretary: Mr P. R. Taylor, 7 Amy Street, Ovenden, Halifax, West Yorkshire, HX3 5QB.

**Huddersfield:** 8.00pm last Friday of each month at WOs & Sgts Mess; TA Centre, St Paul's Street, Huddersfield. Secretary: Mrs P. Harley, 55 Daws Royd, Almonbury, Huddersfield HD5 8SN.

**Keighley:** Details of Branch meetings can be obtained from the Branch Secretary, Mr Dave Connor, 07258 672114.

**Sheffield:** 8.00pm second Tuesday of each month at WOs' & Sergeants' Mess, 38 Signals Regiment, Manor Top, Sheffield. Secretary: Mr C. Withers, 18 Wheel Lane, Grenoside, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S35 8RN.

**Skipton:** Details of Branch meetings can be obtained from the Secretary, Mrs Mary Bell, telephone 01756 790155, email m\_bell2@talk21.com.

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

## Skipton Branch

On 16 June the Branch held its annual Waterloo Dinner at the Skipton Golf Club. We had no chief guest this year but had the Chairman of Craven District Council, Councillor Wendy Hull, and her consort, daughter Miss Claire Lindblom. We had 68 guests and had music by Mr Tim Clark the Sax Man. There was also a raffle. Everyone enjoyed the evening.

On Sunday the 17<sup>th</sup> members of the Branch and friends attended the morning service at the Holy Trinity Church where the Skipton Branch unveiled a plaque which it had donated with a short history of the Regiment. The Rector, Veronica James, blessed the plaque. It is now with the laid up Colours of the 1/6<sup>th</sup> and 2/6<sup>th</sup> Battalions. We have now a little corner within the Holy Trinity Church which will always be the Regimental Corner for the Dukes in Skipton.



L to R Derek Green, Gordon Bell, Barry Blood and Revd. Veronica James.



The Plaque and framed short history of the Regiment."

# Obituaries

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

## WO2 Alan Simpson



**Alan Simpson (on the right) with Major General Donald Isles and RSM Dave Hughes**

*(This obituary should have appeared in the last edition and I apologise for its late inclusion –Editor)*

Alan Simpson was born in Spenborough on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1941, the eldest of eight children. The family soon after moved to Middleton, Leeds where he lived throughout his childhood and went to school.

He left school at 15 and worked as a butcher in Leeds before joining the Army in 1959 at the age of 18. After completing his recruit training at the Yorkshire Brigade Depot he joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, the Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire in Gibraltar. He, as a particularly fit young soldier and keen sportsman, was soon identified as PTI material returning to the UK to do a Physical Training Instructors course in 1961. By the time he had finished the course the battalion had moved to BAOR and were based at Wuppertal where he rejoined them. It was there that he met Anne Munnelly who, as

an adventurous young girl had left home in Scotland with a friend to see the world and was working in the NAAFI. They returned to Scotland to marry before Alan was posted to the Army Apprentices College in Harrogate as a PTI.

After Harrogate it was back to the battalion by then half way through a year long tour in Aden and then Colchester. It was while the battalion was on exercise in Colchester that they were urgently recalled from a very wet exercise in the middle of the night, to return home where Anne frantically sought to dry his kit before the battalion embarked for Northern Ireland as the first unit to be deployed on the streets of Belfast at the start of the 'Troubles'. It was to be the first of many Northern Ireland tours. From Ireland it was onto Cyprus before returning to the UK to do the drill instructors course at Pirbright followed by the RMAS instructors' course. Though he was not selected for instructing at RMAS, only the first two were selected and he came third, they were courses he thrived on and they set a pattern for the rest of his military career where he always prided himself on being immaculately turned out and setting a standard for others to follow.

Having completed the Drill and RMAS Instructors' courses he decided he did not want to return to Cyprus and with this chose to rebadge to the Dukes joining 1DWR in Catterick after their return from Hong Kong and with this another tour in Northern Ireland as Platoon Sergeant for a brand new young subaltern, Andrew Meek, who particularly welcomed his steady guidance on his first operational tour as well as the warning tale about how Alan lost the top of his index finger by inserting it into the breach of an SMG at the wrong moment.

The next tour, only some 8 months later, he was given command of 1 Platoon, Alma Company. While the rest of the battalion was in South Armagh Alma Company was deployed independently first to Londonderry and Strabane ending their tour with a particularly 'lively' time in the Ballymurphy, Belfast. It was for his time as a platoon commander in Belfast that Alan was awarded an MID.

After the tour it was back to Catterick, on to Ballykelly for the 18 month 'residential tour' and then Aldershot as

CQMS for Burma Company. It was in Minden that he was promoted to Company Sergeant Major for Burma with Johnny Walker as his OC. In the summer of 1977 he completed yet another tour to Northern Ireland where Johnny was greatly indebted to him for the well of leadership, management and operational experience that he brought with him which he had built up through his many years of working in the Province. On the Battalion's return to Catterick in 1980 he moved to the Training Wing and with this the all-important role of overseeing the drill training for the battalion as it prepared for the presentation of new Colours and guard duties at Buckingham Palace. Alan retired from the Regular Army in October 1981 and then took an NRPS

post as CQMS for C Company 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Yorkshire Volunteers in Huddersfield where he was to remain until his full retirement in June 2000 after 38 years in uniform.

Throughout his career Alan was a keen and accomplished sportsman as a young soldier he boxed for 1 PWO in 1960 and in 1966, he represented the Army at basketball, badminton and cross country running and was trialled for the army in swimming and water polo – a most impressive range of sporting abilities. But above all he will be remembered for his warm personality, absolute dedication to being a professional soldier and with this his immaculate turn out whatever the occasion.

### Colonel Hugh Le Messurier



**Colonel George Kilburn presents the Legion D'Honneur to Colonel Hugh**

These two tributes were given at Colonel Hugh's funeral service by firstly Brigadier Michael Bray, and secondly by his daughters, Jacquie and Susie. He died on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2018.

Brigadier Bray said "It is a privilege to be asked to say a few words in tribute to Hugh on behalf of the Duke of Wellington's Regiment, but since most of you will not be familiar with the Regiment, I want to begin with a short introduction to it.

The 33<sup>rd</sup> of Foot, all regiments had numbers not names originally, was raised in 1702 and was the regiment in which Arthur Wellesley did most of his active soldiering. Hence, when he died, Queen Victoria ordered that the 33<sup>rd</sup> was to be renamed the Duke of Wellington's Regiment in his memory. And so it remained until 2006 when sadly it was amalgamated and the name, and much else, was lost. This was deeply felt by many of us, and

no one more than Hugh, who like many others joined to follow a family tradition in a close-knit tribe. The Regiment was always known as the Dukes, and so were its members. I would not like you to think that we were all members of the House of Lords.

Hugh joined the Dukes in 1939. I am not going to go through his 30 year military career in detail but I do want to relate where he served; it is a remarkable list: Iceland, France, Holland, Belgium, Germany, Egypt, Sudan, Palestine, Bermuda, Korea, Gibraltar, Aden, Rhodesia, Kenya, Cyprus, Northern Ireland, Yugoslavia and of course the UK.

So much for travel, what of the man.

In 1957, I joined his company during a quiet period in Belfast. I think that Hugh cannot have been much challenged by the task; after all he had commanded a company 12 years before in the War. Furthermore, he was very well supported. The 2ic was Peter Hoppe, the finest officer boxer the British Army ever had. The mere mention of the possibility of an interview with Peter caused the most truculent soldier to fall into line immediately; Not that I think Peter actually ever struck anyone outside the ring. And the CSM was Walter Robins, in my opinion the best soldier the Regiment produced since WW2. Hugh presided, a good humoured, unflappable, father figure.

Walter tells me that Hugh was puzzled by one challenge: sandbags. The police thought trouble was coming and wanted us to stack sandbags around their stations. The politicians thought this might be provocative and said the sandbags were to be inside the police stations, leaving little room for the policemen. Soldiering in Ireland is never straightforward.

We did have one excitement. One night the siren in the clock tower in our barracks went off in the middle of

the night and by 0200 we were all ready to go. But no one could establish where or why, so we went back to bed. The same thing happened two nights later. A close inspection was made of the tower and it was discovered that the Regiment, for the first time in its history had been paraded by a mouse that had chewed through some wires and caused the alarm. We never discovered whether the mouse was Protestant or Catholic. I think it was French. Napoleon's revenge.

Shortly afterwards, by chance, Hugh and I both worked in the big military HQ in Aden. Hugh worked for a ferociously intelligent Colonel Willison, who also had a ferocious temper, as I knew because I crewed for him dinghy racing. I have never forgotten him telling me that Hugh was the best staff officer he had ever worked with; a tribute indeed from a man who became a four star general.

Hugh told me quite recently a rather nice story from Normandy, where the Dukes were alongside the 6<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division, of which my Father, also a Duke, was chief of staff. Shortly after D Day my Pa visited the Dukes on the scrounge for equipment, theirs having been scattered by high winds far and wide. I expect they needed wine glasses for the Div HQ. Hugh, the CO Felix Wilsey and my Pa were standing chatting by Hugh's trench when the Germans started shelling the area. First into the trench was my Pa, second the CO and Hugh was left saying, "that's my trench and there's no room for me." To which my Pa replied: "Go and find a better one."

Hugh's soldiers did once get the better of him. Walter tells me that the Company was tasked to carry out a search of a rural area for hides where terrorists might have hidden weapons. Hugh gave this operation the codename "Invitation Hunt." But he explained to the men in some detail the term's use in the fox hunting world. Imagine the scene, shortly after first light, with the Company spread across a hill side in a long line; Hugh gave the word to go. The men set off all barking loudly like hounds in full cry. Nothing Hugh could do would stop the racket, and he was not amused!

Of Hugh's life after he left the Army and came to live up here, we should really be hearing from General Charles Huxtable, a close neighbour, but unfortunately, he is temporarily excused boots, as we said in the Army, and so I quote from him.

"The thing that really distinguished Hugh from the rest of us was his amazing sense of duty. Any organisation of which Hugh was a member obtained his complete support- be it the family, The Regiment, the RBL, The Korean Veterans Association, Hugh never held back with

his support. Whereas most of us would from time to time excuse our absence from some meeting or other with the thought, Oh, they won't miss me, I do not need to go, Hugh never did. He and Rosemary over the years demonstrated their loyalty and sense of duty to the Korean Veterans by always attending the two or three day gathering at Scarborough each year. Whereas most of us certainly including me would excuse ourselves with the thought, we do not need to go, plenty there without us. Anything to which Hugh belonged got his full support and there was never any question of finding excuses for not attending an event that he thought it was his duty to attend. It was a long, continuous and remarkable demonstration of an all-powerful sense of duty that I so admired."

Hugh was mentioned in despatches, really the equivalent of a decoration, after D Day and in Korea, but then there was the icing on the cake in 2014, when the French President awarded all those who had taken part in the liberation of France and were still alive, membership of the Legion D'Honneur. An act of typical French generosity, unlikely to be emulated in Whitehall. If Yorkshire had its own legion d'honneur, which it should have, Hugh would not have been a mere chevalier, he would have been a knight grand cross for services to the community.

Hugh was a man of great ability but he exercised it with disarming modesty and good humour. On his official Army record of service, part of which he had to fill in, he crossed out the heading "Education" and wrote in "semi educated." Typical Hugh!

So long as there are Dukes alive who knew Hugh and Rosemary, they will be remembered with affection; we will think of them with a smile and they will remain a source of inspiration to us all.

Next May, when the Regiment unveils a very fine statue in Halifax to commemorate 304 years of service to the Nation, I will be thinking of Hugh."

His daughters said "How does one distil 97 amazing years into just a few minutes? Last year when Dad was 96 he read an article in the paper that said that grumpy people are more likely to get Alzheimer's. "I suppose I can add that to my list now" he muttered darkly. It was pointed out that if he hadn't got it by now he never would. "I was always a late developer" came his quick reply!"

Our parents met in Egypt during the war and they married in 1948. They made a great team. Dad missed Rosie dreadfully when she went into the Care Home but he made sure he went to see her at least five days a week.



Both their faces lit up with joy when they saw each other. It was always hard to part. He was determined to outlive her as she would have been too confused to know where he had gone. In fact he died the day before their 70<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary and we like to think that he made it up to his beloved Rosie just in time.

She was his great love followed closely by the Duke of Wellington's Regiment, his spaniels and then us - we came last on the pecking order! The Regiment recently made much of him at a ceremony in Huddersfield where he was presented with the Legion d'Honneur.



**Hugh with his much loved dogs**

Dad has had a long, happy and fulfilled life, short of fathering a boy! He eventually acquired 2 terrific sons-in-law and he has since been blessed with 1 grandson, 5 granddaughters, 5 great grandsons and 2 beautiful great granddaughters.

Dad was a one off as I'm sure you would agree. He was sharp as a tack and this led to much frustration for him recently as his body was not functioning as well as his mind. He was an excellent communicator and genuinely enjoyed meeting people of all ages. He kept up regularly with some primary school chums in Newfoundland where he was brought up. From boarding school in England, he would return for the school holidays and this period of his life left a lasting love for all things Newfoundland. His Grandfather wrote the lyrics to Newfi's most iconic song titled 'We'll Rant and We'll Rave Like True Newfoundlanders' which is still belted out every day on Canadian Radio stations.

As children our adventures, thanks to them, were many and varied – flying over Victoria Falls in a Tiger Moth and taking a boat out on the almost completed Kariba Dam to watch the last of the animals being rescued and to see the tops of the trees disappearing under the water for ever – an unforgettable experience. He said that he

took us out of school (in what was then Rhodesia) so that we would remember these adventures as being altogether more educational than school work - it was debatable as to whether the teachers agreed but looking back, he was right.

In the 60s, he was posted to Belgrade, Yugoslavia as Military Attaché taking us on trips around the country in the school holidays, sleeping in a rather floppy blue tent with buckets and bowls catching the various leaks. Dad would shake his head with shame as everyone round us managed to have taut, dry tents!

During his 70s, he was greatly involved in the British Yugoslav Society and twice drove across Europe in a rented truck during the war in the former Yugoslavia, to bring medical aid to the Red Cross. He then decided to go and help save Rwanda when that country was in the middle of turmoil. He was 78 and under Mum's disapproving gaze, he flew out with much needed equipment. After that, he bowed to her wishes and stayed at home. He worked hard to keep up his Serbia Croatian language skills whilst also learning Spanish.

Dad was a countryman at heart; in his younger days he went beagling. He had always been a keen fisherman and in more recent years, it gave him great pleasure to be able to teach youngsters to fish. Sadly for him, his teenage daughters didn't share his passion for the sport. After he retired from the Army he became Range Commandant in Catterick. He ran the Catterick Shoot where he somehow balanced the need for short term Army training and long term pheasant welfare. He liked nothing more than walking the moors with his spaniels.

Apart from his family and dogs, Dad was keenly involved with the Salmon and Trout Association, The Royal British Legion, The Korean Veterans Association and, as previously mentioned, the British Yugoslav Society. He worked tirelessly for them all and thoroughly enjoyed his connection with everyone in these organisations.

As recently as November, he went down to London to attend a black tie Regimental Dinner, Golden Wedding Anniversary and a visit to an old Sandhurst friend. "Mission accomplished" he would mutter after each event.

After being diagnosed with cancer two years ago, he faced life with great stoicism. He enjoyed living in Masham finding the church and towns-people very warm and welcoming. He made many friends here and we really must thank everyone for their huge generosity towards him over the years and especially lately. Since his fall in January, he has been looked after by a

wonderful team. Their care and kindness was outstanding and he grew to love each one. In the many cards and letters we have received, for which we are enormously grateful, he was called a true gentleman in every sense, full of courtesy and a lovely man. He faced his end with serenity and courage and as another friend said "I hope

Colonel Hugh is given a decent send off, he was a soldier and a good one at that!"

Let's celebrate his wonderful long life and keep him in our memories. Sleep tight Dad ..... you have earned your rest.

### Fred Hilton Crowther



**Fred Crowther and with his comrades, Korea 1953. Fred is standing on the left of the group photo as you look at it**

Fred was born in Wakefield on 8<sup>th</sup> April 1933, and was raised in Painthorpe. Fred spent much of his early years on the family farm 'Broad Oaks' at Churwell, Morley.

Fred joined 'The Dukes' as a National Serviceman and served in Germany. He later served in the Korean War and was eventually discharged where he returned to his wife and a new home in Eastmoor.

On leaving the Army Fred became a 'bricklayers' labourer' and being very fit and strong even had an extra-large 'hod' made for him, so that he could carry more bricks. Fred's hobbies were cricket, caravanning and big cars and horse racing.



In 1982 Fred and his family including wife and 2 sons moved to Crofton. Fred's wife and partner for 65 years passed away in September of 2016. Fred never got over the loss of his wife and his health deteriorated until his death on 11<sup>th</sup> of August 2018.

Rest in Peace Fred – Virtutis Fortuna Comes

### Major Chuck Ivey

Chuck Ivey, who served in the 1st Battalion in the 70s and 80s stayed on in Zimbabwe after a tour at the in-country British Military Advisory and Training Team, basing himself in Harare. He pursued a number of business interests. He was murdered at his house in the Greenslade District by the boyfriend of his maid, who thought he had just been to the bank to collect a large sum of money which they intended to steal. The murder

occurred on 17 October 2017 when Chuck was 81. He was the author of a book, available on Amazon called "One Step at a Time; Adventures of a Simple Soldier". Any reader who knew Major Ivey during his service is invited to send in a report on his military service".



“Gerard Lake”.

Gerard Lake was an Irishman and a professional soldier who took a prominent part in the suppression of the Irish insurrection of 1798, when he was 54 years old. He led a force to confront the French and rebel army at Killala, where an initial defeat was turned into an eventual victory and the capture of the entire French force.

He had served in Germany in the Seven Years War (1756 – 1763), and in the American Revolutionary War (1775 – 1783), where he was taken prisoner at Yorktown.

He was Commander in Chief of the British Military in India from July 1801, and commanded the army that included the 76th Regiment, whose story has been serialised in this Journal for several editions, the last of which appears in this issue. He was a man of courage and fortitude who knew his own mind and followed his own judgement and inclinations even when they did not entirely match those of his superiors. The success of the 76th and the remainder of the King’s and Company’s units in his Mahratta campaign was in no small part due to his leadership.



**Grand Ravine CWGC Cemetery, just outside Havringcourt. It contains the graves of 35 Dukes, 34 from September – November 1918, and one from 1917. The 1918 casualties are mainly from the 2/4th and 5th Battalions. Havringcourt was the centre of action in the Cambrai campaign in November 1917, and had to be captured again in late 1918, during the 100 days.”**