



SHINERS CLUB NEWSLETTER
2017 EDITION THREE

Newsletter 2017 Edition 3



Chairman's Comments

Ladies and gentlemen It is my pleasure to be re-instated as Chairman of the Shiners Club and I was asked to put a little piece in the Club newsletter. First and foremost, on behalf of all members of the Shiners Club I would like to thank Tony Preston for his sterling work as past Chairman. It is with great sadness that during his tenancy as Chair he lost his dear wife. He held the Club together with his hard work and leadership. We do wish Tony all the best for his future endeavours. As the Shiners Club is a family we will always be there to help. I do know General Friedberger wrote him a letter of appreciation for his work as Chair, so he is in good company.

As you know June and I did 12 years of running the Shiners Club after John McKay died. My introduction to taking over was I met John's daughter, Janet, at a motorway services on the M62, Janet lives in Manchester and I live in Goole. She gave me a carrier bag with several pages of names and addresses of members. What we did thereafter we surfed the web to find where we could obtain various pieces of stock, jumpers, ties, T-shirts, cufflinks, etc. It was quite a challenge at first.

I did quite a few journeys to the hotel at Stockport to negotiate the price of the room and the evening meal for Saturday. The price of the meal every year never went above £12, they were very good to us. We always had a set menu every year, dare I say I would like to see that at Swindon to save time.

When I first took over the members attending Stockport were over 100 but over the years the numbers declined. It was a constant worry to get funds. The only means of revenue was the raffle and I always asked people to bring a raffle prize and, being mercenary, I always suggested they buy a minimum of £5 of tickets (1 strip) which they always did. In those early days, we sent 4 letters a year with an average of 150 letters every quarter, but eventually it had to be reduced to once a year because of the price of postage etc and with the numbers declining so was our revenue. It was a lot of work but it was very enjoyable, dealing with queries, giving advice and helping people out where I could. Help was only a phone call away. I am sure, once I get my head around it I will thoroughly enjoy the job in front of me.

I have mentioned 2 suggestions in this letter and I would like the members to look at them and consider them. I did suggest 3 years ago the management of the Crown was asked if they would offer free accommodation for one night as first prize in the raffle and Danielle was delighted at the idea. So, if you don't ask you don't get.

I have waffled on long enough. I will see you all at Swindon and you can abuse me there, but don't forget we got a medal for our efforts at Stockport!! Cheers for now. Ron

There is a lot of work involved in getting permission from authors, publishers and photos we may use. We have built up respect from publishing houses in our quest for articles we find interesting and they are more than helpful in providing information that may be of use. They are pleased to help old comrade's clubs like ours and wish us all the best. Ron Fletcher

Newsletter Printed & Edited by A.J. Powney

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Vice Chairman's Comments

When I wrote my report last year, I really thought that Tony Preston would soon recover and that I would be able to relinquish my temporary position in the New Year. Sadly, this was not to be. Tony felt that he was not able to continue so we had to accept the inevitable and his resignation. To be fair Tony did say he would offer his support for a year. I have known Tony since basic training at Catterick in 1959. We all owe Tony a great deal of thanks for his time as our Chairman and for producing our first newsletter. I do hope that he will soon feel able to get on with his life albeit with changed circumstances.

Ron Fletcher volunteered to step into the breach for a second time. However, in view of Ron's age I will remain as Vice Chairman. I am well aware that Ron resigned the last time due to advancing years and the lack of support from members. However, this time Ron has Alan and myself plus the rest of the Committee to assist him and will not need to produce and distribute our newsletter. I had hoped for a more peaceful life but in the circumstances, I am delighted to continue.

Alan will again produce our newsletter. He will then send them to me in bulk, for onward posting. Those with a computer will again receive theirs by email. If you receive this by post and have a computer, please send your email address to Alan Powney.

Thank you to Alan for all his hard work over the year.

It has recently come to my notice that not all our members realised that I hold Tenth Hussars Flags. I have held these Flags for over a year. The Flag is available, on request, for Old Comrades Funerals. Liz Bentley also holds Flags at Swindon. This does mean all Old Comrades and they do not have to belong to the Shiners Club. The only necessity is that at some stage they served with the 10th Royal Hussars. My contact details are on another page of this newsletter. There is no charge for this service as the Shiners Club pay for all postage.

This year we are dedicating some articles to the memory of members of the regiment and their families I wish all Old Comrades and their Families a very Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year. I look forward to seeing some of you at the Reunions at Cheltenham, in March and Swindon on the third Sunday in May. Sadly, we have again lost a number of Old Comrades since the last newsletter.

Ian Clements.



Committee

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Club Report



The Shiner's Club Profit and Loss Statement For the period from 01/06/2016 to 31/03/2017

31/03/2017

Income

Cheques	60.00
Clothing	104.95
Donations	20.00
PRI Sales	336.01
Raffle	265.00
Total – Income	785.96

Less: Expenses

Clothing	199.40
Flowers	60.00
Postage	100.00
Printing and stationery	160.00
Total – Expenses	519.40

Net profit (loss)

266.56

The Cheque of £60 for Flowers was cancelled as being unrepresented
The order of £104.95 for Regimental Ties was cancelled
Both of the above transactions are recorded as being both Income & Expenditure to balance the account

Roger Haydn Howell

Treasurer The Shiner's Club



RIP

**TO ALL OUR DEAR FRIENDS
WE LAID TO REST IN 2016 2017
GOD BLESS THEM ALL**

22nd November	Mike Doak
23rd December	Phillip Crutchfield
11th January	Fred Jones 10H 1956-1858
8th February	Les Cotton
13th February	Fred Kelly
3rd March	Fred Jones 10H 1960-1969 RH 1969-82
9th March	Eric Arnott
19th March	Ken Wallace
4th April	Bill Haw
13th May	CLC Leslie Esq 10H 1951-1952
24th July	Malcolm Dare
8th October	Harold Lloyd
11th October	Gordon Murdoch RAPC Att. 10H 65-69
14th October	Major D A Whittlestone 10H 38-69 RH 69-70
18th November	Bernie McGee
5th December	Peter Hill
6th December	Arthur Deverell
7th December	N J Nunes-Carvalho 10H 56-58

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Swindon Reunion

This year's reunion was one of the best at Swindon for a number of years. Thirty-seven members stayed at The Crown or other guest houses and hotels in the area. The Friday evening saw around eight enjoy a get-together during the evening. Saturday others arrived, some who had not attended before were made very welcome. The day was busy for some of the Ladies who purchased and arranged the fruit basket, raffle prizes and PRI items.

Saturday everyone enjoyed a boisterous evening meal, quite a number from A Sqn. Attending for the first time. The seating arrangement's we made were not good, which made things rather loud, we will ensure it is better in future. A later arrival was Penny and Bob Massingham, who "dropped by as they heard it was the place to be for the weekend". They also came for the Sunday and look forward to next year. Penny is Tom Knight's Daughter.

Sunday was boosted by members of all Squadron's the number being over ninety, The Crown served eighty-nine meals without a hitch, good, considering how packed the Crown was. Old comrades made Maj. Gen. John Friedberger welcome, the first reunion that John has attended, and he visibly enjoyed the day and meeting so many old comrades. The evergreens of Tom Knight and Richard Perry are always in demand and it was good to see so many just enjoying a great day. Eva, Pauline Searby, Mary Read and Catherine Robinson, with her Daughters. Pauline Sherwin, Jean Ham, Ann Doak, Yvonne Palk, Yvonne Eady, Ann Whatley, Bonny Hauxwell, Elke Smith, Joyce Hunt and Liz Bentley were just some of the wives who had a great time. I would like to mention Di and Charlie Chafe, with their Daughter Clare, Phil Crossley and Pete Edwards who would not let anything stop them coming to Swindon. As Jeff Cook said to Peter Jagger after lunch, looking around with all the people talking and laughing "it does not get any better than this"



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Swindon Reunion continued

Liz Bently was presented with a bouquet from John Friedberger and Tom Knight, for the sterling work throughout the year in arranging and making sure Swindon works. It certainly works Liz. The raffle was great with many prizes donated by many, Eva, Ann Doak, Gerry Murphy and Tony Preston to name some and of course the accommodation voucher donated by the Crown. This year there were two vouchers as Jenny and Pete Lewis could not use the voucher they won in 2016, so Dannielle honoured their generous donation, thank you.

Maybe some of the older members and National Service old comrades who have expressed interest are able to attend the next reunion, would be great. If any help is needed, please contact us. A special thanks to Dave Quigley and Steve Bull for the photos of the weekend

I would like to thank everyone for making Swindon a memorable weekend and to the staff of the Crown and those who organized and made it happen a big Ta.

There were many photos taken over the weekend, with limited space, only a few are here.

For more visit our website;

www.10thhussar.com

Alan Powney

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National Service & Basic Training Regiment

Here is a series of articles that all of us can relate to, those who were National Service had no choice. It was a rude awakening for all though, volunteers and Boys Service alike, no matter how one joined the army, there were some at Catterick who took the twenty-day option "sell the pig and buy me out", twenty quid when I joined. I heard that some young lads in civvy street were given the choice of "join the Boys Service, or you go to ..." These articles will bring back many memories of those awakening days and how we all had to adapt and adjust, and the way some opportunities arose and were used to increase ones' wealth. Funny and entertaining.

Peter Hopgood wrote the articles and is delighted to have them included in this and future Newsletters

Saturday, February 04, 2012



GOODBYE TO ALL THAT

The picture above shows the entrance to Barker Barracks just outside Paderborn in Germany - BFPO 16 it was when I was there. The forbidding building is just one of a number of barrack blocks where I spent the vast majority of my 731 days of National Service.

But today is a special day for me, as I celebrate the fact that it was 50 years ago today that I finally said goodbye to all that, my conscripted service to crown and country at last at an end. The funny thing is that, whilst I will never forget the day long journey that took me to Catterick Camp on 4th February 1960, I can't recall much about the day long journey that took me away from BFPO 16 and returned me back to civilian life on 4th February 1962

It might have been the remnants of an extended demob party that blurs my memory or the simple euphoria of recapturing my identity after relinquishing it to two years of good order and military discipline.

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National Service & Basic Training Regiment

What I do remember very clearly is the `exit interview` I had the day before with the regiment's commanding officer - an impressive and imposing colonel, who offered a number of inducements for me to sign on and become a regular soldier rather than a grudging conscript. For a fleeting second, I may have been tempted by prospects of promotion and a life of ordered regularity but then it dawned on me that the fragrant Mrs. Snopper was waiting for me in her idyllic Kentish village, along with the inviting prospect of controlling my own destiny rather than have the army control it for me. So, I declined gracefully but with genuine gratitude for the experiences I had had - some memorably good, some indescribably awful - the fortitude and resilience I had been forced to develop, the skills I had learnt and the friends I had made and would genuinely regret leaving behind.

What had started out with ten weeks of humiliating misery in the wilds of north Yorkshire had mellowed into being an almost agreeable routine in the depths of Germany - almost, but not quite. Did I have any regrets about it all? Well, I suppose I resented the conscription, especially those first few weeks of verbal abuse, pointless tasks and humiliating oppression but, having shrugged my shoulders and accepted that I had to do it, I found the National Service experience that I left 50 years ago today, was one never to be forgotten. If it had not been memorable, I wouldn't have written this on today of all days.

Peter Hopgood

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Officers of the 10th Royal Hussars (PWO)

It is surprising how little most of us know about some of our well-respected Officers, Senior Ranks and Interesting Members. So, let us start these articles with one of the most respected Commanding Officers.

We enclose the Obituaries from the Chard and Ilminster News and Major General JPW Friedberger and the thoughts of Ian Clements and Theo Hunt. Hugo Willis is delighted to give his approval to the article.



The life of Major General John Brooker Willis CB, who died on February 1, 2010, was celebrated by family and friends in a memorial service on April 7 at The Minster in Ilminster.

Born on July 28, 1926, John Willis lived a full and varied life with great enthusiasm and verve. He was respected for being firm, but fair, and loved for his charm, sense of fun and caring attitude towards others.

John Willis was born to be a soldier - however, his army career was preceded by an earlier one as a pilot and, indeed, flying remained a great passion until the day he died.

In 1944, at the age of 18, having been turned down by the Royal Navy as an apprentice engineer (for lack of teeth), he was accepted by the Fleet Air Arm, eventually becoming an acting leading naval airman. Unfortunately, before flying training had been completed, the war ended and there were no jobs for half trained pilots other than as sick berth attendants or cooks.

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Officers of the 10th Royal Hussars (PWO) cont

So, John enlisted in the Indian Armoured Corps and returned to India, where he was commissioned in April 1947 and awarded the last Sword of Honour before Partition took place. However, after Partition British officers were not required and he joined the 10th Hussars, stationed in Germany. John Willis was an outstanding soldier, rising from a highly efficient troop leader, to adjutant and squadron leader. Affectionately nicknamed Energy Ernie by his soldiers, he provided a much-respected role model for those under his command.

He was the youngest and last brevet Lieutenant Colonel in the army and took command of the 10th Hussars from 1965 to 1968. In 1977 he was promoted to Major General and became Director General of Fighting Vehicles and Engineer Equipment.

John was an excellent all-round sportsman and a natural horseman with a great love of horses and dogs. His sporting abilities proved useful to the army for whom he played hockey, trained and led the shooting team that won the Royal Cambridge Shield in 1954, captained the polo team that won the Captain's and Subaltern's competition in 1958, as well as competing at swimming, boxing, skiing, athletics and rugby for his regiment.

He retired from army life in 1981 having been made a CB and went to work as a defence advisor.

When finally, fully retired in West Sussex, John became Chairman of Midhurst Royal British Legion for whom he collected memories of World War II from people in the Midhurst area, which were published in a book, *They Also Served*. He also organised fundraising for his local village hall, took up amateur dramatics, sang in a church choir and became a West Sussex woodturner.

A final move, in 2003, was made to Clayhanger, near Wadeford, where he took great pleasure in making his vegetable garden and woodturning. He particularly enjoyed the countryside and was never happier than when out walking his whippets, chatting to anyone he came across. Following deterioration in his health, the last year of his life was spent in the excellent care of Vaughan Lee House in Ilminster. Where, nonetheless, he was still able to take charge of the resident goldfish.

A Willis family friend wrote about John: "Such a kind and warm man with such a big heart, full of humour and the joy of living - one felt better immediately on seeing him, his enthusiasm and energy was infectious. He was a special sort of man."

John Willis is survived by his wife Belinda and children Guy, Richenda, Abigail and Hugo.

Chard and Ilminster Echo

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Officers of the 10th Royal Hussars (PWO) cont

Major General JB Willis CB

10th Royal Hussars (PWO) 1947–1969

The Royal Hussars (PWO) 1969–1981

John Willis was truly a son of the Regiment. He was born when the 10th were stationed at Aldershot in 1926 and the first eleven years of his life were spent at 'regimental duty'. His father was a warrant officer in the regiment which moved first to Egypt in 1928 and then in 1930 to Meerut, followed by Lucknow, in India until late 1936.

Mr W N (Tim) Willis had enlisted as a trumpeter in the 20th Hussars in 1912, aged 15, serving in the First World War and transferring to the 10th in 1917. On moving from the Band, he was promoted rapidly, spending only one day as a sergeant for administrative reasons, before becoming Troop Sergeant Major of MG Troop under Major (later Colonel) Colin Davy, MC, also a former 20th Hussar. Tim Willis was subsequently SSM of B Squadron and RQMS during the long tour in India and after retirement from the Army in 1937 he was a longstanding member of the Tenth Hussars' Old Comrades Committee, becoming Chairman in the 1960s.

John and his sisters were evacuated to the country from London in 1940. After two years at Redhill Technical College he volunteered, aged 16, to join the Royal Navy as an apprentice engineer but was turned down due to a lack of molar teeth. However, at a second attempt in 1944, he was accepted to undergo pilot training. (It was expected that the war against Japan would take several more years and Great Britain's main contribution was to be based on aircraft carriers of the Pacific Fleet).

First it was considered important for potential pilots to become proper sailors, with training at HMS Royal Arthur and HMS St Vincent. In due course, John and his colleagues were granted the rank of Acting Leading Naval Airman prior to embarkation on RMS Queen Elizabeth in the Clyde, bound for New York. The original batch of 365 hopefuls was now only some 80 strong. Initial flying training on Stearman N2S aircraft at US Naval Air Station Bunker Hill, Indiana was to have been followed by an advanced course at Corpus Christi, Texas, but the atomic bombs dropped on Japan ended the War and the Royal Navy found itself no longer in need of new pilots.

So, disappointed but with useful experience of the wider world, John returned to England on the Queen Elizabeth only to be offered a post as Sick Berth Attendant, Cook or Writer (clerk). Fortunately, he met a Brigadier who was looking for potential officers in the Indian Army and he transferred to the Indian Army Armoured Corps Officers' Training School, Ahmednagar. John was awarded the last Sword of Honour before Partition, but British Officers were no longer needed in either Indian or Pakistani Armies. Although again disappointed, fortune at last returned him to his roots with a Commission in the 10th Royal Hussars.

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Officers of the 10th Royal Hussars (PWO) cont

Once in Germany, John quickly proved to be a highly efficient Troop Leader. Apart from a short staff tour with HQ 11th Armoured Division, he remained at Regimental Duty for 11 years, culminating in two years as Adjutant at Aqaba in Jordan and Tidworth. He was an excellent rifle shot and was Captain of the team which won the Cambridge Shield in 1954. John was also a versatile all-round sportsman.

He was in the hockey team until his last days in command and, when time permitted, he sailed for the Regiment. A good horseman, having learnt to ride in Lucknow as a boy, he was also a stalwart member of the polo team throughout his Regimental service, with a handicap of (plus) two. In 1958, with his good friend and contemporary Bernard Greenwood, John was selected for the two-year technical staff course at RMCS Shrivenham. Whilst there he met and married Belinda Firbank, a very pretty young Master of the Mendip Farmers' Foxhounds.

They returned to the 10th in Paderborn and John was a notably energetic and effective A Squadron Leader. John Robins, one of his Troop Leaders, recalled when paying tribute at the Service of Thanksgiving in Ilminster that John worked hard and played hard. 'If you made a mistake it could be costly, as a penalty came winging your way in summary fashion'. John Willis was a much respected and well-liked Squadron Leader both in barracks, for example leading the Regiment on the Guidon Parade in 1961, and in the field.

In late 1962 he was posted to Bovington to manage the trials of the problematic Chieftain tank – a hard but successful tour which destined that all his future appointments, except command, were to be technical in nature.

After attendance at the Joint Services Staff College, Latimer, John returned to the Regiment, by now based in Little Aden and with Squadrons detached around the Arabian Peninsula, to be Second-in-Command to Colonel Bill Lithgow. In this role he led the band on a successful tour to Addis Ababa, before being promoted to be one of the last Brevet Lieutenant Colonels in the Army. On 23rd July 1965, five days before his 39th birthday, he took over command of the Tenth.

He would have relished a more sharp-end tour as John was a fearless and quick-witted leader, but two months later the Regiment returned to York Barracks, Münster, with the unglamorous task of nuclear force protection. We trained as a normal armoured reconnaissance regiment and under John's command became highly effective in the role. The Air Squadron (6 Sioux helicopters) had been formed in Aden and, once in Germany, they reached full operational strength and efficiency with entirely Regimental pilots under the leadership of Nick Mylne and then David Edwards.

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Officers of the 10th Royal Hussars (PWO) cont

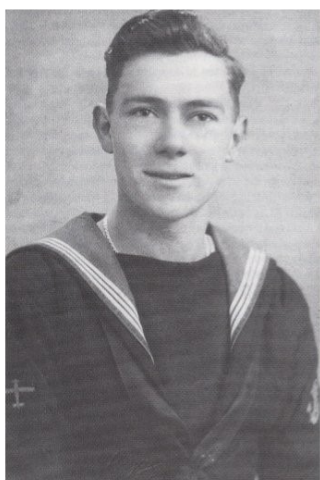
With his love of flying, John was in his element and he was a leading exponent of how helicopters and armoured forces should integrate on operations, well ahead of much contemporary thinking. Under his command, the 10th was a most happy and respected Cavalry Regiment. It was a privilege to serve as his Adjutant. Before he handed over command to his old friend Bernard Greenwood in March 1968, news arrived that the Regiment was to amalgamate with the 11th in 1969. John's positive attitude and leadership ensured that high morale and exemplary standards were maintained to contribute to the new Regiment.

By now John and Belinda had 4 children one of whom, Hugo, is a serving Officer in The King's Royal Hussars. His subsequent military career was based entirely in England at Shrivenham, in the MGO Secretariat, at the RAC Centre Bovington, and culminated in five years as Director General Fighting Vehicles and Engineer Equipment in the MOD.

After leaving the Army he was a Director with International Military Services (IMS), involving much travel, and the Willis family settled at Graffham in West Sussex before finally moving to Somerset. For John's 80th birthday, and to his great delight, his loving family treated him to a flight in a Stearman N2S plane, similar to the one he had flown over 60 years earlier.

John's military career of 37 years was unique, starting as a Naval Airman 2nd Class and finishing as a Major-General, via the Royal Navy, the Indian Army and the British Cavalry. He was greatly respected by all who served with him and he will be much missed.

JPWF



I first met John Willis when he arrived in Aden in November 1964 as Second in Command to Col Bill Lithgow. He then took over as Commanding Officer in about July 1965, for the remainder of our tour of Aden and our return to Munster after leave.

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Officers of the 10th Royal Hussars (PWO) cont

I was Part 11/111 Orders Clerk and got to know him quite well. I became ORC at Munster in about August 1966, where I remained until the Colonel gave up his tenure of Command to his old friend Bernard Greenwood in about March 1968. I fully expected him to take over an Active Brigade on the day he gave up command of the 10th Royal Hussars. However, the Regiment had rather a lot of Courts Martial in the period that I was ORC. The powers that be seemed to hold the Colonel and the RSM responsible and they were both posted in their same ranks. Although John Willis eventually reached the rank of Major General, he never again had an Active Command. I am absolutely certain that that was the Army's loss. I did not always see eye to eye with him, but he was clearly the best Commanding Officer that I ever served under. He knew everything there was to know about an Armoured Regiment and would have been well capable of doing everyone else's job, including both of mine should the need have ever arisen. Woe betide any Officer or Soldier who tried to pull the wool over his eyes.

His standards were undoubtedly higher than ours. He always seemed to be in control without the need to shout and swear. In the period that I knew him I was aware that he was still playing Hockey and Polo. I also saw him play cricket, I think about twice. Until I read the main part of this article I had no idea how many other sports he had played. However, having got to know him, I am not in the least surprised.

After we both left the Regiment I met him a number of times at Reunions and at open days of the replacement Regiments. RIP General, it was my great pleasure to have served under you.

Ian Clements.

A brief history!

Trained at Catterick 1964, Joined the 10th in Paderborn, Stationed at Tidworth, Posted to Aden, Posted to Munster, Posted to West Byfleet, Posted to Shrivenham Royal Military College of Science, Posted to Dorchester in Dorset.

Whilst in Aden and part of MT troop with Sgt Aylott as troop Sergeant I was a Jack of all trades as I drove a minibus for the medical centre, a stand-in Ambulance driver and from time to time drove a coach taking soldiers to Steamer point. For their recreation.

Whilst on my way to take up duties one day in Aden Sgt Aylott roared at me across the MT troop yard "Trooper Hunt go and get changed into your best uniform and collect the Colonel's car and go and pick him up" I was stunned as this is the dream job in the MT troop. Tom Sawyer was Colonel Lithgow's driver at the time but his time as Colonel was coming to an end and was being he was being posted to Middle Wallop in the UK in three months' time. Tom was going back three months early, so I was to be Colonel Lithgow's driver for the remainder of his tour in Aden.

Colonel Lithgow in my eyes was the Quintessential Colonel right down to his very prominent mustache and his general demeanor. All in all, a very lovely man who I got on with very, very well.

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Officers of the 10th Royal Hussars (PWO) cont

After the three months, Colonel Willis took over as Colonel of the regiment and he requested that I stay on as his driver. Colonel Willis was very different to Colonel Lithgow. He was much younger and very much more hands-on and really did not pussyfoot around and said it like it was. He used to hand me the map and drive sometimes, he flew sometimes and was a great friend of Captain Milne who was in the Army air corps and did many flights 'Upcountry' with Colonel Willis at the controls. In Aden, he was a very popular guest at dinner parties and so was involved with entertaining quite a lot. Because of entertaining I very quickly became his right-hand man or to use the correct military phrase, Batman? This suited me very well as he hadn't had much success with his own Batman employed to look after him so because we got on well it was a natural progression for me to take over those duties as well. Colonel Willis was a very particular man and liked things just so especially his wardrobe and uniform and previous Batmen found it too taxing. Two or three times whilst being entertained at the Governors home it was touch and go whether after a late night session to get back across the Causeway before curfew!

Also, while in Munster My then wife had been Employed as a cook to Lord Carnarvon of Highclere Castle since famous in the Downton Abbey Series. She left Lord Carnarvon and joined me in Munster and became the cook for the Willis family and was an important part of the household because of all the entertaining.

After two small postings to West Byfleet and Shrivenham Colonel Willis was Posted to the War Office and now he was a Major General. He had a rented property near Dorchester and commuted weekly to the war office. He promoted me to full corporal in Munster and I left the force with this rank.

My role was now more of his Butler/housekeeper as I looked after all his. Needs at the house. My role as housekeeper included breakfast cook, gardener and all things house below stairs. It was the most brilliant job. I only saw the Major General briefly each week and as long as all was well then all was well.

The Major General approached me one day and said there was a remote possibility he may be sent to California and he would be able to take me with him. I turned it down on the basis that property was shooting up in price and if I didn't get on the property ladder now I never would. As it happened the trip didn't come off and, so I got demobbed after 9 years' service.

Mrs. Willis and I hit it off from the moment we met and in all honesty, while he was at the war office I probably spent more time with her than he did, so it was a good job we did. They both allowed me to start at 7 in the morning and finish at 4 in the afternoon whilst in Dorchester, I had weekends off too which was brilliant.

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Officers of the 10th Royal Hussars (PWO) cont

The real test of how well we all got on was that I kept in touch with him until his death and I am to this day still in touch with Mrs. Willis.

As you are aware he was a brilliant Polo player and one of my jobs while in Munster was to drive two very lively Polo ponies around to various matches. He also took part in the local hunt while in Dorchester as did Mrs. Willis as she was also a very competent Horse Woman.

When he retired to Somerset he took up woodturning as a hobby and became very good at it. I actually bought him some woodturning tools as a Christmas present one year.

It was very, very sad for me to think of this very active gogetter of a man end up in a nursing home but I do know he was happy there.

I forgot to mention that he had a very devilish and wicked sense of humor! For instance! The regimental Padre turned up for a dinner party one night and at the door, the Padre said, 'Nice to see you, John, we have the same suits on, Colonel Willis quipped 'Not quite, mines pressed'

Theo Hunt



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Troop Camp

Talking to a friend recently, I was reminded of those halcyon days when we use to go on what was known as troop camps. I think we had two in my nine years with the regiment, but I might be doing the regiment a disservice, it could have been three. I think these trips were organized when the powers to be did not know what to do with us. We had polished our kit, the barrack blocks were just waiting for someone to make a commercial for television, to show house wives that this is what kleeneze products can do with added elbow grease. The Ranges had not reached the dizzy heights of the tundra yet, so there was no point sending anyone there yet, because there was insufficient dust to cover anyone or everything with the regulation six inches of crap. So! Let's get rid of a troop somewhere. My first experience of a troop camp was at the Mohne See in 62 or 63. Not sure but I do know it was the year that they stopped sending us home to Blighty by boat.



I think that I was still in 2nd troop B sqn, but not sure, the only other person that I can remember who was there was Bealer Smith. once we arrived at the camp site and had settled in we were allowed to go to the local pub to raise the alcohol levels in our blood streams. Whilst having a quiet beverage or three I took a fancy to a rather attractive ash tray, I was always on the lookout for the unusual and the Germans new how to make ash trays. When we got back to camp I was showing Smudge my trophy, he asked why I should want to pinch it and I explained, that I liked to collect the unusual ones it was a bit of a hobby if you like, he looked at me as if I was mad. The following night we returned to the same pub had a few and returned to camp. The next morning after a hearty breakfast we were tidying up when the police arrived and wanted to speak to the officer who was in charge, he then wanted the troop on parade, where he told us that the key to the toilets in the pub were missing, and if they were handed back nothing more would be said. Bealer handed them in and said he had pocketed them by mistake. When we were back in the tent I asked him why he had pinched the keys and he replied, that he had thought about what I had said the night before and he had decided that he would save keys to toilet doors, as his hobby. Following this the week went rather quickly and quietly until the final night, where a few of us decided to come with me to a rather decent pub on the opposite side of the reservoir which did rather good grub and booze, whilst we

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Troop Camp continued

were about half way thru the evening we were joined by a couple of gunners from some R.A. Regiment who were swanning about in a Champ and liked the look of the pub and decided to pop in for a quick one.

Do I need to say more? A few hours later half cut, we decided to head home back to our base and talked the two gunners into giving us a lift back, cos it was a bloody long way. They agreed as long as we gave them some fuel as they did not think they had enough to get back to where they were camped. Now prior to going on this troop camp I had bought a new pair of shoes, because a week later I was going home on a month's leave and foolishly I had decided to wear them on this night to break them in, they hadn't hurt my feet on the walk to the pub and I was feeling quite chuffed with them. But! When we got outside and started to pile into the Champ, I was the last to try and get aboard and had just placed my hands on the back, when some bright spark shouted O.K. and off they went down the road with me hanging on like a demented water skier at about thirty miles an hour, my feet or shoes were on fire by the time they stopped to let me on, and taking off my shoes to cool my feet I noticed that the soles were completely burnt thru. Well and truly knackered, I was not a happy bunny. I was looking for revenge, and so when we got to our camp I said to the troop Sgt that these Gunners needed fuel, he told me to sort it, this was my chance, as it was dark I gave them a couple of Jerry cans of Kerosene and sent them on their way.

Would you believe it? a week later arriving at the docks at the Hook of Holland and waiting to board the good ship Vienna, who should I run into, but the two gunners. After the usual how's it going? you have changed since I saw you last, I asked how they had got on, after they had left us, they replied that their journey took ages because, the Champ kept coughing and spluttering, and they didn't know why. We had a good laugh when I explained what had caused the problem. Footnote! I had thought that I had finished this, but whilst watching Antiques Roadshow last night, I saw some chap who had a collection of keys and he was told that they could be worth Ten Thousand Pounds. Made me think of old Bealer, he was obviously a man before his time.

Ivor Biggun.

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Blairs Field

December 1964

Many of us have a few tales to tell at the bar, since our tour of Aden in 1964. Mine is a little different than the norm.

I was in B Squadron SHQ and 3rd Troop. I am Alan Powney, like most of us, did our stint in most of the locations, Up Country. I was with 3rd Troop at Blairs Field in the Radfan, over the Christmas and New Year period. As with most Troops, not a great deal ``Happened`` other than the most daily sniper fire to keep us on our toes, and the daily Mine Run on the Air Strip and between Blair's and Paddy's. Once I had had a shower and on the way up to our tent, they started firing, I ran up the hill, losing the towel, didn't matter I was so thin they probably thought it was a large Stick Insect. I jumped in the Ferret and started firing in the same direction as the Saladin, towards the Landing Strip and the hills around it, but not really knowing what I was shooting at to be honest. I don't think many of us did. We were all young and very naive to the many things in an active service area like Aden. That can also be said of most members of the Regiment for active service is different than Soltau! Do I tread on toes? Yes.

Over Christmas we had a Christmas card bet and I think 5 cards won it. On BFBS Wireless for the Blind, some mad RAF man kept "Little Red Rooster" from the Stones at the top of play list so long we went mad ourselves; I think Cowboy Coleman was the only one who enjoyed it!!!!

On the 31st of December 1964, I was to do the Mine Run from Blair's to Paddys Field with the East Anglian Regt. Who were at Blair's Field with us. Due to our being delayed (we needed to go on to Thumier to get Ammo and Stores and I needed to fill up). As we also had two Ferrets from 5th Royal Inneskillen Dragoon Guards stationed with us learning the "Ropes" and helping us out. (B Sqn. Had to send two Troops to Beihan earlier than expected, why I don't know) Paddys Field also had two Ferrets with them. Cpl. McGinty agreed to carry on and do the run, as they had been with us since 28th Dec. and carried out three runs with us, and as the East Anglians were waiting, decided to carry on, we would catch up. My Commander and I got our shopping list and a few things for return, and were about to leave, when an explosion was heard. I grabbed the Medic, (who at first insisted on staying at Base!!) and went out to the incident. How far up the track I don't know, followed by Royal Anglians, who also feared the worst?

After accessing the incident, I stayed on our Ferret doing radio watch and taking messages. The crew of Cpl. McGinty and Tpr. Teggart had damaged eardrums but otherwise not seriously injured and the Ferret was written off. The East Anglian Regiment men, who were on the back of the Ferret, suffered three casualties, Private Wally Frazer being killed, and Corporal Andrews lost a leg while Private Barrell suffered damage to his jaw. This was very sad as they had finished the Mine Run and were getting a lift back to Blairs Field. Maybe just after turning around at the half way point! I don't know.

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Blairs Field continued

I know that this was talked about in our location but after a few days not much more was said, why I cannot tell you. This incident was never mentioned again, and I can't think that I ever discussed it with anyone.

I can't even remember my Commander, I would suggest Bernie Lowther! What is more there was nothing said or written in any Gazettes from the 10th Royal Hussars. Only that Major "Lofty" Gordon thanked the 5th Skins for helping us out in the area, before and during handover to C Sqn. (I phoned him a few weeks ago, but he could throw no more light on the subject. As he said we are all getting older) Why am I so interested in an incident that happened so long ago? Well it could have been My Commander and Me that hit the Mine; after all we should have been leading Ferret.

It was not until January this year that I found on the Aden Vets web site, an article from Alan Cole, Royal Anglian Regt, (The Crater to the Creggan) that mentioned a mine incident on 31st Dec. that I started to think about what happened all those years ago. It was always in the back of my mind, but I knew nobody that I could share this with. Until I started to send emails to Alan Cole, who gave me much more information. I started to talk to Dave Robinson, who is a great old mate who I last saw in '73! I asked the Regt. Sec. from The Royal Anglian Regt. Lt Col Kevin Hodgson OBE who supplied much information and other names and Platoon members and locations. I visited Alan Cole in England (it turns out he lives in same town as I did in Lincolnshire!) Alan has the most amazing database, books and files with every article of memorabilia from Aden you could ever wish to find. It gave me great pleasure to find a man so dedicated to Aden Vets that one could talk to him for ages on the subject.

After I returned to Berlin the trail went cold. No info and I posted help notices on various sites, Dave Robbo and I phoned each other and talked about the next step to find out which Unit the Ferret crew were in. Robbo sent messages to his labyrinth of mates in JLR and old comrades and all gave various bits of information, thanks all. The National Archives may have given more information, but access to the files was difficult. They can only be viewed at Kew, if there at all!

After giving up I had an email from Alan Clydesdale of the 5th Skins who came up with everything that was missing.

I don't know Alan, but would buy him the best Scotch he ever had and would like to meet him one day. Alan confirmed that WE WERE being helped by the 5th Skins, as this was the only piece of information that was missing.

Wally Frazer was laid to rest in the Maala Cemetery the other injured men I have no idea how their lives may have changed since that day. It would be interesting to know how they managed.

Why is it that there is no report in any of the Regimental Gazettes, Journals on this Accident? Perhaps the powers that be would know.

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Blairs Field continued

Alan Cole was at Table Top

Alan Clydesdale in Aden

Thank you, Alan Cole, Alan Clydesdale, without you this would not have been told.

Alan Powney, March 28th, 2011

Aden, never forgotten

There was some talk a few weeks ago with Dave Robinson and Peter Smith-Evans about Blairs Field being closed down and removal of Ferrets from the Radfan in 1965. This prompted me to ask other officers and senior members who would have been involved in those decisions, to give me some information, with interesting results;

Major David Edwards. 5th Troop Leader B Sqn.64/65; I did keep a diary while at Blairs, from 27th Sept 5th took over from Ollie Holder, til 20th Nov, when we handed over to Mark StanleySmith. During that time, we had one very tired Saladin, and there was another at Paddys Field under Brian Weston. Dahla had certainly one, possibly two. After I left Blairs, I continued from Little Aden escorting convoys up to Thumier, but they were Ferret only. That continued to 12/13 Dec, and on one of those later ones, we escorted much of the Bde HQ admin vehicles down to Aden. It was a ghastly convoy-probably 6 Dec. We were also doing patrols at night around the quarters at that time after some bombs/grenades. They were also done in Ferrets.

Major Richard Perry. 1st Troop Leader C Sqn 64/65; We were certainly in the Wadi Rabwa at I think Paddys Field when the Peter Smith-Evans and Maurice Childs Ferret got mined. I then recall being in Monks field. By this time, I think Blairs Field had been closed. I had a Saladin but can't remember if we had more than one, but possibly two. The late Dennis Beadle was Troop Sgt.

In about April 1965 I was in Dhala with certainly two Saladins. It was the tragic death of Ian Scott that sparked the withdrawal of the Ferrets from the Radfan. I remember them departing from Dhala but do not recall any replacements. Later Dennis Beadle in a Saladin had a rear off-side wheel blown off near a position occupied by Fred Nicholas and his troop a couple of miles outside Dhala. Fred Nick got ambushed at night and the troop acquitted itself very well. Ask him.

I think one of the reasons that Saladins ceased to do convoy escort was the arrival of the Stalwarts which went much faster than the Saladin and were sufficiently robust to take a hit, perhaps not from a British Mk 7 (of which thousands had been left behind in the canal zone.)

I think the following might be worth contacting for their stories, apart from those already mentioned: Sgt Alan Hunt, Cpl Geoff Cook, Tpr Tarrant (my driver), Tpr Brown (Ian Scott's driver) I don't think I went back to the Radfan after about May/June 65

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Blairs Field continued

With the above help I am able to place Lt. Stanley-Smith as Troop Leader at Blairs. Olli Holder took over in Sharjah.

Major General John Friedberger, having travelled over land from Tidworth, was 2i/c C Sqn in Sharjah. After some disturbance in Salalah C Sqn was asked to send 2 troops to that location. John Friedberger travelled as OC the detachment at Salalah. After a few weeks he moved to Little Aden as the new Adjutant.

On taking over from 4RTR in Aug/Sep 1964 the regiment had very few Saladins.

Most, not more than 4, with B Sqn in the Radfan, probably none then with the Beihan squadron.

I think there was one, for training purposes only, in Sharjah.

As already indicated more Saladins were issued in the first part of 1965.

A Sqn Notes record:

'Once more we took over from "C" Squadron at Habilayn, (Thumier) Dhala and Hayaz. There had been a considerable increase in mining and it had been decided to have only Saladin Armoured Cars "upcountry". The Squadron was re-organised so that each troop consisted of three Saladins. Two troops were at Habilayn and a troop with our old friends from Beihan. 4th F.R.A., at Dhala. Another troop was at Hayaz with 3rd F.R.A. The area around Hayaz had been "Proscribed" owing to Dissident activity. This was the most likely place to be attacked and 1st, 4th and 5th Troop had their share of excitement and on occasions helped to fill the Game Book. Cpl. Wadhams, Tpr. Dunnings and Gowens were blown up on a mine while escorting a convoy from Dhala, apart from being shaken up they appeared to be none the worse for it.'

With further reference to mines the Gazette records:

'The Regiment served in the Middle East for about 14 months—from the arrival of 'C' Squadron Advance Party in Sharjah on 4th August 1964 until the departure of the Rear Party on 30th September 1965. During this time each sabre squadron served in three main areas occupying at varying times 15 separate troop positions of some permanence. As well as serving in Aden State, The Federation of Southern Arabia, The Trucial States and Muscat and Oman, official 10th Hussars parties also visited Kenya, Ethiopia, Bahrain, The Eastern Aden Protectorate and Saudi Arabia on military or quasi-military affairs. Most members of the Regiment fired, or were fired at, in anger—including many Aden based Headquarter Squadron men on Internal Security duties. Ten vehicles were mined (7 Ferrets, 2 Saladins and 1 Scammel)—the majority by ex-British Mark Seven Mines which had been acquired by the Egyptians after WW2.'

Most of the mining incidents were in the Radfan area. Lt Ian Scott's death in April 1965 is recorded briefly in the '65 Gazette with a full obituary notice in the '66 edition.

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Blairs Field continued

Does anyone know of a mine incident in the Beiham squadron's area?

One of the 7 Ferrets mined was on the road from Salalah to Raysut on 22 Oct. C Sqn Notes:

'On 22nd October, L/Cpl. Preece and Tpr. Finney returning in a Ferret from the jetty on a night patrol struck a mine, exploding it under the rear wheels and causing the car to overturn several times, and to catch fire. L/Cpl. Preece went down to Aden for three weeks while a head wound healed, leaving Tpr. Finney to continue at Salalah, little worse off for the incident. The car was burnt out and the subject for much photography together with the RAF crane and water wagon which suffered the same fate during our ten weeks there. They (presumably Preece and Finney!) are to be congratulated for removing as much ammunition as possible, whilst the vehicle was on fire. '

I have often thought about the two soldiers killed in the Radfan appertaining to our regiment. They are;

Pte. Wally Frazer East Anglian Regiment 31st December 1964 (Blairs Field)

2nd Lieutenant I A G Scott 10th Royal Hussars (PWO) 25th April 1965 (Dahla Road)

Over fifty-two years have passed since these tragic deaths, and I was reminded of an article by David Ninnim, referring to Ian Scott. This is on the next page

A Powney

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Extraordinary Meeting

When I left the regiment in the mid-80s and became a fully-fledged civilian, I was working in London for a private client stockbroker, as the civilian equivalent of RSM, RQMS, Trg WO, Provost Sgt and a few more besides, great job and I thoroughly enjoyed it. The commute from Colchester to Liverpool Street for 30 years could prove taxing at times, but there were highlights which made the life even more fun. One of these was when I was invited to “Rules” restaurant, the oldest restaurant in London apparently, for a business lunch. The hosts were a building and design company that I had used in the past and they had invited some 10 random (to me) guests with the intention of selling their services with a big slap up lunch.



Chatting, during this excellent lunch, to one of the guests about the current state of military affairs, always close to my heart, he claimed that he had lost a brother in the armed forces back in the mid-60s. I was absolutely staggered, when, on further questions from me, the lost brother turned out to be Lt Ian Scott of the 10th Royal Hussars, who died in up country in Aden when his FSC was mined. I cannot imagine what the odds were that 20 years after that sad event that I should meet up with his brother. Whilst at the time of his death I was a mere Trooper in A Sqn and Ian was Lieutenant in C Sqn I could not therefore pass on any personal notes etc, but nevertheless, the lunch went on rather longer for the two of us than anyone ever intended! Even writing this today I still find the co-incidence of the meeting extraordinary.

Courtesy David Ninnim



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ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

12380 Sergeant George Clements MM Wiltshire Regiment

One Hundred years ago this month Father was seriously wounded and subsequently decorated for his actions in Salonika. Men of his generation did not really talk about the horrors of war. I always assumed that was because they really wished to forget what had happened and their part in it. I knew Father had been wounded and that a bullet had gone through one of his lungs. When he died, in 1951, I was only 10. I inherited his medals, watch, ring and walking stick. The medals included his citation, a newspaper cutting, his discharge papers and details of his enlistment. I could see that he was wounded on the night of 17th November 1917 and that he was discharged from Hospital in 1919. I had therefore always assumed that he had spent the whole of the intervening period in Hospital. I was however wrong. I had always intended to write this article this year. As my knowledge of what happened was very limited, I consulted the Chairman of the Lydney Branch of the Royal British Legion, who is a local historian. He suggested that I contact the Museum of the former Wiltshire Regiment, in Salisbury. I was to ask them whether they held the War Diary of the 7th Battalion and whether they held any further information appertaining to Father and his war service. I made contact during the summer, unfortunately the Museum was being modernized and I only got some details within the last 2 weeks. However, I had already promised this article to Alan for this year, so I decided to proceed. George Clements was born in Pewsey, Wilts on 6th April 1880. He was one of eight children born to George Clements and his wife. He became the village Postman in Manningford Bruce, in the Pewsey Vale. In 1905 he married the village Postmistress, Georgina Job a widow with 5 children. War was declared on 4th August 1914. He enlisted in Pewsey on 7th September 1914 into the Wiltshire Regiment. He did his basic Training on Marlborough Common. I understand that Marlborough was the home of the 7th Battalion. He told me that when the Battalion moved to Codford the men marched there in one day. This must have been a journey of about 30 miles. They lived in a tented camp and Codford was known as "Codford in the mud", it is a village in the Wylde Valley. The Church at Codford St Mary has a number of service graves. From memory they are mainly ANZAC Soldiers who died in 1918. I assume that they either died of wounds or of Spanish Flue. The Battalion later moved a few miles up the Wylde Valley to Sutton Veny. On 22nd September 1915 the Battalion moved by train to Folkestone, they embarked for Boulogne where they arrived the next day. They moved between various locations in Northern France, mainly on foot but sometimes by train. Although they did some training for trench warfare they did not enter the front line. On 13th November 1915 they moved by train to Marseilles where they embarked for Greece, arriving in Salonika on 21st November 1915. The Battalion served in many locations in Salonika for another two and a half years, moving in and out of the front line. Casualties were light until 1917. The main losses were on 24th- 26th April 1917 in the Doiran Sector. On the night of 17th November 1917 Father was involved in the raid on Akindzali Wood. I now quote. "During a raid on the night of Nov 17th Sgt Clements was with one of the leading platoons in the attack. During the withdrawal his platoon formed a rear guard. While controlling part of the line, he was wounded, but in spite of this he continued most ably to carry out his duty until he fainted from loss of blood.

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ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO continued

He behaved most gallantly throughout." The award of his Military Medal was published in the London Gazette dated 23rd February 1918. Having recovered in Hospital from his wounds, he returned to his Battalion. On 24th June 1918 the Battalion embarked for Taranto, in Italy where they disembarked the next day. They then travelled by train to France, arriving in Serqueux on 7th July 1918. After training they moved into the front line on 27th September 1918. Between 4th and 6th October 1918 during operations on Prospect Hill Father was again wounded and evacuated. This time his active service was indeed over. The war ended on 11th November 1918 and Father was demobbed from Hospital on 18th February 1919. His 3 Stepsons also served in the Army, all 4 of them survived the war and their names appear on the Memorial inside the Church at Manningford Bruce. He then resumed his postal duties, during the war his duties had been carried out by his eldest Stepdaughter. He joined the British Legion (now Royal) when it was formed and was the Standard Bearer for the Manningford Branch. He retired from the Post Office at the end of the Second World War, by then he was in very poor health. He was too ill to carry the Standard at the Victory Parade although he still walked to the Church. The parade had formed up outside our house and I remember marching to the Church carrying a Union Jack, I still remember the names of the 2 boys that I marched with. At some stage his first wife had retired from the Post Office and subsequently died. On 1st September 1933 he married Laurena Hulbert from Newport, Mon. She had also served in the First World War from 1916 to 1919. For part of this time she had served in France, at a Stores Depot in Abbeville. Her older Brother was Captain Octavius Hulbert (known as Teve) of the South Wales Borderers. He also survived the war with an MC but had lost an arm to a sniper's bullet in 1918. Father died in Hospital on 17th April 1951, he had survived for 33 years with one lung. I had always assumed that he had lost his lung in November 1917, but now I am not sure which of the two bullets had taken his lung. Father used to carry one of the bullets in a little suede case, I never saw it again after he died, I assume that Mother must have thrown it away. I do not have details of his earlier promotions, only that from his 1914/5 Star he was a Corporal in 1915. He was promoted to Sergeant on 29th April 1917. I still have his medals and I have told my Daughter that they must never be sold. After all of these years I am still very proud of what he did. I am very grateful to Ian Hendy of the Royal British Legion and the Museum of The Rifles in Salisbury for the help that they have given, to enable me to produce this article.

Ian Clements.

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Memories, Wednesday, February 04, 2015

Wednesday, February 04, 2015



THE RELUCTANT GUARDSMAN..

Each year on this day of all days, I dredge up a memory from the 731 days of my National Service, which began and ended on 4th February. It's 55 years ago that I arrived at Catterick Camp in the depths of a North Yorkshire winter and 53 years ago today that I took my leave of the 10th Royal Hussars (Prince of Wales Own) - the Shiny Tenth - and turned my back on Barker Barracks, Paderborn, BFPO 16 for the last time. I did so with a tinge of regret at leaving good friends behind, some of whom I am still in touch with even now.

And recently one of those 'old' friends got in touch to remind me of his reluctance at being placed on guard duty. Well, you can hardly blame him, for unless you were selected by the Orderly Officer (and, yes, there were some disorderly ones too) as Stick Man and thus relieved of guard duty thanks to the smartness of your kit, you spent the rest of the night patrolling the tank park in two-hour shifts, armed with a whistle and a pick axe handle (no axe - just the handle) to ensure the security of western democracy in the face of the Soviet threat. A daunting task indeed. And his recollection brought to mind an incident when I was detailed to be on guard duty myself one night. Now it seems to me that life is indeed about Kipling's twin imposters of triumph and disaster; life is a series of little victories and setbacks. Some you win, some you lose and the Shiny Tenth's very Regimental Sergeant Major's insistence that I went on guard duty, gave rise to a serious conflict of interest.

My basic pay as a National Serviceman was something like 15/9d a week when I started in Catterick and this 'rose' to about 26/- a week when I arrived in BFPO 16. I felt the need to increase my income, which I did by conning my way into the job as projectionist in the Army base's AKC Globe Cinema. I convinced the cinema manager that of course I was well versed in the mysteries of cinemascope, stereophonic sound, lighting calls, sound cards, reel changes and the rest of the smoke and mirrors that ensure an enjoyable evening at the pictures.

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Memories, Wednesday, February 04, 2015 cont

And after a few false starts, audience refunds and trial and error, my fellow compatriot, Dave Millman and I became quite good at it. I still have my certificate of competence to prove it.

At the time of the threat of me doing guard duty, Dave was away on leave and I was manfully running the cinema shows by myself, so when I learned that I had been put on guard duty, I contacted the cinema manager to let him know that I would not be available to run the films that evening. There then followed some high-level discussions between the manager and the extremely Regimental Sergeant Major and I found myself hauled before the Adjutant to be told that I had to do the guard duty and what did I think about that?

Time to pull at the heartstrings, I thought, so I explained that of course I had to accept the order to do the guard duty but felt sorry for the 200 or so of the military audience and their families who would be deprived of their evening's entertainment and I wondered how this might affect morale. Further discussions ensued, and I was then informed that I should work that evening in the cinema but that I would have to do guard duty at some point in the future. (I took this as one of life's little victories.)

Some weeks later, I was sent on exercises to Soltau on Luneburg Heath, leaving Dave to run the cinema, although by that time we had recruited an assistant - Gordon Watson from the Pay Office - so Dave wasn't entirely on his own. Shortly after setting up our 'camp' on Luneburg Heath, the awfully Regimental Sergeant Major placed me on guard duty. I had no chance of being selected as Stick Man and so, armed with my trusty pick axe handle and whistle, I spent most of the night patrolling the serried ranks of tanks and military equipment, hoping that the Russians would not choose this moment to launch an offensive. Especially as it was my 21st birthday.

Now I could have taken this as one of life's little setbacks but I suspect it was the frightfully Regimental Sergeant Major's way of wreaking his revenge on this conscripted upstart by making me spend my 21st birthday so memorably. In the final analysis, I settled for Snopper 1 - RSM 1, after extra time. And I still don't know how the 53 years have gone by so quickly.

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Memories, Wednesday, March 11, 2015

Wednesday, March 11, 2015



DISTURBING THE PEACE..

It's years since I went to the cinema, probably as long ago as when we used to take our three boys to see James Bond when he was Sean Connery and the Chitty Chitty Bang Bangs of that long-ago era. Those days were not many years after I finished my National Service, during which time I moonlighted as a projectionist in the local AKC Globe Cinema in Paderborn, Germany, to supplement the Army pittance.

It was a proper cinema with all the trimmings of CinemaScope, excellent sound system, decent seating and curtains and lighting that produced a relaxed air of expectancy for the waiting audience. Up in the projection room, we did our stuff on carbon arc Bauer Projectors with films that ran up to six reels, which had to be changed (in the right order) without the audience being aware that the changes had happened. The programme changed about three times each week and included a main feature, a B movie, newsreels, adverts and trailers, so it was challenging but interesting work.



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Memories, Wednesday, March 11, 2015 cont

And we suspected that our captive audiences may have become bored with soothing music from the likes of Mantovani, Joe Loss, Victor Sylvester and his Ballroom Syncopators and we thought we should try some of our own.

My very good friend Alec Craig (RAPC Att. XRH), now sadly passed on, was a devotee of the Modern Jazz Quartet - the MJQ with Milt Jackson on vibes and he persuaded us to play The Golden Striker as a nightly prelude to the film show starting. It seemed to go down well, so we tried some more. Now this was pre-Beatles and so the music of rebellious youth came from those such as Stan Kenton, Woody Herman and my own personal favourite Ray Conniff. So, I treated the audience to S`Wonderful and especially Smoke Gets in your Eyes whilst at the same time changing the lighting in time with the music. The cinema management were not as keen as we were on this break from tradition which disturbed the peace of the waiting punters and we were subjected to dire threats descending on us from the AKC hierarchy in their Minden HQ.

But we weren't to be put off - we were in rebellious mood - the latter-day Jeremy Clarkson's and Russell Brands of our time.....and this was edgy stuff with the voices being used as instruments. And despite now being terribly dated, well past its sell by date and seriously out of time, I still enjoy Ray Conniff to this day.

Peter Hopgood

To be continued....

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Sachsenhausen

British Commando raiders are executed in Sachsenhausen Sachsenhausen



Sachsenhausen concentration camp had operated since 1936 as punishment facility rather than an extermination site. About 30,000 people are believed to have died there from overwork, ill-treatment and malnutrition, although a proportion were put to death by shooting, hanging and, in later years, a gas chamber.

On the 1st of February there had been elation in Sachsenhausen concentration camp, located 22 miles north of Berlin. The news reached the prisoners that the Red Army was just 60 miles east of Berlin. Rumours soon spread that they would soon be liberated, and that it might well happen in the next day or so. The grim reality proved to be a deep disappointment the following day. Not only were the Nazis preparing to evacuate the whole camp but they were now starting to murder some of their more prominent prisoners. Odd Nansen, a Norwegian political prisoner, was keeping a secret diary in the camp, writing on the 3rd he recalled the events of the 2nd:

From the brightest and wildest optimism we've been plunged into gloomy pessimism.

When we got back from the job last night, we were met by the sinister announcement that the camp is to be evacuated. We're all to start off on a trek. To the great majority the news was thunder from a clear sky, and many still refuse to believe it, such an utterly outrageous impossibility and insanity does it seem. Forty thousand men on the tramp southward, southwest or west; miserably clad, with nothing to eat – for it can be only Norwegians who have any food to take with them – and in a worse than rickety condition. First we heard it as a rumour, and it penetrated slowly into our consciousness, which refused to accept it. Then it came as an official announcement in the block: "The camp will probably be evacuated". Wahrscheinlich! A hope still lingers in the interpretation of that lumpy German word, a little chance that the Russians may be too quick, the possibility of a change of mind with the ensuing counterorder, of which, indeed, we've known so many that they can almost be taken as the rule. But in that case there is another dark cloud in our sky, a cloud which has grown darker, blacker and more menacing in the last forty-eight hours. Liquidation! Vernichtung! It is now being said that over two hundred men, including all the lackeys of the Sonderkommission, were shot last night. They were a frightful gang indeed, and no one laments them. They were the Gestapo's henchmen among the prisoners. And so that was their reward.

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Sachsenhausen continued

When the truth about the events of the night gradually came out, when we learnt that our friends the Englishmen, John and Jack and Tommy and the rest, we knew them right back in Grini [a Nazi concentration camp in Norway], had in all probability been shot, and the Russian officers and many others, the atmosphere filled with gloom. Rumour also had it that the coming night would be still worse. Last night many were awakened by shots in the camp. This was what happened: when a party of those who had been taken from the blocks under cover of darkness marched out of the gate and turned to the right, they realised where they were going, broke the ranks and ran into the little park there between the walls. The guards opened fire on them, and they were shot down there in the park. It was the rat—tat of the guards' tommy-guns which broke the night silence, filling those who lay awake with horror and dread. The 'English friends' that Nansen was referring to were members of a British commando team that had been captured after a sabotage operation to Norway in 1943, Operation Checkmate. They had successfully sunk a German minesweeper and other ships with limpet mines but despite the fact that they had operated in uniform they fell victim to Hitler's Commando Order when they were captured. They were not treated as Prisoners of War under the Geneva Convention. In Sachsenhausen they had been forced to march 30 miles a day on cobbled roads, 'testing' German Army boots. It later emerged that, when they were led to execution, Temporary Lieutenant John Godwin, RNVR, who had led the team of Commandos and Royal Navy seamen, managed to snatch the pistol of the firing party commander and shoot him dead before being shot down himself.



Lieutenant JOHN GODWIN H.M.S. Quebec., Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve who died age 25 on 02 February 1945

There were no witnesses to Godwin's resistance surviving at the end of the war, a fact that meant he could not be eligible for a gallantry medal. Instead he was awarded a 'Mention in Despatches'. The citation, in The London Gazette, 9 October 1945, read:

"For great gallantry and inspiring example whilst a prisoner of war in German hands in Norway and afterwards at Sachsenhausen, near Oranienburg, Germany, 1942-1945

I have often visited Sachsenhausen, the whole area is sobering, enlightening and more important enables one to reflect. Many of the younger generation, from all nations visit, and take a keen interest in the camp and not just go to some areas and say, "been there" their walking pace visibly slows down after entering the gates and take great interest, placing stones as a sign of respect is very evident. This Jewish custom, symbolizes the permanence of memory. The Commandos Cell is of keen interest to many.

My thanks to The Commando Veterans Association

Alan Powney

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A Soldier's Journey

Private CH Harper Army Service No 537772

A Soldier's Journey

About Carl...



Brief History of Carl H Harper. Born January 1898. Registered Birth in Wix. Tendering. Essex. 1901 Cenus living at 62 Windsor Road St Matthews,Ipswich. With his Father Horace age 25, Mother Madaline age 24. Sisters Daisy M age 5 & Muriel C age 2. Brother Benjamin G age 7 months. 1911 Census records Carl living with his Grandfather Mr Benjamin Horne at Ocean Wave Farm. Working on Farm when he left School On 7th October 1914 enlisted in 1st Essex Yeomanary Cavalry Regiment Service No 1362. During WW1 was Transferred to the Corps of Hussars & was given a Second Service No 80985. On 13th February 1915 sent to France as part of the B.E.F (British Expeditionary Force) joining up with the Royal Horse Guards & 10th (Prince of Wales Own) Hussars (This explains how Carl finished his career in the 10th Hussars). They formed the 8th Cavalry Brigade which was part of the 3rd Cavalry Division.

In 1915 Saw action at the Second Battle of Ypres (Battle of Frezenberg Ridge) 11th - 13th May & Battle of Loo's 26th - 28th September. 1916 there are no notable records of Battles. 1917 Battle of Arras (First Battle of Scarpe) 9th - 12th April. On 30th March 1918 the 3rd Cavalry Division was split up onto 7/8th Cavalry Brigade as a dismounted unit in the Trenches. Later the 7th became a cyclist Brigade & 8th Cavalry, which is where Carl served. Carl returned to England on 30th March 1919. All Army service Personnel Had to Re-enlist & Carl was given a Third Service No 537772, transferred to 18th (Queen Mary's Own) Hussars on 6th November 1919 & again transferring to the 10th (Prince of Wales) Hussars on 18th November 1919. Carl Married Laura Mepstead on 6th December 1920 at Bridge, Kent. There are no records of children. 6th June 1921 the 10th Hussars where sent to Northern Ireland, where they accompanied King George V on the First State Opening of Parliament on 21st June 1921.

On the 24th June 1921 Carl was killed by Rebel IRA Activists at Adavoyle, Newry. A bomb was planted on the railway tracks just before the station killing 3 Soldiers, 1 Guard, 30 horses & injury 30 men

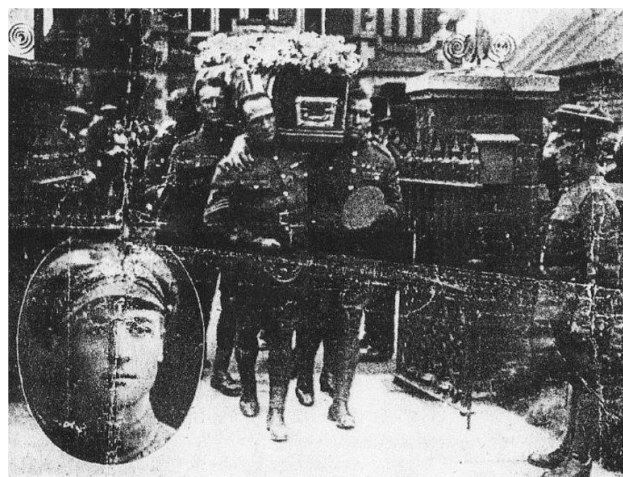
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A Soldier's Journey continued



On Tuesday 28th June 1921 Carl's Coffin was repatriated at his parents home in Margaret Street, Walton. Felixstowe. On Thursday 30th June 1921 Military Funeral Service was Held at St Mary's Church Walton at 2pm. His Commonwealth War Grave is at Walton Church, High Street, Felixstowe sited just through the main front gates south east corner.



"At the going down of the Sun we will Remember Them"

Link to Carl's Web Page <http://stephenharper24.wix.com/private-ch-harper...>

Yesterday 19th June 2017 I was contacted by Brian Tomany of Slieve gullions foot FB Group who had researched The Adavoyle Troop train Disaster on 24th June 1921 & has kindly allowed me to use the following Info which I'd like to share with you all. This would have also been the Day 96yrs ago to the Day Carl made the Journey to Belfast in preparation for the First state opening of Parliament by King George V.

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A Soldier's Journey continued

This is the transcribed witness statement of John Grant from Mullaghbawn, a member of the IRA's 4th Northern Division which carried out the attack on the train at Adavoyle (or, more correctly, Ayallogue).

"In June, 1921, King George V of England opened a Parliament for Northern Ireland in Belfast. About the day of the opening ceremony a courier arrived at Divisional Headquarters at Mullaghbawn from General Headquarters in Dublin.

Shortly after the arrival of this courier the Divisional O/C. mobilised a small number of the Mullaghbawn company three or four to carry out a derailment of one of the troop trains which was conveying British military personnel to Dublin and the Curragh after their taking part in the opening ceremony of the Parliament in Belfast. I was given to understand that a number of trains were to be attacked at different points and that "our train" was the last of those trains leaving Belfast.

The Divisional O/C; took charge of this operation and he and the men mobilised in Mullaghbawn arrived at Adavoyle, the place selected for the derailment, about 6 a.m. on the 24th June, 1921. We met there a number of officers and men mobilised from other parts of the Division. Those men included Seán Quinn, Divisional Quartermaster, Mick Fearon O/C. Camlough Battalion, and a few men from both Meigh and Killeavy Companies.

The place selected for the derailment was at a slight bend to the right on the Dublin up line and at an embankment where a derailed train would fall down a slope with a drop of roughly thirty feet. The plan adopted was to remove the bolts from the fishplates of the outer rail and when the train due for derailment arrived near the spot selected the outside rail was to be removed. After we arrived at the place we concealed ourselves in a vacant house beside the railway. Scouts were sent to a mountain on the eastern side of the position where it was possible to have a clear view of the railway for about four miles and be in a position to identify the kind of train coming so that ordinary passenger or goods trains would be safeguarded.

A signal was arranged to warn us of the approach of the military train. The first activity we carried out at the scene of the operation was to take charge of a number of railwaymen working on our section of the line. We took these men into the vacant house and kept them under guard until the derailment took place. Whilst we were still concealed in the vacant house a military train passed through as we were within view of Adavoyle Railway Station and the absence of the railway workers might cause suspicion at the station, we took off our coats and acted as if we were the workmen engaged on the line. We cut all telegraph and telephone wires along the railway line and waited the expected signal.

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A Soldier's Journey continued

We got the signal that the train was approaching and removed a length of rail as described in the above plans. When we had this done we could hear the train approaching and we cleared off in the direction of Meigh village. When I got 300 to 400 yards from where the rail was removed I looked back and saw that the engine and one carriage had remained on the line and the remaining carriages had disappeared from my view in the opposite side of the railway track as they had toppled down the embankment on the opposite side as planned. I saw, what appeared to me, a British military officer getting out of the carriage that was attached to the engine, on to the railway line.

We retreated away from the vicinity of the crash. We returned to Mullaghbawn that evening but did not remain there. Great military and police activities commenced especially around Killeavey, Meigh, Dromintee and Forkhill areas. Mullaghbawn did not, I think, get so much attention on this occasion. Labour was commandeered around the scene of the train smash to bury the large number of military horses destroyed."

Stephen Harper

Stephen is one of many who aired their views on restructuring the Shiners Club that was founded by John McKay and others in 1991. It was his idea at the Swindon reunion in 2015 to create the Shiners Club Committee and get feedback from those who offered their support and wished us well in taking things forward. Stephen said, "you cannot let old comrades down, so we will put our heads together and get it moving, you all served in the regiment and the members need the Shiners Club for the support it can and should be offering them"

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Libor Tours



Remembrance Travel, the travel arm of The Royal British Legion

LIBOR TOURS

D DAY VETERANS RETURN TO THE BEACHES WITH REMEMBRANCE TRAVEL

D-Day was one of the most important battles of World War II and therefore it is vital that we continue to remember those who fought so bravely for our freedom.

Since 2015 Remembrance Travel, the travel arm of the Royal British Legion, has been taking D-Day veterans back to Normandy, to the beaches and the fields where they fought and lost friends, so they can finally lay 'old ghosts to rest'. The Normandy tours are free for veterans, a family member and a carer and are made possible thanks to LIBOR funding – fines imposed on banks for the LIBOR banking scandal.

A hero returns

93-year-old World War II veteran, Cedric Wasser landed on Sword Beach on 6 June at 10.30am, as part of the second wave in 185 Brigade. Cedric experienced a near miss before he landed when a German bomb exploded by his ship, which put the lift mechanism out of action to move vehicles out of the lower decks. Cedric and the others had to wait until an empty LST came along side and they could transfer into the empty vessel, moving the vehicles over planks of wood suspended over the sea, from one ship to another. The vehicles were then lifted onto the lower decks of the new ship and discharged onto a rhino floating deck. Once on Sword Beach, the enemy activity was minimal so they could concentrate with getting the vehicles ashore.

Cedric spent his first night in Normandy in Hermanville cemetery under the stars, with German anti personnel bombs dropping around him. The next night he was camped at Perier-sur-le-Dan cemetery, where he was part of the Light Aid Detachment (LAD) and repaired vehicles and motorbikes for the 7th Field Regiment RA. Cedric was stationed here for five weeks, but even here there were the odd German shells exploding around them, one of which killed a member of Cedric's team.

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Libor Tours continued

Over the years Cedric had wanted to re-visit Sword Beach, where he had landed, and thought the Libor tour was the ideal opportunity. Cedric said: "visiting places such as Arromanches and Pegasus Bridge was wonderful as the French still have a deep appreciation for the liberating forces. Even the younger generations, if they saw my medals, they would speak to me and thank me for what I did all of those years ago."

Cedric enjoyed travelling in April as it meant that the locations were not crowded as there were few tourists around, and that the weather was still good. Cedric found the tour to be well organised, was not rushed and allowed the veterans to go at their own speed. He said: "We had a wonderful tour guide who had done her research on us all, and along with the coach driver, tried to get us veterans to every location we wanted to visit." There were also several acts of remembrance during the visit which allowed veterans to pay their respects to fallen friends. Cedric said: "It was wonderful meeting up with veterans from across the services who were also on the tour. We were all there together, talking and helping each other, just like we did in 1944."

Remembrance Travel will be running another series of LIBOR-funded tours for Normandy veterans in 2018. Each D-Day veteran can return free of charge along with a relative and carer. Each Normandy tour is accompanied by a fully trained medic and a Royal British Legion tour guide. To discover more,

visit www.arenatravel.com/our-holidays/remembrance-travel.



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THE CROWN INN



THE CROWN INN

Stratton St Margret

T 01793 827530 E thecrownstratton@gmail.com

The Crown Inn, Stratton is situated close to Swindon town centre, the Cotswold's, Oxford and local business parks. The pub offers food and drink 7 days a week, as well as Bed and Breakfast accommodation

We hold a weekly Quiz night every Sunday from 8.30pm as well as a poker night on a Tuesday evening and monthly Rock and Roll Bingo.

We can also cater for larger parties for Christenings, Weddings and Wakes with our Buffet Menu

So whether you're staying with us for business, or just passing through you're always welcome and guaranteed a good time.