

SHINERS CLUB NEWSLETTER
2016 EDITION TWO

Newsletter 2016 Edition 2



Vice Chairman's Comments

December 2016

I assume that many of you will have heard the very sad news that our Chairman, Tony Preston, lost his wife Zara during the summer. Tony has struggled to come to terms with this loss, as such he has been unable to fulfil his duties as Chairman. Grief affects us all differently. It is therefore imperative that we can all have time to deal with grief in our own way. Alan Powney and myself have tried to cover for Tony as best we can, without advertising what we have been doing. We have assumed that readers will expect to read the Chairman's comments in this newsletter, therefore now is the time to tell you what has happened. May I remind you all the excellent job which Tony did with the last newsletter. This newsletter has been produced by Alan on his own. It is being printed in Berlin and postal copies will be sent to England in bulk. I will then post them.

Please note that I have not replaced Tony. It is hoped that mine is only a temporary appointment until Tony is well enough to resume his duties in full. When the new Committee was formed, I did not stand for election as I felt that I was too old. Because of my clerical background I have been acting as Liaison between our Committee, Home HQ, General Friedberger and Colonel Singer. I have now been asked to become Vice Chairman on a temporary basis, I have been delighted to accept.

However, I look forward to the return of Tony when I will be happy to relinquish my temporary appointment and to return to my liaison duties.

May I apologise for the lack of my usual article. I tend to work to deadlines and to leave things to the last minute. I spent over 2 hours two days ago on my proposed article. Unable to finish it that day I thought that I had saved my copy but something went wrong. I can only assume that it was a mixture of bad luck and lack of computer skills. I must clearly make an earlier start next year.

I have been saddened by the passing of many Old Comrades since the last newsletter. I do hope that the next year will treat us more kindly. Roger Howell and myself hold Regimental flags. These can be dispatched for the Funeral of any Old Comrade who wishes for a flag to cover their coffin.

May I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year. I look forward to meeting some of you at the Reunions in Cheltenham and Swindon next year.

Ian Clements.

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Club Report

A lot has happened since the first newsletter. Christmas and New Year went by in a flash and arrangements started for the Swindon Reunion.

As Tony Preston's wife Zara passed away early in the year, Tony has asked me to write the club report this year.

We were asked by the family of Fredrick Walker BEM, who passed away aged 95 on March 1st to add his name to our Obituaries Page, being an ex Shiner he would be very proud.

As we knew nothing of Frederick, I contacted the family and was more than surprised to hear of his very long and interesting service. The club was offered access to his Memoirs and I had a lot of discussions with Frederick's family, our committee & members and HHQ and after some further research, decided with permission, to publish and print books for the family, 10th Royal Hussars (PWO) Archives which is now in the regimental museum in Winchester and smaller booklets which were all presented at the reunion this year. More on the memoirs in the newsletter.

There is now a PRI Shop which has various articles for sale and due to requests from members new interesting items are being added. The response of last year's newsletter was very good indeed with some who have had no contact for over fifty years making a good effort to come to the Swindon reunion and all enjoyed themselves. This year will see some articles that have been posted in our Facebook group and on the website. It gives the members receiving their postal newsletter the ability to see some of the more interesting articles. More will need to be done to give wives more information and not just the military themes. We are always open to any ideas and articles you would wish to see, so please keep us informed.

In response to our first newsletter, we would like to thank you all for the generous donations and the great support of the raffle and other merchandise at the Swindon reunion. With your help, we can ensure your idea's and recommendations are included in the newsletter and the way Swindon is presented.

We wish you and your families a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous and healthy New Year.

Newsletter Printed & Edited by A J Powney

There is a lot of work involved in getting permission from authors, publishers and any photos that we may use. We have built up respect from publishing houses in our quest for articles that 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.

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Committee

Chairman

Tony Preston

Tonypreston236@tiscali.co.uk

Vice Chairman

Ian Clements

clements2005@tiscali.co.uk

01594845656

Secretary

Alan Powney

alan44@outlook.com

TREASURER

Roger Howell

Webmaster/Facebook

Anthony McKay

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Anthony Marlow

Lee Doughty

Ron Fletcher

Stephen Harper

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An Airman's Farewell To Aden

Land of toil, sweat and strain
Land of sun and maffish rain,
Sweat rash, footrot prickley heat
Aching hearts and blistering feet,
Swarms of flies that buzz and bite
Fans that hum throughout the night.
Land of scorpions, camels and bugs
Hasheesh, heena and other drugs,
Streets of sorrow, streets of shame
Streets you could never name,
Clouds of sand and dust that sends
The sanest "bod" clean round the bend.
Donkeys, goats and pyiard dogs
Cut throat thieves and pestering clods,
Land where children in their teens
Sell souvenirs outside canteens,
Baksheesh! Baaksheesh! Is their cry
For this alone they live and die.
Where tinea thrives and gypo gripes
Where clods smoke hubbly bubbly pipes,
Where every native black and brown
Awaits for you to go down town,
Obnoxious smells, eternal strife
O for blighty and a wife.
Where tour-ex men just sit and gloat

While others dream about the boat,
There only aim to dodge and skive
Until their clearance chit arrives,
Their chief delight to laugh and shout
At some poor "erk" that's just come out.
Land of turbans, galaleah
Quais tamman, quais katir,
Land of chai and mungaria
Moya chappaties and Alsopp's beer,
Where one can always here men quake
About the thought of NAAFI break.
Oh! For Britain's happy life
Where people never know such strife,
My final chit, I am going home
Away from there I'll never roam,
I am going home and Oh! How grand
To see green fields instead of sand.
Land of sorrow, filth and shame
I've seen you once but never again,
I'll leave you now with no regrets
The sights I've seen I'll never forget,
Native's heaven, white man's hell
This.....! ADEN fare thee well.
Anon
Courtesy Pete Elvey

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VOGELSANG

The Soldiers have gone, all that is left is the empty shell: In the gigantic Barracks, where Ten Thousand Soviet Soldiers once lived.



Most of you have used the military training area Vogelsang in the Eifel area of Germany, but there is another Vogelsang. It is a small village north east of Berlin, with a station and about 100 villagers. A quite place.

In the woods around the village, hidden, lies another Vogelsang. Another Town with its own houses and flats, cinema, sport halls and a school. 15,000 people lived here, it was never quiet, Vogelsang was the home for Soviet Soldiers, in the hangars stood tanks, howitzers and off road vehicles, in the cinema their families enjoyed themselves. Vogelsang was one of the biggest Garrisons outside the Soviet Union. The 25th Tank division were stationed here for almost 40 years, until they left the former GDR in 1994.

Since then it has become a forgotten "Town in the Woods". But today, over two decades later there is still life there. If you walk around the area, there are Racoons, Fallow Deer, and also wild sheep or even goats. The lives of the Soviet soldiers who lived here protecting their socialistic brothers of the GDR have left visible scars. There is a clear difference between the living accommodation for "Soldiers and the better placed". The gigantic Machine and vehicle buildings as the ammunition bunkers were painted in the standard colour of Grey, Blue, Green, Yellow and very seldom Pink. Walking around this deserted area one stumbles over buildings and rooms for soldiers and families and that the barracks functioned as a self-sufficient town, kindergarten and a school.

There was a complete wall around the barracks and with razor wire. very secure, there were arrest or jail rooms that were so small and low, that prisoners could stretch their arms and touch each wall, and very difficult to stand up straight, they often had no windows.

As with many jails, the inhabitants scratched the usual news and dates on the walls, what else could they do.

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VOGELSANG Continued



The School



Arrest Room

Interesting that early in 1959 Nuclear Missiles type SS-3 (R5) were placed here and in Fuerstenburg, about 15 miles away aimed at UK and France as a sort of blackmail. Khrushchev quickly removed them in December 1959, when he realized NATO put in place plans to defend West Berlin and would cross East Germany in order to relieve the City and Khrushchev did not want missiles in the area, as he feared a nuclear exchange. All this before the Cuban Crisis.

Nature has taken back this "Town in the Woods" it is over 20 years since the inhabitants left, it won't be long before it disappears, along with those who lived here. Only Völgelsang won't disappear, the village exists as a kleiner Ort northeast of Berlin, about one hundred villagers, a Station. And of course very quiet.

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Jörg Rehder
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Alan Powney

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Major Ben Strachan, soldier and diplomat – obituary

Ben Strachan

2 August 2016 • 5:25pm

Major Ben Strachan, who has died aged 92, became a career diplomat after a distinguished career in the Army; as ambassador to the Lebanon he became the first senior British official to meet the Palestine Liberation Organisation leader Yasser Arafat, and during his final posting as ambassador to Algeria, he flew over the Sahara Desert with Margaret Thatcher's husband Denis to locate their son Mark, who had disappeared during the 1982 Paris to Dakar car rally.

The meeting with Arafat had not been sanctioned by the British government and almost led to Strachan's dismissal. But it helped to open a dialogue which would eventually lead to the Oslo peace accord. Strachan had been approached at a party by a Palestinian businessman, who asked him whether he would be interested in meeting the PLO chairman. He agreed, not thinking that Arafat would turn up 15 minutes later with an armed guard.

The PLO leader immediately launched into a tirade, blaming Britain for the plight of the Palestinians. But Strachan, according to family members, was having none of it. "Look," he said. "The people in charge at the time have been and gone, governments feel no guilt, so here we are." Thereupon Arafat visibly relaxed and they were able to talk the problems through. When Arafat got up to leave, he stretched out his right hand and smiled, saying: "We shall ask for you as a first British ambassador of our new Palestine." That was not to be. Instead Strachan was posted to Algeria, where in 1982 he got caught up in the drama of the disappearance of the prime minister's son.

Mark Thatcher's car had broken its axle and he was missing for several days; there was speculation that he might have been kidnapped. Mrs Thatcher was distraught, so Denis flew out, and he and Strachan set out to look for him alongside a fleet of aeroplanes, helicopters, trucks and Land Rovers containing hundreds of soldiers, border patrolmen and police from Algeria and neighbouring Mali.

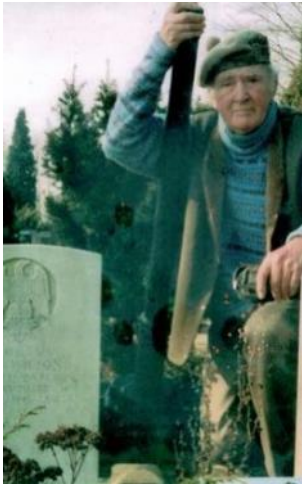
After 31 hours of searching from the air, Mark Thatcher was spotted by an Algerian pilot 400 miles west of the Mali border and retrieved alive and well. Strachan was quoted as saying that the prime minister's son and his colleagues had made a makeshift tent in the desert to shelter them during the six days they were missing. Denis Thatcher, it seems, was inclined to take a less charitable view of his son's rallying career than his wife. Asked whether his son would compete again, he said: "I jolly well hope not."

Although Strachan got on well with Denis, he was less convinced about his wife and never got around to accepting her invitation to Chequers to thank him. "I'll be blown if I'm going to waste my holiday hanging around that lot," he said.

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Major Ben Strachan, soldier and diplomat – obituary



Major Ben Strachan

Benjamin Leckie Strachan was born in Edinburgh on January 4 1924. His father was a doctor who had won an MC in the First World War for rescuing wounded men under fire. A brother, Gordon, would become well known in Scotland as the Reverend Gordon Strachan, author of *Freeing the Feminine* and *Jesus the Master Builder*.

Ben won a scholarship to Rossall School, Lancashire, followed by an exhibition to Oxford, but instead of going up he volunteered for military service and was commissioned, aged 18, into the Royal Dragons.

He crossed over to France after D-Day, and having arrived in Holland was mentioned in dispatches after volunteering to paddle across to a small hilly island in a lake to spy out enemy positions. Although the island came under sustained enemy fire (and was obliterated by the Germans the following day), he made his escape and, after paddling back, relayed the vital information.

Subsequently, as he was leading a group of armoured vehicles through a Dutch town, his car was blown up by a Panzerfaust anti-tank weapon, the explosion killing his gunner and throwing Strachan clear of the car, knocking him unconscious. When he came to he was deaf from the blast and, shielded from the Germans by the burning wreckage, began to crawl towards a muddy ditch. Remembering, however, that his driver was still in the car, he ran back and pulled the man out. As they ran for cover, Strachan received a bullet in the leg.

Captured by the Germans, he was taken to a hospital in which he was the only Allied patient. There he played chess with his German neighbour and when on Hitler's birthday an SS officer arrived to distribute sweets and cigarettes, he pulled the sheet over his head and held out his hand, later speculating that he was probably the only Allied soldier to have received a "birthday" present from the Führer. He nearly died from blood poisoning, until the hospital was overrun and he was flown back to Britain.

After the war he joined the 4th Hussars and, while serving in Malaya during the Emergency in 1948, was shot in the arm during an ambush. It was only later that he discovered that the bullet had gone straight through his arm and penetrated his chest, lodging a few centimetres from his heart. He later transferred to the 10th Hussars, taking command of his squadron as major.

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Major Ben Strachan, soldier and diplomat – obituary

During his Army service Strachan had studied at the Royal Military College of Science and learnt Arabic, both at the School of Oriental and African Studies and at the Army's Middle East Centre for Arabic Studies in the Lebanon. He served as an intelligence officer in Egypt, ending his military career as deputy head of MI 10 (technical intelligence).

By 1961, however, he had concluded that he was not a good peacetime soldier and decided on a whim to apply for the diplomatic service. When asked at the interview what he would do about the Egyptian president Nasser, he responded that it was a bit unfair to ask him to solve in 10 minutes a problem that had baffled the British government for 10 years.

None the less, he was appointed head of the Middle East section of the Foreign Office's counter-propaganda department and ran the information services of the British colonial government in Aden.

He followed that with postings in Kuwait, as commercial attaché, and as chargé d'affaires in Jordan, where he had to barricade himself into the downstairs cloakroom of his house in Amman as it came under grenade attack during the civil war that erupted between the PLO and the Jordanian army.

His first ambassadorial posting, at the end of 1976, was to Yemen. Three years later he was appointed ambassador to the Lebanon. He retired as ambassador to Algeria in 1984 but returned to the Foreign Office as a special adviser (Middle East) during the first Gulf War in 1990.

After retirement he returned to Scotland and settled on his farm, Mill of Strachan in Aberdeenshire, where he dabbled, not always very successfully, in a series of business ventures including a language school, a gift shop, a trout fishery and importing Algerian wine. He also became an active member of the Liberal Democrats. A keen golfer, he created a nine-hole pitch and putt course around his fields and published a book, *The Skirts of Alpha*, on the internet, in which he attempted to prove that consciousness exists in the atom, and that even electrons have free will. In 2005, at the age of 91, he finally graduated, with an MA in Mathematics from Aberdeen University.

He was appointed CMG in 1978.

Courtesy Telegraph Obituaries

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The Galloping Major

I was Maj. Strachan's Gunner for a while when in Paderborn and we were on exercise in Vogelsang. After the day's activities and returning camp Maj. Strachen wanted to be one of the first to reach the Wash-down, it takes some time to clean up a Cent as some of you know. We were going at quite a speed with the Tank bouncing along, when the Major could not talk to the driver, to hurry him up, so reached down and pulled my headset from my head and of course the strap yanked my head up and smashed my face against the Gunners Sight, you can't talk to the driver with this headset I shouted but he pulled even more this time I came up with a broken nose. I am so sorry, I am so sorry he kept saying, I looked like someone who had 10 rounds with Henry Cooper. I remember the Major well.

Tony Preston.

Light Duties

After the allied invasion in June, my Father spent some 3 months in Normandy, after a week or so he developed red blotches on his front and back. The M O could not find the cause of the red marks and Dad's feeling unwell, all cream and tablets were of no avail. Light duties report Sick each week. Some weeks later the MO happened to see him wearing a string vest. He was livid, full duties immediately and 2 extras.

Anon

Rations

Oh a little bit of everything

Got in a tin one day,

And they packed it up and sealed it

In a most mysterious way;

And some Brass Hat came and tested it,

And "Pon me, Sam", says he,

'We shall feed it to the soldiers

And we'll call it Meat and Veg.'

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HRH Prince Albert Victor

One hundred and ten years after my Grandfather, Major Roland Pillinger, first edited Issue No. 1, Volume I of the X. R. H. Gazette, it is a wonderful honour to be asked to produce an article for the Shiners' Newsletter by the present Editor, Alan Powney.

In all but the very first issue, my Grandfather wrote a short valedictory to a past Officer of the Regiment. The first was Major General Lord Ralph D. Kerr. The subject was not always a Commanding Officer, Captain Charles Stanyforth Greenwood being a case-in-point.

One Officer, however, that is a great note by his absence is H. R. H. The Duke of Clarence, who, as an Officer of the Tenth (Prince of Wales Own) Royal Hussars, and future Monarch, attained the rank of Major.

H. R. H. Prince Albert Victor, the Duke of Clarence K. P., K. G.



H.R. H. The Duke of Clarence was gazetted into the Regiment on the 7th June, 1885. Having separated from his close companion and assistant Mr. Dalton, who had accompanied the Prince for his earlier formative years and Naval Service on the ships *Britannia* and *Bacchante*, and their extensive tours of the globe, a new Equerry was appointed, in Captain the Hon. A. Greville, and later Captain Holford.

“High rank alone had been sufficient reason why Prince Albert Victor, the future King, should join a cavalry regiment of brilliant reputation; his fine horsemanship was yet another reason. Concerning the choice of regiment there could hardly be a moment's hesitation; certainly no better regiment could have been chosen than the Tenth Hussars.”

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HRH Prince Albert Victor, continued

The Colonel of the Regiment was the Duke's Father, Field-Marshal His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, to give the future King Edward VII his full military title.

The Prince joined the Regiment on the 6th July at Aldershot, where they had been stationed for only a few months, having recently moved from Shornecliffe, which was their first station following their arrival from a ten year deployment in India, and having fought a brief campaign in Sudan on their way home.

He joined the Tenth as subaltern, and was soon set to work on drill and in the riding school. His day started at 6.30am and, even though he was a noted horseman he was kept in the riding school a full six months; no favours seem to have been shown because of his status.

Like most Officers at the time, off-duty periods were somewhat less soldierly however, and the disciplinary system may have made a nod to his bloodline; the Prince appeared on duty one day without a belt and his fine for so doing was six bottles of champagne! Polo and lawn tennis also featured quite regularly, but amongst these leisure activities the pretty constant drill and attendance at riding schooling carried on.

Being so close to London his Father and other members of his family were at hand, and on the 14th August records state "Attended drill under C. O. In the Long Valley – First time on Parade". On the 18th the Prince returned from a trip to London with the Prince of Wales, Prince George, and Colonel Wehrner, and the following day the Prince of Wales inspected the Regiment.

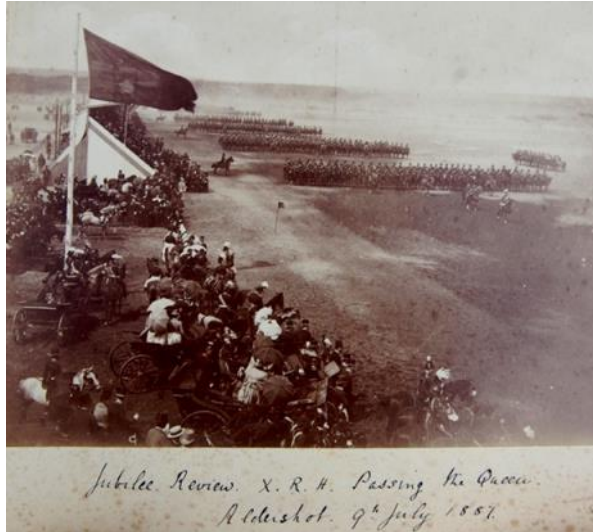
It is interesting to note that *The Memoir of the Duke of Clarence* notes that "he had a certain shrinking from the robust horseplay which had been known to exist among subalterns, although the Tenth was about the last regiment in the world which it was likely to be carried to excess". The Duke was seen a somewhat delicate individual and soldier.

With the ending of riding school the Prince took a month's leave, and attended several functions in London and the south, notably dining with Lord Airlie, who was also a Tenth Hussar. (When the Tenth was diverted to Sudan to fight, Lord Airlie had already arrived home, but on hearing that he was about to miss a fight, chartered a large ship to bring him back to Sudan. He was the only passenger!)

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HRH Prince Albert Victor, continued



In early 1887 the Duke passed his examinations following the garrison course of instruction, and the Regiment moved to Hounslow. From there the Tenth took a leading part in Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee celebrations, on which occasion he was promoted to Captain.

When the Regiment moved to York in 1888 the Prince of Clarence remained fully engaged. Several letters survive that he had written to various friends who had asked him to holiday or spend a few days. Many of these decline their kind invitations because of Regimental duty.



In March 1889 the Commander-in-Chief, the Prince of Wales, took command and spent three days with the Regiment, reportedly living as "one of the Officers". The Regiment held a point-to-point, and Prince Albert came in fourth. The Prince of Wales carried out an inspection at Knavesmire, and personally led the Regiment back to barracks.

The Prince of Wales (Centre) with Officers of the Tenth. The Duke of Connaught sixth from left.

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HRH Prince Albert Victor, continued

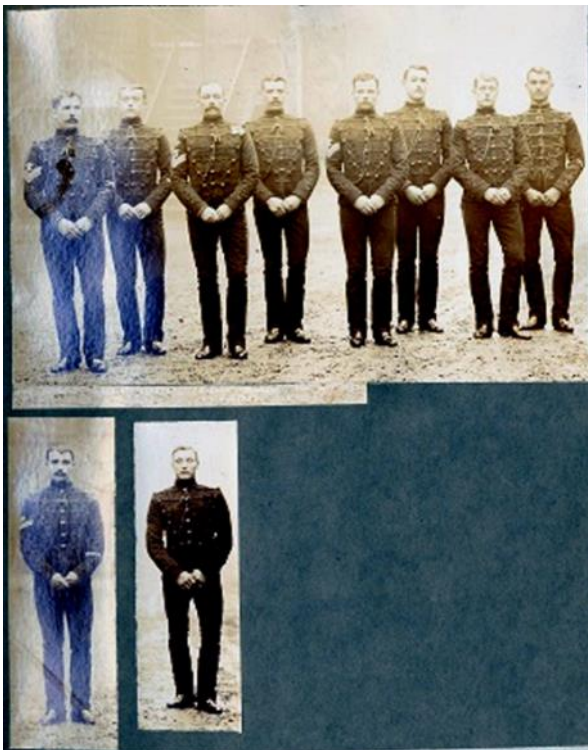
In November of 1890 the Prince Albert sailed on the *Osbourne* to undertake a visit to India, where he travelled extensively and enjoyed a considerable number of days shooting. He saw a great deal of the country and received many of the principle chiefs, Maharajahs and Governors. The Prince shot about three tigers, the largest of which measured 9ft. 6 ins.

The return journey was made on the *S. S. Assam* with a break for eight days in Cairo.

On his return the Prince rejoined his regiment, which by then was stationed in Curragh, Northern Ireland. Within weeks they moved to Dublin. In December 1891 the Duke became engaged to Princess Victoria Mary of Teck.

That Christmas the Prince Albert took leave from the Tenth and spent the festive season at his Father's house at Sandringham, but in early January of 1892 he fell ill with influenza. On the 14th of January his death was announced.

The coffin lay in the Church at Sandringham until the 20th, a service having been held in the Church on the Sunday with the coffin in the centre of the chancel. The Prince and Princess of Wales with their two daughters attended, as did the Princess Victoria Mary of Teck, the Duke of Teck and the Duke and Duchess of Fife.



The Pall-Bearers. N.C.O.s and men of the Tenth

Seven days after his death, on the 20th, the coffin was borne by a party of pall-bearers chosen from N.C.O.s and men of the Tenth from the church at Sandringham to the railway station at Wolferton, some three miles away. From here the train went to Windsor station and the coffin was carried in procession by road to the Chapel at Windsor Castle, where the Duke was buried.

"At Sandringham there had been nothing but the gun-carriage, the Hussar's Busby on the coffin, the flag and the horse artillerymen to bring home to the spectator the fact that our lost Prince had been a zealous young Officer" "but at Windsor all was sternly and solemnly military. The Prince of Wales, who had lost his son, wore his uniform as colonel of the Regiment which had lost an Officer."

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HRH Prince Albert Victor, continued

Simultaneously with the funeral service at Windsor memorial services were held throughout the country, and at Osborne on the Isle of Wight where Her Majesty the Queen attended a service led by Canon Duckworth. The Duke of Clarence was in his twenty-ninth year, and had served with the Tenth for 6 years 191 day



The Tenth Form the Guard at Windsor Station

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The Picture of the Guard at Windsor Station is from the Royal Collection. Permission to reproduce it here was kindly granted by **Royal Collection Trust/ © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2016**

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Wives Club & Sgts. Mess memories

Remember the times of Münster



Courtesy Dave Dawson



MRS. GREENWOOD AND THE LADIES OF THE WIVES' CLUB

If you have any wives club or mess stories please let us know,

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Intelligence Dismissed

During the first half of 1968 the Joint Intelligence Committee took the view that the USSR would be unlikely to invade Czechoslovakia

Very early on the 21st of August 1968 The Soviet Army invaded the country to “put down the Prague Spring”

As far as Britain was concerned the invasion was an intelligence disaster, which is strange given that Sigint (signals Intelligence) and the very successful Brixmis missions. (Brixmis was a military mission which operated behind the Iron Curtain in East Germany during the cold war. I have a good friend who was part of Brixmis and he has many interesting memories, but that's another story.)

Quote Sigint had been supplying very good intelligence for some years, so it is strange that senior British Commanders did not turn to sigint and GCHQ, instead, during the 1960s those in Germany almost seemed to reject electronic monitoring in favor of human reconnaissance from “stay behind patrols”. Often referred to as the Mk. 1. Eyeball. At the onset of a new war, stay- behind parties from NATO special forces would supply information collected by offensive operations, cooperation with partisans or guerrillas, and would also give assistance to escapers such as downed pilots. Intelligence was deemed to be the predominant task of SAS-type units. In the 1960s the BAOR developed a secret new force for this intelligence role. This involved adding a Special Reconnaissance Squadron from the Royal Armoured Corps to strengthen 23 SAS Regiment. The Special Reconnaissance Squadron was expected to hold the fort until the arrival of 23 SAS, which would fly in from Britain. These units were on short readiness times: their unofficial motto was ‘Wait and Fly-Dig and Die’ After the arrival of 23 SAS they would operate as a single unit. **Unquote**

These special units were based in Paderborn and were equipped with high-frequency Morse to provide long range and, hopefully, continued communication.

Most of us were unaware of the SRS as the Squadron was only in being for about two years in the early 1960s and such was its role its existence was not widely known. This Squadron was unique to the RAC as this was the only time that an RAC Squadron was given a role akin to the SAS, organized and trained along SAS lines. They used Austin Champs, Bedford 3 ton lorries and a VW Beetle staff car! Clothing was identical to SAS except for a dark blue beret with a small RAC badge on a red background. 10th Royal Hussars take note.

Establishment allowed for 20 patrols, each of 4 men, plus SHQ and admin, it was never up to full strength, as regiments were reluctant to release many of their best Officers and men and of course the hard selection course. The Squadron moved into accommodation in Alanbooke Barracks Paderborn, home of 4 Div. Engineer Regiment. A good choice, given the secrecy surrounding it.

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Intelligence Dismissed Continued



Parade Square, with the Corporals' Mess to the rear HQ & Guard Room 4th Div. Engineers RE 1961

I have asked many members of our regiment, but can find none that had any idea of the existence of this special Squadron, it would seem that this was indeed a very secret Squadron of the RAC. It would have been interesting to see how this unit would have evolved under the Royal Armoured Corps. However, given the rapid advance in sigint mentioned at the start and what we know about the placement of nuclear missiles in East Germany at the time the idea was out of date before it got started. On disbandment, the Special Reconnaissance Squadron amalgamated with Cyclops Squadron 2RTR to form the Parachute Squadron RAC. The Para Sqn was stationed in Tidworth 1964 and there were some members of the regiment who applied to join, I have been informed that L/Cpl Vuniwaqa and Tpr. Pete Longley joined and also thought Charlie Chafe applied as well, though when we were in Münster, although not sure on that. Peter Longley later joined 22 SAS I am told and another member of C Sqn also joined the SAS I think he is in Australia? During my research, I was contacted by Sandy Moriarty who was a founding member of the SRS, (Lt 5RTR at the time) with more information and he invited me to phone him, where he could supply much more Information. The Squadron was so secret that even 4 Div. Engineer Regiment had no idea what they did or were doing in Alanbrooke Barracks. There was a Sergeant who joined from our regiment and he thinks it **may** have been Sgt. T (smoke) Scriven of A Sqn. It was, Smoke returned to the regiment after his time with SAS and then applied and joined SRS, he returned to our regiment on disbandment of the SRS.

Sandy will be attending a reunion of those in the Squadron in November and he will try and get some names of those who applied to join in 1961, I hope to include them if possible. A very interesting gentleman with many memories, He remembers Lt. Perry and Lt. Kaye thank you again for the invaluable help. Would be important if we can include them here and remember those names mentioned above, where are they now ?

Alan Powney.

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Another look at Swindon Reunion

I had a very nice card from Liz Bentley, thanking us for the lovely flower's and help with the Swindon Reunion. We should thank you Liz, for you did all the organising and work, we just helped with moving a few tables and chairs about and informing members of booking and accommodation details. Of course, we do like a pat on the back now and then, ta. This year saw an increase in the members who have not been for a few years, which was good, and some who attended for the first time. Some of us have not seen them for over 50 years, does tug at emotions. Pete Elvey, Tony Preston, John Lumsdon, Pete Edwards, June and Ron Fletcher Ken Byrant and his wife and Trevor Weston, to name just a few. Saturday saw the new Polo Shirt's being received, most were pre-ordered and one or two are still being finished. 10th Royal Hussars pen's, penknives, clocks were high in demand, Del Boy Doughty enjoyed his new role. A member has donated 25 new baseball caps maroon and blue thank you very much for the generosity. The evening meal, what can one say, a great evening was had by everyone again, last minute sales took place across the table, very funny to observe the "Squaddy" banter between John Lumsdon and Pete Edwards at one end and Eddie Ankers at the other end of the long table, no knives were thrown.

Ted Williams, one of the older members of the regiment, Ted left in 1953, was accompanied by Janet, who drove him down, enjoyed meeting everyone and was seen late into the night deep in conversation with the gentlemen from Durham Richard Bevin, Bob Griffin and other's. Unfortunately, Ted had a nose bleed in the night and had to be taken to Swindon Hospital. Janet spent all night there and informed us early Sunday morning. I would like to thank Spud Murphy, Bill Knight and Peter Jagger, for looking after her during lunch, she was very tired and worried. Ted is now home and we have spoken to him, he is now fine looking forward to next year. He was not involved in the Eddie Ankers and co. shenanigans, I might add.

It was great to speak to Nancy Wilson and her son (sorry forgotten name) quite a giggle when I mentioned Fudge (Tug's favourite sweet) now they know who I am, hmmm. was very good to speak to Mary Reed have not seen Mary for so many years, had to tell me her name, very embarrassing. Mike Sellick and I had a good laugh and a joke, we both confessed we were as poor as a church mouse. Clive Presswell is the only person who gets £5 a year pocket money and still goes home each year with more than he came with. He is pleased he is still taller than Gilbert but not by much. Clive's financial situation was confirmed by Jayne. Mike and I should ask him how it's done.

The Highlight this year was of course the presentation of the KRH Rosette to Liz, June and Ron, well done, Liz says she will wear it with pride each year. Tom Knight and Richard Perry were in good form this year. A photo of the last Aqaba old sweats was a good idea.

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Another look at Swindon Reunion Continued

The memoirs of F C Walker BEM were well received the experiences of men like him will probably not come forward again. Dougie Covill remembers “The Boy” and they were once on guard duty together. A separate post will be made of this. I may have to get some more booklets printed. 4th Troop got their long-awaited photo and “H” looked well pleased all day. Sunday evening was again the Quiz evening and although we had the knowledge base of Spud and the Durham delegation we came last again, the correct answers were given but incorrectly written down. This was due to Eddie the scribe having his fingers in the chip bowl and not around the pen. I was informed of a comment some days later that numbers were down from the previous year, who cares, Swindon is not about counting how many attends but by enjoying the weekend and more important Sunday lunch meeting friends and old comrades each year and not because of any celebrity who happens to attend.



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Another look at Swindon Reunion Continued



When one looks back to the years that reunions started, there were a number in the early nineties and maybe before, the first organised by John McKay was in 1992 at the George Inn Cambridge, near Stroud there were about 20+ old comrades and their wives John McKay, Ian Clements, Dave Robbo 504, Dave Coleman, Spike Spence, David Robinson, Tom Knight, Jack Shearing, Jim Peters, Bill Todhunter to name a few, wife's names escape me, sorry. 1993 saw the next but I am unsure where. Taunton 1994, this time John McKay asked Robbo 504 to organise that. Dorcan near Swindon was the first in the area not sure of the year but could have been 1998 here there was an increase in attendance, this time John McKay got Bill Todhunter to find the venue, people like Don Kane, Mike Cox and many others started to travel longer distances to enjoy reunions. The white Hart was also used at some stage but due to the lack of space the Crown became the venue for all later years although I am unsure when that was. There were other reunions up and down the country most years, I believe Fred Nickolas did some and of course Stockport and Southern Shiners are some of the most notable among the regular ones. The photo's I am sure you may have seen before, but they do bring back fond memories not only of the people involved but how the Shiners Club reunions started and grew into the highlight of all Shiners reunions. There are I am sure members who can correct me on some of the dates of the reunions I welcome any help, just hope I don't get hauled over the coals.

Alan

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Obituaries

TO ALL OUR DEAR FRIENDS

WE LAID TO REST IN 2016

GOD BLESS THEM ALL

15 th November 2015	JJM Glasse Esq. DL
25 th November 2015	AWC Marshall
27 th January	Ian Campbell
1 st March	FC Walker BEM
8 th April	John WC Aylott
23 rd April	Mrs. Irene Wharton
21 st April	Mrs. Zara Preston
25 th May	Ian Paul Knight
2 nd July	Kenneth (Kenny) Wilson REME
3 rd July	Terry Flippence
4 th July	Maj. Bobby Cooper
12 th July	Major Ben Strachan
19 th July	Norman Long
28 th July	Jonathan Robinson
16 th September	Robert "Nobby" Suggitt
2 nd October	Eddie Bainbridge
22 nd November	Mike Doak

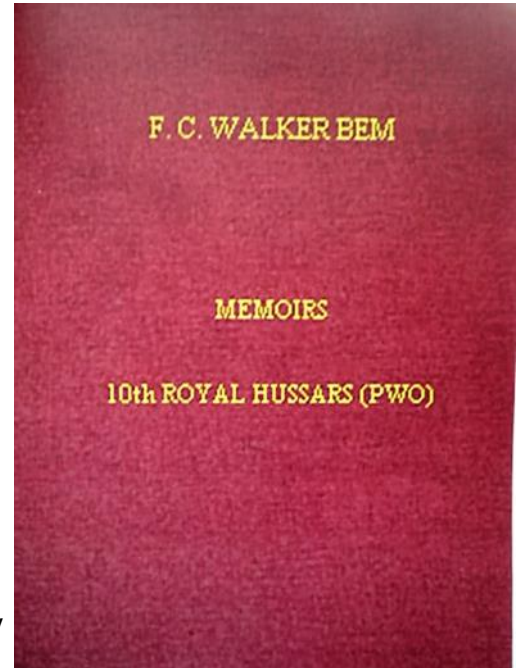
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Frederick Charles Walker BEM

Frederick joined the regiment as a 16-year-old lad as Bugler in 1937. He served until 1947 and was mentioned in dispatches for his work during the occupation in Germany.

He was recalled in 1949 because of the Korean Campaign and joined the 8th Hussars, served in Japan and was instrumental in setting up and running the Leave camp for soldiers of all allied nations, for this work he was awarded the BEM. He was again demobbed in 1952. I was offered his memoirs to share among all members. We discussed this with many members and HHQ, who showed a great interest. We decided to publish a book, which Frederick's family asked for copies for his grandchildren and HHQ wished to add one to the regiments archives at the Winchester Museum. I undertook the task of publishing the hardcover books and also produced booklets for interested members. There are still some available for those of you who are interested and are held by Tony Preston. I had a great evening with Frederick's family and was given a large number of photos which I will publish in future newsletters. I was shown much of Frederick's memorabilia right down to his sewing kit and button stick, how many of those are still about. A P



Dear Alan,

I have just received Fred Walker's memoirs back from Dougie Covill; I also had a chat on the telephone to Dougie.

His eyes are bad but his daughter, Geraldine, read the booklet to him.

She comments:

'Just finished reading the book to Opa (Dougie). What a magnificent document and account of one man's war experiences. We found it very amusing in places but also very moving at times. His description of life after the war in the fifties, sixties and seventies resonates at times with what my parents experienced and indeed it reminded me of much that I had forgotten.

Opa says he did know of The Boy but only met him once whilst on guard duty - he was the trumpeter. Their paths may have also crossed when Fred Walker delivered petrol, food and ammunition in the dark. Although both men experienced many similar situations there are huge differences in each man's war. Opa was in A Squadron on the front line whereas Fred Walker was in the Echelon dealing with the aftermath but not in the thick of the action. But still a very interesting perspective.

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Frederick Charles Walker BEM, continued

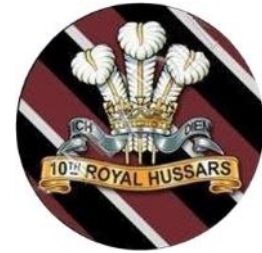
A Squadron supported the Gurkhas and they did indeed chop the heads off several German soldiers and eight of them were placed in the slit trench after the battle.'

Richard Disspain 15th June 2016

I have just finished reading the Memoirs of one very special Gentleman. F.C. Walker BEM of the 10th Royal Hussars PWO. It's not very big, but the man in my thoughts is a GIANT, he may not think so but I do. From the day that he joined the Regiment in 1937 to the day he left the Army in 1952, the highs and lows of Army life during that time.

If you get the chance, read it, it is well worth it "Ich Dien"

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It's 1968

And the QM's Dept. are out for the annual break for fresh air and photo to convince everyone the dept did exist. They enjoyed an eventful year with many changes in personal.



THE QUARTERMASTERS "EMPIRE"

*Back Row—L./Cpl. Budden, L./Cpl. Miles, Herr Holsen, Tpr. Van-de-l'Isle, L./Cpl. Hadaway, L./Cpl. Williams.
Centre Row—Cpl. Harrison, Cpl. Hanson (3 D.G.), Herr Herzog, Herr Paellmann, Fr. Kermbach, Fr. Winkelmann, Fr. Mosters,
Herr Zumdick, Herr Van Huizen, Cpl. Rowley, Cpl. Fleming.
Front Row—S./Sgt. May, R.Q.M.S. Courtney, Major D. F. Covill, M.B.E., D.C.M., S./Sgt. Dawson.
Absent on Leave—Cpl. Stiles.*

Terry Budden helped in renovating the HQ Sqn. Club, he was also in charge of the biggest chippy shop in the Garrison, but had no wood to make anything. Terry Williams was apparently busy all year repairing window panes, that's a lot of pain. The RQMS has been worried for some time, how he was going to inform those joining the new regiment, that they had to hand in their trousers for crimson ones. Viv Stiles was missing again, "on leave or out training" is the usual answer, Viv was a good distance runner at the time.

Ken Harrison broke three ribs, some say a pile of forms fell on him, I hear that forms with numbers 1306 & 1308 being amongst the heaviest, however it could have been when Terry ran into his car when leaving the families NAAFI. Ken told me about it some years ago. The dept. helped the Squadron win the .22 shooting trophy and came second in the darts match, strange they always maintained guns were not their thing and only worked with a millboard and pencil. Terry Budden finally got some timber and had to make 1,000 toffee apple sticks!! That's one thousand. Sadly, some members of the dept. are no longer with us.

Alan

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National Service

As Denis said, we were there for the duration and most of use decided to make a go of it.



Denis Griffiths Basic Training Catterick 1951



Two great friends, Don Flowers & Denis
Menden Road Iserlohn June 1953

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Running

Asking my wife what her plans were for the day she replied that her friend had asked if she would run up a pair of curtains for her, are you mad? said I, the curtains won't take your weight, the curtain rods will come down think of the work you will make for me. She gave me one of her looks and went on her merry way. But this got me thinking, not that I do a lot of it because I find it time consuming, but the word "Run" is strange. Look in a dictionary you will find the word takes up a whole page with its meanings.

Casting my mind back as a kid I recall being asked to run up to the farm to get milk and eggs, being told to run along when adults were chatting, then being told to stop running about indoors. I was taught that trains run on rails, and steam, busses run on petrol, but neither ever run on time. When I left school, and joined the Army cross country running seemed to be in vogue. The C.O. would even come out of his office on a sunny day to watch us, our route would be out of the camp, up the hill and across the tank tracks for a few miles down to the Moreton lane and back to camp. The C.O. would place himself, usually with the R.S.M. at this junction and shout encouragement, well, in the three years I was ensconced in this place it can be told that I only ever completed the course once, that was the first time, which I used as a recce to find how to avoid it for the future.

I managed to avoid most running for some time until one day, the P.T.I. S/Sgt a chap called Bright, who was to later become P.T.I. for the Shiners, decided that we would have trials for the Regimental team, it was getting near lunch time and he called out for men for the 100yds. As that was the shortest distance I decided that was for me, we were informed that we could leave once we had raced, I shot off and won, and went for lunch, and forgot all about it. Imagine my horror when looking at Regimental orders I found that I was mentioned in dispatches, I had been selected for the team to run the 400yds, I never found out why they thought I would be better at a distance three times longer than I had won at, and would report to the sports field at 7.30 each morning for training. This seemed reasonable because about this time of my career I had taken a dislike for first parades. I had been using the sick parades for too long, and I was fed up parading with small pack filled with enough kit for a long holiday. So, this came as another way out. I stuck to this training for a few weeks but 400yds was not my distance, far too far, so after one performance I packed my bags and retired, as far as running was concerned. I was forced out of retirement to take part in battle runs on the ranges at Hohne but that was it, although I did manage to beat Ernie Pomfret over thirty yards to the cookhouse door once.

I was left to either go back to doing first parades again or coming up with something new, this is where the hand of God played a part. The powers to be decided that seeing has a lot of boys kept changing sides of religion when it came to Church services they would have Confirmation classes early morning after breakfast, for the C of E people so I signed up. These didn't take place every morning but they played their part. When I joined the Regiment, I reverted to first parades for I while until Lofty Gordon joined B Sqn and was looking for a Batman so once again my handsome face went missing from first parades for another year or so. But I have digressed from my original topic about the word Run.

Whilst I veered off course, the dog has run off, rivers have run to the sea, the old chap who lives opposite was painting his door and has now noticed that the paint as run, I tried cheering up by telling him that still waters run deep, he replied through gritted teeth asking could I run him to Wickes so he could by some more paint, I told him that he should not be running anywhere at his age, and to top it all when I got back indoors her ladyship was moaning that the nail I had promised to bang in on the shed door had made a run in her tights. I have decided to run up the white flag and go for a run in the car.

Regards Ivor Biggun.

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BOBC

In March 1967 SSM Clifton called me into his office and said they need drivers at the Outward-bound Centre in Norway its only for 8 months' single man's posting, so I said why not Sir, he then said hand in all your kit its civvies up there no uniforms. So, 3 days later I was in Hamburg Hauptbahnhof and reported to the transport cops (MPs) then on the train with a packed lunch going through Denmark and onto the ferry to Norway.

The ferry docked in Kristiansand the next afternoon 20 km drive to the camp. The CO then called me into his office and said we don't need drivers but we need instructors, so I said why not sir. So, the next day I joined the instructors training course, one month later I got my instructors badge and 3 days off for Easter. After Easter, I got a blue Landrover and off we went to the mountain camp at Gautestad at the bottom of the setedal valley.

The BOBC was run by 1BR corps at Bielefeld and was the corps Cmdrs. baby. Sir John Mogg used to visit us once a year by AAC beaver and would fly low over the camp to let us know he needed transport. He was a great man and helped us get all we needed. We were a mixed service unit from all arms except Navy, Permanent admin staff were about 50% RA with REME, ACC, RAPC, Grenadier Guards, 16/5L, 3DG, 11H, 10H, RMP, SAS, Para, RAMC and a RE chippy, and a vicar who came once a month our CO was ex Chindit a real cocktail. The courses were 21 days 10 days canoeing 10 days in the mountains and a changeover day, after which the 6 best students would do a 6-day advance climbing week. So, we worked a 28-day cycle which gave us 2 days and 2 halve days off, we ran 2 courses parallel with a new lot every 14 days. This was as well as Speical-expedition, s every 14 days all through the summer, each sp-ex was a group from any BAOR unit consisting of 32 men or women. So, at any given time we had 120 men somewhere in the south of Norway from Easter until the end of October. During winter, we ran skiing and snow and ice courses from January to Easter.

Our MT was 4 Bedford's and 6 LWB Landover's an ambulance and a minibus. We were very much on our own in Norway with the nearest unit at Kiel in Germany, all our rations (Compo) veh spares naffi goods and anything else we could indent for was collected in Germany on a re-ration run (Germany run). A Germany run would go about every 3 weeks, 2 dvr, s 1 Bedford and trailer usually took 5 days leaving Norway on the night ferry Saturday-to Thursday, via Denmark Hohne, Bielefeld Soest (to collect films) Monchengladbach, then back to Hohne and Kiel and the ferry on Thursday,



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BOBC Continued

In the 2nd year of my 8 month posting the Regt amalgamated and I was surplus to requirement and was “paper” posted to the QDG,s I never served with them and they didn’t contact me after the transfer in 1969, that was the same year my 3 stripe came and I took on the job as admin sgt, same place same job +++but now I was running the SP-EX MT and the map store as well, and I also got married so it was a good year, with no married quarters I had to buy a house but the living out allowance covered the mortgage. The logistics for all the courses was a night mare, in 1970 the winter was a big problem all the students were coming by air and were due to arrive Monday the 2nd week of January and we had NO SNOW for the first time ever in Norway, so the boss said to me go find me enough snow to run all the winter courses this year, I was sent off with a wad of cash and a landrover and only a week to sort it. I found an old tourist hut at 1300 m, s without running water or electricity and only 30 beds a wood shed and a stream and about 3 meters on snow. With only 4-5 hours of daylight and only public phones I had my work cut out, I got back to camp and sent a dvr and Bedford to Germany to get 35 dbl bunks and mattresses and a few other things we needed to move camp in a week, we took out all the beds and in with bunks and the training staff lived in the woodshed the cooks lived in the kitchen, we dug a deepfreeze next to our water supply all the heating and cooking was done on 3 wood burners manned day and night. When the students arrived, we had food and beds for all and a shower every 4th day at a hotel 10 km away and the courses went as planned. The summer students were due 2 weeks after the Easter 10-day break.

On arrival, the students were met at the ferry by 3 bed fords and moved to the camp where they all had the mandatory 50-meter swim anyone who had to be “rescued” was RTUed the same day back to his unit. it was a great posting that lasted just over 8 years. I still live in the house I bought 8 km, s from the camp. Now closed down in 1992.

Lee Doughty

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Tommy Bough

I first met Tommy Bough at a Stockport reunion many years ago and we became good friends very quickly.

Tommy served with regiment in North Africa and he told me he lost 3 Commanders in one week, Tommy was a Tank driver. He was captured by the Italians and spent some weeks in Tobruk before being put on a hospital ship with other Prisoners and sent to a POW camp somewhere in the middle of Italy. He spent about 3 years at the camp, when one morning they found all the prison guards had fled, they were unaware at the time the allies were advancing north. After much discussion as to should they go south to meet the allies or to the hills and join the Resistance Partisans led by Garibaldi, they went to the hills. After some time, they decided it would be safer to return to the camp as they didn't want to be possibly picked up by the enemy and then shot as spies or 5th columnists if they stayed in the Resistance. This they did and waited for the allies who were fast approaching the area. When finally, they arrived Tommy said they had a hell of a time convincing Officers they were British soldiers, as they had fairly good clothes, looked fit and well fed, "due to pasta and soccer on a daily basis" for they were well fed by local farmers and nothing like prisoners of war.

The following article was given to me by Tommy and it was part of a series of stories by the BBC. The narrator was Richard Dimbleby and was a recorded broadcast on the 18th November 1943. It has been in my possession about 20 years and I have asked Alan to include this as it refers to our Regiment during the war years.

Peter Jagger.

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BATTLE HONOUR

"BATTLE HONOUR"

No

"THE FIRST ARMoured DIVISION"

by

Sergeant Percy Hoskins.

Produced by

John Glyn-Jones.

Home Service 8.45 - 9.00 p.m.
(Also honoured for Overseas)

Pre-recorded 18.11.43
Rehearsal

1. ANN.1

"Battle Honour". Another of our programmes telling of the officers and men who in this war have maintained and added further glory to the fighting traditions of the British Forces. This programme written by Sergeant Percy Hoskins in co-operation with the War Office tells of the 1st Armoured Division and the story is told by Richard Disbrey.

PRE.17

Before the value of a new fighting weapon can be truly assessed it must stand the crucial test of battle. The men who take it into the initial combat realise that any deficiencies will be quickly revealed. They know also that from their individual skill and tactics in exploiting the new weapon, lessons can be learned from which future Armies will benefit. The added risks of the trial is there. It is the men who experimented in battle that we honour tonight - the fathers of our mechanised army - the men of the First Armoured Division.

The First Armoured Division was formed in the uneventful peace days of 1937, and its first Commander was General Sir Alan Brooke, present Chief of the Imperial General Staff. As war loomed nearer the division was subjected to so much experimental mechanisation that even six months after hostilities had begun, it was still described in a War Office circular as this "luxury formation".

But, if it was a "luxury formation" the enemy were to pay the bill. Out of its first bitter fighting experience - out of the early battlefields strewn with the wrecked hulls of tanks - so undeveloped in fighting proficiency when we compare them with the land warships of today - was to rise one of the greatest striking forces in the history of armies.

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BATTLE HONOUR Continued

BATTLE HONOUR

THE FIEST ARMoured DIVISION

By SGT PERCY HOSKINS

Excerpts from the script of a BBC Radio Broadcast 18.11.43

Before the value of a new fighting weapon can be truly assessed it must stand the crucial test of battle. The men who take it into the initial combat realize that any deficiencies will be quickly revealed. They know also that from their individual skill and tactics in exploiting the new weapon, lessons can be learned from which future Armies will benefit. The added risks of the trial are theirs. It is the men who experimented in battle that we honour tonight – the fathers of our mechanized army – the men of the First Armoured Division.

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But if it was a “luxury formation” the enemy were to pay the bill. Out of its first bitter fighting experience out of the early battle-fields strewn with the wrecked hulls of tanks – so underdeveloped in fighting proficiency when we compare them with the land warships of today – was to rise one of the greatest striking forces of the history of armies – the Royal Armoured Corps.

The “First” was the only armoured division to go to France and it went – due to delayed reorganization, - wholly deficient of divisional artillery, tank bridging and infantry and deficient of cruiser strength, anti-tank and anti-aircraft artillery and without a reserve of armoured fighting vehicles. It had been intended that the division should complete equipment and training in France but there was no time for that. Hitler’s assault upon Western Europe had begun. The Sedan gap was wide open. And the First with their light-armoured tanks went straight into a counter attack. General Weygand had declared that the division must prevent the Germans from reaching the Seine bridges and that if they could not stop them with the tanks they were to “stop them with bare hands”. So the men of the Queens Bays, 9th Lancers and 10th Hussars and the 2nd and 5th Battalions RTR, swept forward. They cleared the ground but the French infantry who were to consolidate the gains arrived five hours late. The tanks pottered about trying to hold the ground they had won and were then shot to pieces in detail by the heavier-armoured German tanks. The British tanks did not attack the strong anti-tank points but drove into the line between them cruising up and down over shallow trenches and crushing the Germans in them under their tracks. When they could not depress their guns enough to deal with the enemy close round them, the crews opened up the tanks and fired their revolvers down the sides of the turrets. They failed to save Rouen and it was almost a miracle that these men, overborne by the enemy vastly superior in armour, guns, mobility and air support were able to avoid total destruction and extricate themselves to carry on the battle south of the Seine for another ten days.

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BATTLE HONOUR Continued

Long after the BEF had left the beaches of Dunkirk the First Armoured were still in action. They held on until news reached them that the French government had asked for an armistice. A section of the division under the command of general Crocker at Montigny reluctantly began a long trek to Cherbourg. Coming straight out of a battle they marched two hundred miles in twenty-four hours and embarked on the 18th of June. The division had been in France less than five weeks; and losses in men and material had been severe. Some were shaken by what they had seen, by the complete lack of offensive spirit among the French, but throughout the division ran one query "when can we get more tanks and go back again"



It was over a year later when the division left these shores again and early one November morning in '41 they landed in Egypt wearing upon their arms the new and rather sardonic symbol of the force, a rhinoceros. True the division and the beast had similar characteristics for has it not been said that a rhinoceros is the fastest animal of its size and that once its charge has gained momentum nothing can deter its progress?

The Rhino boys- as they soon became known throughout the Mediterranean battlefield found in their early brushes with the enemy that the skin of the tanks they brought with them, Crusader and Stuarts, were not thick enough to withstand the German anti-tank weapons and that the two-pounder though effective was not the complete answer to the armor that Rommel could throw against them.

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BATTLE HONOUR Continued

They fought gallantly and skillfully and on more than one occasion sent the Germans scattering. But it was not until Knightsbridge – Knightsbridge with its experiment of box defense so reminiscent of the human squares at Waterloo – that the fight could be staged at even weights. Knightsbridge staggered the Nazis. For the first time they met armour as heavy, as their own. Grants rushed from America and issued to the Rhino boys only four days before, went into action. The Germans thought they knew the British tank tactics well enough – the headlong charge to get into range; the usual flanking movements, and they waited confidentially behind their guns ready to pick off the British vehicles one by one. But this charge never came. Instead the British tanks deployed- one group to either flank – one to the center – where they settled into positions hull down on the horizon. The Germany watched puzzled. Then shells began to rip through their tanks. Big 75mm shells. At last the First Armoured Division had been given a tank mounting as big a gun as the enemy's. An SOS went out from the German lines for more 88mm guns – their most powerful anti-tank weapon and battle settled down to a long hard hitting dual Grant versus MarkIV; the six-pounder versus the 88mm. The Rhino boys were delighted with the performance of the Grants in their first battle. There was only one complain. There was not enough of them. Many of the squadrons still had their Crusaders and these suffered badly. Each day of the battle the division fought three or four major actions. There was no question of rest or letting up – the tanks were on the move all the time to wherever the fighting was heaviest. The third day of the battle was probably the toughest. On that day standing in a semi-circle with the 10th Hussars on the right, the Queen's Bays in the center and the 9th Lancers on the left the armoured brigade of the division sadly depleted, held off over 150 tanks of the 15th and 21st Panzer divisions. At the end of the day the 10th Hussars were reduced to three tanks. They were called out of the line and their vehicles handed over to the 9th Lancers. For nineteen days the Lancers were reduced to five tanks and they in turn pulled out of the line. At the hottest moment of one of the last days General Lumsden the divisional commander sent a message to Brigadier Briggs of the 2nd Armoured Brigade who was with the forward tanks.

Hello TEPA. KALE calling, take command of everything you can see. I say again Take command of everything you see. Is this clear? Over!

Hello KALE TEPA answering, I will try. All I can see at the moment are German and Italian tanks. TEPA to KALE. Off! Finally, the decision had to be taken to evacuate the Knightsbridge box and the First Armoured moved north to cover the retirement of the South African division to Tobruk and to prevent the Germans penetrating to the coast road. Attack after attack was launched by the Germans and with coloured lights going up on all sides they moved through Acroma to the other side of Tobruk. They were to fall back many more miles before the tide turned at El Alamein.

On the twenty ninth of August Rommel announced to his troops that in two or three days they would be in Alexandria and issued a special order of the day in which he said 'To-day the army strengthened by new divisions is moving into the attack for the final annihilation of the enemy'

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BATTLE HONOUR Continued

He did break through the lightly defended southern sector between the Ruswoisat ridge and Illmaiment and having blocked the southern edge of this gap Rommel turned north behind our lines and made for the coast with the intention of bringing our armour to battle. The bait was refused. Remaining on the defensive we hit back for three days of bombing, artillery fire harassing attacks. Rommel dared not leave an unbroken army on his flanks; supplies were difficult to come by and petrol was running short. Badly mauled he began to retire with nothing to show for his heavy losses except the occupation of a bit of no-man's land.

General Alexander immediately began to reform his striking force for a major attack. He took the first and tenth armoured divisions back; re-equipped them with the Sherman tank - an even more powerful weapon. Behind the lines full scale dummy replicas were built of the enemy minefields and for six weeks the newly created tenth Corps were trained for their task as the armoured spearhead in the battle of Alamein. German recce which flew over the spot on Oct. 22nd reported to Rommel that Alexander's tanks were still training behind enemy lines. Which is exactly what we wanted them to believe. Actually the whole corps had moved into the line leaving behind a skillfully erected dummy camp with an exact facsimile of its normal lay-out of tanks.

At nine thirty the following morning the artillery began the first barrage of the Alamein attack. During the next six days the artillery, sappers and infantry paved the way for the great tank battle of El Aqqaqir. Shortly before the attack on November 2nd the divisional commander had told the First Armoured that he expected every Sherman to account for five enemy tanks. After the battle he was slightly disappointed they had only knocked out 4.8 per tank. The battle raged all day. When it was over El Aqqaqir was a cemetery of the Axis armour.

Next day the enemy were in full retreat, prisoners came in droves and among them was General Ritter von Thoma, co-founder with General Guderian of the German Armoured Corps and Commander of the Africa Corps. von Thoma was bought in by Lt. Grant Singer of the 10th Hussars. You have developed a new type of warfare and it has been too much for us.



The Capture of General Von Thoma by Lieutenant Grant Singer
(Artist: David Shepherd)

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BATTLE HONOUR Continued

I spoke to Rommel and told him that a mass of your tanks and armoured cars was moving around his southern flank. He said it was nonsense and that it must be British armoured cars and nothing to worry about. I sent out a recce which confirmed the report but Rommel still refused to believe it. He said It is impossible that they have come through the Trieste division without their reporting it to me', so I went out on a personal recce and found that far from reporting it the Trieste division had not even stayed to wait and see. It is while I was on this recce that your men caught me.

It was after this battle that REME men of the division made a tremendous contribution to the victory. Recovering five hundred and eleven tanks which had been knocked out they put 277 of them back into battle using just their own field resources. The tank battle over, the pursuit began. After a thunderous chase of eight days the enemy was cleared out of Egypt, but the weather cheated us of a complete victory. It began to rain heavily and by the morning of November 7th the division was hopelessly bogged with its petrol and essential supplies held up some miles behind. Consequently, the Rhino boys couldn't get to Charring Cross in time to cut the coast road and the enemy made good his escape to the west.

On November the 10th the German rear-guard was broken at Bug-bug and two days later the whole frontier was cleared. The only Germans left in Egypt were the prisoners. The First Armoured pushed on. At Tripoli the division began to prepare for the vital role it was to play in rolling up the Mareth Line. In this great battle the Rhino boys made tank history by moving through enemy armour for a distance of fourteen miles and creating great destruction to the 21st Panzer Division until a powerful anti-tank screen held them up.

The coastal attack had been called off and General Montgomery decided to switch the 1st Armoured Division too re-enforce the drive on EL Hamma. Orders to move reached the division at 16:00 hours on March 23rd. Tanks had to be loaded on to transporters and move out on a single route for sixty miles. Nevertheless, the division was through the gap and deployed in desert formation by first light on March 24th. At 16:00 hours the New Zealanders and the 8th Armoured Brigade attacked enemy positions astride the El Hamma road. The attack was made on a three battalion front and was supported by an artillery barrage and by three light bomber squadrons; five fighter wings, and a tank busting squadron. By 18:00 hours the objectives had been taken and the 1st Armoured Division began to pass through with the setting sun behind it.

"We followed up closely and went through the N.Z. division. There was a hell of a dust storm blowing and the visibility was very bad. It must have foxed the German anti-tank gunners as all their guns were sited on the high ground on either flank. While we were advancing up the valley there was a mass of stuff flying about from all directions but it didn't hurt anyone. We got on to our objective just before dark and halted until the moon rose about 23:40 hours. The whole division then proceeded to move down the road or rather astride it in a sort of phalanx. It was an amazing performance and scared the life out of the Boche. We kept on meeting parties of vehicles and guns which we shot up and we could see the Jerries' running about like rabbits looking for someone to surrender to. We did not meet any serious opposition until we got close to El Hamma. The leading troop leader knocked out three anti- tank guns at a hundred yards' range".

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BATTLE HONOUR Continued

The Rhino boys spread terror in the German lines that night and at 03:00 hours the commander revealed a signal from one of his regiments. It read "Most entertaining evening we've ever had. Can we do it again tomorrow night?"

The breakthrough convinced Rommel that he must evacuate his troops in the Mareth position immediately to avoid them being cut off. Next day his garrison began their escape to radi Akerit.

This new defence line did not hold out for long.

After the main attack had succeeded the First Armoured Division passed through a route in the minefields which the sappers had cleared and by night-fall they had made contact with American patrols advancing from the West.

The division was then switched to the command of the First Army to add the power of its striking force to General Alexander's left hook at Tunis. After moving eastwards from the Goubellat area where it had protected the right flank of the 9th Corps attack it drove forward to complete the final discomfiture of the remnants of the 10th and 21st Panzer divisions near Gromoalia.

Major General Freiherr von Broich and his 20th Panzer Division capitulated to the 2nd Rifle Brigade of the First Armoured Division in the early hours of May 12th. Speaking to Major General Briggs his captor von Broich said "We German generals have a great admiration and a healthy respect for general Montgomery, with his arrival, the war in the desert ceased to be just a sport. His blows are cool, calculated and delivered with deadly precision".

Yes, war in the desert had ceased to be a sport for the Nazi's. For the next three years he had been the hunter, now it was his turn to be hunted. When General Alexander wired Mr Churchill "We are the Masters of the North African Shores" he knew that the campaign had confirmed one of his strongest beliefs. The Rhino boys had proved that given the right weapon, the British tank trooper was the master of anything the Axis could hurl against him - a fact that is being confirmed tonight on another great battlefield of this Second World War.

Battle Honour The First Armoured Division

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Major Pillinger

www.majorpillinger.com



www.majorpillinger.com is a website that has been written to detail the career of Roland Pillinger who joined the Tenth (Prince of Wales Own) Royal Hussars at Canterbury in April 1879. He served with the Regiment until he retired, *Time Expired*, in May 1913.

Roland rose from a Trooper to achieve the rank of Major. He fought in Sudan in 1884, The Second South Africa War, 1899 – 1902, attended the Coronation Durbar in Delhi in 1911, and later served at Gallipoli and in the Middle East during the Great War.

The site also contains much detail of the history of the Tenth; it has grown to be an archive of the military lives of Officers and men who served with the Tenth during the Victorian and Edwardian period of our history. Covering time in India, England, Ireland, and South Africa there is also a fascinating insight into Regimental life through the XRH Gazette which Major Pillinger edited from its inception in 1906 until his retirement.



The Tenth At Waterloo

In addition, the sister site www.tenththatwaterloo reproduces Colonel Liddell's account of the decisive part the Tenth took at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815.

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Special Reconnaissance Squadron Update

Alan,

I spoke to members of the Special Reconnaissance Squadron earlier this month at a dinner and they confirmed that the SRS Sergeants were invited to Games Nights in the 10H Sergeants Mess in Barker barracks and enjoyed such occasions. Apart from SQMS liaison with 10H QM, we are not aware of any other contact between the two units.

With Best regards, Sandy

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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.