



THE CHRONICLE

**The Journal
of
The Queen's Royal Hussars
Historical Society**

(Friends of the Queen's Royal Hussars Collection)

VOLUME 1

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The Journal of The Queen's Royal Hussars Historical Society (Friends of The Queen's Royal Hussars Collection)

Editorial

Welcome to the 18th edition of *The Chronicle* and a particular welcome to the new members of the QRH Historical Society.

Having read this copy of *The Chronicle* should you wish to join the Society this is easily done by contacting Home Headquarters.

After a lot of extremely hard work by the Collection Trustees and the fundraising team we are near to opening the new Queen's Royal Hussars Museum in Warwick. Please see the "progress report" elsewhere in this *Chronicle*.

More than 90% of our members now receive *The Chronicle* by 'e' mail. Thank you for accepting it by this means; it has now made it affordable to the Historical Society, but you can still receive it by post should you wish to do so, just by letting HHQ know your preferences.

Please send all articles for the *Chronicle*, no matter how small, to either the postal or e mail address at the bottom of this editorial.

Finally, as always, my sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed any article, large or small to the *Chronicle*. All articles received will be used to produce the *Chronicle*.

David Innes-Lumsden

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QRH Historical Society Terms of Reference

Background The Regiment's heritage is maintained as The Queen's Royal Hussars Collection - a Charitable Trust with a Trust Deed as its Constitution. Objects of the Collection are 'to educate the public and members of the Regiment, and to promote military efficiency and encourage recruitment, by public exhibition of the collection in a Museum or Museums, and to conserve, restore and preserve objects in the Collection'. The Collection consists of:

The Queen's Royal Hussars Museum – Warwick

The Blackshaw Museum at the Regiment

Reserve Collection and displays at Home Headquarters

The Historical Society, which is also 'Friends of the QRH Collection'

Archives at various of the above sites for research and response to enquiries.

The Queen's Royal Hussars Historical Society (Friends of The Queen's Royal Hussars Collection)

The Aim of The Regimental Historical Society (Friends of the Queen's Royal Hussars Collection) is to encourage the study of and research into our Regimental history, and to support our Museums.

The priority of the Historical Society is the encouragement of serving all ranks, as the future of our museums and an interest in our Regimental history will lie in their hands.

The Society members may be used as a first port of call for appeals for volunteer and financial support.

The Regimental Historical Society incorporates, and constitutes amongst its purposes, the previous Friends organisations.

COMMITTEE'S

Collection Trustees

Colonel of the Regiment
Brigadier Nick Smith - Chairman
Brigadier Chris Coles
Lt Colonel Jeremy Metcalfe
Lt Colonel Mike Mumford,
Major Hugh Phillips
Andrew Lloyd - AMOT
Secretary - Regimental Secretary - *Major Jim Austin*

Historical Society Committee

Chairman - Chairman of Collection Trust
Deputy Chairman - Vacant
Regimental 2i/c - ex officio
Historian - Vacant
Webmaster - Regimental Asst Secretary – *Mr Seamus Hamilton*
Secretary - Regimental Secretary - *Major Jim Austin*

Consultants/Researchers/Assistants

Museum Asst Curator - David Walker
Bovington Representative - Lt Colonel Andrew Ledger.

COLLECTION NEWS

The Queen's Royal Hussars Museum.

*Below an update on the new Queen's Royal Hussars Museum.
With thanks to Brigadier Nick Smith.*

Those reading the Chronicle will be thinking are we ever going to see a new museum and some of the Collection Trustees will, I am sure, have shared that view at times in 2019, which has again proved to be a testing year. It is, however, important to say at the outset that huge progress has been made and that we are on track to open in 2020. The plan is to open on an interim basis in April and then fully, following a formal opening, in the Summer.

To start with the good news. The internal refurbishment is now complete and the space created within 1 Trinity Mews is all that we had hoped for. The interior looks splendid and provides the ideal setting for the museum displays. Our selected contractor has been both developing the content for the displays and having the displays and cases manufactured. In support of this, text and detail for the graphics has been written and reviewed. All is therefore progressing but these headlines mask the many bumps that have been encountered on the way.

1 Trinity Mews has continued to remind us that it is a building of character. Having finally resolved all of the internal fabric issues, reported on previously, and feeling confident that the interior was ready for us to finish, by plastering and painting and the fitting the flooring and heating, we encountered what we sincerely hope is the final major hurdle.

The Queen's Royal Hussars Museum.

An update on the new Queen's Royal Hussars Museum.(Cont.)

The stripping back of the interior roof covering exposed problems that had not been identified in the survey. Many of the roof timbers needed replacing and after much thought it was agreed that the roof had to be replaced. Not to have done so would have exposed the finished interior and ultimately the displays to the risk of water damage and worse and replacement at a future date would have been both much more expensive and far riskier. In the end replacement was as straightforward as it could be. The need for a full tin roof covering was avoided and the weather in the Spring enabled the work to be done swiftly and without damage to the interior. The Collection Trustees are hugely grateful to the Regimental Trustees for their forbearance and understanding as we worked through this unwelcome blip and for funding the work.

From the outset deciding what to display, how best to do it and who should design and build the displays has been challenging. When the end can only be a vision, however clearly that is articulated, it means that, however much discussion takes place and previous work is reviewed, in the end a leap of faith has to be taken, that a company can deliver that which you want to see. The Collection Trustees were not content to provide a contractor with a blank canvass to fill, as happens in the design of many new museums, rather the format, layout and much of the detail of each display were specified. But, even with this done, it was necessary to part with substantial funds, initially in order to see what the product would look like and in the end to fund the manufacture of the displays and production of the content. Working through this and negotiating at each critical stage has been challenging and continues to be as the practicalities of building and installing the cabinets and displays is worked through. This is not surprising but it would be wrong to gloss over. Dealing with the difficulties that have arisen and working through the steps that have had to be negotiated has only been possible thanks to the splendid team of Trustees who tirelessly and selflessly continue to bring the project to a successful conclusion. Most especially, for Mike Mumford, it has continued to be a full time commitment and the ongoing huge contributions by Hugh Phillips and Jeremy Metcalfe have been essential to enable us to get to where we now are. What is at last emerging is testament to their vision and dedication. In addition to the work of the Trustees has been the writing of the text and provision of the detail for the displays. David Walker, our splendid curator, has worked tirelessly and has produced most of this material which has then been reviewed by Robert Crichton and those he has co-opted to help him. This is a huge and exacting task for all involved and we are immensely grateful for all they have done and continue to do.

Finance, as ever, remains a concern. The project is on a sound footing at present but we know additional funds will need to be raised to sustain the Museum. We are hugely grateful to Tom Hamilton and all he has done through his book, *Caught in a Camnet*, and his scaling of the UK's peaks, which I am sure all have followed, and for the efforts of the Troops, particularly Worcester and Birmingham. They have provided substantial, invaluable funding and it can only be hoped their efforts encourage others to step forward. For those thinking how they can help the Museum, both now and more especially when it has opened, donations will of course continue to be more than welcome but equally welcome will be offers of assistance; both on one-off occasions requiring manual labour and volunteering once the Museum has opened, to help keep the show on the road. The latter assistance is going to be essential if the Museum is to be a success. If you think you may be able to offer us a few hours per week as a volunteer in the Museum please do get in touch with Home Headquarters: they will then let us know.

ITEMS FOR SALE

from

HOME HEADQUARTERS OR MUSEUM.

HHQ have a small stock of the following items for sale. If you wish to purchase any of these items please send a cheque, made payable to the 'QRH Association' to Home Headquarters. Alternatively, you can email your order to regsec@qrhussars.co.uk and arrange to make payment by BAC transfer; prices include P&P:

QRIH in Borneo 1963 (DVD)	£10
QOH Tercentenary 1685 – 1985 (DVD)	£10
8th Hussars in Korea (Triple DVD)	£25
Regimental Ties 3H, 4H, 8H, QOH, QRIH, QRH (<i>regrettably we do not have any 7H ties</i>)	£30
QRH Enamel Cufflinks	£19.50
QOH , QRIH or QRH Cufflink and Tie Pin Set	£20
Regimental Magazines of The Queen's Royal Hussars (Vol 1, Issues 1994 – 1998 on CD with Acrobat reader) (Vol 2, Issues 1999 – 2003 on CD with Acrobat reader)	£15
QRH Lapel Badges (Cap Badge or Crest)	£5
The Queen's Own Hussars (Tercentenary Edition)	£6.50
QRH Journal 'The Crossbelts' (years 1993 -2014)	£7
AFVs of QRH and its antecedent regiments (Booklet)	£10

Books available:-

'Irish Hussar - A Short History of The Queen's Royal Irish Hussars' - available from HHQ £6.50 author - Brigadier Robin Rhoderick Jones

'In Peace and War – The story of the Queen's Royal Hussars' - available from HHQ £28 author - Brigadier Robin Rhoderick Jones

'Caught in a Cam Net' - available from Amazon books.

author - Lt Col Tom Hamilton

'To War with a 4th Hussar' - available from Pen and Sword books and Amazon books.
author - Peter Crichton

A Basic Guide to the British Army from 1660.

Origins of the Professional Army.

The British Army has been in existence as a standing army only since the reign of Charles II, though the constituent elements have been present for centuries. Until the First World War, and the resulting huge changes in battlefield tactics and technology, the main fighting arms were the infantry (foot soldiers) and the cavalry (horse soldiers). During the army's early history, the Commander-in-Chief controlled only the infantry and cavalry. These were supported by the artillery, who fired guns of various calibres, and the engineers, who shaped and supplied the battlefield.

The artillery was managed by the Board of Ordnance, as were the engineers, who originally comprised only officers, the other ranks being known as military artificers. Additionally there were the non-combatant units – technically civilian units – such as the commissariat, who were responsible for supplies of all kinds, and the medical services. These distinctions are important in understanding the way early records are grouped: for the infantry and cavalry the regiment is the basis of all record management until the end of the 1st World War. It was not until 1920 that soldiers were employed, as it were, by the Army rather than by an individual regiment.

The Infantry

The British Infantry organisation started life when Charles II returned from exile in 1660. The new model army was still in existence, under the command of General Monck who had facilitated the return of the King, and disbandment of the Parliamentary force. All that remained was Monck's own regiment of foot and a troop of horse, used to put down the revolt of the Fifth Monarchy Men early in 1661. As a result it was decided to raise a regiment of Guards, the regiment becoming known as the 1st, or Grenadier Guards, in 1815. Although General Monck's soldiers (who had originally marched from Coldstream to restore the King) had quashed the rebellion, their history meant that they had to first lay down their arms as republicans before taking them up again as the 2nd Regiment of Guards, or Coldstreams.

The Origin of Battalions

It was also at this time that the distinction between 'Regiment' and 'Battalion' became fixed, as a by-product of a piece of skilful politics on behalf of Charles II. The soldiers who had served him in exile (as 'Guards') could equally claim the right to have to be the 'first' Guards, so the King amalgamated these two units, merging two battalions to form one Regiment. After this the battalion became the effective infantry fighting unit, and the regiment became an administrative organisation.

The fact that for two hundred years these two terms could be used more or less interchangeably can be misleading. However, the genealogist should bear in mind that the 'regiment' is an abstract construct that may comprise one or several battalions, and that 'battalion' is the operational fighting unit that could vary widely in number of personnel. Location and operational function.

The Cavalry

The first cavalry regiment was formed in 1660 from troops of horsemen who had close connections with Charles II in exile, and with his brother, the future James II. Together with Monck's troop they formed the nucleus of the Regiment later known as the Life Guards. A troop of horse raised by the Earl of Oxford eventually became the Royal Horse Guards. These two regiments formed the basis of what later became the Household Cavalry.

The 3rd Hussars were formed in 1685 from 3 troops of Duke of Somerset's Royal Dragoons. They were first known as 'The Queen Consort's Regiment of Dragoons'

The 4th Hussars were formed in 1685 by Hon. John Berkeley and firstly known as 'The Princess Anne of Denmark's Regiment of Dragoons' ,

The 7th Hussars were formed in 1689 by Brigadier-General Richard Cunningham and were firstly known as 'The Queen's Own Regiment of Dragoons'.

The 8th Hussars were formed in 1693 by Henry Conyngham in Derry and were firstly known as 'Henry Conyngham's Regiment of Dragoons'.

Paying the Troops

In 1640, in the reign of Charles I, a document covers the costs. The document is called: 'A list for the pay and entertainment (maintenance) of the Officers General of the Field, the Lord General and his train, one Regiment of Horse, one Troop of Horse for the Lord Generals Guard, seven Regiments of Foot, one Regiment of Dragoners, and the Officers and attendants of the train of Artillery'. This shows some of the composition of army in the final years before the establishment of a professional force. The rates of pay vary from £10 per day for the Lord General to 6s 8p for the wagon master down to 8p a day for the ordinary soldier!

Organisation and Regimental Names.

Infantry Regiments were formed as and when required, and were originally known by the name of the Colonel (the most senior regimental officer, and usually the man who raised and equipped the Regiment), which meant that names of units could change as colonels came and went. To avoid confusion, regiments were also numbered sequentially, such as the 1st Regiment of Foot, and the 2nd Regiment of Foot, In this way it was possible to refer to regiments as either the 1st Regiment, or the 1st Foot, and these terms became virtually interchangeable over the years.

Additionally, some regiments were given nominal attributes, thus the 1st Foot was called the Royal Scots, the 2nd Foot the Queen's Regiment and the 3rd Foot the Buffs. The latter name arose because between 1738 and 1748 two regiments – the 3rd Foot and the 19th Foot- had colonels called Howard. The 3rd Foot had buff facings on collars and cuffs of the red coat worn by the infantry at this time, and the 19th had green facings, so to distinguish them, unofficially the 3rd became the Buff Howards and 19th, the Green Howards. These names have lasted for more than two centuries, indicating the importance of tradition and precedent in the army. Not many regiments had ancient or royal roots that would provide a name to add to their number, and so, in order to aid recruitment, it was decided in 1782 that regiments of foot should be given territorial designations. After some negotiation between colonels of regiments, a list was agreed. For example, the 28th Foot became 28th (North Gloucestershire) and the 67th Foot became 67th (South Hampshire). Cavalry regiments, however, were not geographically centred. Needless to say this geographical localisation was not rigorously implemented, and at a time when the army was composed only of volunteers, regiments recruited when and where they could, especially in Ireland, it was not until the Napoleonic war that regiments were formed with Irish Geographical names, such as the 88th (Connaught Rangers) and the 99th (Prince of Wales Tipperary).

The Backbone of the Army.

At the height of the war with France from 1793 to 1815, when the British Army was fighting all over the world, the army expanded to a total of nearly 261,000 men; the infantry was its backbone, making up nearly 205,000 of that total. Infantry was (and still is) essential to take and hold ground, and their performance was probably the key to Wellington's success. In terms of internal organisation, infantry battalions (abbreviated as Bn or Bns) were usually divided up into ten companies (abbreviated to Coy or Coys). One Grenadier company, one Light company and eight battalion companies. The grenadier and Light companies from different battalions could be amalgamated for storming, or scouting or outpost duties respectively as required. At full strength these companies could number a hundred men each, but these totals were rarely achieved, and the number of men in each battalion varied considerably. For example at the Battle of Waterloo, the 2/73rd Foot (that is the second battalion of the 73rd Regiment of Foot) comprised of 558 other ranks, whereas the 2/3rd Guards numbered 1061, and the and the 2/44th mustered as few as 455. Numbers varied for many reasons such as battle casualties, sickness and men detached on other duties. Infantry was divided into categories on a functional basis. The Foot Guards were regarded as the elite infantry units, and had high status – their original function was to guard the sovereign – although they fought as normal line (or heavy) infantry when on campaign. Officers of the guards regiments held double rank, so a captain in the guards ranked as a major in the army. The Line Regiments, so called because the regiments paraded in line in order of seniority from right to left, made up the bulk of the infantry.

The Light Infantry battalions, such as the 51st Light Infantry, or the 85th Light Infantry, were used for scouting, flanking or outpost duties, and had slightly different equipment, but were often used as Line regiments (for example the 51st Light Infantry served during the Waterloo campaign in the same brigade as the 3/14th and 1/23rd Foot). The Rifle Brigade (designated the 95th Foot during the Napoleonic Wars), which had three battalions, and the 5/60th Foot had a specialised function using rifled weapons – the bore of which was incised with a spiral groove to give a spin to the bullet for greater accuracy – as opposed to smooth bore muskets, and were used as skirmishers, wearing green uniforms with black equipment for camouflage purposes. The 60th Foot, (called Royal Americans until 1824) were unusual that some of the soldiers in its eight battalions in 1813 wore red and some wore green, depending on their function. Genealogists will also come across what appears to be a completely separate category of infantry called Fusiliers (contemporarily spelt Fuzileer or Fusileer). There were three regiments thus designated; The 7th Royal Fusiliers, The 21st Royal North British (later the Scots) Fusiliers, and the 23rd Royal Welch Fusiliers. These regiments, which were normal heavy infantry in the Napoleonic period, had normally been armed with a light musket called a fusil, and had been formed as guards for the Artillery. They also wore the mitre hat, rather than the tricorn, allowing them to sling their fusils over their heads and across their bodies more easily. For fighting purposes, and for facilitating command and control structures, two or more battalions were brought together into brigades, and brigades were formed into divisions. These usually included their own support services, described in order of battle, recording the army organisation at any given time.

Cavalry Regiments.

Cavalry was a much smaller arm in the British Army than in other contemporary forces. Like the infantry it consisted broadly of ‘heavy’ and ‘light’ regiments, divided into squadrons which consisted of two troops, but cavalry regiments comprised approximately five hundred soldiers, sometimes many fewer. Heavy Cavalry included both the Household Cavalry (Horse Guards and Life Guards), and regiments of horse called Dragoons and Dragoon Guards. Dragoons were originally mounted infantry, using horses as a mode of transport to the fighting area, where they dismounted and fought on foot. By the time of the Napoleonic wars this definition had ceased to have any relevance. However the difference between Dragoon Guards and Dragoon regiments was very important, and for family historians the failure to distinguish between say the Fourth Dragoons and the Fourth Dragoon Guards would mean researching the wrong regiment entirely. The seven regiments of Dragoon Guards were senior in precedence to the five regiments of Dragoons. The heavy cavalry were used very little, either strategically or tactically, during the Napoleonic period, some units serving at home for most of the war. These heavy cavalry units were armed with a sword called a sabre, as well as carbines (shorter versions of the musket) and pistols. Their role on the battlefield was to stop or deflect the attack of enemy cavalry, or to break infantry formations which were vulnerable to attack because they were either in line or in the process of deploying into squares (it was virtually impossible for cavalry to break infantry in square formation), or to pursue a broken infantry running from the battlefield. (4)

The regiments of Light Cavalry (called Light Dragoons at this period) were used in a similar way to Light Infantry, and were equipped for speed and manoeuvrability, but were obviously able to cover greater distances and therefore provide more accurate intelligence as a result. Four light cavalry regiments were converted to Hussars during the Napoleonic period; Hussars wore a different uniform from the rest of the light cavalry, but in every other way were similar. Light Cavalry was armed with carbines and sabres; at this time there were no Lancer regiments.

The Artillery and Engineers.

Artillery could be divided into three main categories; field artillery, siege artillery and garrison artillery, with the former being divided into horse and foot (essentially horse artillery supported cavalry formations and foot artillery supported infantry formations). The artillery was organised into Brigades (troops in the Horse Artillery) and companies, the companies taking their name from their commanding officer. Officers were trained at Woolwich, the headquarters of the artillery, which was still managed by the Board of Ordnance in the early nineteenth century. The Corps of Royal Engineers was also managed by the Board of Ordnance, and was therefore not part of the army as such. The Corps consisted entirely of Officers at this period, and was very small numerically, with the junior officers doing the practical work in the front line, with an appalling fatal casualty rate amongst them; 25 per cent in the Peninsula. The Royal Military Artificers carried out the physical work, but there were so few of them that in 1812 the whole organisation was re-organised and renamed the Royal Sappers and Miners, and divided into companies commanded by Royal Engineer officers. There was also a Royal Staff Corps of Engineers, formed by the Commander-in-Chief, so that he could have at least some engineers under his own command. The other main support units were the Commissariat and the Medical Services. The Commissariat was run by the Treasury, outside the control of the army command structure. The Royal Wagon Train was formed in 1799, and this was an improvement, but did not solve the problems. The Medical Services were also managed by a civilian Medical Board, and were of a very poor quality at this time, with many wounded soldiers dying of gangrene from poorly amputated limbs or totally untreated wounds. Every army unit (for example an Infantry regiment or an Artillery Brigade) would have its own medical personnel but the level of skill was not high. Surgeons ranked as captains, and assistant surgeons as lieutenants.

The Militia and Volunteer units that existed alongside the regular army.

DETTINGEN

In 1954 a group of 3rd Hussar Officers led by Major John Melhuish visited Dettingen and so started the 'Dettingen project'. Many Regimental Officers have been involved in the project since and leadership has now passed down to Colonel Hugh Sandars. Colonel Hugh is still sorting through numerous files, it is a huge project and we are grateful to him for his effort, and as he completes certain areas he will be writing articles which will be published in the Chronicle. Here is the first.

David Innes-Lumsden – editor

THE BATTLE OF DETTINGEN

On 27th June 1743, King George II led his Army into battle near the village of Dettingen where the King's Own Regiment of Dragoons (later 3rd Hussars), Rich's Dragoons (later 4th Hussars) and The Queen's Own Royal Regiment of Dragoons (later 7th Hussars) endured three hellish hours exposed to French artillery then charged three times through nine squadrons of the French Household Cavalry and routed them. Private Thomas Brown, King's Own, rescued one of the Regimental standards in glorious fashion.

"He had two horses killed under him; two fingers of ye Bridle hand chopt off; and after retaking the Standard from ye Gen D'Arms, whom he killed, He made his way through a Lane of the Enemy, exposed to fire and sword, in the Execution of which he received 8 cuts in ye face, head and neck; 2 balls lodged in his back, 3 went thro his hat; and in this hack'd condition he rejoined his Regiment who gave him three Huzzas on his arrival"

For his bravery Thomas Brown was made a Knight Banneret on the battlefield by George II, the last time a British monarch led his soldiers into battle.

Also during the battle, George Daraugh, 4th Dragoons, saw a French officer riding away with a Regimental standard and, riding his horse through the enemy squadrons, he cut down the officer and brought it back. He was promoted to Cornet by the King and given a purse of guineas.

The King's Own also captured a pair of silver kettledrums from the French after the battle, and although these were destroyed in 1847, a pair of silver replicas are still highly cherished by the Regiment today.

At Dettingen all the officers of the King's Own save two were wounded among the 148 killed or wounded. When George II inspected the Regiment before it returned to England, he sharply asked whose Regiment it was because of the thin ranks, forcing General Bland to answer;

"Please, your Majesty, it is my Regiment, and I believe the remainder of it is at Dettingen"

The Battle Honour Dettingen was awarded to the 3rd, 4th and 7th and we remember and celebrate the Battle and the bravery of our Regimental ancestors.

BATTLE OF DETTINGEN 1743

UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

A FIELD GUIDE

It was customary for officers to take with them on service their own personal servants, who were not enlisted men of their Regiment. Besides administering the needs of their master one at least had a more important function at the time of battle. He was the running footman, sometimes called a field guide. Although mounted men carried messages from commanders to their subordinates when they were at some distance, for those that were near at hand, running footmen were employed. These wore the livery of their General and always carried with them a brass mounted staff of office which indicated their authority.



A running footman or field guide.

OFFICERS

The differences of the various Regiments were shown by the colour of the facings and the pattern of the lace. When a regiment had silver lace then the buttons also were silver, as was the edging to the tricorne hat.

The officer of foot is armed with an espartoon, which was carried as well as the sword. On a ceremonial parade the colonel would dismount and carrying a half-pike would lead his Regiment past the saluting base.

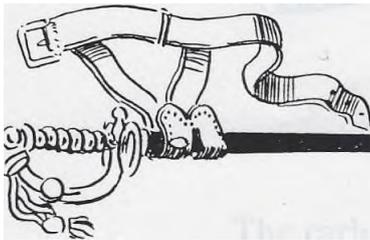
The sash, as with the General Officers, was worn sometimes across the right shoulder and sometimes round the waist.

The infantry officer wears a gorget. This last survival of medieval armour was worn when the officer was on duty. It was not finally abolished until 1830.



Officer's gorget.

His sword, and espartoon - eight feet in length



Officer's Sword.



Head of Officer's Espartoon.

CAVALRY

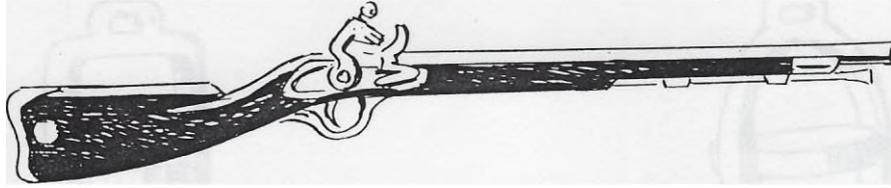
The Cavalry that fought at Dettingen consisted of Horse and Dragoons. They wore two crossbelts, one of which carried the sword, and the carbine was suspended from the other. The Dragoons, on the other hand only wore one crossbelt.

A crimson sash was worn round the waist tied on the right side, a white cloth and buff leather gloves were worn. When on active service a steel skull-cap was worn under the black felt hat. When not in use it was carried on a hook at the saddle-bow. The officers wore their skull-caps under their wigs, and they were not finally abolished until 1750.



Cavalry trooper's sword.

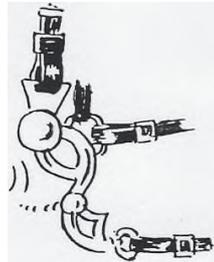
The arms carried by the trooper were the sword, carbine and pistol. The swords were not all of one pattern. They were purchased by the Colonel of the Regiment and were sometimes of foreign make.



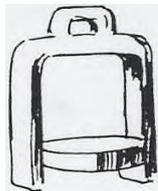
Cavalry carbine.

The carbine had a swivel whereby it could be attached to the crossbelt. Although sometimes this was carried with the butt resting on the bucket the muzzle pointing upwards.

The long barrelled pistol was carried in the pistol-holster on the front of the saddle and the housings would be of the regimental colour.



Bit and Bridoon.



Stirrup Irons.

As regards horse furniture two examples of stirrup irons are shown and also the bit and bridoon.

One of the duties of Dragoons was to carry a fascine on the front of the saddle for throwing into a trench or fosse so that infantry could pass over.



Dragoons carried fascines on the fronts of their saddles.

Fascines were of various dimensions according to the purpose for which they were required. Fascines were fagots made up of small branches of trees or brushwood and tied in several places according to their size.

An epaulement was a kind of breast-work to cover the troops in front and sometimes in flank and were generally made of filled gabions or fascines and earth. A gabion was a basket made of ozier twigs of a cylindrical form.

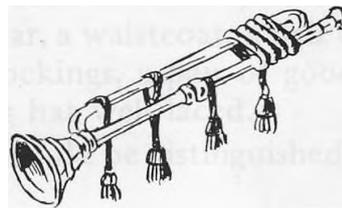


A fascine.



A gabion.

Trumpeters of Horse and drummers of Dragoons wore coats of their regiments' facing colours. The trumpets were silver and the cords were either blue or red.

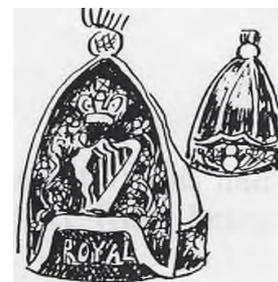


Trumpet.

GRENADIERS

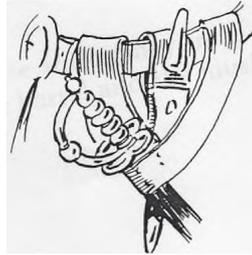
Every battalion of infantry had a Grenadier Company. These were dressed differently from the other companies, the most distinguishing feature being the tall Grenadier cap. Caps were worn because, when the Grenadier was throwing his grenades, he slung his firelock over his back, and the cap was more convenient than a wide-brimmed hat.

The cap originally was not so tall and stiff as it later became, and examples of various patterns are shown.



Grenadier caps. [Note Thistle and Harp]

On his belt the Grenadier would carry his bayonet as well as his sword. The sketch shows the method of wearing these.

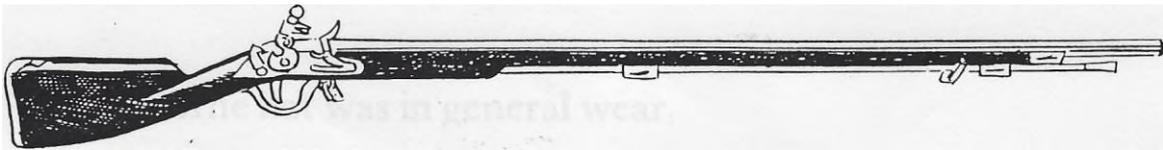


Bayonet carried at the belt.

INFANTRY

The clothing for a Foot Soldier at Dettingen was a good full bodied cloth coat well lined, which might serve for a waistcoat the second year, a waistcoat, a pair of good kersey breeches, a pair of good stockings, a pair of good shoes, two neckcloths and a good strong hat well laced.

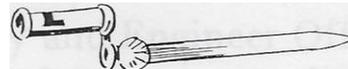
The regiments would be distinguished by the different colours of their facings. The main weapon of the Infantry was the flint lock musket.



The first type of bayonet was the plug pattern but this had the great disadvantage of preventing the musket from being fired when it was inserted in the muzzle.



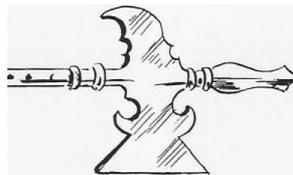
Plug bayonet.



Socket bayonet.

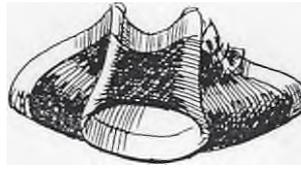
Another type, the socket bayonet, took its place. This could be slipped over the barrel and the musket could still be fired.

Sergeants carried a halberd and this, with their sash, indicated their rank. Their clothing too was of a superior quality to that of the other ranks.



Sergeant's Halberd.

The Tricorne hat was in general wear



Tricorne Hat.

ARTILLERY

Whereas the Cavalry and Infantry Officers received a commission from the Sovereign, Artillery and Engineer Officers received theirs from the Master-General of Ordnance and were under his authority.

There were no regular units of artillery so that when a war did break-out a train of Artillery as it was termed had to be organised, and this would accompany the rest of the Army to the site of operations.

The guns were of various calibres and for the sieges of fortresses mortars would be taken.

Accompanying the train were a large number of specialists and included besides the artillery officers the gunners and their assistants, an engineer contingent containing carpenters, pioneers and miners.

The Officer's coat is blue with red cuffs. He has a steel cuirass and red breeches. When he was mounted his pistol-holster would be red with gold edges and the saddle-cloth red with a gold fringe. The other ranks wore red coats with blue facings and yellow lace, and had blue stockings.

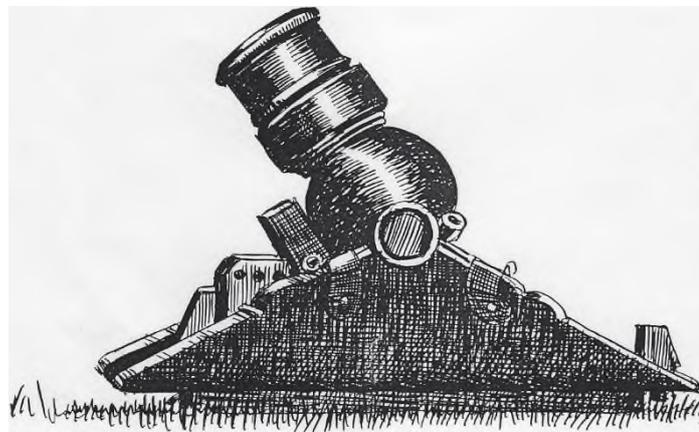
The Gunner's assistants were termed Matrosses, and looked after the equipment, the actual firing being done by the Gunner himself. The ammunition was carried in wagons, similar to the ordinary farm wagon, and was then brought to the guns on wheelbarrows.



"Ammunition for the guns."



Train of Artillery



A mortar

SUTLERS AND DRUMMERS

Sutlers or sometimes sutleresses were among the camp followers. They set up their booths and supplied provisions to the troops. They were limited in number and one grand sutler to a regiment and one petit sutler to a troop or company were usually allowed. The sutleress in the illustration was probably dressed in the uniform of some dead soldier.



Sutleress
(13)

Drummers beat Taptoe at the authorised hour, for closing the taps and warning the men to return to their quarters. In the field no one would be allowed outside the camp except on duty after Tattoo. Drummers usually wore coats of the colours of the facings of their regiments.



Beating taptoe

REGIMENTAL PAINTINGS - 1

The Officers Mess has many fine paintings of Battles in which our antecedent Regiments took part in. The painting below is from the “4th Queens Own Dragoons” collection, and was painted by Henry Martens.



The Battle of Salamanca (22nd July 1812 - Peninsular War)

Battle of Salamanca - Background

The capture of Salamanca from the French was Wellington's object for this summer campaign of 1812. He had learned from captured French dispatches that they intended reinforcing the army holding Salamanca and this caused him to take action without delay. He advanced from Portugal and arrived at Salamanca about the middle of July, only to find that the French had withdrawn north-eastward, leaving a small garrison in the forts, which fell a few days later. Wellington now wished to deal the French a decisive blow and avoided being drawn into a battle which did not promise a smashing effect upon the enemy. The French Commander, Marshal Marmont, was just as anxious to fight the British and their allies but he would have been content with defeating a small portion of them. For days the French manoeuvred from the North-east, to East then to South-east of Salamanca trying to bring on a strong rearguard action, but Wellington refused to be drawn.

Battle of Salamanca - The Battle

On the morning of 22nd July, 1812, both armies were facing each other a few miles to the South-east of Salamanca. About three miles South of Salamanca the road to Ciudad Rodrigo branches off in a South-westerly direction: Wellington had come troops on the high ground near this point and from this circumstance Marmont was led to believe that his enemy was retreating to Portugal. He therefore hurried his troops in a Westerly direction close to the allies in order to catch a portion of it unsupported. All this time, however, Wellington had the bulk of his army hidden behind the crest of some hills waiting for the right moment to fall upon the French when their divisions became strung out in such a way that one would take some time to come to the support of the other.

During the afternoon Wellington saw the French scattered over a large area in no sort of solid formation. This was the moment for which he had been waiting. He galloped off to the troops near the Ciudad Rodrigo road and ordered them to advance against the leading French division and drive everything before them. He then galloped back to the centre of his line and sent it against the next two French divisions. It was this portion of the allied line to which the 3rd Dragoons and the 4th Dragoons belonged.

The 3rd Dragoons and 4th Dragoons were brigaded with the 5th Dragoon Guards (the Heavy Brigade) under the command of Major-General Le Marchant. At the commencement of the attack this brigade was just in rear of the right of the allied line. Just before the action started Lord Wellington told General Le Marchant that the success of the action would greatly depend upon the work done by cavalry and that he must therefore be prepared to take advantage of the first favourable opportunity to engage the enemy's infantry. "You must then charge at all hazard," said Wellington, and rode away to another part of the line.

The Heavy Brigade had not long to wait before they came into action, for about 5 o'clock it was noticed that our troops which were attacking the head of the French column came into view and were seen scattering the French in all directions.

General Le Marchant waited for the right moment when the flank of another French division was unprotected, and sent the Heavy Brigade against it, although the brigade was greatly outnumbered and the advantage of the ground was with the French. The general then led the brigade down a slope at full gallop against the advancing mass of the enemy. Several British officers who saw the charge said that it was too daring and was sure to end in failure, but their prophecy proved wrong, for although the French gave them a good volley as they approached, it made no impression upon them and they galloped on in perfect order. The French attempted to reload, but before they could do this, the brigade burst in upon them with a weight and force that nothing could withstand. The first troops met were the French 63rd Regiment, which were cut off to a man. The greater part of them threw away their arms, but those who resisted were cut down immediately.

Following this successful charge, General Le Marchant without waiting to make prisoners, which he left to the infantry, led his brigade against other bodies of the enemy which had formed a second line in support of the first., but here, however, a more serious resistance awaited him, for the enemy were prepared and their fire brought down many men and horses. Notwithstanding this his brigade dashed boldly through it and penetrated the French ranks, and soon the ground was quickly strewn with their killed and wounded.

The third and strongest body of the enemy still remained intact, but were a good deal shaken by witnessing the overthrow of the other two bodies, and owing to their being enveloped in clouds of dust and smoke and deafened by the crashing of guns and musketry closing on them, they wavered and did not know what to do. General Le Marchant took advantage of this hesitation and instantly pressed on them in as good order as the emergency admitted, to his last and most hazardous fight. The three regiments of his brigade had become so mixed together that the officers rode where they could find places, but notwithstanding this, they maintained a good front and a connected body, without intervals and, though going at full speed, did not fall into the least confusion. Some of the French, however, began to re-form on the edge of a wood. As soon as Marchant saw them he charged them with half a squadron of the 4th Dragoons. The French reserved their fire until the Dragoons were within ten yards distance, then they poured in a volley so close and well-aimed that nearly a quarter of the dragoons fell. This did not arrest their headlong course, for although they were lessened in numbers, their spirits were not affected and they still pressed on and again plunged through the enemy. And dreadful combat followed in which bayonet and sabre were used against each other with telling results and the loss on both sides was considerable, the General himself receiving a bullet in his groin which passed through and broke his spine, from which he immediately died.

In another part of the field Lt. Colonel Lord Edward Somerset led a squadron of the 4th Dragoons against a French battery and captured five guns.

As night came on the action was broken off, but not before the French had been soundly beaten.

Battle of Salamanca - Aftermath

The regiment continued to serve with credit through out the campaign, but Salamanca was the last occasion in which it had an opportunity of distinguishing itself in an outstanding manner under the famous Iron Duke.

*A Simple soldier has been written by (Corporal) Alan Crosskill
who served with 3rd The King's Own Hussar's from 1955 until 1958.*

This is the second part of the serialization'

The first part was in Chronicle Edition 17.

David Innes-Lumsden - Editor

A SIMPLE SOLDIER

by

ALAN CROSSKILL

Part Two

TRADE TRAINING

I enjoyed seventy-two hours of home – bliss - food and being spoilt by my mother. I soon discovered, like others serving Her Majesty, that the standard greeting on meeting friends, and this occurred on every leave; “Hello, nice to see you. When are you going back?”, which was guaranteed to take the edge off any get together. The luxury of wearing my own comfortable clothes and shoes rather than boots, made certain that I did not arouse the passions of members of the opposite sex by being seen in army uniform. However, even when dressed in my best at the dance hall, my cropped head proclaimed my new occupation to all.

Late on Sunday night, with some degree of sadness and reluctance, I returned to Catterick and my new home in the Gunnery Wing. Bright and early on Monday morning my trade training as a tank gunner commenced. At last I was introduced to a tank, a Centurion Mark V, and actually climbed on and into the vehicle, I suspect we were all equally thrilled and excited at the experience of playing with real army toys!

I quickly settled down, enjoying the relaxed atmosphere of the Gunnery Wing whilst making sure I achieved the coveted oil stained beret of real tank crews. Very little time was spent in the classroom environment, most days passing in the tank park and the indoor small-bore ranges. In these huge sheds was situated a row of half a dozen dismantled, and specially adapted tank turrets, each with a framework supporting a .22 rifle above. This contraption enabled it to fire .22 bullets rather than real shells, the targets being a selection of small rubber tanks positioned on a huge sand-table. When seated in the gunner's compartment, the vision through the periscope type gun sight was very much like the real thing.

This then was more like the life I had anticipated when volunteering for the Armoured Corps and signing on. Whilst I have long forgotten almost everything I was taught about tank gunnery, I can still recall the name of one very tiny screw secreted within the breach block of the Centurion tank gun: *'The screw retaining intermediate firing needle withdrawal lever'*. Should this fiddly little item be accidentally dropped into the confined space of the turret floor everything stopped whilst the culprit struggled to retrieve the screw, generally with much reaching and squirming in the dark.

On the final week of the course we were transported to the RAC gunnery ranges at Warcop in Westmorland for a few days. There, in real tanks, we actually fired those 20 pound rounds across the range area. The term 'Shells across the fells' had a certain ring, albeit an exceedingly noisy one.

After six weeks, which ended with many in-depth examinations and tests, I was informed of my success in attaining the exalted trade classification of Gunner III and that I'd been selected to join 3rd The King's Own Hussars in BAOR Germany. However, I was horrified to be immediately informed that having not attained the age of eighteen; I was too young to go abroad and would remain in Catterick at the 65th to undertake training in my secondary trade of signaller. To my utter disgust this entailed a move to another part of the camp and into the Wireless School for a further six weeks. I experienced a surge of hope that evening on learning that the 10th Hussars were stationed in Hampshire, so my age would be of no concern if they sent me to them. First thing in the morning saw me scurrying to the orderly room, where I requested a reallocation to that regiment. Unfortunately the orderly room corporal was himself a 3rd Hussar, who immediately took my request as a personal affront and refused to even consider my plea. Later that day I left the Gunnery wing with my former trainees for one week's leave, bitterly disappointed that whilst they were destined for departure to their regiments, on return I was fated to remain at the training regiment. This also meant I had to continue wearing the RAC cap badge rather than the badge of my destined regiment like a real soldier. In due course I returned and commenced my wireless training.

For reasons unbeknown, Signallers considered themselves superior to other tank crew members and my extra service and gunnery qualification cut no ice. Once again I was required to start at the bottom.

The training was fully classroom orientated, theoretical, academic and bordering on mathematics and it was only during the final week that we were actually allowed to get into a tank to experience using the wireless set in the actual confined conditions. Each day would be spent at a desk copying copious notes into exercise books, just like being at school again. On my eventual discharge from the army I was required to sign the official secrets act. It would be pleasing to hint that that document is the reason why I have given few details of that wireless course. Truth is, most of the points either passed above my head, or were speedily forgotten!

In the depths of my memory are hazy recollections that wireless waves travel through the air like waves at sea, with peaks and troughs. A major feature of a signaller's trade was to ascertain the correct height an aerial needed to be to receive the strongest signal. Whilst the concept for the ideal radio aerial would be a horizontal line strung between two posts, this was of course impractical in a tank. As a result we had to accomplish complicated sums to find out the theoretical height. As the whip aerials on tanks were a maximum of twelve feet, the extra distance was achieved by passing the signal from the aerial through a gadget called varyometer, a device filled with coiled wire which increased or decreased the aerials length. For me this was an evil form of mystery and black magic. The main radio in a Centurion was the 19 Set, which required netting on to the correct frequency by adjusting two dials to receive the strongest signal. When this was achieved (initially with much sweat and swearing) the two dials required to be carefully locked in four places on each dial using a penny, which was not issued! The only interesting part of the course was being taken out in the back of one ton trucks containing a wireless set, to practice radio communications. Most of the time was spent on the North York moors, but we did enter Whitby and Scarborough which allowed us to look at girls! As readers may have gathered I was not impressed by my attendance at that course! However, to my utter surprise, I attained good marks and a high pass which destined me to be a signaller during my first years.

It was during the period of trade training, gunnery and wireless, that we were required to undertake guard duty, which was an absolute bind. Dressed in best battledress, boots and full webbing, all highly bulled and shining, you reported to the guardroom for guard mounting parade. After a detailed inspection by the orderly officer and pistol drill to ensure weapons were unloaded, the guard was dismissed to the guardroom where each man was allocated a period of duty. The guard period, night or day, was divided between wandering around for a two hour duty 'stag' and in-between attempting to rest for the four hours off duty in the guardroom. This took place on a bed without mattress or any form of covering on the metal springs. For the actual guard duty we were armed with a pickaxe handle, a torch, a smoke canister (for which no one explained the use or rationale) a whistle and of course your pistol. The pistols used were for drill use only, sans firing pin and purely for appearance. Those two hour periods were exceptionally lonely, and at times scary, for as the barracks were not fenced, moorland sheep wandered about at will. To be patrolling around the deserted buildings in the dark hours before dawn, then turn a corner and scatter half a dozen sheep, caused many a youthful heart to pound in sheer panic. Naturally after a night's guard duty you changed into working dress to face a full working day with no rest until bedtime.

It was during the period of my wireless training that the IRA commenced attacks on military bases, fortunately for us, in the south of England. This illegal and unsporting action caused the 'powers that be' at the War Office to review and change the procedure for guard duty. It must have dawned on them at these high powered and high-level talks that there were young soldiers at Catterick camp performing guard duty with guns which were of no use against an armed IRA attack. Therefore, procedures were hurriedly put into effect which changed things. Orders were issued that from immediate effect the guard would be supplied with real pistols. What was more, the Guard Commander was to be issued with six rounds of ammunition, and this was to be secured in the guardroom safe. No one thought to explain to us, nor did we dare ask, the course of action we should take in the event of an IRA raid on the 65th Training Regiment. Amongst ourselves we made an assumption of the action we should take if finding ourselves in such a situation. Should an intruder reply to our challenge of; "Halt who goes there?" in what sounded to be an Irish accent, we would request him to stand still. We would then run to the guardroom, request, and sign for, one of the six rounds of ammunition, then run back to shoot him! Childish, when considering the horrendous savagery the IRA committed in later years, but a true illustration of the conditions, mentality and the lack of clear direction which existed in 1955. Fortunately, the only trespassers we experienced remained the nomadic sheep, still guaranteed to frighten the life out of a homesick young trooper wandering through deserted buildings, each of us now convinced that every noise was wild Irishmen about to attack him!

In due course, my training was completed and prior to going on a week's leave at home, I was issued with the insignia of 3rd The King's Own Hussars, then part of the British Army of the Rhine - BAOR. On my return, there followed an arduous week confined to the drafting wing, where every minute of every waking hour was occupied with cleaning, pressing and polishing each item of our kit prior to departure from Catterick.

Seemingly sadistic NCOs inspected us many times each day. Each delighting in throwing offending items across the room. Some years ago I watched a TV documentary covering the military corrective training establishment at Colchester. I was amazed, the conditions were luxurious and the staff exceptionally considerate in comparison to conditions I experienced during my week in the drafting wing of the 65th in October 1955.

Regularly on Sunday mornings, three-ton trucks containing drafts of newly trained troops, left Catterick for Northallerton railway station for onward transmission to armoured regiments scattered around the world. On the morning of 16th October one of those drafts included me. One member of our group (we were convinced the selection was based on the standard of his equipment rather than his common sense) was appointed acting Corporal and made responsible for us. Crossing London from Kings Cross to Liverpool Street was his first test - at least he managed to ask for directions. From there a troop train took us to Harwich where we were loaded onto an unbelievably crowded and pitching troop ship, to the Hook of Holland where we joined a train into Germany.

When our “guardian” announced we would get off at a station before the one specified on his joining instructions, we were past caring. Needless to say no one displayed any sympathy towards him when the disgruntled driver of a regimental three ton truck eventually found us and conveyed us to the regiment. I then settled into my new career at Epsom Barracks, Iserlohn near Dortmund, North Germany, serving Queen and Country and, like most of my colleagues, counting the number of days to my eventual release.

Something worthy of mention illustrating the inflexibility of army mentality of that period occurred at the end of that signalling course. Two National Servicemen had almost identical surnames, Black and Blake. Both were from London but they were as different as chalk and cheese, Black was single with a devil may care ‘Jack the lad’ attitude. Blake, quiet, withdrawn and shy, had been married just two weeks before

commencing his National Service. The poor soul was desperately in love and missing his wife every waking minute. Where Black joined in all aspects of fun, Blake spent every spare minute sitting on his bed writing letters to her - he was one of the few who received regular mail.

When, at the completion of training when regiments were allocated, everyone was amazed to find the outward going Black was destined to join the 10th Hussars in an almost suburban Hampshire, whilst poor home loving Blake was allocated to the 7th Hussars stationed on the other side of the world in Hong Kong. A posting which meant no UK leave for the remainder of his service. Despite requests and pleading by both to be allowed to exchange their postings the army refused. No one was ever able to explain the logic of that decision.

3RD THE KING'S OWN HUSSARS

After the rigors of the artificial life of the training regiment, B Squadron Third Hussars was far more relaxed and civilized. Epsom Barracks, originally constructed for Hitler's army, were luxurious after the spartan conditions at Catterick, with each Squadron occupying its own three storey accommodation block, with central heating and double glazed windows. One especially welcome task was to report to the regimental tailor with my two suits of battledress for them to be altered to fit closely and smartly. Very soon, I was also to see a very different side of regimental life. On our first morning we noticed a 'buzz' of talk and activity and learned that El Alamein day was taking place in a couple of weeks. Whilst aware El Alamein had been a decisive battle in the North African campaign, it meant very little to me – for about half an hour. We were soon informed the regiment had played a major part in the action, losing 47 of its 51 tanks. El Alamein was a Battle Honour and now a regimental holiday for the 3rd Hussars, which again meant little, apart from the thought of gaining a day's respite from duty. No one explained what actually happened, apart from mentioning a football match took place during the morning. Groups seemed to gather to discuss detailed plans but, as the new boy of the troop, I was not included. So, the actual day dawned with me in total ignorance apart from being aware it had been eagerly awaited.

I was now used to being woken by trumpet calls but that morning we were rudely woken by raucous blasts, together with the pandemonium of wild drumming. The whole regimental band had started the day with a bang – literally! It is impossible to recall events in any chronological order, for the world had seemed to have gone wild. Fancy dress, noise, people rushing to and fro, the explosions of thunder flashes, water-fights and much more. When the Third Hussars celebrated El Alamein day, everyone knew. I was to discover that provided nothing was injurious to health and property, anything could happen, and did! An exceedingly good time was had by all. Everyone was very soon drenched with water as every fire hose and bucket was put to good use. Squadron took on Squadron with water and bags of flour, no one 'won' they simply joined and turned their joint attention by 'attacking' another target. I recall being part of a small group on the third floor of our barrack block, filling condoms with water then manhandling these huge and unwieldy objects out of a window in the hope they scored a hit on any unsuspecting passer-by. About midmorning everyone surged to the sports field for the football match, officers versus sergeants. Naturally each 'team' and their supporters were attired in eccentric dress and armed with a range of 'aids' and strategies to deal with their opponents. I don't

recall ever seeing a football in the ensuing melee which ranged on and off the sports field and around much of the barracks, but great fun was enjoyed by all.

As the game roved around, frequently ambushed by marauding groups, the wildly cheering crowd swept along behind, in front and amongst the players, everyone enjoyed the fun and high spirits.

I was told later that instructions had been circulated around all units in the garrison that the Third Hussars were busy that day and had temporarily withdrawn from the British Army of the Rhine - so keep clear. But, somehow a Military Police Jeep arrived, and most unwisely entered the barracks. Naturally when spotted, the news spread like wildfire and the jeep was "attacked" by all. I watched from an upstairs window and observed the flight of those two terrified MPs pursued by a wildly excited crowd, obviously scenting blood! The policemen managed to escape seconds before the main gates were slammed shut. The football match ended, as every year, in an honourable draw by lunchtime, and momentum slowed as all ranks streamed to the cookhouse where a celebratory meal was provided. How the cooks managed to produce such a magnificent spread in such circumstances was a mystery to me. Officers and senior NCOs attended, serving, eating and joking with all. Surprisingly beer was provided with no constraints on quantity. After lunch the activity stopped to allow everyone to recover. Mid afternoon, without being told, clearing up commenced. That evening an all ranks "smoker" took place in the gymnasium when more hair was "let down". The following day, apart from a drum head service to remember those lost at the battle, El Alamein day became a memory for another year.

Things had hardly settled back to normal when I experienced an unexpected break for about six weeks. For some reason, never explained, I was detailed to accompany our troop Corporal, Don Headmore, to take a Centurion tank, for major overhaul at a REME depot somewhere in Germany (not a secret location, just that I've forgotten the name). Our charge was secured onto a tank transporter and with us sitting in the turret there followed a slow full day's journey. Fortunately it was a lovely day and we arrived late evening at the huge REME depot where they provided a meal and overnight accommodation. The following day Don left to ascertain details of our return only to come back with the surprising news that we were to remain with the tank. "Truly amazing", he said. We remained with that tank doing absolutely nothing for what must have been well over a month. Any query Don made to REME staff as to how long we were to remain was met with a shrug and the comment that that was up to our regiment.

For the whole of the period we did no work or anything resembling duties, occupying our days going for walks, chatting to anyone willing to spend time with us, drinking tea and generally idling away our hours. It was a great life as Don was good company, and I had the opportunity to learn much about life in the regiment, procedures, duties, schemes, knowledge he had gathered over his service, which was almost at an end. He also pointed out that we could not be in the workshops at a better time, for it appeared we were to miss the annual admin inspection. The details and amount of chores and duties this entailed had me fervently hoping we would be forgotten until it was over. In fact that was the case.

We lacked for nothing in that extraordinary military time warp. Accommodation was provided for us in a disused cell, we got up when we liked, attended no parades nor reported to anyone. We could not have been forgotten completely by the regiment, as we received our pay each week.

We didn't contact them nor they us. Don's philosophy was, ask no questions, the army know what they are doing! During the week before Christmas we discovered the unit closed completely for the holiday period, military and civilian staff departing on leave, leaving German civil security staff guarding the establishment. Because of this, and I suspect a touch of conscience, as well as the need to be back in familiar surroundings, Don telephoned the regiment who made arrangements for our return – the tank remaining with REME for some considerable time. I frequently wondered what would have happened had Christmas not arrived, how many months would have elapsed before someone in the Third Hussars missed us. As it was, no one questioned, or explained, the reason for our enforced absence.

During the 1950's, the cold war era, life in the British Army of the Rhine passed in a regular pattern, dependant on the season. During winter months we remained in barracks, undertaking trade training, assorted instructional courses and daily maintenance in the Tank Park to ensure an operational state of readiness. November was occupied by preparation for the annual inspection, vehicles, buildings, accommodation and equipment. To the adage, move it or paint it, could be added; or hide it! Naturally we figured most prominently with numerous practices and rehearsals for a full regimental parade before an inspecting military bigwig. Also in that period, that most important feature occurred - home leave.

The summer months were occupied with testing our skills, the period when the British army put everything into practice and we tested ourselves and equipment in operational conditions. We departed the comfort of our barracks and went on what was known as 'schemes', wide ranging exercises on the vast training areas of north Germany. For many weeks we lived under canvas in Squadron leaguer areas, leaving their relative comfort for varying periods to chase around at high speed in our tanks, or sit in them immobile by design (or when broken or bogged down), for long periods doing we knew not what. Most of the time we were completely lost, even my later promotion to troop Corporal and tank commander did nothing to provide an insight into the overall picture. Miles of dusty wilderness with few landmarks were more than a match for my capability at map reading.

During my period with the regiment we were equipped with Centurions – Mark Vs & V11s. Having experience of no other types of tank I cannot make comparisons. However in that year, 1955, 3rd Troop B Squadron was selected for conversion to the Conqueror troop and on 6th May took delivery of these brutes. Whilst I gather initially everyone felt envious, by the time of my arrival in October, the envy had altered to varying degrees of pity. Although the Regimental Journal of April 1956 proclaimed Conqueror to be; *"undoubtedly Britain's finest and newest piece of equipment"*, it was in fact a disaster. Perhaps the politest term I heard was "a military abortion". Larger in every respect than the Centurion, it was an ill designed beast in which virtually nothing operated successfully.

The main gun required a separate projectile and charge which, in the cramped confines of the turret, was an almost impossible feat to load. Although the stabiliser controlling the Cent's main armament, could, at times, be temperamental, that feature on the Conqueror was unpredictable, and on the few occasions when operating correctly, it was seldom in conjunction with a fully functioning engine.

Everything was bigger and heavier than the Centurion and involved hard physical labour for the crew. Gaining access to the engine compartment of a Cent' was a three-man job, two lifting the heavy engine covers whilst one was inside traversing the turret to enable them to undertake this and even though we were fit youngsters, this took a lot of effort. However, that task was far more difficult for Conqueror crews and, due to constant mechanical problems, a chore which was required with far greater frequency!

As promised by that recruiting sergeant in Grimsby, in due course I was issued with my Number one dress walking out uniform. This was almost exactly as he had described, navy blue serge, brass buttons, twin yellow stripes on the outside of each trouser leg (the legs cut closer fitting than those worn by infantry regiments), chain mail epaulettes and a scarlet cap. However, what that uniform did have, which was far better than that of the 17th/ 21st Lancers (and as all Hussars knew, Lancers being lesser than Hussars in every respect!), was a scarlet stand collar. Naturally, in addition to wearing it at the times specified for regimental duties, this uniform was also worn to great advantage at dances on home leave.

SCHEMES – PLAYING AT SOLDIERS

Arriving at the regiment in October meant that I did not experience schemes until the Spring of 1956. Again referring to the Regimental Journal, we commenced at Haltern *“where we experienced tropical heat and dust conditions”*. From there we trained at Soltau and Reinsehlen before proceeding to the tank gunnery ranges at Hohne. As they all looked remarkably similar, this detail was lost on me. For weeks prior to leaving barracks for these schemes, we were kept extremely busy with most activity centred on the tank park. Maintenance and preparation of the vehicles and loading equipment into the stowage bins. The concept of allocated storage was excellent, in the event of a tank being “knocked out” or broken down the crew could be transferred to another and know exactly where items could be found. Great in principle but not in practice. Large metal bins were fitted to either side of the turret and every nook and cranny inside the turret was allocated for the storage of something. Whilst the proposed contents was stencilled in the inside, or outside, it was generally found to be impossible to fit that article into its allocated home and as a result we crammed items where they would fit, thus defeating the master plan. Every conceivable item that might be required (and much that was not) was dusted down, or more often oiled, then packed into wooden boxes and loaded into the ubiquitous three ton trucks.

Early on our day of departure, the peace and quiet of the local civilian population was rudely interrupted as tank engines were started and revved to warm up. The current term of “noise pollution” would have been exceedingly apt when applied to the cacophony of sound created by those Centurion tanks, accompanied by the squeals and shrieks of metal tracks on concrete as each tank was manoeuvred. Whilst this was taking place, the signaller of each crew was at his radio inside the turret, receiving and fine-tuning to a signal transmitted by the signaller in the command tank. When the strongest signal was established, the signaller would lock his radio set to that frequency, a procedure known as “netting in”. In specified order the tanks of each troop made their way from the tank park to form a long column reaching back from the barrack’s main gates. When all were formed in convoy, a thankful silence would at last descend as engines were switched off whilst crews left their charges for a well deserved breakfast. After breakfast, at a given time, each crew would board their vehicle and on command the deafening noise of engines would restart. On receipt of

the appropriate signal, the convoy, preceded by a police escort, would leave the barracks and drive through the town centre of Iserlohn to the railway station.

Iserlohn was a small and picturesque medieval town located some twenty miles south of Dortmund. The town centre consisted of cobbled streets and attractive buildings, mostly half timbered with walls painted in pastel shades, some with external artwork and decoration. It appeared to have suffered little during the war. It seems incredible today that a convoy of 48 tanks, each of fifty-two tons, together with many three ton trucks, were allowed to drive through the town, it does not bear thinking about. But, in 1955, the war had only been ended for ten years and although the British army was no longer one of occupation, that mentality still existed. As our barracks was on one side of the town and the railway station the other, clearly any thoughts of alternative routes did not arise. Also should the driver of a Centurion accidentally clip a lamp post or similar, it was simply a matter of a compensation claim.

Our arrival at the railhead and loading became a duty I learned to hate. One by one the tanks drove onto those flat railway wagons, which bucked and jolted with the weight, goodness knows how many wagons there were, but certainly a great number. As the Centurion was wider than the flats, each track overhung by a couple of inches, and as the driver could not see, he had to be guided on and off, a task I loathed. Carefully walking backwards along those flats, which bounced under the tank's weight, the guide was required to constantly signal changes of direction to the driver, a frightening experience, and I was not alone in being terrified that I might be the cause of the tank falling off! On reaching the allocated flat and before the tank could be secured with heavy chains, a German railwayman had to grant permission. He would check the overhang each side, frequently making you reposition the vehicle for a seemingly negligible amount. Guiding when reversing was especially frightening and although I never saw a tank fall off a flat, the stories of such disasters were legion. On reaching our destination, the loading procedure was the same but in reverse. More agony!

Once safely off the train we again proceeded in convoy to drive to the Squadron leaguer area. These were always in wooded areas in which the four-man open fronted tents were lashed to convenient trees. Each of the four Troops would be grouped together within the Squadron area and each would be required to dig their own rubbish pit. These pits were a matter of honour, with great rivalry to achieve the deepest and smoothest sided. Ten or twelve feet deep was the norm, with the final diggers requiring to be dragged out with ropes. It was a regular occurrence for the unsuspecting or unwary to fall into a pit in the dark. Another task was 'planting' thunder boxes, or in civilian parlance, installing toilets. Dig a hole, place a wooden box fitted with a toilet seat on top and no base over the hole, then surround it with lengths of Hessian fixed to wooden stakes. These were generally erected in pairs, comradeship as opposed to privacy! The Regimental cooks established their catering areas and seemed to work wonders with the compo rations supplied. The efforts of the professionals always tasted far better than our own efforts when out on exercise.

Once our 'permanent' camp was established, the military exercises began. These were of varying duration, ranging from one day to a number of days or a week or more. I was not alone in feeling that the purpose and objectives of these exercises didn't bear much resemblance to the plans on which we had been briefed prior to the start. It was also noticed that within hours of commencement the junior officers rapidly assumed expressions of concern; worry; bewilderment; panic; dismay; abject misery or frustration. However, by the time they reached the rank of Captain and above they all appeared to have mastered the art of looking nonchalant and laid back, even though these worthies still managed to become lost! The weather seemed to be either hot and sunny, which enabled the tanks to create vast clouds of fine black dust that got everywhere and made us filthy within minutes, or heavy rain. Tanks were not waterproof and rain meant we were quickly soaked to the skin and remained wet for varying periods of time until we slowly dried naturally.

Rain also created vast tracks of glutinous mud into which the Centurions rapidly sunk and became helpless until assistance arrived. The Regiment had a permanent REME detachment attached who demonstrated truly amazing skills in keeping our vehicles operational. They were equipped with specially modified Centurions, the turret and gun removed with all sorts of wonderful attachments installed which very speedily winched, or pushed, us clear of our predicament. My main memory of these schemes was of being constantly filthy - dirty hands, grit between your toes, in your mouth and nose, ears filled with dust. Removing your beret and goggles would expose a not much cleaner pair of eyes and strip of forehead. Protective helmets were unknown for tank crews and generally we wore normal denim overalls, berets, boots, web gaiters and waist-belts, together with, as I only noticed when searching for photographs, ties! We did have heavy tank suits for cold and wet weather, but even they never coped with the incessant rain.

Food was rather haphazard when on schemes away from the established leaguer area. Each crew was supplied with boxes of the ubiquitous compo - concentrated tinned rations provided in cardboard boxes, the contents based on rations for ten men for one day, or one man for ten days. The filling of each tin varying from good to passable, with Mutton Scotch style and Irish stew generally disliked by all. In the field great bartering sessions would take place to obtain what you preferred, thereby defeating the nutritionally balanced diets the 'experts' had devised. Fortunately, whatever the weather conditions and facilities, we never lacked for tea. In addition to the main engine the Centurion had an auxiliary power plant, known as the auxgen, this was used for charging the tank's batteries and power systems. Most importantly though, the auxgen powered a copious boiling pot, or to use the correct military term; a vessel boiling. It was the main part of the signaller's role to operate this vital piece of equipment and provide tea for the crew. Into this pot of water, when it looked more or less hot, would be tossed a handful of tea (literally thrown in by hand, hygiene being a dispensable luxury on schemes). Handfuls of sugar and cans of condensed milk were added and all brought to the boil. After stewing this brew for some time mugs would be dipped in and circulated; this brew was always enjoyed by all and declared nectar. I don't recall us ever having sufficient water to wash-up afterwards, tea dregs and dust no doubt adding that 'little something' to the taste. The return to the leaguer area and more passable degree of cleanliness was always very welcome. I recall one occasion when permission was obtained for the Squadron to visit a local swimming pool. Before being allowed onto the trucks, the Squadron Sergeant Major checked everyone to ensure no one was taking soap! At the end of each scheme the camp was struck, everything loaded, rubbish collected and deposited into the pits before they were filled. It was always surprising how soon the place looked deserted, the only indications of our presence being trampled grass and bare earth. Whilst we were well conscious the SSM would inspect the site with eagle eyes, it was also a matter of squadron pride that he should find nothing untoward.

When chasing around these North German plains on exercise, the gunner had the disadvantage of being totally enclosed within the turret, very aware of every bump and every wallowing action of the tank. At the time helmets had not been deemed necessary for tank crews and everyone received cuts and bruises, especially the gunner. I was fortunate, as spending my service as a wireless operator, allowed me to stand up with head and shoulders out of the turret.

Unfortunately, when firing, especially on the move, all hatches were frequently closed, with space becoming a problem. Hampered by wearing headphones connected to the radio, I was required to load the gun with little room to remove the long and heavy rounds from storage bins and insert them into the gun's breach. Breathing soon became difficult as the turret immediately filled with cordite fumes after firing each round (later Centurions were fitted with smoke extractors, but we had mark V's without such a luxury). My hearing has long been poor, with tests establishing the cause was due to the noise in the confined space of a Cent's turret when firing took place. Despite this, we considered ourselves more fortunate than the infantry who seemed to be forever marching cross-country carrying bulky equipment and weapons. However, there was one thing I never understood. When mobile, tank crews were forbidden to be more than waist level out of the tank, but on exercises, a platoon of 32 infantrymen were crammed on the engine decks and when mobile going cross-country they not surprisingly suffered a rough ride. We were constantly stopping as one fell or leapt off, having touched the exposed exhaust pipes. As an example of the heat generated from these exhausts, potatoes inserted under them were cooked in less than five minutes! Whilst willing to confess my map reading skills bordered on nil on those vast training areas, I did pride myself on reasonable proficiency in the classroom and in 'normal' situations. During one scheme, I forget where or when, I reluctantly found myself seconded as signaller in a halftrack vehicle. These war time American relics were retained as mobile command vehicles. The front section was wheeled, the rear tracked part was a 'box' containing a table, a bench either side plus the signaller and radio. Maps covered in clear plastic were pinned on the table and inside walls. The vehicle was manned by the driver, me – the signaller, and a junior officer. During an exercise senior officers entered the 'box' and controlled the action. In time honoured military fashion, no one had explained to me the reason for the journey. In bright moonlight, with the officer in the cab map reading, we set off and shortly joined a road. Peering through the gap dividing my compartment from the cab I watched until seeing something recognisable then pin-pointed our location on the map. I was a little concerned that we were actually travelling on 'our' side of the East/West border. Eventually we rattled over a plank bridge crossing a river and the only bridge I could find crossed the border into East Germany. Tales abounded of troops being arrested for such occurrences. Double checking my findings I voiced my concern. In that laid back drawl affected by his type, the junior officer assured me he knew our position. A mile or so further I again voiced my fears, this time our driver slowed down, suggesting Sir might like to double check. He did, but I noticed a lack of confidence when he assured me I was not to worry. I was relieved that we saw no one and more so that our route now included many left turns until we at last re-crossed a river. The only river on my map was that which was the border between East and West Germany, but the anomaly was never mentioned. The greatest delight of returning to barracks was to be once again clean. The luxury of soaking under a shower without giving any thought to the water supply, to be able to sit down to a 'proper' meal at a table inside a real building, to dress in civilian clothes, and it was noticeable how many wore white shirts to emphasise their sun tan. It was a total delight to leave behind, albeit temporally, the primitive lifestyle and resume a normal life - well as near to normal as the army permitted.

BARRACK LIFE

The end of the scheme period, and our return to barracks, marked another period of different activity. Not only were we required to rid the tanks of the mud, fir cones, grass and debris collected over the period of rough living, we faced the C.I.V. I've long forgotten the meaning of those letters but a rough translation was; cleaning, maintenance and bulling of our tanks prior to a detailed annual technical inspection; presumably to ensure we had not lost any and they were returned to something resembling the required condition should the Eastern Bloc hordes decide to invade.

In 1956, a new Troop Sergeant was appointed to 1st Troop. The Sergeant's attitude and management style made him immediately popular. His acceptance was in no small way aided by a magnificent moustache, a sweeping handlebar specimen which greatly impressed his youthful charges and was unlike any I, or most of the Troop, had seen before and which was viewed with awe. Within days an unanimous decision was reached that we would all produce similar moustaches. However, after a week, it came as a great disappointment to the majority that a 'tache' needs a maturity which few adolescents could match, consequently most were unable to produce anything resembling 'real' whiskers. I had about six hairs one side and fewer on the other. As most faced a similar problem, the craze soon died. It did however make me decide that one day I too would have a moustache. As it turned out, I was to be in my mid-twenties before the desire for whiskers was achieved and maintained.

In the following autumn the Suez crisis occurred with orders received for the Third Hussars to prepare to mobilise. At the time I was with a small group, in two Austin Champ vehicles, undertaking a radio exercise. Bowling along a wooded road we were surprised when a regimental dispatch rider pulled alongside and flagged us to a halt. His announcement that the regiment was going to war and we were to return to barracks was treated as a joke at first, but led to great excitement and speculation on return to barracks. On our arrival at Iserlohn we found unbelievable scenes of frantic activity and swiftly became involved in the flurry of administration and maintenance. We were soon engaged in attempting to pack equipment and belongings into the storage space allocated on the tanks – an impossible task which we never mastered. However, after a few days, the panic and action suddenly stopped as the movement order was cancelled. We were bitterly disappointed – oh the innocence of 1950's youth - we were totally unaware of the political activity which had led to the debacle. We were very soon convinced that the Suez episode had been an enormous ploy by the Quartermaster's department to regain our carefully hoarded stocks of 'buckshee' kit! Another aspect of Suez was the recall of reservists. Naturally these men were not impressed to be whisked out of civilian life and careers and back into the army, mostly into regiments with which they had no connection nor friends. This resulted in an unsettling period for those poor souls and much disruption to our normally comfortable regimental family life.

However, the Suez crisis did prove to hold an unexpected bonus for me. A friend wrote informing me that because of the emergency, driving tests had been suspended; the regulations had been relaxed to enable those who had held a provisional driving licence for six weeks to be able to drive unaccompanied. This kind friend had also enclosed an application for a provisional licence. The completed form was sent by return of post and as a consequence I had held a provisional driving licence for the required period by the time I arrived home on leave. After a few lessons I felt capable of driving my mother's Austin A35 car on the public highway and I then spent as much time as I could at the wheel. As a result, on my return to the regiment I felt completely confident that I could pass a driving test and went to enquire about taking one with the transport section. From that point I experienced a very frustrating period of delays, always some excuse why I was to return at a later date, which was then unavailable and to try again later. Some weeks later, following yet another refusal, I chanced to meet one of the Troop officers of B Squadron, 2nd Lieutenant Blower, a very friendly and amiable guy. "You look fed-up and depressed" he observed, "what's the trouble?" I explained what had happened and the number of excuses I'd received. He smiled. "No problem, I'm acting Squadron Technical Officer, I can take you for a test". My heart leapt. "Yes please Sir, when Sir" I excitedly asked. "Well, I'm rather busy at the moment", he said. My heart plummeted, yet another excuse and disappointment. Then he said; "No, can't make this morning, it'll have to be about two thirty this afternoon". I was elated and arranged to meet him at the vehicle park at the agreed time.

Although I was full of that confidence experienced only by the young and had many hours driving experience on a small Austin car, my eagerness and excitement evaporated at the sight of a seemingly huge, flat nosed three ton truck, against which the immaculately clad subaltern waited. With a growing feeling of panic I hauled myself up into the cab. Climbing up beside me Mr Blower announced, "when you're ready off we go". Finding a gear in the gear box, something akin to dragging a slippery ferret from a can, we lurched forward. The journey was a terrifying nightmare. But to my surprise Mr Blower neither spoke nor told me where to go, simply sitting in the passenger seat nonchalantly twisting and tapping the riding crop favoured by all junior cavalry offers. I proceeded in what I suspected and sincerely hoped would be a quiet area, and succeeded in producing loud shrieks of protest from the elderly truck as I crunched each and every gear change. More by the grace of the good Lord than my driving skill, I lurched along almost deserted roads until the officer suggested we turn at the approaching junction and return to barracks. Narrowly missing a collision with one of the gates of the barracks I thankfully swung the blunt bonnet of the vehicle into the compound, more or less alongside, well within a few feet, of the kerb. Feeling embarrassed and depressed I thankfully switched off the engine convinced I'd made the proverbial cock-up. Mr Blower looked at me for some seconds then said: "I'd hate to drive far with you, but as that's very unlikely, I'll pass you." Utter relief and exaltation. In due course I received the appropriate army form confirming my competence to drive which was swiftly forwarded for my civilian driving licence. I have been forever grateful to that officer and was delighted to learn, many years later, that he had retired from the army as a Colonel. He had well deserved that promotion, if only because he had enabled me to obtain a driving license.

Each winter period we eagerly looked forward to home leave. For regular soldiers based in Germany this was taken in either a block of two three week periods or one of six weeks. Movement from the barracks to Liverpool Street station in London was by military train to the Hook of Holland, followed by an overnight crossing on a troop ship (generally a cramped and rough crossing) then a train journey to Liverpool Street station. From there a rail warrant funded a normal train to your home. Although, of course, we didn't realise it, we were fortunate that this was before Dr Beeching reduced the scope of the railways. Leave periods were generally spent at dances and pubs, all highly educational to a deprived teenager seeking female company, generally with little luck whatsoever. The only females to welcome us were our mothers, and we enjoyed being spoilt. Time always rushed by until we made reluctant farewells and the same journey was undertaken in reverse.

Prior to one leave I had become friendly with the orderly in the regimental medical room. With an exaggerated wink he had suggested I called in before getting onto the leave truck – there were no such luxury as buses. Taking me through to the deserted treatment room, he unlocked a cupboard and dragged out an outsized cardboard box. Imagine my surprise to see it was full of individually packed condoms, or as they were known at the time, Durex or Johnnies. Each was contained in a small brown envelope printed with the maker's name and on the reverse the words: "Do not leave lying around streets and parks, it may offend people". Extracting a large double handful he held them out to me with the words; "Take these and have a good time mate." I was horrified, I had no girlfriend and the opportunity to use even one was totally remote. However, male pride forbade refusal. Unfortunately, as my case was already locked and on the leave truck, I had nowhere to put them. Without thinking I asked where I could put them. He must have thought me a right idiot for he started to explain the anatomical requirement in detail! I swiftly rephrased my question. The reply was more what I wanted. "In your map pocket." The perfect place. On the right leg of battledress uniform was a large pocket and into this I crammed the packets, causing it to bulge conspicuously. Thanking him I left and endured an embarrassing journey home, terrified of being stopped by the Military Police. How could I have explained to them my having such a large number of contraceptives. Arriving home I hid them in a drawer in my bedroom which I hoped my mother would never open. They remained there untouched until the end of my leave, at which time I wrapped my unused gift in a newspaper and pushed them to the bottom of the dustbin. Naturally on my return to barracks I claimed to have taken too few!

Winter time in Germany produced far colder weather than we were used to, making us appreciate the substantial accommodation, the central heating and double glazing. When duties returned to normal in 1957, I was allocated to a higher level wireless course. After a couple of weeks in classrooms we loaded ourselves and equipment into three Austin Champs and set off into the countryside, a part of rural Germany which gave the appearance of being unchanged by time, the medieval atmosphere aided by the now threatening weather. As darkness and driving snow reached us, we entered a tiny and antiquated hamlet which looked like the set of a horror film.

Obtaining permission to spend the night with our vehicles in a huge and dilapidated barn, we erected our small tents inside by fastening the ropes to rusty farming implements.

Once established and sheltered a little from the freezing elements, it was almost cosy, especially as we had brought paraffin heaters. After a hot meal, lots were drawn (well we students drew lots, not the instructors) to decide who remained on guard whilst the rest of us fought our way through deep drifting snow to the pub. German pubs are not like English pubs, especially in the primitive parts of Germany of that period. The expression, undiscovered tomb, was appropriate, and what is more it was a cold one. In addition, the landlord clearly had no love of the British Army, probably dating from his experiences in the first war.

We had not been there long when a guard arrived expressing concern about the drop in temperature and amount of snow entering the barn. We returned to find the snow was getting deeper inside and, despite the paraffin heaters, the barn was well below freezing. Concerned about the effectiveness of antifreeze, it was decided the vehicle engines must be run each hour and the heaters placed by the vehicles, not the tents. That night was never ending. It was bitterly cold, with the noise of engines running each hour and the barn doors were opened frequently to clear the air. I doubt if anyone slept, and we were up and well ready to go as soon as the grey, snow laden dawn crept over the desolate scatter of buildings. Just as we were about to leave we stopped, surprised by something I'd never seen before, nor since. Slowly, in the eerie silence, a hearse approached drawn by two horses, black plumes nodding on the head of each. A solitary man was hunched on the driver's high box, behind which was a glassed section containing a coffin. An eerie and chilling sight. I know I was not the only one pleased to be heading back to barracks.

In May 1957 I was promoted to Lance-corporal, and by a set of fortunate circumstances, gained my second stripe to full Corporal the following August. Both promotions gave me new responsibilities and different duties, the second promotion giving the greater. I was now on the rotas of Guard Commander and Orderly Sergeant, the latter immediately following the former. What little sleep was available to members of the guard was non-existent for the Guard Commander as he was required to be awake at all times. Whilst there was a daily Duty Officer, apart from guard mounting parade and attending for the last post, it was rare to see any more of that gentleman. In essence, unless something major occurred, I, as a lowly Corporal was in overall immediate charge of everything which happened within the barracks. Luckily nothing ever did happen during my duties, but this was uppermost in my mind.

The Orderly Sergeant's duty period began on cessation of that of the Guard Commander. The guard was dismissed and the guardroom handed over to the Regimental provost staff. The OS function covered a range of duties at regimental level.

That most of these emanated directly from the Regimental Sergeant Major was guaranteed to keep you on your toes! Like every man holding that unique appointment of power, RSM Scot ensured he met every requirement the job demanded and upheld the far reaching mystique and reputation attached to it. Although of medium stature, Mr Scot more than compensated for his lack of height with his bearing and reputation. When out of doors, the sight of that ramrod straight figure, even at a distance, ensured your shoulders went back and you emulated his smartness, until he was out of sight. Some maintained there was much truth in the rumour that he could see around corners and even through buildings! I later learnt Mr Scot was exceptionally sociable and very good company during periods of relaxation, a phenomenon I saw only once. I discovered it was the custom at Christmas for corporals to be invited for drinks at the Sergeants Mess and it was a great privilege to enter that holy of holies. It was an exceptionally pleasant experience and the RSM was completely relaxed. However, at the end of the prescribed two hours, the senior ranks gently let it be know that the RSM thought it time we left.

Because Mr Scot was *the* RSM I was always ultra careful in his presence and, truth be known, rather scared of him. Whilst I didn't dislike him, I was always pleased to be out of his presence. It was only when obtaining copies of my army records some years ago that I was amazed to find a report, in Mr Scot's handwriting, recommending my promotion to full Corporal. I felt rather guilty for never being able to express my thanks to him.

The final duty period of the Orderly Sergeant required you to spend the evening in the NAAFI until closing time, and then ensure an orderly dispersal. I was pleasantly surprised to be offered drinks by many troopers. As it was in barracks and the duties of the Orderly sergeant clearly stated alcohol was forbidden, I declined. I thought it was because I was popular, but a colleague somewhat cynically suggested it was just an attempt to get me drunk and not close the bar! After closing, and a check that all was in order within the barracks, the final task was to go to the guardroom and handover the white cross-belt, which denoted the OS role, to the Guard Commander. It was his task, generally relegated to a guard, to clean and polish the belt for his tour of duty the next morning. Having started normal work at 0800 the previous day, taken over the guard at 1800, and ended that duty at 0630, before then commencing as Orderly Sergeant until 2300, with a normal day's work to look forward to at 0800 the following day, my only thought after that spell was bed.

In addition to regimental duties, my promotion to Corporal also elevated me to the post of Troop Corporal, third in command of the Troop. This in turn carried the exalted (?) role of tank commander. I feel few within the Squadron would dispute my claim that I was ill equipped for this task, being incapable of map-reading on those vast, featureless tank training areas of North Germany. Map-reading is easy in normal circumstances where you orientate a map in relation to contours, a church, wood, roads etc. However, the training areas where the British army operated were vast tracts of undulating mud or dust (dependant on weather conditions) or dense forests.

The result was me being permanently lost, which was excellent training in becoming adept at talking my way out of trouble! One night, when we were moving in a convoy operation with no lights, apart from the glimmer of a convoy light on the rear of each tank, dawn brought the horrible realisation we were positioned at the back of a column of tanks of a different regiment, with the remainder of 'B' Squadron behind me!

On another occasion, in daylight, we were completely lost and alone in what was rapidly becoming apparent as being outside the training area. Reaching a small bridge carrying a military sign proclaiming a 20 ton limit (ours being 52) my driver quite correctly, flatly refused to proceed any further in that direction. It was shortly after this when an Austin Champ 'jeep' arrived carrying an extremely irate Brigadier who understandably laced into me before showing me our correct position on a map and explaining how to reach that point. It was at this juncture he produced a notebook and demanded my name and regiment. Now, on schemes, it was custom to take steps to cover yourself for such situations. This was achieved by the simple method of smearing liberal amounts of grease across every distinguishing military sign on the tank, which, within a few miles dust and muck, made us anonymous. Furthermore, we mostly wore a rolled cap comforter to protect our heads from bumps. In addition to the protection they provided, these did not carry the regimental cap badge. Because of these factors I therefore had had no qualms in introducing myself as Corporal Jones, 4th Troop C Squadron 4th/7th Dragoon Guards, who we had met earlier in those parts. No, I feel it would be fair to confess that the role of Tank Commander was not entirely my forte!

Amongst my many memories of that period, I feel two are worth recording. On a couple of occasions the regiment welcomed and hosted our Old Comrades. Many activities were put on for them, together with social events and lots of beer. Everyone made sure those old soldiers had a great time and in turn they delighted in relating experiences of the years before I was born. One evening I listened enthralled to an old guy who had joined the Third in the 1920's when they were real Cavalry. His tales of mounted training were fascinating. From having never been near a horse, to riding, fully equipped, over jumps without stirrups after six weeks training, filled me with awe. When mentioning that I would never dare to get anywhere near a horse, never mind riding one, especially without stirrups, he smiled and told me the concept from day one was to ensure recruits had a greater fear of the riding master than the horses. Considering such things, together with stories related by those who had served in the first war, still makes me thankful for the accident of birth which enabled me to grow up without experiencing wartime military action. In those days Majors and senior NCO's all wore medal ribbons of the second war. One thing which was very noticeable was that those with decorations refused to discuss how they had won the award. I suppose the gruff words of one Staff Sergeant summed it up when asked how he had won his Military Medal, "because I fired before the Jerry; otherwise it might have been him getting a medal and me with a white tombstone and the words about dying for my country."

During 1957 orders came from on high that the 3rd Hussars would move in September from Iserlohn to York Barracks, Munster. Naturally we never discovered why. Of course, this pending move disturbed the general routine, creating much additional work and upheaval. The regiment was very much like any family, and a long period in one home had naturally led to the acquisition of much "valuable and well needed" clutter. Orders were issued that surplus (or what was known as buckshee) equipment was to be handed into the appropriate stores. Not unnaturally this command was interpreted at all levels as "That instruction can't possibly apply to me/us", especially as what had been given up for the Suez debacle had taken a great deal of replacing. Buckshee kit which was "yours" was a matter taken very seriously by the army. The move of a military unit differed from that of a civilian move inasmuch as in those days the army would consider the expense of hiring a removal contractor ridiculous. You have three ton trucks get on with the job! That move from Iserlohn to Munster was an eye opener. Working parties became a daily feature of life, but what was revealed was amazing.

Most items were packed into wooden cases by the staff of the department and watched over by senior NCOs, but some items would not go into boxes. The Sergeant's Mess seemed to have sufficient drums, spears and cowhide shields to equip a Zulu army and a huge pile of lances (but the regiment never had lances Sergeant! You ain't seen 'em lad, get 'em in the truck smartish.) I also suspect the amount of booze transferred would have shocked HM Customs & Excise. At Munster I helped to supervise the unloading and storage, in cellars below the new Sergeant's Mess, of many items of historical value, mostly once owned and used against the regiment in distant wars. Piles of swords, flags and similar, and German Pickelhaube helmets from the First War which must have been worth a fortune. When the cellar was almost full we built a false wall of wooden boxes to hide this booty! Although I never helped at the Officers Mess, reports indicated their treasures were of even greater value and interest. Eventually, all was transported to the new location and we said goodbye to Iserlohn.

To be continued

Regimental Portraits

The Regiment have a superb collection of portraits, in both oil and watercolour.

In this, and future editions, we will publish and identify some of them for you.



Number One

Air Marshal Sir John Baldwin KBE CB DSO

Sir John was Colonel of The 8th Kings Royal Irish Hussars from 1947 to 1958.

He had been commissioned into the Regiment in 1911, and had learnt to fly while at Sandhurst. He was seconded to the Royal Flying Corps in 1916 and at the invitation of the founder of the Royal Air Force, Lord Trenchard, transferred to the RAF in 1920. He never relinquished his connection with the Regiment.

Sir John was awarded the Royal Aero Club's Aviator's Certificate on 17 November 1914 and became a pilot in the Royal Flying Corps. He was appointed Officer Commanding No. 55 Squadron in October 1916 and Officer Commanding No. 41 Wing in December 1917 before transferring to the Royal Air Force on its formation in 1920.

He was appointed Commandant of the Central Flying School in 1928 and served as Aide-de-Camp to King George V from 1931 to 1932. He went on to be Air Officer Commanding No. 1 Group in 1934, Director of Personal Services in 1935 and Commandant of the RAF College Cranwell in 1936 before taking up the post of Air Officer Commanding No. 21 Group in 1938. He retired in August 1939.

Just two weeks later, Baldwin was recalled to serve in the Second World War as Air Officer Commanding No. 3 Group at RAF Bomber Command. Between 9 January and 21 February 1942, he was acting Commander in Chief of Bomber Command, after the removal of Richard Peirse.

During this brief tenure the "Channel Dash" occurred, when the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* escaped from the French port of Brest and fled up the English Channel to the sanctuary of Kiel harbour in northern Germany.

In October 1942 he became Deputy Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, India. This appointment was followed from November 1943 by his posting as Air Officer Commanding Third Tactical Air Force which supported the ground battle in South East Asia. On 5 February 1943, Baldwin attended the departure of Major General Orde Wingate, the Chindits and the 1st Air Commando Group departed for Operation THURSDAY in Burma.

He reverted to the Retired List again on 15 December 1944.

Sir John was Colonel of the 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars from 1948 until 1958, when the unit amalgamated to form the Queen's Royal Irish Hussars

His son, John Noel Anthony Baldwin, became a Captain in the 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars and was killed in action in 1942 in Libya.

Survivors of The Charge of the Light Brigade

The Charge of the Light Brigade was a charge of British light cavalry led by Lord Cardigan against Russian forces during the Battle of Balaclava on 25 October 1854 in the Crimean War. The 4th Queen's Own Hussars and the 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars took part.

In the end, of the roughly 670 Light Brigade soldiers, about 110 were killed and 160 were wounded, one of the survivors was:

Riding Master John Atkins Pickworth



Riding Master Pickworth served the Eastern campaign of 1854-55 with the 8th Hussars, including the reconnaissance to Silistria, Battles of Alma, Balaklava, Inkerman, and the Tchernaya, affairs of Bulganak and M'Kenzie's Farm, siege and fall of Sebastopol (Medal with four Clasps, French War Medal, and Turkish Medal). He also served in the Indian campaigns of 1858-59 and was present at the capture of Kotah, reoccupation of Chundaree, battle of Kota ke Serai, capture of Gwalior, and action of Boordah (Medal with Clasp).

John Pickworth enlisted in the 8th Hussars c. 1840, with the Regimental Number 840. Sergeant Pickworth would embark to the Crimea in the H.T.'Medora' on April 27th 1854. He was to feature in the famous "*Charge of the Light Brigade*", one of the "Gallant Six Hundred" immortalized by Lord Tennyson.

He is mentioned in an account of the Charge, published in the "*History of the VIII King's Royal Irish Hussars*" (by the Rev. Robert H. Murray) :

“The Charge of the British Cavalry at Balaclava”

(By one who was in it)

"(...) I saw, as (the Colonel) passed in front of us, that all at once his face expressed the greatest surprise and astonishment, and even anger, and, walking on, he broke out with, "What's this ?" what's this ?-one, two, four, six, seven men smoking !-swords drawn, and seven men smoking !-why, the thing is inconceivable ! Sergeant-Sergeant Pickworth," he calls out. And the truth is-for I was one of them- the truth is, we were warming our noses each with a short black pipe, and thinking no harm of the matter : and, by the bye, I lost mine, for I passed it quietly to poor Jack Miller in my rear, who went in with us into the charge, and was missed- so that I never got back my pipe. "I never heard of such a thing," the Colonel said, "and no regiment except an 'Irish' regiment would be guilty of it. Sergeant, advance and take these men's names," and leaving the sergeant to find us out, though he couldn't discover any, the Colonel passed on, and halted again. All this time I heard strange dull noises thickening in the air. it might not be quite according to regulation to be smoking, sword in hand, when the charge might be sounded any moment. Our Colonel was a religious man too, which helped him to his nickname, I dare say, and he imagined perhaps we ought to have been thinking of our souls instead of tobacco pouches and inch of clay. (...)"

Sergeant Pickworth is also mentioned in another account of the charge :

"Robert Briggs had his horse shot from underneath him in the charge, but escaped un wounded by grabbing a horse caught by Sgt Seth Bond of the same Regiment who had stopped it for a Sgt Pickworth of the 8th Hussars, who called for his fellow Sgt to stop the free horse for him. Unfortunately it was 'nabbed' by Briggs who was intent on having it ,much to the annoyance of Pickworth who said " Ah, well, I suppose all is fair in war, so let me have hold of each of your stirrups, and I'll run, the sooner we get out of this the better". They then rushed off with the gallant Sgt running in between their horses, to safety."

Sergeant Pickworth was promoted to Troop Sergeant-Major on the next day, October 26th, 1854.

The 8th Hussars would remain in the Crimea until April 1856, to come back home, before being sent to India in September 1857, at the outbreak of the Mutiny.

Pickworth was appointed Regimental Sergeant-Major on October 16th, 1857, and appointed Riding-Master on August 31st, 1858.

He came back from India with the 8th Hussars on board the St. Lawrence East Indiaman, leaving Calcutta on the 13th of January 1864, calling at the Cape of Good Hope on the 1st of March, at St. Helena on the 12th of March and reaching Portsmouth on Tuesday afternoon, April 26th, 1864.

He was appointed to the Cavalry Depot on April 28th , 1875.

The Cavalry Depot comprised a permanent staff, and officers detached from the various Cavalry Regiments serving overseas.



This photograph was taken in 1878, just prior to the 2nd Afghan War where some of these officers would undoubtedly serve, and definitely bring from the Depot much needed drafts to reinforce their regiments.

Riding Master Pickworth is in the second row from the rear, looking across to his left.

He would retire on half-pay, with the honorary rank of Captain, on April 24th , 1879, being installed as a Military Knight of Windsor on the same day.

He was a Member of the 1879 Balaclava Commemoration Society.

He was gazetted on retired pay on September 30th , 1881 (dated July 1st).

On January 4th, 1892, he attended the funeral of Prince Victor of Hohenlohe (Governor and Constable of Windsor Castle), among a deputation from the Military Knights of Windsor, posted near the church door by the Queen's command.

His obituary was published in "The Times" on February 23rd, 1901:

"Captain John Atkins Pickworth, a Military Knight of Windsor, formerly of the 8th Hussars and Cavalry depot Staff, died early yesterday morning at his residence in the Lower Ward, Windsor Castle. Captain Pickworth was born on March 18, 1824, and was consequently nearly 77 years of age. He joined the Army on February 18, 1840, and served in the 8th Hussars for upwards of 35 years. He served in the Crimean campaign, including the Earl of Cardigan's reconnaissance of Silistria, and in the Indian Mutiny, and was in 12 engagements-Bulganac, Alma, McKenzie's Farm, Balaclava, Inkerman, Tchernaya, and Sevastopol, in the Crimea, and the capture of Kotah, the reoccupation of Chundaree, the battle of Kota-keserai, the capture of Gwalior, and the action of Boordah, in India. He rode in the famous charge of the Six Hundred at Balaclava, and was one of a squadron that charged into and through the enemy's camp at Kota-keserai, in India, in which several guns were captured. he received four medals and five clasps, was recommended for the Victoria Cross, and his name was twice mentioned in the records of his regiment for having "distinguished himself by his steadiness and coolness in keeping the men together and the squadron unbroken" - after the death of the officers in the Light Brigade charge at Balaklava ; and during the Indian Mutiny, at Kota-keserai, when, owing to the death of his officer, he succeeded to the command of a troop covering the retreat, and was recommended for and awarded the commission vacant by the death of Lieutenant Reilly, who was killed in action. Captain Pickworth was selected by the Duke of Cambridge, then Commander-in-Chief, for the Cavalry Depot Staff on May 12, 1875, and was appointed by the late Queen Victoria a Military Knight of Windsor on April 24, 1879, after over 39 years of continuous service."

Regimental Battle Honours of The Queen's Royal Hussars

Since 1685 the parent Regiments of the Queen's Royal Hussars have been awarded 172 Battle Honours. Of these, 44 are recorded on the Guidon. These articles are to give more information on some of the battles where we earned 'Battle Honours' which were fought many years ago in then very distant lands!

David Innes-Lumsden - Editor

Battle of Chillianwallah

A battle of the Second Sikh War fought on 13th January 1849.

The Battle of Chillianwallah was fought in the Punjab in the North-West of India. The two wars fought between 1845 and 1849 between the British and the Sikhs led to the annexation of the Punjab by the British East India Company, and one of the most successful military co-operations between two races, stretching into a century of strife on the North West Frontier of British India, the Indian Mutiny, Egypt and finally the First and Second World Wars'

British troops and Indian troops of the Bengal Presidency fought against Sikhs of the Khalsa, the Army of the Punjab.

Major General Sir Hugh Gough was the British commander at the Battle of Chillianwallah and the Sikh's by General Shere Singh.



Major General Sir Hugh Gough



General Shere Singh.

The British Army numbered 12,000 with 66 guns and the Sikh's 35,000 with 65 guns.

The British contingent comprised four light cavalry regiments (3rd, 9th, 14th and 16th Light Dragoons, - the 9th and 16th being Lancers) and twelve regiments of foot (9th, 10th, 24th, 29th, 31st, 32nd, 50th, 53rd, 60th, 61st, 62nd and 80th regiments) and Cavalry and Infantry of the Bengal Army

General Gough commanded the British/Indian army at six of the seven major battles (not the Battle of Aliwal). An Irishman, Gough was immensely popular with his soldiers, for whose welfare he was constantly solicitous. The troops admired Gough's bravery, in action wearing a conspicuous white coat, which he called his '*Battle Coat*', so that he might draw fire away from his soldiers.

Gough's tactics were heavily criticised, even in the Indian press in letters written by his own officers. At the Battles of Moodkee, Sobraon and Chillianwallah, Gough launched headlong attacks, considered to be ill-thought out by many of his contemporaries. Casualties were high and excited concern in Britain and India. By contrast, Gough's final battle, Goojerat, which decisively won the war, cost few of his soldiers their lives and was considered a model of care and planning.

Every battle saw vigorous cavalry actions, with our own 3rd King's Own Light Dragoons particularly distinguishing themselves.

The weapons for the 3rd King's Own Light Dragoons cavalry were the sword and carbine.

Commands in the field were given by the cavalry trumpet and the infantry drum and bugle. In the initial battles, the Sikh artillery outgunned Gough's batteries. Even in these battles and in the later ones, the Bengal and Bombay horse and field artillery were handled with great resource and were a major cause of Gough's success.

The Sikhs of the Punjab looked to the sequence of Gurus for their spiritual inspiration, and had established their independence, fiercely resisting the Moghul Kings in Delhi and the Muslims of Afghanistan. The Sikhs were required by their religion to wear the '*five Ks*', not to cut their hair or beard and to wear the highly characteristic turban, a length of cloth in which the hair is wrapped around the head.

The traditional weapon of the Sikh warrior is the 'Kirpan', a curved sword kept razor sharp and one of the 'five Ks' a baptised Sikh must wear. In battle, at the first opportunity, many of the Sikh foot abandoned their muskets and, joining their mounted comrades, engaged in hand to hand combat with sword and shield. Horrific cutting wounds, severing limbs and heads were a feature of the Sikh Wars, in which neither side gave quarter to the enemy.



Charge of the 3rd King's Own Lt Dragoons at the Battle of Chillianwallah, 1849

(Picture in the Officers Mess)

Account of the Battle of Chillianwallah.

The Battle of Ramnagar, and General Thackwell's inconclusive expedition across the Chenab River, had the effect of driving Shere Singh's Sikh army north from the Chenab, to take up a position against the River Jhelum. On 10th January 1849, the news came in to the British commander, Major General Gough, that the Sikh commander, Chattar Singh, had finally captured the fortress of Attock in the extreme north-west corner of the Punjab. It was now a matter of time before Chattar Singh's force, with its Afghan allies, joined Shere Singh on the Jhelum to create an overwhelming Sikh army.

The Governor General, Lord Dalhousie, urged General Gough to advance with the British and Bengal 'Army of the Punjab' and attack Shere Singh before he could be reinforced.

The fall of the city of Multan to its British and Bombay Presidency besiegers released General Whish's division to re-join the Army of the Punjab, but Dalhousie and Gough took the view that they could not wait for its arrival.

On 13th January 1849, Gough marched up to within eight miles of the Sikh army in its position along the Jhelum River, entrenched in a row of rural hamlets. The Army of the Punjab halted at the village of Chillianwallah and prepared to pitch camp, while Gough carried out a reconnaissance.

The Sikh left flank lay on the village of Rasul, in a line of small hills running nearly parallel with the Chenab River. The Sikh right lay against a thick jungle wall. Along the front of the Sikh line was a deep area of scrubby jungle.

The Sikh army comprised 25 infantry battalions, of which 10 had been raised since the end of the First Sikh War, 5,000 Gorcharra irregular cavalry and 65 guns, mostly of a light calibre. It was a feature of the Second Sikh War that the Sikhs had lost the predominance in size and numbers of guns they had possessed in the First Sikh War.

Pitching camp by the Army of the Punjab was interrupted when a battery of Sikh artillery advanced and opened fire on the British and Bengalis, until they were forced to retire by the counter-fire of Gough's artillery. The whole of the Sikh artillery came into action and it became clear that the Sikhs had advanced well forward from their fortified position and that battle was imminent.

Cancelling the order to pitch camp, Gough formed up his regiments and prepared for battle, while his guns returned the Sikh fire

It is reported that Gough was particularly enraged when several Sikh cannon rounds came the way of his staff. The criticism is made that it would have been better to have acted with restraint and stuck to his plan to give battle the next day.

Gough drew up his infantry in two divisions of two brigades each: from the left; Campbell's division of Hoggan's and Pennycuick's brigades, then Gilbert's division of Mountain's and Godby's brigades. Penny's brigade provided the infantry reserve. White's cavalry brigade was posted on the left flank with Pope's cavalry brigade on the right.

The dense scrub made movement and observation equally difficult and, as always in battles in the Indian plains, the marching of troops and horses and the firing of artillery and infantry weapons created heavy clouds of dust and powder smoke which added to the confusion. Horsford's heavy guns fired upon the centre of the Sikh position, aided by the field batteries positioned on the flanks of the army. After an hour of bombardment, the infantry was ordered forward to attack.

Campbell's division on the left, Hoggan's brigade pushed into the Sikh infantry line and drove it back. Pennycuick's brigade drifted away to the right, struggling to keep order in the dense scrub. HM 24th Foot, an inexperienced British regiment full of young soldiers, outstripped its two flanking BNI battalions and reached the Sikh lines, attacking and overrunning the Sikh positions, taking many guns.

The Sikhs stormed back into the captured trenches in overwhelming numbers, and drove the disordered 24th Foot out in full retreat and with heavy casualties. The two BNI battalions attempted to hold the attack but were forced back, the whole brigade retreating in confusion to its start point.

In the melee, Brigadier Pennycuik, his son, Lieutenant Colonel Brookes, the commanding officer of the 24th, and the two other field officers of the regiment were killed. The 25th and 45th BNI lost all but one of the five colours these two regiments carried. HM 24th Foot lost one colour while the other was rescued by a private soldier. Penny's brigade advanced into the gap left by the retreat of Pennycuick's and managed to hold the Sikh pursuit.

Hoggan's brigade, under General Campbell's leadership, pushed through the strip of jungle behind the Sikh lines, supported by the fire of horse and field batteries, coming out on the far side in the presence of a strong force of Sikh infantry, cavalry and guns. 61st Foot charged the body of cavalry and drove them away, while the Sikh infantry repulsed the 36th BNI on their right. 61st wheeled and attacked the Sikh infantry and two guns they had brought up. On the left of the brigade 46th BNI repulsed a Sikh cavalry charge. The whole brigade formed to its right and advanced down the Sikh line, rolling it up and capturing 13 guns until they joined up with Gilbert's Division. On the left flank, White's cavalry brigade found itself confronted by a large force of Sikh Gorcharra irregular horsemen.



Captain Unett of the 3rd King's Own Light Dragoons

(Picture in the Officers Mess)

Captain Unett of the 3rd King's Own Light Dragoons led his squadron into the charge, galloping as best they could through the broken jungle. General Thackwell, the commander of the cavalry division, ordered the 5th BLC up in support, but the regiment failed to follow Unett's squadron into the dense mass of Gorcharras. Unett's light dragoons cut their way through the Sikhs and, turning, charged back, dispersing the threat to the left flank. All the officers of the squadron were wounded. (48)

On the right flank, Pope directed his brigade to advance in line of regiments; two squadrons of 9th Lancers on the right (the remaining two squadrons had been sent away towards the hills), three squadrons of 1st and 6th BLC in the centre and 14th King's Light Dragoons to their left, with ten guns of Huish's and Christie's troops of Bengal Horse Artillery on the extreme left of the brigade. No unit was retained as a supporting line.

Pope led his brigade at the trot through the broken scrub, without the precaution of skirmishers in advance. At the sight of a body of Sikh cavalry, the BLC squadrons in the centre of the line halted, forcing the British regiments on the flanks to stop in conformity. The Sikhs charged the BLC squadrons which turned about and made off. The two British regiments did the same, all attempts by the officers to halt their soldiers being to no avail.

The precipitous withdrawal of the cavalry regiments left the brigade horse artillery battery unprotected, and, in the confusion of limbering up, the battery was overrun by the Sikh cavalry who captured two guns. Eventually two other guns came into action and were sufficient to drive the Sikh cavalry back.

The retreating cavalymen from Pope's brigade found their way back to the camp at Chillianwallah, where they were rounded up by officers of the non-combatant services, including a padre.

The disappearance of the cavalry left Godby's infantry brigade exposed. The 70th BNI pulled back its right wing to provide cover and, after some hard fighting, the division was able to resume its advance, Mountain's brigade taking a Sikh battery.

The battle ended with darkness. The Sikh army left the field, withdrawing into the hills around Russool, between their position and the Jhelum River. Gough's army withdrew to the village of Chillianwallah, leaving several guns on the field, but ensuring they were spiked.

Heavy rain set in the next day preventing any further manoeuvre by either side.

After the Battle Gough's Army of the Punjab withdrew to its camp at Chillianwallah, while the Sikhs fell back no further than the hills around Rasul. The battle was not won by either side, although it is said that the Sikh missed an opportunity to defeat the British outright.

From Captain Unett's squadron of 3rd King's Own Light Dragoons of 106 men, only 48 were in the saddle at the end of the battle.

General Gough, with perhaps uncharacteristic restraint, resisted all urgings to attack the army of Shere Singh in his new position, waiting until shortage of supplies forced the Sikh army to move into more fertile and open country. Reinforcements reached Shere Singh from Attock, but so did reinforcements for the Army of the Punjab from Multan, and in time for the finale of the war at the Battle of Goojerat.

Anecdotes and traditions from the Battle of Chillianwallah:

- The British press and public were horrified by the losses and the apparent incompetence of the leadership at the Battle of Chillianwallah. The Government decided that Gough was to be replaced as commander-in-chief by the elderly veteran Lord Napier, but the war ended with the successful Battle of Goojerat before Napier reached India.
- The cause of the collapse of Pope's cavalry brigade was attributed to Pope's age and inexperience. He was elderly and so ill that he had to be helped to mount and had never commanded more than a squadron in the field.
- Chillianwallah was an iconic battle for the British cavalry for widely differing reasons. Unett's charge with his squadron of the 3rd King's Own Light Dragoons on the left flank was held up as a paragon. The squadron was mounted entirely on greys. The conduct of Pope's brigade on the right flank became notorious. It is said that the slur cast on the competence and courage of the British light cavalry continued to reverberate into the Crimean War, and may have contributed to the disastrous Charge of the Light Brigade. Captain Nolan, who played such a key part in committing the Light Brigade to the charge at the Battle of Balaclava, was serving in India with the 15th Hussars during the Sikh Wars, and was appalled by the incompetent handling of Pope's cavalry brigade at Chillianwallah.
- An extraordinary incident took place in 1850, when Sir Charles Napier reviewed the 3rd and 14th Light Dragoons and congratulated them on their performance in the Sikh Wars. A trumpeter of the 14th rode forward and announced to Napier '*Our colonel is a coward,*' referring to the commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel King. Soon afterwards King shot himself. At the point during the Battle of Chillianwallah when Pope's cavalry brigade began to disintegrate, King was attempting to persuade Pope to charge the Sikh cavalry.

3rd King's Own Light Dragoons:

- Captain Unett led the squadron of the 3rd King's Own Light Dragoons at the Battle of Chillianwallah. On the regiment's return to England, Captain Unett and Lieutenant Stisted, both wounded in the battle, were presented to Queen Victoria to be congratulated on their conduct.
- **3rd King's Own Light Dragoons:** It is hard not to rhapsodise over the conduct of the '*Galloping Third*' in the Sikh Wars. The regiment charged several times at each of the Battles of Moodkee, Ferozeshah, Sobraon, Ramnagar, Chillianwallah and Goojerat. In many instances, the charges were delivered when regiments of Bengal Light Cavalry balked at clashing with the feared Sikhs, leaving the 3rd to attack unsupported and against overwhelming odds, the officers and soldiers knowing the Sikhs gave no quarter and inflicted appalling wounds with their razor sharp kirpan swords, severing limbs and heads.

THE 11th TULIP RALLY

The Tulip Rally (Dutch: Tulpen rallye), first held in 1949, is the oldest Dutch rally competition. The teams are divided into three classes: Tour, Sport and Expert. Participating cars must have been built before December 31, 1971. According to the current event rules, it is not allowed to use a mobile phone unless you have bad luck (such as a breakdown). Modern stopwatches and watches are allowed. It is allowed to have up to 10 liters extra fuel in your trunk. Violations of the maximum speed is punished with penalty seconds. Though organized in the Netherlands, most of the 2 500 kilometer route is run outside its organizing country, and the start itself is given from abroad. For instance, the 2019 competition starts from Andorra and most of the rally goes through France and Belgium.

In 1959, Captain David Vetch and Lieutenant Peter Bailey, of the newly formed Queen's Royal Irish hussars, took part.

It was over a drink, or perhaps after several of them. that Peter Bailey and I committed ourselves to taking part in this year's Tulip Rally. We had neither of us ever taken part in a rally before, and in consequence had no idea of what our lightheadedness had let us in for. We did not realize what it would be like to average 38 m.p.h. over 2,000 miles of roads any sensible driver would go another 1,000 miles to avoid. It was probably just as well, as our ambitions would probably never have gone farther than the bar that night.

The Tulip Rally is incorporated in the Rally Championship of Europe. and is organized by the R.A.C.-Wert. of Holland. The Rally itself is divided into nine classes, A to J. the classes being governed by cylinder volume and type of car. In addition there is the Rally class, which is in effect a novices class, and into which go all the amateurs and "new boys" to the game, regardless of size or type of car. We therefore entered the Rally class.

It was only after considerable correspondence with the R.A.C. in London that we eventually obtained the necessary competition licences which enabled us to be accepted as entrants by the Rally committee, and were then able to concentrate on a detailed plan of campaign. We had intended to carry out some practice mountain drives in the Votes, and high-speed tests at the Nurburg Ring. but unfortunately the time was not available.

The car itself, a 1957 Mercedes 220 S. required very little attention. Apart from a 35,000-mile servicing the week before the Rally, and a new set of tyres, no further work was required. The only additional equipment incorporated into the car was a long-distance lamp; in addition to that we carried two shovels, tow chain, two spare wheels and normal tool kit. We also carried a spare set of plugs, and a few odds and ends, such as fan belt, magneto, petrol pump. bulbs and fuses. None of these items was required. We had intended to fit an average speed indicator, but it did not arrive in time, and as it turned out it would not have been of very great value to us anyway.



WINNERS - RALLY CLASS TULIP RALLY AT FIRST ATTEMPT
No 178 Mercedes-Benz 220 S, Capt D. A. Vetch (*left*) and co-driver Lt P. G. Bailey

The Rally was due to start in Paris on Monday morning, 27th April. As we had to weigh in on the Sunday afternoon, and present ourselves to the committee, we did not think it would be thought undue vulgar haste to leave Hohne on the Friday. We therefore had three days in Paris, all of which I regret to record were without incident. At the weigh-in we received our road log books, which gave a detailed itinerary of the route and report times at the various check points which would be placed along the road. Mingling with the other Rally drivers who were discussing tyre pressures, rear axle ratios and servicing depots along the route, we became very aware of our inadequacy, and returned to our hotel worried and apprehensive of what the next three days were going to produce.

Sunday evening was spent in tracing the 1,800-mile course on to the maps, by the end of which we were thoroughly demoralized, having pencilled our route across every hill and mountain pass in France. Morale was not high anyway, having seen every other Rally car at the weigh-in, with umpteen gadgets and dials and instruments installed. One Swedish entry, a red Volvo, had particularly impressed us with its array of driving lights outside and full panel of stop watches, average-speed indicators and navigational instruments inside.

In the Rally class there were fourteen entrants, of which thirteen actually started. It was predominantly British, but there were entries from Holland, Denmark and Germany. British cars were M.G., Austin-Healey, Rapier, Triumph TR2 and Zephyr. There were three other Mercedes.

The start point was on the race track at Montlhery just outside Paris. The sky was grey and a cold wind blew across the start as cars were dispatched at one-minute intervals. We were lined up ten minutes before our start time, and at the wave of the flag we were off, on a drive which would last three days and two nights, taking us through the French Massif Central, Alps, Jura Vorges and Ardennes, finishing at Noordwyk an Zee on the Dutch coast near the Hague, and we were due there at 1800 hrs. on Wednesday.

The first time control was Vichy, 220 miles away, where we had to report at 1605 hrs. It was an easy drive along main roads, and we soon discovered that there was nothing to rally driving; in fact, we even made a long halt for lunch. Little did we realize, however, that our next meal would not be until the following evening.

During the course of the 1,800-mile route there were to be eight eliminating tests. These tests were hill-climbs, varying in distance from three to eleven miles. The road over these sections would be closed to normal traffic, and it was a case of "quickest the best." The first of these eliminating tests came soon after Vichy, at La Baraque, on the outskirts of Clermont Ferrand. Conditions were not made any easier by a fine drizzle of rain which made the already greasy roads even more unattractive, and they got worse as the evening wore on, and we picked our way across the Massif in the gathering gloom to the Rhone valley, and Valence, our next time control.



At Valence there was an hour's compulsory rest, and by this time we were beginning to realize that there was a bit more to rally driving than we had originally supposed.

During our "rest hour" at Valence, we had to refuel, check the car, and prepare ourselves for the ordeal of the night drive ahead. The drizzle which had started earlier in the evening had now turned into a steady downpour, and the roads had turned into veritable rivers as we left Valence just before midnight and headed up into the Massif again. The Rally had now begun.

Having had only two time controls up to date, the checks during the night were far more numerous, and were sometimes only twelve or fifteen miles apart. This, we discovered, was a feature of the night sections.

Shortly after Valence there was another eliminating test. This time over the Col du Pin, a distance of four and a half miles, and over which we might have returned a good time had it not been for Orum of the Mercedes team, who had ground his 300 SL into the mountain side, and for whom we stopped to offer assistance. He was, however, only one of four cars who had performed similar feats during the course of the climb. much to the detriment of the cars, but fortunately not to the crews. The night and weather were beginning to take their toll, as we passed dented and upturned cars.

From now on it was a battle through the Massif mountains, and steep rocky gorges of the Tarn, with the torrential rain adding to the difficulties of negotiating the slippery and fast blind corners, in our efforts to maintain an average of 38 m.p.h. which was necessary if we were to arrive at the time controls unpenalized. Map reading did not ease the situation, and there came a time during the night when all manner of cross-roads and junctions began to appear. and trees to move! At that stage one knew it was time to change drivers, as we had testimony of many who had not changed in time : Pat Moss with her Austin-Healey firmly embedded into the hillside, and two cars, an M.G.A. and an Alfa-Romeo, which had collided and rolled to the side of the road. The second 300 SL of the Mercedes team disappeared off the side of the road at this stage.

A grey dawn broke about six o'clock as we motored down out of the Massif. across the Rhone again and through Avignon to Bedoin, where we were to have an hour's rest period. Fortunately we arrived early, and were able to enjoy a refreshing wash and shave, followed by some coffee and a half-boiled egg—all our humble French would permit us.

On leaving Bedoin we immediately entered the third. and so far longest, eliminating test—this time nine and a half miles over Mont Ventoux. This 4,000 ft. climb over a very rough road took us up into cloud, which became thick fog at the top as the road, now icy and covered with blown snow, cut its way through the drifts. I felt thankful that I was well in rear of the column, the leaders of which must have had considerable difficulty cutting themselves a path through the snow, which in places was still several feet deep.

We now headed north for Gap, another eliminating test over the Col Bayard and on to Uriage near Grenoble, where there was another hill-climb eleven miles up to the Chamrousse ski-station. And we had completed the first 1,000 miles of the course.

At Uriage we had a half-hour break, but by the time we got the car refuelled there was no time for lunch, and we made do with a cup of coffee. Throughout our drive we had sustained ourselves with Horlicks tablets and pounds of oranges we had bought in Paris. and remarked how little urge we had for a proper meal although, arriving at Belfort about 2000 hrs., we put a steak to very good use, not having eaten anything solid since lunch the previous day.

Although beginning to feel weary, there was no doubt that we had now settled down, and it seemed that our driving ability improved hourly. Certainly I would never before have contemplated negotiating mountain hairpins at 40 and 50 m.p.h. Morale, too, was given a boost on Tuesday afternoon as we drove along fast main roads into Switzerland, to get a glimpse of sun as we skirted round Geneva. However. it was to be short lived, and by the time we crossed back into France the wipers were on again.

We headed north now, for Belfort. taking in four miles of the Cotes de Givrins, over which we were lucky enough to return one of the best times, and so to Belfort for an hour's rest and by this time some food. Fortunately we arrived early and not only had time to attend to the car and eat, but also to have a ten-minute sleep before starting on the most gruelling part of the rally, the second night.

I had found it impossible to sleep in the car as we bounded over the mountains, but Peter Bailey was more fortunate in this respect, being able to "kip" whenever not navigating. Here again, like our food requirements—or lack of them—we were not worried by lack of sleep, and indeed the ten minutes I had at Belfort was the only sleep I managed throughout the Rally.

By the time we left Belfort at 2020 hrs. it was dark; we had 1,300 miles on the clock and in the first two days and nights had lost only one mark. Our complacency, however, was soon to vanish.

Our route now ran up and down Jura and Vorges in a brake-thrashing drive to Bitschwiller, where we arrived nine minutes late, thereby losing nine marks. Over part of this section the average speed had risen from 37 to 42 m.p.h.—but worse was to follow as we ploughed through the night, which was not helped by thick fog and more rain.

The night continued to take its toll of drivers and cars. The highly instrumented red Volvo we had cast covetous eyes over in Paris, we passed, his nose (lights and all) well and truly buried into the mountain side. We reduced our speed to about 25 m.p.h. in view of the hallucinations each of us suffered. Suddenly a large tree would seem to develop into a double-deck bus in the middle of the road, or a bush into a cart crossing the road. Eyes were getting tired and strained, and we decided it was safer to be late than upturned in a ditch, and felt we could easily make up time when it got light, on the main roads to Metz and Luxembourg.

Our hopes of a fast drive into Luxembourg, however, were dashed by a thick ground mist which kept us down to 50 m.p.h., and nearly put us out of the race, when two trucks, one overtaking the other, suddenly loomed out of the mist. But despite this we managed to arrive in Luxembourg in time, although during the course of the night we had lost about forty points.

After a good breakfast at Luxembourg we headed north again to the Ardennes and the famous "route of a thousand corners." But this time about a third of the drivers who had left Paris forty-eight hours before in such high hopes had retired—but the home stretch was almost in sight and we battled on to Eindhoven, where we were entertained to tea by the Phillips factory and so to Noordwijk.

Of the thirteen starters in the Rally class, only four finished.

Prior to the start of the Rally we never really doubted that we could complete the course. However, our first rude awakening came when we looked at the route on our maps on Sunday night, and after the start there were several occasions when we reckoned that perhaps we had "bitten off a bit more than we could chew." Our surprise therefore was even greater when we discovered that of the four finishers we had obtained fewest penalty marks.

It was an experience which I would not have missed, but next time I would prefer to use somebody else's car!

The Apprentice College Chepstow, Singapore 1963-ish
and a NATO scheme in Germany

by

John Sefton

As promised in previous editions of the Chronicle, here are three more 'articles' from John Sefton (REME) covering his service at The Army Apprentices College and his time with the Queen's Royal Irish Hussars in Singapore and Germany in the 1960's.

The Apprentice College Chepstow February 1956.

It was February 1956 and the recruiting sergeant saw me off at Paragon station, Hull.

There I was, 15 years old, with the Queens shilling in my pocket, feeling so vulnerable and wondering what the hell I was doing on that cold platform. I boarded the train and the sergeant did a hasty runner as he had done his bit for Queen and country and probably thought that was another one for the boot camp at Beachley Point, Chepstow.

Many hours later I arrived at my destination, tired and nervous at the thought of what laid ahead of me. There was an army truck parked up in the car park so I made my way to it and got aboard as it was there for our use and for others on the same train.

I arrived at the camp and was greeted by a big fat sergeant major in the Cold Stream Guards, with no neck to speak of. He had a mouth to match his size that was XXXL. I was bollocked for having my hands in my pockets which for me was the norm. I was shown to a wooden hut heated by a coke burning stove in the centre of the room, of course it was not lit and the room was bloody freezing. The SM called it our central heating because of its location in the centre. I selected a bed near to the stove as I thought it would be one of the warmest places to be on a night, little knowing that it would be a congregation point for all the lads to gather round at a later date when we were all friends.

Next morning I was introduced to the rest of our intake which was 56A 'B' Company. We were then issued with all our uniform and kit, including drawers Dracula which we nick named as they were bloody awful underpants. We were put straight into the training program to knock us into shape and luckily I had been in the army cadets for a few years so I knew what to expect. Other lads in the company had a hell of a shock to their systems as they had never know the like before.

I will not bore you with the details of training as it is the same the whole world over.

My first visit to the cookhouse was an education to say the least as it was very sparse and smelled like what school dinners used to. Breakfast was the first meal, no cooked bacon, eggs or the like, just ruddy porridge and two slices of bread each and a very small dab of greasy margarine. I thought to myself at the time this cannot be right for growing lads; we will starve without a doubt. After a week or so we realised you were allowed one egg per week and cereals if you were lucky. You were never allowed any extra bread if you were hungry until after the meal was over and the cook sergeant shouted out “ Buckshee”, then you had to run and fight for an extra piece of stale bread. It was pathetic but we still fought for that bread. I later found out that the rations for young soldiers was a lot more than what they were feeding us, so obviously somebody was on the fiddle, Mr bloody cook sergeant! Eventually we got used to the poor food that they fed us and we used to fill up on other goodies that our parents sent us in the shape of food parcels.

Another hazard we had to contend with at this lovely college was RATS, hundreds of the ruddy things as they were all under the billets (barrack rooms) that we slept in. Friday night used to be polish night where we had to lay thick layers of polish on the lino floor so that they could be polished next morning for our room inspections by the senior staff. On the Friday night we used to retire to our pits (beds) then after a few minutes when all was quiet, the scratching noises started. We had no idea what it was at first and some funny comments came out until some wise lag switched the lights on and then we saw the horror before us. As the lights came on we saw lots of large rats running up and down the billet trying to find their holes again from whence they had come. After they had all gone back down their holes we had a discussion about the problem amongst ourselves. We vowed to wage war on these horrible intruders into our lives. That night and for many nights after we slept with our heads under our blankets for fear that a rat would bite us in the night. Most Friday nights after that we used to stand on our beds waiting for the rats to come out and play and once they were all away from their holes we started to attack them with whatever we could lay our hands on such as bumpers and scrubbers etc which were cleaning tools used at that time. We killed quite a few but there were plenty more where they had come from. I must add here that this went on for almost two years even after reporting it to the senior staff. Rat catchers were brought in after two years and they got rid of the problem once and for all.

Another incident worthy of note was when a Corporal asked me to look in his bunk (bed) as he had seen a lump under the blankets and yes it was a big juicy rat. I got hold of a bumper handle and my mate took hold of another. He stood at the head of the bed ready to smack the rat as it shot out when I smacked the lump. I gave the lump an almighty whack and this huge rat shot out of the blankets over the pillow and up the wall, hit the ceiling then fell down onto the floor. My mate never budged as he was shaking with fear so I played hell with him for missing the chance to kill the bleeder. To finalise this story, when the rat catchers came they fed the rats Warfarine, which made the rats very thirsty and they had to come up looking for water and when they did they usually just keeled over and died. That was the end of the rat population at the college. (57)

I tell you what the permanent staff were like at the college now as there were some funny buggers there. One worthy of a mention was Lance Corporal Cagney who worked in the sick bay everyday. He was 20 plus stone and always had a fag in his mouth. He was a dirty sloven and should never have had a job treating the sick. I cut my finger on a razor blade in the drains one day. I washed my finger straight away and disinfected it and put a small dressing on it. But after a few days the finger had swollen quite large and it was hurting like merry hell. Sick bay was my next port of call and yes who was on duty but mucky old Cagney. He had a fag in his mouth and he started to clean the finger up whilst ash was dropping off his fag end. He wiped sweat from his brow and carried on dressing my finger so I had a mixture of sweat, fag ash and any germs he was laden with to boot.

To shorten this tale a bit I ended up with a very severe infection and had to have the end of the finger amputated under general anaesthetic at a local hospital. I was in very bad pain and was given nothing for it at all. I had to visit the hospital each day for injections of streptomycin which was like having treacle injected into you and have the dressings changed. It was not healing at all and one day the surgeon called me in and told me the bone was infected and the first knuckle would have to be removed to help the healing process so back under the knife I went again. All told it took about 10 weeks to heal and I was nearly relegated to 57 intake a year behind as I had missed all my classes. I chatted to my instructors one day and they said if I got caught up with all my lessons some how then I would stay as I was in 56A. I set about reading and copying all my mates notes on all the courses I had missed and eventually I got there and was not relegated.

Quite a lot of the senior staff was ex guards men and I am sure they were drop outs from their regiments as they were all well over weight and were big bullies. I remember being on parade one day and this fat sergeant major came up behind this poor unsuspecting lad and smashed his pace stick on this lad's china mug. He said the lad's mug was dirty and not fit for his parade but I thought he was well out of line with what he did. I could go on but I think you get the picture now.

Health and Safety regulations in those days were none existent as I remember well when I was on night duty corporal and part of my duties was to go round all the billets and switch the security lights out. It was pouring with rain and I had just approached one billet to switch the outside light off. I reached out and made contact with the switch when wham bang I was on the deck fighting for breath with a hell of a pain in my arm and chest. I had nearly been electrocuted as some silly twerp had taken the cover off the switch for a lark. I survived that shock so I must have been fit at the time. The three years I spent at this establishment was not an experience I would ever like to go through again, never!

There are certain things unsaid that would raise eyebrows if the facts ever got out to the public. The only good thing about the experience was that it got me fit; I learned discipline and also learnt to live with rats for two years. I reached the dizzy heights of sergeant in the last year and was allowed into the sergeants mess where the grub was a lot better.

Eventually the time came to leave and we went into mans service in the REME.

I hope the colleges have improved since I was there for the apprentice's sake.

Singapore 1963-ish

I remember Singapore very well as it was a period in the army were I actually felt relaxed and not under a great deal of stress like on other postings whilst serving with the Queens Royal Irish Hussars.

The camp we were accommodated in was called Nee Soon. It was a well laid out camp and the barracks were of good quality and smart. There were no mosquitoes in Singers not like Malaya the god forsaken place where they took off in squadrons by their millions just to aggravate us soldiers.

During my stay in Singers I attended two courses one being my first class trade test and the other being a life saving instructors course.

The first course I attended was the trade course and I was part way into it when I got myself into a spot of bother with Nee Soon camp military police.

It was one weekend when I had gone back to camp to see my mates. We went down the town for a laugh and a few beers and came back pretty drunk on that shitty Tiger beer. We were always certain it was Tigers pee as it tasted foul at first but got better as the night went on.

Later that night we returned to camp drunk as skunks and singing our little heads off. Just outside the guardroom which we had just reached was a set of road signs beautifully hand painted in green and white. I do not know why to this day why I did what I did next but I decided to swing on this sign post and holler like Tarzan. Suddenly there was a crack like gunfire and the sign broke in two. Well it was like a starting gun going off because we all shot off like scalded rabbits. Me being fit as a fiddle I ran all the way back to the barracks which were about half a mile inside the camp and I jumped into bed fully clothed and pretended to be asleep. All my mates had used their common sense and jumped into the deep monsoon drains that surrounded the camp and hid out of view.

I heard this Land Rover screech up to our barracks and the next thing two hairy faced Malaya Police pulled my blankets off me and arrested me for criminal damage to the sign post and I was escorted to the camp guardroom post haste and thrown in the cells.

I had a very uncomfortable night in the cool cell with no blankets just a hard wooden bed. They released me next morning and I was told that a report would be going to the training school.

On the Monday morning I was called before the course Officer a Captain in the REME who looked just like Ernest Borgedine. He was a tough looking bugger and as hard as nails as he was an ex paratrooper with full wings and medals. He began giving me a right old rollicking of my life but I noticed there was a wry smile on his face when he was giving me it. He finished by calling me a Bad Apple in the barrel and then told me to get back to my studies and never to darken his doors again. I never received any real punishment which surprised me greatly as the sign must have cost a small fortune.

I have to add here that years later when I was demobbed I had to go to Aborfield in England to get signed off and who was there to do the deed, my old friend the Captain Ernest Borgedine from Singers days. He sat behind his huge desk and then looked up as I marched in and he looked quite puzzled. He said "Don't I know you laddie"? I replied, "Bad Apple sir, Singapore 1963". He smiled and said "oh yes I remember you now you are the bugger that broke the camp sign in Nee Soon". He wished me well in civilian life and signed me off and that was it then.

The next course I attended was the life saving instructors course and I had Johnny Bagshawe with me for company. It was a week long course and we had to train four lads up each to get them through their Bronze medallion life saving award. The whole course was done in swimming costume from morning until night and I always remember going into a local NAAFI canteen which belonged to the Women's Royal Army Corps dressed in our skimpy costumes. There were big hairy legged WRAC's sat there, women soldiers who would have looked good in the Earl De Grey in Hull's pub land. What an embarrassment as these women used to slag us off something awful shouting out really loud about our manhood's etc. I blushed like hell every time but my mate Johnny used to give them a load of verbal's back. It was only hunger that made me keep going back there, believe me. It was like running the ruddy gauntlet every day. Thankfully the course was soon over and we passed with flying colours and returned back to base camp in Nee Soon.

To return back to base camp, there was a scary moment once when we were working in the vehicle compound and all was at peace with us or so we thought when suddenly there was all hell let loose as a ruddy great road wheel from a three tonner Bedford came crashing into the compound causing all sorts of damage to our workshops and surrounding buildings. An Irish Hussar lad had been picking this new wheel and tyre up from the stores on top of a hill above our compound and he was bowling it along merrily but lost control of it and the rest you know. We were damn lucky not to have been injured but nobody was, just a few odd Hussar lads with soiled underpants. The Hussar got a right old rifting from Foxy and he would not be bowling wheels from any stores for a long time.

To mention a few points about our glorious leader Frank the Desert Fox. He was a good leader and tradesman but was just a bit too much militarised for our liking. He always tried to make me have a basin haircut like what he had and we always had many an argument over it but I got away with murder as I used to bribe the barber to give me a very wee trim and

then when Foxy complained there was not enough off, I quoted army regulations to him and he used to froth at the mouth in temper. He could not do a thing about it as army reg's were the law and it stated in there that hair had to be kept neat and tidy at all times but nothing about short. I just used to keep out of Foxy's way as often as I could which seemed to work ok for me. He got his own back though, the bugger, as weeks later he sent me on active service to Brunei for a 6 months stint

We liked his explanation of making a good cup of tea as he always insisted that you must stir the tea clockwise never anti clockwise. We never took a blind bit of notice of him as we were sure he was trying to take the Mickey out of us. Cannot have been too bad for us though as we got invited home for tea with his wife and kids once and that was a treat for us. His wife treat us like Kings that day and we enjoyed ourselves a lot and it reminded us of back home.

About a month before my posting to Brunei I was out with the lads again down town and got a bit of beer under my belt and had the misfortune to fall down a 6ft monsoon drain. I cut my leg quite badly and one of my mates took me to a Chinese couple's house for first aid. They had no say in the matter poor folk as he knocked and walked straight into their home the sod that he was and demanded I get first aid. Luckily they saw I was badly cut and did the necessary for me as they were a lovely couple. I was embarrassed even though drunk and behaved myself whilst I was in their company. They refused money that I offered them for their kindness so I thanked them from the bottom of my heart they smiled and saw us to the door. Probably thankful to be rid of us. Yes, it was Tom Cunningham. About a week or so later this cut turned into a tropical ulcer and I also had a huge carbuncle on the other calf to keep it company so both my legs were bandaged up in crepe bandages. This proved to be quite a problem when going to the toilet for a number 2 as some of the bogs had no seats just key holes in the floor so I had to do it standing up. You could imagine the sight it was funny when you thought about it later but not at the time

When I came back to Singers after my 6 month tour in Brunei I took up cross country running and was getting quite into it. But one day I had been out for a run and I went for a shower before breakfast. I had a pee and blood was in my urine and I broke out into a cold sweat as it was so painful as well. That was it I thought I will be coming back home to England with knackered kidneys or the like. I went off to see the camp doctor and he said I had sprained my bladder quite badly from running in the tropical heat and it would take 6 months to get better. My, was he right, as I suffered six months of pure hell. Every time I peed I wanted to scream in agony as it hurt badly. I used to dread going to toilet and used to hold on for as long as I could but it still got me in the end. The Hussars lads that used to get sexually transmitted diseases off the local talent never suffered as bad as I did and theirs was cured after a jab of penicillin in their back sides.

Well my tour of Singapore and the Far East was coming to an end and I was quite sorry in some way as I loved it out there and if times had there way of coming around again I would go and live there'(61)

I did have the good fortune to start courting an RSM's daughter from another regiment, a girl called Linda Petty she was a gorgeous girl and I was the envy of the lads whilst I was taking her out. "Gone with the wind" was on at the cinema and she wanted me to take her but I didn't have any decent gear to wear as I was nearly always in uniform, so I borrowed and begged certain articles of clothing off some of the lads. It was a short courtship as Linda was going back home to Blighty and I was due to go to Brunei but I enjoyed her company for a while and she still remains dear in my heart after all these years. I did my stint in Brunei but that's another story. Eventually we were all sent to Kuala Lumpa in Malaya to get ready to fly back to the UK.

A hotel was to be our home for a few weeks whilst it was all organised and it must have taken some planning. My bed was a four poster job and very comfortable.

Finally my day came and I was aboard a plane bound for the UK and home after a three years tour.

NATO scheme in Germany in the 1960's

In the early 1960's we set off from Hohne Camp in West Germany as it was then.

We were setting off on a big NATO scheme for a few weeks.

We were attached to a tank regiment of the Queens Royal Irish Hussars as a light aid detachment of REME.

The journey was by Mighty Antar tank carrier which carried our ARV (armoured recovery vehicle). In front of us was another Mighty Antar carrying one of the squadrons Conqueror tanks. One of the Hussars who was a pal of mine called Ginger Campbell was fast asleep on this second vehicle. In the old days we were allowed to travel on the back of the vehicle behind the cab. We used to get comfy and sit on camouflage nets. It was rather dodgy to be on the back of these vehicles as the exhaust pipe was high up and aimed towards the rear of the vehicle and we got a lot blown our way.

The journey took all day but we eventually got there tired and fed up after our hectic ride.

Our vehicle was trundling down this narrow track when suddenly we came to a halt with much commotion going on. I went to have a look see and noticed a lot of lads were stood

looking under the front transporter with very pale faces. I approached the vehicle very gingerly wondering what had happened when our squadron sergeant major came to me and

told me to get a shovel off our vehicle. I asked why and he solemnly told me that Ginger

Campbell had fallen under the wheels of the trailer and Conquereor tank and had been crushed to death. I felt physically sick but did as I was bade and handed the shovel over to

the SM who recovered poor Ginge and placed him into a body bag. The military Police

soon arrived on the scene to take statements from the lads on the front vehicle.

We were eventually leaguered up in the woods with full camouflage nets in place but there was a horrible air of doom about due to the fatal accident. Gingers crew on the front vehicle were allowed back to base camp as they were to upset to carry on with the scheme. My heart went out to this poor lad's family as he was in his prime of life and a great lad to boot. After that scheme no personnel were allowed to travel on the backs of the vehicles ever again. With heavy hearts we carried on with the scheme as best we could. During this scheme 18 soldiers were killed due to accidents which I thought was unbelievable but I was informed that it was the norm for a big scheme. A Polish driver went the same way as Ginger Campbell and died under the wheels of another Antar. Three lads from another unit died under a tank which they were sleeping under and the tank sank in the night crushing them to death. Three more died in a river crossing by drowning. There were numerous traffic accidents and one poor MP got blinded by a thunder flash that was thrown at him by some imbecile as he was directing traffic.

I had a scare when it was my turn to attempt a river crossing in the night with our ARV on a raft without lights. I was the radio operator as well as a fitter on the ARV and my seat was right next to the large auxiliary generator engine which was inside the vehicle to give the pulling power for the recovery of other tanks. I was on a narrow shelf and it had about two feet head room, a bloody dwarf could not fit in there believe me. I had to have my heads phones on all the time in case instructions came over the air ways and the hatches were battened down. So you could imagine I was very cramped indeed. The ARV lurched onto the raft and I virtually filled my pants with fright as I thought I was off into the river which was very deep and fast flowing. The crossing seemed to take forever but we got across ok thank goodness. But I vowed that would be the last time I would cross a river on a raft in an ARV

On a lighter theme I dreaded going to the toilet on these schemes as it was usually a glorified hole dug in the ground with a thunder box over it and a small canvas screen around it. One particular night I thought I would try and have a private session on the bog and crept quietly into the bog area and sat on the throne. Which I must add was a six seater version. I had just started my toilet when this big Irish guy, Ginger Coates, plonked himself down next to me passed wind about four times then asked me how I was. I wanted the ground to open up and swallow me as I was that embarrassed. I quickly finished and slinked out of the bog vowing never ever to use this bog again. Well that was not the end of it all as the next evening I need to go again so I took a shovel and paper and set off into the woods. I found a tree where the roots were exposed in the ground and there was a pit below it. I dropped my kecks (trousers) and perched myself on this exposed root and started my toilet. This was ideal I thought, until suddenly I heard singing coming very near to where I was sat. I wondered what the hell was going on and when I looked up there was a squad of German soldiers marching though the forest singing their little hearts out. They saw me, stopped singing and cheered really loud until the corporal with them told them off. I didn't know where to put myself I was that embarrassed again. I shot off back to camp vowing never to go to toilet ever again on scheme. I stuck to my word but was very constipated when I got back to base camp. (63)

A LETTER WRITTEN, FROM BALAKLAVA,

BY LT. EDWARD SEAGER

8th KINGS ROYAL IRISH HUSSARS

When in Australia, the writer was invited to a Balaklava dinner at the Imperial Service Club, Sydney. This proved to be a reunion dinner for past and serving officers of the famous Australian Light Horse Regiments, presided over by Major General MacArthur Onslow. A sterling character called Captain Bill Rodie was present at this dinner, and he mentioned that a friend in South Australia possessed a letter, written by an ancestor in the 8th Hussars. A few days after the famous charge. Captain Rodie later sent the editor a typewritten copy of this letter, which proved most interesting and obviously genuine. It is published here through the kindness of Captain Rodie. It is very much regretted that we do not know the name of the descendant of Lieutenant General Seager's, who gave Captain Rodie the original copy.

BALAKLAVA, CRIMEA, Thursday, 26th October 1854

On Wednesday the 25th, you will hear that we were engaged with the enemy and thank God I have received a slight wound, only on my right hand, and am obliged to write with my left. The enemy came on at daybreak when we were in front of our lines, the Turks who held the heights in rear of us, opened their cannons upon them and so went up to support. The Russians had an immense force commanded by Prince Menshikoff. The Turks soon bolted and the Russians got the heights and trained the cannon upon us. We had to retire and then a very large body of cavalry followed us. The heavy Brigade charged them it was a beautiful sight and made them run in right good earnest and such a panic took hold of them, that they made all the others run as well. The Turks, 10,000 of them, were the only infantry we had with us and they behaved very badly, ran away before a man was touched. I believe Lord Raglan will have nothing more to do with them.

About 3 o'clock in the afternoon, by some mistake, the Light Cavalry were ordered to attack the Russian Cavalry and we had to proceed down the extent of a valley about a mile long, the other end of which the Russians were posted in force, on the hills on each side of the valley were posted the Russians' guns and also on our right, a line of infantry armed with Minie Rifles, through the whole of this force we had to pass before we got to their cavalry. We advanced in three lines, the 8th, the last line, went to support. There was only about 100 of one Regiment in the field, we advanced at a trot and soon came within the crossfire from both hills, both of cannon and rifles. The fire was tremendous, shells bursting amongst us. Cannon balls tearing the earth up and Minie balls coming like hail, still on we went never altering our pace or breaking us up in the least, except that our men and horses were gradually knocked over. We passed through the whole of this fire without a check, our men behaved nobly, poor Fitzgibbon was shot through the body, and fell and is supposed to be dead.

Clone's horse was shot under him and the last was seen of him he was walking towards where we started from and we suppose he was taken prisoner. Captain Lockwood who was on Cardigan's Staff is also missing and he is either a prisoner or killed.

Up to this time I was riding in front of the men on the right of the line of officers and Clutterbuck, who was on my left, got wounded on the right foot by a piece of a shell that must have passed me, and Captain Tomkinson who commanded the squadron, had his horse shot. I then took command of the squadron and placed myself in front of the centre. Malta had just previously got a ball through her neck just above the windpipe, but she went bravely on. About this time we discovered a large body of Russian Lancers coming on in our rear to attack us. We immediately wheeled about to show fight and we advanced upon them. The Colonel and Major got through them somehow but I think did not come in for the shock. I kept with the Squadron, Clutterbuck the left troop and Phillips the right, me in front of the Squadron leading, the men kept well together and bravely seconded us, we dashed at them so as not to give them so great a chance of hitting us.

They were three deep with lances levelled, I parried the first fellow's lance, the one behind him I cut over the head which no doubt he will remember for some time, and as I was recovering my sword I found the third fellow making a tremendous point at my body, I had just time to receive his lance point with the hilt of my sword, it got through the bars, knocked off the skin of the top knuckle of my second finger, and the point entered between the second and top joint of my little finger, coming out at the other side. I shall most likely be returned wounded in the Gazette but you see I have only got a slight scratch that might look interesting in a drawing room. I have very little pain in it and I am now writing with it (this is 27th October).

After I found myself through the Russians, I saw the Colonel and Major a long distance ahead going as fast as their horses could carry them, the batteries and rifles peppering at them in grand style. As we had to go back through the same fire and a great number of men and horses having been killed, we had to go back through the fire in a scattered manner.

On looking to see what had become of my men, I found they had got through and had scattered to the left and got out of reach of the rifles and a large body of the Lancers were coming on my left to cut us off. I put Malta to her speed and she soon got out of their reach but the shot and rifle balls flew about in great quantities, shells bursting just over my head with an awful crash, through all the fire I returned sometimes walking my horse, sometimes galloping, until I got out reach of the fire and found the remains of the Regiment collecting gradually and counting over the missing. That any of the Light Cavalry Brigade returned through the crossfire kept upon us was through the great providence of God, to whom I am grateful more than I can express.

Many a poor fellow was laid low. Many officers of the Brigade have also fallen. We had 26 men killed and 17 wounded and 38 horses killed and a number wounded. The Light Brigade is now a skeleton as all Regiments suffered more or less.

They gave us great credit for wheeling about and attacking the Lancers; it enabled the other Regiments, who were previously broken, to get through them much more easily. The Colonel gets all the credit for it but Phillips, who was riding next to me, could tell you who it was that called to the Colonel to let us wheel about and attack them but I will tell all please God when I get home and it is well known to the Regiment. My brave mare might have known that life and death depended on her for she dashed through the Russians in fine style and although wounded, carried me safely to our supports. The Heavies did not do anything in this except the Grey's who were ordered to support us, but were afterwards ordered to retire when they had got them under fire.

Everyone says this was a most gallant exploit of the Light Cavalry Brigade never excelled in history. British Soldiers if ordered ride up to the cannon's mouth, but it is a shame to sacrifice such men.

Lord Raglan is very angry and says he did not order us to go through such a fire but the man who carried the message from him to Lord Lucan (Capt. Nolan) is killed so I suppose all the blame will be laid to his account.

Among 26 of our killed were Troop Sergeant Major Mayhew, Sergeant Williams and Reilly, R. Sergeant Major Harding I am glad to say, was not out with us that day—although much to his annoyance—he was laid up with a boil on his leg and could not ride.

The Light Brigade had had no breakfast and nothing to eat until evening. When the alarm was sounded the Regimental butcher was cutting up a beast and he charged in his apron.

I suppose you would like to know what I had about me through all this danger. In my sabretash was your's and the darling children's picture, my dear mother's present (prayer book and Testament) very small writing case with a lot of letters in it, and in the pocket of my jacket was your letter containing dear little Emily's hair which has been there since I received it. In my haversack was some biscuits and a bottle with some whisky and water in it, and very useful I find it. In my pocket some sovereigns and also some Turkish coins, and around my neck was the dear locket you gave me in Exeter. All these I turn out with just the same care as putting on my sword and revolver.

That night I was glad to lay down and slept well for the alarms of the enemy we care little for and take everything as it comes as a matter of course, and even our battle of the 25th is like a tale that has been told. Although I hope to celebrate it in England please God for some time to come.

I am now for a few days a non-combatant, my sword hand being useless, but it is getting on very nicely and I have scarcely any pain in it. My poor mare suffers from her wound which is dangerous but I hope I shall not lose her.

Sebastopol is not taken but it is expected to fall every day, we are gradually approaching nearer with our guns, and have nearly silenced their guns.

I received your dear letter dated 12th October last night and read it with great interest and pleasure. May God bless you my dearest Emily and my darling children and all my dear relations, and may we meet again soon when the war is over. The constant prayers of yourself and my dear relations for my safety must have been heard by the all-seeing God whose great mercy to me I hope that I shall never for a moment forget.

I am ever your faithful and affectionate husband,

EDWARD.

Tomkinson got back to us, also Phillips whose horse was also shot. They were neither of them wounded.

As a reward for his outstanding services Lieutenant General Seager was promoted from Lieutenant to Colonel within 2 years. Later he became Colonel of his Regiment. He had run away three times from school to join as a trooper 20 years before. He held the C.B. and other decorations.

The Military Career of Winston Churchill

Winston Churchill was an Army Officer and afterwards a politician, but much of what people know about Winston Churchill's life concerns his later years in politics. Below are some more details of our illustrious Colonel's military career.



Winston Churchill's long involvement with the British Army did not begin well.

His father had pushed him towards a military career because he believed he was not bright enough to study law. It took Winston three attempts to pass the entrance exam for Sandhurst and when he did pass, in August 1893, he did not get enough marks to qualify for training as an infantry officer, so was placed into the cavalry.

This irritated his father because cavalry cadets required an additional £200 of kit per year.

Luckily, as a result of other candidates dropping out, Winston was offered an infantry training place after all and he passed out with honours in December 1894, finishing eighth out of 150 classmates.

He was supposed to serve in the prestigious 60 Rifles but Winston was more attracted to the glamour of the cavalry, where promotions tended to be quicker and his small status would not be an issue. As such, Winston switched to 4th Queen's Own Hussars, a socially elite regiment based in Aldershot.

However, Winston's first taste of combat came not as a soldier, but as an observer, during the Cuban War of Independence.

In November, 1895, Winston travelled across the Atlantic, arriving in Havana via New York and Florida. He was given permission to join the Spanish forces. Officially a 'guest', he could only use his weapons in self-defence.

Winston spent seven weeks in Cuba, and experienced being under enemy fire for the first time, as well as witnessing a pitched battle.

(In fact, the US and Britain had a brief dispute over the Venezuelan border that year, before the US went to war with Spain in 1898, invading Cuba in the process).

The next trip abroad would be to India; in October 1896 Winston arrived at Bangalore, the new base for his Regiment, the 4th Queen's Own Hussars.

He was largely restless and unhappy there; his official duties were undemanding, taking only three hours per day and usually completed by 10.30am. His main priorities appeared to be playing polo (he was part of the victorious team in the Inter-Regimental Polo Tournament in Hyderabad), reading, rose-gardening and collecting butterflies (sadly his terrier ate the sixty-five species he had gathered).





The 4th Queen's Own Hussars Officers Mess in Bangalore

Winston was also unhappy about the officers' mess, complaining it needed new carpet, cleaner tablecloths and better-quality cigarettes. His attitude annoyed many of his fellow officers, and culminated in him being squashed under a sofa in the mess (he escaped.)

Winston would experience some combat, but once again it was not as a soldier. This time it was in the North West Frontier Province, on the border between British India and Afghanistan.

The region was inhabited by Pashtun tribes who often rebelled against British forces. In July 1897 they attacked the British garrison in Malakand. A field force was dispatched to stamp out the uprising.

Winston managed to join the Bengal Infantry, which was part of the field force, but he was attached as a journalist. He spent six weeks with them, filing fifteen dispatches for the Daily Telegraph.

He came under fire ten times, and was mentioned in dispatches for bravery.

During this time Winston developed a taste for whisky; at the time it was out of fashion in England and on the few occasions he had tried it he had not enjoyed the smoky taste. However, it was the only drink available in Malakand so Winston learned to appreciate it by the end of the campaign, and it became his habitual beverage of choice.

In March, 1898, an Anglo-Egyptian army was sent out to defeat the Sudanese Mahdists, followers of the religious leader Muhammad Ahmad, who proclaimed himself the 'Mahdi', a messianic figure who would redeem Islam.

As Britain had not fought a major war in over decade, every soldier in the Empire wanted to join the expedition.

Winston was no different. From India, he requested a transfer to a regiment bound for Sudan, the 21st Lancers.

This was approved by the War Office but rejected by Herbert Kitchener, the leader of the expedition.

Winston took leave to return home to lobby for the transfer, arriving in London in June. Friends and family spoke up for him, and even the prime minister supported his appeal.

Kitchener, the son of an Irish army officer, still refused, possibly because he resented the young aristocrat's entitlement and social connections.

Winston finally forced his way into 21st Lancers when Sir Evelyn Wood, a high-ranking General in England who had authority over appointments to the regiment, named him as the replacement for an officer who died in Sudan that July. Winston was with his new regiment by August.

He had arranged to write reports for the Morning Post to finance the trip, as the War Office would not pay his expenses (as well as declining any liability if he was wounded or killed.)

On 2 September Winston took part in the decisive engagement of the war, the Battle of Omdurman.

Kitchener's forces, though outnumbered two-to-one, were armed with modern artillery, rifles and machine guns. These new weapons cut through the Mahdist lines, killing thousands.

When they retreated, Kitchener sent 21st Lancers, including Winston, to pursue.

After the battle, wounded Mahdists were left to die or shot and bayoneted where they lay. This was approved by Kitchener, shocking Winston, who criticised the decision in print.

He returned to London in October before travelling back to India that December.

Shortly afterwards the British Army instituted a regulation forbidding serving officers from simultaneously working as war correspondents. This contributed to Winston resigning his commission so he could pursue writing, as well as politics.

Winston left India for the final time in March 1899; that July he stood as a Conservative candidate in the Oldham by-election but was unsuccessful.

In October, 1899, war erupted in South Africa between Britain and the independent Boer Republics of Orange Free State and Transvaal.

Winston would cover the conflict for the Morning Post but his journalistic enterprises were interrupted on 15 November, when his train was ambushed and derailed by the Boers. Winston was captured and held at a POW camp in Pretoria, the capital of Transvaal.

On 12 December, he scaled the walls and escaped, stowing away on a freight train.

Without any supplies, he disembarked at the mining town of Witbank to look for food. By this time he was wanted dead or alive and there was a £25 bounty on his head.

Fortunately, Winston came across the home of an English mine manager who agreed to feed and shelter him.

He was hidden first down a mine, then in an office, and, after six days, was placed aboard a train hidden in a consignment of wool bound for Portuguese East Africa (modern Mozambique), where he arrived on 21st December.

Winston then sailed to Durban and joined the South African Light Horse regiment as a lieutenant. He took part in the Relief of Ladysmith before joining in the capture of Pretoria.

After the fall of Pretoria, the war transitioned to a guerrilla conflict between Boer commandos and British and Commonwealth forces that went on until May 1902.

Meanwhile, Winston had left South Africa and on 20th July 1900 arrived home.

Reports of his escape had made him a national celebrity, helping him to be elected MP for Oldham that October.



Whilst pursuing his career as a politician and writer, Churchill decided to volunteer for a yeomanry regiment, and in January, 1902, Winston joined the Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars (QOOH), as a captain. In 1905 Winston became a major in the regiment, and until 1913 commanded its Henley-on-Thames squadron.

In September, 1906, whilst still a junior minister, Winston travelled to Silesia (a region now mostly in Poland, but then part of Germany) and spent a week observing the manoeuvres of the German Imperial Army.

He stayed in Breslau (now Wrocław) and with other guests and officials and was taken by train out to the countryside to view the assembled ranks of 50,000 soldiers going through their exercises.

The evenings were spent at official banquets. Winston would even meet Kaiser Wilhelm II.

He reported that the Germans were very well-organised and disciplined, although he noted that Wilhelm had little conception of the power of modern weaponry.

The next year, Winston attended the manoeuvres of the French Army; he adored their bright uniforms and the pageantry of the occasion.

It made him a firm believer in the recently-established Entente Cordiale, an alliance that would hold steady throughout World War I, which broke out in 1914. By this time, Winston was First Lord of the Admiralty.

He still played close attention to his reserve regiment, the QOOH. Shortly after the war started he intervened to ensure they would be sent to serve on the Western Front.

The regular army did not hold them in high regard, nicknaming them the 'Queer Objects On Horseback' or 'Agricultural Cavalry'.

Winston fell from power following the disaster of the Gallipoli Campaign, which he had been a major supporter of, he was forced out of the position in May 1915, and was demoted to being Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, a post with no real power or influence.

That November, Winston resigned from government and returned to the Army, hoping to play a role in the fighting.

In December, Winston went to the Western Front for one month of training with the Grenadier Guards.

By the New Year he was a (temporary) lieutenant-colonel commanding 6 Royal Scots Fusiliers, an infantry regiment posted at Ploegsteert (known as 'Plug Street' by the British) in Flanders, a fairly quiet sector at the time.

He made sure he was well-provisioned, taking with him food boxes from Fortnum & Mason, corned beef, stilton, cream, ham, sardines, dried fruit, steak pie, peach brandy and other liqueurs. He also brought a gramophone to put in the officers' mess, as well as a portable bath.

Winston's first major initiative was a campaign of delousing, as well as encouraging sports days and singing while marching. He then focused on building and repairing the trenches his battalion was stationed at. He proved to be popular with his men; attentive to wounded soldiers but perhaps over-lenient on disciplinary matters.

In total, Winston made thirty-six forays into No Man's Land, often placing himself at some risk. However, with little chance of a promotion or a transfer to a more active sector Winston returned home in March.

He eventually returned to government in July 1917, serving as Minister of Munitions (a post formerly held by then PM David Lloyd George) and playing an important role in securing victory for the Allies.

Winston would carry on serving as a reserve officer until 1924, when he resigned from the Territorial Army.

By this time, the QOOH had converted into an artillery force. For much of World War II they served in England and Northern Ireland, until in October 1944 Winston, by now Prime Minister, personally requested they be sent to fight in France.

Winston was Colonel of The 4th Queen's Own Hussars from 1941 until 1958 and then of The Queens Royal Irish Hussars from 1958 until 1965

Winston died on 24th January 1965.