

# The sharpshooter



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Incorporating 18th, 21st & 23rd Bns (Sharpshooters) Imperial Yeomanry, 3rd County of London (Sharpshooters) Imperial Yeomanry,  
3rd County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters), 23rd London Armoured Car Company (Sharpshooters), 4th County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters),  
3rd/4th County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters), The Kent and County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters), The Kent and Sharpshooters Yeomanry.  
[www.ksymuseum.org.uk](http://www.ksymuseum.org.uk)

# The Sharpshooters Yeomanry Association

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**Linkman from RGH (Cheltenham):**  
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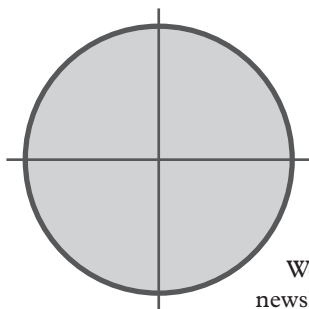
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**Standard Bearer:** Kevin Wright

Trustees of the Association are marked with an asterix \* after their name

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## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Welcome to the 2011 *Sharpshooters Yeomanry Association* newsletter. There is always so much that goes on within the SYA and this year has been no exception. I will let the newsletter itself share with you the good news, and the sad and it will be very clear how much happened this year within the *Sharpshooter* squadrons, the *Museum Trust*, the *Sharpshooter* cadets, the *Association* itself and the two branches.

### Active service

2011 is especially notable because one *Sharpshooter* returned from Op HERRICK 12 (Afghanistan) at the beginning of the year and seven of our *Sharpshooters* are currently mobilised on active service for Op HERRICK 14 and Op TOSCA (Cyprus), proudly operating alongside our colleagues in the Regular Army. Indeed, if you were to see a group of our *Sharpshooter* soldiers in Afghanistan or Cyprus you would not be able to tell them apart from the *Regular* soldiers. Our hearts and thoughts are with the soldiers and their families during the long absence from home and we wish them a safe and speedy return.

As you will read later, Penny O'Hare and the Croydon branch have again grasped the "Support to Operations" task for our serving soldiers with a steady - and very welcome - stream of parcels heading overseas full of useful day-to-day items as well as the occasional luxury. Penny has galvanised a team of trusted helpers to make this all happen and has been active in ensuring that *Sharpshooters* overseas never feel that they have lost touch with home. Penny has extended her support well beyond the *Sharpshooters* on at least one occasion, sending parcels to the wider *Royal Yeomanry* family too, a total of over forty people. Well done, Penny, we are all very grateful for the hard work that goes into this.

### 2011 AGM and the future

My aspiration to bring the two branches and the main *Association* together was very much the focus of the recent SYA AGM and some positive progress was made.

The three groups now operate almost independently whilst all trying to serve what is broadly the same audience. By working more closely together, as one body, I hope to embrace the enthusiasm and skills of everyone involved and support the *Sharpshooters* in a more unified way.

Rather than fill space here, I have included a separate piece about this further on in the newsletter together with a link which will take you to a comprehensive set of documents available online (for those not online there is a paper / postal alternative).

## Our people

Earlier in the year, the Honorary Colonel of the Sharpshooters, Lieutenant-General Barney White-Spunner CBE was “promoted” to be Honorary Colonel of the Royal Yeomanry and was also appointed as a Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List. He was knighted on 18th October by HRH The Princess Royal. On behalf of the *Association*, I publicly congratulate General Sir Barney on his well-deserved knighthood. We thank him for all the support that he has given to the entire *Sharpshooter* family during his tenure, and offer our best wishes for his Colonelcy of the *Royal Yeomanry*. Whilst sad to lose General Sir Barney as Honorary Colonel, we are pleased that he is remaining close to the *Sharpshooters* through, not least, the *Royal Yeomanry* connection.

General Sir Barney’s post has been ably filled by Colonel the Rt. Hon Nicholas Soames PC MP and we are delighted to welcome Colonel Nicholas into the Sharpshooter family.

Sadly, the President of the *Bexleyheath Branch*, the Earl of Onslow, passed away in May. Another great *Sharpshooter* supporter, the Earl will be sorely missed by the *branch* members, the *Association* and the serving *Squadron*. The Earl would have been especially proud to attend 265 *Squadron* exercising their Freedom of The London Borough of Bexleyheath for the first time in September.

The *Sharpshooters* affiliated livery Company is the *Worshipful Company of Insurers*, and the Master, Wardens and members always take a very active interest in the *Ssquadrons* and the *Association*. The Clerk of the *Company* for the last 14 years, Len Walters, who was due to retire in September this year, died suddenly during the summer. Len had attended numerous *Sharpshooter* functions and events during his time as Clerk and was a keen supporter of the affiliation. Len leaves behind Eva, his wife, of 33 years, and will be much missed by the *Company* and by all *Sharpshooters*.

In recognition of their contribution to the *Sharpshooter* cause, Peter Crowley and Boris Mollo were both invited to become Vice-Presidents of the *Association* at the AGM. Peter has been the *Association*’s Visiting Officer for over 20 years and has kept his commitment to his father, Freddie, who was a distinguished WW2 *Sharpshooter* veteran, to look after the “old and bold”. After such a distinguished tenure, Peter has stood down from his Visiting Officer role but has promised to be available should we need any additional help in the future. Boris most notably continues to be a very active part of the *Museum Trust* team as well as an active supporter of the *Association* as a whole. I am delighted to report that both happily accepted.

Similarly, in recognition of the contribution of our two past Honorary Colonels to the *Association*, Lieutenant General Sir Barney White-Spunner KBE and Colonel Julian Radcliffe OBE QVRM TD, have both been invited to become Vice-Presidents of the *Association*.

Tim Rayson, is not only our hard-working Honorary Secretary but until July this year, had also been the *Association*’s Standard bearer. Tim has travelled across the country with the Standard to represent the *Association* and the *Sharpshooters* at all sorts of military events and funerals. Given the numerous commitments and organisations that Tim is involved with, Tim has passed on the responsibility of Standard Bearer to Kevin Wright. Our thanks to Tim for all his efforts ensuring that the Standard has been smartly paraded whenever required over recent years, and our very best wishes to Kevin for continuing the tradition.

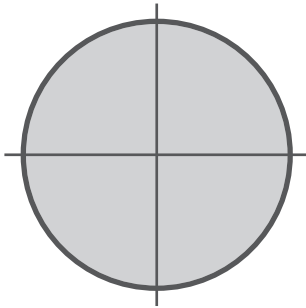
## Public thanks

Please accept my thanks for those who participate as Trustees and on the Committee as well as all those that make the *branches* and the *Association* the active organisations that they are. In respect of this newsletter, thanks to all the contributors and especially Simon, Tim and the team who make the newsletter the success that it is. Undoubtedly I will miss someone to whom I should be offering our thanks – and if I have I will endeavour to make amends in the next edition !

Across the *Sharpshooter* family, the number of trips, parades, dinners, functions and events that have taken place in the last twelve months under the *Sharpshooters* flag is immensely impressive. The quality of all these events is always excellent and we are fortunate to have access to such a range of events. Not least there have been the annual 265 Reunion dinner, the annual St George's Day dinner, trips to France, Sicily (twice!) and to Flanders.

The enthusiasm within and for the *Sharpshooter* family continues to thrive. Read on for more!

Mark



## MODERNISING THE WAY THAT THE ASSOCIATION OPERATES

### Introducing a new Trust Deed for the Sharpshooters Yeomanry Association

As many of you will know, it has long been my intention to bring together the component parts of the *Association*, ie the branches and the central *Association*, in order to get the best out of the efforts of everyone who is involved in supporting the wide *Sharpshooter* family.

This is a very positive opportunity for the *Association* and I encourage all of you to take a few moments to read the following paragraphs and then to take some time to read the related documents.

In order to make the necessary changes, we need first to introduce a new Trust Deed to replace the current Constitution and also to revise the Trustees and Committee structure. These changes are also required to bring us into compliance with current Charity Law.

### What changes are being proposed?

First, it is important to understand that the principal Objects of the *Association* will remain the same ie:

to promote the efficiency of the Army by:

- i. a. maintaining contact between past and present members of the *Regiment*, fostering mutual friendship between them and providing for social gatherings for them.
- b. fostering *esprit de corps*, comradeship and the welfare of the *Regiment* and preserving its traditions.
- ii. to relieve either generally or individually members of the *Association* or past and present members of the *Regiment*, and their dependants, who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress.

Second, the new Trust Deed will allow the Trustees and Committees to take in new and existing Committee Members from both branches and the main *Association* so that we operate as one team rather than three and can thus support all *Sharpshooters* in a more effective and focused way.

Third, we propose to change the name of the *Association* in order to make it more consistent with both *Kent Yeomanry* and *Sharpshooter* history and who we are currently supporting, ie. make it more inclusive, and the proposal is for the *Association* to become the “*Kent and Sharpshooters Yeomanry Association*”.

Other changes are very much about ensuring that the Trust Deed reflects current Charity Commission guidelines and recommended working practices to keep the *Association* up to date within current law and tax regulations.

All of this is set out in the document pack relating to updating the current Constitution and introducing the new Trust Deed (see below).

### **Where are the documents and/or how do I view them?**

The full set of documents can be viewed at <http://sya2011.tumblr.com> (you will need to use the password “hevercastle”). I have put these online in an attempt to make the documents as accessible as possible whilst also saving on unnecessary print and postage costs that would be incurred by enclosing them as part of the Newsletter.

For those that are not online or cannot access these documents, please telephone me on 07976 967673 and I will send you a complete set. Should you reach my voicemail service when you telephone then please do leave me a message. Alternatively, ask a friend to email me at [chairman@sharpshooters.org.uk](mailto:chairman@sharpshooters.org.uk) so I can send you a printed set.

### **How will the Association adopt the new Trust Deed?**

Under the current Constitution, proposed changes to the Constitution can only be accepted if approved by at least two-thirds of the members attending an Annual General Meeting (AGM) or Special General Meeting (SGM).

Given that the attendance of members at AGMs is relatively low, perhaps only around 5% of the total membership, I am taking this opportunity to canvas feedback from as many members as possible to the proposed changes. I believe that the changes which are supported by the present Trustees and Management Committee are absolutely right for the Association and will serve to continue the ideals and standards that were set back in 1943 when the Association was first formed and which have been exemplified year after year by the Sharpshooter family.



In addition to asking for feedback from members we will hold a Management Committee/Trustees meeting on Friday 18th November (the same day as the El Gubi luncheon) at 6.30 pm in the Union Jack Club. The meeting will enable the current Trustees to invite a number of additional Trustees to the Trusteeship of the *Association* and establish the new Committee(s) structure. The meeting will also allow the Trustees to approve the new Trust Deed for presentation at an SGM that will immediately follow the Trustees meeting at 7.15 pm. The SGM will be convened for the sole purpose of adopting the new Trust Deed for the *Association* and I encourage as many people as possible to attend.

### **What do you need to do now?**

Please take the time to look at the documents or request a set of documents to be sent by post.

I will really appreciate your feedback, so please do write back to me and/or the Honorary Secretary with your thoughts/support/questions/objections/general feedback. For ease you may use [info@sharpshooters.org.uk](mailto:info@sharpshooters.org.uk) (or you may write directly to me using [chairman@sharpshooters.org.uk](mailto:chairman@sharpshooters.org.uk)). If you are using the website <http://sya2011.tumblr.com> you may post comments or questions directly onto there if you wish, and this will be a valuable way to promote a discussion about the proposed changes.

We need any feedback that is to be considered for the SGM to have been submitted by midnight on Friday 11th November irrespective of whether you are attending the SGM or not.

If you feel that you would like to get involved with the *Association* as a Trustee or Committee Member and have not yet expressed an interest in doing so, then please contact me directly.

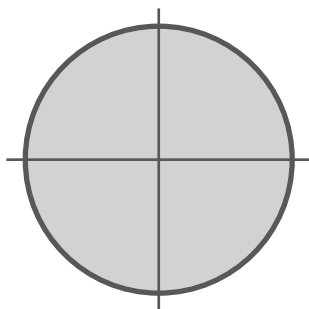
I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours aye

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark', with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Mark Hodson TD  
Chairman SYA





## **THE SECRETARY'S BLOG**

**or**

## **THE YEAR IN REVIEW**

Looking back over the last twelve months since the 2010 edition of this august publication I am struck by the variety of things that have happened outside of the *Sharpshooter* family and how we have continued to go on.

We have lost a number of our dwindling band of veterans from the Second World War including dear Nancy Gillman and some from the Cold War generation as well; The Earl of Onslow being one and Dave Tickner being another – both of these losses show the wide span and diversity of our family. But there remains a continuing desire to be part of that ‘family’ and we must continue to evolve and grow it to meet the needs of those *Sharpshooters* who have been on recent and continue to deploy on current operations. There still remains a thirst to visit those places that the *Sharpshooters* and *Kent Yeomen* fought and died during both world wars and that thirst for knowledge spans the generations from Phil Moore who at a sprightly 91 has completed both the Sicilian Straight 10 and Flanders Dash 11 trips through present serving *Sharpshooters* through to an aspiring *Sharpshooter* who is a cadet – regrettably not badged as us but never mind! We have also welcomed new members to the Association and once again it seems that losses are equalled by gains!

There were a number of firsts and lasts in the year – more of the former though. There was the last 7th Armoured Division reunion at Orwell Park School which some of our veterans attended, the CCF unit at Royal Russell School became the first cadet unit to be badged RY at a splendid day in November albeit tinged by a little sadness as were the last *Sharpshooter* cap badged unit – the ACF unit in Eltham remains in suspended animation. There is no clear date when it will be reconstituted but it will be RY when it does. A first on Flanders Dash 11 where we honoured not only the 3rd CLY part in the last 100 days in France but also that of the *Kent Yeomanry* who suffered very high casualties in that campaign at the end of World War 1. There was also a first where Phil Moore and I took the lead part in the Menin Gate service in Ypres – I read the bidding by Binyon and Phil did the Kohima one. A very moving experience especially as Phil served in Burma after being wounded in the desert in 1942. The final ‘first’ – and not particularly glorious – was the debacle at last year’s opening of the Field of Remembrance and the absolutely insensitive way in which access was controlled! Having had long discussions with the RBL it is clear that the fault lay with the police and Abbey authorities. The lesson for this year is that it will again be an all ticket event and I have applied for 30 tickets and you must get there early wearing warm clothing – especially footwear – and bring a hip flask!!

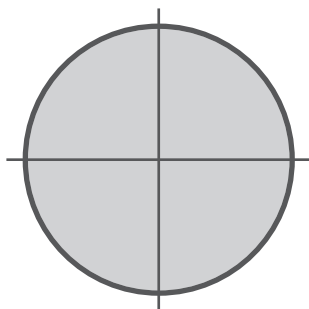
The Bir El Gubi dinner was held in November but at HQ Sqn RY in Putney due to some confusion about dates with HCMR. This was another 'first' in that it was in Putney and our principal guest was Colonel Rainer Buske who was the German LO at PJHQ. There were some 60 members sitting down and a good evening was enjoyed by all including Colonel Buske who spoke very warmly about being privileged to be at his second dinner and the fact that we not only serve on operations together but train together – and that includes the cadets. He is now COS at the German Army armoured corps centre and one of his assets is the German Tank Museum! The Hon Sec will be conducting a recce to see if we can organise a visit.

However in recognition of the fact that this year is the 70th Anniversary of the battle we will be holding a lunch which it is hoped will be more accessible to our World War 2 veterans. The venue, by kind permission of The Lieutenant, is the Mess of the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen at Arms in St James's Palace and will be preceded by a service of thanksgiving in the Chapel Royal which is also in the Palace. This is a one off event at this location and there at present only 50 places available for the lunch – up to 80 for the service – with priority given to veterans with a spouse or carer. The guest list includes the new Honorary Colonel.

As Hon Secretary I have to report on the AGM. The good news is there was an AGM in July and amongst other things it elected a new Standard Bearer – Kevin Wright. If you require the standard please contact me and I'll discuss it with Kevin because we are going to manage attendance at events between us. I think that everyone who attended the AGM came away with a clear understanding that we as an *Association* will need to grow up in the very near future to ensure that we remain connected with and relevant to both our serving squadrons and – importantly – remain within the law and the compliance requirements of it. There will be much work over the next few months to ensure that we remain so and one of the key elements is understanding who makes up the *Sharpshooter* family based on the distribution list of this journal. **Please do complete the questionnaire and return it to us.**

The next 12 months will be challenging I have no doubt but we are moving into the Diamond Jubilee year so there will be much to celebrate nationally and as an Association. There will be a trip in October next year to retrace the steps of the 3rd CLY in the Italian campaign and there will be the usual parades in May and June. Please note the new dates for these in the Forecast of Events. Please do ensure that if you have an email address you let us know what it is so we can contact you quickly if there are any other changes. For those who are not connected we will send out a calendar update in December to keep you posted.

Finally last year I made two requests the first of which concerned funding and the second concerning membership and I have no hesitation in reiterating both of them. If every person who received a copy of the journal were to donate £10 a year we as an *Association* can through tax claimed back turn that into £12.50 if you are a standard rate tax payer – and most if not all of us are. That sum will go towards both sending a parcel to a *Sharpshooter* on deployment and contribute to the cost of producing this journal and help to build up our charitable fund. **Please do therefore complete the questionnaire that is enclosed with the journal together with the Gift Aid form.**



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### **Report on C (Kent & Sharpshooter's Yeomanry) Squadron, 12 months to July 2011**

Early summer 2010 saw the return of three members of the *Sqn* from Afghanistan (Sgt Barnard, Cpl Faytaren and LCpl Thomson). They spent six months scattered across Helmand on Operation CORTEZ providing fixed point security with the latest in CCTV, radar and remote cameras. The troops were very grateful for all the packages which were sent out to them by family, friends and the *SYA*.

Annual Camp in August 2010 saw the *Royal Yeomanry*, with a significant contingent of *C Sqn* personnel, deploy a formed company to Cyprus to conduct counter insurgency training. Other members of *C Sqn* attended an annual training camp at Bovington.

Autumn 2010 consisted of finalising the *Sqn's* MATTS qualifications as well as trade training and ceremonial duties at The Lord Mayor's Show and Remembrance Sunday. However all this routine activity was somewhat overshadowed by an urgent requirement for the regiment to provide approximately 50 individual replacements for *SCOTS DG* & *9/12 Lancers* on Herrick 14. A number of *Sqn* members volunteered and entered an intensive preparation programme of physical training before being mobilised in December and January. Sgt Mason, Cpl Paine, LCpl Grais, LCpl Banwat and Tpr Dunning were mobilised for Afghanistan and Cpl O'Hare was mobilised for Cyprus, all in traditional roles of riflemen, drivers, liaison officers and watch keepers. The *SYA* has continued its sterling work providing parcels and letters for those on Operations, as well as working with the *Sqn* to organise a number of events. The *RY* Regimental Padre Mark Chester has recently returned from Afghanistan where he found that individual replacements from the *TA* tend to be at greater risk of emotional difficulty than those in regular formed units. The Padre emphasises that while the physical needs of most personnel on operations are well catered for by the army most *TA* personnel really benefit from letters from the UK.

In the new year LCpl Moden returned from Afghanistan and joined *2nd Troop*, while Lt Critien was mobilised as an FAC for Herrick 15, however the *Sqn* was fortunate to have his younger brother 2Lt Alex Critien to take over from him.

From January onwards the calendar has taken its usual course of events with non-tactical activity such as trade training, MATT's training, and the GOC's challenge running alongside the tactical training programme. The *Sqn* successfully completed a troop training weekend in January then a *Sqn* FTX in March, this was followed by a Regimental CPX, another *Sqn* FTX and finally a Regimental FTX at the end of July.

The *Sqn*'s ORBAT has been configured into a small SHQ and two sabre troops with a third troop as an interim holding / training cadre offering newly trained soldiers the opportunity to build their alround soldiering skills before being posted to a sabre troop.

All in all given the combination of operational deployments, trade training, tactical training and other duties it has been a very intensive period and the *Sqn*'s members have performed exceptionally well to cope with this ever increasing burden. Sadly this has all been achieved with an effective TA strength of approximately 40 personnel. Despite a certain level of continued interest from potential recruits very few are making it through the elongated centralised recruit training process and on balance the sub-unit has to work extremely hard to maintain its current manning by replacing leavers with new joiners.

We hope that the initiatives of the Future Reserves 2020 study will bring a much improved training and employment proposition to reservists as a whole, and specifically a clear role and updated equipment scaling for *C Sqn*. Our new Honorary Colonel, Colonel The Rt Hon Nicholas Soames PC MP, who was recently 'Dined in' at White's Club is keeping us well abreast of any developments in Westminster.

## THE SHARPSHOOTERS TOUR 2012

### *ITALIAN HANDICAP 12*

The tour for next year will take place in mid October 2012 and cover the advance of 3rd CLY under command of Sandy Cameron along the Adriatic coast in the last quarter of 1943. The 3rd CLY were awarded a number of battle honours on this campaign together with numerous gallantry awards including a MC for Derek Hawkins and MM for Doug Endacott.

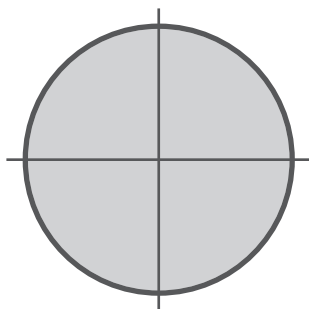
The outline 7 day itinerary is as follows:

Day 1 :Flight from London to Rome Day 2-5 Visits to Cassino, Termoli, San Severo, Caserta, Sangro and Moro rivers, Ortona. Day 6 Sight-seeing in Rome. Day 7 Return flight to UK.

The Price per person, based a minimum of 22 paying passengers sharing a twin room half board, is £849.00 per person. Lunch will be taken on the move. The single room supplement £99.

Deposits of £100 pp will be required in due course and a payment scheme will also be available for those that wish to spread their payments over a period of time.

If you would like to take part in this trip please contact the Hon Sec as soon as possible. The exact dates will be fixed as soon as we have sufficient interest.



**265 (KENT AND COUNTY OF  
LONDON YEOMANRY  
(SHARPSHOOTERS))  
SUPPORT SQUADRON  
(VOLUNTEERS)**

**71ST (CITY OF LONDON) YEOMANRY  
SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)**

TA Centre, Watling Street, Bexleyheath, Kent, DA6 7QQ  
Training Night: Tuesday

OC: Maj Andy Church  
2IC Capt Paul Ukpai; PSAO: Capt Steve Slaney; SSM: WO2 Adrian Keeble  
Tp Cmdr: Lt Khrushu Cooper.

We start this years report with a round up of Annual Camp 2010. This took place in early September and consisted of a very busy first week with a UK OPS based communications exercise based in and around the M25 area. This kept everybody in the *Squadron* extremely busy. No only were the *Squadron* providing a key role in providing communications with REEBOK and BOWMAN but were also providing full life support to the Regiment as well as constructing and assisting with the manning of the Regimental Ops room at Bexleyheath.

For the second week of camp the *Squadron* deployed to Westdown Camp on Salisbury Plain for a week of military skills training which included an exercise around Copehill Down and a range day followed by a patrol competition. Camp ended with the usual highly imaginative Regimental Sports competition ably organised by SSM Keeble.

October saw the *Squadron* crack on with trade training and maintenance with the mandatory Personal Fitness Test run under the watchful eyes of our PTIs Cpls Porter, Sutton and LCpl Crane. On a more prestigious note the title “City of London” was conferred on the *Regiment*.

The Lord Mayors Show and Remembrance Sunday followed in November. Due to the “persuasive” talents of OC LAD Capt Murphy, Lt Cooper and their team, over £1,000.00 was collected for the RBL during just 2 hours of The Lord Mayor’s Show. This was followed by a reunion dinner at Bexleyheath and the customary Remembrance Sunday parade which was attended by the Mayor of Bexley Cllr Val Clark.

The planned Regimental Christmas weekend was curtailed due to the heavy snow fall. This was made up by a well attended trade training weekend in January 2011 at Napier Barracks.



Above: CBRN with the SSM again!

Inset: LCpl Crane developing his kite flying skills!



February is usually a busy month and this year was no exception. The start of the month saw a plug up and communications exercise in preparation for EX PHOENIX CHARGE our annual 4 day UK OPS exercise.

The end of the training year saw the usual Regimental MATTs weekend with the *Squadron's* personnel providing the bulk of the training and administrative staff.

The new training year kicked off with a training and maintenance weekend based at Bexleyheath. Much useful training was achieved and the *Squadron* PTIs under the watchful eye of SSM Keeble ensured that every one ran several laps of the *Hall Place* grounds.

Longmoor was the location this year for GOC's cup in May and as ever the *Squadron* led the *Regiment* by providing over two thirds of the participants. The results were impressive: the sports competition was won outright with Capt Slaney leading the football and tug of war teams to victory.

A Regimental exercise followed in June where communications and field deployments were practised. On a more cerebral note the Regimental Officers were involved for part of the exercise on a TEWT – EX TABLE TOP OLYMPICS where our new 2IC Capt Paul Ukpai proved his mettle. It helps having a day job in the Cabinet Office!

In closing, we look forward to becoming acquainted with our distinguished new *Squadron* Honorary Colonel - Colonel The Rt Hon Nicholas Soames PC MP, Annual Camp and the results of the much awaited review of the Reserve Forces.

## **STOP PRESS: 265 (KCLY) Support Squadron (Sharpshooters) is awarded the Freedom of Bexleyheath**

A great honour bestowed on 265 (Kent and County of London Yeomanry) Support Squadron (Sharpshooters) on 10 September with the granting of the freedom of the London Borough of Bexley. It is only the third time that the freedom of the Borough has been given in this way.

The Squadron, halfway through their annual camp, marched out of the TAC accompanied by the band of the Royal Corps of Signals in full dress uniform and proceeded to the Civic Hall where the salute was taken by Mayor of Bexley, Councillor Ray Sams.

The Mayor was accompanied by a number of dignitaries from the council and local community and included Colonel Paul Acda and Major David Hewer (DL for the Borough of Bexley), both former OC 265, and the SYA President Guy Farage.

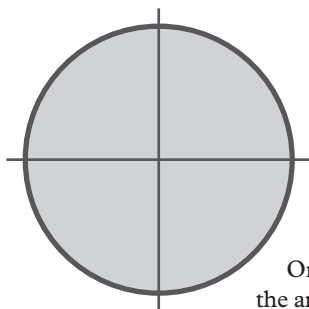
The parade continued through the high street, as granted by right, with police escort and arrived at the splendid historic Hall Place and park. The parade marched on in front of the marquee and dias where the Mayor gave a speech and the Officer Commanding 265, Major Andy Church, replied.

The parade, which included medal presentations, was inspected by the Mayor; The Honorary Colonel, The Right Honourable Nicholas Soames PC MP and Brigadier Vickery, Commander 2 Signals Brigade.









## KCLY (SHARPHOOTERS) BRANCH REPORT

On Remembrance weekend we were delighted to co-host the annual reunion dinner with the serving squadron 265 (*Kent and County of London Yeomanry (SHARPSHOOTERS) Support Squadron (Volunteers)*). A sit-down affair complete with port served from the drinks trolley and masterfully administered by the PSO, SQMS (God bless them) and the SSM - a big thank you for all the hard work. It was an excellent turn-out with a number of new/old faces which was great to see with more names added to the branch contacts list! As ever, it was the prelude to the Sunday Remembrance service and made for a full and memorable weekend.

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of the Earl of Onslow, the *Branch* President, in May. His funeral was attended by Tony Jewell and other *Association* members. We will remain grateful to the Earl for allowing the *Association* to dine in the glorious surroundings of the *House of Lords* overlooking The *Thames* in May last year.

September saw a visit to Longmoor Camp where 71st (*City of London*) *Yeomanry Signal Regiment (Volunteers)* had deployed to start training for their official role as the Olympic Games Communication and Control Regiment with effect from now until the end of the Olympics. Torrential rain called for waterproof issue to wear over combats. The *Squadron* was in tented accommodation in the old Canadian Army Camp and was being introduced to the REEBOK system with newly issued kit which will link up with Command and Blue Light Units (Police, Fire, and Ambulance) plus the use of the already established *Bowman* system. It will be a call up situation for both volunteers and employers.

As the City of London's Signal Regiment, the preferred candidate as the next Lord Mayor of the City of London, David Wootton, was delighted to chat about the Olympics situation which will exist for a large part of his Mayoralty. He will arrange to meet the Squadrons of the *Regiment* during this time.

Lt. Col. Craig Sutherland, with a strong Special Forces background, was enjoying his first camp as Commanding Officer and shows huge enthusiasm for the task ahead. We wish him a successful sojourn. Best wishes to Lt. Col. Tim Allan in his new post troubleshooting the World's flash points.

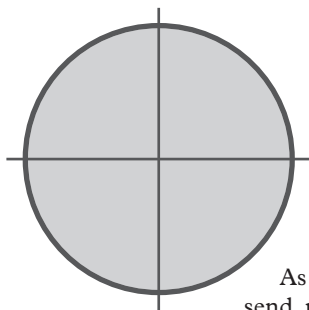
The three squadrons at camp turned out over 100 soldiers and, as usual, made the best of the bad weather and a dreadfully sub-standard camp.

The *squadron* returned to Bexleyheath on 10th September where it was granted the Freedom of the Borough of Bexley. This was the first official duty for the new squadron Honorary Colonel and is covered in the squadron's report. The Parade at the historic

Hall House was well attended by members of the *Association* including the *SYA* banner carried by Kevin Wright.

A big thank you to Andy Church, Steve Slaney, Adrian Keeble and all the staff, for the wonderful organisation of camp and the Freedom Parade.

The annual reunion dinner will take place at the TAC Bexleyheath on Saturday 12th November. The *Sharpshooters* Te Deum Dinner is at The Cavalry and Guards Club on 5th December 2011 and the 71 (Y) *Sig Regt (V) Officers' Dining Club* will meet at The Cavalry and Guards Club on 13th February 2012.



## CROYDON BRANCH REPORT

As in previous years the *Croydon Branch* has continued to send parcels to deployed *Sharpshooters* in Afghanistan; this continues to be our **main effort**. I have received emails and letters of thanks from the recipients and these are greatly appreciated. *C Squadron* have continued to offer their support and continued use of facilities at the TA Centre (TAC), thank you Major Howell and WOII Shardlow.

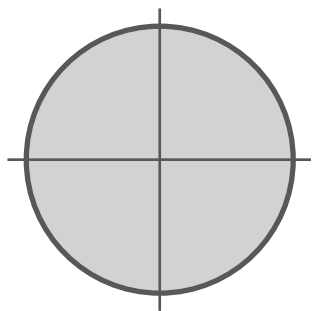
The *Branch* attended the annual Ladies Night in November and this year Peter's Decanter was presented to Capt Jim Davies who has never waived in his support for the *Squadron* over 16 years. In April the *Branch* held its annual St George's Dinner at Rownham House which was well organised by Mark Kentfield. These events are open to everyone and we try to keep the price below £25 so please let us know if you want to attend, catch up with some old friends and try the local beer.

We have received donations from former *Sharpshooters* to fund the welfare effort and the annual payment that many of you make of £10 really does make a difference.

Looking forward, I am supporting the suggested replacement of the Memorial which stands outside the TAC. This is likely to cost £1,500. This is a large sum of money but I think that it is the right thing to do.

The *Branch* must always represent its members so if anyone from the *Sharpshooter* family has views or wants to get involved please step forward! We do have a good time and all our meetings have refreshments.

John Gunn  
Chairman  
Croydon Branch



## **SHARPSHOOTER CADET DETACHMENTS**

### **ROYAL RUSSELL SCHOOL**

The contingent at Royal Russell School has had an excellent academic year and again achieved a volunteer recruit intake of 80 cadets – 60 from the school and 20 from our partner school at Coloma. The latter were oversubscribed significantly and although we do lose quite a few in the first 12 months we do have a good cadre for the coming year, so unit strength as we approach the start will be around 60-80 cadets to which we will add a further 80 recruits in September.

Our biennial inspection took place on 10th November 2010 and at that event the Contingent was presented with a banner by the representative DL for Croydon – Colonel Ian McRobbie. The format of the presentation including the blessing very closely followed that of the presentation of the Guidon in 1963 by HRH Princess Alexandria.



Cadet Sgt Anthony Davis receiving the banner from Colonel McRobbie.

After the banner was presented it was then trooped around the whole contingent – some 130 cadets – before the Army Section were rebadged to RY with the Banner and escort receiving their new cap badges from CO RY. This was naturally a sad occasion as this was the last time that the Sharpshooter cap badge will appear on a parade but it was a happy event as well because we are the first RY Cap badged cadet unit. The Band of the RY were present for the whole day, teaching in the senior school, running a concert at lunchtime and playing – no pun intended – a key part in the presentation of the banner and re-badging. The Contingent marched on to the Sharpshooters March and trooped the Guidon to the RY March – The Farmers Boy and we were very grateful to the CO for letting the Band parade.



The banner is marched off to a smart ‘eyes right’ to the Saluting Officer.

Once again we held our main FTX in April and were grateful for the support that C(KSY) Sqn provided with a half troop of vehicles especially in these difficult financial times. Annual Camp was split this year with the juniors and some NCO’s going to Crowborough for a week whilst a mixed party of RRS and ACF went to Germany for Leopards Leap 11. Camp in Germany was a great success with the cadets beating –



again – our German hosts over the obstacle course and the Leopard 2 reload exercise. Unfortunately the cadets lost the penalty shoot out and also the football match that followed – some things never change. We have been invited to return and planning for that will start shortly.

By the time the journal hits the streets we will have said farewell at the beginning of September to our senior ranks and hello to a new crop. The coming year will doubtless be as exciting as that just gone and we look forward to training again with C Sqn and Exercise Diamond Leopard 12 in July next year in Germany.

### **93 (KSY) Detachment, SELACF**

The detachment at Crown Woods School – now an Academy – remains in suspended animation and its future is uncertain. If it is reconstituted it is very likely to be badged RY at the outset.



The Cadets and a Leopard 2 MBT on the training area



Cadet L/Cpl James Strudwick, Cadet SSgt Anthony Davis , Cadet Sgt Richard Nzewi and Cadet CSM Dale (ACF) receiving their 203 Tank Bn badges from the CO with Captain James Lacey RRS CCF.

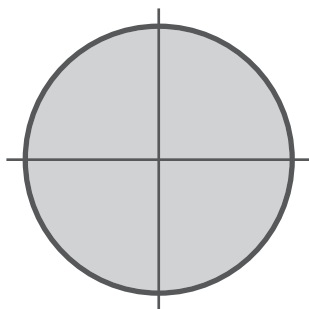


CCF and ACF cadets on QRH Challenger 2 MBT





RRS CCF Cadets at Camp in the UK



## **WELFARE REPORT (SUPPORT TO OPERATIONS)**

**by Penny O'Hare  
Croydon Association Welfare Officer**

Since March 2011 we have had six soldiers deployed. They are:

Sgt Phil Mason – 5 Regt RA, 53 STA Bat - Afghanistan

Cpl David Paine – 9/12th Lancers - Afghanistan

Tpr Richard Dunning – 9/12th Lancers - Afghanistan

L/Cpl Banwatt – WHG GP Scots DG - Afghanistan

L/Cpl Jason Grais – Royal Scots Dragoon Guards - Germany

Cpl Brennan O'Hare – 3 Royal Anglians - Cyprus

We have sent out 56 parcels to support the present deployment which works out as an average of nine parcels per man.

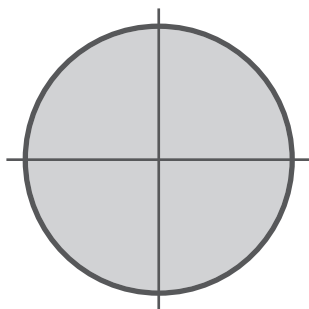
We have had donations from The Good Shepherd Church in Tadworth. Mike and Jenny Shaw put an empty box at the back of their church and people were putting things in. In the end there were five big boxes full of books, sweets, toothpaste, toothbrushes, crisps and magazines etc. I also had a Tesco delivery from Tam (ex 'C' Sqn officer).

Richard Dunning's sister Emma had a 'Fill a shoebox' appeal at her work (RBS Bromley). This produced 32 boxes out of which we made 50 boxes and I sent them out to all of the Regiment plus extras for the Padre. The Colonel of the RY thanked us for coordinating the parcels for the rest of the Regiment. We are in regular contact with the RY Welfare team. I have had emails and eblueys back from the soldiers thanking us for the parcels.

A big thank you to 'C' Sqn for letting us have a cupboard at the barracks, it now means I have my kitchen back! We are down there every two weeks to pack up, wrap up and label the parcels. Every box works out to be about £10 which includes packaging and posting.

In May the Regiment arranged an afternoon and evening at the Windsor Royal Tattoo. A mini bus was laid on for us and all the families came along. We had a nice meal and wine as well. It was nice to meet wives, girlfriends and families from the other Squadrons. A fabulous day was had by all.

'C' Squadron has another day planned in September. We are planning a visit to the Horse Guards Museum and then a trip on an open top bus. We will be finishing off with a meal on the way home.



# SHARPSHOOTERS YEOMANRY ASSOCIATION

## VISITING OFFICER'S REPORT 2010-2011

I am happy to report that the *Association* has continued to support the *Sharpshooter* family during the last year – but, again, at fairly limited expense.

**Allowances:** We have at the moment only one annuitant.

**Christmas Box:** We still give a Christmas box of £50 to three people, which are sent with a Christmas card and, of course, greetings from the *Association*. A fourth Old Comrade and his wife received £30 this year. He died very shortly afterwards, but no doubt we shall look at his widow's needs later in the year.

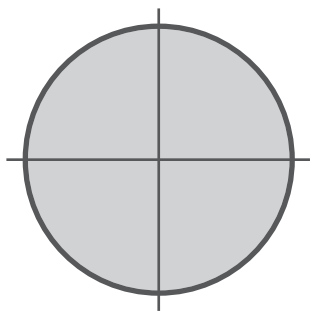
**Grants:** Again, this has been a very quiet year – a good thing, of course. Only one grant has been made – to assist the Old Comrade referred-to above, who was dying from pancreatic cancer and needed some financial help with the rent for his stairlift. Again, we worked with SSAFA and the YBF and others to help out.

We are occasionally asked for help in paying funeral expenses. A decision has been taken that the answer will in every case be 'No'. It is a horrible thing to have to do, but our funds are limited and we have to prioritise the living and particularly support those serving *Sharpshooters* on operations in Afghanistan and their families back in the UK. Please understand our inability to help.

As ever, please let us know if you know – or think – a *Sharpshooter* or his/her family might need our help, even if it is only a bit of advice. We work very closely with SSAFA, the RBL, YBF and others who often have the detailed know-how to help people out of difficulties – and the funds as well.

This will be my last Report to you and I would like to encourage you all to contribute a voluntary donation to the *Association* so that it can keep producing the Newsletter that we all like to read as well as providing support to the membership. After twenty-plus years in post I think it's time for a rest. So, for the last time, my sincere thanks to John Prince, our wonderful Benevolent Secretary, and to his equally wonderful predecessor, Christine Chrystie, and to the local *Sharpshooters* welfare officers. Keep up the good work!

Peter Crowley – Visiting Officer



## **FROM THE HONORARY COLONEL**

**THE RT HON NICHOLAS SOAMES PC**

I am very honoured to have been asked to be Honorary Colonel of *The Sharpshooters*. I must say when serving as a subaltern in the 11th Hussars, it never occurred to me, and certainly not to any of my brother officers, that I would ever be a Colonel, honorary or otherwise!

I have very much enjoyed my induction into the remarkable world of the Territorial Army and I am very grateful to Toby Howell and his brother, officers and other *Sharpshooters* for their very warm welcome at a splendid dinner in White's Club.



I relished also the opportunity to meet several old comrades whose contribution as a collective memory is so completely invaluable.

I had a very interesting day on Salisbury Plain, which gave me the chance to see how well the Squadron does, and also to hear of some of the difficulties that they are faced with. It will be my priority to do whatever I can to support and help the *Sharpshooters* family in whatever forum is available to me.

When General Barney last wrote his column as Honorary Colonel, he made the point that everyone was waiting for the then

new Government's Defence and Security Review. Well, it duly arrived to a fairly mixed reception and containing decisions which involved the Judgement of Solomon on some fantastically difficult questions.

We had to wait some time to hear of the future plans for the TA because the Prime Minister, having taken a personal interest, was not satisfied with what appeared to be the first offer. On 18th July, the Secretary of State for Defence, Liam Fox, made a statement to the House of Commons which dealt in further detail with the Government plans to deal with the enormous legacy-spending problem of a £38 billion black hole and further plans against that backdrop for the review of the TA.

For my part, I warmly welcome the review, "Future Reserves 2020". I think General Nick Houghton, Lt. General Graham Lamb and Julian Brazier (a former TA officer and now MP for Canterbury) did a tremendous job in very difficult circumstances.

The report makes clear that the Reserve Forces make an outstanding contribution to operations but have been shamefully neglected in recent years. For example, by some estimates the Territorial Army has a trained and active strength as low as 14,000. The Secretary of State announced that the Government will proceed with a £1.5 billion investment package over the next 10 years to enhance the capability of the Reserves and to increase their trained strength, £400 million of which will be spent during this Parliament. Readers of this magazine will be aware that this will require a massive amount of work, especially with employers, and it may be necessary to legislate to ensure that the Reserves are more readily usable on operations.

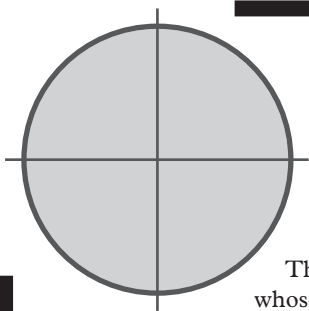
The Government have an extremely ambitious vision for "Future Forces 2020" which, if the Territorial Army develops in the way it is intended, will be a total force of around 120,000 with a Regular to Reserve ratio of around 70:30. Clearly, this is, as I said, extremely ambitious and in my view will require two essential components. Firstly, an improved offer for the soldiers; and, secondly, some very substantial improvements in the equipment available.

I like to think that both these things will be forthcoming and I pledge to the *Sharpshooters* to do all I can to help this programme along.

I very much enjoyed watching 265(KCLY) Sharpshooters Support Squadron under the command of Major Andy Church when they received the Freedom of the Borough of Bexley. They looked immaculate and with the band of the Royal Signals put on a terrific show for the TA.

I very much look forward to meeting many more Sharpshooters in the future.

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## EMPTY SADDLES 2010/11

The following lists those members of the Association whose deaths have been notified since the publication of the last newsletter in September 2010. Where available their obituaries appear in the following pages.

Where possible the Association is represented at funerals by members of the SYA including the Standard if it is requested. Individual named Remembrance Crosses are planted in the KCLY plot at the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey.

Nancy Gillman

Roy Hedges late 4th CLY

Fred Smith late 4th CLY

Doug Endicott late 3rd CLY

Dave Tickner late KCLY R Signals

John Harris late 4th CLY and 2nd Derbyshire Yeomanry

Robert Melville late 4th CLY

Ken Aldred late 4th CLY

Colonel D Squirrel late CLY

Hubert Smith late 4th CLY

J Bradley

J Fisher late 3rd CLY

### **BOB MOORE MM** – Obituary Corrections

The Editor and Secretary wish to apologise to Bob and Joan's family for the errors made in the last edition; Please find the corrections below:

Bob died on Thursday 10th June 2010 and was followed 29 hours later by his wife, Joan.

In April 2010 they celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary.



## **WO2 (RQMS) David Tickner**

It is with great sadness and regret that we announce that 'Dave' Tickner, a long serving Sharpshooter and member of 265 Signal Squadron, passed away peacefully on 7th December 2010 at the age of 67.

David was born in Beckenham, Kent during an air raid in 1943. Having just missed National Service, David wanted to 'do his bit'. Consequently, at the age of 17 he joined the Bromley based 297th (Kent Yeomanry) Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment Royal Artillery in 1960.

In 1961, the Kent Yeomanry was amalgamated with the Sharpshooters to form the Kent and County of London Yeomanry. At this time, Hill House in Bromley became the Regimental Headquarters and David became a crew member of one of RHQ's Humber Command Vehicles along with Ron Snowball and Colin Newton. Ron recalls that during one Annual Camp on Salisbury Plain the three of them were deployed in the Humber on exercise. On this occasion, the Humber also happened to contain the Officers Mess box which the crew soon took advantage of. When the rear of the vehicle was opened by SQMS Moody at the end of the exercise, the three of them, rather worse for wear, fell out!

David continued to be based at Bromley, but after 265 (KCLY) Signal Squadron was formed in 1969, David transferred to the new unit. By this time he had been promoted and it was while he was on a Junior NCO's course at Crowborough Camp in 1972 that he first met his future wife Cath, who was serving with 70 (Essex Yeomanry) Squadron at the time. Although his first marriage proposal was turned down, a courtship ensued. Dave was persistent and on his fourth proposal Cath agreed and they were subsequently married in September 1974.

In 1977 Dave was promoted to Staff Sergeant and appointed SQMS the same year. Dave was renowned for his dry wit and during Annual Camp at Shoeburyness in 1980 he put this to good effect. He sent one of the Provost Staff to a hardware shop in Southend, where David knew the owner. The unsuspecting soldier was to ask for a 'box of bulling rings'. After about five hours the soldier phoned with the message that they had no bulling rings just the inners. David then told him not to worry - instead he was to ask for a 'long weight'. The weary soldier got back to camp at midnight with neither!

Also that year, David was awarded a bar to his TEM. In 1982 he was promoted WO2 (RQMS) and was posted to RHQ. It was at this time that the Bexleyheath Branch of



the KSY Association was being formed under Captain Tony Jewell. Dave, together with wife Cath, agreed to become committee members.

The following year, Annual Camp was at Otterburn in Northumberland. When it came to BFT [Basic Fitness Test] time, Dave, along with the rest of the squadron, was taken onto the moor precisely 3 miles away from camp. Dave, being somewhat older than many in the squadron was in the first batch to set off and he jogged off down the track towards camp. However, after some 600yds he was seen to clutch his chest and disappear from sight. Fearing the worst his chums Terry Bodman and Colin Friend, who had followed not far behind, went to his aid, only to find that on their approach Dave climbed out of a ditch and carried on his way having answered a call of nature!

In 1987 the headquarters element of 265 was moved to the newly formed HQ (KCLY) Squadron (Sharpshooters) and Dave, along with the QM's Department moved with it. For the next five years David continued to work very much behind the scenes, not only in his role as RQMS but also as manager of the Regimental Sergeants' Mess.

Eventually, after an astonishing 32 years service in the Territorial Army, Dave finally 'hung up his boots' in October 1992. No doubt he would have liked to have carried on, but after a TA Review, the Ministry of Defence decided that those aged 45 years or over would be retired, and so ended a remarkable military career.

An enduring image of Dave for many people in the squadron (and probably the regiment as well) is seeing him sat on a bar stool at the end of the bar, with a brandy and cigar – a picture of contentment. He will be fondly remembered and sadly missed as a good as well as loyal and reliable Territorial. In the words of an old friend "we have lost a good man".

He is survived by his wife Cath, son Mark and daughter Helen.

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## Sharpshooter

*JL Cloudsley-Thompson*

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Arcturus Press (only 70 copies left)

## **Douglas Endacott MM**

### **14th April 1919 – 7th May 2011**



Doug Endacott enlisted in the 3rd County of London Yeomanry (The Sharpshooters) shortly after the outbreak of WW2. In "A" Squadron he quickly formed firm friendships with several other new recruits, most of whom never returned from active service. In 1941, his unit was posted to North Africa where they took part in some of the most famous tank battles of the North African Campaign. During the course of this campaign he was promoted to Sergeant.

Early on in the war Doug developed an interest in photography and he was encouraged in this by Captain Jimmy Sale. The photographs that Doug took throughout the duration of the war provide an interesting and personal visual record of the various campaigns in which his Unit was involved.

After North Africa they took part in the invasions of Sicily and Italy, and it was in Italy that Doug was awarded the Military Medal for bravery at the crossing of the San Grio valley. The medal citation reads:

On the 30th November 1943, when acting troop leader, Sergeant Endacott was on the left in the final attack across the River Sangro on the LI. COLLI ridge position towards the village of SAN MARIA. He led his troop ruthlessly across the enemy strongpoints and dugouts, driving right over them and hurling grenades into the openings, while subjected to sniping and grenade throwing, difficult to locate owing to the thick olive trees.

Later a boggy patch of ground was struck and Sergeant Endacott's tank was amongst those stuck. While directing his tank crew in cutting down wood to make a hard surface to get the tank out, he noticed a party of some dozen enemy making their way back from the defences towards the rear, and led his crew with pistols to attack them, taking six prisoners and wounding others.

Sergeant Endacott showed great courage, initiative and powers of leadership in this attack as throughout the campaign, and effectively silenced the main defences, thus enabling our infantry to mop up.

At the end of 1943, Doug's unit came back to Britain to prepare for D-Day and he was in the first wave of tanks that went ashore when the Allies landed on the Normandy beaches and fought their way through France, Holland and on into Germany. It was during this time that Sergeant Endacott was promoted in the field to Lieutenant Endacott.

After the war Doug married and returned to civilian life, eventually buying a garage in Wiltshire, which he ran successfully until his retirement.

## **Trooper Fred Smith**

### **4th CLY**

Frederick Smith was born in Bethnal Green, in London's East End, in 1915, and went into carpentry and furniture-making. After being called up in September 1940 and, after training on Salisbury Plain, he joined the 4th County of London Yeomanry, which was soon drafted as part of the 22nd Armoured Brigade to fight the Nazis in North Africa. The brigade, in turn, was assigned to the 7th Armoured Division, the "Desert Rats."

Smith – Trooper 7917726 – fought in most major battles in North Africa, including Operation Crusader to relieve Tobruk, the two major battles at El-Alamein, the heavy defeat at Sidi Rezegh, the battles for Tripoli and the capture of Tunis. He was shot and wounded near Tripoli in January 1943. During his recovery, an RAF pilot friend from 213 Squadron took him for a rare and highly irregular spin in a captured Luftwaffe Stuka dive-bomber near Sidi Haneish. The pilot offered to do a vertical dive but Smith declined, having seen too many such dives from the ground. After recovering, Smith sailed with his unit to Salerno and fought with them through Italy, including at the River Volturno, before they were recalled to the UK to prepare for D-Day.



Fred Smith at a Holocaust remembrance Service in 2005.

They landed at Gold Beach, Arromanches on the evening of D-Day – 6 June 1944 – and engaged in fierce fighting on the drive to the town of Villers-Bocage and the subsequent Operation Goodwood around Caen. After the amalgamation of the 3rd and 4th CLY Fred continued serving and was present at the liberation of Bergen Belsen concentration camp where the full horrors of the holocaust were apparent.

After the war, Smith saw that his fellow Londoners were desperate for "half-decent" furniture and went back to his old trade, starting off in the front room of his house near London docks, using black-market timber. He built his business into one of the largest cabinet- making companies in London, employing 45 staff. In 1973, he treated himself to a "Roller" – a Rolls-Royce, his pride and joy.

This obituary has been cut down from that in The Independent newspaper published on 1st July 2011.

## **Major J.N. Harris, OBE, MC and Bar**

### **2nd Derbyshire Yeomanry (1914-2009)**

John Harris, born 1914, was educated at Mill Hill, gained a B.Sc.(Agricultural Science) at Wye College and after further study at LSE joined the editorial staff of the *Farmer & Stockbreeder*.

In 1939 he joined the Territorial Army as a Trooper in the 4th County of London Yeomanry which was mobilised in August 1939, and in August 1940 was sent to Sandhurst. After passing out, John joined the 2nd Derbyshire Yeomanry. By the time 2DY sailed for the Middle East in May 1942 under command of Viscount Allenby, he had become Adjutant. The following November he was appointed Major and took command of 'B' Squadron, which he retained until the end of hostilities in Europe.

His first MC was awarded for holding the village of Escoville over the 16th and 17th June against persistent attack and literally ceaseless shelling and mortaring. The enemy was seeking to break the British perimeter at that point and B Squadron had been told to hold it at all costs. This they did, and bearing in mind that 2DY was equipped and trained for reconnaissance, B Squadron's achievement in holding this vital village under ceaseless assault was a tribute to John's superb leadership.

John's second MC was awarded for the prolonged and progressive contact, which his squadron maintained with the enemy in pushing through Germany after the Rhine Crossing in March 1945. That three of his Troop Leaders gained MC's themselves underlines the inspiring quality of his leadership.

Demobilised in December 1945, by then Second in Command, 2 Derby Yeo., he rejoined the staff of the *Farmer & Stockbreeder*, becoming Editor in 1962. In 1968 he became Managing Director IPC Agricultural Press, and later Deputy Chairman IPC Business Press. Retirement in 1979 brought an OBE.

From 1980 till 1985 John Harris was Chairman BBC Agricultural Advisory Committee, and in the early '80's was elected to Sevenoaks District Council, becoming Chairman in 1983. Throughout his civilian years he was a member of the Farmers Club, serving in various offices and finally as a Vice President and Trustee.

Throughout his life he gave wide-ranging service and leadership to his country, his industry and his community. Success is an insufficient term.

John leaves two daughters and three grandchildren and clearly his example to posterity is not lost.





## Roy Hedges

A tribute from David Hannam and Tim Rayson:

David Hannam, Vice President and Tim Rayson, Honorary Secretary of *The Sharpshooters Yeomanry Association* are not able to be here in person, but they wanted to send their tribute to Roy from *The Sharpshooters*.

Back in 2005 David and Tim spent a memorable day with Roy and Avril in Devon as Roy reminisced on camera about his time with the *4th County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters)* during WW2 – The Sharpshooter Regiments were the finest Territorial Tank Regiments of the War.

Roy's first memory of *The Sharpshooters* was at school when they brought a troop of vehicles to visit the Officer Training Corps and he decided there and then that as soon as he was able he would join "the Tanks". At 17 he arrived at the Royal Armoured Corps training regiment at Bovington where he learnt key things that stood him in good stead in the heat of battle:

- You need to be fit and to have a sense of humour – every day they went over the assault course and every day the PT instructor said "not good enough"...eventually they worked out he was timing the last man to finish – a lesson learnt – look after your men and work as a team.
- You also need to do your best at all times whether working on your weapon handling skills or cleaning the latrines... "Hedges – these toilets have never sparkled like that in all the time I have been here... well done lad"...
- This concept of "Personal Best" or "PB" as Roy called it was something that he applied to himself and his appreciation of the efforts of others throughout his time with the Army.

Whether it was his ability to make things shine or not, Roy was chosen to attend the War Office Selection Board and gave a "PB" performance as he passed and went to Sandhurst where he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant. On the final parade the Senior Officer advised all the new young officers that when addressing their troops in the future they should "Stand Up.... Speak Up... and then Shut Up".



We are delighted to report that in his interview with David and Tim he “Sat Down... Spoke Up....and went on talking without notes for three hours... with only a pause for lunch and a glass of Sharpshooters Single Malt Whisky.

Roy was posted to join the 4th County of London Yeomanry late on in the War and sailed to The Middle East by way of Liverpool and New York – he reports that he dined well during the voyage but by the time he arrived, The Regiment had been sent back to the UK to prepare for the invasion of France. Roy was posted straight back on the next ship in what has to be the shortest “North African Campaign” recorded in the Army.

Roy remembers the warm welcome from the battle hardened and experienced Officers of The Sharpshooters who made him feel at home straight away and Roy always referred to “The Sharpshoooters” as family.

He landed in Normandy just after D-Day in June 1944. He was a Troop Leader of three tanks and was in action for the whole of the Normandy campaign fighting in the tight lanes of the “Bocage” where tanks from both sides stalked each other and were in turn stalked by anti-tank wielding grenadiers. It was bloody and Roy lost men in his troop which affected him greatly. He was involved in the heart of the historic battle for Villers-Bocage on 13th June 1944 as part of B Squadron – a story he re-told as part of the interview which was then subsequently used in the documentary “Villers-Bocage: The Truth Behind The Myth”.

He continued serving with the Regiment across France, Belgium, Holland and into Germany.

Some weeks after the interview, Roy hand wrote a short paper called “Memory Hold The Door” which added the final instalments to his life in the Army.

He mentioned that after the cease fire he was on the northern bank of the Kiel Canal and required electricity for the village he was about to enter. He went and found an electrician, took him out to an electric tower and provided not only light for the village but at the same time lit lights along the entire visible bank of the *Kiel Canal* – first electric light since about 1939 – as Roy said – “notch that one up for The *Sharpshooters*”. The lights remained on for several days giving a very nice view from the balcony of the honeymoon suite at the Hotel occupied by Roy for a brief spell – although he assured us no bride was provided!

He was sent home about a year after the War ended as his mother was dying of cancer. He was grateful to the Army – He gave of his best and the Army responded with consideration, posting him to a UK unit pending demob so he could be with her.

His memory of demob was – A suit, shirt, tie, cufflinks, macintosh and, after six years, £47.10s which bought a radiogram. Thereafter the big shock of Civvy Street, where one was on ones own and it appeared that all preferred taxi and train to a tank for transportation!

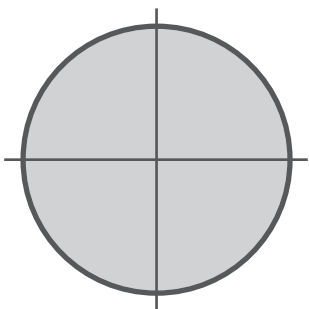
He signed off the paper with an ever cheerful – “That’s it folks! Once a Sharpshooter, always a Sharpshooter!”

So from all The Sharpshooters – We thank you Roy Hedges (PB) – a life well done.

David Hannam in Edinburgh

Tim Rayson in Australia

17 January 2011



## SHARPSHOOTERS REMEMBERED

**Menin Gate – The Only Sharpshooter  
by TIMBER**



On panel 5 of The Menin Gate you will find the name of Second Lieutenant HAROLD MALTHY HARRIS 3rd County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters) who is recorded thus by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and noted as having died on 16 June 1917.

According to his record card his name was Harold **Maltby** Harris who started as a Private in *The London Regiment* prior to being commissioned into *The Sharpshooters*. His next of kin address was Hove in Sussex. He is recorded as one of the many missing of The Great War.

Name		Corps	Rank	Regt. No.
HARRIS		25/Lond. R.	Pte	6260
Harold Maltby.		C. of Lond. Ye. RF 2nd/Lieut.		
Metal		Roll	Page	Remarks
x 3/10/17	3/10/17	Off 16	27	Appd. Comm. 3/10/17 Lond. R. 25/9/16
BATTLES		NW 2999 3/10/17 NW 4/23692		
DEATH				
Theatre of War first served in				
Date of entry therein				

17.3.22 NW/6/23692 E 1280

Next of Kin - S. A. Harris, Esq.,  
Address 93, Pembroke Crescent,  
Hove,  
Sussex.

173) W. 2289/11812 1,00m 1223 J.F.W. E 2281.

Miss 24/10



The puzzling thing is that in June 1917 *The Sharpshooters* were in Palestine. So how did Harold come to be in Flanders? The answer has been revealed, at least the last part of the mystery, whilst conducting a family research project involving the *2/2nd City of London Regiment (Royal Fusiliers)*.

Their Regimental History on page 166 tells us that Harold was part of a reinforcement of Officers for the *2/2 Battalion* in March 1917 at Boisieux in France where they were part of the *173rd Brigade* of the *58th Division*, south of Arras.

The Battle of “Bloody Bullecourt” has a deep memory for Australians, on a par with Gallipoli, but much less well known. The *2/2 Londons* found themselves taking over the line North-West of Bullecourt from the Aussies, opposite a deeply defended section of the Hindenburg Line, late on 15th June 1917. Harold was in command of *No. 6 Platoon*, the lead platoon of *B Company*.



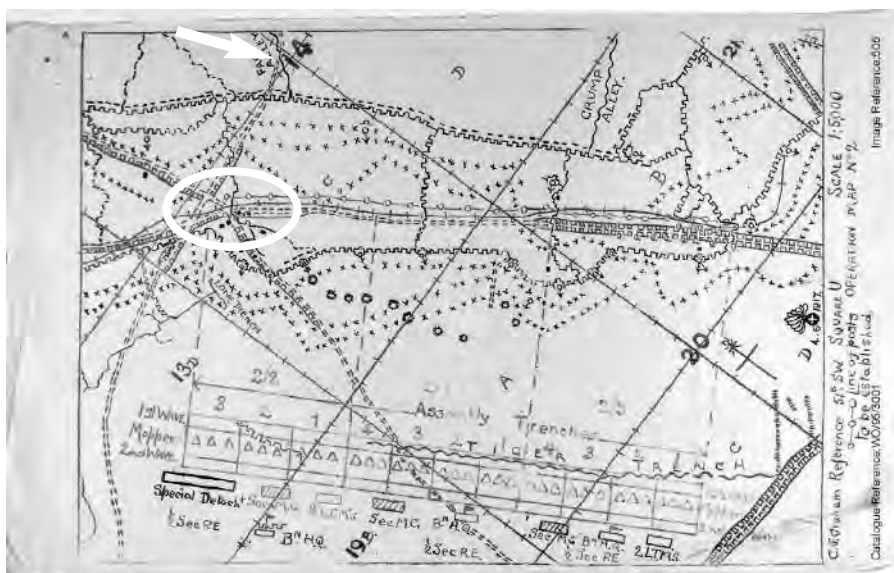
Hindenburg Line near Bullecourt.

Arriving late on the assembly line having been held up by a big block in *Factory Avenue*, the non arrival of *No. 7 Platoon* resulted in Harold being moved up with his Platoon to the first wave of the planned attacks.

At 3.10am on 16th June Harold advanced under cover of a barrage from the whole of the Divisional Artillery and Brigade Machine-Gun Companies, and the Company succeeded in establishing themselves in the **Hindenburg** support line.

The Company Commander positioned men at the entrance to each dugout in the trench, and, after passing *Fag Alley* (a long communication trench running back to the German second system) he established connection with *A Company* on the left. He then returned, and, with 2nd Lieut Harris, explored *Fag Alley*, finally leaving a party of men about fifty yards up it to form a block.

After an eventful night of hostile shelling, the Germans appeared on the flanks of the Company positions and bombed the *Fag Alley* block. Despite repeated red flares and waving yellow handkerchiefs whenever the spotter planes came over, no artillery support was provided to ward off the attacks. Attempts to get through to the Company were repulsed and under severe attack the Company withdrew. Most of this gallant band were wiped out and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut Harris was seen no more.

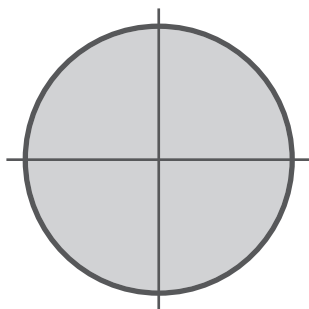


The Operations Map for the Assault – Fag Alley is behind the second line of the German Defences



The “Crossroads” circled on both images – “Then and Now”.

**We will remember Harold Maltby Harris with honour in perpetuity.**



## **7TH ARMoured DIVISION REUNION AT ORWELL PARK SCHOOL**

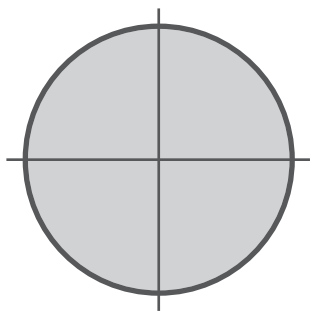
On Tuesday 23rd November, 2010, three members of the SYA attended the 7th Armoured Division Memorial Service and Reunion at Orwell Park School on the banks of the River Orwell near Ipswich. The gathering was honoured this year by the presence of HRH, Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall who, after arriving by helicopter, attended the Service of Remembrance and Inspected a Guard of Honour and a drive past of military vehicles. Veterans, members of the school and guests then proceeded to the Desert Rats Memorial where, during a cold and windswept ceremony, wreaths were laid in tribute followed by a helicopter flypast.



Left to right: Harold Currie, Clifford Pace, Wally Healey.

Following a buffet lunch in the Orangery, HRH delighted veterans by ensuring she spoke with each one of them individually. She recalled how her Father, Major Bruce Shand, was captured at El Alamein whilst serving with the Division. In thanking the school for hosting a number of reunions over the years she presented the Headmaster, Rowland Constantine, with a trophy which was the original gift made to the Division in Berlin in 1945. Following HRH's departure the young musicians of the school entertained guests with a short concert and a local re enactment group concluded the entertainment with lively and reminiscent "jitterbugging" dance routines of the 1940's.

Attendance by SYA veterans was, sadly, smaller than in previous years. Harold Currie, Clifford Pace and Wally Healey all thoroughly enjoyed the day and the opportunity to renew acquaintances and talk over past times.



## **“WENT THE DAY WELL” THE LORD MAYOR’S SHOW 2010**

**by Terry Bodmin**

Went the day dry for a change, although a bit on the cool side, after the last two years of having a wet and soggy show. The show was late in starting and we moved off 25 minutes past eleven (start time 11.00 hrs) and no fly past by the RAF due to low cloud.

Our RY contingent this year was made up of 2 x Scout Land Rovers of C Sqn, 2 x CVR(T) 1 Spartan and 1 Sultan of W Sqn, (? replace with ‘two Scout Land Rovers of C Sqn, two CVR(T), one Spartan and one Sultan of W Sqn’). Bringing up the rear were the Association members on the low loader with the M10 “Achilles” Tank Destroyer in lieu of the Sherman Firefly which is still under restoration.

This impressed Boris (first time on the show) so much that he spent the return journey in the turret beaming like a Cheshire cat. Other newcomers were Mick Hall and Alan Davey who are definitely up for it this year. Some good video footage of us passing St Paul’s, was taken by the daughter of John Morrison (Jnr), a better coverage than the BBC which is viewable on Facebook in the *Sharpshooters* website.

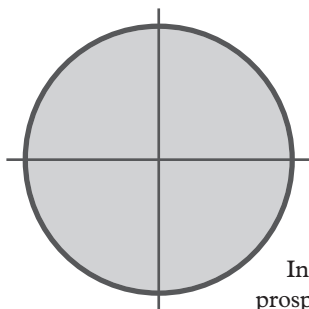


Overall there was a good turn out for last year's show from The Royal Yeomanry and the Association, as well as the cheering crowds along the route. Those attending this year were our President Guy Farage, Tim Rayson, Boris Mollo, Mike Swan, Trevor Tew, John Morrison Jnr, Mick Hall, Alan Davey, *RRS Sharpshooter Cadets* Cpl Clark, Cpl Taylor, Cdt Max Leggatt and Cdt Surridge The Rifles ACF, our re-enactors, Ashley, Maria, Lee, Alex and our drivers Ken and Steve.

Our thanks go to Maj T Howell OC C Sqn RY, Capt M Webb, Lt Harry Bartles and his team as well as W Sqn for their help and assistance and for allowing us to join the contingent. Also to Rex Cadman for his continuing support each year for the Association and his War and Peace team along with the low-loader and tank. Many thanks Rex.







## 4TH COUNTY OF LONDON YEOMANRY

In autumn 1938, following the Munich Crisis, with the prospect growing of another war with Germany it was apparent that an expansion of the *Territorial Army* was required and, early in 1939, it was announced that the whole of the *Territorial Army Field Force* was to be doubled. For our Regiment, then known as the *23rd London Armoured Car Company*, this involved first, for the existing Company to be expanded to regimental strength, resuming its previous title of *3rd County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters)*, and then to form another Regiment, all within a few months. As the new regiment was being formed, the first impulse was to follow the usual precedent and refer to it as *2nd/3rd CLY*, as had been the case in the 1914-18 War and as was the case with other Yeomanry Regiments in the same position. Thus the Regimental Orders for the move to Annual Camp, August 1939 (included among the papers of Tpr Norman Henry Druce *4CLY* – 2010-2) were issued by Major W.G. Carr Commanding *2nd/3rd County of London Yeomanry*. By the time they had arrived in camp, however, the decision had been taken to call the new regiment *4th County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters)*. The exact reason for this decision is not recorded but presumably because the new title was simpler and more distinctive for the new Regiment. Another unusual feature was that *3rd CLY* remained more or less intact in so far as personnel was concerned and, apart from a few key senior ranks, *4th CLY* was raised from scratch and achieved regimental strength within a few months including a large number of ex-soldiers rejoining the service.

Whether those in authority were aware of the fact or not, there had been a previous *4th County of London Yeomanry* formed, at more or less the same time as the *3rd CLY*. This regiment was raised as a result of the South African War, not so much to serve in South Africa, as to reinforce the depleted home defence forces by raising a Yeomanry Regiment of volunteers from our overseas domains for service within the UK. It was formed on 29 November 1901 and was called the *4th County of London Yeomanry (King's Colonials) Imperial Yeomanry*.

The original regimental badge featured the arms of the Prince of Wales and the title *King's Colonials*. There were also separate squadron badges, *A Squadron* an Elephant with the title *British Asian*; *B Squadron* a beaver with the title *British American*; *C Squadron* a Kangaroo with the title *Australasian* and *D Squadron* an ostrich with the title *British African*. In 1909-10, with the change of title, squadron badges were abolished and replaced by the one new regimental badge.

In 1909, the title *King's Colonials* was considered no longer appropriate as so many colonies had become self-governing dominions and the title was therefore changed to *King Edward's Horse (The King's Overseas Dominions Regiment)*. It is said that the title





1901 Badge



1910 Badge

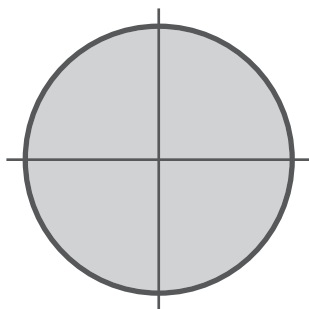
was soon amended by the other London Yeomanry Regiments from 'King Edward's Horse' to 'King Edward's Whores' to 'The Lily Langtrys'. King Edward VII's title was continued after his death as he had been the original King in the first title. They continued under this name in the 1914-18 War serving as individual squadrons on the Western Front. In 1916 a *2nd King Edward's Horse* was raised but only lasted one year before being absorbed into the Tank Corps. The *King's Colonials* were finally disbanded in 1924.

## **AGIUS Collection**

### **– Update –**

Tim Rayson and David Hannam continue to seek willing volunteers who want to share on camera their individual memories of time with The Sharpshooters. It is a relaxed and friendly experience, with Tim and you sharing a quiet conversation whilst in another corner of your lounge (we are happy to come to you), David fiddles about with wires, microphones and a video camera. We like to think of it as “preserving the living history of today for tomorrow’s Sharpshooters”.

If you would like to discuss joining the growing band of Sharpshooters (40 plus) who have gone “on the record” then please get in touch with Tim who will be happy to make the arrangements.



# FLANDERS DASH

**3rd–6th JUNE 2011**

**by Cadet Will Surridge**

## **Friday 3rd June**

After an early morning start we finally arrived at *Sharpshooter House* in Croydon. Once the majority of people had arrived we went inside and had a glass of champagne (obviously except for me as I was busy serving it!)

Once we had finished, we loaded up the coach, eased springs and mounted up. The journey was quite long but you didn't really notice with all of the new people for me to meet – as well as doing lots of revision. We also got an intro about WW1. We made good time and arrived at the ferry port early; this left us plenty of time to eat some breakfast, unfortunately the only choice was Burger King.



Flanders Dash Riders at Croonaert Wood.



A tank called Deborah.

We got on the ferry and explored the ship and after being on the deck for leaving the harbour we went into one of the many bars and met up with a group of people and had a drink (of coke). We eased springs – again!, re-mounted and then picked up our tour guide from Calais port before starting our long journey to the hotel. Dave Carter gave a talk about life in the army of 1918 that was very interesting. En route to the hotel we went to see the positions of the front line on the Hindenburg line on the salient. We also went to a place (Croonaert Wood) where someone had excavated the trenches and where some German pillboxes still remained. Peter our guide gave an interesting talk about life in these very small shelters – and they were very small even for me!

After we arrived at the hotel we all got ready and went out for dinner in a local restaurant. I started off with snails and moved on to a beefsteak, which was fabulous. Once we had sorted out the bill (which involved Dave counting and re-counting the money) I went off to bed. In the morning I found out that not many others joined me! Bar Velvet seemed to have been a popular attraction!

### **Saturday 4th June**

We woke up and got ready for the long day ahead and went upstairs for breakfast, there was a massive selection but I wasn't feeling desperately hungry!

We had a change of plan for eating which involved going to the local market to buy our lunch. Being as prepared as we are we – well Tim – had a picnic rucksack so we ganged up with him and Ron Snowball to buy quite a selection of fresh meat, fruit and vegetables to say nothing of the cheese and pate! We then got on the coach and went to the supermarket because some people weren't satisfied with the produce from the market.

After that we went to see a tank called Deborah. It felt very privileged to see her because not many people get to and she was found and kept within a few miles of where she fought at Cambrai. It was even more fascinating when we went into the museum and saw some of the other remains of the Great War. Once we had seen a substantial amount of the tank and other relics we went off to our first wreath laying service at the CWGC cemetery at Brown's Copse; in which I had to read the poem at the end. It was very touching taking part in the service.

Our picnic lunch was in the grounds of a Canadian memorial, which all have the same cube design. Also on that day we drove around Arras and Cambrai, which are the first places that had concentrated use of tanks in battle. We also had an excellent talk by Boris about the MGC.

We then went to Ypres and the Menin Gate. We had a little walk around and most people had a cheeky beer before the service which went down very well. Every night since 1945, the night in which the Germans withdrew from Ypres, the last post has been played and people have laid wreaths in memory of those soldiers who have no known grave. This was very touching especially as Phil Moore laid the *Sharpshooter* wreath and Tim read *The Bidding* by Laurence Binyon. Phil also gave the Kohima bidding as well which was very appropriate as he fought there. We briefly met up with some other *Sharpshooters* who were there at the same time before we got on the coach and went to Dots restaurant in the middle of a business park. It was an interesting choice but the food went down well. After counting and re-counting the money (again) we got back on the coach and went back to the hotel, I went straight to bed but I believe the rest of the troop went back out (possibly to Bar Velvet!)



Phil Moore and Tim Rayson form up for the Menin Gate service.

### Sunday 5th June

We woke up and went to breakfast, which again I didn't eat much of, but what I did eat was very good. We got onto the coach and went back to a supermarket to re-supply our stock of food and importantly wines. We held another two services in cemeteries that had *Kent Yeomanry* soldiers in them – Vis en Artois and Templeux Le Guerard and squeezed an extra one in at Hagricourt. One of the cemeteries reminded me of the Bayeux cemetery that I went to two years ago. This was the day when we followed the advance of the *Kent Yeomanry* towards the Hindenberg Line and after a lot of poring over maps we ended up at the site of Quennemont Farm which they tried and failed to

over maps we ended up at the site of Quennemont Farm which they tried and failed to capture in 1918. The advance was over open ground and up a slope with no cover at all. It was no wonder then that they suffered such heavy casualties.

We then went to the American Somme cemetery for lunch which was conveniently on the next ridge behind the Farm. It was amazing the way that they are all in perfect lines in all directions. Lunch was very needed food and I was glad that we had plenty of it! After lunch we went back to Quennemont Farm and had Dave Carter gave a very interesting talk and demonstration of what a WW1 soldier would have worn at that time. The clothing wasn't

warm enough for the cold winters. We also had a look at the SMLE, which stands for Short Magazine Lee Enfield. This was very similar to the No. 8 Cadet Rifle and was a very good weapon for those days. We then returned to the hotel and got ready for our endex meal. We had some pre-meal drinks. It would have been better if someone had put the champagne in the fridge so we just had beer instead. Dave and Frankie came dressed up in traditional 1928 white tie and tails, which was a surprise for everyone but they really looked good. We then sat down and started our meal; it was interesting because there was only one waiter serving all 22 of us. It took some time but the meal was very good. We cracked open the, now chilled, champagne and had some toasts and Guy magically made a present for Tim appear. It was a beautiful silver dish with the *Sharpshooter* badge engraved. Once that was finished we went and bought a magnum of champagne – they accidentally charged us half price! After struggling to go round serving I and the others heard an excellent story from Phil about his RSM Gus Fuller and then I went to bed.



Corporal Dave Carter dressed as 10th (V) Bn The Buffs (East and West Kent Yeomanry) tells us how it was in 1918 at Quennemont Farm.



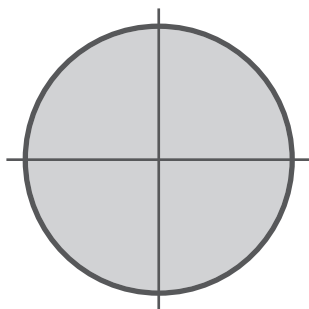


Flanders Dash Riders at Vis En Artois Memorial.

### **Monday 6th June**

We woke up got ready and then packed before going up for breakfast, which I ate more of due to not having full meals for the rest of the day. We got our cases and loaded them onto the bus. We then left for a tour of the craters. We saw a few on the bus and then got out to see a famous one, The Lone Tree Crater. It was enormous. We then went to Ypres again and discovered a very good chocolate shop and felt it would be rude not to buy some! We also went to a café and had a small early lunch. After that we went to the German cemetery at Langemarck; it was interesting how different they are to the British ones. After that we went to a duty free wine shop and stocked up on the wines! We got onto the ferry and had a drink with a group of people. After general time wasting tactics we grabbed a snack and then eased springs for the last time before our long leg home. We got back on the bus and started the journey. The traffic was good and we managed to arrive back in Croydon in very good time. After our goodbyes and very well deserved thank-you's to Tim, Dave and Boris, as well as all the other people that contributed towards a very successful battlefield tour we headed of back home.





## **SICILIAN STRAIGHT 10**

**A report by Giles and Barrie Fearn**

An overcast morning saw the 2010 riders assemble in the North terminal at Gatwick, in rather good spirits despite the very early start many had had. Swift passage through check-in, security and then a leisurely wait for the departure followed by an easy flight, deposited us in the much warmer environment of Catania with clear skies and 27 degrees. It was now that one had to switch from London bustle to Italian torpor as we queued for the hire cars amidst a noisy and typically Italian crowd. Finally, issued with keys and documentation, we ventured to find the awaiting cars. We found them... battle scared and well used. Not the shinning pristine hire cars one is used to, but examples of their many hours on Italian roads, with scratches, bumps and bits missing; but they worked and hey this is Italy so get on with it.

Once everyone was loaded on, it was time to head north to the hotel and take in the scenery. Passing through the suburbs of Catania there wasn't much to distinguish it from any other similar sized town in Italy, Southern France or Spain. Out to the west though, loomed the hulking mass of Mount Etna, it's summit wreathed in cloud in the late afternoon sun. Glimpses of the sea showed how narrow a strip of land there was between mountain and coast and it is here that the vast majority of Sicilians live on the east coast.

Arrival at the hotel was preceded by the ultimate test in hill starts as we climbed the road to the car park. Having settled in to our accommodation, with its stunning views over the Letajanni coast, we had time to enjoy the late autumn sun, the swimming pool and poolside bar, whilst the recce party set off to confirm Saturday's locations.

The hotel is a vast complex that covers a very steep hillside, but has everything one could need including its own funicular and lift down to sea level. Fortunately, as this is end of season it wasn't that full so one never felt as though one was in a large holiday destination. The food and wine were both tested in suitable amounts and found to be very pleasing.

Day two dawned with clear skies and the promise of lots of hot weather, and a pretty prompt departure as we headed south to visit the landing beaches in and around Fontane Bianche. The post war years have seen a huge amount of development along the coast so the open spaces experienced by the *Sharpshooters* in 1943 have mostly been built upon. However, we had an interesting summary of the actions by Boris Mollo whilst sitting by a beachside hotel's pool enjoying a coffee and beer. Tim Rayson did well in the leading car and when you have six cars in a convoy it is always difficult to keep them together and even more difficult to find turning spaces when one doesn't know the local area that well.



Sicilian Straight riders at the end of the race on the steps of the Church in the square in Pedara.

The next stop was at the Syracuse War Cemetery, which necessitated finding parking places for all the cars in a local cemetery's rather small parking place – Saturday is obviously the favourite day for locals to visit their deceased loved ones as the place was packed. A short walk along a busy dual carriageway and we reached the tranquillity and splendour that one always finds at CWGC locations. Guy Farage led a short service with Tony James reading a poem. Time was then spent paying respect to the allied servicemen buried there and crosses were placed at the *Sharpshooters* graves. The convoy then headed into the centre of Syracuse and miraculously all ended up in the right place for lunch. A delightful restaurant fed us very well on homemade pasta and fresh fruit salad. Suitably nourished and refreshed we headed inland to look at the gorge at Villasmundo.

Several pill boxes still remain guarding an important crossroads and it was from here that the next stand started. The terrain and heat in mid July would have made for very hard and difficult fighting and it was possible to get a real feel for what the *Sharpshooters* had gone through as we drove down into the gorge and found the original bridge. This was poor country for tanks with so few roads and tracks to use and perfect country for defenders. As the sun set behind Etna, we headed back towards the hotel after a fairly long hot day with the prospect of a cool beer at the other end. Tim and Boris went off to recce Sunday's positions, some rested by the pool and some decided to add an hour or so to their journey as they headed south instead of north to get back to the hotel!

Sunday started again with clear skies and bright sunshine and the prospect of looking at one of the harder battles fought by the CLY. Primasole Bridge was of vital importance to the British in their advance; the *Sharpshooters* and Durham Light Infantry fought



The Square in Pedara – A Sqn 3rd CLY taken from the Church in 1943.

The Square in Pedara – A Sqn 3rd CLY Leaguer



Primasole Bridge immediately post the battle. It looked a bit like this when we visited it!

hard and long to cross it. The benefit of recces was borne out by the fact that when Tim and Boris went to look at the bridge it had been demolished and was in course of being replaced by a new bridge. The area was a construction site and there was therefore no way of getting across the river and a quick replan of the approach needed to be undertaken. Fortunately two local nature wardens – also WW2 enthusiasts – appeared on the scene and helped Boris and Tim to do the recce in the twilight – they thought they were thieves trying to steal construction materials! They then promised to help the group the following day. So we arrived at the construction site and were escorted right up to the river's edge where again Boris give an illuminating talk and we had time to look at the ground and get a feel for the action. The wardens then took us to see the landing site of the German and British paratroopers and the strong point the Germans used during the British drop. There is also a memorial to the DLI close to the bridge which we had time to look at; a simple cenotaph-style memorial built in local black rock.

The Cemetery at Catania holds many of the DLI graves and it was poignant to see so many of the same cap badges. Maurice led the short service with Mark Hodson reading a poem and again there was time to reflect and look around the cemetery. As is traditional, crosses were placed at the graves of the *Sharpshooters* who lie there. We then headed up the slopes of Mount Etna following the route the *Sharpshooters* took and had lunch in Balpasso where C Sqn *Sharpshooters* had fought. Here we were treated to a local lunch and ice cream. After lunch we visited Pedara where A Sqn leaguered in August 1943, and stood in the square that is shown in Jimmy Sale's photographs; not much seems to have changed except the buildings are in a worse state of repair. Here the historical section of the trip ended as the *Sharpshooters* were then re-tasked and their



Catania War Cemetery (above) and Phillip Moore (right) also at Catania.





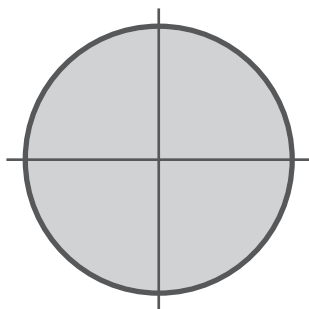
An unlikely trio singing ‘O Sole Mio’ at the Endex Dinner!

Sicilian adventure was over. That evening the group ventured out to a local restaurant found by the Tomlins and we were very well looked after as we dined on local specialities and sampled a little more of the local wine!

Monday was a day to explore the local area and take in the sites. Early birds left for a trip up Mount Etna and had a fascinating trip up to nearly 3000 meters, seeing a number of the craters that periodically spew forth gases and lava. Others visited Taormina and took in the sights of this delightful village perched upon an almost sheer hillside overlooking the sea and coast. A group visited the local English Church where they met the visiting vicar and having had a brief service were given a guided tour of the Church and the Greek Amphitheatre in Taormina. All gathered together on the Monday evening for the final Sicilian Straights Dinner, which was the last formal event of this year’s trip.

The evening started with champagne and the Loyal Toast prior to supper. Supper was a veritable feast of local dishes such as pistachio risotto and cannoli ricotta complimented by local red and white wine that ensured a very lively and entertaining evening. We were serenaded by a duo that sang and played the accordion during supper, singing local songs and traditional Sicilian melodies. Guy Farage and Philip Moore proposed the toasts to absent friends and the *Sharpshooters* respectively.

On Tuesday the Sicilian Straight riders headed south to Catania having experienced Sicily as their forebears would not have, but we had seen the terrain and country they fought over and had an inkling of what they had been through. We had also rekindled friendships and, just possibly, lived as *Sharpshooters* should.



## **SICILY II**

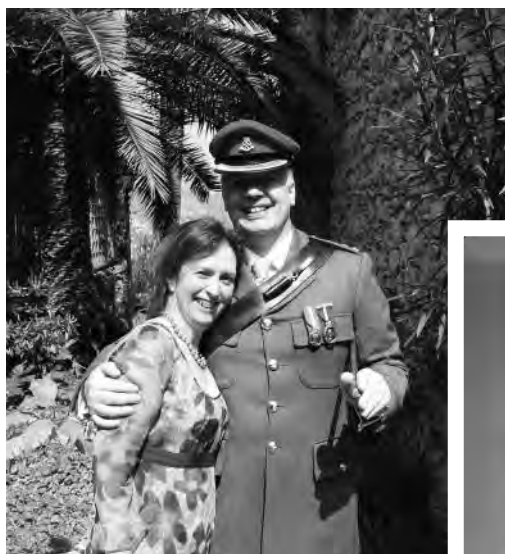
The SYA enjoyed a second trip to Sicily in March 2011, following the earlier one in September 2010. This second trip was organised and led by Tony James whose father had served in the 3rd County of London Yeomanry. Tony, a relative newcomer to the Sharpshooter fold, who only made contact with the Association in 2010, and following the highly successful first Sicily trip organised by Tim Rayson, Tony was motivated to personally fund and organise the installation of a memorial to commemorate the 3rd CLY in Sicily in the English church in Taormina. Tony made the trip a very warm and personal event and involved some of his friends (Dudley who also joined us on Sicily 1, Gerry and Geoff) and family (Linda and Vincent) in the trip.

The memorial tablet itself had been commissioned by Tony after many hours of discussions with stone merchants and was then engraved under Tony's watchful supervision. Personally I was fortunate to be closely involved with the production of the memorial as Tony and I are near neighbours in Ealing and the work on the stone was undertaken in nearby Greenford. If you ever have a moment, Tony will happily share the rollercoaster tale of procuring the stone, having it engraved and then shipping it to Sicily, in all an exercise with several near-misses and anxious moments.

The memorial is made of Portland Stone and is an impressive and fitting tribute to our forebears who fought in Sicily. The stone now hangs (thankfully it appears firmly fixed to the wall but there was much apprehension about whether a plaque could be prepared in England where the system of stone fixing might be different from that used on the Continent!) proudly in the St George's Anglican Church in Taormina, part of the Diocese in Europe. (See [www.anglicanchurchtaormina.it](http://www.anglicanchurchtaormina.it) for more information about the church, and click on the "news" and "photos" sections for more photos and news about our visit.)

The service, much rehearsed under the professional guidance of Tony, whose career in the light entertainment industry shone through as we were all "directed" through our respective parts for the day, was a hugely successful affair, both humbling and uplifting. The regular friends and worshippers of the church turned out in force, and the "ladies of the church", predominantly English ladies who had married or settled in Sicily, put on a fabulous al fresco luncheon for all in the church's garden. Jane Moser, the Church Secretary, was instrumental in ensuring the success of the day along with Rev Paul Rayner, the vicar, and his wife, Margaret.





Major Mark Hodson and Emma Surridge (above) and Church reception (right).



The service itself is best described using the article that Jane Moser, the Church Secretary wrote, after our visit. It is reproduced here, courtesy of Jane, and can also be seen on the church's website:

On 27th March in St George's, Taormina, a momentous Holy Communion Service took place which included the dedication of a tablet in memory of the fallen of the *3rd County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters)* – Sicily 1943.

Tony James, whose father served with the regiment during the Sicilian Campaign, kindly, donated the tablet which is made of thick Portland stone, weighing over 12kilos and was quarried especially for this purpose. The Reverend Paul Rayner, who was locum chaplain for this period, had the responsibility of transporting the tablet from England to Sicily as well as the prominent task of conducting and preaching at the service.

A group of 16, all associated with the *3rd CLY*, travelled from England and France to attend.

Genesis 12:1-4 was read by Sylvia Moschella, a local church member, and Romans 4:1-5, 13-17 was read by Cate Hawkins whose husband also served in the Sicilian Campaign. Intercessions readers included Geoff Dawson, Clive Jones, Emma Surridge, Peter Tomlin and Linda Adenis-Lamarre.

The names of the 19 fallen were read by: Richard Brown – Honorary British Consul in Sicily and Major Mark Hodson – Second-in-command of the Regiment and currently one of the most senior serving Sharpshooter officers. The Prayer of Remembrance was read by Guy Farage who was squadron leader of the

*Sharpshooters* until 1962 and is currently President of the SYA and Chairman of the *Kent and Sharpshooters Museum Trust*:

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;  
age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
we will remember them.

Daniele Zappela, brass, superbly played the Last Post and Reveille. Miles Lallemand and Laura Lamph provided truly remarkable voices and keyboard to the various hymns and solos.

Father Ron Kennedy, command chaplain US Navy Air, Sigonella (Catania), whose congregation donates generously to the church annually, took part in the service and assisted with the distribution of communion.

Major Mark Hodson and Fr Kennedy, both in full uniform, placed a 3rd CLY poppy wreath under the tablet.

A buffet, provided by the regular church members, was offered following the service in the church garden under the warm Sicilian rays of the sun and their eldest member, Freddy Rowlands, 95 [a World War 2 Sicily veteran himself], was thrilled to be present. Gifts which included *Sharpshooter* memorabilia and essential English tea were distributed.

It was an exceptionally moving event and the church is honoured to have the only tablet expressly dedicated to the memory of the fallen of the 3CLY Sharpshooters Regiment anywhere in the world.

Aside of the church service, we enjoyed many fabulous meals and Sicilian cuisine, Tony leading a group which got lost in Siracusa, (or is this too rude!) and numerous other memorable visits including a stunning fish market and fascinating military museum.

Visiting Sicily twice in a six month period was perhaps rather indulgent but a real privilege to witness and be a part of dedicating the tablet to the *Sharpshooters*, the only such memorial to the entire regiment in Sicily. (Jane's article says the world?)

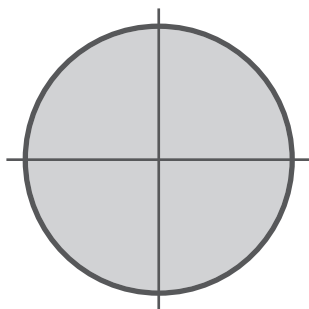
Should you be planning a trip to Sicily, or find yourself there, do take a moment to visit St George's in Taormina and to visit the tablet.

Many thanks to Tony for organising such a wonderful trip and adding another important item to *Sharpshooter* history.

Mark Hodson

List of those who attended Sicily 2:

Tony James, Linda Adenis-Lamarre, Vincent Adenis-Lamarre, Guy Farage, Dudley Rees, Geoff Dawson, Geri Dawson (Gerry?), Clive Jones, Cate Hawkins, Cate Luck, Emma Surridge, Mike Swan, Eileen Tomlin, Dan Tomlin, Pete Tomlin, Mark Hodson.



## VILLERS BOCAGE DINNER 2004 – BASRA, IRAQ

Tim Rayson, on a recent tour of Australia to gloat about the 2010/2011 Ashes, asked me over lunch if I could write something about the dinner we held in Basra for the 60th Anniversary of the Battle of Villers Bocage. This was one of the highlights of the 2004 tour where thirty-odd *Sharpshooters* managed to commemorate the 1944 Battle in one of Saddam's old palaces.

Knowing that the main dinner was being held in France, someone (Matthew Webb or Matthew Douglas may remember exactly) mooted the idea of having a twin dinner in Iraq. I thought we had little chance of having a formal dinner in an operational zone, but I had reckoned without 1RHA. The majority of the deployed *Sharpshooters* had been attached to D Sqn Queens Royal Lancers which made up part of the 1RHA Battle Group. The CO of 1RHA thought the idea a good one and directed us towards the 1RHA shipping container which had half of their regimental kit, including the silver! Apparently, like American Express, they never travel without it. The next stop was the cookhouse to convince the chefs to cater for us. They jumped at the idea of “doin’ something proper” and made several good suggestions for the menu. This included a chocolate mould and we were able to have chocolate copies of the *Sharpshooter* cap badge with our coffee. Alcohol proved the easiest item to obtain as fifty-five Royal Navy and Royal Marine personnel formed part of the Battle Group. They haven’t been to war without alcohol since the rum ration was formalised and so provided several crates of beer and bottles of wine. The next problem was getting all of the *Sharpshooters* in one place. This proved the most difficult, but we managed about half, mostly from D Sqn in Umm Qsar. Those with A Sqn in Al Amarah couldn’t get away as their squadron was in support of an operation being conducted by 1PWRR BG at the time. Bad planning to let that get in the way of scoff!



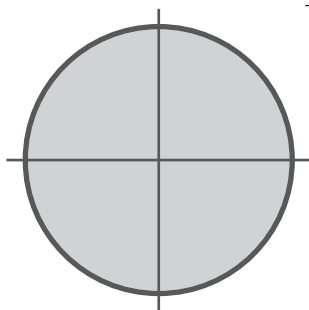
The dining table before dinner.



Toby Howell, Charlie Field and the author share a joke.

Arab garb; a sort of Croydon Lawrence of Arabia. But whatever the dress, everyone enjoyed swapping stories, having a drink and a laugh.

And so the night went well. The silver gleamed on a white table cloth and included an old cavalry sabre bought in the markets of Baghdad (an area later blown up by a suicide bomber as coalition troops did their shopping there) which later made an appearance at Matthew Webb's wedding. Toby Howell and Charlie Field dressed rather more formally than desert combats and Mustafa Banwatt came dressed in full



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## MY TIME WITH THE SHARPSHOOTERS

by Mark Leonard Bamfield –  
otherwise known as 'Basher'

Whenever my father and I visited my grandmother's flat in Mitcham, I would always ask to see my grandfather's photo albums. And she would always reply "What, again?" My grandfather, Leonard Bamfield, had joined the 17th/21st Lancers in 1924 and was posted to India with the 9th Queens Royal Lancers two years later.

The photographs in the two large heavy albums were very well taken and beautifully printed for the time. The smartness of the 9th Lancers impressed me immensely. These were the last years of the cavalry on horseback. They had their own band with Drum Horse and Regimental Trumpeters. They also had a musical ride and trick riding team. My grandfather later spent six years in North Africa with the Queen's Own Yorkshire Dragoons, the Reserve Regiment of the 9th Lancers. When my father was called up for National Service in the 1950s he was 'claimed' by my grandfather to join the 9th. After leaving school, I was offered a place at Art College. The course was five years, so I resolved to complete both my further education and military service at the same time.

There were two possibilities. The Westminster Dragoons and *The Sharpshooters*. My father and I drove up to Westminster to take a look at the Drill Hall of the WD. They wore black RTR berets with a tank arm badge and looked like quite a professional unit. However, they were an HQ Sqn of the RY and had old Saracen vehicles. I wanted to join a unit with modern equipment. It was 1978 and *the Sharpshooters* had CVR(W) Fox.

I had seen the Sqn parked in a back street before the Lord Mayer's Parade the previous year. They looked pretty fierce covered in camouflage nets, which was not something you see on the streets of London every day. A week later, I visited C Sqn at Croydon and joined straight away. Walking into any military environment can be intimidating for a civilian and I certainly felt a little apprehensive. The Drill Hall was frenetic, with soldiers darting about in all directions.

Eventually, as the clock neared 8pm, the men lined up at the back of the drill hall and the SSM called out loudly "C Squadron, get on parade!" I was escorted upstairs for an interview, passing many photographs of the Sqn in number 2 dress with red service caps. My first interview was with a senior NCO and then a Captain, who seemed quite impressed by my family's cavalry credentials. I was then introduced to Sgt John Adamthwaite of 5th Troop. He made an impression on me immediately with his smartness and professional manner. He was wearing barrack trousers with shoes, a shirt and tie under his jumper, and carried a crop. He briefed me on what was expected of me. I then met the Troop Corporal Mike Tregent and Lance Corporal Gordon Czapiewski. 5th Troop had three Foxes and one Ferret, which was typical of the Sabre troop at the time.

The second drill night, I started to hear the names of some very odd ranks – Corporal of Horse this and Corporal Major that. These were the ranks of the regular instructors of the Household Cavalry and meant learning a whole new rank structure. Lance Corporals with two stripes and Full Corporals with three stripes, for example.

On my very first weekend exercise, we were drawing equipment and I made the mistake of calling the Squadron Quarter Master Corporal 'Staff'. The next thing I knew, I was getting the hairdryer treatment and my newly shrunk beret was now at the other end of the drill hall. The next time I drew kit, I addressed him in the correct manner but managed to upset him even more this time with the shape of my beret. In those days, berets in the Royal Armoured Corps were usually worn pulled over to the right but also slightly over to the left to accommodate headphones. I was pretty pleased with mine. The SQMC (SQIMPS) rushed over to me, grabbed my beret from my head and threw it across the drill hall again screaming "How many \*\*\*\*\* tanks have you been in?" So I returned to the down one side beret style for a few months until I had a trade.

Later that year, during the summer, the Sqn held an open day at Squerries Court in Kent. My parents and my grandmother were attending the parade, so I was keen to show off a bit. The parade went well and our drills were quite good considering we had no rehearsal time. This was the first time I'd seen our full dress uniform.

This job usually fell to the smallest man in the squadron because the uniform was original. After the parade, we all got changed into combats and some competitions took place, such as tent pegging with a lance but using a Ferret instead of a horse. I was selected by the OC to drive a Fox in a mock battle display.



Having politely pointed out that I had not passed a driving and maintenance course on Fox and up to that time had only driven Ferret I decided not to push it and jumped into the driving seat. I knew how to drive one but had no experience in cross-country. I put my foot down a bit too eagerly and we flew off towards the pretend bridge at the base of a hill. I could hear the Commander yelling at me to slow down but it was too late. We skidded straight into another Fox and sheered the wheel right off. Thankfully, no one was hurt. I was very embarrassed but most of the blokes were supportive and treated it lightheartedly. The sergeant in the now three wheeled Fox called me Basher Bamfield for the rest of the year.

I became Sgt Adamthwaite's Driver in Fox and began to acquire the trades necessary to command an armoured vehicle. The Sqn attended camp and this was to include the first Royal Yeomanry parade. After two week on exercise in East Anglia the Regiment gathered at Thetford. I remember some members of HQ troop playing original German panzer marching songs very loudly in the accommodation before the parade. This might seem odd considering our Regimental history but every unit has its fair share of characters.



About a year later, I was sent to the Household Cavalry barracks at Windsor for my NCO cadre. This meant a lot of drill and taking command of a squad on the square. A couple of us managed to bring back ammo boots procured from a Corporal of Horse. Ammo boots were worn by the Guards Division for No 1 and 2 dress and a few members of the squadron owned them. The Regiment took part in Crusader 80 and Cpl Mike Tregent and I were asked to kick off the exercise with a drive around Horse Guards Parade for the press. This was the largest overseas deployment of troops since WW2, so there was quite a lot of publicity in the press and TV. About this time, we had a new Adjutant

arrive – Captain ‘Noddy’ Holdsworth from 1st The Queens Dragoon Guards. Word quickly got around that he was a close friend of Captain Mark Philips and that his nickname for the Captain was Foggy due to the fact he was thick and wet. He also was a very good fly fisher spending what seemed to be a lot of time practicing his casting techniques on the square.

Occasionally I would take a day off from college and volunteer for duty delivering vehicles for repair or recruitment days. On one such day, I volunteered to attend a memorial service at Westminster Abbey. I was the only member of the Sqn attending the morning part of the service. Corporal Tim Rayson from 3 Troop would be arriving later with other members of C Sqn. It was a cold November morning and we had not been issued great coats. I made my way to the 3rd /4th county of London Yeomanry plot. Each soldier killed in action had his own small wooden cross with a poppy attached. There were at least 300 crosses.



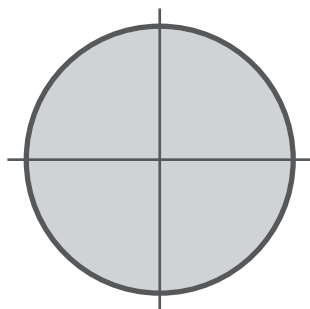


Gradually, other soldiers started to arrive and soon there were many different variants of No 2 dress about. Most soldiers were without great coats so I stopped complaining to myself about the cold. Many veterans had arrived and I was chatting away to one when an association member who had greeted me at the Abbey earlier interrupted me. I turned and standing in front of me was the Queen Mother. I snapped to attention. I was introduced as a member of the Royal Yeomanry and he reminded Her Royal Highness that she was the Colonel in Chief of the Regiment. I'm sure she didn't need reminding. The Queen Mother looked me in the eye in the same way my grandmother used to when I'd been naughty. A kind of gentle half-glare. HRH then proceeded to the next plot. I later met up with more members of C Sqn and we visited the Army Museum in Chelsea to fill in some time before the evening service

The curator came down to say hello and kindly showed us around. On our way back to the Abbey, two policemen near Sloane Square Station approached us. They obviously confused us with Military Policemen because of our red service caps. "A lot of squaddies in town, eh? Let us know if you need a hand." We just played along and tried not to laugh. At that time, you didn't see many soldiers in uniform on the streets because of the IRA threat. We then met with Tim Rayson and made our way back to the Abbey. Our role that evening was to mount a Guard at the tomb of the Unknown Warrior. We were marched in along both sides of the tomb and the service began. Afterwards, Tim Rayson lightened the mood with the offer of a few pints. A great day and one that made a change from the servicing of our vehicles or exercises.

Being part of a Sabre Troop in the *Sharpshooters* was an amazing and rewarding experience. It was the cold war and we only had the Warsaw Pact to worry about in those days. I met some fantastic people from many walks of life. I also received a leg up in my civilian career. I had met a captain from HQ Squadron in Germany. He worked for the advertising agency Davidson Pierce in Knightsbridge. He kindly helped me gain a few weeks work experience at the agency and from there I was able to network into other agencies. During my time with C Squadron I made an illustration of a Fox and presented it to the Mess. Unfortunately, this has since gone missing. I have now created a new version based on a photograph of the original sent to me by Boris Mollo. Copies can be obtained through Tim Rayson.





# **THE ONES THAT GOT AWAY**

## **Regimental Battle Honours for World War II**

**by Boris Mollo**

Battle Honours for World War II were recommended by the War Office Battle Honours Committee, which worked for ten years after the end of the war before issuing a pamphlet entitled 'The Official Names of the Battles, Actions and Engagements Fought by the Land Forces of the Commonwealth During the Second World War 1939-1945' (KSY:1961-12-1). This comprised a list of nine hundred and seventy battle honours divided into theatres of war. Regiments had to submit a return listing the battle honours, taken from this list, to which they considered themselves entitled. In 1956 *3/4CLY* submitted a list of sixty-two battle honours (KSY:1961-12-2). A year later, the War Office Battle Honours Committee recommended the granting of forty-two battle honours. This was the most of any regiment in the Royal Armoured Corps, regular or territorial, other than the *11th Hussars*.

This article considers those twenty battle honours which were not accepted by the Honours Committee. It is not clear how the initial list was compiled by the *Regiment*. Our copy of the pamphlet of Official Names has pencil marks against those battle honours which were submitted but no other correspondence survives and it is not clear how the list was justified. At that time the *Regiment* no longer retained copies of its war diaries, which have only in more recent times been obtained in photocopy form. This article has, therefore, been able to take into account the war diaries which almost always give an indication of how much action occurred on any particular day. This shows that, in a number of instances, the Regiment was not in action on the days on which the honours list was based but in some other instances, they were fully involved and should perhaps have been entitled to the honour.

In the following narrative, battle honours which were awarded are noted in CAPITALS, those which were applied for but refused are in *CAPITAL ITALICS*.

The two *Sharpshooter Regiments*, *3CLY* and *4CLY* which, together with the *2nd Royal Gloucestershire Hussars* formed the *22nd Armoured Brigade*, first saw action in the Western Desert in November 1941 as part of Operation Crusader which was intended to retake the eastern end of Libya and relieve the siege of Tobruk. The Brigade task was to loop around to the south and advance on the enemy held airfields at SIDI REZEGH and El Adem. On November 19th they first encountered the German and Italian forces in a heavily defended position near EL GUBI, which they overran, but at the cost of heavy casualties both by enemy action and by breakdowns. They were then ordered to press

on to SIDI REZEGH airfield and for the next four days, November 19th–23rd, they were involved in fierce battles on and around the airfield for which the battle honour was duly awarded.

Rommel now turned the Afrika Korps east towards the Egyptian border with the aim of cutting off the forward British troops and cutting off their supply lines. *3CLY* and *4CLY* remained in the SIDI REZEGH area and were involved in several minor actions. It would appear that it was these actions that prompted the *Regiment* to apply for the honour *TAIEB EL ESSEM*. However this was turned down as it was intended for those regiments attempting to break through to Tobruk and the *11th Hussars* were the only British regiment involved in this action.

Eventually Rommel outstretched his supplies and was forced to retire to the Gazala line west of Benghazi, allowing Tobruk to be relieved. The allies advanced west past Benghazi until they came up against the new German defensive line at El Agheila. On December 27th–28th, *3CLY* and *4CLY* saw a couple of days of fierce action at CHOR ES SOFAN.

*22nd Armoured Brigade* was then sent back to Cairo for refitting which included the issue of the new General Grant tank. They returned to the Western Desert in April 1942 where they formed part of the GAZALA line. On the night May 26th/27th, the Afrika Korps attacked once more sweeping around to the south of Bir Hachim and then north to cut off Benghazi and Tobruk. There followed several weeks of bitter fighting as the British were forced back into Egypt and eventually to the El Alamein line. The two *Sharpshooter Regiments* were awarded a total of ten battle honours for this phase including two (HAGIAG ER RAML and POINT 93) which are unique to the *Sharpshooters*. The only honour which was refused was *KNIGHTSBRIDGE*, a defensive box around which there was intensive fighting at the start of Rommel's offensive. This battle honour covered two periods of fighting, June 6th/7th and June 11th–13th. According to their war diaries both *3CLY* and *4CLY* were very much involved at both times. The honour HAGIAG ER RAML was awarded specifically for the period June 11th–13th so it does appear that there was a good case to have been awarded *KNIGHTSBRIDGE* as well.

Following the battle of ALAM EL HALFA, *3CLY* and *4CLY* were split and, on the toss of a coin, *3CLY* left *22nd Armoured Brigade* for *4th Armoured Brigade* and were withdrawn from the line to convert to Sherman tanks and to prepare for the invasion of Sicily.

*4CLY* went on to fight at EL ALAMEIN and took part in the pursuit of the Afrika Korps through Libya into Tunisia. When Rommel launched his final unsuccessful counter attack at *MEDENINE*, *4CLY* were present but held back in reserve and, as the war diary states, "...had no chance to shoot" and so the refusal of this honour is understandable. Rommel's final defensive position south of Tunis was the Mareth Line, a feature of which was the wadi (river) AKARIT. Here, on April 6th 1943, *4CLY* played an important part in supporting infantry brigades who were attacking the DJEBEL ROUMANA ridge and this action provided two of our battle honours. A further two actions on the same day, *DJEBEL EL MEIDA* and *WADI AKARIT EAST*, were applied for but turned down, as they were engagements involving particular infantry battalions. On May 7th 1943, *4CLY* followed the *11th Hussars* into TUNIS to mark the end of the

desert campaign. The war diary notes some minor skirmishes with some remaining pockets of resistance but the main work seems to have been to cope with increasing numbers of prisoners. It does note that, by May 9th, "...a leave party was allowed to go into Tunis where they were met by a cheering crowd". A bid for the battle honour *DJEBEL TEBAGA* awarded for action on those days was not accepted.

*3CLY* returned to action in July 1943 with the invasion of Sicily which brought four battle honours, all that were applied for. Surprisingly, although it was one of the hardest fought battles of the war, the *Regiment* neither applied for nor received the battle honour of *PRIMOSOLE BRIDGE*, presumably assuming that it came under the general heading of *SIMETO BRIDGEHEAD*, (the river that the Primosole Bridge crossed). They moved on to Italy on September 22nd 1943 ("uneventful voyage, catering arrangements very bad" says the war diary) and landed unopposed at Taranto. From there they moved up the east coast.

*4CLY* coincidentally also landed in Italy on September 22nd 1943, although they landed on the west coast at *SALERNO*. The original landings at Salerno had taken place two weeks earlier and by the time *22nd Armoured Brigade* landed, the worst of the fighting was over. The *Regiment* applied for the battle honours of *SALERNO* and *BATTIPLAGIA* but were refused as both honours were restricted to the first week of the landings. A month later, they were involved in the *VOLTURNO CROSSING* where they faced more problems from the weather than from the enemy, the only casualty noted in the war diary being one drowned tank. They also bid, unsuccessfully, for two other honours over this period, *MONTE MARO* and *ROCCHETTA E CROCO*, but these appear to have been minor infantry engagements and neither are mentioned in the war diary. With weather worsening *4CLY* were pulled out of the line and sailed for England on December 20th.

*3CLY* on the east coast had similar problems with two river lines, the *SANGRO* which they finally crossed on November 28th and the *Moro* which they tried and failed to cross on December 6th/7th. The *SANGRO* honour was awarded, and was one of those honours selected to be carried on the Guidon, but although the war diary notes a fair amount of action on the *Moro*, the *Regiment* was unsuccessful in bidding for *THE MORO*. *3CLY* embarked for England on January 27th 1944.

After several welcome months in England, *3CLY* and *4CLY* were both landed in Normandy on D+1, June 7th 1944. The first in action were 'A' Squadron, *3CLY*, detached the same day to support infantry attacking the radar station at Douvres, but having met strong resistance, they were withdrawn to allow the RAF to bomb the area. It was presumably for this action that the honour *PORT EN BESSIN* was applied for but refused as it applied only to those units involved in defending the area where the Mulberry harbour was being set up. Three further battle honours for engagements during the first week ashore, *CAMBES*, *LE MESNIL PATRY* and *BREVILLE* were applied for but refused. The war diaries confirm that both *Regiments* were held in reserve during this period and saw little action beyond suffering some casualties from enemy bombardment and snipers.

*4CLY* were next involved in leading the *7th Armoured Division* first to *TILLY SUR SEULLES*, which fell on June 11th, and then on to *VILLERS BOCAGE* which was their first battle honour of the Normandy Campaign. A bid was also made for *TILLY*

*SUR SEULLES*. The war diary shows that the *Regiment* was fully involved in that area on June 11th-12th but the bid failed apparently because the qualification dates had been set for June 14th-19th. By this time *4CLY* having suffered heavy casualties at *VILLERS BOCAGE* had been withdrawn.

From June 26th-July 1st, *3CLY* were involved in Operation Epsom, the attempt to encircle Caen from the west, and then to fight off the counterattack by the II SS Panzer Corps. For this action the *Regiment* was awarded the battle honours *ODON* and *DEFENCE OF RAURAY* but were turned down *CHEUX*, although they did see action in that area on the specified dates.

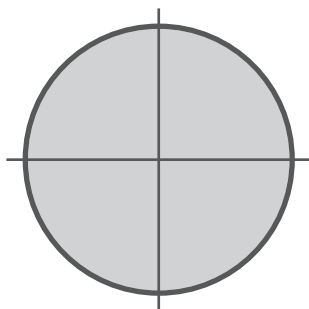
The last battle before the amalgamation of *3CLY* and *4CLY* was *Operation Goodwood*, the attempt to break through to the south east of Caen by launching three armoured divisions, but which had only limited success due to the effective defence in depth by the German armour. On the opening day, July 18th, *4CLY* were involved but were the last to start and saw little action on that day, although they were involved over the next few days holding the ground taken against counter attacks. The battle honour *BOURGUEBUS RIDGE* was awarded for this action but the bid for *MALTOT*, a village in the area but which is not mentioned in the war diary, was turned down.

The amalgamation of *3CLY* and *4CLY* took place on Carpiquet Airfield on July 31st. *3/4CLY* were soon back in action and continued the *Sharpshooter* tradition for the remaining nine months of the war in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany, gaining a further six battle honours with no further refusals.

It does appear from this resume that, of the twenty battle honours that were refused, there are only four where the war diaries show that the *Regiment* was fully engaged on the dates in question. These are *KNIGHTSBRIDGE*, *THE MORO*, *TILLY SUR SEULLES* and *CHEUX*.

*The Kent Yeomanry* served as Royal Artillery in World War II and so were not awarded battle honours as the Royal Artillery traditionally has just one battle honour 'Ubique' ('Everywhere'). However, those Yeomanry Regiments which had served as Gunners, and subsequently became part of the Royal Armoured Corps, are entitled to carry theatre honours on their Guidon, an entitlement which was missed when our Guidon was presented in 1963. In 2009, the Army Honours and Distinctions Committee, with the approval of HM The Queen, agreed that the *Kent and Sharpshooters Yeomanry* should be allowed the Royal Artillery Honorary Distinction with Theatre Scrolls "North West Europe", "North Africa", "Italy", and an overall date scroll "1940, 42-45".





# **THE YEOMANRY PATROL OF THE LONG RANGE DESERT GROUP**

**(Part 3)**

**by Dave Whitehouse**

As we learned from Parts 1 and 2 in the 2009 and 2010 Newsletters, men from both the *Sharpshooters* and the *Kent Yeomanry* served with the famous *Long Range Desert Group (LRDG)* during World War II. At the conclusion of the desert campaign, the LRDG were deployed to the Mediterranean and Aegean theatres.

The ill-fated campaign in the Dodecanese Islands towards the end of 1943 resulted in many LRDG men, including Sharpshooter Graham Warrington of Y Patrol being taken prisoner on the island of Levitha. Survivors were withdrawn to re-join the rest of the LRDG on Leros.

The disaster on Levitha was a huge blow for the LRDG. After a conference with his officers, the CO felt that the group should be withdrawn. Consequently Captain Guild was sent to Cairo to convey this to the staff at GHQ. On his arrival, he learned that the New Zealand government had already demanded the immediate withdrawal of the New Zealand Squadron as they had been committed to a new theatre of operations without government consent. As it was argued that replacements could not be quickly be found or trained the New Zealand government agreed to delay their withdrawal until trained replacements were available.

Meanwhile British forces on Leros braced themselves for the inevitable German onslaught. The garrison of some three thousand troops was disposed as follows; the Royal Irish Fusiliers held the central feature of Meriviglia; The Buffs were sent to the north of the island, whilst the King's Own were sent to the south. These meagre forces were supplemented by a battery of 25-Pdr guns and a dozen anti-aircraft guns.

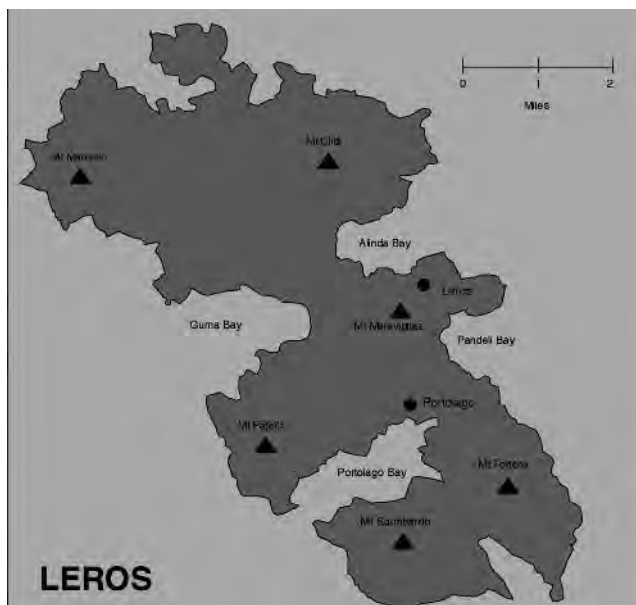
It was decided that David Lloyd Owen should go back to Egypt with the aim of recruiting and training more men for the LRDG to make up for recent losses. He left aboard an Italian submarine and after five hair-raising days at sea arrived in Haifa. From there he made his way to Cairo arriving on the 12th November 1943 just as the battle for Leros was beginning.

On that day over 500 German troops landed from the sea on the north, whilst 500 paratroopers dropped onto the narrow isthmus that divided the island. As soon as the paratroops landed, LRDG patrols were sent off to deal with them. Sadly, Alan Redfern of A Squadron who went out with the patrol was killed.

Although British ground forces met with some success, German air superiority would be the deciding factor. It was not long before most of the British air defences were knocked out, as well as the 25-Pdr guns. That night further enemy reinforcements were landed from the convoys that had lain off shore. This was followed by another paratroop

assault the following day. On the night of the 15th November, Jake Easonsmith was killed by a sniper whilst leading a patrol into the village of Leros to ascertain the strength of the enemy there.

On the 16th November, the British headquarters at Meraviglia was attacked, and eventually overwhelmed. Guy Prendergast who had been sent away to organise a counter-attack decided to attempt an escape with the LRDG.



By the 17th November, with the Brigadier and his staff having surrendered, most organised resistance had crumbled, but fighting continued in one or two isolated pockets around the island. A party of LRDG under John Olivey had already beaten one attack on the heights of Clidi, but were forced to destroy the coastal guns they were protecting, when their capture seemed imminent.

Learning that the rest of the garrison had almost certainly surrendered, Olivey ordered his men to withdraw to the north. He then returned alone to the gun position to destroy the magazine. After the laying the charges he went in search of special matches to light the fuses, but happened upon two German soldiers whom he was forced to shoot. Making a hasty withdrawal, Olivey made his way to the patrol RV which he found unoccupied. It was here that overtaken by exhaustion, Olivey fell asleep. When he awoke, he found two German officers with some men at the foot of his bed, and was taken prisoner.

So the battle of Leros came to a close. At the surrender a total of 123 LRDG men of all ranks were on the island. Although many of these had eventually been captured, a considerable number were able to make good their escape and by the end of the month just under seventy had returned. Many more would come in over the ensuing weeks and months.



With such crippling losses coming so soon after those of Levitha, it was clear to Lloyd Owen in Palestine, and now in command of the LRDG, that the unit would have to be rebuilt. To compound the problem, despite pleas to General Freyberg, the New Zealand government felt it could no longer maintain the squadron due to urgently needed reinforcement of the New Zealand Division in Italy. A date had now been set for their withdrawal on the 29th December 1943.

It was at this time that the Rhodesian patrol received a visit from the Rhodesian Air Minister, who was visiting the Middle East. David Lloyd Owen took the opportunity to persuade him that the LRDG was in need of more Rhodesians to increase them to squadron size. Luckily his views fell on sympathetic ears, and after the Minister returned home, the LRDG began to receive more reinforcements from Rhodesia.

So, by the middle of December 1943, the LRDG was able to re-organise into two squadrons once more; a UK squadron under Moir Stormonth-Darling and a Rhodesian squadron under desert veteran Ken Lazarus.

It was this time that Y Patrol was joined by a Kent Yeoman, Cyril Smith. He had joined the 97th (Kent Yeomanry) Field Regiment Royal Artillery in May 1939, and after mobilisation had gone to France with the regiment, only to be evacuated at Dunkirk during Operation Dynamo in May 1940. When the regiment went overseas to Iraq and then to the Western Desert, Cyril had gone with it. After El Alamein, the Kent Yeomanry had been sent to garrison Cyprus. Cyril was now fed up with garrison duties on the island. After an interview with the Commanding Officer, it was suggested that he might be suited to joining one of the Special Service units. Thus on 18th December 1943 Cyril Smith was taken on the strength of the Long Range Desert Group.

LRDG veteran Jimmy Patch recalls *"He had a splendid moustache and was known as Tashy. He had a most earnest manner and curiously was a close friend of one of the most colourful characters the LRDG ever produced, Capt. Archie Gibson MM."*



Some members of Y Patrol in Syria c1943. Back row l-r: Brian Springford (NSY), Ken Smith (R. Signals), 'Micky' Coombs (NSY), Capt Archie Gibson (Scots Guards), Don Cashin (CheshireY). Front row l-r: 'Jesus' Armstrong (CheshireY), Cyril 'Tashy' Smith (Kent Yeomanry). *I am indebted to Ian Chard for this photograph*

The group was now based at Azzib, an Arab village north of Haifa and to close to the border with Syria. There was much work to do; new men to train, new equipment to be got; and a thousand and one other tasks, not least of which was finding a new role.

Early in the new year, by which time the New Zealanders had left amidst much sadness, the LRDG started training in earnest. Parachute training at Ramat David, was followed by another stint at the Mountain Warfare School at Cedars. This was interspersed with small boat handling, courtesy of their old friends the SBS, explosives training, navigation exercises, and even the handling of pack animals.

On the 28th February 1944, Lloyd Owen flew to Field Marshal's Headquarters in Caserta, Italy to discuss the LRDG's future. Lloyd Owen had long seen opportunities for the LRDG to be employed in the Balkans. He managed to get an interview with General Harding, Alexander's Chief of Staff, where it was agreed that the group should move to Italy once its training was completed, where it would operate directly under the headquarters. A suitable base was identified at Rodi, and plans were made for transporting the group from Palestine on the next available convoy.

Because of the rapid advance of Allied forces in Italy, there was little scope for the immediate employment of the LRDG in that theatre. Various schemes had been put forward for operations behind enemy lines, but these were cancelled at the last minute.

With mounting frustration, Lloyd Owen paid another visit to Caserta, and suggested that one squadron could be used to support the partisans in the Balkans, and this was agreed. Consequently on the 7th May the Rhodesian Squadron moved to Bari to be close to the HQ of 'Force 266' which was responsible for co-ordinating operations in that theatre.

On the 16th May 1944, the first patrol since the Leros disaster, set out, to reconnoitre a radar station on Corfu. The patrol, under Stan Eastwood was landed by boat, and when it returned a couple of days later, it had obtained a comprehensive picture of the enemy dispositions on the island.

This success was soon followed by another, when a patrol under 'Jacks' Jackson was parachuted into Albania. After four days the party was picked up with full details of the enemy's presence in the area.

In early June, Eighth Army HQ had called on the LRDG to send out several patrols by air to report on enemy movements by road north of Rome. Two patrols were despatched on the night of the 12th June with a further two, the night after. These early parachute operations were not successful. The leader of the first patrol was killed when his parachute failed to open, whilst the second patrol was landed some dozen miles away from the objective, and many patrol members were captured.

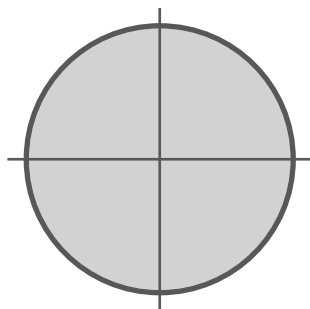
Meanwhile Lloyd Owen turned his attention to potential operations in the Dalmatian Islands. Like the Aegean, there was a requirement to watch enemy shipping movements.

In order for these patrols to operate effectively without reliance on the Royal Navy, Lloyd Owen sought to obtain his own craft. Accordingly, he obtained a motor fishing vessel named 'La Palma'. This was suitably modified for LRDG use and Alan Denniff, now a Captain, became skipper, whilst another Y Patrol desert veteran 'Titch' Cave became bosun.

Further patrols were sent out from the Rhodesian Squadron. One was sent out to investigate a German lookout station on the Albanian coast which was monitoring Allied shipping movements in the area. It was soon discovered that the station was heavily protected and would be difficult to attack. A raiding party was organised by Lloyd Owen, and with naval gunfire support from several destroyers, a successful attack was mounted on the station.

Meanwhile Stormonth-Darling was making plans to send in several patrols from his squadron to support partisans in northern Italy. Although these were initially agreed, by early August all had been cancelled, much to the disappointment of the men.

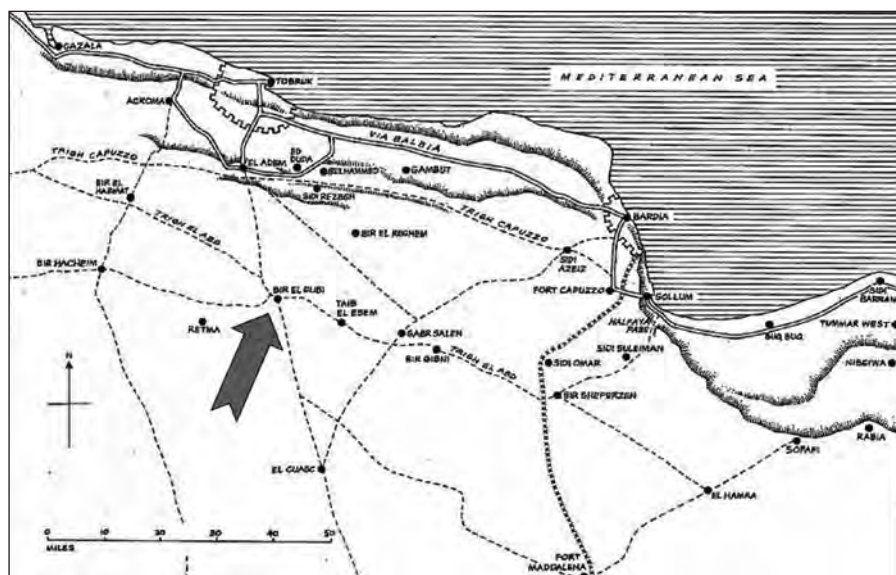
As there appeared to be no more suitable tasks for the LRDG in that theatre, the group was placed under the command of the newly formed Land Forces Adriatic (LFA), and ceased to be answerable to Alexander's HQ. It was agreed at this time that the LRDG's role was to be 'primarily recce', whilst that of the Special Boat Service who was also under the command of the LFA, was to be 'primarily beat-up'



## THE ROAD TO BIR EL GUBI

by Roy Cawston and David Hannam

This year is the 70th Anniversary of the first action of The Sharpshooters in WWII at Bir El Gubi in the Libyan Desert, or Cyrenaica as it was then known.



*Operation Crusader* started on the night of 18th November 1941 and there are many vivid and well written accounts of the part the *3rd CLY (Sharpshooters)* and *4th CLY (Sharpshooters)* Regiments played in *Operation Crusader*.

In 2003, David Hannam interviewed a veteran of the battle Roy Cawston in a live double act on stage at Bexleyheath TAC during an Open Day ... the session was billed as "The Road to Bir El Gubi" and was filmed for The AGIUS Sound and Vision collection ... here is the script.

### **1938/9 Recruiting drive following the failure of the Munich Agreement**

With Conscription already on the Statute Book this recruiting drive effectively doubled the strength of the Territorial Army. Some county regiments were able to form as many as four additional TA battalions.

As far as the *Sharpshooters* were concerned all recruits signed up for ***3rd County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters)*** aka *23rd London Armoured Car Company (Sharpshooters)*. When *3rd CLY* had recruited up to its War Establishment there was a sufficient number left over to form a second line regiment. It was only in the Spring of 1939, not long before both regiments were due to go to annual camp, that it was decided to name the second regiment ***4th County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters)***.

The horrors of the First World War were only twenty years away and very much to the forefront of the national memory so the mood was certainly not jingoistic. More recently, world attention had been focused on Mussolini's conquest of Abyssinia and the Spanish Civil War where the Axis Powers (Italy and Germany) and the Soviet Union had respectively backed opposing sides in the conflict, which turned out to be a dress rehearsal for things to come.

It was no co-incidence that the film of H G Wells' book *Things To Come* was a box office success at that time.

So what were the motives of all these volunteers? Of course with Conscription on the horizon we were getting in on the ground floor and able to choose whatever branch of the services took our fancy (always provided one was accepted). Then by joining up we acquired an extra two weeks annual holiday at the Government's expense plus a minuscule Bounty and payment for attendance at 'Drills'. These were hardly big inducements. It was really a case of 'What shall I join?' rather than 'Shall I join?' The majority of my contemporaries were joining up and I never considered not doing so. I duly offered my services to King George VI at the Drill Hall in Allitsen Road, St John's Wood and was accepted with the minimum of fuss and a most perfunctory medical examination. The fact that I possessed a full driving licence was probably a factor – but I was now a *Sharpshooter*.

My parents' reaction to my joining the TA was supportive, if not ecstatic. They had married in 1916 in wartime when my father was a member of the Home Defence Volunteers. My mother's war work in the 1914-1918 conflict was with the *Westminster Bank* in Stratford, Essex. She was among the first women to be employed by the banks, although by the end of that war the number of female bank clerks had greatly increased. My mother and father were thus no strangers to a wartime environment and accepted my decision without demur.

In order to earn the bounty awarded to TA members one was required to attend a stipulated number of two-hourly drills and a fortnight's camp every year.

Our drills were mainly concerned with getting to know the vagaries of military discipline and square-bashing. Much of the latter followed the Cavalry manual of drill for dismounted troops, a highly complex system of movements which assumed one was still mounted on a horse! Alas, along with the rest of the Army, we were soon to have to learn an entirely new system – namely 'Threes Drill' – so a lot of our early efforts were wasted.

We were also introduced to the mysteries of the Vickers machine gun and were taught how to strip and re-assemble its complicated lock, blindfold. We also learned the mandatory responses to the Instructor's class room questions such as "What do you do if the water-jacket runs dry?" Answer: "You take the muzzle cup to the fusee spring and fill from there". Or: "What happens if you have a runaway gun?" Answer: "You mount the tripod and ride after it." It was predictable that all our hard work in this connection was largely wasted. When later *4th CLY* received their first Mk VIc Light tanks, we discovered that they were armed with Besa machine guns not Vickers!

Most of our drills took place in the car park at the Nursery End of Lord's Cricket Ground or on the parade ground of the Royal Horse Artillery barracks in Ordnance Hill, St. John's Wood, under the aegis and watchful eye of PSI Jock Campbell resplendent in *Sharpshooter* 'blues'.

*3rd CLY* went to camp at Popham near Micheldever for the last two weeks in July 1939. They left the tents, armoured cars and transport in situ for *4th CLY* to take over for the first two weeks of August. The weather was extremely wet for *3rd CLY*'s camp and all other first line TA units who customarily camped at that time. The papers were full of harrowing pictures of 'Terriers Camp in Mud' etc. *4th CLY* and the other 'second liners' certainly had the better of the weather deal.

The *Sharpshooters* were armed with Crossley, Lanchester and Rolls Royce armoured cars plus one or two Vickers (2 man) Light Tanks and a few Medium tanks for training purposes.

For the duration of the camp I had charge of a 15cwt Morris Commercial Portee in which I roamed (officially!) the length and breadth of Hampshire as SQMS Hill's driver. The big scheme of the fortnight took place in the New Forest when we managed to penetrate as far as Lepe on the Solent coast.

Joint Air Exercises with the RAF and the French Armée de l'Air were a feature of the skies over southern England at the time.

At the beginning of 1939 gas masks had been issued to the civilian population. In fact, *4th CLY* took theirs to camp with them: service respirators were not issued to them until the end of 1939 in the third month of the War.

Blackout came into force two or three days before war broke out. Shields with slits had to be fitted to all private and public transport. Train compartments had their blinds drawn at night and blue bulbs were fitted.

The imminence of war meant that many personnel designated as 'key men', did not return home from camp, they being retained in uniform to cope with mobilisation which was just round the corner.

The days that followed our brief return to Civvy Street saw little clerical work done by me and my fellow juniors at the office – that was left to our seniors and betters!

My task along with other members of The Employers' Liability Assurance Corporation Ltd's sports club was to fill and position sandbags to protect the ground floor of our Head Office, Hamilton House, on the corner of Temple Avenue and the Victoria Embankment immediately opposite HMS President, the floating Headquarters of the London Division of the RNRV.



Vickers Mk VIc

Being so near Fleet Street, we were able to keep abreast of the course of world events by reading the constantly changing newsbills on the sides of the delivery vans of the *Evening News*, the *Evening Standard* and the *Star*, all of which were printed nearby. The news became progressively worse. August 24th saw Regular Reservists recalled to the colours and the Air Raid Precautions (ARP) organisation was alerted. Then on September 1st evacuation of children and expectant mothers from the cities began, the Territorial Army was embodied and the blackout was imposed that same night. Those of us who belonged to the TA along with other Volunteer Reservists bade farewell to our office colleagues and made our way home 'to break the news to Mum'. In fact mother needed no telling that her son was 'off to the war' because the BBC News Service had kept the country informed of events minute by minute as they happened. Members of the Territorial Army and the other Volunteer Reserve Forces were instructed to report to their units forthwith. It was time to kiss the girls goodbye, put on our uniforms, pack our kitbags and report to our various headquarters.

### **Random thoughts on everyday life in Greater London 1939**

**Radio** always referred to as "**the Wireless**".

**Television** definitely in its infancy. Probably only a few thousand sets in London. 9 inch screens.

**British Rail** had not yet been born. There were the four Mainline Railway Companies: **GWR**, **LM&SR**, **LNER** and **SR**. All were steam-operated except for **SR** whose suburban services had been electrified.



In August 1939, an adult **3rd class quarterly season ticket to Waterloo from Claygate (16 miles)** cost **£4**.

The **Underground** consisted of the **Northern, Bakerloo, Central, Piccadilly, District and Metropolitan Lines**.

A **tramway** network covered most of Greater London and parts of the City itself, although trams were beginning to be phased out in favour of trolley-buses.

**Imperial Airways** operated out of **Croydon Airport**.

Trans-Atlantic flights by **Short** 'Empire' flying boats had only recently begun scheduled flights. Competition was with the US **Boeing** 'Clippers'.

**Cigarettes** : 20 Players cost 11½d and could be obtained from machines by inserting one shilling – a half-penny change was tucked in the cellophane wrapping.

**Beer**. A pint of mild & bitter cost **9d**.

**Milk** cost **4d** a pint.

**Bread**. A large white loaf (unwrapped and unsliced of course) cost **4½d**.

**Potatoes** (old), cost between **1½d and 2d per pound**.

My **salary** as a junior clerk when I joined the *Sharpshooters* aged 18½ was **£65 pa**.

**Banknotes**. Three sizes of note were in use: **10/-, £1 and £5**. The latter was largest and was printed in black on white paper. Larger denominations existed, but were not in general circulation – they were also black on white and the same size as a 'fiver'.

**Stamps**. **1d** (postcard), **1½d** (2oz. Letter). – **2d** (receipt)

## **Training in U.K. 3rd September 1939 to 14th August 1941**

### **Formations:**

Shortly after the start of the war we learned that we were destined to be armoured regiments. This heralded the formation of the **Royal Armoured Corps** to include all the Army's cavalry regiments and the **Royal Tank Corps** whose numbered battalions now became **Royal Tank Regiments**. Several, but not all, **Yeomanry** regiments such as the **Sharpshooters** and **2nd Royal Gloucestershire Hussars** became part of the new corps.

Both *Sharpshooter Regiments*, **3rd CLY** and **4th CLY**, together with **2nd Royal Gloucestershire Hussars**, made up the **22nd Armoured Brigade** part of **2nd Armoured Division** (silver knight's helmet and visor on a red square).

**3rd CLY** and **4th CLY** were stationed in West Somerset and North Devon until Christmas 1939 when the Brigade was effectively formed in the Dukeries area of Nottinghamshire.

By May 1940, **3rd CLY** were equipped with **Light Tank MkVI b** (1 x Vickers .303 m/g, 1 x Vickers .50 m/g). **4th CLY** had the **MkVIc** version (1 x Besa 7.92 mm m/g, 1 x Besa 15mm m/g). During the course of the latter half of 1940 and early 1941 the two Regiments gravitated towards the **A15 Cruiser MkVI Crusader I** tank with which they were equipped when they left UK. In the interim they had trained on the **A13 MkIV Cruiser** and the **MkV 'Covenanter'** (of unhappy memory).

No sooner had we received our full complement of tanks, (we were then in Northamptonshire, whence we had moved from Nottinghamshire in May 1940) than we had to surrender them to a brigade of the *1st Armoured Division* who had lost theirs in France when they came out of Dunkirk. We also swapped Divisions and became part of *1st Armoured Division* (white rhino on black oval).

In October 1940 the Brigade moved from Cambridgeshire to the Surrey/Sussex border where it remained until June 1941. In February 1941 the Brigade went to the ranges at Linney Head, Pembrokeshire (later called Castle Martin) for its one and only 'all crews' practice firing of its 2 pounder guns before going into action! Moved to Warminster and Salisbury Plain in June 1941 prior to embarkation for Egypt in mid-August of that year.



Cruiser Mk 6 A13

### Armament:

The **Crusader I** weighed **18 tons**. Its engine, housed in the rear compartment of the hull, was a de-rated WW1 American '**Liberty**' III petrol driven, aero engine of 340-hp. Manufactured by **Nuffield** and **LM&SR**.

The maximum thickness of its armour was **40mm**. It was recognised that this was too thin when it was designed in 1939, but in the post-

Munich panic rearmament it had been ordered 'off the drawing board'.

The suspension was the famous Christie design with five pairs of road wheels – their springs were located inside the hull. Steering was by means of hydraulically controlled epicyclic gearboxes connected to the respective driving sprockets at the rear end. The engine's gearbox was gated and required double de-clutching when changing gear.

The **Crusader** was the last tank to be designed to the '**cruiser**' concept, i.e. a lightweight cavalry tank for reconnaissance and deep penetration. It was capable of speeds in excess of 30 mph.

Dimensions: Length 20ft. Height 7ft 4ins. Width 8ft 8ins.

110 gallons of **petrol** gave it a range of about 200 miles.

The **driver's position** was in the offside front of the hull. His armour-plated hatch had an armoured glass visor and a split flap roof.

Beside the driver (nearside front), was a manually operated bow turret designed to contain a Besa 7.92mm m/g. The position was never used for its designed purpose and was used by us as extra storage space for the crew's kit.

The fighting compartment occupied the centre of the hull where the hydraulically driven turret was suspended from a toothed turret ring six-feet in diameter. The turret carried the armament in the form of a 40mm 2 pounder semi-automatic quick-firing gun coaxially mounted with a Besa 7.92mm machine gun. There was racking for 110 rounds of AP 2 pounder rounds and 4500 rounds of Besa ammunition. The main gun

was not mechanically stabilised. The **gunner's position** was on the left front of the turret compartment with the breeches of gun and machine gun alongside his right shoulder. His telescope was in front of him and he had pistol grip triggers for both guns for his right hand. Elevation between  $-15^{\circ}$  and  $+20^{\circ}$  was by means of a padded 'C' shaped rest on the mounting into which the gunner fitted his right shoulder. You will no doubt find it surprising that despite the lack of any gun stabilisation our tank gunners were trained to fire on the move. The gunner could traverse the turret  $360^{\circ}$  either clockwise or anti-clockwise by means of a spade grip with his left hand.

The **loader/wireless operator's position** was on the right front of the turret. In action he would sit facing the gunner across the guns' breeches. The procedure for loading the 2 pounder was for the loader to tap the gunner's right forearm when the round had been loaded and the breech closed.

The **wireless** (at the time of the Battle) was the old **No 9 set** on which most of our training had been done in the UK. It was housed in the rear extension of the turret, ie. immediately behind the



Crusaders

**tank commander.** The set had three components: receiver, power pack and transmitter. Wireless communication was predominantly **R/T** with a nominal range of 12 miles. A Morse signalling buzzer was carried in the event that **W/T** was necessary. We used the standard 6ft aluminium aerial rod. Whip aerials came in when later marks of set were installed. Tank commander and operator had microphones and all four crew wore headsets. The tank had its own intercom that could be accessed from the commander's mike.

The **commander's seat** was central behind the recoil guard and ejection chute with a  $360^{\circ}$  periscope when the turret rear-sliding flap was closed. Or when he was sensibly keeping his head down!

Other auxiliary items accessible from the turret were: **smoke mortars** mounted on the outside of the turret, fired from inside by means of Bowden cable **but** only reloadable from outside; **A/A Bren gun**; **Thompson sub-machine gun**; and **sun compass**.

#### **External Stores:**

**Tools** carried in boxes on either side of turret. **Towropes**, **tarpaulins** and **camouflage netting** on top of engine compartment. **Water tank** attached to rear end. **Spare track links** on front glacis. The crew's personal kit, cooking gear, rations, etc. were stowed or hung wherever there was space!

**Side-arms** worn by all ranks, usually **Issue .38 revolver** (Colt or Smith & Wesson).

### **Egypt 5th October 1941**

When **22nd Armoured Brigade** left UK for Egypt it was part of **1st Armoured Division**, but in Egypt and the Western Desert, for all practical purposes it acted as an independent brigade with **7th Armoured Division** in **XXX Corps**.

So we wore the 'White Rhino' divisional sign for some months before the 'Desert Rat' of **7th Armoured Division** into which we were officially incorporated in late 1942.

### **Desert Training:**

On arrival at Port Tewfik at the southern end of the Suez Canal, the Brigade was transported by train to an encampment at el Amariya about 10 miles from Alexandria on the western side of the Nile Delta.



Line of Honey tanks

The first few days were spent unloading the tanks at Port Said from the three merchant ships of our convoy. The tanks had then to be prepared for desert conditions – at the expense of precious training time – particularly bad planning when this could very easily have been done before we sailed.

When we were finally re-united with our tanks we immediately began intensive exercises in the desert to the south west of el Amariya and to the west of the Alexandria to Cairo road. We were 'green' of course, but we had been well trained and our morale was high. What we lacked was battle experience, a reliable tank engine and high-explosive ammunition for our main armament. All these aspects were about to be put to the test. Let history be the judge.

### **Battle of El Gubi 19th November 1941**

At the start of **Operation Crusader** on 18th November 1941 the Brigade's main tank armament was the **A15 Cruiser MkVI Crusader I**.

There were a few American **Stuart ‘Honey’** tanks used for recce purposes.

All Squadrons were equipped with **Daimler** Scout Cars – at this stage of the war (pre Pearl Harbour) the **Jeep** had not come on the British Army scene.

Early in November 1941 the Brigade was ordered to move west. The tanks were loaded on ‘flats’ and transported up the desert railway from El Amariya to the railhead south west of Mersa Matruh. About one squadron per train – loaded end-on end-off in the dark!



Crusader passing knocked out Mk111

After de-training at the railhead the *Regiments* travelled south west across the desert about 70 miles to the Brigade assembly area 20 miles east of Fort Madelena on the Libyan/Egyptian border 50 miles south of Sollum.

On the night of **17th November** the ‘Border Wire’ was breached and fuel dumps established in Libyan territory. This was accompanied by a severe thunderstorm.

Early morning **18th November**. Communion Service. Brigade moved westwards into Libya at about 09.00hrs and made for refuelling points.

One tank of *C Squadron 4th CLY* brewed up while refuelling – luckily no casualties.

The Desert Air Force provided an ‘umbrella’ of **Hurricanes** and **Kittyhawks** while this was going on.

The Brigade then moved to its battle stations, **3rd CLY right, 2RGH centre and 4th CLY left.**

Throughout the Brigade there were many instances of mechanical breakdown.

**4th CLY** leaguered that night short of fuel.

**19th November.** *Regiment* ordered to advance without refuelling. **Viscount Cranley, C Squadron Leader**, ordered *C Squadron* to wait for the fuel trucks to arrive. They caught up with the other Squadrons soon afterwards. This decision was vindicated later when several tanks of *A and B Squadrons* ran out of fuel when going into action. Sgt Mike Seaward of *B Squadron* was awarded the DCM for his brave initiative in towing some of them to safety under enemy fire.

The immediate object of *Operation Crusader* was the relief of our besieged forces in the Libyan port of Tobruk. As the Brigade swung north west towards the coast, Bir el Gubi lay in its path. This was where several of the ancient desert caravan tracks intersect. One of these leads from el Gubi on the Trigh el Abd directly to Tobruk via el Adem on the Trigh Capuzzo.

It was known that the Italian Ariete Division, were in the area. As far as *4th CLY* were concerned, what took place that day (**19th**) was largely a one squadron (*C Squadron*) action on the *Regiment's* right alongside *2RGH's* lefthand Squadron (*G Squadron*).

We heard the signal that *2RGH* had encountered Italian M13s.



Italian M13

*C Squadron, 4th CLY* were ordered to attack a formation of enemy vehicles that had been sighted. The attack was on and *C Squadron* was committed to battle. With our Squadron Leader's exhortation "Go for them, they're only bloody Eyeties!" ringing in our earphones *C Squadron* charged. However, it was soon apparent that we had fallen into an ambush situation. The vehicles were dummies masking a strongly dug-in anti-tank position. Several tanks, mine included, overran the ditches whose occupants held up their hands as we approached, only to pick up their weapons again as soon as we had passed them. Innocuous seeming barrels were lying in front of the Italian position were in fact, range markers for their guns.

Due to the previously mentioned mechanical failures, only eleven *C Squadron* tanks were able to take part in the attack. Only three were able to respond to Colonel Carr's recall message late that afternoon "Retire into the sun!"

The casualty list that day was as follows Lt John Hankey (first *4th CLY* officer to be killed in action); Sgt Don Cardy, killed; Tpr NJ Davison, killed; Tpr W Appleyard, killed. Two other Troop Leaders, Lt Count John de Bendor and Lt PGC Somervell, were taken prisoner together with fifteen other ranks, some of whom were wounded.

Lt Hankey's tank was disabled when it was run into by a *2RGH* tank and, as a result, was an easy target for the enemy. Sgt Pat Shurmur was in the turret as gunner when Lt Hankey and Tpr Norman Davison were killed. The driver, Tpr Les Colombé, was taken prisoner. Most of the k.o.'d tanks, such as mine, were disabled by losing a track on the threshold of the anti-tank position.



The following diary was scribbled down on scraps of paper and was covertly compiled by Leslie Ephgrave and Roy Cawston in Benghazi within thirty six hours of their capture.

### **Diary of No 2 Troop Leader's Tank, C Squadron 4th CLY**

#### **November, 1941 - Battle of Bir el Gubi**

Crew: 2nd Lt Count John de Bendern (*Tank commander*)

Cpl Bill Cooper (*Gunner*)

L/Cpl Leslie Ephgrave (*Driver*)

Tpr Roy Cawston (*Wireless operator/Loader*)

#### **18th November, 1941**

06.00 hrs *Moved towards Libyan border.*

07.00 hrs *Tony's tank dropped out (Troop Corporal's Tank).*

09.00 hrs *Crossed through Wire into Libya.*

11.00 hrs *Refuelled from dump created in advance by RASC. Aerial protection provided by RAF fighter patrols. 'Slim' Somervell's tank goes up in smoke. Crew including Cotching (Driver) OK. Roy trying vainly to repair intercom broken by Count in moment of stress.*

12.00 hrs *Jonah's tank drops out. (Sgt Jones, Troop Sergeant)*

14.30 hrs *Our tank develops oil leak. Contents of 5 gal oil drum hastily poured in temporarily cured problem.*

15.30 hrs *Caught up with rest of Squadron making tea during halt. Successfully made hot chocolate with water heated by exhaust pipe.*

17.00 hrs *20 minute halt. Made tea. Intercom repaired by Roy (Shouts of glee).*

18.30 hrs *Sundown. Moved into close leaguer where we picked up with Jonah. Bill cleaned guns whilst Roy and I made a very successful bivouac (Guaranteed lightproof – great advantage to all heavy smokers). Now 82 miles inside Libya. Still no signs of Enemy. Passed uneventful night with plenty of sleep.*

#### **19th November, 1941**

04.00 hrs *Reveille.*

05.00 hrs *Broke leaguer.*

06.00 hrs *Refuelled while Bill cooked sausages and chips! For breakfast!*

06.30 hrs *Moved off into the 'Blue'. Now two strong with Jonah, but still leaking oil pretty fast.*

10.00 hrs *Bill and Roy frantically endeavouring to clean Besa while on the move.*

10.30 hrs *Gunfire heard in near distance. Later discovered to be B Squadron firing on Gloucester Hussars.*

11.00 hrs *Unidentified lorries reported to our right rear. 2 Troop ordered to investigate. Result of recce – our Close Support Group having a brew!*

12.00 hrs *Wireless message to A Squadron 'Prepare to engage enemy'*

- 12.30 hrs *Roy satisfies our 'inner men' with bully beef and biscuit sandwiches.*
- 12.30 hrs *Told by wireless to watch for 50 enemy transport and two M.13 tanks.  
Advanced towards Bir el Gubi. Mirage of lorries and a building in the distance.  
Closed down and still eating sandwiches.*
- 13.00 hrs *2 Troop (Up till then Right Reserve) told to come up on right flank. Advanced to about 300 yards ahead of Squadron and charged the encampment firing at lorries and anti-tank positions. Lord Cranley's famous last words over the air - 'Let them have it they're only bloody eyeties!' Shells by now bursting ahead of us.*
- 13.10 hrs *'Encampment' now seen to be enemy strongpoint bristling with anti-tank guns and other artillery well dug-in with lorries merely decoys.  
Ominous crack on our left side turned out to be our left track shot away. Started in large circle to left.  
Heavy thud on right side and something dropped in my lap. Thought it was a shell, but only my fire extinguisher come adrift.  
Now only about 50 yards away from anti-tank and m/g positions – rattle of machine gun bullets all over the tank.  
Saw through my visor the sun compass spinning ahead of us in the sand. Bren Gun on turret roof hit. Magazine dropped into turret narrowly missing the Count and Roy.  
By now made another half-circle away from the enemy. Shells thudding into the rear of tank but apparently having no effect.  
Commander's periscope hit and fragments of glass showered over Count who also received a heavy blow on head from base of periscope.  
Two consecutive shots landed by Bill's left ear knocking binoculars case off. Coming round on yet another half circle observed two other tanks knocked out.  
Saw anti-tank gunner in trench just ahead taking a shot at us – yelled up to Bill who put him out of action with a 2 pounder shell.  
Besa firing intermittently – aimed by Bill and fired by Roy as remote control U/S. Very unsatisfactory!  
Spent shellcase bag dropped off 2 pounder and Bill not realising what had happened put his right arm through the recoil guard to pull the trigger – just in time stopped by Roy.  
Went round in further two or three circles firing at enemy with 2 pounder as Besa practically U/S. Enemy still firing at us and shots thudding into us all around but with no apparent effect.  
Realised by now that we could achieve nothing by remaining there as rest of Squadron had retired except for ourselves and tanks K.O.'d. So we tried to progress by stopping and reversing then forward again trying to cover up by firing smoke, but found ourselves jinking even nearer the enemy than before.  
Right track went over trench and the engine raced so I assumed that track had broken too so put her out of gear.*

*The Count by this time suffering the effects of the concussion from his encounter with the periscope. He was acting in a dazed manner and kept putting his head out of the turret. Every time he did so another volley of shots hit into our rear which by this time luckily was between us and the opposition. One shot hit turret roof hatch causing a metal splinter to hit the Count on the back of his hand piercing a vein. Blood spurted out until Roy bandaged it up with a strip of clean 4 x 2 gun cleaning cloth.*

*We now realised our only chance of getting out alive was to 'lie doggo' until dark and then make a break for it. Switched off the engine and we settled down to wait until dark. Suddenly spotted scout car on horizon making for us – new officer from HQ inside. He came alongside in a hail of m/g fire to try to get us out. This was absolutely hopeless. Count told him to buzz off quick. Miraculously he got away OK.*

*(It should be explained here that although the rear of the tank was towards the enemy, our turret, the front of which had the thickest armour plating, was facing them. Leslie could see back the way we had come, which is how he spotted the approach of the scout car.)*

*This episode brought a fresh barrage from the enemy and several more hits were received in the engine compartment that must have finally put it out of action.*

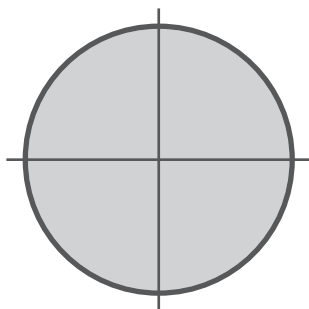
*Roy on the air to Capt Cameron and told him our situation. He told us to get out if we could, but if not, to be quiet! – that was our intention anyway! Occasional shots still ricocheting off us or going into the engine.*

*Passed the time getting haversacks filled with rations and water bottles ready. Eventually made a plan of action for our getaway at dark which would be about 18.00 hrs. Sat waiting and praying that nothing would come through our armour plating.*

*17.00 hrs. Things had quietened down considerably and we were beginning to think we could get away with it when four Italians came towards us signalling for us to get out.*

*Hasty consultation in the turret and Count said to give ourselves up – which was the only thing we really could do – and he accordingly waved his map case out of the turret. We piled out of the tank and had our revolvers taken off us.*

When we had climbed out of the tank the first question we were asked was 'Are you Australian?' Something in the questioner's tone of voice prompted a swift 'No'. We were only too well aware that the Aussies had given the Italians a hard time in the course of Wavell's advance ten months previously and there were obviously some scores waiting to be settled!



## **PROVIDING FOR THE THIRSTY**

**A wander through the  
archives by TIMBER**

[Source: The AGIUS Collection]

The latest additions to The Collection are the papers of our esteemed former Editor, Roy Cawston. This article comes from the memoirs of John Lawson entitled “Before and After D+One” written in 1994.

Let us go back to the winter of 1944 near the Ardennes. Our Brigade was on ten days notice and the main task was to keep warm in billets. Many of the roads froze and the surfaces rose up with the frost. At any slight thaw the crust was broken by heavy vehicles and soon roads were full of ruts. In billets there was little to do, and long evenings were spent playing pontoon and drinking a variety of indifferent local alcoholic concoctions. We used coffee beans for counter and, at the end of the evening, we settled up at a halfpenny a bean. In the absence of peanuts, and other nibbles, we chewed roasted coffee beans instead. By Christmas 1944, squadrons were sending out unofficial foraging expeditions, and the source of anything drinkable was kept a close secret.

Shortly before the New Year, our Colonel sent for me. He was a charming man and much respected by all ranks as a leader. He informed me, what I already knew, that the Regiment had drunk everything worth drinking East of Brussels. He mentioned that a sergeant in B Squadron had recently returned with a top quality load of wine having wandered as far as Epernay in France. I was to be in charge of a party to forage for the Regiment. My first task was to collect cash from any squadrons or messes that wanted to participate. We were to take a three-ton truck and a Jeep with adequate petrol and rations. There was a contact in Brussels who was to act as our interpreter and to ease our passage, he signed two passes – one giving authority to purchase supplies for the Regiment in the regions of Paris, Epernay and Bordeaux, and the other authorising the contact to accompany us. My job was to ensure that the party did not disappear into the blue with the money. We were in a period of no move before ten days and the trip was estimated to last nine days.

Two evenings later, although little cash had come into my possession, I obtained a chit from the Colonel authorising me to change specific sums of Dutch guilders and Belgian francs in to French money. The following morning we set off from the Regiment at about 0800 hrs, with a three-ton truck, a Jeep, some hundreds of gallons of petrol, and rations for three weeks. As we left the lines we were met by various people who passed on to us cash from several messes and canteens run by the different ranks within the Regiment. On arrival in Brussels, we made our first stop at a small family café to collect our interpreter Bob. From here on in he was virtually in charge as only he knew his way around.

We then went to the central Field Cashier who looked at us with grave suspicion, for most people wanted to change currency out of French francs. After much labour, we sorted piles of grubby notes into their various denominations. About a couple of hours later, we left with the equivalent of £1,100 in French francs, but were not permitted to exchange any excess that we held in Belgian and Dutch currency. The Field Cashier had only been able to find sufficient French money by shopping around the other banks. It was only at this stage that I discovered that Bob was more than an interpreter, he had a stake in the adventure!

Our departure was delayed because Bob would not leave Brussels till after the New Year. Further I discovered there was little chance of buying wines in France if you did not take empty bottles with you. We spent several days around the back streets among Bob's contacts, finishing up with around 2,000 empties. In the meantime I stayed at the transit camp; this was a vast vaulted barracks in the centre of Brussels. My problem was what to do with the French currency? This was all in large denominations rather like the English £5 note of old. There was nothing for it; I wrapped them all in a large khaki handkerchief and stuffed the lot under the mattress, hoping for the best.

My mentor and guide was unworried. The New Year having arrived, we began to make our way to Epernay, that bastion of the Champagne countryside. The first surprise came near the frontier when our little convoy stopped. Bob, a large tubby gentleman, was unceremoniously bundled into the back of the truck where he was hidden among the empty bottles, and then the sheet-covers of the lorry were lashed back into place. At the frontier, the Military Police were in evidence. They looked at the pass signed by the Colonel, declaring we were on our way to buy supplies for the Regiment in the areas of Epernay, Cognac and Bordeaux, they waved us on. I was as naive as a new born babe.

Our instructions were that where possible we should seek out the Town Major who would provide us with billets, otherwise we would live on our vehicles in the time honoured manner of tank crews. My mentor declared this nonsense. We would stay at the local hotels, and on our way home flog some of our purchases in the black market in Paris. With France in the grip of severe frost, frequently below zero, it was clear that if I did not agree I would be sleeping out, probably on my own.

By the time we arrived at Epernay, the sun was shining, but it was still very cold. We knocked at the doors of half a dozen or more great champagne houses, only to be told there was a government directive to the effect that wine stocks were a national asset and could not be sold without a licence from the Ministry of Agriculture. After much chatter about the victorious allies having nothing to drink, occasionally with the promise of empty bottles, we were able to buy full ones. In the process, champagne was drunk to excess, but we were able to acquire around five hundred bottles fit to grace any table. It was while on these rounds that I was introduced to Mar de Champagne, an eau de vin made from the bottoms of champagne casks. It was a most admirable first water!

We journeyed to the south-west along the Loire. On the way we passed through the Vouvray countryside where we visited an acquaintance of my mentor. Monsieur Le Fèvre came out of his caves dressed in clogs and a rough apron. There he had been putting the labels and gold foil wrappings on his sparkling wine. We were invited into the house to talk business, aided by a bottle that was produced, covered with the black

dust of ages. This we enjoyed and finally purchased some three-hundred bottles of this delicious wine. Later that day we stopped for the night in Tours where we dined with mine host at one of the leading hotels. The dish was succulent with mushrooms, wine, chicken and other unidentified ingredients. The following morning we discovered he had charged us for entertaining him! On our way we purchased some hundreds of litres of wine in casks and finally arrived at Cognac in the south-west.

In Cognac we did the rounds of Remi Martin, Martell, Prunier and Hennessy. Frequently the managers wrung their hands at the strictures of the Ministry of Agriculture, but in the end opened their warehouses on the production of empty bottles. An amazing room, that every House possessed, was one said to contain a bottle of every consignment sent out. Their sizes and designs were diverse, some clearly intended for the Chinese or Japanese market. From there we went to Jarnac, an area noted for its Grande Fine Champagne grapes. This produces the finest distillations and the designation is protected by law. First we visited Messrs Hine, where much was made of the fact that, some two years previously, one of the squadron leaders of the Regiment was in civilian life a director of the firm in England. Then we crossed the road to Courvoisier where we were made welcome and did good business. The bottling shed was in full swing, aglow with well polished copper pipes flowing with nectar. One arm on the bottling machines sloshed spirit into the bottles, another pushed the corks in. The sound was that of a smoothly running engine, while the scent was similar to that of Christmas pudding being served. When examining the cases of cognac later we discovered that Courvoisier made up their twelve bottle cases with eighteen bottles to the case! I understood this was the custom with this exquisite grade and had nothing to do with inebriation!

Having come far west and south, we had left the worst of the weather behind. We now began the long trail home. One port of call was a place called Angers, also known as the café au lait countryside. Here we enjoyed a mid-morning break with Madame and her family. Coffee was served in soup bowls, and the hot milk was spooned into them from a central basin. Coffee was drunk from the spoon, and only when the last dregs were reached was the bowl lifted to the lips. With the honour of the Regiment in mind, I conformed to local custom but, as the bowl was tilted, the bottom fell out. An ancient crack had finally given way, amid cries of “Monsieur l’officier, le uniforme!” After much mopping up and apologies we left with sundry bottles of fire water for the Colonel. The local delicacy, the Eau de Vie de Framboise (raspberries), looked, tasted and burnt like methylated spirits. The selling point was that a pear branch had been insinuated into the litre bottle during the growing season. The spirit was then poured in when the pear was full grown. No doubt the eau de vie would have tasted better if patience had left it for five or more years to mature. I think thereafter it was reserved for unsuspecting guests in the Mess.

By the time we arrived at the outskirts of Paris, Bob, our interpreter, was suffering from the cold and continually said “I wanna go home”. For once I asserted my authority and pointed out that we could not run the risk of having a seriously ill Belgian on the wrong side of the frontier. Consequently, my companions had to forgo the possible pleasures of a night in Paris and we trundled past the Arc de Triomphe without recouping the expenses of the journey through sales in the black market. When we were well on our way, a three-ton truck and a Jeep going in the opposite direction passed us. As we approached the frontier we stopped, as on the journey out, and Bob was hidden



among the bottles and casks. When we pulled up level with the Military Police they waved us through with a smile, as much as to say "You have not been long on the job!". Bob was then released from his unnecessary confinement! Late that night we arrived at Bob's café near the Gare du Nord, having parked the vehicles in a convenient lock-up yard a short distance away.

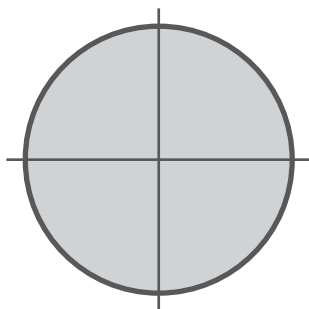
Madame was jubilant at Bob's return and told him she had done good business in his absence. Bob recovered his health as though touched by some magic wand and, after stuffing ourselves with Madame's home cooking, we retired to bed. The following morning we slept late and about 11 am crawled down for a cup of coffee. Bob had beaten us to it and, in his desire to get his share of the swag onto the bar of the café, had brought the truck round and unloaded some of the cognac. Before we could drink our coffee we were interrupted by a sergeant of the Military Police enquiring if the lorry was ours. He produced a rifle and ammunition, plus the distributor lead from the lorry, asked us our business and listed the offences we had committed. Having reminded him that he was not entitled to question an officer, he took me back to the Services Investigation Bureau where I was grilled for some time about the contents of the lorry. I produced the passes and explained our mission, now almost completed. In the end my interrogator relaxed and explained what he was looking for.

It transpired that a gang in army uniform had been selling Andy McDrew's Scotch Whiskey. This, needless to say, was not what it seemed, but was judged to be a concoction of anti-freeze and pyrene fire extinguisher fluid. People who had drunk it had been found dead, demented or blind! Further, when he heard of the petrol we had taken with us to France he pricked up his ears for, as they searched the café, they not only found the cognac but also some hundreds of gallons aviation fuel. I was able to convince him of the authenticity of our enterprise, but Bob was in serious trouble. What his wife had done was no concern of ours. We were bidden to return to the Regiment fast, which we did immediately, arriving late that night.

Initially I had to explain why we had been away for three weeks, but on production of the merchandise all was forgiven. My task then was to produce records of the transactions and to break up the consignment between the various units according to the money that each had contributed. This proved a mammoth task, involving many calculations from Belgian and Dutch currency into French, without the benefit of calculators. To cover the expenses a 'bottle tax' was authorised and, in the end, all was square enough for the Colonel.

The conclusion of the enterprise was a Regimental binge from which many emerged pale-faced and with bloodshot eyes. It was not an expedition I would have chosen; I realised that we had obtained some exquisite wines and spirits and was disgusted with the indiscipline that ensued.

In the weeks that followed there were rumours from Brussels of an officer of the Regiment who was under investigation for a trip into France. I had visions of being cashiered but I preserved the passes and authorisations that the Colonel had signed, just in case! Finally we heard that the Colonel had been sent for by the Corps Commander, an old crony in his previous regiment. We understood he took with him a few bottles of the best and, after a serious talk and a drink, was told "Don't do it again, old boy!"



## **ROYAL GLOUCESTER HUSSARS**

**REPORT FROM  
SYA LINKMAN DAVE CARTER**

We continue to maintain our links with the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars. For those of you who are unaware of the origins of these links, our three regiments (3rd CLY, 4th CLY and 2nd RGH) served together in the early days of the *Sharpshooters'* desert campaign. They fought side by side at El Gubi, where the RGH suffered badly. Eighty-four members of 2nd RGH died as a result of the battle. For this reason El Gubi is as important to the RGH as it is us and every year a memorial service is held in the church on the Badminton estate in Gloucestershire. All *Sharpshooters* are warmly invited to attend and it is well worth the trip. This year the service takes place on Sunday 27th November at 11.15 a.m. Before this, at 10.30, the Duke of Beaufort (the RGH's Honorary Colonel) invites all those who attend to join him for light refreshments in one of the rooms in Badminton House. With the service now being held in the morning, you can now also retire for lunch at one of the excellent Cotswold pubs in the surrounding area. Highly recommended! If you need any more information, e-mail me on [davecarter@onetel.com](mailto:davecarter@onetel.com) or call on 01432 820403.

Next year I am hoping to organise a joint social event, possibly an evening at a pub with a skittles match or similar, possibly followed by a trip to Badminton Horse Trials the next day (running 5-7th May next year). If you haven't been to the horse trials, don't worry if you haven't got the slightest interest in horses! The event is a huge country show, with plenty to eat and drink and an unimaginable plethora of goodies for the better half to spend money on. If you are interested, e-mail or call me and we'll see if there are enough runners to make it viable.

On the subject of country shows, another one well worth attending is Frampton Country Fair, again in Gloucestershire, held on Lt. Col. Clifford's estate. You'll probably read this too late to catch this year's fair on 16th September, but bear it in mind for another year. One day perhaps we should compete in the tent pegging (again, anyone interested, drop me a line)!

Meanwhile, if you want to keep up with what the RGH are up to, they now have a website, [www.rghya.org.uk](http://www.rghya.org.uk)



# SHARPSHOOTERS YEOMANRY ASSOCIATION FORECAST OF EVENTS OCT 2011 – NOV 2012

## 2011

October 23rd	CCOCA Church Service at RH Chelsea. POC: Hon Sec SYA.
November Thurs 10th	Field of Remembrance, Westminster Abbey. 0930hrs start. Dress: Lounge Suit and medals POC: Hon Sec Tim Rayson
Sat 12th	Lord Mayors Show London. POC: Terry Bodman.
	Bexleyheath Branch Remembrance and reunion Dinner POC: SSM 265
Sun 14th	Remembrance Sunday. Hosted by Croydon. POC: Andy O'Hare
Fri 18th	El Gubi 70 Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving The Chapel Royal, St James Palace. 1145 for 1200hrs. Dress: Lounge Suit with miniatures
	Annual All Ranks Bir El Gubi Lunch at The Corps of Gentlemen at Arms. St James's Palace. 1230 for 1300 Dress: Lounge Suit with miniatures. POC: Hon Sec SYA/ Keith Dempster. Price per ticket: £40 pp
Sun 20th	2 RGH El Gubi service. Badminton 1100hrs start. POC: RGH Link man Dave Carter

Sat 28th	C (KSY)Sqn Ladies Night. SYA invited to attend.
December 5th	Sharpshooters Te Deum dinner. Cavalry and Guards Club. Dress: Mess dress/black tie with miniatures. POC: Bexleyheath Chair: Tony Jewell
31st	113th Anniversary of the Founding of the Sharpshooters

## 2012

May Thurs 10th	Kent and Sharpshooters Yeomanry ODC. Venue/Timings tbc POC: Matthew Douglas
Sun 20th	Cavalry Sunday Parade at Hyde Park followed by lunch. Dress: Lounge Suit/Blazer with medals. Chariots available. Lunch venue: Atheneum Club £25pp appx POC: Hon Sec Tim Rayson.
June Sun 10th	All Ranks 76th Anniversary Federation of London OCA Annual Parade of Homage. Venue: City of London Dress: Lounge suit/Blazer with medals Lunch: At HAC (£18pp appx) POC: Hon Sec Tim Rayson.
July Fri 23rd	Founders Day. 112th Anniversary of 3rd CLY being gazetted in July 1901
August 31st	Newsletter contributions required by. POC: Editor Simon Malik.
October	SYA Battlefield Tour to Italy POC: Hon Sec Tim Rayson
November Fri 16th	The El Gubi Dinner.

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*Field of Remembrance*  
*- 2010 -*







Flanders Dash Riders at Croonaert Wood. 3rd-6th June 2011