

The sharpshooter



**Edited and Published by: Kent and Sharpshooters Yeomanry Association,
Sharpshooter House, ARC Mitcham Road, Croydon, Surrey CR0 3RU.
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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



Kent and Sharpshooters Yeomanry Association

(REGISTERED CHARITY No. 803784)

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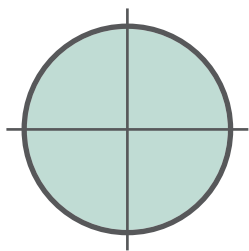
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Front cover: LCpl Salamut (Taz) attached to the 1st Queens Dragoon Guards (QDG) in Poland on Op CABRIT 14.

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

by Lt Colonel Mark Hodson TD

A very warm welcome to the 2023 edition of the Sharpshooter journal. There is much to read within, so let me briefly pick up one or two highlights here.

2023 was the year of the coronation – of King Charles III and Queen Camilla; a joyous national occasion. Our own celebrations, kindly hosted by Chris Sutton and Dan Taylor and other members of the Museum in Hever, provided a wonderful get-together to mark such a landmark event. Huge thanks to our committee members, and in particular Chirs Moden, Steve Shelley and David Palmer for organising such a wonderful event – one we should perhaps repeat regularly.

Another significant occasion was dining-out Guy and Carol Farage for which the Rendezvous Brasserie in Westerham threw its doors open for an exclusive Sharpshooters gathering. We presented Carol with a large bouquet of flowers and Guy with a Sharpshooter statuette, which as we learned will replace a similar item that was sadly stolen from Guy's and Carol's home only a few weeks before. We wish Guy and Carol the very best for the future and know that we can count on them for their continued support.

The El Gubi dinner in November was an immense success – 77 Sharpshooters dined at the Cavalry & Guards Club, celebrating the 76th such event that the Association has held and commemorating the 82nd anniversary of the battle.

A great mix of Sharpshooters and guests attended, including guests from as far afield as New Zealand and Germany. We were delighted that from Worshipful Company of Insurers (WCI) the new Master Insurer, Claire Burrell and her husband Andrew Eade were able to join us, along with Gordon and Jane Jones and other members of the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars Association (RGHA).

Recognising selfless service to their squadrons, the Master Insurer presented a WCI brooch to Second Lieutenant Phoebe Lewis of 265 Squadron and a set of WCI cufflinks to Corporal Kieran New of C Squadron. The full citations for both Phoebe and Kieran can be found in the article on the dinner.

It was my proud duty to make a presentation to the WCI during the dinner in recognition of our long and enduring affiliation and for the generous support, both in-person and financially, that we receive from the Insurers Livery. The silver dismounted Sharpshooter and horse was gratefully received by the Master Insurer who spoke very warmly of our affiliation. I am pleased to share that I have agreed with the Clerk of the Insurers that I will re-represent the silver Sharpshooter and horse to the Insurers at their annual Mansion House banquet in May.

Our support to Operations continued during 2023. The variety of tasks and military operations that our serving soldiers and officers are mobilised for continues to increase. With the downsizing of the Army, fighting in Ukraine and the Middle East, and

continued unrest around the world, it is highly likely that the mobilisation of Sharpshooters and the Reserves generally will only increase. As ever, we are ready to support those on Operations, their families, those at home whether in training or having returned from deployments.

We are indebted to our journal editors, Colonel Simon Malik and Tim Rayson who devote many hours creating and producing our journal each year. Thank you both for the energy and dedication that you pour into our Journal.

I'd also like to take this annual opportunity to publicly thank my fellow committee members and other supporters for all their hard work and commitment supporting the Association and Sharpshooter family. Thank you: the Association simply would not function as well as it does without your energy and passion for our cause.

If you come across or know of any Sharpshooters who are not in contact with us please do ask them to get in touch (via our facebook page – search @TheKentandSharpshootersYeomanry, or via secretary@ksya.org.uk). Please remember we are here to assist the entire Sharpshooter family – those serving, those who have served, and their families too; please get in touch if there is anything we may be able to do for you.

Finally, I'd like to congratulate Tim Rayson, our Honorary Secretary for the recognition he received from the Palace in the New Year Honours List.

Tim has held the post of Axekeeper to His Majesty's Body Guard of the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen at Arms ("the Nearest Guard") since 2010. I have always enjoyed being able to tell friends and acquaintances that a good friend of mine is "the Axekeeper at the Palace"!

He presented the Corps with a beautiful Roll of Honour showing all of the Axekeepers since 1712. Tim is the 33rd holder of the post, and one of only seven to have served more than one monarch.

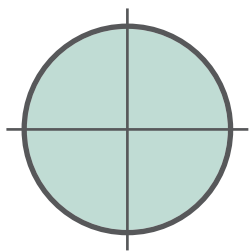
His immense service to the Corps, to the Palace, to the Royal Family, and wider public and his community service was recognised with the award of the Royal Victoria Medal in the New Year Honours list. An award richly deserved. Well done and congratulations to you, Tim.

Despite the increasingly uncertain times in which we currently live, please accept my very best wishes to you and your families for 2024.

Mark Hodson

Lt Col Mark Hodson TD





THE SECRETARY'S REPORT 2023

by Tim Rayson

It is against a background of some terrible events around the world that I'm trying to write my report for the year 2023 and I will be brief because the members of your Association's committee have done sterling work in writing reports and articles that the Secretary would have generated in the past!

The main event for the Nation was of course the Coronation of His Majesty The King and Queen Camilla and you can find two reports in the Journal that offer different takes on what was a fabulous day. The Coronation was swiftly followed on the 8th May by a families BBQ that the Association hosted at Hever Castle and that in turn was swiftly followed by the 99th Annual Combined Cavalry Parade at Hyde Park on the 14th May. The BBQ was a great success – the weather held off and the food was both excellent and plentiful. I must mention here that this event was essentially organised and executed by just three people – Dave Palmer, Steve Shelley and Chris Moden – their report is also in the Journal. Well done to you all and we hope to hold another BBQ in 2024 again at Hever. The Combined Cavalry Parade was a success as well with a RY contingent containing some Sharpshooters and a lunch at a local pub in Shepherds Market. The parade in 2024 will be the 100th parade since the unveiling of the memorial so I hope as many of you as possible will attend. If you need seats rather than marching let me know, this is a families event.

In mid August I travelled to Scotland to attend the 102 birthday party of our Kent Yeomanry veteran Jim Mitchell. I am delighted to report that he was in good health and it was great to be able to cut the cake for him using a Skeanduh dagger of amazing sharpness! I will be going again this year.



Tim Rayson and Jim Mitchell celebrating Jim's 102nd birthday.

The committee – and friends – lunched Guy and Carol Farage out on 23rd September at a very convivial restaurant in Westerham where we presented Guy with a silver Sharpshooter statuette. The statuette was very warmly received and fortuitously replaced his original one that had been stolen a few days previously when his house was burgled.

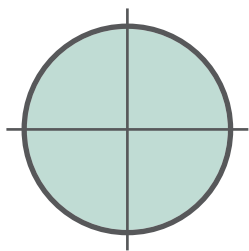
The 2023 El Gubi Dinner took place in November and was the first one in recent memory where we had to operate a wait list – due to the size of the room at the Cavalry and Guards club. As you will see from Steve Shelley's report the food was delicious and Lt Colonel Frank Dirksmeier played us into dinner on his bag pipes and then played a lament 'Sunset over El Gubi' that he had written especially for the Association and presented a copy of the music afterwards. We now have a new tradition – with the lament being played as part of the 'Absent Friends' toast – I wonder what our desert veterans would think of this. C Sqn threw a very convivial dinner in December at Sharpshooter House ably organised by the SSM and where the toast of 'Absent Friends' had an added twist to it.

And so the year ended and as you will see the Forecast of Events has quite a lot in it whether it is events or anniversary's where you can perhaps organise your own event to commemorate them. However before I close what must be a pretty short 'blog' I'd like to raise the issue of membership and donations. As you all know from the Little Green Book membership is automatic if you are serving or have served in either of the units that bear the title Kent and Sharpshooters Yeomanry. To enable your Association to deliver support to you and your families whilst you are deployed on operations we need you to sign up to the Association by completing a membership form and this leads me on to subscriptions and donations. The voluntary subscriptions that you pay allow us to help you and your families whilst you are deployed, retired members and the Journal. But to enable us to continue to do that we really need everyone to contribute so that we have sufficient funds to continue do so.



Over the last three years we have delivered 'morale' boxes to all those on deployment abroad and hampers to either their family or retired members who need a bit of cheering up. This year we will be doing the same including supporting a major deployment for one of the squadrons. Finally there have been a number of benevolent cases where the Association has stepped in and helped individuals and their families with not insignificant grants.

Please join and contribute what you can afford – £2 or £3 per month will help significantly especially when we apply for Gift Aid which increases your donation by 25%. Is that too much to ask? The KSY Association is for life and not just for when you are serving so join and help us continue to support both of our squadrons and past members.



MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT 2023

Dear Sharpshooters,

I am pleased to report that as of December 2023 the KSYA Association membership totalled 416 members including serving soldiers in the two Sharpshooter Squadrons.

Details of the membership for 2022 are as follows.

Membership 2023

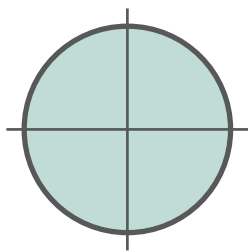
Full Member	364
Family Member.....	10
Friend of KSYA	23
Honorary Member	9
Vice President	10
President	1
Total Members	416
Members who are Subscribers.....	71

If you are reading this and you're not sure if you are a member of the KSYA and would like to be then please contact me at membershipsec@ksya.org.uk.

Yours aye,

Chris Moden
KSYA Membership Secretary
Cpl, C Sqn RY 2006-2015.





FORECAST OF EVENTS

2024

April

- 7th** **106th Anniversary** of the amalgamation of 3rd CLY (Sharpshooters) and City of London Yeomanry (Roughriders) to form 'E' Bn Machine Gun Corps subsequently re-titled 103rd Bn Machine Gun Corps in August 1918.
- 8th** **230th Anniversary** of the raising of independent troops of Yeomanry in Kent in 1794 that subsequently formed the basis of both the East and West Kent Yeomanry regiments.

May

- 5th** Rededication of the Desert Rats Memorial at High Ash camp, Thetford.
- 13th** Combined Cavalry Old Comrades Association Parade and Service Hyde Park. This is the 100th parade. Sponsor Regiment: The Royal Dragoon Guards followed by lunch (venue tbc). Please contact the Hon Secretary on 15th March for further details.
- 31st** **122nd Anniversary** of the end of End of the Second Boer War in 1902.

June

- 6th** **80th Anniversary** of the D Day Landings.
- 13th** **80th Anniversary** of the Battle of Villers Bocage in 1944. KSY Assn trip 12th-15th June (TBC).
- 29th** Villers En Fete, Villers Bocage Liberation ball.

July

- 10th** **81st Anniversary** of the invasion of Sicily (3rd CLY) in 1943.
- 23rd** **Founders Day. 123rd Anniversary of the 3rd CLY being formally established in the London Gazette in 1901.**
- 26th** **115th Anniversary** of the First annual dinner of the Brigade of Sharpshooters OCA in 1909.

August

- 4th** **110th Anniversary of the start of World War 1.**
- 15th** **79th Anniversary** of the end of the war against Japan.
- 30th** **82nd Anniversary** of the Battle of Alam El Halfa (1st Alamein) (3rd and 4th CLY) and 97th Field Regt (Kent Yeo) in 1942.

September

3rd **85th Anniversary of the start of World War 2.**

22nd **81st Anniversary** of 3rd CLY landing in Italy at Taranto in 1943.

81st Anniversary of 4th CLY landing at Salerno in 1943.

October

22nd(tbc) Combined Cavalry Church Service and lunch RH Chelsea. All are welcome. Please contact the Hon Secretary in April for further details.

23rd **82nd Anniversary** of Battle of El Alamein (2nd Alamein) (3rd and 4th CLY) in 1942 and 97th Field Regt (Kent Yeo) in 1942.

November

9th (tbc) Opening of the Field of Remembrance, Westminster Abbey. Please apply to the Hon Secretary for tickets in July. Limited tickets available.

11th (tbc) The Lord Mayors Show.

12th (tbc) Remembrance Sunday.

19th **83rd Anniversary** of the Battle of Bir El Gubi (3rd and 4th CLY) in 1941.

23rd **The 77th Bir El Gubi dinner. To be held at The Cavalry and Guards Club, 127 Piccadilly. See flyer for further details.**

24th (tbc) 2 RGH Bir El Gubi service at Badminton.

December

Inputs for the 2023 Journal are required before the end of Dec.

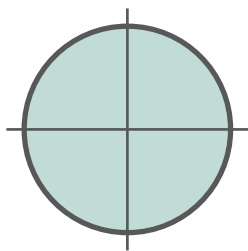
11th (tbc) RY Carol Concert. Further details to be published.

20th **123rd Anniversary** of the Battle of Tafel Kop, South Africa (23rd Bn Imperial Yeomanry – the original Sharpshooters) in 1901.

25th **122nd Anniversary** of the Battle of Tweefontein (Groenkop) South Africa. Royal East Kent Yeomanry (33rd and 53rd Coys) who were part of 11th Bn Imperial Yeomanry.

31st ***125th Anniversary of the Founding of the Sharpshooters in 1899.***





TREASURER'S REPORT, YEAR ENDED 31st March 2023 by David Palmer, Hon Treasurer

Using current (31st March 2023) valuations of investments, the Association had net assets of £91k compared with £107k at the end of the Associations last financial year. The decrease in net assets can be attributed to the poor state of the financial markets amid the ongoing war in Ukraine. Unfortunately, in the 9 months since the Associations financial year end, both the continued conflict between Russia and Ukraine, and the ongoing poor market conditions have continued the downward trend. The financial markets have started to stabilise and investments are starting to see a slight recovery. At the time of writing (Dec 2023) the Charifund units are listing at around the £13.96 per unit mark (~£57.2K), compared with a value of £14.83 (~£60.8K) per unit at the Associations financial year end. However, M&G investment distributions improved over the previous year.

The Cambridge and Counties Bank fixed rate investment from December 2021 will come to fruition shortly. This investment decision was taken to diversify the Associations portfolio away from a strategy of 100% of the Associations investments being in M&G Charifund units. Current rates on offer make this an attractive investment to continue with in the future.

Income this financial year has fallen overall by £5k to around £11.4k, attributable mainly to fewer crowdfunding appeals, no significant bequests and lack of gift aid recovery due to problems with accessing the account, which is now resolved. Gift aid recovery ongoing will be for current year's income as the previous four years historical recovery has been made. Again, the Association has benefitted from the very generous and continuing support of The Worshipful Company of Insurers. Approximately 90 individuals have generously contributed to the funds and the cost of the annual journal. The level of income receipts has allowed the Association to continue to publish the annual journal and fulfil its charitable obligations at a level similar to last year.

Our largest expense continues to be the production and distribution of the annual journal and the "Little Green Book" at £4.7k. Expenditure this year in respect of crowdfunded activities, was the second grant to The KSY Museum Trust of £1.4k for the restoration of the EKY Guidon. The Association continues to support four charities, they being The Yeomanry Benevolent Fund (YBF), SSAFA (Kent), the KSY Museum Trust and the Royal British Legion, which have benefitted from a grant of £1.4k, divided between them. Welfare grants were made to the value of £1.5k to support Sqn members and the 2 Sqns' Jubilee parties. El Gubi transactions this year resulted in a net expenditure of £1.75k. Total expenditure this financial year was £11.9k, up some £0.5k on the previous year.

The net effect has been a minor deficit during the last financial year of just £536.

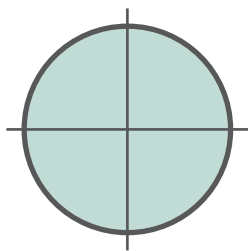
The Association takes this opportunity to remind members and donors, that those of you who are both able to and wish to do so, please consider completing and forwarding a gift aid form to the Secretary, if you have not already done so. HMRC currently contributes a further 25% to gift aided donations. Please contact the Secretary (secretary@ksya.org.uk) for further information.

At the end of my first full year as Treasurer, I would like to thank Tony Bentley for his hard work in setting up the accounts and arranging the smooth transfer upon his retirement from the post. I believe the Association is in good financial health overall and well placed for the future. We continue to review our investments to ensure we are able to maximise our returns and seek to gain significant interest under the higher rates available currently.

David Palmer, Honorary Treasurer

Further information pertaining to the income and expenditure and balance sheets for financial year ended 31st March 2023, is included in the Kent and Sharpshooters Yeomanry Association Committee Members Annual Report for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.





WELFARE AND BENEVOLENCE REPORT

by Penny O'Hare

It has been a funny year, not much happening at home but we have had couple of our boys sent out to Falklands and Poland.

We had LCPL Michael Takacs of C Squadron deployed to Poland in March/April 2023 and of course parcels were sent out to him and as usual they were received with thanks. We have also had a soldier from 265 squadron in Bexleyheath deployed to Falklands in October: a Christmas box was packed up and sent to him which has arrived in time for Christmas. The Association wished him a Merry Christmas and to let them know we are thinking of him and family at this time. A Christmas hamper was also sent to his parents to let them know we are here for them.

As you can see from these two cases sending parcels to Kent and Sharpshooter Yeomen on deployment never stops and this is all funded by your donations to the Association. As the Chairman said in his report last year we can always do with more donations so if you are a recipient of the Journal and you are not donating then please do so. If you are donating please ensure that it is to the KSYA .

As usual many hampers went out this year for Christmas to our veterans from the Cold War era as well as our sole surviving veteran from World War 2 who has passed 102 and is accelerating to 103. Absolutely amazing. They were received with surprise and thanks.

Dear Penny and KSYA,

Thank you so much for the lovely hamper you sent Sid and I. It is full of Christmassy treats which we have not seen before, very innovative and unusual.

Please thank the KSYA for us for their kind thoughts, Sid is very moved by being remembered by his friends and colleagues in the TA, having left forty-one years ago now! He enjoys reading the news letter every year and he talks about his ten years in 6th troop with great fondness (and detail) whenever he has the chance.

We hope you and your family are well and that you have a great Christmas.

Thank you again.

Best wishes.

Syd and Carol Jonas

In September we said goodbye to our President Guy Farage, I would like to thank him for the support and encouragement he has given me over the years. I know the boys really appreciate his support.

Please remember that we are here for anyone that is in need of help however small. If we can't help we have contacts in outside agencies that can help and give advice where needed. If anyone can think of someone who is down on their luck and would appreciate a little gift from us at Christmas – or indeed at any other time of the year – so they don't feel alone please forward their details on to me at the email address below.

Please remember that we are here for anyone that needs to chat or needs support. Contact details are pennyohare@hotmail.com or 07703 254009 (Penny) mobile on 24hrs a day.



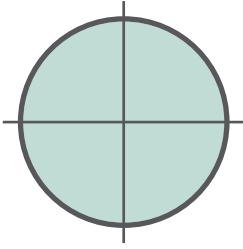
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THE SHARPSHOOTER JOURNAL 2024 COVER PHOTOGRAPH COMPETITION

The editorial team invite those serving in both Squadrons to take part in a competition to provide the cover photograph for the Journal. The image must be in colour, High Resolution (min 5Mb). Black and white images will be considered if it adds to the composition.

The prize for the winning entry will be one ticket to attend the Association's annual Bir El Gubi dinner which will take place on 23rd November 2024. There will be no cash or equivalent prize.

Entries must be sent to the Secretary by no later than 1st November together with a suitable caption and accompanying story. The editorial team and Chairman will select the winning image and their decision will be final.



EMPTY SADDLES 2023

**AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN AND IN THE MORNING
WE WILL REMEMBER THEM**

Wherever possible and when requested by family the *Association* will parade its Standard for funerals, cremations and memorial services.

Corporal Tony Nicholson

Late 5th Troop C (KCLY) Sqn

**THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVER MORE
LEST WE FORGET**

Corporal TONY NICHOLSON

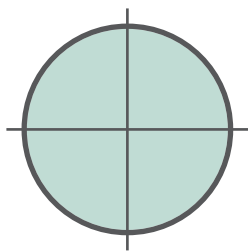
Corporal Tony Nicholson late 5th Troop C (KCLY) Sqn. Tony served in the late 1960's /70's and was a former Queens Scout based in West Wickham. He was also an excellent shot and during his time with the squadron was awarded the Lucy Trophy for best Trooper. Tony left the squadron in 1973 and joined 10th Para where he qualified for his wings and subsequently achieved over 50 jumps.



He also featured as the front cover picture of the RY magazine which is published as part of this notice. The following members of the Association attended Tony's funeral:



Left to Right: John Annett, Plum Pearson, Tim Rayson, Micky Dodds, Roger Thompson, Ron Snowball.



265 (KCLY (SHARPSHOOTERS)) SUPPORT SQUADRON OC'S REPORT

There are two parts to this article: the OC Contribution by Maj Sumner and the Year in Detail by 2Lt Lewis.

OC Contribution

Officer Commanding – Major Craig Sumner

Second in Command - Gapped

Squadron Sergeant Major – WO2 (SSM) Jim Denney

PSAO – Captain Tul Ale MBE

Troop Commander – 2Lt Phoebe Lewis

Tech Sgt – Sgt Brett Harries

SQMS – SSgt Bob Marshall

2023 has offered a highly challenging year for 265, I begin with a closing statement from last year's journal. *265 is the HQ Squadron; we deliver the capability for command by creating the StaffWorking Environment (SWE). Additionally, providing real-life support and a staff training effect.* Tick VG, delivered that and more on the largest UK land exercise in 20 years.

265 developed, tested and delivered 71 SR's Regimental CP and a functional Divisional command net. Additional supporting engineering efforts to test HF data across the UK, achieving full operating capacity within two hours from Castle Martin to Stanford.

Geopolitical dynamics across the world have changed across 2023, we once again see state on state conflict in Europe, with conflict again flaring in the Middle East. The sub-threshold domain in the High North and Asia Pacific should make us take note. The lessons identified are permeating into everything the British military and NATO are doing. A sense of clarity is appearing into the role of the Army Reserve, no longer an integrated or supporting arm, but a requirement to be a credible and stand alone function of the British Army.

Recruitment challenges exist, demographics are changing and, as I type, an economic downturn is impacting the serving soldiers. Like all army reserve units, now is a time for commitment but above all a selfless commitment to each other. 265 have proven once again throughout the year to be a caring, generous and people orientated unit. A privilege to command, I am humbled by every member of the unit.

Over the course of the year, we have seen deployments to CABRIT, the UK enhanced forward presence, Op INTERFLEX and SCORPIOUS Britain's commitment to



training and logistics support to our Ukrainian counterparts. We have supported border security efforts and deployed members to the British Forces South Atlantic Islands (BFSAI). Additionally we have engaged in adventurous training and community liaison across the year, engaging heavily in the Lord Mayor's Show and continuing to engage with the positive community relationships in Bexleyheath.

I particularly wish to take the chance to congratulate and thank some departing members for their support and service over their careers.

Both positive and enthusiastic signallers, Sigs Masiko and Vasey transferred to other squadrons to launch the next chapters of their army careers. Sigs Masiko transferred to an RLC squadron to be closer to family. Recipient of best student on his trade course, Sig Vasey transferred to another signal squadron.

Cpl Arkabil, a superb contributor to the Sqn and regiment over the years, her culinary skills have kept the Sqn marching.

Sgt Kwok Woo, a calm and thoughtful soldier, whose guidance and measured manner has been a support to more than one OC over the years.

WO2 Ian Lapidge, a logistical support and a happy face, a long standing member of the Sqn in all its past forms, you will be greatly missed.

WO2 Simon May, a kind and considerate SSM, moved to 31 Sqn before leaving the British Army next year. He prepared the sqn as part of his final Remembrance Parade as a serving soldier.

Capt Ian Dawes, a great troop commander and then sqn 2iC, has taken on the role of Ops Officer at RHQ.

A strong year, I look forward to the coming one.



The year in detail – 2Lt Phoebe Lewis

We started this year with a clearly defined mission: to ensure our readiness and relevance as a credible and usable reserve capability to support the 3RD Division, the UK's only Warfighting Division. We intended to do this by conducting progressive, innovative and rewarding training. The efforts of every soldier in the squadron ensured that we delivered on this mission.

Across our four trades, we enhanced the operational capability of the squadron. The clerk troop has doubled in numbers this year. Under the direction of Sgt **Fox**, the troop is going through their trade levels. LCpl **Hart** came off the promotion board and is looking to her next career steps. Pte **Holland** completed soldier basic training and transferred in from 68 Sig Sqn and Pte **Gurung** completed basic soldier training to join them in the autumn. The troop is actively helping the broader squadron to enhance their administrative capabilities in barracks and soon on exercise.

In her last year in the army, LCpl **Akarbil** in the chef troop has delivered countless catering events from sqn BBQs to regimental dinners at the Regiment's FOB at Lincoln's Inn. She catered for the squadron, association, and our guests on Remembrance Sunday, bringing everyone together on this important day in our year.

The medic troop gained Pte **Websdale** who has thrown herself into her trade training since completing basic training. Together, she and LCpl **Ovenell** have proactively



sought opportunities to enhance the integration of the medic trade into our training. LCpl **Ovenell** has provided a range of training to recruits and trained soldiers alike to keep us current on battle casualty drills. Sgt **Langley** has continued to deliver high quality training to the medic troop, and coordinated the troop across multiple locations throughout the year.

Our latest troop, the comms troop, has transformed its operational capability this year. We were assigned with the task of creating and managing the delivery of a regimental command post from which all regimental comms training would be run. The evolution in this capability has been extraordinary. Following deployment on Ex IRON TITAN, the troop successfully delivered a command post ready to receive staff officers in under four hours. On this annual continuous training, the only commanders who were able to be brought into the first commanders conference on HF radio were enabled by 71 Y Signal Regiment. A true testament to the competence of our soldiers who deliver high quality outputs on limited training.

These successes were due to the knowledgeable and enthusiastic engagement of our sqn supervisor, Sgt **Harries** who developed the Regt's first SOI for CP71 and guided the troops through comms fault finding. SSgt **Crane** and Sgt **Porter** oversaw the delivery of the CP71 build, ensuring it was ready for staff users and that junior soldiers were guided in its development. Assigned the role of Complex Cpl, Cpl **Lovett** took on the immense task of directing new troops on every build we have had this year, demonstrating excellent command and control that enabled the delivery of this regimental asset. LCpl **Jarvis** – who was promoted this year – has stepped into the Comms Cpl on exercises, ensuring that the troop achieves initial and full operational capability as efficiently as possible.

The comms troop has been steadily increasing its technical capability. Sigs **Main, Lamb, Damilare Sage, and Wakeford** all completed their trade course in November. Sig **Chalk** received the CO's coin on Ex PHOENIX COMMS 1 for delivering incredibly effective technical expertise to all the rear link detachments across the regiment, enabling the development of a key comms asset. Sig **Blackman** has been deployed with regular units on exercise. Sig **Shine** is deployed with the British Forces in the South Atlantic Islands in the Falklands for six months where he is gaining strong technical expertise that he will bring back to the squadron.

We have also welcomed many new squadron members who have completed soldier basic training this year, including Sig **Afful**, Sig **Bond**, Pte **Gurung**, Sig **Wakeford**, and Pte **Websdale**. Under the direction of the recruiting team – headed by LCpl **Oldham** (also promoted this year) and Sig **Majoros**, they have successfully transitioned into the troop. Having led the recruit troop for two years, Cpl **Liscoe** has moved on to coordinate the drill nights for the squadrons, ensuring that well planned and interactive training is delivered that encourages retention. All this under the direction of the new squadron sergeant major, Mr **Denney**.

Outside of trade, the squadron has been developing their core soldiering skills. LCpl **Wilsher** won a CO's coin for the excellent command and control demonstrated on Ex PHOENIX MAGELLAN. A clear highlight from the year was also Ex PHOENIX LEADER where the squadron conducted a platoon clearance of a street, crawled through drainage systems, and learnt how to make and throw petrol bombs. Some of the best throws in the Regiment came from 265 Sqn.

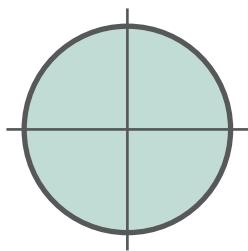


Remembrance and 265 (KCLY) (Sharpshooters) Support Squadron.

The squadron also went on its first adventurous training in several years to the Peak District to do rock climbing and mountain biking. This was an excellent opportunity for everyone in the team to experience controlled exposure to risk that strengthened our bonds and boldness. Excellent examples of this are **Sig Hickson** and **SSM Denney** abseiling down a rock face. Due to limits on defence accommodation, the ingenuity of our soldiers knew no bounds as they had freezing cold hosepipe showers on the lawn of the abandoned farmhouse. With our new sqn BBQ, they cooked up a very rewarding meal to enjoy as the sun set over the peaks.

The squadron has had another strong year in which purpose, cohesion, and ability to deliver against our mandate have been strengthened. We approach 2024 with a renewed sense of focus, looking forward to building on gains this year and ensuring we can continue to grow our technical and soldiering capabilities.





C(KSY) SQN OC'S REPORT

by Major Julian Moore

OC – Maj Julian Moore
2IC – Capt Richard Darlington
PSAO – Capt Rand Faytaren
Trg Capt – Capt Robin Rowe
Trg Officer – Capt Jason Jibb

SSM – WO2 Brennan O'Hare
SQMS – SCpl Jonny Ware
SQMS(V) – Sgt George McNeil

Recruit Troop Leader – Lt Calum Alister-Jones
1 Troop Leader – 2Lt Chris Wilson
2 Troop Leader – 2Lt Hugh Maitland-Jones

Reflecting back on 2023, it is hard to conclude otherwise that it has been another turbulent year.

As we look to the East of Europe, Ukraine continues its valiant defence and counter-offence against an ever-belligerent and defiant Russia.

While we are very lucky the kinetic effects of that war seem very far away, it has of course been felt by all of us back home though increased energy prices, food cost inflation and the constant reminder that the threat is not actually that far away from home.

As Russia launches into its long-predicted Winter offensive, with targeted strikes deep into Ukraine targeting energy infrastructure just as winter sets in, there is no sign of a conclusion to this tragic, desperate conflict.

This is a conflict that continues to be as brutal as ever, demonstrating a form of modern warfare never seen before such as: the fielding of autonomous systems like drones, changing the way soldiers on both sides fight, introducing new tactics and doctrine; and artificial intelligence, not seen on this scale before in conflict, in particular employed as a tool for devastating psychological effect.

As we look just beyond the South of Europe, in Israel and Palestine, another brutal conflict has erupted that on first look seems localised – but doubtless has the long arms of both Iran and Russia entangled, that threatens Middle East stability, distracts from Ukraine's cause, and of course threatens Global Stability.

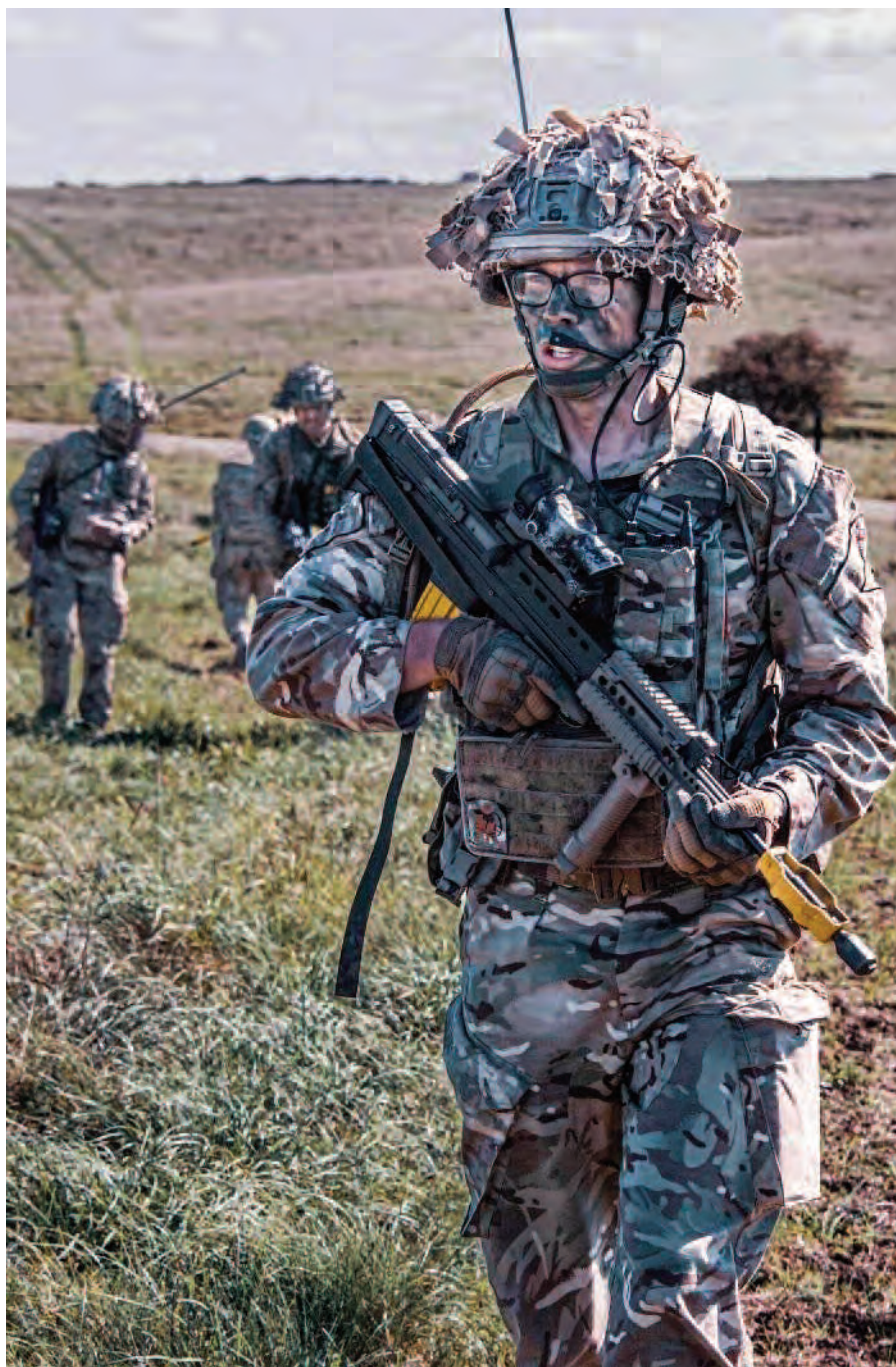
Next year, brings more uncertainty with elections in the US, and closer to home here in the UK, likely in or before the Autumn.



A C Sqn Jackal on the range.



A Wednesday evening lesson.





C Sqn go climbing on a Wednesday night.

Bringing things a bit closer to home, next year, the Army has asked the Royal Yeomanry to provide a composite Squadron of light cavalry for Operation CABRIT once again.

This comes against a backdrop of an army that continues to struggle with resources, and continues its journey of change, both regular and reserve, looking to do more with less.

We feel that here as we look into our stables and see empty spaces where there should be vehicles; at times feeling hamstrung by attitudes to risk management; and so on. All of this impacting on the retention of our soldiers, friends and colleagues, with the reserve offer at times being harder to justify to ourselves and families.

But we in C Squadron have a good track record of doing more with less. We remain the Squadron that deployed more personnel on Operations over the last three years than any other; packing the biggest punch in terms of outputs in comparison to our sibling subunits, who are also providing substantial capability to our paired units and the wider army.

For example, Cpl Takacs, who seems to be serial deployed, fresh from Operation NEWCOMBE in Mali, deployed on Op CABRIT earlier this year. And of course, Cpl Salamut who, at the time of writing, is currently on Operations and has also deployed on multiple occasions in recent years.

As a Regiment, the Royal Yeomanry has made significant progress in making the most of what we have and of our resubordination to our new Brigade Combat Team, 1 Deep Reconnaissance Strike (1 DRS BCT).



C Sqn on the ranges advancing to engage targets front.



C Sqn Recce moves forward on Ex SCORPIAN CYCLONE.



C Sqn's contingent on Remembrance Day.

This year, the Regiment ran the first light cavalry tactics course for the reserve in three years, overcoming a number of constraints and some bureaucracy to do so. Congratulations to Cpl Norman who attended from C Sqn, and by all accounts did particularly well.

The Regiment also managed to support the 1DRS BCT on Exercise IRON TITAN, the largest land forces exercise since the mid-eighties, with C Sqn providing soldiers to both The Royal Lancers (Queen Elizabeth's Own) and 1st Queen Dragoon Guards.

Our soldiers acquitted themselves with acclaim performing just as well alongside our regular counterparts, while adding that extra value that comes from reservists with civilian experiences, perspectives and niche expertise. Tpr Pendered in particular should be commended for his ever determined and professional attitude. Congratulations to all of those in C Sqn who gave up two weeks of their summer to take part in this important exercise.

Back in Croydon, we have continued to iterate and improve the fabric and physical infrastructure of the Squadron. Thanks to the 2IC, Capt Darlington, for tripping over external yellow-glow uplighting dating from the 1990s, we now have new, flush white up-lighters that really amplify the splendor of Sharpshooter House at night.

We also have another new Permanent Staff Administration Officer (PSAO). We are very grateful to Capt Ireland for significantly transforming the Squadron's administration. We were very sorry to lose him – he left to enlarge his family and seek new, non-military opportunities.

On the subject of Permanent staff, a huge thank you to Sgt George and Sgt Tuitubou, two of our Permanent Staff Instructors who also leave C Sqn this year. In particular, thank you to Sgt George who has been here longer than me – which seems like a very long time indeed! Thank you for all your hard work and professional enablement.

One of the highlights of the year was to see the then Squadron Sergeant Major, Rand Faytaren, replace Capt Ireland as PSAO. It must stir something in all of us to see



Commanding Officer Royal Yeomanry promotes WO2 Rand Faytaren to Captain.

someone go from trooper to officer, which such an excellent career in between, with such a focus on public service as has been demonstrated by Rand, now Capt Faytaren.

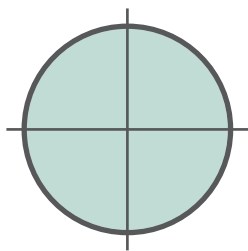
It was also a proud moment to see him represent C Sqn, alongside Cpls New and Greenwood, at His Majesty the King's Coronation back in May.

Another moment of contemporary C Sqn history was to see now Sgt Maj O'Hare – of great C Sqn dynastic lineage – take the reins as SSM.

It is family and friends that I want to finish on. Against the external context of doom and gloom, increased threat, global instability and uncertainty, it is you who support the Sqn and enable us to do what we do do.

As my final full year in command comes to an end, I wanted to highlight that and thank you, our family and friends, for your unwavering support. From simply tolerating our absence through to all the extra work you put in back at home, you enable us to train to be ready to be the reserve the army needs – needed perhaps now more than it has, for some time.





OPERATION GOLDEN ORB

by Cpl Kieran New

On the 26th of April 2023, seven members of the Royal Yeomanry converged on the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, along with the entirety of the Royal Armoured Corps, for what would be one of the most hectic fortnights of drill, polishing, more drill and state ceremonial rehearsals than any of us had experienced in our military careers in the run up to Operation GOLDEN ORB, the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III.

The Royal Yeomanry marching contingent fortunately offered an opportunity for every aspect of the regiment to be represented; one soldier from each of the six Squadrons, the Commanding Officer and members of the band. Soldiers and Officers were also involved in various other aspects of the ceremony: presenting the Regimental Guidon, supporting in the operations room, and working with the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen at Arms, which would go unseen to the general public, as is typically the case.

For the parading contingent, we endured two weeks of rehearsals at the Academy, utilising their drill instructors and a mock-up of the marching route created around the Academy estate. We regularly clocked between 15 and 20km of marching each day, resulting in a multitude of foot injuries which therefore led to the decision to allow troops to march in No2 dress with “comfy boots and earpieces” to the dismay of *The Times* readers. The medical centre was full, not only with those who required tape and plasters for their feet or an opportunity to recover post-fainting, but also a shocking number of bayonet related injuries too.

Due to the scale of the Coronation parade, it was impossible to accommodate and train all of the marching troops together. Therefore, for the majority of the rehearsal period, each Corps within the Army, and the other two services practiced separately. The entire parade was only able to come together on three occasions; a day time rehearsal at RAF Odiham, an overnight dress rehearsal on the London parade route and the Coronation parade itself.

Our first full rehearsal on the airfield at RAF Odiham was a spectacle in its own right. Close to 5,000 marching troops from all three services, across the Commonwealth and a brown minibus which for the day would be our replica of the golden state coach that the newly crowned King would be riding in. The day was chaos. In typical military fashion, we rehearsed various ‘actions on’ for events that we may face during the parade itself including the worst-case scenario of the golden state coach stopping and the parade grinding to a halt. It was also the first time we were truly able to appreciate the most taxing of drill movements: twelves to sixes. The purpose of which was to reduce the marching parade in width by half to enable us to seamlessly fit through the gates of



Buckingham Palace. How it works is still a mystery and I'm not sure I could ever accurately explain how it was done and it was clear after this rehearsal that it required a lot more work.

The evening of the 2nd of May was a big one for us all, the opportunity to show that all the practice was working and to prove the concept of the movement of all marching troops into Central London from their various holding areas across the South East by train. We moved to Farnborough station by coach and then on a chartered train to Waterloo station. Rifles were stacked on luggage racks and overhead shelves and, as expected, the toilets were out of order. The entire Army contingent moved to the basement levels of Wellington Barracks for a well-deserved coffee and sausage roll before the real work started once the sun had set and London fell still. What happened after that is all a bit of a blur, sleep deprivation had started to kick in as we stood, formed up, on Whitehall for close to an hour and a half to simulate the Coronation ceremony itself taking place in Westminster Abbey. The march back to Waterloo station somehow felt considerably longer than on the way out, via Buckingham Palace Gardens, although under strict instructions to keep off the grass because of a garden party that was being hosted that same day, but we had completed the second key milestone, we knew what needed to be worked on over the next two days before the Coronation day itself.



Cue a ridiculous amount of polishing, ironing, emergency sewing and trying to fix blistered feet.

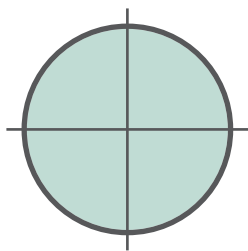
The 6th of May will be a day that everyone involved in the event will remember for the rest of their lives. The feeling of getting off the trains at Waterloo station (in the right order this time, another of the lessons learnt from the overnight rehearsal) and walking across the concourse to cheers and applause, the sense of occasion was tangible. As we marched to a lone, muted bass drum to our starting positions on Whitehall, we could

hear the service in Westminster Abbey on loudspeakers placed along the procession route. We marched through Admiralty Arch as *Zadok the Priest* was being sung by the choir, and somehow the hour or so we had to stand stationary on Whitehall went much quicker this time. The King was crowned and cheers of “God save the King” rippled around the crowds of people watching. We knew the moment was coming soon where we would have to do what we had spent two weeks rehearsing for. The perfectly in sync commands along the mile long procession of “*Coronation Procession, by the centre, QUICK MARCH*” meant we were off. The bands struck up in perfect time and 5,000 troops all marched along Whitehall, around the tricky corner at Trafalgar Square, under Admiralty Arch, and down The Mall. I had never felt as proud marching in uniform, knowing that the eyes of the world were upon us really hit at that moment. We even managed to perfectly execute the difficult twelves to sixes movement before forming up in Buckingham Palace Gardens to be received by The King himself.

If you have not yet seen the video footage of the three cheers in the Gardens, I would strongly encourage that you do. Now, put headphones on and turn the volume right up. That is still only a fraction of how loud it was in the Gardens, the echoing cheers were a truly memorable moment and one that, by all accounts, His Majesty also thoroughly enjoyed. From that point on, the hard work was done. All we needed to do was get back on the train and then we knew a hard earned, and well deserved drink was waiting for us.



Lt Col C Field, Cpl L Blant (A Sqn), Cpl S Harper-Griffin (B Sqn), LCpl K New (C Sqn), Tpr A Quinn (D Sqn), LCpl D Pateman (E Sqn), Tpr S Burban (F Sqn).



KING'S CORONATION

by Cpl Michael Greenwood

After the dust settled on a hectic 2022 and towards the end of the year, the Gentlemen at Arms held a reception at St James Palace to thank those who had assisted them during the late Queens funeral. Amongst the catching up there were some rumblings of when the Kings Coronation would be. Speculation was mainly around a summer date (probably to get good weather!) or possibly spring, ahead of the Trooping of the Colour.

A date was soon announced that the Coronation would be on 6th May and again The Royal Yeomanry were requested to provide a helping hand to the Gentlemen at Arms. Two other members of The Royal Yeomanry also volunteered to offer assistance; Cpl Matt Launder and Tpr Ben Littler (both from E Sqn).

The pace of the Coronation was a lot more relaxed compared to the funeral. There were no continuous vigils with the main effort being the overnight rehearsal on 2nd May and the big event on Saturday 6th.



The Royal Yeomanry tie being recognised in public.



New cartouches with King Charles III Cypher.

The ornate kit and equipment was again taken out of storage from Gieves and Hawkes and Tuesday 2nd was spent re-polishing boots, polishing swords and prepping the coatees and trousers for wear. There was also a slow trickle of new cartouches with the updated Royal Cypher of King Charles III.

After preparing the Gentlemen at Arms for 2200 for the overnight rehearsal, it was time to get our heads down. Luckily, we were being accommodated in The Royal Mews. After approximately four hours sleep in a cot bed (does that really count as sleep?!), it was time to get back to St James Palace to turn the kit around. We heard the practice of the three cheers from Buckingham Palace Gardens, which broke the silence of the morning. Of course, there was now a very tight security cordon around Buckingham

Palace which meant that we would have a 30-45 minute walk the long way round via Hyde Park Corner and Piccadilly. Luckily for us, as we left The Mews, we bumped into four members of the King's Body Guard of the Yeomen of the Guard, who were also heading in the same direction. They were happy for us tag on the back and march behind them through the secure area - and complimented us on keeping the step!



The Diamond Jubilee Coach.

The next practice was at Westminster Abbey on 4th May. Originally planned to be in normal clothes, and without the ceremonial axes, this quickly changed. This meant that Cpl Launder, Tpr Littler and I had to move ceremonial axes into their carrying bags and attempt to hail a cab on Pall Mall to take us to the abbey. We caused quite a commotion at security for the Abbey when arriving with two dozen battle axes.

Saturday 6th was a very early start for everyone involved. First task for me was to convince the police at St James Palace to let the tailor from Gieves and Hawkes in. They had unfortunately left their Royal Palace pass somewhere. This was a lot easier than expected and just required a phone call to security to confirm the person stood in front of them, was the person they had on their system. First crisis of the day averted! Breakfast arrived not too long after 0700 and once all the Gentlemen at Arms were ready, the three Royal Yeomanry personnel changed into our No1 Dress, which we were very politely complimented on.



The assistants to the Gentlemen at Arms.

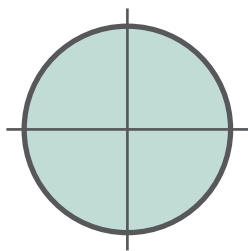
Unfortunately, we were unable to gain access to the Abbey to watch in person. It was standing room only and no additional seating provided as there was in 1953. This did however mean we could provide a Guard of Honour to the Royal Honorary Colonel HRH Princess Alexandra as she left for Westminster. After this, we settled down in front of the television to watch the Coronation, with a cup of tea and a Jammie Dodger biscuit.

We did manage to sneak out onto The Mall to watch the Coronation Procession and were able to get past the barriers to a front row seat which enabled us to see The Royal Yeomanry contingent, looking resplendent after two weeks of marching up and down the runway at RAF Odiham.

After welcoming the Gentlemen at Arms back into their mess and resetting uniforms, ready to go back into storage until the next time, Cpl Launder, Tpr Littler and I cut through the crowds to the Cavalry and Guards Club for a buffet lunch, where we were able to meet the family and friends of the Gentlemen at Arms.

It was a moment in history that I felt honoured to take some small part in.





MY REFLECTIONS ON THE ROLE OF RECCE IN 1 DEEP RECONNAISSANCE STRIKE BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM, FROM EX SCORPION CYCLONE, PART OF EX IRON TITAN 23

by 2Lt Hugh Maitland-Jones

Between the 25th and 28th of September 2023 I was posted to Deep Recce Strike Control (DRS CTRL) headquarters as an extension of my ADE (annual camp). My role was as Reconnaissance Watchkeeper, which left me with an overarching view of the battlespace management conducted by this headquarters. DRS CTRL manages the current operational picture as opposed to DRS Forward (DRS FWD) which carries out the planning. The role of Recce Watchkeeper is a nascent one, and I had no fixed portfolio, but generally I explained the conduct of recce actions to the almost entirely Royal Artillery (RA)-badged HQ and assisted the Battle Major with the current operational picture, with a focus on making sure recce considerations were getting the hearing they deserved.

Within DRS CTRL there is a Battle Major commanding the ongoing operations, a Fires desk monitoring and tracking fire missions, a Recce desk monitoring the ISTAR picture, a Counter Fires desk, a G2 Intelligence desk, and a G4 Pers / Log / Med cell. Those I was working with had recently completed Ex WARFIGHTER in the United States.

Over the period of my placement the DRS Battlegroup was on the offensive, moving from west to east across Salisbury Plain. The Royal Lancers (RL) B & D Sqns provided the combat power, along with Ghost Troop (a Sqn in British money) 2nd Sqn / US 2nd Cavalry Regiment. On the artillery side were GMLRS rocket artillery, AS90 self-propelled 155mm guns, and 105mm Lt Guns. 1st The Queens Dragoon Guards were acting as enemy or Red Forces, and both formations were wearing laser-tag-esque equipment to allow direct and indirect fire to simulate the loss of soldiers / materiel. Overall, there were more than 1,100 soldiers on the Plain, with soldiers from the RY, including C Sqn, embedded with both RL and QDG.

My key takeaways from my admittedly limited exposure were that 1) the DRS concept is highly permissive to initiative and innovation at the lowest levels, 2) that the recce instinct to push forward and forward into the Deep creates some direct conflicts with the artillery way-of-working, and 3) that we as recce troops need to have a greater understanding of what the RA need from us in terms of recce product to enable them to operate at our higher tempo.

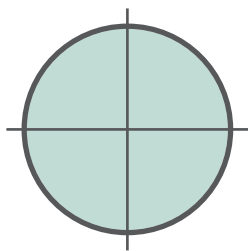
First, recce forces within 1DRS are empowered to operate much more fluidly than previous artillery / recce interfaces. Permissive use of airspace for sensors, like drones, helps speed up the sensor-shooter loop and enables new technologies to be employed without hindrance by recce forces, these two permissions are very empowering. To enable this intent, recce assets such as drones need to be pushed out to car or troop level and their use understood by those operating at the lowest level.

Second, the recce instinct for speed comes very quickly into direct conflict with the RA concepts of the Restricted and Constrained Fire Lines (R / CFL). As a Fire Support Control Measure, no troops can be forward of the Divisional CFL to allow the free prosecution of targets in that area using Corps assets. Between the Div CFL / RFL is the 'recce gap', a concept defined both spatially and temporally as the area the recce battlegroups operate freely within but also by its frontage being ahead of the leading Armoured Brigade Combat Teams (ABCTs). The guns, excepting in the case of an artillery raid, need to remain behind this RFL (essentially the Forward Line of Own Troops (FLOT)) for protection. The checklist of conditions for allowing the CFL and RFL to move forward included control of the RFL, which to the recce callsigns meant eyes on whereas to the Artillery it meant troops being physically on the crossings themselves. This misalignment illustrates the importance of having recce troops on hand in CRS CTRL / FWD to iron out what conditions are or aren't realistic for recce formations where mass is so low.

Third, the recce product that the artillery needs from recce troops is specific to task and is not something that recce troops (at least in the Royal Yeomanry) are familiar with. The designation of Artillery Manoeuvre or Reserve Areas (AMAs / ARAs) can be done from a map but requires recce confirmation too. The conceptual underpinning of how Artillery operates in the modern day is also something not overly widespread outside Larkhill. Artillery have their own recce elements, but in the fast-paced advance 3 (UK) Div assumes they will have little time to conduct their task before the guns are needed to support fire missions on the ground. Therefore, proper reconnaissance of previously map-identified potential AMAs / ARAs by the recce battlegroups will be essential and more knowledge of their selection will need to be disseminated.

To conclude, DRS CTRL runs the current operational picture, whilst DRS FWD plans future operations. Greater familiarisation with the warfighting model of 3 (UK) Div and 1DRS will enable individuals and formed bodies from the Royal Yeomanry to play a greater role in enabling the Brigade and Divisional intent. Additionally, great opportunities for junior initiative and leadership are baked into this intent, indicating an exciting and rewarding future for RY soldiers and officers. An obstacle to seizing this opportunity is lack of familiarity with RA procedures and concepts, but this could be easily rectified.





OP CABRIT 14

by LCpl Salamut



LCpl Salamut (Taz) has just deployed on operations and is attached to the 1st Queens Dragoon Guards (QDG) as the IA&O (Influence Activity & Outreach) lead for the British army in Poland on Op CABRIT 14. The role of IA&O involves producing high quality content, managing official NATO social media as well as British army and QDG social media. To prepare for his deployment and to ensure he would be able to perform his role to the full extent Taz attended a number of courses at Joint Influence Activity Group by A Sqn, QDG

Taz's role comes under HQ Media CABRIT, which is based in Estonia. "I've had to work to media plans and strategies set by SO1 Media CABRIT, which is great as I am given the full outlook on what the aim and messaging needs to be, but I'm given free reign to produce my own films/reels and photographs and also write ups" Taz said.

So far Taz has been working with the US PAO (Public Affairs Office) on articles and videos for Stars and Stripes magazine and also working with NATO on their Protect the future campaign. At a recent event in Warsaw he had to act as a media handler and spokesperson and had to ensure the press and TV interviewers were briefed and minded whilst interviewing junior soldiers. Only having been in theatre for three weeks he is still finding his feet in the role but relishing the challenge.

A Sqn, QDG have some awesome multinational exercises lined up with the US Battlegroup which should produce some amazing content for publication. These big



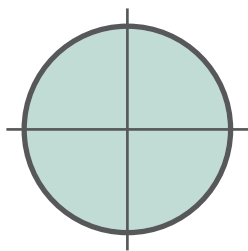
exercises where he will be the official Photographer/videographer, are likely to include JTAC and Close Air support which will make for some incredible viewing.

Taz says “I feel that I’ve achieved more since mobilising with QDG and deploying back to Poland than I have in my entire career!” adding “Gaining the Defence communicators course has complimented my specialist camera operator qualification. I’m hopefully being sent back to the U.K.

early next year to gain my MPOC (Military Psychological Operations) qualification. QDG are amazing and really recognise and nurture talent. I recommend anyone to deploy with them”.

This is Taz’s second Op CABRIT tour, the first being Op CABRIT 3 in 2018 with C Sqn QDG which was supported by a RY wide deployment.





OP CABRIT 13 (BPTA, POLAND – 2023) NATO BATTLE GROUP

**by L/Cpl Michael Takacs – C Squadron,
The Royal Yeomanry**



Having served in the Regular Army for 10 years I find myself more determined and dedicated as ever to the Army Reserves. The opportunities that have presented themselves to me over the last 10 years of service with the reserves has proven to me that not only are the reserves a great opportunity to travel the world but also to meet some amazing people from different nations, cultures and backgrounds all of which are working together for a common goal.

At the end of 2022 I was fortunate enough to be one of only a handful of reservists who got the opportunity to deploy on Op Cabrit 13, attached to a regular unit the Royal Lancers who are based in Catterick. This is where I began my pre deployment training in January 2023, and the start of a three month package to allow soldiers to pass all the necessary pre requisites to deployment on Op Cabrit 13 to Poland.

Having completed the pre tour package requirements: physical build up training, passing physical tests, completing numerous courses as well as a range package at Castlemartin in Wales it was now time to fly out. I deployed on the 10th April 2023 to be part of the NATO BATTLE GROUP – POLAND.

Sports and Challengers:



While deployed, the first few months were focused on integration, squadron development and cohesion as well as a number of sporting and charity events. I participated in many of these activities, from being part of the volleyball team and competing with other nations to competing on a Norwegian 30 km foot march carrying 12kg of weight. The challenge was to complete the march in a time of less then 4 hours 30 mins. I'm very happy to say I



completed it in under 4 hours 8 mins. After the event there was a parade for all the individuals who passed, we were presented with an award/certificate to recognise our completing the Norwegian 30km Challenge.

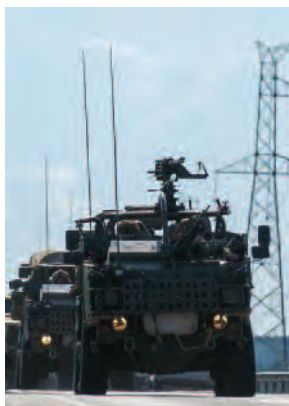
Exercises and Deployments:

During the time here we were put through a number of tasks by the Battle Group Commander, which they called “EMERGANCY READINESS DEPLOYMENT EXERCISE” (ERDE). One of these exercises took place in the early hours of the morning, roughly 00:30hrs. It was called Ex ALIWAL SURGE. The ERDE proved the Battlegroup’s ability to deploy at a moment’s notice to positions across Northern Poland. Once deployed on the ground, Aliwal Troop from the Royal Lancers navigated across the Polish countryside finding routes and battle positions for use by the M1A2 Abrams of the Head-hunters Bn US Army, enhancing UK-US interoperability.



Task Force Lancers:

A 2435km round road move/convoy through four countries (Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) has never been done before. As a member of the Royal Lancers (attached arms) I had the privilege of being one of few who was given the opportunity to complete this task. The objective was to see that both the British and American convoys rapidly deployed as far north as Estonia in the shortest amount of time. TF LANCERS comprised of over 50 soldiers and 20 vehicles. TF LANCERS mission was to conduct a tactical road march covering over 1100km to NATO BG ESTONIA. During the road move we battled the elements of the weather, mechanical (which were surprisingly very few) and sleep deprivation/tiredness. Thankfully throughout the road move and through all four countries we were escorted by either military police or civilian police – blue lights all the way.



Recruitment and Showfare:

During Op Cabrit 13 we conducted a number of recruitment and showcases throughout Poland. NATO's Forward Land Forces supported and celebrated Polish Armed Forces Day with a parade through Warsaw. We also hosted a recruitment event for recruits from the Polish Army. This proved to be a massive success and was enjoyed by all that attended.



Achievements and Awards:

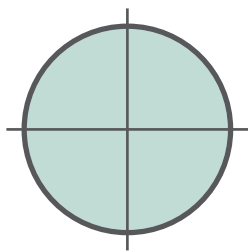
During the last couple of months, I decided to volunteer with the Red Cross and the USO charity. While volunteering I was asked if I could head up a project for the USO – obviously I accepted. I was given a team of around 20 US soldiers who would work with me to create a welfare facility for all nations to enjoy. I designed the layout of both internal and external facilities. With the help from my team we all contributed to ensuring that the design would cater for everyone from gamers, readers, pool players, movie watchers, as well as a private garden so people could relax and have some privacy. Because of my commitment and dedication to creating a welfare facility for all I was awarded a number of coins, 1st was a Regional Coin of Excellence from the Vice President of the USO for the Design and Creation of the USO Facility, second was a Coin for Excellence from the US Battle Group Commander for my leadership towards his soldiers and a third was a Military Medal for overall Military Achievement as well as a split US and British flag signed by everyone from the team I had the privilege of leading and who supported me along the way.





I had the privilege and honour of being part of something amazing, the experience and friendships I have gained from this operational tour is something I will never forget.





MUSEUM TRUST REPORT

**by Chris Sutton
Chairman**

Trustees: Chris Sutton (chairman), Huw Jones (secretary), Dan Taylor (curator), John Gunn (treasurer), Tim Rayson, David Lakin, Phil Mason, Brenda Traylen (resigned 27 November 2023)

The main development with the Trust this year has been the growth of the Living History Group, which you can read about in the curator's report. The Group provides a lot of support in museum maintenance too, and the Saladin and Field Gun gate guards at the Museum have benefited greatly from this.

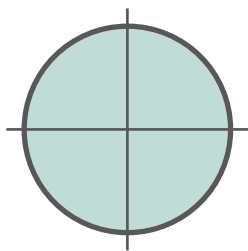
It has been good to invite Group members Freddie Deane and Eve Edmundes to our six-monthly trustees meeting, as well as regular attenders David Whitehouse (assistant curator Bexleyheath) and Jeremy Kimmel (museums adviser). In November we dined out Brenda Traylen, who has stood down as a trustee, but intends to continue as an active and very welcome volunteer. Brenda, thank you for all your work as a trustee for many years.

We welcomed many members of the association and their families to the museum on Coronation Saturday, followed by a barbecue laid on by the association in the garden of Hever village hall. A number of trustees also joined a memorable dining out for Guy Farge in Westerham – Guy was for many years Chair of the Museum Trust as well as Association President. Staying on the theme of great events, I represented us at a wonderful black tie dinner laid on by the Guthrie family, our landlords at Hever, to commemorate the 640th anniversary of the castle, and the 40th anniversary of Guthrie ownership. It was a staff, friends and family occasion, and the Guthries restated how we at the museum are a valued member of the Hever extended family.

Finally, it has been a while since we refreshed our cohort of regular donors to the museum. Just another £1000 a year would help us break even on our annual operating costs; (note that this does not cover the cost of big acquisitions when we tend to do specific fund raising appeals.) If one hundred readers of this journal could commit to an annual standing order of just £10, we will be financially sustainable. Larger or more frequent standing orders are of course more than welcome too. Our bank account details are: CAF Bank, account name KSYMT, sort code 40-52-40, account number 00035394.



If you already have a standing order paying in to our Holt's bank account that's fine, we still get the money, but we are gradually transitioning to CAF Bank as it is better for making online payments to suppliers with two online signatories. So this would be a good time to terminate your Holt's standing order and create a new one with CAF Bank. Alternatively, please scan the QR code on your phone to reach our Just Giving page to make your donation. Thank you



KENT & SHARPSHOOTERS YEOMANRY MUSEUM TRUST

Curator's Report by Dan Taylor

Trustees: Chris Sutton (Chairman), Dan Taylor (Hon Curator),
Huw Jones (Hon Secretary), John Gunn (Treasurer), Tim Rayson,
David Lakin and Phil Mason.

Curatorial posts held as of 30th November 2023

Hon Curator: Dan Taylor

Curator (Croydon): Tim Rayson

Curator (Bexleyheath): David Whitehouse

Curator (Hever): Freddie Deane

Assistant Curator (Collections): Eve Edmondson

It feels a bit of a cliché to say each year that we keep getting busier, but the facts speak for themselves. There are now over forty active members of the Volunteer gang – our annual museum tidy-up day was attended by an astonishing 29 volunteers (a far cry from the four attendees back in 2016), and the museum has representation at a number of historical events. We now put on a number of activities in and around the museum throughout the year and put on a pretty lavish display for Hever's 'Home Front'. In addition to these home activities, representatives of the museum are becoming a regular feature of historical events and shows, and our burgeoning Living History Group goes from strength to strength. We have had our fifth annual Student Volunteer week in the summer and our 'Black Gang' continue to provide very valuable maintenance of our outdoor exhibits. Rather than satiating the museum's responsibilities for maintaining the museum, the number of volunteers opens up all manner of new possibilities, and now feeds the drive to do more with the collection and allows us to make our forward planning more ambitious. We would therefore be very happy to hear from anyone who would like to join our enthusiastic and diverse gang – there are a variety of roles on offer.

Tasks carried out by the volunteers this year have included the installation and decoration of the displays within the Anderson Shelter; plantings on top of it; fitting of non-slip treads on the access ramp; all manner of gardening, weeding and site augmentation, painting the Saladin; scanning and annotation of the photograph collection. We are now looking to acquire a running wartime truck to help with events and are planning the construction of a Nissen hut next to the museum to act as a combined store and research centre. There are plenty of things to do – much of it very hands-on.

Among this year's accessions, we have received a collection of Second World War munitions, a fine portrait of John 'Dusty' Rhodes (a long-time senior NCO through the



The assembled volunteer gang at the annual 'Tidy-up' day at the museum. Much cleaning, gardening, vehicle maintenance and other general titivation is achieved each year at this event by our enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers.

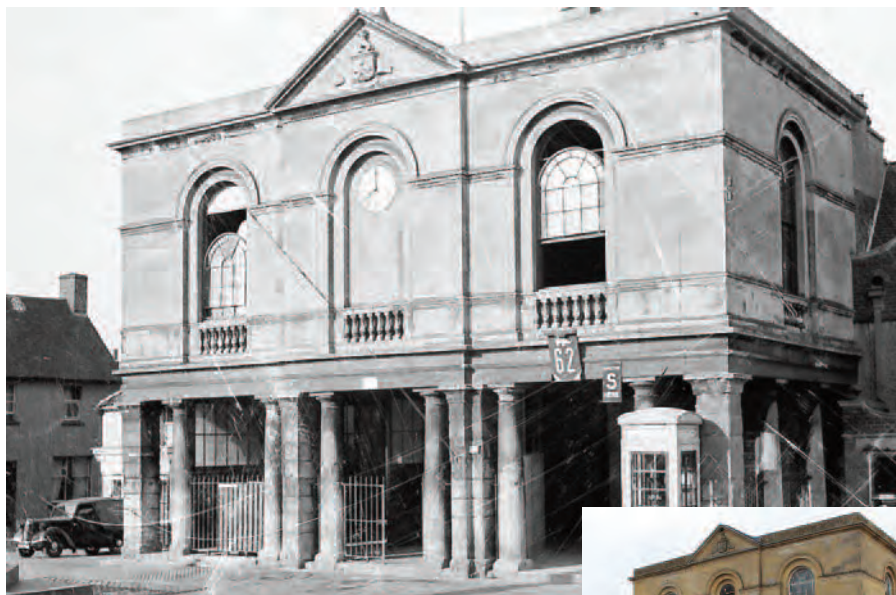
Western Desert and Italy, commissioned in 1944 in NW Europe and unfortunately died in April 1945), a collection of artifacts that belonged to Trooper Mahoney and photograph albums relating to 4 CLY. In addition, I have visited the IWM with Freddie Deane in order to photograph the entire Milford-Cottam album – also of 4 CLY. These additions substantially increase the range of images held for 4 CLY during the brief period of its history.

Eve Edmondes has been appointed Assistant Curator (Collections) with a remit to help with displays at our three sites and various stores. In addition to work at Hever, she has been engaged with helping David Whitehouse with the revision of the displays at Bexleyheath. Eve and I recently attended a conservation course at the National Army Museum's Stevenage site, which turned out to be very useful and has highlighted some practices we intend to adopt over the coming months.

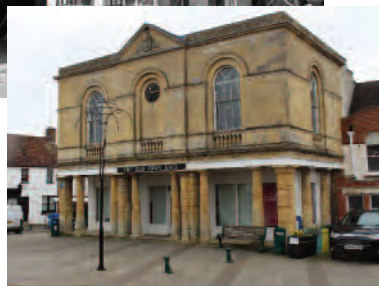
The Black Gang continues to tinker with both the Saladin and 25-pdr. In addition to the



A rather nice portrait of John Rhodes, donated to the museum this year. 'Dusty' Rhodes served with 3 CLY through WWII, chiefly as a Squadron Sergeant Major. He was commissioned in January 1945 and was tragically killed in April of that year – less than a month before the war ended. His parents commissioned this painting based on a photograph taken earlier in the war, though with his rank updated.



One exercise carried out early in the year was a visit to one of 3 CLY's wartime billets in Westbury, which I visited with Mark Selby - one of our volunteers - on our way to a course at the Small Arms School in Warminster. The Regiment was stationed in Westbury during the summer of 1941 running up to their overseas deployment to the desert. This is the Town Hall, suitably marked up with the Regiment's markings. Inset: The building remains today, little changed.



cosmetic improvement of the exterior of the Saladin, mentioned above, they are replacing a rusted stowage bin lid and continue to work on getting the various automotive systems back into running order. No easy task with some complex hydraulics to contend with. They have also managed to source a replacement tyre for the 25-pdr thanks to their multifarious contacts. The gun had been inappropriately fitted with a radial which was beginning to buckle under its weight, and they were able to replace it with a walled tyre of the correct type just in time for the Coronation Shoot in May.

One highlight of the year was taking part in a Normandy tour during the D-Day commemorations. This will be covered in the feature about the Living History Group but included visits to a number of the Regiment's battle sites including Villers-Bocage. I gave a talk at the National Army Museum in September about Villers - correcting a number of the misunderstood elements of the battle and providing some publicity for the museum. I was also featured in a podcast for WW2TV in October about the crossing of the river Volturno, which highlighted Dick Sutton's story.

The curatorial team dealt with over one hundred enquiries during the course of the year. These ranged from a number of family members contacting us to learn about a relative's time with our antecedent Regiments to hosting a visit by a



A Squadron had their HQ on the western side of the town in a substantial house off Black Horse Lane. Inset: After the war the house fell into disrepair and much of its grounds were sold off for new development. The current owner has restored some of the former grandeur and kindly allowed us to take some comparison shots to go with our wartime collection.



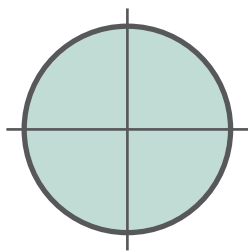
An unusual wartime image of the Regiment having its Church Parade in All Saints church, Westbury. On the right, then SSM Freddy Crowley glances at the camera. Inset: The same spot photographed in 2023.

modelmaking company who wanted to scan our Saladin in order to create a plastic kit of the vehicle.

As you can probably tell from the tone of this article, there is no intention to slow down and so we would very much welcome anyone looking to get involved. We offer training opportunities in a range of museum competencies and, as the growth of the team suggests, it is an engaging and fun group of people who are making tremendous strides in promoting the Regimental history. We would also welcome financial contributions so that we can fund our ambitious plans and to provide the necessary kit to keep the team busy. Please get in touch via e-mail – curator@ksymuseum.org.uk – or speak to one of the team named at the top of the article.

Dan Taylor
31st December 2023





WILLIAM WILSON REKMR

In January 2024, the museum was delighted to receive from Mr Stuart Wilson, a fine collection of trophies presented to his grandfather Corporal William Wilson during his service in the Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles towards the end of the 19th Century. The collection comprises, a crystal decanter set, a marble mantel clock, and silver jug and a silver teapot.



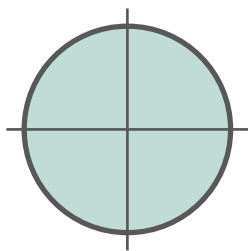
From the inscriptions on some of the items, we learn that these were presented to William as prizes for swordsmanship. A brass plaque on the clock is inscribed “REKMR, E Troop, Sword Prize, Presented by Capt FA Mackinnon, won by Trooper W. Wilson 1886”. Similarly, a plaque on the decanter set is inscribed “REKMR, E Troop, Sword Prize, Presented by Capt FA Mackinnon, won by Trooper W. Wilson 1888.”

The latter is particularly interesting as the East Kent Gazette of 2nd June 1888 confirms that Trooper Wilson received a prize for swordsmanship at Mote Park 23rd May 1888. It

was on this day that both regiments of Kent Yeomanry were reviewed at Mote Park by HRH The Duke of Cambridge and was the subject of a painting by renowned military artist Sergeant Harry Payne of the West Kent Yeomanry.



We are privileged to have the original oil painting in our collection, and perhaps one of the REKMR riders depicted on the left is William Wilson himself!



LIVING HISTORY GROUP

by Dan Taylor

We are now into the second year of operations for our team of dedicated re-enactors. The intention is that they are able to represent a number of diverse periods of our combined history and to thereby promote awareness of the museum and to authentically recreate the look and ethos of those who served. Over the last year we have represented the Kent Yeomanry gunners of WWII for the coronation, a variety of periods from WWI to the Cold War at Home Front and provided Sharpshooter dressed vehicle crews at a number of other historical events.

In order to create an accurate representation, the members undertake training weekends to learn basic military skills and to learn our history and the equipment used since the turn of the 19th Century. We have a basic set of kit to get members started though they quickly begin to collect their own items of uniform, badges, and insignia – competing to have the best representation. This then helps them to have stories to tell the public when attending events. We have a huge advantage in this regard because the rich history of the Regiment means we have plenty of stories to tell. We are also fortunate that the majority of the group are in their late teens and early twenties and so are much more credible when representing actual service personnel than some groups, where they are often somewhat more portly and advanced in years than those they seek to portray. Consequently, our group are popular with vehicle owners as they can present a much more realistic photograph opportunity for the visiting public.

The first training event was attended by fourteen of the group's members over a weekend in February. A lively programme of training, drill and other entertainment proved a great success with the assembled team and will be used as a springboard for similar events in 2024. When



One of the highlights of the Annual Training Weekend was the appearance of an M9A1 half-track marked up as a 3 CLY vehicle from 1944. We provided photographs of the Regiment's wartime vehicles as a reference for the owner, Graham Cole, whilst he was restoring the vehicle, and this was the result. By way of explanation, the group had just finished a session on the application of personal camouflage and Joe, on the left, may have been a little heavy-handed.



The shoot for the King's coronation took place on a rather damp morning in May, though it was very well attended by the public. Whenever the gun is shot there seems to be a competition to catch the moment of flames emerging from the barrel – which is achieved surprisingly often considering the fact that the flash is practically imperceptible in real time.



The Invicta gun troop lining up for a commemorative group photograph. Freddie Deane has created a very apt set of signs for each of the epochs the group displays – which he is posing at David Whitehouse's feet for the photograph.



Freddie is here at the Home Front event, displaying the Service Dress uniform worn by a Second Lieutenant during the Inter-war years.



The Normandy trip took place at the start of June and was the first visit to the battlefields for most of the members of our group. The vehicle crews were volunteers with the East of England Military Museum who restore wartime vehicles to running condition and then take them to commemorative events like this. They are mostly ex-regulars and our group integrated with them surprisingly well!

devised, the training weekend had been intended as an activity behind closed doors, but a diary change for Hever meant that it ended up being public-facing – and quite unexpectedly popular with the visiting public. Future training activities will be deliberately set up for when the castle grounds are open – we can then take advantage of the warmer weather in the Spring.

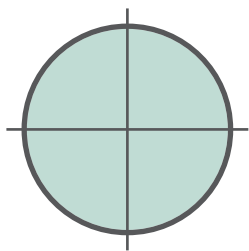
Through the year, the group provided KSY Museum representation for the following events: In May we fired a ten-shot salute for the Coronation in Kent Yeomanry kit, complete with a Field Artillery Tractor to tow the gun in front of the castle. Our Normandy trip in early June, had ten members of the LHG under canvas in the grounds of a Chateau, travelling as part of a party of restored vehicles to take part in the 79th anniversary commemorations. At Hever's 'Home Front' we had members dressed as WWI East Kent Yeomanry officer, Inter War Sharpshooters Officer, WWII Kent Yeomanry gunners, WWII Sharpshooters, and Cold War Sharpshooters. Further Sharpshooters displays were put on at 'Military Odyssey' in Kent, and 'We Have Ways' in Oxfordshire. The list of events is set to expand for 2024.

The group is actively looking to expand and to improve the quality of their representation. Anyone wishing to join (or just to find out more) would be most welcome. We have both male and female members, and whilst the majority are youthful, there are some of us more advanced in years! We would also like to hear from you if you have any kit hiding in a cupboard that you could live without – particularly black ankle boots. The group can be contacted at reenactor@ksymuseum.org.uk.

The main upcoming project is the purchase of a suitable vehicle for the group. The preference is for a wartime 15-cwts which would have the dual benefit of carrying all of our kit and being an instant centre-piece for our pitch at shows. This will require some fund-raising and so if you are interested in making a contribution to the cause, contact us at the address above. If you know of a company which might be interested in sponsoring the purchase (with a suitable acknowledgement displayed), that would be excellent too!

Dan Taylor
30th December 2023





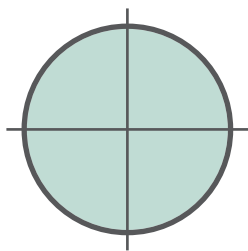
THE LIVING HISTORY GROUP IN 2023

by Arthur Whitehouse

The museums living history group has been very active this year. We've made a good amount of progress since last year when everything began. The first thing we did was a training weekend in February where we collectively learned new skills such as drill and easy camouflage. We also improved our knowledge and skill on firing our 25pdr by introducing new aspects we had found out about from the Garrison Artillery LHG the previous year. After this the group went down for the Kings Coronation in May and fired a salute in front of the castle. I was the gun layer so got to fire the ten shots. There was a massive crowd which only came down to see us. Not long after in late June we set our camp up at Hever for the annual Home Front weekend where a handful of other reenactors came to Hever as well. The penultimate thing our living history group did this year was venturing to Military Odyssey! This was the first time we set up our field bar the Contented Penguin which was a massive hit! Getting lots of other reenactors from Napoleonic to Mongolian! Finally in November for Armistice Day we gathered to fire two shots from our 25pdr to mark the two minute silence. As the living history group has been such a success this year we plan do it all again next year and more!







FIELD OF REMEMBRANCE

2023

by Marian Hannam

The 95th Royal British Legion Field of Remembrance was held at Westminster Abbey on Thursday 9th November when the lawn of St. Margaret's Church was laid out with 308 plots in the names of military associations and other organisations, including new ones to represent the Single Service Widowed Association and the RAF Benevolent Fund. This year more than 35,000 tributes were planted by the team of staff and volunteers.

The *Association* plot contained a large named cross – 3rd/4th County of London Yeomanry (*Sharpshooters*) and three further crosses representing the *KSY*, the *Kent Yeomanry* and the *CLY* (*Sharpshooters*) together with ten small crosses commemorating *Association* members who had passed.

The service commenced with the arrival at the Field of Her Majesty The Queen where she was met by The Dean of Westminster Abbey, The Very Reverend David Hoyle, MBE. Prayers were offered after which Her Majesty laid a personal Cross of Remembrance.

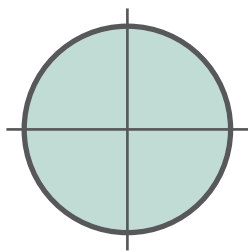
A Bugler from the Band of the Irish Guards sounded 'The Last Post' which was followed by the 'Exhortation to Remembrance' given by Surgeon Rear Admiral Lionel Jarvis, CBE, DL, President of The Poppy Factory. The two-minute silence was observed followed by 'Reveille'.

Her Majesty was then invited to undertake a review of the plots where she took the opportunity to speak with our plot representative Tim Rayson, *Honorary Secretary* of the *Association*.

The following members of the *Association* were also in attendance: Carol and Barrie Corfield, Marian Hannam, David Palmer, Keith Wrate and Kevin Wright.

"WE WILL REMEMBER THEM"





THE KSYA CORONATION CELEBRATION AND BBQ

Monday, 8th May, 2023

by Chris Moden

This year, we saw the coronation of His Majesty the King. I'm sure that like me, many of you couldn't help but be glued to the television on 6 May to watch a 'once in a lifetime' event at Westminster Abbey. A ceremony that combined religion, celebrity and tradition into a spectacle unique in a 21st century world as the United Kingdom 'swore in' a new head of state. For many serving and ex-serving military folk, the coronation is a reminder of our oath and the bonds that tie the Sovereign and the armed services in service of the country. Of course, serving Sharpshooters were busy supporting the service as they had done following the death of the late Queen.

Tim Rayson and I have long discussed how we might add an event for all Sharpshooters to the calendar and not to miss an opportunity, we decided we should propose to the committee that the KSYA host a gathering to mark the coronation and bring together our members in a way that celebrates our common identity. Our venue of choice was Hever Castle, home of the KSY museum and a place that many Sharpshooters know well from jubilee and other parades. This proved quite the challenge but we put together a crack volunteer team for the task, consisting of Tim Rayson (Hon Secretary) Steve Shelley (Assistant Hon Secretary), David Palmer (Treasurer) and myself.

Thus thanks to modern technology in booking the event and an awful amount of hard work by the team on Monday 8 May, the KSYA hosted a coronation celebration and barbeque at Hever Castle. Over 180 of you attended Hever on the day and 177



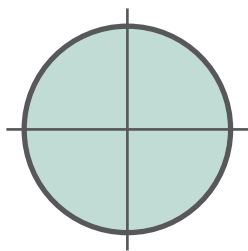




joined us for a hearty lunch. The day started with a gathering at the ‘Think Tank’ next door to the Sharpshooter Museum for coffee and speeches from the Chairman and updates from the museum trust on their work. Thanks to the generosity of Hever Castle our members were given ‘gratis’ access to visit the museum and roam the gardens before we trekked across the road for lunch at Hever Village Hall, an ancient and crumbling nissan hut whose glory days had probably seen a few royal celebrations. Most importantly the weather was kind!

Our thanks go to all of you who made it to the day, our hosts at Hever Castle including the Guthrie family for their generosity. Also to the trustees of Hever Village Hall and of course, our catering partner “BBQ King”. Watch this space for possible announcement of another event in 2024.





REFURBISHMENT OF DESERT RATS MEMORIAL, HIGH ASH, NORFOLK

Having stood on the memorial for nearly 25 years, it was felt that the Cromwell tank, “Little Audrey II” (a Cromwell Mk VI in the markings of 1st Bn, The Royal Tank Regiment) was greatly in need of a refurbishment. Although the tank had been repainted in the Autumn of 2020, the paint had not fared well and masses of it was flaking off badly and was not a fitting and suitable memorial to the Desert Rats.

So, the Desert Rats Association, decided to fund the refurbishment of the tank and after consideration the Cromwell tank was removed on 17th October 2023, into the care of Shaun Hindle MVS. Shaun is ex REME, and has supported the Association over many, many years.



Tank being prepared for the lift.



The tank at Shaun Hindle's workshop, showing the bad state of the paintwork.

When the tank was unloaded it was amazing, that after 25 years on the plinth, the road wheels still turned and, after a little shunting around the yard, the tracks freed up, too. It is essential that the tank be removed from the plinth, as the process of the refurbishment will use products that the Forestry Commission will not approve for use at the memorial site, plus the damp uncontrolled location of the tank on the plinth, is far from ideal when grit blasting, repairing the surfaces and painting the tank whereas Shaun has the necessary protection at his workshop to provide the best environment for the work. In short, to achieve the standard of refurbishment we need, hence the work could not take place in situ.

A little while later, the turret was removed and both it and the hull were inspected. All of the hull and turret were found to be in very good condition, with just surface rust, also with the primer from 25 years ago still being visible.



The turret being removed.



Inside the hull, after the turret was removed.

While the tank is away, the plaques on the Memorial will be refurbished, too, as the lettering is also suffering and the brickwork, plus the area around the plinth, will also be cleaned and prepared for the future.

In early 2024, the full refurbishment of the tank will commence and it is planned that she will be returned in the Spring of 2024. This will be in time for a rededication service and a special service on 5th May 2024 to remember the move of the Desert Rats to their embarkation camps, in readiness for the Normandy Landings. This will be 80 years after the tanks of 22nd Armoured Brigade, including 4th County of London Yeomanry (The Sharpshooters), departed for Orwell Park School, Ipswich.

Once complete, our aim is that the full Memorial will be able to last another 25 years, as a fitting memorial to the men of the Desert Rats.

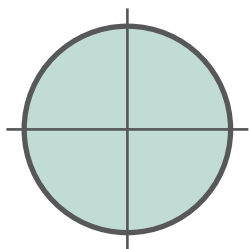
Floreat jerboa!

The Desert Rat Association.

Note by the Hon Secretary.

This memorial to the Desert Rats of which both Sharpshooter regiments were almost founder members was the brainchild of Les Dinning who was formerly 4th CLY and was a reserve crewman at Villers Bocage. As we know the 3rd and the 4th had to amalgamate to create critical mass and as result there was a certain amount of surplus manpower that was posted out to different regiments including 1 RTR which is where Les ended up in B Sqn. The Cromwell memorial was almost entirely down to his own efforts and he lived to see it completed and dedicated before passing away.





VISIT TO TILLY-SUR-SEULLES

by Penny Malik

Towards the end of November a small intrepid group of Sharpshooters decided to brave the heavy rain and grey skies and visit the newly rededicated graves of three Sharpshooters buried at CWGC Tilly-sur-Seulles. The group consisted of Simon and Penny Malik, David and Marian Hannam and Barry and Carol Corfield.

There are several different routes to take to reach this part of Normandy – the Channel Tunnel, the Newhaven-Dieppe Ferry and the Portsmouth – Caen Ferry. We decided that given the time of year and the inclement weather to use the Channel Tunnel. Having experienced lengthy delays at the Channel Tunnel in the past and needing some flexibility with timings, we splashed out on flexi-plus. If you have a full car of people this is definitely recommended!

The drive from Calais to Normandy is over three hours. The roads are well maintained, there are numerous spots to stop and Pont de Normandie is such a spectacular bridge it makes the drive worthwhile all on its own! Another tip to speed up your journey is to invest in a Sanef toll tag. It means you can drive through the numerous toll booths without stopping.

When going to Normandy we normally stay in Crepon. On this trip we decided to look at the American beaches and found a lovely hotel Domaine d'Utah Beach. This privately run hotel is a converted farm just a few miles from Utah beach. As it was the end of the season we appeared to be the only guests staying at the hotel. The rooms, service and food were fabulous. The hotel closed for the winter as we left.





Unfortunately, all the museums in the area were closed during our stay. However, we were able to visit the Utah and Omaha Beaches and appreciate the advantage our troops had in coming ashore at Gold Beach.



On leaving Utah Beach we stopped off at the memorial to Major Dick Winter (OC Easy Company, 101st Airborne) immortalised in the TV series Band of Brothers.

At Omaha Beach we admired the memorial on the beach.

We also visited the American Normandy war cemetery. It is much larger than our own cemeteries and possibly not as personal.



Another tip for visiting France, when it comes to lunchtime steer clear of the tourist cafes and look for any small restaurant with a lot of locals dining. We stopped off at the Restaurant Brasserie Bar La Cremaillere. We knew we had chosen a good spot by the large number of local tradesmen vans parked outside.

We then focused on the main purpose of our visit – to see the newly rededicated graves of the three Sharpshooters at the Tilly-sur-Seulles war cemetery.



Having previously seen service in North Africa and Italy, on 6 June 1944, D Day, 4th County of London Yeomanry landed at Gold Beach as part of Operation Overlord. Having reached their assembly area, they began their advance inland on 10 June. At first light on 11 June, they advanced to bridges held by the enemy north of Tilly-sur-Seulles, operating in support of 2nd Battalion The Gloucestershire Regiment. With the bridges secured, two patrols from the Recce Squadron and C Squadron headed towards Tilly-sur-Seulles. C Squadron withdrew to outflank the town to the right and encountered ‘close country’. One troop was sent down a narrow lane and was ambushed with the loss of every tank. At the end of the day 18 members of the battalion were missing including LCpl Skilton and Tpr Morris.

Having seen action at Tilly-sur-Seulles on 11 June 1944, at first light on 13 June, 4th County of London Yeomanry moved towards Villers-Bocage and attacked. At 10:00 hours A Squadron was surrounded and attacked by the enemy. Their position became untenable, but withdrawal was impossible. B Squadron was ordered to hold the town at all costs. By 16:00 hours, after a six hour street battle, the village was still held by B Squadron but enemy infantry remained in the area.

1/7th Battalion The Queen’s attacked but could not clear the opposition. B Squadron was ordered to withdraw with C Squadron covering the withdrawal. 4th County of London Yeomanry suffered casualties of 88 missing, eight wounded in action and four killed in action that day. Cpl Griffiths was last seen being treated for wounds in the vicinity of Point 213 on the northern edge of Villers-Bocage.

Even though it was known that these three Sharpshooters had been lost during this action, it was not known where they were buried. The graves of Cpl Griffiths and LCpl

Skilton were identified after a researcher submitted evidence to CWGC hoping to have located their final resting places. Further research was carried out by the National Army Museum and JCCC and the identification of the graves was confirmed. During the course of this further research the grave of Tpr Morris was also identified.

Three rededication services were held on 21 September 2023 at their gravesides. The services, organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC) were held at CWGC Tilly-sur-Seulles War Cemetery.

The services were attended by members of Cpl Griffiths and LCpl Skilton's families as well as serving soldiers of The Royal Armoured Corps and The Coldstream Guards. The services were conducted by the Reverend Martin Robbins, Chaplain to 1st Battalion The Coldstream Guards.

TROOPER DAVID LOUIS MORRIS

Tpr David Louis Morris was born on 4 April 1923 in London borough of St Pancras. He was the only child of Louis Jervis Morris and his wife Olive Muriel. Before the war he worked as a civil servant. He enlisted into The Royal Armoured Corps on 23 April 1942 and was posted to 54th Training Regiment. On 9 November 1942, Tpr Morris was posted to 52nd Training Regiment. He embarked for the Middle East on 19 December 1942 and saw service with the First Army in North Africa. On 5 May 1943 he transferred to 4th County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters) and on 23 July 1943 qualified as a Gunner Operator. He was part of the Regiment when it landed at Gold Beach as part of Operation Overlord. Tpr Morris was listed as missing after the action on 11 June and his name was commemorated on the Bayeux Memorial to the missing in Normandy.



CORPORAL ALLAN EDWIN GRIFFITHS

Corporal Allan Edwin Griffiths was born in Hereford on 13 October 1909. He was one of three children born to Charles Sandford Griffiths and his wife Florence Mary. Private Charles Sandford Griffiths was killed in Belgium on 25 May 1915 during the Second Battle of Ypres whilst serving with 2nd Battalion The King's Shropshire Light Infantry and is commemorated on the Menin Gate.

Before enlisting, Allan was employed as a rates clerk and worked for Hereford Rural District Council. On 28 December 1933, Allan married Millie Frances Langford in Hereford. They had three daughters, Shirley Anne, born on 1 June 1935, Stella Margaret, born on 1 April 1938 and Pamela Mary, born on 10 September 1941.

On 16 July 1941, he enlisted into The Royal Armoured Corps and was posted to 6th Training Regiment. He arrived



in the Middle East on 19 April 1942 and was posted to 4th County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters) on 21 June 1942. On 18 December 1942 he qualified as a Driver Operator and was promoted to lance corporal. On 9 September 1943, he was promoted again to corporal. Having seen action with the Eighth Army in North Africa, on 21 November 1943 4th County of London Yeomanry entered Italy. On 6 January 1944, they disembarked in the United Kingdom. Cpl Griffiths was sent to the Army School of Chemical Warfare in Glenridding, in the Lake District.

He rejoined the regiment and was with 4th County of London Yeomanry when they landed at Gold Beach. He was last seen being treated for wounds in the vicinity of Point 213 on the northern edge of Villers-Bocage. He was listed as missing and his name was commemorated on the Bayeux Memorial.



LANCE CORPORAL NEVILLE CHARLES SKILTON



Lance Corporal Neville Skilton was born on 11 December 1915 in Tonbridge, Kent. He was the youngest of three children born to William Skilton and his wife Nellie. Before the outbreak of the World War 2 he worked as a clerk. On 16 May 1940, Neville enlisted and was posted to 6th Battalion The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment.) On 8 March 1941, he married Esme Gertrude Heller at Edmonton Register Office in London.

On 27 March 1941, Neville transferred to The Royal Armoured Corps and qualified as a Driver Operator. He was initially posted to 54th Training Regiment, before being posted to 4th County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters) on 11 August 1941. On 15 August 1941, he embarked for the Middle East and saw service in North Africa with the Eighth Army. On 21 November 1943, 4th County of London Yeomanry entered Italy. On 5 January 1944 he was promoted to lance corporal and the battalion disembarked in the United Kingdom the following day.

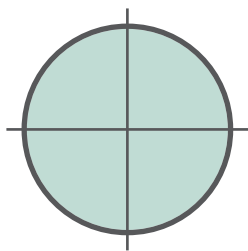
He was part of the Regiment when it embarked on Operation Overlord. He was part of the troop that was ambushed down a narrow lane. He was listed as missing and his name was commemorated at the Bayeux Memorial.



Corporal Allan Edwin Griffiths.



Lance Corporal Neville Skilton and Tpr David Louis Morris.



EL GUBI DINNER

18th November 2023



Once again there was a gathering of the KSYA multitude to commemorate the battle of Bir El Gubi on 19 November 1941 that forms our association annual dinner. This was the 76th continuous event, to mark the 82nd anniversary, in the excellent and illustrious surrounds of the Cavalry and Guards Club in Piccadilly, London.

The Chairman welcomed the new Master of the Worshipful Company of Insurers (WCI), Claire Burrell and her partner to her first dinner; as well as Col Tim Orchard, Honorary Colonel 71 (City of London) Yeomanry Signal Regiment and guests from Germany, particularly Lt Col Frank Dirksmeier (German Air Force) complete with bagpipes who piped us in at the call to dinner and played 'Sunset over El Gubi' during the toast to Absent Friends. A number of those attending had come from far and wide and, as ever, it was always good to see familiar faces and catch-up with news and chit-chat while tucking into game pie, drinking fine wine and admiring the silver on the table. The Chairman had written to His Majesty the King offering greetings from the association, he had graciously replied and the response was read by our Honorary Secretary Tim Rayson.

There were two particular events to be marked this year, the annual WCI presentations and a magnificent silver statuette presented by the association to the WCI.

WCI Presentation

The annual presentation is made by the WCI to an individual from each of the serving squadrons in recognition of their making a significant contribution to the unit. The personal awards are in the form of either silver cufflinks or a broach. The award citations, given below, were read by the OC 265 Squadron, Major Craig Sumner for **2Lt Phoebe Lewis** and Lt Col Matthew Webb for **Cpl Kieran New**. Both well-deserved recipients were very warmly congratulated and applauded by all.



Maj Sumner with 2Lt Phoebe Lewis accepting the WCI broach from the Master WCI.



Cpl Kieran New accepting the WCI silver cufflinks from the Master.

Worshipful Company of Insurers Presentation Citations

2nd Lieutenant Phoebe Lewis – 265 (Kent & County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters)) Support – Since joining, 2Lt Phoebe Lewis has been a central figure and driving force behind the Squadron's recent successes. A Squadron on a changing trajectory, 265 were tasked to deliver a nascent 71 Signal Regiment Command Post (CP71) which was a challenge, even for the most experienced; Phoebe Lewis stepped into the Troop Commander's role with an open attitude, a drive to learn and demonstrated the art of officership. Not afraid to get involved, Phoebe Lewis engaged directly with the equipment, learning its strengths and weaknesses, challenges and success factors, her compassion and care for the entire Sqn personnel have been second to none throughout. Given the unenviable task of delivering High Frequency (HF) communications across a distributed network, combining functions to maintain support across the regiment, all while delivering a functional HQ while enabling to host 7 Signal Group commander and staff, Phoebe Lewis set to work. In little over a year, CP71 delivered on Ex IRON TITON, the largest land exercise in 20 years. 71 Sig Regt were the lead Army Reserve element selected to deploy, with 2Lt Phoebe Lewis charged with the deployment of CP71. Established to Full Operating Capability in under four hours, with HF communications across the entire battlefield. CP71, under Phoebe Lewis's leadership, was the only deployed CP to establish 100% and provide the commander with data and voice across the width of the UK. Additionally, soldiers from 265 were requested as Subject Matter Experts to re-deploy in order to support engineering efforts for two other formations. Delivering against an unenviable task, 2Lt Lewis has demonstrated the utmost professionalism and the highest level of impact, she fully deserves the WCI presentation.

Corporal Kieran New – C Squadron (KSY) RY – Cpl New has shown exceptional commitment this year. He is currently acting up one rank, in the role of 2 Troop Sergeant. In that role he has proved himself the backbone of the Troop, keeping it running efficiently and to a high standard. As an instructor he has also planned and delivered numerous Sqn training events during the year. In addition to his military contribution Cpl New is also responsible for managing the Junior Ranks Mess, a demanding and unsung role, that contributes to the overall life of C Sqn. In summary, Cpl New has, and is, delivering an effect above and beyond that expected of a JNCO. In doing so he has proved himself a key part of the fabric of C Sqn and its success this year. The WCI presentation is a wholeheartedly deserved recognition of his commitment to the Sharpshooters.

KSYA Presentation to the Worshipful Company of Insurers (WCI)

As one of the leading City Livery Companies, the WCI is the association's affiliated link with the City of London. The WCI provides financial support to the association each year which is used towards providing welfare support to both long serving members and, in recent times, to serving members when deployed on operations.

As a mark of the link and in appreciation of the continued support to the association over the years, a silver-plated statuette was commissioned and presented by the Chairman to the Master.



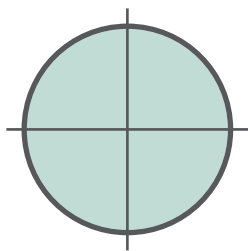
Chairman Lt Col Mark Hodson TD presenting 'Man with a Horse' to the Master WCI.

The statuette itself has its own history (befitting the Sharpshooters) which was detailed in the 2018 Journal; but in brief, the 3rd CLY seem to have produced a statuette of a dismounted trooper and his horse which echoed the affection that the WW1 horse mounted yeomen had with their mounts. The figures were hand made in wood by Frederick Brownlie who served in C Sqn 3rd CLY but sadly none seem to have survived the passage of time. In 2018 Tim Rayson decided to try and recreate the dismounted soldier with his horse in the desert exactly as Fred had made his in wood, but a silver-plated version. This would be a fitting tribute to all of our mounted predecessors. He engaged Peter Hicks and Co who would have to start from scratch and it took some six months with many pictures and reviews of the maquette to ensure that it was faithful to Fred's model.



The result was magnificent where every little detail is covered right down to the figure 3 on the Solar Topee, a very limited number were then produced.

The (surprised) Master accepted the gift and in thanking the association said how proud both she and the WCI were of the affiliation and its support. The Master then offered a toast to The Sharpshooters to end the glittering evening.



265 AND THE CONRAD RADIO SYSTEM (PART 1)

by David Whitehouse

Back in 2016, I wrote an article for the journal about the government's secret bunkers to be used in the event of a nuclear war and 265 (KCLY) Signal Squadron's role in providing post-strike communications. This is a follow-up article which focuses in more detail on the communications system known as CONRAD (control by radio) to be set up by 2 Signal Group (later 2 Signal Brigade) which included 265 (KCLY) Signal Squadron.

In the early 1980s when I joined 265, much of what is now in the public domain about the unit's role in the event of a nuclear strike was secret. Whilst we were told about the broad concepts of a HF (high-frequency) radio network comprising of 'gateways' and 'nodes' much of the detail was withheld from us. Individual radio detachments were given obscure names such as 'ASSG1' and 'ACHDF4', or in the case of my own detachment, 'Bravo Troop'.

Although I eventually came to understand that 'ACHDF4', for example, would deploy to an RAF station to provide a node for Air Commander Home Defence Forces, I had no idea what 'ASSG1' did and the role of 'Bravo Troop' was simply not discussed at all. Furthermore, we were not permitted to learn our wartime locations, and nearly always exercised on military training areas.

What little we did know about CONRAD was not to be discussed outside the unit and it is only now that previously classified material has been placed in the National Archive, that details about CONRAD have entered the public domain.

It was assumed that following a nuclear strike, much of the UK's landline telephone infrastructure was to be inoperable. Thus, the idea of CONRAD was that it would provide a basic telegraph messaging service (or telex) to regional civilian government and military headquarters. As frequencies in the HF Band (2-30Mhz) were less likely to be affected by the adverse radio conditions following a nuclear strike, the telegraph 'circuits' would employ HF radio.



One of 265's radio detachment vehicles c1982. Note that as well as the 'box body' containing the radio equipment, the Bedford MK also carries twin 3.5KVA Onan generators behind the cab, as well as various storage bins to stow mast and antenna. (photo – author's collection)

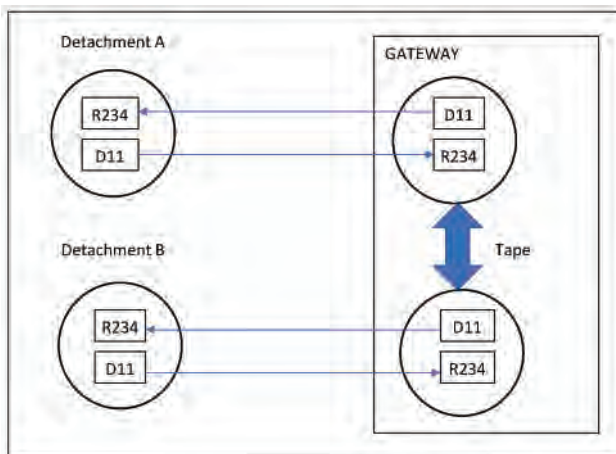
For this purpose, the regiments of 2 Signal Group, including 265, were equipped with D11/R234 high-power HF valve radio sets – the D11 being the transmitter and the R234 being the receiver. Each of these was the size of a filing cabinet and were housed in a steel container, together with teleprinter and power supply, on the back of a 4-ton truck. In this way, the equipment was deployable to field locations for exercising in peace-time, but could then be dismantled into underground war locations in the event of hostilities.

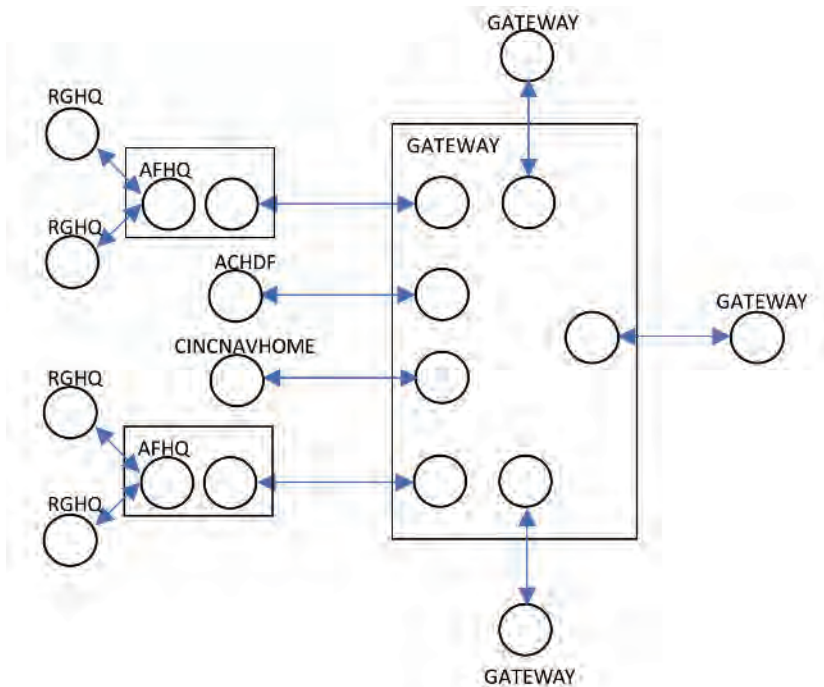


Inside the 'box body' with the R234 Receiver on the left and the D11 Transmitter on the right. In the centre bottom is the substantial power supply to provide the high voltages required by the valve sets. Above the power supply is the Ariel Matching Unit (AMU). In the foreground is a Siemens T100 teleprinter. On full power, a D11 could produce 300 Watts of RF, which could easily reach many hundreds of miles with the right conditions. It could also give you a very nasty RF burn if you were unfortunate enough to come in contact with the transmitting antenna!

So, what of the CONRAD system itself? In essence, a single detachment would provide one end of a radio 'circuit' the other end being provided by a gateway, which was also known as a tape relay centre. Each received or transmitted message was stored by means of punched tape (a bit like old fashioned computers) so messages could easily be passed onto other circuits.

The diagram (right) shows a simplified network of two outlying radio detachments linked to a gateway. If detachment A wished to send a message to Detachment B, then it could only do so via the gateway. The message would be received by the gateway and recorded on tape which would then be transmitted on the radio link servicing Detachment B. Gateways played a vital role in connecting the network UK wide. To start with, there were only three gateways for the UK, but in 1983 it was decided that a fourth gateway was needed and so 265 Squadron became Gateway 4.

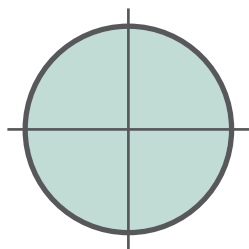




Typically, a Gateway would service Armed Forces Headquarters (AFHQs) in their allotted regions, who in turn would be linked to Regional Government Headquarters (RGHQs). The Gateway would also provide circuits to the other three Gateways in the network plus to specific government or military entities such as Air Commander Home Defence Forces (ACHDF) or Commander-in-Chief Naval Home Command (CINCNAVHOME).

With numerous radio circuits to provide, a Gateway was an enormous undertaking employing a large number of vehicles, equipment and personnel, but more of that will follow in Part 2.





GUY FARAGE
PRESIDENT OF THE KENT AND
SHARPSHOOTERS YEOMANRY ASSOCIATION
2006 – 2022



To mark the occasion of Guy Farage standing down from the position of President of the KSYA after 17 years – and 67 years with the Sharpshooters – a lunch was held in his honour on 23 September 2023.

There was a delightful assembly of faces to greet both him and Carole, his wife who has displayed equal loyalty throughout the years, at a restaurant in the splendid market town of Westerham in Kent.

Guy has been associated with the Sharpshooters for 67 years, a remarkable achievement. During his time as Chairman and then President he has seen the Sharpshooters change in scale and role several times, including home defence and the field army, through various defence reviews and now with two serving squadrons.

His advice and guidance had always been highly valued, his leadership and dedication to the Sharpshooter cause, intertwined with the KSY Museum Trust, unswerving, not to mention his noted sartorial elegance.

National Service was the initial call to arms, with 3rd Royal Tank Regiment (the Armoured Farmers) equipped with Centurion main battle tanks serving in Detmold, West Germany. On completion of his call-up he returned to civvy street and a commitment to the Territorials with the Northamptonshire Yeomanry, which proved logistically challenging; subsequently an interview with CO 3/4 CLY secured a place



with the Sharpshooters and the armoured reconnaissance role with Dingos and Daimlers.

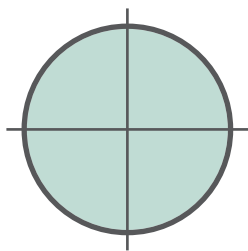
Involvement with the Museum Trust Committee (since 1977) soon added to Guy's interest, including the first opening at Hever Castle with Boris Mollo who he knew during National Service (they had joined on the same day) and the Association Committee in 1978. He later succeeded Boris Mollo as chairman of the Croydon branch.

It was during a battlefield tour of the western desert, somewhere between Alexandria and Alamein, that Eric Cornish (Chairman and wartime Sharpshooter) informed Guy that the Association Committee wished to propose him as successor Chairman, as (he was subsequently told) amongst other attributes he was deemed to be a 'reliable attender'. He was appointed in 1993, with David Hannam as Vice Chair, representing both sides of the Association which marked the transition from WarTime Sharpshooters managing the Association. In 1998, Guy moved from Chairman to Vice-President and, in 2002, became Chairman of the Museum Trust. At the instigation of David Hannam (Chairman) and Robin Ludlow (former Chairman and Vice President), Guy agreed to succeed Neville Gillman as President in 2006.

To mark the occasion, Guy was presented with a silver-plated Sharpshooter statuette by Chairman Mark Hodson and Hon Secretary Tim Rayson and a large flower arrangement to Carole presented by Penny O'Hare. All accompanied by a glass of port provided by Guy that ensured a very suitable conclusion to a long and loyal involvement with the KSYA.

List of attendees: Tim Rayson, Mark and Emma Hodson, David Lakin, Brenda Traylen, Jaimie Barr, Peter Crowley, Mr and Mrs Will Wright, Simon and Penny Malik, Andy and Penny O'Hare, Ronnie Todd-Young, Tony and Angela Jewell, Steve Shelley, Col and Mrs Ian Mcrobbie, Lisa Mcrobbie, Mr and Mrs Steve Slaney, Leon and Ann Le Besque, Midge Poland, JJ Macnamarra, Ron Snowball, Mike Swan and guests, Simon McMenemy, Chris Sutton, Bill Lovell, Paul Waddington, Andy Church





TA ROYAL SIGNALS REPRESENTATION IN BRIGHTON

“Signi ab mare”

by Major (TOT) Ret'd John Barber TD

Part One of the 884 Troop (V) and adjacent units terminal evolution

Background and Introduction ~1968 to 1988

When Lt.Col (ret'd) Simon Malik, Editor in Chief, suggested that some words about the closing years of Royal Signals in the Brighton area could be popular, I happily if cautiously agreed. After some initial thought, digging out forgotten notes and time consuming researches, I decided to assemble this as a Part One of my offering, namely ~1968 to ~1988, with a second part maybe for another and future time. My major focus has been on 884 Tp (V) because both of us and Penny (Malik) were all Tp OCs at different times over the article's period before moving internally onwards and upwards. Records show that 884 has a proud history of supplying a significant number of officers, warrant officers and SNCOs to 71(Y) SR higher command.

This Journal article has offered a further niche, both to try to satisfy the foregoing aim and reveal some small parts of Corps history not previously very visible or indeed even acknowledged at all. In consequence, the following comments are intended to serve three objectives. Firstly, a lighter-weight and broadly based historical summary from such limited data as still remains. Secondly, to register a general thankyou to all those who contributed time, effort and expertise to the survival and re-grown success of the volunteer Corps in the area. Thirdly, a personal acknowledgment to the many with whom I had the honour, pleasure and experience of sharing volunteer soldiering over almost 30 years, albeit only twelve of them with 884.

Additionally, as a perfect complementary article in this Journal issue, do also read and enjoy the CONRAD system appraisal therein. Written by Dave Whitehouse it is, for those without a 60s to 90s Home Defence Comms familiarity, really essential information. It will help readers to grasp some of the MACP elements of government policy during the Cold War. Referencing key command interconnects at national level down to the middle level of the regionally intended paths. Moreover, little has been aired about the lowest level of low power HF voice comms resource provided to local authority district councils. These were not Army provisioned but should have connected to the greater network. 884 had several occasions when attempts to work and succeed at this aspect. They were indirectly exercised with the local and County Emergency Planning of the time. More on this may be broadly outlined in Part Two.

Ten years ago my admirable colleague, historian and old friend Huw Jones contributed to the Journal an excellent article on the antecedents of 884 Signal Troop. This described evolution and ultimate demise of historic Sussex area coastal artillery defence units. Those Volunteer Gunners (together with the last surviving elements of

TA Bofors anti-aircraft batteries) were strung out along the hillsides and beach lands facing continental Europe. In my two articles I have briefly focused more closely on the descendants of these Sussex units as they have the greatest relevance to our local Corps genealogy. My background seeks to amplify some comms area detail of Huw's appraisal plus the local interest and professionalism of the people who maintained and then extended the Royal Signals Territorial Army presence in south central Sussex.

Huw's background paper was very soundly researched; I have attempted to fill in some ancillary detail from 1967 until roughly two decades later. There is inevitably some overlap between our two offerings without which there would not be any viable even detectable fluence. The origins, creation, emergence and metamorphosis of the volunteer / reserve Corps in south central Sussex was as Huw explained. I commend reading his words (*2013 Sharpshooter, pp 67-71q.v.*) as a complement to reading this article. In addition, some of the 1967/8-1978 information comes from Ken Flint's admirable personal journal entries. I am indebted both to the former and greatly to the latter for his keen observations and occasionally very frank comments!

For broader context to Huw's article, post WWII there was progressive overall reduction in artillery units and removal of fixed sites plus manpower. In parallel with the cancellation of superfluous resources, top level defence policy implemented better command, control and increasing communication needs. Whilst telephones suited the interconnection of unmoving sites, quickly re-locatable assets needed equally rapidly re-deployable comms; only radio could meet that need.

I remember once reading somewhere, that there was a quote claiming that post WWII there existed: – "The Royal Artillery – and the rest of the Army". UK ground forces did then have a large constituent percentage of differing artillery capabilities many introduced during the Second World War.

In the late 40s the WWII (All Arms) heavy, widespread, often slower than needed dependence upon Morse over HF radio had been reviewed and re-balanced against much improved, quicker and increasingly reliable VHF RT options. These were to be spread initially across the teeth arms but incorporating a generous (23-38MHz) spectrum allocation to the differing roles of the RA. Revisions across HF, VHF and new UHF were all planned under the scope of Project Larkspur equipments. It is of interest to note that the first new C11 HF stations [introduced to replace the ageing almost ubiquitous, WWII WS19 Mk III] were sold to Nigeria in 1953/54 *before* their general issue to the UK Regular Royal Signals in 1955. Some 12 years later the Home Defence HF Radio Comms Reserves eventually received them...!

In parallel, inter alia, an application specific radio system was introduced to meet the evolving needs of the above mentioned branch (es) of RA despite their relatively imminent disappearance. This element of the Gunners was equipped with a new three channel RTVHF set, the B44 (Mks1-3). This proved to be one of the shortest in-service lived Larkspur radios ending up as government surplus in the early 60's. Many ended up a source of quality 4m band sets to radio 'hams' of the period...!

The 1960s brought general Home Defence uncertainties extending to clarifying comms needs for that theatre. The twists and turns of Royal Signals HF radio survival both in Sussex and more generally across the south-east were significant. Amalgamations created and then ended 62 (Mixed) SR, and then the creation of 44

(Cinque Ports/Home Counties) SR. The 1967 Review then brought the reduction of 44 SR to Sqn size and left a hole in HF which was not to be refilled until the end of decade emergence of 71(Y) SR.

The “Caterpillar to Chrysalis” revisions

So hereafter a broad brush build-up to the more immediate SE Royal Signals structure during the 60's and the inter-related metamorphoses of the AER and TAVR units and personnel. Between end 1967 and mid 1969 surviving remnants were given infantry support roles. These were mostly TAVR III but were upgraded to Class II with new kit, uniforms and some new FFR vehicles. The uplift was initially overseen by Major David Bailey (ex-AER) who came briefly back and then retired. With the arrival of 71(Y) SR, 884 Tp command passed to Capt. David Bartlett over the years up to 1975 when he too hung up his boots.

Lt. Col John Kirby (SETAVRA) had confirmed that there would be no Signal Squadrons in Sussex after autumn 1967. Some emphasis was placed on support to HD Infantry and, interim, a small concentration of volunteers into 950 Regional Signal Troop (TAVRIIA) with 951 and 952 Sub-Regional (TAVRIII) Troops in parallel operated in a squadron-free Sussex from autumn 1967. Much communication support activity arose in support of the infantry battalions whilst HF participation in Home Defence infrastructure was re-appraised over a longer time.

Varyingly based at Queens Road, Marlborough Place, Preston Barracks and eventually Dyke Road, Brighton Signals homes finally settled there. This was a site share with 200 Bty RA plus a det of 217 Field Hospital. In the closing 1960s when TAVR II / III barely hung together, many geographically local signallers were members of 950/951/952 collection of Signal Troops. Signalling activities were enacted on VHF; support was rendered to SE area infantry battalions via the CRUMB system. This was based on public utilities style, commercial spec Pye radio, widespread across the home defence world on a voice only Command and Control. This collection of facilities from Battalion Master Station down to single ‘Westminster’ sets at a Company / Platoon HQ level endured from the mid 60s to the replacement issues of MOULD a decade plus later on. The strength and enthusiasm of these very small TA sub-units provided the vital cornerstones for the re-population of late 20th century Royal Signals in the South East and specifically Brighton itself.

For relevant interest Tina Malenczak, currently RSA Brighton Treasurer is the sole survivor of 951Tp known to the author. Of relevance, Tina applied to be attested mid-autumn 67 but at just 17 she had to wait to be sworn in the winter of 1968! Her recollections of the time have been most informative!

Just for completion of local Royal Signals genealogy, 44 Sig Sqn was re-arranged. It did eventually return to Sussex (Eastbourne) as 858 / 859 Sig Tps, as BAOR reserve BRUIN radio relay dets. Sadly, in a few years they too disappeared under revised 1 BR Corps C3 needs plus the gradual arrival of Ptarmigan area comms from end 70s.

71(Y) SR would not visibly and tangibly emerge from the scattered ashes of repeated Home Defence comms rearrangements until mid 1969. The amalgamation of other re-rolled TA Yeomanry (sub) units gradually formed into comms resources believed more appropriate to coming times and needs. A number of newly created Signal Squadrons

enjoyed inter-unit Tp swaps over the next couple of years but the two original Royal Signals troops of Brighton and Southampton directly carried the Corps Colours into the nascent 71 (Y) SR.

In Brighton in the early 70s the establishment of a pair of Tps alternately 884, 887, and briefly 891 continued to grow steadily by successfully recruiting new members. Maintenance of traditionally high communication achievements was progressively to earn them singular notability within 71 (Y) SR and later at 2 Sig Bde. Morale was high both on and off duty with quiet confidence in demonstrating 'Certa Cito' both seriously and enjoyably. The challenge to perform more than just respectably drove sustained effort and application particularly during the "Red Shoes" CONRAD exercises.

A sound framework of communication skills was back in place. By 1973 military skills were also polished up by many of the experienced personnel listed below. The Tp enjoyed the in-posting of 2/Lt Eddie Keith from Uni. OTC. Living locally he joined to supplement the then team of OC Capt. David Bartlett and his 2i/c (inc. WRAC overseer!) Capt Marjorie Lucas. The Troop's admin and pay were expertly handled by (then) L/Cpl Pamela Stocks (nicknamed 'Dragon'). The day to day running was managed by a TSI (ex-naval CPO Yeoman) WOII Chris Constantine right up until his retirement in 1982 plus professional Tech Support from then Sgt Graham Payne.



The complement of those as illustrated in the above photo (2+33) and nominated in the text reflected the solid attraction to and support for the resurgence of volunteer Corps in the south Sussex area based in Brighton. In its formative days the Troop had also inherited and enjoyed a pool of wide experience, Sig John Carney, Sig Jan

Malenczak, Sig Frank Malin and L/Cpl Brian Vardy... just to mention a prominent few. Cpl (later S/Sgt) Gordon Holloway and Cpl (later 265 SSM) Tony Allibone, amongst others being invaluable experienced ex-National Servicemen who brought a wealth of “how to do military things properly” knowledge to the unit’s younger and inexperienced personnel.

Additionally, SNCOs acknowledged names being S/Sgt Eric White, S/Sgt Flint, Sgt Dave Tupper, Sgts Pete Phillips and Derek Powell. Plus, on the Data Telegraphy side Eric Ridgwell, Janice Stiller, Yvonne Cudlip, Janet Tupper (née Middlehurst) to recall but a few.



Having contributed much to the Brighton troops, both David and Marjorie retired a couple of years later so leaving significant Tp command gaps.

As a very capable and suited candidate the “con” was handed on to newly promoted Capt. Eddie Keith, 2i/c became the newly commissioned 2/Lt Graham Payne and an extra (technically Sqn over-borne) “other hand” officer was me. This put in place, so I believe a profoundly well-based mix of relevant electronic device knowledge, HF radio communications systems, antenna familiarities, and radio modulation techniques. The scope of comprehension and qualifications therein present was almost unrivalled in 71SR then and for some two decades to come.

Under the aegis of 71 (Y) SR, nomenclatures changed (884/887 Tps being the most common) Brighton membership was passed back and forth between 68 and 94 Sqns but never under 70 Sqn command. With the eventual regimental incorporation of the new 265 (KCLY) Sig Sqn into 71SR, a perceived final home for the ‘seaside people’ had arrived. However, a mid 70s Home Defence comms updating produced yet another Brighton renumbering, this time to 905 (Group Main) Sig Tp.

This occurred not long before my in-posting and endured for several years ultimately leading to and through the Gateway 4 emergence in the early 1980's. In 1977 in lieu of separate three x K9 MK D11/R234 vehicular installations we were issued a with brand new so-called "Triples". Brand new Marshall's CB305 Tx - Rx pair mounted on Bedford MKs. Each one carrying the three respective transmitters or receivers as had previously existed as single stations. Similar configurations were also fielded in the regular Corps with 16 Sig Regt. They were certainly issued to two troops within 71SR as, I believe, AFHQ terminals. Their baseband interconnection was effected by D10, quad cable and patch panels.

Various exercises and UK deployments were enjoined during the late decades of the 20th century ranging from much time spent at Pippingford Park, St Martin's Plain, Folkestone, Penhale, and the wilds of Dartmoor. Followed by Warren Hill, Beaconsfield, and STA Thetford. Plus the excruciating week in autumn '77 on Scremerston Beach, in a NE gale-borne sandstorm when the Bde comms were rubbish and eating all wrapped up even worse!

Thereafter, Brighton acquired the best possible TSI appointment in the personality of WOII Brian Eason. Brian came directly from a long career Corps background and adopted the TSI role through the good offices of 265 (KCLY) Signal Squadron PSO, Capt Jim Esson of widespread and fond recall. Brian became the cornerstone of wise Tp administrative success, shooting expertise and generally recognised comms experience.



Personal background

Overall I spent 12 years with Brighton troop, becoming OC in 1983 following Graham Payne's promotion and rise to Regt Ops Officer. At the height of the blossoming Gateway 4 years, I moved up to be 265 Sqn Ops Officer in 1988, then over to HQ Sqn, ending up at my career goal as Regimental TOT for my last years of service.

After school I went on to check out a possible transfer into local TA Royal Signals. Spring 1967 I was steered towards 44 (Home Counties -Cinque Ports) Sig Reg't (V). Having both their RHQ plus 3 (SCA) Sqn HQ located in Brighton, this was a potentially near-perfect solution. Short distance travelling, plus total technical familiarity with their SR C11/ R210 radio kit made this a win-win.

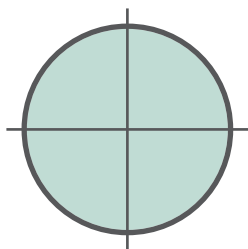
Sadly, whilst things edged along, just a few weeks later it was confirmed under the 1967 Defence Review that 44 SR were to be reduced to Sqn size and re-centred on Gillingham in Kent. Home Defence needs for the future were also under Cold War review. So my commissioning progress was 'held' pending structural changes in the rearrangement of Home Defence comms needs.

Usefully, as a defence industry military radio systems member I continued my work with exposure to an SSB HF system development – to be part of'Clansman'!]

Major (TOT) Ret'd John Barber TD
November 2023

A second article, addressing some more of the activities and personnel of 884 Troop from 1988 to the final closedown in 2014 is planned to follow at some future point.





FROM SARACEN COMMANDER TO GENTLEMAN USHER

by Colonel Piers Storie-Pugh OBE TD DL

**Commissioned C (Kent & Sharpshooter
Yeomanry) Squadron The Royal Yeomanry**

Tim Rayson, our energetic and enthusiastic Editor and Secretary and I have been colleagues for over 50 years. In fact, he was one of my corporals in the Support Troop of C (KSY) Squadron at Croydon and I was the rather unorthodox commander. We soldiered together at Castlemartin, on Stanford Training Area, in BAOR Germany, on Major Dickie Maydwell's private land and we even drove our Saracens straight through Trafalgar Square during a Nelson Mandela demonstration, getting a photograph in some dodgy underground magazine. Then there was the Liphook Station affair which would warrant a complete chapter!



I lived near Cambridge and our Support Troop camped on our land for one of our exercises. We crossed the A10 by night and stopped short of our objective, a farm owned by David Sheldrick. Some of us, myself included, fell asleep and Tim eventually came over and said, "time to go sir" and I think I promptly got up and shouted "charge!"

As a direct result of these unusual activities, I believe we were sometimes the envy of the sabre troops, and I am convinced that our rather irregular way of training kept the



members of the Support Troop together; not least through Ron Snowball's magic touch and appropriate discipline as troop sergeant. It may have been irregular, but it was very realistic to role. We were a very happy band of brothers and our attendance was nearly 90% on all occasions. (Photo group sitting on the Saracen).

C (KSY) Squadron was itself the envy of others in the Royal Yeomanry; not surprising given the calibre of the squadron's characters at the top. Boris Mollo, Charles Wenham, Philip Mayles, Bill Richards, Julian Ratcliffe, Captain Baron Alex von Twickle, the Adjutant, to name just some. We, of The Support Troop, even provided a Guard of Honour for HM The Queen Mother.



I am not sure I had what it took to be a battle captain and I therefore transferred to 6th/7th Battalion The Queens Regiment which I would subsequently command. I ended

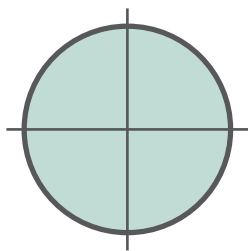
my Territorial Army service after a succession of full colonel appointments, the most enjoyable being the Dep Comd 2nd Inf Bde and ADC to Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth. It was during one of these appointments that I competed for the brigadier slot against Gerald Grosvenor, the Duke of Westminster, a great friend. If the best man didn't win, certainly the richest one did! I then became a long serving Honorary Colonel after which I rather assumed that my days in uniform were over.

Until I was, out of the blue, selected to be The Gentleman Usher to the Imperial Society of the Knights Bachelor. This sounds rather grand, certainly the uniform is, and it involves a number of events, for example in St Paul Cathedral where this photograph was taken in July 2023. The Knights Bachelor is the oldest form of knighthood in Great Britain dating back 1,500 years and the knights themselves are a very distinguished brotherhood; drawn from areas as diverse as philanthropy, university chancellorships, international corporates, parliamentarians, national charities, Health Trusts, Education and so on. The Society was formed in 1908, the same year as the Territorial Army, and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth was Patron from 1975 to 2022. My most recent duty was attending the carol service in the Savoy Chapel.

The last time Tim Rayson, Ron Snowball and I met was at Paddington in 2022 when the Flying Scotsman was about to set off to the West Country. However we now have plans to lunch together at The Cavalry and Guards Club in the Spring.

I am delighted that Tim has just been awarded The Royal Victorian Medal for his lengthy service to The Royal Household, coupled with his volunteer activities, not least as Secretary and Editor of The Association. He was always incredibly positive and enthusiastic back in the early 1970s, as he still is today.





SOME RANDOM EARLY REFLECTIONS FROM A ONE-TIME ADJUTANT

**Captain Craig McColville
R SIGNALS**

Some of our readers may remember a young, Regular, R SIGNALS Captain who was Adjutant of the, then, 71st (Yeomanry) Signal Regiment (Volunteer) during the period of Spring 1979 to Autumn 1981

As a Regular Officer, and a member of RHQ, I was “on the books” of 265 (KSY) Sig Sqn (V) which was both a communicating unit and HQ Squadron for the Regiment. And I built strong links with the “Sharpshooters”, and proud to have done so. I have maintained those, albeit geographically distant links with the Sharpshooters; some may remember my attendance at a couple of ceremonies in Normandy and frequent attendance at the KSY plot at the RBL Field of Remembrance at Westminster, usually supported by my wife, Mary.

Which is why this article is being written. I do feel like a Sharpshooter, although never served as one and never had the privilege of wearing the cap-badge. I probably have more connection now than with R SIGNALS.

“Back in the day” as they say, I had asked our postings branch, after a spell training young soldiers near Newcastle, for a tour in Hong Kong with Queen’s Gurkha Signals but was told that the plot was that I should be posted to 71(Y) Sig Regt (V). Who? Where? What? Presumably as I had served a couple of years, (as Regimental Signals Officer) in two somewhat prestigious armoured regiments in Germany (Life Guards and Blues and Royals, no less) and would therefore might just fit into the ethos of Yeomanry Army life and style! Wow! Perhaps aided, or encouraged in the choice, by the desk officer in charge of Captains’ postings, by the soon to be CO, Lt Col Colin Brown.

When I arrived the Regiment consisted of four Squadrons. In numerical order:

- §. 68 (Inns of Court and City Yeomanry) Sig Sqn (V), based at Lincoln’s Inn with another TAC at Whipps Cross. (sorry whatever a TAC is called these days?)
- §. 70 (Essex Yeomanry) Sig Sqn (V) based at Chelmsford with other TACs at Harlow and Southend.
- §. 94 (Berkshire Yeomanry) Sig Sqn (V) with SHQ at Windsor and other TACs at Southampton and Chertsey.
- §. 265 (Kent and Sharpshooters Yeomanry) Sig Sqn (V) at Bexleyheath with one other TAC at Brighton.
- §. RHQ was in Bromley, at Hill House, with the LAD REME (V).

Not quite what I was expecting as a “Territorial” unit. We covered a huge swathe of SE England, three Army peacetime Districts: London, Eastern and South-East District. And we were answerable to, I think, four TA Associations (TAVRA) in our area of the South-East; 11 Drill Halls, (TACs) and many miles between them all, from Southend

to Southampton. Add into the chain of hierarchy, under the command of HQ 2 Signal Brigade in Aldershot, and you may get a feeling for the amount of correspondence this TA Adjutant had to deal with. Regular postings branch for R SIGNALS, at the time, was in Reading.

You might add on that we in the Regiment dealt with all recruiting, *ie* feet over the door or telephone enquiries, (thank goodness we didn't have the so-called (anti) social media at the time!) all recruit introduction, paperwork and induction and training, trade training and promotions, and then retirement from the TA, with support after the TA, through Old Comrades Associations (OCA) Oh what an easy job my Regular Regiment Adjutants had to cope with. Gosh? Not jealous... really.

RHQ in Bromley was led, of course, by the CO; first of my time, as already mentioned was a Regular, Lt Col Colin Brown, replaced during my last year by a Volunteer, ex Essex Yeomanry (maybe NEVER quite-EX Essex!) Lt Col David Castles. Sadly both now deceased but both held in high affection.

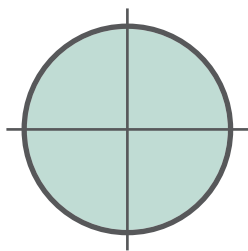
Heading up the home team were the Regular Training Major and the Adjutant. RHQ had a Regular RSM, MT WO, and latterly a Yeoman of Signals. The front office was the domain of a Regular Chief Clerk, (S/Sgt) with two very capable civil servants and a typist. Hill House, Bromley, was also home, as already stated, to the LAD REME (V) with a Permanent Staff Instructor (PSI) S/Sgt REME. Upstairs on "drill nights" could be found the pay staff, a TA Major with his two assistants. We did have a WRAC S/Sgt (maybe she was a WO?) but that was not for long as her post was dis-established on her retirement. One of our very dedicated civilian clerical staff was forced to retire with the "cuts-of-the-day" but we managed to persuade Millie, and the system, that she could be brought back to her desk as an NRPS Sergeant. No, I can't remember what those initials stand for! The CO had a Regular driver from R SIGNALS.

Each of the TACs had a Regular PSI or an NRPS, a Sergeant or Staff Sergeant and either an operator or technician by trade. The technical side of the Regiment was overseen by a Regular Foreman of Signals (WO2) based at Bexleyheath. The day to day administration and management of each Squadron lay in the hands of very capable Permanent Staff Officers, with the rank of Captain (PSOs) The stores and equipment areas were overseen by a Regular Quartermaster, with a Regular RQMS, based at Bexleyheath, very ably assisted by TA officers and RQMSs, and their staff.

That was the Regiment when I arrived, and subject to little changes here and there, and the inevitable postings and promotions, was the same for most of my tour.

As for me? Daily life was not dull! Apart from the correspondence which, sadly, frequently arrived in almost the same format from a dozen different origins, see the list of "superior HQs", Districts and TAVRAs above, we also had the routine of dealing with the occasional "fast ball". One example, only, for this article, on my first drill night, I was informed that a Regular Foreman of Signals, on our attached strength, but actually working out his last six months of regular service with the Port and Maritime Regiment RCT, in Southampton had died! Was this a wind-up for the new Adjutant? No, sadly it was the case and I had to attend to the paperwork at the time and represent the Corps and the Regiment at his funeral.

This may just be the first of my stories about my time as Adjutant of the "Yeomanry Signal Regiment" but that will do for this year.



LEAVING NORTH AFRICA

by Freddie Deane

Images colourised by Simon Malik

Almost exactly eighty years ago, at the time of writing, 1943 was coming to a close, and, undoubtedly, the men of 3rd County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters) took a moment to reflect upon the remarkable events of the previous twelve months. In 2023, we have described these events, as they happened, month by month, through the museum's social media platforms. By attempting to understand 3CLY's wartime experience in real time, exactly 80 years on, we gain a certain freedom from teleology and hindsight, allowing the reader to better appreciate the time scales in which key events took place, their relationship to other events and the realities of the soldier's lived-experience in wartime. 1943 was perhaps the most pivotal year of the war, a definitive turning point; with the balance on the Eastern Front tilting firmly in the Soviet Union's favour after the hard-won victory at Stalingrad in February, the titanic battle of Kursk in the summer, the Casablanca Conference determining the allied strategy in the West, the end of the North African campaign, the subsequent invasion of Sicily, the fall of Mussolini, and finally the moment western allied troops began liberating mainland Europe with the start of the Italian campaign. 1943 was undoubtedly a dramatic year, but it is all too easy to be drawn only to the scenes of action; such an approach often misses the less exhilarating but nonetheless essential moments of rest, maintenance and training which ensured the optimal efficiency of both men and machines. These periods are particularly noticeable in 3CLY's narrative when considered in real-time. In a way, their existence points to the strengths of the Western allies and their ability to manage their material advantages.





After an eventful summer of '42, a prolonged break from the frontlines was much needed in anticipation of the opening of a new European front. Whilst 4CLY were busily racing across the desert to Tripoli, 3CLY contented themselves with a move from their camp at Khatatba to Cowley Camp in Mena, near Cairo. The task at hand was familiarisation with the latest equipment from America to ensure optimum operational capabilities when the invasion of Europe began (although, at this stage, the intended target was a closely guarded secret). The equipment in question was, of course, the Sherman tank, along with 15cwt Dodge trucks, GS Fords, White Scout Cars, 'Willys Bantams' (jeeps), and a host of smaller ancillaries and new weapons such as Browning machine guns, all of which required extensive training and familiarisation schemes to operate effectively. The regiment had been using Crusader tanks since February 1941 before their deployment to Egypt later that year, and, aside from a limited number of Grants, virtually all of their combat experience had been with Crusaders. Naturally, it would take time to transfer that experience and capability to a wholly different type of tank, and so this became the chief occupation of the regiment until the end of June. One advantage of remaining in one place for a prolonged period was the revival of 'B' Squadron's sergeant's mess styled as 'The Contented Penguin', joined by similar efforts from the other squadrons, doubtless keen not to be outdone by the Penguin, including 'The Red Petticoat' and 'Balu Brasserie'. Additionally, in May, Jimmy Sale compiled one of three





complete sets of regimental photographs, likely conscious of the regiment's imminent deployment but perhaps less aware of the value of such a resource to the historian.

After months of preparation, training, and reequipping, the wait was over. On the 25th of June, 3CLY loaded themselves onto eight Landing Ship Tanks in Alexandria and set off along the coast for Tripoli. The journey west was described as an effortless glide across the blue Mediterranean of 'a dreamlike quality in passing, on the seaward side, so many painful places which had only been too familiar in the fighting of the last two years.' Once in Tripoli, personnel were offloaded and sent to a transit camp some 15 miles along the main Tripoli road, leaving one officer and one man per tank on each LST as guards. By all accounts, the time spent in the transit camp was an uncomfortable 'steambath', and only a few model schemes were held in the way of training. But this was only temporary, and on the 7th of July, the regiment re-embarked on their LSTs and spent the night in the harbour before leaving North Africa behind for good.

Once at sea, the destination was at last revealed as Sicily. The cruise was carried out in relative comfort; the convoy was undisturbed by the enemy, and the Royal Navy's hospitality, coupled with the domestic comforts of an American-built ship, made for a welcome change from the relentless sand which had been such an invasive part of life for almost two years.

On the 10th of July, the invasion began; at first light, the disparate small convoys of landing ships converged, laying off the coast as far as could be seen. The British 8th Army was made up of XIII Corps, commanded by General Dempsey, and XXX Corps, commanded by Leese. 3rd CLY, as part of the 4th Armoured Brigade in support of the 5th Division (XIII Corps), was to land on the far right flank of the army, whose objective was to secure a bridgehead 15-25 miles deep inland. Overnight airborne forces



had landed west of Syracuse to capture the Ponte Grande, and commandos had been landed to secure the coastal batteries.

The assault landing on the beaches took place at 02:45 that morning, succeeding with only minimal casualties. By 11:30, orders were received from the Beach Master to unload the LSTs, and by the evening, all of 3CLY were ashore, having made contact with their allocated infantry brigades. Over the next few days, the regiment operated by squadrons, clearing through Syracuse, Floridia, and Priolo. Several tanks were knocked out by well-positioned anti-tank guns in the village-to-village nature of the operations, some of which, namely Priolo, proved to be very stubborn objectives, but all were eventually overcome in cooperation with the artillery and infantry. The fighting continued in this manner, regularly ambushed by concealed anti-tank guns all the way to Augusta, where the guns covered the narrow bridge over a ravine along the main road, making an advance with armour rather difficult.

Unlike the vast expanses of the desert, Sicily was much closer country, leaving tanks incredibly vulnerable without infantry support. On the 13th of July, 'B' Squadron paid a heavy price in discovering this reality whilst supporting the 15th Infantry Brigade in a move to the north of Tentella. The KOYLI were sharply counter-attacked on their right flank, leaving the half Squadron under Major CB Wrey exposed, enabling the enemy to direct heavy anti-tank and mortar fire from both flanks, knocking out six of the seven tanks, completely destroying four of them. 15th Brigade eventually recovered the ground, but 'B' Squadron had tragically lost nine men, six of whom were experienced NCOs.

That same night, Capt Oliver Woods left his squadron leaguer with two tanks, the other commanded by 2/Lt John Crews, to support the 6th Seaforths in their attempt to break into Augusta. With fading moonlight, Woods dismounted and walked ahead of the two tanks with the leading company commander to direct them. In half-darkness, the small column nervously advanced past presumably occupied pill boxes and buildings. Woods dived back into his tank and directed their fire at any hint of trouble, destroying any strong points along their route and encouraging about 70 Italians to surrender. With the moonlight failing, the Seaforths halted to allow the Royal Scots Fusiliers to take over the advance. The tanks had been ordered to halt with the Seaforths but were requested to accompany the advancing infantry to see them into Augusta. When the advance reached the final crossroads before Augusta, Woods placed John Crews in the turret of his own tank and sat himself on the front to direct given the almost-complete darkness. Suddenly, a 2.8cm anti-tank gun opened up and knocked out the leading tank, killing John Crews. The accompanying infantry promptly charged bayonets and had Augusta in their hands before dawn. For his part in the action, Oliver Woods was awarded the Military Cross; the citation noted:

‘Captain Woods shewed initiative and gallantry of the highest order in the most trying circumstances entirely foreign to normal tank tactics, and his action was of inestimable value to the infantry.’

Both of these actions demonstrated the new challenges presented by the Sicilian landscape over which were scattered countless defensible villages; it had exposed the vulnerabilities of the tank, reinforcing the need for close infantry cooperation exemplified by Oliver Woods’s actions.

To return to the narrative, by the 14th of July, with a bridgehead now firmly established, thoughts turned to a concerted effort to breakout and make for the city of Catania with its port and airfields. The main obstacle between 4th Armoured Brigade, their accompanying infantry and Catania was the Primosole Bridge over the Simento River. The bridge had to be taken intact as insufficient bridging material was immediately available to build a Bailey bridge, and time was of the essence to maintain the momentum of the advance. Therefore, an airborne landing was launched the night of the 14th, but they would not be able to hold for long, so a race was on to get to the bridge and relieve the airborne before they were driven back. At 08:30, the regiment began their advance. Several 88mm anti-tank guns were encountered and knocked out around Carlentini, but C Sqn had considerable difficulty advancing over the rough volcanic rock, causing several tanks to shed their tracks. Further delays were encountered in Lentini owing to traffic jams, meaning A Sqn did not reach the regimental leaguer until 03:30.

With a concerted counter-attack on the bridge, the airborne brigade were driven back at nightfall, but fortunately, they had successfully removed the demolition charges, leaving the bridge intact for the time being. When 3CLY got underway the following morning, they deployed on the high ground overlooking the Plain of Catania, where they engaged several targets, and in the afternoon, they moved again to relieve 44th RTR’s positions to the South of the Primosole Bridge. However, reports of enemy activity in the Lentini-Carlentini area forced the regiment to leave ‘A’ Squadron in place to mop up the threat in the rear. Further reports of enemy tanks continued to occupy ‘C’ Sqn for the remainder of the day until it was realised the tanks in question were



friendly. That night, the alarm was raised when enemy parachutists, encircled in some woodland around Lentini, attempted to break out, leaving crews from 'B' Squadron stood-to for four hours until it was concluded that the enemy had got away.

The following day was spent supporting several smaller engagements and patrols in preparation for the main assault on the Primosole Bridge that night. At 01:00, in near complete darkness, with a barrage of artillery, 'B' Squadron opened up on the bridge from the south with small arms and machine gun fire for an hour. One tank was lost to HE, but the crew escaped; at 02:00, the infantry went in and secured a 500-yard bridgehead, allowing 'A' and 'C' Squadrons to cross the bridge at 05:00, pushing through the determined resistance of the remaining defenders. In the following actions, Lt. Col Willis went forward to contact the infantry brigadier, but having advanced some 200 yards, came under heavy machine gun fire, which struck the CO on the forehead; he died of his wound an hour later, leaving the regiment under the command of Major AW Grant MC.

By mid-morning, the remaining elements of resistance had been mopped up, leaving the rest of the day to prepare against possible counter-attacks. In the evening, elements of 'RHQ', 'A', and 'C' Squadrons made probing attacks, but the enemy positions on the plain could not be identified, leaving the regiment to leaguer for the night to the east of the bridge, only to be heavily shelled and mortared forcing a relocation.

The vital bridge had been taken, and the Sharpshooters had played their decisive part in what Montgomery described as 'the hardest fought battle in the campaign', but it came at the cost of three highly experienced Sharpshooters killed, and two squadron leaders badly wounded.

After a very brief period of rest for 'A', 'C', and 'RHQ' Squadrons, the advance continued on to Mistabianco, where 3CLY were to support the infantry and exploit any breakthrough, but the attack came to a standstill, perhaps owing simply to exhaustion. They had been fighting through a scorchingly hot Sicilian summer in territory ideally suited to defence and on the sharp volcanic ground which shredded the rubber on the tank's roadwheels, restricting most movement to the well-defended main roads, where carefully sited anti-tank guns awaited their prey.

After Mistabianco, the regiment at last had something of a break, bedding down in the shelter of the Gornalunga River valley, though this was not without the irritations of mosquitos and occasional mortar fire. Here they remained until early August whilst XXX Corps, with fresh troops from North Africa, made progress along the West of the island, hoping to loop behind Mount Etna to hit the enemy in the rear and cut them off from the Straits of Messina.



By September, the campaign was over; the encirclement had not succeeded as intended, but nonetheless, Sicily was secure. During this period 3CLY were inspected by Brigadier Currie who was suitably impressed by how well turned out the Sharpshooters were, noting that 'the best turned-out and best disciplined Regiments are the best fighters'. The first half of September was then spent welcoming reinforcements and replenishing equipment ahead of the coming invasion of mainland Italy. The campaign in Italy itself began on the 3rd with 8th Army's assault across the Straits of Messina, where for thirteen days they advanced to reach the forces landing at Salerno on the 9th. That morning 1st Airborne Division also began landing on and around Taranto to secure the port and surrounding airfields.



It was not until the 22nd that 3CLY reached Italy, landing at the now firmly secured port of Taranto, where they shortly joined the main thrust towards Foggia and its vital airfields. As they advanced, most of the villages were found to have been recently evacuated by the enemy, likely a pleasant relief from the hard village-to-village fighting of Sicily. The first major obstacle encountered was the river Carapella, the bridge over which had been blown. A minor skirmish broke out with German armoured cars as elements attempted to reach an alternative crossing point, but the river was soon crossed. This brought the regiment up against the river Gervaro, the last major obstacle before Foggia, the approach to which was covered by a piece of dense woodland, where it was believed (correctly) that the enemy would be dug in. 4 Troop from 'A' Squadron were dispatched to support the independent company of the air landing brigade in clearing this woodland, destroying an 88mm anti-tank gun and its ammunition lorry. As the independent company pressed home its advance, with 'A' Squadron machine-gunning and shelling the wood, the enemy withdrew across the river, destroying the bridge as they went. The river was eventually crossed after finding an alternative crossing (a two-mile detour), leaving the way to Foggia open.

Beyond Foggia, the advance progressed to the North-West, beginning with a reconnaissance of San Severo by four scout cars of 3CLY. An 88mm gun ambushed the small column of scout cars, and only three of the eight-man party managed to get away. In early October, the main advance passed through San Severo, knocking out what was believed to be the very same 88mm gun. From here, they continued on to San Martino, but heavy rain made the going difficult, and several carriers became bogged down and separated. At this point, the main target was the port of Tremoli, but

intelligence indicated that the 16th Panzer Division had been dispatched to capture the port before the Allies. What followed was a race to the port, and on the night of the 2nd/3rd of October, British commandos, along with 1st SAS and 2nd SAS led by former Sharpshooter Capt Sandy Scratchley, made surprise landings and secured the port. The following evening, the bridgehead was reinforced by 36th and 11th Brigades of 78th Division. Whilst the position was secure for now, the River Biferno to the south had flooded from heavy rains, and the bridge across it had been blown leaving no overland route.



Attempts were made to ford the Biferno, but by the sixth tank to cross, the tracks in the riverbed had deepened considerably, and the vehicle's engine cut out mid-stream. With time of the essence, all eyes were on the Royal Engineers as they hurriedly worked to repair the bridge amongst constant shelling. The work was complete by 14:20 on the 2nd of October, and the regiment was across before the end of the day. Now able to assist 78th Division, 3CLY worked tirelessly to prevent the encirclement and to secure Tremoli, which they accomplished by the 7th. With the port secure, 3CLY enjoyed a relatively restful remainder of the month, spent carrying out maintenance and training.

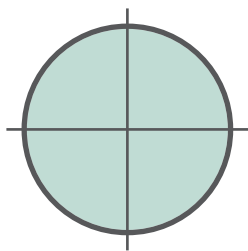
This continued until the 19th of November when 3CLY rejoined the fight, crossing the Osento River en route to the Sangro. Much like the Biferno, the bridges over the Sangro had been destroyed, and so the regiment were forced to wait until the sappers could complete their work. It was now the 29th of November, and, having crossed the river, an attack was made on the prominent R.Li Colli feature, which overlooked the bridgehead. Covered by a creeping barrage, the regiment, led by 'B' Squadron followed closely at only 150 yds distance. The going had continued to be difficult, the winter

rains turning the ground into a bog, but to make matters worse, 'B' Sqn ran into a minefield, disabling seven tanks, 'A' Sqn attempted to deploy to the left but also found mines; fortunately the third attempt proved more prosperous, and 'C' Sqn managed to find a route to the right up to the R. Li Colli feature where the RE had cleared a path. Having fought through the enemy position on the hill facing Fossacesia, the regiment reached Santa Maria, although boggy fields claimed their share of tanks. Having cleared Santa Maria, the following day was spent attempting to recover these bogged-down tanks and standing at readiness to support an attack by the 44th RTR. As was becoming uncomfortably common, most casualties appeared to be amongst the recce troop and the Echelons whose lightly armoured and soft-skinned vehicles were particularly vulnerable to air attacks, even when some way behind the front.

Efforts to recover stuck tanks continued into early December until the advance was resumed on the 3rd to capture San Vito. About a mile from the town, a short engagement broke out with enemy infantry, who promptly retired, leaving a number of dead, and 30 men who were taken prisoners. Upon entering the town, the regiment was subjected to heavy mortaring and shelling. It was found that the main Pescara road out of town was impassable owing to craters, and so the regiment withdrew to leaguer. After a few days of maintenance, 3CLY were on the move once more, intending to cross the Moro to give support to the Seaforths and Hastings regiments. 'B' Sqn attempted to cross on the right flank but failed, 'RHQ', 'A', and 'C' Sqns tried a point by a demolished bridge, but after the first three tanks from 1 Trp 'C' Sqn became bogged down, and another troop attempted to repeat this effort with the same results, further efforts were abandoned. The regiment instead spent time in observation and, after a day, withdrew to leaguer, where they spent the rest of the month preparing for Christmas, along with the usual programme of maintenance and training.

Thus, 1943 came to a close for 3CLY, a year of intense activity spread across three different theatres of war, each with its particular challenges and discomforts. From endless sand to sharp volcanic rock to relentless mud, the men of 3CLY fought hard in trying conditions. Viewing the story of 1943 from a regimental perspective makes the Allied way of war clear. Whilst there were some prolonged periods spent at the front, they were always interspersed with considerable time to carry out essential maintenance and rest. It is also worth observing just how much of 1943 was spent in preparing for particular offensives, most notably the early part of the year when the regiment spent three months out of the line to ensure their efficiency with new equipment. Looking ahead, in January 1944, 3CLY will leave Italy to return home to Britain, enjoy some well-deserved leave, and prepare for the upcoming and much-anticipated invasion of France.





BOOK REVIEW

by David Lakin



Victory to Defeat: The British Army 1918-40. Richard Dannatt & Robert Lyman. Osprey Publishing, Oxford 2023. 352p, 33 plates, 3 maps. ISBN 9781472860866. HB £25

A book co-authored by a former CGS about a key, but under-studied, period in the history of the British Army is of course going to be of interest not least to readers of the Sharpshooter Journal. The period in question, after all, is one which saw both the Sharpshooters and the Kent Yeomanry cease to be mounted regiments and adopt the roles they were to take forward into the Second World War. But this book is not simply a work of history examining the army of 80 or more years ago it is a polemic seeking to influence current defence policy and is of relevance therefore to anyone with an interest in the current serving squadrons.

The basic premise of the book is that the British Army had by 1918 transformed itself from a bunch of enthusiastic but untrained citizen soldiers into a warfighting machine of awesome capability which through a well-honed understanding of how to apply firepower and combined arms manoeuvre defeated the Germans in the offensives of The Hundred Days. However, the British Army lost the knowledge of how to undertake warfighting at scale against a peer enemy in Europe almost as soon as the war ended. A return to peacetime soldiering saw the army concern itself solely with regimental duties as an imperial gendarmerie. With the exception of a few, largely uninfluential, individuals the military establishment did not concern itself with how modern warfare might be conducted in Europe – after all it was not going to happen. When it became apparent in the mid-1930s that large-scale conflict was going to happen on Britain's doorstep the army had no concept of what warfighting against a peer enemy might look like and hence had no overarching set of precepts by which to guide how it structured, trained and equipped itself. The result was a massively expanded (the Territorial Army was more than doubled in size and mobilised in peacetime) but poorly equipped and undertrained army which was thrashed by the Wehrmacht in France and Belgium in 1940. The lessons were learnt slowly and were still being learnt in the Western Desert in 1941.

The book is divided into four parts: chapters 1-4 are a study of how the British became 'masters of the battlefield' by late 1918; chapters 5-11 look at the inter-war years with an emphasis on how the army forgot how to win wars; chapters 12-14 deal

with how the ‘new threats and realities’ of the late 1930s were met (or not); and, chapters 15-17 describe how the chickens came home to roost.

The first part of the book is a good summary of how the army went about its business by the end of the Great War. It is thoroughly competent and readable but is there essentially to describe the standard of excellence from which the army declined. The speed and completeness of that decline along with an examination of the reasons for it are examined in the second part and it is here (and part three) that the heart of the book lies. So, who were the guilty men? Almost everybody it would seem – military men who lapsed back into comforting pre-1914 habits of regimental life (‘at last we can get back to real soldiering’) and refused to engage with the realities of a world changed forever; politicians who persisted in believing that war was impossible long after the aggressive policies of Hitler and Mussolini made the probability of war very clear; and a public, repelled by the loss of life in 1914-18, which made clear its unwillingness to accept bloodletting on a similar scale ever again. Part 4 is coda which carries the message that if you wish for peace you should prepare for war and if that preparation is ineffective, poorly focused and under-resourced you will come unstuck.

Are the arguments put forward cogent and valid? For the most part they are but because this book is a polemic aimed at an audience of present day politicians and military leaders it does tend to drive home its points with more force than nuance. Was the inter-war concept of defence which relegated the army to the role of imperial policeman and relied on the navy and RAF to protect the UK really unreasonable? It is worth noting that the much derided 10 year rule was perfectly accurate for the 1920s. In that light the spending policy in Whitehall which prioritised spending on the navy and RAF is understandable (perhaps especially so in light of the very vociferous air lobby – there is a whole other discussion to be had about how the creation of an independent air force may have warped defence policy generally as the new service strove to justify its existence). A key argument is that the army, faced with lots to do in the imperial policing role and no resources to do anything else, failed to institutionalise the process of examining how it should do business. In short that it failed to develop doctrine – an error which the Germans did not make (despite being even more short of resources). Of course the British army didn’t get a formal doctrine until half a century after World War Two broke out so expecting the soldiers of the inter-war period to develop it is perhaps a little unreasonable – especially so in a situation where it was not seen to be necessary (the Germans on the other hand had very good reason to want to understand how to win a war).

The warning inherent in this book is that the war in the Ukraine should be a wake up call to both politicians and military that defence policy is fit for purpose in a way that it was not in the run up to 1939. Indeed, there are sufficient similarities between modern geopolitics and those of the 1930s to give the warning some force. However, the British army is in significant respects better placed in 2023 than it was a century ago. It is not an unreflective organisation with bodies like DCDC giving considerable thought to how warfare might look in the near future. It exercises at formation level and alongside its allies in a way which simply did not happen in the inter-war period (leaving mistakes to be made in the face of the enemy rather than in training). Combined arms and indeed tri-service operations are absolutely core business (Dannatt and Lyman’s commentary on the 1940 Norwegian fiasco is salutary). One might take

less comfort from the continuing failure of politicians to confront unpleasant truths and commit resources where they are required. Perhaps it is best left to those in the serving squadrons to comment on whether the recent Integrated Review has left them structured, trained and equipped to meet what the future holds?

In their discussion of the plethora of tasks which faced the British army in the immediate aftermath of the Great War was a comment on fighting the Bolsheviks in northern Russia and elsewhere. The authors describe it thus - ‘a military commitment without a strategic purpose, and on that basis an abuse of soldiers’ lives’, an observation which could equally well have been made about Blair’s wars of our own times. Those wars had their impact on the Sharpshooter family, let us hope that if the current generation of Sharpshooters have to go down the same road it is to better purpose.





Kent and Sharpshooters Yeomanry



DIGITAL ITEMS FOR SALE

PRICES - Jan to Dec 2024

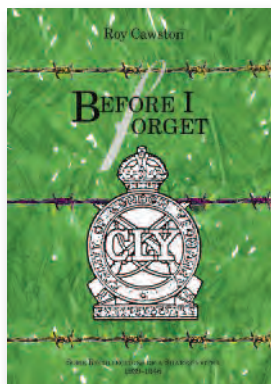
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eBooks are pdfs available for download from DROPBOX only - details on how to do that will be provided following your purchase

Payment via PayPal or Bank Transfer

Contact David Hannam by email for details at thetigger@mac.com



Before I Forget

by Roy Cawston; pdf

First published in 1993, this celebrated volume has been out-of-print for many years and covers "some recollections of a Sharpshooter 1939-1946". This is an updated edition by Roy available only as a pdf.

Price: £10

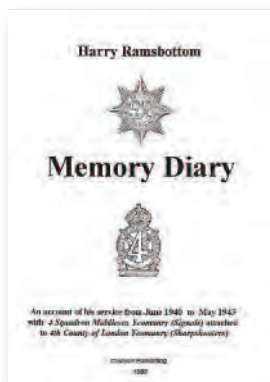


Carpique Bound

by Walter Allen and Roy Cawston; pdf

First published as an A4 book in 1997 and no longer available in print. We are delighted to offer once again this pictorial tribute to 4th County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters) 1939-1944.

Price: £10



Memory Diary

by Harry Ramsbottom; pdf (93pp)

Harry was with 4 Squadron Middlesex Yeomanry (Signals) and this is an account of his service (often in the CO's tank) from June 1940 to May 1943 covering el Gubi and Op Crusader, Knightsbridge box, Alam Halfa, El Alamein and the march to Tunisia whilst attached to 4th County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters). In spirit Harry was a Sharpshooter and we remember him as such. Written in 1983 and first published in 1995 as a spiral bound A4 book.

Price: £10



The Sharpshooter Chronicles

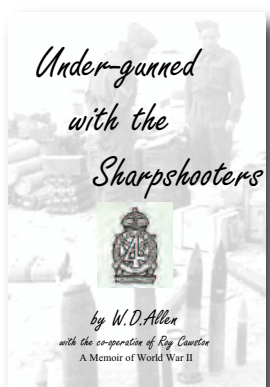
by David Hannam; pdf

David has painstakingly scanned in all the available paper copies of the:

- Sharpshooters news issued by the Hon Secretaries during WW2
- Sharpshooters Gazette an A5 magazine from the late 1940s and 1950s
- Association newsletters/journals up to and including this edition

The pdf is enabled for searching (OCR – optical character recognition) and best viewed on a personal computer.

Price: £10

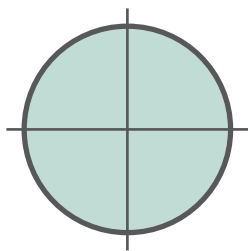


Undergunned with the Sharpshooters

by Walter Allen; pdf (60pp)

First published in 1997 as a spiral bound A4 book, Walter wrote this on the back of the success of Carpiquet Bound having been encouraged to “keep scribbling” by a number of friends. It covers his time as a pre-War Territorial from 1938 through to demob in early 1946. Along the way, Walter was involved in all the major actions of 4th County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters) through to the amalgamation at Carpiquet airfield.

Price: £10



CRASH ON THE RIVER EXE

By Daniel Taylor

The following is a short extract from my forthcoming book on the Sharpshooters during the Inter-war period entitled, 'Defending Arcadia'. The book is due for release in the summer of 2024.

In August 1938 the Sharpshooters – at this time the 23rd London Armoured Car Company – took their annual camp at Dalditch Farm, a little way north of Budleigh Salterton, near Exeter. The first week was devoted to section training and for the second week of the camp they were joined by their Regular Army counterparts, 12th Lancers. This pairing gave the Territorial soldiers the opportunity to train alongside full-time troops and to use first line equipment – not that there was a tremendous difference with their own mounts. At the time the Sharpshooters were operating the Rolls Royce armoured car, they took all three of theirs to the camp. For annual camps there was a pool of cars garnered from other Territorial armoured car companies. This sharing allowed each company to operate sufficient vehicles to train as a full unit where camps took place over successive fortnights. To augment the vehicle strength and to broaden experience on a variety of types, 12th Lancers contributed some Crossley and Lanchester armoured cars.

One of the exercises staged in conjunction with the Regulars was a day and night navigational scheme. Early in the morning of the second day of the event, one of the Lanchesters was travelling along the Stoke Road, where it runs beside the river Exe. The vehicle commander was Sergeant Tweed who, along with crewmembers Corporal Bunn and Private Rhodes, were all Sharpshooters. The driver was the only member of 12th Lancers in the vehicle, Private FE Bailey. The scheme had been running for eighteen hours, with no opportunity for rest, and at around 5a.m. on 24th August it would appear that Private Bailey fell asleep at the wheel. The Lanchester left the road and overturned, rolling over four times as it cascaded down the 30-foot riverbank, coming to a rest only feet from the water's edge. Astonishingly, given the precipitous fall, the crew escaped with only light scratches and bruises, though Bailey was later admitted to the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital. A reporter from the local newspaper, the Express & Echo, happened along the road during the morning. He came across a small crowd which had gathered to see what was going on. By then the crew had been rescued and a recovery party had arrived to work out what to do next. It would appear that his questioning was not taken warmly by the troops as the journalist was only able to record the basic facts and his somewhat gruff treatment by the soldiers.

Once the fuss had died down, the problem remained of how to extricate the vehicle from its resting place. It was on its side and surrounded by vegetation and scrub. The

first task was to lighten the bulk of the seven-ton vehicle and so all removable parts, including the turret were taken off and hauled up the bank. The remaining chassis still weighed in at over five tons and the prospect of getting it up the steep bank remained daunting. An elaborate plan using standard engineering equipment was devised and proved so educational that a training guide was created around it, complete with a series of detailed drawings to show the recovery process. Fortunately, the Sharpshooters' photographic enthusiasts were on hand to illustrate the event.



A daunting impression of the nature of the accident is given by this image taken by Paul Bird from the top of the 30-foot riverbank. It was tremendously fortunate that there was a flat area just before the water's edge which arrested the fall only feet from the river. A very lucky escape.



An unidentified sergeant of the Sharpshooters sitting on the upended Lanchester. This shot was again taken by Paul Bird, this time as he stood at the water's edge, showing the rarely photographed underside of the vehicle.



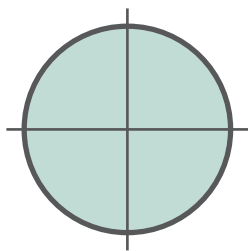
The recovery process is now under way. Unnecessary items such as spare wheels, the turret, tools and tarpaulin have been taken off the superstructure. Fuel would also have been drained. Lieutenant John Castle, the Sharpshooters Technical Adjutant at the time, took this image from part way up the banking.



Another image taken by John Castle shows part two of the recovery. The chassis has been righted in preparation for it being winched up the bank. The Lanchester is now identifiable as a Mk II vehicle named, somewhat appropriately, 'Armageddon'.



Though no photographs survive showing the winching process, a set of six nicely drawn illustrations show how it was achieved. This is plate 4 and it neatly shows the amount of effort and equipment required.



HMS SHARPSHOOTER (1917)

by Tim Rayson

HMS SHARPSHOOTER and her sister ship (SATYR pictured above) were laid down at the William Beardmore and Company shipyard in Dalmuir during May 1916 with the yard number 550 at a contract price of £170,722. The vessel was launched in December 1916 and completed in February 1917. She had a maximum speed of 36 knots or 41mph.

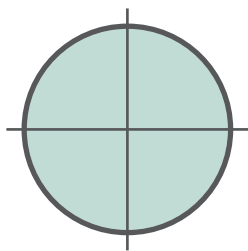


Note that this image is HMS SATYR 'R Class' destroyer the sister ship.

On commissioning, Sharpshooter joined the 10th Destroyer Flotilla of the Harwich Force. The destroyer was engaged in escort duties and, on 9 April, was accompanying a convoy travelling east from the Netherlands when it was attacked by the German submarine UB-31. The submarine successfully sank one of the merchant ships, but before it could unleash another torpedo, Sharpshooter saw the track made by the wake and, following it, rushed upon the submarine, dropping three depth charges and scaring it away.

On 4 June 1917, Sharpshooter was deployed as part of a large group of seven cruisers and twenty-five destroyers to protect the monitors Erebus and Terror in their bombardment of the German held Belgian port of Ostend. At 2:30 in the morning of 5 June, the destroyer was part of a flotilla of four cruisers and nine destroyers that were patrolling off Thornton Bank when they spotted the German destroyers S15 and S20. A vigorous battle ensued, during which a torpedo narrowly missed Sharpshooter, passing astern. Along with Satyr, Taurus and Torrent, Sharpshooter damaged S15 and sank S20. The flotilla subsequently undertook anti-submarine patrols, but the destroyer did not sight an enemy boat. The rest of the war was uneventful apart from 1 June 1918 when the destroyer rescued one of the first pilots of the Royal Australian Navy, Captain A. C. Sharwood, who ditched his Sopwith 2F.1 Camel, operated from Sydney, nearby.

Sharpshooter was sold for scrap to Thos. W. Ward at Briton Ferry on 29 April 1927.



THE SHIPS THAT TOOK KENT AND SHARSHOOTERS YEOMEN TO WAR AND BROUGHT THEM BACK AGAIN

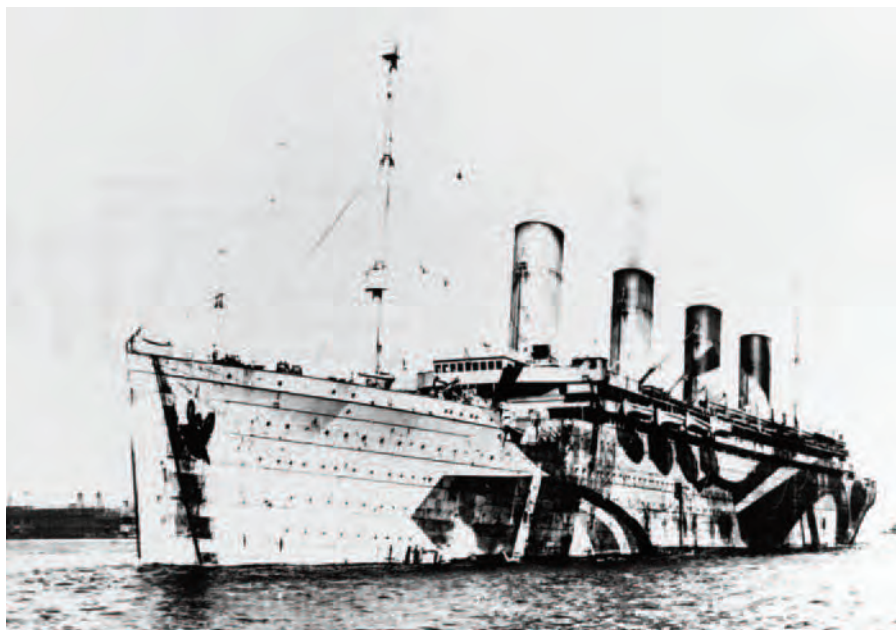
PART 2

1914-1918

by Tim Rayson

In the First World War both of the Kent Yeomanry regiments and the 3rd County of London Yeomanry regiment initially served at home because like most Yeomanry they were for Home Service only – they had to volunteer for service overseas. The volunteering took place en masse on either a squadron or regimental parade and it is impossible to describe the pressure that individuals must have felt at that time when the call was made on parade for those who did not want to volunteer for overseas service to take one pace forward. When the CO of 3rd CLY called such a parade on 11th August 1914 much to his chagrin 106 men stepped forward which reduced the regiment to two service squadrons potentially scuppering any deployment.

RMS OLYMPIC



This ship was the sister ship to the ill fated TITANIC originally being of the same design and construction and laid down at the same time. The third ship of the class was BRITTANIC which became the world's largest hospital ship in WW1 before she hit a mine and sank off Greece.

RMS OLYMPIC had a chequered history with the Royal Navy from the very start of her career colliding with HMS HAWKE off Southampton and then trying to tow HMS AUDACIOUS (Battleship) unsuccessfully in 1914 just after WW1 started. Although initially laid up she was requisitioned for war service in September 1915 and dazzle painted as shown in the photograph. The West Kent and I believe the East Kent Yeomanry having volunteered for service overseas dismounted were on board for her first trip to Mudros the staging island for Gallipoli. During her wartime service she was attacked by submarines three times ramming and sinking the last one (U103) in 1918. Her post war career had a number of exciting incidents before she was retired in 1935 and broken up for scrap.

Further details can be found at the links below:

<https://www.whitestarhistory.com/olympic>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMYu9cCLOAw>

HMT MALWA

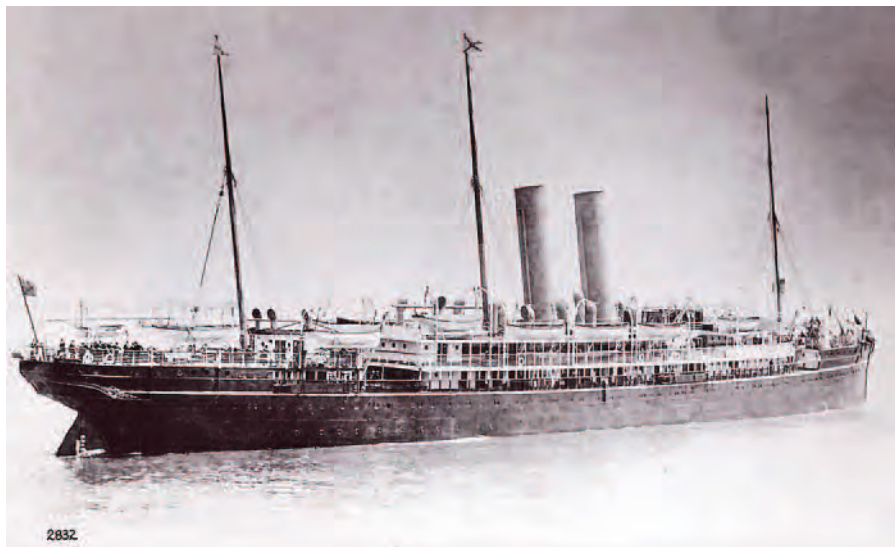


Following the amalgamation of both Kent Yeomanries in 1916 as 10th Bn The Buffs the SS MALWA transported them in 1918 from Palestine where they had taken part in the capture of Jerusalem to Marseilles for service on the Western Front. The MALWA was built in 1908 by Caird & Co, Greenock for the Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co (P&O Line). She was a 10,883 gross ton ship, length 562ft x beam 61.2ft x depth 24.6ft, two funnels, two masts and twin screw. There was passenger accommodation for 407-1st class and 200-2nd class. Launched on October 10th 1908, she sailed from Tilbury on her maiden voyage for Columbo, Melbourne and Sydney on January 29th 1909. In 1910 she was in collision with the British steamer NAIRN off Columbo, and in 1917 was requisitioned for use as a troopship. She resumed the Australia service on September 24th 1920 and continued on this route until December 16th 1932 when she was sold for breaking up in Japan.

SS CUTHBERT, SS ESMERALDAS, SS NILE

Of the three ships above that took the Sharpshooters to Egypt the only images that have been found are that of the SS NILE and the SS ESMERALDAS. Despite an exhaustive search nothing has been found of the CUTHBERT.

SS NILE (1893)



The Sharpshooters sailed from Avonmouth aboard three different ships for Alexandria on 12th April 1915: SS CUTHBERT, SS ESMERALDAS and SS NILE. The only ships that we have an images of are SS NILE (1893) and SS ESMERALDAS. The ships sailed via Malta eventually arriving on 27th April. During the voyage 14 horses died aboard the CUTHBERT.

The SS NILE was built in 1893 by James & George Thomson of Clydebank for the Royal Mail Steam Packet Co Ltd of London weighing just under 6000 tons and a top speed of 15knots. She carried 215 1st class, 36 2nd class and 350 3rd class passengers and was broken up for scrap in 1925.

SS ESMERALDAS

SS ESMERALDAS was a British cargo steamer of 4,491grt built in 1906 by Laing, England for the Pacific Steam Navigation Co., Liverpool. When the Sharpshooters deployed to Egypt she took a large number of horses plus some troops. On the 10th



March 1917 she was captured by the German Armed Raider SMS Moewe when on route for Baltimore to pick up a cargo of horses destined for the British Army in Europe. This unusual photograph above shows ESMERALDAS sinking after being scuttled by the famous German Raider 'Moewe' on 10th March 1917.

SS CALEDONIA



The Sharpshooters sailed from Alexandria to Mudros on 14th August 1915 on the SS Caledonia along with the whole brigade. The 9,223-ton S.S. Caledonia was a British passenger ship built for the Anchor Line by David and William Henderson & Company at Glasgow, Scotland, and was launched on 22 October 1904. Caledonia went on her maiden voyage on 25 March 1905 and was used primarily for trips between Glasgow and New York City. The ocean liner was approximately 500 feet long and 58 feet wide and had a top speed of 16 knots.

On 5 December 1916, while on a voyage carrying mail Caledonia was torpedoed without warning by U-65 approximately 125 miles east of Malta. Although his ship was sinking, Caledonia's commanding officer, Captain James Blaikie, steered the troop ship towards the U-boat and managed to ram her causing severe damage. The ship eventually sank with the loss of two lives.

The story regarding the sinking and particularly that of Captain Blaikie can be found at the link below:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SS_Caledonia_\(1904\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SS_Caledonia_(1904))

HMS DORIS



HMS DORIS transported 3rd CLY from Mudros to the landing at Suvla Bay and this photograph shows the regiment disembarking into lighters for transporting to the beach. Initially the landing at Suvla Bay was unopposed but within 48hrs Turkish forces had surrounded the beach head and what had been an unopposed landing became a very opposed landing. The opportunity to outflank the Turkish army had been lost.

HMS Doris had a displacement of 5690 t (5600 long tonnes) at an overall length of 113.7 m, width of 16.3 m and draft of 6.25 m. The ship was driven by two triple-cylinder vertical triple expansion steam engines, supplied by eight coal-fired boilers, which moved a pair of propellers. The engines reached 8000 horsepower, giving a top speed of 18.5 knots. She was eventually sold for scrap in 1919 in Mumbai.

HMS ERMINE



The Sharpshooters finally left Gallipoli on 2nd November embarking at Lala Baba at 1830 on HMS ERMINE for the trip to Mudros where they arrived the following day and disembarked being billeted in a Rest camp in West Mudros remaining there until 24th November.

HMS ERMINE (ex SS Ermine) was a British Steam Passenger Ferry of 1,836 tons built in 1912 by Fairfied, Govan, Yard No 486 for G & J Burns Ltd, Glasgow and requisitioned by the Admiralty in 1915 as a Fleet messenger ship. She was powered by two sets of four-cylinder triple expansion engines, twin screw. She was one of a group of ships requisitioned by the Admiralty at the start of The Great War to augment the ships of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. These ships were known as MERCHANT FLEET MESSENGERS. The ERMINE was greatly used under the most arduous of conditions and often under fire during the Dardanelles & Gallipoli campaign. The ship was delivering troops, horses and picking up casualties from the battlefields in the movement of other important officers & transit passengers.

She was fulfilling this role on 2nd August 1917 when sailing in the Aegean Sea she struck a German mine off Mudros and sank with the loss of 24 lives.

MV WATERWITCH



The Sharpshooters embarked MV Waterwitch on 24th November 1915 transferring to HMT THEMISTOCLES later that day.

MV WATERWITCH was laid down in 1914 and completed in 1915 at Govan on the River Clyde as a passenger ferry. The RN took her over while building for completion as a despatch vessel/tender/ferry at Gallipoli (above) and she

was later based at Salonika – see picture below. At the end of the war she was used as a “fleet manager” during the Allied occupation of Istanbul before being sold locally in 1923 when she reverted to being a passenger ferry in Turkey.

This story does not end in an ignominious scrapping or torpedoing as in 1985 she was extensively rebuilt for luxury day cruising in the Bosphorus and further refurbished in 2011 as a seagoing charter yacht. Today she still operates as a charter ship in Istanbul under the name HALAS.

WATERWITCH – NOW HALAS 71



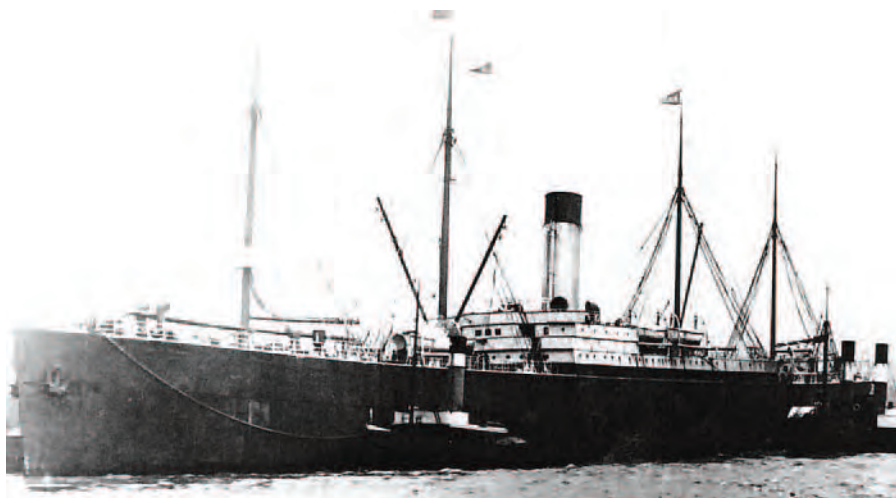
HMT THEMISTOCLES



The Sharpshooters embarked on HMT THEMISTOCLES on 24th November and following a circuitous route arrived at Alexandria in the afternoon of 27th November finally disembarking on the 28th for Cairo.

The SS THEMISTOCLES was a UK steam ocean liner and refrigerated cargo ship. She was launched in 1910 in Ireland and scrapped in 1947 in Scotland. She was built for Aberdeen Line, White Star Line managed her for a few years, and she spent the latter part of her career with Shaw, Savill & Albion Line. Themistocles was a troop ship in the First World War and also served in the Second World War in the same role.

HMT CESTRIAN



The Sharpshooters embarked CESTRIAN on 13th November 1916 to deploy to Salonika arriving there 18th November and disembarking on the 19th November and moving to Lembet Camp the same day. The regiment returned from Salonika on the same ship departing on 4th June and arriving back in Alexandria on the 11th June and moving to camp at El Ferdan.

SS CESTRIAN was built in 1896 at Harland and Wolff shipyard in Belfast. She was an ocean liner of 8912 grt and a top speed of 13 knots and in the troop ship role could



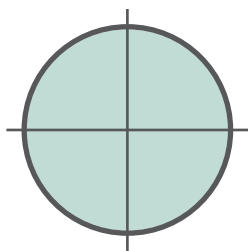
carry up to 800 pax incl horses and wagons. Sixteen days after returning with 3rd CLY she was torpedoed and sunk on 24th June 1917 en route between Salonika and Alexandria with the loss of three crew. It was reported that “the splendid discipline of the troops was the sole reason why none were lost”!

SS CALEDONIA (1894)



In 1918 The Sharpshooters (by then amalgamated with the 1st City of London Yeomanry) were transported from Alexandria to Marseilles for deployment on the Western Front as E Bn Machine Gun Corps. This name was changed to 103rd (City and 3rd County of London Yeomanry Bn) soon after the original name was published.

SS CALEDONIA (not to be confused with the 1904 ship of the same name) was built in 1894 for the P&O line and broke several speed records for the London/Bombay run – she also ran aground several times at Southend, Suez and Plymouth. In WW1 she served as a troop transport and struck two mines in 1916. She was repaired and brought back to service eventually carrying over 100,000 troops between 1917 and 1919. She was scrapped in Bombay in 1925.



KENT YEOMEN AT THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME 1916

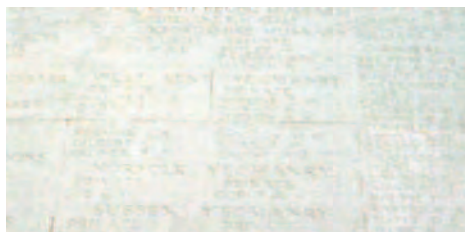
by Dave Whitehouse

Visiting the Somme battlefields for the first time with Mickey Mustoe (former OC HQ (KCLY) Squadron) in the early 2000s, one of the places we were keen to see was the Thiepval Memorial. This enormous monument, which was completed in 1932, bears the names of more than 72,000 officers and men from the UK and South Africa who died on the Somme battlefield but who have no known grave.



Studying one of the panels of names, I was confounded to find a list of men from the West Kent Yeomanry (WKY). As far as I knew, the WKY had fought at Gallipoli towards the end of 1915 and in 1916 were in Egypt. It was only later, when referring to Ponsonby's regimental history that I discovered that in mid-1916 a draft from 3/1 WKY had joined 13th Battalion, The Middlesex Regiment, which had fought on the Somme.

The names are difficult to discern from these pre-digital photographs but those listed are:

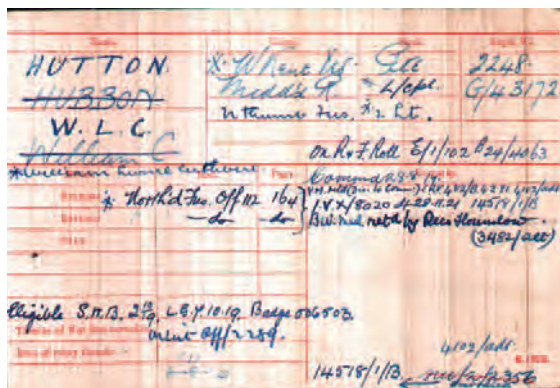


COULTER A.J.	HOPKINS T.W.
DARBY T.	INGRAM S.C.
DOWLING G.F.	JOPSON A.H.
ELLIS A.	LONG W.V.
FERMOR A.E.	NICHOLLS H.G.
GILBERT C.	NOAKES H.G.
GLOVER F.	TAUNT H.J.

These names do not tell the full story. According to Ponsonby, “in the latter half of 1916 drafts totalling 560 NCOs and men were sent to various regiments in France, a large proportion going to 13th Middlesex Regiment.” Ponsonby then lists 23 names of those sent to the 13th Middlesex who were reported to be killed in action. From my research, I have been able to confirm 22 of these names.

So how many men of the WKY were drafted to the 13th Middlesex and how many were subsequently killed? This is not an easy question to answer, not only because of a lack of surviving records but also because those records that do survive are inconsistent in the way that a soldier’s unit was recorded.

After many hours research, I have been able to compile a list of 103 NCOs and men from the West Kent Yeomanry (the vast majority from 3/1 WKY) that went on to serve with the 13th Bn Middlesex Regiment. A further two men from the WKY who were killed in France during 1916 are presumed to have also been drafted to the Middlesex Regiment.



None of the service records for these men survive, so it is not possible to determine when they enlisted nor when they were drafted to the Middlesex Regiment. Furthermore, none of their Medal Index Cards (MIC) records when they entered into a theatre of war, save one. Private William Lionel Cuthbert Hutton, enlisted into the WKY as Trooper 2248. According to his MIC he entered theatre (1),

indicating Western Europe (generally meaning France and Belgium on 8th August 1916. This date was that on which he actually disembarked, in this case probably Boulogne. This is a important clue as it provides an indication of when he, and presumably the remainder of the WKY draft, joined the Middlesex Regiment.

For further clues, I have looked at the war diary for 13th Middlesex. On the day that Hutton landed in France, the 13th Battalion was in the Messines Trenches in the Ypres Sector. Four days later they were relieved and went into Divisional Reserve before returning to the trenches at Spanbroekmole. By the end of the month, the battalion

had come out of the line and had been marched to Kennel Shelters, west of Kemmel. Crucially, the war diary records that during the month of June, the battalion had received drafts of 101 ORs. The diary doesn't indicate when they arrived or if they arrived as a single contingent. There were no drafts of ORs recorded for July and in August, the battalion received further drafts of 339 ORs, by which time WKY casualties amongst the 13th Middlesex were already being reported. I strongly suspect the June draft were the WKY men.

Of the 105 WKY men sent to France in 1916, a staggering 41 of them subsequently died or were killed in action – that is just under 40%! Half of these died on the same day – 31st August 1916. When the British offensive opened on 1st July 1916 marking the start of the Battle of the Somme, the 13th Battalion was still in the Ypres. It would not move southwards until the end of that month. For the first two weeks of August the battalion was engaged in training for a forthcoming attack on Guillemont. When the battalion attack on Guillemont took place on 18th August, it suffered heavy casualties – over 350 officers and men in all.

The battalion was eventually relieved, but was later sent to Mameetz and on 30th August took over positions at TEA TRENCH, WORCESTER TRENCH, PONT STREET and ORCHARD TRENCH (the last-named trench is marked on the extract from a 1916 map below).



The following day the Germans launched the largest counter-attack on the Somme against British positions around Delville Wood and High Wood. The war diary records;

31 Aug 1916. Trenches knee deep in mud & blocked by troops. At 8.30 a.m. enemy bombardment commenced on all trenches – increasing up to 2 p.m. when attack was launched – driving ‘B’ Coy out of TEA TRENCH and ‘A’ Coy back up WORCESTER TRENCH to MACDOUGAL C.T. and PONT ST. Enemy advanced to ORCHARD TRENCH where they were stopped by

2/LT GREEN with about 12 men of 'D' Coy and a L.G. This party forced to retire did so in good order, holding up enemy until support could be brought up. 'A' Coy withdrawn from PONT ST. to CARLTON TRENCH also remnants of B & 1 platoon 'D' & 'C' Coy. Gas shells at night.

It is during this battle that the WKY men presumably lost their lives, alongside many others from the battalion. Casualties for the month of August amounted to 98 killed, 146 missing and 345 wounded.

More losses amongst the WKY in the battalion would not occur again until April 1917 whilst taking part in the Battle of Arras, when a further four men were killed. Most of the remaining casualties amongst the WKY men occurred in the final battles of 1918, in some cases after they had left the 13th Battalion and had been transferred to other battalions of the Middlesex Regiment.

13Bn Middlesex WKY personnel.

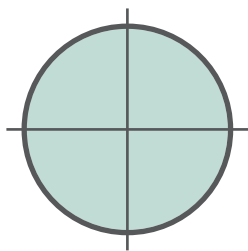
Previous No	Service No	Final Rank	Last Name	First Names	Remarks	Record ID
		TPR	LOWER *	ET	See Note 1	1566
	2096	TPR	NOAKES *	Harry Gordon	Killed 31/08/1916	1805
	2157	PTE	WANNACOTT *	Samuel Yelland	Killed 31/08/1916	2599
	2196	TPR	GLOVER *	Frank	Killed 31/08/1916	976
	2204	TPR	GILBERT *	Charles	Killed 31/08/1916	957
	2215	TPR	TAUNT *	Herbert James	Killed 31/08/1916	2438
	2304	TPR	HOPKINS *	Thomas William	Killed 31/08/1916	1272
	2331	TPR	ELLIS *	Albert	Killed 31/08/1916	791
	2374	TPR	NICHOLLS	Harry Gordon	Killed 31/08/1916 (3)	1800
	2468	TPR	SMITH *	Frank Leaver	Killed 31/08/1916	2293
	2515	TPR	TURNER *	John Sydney	Killed 05/09/1916 (4)	2538
	2521	TPR	DARBY *	Thomas	Killed 31/08/1916	645
2179	39061	PTE	HIRST	William Alfred	Transfer 5 Middlesex	18486
2205	43121	PTE	ABNETT	Henry	Killed 05/04/1918 (5)	11897
2283	43124	PTE	ANGEL	Joseph Eglington		11900
2322	43125	PTE	ARCHER	Richard	Killed 15/04/1917 (5)	11902
2197	43126	PTE	BALDWIN	Stanley		11911
2085	43127	PTE	BUTCHER	Edward R	Transfer 2 Middlesex	11952
2128	43128	CPL	BUBB *	Frederick Thomas George	DoW 04/11/1918	371
2155	43129	PTE	BLACKMAN	Percy Rowland	Killed 28/09/1916	11929
2438	43132	PTE	BAKER	Sidney Ray		18923
2063	43133	PTE	BATTEN	Frederick	Killed 10/04/1917	11916
2305	43134	PTE	BARLING	Lester	Transfer 11 Middlesex	11912
1885	43135	PTE	BARROW	George Norman	Killed 26/08/1917	11914
2150	43136	PTE	BARROW	Roden		11915
2353	43137	PTE	BISHOP	Percy C	Transfer 2 Middlesex	11927
2417	43138	PTE	BEETON	Joseph		11922

Previous No	Service No	Final Rank	Last Name	First Names	Remarks	Record ID
2127	43139	PTE	BODIAM	Frank Henry	Transfer 16 Middlesex	11930
2249	43140	TPR	BUDGEN *	Reginald Harry	Died 09/01/1917	378
2323	43142	PTE	COMPTON	Herbert Henry		11997
2187	43143	TPR	CLARK *	George Thomas	Killed 13/08/1916	496
2217	43145	PTE	CARD	Joseph		11958
2411	43146	PTE	CLUCAS	George	Killed 15/04/1917	11976
2195	43147	PTE	COOKSON	Gurth		12001
1797	43148	PTE	COX	Harry		18922
2379	43149	CPL	COULTER *	Frederick	Killed 31/08/1916	12007
2199	43151	CPL	CROSS	Edward Henley		12018
2427	43152	PTE	CURRAH	Emerson	Killed 05/04/1917	12023
2413	43153	CPL	COATSWORTH	Arthur		11978
2246	43154	PTE	DYKE	Cecil William	Died 06/01/1919	12046
2176	43155	PTE	ELLIS	Algernon Reginald		12053
2403	43158	PTE	FLINT	Robert	Killed 07/04/1917	12067
2231	43160	PTE	FARMER	George Edward		12062
2261	43161	PTE	FINCH	Herbert		12065
2253	43162	PTE	FORMAN	Albert Austin		12069
2136	43164	TPR	GARRETT	Bert Lewis		9588
2307	43165	PTE	GILES	Leonard	Killed 12/03/1918 (5)	12080
2218	43166	PTE	GOLDING	George Edward	Killed 20/02/1918 (5)	12096
2220	43167	PTE	GOWER	Audrey Gerald		12100
2285	43168	CPL	GREY	William Campbell		12124
2467	43170	PTE	HEWETT	Edgar Alfred Robert	Commissioned RWK	12139
2336	43171	PTE	HARRISON	George William	Killed 25/03/1918 (5)	12120
2248	43172	PTE	HUTTON	William Lionel Cuthbert	Commissioned NFus	12176
2225	43173	PTE	HULKS	Horace Elias		18921
2090	43174	CPL	HASKELL	Frederick		12123
2143	43175	PTE	HART	Albert William		12122
2184	43176	PTE	HADLOW	William		12112
2219	43177	PTE	HENMAN	Archibald	Killed 24/08/1917	12137
2320	43178	PTE	HOOPER	Leslie W	Commissioned RWK	12152
2276	43179	PTE	HOWE	Albert	Killed 25/08/1917	18920
2318	43182	PTE	HUNT	William		12173
2511	43183	SGT	HICKMOTT	Charles		12140
2409	43184	PTE	HOUSDEN	George Bernard		12154
2315	43185	PTE	IVES	Frank Henry		12177
2485	43186	PTE	JOHNSON	Edward		18918
2142	43187	PTE	KITCHENER	Horace Alfred		18919
2192	43188	TPR	LEMON *	Maurice Raymond	Killed 04/11/1918	1535
2139	43189	PTE	LURCOOK	Frederick G		12212
2154	43190	PTE	LINFIELD	Alfred Albert		18924

Previous No	Service No	Final Rank	Last Name	First Names	Remarks	Record ID
2247	43193	PTE	LAY	Arthur George	Killed 27/03/1918	12206
2219	43195	PTE	LAW	Herbert	Transfer 21 Middlesex	12204
2406	43199	PTE	MITCHELL	Albert	Killed 19/04/1918 (5)	12230
2062	43200	PTE	McKENZIE	Arthur	Commissioned Sussex	12223
1787	43204	PTE	PARNWELL	Reginald		12256
2243	43205	PTE	PEGRAM	George William		18925
2251	43206	PTE	PARKER	John		12255
2404	43207	PTE	PARRIS	Herbert Capon		12257
2393	43208	SGT	RUSSELL	Errol John		12311
2102	43210	PTE	SWIFT	Walter Mark		12381
2440	43211	PTE	SUTTON	William Ernest		12377
2423	43213	PTE	SHACKELFORD	Lawrence William		12325
2376	43216	PTE	SIERAKOWSKIE	Frank	Transfer 2 Middlesex	12333
2235	43218	PTE	SPENCELEY	Herbert Russell	Transfer 7 Middlesex	12355
1821	43219	PTE	STEVENS	William Albert		12362
2289	43220	PTE	STYLES	Edward William		12374
2317	43222	CPL	SEWELL	Charles Henry		12324
2082	43224	PTE	TOBIN	Charles Dennis		12398
2153	43225	PTE	TOMPKINS	Frederick		12402
2183	43226	PTE	TASKER	Frederick		12383
2421	43229	PTE	WILLIAMS	John		12450
2278	43230	PTE	WAKELAM	John William		12414
2388	43231	PTE	WILKINSON	Reginald Horace		18926
2299	43234	PTE	WHITE	Oliver	Commissioned RIR	12437
2221	43252	TPR	LATTER *	Alfred Alick	See Note 2	1507
2431	43253	TPR	WOOD *	George	See Note 2	2755
2147	245330	TPR	LEARY *	Joseph	Killed 31/08/1916	1521
2191	245341	TPR	SMITH *	Percival Charles	Killed 31/08/1916	2305
3214	245346	TPR	COULTER	Arthur James	Killed 31/08/1916	581
2245	245351	TPR	INGRAM *	Sidney Charles	Killed 31/08/1916	1343
2311	245365	TPR	CHICK	Frederick Ernest	Killed 31/08/1916	476
2324	245368	TPR	JOPSON	Alfred Henry	Killed 31/08/1916	1411
2325	245369	TPR	LONG	William Victor	Killed 31/08/1916	1557
2333	245375	TPR	BAKER	Bertie Alfred	Killed 31/08/1916	102
	245399	TPR	FERMOR *	Arthur Edmund	Killed 31/08/1916	853
2501	245414	TPR	DOWLING *	Geoffrey Frank	Killed 31/08/1916	731

Notes

1. Listed by Ponsonby but unable to corroborate service with WKY or his death with CWGC records.
2. Listed by Ponsonby and corroborated service with WKY but no evidence of having been killed (no CWGC record)
3. Not listed by Ponsonby and corroborated service with WKY but not Middlesex Regiment.
4. Listed by Ponsonby and corroborated service with WKY but not Middlesex Regiment.
5. Killed whilst serving in another battalion of the Middlesex Regiment after being transferred from 13th.



THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL MAIL SHIP LEINSTER (PART 2)

by David Whitehouse

Those who read Penny Malik's original article in the 2021 Journal would have learned that on 10th October 1918, RMS Leinster was struck by a torpedo and sunk in the Irish Sea. Many of the crew and passengers were lost and included amongst them were Sharpshooters, Privates Alfred Ray Horner and Frederick William Laws.

Further research has uncovered additional men linked to the regiment who were tragically lost on the Leinster that fateful day.

Lt-Col Charles Harold Blackburne DSO



Charles Harold Blackburne was born on 20th May 1876, the third son of Charles and Mary Blackburne. A later memoir by a brother recalled "from infancy, Charles was healthy, strong and big, but also restless and full of mischief." From an early age he developed a great passion for horses and his toys were almost all of an equine nature. Naturally, he learned to ride, facilitated by an elderly coachman of his uncle. Charles was educated firstly at Upper St. Leonards School then later, Tonbridge finishing there in 1893. On returning home, aged 17, he and his brother Lionel took on a large farm near Penshurst, Kent, and set about horse-breaking.

In 1898, Charles travelled to the Klondyke. He later visited Alaska together with two Englishmen and took a 'claim' on a small piece of land

hoping it would contain gold deposits. This proved not to be the case and he made a second attempt to 'strike' gold at Cape Nome but success eluded him. He returned to England in December 1899 just when war broke out between Britain and the Boer republics in South Africa.

On 9th January 1900, Charles enlisted into the 36th (West Kent) Company Imperial Yeomanry as Private 7447, together with his brother Henry who enlisted as Private

7448. After a little under two month's training, he embarked aboard the S.S. Cymric arriving in Cape Town on 28th February 1900. He was soon to see action during the Battle of Biddulphsberg on 25th May 1900 and was subsequently promoted lance-corporal. The following month Charles was promoted to sergeant and continued to distinguish himself. In December 1900, he was gazetted lieutenant. In January 1901, Sir Samuel Scott returned home leaving Charles and Bertram Pott in charge of the whole company. In December he returned home to England on leave in time to hear of the loss of his friend Lt Hardwick RFA at Tweefontein. Charles returned to South Africa in February 1902 and was seconded to Colonel Lowe's Staff, and was duly promoted Captain. He was later mentioned in despatches and awarded the Distinguished Service Order, for his services in South Africa. In June 1902 Charles resigned his commission.

In 1903 Charles married Emily Beatrice Jones and by 1906 had settled in Liverpool. In 1910 he moved to Tyddyn, near Mold, North Wales, where he set up his own equine business. On the outbreak of the Great War, Charles was commissioned into the 5th Dragoons Guards and landed at Havre on 16 August 1914 to join the BEF. He saw action at Mons, Aisne and the First Battle of Ypres. It was at Ypres that Charles was severely wounded on 13th May 1915, necessitating a return to England. Despite several operations he effectively lost the use of his left arm but was able to take up a desk job with Headquarters Staff, Dublin. Further promotion followed; firstly, Brevet Major in June 1916 and then Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel in January 1917. Having applied for a Senior Staff course at Cambridge, Charles was required to return to England, and thus on 10th October 1918, he, together with his wife and two children boarded RMS Leinster. After the ship was hit, Charles was last seen to swim as best he could with his daughter on his back. Both he and his two children drowned but miraculously, his wife survived. Charles is buried at Kilmainham (Royal Hospital) Cemetery, Ireland. In 2019 his medals and decorations were sold at auction (Spinks) for £4,500.

Trooper Horace Albert Cook



Horace Albert Cook was born in Bradworthy, Devon in February 1899 to Charles Henry Cook and Lilian Elizabeth Collins and was baptised in Bradworthy on 18th February the following year. Charles was a tailor and Horace was the couple's only child. Shortly after Horace's birth, the family moved to London. Initially they lived at 17 Filmer Road, Fulham but later moved to 2 Bramber Road also in Fulham. At the time of his enlistment, Horace was living in Wimbledon.

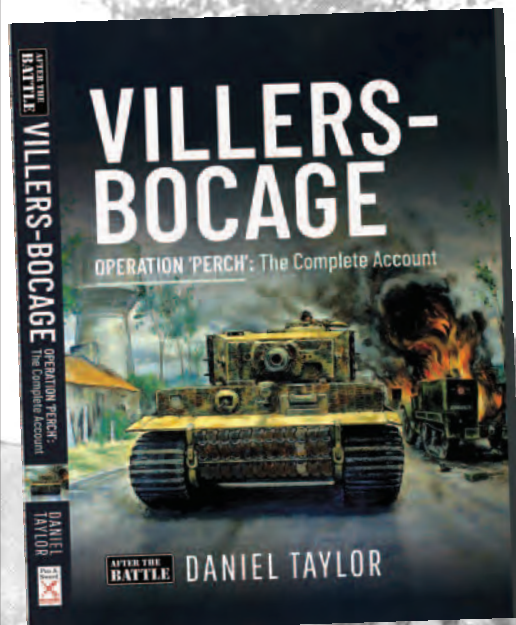
Surviving military records do not indicate when Horace enlisted in the army but given his age, was most

likely during the second half of the conflict. He is recorded as serving with the 2/1 Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles (although his CWGC record wrongly attributes his unit as 10th Bn The Buffs). Whilst the first line had proceeded overseas, the second line remained in the UK and for a short while was amalgamated with 2/1 West Kent Yeomanry to form a cyclist battalion. This was rescinded and the 2/1 REKMR reformed in April 1917. In April 1918 they were moved to Ireland, first to Dublin and then to Claremorris in County Mayo. It is likely that Horace was travelling home on leave when he boarded the RMS Leinster.

After the sinking, Horace was drowned but his body was recovered on the Isle of Man. He was buried in Douglas cemetery, aged just nineteen. His name is also inscribed on a memorial in the Warriors Chapel, St Marys Church, Wimbledon.



An opportunity to buy the new book about the Sharpshooters' most famous battle - Villers-Bocage - direct from the author. Published in time for the 80th anniversary. To get a signed copy send an e-mail to Dan Taylor - curator@ksymuseum.org.uk



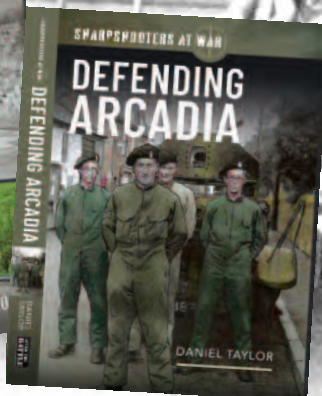
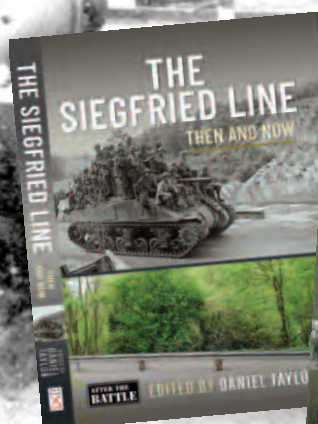
Other books by Dan:

The Siegfried Line, then and now - a lavishly illustrated analysis of Germany's Westwall - 312pp.

Red Army on the Oder, then and now - the battles on the Eastern Front that led to the final collapse of Nazi Germany.

Coming soon - a new series of books about the Sharpshooters in WWII.

The first, **Defending Arcadia** is due out summer 2024.



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The Kent & Sharpshooters Yeomanry Association charity exists to support the Squadrons and soldiers of all ranks, both serving soldiers and retired veterans, and their families.

Contact Tim Rayson on Secretary@ksya.org.uk
or Steve Shelley on AsstSec@ksya.org.uk

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Soldiers from 265 KCLY (Sharpshooters) Support Squadron taking a break from exercise Phoenix Leader.