

The sharpshooter



**D-DAY
80th
ANNIVERSARY
EDITION**



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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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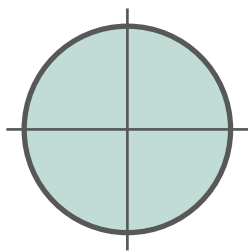
Colonel JGY Radcliffe OBE, QVRSM, TD. P. Crowley Esq,

Major Brenda Traylen MBE, TD, W P Lovell Esq, Colonel Paul Acda TD DL

Front cover: The crew of a 4th County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters) cooking tinned bacon on a No2 burner shortly after Operation Perch in June 1944. Left to right they are: Troopers Arthur Nelson and William Leonard, who are being supervised by Sergeant Arthur Gordon.

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT (OUTGOING)

by Lt Colonel Mark Hodson

A very warm welcome to the 2024 edition of the Sharpshooter journal.

Another busy year has passed for the Association and the Sharpshooter family. Some highlights have included welcoming Colonel Simon McMenemy on becoming Honorary Colonel of C Squadron, following approval from His Majesty the King. We have also welcomed Major David Lakin as our Vice-Chairman following the retirement of Colonel Paul Acda TD DL. Colonel Paul was an active and wise Vice-Chair, to whom I offer our thanks for his service to the Association, and I am pleased to share that he has accepted being elected as a Vice-President of the Association.

During November, a keen military history member of the Worshipful Company of Insurers – Gary Johnson, and I, enjoyed a visit to 265 Squadron at their Army Reserve Centre in Bexleyheath. As always, it was great to see the squadron's radio equipment up close, talk to several of the soldiers and to learn more about recruiting and the role of the squadron. The highlight was sitting in on an O-Group (orders group) given by Lieutenant Phoebe Lewis for a field exercise that the Squadron would participate in on the following weekend. The orders were detailed and thorough, and Gary and I were both sad not to be able to participate in the exercise itself! With thanks to Phoebe, her troop, and also to Officer Commanding – Major Craig Sumner, and Honorary Colonel – Colonel Simon Malik, for a fascinating and enjoyable visit.

Our annual El Gubi Dinner saw 95 Sharpshooters and guests dine at the Cavalry & Guards Club. The evening was another immense success, celebrating the 83rd anniversary of the battle of Bir El Gubi, and was the 77th such event that the Association has held.

You may recall that we presented a silver statuette of a dismounted Sharpshooter and horse to the Worshipful Company of Insurers (WCI) at last year's dinner in recognition of the long-standing affiliation that we enjoy with the livery, and in recognition of the support that the WCI gives to the Association and the Squadrons. The statuette was proudly stationed in front of the Master Insurer during the dinner. I was honoured to be able to re-present the statuette to the livery in front of its members at the Insurers' Mansion House annual banquet in May. In this way, the statuette has been seen being presented by not only Sharpshooters and members of our Association at our dinner, it has also been seen by members of Insurers' Livery at their dinner; very fitting for such a beautiful and important item. I should share also, amusingly at the Mansion House, that the Insurers' Beadle had a slight mix up in the running order of presentations, and in order to correct himself, declared loudly

as if on a firing-point – “misfire” and proceeded to bring things back to the correct running order.

The Guard at both the Mansion House dinner and at the El Gubi Dinner was provided by C Squadron. The WCI were very grateful for this at the Mansion House, as were the Association at the Cavalry & Guards Club.

My message, on behalf of the Association, offering Loyal Greetings to His Majesty the King on the occasion of the El Gubi Dinner was received by the Palace and His Majesty graciously replied with a warm message thanking us for our loyalty and sending best wishes for an enjoyable evening, the Royal response being read to us by our Honorary Secretary, Tim Rayson RVM.

A rich mix of Sharpshooters and guests attended the El Gubi Dinner, including guests from as far afield as Australia; New Zealand, including the Deputy Chief of the Army – Brigadier Hamish Gibbons; and from Germany. From the Worshipful Company of Insurers (WCI) the new Master Insurer, Karl Jarvis and his wife Claire, and Past-Master David Sales and his wife Karen, and the Chair of the WCI Military Affiliates Working Group, Major Dexter Bransby and his father Michael, both veterans themselves, were able to join us. We also enjoyed the company of Gordon and Jane Jones from the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars Yeomanry Association (RGHYA), who have been attending our dinner since 1992!

We also enjoyed the company of Sian Birtwhistle, John Gillman, Clive Groves, and Michael Holmes, whose fathers all served during the Second World War (John’s father, Neville, will of course be remembered as a former Chairman and President of the Association). Notably, many of the Sharpshooters and guests who dined are veterans of more recent wars including the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan, or have been deployed on NATO or UK Operations such as those in Cyprus, the Falklands, Estonia and Poland.

Much as I would love to list the name of every guest at the dinner here, print space does not allow: suffice to say that everyone who attends is very welcome and it is testament to the Sharpshooter ethos that we enjoy such a mix of guests whether serving, former serving, friends or family members.

Recognising selfless service to their squadrons that might not otherwise be recognised, the Master Insurer presented WCI cufflinks to a Sharpshooter from each of our serving Squadrons. Both recipients were at the dinner to receive their cufflinks in person. The citation for 265 Squadron was read by their Honorary Colonel, Colonel Simon Malik, with the presentation being made to Lance Corporal Danny Wilsher; and the citation for C Squadron was read by their Honorary Colonel, Colonel Simon McMenemy, with the presentation being made to Lance Corporal Frederick Bailey. Both very worthy recipients, the full citations for their awards are to be found later the journal.

Tim Connell, Tim’s fiancée Mariana, and I were proud to represent The Sharpshooters at the RGHYA El Gubi annual service at Beaufort House on the Sunday following our El Gubi dinner. It is always a moving service, and the special relationship that developed between the 2nd Royal Gloucestershire Hussars and the 3rd and 4th County of London (Sharpshooters) Yeomanry’s fighting alongside each other at the

battle of Bir El Gubi is always mentioned during the service. We are always warmly welcomed by the RGHYA and serving members of the Royal Wessex Yeomanry and their RGH Squadron; and the hospitality offered prior to the service at Beaufort House is always warm and generous. If diaries allow and you are able to attend, I encourage you to do so.

The Association's support to Operations continued during 2024 and continues into 2025 with several Sharpshooters deployed on active service. Being deployed over Christmas is always unpleasant, especially so for families and friends. I'm delighted that the Association, in concert with the Royal Yeomanry Regimental Association, has been able to support those deployed as well as their families at home, with Christmas hampers and gifts.

We are always on the lookout to raise funds for the Association, if you have any fund-raising ideas, or wish to make a donation, please do drop a line through to our treasurer David Palmer (treasurer@ksya.org.uk) or any of the committee members. Our funds go towards supporting those on operations and their families, running the website, helping the museum, providing places at dinners and events, funding welfare support or providing small grants to those in need. If you are able to make a donation, of any size, or set up a regular donation, we'll be enormously grateful for you doing so. Details of how to make donations are printed later in the journal. Thank you.

Each year the journal is a greater triumph than the previous edition. We are tremendously fortunate to have such energetic editors, Colonel Simon Malik, Tim Rayson and Penny Malik, who devote many hours creating and producing our journal each year. Thank you both for bringing such joy to the Sharpshooter family each year with the journal that is eagerly awaited by us all. And thanks also to all our members and friends for the contributions that you submit for publication.

This is my last report as Association Chairman, a role I have been proud to hold since taking over from Major David Hannam some years ago. I'm pleased to be handing over to a great friend and fellow Sharpshooter, Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Webb JP. Matthew will bring great insights and energy to the role, and I look forward to his leadership of the Association. Matthew will certainly be busy – Matthew is also Secretary of the Royal Yeomanry Regimental Association (RYRA). This dual role will undoubtedly bring benefits to our Association, as the KSYA has increasingly worked more closely with the RYRA in recent years, helping to shape the way that "regimental" associations can work with "squadron" associations.

When I first joined the C Squadron RY back in 1988 (when I first had the pleasure of meeting Tim Rayson who was then leading the Recruiting Team) little did I appreciate what joining the Sharpshooters might mean in terms of fun, friendships and service. It has been my absolute privilege to be involved in the Association and to have been its Chairman. I have been humbled by being elected as the new President of the Association, following in the footsteps of Guy Farage and the late Neville Gillman MC. I look forward to serving you further in this role.

I'd like to take this final opportunity as I step down from being Chairman, to publicly thank my fellow trustees, 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.

Please accept my very warmest wishes to you and your families for 2025.

Mark Hodson

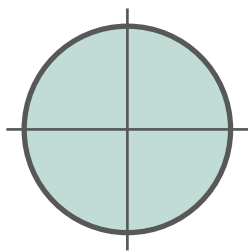
Lt Col Mark Hodson TD

PS – 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 Sharpshooter families too; please get in touch if there is anything we may be able to do for you.





CHAIRMAN'S REPORT (INCOMING)

by Lt Colonel Matthew Webb

Following Mark Hodson's announcement, at last year's Bir El Gubi Dinner, that he was stepping down as Chairman and that I had been elected as his successor, I would like to take the opportunity to thank Mark for his service as Chairman and to formally introduce myself to fellow KSYA members.

Mark's tenure as Chairman lasted for a record 16 years, during which he conducted the role with grace and skill. I am sure you will join me in thanking and congratulating him on a highly successfully period in office. I am happy to say we will continue to benefit from his experience as he takes up his new role as President of the Association, a role for which he is eminently suited.

For my own part, when I attended my first El Gubi Dinner as a Trooper with C (KSY) Sqn RY, 38 years ago, I was in awe of the many WW2 veterans present. I am now serving as a Lt Col at Army HQ, but my pride in being a Sharpshooter and sharing in our common bond of comradeship has continued to increase over the intervening years. Consequently, I feel very privileged to take on the responsibility of being your Chairman. I am also Secretary of the Royal Yeomanry Regimental Association, which I hope will facilitate seamless cooperation between the two associations.

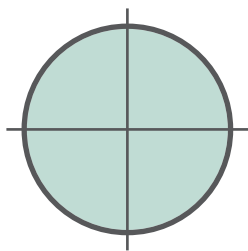


As I begin my period in office, I am happy to report an association that remains extremely healthy. This is both terms of membership, as demonstrated by the 95 attendees that gathered for the El Gubi Dinner last November, and our finances. This is extremely important because, as an association with two serving Squadrons, the need to support members will continue to grow. This is also true in respect of the support we provide to members of the serving Squadrons on Operations. Indeed, it is worth noting that as we enter 2025, there are Sharpshooters deployed overseas, as there have been for most of the last 25 years (a total six soldiers from both Sqns are deployed on Op CABRIT as part of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence in Poland and the Baltic States).

As ever, the forecast of events for 2025 will provide numerous social events at which members can enjoy the company of old and new friends. The highlights are Cavalry Memorial Sunday (11th May), VE 80 BBQ (date TBC, late May or early-mid June) and the El Gubi Dinner (22nd Nov).

Finally, I would like to thank the excellent committee members I have inherited for their ongoing commitment and great work.

Lt Col Matthew Webb JPVR



THE SECRETARY'S REPORT 2024

by Tim Rayson

I'm trying to write a brief report for this year's Journal because the members of your Association's committee have done sterling work in writing the reports and articles that the Secretary would have generated in the past! However I'm not sure that I'm going to succeed but here goes.

The year has seen considerable changes at the top of the Association which were confirmed at the Association's Management Committee held in November. At the meeting the Chairman announced that he would be standing down with effect from the 2024 El Gubi Dinner. The Committee and this Association owes Mark a massive debt of gratitude for his 22 years of dedicated service first as Vice Chairman and then latterly as Chairman where has served for 17 years. A new Chairman was elected, Lt Colonel Matthew Webb JP whom those who have served in the last 25 plus years will know. We also have a new Vice Chairman (Major David Lakin ex OC 265 Sqn) who has replaced Colonel Paul Acda TD DL who has reluctantly stood down on health grounds. He was the epitome of wise advice to the Association over his many years of service. Hopefully he will manage to make El Gubi this year. C(KSY) Squadron also have a new Honorary Colonel as Colonel Sir Nicholas Soames (Baron Soames of Fletching PC) has stepped down following stalwart service in the post. He has been succeeded by Colonel Simon McMenemy VR a former OC at Croydon, CO of the RY as well as Secretary of the RY Regimental Association – a Sharpshooter through and through.

The 100th Combined Cavalry Parade was a great success with all of the Cavalry and Yeomanry guidons being on parade which made for a colourful sight. The 101st Parade will take place on Sunday 11th May 2025 and there will I believe be some changes as to how the Parade will be administered in the future which may include some form of ETicketing. More details to follow in March/April. The Parade is a great day out and whilst it has a serious side to it is becoming a family friendly event so I hope as many of you as possible will attend. If you need seats rather than marching let me know.

The year also saw the 80th Anniversary of the DDay Landings in 1944 with various Sharpshooter groups visiting Normandy including Villers Bocage. As



ever it was a marvellous spectacle and well organised marred by the absence of the then Prime Minister who was more concerned about securing votes. His efforts did not garner any extra votes – almost certainly the opposite. Who knows what will happen for VE and VJ Day this year as they are both 80th Anniversary's.

To continue the theme of Remembrance a small party of Sharpshooters attended the opening of the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey on a very chilly day. Unfortunately HM The Queen was not well and the Duchess of Gloucester stepped in at very short notice where she duly met the Sharpshooters for the first time.

Fortunately we managed to defrost at the Cavalry and Guards Club with eventually a splendid roast beef lunch afterwards notwithstanding some initial confusion as to whether we had pre-ordered the beef – myself or a bevy of rather senior officers! Needless to say the truth was out and we enjoyed the beef! Those attending were myself, David Palmer, Keith Wrate, Ron Snowball, Kevin Wright and Will Wright. Although there are only a limited number of tickets available each year there are usually a couple of spares available and it is a nice morning out with the possibility of meeting a senior member of the Royal Family followed by a delicious lunch – optional!

The 2024 El Gubi Dinner took place in November and was the first one in recent memory where we had 92 guests who filled the Coffee Room of the Cavalry and Guards Club. Congratulations are due to Steve Shelley for his thorough planning and preparation which ensured that it went off without a hitch – almost! C Sqn threw a very convivial Winter Ball on 7th December although sadly the Hon Secretary could not attend due to a mix of bad weather and the fact that he was laid low with some flu bug.

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.

On a personal note 2024 has had its challenges with my retirement from His Majesty's Body Guard of the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen at Arms which was preceded by the award of the Royal Victorian Order medal in silver. This great honour that the King bestowed on me was swiftly followed by 37 days of radiotherapy with the same results as the previous 37 days in 2016 – unpleasant. The moral support that I have received from members of the Association has been outstanding and much appreciated.

However before I close 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



Hon Sec meets Duchess of Gloucester at the FOR.

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 (or at sometime in the distant future where you may need help) we need you to sign up to the Association by completing a membership form. Without any contact details we will be unable to send you a Journal or support you and your family in times of need. That in turn leads me on to subscriptions and donations. The voluntary subscriptions that you pay will allow us to help you and your families whilst you are deployed and obviously retired members as well, plus helps fund the Journal. But to enable us to continue to do that we really need everyone to contribute so that we have sufficient funds to do so. At present less than 25% of the readership actually contribute.

Over the last four 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. In 2024 we joined forces with the RYRA to ensure that families of those Sharpshooters at Croydon on deployment receive a Christmas hamper. We also directly support those individuals who deploy from Bexleyheath. 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 please join and help us continue to support both of our squadrons and past members and their families.

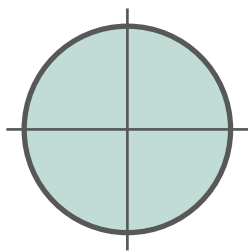
The Journal

You will all be aware that the cost of postage in the UK has risen outrageously over the last three years and that further price rises are in the pipeline. The cost of posting Journal abroad have also increased significantly. After postage the cost of printing the journal is the next biggest expenditure – the cost of compiling it is free and the articles of course cost nothing but the time that the authors devote to creating them.

To enable us to keep sending the Journal out in its current hard copy format that everyone likes we need everyone including those Sharpshooters living abroad to contribute to the Association. For those living abroad the easiest and cheapest way of doing this is via PayPal directly to the Hon Secretary and I can then make the payment on your behalf. This avoids any bank currency charges if you make the payment in sterling.

The Hon Secretary's Email address is:
Tigertim52@gmail.com

And on behalf of the Association I thank you in advance for an annual donation of £20 in the coming months.



MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT 2024

Dear Sharpshooters,

I am pleased to report that as of December 2024 the KSYA Association membership totalled 411 members including serving soldiers in the two Sharpshooter Squadrons.

Details of the membership as follows.

Membership 2024

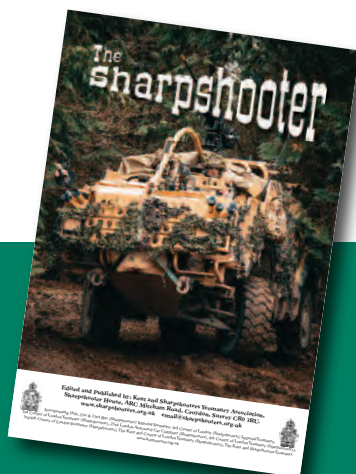
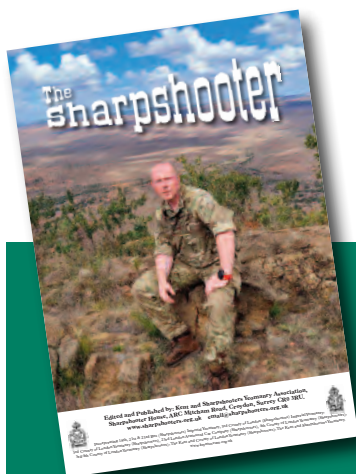
Full Member	361
Family Member.....	10
Friend of KSYA	22
Honorary Member	8
Vice President	9
President	1
Total Members	411
Members who are Subscribers.....	73

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





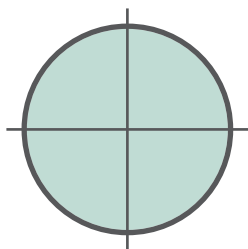
The Sharpshooter

THE SHARPSHOOTER JOURNAL 2025 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 22nd November 2025. There will be no cash or equivalent prize.

Entries must be sent to the Editor 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.



FORECAST OF EVENTS

2025

2025

February

1st **109th Anniversary** of the amalgamation of the West Kent Yeo (Queens Own) with the Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles (Duke of Connaught's Own) to form the 10th (Royal East and West Kent Yeomanry) Bn. East Kent Regiment (The Buffs) in 1916.

April

7th **107th 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 **231st 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

8th **VE Day. 80th Anniversary of the end of WW2.**

11th Combined Cavalry Old Comrades Association Parade and Service Hyde Park. This is the 101st parade. Sponsor Regiment: The Queen's Royal Hussars. Lunch arrangements tbc. Please contact the Hon Secretary on 15th March for further details.

31st **123rd Anniversary** of the end of the Second Boer War in 1902.

June

6th **81st Anniversary** of the D Day Landings.

13th **81st Anniversary** of the Battle of Villers Bocage.

July

10th **82nd Anniversary** of the invasion of Sicily (3rd CLY) in 1943.

23rd **Founders Day. 124th Anniversary of the 3rd CLY being formally established in the London Gazette in 1901.**

26th **116th Anniversary** of the First annual dinner of the Brigade of Sharpshooters OCA in 1909.

August

4th **111th Anniversary of the start of World War 1.**

- 15th **VJ Day. 80th Anniversary** of the end of the war against Japan.
 30th **83rd Anniversary** of the Battle of Alam El Halfa (1st Alamein) (3rd and 4th CLY) and 97th Field Regt (Kent Yeo) in 1942.

September

- 3rd **86th Anniversary of the start of World War 2.**
 22nd **82nd Anniversary** of 3rd CLY landing in Italy at Taranto in 1943.
82nd Anniversary of 4th CLY landing at Salerno in 1943.

October

- 6th Royal Yeomanry ODC. Details to follow.
 22nd(tbc) Combined Cavalry Church Service and lunch RH Chelsea. All are welcome. Please contact the Hon Secretary in April for further details.
 23rd **83rd Anniversary** of Battle of El Alamein (2nd Alamein) (3rd and 4th CLY) in 1942 and 97th Field Regt (Kent Yeo) in 1942.

November

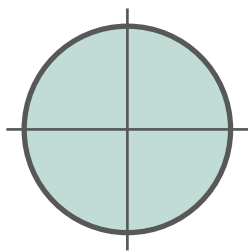
- 6th Opening of the Field of Remembrance, Westminster Abbey. Please apply to the Hon Secretary for tickets in July. Limited tickets available. Optional lunch afterwards at the Cavalry and Guards Club.
 8th The Lord Mayors Show.
 9th Remembrance Sunday.
 17th (tbc) 2 RGH Bir El Gubi service at Badminton. 1115hrs. Please advise the Hon Sec if you are going.
 19th **84th Anniversary** of the Battle of Bir El Gubi (3rd and 4th CLY) and 2GH in 1941.
 22nd **The 78th Bir El Gubi dinner. To be held at The Cavalry and Guards Club, 127 Piccadilly. Updated flyer to be posted shortly for further details.**

December

Inputs for the 2025 Journal are required by the end of Dec.

- Date tbc RY Carol Concert. Further details to be published. Please register your interest in attending with the Hon Sec in September.
 20th **124th Anniversary** of the Battle of Tafel Kop, South Africa (23rd Bn Imperial Yeomanry – the original Sharpshooters) in 1901.
 25th **123rd 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 **126th Anniversary of the Founding of the Sharpshooters in 1899.**





TREASURER'S REPORT, ASSOCIATION FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING 31st March 2024

by David Palmer, Hon Treasurer

Using current (31st March 2024) valuations of investments, the Association had net assets of £86k compared with £91k at the end of the Associations last financial year. The decrease in net assets can be mainly attributed to the two key expenditures totalling nearly £5K, for the Coronation BBQ and the presentation of the statuette to the Worshipful Company of Insurers. At the time of writing (Nov 2024) the Charifund units are listing at around the £14.38 per unit mark (~£58.9K), compared with a value of £14.56 (~£59.7K) per unit at the Associations financial year end. However, they had been as high as £15.19 during the previous three months, so we assess this is still a safe investment.

The Cambridge and Counties Bank two-year fixed rate investment from December 2021 came to fruition, with a nett receipt of £359.14 in interest. This interest was taken into cash accounts and a further £5K of liquid funds was placed on a one-year fixed rate due to a significantly better interest rate of offer of 5.2% on maturity. Current rates on offer make this an attractive investment to continue with in the future.

Income this financial year has increased by £2.5k to around £14k. Gift aid recovery is still in process unfortunately, but will hopefully be resolved shortly. Again, the Association has benefitted from the very generous and continuing support of The Worshipful Company of Insurers (WCI). Approximately 90 individuals have continued to contributed generously to the funds as well as the cost of the annual journal. One crowd funding event took place for the presentation of ex-President Guy Farage. At this level of income receipts the Association can continue to publish the annual journal and fulfil its charitable obligations.

Our largest expense continues to be the production and distribution of the annual journal at £4.7k. The second largest expense was for the Website hosting costs for the past 8 years, which had not been claimed by the provider. The amount of £3.6K was shared between KSYA and the Museum, and allowance has now been included for all future years' costs. Next highest (£2.55K) was the Statuette presented to the WCI in recognition of their long-standing support to the KSYA. The Coronation BBQ, held near Hever Castle and the Museum resulted in a nett cost of just over £2K, which was a deliberate policy to attract serving members and their families to attend and was successful in that regard. Re crowdfunded activities, due to the resignation of our long-standing President, Guy Farage, a presentation was made to him at a lunch event in Sep 23. The donations covered the costs of the statuette. 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

£1k to support Sqn members and provide Xmas boxes to deployed soldiers and their families. El Gubi transactions this year resulted in a net expenditure of £0.8k, down from £1.7K last year. Total expenditure this year was therefore £17.3k, up some £5.4k on the previous year.

The net effect has been a deficit during the last financial year of £3,334.

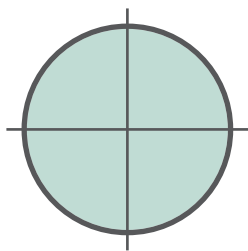
You are kindly reminded to complete and forward a current Gift Aid form to the Secretary or Treasurer. HMRC contributes a further 25% to gift aided donations. Please contact the Secretary (secretary@ksya.org.uk) or Treasurer (Treasurer@ksya.org.uk) for information.

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, Lt Col (Retd) TD VR Honorary Treasurer

Further information pertaining to the income and expenditure and balance sheets for financial year ended 31st March 2024, is included in the Kent and Sharpshooters Yeomanry Association Committee Members Annual Report for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024





WELFARE AND BENEVOLENCE REPORT

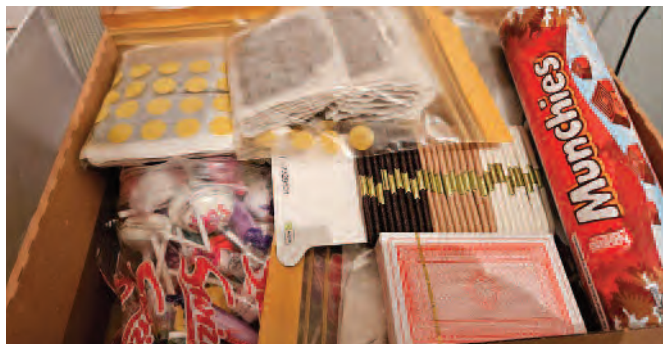
by Penny O'Hare

The year started quiet but has got busy as the year went on. We have had five of the C Sqn sent out to Poland. WO2 O'Hare, Tpr Teer, Tpr Bowerman, Tpr Slater and Tpr Vithayathil and Sig Blackman and Sig Shine from 265 Support Sqn were sent to Estonia and The Falklands respectively.

They received a welcome box in October and a Christmas box, all boxes were received with thanks. The feedback we got was that they are a great morale boost with for some the tea bags being a particular highlight "I've been desperate for a good brew since we arrived in camp. American tea from the USO just doesn't hit the spot the same as Yorkshire!!"

We also supported the RY RA who sent Christmas hampers to the NOK of those deployed. These were also very well received.

A big thank you to my big elf (Andy O'Hare). A lot of thought goes into the contents of the parcels, which we then pack and post off to put smiles on faces.



As you can see sending parcels to Kent and Sharpshooter Yeomen never stops and this is all funded by your donations to the Association. If you are not donating please do so as every little bit helps.

We also sent gifts of flowers or Christmas hampers to some of our veterans and their families. We sent them to the recently bereaved and other members recovering from surgery or facing health problems. The feedback was very positive as the veterans really appreciated the Association thinking of them during challenging times.

We will be donating £500 to Combat Stress in the New Year. They do a marvellous job with limited resources not funded by the NHS.

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 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.



Kent and Sharpshooters Yeomanry Association

(REGISTERED CHARITY No. 803784)

Why you should join your Association

The Association directly supports both serving squadrons, the Royal Yeomanry Regimental Association and Royal Signals Association and wider military charities. We exist to provide not only charitable support for both serving and past members but also to preserve the traditions of the Kent and Sharpshooters Yeomanry where we work in concert with the KSY Museum Trust (main museum at Hever Castle).

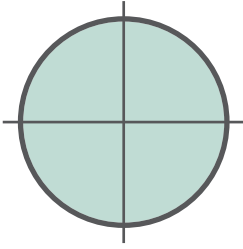
The Association provides support to Sharpshooters on Operations by providing 'goody boxes' as well as supporting their immediate families. It helps serving and retired members in cases of hardship and it organises the Annual Bir El Gubi dinner that takes place in November. We also financially support the serving squadrons with grants when they undertake Adventure Training or other events/training such as Battlefield Studies.

Subscription

Whilst membership is free a voluntary annual donation of £20.00 (or whatever sum is affordable) is requested to support the Association. The most efficient way to do this is by a standing order through your bank, the account details are on the registration form.

Please follow this QR to the KSYA membership page and sign up to the Association.





EMPTY SADDLES 2024

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.

Alan Blake	4 Troop C (KCLY) Sqn
Russell Mellor	5 Troop C (KCLY) Sqn
Sid Jonas	6 Troop C (KCLY) Sqn
Jim Mitchell	97th (Kent Yeomanry) Field Regiment RA

THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVER MORE LEST WE FORGET

A number of ex C Sqn personnel and the standard bearer, Kevin Wright, attended funeral services and memorial services for the following during the year:

Alan Blake

(brother of the late Captain Peter Peter)

Alan served in 4 Troop with Terry Burton, Tony Pilton, John Cox and David Palmer, amongst others. A solid crewman and totally reliable with a great wit – something that he had in common with Peter Blake. He rose to Troop Corporal before leaving to spend more time with his family. The crematorium was full to overflowing with well-wishers from both his TA service and civilian career at Reuters, with his extended family. Among those from the Squadron attending were: Ron Snowball, Tony Pilton, Terry Burton, Chris Ely, Keith Martin and David Palmer.



Left to right: Sgt Terry Burton (Tp Sjt), Mickey Stears (rear), Unknown(front) , Alan Blake (rear), Front (unknown), Dave Palmer (centre), Rear (unknown), Lt Peter Kennerley (Front and 4 Tp Ldr) remaining two unknown. Photo courtesy of Lt Col David Palmer TD.



Russell Mellor

Russ was a great character who came to us having served in the Royal Navy on board HMS BULWARK during the Suez crisis in the mid 1950's. He served in 5 Troop for a number of years and loved the military and everything that it stood for. Quietly spoken and a true gentleman he had the nicknames 'Golly Gosh' and 'Chuckles' as he was always smiling. He was qualified as a Master Vintner and also subsequently served as Mayor of Bromley for a term. His funeral service was well attended by family, friends and colleagues from his career. Those attending were: Ron Snowball, Tim Rayson, Keith Martin, Kevin Wright with the KSY Association banner and, David Palmer.



Sid Jonas

Sid was a well-liked and respected Troop Sergeant of 6 Troop. Sid came to us having previously served in R (Tower Hamlets) Battery, 512th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment Royal Artillery (TA). His quickly made his mark and his personality and stature created a great respect from all who knew and served with him. Although we were not able to attend his actual funeral, a short memorial service was held by the Association and the Squadron at Sharpshooters' House after the parade on Remembrance Sunday. The photo shows Sid as part of the Guard of Honour for the marriage of a young Julian Radcliffe – he is the front RH man nearest the camera.



Jim Mitchell

In 2024 our last known World War 2 veteran Jim Mitchell died at the grand old age of 102 and 9 months just short of 103 years old. Jim served with 97th (Kent Yeomanry) Field Regiment RA.

In 1939 Jim was 18 years-old and training in Hertfordshire to become an engineer when he joined the local unit, the Hertfordshire Yeomanry, because like so many of that generation he could see that war was imminent. Jim was initially trained as a Dispatch Rider and then latterly as a 25 Pdr Quad driver before training as a signaller which made him a very attractive asset. He served as a signaller and in 1940 post Dunkirk was transferred to the Kent Yeomanry and deployed with them to Bombay, India in August of that year on the SS Orontes. In Bombay the Kent Yeomanry were transhipped onto a troop transport and sailed for Basra eventually arriving there on 30th October and then moved onto Baghdad.

Jim eventually sailed to North Africa where he fought in the Battle of Alam El Halfa where he was mentioned in Dispatches for his bravery after intercepting some German soldiers trying to destroy a British defensive minefield. Jim was injured when his truck blew up on a mine but returned to the Regt once his wounds allowed him.



Jim Mitchell in Egypt.

He was a great one for volunteering for courses so whilst in Egypt he volunteered to go through parachute training. To qualify they had to complete three perfect jumps. Despite a sandstorm blowing, the jumps went ahead with predictable casualties – about 50% were injured including Jim who had a dislocated elbow – he thought that he was lucky to have survived. The survivors were told they could repeat the course or return to their units and become PTT's and Jim wisely chose the latter! After returning to his regiment, he was then posted to Cyprus for mountain training to prepare for the invasion of Italy.

Jim's regiment landed at Taranto and was soon moving north and passed through Rome. At this point they were astounded to find St Peter's Basilica Church and the Vatican completely empty, so they went exploring the Pope's chambers and took part in an impromptu concert.

The fighting in Italy was hellish, carried out over mountainous terrain village by village and even monastery by monastery. The regimental history *Yeoman Service* – does its best to describe the conditions which were trying in the extreme. By the end of the War Jim had been wounded for a third time (this time by a mortar bomb) and had been evacuated by mule and aircraft to the hospital for treatment and then returned to the



regiment which by this time was up in Northern Italy near Trieste. The shell splinters that he received continued to make their way out of his body in subsequent years. Jim finally returned home with the regiment driving all the way via the Brenner Pass.

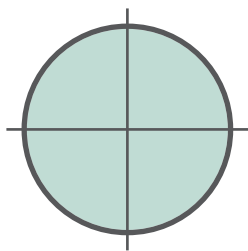
After leaving the regiment in 1945, Jim finished his engineering apprenticeship before joining the Merchant Navy, finally settling back in Scotland after meeting his late wife Isabel. Jim was very familiar with the distillery on Arran although not aware of the Sharpshooter connection to its founder – Hal Currie. He was a keen boater over the years and the islands of the River Clyde his “back yard”. He pulled into Lochranza many times, anchored up and paddled ashore in the most unstable tender to make the trek up the road and sampled their whiskies which certainly included more than a few ‘Robert Burns’ and other tasty samples.

In 2021 Tim Rayson and David Hannam travelled to Largs in Scotland to record Jim’s story for the KSY Museum Agius Hannam Digital Sound and Vision collection. Whilst there, Jim’s telegram for his 100th birthday from HM The Queen arrived by messenger and the moment was recorded to share with Jim’s family around the World. Jim was also delighted to receive a KSY Association tie and a dram of The Arran Malt.

Jim was an extraordinary man who I was privileged to meet and become friends with during his remaining years and I had planned to attend his 103rd birthday party but alas it was not to be. Instead I attended his funeral with Will Wright.

RIP Jim Mitchell because we will not see the like of you and your generation again.





C(KSY) SQN UPDATE

by Edward Mitchell
Major, Sqn Ldr, C (KSY) Sqn

OC - Maj Edward Mitchell

2IC - Capt Jason Jibb

PSAO - Capt Rand Faytaren

Trg Capt - Capt Robin Rowe

SSM - WO2 Brennan O'Hare

SQMS - SCpl Jonny Ware

SQMS(V) - SSgt George McNeil

Trg WO - WO2 Mark Thomson

Recruit Troop Leader - Lt Calum Alister-Jones

1 Troop Leader - 2Lt Chris Wilson

2 Troop Leader - Lt Hugh Maitland-Jones

2024 marked the handover of command from Major Moore, to me. Having spent the previous couple of years in the role of Intelligence Officer with RHQ, I now find myself firmly back with the sabre troops, on the receiving end of the Regimental 'tin can phone'. This is a good thing, however, and I must stress that this undertaking is not only an honour, but also that the Squadron is thriving and is a pleasure to command.

The last year has been a busy one geopolitically as we all continue to navigate turbulent waters. British Defence continues to adapt and react to the ever-changing global threats while trying to achieve more with less. It is obvious that there is enough taking place globally and domestically to keep us focused as Light Cavalry!

Despite everything, Ukraine and its war against Russia continues to rage, with the fight now taken back to the motherland. The use of drones is an example of a battle-winning technology that has seen recent focus within the British Army and our Squadron, with new drone operators undergoing training, and new kit and equipment being trialled. It seems logical that as the British Army seeks to do more with less, UAVs, AI, and other autonomous equipment will play a key role in enhancing our combat power.

Sadly, the kinetic activity hasn't been limited to Ukraine and Russia. Israel and Hamas have drawn out their conflict into 2024 and now onto 2025. As one watches from afar, we try to learn from the mistakes of others, and one of the lessons we are taking away is the importance of urban warfare. We need to continue training as we intend to fight, ensuring we are comfortable operating in both a dismounted and/or mounted capacity in an urban environment. Additionally, further developments have caused instability in the Middle East, with new conflicts emerging in Syria and Yemen. These localized



Ex DYERS DASH in Jul 2024.



A Model on Ex RENDERS RETURN in Jun 2024.



Capt Rowe in SHQ on Ex VILLIERS ADVANCE in May 2024.



C Sqn Honour Guard at a WCI Livery Dinner at Mansion House in May 2024.

skirmishes have wider ramifications due to the ties with Iran and Russia, as well as the responses from both the US and UK.

Considering the aforementioned and in a UK post-Germany, it seems that the importance of Op CABRIT and the role it plays in Eastern Europe for NATO is ever-growing. LCpl Salamut returned in the second half of 2024, having conducted some impressive and impactful work with NATO. He led a multinational media team that included officers due to his solid performance and experience. As he returned, we saw an additional deployment of five Squadron members (who won't be named for operational reasons).

Reflecting on the training year, we have conducted several excellent field exercises and training events. I would like to say a big thank you to our PSIs SSgt Naga and CoH Knight for this, as well as Capt Rowe and the 2ic. We have had a very fulfilling year from a training perspective, and the planning and execution of this is down to your hard work!

The summer weather paired with generous funding from the association, permitted a water sports Adventurous Training trip to take place on Thorney Island, which Lt CN Alister-Jones has kindly expanded on elsewhere in the journal.

There is a steady flow of recruits with little wastage. Some of the more recent recruits, Tprs De Burgh and Shepard, both took part in CAMBRIAN PATROL upon attesting and went on to win a silver medal with the RY Regimental team. Their efforts and undertaking are a testament to the high calibre of recruits coming through and joining our ranks, as well as their own ability to learn, adapt, and overcome.

Remembrance was an important and successful event for C Squadron. Personally, I found it somewhat daunting, having never taken part in a C Squadron remembrance parade until then. However, despite having to lead from the front, the collective knowledge and preparation done by WO2 Thomson, Sgt Dunning, and SSgt McNeil, to name but a few, meant that the Squadron and Association were able to come together and remember all those fallen comrades.

The final event for the Squadron in 2024, post our Christmas ball, was the vital Christmas hampers for those deployed. The Regimental and Squadron Associations did an amazing job pulling this together as part of their ongoing welfare support, with Capt Faytaren, CoH Knight, Pte Faytaren, and Sgt Smith very kindly ensuring they were all delivered to respective addresses here in the UK. This support is key for those deployed, and I would like to thank the Association for everything they are doing. From the hampers to the morale boxes and wider welfare, this is making a huge difference to those deployed as well as their families!

I would also like to highlight that other than the obvious change, 2024 saw a couple of other noteworthy changes from a Squadron personnel perspective. In addition to Maj Moore, Capt Rowe handed over the Training Officer role to WO2 Thomson, and Col Simon took on the role of Hon Colonel. At a Regimental level, I am sure you are aware, but it is probably worth calling out that Lt Col Charlie Field handed over command of the RY to Lt Col Mathew Bonner. I would, therefore, like to thank those who moved on, for everything they have done in their tenure. The Squadron is where it is today as a result of the collective excellence and hard work I have been fortunate enough to inherit!



Ex VIRTUALYEOMAN in Feb 2024.



Croydon Remembrance Parade Nov 2024.

2025 brings its own targets and challenges. Having finished our training year, post-skiing in January, we now pivot towards next year's Road to War and Exercise TITAN STORM with 1 DRS on the Salisbury Plain in October. C Squadron will be one of the two RY Sub-Units, bolstered by our paired Sqn (F) as well as another Squadron, so that from the 6 RY Squadrons we aim to field two Sub-Units. The Squadron is looking to focus on three key areas as part of the wider Regimental campaign:

1. **Readiness** ahead of TITAN STORM, ensuring we are ready to meet our commitments and deploy as a fully formed and capable Sub-Unit.
2. **Lethality** and mounted capability, which ties into the first and aims to develop Jackal and GS crews to provide depth and mounted excellence.
3. **Supporting our people**, aiming at sustaining the commitment of our personnel through their own career plans but also looking at innovation and fleet management.

If we achieve this, I am sure 2025 will deliver some great results building on the success of 2024. Thank you all for your support this year, to those serving in the Squadron, the members of the Association, and especially the families who give us the precious time away from home to carry out our roles at C Squadron! We are one big family, and I am very glad to now be a part of this and help shape it for the future.

C Squadron at Army Inshore Sailing Training Centre, Thorney Island by Lt CN Alister-Jones, C Sqn

Over the weekend 09-11 August 2024, seven participants from C Squadron took part in a two-day water sports training event at the Army Inshore Sailing Training Centre (AISTC) on Thorney Island. The core aim of the trip was to offer challenging yet thoroughly enjoyable, non-military training that developed Service Personnel's leadership, teamwork, and sense of sub-unit cohesion. The trip was made possible in great part through a generous grant provided by the Squadron Association, which was gratefully received by the attendees.

Day 1: Sailing and Windsurfing

Saturday began with laps of Thorney Island to locate the cleverly disguised temporary feeding facilities, which once successfully located, was followed by the day's first activity: dinghy sailing. The AISTC team covered the essentials of theory for C Squadron's (mostly novice) SPs on dry land, which provided many moments of levity. The boats were then rolled down the Centre's long pier, before C Sqn launched itself with usual aplomb onto the waves.

Under the close tutelage of the Centre staff, our SPs slowly but steadily won control of their initially uncooperative vessels – most of which seemed at first to have a marked preference for sailing in the opposite direction to their skippers' wishes, or lobbing their sails' booms with little warning. As ever, however, C Squadron looked after each other – with SPs coming to each others' aid when vessels were inevitably run ashore on sand banks, and shouting newly discovered learnings at each other across the area. A series of races were then run by the AISTC staff around a local course, which became very competitive yet nonetheless provided great mirth.



Following a break for lunch, windsurfing lessons took place in the afternoon. This was a physically demanding activity which further encouraged teamwork, as participants yet again constantly shared their hard-won learnings with each other, and supported one another through the inevitable wobbles. The day concluded with a relaxed BBQ thoughtfully provided by the AISTC staff, giving the group some welcome downtime and an opportunity to reflect on the day's events.

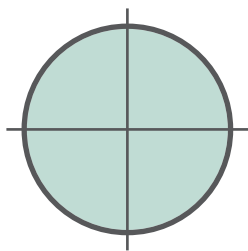
Day 2: Exploring the Local Waters

On Sunday, the AISTC staff guided the team on a boat trip around Thorney Island, highlighting points of especial local environmental and historical interest. The first point commemorated a retired Royal Marine Officer who had sadly passed away just off Thorney Island, but was well remembered by a maritime navigation buoy in the gentle waters between Thorney and West Wittering. On a happier note, the large seal colony further around the bay was a cause of much delight, with its 70-odd members basking contentedly in the morning sun. Returning to the main site for lunch, the group then departed for Croydon ARC, having had a great two days of engaging water sports and shared company.

Summary

The weekend was short and sharp, but proved valuable for those who attended. Individuals were able to practically develop their leadership and teamwork, while enjoying improving C Squadron's cohesion in a very relaxed setting.

The weekend also established a template for successfully deploying a group of C Sqn personnel to AISTC – a top notch facility, within easy striking distance of the ARC – ensuring that such trips will be significantly more straightforward to plan and deliver in the future, and benefit many more members of the Squadron.



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

Officer Commanding – Major Craig Sumner R SIGNALS

Second in Command – Captain Ben Taylor R SIGNALS

Squadron Sergeant Major – WO2 (SSM) Jim Denney

PSAO – Captain Tul Ale RE MBE

Squadron Supervisor – SSgt Brett Harries

SQMS – SSgt Sushil Chamling RGR

Troop Commander – Lt Phoebe Lewis R SIGNALS

Troop Staff Sergeant – SSgt Carl Crane

SPSI – SSgt Richy Williams

SPSI (Tech) Sgt Jack May

What a year – kicking off with a consolidation of our new role, delivering C2 effect and HF capacity across a UK battlespace – the squadron maintained focus and delivered above and beyond again.

As we move to the end of 2024 I reflect on my words in the previous journal, ‘geopolitical dynamics across the world have changed’, this statement is evergreen, but the change and division we see now is confronting.

We can take comfort in the networks and comradery of our military family, past and present. We see more than ever the need to ensure associations, friendships and a hand in times of hardship are maintained. I have seen first hand the impact we can have when we, as an association come together; for that I am grateful for your continued support for our serving soldiers.

In these choppy waters, I am proud to state that 265 have maintained our support to the UKs wider commitments. Deployments on Op CABRIT, the UKs advanced forward presence, we have deployed personnel in support of training the Ukrainian armed forces, and again received great feedback for our personnel who have spent over six months with the British Forces South Atlantic Islands (BFSAI).

Additionally, we have had squadron members taking a leading role in developing not just the Regimental, but the Royal Corps cyber skills. Deploying instructors and team members in support of multiple cyber war games; winning plaudits from across a multi-national domain.

We welcome a new 2IC, Captain Ben Taylor, having served over 15 years in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers before transferring to the Royal Corps of Signals

on recommendation. A credible and dedicated individual, he has had the privileged membership of both the Sergeants and Officers mess.

We also welcome our new SQMS SSgt Chamling, having served with distinction in the Royal Gurkha Rifles.

With arrivals, we also say goodbye to SSgt Bob Marshall RA, as SQMS his efforts and impact cannot be overstated. His absence will be greatly felt, and we wish him the best for the future. We also said goodbye to one of our longest serving soldiers, LCpl Akarbil RLC, retiring following a full career, we wish her the best in a well earned retirement, you will be missed.

We look into the next year with eagerness, an outlook to maintain our current capacity and increase our impact. I can report that recruitment is up, the climate is in our favour, but we cannot rest. We must maintain our relevance and ensure the training evenings are impactful, and above all, that the 265 and Sharpshooter community and ethos are maintained.

Thank you!

Year in Review

Lt Lewis

Delivering on our mission

Last year, 265 Sqn focused on understanding and building its role as an HF specialist within the warfighting division of the British Army. With this basis firmly established after the success of Ex IRON TITAN, the sqn spent 2024 refining this capability. At the start of the year, the sqn was able to create and run a regt command post in best practice time.

This growing capability relies on the skills of our supervisor SSgt **Harries** and his Comms Cpl (LCpl **Jarvis**) and Sig **Chalk** to establish comms in record time. The detailed management of the build and running has been driven by Cpl **Lovett** who has trained LCpl **Wilsher** into the Complex Cpl role. Our SSMWO2 **Denney** has trained SP from across the regt to defend the command post in increasingly dynamic exercises alongside the steady direction of our troop SNCOs: SSgt **Crane** and Tp Sgt **Porter**.

This succession planning and deepening of skill sets has enabled the squadron to act as a lynch pin to the successful integration of comms capability across the regiment. This refined skill has leveraged the skills of other squadrons as well as our own signallers, including Sig **Damilare-Sage**, Sig **Bond** and Sig **Holmes**.

In our chef troop, we said goodbye to LCpl **Akarbil** who retired. Happily, LCpl **Oldham** re-cap badged as a chef and completed his Class 3, cooking up all kinds of dishes in field conditions.



Ex PHOENIX WARRIOR. March 2024.



Cpl Liscoe manning the net at CP71 on Ex PHOENIX COMMUNICATOR. July 2024.

Our medic troop is growing in expertise as LCpl **Ovenell** delivers BCD training and Pte **Webdale** completed her Class 3. She was 2Pl Medic on Ex DANISH PHOENIX providing critical support throughout the field exercise and real-life support throughout the deployment. LCpl **Ovenell** was also awarded a Commanding Officer's Coin for his emergency first aid response to a road traffic accident.

Under the nurturing stewardship of Sgt **Fox**, clerk troop continues to grow. Cpl **Hart**, Pte **Gurung**, and Pte **Holland** steadily work through their trade while providing continual administrative support to the squadron. Pte **Holland** was the single point of contact for deployed regimental personnel on Ex DANISH PHOENIX; a great achievement for her first year of trade.

A strong performance across the squadron on our Annual Continuous Training (ACT) deployment to Denmark. The regt ops team led a seamless reform of ACT when we were told one month out that a deployment to Cyprus was no longer viable due to the escalating tensions in the Middle East.

Cpl **Lovett** ran a week-long range package, ensuring the regt could all qualify for their marksmanship skills – made more challenging by the different nature of the Danish ranges. Our squadron also received best sect (led by LCpl **Wilsher**) and best platoon.

Maintaining our military skills

Alongside the Ex PHOENIX COMMUNICATOR series, the squadron has maintained its commitment to high quality soldiering. SSgt **Crane** coordinated a hugely successful warrior exercise with a FIBUA attack and challenging obstacle course through the sewers and under the floorboards of Cope Hill Down.

The squadron honed these skills on Ex DANISH PHOENIX when the regiment deployed for annual continuous training to Denmark. We worked through a complex scenario that including patrols, night reces, vehicle check point managements, and deliberate attacks. LCpl **Wilsher** led the section that was awarded best section on the exercise due to his strong command and control.

Ensuring we have meaningful weekly training is key to our retention. With Cpl **Liscoe** leading as Training Night IC, the quality and consistency of our training has improved.

He brings the experience of training recruits in the core soldiering skills to ensure a diverse programme for our trained soldiers.

Adventurous training and battlefield study tour

Our adventurous training exercise is one of our favourite opportunities to bond as just 265 Sqn – an opportunity made possible through the generous contributions from the Sharpshooter Association and the WCI. This year, we went on a challenging scrambling and mountaineering trek in North Wales followed by a trip to ZipWorld. Sig **Majoros** was 2iC for the exercise, demonstrating the competence and capability we aim to nurture in the squadron.



Sqn AT in North Wales. July 2024.

As part of 71 Sig Regt, the squadron went on a battlefield study tour to Gallipoli where we learnt about the importance of effective planning, good navigation, ground appreciation, and the imperative to seize the initiative in combat. These study tours are



Battlefield Study Tour to Gallipoli. May 2024.

one of the most effective means of building strategic and tactical knowledge amongst the squadron.

Career development

The squadron welcomed the following soldiers out of basic soldier training this year: Sig **Alo**, Sig **Bond** (who won best soldier on a warrior exercise), and Sig Holmes. In recognition of their work to deliver against all the work above, the squadron is proud to announce the promotions of SSgt **Harries**, Sgt **Lovett**, LCpl **Majoros**, and LCpl **Shine**. All these individuals have worked tirelessly to add value to the squadron and ensure it is a workplace that soldiers want to keep coming back to.



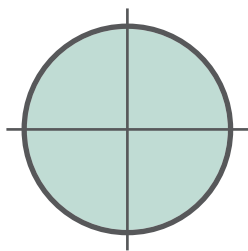
Final Ex PHOENIX COMMUNICATOR.
October 2024.

Adding value to the broader field army

Sig (now 2Lt) **Lamb** used his rich cultural and international experience from his civilian career to provide impactful, strategic insights to teams within the army. 2Lt Lamb went on to complete the entire Commissioning Course Short at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, receiving excellent scores across his assessments.

In May, Sig **Shine** returned from deployment to the Falkland Islands where he did the regiment proud. Highly commended for his strong communications and leadership skills, he comes back as an experienced Class 2 signaller. Sig **Blackman** has deployed on Op CABRIT to provide critical communications support. Both Shine and Blackman's deployed units praised their technical excellence and professional competence, commending the value that reservists added to the capability of the army on operations.





265 (KCLY (SHARPSHOOTERS)) SUPPORT SQUADRON NEWS

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 2024

by Sig Ryan Bond

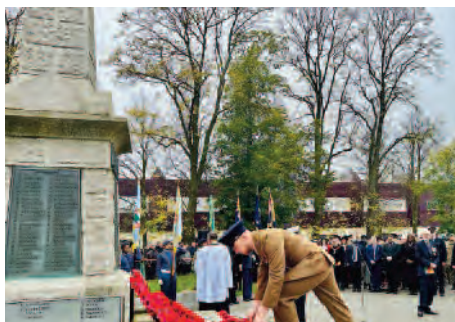
Participating in Remembrance Sunday this year was a deeply moving and humbling experience for me. As I stood among the crowd gathered to honour the sacrifices of those who served, I felt a profound sense of connection to the moment and its significance.

The most poignant part of the day was when I had the honour of laying the wreath at the monument. It was an immense privilege to play such an important role in this solemn tradition. As I approached the monument, I was acutely aware of the weight of the moment. The wreath I held symbolized the gratitude and respect of many, and I wanted to ensure that every step I took reflected the reverence the occasion deserved.

However, I have to admit that the responsibility was nerve-wracking. I was so concerned about performing the task correctly – what if I tripped or placed the wreath awkwardly? These thoughts ran through my mind as I marched towards the monument. But when I arrived and gently placed the wreath, the significance of the act itself overcame my fears. It wasn't about perfection but about paying tribute.

As I stepped back and joined the others, I felt a sense of relief and pride. The moment reminded me that honouring those who served isn't about flawless ceremonies; it's about carrying forward their memory with sincerity and respect.

Being a part of this day has left a lasting impression on me. It was a day to reflect, remember, and commit to keeping the stories of those who served alive.



FALKLANDS DEPLOYMENT

Oct 2023 – May 2024

by Sig Matthew Shine

My name is Sig Matthew Shine and I am a Signaller with 71 Signal Regiment, 265 Support Squadron. I joined 265 in February 2020 and was eager for a deployment as soon as I joined the British Army. I had heard of deployment opportunities to the Falklands during basic training so as soon as I had completed trade training and GS Conversion course for Land Rover (both mandatory requirements to be eligible for selection) I jumped at the request for radio operators for a six month tour.

Thankfully I have a very supportive employer regarding reservist duties so I never had to worry about the length of deployment except for my own reservations of being so far away for so long from family and loved ones.

Before embarking on the deployment, I had the chance to talk about life in the Falklands with my relief as well as some individuals from my unit that had completed deployments there in the past so I wasn't going in completely blind.

When I first arrived to Mount Pleasant Camp (MPC), which is where the bulk of Service Personnel live and operate on the Falklands, I was transported back to my first day of Uni where you're trying to determine where everything is, meet your team and try and remember where your room is; I don't think I was able to find my room without the help of my relief for at least five days. The accommodation blocks all look the same and offer the same maze like challenges as the numbers and references to the halls have no order whatsoever, or at least none that I could make sense of.

I was one of the few on MPC to have a one week handover with my relief who I was taking over from as most individuals only have a two to three day handover before they're off and the relief takes over. It's a rather daunting feat to adapt to a totally different environment, new job and so far away, before you are left totally to your own devices. I was however, fortunate to have a very comprehensive handover for my daily tasks as well as supported into the evenings to familiarise myself with all the local hangout spots and administrative departments. Again, most people landing in the Falklands are straight into their roles and handover the morning after they land but my first day was adventure training in the swimming pool learning to kayak and kayak polo....awesome! There isn't any other job on earth where this'll be your first day. This was a Friday so I then had the weekend to find my feet around MPC before officially starting role the following Monday.





Thankfully 265 Support Sdn were well drilled on a week night and weekend to help me remain familiar with HF/VHF dets and the equipment in the Falklands was pretty much a carbon copy of what I was used to back home. For my own development, it was invaluable having the opportunity to be hands on with kit everyday and this was pretty much my day to day activities whilst in the Falklands. I was put of a three-person team in RADCON which sat under J6 Ops whilst on Island. RADCON had four Dets to maintain each with HF, VHF and data to maintain. At all times whilst on Island, RADCON were at 30mins readiness to move in the event of an emergency. Our task would be to roll out within 30mins and setup at Comms HQ wherever required and at whatever time. Unfortunately, during my time on Island, this was called upon as a MAN SV carrying infantry rolled off the road requiring Med Evac via ambulance and helicopter and RADCON's presence offering stable cComms back to the Joint Operational Command (JOC) was vital to coordinate this.

Apart from the emergency scenarios, life in RADCON consisted of daily equipment care checks, CRYPTO accountability checks, issuing of kit and training on communication equipment to all who needed or requested it. For me, this meant learning and understanding new kit that I hadn't used before and bespoke to the Falklands and MPC to then brief and train other users. This opportunity and experience helped me gain confidence in speaking in front of others and developing leadership qualities with those around me that I will use in both my army career as well as civilian career. On three occasions I was also out with the Infantry force on Island supporting them with comms requirements on Ex Cape Monk and Ex Alemeda, both on the ground and in HQ. On all occasions I had to be ready to react to ever changing environments, scenarios and Comms requirements to achieve a positive outcome to the exercises all of which simulated land, sea and air threats to Island.

Life on Island also offered plenty of recreational opportunities to keep fit, learn about the history of our presence on the island and simply relax. During my time on deployment I took a helicopter ride to Volunteer Point to see all the different wildlife (there's more than just penguins), organised a squash tournament for J6, took part in a five-a-side football tournament, volleyball tournament, darts competition and spent time in the bars, cafe and library. There was a massive gym which was open 24/7 and a swimming pool open seven days a week, so keeping fit and a healthy mind was easy to come by. Needless to say, I thoroughly enjoyed my time in the Falklands and on deployment. I feel that a six month deployment was the sweet spot in terms of having enough time to develop my skills but also not being away from family and friends for too long, as towards the end of the tour I was starting to miss them and was looking forward to coming home. I would certainly recommend anyone who's interested in a deployment and wanting to improve their abilities on HF/VHF systems to strongly consider an opportunity in the Falklands. I don't have a single regret.

Rev. Dr. (Capt) HENRY AFFUL

4th Regiment Royal Artillery, Alanbrooke Barracks, Topcliffe, North Yorkshire

My journey started when I first walked through the gates of the Army Reserve Centre, 265 Support Squadron at Bexleyheath in 2015. After an initial enquiry about joining the Army Reserves, I had a setback when my medical was turned down. I persisted and after a successful appeal started the recruitment process in 2021.

In April 2021, I successfully passed the recruit assessment at Pirbright. I then completed Module 1, Foundation Training over five alternate weekends in June and August 2021. The next stage was Module 2, Battle Camp, a 15.5 day full residential camp, at Grantham in November 2021. It was there that I had some difficulties. Firstly I failed the Annual Combat Marksmanship Test (ACMT) and secondly I was challenged by various aspects of section attacks, as a result I was asked to retake the whole Battle Camp training again.

That was my lowest point in my military career, I was demoralised and lacked confidence. I sat down with my Troop Commander, Senior Permanent Staff Instructor and Troop Staff Sergeant and discussed the way forward. They provided me with reassurance and the belief I could return and retake Battle Camp. SSgt Crane, the Tp SSgt, said 'celebrate failure', which resonated with me. Importantly I mentioned that I was a man of faith and that I believed I could retake the course. Immediately after that meeting, the Squadron had their Christmas party, it was there that SSgt Crane asked me to say grace and I found my natural place in the role of chaplaincy. However, to prove to myself that I could do it and to the admiration of all, I went back to Pirbright and retook Battle Camp training, I passed it and was also awarded the Best Endeavour Award.

My plan to become an Army Chaplain in the Regular Army then started. I applied and was accepted to the Army Chaplaincy Department, as I had been ordained as a minister in 2005, after initial ministry training with the South London Temple in Peckham, South London. I then passed Army Officer selection and Officer training at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. In November 2024, I became the first black Churches in Communities Chaplain in the British Army. I was posted to 4th Regiment Royal Artillery, Alanbrooke Barracks, Topcliffe, initially unaccompanied with the plan for my family to join me in 2025.

Although early stages, I have been told that I have already started to make a difference, through my extensive experiences in church ministry as well as a teacher in a number of secondary schools across London. I have started to play for the local football team and bring my wealth of knowledge, experience, education and sports to the Regiment.

I will however always remain a Sharpshooter. As a Sharpshooter, who has served with 265 (KCLY) Support Squadron and will always be happy to come back to share his experiences with all fellow Sharpshooters. I remain grateful to the chain of command for all their support in helping to shape my military career. In addition, Padre Trundle, the Regimental Padre, who often provides the spiritual guidance and prayers for the troops during Remembrance Day ceremonies and the annual Christmas celebrations.



Finally I would like to mention that my personal challenges through the training process have helped me to remain grounded and keen to provide the necessary moral, spiritual and pastoral support to soldiers who may be faced with similar challenges.

COMMISSIONING COURSE AT SANDHURST

by 2Lt Lamb

While the plain 1970s architecture of Victory Building – home to Dettingen Company – might lack the grandeur of Old College’s ornate white façade, it was still a privilege to have been accepted onto the October cohort of Commissioning Course Short 243 (CCS 243) at Sandhurst. This eight-week programme, designed specifically for Reservist Officers, Professional PQOs, and Padres, condenses the core elements of the Regular Commissioning Course into four two-week models.

The short duration of the course meant long days and little time to absorb an overwhelming amount of new information. The ‘Combat Estimate’, for example, was taught over just one week, with Officer Cadets expected to competently answer each of the ‘7 Questions’ based on a complex set of orders – or ‘FRAGO’ as they are often called – from Company Command. Fortunately, the Directing Staff (DS) of Dettingen Company were exceptional, ensuring that, while the tuition brief, every Officer Cadet was able to prepare and deliver orders in the field.

Similarly, learning to lead platoon attacks at all levels was a complex skill that had to be mastered quickly. Under the expert guidance of our DS, Officer Cadets took turns in command positions – including as Platoon Commander, Platoon Sergeant, and Section Commander – navigating tough terrain and tackling a series of challenging enemy positions during several arduous field exercises on Barossa. Each role brought its own unique set of challenges, but we were expected to become (relatively) proficient in each.

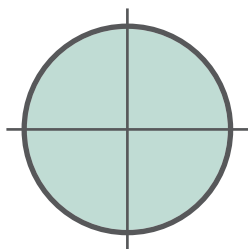
Yet, despite the obstacles and tests that we faced during this demanding but rewarding course, the day came when the Officer Cadets of CCS 243 finally left Victory Building. In front of our colleagues, family, and friends, we marched up the famous steps toward and through the colonnade of Old College. It was an honour and privilege to step where so many British greats have once trodden, but as we crossed that historic threshold, one could not help but feel the importance of responsibility and duty that now rested upon our shoulders.



CO and 2Lt Lamb.



Recently commissioned 2Lt Lamb, Capt Afful and Sqn Hon Col at Sqn presentation evening.



71ST (CITY OF LONDON) YEOMANRY SIGNAL REGIMENT REPORT

by Lt Col David Burnett R SIGNALS

Having assumed command of 71st (City of London) Yeomanry Signal Regiment in October 2024, I consider it an immense privilege to lead such a capable and dynamic Regiment. Its proud history, and critical role in delivering operational capability, underscores its enduring importance to the Army, Defence and the UK.

As we await the outcome of Strategic Defence Review 2025, I am pleased to report that the Regiment is in excellent health.



Recruitment remains robust across both soldiers and officers, with six officers commissioned in 2024 and an overall positive inflow across the Regiment. This reflects the strength of our recruiting base, leveraging the diverse talent London offers across a breadth of skills and experience.

The Regiment's operational focus continues to centre on delivering High Frequency Rear Link Detachments, an indispensable capability that underpins the provision of the Divisional Wide Area Network for 3rd (United Kingdom) Division. These Detachments ensure the Warfighting Division's ability to maintain command and control across the battlespace and exemplify our ability to meet evolving operational demands. The expertise and innovation within the Regiment positions it at the forefront of change as the Army adapts its structures and capabilities for the future.

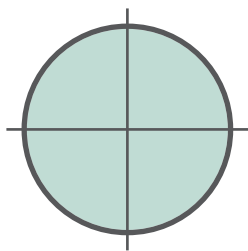
265 (Kent and County of London (Sharpshooters)) Support Squadron have seen particular successes this year. Their commitment to delivering excellence – whether through their HF expertise, deployments on operations such as Op CABRIT, or their contributions to cyber and leadership development – has been exemplary. Their delivery of a Regimental Command Post to 7th Signal Group goes from strength to strength as we develop a key operational capability. The Sharpshooters' achievements highlight the determination and vitality of the Regiment as a whole, and the thirst of our Regular and Reserve Personnel to meet future challenges. I would also like to take this

opportunity to personally thank Major Craig Sumner for his outstanding leadership and dedication to the Squadron. Major Sumner is due to depart this summer for a new role with HQ Royal Signals, working on the development and management of the Corps' Reserve Junior Officers and we wish his every success in his next post. His replacement will be announced on the next Sub-Unit Command Board in April.

The Sharpshooters have also been heavily involved in the activity and successes of 2024. Whether commemorating Remembrance Sunday in Bexleyheath and at the Festival of Remembrance in the Royal Albert Hall, or participating in the inaugural Signal Sunday parade at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, they retain their strong links with the Royal Signals and their local, traditional roots. Signal Sunday in particular united the Regular, Reserve, and Retired Royal Signals community for a service and lunch with the Chelsea Pensioners. Personnel have also deployed to Denmark and Estonia on exercise and operations, France for skiing, and Gallipoli for a Battlefield Study. Activity in the coming year will include skiing in March, and a two-week mountaineering expedition to the Atlas Mountains in May, as well as further operations in Estonia and the Falkland Islands, amongst others. The opportunities for our personnel remain varied and exciting and I am confident the Sharpshooters will meet whatever challenges they may face.

As we look to the year ahead, I am confident in the Regiment's ability to continue to adapt and thrive in a rapidly evolving landscape. Whether through enhancing our operational outputs, leveraging the technical expertise within London, or nurturing the diverse talents of our personnel, we remain focused on delivering excellence for the British Army. My sincere thanks go to all those – past and present – who contribute to the success of this extraordinary Regiment. Together, we will continue to build on its proud legacy.





MUSEUM TRUST REPORT

by Chris Sutton
Chairman

Trustees: Chris Sutton (chair), Huw Jones (Secretary), John Gunn (Treasurer), David Lakin, Phil Mason (resigned April 2024), Penny Malik (appointed April 2024), Tim Rayson, Dan Shead (appointed November 2024), Dan Taylor (Curator)

This has been a “business as usual” year for the Trust, and you can read about our wide ranging activities in the Curators Report. A personal highlight for me was welcoming the family of Pat Dyas to the museum in the summer.

My own journalistic energies this year have gone into my battlefield tour of the Kent Yeomanry’s advance from San Marino to Pergola Ridge in Italy in autumn 1944, which you can read about elsewhere in this edition.

Following Phil Mason’s resignation as a Trustee due to work commitments, we were delighted to appoint Penny Malik as a new trustee in April.

Then I took the opportunity of the Cenotaph Parade on Remembrance Sunday to invite Dan Shead to become our latest trustee. Dan and I are the two Sharpshooters who joined a selection of Westminster Dragoons in the Royal Yeomanry contingent on parade. We are in the small group approaching the Cenotaph from the right. Dan is second from the left, I am third from the left. It was a very reaffirming to be amongst

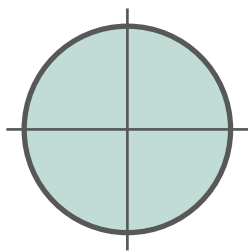


over 10,000 veterans in Whitehall, all keen to honour those who died in service for the country and the values that they fought to defend.

I was back in Whitehall in December in the basement of the MOD building, for a tour of the Army Historical Branch organised for members of the Army Museums Ogilby Trust. How do you get busy soldiers to submit paperwork to Whitehall when on active operations? In our increasingly litigious society, the threat of claims for mistreatment of civilians during operations has been a key driver for the AHB's work, and at time of writing a well-known human rights lawyer has just been convicted of fabricating claims against the Army relating to mistreatment in Iraq, because the data shows otherwise. I was also struck by the exponential growth of digital data held by the AHB. When such data becomes publicly available through the National Archives in thirty years, museums will need to have honed their use of digital search skills and AI to find what they are looking for. The question of what data can be shared publicly, given competing needs of Freedom of Information and GDPR, is one that parliament will need to grapple with, but I imagine that gun control video footage from an attack helicopter, for example, showing the detailed impact of a strike is not something that a museum such as ours would want to be responsible for in our displays, even if it were at some point made available to the public.

My deep thanks to all the trustees, assistant curators and volunteers for all the time and energy they devote to the museum. I shall be standing down as Chair in November 2025 after nine years in post. The trustees have commenced the process to select our new Chair and if you are interested in applying please contact Dan Taylor. I very much hope to continue to serve as a trustee.





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, Penny Malik and Dan Shead

Curatorial posts held as of 30th November 2024

Hon Curator: Dan Taylor

Curator (Croydon): Tim Rayson

Curator (Bexleyheath): David Whitehouse

Curator (Hever): Freddie Deane

Curator (Collection Conservation): Eve Edmondson

Archivist (Croydon): Madelaine Budgen

2024 has seen continued growth in the Museum Collection – and in our volunteer force. For the eighth year in a row, the annual tidy-up day at the museum saw an increase in numbers attending. Consequently, we were able to tackle jobs deep into the ‘wish’ list and not just fix urgent problems. The gang in attendance is so large now that it is impossible to name-drop everyone but I really appreciate the efforts of our lively and friendly volunteers who throw themselves into every task so willingly and with such enthusiasm. David and Arthur Whitehouse deserve special mention here as they have not only installed a No19 wireless set in our Cromwell tank turret mock-up but also enhanced the Anderson Shelter display (and have added to the displays at Bexleyheath with the able assistance of Eve Edmondson). Another exciting development – thanks to Freddie Deane and Joe Tichelly – was that we finally got the projector working to show archive newsreels – and hopefully soon some of the interviews created for the Agius Collection by Messrs Hannam and Rayson.

Our usual annual cycle of events has carried on through the year. In April our group waved off the IMPS vehicle rally from Sevenoaks to Hastings. At the start of June the Living History Group took part in the commemoration of the eightieth anniversary of D-Day in Normandy. At the end of the month we put on a full effort at Hever’s Home Front event – accompanied by a number of historic vehicles provided by local enthusiasts. Sharpshooter representation was also present at a number of events across the south of England. The year’s cycle was concluded with the firing of our 25-pdr gun for the Armistice commemoration in November

As you may recall, we run a Student Volunteer week every summer – aimed at providing useful opportunities to work with the collection. Clearly this is a major benefit to the museum as it allows us to take on projects that are too large or complex to be

addressed in our regular day-to-day activities. The intention is that it is also an advantage to the students as it provides a constructive activity for their CVs and engages them in genuine hands-on heritage industry experience. This year we had a rotating gang of around ten volunteers clearing out and conserving the store at the Mitcham



The Living History Group display at Hever last June. We were able to muster four Kent Yeomen, four Sharpshooters and three FANYs despite some key members being away on other activities. A great turn-out and a popular stopping-off point for visitors. Sergeant Whitehouse and Private Whitehouse are demonstrating the use of a No 19 Wireless.



A couple of 'after' shots of the museum store at Mitcham once the volunteer gang had completed the exercise. A miraculous transformation!



Left: An unexpected acquisition at the end of the year. We were visited by Stella Strannock, daughter of John Bloomfield (ex 3 CLY), who kindly gave us a bag of assorted items left by her father. Amongst the trove was this rather fine silver cigarette box engraved for then Major Jago from the 3 CLY OCA. This places the box's presentation between 1935 when 'King' Jago was promoted Major and 1938 after which he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. This will shortly be on display at Hever. **Right:** John Bloomfield had been Jago's driver early in the war and the two were clearly close. In this photograph, taken on a family holiday in 1971, the Bloomfields visited the Jagos at their home in Kinsale, Ireland. Mrs Jago stands on the step and Mrs Bloomfield on the right. Also inside the box was a newspaper cutting recording RK Jago's death on November 18th, 1974. Poignant that he should have died on the anniversary of the opening of Operation Crusader, thirty-three years before.

Barracks ARC. Our store had become something of a dumping ground and was consequently so packed that it had ceased to be a viable working space. Over three days, the working party cleared the store, extended the shelving for framed pictures, re-arranged to the storage cupboards to make better use of space and even created the facility to have a useable desk for administration and research. The work progressed so well that we were able to substantially reorganise, record and annotate our map collection. The volunteers were also given some conservation tasks and members of the serving squadron showed them round the facilities – including an in-depth look at a Jackal MWMK. On the fourth day we arranged a visit to the National Archives in Kew so that they could take part in the research and recording of War Diaries and generally sample the working of a major national archive. In future years the week will run as a general volunteer event – retaining a student contingent but allowing greater emphasis on the inclusion of the wider volunteer team. If you or anyone you know may be interested, please drop me a line.

The Museum's Living History Group continues to prosper – adding new members and even vehicles. One of the members has acquired an Austin staff car and another owns a Stuart Light Tank (M3A1), currently being rebadged as 3rd/4th CLY in Northwest Europe. We are still on the lookout for a suitable wartime 15-cwt truck but the direction of travel seems very healthy. The group attended five events during the course of the year and we are hoping to expand that tally next year.

Taking in the mood of the museum, this feels very much like a change of epoch. Over recent years, we have seen the last of the wartime generation pass on and so a tangible portion of the museum's research time has turned to answering questions from

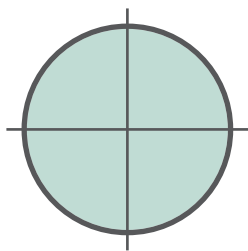


We have been given a collection of tank projectiles by the collector Jon Bottomley. Amongst the group is this 6-pounder anti-tank round. The intention is to create a display of all the ammunition types used by (and fired at) the Sharpshooters during WW2.

surviving family members about how and where ‘dad’ served during the war. This feels like the moment to redouble our efforts to record stories from the Cold War era so that we can preserve our understanding of the period better. Encouraging participation in this research has proved a challenge in the past as the focus on the Second World War meant that the Cold War warriors didn’t think their contribution merited attention. Well it did and it does. This is now a substantial phase of our history and we could do with improving the record. If you served with the Regiment between 1961 and 2000, we would welcome help in annotating photograph albums from the period. We would also like to record your thoughts and anecdotes on film if we can. Please let me know if you are interested in taking part (e-mail address below).

To compound this period of change, a couple of the stalwarts of the Museum Trust are stepping back and very much deserve a mention (in dispatches?) for the years of devoted service to the cause. Tim Rayson has been a cornerstone of both the Museum and Association, bridging the two in a way that will be difficult to replicate. He has taken the opportunity to retire down to Tenterden and so has wisely sought to relax his grip on running of our displays at Mitcham. His passion for everything Sharpshooter and his depth of knowledge will be sorely missed – though it is very much the plan to keep him in touch whenever possible. He knows too much for us to let him stray too far. Chris Sutton has been with the Museum Trust for the best part of thirty years and has, for the last ten years been our Chair. He has given notice that he wishes to step down in November, though he intends remaining part of the team in some capacity. Chris has provided me as curator with immeasurable support since I took over from Boris Mollo – not to mention leading the way on securing substantial grants in order to accomplish the rebuild in 2015 and to help the general work of the museum. Analytical and driven, Chris will be a hard act to follow. Thank you both for your years of service and for the excellent foundation you have provided for our next phase.

Dan Taylor
 curator@ksymuseum.org.uk
 December 2024



KENT & SHARPSHOOTERS YEOMANRY TRUST

Chair Recruitment

The Trustees of the Kent & Sharpshooters Yeomanry Museum Trust are seeking to appoint a new Chair. After ten years in post, the current Chair, Chris Sutton, is planning to step down in November 2025 and so a suitable candidate is sought to take on this exciting role from that date.

The purpose of the Trust is to help promote and broaden the museum reach to best secure the museum's long-term prosperity. The Museum currently has three sites – the main museum at Hever Castle (opened in 1985 and redeveloped in 2015) and two smaller museums within the Army Reserve Centres in Bexleyheath and Croydon.

The Museums are managed by Dan Taylor as Honorary Curator, supported by several assistant-curators and volunteers at the three sites. We have no employees, everyone involved with the Museum is a volunteer. The Museum also has an active living history arm, who help to bring the history of the Kent & Sharpshooters Yeomanry to life and to engage the public at events away from our primary sites.

The Museum Trust is a registered charity, and we are members of the Association of Independent Museums, the Army Museums Ogilby Trust and National Army Museum networks, and are accredited by the Museums Association.

The Board of Trustees comprises the Chair, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer, Curator and four other trustees.

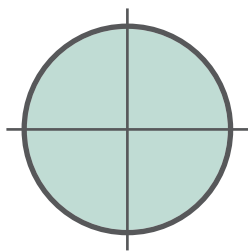
The preferred candidate would have the following attributes:

- Good leadership – preferably have a military background, though this would not be a requirement for the right candidate.
- Teamwork – the all-volunteer nature of the organisation means that the group needs a variety of approaches to garner the best route to achieve goals.
- Interest in History – essential to understand the breadth and nuances of the museum remit, and to tell our story when raising funds
- Community Engagement – an outgoing personality is a must.
- A high-level understanding of charity law.

The main tasks for this role is governance, including developing the Board and chairing its biannual meetings (currently one remote and one in central London); liaison with the management team at Hever Castle and with the current key personnel at our serving squadron sites; co-ordination of projects undertaken by the museum and overseeing fundraising activities.

If you would be interested in undertaking this voluntary role, or have recommendations for someone who might be interested, please contact Dan Taylor by email on curator@ksymuseum.org.uk

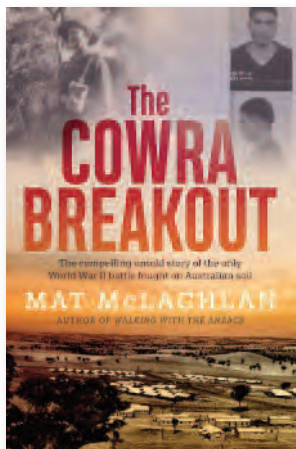
You can find out more about us at www.ksymuseum.org.uk



BOOK REVIEW

by Penny Malik

The Cowra Breakout by Mat McLachlan.



During World War II in the town of Cowra in central New South Wales Japanese prisoners of war were held in a POW camp. By August 1944 over a thousand were interned and on the night of August 5th they staged one of the largest prison breakouts in history, launching the only land battle of World War II to be fought on Australian soil. Five Australian soldiers and more than 230 Japanese POWs died during what became known as the Cowra breakout.

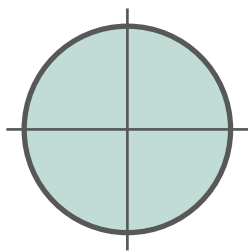
This book tells the full story of the breakout. It tells a tale of proud POWs who had to battle with the personal shame of being captured and national shame that Japan was struggling in the war. This fragile environment was further compounded by the negligence and complacency from the captors.

The book is an easy read and tells the story through the eyes of the participants. This makes the story feel both personal and compelling. There is quite a build up to the actual breakout, giving backgrounds on a number of the individuals involved. The breakout itself was surprisingly violent with a massive loss of life. What came across strongly in the book was how the Japanese soldier during the war regarded death preferential to the shame of capture. It was also clear that this concept was completely alien to their Australian captors.

Many of the prisoners were killed at the camp. However a large number also managed to escape into the surrounding countryside. It became apparent that they did not know what to do with their new found freedom and many just sat around in groups waiting to be recaptured. During this recapture several other Japanese POWs were killed, with some committing suicide.

The book is a series of individual stories and highlights the tragedy brought about the lack of understanding between such different cultures and beliefs.





EL GUBI DINNER

18th November 2024

The 2024 annual Bir El Gubi dinner was held on 22nd November to commemorate the battle of El Gubi was the 83rd anniversary and the 77th continuous dinner to be held since the first dinner in 1947. The calendar meant that the dinner took place after the battle had been fought and both regiments were fighting for their lives at Sidi Rezegh. The wonderful surrounds of the Cavalry and Guards Club with excellent food once again provided an excellent setting for the dinner.

In his post dinner speech The Chairman, Lt Col Mark Hodson, welcomed all to the evening to whether they had served with the Sharpshooters, were from the immediate Sharpshooter family and, those attending for the first time and overseas guests from Germany, Australia and New Zealand, especially Brigadier Hamish Gibbons Deputy Chief of the Army of New Zealand. He also very much welcomed the new Master of the Worshipful Company of Insurers Karl Jarvis and his wife Claire.

Following the loyal toast to His Majesty, the Royal Honorary Colonels – The Princess Royal and Princess Alexandra the toast “Absent Friends “ was drunk in silence with the Hon Secretary reading the names of years ‘Empty Saddles’ who were remembered:

Jim Mitchell (Kent Yeomanry – the last man standing at 102 and 9 months);
Alan Blake;
Russell ‘Chuckles’ Mellor;
Sydney Jonas;
George Nash.

The Chairman had written to His Majesty, offering loyal greetings from the Association to which His Majesty had graciously replied in a letter read by Secretary Tim Rayson.

Major Craig Sumner, OC 265 Squadron gave a short resume of the Squadron’s activities over the past year whilst 2Lt Hugh Maitland-Jones gave a quick update on the year at C Sqn at Croydon including the





Lt Col Mark Hodson.



Master WCI Karl Jarvis addresses the Association.

appointment of a new OC – Maj Edward Mitchell who had taken over in January. Notable achievements in the year were the award of silver medals for Ex CAMBRIAN Patrol and on an individual level Trooper Gouveia being awarded his RAC tennis colours.

The, now, traditional award by the Worshipful Company of Insurers of cufflinks/brooch to a member of each Squadron for their significant contribution to their unit was announced by respective Squadron Honorary Colonels; Col Simon McMenemy for C Sqn and Col Simon Malik for 265 Sqn. The citations (below) highlight the contributions of L/Cpl Frederick Bailey and L/Cpl Danny Wilshire and the awards were presented by the Master of The Company Mr Karl Jarvis.

The association Chairman, Mark Hodson, announced that after 17 years in the appointment he was standing down. He was not, however, exiting stage left completely as he had recently been voted-in as the association's new President, so his contribution will continue to be valued. In his place, Lt Col Matthew Webb JP will take-up the mantle of Chairman and ensure a steady hand on the tiller into the future.

The formal part of the evening was rounded off with a speech by, The Master saying how proud he was of the link between the livery company and the association and looked forward to continuing support. He then proposed the toast to the Sharpshooters which concluded the evening.

Citation – Lance Corporal Frederick Bailey

C Squadron (Kent and Sharpshooters Yeomanry), Royal Yeomanry



L/Cpl Frederick Bailey receiving his cufflinks and certificate from the Master WCI.

Lance Corporal Bailey has shown a wide range of qualities which are vital in a mounted Light Cavalry role. Having promoted from Trooper to Lance Corporal in the last reporting year, this is a direct product of the value he adds to the Squadron. As the cavalry saying goes “Horses, men, self”, something that Lance Corporal Bailey lives by effortlessly. Despite only having recently qualified on the Jackal platform, he is now instrumental in leading the vehicle maintenance charge; For his peers, he is not only a source of morale for those in the Squadron but also is adaptable and dedicated. Finally, as an individual, Lance Corporal Bailey has often gone above the expected outputs of his rank; Selfless, he regularly puts the needs of others and the Squadron first. For the above achievements, Lance Corporal Bailey has been put forward for this award.

Citation – Lance Corporal Danny Wilsher

265 (Kent and County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters)) Support Squadron, 71st (City of London) Yeomanry Signal Regiment



L/Cpl Danny Wilsher receiving his cufflinks and certificate from the Master WCI.

Lance Corporal Danny Wilsher has delivered one of the most impactful years of his distinguished service. Drawing on over a decade of experience, his foundation was laid through diverse deployments. His career has involved support to the community during the London Ambulance Strikes, multiple challenging warfighting exercises with the UK's 3rd Division, deployment with 20th Armoured Brigade Combat Team to BATUS in Canada and all Regimental training camps, including Germany, Cyprus and recently Denmark.

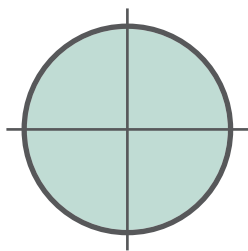
Through 2024, Lance Corporal Wilsher has elevated his operational performance and amplified his role within the regiment. Volunteering for additional responsibilities, he stepped into the demanding role of Complex Corporal. Leading the construction of the Regimental deployed Command Post, his exceptional efficiency, speed and thoughtful leadership style, has enabled 71st City of London (Yeomanry) Signal Regiment to prove it's capability to undertake deployments at a pace demanded by current operational lessons.

His commitment to training has been equally exemplary, earning him 'best section' honours twice as section commander, and setting him up to qualify as an Urban Operations Instructor – a testament to his technical and tactical acumen. Lance Corporal Wilsher's influence extends further, completing the Drill Instructors course, he has led with ensuring the squadron was well-prepared for the 2024 Remembrance.

Day parade and marching contingent to the Lord Mayors show. His unwavering dedication, both on and off the battlefield, and willingness to go above and beyond make him a beacon of modern reservist values – leadership, resilience, and a relentless commitment to service.

A dedicated father to Florence, his driving force, Lance Corporal Wilsher's contributions in 2024, set him apart as a standout candidate for the Worshipful Company of Insurers award.





FRIENDS OF THE DESERT RATS

by Ian Paterson

Many people will have noticed that The “Desert Rats Association” is now the “Friends of the Desert Rats”. The main purpose of the “Friends” will be to maintain the two Desert Rat Memorials, which are:

- The recently installed memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum – this has fully paid maintenance in our contract and therefore outlay on this should be minimal.
- More particularly ‘Little Audrey II’ Memorial at High Ash in Thetford which has undergone extensive refurbishment and was re-dedicated in May 2024.

We will also “keep the flame alive” by developing a fellowship organisation. The “Friends”, will continue to provide assistance to anyone wishing to discover the service history of their relatives

The main reasons for making this change are:

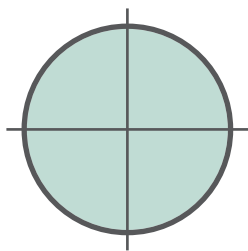
- a. The generation of Desert Rats veterans from WW2 are largely no longer with us or of an age when physical presence at gatherings is becoming increasingly difficult.
- b. Modern day Desert Rats seem less than keen to be part of the Association in its current physical form, but make much more use of the internet to maintain relationships with like-minded colleagues.
- c. The last few years have been dedicated to and working towards the raising of the memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum. This goal now having been achieved negates a major vision that formed part of the old DRA Constitution.

This means that the bulk of our activity will now be on-line and after the event on 5th May 2024, the ‘Friend’s will no longer be holding regular physical events.

We wish to thank everyone who has supported the Desert Rats Association over the years.

Floreat Jerboa!





REFURBISHMENT OF DESERT RATS MEMORIAL AT HIGH ASH, NORFOLK – LITTLE AUDREY II

by Ian Paterson

The Desert Rats Memorial, at High Ash, Norfolk, with a Cromwell Tank – Little Audrey II – atop the plinth, has proudly sat as a Memorial to the Desert Rats, who were there and the neighbouring area, since 1998. In the 25 years since then the weather had taken its toll on the paintwork, and despite being repainted on many occasions, the Desert Rats Association, decided it was time to remove her from the plinth for a full strip down and refurbishment.

So in October 2023, the tank was carefully lifted off the plinth and taken to Shaun Hindle MVS. 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 would use products that the Forestry Commission would 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 wanted, the work could not take place in situ.

A little while later, the turret was removed and 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, by a professional ornament stone mason, as the lettering is also suffering and the brickwork, plus the area around the plinth, was also cleaned and prepared for the future.

Here are some before and after images of the same side of the tank, showing the change of appearance.



The tank from October 2023, showing how badly the paintwork had deteriorated and effectively flaked off.



The end result with the few minor repairs in the storage bin area and the finished tank after she had been painted with primer and several layers of topcoat.

In the Spring of 2024, the tank was reassembled and repainted, cumulating in a pre-installation inspection on 20th April. The work had been carried out to a very high standard and the tank looked fantastic and as she would have looked 80 years ago when the Regiments left High Ash for the embarkation camps.

The markings have been confirmed at those from May 1944, including the Allied Air Recognition Star on the roof of turret. The name of Little Audrey II, is confirmed from the War Diaries of 1st Bn. Royal Tank Regiment, just before the tanks left. This is confirmed as correct by Les Dinning's family, who told us the name of Little Audrey I was a concession Les had made to another veteran, years ago. During the many repaints of the tank, this has been carried on, as the full story was not known.

The return went extremely smoothly, with just a few adjustments to the final position on the plinth and Little Audrey was back where she belongs. Here are a few images of her return.



Being pushed onto the transporter, with a Scammell Pioneer Recovery vehicle carrying 22nd Armoured Brigade Workshop, REME, markings from 1944.



Being lowered onto the plinth.



The team from Crowland Cranes who placed her back on the plinth.



Ian Paterson (Friends of the Desert Rats), Shaun Hindle, plus Mickey Lee and John Wiseman who were part of the team that worked on the tank from Shaun Hindle MVS and Tramps In Armour.



Finally, Lindsay Guiver (Les' daughter) and Francis Dinning (his widow) who witnessed it all and approved of everything the Friends of the Desert Rats had achieved.

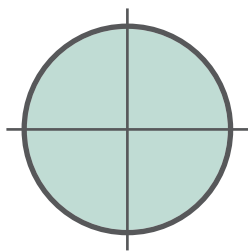
We must thank Shaun Hindle MVS and “Tramps In Armour”, who have done such a fantastic refurbishment and the team from Crowland Cranes, who got her back on the plinth.

Following the refurbishment of the tank and plinth, a rededication service and a special service, was held on 5th May 2024, to remember the move of the Desert Rats to their embarkation camps, in readiness for the Normandy Landings. This was 80 years ago. when the tanks for 22nd Armoured Brigade, including 4th County of London Yeomanry (The Sharpshooters), departed for Orwell Park School, Ipswich.

Now all is 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 BETTS BROTHERS

by David Whitehouse

On the museum's database of those who have served in the Kent and Sharpshooters Yeomanry over the last two centuries, there are plenty of examples of brothers serving together, such as the Blowers brother (see *The Sharpshooter* 2021) and the Crease brothers (see *The Sharpshooter* 2019). There are even examples of father and son serving together. However, I have only been able to find one example where both brothers, not only served together, but were both decorated for gallantry during WW1 – John and Laurence Betts.

Maidstone butcher and farmer, James Rayner Betts (who was also a councillor and Justice of the Peace) was the proud father of no less than five sons and three daughters, the product of two marriages. The eldest Helen Clara Betts was born in 1888, followed Archibald in 1889, Lawrence James on 14th July 1890 and John Percy on 24th January 1892. In 1892 his first wife, Clara Farmer, died aged just 27. Four years later, James married Florence Ellen Sharp, who gave birth to Herbert Rayner in 1898, Florence Audrey in 1901, Kenneth Rayner in 1903 and Joyce in 1919.

Although four of James's sons would have been old enough to have served in WW1, it seems that only three did so. The eldest, Archibald sadly died four years before the conflict in a lunatic asylum at Stone, near Dartford, Kent. Lawrence and John (known as Jack) are both known to have attended Maidstone Grammar School, after which both appear to have been working in their father's business (shown in the 1911 census as farmer and butcher respectively).

With the coming of the Great War, it is not clear when Lawrence joined the West Kent Yeomanry (WKY), but judging from his service number (1440) it was probably some time before his younger brother John. Lawrence was posted to 'A' Squadron.

It was some time after the outbreak of war that John joined the same regiment as his older brother. He enlisted into 3/1 WKY at Maidstone on 24th January 1916 as Pte 2355 Betts. At this time the 3rd line unit was acting as the regiment's depot where all new recruits were initially posted.

Their younger brother Herbert, didn't follow in his older siblings' footsteps. Instead, he joined the 3/4th Battalion Royal West Kent Regiment, probably sometime after 1916, when he would have turned 18 years old. He was given the regimental number of 204647.

Returning to John, on 31st May 1916 he was posted to 'A' Squadron of the first line 1/1 WKY and joined them a month later at El Shatt, Egypt, where the regiment was training in the dismounted role. In July the West Kents moved to Mersa Mutrah, 125 miles west of Alexandria, from where patrols were sent out into the dessert to counter

the threat from Senussi tribesmen who had staged an armed insurrection earlier in the year. Presumably the Betts brothers took part in these patrols.

A period of intensive infantry training preceded an announcement by the military authorities that the Yeomanry were to formally covert to infantry, and form new battalions of existing regiments. Consequently, the Royal East Kent (Duke of Connaught's Own) Mounted Rifles and the West Kent (Queen's Own) Yeomanry were to be amalgamated to form the 10th (Royal East Kent and West Kent Yeomanry) Battalion East Kent Regiment, The Buffs. Accordingly, the West Kents re-organised three squadrons into two companies by splitting and distributing 'C' Squadron between the other two. When this was completed the two companies moved to Sollum to join their sister regiment for the official amalgamation. This took place on 1st February 1917 and the East Kents formed 'A' and 'B' Companies, whilst the West Kents formed 'C' and 'D' Companies. The Betts brothers now found themselves in 'C' Company and were given new regimental numbers – Laurence 270760 and John 270991.

The battalion was now part of the newly formed 74th (Yeomanry) Division, alongside other county Yeomanry units which had undergone a similar transformation. The division was earmarked to take part in operations in Palestine under General Allenby, and in early April the battalion found itself in Deir el Belah, Palestine. Over successive nights the battalion spent marching until the morning of the 19th April when it marched into a system of gullies. The battalion, which together with the remainder of the 74th Division was held in reserve, lay in rest for two days, listening to the sounds of the second battle of Gaza raging in the distance.



The next few months saw the battalion engaged in an almost relentless cycle of marching, digging trenches and fortifying lines. These tedious tasks were not made easier by the hot climate, sand, ubiquitous flies and spartan diet. However, in July the monotony was broken when the 230th Infantry Brigade (of which they were a part) became Divisional Reserve and was ordered back to Dorset House (about four miles east of Deir el Belah) to begin training. This concentrated on open warfare, smoke attacks, night marches and gas attacks. It was at this time that Private John Betts was ordered to the Imperial School of Instruction at Zeitoun outside Cairo, and on 31st August 1917 qualified as a Lewis Gunner First Class.

Meanwhile commanders were gathered together to plan for a new offensive against the Turks at Beersheba, in which the 74th Division was to take part. The full moon at the end of October signalled the start of this new offensive. The battalion, including the Betts brothers, was marched to the area of operations over four nights, resting on the 30th, within six or seven miles of the enemy positions. That night the battalion moved silently into 'Sussex Wadi', ready to attack at dawn.

At first light, the attack began. The enemy's positions comprised of a line of trenches sited on the forward slope of a deep gully. These were connected to the rear, by a system of communication trenches. The trenches were defended by advanced sniper and

machine-gun posts, two of which, known as 'Z6' and 'Z7' were assigned to the 10th Battalion. As 'B' and 'C' Companies started their advance, they were subjected to heavy shrapnel, sustaining 50 to 60 casualties. However, they continued to advance, and by making good use of wadis and dead ground, reached Hill 960 about 1200 yards from their objective. 'D' Company, who had been held in reserve, were now pushed forward to close a gap on the battalions left flank. The brigade's advance was now delayed some three hours whilst other positions were being taken, and when this was finally achieved, the advance resumed. When the Turks were thought to be faltering, the order to assault was given and by 12.45 the position was taken.

Meanwhile the Sussex and Suffolk's were ordered northwards, and successfully overcame a position near Wadi Saba. The Buffs established an outpost on the high ground behind the position and the battalion sustained some casualties from long-range snipers and machine-gun fire, until relieved at dusk, whereupon the yeomen settled down for a hard-earned sleep. By all accounts the battalion and indeed the brigade had acquitted itself well, and the battle of Beersheba had been executed almost exactly to plan.

It was during the battle, that Laurence earned his Military Medal. According to a letter written by his company commander, Captain Charles Ponsonby, to Betts' father, Laurence *"not only most gallantly bound up a wounded man and brought him in under heavy machine gun fire, but also the valuable assistance which he rendered to his company commander in keeping in touch with the next unit, rallying and leading forward without least regard for personal."*

After a brief period of reorganisation, the Betts brothers and the 10th Buffs were on the move again. After a series of hard-fought actions, the Battalion reached the hills of Judea in late November, and were in grasping distance of their destination – Jerusalem.

On the night of the 8th December, the battalion advanced down into Wadi Bawai below the village of Beit Surik. It filed down the wadi, and eventually deployed at the start line below the Turkish positions. 'C' Company were on the right, and 'A' Company on the left. As dawn broke, the companies moved up the slope, but came under heavy fire as they reached the top. 'A' Company reached the top with few casualties, but 'C' Company suffered much at the hands of the Turkish machine-gunners and snipers.

The wadi was a difficult climb, particularly for Lewis gunners, and despite receiving a gunshot wound to his face, John Betts, insisted on getting his section forward. For his *'great pluck and determination'* he was recommended for the Military Medal. John was evacuated to 31 General Hospital in Port Said. It was whilst in hospital that the award of his MM was confirmed.

Fighting at Jerusalem continued in his absence throughout the day, but as night fell, outposts were deployed, and the battalion attempted to get some sleep despite sodden clothing and the cold December air. Dawn broke with an eerie silence. No clatter from machine guns in the hills, or the crash of shells, but the tolling of a single bell from the Sacred City. The battle was won and Jerusalem had been taken. The Buffs casualties amounted to 14 killed, and 43 wounded.

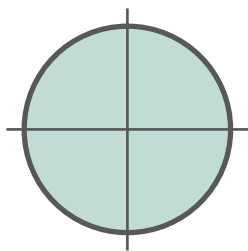
After the campaign in Palestine had been concluded, troops were desperately needed on the Western Front. Thus, the 74th Division was ordered to France, arriving there in early May 1918. After several moves, the battalion finally entered the trenches in the



Merville Sector on 4th August; 'B' Company on the right and 'C' Company on the left. It was here that John Betts, recently promoted to Corporal, was killed in action. He had led a successful raid on the enemy trenches, when his party of men was hit with sniper fire and Betts mortally wounded. He is buried at St Venant-Robecq Road, British Cemetery.

By the time of his brother's death, Laurence had left the battalion and obtained a commission in the newly formed Royal Air Force. Around about the same time, younger brother Herbert also obtained a commission into the 5th Battalion The Buffs. Both brothers survived the war.





THE WAKELING BROTHERS

by David Whitehouse

One of the more unusual enquiries received by the KSY Museum Trust, was that from Mr O'Shaughnessy in December 2024 who wanted to reunite a WW1 Victory Medal with any surviving family members of the recipient, and was seeking the museum's help. Mr O'Shaughnessy had found the medal in his garden many years ago whilst living in the Home Counties. The inscription on the medal appeared to read PTE H.U. WAKELING E.KENT.YEO.

With this scant information, my research begun. A check on the museum's database showed that there was indeed a Private 2782 Wakeling in the East Kent Yeomanry during WW1 but his initials were H J, the second letter obviously being difficult to read on the medal that was in poor condition.

NAME	REGIMENT	DATE	ROLL NO.
WAKELING	RE Kent Yeo RW Kent R RG	2782	18530
Henry J	do	543921	10R/177629
RE/102 B4 1152	do		
do	do		

His medal index card gave a first name of Henry and indicated that he had also served in the Royal West Kent Regiment and the Royal Engineers. In fact, the medal roll number was that relating to the last named unit. This was quickly confirmed by the medal roll itself which indicated Henry had served on the railway section of the Royal Engineers.

Of more interest was the entry on the roll directly following that of Henry. This relates to a A/Cpl John C Wakeling who also served in the East Kent Yeomanry (EKY) and whose service number followed on from that of Henry. Not only that, but his service number preceded that of Henry's in the Royal West Kent Regiment suggesting that they transferred at the same time. Taken together, this is highly suggestive that Henry and John are brothers, and given the latter's service number of 2882 in the EKY, John likely joined up after Henry.

Much of this I have been able to confirm from surviving extracts from their respective service records which has allowed me to sketch out their service history.

Henry James Wakeling of 204 Newtown, Ashford, enlisted into the 3/1 Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles at Canterbury on 26 May 1915 aged 24. On 11 Mar 1916 Henry

(To be filled in by the War Office)

Railways

E.B. ROLL OF INDIVIDUALS entitled to the Victory Medal and/or British

Name of individual in the Corps in respect of which the rolls are submitted.		NAME	In sequence Units and Corps previously served with by each individual and Regt. Nos. therein; the highest rank, whether substantive, acting or temporary, recorded as having been held for any period in a theatre of War, unless reverted for misconduct, being shown against the name of the regiment or Corps which is to be inscribed on the medal.	Theatres of war
Regt. No.	Rank			
/177629.	SPR.	WAKELING, Henry J.	R.E.Kent Yeo. 2782. PTE. R.W.Kent Regt. 18530. Royal Engineers. 543921.	✓
R/177630.	A/CPL.	WAKELING, John C.	R.E.Kent Yeo. 2882. PTE. R.W.Kent Regt. 18528. Royal Engineers. 543922.	✓

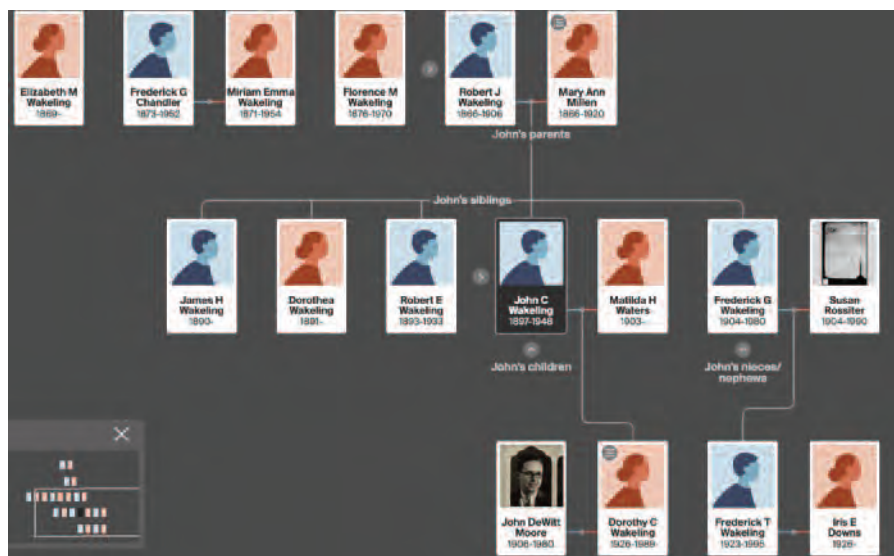
was appointed unpaid L/Cpl but reverted to Private six month later on 20 Sep 1916, the day before he embarked for the BEF, presumably as part of a draft. On 22 Sep 1916 he arrived at 38 Infantry Base Depot, Etaples and three weeks later was formally transferred to the Royal West Kent Regiment on 11 Oct 1916, joining the 11th Battalion three days later. He remained with 11RWK for about five months before being transferred again to 63 Broad Gauge Railway Workshop Company RE on 4 Mar 1917. This may have been due to his former employment as a fitter's assistant with the South Eastern and Chatham Railway prior to the war. On 15 Sep 1918, Henry apparently suffered a hernia from 'overlifting' and was admitted to No 11 Stationary Hospital, Rouen. Henry was invalided to England on 17 Feb 1919 and taken to Horton (County of London) War Hospital, Epsom, where he spent the next three weeks. A medical board on 7 Mar 1919 found that he had been healed and he was discharged from hospital. Henry was finally demobilised on 4 Apr 1919.

John Charles Wakeling, also of 204 Newtown, Ashford, enlisted into the 3/1 Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles at Canterbury on 28 May 1915 just two days after his brother. He gave his age as 22, but later records show his year of birth as 1897 meaning that he was only 18. He was posted to 2/1 REKMR on 10 Jul 1915 and a stamp on the record suggests that he may have joined "B" Squadron. Thereafter, his service closely follows that of his brother; transferred to 11RWK on 11 Oct 1916 and then 63 BGRW Coy RE on 28 Mar 1917. John was promoted 2nd Corporal on 16/12/1918 but then appointed L/Cpl on 1 Mar 1919. He returned to the UK on 1 Jul 1919 and was demobbed.

So, what of surviving family members? Finding out what the brothers did before and after the war, and if they married and had children, has been tricky. I have not been

able to find any electoral registers for Kent to see if they returned to their presumed family home in Ashford and there are few post war records that have been digitised. With some luck, I found a family tree online that seemed to feature the two brothers, although the name of the eldest of the two was rendered as James Henry, not Henry James. This family tree revealed other siblings; a sister Dorothea Wakeling born c1891, and two other brothers Robert E Wakeling born c1893 and Frederick G Wakeling born c1904. Their parents are identified as Robert J Wakeling 1866-1906 and Mary Ann Millen 1866-1920.

Supporting this family tree were a number of records including the census of 1911. This finds James Henry 21, John Charles 15 and Frederick George 7 living in Battersea with Robert James Attoc and his wife Mary Ann Attoc, who is presumed to be the boys' mother having remarried after the death of their father in 1906. There is no mention of their sister Dorothea who may by this time have married and left home. Brother Robert is also missing but I have found mention of a Robert Edward Wakeling 17 elsewhere in the 1911 census; as a prisoner in HMP Wandsworth!



So, it seems that the eldest son used different name often using his first and second names interchangeably. This is somewhat confirmed by a probate record recording the death of a Henry James Millen (Millen being his mother's maiden name) Wakeling otherwise Harry otherwise Henry James of 1 Forrester's Place, Torrington, Ashford on 24 Feb 1950. Probate was granted to Frederick George Wakeling, presumably his younger brother. If he were married, one would expect his wife to be given probate and this omission suggests that he had not married and had no children of his own – a dead end.

As for John, I am fairly confident that John briefly joined Birmingham City Police on 14 Sep 1920. The force's ledger shows that a John Charles Wakeling, born 27 Oct 1897 of Ashford, Kent with former service in the Royal Engineers, joined on that day and

was posted to C Division. He only served for one year and left at his own request on 13 Sep 1921. The 1939 Register finds John still residing in Ashford but at 60 Sussex Avenue, together with his presumed wife (no relationship details are given), Matilda and probably one child whose details have unfortunately been redacted as they were likely still alive when the record was released into the public domain.

Further research indicates that a John C Wakeling was married in the district of W. Ashford in 1924 to a spouse with the surname of Waters. Further searches of the General Registrar Office indexes shows that the birth of Dorothy Caroline Wakeling was registered in East Ashford in second quarter of 1926 whose mother's surname was Waters. According to the online family tree, Dorothy married John DeWett Moore. I have not been able to find a marriage record in these names. I have, however found an marriage entry for a Dorothy C Wakeling and spouse with the surname Counter in Ashford during the third quarter of 1945. It would seem from another online family tree that Dorothy married Gerald Houstin Kounter and moved to the United States. Divorcing in about 1950, Dorothy apparently married John DeWitt Moore in about 1951. She died in Colorado in 1989. There is no mention of children in either marriage so this would appear to be another dead end.

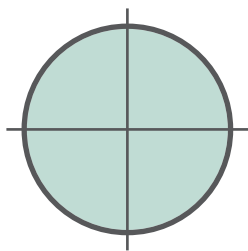
This leaves the youngest brother Frederick. A marriage entry in second quarter of 1923 indicates that a Frederick G Wakeling married a spouse with the surname of Rossiter in West Ashford. The 1939 Register finds the couple living in Ashford together with a Frederick T Wakeling born 20 Jul 1923. According to the online family tree, Frederick T married Iris E Downs. This is confirmed by a marriage entry registered in Sittingbourne in the last quarter of 1946 between Frederick T Wakeling and Iris E Downs.

I have found a birth entry in third quarter of 1954 of a Susan A Wakeling registered in Canterbury where the mother's maiden name is given as Downs. This woman appears to be a likely candidate for a member of the Wakeling family who may still be alive. The problem is that the name is not as uncommon as one might suppose. I have found a number of records that relate to a Susan A Wakeling in Kent alone;

- Electoral Register of 2013 living at 25 Palmerston Walk, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 3BT.
- Marriage to a Derek J Wakeling registered in Swale, Kent in Mar 1984
- Marriage to a Terence D Base registered in Sittingbourne, Kent in Jul 1974
- Marriage to a Robert M Kilden registered in Bexley, in Apr 1977

I fear this is as far as I can get in identifying a living relative of Henry J Wakeling, but it has been an interesting journey.





THE COE BROTHERS

by David Whitehouse

It will be recalled in 2022s journal that a story appeared about a concert, organised by 'C' Squadron of the 3rd County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters), at Café Monico in 1912. One of the singers who performed at the concert was a Trooper Edwin H. Coe of the West Kent Yeomanry (WKY). Trooper Coe has an interesting story all of his own which now follows.

Edwin Henry Coe was born on 24th September 1887 in Deptford to Edwin Uriah Coe and Katie Emily Ann Coe. We know little of his early life but by the time of the 1911 Census, he was a solicitor's articled clerk living in the family home at 29 Adelaide Road, Brockley (now in South-East London, but then in Kent), with his parents and siblings Elsie Kate and John Leslie Coe, together with two servants. Edwin had become articled the previous year with C.G. Siprett Solicitors of 45 Finsbury Pavement, London. In 1913, Edwin Coe set up his own solicitor's practice in Lincoln's Inn.

It is not known when exactly Edwin joined the West Kent Yeomanry as his name does not appear in the limited records of the period held in the KSY Museum's archives. Given his occupation and presumed social status, it is surprising that he enlisted as a trooper and did not seek a commission straight away.

Nevertheless, when war came two short years after the concert, Edwin was mobilised as a trooper in 'A' Squadron of the WKY on 4th August 1914. His name appears in Colonel Ponsonby's regimental history in a roll of men who left the WKY between August 1914 and September 1915 to take commissions, alongside a J Coe also of 'A' Squadron. The latter is highly likely to be a reference to Edwin's younger brother John (born 4th March 1889).

Indeed, both brothers were gazetted on 8th January 1915 as a temporary second lieutenants in the Royal Field Artillery (RFA) in consecutive entries. The monthly Army Lists for February and March 1915 shows that the brothers were both posted to No. 3 Section of the 13th Divisional Ammunition Column. Thereafter, the monthly Army Lists no longer listed the units in which officers of the Royal Regiment of Artillery were serving, so it is impossible to determine when they moved.

Whilst we have established that Edwin was at some point posted to 'C' Battery of 187th Brigade RFA, the unit to which John ended up with is less clear. The latter's Medal Index Card indicates that he entered the Egyptian theatre on 2nd July 1915 but also was on the nominal roll of officers of the 10th Division RA. If this is a reference to the divisional artillery of the 10th (Irish) Division, this didn't land at Suvla Bay, Gallipoli until 7th August 1915.

Whilst the 13th Division deployed to the Mudros preparatory to landing at Gallipoli around July 1915, the Divisional Ammunition Column remained behind. However,

some of the other units of the divisional artillery (67th and 68th Brigades RFA) did go overseas and later joined the 10th (Irish) Division. Thus, it is possible that John remained with the 13th Division when Edwin moved to 187th Brigade, and then joined the 10th (Irish) Division later on.

The 187th Brigade formed part of the 41st Division which arrived in France in early May 1916, initially taking billets at Hazebrouck but then taking over gun positions of 50th Brigade RFA. In August 1916, they were relieved by 105th Brigade RFA and moved to front at Abbeville where the Battle of the Somme was in progress. It was probably here that Edwin was wounded for the first time. Although the exact circumstances are not known, his name appears in casualty list published in the Army and Navy Gazette on 16th November 1916. Shortly afterwards he was promoted to temporary lieutenant.

For the next two years, apart from a small interlude in Italy between November 1917 and March 1918, the 41st Division was engaged in most of the major battles on the Western Front including Battle of Messines (7-14th Jun 1917), Battle of the Menin Road (20-25th Sep 1917), First Battle of Bapaume (24-25th Mar 1918), First Battle of Arras (28th Mar 1918) and the Fifth Battle of Ypres (28 Sep-2nd Oct 1918).

It was probably during the last-named battle that Edwin, now an acting Major, was awarded the Military Cross. His citation reads:

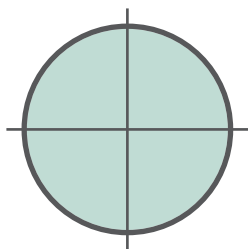
"For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty at Kortwilde on 1st October, 1918. When the battery under his command was advancing in column of route, it came under heavy shell fire, which blew up the two leading teams. With great coolness and resource, he got the rest of the teams unhooked and to a place of safety, leading them back and bringing his guns into action as soon as the shelling abated."

On 30th May 1919, Major Coe, having been wounded three times during the war (according to the record of service of solicitors and articled clerks with His Majesty's forces, 1914-1919), relinquished his commission on the completion of his service and returned to his solicitor's practice. In 1920, he expanded his business and that same year bought Calder Woods & Pethick, renaming the company Edwin Coe & Calder Woods. On 25th March 1922, Edwin, now living at 68 Canadian Avenue in Catford, married Kathleen Sarah Octavia Hinton.

After World War II, Edwin Coe was joined in partnership by Basil Greene who acted as a Lieutenant Colonel in WWII, and Jim Watson, who had previously worked as a managing clerk before qualifying as a solicitor shortly after WWII. This partnership lasted until the end of the 1960s when they retired.

Meanwhile, what had become of brother John? Before the war, we know from the 1911 census, he had been employed as a bank clerk. After the war, it seems he returned to his former occupation, and spent much of his time as a bank official for Midland Bank travelling to and from New York. Between 1921 and 1926 there is evidence of in excess of 30 such trips – in 1924 he made the 4-day journey across the Atlantic every month! What his new bride Lucy (who he married on 17th February 1923) felt about his regular absences, is not known.

John Leslie Coe passed away in late 1949 and was buried in Southwark on 25th November 1949. Edwin Henry Coe survived him by another 21 years and passed away on 25th October 1970. The solicitors he founded survives to this day under the name Edwin Coe LLP of No. 2 Stone Buildings, Lincoln's Inn, London, just a few doors down from the registered address of the KSY Association!



100 YEARS IN THE CORPS

by Keith Wrate

On 20th Feb 1923, Arthur Forrest Rhodes enlisted in the Royal Corps of Signals TAVR, joining 2 Coy, 56(1st London) Div. Signal Regt. He was 18½ and, despite coming from a distinguished theatrical background, had taken a career as a warehouseman with the British and Foreign Bible Society. His rationale was quite simple, he was young, wanted something to do at the weekends and needed the money.

Arthur served through the remainder of the 20s and 30s, was promoted L/Cpl in 1926, Cpl in 1927 and achieved the rank of Sergeant in 1932. Similar to a number of 'Territorials' he was away with his unit on annual camp in September 1939 when war on Germany was declared. In November that year, as an experienced soldier, he was promoted to WO11 (SSM).

His first few years of the War were spent in various locations throughout the UK, embarking for overseas in August 1943 serving as part of MEF (Middle Eastern Force) BNAF (British North Africa Force) and CMF (Central Mediterranean Force) in places including Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia before taking part in the Sicily landings then Italy. He was promoted to WO1 (RSM) in 1945, although reverted to WO11 (RQMS) on posting back to the UK the following year.

Arthur was 'demobbed' in 1946 with an 'Exemplary' service record and immediately re enlisted in the TA, where he served as RQMS for 56 (Lon) Armd. Div. Sig. Regt until his discharge in 1954. Before he left, both his daughters, Janet and Valerie had joined, and, during their service, both met their future husbands.

Janet enlisted in September 1949, again aged 18½ joining 55 Signal Squadron and reaching the rank of L/Cpl by 1953 when she left to have the first of her children. During her service, she participated in the dedication service for the Festival of Britain, provided the commentary on



Arthur Forrest Rhodes plus medals.



Janet Rhodes.

White Helmet Display Team and met Vic, her husband. They married in 1953. Despite her relatively short service, Janet remained a member of the RSA and 56 Div OCA until her death in 2021.



Albert Victor (Vic) Wrate Second left, holding the towel.



Vic Wrate as a White Helmet – I don't know which one he is but he's definitely part of this.



Albert Victor (Vic) Wrate. Joined the Signals in 1951 having done two years' National Service, 1946-48, mainly in Germany with the Royal West Kent Regiment and a period as a 'Z' Reservist. He started as a DR (Despatch Rider) and joined 56 Div Sigs' White Helmet display team [as an aside, and while it was before Vic's time, this was the only TA unit to replace the Regular display team, at the Royal Tournament, in 1937]. He retired from the TA in 1973 as S/Sgt SQMS with 83 Signal Sqn having been awarded the Lord Lieutenant's Certificate the same year. His two daughters, Carol and Alison followed him into the Corps. Carol joining 83 Sig Sqn in 1973 and Alison, breaking with all family tradition joining 71 Signal Regiment in 1982.

Alison did, however, move back to the 'family Regiment', in 1985 serving with 31 Sigs until 1988 when she transferred to B Sqn REXY and then 101 (EOD) RE (V) before leaving the TA in 1998.

It was in 1983, whilst Alison was still serving with 265 (KCLY) Signal Sqn that I come into the picture, walking through the door of Bexleyheath TAC in May of that year. On my second Tuesday, whilst doing my documents, I met the Chief Clerk WO11 Bert Wright, the only person I know who served alongside three generations of my family in 56 and 31, and 71(Y) Sig Regts with my grandfather, parents



SERVICE AWARD FOR OUR VIC

MR. ALBERT Wrate, a staff sergeant in the Territorial Army and Volunteer Reserve, last night received the Certificate for Meritorious Service from the Association's President, Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templar. The staff sergeant was one of eight to receive the presentation which took place at the Association's London headquarters in Chelsea. Mr. Wrate, Vic, to his friends, has been a member of the TA for 22 years. He's a circulation representative with the Evening News and lives in Yorkland Avenue, Welling, Kent. Vic, aged 44, is married and has four children.



Lord Mayors Show 1983.

and sisters. I joined because of a meal the Christmas before when every single person around the table – mostly family members but also my girlfriend at the time were either in the army or had served. I did not want to be left out of future conversations.

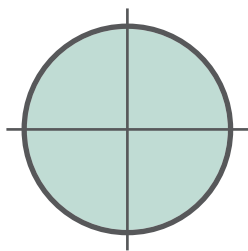
My fitness was rubbish, I struggled to run a half mile at first, and I was a good nine to ten years older than most of my recruit intake but I knuckled down and we had a good time. I didn't manage as long a service as my Grandfather, 33 years vs 34. I thought I was the first to attain the rank of WO1 until I read his

war records (he was always very quiet about his service and, out of respect, we didn't press) but I had my high spots. My service has allowed me the privilege of meeting all of the senior Royals, and two tours as Sqn Commander but nothing could beat attesting my own son, Jonathan (Jonno) in my own Sqn in 2015.

Because of his attestation in the R. Sigs, he remained a Signaller all the way through UOTC (where, I am sure he won't mind me mentioning, he attained one Gold and one Silver Cambrian Patrol Medal). Due to Covid delays, Jonno finally passed out on his Recruit course in 2022 and continues to serve in 94 (BY) Signal Sqn. He continues the family tradition on service in the Corps.



Me and Jonathan (Jonno) Wrate (plus Percy the dog).



ERNEST TILLING – A VETERAN OF THE BOER WAR

by David Whitehouse



In the soldier's section of New Zealand's second largest burial ground – Karori Cemetery, Wellington, stands a headstone that marks the last resting place of James Harold Ernest Tilling who passed away on 13th November 1939 aged 61. At the top of the headstone is inscribed 'South African War' underneath which is his service number, rank and unit – 20329 Pte 3rd Imperial Yeomanry.



What is remarkable is the cap badge of the 3rd County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters), which has also been engraved on the headstone. How does an Imperial Yeoman and apparent Sharpshooter end up the other side of the globe? This piqued my interest and thought this man's story was worth researching and re-telling.

The story begins, as so often is the case, with an enquiry from a family member, to the KSY Museum Trust. In December 2022, I received an email (via Dan Taylor) from a Mr Lex Manson, the great grandson of 'Ernest' Tilling, who wanted to find out more of the latter's service in South Africa. According to Mr Manson, Ernest had enlisted at Maidstone into the 36th Company Imperial Yeomanry on 21st January 1901. This company had originally been formed in early 1900 from men of the West Kent (Queen's Own) Yeomanry (WKY), so hence Mr Manson had been directed to the museum.

A quick check on the museum's database confirmed that a Private 20329 Ernest Tilling had served in the 36th Company, but it held no more useful information. However, by reference to the Imperial Yeomanry service records (held by the National Archive at Kew under WO 128) I was able to confirm that he had enlisted on the date and place provided by Mr Manson. His record also showed that after a medical examination and attestation he was approved for service by the Commanding Officer, WKY on 25th January. However, many details that should have been recorded on his service record are absent. For example, the section of the record where dates when he proceeded overseas have been left blank. Additionally, whilst it is apparent that when he was discharged on 3rd July 1902, he was with the 3rd Company Imperial Yeomanry (the unit named on his headstone), but no details are recorded of when this happened.

One small detail of interest is that his next of kin is shown as 'Sergt Pyrke WKYC Bromley.' An address written randomly across a page is '147 High St, Bromley, Kent.' Further enquiry with Mr Manson revealed that Ernest Tilling had been orphaned and



The house still standing in Chislehurst believed to be that where Ernest lived with his grandparents in the 1890s.

that his grandparents, who lived in Chislehurst, Kent, had originally taken him in. After they passed away, he then moved in with his paternal aunt and her husband George Lyde Pyrke. They lived and worked in 147 High Street, Bromley.

Much of this I was able to confirm. A JHE Tilling appears on the 1891 census as living Belmont Villa, Chislehurst, Kent with his grandparents, George and Dorcas Tilling and their adult children. As for his later guardian, George Pyrke, our archives show that a Sergeant G L Pyrke was serving in 'A' Squadron WKY as late as 1902, and was listed on a muster roll as early as 1890. His two sons, Stanley Frederick and George Lawrence Pyrke also served in the WKY and went onto to serve during WW1.



Returning to Ernest Tilling, I had yet to discover anything more about his service in South Africa, or what was the nature of his connection to the Sharpshooters. Searching through medal rolls for clasps to the Queen's South Africa Medal, I found that the entries for 'Trooper Tilling, E' were listed under the 3rd Company IX. The first of these was dated 8th June 1902 and were for the clasps Cape Colony, Orange Free State and Transvaal. It also reveals that he was invalided to England on 21st April 1902. The second roll, dated 20th February 1903 was for clasps 'South Africa 1901' and 'South Africa 1902'. Neither of the medal rolls provide any clues as to when he transferred from the 36th Company to the 3rd Company. Nor do they indicate any link to the Sharpshooters.

Ernest Tilling's Queen's South Africa medal with clasps (photo courtesy of Lex Manson).

Someone else on the medal rolls of the 3rd Company who had originally enlisted with another company was 20550 Trooper Frank Ashbee. He had enlisted into the 33rd (East Kent) Company on 23rd January 1901 at Canterbury. Yet when he died of wounds four months later, he was reported to be serving in the 3rd Company. His service record does not mention the 3rd Company at all, and details are again sparse. Nevertheless, this suggests that Trooper Ashbee must have moved companies fairly promptly, probably soon after reaching South Africa.

Whilst the regimental history of the West Kent Yeomanry (Edmeades, 1909) includes an account of 36th Company IY in South Africa, it only includes details of the first contingent as the company was composed entirely of men from the WKY. This is not the case for the second contingent that Ernest Tilling joined which included men with no previous military experience. The second contingent left the UK in mid-March and would have arrived in South Africa approximately four weeks later.

Incomplete service records coupled with the lack of individual unit war diaries make it very difficult to piece together what individual soldiers were doing in South Africa. According to Creswicke's *South Africa and the Transvaal War*, the 3rd Company and 36th Company were both engaged in clearing the east of Orange Free State in mid-1901; the former with Major-General Campbell's column and the latter with Colonel Harley's column. The first contingent of 36th Company returned to Harrismith on 9th June 1901 before handing over horses and kits presumably to the second contingent.

We can infer something of the doings of the second contingent from William Corner's *Story of the 34th Company (Middlesex) Imperial Yeomanry*. Corner served in the first contingent of the 34th, which alongside the 35th, 36th and 53rd Companies formed the 11th Battalion IY. Corner recounts (when referring to the second contingent) that "for some months the new men remained, for the most part, in and about Harrismith, training." Thereafter they apparently trekked over ground that the 11th Battalion had previously covered including Bethlehem, the Brandwater Basin, Necramo Nek.

It is likely that Ernest Tilling was still with the 36th Company at least until the training at Harrismith had been completed. When columns left Harrismith on 13th July 1901 (*After Pretoria*, Hamsworth 1902), presumably companies of the 11th Battalion were amongst them. Certainly, casualties amongst men from the 33rd, 36th and 53rd companies were being reported in the newspapers in August 1901 when Colonel Harley's column, of which they were a part, were at Elands River in western Transvaal.

Meanwhile, casualties reported from the 3rd Company IY at this time, were centred around Harrismith – unsurprising as the town served as the base of all operations conducted by 8th Division. However, given that nearly all of these died of disease, they were probably in hospital in Harrismith, and not with their company.

With Boer attempts to invade neighbouring Natal between August and October 1901, Rundle was ordered to block the Drakensberg passes between Van Reenen and Witzieshoek. However, it is not known if the 3rd or 36th Companies were involved in these operations.

The building of blockhouses from Frankfort to Heilbron commenced in October 1901 and with the threat from Boer raids, Rundle was obliged to use some of his forces including the Imperial Yeomanry to protect the construction parties. Towards the end of the year, the 36th Company was part of column engaged in protecting the

Harrismith-Bethlehem blockhouse line when disaster struck. Boer commander De Wet has been closely following the British column and when the infantry was withdrawn leaving just the Imperial Yeomanry and one gun of the Royal Artillery encamped on a hill close to Tweefontein Farm named Groenkop, he attacked. The British were taken by surprise and in the ensuing battle, lost over 100 men dead or wounded. This included 24 men of the 36th Company, six of whom were killed.

Again, we can only speculate as to whether Ernest Tilling was present at Tweefontein. If he was, he clearly survived and likely without injury as his name does not appear amongst the casualty lists of the battle published at the time. The fact that Ernest was not invalided to England until four months later suggests that the reason for his incapacitation was from some other cause. The Bromley Chronicle of 15th May 1902 dryly noted that “Trooper Ernest Tilling of Bromley, serving in the Kent Imperial Yeomanry, is now in barracks at Aldershot.” Two months later he was discharged at Shorncliffe in Kent as being medically unfit.



A pocket watch fob presented to Ernest Tilling by United Ancient Order of Druids in 1913 (photo courtesy of Lex Manson).

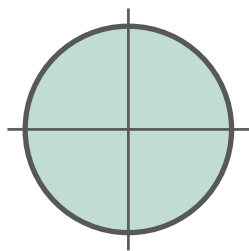
Ernest Tilling didn't stay in the country of his birth for long. On 11th October 1902 he boarded the SS Papanui bound for Wellington, New Zealand arriving there on 2nd December. In 1904, Ernest married 21-year-old Henrietta Daisy McAnerin. According to voters' records, The Tillings initially settled in Manawatu District, but subsequently moved around other districts in New Zealand's North Island. Obituaries after his death reveal that for many years, he was head storeman at the Wairarapa Farmers' Co-Operative Association's warehouse. Later he took over a business at Paraparaumu before returning to Wellington to begin a grocery business. It was whilst in Wellington that he took an active part in the formation of the New Zealand South African

War Veterans Association and was secretary for 16 years. He also became an active member of the United Ancient Order of Druids.

When Ernest passed away in 1939, it seems that it was the New Zealand South African War Veterans Association, which had clearly held him in high esteem, who were responsible for organising his grave marker in Karori Cemetery. Unfortunately, the association no longer exists as it was wound up in 1980. Enquiries with both the Royal New Zealand Returned and Services Association (RSA) and Veterans' Affairs New Zealand have failed to throw any light on how the 3rd County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters) insignia came to be engraved on his headstone.

There was in fact no generic cap badge for Imperial Yeomanry and if one was worn at all, individual units tended to adopt one from the home service Yeomanry from which they were originally recruited.

I think it likely that when researching Ernest's Boer War service, the 3rd Company Imperial Yeomanry has somehow been conflated with the 3rd County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters) which are two entirely different units.



D-DAY

80th ANNIVERSARY

from various Sharpshooters

Brenda Traylen

When the Sharpshooter's trip to Normandy for the 80th D-Day anniversary was cancelled, I decided to do my own trip, in July, in the way I normally like to travel: that is – alone, self catering and using public transport. This involved two trains to Caen, where I had booked an apartment, not far from the bus and rail stations.

Day 1 was Villers Bocage. The bus drove past the Sharpshooter's memorial, so I knew exactly where to go once the bus had dropped me off in town. All the shops were still adorned with D-Day decorations. I walked up to the memorial, where I laid a RBL cross with the wreaths that had been laid on 13th June by fellow Sharpshooters. After some reflection I waited some time for a pedestrian to capture my presence at the memorial (I hate selfies!!)

Day 2 was spent at the British memorial at Ver-sur-Mer. It was easy to spend four hours here wandering round, looking at all the dedications and 'standing with giants' installations. I also found the memorial seat dedicated to members of the Inns of Court then went to the Churchill Cafe where you can get a cup of Yorkshire tea!

Day 3 was a trip to the war cemetery at Tilly-sur-Seules. It is here that the bodies of three Sharpshooters were re-buried at a rededication ceremony, after being identified at Bayeux. The previous evening, not knowing how large the cemetery was, I imagined my search could be like, for those who know it, the cemetery scene from the Good, the Bad and the Ugly! In the end, my friend Sue, back home, did a load of research and came up with a plan of the cemetery plus the grave numbers for Cpl Griffiths, LCpl Skilton and Tpr Morris. When I arrived, I knew exactly where to go and laid a cross at the grave of each. As the cemetery was fairly small, I had time to look at every grave. I found six more from 4CLY: LCpl Roper, Tpr Lunn, Tpr Lively and three unknown Sharpshooters. I had spare crosses, so was able to lay those at the graves of the others. Well done Sue for making it so easy!

I was really pleased to have made this trip, especially as decorations were still up in Villers and standing with giants was still in situ at Ver-sur-Mer.





standing, a
l'ensemble
Anglais, les
commémora
fabriques
installations
religieuses, et
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se sont dans
Les 1 475 y
Monument na
étaient des
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jusqu'à 315
fabriques
Lorsque ne
l'année d'ar
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Résistance
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de silhouette
Vous pouvez
mesure rapp
ou souvenir
célébrer à
lors de la
désormais



Sharpshooter's Trip to Normandy (12-15 June 2024)

Tim Rayson, Ron Snowball and David Palmer

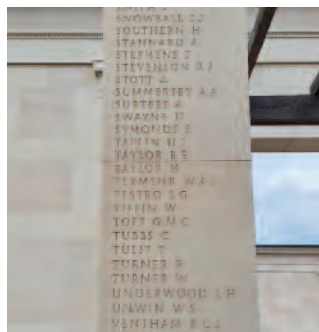
On 12th June, three Sharpshooters, all ex-C Squadron, Kent and Sharpshooters Yeomanry, Royal Yeomanry, departed UK for France via the Eurotunnel train for a Battlefield tour in commemoration of the 80th anniversary of D-Day on 6th June and 13th June the day of the battle of Villers Bocage, one of the battle honours of the Sqn. WO1 Ron Snowball, Capt Tim Rayson and Lt Col David Palmer travelled to their hotel in Aunay sur Odon, which was to be their base for the tour.

On 13th June, after a short tour of the various locations of the battle itself they visited the memorial in Villers Bocage to meet up with others at the memorial, where Tim gave a short resume of the battle, with input from Dan Taylor from the KSY Museum, who has recently written and published a book on the battle. A wreath was laid alongside other wreaths from 4CLY and the Desert Rats Association, laid the previous week on the actual anniversary of D-Day. The group then went for lunch with a number of other Sharpshooters who had similarly congregated in the town at the same time and raised a glass to "The Sharpshooters". Then the team moved to the cemetery at Bayeux, to find the gravestones of several Sharpshooters and laid a second wreath.

On 14th June the C Sqn team visited Asnelles, the site of the landing of 4 CLY following D-Day, before heading to Ver sur Mer and the new British Memorial and the impressive display of "Standing with Giants", representing the 1,475 British servicemen, who died on D-Day itself. After a wonderful seafood lunch at a nearby restaurant, we worked our way back to the Hottots-les-Bagues cemetery at Tilly-sur-Seuilles and found more Sharpshooters' gravestones, which we paid our respects to. This ended the site visits, and we returned to our hotel for a welcome rest, to the accompaniment of the local brass band as they marched around the town as part of their music festival.

The overall impression was that the locals had made a great effort to welcome visitors to all the sites with Union Flags flying alongside the other nations involved everywhere we went. The new upgrades to the various museums and site in general was notable. As always a very moving and humbling experience, enabling us to pay our respects to our forebears and the valiant efforts they made and in so many cases, lost their lives for.





Normandy visit

Penny and Simon Malik

This summer we visited the British Normandy memorial. This was our second visit; however this time was extra special as it coincided with the Standing with Giants installation. The memorial is already evocative as it looks over the Normandy landing beaches but with the whole area covered with life sized silhouettes, representing each soldier lost on D-Day, it became quite an emotional experience.

My uncle was killed on D-Day serving with the Inns of Court Regiment (now a sister squadron to 265 (KCLY) Support Squadron, part of 71 (Y) Signal Regiment)) and is buried in the Ryes-Bazenville cemetery. Of course I never met him, but he was someone very real to us through the words and memories of his two younger brothers. Simon and I always try to visit his grave every year to remember him. His name is now on the monument.

We have sponsored a plaque on the site in remembrance of him, which reads:

Uncle Jack, you will always be remembered.

You were dearly loved and still are.

Lt OJ Sinnatt.

The Inns of Court Regiment, Royal Armoured Corps

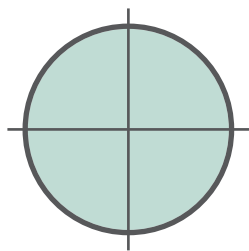
6 June 1944. Aged 22.

Simon & Penny Malik (nee Sinnatt) & family.

When planning our visit on VE Day, 8th May, we had expected to be largely alone at the memorial on a wet and blustery mid-week visit. However VE Day is a public holiday in France. It is a date that the French traditionally visit memorials and war graves to remember those who gave their lives so they could be free. Therefore we were far from alone and the memorial were full of French families of all ages visiting the war dead.







NORMANDY 2024 LIVING HISTORY GROUP

by Freddie Dean

In what is becoming something of an annual event, last year museum volunteers from the living history team once again travelled overseas to Normandy to take part in the 80th anniversary commemorations. The week-long trip included museum visits, battlefield tours, and the ever-moving visits to cemeteries to pay our respects to the fallen, particularly those from the Sharpshooters and Kent Yeomanry. The team portrayed members of the 3rd and 4th County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters), 143rd (Kent Yeomanry) Field Regiment Royal Artillery, and the First Air Nursing Yeomanry with the objective of representing these units as they would have appeared in June 1944. The aim was to engage with members of the public to tell the particular stories of the units in question, and to raise awareness of the museum, building overseas connections and sparking insightful conversations. In the spirit of authenticity, I also documented the trip using an original 1940s period camera, some photographs from which accompany this article.



The tour began when I met the group directly off the ferry in Ouistreham with breakfast at Pegasus Bridge and a visit to the airborne museum, before driving to our home for the week at the beautiful 13th century Chateau de Fontaine-Henry; just under five miles from Creully where Montgomery established his tactical headquarters in June 1944. This being the living history team, we were of course not in the chateau itself but encamped in the grounds under original 1940s tentage. The camp at Fontaine-Henry was part of the official 80th-anniversary commemorations, bringing together groups authentically portraying Commonwealth and associated forces to create an immersive experience for public engagement. The structure of the camp, with groups from across Europe made for a convivial and friendly atmosphere. As it happened, a very large section of the camp had travelled from Poland to portray members of the Polish 1st Armoured Division, and as our immediate neighbours both groups exchanged histories, stories, and gifts, learning of the roles played by our respective nations, and armoured units 80 years previously.



From our camp the group travelled across Normandy on excursions to Bayeux, the battery at Longues-sur-Mer, Villers-Bocage, Port-en-Bessin, amongst other places, and a tour of the Operation Goodwood battlefield led by the museum's curator Dan Taylor. On the night of the 5th June, the Chateau's owner thanked all the groups present with

drinks on the terrace ahead of the open air ‘Liberation Ball’ with live music and dancing which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. The trip was rounded off with a meal out in Ouistreham before boarding the ferry to return to Portsmouth.



Perhaps the most memorable moment for the group came on the final day during our visit to Ranville cemetery, where in an otherwise almost empty cemetery we noticed a gentleman in a wheelchair, wearing a black beret, sitting quietly and facing the graves. Until that point, we had not encountered a single veteran of the conflict. With so few remaining, Normandy in early June is a far cry from the Normandy we hear of from ten or more years ago when veterans could be found in numbers. We were very privileged then to meet Trooper Ted Rutland 148th Regiment Royal Armoured Corps. Ted had only ever been to Normandy once before where he had lost his OC and had never found out what had happened. But that was eighty years ago and so, Ted's neighbour had kindly offered to take him to Normandy to find his OC, in a search that led them to Ranville cemetery. Ted was incredibly generous with his time, lucidly recounting stories from his first visit to Normandy. Meeting one of the last surviving veterans of that campaign was an immense privilege, made even more poignant by the fact that Ted had crewed tanks in close proximity to, and on some of the same operations in which the Sharpshooters had also served. Meeting Ted reminded us all why it is so vital to keep the memories and stories of these historical events alive.



My own journey to Normandy took a somewhat different route from the rest of the team, and although this may be something of a tangent, I feel it helps to communicate how I, and the living history team find that we can best understand and connect with the past through real experience. Of course, we can never truly experience what those on active service endured in 1944—nor would we want to. Their sacrifices were in part to ensure that we would not have to confront the horrors of war, and for that we owe them an enormous debt. However, what I believe we gain from living history is empathy and understanding. By spending a week in the field under the same tents, wearing the same clothes, cooking with the same equipment, and at times eating the same food, we begin to gain a greater appreciation for some of the more mundane aspects of a soldier's life in 1944 that can only be attained through experience. There are of course similarities to the soldier's experience today, but there are also essential differences, living without Gortex to cite an obvious example. With that said, I would like to offer some reflections on my own experience in Normandy following in the footsteps of my Great Grandfather.

William King joined the Royal Marines in 1934 and by early 1944 he found himself at HMS Squid, the Royal Navy's landing craft depot in Southampton. William spent the early months of 1944, like so many other Royal Marines, retraining to crew landing

craft. Some two thirds of all landing craft crews on D-Day were Royal Marines, and as a sergeant in the 900th Landing Craft Support flotilla, it is probable that William would've been a coxswain. The Landing Craft Support (LCS) was based on the same hull as the more familiar Landing Craft Assault (LCA) that carried troops to the beach, but rather than carrying a platoon of men, the LCS carried twin 0.5" machine guns and a 4" smoke mortar in the bow. LCSs were detached at a rate of one LCS to twelve troop carrying LCAs to provide fire support and smoke cover.

In May 2024 I was fortunate to join the crew of Rummy III, a 42-foot motor yacht built in 1935, on its journey to Normandy for the 80th anniversary. Rummy III was requisitioned by the Royal Navy in 1939 and served in a wide variety of roles from admiral's launch to fireboat, and the current owner has faithfully restored her to her wartime configuration and appearance. I joined Rummy in Calais, but poor weather kept us in harbour for three days until we could attempt the journey to Ouistreham in Normandy, a journey of 140 nautical miles. With an average speed of eight knots this was set to take us 17.5 hours, and with a deadline to reach Caen (up the canal from Ouistreham), this meant there would be no time for stopping. At this point it is worth observing that the dimensions of Rummy are almost identical to that of an LCA or LCS, 40 foot long, 10 foot in the beam. Both were constructed from wood and travelled at roughly the same speed. With a flat bottom and a shallower draught (2' rather than 4') the sea handling would of course be different in a landing craft, but this was undoubtedly the closest to experiencing a sea crossing in an LCS that I could get. For the first few hours the weather was very pleasant, but soon enough the clouds covered over, and the

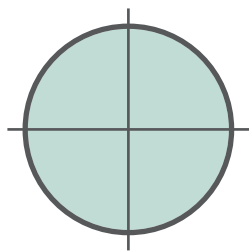


sea became much less forgiving. Whilst there was still light, the worst of the waves could be taken on the bow, but when night set in they were impossible to see and seemed constantly to change direction. There was water over the bows and gunwales, the boat and our crew of three were tossed about and its 90-year-old planking took a hammering. With about 10 nautical miles to go, passing Le Havre, we took a series of particularly bad waves on the beam which very seriously threatened to roll us over forcing us to break off with our companion boat 'Our Lizzie' (a Dunkirk Little Ship) and to turn for Le Havre. This was not without its risks being a small boat in a significant shipping lane in the dead of night, but eventually to our immense relief, with the sun beginning to rise we entered Le Havre. Accepting that we would be a little late, but not wishing to miss the canal locks, we resumed our journey in the early hours of the following morning. Some time later we arrived off the Normandy coast with grey skies and a moderately choppy sea, with Sword beach looming into view at almost exactly H-Hour 06:30. At that moment, I felt an unparalleled connection to the past—the weather and waves mirroring those reported on D-Day 80 years ago, aboard a wartime vessel with the same proportions as the landing craft my great-grandfather crewed.

Later that morning we passed along the Caen canal, through Pegasus Bridge, and were reunited with 'Our Lizzie'. The serenity of the canal, and the opportunity to see the famous sites from the water was very special indeed, and I can heartily recommend it to anyone given the opportunity. After a few days moored along the canal, we passed back down to Ouistreham where I left Rummy to join the team from the museum as they arrived off the ferry, thus beginning the second half of my Normandy trip.

I realise that this account has been of only tangential relevance to the Sharpshooters, but I feel that it serves to demonstrate the value of living history in bringing us closer to the past. Whilst I did not experience the risk of mines or enemy action, I did gain a sense for the discomfort, vulnerability, and fear over an extended period of time that so many would have experienced sat on their landing craft off the Normandy coast in 1944. It highlighted the extreme dangers of naval operations where the perils of the sea must first be mastered before any consideration of engaging the enemy is made. This also revealed to me just how vulnerable the entire operation was to the whims of the weather in the English Channel, success depending on how well the smallest and most fragile craft of the armada could take the weather. For us, Normandy provided a safe haven, but in 1944 it was quite the opposite. I am left with a fortified sense of admiration for all those who made the crossing to Normandy in 1944, and for all who took part in amphibious and small boat operations more generally.

To conclude then, the museum living history team's 2024 Normandy trip was, by all accounts, highly informative, engaging, and enjoyable. These trips have shown us the educational value of immersing oneself in history and visiting the sites of monumental events. From a personal perspective, I felt that I left Normandy with a profounder appreciation for the experience of those of my own age and younger who passed through the same places 80 years previously. I also have a renewed sense of the value of living history, both for those participating and for the public observers whom it is intended to engage with. Looking ahead to 2025, plans are afoot for our next overseas trip, though the destination is as yet undetermined, but from the team's end of season AGM it is clear that all are eagerly anticipating whatever 2025 may bring.



3RD COUNTY OF LONDON YEOMANRY (SHARPSHOOTERS)

June-July 1944

by Freddie Deane

Images colourised by Simon Malik

This year we have followed the activities of 3rd County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters) 80 years on, through the museum's social media platforms on a month-by-month basis. I have chosen to focus on 3CLY for several reasons; firstly, the prevailing Sharpshooters perspective of June 1944 is that of 4CLY following their rather dramatic experience at Villers-Bocage, itself the topic of two entirely comprehensive books authored by our own curator. Secondly, the narrative has followed 3CLY from the outbreak of war, and whilst the two regiments eventually became one, it seems appropriate to maintain the focus on the experiences of those same individuals whom we have followed since 1939. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, this project has drawn heavily on Jimmy Sale's photographic collection, the extent of which provides us with photographs which can match the written narrative with remarkable consistency and precision.

When it comes to the activities of the Sharpshooters, they were present for many of the most pivotal operations and actions of the conflict, and not entirely through chance. They had been in action since early 1941 and had gained something of a reputation as part of the highly regarded 7th Armoured Division. Yet of all the dramatic long years of the Second World War, perhaps none was more so for the Allies generally, and the Sharpshooters particularly than 1944. Historians dispute the true 'turning points' of the Second World War and indeed, the more time one spends looking for turning points the more there seem to be, but few could dispute the significance of Operation Overlord.

Perhaps what makes Overlord stand out is that it speaks to something deeper about the Allied war effort, their immense industrial capacity, which in retrospect makes victory seem inevitable. Whilst this should not detract from the heroism or sacrifices of those who took part, nor the uncertainty of success and the role fortune played, the ability of the Allies to carry out an operation of this scale is truly remarkable. The Allied armada consisted of some 4,000 vessels of varying size, from the largest warships to the smallest LCAs (landing craft assault) including merchant ships, troop carriers, specialist assault craft, tugboats, and minesweepers. Keeping the skies clear of the enemy and carrying nearly 23,500 troops and their supplies behind enemy lines were some 13,000 aircraft of all types. In all, the operation saw 858,000 men and 150,000 vehicles land in Normandy by the end of June, a truly monumental undertaking, and still the largest amphibious operation of all time. The stakes were incredibly high too, this force was the result of years of preparation by the wealthiest and most industrialised societies in the world. Failure was out of the question, and yet success was never guaranteed. What followed were months of some of the toughest and most bitter fighting of the war, it led many to question the competency of the Allied leadership and their ability to end

the war. Yet beneath the broad and sweeping narrative of Allied victory are countless individual and unit-level stories which on their own can make for a somewhat disorientated and even claustrophobic reading of events. We get a particular sense of this through the war diaries as they were written on a daily basis very shortly after the events they describe. This offers a certain immediacy divorced from what is at times a teleological telling of the grand-strategy narratives. What we gain from the war diaries is a sense of what the soldiers experienced, the uncertainty of what the next day might bring, and a sense of the rhythms of combat with the routine movement in and out of the front line. Without a close understanding of the events in question, it can be difficult to place the actions of the war diary in their broader context, but there is a certain value in this; it gives us the perspective of those taking part who did not know where the story would go next, nor what place they would take in its final framing. With that said, it is worth turning to the experiences of 3rd County of London Yeomanry in the June and July of 1944 as derived from the war diary.



Part of the invasion fleet assembling off PORTSMOUTH.

Having spent May training in Worthing, on the 1st June the regiment were placed at six hours' notice and moved to an area north of Portsmouth for final preparations and waterproofing in preparation for the Normandy landings (though few knew their true destination at this stage). From there, they were moved to Gosport where they sat on the 'hards' waiting to be embarked. It was here, on the 6th June, that news arrived on the wireless of the landings, finally revealing their destination. That evening, embarked on LSTs (landing ship tanks) they sailed under the cover of darkness, arriving on the morning of the 7th June at Mont Fleury-La Rivière three miles west of their intended landing place on Sword beach. In the confusion, a scout car and three lorries were lost, but more happily they happened to run into 4CLY, landing with the 7th Armoured



Our LCT (landing craft tanks) anchored off GOSPORT, assembling with remainder of convoy before sailing for NORMANDY.

Division. The regiment then regrouped at Banville where it completed de-waterproofing, preparing the vehicles for action. As part of the independent 4th Armoured Brigade, 3CLY would spend the campaign acting as a mobile armoured reserve: a smaller, self-contained, and more nimble formation deployed anywhere additional armoured support was needed.

For most of June and July the fighting took place at the troop level with few squadron or regimental actions, illustrating the disjointed and somewhat chaotic fighting of the early days of the campaign. There was to be little rest for the newly arrived 3CLY, and shortly after landing on the 7th June, 'A' Squadron under Major Woods was detached to support the Black Watch in an assault on the Douvres radar station. The initial assault failed owing to minefields and anti-tank fire. Major Woods suggested rushing the point but accepted that this would likely result in high losses. Being so early in the campaign, the idea of risking so much precious armour was unacceptable, and so the Squadron withdrew. It was some two weeks before the then cut-off radar station was eventually taken by commandos after a heavy bombardment. Meanwhile, 'B' and 'C' Squadrons were deployed to support the Gordon Highlanders and the Black Watch respectively, who were taking up positions near Colombiers-sur-Seulles and Le Fresne-Camilly. Despite the best efforts of allied planners, the realities of war brought anxiety and confusion, which unhappily resulted in numerous instances of friendly fire across the Allied front. In one such instance on the 8th June, 'B' Squadron and 'RHQ' came under fire from Canadian Shermans. Luckily, there appear to have been no casualties, though the war diary does mention a Tpr Taylor being wounded by 'shelling' on the same day.



“A” Squadron going inland, passing a German anti-tank gun.

On the 10th, ‘A’ Squadron rejoined the regiment and, following an abandoned plan for an eastern advance over the River Orne, the regiment took up defensive positions near Villons-les-Buissons. A range shoot on the 16th provoked some uncomfortable retaliatory shelling which forced RHQ to relocate, but aside from intermittent shelling the regiment enjoyed a period of relative quiet. On the 19th, the regiment temporarily came under the command of the 11th Armoured Division in anticipation of operations in support of the 8th Canadian Brigade around Camilly. Throughout this period, the regiment were almost constantly within range of German guns and as such suffered continual harassment and occasional casualties.

On the 24th June, the pace of action increased somewhat as preparations were made for an attack over the River Orne with 4th Armoured Brigade acting as rear protection. Following an ‘O’ Group on the 26th, just as the operation was beginning, with the Regiment formed up south of Bretteville l’Orgueilleuse, Brigadier Currie DSO MC was killed by shellfire leaving Lt Col Cameron to take over immediate command of 4th Armoured Brigade with Major A.W. Grant taking charge of the regiment. Bad weather and congested roads made for slow going en-route to Norrey-en-Bessin where they leaguered for the night. The following morning the advance continued, reaching Cheux where they were to relieve 44th RTR and take up defensive positions with reports of Tiger tanks in the area. On the 28th, the Regiment moved to assist the Highland Light Infantry into Mouen where they were met with heavy resistance. ‘C’ Squadron bore the brunt of the fighting in which the regiment lost nine other ranks killed and eight missing, but they successfully accounted for two Tiger tanks, four Mk IV Specials and two self-propelled guns.



Knocked-out Panther tank, destroyed by an infantry PIAT (the first we had ever seen) at BRETTEVILLE-EN-ORGUILLEUSE. Ollie [Woods], in flat hat, with his back to the camera.

As June drew to a close, the regiment established itself in defensive positions near Granville-sur-Odon where they remained relatively undisturbed except for reports of a possible counterattack with Panther tanks that never materialised, and some minor skirmishes with enemy reconnaissance patrols. June had proved to be a trying month for the regiment and would set the tone for the months to come. It had come at a cost with ten men killed, seven missing (believed killed or captured), and twelve wounded, along with several vehicles destroyed or disabled.

The start of July was to be much the same as the previous weeks, with 'A' Squadron detaching to support the Royal Welch Fusiliers in Rauray, and 'B' Squadron moving to



The chateau at MOUEN.

support a company of the Royal Scots Fusiliers in a small attack to the southwest of Haut-du-Bosq. Despite some shelling and mortaring directed at the infantry which wounded Major Phelps of 'B' Squadron, there was little to report and the attack was a success. At the same time, 'C' and 'RHQ' Squadrons remained in position, and were joined by 'A' and 'B' Squadrons between the 2nd and 7th in preparing positions to support 44th Brigade against potential counterattacks.

On the 8th, the Regiment retired to Le-Mesnil-Patry for a short rest period, being relieved by the 23rd Hussars. The officers were themselves relieved to be reunited with their mess truck. The regiment were back in the line on the 10th ahead of Operation Jupiter, moving to support a thrust south of the River Odon by the 43rd Division, followed by a hurried crossing of the river to the north of Eterville where amongst the heavy shelling Major Gale OC 'C' Squadron was killed as was SSM Brown of 'RHQ'. Over the next few days, having crossed the Odon the regiment inflicted heavy casualties



Infantry wounded being evacuated by jeeps during the battle in which "A" Squadron held the ETTEVILLE Ridge. L/Cpl. Topper Brown in the foreground.

on the enemy infantry, and 'A' Squadron were dispatched to deal with reports of a six hundred strong enemy force supported by tanks on the ridge of Eterville running towards Louvigny. Once on top of the ridge, Lt Brodie's No. 3 Troop spotted three Panther tanks and sent for two Sherman Fireflies from Squadron HQ. However, with only two tanks, No. 3 Troop managed to deal with two of the Panthers before the Fireflies had even arrived.

From their position on the ridge, 3CLY had an excellent view to the southeast over the village of Maltot where the German counterattack on Eterville was to begin. Some two hundred infantry, supported by heavy tanks and assault guns advanced on Eterville. From his position on the ridge, Major Woods decided to engage the enemy, although his orders had instructed him only to establish a standing patrol and to support the infantry on the ground behind the ridge. Through a fortunate misidentification, the advancing troops were initially reported as friendly, allowing the enemy tanks to advance to within 1600 yards at which point they were engaged. In all, this cost the Germans three Tigers, a Mk IV and a self-propelled gun with numerous other tanks hit and damaged. After a day's hard fighting, by seven in the evening the enemy infantry abandoned their assault, and the following day the regiment were relieved by a Canadian armoured battalion.

The regiment withdrew to Mouen and crossed the River Odon where it remained for the next eight days. There were a series of promotions, with Capt. Aitken MC becoming a Major and OC of 'B' Squadron, Capt. Murray was promoted to Major and OC of 'C' Squadron, and Lieutenants Hawkins MC MM, and Grimwade MC, were also elevated

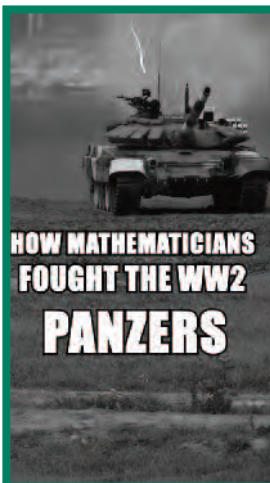


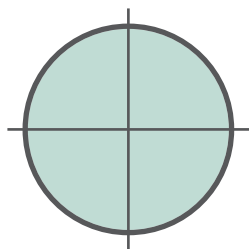
Destroyed German Mk IV Special. The ridge with the wood on the sky-line being the main attacked point 112, south of CAEN.



CARPIQUET aerodrome.

to Captains. There followed several operational orders which were eventually cancelled, and on the 23rd the Regiment then moved to Carpiquet airfield where it would live out its last days as the 3rd County of London Yeomanry. Conferences took place to decide how best to integrate with the somewhat battered 4CLY to form the 3rd/4th County of London Yeomanry, and on the 30th, Lt Col Cameron addressed the regiment in preparation for the amalgamation. On the 31st, the final composition of the new regiment was confirmed with Lt Col W. Rankin assuming command, and the amalgamation was complete. The new 3rd/4th CLY were placed on four hours' notice from the 1st August 1944 and a new chapter in the Sharpshooters story began.





KENT YEOMANRY GRAVES IN ICELAND

by Penny Malik

Images by Simon Malik

In January 2024 we spent a few days in Iceland, hoping to see the Northern Lights. Unfortunately snowstorms prevented any viewing of the Northern Lights and even reduced our sight seeing trips around the island. Therefore we decided to explore more of the city of Reykjavik and included a visit to the CWGC graves in the city. To our surprise, the graveyard held the graves of two Kent Yeomanry. Why were they there?

Following the invasion of Denmark in 9 April 1940, Iceland was officially a neutral country. Many Axis merchant vessels seeking shelter within the neutral waters around Iceland were sunk by Allied warships, which had established an effective naval blockade. London imposed strict export controls on Icelandic goods, preventing profitable shipments to Germany, as part of this blockade. London offered assistance to Iceland, seeking cooperation “as a belligerent and an ally”, but Reykjavik declined and reaffirmed its neutrality. German presence in Iceland, along with the island’s strategic importance, alarmed the British. After a few failed attempts of persuading the Icelandic



British troops in Reykjavik.



government by diplomatic means to join the Allies and becoming a co-belligerent in the War against the Axis-forces, the British invaded Iceland on 10 May 1940. The invasion force of 746 British Royal Marines commanded by Colonel Robert Sturges invaded Iceland in the early morning of 10 May 1940 with British troops disembarking in Reykjavík. Meeting no resistance, the troops moved quickly to disable communication networks, secure strategic locations and arrest German citizens. Requisitioning local means of transportation, the troops moved to secure landing areas against the possibility of a German counterattack. In the following days air defence equipment was deployed in Reykjavík. In the evening of 10 May, the government of Iceland issued a protest, charging that the neutrality of Iceland had been “flagrantly violated” and “its independence infringed” and noting that compensation would be expected for all damage done. The British promised compensation, favourable business agreements, non-interference in Icelandic affairs and the withdrawal of all forces at the end of the war. Resigning themselves to the situation the Icelandic authorities provided the invasion force with de facto cooperation, though formally maintaining a policy of neutrality.



Nissan Huts at Alafoss in winter. It is believed that this photo was taken by Sgt Hymers of 143 Field Regiment.

The invasion force had limited training, a shortage of weapons, and many new recruits and was insufficient to defend an island of 103,000 km. On 17 May, 4,000 troops of the British Army were sent in to relieve the Marines. This force was subsequently augmented to a final force strength of 25,000.

143 (KentYeomanry) Field Regiment RA (TA) was deployed to Iceland in November 1940 as part of this augmented force. At this point the Regiment consisted of two batteries. In May 1941 a third battery was formed in Iceland. The unit was based at two sites in Iceland: Alafoss and Lambton Camp.

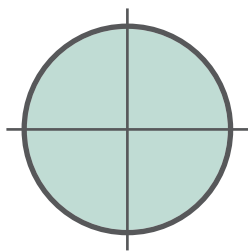
On 7 July 1941, the defence of Iceland was transferred from Britain to the (still officially neutral) United States, by agreement with Iceland, and American troops (40,000) replaced the British. They remained there for the duration of the war. The Kent Yeomanry returned to the UK in April 1942, joining 49 Infantry Division.

The two Kent Yeoman were:

Bombardier Eric Charles Mathews. He died on 4th May 1941. He was 25 years old.

Gunner Jack Terrance Russell. He died 13th April 1942.

It is unclear from the records as to what happened to them. Bombardier Matthews was admitted to hospital on 24 February 1941 before his death on 4th May. The record for Gunner Russell says he died in an accident.



COLONEL SIMON McMENEMY VR

It is a huge privilege to have been asked to become Honorary Colonel of C (Kent & Sharpshooters Yeomanry) Sqd The Royal Yeomanry. The process of appointment is now much more formal than previously. Having been asked by the Regimental Honorary Colonel to take this position the vetting process takes several months before being signed off by his Majesty the King and published in The London Gazette. Therefore, according to the Gazette my term of five years started on 1 July 2024. I hear timers being set!

I would like to pay tribute here to my predecessor Colonel Nicholas, or Baron Soames of Fletching PC, as he has now become. The period during which Col Nicholas served as Honorary Colonel was a momentous one, which saw Brexit, the Covid pandemic, the death of Queen Elizabeth and the Coronation. Colonel Nicholas was close to the centre of things during these events that will stay in our collective memory for many years to come. So it was no surprise that we did not see him as often as we and he would have liked. However, when the recent history of the Squadron and the Regiment is written what will become clear is what an important role Col Nicholas played at times



Lunch out Baron Nicholas Soames of Fletching.

when the Squadron faced existential issues. On behalf of us all I would like to thank Col Nicholas for all he did and continues to do on our behalf, and on behalf of all the Armed Forces, both in and out of Parliament. Lt Col Charlie Field and I dined Col Nicholas out at the Cavalry & Guards Club and can report that he was on extremely fine form and as entertaining as ever.

When I took command of the Royal Yeomanry on a wet and windy parade ground at Otterburn in October 2014, I said then that it was a privilege to be a Royal Yeoman, but that with privilege comes responsibility. As Honorary Colonel of what I consider to be the finest Squadron in the Royal Yeomanry I see my responsibility as supporting the Squadron in every way I can to maintain its existence and identity, to increase its recruited strength and to widen its sphere of influence.

At the recent Yeomanry Association meeting I saw some surprised faces when I pointed out that if you live in Kent, Surrey, East Sussex, West Sussex or Hampshire and you want to join the Royal Armoured Corps, then your nearest Sub-Unit is C Sqn in Croydon. When you think of the very large populations to which these counties are home, and the increasing difficulties faced in recruiting within London (for various reasons) then Army Regional, Brigade and RFCA boundaries are artificial and can be counterproductive. Given the good travel connections that Croydon has we should be pushing further into these counties to what could prove to be fertile recruiting ground for example, three out of the last four RY Commanding Officers lived in Sussex). Given the demands on time and resources of the serving Squadron and the state of official army recruitment at the moment it is incumbent on us all, as the wider Sharpshooter family, to help with recruitment.

My own son spent some time in C Squadron before going to Sandhurst and commissioning into the Foot Guards earlier in 2024. It is clear from talking to him that recruitment is not just a challenge for the Reserves but just as much, if not more so, for the Regular Army.

At a recent RUSI conference there was talk of the Reserves growing exponentially. Finland which has a population of 5.5 million has a Defence Force of 900,000, consisting mainly of reservists. If the UK were to have reserve force based on the same percentage of the population, it would number 11.5 million. These are extraordinary numbers, but I would say we live in extraordinary times, worryingly similar to the 1930s in many ways, and we must be prepared. As the saying goes, if you want to avoid conflict 'speak softly and carry a big stick'. Please do what you can and seek out those opportunities to introduce new recruits to the Squadron.

Of course, it is not all work and it is a real pleasure to be 'back home' amongst familiar faces both within the serving Squadron and amongst the Association and veteran community. I was delighted to congratulate Capt Rand Faytaren on his commissioning in 2024, having already stepped in as PSAO. When I joined the Squadron over twenty years ago I was lucky to have Rand in my Troop and it was clear then that he was a soldier of rare ability. Tim Rayson continues to set an example to the rest of the Regiment on what an Association should be for its members in organising our participation at Cavalry Memorial Parade, the Garden of Remembrance, and the superb El Gubi Dinner which brings together the wider Sharpshooter family. It has been hugely reassuring to know that the Squadron can always rely on the unwavering support of Lt



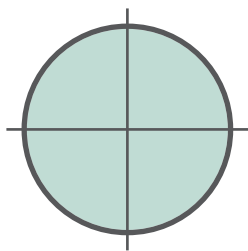
Remembrance Sunday.

Col Mark Hodson and all those who work so hard for the Association in support of those deployed and those serving and retired who need help. I know for a fact that this will continue seamlessly as Lt Col Matthew Webb takes the Chair. To be able to work with these friends of over twenty years is a joy.

The Officers' Mess is the strongest in the Regiment and continues to supplement other Squadrons and fill key appointments at RHQ. Our own Major Godfrey Critien is a case in point, stepping up as second in Command of the Regiment as the CO is pulled in so many directions. We held a Sharpshooters shoot in November in Sussex attended by no less than six C Sqn Leaders, four previous Commanding Officers and three Regimental 2ics and one Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff – quite a bag, even if the shooting was not as sharp as it could have been! Sharpshooters enjoy the camaraderie and friendship that is hard to find in our modern, increasingly transient, world.

So it is good to be back and to see that the Squadron and the Association are on a very firm footing and in safe hands, and with the help of the wider family, will continue to make us all proud to be Sharpshooters.





A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF SHARPSHOOTERS' MESS DRESS

by Hew Jones

Origins

Until the middle of the nineteenth century officers generally changed into plain (i.e. civilian) clothing in the evening or ate in uniform. For formal social occasions, such as balls, dismounted full dress was customary. Mess uniforms first appeared in the 1840s and reflected the regular army custom in India, where the climate made the heavy full dress coat profoundly uncomfortable. Instead, officers substituted the short shell jacket, worn stable, or working dress. This had a standing collar, and was worn closed on duty. For mess use it remained closed at the neck but was otherwise left open to show the sleeveless and high-collared mess vest. Jacket and vest became more elaborate as the distinct use diverged from its origins. Mess dress was originally worn with full dress overalls, with stripes of the regimental pattern, black wellington boots and spurs. The regular army set mess dress patterns for household cavalry, dragoons, lancers and hussars. There were, however, no set patterns for the yeomanry and, although regiments tended to follow the dress of their regular counterparts (hussars for Sharpshooters) this was not inevitable across the yeomanry.

In 1902, however, the creation of the Imperial Yeomanry in the wake of the South African (Boer) war led to formal direction and its closer alignment with regular forces. The first edition of Imperial Yeomanry Regulations, issued in 1903, stipulated "A mess dress, which should be in similar pattern to that approved for the regular forces." This was the 1902 pattern of mess jacket adopted by the regular cavalry, which replaced the stiff high collar with a more fashionable shawl, or roll, collar over a stiff shirt/bow tie and low front waistcoat, in imitation of contemporary civilian evening wear. Yeomanries were expected to submit their new patterns for royal approval in 1905 and to withdraw previous patterns by 31 December 1909.

As ever, the response across the regiments was mixed with many of the established county yeomanries apparently treating the regulations as a suggestion and ignoring it. Most units raised during the Boer War, adopted the new pattern, although others opted for the old. Mess photographs across the yeomanry of the period also show units with a mixture as new officers bought the new pattern while their elders saw no reason to change. Also, mess dress was an optional purchase so those who chose not to buy would have worn their khaki serge, or civilian evening dress, at dinner. Overalls did, however undergo a change with lace being changed to cloth stripes.

1901-1914

As an Imperial Yeomanry regiment raised during the Boer War, The Sharpshooters entered the Army List on 23 June 1901 and the regiment's formal uniform was



Image 1: This photograph of a 3CLY 'A' Squadron dinner in 1907 shows all pre-1914 forms of mess dress. Top left the officers wear the roll collar 1902 mess dress while NCOs wear the older style high collar jacket. ORs wear full dress or civilian evening dress. In reality, the yellow tone of the facings and braid is brighter the picture suggests.



Image 2. Officer's mess jacket and waistcoat. 1902-1909 (KSY1955-36)



Image 3. Officer's mess dress jacket, circa 1910, showing the new, darker green cloth and green lapels. (KSY: 1962-01)

sanctioned in January 1902. This set out "bright dark green" and yellow braid for full dress. These followed through into mess dress with the officers adopting the new 1902 pattern, of a green jacket with yellow roll collar, yellow pointed cuffs, green shoulder straps and a yellow low-cut waistcoat. An example from the KSYMT collection is shown in **Image 2**. Mess overalls were of the same shade as the jacket and had twin $\frac{3}{4}$ " yellow side stripes.

From 1909 the jacket was changed to a darker shade of bluish green, with a silk roll collar in a slightly paler green. The lapels carried an update gold embroidered badge, still of crossed rifles but now within a circlet containing the numeral "3" superimposed.



Image 4. NCO's mess dress jacket 1909-1914. The jacket is intended for wear with a high collared vest. (KSY:1955-38)



Image 5. Private soldier's full-dress tunic. This was worn in place of a separate mess dress by junior soldiers. (KSY: 2002-5-1)

The jacket's back seams were trimmed with black mohair braid, ending in an Austrian knot on each shoulder. The side pockets were similarly trimmed and there were black mohair plaited shoulder cords, with miniature embroidered gold rank badges. **Image 3.** The waistcoat was also changed to green with plain gilt buttons. The Military Historical Society speculates that the change is because the previous yellow facings proved difficult to keep clean.

Mess wear for non-commissioned ranks seems to have depended on rank. The 1907 photograph shows some NCOs in the more traditional closed collar jacket and vest, which was revived in the 1960s. (**Image 4**). The same image shows junior soldiers in the braided hussar pattern full dress (**Image 5**) or civilian evening dress. The choice of the older pattern for NCOs' mess dress is not clear and it may be that it was introduced unilaterally in advance of regulations and, as a personal purchase.

1920-1939

After the World War 1 The Sharpshooters were reconstituted as a company of the Royal Tank Corps (RTC, later the RTR). The regiment did not adopt RTC uniform, other than its black beret. Officers' mess dress of the 23rd London Armoured Car Company (Sharpshooters) was substantially that worn pre-war, but with what appear to be watered silk lapels and updated lapel badges. (**Image 6 with a full length depiction as Image 7**).



Image 6. Officer's mess jacket 1920-1939 (KSY:1974-01-3)



Image 7 shows the 1920-1939 mess uniform full length and with a rear view to show the mohair trim. (Copyright D Taylor)



Image 8. 23rd Armoured Car Company Sergeants' Mess in blues, annual camp, Lulworth 1933 (KSY:1960-09)

The Museum Trust does not possess any inter-war mess uniforms for NCOs or ORs. This might reflect a move towards use of Number One dress, often referred to as “blues” after 1918, as full dress was no longer in use. **Image 8** shows The

Sharpshooters' sergeants' mess in 1933 although, as the uniform was also worn as a parade dress, this does not necessarily indicate mess use. There is, however, a photograph of a Kent Yeomanry battery dance in the 1930s which shows officers in mess dress and ORs in blues, albeit with the addition of shoulder chain mail as a nod to yeomanry status.

1945-1961

The period after World War II was one of formal "austerity". When the Territorial Army was reconstituted in 1947 it is highly likely that the cheaper "blue patrols" were worn for several years as mess dress. This would also have reflected the turnover from the pre-war 23rd LAC generation and that many of those serving would have been returning national servicemen seeing out their compulsory time in the TA. The traditional uniforms were, however, reintroduced from the mid-1950s, especially in the regular forces.

The Sharpshooters amalgamated with 297 (Kent Yeomanry) Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, RA TA in 1961 to form the Kent and County of London Yeomanry. The Kents had worn Royal Artillery mess dress pre-war. The mess dress for the new Kent and Sharpshooters Yeomanry showed a reversion in favour of the pre-1902 high collar jacket with an exposed vest in scarlet. Unusually, officers' rank was indicated through increasingly elaborate Austrian knots on the sleeve. Image 9 shows the new regiment's Honorary Colonel, Sir William Mullens, in about 1970.

References:

The Uniforms of the British Yeomanry Force 1794-1914, 5: 3rd County of London (Sharpshooters). L Barlow and RJ Smith. AMOT 1983.

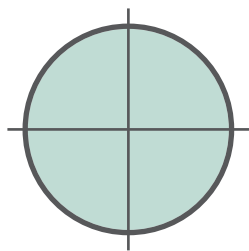
The Sharpshooters 1900-2000, B Mollo. Ian Allen 2000.

The Mess Dress of the Yeomanry Cavalry 1880-1914, DJ Knight and RJ Smith. Military Historical Society 2006.

All images are from the KSY Museum Trust collection, other than the painting at image 7 which is copyright Dan Taylor.



Image 9: Colonel Sir William Mullens DSO, Honorary Colonel, Kent and County of London Yeomanry C1970. Note the rank is indicated by the sleeve knot.



VISITING RORKE'S DRIFT

by Penny Malik

Simon and I fulfilled a long term dream earlier this year when, as part of a trip to Southern Africa, we eventually made it to Rorke's Drift. We had both seen Zulu several times and listened to podcasts about how the actual battle differed from the film, now we had the opportunity to hear about the battle from descendants of some of those who fought there.

Rorke's Drift is located near Durban in South Africa. As we had landed in Johannesburg after an overnight flight, we arranged with our hosts at Fugitives Drift Lodge for a driver for the five hour car journey. It was a great decision because our driver, a native Zulu, was a font of much knowledge about his nation and modern traditions. Over the next three days, we were to learn, first hand, how this had changed from the times of the famous battle.

There are several lodges in the area suiting a wide range of pockets, however only one owned by the Rattray family. David Rattray, who sadly is no longer with us, was famous for the depth of his research on the battles of Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift and





Doug Rattray.



The two VCs Melville and Coghill.



Dining area.



Isandlwana.



Isandlwana cairns and memorials.



Rorke's Drift.



Rorke's hospital and church view.



Inside the hospital.

his family have continued with his legacy. Their lodge, Fugitives Drift, is a fabulous boutique hotel nestled in the landscape of the battle. The Lodge itself is within a small private game reserve and as we drove in we saw herds of giraffe, wildebeest and zebra. With there being no predators in the area, it was peaceful haven for them. On their property is also the graves of the two subalterns who lost their lives escaping from Isandlwana with their colours.

On arrival we were greeted by Nicky Rattray, the family matriarch and widow of David Rattray, and by her son, Doug. This is a very special place to stay, made more so by the direct involvement and hospitality of the family. Having been shown into our very luxurious lodge room, complete with outside shower, we had a chance to freshen up before lunch.

We probably all know the famous story of Rorke's Drift and the purpose of this article is not to repeat the details of the battles, rather give a synopsis of some of the interesting details we learnt during our trip – especially where it was different to the film.

Our first guided tour was a walk to the graves at Fugitives Drift. Our guide for the afternoon was a young intern, who had a love for the history of the place and brought the fateful journey of the two VCs Melville and Coghill to life. We found their graves overlooking Buffalo River and were able to see the rock they were on when they were being attacked by their Zulu pursuers and where they lost their Queens's Colour. We went to the spot where the Regimental party led by Major Black was based when looking for the Colour and heard how they found it sticking upside down in the river. As we were visiting in the dry season, the river was a mere trickle of what it would have been on that January day in 1879, when they lost their lives having struggled to cross the river.

The next morning we were guided by Bryan Mcube, a Zulu who grew up in Rorke's Drift. He took us onto the escarpment overlooking the battlefield of Isandlwana and gave us a very different view of the battle. Firstly, the invasion of the Zulu nation was not sanctioned by the British government, and was undertaken to fulfil the personal ambitions of Chelmsford and the British administration in South Africa. The defence of Isandlwana was not well thought out – the over-confidence of the British forces meant they ignored the advice of the native troops led by Colonel Durnford. The Zulus almost lost the battle in the early stages as the young warriors turned tail when overwhelmed by the infamous Martini-Henrys. Zulu regiments were structured according to age. The young warriors, keen to “dip their spears in their enemies blood” which then gave them the right to marry, were first into battle. The battlefield was covered in tall grasses and visibility was poor. On reaching the British lines many were mowed down by gunfire causing the rest to flee. Behind them was a leader of one of the older battalions. Seeing the young warriors retreating he ran into the battle and got them to turn and fight. He was killed quite quickly, but without his brave and inspiring action, it is unlikely that the Zulu would have seen victory.

The battlefield itself was very moving. A rocky landscape covered in many cairns of white rock. Each of these cairns cover the graves of eight to twelve soldiers. The British did not return to the battlefield for five months after the battle and, by this time, it was almost impossible to identify the dead. However, some families did their best to identify their loved ones and there were a handful of named graves.



Rorke's Memorial.



Rorke's Memorial names.



Rorke's Zulu Memorial.



Hook VC.

Colonel Durnford was one of the officers killed on the day. He was well known to and respected by the Zulu. He was killed by a Zulu with a rifle not a spear. The Zulu was so disgraced for killing a respected enemy that way, that he never really reintegrated with his family. When the Zulus found Colonel Durnford's body they buried him the Zulu way, covered by shields.

Later on in the afternoon we were taken by Doug Rattray to visit Rorke's Drift. Firstly, even though Zulu Dawn was filmed at Isandlwana, Zulu was not filmed at Rorke's Drift. The site was much more compact than on the film and the terrain in the immediate area was much more hilly.

Doug Rattray, like all the guides at Fugitives Drift, is a consummate storyteller. He kept us entranced as the sun slowly set with the story of the battle. What surprises were there?

Firstly the hospital was a very small building with a number of tiny inter-connected rooms. It made you all the more impressed with how the defence was undertaken by a small group of soldiers.

Secondly, the plan for the defence was not the work of Chard and Bromhead, but rather by the Commissary James Dalton. He had just returned from a course on establishing a defence. They had a few hours to set up their perimeter, which they did around the chapel, leaving the hospital as effectively the first line of defence. The material they used? Mielie (mealie) bags and boxes of biscuits brown!

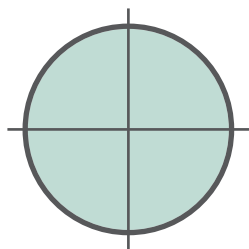
Another surprise was that Private Henry Hook wasn't the drunken insubordinate soldier he is portrayed to be. The complete opposite in fact. He was a non-drinking Methodist and cook. His family was so disgusted by how he was portrayed in the film that they left the premier.

The final surprise was that the Zulus attacking Rorke's Drift were doing so against the wishes of the Zulu King. They were the reserves at the battle of Isandlwana. They were distressed that they did not have a chance to engage in the first battle and decided to attack Rorke's Drift to be able to kill some of their enemy. They did not leave at the end because of respect for the British defenders, but because Chelmsford's relief column had been spotted. Again they faced the wrath of their king and the disgrace of their nation for the actions they took on that day. In the continuing battles of the Zulu War, many of these young warriors deliberately went into battle with the aim of being killed, to nullify their disgrace.

Both battlegrounds are managed with sympathy and respect by the current Zulu population. The story of the battles is told with equal respect to both armies involved. Clearly there were a number of mistakes made on both sides, however you came away with a feeling that the awards of VCs during both these battles were well deserved.

Overall, we had a fantastic couple of days at Rorke's Drift. We would highly recommend it to anyone with even the slightest interest in the battles. This was one of the best battlefield tours we have been on as the story was brought to life.





SHARPSHOOTER INSIGNIA – THE MALIK COLLECTION

by Dan Taylor

Simon Malik has a superb collection of Sharpshooter and Kent Yeomanry related insignia, amassed over a number of years.

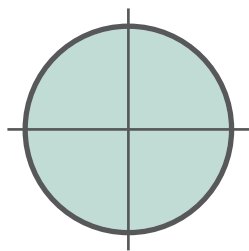
In the first image, the top row is composed of Sharpshooters related tie-pins, sweetheart broaches and other metal badges. The set covers the First World War (those with the 3 on the face of the badge), all three iterations of the Sharpshooters in the Second World War (3rd CLY and 3rd/4th CLY having ‘CLY’ in the face, then 4th CLY having the ‘4’).

The most attractive is clearly the enamelled and diamond detailed 4th CLY badge, top right (and inset). The two pins, just below, are both based on miniaturised collar dogs – that on the left is a very early iteration, possibly Edwardian. That on the right likely dates from the late fifties or 1960s as it includes a Queen’s crown. The Kent Yeomanry set, below, are mostly fashioned from a version of the collar dogs, with an oval surround.



The second image shows Simon's set of Sharpshooters blazer badges. The variety of the detail is immediately eye-catching. Examples in the museum collection also reflect this absence of uniformity, though this doesn't do much to help date them. The only one whose era can be estimated is top right as it has a Queen's crown, narrowing its creation to between 1953 and 1961, after which the Invicta motif was added. The best you can say of the rest is that they hark from the first half of the 20th Century!





SHARPSHOOTER'S TRIP TO THE NETHERLANDS, BELGIUM AND FRANCE

30 September—4 October 2024

**by Ron Snowball, Tim Rayson, John Annett
and David Palmer**

On 30th September, four retired Sharpshooters, Ron Snowball, Tim Rayson, John Annett and David Palmer, all ex-C Squadron, Kent and Sharpshooters Yeomanry, Royal Yeomanry, departed UK for Maastricht via the Eurotunnel train for a Battlefield tour of both First and Second World War sites in Belgium and France.

Staying in a lovely chateau, Hotel Vaeshartelt, near Maastricht initially, the first visit was to the Fort Eben-Emael at Bassengen in Belgium. The gigantic complex is the largest and best-preserved underground fortress from the Second World War that can still be visited.



According to Wikipedia: “The **Battle of Fort Ében-Émael** was a battle between Belgian and German forces that took place between 10 May and 11 May 1940, and was part of the Battle of Belgium and *Fall Gelb*, the German invasion of the Low Countries and France. An assault force of German paratroopers, *Fallschirmjäger*, was tasked with assaulting and capturing Fort Ében-Émael, a Belgian fortress whose strategic position and strong artillery emplacements dominated several important bridges over the Albert Canal.



These carried roads which led into the Belgian heartland and were what the German forces intended to use to advance. As some of the German airborne forces assaulted the fortress and disabled the garrison and the artillery pieces inside it, others simultaneously captured three bridges over the canal. Having disabled the fortress, the airborne troops were then ordered to protect the bridges against Belgian counter-attacks until they linked up with ground forces from the German 18th Army.



The battle was a strategic victory for the German forces, with the airborne troops landing on top of the fortress with gliders using explosives and flamethrowers to disable the outer defences of the fortress. The *Fallschirmjäger* then entered the fortress, killing some defenders and containing the rest in the lower sections of the fortress. Simultaneously, the rest of the German assault force had landed near the three bridges over the canal, destroyed several pillboxes and defensive positions and defeated the Belgian forces guarding the bridges, capturing them and bringing them under German control.



The airborne troops suffered heavy casualties during the operation but succeeded in holding the bridges until the arrival of German ground forces, who then aided the airborne troops in assaulting the fortress a second time and forcing the surrender of the remaining members of the garrison. German forces were then able to use two bridges over the canal to bypass Belgian defensive positions and advance into Belgium to aid in the invasion of the country. The bridge at Kanne was destroyed, forcing German engineers to construct a new bridge". <https://fort-eben-emael.be/en/>

Although visits can be made by private individuals at weekends, we had booked a private visit with a guide for three hours, to explain and guide us through the huge site. In the end we stayed for four hours and even then, we didn't get to spend any time on the surface of the fort, where the attack was mounted from by the glider force. Reason enough for another visit.

In the evening, we were invited to dinner at the home of Lt Col Christoph Kahnert, a former Defence Attache from Germany to the UK and an avid admirer and supporter of all things Sharpshooter. Dinner was a nice family event and a lovely meal starting with the champagne opened by sabre and through to the port at the end. Having been given directions to a flower shop, earlier in the afternoon, which turned out to be closed, Tim and I ended up driving around the town trying to find one that was open, using our rather limited language skills to ask for directions. Success in the end however, as can be seen by the flowers in the photo.



The next morning, we left the hotel to drive to Ypres in Belgium and the Hotel Kasteelhof 't Hooghe. This hotel is placed on the battlefield of Hooghe just outside of Ypres. We visited the privately run Hooghe Crater museum, which gave us an insight into the battle and subsequently walked around the remains of the trench system still in situ in the grounds of the hotel.





The following day we first visited the Royal Engineers' memorial at Railway Wood where a eight sappers (177 Field Coy) and four attached infantrymen were killed in action in the underground war that raged in the area...



... and the Liverpool Scottish Memorial before heading off to the Tyne Cot cemetery, a must for any WWI tour.

We then made a visit to Hill 60 and the Caterpillar Mine Crater and then on to the Spanbroekmolen crater and the Pool of Peace. This is now a beautiful site, in nature's defiance of the devastation that must have taken place there as the mine went off.

Our afternoon was spent at the Passchendaele Museum, which is really worth a visit, including the trench system there. Many very interesting displays and works of art in memoriam.

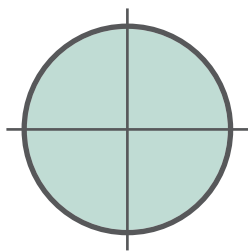
On our final day we drove via Ypres itself, where the Menin Gate is currently under restoration, back through France to Le Paradis Massacre Memorial site at Lestrem.



Ron Snowball's uncle, Drummer R Edgecombe, serving with 2 Battalion Royal Norfolk Regt was killed by the SS on 27th May 1940, along with 96 of his colleagues, although there is no actual grave marker with his name. The unit was cut off and surrendered after running out of ammunition during the retreat to Dunkirk, and the Waffen-SS soldiers were ordered to kill them all. Only two survived, both wounded. After the war, the SS Officer in charge was subsequently tried by a British military court and sentenced to death on the evidence of the survivors, and the sentence was carried out in 1949. A very poignant visit.

This completed our four-day trip, returning home via the Eurotunnel once more.





OBSCURE VEHICLES OF THE SHARPSHOOTERS

by Dan Taylor

Peerless Armoured Car

First issued to the Sharpshooters – 1920, withdrawn 1930.

The Peerless was the first type of armoured car issued to the Sharpshooters after the Regiment was reconstituted as an Armoured Car Company in 1920. The vehicle had originally been built for the Tsarist Russian Government but had been withheld from delivery after the revolution in 1917, never seeing service during the War. A few saw military service during the Irish War of Independence (1919 – 1921) but most, if not all, were turned over to the eight Territorial Armoured Car Companies created post-war. At the time these were the only active units in the UK operating armoured car and so were in demand to take part in Regular Army exercises. The Sharpshooters and Westminster Dragoons, in particular, were utilised during the 1920s due to their proximity to the training areas on Salisbury Plain.

The vehicle was based on a standard US lorry chassis, produced by the Peerless Company, which was available in some numbers towards the end of the Great War. The basic chassis had a dual turreted fighting compartment fitted to it, which was based on that of the Austin armoured car. Compared to its peers, the Peerless was heavy, weighing in at over six tons. The two machine-gun turrets also made it top heavy and cumbersome. The manuals suggest that, operating on fair roads they could maintain 18 mph, and they had a range a little short of 100 miles. In practice, however, the Sharpshooters Standing Orders recommended keeping them under 12 mph which, by most accounts, was as much as they could manage. The stated range was also optimistic. Off-road performance was much worse and to be avoided whenever possible, exacerbated by the narrow, solid tyres which gave poor weight distribution. The trickiest aspect of operating the Peerless lay in its steering, which became extremely strenuous at low speed which can't have been ideal operating on the streets of London. Like most vehicles of the period, there was no fuel gauge and so petrol was measured by dip-stick. Obviously, this was only possible when the vehicle was stationary. There are anecdotal stories in the archives of vehicles running dry at inopportune moments, leading to stipulations on checking the tank regularly. There is also the suggestion that there was a strange habit of the petrol running out just as the Sharpshooters happened to be passing a pub.

After training on pooled vehicles operated out of depots, the Sharpshooters (temporarily the 5th (London) Armoured Car Company) received their first actual allocation of cars in 1922. Soon afterward the unit became the 23rd (London) Armoured Car Company. For most of the next eight years, three Peerless were kept at the drill hall on what was then Henry Street (renamed Allitsen Road in 1935), north of



The Easter Camp of 1922 was the first occasion the Sharpshooters were able to take their new mounts out on the road as a unit. Here they are shown on their return trip near Kingston where they happened to pause outside a photograph shop. Len Gaywood retained the image that now resides in the museum collection.



The classic image of a Sharpshooters inter-war group photograph was taken at Sandling, Kent during the Annual Camp of 1923. The vehicle is resplendent with the 23rd (London) Armoured Car Company cap badge.



The lineup of Peerless armoured cars at the 1924 Annual Camp, this time held at Lulworth, Dorset – seven in total. Not that the early two-piece white overalls were still in use at this point, along with the service dress cap. Neither were particularly practical in armoured vehicles.



The following year berets had been introduced and crews had started wearing one-piece overalls – apparently often purchased at their own expense. This view shows the chain drive system and the cramped entry through the rear of the superstructure.



A newspaper cutting from 1925 shows a typical weekend exercise – all three of the unit's cars plus a lorry acting as tender to carry kit and tentage.



The first major call out of the Sharpshooters armoured cars was for the General Strike in 1926 when they and the Westminster Dragoons were called on to guard convoys of food and other produce as they were being distributed across London. Here they are shown near Marble Arch.



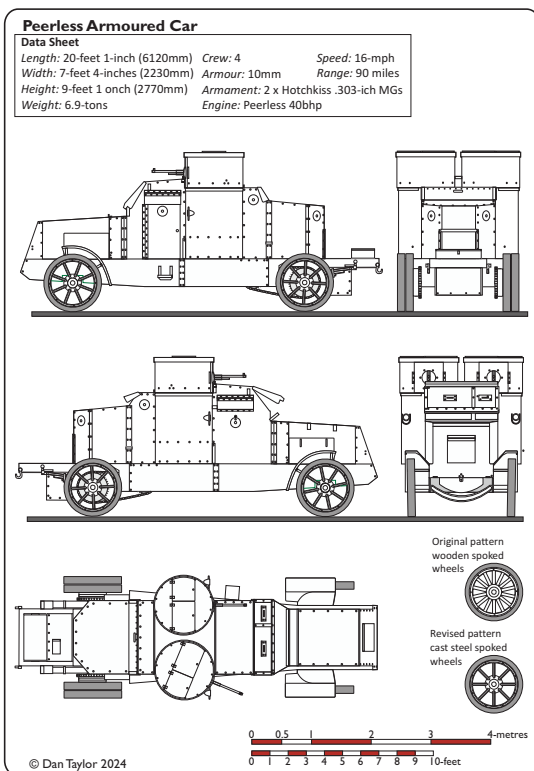
An interesting portrait of a Peerless to which has been added a sign 'borrowed' from a construction vehicle. On the left is Lionel Ray ('Uncle Ray' as he was generally known within the unit). After serving with the Sharpshooters throughout the 20s and 30s, he was commissioned and became a technical adjutant.

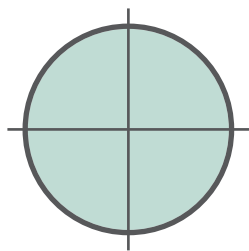


A major, if little-known activity of the Sharpshooters was the first installation of wireless equipment in an armoured vehicle. One of the officers, Captain Hargreaves bought the equipment – at his own expense – which was tested during the summer camp of 1927 in Moultsford. Two Peerless and one lorry were used as transmitting stations and members of the press attended to see how it performed. The Times reported the test a great success, though he did comment that the poor old Peerless armoured cars seemed past their best.

Regents Park. When necessary for exercises or camps, further vehicles would be allocated or shared with the other armoured car companies. Initially the cars were fitted with the first pattern wheels, identified by being wooden and having fourteen spokes. Contemporaneously, those Peeless cars deployed to Ireland had run into a problem. Irish nationalists quickly discovered that the simple expedient of thrusting a rod between the spokes shattered them, making the wheels collapse catastrophically. Consequently, these were replaced with eight-spoked cast iron wheels and our photographic record shows that the wooden variety had ceased to be used by 1924.

The vehicle was armed with two Hotchkiss machine-guns, each in an independently rotating turret on top of the superstructure. It was normal practice, though, to dismount the guns for combat, which was probably a reflection on the poor manoeuvrability of the Peerless, rather than ideal tactical use. Its armour, such as it was, barely offered protection from small-arms fire. The Peerless' many foibles meant that they were a useful vehicle to help the Sharpshooters adjust to the revised role of the unit and, as an aside, their idiosyncrasies enabled crews to become well versed in vehicle maintenance and repair. The fan belts, in particular, seem to have been susceptible to failure and needed frequent attention, leading to frequent stops to allow the vehicles to cool. Some internal documentation refers to the vehicle being called the 'Dragon', though no reference has been found on this in official literature. Most accounts suggest that their crews were glad to see the back of the Peerless in 1930 – particularly when its replacement was the much sportier Rolls-Royce armoured car. However, Len Gaywood seemed to be in two minds. His diary suggests that he would miss the Peerless and that they were swapping one set of known problems for a new set of unknown issues.





97 FIELD REGIMENT KENT YEOMANRY'S ITALY CAMPAIGN IN AUTUMN 1944

by Chris Sutton

Many articles have been written over the years in this journal on Kent Yeomanry's Italy campaign, including David Whitehouse's article in 2007. We have also written up the story of "The Oscar Winner" on the museum touchscreens, featuring Lt Jack Bazzard who won an MC for his bravery as a Forward Observation Officer in the battle at Pergola Ridge; the "Oscar" (also known as "The Sikh") is a silver statuette (now in the museum at Hever) presented to the regiment by 3/1st Punjab Regiment, who 97 Field Regiment (385 battery) provided artillery support to as part of 25 Indian Brigade.



Then in 2022 the museum won a small grant to research the Oscar story from the Punjab point of view, which led us to do joint research with the UK Punjab Heritage Association. One fascinating fact I learned from this research was that it was logical for a British Army artillery unit to support an Indian infantry regiment, as the Indian Army was forbidden to have its own artillery since the days of the Indian mutiny.

97 Field Regiment had landed in Basra (Iraq) in October 1941, and were in action in Egypt and Libya from June to November in 1942. Having spent December 1942 to March 1944 training in Palestine, they arrived at the port of Taranto in the south of

Italy in March 1944. From April to September they fought northwards through the Tiber valley, until reaching the heavily defended Gothic Line. The Allied Command then moved resources to try to penetrate northwards along the Adriatic coast, which is where this article focuses.

We have Colonel Lushington's book "Yeoman Service" that gives us a diary of events, and David Hannam found for me the Indian Army's account "From Teheran to Trieste". We also have Jack Bazzard's diary. There are also the histories of other regiments who fought in the campaign. As I was on a family holiday near Urbino in Italy in August 2024, I decided to spend a day visiting some of the battlefields, and also the Commonwealth War Grave at Forlì where three Kent Yeomen are buried.

The key dates and locations, taken from Lushington's book, are:

- Sep 19 Move to Sennegallia, a pleasant seaside town north of Ancona
- Sep 26 Concentrate at Coriano, now a major shopping centre near San Marino
- Oct 1 Move through the independent republic of San Marino to Trebbio
- Oct 2 In action at Cornachiarra near Trebbio
- Oct 10 Roneofreddo captured in night attack across the Rubicon
- Oct 11 Night march through Sagliano to San Paola
- Oct 15 Move to Sorrivoli
- Oct 10 Capture of Montereale
- Oct 21 Capture of Taverna and San Carlo
- Oct 24 Move to Gallo; Cesena falls
- Oct 31 Move to La Fratta
- Nov 3-18 Rest area at Viserbo, a resort on the Adriatic north of Rimini
- Nov 19 In action at Villagrappa
- Nov 20 Capture of Forlì (Gnr Macleod dies on this day)
- Nov 23 In action at Villafranca
- Dec 7 Move to Marzeno
- Dec 8-16 Series of stiff battles across the River Lamone culminating in the capture of the Pideaura Ridge
- Dec 17 Move to Pergola

From Jan to May 1945 the regiment was then on the plains of the Po Valley, and were near the city of Ferrara when the Italian Campaign ended with German surrender on 2 May.

Those are the brief facts, but what was the landscape like, and how did that play a part in the campaign? From Trebbio through to Marzeno, you are moving northwest along the northern escarpment of the Apennine mountains. The inclines are steep in some parts, but the landscape is mainly hilly farmland and woods, pierced by a number of rivers running northeastwards from the mountains to the coast. I visited in August when the rivers did not look like much of an obstacle. The Rubicon is just a stream, despite its historical significance – Julius Caesar in 49 BC effectively declared war on the Roman Republic by leading his troops southwards across the Rubicon into Roman

territory. The Savio river between Montereale and San Carlo, the Lamone river south east of Pergola Ridge, and the Selvio river north west of Pergola Ridge are each maybe 20 feet wide. But in November and December, when the action took place, these rivers would have been much wider.

All along the line of advance, you can see the Adriatic coast some 10 to 20 miles to the east, and the extensive plains of the River Po to the north.



View north east from Roncofreddo.

The advance along the escarpment must have seemed like an irritating “mopping up” operation in the hills, with the real prize being the plains to the north. The towns at the start of the plains, moving south east to north west along the Via Emilia in parallel to the escarpment, are each about twenty miles apart Rimini (captured in September 1944), Cesena (captured in October), Forli (captured in November), Faenza (captured on 18 December), Imola and Bologna (which both fell in April 1945).

Roneofreddo mentioned by Lushington is an impressively situated hill village. It should actually be spelled Roncofreddo.

Lushington indicates that it was captured in just one day. Montereale is a low ridge which ends just south of the major town of Cesena.

When you reach Marzeno, on the east of the River Lamone, with a major bridge at the historic town of Brisighella nearby, you would be looking northwest across to the next ridgeline at Pergola Ridge, and thinking this would just be another piece of hilly farmland to capture.



Approaching Roncofreddo along line of advance.



On the Monreale Ridge.



On the track along Pideura Ridge looking north-west.



On the track along Pideura Ridge looking north-east.

But then you drive up the very small track leading from the Lamone Valley to the tiny ridge-top hamlet of Pideura; which is the correct spelling– Lushington’s spelling “Pideaura” did not get me anywhere on Google Maps, until I found the correct spelling in “Teheran to Trieste.” As you get to the top of the ridge, you are not seeing the Selvio river ahead. The track you are on becomes a narrow ridge (the Pideura ridge, running south-north) which connects ahead of you with the Pergola ridge running east-west – a bit like a T junction. Pideura hamlet sits at the “T Junction”. Pergola hamlet is on the ridge about half a mile east, looking north towards the River Selvio. Note that this is my judgement of the names and locations based on the available information – however it could be that the north-south ridge is unnamed, and that the western end of Pergola Ridge is called Pideura Ridge. No matter.

On either side of the north-south Pideura ridge are deep valleys, and between the two valleys and the east-west Pergola ridge there are walls of steep rocks. So, the only way to get to Pergola Ridge from the south is to capture the “T junction,” by traversing the very exposed, very defensible Pideura Ridge until it meets Pergola Ridge. No wonder it took a week of stiff fighting to capture, involving many allied units – the 9th Lancers have Pideura as a battle honour. There were a few candidates I saw for the farmhouse which might have been Jack Bazzard’s forward observation post as he guided the guns to protect the 3/1 Punjabis.

Bazzard’s diary recounts how, being the only uninjured officer in the advance he assumed the command of a Punjabi company. The fully story is set out in David Whitehouse’s article in the 2007 Journal but to summarise: In trying to get to a farmhouse to set up a forward observation position, Gnr Cronshaw stepped on a mine and later died of his wounds. Bazzard and Sgt Morris were hit by mortar fire, Bazzard was partially saved by the wireless set he was carrying, which was destroyed. Thus, from the Forward Observation Position in the farmhouse he could not communicate with the guns. Eventually a Punjabi signaller managed to get his own radio operating, and communications with the guns were then possible. When a detachment of Punjabi’s finally reached the farmhouse, they attempted to take Bazzard prisoner as he was wearing civvy clothes – corduroy trousers and a pullover.

When that misunderstanding was sorted out, they followed orders and navigated their way back through the minefield and rejoined the main unit.



ARTILLERY OBSERVER in an old farmhouse directs artillery fire in support of Indian troops.

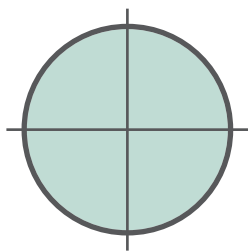
Lushington recounts how “This (Pideura and Pergola Ridge) turned out to be the toughest battle in which the regiment took part. Both Jack Bazzard and Jimmy Baird received MCs for extreme gallantry under very trying circumstances. As usual it rained in torrents and the whole countryside became a quagmire. Jimmy Wigginton was killed in his OP in this battle and the infantry casualties were very heavy.” Having captured the ridge, further attacks were put off several times and eventually abandoned owing to unfavourable weather and the short daylight hours.



View north to the plains from the top of Pergola Ridge.

After leaving Pergola Ridge I visited the Commonwealth War Grave at Forli, which coincidentally lies about ten miles north of Mussolini’s birthplace at Predappio - now a small museum. It is strange how the road-trip starts with Julius Caesar and ends with Mussolini. I chose instead to focus my time on paying respects to the three Kent Yeomen who are buried in the cemetery – Lt Wigginton, Gunner Cronshaw, and Gunner Macleod.





ADRIAN CARTON DE WIART VC

by Penny Malik

As some of you may know, Simon and I, are trying to visit as many graves of WW1 Victoria Cross holders as we can. Recently we came across one particular VC holder, Adrian Carton de Wiart, whose background portrayed an outstanding example of a life of courage, tinged with recklessness. We then discovered that he also served for a period as Adjutant of the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars and felt that his story was worthy of sharing. We visited his grave in Cork in October. Sadly, tucked away at the edge of the graveyard, this monument to himself and his wife Joan, is sadly neglected and falling into disrepair.

Adrian Paul Ghislain Carton De Wiart (1880-1963) was born in Brussels, Belgium on 5th May 1880. After an education in Cairo and the UK he was accepted at Oxford but quickly bailed out on the outbreak of the Boer War, to pursue his dream of life in the military.

He enlisted with the Middlesex Yeomanry on 25th January 1900 under the name Carton because he was underage, not a British citizen and his father did not know. He served in South Africa with Paget's Horse and was hospitalised with fever while serving in Orange River Colony. He then joined a local corps and was wounded in the stomach and groin while trying to cross a river in full view of the Boers. Having been evacuated to hospital, his identity was discovered. His parents were notified and he was sent back to England to be invalided out of the Army on 22nd October.

Back at Balliol, he could not settle, and in December he went to Egypt and persuaded his father to let him leave. He returned to South Africa, enlisted in 2nd Imperial Light Horse and was commissioned on 22nd February 1901. On 14th September he received a Regular Army commission in 4th Dragoon Guards and joined the Regiment at Rawalpindi, India in March 1902.

Adrian moved with the regiment to Middelburg, Cape Colony in 1904 and was promoted to Lieutenant. He was appointed ADC to Brigadier General Thomas Hickman, GOC Middelburg District from July to October 1905. Adrian became a



naturalised British citizen on 25th April 1907 and returned to England with the Regiment in 1908.

Adrian married Countess Freiderike Maria Karoline Henriette Rosa Sabina Franziska Pauline, nee Fugger von Babenhausen on 27th October 1908 in Vienna, Austria. She was the daughter of the chamberlain to Emperor Franz Joseph I. Adrian and Freiderike had two daughters: Anita born in 1909 in Bavaria, Germany, and Maria-Eleanora born in 1911. He was promoted to Captain and then Major by 1911. He was appointed Adjutant of the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars from 1912-1914.

In his autobiography Adrian gives a great description of the life of a yeomanry officer: "Loath as I was to soldier in England, I knew the life of a yeomanry adjutant was an enviable lot and renownedly pleasant both militarily and socially, and Gloucestershire the heart of good hunting country."

"In such a county first things came first and the training of the Yeomanry was most carefully timed not to interfere with the May-fly season and to finish before the hunting, but during our weeks of training the enthusiasm and keenness of the officers and men were really stimulating. We put them through a gruelling training and still they asked for more, and would have been extremely disappointed if they had not got it. The nights were hilarious and rowdy and produced the casualties we had not suffered by day."

"In the early autumn when there was no training, no fishing and no hunting, I found a delightful system whereby I conducted my adjutancy from the Continent by a correspondence course. I had all the papers sent out to me to sign and return, and occasionally and regretfully resorted to the expense of a wire. All this showed the lack of national crises and the high degree of efficiency and smartness of the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars, who were undoubtedly the pick of the Yeomanry and quite capable of entirely running their own show."

In July 1914, he was posted to serve with the Somaliland Camel Corps on operations against Sayyad Mohammed Abdullah Hassan, the "Mad Mullah". He was awarded the DSO for his actions on 19th November against Dervish forces at Shimber Berris. He stormed the fort, during which he lost an eye, and was also wounded in the elbow and ear. He was evacuated to Berbera and then Aden to a hospital. He was moved to Egypt where it was recommended he have the eye removed. He refused and was returned to England for treatment at King Edward's Hospital in London. The eye was removed in on 3rd January 1915.

As a result of his injuries, he was declared unfit for service, but within two weeks demanded to be seen by the Medical Board. The Board decided that if he wore a glass eye, his case would be reviewed. He obtained one, went before the Board, was declared fit, left the building and hailed a taxi. As he got in, he removed the glass eye and threw it out of the window, and donned a black patch, which he wore for the rest of his life.

He joined the 1st Dragoon Guards in Flanders in March 1915, but it was not for long. He was evacuated to England as a result of wounds received at Zonnebeke on 22nd April. A doctor in Belgium refused to remove some fingers on his left hand, so Adrian pulled them off himself. The hand was amputated in London. He received his DSO from King George V while recuperating on 29th June. Now without an eye and hand, he again managed to persuade the Medical Board he was fit for service. He was appointed Temporary Major and 2nd in command of Loyal North Lancashire between March and July 1915.



Adrian Carton de Wiart VC and his wife Joan's grave.



Victoria Cross

He received the Victoria Cross (VC), in 1916. He was 36 years old, and a temporary Lieutenant-Colonel, attached to the Gloucestershire Regiment, commanding the 8th Battalion, when the following events took place on 2/3 July 1916 at La Boisselle, France, as recorded in the official citation:

Capt. (temp. Lt.-Col.) Adrian Carton de Wiart, D.S.O., Dn. Gds.

For most conspicuous bravery, coolness and determination during severe operations of a prolonged nature. It was owing in a great measure to his dauntless courage and inspiring example that a serious reverse was averted. He displayed the utmost energy and courage in forcing our attack home. After three other battalion Commanders had become casualties, he controlled their commands, and ensured that the ground won was maintained at all costs. He frequently exposed himself in the organisation of positions and of supplies, passing unflinchingly through fire barrage of the most intense nature. His gallantry was inspiring to all.

—*London Gazette*, 9 September 1916.

His Victoria Cross is displayed at the National Army Museum in Chelsea.

He was wounded in the action and later in the head at High Wood. He was taken to a dressing station at Corbie before being evacuated to England. When he returned to France a few weeks later, he was wounded again at Grandcourt in September and evacuated again.

He received his VC from King George V at Buckingham Palace on 29th November 1916. He was then appointed Brevet Major on 1st January 1917. He returned to France and commanded 8th North Staffordshire for a short time at Hebuterne. He was then GOC 12th Brigade from January to November 1917. He commanded 12th Brigade during the Battle of Arras and Third Battle of Ypres, until wounded in the hip by shrapnel on 23rd November and evacuated.

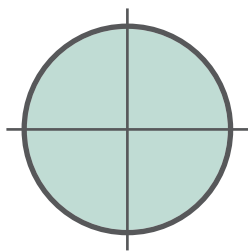
He was promoted again, and was wounded in the leg at Martinsart on 20th April 1918. He was then awarded the CMG on 3rd June 1918. He returned to France in October and was appointed GOC, 113th Brigade from November 1918 to February 1919 as a Temporary Brigadier. He was wounded nine times during the war but, despite this, he wrote "Frankly, I had enjoyed the war." He was also awarded the Belgian Croix de Guerre, Belgian Croix d'Officier de l'Ordre de Couronne and the Companion of Bath.

Following the war, he became ADC to the King from 1920-1924. He was promoted to Colonel in 1922. He transferred to the Regular Army Reserve of Officers and was granted the honorary rank of Major General on 19th December 1923. He then lived in retirement in Poland, until in July 1939, he was summoned back to Britain to be appointed to head the Military Mission to Poland. He managed to escape through Romania and reached Britain. He commanded the Norwegian Expeditionary Force from April-May 1940 and managed to extract his force with great skill. He returned to command 61st Division from 14th May and took it to Northern Ireland. On 6th April 1941, he was appointed to the Military Mission to Yugoslavia, but the Wellington bomber carrying him crashed and he had to swim ashore and was captured by the Italians. He was held for four months at Villa Orsini, Sulmona and then at the Castello di Vincigliati, near Florence, where a fellow prisoner was Philip Neame VC.

He attempted escape several times until released by the Italians in August 1943 and sent to Lisbon to help negotiate the Italian surrender. He returned to England on 28th August and was appointed Head of the Special Military Mission to Nationalist Chinese leader Chiang Kai-Shek and promoted War Substantive Major General. On his return voyage home in 1946, he briefly stopped in Rangoon, where he broke his back in an accident having slipped on coconut matting as he was coming down the stairs. He again spent several months in hospital.



In 1947, he became an Honorary MA at Oxford University and a Fellow of Balliol College. His wife died in Vienna on 4th July 1949. He published his autobiography "Happy Odyssey" in 1950, and he was described by Ian Fleming, author of the James Bond books as "one arm, one eye, and rather more surprisingly only one Victoria Cross." Adrian married Joan Sutherland on 18th July 1951 in Tiverton, Devon. Adrian and Joan moved to Aghinagh House, Killinardrish, County Cork, Ireland, where Adrian died on 5th June 1963. He was buried in Killinardrish Churchyard in the grounds of Aghinagh House.



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

PART 3

1939-1945

by Tim Rayson

In the Second World War both the Kent Yeomanry and the Sharpshooters raised second regiments for service. These were 143 (West Kent Yeomanry) and 4th County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters) and whilst 143 Regt had an unusual war the 4th CLY were in the field with 3rd CLY from the outset.

97 Field Regiment (Kent Yeomanry) were part of the BEF and so when war was declared in 1939 they deployed to France. The second regiment remained in the UK for the time being.

SS BRUGES



The ship was built by John Brown of Clydebank for the Great Eastern Railway as one of a contract for two new steamers and launched on 20 March 1920. She was launched by Lady Thornton and placed on the Harwich to Antwerp route. In 1923 she was acquired by the London and North Eastern Railway.

She was requisitioned during the World War II as a troopship and lifted 97 Field Regt to France when they deployed in 1939. She took part in Operation Cycle (the evacuation of Allied troops from Le Havre) and was bombed and damaged on 11 June 1940 at Le Havre by Luftwaffe aircraft. She was beached to prevent her from sinking.

97 Field Regt took part in the withdrawal to Dunkirk, and troops were evacuated by a number of different ships, one party of about 40 including the CO were taken off by boats from **HMS WINCHELSEA**.



HMS Winchelsea (D46) was an Admiralty W-class destroyer of the Royal Navy, ordered 9 December 1916 from J. Samuel White at Cowes during the 1916–17 Build Programme. She displaced 1200 tons and had a top speed of 34 Knots (39mph)

Winchelsea was launched on 15 December 1917 and was the 7th Royal Navy ship to carry this name, introduced in 1694 and named after the 6th Earl of Winchelsea (1647–1730).

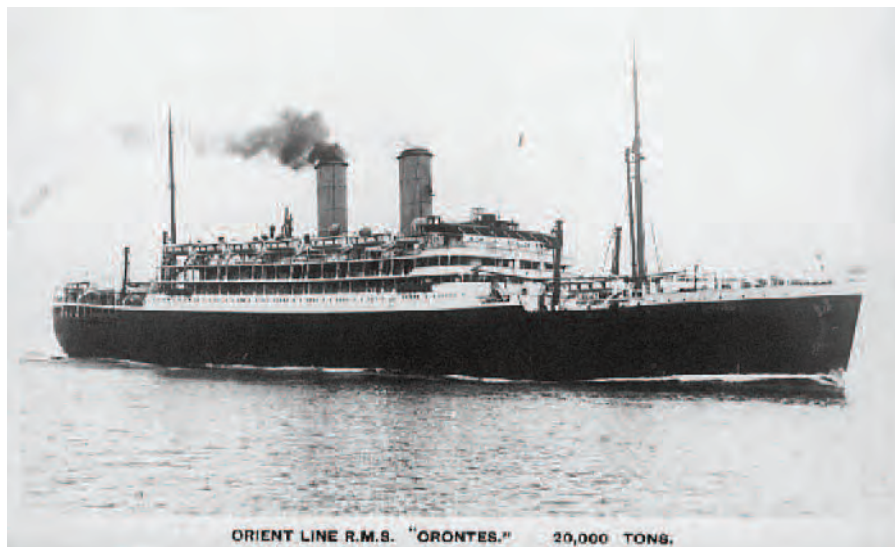
In March 1945 she was decommissioned and sold for scrap.

PASCHOLL

The Pascholl, was a Navigator leader ship for a group of Dutch schuyts. These were flat-bottomed sailboat, broad in the beam, with a square stern; usually equipped with leeboards to serve for a keel. They were used to ferry combat soldiers from the shore to the ships. She lifted troops of the Kent Yeomanry (385 Battery) from both Dunkirk and latterly St Valery.



Following the evacuation of the Kent Yeomanry from France 97 Regt reconstituted in a variety of locations including Wales and the Essex where they received orders to mobilise for service overseas. These however were cancelled and the Regt returned to Wales only to return to Essex and be mobilised. On 28th August 1941 the regiment set sail from Glasgow on the SS ORONTES. The Regt arrived in Cape Town and following a few days rest the convoy headed East with ORONTES setting course for Bombay with half of the convoy.



SS ORONTES was a passenger ship owned by Orient Line.

The ship was built in 1929 by Vickers Armstrong at Barrow-in-Furness, England. The ship displaced 20,000 tons and could carry 1600 passengers peace time and had a speed of 20 knots.

Orontes maiden voyage was a Mediterranean Cruise in June 1929. From 1929 to 1940, she served on the England to Australia route and carried the England cricket team on the way to the famous (or infamous) Bodyline tour in 1932.

During World War II, Orontes became a troopship, serving that role from 1940 to 1947. Ironically in 1947 Orontes transported World War II prisoners of war from Melbourne to Cuxhaven, West Germany.

The Orontes was scrapped at Valencia in 1962.

On arrival in Bombay the regiment speedily disembarked and embarked on HM Transport DEVONSHIRE which was a purpose built transport ship. The journey to Basra took six days where they disembarked and entrained for a non existent camp at a place called Zubair.

HMT DEVONSHIRE was a purpose built troopship built at Fairfield Shipbuilding & Engineering Co at Govan. Her yard No was 670 and she was launched on 20th December 1938. The ship displaced 12,000 tons and could carry 1344 passengers of

which 1150 troops were accommodated in dormitories and hammocks. The ship was diesel powered and had a speed of 16 knots. After delivery the Devonshire reached Dartmouth on July 8th to await her first troopship sailing. On August 11th 1939 the Devonshire sailed from Southampton for India and would spend the next four-and-a-half years on troopship duties before returning to the United Kingdom. Her trooping voyages took her to the Far East, Australia, South Africa and the Mediterranean.

She was sold to the British India Line in 1962. Refitted for school cruising and broken up in 1968.



Following the battle of El Alamein the Regt was posted to Cyprus in mid-January 1943 and took passage in HMS WELSHMAN – leaving their guns and transport behind for their replacement unit.

HMS WELSHMAN



HMS *Welshman* was an Abdiel-class minelayer of the Royal Navy, launched in September 1941. She displaced 3400 tons at full load and had a maximum continuous speed 44 knots. During World War II she served with the Home Fleet carrying out minelaying operations, before being transferred to the Mediterranean Fleet in mid-1942 for the Malta Convoys. She also saw service during Operation Torch.

In January 1943 *Welshman* transported stores, including 150 tons of seed potatoes, to Malta before carrying out minelaying operations in the Skerki Channel, across the Axis evacuation route from Tunisia. She also transferred the Kent Yeomanry from Beirut to Famagusta, Cyprus.

HMS *Welshman* was torpedoed and sunk off Tobruk by the German submarine U-617 on 1 February 1943, with the loss of 157 lives.

In June 1943 following garrison and training duties in Cyprus the Kent Yeomanry embarked for Palestine on HMS *MANXMAN* sister ship to *WELSHMAN*.

HMS MANXMAN



Following training in Syria, Palestine and, Egypt the Kent Yeomanry were called to deploy to Italy and departed from Port Said for Taranto on the RMS *FRANCONIA*. This was to be last ship borne journey by 97 Field Regiment.

RMS FRANCONIA



RMS *Franconia* was launched at the John Brown & Company shipyard in the town of Clydebank, Scotland and displaced 20,000 ton with a top speed of 16 knots. She could carry up to 1750 passengers in peace time. In September 1939, she was requisitioned as a troopship after refitting at Liverpool. She had a collision off Malta with the French troopship *Marietta Pacha* and was escorted to Malta by the armed merchant cruiser *Alcantara*. The ship was repaired in time to take part in the Norwegian campaign. On 16 June 1940, while en route to St Nazaire as part of Operation Aerial (the evacuation of the Second British Expeditionary Force from France), she was damaged by near-misses from German bombs and was escorted back to Liverpool for repairs.

Later in the war, she took troops to India and took part in landings at Madagascar, North Africa, Italy and the Azores. In 1945 she was used as a headquarters ship for Winston Churchill and the British delegation at the Yalta Conference. At the end of the war in Europe, *Franconia* made several trips across the Atlantic carrying returning US troops and refugees. After VJ Day she was employed repatriating British troops, including freed prisoners of war, from India. During her government service, she had covered 319,784 miles (514,642 km) and carried 189,239 military personnel.

After more than three decades of activity in both war and peace, *Franconia* was retired and scrapped in 1956.

And so ends the story of 97 Field Regiment's travels around the oceans. There is no information readily available for 143 Field Regiment but as they spent 18 months in Iceland there must be some information out there somewhere!

We now turn our attention to the 3rd and 4th CLY and their journey's to get to the action.

The 3rd and 4th CLY forming part of 22 Armoured brigade deployed to the desert in August 1941 with 3rd CLY embarked in RMS *Orion* together with brigade HQ from Avonmouth docks whilst 4th CLY were in RMS *Strathnaver* which sailed from Liverpool – 2RGH who were the 3rd armoured regt in the brigade were on RMS *Strathmore* with the convoy commander.

The journey out was quiet with one exception when the *Orion* rammed the escorting battle cruiser HMS *REVENGE* when the latter's steering gear failed. There was quite bit of damage but both ships made it to Cape Town where repairs were carried out and subsequently proceeded to Aden and then to Alexandria the final destination where they subordinated to 7th Armoured Division.

RMS *Orion* was an ocean liner launched by the Orient Steam Navigation Company in 1934 and retired from the water in 1963 after carrying about 500,000 passengers. A 23,371 ton passenger ship, the *Orion* was built to carry 486 first class, 653 tourist class passengers and 466 crew from Europe through the Pacific to Australia.

She was delivered to her owners in August 1935 and made a series of cruises from Tilbury Docks, London, the first of which was to Norway. On 29 September 1935 she sailed from Tilbury on her maiden voyage to Australia. *Orion* alternated between voyages to Australia with short cruises until the outbreak of World War II, when she was requisitioned by the British government as a troopship.



Wartime service

Orion's first voyage as a troopship was to Egypt, then to Wellington, New Zealand, to transport troops to Europe. She departed Wellington on 6 January 1940 and sailed in convoy for Sydney, Australia, to rendezvous with her sister ship *Orcades*, the convoy then sailing from Australia to Egypt.

On 15 September 1941, while part of a convoy carrying troops to Singapore, she was following the battleship *HMS Revenge* in the South Atlantic when the warship's steering gear malfunctioned and *Orion* rammed *Revenge*, the impact causing severe damage to *Orion*'s bow.

She continued to Cape Town, where temporary repairs were made and then continued to Singapore, where more permanent repairs were performed. The Japanese army was at this time advancing on Singapore, so *Orion* was called upon to evacuate civilians to Australia.



RMS ORION bows after the collision with HMS REVENGE.



RMS STRATHNAVER, later **SS Strathnaver**, was an ocean liner of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company (P&O).

Strathnaver was built by Vickers Armstrong on the Tyne and was a 22,000 GRT ocean liner with a speed of up to 23 Knots. She had three funnels but only the middle one served as a funnel: the first and third funnels were dummies.

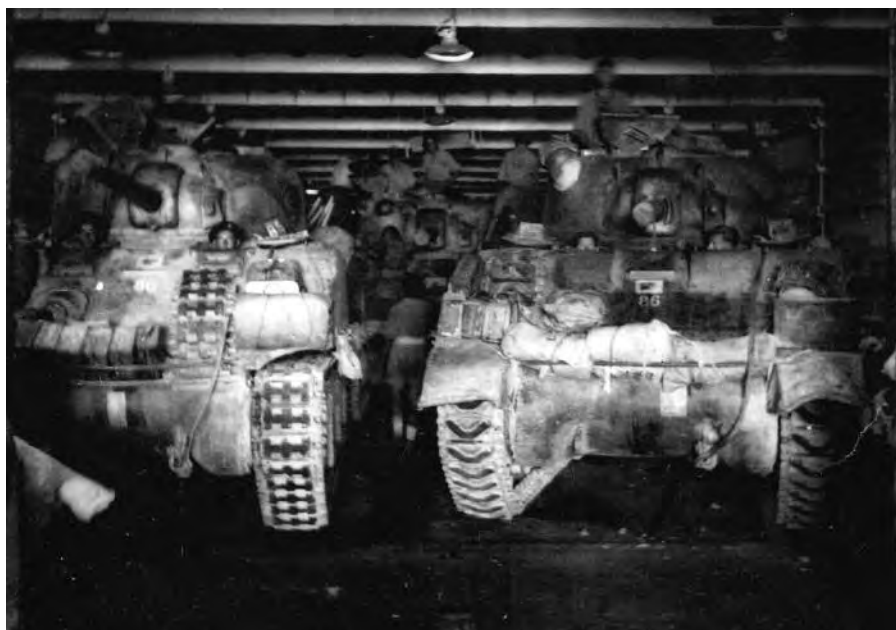
She was the first of five sister ships in what came to be called the “Strath” class. All previous P&O steamships had black-painted hulls and funnels but Strathnaver and her sisters were painted with white hulls and buff funnels, which earned them the nickname “The Beautiful White Sisters” [4] or just “The White Sisters”. Strathnaver and her sister ships RMS Strathaird and RMS Strathmore were Royal Mail Ships that worked P&O’s regular liner route between Tilbury in Essex, England and Brisbane in Queensland, Australia.

In 1939 or 1940 the two sisters were requisitioned as troop ships. Strathnaver’s war service included bringing Australian and New Zealand troops to Suez and Allied troops to the Anzio landings. She remained a troop ship until November 1948, when she was returned to P&O. In her nine years of government service she carried 129,000 troops and travelled 352,000 miles. She was scrapped in 1962 following over 30 years service.

Landing Ship Tank

As the desert campaign progressed to its finish post El Alamein the 3rd CLY was selected to take part in the invasion of Sicily swiftly followed by Italy whilst 4th CLY carried on with the final push towards Tunis and the subsequent invasion of Italy. The operational environment precluded the use of ocean liners for transport because both sets of landings were going to be assault events with the tanks driving straight into action. For these both regiments embarked on Landing Ships Tank (LST) and 8 or 9 LSTs were required to lift each regiment with each carrying up to 20 M4 Sherman tanks with which each regiment was equipped. For the DDay landings a mixture of

LST and LCT were used with 3rd CLY embarking on LCT and 4th CLY on LST. The photos below are of 3 CLY loading their tanks onto LCT.





4th CLY 'Firefly' coming ashore in Normandy. 7th June 1944.

At the end of 1943 both the 3rd and 4th CLY were withdrawn from Italy and returned to the UK on different ships in preparation for the Normandy landings. Both regts handed their tanks over before embarking. 4th CLY were the first to leave on HMT CAMERONIA arriving back in the UK on 3rd January and moving down to Thetford to re-equip with the Cromwell tank whilst 3rd CLY were the last to leave at the end of January 1944 on the MV TEGELBERG.

HMT CAMERONIA in Suez 1941

RMS Cameronia was a British ocean liner which was built in 1920 by William Beardmore & Co Ltd, Dalmuir for the Anchor Line. Cameronia participated in the 1937 Spithead Naval Review, where she was used as a floating grandstand. She was requisitioned for use as a troopship in the Second World War and could carry around



1400 passengers. The ship survived a torpedo attack off Crete in 1941 and spent quite a while being temporarily repaired before returning to Scotland for a full repair. Cameronia was the largest troopship that took part in Operation Overlord in June 1944. She served until the end of the war, when she was laid up. In 1953 she was requisitioned by the Ministry of Troop Transport (MoTT) and renamed Empire Clyde for more trooping duties and was scrapped in 1957.



M.V. “TEGELBERG”, (Dutch), Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappi, passenger ship. The M.V. “Tegelberg” was built in 1938 by Nederlandsche Scheepsbouw Mij, Holland, for Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappi of Balavia, (K.P.M.) on the company’s long haul route from South Africa to the Indies and onwards to Japan. The dimensions; 14,150grt, Length: 559.0ft x Breadth: 72.2ft, passengers: 664 in three classes, Crew: 231. Propulsion was by 8 cylinder diesels, totalling 11,000bhp through three propellers, this gave a speed of between 16 - 18 knots.

During WWII the ship was fitted out as a troopship under the control of Ministry of War Troopships. and was fitted with anti aircraft guns situated forward, in way of the funnel and aft together with three twin 120mm guns. The ship was also fitted with extra lifeboats. The TEGELBERG collected 3rd CLY from Naples at the end of January 1944. and brought them back to the UK in Dec 1944.

In 1945 she was transferred back to the original owners and in 1947 was transferred to the newly formed Royal InterOcean Lines entering service on the new Japan - Hong Kong - Singapore - South Africa - South America Route. The ship was eventually broken up in Taiwan in 1968.

At the end of the war the 3rd/4th CLY remained in Germany as part of the Army of Occupation and was placed into suspended animation in September 1946 before being reconstituted on 1st January 1947. 97 (Field) Regt were placed into suspended animation on 12th December 1945 whilst 143 (Field) Regt joined them on 18th April 1946. On 1st January 1947 143 (Field) Regt were formally disbanded whilst 97(Field) Regt were reformed as a LAA Regt based in Maidstone.

List of Association members who have contributed to the Association funds in the financial year 2023/24 and to the end of the calendar year 2024, covering individual donations, specific donations towards the journal and to the Association funds in general.

Paul Acda, Les Adams, RJ Allen, Mrs Carole Amitrano (in memoriam), John Annett, Jaimie Barr, Colin Bingley, Sian Birtwistle, J Bishop, Terry Bodman, Guy Bonser, Becky Bowles, D Browning, Graham Browning, Terry Burton, Chris Chadwick, Paul Coxon, Eric Cross, Peter Crowley, S Dodds, Michael Donnelly, The Drapers Charitable Trust, Guy Farage, Rand Faytaren, John Gillman, Jason Grais, David Hannam, P Harrison, J Henderson, David Hewer, Richard Hewett, Boyd Holmes, Mark Hodson, Neil Hubbard, Tony James, Simon Jenkins, Andy Johnson, Gordon Jones, Huw Jones, Dominic Rucke-Keene, David Lakin, Leon Le Besque, JP Lee, Bill Lovell, James McNamara, Simon and Penny Malik, Paul Martin, Anthony Michael, Chris Moden, Pat Moore, A Newitt, Andy and Penny O'Hare, David Palmer, Mrs Gladys Ping (for Mr T Brown), The PDC Trust, Tim Rayson, S Ridgwell, Paul Rogers, Steve Shelley, Lee Sirett, Ray Smith, William Stancombe, Chris Sutton, Trevor Tew, Mrs Megan Timbrell (in memoriam Clifford Bliss 3rd/4th CLY), AG Thompson, Ronnie Todd-Young, Ewan Watt, Matthew Webb, Dave Whitehouse, PA Wilson, The Worshipful Company of Insurers, Keith Wrate, Kevin Wright, and C Sqn RY and the members of the old Croydon Branch.

If you have donated and your name does not appear above then it is probably because:

- Donations are received throughout the year and the above list is a snapshot taken at the end of last calendar year.
- You are paying into the wrong account and need to change your mandate
- We have actually missed you - possible but unlikely. Our apologies if we have!

Any queries should be directed to the Treasurer by email: Treasurer@ksya.org.uk

Kent & Sharpshooters Yeomanry Association PRI Shop

The Hon Secretary has a small stock of Association items for sale:

KSY Association non crease silk tie£30.00 excl postage

KSY Association non crease silk Bow tie (ready tied)£30.00 excl postage

KSY Association non crease silk Cumberbund£40.00 excl postage

KSY Silver tie pin.....£70.00 excl postage

KSY Silver brooch.....£50.00 excl postage

Contact Tim Rayson on Secretary@ksya.org.uk



The tanks of 3rd County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters) having their wading gear removed, shortly after landing in Normandy, 7th June 1944. The field where this took place happens to be the precise location of the new D-Day Memorial, a short way east of Arromanches.

