

The sharpshooter

**VE/VJ
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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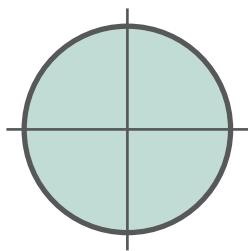
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Front cover: C(KSY) Sqn night leaguer on SPTA.

Rear cover: SSgt Crane, 265 (KCLY) Signal Sqn, OPFOR Copehill Down Camp.

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

by Lt Colonel Matthew Webb JP VR

Welcome to the 2025 edition of the Sharpshooter journal.



It has been a busy year with the highlights being our VE/VJ Day BBQ at Hever Castle in August and the 78th edition of the Bir El Gubi dinner in November.

We were lucky that the VE/VJ Day BBQ at Hever was treated kindly by the weather and it proved a big success with 120 of the Sharpshooter family and our friends attending. It also provided the perfect opportunity to unveil the newly conserved 1963 Sharpshooters Guidon. It looks superb in its new display case in the museum and I would recommend a visit to those yet to see it. The two Kent Yeomanry Guidons were, unfortunately, deemed too fragile

for conservation, but the Museum Trust has plans to preserve them, to prevent further deterioration. The funds required for this project were considerable and I'd like to give a special thanks to our friends at the Worshipful Company of Insurers and all those Sharpshooters whose generous donations made the essential conservation work possible.

The Bir El Gubi dinner in November was a memorable evening with 80 Sharpshooters and guests assembling at the Cavalry & Guards Club. We were fortunate to be joined by the new Master of the Worshipful Company of Insurers, Sara Fardon, Lt Col David Burnett, CO of 71SR and Col Tim Orchard, Hon Col of 71SR.

As is customary, prior to this year's dinner I sent a letter of Loyal Greetings to His Majesty the King. I'm delighted to report that His Majesty graciously replied with a warm message thanking us for our loyalty and sending us his best wishes for an enjoyable evening, which was read to us by our Honorary Secretary, Tim Rayson RVM.

This year I would like to take the opportunity to reflect on the continued relevance of the Sharpshooters to the UK's defence. We have been conscious for many years of the dwindling numbers of those veterans who served in the two World Wars. However, this year we lost Capt Terry Smyth, a veteran of the much more recent Second Gulf War of 2003. This made me realise that in recent years the number of our veterans with operational service has, in fact, been on the increase. During the fifty years following the Second World War, hardly a single Sharpshooter served on operations overseas. Yet

in the first quarter of this century, over one hundred Sharpshooters have been mobilised for operational deployments. This is an incredible achievement from just three serving squadrons. The range of these deployments is quite staggering and include Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Kosovo, Poland and Estonia (in support of NATO's eastern flank), Cyprus, Kuwait, Iraq, Afghanistan, and even Mali.

I suspect that, in an increasingly unstable world, we will continue to see this roll call of Operational service grow. It is good to know that the serving Squadrons are well recruited and as committed as ever to contributing to our national security when asked. The legacy of the Sharpshooters is in good hands.

Given my comments on the continuing Operational demands placed on our serving Squadrons and our increasing number of modern veterans it will come as no surprise that we have been busy on the welfare front. I'm pleased to report that in the last year the Association has provided welfare packages to those soldiers serving abroad on Operations and Christmas hampers to their families at home. In addition, we have provided Christmas gifts to those veterans who we know have faced difficult times during the year. I would urge all members to inform the association of any comrades that they know are in difficulty, whether financially or through ill health, so that our welfare team can assist if possible. And on that note, I must thank Penny O'Hare, who is our Welfare lead, for all the work she does to ensure our serving soldiers and veterans receive support when needed.

As ever, the forecast of events for 2026 will provide numerous social events at which members can enjoy the company of old and new friends. The highlights are Cavalry Memorial Sunday (10th May), Sharpshooter 125 (events TBC) and the El Gubi Dinner (21st Nov). I would welcome suggestions for events (either social or fundraising) as we are here to serve the interests of our members. Please feel free to contact me at chairman@ksya.org.uk with your ideas, which I will be happy to discuss with the trustees.

The journal is a greater success each year and we are incredibly fortunate to have as our editors Colonel Simon Malik, Tim Rayson and Penny Malik, who devote so many hours producing this magnificent publication, each year. My thanks to each of them for bringing such joy to the Sharpshooter family each year and to all our members and friends for their contributions and articles which they provide for publication.

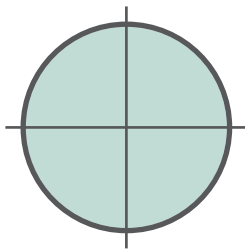
Finally, I would like to thank the excellent committee members, which I inherited 12 months ago for their ongoing commitment and great work.

Lt Col Matthew Webb JPVR

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.



THE SECRETARY'S REPORT 2025

by Tim Rayson RVM

Last year I tried to write a brief report for the Journal because the members of your Association's committee had done sterling work in writing the reports and articles that the Secretary would have generated in the past! I'm going to try and do the same for 2025 which is drawing to a close as I write it.

The year has seen last year's management changes bedding in and the 'season' started off with the commemorations surrounding VE 80 and swiftly followed by the 101st Combined Cavalry parade both of which were a great success. The new ticketing process seemed to work and whilst there maybe be some further tweaks it is here to stay. The parade itself was a great day out, the weather was kind and whilst it has a serious side it is becoming a much more family friendly event so I hope as many of you as possible will attend in 2026. If you need seats rather than marching let me know. The 102nd parade will take place on Sunday 10th May 2026 with the organising regiment being the Queens Own Yeomanry. Further details to follow in March/April.

VJ Day followed in early August and at the end of the month the Association hosted a VE/VJ BBQ at Hever Castle where the newly conserved 1963 guidon was installed in the Museum where it is on permanent display. A report on the event and the conservation of the guidon as well as the Kent Yeomanry guidons are in the Journal. In August I also attended a Gala dinner of the German Light Horse club which took place in the Officers Mess at Luneburg. A great night out and one lesson learned which is to make sure you book a real hotel in Germany and not an Airbnb. If it was not for the sterling efforts of Captain Jan Killer, Adjt of Aufklärungslehrbataillon 3 "LÜNEBURG" I'd probably still be walking the streets of Luneberg trying to find it!

In October I handed over the medals of the late Major Dickie Maydwell to the Army Cadet Charitable Trust for display at the Cadet Training Centre Frimley Park. Please read the article in the Journal to discover what a philanthropist he was.

A small party of Sharpshooters attended the opening of the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey on a chilly day. HM The Queen visited all of the plots stopping at ours for a brief chat with the Hon Secretary. There was a splendid lunch afterwards at the Cavalry and Guards Club afterwards for those attending: myself, David Palmer, Keith Wrate, Ron Snowball, Kevin Wright. Most units represented there have four tickets and we are very lucky to be able to have more. This allows more Sharpshooters to attend although only one is allowed to stand and greet HM The Queen as she inspects the plots. It would be nice to see more members turn up and tickets are available from me on a first come/first served basis.

The 2025 El Gubi dinner took place in November with 75 guests filling the Coffee Room of the Cavalry and Guards Club. The number attending was lower than in previous years due to a diary conflict with RY – something that we will try and avoid for 2026.

Congratulations are due to Steve Shelley for his thorough planning and preparation which ensured that it went off without a hitch and his report is in the Journal. The 2026 El Gubi dinner will take place on Saturday 21st November at the Cavalry and Guards Club. C Sqn threw a very convivial Winter ball on 14th December at the Shirley Hills Golf club.

And so the year ended. As you will see from the 'Empty Saddles' section both sqns lost a number of long standing members including those who have served on operations such as OP TELIC. These losses bring added poignancy to the words of the 'Bidding' – They shall grow not old as we are that left grow old, Age shall not weary them nor the years condemn, At the going down of the sun and in the morning we shall remember them. Let us not forget them but remember them focussing on the good times that we had with them in the family that is the Kent and Sharpshooters Yeomanry.

The Forecast of Events for 2026 has quite a lot in it whether it is events or anniversary's where you can perhaps organise your own event to commemorate them. The two key events are the 85th Anniversary of the Battle of El Gubi and the 125th anniversary of the raising of the 3rd County of London Yeomanry announced in the London Gazette on 23rd July 1901. Quite what the format of Sharpshooter 125 will be is not yet determined but we may well be joining forces with F Sqn RY who were raised on the same date as the 2nd County of London Yeomanry (Westminster Dragoons). And yes there was a 1st County of London Yeomanry as well raised on the same day and who are now (via many amalgamations) 31 (Middlesex Yeomanry and Princess Louise's Kensington) Signal Squadron, 71st (City of London) Yeomanry Signal Regiment.

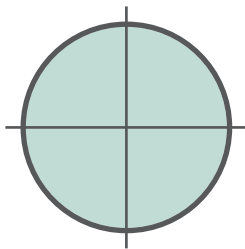
On a personal note 2025 continued to have its challenges and although I had retired from His Majesty's Body Guard of the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen at Arms there was still one further duty to perform which was to attend a private audience with His Majesty at Buckingham Palace. This duly took place and His Majesty graciously presented me with a signed photograph and an enamel pill box from HM The Queen.

Finally as you all know from the Little Green Book membership of the Association is automatic if you are serving or have served in either of the units that bear the title Kent and Sharpshooters Yeomanry. However 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 formally sign up by completing a membership form. That in turn leads me on to subscriptions and donations. It is a fact that only 77 out of 363 members of the Association pay a voluntary subscription that allows us to support members and their families whilst deployed and help retired members in need as well.

This year we delivered 'morale' boxes to all those on deployment abroad and working with the RYRA we also sent hampers to their families. We also directly supported those individuals who deployed from Bexleyheath and we also delivered 16 Christmas hampers to retired members as well as supporting a number of benevolent cases with not insignificant grants.

We really need everyone to contribute by a voluntary subscription so please contribute what you can afford - £2 or £3 per month is fine and 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 sign up and help us continue to support both of our squadrons and past members and their families.



MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT 2025

Dear Sharpshooter

Having taken over the role of Membership secretary in the summer of this year, I would like to thank Chris Moden for the hard work he has undertaken over the past few years in maintaining the membership status and wish him well as he retires from this role to concentrate on his family.

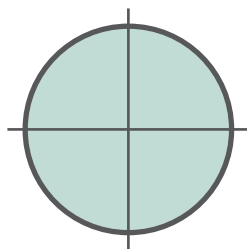
The status of the membership across the association and including the serving soldiers across both squadrons is as follows:

Full Member.....	312
Family Member.....	11
Friend of KSYA	23
Honorary Member	7
Vice President	9
President.....	1
Total Members.....	363
Members who have subscribed.....	77

In taking over the role my aim is to try and increase the membership of the association, I would therefore ask if anyone has contact details of past members of the KSYA who may not be receiving updates from the association, would they pass on my contact details so I can include them for next year.

Your support is greatly appreciated
David Shardlow
KSYA Membership Secretary
membershipsec@ksya.org.uk





FORECAST OF EVENTS 2026

2025

February

1st **110th Anniversary** of the amalgamation of the West Kent Yeomanry (Queen's 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 **109th 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 **232nd 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. 81st Anniversary of the end of WW2.**
10th Combined Cavalry Old Comrades Association Parade and Service Hyde Park. This is the 102nd parade. Sponsor Regiment: The Queen's Own Yeomanry. Lunch arrangements tbc. Please contact the Hon Secretary on 15th March for further details.

31st **124th Anniversary** of the end of End of the Second Boer War in 1902.

June

6th **82nd Anniversary** of the D Day Landings.
13th **82nd Anniversary** of the Battle of Villers Bocage in 1944.

July

10th **83rd Anniversary** of the invasion of Sicily (3rd CLY) in 1943.
23rd **Founders Day. 125th Anniversary of the 3rd CLY being formally established in the London Gazette in 1901.**
26th **117th Anniversary** of the First annual dinner of the Brigade of Sharpshooters OCA in 1909.

August

- 4th **112th Anniversary of the start of World War 1.**
15th **VJ Day. 81st Anniversary** of the end of the war against Japan.
30th **84th Anniversary** of the Battle of Alam El Halfa (1st Alamein) (3rd and 4th CLY) and 97th Field Regt (Kent Yeo) in 1942.

September

- 3rd **87th Anniversary of the start of World War 2.**
22nd **83rd Anniversary** of 3rd CLY landing in Italy at Taranto in 1943.
83rd 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 **84th Anniversary** of Battle of El Alamein (2nd Alamein) (3rd and 4th CLY) and 97th Field Regt (Kent Yeo) in 1942.

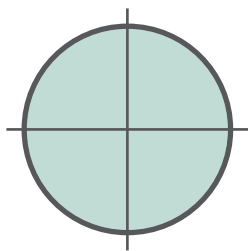
November

- 7th 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.
9th The Lord Mayors Show.
10th Remembrance Sunday.
22nd 2 RGH Bir El Gubi service at Badminton. 1115hrs. Please advise the Hon Sec if you are going.
19th **85th Anniversary** of the Battle of Bir El Gubi (3rd and 4th CLY) and 2GH in 1941.
21st **The 79th Bir El Gubi dinner. Venue: The Cavalry and Guards Club. Updated flyer to follow.**

December

- Inputs for the 2026 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 in September.
20th **125th Anniversary** of the Battle of Tafel Kop, South Africa (23rd Bn Imperial Yeomanry – the original Sharpshooters) in 1901.
25th **124th 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 2025

by David Palmer, Hon Treasurer

Using 31st March 2025 valuations of investments, the Association had net assets of £101k compared with £86k at the end of the previous financial year. This increase in net assets can be significantly attributed to the receipt of funds from the old Croydon Branch into the Association funds, as well as the initial crowdfunding activities for the guidon conservation project, which will be paid in the current financial year.

The M&G Charifund units were valued at around £62k at the yr end compared to £60k at 31 Mar 2024. The value as at 30 Sep 2025 is running at some £66.5k, so we assess this is still a safe investment, now recovering well from the previous stock market fall.

The Cambridge and Counties Bank fixed rate investment of £16,915 from December 2023 came to fruition, with a receipt of £0.9k in interest. This interest was retained and reinvested into a further fixed term investment account maturing in February 2026, at 4.65%. Whilst this rate remains attractive, the falling Bank of England base rate will have an impact on future investments and so this holding will remain under review.

Total income this financial year has increased to £31.7k from around £14k. This does, however include El Gubi receipts in full, only shown as a nett expense last year. A major element of this income came from the transfer of £11k from the old C Sqn Branch funds into the Association accounts, and Gift Aid has also been claimed on this in the 2025/2026 accounting period, as with other claims from the prior years, and this will show in next year's accounts. The Association has continued to benefit from the very generous support of The Worshipful Company of Insurers (WCI). Over 75 individuals have contributed generously to the funds to the value of ±£3.5k Another significant element of income was the initial tranche of crowd funding event for the conservation of the three guidons, generating an initial £2.3k.

At this level of income receipts and funds the Association can continue to publish the annual journal and fulfil its charitable obligations.

Our largest expense was the El Gubi dinner at £8.8k. This year the event resulted in a net expenditure of £1.6k, up from £0.8K the previous year. The increase was due to the number of guests and support to both Sqn's junior members attending. The next largest item continues to be the production and distribution of the annual journal at £4.8k, which is only a minor increase on last year. The Association continues to support the following charities, they being The Yeomanry Benevolent Fund, SSAFA (Kent), the KSY Museum Trust and the Royal British Legion, which have benefitted from a grant of £1.5k, divided between them. Based on the transfer from C Sqn funds, we have also donated an additional £500 to the Combat Stress charity this year. Welfare grants were

made to the value of £4.3k to support ex-Sqn members in need and provide Xmas boxes etc to deployed soldiers and their families. Total expenditure this year was therefore £21k, up some £4k on the previous year.

The net effect has been a surplus during the last financial year of £10,692, compared to the deficit last year of £3.3k.

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 can maximise our returns and seek to gain significant interest under the higher rates available currently.

The accounts have been examined and approved by the kind offices of Mr John Gunn, ACMA.

David Palmer, Lt Col (Retd) TD VR, Honorary Treasurer



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).

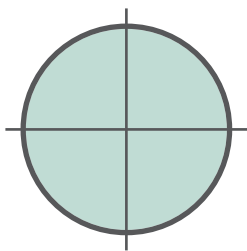
The Association provides support to Sharpshooters on Operations by providing 'goody boxes' as well as supporting their immediate families. It helps serving and retired members in cases of hardship and it organises the Annual Bir El Gubi dinner that takes place in November. We also financially support 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.





WELFARE REPORT 2025 by Penny and Andy O'Hare

The year started quiet but got busy as the year went on. All five of those deployed from C Sqn to Op CABRIITT 16 (WO2 O'Hare, Tpr Teer, Tpr Bowerman, Tpr Slater and Tpr Vithayathil) returned safely from Poland in late March and early April whilst Sig Blackman from 265 sqn came back from Estonia also in early April.

We are as ever grateful for the continuing and generous financial support that our Livery partner the Worshipful Company Insurers gives us and which enables us to send out parcels to our boys and girls abroad when deployed as well as their NOK in the UK.



In February Andy and I went to Combat Stress and passed on a donation of £500 from the Association. They do a marvellous job with limited resources and are not funded by the NHS.

In 2016 Marc Stoner and some friends from C Sqn built a koi carp fish pond as a form of therapy for others to admire and it is still there for visitors to admire.



As usual my little elves have been busy delivering hampers, flowers and Christmas joy to our veterans that have faced hard times this year whether through illness or other circumstances. This year the Association decided that a Christmas cheese and port hamper would be nice and so one of the selection made by The Cheshire Cheese



company was selected whilst flowers were sourced from Interflora. In total 16 boxes plus flowers were dispatched to those who we know are in need.

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 such as SSAFA and the Yeomanry Benevolent Fund that can help and give advice where needed. If you know of someone who would appreciate a morale boosting gift from the Association at Christmas – or indeed at any other time of the year - 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.

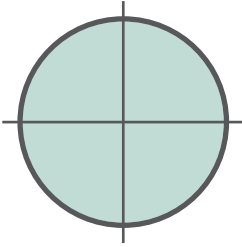
The Journal

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 Journals 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.

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.



EMPTY SADDLES 2025

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

The following members of the Association passed away in the year. 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:

Captain Terry Smyth	C(KSY) Sqn, RY
Peter (Mr Spitfire) Arnold	3 rd /4th CLY, KCLY
Cpl Brian Colyer	265 (KCLY) Signal Sqn
SSgt Cath Tickner	HQ and 265 HQ (KCLY) Signal Sqn
WO2(SSM) Allibone	265 (KCLY) Signal Sqn
Cpl Rowland Symmons	265 (KCLY) Signal Sqn

THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVER MORE LEST WE FORGET

Captain Terry Smyth

15th June 1960 to 16th October 2025.

Captain Terry Peter Smyth — “Smythy” to his friends — a distinguished soldier, respected leader and cherished father, passed away on 16 October 2025 at the age of 65 following a courageous battle with Progressive Supranuclear Palsy (PSP). Born on 15 June 1960, Terry dedicated his adult life to service, exemplifying professionalism, humility and courage throughout his military career.



Terry joined the Army in January 1980 as a Trooper in 6th Troop, C Squadron, Royal Yeomanry. From the outset, his strong work ethic and steadfast character set him apart. He served as a Sharpshooter from 1980 until his retirement from enlisted service in December 2007, rising through the ranks to become Squadron Sergeant Major — a role in which he was deeply trusted for his judgment, fairness and unwavering commitment to the soldiers under his care.

Terry was a versatile soldier and leader. He guided many NCOs and young officers when needed, and offered helpful advice to more senior officers when appropriate, all to the betterment of the individuals concerned or the Squadron overall. Even as the Squadron Quarter-Master Sergeant, Terry ably showed his skills as a 30mm Rarden gunner helping to train gunners and Troop Leaders during preparations for the regiment’s final gunnery range exercise before the regiment changed roles and our armoured vehicles were taken back by the Army.

In 2003, Terry deployed on operations in Iraq during Op Telic 1. His leadership and conduct during this demanding tour earned him a commission and he went on to serve with distinction as an officer, ultimately attaining the rank of Captain. Throughout his career, he led by example: calm under pressure, thoughtful in his decisions and always mindful of the welfare and development of those he led.

Beyond the uniform, Terry was a devoted father and a keen DIY enthusiast. He also forged a successful career as an engineer and manager with BT, where colleagues valued the same steadiness, integrity and good humour that defined his military service. He will be remembered for his quiet wit, his generosity of spirit and his ability to offer calm reassurance when it was needed most.

Terry's funeral took place on 24 November and was attended by a large gathering of family, friends and members of C Squadron — a testament to the impact he had on so many lives. In respect of Terry's family's request for no flowers, donations were invited to be made to the Association in memoriam, to be passed to the PSP Association which is a charity that supports victims of PSP. A total of £500 was raised from individual donors and The Association claimed Gift Aid on these and added a further £250 from its funds making a total £875 which has been passed to the PSP Association. In acknowledging the donation, the PSP Association have said that the money raised will go towards funding their helpline which offers emotional and practical support, holding more local groups, providing literature for sufferers and funding research into the causes and treatments for this terrible disease.

Military colleagues attending his funeral included: John Adamthwaite, Guy Bonser, Neil Bromwich, Des Campbell, Ray Campbell, George Doughty, Chris Eley, Jack Eley, John Gunn, Mark Hodson, Andy O'Hare, Brennan O'Hare, Penny O'Hare, Jeff Ross, Danny Shead, Lee Sirrett, Matthew Stone, Michael Tenten, Paul Waddington, Steve Woyen.

Terry Smyth leaves behind comrades, friends and family who will remember him with pride and deep affection. His life stands as a reminder of the values he embodied: honour, commitment and compassion.

Rest in peace.



Peter (Mr Spitfire) Arnold

3rd December 1941 – 9th October 2025



Peter served originally with the 3rd/4th CLY and on amalgamation with the Kent Yeomanry in 1961 served with the KCLY during its short life from 1961-1967

Peter was widely regarded by many in the aviation world as knowing more about the world's surviving Spitfire/Seafire aircraft than anyone else and travelled to over 150 countries to see every one of the 260+ examples spread around the world, with only one exception. The exception was Seafire XV PR422 at Meiktila Air Force base, Myanmar, and one which he always wanted to 'tick' off. When we were in Libya in 2007, Peter was interested in the aerial image of a Spitfire underwater at the end of a runway. The local Libyan Secret Service were with us and Peter was discussing how to open up tourism in Libya... but wanted help to explore the potential





Peter Arnold in rear cockpit image by Richard Paver.

recovery of the Spitfire. He had done a similar thing in Egypt which is related in an article in the edition of *The Sharpshooter Journal* .

His reputation in the Spitfire world made him the ‘go to’ person from all corners of the world. He was always incredibly generous with his knowledge and experience, and this has had such a positive effect on many projects and researchers the world over. Peter continued this until not long before his passing. His passion for matters Spitfire are recounted in the 2022 edition of the *Journal*. He was always a great supporter of the Association and had a significant collection of not only rare Sharpshooter cap badges but also sweetheart brooches from the Boer War through to WW2. The sweetheart brooches were covered in an article that he wrote in the 2014 edition of the *Journal*. Both the 2014 and 2022 editions of the *Journal* are available online on the Museum website: <https://www.ksymuseum.org.uk/KSYA/Journals>

Peter was always searching for the next undiscovered image of a surviving Spitfire and over time amassed a world-class photographic collection which is no doubt the largest and most comprehensive on the topic in existence. Countless books and publications have benefitted from the collection over the years.

Peter also appeared on TV when he was interviewed by Sue Lawley about his hobby and his life story including the interview is told in the video on YouTube at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62KuHU1cK-g>

He is survived by his lovely wife Kay and their sons.



Cpl Brian John Colyer

1960 – 2025



A personal tribute

It is with the deepest regret and sadness that I announce the passing of Brian Colyer on 19th September 2025 after losing his long battle with cancer.

Brian or 'BJ' as he was known to his many friends, joined 265 (KSY) Signal Squadron in 1980. Certainly, he was an established member of the squadron by the time I joined a year or so later, as he had already completed his recruit training (Shoeburyness 1981), qualified as an HGV driver and Combat Powerman. In those early days I would often find myself sat up in the cab of my detachment's radio truck with BJ in the driving seat. His brilliant sense of humour and infectious laugh made light of any journey, be it crawling up Wrotham Hill at barely 30mph after a weekend at Crowborough, or the torturous long journey to Otterburn Training Area in Northumberland.

However, it was when we were off duty that I really got to know BJ. In mid-1983 eight of us from 265, including BJ decided to go on a narrowboat holiday on the Grand Union Canal. We split ourselves into two 'crews' where each crew would take it in turns to 'drive' and tackle the locks with BJ really showing us he was a team player. What a fantastic time we all had despite the fact that BJ was largely responsible for us being chased out of a pub in Oxford by dozens of angry university students!

Whether it was army parachute training at Netheravon, a 21st Birthday party (of which there were quite a few), or turning up in fancy dress to go horse riding, BJ was in the thick of it bringing humour to every event. Of course, BJ was active member of the very successful squadron football team and took part in several tours to Herford, Germany – home at that time to 4th Armoured Brigade and 7 Signal Regiment, whose teams they played against.

I can't be sure of the year but probably around 1985, Brian left 265 to join the Metropolitan Police. I know from speaking to him later on, that this didn't work out for him and he then pursued a career in the motor trade – he loved old cars owning at different times a Thames van and Triumph Dolomite. Eventually Brian put roots down in Maidstone with wife Christine. Brian became the proud father of four children – son's Jonathon and Daniel, the latter now serving with the Royal Fusiliers and daughters Victoria and Sarah.

I was so happy that Brian was able to come to our reunion at the Union Jack Club last year, reminiscing over old times. You will be sadly missed by all that knew you. Rest in peace my friend.

Dave Whitehouse

Staff Sergeant Cath Tickner



It is with the greatest sadness that I announce the passing of Staff Sergeant Cath Tickner formerly of 265 (KCLY) Signal Squadron, who died peacefully in her sleep on 1st February 2025, aged 72.

Cath was born on 22nd July 1952. She enlisted into the Women's Royal Army Corps at Harlow, Essex and joined 70 (Essex Yeomanry) Squadron of 71st (Yeomanry) Signal Regiment in about 1970 (presumably when she turned 18). It was while attending a Junior NCO's course at Crowborough Camp, East Sussex in June 1972 that Cath first met her future husband. A rather inebriated Dave Tickner of 265 (KCLY) Squadron had fallen into a ditch following an evening at the NAAFI. Cath came to the rescue and pulled him out, whereupon he promptly proposed. Needless to say, Cath refused his advances. However, they became friends and then began courting, punctuated by further proposals and more refusals! Finally, in 1973 at Annual Camp in Yorkshire, David proposed a fourth time while completely sober and received a hearty "Yes" from Cath. David and Cath married in September 1974 at St Thomas More Church in Harlow. They established home in Tunbridge Wells and it was probably at this point that Cath transferred to 265 (KSY) Signal Squadron.

Cath's TA career went from strength to strength, and by the mid 1970s was Corporal in 905 (Alt) Troop in charge of the Comcen. In 1977, Cath was promoted to Sergeant and that same year obtained the highest WRAC score for SMG at Bisley. At some point Cath completed HGV driver training and one contemporary observing "*Cath was one of the finest HGV drivers on the Regiment. We were in a convoy which came to a very tight turn. Most drivers had to have a couple of goes at getting round. Cath arrived and nailed in one go straight round without stopping.*" In the early 1980s when 265 Squadron's role was changed, the Comcen became even more important, and Cath took a leading role in training and mentoring new Data Telegraphists in what was then UK NALLA Troop but later became Gateway 4.

Even with the demands of motherhood after her first child, Mark, was born in 1986, followed by Helen two years later, Cath soldiered on, playing an active role in regimental trade training. By the time that she finally hung up her boots at the end of the decade, Cath had reached the rank of Staff Sergeant. In March 1991, a retired Cath was awarded the clasp to her Territorial Efficiency Medal for completing 18 years' service.

Cath will be remembered for being a strong advocate of the WRAC and fiercely protective of 'her girls' in 265 Squadron, many of whom recall with fondness her role in their own TA careers. Rest in Peace, Cath, your duty is done.

WOII (SSM) A. J. (“Tony”) Allibone

January 1937 – May 2024



The passing of Tony Allibone last Spring came as a profound shock to his family and friends alike. A brief tribute to his long military service follows and summarises his contribution to the growing success of 265 (KCLY) Signal Squadron in the last quarter of the 20th century.

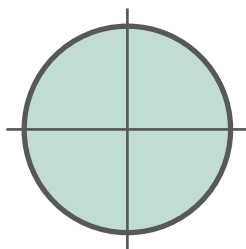
Tony joined the RASC attached to the Guards Division as a 19 year old National Serviceman in 1956. His time was largely spent in Malaya in support of the British action against the Communist terrorists. Having served his time he returned to civilian life and developed a civil service career with H M Inspectorate of Taxes. Located in Worthing, he met and married Shirley and settled into domestic family life.

However, he had so much enjoyed his NS soldiering time that he researched possibilities with the T A. Post the 1967 TA/AER reorganisation, a local opportunity with Royal Signals (V) in Brighton presented itself. He re-joined the colours as a Data

Telegraphist. With his background was immediately noted to be both “a very smart and capable soldier”. He continuously progressed upwards during the 70s, finally leaving 884 Signal Troop in Brighton for 265 (KCLY) Signal Squadron, Bexleyheath as S/Sgt in the 1980s. Acquiring promotion to WO2 in the early 1990s he took over the post of Squadron Sergeant Major until his retirement. During this time he also actively supported the Royal Signals Association Brighton Branch in which he served as both Treasurer and Chairman.

Tony was a much respected, admired and liked, exemplary SNCO who gave much at all the levels and appointments in which he served. He leaves wife Shirley and three sons with whom Royal Signals Association, Brighton remain in touch; he will remain very warmly remembered by all of us.





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 Kev Howard

SSM - WO2 Brennan O'Hare
SQMS - SCpl Jonny Ware
SQMS(V) - SSgt George McNeil

Recruit Troop Leader - Lt Calum Alister-Jones
1 Troop Leader - 2Lt Chris Wilson / Capt Jeremy Critien
2 Troop Leader - Lt Hugh Maitland-Jones / 2Lt Fynn Mitchell

2025 has been a very busy and successful year, seeing C Squadron firmly leading from the front and showing the RY what good looks like.

The war in Ukraine continues to rage on and still shapes the training and focus we have as a Regiment and Army. Drones seem to rightfully be earning their own career stream and will likely be instrumental in ensuring our Lethality increase is achievable with fewer soldiers in the Armed Forces.

Having focused on training and competencies last year, this year was all about the increase in lethality and building up to our annual deployment exercise, increasing our collective competence across numerous Sqn and Regimental exercises. This culminated in early October on this year's ADE where 150 soldiers and 70 vehicles were able to field two Lt Cav sub-units from across the Regiment, led by myself and Maj Greenway, under a BGHQ and supported by wider BG and Brigade support.

The exercise showed what can be achieved with a little more time, space and equipment, paired with the enthusiasm and willingness to learn of our soldiers from B C and F Sqn, operating in a hybrid Squadron under C Sqn SHQ. Lt Wilson will cover the detail in a separate article; however this was a good display of a mounted Sabre Squadron operating in both Jackals and GS to take part in a complex and well-resourced exercise on the plain. I feared that opting for commanding the Squadron from a roofless Jackal might be something I came to regret if the usual October weather was to RV with us, however we were granted a very mild and pleasant exercise with the exception of the wet drive down!

Whilst we have been focussed on collective training, we continue to prove ourselves on operations. This last year, C Sqn also recovered back several soldiers from Operations

where we had four soldiers and the SSM deployed on Op CABRIT 16 to Poland with C Sqn, The QDG, and welcomed them back in April after a successful tour.

In addition to the numerous exercises expertly planned by the Training Team, supported by the permanent members of staff and SHQ, we have also found time to carry out Adventurous Training across multiple disciplines from Alpine Skiing to sailing. The RY also gained a Bronze Medal on this year's Cambrian Patrol, thereby continuing our tradition of medal winning success in this most arduous of competitions. These activities help give back to the serving soldiers, increase buy-in and foster a sense of belonging and teamwork.

Remembrance was another display of excellence and high standards across the Sqn with a thoroughly smart turnout and event.

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 who has now handed over to Sgt Foster, and CoH Knight for this, as well as Capt Howard and the 2ic. The Road to War which set C Squadron up for the ADE success was down to great planning and delivery from you all.

On the Recruitment side, we have a healthy pipeline of 12, with four due to pass out in March 2026. This is down to the hard work from the REMSO, Capt AJ, SSgt Smith as well as Cpl Takacs who have expertly identified, engaged and retained these future Squadron members.

This year's Awards and Presentation night took place at Shirley Park in December and was pulled together by primarily LCpl Bowles with some good PSAO support (as with most Squadron areas) by Capt Faytaren. 73 of us were able to come together as a family, with members of the association, friends and partners to celebrate the hard work, sacrifices and achievements of 2025.

I would also like to call out some Squadron personnel movements. This year we have said goodbye to SSgt Naga who left us and F Sqn as the MT PSI; Mr Thomson also left C Sqn after having spent half the year as the Trg WO and has taken over as SQMS with F Sqn; SSgt Salamut has also moved on to pastures new post CABRIT and now promoted at 77X. To counter these departures, we have welcomed several new joiners to C Squadron. Sgt Foster is our new MT PSI from the QDG; Capt Howard transferred in from LUOTC and has our Training Capt; 2Lt Mitchell, my brother, is shadow 2Tp Leader; Capt Jeremy Critien, brother to the Regimental 2IC has joined us from the RLC and is shadow 1Tp Leader, having also been acting F Sqn PSAO for several weeks; Former CoH now Sgt Buckingham has also rejoined, a former PSI and now Tp Sgt; LCpl Antwis joined us the SCOTS DG as a JNCO. Welcome to all of you!

2026 will see us pivot back to a training year, and with our Brigade renamed to 3 Deep Recce Strike (3DRS) Brigade and with the QDG moving to 1 Deep Recce Strike (1DRS) Brigade, we will need to carve out a new role within 3DRS. The focus will therefore need to be:

1. Increasing the breadth of capability that we hold at Squadron level, enabling us to offer up 'Support Troop' level capabilities to 3DRS, focussing on sUAS (drones), Sharpshooters or Javelin/NLAW capabilities.

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 improving physical and mental health through AT, Sport and retention positive activities.

If we achieve this, I am sure 2026 will see a drastic increase in both lethality but also employability for the Squadron and Regiment, allowing us to then hit the ground running in 2027 and support both Operations and Exercises as a highly capable and versatile reservist Light Cavalry Squadron and Regiment.

It definitely has been another superb year, as we continue to cement our reputation as the best Sqn, in the best Army Reserve Regiment in the best Army worldwide, and it is down to both those in the Sqn but also those at home that we have achieved what we have this year, allowing me to take all the glory as Officer Commanding, so thank you all!

Edward Mitchell Major Sqn Ldr, C (KSY) Sqn, Royal Yeomanry

ADE Journal

Day 1, Friday 03 Oct:

Throughout this exercise 3rd Troop consisted of soldiers from B squadron (Dudley), F squadron (Fulham) and of course C squadron (the mighty KSY) and so it was that on a cold and wet Friday evening the majority of the troop (less the troop sergeant, Sgt Askell, from Dudley) gathered. It was the usual hectic rush to adapt to last minute changes to orbats and vehicle load plans but thanks to a good deal of preparation done in the previous weeks the troop set off from Sharpshooter House in good time. Unfortunately, in the driving rain of storm Amy and just 25 miles short of our target (Avon compound a FOB just outside Neverathon on Salisbury Plain) the troop leader's wagon was forced to pull over due to an electrical fault. Thanks to the diligent work of LCpl Teer, SSM O'Hare and CoH Knight the issue was fixed and the sodden callsign was able to push on and collocate with the others at Avon. The evening was spent on camp cots in the main building with the compound and there was an air of excitement in the room as everyone got their heads down, anticipating the exercise to come.

Day 2, Saturday 04 Oct:

After the customary early start and a container meal cooked breakfast it was straight into exercise admin with safety briefs, the CO's address, the G1 team working tirelessly to ensure everyone's paperwork was inline and of course the inevitable orbat adjustments and crossdeckings that come with exercises of this scale. Of particular interest was the presentation delivered by an MSO from 1DRS who discussed the lessons learned from Ukraine in terms of how we will have to care for and transport casualties.

Day 3, Sunday 05 Oct:

Another early start was in order to complete radio checks and enable us to get the maximum possible training value out of the day. Not long after the Sun rose 3rd troop

shot off from Avon compound heading west towards areas 11, 12 and 13. Once on the area troop level lessons were conducted that covered tactical vehicle movement, vehicle casualty extraction and hide occupation. Thereafter, the troop moved into our first hide of the exercise and although we had definitely benefitted from the day's lessons, nothing beats practice and it's fair to say there was some way to go in terms of noise and light discipline.

Day 4, Monday 06 Oct:

Monday saw a much improved meteorological outlook (that by some miracle stayed put for the remainder of the exercise) and the soldiers enjoyed a day of practising sighting and contact reports, artillery fire missions, vehicle movement and range cards. Of particular interest was a troop of Ajax IFVs accompanied by a pair of quadcopter drones that were operating in the same area as us. They made for ideal practice targets in the sighting reports and fire missions and it was exciting to see the much discussed vehicles finally out and about. That evening we co-located with the other troops for a squadron level CTR lesson led by the indomitable Captain Maxwell. As an ex-regular whose previous job was to teach the regular light cavalry tactics course there could be no one better to educate us in the ways of recce.



Day 5, Tuesday 07 Oct:

The regiment laid on a day of urban warfare training so the bulk of the day was spent in and around Copehill Down urban warfare training facility. It was an excellent day's draining with lessons covering: methods of entry (smashing in doors and windows with hammers and scaling walls with ladders), room clearance drills, captured personal drills, anti-tank weapon (N LAW) training, zulu mustering and rolling replens. The day culminated in a squadron plus strength attack on a series of buildings in search of a high value target (C squadron's own Cpl Ullah). The soldiers of 3rd troop acquitted themselves very well, providing resolute flank protection for the initial assaults and jumping forward when called upon for the final assault. Their efforts in the withdrawal caught the eye of the RSM who, in the after-action review, highlighted their discipline, aggression and use of controlled fire and movement. After the excitement of the day all of the troops cycled through a rolling replen and then struck south into the darkness searching for a place to sleep in the woods surrounding Melsome Pole Barn (an open

fronted barn about one mile southwest of Shrewton). By this point the hide occupation routine was getting slicker and it didn't take long for the troop to get in and bedded down with minimal disruption to our surroundings.



Day 6, Wednesday 08 Oct:

Wednesday morning was spent practising troop level mounted obstacle crossing drills in the West of training area 6. After a few (questionable attempts) the rhythm began to build and by lunchtime everyone understood the mechanics and their role. The afternoon and evening were spent back in the vicinity of Melsome Pole Barn working through the principles of an advance with SHQ followed by the receipt of squadron level orders for an advance to come the following day.

Day 7, Thursday 09 Oct:

By this point the morning routine of personal admin and collapsing the hide were second nature and 3rd troop were set on the line of departure with time to spare prior to H-hour. The squadron level advance would see our troop and the Western half of the frontage. The mission was to clear up to the northern training area boundary and establish a screen along the main supply route (MSR) running from the south-west to the north-east. However, this would be no mean feat as between us and our target were several obstacle crossings, the Copehill down complex and the Fox Covert drop zone that was seeing regular A400 cargo drops. The first of these issues was well in hand given the previous days training and thanks to careful deconfliction with the other callsigns we were able to skirt to the west of Copehill down. The cargo drops did however cause some issues and several callsigns had to go firm until the exercise coordinating staff gave the all clear. Once again 3rd troop operated professionally and efficiently, with the exception of the troop leader who managed to get his vehicle stuck and required troop level recovery. A deliberate decision to put into practise some of the drills we had covered in the previous days we are assured... That minor hiccup dealt with, we covered the ground thoroughly and efficiently and by close of play were set with an excellent view of a likely enemy point of ingress into our area of operations ready for the screen. Then followed a squadron level lesson on the principals of a raid (once again led by the enigmatic Captain Maxwell). A particular highlight of the day

was the close encounter with an Apache helicopter that seemed intent on hovering 2 m off the ground right in front of us for several hundred meters during the advance.

Day 8, Friday 10 Oct:

It was time for another battlegroup level replen and once again 3rd troop were efficient and professional, again with the exception of their troop leader who managed to get his vehicle into a fight with a tree it was never going to win. Once the replen was complete we were retasked to play enemy for the battlegroup for the remainder of the exercise.



Day 9-10, Saturday-Sunday 11-12 Oct:

Across the weekend we took the opportunity to do much needed maintenance on our vehicles and radios. There was also the opportunity to work with the Regimental Medical Office and a medical sergeant, along with two of the C squadron combat medical technicians to learn more about basic trauma care and lessons learned from Ukraine. They also introduced us to the ultra-realistic casualty dummies that would be used during the final phase of the exercise. On top of this we got a lesson in how to set up trip flares from Sgt Healy and spent some time going through GPMG weapon handling drills. Alongside this a considerable amount of time and effort was put into producing photographs for the blue forces ISTAR briefing packets. Sunday evening also saw the return of the Cambrian Patrol team who, off the back of a long 72 hours, were jumping back into the exercise and Trooper Ling who had just completed the jackal driver's course.





Day 11, Monday 13 Oct:

We deployed back out from Avon compound on Monday and continued practising troop level vehicle movement to the north of the training area, well away from the advancing blue forces who were being delayed by other elements of the enemy. This gave Sergeant Askeff the perfect opportunity to use his drone instructor qualification to teach us about what capabilities are available and give us a chance to use a drone.



Day 12, Tuesday 14 Oct:

Overnight blue forces had set up a recce screen and were prepared to fight a delaying action. The challenge laid down to us by exercise control was to penetrate their screen and pressure them in their delay. In order to make sure each blue force element was tested we had to make several sorties at various locations across their frontage. On the whole they dealt with us fairly effectively, calling in artillery and using anti-tank (NLAW) assets to engage us decisively. Once given the signal by the exercise control we massed at one of the tank crossings in the north and made a concerted effort to head due south forcing blue forces to begin their delaying action. It was fascinating to see our tactics and doctrine playing out from the other side and a very useful learning experience for us all. One particularly sobering and important takeaway was the success that we (as red forces) had prosecuting speculative artillery missions onto likely blue force locations. Simply by studying the map and targeting places we might choose to use if we were the ones fighting the delay we were able to inflict significant damage. This highlights one of the lessons learned from Ukraine, do not pick the best and easiest positions as the enemy will target them. The latter stages of the delay became pretty frantic and our troop of three landrovers and two jackals had a great time racing across the plain causing havoc.

Day 13, Wednesday 15 Oct:

Wednesday saw the whole regiment gather (us without our orange minetape and enemy callsign identifiers) for a photo and then we headed off to adopt our final position. We were to occupy a red forces battlegroup headquarters in which a high value target (the battlegroup commander) was situated. Our last stand was to be in and around the Chisenbury Field Barn complex, consisting of a handful of iso-containers, a barn and some longdrops at the top of a lone re-entrant about one mile east of Upavon - our very own Rorke's drift. We parked a jackal across on the southeast edge of the compound giving excellent fields of fire up and down the valley along likely avenues of approach and put two sentries out, one roving and one of the GPMG on the jackal. Armed with thermal optics and night sights we picked up a few signatures through the night that could well have been blue force recce elements but were not able to confirm and engage them.



Day 14, Thursday 16 Oct:

At around 09:00 a hail of fire opened up on us from the ridgeline to our east. Blue forces had used the dead ground to set up a fire support line consisting of GPMGs and NLAWs less than 100 m from our outer perimeter. As we had practiced the troops on guard engaged the blue forces, taking up defensive positions along the outer wall and from the cupola of the jackal. Meanwhile, a squadron plus strength descended on us on foot from the wood block to our north. We deployed our quick reaction force from the barn (leaving only a few soldiers in depth to act as reserve) but we were quickly overwhelmed by the weight of fire and decisive action taken by the blue forces. Once they breached the perimeter the remaining red forces fell back into the iso-containers and small pockets of resistance made the final stands. However, in amongst all of this the battlegroup commander (played superbly by 2Lt Mitchell) managed to slip away in a landrover unnoticed with the help of a getaway driver (Tpr Turner). Unbeknownst to us, unfortunately blue forces had set up cut-off groups to cover routes in and out of the compound and our glorious leader was eventually intercepted. This marked the end of the tactical exercise phase and what followed was a day of picking brass, cleaning weapons, redistributing signals kit and thought provoking after action review in which we were able to offer unique insight from the red force perspective.

Day 15, Friday 19 Oct:

The exercise was finished with a container-meal fry up and a trip to the vehicle washdown at Larkhill followed by the COs closing address. It was unanimously agreed by the soldiers of 3rd troop that ADE was an extremely engaging, rewarding and challenging experience and one from which we all learned a huge amount. Ultimately, we all left the plain better soldiers than we had been two weeks prior and had some great laughs along the way.



Royal Star and Garter Dragon Boat Race

The Royal Star and Garter are a charity that provides outstanding care and support recognising the needs of veterans living with a disability or dementia, and their families.

On 14th January 1916, Star and Garter Richmond first opened its doors to care for the severely disabled young men returning from the battlegrounds of the first world war. From 1986 the first women were welcomed as residents to the home. In November 2014 the Richmond Building was sold.

The charity now has a new generation of award-winning homes in Solihull, Surbiton and High Wycombe providing appropriate care for todays veterans.

On Sunday 20th July 2025 members of The Royal Yeomanry from C and F Squadrons took part in the Kingston Boat race to raise money for Royal Star and Garter. We took our competitiveness, team spirit and our abundance of enthusiasm to the water and achieved more than we thought we could. We were slightly at a disadvantage as we needed a full boat of 16 but we only had 12 rowers, the minimum we could have! Despite not having a full boat we aced our races coming first in all three. Needless to say that with our skills and determination not to be beaten the Royal Yeomanry made it into the finals.

It was here that The Royal Yeomanry were a little deflated as we lost the final. However, we were not deflated for long when we soon realised that the final was our best finish time of the day. To that end we were absolute winners especially as we were the underdogs taking on full size teams! Some of us had never rowed before let alone taking part in a competition but it didn't take long to get the hang of it. Our team spirit and morale was high throughout the day.





Thank you to Halani Foulsham, Liz Walters and Mo Bakkali for giving us the opportunity to raise money for your charity and to be able to do so with such energy and enthusiasm. In total we raised a grand total of £801.25 which is a massive achievement.

Well done to everyone that took part!

An insert from Halani:

Hi Chris,

I wanted to express a HUGE thank you to all of you for your amazing efforts yesterday. I was blown away by the team's ability to get to the finals and land a final time of 46 seconds! That is epic given the 4-person handicapped you all had on the day. It was amazing! Well done and thank you!

Our race times:

Heat 1: 0:57.52

Heat 2: 0:53.76

Heat 3: 0:51.42

Finals Open Category –

0:46.89 This was a total victory as far as we were concerned!!

Royal Yeomanry Football Team

This summer, the Royal Yeomanry embraced the spirit of adventure and competition, participating in a range of sporting events including Dragon Boat Racing and the prestigious Army Reserve 6's Football Competition held in Abingdon, Oxfordshire.

The tournament kicked off on Saturday, 9th August, under glorious cricket weather, with 16 Army Reserve Regiments vying for the title. Team managers and captains gathered early for the safety and competition brief, setting the tone for a weekend of high-energy football.

Group Stage

The Royal Yeomanry were drawn into a tough group alongside:

101 RA

167 RLC

3 Royal Welsh

81 Signals Sqn

75 Engr Regt

HAC

Despite a promising start with a 0–0 draw against 101 RA, the group stage proved challenging. Physical play from the Gunners was matched by the Yeomanry's pace and quick thinking, but the net remained elusive. A narrow loss to 167 RLC and another draw with 3 Royal Welsh left the team second from bottom. Nevertheless, the Yeomanry pressed on with determination.

Group Stage Results:

101 RA 0 – 0 RY
167 RLC 2 – 1 RY
RY 0 – 0 3 Royal Welsh
RY 1 – 2 81 Sigs Sqn
RY 0 – 0 75 Engr Regt
HAC 3 – 0 RY



Knockout Stage

The knockout stages brought a resurgence of Yeomanry spirit believed to be from the team pub grub and a glass of wine the night previous. Facing 3 MI, the team delivered a commanding 4–0 victory, with LCpl Askell of B Sqn scoring what was hailed as the goal of the competition.

Momentum carried into the quarter-finals against the 3 Royal Welsh. In a tense and tactical match, the Yeomanry emerged victorious with a 1–0 win, showcasing true cavalry grit and securing a clean sheet in what was described as the best-fought RY victory to date.

However, the semi-final clash with 151 RLC proved to be the end of the road. Despite high hopes and strong play, the Yeomanry fell 5–1 to the eventual champions, who went on to defeat 71 Sigs Regt 4–2 in the final.

Looking Ahead

This year's squad has been hailed as the strongest Royal Yeomanry Football Team to date. Recruitment continues across the Regiment, with three Sharpshooters currently committed to the team. In September two new additions to the RY team from C Sqn (Tprs Gouveia and Fallon) made their debut in the Army Reserve Challenge Cup

match against 101 RE which RY won resoundingly 7-2. Tpr Fallon had a solid debut playing as Centre Back, with the PSAO and Tpr Gouveia coming on as second half substitutes. We were drawn in the second round to 159 RLC on the 14th of Dec, the day after the Sqn Dinner however they withdrew being unable to form a team and so we have painlessly advanced to the next round.

The Cavalry Cup match against the Light Dragoons on 10th January was postponed and team's next outing will be against 101 RA regt in March in the second round of the Army Reserve Cup. A report will be in next year's Journal.

Capt R Faytaren
PSAO, C (Sharpshooters) Sqn
The Royal Yeomanry

Ex Dyer's Dash Ex Report

14-15 June 2025

On Friday, troops deployed to a Sqn leaguer under the direction of RHQ. After enforced rest for drivers hours, we received our brief from Maj Mitchell and moved into Tp manoeuvre lanes either side of the dismounted Sqn AO. Having made our way over the undulating terrain whilst maintaining balance and deconfliction, we then established eyes on our respective assigned NAIs; initially moving into a very cautious OP before being encouraged to be more mobile and aggressive in our posture. 1st and 3rd troops had encountered token Red Forces on their respective NAIs, but 2nd troop initially drew a blank, before locating a Red Forces Command & Control (C2) node some kilometres off their initial search area.

After having kept the C2 node under observation overnight using night vision and thermal optics, the breaking dawn allowed our dismounted support to move into position. As the rising sun burnt through the last of the dawn mist, our vehicles crested the ridgeline above the position and immediately established fire superiority and cut-offs, sealing the closing ring around the enemy. Under that covering fire the dismounted troops broke into and destroyed the command post in a precise raid. Anticipating enemy retaliation, the mounted callsigns covered the dismounts off the target area, before sequentially conducting a Rearward Passage of Lines back to safety.

Sailing

Over the weekend of 22–25 August, a brave contingent from C and F Squadron ventured onto the Solent for a sailing expedition. After the traditional Friday logistical chaos — the kind that really tests one's patience, character, and ability to pretend everything is fine — we eventually reached Southampton. Following a few practical exercises arranged by 2Lt Gimlette (who seemed suspiciously enthusiastic about knots), we finally set sail.

Across the weekend we covered a range of lessons. I've sailed before, but the physics of it had always been a bit of a mystery — essentially “the boat goes because... wind?” This time, thanks to a surprisingly clear and engaging demonstration, I can now explain how sailing works without resorting to interpretive dance.

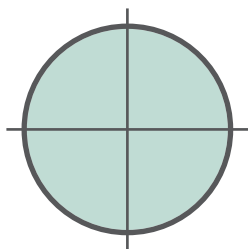


We visited several destinations, but the highlight was definitely the Isle of Wight, where we met Lt Alister Jones (now Capt Alister Jones — promotion achieved) for a BBQ. The following evening we enjoyed an open-air cinema by the harbour showing *Top Gun*, which felt appropriately nautical, even if none of us were allowed anywhere near a jet.

On the way back we passed several cruise ships arriving and departing Southampton. I managed to impress the crew by identifying a number of them long before they were close enough to see — a skill I didn't know I had, but will now be bragging about at every opportunity.

Sadly, I came down ill afterwards and couldn't make the second weekend, depriving the team of my newfound cruise-ship-spotting expertise.





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

Officer Commanding – Major Ben Taylor R SIGNALS

Second in Command – Lt James Denney R SIGNALS

Squadron Sergeant Major – WO2 (SSM) Carl Crane

PSAO – Captain Tul Ale RE

Squadron Supervisor – SSgt Brett Harries

SQMS – SSgt Sushil Chamling RGR

Troop Commanders – 2Lt Adam Jasko R SIGNALS

Troop Sergeant – Sgt Alex Lovett

SPSI – SSgt John Edge

PSI (Tech) - Sgt Danon Owers

As we approach the end of 2025, I wanted to begin by thanking every member of 265 for my inaugural years into the Regiment, for accepting me into The Sharpshooter fraternity, and for their utter grit and dedication in making the Squadron a continued success. I also wanted to extend these thanks to the wider Sharpshooter family for their unwavering support to the Squadron. All of which culminated in another successful year of delivering above and beyond and doing so with gusto.

I want to take this opportunity to reflect on all that 265 has achieved in 2025. In an increasingly volatile and complex world we have continued to deliver all that has been asked, and we have risen to the challenges with fortitude, professional skill, energy, commitment, and cheerfulness. I recognise that we may feel, at times, that we are constantly delivering more with less and we are busier now than ever before. However, with an ever-polarising world and with the real peer-on-peer threat looming at the door of NATO, we stand steadfast to provide a credible and real capability to the 3rd (UK) Division (The Iron Division).

As part of our commitments to 7 Signal Group and wider Defence, we have continued to maintain support to deployments both domestic and overseas. With a deployment to Op CABRIT, another 6-month deployment to British Forces South Atlantic Islands (BFSAI), a long-standing member of the Squadron deployed on Op LAZORITE in support of the ARAP program and a Young Officer deployed for 12 months supporting Special Forces on Op SHADER.

We welcome in a new member, Signaller Harry Baldock, who has transferred to us from 37 Signal Regiment. He has already had an impressive start to his new chapter



Best Recruit Award presented by Sqn OC , Major Ben Taylor to Sig Gergely Kalmar.

with 265, deploying in support of Army Cyber Spartan and TaceEX2 (support to RMAS Training). A dedicated individual who has a lot to offer, I look forward to watching him grow and develop in his new home as a Sharpshooter.

We also welcome into the SSM role WO2 Carl Crane, a longstanding member of 265. I am confident that his experience and knowledge will see him flourish in his new role.

We look forward to welcoming Lt Phoebe Lewis back to the Sqn after a year away on deployment.

I lastly congratulate Lt James Denney on his successful Senior Soldier Entry Commission from SSM to Commissioned Officer. He now starts his new role as Squadron 2IC, a role I know he will add immense value and continue to serve the professional soldiers under his command.

With all new arrivals, we must not forget those that leave us. We say goodbye to Major Craig Sumner after his three-year tenure ends. I wanted to extend my gratitude to my predecessor, on handing over command of 265 in a fantastic position and with clear direction and intent for the future. We all wish him the very best in his new role as SO2 Recruitment in Royal Signals HQ, Blandford. We will also say goodbye to 2Lt Adam Jasko in the New Year as he explores new opportunities to serve within the Reserve SF environment – we again wish him the best of luck on his new journey.

We step out of the shadow of 2025 into the New Year; Ready, Resilient and Committed as ever. I look forward to growing the bond between 265 and the Sharpshooter association in the New Year as I begin my tenure as Officer Commanding, and welcome past members to the next reunion event in Q1 2026.

We must take the time now to reflect on a very busy 2025 and ensure we support those family and friends around us, who silently support us in the background. I wish all members of the Sharpshooter family past & present a Happy Christmas, happy celebrations, and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Yours Aye
Major Ben Taylor
Officer Commanding 265 (KCLY) (Sharpshooters)) Support Squadron

Ex PHOENIX WARRIOR - 13 – 15 Jun 25

by WO2 (SSM) Carl Crane

On the weekend of 13 to 15 June 2025, 265 (KCLY) Support Squadron organised and delivered Ex PHOENIX WARRIOR, a Basic Close Combat Skills (BCCS) exercise, designed by the Sqn for nearly 100 personnel to complete their Individual Training Requirements (ITRs). The exercise was carried out in Friday Woods, Colchester, and while the main aim was to achieve ITRs, it also served as preparation

for Annual Continuous Training and provided safe, realistic training for the Regiment to support the Warfighting Division. The exercise had a 'remind and revise' training package throughout Saturday 14 June 2025 and included BCCS, URBAN and Basic Casualty Drill training. In the evening, Platoon Commanders delivered their orders and early Sunday morning, a confirmatory exercise was conducted, which culminated with a final serial of two separate Platoon attacks, to develop Command and Leadership.



Sig Michael Sage, 265 (KCLY) Sp Sqn, receiving his prize as the winning section.

Ex Phoenix Storm

Pte Gurung

Ex PHOENIX STORM, this year's Annual Continuous Training (ACT), saw the Squadron deploy to St Martin's Plain in Folkestone. The programme included a navigation day, several range days, a cultural day, a comms exercise, and some well-earned evening downtime.

Since joining the Squadron, I have realised that the fundamentals of all aspects of service are heavily emphasised. Having the latest technology is valuable, but truly understanding and applying the basics is essential. Like many, I usually rely on technology instead of maps for navigation. However, it's the "what if" scenarios that pushed me to learn. The first day of training was a revision of map-reading principles and their practical application. We completed a navigation exercise (NAVEX) during the day and another after dark. The daytime NAVEX ran smoothly (quite literally for some!) but the night navigation proved more challenging due to limited visibility and the need for stealth and careful light discipline. I wouldn't have completed it as easily without the help of Sig Ross Blackman, my fellow Sharpshooter. Thanks to him, Exercise BEACON was completed successfully.

The following three days consisted of the Annual Combat Marksmanship Test (ACMT) and transition to live-fire tactical training on the Individual Battlefield Shooting Range (IBSR). I thoroughly enjoyed the IBSR portion. After receiving clear instructions, we were shown various firing positions and guided through exercises emphasising weapon safety, movement between covers, and precision shooting at falling targets. I particularly enjoyed the tactical pairs manoeuvre, we were both cautious going in, but under energetic guidance, we ended the session exhausted from the shouting, running, and shooting but happy with our effect on the enemy. I am very grateful to all the safety staff for organising this valuable training opportunity.

Next, we had a cultural trip to Dover Castle and Fan Bay, learning some of the wide-ranging military history of the area. Having a local "Doverite", Sig Ryan Bond, was a



bonus; he took the lead in driving us around and sharing fascinating stories about the area.

An evening out for drinks and bowling with the Squadron, provided a welcome break, even if it took place just before the field exercise phase! While the final days of training were quieter for me, it allowed time to work on my AGC(SPS) Workplace Training Book, while the Squadron were on exercise in the field. I also gained useful insight into the challenges faced by the Ops Room, as SNCOs managed the exercise.

After just a few days back in role, I found myself looking for another excuse to get away and Adventurous Training (AT) provided it. Both days were fantastic, a coastal walk and the axe throwing, both equally enjoyable. The coastal walk, six miles in the persistent drizzle and wind, followed by an opportunity to learn axe throwing and perfect my aim on the following day.



Sig Blackman

Leading up to ACT, the Squadron completed numerous communication exercises to develop our knowledge and skills with the kit. During ACT, this continued with an emphasis on survivability training for the Sqn's detachments, it covered everything from minimising emissions to effective camouflage and concealment.

One key moment that stood out to me during this phase of annual camp was when we had a presentation on pieces of equipment they are currently testing and considering for future procurement. This included both comms and electrical kits that would greatly enhance our capability in the field.

After this phase of build-up training, the Sqn began the field phase of the Exercise, which consisted of one central HQ and multiple detachments acting as Rear Link Detachments (RLDs) deploying to the training area. The exercise functioned as a large round-robin between various sites, each with different terrain and routes. Being on an RLD myself, we moved several times and had the opportunity to put everything we had learned both during the previous days and throughout the earlier exercises into practice.

Phoenix Cyclone Series 2025

Cpl Tom Jarvis

In 2025, the Squadron launched a renewed focus on delivering core communication skills, from basic detachment setup to data for situational awareness, through the Phoenix Cyclone (PC) weekends previously known as Phoenix Communicator. Consisting of four weekends over the year, these regimental training weekends had previously concentrated on building and managing Command Points (CPs). While understanding CPs is essential, this emphasis led to a noticeable decline in fundamental communications proficiency, mainly in the HF and data space, prompting a strategic shift to reskill the regiment collectively.

Under the guidance of the new regimental Yeoman of Signals, the training year adopted a “back-to-basics” approach. Early sessions ensured every signaller mastered essential tasks before progressing to advanced capabilities such as ComBAT, data handling, and fibre LAN deployment. This structured progression aimed to restore confidence in core skills while preparing personnel for modern, complex communication environments.

The PC series employed a “round-robin” format, maximising exposure to varied scenarios and practical exercises across the weekends. This method not only reinforced technical competence but also fostered adaptability, interoperability and teamwork.

Maximising opportunities, the Squadron also deployed 1 x FFR and 1 x MANN SV Squadron to the Honorary Colonel’s farm during a Sqn maintainer / Comms weekend in early August. It provided an ideal opportunity to try and establish comms with another Det at Bexleyheath, consider the location for future Regimental Exercises and Noble Skywave, practice lessons learned from Ex Phoenix Communicator 2 and to complete Detachment Equipment Care in the field.

Additionally, the local Royal Signals Association branch had the opportunity to reacquaint themselves with the equipment and discuss training with the serving Sharpshooters. There was also the opportunity to take a photo of KCLY Squadron OCs from the early 1990s to 2025!

The evening continued to foster relationships between old and new as the Squadron was invited to attend a barbeque and socialised with the branch members. The OC provided a Sqn update and we took the opportunity to say farewell to Capt Ian Dawes,



who will be away from the Sqn, on a two-year secondment to London District. We wish him well and thank him for all that he achieved in his time with the Sqn.

I am confident that the hard work accomplished in 2025 will yield significant benefits in the 2026 training year, where communication training is expected to intensify and scenario-based exercises will feature prominently throughout the weekends.



Sports & Adventure Training

Pte Lydia Holland

The new CO has been very keen to promote sport, which, along with the dedication of the PTIs, has meant that the Squadron has had many opportunities for sport and adventure training over the year. The Squadron has competed in multiple football tournaments for both female and male teams, a mixed netball and volleyball tournament, athletics meet, and prestigious competitions such as Trailwalker and Lanyard Trophy.

The Squadron was extremely fortunate to have been invited to play with Bromley Vets at Bromley Football Club. This was part of an engagement event with 106 Royal Artillery. Cpl Danny Wilsher and I had an amazing experience as we got to play with some fantastic players. Although I was the only female to show up! We were also treated to match day tickets to watch Bromley FC play against Crawley FC. Cpl Wilsher also made use of the networking opportunities to further his football coaching.

Adventure Training offers great opportunities for physical and mental development and bonding across the Squadron. While there were several highlights, one unforgettable Squadron achievement was the completion earlier this year of the weeklong challenging mountaineering trek, through Berber villages and to Toubkal (4167m) in the Atlas Mountains, in Morocco.



Ex Army Cyber Spartan

Sig Harry Baldock

The Squadron's cyber capability was on display this year as the Regiment's Cyber Team took part in the Army Cyber Spartan competition. The event brought together teams from across the Army to compete in a challenging environment designed to test technical ability, teamwork, and operational thinking in the cyber domain.

Army Cyber Spartan is structured to replicate the pressures of real-world cyber operations. Teams are tasked with defending networks, responding to incidents, and

identifying vulnerabilities while operating under pressure and against the clock. Success relies not only on individual technical skill, but on effective collaboration, communication, and the ability to prioritise under pressure.

Squadron members, within the Cyber Team, demonstrated a high level of professionalism throughout the competition. Team members drew on a wide range of skills, including networking, system defence, and incident response, combining military training with specialist civilian experience. The competition environment provided a valuable opportunity to test these skills in a realistic and demanding setting.

Participation in events such as Army Cyber Spartan plays a key role in developing and sustaining cyber expertise within the Army Reserve. It allows reservists to apply their knowledge in a Defence context while sharpening skills that are increasingly vital to modern military operations. The competition highlighted the Regiment's ongoing commitment to building credible cyber capability alongside its traditional communications role.

The lessons identified during Army Cyber Spartan will be used to inform future training and strengthen cyber readiness. As the character of conflict continues to evolve, opportunities like this ensure that soldiers are prepared to operate effectively in the increasingly contested digital battlespace.

The regiment now has a formal cyber tasking and is forming a dispersed Cyber Troop that will include several Sharpshooters. These troops will have more of a cyber focus (whilst maintaining their radio skillset) and will further develop the regiment's strengths and successes on exercises like Army Cyber Spartan and Defence Cyber Marvel.

Squadron's Sharpshooters Awards Evening

WO2 (SSM) Carl Crane

On Tuesday 16th December 2025, we celebrated the Squadron's successful year and awarded trophies to individuals within the Squadron. This year was especially poignant as the Squadron welcomed for the first time the parents and sister of 2Lt Jonathan Bracho-Cooke, to present the Bracho-Cooke Shield.

Jonathan, a Sharpshooter, formerly of 884 Signal Troop, 265 Signal Squadron, commissioned into the Duke of Lancasters Regiment and tragically died in February 2007 in Iraq as a result of injuries sustained by an IED attack against his patrol in the As Sarraji District of Basra City. In his memory, the Bracho-Cooke Shield was created in 2007, awarded to the Squadron's Soldier of Year.

This year, following 2Lt Adam Jasko's Tp Cdr's brief, which provided an overview of the Sqn's training year accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation, the Squadron's Honorary Colonel Simon Malik presented Sharpshooter ties to seven new members of the Squadron. Major Ben Taylor, Officer Commanding, presented Sig Gergely Kalmar with the Best Recruit Award. WO2 Carl Crane, Squadron Sergeant Major (SSM), presented Sig Ryan Bond with the SSM's Shield. Mr Jonathan Cooke and Mrs Paty Bracho-Cooke, along with their daughter, Mrs Lucy Bran, presented the Bracho-Cooke Shield for Soldier of the Year to LCpl Janos Majoros. All recipients for this year and

last year, were awarded the newly created Sharpshooters medal, a tangible token of their achievements, to be treasured by the award winners long into the future.

After final words from the OC and the Hon Col, the evening was concluded by a 'Food Around the World' buffet provided by the Squadron members.



Previous winners and the new winner, LCpl Janos Majoros, with the family of 2Lt Jonathan Brcho-Cooke.



Honorary Colonel Simon Malik presented Sharpshooter ties to seven new members of the Squadron.

Remembrance Weekend 2025

Sig Harry Baldock

Remembrance Weekend 2025 began with a unique display of service, community spirit, and teamwork as members of the Squadron supported the riders taking part in this year's Lady Mayor's Show (only the third woman to hold the post in over 800 years, and the first ever to be titled 'Lady Mayor of London') in London. The Squadron contributed both mounted riders and ground personnel, forming part of the event's long-standing tradition of military presence and public engagement.

Despite the scale and pace of the Show, the Squadron undertook their roles with professionalism from the outset. A dedicated contingent manned a key pit stop along the route at Middle Temple, assisting riders, tending to horses, and ensuring smooth transitions during one of the busiest ceremonial days of the year. Their responsibilities ranged from crowd and movement safety to hands-on support with the horses, all carried out with the calm confidence expected of Sharpshooters.

The pit stop became a small hub of activity where the team demonstrated the kind of adaptability they regularly train for. Whether handling equipment, supporting logistics, or coordinating with other units and event officials, the Squadron showed precisely how soldiers contribute behind the scenes to major public events. Many spectators paused to interact, allowing the team to represent the Regiment to the public, share insight into their roles, and highlight the broad skills that Reservists bring to the armed forces.



2Lt Jasko.



WO2 Denney & LCpl Majoros.

On Saturday evening, Sgt Alex Lovett and Cpl Danny Wilsher represented the Squadron at the Royal British Legion's Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall.

On Remembrance Sunday, the Squadron formed up for the local parade and service. With wreaths laid and a strong contingent on parade, the Squadron represented and remembered its heritage with pride. For many, this was an important moment to reflect on our lineage and the long association with London and Kent.

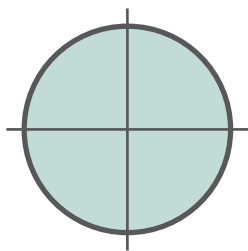
The Squadron marched alongside veterans, cadets, and local organisations, joining residents in a united act of remembrance at the town's war memorial. The two-minute silence was observed with the characteristic discipline and composure expected, but also with genuine personal sentiment shared by many on parade.



Service personnel from 265 (KCLY) Support Squadron.



Service personnel from 265 (KCLY) Support Squadron.



KENT & SHARPSHOOTERS YEOMANRY MUSEUM TRUST

Curator's Report by Dan Taylor

Trustees: Richard Coulstock (Chairman), Dan Taylor (Hon Curator), Huw Jones (Hon Secretary), John Gunn (Treasurer), Chris Sutton, Tim Rayson, David Lakin, Penny Malik and Dan Shead

Curatorial posts held as of 30th November 2025

Hon Curator: Dan Taylor

Curator (Croydon): Tim Rayson/Dan Shead

Curator (Bexleyheath): David Whitehouse

Curator (Hever): Freddie Deane

Curator (Collection Conservation): Eve Edmondson

Archivist (Croydon): Madelaine Budgen

There is a perverse and growing trend amongst the larger military museums to shy away from an overt display of military artifacts. Most are now staffed almost exclusively by professional curators, who have largely replaced staff with a military background. My point is not that curatorial roles in military museums should be purely the preserve of former members of the military but rather that both types of background are essential in order to best conserve, represent and promote a collection. The consequence of this trend away from using military experience is that there is a growing view that the past needs to be sanitised rather than curated and explained. This is a shame. Britain has a rich and complex history. Yes, there are plenty of examples of episodes where the activities of the Army could (and possibly should) be cast in a poor light – yet there are far more examples of men and women performing perilous, audacious and daring acts which can only be seen as brave and heroic. There have been enormous strides in innovative technology brought about by this history, which deserve to be celebrated and understood. To be mealy-mouthed about promoting the innovation, daring and sacrifice of generations of Britons (and members of the Commonwealth) dishonours the memory of those who gave up their lives or suffered loss. Worse still, it takes a cowardly path by failing to be honest in order to appease an audience that appears largely indifferent to history. Our job is to honestly explain the past and give it context. We must help visitors see events through the eyes of those who were there rather than the amateurish lens sometimes presented by the media. We need to address wrongs, certainly, but we also need to use the light provided by history to show the consequences of ignoring its message.

2025 heralds a new era for the museum. After over a decade of dedicated and benevolent leadership, Chris Sutton has decided to step aside. He has been a



An officer's Royal Artillery pattern, full-dress helmet worn by Major JRO'B Warde, the Kent Yeomanry's Adjutant c1930. This artifact was one of the items spruced up by our student volunteers at Bexleyheath in the summer. Accession number KSYM1980-02

powerhouse in managing our transition from a side exhibit, tucked away up a winding staircase within Hever Castle, to a prominent, stand-alone attraction within Hever's grounds. Besides an outstanding job of fundraising for the Tent-in-the-Park project, Chris has continued to exact the best from fellow trustees and our continually growing volunteer force. The loss to the Museum Trust is mitigated somewhat thanks to his desire to remain on the Trust and by the appointment of Richard Coulstock in his place. Richard has shown great energy in wishing to familiarise himself with the work of the museum, the ARCs and the volunteer force. With Chris available for mentoring, there is great potential for the future development of the museum. And it does look as if development will be high on the agenda.

If there is one thing that is a persistent problem for running of the museum, it is the dispersed nature of the collection. Across the three sites that we occupy – Hever, Mitcham and Bexleyheath – we have three stores. The main site at Hever has a small store, inconveniently located within the attic space of the castle, well away from the Museum and, being in a somewhat elderly building, prone to

ingress from unwanted insect visitors. The museum has some small storage spaces within it but these are awkward to access and really only practical for display stands and other collection management items. Despite a generous allocation of space within the ARCs, there is a limit to what can or should be held on sites belonging to the Army. At Bexleyheath, we have very kindly been allowed to use a room to store our extensive uniform collection, in addition to a dedicated storeroom. This situation has been allowed to run for almost five years now and the uniforms have quite clearly overstayed their welcome. At Croydon, after an excellent tidying exercise carried out by our volunteer team, there is workable space in our storeroom but the room has been subject to a leaking roof in the past and so there is always the possibility that this may occur again. Even with this allocation there is a lot of over flow. The Regimental silver has spilled into both the C Squadron's silver store and the officer's mess. In the case of the ARCs, there is always a persistent concern that a wrong government decision might mean that a building could be shut down. What we would do under these circumstances is a terrifying prospect. To supplement the limitations on space, the curatorial team are sometimes forced to house items for which there is no space within the existing storage sites in their own homes. At last we are working towards a solution.

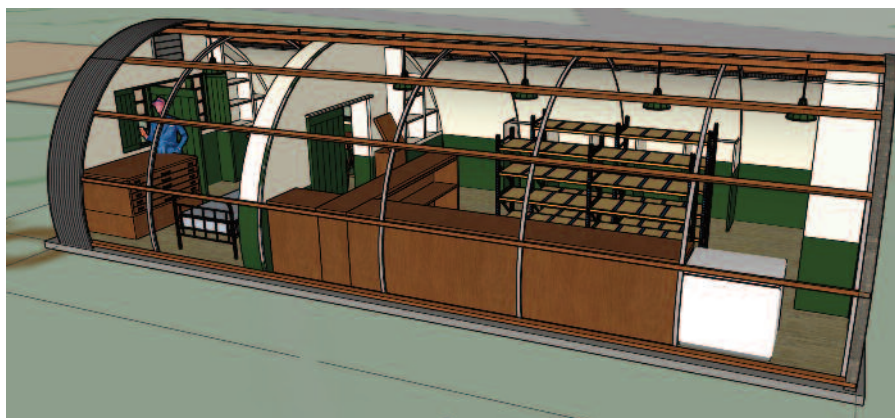
With Hever's help, we have a plan. We would like to erect a substantial store beside the museum at Hever. The idea is to fabricate what will appear to be a Second World



The Living History Group have adopted this lovely M3A1 Stuart Light Tank for augmenting their displays. It belongs to Andy Camp and, during the winter, the markings are set to be switched to those for 3rd/4th CLY (Sharpshooters) in the final year of the war. The Regiment operated the Stuart first in the desert in early 1942 (when it was issued to make up for losses after Operation Crusader), and again from June 1944 to May 1945 in the Recce Troop. The colour scheme and markings will reflect the latter deployment.

War Nissan hut, measuring 16-feet (5 metres) by 36-feet (11 metres). This will be split so that the front section, 12-feet in depth, will be fitted out as wartime barrack-room, whilst the rear 24-feet will resemble a QM store. The front section will serve a dual purpose in that it will also be a long-promised research hub where visitors will be able to use our archival material in a single location. Our current arrangement for researchers is, at best, chaotic. We have to spend time working out where the items they wish to see are located, potentially arranging a behind-the-wire visit, or collecting items so that I can provide viewing facilities at my home. This is so time-consuming and difficult to arrange that most researchers give up. The 'QM Store' is designed to facilitate the bulk of the existing collection that is not on display (including six full rails of uniforms!). If we can retain use of the existing store spaces, this main storeroom would be able to house the bulk of the collection and retain about 25% room for expansion, whilst creating a potential emergency space if one of the ARCs were to fall victim to cutbacks.

This purpose-built facility would allow us to do a great deal more for the proper conservation of the collection. We can include a freezer to treat new accession cloth items so that infection by moths can be avoided. With underfloor heating and good insulation, we can provide a stable environment for artifacts. Easier access to a much larger proportion of the collection in a single location would also help with auditing and in identifying potential vulnerabilities.



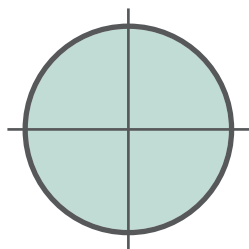
An excellent image of the planned Nissan hut project, turned into a 3D projection by Freddie Deane.

The project is at an early stage but has passed the first hurdles. We are hoping to be able to start our main fundraising activities early in the summer of 2026.

The usual cycle of Museum events and activities were carried out through the year. The annual museum tidy-up day took place on 25th January, with a record thirty-two volunteers on hand to ease the way. The IMPS vehicle rally from Sevenoaks to Hastings took place on 6th April, raising nearly £3,000 for the Combat Stress Charity. We fired a salute on the 25-pounder on 5th May to commemorate VE-Day. Hever's increasingly popular Home Front event was held over the weekend of 21st June and we were able to show off wireless and gunnery for the visitors. The main thrust of our volunteer week in July was extensive work to improve the displays at Bexleyheath – also doing some work at both Mitcham and Hever to help with conservation. The Living History Group's year was capped off at the Military Odyssey event over the August bank holiday weekend when they were able to display with an M3A1 Stuart light tank belonging to one of the group's members! This event was also the inaugural deployment of the group's wartime marquee – acting as the 'Contented Penguin' squadron mess. Formal activities for 2025 concluded with the firing of our 25-pounder gun for the Armistice commemoration on 11th November

The key event of the year was the adoption of the 1963 Guidon into the museum collection. It is a great honour to be able to display this important part of our history – and unusual for it to be put in the care of a museum, rather than a church. It presented a few headaches, trying to find a way to display such a large item within an already crowded museum space, but it was accomplished and now perfectly sets off the Boris Mollo Gallery. If you have the opportunity, do come and have a look.

Dan Taylor
curator@ksymuseum.org.uk
December 2025



MUSEUM TRUST REPORT

**by Chris Sutton
and Richard Coulstock**

This article marks my last as Chair of the Museum Trust, having handed over to Richard Coulstock on 27 November. I am delighted that Richard has taken on the role, and am confident that he will take us to new levels of success. You have a great team of trustees and volunteers to support you Richard, and you will not be short of suggestions from our curator Dan Taylor and indeed all of the trustees for exciting new things that the Museum Trust can do.

Looking back over my decade as Chair, I took over from Guy Farage shortly after the royal opening of our new museum at Hever in 2015. As a team we had successfully created a wonderful new museum, and I was proud to have led the campaign to raise around £300,000 in the process. Nothing I felt could possibly surpass that, but the ongoing running of the museum has also been truly fulfilling. Our team, composed entirely of unpaid volunteers, continually brings creativity and stamina which we should never undervalue. When I have occasionally felt that we have been driving on fumes with an empty fuel tank, I have always seen the Sharpshooter spirit take us forward.



I am especially pleased to see how the museum's relationship with the association has strengthened in recent years, gratefully acknowledging the passion and wisdom of Tim Rayson in this regard. The museum trust has certainly benefited from the association's crowd funding over the years, most recently for the display and conservation of guidons. Warmest thanks to all donors, and I hope that newer readers of this journal will be ready to provide financial support to the museum – your museum – in the years ahead.

Keeping up contacts with our two serving squadrons in the ten years has been both a challenge (as we build new relationships year on year) and a pleasure. Please do reach out to the museum trustees if there is more that we can do for you, and please continue to arrange visits to Hever for your squadrons where we can welcome you in person. Thank you to all those involved, from both the Museum Trust and the serving squadrons, in maintaining our museum outstations in Croydon and Bexleyheath.

I am also truly appreciative of the support given to us by the Guthrie family (the owners of Hever Castle Ltd) and Duncan Leslie their Chief Executive. It goes without saying that without their brilliant support we simply could not have our wonderful museum at Hever. In an era when the MOD is reducing the number of army museums it supports, on a “one current cap badge, one museum policy” we are fortunate indeed to be an independent museum with such generous commercial hosts. As trustees we are always mindful that the Guthrie family's hosting comes with an obligation on us to maintain and develop the museum as a top-quality visitor attraction in the Hever grounds.

As a recent Master of the Worshipful Company of Management Consultants, I can safely say, when we look at regimental connections across the livery, that the serving squadrons, association and museum are very fortunate in the strength of the relationship and financial support we have from the Worshipful Company of Insurers, and I add my own thanks to them.

Most of all, as retiring Chair of the Museum Trust, I am so grateful for all our trustees – both the current team and those who have retired on my watch. Huge gratitude also to our many volunteers – with a big shout-out for David and Arthur Whitehouse, and to all the members of our Living History Group for all their enthusiasm and hard work and for lowering the average age of the museum team.

So yes, 2015 might have been the big adrenalin rush when we opened the new museum, but the experiences of the following 10 years have led me oft to bless the day, I came that way, to be a Farmer's Boy.

Chris Sutton

I am honoured to take up the role of Chairman of the Kent & Sharpshooters Yeomanry Museum Trust. Within my career in financial services consulting, I value good governance and responsible stewardship. It is a privilege to now apply this in support of an organisation dedicated to preserving and promoting the remarkable history of the Kent and Sharpshooters Yeomanry.



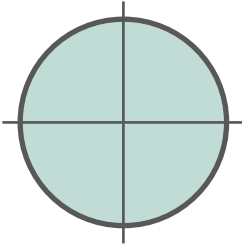
My passion and appreciation for military history began as a child while learning about the sacrifices made by my relatives, eventually studying military history at university. I spent many childhood days heading to various museums, and something that I now do with my own children, who are very familiar with the KSY Museum. That personal interest has remained with me ever since, and it is a privilege to contribute to a museum that tells such an important story.

The Kent & Sharpshooters Yeomanry's evolution from local yeomanry to the Boer War, First and Second World Wars, Iraq, and onward to today's two serving squadrons reflects a proud legacy of service, heroism, and commitment. The museum trust plays a vital role in ensuring that this story continues to be told with accuracy, dignity, and enthusiasm.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to Chris Sutton, who has served as Chairman with distinction for the past decade. Chris has achieved a considerable amount during his tenure, not least in strengthening the governance of the Trust and successfully seeing the move to the current site within the grounds of Hever Castle. His leadership leaves a strong foundation on which we can continue to build.

I look forward to working with the trustees, our volunteers, and our partners across the wider KSY Association family as we continue to protect, preserve, and share this remarkable and proud history.

Richard Coulstock
Chairman
Kent and Sharpshooters Yeomanry Museum Trust



VE DAY 80

By Freddie Dean

2025 marks the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. As historical events, anniversaries provide us with opportunities for reflection, drawing our attention to our growing distance from the events in question. Yet anniversaries in other contexts can be celebrations of continuity. No other single historical event could be said to inform our lives quite as deeply as the Second World War. It is no exaggeration to say that it created the modern world, our sensibilities, anxieties, and national consciousness. In this sense it is uniquely present whilst simultaneously, being in the past. Regrettably it is no longer possible to write that the Second World War put an end to major European conflicts, nor that it constituted the final triumph of liberal democracy over fascism, but the trials of the present should not diminish the achievements of the past. Indeed, the past provides us with invaluable insight into the future and whilst history may not repeat itself directly, we can at least draw on historical experience to highlight risks and inform our solutions in the present. This is why the historical dimension of the anniversary is so important, we must not forget what was sacrificed and experienced



“C” Sqn parade HAMBURG.

in the past because we live in the world shaped by these events, and thus they remain continually relevant.

As the Second World War fades further into the past, we are increasingly deprived of those who lived it first hand, placing us at a seemingly greater distance than ever before. There is perhaps then an even greater need for the historian to tell these stories, and to draw together diverse sources to reconstruct events and produce novel perspectives. At the same time, it is important not to lose sight of the microlevel histories which make up broader narratives. By viewing the past through the actions of a single regiment or select group of individuals, we often learn far more about the human experience than we could from generalised grand narratives. Over the past few years, we have followed the activities of 3rd/4th County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters) in 'real time' through short-form monthly bulletins on the KSY museum's social media pages. In 2025 we reached the conclusion of this epic story, and it now remains to revisit the events of the closing months of the war, with a few thoughts to the broader context.

The fighting began for both regiments of Sharpshooters in November 1941 in North Africa. Both regiments grew rapidly from the efficient yet novice part-time soldiers of the pre-war years to hardened veterans, relied upon by their commanders for the most demanding operations. It began with the mixed successes of Operation Crusader, on to the great turning point of El Alamein, through Egypt, Libya and on to Sicily, always at the tip of the allied spear. After Sicily came Italy and the hard-fought advance northwards before Monty's trusty desert veterans were recalled to Britain in preparation for the invasion of France. From D-Day+1 both regiments battled through Normandy sustaining painful losses as they played their part in decisive actions against the enemy, as exemplified by 4th CLY at Villers Bocage. At Carpiquet airfield on the outskirts of Caen in August 1944, the two regiments became one, fighting on through France and into Belgium then Holland during the brutal winter of 1944/45, and at last to Germany. By this later stage in the war the allies were becoming accustomed to victory, and indeed the macro-perspective offers the impression of an unstoppable allied war machine whose eventual victory was a given. Yet for those at the head of the allied charge, there was little sense that things were becoming easier, every mile advanced was hard won and not without its cost.

For the Sharpshooters, as for many others, the end came with VE Day on the 8th May 1945, although the war would continue in the far east until August. At the time, the Sharpshooters were in Germany, having spent the preceding weeks mopping up stubborn and often isolated pockets of resistance. Throughout this period, it was clear that the end was near, and yet the intensity of the conflict had far from diminished, in April alone the regiment received some 30 casualties, a third of which were fatalities. John 'Dusty' Rhodes was one such casualty, having served with the regiment for the whole war until his life was cut tragically short just days before its end. The war by this stage had taken on an altogether different character for the Sharpshooters, gone were the cheering, welcoming crowds of France and Holland as they greeted their liberators. In their place were at best exhausted and disillusioned prisoners of war, and at the worst, ideologically dedicated bitter-enders committed to seeing the conflict through to its inevitably bloody conclusion. Clearly any sense of glory in victory was heavily muted in these months.



John 'Dusty' Rhodes pictured bottom left with the tank commanders of 'A' Squadron in newly issued 'Pixie Suits' in the winter of 1944 near Wintelre in Holland.

An extract from the War Diary from the 8th April 1945 gives a sense of the rhythms of fighting that had been reached by this late stage in the war:

'B Sqn reached river crossings at 992234 and 999248. The former was blown and the latter protected by MG, *Panzerfaust*, mortar and shellfire. One tank was destroyed by bazookas. B Sqn continued on to high ground at W.004254 where A Sqn passed through with a Coy of infantry in Kangaroos [turretless Canadian RAM tanks] to take up positions overlooking the village of VOLTIAGE W.010265 from the East. The kangaroos advanced to the village, but after leading vehicle had been brewed up by bazooka fire, the entire village was blasted by the guns of the Sqn tanks and rocket firing Typhoons.'

This same pattern was repeated wherever resistance was met, the allies deploying their overwhelming material advantages to bring the war to a close as swiftly as possible.

By May 1945, the regiment had reached Hamburg, and it was here that at 14:00 on the 7th May they were informed of Germany's unconditional surrender, effective from midnight of the 8th/9th. The war diary is perhaps appropriately brief: '8th May 1945 **VE DAY**. The occasion was celebrated in Sqn Messes and canteens.' The following morning a thanksgiving service was given in Pinneberg parish church before the regiment promptly turned its attention to its new role as an army of occupation. A command post and roadblocks were set up at Elmshorn from which patrols began to



Lt. Woollacott with Tpr. Mitchell during their daily round of one of the Yugo Slav camps at ELMSHORN.



Teddy Bradbury and Chris Woollacott on the advance party to SALZAU.

comb through the surrounding 80-square miles of countryside for POWs, weapons, ammunition, and as the war diary describes 'undesirable natives'. All POWs were sent to Pinneberg barracks which served as the brigade's POW camp. Aside from policing the local area, the patrols were also responsible for liberating some 44 German POW and Displaced Persons camps, including camps housing Russians where conditions were found to be particularly bad. Efforts were made to source food and clothing from local inhabitants to make up for the shortages in these camps.

These duties continued for the next few months with RHQ based at Lemhuhlen, A Sqn at Raisdorf, B and C Sqns at Salzau. Time was also found for recreational training, including yachting, cricket, football, handball, tennis, and horse riding (offering a brief taste of times gone by to the Yeoman). Instructors were also identified for the Army Educational Scheme including classes in Shorthand and French, and shortly afterwards a Regimental Educational Scheme was implemented covering 15 different subjects of which some 180 students took part. The Army's attention to retraining and education reminds us that this was a predominantly civilian army, the small number of pre-war regulars had been dwarfed by the influx of territorials and conscripts, and soon it would be time for them to return to their old lives. It is notable however that throughout the remainder of 1945, military training was continued apace, including practice at the Putlos firing ranges, there were even demonstrations by the RAF of the ground-attack capabilities of Typhoons. Whilst the war might have been over, the peace was far from settled with internal dangers remaining in Germany, and the threat from the USSR, no



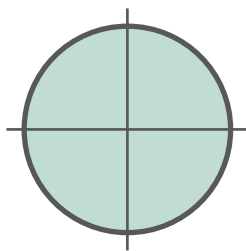
Capt. Michael Seaward D.C.M.

longer protected by an alliance of convenience, had almost at once escalated into the Cold War. In this context, and whilst the new borders of Europe were being drawn, it was vital for the allies to project a show of strength. More cynically, there was also a need to keep the men busy to prevent lapses in discipline or despondency which threatened to destabilise the entire occupation force, exhausted by years of war and yearning to return home. Soon enough though the opportunities to return home came, for leave to begin with, although the first member of the regiment to be demobbed, Trooper RA Death, was released the 24th July 1945, most had to wait until 1946.

And so, the war came to an end for the Sharpshooters, the fighting might have ended abruptly, but the return to any sense of civilian ‘normality’ would be a much more gradual process. The Sharpshooters had come a long way since its first glorious charge across the desert plains in November 1941, an event perhaps more closely related to the massed cavalry charges of old than to the brutally methodical fighting through German villages, or the protracted emotional exhaustion brought on by incessant ambushes by a lone *Panzerfaust*. This was now a force of hardened fighters who’s next (and for some most difficult) battle would be the return to civilian life. In all, the roll of honour lists some 381 names, not including the countless others left with life changing injuries both physical and mental. These sacrifices had been made in virtually all the western theatres of the war, the regiment accruing some 42 battle honours, an immense achievement for any regiment let alone for pre-war territorials, and an achievement exceeded only by one other cavalry regiment. It is this immense achievement and sacrifice, their part played in the conflict that created the modern world, that we commemorate on the 80th anniversary of D-Day in 2025. We therefore look back at the historical and remind ourselves of its continuing place in the present.

* All images colourised by Simon Malik.





VE/VJ 80TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT

HEVER CASTLE

by Steve Shelley



Along with the various national and local VE/VJ 80th anniversary celebrations marking the end of World War 2, it was only fitting that we too marked the occasion, this time at Hever Castle on 30 August. It was also particularly pertinent that it provided an excellent opportunity to unveil the newly restored Guidon at the museum, its story is told more fully elsewhere in the journal.

Secretary Tim Rayson bade a very warm welcome to the crowd assembled in front of the Museum attending this important day and thanked everyone in supporting both the Association and the Museum.

Col Simon McMenemy, as Honorary Colonel of C Sqn, explained the role of the guidon and its importance in symbolising a focus for an army unit (regimental colours by another name) and for its soldiers in both battle and when on parade. They were, in effect, sacred and there was a duty to both respect and preserve them accordingly; that duty now lay with the Association. The Guidon which was presented on behalf of the Monarch in 1963 had been 'laid-up' in 2016 and had recently undergone extensive restoration, it was now in pristine condition and would be displayed in the museum for all to see. Col McMenemy then asked Dan Taylor, curator of the museum, to unveil the guidon.



Col McMenemy speaking at the unveiling.



The Guidon unveiled.



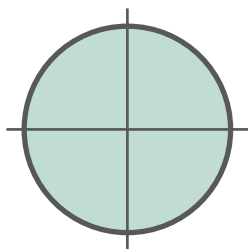
Chris Sutton, the outgoing Chairman of the Kent and Sharpshooters Yeomanry Museum Trust explained in accepting, as custodian, the Guidon, the work of the museum and said that the next project would investigate if the same could be done to the 2 Kent Yeomanry guidons that originate from 1794.

Karl Jarvis, Master of the Worshipful Company of Insurers, spoke saying he was delighted to help in supporting the funding of the refurbishment and see it in its new home on such an auspicious day. The Sharpshooters were their longest military affiliation and the WCI had recently signed the Armed Forces Covenant. Chris Sutton, on behalf of the museum trust, was then kindly presented with the archives of Trooper Blackman of the 4th CLY, by his son, for cataloguing and safekeeping.

Lt Col Matthew Webb, as Chairman, then thanked the WCI for both their affiliation to the KSYA and their generous financial contribution which had gone towards the guidon which was very much appreciated. Finally, Dan Taylor thanked the re-enactors - the volunteers who dress in WW2 uniforms (complete with appropriate weapons) - for their attendance which very much enhanced the occasion.

Formalities complete, advantage was taken by many to visit the museum and then retire to Hever Village Hall and grounds just down the road from the castle, to enjoy a sumptuous BBQ of angus beef burgers, spit roasted chicken, vegetarian options and most of all a social catch-up in good company. It was a perfect way to conclude the day and, fortunately, the weather held, just.





EL GUBI DINNER

22nd November 2025

by Steve Shelley



The Chairman addressing the Association.

To commemorate the 84th anniversary of the Battle of Bir El Gubi and celebrate the annual dinner of the association (its 78th unbroken event), the splendid surrounds of the Cavalry and Guards Club Piccadilly once more provided a befitting venue for the event on 22 November.

The Chairman, Lt Col Matt Webb JPVR, welcomed all to the evening's event, it was an especial pleasure to welcome the new Master of the Worshipful Company of Insurers, Sara Fardon and partner, our associated livery company. A particular welcome was made to those who had come from afar, Lt Col Frank Dirksmeier from Germany, complete with his bagpipes playing-in everyone with a medley of tunes, and Lt Col Doug Ensor from Australia. Closer to home, the new CO of 71 (CofL) Yeomanry Signal Regiment, Lt Col David Burnett, and the Honorary Colonel 71, Col Tim Orchard were also very much welcomed as was regular representation from the Royal Gloucester Hussars Yeomanry Association, Dr Christopher Holmes, Gordon and Jane Jones.

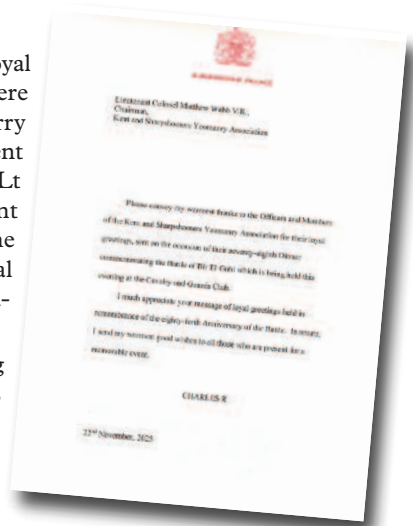
Starting with pre dinner prosecco, members and guests tucked into a starter of salmon followed by saddle of lamb, lemon meringue cheesecake with red currants accompanied by fine wine, coffee and of course port.

After the Loyal Toast to HM The King and the Royal Honorary Colonels, the following Empty Saddles were noted: Peter (Mr Spitfire) Arnold, Brian Colyer, Terry Smyth and Cathy Tickner, this was followed by a lament “Sunset Over Bir El Gubi” composed and played by Lt Colonel Frank Dirksmeier and the toast “Absent Friends”. A toast was then made to the guests. The Chairman had written to HM The King offering loyal greetings from the association and the Secretary read-out the gracious reply from His Majesty.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the serving squadrons – represented by Capt Calum Alister-Jones and 2Lt Adam Jasko gave updates on their respective activities over the last year, which had been fairly busy – C Sqn were away that weekend so unable to attend in numbers.

The VE/VJ celebration year began with the publication of the association’s journal, another very full edition charting the serving squadrons, historical records, events and fascinating personal stories. This led onto the celebration BBQ event at Hever Castle in August with the unveiling of the restored 1963 guidon (see separate article) at the Museum, partly funded by the WCI and represented by the Master at the dinner, which was greatly appreciated.

The Master WCI then spoke, stating that the WCI was proud of its link with the Sharpshooters and delighted to sustain its support. In that respect, the citations for each squadron nomination were read-out by the squadron representatives and are given



The Master Worshipful Company of Insurers Sara Fardon.



President Col Mark Hodson, Standard Bearer Kevin Wright, WCI: Adrian Gilvern, Master Sara Fardon, Gary Johnson and Theresa Dutton.



Chairman KSY Museum Trust Richard Coulstock, Curator KSYMT Dan Taylor, President Col Mark Hodson with a print of the newly unveiled Battle of Bir El Gubi painting.



WO2 (SSM) Carl Crane, Sgt Jeff Porter, Capt Steve Slaney, Major Keith Wrate, Cpl Danny Wilsher, WO2 Jim Denney, Major David Lakin



Chairman and CO 71 – Caption Competition ?

below. Trooper Fergus McIsaac from C Sqn and Sgt Jeff Porter from 265 were announced as the worthy recipients, Tpr McIsaac was deployed on exercise that weekend so his award was accepted by Capt Alister-Jones on his behalf; Sgt Porter was present and so awarded by the Master WCI.

The evening ended with a toast to the Sharpshooters, proposed by the Master WCI.

Worshipful Company of Insurers Award 2025 - Citations

Trooper Fergus McIsaac

C (Kent & Sharpshooters Yeomanry) Squadron,
Royal Yeomanry

This Sharpshooter is an exemplary soldier and a great asset to both 1 Troop and the Squadron.

His commitment, enthusiasm and professionalism are all of the highest standard. Despite living over an hour and half's drive away from the Army Reserve Centre, he is always the first to volunteer to come in and support taskings. For example, coming in on weekends to drive Jackals on the 10-hour round trip to and from Telford for routine maintenance.

His passion for his trade as a Jackal driver is evidenced by the fact that he takes every opportunity to work on the platform and help more junior soldiers develop their understanding of how to maintain and utilise it. He has also proven himself over the last year as the Squadron Leader's driver, showing a good understanding of tactical movement and how to drive call-sign 3 – zero – alpha (30A) with minimal input. This earned him a Commanding Officer's coin on the 2-week Annual Deployment Exercise.

Outside of green training, this soldier is very proactive in pursuing equine army sports, seeking out opportunities in polo, dressage and show-jumping and he is ever keen to support and encourage others in the Squadron. He also played a key role in planning and delivering C Squadron's Burns Night celebration this year and is currently organising next year's event. To see a junior soldier put in the effort and time required to organise a social event that helps improve retention and esprit de corps within the Squadron is impressive and sets an excellent example.

Trooper Fergus McIsaac is a very dedicated and highly competent soldier who gives his absolute all to the Army Reserve and is duly recognised for his efforts and achievements.

Sergeant Jeffrey (Jeff) Porter

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

Throughout a distinguished and dedicated career, this Sharpshooter has consistently demonstrated exceptional commitment to the Squadron and the wider Regimental family.

For over two decades, they have maintained exemplary attendance at drill nights and training weekends, successfully completing numerous trade and instructor qualifications, including Communications Systems Operator Class 1 and Physical



Master WCI presents Sgt Porter with his award.

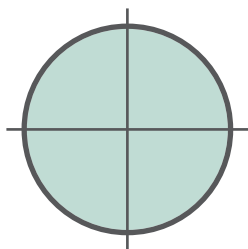
Training Instructor. They have deployed on multiple operational tours, representing both the Regiment and the Royal Corps of Signals with professionalism and technical expertise, embodying the ethos of a highly skilled and dependable soldier.

Their unwavering work ethic and tenacity set the highest standards. Always among the first to arrive and the last to depart, they are a role model to peers and subordinates alike. Their contributions—often unseen due to their humility—are critical to the Squadron’s success, from meticulous preparation and coordination of exercises to supporting operational outputs.

In all circumstances, whether routine or challenging, they remain a pivotal member of the team. Their experience and integrity enable them to provide constructive challenge when appropriate, while consistently displaying the highest levels of professionalism and followership when direction is given.

This individual exemplifies the qualities of a soldier and leader: dedicated, capable, and selfless – A True Sharpshooter. In recognition of his outstanding service Sergeant Jeffrey Porter is nominated for The Worshipful Company of Insurers Award 2025.





THE GUIDON PROJECT

by Tim Rayson

In 2016 the guidon presented by HRH Princess Alexandra to C(KCLY) Sqn was laid up at a moving and simple parade at Croydon. Queen's Regulations (now King's Regulations) regarding the disposal of colours allowed for three options for the final disposal of the guidon and it was decided that the best option would be to display it in the Officers Mess before subsequently putting it on display at Hever Castle. At this stage the guidon needed substantial repairs to the central motif and the fringe which the Hon Secretary managed to persuade Messrs Gieves and Hawkes to undertake at minimal cost. And then COVID arrived putting everything on hold for quite some time – in fact until 2024!

Having decided that the 1963 guidon was to be displayed at Hever Castle there was a discussion about who actually owned it and thanks to the newly appointed Chairman's and Hon Colonel's support it was confirmed that the Association owned the guidon which remained the property of the State. Fortuitously a fully accredited fabric



Photo 1. Unveiling of Guidon.



Photo 2. The 1963 guidon mounted in its enclosure in the museum.



Photo 3. QO West Kent Yeo guidon original state.



Photo 4. East Kent Yeo Elham Tp Guidon original state.

conservationist company was located about 10 miles from where I live and they were then engaged to survey the 1963 guidon and produce a costed estimate of the work required to conserve the guidon.

The conservator visited Hever Castle in early January 2025 to advise on the best location for the guidon and by chance saw the other Kent Yeomanry guidons. Their unequivocal recommendation was that both guidons should be removed from display immediately and as the reader can see from the photos they were in desperate need of conservation. On the basis of this recommendation both guidons were removed from display and condition reports commissioned with recommended costed repairs. In parallel with this activity conservation work started on the 1963 guidon which was in a far healthier condition. We also approached a variety of museum organisations but sadly this did not gain much traction – in fact none! However not to be defeated we launched an appeal to the Sharpshooter family (both Association and members) that turned out to be highly successful with some significant donations from individuals. These donations together with grants from the Association and organisations allowed us to proceed with the work. I would therefore like to thank all who have contributed to this project for their generous support because without it this project would not have got off the ground at all.

The conservation work on the 1963 guidon was successfully completed as were the building works culminating in the unveiling of the newly refurbished guidon at Hever on 30th August at a BBQ organised by the Association.



Photo 5. QO West Kent Yeo guidon conserved in new storage box.

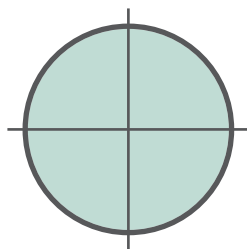


Photo 6. East Kent Yeo Elham Tp Guidon in new storage box.

With the relatively easy part over, attention and effort was transferred to the two Kent Yeomanry guidons which as you can see from photos 3 and 4 were in a parlous and fragile state. It is also worth pointing out that whilst the 1963 guidon was made of double sided silk with a lining and battle honours sown on the two Kent Yeomanry guidons were made in circa 1795 and were hand painted on single sided silk – none of the badges etc are sewn on but are hand painted. On detailed survey it was found that the condition of the guidons was so bad that the conservationist advised that any conservation work was at high risk of causing significant damage to the structure of both guidons. In the light of this advice it was decided to protect the guidons in their current state in special storage boxes and store them in the Archive at Croydon. This work was completed in mid December and our efforts now focus on the feasibility of creating replicas of the KY guidons which could be safely displayed at Hever. To de-risk this a trial sample of part of one guidon will be created to see if this is a practical and more importantly a cost effective exercise.

As one might imagine conservation work is painstaking and not a cheap undertaking. In terms of expenditure the 1963 guidon cost just over £3000 to conserve and mount whilst expenditure on bespoke secure storage for the two Kent Yeomanry guidons is estimated at £700 approximately each. All of this work was funded by a combination of donations from the Worshipful Company of Insurers, the Association as well as individual members of the Association. All remaining funds have been retained by the Association and ring fenced for future use on appropriate Museum led projects.





AN OLD SHARPSHOOTER IN FRANCE

A Visit to the Musée des Troupes de La Marine¹ by David Wilson (jacdaw)

In June this year, I was very lucky to be invited by my colleague, the Médecin général inspecteur Marc MORILLON Retd. of the French army to the inauguration of a new exhibit in this newly built museum. This building, opened in 2022, replaces the previous building which now houses the CHETOM, le Centre d'Histoire et d'Etudes des Troupes d'Outre-mer and archives attached to the museum.²

This museum was designed by the regimental associations and serving officers and rather uniquely is staffed by serving officers and men of the regiment in uniform.

Another originality is that not only is it on a military base, but part of the training ground backs on to the museum and is visible through a large window in the entrance hall. This was designed to create a link from the past to the present.

The museum covers the origins of the regiments as shipborne marine infantry in the 1660s, passing by the colonial regiments of Africa, India, Asia, the Pacific Islands and the Americas, in particular Canada, the Caribbean and Louisiana.

The museum takes you on a chronological walk-through history with a series of vitrines showing a vast number of beautifully preserved and presented artifacts highlighted with both contemporary and recent paintings, a number of which appear regularly in historical revues, too many to mention here.

The “Colonial” period is particularly well covered even including a camel with a “*Méhariste*” camel regiment and a mountain gun as used in the desert.

The Franco Prussian war is evoked by the famous last stand of the Marines at the Battle of Bazeilles on the 31st of August 1870 and the famous story of the last cartridge. This is now the date of all the Marine regiment’s commemorations.

The Second World War is also well covered with uniforms and armes of British origin issued to the Free French units including a Denison smock providing another connection to the UK. The actual 1er Régiment de parachutistes d’infanterie de marine are the descendants of the Free French SAS of whom two battalions were formed in England and North Africa and who still wear the Winged Dagger albeit with ‘Who dares Wins’ written in French “*Qui ose gagne*”. It is still one of the top French Special Service regiments whilst many other marine troops fought alongside British regiments in the desert, in particular the 1er bataillon d’infanterie de Marine (1er BIM) who were part of the 7th Armoured Division, as were the Sharpshooters.

¹ Musée des Troupes de Marine
240 Avenue du Musée des Troupes de Marine
83600 Fréjus, France
04 94 17 86 03
Web site; <https://www.museedestroupesdemarine.fr/>

² CHETOM, le Centre d'Histoire et d'Etudes des Troupes d'Outre-mer, the centre of the History and studies of the Colonial Troupes



MTM 8 bis Entrance to the museum. D. Wilson



MTM 8 Entrance to the museum. Lt. col. Tremoulet



MTM 7 Foyer Entrance Hall D. Wilson



MTM 6 Main Exhibition Hall Lt. col. Tremoulet



MTM 6 Main Exhibition Hall D. Wilson



MTM 9 bis Officier 1Div. FFL Provence 1944



“Méhériste” camel regiment MTM



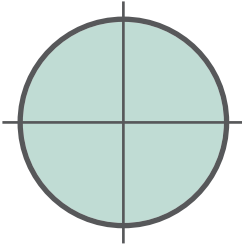
1 er BIM with their colours Egypt 1941

The museum then brings us to the modern period with uniforms of the wars in Vietnam, Algeria, Lebanon, the Gulf war and Afghanistan and concludes the visit by the descent to a crypt with retired colours, memorial plaques a continuous video screen showing the fallen, both recent and ancient.

Today the French marine regiments are still an important part of the modern army, most of the parachute regiments are marine regiments but also include an armoured regiment, an artillery regiment, engineers and a very important medical service, in particular tropical medicine.

This wee recite would not be complete without mentioning the important engagement of their association Les Amis du Musée des Troupes de Marine, composed of veterans, serving soldiers and civilians who do a magnificent job of collecting and preserving historical artifacts and souvenirs, and enormous data base, collections of old photos as well as preserving the memory and giving conferences in the museum’s special exhibition and conference hall.

Dave Wilson joined C(KSY) Sqn in the early 1970s and served in the Support Troop alongside myself and Ron Snowball. He moved to France and is a well known illustrator and author of books about the uniforms of the French army (and others) in the middle and late 17th and 18th centuries. –Tim Rayson



PRIVATE FREDERICK WILLIAM BRICKSTOCK – 10 BUFFS

By Arthur Whitehouse

Millions served and died in the Great War and many have been forgotten. Because of this, I decided that I wanted to research a soldier who served during the Great War and was either part of the Kent Yeomanry or the Sharpshooters. I ended up choosing an East Kent soldier, Private Frederick William Brickstock!

Born Frederick William Brickstock, in Godmanchester, Huntingdonshire, on the 10th May 1884 to Frederick and Fanny Brickstock, who had just got married in the previous November. Frederick ended up having several younger siblings. One brother was Arthur Oliver Brickstock, who also served during the Great War with the Welsh Regiment was killed in action on the 28th January 1915. By 1901, Frederick and his family were living in Sydenham at 42 Perry Hill and then by 1911, they were living in Bromley at 21 Croft Road where, he attended St Andrew's Church. It is presumed that they moved once again before the outbreak of war to 11 Freelands Road, due to the fact that he began attending St Mary's Church which is not far from Freelands Road. Before the war Frederick was working as a draper's assistant.

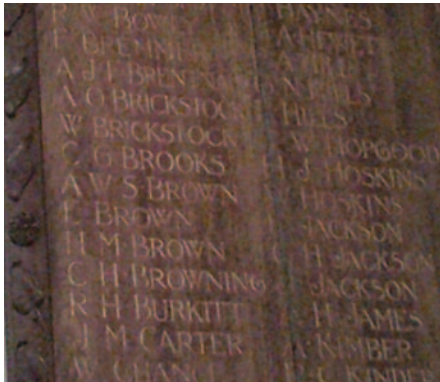


After war broke out in August 1914, Brickstock, like countless other men, was eager to join the British war effort. He enlisted on the 8th September 1914 and joined the RAMC, being posted to 1st City of London Field Ambulance where he was given the service number, 271. During the entirety of the war, Brickstock remained a private. Brickstock was transferred on the 10th February 1918 to the East Kent Yeomanry or simply known as the 10th Buffs, who at the start of the war were cavalry but after leaving their horses, had become infantry. It was here that Brickstock's service number changed to 265133. One month later, the Buffs were sent to the Western Front - to the Somme, It was not until the Allies on the Somme made a push towards the Hindenburg line that on the 21st September 1918,

Brickstock went missing after the 10th Buffs went over the top, becoming a prisoner of war (POW).

Frederick William Brickstock is thought to have died about one month before the Armistice age 34. His body was found and identified in the early 1920s, surrounded by German soldiers, likely killed by an allied artillery bombardment. The exact date of death is uncertain, being variously recorded as 30th September 1918, 11th October 1918, 30th October 1918 and 30th December 1918. However, the date placed on his grave stone is the aforementioned, 11th October 1918. He had qualified for two medals, the Victory Medal (VM) and the British War Medal (BWM). At the time of his death, his parents were still living at 11 Freelands Road but not long after, they would move into 9 Sundridge Parade. Sadly no known photos exist of Brickstock and all we have is a vague description of him - brown hair, moustache, 5'9".

During my battlefield tour in August of this year, I had the privilege of visiting Brickstock's grave, located in the Landrecies Communal Cemetery. I have also had the



Memorial Plaque at St Mary's.



Memorial plaque at St Andrews.

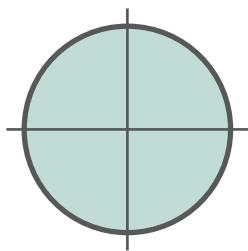


Plaque on the Bromley War Memorial.

chance to find his name on the plaque in both St Mary's and St Andrew's churches placed right next to his brother, Arthur. However, an interesting detail I noticed on the Plaque in St Mary's Church, is that he is noted to be W Brickstock rather than F W Brickstock which perhaps tells us that he was known in the local community as William rather than Frederick, maybe due to his dad's name also being Frederick. His name is also commemorated on several memorials, including the Bromley War Memorial as well as on the names above the registry in the Kent and Sharpshooters Yeomanry museum located in the grounds of Hever castle, which is where I first saw his name.

well as on the names above the registry in the Kent and Sharpshooters Yeomanry museum located in the grounds of Hever castle, which is where I first saw his name.

May we never forget his name. From 1st City of London Field Ambulance, to the 10th Buffs, from a Bromley draper's assistant to a Prisoner of War. Let him be remembered, and honoured. Frederick William Brickstock, who died aged 34 as a prisoner of war, holder of two war medals - at the going down of the sun and in the morning we will remember him.



HORSES TO HORSE POWER AND BACK

by Bjoern Muller
via Tim Rayson

The following article originally appeared in the September issue of “Loyal” which is the House magazine of German Military Reservist Association –VdRBw e. V. It was subsequently translated at the request of officers of NATO allied forces. It is one of three articles entitled *A Renaissance of Equestrian Reconnaissance?*, *Horses in today’s armed forces*. Please note that the wording in the translation has been made as precisely as possible, but slight deviations in the meaning of individual terms may occur.

From Horse to Horsepower to Horse – A Renaissance of Equestrian Reconnaissance?

The 3rd Reconnaissance Demonstration Battalion in Lüneburg is exploring the potential that horses offer for today’s military reconnaissance. We spoke with battalion commander Lieutenant Colonel Jochen-Andreas Moos and Lieutenant Colonel (R) Claus Solbeck, who is gaining experience with active-duty soldiers.

INTERVIEW LEADER: BJÖRN MÜLLER

Q: Horses in reconnaissance seem antiquated for a thoroughly mechanized army like the Bundeswehr. Why are you bothering with it?

Lt Col Moos: The principle that an army like the Bundeswehr needs mechanized reconnaissance forces, for example with our reconnaissance vehicle Fennek, still holds. After all, we reconnaissance units must be able to interact with the mechanized combat units. However, there are terrains where mechanized units reach their limits. This is partly the case in the Baltics. Lithuania is crisscrossed by numerous waterways and swamps. In such terrain, we reconnaissance units may be required to monitor areas that are difficult or even impossible for our combat vehicles to access. In these cases, horses can be a way to transport soldiers and equipment into these areas and then conduct reconnaissance. Therefore, as a recce battalion, we are examining whether we should add the ability “to be able to ride” to our recce toolbox.

Q: What advantages do horses offer for reconnaissance here?

Lt Col Solbeck: We’re talking about a region that’s 65 percent forested and a quarter swampy. There are only a handful of paved roads in the entire border region; the rest are forest trails. Here, horses can penetrate places even tracked vehicles can’t. The animals are light, mobile, and have a small silhouette. Horses also don’t generate any more waste heat than humans. There’s a Finnish company that produces camouflage ponchos for horses used against thermal reconnaissance. A diesel engine like the Fennek



has, generates 100 degrees Celsius waste heat, and the exhaust gases reach as high as 400 degrees Celsius. Even if a vehicle is camouflaged in a position, it takes four to six hours for the engine to cool down. But the decisive factor is that a horse can carry a load of up to 110 kilograms. Transporting a soldier with equipment is feasible. This significantly expands the range of light reconnaissance forces.

Q: So, it's about transporting soldiers with sensors?

Lt Col Moos: That's what our considerations revolve around. It's not about a return to "cavalry charges." We're interested in whether horses can be an alternative means of transport for scouts, which - like unmanned systems in the future - can complement mechanized reconnaissance. Why shouldn't there be missions where reconnaissance forces, including sensors, are deployed on horses in muddy areas to monitor them? I'm in favour of pragmatic experimentation. Some reconnaissance forces are now also using e-bikes. And regular motorcycles are also playing a more important role in the armed forces today than they have in recent decades.

Q: Are other armed forces already taking advantage of such possibilities?

Lt Col Moos: Yes, for example, the Polish and Dutch armed forces. The Polish Territorial Defence Forces (TDF) already deploy mounted patrols on the border with Belarus to patrol the impassable border. We recently had a small team of observers from our battalion - active soldiers and reservists - visit the Polish Territorial Defence Forces. They gathered initial impressions of how horses are used there. The Dutch, with whom

Germany maintains close ties within the framework of German-Dutch military cooperation, are also currently examining what role horses can play for their purposes. These forces thus go far beyond the representative aspects for which horses are used there today. As a unit, we maintain a sponsorship relationship with units of the Dutch Army that will soon be 60 years old. In this respect, it is logical for me that we also examine whether we can - and are willing - to learn from our Dutch comrades with regard to the use of horses. And part of these efforts is Lt Col (R) Solbeck.

Lt Col Solbeck: Every year in the Netherlands, there is a demanding military equestrian competition, the “Militaire Prestatietocht te Paard” - in English: “Military Performance Ride on Horseback.” Last year, a team from the German Armed Forces Bundeswehr participated for the first time. All of them were passionate riders with ties to the battalion, most of them reservists. The performance ride involves skilfully combining man and horse over a 40-kilometer distance, for example, throwing a hand grenade from horseback. Tactical tasks must also be solved. In 2024, the challenge was to locate and evacuate a downed helicopter pilot from difficult terrain. We want to use the performance ride as a “testbed” in the coming years to gather experience. This year, the Dutch are testing how easy or difficult it is to spot horses in the forest.

Q: Do you have any idea how long soldiers would need to train to be able to ride on horseback?

Lt Col Solbeck: According to a British experience, six weeks are sufficient to train solid riders who can handle horses for transport. However, we are still at the very beginning. We first need to gather basic experience. For example: How does riding work with the Bundeswehr’s combat clothing? Can I safely carry long and short weapons? Once that is resolved, the next possible step would be a pilot project in the Baltics at



the squadron level, i.e., with approximately ten soldiers. This would then focus on aspects of how the horses are cared for in the operational area. Is what they find in nature in terms of water and grass sufficient, or would concentrated feed be necessary, or would it even be necessary to create food depots? One thing is clear: In the rugged terrain on the eastern flank, I cannot use noble thoroughbred horses from Germany. One would have to work with the smaller, robust local horse breeds. There are private riding stables for this. The Poles use such stables for their mounted forces.

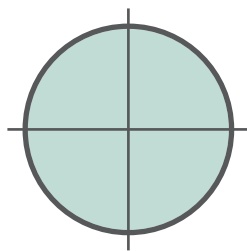
Q: What about the German Army's mountain troops, who use horses: Is there an exchange here?

Lt Col Solbeck: Not yet. As far as I know, the mountain Infantry use mules and Haflinger horses for transport and to check the walkability of trails. But that has nothing to do with enemy reconnaissance. The mountain troops are concerned with determining the passability of mountain trails. Our impetus to examine the potential of horses for enemy reconnaissance came from our contact with the *Korps Mariniers* - the Dutch Marine Infantry. They follow the principle of being able to move optimally in any terrain. To this end, they also train for reconnaissance using horses in the German-Dutch border region.

Q: Suppose they determine that horses make sense in the army's reconnaissance toolbox. How do you implement that in the Bundeswehr?

Lt Col Moos: That would be a rocky road. It certainly wouldn't work without adjusting the target organization, reformulating regulations, and creating infrastructure - to name just a few aspects. That's why it's not my intention to have horses back in the battalion barracks or even engage in horse breeding, as was the case in the German Empire. My point is that we seriously examine whether, in order to better fulfil our mission, we should be able to use horses as a means of transporting reconnaissance troops and their equipment. That would then be a qualification we would provide for individual forces within our battalion. We would train accordingly and then probably only mount horses in the operational area - just as the first American forces did in Afghanistan in cooperation with the Northern Alliance. Below the threshold of changes to the target organization and regulations, it is my aim and approach that we share our experiences, especially within the recce troops. The annual meeting of the Army Reconnaissance Troops would be a good forum for this. Depending on how we as a branch of the military approach the issue, it would then be possible to incorporate individual aspects of the topic into the recce regulations. And the general of the Army Reconnaissance Troops could then address this in his annual report to the Army Command. But as I said: Our main concern at the moment is to learn from others. And, depending on that, to train additional soldiers within our unit.

Parts 2 and 3 to be published in the 2026 Edition of the Journal.



KSY BATTLE HONOURS WW1 WESTERN FRONT by Dave Whitehouse

The Battle Honours earned by the Kent & Sharpshooters Yeomanry on the Western Front during World War 1 describe both campaigns as well as individual battles. As such, some overlap and to an extent duplicate specific actions in which units took part. Thus by qualifying for a single battle honour, the KSY units involved would also be entitled to the battle honour associated with the campaign. This article describes how the Kent Yeomanry and Sharpshooters won four of these battle honours, the remaining two being covered in a follow up article.

France and Flanders 1918

In May 1918, following Allenby's victories in Palestine, most Yeomanry units were transferred to the Western Front; the Kent Yeomanry, now infantry and styled 10th (Royal East and West Yeomanry) Battalion, The Buffs, as part of the 74th Yeomanry (Broken Spur) Division, and 3rd County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters) re-rolled as a Machine Gun Battalion.

Bapaume 1918

Awarded to units that took part in one of the following engagements; First Battle of Bapaume, 24–25 Mar 1918 and Second Battle of Bapaume, 21 Aug–3 Sep 1918. The Kent Yeomanry did not serve in Bapaume itself but this was an honour granted to those involved in the defensive battles of Aug–Sept 1918.

Somme 1918

In late August the 74th Division was sent south to the Somme battlefields to join the Fourth Army. Here, throughout September, the battalion was to take part in the advance towards the strong German defences known as the Hindenburg Line (see also *Epehy* and *Hindenburg Line*).

Epehy

The Battle of Epehy denotes the fighting against the German outpost positions in front of the Hindenburg Line by units of Rawlinson's Fourth Army on the 18th September, during which the town of Epehy was captured.

Colonel Ponsonby's regimental history gives a detailed account of the 10 BUFFS at this time:

"... on September 16th we moved into the Faustine Quarries preparatory for a further advance. Here the rain came down again, and intensive gas and H.E. shelling, varied by that worst of all evils, aeroplane bombing, gave us something by which to remember the Quarries in our hours of leisure in the future. During the next few days our leisure, to say nothing of our existence, in the future seemed to be problematic.

On September 18th at dawn, in pouring rain, began the attack on the outpost positions of the Hindenburg Line. Few of us had ever heard a din so great as that made by our Artillery and machine-gun barrage, but all agreed that the result was all that could be desired. The enemy soon had enough, and began to surrender. Even the famous quarries at Templeux le Gerrard, where pits and refuse heaps, holes and caves formed ideal ground for defence, were given up. The Sussex and Suffolks, with the Buffs and Somersets (229th Brigade) closely in support, moved on through the quarries to Hargicourt Trench, the first objective, which was captured at 8 a.m. After an hour's halt the barrage started to creep forward again. This time we were in front, and our objective was Zogda Trench and Rifle Pit Trench, between 1500 and 2000 yards away.



From the jumping off place the ground sloped away into a slight depression and then rose again towards the objective, but the barrage was perfect, and gave us great confidence, and, though held up for a time by machine-gun fire, we captured the trenches soon after midday, and, later on, pushed on for a further 300 yards towards the 'Exploitation Line'.

In the meanwhile, events had not been going so well on our left. The 18th Division were held up by some strong positions round Epéhy and Ronssoy, and this kept back the 231st Brigade, who were on the left of the 74th Division. We had to stop, as also the Australians on our right. About 5 p.m. Very lights went up on the left, showing that a counter-attack was threatened there, and the Artillery immediately put down a barrage along the line of the second objective. As we were 300 yards in advance of this, we were involved in the barrage, and had to come back to Zogda and Rifle Pit Trenches. Here we rested as best we could for the night. Except for the last hour or two, the day had again demonstrated the possibility of almost enjoying a battle, when the organization was good, and everything went according to prearranged plan. The barrage of Artillery and machine guns crept at exactly the right speed, the difficulty of changing direction in the middle of a movement had been overcome, and the pace of the advance shattered the enemy's morale. It was only unfortunate that his positions on our left had been strong enough to hold up part of the line. Had the whole line been able to get on, it might have facilitated the

subsequent operations. As it was, however, the 74th Division could not grumble. They were showered with compliments. They captured on that day 18 Officers and 873 other ranks, ten 77 mm. field guns, three 4.2 in. howitzers, five trench mortars and over ninety machine guns.”



The battlefield looking north from Hargicourt Communal Cemetery as it appears today.

However, the day’s work has come with a heavy cost. The War Diary records “Owing to our own barrage coming down on us Capt HL Allfrey & 2nd Lieut EG Porter killed in action 10 OR killed in action 1 OR died of wounds 48 OR wounded to hosp 2 OR missing.”

According to the KSY Museum’s database those killed on 18th September are:



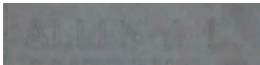


Image	No / Rank / Name / Company	Cemetery
	CAPT HL ALLFREY B Coy	Unicorn Cemetery Vend’Huile
	2LT EG PORTER B Coy	CWGC Vis-en-Artois Memorial
	21245 PTE AL ALLEN A Coy	CWGC Vis-en-Artois Memorial
	270198 PTE AJ BOLTON B Coy	CWGC Vis-en-Artois Memorial
	24432 PTE B BROOK	CWGC Vis-en-Artois Memorial
	24595 PTE D CRUMMEY A Coy	CWGC Vis-en-Artois Memorial

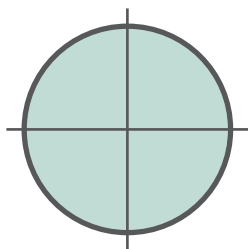
Image	No / Rank / Name / Company	Cemetery
	270160 PTE A HAYWARD A Coy	CWGC Templeux-Guerard
	270308 PTE JH HOLBROOK A Coy	CWGC Vis-en-Artois Memorial
	14585 PTE MF KING B Coy	CWGC Vis-en-Artois Memorial
	270187 PTE FJ MILLER B Coy	CWGC Vis-en-Artois Memorial
	270258 FJ MOORE A Coy	CWGC Templeux-Guerard
	24544 PTE JD PLATTS B Coy	CWGC Hargicourt Communal
	26968 PTE RE RUSH B Coy	CWGC Vis-en-Artois Memorial

All of these men were honoured during a KSY Association battlefield tour in June 2011 (Flanders Dash). Additionally, the grave of one of these men, Pte Platts, was visited by the author together with his son Arthur, and two other former members of 265 (KCLY) Signal Sqn, Micky Mustoe and Colin Alderton in August 2025.

The War Diary does not name the 48 men who were wounded on the 18th and I have only been able to identify six, whose surviving service records (in the National Archive under WO 363) show that received wounds on that day as follows:

24725 PTE E CLIFFORD Wounded GSW Shell face
270818 PTE WH COOKE Wounded GSW R/arm
270971 PTE H JENNER C Coy Wounded GSW L/Thigh
270984 PTE BR STRIPP C Coy Wounded R/Thigh
270499 PTE BW SWAIN B Coy Wounded R/Foot
270978 PTE SH TIDNAM D Coy Wounded GSW L/Elbow

Pte Clifford subsequently died of his wounds, whilst Cooke and Jenner were invalided home. Ponsonby's history identifies a further 181 men who were wounded during September 1918, but no specific dates are given.



LOST AT SEA

Kent and Sharpshooter Yeomen lost at sea 1939 -1945

by Tim Rayson

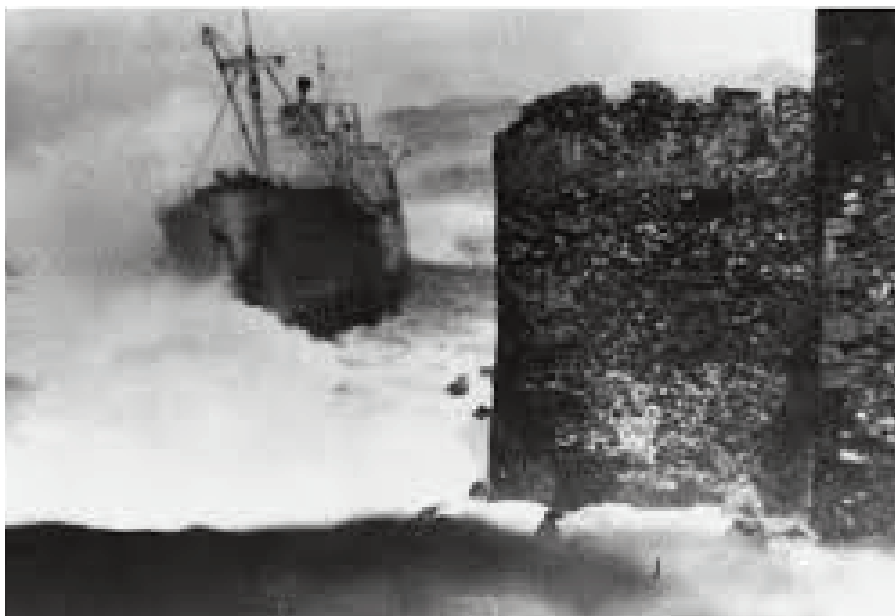
The recent gifting of the diary of Richard Blackman late 4th CLY piqued my interest in the fate of British prisoners of war who after capture during ‘OP Crusader’ were shipped across from POW camps in North Africa to POW camps in Italy. Of the merchant ships used to transport POWs six were sunk whilst in transit by the RN because unlike hospital ships, prisoner transports were not marked making them fair game whilst on passage to Greece and Italy. There was also a darker background reason to their loss.

Richards’ diary contains a detailed passage about the sinking that he was involved in and his story is corroborated by Dave (Leslie) Davies in a passage in the late Roy Cawston’s book *B4I Forget*. What is interesting but perhaps not unusual is that Richard Blackman does not get a mention in Roy’s book despite almost certainly being in the same camps in Italy and subsequently Germany nor does he appear in *The Sharpshooter Newsletters* of 1998 and 2003 where this topic was originally reported.

By early December 1941 thousands of British and Empire soldiers had been captured by the Axis forces in Operation CRUSADER. They were removed from the forward combat zone around Tobruk to the main supply port of Benghazi, 460km to the west. However the burden they imposed on the logistic supply chain in North Africa necessitated their transfer to Europe.

Transfers to the Italian mainland started in early December 1941, with modern MV *Sebastiano Venier* (Ex Dutch Jason) being one of the first merchant vessels to carry prisoners north. On the evening of 8th December the ship left the port of Benghazi for Taranto escorted only by a light destroyer and carrying 2,000 UK and Commonwealth prisoners batted down in her holds. The breakdown of passengers by nation were approximately 1200 South Africans of 5 S.A. Infantry Brigade, captured at Sidi Rezegh on 23 November 1941, appx 400 New Zealanders, captured outside Tobruk during operations lasting from 29 November to 2 December 1941 with the remainder being British. Included in this last group of prisoners were ten from both 3rd and 4th CLY. Also on board were a small number of officers and sailors from the Kriegsmarine whose ship SS *Tinos* had been sunk during an air raid on Benghazi harbour. The OIC of this group was to play a very significant part in subsequent events.

On the afternoon of the 9th December HM Submarine Porpoise fired a spread of four torpedoes at *Venier* of which only one hit the ship in the forward hold killing all the POW there – the numbers lost are estimated at between 300 and 500. The Italian crew abandoned ship rapidly and despite the best efforts of the escort to compel the crew to reboard the ship in the very high seas they paddled ashore. The escort engaged HMS



MV Sebastiano Venier aground.

Porpoise, attacking her with 22 depth charges which all missed and the submarine subsequently made good her escape whilst the ship continued to drift towards the shore.

Down by the bow and with her steering wrecked, *Venier* remained afloat whilst the remaining guards and German crew members of SS *Tinos* removed the covers from the holds in which the prisoners were confined and set them free. However the ship was so badly damaged that she had to be beached stern-first in a desperate attempt to save her and the remaining passengers on board. After about 2.5 hours of skillful maneuvering under control of the German Engineering officer from the SS *Tinos* the ship was beached under the walls of nearby Methoni castle.

However due to the sea state, survivors could not scramble ashore and many died whilst trying to swim the 50yds to the shoreline in the very rough and cold seas. Richard's account of what was going on at that time presents a harrowing picture:

“Now we huddled together first for safety and secondly for comfort in the crippled vessel. From the heaving deck the land was now clearly visible off the starboard side when the surge of the sea gave us enough height to permit our vision to cover the distance. By now I had taken up my position on the extreme stern which, because of the ship's condition, i.e. bow submerged and stern well above the sea level, it thus gave added height. Looking downwards into the waves we, to our surprise which quickly turned to horror, could see a kind of raft with about six to eight men clinging to it.

Although the ship was drifting landwards the raft was coming towards the stern! Tides, currents and undercurrents together with a backwash might have been the reason.

To our horror we few hanging over were witness to an appalling tragedy. We were able to see that the ship's propeller was slowly revolving and it was towards this that the raft was slowly heading in a lurching motion produced by the waves.

Nothing could be done now to prevent the inevitable. At this point I repeat myself to remind readers that the ship's head being submerged caused the after-end to lift. Thus the ship's propeller and rudder were clear of the water, at times quite high above. Consequently the ship acted like a see-saw, up-and-down, up-and-down, and it was then at the end of a down movement of the ship that the raft was swept beneath the revolving propeller bearing its occupants to their doom immediately turning the white foam from the waves as they broke round the ship's stem to a red colour stained by the blood of the victims on the raft."

Eventually a lifeline was rigged from the ship to the shore through the heroic action of L/Cpl Bernard Friedlander, 3rd Transvaal Scottish Regiment who after 90 minutes of fighting the wind and sea managed to get ashore. Despite Friedlander's deed, more men were killed as they tried to reach land and it was not until the following day when the remaining passengers including the wounded managed to get ashore. L/Cpl Friedlander was awarded the George Medal for his heroism in July 1945 with the citation being written by the German engineer officer. Once on land, survivors of the beached *Vénier* were assisted by soldiers of a nearby Italian garrison.

Two days after being beached HMS Porpoise made a second attempt to destroy *Vénier*, launching two torpedoes at her. Both failed to strike their target. On 15 December, HMS Torbay succeeded in striking *Vénier*, putting her beyond repair and the wreck was broken up in situ in the 1950s.

The names of the 10 Sharpshooters on board the ship are:

Tpr Ranger RFJ 4CLY (Died)

Sgt Whitehead GF 4CLY (Died)

Tpr Cuthbert KE 3CLY (Died 02/03/1942)

Cpl Boon PJ 3CLY

Cpl Fryer JW 3CLY

L/Cpl Lakeman E 3CLY

Tpr Worswick D 4CLY

Tpr Crebbin R 4CLY

Tpr Davies LF 4CLY

Tpr Blackman

The Role of ULTRA

By late 1941, the ability of the British command to read Italian and German naval and air force messages encoded on Enigma machines, known as ULTRA, was well-developed. Messages were read with very short delays and in sufficient time to guide operational decisions. Messages that prisoners were to be carried northbound on merchant vessels returning to Italy had been deciphered since 5 December. Thanks to ULTRA, the departure time and escort arrangements of *Vénier* were known in London, well before her actual departure as was the fact that the ship was carrying 2,000 POW on board.



SS Scillin.

HMS Porpoise had left Alexandria for her 14th war patrol on 28 November, prior to these messages being deciphered in Bletchley Park. Almost 33 hours after the signal confirming that Venier was carrying 2,000 prisoners north had been deciphered in Bletchley Park and over 24 hours after this information had reached the Admiralty and Prime Minister's office in London, HMS Porpoise fired her spread of torpedoes. On the face of things there was therefore sufficient time available to allow HMS Porpoise to be instructed not attack merchants moving north. However this would have brought with it the risk that ULTRA might be compromised and so no such message was sent.

The loss of the Venier and the other 5 ships sunk carrying POWs was not made public until well after the war ended – in fact in 1996. Of the other 5 ships to be sunk the only one where Kent and Sharpshooter Yeomen were involved was that of the SS SCILLIN which was torpedoed on 14th November 1942.

In November 1942, in Tripoli, Libya, 814 Allied POWs were embarked in Scillin's hold, which, reportedly, was suitable for only about 300 and looking at the photos of the ship one can quite believe that figure. This resulted in severe overcrowding and unsanitary conditions. More prisoners would have been embarked, but the British military doctor (Captain Gilbert, RAMC) made vehement and repeated protests. Some reports state that a further 195 POWs were embarked before Scillin sailed and that there were some 200 Italian troops aboard; others dispute these points saying that the only Italian troops aboard were guards and gun crews and the surplus POWs were never actually embarked. The ship sailed on 13 November 1942 for Sicily fully loaded and with hatches battened down. Amongst the POW's were 47 Kent Yeomen captured at the Battle of Deir El Shein.

The following night (14th November) Scillin was intercepted by the British S-class submarine, HMS Sahib off the coast of Tunisia. The submarine first fired two rounds from her deck gun shells at the cargo ship to stop her and then fired a single torpedo at close range which hit the hold. The ship sank rapidly with the prisoners in the hold having little chance of survival. HMS Sahib rescued 27 POWs (26 British and one South African), Scillin's captain and 34 Italian crew and soldiers before the arrival of an Italian warship obliged her to leave. Only when Sahib's crew heard survivors speaking English did they realise the ship was a POW transport.

At this stage of the war Royal Navy submarine commanders had been ordered not to attack enemy civilian ships that were *en route* from North Africa to Italy. In the subsequent naval inquiry, *Sahib's* commander (Lt John Bromage) was cleared of culpability, since he claimed that *Scillin* had borne no lights, he had believed that *Scillin* was carrying Italian troops, had appeared to be *en route* to Africa and had not responded to the initial shelling (two rounds), intended to halt her. Interestingly in his log Lt Bromage never claimed to have fired any warning shots.

A subsequent attempt was made to prosecute the Italians for war crimes because of the lack of life-saving equipment and Italian attempts to batten down (*i.e.* close) her hatches where the POWs were kept, thus preventing their escape. This prosecution was abandoned due to lack of evidence.

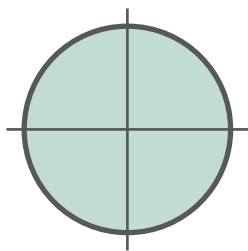
The details of Scillin's loss and the circumstances of the death of the Allied POWs were kept secret for more than 50 years until persistent inquiries by relations and historians brought a more open response. The reasons for official reticence for such a long period are not clear, but there are claims that it was deemed necessary to protect intelligence sources. It should be remembered that Ultra was highly secret and its existence was not publicly disclosed until the 1970s.

Many measures were applied to protect Ultra intelligence one of which was to overfly any intended shipping target before directing any interception and attack. Scillin's crew were interrogated when they were landed at Malta and disclosed that the ship had been sighted by aerial reconnaissance following which Sahib was then given an interception course. This was standard practice when attacking shipping whose movements had been revealed by Ultra whether they had POW aboard or not.

The first-time information on the sinking of the Scillin and other POW ships was made public was in 1996 when the Ministry of Defence put an account of the sinking and a list of POWs into an existing file at The National Archives. (WO311/304). However both the account of the sinking and the list of casualties were factually flawed: when the mistakes were pointed out the MoD accepted the errors, but no alterations were made to the records.

The 47 Kent Yeomen are commemorated on the memorial to the missing in the cemetery at El Alamein and there is a memorial at the National Arboretum for all those who died in POW ships during the desert campaign.





MAJOR ALEXANDER JAMES SCRATCHLEY, MC

by Dave Whitehouse

In the recently broadcast wartime drama entitled SAS: Rogue Heroes (based on the book of the same name by Ben Macintyre), there is an episode that depicts Operation Devon in which the Special Raiding Squadron (SRS) under Major ‘Paddy’ Mayne captures the Italian port of Termoli in October 1943. Whilst the drama is inevitably focussed on the legendary exploits of Paddy Mayne and other L Detachment SAS veterans, there is a scene towards the end of the episode where SRS is joined by elements of the newly formed 2 SAS. This is where Jim Almonds, a veteran of L Detachment who had been posted to 2 SAS is reunited with some of his old chums. However, the drama fails to depict or even mention the commander of the 2 SAS contingent – Major ‘Sandy’ Scratchley, also an L Detachment veteran but more importantly a Sharpshooter.



Members of 2 SAS on parade for an inspection by General Montgomery, following their successful participation in the capture, behind enemy lines, of the port of Termoli in Italy. On the left is Major Scratchley MC, commanding the SAS detachment (IWM E26182).

Born on 3rd June 1906 in Chelsea, and baptised Alexander James Scratchley in Alphington, Devon on 14th August, 'Sandy' came from a family of military men. His father, Victor Henry Scratchley was a Lt-Col in the Royal Engineers then later in the Kings Royal Rifle Corps, serving in India, the Boer War and WW1. His paternal grandfather, was Major General Sir Peter Henry Scratchley KCMG who served in the Crimean War and Indian Mutiny. He later became special commissioner for Great Britain in New Guinea 1884–1885 and defence adviser for Australia. Sandy's great grandfather, James Scratchley was also a soldier in the Royal Artillery.

Following in his forebears' footsteps, Sandy was commissioned into the Kings Regiment as a 2nd Lt on 4th Feb 1926. However, his military career was short lived as the London Gazette of 18 March 1927 records "2nd Lt. A. J. Scratchley is placed on the h.p. (presumed to denote half-pay) list on account of ill-health."

Nevertheless, it clearly enabled Sandy to follow other pursuits as over the next decade he became a successful jockey under National Hunt rules, amassing a total of 78 wins. In 1929, he narrowly missed serious injury or worse when the race favourite 'Drumbeg' he was riding, during the Dover Hunters Steeplechase at Folkestone, fell at the last fence. Although he sustained a broken collar-bone, a fellow jockey who also fell was not so lucky. James Joicey was carried off unconscious and died soon afterwards.

After war broke out Sandy was gazetted to 4CLY as 2nd Lieutenant in September 1939, the gazette entry showing that he was "late 2Lt The Kings R." Sandy was one of many junior officers to join 4CLY over the coming days as the regiment was made up to its war establishment. It would be soon joining its sister regiments in the 22nd Heavy Armoured Brigade, 3CLY and 2RGH in the West Country. In fact, one of Sandy's first duties was to command a convoy of trucks as the regiment moved to Minehead in Somerset on 10th September, according to the only war diary entry that mentions him.

Despite appearing in the Army List as a 4CLY officer in 1940, Sandy did not stay with the regiment for long. In January 1940, the War Office called for volunteers who could ski to join a newly formed 5th (Special Reserve) Battalion, Scots Guards. A number of Sharpshooters including 2Lt Scratchley volunteered.

The formation of this unit resulted from the decision of the British and French to formally ally with the Finns in their struggle with the Soviet Union and it was now necessary to find troops suited for fighting in Finland. The French could provide the ski-trained Chasseurs Alpins. The British, however had a problem – there were very few people in Britain who could ski, and since skiing was generally restricted to those who could afford it, there were even fewer in the British Army. Thus, most of the volunteers for the 5th Bn were commissioned officers, many of whom agreed to relinquish their commissions and serve as other ranks. Amongst them were David Stirling who went on to form the SAS, and Mike Calvert of future Chindits fame.

On 3rd February 1940, volunteers were directed to report to Quebec Barracks, Borden three days hence, where the battalion was being assembled. Given that the CO, Colonel Coats, had been told to have the battalion ready for overseas service by the 1st March, so everything had to be done on the hurry-up. Each volunteer was interviewed by the CO or one of his senior officers and closely examined as to his qualifications. Many were subsequently rejected but it appears that Sandy was accepted as he was posted to 14 Platoon of the Left Flank Company together with Cpl F W Brooks of



The 5th "Ski" Battalion Scots Guards training at Chamonix, March 1940.

4CLY and 2Lt William Goodbody of 3CLY. According to the 3CLY War Diary, Troopers Frank and Mooney also volunteered but it is not known if they were accepted.

On the 2nd March in deepest secrecy, the battalion embarked at Southampton and landed in France the next day. After a non-stop train journey across France, the battalion arrived at Chamonix in the French Alps. With the assistance of 199th Battalion of Chasseurs Alpains, training now begun in earnest. However, this was to be curtailed a week later as the situation in Finland deteriorated. The battalion was hurriedly returned to the UK and it was only when the men had started to embark for the journey north that they heard that the Finnish Prime Minister had gone to Moscow to seek terms. The battalion was no longer needed and was thus sent back to Borden and disbanded.

Sandy returned to his former regiment which by this time would have moved, along with the rest of the brigade to Worksop to join the rest of 2nd Armoured Division, of which it was a part. It was here that Sandy apparently intervened on behalf of Cpl John Harris who had been hauled up in front of the Squadron Leader for dereliction of duty, having been held responsible for leaving rifles unattended in the back of a truck. Harris later recalled *"I was hauled before my squadron leader and advised of the seriousness of this ghastly lapse of duty, a matter which might result in court martial and so on. I was saved by an officer of my squadron, one Sandy Scratchley. Sandy was a famous hurdle race amateur jockey, the best of his time, a man of great common sense who saw such innocent derelictions of duty in their proper perspective. He intervened on my behalf, said I was a useful NCO and so on. The Squadron Leader took heed and the matter was dropped."*

In October 1940, 22nd Brigade was moved to 1st Armoured Division in Surrey and training and large-scale exercises continued until finally in August 1941, 4CLY embarked at Liverpool for the Middle East. In early October 1941 the regiment arrived outside Cairo and would shortly be 'bloodied' as part of Operation Crusader.

Despite the fact that Scratchley is not mentioned in Andrew Graham's 'Sharpshooters at War' or Earl of Onslow's 'Men and Sand', I can only assume that Sandy remained

with the Sharpshooters for at least the first few months of their desert war. If that was the case, he would have been involved in the heavy fighting at Bir el Gubi, Sidi Rezegh and perhaps even forays into the desert as part of 'Arthur Column' commanded by Lord Cranley.

Eventually in early 1942 the brigade returned to the Nile Delta for refitting. It was perhaps during this period that Sandy heard about volunteers being sought for a new unit – the Special Air Service. He would have been attracted by the name of the unit's commanding officer David Stirling who he would have encountered during his time in the 5th Bn Scots Guards.

What I have been able to establish, is that on 13th July 1942, David Stirling left his men in their desert hideout at Bir el Quseir, while he and Paddy Mayne went off to Cairo for much need equipment, supplies and reinforcements. He returned 10 days later at the head of a 20-strong column of jeeps plus lorries loaded with supplies. Also in the convoy were a number of new officers including Lt Scratchley.

Over the next couple of days, Stirling made preparation for his next raid on 26th July 1942 using the new jeeps heavily armed with Vickers K machine guns. The target was an airfield at Sidi Haneish, approximately 30 miles east-south-east of Mersa Matruh. Briefing his men, Stirling explained that they would drive on to the airfield in two columns with a distance of ten yards between vehicles. Stirling himself would direct the attack from his jeep positioned between the heads of the two columns. He ordered a dress rehearsal on the evening of 25th July.

So, on the evening of 26th, the SAS jeep convoy set out, with Mike Sadler navigating them the 70-mile journey north to Sidi Haneish. Seemingly with no prior SAS training, Sandy was put in charge of one of jeeps. The approach to the target airfield was largely uneventful and they arrived in just four hours. After quick battle orders, the SAS men advanced slowly forming into two columns. On a green Verey light signal fired from Stirling, the attack commenced.

The two columns were directed to the centre of the dispersal area and proceeded to shoot the planes up one by one. About thirty were destroyed, with many bursting into flames. As the columns doubled back they came under attack from a 20mm gun and small-arms fire, from the enemy in an attempt to mount some sort of defence. Stirling's jeep was damaged but not disabled. However, a bullet killed L/Bdr John Robson, the rear gunner in Sandy's jeep. They departed the airfield and split up.

Sandy's jeep, together with those of David Stirling, George Jellicoe, and Stephen Hastings went south-west whilst others headed south. Luckily a fog obscured the rising sun and thus hid them from enemy aircraft for a little while. However, a detachment of Free French SAS men were discovered and 2Lt Andre Zirnheld was killed.

Over the next two days, the remaining detachments made their way back to base at Bir el Quseir and shortly afterwards the SAS including Lt Scratchley were ordered back to Cairo for a new operation. The new commander of the Eighth Army, General Bernard Montgomery was planning an autumn offensive against Rommel at El Alamein. Stirling was summoned to MEHQ and was horrified to learn of the role that the SAS would be expected to perform in the forthcoming attack. Contrary to the unit's normal *modus operandi*, Montgomery instructed the SAS, together with elements of the Middle East Commando and the Special Boat Section (SBS), to raid the port of

Benghazi on the night of 13/14 September. At the same time, a combined force of commandos and infantry would conduct a seaborne strike against Tobruk.

The operation, codenamed Bigamy, was a complete disaster. Even before getting to Benghazi, a number of vehicles, including two tanks, became either bogged down in the sand or broke down and had to be abandoned. At the same time, they suffered several serious casualties after a jeep hit a mine and burst into flames. This coupled with reports that the operation had been compromised, led to Stirling considering aborting the attack, but was ordered by GHQ to proceed.

When the jeep convoy of the main force to the outskirts of the town, they encountered a road block, complete with barbed-wire and minefields. Almost immediately machine-gun and mortar fire erupted from the road side and the convoy was forced to make a hasty turnabout and escape up the escarpment from which they had come. They then came under fierce bombardment from the air as they tried to make it back to cover.

With many now wounded, most of the force managed to make it back to the RV but now faced the prospect of having to travel across more than 600 miles of desert to Kufra. To make matters worse, they were low on fuel so Paddy Mayne and a party of men went off to secure more at Jalo, leaving Stirling in the jebel to follow on in slower time. As they neared the Jalo, it was decided to send a scouting party led by 'Sandy' Scratchley up ahead to see if they could find any fuel, and perhaps come across Mayne.

By nightfall the following day, Sandy had not returned, and so an experienced officer volunteered to go and look for him. Returning some hours later, he had not found Sandy but had found fuel. Scratchley and his party had apparently become trapped in no-man's-land, pinned down by fire from both directions.

When Stirling finally made it back to Kufra, he managed to round up more of his missing men, presumably with Sandy amongst them. However, a quarter of his force had been killed, wounded or captured and over half his vehicles lost.

Following this debacle, when Sandy might have expected his SAS career to come to a premature end, he found that he was in fact to continue serving in an expanded 1 SAS – the unit had gained regimental status. The new regiment would comprise of four squadrons: A Squadron under Paddy Mayne would include L Detachment veterans; B Squadron under Stirling himself would largely comprise new recruits; C Squadron the Free French and D Squadron the Special Boat Section.

Lt Scratchley was posted to A Squadron and remained with them for the remainder of the desert campaign. In early 1943, when a second regiment 2 SAS was formed under the command of David Stirling's older brother Bill, Sandy was transferred to the new unit.

2 SAS was destined to take part in operations in support of the Allied landing in Sicily: Operation Narcissus was a raid by 40 members of A Squadron 2 SAS on a lighthouse on the south east coast of Sicily. The team, under the command of Sandy (now promoted Captain) landed on 10 July with the mission of capturing the lighthouse and the surrounding high ground. Whilst the lighthouse itself was deserted, a thorough sweep of the island uncovered three terrified Italian soldiers hiding in foxholes. The troopers withdrew with hardly a shot being fired.



A close up of the Major Scratchley DSO MC, CO of the SAS detachment which took part in the attack Termoli.” Photo taken by Capt Poston 19.10.43. IWM E

The unit would go on to play its part in operations on the Italian mainland but I have not been able to discover what Sandy’s role was in these, except for Operation Devon, the amphibious landings at Termoli. In the early hours of 3 October 1943, the SRS together with 3 and 40 Commandos, landed behind the German lines under cover of darkness at the Adriatic seaport, north of the Biferno River. The enemy were only alerted once the force had entered the town and there was brisk close-quarter fighting with German paratroopers. By 0800 the town was captured.

According to Roy Farran, he together with 20 men of 2 SAS, did not take part in the attack but had arrived in the town to rest. Farran recalls *“I had come up the leg of Italy and I was there resting and I didn’t think it was our battle really. Sandy Scratchley came along, my old friend from command headquarters, and said what the hell are we doing hiding behind a sack of flour and everything. Why weren’t we defending part of the perimeter? So, I felt rather shamed by that and I took my men out and formed part of the perimeter.”*

Sandy was clearly present during the German counter-attack but perhaps had a liaison role between 2 SAS and the Commando Brigade HQ. Therefore, it is not surprising that he appears alongside Roy Farran in the photograph at the beginning of this article (taken 11 October 1943).

After Termoli, 2 SAS went on to carry out raids behind enemy line, targeting the railway lines feeding the German front. Roy Farran took a party of 16 men on one such raid. They were taken by torpedo boat to Giulianova, a coastal town 100 miles north of Termoli and well behind enemy lines. They then split into four parties of four men each and went off to their respective targets. He recalls *“The next day we blew up the railway line, we blew it in several different places and then we walked through the hills. We knew the Germans were after us, in the mud and eventually got to the rendezvous point and we flashed our torches, and Sandy Scratchley was there and he picked us up. And I lost two men only, two from one party who had gone through a German village and had been challenged and captured.”*

Sandy remained with the SAS throughout the Italian Campaign and for his activities there was awarded the Military Cross. His citation reads: *“This officer led a small party who were landed behind the enemy’s lines and remained there for two or three weeks. Most useful information was produced and a certain amount of sabotage carried out e.g. blowing of railway tracks, cutting of signal and power cables, setting fire to railway tracks etc. Whilst there, this party ran considerable risks and on more than one occasion were chased and shot at by enemy patrols.”*

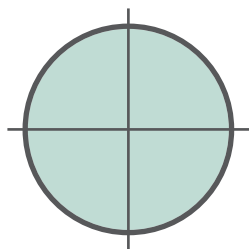
Intriguingly, in some sources including IWM, Sandy is also credited with the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) as well as a bar to his MC. I have been unable to verify this in the London Gazette. Nor can I find his name in the index of DSO recipients (1919-1945) in the National Archives under WO 390.

By the end of 1943, men of the SAS had been recalled to Britain to prepare for Allied D-Day landings. After a disagreement with higher command over the use of the SAS in the forthcoming invasion, Bill Stirling resigned as the new CO of 2 SAS became Brian Franks.

I have found nothing to suggest that Major Scratchley returned to 4CLY and can only assume he remained with 2 SAS for the rest of the war. However I have not found any mention of Sandy in relation to operations in Europe.

After the war, Sandy married Pamela Baker (former Lady Bridport) and returned to horse racing, this time as a race-horse owner. He died on 13 May 1973, aged 66 and his passing was noted in the SYA Newsletter of that year.





THE MEDALS OF MAJOR DICKIE MAYDWELL

A PIECE OF SHARPSHOOTER HISTORY

by Tim Rayson RVM

Major Dickie Maydwell was born in 1919 and served during the Second World War with the Royal Signals, seeing action in the Western Desert. He was awarded the 1939/45 Star, Africa Star, Defence Medal, War Medal, Cadet Forces Medal (EIR).

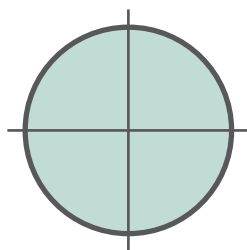
In the post war years he was commissioned into the Surrey Army Cadet Force and served with the Mitcham Road Detachment in Croydon. This unit was badged as the Kent and City of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters). He remained an active member of the ACF until his death in 1993 and worked closely with the Honorary Colonel of the day who was Sir William Mullens DSO and bar and a former distinguished CO of the Kent Yeoman. Having no family to leave his estate to Dickie bequeathed it to the then Army Cadet Force Association for a very considerable sum (six figures) which has

over the years supported the development of army cadets in a wide variety of ways.

In 2022 his medals came up for auction and the Association decided to bid for them as he was such an influential figure that quite a few of us including myself had known. We were successful in getting the medals – the purchase being crowd funded by members of the Association and these have now been framed.

The original idea behind the purchase was to ensure that they went on display where their history would be understood and appreciated. In October of this year the medals were formally presented by the Hon Secretary to the Chief Executive of the Army Cadet Charitable Trust for display at the Army Cadet Training Centre at Frimley Park for both cadets and adults to see.





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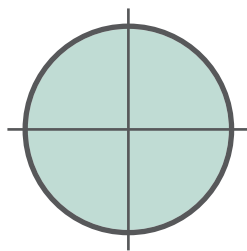
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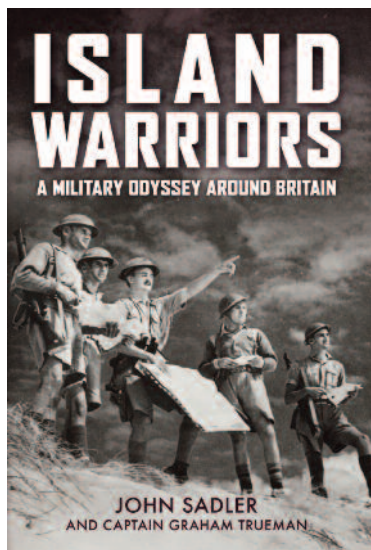
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BOOK REVIEW

by David Lakin



Island Warriors: A Military Odyssey Around Britain by John Sadler and Captain Graham Trueman. Amberley Publishing 2024 ISBN 978 1 39811479 1 £25

The military odyssey of the title comprises accounts of visits to about 50 of the principal author's favourite military museums (it is not clear the degree to which his sidekick had any say in the matter – Trueman's role seems largely confined to providing the other voice in the Derek and Clive-style dialogues which appear at intervals throughout the book). After a rather rambling introduction, the subsequent chapters provide a region-by-region account starting in the authors' native north-east and moving anticlockwise around Britain. At each stop the author selects a key story to tell and usually a key object from the collection. The stories are well selected and well told – this is very much the best

aspect of the book and unsurprising given the main author's career as a living history interpreter. For those readers with an interest in military history many of the stories will be very familiar, for example the account of Sergeant Charles Ewart's actions at Waterloo are recounted as part of the visit to the Scots Dragoon Guards museum in Edinburgh Castle. To the author's credit he includes a number of less well known (and less regimentally focused) stories such as that of the thousands of women who, during the First World War, worked at the vast factory at Easttriggs producing cordite (memorably named the 'devil's porridge' by Conan Doyle).

The text is supported by 16 pages of photographs loosely related to the sites visited and objects selected. They include a photograph of the authors in a Fox armoured car owned by Trueman. There is a gazetteer of the sites, arranged by region, with sufficient details to allow the reader to make their own odyssey should they wish.

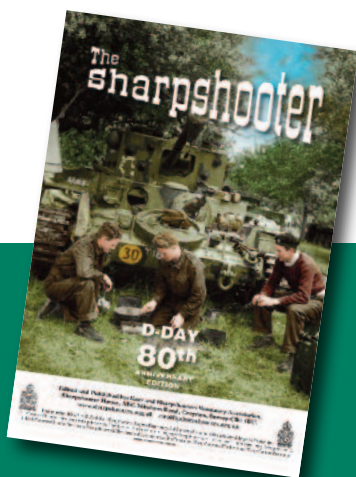
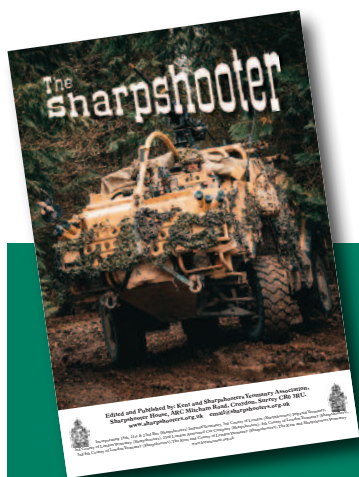
Sadly, the Kent and Sharpshooters Yeomanry Museum does not form part of the odyssey however there is some yeomanry interest in the form of the Northumberland Hussars collection in the Discovery Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne. Apparently dubbed 'The Noodles' they were soon lampooned as 'Blue bummed bumblers/ cock-tail tumblers/fireside soldiers/dorn't gan te waar'. There is a brief narrative of the regimental

history which features a fair amount of firsthand material, including the experiences of Lt Isaac Armorer Patterson who had joined as a private soldier in 1908 and was wounded and captured in August 1918 near Bray sur Somme. His account of his captivity and repatriation after the Armistice sheds light on an aspect of the war which generally gets little treatment.

So, does the book work? I would say that it does within the parameters it sets itself. But these are parameters set by someone who is keen on dressing up and telling stories, and there is a tendency to raise interesting, but more difficult, points and then shy away from them. One such is raised in the introduction under the sub-title *Why Museums Matter*. The argument is made that we are a product of our heritage and that military heritage is a big part of that. The case of the ill-fated Durham Light Infantry Museum, which was closed by Durham County Council in 2016 as a cost-cutting measure, is cited as an example of the degree to which a military museum can be embedded in and reflect an entire community. Unfortunately, the narrative then swerves back to storytelling and anecdote resolutely ignoring thereafter the question of who military museums are for.

This is a highly personal account (we learn perhaps more than we might want to about the authors' childhood reading habits and favourite war films) which tells selected stories very well. If that's the sort of thing you like this book is for you. If on the other hand you want something a bit more insightful about military museology (or you have heard the stories before), it probably isn't.





The sharpshooter

THE SHARPSHOOTER JOURNAL 2026 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 21st November 2026. 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.

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

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Contact Tim Rayson on Secretary@ksya.org.uk



