



THE CHESHIRE REGIMENT ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



VOLUME 2 ISSUE 8

JUNE 2011

EDITORIAL

I suppose that most lads dream of being at Wembley for the FA Cup Final. Some of us are lucky enough for our chosen team to win the FA Cup. But it is nothing else but Boys' Own stuff that one moment you are an ordinary soldier, the next moment you are presenting the FA Cup to the winning team in front of tens of thousands with many more millions watching on TV.

Truly Corporal Mark Ward from our 1st Battalion is an inspiration to his colleagues and his recent activities have made him an ambassador for the Army as a whole. Nevertheless I suspect that a year ago if you had told him that he would be a highly decorated soldier and presenting the FA Cup at Wembley, he would have been calling for the men in white coats and the straightjacket. I guess that presenting it to the team that he just so happened to support must have made the dream complete. As one political commentator often says, you could not make it up.

It is always nice to receive letters from Brigadier Mike Dauncey and it is clear that he still has his finger on the CRA's pulse. He takes a great interest in all that is going on and he tells me that he particularly enjoyed Peter Gresty's article in the last edition about the Droppin Well Memorial.

By the time this newsletter lands on your doormat I hope that we will have enjoyed another successful reunion in Blackpool and that the summer will be well and truly upon us.

Please send your contributions to me at: The School House, Dartmouth Road, London SE26 4RD. My telephone number is: 020 8291 9225. You can also e-mail me at: george.szwejkowski@sky.com.

George Szwejkowski

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

It doesn't seem like 2 minutes since I wrote my last column for the newsletter and yet here we are again which means we are now almost halfway through the year, where has the time gone?

It has been a strange period for me as Chairman of the CRA and nothing like any period in the previous 3 years. At recent events many of you have asked why have I been absent from parade but through necessity I have been travelling for work a lot and as a result have been unable to attend the events which I normally like to frequent. It is for this reason that I am unable to comment on the Ellesmere Port Standard Dedication, the Malaya & Singapore Reunion and the Regimental Race Day but I am sure that they are well covered elsewhere in the newsletter.

Before this edition of the newsletter hits the doormat many members will have attended the reunion weekend in the Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool, organised by Eddie Pickering and Dave Mapley. I hope that all those who did manage to attend enjoyed themselves and appreciate the time and effort put in by a few individuals to make sure it happens. Unfortunately for me I was on yet another long haul flight, for work, during that weekend so will have missed the chance to meet up with old friends.

Many of you will have read, in previous newsletters, about HMS Ambuscade Association plans to come along to the Races and use the facilities of the CRA Club the following day. They enjoyed themselves so much they have asked if they could be allowed to attend the races again as their reunion is in Crewe next year, CRAMC will discuss this at the next meeting.

The summer is normally a fairly quiet period for the CRA but there are still one or two events which could do with your support if you can possibly make it, some of these are the Ellesmere Port Boat Museum and Whitby Park Memorial service and the Suez Reunion which will be held in the CRA Club on this occasion. One other very important event following the Afghanistan tour last year is the Crich Memorial Pilgrimage on 3rd July where the names of the fallen from 1 Mercian (Cheshire) have been added to the memorial. The details for all of these events are contained elsewhere in this newsletter.

I hope all members; enjoy the summer period which promises so much, support the CRA where possible and remain in good health.

Peter Gresty

The link for the CRA webpage is:

<http://www.cheshiremilitarymuseum.co.uk/regimental-associations/the-cheshire-regiment-association.aspx>

The Mercian Regiment website is:

<http://www.army.mod.uk/infantry/regiments/Mercian.aspx>

The opinions expressed in the articles in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy and views, official or otherwise of RHQ or the Regiment.

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MINUTES OF THE CRAMC MEETING

MINUTES OF THE CRAMC MEETING HELD ON 2nd APRIL 2011 AT RHQ CHESTER

Present: Mr P J Gresty (Chairman), Mr J Cooney, Maj J S Holden TD, Capt A W Hughes, Mr J A Jennings, Mr G T Kipps, Maj J Salisbury, Mr D J Waring. Maj T E Pickering MBE (Secretary).

Apologies were received from Mr A Kennedy and Mr K Parsonage.

The Chairman opened the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance.

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

There were no matters arising and Major Salisbury proposed that they be accepted as a true record, Mr Jennings seconded the proposal. Carried.

The minutes of the AGM were reviewed; Major Holden asked that copies of the Trustees Report and Financial Statement could be handed to all those attending the AGM in future rather than the financial summary provided. The secretary said that he felt it would be a waste of resources to do so as most copies would be left behind, he had said at the AGM that the full report was to be published on the Charity Commission website, the CRA page of the Museum website, a copy would be sent to every branch and to any individual who requested one. After some discussion it was agreed that at future AGMs, a summary would be issued with the agenda and there would be full copies available for those who wished to study it.

2. Chairman's Report

The Chairman started by saying how honoured he was to have been asked to remain in office for a second 3 year term of office he also welcomed the newest member of CRAMC, Gordon Kipps from Ellesmere Port branch, who was appointed for a 3 year tour of duty at the recent AGM, he thanked him and Martin Walker who was reappointed for a second term for their willingness to serve. He reminded members that they are not branch delegates, but that the committee serves the interests of all members of the CRA.

He then spoke briefly about the AGM which had to be held in the Club because the caretaker of St Mary's Centre failed to open the hall. Although it was a tight squeeze but we all fitted in and had a really good supper afterwards, it may be the way forward in the future if numbers continue to fall. The minutes of the AGM have already been circulated and they have also been published in the newsletter. He promised to give an update on the proposal, made by Bill Helliwell for a memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum later in the meeting.

He mentioned that Meeanee Dinners were held by Southern Region, Stockport and Sandbach branches and Macclesfield branch held a Meeanee church service during the month of February and that it was good to see our regimental history being remembered at these events. He also mentioned that on the day after the AGM Ellesmere Port Branch had their new standard dedicated at a ceremony attended by our President.

Regimental Race Day this year seems to be attracting interest from greater numbers according to the evidence on the Facebook page. That weekend will also see the HMS Ambuscade Association holding their reunion in the Club and some of them will also be in town for the Race Day. They have also invited members of the CRA to join them at the reunion on Saturday evening.

3. Secretary's Financial Report

The Secretary presented a summary of the CRA accounts and a breakdown of Income and Expenditure for the 5th months ending 31st March. (Income £11893, Expenditure £11925. The CRA currently has a net worth of £86772 and will claim the balance of the MRA grant to bring it up to £91615.) He drew attention to the generous legacy received from the estates of Maj & Mrs Cross and also the donation of £1000 from Peter Hennerley from the sales of his DVD about "The Bravest Little Street in England" without which the accounts would not look as healthy as they do. Maj Holden proposed that the debtor of £154 shown which was the hire charge for St Mary's Centre for the post-Mercian Marathon event in October be entered as "support to the Mercian Regiment." Mr Jennings seconded the proposal. Carried.

The Chairman stated that he felt that the budget should remain the same for the remainder of this financial year and the committee were in agreement.

4. Future Events

The following upcoming events were discussed:

- a. **Blackpool Reunion.** The rooms held for this event will be released on 8th April. Numbers, while healthy are lower than was hoped. The Secretary explained that the Gala Dinner on the Saturday night will be a ticket-only affair to prevent gate-crashers.
- b. **Suez Reunion.** The untimely death of Geoff Hunt has left the organisation without its prime mover, however as this year marks the 60th Anniversary of the 1st Bn's deployment, it was felt that a gathering should be organised as a final gesture. The Secretary agreed to discuss the matter with Graham Ball. (After-note: A final reunion will take place in the CRA Club on Saturday 30th July starting at 6pm. Interested parties will be contacted in due course.)
- c. **Crich.** The Chairman outlined the background to this event and went on to explain that there was now a Mercian Regiment memorial at the site where the names of 1 MERCIAN's soldiers who lost their lives in Afghanistan will be inscribed and dedicated on Sunday 3rd July. He encouraged members of the CRA to show support for this event.
- d. **Mons Reunion.** The Secretary explained that plans were in hand but warned that due to a stricter interpretation of the Regulations, it may not be affordable to have a band to lead the parade in future years, although this year's parade will be led the band of The Mercian Regiment.
- e. **East Cheshire Reunion.** The organising committee are hoping to secure the services of 1 MERCIAN or 4 MERCIAN's Corps of Drums.
- f. **Ballykelly.** The 29th Anniversary is planned for 4th December.

(Afternote: the Secretary omitted the Singapore and Malaya Reunion which will take place in Pelsall on 14th May – apologies).

MINUTES OF THE CRAMC MEETING

5. Other Business

- a. **Mr Jennings** remarked that one of the recipients of the Military Cross announced in the recent Operational Honours list was Cpl Mark Ward, the grandson of Alan Kennedy. The Chairman said that on behalf of the CRA, he has written to congratulate all of those decorated.
- b. **Major Holden** commented on the cost of food at CRA functions and asked that in order to keep them affordable, consideration be given to a subsidy. The Secretary pointed out that ticket prices for the 2010 Mons and the recent Meeanee supper were £8 and that the Mons lunch price included drinks. It was agreed to keep costs under review.
- c. **Mr Cooney** asked about the policy for attendance of the Association Standard at funerals. It was explained that the extant policy is that the CRA Standard will parade at funerals of Operational casualties and prominent CRA personalities. If a branch wishes to have the CRA Standard paraded alongside their own, they are to arrange this through the Secretary but must be prepared to cover any costs involved if they have no Standard Bearer.
- d. **The Chairman:**
 - (1) Updated on progress with the NMA plot, conditions and costings. It was agreed that this project was going to be costly if it is to be done properly. One of the costs is a "donation" of £36 per square metre, Major Salisbury suggested that each Branch of the CRA be approached to provide a square metre donation. The Chairman said that he will be visiting NMA at the end of May to open discussions and that members of CRAMC may wish to attend, he will inform members of the date when known. It was agreed that collecting buckets should be available on Race Day to start up a fund.
 - (2) Proposed a vote of thanks to Peter Hennerley. Unanimous agreement.
 - (3) Drew attention to the Royal Hospital Chelsea's "Buy a Brick" appeal. This was felt to be something which Branches might like to involve themselves with.
 - (4) Spoke about a proposal to erect a statue in honour of Todger Jones VC in Runcorn. It was agreed that the CRA should support this project, Maj Salisbury proposed that we donate £250 and Mr Waring seconded the proposal. Carried. It was further suggested that CRA Branches may wish to give something.
 - (5) Circulated an email from Tony Butterworth showing a CRA badge he had made and was offering for sale.
 - (6) Reminded everyone about the Newsletter deadline dates of 20th May, 22nd August and 16th November.

6. Date of Next Meeting

16th July (CRAMC 1000hrs, Lunch, Branch Officials 1300).

VIEW FROM THE CASTLE



The year is galloping by! Race Day came and went in a flash, it was good to see so many CRA members gathered together both at RHQ and on the Racecourse, there were nearly 500 people crammed into RHQ Courtyard at the busiest time.

At the time of writing, we are putting things together for the reunion in Blackpool and hope that it will be an enjoyable weekend. Plans are already afoot to return in February 2013 for another Meeanee Reunion, then there is the Mons Reunion in September, details are enclosed.

On Sunday 3rd July, at Crich in Derbyshire starting at 1430hrs, the Mercian Regiment Memorial Wall, on which the names of the soldiers who died in Afghanistan last year have been inscribed, will be rededicated. Members of the CRA are cordially invited to take part in the Memorial Service. There is a large car park close to the venue, and it is a short walk up a steep incline to reach the Memorial Wall. Refreshments are available on site from 1230hrs.

A sponsored walk is being planned in Warrington on Friday 29th July in memory of Pte Tom Sephton of 1 MERCIAN who died of wounds received in Afghanistan last year. All funds raised will go to the Mercian Regiment Benevolence Charity which looks after the needs of members of the CRA as well as the other former regiments. It will start at 7pm at Crossfields Rugby Club if anyone is feeling energetic and wishes to join in, details from CRA Secretary.

Also enclosed with the newsletter is a copy of the Shop pages from the Museum website showing some of the things we sell and how much they cost. There is an online shop called "Cheshire Regimental Shop" which sells ties and blazer badges, this organisation has absolutely nothing to do with the Regiment, the CRA or the Museum. Compare their prices with ours and make your choice. Don't forget that the Museum shop is open 350 days a year and we can handle mail order. Sadly, we are unable to accept card payments, the installation of a card-reader would lead to higher prices because of commission charges and rental fees.

In April, I had a meeting with Town Councillors from Quievrain which is the local authority of the area where the 1st Battalion made their heroic stand in the Battle of Mons on 24th August 1914. Together, we are making plans for a CRA pilgrimage to commemorate the Centenary of the battle on 24th August 2014 and they hope that as many CRA members as possible can visit to take part in the ceremonies, so pencil the date in your diaries now, firm details will be published in 2013.

Eddie Pickering

WORD FROM THE BRANCHES

CHESTER BRANCH

It has been a very quiet period here at Chester if you discount the annual invasion of the Castle and Racecourse which occurs every May. It was great to meet so many old and new friends yet again. This year there was a terrific turnout from 1 Mercian and leading the charge of the old and bold were Major Mike Tarbuck, Major Ron Goodwin, Major Dave Sherlock (to name but a few) and, having flown in from Dubai, Keith and Helen Tarbuck were seen graphically demonstrating the art of shivering. It seems that everyone who was present at the Bar in the Castle, particularly during the two hours from eleven am until one o'clock, helped set a new record. In that time Iggy Jones and his team of still exhausted barmen sold 500 pints of beer! It is not recorded if any of the record breakers actually saw a horse!

I must say that Pelsall Labour Club doesn't improve with age, but the welcome we received when we attended the well organised Malayan reunion was just as warm as ever. The fish and chips were as delicious as always and well worth the journey. I am happy to say that we went mob handed this year. There were three of us. Bill Helliwell, Mitch Elliott and yours truly who were pleased to escort Major Bill Jones and act as his body guards! Which was just as well because as we left we were accosted by a garrulous gentleman of Glaswegian origins. Using Mitch as our interpreter we were able to discover that the man merely wished to compliment all who had attended the reunion on their extremely smart appearance and proud bearing. We thanked him for his kind words and sent him on his somewhat unsteady homeward way. We look upon the incident as proof that breeding tells and the 22nd may be stood down but we still have a least one fan!!

On July 23rd Chester Branch are holding yet another world famous Dinner/Dance at Fox Barracks. We have managed to hold the ticket price at £25 (same as last year) and cordially invite anyone wishing to attend our latest shindig to contact me at Chester Branch. Remember at this late stage ticket availability is likely to be limited so if you are interested in attending don't leave it too long before applying.

Just a reminder for all our friends out there. We are open every Friday for a Social evening to which we welcome all comers. All we ask is that if you intend to arrive mob handed we would appreciate a little notice, to give us a chance to organise a few extra chips.

John Fairbanks

ELLESMERE PORT BRANCH

Greetings from Ellesmere Port Branch. I start on a sad note. I have to report the passing of member Maureen Goodenough, wife of Harry. All members extend their condolences with the assurance to Harry, we are all here for you Harry.

Next, the dedication of our new Branch standard on February 20th. A very successful event and our sincere thanks go out to all who gave their support on the day. Including our President Brigadier Donnelly, who delayed his return home after the CRA AGM to attend. Congratulations must go to our Standard bearers Tom Simkins and Norman Wakefield whose performance was outstanding. Thanks also go to Terry Finlay and Derek Sykes who gave, prior to the service, valuable advice on procedures etc. Also, thanks to Major Pickering and staff at HQ – we had an excellent service sheet for the event.

After a fairly uneventful March and April the Branch gave their support to the local VE Day commemoration. So sad that we could only muster fourteen "pairs of boots" round the Cenotaph. Is the sentiment "We will remember" fading into obscurity? This must not happen!!

May 14th saw us, together with friends, and supporters from Birkenhead Branch, embark on an outing to York. A very tiring but enjoyable day out. York - a "walled City very much in architecture and atmosphere like our own beloved Chester. A thank you goes out to Mike Dempsey and his wife Shirley for organizing the day. I am nominating them as social event organizers for my Branch. Together, they are doing a cracking job.

Next, we have the event, Veterans/Armed Forces Day, together with other ex-service association colleagues Tom Simkins and I are involved in organizing the events in Ellesmere Port. I urge all Branches, get involved as much as possible with your local events. Take the opportunity to raise the profile of the CRA, and "flash the badge"

On the subject of profile, I have revived my recruitment campaign, by way of a photo shoot at my home and a telephone "interview" with local press. In the interview I described the CRA as a tree, (The Oak Tree), with us - the Branches supplying nutrient to the roots, (the heart of CRA containing all the memories of the old "22s"). If the branches shrivel, without their input, the roots will die, "Stand Firm - TOGETHER" and we will succeed and survive.

To conclude - can I remind you all that on July 17th we hold our annual Service of Commemoration. I am looking for a very good turnout this year.

Gordon Kipps

NANTWICH BRANCH

The branch continues to have a good membership and attendance at our once-monthly meetings, held in the Crosville Social Club, situated in Chester Street, Crewe. As ever there is a great deal of discussion, including a sense of humour of course. The meetings are so ably chaired by Harry Tomkinson.

Many of our members have not enjoyed the best of health over the past months and "Thinking of You" cards have been sent to them.

Additional details of branch events and activities for the rest of the year are still being formulated. These will include the Grand reunion in the Norbreck Hotel in Blackpool, the Armed Forces Day on 25th June, also possible visits to the National Arboretum and the Imperial War Museum in Manchester.

I was so pleased to receive the April issue (No. 19) of the Veterans World Magazine – raising awareness of the range of help and advice available to veterans, which included details of the planning for the Armed Forces Day on 25th June. This, no doubt will be extremely useful for discussion amongst branch members.

Branch meetings are held on the last Tuesday of each month in the Crosville Social Club. Meetings commence at 8 p.m. New members are always made welcome. Do come and join us.

Ray Stafford

WORD FROM THE BRANCHES (continued)

SANDBACH

I would like to apologise to the branch for missing the last newsletter it was totally my fault for getting the email address wrong Mr Charles Sullivan was ninety on the 9th August and we held a joint birthday bash on one of our meeting nights, with Roy Goodes eightieth they both had a small gift from the branch. In November on Remembrance Day after our town, parade members made their way to our memorial garden at the cemetery and we unveiled a small memorial slate to the twelve members of 1st Battalion Mercian (Cheshire). Pastor Barry Colclough read out their names one by one and he was brought up in the school of hard knocks being a boxer but these guys are the true heroes there wasn't a dry eye there, we will remember them. On a lighter note our Christmas party was a great success and was well attended by members and friends, we would like to thank Sam Machin once again for donating the hamper which raised well over one hundred pounds. Charles Sullivan received his first hamper from the C.R.A. for which he was very grateful. We were very sad to lose one of our founder members in patient Mr L Stubbs. Members went to the Royal Hospital to attend his funeral. Mr T Beckett carried our standard and other members present were Mr C Farrinton, L Bateman, M Cooper, P Cooke, L Davies and B Thorley. The branch paid their fares, for those unable to attend the funeral we held a memorial service at the Congregational Wheelock. Our Meeanee ball was fairly well attended although numbers were red from previous balls but still all who attended had a good time.

Percy Cooke received the General Martin award at the A.G.M. Chester presented by Brigadier John Donnelly - well deserved. We held our annual A.G.M. on 28th April. We have a new Treasurer, Mrs Debbie Cooper who has taken over from Mrs Margaret Bailey who wanted to finish last year but stayed on for another twelve months. She finishes after thirteen years well done and thanks from the branch otherwise the rest of the committee remains the same.

Race day was well attended by members from Sandbach, only one of our members got lost on the course and didn't find the beer tent he took a wrong turn and couldn't get on the main field Len Davies was never any good at map reading Mrs Mary Cooke managed to prize Percy's wallet out of his pocket and he brought her a Cheshire teddy out of the Museum shop. We have another birthday to announce it is Percy's ninetieth birthday on the 1st of July 2011 Happy Birthday from all members of the of the branch and he's still playing golf - good luck Percy. We wish all members of 1st battalion Mercian (Cheshire) all other serving soldiers and their families, members of the C.R.A. Good luck to all and God bless.

Dave Beech

SOUTHERN REGION

After over ten years of meetings at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea we have now made the move to our new home in the WOs and NCOs' Mess, Hyde Park Barracks, Knightsbridge. We were made most welcome and it was nice to have the additional treat of a tray of sandwiches. Thank you to Trevor Taylor for organising the move, although we are still waiting for the MFO boxes to arrive!!!

It was good to see so many from the Southern Region at Chester Races and some of us also made it to the Army v Royal Navy rugby match at Twickenham the following day. A 10 - 0

lead for the Royal Navy did not deter the Army, who ran out winners by 44 - 10, erasing the memory of last year's debacle.

The committee members recently enjoyed a visit to Westminster in order to see the House of Lords and the House of Commons. Thanks to Colonel Bob Stewart DSO MP we had a personal guided tour, culminating in lunch on the terrace and for those that were interested, watching the House of Commons in action.



On the terrace at the Houses of Parliament

We are looking forward to going to Lords on 28th June for the second Tri-Service T20 Cricket Tournament. If it is anything like as good as last year, then we are in for an excellent day.

We are also looking forward to meeting up with Fred Sims, who celebrates his 90th birthday on 11th June.

Our next meeting will be in the WOs & NCOs' Mess at Hyde Park Barracks, Knightsbridge, at 7pm on Thursday 27th October.

George Szwejkowski

SOUTH WIRRAL BRANCH

Well it was another successful Xmas dinner and draw, thanks to Nigel Hunt for all his hard work to bring it about. It was held at Upton British Legion, looking at them staggering out I can only surmise it was a good do. A lot of nice prizes to those who were lucky enough to win. Now we are based at the Phoenix Club we'll be having this year's there. Next up was William and Kate's wedding which we celebrated at the Whitby Sports Club, a twenty pound levy was granted for those who turned up, entertainment was provided by the PERCIALS (Billy and Graham) magic and jokes being the theme, a good night was had by all methinks. For the races a bus was provided and a buffet before, thanks to Ronnie the boss of the club for up at 10am and thanks to John (Tiny) Davies (Ellesmere Port Branch) for providing the buffet, a few scoops and away to the races, as usual a good time was had by all who could remember!!!!!! 6.30 back on the bus to the club to finish off the buffet thanks again to Nigel for the organisation. Blackpool is next hope to see many of you there. Congrats to Joel and Terri Smith on the birth of their second daughter Alesha Daisy born 11th April. On a sadder note, one of our members passed away on 30th April. Jimmy (Jock) Douglas R.I.P Jock you will be missed.

Chairman G.Smith

WORD FROM THE BRANCHES (continued)

STOCKPORT BRANCH

On Sunday 20th March twenty branch members joined our friends from the Old Comrades Association, Ashton-under-Lyne, at the war memorial, where every third Sunday of the odd month of the year, they parade the standards for a short remembrance service for the fallen of two world wars. The two new memorial stones are now in place for those who fell in conflict since 1945. Included on the stones are the names of two members of 1st Battalion Mercian (Cheshire), who were killed in action in Afghanistan in 2010. Cpl Harvey Holmes and LCpl Andy Breeze. Harvey's mother was in attendance for this service. She was pleased to see the Cheshire and Mercian standards on parade. Afterwards we paid a visit to the 13th Cheshire Astley Volunteers Rifleman Inn in Stalybridge, which regained its status in the Guinness Book of Records of the longest named pub when it re-opened last year. The landlady laid on Cheshire Hot-pot for us and we spent the next four hours eating and drinking in congenial company.

Sunday 17th April saw us once again in Ashton-under-Lyne. This time at the OCA Club in the drill hall for a cheese and wine party. The beer and wine flowed well and another good day was had by one and all.

On St George's Day we held a regimental dinner in the Armoury. 22 members sat down to a superb four course dinner organised by Branch Chairman Alan Kennedy and Les Heighway, pub manager and former Mercian Volunteer. Guest of Honour was Cpl Mark Ward MC of 1st Battalion Mercian (Cheshire) Regiment. Cpl Ward gave us a detailed and interesting insight to the action in Afghanistan that brought about his award of the Military Cross.

The Regimental Race Day saw the usual suspects converging on the Roodee to down a few tinnies and while away a few hours conversing with comrades, old and new and trying to back a winner (if they could find a horse in the beer tent that is). Once again a huge success and well organised event. Congratulations to Eddie and the team with over 400 attending.

Ann Beard has been in hospital with a slight heart attack but is now back home recuperating. Ivan Vaughan has been having bad turns with his angina but is soldiering on. He still manages to visit his friend and our oldest member Stan Freeman, who celebrated his 95th birthday last month. Stan always asks after the boys in the branch. Stan, along with Percy Cooke, is one of I think three surviving members of the 6th Battalion, who served in North Africa and Italy during WW2. Stan now resides in the Meadows Nursing Home in Offerton and is regularly visited by welfare officers Derek Sykes and Ivan. Major Sidney Burton TD, Branch Vice President, is back home after a lengthy stay in hospital. On arriving home Sidney plonked himself down in his comfy armchair and stated that he would not be returning to the damn hospital ever again. "I'm staying put" he said. Harry Shufflebotham has ongoing niggly health problems but is soldiering on. Our thoughts, prayers and best wishes go out to one and all.

On Saturday 14th May fifteen members travelled to Walsall for the Malaya Reunion. Once again Walsall Branch pulled out all the stops for a great evening, with superb fish, chips and mushy peas. In attendance were Major Bill Jones TD and Bill Helliwell. Good to see them back in the fold after their recent family losses and bouts of poor health. Welcome back gentlemen.

Keith Mort

TRANMERE BRANCH

On Tuesday 5 April Tom and Eva Heaps, Joe Cotgrave and myself attended the funeral of Albert Profitt in Stoke on Trent. In the early months of 1962 Joe and I were in continuation training in Ballykinlar, Northern Ireland. Albert was our training Sgt. I remember very clearly that he was a fine instructor, but, above all he understood that we were raw recruits learning our soldiering trade and he helped us all to come to terms with the rigours of military life. Tom and Eva were great friends of Albert and his wife during their service with 1 Cheshire. Our condolences to Albert's family.

The attendance at Race Day this year was good to see, and it was good to meet old friends and reminisce about service days gone by. It was especially good to see our lads from the 1st Battalion enjoying themselves and our hearty congratulations go to RSM Tony Blackshaw on his recent promotion. His Mum and Dad were in good form and it was a pleasure to see them looking so well. We appreciate the hard work by all those who gave their time and efforts to give us all a good day.

On the following Sunday, myself, granddaughter Jodie, Majors Eddie Pickering and Mike Huntress joined up for our sponsored walk to raise money for the Mercian Benevolent Fund. Despite the rain at the start of our 6 mile plus (Mike reckoned it was 7 mile) walk it was pleasant through the countryside and the last leg along the River Dee was in glorious sunshine. The event was very well organized by the Chester Business Club with numerous stops on route for drinks and bacon butties etc...indeed at the end on receiving our certificates we were offered Gin & Tonics: the lady's face was a picture when I asked for a pint of bitter instead! Jodie and I raised £300 for the Mercian Benevolent Fund and the cheque has been forwarded on. I am sure Eddie and Mike have done just as well. Our sincere thanks to all of you who sponsored us.



Jodie and Rusty – We did it

Tranmere Branch will be holding their Grand Summer Social on the 27th August, tickets are £5 and anyone wishing to join us will be very welcome. We look forward to seeing you at Blackpool and at the Chester Branch Dinner night on 23 July.

YNWA Rusty

SNIPPETS

"Low self-esteem is like driving through life with your hand-break on." *Maxwell Maltz*

WORD FROM THE BRANCHES (continued)

Due to the bad weather our Christmas Dinner Dance had to be postponed due to the heavy snow making the roads impassable. The re-arranged date was 4th February, when 70 people sat down to a three course meal, wine, coffee, mints and mince pies. The entertainment was also very good.

The CRA AGM was attended by nine members from the branch. We noticed a poor general attendance and the absence of certain branches that had no members at all present. Poor show lads, you missed a very good film, show and talk by the RSM and WO2 Matt Henry. The food was good with a good selection. Thank you to all the backroom staff who make the event happen. Congratulations to Corporal Mark Ward on receiving the MC.

The Race Day was attended by nine of our members. It was great to meet up with old friends and also make new ones. The refreshment tent proved to be a winner and we hope the event can continue for the foreseeable future.

On 29th April one of our members, Cliff Easthope, along with his wife, daughter and two grandchildren went on a pilgrimage to visit Cliff's grandfather's grave in Loos-en-Gohelle. A full account has been sent to the editor for use elsewhere in this edition.

On 14th May we held our Singapore/Malaya Reunion. It was attended by 98 people and all comments were favourable. The supper was up to usual standard and the entertainment proved very good. We were all pleased to see Major Bill Jones and Mr Bill Helliwell attending after their recent illnesses. It was also on the day that Corporal Mark Ward presented the FA Cup to his beloved Manchester City. His granddad, Alan Kennedy was a very proud man on the night.

Reg Smith

CHESHIRE GOLF

Prestbury – 14th April

A beautiful day, lovely course and an excellent turn out with the 22nd flag flying high. What more could one ask for?

Some 31 players turned out in ideal golf weather (shirt sleeve order). The course was in good condition and, as usual, Prestbury made us very welcome. We had two tees and this made all the difference in getting everybody out and in for a little gentle drinking before a very good buffet meal.

We were delighted to have two representatives from 1 Mercian (Cheshire) with us for the day and they really did enjoy themselves.

On a sad note we had a minute's silence for Major Roy Connor, who had always supported the Golf Society over the years. We also stood for a toast to Percy Cooke, who will celebrate his 90th birthday in July. He played the whole eighteen course, walking and had to push his trolley half way round. Percy then told us that he had played eighteen holes on his own course the day before. Not bad from a man who joined the regiment in 1939.

John Bigland presented the various prizes, with the outright winner for the day with 33 points being Joe Murphy. An extremely good score on a very difficult course. Second was Paul Murphy from 1 Mercian, with a 31. He won on a back nine play off from Chris Whitehead.



Prestbury Winner – Joe Murphy with 33 points

Nearest the pin wins were Darren Crump and Mike Simpson and the longest drive was Chris Whitehead, who just managed to creep past Frank Barham.

As ever the "after golf" brought the whole playing members having the odd half-pint and no doubt fighting a few old campaigns again.

Sutton Hall – 17th May.

Some twenty players turned out on a very overcast day. However, as usual, every one enjoyed the day on a long course which was quite tricky.

The winner was "Tiny" Lawson with 35 points. Second was Joe Murphy with 32. This was after having his handicap dropped by 2 following his Presbury win. F Barham and M Coker also got 32.



Tiny Lawson receives the winner's prize from Captain John Bigland

The meal was excellent and as always the whole group mixed well. Again we gained two new members and we made it very clear that members should get their returns in early for Pryors Hayes as we are expecting upwards of forty players.

A reminder of dates forward: Chester Friday 1st July, Eastham (Team Event) Friday 5th August, Pryors Hayes Friday 9th September.

Bill Jones

NORMANDY VISIT 3rd - 8th APRIL 2011 by Roy Banwell

After reading some of the exploits of Sergeant George Bush and Major General Peter Martin with the 2nd Battalion in 1944, the Normandy D Day landings were next on our wish list. Last October my friends Colin Tyler, Haydn Ruck and I visited Ypres which was covered in the winter newsletter. With a spring in our step, or foot on the accelerator, the three of us again set off for Portsmouth for the Ferry to Ouisteham (Caen). It was then just a short drive to our hotel in Bayeux, famous for both its Tapestry and William the Conqueror. We all bunked in together again to give it that barrack room feel at the Campanile Hotel just a short walk from the Notre Dame Cathedral and the Commonwealth War Cemetery.

Monday 4th

Starting early we set course for Omaha beach, arriving at Pointe Du Hoc. It came as a bit of a shock to me the distances involved in the D Day landings. I certainly was totally unaware that the landings took place over an 80 mile frontage. A huge distance from any command and control point of view. As we all know the landing on Omaha beach was a disaster and was described in my Pitkin guide as “just short of outright failure.” Standing on the top of the cliffs at Pointe Du Hoc I could see why. The Company of Rangers that attacked this place at 06:30 on the 6th June 1944, with their ladders and grappling hooks must have wondered at their leader’s sanity, but prevail they did after huge losses. Compound this with the loss of communications, their reinforcements could not be called forward to help them consolidate the bridgehead and they landed elsewhere. The rest of Omaha beach seemed to fare much the same fate as can be seen in numerous films. The huge cemetery overlooking the Omaha beach is testament to the American soldiers’ heroism and the reverence America places on its war dead.

Tuesday 5th

The day I had been waiting for: Gold Beach. We drove to Arromanches, a town that straddles a narrow gap leading from the beach. It became famous for the Mulberry harbour, built there long after the 2nd Battalion had been and gone.

Sergeant George Bush remembered: (extracts from NVA Friends website) the pre-invasion bombardment had been effective, as George puts it, “the Navy did the job, that day.” The 2nd Battalion of the Cheshire Regiment, as part of the 69th Infantry Brigade, landed in 5 waves during the 6th June. At 06:50 (H+20) the first Vickers Machine Gun Platoons of ‘B’ Company



Sergeant George Bush

came ashore from landing crafts. George landed in the first wave. They were followed at 07:15 (H+45) by further Machine Gun Platoons and the first of the 13 Heavy Mortar Platoons aboard landing craft. Further landings of the 2nd Battalion took place at 07:30, 08:00, 08:30 and 11:00, which saw the remainder of the Machine Gun and Mortar Platoons along with handcarts, motorcycles, trailers, jeeps and Bedford 3 ton GS lorries, which would support the battalion’s movement off the beach and the creation of a British bridgehead.

Outside the museum there are 25 pounder field guns. We all remembered having these for toys as children, firing matchsticks around the house – here they were for real and not firing match sticks. Staring out over the area I remembered from somewhere in the recess of my memory, “We’re here liberating the people who conquered us.”



A view of the Mulberry harbour today taken from the battery at Longues-Sur-Mer

NORMANDY VISIT 3rd - 8th APRIL 2011 by Roy Banwell

Wednesday 6th

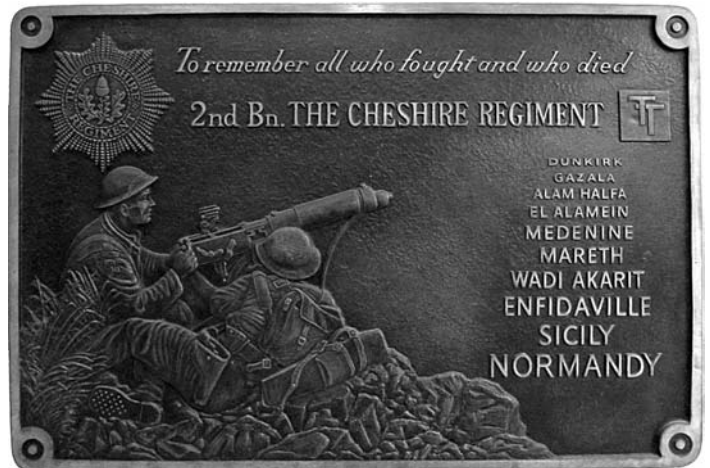
We started the day by visiting the Commonwealth War Cemetery in Bayeux. I was immediately struck by the difference in ages of the casualties from the 1st and 2nd World Wars. Of the ten known Cheshires buried there, their average age was 29. This is in stark contrast to the 18/19 year olds of the 1st World War. Please forgive me for naming all the Cheshire soldiers that rest there: Cpl F. Gidman, Ptes R.W. Hargreaves, G. Makin, J.F. Bannister, J. McCarthy, W. Oldham, J. Royle, D.W. Keel, E.W. Wright, S. Noden and one unknown soldier of the Cheshire Regiment. I looked up 4133145 Pte Robert Wilfred Hargreaves; he was killed on the first day, the 6th June 1944, and he came from Stockport, the same town as me, possibly the first Cheshire to die on D Day.

We then moved on to Pegasus Bridge. I was amazed by the skill of the glider pilots, three gliders landing within yards of the bridge in the dark and on a very narrow spit of land surrounded by water – a truly staggering feat. Judging by the photographs the gliders were within a wing's length of each other. I couldn't help think about Brigadier Mike Dauncey at Arnhem – when you see the wooden box they flew, one can only admire their skill and bravery. I was shocked but pleased that it was The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry that captured Pegasus Bridge and not the Paras, which I always presumed as they wear the Pegasus badge.

The long day was concluded with a visit to Sword and Juno beaches, a very flat area with perfect fields of fire for the Germans. Though the Canadian and British forces suffered fearful casualties against the substantial complex of bunkers the area was quickly cleared. The 9th Brigade units were among the most successful on D Day, reaching all their objectives by nightfall.

Thursday 7th

Utah Beach today and the American airborne landings, so we drove to Sainte-Mere-Eglise. The airborne landings were also, sadly, a bit of a disaster with paratroopers being scattered over a wide area. Many lost their lives, drowning in the marshes without firing a shot, the poor devils. One soldier landed on the church tower in Sainte-Mere-Eglise and was left dangling there all day



Plaque displayed in Arromanches museum

while his mates cleared the village below; luckily he lived to tell the tale. There is still a dummy of a Paratrooper hanging from a parachute for all to see today. Utah Beach was taken quickly, owing to the fact they landed in the wrong place. Luckily the area in question was lightly defended, so allowing them to land and roll up the German defences from the landside.

Our last night

We were in our normal watering hole recovering from our long day. A group of 25/30 year olds trooped in. Haydn said they looked like French rugby players, but one piped up, “no we are not” in English, a northerner at that. We started talking, finding out why we were all there. I told him we were doing the D Day sites and I was an ex Cheshire. He shook my hand and said he was an ex Cheshire himself. He had served a few years as an officer with the Cheshires before transferring to another unit. His name is Ian Broadhurst; his Platoon Sgt was Vinnie Gough. What a strange world we live in when a casual word can open up a whole way of life in our Regiment.

Roy Banwell

MALTA EXPERIENCE 2 by Leonard Chance

Having read in the last CRA newsletter (March 2011) about the “Three Amigos” visit to Malta. My wife and I also visited the Valletta War Museum on May 9th. 2011, which we found extremely interesting, seeing the Gloucester Gladiator “Faith” and also the Willy’s Jeep “Husky” that was used by Eisenhower before the invasion of Sicily in 1943 and also by President Roosevelt during his visit to Malta. Malta started being bombed the day after Mussolini declared war on the Allies on June 10th 1940. In 1941 it got worse after the Luftwaffe attacked and brought death and devastation. April 1942 was the worst month for Malta and on the 15th April 1942 King George VI honoured the Maltese Islands with the George Cross for their bravery.

We had a wonderful holiday in Malta the people are very friendly and there are so many other fascinating places to visit. Still in Valletta (a World Heritage site) itself, we also visited St John’s Co-Cathedral which has the most beautiful coloured marble tombs set into the floor of the previous knights of St. John, plus the two Caravaggio paintings of “St Jerome” and “The be-heading of St. John the Baptist” done in 1607 and 1608.

After all this wonderful cultural visiting we needed some much required fluid refreshment! Just off Merchant’s Street, we

visited “The Pub” which is frequented by the Navy when they are in town. HMS Westminster and Cumberland who had been recently been evacuating people from Libya, were there a week previously. It was also the pub where Oliver Reed had died, while in Malta filming “Gladiator.”

Being a Suez Vet, spending time from Nov. 1951 to June 1952 with the Regiment (1st Battalion, S. Company anti-tank platoon) driving an American Stuart tank, used to tow a 17lb anti-tank gun. While in Cyprus I went to Tell El Kabir on a tank driving course then back to Cyprus but as trouble broke out in Egypt, back I went again. In Suez I was attached to the Riot Squad B Company for a short time, and during that time there was an accident which resulted in me putting out the power in Port Said! On the return to the U.K. we did stop in Malta just to re-fuel, so I had been there before but never got off the plane.

So since retiring from work, we have visited Lichfield barracks, (where I did my basic training) and visited on Sept. 1st. 2007 for the Mercian Regiment Formation day. Barnard Castle, a winter spent there was so cold, and Cyprus which we visited with the CRA in Feb. 2001 (a wonderful time had by all). Alas I’ve not yet been back to Egypt, but who knows in the future!!

USE YOUR INITIATIVE by Arthur Clarke

I was interested to read in John Fairbank's article 'The Way We Were' in the November 2010 edition of this Newsletter the 'recently unearthed' descriptions of the British soldier and his equipment in the post WWII period. Under the heading 'Initiative' I read "*Just like Sir Lancelot eternally seeking the Holy Grail . . . the British Army has been perpetually searching for a specimen of the legendary and mysterious 'initiative' reputedly possessed by every British private soldier . . . not the slightest trace of which has ever been found.*" I am pleased to report that apparently the situation is not so very different in most other armies.

For example, in 1974, a young Japanese officer called Hiroo Onoda wrote his 'Memoir' entitled 'No Surrender: My Thirty Year War.' In his account he describes how he was drafted into the Japanese Imperial Army in 1944. After training, he was put in charge of a squad and posted to the island of Lubang in the Philippines. He arrived on December 17th and was given strict orders never to surrender or take his own life but to fight on until relieved.

Onoda turned out to be exceptionally good at following orders and somewhat lacking in using his own initiative. It was to be another 29 years before his personal contribution to the war came to an end.

Surviving in the Jungle

In February 1945 the Americans invaded the island and quickly overran it. The Japanese defenders split up into guerrilla groups and retreated into the dense jungle. Onoda's squad consisted of 4 men, including himself. They survived by eating coconuts and bananas and stealing the occasional cow from one of the villages.

The villagers obviously knew about their existence and frequently left them notes saying such things as, 'The war ended on August 15th 1945. Come back.' The Japanese soldiers read the notes but *they had their orders* and no Commanding Officer had told them to surrender or that the war was over so they concluded that these were traps set for them by the crafty Americans.

And so the years slipped by, ten years, twenty years. They were constantly tormented by oppressive heat, torrential rain, rats, insects, mosquitoes, disease and search parties. However, their faith in Japan's eventual victory was unshakeable and *they had their orders*.

One by one Onoda's little squad of soldiers died of disease or were shot by villagers as they attempted to steal their livestock.

Onoda was alone but *he had his orders* and was determined to do his duty. He was convinced that when the Japanese were finally victorious his solitary struggle would be recognised as invaluable.

Surrender

News of Onoda somehow reached Japan and although he had been officially declared dead for over 13 years a search party set out to find him. Eventually, a university drop-out called Norio Suzuki tracked him down. He tried to convince him that the war ended 29 years ago but Onoda refused to believe it. However, he agreed to a meeting with his former company commander, Major Taniguchi. The major had long since retired from the army and was a bookseller but on hearing about Onoda he agreed to meet him in a jungle clearing. They both turned up in uniform, Onoda wearing what remained of his best dress uniform and his sword

and carrying his still working Arisaka rifle, 500 rounds of ammunition and several hand grenades. Major Taniguchi ordered him to surrender and informed him that the war had been over for nearly thirty years. After a few moments quiet reflection Onoda pulled back the bolt of his rifle, emptied the chamber, took off his pack, laid the rifle across it and wept bitterly as the reality of his pointless existence for the past 29 years soaked in.

Life as a Civilian

He was welcomed back to Japan as something of a hero, although with a mixture of astonishment and pity. He married fairly soon after returning home but couldn't settle down in civilian life and moved to Brazil where he made a lot of money beef farming.

He then went back to Lubang for some years and donated around £7,000 to the local school.

Finally, he returned home to Japan where, as far as I am aware, he still lives.

What can we learn from this sad tale of a wasted life? I suppose the first thing that springs to mind is that it tells us something about the Japanese character. I was interested to read that there was no looting or rioting following the recent tsunami and subsequent devastation. The survivors *had their orders* and followed them in a responsible and disciplined way. This character trait has two sides to it: it makes good citizens and formidable soldiers but without a bit of common sense it can lead to some pretty bizarre situations.

There are many more conclusions we could draw but I'll leave those for you to think about.

Arthur Clarke



Lieutenant Hiroo Onoda begins the journey home following his eventual surrender to the Philippine authorities in 1974. Tragically, he and the three other men in his unit were responsible for killing 30 Filipinos and injuring 100 others during the 29 years they were hiding on Lubang.

KHARTOUM

I was working a short while ago in the Sudan, whilst in Khartoum I visited the well-maintained British Military Cemetery. There were two members of the 22nd laid there, I paused by their adjacent graves and paid my respects. I attach pictures of their headstones. Anyone connected with our two Regimental brothers can take solace from the fact that their resting place is well cared for and their sacrifice is recognised by the British Embassy on the 11th November each year.

The Newsletter goes from strength to strength, thank you for your excellent work and dedication to keeping us in touch.

P.S. In 2008 I was in Thessaloniki (Salonika) and recorded the regimental graves in the City and battlefield (on the border between Greece and Macedonia) cemeteries. I am very happy to send them to you or anyone else who may be interested.

Best Wishes

Bryan Watters



Private Joseph Glyn Clarke, 1st Bn The Cheshire Regiment



Corporal Harry Kenneth Barnes, 1st Bn The Cheshire Regiment

MALAYA REUNION IN PICTURES



RAPID RESPONSE – FOR ONCE

Chester Fire Station is next door to the Northgate Arena Leisure Centre. And for a time both during and after the construction of the Arena the apparently waste ground between the two buildings was used by a variety of people for their own, often nefarious, reasons. Courting couples were regularly to be seen getting to know each other and ladies of the night plied their trade in the shadows cast by the Arena walls. Glue sniffers inhaled their Evo-stick on a daily basis alongside drug addicts seeking their own dubious pleasures. Winos were so plentiful it was rumoured that Alcoholics Anonymous held a weekly meeting there. The area was also a popular spot with car drivers who wished to avoid parking charges. This meant that at any given time there were always several cars available for looting.

From the fire station control room where I worked, these unholy activities could be clearly observed and in the quiet periods of the day or night there was usually something of interest to attract the attention of bored control room operators. Some of what was witnessed was of such a nature it had to be brought to the attention of the police. But because of the low calibre of the criminal activity involved the keepers of the Queen's Peace seldom responded and if they did it was usually long after the culprits had left the scene, but not always. It was very early one Sunday morning when a sudden movement caught my eye and I saw a shifty looking character, wielding what looked like a small crow bar, trying to break into a smart looking car. I immediately phoned the police and I must admit that their response was swift and highly effective. Within three minutes four cars silently arrived and eight bobbies pounced and arrested a startled, but extremely stunned, suspect. A little while later a policeman called in to thank me for my public spirited action in alerting them. He also took the opportunity to explain that, unfortunately, it was the suspect's own car. He had locked his keys inside and was trying to retrieve them!!

UN-FAIR COP

In 1965, having served fourteen years in the 22nd, I decided it was time to try something different. So I handed in my notice and, accompanied by my wife and young son, went to live in the Tirol. In doing so I fondly believed I would leave behind the harsh, demanding military world of instant obedience to my superiors. I was convinced that life in a small, fairly remote Alpine village would be a relaxed, easy-going existence free from bureaucratic control. How wrong I was. I entered a world where rank and position were all-important. From their moment of birth, until they shuffle off the mortal coil, the entire Germanic race is in thrall to authority. It does not matter who gives the orders. The postman, the road mender, the priest and the doctor, to name but a few, all command the utmost respect from the general public. Instructions or orders given by them in the course of their duties are obeyed instantly and without question.

I experienced at first hand something of how this authoritarian regime worked shortly after I started work at the four star Hotel Austria in Neiderau. Because a large percentage of the guests at the hotel were British I was offered the position of receptionist with special responsibility for the welfare of my countrymen. In the course of my duties I regularly met the village policeman when, once a week, he called in to check that the registration of all foreign guests had been correctly completed. Helmut was a tall, imposing figure, immaculately uniformed in green – including a stylish peaked cap that would

have made British Guardsmen go green with envy. It seemed to me that because of his position and his imperious manner, and probably because he carried a large automatic pistol, he was afforded the greatest respect by all the villagers. And when our official weekly business was completed he and I would sit on the terrace and have a coffee and a slice of whatever delicious pastry was on the menu. From what I saw of Helmut during the taking of these 'freebies' I thought him to be a level-headed, decent, and friendly sort of bloke. I was soon to learn otherwise...

It became a habit of mine, when my day's work was done, to relax by having a pint away from the hotel, mainly because my boss did not like his staff mingling with the customers. On one such evening I went to the 'Cave Bar,' one of the popular local dives which was overcrowded as usual. I managed to fight my way through the throng and, after a word or two of banter with the barman I stood sipping my beer and considering whether or not to try and find somewhere quieter. As I did so I became aware of someone standing by my side. I gave him a cursory glance but his identity did not register and I returned to my thoughts. A few seconds later the man tapped me on the shoulder and said "What's the matter Englander. Don't you know me when you're out on the town?" It was Helmut, our village policeman, nattily dressed in civilian clothes, which was a sight I had never seen before. "I'm sorry," I replied, "I didn't recognise you without your gun!" Things then happened very quickly. I found myself being frog-marched through the throng of customers and out of the bar to the accompaniment of a loud and explicit lecture concerning the penalties I could expect for making insulting remarks detrimental to the character and conduct of the Austrian Police. The tirade was for the benefit of the audience of mostly Tyrolean clubbers who visibly enjoyed seeing a foreigner humiliated. Outside the bar Helmut made me assume 'the position' whilst he searched me and read the riot act again, before releasing me with a final warning as to my future conduct.

Following this sudden deterioration in Anglo-Austrian relations I made a couple of life-changing decisions. I never again risked making facetious remarks to any Austrian bureaucrats, and the over-zealous Helmut suddenly discovered that his weekly supply of free coffee and cake had mysteriously dried up.

CARD TRICK!

The other day I met a friend of mine, Brian Watts, whose father had served in the Cheshire Regiment with distinction, attaining the rank of WO1.

But, despite being a Son of the Regiment, Brian, when called up to do his national service, suffered a fate worse than death. To his dismay not only did he find himself posted to the Royal Engineers but he then spent twelve long months stationed on Christmas Island. Life at that isolated location proved extremely boring, consisting mainly of very hard work and, apart from the occasional H Bomb test, nothing else of any interest.

Leave was a rare event so Brian, then a L/Cpl, was overjoyed when he was awarded four precious days R and R in Honolulu. He had a marvellous holiday which was marred only by the discovery that, just prior to his return to duty, he had lost his military identity card. He decided to keep his loss to himself and managed to return to Christmas Island without any one in authority being any the wiser.

Life resumed its boring routine until two months later when he was sent for by his sergeant major. The warrant officer, one of

JOHN FAIRBANKS WRITES (continued)

the old school, said he was carrying out a routine admin check and his first question to Brian was to offhandedly enquire if he had an ID card. Brian freely admitted to possessing such an item. With the air of a tiger closing in for the kill the CSM asked him to produce it. Brian, realising that the game was up, had no option but to confess to having mislaid his ID. Like a conjuror pulling the proverbial rabbit from the hat the CSM delightedly produced the missing item and, with sadistic pleasure, regaled Brian with a full and detailed explanation as to how it had come into his possession. It seems that a little, old American lady had found the card on the beach in Honolulu and, with single-minded determination, had sought long and hard to find a way to return

it to its rightful owner. It was as a direct result of the combined efforts of the CSM and the interfering old Yankee busybody that L/Cpl Brian Watts, at the conclusion of a very fraught interview with his commanding officer, rejoined his mates as Sapper Watts!

But this little setback to his career plan did not deter the reborn Sapper who, having become enamoured of Army life, signed on and served for twenty-two years. He retired from the army in the rank of WO2 and, while not quite emulating his illustrious father, he is more than content with his own achievements. And he insists that one of the highlights of his military career was the day he became a fully-fledged member of the Yo Yo club!

CENOTAPH

Most readers will be aware that the Regiment is represented at the Remembrance Sunday Service in Whitehall by a contingent from CRA Southern Region. After the Service, we march past the Cenotaph with contingents from many other Regiments and Corps. As we march past and give our "Eyes Left", our Regimental Wreath is taken from us and laid on the Memorial.

It is vital that the Regiment is represented at this central act of Remembrance, which is attended by HM The Queen, our Colonel in Chief HRH The Prince of Wales, other members of the Royal Family and the leading political figures. For us in CRA Southern Region, it is not only our duty but it is a great honour to be paying tribute to our fallen from 318 years of Regimental service.

Southern Region has been carrying out this duty since the branch was formed in 1999. Over the years, we have had our numbers boosted by small parties from CRA Branches, individuals and a few young officers from the 1st Battalion. Like other branches, many of our members have duties to perform at their own local remembrance ceremonies and last year an order went out that no serving personnel were to parade – only ex Servicemen. The result of all this is that we were only 2 ranks of 6 strong in November 2010. We are now a little concerned that our lower numbers could mean that our ticket allocation is

reduced and perhaps bring our place on parade in question.

We would be really grateful to hear from any CRA member who would like to join us. You would be very welcome – you will be in good company and have a very moving experience. If you would like to do more than just the Service, and even make a weekend of it, for your family as well, there is a "package" that we enjoy. Thanks to our Regimental Yeoman Warder at the Tower of London, Dickie Dover, we go each year on the Saturday evening before Remembrance Sunday for a guided tour of the Tower. We listen to Dickie's gruesome stories, we watch the Ceremony of the Keys (that will bring back memories for those who did the Caterham tour from 1986 to 1988), and have a beer or 2 in the Yeoman Warders' Mess. Wives, girlfriends and family members are welcome. And after the Remembrance Sunday Cenotaph Parade, we go and have a roast lunch at the Chandos – and lunch is free for the marchers!

So please consider coming to join us on Sunday 13th November 2011. We would like to be able to form at least four ranks this year. If you need any more details or to tell us you are coming to join us, because you need a ticket to get on parade, please contact the Southern Region Secretary, George Szejkowski. His contact details are on the front page of this newsletter.

Tony Twiss (President of the Southern Region)

LOOS-EN-GOHELLE by Cliff Easthope

On 29th April we took our daughter and two grandchildren to France. We have made this pilgrimage for the past twenty years with our other children and close members of the family. We visit the Loos-en-Gohelle Memorial, where their great Grandfather and great-great grandfather is buried.

The memorial is also known as "Dud Corner". The first burials were made in the large crater that was made by an unexploded bomb. It is also the last resting place of Rudyard Kipling's son.

The next day we made our way to Arras, where we saw the Wellington Memorial. It is where the stone was first carried to build the buildings in the town during the middle ages.

During the great war Arras was destroyed as soon as 1914. In 1916 the allies sent in the New Zealand sappers to link up the quarries to create an underground network, where 24,000 soldiers could be quartered, waiting for the offensive to start. They were billeted a few metres from the front line, before their surprise attack on the German positions in the morning of 9th

April 1917 at 5.30. They were waiting for eight days in the tunnels.

The tunnels were re-opened to the public in 2008. The whole experience was most enjoyable and well worth the visit.

SNIPPETS

"Both my marriages were failures. Number one departed, and number two stayed." *Gustav Mahler*

"The important thing in acting is to laugh and cry. If I have to cry, I think of my sex life, If I have to laugh, I think of my sex life." *Glenda Jackson*

"One of the lessons of history is that nothing is often a good thing to do and always a clever thing to say." *Will Durant*

"Old professors never die, they just lose their faculties." *Stephen Fry*

"I never hated a man enough to give him his diamonds back." *Zsa Zsa Gabor*

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Editor,

My name is Ken Wharton, former soldier and author of the following books:

'A long Long War; Voices From the British Army in Northern Ireland, 1969-98' / 'Bullets, Bombs and Cups of Tea; Further Voices of the British Army in Northern Ireland' / 'Bloody Belfast' / and due out in May, my 4th book: 'The Bloodiest Year: Northern Ireland, 1972: British Soldiers in Their Own Words.' All my books are pro-British soldier (I was one myself and will always be pro-Army).

The reason for my writing to you is that I am now writing my 5th book on the troubles under the title of: 'Sir; They're Taking the Children Indoors.' It covers the period 1973-4/5 and I would be immensely grateful if you might add a piece on your Regimental Association website inviting any of your lads who did tours in the period 1973-1975 to contact me with a view to writing of their experiences. Please assure them that anonymity is provided if they don't wish their names published and that the book is PRO-squaddie. Any rank is invited.

If there is a charge, please let me know and I would be pleased to contribute. Please feel free to contact me and please also include my e-mail address in any appeal for stories.

Please also feel free to check out my books and this will demonstrate my honesty, sincerity and support for the Army in which I served. Please also see what the MOD wrote about my book, 'Bloody Belfast.'

My e-mail address is ken_wharton@hotmail.com

Best wishes, *Ken Wharton*

Dear Editor,

I'm confused. In Issue 6 of the newsletter Mr Gresty, in his Chairman's notes, gave the secondary title of the Gurkha Reinforcement Company as "Anzio," but in Issue 7 he gives the title of "Tobruk." Which is the correct secondary title?

Furthermore, the title of our association, is it "The Cheshire Regiment Association" or "The 22nd (Cheshire) Regiment Association?" In the photograph on page 7 of the new branch standard for the Ellesmere Port Branch, it carries the wording, "The 22nd (Cheshire) Regiment Association, Ellesmere Port."

I think it's about time the association changed its name to The 22nd (Cheshire) Regiment Association as everybody who now serves in the CRA served under the title of The 22nd (Cheshire) Regiment.

Ellesmere Port Branch will need to get a new standard to carry the correct title of the association or the other branches will need a new standard.

The latest newsletter states that the word Association will be inserted after the wording of "The Cheshire Regiment" in the Regimental Collect for CRA events.

Therefore, if the Ellesmere Port Branch can put the title of "The 22nd (Cheshire) Regiment" on their new standard and the CRAMC can agree to insert the word Association after the wording of "The Cheshire Regiment" in the Regimental Collect, then the CRA must now change its title from the "Cheshire Regiment Association" to the 22nd (Cheshire) Regiment Association.

Thomas Atkinson

In reply to the above letter, Peter Gresty makes the following points:

1. The title of the Gurkha Reinforcement Company was G (Tobruk) Company as published in Issue 7 and it was an error on my part in Issue 6 to use the secondary title (Anzio).

2. The title of our Association is The Cheshire Regiment Association (CRA) as stated in our constitution.

3. I have not seen the new Ellesmere Port branch standard as I was out of the country working when it was dedicated but I shall look at it.

4. The name of the Association can only be changed at an AGM and even then with the agreement of the Charity commission but Mr Atkinson is incorrect in saying that all current members have served in the 22nd. Members of 1 Mercian (Cheshire) are in fact members of the CRA and some may never have served in the 22nd.

5. Whether Ellesmere Port Branch will have to get a new standard or not is a matter for the CRA Management Committee, in consultation with the Committee of Ellesmere Port Branch, to decide. I would much rather have a branch of the Association with an incorrect title on their standard than no branch at all.

6. The CRA have inserted the word "Association" after the words The Cheshire Regiment in the Association Collect. The Regimental Collect remains unchanged as we cannot, and will not, change that. There is no mention of 22nd in the Regimental Collect so there isn't in the Association Collect. This was explained, and agreed, at the recent AGM.

I would say to Mr Atkinson that his attention to detail would be appreciated in the service of the Association, possibly on a branch committee or even CRAMC, rather than in finding fault in us. I do the job of Chairman in addition to my very busy full time job and only ever do what I consider to be in the best interests of the Association.

Peter Gresty

HADRIAN'S WALL WALK

Dear Editor,

Just a note to update you on my progress for raising money for Help for Heroes:

I am Training in Cheshire most weekends and Northumberland is going well, nowhere near as painful now.

Pledges are still coming in, very near £2000 now, trying to have a rally now to see what we are capable of by the end of June, when I will be closing the account. Come on you Twos.

It was nice to see people at the Races and thanks to those who sponsored me. It was equally nice to hear Bob Nottage's voice on the phone a few weeks back after so many years and thanks Bob for your generous donation.

Two weeks to go now soon come round. Link and number still the same as first e-mail:

(<http://www.justgiving.com/pete-coward>)

Pete Coward

Dear Editor,

Reference Colchester Cadre 1954 in Issue 7, I am on the front row, second from left. 22864148 Pte Rollinson, later Corporal C Company, Colchester and Berlin. I joined the Battalion in Egypt after passing out from Ypres Platoon at the Dale 1953-1956. I too, after 57 years, remember no other names.

Philip Rollinson

SNIPPETS

*"Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated."
Confucius*

CORRESPONDENCE – WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Dear Editor,

I thought that you might be interested in the following information and photographs. The first photograph is of Christmas Day in Selarang Mess. Does anybody have any fond or funny memories? I am second left and I think that the left-hand person was called Andrews.



A couple of years ago I was able to visit Selarang Barracks and even saw the Road to Changi Beach. I was amazed that the son of the barrack photographer was still trading in Changi and had copies of photographs of the soldiers from our time displayed around the shop.

Ken Duckers

(I regret that I was unable to publish other photos and material that Ken sent to me Ed.)

Dear Editor,

With reference to your recent issues on the regiment in Singapore and the journey on the boat coming home, I thought it might be interesting for former members of the regiment to see themselves as they were in the late 50s and early 60s. Hopefully it may bring back fond memories of that time.

Mr P Smith

(ex Smith 28 6 Platoon, B Coy)

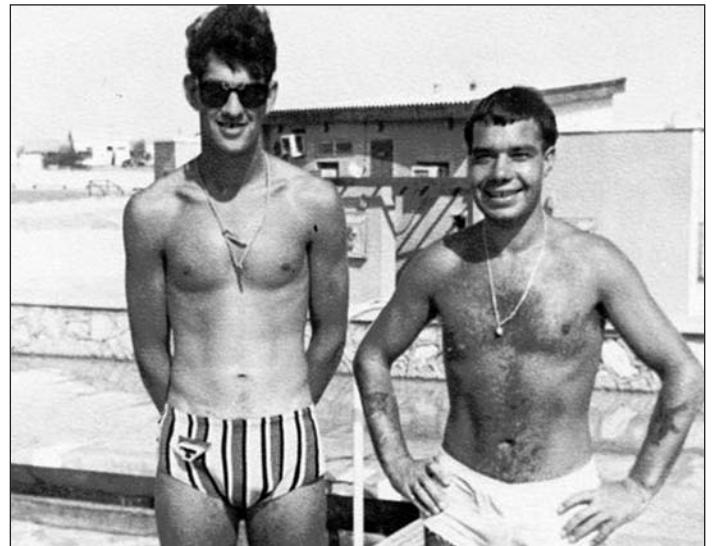


In the NAAFI Selarang Barracks

Dear Editor,

If anyone knows where Buddy Hunnyford is now can they contact Bill Richards on phone number 07919 867092. If you can put this in the newsletter I will be grateful.

Bill Richards



Buddy Hunnyford and Bill Richards



Left to right: Lacey, Thompson, Powell, Harding, Sgt McDermott, Jones, Shallcross, Evans, Littlewood, Clift, Acton

OBITUARY

JIM STANLEY

He was my friend

I feel extremely honoured to have been asked by the family to say a few words about Jimmy; and a little daunted too. I'm no wordsmith, unlike Jimmy.... So, James Michael Stanley, Jim or Jimmy, I almost always called him Jimmy. Where can I begin? I've known Jimmy for over 45 years. But I really got to know him in Bahrain, where occasionally we would sit on top of the water tower in the middle of the night to put the world to rights. The water tower was out of bounds, by the way. We attended senior Brecon together, where we sparked off each other and knocked spots off the rest. We were good; he was brilliant. We served together in Belize and got into many scrapes and scraps, and at one time when I was really down, there was Jimmy offering words of wisdom with a large Scotch!

He was my friend.

Jimmy was many things to many people: a husband, father and brother. He was so proud of his boys. He was a soldier; I mean a real soldier, I know he went up and down the ranks somewhat, and should perhaps have had Velcro chevrons, but that was Jimmy. But I tell you this, if it all hit the fan there is no one on this God's earth who I would rather have had sharing my trench. He was an athlete, a high jumper and hurdler; he was an important member of the 1st Battalion's all conquering athletics team of the 1960s. He was a champion boxer, basket ball player, footballer, well goalie (I remember Alan Rayner saying Jim saw himself as a goal scoring centre forward, but he was really a much better goalie), he had fantastic reactions. He ski-ied, he had done free fall parachuting, and he could handle a horse pretty well too. But he was a thinker, a voracious reader of everything and anything, a great raconteur, a poet, although he didn't write nearly enough, because he was good and very clever with words, he had a great wit, with a lively sense of humour. I know it's a cliché but he was certainly far more than the sum of his considerable parts. Jimmy lived life to the full, made many friends, and if he called you friend you were a friend indeed. He would stick by you through thick and thin.

He was a man.

He was my friend.

Hod Birkby

REMEMBER ME

Do not shed tears when I have gone
But... Smile instead because I have lived.

Do not shut your eyes and pray to God that I'll come back
But... Open your eyes and see all that I have left behind.

I know your heart will be empty because you cannot see me
But... Still I want you to be full of the love we shared.

You can turn your back on tomorrow and live only for yesterday
Or... You can be happy for tomorrow because of what happened between us yesterday.

You can remember me and grieve that I have gone
Or... You can cherish my memory and let it live on.

You can cry and lose yourself, become distraught and turn your back on the world
Or... You can do what I want - smile, wipe away the tears, learn to love again and go on.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2011-2012

2011

- 1 Jul Regimental Golf Day, Chester Curzon
- 3 Jul Dedication of Memorial, Crich, Derbys
- 9 Jul Serjeants' Club, CRA Club, Chester
- 9 Sep Regimental Golf Day, Pryor's Hayes
- 10 Sep Officers Association Ladies Dinner, Chester
- 11 Sep Mons Day Parade & Lunch, Chester
- 29 Oct East Cheshire Reunion, Stockport
- 4 Dec Droppin Well Memorial Service, Ballykelly

2012

- 18 Feb CRA AGM & Meaneee Reunion, Chester
- 11 May Chester Races

CLUB NEWS

The Club can be used for Branch Events and Private Parties by arrangement. A concessionary hire rate for CRA members' private use applies. Branches do not pay to use the Club.

Revised normal opening times are:

Monday 1200-1400

Wednesday 1200-1400

Friday 1200-1400

1900-2330

Saturday - by arrangement

Sunday 1200-1400

For all Club enquiries, contact Alan Jones on 07906 753699

22 CLUB WINNERS

May

£100.00 CRA Tranmere Branch

£50.00 Mr S C Leedham Runcorn

£25.00 Mr L S Dunning Thorncombe

LAST POST

Peter Birkett-Smith died 24 Feb 2011 Aged 95 Ex 7th Bn

John Davies died 14 Apr 2011 served 1st Bn 1972-75

WH Day died 20 Jan 2011 Ex RSM

Thomas Jones died 25 Jan 2011 aged 84 Ex 2nd Bn served Egypt & Palestine

George Lane died 14 May 2011 22 years 1st Bn, 19 years TA

George Parr (Bob) died 16th May 2011 aged 76
Ex 1st Bn 1952-54 LCpl D Coy

Albert Prophett died 25 Mar 2011 Ex 1st Bn served Suez, Malaya & Berlin

J Richards died May 2009

Roderick 'Robbo' Roberts died 19 May 2011, aged 43, TA 3 CHESHIRE/4 MERCIAN, served from 1990.

Brian Shaw died 5 Feb 2011

Major Noel Taylor died 24 Feb 2011 Ex 5th Bn

Sam Taylor died 14 May 2011, aged 84, served 1945-52

Sid Thomas died Feb 2011 Ex 1st Bn 1950s - 1960s

Lt Col P W Wilde died 31st May 2011