



# THE CHESHIRE REGIMENT ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



VOLUME 2 ISSUE 19

JUNE 2014

## EDITORIAL

I suppose the recent proposals regarding women taking up front-line posts in the infantry and other teeth arms, has got some of you choking over your corn flakes.

I would not question the bravery or aptitude of women, and if they are happy to risk being killed or maimed in conflicts of dubious political making, then that is their choice. It is however interesting that this proposal comes as Afghanistan is winding down and as the MOD is failing to meet its recruitment targets. Whether it happens or not, only time will tell. I have a feeling that there may not be too many takers - women are far too sensible.

What an excellent Race Day on 9th May. The weather could have been a bit better, but you can't have everything. The 1st Battalion must be thanked for laying on an excellent marquee and enclosure and for running an extremely efficient and friendly bar. I know that everyone wanted to thank Major Kevin Fletcher personally, but as he was wearing his camouflage dress, not many actually saw him! Grateful thanks also to Eddie Pickering and Alan Jones with his team for the organisation back at the Castle.

It was very sad to learn of the sudden death of Peter Hennerley. He took such enormous pride in the regiment and particularly the part played by the famous Chapel Street in Altrincham. I am grateful to Alan Jennings for writing an obituary which recognises the wonderful work that Peter did on behalf of his family, friends, and the CRA.

The deadline for the next issue will be 15th August 2014. Please send your contributions to me at: Flat 1, 53 Tweedy Road, Bromley, BR1 3NH (note change).

My telephone number is 020 8290 4268. You can also e-mail me at: [george.szwejkowski@sky.com](mailto:george.szwejkowski@sky.com)

*George Szwejkowski*

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 CRA.

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/23998.aspx>

## SSAFA VACANCY

SSAFA Cheshire is looking to recruit volunteers for the position of Treasurer. The task is not onerous and far easier than the old AB397; the average work load is 4 hours a week and we offer a 3 day training course at SSAFA Central Office in London. All out of pocket expenses are paid including a motor mileage allowance. You can work from home or at one of our offices in The Dale, Peninsula Barracks Warrington or Crewe Drill Hall. Please contact Andrew Swindale email: [swins46@btinternet.com](mailto:swins46@btinternet.com) or telephone: 01630 657268

## CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

In the last edition I spoke of 'theft'; our cap badge, our Colours, and our county name. As 2014 marches on, more and more of my thoughts are on 'support'. Against a backdrop of increasing Mercian Regimental control and involvement into CRA matters, the impending retirement of the Assistant Regimental Secretary (Cheshire) is something we could well have done without.

Previous Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries have all been Cheshire Officers: Alec Blacoe, Dick Peel, Tony Astle, John Ellis, Nigel Hine, Alan Hughes and last, but not least, Eddie. It is unlikely that the new incumbent of this Civil Service post will be an ex-Cheshire, an ex-Mercian or even an ex-soldier. For certain, he or she will have the responsibility of ensuring both continued support for the CRA as well as for the Mercian Regiment. Something of a balancing act. Is it reasonable to expect the new incumbent, as previous Secretaries have done, to go the extra mile for things 'Cheshire' outwith his/her contract of employment?

Mercian Regimental support will still be forthcoming and an aspect of this is the Race Day. Last year's event was something of a damp squib because external help for the small number of staff at RHQ was not available. This year thanks to 1 MERCIAN, and in particular Major Kevin Fletcher, the event proved to be extremely successful. Not one negative Twitter was received - a first, Eddie tells me. My point? The Race Day will continue to be supported by the Mercian Regiment (presumably the 2nd Battalion from The Dale) and should therefore continue to be a high profile Regimental day for the foreseeable future. This regimental day shared by both Cheshires and Mercians. Good news.

*continued over...*

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## CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN (continued)

As far as the CRA branches go, their activities will always depend entirely upon the membership and the efforts of their appointed officers. For example, this summer:- Winsford Branch helping the Bike Festival for Help the Heroes at Chester FC; the now famous CRA vehicle and gazebo, this time at the Engine Rally in Chelford near Macclesfield; Birkenhead and Stockport annual bowls event at Port Sunlight; Ellesmere Port annual services and wreath laying at the Regimental plaque and the Cheshire Copse. The list goes on. Q: In the future can we still expect continued Mercian Regimental support at Branch level? A: Doubtful. That is, not just for those mentioned above, which to my knowledge have not received any external financial support, but for any of our Branch activities. Example: East Cheshire Reunion!

At the next Branch Officials' meeting (Wednesday 9 July at RHQ) the Mercian Regimental Secretary, Lt Col Richard Spiby, will outline the Mercian Regiment perspective of how they see their partnership with the CRA working in the future. Financial and, indeed, moral support will be mentioned as no doubt will the recruitment process of our new Assistant Regimental Secretary (Cheshire). We have to accept that it is a continually reducing financial environment and therefore, without doubt, more responsibility for our own activities will be required. That is, both by CRAMC and the Branches.

*To this end, I would request the attendance of at least one official from each of our Branches, in order that all members are aware of developments.*

In closing, may I recommend attendance at the Crich Pilgrimage on Sunday 6 July? Trust me, there is a real regimental feeling about the whole day and you will be in good company. Stacks of Cheshires and Mercians.

Have a good summer - and if you haven't done so recently, pay your branch a visit!

*David Oak*

P.S. A letter in the newspaper caught my eye and gave me a chuckle.

It was from 'Disgruntled from Didsbury' saying that whilst she appreciated the reasons for having ex-sportsmen acting as either commentators or pundits on the various sports channels, it was pointless if, as in the case of Jamie Carragher, she couldn't understand them. This was followed, two days later, by a reply. "Madam, if it is any consolation, I was born, raised and have lived all my 49 years in Wavertree ..... And I can't understand a word of what Jamie Carragher says."

## MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

### MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON SATURDAY 5th APRIL 2014

Present: Lt Col D M Oak MBE (Chairman), D J Clarke, J Cooney, P Jackson, J A Jennings, A Kennedy, D C Mapley, Maj J Salisbury, D J Waring, Maj T E Pickering MBE (Secretary).

1. Apologies were received from: Capt Hughes and G Szwejkowski.
2. The Chairman welcomed the three new members of the Committee.
3. The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed, Mr Cooney asked if a new Branch Officials list had been produced, the Secretary stated that he had asked every Branch to update their details and forward them before the meeting, and only 2 had done so. Mr Jennings asked for confirmation of the date for St Julian Day, Mr Kennedy confirmed that it will take place on 27th July. The secretary reported that he had not done anything toward a 2015 Diary but understood that The Mercian Regiment produced a diary and suggested that we may consider that. After a discussion, the majority expressed a wish to find another supplier for a CRA diary. There were no further matters and Maj Salisbury proposed, Mr Cooney seconded that the minutes be passed as a true record. Carried.

The minutes of the AGM were discussed, no observations were made.

4. The Chairman opened his report by thanking those who had written citations for the General Martin and President's awards. He said that he hoped to make contact shortly with Brigadier Cave about CRA matters once he has returned from his post-tour leave and settled into his new job.

5. The Secretary distributed copies of financial statements showing the current state of the CRA and the CRA Club. He pointed out that legacy funds from MRA were still outstanding but he hoped to resolve the hold-up on his next visit to RHQ. He presented a comparison of current Club business compared with 2013, which showed a decrease in like for like sales. The Club is currently running at a deficit in excess of £3000.

6. The Constitution of the Regimental Association. The Chairman asked members to study the Rules and Constitution, which he felt should be updated. The Secretary pointed out a reference to membership of CRAMC of a serving Officer/WO from the 1st Battalion and asked whether in view of the forthcoming reorganisation, this was still relevant. It was agreed that a sub-committee comprising Messrs Jennings, Cooney and Waring together with the Secretary should consider the rules and report back to the Committee in the October meeting.

7. The following bids for financial support were considered:
  - a. East Cheshire Reunion: £500
  - b. Malaya Reunion: not to exceed £250
  - c. Droppin Well Memorial Service: £300
  - d. Mons Day: not to exceed £400
  - e. Blackpool Reunion: not to exceed £1000

Mr Cooney proposed and Mr Mapley seconded the proposal that they all be accepted. Carried.

8. Other business. Maj Salisbury made the observation that a number of members may be suffering from PTSD and asked whether it would be possible to produce an information sheet for such cases and perhaps publish it in the Newsletter.

The Chairman thanked those attending for their positive input and closed the meeting.

# MINUTES OF BRANCH OFFICIALS' MEETING

## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF BRANCH OFFICIALS HELD ON SATURDAY 5th APRIL 2014

Present: Lt Col D M Oak MBE (Chairman), Maj T E Pickering MBE (Secretary) and representatives from Birkenhead, Chester, Nantwich, Sandbach, Stockport, Stoke on Trent, Tranmere and Winsford Branches.

Apologies were received from Limavady, Macclesfield, Southern Region and Walsall Branches.

1. The Chairman opened the meeting, thanking those who attended.
2. The minutes of the meeting held on 5th October 2013 were reviewed. There were no matters arising. Dave Mapley proposed and Slim Hayden seconded the proposal that they be accepted as a true record. Carried.
3. The minutes of the AGM were reviewed, there were no observations.
4. The Secretary presented a financial statement as at 2nd April and explained the figures.
5. **Branch reports:**
  - a. **Stoke** – 7 members, regular social meetings are held.
  - b. **Tranmere** – meetings are attended by 12-16 regulars. One new member ex-1 MERCIAN. Mr Cooney asked about details of the CRA being given to Service Leavers. The Secretary explained that it was now Mercian Regimental policy that soldiers leaving should opt-out of their details being provided to the MRA. He reported that the Mons Pilgrimage had 46 passengers.
  - c. **Birkenhead** – 15 members is the normal attendance plus some widows who are associate members, this sometimes includes Ellesmere Port members. The Branch is financially healthy.
  - d. **Chester** – Concern about the lack of support from members, average attendance is 13 members weekly from about 100 membership. Low numbers impacts on the viability of the Club. The Branch is financially healthy.
  - e. **Nantwich** – 14 regular members but ageing, financially stable.
  - f. **Winsford** – 7 regular members, financially stable.
  - g. **Stockport** – 25 members attended the latest meeting, financially stable.

### 6. Forecast of Events:

**9th May – Chester Races**, the Secretary reported that B Coy 4 MERCIAN will be running the tent on the racecourse and assured members that lessons had been learned from last year. It is hoped that future years will be covered by 2 MERCIAN.

**8th June – Birkenhead v Stockport Branch** Bowling competition is taking place at Port Sunlight Social Club.

**14th June – Malaya Reunion**, Walsall.

**28th June – Armed Forces Day**, there are many events taking place. The National AFD event takes place in Stirling, no interest has been forthcoming from Branches.

Stockport Branch will be organising a dinner and invited participation. Maj Salisbury proposed a vote of thanks to Stockport Branch for organising the event, David Waring seconded it.

**6th July – Mercian Regiment Memorial Day** at Crich. The Chairman encouraged Branches to take part.

**27th July – St Julien Day**, Stockport.

**22nd – 25th August**. The Secretary updated on the planned **pilgrimages to Mons**, reporting that 1 MERCIAN will be parading with about 120 men. He outlined the plans for the ceremonial/commemoration phase of the 24th August.

**7th September – Mons Day Reunion** in Chester. The Secretary reported that this event will be the centrepiece of the County Commemoration of the Centenary of the Great War. The parade and service will commence half an hour earlier than usual.

He asked for assistance to help organise the post-parade lunch.

**19th September – Chester Branch Dinner** in the Club.

**20th September – Northern Ireland Veterans Memorial** at NMA.

**25th October – East Cheshire Reunion**.

**9th November - Remembrance Sunday**.

**7th December - Droppin Well Memorial**, Ballykelly.

**13th – 16th February – Meeanee Reunion**, Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool.

**21st February – AGM**, Chester.

### 7. Other business:

The Secretary drew attention to:

(1) an initiative from the RBL to “adopt a war grave” for people to keep an eye on war graves in their locality (after note: this has been postponed until at least next year).

(2) Cheshire Military Museum is able to assist young people working toward the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, if members have young family members interested.

(3) The proposed Regimental Christmas card showing the Christmas Truce 1914 as described in the diary of Lt Brockbank of the 6th Bn. Details to follow.

8. **Date and time of next meeting**. The Chairman outlined the rationale before suggesting that we meet on a weekday on Wednesday 9th July (CRAMC at 1100hrs, lunch and Branch Officials at 1330hrs). A majority agreed to trial this.

## WORD FROM THE BRANCHES

### BIRKENHEAD BRANCH

This is customarily a quiet time of the year. At least spring has appeared on schedule. Our January Branch AGM provided few surprises. The Branch remains solvent if not wealthy. The Committee remains unchanged except that Ken Guntrip BEM, who has faithfully kept the Branch minutes, has decided to 'retire'.

Ken was a Drummer in the 1st Battalion and was in the front rank of the massed Bands and Drums of the Regiment at the 1957 Colour Presentation. His colour service was followed by an exceptionally long time with the TA in the RASC, later RCT. (Ken's BEM was presented in Liverpool on the day the Toxteth Riots erupted in July 1981, although no connection has been established). Ken and Bett will continue as always to be staunch supporters of the Branch and the CRA.

Recently a proposed Branch event had to be abandoned because of insufficient support, although only 10 people were required to make it viable. Other Branches report similar problems and dwindling membership. One solution is to try to organise more 'joint ventures'. - closer liaison between neighbouring Branches perhaps?

We look forward to Armed Forces Day/Week in June but, up to now, what is planned for Wirral is unclear. Ellesmere Port and Southport show up on the AF Day website as having planned events.

On a happy note, the annual bowls challenge match against Stockport Branch has been revived, following cancellation of last year's match owing to difficulties with finding mutually agreeable dates and venues. The home fixture will be at The Lever Club, Port Sunlight 1100 on Sunday 9th June and the return on Sunday 3rd August at The Friendship Inn, Romiley, Stockport SK6 3AA. So far no other Branch has taken up Birkenhead's bowls challenge. It should appeal to those Branches within travelling distance of Wirral and would make a pleasant day out for players and spectators. We await responses.

*Peter Jackson*

### CHESTER BRANCH

Whilst still reeling from the Race Day invasion we at Chester, after the clearing up operation, are left with one burning question. Why, a week after entertaining 400 CRA members and their families, we can't assemble more than nine members in the club. And they are from our nominal roll of only 58 ex Cheshires. We would love to know what we are doing wrong. Is it not enough curry? The beer prices? A weekly average of some 30 branch members, many of them honorary, manage to enjoy a drink. Music? - we have bought one of those modern gadgets that not only plays music, but makes the coffee, and peels the spuds for Linda's appetising suppers. So you see we are trying to solve the problems. But we can't do it without support.

There are so many who served in 22nd who live within our catchment area, who we often see around town, but who, with the exception of race day are never seen within the Castle precincts. Again the question - Why?

We held our Annual General Meeting on 16th May. Terry Finlay, who was sunning himself in Mexico at the time, was elected to succeed the late Mitch Elliott as Chairman, and Dennis Rochell, whilst retaining the Standard Bearer portfolio, was elected as Vice Chairman. All those members holding other committee posts were re-elected. Several ideas for increasing membership, and for future suitable functions and events, such as a Branch Dinner in September were discussed. The details will

be made public when due consideration to costs, dates etc. has been given. In the meantime the new committee send greeting to all our old friends and ex-comrades with the hope that they will all manage to call in occasionally and do a bit of lamp swinging.

*John Fairbanks*

### ELLESMERE PORT BRANCH

Greetings from Ellesmere Port. We are looking forward to a busy 2014 for Ellesmere Port. We are collaborating with the Veterans Day Group in Ellesmere Port and looking forward to supporting the Group once again, as we prepare for Centenary of outbreak of WW1.

On Mothers' Day, 30th March I was invited to a local Care Home, where I presented "women of the year" certificates to around five residents, sponsored by their families, a very enjoyable afternoon. I spoke about, and paid tribute to the part the womenfolk played in various industries, when their menfolk answered the "call to arms."

10th May saw around 32 members, friends and families on a day out jaunt to Llandudno. A very traumatic start to the day was when the coach driver found that he could not engage reverse gear, after a wait of thirty five minutes a replacement arrived from Runcorn and off we went. Weather in Llandudno - wet, very windy and very cold. I found it ironic to see notices on sea front - "Please do not feed the seagulls." Did not have to!! Numerous trippers found that they "help themselves" (my ice cream).

Looking forward to Veterans/Armed Forces events in June, and of course, our annual services of commemoration on July 13th.

*Gordon Kipps*

Ellesmere Port Veterans  
Day Group



**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2014  
GALA CABARET EVENING**

**Ellesmere Port Civic Hall  
Doors open from 6.30pm**

**Show starts 7.30pm**

**TICKETS £6 PER PERSON  
INCLUDING INTERVAL BUFFET**

**To book call: 0151 356 6890**

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2014.**

**Thanksgiving Service at the  
Centotaph**

**Civic Square Starts - 11am prompt.**

Followed by

**VETERANS OPEN-DAY**

**Ellesmere Port Arcades**

**Recollections of the War, Bird show,  
Vintage Military Memorabilia and Cheshire Yeomanry**

**Information and advice stands**

For additional information please ring 0151-355-0233



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## WORD FROM THE BRANCHES (continued)

### NANTWICH AND DISTRICT

The branch continues to meet once a month with a fairly good membership and attendance. It has been good to see Tony O'Connor back after an extended illness. There is always much lively discussion and of course good humour and comradeship. "Thinking of You" cards are sent on behalf of the branch to those of our members who continue to be unwell.

Some of our members recently attended the Royal British Legion collection of Armed Services memorabilia on display at Crewe indoor market. Much on display comes from the late Billy Smart (see photo).



*Members at the RBL Display in Crewe Market*

Some members also attended the Chester Races on 9th May. We now look forward to attending the Malaya and Singapore Reunion in Pelsall on 14th June – always a great night. Members have discussed a possible visit to Llandudno in mid-summer. Details to be finalized at our next meeting. Members have also been informed of a British Legion sponsored walk on Sunday 3rd August, to mark the centenary of the outbreak of the Great War. Also to be discussed at the next meeting.

Branch members have agreed to hold two town collections, one in Crewe and one in Nantwich, during the latter part of the year. Proceeds will be for the Mercian Regiment charity.

We continue to meet in the Crosville Social Club in Chester Street, Crewe on the last Tuesday of each month. New members are always welcome. Do come and join us. The next meeting is at 7.30pm on 24th June.

*Ray Stafford*

### SANDBACH BRANCH

First of all I must apologise to our branch for missing the last two copies of the newsletter. Charles Sullivan ex 2nd Battalion has been in and out of hospital since well before Christmas he has decided to go into sheltered accommodation moving to Brantwood on Congleton Road Sandbach.

Albert Gregory one of our associate members has had operations on both his knees and he is well on the road to recovery. Sheila Hodgkinson is in hospital with a chest infection we wish them from the branch. At one of our meetings held recently it was decided to donate £200 to the East Cheshire Reunion for the beer on the tables and Lawrence Dunning sent us an email thanking us for the donation.

We recently held our A.G.M. the committee remains more or less the Colin Farrington is now Vice Chairman and Craig Roughley takes over as Chairman. It is nice to have someone younger with new ideas and Kath Beech is taking over as welfare officer we wish her well. Armed Forces Day Sunday 29th June

2014. 1 Mercian is to receive the freedom of Sandbach Town. Assemble at Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach at 1330hrs, so come along and cheer them on. Ernie Bate has died ex Cheshire Second World War. His funeral was Thursday the 8th May 2014.

Colin Farrington was presented with an engraved hip flask and a bottle of something to put in it. He was thanked by members for 25 years loyal service to Sandbach Branch. I hope I haven't missed anything I'm sorry if I have. God Bless all members of the C.R.A. and all members of the armed forces and their families. Stay safe.

*Dave Beech*

### SOUTHERN REGION

The Southern Region's quiet tranquility has been broken only twice. The first occasion was the annual pilgrimage to Twickenham in order to watch the rugby match between the Army and Royal Navy. Over 80,000 watched the Army come from behind to win 30 – 17. Another excellent day, with rumours that some bars ran out of beer very early on.

The second occasion was the trek north for Chester Races. What a great day and the 1st Battalion are to be thanked and congratulated on running an excellent bar and enclosure.

We will have held our branch meeting in the Tower of London by the time this newsletter is published, and our thanks go to Dickie Dover for arranging the venue. We look forward to the annual Inter Services T20 cricket, which takes place at Lords on 3rd June. Our thanks once again to our president for arranging our visit into the hallowed precincts of the pavilion.

*George Szwejkowski*

### STOCKPORT BRANCH

A busy start to our year and the Dedication Ceremony at the Armoury in recognition of the late Major Sam McGeorge TD. An oak-cladded Association Standard cupboard with brass memorial plaque was duly dedicated in the presence of Mrs Wendy McGeorge and her two sons. Witnessing the occasion were trustee Lt Col Tony Angel and former TA members Alan Jennings, Alan Massey and Keith Mort. Major John Holden's widow Judith oversaw the event as Major John had planned the whole event before his death. A commemorative meal at the Wycliffe Hotel followed.

The funeral of ex Cheshire Steve Duffy was held at Poynton Church with a cremation later at Stockport. Our Branch Standard, along with the Regimental Flag, were duly paraded at the request of his family. The standard bearers were Derek Sykes and Alan Kennedy, supported by Keith Mort, Eddie Bottomley, Brian Hartigan and Alan Massey. The church was filled to capacity with many ex Cheshires who had served with Steve and many knew him well. And ever true to Regimental practices the local pub was invaded afterwards.

The AGM at Chester sprung a pleasant surprise. Brian Hartigan was awarded the Major General Peter Martin Award for outstanding work for our Branch.

We were proud to parade both the Association and Branch Standards at the funeral of Sgt William Donaghy DCM at St Mary's Church Towyn. The welcome and warmth extended to us by his family made the long journey well worthwhile.

We made our annual visit to the home of Colonel Sir William Bromley-Davenport, KCVO at Capesthorpe Hall for the Meeanee Commemoration Service and the customary dinner at the Flower Pot later. Several pints and plenty of lamp swinging made for yet another excellent day in our calendar.

## WORD FROM THE BRANCHES (continued)

March 1st and the Stockport Branch attended a Meeanee Reunion Dinner at the Regimental Club. 38 of us sat down to a superb three course dinner with wine and the obligatory port for the loyal toasts. The venue is so apt with so much of our Regimental history tied up in the Castle. What a pity other branches cannot do something similar to support the Club.

Tuesday 4th March and we visited the Macclesfield Branch for their AGM. A very pleasant evening with a hot buffet to follow.

The 16th March and once again we visited the 13th Astley Volunteer Cheshire Rifleman Inn for our usual hot pot and cold beers, good banter and the usual mickey-taking when the football was shown.

Another visit to the Macclesfield Branch CRA and the chance to chat to former Malaya/Singapore Veterans with photos and memories exchanged. Many thanks to the Macclesfield Branch for the hospitality shown.

Time now to plan our pilgrimages into Belgium and France in commemoration of the Battle of Mons.

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Peter Hennerley 1955-57 (Ex Corps of Drums 22nd Cheshire) recently. Peter produced the DVD 'Chapel Street Remembered' (dubbed The Bravest Little Street in England) from which the Association benefited from sales revenue. Also Steve Bradshaw 1978-1999 (HQ Coy 22nd Cheshire). It was standing room only at Steve's funeral on Friday 4th April with many friends and a huge representation from the Mercian Volunteers present. Steve certainly was a popular man judging by the numbers there that day. Peter's funeral was also well attended with a humorous eulogy by Alan Jennings summing up Peter's life and habits of extra-long phone conversations whilst rolling a cigarette at the same time. A brilliant man.



*Presentation of a Cheque to the ABF from the recent Charity Walk by the Mercian Volunteers, Stockport.*

On 15 April 2014 a photo session was held at the Armoury when Lt Col A.N. Angel T.D (KCR 4 Mercian) presented a cheque for £1,000 to the A.B.F N.W Regional Organiser Col P Naylor O.B.E., this being part of a 14 mile sponsored walk fund raising exercise around Ladybower Reservoir. Both the CRA and MVA benefited from this fund raising event held last August. Members of 207 Field Ambulance, C.R.A Stockport and the M.V.A benefited also. Thanks go to Lt Col Angel for organising this event.

Easter Sunday saw some of our branch members attend a 'Lancashire' day with our friends from the Ashton Old Comrade Association. Flat cap, waistcoat, Grandad Shirt, braces being the statutory dress code on that day. Our Annual Armed Forces Day dinner and dance has now been confirmed, booked and now waiting for table bookings. Information on this event can be obtained from Stockport CRA via (Paul Lomas) 0161 486 6054.

Till the next time.

**Gordon H Smith**

## WALSALL BRANCH

We were pleased to accept a new member to the Branch – Steve Lowe who travelled down from Burton on Trent to our May meeting. He was with the Battalion from 1973 to 1992, serving mostly with the Signals. Anyone who remembers him and wishes to contact him, I have his details.

We have Len Eyton unwell at the moment and wish him a speedy recovery.

We had a good day out on Sunday the 4th May when 22 members boarded the coach for a wonderful day out in Llandudno for their annual Victorian extravaganza which is held Saturday, Sunday, Monday and is worth a visit.

For the race day we had six members attend but the numbers were down due to holidays and illness.

One of our old comrades, Tony Hackwood, is on a mission to try to locate relatives of Tommy Smith who was in the first world war South Stafford's, as he has been given medals which include British War Medal and Victory Medal, affectionately known in the forces as Mutt and Jeff. They are accompanied by the Memorial Plaque, a large bronze medallion which was presented to all the next of kin of the British and empire personnel who were killed as a result of the war. Tony thinks that some of Tommy's relatives may still live in the Bloxwich area.

Our next event will be on the 14th June, the Malaya Singapore Reunion, when we look forward to meeting our old comrades. This is followed closely by a day trip to Weston Super Mare on June 22nd for Armed Forces Day.

**Reg Smith**

## STATUE UNVEILING CEREMONY

The Cheshire Regiment Association has been invited to take part in the unveiling of the statue of Todger Jones VC in Runcorn on Sunday 3rd August 2014.

Members of the Regimental Association and Branch Standards should assemble in Victoria Road, Runcorn (next to St Michael's Church and Runcorn Cemetery, where Todger is buried) at 1015hrs. The parade, comprising a number of ex-Service Organisations, Cadets and local schoolchildren will step off at 1040hrs and march to Runcorn Cenotaph where a short Service of Remembrance will take place. Following this service the parade and spectators will turn to face the Memorial Garden where the statue will be unveiled by WW2 veterans, one of whom is a gallantry recipient.

The parade is invited for after-ceremony drinks and buffet at the Runcorn British Legion.

It is hoped that there will be a large contingent of the 22nd to honour our only soldier VC.

Branches are requested to let the CRA Secretary know by 30th June whether OR NOT they will be attending, with approximate numbers, and if their Branch Standard will be paraded. Any other individuals wishing to attend are also requested to inform Secretary CRA of attendance in order that an accurate picture can be sent to the organisers.



*Thomas Alfred "Todger" Jones  
V.C., D.C.M.*

# NATIONAL SERVICEMAN 1957-59 – THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY!

By David Cargill BEM

I joined the Cheshire Regiment in April 1957 to complete two years National Service. At the initial interview I was asked what I would like to be in the Army. I replied that a radio operator sounded interesting but as I had been a clerk in civilian life - a clerk went down on the form. Intake 42 finished its training in the July, coinciding with the Regiment leaving for Malaya and the presentation of Colours to the 1st Battalion by her majesty The Queen. Following our work in the celebrations the intake was posted to Malaya, whilst two of us were sent on an administration course to the Sussex Light Infantry base in Chichester. On our return we were interviewed by the Adjutant to be told that one was required in the Depot Orderly Room the other would follow the intake to Malaya. The decision was left in our hands! As we both stated that we wished to join the Regiment in Malaya we were told that was not possible. The following morning we were stood in front of the Adjutant being asked if we had made up our minds. We were still of the view that we wished to follow our colleagues. We were then asked which sport we followed. My colleague stated that he was a cross country runner and I admitted to playing a bit of tennis. "Right" replied the Adjutant "you will play me tonight on the Officers' tennis court at 6pm." Suitably equipped I turned out and played him and obviously impressed as he informed me that I would remain at the Depot and be his tennis partner in a forthcoming competition. We went on to win the North West Army Inter Unit doubles championship in Preston. Photo of the replica attached.



The Army North West Inter Unit Tennis Doubles Trophy - 1957

A few months later after serving my time administering Army documentation and undergoing a rigorous Admin Inspection I was promoted to Corporal of the Depot Orderly Room. It was a period of time when the IRA were active and the camp was on 24 hours alert. One night the alarm went off and we all turned out on the square for action. However, it turned out to be a false alarm as an incident had taken place in the Guard Room. The Guard Commander, my non-commissioned officer in the Orderly Room, had been summoned to the CO's house and subsequently assaulted by the senior officer. Following a Court Marshal, the Commanding Officer was retired and the NCO was moved to the Staffordshire Regiment - I was promoted to Corporal!

Those were the days when the Regiment regularly paraded through Chester with fixed bayonets and provided an Assize Guard for the opening of the Quarterly Session of the Courts at the Castle. I and a colleague were accommodated in a little room behind the

armoury and enjoyed making coffee on the stove using cans of condensed milk. Outside the armed guard patrolled each night around the building - so we were well protected! The next two intakes of National Servicemen included cross country runners and professional footballers to strengthen the Regimental teams.

During the period of my National Service I took up photography with a regular evening with a professional in Chester. This is a hobby that I have continued throughout for the last 50 odd years and now belong to a club which holds "battles" with other like-minded people. Although I counted down the days to my return to civilian life, looking back this was a valuable period when most young men grew up and understood their responsibilities in society and the need for comradeship. I was at a car boot sale in Chepstow last year and bought a Cheshire Regiment cap badge for a few pounds. In our village we have an annual cenotaph commemoration which is always well attended, and always reminds me of those days at the Dale.

David Cargill BEM, JP, FCCA (23389426)

## THE FAIRBANKS COLLECTION

### BRIEF ENCOUNTER

Each Friday evening, in the hallowed precincts of Chester castle, a group of aging old soldiers gather. They do so in order to pass a few pleasant moments in the company of friends and contrary to popular belief they do not talk incessantly about WW2. They are more likely to be overheard discussing their latest knee replacement operation or the surgical correction of a hernia. I must confess that as the beer flows the conversation will often include topics of such great significance as the fate of West Bromwich Albion or whether Freddie Flintoff will return to international cricket.

When attention is given to military matters the points discussed usually consist of details of wrongdoings either committed by or involving the person telling the story. I have often said that despite my somewhat chequered career I was not a bad soldier - just unlucky. I offer the following incident in support of this claim.

It occurred at four am one day in 1951 in Hodgsons Camp, Suez. I had risen at that ungodly hour and, clutching my washing gear, was heading towards the ablutions intent on grabbing a shower before the post reveille rush. To get there I had to cross the only metalled road in the camp which at that point was lit by a solitary and exceedingly dim lamp. As I reached the road I heard the sound of hobnailed boots on the tarmac and in the gloom was able to make out, with some trepidation, that I was about to cross the path of the CO and Provost Sergeant who, at that time of day, were obviously up to no good. As a newly arrived white kneed sprog, who had never before been in the august presence of a Colonel, my urgent problem was what course of action to take? Throwing caution to the wind I continued across the road, gave a smart eyes left, and said, "Good morning Sir!" I never reached the showers. The Provost Sergeant, with fearsome relish, doubled me smartly to the guard room and later that morning I was charged with 'Undue familiarity' and punished by being awarded seven days defaulters. Thus it was that I obtained the first blot on my escutcheon simply for passing the time of day. As I said earlier, I was not bad, just unlucky.

## VISIT OF THE BAND & DRUMS TO VIENTIANE 11.11.1959 – 16.11.1959

According to the Oak Tree Regimental Journal 1959 Winter edition the above with an escort and some of the Regimental silver were invited by the King of Laos to take part in their annual religious festival of That Luang.

I enquired through the Association Newsletter some little time ago whether anyone could recall this visit which was led by Captain Turner. The only reply received was from a member of the Pioneer Group who recalled making and labelling numerous wooden crates for the visit. Since then various rumours about the real reason have come to light – that in fact the ‘Goodwill’ visit was merely a cover for the evacuation of the British Embassy! This seemed pretty far-fetched but it did strike myself and others that we were in a French colony flying a Union flag! Stranger still one of my tasks as Corporal i/c baggage was to remove the Union flag and the flag of Laos from the Embassy building upon departure.

Who were the civilians on board the Beverly when we too set off at 0155 hours from a military airport?

I visited Vientiane some three years ago and was able to identify the British Embassy (complete with my flagpole!) but was surprised to see the whole building secured with blocked windows and barbed wire. Again I asked why? A visit to the Public Records Office in Kew revealed that all Laotian Embassy correspondence ceased in December 1959.

Further research revealed that the new King, His Majesty King Savang Vatthana and the whole family had left power in a communist coup in January 1960. The monarchy was dissolved in 1975 and the King and his wife were murdered in 1979.

## THE ROYAL HOSPITAL, CHELSEA

Currently there are no former soldiers of the Cheshire Regiment living at the Royal Hospital Chelsea. Should you live on your own and have served in the Army, providing you meet the criteria below you could apply to live in the Royal Hospital Chelsea. The key criteria are:

1. Over 65 years of age. Either a former non-commissioned officer or soldier of the British Army;  
*or*  
a former officer of the British Army who served for at least 12 years in the ranks before obtaining a commission;  
*or*  
have been awarded a disablement pension while serving in the ranks.
2. Able to live independently in the sheltered accommodation (known as Long Wards). The Royal Hospital Chelsea does not usually accept direct entries in to the Infirmary.
3. Free of any financial obligation to support a spouse or family. If you are in receipt of an Army Service Pension or War Disability Pension you will be required to surrender it upon entry to the Royal Hospital. Please note that if your Army Service or War Disability Pension does not meet a minimum threshold you will be required to ‘top-up’ to that amount, providing it does not place you in financial difficulty.

The website for the Royal Hospital is:  
<http://www.chelsea-pensioners.co.uk/home>

This site contains an application form for entry candidates.

To bring the story to a close I was on a cruise in the Far East in February of this year and one of the speakers was Sir James Hodge KCMG CMB KCVO – ex Ambassador to Thailand and Laos! What an opportunity to delve!

Amazingly enough after I had related the story of the events of December 1959 he at once confirmed that indeed the whole incident was a cover for the extraction of the staff and chattels of the Laotian Embassy, so giving credence to the whole rumour. He did add that the art of diplomacy meant the right hand revealing nothing to the left, and that one definition of the art was lying on behalf of one’s country! He ended by saying that the embassy had reopened for business and that our affairs in Laos in the interim had been looked after by the Australians!

I still have the Union and Laotian flags and the Administrative Instructions – should they go to the Museum? Please advise.

*Graham Nottingham*  
*Mountfields*  
*Shenington*  
*Banbury*  
*Oxon OX15 6NA*

P.S. On a cruise in the Far East recently I met Mrs Irene Pearce whose husband Captain Frank Pearce (now deceased) served with the Regiment. We were able to exchange stories about life in the Cheshires and she was very keen to send best wishes to all who remember her husband and herself, especially Eddie Pickering and Ron Goodwin.

## N.I. VETERANS ASSOCIATION

### NORTHERN IRELAND VETERANS’ ASSOCIATION SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM 11.30AM SATURDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER 2014

The Northern Ireland Veterans’ Association Service of Remembrance 2014 will be held at 11.30am on Saturday 20th September 2014 at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffordshire.

The service will commemorate and remember all those who lost their lives in service of the Crown as a result of the conflict in N. Ireland.

The service will be followed by a parade down to the Ulster Ash Grove for the laying of wreaths.

Following the laying of the wreaths, there will be a 15 minute pause before the parade forms up for the return march to the visitor centre during which the guest of honour will take the salute.

The service is open to all and all Associations are welcome to parade their standards. It would be appreciated if Associations arranging for groups of their members to attend could notify us of numbers and confirm if their standard will be parading.

We look forward to welcoming you to our annual memorial service.

Yours,  
*David Langston*  
Email: [nivaservice2014@gmail.com](mailto:nivaservice2014@gmail.com)

## BOOK REVIEW – MORAL COMBAT by Michael Burleigh

### **It is all relative**

For the last 150 years or so it has been very fashionable amongst so-called intellectuals and philosophers in the West to assert that there is no such thing as 'objective morality'. In other words, everyone is entitled to their own opinion as to what is right and what is wrong and no one has the right to say that one person's actions or behaviour are superior to anyone else's. They might, of course, argue that it is wrong to hurt other people. But not necessarily so. "Who are you", they would say, "to judge someone else's behaviour?"

At the extremes, there are people who would say that a slave owning society is no worse than a free society. It is just different and they are just as entitled to their beliefs as we are.

### **Good and evil in World War II**

Michael Burleigh has no such illusions. He examines the 2nd World War from the standpoint of good versus evil and comes down very firmly on the side that 'the predators': Hitler, Mussolini and Prince Hirohito were appallingly evil men, who with their cohorts, were responsible for committing the most horrendous crimes against humanity. It is difficult for us to understand why, but huge numbers of the German and Japanese populations, particularly the military, were totally brainwashed and committed to executing horrific crimes of murder, torture and genocide against totally innocent people. Ordinary German soldiers on the Eastern Front talked about "going shopping with a gun". What they meant was, they were going out to look for something they wanted and if they saw it, shoot the owner and appropriate it. Burleigh dismisses the popular distinction between 'the ordinary German soldier' and the members of the SS. Both committed appalling crimes against humanity.

He recounts one occasion when a very beautiful young woman, carrying a baby, is being led away in a line of captives somewhere in Eastern Europe. She sees a good looking, cultured German officer standing there and asks him to what will happen to her baby. "He will be well cared for, Madam," he replies, "Do you think we are barbarians?"

When she is out of sight he drops the baby down a manhole.

### **The Japanese mentality**

It is difficult to comprehend the depths of degradation to which both the German and Japanese soldiery sank during World War II. The Japanese regarded most other Asians, particularly the Chinese, as sub human and resorted to wiping them out in huge numbers – almost for fun. Women, in particular, were fair game. They were treated as sex objects, abused and then bayoneted in hundreds of thousands. Korean women were treated in similar fashion.

### **Genocide in Europe**

The genocide of the Jews in Europe is a subject in itself. There were millions of ordinary Germans who loathed the Jews. All sorts of excuses have been made for this hatred, such as they always rise to the top of their profession, they make lots of money, they've got big noses etc. But this is only a whitewash. People readily acquiesced in Hitler's hate propaganda and abandoned 2000 years of Christian teaching within twenty years. The latest scientific techniques and some of the finest scientific intellects in Europe were devoted to designing and perfecting the most efficient ways of killing large numbers of innocent people.

### **Standing up to the Nazis**

Of course, there were some very brave people who withstood Hitler but most of them either had to escape the country, go into hiding or were put in concentration camps: people like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the Lutheran pastor, who spent years in prison

before being eventually executed for his involvement in the plot to kill Hitler; or Simon Haffner, an aspiring lawyer, who found himself compulsorily obliged to attend Nazi training camps where all the trainee lawyers were indoctrinated in Nazi ideas and told that there was no future for them, particularly in law, unless they joined the party and subscribed to its ideals. To his credit, Haffner eventually managed to flee the country and get to England; or Martin Neimoller, the World War I U boat captain who survived the concentration camps. Obviously, there were some good Germans but it was virtually impossible for them to escape the clutches of the Nazis and many of them finished up in concentration camps and their families were threatened with dire punishments.

Mussolini is treated fairly leniently. He was an aggressive war lord who aimed to conquer the region round the Mediterranean but the majority of Italians were not rabid anti-semites or warmongers, like the Germans, and did much to hide and protect their Jewish neighbours.

### **Allied killing**

Fortunately, we in Britain were spared virtually all of the Nazi atrocities and we can only guess at what would have happened if the jackboot had marched down Whitehall. A leopard doesn't change its spots and one can only assume that Britain would have been reduced to a helot state with the natives tilling the ground for their Nazi overlords.

It has been popular since the war to criticise "Bomber Harris" and the bomber crews who flew nightly over Germany. Burleigh has no truck with these fireside critics. He examines all the arguments carefully and concludes, "No serious person can compare the hard-fought bombing campaign with slaughtering innocent civilians where the only risk the perpetrators ran was to be splashed with blood and brains in some ditch in the Ukraine". He describes the 55,000 volunteers who died in Bomber Command operations as "heroes" – not a comment with which everyone agrees today, sadly.

He is angry that Churchill tried to pin responsibility for the bombing of Dresden on Harris and that Bomber Command were denied a campaign medal for many years.

Burleigh feels that most people today don't realise just how close this country came to defeat and that every possible means had to be employed to ensure our survival, otherwise the whole of Europe could well have been under Nazi rule to this day and very few of us would have survived.

Burleigh does not gloss over the crimes of the Allies and Stalin in particular is held to account for his brutality towards his own people and the nations subjugated to Communist rule at the end of the war. It is acknowledged that Stalin was responsible for the deaths of just as many people as Hitler; tens of millions ended their lives in the Gulags.

I found this book very inspiring, perhaps a bit depressing at times, but I like an author who tells it like it is. As a firm believer in 'objective morality', I found myself agreeing with virtually everything he says.

In the light of the rise of modern terrorist groups, which care nothing for human life, it is good to read a book like this where the author has not been infected by such wishy-washy ideas as, "Well, that was their belief." We need a few people with moral certainties if we are to tackle the terrorist groups currently raising their ugly heads and who believe it is their God-given mission to destroy our way of life and subjugate us to their particular creed.

*Arthur Clarke*

# MISSING MEDAL - FOUND

The article below was published in my local paper The Grimsby Telegraph, it relates to my GSM Northern Ireland. Forty four years ago the regiment was posted to Berlin for a two year stint. While we were there, the Prince of Wales visited and presented the medal to me, it was looked after and cleaned often. On completion of the tour we all packed our belongings in wooden crates for shipping back to the UK the crates were shipped back to Weeton Camp, Blackpool which was our next posting. When the regiment arrived back we found some of our crates had been opened and some of the belongings had been taken, one of which was my medal.

In my heart I knew that it would be returned to me somehow because name rank and number was engraved on the outer rim, after 40 years though I was beginning to lose faith that I would ever see it again. In February 2013 I received a phone call from Major Eddie Pickering asking me for my name rank and number, I asked him why and he told me that he had my medal in his hand and would like to return it to me, the medal was found in a charity shop in Kirkham 5 miles from Weeton Camp by Mrs Joyce Robinson, who had it in a box for 12 years, not knowing the importance of the medal gave it to a relative named Brian O'Hare who was an ex-serviceman who did know the importance of the medal decided to hand it over to officers in the careers office in Preston, who passed it on to the regimental headquarters in Chester.

The last record for me dated back to the 1960's. As I had lived in various barracks before settling into civvy street in South Killingholme, North Lincolnshire 25 years ago.

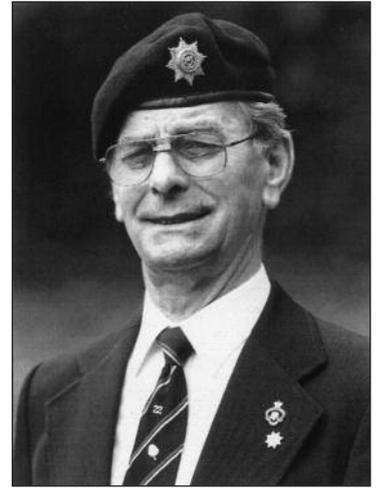
I was given a replacement medal some years ago by a family member, which was nice, but it could not replace the original given to me by HRH Prince Charles. Fortunately in 2009 I had given some old newspaper cuttings from Northern Ireland to the regimental museum and my address had been kept by the staff. It has taken a great deal of effort by many people to get it back for which I am eternally grateful as I will be able to wear it on Remembrance Day.

Kind Regards, *Tony Williams*

# OBITUARIES

## Peter James Hennerley

Peter and I are Altrincham lads. Both born in the 1930's we served in the 22nd. Whilst I was a NS man who did two years and then TA service, Peter signed on for three years regular service in 1954 and served in Berlin. We were both on the Presentation of Colours parade on the Roodee in 1957. Peter served his time in the Corps of Drums and he was the drummer who marched out and beat "Drummers Call" on that parade. He said that this was one of his proudest moments in uniform. He was a time served joiner by trade.



Peter and I had an interest in Chapel Street (The Bravest Little Street). His grandparents lived in the street and his father was born there. Chapel Street was in fact a cul-de-sac and I was born and lived during my childhood days at 14 Wellington Square which abutted Chapel Street.

Peter campaigned long and hard for Chapel Street to be awarded a Blue Badge and he eventually succeeded when it was placed on the wall of the Grapes Inn in November 2001. Wreaths are placed on the wall of The Grapes each Remembrance Sunday and I am always pleased to see that they are not vandalised. Not content with that he produced booklets and a DVD, selling them to the public. He raised thousands of pounds for military charities, demonstrating his vision, single-mindedness and tenacity. For his outstanding work Peter received the President's award in 2012. He was a regular attendee of the East Cheshire Reunion and was one of the first to apply requesting two tickets, one for himself and the other for his long time friend from the 1st Battalion, "Snowy" Ball. Peter was a regular contributor to the CRA Newsletter. He covered many topics and was somewhat pleased when I captioned his article in my last newsletter as "More Ramblings from Peter Hennerley."

Peter would phone me regularly, normally around 11.20am and his conversations were always light-hearted, rambling, lengthy, amusing and funny (he would brighten up my dull days in winter) but invariably I would have to cut short his 45 minute plus conversations with "Pete, kitchen is sounding" or "my water tablets are working" Always a smile in his voice as he concluded "I understand and I will speak to you soon". I have very pleasant memories of his conversations and I shall miss them.

I was genuinely shocked at Peter's sudden and totally unexpected demise. He was working hard on producing his final project regarding Chapel Street (March edition of the Newsletter) and I last spoke to him in the second week of March. He would have been 78 on the 11th August. He died on the 17th March 2014.

Peter was a genuine guy with the ability to see the funny side of events and his eyes were always smiling. And of course there was always the hand rolled little "ciggy". He was very proud of his Family, his Regiment, the Corps of Drums and the CRA and it was our privilege to have known him.

*Alan Jennings*

## OBITUARIES

### Jimmy Caffrey

In my life I have been privileged to have known and met many people from all walks of life who have led interesting lives and have wonderful stories to tell. When I joined Stockport Branch I met some of these wonderful men – the 4122's and the 4123's. These were the men who had joined the Regiment in the early 1930's. Their regimental number began with either 4122 or 4123. These lads had been posted to India after their



basic training as callow youths in their late teens. They were on their way home from India when WW2 broke out. Instead of a pleasant sail home they were redirected to Sudan then North Africa and then to Malta. When they returned to England some of these men been overseas for up to twelve years. They left England as callow youths aged 18 and returned as 30 year old men. They had enjoyed each others company for all their service. They had not experienced the joys of courtship in their 20's and they could only dream of marriage and parenthood and wondered whether they would ever again enjoy the company of English girls. You can imagine the wealth of stories they had to tell. These were the chaps that I could listen to for hours on end as they recounted their experiences. I was doubly privileged to have Tommy Blinkhorn in the Branch. Tommy was called up in 1939 and served with the 1st Battalion B Company for the duration of hostilities. Tommy was a raconteur and a very good organiser and made arrangements for some 30 of his colleagues from the Battalion to attend CRA reunions.

Stockport branch had in the 1980's a number of 4122/3's. George Parrot, Jimmy Garner, Fred "Buckshot" Bedson, and Tommy Dawson who were regular attenders on a Friday night. On these evenings conversation was conducted in a mixture of English, Hindi and Urdu.

I first met Jimmy Caffrey at one of the Mons Reunions and what an engaging character he was. Typical scouser with a natural smile and a brilliant sense of humour. Jimmy lived in Croxteth, Liverpool. Tommy Blinkhorn was a great friend of Jimmy's and he told me that Jimmy had spent a respectful amount of time in the guardroom at all of his postings. Being under close arrest seemed to be part of Jimmy's makeup. Jimmy was a good soldier who periodically lapsed into some minor misdemeanour. Jimmy though was a tough character.

In February 2001 the CRA organised a trip to Cyprus when the 1st Bn was there. Jimmy and Tommy joined the trip and shared a room. One evening Jimmy slipped in the bathroom which necessitated a visit from the local doctor. He diagnosed a fractured rib and suggested that he go for an X-Ray. Jimmy spent the night between clean sheets and under sedation. The X-Ray confirmed the diagnosis and also showed that another seven ribs had been cracked when he was shot in the stomach in the Western Desert – they had healed. Jimmy never showed any sign of pain during the rest of the Cyprus trip; he just wore that incorrigible smile.

Tommy's group of 4122/3s would attend the Mons reunion whenever they could and at the 2004 reunion Jimmy's younger

brother Peter also attended having flown in from Australia. Peter had joined the 1st Bn in India but Jimmy did not know he was coming until he arrived.

Even in Malta Jimmy ended up in detention in Corradina jail. However my best story about Jimmy was that when the 1st Battalion was posted to North West Europe in 1944, Jimmy and his fellow defaulters were in irons as they boarded the ship. Fortunately a Staff Officer supervising the embarkation noticed and ordered the manacles to be removed forthwith and be replaced with rifles. You couldn't make it up. Jimmy left the Regiment in 1946.

4123423 James Anthony Caffrey was born on the 8th April 1915 and died on the 24th April 2014 aged 99 years. Members of Stockport Branch attended his funeral, with Standards, on May 7th.

In the 1930s there were no mobile phones or computers so these lads in their off-duty time would converse among themselves and remember that their barrack rooms probably held two dozen men. These 4122s and 4123s always seemed to be happy and smiling. Their stories and experiences have stood the test of time, they will live long in my memory. These lads did not have "human rights," they only had responsibilities. Jimmy was one of the last of this era, his smile and humour now gone forever. Somehow I don't think we shall see the likes of them again. Their memories and reminiscences will however remain with us. It was a privilege to have enjoyed his company over the years.

*Alan Jennings*

### Robert "Roy" Simon

Roy Simon, died on 15th July 2013 at home in Saltney, Chester aged 78. At a young age, he developed a lifelong interest in aeroplanes and, when the time came to do his National Service and select his preferences between the Air Force, Navy and Army, he put Air Force 1st, Air Force 2nd and Air Force 3rd.

He was conscripted into the Army learning an early lesson - you don't tell the military what to do. He joined The Cheshire Regiment, 1st Battalion. After training, he was posted to the Suez Canal Zone. He always blamed having to wear a beret or helmet in the hot sun for losing his hair but it is much more likely that it was just in his genes.

Roy told his family lots of Army stories but a favourite was when he was on overnight guard duty looking after some food supplies. He heard a noise and went to investigate. He turned a corner and someone, a thief presumably, punched him smack on the nose. "Did you go after him, Dad?" we asked. "No" he laughed, "I was flat on my back with blood pumping out of my nose and, anyway, my eyes were streaming, I couldn't see a thing." He always suspected the person who hit him was from his own company but he never found out who it was. If anyone would like to own up...!

Shortly before he was due to be discharged, Roy was called in by a superior officer. "Life would be much more comfortable in the Officer's Mess, Corporal," he was told. But despite this encouragement, he didn't stay on and admitted he left with some regrets and wondered if he made the right decision. He followed the postings of the Cheshires after that, was especially proud of his Suez medal and thoroughly enjoyed attending the reunions in later years.

*John Simon*

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2014

### 2014

- 13 Jun Regimental Golf Day, The Oaks, Mollington  
14 Jun Malaya & Singapore Reunion, Pelsall  
18 Jul Regimental Golf Day, Peover  
8 Aug Regimental Golf Day, Eastham Lodge  
21-25 Aug Centenary of Battle of Mons, Belgium  
5 Sep Regimental Golf Day, Pryor's Hayes  
6 Sep Officers Association Ladies Dinner, Chester  
7 Sep Mons Day Parade and Lunch, Chester  
100th Anniversary  
25 Oct East Cheshire Reunion, Stockport  
7 Dec Droppin Well Memorial Service, Ballykelly

### 2015

- 13-16 Feb The Last Meeanee Reunion, Blackpool

News of major events is published on the CRA page of [www.cheshiremilitarymuseum.co.uk](http://www.cheshiremilitarymuseum.co.uk) and also on the CRA facebook page.

## PTSD RESOLUTION

If you know of any ex-service men or women struggling with nightmares, flashbacks, anxiety, depression, anger issues, or any of their families being affected by their behaviour, please help them contact the charity PTSD Resolution (charity number 1133188) on telephone number 0845 021 7873. They will be put in touch with a local counsellor trained to deal with the symptoms of post-traumatic stress, and other general mental conditions. Treatment is free, local, confidential, brief, immediate, non-intrusive and delivered through a network of 200 therapists UK-wide.

## A POEM by Sandy Birks

### THE OLD COLOURS

By Sandy Birks

They marched our Colours off the Worcester Ground  
Marched in slow time, as befits your grace and age  
One last sight, a tear escapes my eye  
Colours that I'd known and felt  
Colours that weighed heavy, but were loved  
I'd carried heavy pike, reined in your drapes when whipped away  
by wind  
Shoulders ached, whilst Adjutant barked at sapping strength  
I'd known his meaning

You were the Regiment  
Still as a cut flower, you stood in mess alone  
Or guarded close, when time or place were foreign or untrue  
In days gone by, 'twixt shot and shell, the battlefield you knew  
Whilst rallied you the men  
Well tattered and shot through

Farewell old things! I loved you dearly  
But moreso still, the men who served with you  
Soon we will be garlanded with new  
Forget I not the times we had together  
Whilst you lay up, a-gathering dust in distant church  
And I serve on, remembering to be true

## 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.

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

### March

- £100 Lt Col (Retd) D M Oak MBE, Preston  
£50 Mr D E M Hewitt, London  
£25 Mr R Evans, Leasowe  
Mr Evans kindly donated his winnings to the CRA

### April

- £100 Mr C J Carress, South Norwood  
£50 Mr E T Smith, Coleford  
£25 Mr S Abbott, Birmingham

## LAST POST

**Jimmy Caffrey** died 24 April 2014 aged 99. Served 1934-46 including WW2 in the 1st & 2nd Bn's in the following areas: Sudan, Egypt, Malta, Sicily, Italy, Normandy & Berlin

**Bill Day** died 5 March 2014 served Malaya 1957-59

**Colin Duggan** died 7 March 2014 aged 87 WW2 Veteran served in Palestine, Egypt & Lebanon

**Peter Hennerley** died 17 March 2014 served 1955-57  
Author of 'The Bravest Little Street in England'

**Ray Hewitt** died 2014

**Maj David Hughes** died 29 April 2014 Ex 5th Bn 1940-46

**Maj Geoffrey Pugh** died 2 April 2014 aged 93.  
Served 1943-48. Adjutant of 2nd Bn in Palestine 1945-47

**Ronald Pulham** died 24 Mar 2014

**Jack Speed** died 7 December 2013 Aged 94 Served 6th Bn WW2 in North Africa & Italy

**Robert Roy Simon** died 15 July 2013 aged 78 Served 1st Bn 1952-54 Suez

**Captain Robin H Stewart** ex NS and 7th Bn died 18th April 2014 aged 82.

**Colin Williams ACC** attached 1st Bn - Berlin, Weeton, NI – passed away 20 April 2014 aged 60