



THE CHESHIRE REGIMENT ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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DECEMBER 2014

EDITORIAL

Traditionally the latter end of the year has always been an emotive time. The recent commemorations of the First World War, Remembrance Sunday and the recent loss of some CRA stalwarts have combined to make it a particularly poignant time this year.

Attention on the Great War has thrown up so many views and emotions and perhaps the epic Sainsbury's Christmas advert has attracted some diametrically opposite views. Whatever your thoughts it was nice to see that the makers did their research and that soldiers of the Cheshire Regiment featured strongly.

The heightened security, particularly in London is a necessary evil, but it did bring a smile to my face when I saw soldiers guarding the Horse Guards at Whitehall. Guards guarding the guards! Wasn't that something out of Monty Python?

As you will see in the minutes of the CRAMC meeting, held on 22nd October, we will be reducing to three issues of the newsletter per year. It is necessary to save money and it will also reduce the strain for me, as I am finding it difficult to produce four issues per year. With that in mind, the deadline for the next issue will be 14th March 2015.

Please send your contributions to me at: 86 Edward Road, Penge, London SE20 7JS. My telephone number is 07721 660471. You can also e-mail me at: george.szwejkowski@sky.com

Have a lovely Christmas.

George Szwejkowski

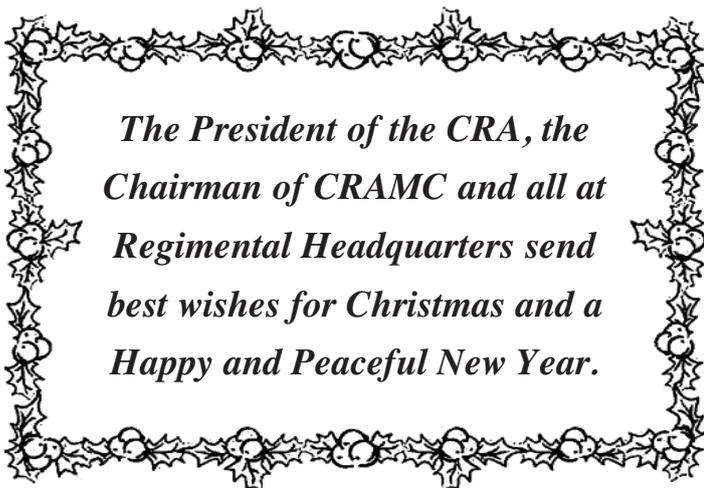
CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

"I left you in this position," seems to be appropriate after writing the previous Chairman's Column way back in August. This, specifically, regarding the Mercian Regimental Secretary's address to the CRA Branch Officials' meeting in July. You will recall this was reproduced in September's newsletter and gave the Mercian Regiment take on our future. Incidentally, Lt Col Spiby left his post in September and has yet to be replaced.

From this address it is quite clear that as far as the Mercian Regiment is concerned, whilst the CRA will remain independent for as long as it is able, funding will cease from 2017. There is already, in embryo, a Mercian Regiment Association but whether this would subsume any or all antecedent associations is, as yet, unclear. Whilst, for the time being, this has removed some of the grey area what remains abundantly clear, if we are to retain our independence, is that support for branches has never been more vital.

An example of garnering further support occurred to me the other evening whilst attending the recent Serjeant's Club AGM. Accepting that it is a separate entity from the CRA, there were in attendance more than 30 ex-Warrant Officers and Senior NCOs from the 1st Bn, all of whom have the necessary skills, leadership and experience required by branches. Could I suggest, gentlemen, that every now and again you attend a branch meeting and offer your expertise?

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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>

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CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN (continued)

A successful Mons Day parade on 7 September and an equally successful East Cheshire reunion on 25 October, both of which are reported elsewhere in the Newsletter, were enjoyed by all active Association members. Concentrating the mind as we move forward is, of course, the forthcoming retirement of our Secretary Maj Eddie Pickering. Eddie actually leaves his post on 31 December but he will continue to support the CRA and its activities up to and including the AGM on 21 February 2015. It is to be hoped that by then his replacement will be in post!

I am sure all members will join me in wishing Ken Cooper and his colleagues in Ballykelly every success at the forthcoming Droppin' Well memorial service. We will be thinking of you.

Finally, although I am conscious that my appointment as

Chairman should not allow me to highlight specific aspects of the generation in which I served, I cannot finish these notes without mentioning both Eddie Bottomley and 'Rusty' Cooney, who passed away recently. Both vastly different characters, with a completely different sense of humour, but both with a ready smile and that unique Cheshire glint in their eyes - both friends too. Rest In Peace, gentlemen, and thank you.

For us who are left, and growing older, have a good Christmas, a healthy New Year and please, support your local CRA branch And the Blackpool Reunion!

David Oak
Chairman

THE MERCIAN REGIMENT BENEVOLENCE CHARITY

The Mercian Regiment Benevolence Charity assumed the benevolence responsibilities of the Cheshire Regiment Association in 2007. The Day's Pay a Year Scheme from serving soldiers provides a regular income of around £4900 every 3 months. The loss of the 3rd Battalion has had a significant impact on this income. In the first 6 months of the current Financial Year it has also attracted £17000 in donations from other sources.

Over the same period, the charity has received 120 requests for assistance from former members of the 3 antecedent Regiments and the Mercian Regiment. Many of these requests

are for help with rental deposits and supply of white goods and the total granted so far is in the region of £30000, with a maximum grant for each case of £400. In addition, the Army Benevolent Fund has supported with grants of £20500.

The Trustees of the Mercian Regiment Benevolence Charity request that anybody thinking of starting a fund-raising project for soldiers in need, considers the Regiment. All funds raised are used for benevolence purposes, with nothing deducted for administration or wages.

Eddie Pickering

BLIND VETERANS UK

Sight loss support for vision impaired ex-Service men and women

Blind Veterans UK believes that no one who has served our country should battle blindness alone. The charity offers free lifelong support to help veterans and their families overcome the challenges of sight loss and live life to the full.

It doesn't matter how a veteran lost their sight - it could be due to old age, illness or an incident whilst in Service - or how long ago they served, if they are now battling severe sight loss, Blind Veterans UK can help.

Through three service centres in Brighton, Sheffield and Llandudno, North Wales, and a network of welfare officers, Blind Veterans UK provides specialist rehabilitation, training, equipment and emotional support, as well as sports and social activities, so that veterans receive the help they need in order to adjust to life with sight loss and live independently.

Blind Veterans UK estimates that there are over 68,000 blind and vision impaired veterans in the UK who could be eligible for the organisation's free, lifelong support, but don't currently realise it. If you, or someone you know, served in the Armed Forces or did National Service and is now experiencing severe sight loss, call freephone 0800 389 7979 or visit www.noonealone.org.uk.



GRAND MEEANEE REUNION

BLACKPOOL 13-16 FEBRUARY 2015

If you have not yet done so, please make your booking for Blackpool as soon as possible. The weekend is for all members of the 22nd, their families and friends to get together and remember old times and to strengthen the bonds of the Cheshire Regiment Association for the future.

You can get all the details from the website: www.cheshiremilitarymuseum.co.uk, or by contacting RHQ.

The Norbreck Castle is Blackpool's biggest and friendliest hotel and has leisure facilities including an indoor heated swimming pool, sauna, solarium, steam room, whirlpool spa, snooker/games room and cinema. The provisional programme includes entertainment each evening and a Meeanee Ball on the Saturday evening.

Prices for dinner, bed and breakfast are:

3 Nights: £138 per person

2 Nights: £116 per person

Ball and dinner only: £ 22 per person

Please make your booking and help to make it a weekend to remember.

SNIPPETS

This issue, festive funnies...

"The supreme court has ruled that they cannot have a nativity scene in Washington DC. This isn't for any religious reasons. They couldn't find three wise men and a virgin."

Jay Leno

MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

CHESHIRE REGIMENT ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 22nd OCTOBER 2014

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

1. Apologies were received from Mr J Cooney, Capt A W Hughes, Maj J Salisbury.

2. The Chairman welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. He asked if there was any news about Mr Cooney, the Secretary reported that he had received an email from him saying that he was visiting hospital daily and that he was not well.

3. The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed, Mr Szwejkowski noted that budgets and economies are minuted to be discussed at this meeting but are not on the agenda. It was agreed to discuss under Finance in the Secretary's Report. Proposed by Mr Szwejkowski and seconded by Mr Mapley that they be passed as a true record. Carried.

4. Chairman's Report. The Chairman reported that this has been a busy period for the CRA with the Pilgrimage to Mons, the Mons Day commemorations and Reunion in Chester followed by the visit of HRH The Earl of Chester to Chester Cathedral where he met with 3 serving members of the Mercian Regiment and 3 members of the CRA (the Chairman, Mr Terry Finlay and Mr Derek Sykes.) It was agreed that everything was a success although it was felt that numbers attending were a bit low. He remarked that it was a pleasure to see Brigadier Cave at the Mons Day Service.

Mr Jennings commented that attendance at the Mons Reunion is in decline and it does not attract younger members of the CRA. He wondered whether the parade should be reduced to a simple affair outside the Town Hall prior to taking seats in the Cathedral. The Secretary indicated that 2 MERCIAN will support the Reunion with a marching body of troops every year, operational commitments permitting and, with a band should still produce a viable parade.

5. The Secretary distributed copies of financial statements showing the current state of the CRA and the CRA Club. He explained the figures, reporting that the net worth of the CRA was £51686 and seems to be in line with forecasts made in 2007 following the transfer of the funds to the MRA. He pointed out that the Club may break even at the end of the trading period, on 31st October. He then reported that Alan Jones has indicated his desire to retire at the end of the year and that he has approached Mike Smith, a former member of the Regiment who is keen to take on the post of Steward. He will be employed on a flexible weekly hour's contract with a guaranteed 20 hours per week. He then turned to current income and expenditure and gave an analysis to date.

A discussion about possible economies ensued, it was agreed that in most cases, economy would have a detrimental effect on CRA activity. In consultation with the Editor, who agreed that it is sometimes difficult for him to produce 4 Newsletters per annum,

it was proposed by Mr Mapley and seconded by Mr Szwejkowski that the frequency of the Newsletter be reduced to 3 per annum (in April, August and December) in order to save approximately £2200. Carried.

Mr Mapley asked if the promised funds from the BNIR had been transferred, the Secretary reported that they had not.

6. Review of CRA Constitution. The Chairman reported that the sub-committee has completed their work and the draft revision has been circulated. There were no comments other than that the pages need to be renumbered. It was agreed that this will be proposed at the AGM.

7. Election to CRAMC. There are 4 members whose tenures expire at the AGM, Messrs Cooney, Jennings, Kennedy and Waring. Apart from those wishing to seek re-election, there has been one further candidate to date. The Secretary stated that if there were only 4 nominations, there is no need to hold an election. (*After note: there have been more nominations and an election will be held*).

8. President's Award and General Martin Award. The Chairman urged members to consider nominations.

9. Blackpool Reunion. Mr Mapley reported on progress with the Meeanee Reunion. He and the Secretary have visited the hotel and discussed menus and entertainments, the numbers are slowly building up.

10. Affiliations with the Mercian Regiment Association. The Chairman reported that the organiser of the ECR, Capt Dunning had sought advice on opening the reunion to members of the Staffordshire Regiment and WFR Associations. Mr Jennings felt strongly that as the ECR has its origins in the 7th Battalion Reunion which will be 67 years old this year, the reunion should remain closed to all but those who have worn the Cheshire Regiment badge. Following a lively discussion, it was felt that this was a matter for the ECR committee alone.

The Chairman stated his intent to forge links with the Mercian Regiment and the 2nd Battalion in particular.

11. Closing comments. Mr Szwejkowski spoke about the Mons Pilgrimage and asked if the 1st Battalion had been thanked for their contribution, the Secretary reported that no formal thanks have been made. He went on to speak about the commemoration of the death of Edith Cavell and wondered if the CRA should be represented at the event as she helped many members of the 22nd following the Battle of Mons. He suggested that we link with the Cavell Nurses Trust for the 100th Anniversary. It will be brought forward at the next meeting. He then asked about the Over-90s Christmas Gift and was reassured that they will be sent.

SNIPPETS

"There is a remarkable breakdown of taste and intelligence at Christmastime. Mature, responsible grown men wear neckties made of holly leaves and drink alcoholic beverages with raw egg yolks and cottage cheese in them."

PJ O'Rourke

MINUTES OF BRANCH OFFICIALS' MEETING

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BRANCH OFFICIALS HELD AT RHQ CHESTER ON WEDNESDAY 22 OCTOBER 2014

Chairman: Lt Col D M Oak MBE

Secretary: Maj T E Pickering MBE

Representatives were present from Chester, Stockport, Southern Region and Winsford branches. Also in attendance was John Donaldson who is working to form a branch in Halton.

Apologies were received from Birkenhead, Ellesmere Port, Limavady, Macclesfield and Stoke on Trent branches.

1. The Chairman opened the meeting and proceeded to review the minutes of the previous meeting. There were no matters arising. George Szwejkowski remarked that he had been greatly reassured by what Col Spiby had said.

2. The Chairman spoke about the activity since the last meeting, drawing attention to the success of the Mons Pilgrimage where 2 coaches of CRA members and friends had taken part in the ceremonies and also enjoyed some superb hospitality given by the village of Audregnies. He spoke about the Mons Reunion in Chester and remarked that it was good to see the Cathedral so full. The reunion lunch, though not well attended was extremely enjoyable in his view. He thanked the Secretary for his work in putting together the two events.

3. The Secretary presented a financial statement, reporting that the net worth of the CRA was £51686 and seems to be in line with forecasts made in 2007 following the transfer of the funds to the MRA. He then gave an analysis on expenditure and income to date. He pointed out that the Club is losing money as at the end of September but may break even at the end of the trading period, on 31st October. This is due solely to poor usage and suggested that branches may wish to consider using the Club for one function per year. He then reported that Alan Jones has indicated his desire to retire at the end of the year and that he has approached Mike Smith, a former member of the Regiment who is keen to take on the post of Steward. He will be employed on a flexible weekly hour's contract with a guaranteed 20 hours per week.

The Chairman spoke about the Mercian Regiment grant which is reducing to £5000 in the current year, to £3000 in 2015/16, £1000 in 2016/17 and then will end. CRAMC have looked for economies and have decided to reduce the number of editions of the Newsletter to 3 per annum in order to make some savings. He then invited comments, John Fairbanks asked about fund raising and the Chairman responded that it may be an option in the future.

The Chairman asked the Secretary to brief about his retirement and replacement as Assistant Regimental Secretary. The Secretary responded that his job is about to be advertised, but it is unlikely that the post will be filled straightaway. He reminded everyone that he is staying as CRA Secretary until the AGM and is happy to remain beyond if no successor is appointed.

4. **Mercian Regiment Benevolence.** Copies of the MRA Benevolence sitrep were circulated for interest.

5. **Branch Reports:**

a. **Chester Branch.** John Fairbanks reported that Chester Branch recently held a successful dinner. The committee are planning a programme of visits for the next year, including the Arboretum and the Royal Armouries. Other

events are the Christmas lunch on 7th December and the Draw on 19th December.

b. John Donaldson gave an update on the formation of **Halton Branch**; they are meeting at Halton RBL in Runcorn. They have had 16 expressions of interest on facebook and there are 5 members meeting at present. He is hoping to attract a number of former members of 3 CHESHIRE who live in the area.

c. **Winsford Branch.** Steve Pugh reported that the branch is in good shape and they will be taking part in Winsford's Remembrance Sunday parade.

d. **Stockport Branch.** Keith Mort reported on the Bowls match where they beat Birkenhead Branch and gave a resume of forthcoming events (ECR, Ladies Dinner, AGM).

e. **Southern Region.** George Szwejkowski reported that they have a membership of 85 of whom 72 are full members. The Branch will continue to support the opening of the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey each November. Planned events are a visit to the Tower of London on 8th November, the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday (he pointed out that they are allocated 24 tickets so people need to contact him early if they wish to take part). Their Meeanee Dinner will be held in Brown's Restaurant, Covent Garden on 7th March 2015.

6. **Forecast of events:**

a. 25 Oct – ECR, Stockport. So far 150 people are expected.

b. 1 Dec – Widnes and Runcorn. Mercian Regiment will march through Widnes at 1030 and Runcorn at 1200.

c. 7 Dec – Ballykelly Memorial Service.

d. 14 Jan 2015 – CRAMC meeting (note, no Branch Officials meeting).

e. 13-16 Feb 2015 – Blackpool Reunion. 80 reservations so far. The Secretary updated on progress so far. Booking forms can be found on the Museum website. Those who pay the hotel in advance will get "express check-in" those who don't will have to queue up. The weekend will take the usual format (Friday, meet and greet, buffet and disco, Saturday, gala dinner and cabaret, Sunday, buffet, quiet cabaret) and the reunion bar will have special beer prices.

f. 21 Feb AGM and Meeanee lunch – 1200hrs.

7. **Membership of CRAMC.** The Chairman reminded everyone that nominations are still invited for CRAMC.

8. **Other business.**

a. Awards. The Chairman invited nominations for General Martin and President's awards.

b. The Secretary announced the winners of the monthly 22 Club prize and exhorted members to consider joining in the draw.

c. The Secretary invited opinion on the format of the Meeanee Lunch. The general opinion was to have a hotpot lunch (West Cheshire style).

d. George Szwejkowski asked that photographs submitted for the Newsletter should be captioned.

e. Steve Pugh said that the RBL are offering Standard Bearer training in January, free of charge, in Winsford. The Secretary undertook to inform the branches and pass over names.

9. The Chairman closed the meeting by wishing success to the Halton Branch project.

WORD FROM THE BRANCHES

BIRKENHEAD BRANCH

This year's Mons Reunion on Sunday 7th September was a memorable one. It was an impressive event in many ways and combined our traditional parade and service with commemorations by the City and by the Chester Diocese.

The Band of The Mercian Regiment led the Colour Party and two guards from 2 MERCIAN at the head of the parade, followed by the CRA Standards and marching contingent. At 'Fall In' our Branch President, Ken Thiis, smartly stepped into the right marker position and marched both to and from the Cathedral in the front rank of the CRA detachment.

Civic dignitaries, representatives from the whole Chester Diocese together with the military contingent, cadet forces, youth organisation and the 700 volunteer 13th Battalion re-enactors filled the Cathedral and, later, filled the Castle square. Those who did not attend missed an opportunity to spend a day in the sunshine. The day at times was solemn; at times light-hearted. It was a commemoration of the Great War and a celebration of the historic links between the City of Cheshire and the Regiment.

Four members of the Branch attended The East Cheshire Reunion on 25th October. Thanks to Lawrence Dunning and the organisers, the event was a great success. Lt-Col Mark Elwood, CO of 1 MERCIAN, once again gave an upbeat summary of his Battalion's current activities.

Branch members paraded at Port Sunlight War Memorial for the Remembrance Sunday Commemoration, followed by the service at Christ Church. A small ceremony at the Museum followed, in remembrance of the 13th Battalion whose silver statue is kept there. The Branch was also represented, and a wreath laid at the Birkenhead Cenotaph service, by Ken Guntrip.

Preparations are well in hand for our Branch Christmas Dinner, scheduled for Sunday 7th December. We are looking forward to welcoming our guests and friends from other ex-service organisations. This year we will be entertained by female vocalists, 'Signature.'

Peter Jackson

BOWLS

Sunday the 5th of October was the day for the return match against our old foes CRA Stockport. Once we had found our way to the venue, we were accorded a very warm welcome. The sun was shining and the green (the largest green we have ever played on) was great. What more could we ask for?

The answer was for the Birkenhead Branch to play and to triumph. Alas, our old and bold were not up to the task. We were well and truly beaten. However, hope springs eternal and we will seek revenge in our next match, next May. Notwithstanding the result we all thoroughly enjoyed meeting both old and new friends and our thanks go to our hosts for a superb buffet. Hopefully we will all meet again next year. Well done Brian.

Tony Brandon

CHESTER BRANCH

Following a long period of poor attendances combined with the recent tragic loss of so many loyal members, change is very much in the air. We have lately enrolled four new members and warmly welcome Messrs Joe Murphy, Malcolm Lipton, Les Heaps and Darren Bates to the ranks of our merry band of ex-licentious soldiery! May their association with us be long and

happy. We are also pleased to welcome Tom Senior back into the fold.

Another sign of change at the Castle is the decision of Alan Jones, our revered steward and egg fryer extraordinaire, to retire. He recently swapped both of his knees for new ones (the doctors made him a BOGOF offer he couldn't refuse). His imminent departure is causing much distress, especially amongst those members who are partial to an expertly fried egg. When Alan does finally hang up his skillet and leave he will depart with our heartfelt thanks for all he has done for us, and our best wishes for a long and happy future for him and Linda. We welcome his replacement, Mr Mike Smith, who is ready, willing and able to risk all on our behalf. We wish Mick success in the job and can assure him of our willingness to assist him in any way we can.

On December 7th the Branch Christmas Lunch will be held at the Castle. The dress will be informal, but members wearing pyjamas will be refused admission and sent back to bed! It will be a traditional two course meal with a glass of wine, coffee and mince pies and all the trimmings. The meal will be served by probably the worst behaved elves Santa has ever had to put up with. A limited number of tickets, price £12, are on sale now on a first come first served basis.

Two weeks after the lunch on 19th December our Christmas draw will take place. Tickets costing £6 are on sale now and the cost includes mulled wine, mince pies, a substantial buffet, a mind boggling quiz and the chance to win one, or more, of the fifty prizes which will be up for grabs. To gain entry into the club on the night you will need to have a ticket.

We look forward to the Christmas period and following the holiday we hope for a good, well-attended Reunion at Blackpool (the last one) on 13-16th Feb and a successful CRA Meeanee AGM at the Castle on 21st Feb. We wish all members of the Mercian Regiment success in everything they do, and to all our friends and ex comrades everywhere a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

John Fairbanks

ELLESMERE PORT BRANCH

Greetings from Ellesmere Port. A very quiet period to report on this time, the Branch currently has twenty-five members on nominal roll, with an average meeting count of twenty-two. Taking into account our "age profile," a good result and I commend our members for their loyalty and continued support. Stand firm together and we will survive.

October 24th saw thirty-five members, families and friends at our Autumn social evening, with the usual "party" games and a very enjoyable Hot Pot buffet, with an added choice of sandwiches etc. Mike discovered new talent as quizmaster, and Frank took on the role of bingo caller.

A special thank you to Shirley and the girls for a very efficient raffle, with prizes donated by members. I even won a prize myself, a HANDBAG! (very quickly handed back into draw!) As usual, music(?), was supplied by yours truly, "Just Gordon."

November 9th was Remembrance Sunday, and I paraded our Standard at the Station Road Cenotaph, where our wreath was laid by member Dave Wright, and afterwards at Civic Centre Cenotaph, with wreath laid by Bill Maguire. I have attended many services at Civic Square, but this year was a record turnout by the townspeople.

WORD FROM THE BRANCHES (continued)

December 17th will see us assemble once more for our traditional Christmas dinner. In the last newsletter our CRA chairman made a comment on recruitment and I wish to re-enforce this. I have worked as a “volunteer” in the HQ post room, preparing newsletters for posting, and there are numerous postings to members in Chester and Ellesmere Port. If only these members could be motivated to join their local Branch.

Due to closure of the Phoenix Club, our meeting venue is now the fourth Friday in the month, at Labour Club Flatt Lane, Ellesmere Port, 1930hrs start.

Finally, our condolences go out to the family of Rusty Cooney - another Regiment family suffering the trauma of the “Empty Chair Syndrome” at Christmas.

Season’s greetings to all, and wishing you a prosperous and peaceful 2015.

Gordon Kipps

KIRKHAM BRANCH

In August the Kirkham branch members met up with the Tranmere Branch in order to travel to Belgium as part of the CRA Pilgrimage to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Mons.

We had a good trip over and on Sunday 24th August we made our way to Audregnies where we met up with other members of the CRA, the Mercian Regiment and various Belgian associations. We marched to the cemetery where a service and wreath laying ceremony took place. At the end of the moving ceremony we marched to the place where the battle involving our 1st Battalion took place, where a memorial stone was unveiled.

We made our way back to Audregnies where the local people put on a first class meal and drinks for us all. They looked after us very well indeed and I have sent a letter of thanks to the people of Audregnies. The trip, as a whole, was a very moving experience and one we will never forget. We made a visit to Blockhaus, where the Germans assembled the V1 and V2, we also made visits to Lijssenthoek Hill Cemetery, Cement House Cemetery, Tyne Cot and the Menin Gate.

The trip was very well run by Alan Rowe, Dave Mapley and the Tranmere Branch. It was a pleasure to be in their company and of course Jean, Bill, Rick and Tommy from Kirkham Branch.

As it will soon be Christmas, we are getting ready for our own branch Christmas party at the Stables Hotel and then our AGM in January. I would like to wish everyone in the CRA and also the Mercian Regiment a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

John Gibson

NANTWICH AND DISTRICT

Members continue to give good support to our branch meetings, held in the Crosville Social Club in Chester Street, Crewe on the last Tuesday of each month. There will not be a meeting in December and the next one will be the AGM in January 2015.

Many of our members continue to be unwell and “Thinking of You” cards have been sent. It was good to have Major Michael Morgan-Wynne and Harry Tomkinson at our recent meetings after their illnesses. Prior to each meeting we continue to hold a minute’s silence for fallen comrades, followed by the CRA prayer.

Recent branch activities have included attendance by members to the East Cheshire Reunion in Stockport. Another enjoyable occasion was the Armistice Day services in Crewe and Nantwich and also the service at the Airman’s grave, situated to the rear of Shrewbridge Road in Nantwich. The bugler played Last Post and Reveille at all venues.

Future events include the annual Christmas dinner at the Royal Oak in Worleston, near Nantwich on the evening of Tuesday 9th December. The branch AGM takes place in the Crosville Social Club in Chester Street, Crewe on Tuesday 27th January 2015 – 7.30pm for 8pm. Members will also be at the CRA AGM in Chester on Saturday 21st February.

As always new members are always welcome and encouraged to come and join us. Finally, on behalf of the branch, best wishes to everyone in the CRA, a merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year to one and all.

Ray Stafford

SOUTHERN REGION

It was the usual quiet summer and then the events, similar to London buses, all seemed to come at once. We gave good support to both the Mons Reunion and the East Cheshire Reunion and it was nice to finally catch up with Bob Nottage in order to present him with his Southern Region President’s Award, which was presented to him by Major Ron Goodwin MBE.



Bob Nottage receiving his award from Maj Ron Goodwin MBE

The Field of Remembrance was well attended, as always, although we were slightly miffed to see that the regimental badge was missing from the cross on our plot.

We enjoyed another excellent visit to the Tower of London on the eve of Remembrance Sunday, and we are grateful to Dickie Dover, who for the last time gave us interesting and macabre stories from the Tower. Thank you Dickie.

Remembrance Sunday saw us once again parading on Whitehall and marching past the Cenotaph. We are grateful to everyone who supported us that day, but particularly Thomas Jones, at the age of 98 and his daughter Karen. We enjoyed an excellent lunch in the Chandos Public House afterwards, and we took the opportunity of thanking the pub manager who has always kindly allowed us to take over part of the pub.

We look forward to our AGM, which takes place in the WOs and NCOs’ Mess, Hyde Park Barracks on Thursday 22nd January at 7pm. The next event is our Meeanee Ladies Dinner, which will be on Saturday 7th March in Browns of Covent Garden. You are very welcome to attend what is always a prestigious event.

WORD FROM THE BRANCHES (continued)



Back on Horse Guards after marching past the Cenotaph

Our best wishes to all for a merry Christmas and a happy and peaceful New Year.

George Szwejkowski

STOCKPORT BRANCH

July 27th saw a crowded St George's Church and our Annual Commemoration Service to pay thanks to those of the 6th Battalion who fought with valour and courage at the Battle of St Julien. Eight Standards paraded from as far away as Chester. Later we retired to the Armoury for the usual Bun Fight, Cold Beers and plenty of 'Lamp Swinging.'

Next in our calendar was the Veterans March with our new Mayor of Stockport. This continued with a Service in St Mary's In the Market Church. This event did clash with the Todger Jones Memorial unveiling but we still managed to support both.

Next we had a candle-lit procession in Woodbank Park to commemorate those from the town who fell in The Great War. The event was organised by Stockport MBC and Friends of Woodbank Park.

Next, and on to another of our visits to Macclesfield CRA to enjoy their hospitality and beer of course. A combination of old age and poverty seems to be taking its toll just lately, with several members suffering somewhat.

The Mons Day Commemorations in Belgium went exceptionally well, I'm pleased to report. As did our Annual Mons Day Parade and Service in Chester – in my opinion the best parade I have ever witnessed, this having been reported in depth in our previous newsletter.

The second leg of our bowls tournament resulted in a very hard-fought win over our rivals, the final score being 254-239 in our favour. Many thanks to Birkenhead for a great series. It's fair to mention the fact that Maggie Porter's sister had passed away that morning and, credit to Maggie, she willingly played an important part in our bowls win. (Thanks Maggie). Brian Hartigan has decided to step down from bowls Captain with Paul Wilkinson taking his place. We now have a permanent 'home' venue at the Grange Bowls Club, Stockport. This rules out the uncertainty of our 'home' venues in the future.

We recently held an unveiling ceremony at the Armoury of the Late Major John Holden's sword, swagger stick and scabbard. These were mounted in a glass-fronted oak display cabinet. Major John's widow Judith and daughter honoured us with the unveiling.

September 13 saw several of our members attending a 'tea and chat' session with veterans meeting and talking of our past experiences (the clean ones you understand) in our time with the armed forces. This idea was first planned by the late Jim Claire before his passing. We duly obliged Jim with our attendance.

September 20th and we were represented, along with Stockport RBL, at Stockport Railway Station for the unveiling of a plaque in honour of ex railway employee Pte Wilf Wood. Wilf was an ex 22nd Cheshire/Northumberland Fusiliers who, in WW1, silenced a German machine gun post and captured 170 officers and men. We were entertained also by a WW1 re-enactment on Platform Two, plus a sing-a-long to several curious but appreciative passengers.

Some 30 members and guests attended The Duke of Lancaster's Regimental Association Dinner Dance; an occasion when and where we can pay our respects to other regiments' contributions and sacrifices in WW1.

Our Annual East Cheshire Reunion was held with 130 sitting down to a hotpot and cheese board supper. Bollington Brass Band provided us with the background music.

It was with deep sorrow we learned of the death of Eddie Bottomley who passed away after a long illness on Friday 24th October. Eddie was an outstanding athlete in the Regiment, an avid Manchester City supporter and a likeable rascal who will be sorely missed. His funeral was held at St John's Church, Dukinfield with approximately 300 of our regimental family and friends present.

It never rains but it pours just lately with Dave Mapley suffering a severe stroke. We send our best wishes and thoughts to him. Then came the sad news of Rusty Cooney's death. Our branch sent a representation along with our Standard to pay our respects to an old comrade. On the day of Eddie's funeral we learned also of the passing of one of our long-standing trustees, Major Sidney Burton TD.

It now befalls me to wish all our regimental family and friends a very Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year.

Gordon H Smith

WALSALL BRANCH

On August 4th Walsall town held a parade for Armed Forces Day. We managed a small representation of five members plus standard and there were other regiments present which made for a decent parade. The parade R.S.M seemed to forget he had our age group on parade as the tempo was as fast as the Highland Light Infantry.

September 4th was our AGM where the present committee were re-elected and the standard bearer is now Mac Hartshorne who takes some pressure off our secretary Joe Sadler. Thanks Mac.

The Mons parade this year was not attended by many of our members but the overall turnout was excellent. I could not be present as I was on holiday on The Isle of Man. There I discovered a large monument in Douglas with the names of men from the Cheshire Regiment Volunteers 1860 to 1920. You learn something every day.

October 25th we were at the East Cheshire Reunion with nine members who all commented on the improvement of the hotpot and the even better cheese board. We also noticed the lack of "the leaders of men," which was noted a few years ago by our late secretary, Mick Bird. The Major General Peter Martin award was presented to our hard-working secretary Derek (Joe) Sadler.

WORD FROM THE BRANCHES (continued)

Without him we would not have a branch as no one else is willing to take on the job.

November 9th we attended the remembrance parade at Walsall cenotaph which each year is a good turnout but this year was phenomenal. 1,000 on parade and 1,000s lining the streets and square. Our president Major (ret'd) Mike Tarbuck, as is the norm, led the parade but we were down on our usual representation due to unforeseen circumstances, but the standard was on parade.

I have been sorry to hear about the severe illness of one of my close comrades, Gerald Walker, Nantwich Branch, and can only convey my thoughts to him, his wife and daughter.

Our next event will be our Christmas dinner dance to be held at Rushall Labour Club on 3rd December with 4 course meal and full evening of entertainment. The Walsall Branch wishes all CRA members a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Reg Smith

AN EVENING WITH FRIENDS (The East Cheshire Reunion) by Alan Jennings

I enjoyed a very pleasant evening in SK1 on Saturday the 25th October 2014. I was collected at 16.45 hrs, suitably attired, and enjoyed a pleasant conversation as we travelled eastwards. Progress was fine until we encountered a traffic hold up approaching our destination. Low and behold an FA cup fourth round qualifying match had just ended. The spectators and traffic leaving the ground ensured a severe and immediate congestion problem. Being of senior citizen status, time is no longer a problem; it is one of the things we have plenty of. We nevertheless arrived at our destination some 20 minutes later than scheduled, still in plenty of time. I was shown to my table and sat quite contentedly and chatted to other like-minded people. Yes, Lawrence Dunning and I had arrived at the Armoury, Greek Street, Stockport for the 66th annual reunion of the 7th Battalion, now incorporated in the East Cheshire Reunion.

The TA centre was laid out for the event and tables were set for some 135 persons. This was 10% down on our target figure of 150, but what we had was quality. Members from the majority of branches attended. We had the Bollington Brass Band who entertained us prior to the meal and the cookhouse call was sounded at 19.00hrs. We then commenced the formal part of the evening. Peter Gresty was the MC and gave the command March on the Standard, which Derek Sykes did in his usual exemplary manner. Our Presiding Officer this year was Major Eddie Pickering who laid a wreath for our fallen colleagues and turned a page of the Book of Remembrance in respect of soldiers killed in WW1. Percy Cooke did the same for those killed in WW2 and Lt Col Mark Ellwood turned a page for our colleagues who have died in action since WW2. During this part of the ceremony Peter asked us to also remember the 45 colleagues in the CRA who had died since the last reunion. Two members of the BBB then blew Sunset and the Regimental Flag was lowered. This was followed by the Last Post and Reveille and then verses 1, 3 and 5 of the Hymn "Abide with Me" which were heartily sung. As I have written previously I find this part of the reunion the most poignant and I was not disappointed.

Derek Sykes then said an appropriate grace including thanks for the can of John Smith's ale. We had a new caterer this year and there was some speculation as to the quality and quantity of the hot pot. We were pleasantly surprised at both. The meat content in the hot pot was visible and the cheese board had a nice selection with the addition of paté. Well done Lawrence and I understand that the caterer has been pencilled in for next year.

After the meal came the formalities and Eddie Pickering was in good form. For the very first time in the history of the Reunion he commenced by saying, "Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen." We had three female colleagues who served in the 4th Bn. They had worn the cap badge and we were delighted that they were with us. Eddie gave a witty résumé of life with the



The hot pot and cheeseboard went down well.

CRA, whilst reminding us, inter alia, that the date of his retirement was fast approaching. Message of Loyal Greetings had been sent to Her Majesty and her reply was read out before Eddie proposed the Loyal Toast, "The Queen."

Lt Col Mark Ellwood then gave us an update on the 1st Bn and the Regiment. He spoke without microphone and gave us a most detailed account of what the Regiment was doing. I just sat there in rapture and, as I did not know then that I would be writing this article, unfortunately did not take notes. The new regiment is working well and more than fully occupied. The tasks they are undertaking are comprehensive and there are companies in Kenya and the Falklands etc. The Regiment is excelling in all the athletics and sporting arenas and I was pleased to hear that they have a rugby league team as well as soccer and rugby union. I wish now that I had taken a few headlines down, as I have not done justice to his briefing. Mark mentioned the pilgrimage to Mons this year in which the 1st Bn had 150 soldiers on parade, which had left a lasting impression on both him and the soldiers. He concluded by proposing the toast, "Our Colonel in Chief," and was warmly applauded. Peter Gresty proposed the Toast to "The Regiment."

David Oak presented Joe Sadler, who was awarded The General Peter Martin Award at the AGM but was not able to attend the AGM, with his well-deserved award. The formalities were then concluded and the band played a final couple of pieces and departed.

With the mention of Mons I enjoyed reminiscing with John Ferns, Andrew Swindale and Mike Huntriss about Sunday the 24th August 2014 and what a wonderful experience it had been.

As the members dispersed, after what had been by consensus

AN EVENING WITH FRIENDS (continued)



Derek (Joe) Sadler receives his General Peter Martin Award from the Chairman of CRAMC

a very pleasant evening, it was good to reflect on the evening. Whilst our numbers may have been down the numbers were really very creditable and I must thank the branch members who attended, some having travelled quite a distance i.e. George our editor, David Oak, Ron Goodwin, Mark Ellwood, Keith Jeavons, Walsall Branch, Slim Hayden and David Baddeley and branches from the west side of the county; but once again I must thank Colin Jarman, who flew in from Cyprus especially for this reunion. Thank you Colin for your special support. I don't know

from which continent Peter Gresty flew in, but it was good to have him as our Master of Ceremonies.

We received apologies from many people including Brigadier Mike Dauncey and Colonel Edward Scott (incidentally both Arnhem veterans) and Canon Bill Tyson who was the 7th Battalion's Padre. It is always a pleasure to have our nonagenarians with us: Percy Cooke, Frank Worrall and Ken Thiis. I estimated that there were some 20 people present who had served in the 7th Battalion and I hope that while there are members of the 7th Bn still able to attend, that the CRA will retain the 7th Bn element as part of the East Cheshire Reunion. I am grateful as always for the support of David Oak and CRAMC.

Lawrence in his ticket application letter asked members to consider giving a donation and, if applicable, to gift aid their donation. This was well received and may I thank those members who did. I must also thank Sandbach Branch for their donation of £200, which paid for the cans of John Smiths on the table. Last but not least, may I thank Stockport Branch for their contribution by laying out the Drill Hall and clearing away afterwards – well done! I enjoyed my evening in the company of John Fairbanks and George Szwejkowski and it was good to see Ivan Vaughan who has overcome some serious medical problems of late. He and John Fairbanks were called up on the same day. Isn't this really what reunions are about? The next ECR Reunion will be on Saturday the 31st October 2015.

And the reason for the initial hold up? Stockport were beaten 4-2 by Chester in the FA Cup.

Alan Jennings

MONS PILGRIMAGE 1964 by Charles Lane

I much enjoyed Alan Jennings account of the 100th Anniversary Mons Pilgrimage in the September Newsletter. Through force of circumstances I was unable to attend, but at the time of the pilgrimage my thoughts went back to the 50th Anniversary in 1964 which, with a large contingent of Old Comrades led by the late Colonel McGarel Groves and with a few soldiers from the 1st Battalion (then at Munster), I did take part, with the then 1st Battalion CO, Mike Dauncey, and Major David Owen. My memories of this rather more low-key visit were of the kindness and generosity of the people of Audregnies and the reflections of the Old Comrades, many of whom were there in 1914.

We were housed in an old cavalry barracks in Mons where our first (and to many surprising) task was to fill our palliasses with straw. That afternoon there was an exchange of gifts at the Mons Museum as we examined a surviving 1st Battalion machine gun. We had an excellent supper in the barracks provided by two Belgium Army TA cooks before bedding down for a fairly uncomfortable night! The following morning we travelled by coach to Audregnies where we were met by the Mayor (with much embracing), the Fire Brigade Band and champagne. Before attending a very moving service in the church, a few of us went to see where the Miniature Colour had been hidden in a bricked-up attic (retrieved in November 1918). At the church we spent a few moments looking down at its steps where ten soldiers of the battalion had died fifty years before.

We were split up into groups of three or four and given lunch by families in their homes. Our hosts, who for the most part were very poor, communist, out-of-work miners, were enormously generous. The food and wine were memorable, all finished with

cigars! In a way, slightly humbling.

After lunch we walked to the Sunken Road where the 1st Battalion had been strung out in a thin, extended line. What amazed the old soldiers most was that the scene was unchanged: not only that the sunken road remained a simple track but that the Sugar Factory was still there, as was the colliery and the cottage (half-left). It was not difficult to imagine the lines of wire, everywhere. Colonel McGarel Groves (in 1914, Lt Groves) took us through the battle as he remembered it before he was told to try to get back to Brigade (the fourth officer to attempt this) to tell them what was happening – all other communications having been lost. Many of those present could point out exactly where so-and-so was wounded, killed or last seen, where Mr somebody drew his sword, and other details where the memory was still painful. There was a moment of light relief when what appeared at first to be a deranged man came running towards us brandishing a rifle. As a small boy he had picked it up on the battlefield, hidden it for fifty years, and now presented it back to us. After a short time in Mons, we all returned in the evening for a marvellous supper and dance in the Village Hall.

As well as being a very emotional experience for all of us, my abiding memory will be the extraordinary generosity of the people of Audregnies

SNIPPETS

"I stopped believing in Santa Claus when I was six. Mother took me to see him in a department store and he asked for my autograph."

Shirley Temple

MY VETERAN IN CIVVY STREET

The following article is an extract from a blog by Linzi Jones, wife of Steve Jones, a former serving soldier. Much of the content may be familiar to many spouses, particularly those of husbands who served in the 1970s to the 1990s (Ed).

Hubby of mine is a Veteran. A former Sergeant Major in the 22nd Cheshire Regiment. He still retains so many of his army ethics and like many families of ex-squaddies I'm sure, his ethics drive me and the kids bloody crackers!

The kids and I have happily maintained a 'fly-by-the-seat-of-her-pants' approach for years; until my man came along. These days though, our blank-faced responses to questions starting with "Where?" and shrug shoulders replies to "What?" and in particular, the "Meh, whatever" disinterest and general "umm..." attitudes have proved to be a source of massive annoyance to Mr Regimented, Orderly, Fold Stuff Neatly, Read the Instruction Manual, Knows How to Read a Map, Sergeant Major Man.

Hubby believes he can train us up. We believe he will give up and chill out eventually! Don't tell him but, as he sits outside in the car, revving the engine to indicate that 'on time' was 10 minutes ago, we plod leisurely round the house, gathering the last bits of essentials, amused that he thinks the pressure tactic will work in any way, shape or form. Truth is, if he rushes us then we forget important things and then he flips out when we have to do a U-turn 20 minutes later for things like shoes, coats, purses, a child (only forgot him once)... etc.

Whilst on the car subject. Parking. Why does a squaddie drive round the car park / street/ cul de sac passing a number of spaces, in order to ensure the car is facing the 'right' direction at leaving time? Me - I see a space, I park in it. Done.

While I'm on a roll, it's worth me taking the chance to beef about scenery. Just for once, it would be nice if I could sit with a view of the room when on a date. I know, I've heard all about it that a squaddie will always sit where he can see the exits and full view of his/her surroundings but I mean, come on, there are only so many walls a girl can stand to look at. Methinks it's still a ploy so that he can eye up the ladies without risking a rollicking! hhhmm...And adding to this, it would be nice to get home from said dates without him having a full on egg banjo orgy.

Now, my fella left the army nearly 20 years ago (yes, we have a bit of an age gap) but surely by now he would be past the Meerkat phase? Every single noise makes him bolt upright and stand to attention like a Meerkat in the terrain, listening to see if its friend or foe; usually its nothing more than the dishwasher changing cycle. It's amazing how he can hear a pin drop and with

lightening reflexes take on full Rambo-face shoot to kill expression but he can't hear bum all I say to him when I get home from work

Hoping for sympathy from fellow Veteran's wives at the annual Chester Races event is non-existent. Yes, I'm 20 years younger than my man but the quiet acceptance of the wives proves me to be 20 years naïve too. As I listen to the fascinating stories of these men's years in Belize, Northern Ireland, Hong Kong and further, it reminds me that Hubby's pedantic, get on your nerves regulations are not simply him trying to 'fix us', nor is he out of touch with 'Civvie chillaxing.' The training is ingrained in him and his comrades. This mentality of Preparation, Perception and Order is what kept him and his fellow soldiers alive!

I will never know the horrors that these men and women have known. I am thankful that these service men and women have risked so much and worked so hard; my children and I wouldn't have the luxury of "meh" without their sacrifices, and so it is with this in mind and the words Thorough Planning and Preparation Prevent a Piss Poor Performance touretting in my brain, I went to Chester Military Museum to buy him the 22nd Regiment sweatshirt that he has been wanting - in preparation for his Christmas present. Well done me :-)

Although the regiment is no longer, having been amalgamated into One Mercian regiment, the pride and respect for this regiment stands proud. Acknowledgement for the 22nd's Commander in Chief Prince Charles resolutely displayed.

On the drive home, I thought about how the kids and I rejoiced at the subtle changes in Hubby's behaviours recently. No freaking out about a lack of tent poles during a camping holiday, ironing pilling high without causing heart failure, cars looking like kiddie battlefields and gardens overgrown. These no longer seemed like victories in our favour!

As much as I feign irritation at the horrified look on his face, each time I reach into the wardrobe and rob one of his precision ironed t-shirts from his folded, stacked so neatly you could balance a perfectly measured spirit-level on them pile, I'd be gutted to have to go back to ironing my own clothes myself! In all seriousness though, my man is who

he is because of the Army. The life he lived before us is one to be proud of! If he did finally do as we hoped and just "chill out dude" then he would be a completely different man; and that would be our loss!

I love the man he is now, squaddie humour and all, and more importantly, as my daughter pointed out the other day, "we are never late for school anymore and we always know where our shoes are now."



GALLIPOLI - OCTOBER 2014 by Roy Banwell

Where does one start? I told my fellow workers I was going to Gallipoli to see where my great grandfather died in the First World War and no one had heard of it. It's not a much talked about or remembered campaign by the then British Empire. My uncle David Garside, a "Marple" boy, and I had talked about this trip for years, so I decided to bite the bullet and book the trip with Leger Tours. We flew to Istanbul and then travelled by coach down to Gallipoli, staying at the hotel Kum in Ecoabat. The hotel was nice and in an ideal area for the trip. It was also right on the beach, not that we had much time for sunbathing on this trip.

My great-grandfather Ernest Brownridge Garside had been in the second Boer War 1898-1901 with the Kings Liverpool Regiment. At the outbreak of WW1 he joined the Ardwick 1st/8th Battalion of the Manchester Regiment, and due to his earlier service he was a Company Serjeant Major by the time he arrived in Gallipoli.

The Ottoman Empire had sided with the Germans after failed talks with the British. The Germans being Germans sent Generals and troops to advise the Ottomans on preparing for war. Meanwhile Winston Churchill decided that he could crush the Ottomans with the Royal Navy alone and sent in the Navy to bombard the Dardanelles, hoping that the Ottomans would capitulate, so allowing Russia passage from the Black Sea. This would in effect leave a calling card that the British were interested in the area. The German General decided to greatly fortify the area, so when the troops were sent in some four months later the area was strongly defended.

At the outbreak of war the Manchesters travelled via Malta to Alexandria in Egypt to guard the Suez Canal. After the attack on Helles "V" beach, Gallipoli, on 25th April 1915 the depleted divisions needed reinforcements. The Manchesters were part of the reinforcement division and landed again at Helles beach on 6th May 1915. The beach was still under fire from the Ottomans some twelve days after the first landing, so digging in was the priority. Ernest was one of the 14,000 British troops who sadly were never found. He is commemorated on the Helles memorial Panel 158-170 overlooking "V" beach. He died aged 34. He is also commemorated on the Buxton war memorial. His father was a train driver living in railway cottages, Buxton, at that time. We were both very moved seeing Ernest's name carved on that panel and looking back towards the sea I could see why so many would die there.

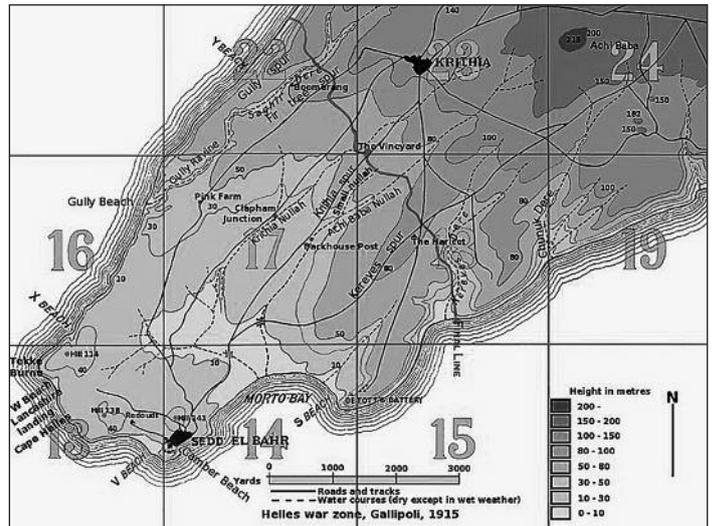


V Beach about two days after the landing.

A big shock to me was coming across Cheshire soldiers' graves on the third day. I wasn't aware or had forgotten we were involved in this campaign. Disasters of this sort are rarely talked

about too much unless you are Australian. I was now intrigued, but not having the means to check on the internet I was stuck. The more I looked For Cheshires the more I found. Unlike the CWGC in Europe, the mass graves contain no names or Regiments, only the approximate numbers buried. I have since found out that 1st/4th, 1st/7th & 8th Battalions landed there around the 9th August 1915 and stayed there until the total withdrawal in December/January 1916.

A very interesting point told to me by our tour guide was about the Sandringham Company of the 5th Norfolk Regiment, immortalised in the film "All the King's Men." They all disappeared and died on 12th August 1915. Their mass grave was located after the war and in the grave were lots of bodies of Cheshire Regiment soldiers who must have been involved in the same battle around Suvla Bay. This point is also highlighted in Major Holt's book on Gallipoli.



The Gallipoli Peninsula

Great grandfather died at the "Vineyard" while taking part in diversionary attacks by the Manchesters into no-man's land, towards the small village of Krithia, to allow the Australian & New Zealanders to land in Anzac cove. The fast tide in the area pushed them 2000 metres off course and they landed in the worst area possible to attack. Instead of a flat area they were faced with towering sandy cliffs to climb, under constant fire.

The cost to mankind looks like this: 56,000 allies killed, 123,598 wounded, 7954 missing/prisoners totalling 187,957. On top of this 205,000 fell sick/ill with things like typhoid and dysentery because of the unsanitary conditions on the battlefield, and frostbite at the onset of winter. In the summer months the lack of fresh water was a huge problem, driving the troops insane with thirst.

Total gain inland from the landing points was approximately 3 miles deep by 1 mile wide. After 8 months a total withdrawal took place, leaving the battlefield littered with bodies from all sides. After the war ended the CWGC entered the area to start burying the fallen; the fields were reported to be shining white with the sun reflected off the bones. I believe that we can never judge what happened in the war; it was a different world with different priorities and values. All we can do is pay homage to the brave people who fought on all sides and died for their countries.

The trip was an eye-opener, was well run by Leger tours, and their tour guide was informative. Both my uncle and I enjoyed it immensely. It was a privilege to visit where my great grandfather fought and died for his country.

MONS COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE – CHESTER CATHEDRAL

To mark the centenary of the beginning of the First World War and to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Mons, a service was held in Chester Cathedral on 7th September 2014. A packed congregation included soldiers from 2 MERCIAN, representatives of the RBL and uniformed youth organisations as well, of course, as a strong body of Association members. The sight of the Mercian Colours and our standards being carried through the city and paraded in the cathedral will long stay in the memory.

In attendance at the service, along with the Duke of Westminster, the Lord Lieutenant, the High Sheriff, the Lord Mayor of the city, was the CRA President Brigadier Ian Cave, who gave the following address.

A Soldier's Reflection

What do the events of 1914 and the four brutal years that followed suggest to us today as we pause to reflect? What has changed and what has remained the same? How much of what was felt and believed, individually and collectively, in 1914 would we recognise today?

The scale of that war eclipses anything that most of us are able to imagine. Ten million combatants died as well as six million civilians. In addition 20M were wounded. 700,000 British soldiers died – about 1 in 10 of those who were mobilised or 2% of the population. At War's end according to Maj Gen JFC Fuller; *'Britain was bankrupted and France bled white; Russia and Germany were in the throes of revolution; the Austro-Hungarian Empire had vanished; the Ottoman Empire had been dismembered; Italy was distraught; and every other country in Europe was scorched by the fiery blast – an epoch had gone up in flames.'*

These numbers, this scale, the politics, opinion, the media, all fade to the margins the closer one gets to events themselves. Even the visceral, barbarous, ruthless conduct of war at industrial scale itself masks the personal, intimate impact these events have on soldiers who are quickly insulated from normality as they focus on the task at hand and, of prime importance, they focus on their comrades and the responsibilities they have to their team – and it is about the smallest of teams: pairs; four man teams, bound by courage, selfless commitment, loyalty, self-discipline, and the primeval determination to do their duty by their mates – to keep their friends alive, to not be the cause of their deaths or injury; and more important to many than their own survival. As GK Chesterton noted; *'The true soldier fights not because he hates what is in front of him, but because he loves what is behind him.'*

Soldiers today are every bit as hardy and determined as their predecessors. Soldiers are keen to get stuck in, although perhaps less eager as they gain experience. The character, motivation and emotions of soldiers have not changed. Anticipation, fear, confidence, leadership, loyalty – it is not difficult to visualise the emotions of Tommy Atkins as one paces the battlefields of WW1 and not difficult either to understand how those same characteristics would have also been present in conflicts since 1918 and 1945 in Palestine, Malaya, Korea, the Falklands, Iraq and Afghanistan.

The scale is different but the impact on individuals and those close to them remains. Conflict may have become increasingly compartmentalised – the burden borne by relatively small numbers, but, and this is a constant, soldiers retain the support of the vast majority at home – we draw huge strength from this absolute commitment to the soldier. The proliferation of

communications has also had its effect – no longer only the telegram or letter which in WW1 took days to be delivered, we now have instantaneous communications both personal and through the media which can deliver reassurance and sometimes fear. Perhaps we also have higher expectations; and a determination to hold the system to account for actual or perceived failings.

Gen Pershing who commanded US Expeditionary Forces in WW1 said; *'In each succeeding war there is a tendency to proclaim as something new the principles under which it is conducted. Not only those who have never studied or experienced the realities of war, but also professional soldiers, frequently fall into the error. But the principles of warfare as I learned them at West Point remain unchanged.'*



Re-enactment of the Port Sunlight Volunteers march to Chester.

The last words belong to two youngsters whose words from August 1914 retain resonance today. First a young lady, Elizabeth Lee, who was 22 when War was declared on Tue 4 Aug after a Bank holiday weekend. *'... when war was declared, I was on holiday, lots of people were on holiday – and it came suddenly ... it was on the newspaper placards when Dad came home at night and said, 'War has been declared on Germany!' People who followed politics of course expected it, but I don't think I bothered much about it; you don't when you're young and having a good time!'*

Trooper Percy Snelling from the 12th Royal Lancers saw war as opportunity; *'We were delighted. We had been preparing for cavalry manoeuvres which would take us down into Salisbury Plain. And it wasn't so very popular. And when we heard that war was declared, everybody was delighted... we thought it far more amusing to go and see some part of the continent than to go on manoeuvres. Literally cheers went up from each side of the barrack square.'*

As I understand it Trooper Snelling survived the War.

Speaking to the Dean a few days later, he remarked how thought-provoking and relevant he found Brigadier Ian's address was. It is therefore produced here for your interest.

David Oak

SNIPPETS

"What I don't like about office Christmas parties is looking for a job the next day."

Phyllis Diller

ICE COLD IN SUEZ

In the first half of the twentieth century Admiral Richard Byrd, US Navy, was a famous polar explorer. For reasons known only to himself, he had chosen to spend much of his life in some very chilly parts of the world. On one occasion, when pressed repeatedly by a pushy BBC interviewer to say which was the coldest place on earth that he had ever visited, with great relish the Admiral replied, "An English hotel bedroom!!" I think that had he been with D company, 1st Battalion Cheshire Regiment, during an exercise in the Arabian Desert, in 1952, he might have given a different answer...

We had spent several hot, dusty days fruitlessly pursuing an extremely elusive enemy through what seemed like most of Egypt. The exercise ended with us required to make a night assault up a large and rocky Djbel (for the benefit of white-kneed readers a 'Djbel' is a mountain). It was a long, hard climb up very steep slopes and when, sweating profusely, we reached the summit we found that the enemy, a company of hairy-buttocked marines, had vanished yet again.

It did not take long for us to realize why they had prematurely called it a day. A strong, cold wind was howling across the flat mountain top, which lacked any form of shelter. Within minutes I was so cold I began to lose all feeling in my rapidly cooling, sweat-soaked body, and I wasn't the only one. Our Platoon Sergeant, probably affected by rapid onset of hypothermia, gave us the incredible order to dig in. At that moment in time I was so cold, and so desperate to get off that blasted peak, I was prepared to take any action, including lynching the Sergeant, in order to do so.

I do not believe that any readers of this newsletter will have ever had to try to dig a fox hole in solid granite using only an entrenching tool. Bitter experience leads me to confirm that it is an unproductive exercise that does neither the entrenching tool nor its user any good at all – as our Sergeant later discovered, when trying to explain to a Court of Enquiry how so many entrenching tools became unserviceable, all at the same time!

DOG SOLDIER

After an evening spent fruitlessly trying to get my electronic instrument of torture to obey me I somehow found myself on Google. Vaguely remembering instructions I had received from my IT guru (a young lady of some twelve summers who answers to the name of Amelia), I decided to type in 'Suez Canal Zone' to see what would happen. Much to my amazement I found myself looking at a series of photos of RAF Fayid, which unexpectedly included one showing the 1st Battalion the Cheshire Regiment embarking on the troopship Empire Fowey, at Port Tewfik, at the start of their journey back to Blighty in 1954. This unexpected glimpse of events from 60 years ago brought back memories of long-forgotten incidents, one of which occurred at the RAF HQ in Fayid, where the Battalion were occasionally called upon to perform 48 hour guard duties...

Our primary task was manning the main gate, with the perimeter wire patrolled by RAF police dog handlers. It was not unknown for the occasional policeman to call into the guardroom, usually in the small hours, seeking a place to rest his weary, brylcreamed head. On this particular occasion it was at 2am, during our second continuous night on duty, that the guard room door opened and a policeman, accompanied by Doberman, entered and asked for permission to get his head down for a couple of hours. I pointed out that there were no spare beds but he was welcome to doss down on the floor in front of the

guardroom table. He agreed to this and requested that I wake him at 5am. I managed to find him a pillow and a blanket and, with his dog by his side, he settled down to sleep. We had been on duty doing two hours on and four hours off for 42 hours so I was beginning to feel rather tired. But I soon became fully alert when, at 5 am, I reached across the table to rouse the policeman. It was then that I found myself with a rather large and distinctly unfriendly Doberman attached to my arm. My pain-filled bellowing awoke everyone in the guard room with the exception of the handler who remained deep in the arms of Morpheus. The dog flatly refused to either let go of my arm, or allow anyone to approach the handler. Eventually, after what seemed like hours, the policeman sat up scratching himself and enquired what all the noise was about. After he had ordered his dog to release me he seemed astonished by my hostility towards him and his hound. He pointed out that the skin on my arm was unbroken and that what he called the 'puppy' had only done what it had been trained to do.

He went on to tell of an incident that had occurred a couple of nights previously. He had been patrolling the perimeter wire when he saw two natives climbing into the camp. He had immediately sent the dog to apprehend them. The animal succeeded in knocking one intruder off his feet, but then had returned to the handler, wagging its tail, obviously seeking a reward for doing its duty. The policeman pointed out that had either of the natives been armed, he and the dog would probably have been shot; therefore, the canine's career in the RAF was probably over. I must admit I felt sorry for the hound that had moments before been trying to detach my arm from my torso!!

N. IRELAND VETERANS ASSOC.

In a recent edition of your excellent newsletter I noted that the Northern Ireland Veterans Association (NIVA) were having a service and parade at the Arboretum in Lichfield. Doris and I decided to visit for the weekend (most of my 1961 haunts seemed to have gone?) It was good to see my old pal Tony Cannon and Rita, plus some 30 members of the CRA with 2 Standards along with many other regiments' standards. What a day! Over 1000 were there and around 500 marched. I did not know how large the NIVA was – they said it was the biggest ever in 10 years – it is so well supported and the whole day was well run. If it comes along again try and go, you will enjoy the day.

Ron Goodwin

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.

SNIPPETS

"Christmas is the season when you buy this year's gifts with next year's money."
Author unknown

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Editor, I think you would have seen the Sainsbury's advert showing the 1914 Christmas truce where the British troops are wearing the Cheshire Regiment badge. I came across this clip which you may find interesting.

George Walworth Ex 7th Bn and 1 Mercian Vols

From The Dublin Evening Mail 2nd January 1915.

This friendly intercourse with the enemy is also referred to in an interview by a company sergeant major, Frank Naden, (later Colonel) of the 6th Cheshire Territorials who has returned to his home at Stockport for a week's leave. "On Christmas Eve," he said, "as each fireball went up from the German lines, our men shouted 'Hurrah' and 'Let's have another.' They also sang 'Christians, Awake!' and other Christmas hymns. On Christmas Day one of the Germans came out of the trenches and held his hands up. Our fellows immediately got out of their trenches and the Germans got out of theirs, and we met in the middle, and for the rest of the day we fraternised, exchanged food, cigarettes and souvenirs. The Germans gave us some of their sausages, and we gave them some of our stuff. The Scotsmen started the bagpipes, and we had a rare old jollification, which included football, in which the Germans took part. The Germans expressed themselves as being tired of the war and wished it was over. They greatly admired our equipment and wanted to exchange jack-knives and other articles. Next day we got an order that all communication and friendly intercourse with the enemy must cease, but we did not fire at all that day, and the Germans did not fire at us."

From Alan W Gregson:

In the last newsletter you printed a letter from George Wallworth, formerly of the 7th Battalion and 1 Mercian Volunteers, about the Victoria Cross being awarded to Sergeant Rowland Shubotham of the 1st Battalion.

Here is an article about the said Rowland Shubotham which I think your readers will find interesting.

The news of the Victoria Cross being awarded to Sgt Rowland Shubotham appeared in the following papers:

Warrington Guardian on 13th, 16th, 20th and 23rd January 1915. The Times on the 21st January 1915. The Macclesfield Times and East Cheshire Observer on 22nd January 1915, Cheshire Observer on 23rd January 1915. Birkenhead and Cheshire Advertiser and Wallasey Guardian on 23rd January 1915. The above I've been able to look at, at local libraries.

Also internet searches have shown that news articles also appear in the following papers, The Liverpool Echo on the 20th January 1915 and The War Illustrated on 6th February 1915, The Singapore Straits Times on 26 February 1915, The Manchester Courier and Lancashire General on 21st January 1915, The Hull Daily Mail on 21st January 1915, The Manchester Evening News on 21st January 1915, The Western Daily Press, Bristol on 22nd January 1915, The Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette on 21st January 1915, The Lichfield Mercury, Staffordshire on 22nd January 1915, The Newcastle Journal, Tyne & Wear on 22nd January 1915 and The Liverpool Daily Post on 21st January 2015.

The Warrington Guardian and the War Illustrated News both carry pictures of Sgt Shubotham in his uniform.

The details also appeared in the 'Oak' on 22nd January 1915. This is the magazine of the 3rd (Special Reserve) Battalion of the Cheshire Regiment when they were stationed at Birkenhead. But their information came from the 'Morning Post' of 21st January 1915.



He was a patient in the military ward at the Warrington Infirmary, suffering from rheumatism and frostbite, when he received a letter, which included the ribbon, from the King's Secretary. It also expressed the King's desire to be able to present the medal in London.

Sgt Shubotham was a native of Newcastle, Staffordshire who prior to the outbreak of war was a farm bailiff/servant for Mr W Riley of High Birch Farm, Galsworthy, near Macclesfield. He had lived in Macclesfield and district for several years since the end of the Boer War. When in Macclesfield he lodged with Mrs Jackson of 119 Crompton Road.

In the South African War he won the DCM for rescuing a comrade under heavy fire. The Royal Albert Humane Society awarded him their Gold Medal for rescuing two children from a burning house in Newcastle, and the Society's Bronze Medal for rescuing the daughter of the Sergt-Major of the 41st Welsh Regiment, who got into difficulties whilst bathing at Alexander, Egypt, whilst with engineers.

How did he win the VC? Well, in his own words, "The British were making an attack at La Bassee. One of our officers, Captain Marley, was leading his company to the attack when he was struck by a bullet and disabled. I at once ran some 200 or 300 yards under a heavy fire and reached the Captain's side.

I lay flat on the ground and commenced to crawl out of the danger zone with the Captain clinging to my feet. We reached a place of safety, but unfortunately the gallant Captain succumbed to his injuries 3 hours later."

There is a difference of opinion of the Captain's name as some of the papers record the name as 'Marney.'

So who was Captain 'Marley/Marney?' Well, there is no officer with either name who died whilst serving with the Cheshire Regiment in the Great War.

There is nothing in either 'Ever Glorious' by Brigadier Rigby or The History of the Cheshire Regiment in the Great War by Colonel A Crookenden DSO or the 1st Battalion's War Diary.

In the book "The Bond of Sacrifice" which covers the officer casualties from August 1914 to November 1914, it has a section on Captain Frederic Henry Mahony, 1st Battalion Cheshire Regiment.

'While in temporary command of his battalion near La Bassee, he led a successful bayonet charge under heavy artillery fire, for which he was congratulated by Brigadier-General

CORRESPONDENCE

Count Gleichen. Soon after that he was shot in the left shoulder by a German sniper from a cottage window one thousand yards away, and was rescued from the fighting line, under heavy fire, by Sergeant Shubotham, of his battalion, who earned the V.C. for his courageous act. Captain Mahony died some hours later at the hospital at Bethune on the 22nd September 1914.'

The Oak, in issue No. 4 dated 15th January, printed a letter received by an officer of the 3rd Battalion.

Captain Mahony commanded the regiment at La Bassee for a week and Count Gleichen (The Brigadier General) complimented them on their excellent work under his command.

He led a bayonet charge successfully under heavy artillery fire and his coolness and courage was remarkable. Captain Mahony went to give orders to some men in the trenches and was shot by a German sniper from a cottage window over 1,000 yards away.

Before going he had been asked, 'why not send a man with the message?' and he replied, 'I won't ask a man to do what I won't do myself.'

He was shot in the shoulder which went into his lung causing death a couple of hours after he arrived at the hospital at Bethune. He is buried in the cemetery there and a wooden cross is on the grave.

Did this letter mention Sgt Shubotham? We will never know.

None of the papers, the 'Oak' or the War Illustrated News mentions Sgt Shubotham's regimental number.

So is he the same man as in George Wallworth's letter? Well there is only one man with the name of Rowland Shubotham who served in the Cheshire Regiment during the Great War which appears in the Medal Index Card.

If George Wallworth is correct, as per the details in his letter in the last newsletter, then it is impossible that Rowland Shubotham saved the life of Captain Mahony from the front line as it is 39 days between the wounding of Captain Mahony on the 21st October 1914 and the entrance of Rowland Shubotham in France on the 25th November 1914 as per the Medal Index Card.

A couple of the papers mention that he served at Mons, Marne, Aisne, at Ypres and back La Bassee. Also that he shook the hand of the King whilst visiting the troops, who complimented him on his gallant action and also referred to his winning the DCM in South Africa.

The First Battalion did parade and was inspected by King George V at Bailleul on the 3rd December 1914.

There are a couple of things we need to look at, one is that Rowland Shubotham wrote to Lord Derby asking him to seek the permission of the King for the VC to be presented to him by either the Mayor of Warrington or the President of the Infirmary.

Did the King refuse his request and so therefore Rowland Shubotham refused to receive the VC? If he did, he at least should have been downgraded to a DCM.

In February 1924 he was remanded at the Knutsford Police Station charged with sacrilege.

He was 5 feet & 4 inches tall, with a fresh complexion, black hair, grey eyes and his occupation was given as a groom.

His previous convictions included larceny, sacrilege, housebreaking and other minor offences at Stoke, Hanley, Stafford and Burton on Trent.

Was he a fraudster? I looked at the papers mentioned earlier for the rest of 1915 and the years of 1916, 1917, 1918 and 1919. Nothing appears in them which carries an article about the presentation of the VC or stating that he was a fraudster.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2015

2015

14 Jan	CRAMC meeting
13 - 16 Feb	The Last? Meeanee Reunion, Blackpool
21 Feb	CRA AGM Chester
15-17 Apr	Regimental Golf – The Forgotten Trophy
17 Apr	Officers Association Lunch, Wellington College, Crowthorne
8 May	Regimental Race Day, Chester
15 May	Regimental Golf Day, Malkin Bank

News of major events is published on the CRA page of www.cheshiremilitarymuseum.co.uk and also on the CRA facebook page.

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:

Wednesday	1200-1400
Friday	1900-2330
Saturday	- by arrangement
Sunday	1200-1400

For all Club enquiries, contact Mike Smith on 07906 753699

22 CLUB WINNERS

September

£100	Mr R J Salmon, Chester
£50	Mr A Williams, Holyhead (who kindly donated his winnings to the CRA)
£25	Mrs C Robinson, Sunderland

October

£100	Mr M Carmon, Chester
£50	Maj T J Bock, Banbury
£25	Mr P Adamson, Buxton

November

£100	Walsall Branch
£50	Col J D Reynolds, Rushwick
£25	Mr J A Jennings, Altrincham

RETIREMENT OF SECRETARY AND STEWARD

As members will be aware, both Maj Eddie Pickering and 'Iggy' Jones retire as at 31 December 2014.

In order to thank them both for incredible service, presentations will be made at the AGM on 21 February 2015.

Donations are being collected by the Nantwich Branch of the CRA. Should you wish to contribute, cheques (made payable to Nantwich Branch CRA) and/or monies, please, to Mr D J Waring, 21 Churchill Drive, Tarporley CW6 0BY.

SNIPPETS

"I once bought my kids a set of batteries for Christmas with a note saying, 'Toys not included.'" Bernard Manning

OBITUARIES

EDDIE "Steady Eddie" BOTTOMLEY

20 November 1941 - 24 October 2014

I am grateful to David Oak and Paul Wilkinson, who both submitted articles regarding Eddie Bottomley. I have taken the liberty of amalgamating the two articles into one – Ed.

It was with great sadness, bordering on disbelief, that most of us attending the East Cheshire Reunion learned of the passing of Eddie Bottomley earlier that day.

Eddie grew up in Stockport with two brothers and a sister. He and his adored wife, Mary, had four children and, in turn, numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Always part of a large family, it is believed that when Mary died in 2006, perhaps the cornerstone of Eddie's life crumbled.

Eddie enlisted in the Regular Army in 1961 until 1977 serving in the 1st Bn the 22nd Cheshire Regiment. He served in the following places during his service with the Regiment: Northern Ireland, Bahrain, West Germany, Cyprus, and England. From the start of his service it was evident that Eddie was a first class athlete and ran in most of the events including the Pearson Trophy, which most of us couldn't wait to do on every Friday before going home to see our loved ones and have a well-earned drink or two.

It is believed that Eddie was the only soldier in the British Army to win seven Athletics' Medals, including the converted British Army Cross Country Championship Medal.

Eddie was the quintessential Cheshire soldier. Full of life, always smiling if not openly laughing and with a rarely absent mischievous glint in his eye. As triumvirates go, (Terry) Harrison, Cleo, and Eddie Bottomley don't roll off the tongue as, perhaps, Harvey, Ball and Kendall or (as Eddie was a City fan) Bell, Summerbee and Lee do. However, to a certain generation of Cheshires they were the stars and character of our continued success at numerous Army cross-country events, winning *en route* numerous brigade, regional and divisional championships.

However, for some the picture that comes to mind is him in a mud-splattered, sweat-stained regimental running vest, defiance and determination written all over his face with – and this is the essential ingredient – a Cheshire smile waiting to celebrate another victory.

Eddie had a great sense of humour which brings to mind one such occasion when everyone was ordered to wear regulation P,T Kit. Eddie came in 160 or there about. When asked why he was so far down the line, Eddie replied "If you want me to look like a fool I'll run like one."

After leaving the Battalion Eddie joined the TA, was promoted Sergeant, and later served with the Air Cadets, where he became a Warrant Officer. Eddie was a staunch supporter of the Stockport branch of the CRA and in the words of their Chairman "Eddie loved life and lived it to the full. He tried at all times to be a natty dresser, not always successfully! His party piece at each Passchendaele remembrance supper was to present each of the attending ladies with a red rose.

Eddie did not stop running after his Army service finished and took up Marathon running. In all Eddie did 35 Marathons and made thousands of pounds for charity.

We will miss him greatly."

It was both fitting and humbling to see upwards of 60 Cheshires joining Eddie's extended family to say farewell at St John's Church, Dukinfield on 10 November.

David Oak and Paul Wilkinson

JOHN (Rusty) COONEY

Rusty was born in Birkenhead on 12 November 1941. Sadly Rusty died of Cancer at home in Birkenhead on 4th November 2014. Rusty is survived by his very loving and supportive family, his wife Joyce, daughters Belinda and Celeste and son Merle.

I believe that all who attended the funeral were really moved by the tributes paid to Rusty by his loving family. The funeral service and cremation was held at Landican Cemetery Centre Chapel at 1300hours on Thursday 13 November 2014 and attended by upwards of 200 Cheshire Regiment Association members and 8 Standards.

Rusty joined the Cheshire Regiment in the early 1960s and served a full career of 22 years, attaining the rank of WO2. He experienced many different aspects of the infantry: Regimental duties included rifle platoon section commander, platoon sergeant, provost sergeant, company colour sergeant and company sergeant major of Support Company.

Rusty also served as a Recruiting Sergeant, Depot training Sergeant, PSI with 3 Cheshire and Training warrant Officer with the Hong Kong Regiment.

All of the above Rusty excelled in, and carried his duties out with total commitment and enthusiasm.

Rusty found it difficult to adapt to civilian life after he left the Regiment but eventually settled down as a taxi driver in Birkenhead until the age of 70. During this period he launched himself fully into The Cheshire Regiment family.

He was a staunch member and Chairman of the Tranmere Branch, also a member of Cheshire Regiment Association Management Committee for many years. He was always at the forefront when anything needed to be organised and you could depend upon him attending any event that was taking place.

There are many different ways of trying to describe Rusty as a person and soldier. Viewing a popular social media site since Rusty passed away there have been a number of descriptions given, quotes like:

"Larger than life character," "True Gent," "Lovely Man," "Brave," "Loyal," "True Friend," "Great Soldier," "A truly Genuine Person." I always found Rusty to be all of these, and more.

A great soldier, dedicated and completely loyal to the Regiment and those serving with him. I feel privileged, and thank him for being one of my best friends.

I will end with one of Rusty's favourite endings of his writings.

YNWA - I don't think YOU ever will, Rusty

Alan Hughes

LAST POST

Eddie Bottomley died 24 October 2014 Ex Sgt 1st Bn

John (Rusty) Cooney died 4 November 2014 Ex WO2 1st Bn 1961-83 member of CRAMC and Chairman of Tranmere Branch

Walter Jones died 18 August 2014 served 1959-61

Allan Pearson died 27 August 2014 aged 93 Ex 4th Bn

George Plant died 29 September 2014 served in Palaestine

Harry Rowe died 26 October 2014 served 1952-55 Suez

Col Ray Savill died 24 September 2014 aged 92