

VANGUARD

JOURNAL OF THE INNS OF COURT AND CITY YEOMANRY ASSOCIATION



Who's Who

Inns of Court & City Yeomanry

Honorary Colonel: Col Sir Robert Finch KCB DL

68 (IC&CY) Signal Squadron

Officer Commanding: Maj David Cornick
 Second in Command: Capt Sean Olohan
 PSAO: Capt John Donaldson
 Sergeant-Major: WO2 (SSM) Paton
 Squadron AO: L Cpl Giles
 Headquarters: 10, Stone Buildings
 Lincoln's Inn
 LONDON WC2A 3TG
 Telephone: 020 7405 8112
 Fax: 020 7414 3496
 E-mail: iccy.li@virgin.net
 Drill Hall: TA Centre
 900 Lea Bridge Road
 Whipps Cross
 LONDON E17 9DW
 Telephone: 020 8556 0938

The Band of the Royal Yeomanry (Inns of Court & City Yeomanry)

Director of Music: Maj R Falshaw,
 BA, FLCM, ARCM, psm RY
 Headquarters: Holderness House
 51-61 Clifton Street
 LONDON EC2A 4EY
 Telephone: 020 7539 3447
 E-mail: band@royalyeomanry.co.uk

35 (IC&CY) Signal Squadron ACF

Det Comd: Lt J White
 Headquarters: TA Centre
 900 Lea Bridge Road
 Whipps Cross
 LONDON E17 9DW

IC&CY Museum

Curator and Deputy
 Chairman, Museum
 Trustees:

Maj M O'Bierne, TD
 Michelob666@ntworld.com

IC&CY Association

President: Col Sir Robert Finch KCB DL
 Vice-Presidents: Maj (ret'd) KR Hall, TD
 Maj (ret'd) AA Shipton, MBE, TD
 Maj (ret'd) AS Collins, TD
 E-mail: a-collins@btconnect.com
 Chairman: Mr TD Taylor
 E-mail: iccytomtaylor@aol.com
 Deputy Chairman: Maj (ret'd) PB Corfield QVRM TD
 E-mail: iccyassociation@btinternet.com
 Secretary: 8 Ascot Road, St Mary Cray,
 Orpington, Kent ME15 0NL
 Address: 01689 827496
 Telephone: iccyassociation@btinternet.com
 E-mail: David Norris
 Treasurer: 34 Calder Close, Tilehurst,
 Reading, Berks RG30 4XL
 Address: Telephone: 01189 421159
 E-mail: davidnorris4@sky.com
 Editor: Richard Bundy
 E-mail: rabundy@mac.com
 Committee: Major AJ Benbow, Mr DH Durkin,
 Maj J Fern, TD, Mr EJ Hendrie,
 Maj EH Marshall, TD,
 Maj M O'Beirne, Mr J Sabini,
 Mr T Taylor
 SSM James Paton

ICCY Representative Home Service Force Association

Point of Contact: Mr J Sabini
 Telephone: 020 8527 6871
 E-mail: john.sabini@btopenworld.com
 Website: www.iccy.org.uk

Inns of Court & City Yeomanry Benevolent Fund

Secretary: Maj (ret'd) J Prince, TD, ACIS
 Telephone: 01962 779227

Devil's Own Sergeants' Club

Secretary: Mr R Nelson
 E-mail: nrobert960@aol.com

Contents

2	Who's Who	22	Ken Called to Holland to Salute the War Dead
3	From the Honorary Colonel	24	The Black Brogues
4	Our Bond with Lincoln's Inn	26	Hunting in Afghanistan
6	From the Association Chairman	26	ICCY Middle Eastern Drinks Party
7	From the Secretary	27	Devil's Own Sergeants Club
8	Signal Squadron Report	27	The Benevolent Fund
10	The New PSAO	28	ICCY Devil's Own Invitation Regatta
11	The Liberation of L'Aigle	29	A Most Generous Bequest
20	Exercise Suman Protector	30	Obituaries
21	The Museum		

Cover picture: Detail of 1944 cartoon by Lieutenant Hugh C Sim MC

"On 4th August 1944 Lieutenant H.C. Sim of A Squadron, then under the command of Guards Armoured Division, carried out a difficult patrol, partly on foot, which lasted for 7 1/2 hours. In spite of being consistently sniped, mortared and shelled he reported valuable information about enemy troop movements and German artillery positions in the area of Estry. He also pin-pointed the position of four multi-barrelled mortars, which enabled our artillery to deal with them. He was awarded the MC". from *The Devil's Own*, Major DM Hatton TD

FROM THE HONORARY COLONEL

COLONEL ALDERMAN SIR ROBERT FINCH KCB DL

It is that time of year; a touch of frost, leaves falling, poppy sellers out and about and soon we gather in Lincoln's Inn for the annual memorial service in the Inn's chapel, wreath laying and our own Act of Remembrance. I look forward to meeting many of you there.

The Squadron will next weekend once again be riding in the Lord Mayor's Parade accompanied by the Royal Yeomanry Band, of which I also have the honour to be the Honorary Colonel. All these events show the public face of one of the historic units of the Royal Signals, which, in today's turbulent world, is so important. It will be so good to see Capt Nigel Pulman in the Parade as one of the City's two Sheriffs. He is a proud former officer of ICCEY.

We are well recruited and played a prominent role in helping to secure the Olympic Games as a safe and secure venue; we continue to send members of the Squadron to Afghanistan with conspicuous success.

I have been delighted to welcome our new PSAO, Captain John Donaldson, previously of the Irish Guards, and we all look forward to a hardworking and successful tour of duty. We also look forward to welcoming the soon to be installed Colonel of our Regiment, Major Julian Picton TD, QC, and the Honorary Colonel of 71 City of London Signal Regiment, Colonel Stephen Foakes TD DL, an officer well known to us through his Essex affiliations.

I am pleased to say that arrangements are well in hand for the Lord Mayor to visit 10 Stone Buildings in October 2013 for a revived Lord Mayor's dinner.

Congratulations to all of you for another successful year. Thank you for supporting the Squadron.

Robert Finch



***we continue to
send members
of the Squadron
to Afghanistan
with conspicuous
success***



*Colonel Stephen Foakes TD DL Hon
Colonel of 71st (City of London) Yeomanry
Signal Regiment*



*Major Julian Picton TD QC who takes
command of 71st (City of London)
Yeomanry Signal Regiment from
January 2013*

OUR BOND WITH LINCOLN'S INN

When, three decades ago, Eastern Europe was under the heavy hand of communism, one of the groups most feared for their subversive capacity was the legal profession, all of whom were severely restricted and monitored. In antithesis, Great Britain has, in times of need and national crisis during the past 450 years, called upon its lawyers for military assistance. This remains the case today, as although happily not a national crisis, 68 (ICCEY) Signal Squadron, as part of 71 (City of London) Signal Regiment (V), has played its part in supporting the security arrangements for the Olympic Games.

The first record of the lawyers of London banding together for such purposes was in the latter half of the 16th century, to protect the country from the threat of the Spanish Armada. In this, Lincoln's Inn played its part, the document convening members of the Inn requiring them to "withstande, offend and pursue, as well by force of armes as by all other meanes of revenge, all manner of persons that shall tende to the harme of her [Majesty's] royll person".

Against this background there is one particular legal entity with which the Inns of Court & City Yeomanry has had particular and strong connection throughout the ages, namely The Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn. In fact, that connection stems right from the Regiment's very roots, in that the associations formed to combat the Spanish Armada, to which the Squadron can claim to be descended, had, as its first Commanding Officer in 1584, Thomas Egerton, who was called to the Bar as member of Lincoln's Inn in 1572. The Inn's history is considerably longer than that of the Regiment. Indeed, it is the oldest of the four surviving Inns of Court having existed prior to the commencement of its formal records in 1442, it being likely that its origins stemmed from the 14th century. Furthermore, its existence has been continuous since that date, unlike that of the Squadron's predecessors whose continuity has been interrupted by periodic outbreaks of peace – an indication perhaps that the nation's need for lawyers exceeds its need for military protection – at home at least.

The various units from which the current Squadron can claim descent were formed, either by voluntary act or Act of Parliament,

*"18th
Century
view of
Lincoln's
Inn Hall,
Chapel and
Chancery
Court?"*

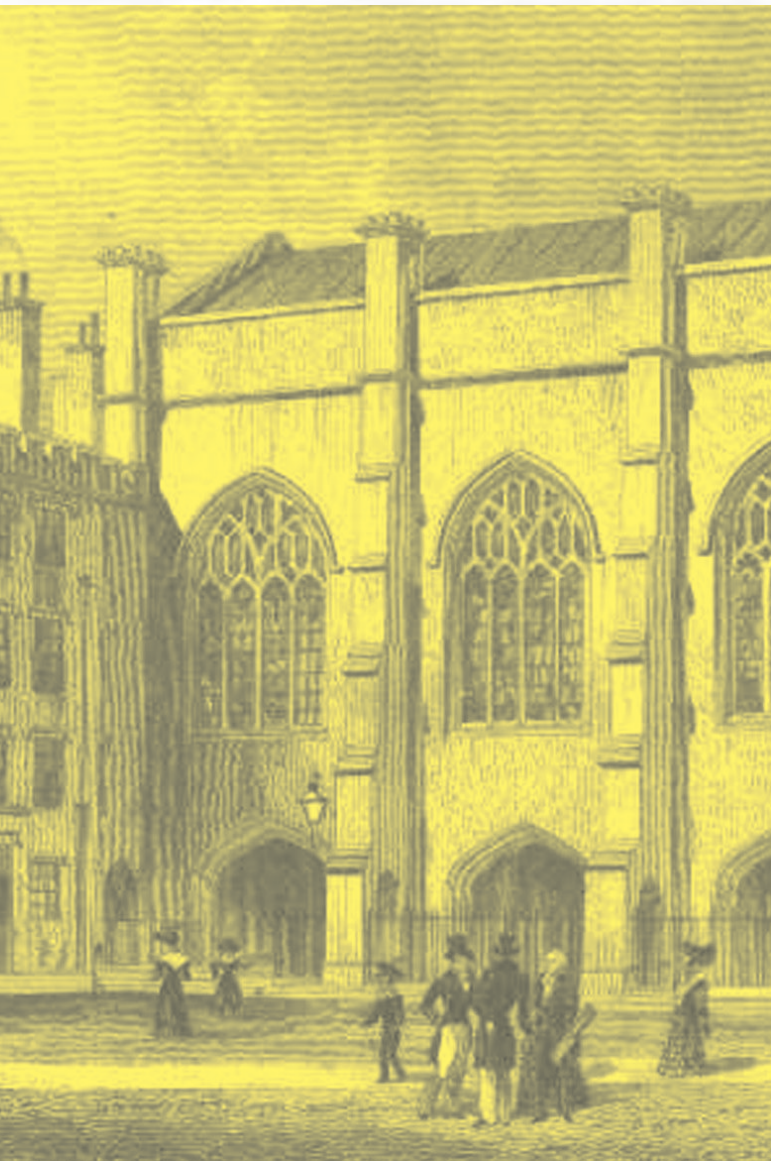


to counter such situations of national importance as the Civil War; the threat posed by Bonnie Prince Charlie and the Gordon Riots (perversely the Hon Thomas Erskine, a member of Lincoln's Inn, who commanded the Law Association Volunteers actually defended Lord George Gordon at his subsequent prosecution – and successfully at that!).

Hostilities

Towards the end of the 18th century hostilities with France became of such a protracted nature that a succession of volunteer forces was established to provide home defences against, initially, the threat posed by the French revolutionary Government and subsequently Napoleon. Lt Col S C Cox, who commanded one of such units, the Bloomsbury and Inns of Court Association, from 1797 to 1802 (his portrait hangs in the Mess) and was a member of Lincoln's Inn. One of the eight companies of the BICA was the Lincoln's Inn Association Volunteers, which was naturally commanded by a member of the Inn, Captain Sir William Grant. Two other companies, entitled The Knight-Marshall's Volunteers were also commanded by a member of Lincoln's Inn, namely Sir James Burges Bt.

To put matters in perspective, at this stage, Cecil Sebag-Montifiore



There can be no doubt that the Armed Associations occupied a very important and in some respects extraordinary position in the defences of the country

Owing to renewed fears of further hostilities with France and following the passing of the Volunteer Forces Act 1859, The Inns of Court Rifle Volunteer Corps was formed, the first two companies being sworn in at a ceremony carried out in the Old Hall of Lincoln's Inn. They were commanded Lt Col W B Brewster who commissioned new entrance gates for the Inn which, lovingly restored by Regimental funds, now stand at the north side of New Square, Lincoln's Inn. In these days the Inn made an annual donation of 100 guineas to the Corps and allowed the use of the gardens for training purposes, extending their bounty to the use of premises in New Square as an orderly room in 1860. In 1882, Queen Victoria opened the new Royal Courts of Justice in the Strand thus leaving vacant the former Record and Writ Clerk's Office at 10 Stone Buildings. The following year the ICRV were allowed the use of large hall on the first floor of the building and, ultimately in 1901, were allowed the use of the entire building, where its successor units have been established ever since.

in his book *A History of Volunteer Forces* (1908 – A Constable & Co Ltd) commented:-

"There can be no doubt that the Armed Associations occupied a very important and in some respects extraordinary position in the defences of the country. As a social institution they were exceedingly popular; they united the various classes in a common patriotic object; without trespassing unduly upon the province of the military forces, they were instrumental in educating the people to the disciplinary use of arms; and above all, they were a means of inculcating in the popular mind a true conception of the duties owed by the citizen to the State."

Perhaps we should now reflect how things have changed when it is now proposed that the Territorial Army should take its place alongside the Regular Army in fulfilling its various roles in defence of the country. However the Army would do well to bear in mind the essential social elements of any volunteer force.

Disbandment of volunteer forces once more took place after the Peace of Amiens in 1802. However in 1803 The Lincoln's Inn Association was formed as a battalion of the Law Association Volunteers (whose drums are retained in the museum at 10 Stone Buildings and the National Army Museum) under the command of Lt Col Thomas Erskine, a member of Lincoln's Inn.

From 1861 onwards there was a strong social bond between the Regiment and Inn involving dinners and balls, up to the point of general curtailment of such enjoyable frivolities occasioned by the two World Wars. This bond continues even today, albeit in reduced form, with the annual joint Remembrance Day commemoration after which officers of the Squadron and those connected are invited to lunch in the Great Hall and members and officers of the Inn being invited to dine at 10 Stone Buildings whenever occasion arises.

The Inn has also been gracious in allowing affiliated organisations to use its facilities. From 1883 to 1938 the Inns of Court School of Arms Club was allowed to conduct its fencing activities in 10 Stone Buildings and in the gardens. This Club bred a number of national champions in epee, foil and sabre.

Thus the bond between the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn and the Inns of Court & City Yeomanry is one which has continued, albeit intermittently, for nearly 430 years. This bond has recently been strengthened by the recent election of the Squadron's Honorary Colonel, Sir Robert Finch, as a Benchler of the Inn. The Regiment and its successor Squadron owe much to the Inn for its support over the ages and long may it so continue.

Major Andrew Collins TD

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

From Major Andrew Collins TD

In my Annual Report to the Association in last year's Vanguard, I wrote: "Clearly there are times of great change ahead". Whilst I do not think this prophecy has influenced the course of recent events, it would be a welcome change to achieve continuity and progress.

At the same time, I welcomed Major Alex Downing who had taken over as Officer Commanding 68 (Inns of Court & City and Essex Yeomanry) Signal Squadron (V). In April this year, Alex was suspended from duty and this problem remains unresolved. We all hope for a just and fair outcome. His newly appointed 2 i/c, Captain Catherine Dixon assumed command but less than three months later, owing to a demanding change of job, was forced to seek indefinite leave of absence from the TA. Into the resultant vacuum, Major David Cornick was seconded from 47 (Middlesex Yeomanry) Signal Squadron to command the Squadron. As if those changes were not disruptive enough, throughout almost the whole of this period the Squadron was without the support of a PSAO.

One part of the good news is that Captain John Donaldson IG joined the Squadron as the new PSAO in August. A former Regimental Sergeant-Major, John is an inexhaustible source of enthusiasm and commitment. He is a most welcome replacement for Major Ian Wadley. Our thanks are due to Alex for his devotion and leadership and Cat and David for stepping into the breach. The second item of good news is that we are extremely lucky in having David Cornick commanding the Squadron during this unfortunate interregnum. He has shown total commitment to the task and, as the Squadron Report shows, an impressive result has been achieved in terms of recruitment, training and fulfilment of role which this year including the support of the London Olympics. Praise is due to all ranks for maintaining morale and enthusiasm during a period of considerable disruption.

It pains me to say that access to 10 Stone Buildings for social events is no easier, although RHQ have arranged on occasions for catering to be provided from Woolwich which provides sustenance at more affordable prices. Come what may, the unfortunate contract with Kai Catering, entered into by Lt Col Tim Allen, will shortly be coming to an end and we hope for a more workable arrangement in the near future. Notwithstanding the eye watering expense, Ian Wadley was dined out by the Association in the Mess in April – a fitting "thank you" for all that he gave to the Squadron. At the same time, Major General David Jenkins, our former Hon Colonel, Major James Evans, the former OC, and Captain David Thomson, the former MO, were also dined out and presentations made to all.

Another item of happy news is that Captain Nigel Pullman, who served with the Squadron from 1975 to 1988, after service with the Royal Corps of Signals and the UN, has recently been elected as a Sheriff of the City of London and has chosen the Squadron/Association as one of the four important organisations in his life to make presentation to him at the Silent Ceremony



at the Guildhall in November. With our Hon Colonel being a former Lord Mayor and four ex-officers as past masters of City Livery Companies our ties with the City go from strength to strength.

In November last year we heard of the sad death of Anne Bright, the widow of Sergeant John Bright, who many of you will remember as a regular attendee of all events and a staunch member of the DOSC. Anne had, since John's death, been supported by several of his former comrades-in-arms. Along with this sad news, we learned that Anne, after a generous legacy to the DOSC, had named the Association as her residuary beneficiary. Your Association has met to deliberate how this generous bequest should be used for the best advantage to the Association and two decisions have been taken in principle: to commission a painting in honour of John Bright and to subsidise battlefield tours to which John was particularly partial. I will say no more as a separate tribute to John appears elsewhere in this edition.

By the time that this goes to press, our annual autumn events including the Rough Rider Memorial Service, the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey, The Lord Mayor's Procession, the AGM and Remembrance Sunday will have taken place but I hope that I will have seen many of you there.

For the future, there is much to be hoped for not least that the forthcoming publication of the Armed Forces Review will not only expand the numbers of reservists but, in particular, the Royal Corps of Signals. Nevertheless, some answer will have to be found for the prejudice shown by employers against members of the TA which has recently been highlighted by Major General the Duke of Westminster. Whilst on the subject of politics, with the Regiment's involvement in Afghanistan and other overseas theatres as well as the Olympics and its designated role, one could take exception to the remarks made by the Defence Secretary about the TA "playing at soldiers"; although Philip Hammond is of a non-military background one would at least hope for a cabinet minister to be briefed. Anyhow, it is very much my hope that I shall writing happy things this time next year.

Meantime, please visit our updated website at www.iccy.org.uk and make use of the blogging facility.

SECRETARY'S NOTES

**From Major Barrie Corfield
QVRM TD**

The Field of Remembrance, last November at Westminster Abbey was attended by 14 members. This is now an all-ticket affair, which worked properly this year with little queuing involved. The vice chairman, Tom Taylor, and secretary, Barrie Corfield, supervised the plots. HRH Prince Philip did stop to have a chat and asked the secretary to move out the way so he could see who people were.

Lord Mayor's Show was well attended by Squadron members and serving members of the Regiment as well as members of the Association. Especially welcome were the Regimental Colonel of 71 (City of London Yeomanry) Sig Regt(V) and the Colonel. Food and drink were provided for all attending. Our Hon Col, Sir Robert Finch, was seen in the parade close to the Lord Mayor's coach. The riding detachments looked extremely smart and were bolstered by a riding detachment from the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry.

Remembrance Sunday

What a great day, not a cloud in the sky and a temperature of 16 degrees – topcoats not required and gloves cast aside. A good turnout was achieved by the Band, Squadron and Association. It was a pleasure having the Band playing for us, fresh from their success after passing their annual fitness for roll examination. We had 21 members on parade at the start of the memorial service. The wreaths were laid by the Treasurer of Lincoln's Inn, Major Alex Downing for the Squadron and Denis Durkin on behalf of the Association. It was great to see Pam Bailey with the girls and grandchildren as well as Catherine (Kiwi) Lavinder with Amal and Peter, her new husband. When the parade reformed for the march past our ranks had swollen to 30. Some people just can't get up early. Flight Lieutenant Jennifer Lavinder paraded with us, putting a Lavinder back in the ranks, which I found very moving. Mark Sheppard also marched again, stating afterwards that he normally does not walk that far to his local. The Squadron provided a curry lunch for all and the bar remained open for some time. The parade was a resounding success although the cadets were noticeable by their absence.

Sadly we have played the last post to a number of members this year and they are mentioned in the obituary section. The members of the Black Brogue Brigade go from strength to strength and continue to build on their membership. A number of social occasions have taken place under their organisation namely the lunches at the KRRC as well as concerts and pub events.

The Association membership increases every year and it was nice to welcome back John Breen, and Rick Yeomans amongst others.



The members of the Black Brogue Brigade go from strength to strength and continue to build on their membership. A number of social occasions have taken place under their organisation namely the lunches at the KRRC as well as concerts and pub events

SIGNAL SQUADRON REPORT

The Squadron has undergone a number of personnel changes within the chain of command. Recently Major Dave Cornick had arrived as the interim Officer Commanding and Capt Sean Olohan, having returned from another tour of Afghanistan, has taken over as the new Sqn 2 I/C. SSgt Andy Carnegie had moved onto his new job at Tidworth and his position had been filled by SSgt Jim Brown, himself having just left the Commando unit in Plymouth. SSgt Dave Haskell is in the process of resettling into civilian life after retirement from the military after 22 years service.

Effort

The main effort for all connected with the Sqn during this past year was obviously Op Olympics. The unit played a major role in ensuring that the communications for the ops room at Wellington Barracks was maintained. We had troops stationed all over London providing comms back up to major units. The Command Support Teams working out of Whipps Cross really showed what they were made of on the day of the opening ceremony. The command centre controlling all military involvement at the games had a major malfunction. The teams were crashed out to rectify the problems and, with minutes to spare, they managed to return the ops room to full working

order – a major achievement for the unit and one that was duly recognised by very senior commanders. It was a cracking display of what the Squadron can produce and demonstrated how well they have been trained.

The majority of the soldiers within the Squadron were able to achieve their annual camp by completing a two-week tranche in support of Op Olympics. Others managed to get away to Scotland to complete their camps with other Signal Regiments.

LCpl Fox and Sig Osment returned safely from a tour with the Grenadier Guards in Helmand. They had an excellent tour and now have an insight into an infantry battlegroup and

what it does on operations.

The experience that both soldiers have gained will stand them both in good shape for their future careers within the military. Cpl Maalouf and Sig Teslenko also returned from their tour in Helmand. Both were involved with running the Reception Staging Onward Intergration (RSOI) working out of Bastion Camp. They provided assistance to those troops arriving in theatre, who had to undergo in-country training prior to deploying out into the areas of operation. A very important task that they completed with a great sense of humour and professionalism.

Capt Sean Olohan had a very eventful tour, based





in Kandahar and working with the OMLT(A). He encountered a number of what you could class as 'hairy moments' the most notable being that he was inside the British Embassy in Kabul when it came under a heavy crossfire attack from eight hardline Haqqani insurgents. Thankfully the occupants of the Embassy

were not hit by any shrapnel from the RPG rockets that hit the building, however they did suffer a direct hit to the portaloos which covered the security guards with an array of undesirable liquids.

Weekend training for the reporting period was heavily focused on communications in the run up to Op Olympics. It was well delivered and paid off in the

The majority of the soldiers within the Squadron were able to achieve their annual camp by completing a two-week tranche in support of Op Olympics

tasks that were completed. The main effort now is on rebuilding the military skills that are at the core of all our training. A number of weekends are planned to re-hone these basic skills and get the soldiers back on the right track to become a more military based Squadron that can provide vital comms when required.

The 2 I/C has taken on the enviable task of putting together the Lord Mayor's Show Riding Detachment; this is a major task and one which he relishes. There has been a keen interest from the Squadron members to participate in this year's event. The Officer Commanding, Major Dave Cornick, has been down to the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst and completed a rigorous horseriding package in preparation for commanding the detachment. The main horseriding training package for all members started on the 13th of October, allowing us five weeks build up to the actual show. Equestrian skills have been proved in front of the Riding Master from the HCMR and again the Squadron will prove that being the only ceremonial riding detachment within the Royal Signals is a huge honour.

The Squadron is in very good spirits and with the arrival of a new PSAO and Sqn 2 I/C and the future looks to be brightening for the unit. Recruiting is on the up and by the next report we hope to have swelled the ranks with both new officers and signallers. A number of the Squadron will deploy on Op Herrick 18 in the Spring of 2013 and therefore put the unit to the forefront of military operations.

Captain John Donaldson

68 Signal Squadron PSAO

The New PSAO

Captain John Donaldson arrived as the new PSAO for 68 Squadron in July this year after leaving the regular Army after 28 years service. He enlisted in June 1984 as a Junior Leader at Shorncliffe. After completing his years training he arrived as a Guardsman with his chosen regiment, the 1st Battalion Irish Guards, who at the time were based in Munster, BAOR. A move back into ceremonial duties in Chelsea Barracks then followed and he was promoted to LCpl in 1987. He continued to work his way up through the career ladder – he became a LSgt in 1989 and was a member of the signal platoon with the Battalion for several years. After successfully completing his Senior Brecon Platoon Sgts course he then took charge of his first platoon in Pirbright in 1994 within No 1 Company. In 1998 he was posted to the Infantry Battle School at Brecon as a CSgt Instructor and taught on the Junior Tactics wing.

A move back to Munster to take up a position as the CQMS of No 2 Company followed in February 2000. In the summer of the same year he was promoted to WO2 and took charge of No 1 Company as the CSM. He was then given charge of the Guards Training Company at Catterick in February 2002 and remained there until the summer of 2004 where he rejoined his Battalion as the RQMS. On the 12th of June 2005 he was promoted to WO1 and took on the job as the RSM of the Battalion, which at the time was based in Wellington Barracks in London and were conducting the various public duties throughout the year.

He then commissioned to Captain in January 2007 and became the regiment's Welfare Officer. In October 2008 he was seconded to the 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards as their Transport Officer. He deployed to Helmand Province in September 2009 and was the unit's Media Officer. His final role was as the Career Management Officer at the Army Training Regiment at Pirbright from which he left the Regular Army on the 29th of February this year. He reported for duty as the PSAO of 68 Squadron in July this year.

He has served at regimental duty in Munster and Berlin in Germany, Belize, Pirbright, London, Northern Ireland and Afghanistan. He has served externally at Pirbright, Brecon and Catterick.

His main interest is golf – he has represented the Infantry and run successful golfing tours to Europe and has been the Irish Guards Society Captain in 2007. He also has a passion for football and played throughout his career with the units he has been attached to or served with. He was the Infantry Football Secretary for two years and is a qualified level 2 FA Coach. He enjoys skiing and likes the theatre, cinema and travelling.

“He was promoted to LCpl in 1987. He continued to work his way up through the career ladder – he became a LSgt in 1989”



2012 Commemoration
at the graves of Lt RL
Richards and Private DW
Climie

A group of approximately 15 people, including veterans in military uniforms and civilians, are standing in a line in front of a cemetery. Several flags are visible, including the Union Jack, the French flag, and the European Union flag. The background shows a hilly landscape under a cloudy sky. The text 'THE LIBERATION OF' is overlaid in large, bold, red letters at the bottom of the image.

THE LIBERATION OF

THE LIBERATION OF

L'AIGLE

and were adequately supported by tanks and A/T guns. He provided most valuable information as to the strength and depth of the enemy defence.

Lt Howdle died in 2005 and a Service of Commemoration and Mass was held for him at L'Eglise St Martin in L'Aigle.

>>>>>>>>>>>>

For the two years before going into action my troop, DOG4, was the Regimental Demonstration Troop. Inevitably, therefore, my superb sergeant (later SSM) ER Brickell, MM, TM and I were divided into two Light Troops – his DOG4 and mine DOG3. It is a matter of record that either he or I was always on the Squadron Centre-Line or its open right flank or the Regimental Centre-Line (ie the Division's Centre-Line).

The story of the liberation of L'Aigle belongs to Operation "Bluecoat" when, as Corps Troops, we were seconded to 11th Armoured Division. "Bluecoat", also known as "La Percée du Bocage", began at first light on Sunday, 30th July at Caumont (Caumont l'Éventé).

Situation

At midnight on Sunday 20th August, we had still not been given information as to the situation ahead of us. We had realised that the USA swing on our right flank had gone far forward and that the French 2nd Armoured Division, with whose HQ I had liaised at Ecouché, had also been sent eastwards and, we had guessed, to Paris. The Regiment, with all Squadrons "up" (that is all engaged in action), was fighting and reconnoitring at the "bottom", the south side (an open flank) and the "neck" of the "Argentan Pocket", or "Falaise Gap". We had not been told that British troops were fighting southwards to squeeze the north side of the Gap whilst Canadians and Poles were fighting hard to close the pocket or bag and desperately trying to pull tight the drawstring to close the mouth. Nor were we informed that a German counterattack was attempting to keep open the mouth of that pocket to allow their disintegrating elements to escape eastwards.

On Monday 21st, whilst DOG3 (Howdle) was on the open right flank, DOG4 (Brickell) was personally briefed by our CO, Colonel R.A.G. Bingley, to carry out a "recce" to the northeast and then to the north of l'Aigle. This was done to such good effect, despite pockets of enemy resistance, necessitating much fighting and alteration of route that Sgt. Brickell was awarded an immediate MM.

For some days we had realised a dramatic change in the battlefield situation. For example, enemy mortaring had decreased to a cessation; set pieces were becoming fewer and less intense; whilst on the west or bottom of the pocket there seemed to be an almost entrenched battle developing in contra-distinction to the open southern flank which

followed, roughly, the old Paris-Brittany route.

Here, on this flank, the enemy was in small groups, lightly armed and behaving like wasps from a disturbed nest. Fumes and smoke from the eruptions of bombs, shells, rockets, mortars and mines, with debris and earth pulverised to all grades of dust had intensified in this ever-constricting battlefield into an acrid, airless pall – a choking, foggy mixture of gases to which was added minute by minute fumes from consuming fires.

These were cauldrons of melting rubber, exploding oil and petrol, touched off at flash-points, flaming and flaring to continue the consuming of roasting flesh and the calcinations of burning one in a porridge of white-hot metals and colouring chemicals. Smell is supposed to be the least potent of our senses; that may well be so, but many a Normandy veteran complained of nightmares when dentists began using high-powered drills which produced the odour of scorching, burning bone; similarly, the smell of the smithy, when the smith was fitting new shoes on horses' hooves, had the same effect. Enquiries of Old Comrades elicited the information that, like my own experiences, this atavistic effect lasted but a few occasions.

Fortunately, during this latter part of "Operation Bluecoat", our work moved us to the fringes of the battlefield. My route on the southern flank was along the high ground with the funeral pyres on my left, the North, in the low ground covered by the smoke pall. Distance was dimming the battle's din. Thus, although we were forcefully reminded of the stench of the battles around Caen, we escaped most of this pocket's central carnage and the concomitant gases from uncremated, and now decaying, horses and mangled men and mangled women and mangled children. Though these were seen and recognised with shock, we were usually on and away at speed so that the impact of viewing minced civilian casualties was not so great for us nor for those of us who recognised that we had been blooded, as I had been, in the Blitz in London and other cities.

It may well be that in war it is women and children who suffer most, but a soldier who spends even a fraction of a second in a philosophy of sympathy and empathy under battle conditions soon weakens himself and loses his morale. Morale is a delicate enough creature for a soldier on active service to conserve on the best of days. It didn't need a Lord Moran (Churchill's personal physician) to tell us that courage is expendable. We were expending it.

At nightfall then, on Monday the 21st August, the 11th Armoured Division was established on a general attaching line, part of which extended on the north from St. Evroult-de-Montfort (N138) to Ste. Gaubourge-St. Colombe (N26) in the south. "D" Squadron HQ was about 6kms east of Gacé near la Trinité-des-Laitiers on the Gacé / l'Aigle road (D13).

The "Liberation"

It was here at first light, not at "Stand-to" an hour before true dawn, that I received orders to reconnoitre through Le Forêt de St. Evroult, avoiding St. Evroult-N.D.-du Bois but tapping into the Gacé / l'Aigle road east of that township to recce l'Aigle and the main road east to Rugles.

Other than the suspicion that the enemy was using road D13 as an escape route, I was given no information. I had only the debriefing of the night before and Sgt. Brickell's epic story – as well as my own recent experiences – as guides. Because of casualties in men and material, I was using my sergeant's, Sgt. Wallington's car, and his driver, Trooper "Dutchie" Holland, a dweller of the Custom House area on the Thames. My own mount had been





shot from under me, with the loss of my driver Tpr. Freddie Reed, on Sunday 13th August. Further, the commander of my rear car though normally a sergeant or a corporal, was Lt Frankie “Wetfur” Parsons with his own scout car and driver, Tony Voaden, under my command.

It was our habit to “shave, shower and shampoo” last thing after our return at night and after weapon cleaning and re-arming, so that a “lick” of cold water was sufficient to take us to breakfast and the hot tea that punched the stomach and bullied the brain awake. Thence swiftly to final checks of gear and stowage and the “Slidex” code and the map-talc, cleaned of chinagraph crayon because no route had been ordered for my troop. I had only the one road and towns thereon to reconnoitre.

Apart from the specific order to report on the Saint Evroult Forest, how I got to L’Aigle and Rugles was left to me. So, we made a last check on the wireless net and the spare or emergency frequency. Finally and as normal, there was a quick word with the lads and with Frankie to confirm that they were all in good fettle and knew what we were to do. Then we were ready – cars mounted, engines running safety-catches off all weapons, with a Mills “36” grenade or two easily to hand – all routine quickly and methodically followed – then a wave to the Squadron Leader – “DriverAdvance!” into the intercom and advance we did – away once ore into the morning mist. This was not too bad, today, though it was barely light enough for what we called “comfortable vision”.

Adrenalin was already flowing and those of us who knew of it welcomed its purpose but not its necessity and side-effects. Shake down and relax. Settle in the seat. Don’t worry about your tail. Frankie knows what to do guarding my tail and he has to follow me!

There was no infantry screen; none had been mentioned; none was found. Our first hazard was being in a forest – no place of safety for us – because, driving along one of the firebreaks, or rides, we were sitting targets and desperately noisy with our engines; we

had no all-round vision, that ideal of all military activity. Visibility was severely restricted by trees and undergrowth, which posed their own ambiguity. This situation we used to call the “Clay Pipe” or “Aunt Sally” condition from fairground shooting stalls!

Very soon the fire-break rose gently and the hackles rose with it because the far outline changed to a strange irregularity which was swiftly, and with relief, identified as a small, abandoned, open truck. With my car ahead and Frankie’s behind it, we found no booby-traps, no bodies, no vehicle-markings and the engine stone cold. Obviously, it was one of the very few civilian vehicles about, commandeered, and now useless without fuel. This negative information I condensed and reported before driving on and on and on to the first of many similar and frustrating obstacles – a tree, or trees, felled across the paths, tracks and rides.

Experience of our hard going of the last three weeks, the enemy’s night-time withdrawals, his stands behind newly prepared positions whereat our noses were bloodied day after bloody day, kept us extremely cautious. Each obstruction had to be checked in case it was covered by any combination of enemy fire, booby-traps and mines. Horses would have been better mounts for this work.

After many such delays from simple, yet massive, merely felled trees, I came to the conclusion that these impediments to my progress were the efforts of the French Resistance to slow down the Germans fleeing the field and now slowing down our pursuit. These were friendly barricades unlike those we had had to negotiate in previous weeks. I therefore took the calculated risk to make only rapid visual checks before tapping round further felled tree obstacles. Thus, our progress was expedited until we approached the tiny river Charentonne whose little hump-backed bridge had an even more humped carriageway! With the rear car and my driver to cover me, I established that there appeared to be no defensive cover to the five, suspected mines on the bridge.

Closer inspection proved them to be Tellermines. Each one was covered with a most obvious pile of fairly fresh horse-dollops – quite probably that morning’s delivery – hence the strange

outline of the bridge and my sudden sense of relief at some hidden assistance somewhere nearby. That eerie feeling, rarely absent in no-mans-land, of being observed, of being watched fell away though vigilance remained. The mines were in a row of three facing me with two more filling the gaps just behind. Choosing the centre one, I carefully removed the ordure to find that this type of Tellermine, having been armed, could not be made safe, but would have to be blown. This was information given to us only a few days previously; so, once again, a fortunate fate was with us. I calculated that the mines would only collapse the bridge into the stream, for it was little more at this time of year. The river would be easily passable by AFVs (Armoured Fighting Vehicles) including my own.

The next procedure is the subject of many a joke. We carried rolls of "duff" (obsolete) signal wire at least fifty yards long. These had only two purposes, either to act as a trip wire or to be tugged sharply in the hope of setting off the device – the operator having taken great care to seek some shelter – mine against these mines was in a ditch alongside my car. "Lid down, driver!" The joke is that this operation is standard procedure amongst our highly-trained Royal Engineers with but one extremely important and highly professional difference. They use a much longer length of wire! The mines blew very nicely and we bumped across in good style and in good heart.

We now approached road D13 from the south and about 1 km east of Le Cauche Alin. A hundred yards or so short of the road and hidden from it on my left or west side was a bungalow. I went through the little garden gate and the very short front garden and hammered extremely hard on the front door; then I stood on one side against the wall with my Schmeisser machine-pistol at the ready.

Reluctant

After more hammerings, a reluctant old man appeared (who can blame his reluctance!) and seemed not to be able to understand that we were British, nor did he appear able to answer my questions as to whether any Germans were travelling on the road and going east or west i.e. to l'Aigle or Gacé. I was troubled that my school-boy French was now incomprehensible when it had not been as recently as at Ecouché! Then I remembered that my AFV-Type helmet was not unlike the German general issue and even more akin to the German paratroop casque. Hurriedly, I pulled down the shoulder of my denim overalls and pointed out the flash on my battle-blouse underneath. In great excitement, he read off, as if it were French – and most of it is! – "Royal Armoured [armure] Corps". At this he seemed to lose years from his age and dashed back into his house calling: "Maman, they are here! They are here, at last!" When he returned and offered hospitality, I had to warn him to do nothing until there were many, many British soldiers between him and l'Aigle and then thanked him and his wife, barely glimpsed in the background, for their offer of refreshment, reluctantly declined.

To their cries of hanks and tears of joy and calls of blessings upon us, we pushed on with morale a little higher despite our slow progress and gathering fatigue. Now we had the old gentleman's word that nothing had moved up or down the main road since dawn. A quick check of the road and I gave orders to "bomb", nickety-split (our slang for maximum speed), for the remaining 2 kms or so into l'Aigle. I reminded ourselves of the axiom "Speed is Armour" and that this road, if it were an escape route, would not be mined like the bridge in the forest. If it were mined then either the explosion or our crash would kill us.



*Jack Howdel receives
a Commemoration
Badge from the Mayor
of l'Aigle, 22nd August
2004*

Midday, hearts in mouths that were now thoroughly dry with adrenalin, we raced at 60 mph to join the D12 Vimoutier road where – to my mixed horror and swift relief – our speed took us past a "Tiger" tank defending all routes, including the flanks, and the main road, N26, to Vire and the West. I had a nagging doubt that the slow progress beforehand and the high speed of the last few minutes had deranged my judgement so that we had arrived here ahead of my appreciation of the terrain ahead of us. All the "Tiger" crew was outside the vehicle smoking during, I can only assume, a noontime break. The fraction of a second glimpse showed me that they were as surprised and shocked as we were. They raced to mount their tank, but we had now slowed, save to negotiate the bend at highest speed, so we were away bumping over a level crossing, past a small millstream and into the houses. "Dog 3 CONTACT! Tiger. L'Aigle. OUT!"

Simultaneously and somewhat frantically, I was looking for the main bridge shown on my map, both to check my position, which is not easy in a street of rubble, houses and shops, and to check the condition of the bridge's structure. My realisation that the bridge was a hole in the road came at the same moment that my driver made the tyres scream to a halt. Almost immediately, we came under a rain of small arms and heavy machine gun fire which I identified as coming from the railway station on slightly higher ground to the North – my left. Getting Frankie to close up to me, whilst I closed up to the blown bridge, brought us both out of their line of fire, but an interesting situation – not for the first time – was rapidly developing.

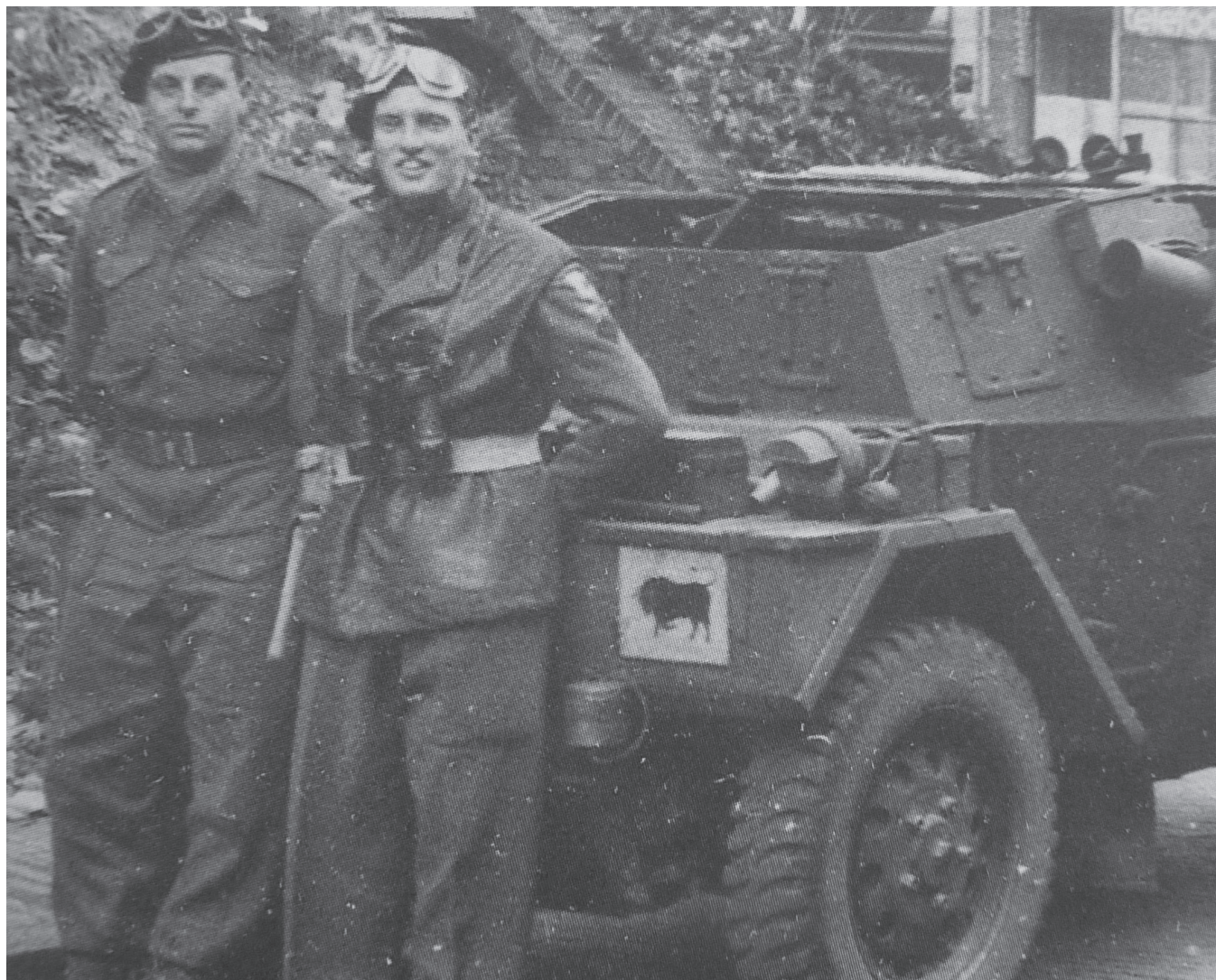
My most urgent task was the preservation of my composite troop, but I now had vital information, which it was our prime job to report to Squadron HQ with the utmost clarity and least delay. This information consisted of the "Tiger's" location, his ability to cover all routes from that position, the unknown strength of the Germans at L'Aigle railway station and the blown main bridge over the river Risle. "Hullo Dog 3. Hullo Dog 3. Report my signals. Over." This was repeated a number of times without any acknowledgment from HQ.

During the effort to raise a response from them, my mind was rapidly assessing our perilous position: a blown bridge, now a hole in the road with a six foot drop into the water, too wide to leap even if we were able to move and gather speed to try the jump across; one "Tiger" to our rear and could he see us? And would he move to blast us? Were the Jerries, with the initiative in the station, fresh enough or aggressive enough to stalk me in the streets? They appeared from their fire-power, now silent, to be strong enough. What were they doing at this moment? Were they intent only on escape in the coming night and were now sheltering from our fighters and fighter-bombers during the day? Or were they actually "holding" the area despite the destroyed bridge? What was behind all that rubble to my right? Had I time to dismount and see?

I didn't. In those seconds of assessment that are an eternity in these situations, the whole situation changed. Out of that same rubble, magic from a magician's hat, popped not a rabbit – far from a rabbit! – but a voice calling in perfect English with a French

accent: "I 'ave come to 'elp! I 'ave come to 'elp!" I heard the voice. Before I could heave the Bren or lift my machine pistol to shoot, the voice and its head were at my driver's side of the scout car. A quick check – a very quick check! – and I was relieved at not having shot as well as not having had to make any decision so drastic as fighting it out and then blowing up our vehicles before escaping on foot with our information. We needed to extricate ourselves from this present situation and then to seek more knowledge and intelligence of the enemy's strength and disposition. [Later I pointed out to this young man his danger from me with my nerves over-strung and finger on the trigger, but he told me that he had been trained to approach vehicles from the driver's side! And quite right too!]

In no time at all, our new recruit was on the engine cover of my car acting as a guide whose first task was to take us through the rubble. The route was not at all obvious nor easy and it also meant that our only way of escape was to run the gauntlet of the enemy in the railway station – and, quite possibly, the "Tiger" – when following the directions of our guide round the north side of the town. This we did under some sporadic fire from the station and a shot from the tank that demolished the side of a house behind Frankie. Our only reply was to spray the station area heavily with Bren. "Tiger" also appeared to be firing at other targets, but we bumped once more over the level-crossing and dashed for the higher ground. [I was told much later, after he war, that a second tank, without fuel, was also at the station. This was unknown to



me at the time, but would account for the initial heavy machine gun fire repeated a little later during our dash to and through the north of the town. See footnote.]

Thus, thanks to the Frenchman, we escaped without more damage than some body-bruising and much rattling of the teeth. How our guide was faring on the hot, armour-plated louvres above the engine did not, I confess, cross my mind at that time, but I was reminded very much of the “rubble-trouble” of Caen now light years away. [Other eyes than German had observed us. The town baker had crept back to see the condition of his bakery and ovens and to assess how soon he could be operational. His bakery was alongside the main bridge. We saw and heard nothing of him. This information came to me some years later, as did the fact that the Germans had destroyed the bridge only the day before our arrival.]

Out of sight, we hoped! Relatively safe, “Dutchie” Holland tried to raise HQ, with no success, whilst I pointed out to our young volunteer guide the route I wished to take to recce key points in the town. These were all bridges. After this, I told him, the road to Rugles was my objective. Our advance was considerably speeded up by our guide; he seemed to know every cobblestone, curve and corner, when to be cautious and slow down and when safe to speed up. Thus, with my experienced driver also very aware of sneaking down a road, snatching every chance of shelter or cover, I was able to abandon most of the map-reading to concentrate almost entirely on quicker observation with fewer halts.

We had to move rubble from the road near a demolished water tower. [I have no recollection of checking for mines and booby-traps, here, but our guide does and it would be the normal thing to do.] We then came under rather half-hearted fire from an ambush as we dashed across a very minor bridge. My recollection is not quite clear at this point – I seem to think it was only a small wooden bridge of the sort we might call a “hunt-bridge”.

There were a few pot shots at us for a while, but we had plenty of Bren to pour indiscriminately in their direction to keep their heads down while we concentrated on continuing our tasks. We treated these light bursts of fire as sideshows to be ignored, a part of training impressed upon us long ago.

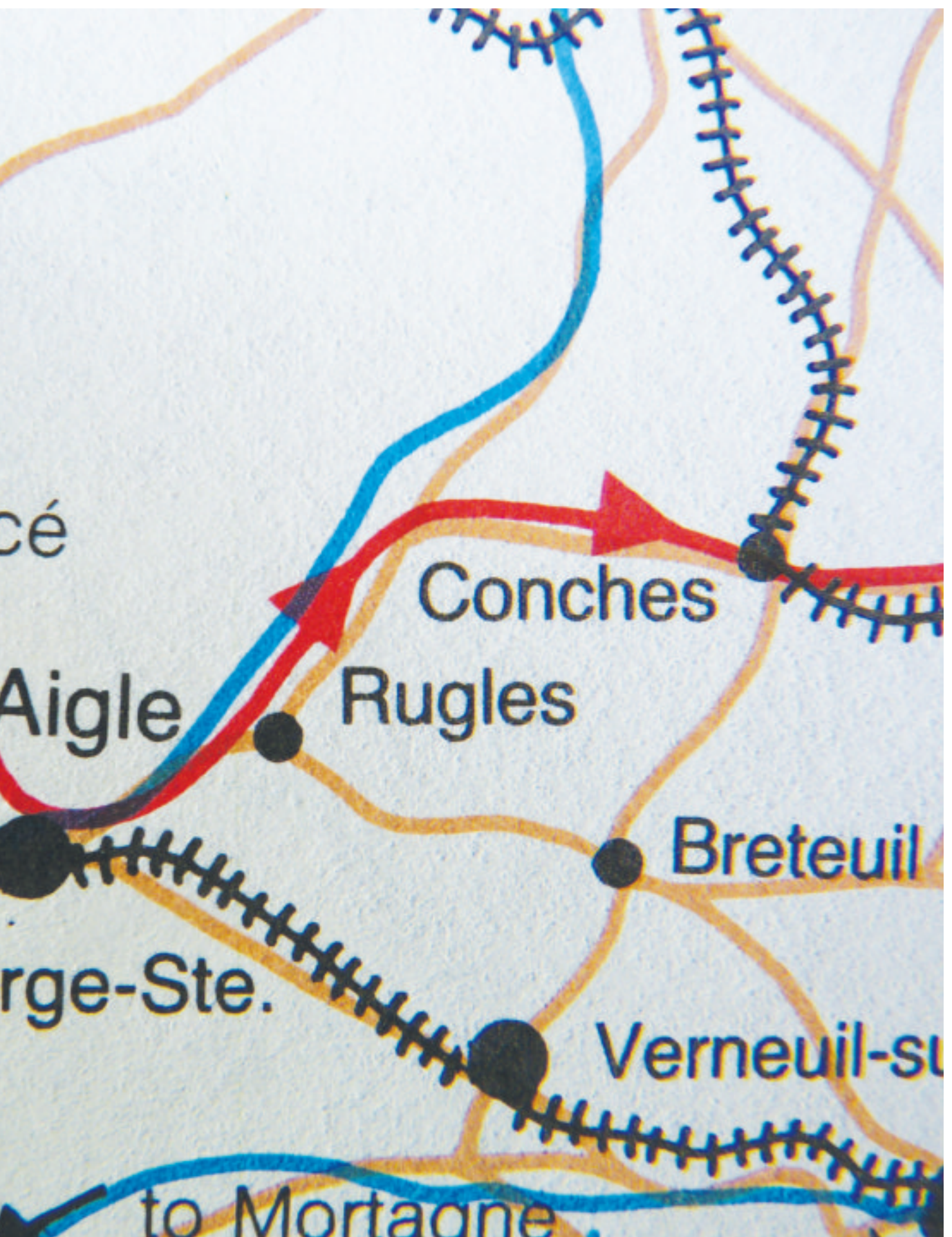
Our guide was fully exposed to this danger and all others throughout the day. I didn't even think of his safety any more than of any other member of my troop. The only room for him was on the hot louvres of the engine cover. He had volunteered to do a job under enemy fire and was doing it superbly. It was only later, back at HQ, that I truly recognised his bravery, crouched behind me with no helmet and no armour plate; he was so much more exposed than we that he was a part of the external body of the scout car deprived of cover, shelter and protection. Like most of us, he was a volunteer.

Nearing 15:00 hours and the north-eastern edge of the town, we halted to try once again to re-establish a wireless link with HQ – still only ten miles to our rear, as far as we still knew, at la Trinité-des-Laitiers. We put up extra lengths of aerial to our maximum of 12 feet, but that didn't help either.

I left the driver to keep calling whilst I viewed the terrain and had a word with Frankie, doing his bit and protecting my tail. I had left my car to meet Frankie and tell him of the quantity and quality of the information he should pass on to HQ if I couldn't. He was as unsuccessful as I in raising HQ on the air. We fired at every movement of anything. The axiom is “Shoot first; ask after.” We fired not quite as frantically as the Americans who sprayed non-

Map of Advance





Fernand Lepinay in 2007



stop each side of every route they took. Perhaps their ammunition supplies were unlimited. We conserved ours, but in a situation such as this our safety demanded a burst of Bren, or whatever, on the slightest suspicion of activity – hostile or not.

I returned to my car just in time to hear “Dutchie” Holland calling into the “mike”, “Hullo Dog 3, Hullo Dog 3, report my signals.” – a pause with, obviously, no answering call – then “Dutchie” burst forth with “Hullo Bloody Dog Tired, Hullo Dog Bloody Tired, say some bloody thing even if its only “Good-bloody-bye!” Whether this ever got through on the air or not doesn’t matter. It broke some of the tension and was the joke-of-the-moment at de-briefing that night. At this point I called to my rear car to give them the responsibility to raise HQ and to tell Frankie that I would now be moving slowly towards Rugles not feeling inclined to take any more unnecessary risks with so much unreported information under our belts.

Disturbing

The next incident, though not immediately disturbing, was to me and others quite macabre in the midst of war wherein, after some experience one becomes accustomed to accepting most things. This was different because we had not thought of it and it was quite unexpected. There, before us, was the town cemetery, under the hot afternoon sun. Its contents had been obscenely resurrected and scattered about in all grades of conditions – from skeletons and parts thereof to partly decomposed corpses as well as the fairly freshly interred dead – with all manner of fragments strewn amongst the drunken memorials and broken containers. [I had thought this to be the result of shelling, but learned, also some year later, that this was caused by our bombing of L’Aigle on the 7th June, 1944, to help prevent German reinforcement of the Normandy battlefield. About 140 Aiglons were killed. I am nearly in tears as I write this, not least because **not one French person has ever spoken to me about it**]

Nearby, the bridge at the main railway line to Paris had been destroyed. [In September, 1992, at the Vin d’Honneur in the

Town Hall, a spinster lady told me that she had seen us at the Pont des Cygnes] We were now clear of the town and, at long last, managed to raise a signal from HQ at strength 5, that is “Loud and Clear”. So, we were able to unburden ourselves of all the knowledge gained thus far. No sooner were we on the main road to Rugles than our hearts were again in our mouths as a plane roared over us at nought feet. Fortunately, it was a Spitfire. Even more fortunately, for I had had no time for any preparatory activity and my memory leapt to our losses from bomb-happy USA airmen and my troop’s narrow escape when directing USA Thunderbolts against a squadron of Panzers assembling in woods near Vassy, the pilot recognised that, if not British, we were Allies and he roared skywards ahead of us down the road. He then did a half-loop ending with a roll to bring his plane back to us, when, with a waggle of wings, he flew past and repeated the half-loop manoeuvre and roll to roar once more at hedge-height down the road to Rugles.

Thus, for some miles, he signalled to us that all was clear and we, too, roared down the road with little caution through St. Sulpice-sur-Risle where the pilot left us with a proper and heart-warming “Victory Roll”. We could but hope that our waves and thumbs up were visible and thanks enough under the circumstances. Could he know that he had boosted our morale a little?

We had just reported the bridge intact over the Finard, a tributary of the Risle when we were recalled. Now our task was to reach HQ safely, but we had to skirt round the “Tiger” at least. Had the position changed? We had to be wary. The drill is never, never, never – not even scarcely ever – take the same route home that was taken going out. Were there little groups of Germans elsewhere? Caution must dampen our enthusiasm at being homeward bound.

Our guide was able to point on our maps to a very minor road on the west of the town that would not take us too close to the German tank. Round the south of this deserted town – ghost towns were no longer an eerie experience, but still a frightening one to us – we drove without further incident, until, at last, we were safely en route to Le Forêt de St. Evroult once more.

The return journey to and through the forest was simply miserable. If the outward route had been impeded by felled trees, the return was congested. Had it not been for our guide recruiting help from nearby farms with volunteers wielding huge, two-handed saws, we would be there yet. Progress was very slow and I impatient to be back. Near St.-Evroult-Nôtre Dame Odu-Bois, we passed sections of 3rd Mons, so I decided to ignore the safety rule of returning by a different route and cut southwards to the Charentonne and the bridge that we had destroyed that morning. We noted that its remains had been crossed by our tanks or carriers and we speeded onwards. I was, perhaps, relaxing too quickly because our abandoned lorry showed up quite unexpectedly giving me a momentary tightening of the diaphragm until it was recognised. Then soon we were back amongst the friendly cries of comrades with waves of welcome around us at the squadron laager (NOT “leaguer”) which was now at Les Touquettes about 11 miles (18kms) west of l’Aigle.

Our next step was de-briefing, wherein Frankie, only half-humorously, stated that he wouldn’t go out with me again because I didn’t know when to stop. To which I replied that I recognised only three reasons to stop – the completion of the ordered task, death or the end of the war. This sounds very much like bravado, but it isn’t – Eddie Brickell and Clive Taylor, among many others well-known to me, had the same attitude of determination which



we had established long before we were in action. A cavalryman has to have a little verve about him in every one of his roles.

"By the end of the day the whole brigade group [29th Brigade Group] was situated just west of L'Aigle and standing patrols were in position for the night on the eastern & south-eastern outskirts. On the morning of the 23rd the whole division concentrated in the area south and south-west of L'Aigle, the town itself being held by 3 Mons [3rd Battalion the Monmouthshire Regt.] against possible attack from north and east."

Pp45 and 46 "Taurus Pursuant". History of 11th Armoured Division, 1946

Meantime, the lads had been looking after our Frenchman whom we had carried back to our lines for his own safety. We had been instructed, months before, that anyone helping us, whether or not seen by the enemy to have done so, should be brought back into protection thus preventing any reprisal. This young man lived with us as if he were a troop member whilst we did maintenance and make-do-and-mend – the first since the 29th of July. I received my new denim overalls, a pair of battle-dress trousers, to replace my blood-stained ones, and a remount. The trousers, with new boots issued earlier, gave me some relief, whilst the remount kept me and my driver busy. We even had time to make a lean-to bivouac with our tarpaulin; this was a draughty luxury almost beyond memory. However, during intense reparations, I used the opportunity at mealtimes to find out a little of our Frenchman and, in particular, his name and address. This I impressed upon my memory, [that is until December, 1946, when for the first time I wrote it down to write to him]. It was:

Fernand L'Epinay, La Boissière, L'AIGLE.

Mistakenly, because I had not written it down at the time for safety reasons, I was using what my ear had told me, so I had spelled his name in the mediaeval way. It should be "Lepinay." He had served his country well, travelling by bus to learn English under the noses of the Germans and acting as a messenger until going underground before his 18th birthday. To him, this day, Tuesday the 22nd August, 1944 was the end of four years of

enemy subjugation. To me, it was the end of a less usual, but fairly conventional day's "recce" made much easier by the bravery of this young member of the French Resistance. He was under fire on a number of occasions and, unlike myself, completely exposed. He had given me, at the risk of his life, a conducted tour of the battlefield whilst the battle was still in progress. He would not have known that he acted in the next few days as a morale-booster. He, and thousands like him would be our helpers. Unlike the Germans who would be hunted and hounded, we were among friends.

On Friday 25th August, we began our move to Vernon on the Seine. I was, therefore, able to give the young Frenchman a gentler ride home. Instead of the hard ride on the hot, armour-plated louvers of a scout car's engine cover, he had a precarious perch clinging like a limpet to the turret of an armoured car belonging to a heavy troop. Our route lay through L'Aigle whose blown bridge had been replaced by our Engineers with a Bailey. At the church, L'Eglise St. Martin in a main street of the town, this French teenager was dropped off amongst the cheering crowds with a wave of farewell, whilst this old man of 24 concentrated on the miserably slow approach march to the Seine. Fernand Lepinay's worry was what his mother would say. He had been involved in sabotage somewhere in north-eastern France for a year and had been working his way homewards by day and night since the invasion. My concern was that my bruises from the 13th August seemed to be worsening and, unlike the cuts, not healing.

Footnote:

On the 22nd August, 1944 on the approach to L'Aigle and somewhere behind me Lt. J.B. Cornwall & Tpr G.J.H. Epathite of the 23rd Hussars were killed probably by the "Tiger". Fernand has some information of this. On the 23rd Rifleman D. Watkin of 8th Battalion Rifle Brigades was killed in the protection of the Town. On the 27th CSM Kelshaw, Private B. Hughes & Lance Corporal J. Smedley all of 4th Batt. King's Shropshire Light Infantry were killed near L'Aigle.

Exercise SUMAN PROTECTOR 12

Better the Devil You Know –

Proving that Inns of Court officers really do get everywhere these days,

Major Mitcham has just returned home from a major exercise in the Asia-Pacific run in support of the Five Powers Defence Arrangements (FPDA).

The British contingent, selected from specialist roles across the country, comprised 38 personnel from all three Services – including a number of Reservists. They deployed to Changi Naval Base in Singapore for the command post exercise, named SUMAN PROTECTOR 12, which is only held once every five years.

They were joined by a similar number of Malaysians and New Zealanders, and some 80 Australian Defence Force personnel. However, the bulk of the numbers came from the Singaporean Armed Forces, who, as hosts, were particularly keen to test their knowledge and military systems, and to learn from their colleagues' operational experience elsewhere in the world.

Working alongside their FPDA colleagues, the British Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force officers spent nearly three weeks immersed in a fictional environment in the South China Sea, employed in



Maj Mitcham at Kranji Cemetery Singapore

both kinetic and disaster relief operations, in order to develop the know-how of their Asian counterparts. They were visited by the Chiefs of both the Singaporean and Malaysian Defence Staff while they were there, as well as by various ASEAN and

Antipodean dignitaries.

There was also time to visit the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery at Kranji, on the site of a former Japanese Prisoner of War Camp, which stands as testimony to the fate of over 24,000 Commonwealth forces.

The Five Powers in question are Singapore, the UK, Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand (SUMAN), which are all members of the British Commonwealth. The Five Powers Defence Arrangements are a series of bilateral accords dating back to 1971, in which the members agreed to consult one another in the event of any external aggression or military action on peninsular Malaysia and Singapore. The FPDA headquarters (or Integrated Area Defence System, HQ IADS) is based in Malaysia, from which UK and other FPDA personnel also took part.

Working alongside their FPDA colleagues, the British Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force officers spent nearly three weeks immersed in a fictional environment in the South China Sea

Museum Report

By Major Michael O'Beirne TD, Hon Curator

Life in the Museum in 2011/12 has been quite eventful. Of great value has been the introduction of the new computerised inventory system. Patient readers will have read of the need to run both a paper-based record of all artefacts owned by the Museum (called the "Accessions Book") and a computerised system with sophisticated searching facilities. Well, it's finally up and running and doing very well. A search on, say, "swords" is achieved by typing in "swords" in the appropriate field and a click or two on reveals all the swords we hold, a description for each including when acquired, who from, where stored, background notes, and much more. Wading through a thick ledger for this information would take hours and be very tedious.

The system has been invaluable when looking at prospective purchases on eBay to ensure we are not buying what we already have.

We are also using part of the system to record all the non-Museum assets held by the ICCY Regimental Trusts. This will simplify the management and care of the assets.

So, I give a big thanks to Major Tony Benbow who has been the driving force and general co-ordinator; to Roger our software consultant, to the General ICCY Trustees who have been generous and to AMOT (the Army Museums' Ogilby Trust) for the rest of the funding. Additionally, Tony has single-handedly extracted all the information from the old system and the Accessions Book and typed it into the new system, a massive job, and without his continuous hard work we would still be in the technical Dark Ages.

The search facility has revealed that an awful lot of stuff lying around has never been recorded. Accordingly many Tuesday nights have been spent searching through the Museum Store and recording the finds and they will shortly be photographed as well. Two photos per item can be added to the system. Many of these items are old framed photos, shields and plaques that have been hanging on my walls for decades or more. There is also a mass of books and a cupboard-full of photographs that need proper recording, not to mention the many dozens of paintings, prints and photographs hanging all round the walls of Stone Buildings and at Whipps Cross. This is very much work in progress.

It was in the course of a dusty and dirty evening in October 2012 that I came across a most extraordinary find. Jammed between a large chest and a tall wardrobe lay a number of old long wooden poles and several lances. These poles rather resemble the poles carried by traditional churchwardens during a service. I don't suppose anyone has taken much notice of them for years and years. Two were wrapped up in old brown paper surmounted by an old brown paper bag and held in place with ancient string. Out of idle curiosity I decided to take a closer look. A yellowing tatty tie label revealed the words: "B&Ioc Assn King's Colour 1797, modified 1803". Distinctly interested now, I commandeered a few square metres of clean floor in the corridor outside and unwrapped the parcel. Inside were sheets of the Daily Telegraph for 1971 encasing a very old cloth about six feet wide mounted on a pole about nine feet long, and which to my great delight appears to be an original Colour for the Bloomsbury & Inns of Court Association Volunteers. I only unwrapped the first foot because the material was fragile and disintegrating in place. The second "parcel" revealed a similar Colour.

A couple of weeks later an embroidery conservator visited SHQ in connection with another matter; took a look and advised no further unwrapping except by a professional conservator. Unfortunately the repair and conservation costs are likely to be large and we need to take professional advice as to where we go from here, but just owning two original Regimental Colours from 1797 (or thereabouts) is very exciting.

The date is significant because that is when the Bloomsbury & Ioc Association Volunteers was formed by Lieutenant-Colonel S C Cox, a barrister who was called by Lincoln's Inn and who became a Bankruptcy Commissioner. His image is recorded in several contemporary prints around SHQ. Much of the Association's recruiting was from Gray's Inn – hence the reference to "Bloomsbury". The unit was raised for local defence during the early part of the Napoleonic Wars together with other "neighbours" such as the Lincoln's Inn Association Volunteers and the Temple Association Volunteers.

I have long given up being surprised at what turns up at Stone Buildings. Those of greying hair and long memory will recall Captain Doug Mully (our PSAO in the 70s and 80s), tidying up a cellar and discovering four rusty Sten sub-machine guns under a pile of old horse furniture. Three were taken over by the authorities and one was conserved, deactivated and is now displayed in the Museum.

As for gifts this year, the only major item was the medals of the late Captain Alfred William Dear, a Rough Rider. He was born on 15th June 1913, served in WW2, later joined the publishing industry and died on 14th November 2000. His six medals (nicely mounted behind glass in a picture frame) and his service papers were given by his widow, Mrs Jane Lambert. Sadly she is terminally ill and wanted to ensure a good home for the items. A pleasant Saturday afternoon was spent travelling to and from her flat in Potters Bar to chat and collect the donation and to thank her personally.

One of our warriors recently returned from Afghanistan has promised some mementos of his attachment to the Grenadier Guards. Wait out for a full report next year. Otherwise, the usual admin tasks continue. There has been a regular flow of visitors and research enquiries to deal with. During a large group visit by OAPs on a day out to London from Felixstowe there was an unplanned mishap when one collapsed just inside SHQ. Thankfully the group included a trained nurse who performed flawlessly and the old lady was soon off to hospital where she recovered. But it shows the potential pitfalls of the job.

Finally, my many thanks go to all those who have helped the Museum in many different ways, not least to our new PSAO, Captain John Donaldson, who handles our many enquiries and is a source of much encouragement.



“KEN CALLED TO HOLLAND TO SALUTE WAR DEAD”*

Ken Robinson was a 19-year-old trooper in C Squadron Inns of Court Regiment and was part of the force that liberated Helmond, The Netherlands in September 1944. This is his account of the wonderful time he had on his recent visit.

Friday 21st September 2012

My son Stuart and I arrived at the hotel in Mierlo-Hout, Helmond at 12.30pm after a 450 mile drive and a boat trip and were met by five of the War Memorial Committee.

Coffee and sandwiches and a briefing of events to come and then up to our room (2nd floor – 43 stairs – no lift!), a quick freshen up and then off on our travels.

First stop the area where we were billeted in 1944, the whole lot having been demolished for a new housing estate.

Next a visit to a young lady of 90 who lived next door to us in 44 and had a young daughter who would not go to sleep until uncle Trooper Bill Simpson had tucked her in and kissed her goodnight.

Back to the hotel, a meal and so to bed.

Saturday 22nd September 2012

11.00am – a car takes us to Mierlo-Hout Cemetery – four Inns of Court members who never came back – Troopers Douglas Salt; Sidney Willows; Frank Loft and L/Sjt Horace Dodge. A wooden cross was placed next to the headstone on each one and a salute. I signed the Book of Remembrance.

Then a short trip to the 11th Armoured Division Memorial and back to Mierlo-Hout Community Hall for lunch.

Back to the hotel to get ready for the main event and then on to the church.

The service started with the priest welcoming everybody, especially the guest from England who was here in 1944/45 and many times since. Then 15 children aged seven to 15 came in each carrying a framed head and shoulders photograph – 11 of them civilians killed in the war – four of them black and white head and shoulders silhouettes of the soldiers killed (no photos available). These were placed on a trestle table, the priest announcing each one – then 15 more children each carrying a candle which was placed in front of each photograph.

After the service we all walked to the monument where a large crowd of over 200 had already gathered.

The chairman's opening speech concluded with the reading





of the message to the people of Helmond from the Honorary Colonel, Sir Robert Finch which was very well applauded – then my turn and that also got a good reception all the way back to my seat.

The unveiling – on my feet again – I could just about reach to cut the ribbon! – followed by a speech by the Mayor and I was called on again to lay a bunch of flowers and the wreath I had taken with me from England.

The concluding speech was given by the chairman of the War Memorial committee and again I was called on, this time to receive a medal from the people of Helmond.

It's all over – but no it's not! The crowd all wanted to shake my hand, kiss me and thank me for what the ICR had done 68 years ago.

Then a most welcome surprise – a short walk to an English type Pub – free food and drinks and more handshakes and kisses – what a lovely way to finish our stay in Helmond.

Sunday 23rd September 2012

10.00am on our way home, arriving here at 8.00pm.

‘The service started with the priest welcoming everybody, especially the guest from England who was here in 1944/45 and many times since’

MISSION COMPLETED

**Headline taken from local newspaper.*

Prince Consort's Own? Former HSF members with Prince Albert above them

Blast from the past. HSF lance guard and route liners 1988 at the opening of the refurbished museum by our former Royal Hon.Colonel the late Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother



The Black Brogues

Twenty-twelve has been a busy year for "The Brogues" with our regular

activities such as the annual visit to the NMA and the Parade of Homage etc, but perhaps the highlight of the year will prove to be the gathering to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the formation of the ICCY Home Service Force Squadron (348)

The celebration was a lunch based at The Rifles' mess in Davies Street, Mayfair (we are able to use The Rifles' mess due to the connection of the Rough Riders with the Rifle Brigade, an antecedent regiment to The Rifles)

.We had a great turnout consisting of former 17 HSF members plus 17 friends, guests and supporters of The ICCY HSF Sqn.(AKA *The Black Brogues*)

We met in the Rifle Bar (former Sgt's Mess 4 RGJ) at Davies Street and proceeded to decimate their keg of London Pride Bitter (had to be changed part way through pre-lunch drinks)

Following an hour's worth of sociability we were summoned to lunch. Due to our numbers

we were the only group in the mess (which was a good thing as our lunches tend to be somewhat lively and noisy).

As always we were well looked after by the mess staff Sgt Polden and Rifleman Steve (**Basil Fawley**) Phillips.

Rifleman Phillips classic on the day was to approach me, tap me on the shoulder and say «excuse me sir I am about to bellow». He then gave a high decibel description of the sweets that were available. To be fair he needed to bellow to overcome the hubbub and chinking of glass that had been brought on by a continuous supply of wine.

In due course the port was served and under the ad hoc presidency of Major Nick Holder the relevant toasts were called – Sgt Callow – The Queen (appropriate as Alan served in 3 Queens as a regular), WO2 Wolfe – The Regiment & WO2 Durkin – The Squadron...

Following all the formal stuff and coffee it was time for team photos – the former members

of the HSF under the gaze of Prince Albert and the ladies under the leering stare of Kaiser Bill.

At the behest of Sgt Polden we were shepherded back to the Rifle bar for another hour and another Squadron attack on the keg of bitter.

After an hour we bade farewell to Davies Street and moved to our secondary watering hole the nearby Barley Mow pub from which the hour having received «quick orders» from my senior field commander (Mrs S).

For the record the ICCY Home Service Force Squadron was formed Jan 1987 and stood down Oct 1994 (a number of members «staged on» for another year as The Defence Platoon).

Everyone that served will have memories of the time in or connected with the Squadron but perhaps two notable highlights: winning the Regimental Patrol Race in 1988

and mounting a live ammunition guard at The Rotunda (Woolwich Garrison) 1991 to take the pressure off the regular army at the time of The 1st Gulf War and the PIRA mainland campaign.

Please note the 50th anniversary lunch will be in October 2037. Price per person 3000 Euros payment in advance by end of next week – no refunds for non-attendance.

On a serious note. It was a special day for former members of the ICCY HSF Sqn. and the presence of so many friends, partners and supporters is really appreciated and helped the day go with a swing.

JS

PS The voluntary charity surcharge and a donation from Eric Hendrie raised £37.00 to go to The Royal Star & Garter Home. this will be added to donations from The Armed Forces Day lunch held in June and any other BB run functions before the end of the year



Kaiser Bill and the ladies



Serious stuff this eating and drinking

Below is an overview of the unit + Black Brogue it's "The Full Monty" no doubt you can pull out key points for an intro'

Who we where and we are now

The Home Service Force was formed in 1992 as a pilot scheme of 4 companies based in The West Country.

The role of the HSF was KP (key point) defence. Covering national infrastructures such as power stations and fuel bunkering locations plus military HQ's. Following the pilot scheme to force expanded to 50 units spread across mainland UK

The ICCY HSF Sqn. was formed on 1st Jan 1987 - officially designated by The MoD as 348 (ICCY) Signal Sqn. In house we were known as ICCY HSF Sqn. and we wore the ICCY cap badge instead of The Royal Signal "Jimmy" the Sqn. ORBAT was 3 Troops (rifle platoons) and a Sqn HQ our wartime role was the defence of London District HQ which would have relocated to Buckinghamshire if "The Cold War went Hot"

Recruitment was restricted to ex regulars from the Army, R Navy. RAF and TA soldiers with a min of 2 years service.

The other units within London District were HAC (2 companies) and 4 Para (1 company). These two units were very restrictive we recruit entry. So their loss was our gain and we received a number of ex regular soldiers with no previous connection with The ICCY most of these were from infantry battalions with Northern Ireland experience. The bulk of Squadron were TA from within 71 Signals Regiment mainly ICCY & Berkshire Yeomanry

From the outside The HSF may have looked like are re run of The Home Guard "Dads Army" but the combination of experienced ex regular infantry soldiers and ex TA soldiers determined to excel in a new role created a very capable unit

Proof of the pudding was the wining of The Regimental Patrol competition in 1988 and the deployment of a troop to guard (live ammo) part of the Woolwich Garrison in 1991 to relieve the regular army at the time of the first Gulf War and the PIRA mainland campaign.

The HSF was stood down with the end of The Cold War from 1993. The ICCY HSF disbanded in October 1994. A troop sized cadre carried on for an extra year as a Regimental Defence Platoon.

The Black Brogue

Following the stand down of the Sqn. an ex members club known as "The Old Devils" was formed. This carried on for a few years but fizzled out.

During this period a National Home Service Association was formed and a small element attended various events most noteworthy being an annual "concentration" based at The ICCY Bisley Hut.

Although activity with NHSF reduced over time we were invited to contribute towards an "HSF Grove" at the NMA in Staffordshire which we did by sponsoring a brick in the plinth!

We were duly invited to the HSF Grove dedication and 5 ex HSF made the long round trip to the NMA.

The famous five decided to regenerate the activities of The Old Devils Club and thus The Black Brogue was formed. Although originally small in numbers The Black Brogue as grown to encompass a strong following of friends and family that provide regular support to our activities.

The Black Brogue is a maverick organisation with no membership list, fees or rules - we simply want to maintain the HSF profile within the ICCY "family" and support the association in general. We make no restrictions to our activities and all are welcome to participate

Why "Black Brogue" - because during out visit to the dedication of The HSF Grove (NMA) one eagle eyed ex SSM spotted one ex Trooper wearing an Oxford shoe on is right foot & a Brogue on his right foot (he got dressed in the dark to avoid disturbing his other half in the early hours prior to the trip to Staffordshire) - he made a feeble excuse saying he had another pair like them back home. From then on we have called ourselves

The Black Brogue



Inns of Court & City and Essex Yeomanry Hunting Trip – Czech Republic 8 Feb 2012

In January Capt Keppler and Lt Allen formed the ICCEY Hunting Troop and set off to bag themselves a wild boar in the middle of the snow-covered forests of the Czech Highlands.

The first evening netted little other than sight of a few rabbits scuttling around in the snow and a several young roe deer. Six hours in, feet like blocks of ice, I was very glad when the hunter said he thought nothing would come out that night. I headed back to console myself with some practice shooting at 3 am in the snow on Capt Keppler's farm – fortified by his never ending vodka filled hip flask.

The next day was occupied with the usual village life of going from here to there to pick up stuff, backdate hunting licenses and so on – with a hearty Czech lunch in between.

Then suddenly a call from the Hunter – we needed to be in position earlier than expected. The moonlight was strong and the boars would be out and about.

Wrapped up like the Michelin Man we drove over to the Hunter's house. A quick turnaround and out in his pickup to drive through the forest. We then trudge up to the hide (a tiny hut precariously balanced 30 foot up a tree). It was minus 15 degrees, but this time I was prepared to wait it out come what may. Settling down to a long long night the boars appeared after only a few hours, snuffling into the clearing about 200 yards away.

The boars are very sensitive to noise and the rifle was on a hair trigger so I very gently got into position. One shot above the foreleg and the boar was down. After gutting it in the snow, the entrails left for the foxes, we lugged it down the track to the pickup and headed home to cut off the head and drink vodka.

The next day we headed to the taxidermists (who greeted us with a cheery "Ah I heard there were two crazy Englishmen coming") for the beast to be mounted.

And then train to the airport and back to work.

Lt Allen

(The head will hopefully make an appearance in the Officers' Mess soon)

ICCEY Middle Eastern Drinks Party

On Wednesday 26th September, Capt (acting) Julian Allen hosted, and Lt Stuart Kennon attended the first annual ICCEY Middle Eastern cocktail party, complete with Squadron cap badge, in resilient splendour. Capt Allen, having recently emigrated to Kurdistan, has relocated his family in Dubai, and Lt Kennon, on leave from training RIFLES recruits at the Infantry Training Centre Catterick, took the opportunity to visit a fellow Devil's Own member. The party took place directly under the Burj Khalifa tower, in blistering 38oC heat. Any serving or former ICCEY Squadron members living in the Middle East are encouraged to get in touch with Capt Allen, as the date of next year's party is yet to be confirmed.'



DEVIL'S OWN SERGEANTS CLUB

2011/2012

These last twelve months have proved somewhat mixed in the fortune stakes.

Sadly quite a few members have passed on, including several who were "founder members" in 1966, and also Mrs Anne Bright, widow of the late John Bright, a pivotal member of the Club. Anne very kindly left the Club a handsome bequest in John's memory.

However, as old soldiers we have just closed up and carried on.

A successful Annual Dinner was held in December 2011 at The Civil Service Club. Although numbers were down all enjoyed a very pleasant evening well organised by Jim

Stewart and John Sabini.

This was followed by one of our "pub-nights" at The Rising Sun, Smithfield which has become our home- from-home and the post-service venue after the Rough Riders Annual Service (short cut across the churchyard).

Members have also taken part in other activities organised by the Black Brogues, run by John Sabini, and hardly a parade or other event has taken place that did not have a member of the Club present.

We heard of some Squadron members serving

in Afghanistan and parcels of sweets etc. were sent. We also learned that Jennifer, daughter of the late David Lavender was out there, disguised as Flight Lieutenant J. Lavender R.A.F. and another parcel of goodies winged (no pun intended) its way over.

Looking forward it has been decided to re-jig the Annual Dinner. In future we will move to March and make it a lunch to try and avoid perils of late night December travel and overload on the Xmas social calendar. Further details to be published shortly.

By kind permission of the Squadron Leader we meet at Stone Buildings every third Tuesday of the month (August and December excepted) at 20.00 hours and any serving or retired senior NCO not already a member is welcome to join us.

Whilst retirement etc. means that members are geographically far-flung we still manage between 15 and 20% attendance and keep in touch with everyone, including our "Friends of the Club" through a monthly newsletter.

Denis Durkin

THE INNS OF COURT & CITY YEOMANRY BENEVOLENT FUND

Are you aware there is a benevolent fund available to assist those who have served or serving in the Regiment?

The Fund is available to provide financial assistance to individuals who have served in existing or former units and their dependants, wives, widows and "who are in need of charitable assistance".

The Fund covers, for example, those who have served in the ICCY, the ICCY Band, The Inns of Court Regiment and The Rough Riders.

- An ex-member of the Regiment who had fallen on hard times and was homeless and living in his car. The Fund provided his rent and some basic furniture so that he could re-start his life. He had served in the 1970s.
- A widow whose husband had served in The Inns of Court Regiment throughout World War II. She is living in a Residential Care Home and the Fund has assisted her with some pocket money to enable her to go on outings, to buy clothing and to provide some small presents for her grandchildren.
- Another widow whose husband had served with The Rough Riders in Africa and Monte Casino. He died some

thirty years ago in the 1980s. His widow suffers from mild dementia and is unsteady on her feet. She continues to live in her own home and the Fund, with others, has assisted her with repairs to her house.

- A couple in their early 60s. His wife suffers from severe symptoms of MS. She lives on the floor below street level with no outlook and shower facilities on the next floor. The Fund, together with the MS Society, Civil Service Association, the RBL and the ABF have provided grants to adapt the house to their needs.

All grants are discretionary and take into an individual's needs and financial circumstances. Cases for assistance are usually assessed by caseworkers from SSAFA or the Royal British Legion who provide a full report to the Secretary.

If you know of anyone who needs assistance please contact me on prince@itchenabbas.fsnet.co.uk or one of the trustees.

Captain John Prince
Hon Secretary

Trustees: Sir Robert Finch, Major Corfield, Major Collins, Mr Durkin, Major Sawyer, Mr Taylor, Major Wadley and Captain Weale



ICCY Yacht Squadron

The Devil's Own Invitation

Regatta 2012

Tide Waits For No Man

Mermaids on the Water

At Seaview on Friday May 4th, a gentle and rising breeze brought a great day's racing, with the forecast far better than that suggested. Contrary to the met prediction of rain with the wind falling to nothing, we headed out for a challenging regatta where the tide was critical. As the first start approached, some teams were rapidly swept away towards Ryde. Turning towards the first mark, to be upstream of the start line at the one minute gun takes some courageous conviction.

A few crewing difficulties reduced the fleet to six this year, but mixing some skills made for a close fight all day.

Many of the familiar faces were present, Capt George Cordle returned to the fold and Barbara Benbow was a very welcome helper for the dinner. We will be striving to boost the team numbers again for 2013 and hope that everyone will encourage attendance not only within our own ranks but amongst other Regiments, always bearing in mind that this is an invitational regatta.

Here are some future dates to note:-

**Winter supper - Royal Thames Yacht Club, Knightsbridge
Thursday 17th
January.**

**Regatta 2013 - Seaview, Friday
3rd May, 2013**

Results:

1st Carden Decanter -
Colonel's Cutter - Maj R Sawyer ICCY

2nd Cumberland Cavalry -
Maj A Collins ICCY

3rd Yeomans Yomp -
Maj M Douglas RY

4th Cave Canum -
Capt M Antelme RHG/D

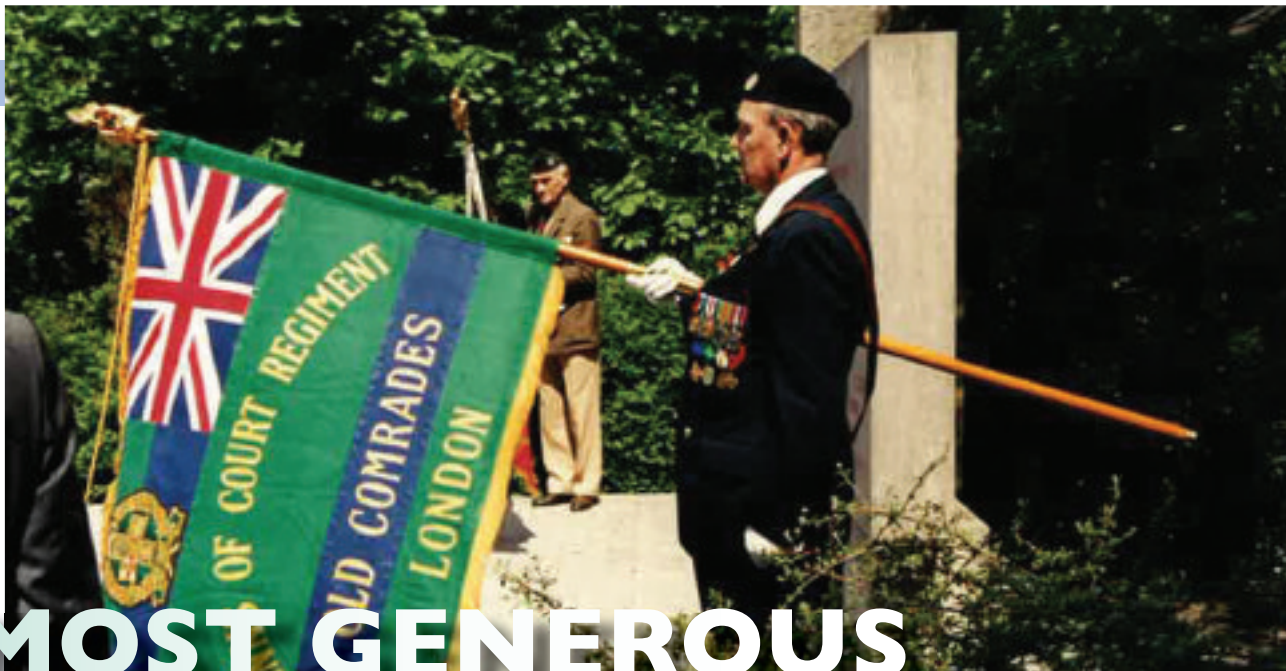
5th HAC -
Capt B Selley HAC

6th Rusty Shackle -
Rear Guard - Maj J Evans ICCY

Flag officers:
Admiral Maj Andrew Collins;
Commodore Col Sir Robert Finch;
Vice Commodore Maj Rupert Sawyer;
Rear Commodores Lt Col Jonathan
Manley and Maj James Evans.

Major Rupert Sawyer TD

A few crewing difficulties reduced the fleet to six this year, but mixing some skills made for a close fight all day



A MOST GENEROUS BEQUEST

Many of you will remember Sgt John Bright who died in July 2003 and Anne, his wife who died in November 2011.

Shortly after Anne's death news was received that the Association would benefit from a substantial legacy from their estate of the order of £200,000. As much of the legacy is tied up in property, it will take some time to resolve but a trust has been set up, the details of which will be available at the AGM on the 10th of November 2012.

Anne and John were childhood sweethearts, indeed they lived next door to one another in Chingford and were married in July 1946 when John was demobbed. He was then aged 19 and Anne a little younger. John was under age when he volunteered to join the Inns of Court Regiment and was posted to C Squadron just before D-Day 1944. He landed on Juno beach in the early hours of June 6th 1944 as a scout car driver/operator with Lt Denis Main-Wilson (he of the Goon Show fame) as his car

commander.

John celebrated his 17th Birthday whilst doing liaison work with the Canadians while back home in Chingford Anne was working in the admin office of the Halex plastics factory which among other war materials made ping pong balls (these were used in flying boat floats and in submarines as buoyancy aids when submarines were used to carry heavy cargo).

After a month working with the Canadians, the team of Bright and Dennis M-Wilson parted, Denis to become an ADC and bodyguard to the Corps Commander and John to return to C Squadron. John was "mentioned in despatches" for his work on Juno Beach.

John was a stalwart of the Association and a committee member for many years. He took an increasing role in organising the annual visit to Belgium and the Belgian night dinner held at Stone Buildings on Remembrance weekend. At the reunion, he always organised a raffle to raise funds. His compassion for those who were bereaved was marked.

John will always be

remembered for carrying the Association Standard at every Remembrance service in Lincoln's Inn and at funerals of Old Comrades. He last carried the Standard at the funeral of Charles Wicker and how he managed to stand throughout the service was a feat as he was already very ill. We do miss his dignified bearing, his enthusiasm his loyalty and his warm smile. Anne was constant in her support for John and they committed an enduring personal legacy to the Association and all those who remember them.

Tom Taylor

John was a stalwart of the Association and a committee member for many years. He took an increasing role in organising the annual visit to Belgium



Obituaries

CAPT. DOUGLAS P MULLY TD

Doug Mully died in Suffolk on 27th July 2011. He had been suffering from a debilitating illness which latterly confined him to a wheelchair and had moved from Ilford to be near his son Piers who lived at Felixstow. Doug's wife Eileen had died, sadly, some years before.

Doug was 68 Squadron's first and only "home grown" PSO. He joined the ICR after service with the 17/21st and the 5th RIDGs (his grandfather's regiment). On amalgamation with the RRs in 1961 he transferred to A Sqdn as a Tp Sgt to assist them adapt to their new role, which he did superbly well as his troop that year won the competition for the Armourers Bowl.

In the dark days of the 1967/68 cut-back to the TA he transferred to the Royal Yeomanry as SQMS of HQ Squadron and became SSM in 1968. In 1972 Doug gave up his civilian occupation to accept the post of Admin Officer as a Captain with 68 Signal Squadron, a post he held for almost 20 years, retiring at the end of 1991. (If any reader is in touch with Doug's brother Colin

or with his son Piers, please let the chairman know.)

Andrew Collins, who commanded 68 Signal Squadron from 1977 to 1980, writes:

"When Doug arrived as PSO at 10 Stone Buildings, it was like a breath of fresh air. For him it was not a job but a vocation. His pride and loyalty to the IC&CY brand was intense and this infused through the entire Squadron. He worked tirelessly to ensure that no detail was left uncovered both in operational

matters and ceremonial occasions.

The Army was in his blood and I recall that he had a superb collection of cap badges. He and Eileen were much missed when his failing health prevented them from attending the various reunions."

CAPT KEITH ROBERTS

died peacefully at home in Sweden on Saturday 12 March 2012. He is survived by his wife Birgitta, whom he met and married in Sweden in 1960; they had two children, son Andrew and daughter Kathy, who also survive him with his grandchildren.

The family also lived in Austria, Germany and the USA when Keith worked for international companies. By 1984 the family was back in Sweden when Keith

set up his own company and have been domiciled there since.

Towards the end of World War II, Keith was called up into the Royal Marines and saw service in NW Europe and Palestine. On demobilisation in 1948 he joined the Infantry Bn of the HAC, serving until 1951, when he transferred to D Squadron ICR as a trooper and later drove an AEC in the Heavy Troop until the AECs were withdrawn in 1955. He was then a Tp Sgt in a sabre troop until he was commissioned in 1958 and transferred to a reformed A Squadron under the then Major Digby Thompson.

He left the Regiment 1960 to move to Sweden. In 1984, after his travels around the world had ceased and he had taken his family to settle in Sweden, he made contact with his old friends and was pleased to discover that he was still eligible

for membership of the Association.

He duly paid his sub and became an active member of the Association for another 27 years, visiting London when he could in November for re-unions and joining visits to France and Belgium and making strong friendships with the late Eddie Brickell, Tony Voaden, Denis Durkin and others of that ilk.

MAJOR JONATHAN MH BALCON TD

Jonny Died age 80 on the 23rd June 2012 at Tunbridge Wells after a very short illness. He is survived by Sally his wife and childhood sweetheart, his daughters Deborah, Henrietta and his grandchildren.

Eric Knowles, who was Jonny's SSM when Jonny Commanded B Squadron IC&CY, just before the Regiment stood down, writes:

"June saw the departure of Jonny Balcon on his last posting to join the ever increasing ranks of our Old Comrades on the other side. Jonny was born on the 7th December 1931 and it must have been a little galling as he reached his 10th Birthday for the celebrations to be overshadowed by the Japanese attack on the Pearl Harbor.

"Jonny was too young for military service in WWII and much to his great regret was found unfit for National Service due to the after effects of accidental damage to an arm. Nevertheless, he joined the TA and served throughout the 50s with the Rough Riders who, at that time, were filling an infantry role with The London Rifle Brigade.

"At the start of Exercise London Pride in the summer of 1954, Jonny was Corporal Balcon and some days later was promoted Sergeant and commanding a Charioteer. He was commissioned onto the RRs. On amalgamation with the ICR, the RRs became A Squadron of the IC&CY and

in the last year before the reorganization of the TA, when Jonny was 2/ic of A Squadron, he was promoted Major and given the Command of B Squadron, a role which he clearly enjoyed, although I think he found the command of an RAC Recce Squadron very different indeed from the command of a more static 3rd Mortar Platoon, as experienced at the end of that years annual camp – which proved to be the last Annual camp of the IC&CY."

On the 5th September, a celebration of Jonny's life was held in his local church at Seal in Kent and we listened to the many tributes paid to Johnny from family and friends. Among the congregation from the IC&CY were Major and Mrs Tony Shipton. Capt and Mrs Leo Antelme, Captain Jane Dodd and her husband Alex, former SSMs Jim Wolfe and Denis Durkin. Also present was longtime and much respected friend, Mrs Digby Thompson.

RALPH BRACE, a Rough Rider, died at Guildford on 24th March 2011, age 90. He is survived by his son Michael and two grandsons. His wife died some years earlier.

Ralph joined the RRs in 1938 at the time of the Munich crisis, as he said, "by mistake". He and some dozen of his friends decided to join the TA and arrived at the Drill Hall in Bunhill Row intent on joining the London Rifle Brigade, to discover that they and the RRs shared the Drill Hall turnabout on a daily basis and they had arrived on the wrong night.

Nothing loathed they signed on and soon learned that they were members of the 11th LAA Regt (The City of London Yeomanry) RA. Ralph was posted to 32 Battery, issued with uniform and equipment and some serious training continued apace until in August 24th 1939 when the Regiment was embodied in

the Regular Army.

Within six hours the whole Regiment had gathered together – No absentees.

That evening the gun troops received orders to proceed to various locations around London. Ralph's troop set off after dark for a location in Stanmore. When dawn broke on the 25th they found that they were protecting a most important location – the RAF Fighter Command HQ at Bentley Priory.

One gun was positioned outside the AOC's office, which led to some interesting conversations. (Ralph had prepared what amounts to a potted history of his service, which echoes that of much of the Regiment's story during World War II and we have received a copy of it which will form the basis of a project for future Vanguards.)

Ralph had a busy and varied time with 32 Bty. Protecting fighter stations such as North Weald and Hornchurch took up most of their time in 1939 and '40 but in 1941 32 Bty moved to Scotland for combined operations training but in September 1941 was sent to Freetown as part of Force 110 to prepare for an attack on the Canary Islands. This plan was cancelled in February '42 and the Bty returned to Scotland to continue combined ops Training.

In July '42 the Bty was rushed to the Isle of Wight ready to reinforce the Dieppe Raid if that had been successful. Operation Torch saw 32 Bty join 1st Army in North Africa. On to Italy, missing the landings in Sicily, given the opportunity to attend a WOSB in Naples he accepted, knowing that success would mean a move back to the UK so with new found friends found himself sailing up the Clyde puzzled about all the naval traffic Streaming out to sea. The Second Front had opened. D-Day had begun.

Ralph attended a pre OCTU

conversion course at Wrotham (in his case to Infantry) before reporting to No 164 OCTU at Barmouth. An OCTU course was never going to be "a walk in the park". In Ralph's case he had to carry off "the park".

On the 1st November '44, 3 days before the Commissioning parade, during a live ammunition exercise he trod on a "blind", an unexploded hand grenade hidden in the long grass and suffered a very severe injury which gave him trouble for the remainder of his life. After an enforced 6 months stay in hospital the Army wanted to discharge him but he protested that he had nowhere to go as his mother, who had escaped from Singapore on the last boat out was living in temporary crowded accommodation and his father was still a prisoner of the Japanese in Changi Jail.

Sympathetic senior officers arranged for him to have another medical board and after "tutoring" was sent to a civilian Doctor, in Croydon and regraded B7 (too low a category even for the Pay Corps). Eventually commissioned into the Pioneer Corps as a full Lieutenant he was given a Company. After several moves he ended up at Catterick looking after 6,000 POWs (with 21 staff). Demobilisation came in 1946 and he returned to the City and Barclays Bank where he enjoyed a successful career.

Lt Colonel RODNEY JAMES PARKER FTLC ARCM psm

Rodney died on the 1st July 2012, Age 71, after courageously fighting a cancer-related illness for over 18 months. He is survived by his wife Catharine, daughter Ruth and a grandchild.

He retired from the regular army in August 1992 after 35 years of distinguished service and took up the appointment of Director of Music of the Inns of Court and City Yeomanry Band (later the IC&CY Band

of The Royal Yeomanry) with promotion to Lt Colonel in 1994. Another highlight that year was a visit by the Band and Squadron to the Normandy town of L'Aigle for the 50th Anniversary of the liberation of that town by an Inns of Court unit. It was a beautiful sunny weekend in August and the Band did much to underpin the «entente cordiale» with our Norman cousins. At the time Rodney commented that it was «a delightful weekend during which, between concerts and parades we ate and drank in true French style and in the town Red Bar which became the Band Club for the weekend where the local language was practised and the European Treaty completely rewritten, largely to the advantage of music and the Territorial Army!». The townsfolk of L'Aigle,

some 18 years on, still remember Rodney and the Band with affection and respect.

Rodney, who was born on 2nd May 1941 at Exeter and enlisted into the Wiltshire Regiment in August 1957, as a clarinet player; he was then only 16 and a bit and was a pupil at Kneller Hall in 1958/9. During his time on the course his regiment amalgamated to form The Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment (Berk & Wilts) and he served with them in Malta and BAOR.

In 1968 he attended Kneller Hall as a Student Bandmaster he won six coveted top prizes.

In 1970 he was appointed Bandmaster of the 2nd Bn The Royal Fusiliers joining the Regiment in Berlin and also serving in Northern Ireland, Canada and Paderborn. He remained a fusilier on his next posting as Bandmaster at the Queens Division Depot July 1976.

On 7th November 1977 he was commissioned into his original regiment, The Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment as Director of Music of the Prince

of Wales's Division. Whilst in this appointment he directed massed bands at the HMS Vernon Tattoo in Portsmouth in 1979 and 1980. In March 1981 he transferred to the RAOC and continued his involvement with the HMS Vernon Tattoo, again being its Director of Music in 1982.

Captain Parker transferred again to become Director of Music to the Brigade of Gurkhas, with promotion to Major on 7th November 1985. He was Senior Director of Music for the Edinburgh Tattoo in 1986 and devised a display for the Royal Tournament in 1986, based on the history of the Gurkhas.

On February 1987 he transferred to the Grenadier Guards as their Director of Music and, later that year, led the Band together with the Pipes and Drums of the 1st Bn The Gordon Highlanders, on a three months tour of North America.

In 1988 Rodney became Senior Director of Music, BAOR and in June 1990 he took a group of Bands to Moscow to perform for our Prime Minister's visit. Rodney claimed to be the first British Director of Music to visit the Soviet Ministry of Defence! Also in 1990 he directed the British contribution to the Breda Tattoo in Holland.

On the 17th February 1991 he was appointed Senior Director of Music for Junior Training based at Kneller Hall. Full Circle.

Major Nick Holder who was an IC&CY member of the Band Committee says that Rodney was very popular, well liked and highly regarded a Director of Music both among his musicians and his audiences, as witness the last concert at the Basingstoke Anvil when he showed his enthusiasm for the music of Mathew Arnold (he of the Dam Busters March) played to a packed House. He will be sorely missed.

68 ICC&EY Nominal Role

906 Sig Tp (LI)

Lt	TAFFS
Lt	TAYLOR
WO2	PATON
SSgt	TEAR
Sgt	BURKE
Sgt	JULES
Cpl	BARHAM
Cpl	HITCHEN
Cpl	JOHNSON
Cpl	KNIGHT
Cpl	MICHAEL
Cpl	SHARP
Cpl	WYNNE
LCpl	FOLEROS
LCpl	FOX
LCpl	MAALOUF
LCpl	MCCARTHY
LCpl	MCGOWAN
LCpl	TEAR
LCpl	WHIFFEN
Sig	CROWTHER
Sig	HAWKINS
Sig	HOLLOWDAY
Sig	LEVY
Sig	MACKINLAY
Sig	MBEREKPE
Sig	MORGAN
Sig	O'HARA GREEN
Sig	OSMENT
Sig	RYAN

Maj	CORNICK	OC
Capt	OLOHAN	2 I/C
Capt	DONALDSON	PSAO

3 Sig Tp (WX)

Lt	BOLT
WO2	PERRY
WO2	YOUNG
SSgt	BROWN
SSgt	GRIFFITHS
SSgt	GOODWIN
Sgt	WARREN
Cpl	BARRETT
Cpl	DAWES
Cpl	KANE
Cpl	WARBURTON
LCpl	ELLERY
LCpl	HONYCHURCH
LCpl	GILES
LCpl	GORMAN
LCpl	MAHOMED
Sig	GOLBOURN
Sig	GORMAN
Sig	HIGGINS
Sig	IRISH
Sig	MEHEGAN
Sig	NOBLE
Sig	OKAFOR
Sig	ROBIN
Sig	TESLENKO
Sig	VICKERS

907 Sig Tp (CF)

Capt	SWAIN
Sgt	MARSH
Sgt	STABLER
Cpl	DENTON
Cpl	NUGENT
LCpl	BRAYSHAW
LCpl	DELF
LCpl	WARD
Sig	ALSTON
Sig	ASHTON
Sig	BENNETT
Sig	BONWICK
Sig	BROWN
Sig	JACKSON
Sig	KERLEN
Sig	LEWIS
Sig	MARKO DA COSTA
Sig	MILLS
Sig	MILLS
Sig	POLLEY
Sig	RIDEOUT
Sig	SALISBURY
Sig	SHEPHERD
Sig	SPINKS

Officers and ORs at Extra-Regimental Establishment

1. Lt Col Jonathan Manley –

SO1 TA, 2 SE Bde

2. Maj Vickie Sheriff –

2ic, University of London Officers Training Corps

3. Maj James Evans –

G7 Young Officer Development Advisor, I45 Bde

4. Lt Conor Brindley –

SO3 LONDIST Recce Team

5. Maj Paul Mitcham –

OCA Sqn, Media Operations Group (Volunteers)

6. Capt Huck Keppler –

Liaison Officer, Media Operations Group (Volunteers) but currently serving as SO3 Influence with the Scots Guards in Helmand Province (Op HERRICK 17).

7. Lt Will Kallaway –

SO3 Analysis, Media Operations Group (Volunteers)

8. 2Lt Ed Perkins –

SO3 Messaging, Media Operations Group (Volunteers)

9. Sig Oakeshott –

Writer, Media Operations Group (Volunteers)