



# THE DIE-HARDS

*The Journal of*

THE MIDDLESEX REGIMENT

*(Duke of Cambridge's Own)*

## June 1945

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# The Die Hards

THE JOURNAL OF THE MIDDLESEX REGIMENT  
(Duke of Cambridge's Own)



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## THE MIDDLESEX REGIMENT (DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE'S OWN)

(57)

The Plume of the Prince of Wales. In each of the four corners the late Duke of Cambridge's Cypher and Coronet.  
"Mysore," "Serinapatam," "Albuhera," "Ciudad Rodrigo," "Badajoz," "Vittoria," "Pyrenees," "Nivelle," "Nive," "Peninsular,"  
"Alma," "Inkerman," "Sevastopol," "New Zealand," "South Africa, 1879," "Relief of Ladysmith," "South Africa, 1900-02."  
The Great War—46 Battalions—"Mons," "Le Cateau," "Retreat from Mons," "Marne, 1914," "Aisne, 1914," "La Bassée, 1914,"  
"Messines, 1914," "Armentières, 1914," "Neuve Chapelle," "Ypres, 1915," "Gravenstafel," "St. Julien," "Frezenberg,"  
"Bellevue," "Aubers," "Hooge, 1915," "Loos," "Somme, 1916," "Albert, 1916," "Bazentin," "Delville Wood,"  
"Pozières," "Ginchy," "Fiers-Courcette," "Morval," "Thiepval," "Le Transloy," "Ancre Heights," "Ancre, 1916," "Bapaume,"  
"Polygon Wood," "Arras, 1917," "Vimy, 1917," "Scarpe, 1917," "Arleux," "Pulckem," "Langemarck, 1917," "Menin Road,"  
"Broodseinde," "Poelcappelle," "Passchendaele," "Cambrai, 1917," "St. Quentin," "Rosières," "Avre,"  
"Villers Bretonneux," "Lys," "Estaires," "Hazebrück," "Baillieu," "Kemmel," "Scherpenberg," "Hindenburg Line," "Canal  
du Nord," "St. Quentin Canal," "Coutail," "Selle," "Valenciennes," "Sambre," "France and Flanders, 1914-18," "Italy,"  
"1917-18," "Struma," "Doiran, 1918," "Macedonia, 1915-18," "Suva," "Landing at Suva," "Scimitar Hill," "Gallipoli, 1915,"  
"Rumania," "Egypt, 1915-17," "Gaza," "El Mughar," "Jerusalem," "Jericho," "Jordan," "Tell 'Asur," "Palestine, 1917-18,"  
"Mesopotamia, 1917-18," "Murman, 1919," "Dukhovskaya," "Siberia, 1918-19."

### Regular and Militia Battalions.

1st Bn. (57th Foot). 2nd Bn. (77th Foot).  
5th Bn. (Royal Elthorne Militia).  
6th Bn. (Royal East Middlesex Militia).  
Depot—Mill Hill. Records Office, Ashford, Middx.  
Pay Office—Kensington.

### Territorial Army Battalions

1/7th Bn. 2/7th Bn. 8th Bn. 30th Bn.  
9th Bn. (— L.A.A. R.A.).  
1st and 2nd Bns. Princess Louise's Kensington Regiment.  
1st, 2nd and 3rd Independent Coys.  
No. 1 Heavy Support Coy.

### Affiliated A.A. Units of the Territorial Army

— (7th City of London) Searchlight Regiment R.A.  
— (St. Pancras) Searchlight Regiment R.A.

### Allied Regiments of Canadian Militia.

The Prince of Wales Rangers (Peterborough  
Regiment) (M.G.) . . . . . Peterborough, Ontario.  
The Wentworth Regiment . . . . . Dundas, Ontario.  
The Middlesex and Huron Regiment . . . . . London, Ontario.

### Allied Battalion of Australian Infantry.

57th Bn. . . . . Preston.

### Allied Regiment of New Zealand Military Forces

The Taranaki Regiment . . . . . New Plymouth.

### Colonel of the Regiment:

Colonel M. Browne, M.C., D.L.

### Officer Commanding Depot:

Major A. W. Clark, O.B.E.

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### NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS.

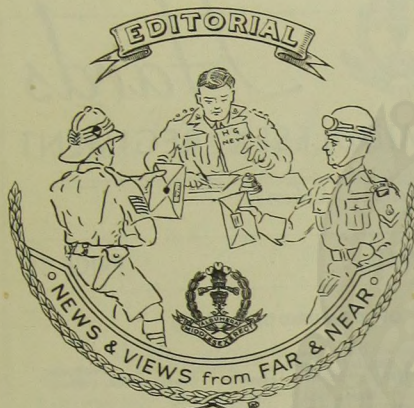
"The Die-Hards" is published in March, June, September and December, and copies may be obtained by application to the Editor, enclosing 1/- for each copy, plus 2d. postage.

All Contributions intended for publication should reach the Editor not later than the 1st of the month previous to that of issue. CONTRIBUTIONS SHOULD BE TYPED IN TRIPPLICATE (FOR PURPOSES OF CENSORSHIP) AND BE ON ONE SIDE OF THE PAPER ONLY, and signed, stating whether it is desired to publish the contributor's name or not. Rejected manuscripts, etc., will only be returned if accompanied by a stamped and addressed envelope. The Editor will thankfully receive Contributions from past or present members of the Regiment or others interested, but necessarily reserves to himself the right of publication. All communications concerning the paper, including Advertisements should be addressed to the Editor, "The Die-Hards" Journal, The Middlesex Regiment, Inglis Barracks, Mill Hill, London, N.W.7.

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Editor: Capt. G. E. Moore, 24th Middlesex Bn, H.G.

To say that events of great moment have happened since the previous edition of these notes would be a masterpiece of understatement!

I am the least fitted to attempt to add anything to that which has already been said and written on the great events which we have been spared to witness, and it is with a very devout "Thank God!" that the Nation has given thanks for Victory in the West and, for those of us in "Southern England," deliverance from sudden death.

But let it NEVER be forgotten that we have NOT YET destroyed Nazi-ism—all we have done is to beat the German armies in the field.

It is infinitely more important for us to win the Peace than ever it was for us to win the War!

So, let us bend every nerve and sinew to the purpose of ensuring that all the sacrifices and privations of the last six years do not become unavailing.

This can only be achieved by each INDIVIDUAL, dedicating himself, in the truest sense of that phrase, to the tasks ahead.

With the recent visit of H.M. The Queen and the two Princesses to Chailey to see the crippled children it is appropriate to mention the work of mercy being carried on by the Hon. Lady Fortescue, whose gracious letter I quoted in my March Editorial. Lady Fortescue has organised The Elisabeth Starr Memorial Fund for the Relief of the Children of Provence. Those of my readers who have read those charming books of hers, "Perfume from Provence" and "Sunset House," will know the countryside to which she wants to take some badly needed relief.

She wants to take out a team of trained people, nurses, masseurs, dentists, welfare workers, radiologists, preferably with a knowledge of French. She wants to buy Mobile Clinics to visit isolated mountain villages too far from the Relief Centres in the towns for weakly children to reach. She wants Mass Radiography vans to detect tuberculosis.

I appeal to all who love children, and all who are thankful that their children spent the war years on this side of the Channel, to help her accomplish a miracle such as has been wrought at Chailey.

Please send ANY contribution, no matter how small, to the Hon. Treasurer, Col. H. D. Carlton, D.S.O., c/o The Westminster Bank, Foreign Branch, 41, Lothbury, London, E.C.2, or any gifts in kind, such as soap, outgrown children's and babies' clothes in good condition, shoes, condensed milk, Bovril, Lemco, syrup, halibut and cod liver oil, sugar—even needles and cotton and darning wool to mend their rags—to The Elisabeth Starr Memorial Fund, c/o E. H. Munnion, Esq., Ardingly, Sussex. Remember that ANYTHING is precious to those who have NOTHING.

Acknowledgments this quarter are as many as ever, and they are made with the same sense of deep gratitude.

To Field-Marshal The Hon. Sir Harold Alexander, K.C.B., D.S.O., M.C., for his generous tribute to the Regiment.

To Lieut.-Colonel W. M. Cunningham, M.V.O., O.B.E., M.C., Military Advisor to the Field-Marshal, for his spirit of co-operation in spite of many most exacting tasks.

To Major Horton and Mrs. Leonard of the M. of I. for our photographs.

To Mr. Arthur Bryant and "The Times" for permission to reprint the former's article "The Needs of Infantry."

To Country Life Ltd. and Hugh Rees Ltd., for immediate and ungrudging permission to quote extracts from, respectively, C. L. Kingsford's "The Story of the Duke of Cambridge's Own (Middlesex Regiment)" and "Wellington's Campaign, 1808-15," by Major-General C. W. Robinson, C.B. (apropos this last-named book, my copy is a specially bound 1st Edition, inscribed by the Author to H.R.H. The Duke of Connaught, dated December, 1907—how did it get to the bookshop where I found it?)

To the following national, provincial and local papers: "The Times," "The Bedfordshire Times," "Thames Valley Times," "West London Observer," "Hendon Times," "Croydon Advertiser" and "Hampstead News."

To the Editors of the following contemporary Regimental Journals: The Journal of the H.A.C., The Snapper, The Suffolk Regimental Gazette, The London Scottish Regimental Gazette, The Dragon, The Sapper, The Covenant, The Gunner, The Tank, The R.A.O.C. Gazette, St. George's Gazette, The Queen's Own Gazette, The Iron Duke, The Journal of the South Wales Borderers, The Oak Tree, The Sprig of Shillelagh, The China Dragon, The Faugh-a-Ballagh, The Journal of the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry, The Lion and Rose, The Borderers' Chronicle, The Eagle, and The Artificer.

Now for my last paragraph as Editor of "THE DIE-HARDS." For a year, now, it has been my privilege and honour to revive this Journal, under the patronage of Lieut.-Colonel F. B. P. Weil, and to have been personally responsible, from cover to cover, for the first four issues. Through circumstances entirely beyond my control, this is the last issue for which I shall be solely responsible. In future the Journal will be produced by a Committee of Management on which I have been invited to serve, so I shall still be close to "THE DIE-HARDS."

It is for these reasons that this month I have dropped the editorial "We" for the more personal "I."

## OBITUARY

LIEUT.-COLONEL JOHN PICKARD HALL

John Pickard Hall was killed in action on the 8th February, 1945, while commanding the 1st Battalion at Groesbeek near the Dutch-German frontier. This was the first day of the great operation which ended in the defeat of the German armies on the western side of the Rhine, and his was one of the four Middlesex battalions taking part in the battle.

Pickard was one of the most delightful characters it has ever been my privilege to meet. As handsome in feature as in manners, he was tremendously popular with both officers and men. It was impossible not to respond to his unselfishness, loyalty and natural charm. The most unassuming of men, he was, nevertheless, full of regimental spirit and very proud indeed when it fell to his lot to command the 1st Battalion. Another side to his character, which added to his charm, was his love of the "bizarre" and of doing those things which are out of the ordinary. This was no pose. The unusual was to him the spice of existence.

Educated at Marlborough and the R.M.C., Sandhurst, he was gazetted as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Middlesex Regiment in 1930. He was selected to carry the old King's Colour at the presentation of New Colours to the 1st Battalion by the Duke of Windsor, then Prince of Wales, at Colchester in October, 1931. He served continuously with that battalion until 1938, going abroad with it in December, 1931.

While in Palestine, he lived for a long period on detachment with his platoon as the uncrowned king of Nablus, a hotbed of Arab sedition and rebellion. The only other British inhabitants were the judge, a doctor and a police officer. He was in his element, particularly as the judge spent all his time in Jerusalem. Pickard took complete charge and became unofficial legislator and dictator. When his turn came to be relieved, the Arabs sent a deputation with the request that he should remain. This was the town which in later years required a brigade to control it. It was while he was at Nablus that Pickard developed his love of horses. He had started hunting while at Catterick and Colchester. He now had a large police stable at his disposal and developed into a fine horseman. He became a prominent member of the 1st Battalion's polo team, which took part in tournaments in Egypt and Singapore.

Pickard came home on leave twice from Egypt, and each time would have nothing to do with the more normal means of travel. The first time he came via Turkey, where he narrowly avoided arrest for entering a forbidden military zone. He arrived home just about in time to go back again. The second time he and a brother officer travelled steerage to France in a Messagerie Maritime boat, in itself a tough undertaking. They then proceeded to Paris by rail, but without a ticket. Their adventures en route would fill many pages.

Another of his more amusing adventures was his visit to his uncle, one of the typhans of Kelantan, while the 1st Battalion was stationed at Singapore. Readers who heard the late Lieut.-Colonel H. W. M. Stewart tell the story of Pickard's experiences in the Malayan "ulu" will not forget that hour of first-class entertainment. Nor will those officers



MESSAGE FROM  
FIELD-MARSHAL SIR HAROLD ALEXANDER,  
K.C.B., D.S.O., M.C.

ALLIED FORCE HEADQUARTERS,  
Office of the Supreme Allied Commander,  
11th June, 1945.

DEAR CAPTAIN MOORE,

I send greetings from Italy to all subscribers of "THE DIE-HARDS" Journal and to all members of the Regiment which has added so much to its splendid fighting reputation during the war with Germany.

I have always been proud to have had the "Die-Hards" under my command and I know, too, that the Commanders under whom they have served have given them the highest praise.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) H. R. ALEXANDER,  
Field-Marshal,  
Supreme Allied Commander,  
Mediterranean Theatre.



who enjoyed the amenities, as the first occupants, of the palatial officers' mess at Gillman Barracks forget "Pickard's Peacocks" and the many dollars their recovery cost him each time they ran away.

In 1938 he returned home to become adjutant of the Depot. Once again he spurned the normal trooper. He insisted on returning via America and managed the journey, for which a fair figure would be £400, at a cost of a little over £100. This included some very luxury travel, as well as some that was very rough, a visit to Palm Beach, and an introduction there to Dolores del Rio, whom he persuaded not only to include him in her polo team, but to make him its captain during a tournament then in progress.



Lt.-Col. J. P. HALL.

During the winter of 1938 he was attached to the French Army and spent three happy months with a battalion of the famous Chasseurs Alpine on their annual training among the snows of the French Alps. Always a good linguist, he was received with open arms by this crack French regiment. He was unable to ski when he joined them, but by the end of his attachment had passed the severe skiing test which is one of their three regimental qualifications. He could claim that he was one of the few officers in the British Army to become a Chasseur.

He was deeply interested in his profession. Although on the surface he might appear in those days of peace to any who did not know him well to give little thought to the science of war, yet he had read a great deal of military history and studied both Clausewitz and Hamley, tasks which few present-day officers ever dream of attempting.

At the outbreak of war he was still Adjutant of the Depot, but when Russia invaded Finland he saw his chance. He promptly volunteered for a special Battalion of the Scots Guards, raised for service in Finland. This was no ordinary battalion, all its privates and N.C.O.s being officer volunteers or public-school boys who were expert skiers. There followed a hectic three weeks' training at Chamonix. Here his previous experience with the Chasseurs stood him in good stead, and he was promoted and recommissioned as a platoon commander. Unfortunately, to his great regret, this notable battalion never got further than embarking on its troopship at Greenock, as the Russo-Finnish war came to its sudden end just in time to prevent it from sailing.

Pickard returned to take up his adjutancy, but only for a short time. The invasion of Norway soon followed, and he was away again as G.3 (Liaison) with the French forces. He was present all through the bitter days of Narvik and worked in the closest touch with a Capitaine Koenig (now General Koenig of Bir Hakim fame), for whom he had the greatest admiration. For his services in Norway he was awarded the Croix de Guerre.

He returned from Norway to become a company commander in a battalion of the Queen's Regiment, this battalion being the first Commando force to be raised. It was eventually disbanded and he spent the next twelve months as G.2 Training at the War Office. But his active nature was not happy with an office life in war time and he was delighted to escape as an instructor and company commander to the Barmouth O.C.T.U. From there he returned to the regiment and after a short time with the 2nd Battalion he was appointed as second-in-command of the 8th Battalion, which position he filled with success until he was selected in April, 1944, to command the renamed 1st Battalion only a month before D day.

Of his service in Normandy, Belgium and Holland, I am unable to write as I have no first-hand knowledge. But like all his friends, I have heard stories of his bravery, of how he would spend all his time visiting his forward platoons. He would appear during the heaviest periods of enemy shelling and mortaring, absolutely cool and unperturbed, smoking his pipe and quietly giving words of encouragement. All this to the great alarm of everybody for his safety.

On 25th April, 1942, he married Joyce, youngest daughter of Colonel O. A. Walker.

To his widow and daughter, now aged only 14 months, everyone who knew Pickard Hall will want to extend their deepest sympathy. His friends will remember him with affection and are the poorer for his passing.

#### THE REGIMENTAL BAND

In the past quarter the Band has been fulfilling several engagements. They attended the Borough of Finchley's Victory Parade and on the 20th May they, together with the band of the Irish Guards, played at the Cenotaph on the occasion of the annual parade of the British Legion.

They have also been one of the military bands who have been entertaining Londoners in the Royal Parks, and at the lunch-time concerts at the Tower, St. Paul's, and Lincoln's Inn.

At Lords Cricket Ground, in June, on the occasion of the match between Sir Pelham Warner's Team

and the 2nd Army, the Band played during the intervals.

As we go to press the band is appearing in the Army edition of the B.B.C.'s programme Merry-go-Round.

#### THE JAPANESE ATTACK ON HONG KONG

Elsewhere in this issue we give an account of Capt. Guest's escape from the Japanese after they had captured Hong Kong. Here is the story of how the Island was attacked and fell, and this also comes from Capt. Guest.

"When the Japanese started war by their general all round attack they did not find the Hong Kong Garrison unprepared. The troops had been in their battle stations several days and although we did not know when to expect the attack, it did not come as a surprise to us.

The attack began with an air raid on the airport on Monday, 8th December, 1941, at 8 o'clock in the morning. The actual number of planes on the airfield were few—14 in number, comprised of six R.A.F. training machines, four planes belonging to the China National Airways Company, three private planes and one American Clipper flying boat, which had arrived the previous day from Manila.

These were destroyed with the exception of two, which later got away and flew to Chungking. We next received reports from the Observation Post on the frontier that the Japanese were massed in large numbers and had started their approach march. This was at eleven a.m. on the same day.

Our forward troops were in position and engaged the enemy at 2.30 p.m. This had the desired effect of holding up the Japanese which gave us time to carry out our demolitions. These consisted of blowing up the sides of the hills, thus blocking the roads at certain places, destroying all bridges, both road and railway, and, finally, destroying the main Shatin Tunnel. All this work was carried out according to plan and was completely satisfactory.

The Japanese were now steadily consolidating their advance and we withdrew our forward troops to our main position, which was known as the Inner Line, and which we occupied on 10th December.

It was now estimated that the Japanese were attacking with two divisions with another division in reserve.

The total forces of the Hong Kong Garrison were composed as follows:—

- Two Battalions of British Infantry:
  - 2nd Bn. The Royal Scots.
  - 1st Bn. The Middlesex Regiment.
- Two Battalions of Canadian Infantry:
  - The Royal Rifles of Canada.
  - The Winnipeg Grenadiers.

Two Battalions of Infantry, Indian Army:
 

- 5/6 Bn. The Rajputs.
- 2/14 Bn. The Punjabis.

The Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Forces:
 

- Eight Companies.



The Hong Kong and Singapore Artillery:

Six Batteries, plus the fixed Garrison Gunners.

The Royal Engineers and the usual supply services.

These forces were deployed as follows:

One Brigade occupied the defences on the Kowloon Mainland, known as the Inner Line, and the other Brigade occupied positions on the Island of Hong Kong.

We were also prepared for an attack on the southern side of the Island from the sea.

On the night of 10th December the enemy launched their main attack on the Inner Line, and fighting went on all the following day. Our right flank were in very fine positions and the Japs were unable to make any headway against them. They were quick to see the strength of this position and swung their main attack to our left flank, where we were not so strong, as the country did not lend itself so well.

On the morning of 11th December the Japanese brought in their air force and dive-bombed the whole of our line. As we had no opposition to offer they were able to fly very low and our casualties were fairly heavy. That same day our strong point, Shin Mun Redoubt, fell, which caused a weakening of our left flank, which later gave way, and we were forced to withdraw the line in the centre and on the right flank.

The Japanese were now pushing forward in great force on the left flank and this compelled the G.O.C. to make a decision. He could either bring up



reinforcements from the Brigade on the Island, or vacate the whole inner line position and withdraw to the Island. The General decided on the second course and that night gave the order for the withdrawal to be made. We had hoped to hold the inner line for at least two weeks, but the odds were against us. All this was in accordance with the Defence Scheme, except that we were moving a little faster than we had contemplated.

The withdrawal was carried out successfully and with no sign of undue haste or muddle; in fact, it was hard to realise that we were not on an ordinary exercise the like of which we had done so many times in training.

The Japs showed no sign of following up immediately, and there is no doubt in my mind that it was some hours before they realised that we had gone. We were able to get all personal guns and equipment away without loss and the evacuation from Kowloon to the Island was a completely successful operation.

The following day, 13th December, Kowloon was occupied by the Japs. That morning we got a very heavy air raid, but in the afternoon, when everything suddenly went quiet, a small launch was seen leaving the Kowloon Pier, flying a white flag. In the front were two or three white women with obviously Japanese Officers behind them. This turned out to be their first delegation coming to ask the Governor if he was prepared to surrender the Island of Hong Kong. The answer was "No," and the launch returned, this time with the white women in the stern of the launch. During this conference there was an armistice which lasted five hours and when this ended the fight for Hong Kong commenced with only 1,000 yards of sea separating the two forces.

At this point, one might ask why had events moved so quickly? The answer is: that we had been driven back by superior numbers only, as our troops had fought well and had done all that could be expected of them in the circumstances.

On 14th December the Japanese opened up with their first big offensive against the Island, as they had now had time to bring up their artillery with which they proceeded to shell all the known military objectives facing the mainland, such as the forts and pill-boxes, the naval harbour and docks. They also dive-bombed the forts, paying particular attention to Lychmum and Davis, which were the nearest forts to the mainland.

The battle now developed into an artillery duel, with us shelling the roads, the hills and their gun positions which were observed by flash spotting.

On the second or third day they bombed and shelled the storage tanks of the Asiatic Petroleum Company at North Point, which quickly caught fire and caused one of the biggest blazes I have ever seen. The flames leapt to 2,000 feet and lit up the harbour for the next three nights. This proved to be a blessing in disguise, for during the nights we were able to continue our observation of the Japanese and note any movement of boats, etc.

The next thing to happen was more unfortunate for us; the fire spread to the crude oil tanks and the flames turned to heavy black smoke. The following evening the wind dropped, which caused the smoke to descend and form a most awful fog over the whole harbour area. The Japs were quick to take advantage of this, and it was under cover of this fog that they were able to land storming

parties during the night and next day, who quickly overwhelmed the crews of the pill-boxes. So the Japs gained their first footing on the Island.

On 18th December, the Japanese had established a firm bridgehead at Lychmum, Jardine's Look-out, and Sai Wan; and although we tried to isolate this part of the Island by bringing up reserves, we were unable to stop the strengthening of these positions by the Japs and their continued landing of troops.

The enemy began to infiltrate in large numbers to many parts of the east side of the Island and the General was forced to withdraw the East Brigade to Stonehill and to evacuate all artillery on the eastern half of the Island to the Stanley Peninsular.

We were now being forced out of our positions everywhere, and I would like to point out that we had been going hard at it for twelve solid days and nights and the troops were dead beat as they had not had a moment's respite from hard fighting.

The Japanese next captured Wong Nei Chang Gap, which was the H.Q. of the West Brigade and was our real strong point of the Island. They had previously overrun the Canadian H.Q.'s, killing the Canadian Brigadier, Brig. Lawton, the Brigade Major, and all his staff.

We attempted to launch two separate counter-attacks on the Wong Nei Chang Gap and Violet Hill, but both failed, owing to being outnumbered and suffering many casualties. These casualties were now beginning to tell heavily against us. We had lost five Staff Officers of Command H.Q.; the Canadian H.Q. had been wiped out; The Royal Scots had lost most of their Officers and a large proportion of their men; the C.O. of the 2/14 Battalion had been killed and that Battalion had suffered a heavy toll; the Middlesex and the Rajputs had also been very badly knocked about and the casualties among the gunners, both mobile and garrison, had been exceptionally heavy.

On 21st December we collected the remains of our scattered forces and tried to form a line: (1) by East Brigade from Stonehill to Stanley View, with a pocket at the Repulse Bay Hotel; (2) by West Brigade with pockets at Shoushun Hill, Little Hong Kong Magazine, Brickhill, Aberdeen, Bennets Hill, Mount Cameron, Mount Nicholson, Blue Pool Road, Leighton Hill and Number Two Police Station.

On 22nd December the Japs captured Mount Nicholson which caused a bulge in the line and was very difficult to straighten.

On 23rd December we were forced to evacuate Repulse Bay Hotel, which was being held by a company of Canadians. The same day the Japs captured Blue Pool Road and re-took Mount Cameron from the Canadians.

On Christmas Eve we again gathered the remnants of our forces and tried a counter-attack on Mount Cameron, by West Brigade, and a counter-attack on Red Hill by East Brigade. Both failed, with heavy losses.

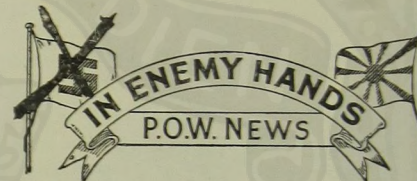
By this time the Japs had captured Stuffs Road, which had entrances to the A.R.P. tunnels. They were able to infiltrate through these, which brought them out behind our lines in Queen's Road, Wan Chai. They were now over-running Leighton Hill, from which we had withdrawn, and the Happy Valley Racecourse. By Christmas morning things were really getting desperate.

During this time, a Major Manners and a Mr. Shields had been captured by the Japanese at the

Repulse Bay Hotel (which also contained about 80 white women and children). These two men, together with some Japanese, came through to Command H.Q. under cover of a white flag. They were sent by the Japanese Commander to contact the General, with the suggestion that we now surrender, as the Japanese had 20,000 troops on the Island and that our position was helpless.

Again we refused and we sent them back with our decision. That afternoon the Japanese launched their final attack, which broke our line in several places and we were surrounded everywhere by them.

The position was now hopeless, and at 3.15 in the afternoon of Christmas Day, 1941, we were forced to surrender.



With the cessation of hostilities in Europe since our last issue, we have altered our heading block, and for this issue we are focussing our attention on the Far East. Therefore it is most apt that the following account of Capt. Guest's experiences with the Japanese should be printed.

Capt. Guest, who was commissioned in India for the Indian Army during the last war, was attached to our Regiment before going on to the 8th Cavalry, I.A. He served with this regiment during that war and in 1930 was transferred to the R.A.R.O., being posted to the Middlesex Regiment. In June, 1939, he was recalled and posted to the R.A.O.C. On the outbreak of war, after helping with the mobilisation of the Ordnance Corps, he was posted to one of our Battalions and went with them to France. At the end of 1939, he returned and was placed in charge of a draft to join one of our Battalions in Hong Kong. He served with the Battalion for a year and was then taken on the Staff at China Command H.Q. He was one of the G.S.O. III.s during the fighting in Hong Kong and after the surrender made his dramatic escape. On reaching India he was sent on a special mission to Chittagong and later to Imphal. Ultimately he was sent to the Officers' Training School at Bangalore to teach Mule and Pack Transport, of which so little was known at that time (1942). He returned to this country in January of this year, after being five years abroad. Here is the story of his escape:

"After the surrender of Hong Kong on Christmas Day, 1941, we were being rounded up by the Japanese, and put into Murray Barracks, which was being used as the P.O.W. Camp.

"Three of us decided that we would make an attempt to escape, with the object of trying to assist with the getting away of the Chinese Admiral Chan Chak, and a Chinese Colonel, S. K. Yee. These two men had been lent to us by the Chungking Government, with the object of helping us with the suppression of Fifth Column activities.

"It was hoped at one time that they could be got out by plane, but as there were none at this stage, this idea was out of the question. They were

in hiding in the heart of the Bazaar, and our first task was to try and connect up with them.

"The Japanese were now in complete occupation of the Island, and with difficulty we managed to get where they were. We told them that we were going to try to escape and would they be prepared to come with us. We had no set plans, but were just taking a chance, and hoping for the best of luck.

"They immediately agreed in their calm way, as they were quick to realise that their standing with the Japanese was not healthy, and it would not take long for them to be caught. We all immediately set off for a part of the Island on the south side, where we hoped that we might find some kind of a boat, or even a Chinese junk. We eventually got through to the district round Aberdeen (a small fishing village), after being sniped at on the way. Here we found that all the naval craft that could not get away had been either sunk by bombardment or, later, by the Naval personnel.

"After a search we were lucky enough to find a small motor boat about 25 feet long, with a very small engine, not capable of doing more than six knots per hour. We decided to have a go with this, and were lucky enough to get together a volunteer crew of some Chinese and two or three Naval personnel who had been in hiding and had not yet been rounded up.

"We proceeded to fill the boat with rifles, ammunition, food, water and petrol from some hidden stores, and when all was ready, we set off in broad daylight, with the hope of getting out of range before being seen. There were fourteen of us in all.

"Our object, after a hurried discussion, was to make for a deserted portion of the China coast, and then trust to luck to get into Free China.

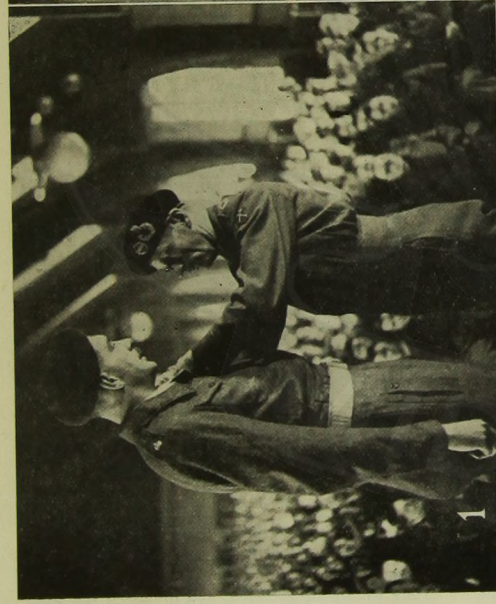
"We had only been going about thirty minutes or so when we were spotted by snipers and they began to have pot shots at us. This soon drew the attention of a Japanese M.G. post and they immediately opened up on us at about 800 to 1,000 yards. Their second burst hit the petrol pipe and the engine gave out at once.

"The boat stopped at once and in the next burst some of the party were hit. There was only one thing to do and that was to swim for it. So, over the side we went, and tried to make for a small island, on the other side of the channel, which we hoped was not occupied. All the time we were swimming, the two M.G.'s just let us have it for all they were worth and one or two more men were hit and never reached the island.

"We landed on a small island some distance from Hong Kong, which was just a bare grassy hill with quite a steep rocky line to the water. Each had chosen his own cover to lie up behind, and this we did to enable us to regain our strength. Just when things appeared to quieten down, a field gun began to drop shells around us, so we made for the other side of the island. As the shells appeared to be going high, I got into the water again and swam round to the other side. We had been split up all the time and not a word had passed between us, but we all seemed to have the same idea.

"There was another island on our right which we knew had a Chinese village on it, so we made for that, which meant another swim. There was a small alcove in quite a safe spot which we made for. Here we all foregathered, and discussed the situation. There were now only six of us left, two of





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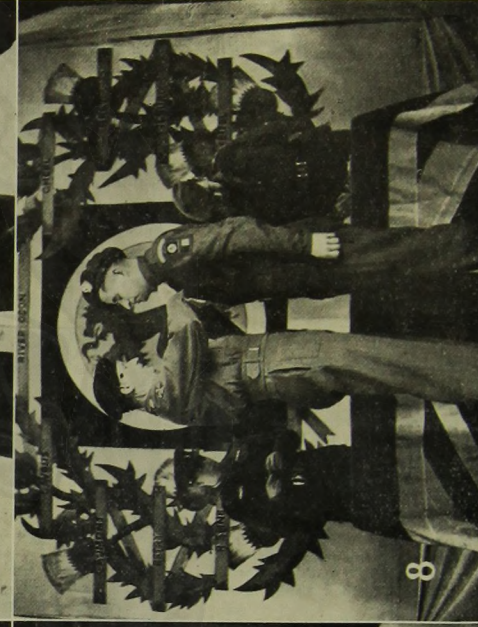
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# FIELD MARSHAL MONTGOMERY AT BRITISH INVESTITURES

1. Major M. F. Pearson, Middlesex, receives M.C.
2. Sergeant D. Reed, Middlesex, receives the M.M.
3. Capt. R. E. Orr, of the Middlesex Regiment, receiving the M.C.
4. Cpl. A. Stewart, Middlesex, receives the M.M.
5. Capt. D. E. Blaney, of the Middlesex Regiment, receiving the M.C.
6. Cpl. H. E. Edmed, of the Middlesex Regiment, receiving the M.M.
7. Lieut. P. W. B. Lloyd, Middlesex, receives the M.C.
8. Pte. L. Lash, Middlesex, receives the M.M.



whom were wounded. The Chinese Admiral had been shot in the left arm while in the water and although he was wounded and was minus one leg he made the swim and finished up on the second island with us. We left him behind a rock, while we went off to see if there was any hope of finding some kind of craft to get us away; we didn't like leaving him, but he was completely helpless without his wooden leg, having thrown it away before making the swim.

"The light was now beginning to go, and all firing had stopped. We decided that one or two of us should go and have a look round to see what could be done and also to see if anything more was happening from the Japanese positions.

"It was while doing this that the two of us who had gone up to the top of the hill, spotted a naval craft lying off the far end of the island under cover of the rocks. One of us went back to tell the others, and the other made for the boat to try and attract attention.

"When we all started to make toward the boat across the hill, they suddenly spotted us and the way they greeted us was to open up their M.G.'s in a mighty burst on to us as they had taken us for Japanese in the dusky light. We just flattened down, and, luckily, none of us were hit. We were only 400 yards away, and were able to shout to them who we were. We asked them to come and pick us up, but they replied that it was too rocky and that we would have to swim for it. So once again, into the water we went, and I was glad when I felt the arms of two British sailors heave me on to the deck of the motor-boat.

"After a change and a drink of rum, we borrowed the dinghy and went off to collect the one-legged Admiral, and also to see if any of the others were about. It was now about four hours since we had left him, but there he was, just lying propped up against a rock, still bleeding from a wound in the arm. He greeted us with a little smile and not a word of complaint about the hours we had left him. We carried him to the dinghy and got him around to the naval boat. This little job had taken well over two hours, and by this time the other naval boats had come out of their hiding places and had joined the party.

"We had a meeting on one of the boats, and discussed what we were going to do. We decided to make a dash for the China coast, some 100 miles away, just after midnight.

"At the given time, the boats all started up with the loudest roar I have ever heard and with a bound we were away like the start of a boat race. Lights began to appear, just here and there, and a field gun from the land opened up, but it was dark and we were travelling very fast. The place we were making for was about three hours away, and after having been going for about one and a half hours, a large black shape loomed in the darkness on the starboard side and it was only a minute before we knew it must be a Japanese destroyer. Its searchlights suddenly swept round and in a few minutes they had seen us.

"A moment later they opened up on us; they were about three miles away and luckily were going the opposite way. Their shells fell short and at the speed we were going we were soon out of range. As they had not turned, that little incident passed. We were now nearing a small inhabited island, which was only a little way from the main-

land and we decided to send a party ashore to find out if that part of the coast was in Japanese hands. We got the information we were after, and decided to make the landing and sink the boats. We stripped them of anything of any use, including food, guns, ammunition, etc., then sunk them.

"We had been informed that the Japanese were in occupation about 90 miles inland, so, after resting that day, we set out on our trip to Chungking, which was about 1,200 miles away. This meant that we would have to cross the Japanese lines about the third night, so, after doing about thirty miles each night for two successive nights, we sent out a small recon party to find out where they were and what they were doing.

"We found out all that we wanted to know, and at about two o'clock the next morning we crossed their lines without incident. We kept going until we had got two large rivers between them and us. We had then done about 90 to 100 miles in three nights and were rather tired, so we decided to rest for two or three days and take stock of our supplies and our situation. We had now connected with Free China, and after travelling by all manner of means, such as boats up one of the large rivers for days on end, and by trucks on some very rough roads, we reached Chungking after five weeks' travelling.

"We reported to the British Ambassador, Sir Archibald Clerk-Kerr, who was very helpful to us. He arranged for us to fly to India, via Lashio, where we met General Chenault, the American chief of the then A.V.G.s. We continued our flight over the Burmese mountains and arrived in Calcutta, where we reported to the Military Authorities. They sent us on to G.H.Q., Delhi, which we reached in March, having left Hong Kong in December."

#### THE HONOURS ON THE COLOURS Part II ALBUHERA

In the earlier stages of the Peninsular War neither the 57th nor the 77th Foot had any share. But not long after Sir Arthur Wellesley had been sent to Portugal for the second time in 1809, the 57th was chosen as a mature battalion (out of 859 N.C.O.s and men only 156 had less than four years' service) to form part of his reinforcements. Wellesley landed at Lisbon on 22nd April, 1809, and within a month had forced a passage of the Douro and driven the French, under Marshal Soult, Duke of Dalmatia, out of Portugal. He then advanced into Spain by the valley of the Tagus, and on 28th July defeated Victor and King Joseph at Talavera, and won for himself the title of Viscount Wellington. But a threatening movement by Soult compelled him within a few days to commence a retreat.

It was at this juncture that the 57th appeared on the scene. The regiment had landed at Lisbon on 15th July, and a fortnight later was conveyed by boats as far as Vallada on the Tagus. Thence it marched to Zarza la Mayor, where it arrived on 14th August, and joined the force under Marshal Beresford, and it was not until 7th September that the 57th took its place at Elvas in the 2nd Brigade of the 2nd Division under General Hill.

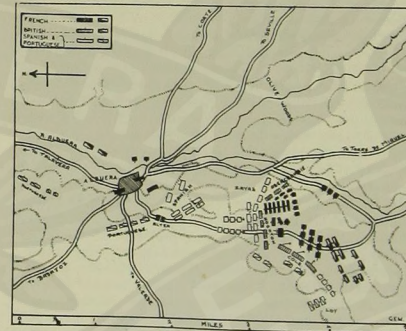
Except for the battle of Bussaco on 27th September, 1810, in which, although there, the 57th took no part, they were at San Lago dos Vilhos and, later, at Chamusca until the end of the year, when

General Hill was invalided home and the 2nd Brigade came under the command of General Hoghton. On Hill leaving the Peninsular the right wing was entrusted by Wellington to Marshal Beresford. At the beginning of March, 1811, Massena and the French began their final retreat. At first the 2nd Division was moved back to join in the pursuit; but as soon as Wellington was satisfied that the enemy would not fight, Beresford was directed to march with his whole force to the relief of Badajoz, where the Spanish garrison was hard pressed by the French under Soult. Before Beresford could concentrate his army at Portalegre, news came that Badajoz had surrendered on 11th March. Wellington then directed him to advance to Campo Mayor, and after constructing and securing a bridge across the Guadiana at Jerumenha to move forwards and endeavour to invest Badajoz. After many delays, on 11th April the 2nd Division was at ALBUHERA, twelve miles south of Badajoz and only the delay entailed by the provision of a siege train prevented an immediate advance on the town.

On 6th May Badajoz was invested, and the siege begun. Little progress had been made when on 12th May it was learnt that Soult was approaching with an army of nearly 25,000 men. Beresford determined to fight, and summoned the Spanish generals Castanos, Ballesteros and Blake, who were fortunately close at hand, to meet him at ALBUHERA.

The village of ALBUHERA was a street of small houses, with a church, situated on a little river, from which it is named and which is a tributary of the Guadiana. The village is traversed by the high road leading from Seville to Badajoz, which, about 200 yards to the right, crosses the river by a stone bridge.

The battlefield of ALBUHERA is a rolling line of low hills along the Feria stream (which unites itself immediately above the village with the River Albuhera), facing a gentle slope studded with olive groves. (See map.)



Here, on 15th May, Beresford assembled his main force 15,000 strong, the 4th Division being left before Badajoz till the last. Blake joined him late at night, and Cole, with the 4th Division and a Spanish brigade, was expected at daybreak.

Beresford posted a Portuguese division with a British brigade and a small force of cavalry on his left. In the centre, the village of ALBUHERA was held by two German battalions under General

Alten; the 2nd Division under General Stewart—its three brigades commanded by Colborne, Hoghton and Abercrombie—lay concealed in the rear. The right, where Beresford thought an attack was least likely, was held by the Spaniards under Blake, protected by their own cavalry under Ley. Sir Lowry Cole's division, which arrived somewhat late, together with the rest of the cavalry, was in reserve. The Allies complete mixed force numbered about 30,000, of whom 7,000 were British, with 38 guns. In gross numbers, the French Marshal was inferior to Beresford; in infantry he was weaker by a third; but in the other arms he was dangerously superior. He brought 4,000 cavalry and 50 heavy guns into action; all were French veteran troops and consequently admirable soldiers.

After a careful reconnaissance on the evening of the 15th, Soult selected the right of the allies as the object for his greatest effort. Favoured by the darkness, he lodged Girard's corps, Ruty's artillery, and the cavalry of Latour Maubourg, in the wood; and when morning broke, a powerful force was already formed in close column, and perfectly concealed, though within ten minutes' march of the Spanish line. Thus was the field set for what was to prove one of the most—if not the most—close and desperate battles of the Peninsular War. The battle forms, with Corunna and Barrosa, the three at which Wellington himself was not present, but for which bars to the Peninsular medal were awarded.

"The enemy, on the morning of the 16th, did not long delay his attack. At eight o'clock he was observed to be in movement, and his cavalry was seen passing the rivulet of Albuhera, considerably above our right; and shortly after he marched out of the wood opposite to us a strong force of cavalry, and two heavy columns of infantry, pointing them to our front as if to attack the village and bridge of ALBUHERA. During this time, under cover of his vastly superior cavalry, he was filing the principal body of his infantry over the river beyond our right; and it was not long before his intention appeared to be to turn us by that flank and to cut us off from Valverde."

G.E.M.

(To be continued.)

#### "MACHINE GUNS IN THE DESERT"

This is the tentative title of a book which is being written by Lieut.-Colonel J. W. A. Stephenson, D.S.O., late Battalion Commander of our 17th Battalion and now G.S.O.1 at The School of Infantry, dealing with the participation of his Battalion in the events leading up to the Battle of El Alamein and from there on to the end of the fighting in Sicily.

With the serialisation of his book in this and subsequent issues of "The Die-Hards" we are able to keep the promise made in our Editorial in December, 1944.

For the benefit of readers who may not have a very close connection with our Regiment, it may be of interest to identify the author for them as being the peace-time Essex County cricketer, Capt. J. W. A. Stephenson, whose keenness and zest for, and obvious delight in, the game of the moment, was the source of such pleasure to so many spectators, in whose ranks we so often numbered ourselves and of which occasions we have so many pleasant memories.



## CHAPTER I

## "INTRODUCTION TO THE DESERT"

"The Battalion leaves Aldershot this afternoon in two trains."

The tension was broken; and the news, given out by the C.O. to the assembled Battalion in the dining-hall at Mandora Barracks on the morning of 17th June, 1942, was now "official."

Mobilisation had been an impatient period, and almost too much, it seemed, had had to be crammed into it. Ten days at Netheravon had certainly been worth while: the new transport had been carefully "run in," and, glistening with its many coats of bright paint, seemed to reflect its pride in the attention fondly lavished upon it by the Battalion sign-writers, Pte. Puttick and Pte. Williams; the baggage had been packed, weighed, stored and stencilled with our security number and colour bands; tanks had run over us while we cowered in slit trenches; the officers had scrambled home against the sergeants in a final cricket match; the Sports and the All Ranks' Dance on Albuhera Day had been a great success; and on 3rd June, a glorious summer's day, the King and Queen had visited the 51st (H) Division to say "farewell."

During their tour they had watched "B" Company of the Battalion carry out a demonstration, and had stopped to speak to Pte. Blower, whom Her Majesty had recognised as a former footman at Windsor Lodge.

But all these were now memories. We were off! No one knew where we were going, of course. Though the Middle East was the most popular fancy, many suspiciously-knowledgeable individuals were heard to whisper confidently, "Persia" or "India."

H.M.T. 7 (a war-time overall grey disguised S.S. "Stratheden") was lying in King George V dock when the two trains drew slowly into Glasgow Docks shortly after midday on 18th June. Embarkation ought to have begun at once, but had to be slightly delayed while the Adjutant and Embarkation Staff dealt with the numerous paper complications and adjustments which were necessary to allow our stowaway, Pte. McDonough, to achieve his very genuine determination to sail with the Battalion.

On the afternoon of the 20th, H.M.T. 7—carrying, apart from the Battalion the Divisional Headquarters, Divisional troops, the 7th Battalion The Black Watch (R.H.R.) and the Divisional Reconnaissance Regiment—steamed lazily and majestically out into the Clyde to take up station in the convoy.

Messages twinkled from signalling lamps, and flags swarmed up the mainmast in a variety of colours as we watched our escort fan out around us. Our journey had really begun. Ailsa Craig soon disappeared over the horizon behind us, and no one dared to think when he would see it reappear.

Physical training under Lieut. Fettes; machine-gun training on limited deck space; discussions; lectures; an inter-platoon "quiz" competition in which the heavily-backed Signal Platoon sadly disappointed their supporters by not even reaching the final; these kept us amused until we fetched up at Freetown.

Freetown, unfortunately, had an epidemic of yellow fever. Nobody was allowed ashore, and we had to be content with gazing at a remarkable assortment of blooms and luscious masses of green

foliage that tumbled down the hill into the town. It would be three weeks before we would see land again.

Durban was the first real excitement, and the clean and gaily-coloured houses along the sea-front drew large crowds on to the deck very early on the morning of 20th July. Expectation grew as we steamed slowly up the narrow channel into the harbour. Everyone was anxious to get ashore. To be told we were going to spend five days billeted in the mills and warehouses of "P.B.S."\* gave us no inkling of the friendliness and hospitality so soon to be showered upon us. The very warmth of the welcome we received, together with the hot sunshine of South Africa's winter, firmly decided many of us that this was the country in which to settle after the war.

Route marches each morning were both pleasant and necessary. And no one was ever too tired to take advantage of the more unofficial exercise in the town itself each afternoon and evening. The shops had much to offer. We had money to spend, and nobody seemed to have heard of coupons.

Our five days passed all too quickly, and many were the fond last looks that lingered over the town ere it disappeared into the darkness of the night on which we sailed. Durban had made us forget there was a war on. Tobruk had fallen, but Tobruk seemed an immeasurable distance away. When the convoy began to steer a zig-zag course west of Madagascar, however, it was brought home to us that this was no pleasure cruise, and we realised how successful the U boats had been in the Mozambique channel.

Aden was reached on the morning of the 6th August, and here a peculiar pink sandstorm obliterated the town, the harbour and the ship while the convoy took on supplies of fresh water.

Two days and nights, suffocatingly hot, were spent in cutting our way through the glassy surface of the Red Sea. Conversation flagged, and Persia and India were hardly suitable subjects for discussion. Of course we were for the desert! And now that we had a chance to think about it, hadn't the officers attended weekly discussions aboard ship, studying, amongst other things, the mysteries and intricacies of night navigation? For that matter, we had all been taught something about the magnetic compass. And we liked that story of the officer who, forgetting his compass, had lost himself one night in the desert while making his way from the Officers' Mess tent to the latrine, and of his failure to find the latrine until daylight the following morning. It was a good story—almost too good to be true.

Port Tewfik, on the morning of 12th August, looked hot and horribly eastern. The C.O. was wondering what it was Kipling had said about being "East of Suez," when his thoughts were interrupted by the G.S.O.1 (Lieut.-Colonel R. E. Urquhart). The G.S.O.1 had come aboard, shortly after H.M.T. 7 had dropped anchor in the roadstead, to tell the C.O. that the Battalion, less "A" Company, was to entrain the following day for Camp 17, Qassassin, some 70 miles east of Cairo. "A" Company was to proceed independently to Geneifa for "guard-duties." The promise that they would re-join the Battalion within a matter of weeks was readily accepted, and at the time gave no indication of the persuasion and the constant jogging of Staff Officers' memories that were

\* "P.B.S."—A prominent firm in Durban.

necessary during the three weeks which elapsed before we saw "A" Company again.

Camp 17 existed on paper. On sand only a bare five tents, of the vast number that had put Qassassin so recently on the map, stood as lonely markers of Camp 17. It was a discouraging start. But Lieut. Abbott was not to be discouraged. He should have led his platoon to Geneifa, but, losing all except one section, had found himself exploring Qassassin for the camp allotted to the Battalion. Once found, he (together with many willing hands from our first and very good neighbours, 46th Royal Tank Regiment) had lost no time in making Camp 17 a more presentable and heartening sight. Tents up and dug-in, the Regimental flag flying, and the camp beginning to look ship-shape with R.S.M. Knight and Provost Sergt. Gowland playing leading parts as camp designers and decorators, we were ready to accustom ourselves to the desert, to its peculiarities of climate and to its disorders of digestion.

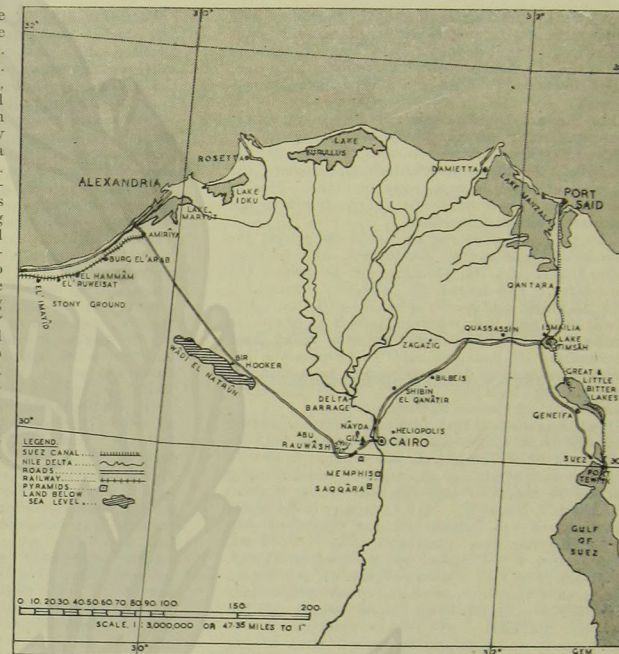
A "daily dozen" before breakfast, company route marches into the desert up to noon, an organised siesta up to tea-time, and "gun-bumping" for two hours after tea, was a normal day's routine. Topees we were able to discard after ten days.

Everyone was encouraged to take part in the M.O.'s campaign to "Kill flies." Dysentery, the Doc. claimed, could and would be prevented—if only everybody would kill flies. The C.O., the Adjutant and the R.S.M., taking him at his word, authorised the fashion of carrying a "flyswot" on parade. No manner of ruthlessness towards the fly, however, nor the well-publicised fly slogans which appeared, could prevent "gippie-tummie." Dysentery might be prevented, but not that acute sensation which gripped the stomach and caused on occasions such general disastrous discomfort. Where there was desert, there were flies, and where there were flies...

The story is best left to the Doc. For who should be the first victim to dysentery in the Battalion but the Doc. himself!

Lieut. Fettes and his baggage party, left behind at Port Tewfik, were anxiously awaited. When all the crates had been unpacked nineteen Vickers machine-guns were missing. Although Lieut. and Q.M. Trestant was able carefully to mask his horror, R.Q.M.S. Badham forcibly expressed his indignation. A search of all the various camps at Qassassin proved in vain, and was really only responsible for providing some rather misplaced humour. After eight days of frantic searching, Capt. Bolt, completing a wide circuit into the desert, came back to lunch with the news that the guns

\* "gun-bumping"—Machine-gun training.



had been found. They had been delivered by some Arab driver to a Base Ordnance dump at Geneifa. Lieut. Fettes was acquitted; but the R.Q.M.S. never found that Arab.

Capt. Bolt, however, had bad news. "The Empire Governor," which was carrying all the Battalion's transport under command of Sergt. Taylor, had developed engine trouble before reaching Durban. It would be three weeks before that accursed ship would be fit to sail. Since much of the M.T. of the Division had suffered a similar fate, there was nothing for it but to make the best of our share of the Divisional pool of transport, poor as this seemed to us with our memories of the square at Aldershot where we had last seen our glistening vehicles.

We could not know at the time that "The Empire Governor" was not to reach Suez until the first week in October; nor our trucks to join us—alas, too late—three days before the battle of Alamein.

The Division was given three months in which to train, and it was not a moment too long. An instructional team of experienced "desert" officers soon had us talking in terms of "boxes," "swanning," "the Bluey," and "barrel-points."\* None of us really knew quite what all that meant. Sufficient for the present was the fact that machine guns were in great demand. A company of machine

\* Desert slang. A "box," a Brigade defensive position: "Swanning," used in the sense of moving about the desert: "The Bluey," the desert: "Barrel-points," map references marked by (and on) barrels.



guns was included in each brigade "group," and vivid accounts, from the battle, of machine guns firing from "hull-down" \* positions on carriers had made the memory of a twelve-mile carry over the "Hog's Back" fade into a very distant background.

For the moment we could afford to laugh at the memory. But: "Your time will not long now be delayed." The Prime Minister's words to the officers of the Division with whom he spent the morning of 22nd August, were ominous. Few of us, however, expected to be on the move to the Cairo area within three days.

The C.O. had motored on ahead to attend the Divisional Commanders' Conference, and here he learned that 51st (H) Division was to defend the Cairo area. The accent on "defend" sounded a little alarming, and hardly what we expected. But it was only now that we were to hear of Rommel's Afrika Corps standing some seventy miles from Alexandria. If Rommel chose to by-pass the 8th Army, now holding what seemed to be a thin red line running from El Alamein to El Ruweisat, Cairo would obviously be his objective.

Each Brigade had been allotted a sector guarding the west bank of the Nile, and the Battalion, less "B" and "C" Companies, was ordered to defend a 10,000 yard stretch of an irrigation canal running parallel to the river and marked on our map as EL MUHIT DRAIN. "B" Company came under command of 154 Brigade for the operation with orders to defend the "Barrage" area. "C" Company, under 153 Brigade, had 10 Platoon (Lieut. J. A. Dare) and 12 Platoon (Lieut. H. N. Wigan) acting as a mobile reserve and positioned astride the MENA-CAIRO road, close to the MENA HOUSE HOTEL. 11 Platoon (Lieut. R. G. McPherson) was comfortably tucked away among the catacombs under the mighty Pyramid of Cheops.

A section of carriers from the 1st Battalion The Gordon Highlanders, two sections of 275 Field Company, R.E., under command of Major S. Russell, R.E., our 6 Platoon (Lt. H. Young), the only "A" Company platoon which had been released from Geneifa, "D" Company and Battalion H.Q. comprised the total force under the command of the C.O.

Digging was priority number one, but it had to be done under appalling conditions. Nothing can describe the loathsome selection of smells that hung over the Muhit Drain.

There was nothing that could be done about them. Everyone admired the initiative of Lieut. Le Lacheur in getting himself presented with the freedom of the village of KOMBIRA, but such power as he wielded in the affairs of the village had not the slightest effect on the local sanitation.

Sixteen machine guns along a canal front of ten thousand yards meant that only the actual bridges (nine in all) could be held, with arcs of fire lengthened wherever possible to include the straighter stretches of the canal. The banks of the Drain were high, and set a peculiarly difficult problem when it came to siting gun positions. Sergt. Dawkes, commanding 13 Platoon, solved that problem quickly and ingeniously. Establishing an O.P. on the far bank, he selected a series of targets he could engage by indirect fire before such time as he would have to abandon his O.P. and return in a requisitioned rowing-boat to his gun line on the near bank.

\* A carrier or any Armoured Fighting Vehicle sited behind cover with only its gun showing is said to be in a "hull-down" position.

Battalion H.Q., linked to all platoons by line and wireless, was established in a house some nine hundred yards east of NAYDA. NAYDA itself was second only in stench to KOMBIRA, but, as the Adjutant pointed out, Battalion H.Q. was "out of range of snipers and smells."

"A" Company re-joined the Battalion on the 19th. This allowed 4 Platoon (Lieut. Fettes) to come temporarily under command of 201 Guards Brigade, who had been ordered to hold the ABU RAWASH feature. 4 Platoon's role was to harass the enemy should he appear on the CAIRO-ALEXANDRIA road, and then to come into reserve near Battalion H.Q.

On 31st August the Division was put at two hours' notice. The battle in the Western Desert was about to begin. Code word DONALD, which meant that the C.O.'s force would move into position, was expected hourly. It never came. By 4th September it was known that the 8th Army had beaten off Rommel's attack, and the threat to Cairo was at an end. We abandoned the Muhit Drain quickly and gratefully.

On 6th September orders arrived for the Division to relieve the 44th Division in "E" and "F" "Boxes," some ten miles south of a prominent feature in that part of the desert known as Beachy Head, itself four miles from the sea and 20 miles east of Alamein. The Battalion was to take over from the 6th Battalion The Cheshire Regiment, the machine gun battalion of the 44th Division. The C.O. and I.O. (Lieut. Chevasse) left Cowley Camp on 8th September, Company Commanders on the following day. The Battalion, under Major Green, left on the 10th, with orders to stage one night at KILO 170 on the Cairo-Alexandria road.

The endless ribbon of macadam black stretching north to the sea lay like a long, black scar across the desert, and the journey of 130 miles gave everyone a chance to speculate on what lay beyond the western horizon—very far away, it seemed, across the expanse of shimmering sand. Men catching sight of any kind of building pointed excitedly. A herd of goats was a source of considerable comfort; for many of us were beginning to wonder how anything, let alone human beings, could exist in such a nothingness of yellow. "Pretty yeller" it most certainly was, and "not 'arf bleeding 'ot neither!"

Major Green decided to practise the Battalion in desert formations once the convoy bade farewell to the friendly macadam and began its long and dusty trek over "Mac" track. Tracks were easily definable, though they existed not so much as tracks in the real sense of the word as we thought we knew it, but as deep, wide furrows of loose, soft sand which, pillaring into clouds at the slightest disturbance of the surface, gave an eerie yellow tinge to the blue of the heavens.

Compasses were not necessary. Drivers, when they were not half-blinded, had only to steer their vehicles into the sand-clouds that shrouded the vehicles ahead. Motor cycles performed every variety of skid, and called for the artistry of a dirt-track rider. Lieut. Chevasse, making his first appearance in similar conditions, not unnaturally soon came to grief.

The desert was certainly full of sand. Where and how one lived was hard to understand. There were certainly groups of vehicles dispersed on the side of the track, and it slowly dawned on us that these must constitute a form of desert camp. Could

this be the "leaguer" we had heard so much about?

Men with nut-brown faces, and with limbs and bodies of varying shades ranging to nigger-black, made us squint shyly at our own only slightly-sunburned skins. More vehicles, more sand, more dust. Where were we going? A glance at the map to check the map reference showed the words "Stony Ground" printed across two yellow squares. There was nothing but sand and that unshapely "Beachy Head" so far as we could see.

The convoy had halted. We had arrived in the desert proper. Was this stony ground? And what was that impossible belt of green marked on our map?

There was no time to answer questions now. Anyhow—they were probably all bound up with the Sphinx, and he supposedly was the only person who knew the answers.

## PUGILISM IN PALESTINE

Three championships—more than any other unit—were won by a Battalion of the Regiment in the Palestine Command United Services Novices' Boxing Championships at Jerusalem in May.

Ten boxers were entered for the competitions from the Battalion and five fought their way to the semi-finals: Sergt. F. Saunders (Eltham), Ptes. C. Langley (Folkestone), R. Leeson (HILLINGDON), F. Manze (TOTTENHAM), and J. Davidson (Lancs.).

Best performance in the competition was put up by Leeson, who won the lightweight championship after a hard fight in the final against a member of the Palestine Police Force. Leeson boxed consistently well and wore his opponent down with good straight punches.

The featherweight championship was won by Langley from a Royal Signals opponent by crafty boxing and hard hitting, while Sergt. Saunders carried off the middleweight prize from the Royal Navy after a close and hard-fought fight.

Manze was runner-up in the light-heavyweights after a game fight. Other members of the Battalion who took part were Cpl. F. Wilson (WILLES DEN GREEN), Ptes. L. Bayfield (Welwyn), K. Bayles (EDMONTON), L. Harris (HACKNEY), and A. Berryman (HAYES). The Championship winners received their prizes from Lord Gort, the High Commissioner.

## CASUALTY LIST

The Colonel of the Regiment regrets to announce the following casualties:

### OFFICERS

#### Killed

Lieut.-Col. T. G. Symes.  
Majors H. S. Jupp, M.C., W. D. Ellis.  
Capt. R. G. Macpherson.  
T/Capt. H. F. Bannister.  
Lieuts. Rodney W. B. Lloyd, M.C. (Rifle Brigade, serving in Middlesex Regiment, N.W.E.), H. S. Shillidy (Kens), B. S. Cornell, E. H. Taylor (K.R.R.C.), E. C. Middleditch, M.C., D. B. Fraser.

#### Died of Wounds as P.O.W.

Lieut. F. Dawson.

### Died of Wounds

Lieut. R. Waggett.

### Died in Japanese Hands

Colonel L. A. Newnham (unofficial report).  
Major S. J. Clark.

### Died

Lieut.-Col. W. Y. Miller, D.S.O.  
Major S. M. Pratt.  
Hon. Capt. and Q.M. James Lee.

### Wounded

Major W. D. Ellis.  
T/Cpts. F. J. Bennett, S. S. Day.  
Lieuts. C. E. W. Coleman, D. W. Bushby, W. Evans, I. R. Richards, M. L. F. Dibble, D. B. Fraser, J. A. E. Howell, W. F. Jenkins, W. N. Penfold, J. M. Wimbury, L. J. Winslow, G. A. Lowrie, J. H. Stubbs, H. G. Brake, F. Bramall, J. E. Finegan, D. Mimmack, G. O'Brien.  
2/Lieut. A. J. Kreps.

### N.C.O.s AND OTHER RANKS

#### Killed

C.S.M. J. Tew.  
Sergts. A. D. Monks, H. Evans, J. Shandley, M. Goss, S. A. Stevens, J. H. Edginton, G. F. F. Percy, P. J. McAleer.  
Cpls. C. G. Horley, R. Lee (Kens), D. Swallow, — Stewart.  
A/Cpl. S. J. Fry.  
L/Cpl. G. E. Morris.  
Ptes. G. Crompton, G. J. Cox, W. E. Cashmore, L. Flenley, A. E. Hutchins, A. D. Powell (Kens), C. G. Sherwood, G. T. Davis, A. H. Farley, J. A. Jones, J. A. Martin, W. Orlebar, W. Evans, W. Edwards, J. Wright, J. Wilson, J. Butler, V. Orr.

#### Died of Wounds

Sergt. R. Osborne.  
Cpl. V. R. Tyson.  
Ptes. T. H. France, J. V. Hawkes, J. Livermore, J. W. Patston, A. S. Tilley, T. E. Field, A. G. Graham, H. A. Hassall, A. Laverick, J. E. Marriott, A. G. Parrott, W. E. Cashmore, C. G. Sherwood.

#### Previously Reported P.O.W. now Reported Died as P.O.W.

Pte. J. F. Abear.

#### Died

Cpl. G. E. Douglas.  
Pte. F. J. Eyles.

#### Wounded

Sergts. H. Durbin, E. A. Underwood, J. E. Coates, C. Farebrother, G. W. Lomas, S. C. W. Weller, H. Betchin, H. Deverill, A. H. Bond, W. R. Calland, G. W. Dutch.  
Cpls. D. F. Blake, V. G. Lambert, J. W. Soderberg, L. A. J. Culver, A. S. Walker, J. Edwards, W. B. Gibbs, G. Hill, H. Roberts, J. Welsh, J. L. Dartnall, J. R. Emery, D. J. McKinnon, W. Tate, A. W. Johnson.  
L/Cpls. G. W. Read, E. Swaine, R. F. Craggs, T. H. Leigh, J. Hughes.  
Ptes. G. Albiston, J. E. Anderson, G. E. Bacon, A. Bales, W. Barker, J. J. Barnard, J. T. Bates, A. H. Belsey, B. Benson, F. Bernstein, C. T. Bolton, N. J. Brazier, S. C. Briggs, E. R. Broadway, J. S. Bushell, R. Casemore, S. J. Charles, A. B. Church, R. Cockerill, R. B. Coia, W. A. Connor, W. J. Conway, G. Cooper, G. T. Copus, A. J. Cornelius, J. W. Coulson, C. A. Daniels, E. G. Dix, P. Doyle,



L. A. H. Dunne, D. A. Ellis, C. R. Ellisdon, W. Evans, A. C. Fisher, D. Fitzgerald, G. C. Gee, W. A. Godfrey, E. K. J. Green, W. C. Green, G. E. Griffin, E. Haine, R. C. Hay, G. H. Hill, E. Herbert, G. A. Hollands, E. W. Honeychurch, G. M. Houseley, K. Hurst, P. F. J. Jarvis, H. R. Jeffrey, G. F. Jerram, H. Jones, J. A. Jones, H. Kedge, A. A. Kellighan, A. P. W. Kelly, W. Kidd, R. E. D. Knowles, R. G. Lashbrook, A. Locke, C. H. Lord, A. Marshall, A. J. Matthews, B. McCrossan, A. Merritt, P. A. Michaelson-Yates, D. T. Morriss, V. J. D. Mortimore, A. Moulding, A. E. Newman, R. H. Otto, E. L. Panter, E. L. Pardey, R. W. Patterson, J. G. Peart, J. E. Phillips, G. E. Pither, N. Pritchard, R. F. Pugh, A. A. Richardson, F. Riley, M. Riley, C. R. Rouse, D. H. Ryall, G. H. Saunders, F. G. Schieldowsky, R. J. Scrivier, G. H. Shaw, L. T. Shepherd, S. H. F. Southwell, G. A. Stimpson, L. Swann, G. Timms, F. Thomas, A. H. Thurlow, W. J. Town, A. T. Wallington, T. G. Wallis, A. Walsh, A. Weaver, C. D. West, H. G. Wheadon, M. W. White, J. W. Williams, R. A. Willard, C. Wilson, J. Wilson, F. Wolstencroft.

## DECORATIONS and AWARDS

### D.S.O.

Capt. F. A. M. Docker.

### M.C.

Majors I. D. F. Campbell, J. W. Doyle, M. F. Pearson, E. F. Thompson, A. R. Waller, S. Jacobson. Lieuts. K. P. Baxter, C. E. W. Coleman, D. H. Fulton, J. T. Griffiths, J. S. McKay, K. O. Shaw.

### Bar to M.C.

Major M. F. Pearson.

### D.C.M.

Cpl. B. L. Evans.

### M.M.

Sergts. — Addison, — Carter, — Fisher, — Hayward. L/Sergt. — Claydon. Cpl. C. E. Chidgey. Ptes. W. H. Daniels, T. Latham.

### Mentioned in Despatches

Lieut.-Col. J. P. Hall. Majors A. J. Hughes, B. V. C. Harpur, R. G. Bare. Capts. F. H. Gibbs, F. N. Shippam, Rev. R. Blofeld, C.F. Lieuts. J. S. McKay, J. A. W. Young. C.S.M.s — Skinner, R. Bund. C.Q.M.S. — Upchurch. Sergts. R. Kaye, S. Riddick, W. J. Taylor, M.M., E. Carter, R. Nichols, T. Evans, C. Felstead. Cpl. H. Phillips. Pte. G. E. Brown.

### Certificate of Gallantry

Capt. R. G. McPhearson, C. E. Wright. C.S.M. E. Pike. Sergts. A. Fisher, M.M., J. Horn, A. Woods. Cpls. H. Harris, R. French. L/Cpls. B. Freeman, F. Lavender, A. Sumsion. Ptes. A. Swincoe, W. Ralph.

### Certificate C-in-C.

L/Cpl. W. Hughes.

### Croix de Guerre (with Palm)

Lieut.-Col. A. M. Mann. Major R. G. Bare (with Gilt Star).

**Croix de Guerre (with Bronze Star)**  
C.S.M. R. Bund.  
Sergts. J. Horn, A. West.

**Croix de Guerre**  
Lieuts. I. D. Brotherton, A. J. Milne.  
C.S.M. — Morris.

### HONOURS

#### O.B.E.

Colonel R. H. Batten.  
Lieut.-Colonel W. L. Roberts.

## "THE NEEDS OF INFANTRY"

By ARTHUR BRYANT

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In every war victory in the final resort depends upon the infantry. The least spectacular arm of the Army, Field-Marshal Montgomery has described it, "yet without them you cannot win a battle. Without them you can do nothing at all. Nothing!" Or, as "Field Service Regulations" puts it, "success in war, which is won by proper co-operation of all arms, must in the end be confirmed by infantry." The only arm which can penetrate virtually anywhere, it has to fight its way to and through the objective.

It is in this that Britain—not normally regarded as a military nation at all—has always excelled. Though despised at the start of our major wars as military bunglers and hopelessly handicapped at first by lack of equipment and up-to-date training, we have always emerged victorious in the end, not only at sea, our traditional element, but on land, with our infantry—guards, riflemen, Highlanders, light infantry, fusiliers, and county regiments alike—winning for themselves an international name. The archers of Agincourt who so unexpectedly routed the armoured knights of the Middle Ages, the British line which did the same to Napoleon's Grand Armée, the men of Arnhem; the story is always the same. The phrase and the weapons change, but the genius of the British foot soldier remains a constant, or, at any rate, recurrent factor.

In time of peace this is forgotten, and nowhere more quickly than in England. Outside the little world of the professional army a profound ignorance of our military tradition settles down like a fog at the end of every war. The popular conception of the infantryman in the 'twenties and 'thirties was of a dense if honest chap carrying a rifle, mechanically forming fours, and going through much inexplicable marching and "spit-and-polish." Support was lent to this view by recollections of the last war, when the true function of infantry was largely lost sight of, and when great masses were mown down while mechanically walking behind barrages which a machine-minded age supposed could take the place of human resource and skill.

In 1940 the Germans reminded us—they had given us a preliminary hint in March, 1918—what infantry, properly trained and supported by other arms co-ordinated to a single purpose could do in the way of penetrating even the strongest defensive position.

The great man who led the British Army through the fiery ordeals of Norway, Dunkirk and Greece took the lesson to heart and improved on it. To-day the British infantryman is almost the most versatile craftsman in the world. His is an astonishing range. He has to be able to handle and service a wide variety of weapons and to use them under conditions of close fighting in which the slightest error or mechanical defect may bring immediate and fatal retribution.

His is no single-type job, like a gunner's or signaller's, but a multiple one in which he must constantly adapt himself to unforeseeable conditions. He has to be what the commando is in the popular eye—a jack-of-all-trades of infinite resource, ready to look after himself in all situations and to turn his hand to anything at any moment. Digging in with pick and shovel, crawling silently on patrol in the dark, climbing cliff and rock and crossing river, swamp and forest, negotiating minefield and wire, manning trenches, storming positions, repelling tanks or dive-bombers: these are all in his day's—or night's—work. He has to be alert and quick in practical common sense, always on his guard against danger, versed in the arts of concealment, observation and deduction, and perfectly co-ordinated in body, mind and heart. Between him and his officers and comrades there has to be the closest and, at the same time, the most flexible co-operation—a practised and tested teamwork on which perfect confidence can be based. And, because in modern war dispersal is essential, and because once battle is joined there is little time or opportunity for orders, he has to be able to act on his own initiative. It is on the individual infantryman and the platoon and section that the fate of even the best-planned action depends.

Above all, the infantryman has to be physically strong and spiritually courageous. His place in action is nearest to the enemy: that of the greatest danger and discomfort. Carrying his own weapons and equipment, fighting sometimes for days without sleep or rations, living in wet clothes and sodden or frozen trenches amid din, stench and horror, he needs the highest standard of fitness and toughness. Without a great heart he is nothing. In defence he has to hold on when every natural feeling prompts him to yield. In attack he has to force his way through the line where the defender has planned to hold him and get under his guard. Only the flame of his spirit can enable him to maintain the momentum of attack.

It is not that he is braver than the men of other arms—he would be the last to make such a claim—but that he needs his courage much more. The sailor has his ship, the artilleryman his gun, the cavalryman his tank, but the foot-soldier has little but his pride and morale. On the day of battle everything turns, not as in a ship on the captain, but on the individual private—the lowest-common-denominator—standing firm, even though there is no one to oversee him. If he does not hold, the best-laid scheme will fail.

The first problem of training, therefore, is to give the infantryman an invisible armour of personal pride and morale that will stand the test of battle. In our army this has always been the task of the regiment, and it is the essence of a British regiment that it regards itself as second-to-none. In continental armies the conception of the elite storm-trooper has often prevailed, with the great mass

of infantry regarded as mere cannon-fodder, and as socially inferior to other arms. "Notre armée," an Italian officer remarked before the war to a Highland officer, "Cavalerie bon, Infanterie très bourgeoise." "Dans notre armée," the indignant Highlander replied, "Artillerie bon; Cavalerie bon; Infanterie bon, tout bon; Infanterie avec le jupe crème de la crème." Nothing could have expressed more perfectly the attitude of the British infantryman. He regards himself, however recruited, not as a pawn in a despised bourgeois corps, but as a member of a peculiar, distinguished and exclusive tribe. It is his pride, in this which gives him background in battle. There is not a regiment in our army whose history—embalmed in its peculiar traditions, idiosyncracies and customs—is not worthy of a Homer.

Anything that tended to weaken the morale-building qualities of the regiment would be a fatal blow to the fighting strength of the British Army. Yet the regiment by itself is not enough. For one thing, it is too small a unit to stand up to the casualty drain of modern global war. Again and again in the present and last war it has proved impossible to fill the depleted ranks of a front-line battalion with men of the same regiment. Instead, men from other regiments have been hastily drafted in and sent into action before they have had time to acquire new loyalties and pride—sometimes with serious results. Men who have to stand the unpredictable strains of battle are not arithmetical digits who can be moved about to satisfy the demands of logistics.

For this reason some who most value the regimental tradition have begun to ask whether a regional grouping of our historic regiments for common training and drafting in time of war might not be an advantage. Local pride and feeling, especially in the ranks, can be a very potent factor in creating morale, and the geographical evolution of our regimental system—begun in the days of Cardwell—might perhaps now be taken a step further. Martial loyalties need not conflict; a man may be as proud of his division as of his regiment, and the better soldier for his dual pride.

But the main new development in infantry training has been the battle school. This, born in the dark days after Dunkirk to train men in a seemingly new technique of war, has grown into the School of Infantry. In the famous parent school on the northern moors and in the satellite and divisional schools now established in every command and theatre of war, infantry officers and soldiers are trained in the latest developments of their craft and—in General Paget's phrase—"physically and emotionally prepared for the shock of battle."

With an equipment and range of experience greater than that which any regimental training unit can command, the School of Infantry, like John Moore's School for Light Infantry at Shorncliffe, has not weakened the regimental tradition but has fed and strengthened it. It has almost certainly come to stay as a permanent institution. Here, one hopes, in a home worthy of it—a living memorial to those who have fallen—a common doctrine for battle training will be kept constantly up to date and the special problems and needs of infantry studied and enunciated. For those who have to bear so much, nothing but the very best is enough.





Photograph taken on Albuhera Day, 1945, of the Officers of one of our Battalions in the Middle East who were able to be present together with several old members of the Regiment.

Back row, standing, left to right: Lt. K. Adcock, Lt. R. J. M. Hollins, Capt. D. E. McF. Kidd, Lt. J. Hyams, Lt. J. Flack, Major I. Blackburn (4th Bn. 1915), Capt. N. Micklem, S.A.M.C., Capt. C. P. Glanville, Lt.-Q.M. J. Lintler, Lt.-Q.M. W. Badham (late 17th), Lt. G. Boswell.  
Seated, left to right: Major D. L. Binder, Major R. Bartram (late 17th), Major E. F. Thompson, M.C., Lt.-Col. J. D. Robbins, Lt.-Col. S. Brighton (now Palestine Police), Major E. M. Bruce, Capt. J. A. Churchill.

#### MIDDLESEX AND THE MILITIAS

In my March editorial I mentioned the debt we owe to the Hon. Lady Fortescue for the kindness with which she immediately granted me permission to quote from her late husband's works, the first extract from which follows this brief preface. The late Sir John Fortescue is best known for his monumental history of the British Army; but one of his lesser-known books is entitled, "The County Lieutenancies and the Army, 1803-1814." This book he described as "an overflow" from his History of the British Army and the then (1908) Secretary of State for War, recognising the importance of the subject, namely, the methods of recruiting to, and the formation of the basis of, the present-day British Army, granted Sir John a small subsidy to insure him against loss through its publication. The research work conducted by the author was tremendous: "Upon the whole, I reckon that the manuscript authorities, which I have perused for the compilation of the present brief narrative, include about 100,000 documents of one kind and another bearing upon my subject. One very voluminous and most important return, of which no copy exists at the Record Office, I was so fortunate as to find at Windsor Castle; and I have to express my humble thanks to His Majesty the King for his gracious permission to make use of it."

Before quoting the extracts from this interesting book which have specific Regimental and County associations I think it is desirable to give readers some introductory condensation of the early chapters.

The military system of England from the close of the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century was practically, though with superficial differences, the same. To every place which required a garrison, whether at home or abroad, a small permanent force was indissolubly attached, and for purposes of war an army was improvised.

The institution and increase of the Standing Army affected this system far less than might be supposed.

The improvisation of an army during the eighteenth century was generally effected in three ways: by ordinary recruiting, by raising new corps, and by raising men for rank.

Ordinary recruiting was a regimental matter, which kept two or three officers and a small party of men constantly absent from regimental duty. It was usually stimulated at the outbreak of war by adding two troops or companies to every regiment or battalion, which gave a step without purchase to a limited number of officers. (This mode of augmentation lasted till the Crimean War.)

The raising of new regiments is a thing that explains itself. Practically it offered commissions to any enterprising gentleman or gentlemen who, by hook or crook, could get together a body of men; and in its essence it differed very little from raising men for rank, which signified the grant of a step of promotion to all officers and of a commission to all civilians who would collect a given number of recruits. An increased bounty, of course, naturally accompanied the whole of these arrangements and though in certain circumstances men of rank and station could raise whole regiments of excellent soldiers, yet the backbone of an improvised army was the crimp.

The replacing of casualties suffered on active service, that is to say, the maintenance as distinguished from the formation of an army, was left wholly to ordinary recruiting; and it need hardly be said that in a long war this meagre resource invariably failed.

Increased bounties led always to increased desertion, and even in Queen Anne's time it was necessary to enlist men for short service, instead of, as usual, for life, and to make a levy of so many men from every parish in the county. As time went on, the difficulty of keeping corps in the field up to strength constantly increased.

Towards the end of the Seven Years' War new levies were raised as fast as men could be found to undertake them, but the recruits furnished thereby to the Army in Germany were of miserable quality. In fact, greatly though the sudden peace of 1763 was blamed, it came none too soon for the British Army.

That war, however, brought with it one great and solid advance in our military system, namely, the Militia Act of 1757. This measure provided for passing the entire manhood of the country through the Militia by ballot, in terms of three years, but it was never properly executed, and hence lost very much of its value. The ballot itself was never enforced until the American trouble became serious in 1775, and then, since substitution was allowed, the traffic in substitutes interfered gravely with recruiting for the Regular Army. The price of a substitute rose to ten guineas before the close of the war, which meant that recruits for the Line could not be obtained for less than 11 or 12 guineas. This was the first serious symptom of a very grave mischief.

From 1784 until 1792 Pitt allowed the military forces of the country to sink to the lowest degree of weakness and inefficiency; and in 1793 he found himself obliged to improvise not merely an Army, but, owing to the multiplicity of his enterprises, a very large army. He fell back on the old resources of calling into existence new levies and of raising men for rank, allowing the system to be carried to such excess that the army did not recover from the evil for many years. Never did the crimps reap such a harvest as in 1794 and 1795; and never was a more cruel wrong done to the army than when boys fresh from school, in virtue of so many hundred wretched weaklings produced by a crimp, took command of battalions, and even of brigades, over the heads of good officers of 20 and 30 years' service. In 1793 the bounty offered to men enlisting into the Line was ten guineas; within eighteen months the Government was contracting with certain scoundrels for the delivery of men at 20 guineas a head, and, long before that the market price of recruits had risen to 30 guineas.

One cause of the extreme dearth of recruits was the dread of service in the West Indies, where Pitt had decided to make his principal military effort. Nor was this repugnance unreasonable, for West Indian duty in those days was practically synonymous with death.

By 1796 the Government was at its wits end, and in that year there was serious danger of invasion. In spite of all its Fencibles and Volunteers, it did not feel safe, and so fell, during the next two years, to raising more Fencibles, a Supplementary Militia, more Volunteers, and, last of all, a force called the Provisional Cavalry, which was supposed to include all mounted men not already gathered into the Fencible and Yeomanry Cavalry.

The Provisional Cavalry was a crying failure. In the words of a Parliamentarian of those days, "It passed over the country like a blight. It was a pleasant conceit to make every man ride another's horse, till at length, when the men and horses were brought together, no man knew how to mount, so they all separated." So short-lived was this force that the foregoing caustic sentence about it is almost all that is discoverable.

The Supplementary Militia was more successful. Ministers had the good sense not to grant any exemption to the Volunteers until the ballot had been held. But even so, between these various calls for men, bounties, or more accurately speaking, the cost of recruits and substitutes, rose in 1798 to sixty, seventy and even eighty guineas.

It was very plain that such a state of things could not continue; wherefore, in 1798 Ministers passed an Act to enable 10,000 Militiamen to enlist in the army for a bounty of £10. The Lords-Lieutenant set their faces against it, not wishing to see their men shipped off to the West Indies; and the measure was a failure. But, fortunately, the demand for men in the West Indies ceased about this time, and the Government was able to re-introduce the Act in 1799, with the additional provision that the service of the enlisted Militiamen should be confined to Europe. Many of them volunteered for service in Egypt, though their engagement did not bind them to do so; and, in fact, the army depended chiefly on Militiamen for its recruits until the signature of the preliminaries of peace in October, 1801.

The Treaty of Amiens was admittedly only an experiment, and an experiment so doubtful that it could deserve no higher title than a suspension of arms. In such circumstances it was impossible to reduce the military force to a peace establishment and the lowest number of regular troops that dared be estimated for was 132,000. On the other hand, the Fencibles, both horse and foot, were totally disbanded, which diminished the force for home defence by at least 20,000 men. It had been hoped that most of these men, whom from long divorce from any but military employment were practically soldiers, would have enlisted in the Line; but they did not. The nation seemed, not unnaturally, to be sick of warlike exercises, and recruits were by no means plentiful. But the next war which was to engage this country was declared on 16th May, 1803, and exact returns of the effective strength of the Regular Army on 1st June are available, and they may be set down with tolerable correctness at 114,000 of all ranks, hence, at the outbreak of war the army was over 20,000 men, or nearly one-sixth, short of its proper strength.

(To be continued.)

G. E. M.



IT TAKES TWENTY MINUTES TO TURN  
A SOLDIER INTO A CIVILIAN!

BUT

*Mr. Therm*

WILL GIVE YOU  
EXPERT ADVICE

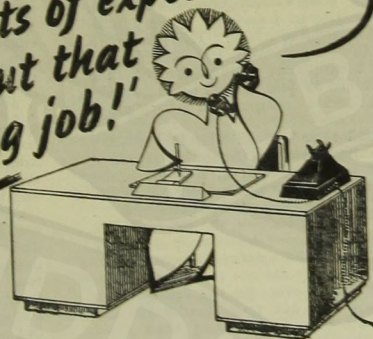
*At Once!*

ON  
COOKING, HEATING, REFRIGERATION,  
HOT WATER, etc.,

FOR YOUR POST WAR HOME

"AFTER DEMOB.—GET ME ON THE JOB"

*'I've had lots of experience!  
See me about that  
heating job!'*

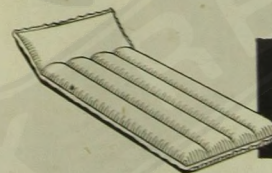


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