



THE DIE-HARDS

The Journal of

THE MIDDLESEX REGIMENT

(Duke of Cambridge's Own)

March 1946

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The Die Hards

THE JOURNAL OF THE MIDDLESEX REGIMENT

(Duke of Cambridge's Own)



VOL. VII. No. 7

MARCH, 1946

PRICE 1/-

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," "Serangapatam," "Albuhera," "Ciudad Rodrigo," "Badajoz," "Vitoria," "Pyrenees," "Nivelle," "Nive," "Peninsular,"
 "Alma," "Inkerman," "Sevastopol," "New Zealand," "South Africa, 1879," "Relief of Ladysmith," "South Africa, 1880-82,"
 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," "Fresenberg,"
 "Bellevue," "Aubers," "Hooge, 1915," "Loos," "Somme, 1916," "Albert, 1916," "Bazentin," "Delville Wood,"
 "Pozières," "Ginchy," "Flers-Courcelette," "Morval," "Thiepval," "Le Transloy," "Ancre Heights," "Ancre, 1916," "Bapaume,"
 "1917," "Arras, 1917," "Vimy, 1917," "Scarpe, 1917," "Arleux," "Ploeghem," "Langemarck, 1917," "Menin Road,"
 "Polygon Wood," "Broodseinde," "Poelcappelle," "Passchendaele," "Cambrai, 1917," "St. Quentin," "Rosières," "Avre,"
 "Villers Bretonneux," "Lys," "Estaires," "Hazebrück," "Bailloul," "Kemmel," "Scherpenberg," "Mindenburg Line," "Canal
 du Nord," "St. Quentin Canal," "Courtrai," "Selle," "Valenciennes," "Sambre," "France and Flanders, 1914-18," "Italy,
 1917-18," "Struma," "Doiran, 1918," "Macedonia, 1915-18," "Suvla," "Landing at Suvla," "Scimitar Hill," "Gallipoli, 1915,"
 "Rumani," "Egypt, 1915-17," "Gaza," "El Mughar," "Jerusalem," "Jericho," "Jordan," "Tell Asur," "Palestine, 1917-18,"
 "Mesopotamia, 1917-18," "Muran, 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, Middle.
 Pay Office—90, Brompton Road, Knightsbridge.

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.
 3rd, 4th and 5th 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.

Agents—Lloyds Bank Limited, Cox & King's Branch.

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., J.P.

Officer Commanding Depot:

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

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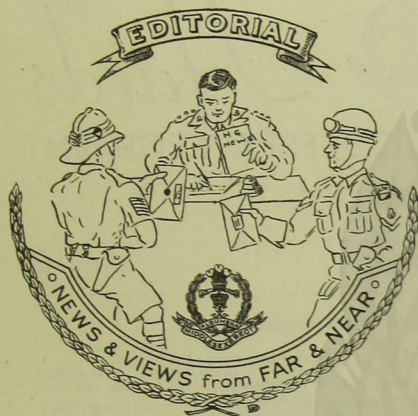
NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS.

"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.

Subscriptions should be forwarded to the Editor, "The Die-Hards" Journal, to whom all Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable and crossed. — & Co.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION 5/- (Post Free)



Editor: Bt-Major G. W. Kempster.

We have much pleasure in informing our readers that we sold right out of our last two numbers. Evidently the Journal is appreciated.

We would like to thank the Sub-Editors of this journal and the officers and men who write the Unit notes for their contributions. Without them we could not have achieved such good results. We know from letters we receive how greatly they are appreciated by those who have returned to civilian life.

The sinking of the *Lisbon Maru* was taken from the Colonel of the Regiment's newsletter, and the picture of it was sent to us by Capt. Man. We desire to acknowledge most gratefully both contributions.

Acknowledgments are also made to the Editors of contemporary Regimental journals who furnished us with copies of their journals.

REGIMENTAL FIXTURES, 1946

(As notified at present).

Officers' Club

May 17th.—Golf Meeting. See Officers' Club Notes.

June 28th.—Officers' Club Dinner. See Officers' Club Notes.

MIDDLESEX REGIMENT ASSOCIATION SOCIAL SCHEME

7th Middlesex.—Old Comrades meet weekly at "The Nightingale," Nightingale Lane, Hornsey, on Wednesday evenings, about 7.30 p.m.

8th Middlesex.—At the "North Star," Kingston Road, Staines, on the third Sunday in each month at 11.30 hours.

At the "Duke of Wellington," Staines Road, Hounslow, on the first and third Thursdays of the month.

9th Middlesex.—Enquiries to Mr. F. Fenemore, at 565, Kenton Lane, Harrow Weald, Middlesex.

Inglis Barracks, Mill Hill, N.W.7.—At the above address on the last Saturday in the month commencing 23rd February, from 7 to 9 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Corporals' Room, and visitors are asked to enter by the lower Guard Room Gate.

OFFICERS' CLUB NOTES

Officers' Club Dinner

We are now able to inform you that the arrangements for our first post-war Officers' Club Dinner are complete. The Dinner will be held at The Connaught Rooms, Great Queen Street, W.C.2, at 7 p.m. for 7.30 p.m., on the evening of Friday, 28th June, 1946. Dress uniform or lounge suit (no miniatures). The Dinner will cost a lot of money, but members of the Club will only be asked to pay 10s. 6d. Drinks before and after the Dinner will be paid for by those attending, but the wines, cigars, cigarettes, etc., supplied during the dinner will not be a charge against diners. There is nothing to prevent a past or present officer of the Regiment attending the Dinner should he not be a member of the Club, but he will be asked to pay the full cost of the dinner, a sum fixed at £2 5s.

This notice will be circulated to all members of the Club. There is no need to wait for that notification, however, if you should see this first. If you wish to attend, will you send a notification to that effect to the Secretary, The Middlesex Regimental Officers' Club, Inglis Barracks, Mill Hill, N.W.7, accompanied by a remittance of 10s. 6d. if you are a member, or for £2 5s. if you are not. The Secretary will then send you a ticket which will admit you to The Connaught Rooms. Anyone who has paid his Club subscription by 27th June, 1946, will be considered a member for the purpose of this Dinner.

Officers' Club Golf Meeting

It has not been possible to run the usual two-day meeting such as we used to do before the war.

This year it has been decided to run a one-day meeting at Hendon Golf Club on Friday, 17th May, commencing at 10 a.m.

Those attending will be asked to pay a green fee of 3s. 6d. to the Secretary on the day itself, which will be handed to the Secretary of Hendon Golf Club. They will also be asked to pay for their own lunches and teas, etc., which will be available at the Club.

There will be a singles competition in the morning, medal round, and prizes will be awarded to the players returning the best scratch and handicap scores. In the afternoon there will be a foursomes competition against bogey, when partners will be drawn for. Prizes will be given to the winning pair and the runners-up.

Players may play off their old Middlesex Golfing Society handicaps, or, if not in possession of one of these, off their last club handicap. The Committee reserves the right to alter handicaps during the course of the meeting. There will be the usual medal sweeps, and a meeting during the luncheon period to elect a Committee to arrange future meetings.

Officers' Club Cricket Week

We are not in a position to add to our notes about cricket. Every effort to hold this week will be made, and is being made, but unforeseen difficulties preclude us from making any definite statements at the moment. All those members likely to be involved will receive sufficient notice in which to make their arrangements.

Officers' Club Ties

Messrs. Humphreys and Crook, Ltd., 22, Suffolk Street, Haymarket, S.W.1, are arranging for a supply of Middlesex Regimental Officers' Club Ties (made from a poplin material as silk is not obtainable for some time). As this firm has been compelled to order twelve dozen of these ties in order to obtain them, the firm trusts officers will take advantage of this opportunity and place their order at an early date to ensure obtaining the ties they require.

LETTER RECEIVED BY THE COLONEL OF THE REGIMENT

from the Middlesex and Huron Regiment:

OXFORD STREET ARMOURIES,
LONDON, ONTARIO.

9th November, 1945.

Colonel M. Browne,
O.C. Middlesex Regiment,
London,
England.

DEAR COLONEL,

We feel that a line to our parent Unit is quite in order and hope that you will accept this communication in the sincere spirit in which we write.

Our Commanding Officer, Lieut.-Col. L. C. Macdonald, V.D., was very enthusiastic over the reception tendered him by you on his call at your headquarters during the month of June, and we feel this has brought us very much closer as a junior Unit to the Middlesex Regiment.

Though it is unfortunate, owing to circumstances beyond our control, that our Unit did not have the opportunity of going overseas as a mobilised Unit, we feel we have made a glorious contribution to the recent victorious conflict in Europe. There has been a total of 57 officers and 1,111 O.R.s seconded from our Unit to active service during the war years. Included in this number we sent a complete Company to the Elgin Regiment when they mobilised in the 4th Division. Also, unofficially, we sent a Company overseas with the Perth Regiment 5th Division. We have nearly a full war establishment of enthusiastic officers, who have almost 100 per cent. qualified for their present ranks, and many are very bitterly disappointed at not having an opportunity to go overseas as a Unit. Had this happened, we are sure they would have made an excellent account of themselves.

We are known in our military district as a Unit keen in sports and have stood out in sport circles. In recent years at our annual camps we have been able to carry away a lion's share of the honours.

During the current year our Middlesex and Huron Regiment hockey team emblazoned more glory in our sports records. We entered the finals, but, owing to a lack of ice, we were forced to call off the final game. We took this team over to the United States to play the University of Michigan, and, despite the fact that this was a team of high repute, they closed their arena for the season by experiencing their only loss of the year to our boys by a score of five to one.

Hockey team.—Hon. President: Lieut.-Col. L. C. Macdonald, V.D. President: Major R. W. D. Lewis, E.D. Manager: Capt. J. A. Irvine. Coach: Sgt. E. Collins. Secretary: Sgt. E. Johnston. Trainer: R.Q.M.S. L. B. Macdonald, E.M. and Bar. Goal: Ptes. P. Riggan and A. Chown. Defence: Capt. R. B. Duffus, Sgt. H. Allen, Ptes. A. Powell and G. Dowell. Forward: Ptes. G. Astles, H. Wood and S. Foxworthy. Subs.: Capt. G. O. Hartwell, Sgt. W. Donning, Ptes. W. Gannon, J. Donning and B. Boyd.

We also have a volleyball team, which in a series of challenge matches during the season never lost a game. Also we have a fine basketball team, coached and managed by our 2nd i/c Support Company, Capt. G. O. Hartwell, who have turned in a magnificent record.

Our pride and joy currently is our Ball Club, coached by R.Q.M.S. L. B. Macdonald and managed by the writer, Capt. J. A. Irvine. Just last week we were victorious in the finals and became champions of the Army Ball League.

We are very happy to say that again our keen sense of sportsmanship asserted itself and, because of inability of our opposing club to field a team, they defaulted the final game. However, we insisted on a play-off game at any time or place at their convenience and walked away with the honours by a score of 13—4.

We are now embroiled in a series for the District Championship, having lost the first game in overtime by a score of 8—7 and winning the second game 9—3. We feel quite confident as to the outcome of the final game and hope to add yet another chapter to our already lofty career in sports.

The Club names are: Hon. President, Lieut.-Col. L. C. Macdonald, V.D.; President, Major R. W. D. Lewis, E.D., O.C. "B" Company; Manager, Capt. J. A. Irvine; Coach, R.Q.M.S. L. B. Macdonald, E.M. and Bar; Captain, Capt. R. B. Duffus, O.C. "D" Company. Players: C., Pte. G. Astles; P., Cpl. C. Parks; 1st B., Sgt. E. Johnston; 2nd B., Pte. W. Gannon; 3rd B., Pte. H. Wood; S.S., Pte. J. McArthur; L.F., Cpl. W. Mitchell; C.F., Capt. R. B. Duffus; R.F., Cpl. K. McLeish. Subs. (Pitchers): Capt. C. O. Hartwell, R.Q.M.S. L. B. Macdonald, E.M. and Bar, Ptes. D. Stone, R. Harlow, D. Gillies and R. Dorman.

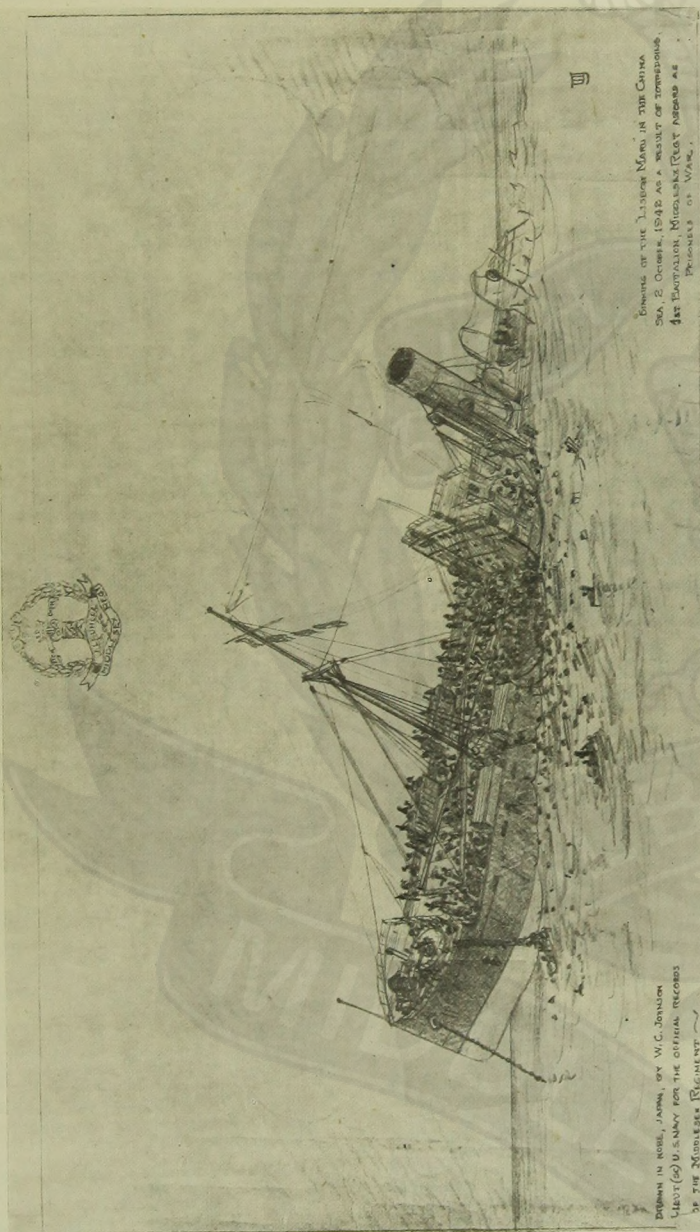
For the last few years we have made a regular practice of holding parties the last Saturday in each month for all Officers and their wives, which are held in our London Mess. These parties are always a highlight and enjoyed by both officers and their wives alike, and we feel that they have a great deal to do with letting the wife know how serious her husband's part-time Army work is.

We hope to have some more information later on with regard to the number of decorations, casualties, etc., of our men on active service, and should you have any material with reference to the Middlesex Regiment we would appreciate your sending it along.

Again thanking you for the courtesies extended to our Commanding Officer, we are

Fraternally yours,

J. A. IRVINE,
Capt., Middlesex and Huron Regiment.



SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE SINKING OF S.S. "LISBON MARU"

The S.S. *Lisbon Maru*, a Japanese transport conveying British prisoners of war (1,800 in all), and some Japanese troops from Hong Kong to Japan, left Hong Kong on 27th September, 1942. The prisoners were accommodated in three holds: No. 1 Hold, forward, consisting of Royal Navy and a few troops; No. 2 Hold, amidships, consisting of 1,150 men (2nd Battalion Royal Scots, 1st Battalion Middlesex Regiment, Royal Corps of Signals and a few Royal Artillery men under the command of Lieut.-Col. H. W. M. Stewart, O.B.E., M.C.), and No. 3 Hold adjoining No. 2, consisting of Royal Artillery personnel. The ship was armed with 4in. guns fore and aft, and had a small armed guard for custody of the prisoners. The first few days were uneventful, and the weather good, the chief complaints being lack of exercise, time on deck and difficulties over drawing water, and a lack of sufficient latrine accommodation. The food, however, was good and cigarettes were issued to the men. At 07.20 hours on 1st October, as the men were assembling in their places for roll call prior to having breakfast, an explosion shook the ship, seeming to come from the rear of No. 3 Hold. This was followed by pandemonium on the part of the Japanese troops and crew, and both guns came into action. At the same time all prisoners were ordered to remain below. In No. 2 Hold, where the men of the Middlesex were, there was very little shock when the torpedo struck the ship, and many did not know for certain what had happened. The engines had stopped but there was at that time no apparent list. The men remained calmly at their places, and joked about a rescue at sea. After a short time, the firing having ceased and the noise on deck having quietened, the men began to think about breakfast, but this was not forthcoming, and, in fact, no further food was issued on the *Lisbon Maru*. The day dragged on and a Japanese aeroplane circled overhead, but that provided the only relief. There was much difficulty over the calls of nature, as at first no receptacles of any sort were available and, as many men were suffering from diarrhoea, conditions rapidly became unbearable. Finally the Japanese passed down two old petrol tins for 1,150 men, but as no one was permitted to go on deck it was impossible to empty them and they were soon overflowing. There was also an acute water shortage, the Japanese finally passing down two buckets of soiled water that was almost undrinkable. In spite of this the men behaved admirably.

The hold was divided into two tiers, the upper occupied by the 1st Middlesex, Royal Engineers and Royal Signals, the lower by Royal Scots and Royal Artillery. The men were sleeping jammed together on Japanese type bed platforms, and in the narrow passageway in the top tier, and all over the bottom of the hold in the lower tier. There was communication from the lower to the upper tier by means of two wooden ladders, and from the upper tier to the deck by three ladders.

By nightfall, though many had the suspicion that all was not well, the majority of the prisoners thought that either the ship would start up under her own power again, when the necessary repairs were effected or that reserve ships would take off the Japanese and British. As there was still no list, there seemed no cause for alarm, and in any case most of the men had lifebelts. At 19.30 hours a ship came alongside, and gave the impression that she had tried to take

the *Lisbon Maru* in tow but had failed. Immediately the Japanese soldiers were seen to embark on the rescue ship. At this point, No. 2 Hold was closed and battened down, and tarpaulins secured over the hatches, leaving the prisoners in pitch darkness. Shortly afterwards the ship was heard to cast off and leave the *Lisbon Maru*. It was at this point that it became apparent that all was not well with the *Lisbon Maru*. No. 3 Hold got in touch with Col. Stewart by tapping Morse on the communication wall, and said that they were manning the pumps but without much success. No. 1 Hold reported that they were battened down as well, and that the heat was bad. As time went on conditions grew worse. An ominous creaking was heard, as if the ship's ribs were being squeezed, and there was a continuous banging, which appeared to come from loose objects floating in a flooded compartment. The heat in No. 2 Hold was stifling, and men were having great difficulty with the latrine situation. No. 1 Hold reported that one man had died and No. 3 Hold said that several men had collapsed at the pumps for want of air. Col. Stewart attempted repeatedly to get in touch with the Japanese and Lieut. Potter, of the St. John Ambulance, continually spoke to the sentries mounted at the companionway with an L.M.G., but they would not pass on any messages. It was now obvious that the ship was listing considerably, and it seemed as if she would sink with the prisoners battened down in her holds like rats. It is unnecessary to enlarge on the feelings of the men in the holds, and there were few who hoped to get out alive, but nevertheless they remained perfectly calm.

At about 08.30 hrs. on 2nd, October the ship gave a very perceptible lurch, but then steadied. All the time Col. Stewart continued to ask the guards to remove the hatches, but was told that they would be removed at 12.00. At 09.00 hrs. the Colonel, fully realising that it was now probably only a matter of minutes before the ship sank, gave orders for the hold to be broken open. Lieut. Howell R.A.S.C., armed with a butcher's knife, proceeded to cut open the covers, and, followed by a few men, got on deck, where, in spite of his being shot at, and one or two men being hit, including Lieut. Potter, he opened up an exit sufficient for the men to leave the hold. In the meantime, the men in the hold, seeing light for the first time for 15 hours, realised at what an acute angle the ship lay. For a few seconds pandemonium broke loose, and it was at once quelled, and the men began to swarm out of the hold on deck. Water began to pour into the holds as the men climbed out, and many were washed back right into the bottom of the hold. On arrival on deck the Colonel gave the order to abandon ship and the sea was soon dotted with heads, some swimming, some on driftwood, some on wooden latrines, ladders or anything that would float, all making their way towards the ships that were a mile or two off, or to the land about eight miles away. Although the first feeling of the prisoners when they reached the deck from the holds was one of relief at the fresh air and daylight, also the presence of ships and land in sight, their troubles were by no means over. When Col. Stewart gave the order to abandon ship many obeyed, but there was still a large number who did not leave the ship at once. Some had no lifebelts, some appeared utterly unconcerned of the danger, especially as the ship had come to rest on a sandbank with its bows in the air, and appeared likely to remain that way. Of these, many

went down with the ship when she took her final plunge at about 11.00 hrs and were drowned. Even those who were in the sea met unexpected difficulties. Most of those who could swim or make headway at all made for the Japanese ships, expecting to be taken on board at once. Cases were frequent in which men were shot at, knocked off ropes, upset into the sea from rafts and even threatened with propellers. It was not until approximately 12.15 hrs. that the Japanese appeared to alter their attitude towards the prisoners and take them on board, but by this time many had started for the shore or were drowned.

Those swimming for the islands had a distance of some eight miles to travel, and at first, greatly assisted by the strong inshore current, they made excellent headway. On arrival at the islands themselves, however, two dangers became apparent, the first a very strong cross current, that swept the weaker swimmers right past the shore and out to sea, and the second, the exceptionally steep and rocky coastline, which together with the breakers, made landing very difficult. In fact, though a large number of men arrived at the islands only comparatively few managed to land, and of these the majority owe their lives to Chinese who picked them up in the water in sampans. An eye witness, Lieut. Baird, R.E., who was swept out to sea and not rescued until nearly midnight, stated that hundreds of bodies floated past him.

Before closing this account, mention must be made of the treatment received by the prisoners when they left the water. Those on the ships received fair treatment. Though very scantily dressed—at least three men died later at sea from exposure—they managed to get dry in the sun and were given cigarettes, small quantities of hot milk, and a few biscuits. These meagre rations were all that were issued out twice daily to the prisoners whilst they remained on board. At night, due to the intense cold, some of the more sick men were put below, the remainder sleeping on deck. In fairness to the Japanese, it must be stated that there was not room for all prisoners below the deck. The men who landed on the islands received a splendid welcome from the Chinese, who fed and clothed them as best they could, and did all that their limited means would allow to make the men comfortable until they were taken off by the Japanese patrol ships on 3rd, October 1942. The days 3rd October to 4th were spent collecting together survivors, and on 5th October the remnants of the prisoners of war who had left Hong Kong on the *Lisbon Maru* assembled at Wessing, but of the 1,800 men who had embarked, only 950 were present to answer their names. The Middlesex had lost three officers and 151 other ranks from their draft of ten officers and 350 other ranks.

So ended an episode in which all who took part may feel justifiably proud, but also a tragedy which most participants wish to forget.

MIDDLESEX REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION NOTES

PARTY TO OUR FAR EAST PRISONERS OF WAR

A very successful party was given to our Far East prisoners of war and relatives at Inglis Barracks on 15th December, 1945. Over 1,100 visitors, who included the Lord Lieutenant and local Mayors,

were entertained. Major Clark, O.C.R.D.P., made most excellent arrangements, assisted by Mrs. Tidbury, for the entertainment of those who attended. There was a huge tea, and a conjurer and Punch and Judy show helped to entertain the party.

Finally, the Christmas tree was disclosed, holding a toy for every child attending the party. A large number of these toys were free gifts collected by Mrs. Tidbury. They were of excellent quality and very much appreciated by the recipients, who, in some cases, required a little gentle restraining during the presentation.

We were all delighted to see how well our former prisoners of war looked. Our thanks are due to Mrs. Tidbury and Major Clark and their numerous assistants for the magnificent effort they made at a most difficult time to produce such excellent results.

A photograph of some of those involved in the organisation of the party appears opposite. It is not a very good one, but the photographer was troubled by some technical difficulties.

THE MIDDLESEX REGIMENTAL SOCIAL SCHEME

The general meeting reported in the last number of *The Die-Hards* bore fruit. Already five social clubs have commenced to function. It is hoped before long that many more will have started. It is also hoped that our readers will give them every support and see that those who are not aware of their existence are informed accordingly. The branches with the names of those running them are given in the front of the magazine under the heading "Regimental Fixtures." Readers are asked to remember that the scheme was intended to be run on a geographical basis rather than a Unit one. This point has, to some extent, been lost sight of. However, the great thing is to follow up the start made by those responsible for the present progress.

DEMANDS ON ASSOCIATION FUNDS CONTINUE TO BE HEAVY

Eighty-nine pounds were spent in giving assistance to eighteen cases in December, 1945, and at the time of writing these notes it would appear that the demand for January will be heavier still. Donations and subscriptions are being received, and it is a pity that space does not allow us to acknowledge them in these columns, but the need for continued financial support remains as urgent as ever.

DRUMMER STAGPOOLE, V.C.

Mrs. Dixon, of 29, Lancote Grove, Trent Bridge, Nottingham, the daughter of Drummer Stagpoole, has been in touch with the Editor for some time now.

She is naturally annoyed with the *Daily Mirror* and another paper, for stating that a Mrs. E. Potter, of New Zealand Square, was the first woman to present a Victoria Cross to the Regiment in which it was won, when the honour of being the first to do so belongs to her.

Her father, it may be recalled, won the V.C. in the Maori War in 1864. Incidentally in the same campaign he won the D.C.M. He was also granted a Lieutenant's commission by Queen Victoria, but for reasons of his own declined to accept it.

After her father's death, Mrs. Dixon presented his decorations and medals to the Officers' Mess of the 1st Battalion, where they have remained ever since.



A group of Organisers, taken on the occasion of the Party at Inglis Barracks given to our Repatriated Prisoners of War from the Far East.

It is hoped that they are safe with the 1st Battalion silver recovered from Singapore.

Many of the dead hero's descendants have distinguished themselves in subsequent wars, but of all the correspondence she has submitted so far the following extract from one of her letters makes the greatest appeal:—"The daughter of my eldest brother was very brave in the raid on Aldershot; she summoned the ambulances, tended the wounded, and collected hot water bottles and blankets right through the raid (being injured herself), and only fifteen years of age. She was presented with a lovely brooch a few weeks later for her courage."

Mrs. Dixon, indeed, has reason to be proud of her family, and so have we.

LETTER RECEIVED BY THE EDITOR

"ESPRIIT DE CORPS"

SIR,

On perusing the *Daily Telegraph* recently I observed a notice in the Personal Column requesting that ex-members of the Regiment should communicate with the Secretary of the Regimental Association.

It gave me food for thought. In older days such a notice would never have been seen in the Press, and I pondered on the causes of the necessity for such a publication. I have come to the conclusion that, largely, the fact that men have lost touch with the Regiment is due to the system of inter-posting regimentally of all personnel during the recent war. I am of the opinion, from experience as an R.H.U., Staff Officer, that a large number of men, especially the younger and temporary soldiers, were "browned off" by finding themselves posted hither and thither, frequently several times.

In September, 1945, I happened to be on leave in U.K., and had occasion to be in Liverpool Street Station. There, on the bookstall, I saw for sale a copy of *THE DIE-HARDS*. This caused me some surprise; subsequently I found out the reason. I travelled back to Germany in the company of an Officer of the Regiment, and I asked him if he knew the explanation. He told me that the numbers of copies printed had far exceeded the demand. I could, therefore, only conclude that large numbers of the men in the Battalions concerned were "posted" men and not men of the Regiment.

However, the existence of the Regimental spirit among the men of the Regiment is far from dead as the following experience will show.

In the earlier period of the late war I was Adjutant of a Pioneer Group. There were sixteen Labour Companies in this Group. When a more active phase set in, and the Dunkirk epic was being created, these companies were withdrawn from the Group, and four Companies of Reservists were taken on strength. The Group became an Infantry Battalion and, as such, became a unit of what was known as "Dig" Force.

These reservists, on account of their age and their out-of-date knowledge of the machine gun, were Pioneers. In one Company there was a platoon of the Middlesex Regiment. My Colonel, myself, and the Quartermaster had never seen these men before; but it was a grand feeling to notice their expressions and hear their remarks when they found that they had two officers of the Regiment with them. They were "grand blokes" and those who remained able to leave France on 17th June, 1940, felt that they had done a good job.

Again, just prior to the famous D-Day, I was in command of a Sub Unit in an R.H.U. The R.H.U. was assembling all branches of the Service. Among Infantry Units was the H.L.I. I received a small deputation of the men of the Middlesex Regiment, who had suddenly been transferred to the H.L.I. They were unhappy and pleaded with me to get them back to their own Regiment. I was, indeed, sorry for them. After all, there is little connection regimentally between the H.L.I. and the Duke of Cambridge's Own. It was even difficult for our Middlesex men to understand the "doon the wa-er" accent of Glasgow. I could well sympathise with them, but I was compelled to inform them that the "exigences of the Service," etc., etc. I exhorted them to keep up the spirit of the badge, but, alas! they had to change their cap badges.

This R.H.U., with which I am still a Staff Officer, has handled, from the date of its formation in March, 1944, to 31st July, 1945, in postings:—

	Officers.	O.R.s.
U.K. to 5th Oct., 1944 ..	417	17,627
N.-W. E. to 31st July, 1945 ..	1,261	34,983
Totals ..	1,878	52,610

There were other personnel handled by the R.H.U., for accommodation, etc., but not taken on strength, bringing the aggregate total to 31st July, 1945: Officers, 2,157; O.R.s, 56,268. It is not a matter of interest as far as this article is concerned to deal with the figures since 31st July, 1945, to date, but the R.H.U. is still hard at work.

Of these numbers quoted above, many were men of the Middlesex Regiment, and, whenever possible, I have made it my special business to see them, and I have always heard the same plaint, "I want to go back to my own Regiment." There, then, is proof enough that the "DIE HARD" spirit *will* die hard.

In conclusion, I would mention that my present C.S.M. is ex-Middlesex, and we both hope to be present at the first post-war Old Comrades' Dinner. I feel sure that the Secretary of the Regimental Association will not have to go to "Press" to find the men who have "lost touch" through no fault of their own, in the future. From my experience here I know that the Regimental Spirit is still strong.

Yours sincerely,

G. STEWART SUTHERLAND, Major.

1st BATTALION NEWS

The end of the momentous year, 1945, found the Battalion still occupying its requisitioned billets in Lübeck. In this we count ourselves fortunate, for many of the other Battalions of the Division have been moved about and spread over the countryside, to meet the decreasing size of the Army of Occupation. We, on the other hand, have remained concentrated in billets we have occupied for six months and have been able to enjoy the benefits of the preparations which were made to meet the conditions of winter. Not that we have been entirely without our troubles. The heating in various billets has broken down from time to time. There is a shortage of electric light bulbs and a somewhat irregular supply of electric current. But these troubles we share in common with everyone else. We have been spared the discouragement of working hard to make our-

selves at home, only to be moved, when all is finished, to new quarters where the work has to be begun all over again.

On the whole it has been a quiet time. The frontier post is still manned, but the size of the guard has been reduced. Line crossing is still not officially allowed but with the reduced guard, and fewer posts, it is not possible to stop it away from the barriers themselves. There is, of course, less excuse for illegal traffic now as exchange arrangements are progressing and there is official postal communication between the different zones.

Anti-crime patrols have been our other heavy commitment. During December there was a concerted drive against this throughout the whole "Kreis" area, with constant patrolling and checking. This followed a record month of crime, both petty and violent, which was threatening to get out of hand. Since the December drive violent crime has fallen off considerably. Most robberies, burglaries and thieving which occur are concerned with food and clothing and much of the stolen property finds its way on to the black market.

Turning to more domestic matters we have first to record a number of awards deservedly gained by officers and other ranks of the Battalion for their services during the North-West Europe Campaign. Major W. D. Ellis, Major G. H. Townend, Capt. J. L. Harding, Sgt. H. Hare ("A" Company), Cpl. H. McNee (Battalion H.Q.) and Pte. F. Waiting have all received a Mention in Despatches. In addition, 26 other ranks of the Battalion have received the G.O.C.s certificate.

The question of release dominates most of our thoughts these days, whether we view it from the point of view of the fortunate who are shortly to go, or from that of the unfortunates who have to wrestle with the problems of diminishing numbers, lack of tradesmen and specialists and a sluggish decrease in commitments. Our feelings on saying good-bye to each age-group are necessarily mixed. It is sad to see the break-up of a body of men who have been together in some cases for more than five years, whose ties of friendship have been strengthened by the suffering and exhilaration of battle. At the same time it is a welcome sign of returning peace and a promise to those in later age-groups that their turn is steadily coming closer. We can, however, sincerely say good-bye and good luck to each age-group as it comes up for release.

The Battalion has received a few additions to its strength. Lieut. J. Soward, Lieut. L. Chamberlain and Lieut. K. Torrens-Spence have returned to us from England after leaving the Battalion shortly after the end of the fighting. With them have come Lieut. J. Smith, Lieut. C. Austin, Lieut. M. Leonard and Lieut. A. Birks. A small number of other rank reinforcements have also come, but they are in no way sufficient to compensate for our losses.

Lieut. Austin and a party of eight other ranks are at present away from the Battalion as guests of the Army of the United States of America in their zone of occupation. In return, the Battalion is entertaining an American officer and three N.C.O.s. There is not a great deal of activity for them to watch or take part in, but as they are normally stationed out in the country it is a change for them to have time to themselves in a town, and the opportunity for an exchange of views has proved interesting.

In the sporting world the Battalion has entered

enthusiastically into all forms of sport taking place, and, on the whole, has enjoyed considerable success. Unfortunately the star athletes, who have been the mainstay of teams over the last few years, are all rapidly disappearing and we shall have to look for new material amongst future drafts if we are to maintain our reputation.

Soccer, as always, has held the first place in sporting interest. We had high hopes of going a long way with a strong, well-tested team. Unfortunately circumstances conspired to give us a weak team in the first round of the Brigade K.O. Competition and we were beaten by the H.L.I. Three leagues have been run in the area. In the first we finished second to the H.L.I. Sgt. B. Bennett was the chief goal scorer in this league with 23 to his credit; other high scorers were: Sgt. L. Compton 12, Sgt. W. Barley 6, and L/Cpl. Jones 5. We won the second league, in which L/Cpl. Jones was the top scorer with 8 goals to his credit. In the third league we were fourth, Pte. Eggleton topping the scoring with 8 goals. There were about twelve teams in each league.

Sgt. Compton spent a long period away from the Battalion, attached to the B.A.O.R. Training Centre. From there, along with other first-class professional footballers, he has taken part in a series of games all over the continent against visiting teams.

Latterly, we have had some good matches with German teams, winning two games out of three. German spectators show great enthusiasm and turn up to watch in great strength.

Within the Battalion "D" (Heavy Mortar) Company won the Baker Cup from "H.Q." Company and at present there are an inter-Company six-a-side and an inter-Company eleven-a-side in progress.

The Battalion Hockey team has had a very good season. Major A. R. Klitz and Sgt. Benson Cooper went with an 8 Corps side to Copenhagen, a side which included internationals and county players. In the local garrison league we have not lost a match and have only drawn one. Against the Germans we have won one match and drawn a second. The inter-Company league, besides producing some exciting games, has introduced the game to many new men and made it possible to maintain the regular Battalion team in spite of demobilisation.

Rugger functions by fits and starts. Capt. R. M. L. Anderson disappears from the Battalion from time to time to play for the Division, the combined Scottish Divisions' team, or the Rhine Army. Pte. Johns also played in the Divisional trials. The Battalion team (very much scratched together and without Capt. Anderson) went down heavily to the Divisional Recce Regt., but, reinforced, enjoyed two close games against a local naval team.

After an easy win in the Brigade cross-country championship our team went forward to the 8 Corps District Championship to represent the Brigade. In this contest we came 4th out of 15 teams; Pte. Stallard came in 16th and Pte. A. Cook 33rd out of 225 runners. In the Divisional individual championship L/Cpl. N. Bell came 7th and Pte. S. Fletcher 8th. L/Cpl. Bell was included in the Divisional team for the Rhine Army Championship.

So far there have been no boxing competitions, but there is a team in training for a match shortly. Most of the team will be making farewell appearances,



German and Battalion Hockey Team, December, 1945.



Christmas Day at the Russian Frontier.



Officers Hockey Team v. O.R.s, Boxing Day, 1945.

including Capt. D. Luck, Lieut. Stubbs, M.C., Sgt. Baxter, and Pte. Lawrence. As it stands, the team is a strong one and we look for a win.

There has been a certain amount of enthusiasm for badminton and matches have been played against

8 Corps H.Q., who beat us, and 10 H.L.I., whom we beat. A Battalion doubles championship was won by a "B" Company pair, L/Cpl. Barham and Pte. Jennings, who beat a strictly "Q" pair, R.Q.M.S. Strachan and Cpl. J. Wills.

Table tennis is played vigorously in all the Messes and the Albuhera Club and the Battalion turns out strong teams to take part in the three garrison leagues, in which we are more than holding our own.

Around the Companies the story is mainly one of departures and sporting activities.

"A" Company have lost 31 members since October, including such notabilities as Cpl. Bartlett, Sgt. Freeman, Sgt. Enstone, C/Sgt. Mackenzie, Cpl. Foster, Harry Lidbetter, Nash and Roberts. They also feel the loss of C.S.M. Cree, who, although he was not with the Company for long, was very popular and a great character. His place has been taken by C.S.M. Gould, from "B" Company, who is one of the oldest members of the Battalion and very welcome. Eight other reinforcements have done their best to replace those on release.

In games the Company has managed to hold its own, without reaching the championship class. In basket ball the two teams finished 4th and 7th respectively. In the inter-Company hockey the team is so far unbeaten, but has only played two matches. The Company has contributed a very fair quota of men to all the Battalion teams.

"B" Company have lost two of their oldest members in Sgt. L. Page and L/Sgt. A. Aldridge, both of whom had been with the Company for over six years and were extremely popular throughout the Battalion. Sgt. B. Bennett is another great loss. He has played centre forward for the Battalion for several years and was unlucky enough to break his leg in one of the recent games against the Germans.

In the sporting world the Company has been fairly successful. The soccer team showed much keenness and most of the team are in high age-groups, which augurs well for the future. The hockey team is similarly composed and has proved something of a "dark horse" in the inter-Company league, springing two unexpected wins in no uncertain manner on its opponents.

"C" Company have lost their Company Commander, Major J. Redman, their C.S.M., C.S.M. Duffey, and the C/Sgt., C/Sgt. Fearnside. Their places have been filled by Capt. L. Delaney, C.S.M. Bignell (from "D" Company), and C/Sgt. Fagan (from "A" Company). Capt. Delaney divides his time between the Company and the many Battalion teams he plays for.

"D" Company have enjoyed a good season of sport, finishing first in the Baker Cup and second in the basket ball. The six-a-side football side is also proving a winner, having lost only one game so far.

Many members of the Company were on the Frontier post for Christmas Day. However, Pte. Hammond, A.C.C., after working all night, turned out a magnificent dinner, which was served by all the ex-Company officers, now scattered on other duties throughout the Battalion, and the Company officers.

"H.Q." Company have also proved very strong in all games, mainly through the presence of C.S.M.I. Sheppard, whose loss in the games world throughout the Battalion is severely felt. His place has been taken by S/I. Sweeney.

2nd BATTALION THE MIDDLESEX REGIMENT (D.C.O.)

November, 1945—January, 1946

EGYPTIAN SOJOURN

Move to Geneifa

Early November found the Battalion settling down in its new area at Geneifa, a pleasant spot on the Great Bitter Lake. The camp, which had previously housed a Jewish Brigade, was an excellent one compared with the transit camp at El Qassasin. There was room for improvement, however, and work on bettering the camp area, sadly neglected by the previous occupants, was commenced with the aid of Austrian prisoners of war, who proved themselves extremely efficient and helpful.

Activities within the Battalion

We were now thoroughly at home in K.D., although our knees showed up white, and the delicate brown of the advance party was greatly admired and envied. The Middle East custom of afternoon siesta was loudly acclaimed and bathing in the lake was the order of the day. Despite the heat, sport, as always, played an important part in the Battalion's life.

Education came into its own and soon afternoon and evening classes were in full swing in a building admirably suited to the purpose. Very successful tours were run to Cairo and the Pyramids, mosques and other places of interest were visited.

The first issue of our Battalion magazine, *The Chad*, was published and was a credit to staff and contributors, and we are looking forward to the publication of the second issue in January.

The Battalion Concert Party, improvising stage props, gave a first-class show, toured neighbouring units and was given a great reception.

Visit of General Sir Bernard Paget, K.C.B., D.S.O., M.C.

December 3rd was marked by a visit from the Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, and retinue, who inspected the camp. He made various suggestions for its improvement, and we only wish that some of them could have been carried out, but, as usual, when local authorities were approached we were met with those magical words of refusal: "That is not Scale 'C'," or "We have no authority."

Relief of 2/7th Battalion in Palestine

We had been given to understand that our stay in Egypt was to be fairly long and it came as a shock to learn, just as we were nicely settled in, that the Battalion was moving up into troubled Palestine. We were pleased, however, to learn that we were relieving one of our own Battalions, the 2/7th, who had recently controlled a Jewish mob after the blowing up of the coastguard station at Givat Olga.

The Battalion moved by road and rail across the Sinai Desert and arrived at Binyamina in torrential rain, our first in M.E.F., to be told we were moving to Jalama, near Haifa, within a few days. This was hardly cheering news, especially when we realised it meant leaving an excellent camp for a hybrid collection of tents and huts on the lower slopes of

Mount Carmel. Nor did it help matters to arrive a few days before Christmas, but it was a great day none the less and celebrated in true Middlesex fashion; many of the Battalion took advantage of the opportunity to visit Bethlehem on Christmas Eve and sing carols in the Shepherds' Field. The Battalion was honoured by a visit from Colonel Crawford, late O.C. 8th Battalion, who is now with the 6th Airborne Division.

Just as November found the Battalion sorting itself out in Egypt, so January finds it undergoing the same process in Palestine. Conditions are not as good as in Egypt, nor does the terrorism of illegal Jewish gangs lighten the heavy burden of guards, picquets, patrols and numerous other duties. However, once more we are "settling in"; education is gradually getting on its feet again, tours "in the steps of the Master" round Nazareth and Galilee have started, the Concert Party will soon be giving another show and already the camp is becoming more habitable. Past experience, however, warns against the possibilities of staying put and we are wondering when once more we shall be required to seek "fresh fields and pastures new."

"A" COMPANY

The Company is now living in tents on the green slopes of Mount Carmel, with the Haifa pipeline and the River Kishon just below in the valley. We are all gardeners now, and each tent has a garden round it—most of them very decorative, too. Other Companies are beginning to copy our idea, but we are confident of winning the Battalion competition at the end of the month. There's loads of "bull" about the lay-out of the Company area, too—red paint and whitewash, and a very handsome stand for the Company flag. The only hut is used as a Company canteen and recreation room, run by Sgt. Woodman. Company cooking, too—and what a relief after Iseghem and Egypt.

What a Christmas we had! The decorations were terrific (thank L/Sgt. Bugden and his helpers), the table-cloths were gleaming white (thank the C.S.M. and the Hospital Q.M.), the food was marvellous (thank Cpl. Pounder and his lads, who produced cakes, jellies, trifles, etc., in addition to all the usual turkey, etc.), the drink was in good supply (thank God we were not liable for any duties that day). After dark we had a great Yule fire on the hillside, with a bar inside the nearby canteen. When the fire was lit, a R.A.S.C. officer jumped out of his bath, pulled on his clothes without drying and raced up the hill with the fire squad to put it out. Was he wild!

Since we wrote to you last we spent six weeks at Geneifa on the side of the Great Bitter Lake and the Suez Canal. Welfare was well organised at Geneifa—cinemas, a first-class O.R.s. club at Fanara and a lido on the beach. "A" Company won all the shooting competitions while we were there, thanks to Sharp, Baker, Byrne, Axten and Co. Bugden made a sensational (and blue) appearance as an Oriental in a harem sketch for the Battalion Concert Party. And when he turned around, there was "Wot, no shirt!" on his fat bare back. When the warning order came to go to Palestine, we had regretfully to leave Schwartz behind. He was broken-hearted to leave the Company.

On arriving in Palestine we spent five days on detachment all by ourselves on the shores of the Mediterranean guarding the notorious Giv'at Olga

coastguard station. We were just getting nicely organised when we had to rejoin the Battalion in our present camp at Jalama. So long for now, chaps!

"B" COMPANY

During November the Company carried out quite a lot of interesting training, including exercises and N.C.O.s' cadres. The whole Company spent one night out in the open during a two-day exercise. Everyone enjoyed this and the experience gained proved to be of great value to the whole Company in its future role in Palestine. Many headaches were caused prior to this exercise in trying to have the complete Company taking part, as, owing to the various commitments, including pre-vocational training classes and an inter-Unit football match, all taking place at the same time, the Company finally proceeded "into action" about 80 per cent. strong.

Once again the appercart was upset when we learned that we were not to be left to settle down in Egypt and, after having made so many plans there, it was somewhat upsetting, to say the least of it, so we started once again sorting out the Company into various parties—rail parties, advance parties, baggage parties, etc., for the new journey to Palestine.

This new venture seemed at first to be another headache, but, as these things always look worse than they are, we took it as it came and everything went off quite well. The larger part of the Company travelled by rail and had many stops which, as usual on long train journeys, could not be accounted for. The remainder of the Company travelled by road across the Sinai Desert and into Palestine. They spent two nights in the open and on the last day of the journey ran into the first rainstorm we had seen since arriving in the Middle East. Quite a few of our vehicles had no covers over the drivers' cabins, but this was overcome by fixing small bivouacs over the top; this proved quite successful.

We eventually arrived at a camp which was being vacated by our 2/7th Battalion, where many reunions were seen. This, however, did not last for long. We stayed there for a few days and once again we were on the road towards Haifa; we stopped at an impressive-looking camp in the valley just outside Haifa and moved in.

Since arriving at this new camp much work has been done in getting the place looking like "home." Tents were pitched and repitched, the rains came and some of the tents went (but were recovered). Education classes have again started to get into their swing, N.C.O.s' cadres have started with a view to filling the many vacancies which will soon occur when many of our old members are released.

"C" COMPANY

For us and the rest of the Battalion December seemed to be an impossible month of move and counter-move.

First there was the exodus from Geneifa, Egypt, to Camp 101 in Palestine. The Company was divided into two parties, road and rail. The road party left on the afternoon of 13th December, 1945, and those of us who were going by rail on the 15th congratulated ourselves on the "cushy" one night we would spend in a pleasant warm train as against the three freezing bivouacs which the road party would have to endure.

The rail party left in the early darkness of the

evening of 15th December, 1945, and, stopping for refreshments at Kantara and Lydda, dimly realised that the one enormous orange grove traversing was the troubled land of Palestine. After detrainment and having a satisfying meal at Camp 87, the road and rail parties arrived almost simultaneously at Camp 101, Binyamina. There we met with the news that our stay there would only be about five days.

Activity was intense and seemed to consist of loading and unloading stores; learning that Tel Aviv slabs break easily; and realising that a Company is a very small unit to supply guards, picquets, patrols, inlying platoons, etc., for a Battalion in an unsettled country.

After our five days or so, we pulled out again for our new camp at Jalama, near Haifa, to find that we were to live on a steep hillside in primitive conditions, whilst the R.A.S.C., who had been here four and a half years, lived in luxury in all the available huts.

Energy was now directed in three different channels: guards, Christmas and improving Company lines. We might add sport also, a field in which "C" Company has been increasingly active and effective.

Now (14th January, 1946) we can look back on a convivial Christmas, when we combined with "H.Q." Company in giving an informal Christmas dinner in the cinema, served by officers and sergeants. New Year slid in easily and pleasantly, though with no less consumption of ale and spirits.

After Christmas we went all out to improve conditions in the lines, having experienced the commercial value of the mud as a wholesale glue—the result of two or three cloudbursts. Gardens are now springing up outside each tent, flag poles are being erected, parade grounds laid out and paths put down. Soon this camp will be habitable—and then, no doubt, we shall move somewhere else.

"D" COMPANY

After a certain amount of training, in common with the rest of the Battalion, at Geneifa, "D" Company has, since arriving in Palestine, been devoting its energies to improving conditions in its detachment camp at Ramat David. Work continues, but already great strides have been made—hard standings to combat the mud (which is particularly sticky), the dining-hall/canteen/recreation room delightfully decorated with wall-painted "pin-up" girls, a loudspeaker system relaying wireless programmes throughout the camp. A small education centre, known as "Bowler Hat House," has been established, including a library of more than three hundred books. Films are shown once a week in the canteen, and there is a cinema at the nearby R.A.F. station. There is something on every evening—tombola, whist, darts, table tennis, gramophone concerts—and at week-ends recreation trucks are run to Haifa.

Soon after arriving in Egypt "D" Company was taking part in the Battalion sports programme with Company and inter-Platoon soccer competitions. The Company's first game, played at Fanara on a sand pitch, was against "B" Company. The result was a draw, 3-3. Hockey and basketball were also a prominent feature of the Company's sporting activities, and a soft-ball knock-out competition was introduced. Our first game in Palestine was a soccer match against the Jodhpur Lancers at Ramat David.

Result: a win for "D" Company, 5-4. The Lancers, who played with slippers or bare feet, were very popular with the "D" Company spectators. "C" Company challenged us to a game at Jalama, a very keen one, resulting in a win for us, 3-2. "B" Company were our next victims, at Ramat David, where we beat them 2-1. The Company boxers are now in training for the inter-Company boxing contest, which takes place 25th-30th January.

"H.Q." COMPANY

After our move from Qassassin to Fanara we remained in one place for nearly two months—quite a record. On the whole, our stay in Egypt was a pleasant one; visits to the Pyramids and Sphinx and to the principal mosques of Cairo were arranged by the Battalion Education Officer, and parties were still able to go swimming in the Great Bitter Lake until early in December, when it became quite chilly and violent sandstorms frequently unleashed their fury against us. Members of "H.Q." Company played their part in the new training scheme, rising manfully at 0530 hours daily to take part in arms drill and R.S.Ms. parades before breakfast.

The struggling infant, Education, was carefully nourished with newly acquired books and limited supplies of materials. Evening classes were commenced in a wide variety of subjects, and a music circle, concert party and Battalion magazine came into being. At last it seemed that we were to be allowed to settle down for at least a reasonable period, but on 13th December our nomadic wanderings began again, with a trek across the Sinai Desert up into Palestine, to settle first of all at Binyamina and then to move again within a week to Jalama, where we arrived a few days before Christmas.

On Christmas Eve transport was arranged to take parties into Bethlehem, where all arms of the services and people of many nationalities mingled to sing carols in the Field of the Shepherds and to attend services in the Church of the Nativity.

There was much celebrating on both Christmas and Boxing Days; the cooks provided excellent meals and liquid refreshment was both plentiful and good.

Both Lieut. Wood (the late I.O.) and Lieut. Goto have been released under Class "B." News was received that the former had received a Mention in Despatches for his work in Europe. He has our warm congratulations.

With the advent of the New Year we began to straighten ourselves out. Classes were resumed, tours were arranged to Nazareth and the Sea of Galilee, inter-Company football, darts and table tennis matches were organised and recreational transport laid on for weekly visits to Haifa. We have now made ourselves fairly comfortable, but our ears are cocked for news about the date of our next move, which we feel must now be very near.

1/7th BN., MIDDLESEX REGIMENT (D.C.O.)

By the time this appears in print, the Battalion's first move since last July will have been completed. We will have exchanged the cramped, in many ways unsatisfactory, yet on the whole friendly atmosphere of our small village just outside Hamburg for the comfortable and better equipped, from a social point of view, atmosphere of Cuxhaven.

Seven months is a long time to have remained in one station, especially when that station is as lacking in those things that go to make life comfortable, as our last area was. Difficulties have been widespread—difficulties of billeting, difficulties of off-duty amusement, difficulties of manpower have all raised their ugly heads at one time or another during the past half-year, and consequently it is difficult to assess accurately the effect that the change from war to peace has had on the Battalion. One thing stands out, however, the ability to improvise, learnt under the hardest of conditions during the past three and a half years, has shown itself to be as strong as ever.

As a result, despite these difficulties, we have managed to make the best of an indifferent job and in consequence have preserved our happiness and our Battalion spirit in general. Everything has been against this last factor—the layout of the area in a village with a population swollen to twice its peacetime figure has meant that each Company has had to be self-contained, and consequently we have experienced all the disadvantages and none of the advantages of a proper Battalion concentration.

Training has had of a necessity to be scrappy. The number of fatigues demanded by four separate Company areas, together with the shortage of men due to leave and demobilisation, and the various standing duties undertaken by the Battalion have left little time. However, by some means the ambitious education programme, comprising Brigade and Divisional as well as Battalion courses, has by now been satisfactorily carried out, due almost entirely to the efforts of Capt. F. M. Massey, his successor Capt. S. R. Hurst, and to the indefatigable education clerk, Cpl. (now Mr.) G. Simmons.

What men remained over by the time fatigues, guards and education had taken their toll were usefully employed in augmenting the Battalion's stock of fuel by cutting wood from our own private "forest," thereby killing two birds with one stone and keeping fit as well as warm.

As far as duties are concerned, these have mercifully been light up to the moment, but will probably be heavier in our new location. Up to the moment we have been employed mainly in guarding a P.W. cage and in making snap checks of the surrounding district. There are disturbing rumours at the moment regarding the extent of our new commitments, but in view of the manpower situation it is hoped that these will be scaled down considerably.

The manpower question is, in common with most other Units, remarkably acute at the moment. We started losing men some months ago, when we sent a large draft of the higher age groups to the 2nd Battalion, and since then things have gone from bad to worse, until at the moment we are down to under 50 per cent. of our W.E., and this will become worse during the next fortnight. Various drafts have been promised us, but at the moment it seems a case of "drafts tomorrow, but never drafts today."

Despite all this, however, the firm policy of the Battalion in insisting upon the maximum amount of recreational training per week for every man has been persevered with, and until the recent frosty weather "D" Company showed every sign of running away with the flourishing inter-company football league. Table tennis is another game that has a large following within the Battalion, and until the vagaries of the German lighting system made evening play a matter of some uncertainty, a table tennis league was also going well. As far as sport on a Battalion level is

concerned, football and table tennis are again the outstanding sports in popularity. The football team, playing in the Divisional League, has at the moment done far better than was expected of it. Built around no particular personality and not having the benefit of any expert advice, it started from scratch last summer, when the potential stars were gathered together under the enthusiastic direction of Major A. J. Hughes, M.C., of whom more anon, for a couple of months' intensive training. This action has been fully justified by results, for so far the Battalion has managed to hold its own with most of the Scotch teams and shows every sign of finishing in the first half-dozen in the league. An outstanding event in our sports world was a visit to Lübeck last October, when we were royally entertained, and well beaten, by the 1st Battalion. At the moment we are trying to arrange a similar game against the 8th Battalion. So far it has not materialised owing to difficulties in finding a suitable date.

To one or two keen table tennis players goes the credit of starting a Brigade League, very suitably headed at the moment by us, although unfortunately there seems little chance of completing the programme.

So much for sport; now for social activities. At the moment these are largely home made but are none the less efficient for that. There is a cinema in more or less working order in the village, and two films a week are our ration, not very satisfactory owing to the poor state of the films shown and to the discomfort of the cinema. The stage could be utilised to put on ENSA shows, but, and this is a sore point, in the whole of the seven months we have been in this location, only one ENSA show has found itself our way. This was not a particularly good one, and so we have had to rely for our "live" entertainment upon such German concert parties as we can get hold of, and it has in all cases been found that their superiority over the ENSA show has been most marked.

The other form of Battalion entertainment is a bi-weekly dance, an all Middlesex affair (with, of course, a certain amount of outside feminine help) that has been taking place in "C" Company's canteen on Tuesdays and Fridays. The band, handicapped considerably through lack of instruments, was formed only a few months ago and is already, under the manership of Sgt. Dell, an extremely efficient combination.

In addition, each Company, with the exception of "B," has in its own area a café of some description and varying comfort; the village bristles with elaborately painted signs such as the "Slip Inn," "Shamble Inn," "Charlie Club," etc. "B" Company, with no café to use, have not been down-hearted and have improvised a rest room and bar in the cellar of one of their billets, and what was originally a cold and dreary basement has now blossomed forth as a comfortable "dive." These Company canteens have proved extremely popular and have played a great part in alleviating the undoubted boredom that is bound to exist under occupational conditions.

Despite the fact that each Company has had to rely so much upon its own resources for social activities, Christmas was an outstanding period from the point of view of the Battalion as a whole. Obviously the Christmas dinner could not be eaten together, but a very considerable amount of energy was spent on making each canteen as gay as possible.

Christmas Eve was devoted mainly to "warming up," and Christmas morning saw the semi-finals and finals of the soccer seven-aside tournament. By dint of a considerable amount of hard work and running around, Capt. Adams, the entertainments officer, managed to secure a German concert party for Christmas evening, while on Boxing Day advantage was taken of the lifting of the curfew to run a dance until 1 a.m. The Battalion football team also provided their quota of entertainment, beating a naval team in the afternoon and, incidentally, drawing in the return match on New Year's Day.

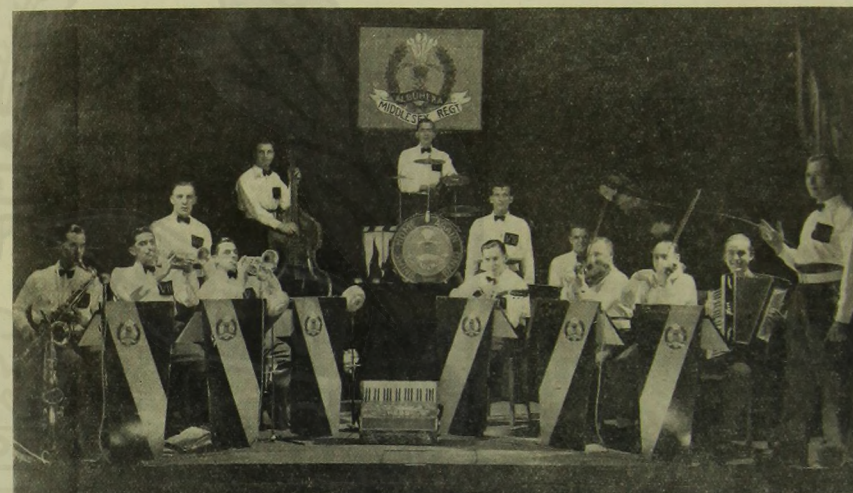
So much for Christmas. There remains little else to be said, except to mention the Battalion magazine, christened, after a considerable amount of thought, "One Seven." "One Seven" started in a very small way in the summer as the magazine of "A" Company. Its first number consisted of four typewritten sheets, produced after a lot of hard work by a small band of enthusiasts. Last September, however, it changed its name, broadened its outlook, and is now an extremely popular and efficient bi-monthly production.

The subject of demobilisation has already been touched upon; so many old-stagers of the Battalion have left us by now that it is impossible to go into particular cases. One demobee, however, must be an exception to this—Major A. J. Hughes, M.C., oldest inhabitant and Battalion 2nd i.c., left just before Christmas and is now well settled in civilian life. He first joined the Battalion over ten years ago and was in stages Signals Officer, "B" Company commander, and then Battalion 2nd i.c. His place has been taken by Major J. T. Panks, M.C., also an old member of the Battalion, who left soon after its return from the first campaign in France and who has spent most of the war in Burma and the Far East.

8th BATTALION THE MIDDLESEX REGIMENT (D.C.O.)

During the last three months we have remained in Luchow, where we settled last June, leading the normal life of an occupational Unit. This is a judicious mixture of work and play, plus preparation for Civvy Street for those shortly to leave us. The work has consisted of everyday occupational duties, supplemented by a very heavy guard commitment during the last month, which has taxed our reduced man-power and severely curtailed our other activities.

We continue to lose old and valued members of the Battalion as each release group comes round. In addition to those mentioned in our last notes, two other Company Commanders have gone, Major J. R. C. Kenyon, M.C., and Major H. G. Wells, M.C. R.S.M. Castree has also left us and been replaced by R.S.M. J. Donovan. Capt. J. Spear is now a Staff Captain at Division H.Q., and Capt. L. Preston and Capt. W. H. Hughes have been released. In fact, the list is endless, and we are now little like the Battalion which landed in Normandy in 1944. On the other hand, we have welcomed many new officers and O.R.s into our ranks, and the regimental spirit is as strong as ever. In particular, the 2nd Battalion has sent us many old friends of all ranks (in addition to our Commanding Officer), including Major H. B. Neve, M.C., who is now commanding "D" Company. A completely new face is Major R. W. Bedlington, M.C., who commands "A" Company and comes to us from the R.N.F.



8th Battalion's Dance Band, "The Home Aingers"

We give below a short account of our various activities, other than our occupational duties, which are dull but necessary, and which to the majority of the Battalion must seem to consist of little besides guards and patrols.

Education

The pre-release Army Education Scheme flourishes. All sorts of subjects are taught within the Unit, and many men go to the formation colleges for more advanced instruction or for subjects beyond Unit capabilities. We have more entrants for the first Forces Preliminary Examination, to be held this month (February), than any other Unit in the Division. There is a flourishing handicrafts centre, where work in wood and metal of a high standard is produced.

Welfare

It soon became apparent when the Battalion had settled down in Luchow after hostilities had ceased that we should have to provide ourselves with our own entertainment and recreational facilities on a scale hitherto never experienced or deemed necessary in England.

The natural reaction from war to peace and the original non-fraternisation order were both liable to lead to boredom and discontent unless offset by plenty of exercise and entertainment.

At first we opened a Battalion pub., "The Pepperpot," which proved a fair success and later grew in popularity as the quality of the beer improved (about July). Then our thoughts next turned to entertainment, of which there was nothing to be expected from sources outside the Battalion at that time.

First of all a German band was collected together under the direction of Herr Willy Etzien (who to-day still retains his position as "musical adviser" to the Battalion, as well as leading an excellent eight-piece orchestra). But their first efforts were considerably hampered by the fact that the only music available was German and the only performers were farm hands who played in their spare time. However, Etzien worked heroically and got them up to a reasonable standard whereby they were capable of playing two or three times a week in the pub.

Next we thought of putting on a variety show from Battalion resources. Several volunteers came forward, a microphone of vintage pattern was "borrowed," and rehearsals started with the German band providing the background (the difficulties of co-ordinating actor with musician through the medium of an interpreter can be imagined).

One of the chief difficulties was to infuse a little swing into the German style of playing, which has not been overcome completely to this day, and the only way to get anything like a little rhythm into their efforts was to put in an English drummer.

These early shows were successful and everybody entered into the spirit of the thing (both audience and actors alike). They were held in the rather charming old courtyard of the pub. in glorious summer weather and the audience was seated round tables with beer and sandwiches were served during the show.

Next the possibility of starting a Battalion Band was considered and, after examining our resources once again, we were surprised and delighted to discover for the first time in the Battalion history that we had sufficient musicians to start a medium-sized dance orchestra. Instruments were provided

out of Battalion funds from welfare sources, and after a few rehearsals the Band was ready to take its place as a firm base for future Battalion entertainment activities. The Band is led by Cpl. Freddie Pearce and is called the "Home Againers," an adaptation of their previous title, "The Home Again Swing Band."

With our Band now firmly established it became possible to extend our activities somewhat, and the Battalion has been offered a consistent ration of six to eight dances and two shows per month from Battalion resources for the past seven months.

Of course, from the Army Welfare Service has come an increasing tide of entertainment. We get an average of three A.W.S. shows per month, both German and D.P. Some of these are excellent. Film shows are pretty frequent as well, and we get an average of two films per week, which we consider very good for our small town.

The Battalion's Entertainments Staff consider it a point of honour to provide some form of entertainment for every night of the week excepting Sundays, and it is seldom that this record is broken.

Our final effort to date was the formation and equipment of the "8 Club." In November a large building, formerly used as a German hospital, was requisitioned and passed to 8 Mx to be used as a canteen. This building has a large hall and stage, on which our experts got to work and in an amazingly short time they converted it into a really first-class theatre, with stage lighting, decorative auditorium, etc., as well as installing two beer bars for use on dance nights. Now just as this article is submitted we are about to start a canteen in the "8 Club."

The Battalion Band is re-forming slightly after losing Sgt. Towersey through demobbing, but it is hoped to see them back on the stage in a few days. Several keen amateurs are practising hard to become full-time members of the Band.

Association Football

The countryside in the Battalion area may have its compensations in the summer period, but it certainly has its worries when producing sports grounds in the winter. To play soccer successfully here one has to be more than versatile and have a knowledge of both water polo and ice skating. However, many excellent games have ensued.

The six-a-side inter-Platoon knock-out proved a very popular innovation and the two remaining teams, Nos. 7 and 10, are awaiting the opportunity to have the final struggle.

In the Divisional Cup Competition we were unfortunate to lose to the 5th Battalion Dorsets in the fourth round by the odd goal, which was scored in the last three minutes of the game. It was quite a brilliant game and at times really thrilling, being played on a ground with a difficult surface.

Several players of note from the first eleven have returned to the home country. We shall greatly miss them and have the grim thought that more are to follow in the near future. Pte. Phipps, whose outstanding efforts are both well known to the 2nd Battalion as well as to ourselves, and Cpl. Ted Andrews, our winger, have returned to the amenities of civil life. Pte. Ranger, a goalkeeper of much promise, who unfortunately broke his leg, has also gone to England. To all we wish God-speed and to the latter-named a rapid recovery.

Hockey

This game is once more coming back into popularity. We have now been successful in producing a fair and reasonable ground and with adequate supplies of gear should have some excellent games. Such stalwarts as Colonel Unwin, Major Beadnell, Capt. Finucane (goalkeeper) and Sgt. "Pop" Pople are prominent. So far we have been successful in reaching the third round of the Divisional Cup Competition by beating the 5th Wils.

Cross-Country Running

The Battalion team ran third in the Brigade Competition. In the Divisional Competition the team came seventh and Pte. Griffin was picked to represent the Division in the Corps Championships. The Division won and went forward to represent 30 Corps in B.A.O.R. Championships, in which they came third.

The outstanding performances of Pte. Griffin are worth noting. His positions were fourth in the Brigade, sixteenth in the Divisional, nineteenth in the Corps, and forty-fifth in the B.A.O.R. Championships. It is good to note that the majority of the team will be here for the coming season.

Boxing

At the time of writing we are in strict training under those veteran Battalion boxers, Sgts. Belasco, Carlier and Pople and Pte. Spiller, for the second round of the Divisional Knock-Out Competition, which will take place on 29th January. The team is fully confident of repeating their previous victories in this competition.

Rugby

The weather during December was not kind to Rugby and, in consequence, many games had to be postponed. Only six games have been played—one win, one drawn and four lost. The Rugby fifteen has never been the same team for any two games, leave, demob, educational courses, etc., bleeding the original team of many of its best players.

Major Wells, M.C., a most useful player, was lost to us after the first game, and Capt. Preston, who played a very good spoiling game at scrum half, left very shortly afterwards.

Lieut.-Col. Unwin, unfortunately, was on leave during the period when three of our matches were played. He returned only to proceed to France on tour with the B.A.O.R. fifteen. In consequence, he has only been able to turn out for us once. The result of this game, 19-8 in our favour, speaks for itself. His very presence acted as a tonic to the team. At least three of the opponents, "T" Force, 30 Corps H.Q., were detailed to watch him, but were unable to stop him from giving our other three a field day. Had Colonel Unwin been available to us all the season, there would have been a very different tale to tell. Sgt. Pople and the two Swann brothers, pre-war Rugby League players, both three-quarters, have been available for all games and were always prominent, both in attack and defence. Pte. Swann, P., filled in the scrum half vacancy and, with his brother at stand-off half, combined extremely well. Of the forwards, Pte. Baverstock, who only learned the game at the beginning of the season, has played extremely well throughout. Major Beadnell, Capt.

Manson, Amoor and Finucane were the mainstay of the pack. In the four games lost only a few points in each game separated the two sides.

In a trial game for 214 Brigade, held at Luneberg early in December, Lieut.-Col. Unwin and Sgt. Pople, three-quarters, Major Beadnell and Capt. Manson, forwards, and Pte. Swann, P., reserve three-quarter, were selected to represent the Brigade in a game against 154 Brigade (51 H. Division) at Stade.

Motor Cycling

A flourishing motor cycle club has been formed and on its first day out convincingly defeated two strong teams from 214 Brigade Workshops and 656 Infantry Tps. Workshops on a very rough course at Dannenburg. The form of competition is known as a "scramble," and in essence is merely a race over three or more laps of a cross-country course. Ptes. Tuff and Von-Bergen rode magnificently to win their respective classes against good opposition, and Cpl. Rivers showed great courage. Cpl. Clemmie was out of luck, but L/Cpl. Wethmar showed great promise.

The return match on our own course produced an equally convincing win, Von-Bergen and Tuff giving a first-class exhibition of skilful riding which delighted a large crowd of troops and Germans. Cpl. Rivers very pluckily remounted in the final after two nasty spills, while L/Cpl. Wethmar, whose form has improved out of all knowledge, gained some invaluable points for second and third places. Several promising recruits are to be seen out on practice afternoons, and it is hoped to hold further matches in the near future.

1st BATTALION PRINCESS LOUISE'S KENSINGTON REGIMENT, SPITAL, CARINTHIA, AUSTRIA, C.M.F.

Editorial

Another Christmas has come and gone, a Christmas that will long remain in our memories. To add perfection, snow began to fall at midday and continued right through Christmas night. It may appear strange to report a white Christmas in Austria, but although the hills and valleys were white, snow had not actually fallen for six weeks.

This will have been the last army Christmas for a very large number of the Regiment; many regretted they were unable to spend it with their families at home; but we had our compensations—we noticed no austerity. Flocks of turkeys were brought up from Italy, as also were many other commodities which helped to digest the birds. The Battalion was spread over a very large area of Austria; consequently each Group arranged their own celebrations. Among them, were tea parties for the local Austrian children. All the food for these parties was saved from the men's own rations; and the consequent small sacrifice was more than compensated for by the very evident enjoyment displayed by the children. The generosity of the Regiment was rewarded by many letters of thanks from the Austrian local authorities.

As may be expected, the Arctic weather of Austria precludes the playing of normal British winter games. The only exception to this has been the selection of Mr. Shimield to represent the Division at hockey. In their place, we enjoy ski-ing and

skating. These two sports form part of our military training and all the equipment is an ordnance issue. We have ample equipment, but, curiously enough, snow in SPITTAL is in short supply. Nevertheless, groups have established their own ski camps up in the hills, where parties go for a week's instruction at a time. The enthusiasm can be gauged by the number of corks that can be seen hobbling around the barracks (the Adjutant has a most amazing affinity for gate posts). As the winter progresses we can expect deep snow everywhere. We will then have winter sports literally on the doorstep. When the temperature is always below zero and drops to 30 below at midnight, the lack of snow is hardly credible.

The release scheme is depleting the Battalion at a most alarming speed. So far, we have had no notification of reinforcements. Consequently, duties become heavier and heavier. Most of our W.O.s and eighty per cent. of the N.C.O.s have left or will have gone before another six weeks have elapsed. It can therefore be seen that great opportunities exist for and great things are expected of the newcomers from Chester.

Before the war, globe trotters paid fabulous sums to visit Austria for the winter sports. We can well understand it. To augment our amenities, we have an excellent cinema in Spittal with a bi-weekly change of programme; and a mobile cinema also visits the groups on detachment. We are normally visited by an E.N.S.A. or A.M.S. show once a week; and, recently, we were entertained by the Regimental Band of the Royal Dragoons.

The advent of peace is demonstrated by the recent arrival of the first party of wives and children. We welcome them to Austria and hope that they will enjoy their stay in this lovely country.

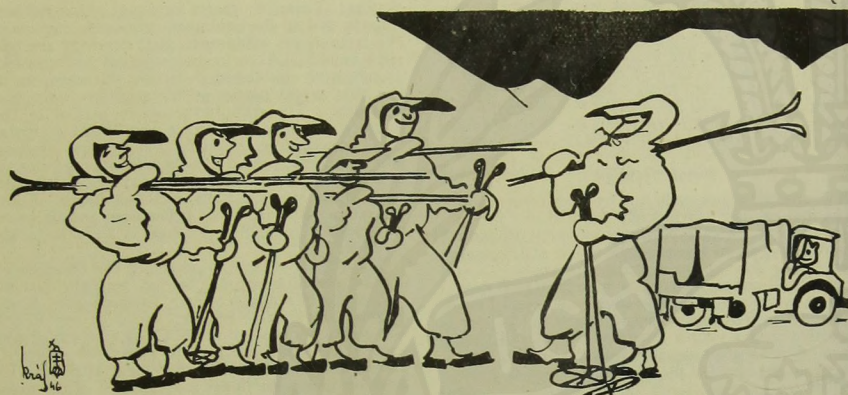
Finally, we would all like to congratulate the following on being awarded decorations:

M.C.—Major B. V. C. Harpur; Capt. R. Mitchell. M.M.—6200187 Sgt. Moreton, A. MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES.—Major A. E. B. Foxwell; Capt. R. G. Shave; Capt. A. H. Sandford; Lieut. F. F. Kendell; Lieut. J. R. Gray; Lieut. D. W. Blizard; C.S.M. McGowan, T. J.; 6462947 S/Sgt. Kibble, L.; 4129452 A/C.Q.M.S. Derrick, D.; 6200187 Sgt. Moreton, A.; 6216796 Sgt. Sewell, A.; 6846465 L/Sgt. Chaston, E.; 14220265 Cpl. Kershaw, A.; 6200339 Cpl. Outton, A.; 6846524 Cpl. Marks, L. W.; 5946376 Cpl. Walton, F.; 6211103 Pte. Davy, J. W.; 6211553 Pte. Perewitz, S.; 6846550 Pte. Roxborough, A.

AROUND TOWN IN HEADQUARTER GROUP

After the cosiest Christmas abroad—complete with kiddies' party organised by Capt. German and ably aided and abetted by Miss Keating, manageress of the "Clarendon" Canteen, and Sgt. Wilson (A.C.C.)—January, 1946, enters into a new phase of occupation.

Gone are the initial urgencies of the miseries of thousands of "Displaced Personnel"—the roping in of "S.S." and other bad types and establishing law and order after the chaotic aftermath of collapse. Things have eased up considerably and the lads have had a little more time for sports and entertainment, although occupation life still isn't quite the Tyrolean "Shangri-La" of sinecures and ski-ing, Strauss waltzes and time out for yodelling that a lot of foolish folks think.



1st Bn. (P.L.) Kensington Regiment. Individual Training, 1946.

A variety of new jobs are always cropping up and it speaks highly for the fair and slick administration of the Kensingtons that they have a prodigious local prestige.

"H.Q." Group is billeted in the medieval old Schloss Portia in Spittal (alleged to possess a 22-carat ghost); and the ever vigilant Signals spread their wiry tentacles to "B," "C" and "D" Groups in nearby villages with duplicate lines and radio telegraphy as a safeguard against the severe weather conditions which might suddenly make communications impossible.

Apart from routine runs for rations, NAAFI, films, E.N.S.A. parties, etc., Sgt. Chamberlain has had eager demands for transport to tour the Southern German and Austrian tourist Meccas; and day trips have been organised to ascend the almost local Grossglockner, which is 12,003 ft. above sea level. Expeditions have even ranged as far south as the Italian resorts of Venice and Grado. As soon as one problem is "teed-up," another materialises. Latest headache is hauling furniture for the homes of newly arrived wives—the vanguard of scheme "Henpeck." Major Harpur, who has been writing the Battalion History and running the popular Divisional newspaper *Battleaxe Weekly*, left for England on Boxing Day to assist on "Henpeck."

A dismal report received from A.S.M. J. P. Whyte states that cold weather and bad roads have mainly contributed to hitting a new high in smash-ups, and L/Cpl. Mason and his recovery crew have clocked a steady 9,000 miles bringing in breakdowns—in two months alone!

Lieut. A. R. Edgecombe, when not shanghai-ing domestic articles for "Henpeck," has his hands full "Q-ing" for Surrendered Enemy Personnel and wrestling with mountains of ski-ing kit (if you want a cheap military funeral, just ask him for "Wax"—he has a million varieties). C/Sgt. Shapire (ex-70th Battalion) has taken over from R.Q.M.S. Headington, who is leaving on release.

Cpl. "Hank" Halsey has taken over the Corporals' Club in the antique *Weinstube*, as Cpl. Stanbridge left for release; in fact, every department of the Regiment these days is playing a desperate game of shuffling men to plug gaps made by the release of the large middle-twenties groups. Recent releases include L/Cpl. Harry Creese (T.A.), Sgt. Waller, who represented the 78th Division and 5th Corps and was an Arsenal reserve at one time. Sgt. Quested, of the Orderly Room, has handed over to Sgt. Wakeford, and R.S.M. McFadden has replaced R.S.M. Upchurch, who left just before Christmas. Sgt. Hodges, who has been in the Signals since his T.A. days, also leaves shortly. Documenting, jabbing, examining and Okaying these home-bound prodigals is Sgt. Edmeads, who left the 30th Battalion at the Tower in 1942. Provost Sgt. "Tiny" Waters (instructor at Mill Hill in 1940) leaves in a couple of weeks, to be replaced by Sgt. W. Hamlin, who served for seventeen years in the 2nd Battalion Middlesex Regiment.

Together with C.S.M. E. C. Leader (ex-10th and 70th Middlesex), all send best wishes to old Middlesex friends for 1946.

"B" SUPPORT GROUP NOTES

For the last three months the Group have been stationed in Radenthein, a large village of some 1,500

souls. The Group did not take long to settle in and were soon on good terms with the inhabitants. The main life of the village centres around the very large magnesium factory, American owned, but, of course, taken over by the Germans during the war. It provides employment for about 80 per cent. of the population. In our very early days it harboured a great number of S.S. and Nazis, and we spent a considerable time in winking them out with surprise raids in conjunction with the Field Security Police.

We are billeted in various *gasthaus* or inns over the village, all of which have been decorated with the Regimental red and grey, and which sport names like "The Mortar Arms," "Ken's-a-Poppin'," and "The Dodgers' Arms." The Officers' Mess and billet is the old director's house, a very imposing edifice. The factory canteen has been appropriated for the men's canteen and various liquors and beer are on sale every night.

Every week the Group hold a dance, which is attended by about 350 people of both sexes, and which culminated recently in a Grand Fancy Dress Ball, held just before Christmas. There were about 600 people in attendance, about half in fancy dress and the rest in borrowed civvy suits.

Most of the Group have had their first Blighty leave after nearly three years overseas; they went in parties of twenty, which meant that over 100 men were away at one time. All duties were carried out by the few men who remained behind. This spelt guard every other night and other irksome tasks, but they were carried out in a cheerful spirit.

The first peacetime Christmas was celebrated in fine style, the Fancy Dress Dance mentioned above, a Stag Party, the usual bumper Christmas dinner, and a new innovation, a Children's Party. One hundred of the children in the village were fed on tea, cakes, buns and sandwiches. It was a great success judging by the number who overate themselves and were sick. The kids were afterwards entertained by a Punch and Judy show and a first-rate conjurer. We do not know who enjoyed themselves more, the children or the soldiers who acted as hosts.

A great number of the old stalwarts are leaving every week for Civvy Street. Capt. Sandford, Sgts. Day, Bonham, Muchmore, Moreton (M.M.), Ptes. Perry, Heaven and Bull are among the many who have left. At the same time, more awards are arriving for past services in action to both present and past members of the Group. Among these are: Major B. V. C. Harpur and Capt. R. A. Mitchell, who have both been awarded the Military Cross; Sgt. A. E. Moreton, who was awarded the Military Medal and was also mentioned in despatches; Capt. Sandford, L/Sgt. L. W. Marks, L/Sgt. A. E. Chaston and Pte. A. Roxborough, who were all mentioned in despatches. Since coming overseas the Group has won three M.C.s, three M.M.s, one American Bronze Star and eleven officers and men have been mentioned in despatches, and we hope the list is far from complete.

With the release of 26 Group practically all members of the Group who were in the Regiment at the war's commencement will have gone, and new, fresh blood will be arriving; if they can maintain the standard that has gone before there can be no complaints.



The Dining Room at the Ski School.



The Battalion Ski School Centre.

"C" SUPPORT GROUP NOTES

The last two months have been full of activity for the Group, both operationally and in the field of sport.

During November and the early part of December it seemed as if the Group would spend Christmas at Edling Camp. Preparations were under way to ensure that this festival would be the best spent since the beginning of the war, for it would be the last Christmas that many of the men would spend in the Army. Foraging parties were being sent out to endeavour to buy pigs and poultry to supplement the rations. Stocks of wines and spirits were being accumulated in the canteen, and everything was ready for a really bumper time.

Fortune, however, demanded otherwise, and a week before Christmas "C" Group had to move to an area near the Austro-Yugoslav border, south of Klagenfurt. This move was not accomplished without difficulty, for the icy nature of the roads made the movement of track vehicles extremely hazardous. It says much for the quality of our drivers that the move was accomplished safely and without loss of vehicles, though the carriers had to stage at Villach.

The Group occupied three small villages, Group H.Q. being in Unterloibl, the M.M.G. Company in Feistritz and the H.M. Company in St. Margerethen, covering an area of about fifteen miles. Although this move upset the previous Christmas arrangements, alternative plans were soon in full swing. The men made themselves comfortable and everyone intended to enjoy Christmas to the full. A programme of routine patrols to the villages on the border, to check for refugee and currency smuggling, and a course of ski-ing instruction were instituted.

Unfortunately, a thaw set in just before Christmas and ski-ing became impossible through lack of snow.

Christmas will long be remembered by all. Four days' holiday had been granted and the most was made of it. Of necessity, each Company had to arrange its own festivities, but everyone had plenty to eat and drink and a thoroughly enjoyable time was spent by all. The officers visited each Company in turn. Dances were held which were unqualified successes in spite of lack of room in the dance halls at Feistritz and St. Margerethen.

No sooner was Christmas over than the Group had to return to Edling, and, in spite of the short time spent in their new location, everyone was sorry to have to leave. The Group was relieved by the 4th Battalion Devonshire Regiment, newly arrived from England. The move back was again very difficult and the carriers were moved in batches over a period of a week.

Leave during this period had been outstanding, and by the end of the year every man in the Group had been home on L.I.A.P. Most of them had already returned and were now waiting to be demobilised or waiting for the new short leave to begin. The demobilisation of the N.C.Os. of the lower A/S Group has necessitated the promotion of many junior N.C.Os. Demobilisation dinners are being held and the Officers entertained, the Sergeants to a dinner at the Officers' Country Club.

The Group had been having plenty of sport during this period. Football matches, followed by a social in the Canteen with table tennis and darts tournaments were held with local units. In spite of nearly 50 per cent. of the Group being away on L.I.A.P., the football team gave a good account of itself against 321/132 Field Regiment R.A. In the Battalion cross-country run "C" Group came out as easy victors and four members of the Group were selected to run for the Battalion in the inter-Unit run held at Rome.

With the advent of the snowy weather football stopped and was replaced by ski-ing and skating. Every man in the Group has the opportunity to learn to ski under the tutelage of expert Austrian instructors. An ice skating rink has been made by flooding a field and it is hoped, at a later date, to start ice hockey matches. Skis and skates are available to all men at very cheap rates.

So here we are with the Edling air filled with cries of "Roll on, my seven," alternated by "Bring out more skis."

"D" GROUP NOTES

The past three months have been a period of placid calm and pre-release repose, enlightened by a few highlights which will, no doubt, live long in the memories of our own chaps who were lucky enough to participate and in the minds of the inhabitants of Gmünd, who were interested and somewhat amazed spectators—and also, from time to time, participants.

For our first party we had to revise the Roman calendar and institute a new Saints' Day. As in all Catholic countries, all the holidays in our village seem to be irrevocably tied up with the saints, and so, to ensure the fullest co-operation and perhaps instil a greater sense of forgiveness in the civilians' bosoms, we introduced them to that well-known patron saint of mirth and merry-making, St. Guy Fawkes. We had considerable difficulty in making



The Battalion Ski School Mess.



Guard Mounting at Spittal with the Mashed Pipes of the 38th (Irish) Brigade.

the Burgomeister see how one so notorious could possibly be connected with a celebration. No doubt his mind was filled with thoughts of Reichstags in flames. Eventually, however, he agreed to co-operate to the extent of having the town fire brigade standing by and lending us the main street for the night for a bonfire of bonfires.

For our next party we were introduced to St. Nicholas, the patron saint of children, and some of the children at that party parted from their rompers many years ago. As St. Nicholas was heard to remark after all was over, "Why should I waste my time chasing naughty little girls when there are so many, naughty big ones who would rather chase me?"

And so the old year wore on to Christmas. Now, although most of us would rather have spent Christmas with our families, I do not think there is one man who is not prepared to admit that this was one of the best Christmases ever. There was a carol-singing party which failed to sing its way past "The Rose and Crown" (the men's canteen). A horse and trap was "requisitioned" for the afternoon and was put to very good use. And, finally, there was Christmas night.

New Year's Eve was on us almost too soon, but we rallied for the final fling of the old year with a

Grand Masquerade. Sylvester appears to be to the Austrians what Hogmanay is to the Scots. In fact, one Scotsman was heard to remark to another that he doubted whether they would have been able to do it any better north of the Border. Many a man was seen hastily to leave his partner at midnight when the masks were raised.

Such was the final quarter of 1945. Of course, there were odd moments when we had to work, such as our grand wood-cutting effort, which everyone appreciates now that winter is on us, but which caused many an aching shoulder and bicep and many a tender palm. When the snows came, we began our ski-ing and the local C.C.S. began to do business once more, while the bottles of Sloan's liniment which had lain so long in NAAFI stock were at a premium. Hard work all of it while it lasted, with hard playing to compensate.

One final comment is to illustrate the growing friendliness between the Austrians and the forces of occupation, and the growing trust placed in us. A certain person happens to occupy a room in a *gasthaus*. One evening at about six o'clock a timid knock came at the door and a cowering schoolgirl presented herself with the request "Would Mr. — be so kind as to help her with her homework, an essay in English on the growth of the British Empire." Mind you, the school-leaving age is pretty high in Austria!

C.M.F. CROSS-COUNTRY RUN

In the middle of November the Regiment was asked to supply a team of cross-country runners to compete in the all C.M.F. Cross-Country Championship to be held in Rome on the 2nd.

Despite the very short notice which precluded any training, and the fact that most of the runners had returned from Blighty leave that same week, a team, under Major C. E. Cullen, went to Rome by truck. There were nine men in the team, the only representatives from the Division. There were sixteen teams coming from all parts of the C.M.F., and all were extremely well trained. When, therefore, the Regimental team came fourth we were considered, as the Divisional newspaper put it, "to have done extremely well."

The course was a short but gruelling one, part of which ran alongside the Tiber on the outskirts of Rome. The race was won by the 2nd Polish Corps, with the 6th South African Armoured Division, the Sherwood Foresters and ourselves second, third and fourth respectively. It was calculated on a team basis, the first six of each team counting. The first man home, a South African, did the course in 13.8 mins. Pte. Parker was our first man home, coming eleventh, but the next five were close up behind. The team enjoyed a three-day holiday in Rome after the race.

SERGEANTS' MESS

Since the beginning of October the Sergeants' Mess has become a kaleidoscope of ever-changing faces. R.S.M. Upchurch has been succeeded by R.S.M. P. J. McFadden, and various members of the "Old Guard," including C.S.M. Skinner, Soper Clayton and McGowan have now received the long-awaited "ticket."

Mess functions have been numerous, all departing members have been suitably and fluidly assured of our sorrow at losing them.

Being situated in Spittal in quarters of palatial dimensions, naturally we are frequently welcoming members of other Units in the Division; hence the Kensington hospitality in this respect has become almost a legend throughout the area.

With the departure of 26 age group almost all the old familiar faces will have left, but the old hands that are remaining can assure the new members of a warm welcome.

26 M.G.T.C. NOTES

The quarter now drawing to a close has seen a continuation of the busy life of this centre. Training, both Corps and continuation, has continued unabated. In addition, we have had to cope with vast numbers returning to civilian life and drafts proceeding overseas.

Only one major change has taken place on the training side—the wind-up of the Specialist Company. At the moment of writing the future policy is still a little obscure. We are still continuing to train motor cyclists and rangetakers, while specially selected men are being sent to Catterick for training as driver operators. We were extremely sorry to see our specialist staff go and take this opportunity of wishing them the very best of luck in their new appointments.

Whilst demobilisation throws a terrific amount of work on to the centre, it does afford us the opportunity of seeing many old faces and the chance to have a last farewell and make plans for subsequent meetings in which to go over again our experiences of these last six years.

To date we have despatched two drafts, both to the M.E.F. Young, keen and eager lads who, we feel sure, will be a credit to their new battalions. Two more drafts are under preparation at the moment. Security forbids mentioning their ultimate destination, but, without exception, each man is looking forward to joining a battalion, settling down, and at last becoming a real member of the Regiment.

At sport we continue with rather full programmes. In the field of soccer we are unapproachable, and to date have only dropped one point. Our goal average is terrific and would be the envy of many a major league club. Appended are league tables up to date.

		Goals							
Team		P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.	
26 M.G.T.C.	..	10	9	0	1	92	12	19	
		9	7	2	0	53	20	14	
		7	5	1	1	34	18	11	
		6	5	1	0	33	7	10	
		7	5	2	0	35	23	10	
		6	3	3	0	23	37	6	
		4	2	2	0	16	38	4	
		8	2	6	0	16	33	4	
		9	1	8	0	17	70	2	
		6	0	5	1	12	47	1	
		6	0	6	0	12	38	0	

At both hockey and rugby our teams are gradually finding their form after a rather moderate start and we have strong hopes of eventually producing sides which will at least acquit themselves well in the forthcoming district championships.

The highlight of the social side of the Unit was our Savings Week.

The sudden appearance of savings, dance, concert and boxing posters in camp and in Chester, combined

with slides in the Cinema, radio van commentaries and newspaper write-ups, announced the opening of 26 M.G.T.C. Blacon Camp Savings Week, and what a week it was. Weeks and weeks of paper work had been put into our effort, and we were most anxious that it should be a success.

Having had very little experience of running Savings Weeks, we were rather dubious as to the amount to fix as a target figure, but decided in the end on £500. As you will see, our work was not in vain, and the figure was almost passed on the first day.

Our Week started on Monday, 12th November, with the selling of tickets for a big raffle, which included a first prize of £50. In the evening of this first day our Unit Concert Party gave an excellent performance of "Laugh and Be Happy," a musical burlesque produced by Sgt. Abbott, the entertainments Sergeant. On the second night Sgt. Smith ran a Carnival Dance in the Gymnasium and made a terrific success of it. Talk about blood out of a stone. I should hate to owe old "Smithy" any money!

Wednesday afternoon was a great show. Lieut. Draper, the Sports Officer, provided us with a grand soccer match at the Chester Stadium between our own unbeaten Army "B" team and Rhyl, and we ran out victors by eight goals to three. Our "Laugh and Be Happy" show gave another smashing performance on the same evening at the Garrison Theatre, Saughton, to a very appreciative audience of about six hundred.

Thursday and Friday provided more "Laugh and Be Happy" for the civilian population of Chester at the Town Hall. This, unfortunately, was one of our few mistakes. The Town Hall is not apparently

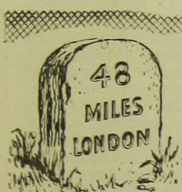
the best place in the world to run a variety concert, and I had quite a lot of explaining to do to the producer and explained that what we lacked in numbers we more than recovered in wealth. Also on Friday night we staged the big attraction of the week—a terrific boxing display staged by Q.M.S.I. Wood, of our P.T. staff, and held in the Camp Theatre. We were fortunate in securing, among other well-known fighters, the services of that great sportsman, Bruce Woodcock, the British and Empire heavyweight champion, who, despite a puncture and a five-hour journey through fog, arrived in time to give a grand exhibition with one of his sparring partners.

Saturday night, with a sale of about £1,300 to our credit, started us off in a cheerful atmosphere for another Carnival Dance. Our Unit Dance Orchestra, directed by Sgt. Tipping, gave the folks a grand evening and "Smithy" fleeced them all again.

The last day, Monday, 19th November, started with a mad rush to dispose of the remainder of our raffle tickets and to sell more stamps and bonds in an effort to reach the £1,500 mark, and the last item of our most successful week was an ENSA show in the evening at the Camp Theatre. When after the performance our C.O., Lieut.-Col. T. C. L. Redwood, R.N.F., spoke to the audience, he gave them some sound advice on the ways of wise saving and thanked the men for their grand effort, after which the Colonel of all the local A.T.S. Units very kindly came along and, out of our home-made Cellophane drum, drew the lucky nine prize-winning tickets of our raffle.

Our final savings figure was £1,484 18s., almost treble our target.

Good show, Blacon! A very worthy effort.



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