



# The Die-Hards

## NEWSLETTER

No. 17

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Deansbrook Road, Edgware, Middlesex.

## Remembrance Day Ceremonies 1971

### The Field of Remembrance

The annual ceremony at the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey took place on Saturday, November 13.

As usual, a large number of ex-members of the Regiment were present, as well as civic dignitaries headed by Lt.-General G. C. Bucknall, CB, MC, DL, Assistant Lieutenant of the Middlesex Area of Greater London, the High Sheriff of Greater London and the Vice-Chairman of the Greater London Council.

The various Boroughs, which lie within the old county of Middlesex, were all represented, except Brent and Richmond-upon-Thames.

After the usual short service at the County Memorial in the Middlesex Guildhall, conducted by Prebendary G. A. Lewis Lloyd, MBE, Honorary Chaplain to 2nd/10th Battalion The Middlesex Regiment (DCO) OCA, a procession headed by RSM R. G. Roberts, MBE, the Parade RSM, and Mr. R. H. Ferguson carrying the Regimental Association Standard, formed up and moved to the Regimental Plot.

On arrival at the plot Col. A. S. J. de S. Clayton, DL, Deputy Colonel (Middlesex) The Queen's Regiment, after saying "We plant these crosses today in memory of our fallen comrades of the Middlesex Regiment" planted the first cross. He then invited the Assistant Lieutenant of the Middlesex Area of Greater London to plant a cross. These were followed by the Chaplain, and the following representatives of Battalions:

1st Battalion	Col. I. R. Burrows, OBE
2nd "	Major P. Donovan, MBE
3rd "	Brigadier B. B. Rackham, CBE, MC, DL
4th "	Mr. C. Ashby
7th "	(TA) Lt.-Col. J. D. Gunnell, TD
8th "	Mr. A. E. Gale
9th "	Mr. R. T. Meers
10th "	Mr. A. D. Scudamore, OBE
12th "	(Service) Mr. J. Price
17th "	Mr. E. Crook, DCM

Crosses were then planted by the civic dignitaries present, followed by members of the Association and their relations.

In addition, a cross was planted by Major A. B. Cowing, now serving with the 2nd Battalion The Queen's Regiment, in memory of Pte. P. S. Carter, of the same battalion, who died from a gunshot wound in Belfast on September 14, 1971, and was the first active service casualty of The Queen's Regiment.

### Regimental Service

Remembrance Day on Sunday, November 14, was bright and sunny.

The service in the Garrison Chapel, Inglis Barracks, Mill Hill, and the ceremony at the Regimental Memorial, both conducted by the Rev. John Webb, ACA, CF, were very well attended.

After the ceremony at the Regimental Memorial, at which Ptes. Brown and Featherbee from Albuhera Company, 4th Battalion The Queen's Regiment, sounded Last Post and Reveille, wreaths were laid in the following order:

Regimental Association, by Col. A. S. J. de S. Clayton, DL.

1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Battalions and Depot, by Col. I. R. Burrows, OBE.

5th and 6th (Militia) Battalions, by Mr. A. M. Mason.

"D" Company (Mx) 5th (V) Battalion The Queen's Regiment, by Major M. L. Muirhead.

"A" Company (Mx) 6th (V) Battalion The Queen's Regiment, by Major M. J. Beaumont, TD.

Mill Hill Branch, The Die-Hards Club, by Major A. E. Peasley.

9th Battalion Branch, The Die-Hards Club, by Mr. Ted Lockyer.

W.O.s and Sergeants Branch, The Die-Hards Club, by Major L. J. Johnson.

At the march past which followed the laying of wreaths the salute was taken by Col. A. S. J. de S. Clayton, DL, who was accompanied by Col. J. W. Holmes, RE, Commanding the Home Postal and

Courier Communications Depot, RE.

The parade over, those who had taken part, or had been spectators, went by coach or private car to the TAVR Centre, Edgware, where a reunion was held.

#### DIE-HARDS EXHIBITION AT MESSRS. AUSTIN REED LTD.

This exhibition was a personal history of The Middlesex Regiment from 1755, when Colonel John Arabin was gazetted colonel, until the Regiment was absorbed into The Queen's Regiment on December 31, 1966. It was open to the public from November 3 to 24, after being officially opened by Lieutenant-General Sir Brian Horrocks, K.C.B., K.B.E., D.S.O., M.C., L.L.D., our most distinguished living Die-Hard, on Tuesday evening, November 2, 1971. The exhibition was held at the invitation of Major Barry Reed, M.C., who, as a subaltern in the 1st Battalion, had won his decoration during the Korean War.



(Photo by Rodney Breuster)

Lt.-Gen. Sir Brian Horrocks recalling how Major Dick Smith, our Curator, "conned" him for Hitler's telephone exchange, much to the amusement of Major Barry Reed.

The success of the exhibition can be judged by the number of visitors—well over three thousand—who viewed the exhibits during the three weeks it was open. Letters and requests for information regarding the Regiment are still being received by the Curator of the Regimental Museum, a pointer that although we cease to exist in the Army List, we are still very much to the fore in the thoughts of the generations of to-day. The successors of the Middlesex Regi-

ment were in evidence by the presence of a serving N.C.O. and soldiers of Albuhera Company, 4th Battalion, The Queen's Regiment, now stationed at Shorncliffe, complete with a display stand of modern weapons, and jealously guarding the Colours of the Regiment, soon to be laid up in St. Paul's Cathedral. They were also guarding our prized painting, "Steady the Drums and Fifes" by Lady Elizabeth Butler, the painting itself now being at the School of Infantry, Warminster.

On display were weapons, uniforms and trophies from our earliest battle honour "Mysore" to the machine gun captured in Korea, when the last hon of the Regiment was won. The uniform of a lieutenant of the Light Company as worn during the Peninsular War was a much admired exhibit as was the collection of eight of our eleven Victoria Crosses which were on display with medals of every campaign in which the Regiment has fought.

An eye-catcher, as one walked along Regent Street, was the large regimental flag, flying from the balcony of the exhibition centre, the flag which has only before flown from the mast on the top of the Middlesex Guildhall, in Parliament Square, every Albuhera Day.

The vast amount of preparatory work necessarily undertaken by the Curator was made well worth while by the many complimentary remarks and letters received whilst the exhibition was open, and subsequently.

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Date—1972	Event
Friday, April 21	1/7th Battalion (1914-18) OCA Dinner at TAVR Centre, Edgware.
Saturday, April 22	9th Battalion Branch Dinner at Victory Ex-Service Club, Seymour Street, London W2.
Saturday, April 29	1/7th Battalion (1939-45) Dinner at TAVR Centre, Hornsey N8.
Friday, May 5	Spring Golf Meeting on course of North Hants Golf Club, Fleet.
Friday, May 12	(1) Officers' Club Cocktail Party at United Service and Royal Aero Club, Pall Mall, London SW1. (2) 2/10th Battalion Annual Dinner at Victory Ex-Service Club, Seymour Street, London W2.
Saturday, May 13	(1) Albuhera Service of Remembrance in St. Paul's Cathedral at 2.30 p.m. (2) Annual Reunion at Pochester Hall, Queensway, London W2.
Tuesday, May 16	ALBUHERA DAY.
Wednesday, June 7	Derby outing.
Saturday, June 24	Presentation of Colours Parade at Tidworth.

## The Regimental Visit to Lille and Gondcourt

NOVEMBER 20-21, 1971

The following notes kindly compiled by Col. Clayton may be of general interest to members of our Regimental Association and of more particular interest to those of use who knew Michael Trotobas in 2 Middlesex and who served in 2 Middlesex and 1/7 Middlesex in the Gondcourt, Houplin, Seclin and Lille area during the "phoney" war period from September 1939 to May 1940.

Prior to this visit we knew that Capt. Michael Trotobas had played an important part in the Resistance Movement in Northern France and that he had been eventually killed by the Gestapo in 1943. However, we knew very little of the details and, as a result of this visit, we have learned a very great deal more from his fellow members and friends of the Réseau Action Sylvestre (code name for this particular branch of the Resistance).

Through the good offices of Mr. Len Arlington (a private in "A" Company, 2 Middlesex in France in 1939-40), our Regimental Association was invited to send a party to participate in the 28th Anniversary Ceremonies in memory of Capitaine Michel (his code name was Michel) and those members of the Region Nord Resistance group who lost their lives in the last World War.

Arrangements were made at speed and it eventually transpired that some 30 Old Comrades set forth by coach from Edgware soon after 8 p.m. on November 19, 1971. We drove to Dover, crossed on the night ferry and arrived at Ostend at around 5.30 a.m. on November 20 (local time). We then set forth for Chemy, crossing the Franco-Belgian frontier around 7 a.m. (where we were met by the French Police and guided to our destination) and arrived around 8.30 a.m. at the home of M. and Mme. Faucomprez. They kindly gave all of us a splendid breakfast of bacon and eggs and we were able to wash, shave and get ourselves ready for the many ceremonies that lay ahead. Our hosts are the in-laws of Mr. Arlington who was sheltered by them throughout the war after being cut off from 2 Middlesex in May 1940. His story is fascinating but suffice it to say in this report that he eventually became a member of Réseau Sylvestre. Capitaine Michel was careful never to meet him face to face since he was naturally anxious not to be identified, particularly by a fellow member of 2 Middlesex as this would have proved awkward in the event of capture.

As we had a few hours to while away before our first official engagement our party broke up into small groups and went on voyages of discovery. Major Bob Cummins and I walked over to Gondcourt, about 1½ miles away, and browsed around those familiar streets. The factory where 2 Middlesex were billeted has gone, but Battalion HQ and the Company offices remain—as does Garage Buisette which had housed the joint Officers Mess of "A" and "B" Companies. The former owners of this garage are dead and it is now run by their son whom I met later in the day. We also met an old lady who came up to us—she asked after Major Brodie and Lt. Ian Campbell. An old boy on his bicycle stopped and chatted—he used to feed the horses and

cattle behind the "A" Company office—but he had to hurry away to change for "our parade" as he was a trumpeter in the Town Band. We also enquired after Mme. Carpentier who used to give French lessons to Major (then PSM) Cummins and several others—we heard she had died in Buchenwald. As time was getting on we had to curtail our tour and hurry back to Chemy with many unanswered questions in our minds.

At around noon the coach load set forth for Gondcourt Square where we were met by the Mayor, the Council, the Town Band and a multitude of townspeople. Our trumpeter friend hurried up to make his own number with us once again. The Band played "God save The Queen", we fell in and then we all marched off to the cemetery. I laid a wreath at the War Memorial and we then marched back to the Hotel de Ville for a Vin d'Honneur and several speeches which were followed by an excellent luncheon provided by the Gondcourt Council. During luncheon I spoke to many people who remembered our Regiment so well and who clearly had held us in very high regard.

At 3 p.m. or thereabouts we had to embus and leave—many of us were very sad that time did not allow a visit to Houplin where 1/7 Middlesex had been billeted.

Our drive to Lille was most exhilarating since we had two police outriders on their vast and powerful motor cycles and, as a result, we drove at high speed through every red traffic light to the delight of us all and accompanied by whoops of encouragement to our driver.

On arrival at Lille we were shown the Monument to the Resistance and the Hotel de Ville—both most impressive.

At 5 p.m. we and many representatives of the Réseau Sylvestre formed up in front of the War Memorial and each party laid a wreath. Mr. Chacksfield sounded "Last Post" and "Reveille" at the special request of our French friends.

At about 5.30 p.m. we arrived at the offices of *La Voix du Nord*, the local newspaper which had played a most important part in the Resistance movement, where we were greeted by a superb champagne reception and several speeches. One speech in particular was of outstanding interest, given by M. Marcel Fertein, President of the "Compagnons du Capitaine Michel", as it explained what had taken place and the part that Michael Trotobas had played. This speech is being translated and a résumé will be sent to all members of our party.

At 6.45 p.m. we proceeded to the Caserne des C.R.S. du Groupement No. 2 (the Police Barracks) where we were to lay our weary heads many hours later. Here we were again greeted by another vast and excellent reception and several more speeches. M. Marcel Fertein invested me, as the senior representative of the Regiment and in the name of the Regiment, with La Croix du Capitaine Michel and presented Le Diplome de Resistance. At the conclusion of this reception we were all ushered into the Salle D'Honneur and entertained to a veritable feast

## Regimental Visit to Lille and Gondecourt

NOVEMBER 20-21, 1971



1 M. Marcel Fertein, Colonel Silbereyez and Colonel Clayton placing wreaths on the memorial.



2 Colonel Clayton paying compliments to our French comrades in arms at the memorial.

3 The reception at the office of La Voix du Nord.

at which over 80 sat down to dinner.

In the early hours of November 21 most of us retired to our downy couches and slept like logs until soon after 7 a.m. However, Mr. Jack Johnson and his friend Mr. Levin decided to take a breath of air and a walk before retiring—but some three inches of snow had fallen and, alas, Mr. Johnson “went for a burton” on the icy steps outside the Police Mess. Most unfortunately he fractured his ankle rather badly in two places and, with the most helpful cooperation of the Police, he was whipped off to hospital where he was kept for the night. The remainder of our party knew nothing of this sad accident until breakfast time.

At 9 a.m. on November 21 Major Cummins and I attended a special Mass in memory of Capitaine Michel and those who fell, and rejoined the remainder of our party at 10.30 a.m. at the Lille Southern Cemetery. We and our friends formed up and proceeded to the Reseau Sylvestre Monument, on which is inscribed “Le Reseau Sylvestre Farmer du Capitaine Michel—A ses Morts”. It is a most impressive monument where Michael Trotobas and some 80 members of the Resistance are buried. Two speeches were made, several wreaths were laid and Mr. Chacksfield again sounded “Last Post” and “Reveille”. We then moved to the British cemetery where wreaths were again laid and then on to the grave of Commandant Bayart where a further wreath was laid.

We then visited the house where Michael Trotobas had lived in Lille and where he had been killed. There is a plaque on the wall in his memory. M. Julien Gerekens (code name Commandant Jacky) told me the final story. At 11 p.m. one evening he had been talking to Capitaine Michel in an alley near the house and they parted having agreed to meet in the house next day. By 7 a.m. next day Capitaine Michel was dead. The house had been surrounded by the Gestapo and then entered—however, Capitaine Michel killed four of them before he died himself. The Gestapo closed the shutters on the windows, locked the front door and sealed it with a piece of white paper on which was the Gestapo stamp. They then departed but not without leaving several ambush parties spread around the house. Some 30 minutes later Commandant Jacky approached the house for his meeting but smelt a rat when he saw the shutters were closed as the agreed signals were to enter if the windows were ajar but to keep away if the windows were closed or wide open. So he proceeded on his way and, as he passed the front door on the corner (it is a corner house), he saw the ominous white strip of paper and therefore knew the worst—so he went on without slackening his step and got away. He told me that if the Gestapo had for once not carried out their routine sealing procedure they would have caught all the top men in the Reseau Sylvestre. This goes to prove that slavish adherence to standing orders does not always pay off.

He then told me of another Trotobas story which is all worth recounting now. The RAF had tried to bomb, without any success, a particular factory situated in a densely populated part of Lille and after repeated failures Reseau Sylvestre was asked to do the job. The explosives eventually arrived—brought in penny packets by lorries from hundreds of miles away as local air drops were not on—these lorries were all carrying supplies for the Germans and each

had its own German guard so the risk must have been tremendous. However, Michael Trotobas and his team got into the factory one night with these explosives, cleared out the night shift, blew it up and got away. Their signal to the Air Ministry of “Operation Completed” was not fully believed and photographs were demanded to prove it. Not deterred, Michael Trotobas, in the guise of insurance assessor, went to the factory, said his firm would not pay up without visible proof in the form of photographs and asked for the co-operation of the Germans. They were very helpful and even held the magnesium flares so that he could take his photographs! He thanked them, left and sent the photos back to the Air Ministry. What superb cheek and what guts!

We then went on to our final reception and banquet lunch at the Palais de la Biere, Lille. After an excellent luncheon and some more speeches we had to embus just before 4 p.m. and leave for Ostend to catch our return ferry.

At Ostend we were thankful to see the ambulance carrying Messrs. Johnson and Levin but we were horrified at the report that a Force 12 Gale was blowing. After several dramas—firstly that the ferry captain would not accept Mr. Johnson and his fractured ankle and, secondly, the coach because of the storm—and much argument, all was well and we all plus coach, were able to embark.

After an extremely rough crossing we arrived at Dover, got through Customs, found Mr. Johnson's car, which awaited our arrival with a driver, put him on board, embussed ourselves and then set forth for Edgware where we arrived around 4 a.m. on November 22, having been delayed by a leaky radiator en route.

To sum up—this first visit of a Regimental Party has been an unqualified success, we have renewed many old friendships and we have established firm links between the Reseau Sylvestre and our Regimental Association.

It was a most memorable and moving experience to have been able to participate as we did in these anniversary ceremonies and to have been received so warmly and so kindly by our many French friends.

We must endeavour to arrange in future years that this event becomes established in our Regimental Calendar. We must also make arrangements for the members of the Reseau Sylvestre to pay us a visit so that we can repay in a small way their most generous hospitality to us.

### FREE NEWSLETTERS

The Editor wishes to thank Mr. A. W. J. Brown, Mr. R. J. Cubitt, Mr. F. C. W. Hammond, Mr. W. Knight, MBE, Major C. L. Lawrence, MC, Mr. A. M. Mason, Mr. R. T. Meers, Mr. F. H. Nash, MBE, Major G. G. Parr-Head and Mr. B. A. Pritchard for their generosity in paying extra subscriptions so that free copies of *The Die-Hards Newsletter* can be sent to deserving old comrades.

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### REGULAR FORCES EMPLOYMENT ASSOCIATION

(NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR EMPLOY-  
MENT OF REGULAR SAILORS, SOLDIERS  
AND AIRMEN)

This Association is part of the Forces Resettlement Service and its object is to find suitable employment for men and women when they leave the Services and in the years thereafter. It is registered as a charity and draws its income from Public Funds and from the Services Benevolent and Welfare Organisations.

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VICES FREE.

Its services are available to all who have not taken commissioned rank in the Regular Forces and who leave with character assessments of "Good" or better after more than three years' service, or have been invalided from the Services before completing three years.

The Association works in close co-operation with the Services, the Ministry of Defence and the Department of Employment, and operates through 43 branches covering the United Kingdom, each of which is run by an Employment Officer who has been in the Service himself and is in close touch with local employers.

The Association is at your service. The addresses and telephone numbers of its branches can be obtained from Corps and Regimental Association, from Post Offices and from Employment Exchanges.

### ALBUHERA DAY 1972

The Service of Remembrance this year will be held in the North Transept Chapel (The Baptistry) of St. Paul's Cathedral at 2.30 p.m. on Saturday, May 13.

Further details will be notified to all Die-Hards in due course.

### ANNUAL REUNION 1972

Arrangements have been made to hold the Annual Reunion this year at Porchester Hall on Saturday, May 13, from 7 p.m. to 11.45 p.m.

Charges for admission will be as follows:

Single tickets — — — 15p

Double tickets — — — 25p

(admitting lady and gentleman)

Further details will be issued in due course.

### PRESENTATION OF COLOURS

Units of the Queen's Regiment are to be presented with new Colours on a parade to be held at Tidworth on Saturday, June 24.

On this Parade the Colours of the 1st Battalion The Middlesex Regiment (Duke of Cambridge's Own) (57th Foot) will be marched off prior to their being laid up in the Regimental Chapel (The Baptistry), in St. Paul's Cathedral at a service to be arranged with the Dean and Chapter.

It is hoped that a large number of Die-Hards will attend the parade on June 24.

Full details will be notified as soon as they are received from RHQ The Queen's Regiment.

### DERBY SWEEPSTAKE

A sweepstake on this year's Derby is being organised by the Middlesex Regimental Association in aid of the Regimental Charitable Fund.

Tickets, costing 3p each, or 15p for a book of five, will be available shortly.

Applications for tickets should be made to Major R. W. J. Smith, MBE, Regimental Headquarters (Middlesex Office), Deansbrook Road, Edgware, Middlesex.

The following prizes will be awarded:

1st prize — 25% of net proceeds.

2nd prize — 15% of net proceeds.

3rd prize — 10% of net proceeds.

The result of the draw and the amount allocated to the Charitable Fund will be notified to all concerned and published in *The Die-Hards Newsletter* in August next.

### THE JOLLY DIE-HARDS

Just released is an ARGO record "Songs and Music of the Redcoats", the same as the title of the book by Louis Winstock. On the record is "Paddy's Resource" also the sung words of "The Jolly Die-Hards".

## Regimental Museum

Curator: Major R. W. J. Smith, MBE, TA & VR Centre, Deansbrook Rd., Edgware, Middx.

The following are recent acquisitions for the Museum:—

Medals and souvenirs of the late L/Cpl. C. Robinson

Christmas card 4th Battalion, 1920

Medals of the late Cpl. F. J. Duffield

Medals of the late Sgt. F. J. Hocking, D.C.M.

Medals of the late 2/Lt. S. H. Leaver.

Photograph albums, etc. of the late Capt. E. J. Blake Budden.

The last Middlesex Regt. bass drum

MEDALS AND SOUVENIRS OF THE LATE L/CPL. C. ROBINSON

These relics consist of the group of medals consisting of the Queen's South Africa Medal with clasps, "Transvaal", "Cape Colony" and "S. Africa 1902" the 1914 Star, British War Medal, the Victory Medal and Defence Medal 1939-45. There is also the chocolate box, given by H.R.H. Princess Mary to our Forces in December 1914, a briar pipe as presented to a number of our soldiers serving in South Africa during the Boer War and a Boer pipe with a metal perforated hinged lid to prevent red-hot ashes blowing about and causing bush fires.

Details of service of L/Cpl. Robinson will be found in the obituary columns.

Presented by his widow, Mrs. C. Robinson.

CHRISTMAS CARD, 4TH BATTALION, 1920

This battalion Christmas card has the distinct 4th Battalion badge, or crest, on the front with "D.C.O., Middlesex Regt." on the title scroll. It also had the red and yellow ribbon, whereas from 1922 the maroon replaced the red in our colouring. The illustration shows the battalion on parade, Trooping the Colour, at Alameda, Gibraltar, on the occasion of H.M. King George V's Birthday, June 3, 1920. The Colour Ensign, carrying the King's Colour on that occasion was the donor, then 2/Lt. E. V. H. Hudson. Above the seasonal greetings is a quotation from Ben Jonson, "True Happiness consists not in the multitude of friends, but in their worth and choice". Ben Jonson, who is buried in Westminster Abbey, with the epitaph "O Rare Ben Jonson" on his grave was a great character and soldier. He served in Flanders under Sir Francis Vere, and at eighteen years of age, fought, slaying a Spanish officer and depriving him of his honour in single combat. After leaving active service he fought a duel with fellow-actor, Gabriel Spencer, and killed his adversary. It was he who transcribed from Philostratus "Drink to me only with thine eyes." When he died in 1637, he was much admired by the wits and poets of the day.

Presented by Colonel E. V. H. Hudson.

MEDALS OF THE LATE CPL. F. J. DUFFIELD

The group of medals consists of the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory medal, awarded to T/F 2336 Cpl. Frederick John Duffield, one of a family who have given trojan service to the 8th (TF) Battalion and prior to this designation, to the 2nd (Volunteer) Battalion of the Regiment.

Cpl. Duffield enrolled in the 2nd Volunteer Battalion, The Duke of Cambridge's Own (Middlesex Regiment) in 1900, being discharged in 1906. He enrolled again in his old unit, now designated the 8th (TF) Battalion in January, 1914, and was embodied on August 5, 1914. He served with the battalion in Gibraltar from September 1914 to February 1915, going to France on March 8, 1915. He was gassed at the Battle of Bellewaarde Ridge May 24, 1915. After a spell in hospital, he returned to the Battalion in March 1916. He was wounded at Leuze Wood—known to the army as "Lousey Wood"—on September 15, 1916, during the Somme Battles. Invalided home he was given a lower medical category and marked unfit for the Infantry. He was then transferred to the Labour Corps and subsequently to the Royal Flying Corps until he was discharged in January 1919. During the 1939-45 War he served with the Civil Defence as a member of the Ealing Heavy Rescue Team which entitled him to the Defence Medal. Frederick Duffield died on New Year's Day, 1963, at the age of 83 years, bequeathing his medals to his brother.

Presented by his brother, ex-Cpl. E. S. Duffield (TF/1799) late 8th Battalion

MEDALS OF THE LATE SERGEANT F. J. HOCKING, D.C.M.

This unique group of medals are those awarded to TF/1027 Lance-Sergeant Francis James Hocking, who was the first member of the 1/7th Battalion to win a decoration in the 1914-18 war and the first other rank to be decorated for gallantry in this proud Imperial Service Battalion's history. The group consists of the Distinguished Conduct Medal, 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal, all in mint condition. The citation for the award, reads "For gallant conduct and resource on the night of May 7, 1915, when a party was covering important new works between our own and the German lines. The enemy stalked the party, and rushed on them from flank and rear. Lance-Sergeant Hocking continued to act with the greatest courage and coolness, although severely wounded, and gave a fine example to his men of steadiness and devotion to duty." This was a hand-to-hand fight, with Germans, who were experienced trench fighters, jumping in with clubbed rifles and knives, on a Territorial unit new to warfare. The officer i/c the 7th Battalion party, Lt. Grosier, grappled with an energetic knife-wielding German and after a rough-house killed him. The German was found to be wearing the Iron Cross. Sgt. Hocking

and his small section held off twice the number of enemy, the casualties at the end of the scrap being seven dead and twenty wounded Germans and two killed and six wounded Die-Hards, one of whom was Sergeant Frank Hocking who died of his wounds eleven days later, on May 18, 1915. Lieutenant Groszer wrote of him, "He was a most valuable N.C.O. and was absolutely to be relied upon at any time we found ourselves in difficulties. He did not know when he was beaten, even when wounded and all odds against him. He set a magnificent example for all the rest of us who remain. He lived and died a gentleman, we of the 7th will never forget him".

*Purchased.*

#### MEDALS OF THE LATE 2/LT. S. H. LEAVER

Stanley Horace Leaver was commissioned into the regiment from the Artists Rifles, that splendid officer-producing unit which supplied so many officers to us during the years 1914-18. Posted to the 5th (Special Reserve) Battalion at Chatham, he was soon drafted to the B.E.F., joining the 17th (First Football) Battalion in the Line. When this battalion was disbanded in February 1918, under the reorganisation of the Expeditionary Force, he was transferred to the 21st (Islington) Battalion. During the German offensive in Flanders, the Battalion was with the 119th Reserve Brigade between Levantie and Fleurbaix. On April 9, 1918, the enemy over-ran the Portuguese Division during the early stages of the Battle of Estaires, causing the 21st Battalion to be called forward to plug the gap. The Battalion suffered very heavy casualties and withdrew across the River Lys, the Quartermaster blowing up the stores as two C.Q.M.S.s defended the withdrawal with Lewis guns. During this battle 2/Lt. Leaver was killed in action. His name appears in the 17th Battalion Roll of Honour as do a number of others who were transferred at that time. He has no known grave, due to the confused conditions at that stage of the war, but his name is commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial—Plugstreet as the Tommy called the place—which is apt because he died when they plugged the gap. His medals, the British War Medal, 1914-18, and the Victory Medal, 1914-19, are now on display in the Regimental Museum at Bruce Castle.

*Presented by D. W. Leaver, Esq., brother of 2/Lt. Leaver.*

#### PHOTOGRAPH ALBUMS, ETC. OF THE LATE CAPT. E. J. BLAKE BUDDEN

Details of Capt. Budden's service are given in the obituary column. Two albums show P.O.W. camp scenes giving an excellent picture in prison camps 1914-18. The Celle Schloss is well covered in the albums, a number of photographs showing Adolphe Max, great administrator and Burgomaster of Brussels in 1914. It is told that the German commander in 1914 after the fall of Brussels opened an interview by laying his revolver on the desk, whereupon Max placed beside it his only weapon—his fountain pen. Another photograph shows the 8th Battalion officers in camp in 1912, the majority wearing the hooked-up collar and braid epaulette, with badge of rank shown in the slash on the sleeves. Some of the officers are wearing on the right breast the "Imperial Service" brooch first authorised to the battalion, one of the ONLY two T.F. battalions to be

so distinguished at this date. (The other was our 7th Bn. (TF)). There are two letters—one in 1934 and the other in 1935—written by Burgomaster Max to Captain Budden. One message is of great interest, especially to our veterans who were serving in 1914. It is headed "Headquarters, Aix-la-Chapelle, August 19." and is the order issued by the German Emperor. It reads "It is my Royal and Imperial command that you concentrate your energies, for the immediate present, upon one single purpose, and that is that you address all your skill and all the valour of my soldiers to exterminate, first the treacherous English walk over General French's contemptible little army. . . ." The answer to that was given on the morning of August 23, when the Die-Hards were given, at Obourg, the command "Fifteen rounds rapid—Fire!"

*Presented by his widow, Mrs. E. J. Blake Budden.*

#### THE LAST MIDDLESEX REGIMENT BASS DRUM

This drum is the last to be carried whilst the name "Middlesex" was included in the regiment's title. It was still in use in the Battalion Corps of Drums, when 4th Battalion The Queen's Regiment was absorbed by the three remaining battalions of the Queen's Regiment. The drum is the oldest of musical instruments and is prehistoric and an instrument always associated with war. The skin is now vellum or parchment but years ago the skin considered the best was that of the ass. The human skin was not at all good when used on drums. The bass, or Turkish, drum is the largest of the family of drums, and was, if possible, played by the tallest man in the Band or Corps of Drums when the unit was on the march or ceremonial parade. For many years the bass-drummer in the Band of the 2nd Battalion was Bandsman A. Walker who was 7ft. tall. The drum presented is emblazoned with all the battle honours borne as the Regiment's Colours, thirty-nine in all, seventeen gained prior to 1914, ten of the ninety-three awarded for 1914-19, ten of the forty-nine awarded for 1939-45 and two of the seven awarded for the war in Korea.

*Presented by Mr. A. Da Costa, the last R.S.M. of 4th Bn. The Queen's Regiment.*

Contributions not appearing in this issue will be acknowledged in the next *Newsletter*.

#### NEWSLETTER EXPENSES

The Editor gratefully acknowledges a donation from Major L. T. Honeybun towards the expenses of producing *The Die-Hards Newsletter*.

## PERSONAL JOTTINGS

A staunch old Die-Hard who has been in touch with us recently is A. Ballard (L/11612) who served in the 1st Battalion in India before the 1914-18 war. Although an octogenarian, he still takes a great interest in what goes on in the Regiment.

The author of *Edith Cavell Biography* is trying to trace information regarding ex-Pte. T. Bosley of the 7th Battalion who, it is understood, fought at Mons on August 23/24, 1914, and subsequently escaped after being captured.

If any reader can give information about him it would be much appreciated if he would get in touch with the Editor.

That inveterate old Die-Hard, Major Geoffrey Bower, still looking young in his eighties, has at last finally retired as a solicitor and has moved to Sawbridgeworth in Hertfordshire. He gave yeoman service over many years to the 7th (TA) Battalion and was Adjutant when that Battalion went to Gibraltar at the outbreak of the 1914-18 war. Later, when the Battalion joined the BEF in France, he distinguished himself in action and was awarded the Military Cross. He was a former senior partner of the firm of Bower Cotton and Bower.

We recently received a letter from C. C. Bradish, one of the first-class range-takers in the 2/8th (afterwards 1st) Battalion when it was a Divisional Support Battalion in Northern Ireland during the last war.

He is to be congratulated on the award of a blood donor's badge which the Red Cross have made for giving regular blood donations every six months since 1943.

He sends his best wishes to all Die-Hards.

Col. Nick Carter, after relinquishing his appointment as Deputy Colonel, 39 Airportable Brigade in Northern Ireland, has been selected to be Colonel (GS), BDLS, Canada. He is due to take up his new appointment in July next.

On completion of his tour of duty on the staff at the Ministry of Defence, Major Gordon Crumley has been posted to 3 Queen's and he is due to take over command of a Company after attending a Company Commanders' course at the School of Infantry, Warminster.

Quite recently we had news that ex-Pte. R. Davies (5718484), who was serving with the 1st Battalion when it formed a part of the Shanghai Defence Force in 1927, is now living in the Worthing area.

The first visitor to RHQ at Edgware this year was Cpl. Johnny Day (19022627), who is most punctilious in paying his annual subscriptions to the Regimental Association and the *Newsletter*.

He served in Palestine with the 2nd Battalion and, since leaving the Service, has been a loyal member of the Association. He is now manager of one of the districts in the West End of London of 3M (UK) Ltd, a big marketing company.

In a letter received early in January, that staunch member of the Regimental Association, S. C. Diamond, who lives up in Cheshire, sent his best wishes for the New Year to all Die-Hards.

It was a great pleasure to welcome to the New Year's party arranged by the Mill Hill Branch on January 1, 1972, M. and Mme. Faucomprez from Chemy, near Gondrecourt, who were accompanied by their son-in-law, ex-Pte. Len Arlington, formerly of the 2nd Battalion.

Apart from a recorded message of welcome from the President of The Regimental Association, who was unavoidably prevented from attending in person, those members who had been so liberally entertained by them during the Regimental visit to Lille last November, subscribed to make a presentation of one of the recently-acquired Regimental ice buckets in the shape of a fully emblazoned side drum.

Writing from South Africa before Christmas, Major David Fettes sent his kindest regards to his old friends and informs us that he is hoping to return to the UK this year for an extended visit.

We have recently received information that ex-Pte. Alfred Franklin (13005), who enlisted at the Depot in January 1910 and subsequently served in the 3rd and 4th Battalions, is now living in the Worthing area. He states that he was on parade at the funeral of King Edward VII and at the coronation of King George V.

That wanderer ex-Sgt. Paul Gillies (23460940), late of the 1st Battalion, was home again for Christmas from Central Africa and was able to attend the New Year's party organised by the Mill Hill Branch. He hopes to be home again in May when he will be in touch with us once more.

We send our heartiest congratulations to the following on their promotion to the rank stated:

#### *To Major*

Capt. G. Goring, with effect from June 30, 1971.

#### *To Captain*

Lt. R. J. Claydon, with effect from November 1, 1971.  
Lt. D. C. F. Gouda, with effect from December 17, 1971.

Lt. G. D. Cripps, with effect from January 4, 1972.

On successfully completing his course at the Staff College, Camberley, Major Peter Gybbon-Monypenny has been posted as GSO 2 (Infantry) at the REME Officers' School, Arborfield, near Reading.

Our heartiest congratulations to Major Mike Hayward on his promotion to Lt.-Colonel with effect from December 31, 1971.

He has been selected to take over command of 1 Queen's later this year.

In a letter received early in the New Year, that staunch veteran of the 7th Battalion, ex-Sgt. Percy Hutchins, who won the Military Medal in the 1914-18

war, sends his best wishes to all Die-Hards. Although handicapped by failing eyesight he remains remarkably cheerful, and we hope that he will be able to join the party again this year for the pilgrimage to Mons.

Ex-Sgt. Algy Alfred Jones (6189268), who was a prominent middle-weight boxer in the 1st and 2nd Battalions during the years following the 1914-18 war, informs us that his health lately has not been good and that he has had to spend many periods in hospital during the past two years. We earnestly hope that his health will improve and that the sea air of Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, where he lives, will help him in this respect.

We were very sorry indeed to learn of the bad motor accident in which Major Chris Lawrence's wife, Kay, had been involved towards the end of last year on the Continent, and her many friends hope that she is making a good and complete recovery.

Col. Sammy Lohan, who resigned as secretary of the Government's D-Notices Committee four years ago, figured prominently in the *Sunday Express* last month when 'Town Talk' was asking what had happened to him. Since the food column which he wrote in the London *Evening Standard* ended in 1969 he has fully retired and is now living in Cornwall.

This photograph of Major-General and Mrs. Christopher Man with the side drum presented to the General as the last Colonel of The Middlesex



Regiment (DCO) and the first Deputy Colonel (Middlesex) The Queen's Regiment was taken by a representative from the Dundee *Courier and Advertiser* during a recent interview. Resulting from this

interview the details which Mrs. "Topsy" Man gave on the keep-fit classes she has organised in the Blair Atholl area ended up as a prominent feature in the *Courier and Advertiser*.

A well-known figure who will be missed in the Finchley area is ex-Sgt. R. K. (Monty) Lowe. He retired on January 18, after giving 47 years of loyal service to the North Thames Gas Board. He finished his career as Manager of the Board's big showroom at Finchley Central.

He was a keen TA soldier and served for five years until 1932 in the 9th (TA) Battalion, when Capt. (now Lt.-General Sir Brian) Horrocks was Adjutant. During the 1939-45 war he re-enlisted in the TA and was on active service from 1941 onwards with the 1/7th Battalion.

We were very sorry to hear that Major Willoughby Newton was ill in hospital at the beginning of November. He is now at home and getting along well.

Ken Partridge, who was a WO2 in the 1st Battalion, has joined the reformed 6th (Vol) Battalion The Queen's Regiment and is now installed as CSM of "A" (Mx) Company at Edgware.

Major David Pike relinquished his appointment as SO2 (Training) at Headquarters, Southern Command on October 14, 1971.

A belated letter from Major John Pollard gives us the news that he went to the USA last September on a two-year exchange posting and is acting as a GSO 2 (Training) with the 4th US Mechanised Infantry Division. He states that in the short time that he has been there he has found American friends of Col. John Ormiston, Col. Rex Waller and Major Chris Mieville. Apart from his military duties he is apparently doing a lot of rugby football refereeing and recently did a 250-mile round trip to get to one match.

When sending his greetings at Christmas time, Col. Jimmy Reid informed us that his son, James, who is in the American Armed Forces, is now a Lt.-Colonel and is Assistant Military Attaché in Buenos Aires. On completion of a course at the Staff School this year he has been earmarked as Military Attaché, Peru.

It came to light recently that there is another Die-Hard in the Star and Garter Home for disabled ex-servicemen. He is ex-Pte. Albert Horace Smithers (6192181) who, during the 1914-18 war, served with the Royal Sussex Regiment. Whilst with the Army of Occupation in Germany in 1919 he was transferred to the Middlesex Regiment and posted to the 3rd Battalion. He served with that Battalion until it was disbanded in 1922, when he took his discharge.

Our congratulations to Major Clive Summers on his marriage last November to Mrs. E. Joan Rymer, a widow, and our best wishes for their future happiness.

Col. Max Summers writes to tell us that he has at long last retired, given up his medical practice at Burnham, and found a peaceful place where he can

"put his feet up" in that delightful spot, Maidenhead Thicket. He states that it was 50 years ago on January 9 last that he was first commissioned in the TA and posted to "B" Company, 8th Battalion, under the command of Capt. Dark.

Ex-L/Cpl. Joseph Ullman (23278198), whom many will remember as a former Company clerk in the 1st Battalion, has now moved nearer to us at Edgware, so we are hoping to see more of him in the near future. Since leaving the Service he has been very busy, not only in attending to his own jewellery business, but also in raising a family of four young children.

Ex-CSM Jock Ure (6199252), writing from Newark-on-Trent, sends his very best wishes to all Die-Hards.

We are pleased to be able to record that Col.

Fanny Walden and Major Sam Weller, who went into hospital for operations last November, are now back at duty again.

When sending a remittance to cover his annual subscription to the Regimental Association and the *Newsletter* last month, ex-Pte. S. J. Wallace (6196203) enclosed a note wishing all Die-Hards the best of luck.

Major-General Sir John Willoughby, who has been head of the advisory committee to the new Union of Arab Emriates in the Persian Gulf, officially concluded his duties on December 31 last.

During the past two years Sir John has been working to forge a common defence force for the Emirates in the Union—Bahrain, Dubai, Sharjah, Al Fujairah, Ajman, Um al Qaywayn and Abu Dhabi.

#### NEW YEAR HONOURS LIST

We send our heartiest congratulations to the following past and serving members of the former Middlesex Regiment (DCO) who received the awards stated in the recent New Year Honours List:

#### OBE

Lt-Col. M. F. Leonard, RMP. He left the Regiment on transfer to the RMP in December 1959, and has recently moved from NATO to take over the appointment of APM at HQ Scotland.

Capt. J. H. Gerrard, mc. He served with distinction with the 1st Battalion in N.W. Europe during the 1939-45 war and, since then, he has had a very successful career with the Metropolitan Police, attaining the rank of Deputy Assistant Commissioner.

#### BEM

Ex-RSM R. G. Overy, a former RSM of the 1st Battalion, for his services with the cadets in Somerset.

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## OBITUARY

It is with much regret that we have to announce that the following have died:

**BAGLEY**—On November 17, 1971, Major George Oliver Turner Bagley, aged 83. He was commissioned into the Regiment on August 29, 1906, and posted to the 3rd Battalion. He served with that Battalion in the Far East and India until May 1914 when he did a tour of duty with the West Africa Regiment in Sierra Leone. After a period of active service in the Cameroons he was invalided home in February 1915 with blackwater fever. On his recovery he joined the 1st Battalion in France and took part in all the actions fought by that Battalion except for the period when he was recovering from wounds. In April and June 1916 he took over temporary command of the Battalion and again in 1918 during the Battle of Meteren. Throughout the war he was a veritable front-line soldier. After hostilities ceased he resumed his substantive rank of Captain and remained with the 1st Battalion. He served with that Battalion until 1922 when he retired with the rank of major. He went to live in California where he became renowned as a typical English gentleman of the old school. He was a staunch Die-Hard to the end and, only a short time before he died, wrote "It shows once more the fact that all Die-Hards form a happy clan whose traditions and achievements cannot be surpassed".

**BUDDEN**—On November 15, 1971, Capt. Eustace James Blake Budden, aged 80. He enrolled into the Territorial Forces on April 1, 1910, when he was commissioned in our 8th (TF) Battalion. In August 1914 he was in Germany studying for a science degree and, as a TF officer, was imprisoned two days before war was declared. He remained a prisoner throughout the war and spent his time learning Russian, in which he became fluent. After the war he went as a member of the staff of the special force to North Russia. For his services he was mentioned in despatches and awarded the Russian Order of St Stanislaus. He returned on leave to this country in September 1919 but two months later he again went to Russia, this time as a staff officer with General Holman's mission to South Russia. In June 1920 he joined the Army of Occupation in Constantinople as RTO and was demobilised in 1922. In 1939 he joined the Government Communications Bureau, remaining there until 1947 when he was transferred to the Foreign Office. He finally retired in 1954.

**LOWES**—On October 30, 1971, Lt.-Col. John Henry Clowes, aged 73. On leaving the RMC, Sandhurst, he was commissioned into the Regiment on May 1, 1917, at the age of 18. By the end of that month he was in France, having been posted to the 2nd Battalion. On July 31, 1917, exactly two months after his arrival in the BEF, he was wounded during the Battle of Pilkem Ridge. He was eventually sent back to this country for treatment and later joined the 1st Battalion on its re-formation after the war. He served with that Battalion continuously

until 1933 when he returned to England from Egypt on a Pay Duties appointment. He later transferred to the RAPC as a Captain and Paymaster and remained with that Corps until he retired in 1949.

**DEAN**—On January 26, 1972, peacefully after a short illness, the Rev. Michael Dean, of St. Paul's, Mill Hill. During his incumbency of St. Paul's he had been officiating chaplain to the Middlesex Regimental Depot at Inglis Barracks until it ceased to function as such in February 1961. Subsequently he always kept in touch with RHQ at Edgware and he gladly officiated on more than one occasion at our services held in the Garrison Chapel at Inglis Barracks.

**FITZGERALD**—On December 2, 1971, in Courtlands Hospital, Worthing, Thirza Ann, beloved wife of Councillor William Fitzgerald, a former Warrant Officer in our 9th Battalion (TA). Mrs. Fitzgerald was a former Welfare Officer with the Ministry of Defence and interested herself in many charitable causes.

**FURNIS**—On December 12, 1971, Alice Furnis, aged 80. She was the widow of the late ex-RSM "Shan" Furnis, 3rd Battalion, and made a point of attending all regimental functions until a month before her sudden and unexpected death. She will be sorely missed at the "3rd Battalion table" where all the surviving members of that Battalion would assemble for a drink after any ceremony organised by the Regimental Association.

**HADLEY**—On December 3, 1971, ex-Sgt. Robert William Hadley, aged 83. With the decease of Bob Hadley the Regiment, and particularly the old 3rd Battalion, has lost a thoroughly dedicated Die-Hard. He enrolled with the 6th (Militia) Battalion in October 1907 and transferred to the Regular Army in January 1908, when he was posted to the 4th Battalion, then serving in Ireland. In 1910 he was posted to the 3rd Battalion, and saw service in the Far East and India. He returned home with the Battalion on the outbreak of war in 1914, and went with it to join the BEF in January 1915. He was invalided home in 1916 and posted to the 6th (Special Reserve) Battalion at Chatham. He was eventually discharged in September 1920. In 1923 he joined Section D of the Army Reserve and served with it until 1927. At the outbreak of the 1939-45 war he became a member of the War Reserve Metropolitan Police and served in this force until June 1941 when he was accepted into the Royal Corps of Signals. His ability and experience were soon recognised and it was long before he was promoted Sergeant and appointed Provost Sergeant. He was finally discharged in 1944. Until a short time before his death he was a regular visitor to RHQ at Edgware and always joined in whatever was going on. His family and his many friends in the Regimental Association will miss him, but we shall never forget him.

**ISHERWOOD**—In November 1971, ex-Sgt. Ernest Isherwood, DCM, aged 81. He enlisted on January 21, 1915, in the Royal Field Artillery and, on joining the BEF in France, he was transferred to our Regiment and posted to the 12th (Service) Battalion. He took part in the Somme battles with this Battalion, including the Battle of Thiepval on September 26, 1916. He showed great gallantry during the Third Battle of the Scarpe on May 3, 1917, and was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. He was wounded in action in March 1918 and was evacuated to this country. On recovering from his wounds he joined the 6th (Special Reserve) Battalion at Chatham and later he was posted to the 32nd (Reserve) TF Battalion, from which unit he was demobilised on March 3, 1919.

**LANSDELL**—On November 26, 1971, ex-Pte. Leslie Lansdell (6201452) aged 56. He was a member of "C" Company, 1st Battalion, when the Japanese attacked Hong Kong in December 1941 and was subsequently a PoW. He was also on the ill-fated *Lisbon Maru* when that ship was torpedoed and sunk in October 1942. After being rescued he was interned in Kobe PoW camp. For the last ten years of his life he lived in one of the Regimental Memorial Homes in Albuhera Close, Enfield.

**ROBINSON**—On September 27, 1971, ex-L/Cpl. Charles Robinson, aged 86. He enlisted in the 5th (Militia) Battalion on November 29, 1901, under the name of Clarke, and after training was embodied on January 6, 1902, for service in South Africa where we were at war with the Boers. After eight months' active service he was disembodied. On its introduction he re-engaged in the Special

Reserve in August 1908. He was again embodied when war was declared in August 1914 and served with the 2nd Battalion in France until May 1917 when he was transferred to the Labour Corps. He was discharged on completion of his engagement on March 31, 1920.

**SMITH**—On November 17, 1971, at King Edward's Hospital, Ealing, ex-Pte. William Smith. He enlisted in "F" Company of the 8th (TF) Battalion in 1912. On the outbreak of the 1914-18 war he was embodied and served with the 8th Battalion in Gibraltar and France until he was demobilised in 1919. He was a real old Die-Hard and a popular member of the Ealing Branch, by whom he will be much missed.

**WHITBY**—On November 23, 1971, ex-L/Cpl. Sidney James Whitby (6203938) aged 54. He enlisted into the Regiment in October 1937 and, on completion of his recruit training, he was posted to the 2nd Battalion. Later he was drafted to the 1st Battalion and was a young NCO in "C" Company when the Japanese attacked Hong Kong in December 1941. After the fall of the fortress he was a PoW in No. 2 Shinagawa, Tokio, until released at the surrender of the Japanese forces in August 1945. He was finally discharged in 1946.

Obituaries of the following, whose deaths have been announced, will be published in the May issue of this *Newsletter*:

Capt. C. W. Bower, Mr. E. Fuller, Capt. R. D. Latham, Major A. E. Morris.

## ASSOCIATION NEWS

### Secretary's Notes

#### Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Regimental Association will be held at the Porchester Hall, Queensway, London W2, on Saturday, May 13, 1972, at 8 p.m.

#### Benevolent Cases

During the quarter ended December 31, 1971, the sum of £706.66 was expended from the Charitable Fund in grants to 54 ex-members of the Regiment, or their dependants.

#### Donations—Charitable Fund

The Secretary gratefully acknowledges donations to the Charitable Fund from Major P. G. V. Bellers, Major F. H. Blackburn, Mr. D. E. S. Cavill, Capt. W. H. Craydon, Major D. J. V. Fettes, Mr. R. H. Green, Mr. F. H. Nash, MBE, and Brigadier N. P. Procter, CBE, MC.

#### Church Service at The Royal Hospital, Chelsea

A party of about three dozen members and their families, headed by the Deputy Colonel and Mrs. Clayton, attended a church service at The Royal Hospital, Chelsea, on Sunday, October 31, 1971.

Prior to the service our Old Comrades, under the command of Major R. W. J. Smith, MBE, and with the Association Standard carried by Mr. R. H. Ferguson, were inspected by the Deputy Governor, Major-General Sir Nigel Tapp, KBE, CB, DSO.

After the service a buffet lunch was provided in the Pensioners' Club.

F. W.

#### EALING BRANCH

The Ealing Borough Council has lost no time in carrying out their proposals for the old TA Headquarters in the Drill Hall, Ealing.

The old folks who have worked there under the guidance of the Welfare Committee have been moved to other quarters and the premises have been taken over by the Youth Department as a Youth Centre.

Official Leaders are there and when I looked in recently there were about 60 young people taking part in various activities.

Everything appeared well organised and, apart from the noise of the "Juke Box", I was quite impressed. Lots of work has to be done by the builders but it should eventually be a very good centre.

The Senior Youth Leader has invited the Ealing Branch to visit the Centre once every quarter to have a chat in his office, for which we are very grateful, as otherwise we should be on the street.

The Albuhera Bar, where so many old Die-Hards have quenched their thirst, is being pulled down to make way for "showers" and other conveniences so the "ghosts" of the old Die-Hards will see "external" instead of "internal" liquids!

We wish them well and maybe some of the lads will end up in the "Queen's".

I, as Secretary, had a letter from the daughter of the late Bill Smith, who wishes to thank the Associa-

tion and their representative who attended the funeral of her father. We, as a Branch, join in these thanks.

Cheer-oh, Die-Hards, all the best for 1972.

ALBERT WHITE.

#### HOUNSLOW BRANCH

No doubt the other Branches of the Die-Hards Association have been wondering if we are still in existence, owing to the lack of publicity in our *News-letter*. For this the writer of these few notes must accept a certain amount of blame, but perhaps in future we will remedy this shortcoming.

In fact we have been in the process of consolidating our relatively young Branch, and have now firmly established ourselves on the map in Hounslow.

During the past year we have enjoyed some very successful socials and outings, notably the Military Music Pageant at Wembley, when unfortunately, we were part of a massive traffic jam and missed part of the show! Next time we will not be caught out. Our now annual visit to the ranges as guests of 5 Queens was also greatly enjoyed, though one is left wondering by the results of our shooting if most members only go for the beer! We were also well represented at the service at St. Pauls. A very well attended Branch dinner at the "Sun", Hounslow, in October was followed by a social at the Drill Hall, and judging by the number of people trying to acquire sleeping bags later speaks for itself, or perhaps they did not fancy having to blow in the Bag on the journey home?

Of course one cannot go through the year without some loss in a small club like ours and losses included "Drummy" Wales and "Ginger" Lee, who have moved out of the district. As Bill Wales was a prime mover in recreating the Hounslow Branch his soberly influence will be sorely missed, and we wish him and his wife all the best for the future in their new surroundings in the Marlow area. Laurie Lee, another stalwart, moved to the more rural Trowbridge, to open up another illicit still we have been told! To him and his wife go our regards also.

Our Branch meets every Thursday and of course we extend invitations to any ex-"Die-Hard" if he is in our vicinity to pay us a visit, where he will be made most welcome, our only proviso being that he must bring his own darts, or maybe it will excite the wrath of Mick Ward or Henry Rae, who it appears have aspirations of becoming, perhaps, another Jim Pike, despite the pleas of Tom Trindall, our able barman, to be allowed to show his skill on the board.

GORDON YOUNG.

#### PORTSMOUTH AND GOSPORT BRANCH

Meetings have been held regularly each month since the last issue although attendances have been poor, but the few faithfuls get together each month, and by doing so keep the Branch alive.

Even with the few we manage to have an enjoyable evening, nattering over past and future events. If all the promises to attend from our ex-members were met in the locality were kept, we could develop into a strong, healthy Branch.

Our numbers have been further depleted with the departure of Mr. and Mrs. F. Wigg who have moved

from the area to take up residence in Westbury, Wilts. We hope the memento we gave him has found an ideal resting place—good luck Fred. But we hope to link up with them at any social function from time to time.

We had a Christmas get-together at the December meeting, only six attending, namely Peggy O'Neill, Bert Hastie, Mr. and Mrs. McNeill, Carol Charles and Ethel Deans, but the exchange of gifts we had arranged caused a bit of amusement, and everyone enjoyed themselves.

Lofty was quite elated with his trip overseas to the Michael Trotobas memorial, and was very impressed with the ceremony and arrangements.

We are now eagerly looking forward to the Annual Reunion and linking up with our old friends once again.

To our invalids—Les Honeybun and Jack Deans—we wish a speedy recovery.

Happy New Year to all our Branches.

R. McN.

#### 9TH BATTALION BRANCH

The most important function of the 9th's is the Annual Dinner on April 22 at the Victory Ex-Services Club, Seymour Street, W.2.

When one realises that these dinners have been held continuously since 1921, except for the war years, well it is not for us to stop them yet.

The Committee does earnestly ask all those who have been connected with the Battalion, before and after the amalgamation with the R.A., to turn up on that night if they are physically able to do so. I know many who will not be able to make it but from their letters their thoughts will be with us.

If you are on our mailing list, you will be informed of the details in March. If you are not, let us have your name, etc. please.

The other social events which are a must, are the Albuhera Service at St. Pauls and the Association Reunion at Porchester Hall on May 13.

At the Armistice Day Service at Mill Hill we were very well represented, which the Committee noted with pleasure.

Among the Christmas greetings sent this year, included those from Capt. J. T. Kemp in Ankara, Turkey; Major H. Sherwood, T.D.; C/Sgt. C. King, Royal Hospital, Chelsea; Percy Fice; Tiny Mellows; T. G. Richards and Johnnie Johnson.

A very enjoyable evening was spent at Austin Reed Ltd., the gentlemen's outfitters of Regent Street on November 2, 1971. The Directors of the firm invited some of us to a private view of an Exhibition called "The Die-Hards", where a colourful display of uniforms, regalia and personal mementoes of the Middlesex Regiment through the ages was displayed. This was opened by Lt-General Sir Brian Horrocks, K.C.B., K.B.E., D.S.O., M.C., who gave us a brief history of the Regiment and he did not forget the Ninth. Our salutations to the Directors a jolly good show. On December 6, 1971, two of us visited Worthing, Sussex, for the Cremation Service of Mrs. Thirza Fitzgerald, the wife of William D. Fitzgerald, one of our oldest members. They had been married 47 years and after living at Wembley for many years, returned to Worthing in 1964, but still Bill came to our functions. Our deepest sympathy goes to him in his bereavement.

Again, we have to record with sorrow the deaths of three of our comrades—ex-Sgt. Sidney Tatt, who died on November 23, 1971, H. V. Cousins on June 22, 1971, and C. F. Verralman in October 1971. All these members served with the Battalion in 1914.

The Committee hope that your shadows have not grown less and wish you the best of health. R.T.M.

#### W.O.'s AND SGTS.' BRANCH

As we look forward to 1972 with hope in our hearts for good health, good fortune and success to the Branch, we can look back on 1971 with a certain amount of satisfaction from our first meeting, despite the Postal strike which prevented us from keeping in contact with members, attendances were bigger, more interest was shown and greater support was given by members and their ladies than in previous years. At the final meeting of the year in December, over 70 members and guests were present to enjoy the sing-song, Christmas draw and running buffet, the latter being organised by our very good friend, Mrs. Ivy Clarke. Among the guests present were Brigadier and Mrs. B. B. Rackham, Col. and Mrs. F. Walden, Lt.-Col. and Mrs. J. D. Gunnell, Major and Mrs. A. E. Peasley, Major and Mrs. R. Cain and Major M. Beaumont, all of whom have written since, saying how very much they enjoyed themselves and how delighted they were at meeting old friends, also expressing their hopes that it will not be the last time they are invited to a Branch function. Major Bert Peasley has now joined the Branch and we are looking forward to seeing both him and Mrs. Peasley at our monthly meetings.

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The year though was not without its sadness and sorrow, for not only were we called upon to pay our last respects to Bill Lewis who passed away in October and Bob Hadley who passed away in December, but also Jim Davis met with two accidents, the first in the early part of the year just after being discharged from hospital, severely injuring his back, and the second one in October injuring his shoulder; Pat Maloney had a lung removed, Les Honeybun met with an accident and was admitted to hospital suffering from severe concussion and compound fracture of the leg, and myself once again being admitted to hospital and having more of my innards removed. All of us I am happy to say are making progress and look forward to a brighter 1972.

Now for 1972 as regards to health, happiness and good fortune, they are in the hands of he who has the power to grant them, but as regards success to the Branch, that is in the hands of its members. Given the support they received in 1971, the committee, I can promise, will do all they can to ensure that 1972 will be an even more successful year. I should also like to look upon 1972 as a year of increased membership. At the end of last year we had a membership of 52, but only 38 of these were paid-up members. There

must be, I am sure, many more ex-members of the W.O.s and Sgts. Mess who at some time or the other, think of the past and the friends they made. Well here's the chance of renewing that friendship. The atmosphere at our monthly meetings is the same as that which prevailed in the mess and with the ladies present, it is given a happy family party spirit. Then again, being held in the W.O.s and Sgts. Mess, makes one feel back home again.

Now should anyone be interested either drop me a line for further particulars—my address is 78 Deans Lane, Edgware, Middlesex—or better still come along with your wife or friend to one of our meetings which are held on the second Saturday each month at 7.30 p.m. in the W.O.s and Sgts. Mess, Deansbrook Drill Hall at the corner of Deansbrook Road and High Street, Edgware, Middlesex. If I do not happen to see you come in and if you do not know me, just ask anyone for me and I will make myself known to you. I can assure you of a hearty welcome.

To all "Die-Hards" we send greetings and best wishes for good health and prosperity and to all branches success in this year of 1972.

LEN JOHNSON.

### BRANCHES

The following is an up-to-date list of branches, giving details of dates and places where meetings are held:

<i>Branches</i>	<i>Hon. Secretary</i>	<i>Meetings</i>	<i>Place</i>
Ealing	Mr. A. White, 56 Warkworth Gardens, Isleworth, Middlesex.	2nd Thursday in the months of March, June, September and December.	Leeland Youth Centre, Churchfield Road, W. Ealing, W13
Hong Kong	Lt. D. Crowther, c/o Volunteer Officers Mess, RHKDF, Beaconsfield House, 2nd Floor, Queen's Road Central, Hong Kong.	Annually, during 3rd week in January	RHKDF Volunteer Centre, Queen's Road Central Hong Kong
Hornsey and Enfield	Mr. H. Thornton, 6 William House, Orchard Place, London N17	Quarterly, usually on a Wednesday	TA Centre, Priory Road, Hornsey, N8
Hounslow	Mr. G. Young, 126 Lilliput Avenue, Northolt, Middlesex	Monthly, on last Thursday	TA Centre, Hanworth Road, Hounslow, Middlesex
Mill Hill	Mr. H. L. Seldon, 42 Bunn's Lane, Mill Hill, NW7	Monthly, on last Saturday	TA Centre, Deansbrook Road, Edgware, Middlesex
Portsmouth and Gosport	Mr. R. McNeil, 22 Whitworth Road, Gosport, Hants	Monthly, on 2nd Friday	RAFA Club, Stoke Road, Gosport, Hants (near White Hart Hotel)
Uxbridge	Mr. J. Dickie, 139 Dane Road, Southall, Middlesex	Monthly on 3rd Friday	Battle of Britain Club, Hillingdon Road, Uxbridge, Middlesex
2/7th Battalion	Major R. E. Robotham, MC, TD, 39 Cyprus Avenue, Finchley, N3	Yearly, on 1st Friday in October. Dinner Club only	Victory Ex-Services Club, 73 Seymour Street, London, W2
9th Battalion	Mr. R. T. Meers, 87 Tudor Court South, Wembley, Middlesex	Monthly, on last Thursday	TA Centre, Deansbrook Road, Edgware, Middlesex
WO's and Sergeants	Mr. L. R. Johnson, 78 Deans Lane, Edgware, Middlesex	Monthly, on 2nd Saturday	Sergeants Mess, TA Centre, Deansbrook Road, Edgware, Middlesex

All Die-Hards are cordially invited to attend any of the above branch meetings.