

"OUT & ABOUT"



HOME HEADQUARTERS
THE ROYAL DRAGOON GUARDS
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FEBRUARY 2005

Happy New Year from Mesopotamia! This is actually the first chance I have had to write the Out and About Notes myself since taking command over a year ago. Let me start by telling you straightaway that your Regiment is thriving on Op TELIC 5 here in Iraq and earning an enviable reputation for the way it has set about a very varied and ever changing set of responsibilities. An RDG patrol has been involved in the biggest firefight of the Brigade's tour of duty thus far and emerged unscathed having beaten off an attempted ambush by insurgents using a roadside bomb in combination with a variety of small arms and rocket propelled grenades.

But, before bringing you up-to-date on things in Iraq, let me recap on last year. The first half of the year, you will recall, was spent largely engaged in armoured training. After an early and snowy outing to Hohne in January the Regiment split to the four winds and was not together again – with the exception of a week in March – until mid-August. The Blue Horse (A) and The Green Horse (D) were battle-grouped with 1 DWR; and The Black Horse (B) and Black Dragoons (C) made up the Regimental Battlegroup, along with two companies of 1 SCOTS GUARDS.

Each battlegroup spent the Spring in intensive all arms training and then went to Canada for a month long exercise on the Prairie in the early Summer. In between all this we began specialist training for Iraq, and spent time brushing-up on our dismounted skills to lay the foundations for our TELIC training. I flew straight from the Prairie to Iraq on my first recce in early July while the Regiment recovered to Münster. The last man arrived back in Münster from Canada just in time to go on Summer block leave on 16 July and this is where we left you in the last Out and About.

Throughout the first half of 2004 there was uncertainty about the size and shape of the formation that would be deployed on Op TELIC 5 – for good reason; Iraq is a changeable place and there is an understandable inclination to minimise troop numbers, of course. Against this background, the Regiment had to earn its place on TELIC by proving that it was up to the job – not just competent on tanks, but physically fit and resilient enough, corporately agile enough, and skilful enough on its feet to be truly useful in the unpredictable operational environment of Iraq.

The old idea of re-rolling an armoured regiment for this sort of operation is redundant. We have become, and must remain, multi-role: I have troops in tanks one day, landrovers the next and on foot patrol during the night in-between; they are ready to fire 120mm main armament with thermal imaging one minute, and on the ground with helmet-mounted night vision goggles, an SA80 rifle and underslung grenade launcher the next; they are patrolling on the Iranian or Kuwaiti borders one day and on a search and arrest operation with the Iraqi Police in Al Amara or Az Zubayr the next. It is good stuff and just what young officers and men who join our Regiment want – challenges, variety, business and excitement!

Back to the Summer of last year, however. We returned from leave in mid-August and began TELIC training immediately. Six weeks later we popped out of the end of an intensive training package and took weeks pre-deployment leave. Meanwhile, further recces to Iraq had been conducted – although we were still not clear at the

time exactly what we would be doing in theatre. This only became apparent in mid-September; Rear Operations! Unglamorous but no

matter, at least it got us into Iraq; what we did once we had got into theatre was up for grabs in my mind and we needed to be ready to seize whatever opportunities presented themselves. Let me tell you right

now that we are no longer the Rear Ops Battlegroup!

On deployment, The Blue Horse were detached under command of the Welsh Guards at Al Amara in Maysan Province; The Black Horse and The Black Dragoons remained under command the Regimental Battlegroup at Shaibah in southern Basra Province (The Green Horse has been temporarily suspended for the duration of the tour in order to bring the other three squadrons up to infantry company strength).

Rear operations involved the two squadrons in guarding various installations and providing convoy escorts across the Brigade area of operations; and, of course, providing the tank reserve. Essential, if slightly dull tasks, but things move fast here and within a fortnight the Black Dragoons were deployed in their tanks to quell fierce inter-tribal fighting north of Basra and remained there, on and off, for the best part of a month, living on their vehicles. No shots fired but the threat of tanks was enough to bring the tribes to heel – big guns count around here ... and we have the biggest!

After a long and patient campaign to get ourselves relieved of the Rear Ops tasks, I am glad to report that the Regiment now has responsibility for the southern half of Basra Province. The Blue Horse remain in Al Amara with the Welsh Guards but they are engaged in much the same line of work as the Regimental Battlegroup down here; security sector reform – in other words, training and then mentoring the Iraqi Police Service (IPS) and Iraqi Army (IA).

Troops generally have responsibility for a particular police station, using military and civilian police advisors to assist them with training the Iraqi police; squadron leaders are running police sectors (battalion equivalents, approximately), and squadron ops officers are running IPS districts (company equivalents and containing three or four individual police stations). A troop leader's dream!

We not only train the police but mentor them in planning and executing their operations – invariably done with us alongside. The Blue Horse managed to get themselves splashed across the Daily Telegraph when they mounted a very successful search and arrest operation; meanwhile Black Horse and Black Dragoons mounted simultaneous search operations the very morning after they were relieved of their rear ops tasks.

You will have seen extensive coverage of the elections in recent days. They went better than anyone had hoped, I think it is fair to say, and there is a real feeling of achievement amongst the Iraqi security forces. It was the result of long and detailed planning with the police, led by squadron leaders, 2ICs and troop leaders at every level of command. Troops were deployed throughout the elections period although the very success of the operation depended on us remaining discretely in the background. What will happen when the results are announced in the next week or so is anybody's guess and we are planning for the various contingencies as I write.

What of the future? You will have heard much talk of Future Army Structure ('FAS'). Let me be quite clear about this: FAS is good

COMMANDING OFFICER'S NOTES

news for RDG – for once, we are in the right place at the right time. We will retain four sabre squadrons and all our men; we are converting one of the squadrons to a new role as interim medium armour (IMA) and this must put us at the front of the queue for FRES DF (the next generation 'medium tank') when it appears.

The IMA squadron will be equipped with Scimitar for the time being although it will be quite different from a medium recce squadron: we will be using Scimitar as a light tank, not a recce platform. This will be fun, and it will make us better suited to contemporary operations – the mix of Challenger and Scimitar will give us much more flexibility as a Regiment and thus make us more usable.

As for our future location, I have written to all our families and explained that things are not yet decided. I think Tidworth is looking increasingly unlikely and we will almost certainly remain in Münster for a few more years yet – I do not know how many. There is then a

chance of a move to Catterick as part of 4 Mechanised Brigade – although, again, this is just one of a number of options. I will let people know as soon as I can.

Well, that's it from Iraq. We will return to Münster in late April/early May and take some leave in May/June. There are a number of important events on the horizon to which I would draw your attention. The Cavalry Memorial Parade was poorly attended by the Regiment in comparison with other Regiments last year and I am sure none of us want the same comparison being made again this year. The Association, serving and retired, are warmly invited to our Medal Parade on Dettingen Day, Mon 27 Jun, in Münster (details available from HHQ). We are conducting a week-long tour of the Regiment's First World War battles in early July and serving or retired members of the Regiment are welcome to join us, (contact HHQ for further details).

COLONEL OF THE REGIMENT - BRIGADIER CLENDON DAUKES

Brigadier Daukes assumed the appointment, Colonel of the Regiment, on 26 November 2004. Educated at Charterhouse and after service as a private soldier in the Queens Own Buffs, he entered Sandhurst. He was commissioned into the 4th/7th Royal Dragoon Guards in 1965 and served an operational tour in armoured cars in Aden/South Arabia. After three years in N. Ireland between 1966 and 1969, he served in BAOR and the UK, during which he was variously ADC to General Rollo Pain, Commander 2nd Division in Lubecke, Sqn 2ic and Adjutant. Following a year at Staff College he served on the staff of the United Kingdom Mobile Force and later taught at the Junior Division of the Staff College. Between 1982 and 1983 he commanded the Independent Armoured Squadron in Berlin. As a Lieutenant Colonel, Clendon spent two years teaching as a member of the DS at the Australian Army Staff College in Victoria and between 1986 and 1988 commanded 4/7 DG equipped with Chieftain tanks in Detmold. On promotion to Colonel he moved to MOD as Assistant Director in Defence Concepts. In 1991, following a year at the Royal College of Defence Studies, he was promoted to Brigadier and made responsible for an emergency programme to finance, design and build at a cost of some £11.5m the (then) new international headquarters (Allied Forces North West Europe) at RAF Strike Command. He was subsequently appointed Director NATO and European Defence, which included responsibility for the UK's operational policy in Bosnia and Croatia. Clendon retired in 1994 and set up a small private company before joining the former Deputy Editor of the Sunday Telegraph to establish 'The Week'. For the past nine years he has been Fellow and Bursar of St Peter's College, Oxford. He has been a trustee of the Regimental Museum and the Serving Officer's Regimental Trust since amalgamation and has recently relinquished the appointment of Vice Chairman of the Regimental Association. Clendon and his wife, Camilla, live near Burford in the Cotswolds. Their three children work in London.

MAJOR GENERAL PAJ CORDINGLEY DSO

On behalf of the Regimental Association, I would like to thank General Patrick and Melissa for their tireless support of all our functions, both at home and abroad during his five years as Colonel of the Regiment. Only those who have held the appointment will realise how time consuming this position is. We greatly appreciate your service and warmly welcome you as an 'Old Comrade'.

MESSAGE FROM THE COLONEL OF THE REGIMENT

As I write this letter the Regiment is half way through its six month operational tour in Iraq. By the time of the Cavalry Memorial Parade on 8th May year those who have been away will have been reunited with their families. Their tour is a fitting reminder that our annual memorial Sunday, when the Cavalry pay tribute to their fallen comrades, is as relevant today as it has ever been. I hope therefore that you will make a special note in your diary to join Old Comrades and members of the Regiment at this year's Cavalry Memorial Parade in Hyde Park on the morning of 8th May. Elsewhere in this newsletter John Etherington gives details of the arrangements, including lunch after the parade. I very much look forward to seeing you in May.

Clendon Daukes

COMBINED CAVALRY PARADE WEEKEND 7/8 MAY 2005

This year's Combined Cavalry Parade in Hyde Park will take place on Sunday 8 May at 1100 hrs. Medals are required. We have limited enclosure tickets available, for both standing and seated, and these will be available from HHQ on a 'first come first served basis', though preference must be given to those with mobility difficulties. It is very much hoped that we will see you all once again, following the wonderful support shown in recent years. Members are advised to arrive early (by 1030 hrs) in order to clear the various security checks, which will doubtless be in operation. This particularly applies to those in the standing and seated enclosure areas. I have been asked by the Chairman of the Combined Cavalry Committee to remind those marching that they should not carry cameras, bags or boxes.

COMBINED CAVALRY LUNCH 8 MAY 2005

The Combined Cavalry Reunion and Luncheon will be held in El Alamein and Carisbrooke suites of the Victory Services Club, Seymour Street. The Club is situated in the heart of Marble Arch. Luncheon costs will be £23 for officers/ex-officers and £17.50 for ORs/ex-ORs. Those wishing to attend should complete the proforma at the end of the Newsletter.

ASSOCIATION AGM AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Annual General Meeting will take place in the Royal Hospital, Chelsea at 1400 hrs on Saturday 7 May 2005. This will be followed by a Committee Meeting. Non-Committee members wishing to attend the AGM should notify HHQ.

CAPTAIN OATES MEMORIAL SERVICE SUNDAY 20 MARCH 2005 ROYAL HOSPITAL CHELSEA

Members wishing to attend, and all are welcome, should plan to arrive at 1030 hrs. We are planning to parade with the Pensioners at 1040 hrs prior to the Church Service which will begin at 1100 hrs. Medals should be worn. There will be ample car parking in the Royal Hospital grounds. Following the service, there will be a cash bar in the 'In Pensioners Club', and a buffet lunch will also be available in the Club, at a cost of £7.00 per head. Please book in for lunch with HHQ (cheques payable HHQ RDG).

ROYAL HOSPITAL CHELSEA - FOUNDERS DAY 9 JUNE 2005

Tickets are in very short supply and we understand we will only receive four. Please bid to HHQ by the 20 of March. Distributed initially to those who have not been before and then on a 'first come first served basis'. A full dress rehearsal will take place on Tuesday 7 June at 1000 hrs. Seating for the rehearsal may be arranged by telephone to the Royal Hospital Events Department 020 7881 5303. Normally, there are no restrictions for seats at the rehearsal.

KOREAN WAR VETERANS COMMEMORATION

Members have asked HHQ to establish the degree of interest in holding a Regimental Commemoration Day for Korean Veterans at the National Arboretum in Staffordshire. 5 INNIS DG arrived and departed Korea in December and the Battle of The Hook was in November. Clearly November and December are not ideal for an outdoor service and if plans progress, we would arrange the day during summer this year. Obviously the feasibility of such a gathering depends on the numbers interested. If you do not respond the event will not happen, so do please remember fallen Comrades and service pals. If you are interested, please inform HHQ, by letter, email or telephone and we will attempt to organise accordingly.

BRITISH KOREAN VETERANS ASSOCIATION

The BKVA hold a number of Branch functions throughout the year and details may be obtained from your local BKVA Branch. The BKVA will be holding a National Commemoration Day at the National Memorial Arboretum on 27 July 2005. Further details from Frank Ellison BEM JP, Hon Secretary, 12 Fields Crescent, Hollingworth, Hyde, Cheshire, SK14 8RJ. Tel: 01457 763699.

LOTTERY FUNDING FOR WWII VETERANS

You will see that we are running two visits to Europe this year. Should you wish to go on one of these trips and have not had Lottery Funding for a previous visit, you will probably still qualify for funding as long as the application is in by 31 March. Should you wish to make a claim please contact HHQ as soon as possible. You can of course still claim if you are travelling as an individual or travelling later in 2005.

MONTFORT – HOLLAND 60th ANNIVERSARY LIBERATION VISIT

5 Innis DG veterans and others who may be interested have been invited to Montfort and St Odilienberg to celebrate their liberation. Details are very sketchy at the moment but the trip is likely to be departing London, (probably 6 am) and Harwich on Friday 29 April, returning on either the 2 or 3 May. Details of the programme are yet to be finalised but those who have visited before have been privileged to experience the Dutch hospitality and welcome accorded in this part of Holland. Again, costings cannot be detailed until we know the numbers of travellers on the coach but we are estimating between £150 and £250 per person. In order to book accommodation and transport, could I please ask for firm declarations of interest by the end of February. Naturally, once received we will be able to forecast the cost of the visit. Please complete the slip at the end of the Newsletter and forward to HHQ or better still call us on 01904 642036.

CREULLY 5 – 9 JUNE 2005

A programme for this year's pilgrimage to Creully has been circulated to those members who indicated their interest some time ago. Currently, we have a few seats left on the coach and limited accommodation in our Hotel in the centre of Caen. If you are interested in joining the trip and have not as yet received a letter from HHQ please contact us ASP for a copy of the proposed programme and costings. A Memorial Lunch, following the normal 6 June service will be held in the Hostellerie St Martin at a cost of approximately £25. Would those who make their own travel and accommodation arrangements for Creully please let me know if you wish to attend the lunch.

REGIMENTAL INVITES – CO's NOTES

Should you be interested in visiting the Regiment for their Iraq Medal Parade 27 June (visit likely to be Sunday 26 June-Tuesday 28 June), or the Regiments WWI Battle Tour in early July, please declare interest to HHQ. Further information, will then be sent to those who have replied as plans are formalised.

DEATH OF A 105 YEAR OLD DRAGOON

Last year, the anniversary of the start of WWI, efforts were made to trace surviving veterans of that conflict. One of those very few traced was Mr George Hardy who served in the 6th Inniskilling Dragoons. George celebrated his 105th birthday in a nursing home in Porthcawl, Wales. Our Chairman, Noel Santry attended his small Tea Party along with Alan Henshall and Lt Col Mark Butler and of course George's family. Sadly George died on the 21 January this year. The Regiment was represented by Noel Santry at the funeral, a Regimental Plaque and Wreath were placed on the coffin and a Trumpeter sounded Last Post in a fitting 'Farewell Inniskilling' to our eldest member.

JUST A COMMON SOLDIER (A Soldier Died Today) by A. Lawrence Vaincourt (www.vaincroft.homestead.com)

He was getting old and paunchy and his hair was falling fast,
And he sat around the Legion, telling stories of the past.
Of a war that he had fought in and the deeds that he had done,
In his exploits with his buddies; they were heroes, every one.

And tho' sometimes, to his neighbors, his tales became a joke,
All his Legion buddies listened, for they knew whereof he spoke.
But we'll hear his tales no longer for old Bill has passed away,
And the world's a little poorer, for a soldier died today.

He will not be mourned by many, just his children and his wife,
For he lived an ordinary and quite uneventful life.
Held a job and raised a family, quietly going his own way,
And the world won't note his passing, though a soldier died today.

When politicians leave this earth, their bodies lie in state,
While thousands note their passing and proclaim that they were great.
Papers tell their whole life stories, from the time that they were young,
But the passing of a soldier goes unnoticed and unsung.

Is the greatest contribution to the welfare of our land
A guy who breaks his promises and cons his fellow man?
Or the ordinary fellow who, in times of war and strife,
Goes off to serve his Country and offers up his life?

A politician's stipend and the style in which he lives
Are sometimes disproportionate to the service that he gives.
While the ordinary soldier, who offered up his all,
Is paid off with a medal and perhaps, a pension small.

It's so easy to forget them for it was so long ago,
That the old Bills of our Country went to battle, but we know
It was not the politicians, with their compromise and ploys,
Who won for us the freedom that our Country now enjoys.

Should you find yourself in danger, with your enemies at hand,
Would you want a politician with his ever-shifting stand?
Or would you prefer a soldier, who has sworn to defend
His home, his kin and Country and would fight until the end?

He was just a common soldier and his ranks are growing thin,
But his presence should remind us we may need his like again.
For when countries are in conflict, then we find the soldier's part
Is to clean up all the troubles that the politicians start.

If we cannot do him honour while he's here to hear the praise,
Then at least let's give him homage at the ending of his days.
Perhaps just a simple headline in a paper that would say,
Our Country is in mourning, for a soldier died today

REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION BRANCHES AND GROUPS

CREULLY CLUB

Forthcoming events: **1. Fort Henry, Studland Bay**, Monday 4 April 05 Commemoration Service for Exercise Smash at 1100 hrs. **2. Creully 2005** 5/9 June 05, Details from HHQ. **3. Palestine Veterans Reunion** 15 October 05, Remembrance Parade at Eden Camp, Malton, N Yorkshire. **4. Alcester**, Warwickshire, 12/13 November, AGM, Annual Dinner and Remembrance Parade. Room reservations to Ralph Lamb, Roebuck Inn, 01789 762410. Creully Bookings to HHQ and if attending Fort Henry, Palestine Reunion or Alcester, please inform Cecil Newton. Further information on any of the above and details of the Creully Club may be obtained from Cecil Newton, 1 Grasshills, Aldbourne, Marlborough, Wilts, SN8 2EH. ☎ : 01672 540356. Email: cnewton@freeuk.com

LONDON AND SOUTH EAST BRANCH

The Social Events for 2004 continued with a 'Get-together' lunch at Morden Hall Restaurant on Wed 4 Aug. The highlight of this event was a 'free raffle' with which our three lady members, Pat Holman, Brenda Hall and Pat Harbury took part. At the end of August several members/friends visited Normandy and Northern France (Lisieux-Bourneville-Boissey le Chatel) on a 60th Anniversary tour organised by HHQ, with an overnight return journey by ferry from Le Havre to Portsmouth. The Branch AGM was held at Selhurst BR Club on Thu 7 Oct, when Paul Oakwell provided a splendid buffet and Ken Austin did the raffle. Officers elected were Chairman – Paul England; Secretary – nominations deferred; Treasurer – Dick Fair; and Welfare Officers – Peter Rose, Ken Austin and Charles Dawson. A presentation was made by the Chairman to the retiring Secretary, Howard Hollingshead. Several members spoke in praise of his record on behalf of the Branch throughout recent years. Several members/friends were in the party visiting s'Hertogenbosch in Holland at the end of October for the 60th Anniversary remembrances and celebrations, the arrangements having been made by HHQ. The Annual Remembrance Ceremony at Westminster Abbey on Thu 11 Nov was attended by many members and friends and was followed by lunch at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea. Gordon Ault and Ken Austin visited Mr Andrews and Mr Bovingdon at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, on Mon 29 Nov as representatives of the Regimental Association. There was a large gathering at the Morden Hall Restaurant on Wed 1 Dec for the Annual Xmas Lunch. The special guest was Capt Alan Henshall, HHQ. A General Meeting will be held at Selhurst HQ on Thu 7 Apr 2005 at 2pm with social time from 1pm and after the meeting. The Branch covers London and the surrounding counties and at all times welcomes new members and any friends who may be in the area at the time of the gatherings. Information on Branch activities may be obtained from Paul England (Chairman), 59 Guards Close, Towngate Wood Park, Shipbourne Road, Tunbridge, Kent, TN10 3RT. ☎ 01732 352138.

CUMBRIA BRANCH

The Cumbria Branch meet regularly and all are welcome and encouraged to attend. Details of Branch membership can be obtained from Mr Dennis Wallace, 2 Denton Square, Great Clifton, Workington, Cumbria, CA14 1UF ☎ 01900 61890.

NORTHERN IRELAND BRANCH

The Branch has been kept busy with chairman Eddie Scott making representation for the Royal British Legion at a recent Service and Parade in Drogheda, Republic of Ireland. The branch piper in residence, the one and only Hank Johnston has been on the move playing at many functions up and down the country and will be making his normal trip to Blackpool once again. The branch bookings for the annual St. Patrick's night dinner are almost finalized and we expect a good turn-out for the dinner in the Park Avenue Hotel, Belfast. Old and new members are more than welcome to attend our branch meetings and can contact the branch secretary Walter Browne on 02891 451365.

YORK BRANCH

The York Branch have enjoyed an excellent year 2004, with the St Patrick's Friday night social which was attended by a large number of members and a few for the first time. But the real highlight was the weekend 23/24 October to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the Battle of Balaclava and in particular The Charge of the Heavy Brigade, thanks to the sterling efforts and organisation of our Secretary, Barrie. On the Saturday afternoon a dedication service was held in York Minster at the Regimental Plaque for all members of the regiment who lost their lives in the sinking of HMS Europa on 27 May 1854, en route to the Crimea. The Regimental Padre, Rev David Porter officiated. This was followed by an informative guided tour of the Minster. Saturday evening an excellent dinner was held at the Lady Anne Middleton Hotel attended by so many old and new friends too numerous to mention. Ex Regimental Piper Bruce Hamilton and his brother who travelled down just for the evening and who continued to entertain but our party and the hotel guests until midnight piped us into dinner. The venue was the third arranged venue due to our normal one being closed due to the TA going to Iraq and then the Rugby Club cancelling our booking. Barrie was at his wits end arranging alternative venues and I dreaded his next telephone call, fortunately David Porter came to our rescue at the last moment, thank you David. Sunday morning a service was held in the Regimental Church, All Saints Pavement, again officiated by Rev David who presented one of his outstanding sermons. This service was also well attended and it was good to see two 'old' Skins for the first time since the amalgamation General Woods and Mrs Ward-Harrison. We then had lunch in a local hostelry before departing back to our various homes. It is hoped that our next event will be mid September and involve a river cruise, lunch and an evening social. Please contact Capt (Retd) B Grimshaw, 28 Foley Ave, Wombwell, Barnsley, S73 8PB – ☎ 01226 759662 for details.

OXFORD AREA

It was sad news that we lost two of our members in 2004, John Fathers who was a founder member of the branch and until his health failed him in recent years seldom missed a meeting. He was for the past few years resident in a nursing home, and we also lost Pat Whitmore, they were both wartime buddies. The branch is still going strong and with thanks to John Walker we are about to recruit several new associate members. The 7th Annual Blenheim Dinner held on the 26 Nov 2004 at the Oxford OUOTC HQ was a great success, our guest of honour being General Tony Mullens, also one of our members being Brigadier Clendon Daukes had, the evening before, been made Colonel of the Regiment, so to mark this occasion a presentation of flowers was made to his lady wife Camilla and an engraved desk top set to the Colonel. Also a presentation was made to General Tony. The AGM was held on Sun 23 Jan 2005, with 13 members present. The Chairman on his visit to New Zealand recently was able to meet up with an old Skin of his troop from Korea and also found his Kiwi Operator from Korea after 52 years, and will later be doing a more detailed account of his occasion for the Regimental Journal. Everyone welcome Contact: Jack Bellinger on ☎ 01865 730303

WESSEX BRANCH

Branch details may be obtained from Eugene Hamilton, 214 Britten Road, Basingstoke RG22 4HR ☎ 01256 414541 or email em.hamilton@ukonline.co.uk

THE 5 INNIS DG OLD COMRADES REUNION

A Reunion weekend will be held in Blackpool from 22–24 April 2005. Further information and group details from Mary Liqueorish, 8 Willow Way, Sutton-in-Craven, Keighley, West Yorkshire BD20 7PT ☎ 01535 635777 email Mliqueorish@aol.com

5 RIDG NORTHERN IRELAND ASSOCIATION

We remain very active and welcome contact from all. For further details contact Jim Price ☎ 028 90 801554

OBITUARIES

We regret to inform members of the deaths of the following and offer sincere condolences to all relatives and friends

- Mr JJ BAKER, 5 INNIS DG, 1965- 97, Ost Str 13, 48231 Warendorf, Germany - 30 December 2004
- Mr AE BEARSBY, 5 INNIS DG, 1940 - 46, Farm House, Nash Street, Nurstead Nr Gravesend, Kent - 13 August 2004
- Mr SMB BRAY, 5 INNIS DG, 1975 - 89, 25 Kirkfield Avenue, Leeds, West Yorkshire - 2 December 2004
- Mr JE CHURCHES, 5 INNIS DG, 1953 - 55, 10 Dunkfield Avenue, Filton Park, Bristol - 2 July 2004
- Mr FW CROSS, 4/7DG, 1957 - 59, 5 Trenance Close, Sutton Park, Runcorn, Cheshire - 15 May 2004
- Mr JA DRIFFIELD MM, 4/7DG, wartime, Huntwick Grange, Streethouse, Pontefract, West Yorkshire - in 25 September 2004
- Mr JH FATHERS, 5 INNIS DG, 1942 - 47, The Westminster, Church Lane, Cubbington, Leamington Spa - 2 September 2004
- MR G GRAY, 4/7DG, 10 Bridekirk, Albany Village, Washington, Tyne & Wear - 5 June 2004
- MR G HARDY, 6 Inniskilling Dragoons, WW1, Porthcawl Retirement Home - 21 January 2005 (Aged 105 years)
- Mr A HAYWARD, 5 INNIS DG, 1939 - 45, Servite Houses, Flat 17 Servite Close, Overpool Road, Ellesmere Port - 9 October 2004
- Mr DJ HILL, 39 Elmfield Avenue, York - 2 October 2004
- Major BE HUTCHINGS, 5 INNIS DG, 41 Tower Road, Yeovil, Somerset - 15 August 2004
- Mr G JAMIESON, 5 INNIS DG, 90 Forbes Road, Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire - 20 October 2004
- Mr LA KEEN, 5 INNIS DG, 43a Badshot Lea, Badshot Lea Road, Farnham, Surrey - 26 June 2004
- Mr RF KINGSHOTTE, 5 INNIS DG, 1958 - 66, 12 Tarnany Gardens, Ballymoney, Co Antrim - 27 August 2004
- Mr K KNOWLES, 4/7DG, 20 Greenways, Flitwick, Beds - 29 November 2004
- THE DUKE OF LEINSTER, 5 INNIS DG, 1932 - 45, Kilkea House, Wilcote Lane, Ramsden, Oxfordshire - 3 December 2004
- Mr SM LOW, 5 INNIS DG, 1936 - 46, 37 Strathbeg Place, Broughty Ferry, Dundee, - 3 January 2005
- Mr K LOYNES, 4/7DG, 1952 - 74, Apt 21 Block B, Pecora Gardens, Erechthiou Street, Potamos Yermasoyias
Limassol 404, Cyprus, - 28 January 2005
- Mr RT MARKLEW, 5 INNIS DG, 1953 - 55, 20 North Fields, Church Lane, Clowne, Chesterfield - 12 August 2004
- Mr J ORME, 5 INNIS DG, 1951 - 55, 47 Effington Way, Wolverhampton - 27 October 2004
- Mr W POWNEY, 4/7DG, 1938 - 43, 175 Heath End Road, Coton, Nuneaton - 13 December 2004
- Mr RA PRICE MM, 5 INNIS DG, 1938 - 45, 19 Sand Acre Park, Highbridge, Somerset - 7 October 2004
- Mr EG QUANT, 5 INNIS DG, 1945 - 48, 34 Bassett Dale, Southampton - 9 October 2004
- Mrs KAY ROBEY, 39 Westhurst Drive, Chislehurst, Kent - 23 December 2004
- Mr K RHODES, 5 INNIS DG, 1951 - 53, 100 Forrister Street, Langton, Stoke On Trent, Staffs - 30 November 2004
- Mr RW SILK, 5 INNIS DG, 1942 - 47, 81 Lister Road, Margate, Kent - 24 August 2004
- Mr W STARR, 5 INNIS DG, 1 Greenfields, Holbeach, Spalding, Lincs - 10 May 2004
- Mr RW TERRY, 5 INNIS DG, 11 Inglewood Avenue, Heatherside, Camberley - 30 August 2004
- Mr ES UPRIGHT, 5 INNIS DG, 1941 - 63, Flat 6, Portway House, Warminster - 30 October 2004
- Mr TJ WALSH, 5 INNIS DG, 5 Bunratty Avenue, Coolock, Dublin 5 - 9 March 2004
- Mr WJ WATERS MM, 4/7DG, 1935 - 63, 52 St John's Road, Warminster, Wilts - 6 January 2005
- Mr JE WHITTAKER, 5 INNIS DG, 1945 - 46, 2 Twyford Close, Heanor, Derbyshire - 24 July 2004
- Mr CJ WILLIAMS, 4/7DG, 58 Firth View Walk, Westfield, Workington - 1 September 2004
- Mrs DIANA WOODS, Lower Wadwick House, Wadwick, St Mary Bourne, Andover - 24 July 2004

LOST, FOUND HELP

JAMES NOEL GIBSON (JOCK) Barbara, the daughter of the late Jock Gibson was born at Catterick Camp in 1955 and grew up with the Skins for about 10 years. Barbara lives in the USA and describes a wonderful childhood. She would welcome any contact from old friends of both her father and herself. Barbara, I do not know her surname, can be contacted at 9723 Burleson Drive, Dallas, Texas 75243, USA. Tel: (972) 664 9143 and email philip_bergman@sbcglobal.net.

FORMER REGIMENTAL BANDSMEN

A group of musicians, initially 3 Carabiniers, have started a get-together in Oxford. The driving force, Mr Steve Barritt, was so content with initial response that he struck a deal with the Waterloo Band for practice rooms in Oxford. Steve welcomes any assistance given and deserves support. Following the success of a gathering on 31 October 2004 of 24 former Bandsmen, Steve welcomes contact from anyone interested in meeting old friends and playing good music. He hopes to have further gatherings in Oxford and details can be obtained with Steve Barritt at 60 Cornwallis Road, Oxford OX4 3NL or telephone 01865 748051.

WILLS HAVE YOU MADE YOURS?

It is one of those things that we all know we should do but put off as facing our vulnerability can be a major step in our lives. If you do not make a Will it is the Law that will decide who will take care of your Financial Affairs and decide who will receive everything you own. This could mean that someone who does not know you can decide who will benefit after your death. Making a Will usually involves the hiring of a Will writer, Solicitor or Bank, and it could to be appear costly if you don't appear to have more than a few possessions but if you treasure those items you will want to be in control of who benefits from them. You can also decide in your Will on whether you are buried or cremated, it may be difficult to express this now but in your Will you have the choice. You can also appoint your own Executors to ensure your instructions as defined in your Will are carried out as you wished them to be.

COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE DIRECT

On 14th July 2004 Community Legal Service Direct was launched by the Legal Services Commission. This service provides a new way for people to get assistance with their civil legal problems. It offers free, high quality information, advice and help with civil legal cases for those who qualify for legal aid. A new national telephone advice line (0845 345 4 345) provides legal help on welfare benefits, debt and education problems in England and Wales. Other services brought together under the Community Legal Services Direct brand include:

The www.clsdirect.org.uk website which features easy to understand legal information, a search facility enabling people to find a legal aid adviser or solicitor in their area, and an on-line calculator allowing them to check their eligibility for legal aid. Information leaflets covering 24 separate topics such as 'losing your home' and 'divorce and separation' can be ordered from the helpline or downloaded from the website. New leaflets on subjects including 'care proceedings' and 'domestic violence, abuse and harassment' extend the range of issues covered even further.

COMMUNITY LEAFLET ON VETERANS ISSUES.

In addition to the information leaflets mentioned above, a leaflet focusing solely on veteran's issues has been produced in consultation with the Ministry of Defence and ex-Service organisations. Topics covered in the leaflet include advice on pensions, compensation, housing, medals, access to Service records and overseas visits to commemorate events from World War II. A copy of the leaflet can be obtained by calling 0845 3000 343.

M6 TOLL EXEMPTIONS.

In January 2004, the new M6 Toll opened, 27 miles long, three lanes wide, it is Britain's first toll motorway and some vehicles are exempt from paying a charge when they use it. Disabled customers can use the motorway free of charge by applying in advance for a Mobility Exemption Pass. Veterans Agency customers who are in receipt of War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement are also exempt. Customers are required to produce a photocopy of their Vehicle Exemption Certificate (WPA 0442) with their application form. For further information contact the M6 Toll Helpline number 0870 850 6262 or alternatively, application forms are available as downloads from the M6 Toll web site: www.m6toll.co.uk

FREE PASSPORTS

Since 18th October 2004 the UK Passport Service (UKPS) is offering free ten-year passports for life to all British nationals born on or before 2nd September 1929. This follows the Home Secretary's announcement on 19th May 2004 of the extension of the free one-year passports for World War II Veterans scheme. If you were born on or before 2nd September 1929 and have obtained a passport since 19th May 2004 (when the Home Secretary announced that this scheme would be introduced), you will be eligible for a refund. Please ask for your refund by writing to your nearest Passport Office. For further information about your free ten-year passport, or how to apply for a refund, please call the Passport Adviceline on 0870 521 0410.

FREE HEATING AND INSULATION GRANTS FOR THOSE WHO NEED THEM MOST

Each year around 2.5 million households in England occupy homes cold enough to increase the risk of ill health. Once winter arrives, thousands of people become ill or even die from inadequate heating in their homes. The Warm Front scheme aims to address the problem of people living in cold houses. Set up by the Government, Warm Front offers FREE grants of up to £2500 to install heating and insulation measures which can make a drastic difference to the warmth in your home. To date, the scheme has helped over 750,000 people but there are thousands of people entitled to a grant who still haven't applied. To qualify for a grant, you must own or privately rent your home and receive a disability related benefit or credit e.g. Pension Credit, Council Tax benefit or disability living allowance but there are many more qualifying benefits. If your application is successful, a Warm Front surveyor will visit your home to determine what improvements we can make, then a local approved installer will call to complete the work. The entire cost is covered by the scheme and Warm Front will organise and pay for the work directly. Mr W, 66, who lives in Leicester, heard about the scheme from the council at the end of last year and decided to apply for a grant to increase the energy efficiency of his home. He said: "I was given a leaflet and decided to phone up and see what I was entitled to. I answered a few questions and then someone from Warm Front came to visit me to see what would help me keep warm." These government grants have provided help to many people and whilst the current scheme is in its last year, all those eligible for a grant will still receive one. Mr W has seen the benefits the grants have made to his home and is keen to let other people know about the grants: "The house is lovely and warm and I know I'll feel the benefit during the colder weather. I will definitely be telling my friends about it." If you think you are eligible and want to apply you can either: - Call Warm Front FREE on: 0800 952 1555 (quoting FOWM) - Visit their website at: www.warmfront.co.uk

IMPORTANT - NEW HEALTH FORM FOR EUROPE VISITS

The E111 and other E forms that provide access to healthcare treatment during visits to European Union countries became invalid on December 1. A new electronic medical insurance card, called the European Health Card, is due to replace existing forms in September this year. Transitional forms are available at post offices - including British Forces Germany post office counters - and need to be completed by anyone travelling in the EU after 31 December 2004. They, and E111 forms issued on or after August 19 last year, will be valid until the end of 2005. Unlike the E111, which covered the whole family, the new form will have to be filled in for each member.

BRITISH VETERANS ID CARD

You may be aware that the Minister of Veterans has decided not to pursue this matter, accepting that a veterans' ID card was not the most appropriate way to ensure that Service leavers could feel that they remained part of the Service once they had left the Armed Forces. There is a civilian company called Trilogy Services Ltd that markets the British Veterans Recognition Card under the name of British Veterans. Neither the British Veterans Recognition Card, nor British Veterans nor Trilogy Services Ltd has any official recognition, endorsement or support from the Ministry of Defence.

NEWSLETTERS & EMAIL

If you received this Newsletter by post but have an email address and wouldn't mind receiving the Newsletter by email, please send HHQ an email (hhq@rdgmuseum.org.uk). Obviously this saves the Association postage! Better still go to our web site (www.rdgmmuseum.org.uk) and update your details on line. This would greatly improve the accuracy of our database. Please do not forget to inform us of any change of email address.

HOSPITAL REDUCTION OF UNEMPLOYABILITY SUPPLEMENT

The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in his budget speech that from 21 May 2003 some benefits would be reduced only when customers had been in hospital for more than 52 weeks. This new initiative applies to War Pensioners in receipt of Unemployability Supplement or Additional Allowance for a spouse paid with Unemployability Supplement, or Additional Allowance for adult dependant paid with Unemployability Supplement. The change will benefit War Pensioners who have had a hospital reduction applied to their Unemployability Supplement for either themselves, their spouse or adult dependant from 21 May 2003. The hospital reduction applies only if admission was

to a hospital, care home or similar institution where care is partly or wholly paid from public funds The Veterans Agency is making arrangements for customers who had reductions made to their Unemployability Supplement from 21 May 2003 to receive arrears of payment All cases will be looked at again and re-calculated to apply the new 52 week limit Old rules will still apply to those customers who had been in hospital eight weeks or more prior to 21 May 2003

FUNERAL EXPENSES -WAR PENSIONERS

With effect from 12 April 2004 two changes have been made to the Veterans Agency's policy on Funeral expenses for War Pensioners. The first is that the Veterans Agency will be able to pay overseas funeral expenses, the second is that they will enforce an upper limit for individual cases in all locations. A claim must be made within three months of the funeral. These expenses can be paid to a widow or widower, next of kin or person responsible for the funeral, to assist with the cost of a simple funeral up to a maximum of £1400 for any ex-Serviceman in one of the following circumstances: - Death was due to Service - War Pensions Constant Attendance Allowance was being paid or would have been paid if the war pensioner had not been in hospital when (s)he died - Unemployability Supplement was being paid at the time of death and the deceased had an assessed War Disablement Pension at 80% or more, or - The person died while (s)he was in hospital having treatment for a disablement for which (s)he received a War Disablement Pension.

SERVICE PENSION ENQUIRIES

Please note that all tri-service enquiries for Service Pensions (specifying the Service on the envelope) should now go to Pension MP, 480 Kentigern House, 65 Brown Street, GLASGOW, G28EX TEL: 0141 2243600. The estimated time of reply is within 10 working days.

INCOME DISREGARDS

Certain sources of income are completely disregarded when assessing entitlement to State Benefits. This is particularly important when looking at the Pension Credit possibilities. Listed are benefits which fall into the 'Total Disregard' category when assessing eligibility for Pension Credit: Attendance Allowance, Bereavement payments, Child Benefit Child Tax Credit, Disability Living Allowance (Care and Mobility components), Guardian's Allowance, Mobility supplement under the War Pensions scheme, Pensioner's Christmas Bonus, Social Fund payments, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, Certain War Widows Pensions and payments or supplements for pre-1973 war widows. Additionally there is a £10 disregard for the following: Widowed Mother's Allowance and Widowed Parent's Allowance, War Disablement Pension, War Widow or Widower's Pension. Any pension paid to a spouse as a result of death or disability of spouse arising from service in HM Forces. Similar payments made by another country, Payment received from the German or Austrian Government as a result of Nazi persecution.

THE VETERANS AGENCY

The Veterans Agency is the focal point within the Ministry of Defence for providing information and advice on issues of concern to veterans and their families via the Veterans Agency free Helpline service - 0800 169 22 77.

Veterans Initiative: The Government's Veterans Initiative was launched in clear recognition of the special status of those who have served in the UK Armed Forces and the unique contribution they have made to the country. It works towards better coordination and communications - not only with the veterans community, but also across Government and with charities and the voluntary sector - to improve the level of services and support available for veterans and their families.

Who is a veteran? The term 'veteran' is used to mean all those who have served in the UK Armed Forces including their widow(er)s and dependants.

What assistance is available? Veterans and their families can get help on many different issues for example health, financial, employment and accommodation. The Veterans Agency Free Helpline can also help with enquiries about service records, medals and military graves - these are just a few examples of the type of advice available. A wide range of information of interest to veterans is also available on the Veterans Agency website www.veteransagency.mod.uk - including useful links to other organisations and Government Departments.

The War Pensioners' Welfare Service: In addition, the Veterans Agency War Pensioners' Welfare Service gives extensive advice and support to all War Pensioners and War Widow(er)s living in the UK and the Irish Republic. They also give advice and assistance to anybody who thinks they may be able to claim a War Disablement/War Widow(er)s' Pension. The Welfare Service works in close partnership with ex-Service organisations, War Pensions Committees and other voluntary groups or statutory bodies such as social services departments in delivering welfare support. They can provide a wide range of advice on:- Help with financial and employment difficulties Disability needs Residential and nursing care Social contacts and everyday help

If you would like to contact your local Welfare office, their phone number is listed in the UK telephone directory under 'Veterans Agency'. Contact details for the Veterans Agency are as follows: Free helpline: 0800 169 22 77 (UK only) Overseas: 44 1 253 866043 Email: help@veteransagency.gsi.gov.uk Website: www.veteransagency.mod.uk Address: Veterans Agency, Norcross, Blackpool, Lancashire FY5 3WP

LIFE AT THE ROYAL HOSPITAL CHELSEA -ALL WORK, REST AND PLAY

Do not get the wrong idea. The Royal Hospital is not a 'hospital' as such - the name given to almshouses in the days before hospitals, was we know them, were invented. The Royal Hospital is an old peoples' home - albeit a rather special one for the soldiers who have served for King, Queen and Country. So, we offer sheltered accommodation, care and, for some, a hospice A few of the In-Pensioners are aged under 65 and our oldest is 99. The average age of our 310 residents is just over 80.

The Royal Hospital has all the things that are required for a comfortable old age - all meals and accommodation found, no laundry and other delightful chores, comradeship and security. Full medical and nursing care is also available for those who need it. For many a pleasant life-style is complete with a visit to the Club to take in a concert or a game of bingo, a game of snooker, a trip to the library or just chatting over the papers. Yet, for those with more energy, there is a lot more to Royal Hospital life.

There is action ... In-Pensioner Jim McGovern completed the 2004 London marathon in less than 6 V* hours not bad when you are over 68 and in uniform), collecting over £8,000 for the charitable work of the Royal British Legion and the Royal Hospital's development programme. In 2002, aged 82, Buck Taylor went over the assault course at Pirbright and he has been snowboarding in Germany. Earlier this year a party of In-Pensioners joined in the annual 12km walk at Soest. However, not every In-Pensioner does such athletic things the Bowls Club is very active and popular. There is a full programme of matches, both home and away throughout the year. The putting green is always available for a quiet 'round' with friends and family. Both are, of course, close to the 19th hole in the In-Pensioners' Club. For those of a more practical and artistic bent there is a fully kitted out Arts and Crafts Block and all manner of pictures and objects are displayed at the popular annual Arts and Crafts exhibition, which is open to the public. The more musical In-Pensioners can join The Royal Hospital Band. It plays at concerts within the Royal Hospital, for the Infirmary residents and at local shows and carnivals. For the green fingered there are allotments, the fruits of which often grace the tables of the Great Hall. In-Pensioners also travel widely. Many go off on

cruises or visit family all over the world. Organized trips are undertaken regularly - in 2004 to Gibraltar for the 300th anniversary of its capture and more recently to the D-Day beaches and Arnhem for the 60th Anniversary of those momentous events.. In 2002 a party event went to Washington and met the President. Every Autumn a battlefield tour is undertaken, this year taking the opportunity of international reconciliation to go to Libya.

Some, however, prefer the more mundane, but possibly profitable ventures of going on one of the many trips to the races. These, like many other activities are organized by the wide number of people and organizations who support us. For those with more sedentary interests there is a computer suite which is available for all to use - tuition is no problem and internet access always on line.

Apart from pure pleasure, around 90 of the In-Pensioners elect to work around the Royal Hospital. This is not onerous but allows them to maintain an interest in what goes on, meet people and, of course, receive additional income. In-Pensioners are valued as guides for the many tour parties that visit. They enthral the visitors with interesting and often lurid stories about the Royal Hospital (soto voce if the staff are around!). Others assist in the Chapel, Museum and Souvenir Shop and in many other ways in the various departments. They make a considerable and valued contribution to the running of the Royal Hospital. There are a few duties that each In-Pensioner is expected to perform. Attendance is required at the Annual Founder's Day, which is held in the second week in June and occasionally each In-Pensioner has to attend the Governor's Parade which takes place on Sunday morning before Chapel. (Compulsory Chapel attendance ended some years ago, but many enjoy attending the service).

The Royal Hospital is acting to ensure that it can continue to provide the most modern residential accommodation and care, maintaining the fabric of the buildings and tradition of the past. Work has now started to provide a complete new Infirmary building. This will offer 'state of the art' medical and care facilities for up to 125 In-Pensioners. Additionally, the In-Pensioner's accommodation in the Long Wards is to be improved to 21st Century standards. This will offer a much enhanced quality of life within the historic buildings. Importantly, it will eventually allow accommodation to be allocated to eligible women former soldiers.

We welcome at any time from any former soldier who is qualified. If you would like to apply (or you know someone who may be interested) the criteria for admission are:

You must be in receipt of a Service or Disability Pension awarded for Army Service, You must normally be at least 65 years of age, and You must be free from the obligation to support a wife or family. If you are interested in joining please contact us through the Royal Hospital website -www.chelsea-pensioners.org.uk or ring 020 7881 5204 for further information. The Royal Hospital is open to the public (entry is free) on nearly every day of the year (not Sunday mornings unless attending Chapel) - if you are in Chelsea take the opportunity to visit us and see the Chelsea Pensioners in action!

RETURN FORM

NAME(S)

ADDRESS

..... TEL EMAIL

Captain Oates Memorial Lunch Chelsea 20 March 2005

Please Book Lunches at £7.00 per person

Combined Cavalry Parade Lunch 8 May 2005

Please Book Lunches at £23.00 per person (Officers)

Please Book.....Lunches at £17.50 per person (Others)

I will/will not be attending the AGM on Saturday 7 May 2005 (Please Delete)

Visit to Montfort Holland 29 April - 3 May 2005

Please add the following Names to those interested in this visit.

.....

If possible I would like *Single/Twin* accommodation. (Please delete) Note, accommodation in this area may well be limited and single rooms difficult. We will of course endeavour to meet your request.

REGIMENTAL MEDAL PARADE & WWI BATTLE TOUR

Please send details of *Medal Parade/WWI Battle Tour/Both* when known (Please Delete)