



Redcoats Review

Celebrating the 136th Anniversary of the Battle of Tofrek

Recently I was having to carry out some cleansing of the mail distribution list for the RGBW Regimental Association lists and received a response from a gentleman by the name of David Thomas, son of Captain Jack Thomas a member of the 5th (Hackney) Battalion The Royal Berkshire Regiment. David has been working on his father's collection of photograph albums relating to the 5th Battalion's time during World War 2 and is gradually passing digital copies to the Museum.

Those of you familiar with the layout of the display cases in the Museum may realise that the 5th Battalion are graphically illustrated in the large diorama depicting the D-Day Landing on Juno Beach. With Allison and Malcolm Letherbarrow having retired and the restaurant changing its name to The Rifleman's' Table, your editorial team felt this would be an appropriate time to reflect on the 5th Battalion's short but nevertheless important role on that auspicious piece of military history.

As a result of an enquiry made initially to the assistant secretary The Rifles in Yorkshire the Museum made contact with a group of re-enactors who replicate the Grenadier Company of the 49th (Hertfordshire) Regiment of Foot. They were due to appear in the prestigious annual display "The shot heard around the World" commemorating the beginning of the American War of Independence, or American revolution, depending which side of the pond you are from. We have provided advice on the uniform of the 49th, and once we are allowed back into the museum hope to provide details of the muster roll from that era. We were also able, with Mike Vernon-Powell's contacts, to tap into the Brandywine Museum and connect them to the re-enactors.



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FUTURE EVENTS

To be announced later

5TH (HACKNEY) BATTALION, THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE REGIMENT (PRINCESS CHARLOTTE OF WALES'S).

NORMANDY 1944

The 10th London (Hackney) Battalion originally came into being in 1912, replacing companies of the 7th Battalion. On 27 July 1937, His Majesty The King was graciously pleased to approve the designation of the 10th London Regiment (Hackney) TA being changed to 5th (Hackney) Battalion, The Royal Berkshire Regiment (Princess Charlotte of Wales's).

At 9.15 pm on 23 August 1939 all key men of the Territorial Army were to be called up immediately, followed by the embodiment of the unit on 1 September. The 5th Battalion, in East London, worked mainly with the Police and Civil Defence Services. Their main tasks being street clearance, traffic control and safeguarding property immediately following enemy air raids. The battalion set to work building shelters, organising service stations of various kinds and preparing defensive obstacles. Between times they held training parades and kept themselves fit by route marching through the streets.

By June 1943, the battalion learnt they were to be included in the approaching allied invasion, as No 8 Beach Group, under their Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel A. L. Taffs.

Duties would include the unloading and transport of supplies across the beaches, where it would be collected into "dumps". Dealing with vehicles, ammunition, petrol, food, ordnance and medical equipment, and stores of all kinds, it entailed the attachment of men from the Royal Navy, the Royal Air Force, and from every arm of the service. Care and protection priorities, replenishments, salvage from the sea, repairs, and traffic routing, were some of the duties that required specialist help. It promised fighting for in its early stages the work would have to be done in the face of active enemy opposition. It was expected that later the battalion would move forward in battle reserve.

By September 1943, the battalion had moved south to Bournemouth where their training included street fighting, conducted in Southampton, and major exercises on the south coast of England. In January 1944, the battalion was transferred to Gullane, in Scotland, where loading and unloading of stores took place in Leith, Portobello, Musselborough and Haddington, using amphibious vehicles.

By February 1944, the battalion was back in Bournemouth, exercises following one another with bewildering rapidity, until No 8 Beach Group, with 132 officers and 2,799 men, went into camp at Moorhill, near Southampton, in April 1944, where they became "sealed off" from the rest of the world. All mail was censored, and no telephone calls were allowed.

No 8 Beach group was to establish and maintain the first lines of support for the 3rd Canadian Division, in the Second Army commanded by Lieutenant General Miles Dempsey (Later knighted in the field by His Majesty The King), himself a Royal Berkshire Regiment officer. The old divisional sign was replaced by the rectangular blue patch on which was superimposed the Beach Group sign of "a fouled anchor", with the Regimental Brandywine flash beneath it.



Image on the left shows Sergeant 5348078 Albert Phillip Judd. It is believed this photo was taken just before the 'D' Day landings in June 1944. A colour image of the full insignia shown on the right.



D-Day was finally appointed for 6 June 1944. With the long preparations and all the training over, the 5th Battalion – the chief component of No 8 Beach Group – waited afloat throughout 5 June, the eve of the great enterprise.

The long wait was inevitably a period of tension. The immediate anxiety was the weather. There was sunshine, with a wind that drove white clouds across the sky and made the sea choppy, in spite of their sheltered anchorage. Everyone knew that it might prevent them sailing; that was unsettling in itself. There followed the soldiers' usual reaction to such an occasion - the desire "to get on with it".

Dawn broke on 6 June, grey and louring. The men ate their breakfasts, while in some sectors ships cruised slowly round or anchored to wait for H-Hour. The coast was now discernible as a thin line drawn along the horizon, and the sea heaved wickedly for those who were not good sailors.

Ships swung round in the growing light. Assault boats were lowered, and at the appointed time men went over the side and scrambled down the draped nets or slid down canvas tubes into the flat-bottomed landing craft.



Members of the Battalion onboard ship preparing to land on Juno Beach on 6 June 1944. [The Canadians had already landed and formed a small bridgehead; the role of the Battalion was to act as a beach group and allow the Canadian to push on inland]

The naval bombardment of the enemy positions began, and then, as if propelled by a single source of power, the first assault waves were off towards the shore. There were four or five miles to go over a roughish sea. The troops eyed it with distaste as hillocks of grey-green water bore down on them, threw them over a shoulder, and racing on left them for the next. The pills taken against seasickness failed to contend with the tea and hard-tack biscuit that most men had found enough for breakfast. The planners who had provided grease-proof paper bags were more than justified.

On approaching the shallows, soundings were taken by some of the ships wallowing in the surf, others raced through as if trusting in their speed to avoid submerged obstacles. As yet no German fire reached out to them and they were untouched. In spite of the smoke that shrouded the shore, they began to see objects in detail. To the left unharmed houses stood above the sea wall; in front was a beach backed by sand dunes, among which bursting shells, momentarily lit by a lick of flame, hurled their jagged mass of metal into the air. The ratta-ta-tat of machine-guns and the crackle of rifle fire sounded away to the right. There was a sudden crash as a mine went up. Then, as one man described it, "The middle compartment of the ship began flooding almost at once, driving the men aft. We helped the wounded as best we could and were thankful the ship did not sink. Presently a 'frogman' broke the surface of the sea swam round a little and disappeared. He was fixing us up I suppose. A feeling of complete unreality came over me, as if I had nothing to do with it all; that I was merely an onlooker and not very much interested".

At last, they ran ashore. Down the ramps. Men jumped into the water; waist high, glad of firm footing once more. They began to wade towards the beach. There were bullets now coming from no one knew where. One went straight through a haversack, drilling a neat hole in everything, and leaving its owner speechless with rage, not caring at all about his escape.

The sector of the assault in which the battalion were concerned extended east and west of the seaside village of Bernières-sur-Mer, on the coast of Calvados, they were among the first ashore. The leading troops were met by the crossfire of machine guns hidden in the sand dunes, the shelling of mortars, and the more distant artillery. As men fell others stepped up and forced their way forward through the barbed wire entanglement, across anti-tank ditches, into Bernières, 400 yards ahead. The battalion reconnaissance subunits, following after, fought for their positions on the beaches, against enemy posts left by the assault troops whose job lay ahead.

Each of the defences was attacked in turn, with grenades and bayonets. As 'A' Company fought their way up the beach, they were halted by an enemy stronghold. Remnants of a Canadian platoon lay scattered on the sand.

Lieutenant C. I. Spackman, with two sections, worked his way forward towards the German pill-box responsible for the damage. There was little cover. With two NCO's he crawled forward towards it. As they reached the post the Germans began to throw grenades: one, well aimed, caught and wounded the two men. Lieutenant Spackman went on alone. Another grenade fell near him but failed to explode. There was no time to lose. He sprang from his position, and before the German machine gunner could fire, he shot him with his revolver and charged into the position. Those remaining in the garrison, apparently flabbergasted by the fury of this young officer, put up their hands and surrendered. Using them as guides, Lieutenant Spackman next cleared an intricate network of underground defences. In all, he captured 26 prisoners. He was later awarded the Military Cross.

Lieutenant Charles Spackman MC who won his medal on D-Day 1944. The photograph shows him wearing battledress with his MC ribbon visible.



From the first the regimental pioneers were busy removing mines from the shore and the road nearby. Within hours of the landing, Beach Group Headquarters was established in a concrete shelter marked by a flag and the 'China Dragon'.



A home-made Regimental flag flown by the Battalion on D Day, 6 June 1944, as the control battalion for Juno Beach, Bernières-sur-Mer.

The medical officer, Captain L'Etang, with ten men, set up an aid post in the dunes. It was the first medical station to open; and soon the battalion stretcher bearers began to bring in the wounded they had collected under fire a mile away.



In their role as Beach Landing party etc mainly to get the Canadians ashore on the beach at Bernières-sur-Mer under the gaze of the now silent German guns, No 8 Beach Group medical staff under the supervision of the 5th R Berks medical sergeant Lock [Left] attend to the wounded (mostly Canadians) of the assault landing. [This was taken about H +2]

The battalion mortar, carrier and anti-tank platoons undertook the defence of various store areas, where they defeated the attempts at infiltration made by the enemy. The ferrying of men, tanks, carriers, lorries, stores, and ammunition from craft waiting off-shore began before noon. Coming away from the ships in a continuous stream they moved quickly up the beaches and disappeared inland.

Snipers were troublesome throughout the day, until they were eventually detected and destroyed. In the afternoon, the beaches were bombed; and at night the raids increased. In spite of the enemy's rain of destruction, mainly directed at the shipping lanes, the work of unloading went steadily on.

As a result of order received shortly before midnight, still on 6 June, certain elements of 'B' and 'C' Companies moved forward into the line to provide the left flank cover of the Canadians who were forming up for an attack. After a forced march of five miles the companies made contact with the north shore regiment and took up their allotted positions, where they remained until the following day, having successfully carried out their task. On return to the beaches shortly before noon (7 June), they at once resumed their work.

The task of the battalion became increasingly varied. Large numbers of prisoners of war arrived, for whom there was no immediate interrogation service. The battalion's Intelligence Section undertook the work, classified information, and forwarded that of value to the appropriate headquarters.



Captain Peter Prior, the Battalion Intelligence Officer standing 2nd left at the back end of the DUKW) telling German Prisoners what was going to happen to them. The marching column were taken to an empty LCT and transported back to the Solent. Refugees, still in their night attire, huddled on the railway station, they had clearly become a battalion problem. A woman spy was caught and suspected fifth columnist were arrested. In addition to main tasks the battlefield was cleared, the dead buried.

Soon after they had landed on D Day, they were unloading 4,000 tons, a day later they were achieving 7,000 tons a day. At the end of the task on 26 August 1944 the battalion had unloaded, transported and stacked 319,980 tons. All of this in spite of the weather and an active enemy. With the battle of Normandy won by mid August and the Allied armies advancing, there was no longer a need for beach groups, particularly as the port of Cherbourg was now open.

For some time, the future of the 5th Battalion remained uncertain, but the drafting away of two platoons from each rifles company, was probably indicative of what was to come. A second draft left on 26 August reducing the battalion to a cadre of 16 officers and 136 men. Many of those who were drafted away went to 43 Wessex Division, which include 4th Dorsets, 4th and 5th Battalions The Wiltshire regiment to fight valiantly at Caen, Mont Piçon, Hill 112 and Maltot, into Belgium and up to Nijmegen.

The reduced battalion left Bernières-sur-Mer, where later a street was named by the French 'Rue du Royal Berkshire Regiment', and 50 years later a plaque placed on the Beach Wall.



The Cadre remained intact and were earmarked for similar duties on the crossing of the River Rhine. But that's another story. [Covered in the next Maiwand edition]

Perhaps the most poignant items the museum holds is the incredible portfolio of sketches done by E. Earnshaw as the landings were unfolding. The image below is just one example.



For this action the Regiment was awarded the Battle Honour of
NORMANDY LANDING

THE WILTSHIRE REGIMENT IN KOREA, 1951

70TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

The unit action that always stands out during this campaign was the epic stand of the 1st Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment at the Battle of Imjin, April, 1951. The Glosters were part of a Brigade dispatched from the UK, and like all home based battalions at the time were under strength, being reinforced with reservists. It was still necessary to send further reinforcements to the battalion on their arrival, this is where the Wiltshire Regiment enter the story, at the time based in Hong Kong. Lieutenant A. E. Carter later recollected...

“In March the battalion dispatched one officer and 90 other ranks. By and large they were volunteers comprising 75 per cent national servicemen and the rest regulars. On their arrival in Japan they were disappointed to learn they were to be divided into three parties, each would leave for Korea on different dates. After carrying out battle training at Haramura, Japan the first group left within a week, the second party on the 14th April and the third on the 18th. The first group joined the Glosters two days before the battle started. From the original party only Private Carter [ex ‘D’ Coy], was there to tell the tale. Several of the wounded had been evacuated to Japan. Private Fox [Ex HQ Coy] had actually been captured by the Chinese but for some reason had been released to make his own way back to the UN lines, which he did without argument. Several Wiltshires were known to have been killed, and others believed to have been killed including Sergeant K. Eames, MM [Ex Sgts Mess caterer at Krefeld], who had won his MM only three months previously on Hill 327. Private Hamson, [Ex ‘D’ Coy], died of wounds at Kure, Private G. Chambers [Listed as killed - later POW], Private Bowl [Ex Orderly Room] Believed killed, 40 members of the draft were missing”.

Its clear that prior to the main draft deploying from Hong Kong with Lieutenant Carter several soldiers were individually deployed to Korea in the months leading up to the main battles. The Wiltshires that remained with the survivors of the Gloster's numbered about 35.

Those soldiers from the Wiltshires that were posted to the Glosters would at the time have been listed in the battalion orders. The Regimental museum archives does not have a copy of these orders and as such it is difficult to establish which soldiers from the Wiltshire Regiment took part in the Korean actions. All those who went were later listed as Gloucestershire Regiment soldiers, when in fact they would still have been badged under their parent Regiment. An examination of the Regimental Journal throws up some further clues, as do investigations on the web and in the Times. In addition to the drafts from Hong Kong others from the Regimental family were deployed to Korea, including a number reservists from the Royal Berkshire Regiment.

Below we list a number of soldiers from our Regiments that served in Korea. This list is by no means complete.

The highest ranking soldier was Brigadier Basil Coad DSO, a Wiltshire Officer of many years standing.

Brigadier Basil Coad, Commander of the 27th British Commonwealth Brigade

Brigadier Basil Aubrey Coad, and his brigade was designated the United Kingdom Strategic Reserve, which meant that it was supposed to be ready to move anywhere in the world at 10 days' notice. In August 1950, Coad was suddenly ordered to take his weakened brigade to Korea, consisting of the 1st Battalion, the Middlesex Regiment (Duke of Cambridge's Own) and the Argylls. Instead of 10 days to prepare, he had one week. The arrival of his orders on a Friday gave him still less time, since most of his men were enjoying the fleshpots of Hong Kong after an arduous exercise, and it would be hard work indeed to recall them to barracks over a weekend. Since both battalions were understrength, it was necessary to augment their numbers from the other units in Hong Kong. Working with his brigade major (chief of staff), Douglas Reith, Coad tried to get some sense out of Headquarters, Land Forces. He asked about artillery support and was told, You're not taking any — they say the Yank gunners are pretty good. Regarding transport, he was informed, You're not taking that either. Won't need any — the Yanks have got a vehicle to about every five men. He asked about rations and was told that you'll be all right there — turkey for every meal.



Brigadier Coad pictured with his Australian counterpart

Corporal E.W. Hatden - [Wilts Regt]

He served in Korea as the batman to Brigadier Basil Coad

Sergeant 14076869 Kenneth Eames. MM

Sgt Eames was the 1st Battalion Wiltshire Regiments mess caterer in Krefeld, Germany. He was sent to the Glosters several months before the drafts commanded by Lieutenant Carter. His citation for the action on Hill 327 reads

"He was a member of one of the assault companies in the attack on Hill 327 on 16th Feb 51. After a sharp engagement on one of the forward slopes during which he distinguished himself by his fearlessness and leadership. Sergeant Eames led his platoon onto the crest of the hill. At this stage, the Eastern half of the feature still remained in the hands of a tenacious enemy who had hitherto resisted every effort to reach them by bring down heavy small arms fire supplemented by grenades on the bare crest line, and who now increased their resistance as Sgt Eames personally led the assault forward. It was he who entered and destroyed the foremost posts whose occupants would not surrender. There can be no doubt that his was a major contribution to the capture of this vital ground and the ultimate success of the day."

N.B. Editor's footnote: I am sad to have to report that Sam Mercer MBE passed away during the evening of 30 January 2021, he being one of the last living survivors of the Battle of Imjin River 21 April 1951.



'C' and 'D' companies of 1 Glosters on hill 327 after the battle. This is where Sergeant Eames won the Military Medal. Private Sam Mercer later told the story of the death of Sergeant Eames MM later at Imjin. *"most of the Company had gone during the Imjin battle apart from those that could not walk. One he recognised as Sergeant Eames who was very badly wounded. He witnessed a Chinese soldier kill Sergeant Eames with one shot, after which he [Mercer] was shot in the leg, but survived"*

Private George Chambers [Wilts Regt]

He was serving in Headquarters Company in Hong Kong when he volunteered to go to Korea. He was employed as a company store-man and was the battalion hockey goal keeper, and football centre half. He was initially reported as 'Killed in action', but was taken as a prisoner of war. He spent two years in Chinese captivity and when released told his story to the local press in his home town of Newcastle. He stated that the Chinese objective was to turn the minds of the British captives by propaganda, with many sessions on politics etc. He recounted how many years of avoiding anything in the British Army equipped them well for appearing to listen, but at the same time to ignore everything. The Chinese at one time left them to discuss the matter alone in groups, which of course led to many card schools in operation !!. Punishment usually meant hard labour [but with extra food].

Private Donald (Lofty) Large [Wilts Regt - Later SAS]

Large joined the Army at age 15 as a "band boy". Because of a lack of vacancies, he was unable to join his county regiment, the Gloucesters, so instead joined the Wiltshire Regiment. After spending five years in England, Germany and Hong Kong with the battalion, he requested a transfer to the Gloucestershire Regiment and volunteered to fight in the Korean War. After a combat training course in Japan, Large was deployed to the front line. In March 1951, along with 30 others, he was sent to 'B' Company's position in the low hills above the Imjin River. The Glosters as part of the 29th Brigade, were tasked with defending routes through the valley that could potentially be used by the Chinese in a southbound offensive towards



Seoul. On 22 April 1951, they engaged with Chinese troops in the Battle of Imjin. By the morning of 24 April, 'B' Company had fought off seven assaults before they were able to rejoin the remainder of their battalion on what became known as Gloster Hill. By this time the battalion was low on ammunition and cut off from the British lines. Large himself was shot in the left shoulder and, along with most of the remaining Glosters, was forced to surrender.

[In Hong Kong Lofty was a member of the drums, and wasn't overly keen on what he later described as 'bull', albeit in stronger language. Although he with others went to the Glosters he remained 'badged' to the Wiltshires. In later years after reaching the rank of Sergeant whilst serving in the SAS he was Mentioned in Dispatches in Borneo. During that period he always appears in the list of Warrant Officers and Sergeants in the DERR Journals indicating he was still badged.]

Lofty Large on Ops in the Radfan in the 1960's

Private 14453219 Victor Thurston Bowl, [Wilts Regt]

He enlisted in the Gloucestershire Regiment, 1944, and served with the 1st Battalion in India and Jamaica. After the war and keen to return to Jamaica, Bowl transferred to the Wiltshire Regiment, in the belief that they were headed for the Caribbean, but when he embarked he found they were for Hong Kong. He was in the draft that volunteered with Lt Carter. On the eve of the Imjin Battle he was one of 30 who were flown over to Korea to be re-united with his old Regiment. He served with 'B' Company, at the Battle of Imjin River, where he was wounded and made Prisoner. Tragically, he did not survive the War and it was reported that he had been killed by a bomb. At the beginning of 1952 a photograph appeared in a magazine of British Prisoners of War, and one of them was identified as Private Bowl. However, the picture was apparently taken immediately after the Battle of Imjin River, as the prisoners of war were being moved to the rear lines. In fact Bowl was not killed by a bomb, but completed the march north to the Prisoner of War camp. In his book 'One Man's War in Korea', 'Lofty' Large recalls how he and Bowl were good friends in the camp until 'Vic' went down with malaria, and, according to his Chinese captors, died in the camp hospital 3.7.1951. However, some weeks later two Americans who had survived the hospital came into the British section of the camp looking for Bowl. They said that he had recovered from malaria and left the hospital in early July, to return to the main camp. But he was never seen again, with the Chinese maintaining that he had died of malaria.

Private D.R. Hamson,

The Wiltshire Regiment attached to the Gloucestershire Regiment [No further information]

Private R. L. White, [Wilts Regt]

He originally served with a Signals Platoon in Malaya in the Devonshire Regiment until November 1950. When the Battalion returned to England however, as he had more than 11 months' National Service left to complete, he was one of 270 men drafted into the Wiltshire Regiment to bring it up to strength in Hong Kong. Indeed it is well documented in the Regimental Journal of the 1st Devons that the ranks of the Signals Platoon 1st Wiltshires were well represented by ex-Devons. While serving with the Wiltshires in Hong Kong, White volunteered for service in Korea, as part of a draft of 90 men under Lieutenant Carter, and arrived in Japan on 14 April 1951. He was taken Prisoner of War at the Battle of Imjin River on 26 April 1951, whilst serving with Support Company.

CSM Whitemarsh [Wilts Regt]

He was stationed at the new Wessex Depot and was posted to Korea [No further details]

Captain J. Drew.

He was a Dorset Regiment officer posted to the Wiltshire Regiment in Hong Kong. He was deployed from the Wiltshires to 1 Glosters as their Mortar Officer after the Battle of Imjin [No further details known].

Further clues regarding the identification of soldiers from the battalion that volunteered for Korea are taken from from the Wiltshire Regimental Journal and written in the company notes.

The 'B' Company notes in the Journal during this period throw up several more clues as to who went to Korea,

'Good wishes to Lance Corporal Pike and Lance Corporal Reynolds'

But the notes failed to name eighteen others from 'B' Company who went.

The 'C' Company notes in the Journal stated,

'Our sincere best wishes go with those who are going to Korea, and we commensurate, with those bloodthirsty volunteers who were not included in the draft'.

Lieutenant A.E. Carter; Private Clarke; Private Richards

[We have no further information about the two privates]

Lieutenant A E Carter.

He was a battalion sportsman of some note, and represented the Regiment and the Army on many occasions before and after the deployment to Korea. As far as we are aware he was the only Wiltshire Regiment officer to deploy.



Lieutenant A E Carter seen here in Malaya during jungle training for the battalion's deployment. In the event it was cancelled and they deployed to Hong Kong.

The 'D' company notes reflected the same thoughts, but did not name anyone. On the return of the Glosters to the UK via Hong Kong the notes named three members of 'D' Company that were in the returning draft.

Corporal Jeyes Private Smith Private Lampin.

Private Edward Pennell [Wilts Regt.] Royal Berkshire Regiment & SAS

He enlisted in the Army in 1938 and joined the Royal Berkshire Regiment serving in India. As a result of his brother being killed in Libya he enlisted in the SAS and was among 50 soldiers parachuted behind German lines during Operation Tombola in March 1945 to join up with Italian partisans and attack German positions. After the war he remained in the Army and joined the Wiltshire Regiment going with them to Hong Kong. He there volunteered for service in Korea. [Little is known beyond that].

Casualties reported in the Times 1951

Lance Corporal P Alberts [Wilts Regt]. Attached to the Royal Ulster Rifles, Wounded in Korea.

Pte (or Cpl) G. Cooke [Wilts Regt]. Attached to the Gloucestershire Regiment, Prisoner of War in Korea

Private G D Gordge [Wilts Regt]. Attached to the Gloucestershire Regiment machine gun platoon, Wounded in Korea. Escaped from forward area 25.

Private M G Guildford [Wilts Regt]. Attached to the Gloucestershire Regiment, Wounded in Korea.

Private W Pearson [Wilts Regt] . Attached to the Leicestershire Regiment, wounded in Korea.

Pte W J Slocombe [Wilts Regt]. Attached to the Gloucestershire Regiment, Wounded in Korea.

Private J Vosper [Wilts Regt]. Attached to the Gloucestershire Regiment, Wounded in Korea.

Lieutenant J H D, Caws [Wilts Regt]. Attached to the Kings Regiment

[Times report on a patrol action by Lieutenant Caws 1953]

"While much of the battalion's time at the front proved uneventful, its night patrols often clashed with Chinese troops. In 1953, the battalion withdrew to reserve for three months. A tactically important feature known as "The Hook", a crescent shaped ridge, was the scene of intense fighting between Commonwealth forces and the Chinese in May. On the night of 20 May, Chinese forces commenced a sustained bombardment of the Hook, defended by the Duke of Wellington's Regiment. Two days later, a company from the King's conducted a nighttime diversionary raid on Chinese positions known as "Pheasant". During the raid, Second-Lieutenant Caws' 5 Platoon, intended to execute the actual attack, inadvertently stumbled upon an uncharted minefield, suffering 10 wounded from a strength of 16. The attack had to be abandoned, forcing the company to withdraw with its wounded back to British lines under the protection of artillery". [Shown in Army list as Wilts Regt 1951 - 1955]

Was it a Premonition?

A letter was located in the Wardrobe archive from a Ex Sergeant F. Knight who was the 1st Battalion Wiltshire Regiments Signal Platoon sergeant in 1947. At that time Corporal F. Goodall was under his command. One day he could see that Corporal Goodall was not his normal self and he asked him what was wrong. Corporal Goodall told him that he had a terrible dream overnight. He said that he was in another war and that with other soldiers were firing their weapons non stop at the enemy, but they kept coming, and he and others kept mowing them down. He woke up, but couldn't shake it of. Sergeant Knight was so concerned that Cpl Goodall was relieved from duty for that day, and the matter was forgotten. Sergeant Knight was later demobbed but in 1951 he picked up the newspaper and on the front page was a picture of his old colleague nicknamed 'Darkie', now Sergeant F. Goodall having returned from Korea. The newspaper report recounted how Sergeant Goodall and his company had been firing their weapons for 72 hours n o n s t o p



Sergeant Goodall photographed here by a Wiltshire Regiment colleague who knew him in Hong Kong when the Glosters stopped off on route to the UK. 1 Wilts hosted them before 'pouring' them back onto the troopship to continue their journey

WILTSHIRE REGIMENT RECALLED RESERVIST

Private Edward Broughton DCM.

He enlisted into the Wiltshire Regiment in 1938. While serving in the 2nd Battalion in France he was taken prisoner in May, 1940. In company with a guardsman he escaped from Stalag XXA, tramped across Poland and crossed into the Soviet Union. There the Russians put them into prison but were eventually freed in August 1941 on the intervention of Lord Beaverbrook's mission. As a result of the escape he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. He rejoined the 2nd Battalion serving with them for the remainder of the war. He transferred

to the reserve in 1946. He rejoined from the Class 'B' reserve in August 1950 for the Korean War. He was again taken prisoner at the Imjin River whilst serving with the Glosters. He was released in 1953.

ROYAL BERKSHIRE REGIMENT RECALLED RESERVISTS

A number of Royal Berkshire Regiment reservists were recalled and were deployed to Korea. We do not know the full list, but have identified a couple.

Private 5335905 Reginald Ernest Bond Nash

He enlisted in 1937 being posted to the 2nd Battalion in Egypt and later served throughout the war and after until 20 September 1949. He served for a period of 12 years and 193 days. He served in Egypt, India and North-West Europe. On being discharged, he went onto the 'Z' reserve. At the outbreak of the Korean War, he was recalled and was posted to the Gloucestershire Regiment. He was captured and became a prisoner of war of the Chinese for two years. He was discharged for the second time in 1953.

WO1 A Cormack

He served in the Royal Berkshire Regiment from 1931 to 1957 in India, the Sudan, Palestine, Egypt, Arakan, Burma, Kohima, Korea and Japan. He primarily served with the 1st Battalion and was the acting Regimental Sergeant Major in Burma and the action at Kohima [Mentioned in dispatches twice]. After the war he transferred to the Gloucestershire Regiment going with them to Korea. [No further info]

Private 5336452 G.R. Walker

He joined the Royal Berkshire Regiment with his brother in 1937. Went to France on the outbreak of the 2nd World War. On the retreat to Dunkirk received a bayonet wound plus a bullet wound to his left hand and was taken prisoner. On his return to the UK he was placed on the reserves and was later called up for the Korean War joining ten platoon of 'B' Company. [No further details known]

Private 5338045 Reshton Newman Knight

He enlisted into the Army at Reading, Berkshire, May 1939, and then joined the Royal Berkshire Regiment, being then posted to the 1st Battalion. With the outbreak of the Second World War, Knight went with his battalion to France and was later evacuated from Dunkirk. After returning from Dunkirk he volunteered for the Commandoes. He took part in the invasion of Madagascar, landing there on 22 March 1942, he took part in the operations which led to the defeat of the Vichy French troops who occupied the island, and was then posted home again on 26 November 1942. He later fought in the Arakan and Burma. After the end of the Second World War Knight was transferred to the Army Reserve. With the outbreak of the Korean War he was recalled and then joined as a Private (No.5338045) into the Glosters 10 August 1950, and then saw service in Korea from 10 October 1950.

He is confirmed as having been serving with the Glosters at the Battle of Imjin River from 22 – 25 April 1951 and was taken prisoner of war by the North Koreans. He would eventually be released from captivity and posted home on 16th September 1953



Private Knight the Royal Berkshire Regiment reservist in Korea, and before the Battle of Imjin



An interesting photograph that shows a Wiltshire Regiment soldier guarding a captured Korean Soldier. The shoulder title just visible in the image reads 'WILTSHIRE'. We believe he was one of the 90 volunteer soldiers that accompanied Lieutenant Carter to Korea. His identity is not known



VOLUNTEER WORKINGS DURING LOCKDOWN

During the three periods of lock down the management team have allowed the Museum's computer to be located off site and for the volunteers who use our database programme, known as MODES, to remotely access the computer for specific allotted time slots. One of the purposes was to take the opportunity of clearing up the violations with each record for each artefact or archive. To give you some idea of what this entails the image below shows part of a record for one object.

The screenshot shows the MODES database interface with a record for an object. The interface is divided into two main sections: 'STRUCTURE' and 'DATA'. The 'STRUCTURE' section on the left lists various fields, some of which are marked with a red 'X' indicating a violation. The 'DATA' section on the right shows the values for these fields. The following table summarizes the data shown in the screenshot:

Field	Value	Violation
Title		
Classification	Arms	
BriefDescription	Scrapbooks (2) News of the War	
CollectionName	Archive Collection	
ObjectLocation		
Location	current location - Keyword Photo Archives Attic 1 / Box 98	
Date	from 31.3.2005	
Note		
Association		
Organisation	unit: Wilshire Regiment, 2nd Bn	
Person		
PersonName	None recorded	
PersonIdentity	1	Violation
PersonTitle		
Note	award :	
PersonIdentity		
Note	unit : None or Not known	
Note		
Content		
Person		
PersonName	None recorded	
PersonIdentity		Violation
PersonTitle		
Note	award :	
PersonIdentity		
Note	Unit :	
Note	Not named	
Production		
Date	1900	Violation
Organisation		
Place	Country: South Africa	
Acquisition		

Each of those reds crosses that you can see represents a violation. In this example there are 3 violations which we can see. Currently we have 57.849 records and until very recently we had 455.000 violations, which would average 7.8 violations per record. Violations are caused by typing mistakes, incorrect unit names, not following the correct protocol when naming people or attributing an incorrect location where the item is stored. So during the second and third lockdown, one of our volunteers, Robert McKellar, who is a whiz on computers, has been studying

the Modes programme so as to rectify our errors and produce a fail safe method so that in the future we don't repeat those errors. We can now report that through Robert sterling efforts the number of violations has been brought down to 550, which averages out at 0.01per Museum Record. I think you will agree that is a phenomenal success rate.

Another volunteer who has been beavering away behind the scenes is Bryan Ad-derly, who has pouring over the Library Books. When we weren't in Lockdown Bryan had been using his expertise as a Librarian to reorganise how the books can be recorded using the Modes Database. Having compiled an Excel spreadsheet of every book, annotating the author(s), publishers, printers and brief description of the contents , by liaising with the Modes Team in Derby he has been able to import the Excel spreadsheet into Modes and create a separate Library Catalogue. Once the volunteers are allowed back into the museum Bryan will be tidying up each entry so that were a book may have several authors or contributors he will be able to add those additional names manually. Something the import of the Excel spreadsheet didn't initially allow as the template had only fields for one author.

EDITOR'S NOTES

With the Governments' Announcement of the Road Map to lead the country out of the Pandemic Restrictions, Tony Field (The Secretary to the Trust) and Bethany Joyce (The Museum Curator) have agreed the Museum professional staff will return to work on 6 April 2021. Volunteers who are told by the Museum Curator that their work space is considered safe may be invited back to volunteer after 6 April. On present planning the Museum will open to the Public on 17 May 2021.

As a Society I think we should be grateful to Tony Field and Bethany Joyce for their very proactive and protective measures that they took prior to the P.M.'s announcement.

The SoF are grateful, as always, to the RWMT for access and use of the archive material used to put this Newsletter together.

On a personal note my grateful thanks to Chris Bacon and Martin McIntyre for proof reading the drafts and finding my numerous "slidex errors" usually caused by thick fingers syndrome or fingers moving faster than the brain, which is nor difficult for a heavy infantryman whose regiment has converted to 160 paces to the minute.

Please stay safe and look after each other and I hope and trust that I with Mac's great help we will be able to bring you the next publication due out in July without too many complications.

Note: "Slidex" was form of message encryption used by the Army during the Cold War.

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BATTLEFIELD TOUR NORMANDY SEPTEMBER 2021

Reluctantly Nigel Walker and Andy Steele have made the decision that the re-arranged dates for May 2021 are not feasible. The intention is to try and run the Battlefield Tour in May 2022



CAN YOU RECRUIT ANOTHER MEMBER?

We are always looking to recruit new members, and on average we get 3/4 new members per year. This of course is offset by members who unfortunately died during the year. As with all good Regiments the best recruiting Sergeants are those who are already serving. With that in mind we are appealing to Redcoat members to consider signing up a friend or acquaintance who may have an interest in our Regiments past, and the future of the Regimental museum. The future brings with it a number of challenges that need a fully manned and vibrant Society of Friends to support the Museum. In particular we need to sign up former members of the Regiment.

APPEAL FOR ITEMS FOR THE REDCOATS REVIEW

Most of the articles that have appeared over the past few editions are on subject matter that the editorial team have either chosen or worked on during their course of volunteering within the museum. It may well be that readers have an area that we have not covered and you would like to see covered in which case we would love to hear your ideas.

Your web page on the Museum web site is:

<http://www.thewardrobe.org.uk/museum/contact-us/support-us/friends-events-and-publications>

