

President: Paul H. Nicol

Vice Presidents: E.S. Mitchell, H.W. Prockter, F.C. Wood

Waziristan 1017  
Afghanistan 1919

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15a, Carlton Drive,  
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Secretary's Notes

As regards the SUMMER? HOLIDAYS this year, I think the least said the better. However I trust you were able to make the most of the few days sunshine.

Report on the 39th REUNION DINNER, held on May 3rd 1963

Our President was in the Chair.

88 sat down to the Dinner, 26 Members sent in their apologies for absence, due to illness, distance, etc. All sent their Good Wishes to those present.

Our Official Guests included the following:-

9th HANTS. Percy Jupe, Harold Arney  
1/1 KENTS. C. Heaysman, George Manning  
2/6 SUSSEX Major G.W. Grylls, G.W. Sherman  
and Mr. L. Morrell, the Caretaker of Fulham House, who looks after us so well at our Committee and A.G. Meetings.

A very enjoyable evening was spent.

The 40th Annual Dinner will be held at the Windsor Castle Hotel, Victoria, S.W.1, on Friday, MAY 8th 1964.

PERSONAL PARS.

Retirements from business. Among the many letters that I have received from Members who have retired during the last year, there is one who I think should be especially mentioned. I refer to H.W. Prockter, one of our Vice Presidents. Harry, who retired from his printing business at the beginning of this year, and is now living at Folkestone, made a great contribution to the O.C.A. by supplying us, right from the start, with all our stationery, which included: Books, Envelopes, Letter headings, Dinner Tickets and Menus. ALL free of charge. Harry, on behalf of the O.C.A. THANK YOU SO MUCH.

H.H. Case is retiring shortly, after being with his Firm 52 years.

Resignation from the Committee. Owing to ill-health, I regret to inform you that C.A. Turner has had to resign from the Committee. Charlie has been one of our staunch Members of the Committee, which has lasted from, I think, the start of the O.C.A. On behalf of the O.C.A. Many thanks Charlie, for your valuable support during those years. We trust that with rest, you will regain some of your strength and fitness.

Messines Ridge. The following paragraph appeared in the Evening News, dated last June, from which I quote:-

"We have recently celebrated the 46th Anniversary of the capture of Wytchaete Messines Ridge, in which the 36th Ulster Division took so prominent part. I was present that day, having been drafted to the 12th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles from the 2nd Battalion 25th London Regiment (Cyclists). I would like to hear from any of my former Comrades who were at Beccles Common Camp and/or subsequently took part on that memorable day at Messines Ridge. (Signed:- Herbert C. Daniel, Aylesbury Road, Wendover, BUCKS.)"

INDIAN CAVALRY by Freddie Guest. One of our Comrades, W. Hughes, informs me that the above book (in which the 25th are mentioned) is now available in Public Libraries. It deals with our stunt on the N.W.F. Perhaps you may be interested.

Harry Sell. Lt. Col. W.S. Read has written me with further news of Harry. Both he and his wife are now in their 82nd year. Harry has recovered from a serious illness, and is again fighting fit. He is the oldest member of his Bowls Club, and has already won three prizes this Season. Well done Harry.

Other REUNION DINNERS

REGIMENT

9th HANTS  
1/1st KENTIS  
2/6th SUSSEX  
1/6th SUFFOLKS

We were represented by:

Messrs. F.C. Wood and C.M. Topham.  
Messrs. H.W. Prockter and A.H. Carmichael.  
The Secretary and his Wife.  
Teddy Churchill and Don Hennings.

A very enjoyable time was had by all.

Obituary. I regret to report the deaths of our following Members.

Major Peyton Baly	E.E. Engerran
A.L. Wharton	R.C. Griffiths
G.F. Scuffle	E.C. Lambert
Capt. C.P. Tindall	Frank Toon

SUBSCRIPTIONS PLEASE. Outstanding receipts are enclosed with this Bulletin.

Thank you.

The Collection at the ANNUAL DINNER amounted to £21.1.0. Many thanks to those who contributed.

Finally I apologise for the lateness of sending out these documents, due to illness, lack of concentration, and ANNO DOMINI. I think a new Secretary is called for.

J.J.G.

NOTICES

- Regimental Ties. 9/6d each. Post free.
- Ophthalmic Optician. W.C. Middleton, 20 Bath Road, Hounslow, Middlesex.  
Hounslow OO24
- Furs of all kinds, renovations, cold storage.  
W.T. Davidson, 21 South Molton Street, W.1.
- Holiday Apartments. V. Champion, "Arundel," 11 St. Peters Road, Sheringham,  
Norfolk.  
W.L. Liggins, The White House, Overcliff Drive, Southbourne,  
Bournemouth. Southbourne 45121  
E.C. Maunderne, "Funchal Guest House," 17 Madeira Place,  
Brighton 1, Sussex.
- Mine Hosts. E. March, "Man of Kent," East Peckham, Tonbridge, Kent.  
E.S. Mitchell, "Warren House," Forest Road, nr. Wokingham,  
Berks.
- Bed/Breakfast. C. Brown, The Lake Cottage, Llandrindod Wells, Radnor.

MEMBERS CONTRIBUTIONS TO BULLETIN

I have received from W.J. Anderson an Article written by the late Ben Riches, entitled "AMRITSAR CLIMAX". This I will include in the next Bulletin.

I have also received an Article from W.G. Abrams dealing with a Camping episode of the 3rd Hants in 1905, but as this refers only to a Hants Infantry Regiment, I have sent it on to the Secretary of the 9th HANTS (Cyclist) Batt., as I do not think it would interest our Members.

What Percy Picked up in the Park

Those who were with "B" Company, 1st Battalion at Lowestoft will share with me many memories, some good and others not so good. But there is one that frequently recurs to me.

When we arrived in Suffolk, "B" Company for some reason was made the Headquarters Company. This had its compensations, not so much in the early days, but certainly when the winter of 1914/15 arrived. Then, while the other Companies were patrolling the coast from Gorleston to Southwold every two hours in each direction during the hours of darkness, come wind, rain, hail or snow, those in "B" Company who were not on guard could look forward to their night's sleep.

On the other hand, for us there was no avoiding early morning P.T. and we were never far from the eagle eye of Sergeant-Major Bart. Our chances of getting away

with a button not done up or a chin-strap not in its proper place were so remote as to be negligible. For the other Companies in their outlying detachments, strict discipline was not so much in evidence - though no doubt when, once every so often, they were attached to Headquarters for a week's "rest", the tightening up must have come as a considerable shock.

After a while "B" Company's programme of guards, parades and military exercises began to pall and the Company Commander, Captain Trapman, decided to give us a fresh interest to prevent our getting too stale and fed up.

There was in the Naval Base at Lowestoft a 12-pounder gun. What its history was we never learned nor if it had even been overseas or had been fired in anger. The skipper arranged for the Company to borrow the gun and to receive instruction in its use from a naval gunner.

At first the novelty appealed to us and we practised taking it to pieces and re-assembling it. Although reasonably fit, most of us had neither the weight nor the strength to cope successfully with the ponderous parts of which I think the barrel and the trail were the heaviest. It was a wonder that there were no crushed arms or legs, as on occasion it seemed a toss-up whether or not we should be able to prevent the barrel crashing to the ground with some unfortunate gunner-cyclist flattened beneath it. Mercifully, however, as far as I recollect, no-one was damaged.

We also dragged the gun round and about on the roads, much to the astonishment of the residents, those of us who were not actually pulling and therefore not too breathless, accompanying our progress with choruses from the popular songs of the day, of which the most appropriate was undoubtedly, "See what Percy's picked up in the Park".

One of these expeditions nearly ended in tragedy.

We had dragged the gun through Lowestoft and at the top of the considerable rise in the main street, the subaltern in command gave the order to right wheel into one of the lanes leading down to the Denes which bordered the shore. There were many of these parallel lanes, which were cobbled, very steep, very narrow and bounded on each side by stone cottages or high stone walls. They had a particular local name which I have forgotten.

Here I should explain that the trail of the gun was hooked behind the limber, which had a long pole with a cross-bar in front. Numbers One and Two of the team held the cross-bar and on the flat or uphill they pulled. Downhill of course they pulled back. The hubs on the wheels of the gun and limber were fitted with swivelling rings and there were two drag ropes. On one end of each rope was a hook which engaged the hub-ring on the limber and these drag-ropes, one on each side, were manned by, I think it was, six men to each rope.

When the road changed from flat or uphill to downhill, the drill was to detach the drag ropes from the limber and attach them to the gun. The men on the drag ropes then dropped back behind the gun and steadied its pace downhill. The order for this manoeuvre was "Reverse Drag Ropes".

On the occasion of which I speak the first part of the performance went according to plan - the men responsible for the hooks detached them from the wheels on the limber and the rest of the men on the drag ropes dropped back behind the gun. Unfortunately they dropped back about a foot too far, so that the men on the hooks could not reach the rings on the wheels of the gun. During the ten or fifteen seconds while this was going on, the gun and limber started to gather speed downhill, despite the efforts of the two men on the pole of the limber, who by then were providing the only retarding influence and who were forced first into a quick walk, then into a slow trot and finally into a trot. The men on the drag ropes, seeing the outfit gaining speed, pulled back harder and harder, making it impossible to hook the ropes onto the gun.

At this point, an apprehensive glance over their shoulders apprised the men on the pole of the situation and they slowed the whole thing over to the right and brought it to a halt by scraping it along the stone wall bordering the lane. And so, apart from a certain amount of damage to paintwork and dignity, no one was the worse.

There was an amusing side to the incident. Those who like myself, are devoted fans of the Keystone Cops will recollect that whenever one of these characters wishes to dash off in a sprint, he first leaps straight up into the air, bringing his knees up to his elbows and then dashes off at full speed. On the day in question

an old fisherman was trudging slowly up the hill towards us with a great basket on his head. When he heard and saw the mass of ironmongery rattling and bounding towards him over the cobbles and fast gathering speed, he leapt straight up into the air, flinging his basket away and turning round he shambled as rapidly as possible down the hill to the shelter of the nearest doorway. As a Keystone Cop he would have stolen the show.

I do not think that anyone in "B" Company in those days ever considered entering a team for the Naval Gun Contest at the Royal Military Tournament nor do I think that Captain Trapman thought it likely that we should ever take the gun into action. And yet stranger things have happened. Who among us cyclists at Lowestoft imagined for a moment that a couple of years later we should be fighting as P.B.I. on the North-West Frontier of India?

A.C. Hills, "B" Co., 1/25th Londons.

Rhyme Without Reason

There was a fat girl of Koomassi,  
A remarkably ponderous lassie,  
She once took a toss  
When riding a hoss  
And sustained a large dent in her chassis.

There was a small boy of Madrid  
Whose aunt wouldn't give him a quid,  
Though they said, "But you can't  
Stick that pin in your aunt!"  
He not only could but he did.

There once was a cop in Djibouti  
Who was doing his stuff on point duty.  
When a runaway jeep  
Knocked him all of a heap,  
His remarks were decidedly fruity.

B. McQ.