
N.W. FRONTIER, INDIA 1917



AFGHANISTAN 1919

25th London (Cyclist)
Old Comrades Association

Silver Jubilee Edition

BULLETIN No. 70



President :

COLONEL SIR GILBERTSON SMITH, T.D., D.L., C.A.

Vice-Presidents :

LT.-COLONEL HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF SOMERSET, D.S.O., O.B.E.

COLONEL ARTHUR CHURCHILL, T.D.

MAJOR P. J. SUTTON.

CAPTAIN C. A. BURT

Hon. Secretary & Treasurer :

P. H. NICOL,

7, OXBERRY AVENUE, S.W. 6

Telephone : PUTNEY 2380

FEBRUARY 1946



25th London (Cyclist) Old Comrades Association

BULLETIN No. 70

SILVER JUBILEE EDITION

February 1946

HONOUR TO OUR PRESIDENT

ALL of us in the 25th will rejoice at the inclusion of our President in the New Year's Honours List. For his public work, and in particular for his work in Civil Defence, he has been created a Knight. We congratulate both Sir Gilbertson and Lady Smith. The following telegram was sent to Sir Gilbertson by the Secretary on the morning of the announcement, "Heartly congratulations on honour bestowed on you from all members of 25th London (Cyclist) Battalion."

Signed: Nicol.

The following reply was received by the Secretary, "Please mention in the next Bulletin that I thank all members of the O.C.A. for their congratulations on my Knighthood. Your telegram was one of the first to arrive and gave me real pleasure to receive."

Yours sincerely,
Gilbertson Smith.

Resume of Sir Gilbertson's Public Work

Senior partner in a firm of Solicitors practising in London and Brentwood. Joined the 26th Middlesex Cyclist Battalion as a private in 1888. Commanded Battalion, 1904-1908. Transferred to the Territorial Force, 1908. Commanded the 25th Cyclist Battalion, the London Regiment, till 1913. Member of County of London Territorial Force Association, 1908-1922. Retired 1913 and promoted Hon. Colonel of the Battalion. Volunteered at outbreak of Great War and raised and commanded 225 Cyclist Battalion, 1914-May, 1919. Promoted substantive Colonel in Territorial Army, September, 1918. On disembodiment of the Battalion in 1920 appointed Hon. Colonel, London Division. Signals till 1928. Finally retired. Raised and commanded Laindon Company Home Guard, 1940-1941. Retired under age limit regulation. Appointed Deputy Lieutenant (Essex), 1929.

Elected to Essex County Council, 1913. Alderman, 1925. Vice-Chairman, 1927. Chairman, 1941 to date, and in this capacity served on many committees of the Council.

OUR SILVER JUBILEE

Last year witnessed the 25th year of the formation of the O.C.A., for it was on 12th June, 1919 (the first Line being still in India) that the Association was formed and Officers and Committee elected. The President was Colonel Gilbertson Smith (now Sir Gilbertson) and Sgt. Jerrold, who at that time was Orderly Room Sgt. under Major Harrison at the Depot at Fulham House was the first Secretary. It may here be said that the assistance of these two in helping to form the Association was invaluable. Sgt. L. J. Hill acted as Assistant Hon. Secretary. Jerrold resigned as Secretary on 4th November 1919, and Tommy Harrison agreed to carry on the duties of Secretary as long as he commanded the Depot. C.Q.M. Sgt. Blackburn was elected Hon. Treasurer. The first big function of the Association was to welcome the First Line on its return from India, in December, 1919. Owing to the generosity of Colonel Churchill an excellent hot meal was provided at Fulham House. Many members who had already been demobilised waited all night to receive them. It was, however, a very foggy night, and as a result it was not till early morning that the train arrived at Addison Road Station. Yet they had a great welcome. The first Annual Dinner of the Association was held at Fulham House on 3rd February, 1920, and the final dinner of the first Line Sgts. Mess also was held at Fulham House, on 17th April, 1920. It was provided from funds sent home by members of this Mess, specially earmarked for the purpose, and therefore was limited strictly to members. As all who were present remember, it was a wonderful evening. A five-course meal, followed by sweet and desert, etc., and liquid refreshment was ample for all requirements, and plenty was left over. How different from present time! It was followed by a concert given by the "Londons" Concert Party. At the first Annual General Meeting held on 4th September, 1920, Blackburn was elected Secretary and Treasurer, Tommy Harrison having resigned. He carried on for just over a year till 13th December, 1921, when he resigned on moving to Coventry. At this General Meeting it was resolved that an

honarium of £25 should be paid to the Secretary annually. We were now up against it to find a new Secretary, but Captain Burt stepped into the breach and carried on till October, 1926, when he resigned. Under his leadership the Association continued to flourish. Launch Trips, Whist Drives, Dinners, Dances, all being well attended. At the A.G.M., following his resignation, Nicol, late C.S. Major, First Line was elected and has carried on to date. At the Annual Dinner on 19th Feb., 1927, Burt was presented with a writing bureau complete with inscribed silver plate, note paper and die subscribed for by the members.

In 1929, our President had to undergo a major operation and for the first time was unable to take the Chair at the A.G.M. in October of that year. But he made a wonderful recovery, and no doubt his life-long adherence to cycling stood him in good stead. No sardine tin shoved by petrol for us in our youth!

BATTALION HISTORY

This was published in 1932 at 5/- and was on sale at the Annual Dinner of that year. It was a History of which any Battalion could be proud. A. S. Clarke of "A" Co. 125, was editor, and he was assisted by the following Committee:— Captains, Trapmann and Burt, Ben Riches, Tommy Harrison, C. Broadbent, "Pa" Corney, Norman Mitchell, Billy Newton, E. F. (Water rat) Smith and Charlie Turner. The Secretary still receives applications for the History, now out of print, so that if any member knows where a spare copy can be obtained he should communicate with the Secretary. Its reception will probably bring a donation to the Benevolent Fund.

"LONDONS" CONCERT PARTY

As many artistes as possible of this well-known party were got together to give a Concert at Fulham House. This was in February, 1934. In many ways this was one of our greatest successes. Many members who had never before attended a previous entertainment came to this. It was free! The two prime movers in promoting it were Ben Riches, and C. J. White. Both alas, have now passed on.

SILVER JUBILEE OF H.M. KING GEORGE V.

On the occasions of the drive of their Majesties through London, 11th May, 1935, 80 members of the Association were invited to help line the route in Hyde Park. They paraded in Wellington Barracks and from there marched to their position in Hyde Park, headed by a Standard presented by the four Commanding Officers:—Colonels, Gilbertson Smith, Churchill, Stenning, and Hynes.

PRESENTATION TO THE PRESIDENT

To mark his 50 years connection with the London Cyclist Battalion (1st April, 1938) a silver salver was presented to Colonel Sir Gilbertson Smith at the Annual Dinner in February of that year. Unfortunately in the next month he was again in hospital for an operation but not of so serious a nature as before. And now dawn 1939, the year of the World War. The Association "carried on" and contact was kept with all as far as possible, and we emerge at the end of it with a "mailing list" of 350. Not so bad, seeing we are a closed concern, and as a consequence have no steady flow of recruits as in other similar organisations. Perhaps this is our strength, for at all our gatherings, members can be assured of meeting many they know and thus renewing old friendships. One seldom hears the remark, "I attended a meeting and never knew a soul," as in so many other organisations.

ASSOCIATION FUNDS

Tommy Harrison started off the funds of the Association with a loan of £50 in July, 1919, but our first real asset was £38 received from Colonel Gilbertson Smith in August, 1919, from the sale of Officers' Mess furniture of the 2/25th (this was subsequently increased to £55). Afterwards we received from the 10th London (via Colonel Stenning) £25 (this was in conjunction with the 3/25th) in November, 1919. Then came £295 8s. 10d. from the funds of 2/25th in February, 1920, and £950 from the Officers' Mess and P.R.I. Fund, 1/25th. In addition a cheque was received from Major Sutton for £75 9s. 11d., being a balance from the Mess Funds of 2/25th. This latter amount was credited to the Benevolent Fund. In 1921 our first balance sheet showed £300 in Exchequer Bonds and a balance at bank of £1,210 17s. 10d., making a total of £1,510 17s. 10d. Now after 25 years our last Balance Sheet shows our investments as £665 18s. 11d. plus £105 1s. 7d. cash at bank and £134 8s. 1d. cash at bank in the Benevolent Fund, making a total of £905 8s. 7d., so that we have carried on for 25 years on an expenditure from capital of £615 9s. 3d.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The total amount received in subscriptions during the past 25 years to date amount to £1,100 9s. 6d.

BENEVOLENT FUND

In 1927 a Benevolent Fund was inaugurated distinct from the General Fund. It is very difficult now to estimate the total amount spent in assisting members in need, but it is over £900.

MEMORIAL FUND

This Fund was inaugurated by Colonel Hynes in 1917 and was obtained from a voluntary stoppage from pay of all ranks of the 1/25 while serving in India. The total collected was £588 17s. 1d. Out of this, Colonel Hynes paid £154 8s. 10d. on our memorial in the church at Jullunder and on the 25th graves in various parts of India. From the balance, £117 13s. 2d. was spent on the Memorial in All Saints Church, Fulham, £250 was donated to University College Hospital, we becoming Life Governors and a bed being named after the Battalion. Fifty guineas was given to the Hospital for Consumption, Brompton Road, of which we are also Life Governors, and £50 to the Seaside Convalescent Hospital at Seaford, and £36 15s. 0d. was paid for the memorial tablet in the drill hall, Fulham House. The balance of £142 0s. 0d. was handed to the History Committee to further the production of this publication. And here it may be pointed out, that should any member require hospital or convalescent treatment he should apply to the Secretary.

Members and relatives will be interested in a note from Kincaid that Dan Whitehead ("A" Co. 125), serving in the Fleet Air Arm, is taking a flying holiday in India and hopes to land at Jullunder and place a wreath on our Memorial there. Those most nearly concerned will be grateful, I am sure.

The 19th A.G.M. took place at Fulham House on Friday, 13th November, 1945, the 18th having been held in October, 1938. It was one of the happiest gatherings of the kind we have ever held and was better attended. Enthusiasm was the key-note. It was presided over by Colonel Sir Gilbertson Smith. A new Committee was elected, the Officers remaining the same. Below are the names of the new Committee:—

- C. Broadbent, "Kulu" 14, Clifford Avenue, S.W.14.
- W. T. Davidson, 9, Fairfield Court, Longstone Avenue, N.W.10.
- J. Gander, 15a, Carl Drive, Putney, S.W.15.
- G. Giles, 1, Talgarth Road, West Kensington, W.14.
- L. J. Hill, 160, Ellismere Road, N.W.10.
- W. Marriott, 17, Telford Parade, Mansions, S.W.16.
- H. Mead, 119, Whyteleafe Road, Caterham, Surrey.
- E. S. Mitchell (Chairman), c/o Harrods, Knightsbridge, S.W.1.
- H. N. Mitchell, 40, Rosedene Avenue, S.W.16.
- S. V. Rust, 25, Tabor Gardens, Cheam, Surrey.
- H. R. Smith, 65, Norbury Hill, S.W.16.
- C. Turner, 8, Northolt Gardens, Greenford, Mdx.
- F. C. Wood, "Meriden," Manor Road South, Hinchley Wood, Esher, Surrey.

At the A.G.M. it was resolved that the following correspondence should be published in the *Bulletin*:—

25th London (Cyclist) O.C.A.,
7, Oxberry Avenue, S.W.6.
13th October, 1945.

Dear Sir,

At the first meeting of the committee of the above Association after the conclusion of the World War, the following resolution was proposed and carried unanimously:—

"That this Association, representing a Unit in the Great War, and therefore part of the Old Army, heartily congratulates the New Army on the complete and annihilating defeat of Germany and Japan."

I have the honour of forwarding the above resolution to you as representing this Army.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Yours faithfully,
(signed) P. H. Nicol (Capt.).

To the Chief of The Imperial General Staff,
Field Marshal Sir Alanbrooke (now Viscount Alanbrooke)

Reply:—
War Office,
Whitehall,
23rd October, 1945.

Dear Nicol,

Thank you for your letter of 13th October, which I was very proud to receive on behalf of the Army.

I know that all members of the Army are full of admiration for the magnificent work done by the Old Comrades of the Great War during this War, both as members of the Home Guard and Civil Defence Services.

Yours sincerely,
(signed) Alanbrooke, F.M.

COMRADES "LOST AWHILE."

In this para. it is proposed to endeavour to put comrades in touch, and notices will be printed in it asking the whereabouts of missing friends. In many cases the secretary will be able to forward communications direct.

Joe Turner ("B" Co. 125) writes, "If any member wishes to contact ex-Sgt. Squires or myself, just wait for the 9.15 train into St. Pancras and it is 100 to 1 we shall both be there."

Harry Oke, congratulations on returning. He was in the front line commanding a company defending Singapore, was captured and became for 3½ years a "guest" of the Japanese. Most of this time was spent in Thailand constructing the railway. We hope to publish his experiences in the next *Bulletin*.

C. P. Tindal ("A" Co. 125) is home on leave from India. His address is, c/o Messrs. Grindleys, Parliament Street, S.W.1.

D. G. Whisstock, M.B.E., writes, "I got called up with the 4th Suffolks at the outbreak of War. They've chucked me out at last (8th November, 1944) but I've had a good innings, having served since 1914.

In a debate in the House of Commons, Cdr. Prior, M.P. for Aston, who was a beachmaster in Normandy, quoted a statement which he received from a 22 year old German prisoner, "You Britishers are fools. There are 22 million young Nazis in Germany. In 15 years we shall have another War and we shall beat you." In contrast to this he quoted an extract from a letter written to him by his Godson, Signalman Lloyd Howard, "... For years there has been a famine of Love in this World; that is why we are where we are; people's souls are undernourished... those who come after us must have their interests in the end of the earth; they must be citizens of the World as well as of their own country; on that idea of Life rests the peace of Mankind." Signalman Lloyd Howard was the son of Lieut.-Colonel H. Lloyd Howard, who commanded the 47th (2nd London) Div. Signals, our lineal successors at Fulham House, and who is one of the few but valued Hon. Members. His son landed in Normandy on "D" Day and was killed within a fortnight. A letter of sympathy was sent to Colonel and Mrs. Lloyd Howard.

Our sympathy goes out to F. Little, whose son was killed after a bombing raid on enemy territory. On the way back the plane dived into the sea, while attempting to jettison a bomb. Although a launch immediately went in search only the body of the Pilot was found.

Also to Sammy Meager on the loss of his Flight Officer son, Rodney, who was killed in Italy, 14th November, 1945.

We regret also to announce the death of Harry Vaughan on 30th December, 1945. An old pre-war member it will be recalled, he broke his leg while playing football at Chisleton, and was unable to leave with the Battalion. His brother Louis, also passed away, September, 1944. He lived at Torquay, and I believe several of our members stayed at his boarding house at Torquay while on holiday.

Also George Grove, of old "H" Co. in the far-off pre-war days, died recently. He never really got over the death of his only son in the R.A.F.

Congratulations to A. Ireland (late of Transport, Lowestoft days) on the success of his daughter in the film, "Pink String and Sealing Wax." She has since been signed on to a new contract at a very attractive figure. A few weeks ago, to my intense surprise and pleasure, I heard her on the radio in "In town tonight." Many of us will, I feel sure, watch her career with interest.

(contributed by H. R. Smith.)

Lieut.-Colonel W. S. Read (Stanley Read of Lowestoft days) writes from Agra:—

"I hope to be home for good about the middle of next year. Thirty years abroad and no home leave since 1937 is pretty heavy going. With very best wishes."

Stanley Read.

FOR THE LADIES

The women of England have done some fine and grand work during the War. Thank you ladies! This, the war-time experience, is of one of them:—

Barbara Kirkham (Mrs. Freddie Wood's niece) who interested us when she was a schoolgirl at two consecutive Ladies' Nights at Harrods with her dainty dancing, volunteered for E.N.S.A. Her ambition was to go overseas directly the "second front" was opened. Her ambition was fulfilled, and she crossed over shortly after "D" Day—not in a luxury liner but in "small craft," and landed in Normandy on 22nd July, 1944. She was with the "Here's How" company, and they at once became "Front Line" entertainers, giving shows near Bayeux, Caen, Falaise, whilst the fighting was at its height just near to these places. When "Monty" broke through at Falaise, they followed up on the heels of our boys right through France, Belgium and Holland giving shows en route. Barbara was close to Nimeguen when our airborne troops landed and made their gallant and historic stand at Arnhem. They lived rough, sleeping for the most part under canvas or in their travelling vans, and they gave their shows in barns, schools, or any old place where they could rig up a stage.

After six months on the Continent, she came home. After a short rest the "Here's How" Company refitted and was rushed off to India. This time the voyage was by Aeroplane and they reached Karachi in four days—a much quicker time than our voyage in the "Ceramic" (the "Ceramic" was torpedoed off South Africa during the War and there was only one survivor from the crew and passengers). From Karachi they went to Bombay, thence to Calcutta, which was a very pleasant experience for her. After Calcutta it was far from pleasant. They went on "Front Line" entertaining again—this time on the borders of Assam and Burma, eventually crossing the Chindwin River, where the fighting had been very heavy. They

lived in the jungle and soon knew all about its discomforts. The mosquitos, the darkness of the nights with the hideous noises, the torrential rains, the humid atmosphere and the terrible heat.

After about six months of this they set face for home. Unfortunately, Barbara caught malaria on the journey from Calcutta to Bombay, but she recovered sufficiently to be able to come home with the rest of the Company.

That was not all—not to be deterred with her malaria, she again volunteered for overseas service. This time her party is called "Thanks to you" Company, and last November she sailed with them to Italy and she has given shows in Perugia, Florence and Bologna. She is not enthusiastic about Italy. Travelling from place to place in a three-ton lorry is not the height of comfort.

What an experience and what an ordeal for a girl! But Barbara has loved it all, and the wonderful receptions they received from the boys "over there" has been her reward, and made it worth while.

Well done, Barbara, and thanks to you!

MEMBERS WHO SERVED IN BOTH WARS

Lieut. Colonel His Grace the Duke of Somerset, D.S.O., O.B.E.; Major N. C. Gillett; Major P. W. Fowler; Capt. F. W. Stoneham; Capt. L. M. Jeffrey, T. D.; E. S. Doubleday; Harry Mead; Harry Oke; M. E. C. Jones; F. H. Hucklebridge; S. G. Emmanuel; A. V. Gay; H. Norman; Dan Whitehead; C. Lowrie.

E. F. (Water rat) Smith sends the following:—

At the outbreak of War he tried to get his Commission back but was informed he was too old, so he applied to the Admiralty for position of Assistant Purser, but waiting list was so long he was advised to seek other activities. Eventually he went to France with the Y.M.C.A. and worked at Arras Rennes and Savernay. He just managed to escape from France by means of Brest, the last port open, weeks after Dunkirk, landing at Falmouth. He then opened a canteen in the Dukeries for the Dunkirk boys, and when they packed up, went to Blandford Camp, Dorset, running a large canteen for two years, after which he went to Coningsby, Lincoln, and opened a canteen for the R.A.F. Soon after that he had heart trouble and had to slow up. He would be most pleased to hear from any 25th, and see any that might be passing this way: White Dale, Walton Road, Bognor Regis, Sussex. Water Rat Smith is over 70. Who said this was a young man's War?

RE-UNION DINNER

Every effort has been made by the secretary and committee to arrange a Re-union Dinner at an early date, but without success. No caterer has been found able or willing to cater for our large

number—250-300. It is therefore to be regretted that it has not been possible to arrange our first post-war Annual Dinner. Can you do anything about it or offer any suggestion? The secretary will welcome help, and take prompt action in replying thereto.

CONTRIBUTIONS (LITERARY)

Matters of general interest to members of the Association are urgently needed for future issues of the *Bulletin*: You have the information—we need it.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Receipts for Subscriptions paid at the A.G.M. are enclosed with this *Bulletin*. Have you sent your subs for 1944-46?

OLD 25th COMRADES SEE IT THROUGH

The following from Ken. Gordon ("C" Co. 1/25) and Sid Bonnet ("A" Co. 1/25) Ace Camera Men of Pathe Gazette send the following contribution:—

From the beaches of Normandy to the Baltic, the Old Comrades of the 25th Cyclists were represented by Sid Bonnett and Ken Gordon, who were acting as War Correspondents for the British News Reel Pool.

Landing just after "D"-day, Sid and Ken were present at all the major battles with their Cinecameras. Sid Bonnett had been to the East and returned home just in time to take part in the landing; Ken Gordon, during the early part of the War had been engaged on the home front, being with the Home Fleet at Harwich and with Convoys in the Channel, then with the 8th American Air Force, having been fully trained as an Air Gunner for duty in Flying Fortresses, later returning to the British Army where he had been one of the Combat camera-men to be used in case of invasion of England. All this time Sid Bonnett was turning out first class material from the East, formerly he was present in France during the "phony war."

Ken Gordon went through training for the big show, attending a number of training operations, including "Operation Bumper," the largest manoeuvre ever to take place in England, also landing training with the Royal Marines on Slapton Sands, Devon.

Both our old comrades landed at Arromanches, and the day after were in action with their cameras, Sid at Tilly sur Seulle and Ken filming the build-up for the battle for Caen, and the fight for Point 112; this changed hands several times and it was here that the 9 and 10 S.S. Panzer Divisions

Old Comrades See It Through—continued

appeared. During these early days, Ken's driver was so badly shell shocked he was invalided out.

Sid and Ken had to cover different subjects, so they did not often meet on the job, so let Kenneth give us some of his personal adventures.

"Well," said Kenneth, "I managed to get into Caen with some of the first patrols; the fighting here was very bitter as the 10th S.S. had arrived as reinforcements and with Panzer Lehr, 12 and 2 S.S. and with 21 Panzer made a total of seven Panzer Divisions opposing the Second Army.

"One of the sights I will always remember was going out with a patrol and seeing the bombing of Caen. After this came the crossing of the Orne and Odon rivers. Then followed the hard fighting around Vire-Mont Pincon-Troan, where I had my first meeting with the Guards; I hope I remembered all the good soldiering Captain Burt had tried to instil into me, later I was in action many times with them, and by the kindly way they always treated me I don't think I let them down.

"Then came the battle for the Falaise Gap, and it was during this that I was bombed by our own Air Force which was engaged in close operations, I managed to get away with it but my new driver, Forster, never fully recovered from the shock. After filming the capture of Falaise, Sid and I joined the Americans and French on the rush to Paris, where we were the first British to help liberate the city; what a reception, you would have thought we had small-pox if you could have seen us, but it was only the lipstick from thousands of French girl's kisses. Next day came De Gaulle's triumphal entry, and we managed to get right in the 'battle' of Notre Dame, very unpleasant, because everybody took a pot shot at anyone, friend or foe. Sid and I then joined up for the dash back, through thousands of dead Germans into Rouen, on to Arras for the dash to Brussels. We were right up with the leading tanks and stopped every now and then while a small battle was fought.

"At last we entered the City, and what a reception; our jeep was filled with flowers and bottles of wine, and how we managed to get going with all the people hanging on for a free ride, I don't know. Every now and then machine gun fire would break out but the Belgian people took no notice. Next day a good time was had by all, but our boys were after Antwerp, and getting up stores and ammo. Some weeks were taken up with the preparations for our break out into Holland. Two canals had to be crossed, the Albert and the Escotte. Then came the great day, the break from our bridge-head and our attempt to reach Arnhem. I was up with the 'Micks,' wouldn't Captain Burt have liked to have been there. They were under command of 30 Corps, Lieut.-General Bryan Horrocks, and it was my good fortune to go into action with this distinguished Corps on many occasions after this.

Bad luck was with us because we ran into a German counter attack coming in, all Hell broke loose, and we lost a few tanks but the 'Micks' soon winkled them out and between taking pictures my job was to search prisoners and get them on their way to the rear.

"Next day we liberated Eindhoven, home of the great Philips radio factory and then on to Nijmegen. Here we joined up with the American Air-Bourne boys who had been dropped to capture the bridges at Grave and Nijmegen. They had got the Grave Bridge O.K., but were having a very bad time at Nijmegen; never have the Americans given the British such a welcome, but no time was lost and I filmed them mounting the Guards Tanks to attack the Post Office, as the control for blowing up the great bridge was housed there. They won, and next morning I went on to the bridge to film our engineers removing the German charges and our tanks going across.

"A sad note here, our D.R., Reanie, taking our films and copy back, was killed when the Germans cut our lines of communication, and we were cut off for some days, and had to send back our Armour to open communications again; this prevented the relief of our Air-Bourne Division at Arnhem. Later I filmed the few who got back to our lines.

"Then with the First Canadian Army for the process of freeing the approaches to Antwerp, the capture of the Island of Beveland, and one of the hardest operations of all, the capture of Walcheren, with thousands of German prisoners. With my comrade Bill Warhurst of the "Times," after a very sticky time we went across the causeway to Middleburg.

"Here I not only obtained some very good pictures including the capture of the German General, but owing to our troops being very short-handed was given charge of the evacuation of the German prisoners; we had no bridges, so two ropes were stretched across the river and assault boats were filled with Germans who had to pull themselves across. Bren-gunners covered them from the banks, just in case. Next came the liberation of the Dutch towns of Tilburg and sHertogenbosh, I was into each with the first troops, on the back of a motor cycle at Tilburg; we had the tyres shot up by mortar fire at sHertogenbosh, and was very lucky to get out with a whole skin. This Dutch town on the banks of the Maas was under shell fire right up to last May.

"Next came the holding of the Germans on the Maas, and the German break through in the Ardennes, where I was again with 30 Corps, and in snow filmed this operation including the Highland Division capturing La Roche. Back into Holland for the battles that took us on to German soil and drove the Hun out of Heinsberg and across the Roer River; all this time the enemy was very active in the air, low machine-gunning.

continued on next page

Old Comrades See It Through—continued

"Then we moved up to Nijmegen for the push to the banks of the Rhine. The enemy had flooded large tracts of country by blowing the embankments and I made trips in our Buffaloes to take part in actions to drive out German patrols holding farm houses and high ground.

"Later came the battles for the Reichwald and the Siegfried Line.

"During this operation, Sid Bonnett lost all his Cameras and Jeep by a direct shell hit in Goch. He was unhurt but had to return home for new equipment. During this time I went in with the first platoon of the Gordons to the capture of Cleve.

"Things were now getting brighter, the filming of operation 'Plunder' took us across the Rhine. Had the pleasure of crossing on a Buffalo with Mr. Winston Churchill and F.M. Montgomery. Three times I filmed Winston during the campaign, firstly in Normandy, next on the Siegfried Line, and firing a big gun, and then crossing the River, after the surrender taking the salute at the Victory march in Berlin.

"What a hectic time we had after the crossing, 250 miles fighting advance in six weeks, some of my more important pictures included entering the Bremen submarine yards with the Royal Marine Commandos, the liberation of our first P.O.W. Camp at Fallingbommel; and the greeting the boys gave us—hundreds of messages home were handed to our Jeep, written on all sorts of scraps of paper, but I regret to say a very firm censorship prevented me sending them. Then came the horrors of Belsen, and being sent forward to try and get into another Concentration Camp at Sandbommel; here we became the spearhead of the British forces and over did it, running into a German strong point held by the 9th Panzer Grenadiers, they shot the wheels off the jeep with Spandau fire, we baled out unhurt into the ditch, and the next thing they hit the car with a Bazooka, that, I think was the end of the Cameras; managed to get up the road without getting hit (rotten bad shots, because I am as big as a house now), into our lines again we collected a fighting patrol, who tried to get to the

remains of the Jeep, but I regret to say that they had a man killed and some wounded, and were withdrawn. We did manage to get the Mortar Officer to hot them up a bit with four-inch stuff.

"A comrade kindly came to my rescue with the loan of a camera, so I was able to be present at the British crossing of the Elbe, the surrender of Hamburg, and the final collapse of the German Army, the delegates coming into our lines at Quick, north of Hamburg, and the final signing of the terms of Surrender to Field Marshall Sir Bernard Montgomery by the Germans on Luneberg Heath. After this came the arrest of the so-called Flensburg German Government, including Grand Admiral Donitz whom I drilled in good old "Burt" style, Himler's death and the capture of Lord 'Haw Haw.' Then a job we didn't do last war, the British entry into Berlin and the Victory march, and the Big Three Meeting at Potsdam, from which I was turned out. The Belsen Trial and the Opening of the Tribunal to try Major War Criminals were very interesting assignments, and later I filmed the refugee camps and the discharge of German Soldiers.

"As a final note I would like to say a word in praise of No. 5 Public Relations Service who looked after the welfare of the Warcos, transport and food was good, and we were allowed to go where we liked, both Sid and I did not have a Conducting Officer, which gave us great freedom. The air service to get our material back to the U.K. was only fair, although at times they laid on special fighters to get back film and photos; the wire service was first class and the Signals despatched Press copy from right up forward many times under shell-fire.

"The Generals gave us every assistance, we were briefed by the Chief of Staff well before any big action and given the fullest picture, during the battle we had a Press conference each morning and could, during the day, call in at Div. Brigade, or Battalion H.Q. and get full details of the local situation."

KEN GORDON,

"C" Coy, 1/25th.

P. H. NICOL, Editor,
7, Oxberry Avenue, S.W.6.
Telephone: PUTNEY 2389.