

President: Paul H. Nicol

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

Waziristan 1917.
Afghanistan 1919.

Bulletin No. 99.
July 1960.

15a, Carlton Drive,
Putney, S.W.15.

Secretary's Notes

HOLIDAYS. As the Annual Holidays are now in full swing, I hope those who have had theirs, had an enjoyable time; and those who have got them to come, also will have a good time, with better weather than we have had lately. Personally, my wife and I spent a very happy week with "CHAMP" at Sheringham. "Champ" is a wonderful character, and Mrs. Champion a splendid Hostess. During our all too brief stay we visited several of the old haunts (Which some of you will remember) such as the "Robin Hood" at Sheringham, the "Ship" and Church at Weybourne and the "Feathers" at Holt. Although I had not been to Sheringham since 1915, apart from a great improvement of the sea-front, it has altered very little.

REUNION DINNER. In spite of the counter attraction on this date, Princess Margaret's Wedding, and the consequent dislocation of the evening traffic, 125 members and friends sat down to Dinner. 27 members sent in apologies for absence due to illness, distance and other engagements, and sent their Greetings to all present. Our President took the Chair, and our Official Guests included representatives from the "SIGNALS", "HANTS", "SUSEX'S" and "KENT'S" Regts. During the evening a collection was made for the BENEVOLENT FUND, which resulted in the sum of £20.10. 0. being received. The Committee wish to thank all those who subscribed.

We were pleased to see at the Dinner, after a lapse of some years, the following Members:- Capt. F. Oswell Jones, H. Long, H.G. White and E.C. Maunderne, who was known in the old days as Corpl. E.C. Leeske. Capt. F. Oswell Jones has sent me a copy of his travels which is included at the end of this Bulletin.

OTHER REUNIONS, etc. "Signals" Centenary Celebrations at Lytton Grove. The O.C.A. were represented by the President, C.A. Turner, myself and our wives.

"HANT'S" DINNER at Southampton. The O.C.A. were represented by F.C. Wood and C. Lowrie.

"SUFFOLK'S" Summer Reunion at Saxmundham etc. The O.C.A. were represented by Capt. C.C.P. Tindall and Teddy Churchill.

PERSONAL PAR. W.F. (Sandy) Holdsworth, who is now touring Canada, has written me stating that he has contacted Jack Suttle at Calgary, and Hill Andrews at Lethbridge. He tells me that both are still very interested in the O.C.A. Sandy has promised me a full report of his travels on his return, next October.

OBITUARY. Since the Publication of the last Bulletin (98), I regret to inform you of the OLD COMRADES who have "Passed on":- P.D. Anderson, E.J. Davis, J.W. Gunningham, F.W. (Sailor) Hageman, A.E. Hickford, H.E. Mead, A.J. Perkins, (the Batt. Lyric writer).

N.B. Whenever possible the O.C.A. are represented at the funerals of our departing Comrades.

Lt/Col. W.S. Read reports the following: "Members of the Battalion who served on the North West Frontier may remember the late General Sir George de Symons

Barrow, G.C.B., K.C.M.G., for whom a Memorial Service was held at the Chapel of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, on May 7th, 1960. Until his recent death at the age of 95, he was regarded as "the Father" of the Indian Army. He commenced his Service in the 88th Connaught Rangers. He transferred to the 4th Cavalry (I.A.) and later commanded the Scinde Horse (I.A.). During World War I, he was Chief of Staff, 1st Army, and after that was G.O.C. Peshwar Division when we moved up from Southern India. Later he was G.O.C. Eastern Command. He was also Colonel of the Scinde Horse and of the 14/20th Hussars".

SUBSCRIPTIONS, PLEASE. Have you paid your subscription up to date? If not, please let me have same by August 31st, Thank you. Outstanding receipts are enclosed with this Bulletin.

James J. Gander.

FROM THE 26th MX. CYCLIST VOLUNTEERS

I have a very clear recollection of the day I joined the 26th Mx. Cyclist Volunteers, in 1906, to become a Military Cyclist. I was then about 31 at the time, rather old for a start. But life was all so very dull and uneventful in the little village of Shepperton on Thames. I had been working as scenic artist for the Hepworth Film Coy., the first permanent scenic in that new industry, and little knew of where that action would lead me in after life, the interest and satisfaction to be doing something, however small, in military life, as my father and grandfather before and also my two brothers, then in the services, one in the Blues and the other in the Royal Marines, I followed the family tradition of several generations and was in my right place painting and soldiering, and have been that ever since. It is my life and it has been full of interest all those years, 54 of them and still going strong. I wanted to join the R.E.s as a regular soldier years before but was not up to their standard at that time of 5'9" and was very disappointed. I intended to enlist for the S.A. War and go out with my brother, but joined another army instead, the army of married men.

At that time the new Company E was being formed by Capt. Trapman, a most enterprising man, full of ideas and interest, and Cpl. Paget was also a recruit in the same section, Sgt. E. Smith was my sergeant and our first small parade was at Weybridge and we joined another small squad at Walton Bridge, all in uniform of the 26th Mx. except myself.

Off we went on a field training excursion somewhere in the Windsor Area, when it came on to rain heavily. By that time Sgt. Smith had become thoroughly fogged and lost his sense of direction and the whereabouts of the main body he had been ordered to join up with. Cense fire was about 4 o/c. Rendezvous was at Bagshot with the main body. I asked Sgt. Smith for his map and studied it a bit and decided whereabouts we might be and suggested carrying on to the next village and make enquiries. When at the next crossroads I spotted cycle tracks on the left of the road. I estimated about 15 to 20. It could not be 15 to 20 civilians, so I advised carrying on the same way until we could check up for the correct position and decided they had passed on about 20 minutes before us. I was right and we joined the main body in a well filled pub near Bagshot Common.

That seemed to impress Sgt. Smith as being pretty good for a newly joined recruit so when I received my uniform it had one stripe on the sleeve at the same time, surely the first recruit to join as a fully fledged L/C.

Soon after when the company filled up I was promoted to L/C Sergeant with my scout's badge up.

And so it happened that it became my lot to train the 26th Mx. in map reading and map making. The most impressive event I remember was when the Old 26 Mx. Cycle Volunteers was disbanded, I think in a field on the roadside near Reigate, and the 25th London Cyclist Bn. was brought into being, I cannot now remember the exact date, but that grand old soldier R.S.W. Charles Burt and Col. Gilbertson Smith were there, the announcement was made with great feeling by Col. Gilbertson Smith at the handing over of the battalion he had created. I think the Beverley camp was the most interesting. I certainly had a lot to do as Scout Sergeant on that occasion.

The most important camp after that was that Stoodly camp in Cambridgeshire, it was the toughest and most exciting, we were brigaded with regular troops, the Household Cavalry, Royal Horse Artillery and two or three cavalry regiments and an early reconnaissance balloon (aircraft were not then invented) from which we received reports to deliver to the various unit commanders as they were dropped. Surely a trial for any troops as a proof of efficiency carried out under the eyes of the War Office Brasshats, and we, like another famous regiment "always got our man".

On that occasion I met my younger brother Cpl. Major B.H. Jones of the Blues and my cousin Essington Brown, riding master of another famous hussar regiment in the field, 11th Hussars.

At the general "Pow Wow" afterwards when Brasshats from the War Office and other regiments were there, Cpl. Ridout and myself were handed up in front of these regiments and commended by the G.O.C. for excellent scouting.

I must have looked particularly scruffy as I had just had a tooth extracted and my face was bloody and swollen. I had not had a wash or a shave for about 5 days and very little sleep either and was certainly hungry and dirty. But we proved the 25th London was the most mobile regiment at that time in the world though we only had a very few motor cycles in use, and as scouts unequalled. We could be depended on to find our way anywhere by night or day and above all were silent, whereas cavalry or motorized transport could be heard miles away by putting an ear to the ground, which proved very disconcerting to the regular troops. We could ride through the lines and at least I did whenever I wanted, without being seen. I once stood behind a big tree at the roadside with the enemy in front and behind me and those behind me passed so close that I could have touched them and I was not seen. There were several other camps after that but none so large and exciting, but some members present will well remember the affair at Burning Gap when a cyclist patrol ran headlong into an advancing cavalry regiment on the top of Beachy Head and withdrew fighting to the little bridge below held by ourselves. For the camp at Rye I was not able to get leave from my firm as I was in the middle of an important film at the time, but it was all but completed by Aug. 4th, '14, when I was mobilized. It was momentous for me. I rode into Fulham House at 3.20, Aug. 4th, '14, for regular service abroad, in fact I was the first man to come forward for foreign service and ultimately signed off at Purfleet on Aug. 4th, '20 at precisely 3.20 p.m. 6 years later. But a most eventful six years.

When the 25th left for India, for certain good reasons I decided to apply for my commission. Permission to apply had been refused by Col. Churchill, though special requests for my services on three occasions and turned down by him for his own ends.

I ultimately joined the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, being a Jones. I went through the usual cadet course. I was then 44, and became an instructor of topography, but

passed quite a lot of my time with the revolver school finding that too easy a life, and became a crack revolver shot. I decided to apply for active service. Ultimately, after many vicissitudes in France and Italy, on the road to join the Notts. & Veroy Reg., (The Sherwood Foresters), I found myself in Egypt. It was a new world to me in every way. I led a full life in regimental affairs and had ample time to paint in the wonderful East, specially Cairo and Palestine. Places full of colour and interest, I even have a few left now, but nowhere I can show them. I met Sgt. Freddy Woods in Suez and went with him as passenger on his qualifying flight, well to be remembered, and in the years that followed travelled nearly all over Egypt, parts of Sudan, Camel Corps Service with the Hedjaz Army, both in Arabia and Palestine. Eventually returned to Cairo on leave when I was requested to join the R.A.O.C. as an Ordinance Officer. Here I found the work particularly interesting and rewarding and remained with that regiment in charge of several large departments, covering almost the whole of Egypt, Arabia, Palestine and parts of Sudan I never saw personally, clothing, camp equipment, an immense organisation and a small engineering store. All very intricate and interesting, until I returned home at the end of July, 1920, signing off 3 p.m., 4th Aug. '20, just 6 years to the minute. But of this part of my services I could well write a book of where I went and who I met and other doings which are not of the 25 C. of L. interest, but I trust what I have written is of interest.

In the last war I joined the Air Ministry as a civilian instructor and did the work of a flight sergeant, served with them some four years at Kirkham Camp after having taken 25 years off my age, for which I was refused an O.A.P. and in disgust at my unfair treatment left England for the little island of St. Helena in the South Atlantic. I married a charming St. Helenan Lady, I had never seen before who had the same name and initials as my first wife, P.B. Ward. We had ten happy years of married life, and at her death on June 20th, '59, I returned home, arriving in cold and snow which nearly killed me but not quite, I am not dead yet. I still paint my pictures of all sorts of places and things and put them in an exhibition for amusement which is not bad for 88, and I am now writing a book of my varied and interesting life for publication later on.

Capt. P. Oswald Jones.

A MEMORY OF ZAM POST

I wonder how many of my old comrades still surviving remember Zam Post? It was soon after midnight on the 7th June, 1917, that the "ever famous 25th" started that march to the gateway of Waziristan. We had been issued with topee shades, sun goggles, quinine tablets, field dressings, and spine pads. I remember taking a cake of soap which later became a jelly, a tin of unsweetened chocolate which resembled hot cocoa if opened in the day time, and a tin of dubbin which eventually swamped my spare shirt and socks!

Our great adventure had started and everybody was wondering what the future held in store for us. The local militia man acting as our guide - either purposely or through inefficiency - advised following the longer track past the Fort at Zam Post. It was dark except for starlight and a thin white moon. Eventually dawn was breaking when we heard the sound of scattered rifle fire about a mile or so ahead. We all wondered what was happening, but one humourist in "B" company suggested that "the grouse season had started". The order came for us to double. We reached the grey loop-holed Fort at Zam. It was entirely composed of sun-baked mud. We soon learnt what had happened. A screen of the 1/4th Gurkhas had left the Fort about 5.30 a.m. to picket the heights for us. The mullah at the opening in the hills had been

reported on by aeroplane scouts as being clear. Nevertheless, the detachment of 90 Gurkhas were ambushed only a few hundred yards from the Fort. There was no warning and no time to build a sangar. The unlucky Gurkhas soon had 34 casualties, including many killed. They had been surrounded by some 400 treacherous Mahsuds, and every man of their advance guard had been wiped out in the first volley. The hillmen suddenly ceased firing and withdrew, but unfortunately a wounded fanatical Mahsud shot the subaltern named Cooper from behind as he raised his body to look round.

Meanwhile our "A" Company had pushed through the Fort enclosure, picked up some extra ammunition and started to chase the retreating enemy. If only that guide had been a little more efficient the retreat might have been cut off.

While we were halted the rest of us had time to look at the "battlefield". The dead Mahsuds and Gurkhas were not a pretty sight. I remember one of our fittest runners - a hockey star - chucking a dummy! But one or two of our cooler opportunists were taking snaps of the grotesque figures of the dead enemy tribesmen. Most of them were wearing ragged "puggarees" round their heads, dirty poahins and pantaloons and sandals of pleated grass. Some had dyed their beards crimson and orange perhaps to hide the grey hairs. One Gurkha was busy lighting the beards with the aid of a box of matches. Another kicked and spat on a dead Mahsud. "They have killed three of my friends", he said sadly. Men from the Fort were collecting "bundooks", equipment and empty .303 cases. Stretcher-bearers were assisting some of the bleeding and limping little brown heroes. The picture still lingers in my mind though it was over 43 years ago. The doctor who attended the wounded - Gurkha and Mahsud alike - asked the Major in command at the Fort what saved the remainder of the gallant Gurkhas. According to "The Times of India Illustrated Weekly", the Major made this illuminating reply:- "Simplest thing in the world, though we hadn't been counting on it. The arrival of the Londons - the regiment we'd gone out to picquet for - half an hour before their time. Someone must have heard the sound of rapid fire and hurried up the battalion".

Conrad B. Hendrick,
"B" Company, 1/25th London Regt.

NOTICES

- Reunion Dinner. Friday, May 5th, 1961, at the Windsor Castle Restaurant, Victoria, S.J.I.
- Ophthalmic Optician. W.G. Middleton, 20, Bath Road, Hounslow, Middlesex, HOU. 0024.
- Furs. Of all kinds. Renovations. Cold Storage. W.T. Davidson, 21, South Molton Street, W.1. MAYfair 2676.
- Sign & Glass Writing. Douglas Stuart, 27, Narbonne Avenue, S.W.4. TUL. 2566.
- Holiday Apartments
- " 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
- " " W.A. Budd, Station Hotel, Sutton, Surrey.
- " " E. Marsh, "Man of Kent", East Peckham nr. Tonbridge, Kent.
- " " E.S. Mitchell, "Warren House", Forest Road nr. Wokingham, Berks.
- Regimental Ties 9/6d. post free.
-