



# Redcoats Review

## Celebrating the 60th Anniversary of the Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Reg- iment (Berkshire and Wiltshire)



The Colours are marched off , after presentation during the Amalgamation parade on the Isle of Wight, June, 1959. The Colour party is under the command of RSM Hodges, front centre is WO2 Jack Barrow



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### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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As 2019 commemorates the 60th Anniversary of the formation of The Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment (Berkshire and Wiltshire) the editorial team felt that this would be an appropriate time to look back at the relatively short history, in military terms, of this fine regiment. Those of us who served in it genuinely believe it to have been the finest Infantry Regiments of the Line. The following two very different accounts give an insight into life in the Regiment. The first is from a former National Serviceman who joined the 1st Battalion some 4 months after the amalgamation parade, Trevor Woodham. The second is from someone on parade on that day in 1959 when two great county regiments bequeathed their history and traditions to the new Regiment and served before the Colours beyond the life span of Regiment, Peter Stacey. So here are their stories.

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**Extracts from an account of the service of an early 'Farmersboy'.  
23753588 Trevor Woodham (Private)  
1st Battalion The Duke of Edinburgh Royal Regiment (Berkshire and Wiltshire)  
November 1959 National Service Intake 59/23.**

The National Service Enlistment Board had called me for a medical at Stoke on Trent in April 1959 and I had passed A1. Almost eight months went by and I was beginning to think the army had lost track of me. It was late October 1959 when they finally caught up with me, and I was duly conscripted into the 1st Battalion Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment.

I was ordered to report to the barracks of the 1st East Anglian Regt. in Bury St Edmunds on Nov.1st 1959, no later than 1600hrs. They even included rail travel warrant for the journey. I had never heard of the Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment, and nobody else I knew had either. At work they made believe they had, and there was a lot of leg pulling about bagpipes, wearing kilts and tartan trews.

**JELLALABAD BARRACKS TIDWORTH**

1 DERR were based at Jellalabad Barracks Tidworth, Hants, and here we were, in Bury St Edmunds, Norfolk. The powers that be decided we should make the journey by public transport. So, 1 Officer, 1 Sergeant, 2 Corporals and 36 privates, complete with all belongings in kit bags set off. We went by train to London Paddington, then across London by underground to Waterloo, and from there on to Tidworth.

We were met by R.S.M. Hodges, a big hard man who just stood and stared at us for a short while, that look was all it took for us to realise who was the boss! To reinforce his authority he had us doing drill for a while, then gave us a short lecture making it quite clear that we were not good enough to serve in his regiment and we had better sharpen up very quickly or else!!!!!!! He then handed over to a sergeant to tell us just where in the regiment we would be serving.



RSM Hodges who had an early "chat" with Private Woodham on his arrival in Tidworth.

I was drafted into 5 Platoon, B Company as a rifleman, a disappointment for sure as I wanted a driving job. The only consolation was that the mate I had made in training, Roy Taylor, was drafted with me. The barracks were a revelation. We found ourselves in centrally heated rooms with only 8 single tier beds, a bathroom, and all easy to keep clean. It was a big change from the Victorian Barracks at Bury St Edmunds.

The following morning we met our Platoon Officer, Lt. Goodheart. He was a Full Lieutenant and was following a family tradition as a professional soldier. We soon came to like him as a person and respect him as an officer. He was a natural leader. The platoon sergeant Sgt Bray was a very different character! Later we also met the 'B' Company Commander, Major Blaschek, he was also a really decent officer, he demanded his 'pound of flesh', but always looked out for the welfare of his men. He quickly set out our immediate future.

### **EXERCISE STARLIGHT**

Preparation. The next major event was 'Exercise Starlight'. We later found out that it was to take place in Libya, and would be the biggest training exercise since the war; some 10,000 soldiers were involved, along with Royal Navy and Royal Air Force units. Our training now consisted of marching, marching and some more marching. Mondays we covered 5-8 miles, Wednesdays 10-15 miles, Fridays 18-20 miles. In between we spent time on the firing range or in battle training on Salisbury Plain. The route marches were usually in full battle kit, and were very competitive. Some days platoons would march against each other, on other days competition was between companies and once each month the whole battalion would march together. On those days, usually a Friday, as we were returning to barracks the regimental band would meet up with us a mile or so out and we would march in to brisk military music. Then as we entered the garrison the band would switch into the regimental march 'The Farmers Boy'. 'B' Company regularly won the battalion marching contests, and '5' platoon were consistently best overall. We were all very happy with that, but we were not to know how it would impact on Exercise Starlight. We all became very fit; our only worry was the 18 – 20 mile Friday march. After that we would have a foot inspection. If there was any sign of foot trouble, you were straight down to the medics, not on the coach home for the weekend.

We flew to Libya from R.A.F. Abingdon in Bristol Britannia aircraft, the first time most of us had travelled by air. We landed at R.A.F. Derna (Martuba), there we were transferred into Beverly Transport aircraft, it was a short flight and to our amazement we landed in the desert, no airfield, just sand.

The exercise had begun. Our Major called us together and he was clearly very angry, we had been tasked with being the reserve company. He had objected strongly to the C.O. He thought because of our performance during training we deserved lead role. Then there was more bad news for 5 Platoon, we were told that we would be the company reserve. In a battle, one regiment is usually kept in reserve, so that if there is a danger of losing the fight, a reserve of fresh troops can readily be brought forward. For the same reason the Regiment keeps a company in reserve and the company keeps a platoon in reserve. In our case this meant that '5' platoon were at the very back of the battle order, in theory we would not see any 'action'.



Private Trevor Woodham in Libya, North Africa on Exercise 'Starlight'

So the imaginary battle began. The story was that we were to fight an invading force and reclaim 'home territory'. For some days we simply followed the advance, the only sight we had of the 'enemy' was brief flashes and bangs in the distance and an odd helicopter flying around. Towards the end of the exercise the umpires declared that the enemy had launched a counter attack, and the front line was in danger of being overrun and should be reinforced. The C.O. 1DERR ordered 'B' Coy. forward and '5' Platoon was put at the head. The march began late one at night. Lt. Goodheart led us through the night working entirely on compass bearings. We marched in single file; we could just make out the man in front, and you couldn't see where you were putting your feet. After almost 4hrs of none stop marching we had 10 min. rest. Then off we went again. Now we were told to be absolutely silent.

Just before dawn we were halted again. The first thing we noticed was the smell, it was vile and in the dark we couldn't work out what it was. As daylight came we saw the reason, we were surrounded by camels! They were everywhere, but despite the smell, there we had another short break. We had now been on the move for over 6hrs, no proper food only boiled sweets from our compositions and desalinated water to drink.

Lt. Goodheart told us to gather round and he gave us our battle briefing, he told us that during the night we had passed right through our own troops defence positions and had reached the 'front line'. The 'enemy' were just over the next ridge, and just before dawn the signal to attack would come, and we would be first to go in. We advanced up the slope and paused just below the ridge, most of us feeling very nervous not knowing what to expect. The whistle sounded and over the top we charged to find..... group's of paratroopers just sitting around!

#### **Exercise Pond Jump.** [Transferred to MT Section]

The battalion was assembled on the barrack square, even the MT section had to parade, that was practically unheard of. The C.O. announced that the battalion had been chosen to exercise with the Canadian armed forces in Canada. The exercise was scheduled to last for a month and that altogether we would be away for a total of six weeks. We were to be hosted by the Canadian Black Watch Regt, and would be the first full British army unit to visit Canada and train with their forces. Everything now began to revolve around preparations for the move to Canada. Each of us was told which party we would be in. Advance party, the first lot to go to prepare for the arrival of the battalion. Main party, which speaks for itself, and Rearguard, the one no one wanted - you're not going!

THE FLIGHT and SET UP - I was put into the main party. We flew from RAF Abingdon in Bristol Britannia aircraft, a four engine turbo prop known as the 'whispering giant'. They were the standard troop carriers of Air Transport Command at the time. A lucky few got to fly in Comets; they were just coming into service. We were bound for New Brunswick province, on the eastern side of Canada where there was/is a huge army training area. In the Britannia it was a 9hr flight to Canada. We flew into the military airfield at Fredericton; from there we were quickly transferred to a Canadian army barracks for a couple of nights, then taken by coach out to the training area. We were in a tented camp that had been all set up waiting for us by the advance party; this was to be our base for the whole of our visit.

At 6am the following morning the battalion was paraded and were informed that we were now operational. I was still the CO's driver and to my surprise I was given a secondary role, Ambulance driver. The ambulance was a Dodge 6 cylinder engine and could carry 4 stretcher cases plus a medic. The troop carrying truck was the 'G.M. Deuce and a half' was an 8 cylinder, 6 wheel fully automatic. Also we had the Willies Jeep. As drivers we were not impressed with the vehicles. The C/O was busy attending welcome parties etc. Everywhere we went the hospitality was terrific, although I was always outside the official groups, I was always offered whatever was on their menus, both food and drink! At this stage my ambulance duties were negligible, yes I was on call, but for some time no emergency calls came, it seemed a bit of a 'routine none job'. That changed with a vengeance one Saturday night. There was a tremendous electrical storm right over our camp, it was like no other storm I had ever seen, the thunder and lightning was nonstop, the rain was torrential. In the midst of all this one of the tents was struck and 4 soldiers badly injured. Three soldiers had minor burns and were in shock, the other one was badly burned and unconscious.



Private [Now Driver] Woodham in  
Canada on Exercise 'Pond Jump'

The Dodge ambulance could carry four stretchers and a medic in the back, so fully laden we set off for the military hospital in Fredericktown, almost 10 miles away. I knew exactly where it was, I had been trained on the route for just such an emergency. The first 2 miles were on gravel roads, they were 'graded' regularly and quite good really. The main problem was the skid risk that loose gravel surfaces present. After that we joined a major highway. Here it was flashing lights and foot down; being night time traffic was very light, my real worry was wild life. We had seen porcupines, bears and a moose around, they had never been close enough to be a problem, we didn't want one now. The journey went well and we were soon approaching the hospital. We swung into the grounds and there was a jeep waiting with a sign on the back that lit up as we got close that said 'follow me'.

The journey back was an anti-climax, but by the time we got back word had been received that three of the lads would be fine, shock and minor burns. The other lad was in intensive care very seriously hurt. He was still in hospital when we came back to the UK four weeks later.

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### A Northern Ireland Interlude

Early deployments to Northern Ireland for 1 DERR

The battalion established a footprint in Ulster from the very start of 'The Troubles' August - December 1969 - 'C' Company to Londonderry [reinforced by the Drums]

June 1970 - 'B' Company to Belfast [Attached 1 Royal Scots]

1971 - Complete Battalion to Londonderry.

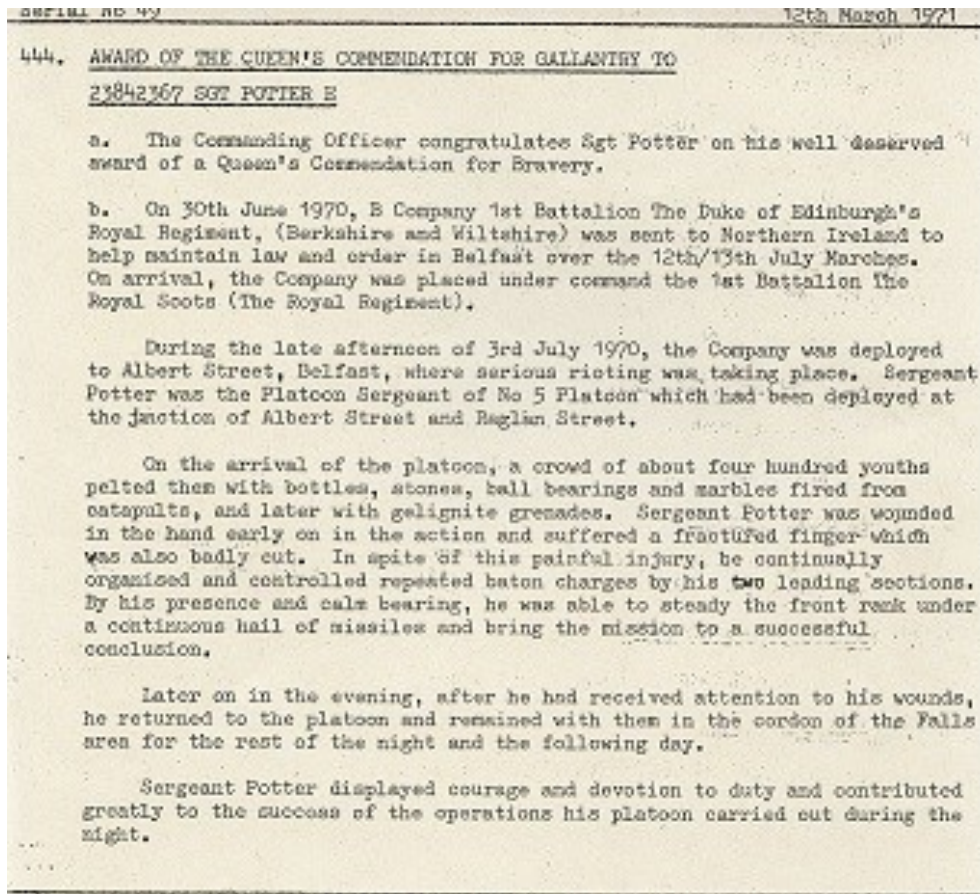
From this point onwards the battalion served in the province up to and including the final year of its existence in 1994.

An example of what was to come is highlighted in the citation of the Queens Commendation for Bravery awarded to Sergeant Ernest Potter, Platoon Sergeant of No 5 Platoon but first his own account.



*"We were supporting a platoon of the Royal Scots, who were searching for an arms cache. When they pulled out we were left with a crowd facing us. We had to dismount to turn our vehicles and the crowd attacked. One man was blown off his feet by a grenade and others were cut. We managed to hold them back for an hour until reinforcements came and we withdrew"*

The actual citation reads:



## FROM BISCUIT BOY TO FARMERS BOY

### Peter Stacey

It seems like yesterday when the 1st Battalion the Royal Berkshire Regiment was informed that it was to be amalgamated with the 1st Battalion the Wiltshire Regiment. Both Battalions were serving in Cyprus during the EOKA campaign. What had we done to deserve this? The amalgamation was to take place in 1959.



A young LCpl P Stacey R Berks leading his patrol on the Green Line in Cyprus. Dragon Cap badge in pride of place within the Brandywine.

At this time, it was also decided that we were to replace our beloved Dragon cap badge with a Wyvern, symbol of Wessex. This was not a popular move; A Company were ordered by the OC to retain their Dragons when in A Company lines. This did not impress the RSM who ordered them to remove the Dragon and replace it with the Wyvern. All of A Company had to carry a Wyvern in their pocket just in case they met the RSM. This continued for some time but by the time the Battalion left Cyprus in February 1959 all were wearing the Wyvern, as was 1 Wilts and the other 4 Regiments in the Wessex Brigade.

The Battalion arrived in Southampton to a wonderful reception: it was then onto Brock Barracks in Reading, also Raniket Camp in Tilehurst. This was followed by freedom parades through all Berkshire towns. Many a tear was seen in eyes of the Old Comrades who had served and worn the Dragon during two World Wars, this was to be the end of their Regiment. A very sad time for the County which then included Wantage, Wallingford, and Abingdon.

At the end of May 1959, the Battalion moved to the ISLE OF WIGHT to join 1 WILTS in Albany Barracks, Newport. The Amalgamation took place on the 9th of June 59. New Colours were presented by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh and the new regiment was born.

The first test was a battalion exercise on Salisbury Plain with the battalion under canvas at Windmill Hill and due to move to Jellalabad Barracks, Tidworth in August 1959. The exercise went well, the bulk of the battalion were National Servicemen most were very good soldiers but lacking in experience.

Having settled into Tidworth as part of the 1st Guards Brigade in the Air Portable Role there were many exercises on the Plain and Keeping the Peace exercises at Thetford. There were also many route marches around the Wiltshire /Hampshire countryside - very impressive seeing the whole battalion on the march: I was in the MMG/ Recce Platoon and often wondered why we had vehicles. Think it was something to do with being in INDIA where a regiment was judged by how well it could march over great distances, 600 Pairs of Ammunition boots marching in step through the villages keep the locals from falling asleep .

Who was the Adjutant that always inspected the Battalion while riding a horse. The animal had a habit of emptying itself on the front-rank soldiers, starting in A Company and not finishing until reaching HQ Company. It could not have completed this trick without training. You could never get a shine on your best boots again if caught in the slip stream. Never liked horses ever again. Was his name "Bill Turner"?

Trying to load vehicles onto a Hastings Aircraft with only a side door proved to be a challenge, having to reverse up an angled ramp with a trailer, we managed to ground a few aircraft, but all flew again after repair. This was a build up for Exercise Starlight 1, to be held in Libya.



Newly formed 1st Battalion DERR deployed in Libya on Exercise Starlight . Those with sharp eyes will note that the cap badge within the Brandywine is a Wyvern

Most of the 3rd Infantry Division were flown to a desert strip at Timimi in either Beverley, Hastings or Argosy aircraft. All troops were under canvas waiting the start of a major exercise which involved a very long advance to contact along the coast to Derna; we then knew what all those bloody route marches were for. It was a very testing exercise which the battalion came through with flying colours and started to gel as a unit after a very hard exercise. (Most of the Tanks and vehicles knocked out in WW2 were still in position together with much unexploded ordnance).

Back to Tidworth and a move to Assaye Barracks and to 51 Inf Brigade. The Battalion were selected to train in New Brunswick Canada as part of the 1st Canadian Infantry Brigade who were deployed to the summer training area under canvas, we joined them and took part in their training. The final event was a forced march competition each company in the Bde had to enter a platoon in full equipment. Each set off at 5 minute intervals, C Coy's team was commanded by Sgt Alan Beck managed to overtake the two Canadian Platoons that had set off before them and won the competition. The Canadians from then on called us not 1 DERRs but THE WONDERS. The regiment was much respected by the Canadians who made us feel very welcome It was a honour to wear the badge even if it was a WYVERN but at least we had the BRANDYWINE. The Battalion had set a very high standard which it maintained.

Lead Elements of the main party deplaning to begin their participation on Exercise Pond Jump where they became known as WONDERR



On return to Tidworth Companies were deployed to British Guiana and Nassau in support of 1 Royal HAMPS. I was posted to the Wessex Depot, then at Honiton, as a training instructor. Among others I trained, I had the privilege of meeting our first Fijians at Heathrow on a cold winter day and went on to take them through their basic training. How proud they were. All went on to be a credit to the regiment who was also proud that they had selected to be Dukes. The Battalion moved to Malta in 1962 on the Troopship 'Oxfordshire', the last battalion to leave the UK by Troop ship.

I re-joined the Battalion in Malta in 1963 as a Section Commander in A Company 1 Platoon. There were Exercises in Libya and Sardinia. The Battalion was then deployed to Cyprus in order to keep the peace between the Greek and Turkish communities. We were tasked to defend Nicosia Airport and to man the Green Line which divided the two communities in Nicosia. Later taking up positions in the mountain villages that had become isolated, due to the civil war.

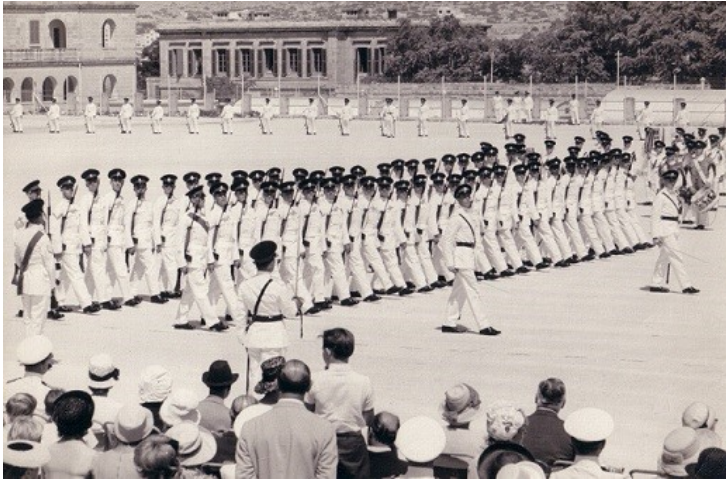
Who was the Coy Clerk, who when on sentry challenged an unknown person who said he was Pilot Officer Duck, and replied with "Waddle over here and Quack your last four"?

They are still looking for the contents of the Cornera Hotel wine cellar Can't think who took it and possibly drank it!

We handed over to 1 PARA, who were part of the UN Peace Keeping Force. Then back to Malta and promotion to Pl Sgt 3 PL A Coy . The Company were again deployed to Cyprus, this time in support of 1 Glosters in Episkopi taking over from C Company. It was a busy tour guarding various sites in the Sovereign Base Areas and taking care of the many refugees. Despite this we managed to hold a Company Ferozshah Parade in Episkopi, had to show the Glosters how it was done.

Back in Malta we were tasked with training the Royal Navy crews who were bound for the Far East in Riot Drills and crowd control. Our soldiers took great pleasure in setting up the sailors with flour bombs and anything else they could throw at Jolly Jack who took it all in good part but couldn't wait to get back on board their ships where their felt safe from the raging Dukes.





One of the Companies marching past on the 1st Battalion Trooping the Colours in Malta 1964.

Who was the young officer when taking staff parade ordered the Duty Drummer to BLOW OFF? I won't tell, Colin.

I was informed that I was to be posted to The Army Apprentice College at Arborfield, as an Infantry Instructor. A very slow pace of life compared to the Battalion, couldn't wait to get back.

Re-joined the Battalion in Minden West Germany who were now Mechanized and part of 11 Infantry Brigade, again in A Company as Platoon Sgt. We became a first class battalion in the Mech Role and were respected throughout BAOR. We set the standard for others to follow, I must have done something right as I was promoted to CQMS of A Company, a very enjoyable post. It's not everyone who can race around the country side in a Stalwart. Crossing the River Weser at night was a challenge but we always made it to the far bank unlike some others, who I won't mention, (B Coy). Our time in Minden was over far too soon. The Battalion had fired on all six or eight cylinders and proved itself once again.



The iconic photograph of a Mechanised Infantry Battalion taken from the attic window of the Warrant Officers and Sergeants mess in Clifton Barracks in 1969. This image formed the centre piece of the Battalion souvenir of that very successful tour.

From the flesh pots of West Germany to the North Yorkshire Moors seemed like a backward step, but little did we know just how diverse and interesting the tour was to become. A Company carried out Exercise Sanjak in Malaya based on the Jungle Warfare School in Johore – Bahru. Who was the Cpl that dropped his AR 15 in the river resulting in the Royal Navy divers from Singapore having to recover the missing weapon in the dark. I think he may have been in the Signal Pl.



A member of A Company on a Close Quarter Battle (CQB) Range during Exercise Sanjak.

The Coy 2ic proved that Map Reading was not his forte but he was on loan from the Glosters. It was a very good and hard Exercise but was enjoyed by all., Again the Regiment managed to raise its profile and prove that a Self-Accounting Company Group could operate far from home in Jungle conditions with no acclimatisation.

The camp barber was keen to show me his references, one had been signed by the CO of the 2nd Bn R BERKS dated 1922. If you ever need to know what's going on, ask the Char Wallah. I gave him the contract to shear the Company. He in return gave me free polish!

Meanwhile B company had deployed to British Honduras, and C Company to Londonderry; this was the start of many future tours to this troubled land. It was now A Company who moved to British Honduras, it can be described as a happy tour in this pleasant part of the world. Again, the regiment carried out its duties in quiet efficient manner that became its trade mark.

On return to Catterick it was announced that all Infantry Regiments could revert to wearing their original cap badge, but that was a problem as we did not have a cap badge, as we had worn the Wyvern from the formation of the regiment. It was therefore decided to wear the left-hand collar badge as the cap badge, which it continued to do. I often wonder what happened to all those right-handed collar badges. QMs perks perhaps!

Having managed not to lose the Company's G1088 I was promoted to CSM Support Company. The Battalion trained in Wainwright Canada which was much enjoyed by all but very cold, again the regiment gained much respect.

Back to Catterick just in time for a long week end then it was off to Drumerhoe Factory in Londonderry - it was a quiet tour. The lull before the storm that was to come. The Battalion carried out a search at the southern end of Lough Neagh. This proved very interesting for those who couldn't swim, my boots are still wet! I don't think we left any soldiers in the water, but it was a close-run thing. If you can't take a joke etc., No Russian Subs were found.

It was difficult to imagine just how much the Battalion achieved while at Catterick busy, busy, busy.

Berlin was most welcome. The Battalion could catch it's breath and enjoy the wonderful facilities of the city. Providing you were not late for the Train Guard Duties life was very good indeed. Time passed far too quickly.



One of the many highlights of the Berlin tour. A visit from HRH Prince Charles, seen here signing the Visitors Book of the Warrant Officers and Sergeants Mess under the watchful eye of WO1 (RSM) J Pinchen, with the Mess PMC WO2 P Stacey

It was time to prepare for a two-year tour in Northern Ireland Ballykinler, this time accompanied. The Battalion would act as Province Reserve. It was a testing time for all and at times very sad but, the Regiment performed its duties in a most professional manner which was a credit to the Regiment and the Army.

WO 2 P Stacey having been awarded the Long Service and Good Conduct (LS&GC) medal on the Ferozeshah parade in Ballykinler December 1973.



In 1975 it was on to Shoeburyness and the battle of Southend Sea Front, Battalion 2 Yobs 0; Black Eyes all round!! Once again, the Battalion found itself in Cyprus again in Episkopi Guarding the SBAs with one Coy dispatched to Ayios Nicolias. Who told the BFBS Reporter that Regiment wore kilts on one day a year to commemorate being the last English regiment to do so. Needless to say, the film crew were not impressed for a wasted journey to film this historic event.

I applied for Loan Service and was selected for a post in Oman with the Royal Guard in the rank of WO 1. It was a regiment of some two thousand men, all Omani's, who were in need of training. It was long hot work in organising a recruit training establishment, together with Officer and NCO training and to form and train a 16 tube mortar platoon. All in Arabic. They say patience is a virtue how right they are. There are too many tales to cover in this article but added to grand tapestry of military life.

With a DERR back ground all came to fruition. The Omani people are very kind and the soldiers very good once trained. I thoroughly enjoyed working with them, at times in some difficult situations. Again, I must have got it right as I was awarded OMANs DSM. Which I wear with pride. While there I used to meet up with Col DIM Robbins who was working in the Oman Mod and once the legendary Johnny Cooper who was then Chief of Police, we had some very interesting lunches. DIM was a very good host

I then returned to the restraints of the British Army and was appointed as RSM of 2 WESSEX, based in Brock Barracks Reading, I had come full circle. It was still a new Battalion feeling its feet, but some old faces were present, Desmond Reading - CO, Ron Allcock - CSM B COY and many others who had been in 1 DERR, what could go wrong? The answer nothing, the Battalion grew in stature and were presented with its Colours by the Duke of Wellington. It could now take its place in the order of battle.

I was informed that I had been selected for a commission into 1 DERR as MTO, how could I refuse and returned to the Battalion, now in Osnabruck West Germany, again in the Mechanised Inf Role. How good to be back home with the Regiment, the Best Mech Bn in BAOR .

There were many exercises and trips to BATUS in Alberta Canada with 1 DERR Battle Group. Who was the Commanding Officer who lost his ID Card? The RSM informed him it would cost him 28 days pay.

Moving armoured vehicles around West Germany mainly by train became an art especially when someone forgot the chocks and chains, but thanks to the very efficient German railway system our vehicles always ended up in the right location, sometimes in small village stations that appeared not to have been used since Hitler's Army had passed through on its way east in 1941.

My time in Osnabruck was over when I was appointed Quartermaster of 1 R HAMPS, who were moving from Germany to Dover. Their Commanding Officer was none other than Mike Martin who had been OC B COY during our time in Ballykinler. The Bn were kept very busy with tours to N Ireland the Falkland Islands, and Public Duties. They were known as the Happy Hampshire's. Having spent some, three years with this fine battalion it was time to move on.

This time to 2 Mercian based in Birmingham. They were a very professional TA Bn whose role was to guard all communication centres in BAOR; this was practised whenever possible.

On one occasion due to an Army Wide shortage of black plastic bags, the company based in Ellesmere Port solved the problem by providing hundreds of the dreaded bags, the only problem being they were yellow and stamped with Liverpool City Council, but needs must, it confused the enemy!

Having thought that I would not have the chance to return to 1 DERR I was appointed Quartermaster and re-joined the Battalion, again in Cyprus during the UN tour based at St David's camp Nicosia about two miles from where I had started my service with 1 R BERKS many years before. During the EOKA Campaign it was a detention camp for captured terrorists which I had spent many hours guarding, a small world.

Trying to get money from the UN to carry out repairs etc. was difficult to say the least. OP Towers had to fall down before any action was authorised, thank goodness for our willing domestic pioneers, I don't think the timber yard missed the odd plank or post, Camouflage and Concealment was always a top priority in the QMs Dept! Helps those who help themselves.

While attending a Mess function I was speaking to a Brigadier in the Cypriot National Guard who informed me that he was once held in St David's Camp as he had been a member of EOKA in the 1950s. I told him that I was guarding him at the time. He seemed fine about it, but I did check under the bed!

Back to Canterbury and prepare for the move to Aldergrove Northern for yet another two-year tour. As part of 8 Bde the Battalion worked very hard with long hours spent in poor condition in various location throughout the province. As always, we came smiling through, looking forward to the upcoming tour in Hong Kong.



Quartermaster's Department  
Aldergrove

It was a very sad day when I left the Battalion for the last time in 1987 to take up the post of Quartermaster of the New TA Battalion being formed in the South West of England after changing titles from Devon and Cornwall Rifles Volunteers (DCRV) to Infantry Battalion South West (INF BN SW) , D&D won the day. It was to be called the 4th Bn The Devonshire and Dorset Regiment Volunteers (It pays to have a few Generals on side). I was to spend the next 13 years in Topsham Barracks Exeter. They became a very good Battalion and took their place in the Order of Battle until being amalgamated with 6LI to form The 1st Rifle Volunteers

Why has every regiment in which I served been either amalgamated or disbanded, perhaps it was me!

After 45 years continuous service I hung up my uniform for the last time in 2000. During that time I had worn 9 different cap badges but was always a Duke of Edinburgh and proud Farmers Boy.

It was the best Infantry Battalion in the British Army, who quietly got *on with the job and always set the standard for others to achieve*. It does not seem possible that it was 60 years from the day when two outstanding county regiments came together to form an even better one.

I was the last Royal Berkshire to serve in 1 DERR and in the Army. I understand that I was the longest serving Duke of Edinburgh some 28 years. Unless of course you know differently The only post in the regiment that was continually filled only by a Duke was that of Quartermaster. From Ali Barber to Bob Luckwell which shows the strength of the Engine Room, The Warrant Officers and Sergeants Mess.



Much looking forward to our 60th Party and swinging the lamp with the many friends with DERR running through their veins and remember those who cannot be with us. All helped make our regiment second to none.

Peter Stacey

### Northern Ireland Postscript

In 1974 the battalion was the lead battalion during the disturbances in the Maze which took place in October, 1974. One soldier Private Graham Giddy had a close shave who got separated during the deployment. He remembered :-

*'I was at the extreme flank and following the radio operator that went through the gate before me, unfortunately his webbing caught the gate which closed and I was left on the wrong side. It was pure numbers kicking each other to get to me that probably saved my life. In no time at all I had lost my webbing, helmet, FRG [Baton gun] and flak jacket. In the process I had more than a few blows to the head and other parts of the body. My head had begun to bleed where I had been hit with my own FRG, how's that for adding insult to injury. I had been stabbed in the back a few times with a make shift knife, probably a screw driver. I tried to reason with the gentlemen even telling them that my grandmother was Irish. Couldn't think of any thing else to say except "don't kill me." Of course she wasn't but it was worth a try. The only thing that I could think of was to stay on my feet because if I went down I would be stamped to death. By this time a helicopter was overhead and one of the terrorists told me to wave to the crew, I think in the hope of keeping it at bay, soon as they saw me they dropped CS gas by the ton (well, it was probably not that much). As the gas hit the ground the mob either dispersed or went to ground I stood up and the next thing that I recall was snatch teams all over the place'.*



The flak jacket worn by then then Pte Giddy. Look Carefully and you will see the 6 pegs denoting where the stabbing penetrated the front of the jacket . Interestingly Giddy's account recalls his being stabbed in the back

## BUDDING SUBSCRIBERS?

Anyone who has a particular topic that they would like to have included or a story that they wish to recount please get in touch with either Mac or me.

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