



# Redcoats Review

## Celebrating the 174th Anniversary of the Battle of Ferozeshah

### Chairman's Letter

I will shortly step down as Chairman and this will be my last Redcoats Newsletter notes that I will write as Chairman. It has been an enormous pleasure to serve on the committee since 1982 and as Chairman for a good many of those. The Society is strong in numbers and we continue to attract new members each year. Support for the Rifles Museum has continued throughout some busy years recently, and the membership subscriptions keep this capability possible. The regular income we receive is so important.

I am enormously grateful for the committee members' contribution; all of them having committed a considerable amount of time and skill over the years and their loyalty and dedication has been vital. We have organized many events, lunches and dinners, talks and presentations, mainly to gather members together on a social basis, but also in some cases to specifically raise funds and awareness.

I have not been able to identify a new chairman to take my place yet and in spite of asking a number of suitable candidates, none as yet has taken up the offer. It may be that someone reading this Newsletter may come forward and volunteer or know of someone who might be able to step in. Please think about this.

The Redcoats Newsletter has now been a feature of the Society for some twenty years in one form or another, and is a superb way of informing everyone about what is going on at the museum but it also acts as an information sheet on many interesting historical stories about the life, times and brave acts of those that served in the regiments of the past. Martin McIntyre has been the main driving force behind the scenes on this work and he has been ably supported by Chris Bacon and of course Michael Cornwall. To all of them I state my heartfelt thanks and gratitude for the research and effort they have continued to give time and time again. (Continued overleaf)



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### FUTURE EVENTS

- 2020 AGM To be Announced.

## Chairman's message (continued)

Michael Cornwell spends much time producing the Newsletter three times a year and this is an extraordinary commitment and we are immensely impressed and grateful for his dedication. I only hope that everyone receiving the Newsletter understands how much effort is involved. Of course we use the records and archives owned by the Rifles Wardrobe and Museum Trust (RWMT) and having access to these is a remarkable privilege.

At the Redcoats AGM this year approval was granted to donate a significant amount of money to pay for the new interactive screen and computer stand that will be installed in the entrance corridor of the museum in January. This will be ready for the opening in February and will be a major enhancement. It is intended that this will host each year's themed temporary exhibition, centred on this screen display, and will therefore improve visitor experience to the museum significantly.

It merely remains for me to wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and New Year and look forward to a successful 2020.

*Editorial Team's Response: On behalf of all members of the Society of Friends we feel it would be remiss of us not to say that we the Society have been very fortunate to have Nigel at the helm, providing excellent leadership and guidance. We will of course miss him however it is expected that he will continue to support the museum as he has done for so many years, serving in an important role as a Trustee.*

## TWO SECOND WORLD WAR HEROES OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE REGIMENT WHO GAINED DISTINCTION WITH NO 2 COMMANDO

### Sergeant Richard Bradley MM

#### Royal Berkshire Regiment [No 2 Commando]

We are constantly revisiting records from the past to ascertain if we can uncover the story, or add value to one already told. Whilst investigating the Military Medal awards from the Second World War we came across a reference to Sergeant Richard Bradley MM in the Royal Berkshire Regimental history by Blight. It simply states POW, but with no further information. Our investigation uncovered a remarkable story.



**Sergeant Richard 'Dick' Bradley Military Medal**

He was born Richard Goebbels, of German parents in London, during the First World War. He, his mother and two elder children were returned to Germany under the auspice of the Red Cross when his father was interned and an anti-German mob ransacked the family shop. There he was brought up in the Black Forest, very near the Swiss border. From the age of 11 to 14 he went to a Cistercian Monastery school near Bregenz, in Austria, by Lake Constance. He returned to England aged 14 together with his family where they opened a butchers shop in Kilburn. As the Second World War approached and the name of the Nazi Propaganda Minister, Josef Goebbels became notorious, the family changed its name to Bradley. With that name and a German accent he volunteered for the British Army.

He enlisted in the Royal Berkshire Regiment carrying out his initial training in Brock Barracks, Reading. After nine weeks of initial training came 15th August and the invasion scare. His recruit company was sent to Wimborne, in Dorset, to defend that part of England. After the Battle of Britain the Company returned to the Royal Berkshire Depot at Reading to carry on training where we had left off. In due course volunteers were needed for special service and in 1940, he volunteers and found himself on the way to Paignton, in Devon, to join No. 1 Special Service Brigade. No. 1 Special Service Brigade was eventually formed into No. 1 and No. 2 Commando. Whist in No 2 Commando he quickly rose to the rank of Sergeant. On the night of 27 - 28 February 1942 he took part in ' *Operation Chariot*' the raid at St Nazaire which was a combined operation to destroy the huge dry dock at the mouth of the Loire, the only refuge for the Battleship *Tirpitz*.



After HMS *Campbelltown* was rammed into the dock gates Sergeant Bradley went ashore as part of a demolition team to destroy the northern lock gate. His officer Lieutenant Walton in his eagerness to reach the objective got ahead of his team carrying the bulk of the explosives was killed. Bradley and the three other team members continued moving forward until he was shot through the lung by a German Machine gunner. Later together with 200 other wounded, he was taken prisoner. He was taken to Stalag VIIIb on the Polish-Czech border. There he met up with another No 2 Commando prisoner Sergeant Season, who he knew very well, and a very bright Private Soldier, James Brown [No 5 Commando] [Later to become Professor of Petroleum Engineering at Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh]. The three of them worked out an escape plan, made in the summer of 1943, which was foiled at the Swiss Border.

2 of the 200 Commandos captured on the St Nazaire Raid

## WAR HEROES CONTINUED

They tried again in the Autumn, using Sergeant Bradley's fluent German to buy tickets to within 25 miles of the Swiss frontier. This time they were successful. On arrival in Switzerland he went to the post office to report his safe arrival and that they were interned. The girl behind the counter later became his wife. Sergeant Bradley was awarded the Military Medal for his skilfully executed escape from prison camp and for achieving a 'Home run'.

Lance Sergeant Richard O'Brien

Royal Berkshire Regiment [No 2 Commando]



Whilst examining the awards and decorations list another soldier was highlighted, Lance Sergeant Richard O'Brien also of No 2 Commando who was awarded a Distinguished Conduct Medal in Norway in 1943, and a Military Medal in Italy in 1944. In 1942 he also took part in Operation *Chariot*, but survived the operation and returned to England. Six months later he was one of the ten Commandos who took part in Operation *Musketoon*. Seven were taken prisoner and later executed. [Hitler's order that captured Commandoes were to be executed]. L/Sgt O'Brien evaded capture after the successful raid and made it back to the UK. He was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for his actions during this raid. The following year, now with the rank of Acting Sergeant, he was awarded the Military Medal for his gallantry between the 10th and 18th Sept. 1943 during the battles of Salerno, Dragone Hill, and Piegolelle (also seen spelt as Piegollette).

### **DCM Citation for Sergeant O'Brien.**

Sergeant O'Brien was one of the detachment of 2 Commando on "Operation Musketoon". This highly successful operation resulted in the destruction of the important electric power plant at Glomfjord in Norway on the night of 20th September 1942. Sergeant O'Brien throughout showed great skill and resolution.

## WAR HEROES CONTINUED

He helped reconnoitre the difficult mountain crossing from the landing place to the objective and personally laid the charge which destroyed the pipeline. He then made his escape, spending, in all, twelve days in enemy occupied country. When suffering from sickness, privation and exhaustion he showed remarkable endurance and determination.

## NORTHERN IRELAND RE-VISITED

In the March 2019 issue we covered the incident in Belfast that saw Sgt Brian Potter gain the Queen's Commendation for Bravery. As a brief reminder here are Brian's recollection of the event: that took place on 3rd July 1970 on Albert Street:

*"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"*

Those of you familiar with the News Letter will be aware that most of the articles are contributed to the former Section Commander turned Detective Inspector Mac, who has uncovered an uncannily déjà vu historical incident concerning Albert Street and one of our antecedent Regiments.



### THE BACKGROUND

The background to that deployment in July 1907 necessitated the deployment of a Brigade from Dublin to break escalating strike action by unskilled Protestant and Catholic workers. The now-famous labour organiser Jim Larkin had arrived in Belfast in January, and by April he had organised some 3000 workers in the National Union of Dock Labourers. Alarmed, the Belfast Steamship Company locked out union members in an attempt to crush the union before its influence spread further.

## NORTHERN IRELAND RE-VISITED (CONTINUED)

They used professional scabs who arrived in the city fresh from having broken a strike in Hamburg. In May, the strikers attacked the docks and forced the scabs from the quays, but the police deployed in large numbers to ensure that the scabs could not return. But as the summer continued, sympathy strikes broke out among coal heavers, sailors, firemen, iron moulders, and female tobacco workers. Fragile solidarity was maintained between Protestant and Catholic workers, aided by daily rallies which were often addressed by Jim Larkin. The police, who had their own grievances around pay, faced a difficult situation. Most of the strikers were Orangemen but they had the active support of many Catholic workers and they were led by a Catholic.

Police resources were stretched and the city was increasingly unsafe for them. In late July, hundreds of police mutinied and joined with 10,000 strike supporters in an atmosphere of euphoria. Unable to rely on the police, the authorities sent in thousands of troops and serious rioting ensued. Meanwhile, leaders of the police strike were dismissed and over 200 constables were transferred out of Belfast. On the night of 11th August, soldiers killed a Catholic woman and man on the Falls Road. On both side of the sectarian divide, opportunistic politicians linked the dispute to the cause of Irish Nationalism. Meanwhile, the British trade union leadership, alarmed by the rising militancy, travelled to Belfast and negotiated settlements to several disputes while Larkin was attending his mother's funeral in Liverpool. The dockers were isolated and the strike ended in bitter defeat. In the following years, thousands of Catholics and progressive Protestants were expelled from the shipyards.



The Battalion's 80,000 rounds of ammunition stacked in their tented area in the Ormeau Park, Belfast.

The events were comprehensively reported in the local Irish press and the Royal Berkshire Regiment were mentioned a number of times and to our surprise most of their activity was in Albert Street, in the Falls Road area, the same ground that 1 DERR operated in many years later. In addition several images came to light of the battalion during this period.

Questions were later asked in the House of Commons :-

**Mr Summerbell MP** - *'May I ask the Right Hon. Gentleman whether, considering the nature of the missiles used by the crowd in Belfast, and the fact that such crowd contained a large number of innocent women and children, he does not consider that the order to shoot by the troops with intent to kill was wholly unnecessary and unjustifiable?'*

**Mr Hadlane MP** - *'I have a report here which tells the story related by the military commander, and I will read the details of it. It is dated the 12th, but it contains a narrative of what happened on the two days—*

*"Military report on the situation in Belfast during Saturday and Sunday, 10th and 11th August—" "Belfast, 12th August, 1907.—I have the honour to report that the troops were on picket duty in the streets on Saturday. All was quiet till about 12 noon, when a determined attack was made on some wagons of Messrs. Hughes in the Nationalist quarter in the Falls Road. Two pickets of the 1st Royal Berkshire Regiment came to help the police and formed a cordon across the street, afterwards falling in in rear of the wagons and escorting them down the road. The troops were greatly hampered in taking any offensive action, as three-quarters of the mob consisted of women and children, the men remaining in rear and throwing paving stones and broken bottles. Second Lieutenants Allfrey and Harvey and ten non-commissioned officers and men were cut about the head with missiles. The disturbance appeared purely local, and I am taking measures in concert with the police to guard against attacks on the pickets in this quarter.*



The Royal Berkshire Regiment guarding shipping companies property on Belfast Quay.

[Other soldiers injured Private Chapman - Concussion. Private Fisher - Serious injury to leg. Private Carter - Injury to forehead.]



Soldiers resting on Belfast Quays

Editor's note: Same accommodation standard as Londonderry August 1969

Another incident was reported by the local press :-

*'Two soldiers of the Royal Berkshire Regiment were proceeding up the Falls Road in charge of an army service corps waggon, and when they got to Pound Street they attracted the attention of some of the residents of that locality, who began to make offensive remarks and to give chase to the van. The men drove at a fast pace, but the crowd was constantly increasing, and near Albert Street a determined effort was made to stop the horses while at the same time the soldiers were assaulted on the waggon. Despite the efforts of the mob the vehicle was driven to Craig Street, where the rowdies assumed a still more threatening attitude. The soldiers altered their original intention on finding the crowd were still intent on obstructing them, and they tried to turn back. The mob were most aggressive and the driver had a narrow escape from being hit on the head with an iron hoop, and several stones were thrown. one man more venturesome than the rest tried to get onto the waggon but he was knocked off with the butt end of the drivers whip. They later made it to safety'.*

The battalion was involved in many similar incidents, returning to Dublin in late August.



## MUSEUM MISCELLANY

### Visit to Museum

On Saturday 7th September the relations of CSM Albert FARRER DCM of the 7th (Service) Battalion Wiltshire Regiment made a pre arranged visit to the museum to view his medals held by the Regimental museum. Two of the visitors had travelled from Australia, met up with relations in the UK and as a group came to the museum.

CSM FARRER was one of the founding members of the 7th Battalion, remained with them throughout the First World War, fighting in Salonica and France. He was wounded twice. He was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal during the battalions action at Doiran on the 24th April, 1917 in Salonica. His citation read.....

*"After severe casualties had been sustained in officers and other ranks, this Warrant Officer, although wounded, displayed magnificent courage in helping to rally his Company. He persevered until he fell from exhaustion and loss of blood."*

During this action nearly all the officers were killed or wounded and the companies were taken under the control of the Sergeants and Warrant officers. [It was very much seen as a similar action as Ferozeshah (Without the Colours)]

During the visit they were briefed on the battalions activities during this period, including viewing battalion photographs, the original war diary and including some information previously unknown to the family. In addition to the family members attending CSM Farrer's daughter [in her 90s) is still alive and at present living in Australia.



CSM Albert Farrer DCM



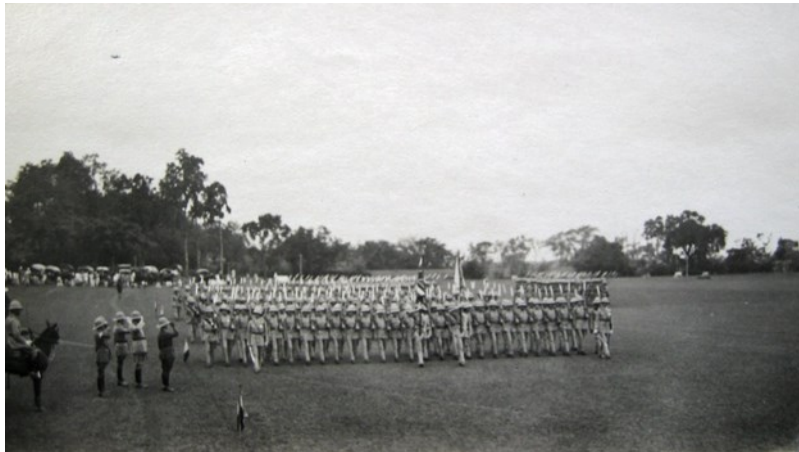
Grandson Richard Boucher of Gloucester  
and Great Granddaughter Vicki Langan

## MISCELLANY CONTINUED

We have heard of the expression “Lightning doesn’t strike in the same place twice” but what are the odd’s of this amazing coincidence happening three times, involving the same family.

The event involves the Presentation of New Colours and being a member of the Escort to the Colour ‘s.

In 1926 in Kamptee, India, the 2nd Battalion The Wiltshire Regiment (Duke of Edinburgh’s)(99th ) were presented with new Colours and C/Sjt Arthur Minty was a member of the Escort to the Colours on that Parade.



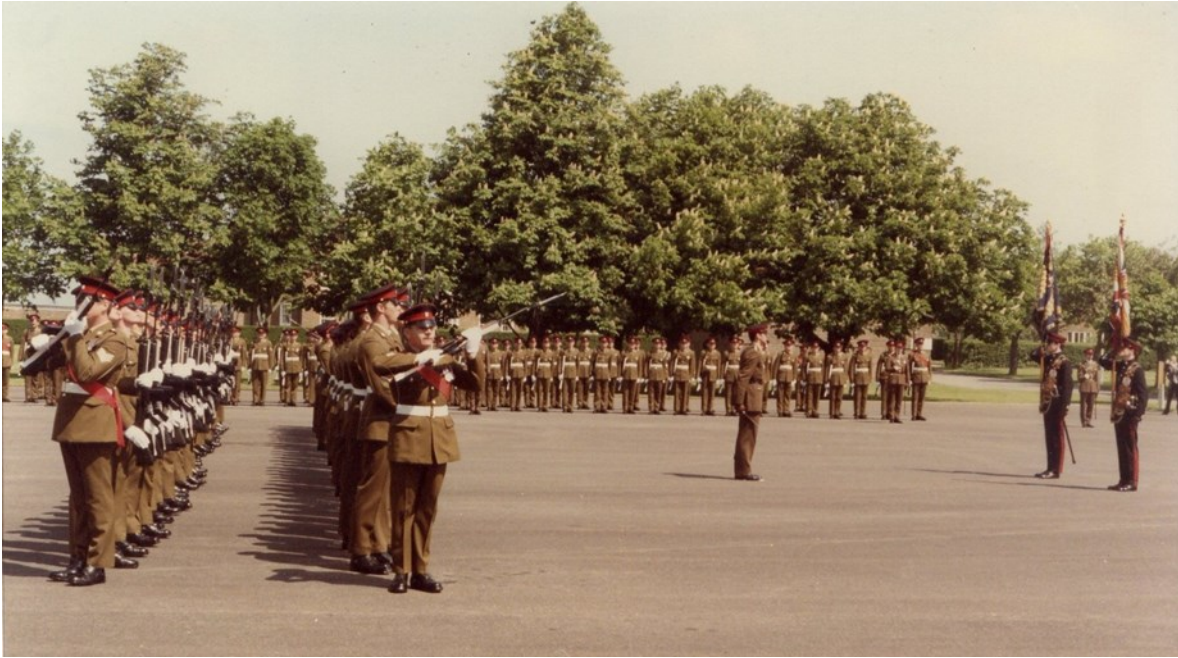
C/Sjt Arthur Minty in the Escort to the Colours as they march pass the Saluting Officer in Kamptee India on the occasion of the Presentation of New Colours to 2nd Battalion The Wiltshire Regiment,

In 1939 in Bangalore, India it is the turn of 1st Battalion The Wiltshire Regiment (Duke of Edinburgh’s) (62nd) to receive new Colours and this time it is the turn of Sgt Arthur John Minty to be in the Escort to the Colours.



Sgt Arthur John Minty in the Escort to the Colours when the new Colours are marched pass the saluting dais in Bangalore in 1939

Advance forward some 45 years to a parade that many of us witnessed either as participants or spectators. 1984 and the Presentation of the Second Stand of New Colours to the 1st Battalion the Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment (Berkshire and Wiltshire). Enter the then WO2 Norman Minty and this time his position within the Escort to the Colours is plain to all.



WO 2 N Minty as the Right Hand Marker of the Escort to the Colours at the Point that the Colours have been formally been presented to the Escort. 1984 in Howe Barracks Canterbury

The Minty family can claim six generations to have served with the 62nd, 1st and 2nd Battalion the Wiltshire Regiment (Duke of Edinburgh's) and 1st battalion The Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment (Berkshire and Wiltshire).

## LIDGATE, SUFFOLK TRIBUTE TO SECOND

Early in the year the Regimental Association had received a request from Lieutenant Colonel Caroline Emmett with a plea for help. She lived in the village of Lidgate in Suffolk which had recently updated the village war memorial by adding the names of those who had died from the village serving in World War 2. Two of the names being added were regiment in the fuller modern context, one being a Lieutenant of the Rifles Brigade, however the second was much closer to our regimental home in that he was a member of the Royal Berkshire Regiment.. He being 14643865 Private Ivan Terence Hazell.

How you may ask does a native of Lidgate, Suffolk end up as a soldier in The Royal Berkshire Regiment. During the Second World War as real estate became a premium, especially in the south of England as troops for the Invasion of France begin to be billeted in the area, the training of the Royal Berkshire Regiment decamped from Brock Barracks and moved to East Anglia centred around Thetford.

So on being called up as an 18 year old it is highly probably Ivan Terence Hazell is sent to the nearest training establishment to commence his training. The museum were able to provide what little information we could through Martin McIntyre and his diligent searching.

Through the good office of Colonel Mike Vernon-Powell and his encyclopaedic knowledge of the officer corps of the 49th/66th, contact was made with Tony Skidmore who lives about an hour away from Lidgate. Chauffeured by his son in law, Tony represented the Royal Berkshire Regiment at the service to Rededicate the Lidgate War Memorial, for which we are all extremely grateful.

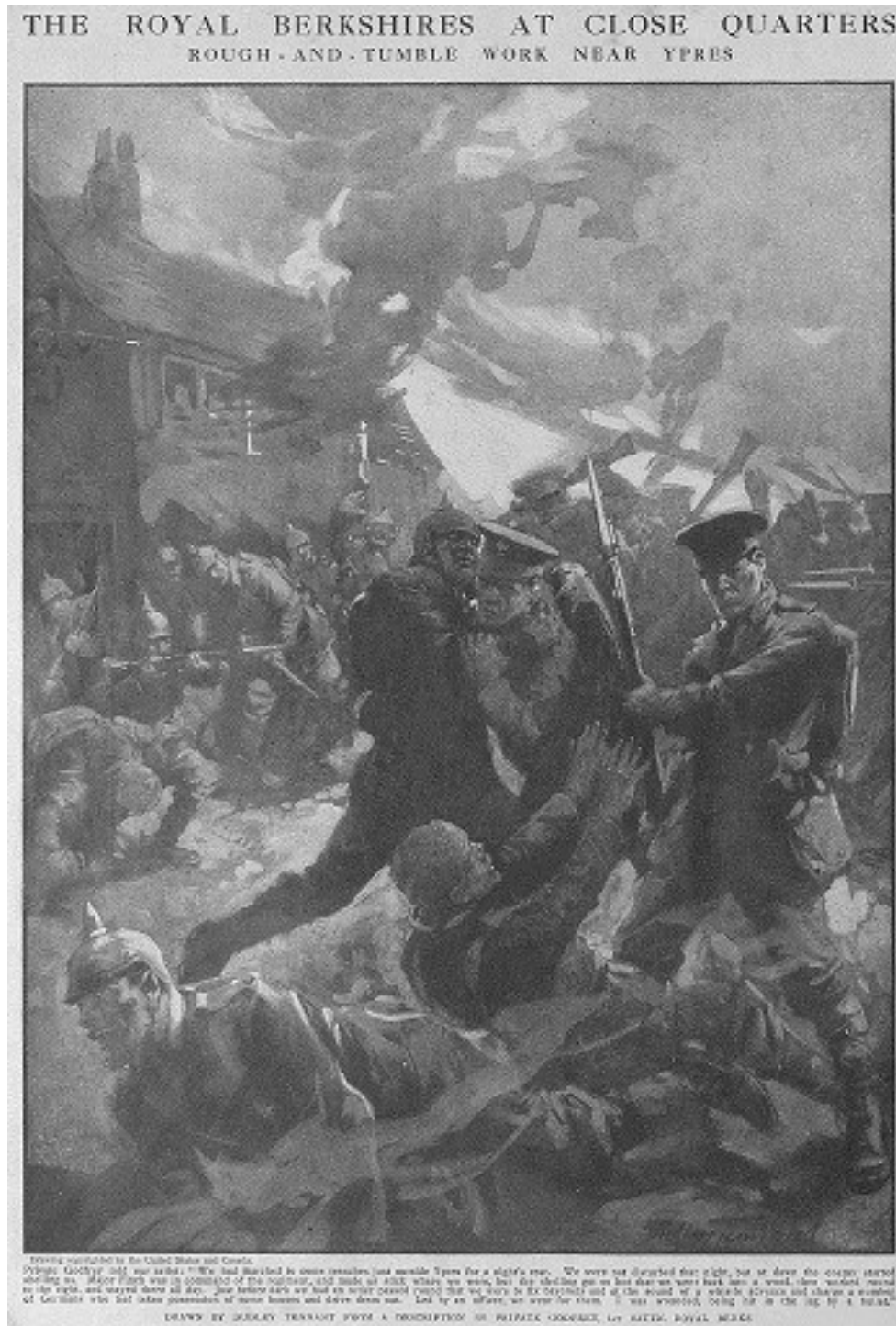


Tony Skidmore laying the Regimental Wreath at the Lidgate Rededication of their War memorial to remember the three servicemen from the village who died in the Second World War



## RARE REGIMENTAL COVERAGE FROM WORLD WAR ONE

Neither of our County Regiments seemed to have featured very often in illustrations published during the Great War. One rare illustration is shown below and relates, been able to deduce, to an action by The Royal Berkshires., which Mac McIntyre has tied into a War Diary entry.



The writing underneath the images states:

*Private Godfrey told our artist "We had marched to some trenches just outside Ypres for night's rest. We were not disturbed that night but at dawn the enemy started shelling us. Major Finch was in command of the regiment and made us stick where we were, but the shelling got so hot that we went back into a wood, then worked round to the right and stayed there all day. Just before dark we had an order passed around that we were to fix bayonets and at the sound of a whistle to advance and charge a number of Germans who had taken possession of some houses and drive them out. Led by an officer we went for them. I was wounded being hit in the leg by a bullet."*

Martin McIntyre is sure that the illustration is a graphic representation of the following action from the War Diary of the 1st Battalion The Royal Berkshire regiment dated 1 November 1914.

Col Graham badly wounded by a stray shell about 8am. A French attack on GHELUVELT by 9 battns was timed for 9.30am. (Message received from 1st Bde). The right of this attack passed through our reserve dug outs about 11.30 am, but owing to subsequent events never got more than about 200yds beyond. About 11.45 am an urgent message was received for support for a detachment of Coldstream Guards at the barrier on the YPRES - GHELUVELT road, the Germans having worked round their flank. As the French attack had already passed through our lines Major Finch thought it inadvisable and unnecessary to send up his two companies in the middle of the French line. (D Coy had on the previous night taken over some trenches on the right of the 60th S of the YPRES - GHELUVELT road.) Shortly afterwards some men of the Coldstreams came running back through our dug outs, saying their officer had been killed and that they had been driven out of their trenches. At the same time a number of men of the 60th were observed surrendering on the S side of the road some 5 or 600yds to our right post. The two companies at once turned out. Major Finch almost immediately received a shrapnel bullet in the heel but was able to carry on for the time. It was now discovered that only one weak French battn had come through us and that they were holding some enclosures just to our front. 1/2 A Coy under 2/Lt Cruise were sent up the left of the road facing S in the vicinity of the French battn. Shortly after the other half of A Coy under Lt Woods were sent up to try and retake the trenches N of the road, but could not get beyond some hedges about 400yds from the trenches. Major Finch then advanced with the whole company and 40 men of the Gloucesters whom he had collected. This party reoccupied the trenches, with the exception of the one immediately N of the main road, which was still occupied by a number of Germans when the order was received about 9.30pm to withdraw to our original dugouts. When the 2 companies turned out at midday one platoon of B Coy under 2/Lt VESEY was sent to hold the cross roads just S of the V in VELDHOEK where they remained mixed up with some of the French infantry. The rest of B Coy under Capt Lucas occupied some trenches immediately S of these crossroads in front edge of the wood, the other battn of 60th prolonged to their right, and stray men from various units also jumped into the trench. Here they remained till dusk when the order to advance was given.

The line advanced with a feeble cheer which failed to arouse the Germans. About 30 men of B Coy pushed between the trenches and the road (moving up the S side of the road) without knowing it, and came upon the Germans turning out of the houses all round. This party then formed in a semicircle and opened fire on the Germans, some of whom were running across their rear into the trench they had passed on their right. This party could make no further headway. Genl Fitzclarence then came up with a party of about 40 stragglers he had collected. These men were sent forward against this trench from the front but could not be got to advance further than a ditch about 100yds from the trench which was now strongly held. The order was received at 9.30pm to withdraw. D Coy under 2/Lt STOKES held the trenches on the right and next to those abandoned by the 60th throughout the day and were at times subjected to a severe enfilade fire. When the withdrawal had been completed the line was readjusted to run just E of the wood at VELDHOEK, the battn taking over the section immediately N of the main road. The GOC 1st Bde thanked the battn for their work during the day. Major Finch went back to the dressing station about 10pm. Lt FRIZELL wounded. Lt KNOTT wounded. The machine guns were at this date detached to the 3rd Bde

## AN AMUSING SNIPPET DEMONSTRATING THE ART OF PENMANSHIP AND THE NEED TO BE A MIND READER

CIRCA 1905

On Thursday Major Barker was playing cricket at Hook, and wanting another man he wired to Lieutenant Hall, of the Barracks, Reading, to '*come and play*'.

The telegram was addressed simply "Hall, Barracks Reading". It only said "*come and play*" and made no mention of cricket.

The message was handed to Drummer Hall, who with a band of about 15 men, travelled by the 1.45 p.m. train to Hook, where they played - but not cricket.

Major Barker was simply astounded when he saw the band, some even go so far as to say that he dropped his bat !!!.

Of course in the modern age of technology, nothing like this would ever happen: would it?

## RIFLEMAN'S TABLE

The Museum is pleased to announce that the Coach House Restaurant, previously known as “Bernières” is reopening under the name of Rifleman’s Table. The opening day is 10 December 2019 with opening hours being advertised as 0830 to 1600 hours



## BATTLEFIELD TOUR NORMANDY SEPTEMBER 2020

There has been a very favourable response to the proposed Battlefield Tour of Normandy with 16 members of the Society committing to going. Our Tour Guide will be the redoubtable Andy Steele, aided by Martin McIntyre.



## MUSEUM TALKS

Bethany Joyce, our Assistant Curator, has instigated Museum Talks which will be open to the public. We ran three talks as a trial, and Bethany's own talk on the Wardrobe building attracted an audience of 30. So watch out on the Museum's web site for news of further talks in the 2020 season.

## SEASONAL GREETINGS

A very Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year to all members of the Society.

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## CAN YOU RECRUIT ANOTHER MEMBER?

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

## APPEAL FOR ITEMS FOR THE REDCOATS REVIEW

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

Your web page on the Museum web site is:

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