

THE ESSEX AND
ROYAL ANGLIAN REGIMENTS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

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September 1982

3rd Battalion (Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Essex) The Royal Anglian Regiment

The report in the Newsletter No. 29 that the Bn were practising moves at short notice came to reality in May when they flew to Belize to relieve 2 Bn Parachute Regiment for them to join the Falklands Forces.

No sooner had the Bn settled into its various bases in Belize when the TEWTs and Battle Group Exercises began. The BG TEWTs were held over 2 days in the North and the South and gave everyone an insight into the problems of operating locally. These were closely followed by the BG North Exercise which took place at short notice when the Force Commander decided he would test the preparedness for war. It lasted 4 days and coincided with 3 of the hottest days of the year with temperatures reaching 115°F and with little or no shade: it was not surprising that there were 6 cases of heat exhaustion, although fortunately none with serious consequences. In contrast the BG (S) exercise coincided with 4 of the wettest days of the year. It was a gruelling exercise in deep jungle with platoons moving on foot carrying their kit and covering distances in excess of 35 miles to set and spring ambushes with the APC Combat Team (B Coy) providing the enemy. Although arduous, the exercise proved valuable and was enjoyed. It stopped raining as the CO gave the order to disperse!

Other activities have included a 2 day Hurricane Exercise during which the Bn practised the receipt of warnings, the preparation of survival shelters and the deployment of columns to Belize City to assist in disaster relief. The Exercise ended after the Bn was barricaded into shelters for a few hours in temperatures well above 90°F, an experience not to be repeated unless it is the real thing.

August was a very wet month, and Rideau and Salamancas Camps recorded 80 inches of rain this year. Soldiers on patrol, particularly in the South, have had to endure being soaking wet throughout three day and seven day patrols, but at least they have not had to suffer being cold at the same time.

The Bn's Rest and Recuperation programme is only four weeks from being complete and already 206 soldiers have made use of the Bn's own leave centre at Placentia, 74 have visited the USA, 72 Mexico where the most popular resort was Cancun, 18 Honduras, 107 San Pedro on the Belizean Ambergris Caye and 24 countries as varied as Costa Rica, Gibraltar and Canada, while 21 returned to UK to be with their wives at or shortly after the birth of a child.

Captain John Weigold's rafting expedition from Bullet Tree Falls near the Guatemalan border, down the Belize River to the coast was successfully completed with the loss of only one of the four rafts. The 13 members of the Airport Camp Combat Team covered 170 miles, including many stretches of rapids, on home made bamboo rafts in seven days. It was an arduous adventure training exercise which required much determination to complete.

3rd Battalion (Continued)

Equally arduous was Lieutenant Richard Clements seven day climbing expedition in which he and eight soldiers from 5 Platoon walked many miles through the jungle to the base of Victoria Peak, a mountain almost 4,000 ft above sea level in the Cockscomb Range of the Mayan Mountains and, on the second attempt, reached the summit. According to Belizean records this was the first occasion the mountain had been climbed by a party walking in, although it had previously been scaled by a group inserted into the lower slopes by helicopter.

The Bn return to Colchester in October 1982 after relief by the 1st Bn The Royal Anglian Regiment.

TA Essex Companies

3 Company 5th Bn TA have spent busy months which included annual camp in Germany and some members shooting for the Bn Team at Bisley where the Bn finished in 6th place overall.

C Company 6th Bn TA spent summer camp at Bodney and gave demonstrations of 84 mm on Mayors Day.

6th Bn is now the sponsor unit Eastern England for the new Home Service Force (TA) which will have its HQ at Bury St Edmunds and platoons in Norwich, Bedford and Cambridgeshire.

Regimental HQ

Donations. Thanks to all of you who always add something extra to your remittances for the funds. Your generosity is appreciated although not acknowledged at the time.

Subscriptions. As mentioned in the last Newsletter, it is proposed to put up the subscription to the Subscribers Roll by 50p to £1 per year. Some members have suggested that a one time life membership payment for cash payers would be more convenient and this will be discussed at the next General Committee Meeting in October 1982. If £1 pa is approved B0 will be enclosed with February 1983 Newsletter.

Histories. We have a steady demand for Colonel T A Martin's 'The Essex Regiment 1929-1950' which we cannot meet. If anymembers have a copy for sale we would be interested in purchasing.

Gardens. The Rose beds in the Gardens are badly in need of re-planting. Over a period of two years 1983 and 1984, it is proposed to re-plant 14 beds. This will require 420 bushes, using the following types, 30 to a bed:

Fragrant Cloud	Mullard Jubilee
Dutch Gold	Manou Meiland
Mala Rubenstein	Memento
Pink Panther	Mountbatten
Sunblest	Chorus
Alec's Red	Burma Star
Piccadilly	City of Leeds

This is not an appeal for funds but we thought you might like to sponsor a rose bush - some - or even a bed! Each rose bush will cost £1.20 in 1983 and the bush would be tagged with the name of the sponsor. Branch Secretaries might consider asking their Committees to sponsor a bed which could then be sign-posted as such.

In addition to the Rose beds the Chapel Gardens will have an addition of 60 Dorothy Wheatcroft to infill the front beds and the Chapel path will be lined by 10 Fragrant Cloud standards.

Annual Reunion 1982. Just over 500 members and guests filled the Chapel. The Address was given by the Bishop of Chelmsford and although each year the Service is little changed, there is still that unique feeling of emotion and comradeship. The Band of 2 Queens played throughout the Service and afterwards at the Reunion and were very well received. Harry Staff once again led the Parade although he had not been at all well throughout most of the year with stays in the Infirmary and in the Military Hospital at Woolwich. Major-General J A Ward-Booth, OBE, took the Salute with the Bishop of Chelmsford and our President Colonel P H A L Franklin. After the March Past the Deputy Colonel spent some time talking to the Old Comrades on Parade.

Regimental Chapel. History is believed to have been made on 4 July when a Service of Dedication for the Royal Naval Association Brentwood Branch was held. The Service was conducted by the Bishop of Europe, Rt Rev A W M Weekes, CB, FRC, RN. A new Branch Standard was dedicated and afterwards paraded. The Salute was taken jointly by R A Laurie, Esq, DL and Vice Admiral Sir Ernle Pope, KCB.

Monthly Services for the remainder of this year are:

3 October 1982 Revd F E Tester
7 November 1982 Revd J A Randall
5 December 1982 Revd D J Lorns

The Chapel still attracts many visitors throughout the year, either for family, military history or architectural reasons.

Branches

Chelmsford Branch (Secretary: Major M Franks, MBE)

The social side has been successful. The monthly dances at Writtle continue but could be supported a little more. The next dance will be on 20 November 1982 followed by 18 December 1982.

In August a coach load of members and friends visited the Military Tattoo at Colchester.

The Annual Dinner and Dance will be held at the County Hotel on 30 October 1982. Tickets £8, available from Eric Saville.

The Trigno Reunion for ex-members of the 5th Bn (1939-1946) will be held on Saturday 13 November 1982. Further details from Gordon Gilder.

On the Welfare side, grants have been made to those in need and visits to hospitals made by Charlie Meekins and his team.

4th Battalion Comrades Association (Secretary: Mr F C Hawkins)

Colonel Sir Arthur Noble, KBE, CB, DSO, TD, DL. It was a sad blow to learn of the death of Sir Arthur and many members attended the Memorial Service in Chigwell Parish Church. Major General D A Beckett, CB, DSO, OBE, has kindly agreed to become our President.

Genotaph Service. Attendance on 21 March 1982 was up with 26 members present. Ex-RSM Johnston was watching and as the contingent marched past remarked "Yes, they're a smart lot of boys".

4th Battalion Comrades Association (Continued)

Interim Reunion. A successful evening was held at RHQ Warley when some 80 members and their wives were present.

Annual Dinner and Dance. A very successful evening on 18 September 1982 with some 150 dining at the Masonic Hall, Shenfield. Two specially invited guests were a Ghurka Officer and NCO from 2/7th Ghurka Regiment on leave from the Falkland Campaign in which they had taken part. In 1983 the Dinner Dance is planned for 17 September.

Another trip to Italy to visit the Cassino area is also planned. For further details contact Bill Hawkins.

The Annual Service of Remembrance will be held on 14 November 1982 at St Mary's Church, Ilford. During this Service a tribute will be paid to the late Sir Arthur Noble. Those attending are asked to be seated by 10.45 am. After the Service there will be a Parade, and, led by the Essex Corps of Drums, will march to the Drill Hall, Gordon Road, where by kind permission of Captain Greville, all will be welcome.

Saffron Walden Branch (Secretary: Mr E W Elsom)

The Annual Social was held at the Town Hall on 18 September 1982. A very enjoyable evening which was supported by a party of members from Chelmsford Branch.

Southend-on-Sea Branch (Secretary: Captain R G Turnidge)

A new venue, Ecco Sports and Social Club, was tried for a Buffet Dance in April 1982, one which proved to be very enjoyable and successful financially. The next Buffet Dance will be held on 24 September 1982 at the same location.

The Branch will take part in the Parade and Remembrance Service at the War Memorial, Clifftown Parade. Meet opposite Keddies at 10.20 am, Sunday 14 November 1982.

Obituary. Mr R P 'Bob' Willis died suddenly at his home on 17 March 1982 age 67 years. Bob will be remembered by many members of 1/5th Battalion The Essex Regiment with whom he served throughout World War Two. He was a founder member of the Southend Branch of the Regimental Association and a loyal member of the Branch Committee for very many years.

Thurrock Branch (Secretary: Mr T J Everett)

The highlight this year was the visit to Holland by a party of ten ex-Pompadours to take part in the 37th Annual Liberation Celebrations at Zeist. The Thurrock Gazette reported:

"A group of old soldiers have just returned from a trip down memory lane. Members of the 2nd Battalion of the Essex Regiment went over to Zeist in Holland for Liberation Celebrations. For most it was the first time they had been to their old war ground for 37 years. A party of 27 left Thurrock for the trip and their three days in Holland were spent renewing old acquaintances and enjoying Dutch hospitality. Organiser Mr Harry Conn, of Godman Road, Chadwell St Mary, said: 'Nothing had really changed, the Dutch were as friendly as ever. The response we got was fantastic. There were many local inhabitants who wanted to meet us and a special reception was