

Part of Duxra 2003 5018 T.

original filed with entry no E0061

from DHC5-4

22 Inglis Road

Colchester

Essex CO3 3HU

Telephone 01206-561055

5 September 1997

Dear Trevor

Enclosed are the photographs we spoke about on the telephone. I have attached a few remarks to each one. Some show the two in my platoon who were killed: Pte Fraser when travelling on a Ferret which hit an anti-tank mine in December 1964, and Pte Fox who was in the Wessex that crashed during the operations in the Wadi Misrah, prior to the assault on the Jebel Huriyah. These may need to be treated with some sensitivity as I expect the families may not have photographs from this period.

Pte Fraser was my batman from the time that I joined the Battalion in December 1963. In October 1964 I was sent to the Oman so I was not present when he was killed.

I was present at the helicopter crash when Pte Fox was killed. A Wessex from the Royal Navy was shuttling my platoon (5 Platoon) to a high and very narrow mountain ledge a section at a time. Due to the height of the operation and the heat all the seats had been removed so that the Wessex could reach the altitude with sufficient troops to make it a worthwhile trip. I think the third trip was when the accident happened. The helicopter hit an empty air pocket, which I understand is prevalent in these conditions, as it was coming in to land and dropped on to the landing site from about 20 feet. The shock of the landing broke the connection to the tail rotor, although the pilot did not know this immediately. Pte Fox realised something was wrong and I saw him try to jump out, but he was pushed back in by the dispatcher. The dispatcher did the right thing in my opinion, but his action was to have tragic results. The pilot tried to regain control, but the helicopter slid over the side of the ledge into a small wadi. The tail struck the side of the wadi, breaking off the last 4 feet. The force of hitting the wadi spun the helicopter outwards and centrifugal force made the occupants shoot out through the hole in the rear of the aircraft. Only one passenger, Pte Waite, and the crew remained in the helicopter. All the other soldiers were flung 20 -30 yards across the wadi to land, mainly head first, on the rocks. Pte Fox was killed instantly by a major injury to his head. Pte Mugglestone broke his femurs badly and had to be discharged from the Army. Pte Casserly had serious injuries to his face from which he too was discharged. I understand that he later went blind. Other injuries were fortunately less serious. The helicopter, by a stroke of luck landed upright on a small ledge, allowing the two pilots, Pte Waite and the dispatcher to get out. Shortly after the helicopter rolled down to the bottom of the wadi. It was later picked up by another Wessex, but shortly after take off it started to oscillate and had to be dropped - from a great height!

Just as,

Tom