

# The King's Regiment Association Liverpool Branch

A Branch of the Duke of Lancaster's Regimental Association



*'Nec Aspera Terrent'*

**JUNE 2017 NEWSLETTER – ISSUE 62**

**ELECTRONIC EDITION**



**DONATIONS TO THE ASSOCIATION**

The Committee would like to thank the following who have made a cash donation to the associations general funds:

**THOMAS CAIN, JIM LUCOCK, PETER O'REILLY BEM,**

**YOUR GENEROSITY IS VERY MUCH APPRECIATED.**



**2017 ONE BOTTLE OF BEER NIGHT**

**Please assemble on St George's plateau at 1820hrs  
Saturday 3rd June 2017.**

**Group photo will be taken at 18.30hrs.**





We require your letters, comments, photographs, stories etc., for inclusion in the next Newsletter which will be published in:

**AUGUST 2017.**

The closing date for submission is:

**MONDAY 24TH JULY 2017.**

Please forward to:

**Eric Roper  
171 Queens Drive  
Liverpool  
L18 1JP**

**email: [eric\\_roper@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:eric_roper@blueyonder.co.uk)**

I can scan photographs and return the originals, but please provide a **SAE.**

Please enclose a detailed description, ie, names, dates etc., of any photograph(s).



## **100 CLUB**

The April 2017 draw was made at City Office, Liverpool on Tuesday 4th April 2017 by Committee member Terry Caffrey, and the winner is:

**1ST PRIZE (£45)  
CLIVE H BECKETT (Share No 26)**

May 2017 draw was made at City Office, Liverpool on Tuesday 9th May 2017 by Committee member John Butler, and the winner is:

**1ST PRIZE (£45)  
LT COL W HUGHES (Share No 23)**





# LAST POST



## **TOMMY CROWE (LATE 1 KINGS)**

It is my sad duty to inform you that Tommy Crowe passed away peacefully in his local Hospice, on Friday 31st March 2017 after a brave fight with cancer

His funeral service took place on Friday 7th April 2017 at 1000 hrs at the Vale Royal Crematorium, Shurlach Lane, Davenham, Northwich CW9 8RP

## **MICHAEL DAVID GLOVER (LATE 1 KINGS & 5/8 KINGS)**

It is my sad duty to inform you that Michael David Glover passed away on Thursday 6th April 2017.

Michael served with 1 KINGS and 5/8 KINGS.

Michael's Funeral Service is to take place on Wednesday 19th April 2017 at 10am at St Paul's Church, West Derby, L12 8SJ followed by a burial at Yew tree Cemetery.

## **JIM DRYSDALE SNR (LATE KINGS)**

It is my sad duty to have to inform of the passing of Jim Drysdale Snr who died on Saturday 22nd April 2017.

## **WILLIAM RAYLEY (BILL) WICKHAM (LATE KINGS)**

It is my sad duty to inform you that His Honour William Rayley (Bill) Wickham passed away on Friday 21st April 2017.

Judge Bill Wickham was born in September 1926 and was educated at Sedbergh 1940-1944. He was conscripted for National Service (NS) after leaving school and enlisted as 14496297 Private, The King's Regiment. He was identified as a Potential Officer (PO) and after attending a War Office Selection Board (WOSB) was recommended for a commission. He was appointed Cadet in April 1946 for the 15 week commissioning course at an Officer Cadet School and granted an Emergency Commission as 2nd Lieutenant, The King's Regiment on 9th August 1946.

I found no records in the London Gazette or Regimental magazines and it is likely that he was almost immediately released to read for a law degree and to serve his pupillage before being called to the Bar in 1951. He was employed with the Overseas Civil Service from 1953-1963 and then practised at the Bar in Liverpool from 1963-1973. He was appointed Recorder in 14th December 1972 and warranted as a Circuit Judge on 3rd September 1975. He was appointed Recorder of Liverpool and Senior Circuit Judge Liverpool in 1992. He retired on 31 Dec 1997.

**(Lt Col Robin Hodges)**



# LAST POST



## **JAY GARBETT (LATE KINGS & LANCS)**

It is my sad duty to inform you that Sergeant Jay Garbutt died on Tuesday 25th April 2017 aged 44. He joined the Army at Strensall in March 1990 and was badged in to the King's Regiment. He served the regiment in Northern Ireland, Cyprus, Iraq and varying other places throughout the UK, including the Army Youth Team in Liverpool and the Army Careers Office in Manchester.

In July 2006 at the amalgamation of the North West Infantry Battalions he became a member of 2 LANCS until his retirement in 2012.

The funeral of Sergeant Garbutt took place in Dukinfield Crematorium, on Tue 23rd May 2017.

## **TONY KENNEDY (LATE KINGS)**

It is my sad duty to inform you that Tony Kennedy passed away on the 2nd May 2017, aged 87.

His funeral service took place on Friday 19th May 2017 at English Martyrs Church, Litherland followed by internment at Thornton Garden of Rest, Thornton

## **MICHAEL CHRISTIE (AKA MICK ORR) - LATE KINGS**

It is my sad duty to inform you that Michael Christie (aka Mick Orr) passed away on Thursday 11th May 2017.

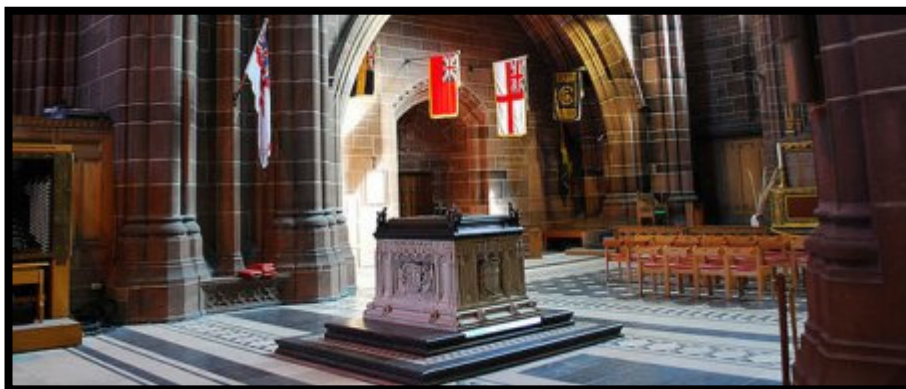
His funeral service took place at Saint Helens Crematorium, Rainford Rd, Saint Helens on Thursday 18th May 2017.



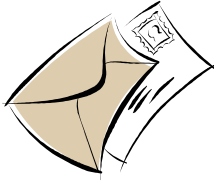
## **TURNING OF THE LEAVES - LIVERPOOL ANGLICAN CATHEDRAL**

**MR JAMES (JIM) LUCOCK, 1 KINGS KOREA VETERAN WILL READ OUT THE ROLL OF HONOUR FOR OUR FALLEN KOREAN COMRADES AFTER THE SERVICE.**

**THURSDAY 8TH JUNE 2017 COMMENCING AT 1730HRS.**



LETTERS PAGE



**PETER O'REILLY, WRITES:**

Dear Eric,

Pat and myself take great pleasure reading your Electronic Edition, for it is nice to hear what is happening, also it brings back lots of memories.

We are sorry to hear that you have not been well, but happy that you are on the mend.

Please find enclosed a cheque for the purchase of 2 x 100 Club Shares, with the balance donated to the Liverpool Branch.

Please give our very best wishes to all former Kingsmen who remember us.

**Yours,  
Peter**

**STEPHEN FOGDEN, WRITES**

**(Letter 1 OF 2)**

**Dear Eric,**

I have recently been appointed the archivist for the newly formed Chindit Society. Our aim is to keep the name of the Chindits alive for future generations and I was hoping that you might assist us in this aim.

Would it be possible to place the Societies website link onto the KRAL site? You kindly added my own website in honour of the men from the 13th Battalion, the King's Regiment back in 2011.

It would also be fantastic if you might mention our organisation and our contact details in the next KRAL newsletter.

I am producing a newsletter twice per year and these will be available on the website shortly. Any help you are able to give would be very much appreciated. I have contacted the Museum of Liverpool, to see if they can help us, by adding the Societies details to their website and exhibits to do with the Chindits.

If you would like to take a look at the website, which is in its early stages, here is a link:

<http://thechinditsociety.org.uk>

**(Letter 2 OF 2)**

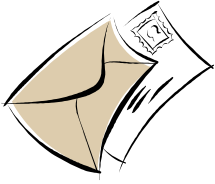
I have been preparing a website in honour of the 13th King's Liverpool and their time in Burma in 1943. One of which was my Grandfather. I was hoping that you might include the release of this site in your next newsletter, or even link it to your own website.

Please do have a look at the content at this address:

<http://www.chinditslongcloth1943.com/index.html>

**Many thanks  
Steve**

LETTERS PAGE



**GEORGE BASTIN , WRITES:**

Request For Regimental Support For The Wayside Cross Centenary Rededication Service  
10th June 2017.

The Wayside Cross at Woodchester was the first War Memorial in this country. It was built to pay tribute to those that had sacrificed their lives in the Great War and was first conceived by Prior Hugh Pope of the Dominican Fathers in Woodchester in 1915. It was originally intended merely for those in the village but it was soon realised that there many more who had made the ultimate sacrifice for whom there would be no memorial. There would be nothing by which to remember them. If the Woodchester Cross had been built exclusively for Woodchester Catholics, as originally intended, it would have another private memorial but it was for all classes and all creeds. While many of the names on the memorial lived in Nailsworth, Woodchester and Stroud there were many others from London, Birmingham, Canada, South Africa, Australia and France. Mariners, soldiers and Air Force names are on the memorial. Many from local County regiments, as you would expect, with some 50 Gloucester's and many other regiments and corps.

The purpose of this email is inform you that the following name from your Regiment is inscribed on the memorial. Sergeant Daniel McCarty. 27th Infantry Labour Corps, King's Liverpool Regiment, transferred to 92nd Company King's Liverpool Regiment Labour Corps. He died on January 10th aged 48. He is buried at The Huts Cemetery, Belgium

We are inviting any descendant or relative of those whose names are on the memorial to attend a service of remembrance at the first centenary of the dedication of the Wayside Cross on 10th June in a manner befitting the memory of those that died. Furthermore we would be honoured to have a representative of each of the Regiments, Corps or Services to attend. Perhaps you have an Old Comrade who lives in the area who you might wish to send in order that your Regiment is represented. Anybody attending in this capacity will be invited to a reception after the service attended by The Princess Royal.

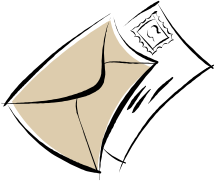
In 1917 the opening ceremony was led by the Rt. Revd. Dr Burton, Bishop of Clifton. This year the rededication service is being led by the present Bishop of Clifton, Bishop Declan. He will be assisted by other clergy to celebrate an ecumenical service attended by HRH the Princess Royal and other local dignitaries, descendants and relatives of those mentioned on the memorial, county regimental representatives, schoolchildren from all, the local schools, local bands and members of the all the services have been invited.

In 1917 the service was attended by five thousand or more. Some have suggested ten thousand. No-one had dared expect the enthusiasm of the crowd. The crowds stretched as far as the eye could see. The following year 1918 the first Remembrance Day was held on St Dominic's Day 10th August which was auspicious being the anniversary of the day war was declared and also Trinity Sunday. The Stroud News estimated the crowds at this service to be four to five thousand but the army who attended estimated it to be ten thousand

**Best wishes,  
George**

**Email:** [gab001@sovision.co.uk](mailto:gab001@sovision.co.uk)

LETTERS PAGE



**CAPTAIN M R HUNT, WRITES (TO MRS L HORNER):**

Laura,

I wanted to write and thank you for the way you managed and prepared for the visit to the NMA. The feeling I got from the many veterans I spoke to was positive and they were grateful to the Regiment for laying on the visit. I have to admit myself that the memorial and indeed the antecedent benches are quite spectacular and a credit to the names that lie beneath the plinth. I even managed to do a little business myself by introducing the two Padre's to each other in preparation for the October Revolution.

I had to smile this morning reading my daily paper, it read: "Although yesterday was the wettest day in the last eight years, be prepared for a hosepipe ban because it wasn't the right type of rain....!" I beg to differ, there are 160 of our veterans and their wives that would disagree, let alone those of us from RHQ.... Well if nothing else, it has wet my appetite to return to see what I never had time for yesterday.

Bloody good show Laura, well done. Would you please pass on my gratitude to the rest of the team.

With warmest regards as always

Mick

**KAREN O'ROURKE, NATIONAL MUSEUMS LIVERPOOL WRITES**

I just wanted to make you all aware of **FREE** drop-in sessions we are offering at the Museum of Liverpool between **1-4pm** on Saturday 24 June (Armed Forces Day).

As well as our usual displays, we will have object handling sessions, memory tours and family craft. **In our large education room**, we are offering a **NAAFI Break**. Veterans and other Armed Forces Day visitors can take a break and have a chat with our *Meet Me at the Museum* reminiscence team over a cup of tea. They can have a look at our Armed Forces memory boxes or just take the chance to sit down and have a rest from all of the bustle outside. We are hoping the event will have the feel of a NAAFI Break.....with me dishing out the tea, coffee and biscuits (and no, before you ask, I am not dressing up as a tea lady).

Please spread the word amongst your contacts and members – we are open to all visitors, but we think the Museum will be one of only a few indoor rest points along that part of the waterfront where AFD visitors can stop for a break and a sit-down, so we hope we can be especially useful for some of the older visiting Veterans and their families.

As we are going for a NAAFI Break feel, but obviously are lacking any Service Personnel on our museum staff (making it decidedly 'un-NAAFI-like!!)– I'd also like to invite workers/volunteers from your organisations to come along if any of you have a few minutes spare – we can only offer the above mentioned refreshments, but you will be the people who will create the NAAFI atmosphere and make our event more welcoming. Also, if any groups/organisations want to leave leaflets or similar free literature in the room, you are more than welcome to do so – you can either leave it with me the week before, or drop it in to the museum on the day.

Best wishes

Karen



**KING'S REGIMENT CORPS OF DRUMS REUNION  
SATURDAY 22ND APRIL 2017 AT THE 'AULD TURKS HEAD' PUB, MANCHESTER.**

This to my knowledge is only the second time that such an occasion has occurred, the first being during the Queen Mothers official visit to the Regiment in Hounslow.

We are eternally grateful to Chris Thomas for taking on the mantle of organising the get together. There is however some administrative issues I wish to discuss with him.

Ex members of the 'Corps of Drums' travelled from near and far to attend, in particular Mark and Doreen Hunt from Scotland, John and Jane Hogan from York and Brian Harrison from Durham. We would also like to thank the other ladies that accompanied there other halves, primarily to keep an eye on them for we are all getting old and a little, well, you know what I mean.

It was good to see the old faces (and I do mean old) especially my old mucker Theo Knox who has not been seen since early Colchester days. Also in attendance, amongst others were Dennis and Lorraine Jessop, Willow and Ann Williams, Brian Slattery and Dave Bramwell, both with ladies far too nice for them. Unescorted, and obviously the last to leave were Ian Davies, Tony Canavan, Stephen Lamb, Steve Preston, Ian Wilmore, Dave Coalburn and John Jones who is still a serving member and Lady. There were more but my brain will not compute.

The beer was soon flowing freely and stories of old slipped of the tongue, the things people remembered about each other were frightening, talk about a close knit family. Turned out to be a cracking day and the weather was great. Alas we older ones and many of those with 'chaperones' left while the night was early, talking gibberish and planning to keep up with each other. The remainder had to be thrown out.

We are hoping to repeat this experience yearly, the next one probably in Liverpool. If you know anyone who was a drummer, but out of touch, please direct them to the 1 Kings Drums Platoon webpage on Facebook. There you can see what all your old friends are up to and peruse the pictures. The page is administered by Brian Harrison

Lastly a special mention must go to Terry Morley who turned up in his wheelchair; well you would, only to find we were all upstairs. No lift. It was good to see the strong men lift him up the stairs, getting down when everyone had had quite a few was a different matter. Strong men were crying (or laughing) depends on your point of view.

**Clive (Henry) Beckett**



**Theo Knox and Henry Beckett**



**KING'S REGIMENT CORPS OF DRUMS REUNION  
SATURDAY 22ND APRIL 2017 AT THE 'AULD TURKS HEAD' PUB, MANCHESTER.**



**Brammy, Terry Morley & Chris Thomas**



**Brian Harrison, John Hogan Jess,  
Davo & Slasher Hunt**



**Doreen Hunt, Loraine Jessop  
& Jayne Hogan**



**Group Posers**



**Lorraine & Jess Jessop**



**Marty Peacock, Brian Harrison  
& Steve Preston**



## HUMOUR IN UNIFORM



### THE SELFLESS KINGSMEN

Kingsmen never hesitate to come to the aid of their fellow man

Shortly after take-off on an outbound, evening flight from Manchester to Kenya on a MOD chartered flight, the lead flight attendant nervously made the following painful announcement:

"Gentlemen, I'm so very sorry, but it appears that there has been a terrible mix-up by our catering service. I don't know how this has happened, but we have 103 Kingsmen on the flight, and unfortunately, we received only 40 dinner meals. I truly apologize for this mistake and inconvenience."

When the muttering of the Kingsmen had died down, she continued, "Anyone who is kind enough to give up their meal so that someone else can eat, will receive free and unlimited drinks for the duration of our 10 hour flight."

The next announcement came about 2 hours later: "If any of your Kingsmen are hungry, we still have 40 dinners available."

### TICKET TO RIDE?

Two Kingsmen, Doug Shipman and Peter Thompson leave the pub, Doug says to Peter, "I can't be bothered to walk all the way to the barracks."

Peter replies, "me too, but we've no money for a cab and we've missed the last bus home."

"We could steal a bus from the depot." replies Doug.

They arrive at the bus depot and Doug goes in to get a bus while Peter keeps a look-out.

After shuffling around for ages, Peter shouts, "What are you doing? Haven't you found one yet?"

"I can't find a No. 91"

"Oh for goodness sake you thick sod, take a No. 14 and we'll walk from the roundabout."

### WHAT A PICTURE!

Kingsman Critchley was asked for his ID at the post office, the assistant remarks, "You've worn a bit since this photo was taken."

"You're dead right love!" He replied. "I had it taken just before I joined the queue."



## HUMOUR IN UNIFORM



### **NBC TRAINED OR NOT**

Former Kingsman Gary McClelland goes for a job at a chemical factory.

The factory manager asks "Have you worked with chemicals before?"

"Yes!" Gary replies.

The manager asks "Can you tell me what nitrate is?"

Gary replies "I'm hoping its going to be time and a half."

### **FEELING SAD AL OVER**

Kingsman Paddy Barrington is doing some roofing work (on the QT) for his platoon Sergeant, Arthur Farrington. As he nears the top of the ladder he starts shaking and goes dizzy. He calls down to Sergeant Farrington and says,

"I tink I will ave to go home, I've come all over giddy and I feel sick."

Sgt Farrington asks "Ave yer got vertigo?"

Paddy replies "No, I only live round the corner."

### **TRUE LOVE?**

At breakfast, Kingsman Geoff Horner says to his wife "What would you do if I won the Lotto?"

"I'd take my half and leave you" she says.

"Great" says Geoff. "I won £12 yesterday, here's £6. Stay in touch."

### **IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH**

Kingsman Skidmore was telling me his wife was texting him all day yesterday saying she was in casualty,

He watched all 50 minutes of it last night and I didn't see her once.

She's still not home yet either and he's getting hungry!

### **WAS IT ISIS OR ELO?**

Ouagadougou has been hit by a terrorist attack....

Police are raiding homes in the neighbouring town of "Push Pineapple Shake The Tree"

## **PTE HAROLD JONES - LATE KING'S REGIMENT (LIVERPOOL) AND EAST LANCASHIRE REGIMENT**

The Mayor of Sefton, Cllr Ian Brodie-Brown presented Pte Harold Jones late King's Regiment (Liverpool) and East Lancashire Regiment with his WW2 Medal on Wed 10th May 2017 which just happened to be Harry's 91st birthday. Harold had been getting looked after by Age Concern and Captain Joseph Darroch BEM (Joe) in particular. Joe approached AHQ in Liverpool to see if Capt Hunt could liaise with Sefton Town Hall to arrange a medal presentation. The Town Hall Staff were very willing to oblige and the date was set.

Capt Hunt had reminded Joe of the seven P's in order for the Mayor to handle the medal and see how it would fit on to Harold's jacket. "Next time you speak with Joe, get him to tell the story" if he has managed to stop laughing!

It was one of the last ceremonies the Mayor was to undertake as he handed over the Chain of Office to Cllr Dave Robinson the following day. The ceremony was done with a little panache, the Mayor donned his Robes and entered the Council Chamber following his Mace. Joe gave an excellent rendition of Harold's service and his past 70 years of living in Bootle. The Mayor presented the medal and gave a nice speech of gratitude on behalf of the citizens of Sefton. The Town Hall laid on tea and coffee plus the odd bottle of whisky and wine appeared in celebration for Harold's birthday.

Capt Hunt would like to thank the Town Hall staff, The Standard Bearers plus Major Roy Bevan MBE for giving up his time to photograph the occasion and the many veterans who turned up to share the experience with Harold.

*(Photograph courtesy of Major Roy Bevan MBE)*



## **ARMED FORCES DAY NATIONAL EVENT – LIVERPOOL SATURDAY 24TH JUNE 2017**

Liverpool is the lead city for this year's AFD Pde and celebrations.

The regiment have been invited to march both regular and reservist and will march from St Georges Hall.

Veterans have been invited to represent their branches and join the march from Derby Square. We have been given 15 places per branch as King's Regiment Veterans, If you are unable to fill your quota, I will ask another branch to fill up accordingly. I will take lead role in the organisation of names to be forwarded.

Could I please ask your branch members if they wish to march then please forward their names to me soonest.

The dress is Regimental Blazer, Regtl Tie, authorised medals, Beret and polished black shoes. Standard Bearers are required from each of our branches. The timings are given below but 1000hrs on Derby Square is the initial registration.

***Colour Sergeant Billy Jones will be the veterans Parade Commander under the management of the overall Parade Leader WO1 Eddie Waring.***

### ***Saturday 24 June - Parade Details***

***Meet Derby Square Approx 10.00hrs (Form up Castle St)***

***Approx. 10.50hrs Step Off***

***Approx. 11.15hrs Salute***

***Approx. 11.45hrs Disperse***

***Approx. 12.00hrs Regulars and cadets will march from St Georges Hall – stepping off at 11.00hrs. Regulars will march past Derby Square/Castle St and continue along James St. The cadets will hold back and the veterans will fall in behind the regulars with the cadets falling in behind the veterans.***

**With warmest regards**

**Mick**

**Captain Michael R Hunt, Asst Regtl Sec - South, Area Headquarters,  
The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment,  
Walker House, Exchange Flags, Liverpool L2 3YL**

**Office Telephone: 0151 242 2322/2876**



## **THE KINGSMAN'S CUP - FORMBY GOLF CLUB FRIDAY 1ST SEPTEMBER 2017**

### **GENERAL**

The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment 11th Anniversary Golf Competition, The Kingsman's Cup will take place on Friday 1st September 2017, at Formby Golf Club; (FGC) by kind permission of Mr AMS (Tony) Webster, Club Captain and members of Formby Golf Club.

The Kingsman's Cup is open to all serving members of the Regiment and its antecedent Regiments. There is a limit of 40 players. The maximum handicap is 24.

The affiliation of Formby Golf Club and the antecedent Regiment formally The King's (Liverpool Regiment) dates back to 1939 at the outbreak of the Second World War (WWII). This year we celebrate 78 years of that affiliation and the regiment is thankful to the members of Formby Golf Club for their continued support.

### **PROGRAMME**

The programme for the day is as follows:

- a. 1215hrs Registration in the Hall Bar
- b. 1230hrs Coffee
- b. 1315hrs Pre match photograph
- c. 1338hrs First Tee – 18 Holes Stableford
- d. 2000 hrs Supper and prize giving will take place in the dining room.

### **ENTRY FORM AND REMITTANCE**

The cost for the day is £60, which includes the upkeep and engraving of the trophies, Bacon rolls and coffee on arrival, 18 holes of golf, prizes and a three course supper. In order for FGC to make the necessary arrangements it would be appreciated if all entries with remittance be submitted by COP Friday 21 August 2017.

You are requested to make your cheques payable to:  
"The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment Charity"

If you have not already received an application form, please contact Captain M R Hunt at the address below, as soon as possible, and he will send you one.

**Captain M R Hunt**  
**Area Headquarters - South**  
**The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment**  
**Walker House, Exchange Flags, Liverpool L2 3YL**

**Telephone: 0151 242 2322/2876**

**Mobile: 07960 215 658**

**Email: [INFHQ-KINGS-LANCS-ASecLpool@mod.uk](mailto:INFHQ-KINGS-LANCS-ASecLpool@mod.uk)**

## REGIMENTAL HISTORY FEBRUARY 2017 (PART TWO OF TWO)

Lieutenant Colonel Robin Hodges, who commanded 1 KINGS from 1992 to 1994, has been working for the past few years on completing the History of The King's Regiment. What started off as a description of badges and insignia primarily designed for collectors gradually expanded into three volumes.

I prepared this biographical note on the occasion of Dick Crittenden's 100th birthday on the 29th December 2016.

### **Captain Dick Crittenden The King's Regiment**

Richard Walter Crittenden, always known as Dick, was 22 when he was called up for National Service on the outbreak of war in 1939.

He left his job at Lewis's department store on Ranelagh Street, close to the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool and moved across to the Depot, The King's Regiment in Seaforth where he became Private Crittenden RW.

Quite quickly he had a run-in with the Regimental Serjeant Major and 'to get him out of the way' he was posted as Permanent Staff to the Potential Officers Platoon.

He had been educated at the Liverpool Institute and had spent seven years in 'The Corps'. His education and his service in the Officer Training Corps fitted him well for military service and after a short period he was also identified as a Potential Officer. Having passed selection, he was recommended for a commission and in October 1939 he was posted as a Cadet to 164th Officer Cadet Training Unit at Colchester.

He successfully completed the 15 week commissioning course and along with four other young men, on 11 February 1940, was granted an Emergency Commission as 2nd Lieutenant in The King's Regiment.

The five young subalterns reported to the construction site that was the training camp at Formby. Their wartime service was to see them scattered far and wide.

Harry Smith was discharged because of ill-health in 1942.

John Vanderwerve volunteered for Special Duties and ended up in Number 2 Commando.

He was killed on the St Nazaire Raid in 1942, in the same action that his Serjeant was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross.

Ronald Boone volunteered for the Army Air Corps and transferred into The Parachute Regiment a few months before D Day, retiring after the war as a Major.

I cannot find anything out about the fifth Officer, John Coney, except that he was a Temporary Captain in 1943 and retired in 1946.

Dick was posted to the 5th Battalion, The King's Regiment which was training for Home Defence in Derbyshire. As the British Expeditionary Force in France withdrew to Dunkirk in the spring of 1940, the Battalion was deployed from Harwich to Felixstowe to defend the coast against the anticipated German invasion. His platoon was based in a Martello Tower; a stone structure built in about 1812 to resist cannon balls. The platoon had no support weapons, the soldiers only having their rifles and bayonets. So long as the Germans remained 300 yards away they could fire at the tower all day without risk.



Fortunately, the previous occupants had left behind a machine gun. It remained unclaimed for 12 months and during that time the Kingsmen became expert machine gunners, engaging passing German aircraft.

Dick's active service came to an end one day whilst playing football on the shingle beach. He turned his ankle, one of the most unfortunate accidents that can happen to an infantryman, and he was posted away to more sedentary duties. He joined the 70th Battalion, which was made up of 'Young Soldiers' who were under-age for deployment to Field Force Battalions. His Battalion was at Netherton on the outskirts of Wakefield guarding RAF airfields and helping in the aftermath of German bombing raids. Dick was appointed Messing Officer, but not to be downhearted by such an appointment he ran cooking competitions between the companies which contributed greatly to the Battalion's morale. He also spent many months of the war involved in Boards of Officers, which checked every item of equipment issued to a unit, and as a member of District Courts Martial, the Army equivalent of Magistrates Courts.

He was promoted War Substantive Lieutenant on 11 August 1941 just as the Home Guard was reorganised on a more military basis and Dick was appointed as Adjutant 1st/5th Battalion, The Leicestershire Home Guard.

He was then posted as Permanent Staff to 148th Pre-Officer Cadet Training Unit at Wrotham in Kent. The pre-OCTU prepared Potential Officers, who under an Army-wide scheme had passed a War Office Selection Board (WOSB), up to the entry standard for the Officer Cadet Training Unit. The Potential Officers were assessed in their Infantry skills, physical condition and Driving and Maintenance skills by Non-Commissioned Officers who they might one day command in battle. Conditions were Spartan and those under training could be there for up to six months. Few of the young gentlemen who passed through the training regime at Wrotham failed to gain an Emergency Commission when they moved on to a commissioning course.

In May 1944 Lieutenant Crittenden was stationed back at the Infantry Training Centre at Formby. One morning he was summoned to the Headquarters and told that he was to escort a secret cargo from Liverpool to London docks. He was not told what he was to escort, or the date he was to depart, but the escort was on a short 'Notice To Move'. Training for his escort involved live firing with Tommy Guns, a weapon not generally issued to the Infantry, and practicing forming a cordon to protect two lorries.

In June 1939 he had married Adeline, the daughter of the owner of McKeveit dairies in Liverpool. Fortunately, when the order was given for the escort to drive to Liverpool it included an instruction to park in Deysbrook Lane and wait for further orders. Captain Crittenden took the opportunity to park his small convoy outside his Father-in-Law's dairy on Deysbrook Lane and to call on his Sister-in-Law who worked there. She was extremely surprised to see him, particularly as their meeting was covered by a Serjeant, a Corporal and ten Kingsmen all facing outwards with loaded Tommy Guns.

A despatch rider arrived with orders that the escort was to drive to Martin's Bank at Exchange Flags, an area which he knew well from his time at Lewis's, which was now only a bombed out skeleton of a building. The escort arrived at the Bank and a large and extremely heavy crate was loaded onto each lorry. Guided by a motor-cyclist the small convoy then left Liverpool. Every few miles another motor-cyclist took over as guide as the convoy travelled the 213 miles south to the East India Docks through a country without any road signs and all the major towns and cities showing the devastation of German

bombing. Un-be-known to the Kingsmen, their two crates contained the gold coins for issue to General Montgomery's 21st Army Group when it landed in France on D-Day.

The fact that gold had been moved to Martin's Bank in Liverpool in May 1940 was not a secret in Liverpool. The rumour was that it had been transferred from the Bank of England in anticipation of a German invasion which was likely to aim for London. The escort at the time had included armed personnel in civilian clothes as well as a large number of bank staff, dockers and railwaymen to move the 280 tons of gold. The gold had then reportedly been moved to Canada for safe keeping. However, sufficient gold for operational use had clearly been retained in the bank.

The presence of some gold in the bank as well as the fact that a significant quantity was to be moved was seemingly known to some in Liverpool.

The move of the gold to the East India Docks was covered by a deception plan which involved moving a number of 'sandbags' apparently containing gold by another route. It was said that an attempt was made to steal the sandbags which became the basis of a 1994 BBC film, *The Bullion Boys*, starring David Jason.

In reality, the Kingsmen delivered the gold safely to the Royal Navy and returned to Formby having been a small part of history. He was appointed Temporary Captain on 15 December 1944.

Dick's final posting was as Adjutant of No 5 Military Disembarkment Camp Units based at Carlisle, an area well away from the Blitzed industrial cities. Soldiers who had served with The King's Regiment, The East Lancashire Regiment and the South Lancashire Regiment returning from operations in the Far East exchanged their uniforms for civilian suits and hats, received their final pay and dispersed across Lancashire. Finally, it was Dick's turn and he retired from the Army with the Honorary rank of Captain after seven years' service in 1946.

In 1948 he was awarded two medals for his war service; the 1939-45 War Medal to recognise his service in the Armed Forces and the Defence Medal in recognition of his three years defending the United Kingdom during the German blitz.

In January 2017 I researched an obituary of an Officer who had served with 1 KINGS;

### **Obituary**

#### **Major Leslie Berker RAPC**

Leslie Berker was conscripted for the Royal Navy when aged 18 in 1940. During the next five years he was to serve in the Atlantic, in the Mediterranean off the North African coast, and later off the Italian coast and for the last year of the war in the North Sea in support of the D Day landings. After the war he was awarded five campaign medals and two further Bars, and the War Medal.

By the end of the Second World War he had been identified as a Potential Officer and after two months training in 1946 was appointed Sub-Lieutenant in the Supply Branch of the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve.

The RNVR was the main path for wartime officer entry into the Royal Navy and was called the 'Wavy Navy' after the wavy sleeve stripes worn to differentiate them from regular Royal Navy officers. Appropriately, as it turned out, officers of the Supply Branch responsible for pay aboard ship would be referred to as 'The Paymaster'. After he was released from

National Service he was accepted for a Short Service Commission as 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Army Pay Corps. He was commissioned in 1951, and was immediately promoted to Lieutenant. From then on his career involved three-year tours as a Paymaster with different units around the world. He was posted to the Canal Zone in Egypt, for which in 2003 he was belatedly awarded a campaign medal.

He was promoted to Captain in 1956 and was posted to Cyprus during the EOKA troubles and for which he was awarded a campaign medal. He was then seconded to the Royal West African Frontier Force and was serving in Ghana in 1960 when the Battalion was deployed as part of the United Nations Organization in the Congo, known to all as ONUC, into the former Belgium Congo which was being divided in a vicious civil war. He was later awarded the United Nations Service Medal for ONUC. He also received the Ghana Independence Medal.

In 1963 he was posted as Unit Paymaster to 1st Battalion, The King's Regiment in Berlin. About 20 years older than his contemporaries, Les immediately made his mark as a great character and was well liked in the Mess. He was the natural choice to compere the Battalion's Christmas Review in 1963 and was one of the junior Officers who acted out a pantomime for the benefit of young Officers joining the Mess.

On the day that a young man joined the Mess, Roddy Coleman would play an extremely rude waiter, whilst Leslie Berker played an alcoholic Company Commander who demolished a gin bottle full of water whilst 'welcoming' the young man to the Regiment.

Les accompanied the Battalion when it moved to Ballykinler in Northern Ireland in 1964. Shortly afterwards he was transferred onto a Special Regular Commission which extended his length of service in the Army. He celebrated by breaking his arm during a game of Mess Rugby after dinner. Apparently he had enjoyed dinner so much that it took him some time to realise why his arm was no longer working properly. He is well remembered as 'a bit of a scally'.

Les was also an enthusiastic golfer who played nearly every Sunday morning in a Foursome with Tony Davies, Robert Rogers and Nigel Scott. It is vaguely remembered that some Officers also played a version of the game inside the Mess.

In September 1965 he deployed with the Battalion on a six months Operational Tour to British Guiana in South America. The colony had been wracked by disturbances the previous year but was now relatively peaceful in the run-up to independence. However, it was a dangerous place at night and soldiers were discouraged from walking-out alone.

One night when walking alone he was the victim of a 'choke and rob' attack which to the surprise of all, particularly the mugger, he saw off by firing a pistol at the man.

Soldiers rarely carried personal protection weapons but un-be-known to most, the Paymaster carried a civilian 'Pay Office' weapon which had been acquired after an attempt to steal a 'cash convoy'. His reputation as a 'scally' was secure.

Back in Ballykinler, Les occasionally demonstrated that he could be blunt in speech. In those days Ladies were not allowed in the Mess except for the annual 'Ball and Chain' Dinner at Christmas. Incidentally, on that night the toast 'To the Ladies' was accompanied by the Band playing, not the Regimental March, but the tune 'Thank heavens for little girls.' As an innovation, the Colonel had directed that a room be designated and furnished as a Ladies Room where ladies could wait for their husbands. The only suitable room was the

Billiard Room and consequently the table was removed. This was a very unpopular decision amongst the junior Officers who lived in the Mess. At each Mess Meeting a rebellious subaltern would raise yet again a proposal to return the Ladies Room back into the Billiard Room. The President of the Mess, at the time Mike Yemm, explained that the Commanding Officer deemed a Ladies Room to be in the best interest of the regiment and the answer was, "No".

A Subaltern then proposed that the Mess buy a Table Tennis table. Mike Yemm again replied, "No". Les Berker, who has spent his formative years in a Navy fighting dictatorship, leapt to his feet and said "Who do you think you are? Hitler. We're supposed to vote." There may have been another word used immediately before Hitler.

Mike Yemm looked at the Commanding Officer for support and receiving none put the motion to the Officers who voted unanimously for a table.

As Paymaster, Les acted as the Colonel's 'eyes and ears' as he was responsible for auditing all the sub-accounts and therefore got to know about everything that was going on in the Battalion.

To the married Officers he proved an astute advisor when the Army announced a change in the rate of widows' pensions from one third to one half. He took the time to speak to each individually and calculated the advantage to the families of paying contributions for earlier years

Amongst the junior Officers, Les was remembered with affection as a lot of fun, approachable and very helpful to those struggling with administration. He left The King's in 1968 and it is believed that he was appointed an Acting Major in his last appointment. He retired from the Army after 18 years' service in 1969.



**If you have any stories, anecdotes, photographs that are worth including in the Regimental Histories, please do contact:**

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**HOW THE BRANCH IS RUN**

The Branch is managed by a management committee that meets quarterly at 1200hrs on selected Tuesdays at Walker House.

The committee is elected at the Annual General Meeting each year.

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