

"OUT & ABOUT"



HOME HEADQUARTERS
THE ROYAL DRAGOON GUARDS
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FEBRUARY 2004

By the time you read these notes, I will have handed over to my successor, Lt Col Jonny Cray, and my time as the Commanding Officer of our fine Regiment will have come to an end.

When I wrote in the last edition of 'Out and About', I reflected on the extraordinary turmoil and uncertainty that had shrouded our

lives during the first half of the year. The firemen's strike, Op TELIC in Iraq, our delayed deployment to Canada as the OPFOR and then ongoing doubts about how long we would be away; all these and other pressures perhaps coloured our judgement of 2003 in those first six months.

However, the year ended well and I can report that the Regiment returned from Canada, with resounding accolades from our Brigade and Divisional Commanders and a public endorsement from Commander BATUS that we were the best trained Battlegroup in the British Army. Certainly, spirits were remarkably high as we arrived back in Munster in November in time for a sustained and protracted burst of Christmas festivities, before three weeks of well-earned leave. Without wishing to brag, I can state the facts about our time at the British Army Training Unit Suffield, or BATUS as it is usually known. During our six months in theatre, we fought five of the Army's front line battlegroups and 1st Mechanised Brigade; a total of 27 battles or missions, of which, according to the statistics, we won 23. OPFORs, although usually very effective (understandably so in view of how long they spend there), are not normally meant to be quite so successful! And it was fun. Just about every man had at least a week of adventure training and we all got more than our allocation of leave during the year, with plenty of opportunity to travel around the USA and Canada or

spend time with our families back at home. So, much success and much to be proud of.

OUTGOING CO's NOTES BY LT COL NCC FREEMAN

My time in command is finished, and although I don't feel that I have done half the things I would like to have achieved, I do feel confident in saying that I am handing over to Jonny Cray, to whom I wish every

success, a happy, contented and professionally highly effective Regiment. As always, it comes back to people. We are 32 men overstrength, we have 135 committed recruits on our books, our retention has been good and we have plenty of good quality potential officers who want to join the Regiment. Beyond that, we have real strength and talent at all levels in the Regiment, from Trooper to Major. In our core skills of gunnery and tactics, there is none better. Pretty much everywhere, I feel that there is a real sense of pride in our achievements, pride in the Regiment, a feeling of comradeship and togetherness and a genuine esprit de corps. We have worked hard and played hard and that was all I ever wanted.

Before I finish, I would like to pay a personal tribute to our indefatigable, immensely loyal and incomparable Regimental Secretary, John Etherington and team at Home Headquarters. They do so much for us all, both serving and retired, and so much of it is unseen and so often unsung. Their experience, advice and compassion have been invaluable and I really don't know how we would manage without them.

As for me, serving in this Regiment for the last twenty three years and then commanding it for the last two has been an immense honour, pleasure and privilege and in the years ahead I will miss the Regiment and my men very much indeed – Quis Separabit and Fare Thee Well indeed.

CAPTAIN OATES MEMORIAL SERVICE SUNDAY 14 MARCH 2004

This year's Memorial Service will be held once again in the Royal Hospital Chapel, Chelsea. Members wishing to attend, and all are welcome, should plan to arrive at 1030 hrs. We are planning to parade with the Pensioners at 1040 hrs prior to the Church Service which will begin at 1100 hrs. Medals should be worn. There will be ample car parking in the Royal Hospital grounds. Following the service, there will be a cash bar in the 'In Pensioners Club', and lunch will be available in the Great Hall at approximately 1300 hrs, at a cost of £6.00 per head. Please do not move to the Great Hall until called, as the In Pensioners must clear the Hall prior to our lunch. Lunch is limited to 64 attendees and will be based on a 'First-Come-First-Served' basis. Please book in for lunch with HHQ (cheques payable HHQ RDG).

COMBINED CAVALRY PARADE WEEKEND 8/9 MAY 2004

This year's Combined Cavalry Parade in Hyde Park will take place on Sunday 9 May at 1100 hrs. Medals are required. We have limited enclosure tickets available, for both standing and seated, and these will be available from HHQ on a 'first come first served basis', though preference must be given to those with mobility difficulties. It is very much hoped that we will see you all once again, following the wonderful support shown in recent years. Members are advised to arrive early (1030 hrs) in order to clear the various security checks, which will doubtless be in operation. This particularly applies to those in the standing and seated enclosure areas. I have been asked by the Chairman of the Combined Cavalry Committee to remind those marching that they should not carry cameras, bags or boxes.

COMBINED CAVALRY LUNCH 9 MAY 2004

The Combined Cavalry Reunion and Luncheon will be held in El Alamein and Carisbrooke suites of the Victory Services Club, Seymour Street. The Club is situated in the heart of Marble Arch. Luncheon costs will be £22 for officers/ex-officers and £17.00 for ORs/ex-ORs. Those wishing to attend should complete the proforma at the end of the Newsletter.

ASSOCIATION AGM AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Annual General Meeting will take place in the Royal Hospital, Chelsea at 1400 hrs on Saturday 9 May 2004. This will be followed by a Committee Meeting. Non-Committee members wishing to attend the AGM should notify HHQ.

NEW EMAIL ADDRESS FOR HHQ

Please note that our Email address has changed at HHQ. Mail to the old Email address (rdgmuseum@onetel.co.uk) will continue to reach us for a limited time but please amend your address books to read **hhq@rdgmuseum.org.uk**

COMMEMORATION OF EXERCISE SMASH - 4 APRIL 1944 TO BE HELD 3/4 APRIL 2004

Sixty years ago in the early morning of the 4 April 1944 the 4/7 Royal Dragoon Guards in their amphibious Valentine "DD" tanks were launched from their landing craft for a live firing rehearsal for D-Day. The weather was marginal at launch and later deteriorated resulting in the loss of six lives and six tanks. As a result, on D-Day the amphibious tanks (by then the American Sherman) were launched closer inshore than had been originally planned and in fact the 4/7th were taken right to the beach. As a result few were lost in general and the only losses to the Regiment on D-Day were due to subsequent swamping when the tide came in. There was a notable difference between the British and American loss rates of amphibious tanks on D-Day largely because the Americans launched from the original distance from shore. The difference in fire support on the beaches also caused widely different casualty rates amongst the other assault troops. The commemoration, which has been organized by Mr John Pearson and Mr Cecil Newton, is to be in two separate but linked parts:

1. On Sunday 4 April 2004, ex members of the 4/7 Royal Dragoon Guards, widows supporters and other veterans will hold a Remembrance service on the headland by Fort Henry, Studland. This will include the unveiling of a slate memorial recording the event and the lives lost. A wreath will be laid on the waters of the Bay from a Royal Marines landing craft with a bugler playing "Last Post" and "Reveille". There may then be an aircraft flypast. Fort Henry itself is the original viewing position constructed specifically for the high ranking audiences witnessing the D-Day training exercises taking place there in 1943 and 1944.
2. The other part of the event will be a military vehicle show which will be the first public appearance of the only surviving Valentine DD tank following a twenty year restoration by John Pearson. This will be over both days of the weekend of 3/4 April 2004 and will be based on the beach at the Knoll, Studland that is about a half-mile from Fort Henry. It will be driven and demonstrated at regular intervals. There will also be other wartime vehicles on display including a Churchill AVRE (Armoured Vehicle Royal Engineers), Sherman, Stuart, Sherman based Beach Armoured Recovery Vehicle, artillery and other privately owned wartime vehicles and also modern Army vehicles including Challenger 2 and Scimitar. Also in attendance will be landing craft from The Royal Logistics Corps. It is anticipated that the Valentine DD and the Churchill AVRE will be brought to the beach by landing craft. After the event, the Valentine DD will be placed on exhibition at the Tank

Saturday 3 April 2004

09.00 Carpark at the Knoll open to the public and privately owned MV's to arrive.

10.00 approx. Churchill and Valentine arrive in RLC landing craft, which are beached (*)

10.30 approx. Churchill and Valentine DD wade ashore and park with other vehicles on beach. (*)

11.00 to 18.00 Tanks are periodically displayed running and moving on sands, including embarking/disembarking once sea has receded.

Sunday 4 April 2004

09.00 approx. RLC landing craft returns. Programme similar to 3 April.

10.00 to 10.30 Veterans assemble at Middle Beach Carpark, Studland.

10.45 Veterans and standards make their way to Fort Henry. This will have to be in single file due to trees.

4/7RDG Banner, piper, and official guests form up in Middle Beach Carpark.

10.55 Official party march to Fort Henry from Middle Beach Carpark

11.00 Commemoration Service and unveiling of plaque. Wreaths to be laid. Piper plays lament

11.30 Approx. Wreath laid on waters of Bay from RM landing Craft; Last post sounded by Royal Marines bugler on Landing craft 1 minute silence Reveille sounded

12.00 Possible Flypast, number of aircraft and type to be confirmed.

RM landing craft returns Bay wreath laying party to Sandbanks ferry jetty. Veterans then invited to view vehicle display at the Knoll

15.30 Valentine, Churchill embark on RLC landing craft for return.

NB: All RLC landing craft movements and timings (*) are dependant upon tides which have not yet been ascertained. All military involvement will be subject to Operational Requirements and in addition landing craft use will be dependent upon weather. Again, weather permitting, RSM Kirkman and a diving party are planning to place a plaque on a submerged tank.

THE MEMORIAL PLAQUE STUDLAND BAY

The plaque, which is being organised by *John Pearson*, is of slate size one foot ten inches by one foot five inches high and will be mounted on a natural stone 'lectern' at Fort Henry overlooking Studland Bay. Total cost is £596.31 which will be paid by *John Pearson* less £300 donated by the Creully Club. *John* is to be most sincerely thanked for his generosity. Contributions would be welcomed and may be sent to HHQ for forwarding to Mr Pearson.

CREULLY JUNE 2004

A finalised programme for the pilgrimage to Creully on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of DDay, will be forwarded to those attending in the near future. Currently, over 120 veterans, families and supporters will be attending our Memorial Lunch on Sunday 6 June. Have heard from Brian Sutton that Albert Kent has knowledge of vacant B&B for a couple with own transport in the Caen area. Contact Albert on 0033 2 31 94 50 42.

BOURNEVILLE 23/28 AUGUST AND S-HERTOGENBOSCH 25/30 OCTOBER 2004

Spaces still available on both of these visits. If you wish to join the coach party please contact HHQ for further details.

GRAND MILITARY RACE MEETING FRIDAY 12 March 2004

Concessions are offered to serving and retired military personnel and families. Prices are; Members Badge Club Enclosure £12 (Full £20), Grandstand £14, Members Car Pass £1. Apply with payment and SAE as early as possible but no later 6 March to : Christopher Marriott, 9 Market Place, Faringdon, Oxon. SN7 7HL. Tel. 01367 242422, Mobile 07970 749658 or Email christopher_merriott@marriotts.co.uk Contact Christopher for further details.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR EXPERIENCE CENTRE

Reproduced as incorrect address given in earlier Newsletter.

The Second World War Experience Centre was created to save a crucial part of our heritage. The aim of the Centre is to rescue the surviving personal evidence of the men and women who participated in WWII in whatever capacity. We are concerned not only with prominent soldiers, sailors and airmen, but with the daily civilian and military experience of all manner of men, women and children in every community during wartime, both Allied and Axis. The collection we are preserving for posterity includes wartime letters, diaries, photographs, maps, newspapers, books, official papers and 'three-dimensional material' evoking the period as well as tape-recorded interviews with veterans. The intention is to make such material available to researchers, students and to the general public so that an understanding of the experience of those who fought in this conflict can be developed and remembered. Should any member have WWII material or recollections they would be willing to record, either in written or tape-recorded form, please contact the Centre. If anyone has a few hours to spare on a regular basis, we have an urgent need for more voluntary help, for example in tape-recording veterans for our oral archive. The Second World War Experience Centre, 5 Feast Field (Off Town Street), Horsforth, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS18 4TJ. Tel: (0113) 2584993 Fax: (0113) 2582557 E-Mail: enquiries@war-experience.org Website: <http://www.war-experience.org>

OBITUARIES

We regret to inform members of the following and offer sincere condolences to all relatives and friends

- CAPT R BEALE, REME Attd 5 INNIS DG, 15 Wrekin Avenue, Newport, Shropshire, who died 13 August 2003
- Mr PB BEAUMONT, 4/7DG, 1968 - 91, 7 Maison Dieu, Richmond, North Yorkshire, who died 7 January 2004
- Mrs M BERTRAND, Steinbeke Strasse 2B, 33175 Bad Lippspringe, Germany, who died 16 September 2003
- Mr D BLOOMER, 5 INNIS DG, 1943 - 47, 41 Green Lane, Castle Bromwich, Birmingham, who died 1 December 2003
- Col WJD BRADFIELD OBE MC, 5 INNIS DG, 1942 - 46, Barn Cottage, Fisherton De La Mere, Warminster, who died 21 November 2003
- Mr P BROWN, 5 INNIS DG, 1943 - 45, 16 Windrush Gardens, Norton Close, Waterlooville, Hants, who died 3 December 2002
- Mr JJ CALLAGHAN, 4/7DG, 1985 - 91, 53 Longfield Road, Rodley, Leeds, who died 12 March 2003
- Mr AW CARSLAKE, 5 INNIS DG, 18 Bryneg, Rhiwhine, Cardiff, who died 22 July 2003
- Mr H DAWSON BEM, 4/7DG, Hindenburgplatz 11, 29699 Bomlitz, Germany, who died 7 September 2003
- Mr D FANNERAN, 5 INNIS DG, 10 Queens Way, Nertheravon, Salisbury, who died 11 November 2002
- Mr GD GILFORD, 4/7DG, 1950 - 55, 8 Charter Court, Market Drayton, Shropshire, who died 29 January 2002
- Capt WD HANCOCK, 4/7DG, 1945 - 47, Connifers, Burnham Deepdale, Norfolk, who died 25 November 2003
- Mr P HEALEY, 4/7DG, 1947 - 49, 20 Layton Park Croft, Rawdon, Leeds, who died 7 August 2003
- Mr A JAMISON, 4/7DG, 1961 - 71, 16 Arthur Avenue, Lower Grange, Bradford, who died 5 October 2003
- Mr W KING, 5 INNIS DG, 1960 - 70, 361 Innsworth Lane, Churchdown, Gloucester, who died 29 December 2003
- Mrs A McCAULEY, 100 Kirkleatham Lane, Redcar, Cleveland, who died 21 October 2003
- Mr BD McCAULEY, 5 INNIS DG, 1959 - 76, 100 Kirkleatham Lane, Redcar, Cleveland, who died 7 November 2003
- Mr T McKIERNAN BEM, 5 INNIS DG, 8 Hertington Avenue, Carlton, Notts, who died 8 September 2003
- Mr J MILLBROOK, 4/7DG, 1938 - 46, 5 Queensmere House, Kinsey Road, High Green, Sheffield, who died 26 September 2003
- Mr R NIPRESS, 5 INNIS DG, 1956 - 65, 111 Holgate Road, Dagenham, Essex, who died 5 September 2003
- Mr J READ, 5 INNIS DG, 1931 - 46, 6 Russel Rise, Flore, Northampton, who died 11 November 2003
- Mr G ROBERTS, 5 INNIS DG, 11 Kinloch Close, Halewood, Liverpool, who died 19 October 2003
- Mr E SHARPE, 5 INNIS DG, 1942 - 46, 8855 Waterfront Tere, Jacksonville, Florida, who died 25 June 2003
- Mr J SHEAD, 4/7DG, 1949 - 65, 20 Enfield Drive, Barry, South Glamorgan, who died 24 December 2002
- Capt DW WICKS, 4/7DG, Mill Stream, 16 Bollin Grove, Prestbury, Cheshire, who died 18 December 2003
- Capt GC YOUNG, 4/7DG, 1941 - 42, St. Feock, 15 Friern Avenue, Friern Barnet, London, who died 5 July 2003

LOST FOUND & HELP

Dennis Jones, 80 Woodlands Avenue, Poole, Dorset, BH15 4EF Tel: 01202 268322 is looking for a 'Skins' forage cap. Any offers please to Denis.

Joe & Angie Monks have moved to Casa Anjo, 17 Calle Strauss, La Siesta, Torrevieja 03180, Alicante, Spain. Tel: 0034 966 78 5010 Email joemonks@supanet.com. They would be pleased to hear from old friends visiting Spain in the future.

Roger Kett is looking for **Archie Rockall**, originally from Cookham, Maidenhead, served in the 'Skins' QMs Dept, Sennelager, 1957 - 1960. Any information to Roger on 01603 482003.

Barrie Grimshaw requires 'Skins' Journals for the years 1959 and 1961. Should you have spares please contact Barrie on 01226 759662.

ROYAL HOSPITAL CHELSEA - FOUNDERS DAY 10 JUNE 2004

We have once again been invited to apply for Founders Day tickets. The tickets are usually in short supply though we do our best to obtain as many as possible. Please bid for tickets to HHQ by the 20 March. Our allocation will be distributed on a 'first come first served basis'. A full dress rehearsal (with Band & Fanfares etc) will take place on Tuesday 8 June at 1000 hrs. Seating for the rehearsal may be arranged by telephone to the Royal Hospital Events Department 020 7881 5303. Normally no restriction for seats at the rehearsal.

REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION BRANCHES AND GROUPS

CREULLY CLUB

Each year, the Creully Club hold a Service of Remembrance at the 4/7DG Memorial in Creully on the 6th June. The Club Reunion, AGM and participation in the Remembrance Day Parade, take place each November in Alcester. Details of these events are available from Cecil Newton, and suggestions and comments for the AGM are also welcomed by him. Further information on any of the above and details of the Creully Club may be obtained from Cecil Newton, 1 Grasshills, Aldbourne, Marlborough, Wilts, SN8 2EH. ☎ : 01672 540356.

LONDON AND SOUTH EAST BRANCH

The Branch AGM was held on Thu 25 Sep 2003 at the BR Club Selhurst, when Paul Oakwell provided hospitality and a buffet and Ken Austin organised the raffle. No nominations had been received for Branch Welfare Officer, however, Paul England (Acting Chairman) – having unanimous support of the members agreed to continue as Branch Chairman. As regards welfare, members decided that, in future, this should be done on an area basis. Peter Rose, Ken Austin and Charles Dawson volunteered for this role. H Hollingshead (Secretary), Dick Fair (Treasurer), and Mrs J Salmon (Committee) agreed to continue in post. The Chairman welcomed a new member, David Holland (ex-RDG) and since our AGM Roy Shaw (ex-Skin) has become a member of the Branch. The Annual Field of Remembrance Service at Westminster Abbey on Thu 6 Nov was well attended by Branch members. Afterwards we were welcomed at Chelsea Hospital, thanks to the good offices of Col Noel McCleery, where we had a session in the in-pensioners bar before having a buffet lunch. The Annual Xmas lunch was much enjoyed by members, wives and friends at Morden Hall Restaurant on Wed 3 Dec. The special guests on this occasion were Major Gene and Mrs Margo Cooney to whom presentations were made by the Chairman, Paul England. Gene suitably replied. The toasts included one for 'absent friends'. A raffle organised by Ken Austin raised over £70. Gordon Ault and Ken Austin, representing the Regimental Association, visited Chelsea Hospital on Monday 8 December to see Mr Andrews and Mr Bovingdon who are in-pensioners at the hospital. The Branch Officers send their best wishes for 2004 to all members, families and friends, particularly remembered are those in ill-health at the present time. The next Branch Meeting will be held at Selhurst HQ on Thu 1 Apr 2004 at 2pm, social time from 1pm and after the meeting. The Branch covers London and the surrounding counties and at all times welcomes new members and any friends who may be in the area at the time of our gatherings. Information on Branch activities may be obtained from Paul England (Chairman), 59 Guards Close, Towngate, Wood Park, Shipbourne Road, Tonbridge, Kent, TN10 3RT. ☎ 01732 352138.

CUMBRIA BRANCH

The Cumbria Branch meet regularly and all are welcome and encouraged to attend. Details of Branch membership can be obtained from Mr Dennis Wallace, 2 Denton Square, Great Clifton, Workington, Cumbria, CA14 1UF ☎ 01900 61890.

WESSEX BRANCH

The next meeting of the Wessex Branch will be in the WO's and Sgts Mess KRH, Aliwal Barracks, Tidworth at 1200 hours Sunday 22nd February 2004. A light lunch will be provided. It is important that names are given in advance to Eugene Hamilton, 214 Britten Road, Basingstoke RG22 4HR ☎ 01256 414541 or email em.hamilton@ukonline.co.uk

NORTHERN IRELAND BRANCH

The recent AGM of the Northern Ireland Branch took place and the branch has been lucky yet again in securing the services of Mr Eddie (Ted) Scott as their Branch Chairman with Mr Walter Browne BEM taking on the task as the Branch Secretary. Mr Ian Roleston continues to hold the purse strings as the Treasurer. The next Branch outing will be the Annual Oates Dinner night on Friday 19th March 2004 in Hollywood, County Down (sorry for those members thinking it was an outing to the USA). We would love to hear from all old and new members wishing to make contact with the branch. The branch secretary can be contacted on 02891 451365 or by email: w.browne@virgin.net or w.brown@qub.ac.uk

YORK BRANCH

The branch members enjoyed a good ending to last year with 41 members sitting down for our annual Balaclava Dinner. As we are very widespread we only get together twice a year so it is especially good to see so many and in some cases for the first time. After a break of two years we are now back to holding the March Social which this year will be the 26th at our new home, Worsley Barracks. We have had two dinners there now and enjoy the comfort of excellent surroundings. As all you regimental historians know, October 2004 is the 150th anniversary of Balaclava where predecessors of the Regiment took part in The Charge of the Heavy Brigade. In order to commemorate this event, our annual October meeting is to be held on Saturday 23rd and Sunday 24th October. We are planning to hold a dedication service at the Regimental Plaque and guided tour in York Minster on Saturday afternoon followed at night by dinner at Worsley barracks. On Sunday there will be a church service in the regimental chapel followed by a lunch – venue to be arranged. If you are interested in coming along to any or all the events would you please let me know and I will forward further details. Secretary: Capt (Retd) B Grimshaw, 28 Foley Ave, Wombwell, Barnsley, S73 8PB ☎ 01226 759662.

OXFORD AREA

Sadly in 2003 we lost two of our members, Peggy Bellinger and Derek Caley. On a brighter note we recruited five new members, John Dunn ex B Squadron 3rd Troop Sergeant in Korea, Johnnie and Maureen Hobart, Johnnie was Adjutant in the Skins in the early 1950s, also a Korean veteran and Ken and Ann Gardner. Meetings throughout the year were quite well attended and in particular the 6th Blenheim Dinner. 53 persons attended and our guests were John and Vanessa Etherington and the Piper Hank Johnson who piped us into dinner. Once again the OUOTC Headquarters made it a great evening. The following evening John Walker organised a curry evening at the OTC. Looking forward to this year we have our AGM at the Royal British Legion club, Marston on Sunday morning 25th January at 1045 hours. The next meetings are at the OUOTC Headquarters on Monday evenings at 2000 hours 10 May and 13 September. The 7th Blenheim Dinner will be held on Friday 26 November - more about that later. Dates to note will be Oates service on 14 March 2004 at the Royal Hospital Chelsea and the Combined Cavalry Parade in Hyde Park on 9 May 2004. Note: Anyone in the Oxford area on the above dates who would like to join us are more than welcome. Give me a bell on ☎ 01865 730303.

THE 5 INNIS DG OLD COMRADES REUNION

A Reunion weekend will be held in Blackpool from 16 - 19 April 2004. Further information and group details from Gordon Nixon, 48 Teasdale Close, Chadderton, Oldham, OL9 8AS ☎ 0161 682 0535.

HIS OWN GRANDFATHER A Dutch paper at Pretoria shows how a man in South Africa has become his own grandfather. The victim himself thus explains it; I married a widow with a daughter. My father who was a widower at the time frequently visited us. He fell in love with the daughter and eventually married her. My father thus became my son-in-law. Shortly afterwards my wife gave birth to a son, who is naturally my father's brother-in-law and at the same time my uncle, for he is brother of my step-mother. To make matters more involved, my father's wife also became the mother of a son. This boy is my brother and also my grandchild. My wife logically is my grandmother for she is my step-mother's mother. I am therefore, my wife's husband and grandchild and since the husband of anyone's grandmother is his grandfather. I have to acknowledge that I am my own grandfather.

THE PENSION CREDIT

Members and widows over 60 may be entitled to claim a "top up" to their weekly income by applying for the Pension Credit, which has replaced the Income Support element of the Minimum Income Guarantee. The Pension Credit aims to guarantee a basic level of income of £102.10 pw for single people and £155.80 pw for couples.

The Pension Credit is formed in two parts: the Guarantee Credit and the Savings Credit.

A "tariff of £1 pw is taken into account for every multiple of £500 or part over the base level of £6,000 of savings. Your residence is not taken into account providing you live there. When assessing the entitlement to the Pension Credit the following sources of income are taken into account: *State Retirement Pension, Occupational Pension, Personal Pension, War Disability Pension, War Widows Pension, Unemployability Supplement, Allowance for Lowered Standard of Occupation*. Members and Widows should be aware that although the War Pension and the War Widows Pension are counted as income, the first £10 is disregarded. The pre-1973 War Widows Supplementary Pension is completely disregarded. The following allowances are disregarded completely: *Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance (Care Component), Constant Attendance Allowance, Comforts Allowance, Mobility Allowances, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit*. You may be more likely to receive the Pension Credit if you are a severely disabled person in receipt of one of the following allowances; *Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance (Care Component), Constant Care Allowance*. Applications can be made over the telephone and your claim form filled in while you speak (it should not take longer than half an hour). You will require the following information: National Insurance Number and that of your spouse if claiming as a couple, Details of your income, Details of your savings. To apply over the 'phone call Freephone 0800 991234.

Motability Enhancements. On 1 October Motability unveiled more enhancements to the Motability Scheme bringing further benefits to their customers, improvements to their services and driving prices down. The changes include: Prices cut by up to £500 from all contract-hire leases. An increase to around 200 cars, including around nineteen automatics, available at nil advance payment on contract-hire. A single, local-rate customer services number: 0845 456 4566. A range of measures to help customers remain mobile between car agreement renewals or if their car is stolen or written-off. Introduction of an improved tyre service (from August 2003) where damaged tyres are replaced free of charge for contract-hire customers. Many of the improvements have been influenced by feedback they have received from customers and their commitment to reducing costs. Look out for full details in the autumn edition of Lifestyle magazine which will have more details or you can go to their website at www.motability.co.uk from October. **New Durashift Transmission.** Ford has also released details to customers and dealers about the new Durashift transmission, available for Ford Fiestas. Durashift enables drivers to switch between clutch-free manual control and intelligent automatic mode, providing hassle-free driving. **Soft-top or convertible?** Convertible cars will be available on the Motability contract hire scheme from November, making certain Motability continue to supply a choice of cars, which reflect the tastes, and lifestyles of their customers. Relevant insurance and excess terms will apply. Anyone interested in these cars should contact their accredited car dealer or Motability Operations from November for details. **New Customer Services Telephone Number.** From 1 October it will be easier to get in contact with Motability. If you are calling Motability, remember to dial their new customer services, telephone number 0845 456 4566. All calls are charged at local rates. **Adapted Vehicles.** If your contract hire car is heavily adapted, or is a wheelchair accessible vehicle, you will now be able to extend your contract up to five years.

Advice for Automatic Car Drivers: Motability's Contract Hire Price Guide has been updated to include an explanation on the differences between standard automatics, semi-automatics, and Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT) cars. We continue to receive calls from customers who have taken delivery of a CVT or semi-automatic car, and have found the driving experience of both types of car different to that of a standard automatic. In some cases, customers have found it difficult to drive these cars, and have requested an early termination of their agreement. The main concern for customers is that, when stationary, a CVT or semi-automatic car will roll backwards on a slope, unless the brakes are in use or the handbrake is on, whilst a standard automatic will not roll because it has a 'creep' facility. Some cars are now available with a 'Hill Start Assist System' which holds the brakes on for a short while, to enable a hill start. This may be suitable for some drivers. Customers should check with their dealers first to confirm whether the automatic car they have selected has a 'creep' facility. It is also important that customers have a test drive before ordering their new car, particularly if they are used to driving a standard automatic car. Please speak to your dealer or contact the manufacturer of your selected car for more information.

SCAM WARNING

The following warning (verified as genuine) has been received from Dorset Police about a VISA / MasterCard scam that is currently being perpetrated by telephone. Please take note.

Someone will call stating that they are from either VISA or MasterCard along the following lines: "This is (Any Name) and I'm calling from the Security and Fraud department at VISA / MasterCard. My Badge number is 12460 (they may give any number). Your card has been flagged for an unusual purchase pattern, and I'm calling to verify this. This would be on your VISA / MasterCard. Have you purchased an Anti-Telemarketing Device (or any other expensive item they may name) for £497.99 from a marketing company based in (Anywhere) recently?" When you reply "No", the caller continues with: "Then we will be issuing a credit to your account. This is a company we have been watching and the charges they are putting onto peoples accounts range from £297 to £497, ie: just under the £500 purchase pattern that flags up on most cards. Before your next statement, the credit will be sent to (*gives you your correct address*), is that correct?" When you say "Yes", the caller continues . . . "I will be starting a fraud investigation immediately. If you have any questions, you should call the 0800 number listed on your card 1-800-VISA and ask for Security. You will need to refer to this Control # ". They then give you a 6 digit number. The caller then says that they: ". need to verify that you are in possession of your card. Please turn the card over. You will see 7 numbers printed on the (signature strip). The first 4 are (1234 or whatever), the next 3 are the security numbers that verify you are in possession of the card. [These are the numbers you may sometimes use to make internet purchases to prove you have the card]. Could you please read me the 3 numbers." When you do, they say: "That is correct. I just needed to verify that the card had not been lost or stolen, and that you still have your card. Do you have any other questions? Don't hesitate to call back if you do." You have actually said very little, and they never ask for or tell you the card number. However, within 15 minutes the sum of £499.99 will have been debited from your card! What the scam requires is simply the 3 digit number and if the card is not stopped, they will keep charging an amount every few days. As you have given the number freely over the phone, filing the necessary fraud report at the end of the month when the statement comes will be extremely difficult. REMEMBER: THE REAL CARD ISSUERS WILL NEVER ASK FOR ANY DETAILS FROM YOUR CARD (THEY ALREADY HAVE THOSE) IF IT IS A GENUINE CALL, THEY WILL MERELY ASK YOU TO CONFIRM SECRET INFORMATION WHICH YOU PROVIDED WHEN YOU ESTABLISHED THE CARD IN THE FIRST PLACE. DO NOT REVEAL ANY OF YOUR CREDIT CARD DETAILS OVER THE PHONE TO SOMEONE WHO RINGS YOU

THE ROYAL HOSPITAL CHELSEA—INTO ITS FIFTH CENTURY

Few of those who watch the Royal British Legion's Festival of Remembrance each November can fail to be touched by the entry of the Chelsea Pensioners. The measured tones of 'The Boys of the Old Brigade' start as a contingent of scarlet clad old men slowly marches into the arena. These men are a national symbol that has come to represent tradition and service to the Crown. The Royal Hospital (meaning refuge or shelter) was founded in 1682 by Charles II for "the relief of veterans broken by age and war". Still located in the original buildings designed by Sir Christopher Wren it is the home to about 350 former soldiers, who served in the Second World War and now more recent campaigns. Admission as a Chelsea pensioner has always been highly prized. In the 18th Century anyone impersonating a Chelsea Pensioner could be sentenced to death or sent to the Colonies.

Today, to be eligible for admission as an In-Pensioner a candidate must be male and:-In receipt of a Service or Disability Pension awarded for Army Service, normally at least 65 years of age, and free from the obligation to support a wife or children. Applications are welcome at any time from any former soldier who is qualified. Currently, because of the accommodation available, it is not possible to admit women.

The Royal Hospital has always been organised on semi-military lines. Today the Governor is supported by the Lieutenant-Governor, the Secretary and nine heads of departments. Senior staff are mainly former regular Army officers or civil servants. Currently the In-Pensioners are organised into six companies under the care of a Captain of Invalids. Each Company has a Company Sergeant-Major and NCOs drawn from the In-Pensioners to assist in its running. Around 90 of the In-Pensioners work voluntarily as guides, chapel attendants, clerical, shop staff and museum attendants and in many other ways. They make a considerable contribution to the running of the Royal Hospital. On arrival each new In-Pensioner is given a Berth in one of the 18 Long Wards (which remain essentially as they were designed by Sir Christopher Wren) and is allocated to a Company. The In-Pensioner surrenders his Army pension(s) and in return receives board, lodging, clothing and full medical care. Depending on individual need support for each In-Pensioner ranges from sheltered housing, through all levels of nursing care to providing a hospice. In-Pensioners are encouraged to pursue a full and active life within the Royal Hospital. In addition to undertaking voluntary jobs In-Pensioners can enjoy many recreational pursuits including the use of a Club, amenity centre, television and snooker rooms, a library, an arts and craft centre, bowling and putting greens and allotment gardens. Trips are arranged regularly both within the United Kingdom and overseas, including Battlefield tours, to sporting events and visits to military establishments. In 2002 a party went to the White House in Washington and met the President. Parades are now mainly limited to Annual Founder's Day, and the Governor's Parade which takes place on Sunday morning before Chapel. The salute is taken by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary or Adjutant with In-Pensioners from each Company on parade. Holidays and leave of absence is freely granted for up to six weeks at a time, although an In-Pensioner must be in residence for Founder's Day and rehearsals, which take place in early June. Within the confines of the Royal Hospital all In-Pensioners are encouraged to wear the Royal Hospital's informal uniform. On all official occasions they wear the famous scarlet coats, completed at ceremonial events by tricorne hats. This dress is a modernised version of the uniform worn at the beginning of the 18th century.

The Royal Hospital's Founder's Day is held on a day close to May 29th which is the birthday of King Charles II as well as the date of his restoration as King in May 1660. The Parade is normally reviewed by a member of the Royal Family. During the course of this celebratory day the statue of Charles II in Figure Court is shrouded in oak leaves, and all participants on the Parade and spectators wear sprigs of oak leaves. This commemorates the King's escape from the Parliamentary forces after the Battle of Worcester in 1651. The statue was re-gilded in 2002 to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II. The Royal Hospital has always been proud to have a close link with the Sovereign. This continues strongly into the 21st Century. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has reviewed the In-Pensioners on Founder's Day on four occasions. The most significant Royal event in recent years occurred on 5th July 2002 when Her Majesty reviewed the Pensioners at Buckingham Palace and presented The Royal Hospital with its first 'colours', The Sovereign's Mace. The Royal Hospital is now taking steps to ensure that it can continue to provide the most modern residential accommodation and care, yet maintain the fabric of the buildings and tradition of the past. This will require: A new Infirmary building, Improved accommodation in the Long Wards and better facilities for the In-Pensioners, also to allow women to be admitted, and Improvements to the grounds to maintain the quality of life and make it a pleasant place to live, work and visit. Chelsea Pensioners are proud to continue a way of life and traditions established over five centuries. The Royal Hospital is committed to provide high quality residential care for old soldiers that have served their country loyally in both war and peace.

The Royal Hospital Chelsea is open to the public nearly every day of the year. Full details are published on the Royal Hospital website - www.chelsea-pensioners.org.uk or ring 020 7881 5204.

NEW SCHEME FOR GIVING TO CHARITY THROUGH THE TAX RETURN

From April 2004 people who complete a Self Assessment tax return will be able to nominate a charity to receive all or part of any repayment due to them. The Inland Revenue repaid around £3 billion to nearly 3 million Self Assessment taxpayers last year. The new scheme will have real advantages for participating charities:

The donation will be paid direct to the charity's bank account. The form will incorporate a Gift Aid declaration. Gift Aid tax will be paid without the charity having to make a claim. For the first time charities will benefit from Gift Aid on anonymous donations.

Please remember that this method of giving will not be available until the Self-Assessment returns are issued in **April 2004**. Should you wish to donate using this scheme, the details are 'The Royal Dragoon Guards Regimental Association' and our unique code is **NAL17FG**.

Commemorative Medal

A New Commemorative Medal has been struck to recognise the Active Service of British and Commonwealth Forces from WW1 to the present Day. The Medal is called "The Active Service Medal". It is of standard size and is Gold Plated. Anyone who has done Active Service will qualify for this Medal, however serving Personnel should not wear this Medal in Uniform but may do so upon becoming Civilians. Funds will be raised for SSAFA Forces Help from sales of these Medals. What better cause is there for Ex and serving Personnel of Her Majesty's Armed Forces.

To obtain an application form please write to Mr.G.E.Harris of 124 Haven Park Crescent, Haverfordwest. Pembrokeshire SA61 1DS, Tel (01437) 768668. E-Mail: george.e.harris@amservice.net

THE BRITISH FRIENDS OF NORMANDY

After the Allied landings of D-Day, 6 June 1944 and the consolidation of the bridge-head, Caen became the anvil of the Battle of Normandy. General Montgomery's objective was to draw the Germans onto his sector of the battlefield so that the American forces to the West could extend and expand; as a result of the fierce battle, the City of Caen was virtually destroyed, some 15,000 inhabitants in the region were killed. The Battle for Normandy raged for some 80 days with about three million men engaged, of whom 300,000 lost their lives.

The 2nd Battalion of the Royal Ulster Rifles was the first to enter Caen and, with the Canadians, liberated the city. Their commanding officer was the late Lieutenant General Sir Ian Harris KBE CB DSO.

When the City of Caen decided to build a magnificent Museum - the Memorial of the battle of Normandy, it was dedicated, not to war, but to peace. International support was given to the Museum, especially by America and Canada. There was some concern, however, that the British contribution in the Battle for Normandy and, in particular, the liberation of Caen, should not be overshadowed. General Harris therefore initiated the British Support Committee which resulted in many suitable artefacts and records being obtained to demonstrate the role played by the British Forces. During the operations in Normandy General Harris met, and subsequently married, a French lady - Anne-Marie Desmontreux, and Lady Harris has worked tirelessly to promote the British contribution. Having provided the initial British presence in the Museum, the support committee turned its attention to the idea of a British Memorial Garden adjacent to the Museum. This involved much detailed discussion with the Caen authorities in which Lady Harris had taken the lead. General Harris wished very much that the Garden should represent not only those involved in the liberation of Caen, but also all those in Her Majesty's Forces and civilians who were concerned with the war effort. With the help of Mr Reg Maxwell, lately the Director of the Botanical Gardens in Belfast, a beautiful garden has been designed and work is underway. It is intended that a formal opening will coincide with the 60th anniversary of D-Day in June 2004.

The Garden, alongside the Museum, is about the size of a rugby pitch and the use of the ground has been granted on a long-term arrangement with the Caen authorities. The centrepiece is a Fountain of Spirits commemorating all those who lost their lives. Along the side will stand the emblems of the British and Allied divisions and formations involved, together with, a naval and RAF memorial, the latter being a solid granite block from the Mountains of Mourne. There will be a Peace Garden providing an area for quiet contemplation.

There is easy access from the Museum car parks and it is overlooked by a recent extension to the Museum. The Caen authorities have been most helpful with the siting and preparation of the ground for the British Garden.

Some £100,000 are needed for its completion and any donations are most welcome to:-

The British Friends of Normandy c/o The Military History Officer Museum Road Portsmouth PO1 2LJ

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- 22 February Wessex Branch Reunion
- 12 March Grand Military Race Meeting Sandown Park
- 14 March Captain Oates Memorial Service Chelsea
- 19 March N Ireland Branch Captain Oates Dinner
- 26 March York Branch Reunion
- 1 April London & SE Branch Reunion
- 3/4 April Commemoration Weekend Studland Bay
- 16/19 April Blackpool Reunion
- 8/9 May Combined Cavalry Weekend
- 10 May Oxford Branch Reunion
- 4/8 June 60th Anniversary Service & visit Creully
- 10 June Royal Hospital Chelsea Founders Day
- 23/28 August 60th Anniversary Bourneville Visit
- 13 September Oxford Branch Reunion
- 23/24 October York Branch Balaclava Weekend
- 25/30 October 60th Anniversary s-Hertogenbosch Visit
- 11 November Field of Remembrance Service Westminster
- 25 November Regimental Officers Dinner London
- 26 November Oxford Branch Blenheim Dinner

REGIMENTAL MUSEUM ALBUMS

The Museum Curator, Captain Alan Henshall, is trying to compile an album of Regimental Christmas Cards from our predecessor Regiments. Should you have any you wish to donate please forward to Home Headquarters.

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL YOU SILVER SURFERS

When changing your Email address, or for that matter when getting one or moving home, do please remember to keep us informed. Also please note, in case you missed it on page 1, our new Email address is hhq@rdgmuseum.org.uk

COMBINED CAVALRY LUNCH SUNDAY 9 MAY 2004 PROFORMA

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____

Please Book Sunday Lunch(es) £22 Officers, £17 ORs per person, Cheques payable to 'HHQ RDG'

CAPTAIN OATES MEMORIAL LUNCH CHELSEA SUNDAY 14 MARCH 2004 PROFORMA

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____

Please Book Sunday Lunch(es) £6 per person, Cheques payable to 'HHQ RDG'

FIRE FIGHTING DUTIES

Readers will recall that the Regiment was extensively used during the firefighters strike in 2002 and 2003. It may be of interest to know that this was not the first time that fire fighting duties have been performed by our predecessor Regiments. In 1829 it was the 7th Dragoon Guards in York and in 1857 the 5th Dragoon Guards in Edinburgh.

The 7th Dragoon Guards distinguished themselves in the role of firemen in 1829. In the early hours of 2nd February 1829, one Jonathan Martin, described as 'a lunatic', started a fire in the organ loft of York Minster, and by 7 o'clock the whole of the roof was ablaze. The City's appliances, and those of the Yorkshire Insurance Company, galloped up soon afterwards, but as their combined efforts proved unavailing, 'an express was also sent to the barracks, and the barrack engine arrived at about 8 o'clock, accompanied by Major Clark, several officers and a file of the 7th Dragoon Guards' (in fact, four whole Troops were despatched). The blaze was finally brought under control by late afternoon, with officers and troops manning pumps and hoses and salvaging furniture and treasures. But by this time the historic Minster had been severely damaged, with the roof of the centre aisle collapsed, all interior woodwork, including the fine altar screen and choir stalls, reduced to ashes, and many of the monuments destroyed. The exertions of the Regiment were officially recognised at a meeting of the Dean and Chapter on 10th February 1829: **Resolved unanimously**, 'That the most grateful thanks of the Chapter be offered to Major Clark, the Officers and Privates of the Seventh Regiment of Dragoon Guards for their valuable services at the time of the conflagration in York Minster'.

To compliment so distinguished a Regiment as the Seventh Dragoon Guards upon its order and discipline would be superfluous and nugatory; but it may truly be remarked that there never was an occasion when order and discipline were more conspicuous, or more useful, than in the conduct of the 7th Regiment on the awful Second of February. Seven days after helping fight this fire, Troop Sgt Maj John Polety died and a Memorial stone to the Polety brothers occupies a place of honour in the All Saints, Pavement which is of course our Regimental Church.

5th Dragoon Guards: In August 1857, a serious fire broke out in the Old Town of Edinburgh, and although it was some distance from Pierhill Barracks, the Regiment was early at the scene of conflagration, and was very instrumental in subduing it, and in rendering aid for the preservation of order and the protection of property. The following is a copy of a letter from the Lord Provost, conveying the thanks of the Magistrates and Town Council, to the Regiment for its services on the occasion.

Edinburgh 11 August 1857

Sir

I have the honour to convey a Resolution unanimously adopted by the Magistrates and Town Council of the City at their meeting today, to express their warm and cordial thanks to the Officers and Men of your Regiment for the valuable and effective aid rendered by you in extinguishing the late fire, and in preserving order.

I have honour to be etc
(Signed) Melville, Lord Provost

REGULAR FORCES EMPLOYMENT ASSOCIATION

The RFEA assists ex-regular men and women to resettle and find employment, any time up to the national retirement age and as often as necessary, provided they served a minimum of three years in the ranks, or, were medically discharged regardless of time served. This service is now also extended to those who were subsequently commissioned, and widows/widowers provided the spouse died in service. . Branches are listed in Yellow pages or local directories. Alternatively contact Head Office at 49 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5JG or ring 0207 321 2011 or fax 0207 839 0970.

LOOKING FOR AN EMPLOYEE OR A JOB?

The RFEA has just launched a major development to their Web site (www.rfea.org.uk). Candidates can view a sample of current local vacancies from the 38 branches throughout the UK. This site sets itself apart from thousands of employment web pages by only advertising vacancies from companies looking for ex-Service personnel. Companies who may not currently employ ex-Servicemen and women, can view a sample list of candidates with qualifications, skills, experience and potential. Many have also had valuable employment experience since leaving the Armed Forces.