



# OLD COMRADES ASSOCIATION 22<sup>ND</sup> REGIMENT ROYAL ARTILLERY



The Welsh Gunners

May 2003

## Regiment to be disbanded

For those of you who have not heard, 22 Regiment is to be disbanded. They are off to Cyprus later on this year as part of the United Nations Peace Keeping Force and on their return will prepare to disband.

I believe that all the Batteries are to be moved intact to other Regiments.

I don't know any more than that at the moment, but hopefully will have much more news by the next newsletter.

## Future of the OCA

With the Regiment disbanding, some thought now has to be given to the future of the OCA, but that decision lays with you the member.

I believe there are only two viable options:

1. We stay as we are, a Regimental Association that encompasses all the serving Batteries.
2. Each individual Battery having its own Association.

**Included with this newsletter is a voting form, Please do not waste your vote, complete it and return it to me.**

## OCA President

Maj General J Milne, the present Regimental Colonel has kindly agreed to become the President of 22 Old Comrades Association.

The Association is very grateful to him for his help and support.

## We have our own website!

It is <http://www.22—thewelshgunners.org.uk> and is live, so visit, have a look at it and decide what you would like to see there, there isn't much there at the moment, but the important thing is that it is there.

***If there is someone out there with some him I skills that would like to take on the running of the website, please get in touch.***

## Membership List

I have included with this newsletter a list of members who have given their agreement to their names being distributed to OCA members.

*If your name is not on the list and you would like to see it there, please complete the attached data protection slip and get it back to me.*

If there are any errors, please remember that I never have been and never will admit to being perfect. So be kind and not abusive when letting me know.

*Though this newsletter is being sent to all original and new members, only those members who have paid their subs will be getting a copy of the membership list.*

## Reunion

If there is one word that causes your secretary to have palpitations, it is 'REUNION'.

The venue, the accommodation, the meal and the after dinner entertainment. To find a venue that gives all this for a good price per head is any secretaries holy grail.

There are of course plenty of hotels out there that would be ideal and so I am asking all members who would like a reunion to look at hotels in your area and let me know if you consider any to be good enough.

It would be fantastic to be able to hold a national reunion but is probably more realistic to hold several regional ones.

However get round those hotels, the information you need is that there will be a minimum of 80 (that is 40 members with wives or friends) (yes I am guessing, but you need to give a figure to the hotel). We need price per head for overnight B & B accommodation that includes a 3-course reunion dinner in the evening.

There have been many conversations about a reunion, with people being careful not to say anything that would mean them getting involved. But let us all get involved, visit hotels you think are suitable and get back to me!!!

Alternatively if you think you could help with other types of venue or have any ideas then tell me.

## Wives Club

Your secretary has been castigated, nay, abused, and from the most gentlest of species, the wives.

They want to know why the OCA only has members who have served in the Regiment, what about the wives they say. I can hear some of your replies as I type, and as I want to live for a few more years I won't put them down here.

But seriously they do have a point. They have endured many trials and tribulations alongside their men, and been as loyal to the Regiment as any serving soldier.

Some are, sadly, on their own, for many reasons and the OCA would be a good place for them to catch up with their friends.

So first give this copy to your wife to read, if she or you know of any wives out there, on their own or not, get them to contact me and I will send them a copy of this newsletter.

But, now the crunch question, should wives be admitted to the OCA as full members, as associate members or not at all?

We do not have meetings where items like this, can be decided, so let me know. The majority decision will determine the answer.

## Sunday Lunch Club

Is alive and well in the South, but I have had no reports of it anywhere else. If you have started one please let me know.

To remind you, Sunday lunches are usually a good value meal within an excellent choice of venue.

Contact any OCA member who is near you, invite them to Sunday lunch with their wives or partners, you each pay for your own meal. Sit back and enjoy one of the best Sunday afternoons to be had anywhere.

## Memories

Memory is a funny thing, I can go upstairs, get to the bedroom door and wonder what I am doing there, I can ask Marie, my wife, if she would like a cup of tea, and when she say's yes, switch the kettle on and then sit and forget all about it, only remembering when she gets up rattling the cup an hour later.

But I can remember quite clearly a Regimental song from the mid sixties, this was sung to the tune of 'Lili Marlane' and there may be more than the two verses I remember:

*Rolling down the Autobahn, twenty miles an hour.  
We are the 22<sup>nd</sup>, we are a blooming shower Can't  
change up, we can't change down The gear box  
is in, but it's upside down  
We are the 22<sup>nd</sup>, we are a blooming shower*

*Early in the morning, Battery's on parade Sgt Major  
sings us a donkey serenade Some silly blighter  
shouts Right Dress You should have seen the  
flamin' mess We are the 22<sup>nd</sup>, we are a blooming  
shower*

I have of course changed the expletives at their request to hide their identity

## News of Dortmund

Thanks to Gary Cross for the following news about the camps in Dortmund:

"I tried today to enter Napier Barracks but had no success. The camp is the only one still standing here in Dortmund as all the other camps have been demolished.

At the B1 (dual carriage way that runs through Dortmund) they are building offices and homes and at camp 7 (that's where the big NAAFI stood), they are building new houses. Cornwall school is still there, it is now called Europe school (a German secondary school)

Napier Barracks however was closed in 1995 and has been standing empty since then, it's being turned now into a training ground for Borussia Dortmund F C and they want to keep the Nature reserve .The Golf Club has 19 holes now and they want to build more houses in that area".

## Tales from 1950

Sir Robin Maxwell-Hislop sent in the tale below from his time with 22 Regiment.

"After commissioning at Mons Officer Cadet School in November 1950, passing out second in my intake in Heavy Anti-Aircraft Artillery, with the customary army logic, I was posted to the School of Coastal Artillery at the Citadel, Plymouth. I wrote to the 2i/c of 79 HAA Regiment RA, at High Leigh Camp, Knutsford, Cheshire (where I had soldiered before commissioning), asking him whether he could intercede with AG6 (the War Office department which controlled all Royal Artillery officers' postings): as a result, on passing out as a qualified Coastal Artillery officer, I was posted to 22 Light Ant-Aircraft Regiment RA, at Menden, 1 kilometers East of Iserlohn, in Westphalia, Germany, where I arrived on December 29<sup>th</sup> 1950.

In the then 'British Zone' of occupied Germany, there were in fact districts, occupied by both Belgian and Norwegian Army units. In February 1951, five incredibly fit Norwegian Army officers arrived at our Regiment, led by a Lt Colonel, to be bought up to date in contemporary Light Anti-Aircraft practice. I was detailed to look after them.

My conventional, but unintelligent, response to finding that all the brass on their buttons and webbing was corroded quite green, was to send it to the Guard Commander, with an order that the prisoners were to occupy themselves before 0730 the next morning, in cleaning it to our accustomed standard, after which each Norwegian officer's kit was returned to his room.

Far from being pleased, the Norwegian Colonel was horrified: "Robin" he exclaimed, "this is terrible, all the brass shines, and it will give our position away to the enemy!". How right of course, he was.

After three weeks, our delightful (and terrifyingly fit) guests left us. But shortly afterwards, their Colonel invited me to come as his personal guest for a long weekend at their Leave Centre, sending his car to fetch me; after a long dark drive, I arrived at their Mess.

Next morning, we all set off skiing. Within a few minutes my deplorable inadequacy as a skier was painfully obvious and an embarrassment to my hosts. So I asked them to lend me a compass, and leave me behind to enjoy myself as best I could, on my own.

I struck off to the east, through beautiful woods; then when the sun began to decline, turned back westwards, for home.

After a few minutes, to my absolute horror, I came to a large notice which proclaimed: 'Achtung: Sie verlassen aus den Volksdemokratische Rebulik. Gefahr! Minen! (Notice: You are leaving the People's Democratic Republic. Danger! Mines!).

I had no idea that I had been anywhere near the border: my hosts had not mentioned it. Having no option but to make my way back, I followed my own ski tracks back, and in pitch dark arrived back at my, by then, very worried hosts' Mess.

Having soaked in a hot bath, and changed into Blues, I was then introduced to Norwegian drinking habits. A half litre glass was presented to me, and I was asked by the Mess Sergeant whether I wanted an "Atom Bomb" or a "Hydrogen Bomb". Modestly opting for the former, he proceeded to pour into my glass one shot from every bottle on the bottom shelf of the bar. For the honour of the Royal Artillery, I drank that, and didn't disgrace myself. Later in the evening, I learned that had I instead opted for a "Hydrogen Bomb", a shot from every bottle on the top shelf would have been added as well!

It was a memorably hospitable visit".

## Push

A loud pounding on their front door awakened a man and his wife at 3 o'clock in the morning. The man got up and went to the door, and when he opened it there stood a stranger who smelled of drink and was swaying, it was also pouring down with rain, and he was asking for a push.

"Not a chance," said the husband, "hell, man, it's three o'clock in the morning, and storming outside!" He slammed the door and went back to bed.

"Who was it?" asked his wife. "Just some drunk asking for a push," he said. "Well, did you help the poor fellow?" his wife asked him. "Of course not....no, I didn't. It's three o'clock in the morning, and raining like crazy outside!"

"Well, you've certainly got a short memory," said his wife. "Can't

you remember about three months ago when we broke down on holiday and that couple helped us? I think you should help him out."

So, the husband gets out of bed again, gets dressed, and goes downstairs, out the front door into the driving rain and calls out into the dark yard.

"Hello.....are you still out here?" "Yes," came the reply. "Do you still need a push?" the husband called out. "Yes, please!" came an answer from the dark. "Well, where are you?" asked the husband. The drunk replied, "Over here on the swing."

### Battery History

I thought it might be a good idea to use this newsletter to remind you of your Battery's history and so each newsletter will carry a different Battery.

This edition will start with 53 Louisburg Battery RA.

### A Brief History of Louisburg

The Battery was formed on April 1<sup>st</sup> 1740 in Woolwich London, but did not become 53 (Louisburg) Battery until 1937.

The title Louisburg is a Battle honour, which was won during the second battle of Louisburg in 1758. Louisburg is a Fort located in the province of Quebec in Northern Canada and is the main defence to the mouth of the St. Lawrence river which leads deep inland and is therefore of great importance.

The first battle of Louisburg took place between 1745 and 1758 between the French and the Americans with the help of local Indians but led by British officers. The Battle was won by the Americans in 1748, but the Fort was handed back to the French on the condition that they did not re-arm and re-fortify. But the French being what they are, they did re-arm and fortify.

The second battle of Louisburg took place in 1758 in which the Company which was later to become 53 (Louisburg) Battery RA saw action. The battle was won due to the close co-operation between the Navy and the Army. Also the fact that the 18 and 24 pounder guns had to be manhandled over swamp and marsh land to take the other small forts before taking the main Fort.

Once the small outer forts had been taken the Battery then turned their guns and captured the French guns on the main fort which fell on 26 July 1758. Once the fort was taken the fleet had free access to the river and could now go deep into Quebec without having to fight its way across hard going terrain.

During the battle the Company was commanded by Captain J Ord, hence why BHQ is called Ord's Troop. A Troop is named after Captain J Anderson who commanded the Company in 1858 and B Troop after Captain N S K Buyiy who was Company Commander in 1855.

It should be noted that all Battery's in the Royal Artillery were called Company's and named after their Company Commander. In 1859 Battery's formed and the practice of calling Battery's after their Commanders ceased and all new Battery's were given either a letter or a number. 53 (Louisburg) Battery is the second senior numbered Battery in the Royal Regiment of Artillery with 1915 Gibraltar being the senior.

All the Royal Horse Artillery Battery's have lettered Battery's and are all senior than the numbered Battery's.

### Finally

Again a shorter newsletter than I would like, but it can be hard to get the information and stories that makes a good newsletter.

So yet again an appeal to all who are reading this, you cannot have served without picking up the odd story or two, so please let me have them.

The website is I think a good way forward, it is a very good medium for keeping in touch, and for building a library of pictures and stories. But the Association needs a talented member with knowledge of HTML and possibly Java to run it.

The Association cannot survive as a one-man band. So please play your part by completing the form that is enclosed, and if you can spare some time and talent, let me know.

The newsletter started with sad news, but through the Association the Regiment can live on if you the member want it to.