

50th

(The Queen's Own)

97th

(Earl of Ulster's)



The
Queen's Own
(Living History Group)
Gazette

Winter 2011



Issue No.6 Winter 2011

The O.C.'s Column.



A short signal from me for this edition – Listen out for a more detailed account soon – duties call at Brigade so I just want to say that I am sure that you will all acknowledge that this has been a tremendous year for the Group with a great deal achieved. This list of events bears testimony that we have made our mark and that the forthcoming year will be even better. Thanks to all our Members and Friends for their continued support.

“The Boss”.

“Past, Present & Future”.



Tunbridge Wells Grammar School – 11th July 2011.

A Full on Day Back at School!

Well chaps, I never passed my Eleven Plus Exam but finally I made it to our local Grammar School in Tunbridge Wells, albeit fifty years or so late - Let me explain. I attend our local Sea and Marine Cadets Unit in Tunbridge Wells as a Civilian Instructor. One of our Cadets said he was due to go on a school visit to the Normandy Landing Beaches for a week. I said “How much do you already know about D-Day?” and he replied “Not very much.” I then offered to help him with some back ground history and to brief him on my collection of equipment from that period of the War. He was pleased with the offer. The next thing I know is I am being asked by the History Department of his school, the Boys Grammar School, to come along on their “Humanities Day” to give a series of talks on the subject. Of course I was pleased to help out in any way I could. The thought then occurred to me that as the theme for the day was “War & Peace” perhaps I could persuade a couple of our Group to join me and give a similar talk on the Great War. Both Nigel and his friend Paul Ongley said they would be only too happy to do this.

For my part, I took along a large selection of Second World War equipment including weapons, uniforms, and D-Day items such as assault vests both British and American. I was then able with my first class of thirty pupils take them through the plan, the build-up, deception and landings on the day itself. I finished off with a bit of role play using tables and benches to represent landing craft and Dakota Aircraft, all of which went very well.

Nigel and Paul of course did something somewhat different. Nigel with his Great War kit, weapons and uniforms did a scenario based around the pupils being new recruits and putting them through what they could expect as Soldiers of the King on the Western Front. Paul did his talk from the German perspective. These two classes were very well received.

The finale was something everyone found exiting. This was carried out in a safe area outside were Nigel and Paul could demonstrate the difference between the Mauser and Lee Enfield Rifles in a blank firing

display. Nigel explained how the average British Tommy could during the “Mad Minute” fire fifteen plus aimed shots. Paul showed his Mauser off to good effect and this ended each lesson we took.

Each of us had about thirty pupils in our class and we gave five talks during the day. It is fair to say that by the end of the day the three of us were exhausted. The School looked after us very well. They provided tea or coffee at break times and we had a very pleasant lunch there as well. We have had a glowing report in writing from the School.

‘POP-H.’

Tunbridge Wells 90th Anniversary of the Royal British Legion in Tunbridge Wells – 31st July 2011.

The 31st July saw a special sight in the middle of Tunbridge Wells as a section and Officer from The Queens Own Royal West Kent Regiment in the shape of its Living History Group took to the streets of this famous town to help celebrate the 90th Anniversary of the local branch of the Royal British Legion - 1921 to 2011.

The parade was led by the award winning band from T.S. Brilliant Sea Cadet and Royal Marine Cadet Detachment based in Albion Road Tunbridge Wells. Standards were paraded along with Royal British Legion members and Armed Forces Veterans. Our regimental chairman, Colonel Champion from The Queen’s Own Royal west Kent Regimental Association was in attendance along with many dignitaries from the Town and Borough.



Precisely at 2 pm we stepped off from the Civic Way and marched around to stand in front of the Town's splendid War Memorial which was unveiled in February 1923. The Queen’s Own Royal West Kent Regiment Living History Group shouldered rifles and proceeded to march down with the rest of the parade to Christ Church in the High Street. Passing as it did Tunbridge Wells Central Station, where many troops left for the Western Front during the Great War.

Coming to a halt outside Christ Church, we made our way in for a service to mark the 90 years of service provided by the Legion and the sacrifice of all those affected by conflict over that period of time and those who paid with their lives to uphold the freedoms we all enjoy today.



After a quick and welcomed refreshment break we made our way back up to the War Memorial, where we had some very poignant photographs taken. Our duty done we then made our ways home after a very moving and successful afternoon. We received many encouraging and congratulatory comments on our turn out and Mr Denis Homewood, from the Royal British Legion thanked me for the splendid turnout of our men.

‘POP-H.’

Military Odyssey – Detling - 27th to 29th August 2011.

A report from your War Correspondent from a Rest and Training encampment behind the lines.

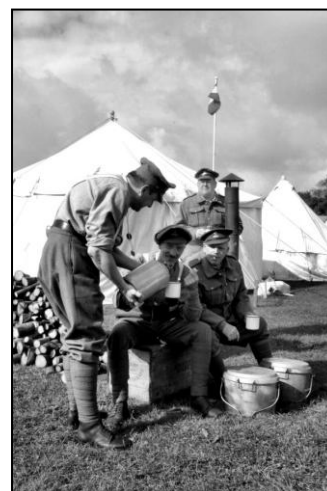
After spending five days in front line trenches at the end of July, the Queens Own Royal West Kent Regiment moved back down the line until it reached a tented encampment on a windswept and at times, rain swept hill strangely reminiscent of Detling Hill in Kent. We shared the tented area with another 18th Division Regiment, the 10th Essex to one side and The Rifles on the other. There were also many other military units - it's odd yer see some very strange sights at times.

The wagon transport led the way with many of the Regimental Stores including the orderly room, messing tent and cooking facilities. They were closely followed by most of the remaining Regimental Tentage. Once the Battalion Cook and his team arrived, they were able to sort out the stores and get the important task of feeding the troops underway. Quite soon everyone was able to sit down to a brilliant and filling evening meal. The cooking team had even been able to brew some beer on the way up from the trenches last month. Several pints were downed with gusto barely touching the sides of your throat as it went down. The first two days were spent with our friends, the 10th Essex and The Rifles in perfecting a special display to commemorate one of the biggest battles the British Army had been involved in and sadly its biggest one day losses and casualties.

The encampment was opened up for the local public to come and fraternize with the troops, many bargains were struck and lots of friends made. One of the most frequented tents was the one showing the locals all aspects of the British Army at war. Equipment, rations, uniforms, weapons, and even how we deal with gas when the dastardly Bosch let loose with it upon us, were on display and explained.

The evenings were spent around an open camp fire with many stories and jokes being told while downing even more of the cooks special brew of Dark Bitter or something called "Lager" can't see that catching on!

The early mornings were accompanied with a hearty breakfast of Beans, Eggs, Bacon and sausages. All liberally washed down with hot mugs of tea. The kettle making the tea never seemed to stop brewing and very welcomed it always was. During our stay, one of our old soldiers had a birthday. John Bellingham was 78 years young and his wife Isobel had been very busy baking and making many goodies for all of us to enjoy – lashings of pies, cakes and bread pudding, WOW just brilliant.



During the three days we were encamped, our General Service Wagon had its very own horse team in attendance. The lovely old Ted with a couple of his lady friends. The Horse Teams were looked after throughout by Driver N. Bristow ably assisted by a member of the Forage Corps, Jan Breen. The horses were of course a great draw to the public and many children who wished to have their photographs taken with the horses.

On the third and final day we joined forces with our friends the Rifles who ran several training scenarios of bayonet and gas mask drills. Our very own Pte Aaron Heald worked very hard with elements of teaching our men rifle drill moves. Aaron also performed wonderfully both in the morning and in the evening by performing colours and evening colours. He played his favourite Bugle during Church Parade on the Sunday morning at 11 o'clock, which is fast becoming a tradition with us now when in camp or in the trenches.

We broke camp around 5.00 pm Monday afternoon and started to make our way back to our various home billets after three full and very successful days.

'POP-H.'

Somme Battlefield Tour – 7th to 9th October 2011.

We were a group descending on the Somme from three different countries; Gabi and Lothar setting out from Osnabrook at 2am, Chris Jupp, Peter Z, Pop Hanmore and yours truly departing on an 8:20 Chunnel and finally Katrien with the seemingly easy journey from Kortrijk in Belgium. In the end Katrien's journey proved the most difficult; having packed her car with money and passport and then when her back was turned, having it broken into, moments before she left. With some resilience and her smile still intact, Katrien arrived at Albert in time for our evening meal.

The UK team's journey had a small detour via Loos. The purpose being to commemorate the death of William George Peat of the 6th Battalion at the Loos Memorial to the missing – his death having occurred 96 years previously to the day. We then drove to the rear of Gun Trench and were now in the area where Pte Peat lost his life.

An hour later, we had checked in at our hotel near Albert, picked up Gabi and Lothar, and were heading for lunch at the *Old Blighty* in La Boisselle. We were told by the estaminet owner that this weekend was an Open Day for The Glory Hole – The Glory Hole being about 3 or 4 acres of cratered land near the Lochnagar crater (whatever you do don't Google "The Glory Hole")! We made contact with one of the archaeologists, being well known author and tunneller, Simon Jones, and were told to report back Sunday morning for a tour of the site. That afternoon we had an easy introduction to the Somme, visiting the Thiepval Memorial, Newfoundland Park and the famous crater at Hawthorn Ridge – exploded 10 minutes before Zero by Hunter-Bunter and filmed at the critical moment by Geoffrey Malin.

Saturday morning prompted an early start for the short drive to Ovillers. This proved more difficult than anticipated due to "No Entry" barriers at the first two roads leading into the village. Fortunately our last option proved accessible and we pulled into the crowded village of Ovillers. The sight of French pipers suggested there was something interesting going on. Today turned out to be a rededication ceremony for the Breton Memorial behind Ovillers – here a force of Breton cavalry had held the advancing Germans in late 1914.

Whilst the Rededication proved problematical for our purpose – to explain our 6th Battalion's attack at Ovillers on 3rd July 1916, we were able to exchange cards with the Poilou Living History Group in attendance, who looked remarkably authentic. Whilst contact was being made, Chris and I walked up to the brow of the hill where the 6th Battalion had attacked the northern part of the village. To understand any battle, or part of, thorough knowledge of the topography of the land is essential. The lie of the land together with the use of contemporary German maps detailing inter-locking machine



gun fire and enfilade fire from the left flank, explained why the 6th Battalion's attack failed with 375 casualties from 617 all ranks that went over the top.

We were now behind schedule and were only able to manage a quick visit to Ovillers Cemetery to pay our respects before our own zero hour at the Ulster Tower. At the Tower we met Teddy Colligan who had agreed to give us a tour of Thiepval Woods. This was a most educational interlude as Teddy pointed out the scars from the German lines and explained how sapping into No-Man's Land had been rife in this area evidenced by subsidence in the road camber, before showing us those parts of the Wood excavated by the archaeologists. After the tour Peter Z and I made the long, windy trek to Mill Road Cemetery on behalf of Ciaran to lay a Royal British Legion cross for his adopted soldier, G/18191 Private Edwin Duke, 7th Battalion, who died on 30th September 1916.

Once again time was pressing and we now drove to Trones Wood – of all the places on the Somme connected to The Queen’s Own, Trones Wood is probably the most well-known. Here the 7th Battalion, almost certainly including Pop Hanmore’s grandfather, made an evening attack on 13th July to straighten the line before the next day’s offensive. The wood was full of enemy strong points and in the late evening light, the attack became confused as we over-ran German strong points without properly knocking them out, meaning the enemy were all around us as we moved forward. However, organised groups of the 7th Battalion were able to hold their gains against repeated counter-attacks until relieved. A message back to GHQ became garbled when relayed to London. British newspapers proudly reported the Royal West Kent’s had held Trones Wood for 48 hours rather than 4 to 8 hours. That beside, what the 7th Battalion had achieved here was worthy of the highest praise. As such, Trones Wood is the location of the 18th Division memorial and it was here that we laid our wreath of remembrance.



We then moved on to High, Leuze and Wedge Woods and Falfemont Farm where our 1st battalion had seen heavy action before we doubled back towards Montauban to find the assembly trenches for the 7th battalion on 1st July. Orienteering by a combination of trench maps and the “sketch map” from the Regimental history allowed Pop to walk in the footsteps of his Queen’s Own grandfather, Stanley Hanmore. Whilst all our Battalions on the Western Front would play their part in the Somme battles it was only the 7th Battalion that actually saw action on the first day of the Somme. En route we made a stop at Mansel Copse. This is where the dead Devonshire’s were buried in their own trench with the famed epitaph “*The Devonshire’s held this trench; the Devonshire’s hold it still*”.

Sunday marked the conclusion of our trip and the morning brought proper Somme weather. First stop was Dernancourt Communal Cemetery Extension to visit the grave of Sgt Tom Harris V.C., of our 6th Battalion, who won Britain’s ultimate reward for valour near where he is buried, on 9th August 1918, at the beginning of the “Last 100 Days”.



We now returned to The Glory Hole unsure whether the Open Day would survive the torrential rain. As it happened we were the first to arrive and the Open Day was still very much on. Unfortunately a film crew had priority and we had to wait before we could be taken into the open mineshaft. This was spent in a very wet tour of the surface of The Glory Hole. This area had been extensively mined and exploded by the French and German armies in 1915 and then the British and German armies following. Today, one mineshaft was open to the public and merely to report that we descended to a level of about 25 feet and about 80 yards in to the shaft, really does not express

the thrill of being amongst the first in over 90 years to enter this WW1 mine.

We had three brief stops to complete our tour before heading home. The first was to the Germany cemetery at Fricourt. Where the British cemeteries are vibrant and colourful, the German cemeteries are dark and foreboding. It has always been so in the same way it is always difficult to accept the huge numbers that are buried in the *Kameraden Grabs*.

Our penultimate visit was the 41st Division memorial at Flers where on the 15th September 1916 a tank prompted the headline “A tank is walking up the High Street of Flers”. Our 10th and 11th Battalions were

members of the 41st Division. Whilst at Flers we also observed the new 17th Middlesex memorial as an “Intel” subject with our own memorial at Tertre in mind.

Our last stop on the Somme was Guedecourt to familiarise ourselves with the ground that the 6th Battalion advanced over in their final action in the Somme battles on 7th October 1916, almost 95 years ago to the day. Sadly, due to the weather, visibility was very poor. It was now time to say our goodbyes to Gabi and Lothar who set off for the return journey to Germany while we headed for a late lunch at St. Omer and a very reasonably priced excellent meal to end a thoroughly enjoyable weekend.

JS.

Filming for ‘Private Peaceful’ – 7th to 9th October 2011.

On Sunday the 9th October 2011 A small band of men from The Queen’s Own Royal West Kent Regiment Living History Group became special extras for the day for the filming of *Private Peaceful*. Together with Taff Gillingham’s Khaki Devils Company those involved were:

Cpl Cosgrove P
Pte Bristow N
Pte Birkett M
Pte Birkett P
Pte Heald A
Pte Cox M

Private Peaceful is Michael Morpurgo’s classic rites of passage story of two brothers and the exuberance and pain of their teenage love for the same girl, the pressures of their feudal family life, the horrors and folly of war and the ultimate price of courage and cowardice.

Private Peaceful details the gritty rural lives and loves of Tommo and Charlie - two young brothers - and their poor Devonshire family from 1909 until 1916, when the outbreak of war destroys their country both join up one is under age leaving behind the beautiful Molly who is the love of both their lives. The young men survive gas attacks, shelling, German troops and the appalling deaths of their close friends. But one thing they cannot escape is summary military justice and the horrors and folly of war and the ultimate price of courage and cowardice. *Private Peaceful* is being made into a major feature film by Fluidity Films, directed by Pat O’Connor and starring Jack O’Connell, George Mackay and Alexander Roach, Richard Griffiths and Frances de la Tour.



The day started getting up at stupid o'clock for a drive up to the filming location. Near Ipswich which was the trench system used for the Downton Abbey Great War scenes. With Nigel, his mate and Aaron who was suffering from a lack of sleep or in other words he got on the beer the night before!. We arrived on set around 6am to find the others up and getting ready and everyone else running around like headless chickens. First we headed to the hair and make-up department for a check over to see we had the right period look - it was here that we suffered our first and only casualty as Aaron had to lose his sideburns in the name of entertainment but we were told that this will be added in the credits at the end of the film! With the painful watching of the razor he just had to man up. It was quite impressive seeing 60 odd blokes in full service marching order that morning. Apart from us Royal West Kent’s there were members from the 10th Essex Regiment, Khaki chums, Great War Society, and the Vickers Machine Gun society taking part and it was good to catch up with few old friends and new ones before the days filming and throughout.

After breakfast we got ready for the first scene of the day in which we marched in full FSMO going off to war in 1914 as members of the Devonshire Regiment with the General Service Wagon and it was here where we met the actors. While we were marching down to the set the actor playing the Corporal thought it was right to call the timings out in the style of an American Marine Drill Sergeant!. We all took this as an insult to the British Tommy and my left hand was twitching over my bayonet! We all told him to s*d off

or shut up! The morning involved us marching up and down a hill during which I felt the pain quite a bit as I had the night before filled my P.08 webbing full of .303 inert!

During the takes we had to try and not to get run over by Nigel on the General Service Wagon -plus we got some PT to keep us busy by pushing up the Wagon up the hill for each take! Nigel nearly got away with wearing his Royal West Kent cap badge but an eagle-eyed Taff Gillingham spotted him and it was changed - but by then they had done two takes with it so you might have got away with it! I had to remove my wound stripe so we both made sacrifices that morning

After about six takes we moved up to our rest area for our next tasking. Some of the other extras who had been there since Thursday were sent to the trench area for the battle scenes they had started in the week and changed into battle order c1915. We all chilled out and Nigel retired to some corner (they couldn't find him a caravan as he wasn't that important enough!) and he then changed into civvies..... Part Timer!. But then GS Wagon was to be used later in the week for other scenes.

We chilled out as there wasn't much for us lot while a battle scene was being shot. Aaron decided to sit out of our next call as he was a little tired and go to sleep some of us were told we were needed to bolster up the battle scene so we so moved up to support the extras on the battlefield set which was impressive! Some ideas were noted for our trench!

We spent about five hours doing the battle scene on the trench system set and it summed up the whole British Army's efforts in the Great War - we moved up and down the set no faster than an asthmatic ant with heavy shopping! Preceding this scene we had to get muddied up so I found a massive puddle and rolled around in it but this wasn't enough for the make-up girls as they touched me up with more mud! We did a number of practice runs before the main takes which they added some smoke and pyrotechnics and stunt men flying through the air. I did feel a bit touchy when a pyro went off close to me and got showered in dirt but I had to think to myself this is what was happening for real to the those men all those years ago and its happened to me for real and it was good test to see if I could handle it all again. And in classic Tommy fashion I just got on with it and held my thoughts for a later date

Around 4pm it was time to do the last scene of the day which was the move up to the Somme front so quick change into 1916 kit and long wait. This time Aaron was awake and was joining us for the last push. The last scene was a lot of fussing over and getting it right as the sun was going down but we got there in the end and a sight of 60 plus Tommy's moving up to the front looked great. Would have looked even better if we all had GS picks, shovels, spare ammunition bandoleers and a couple of Lewis guns which they would have had by that time in 1916. But the film lot didn't have the budget for that! - it's a shame because if they asked us we would have supplied it!

In all it was a good day and a good crack with the boys and would do it again if the chance of filming came up. We had the look and the attitude for it as Taff Gillingham commented to me at the end when we were chatting. I am sure we will be invited again in the future to work with him. I don't think the film will be on the same budget as Warhorse as this film is based on the book and the play by the same writer as Warhorse. So not expecting much but it was a good chance to do some filming and get on the big screen.

PC.

For more details about the film visit:

<http://www.fluidityfilms.com/privatepeaceful/index.html>

Notes from the Orderly Room Clerk's Diary.



At the time of writing this note The 'Queen's Own' Royal West Kent Regiment Living History Group finds itself rapidly approaching its second anniversary. Thanks to Nigel's vision and leadership the Group has grown from the initial five to thirty seven members, including our 'Friends'. We have much to be proud of as we look back to our beginning – there have been formal accolades at large public events as well as numerous letters of appreciation from appearances at individual venues. We have raised funds from within and have acquired equipment and canvas as well as our own Great war Water Cart all of which supports the delivery of our aims and objectives -

To perpetuate the memory of the name, traditions, campaigns, honours, officers and men of The Queen's

Own Royal West Kent Regiment (50th and 97th) by means of education. We have also, thanks primarily to 'Pop' Hanmore, been able to raise funds for our chosen charity The Forces Children's Trust – thanks to the generosity of Members, Friends, family, members of the Regimental Association and the general public we have raised £1236.00 so far for an extremely worthwhile cause.

In closing unquestioningly the most important note this year is that our Platoon Sergeant Lee Hanmore returned safe and well following his second operational tour with the Royal Marines in Afghanistan – Welcome home Lee - We all give thanks for his safe return to his family and us.

PZ.

Planned Regimental Monument – Tertre.

I am delighted to report that the Mayor and Town's Committee of Tertre have given consent for the erection of a memorial to The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment close to where the Regiment saw its first engagement with the enemy at 08.20am on the 23rd August 1914. Our own Committee has met to plan the project so that the Memorial will be constructed in time to coincide with the 100th Anniversary of this action. Plans are now underway to confirm the design, construction, associated logistics and the unveiling ceremony. We will continue to provide updates on our Forum and by email with summary reports published in future editions of this Gazette.

PZ.

Project Aquarius.



Project Aquarius is moving forward thanks to the generosity of Southern Water, Southeast Water who have contributed £1,500 each towards the restoration costs and there is the promise of £500 from the Regimental Association. Richard and Jan have made £400 from the sale of Baldrick's Home Brew and Jan's cakes – Thanks and well done to them!

I have now removed all the spokes from the flanges and flange bolts too, they need splitting into two. I have secured an artillery draught pole original and supporting bar fittings (price to be confirmed) but it will be cheaper than making them from scratch. Over the closed season I intend to take the axle to the shot-blasting company in Lamberhurst and have it treated. I will also tender out various metal work parts to Kentish cottage industry chaps I know. I am still sadly having little (or in fact no help) to date from my contacts at the Firepower Museum at Woolwich who for sure have detailed construction drawings of water cart which is a little annoying - another approach is required one thinks!

I sincerely believe the Water Cart will be fully restored by June 2012 if not earlier depending on information and any further money required to complete the Project; however should we need to raise further funds I suggest that we hold 'Regimental' Boot Fairs using any unwanted belongings in our lofts or garages! The idea of a race evening has also been suggested to me as a way of raising funds so it's onwards and upwards! Watch this space for more news!

NB.

Friends Reunited.

Ian Miller from Queensland Australia, a Friend of The 'Queen's Own' Royal West Kent Regiment Living History Group, shares with us details of his connection with the Regiment:

It may seem odd that an Australian has a connection with the Regiment, but it comes from my mother's side of the family.

A brief background – my mother, Gertrude Lilla Miller (nee Guess) was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1896, when my grandfather, Charles Guess, was stationed there with the Regiment. She was the fourth eldest child and first daughter for Charles and Elizabeth. She had three older brothers, Charles William born in

1890, Frederick James born in 1892 and Edward Alexander born in 1894, all of them enlisted in the Army and served in the Royal West Kent Regiment. The family travelled to various postings including Gibraltar and eventually moved back to England. A family photograph was taken in late 1913 or early 1914, this shows the whole family together Charles Guess and the three older “boys” in uniform – this was the last time the family was together. Before the end of 1916 all three of the boys were dead – two killed in action in the Mons area and one dead as a Prisoner of War following the fall of Kut-al-Amara.

On the 12th December 1917 Gertrude enlisted in Queen Mary’s Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC) after training she was posted to Princess Beatrice Camp near Beaumaris, Belgium where they came under shelling from the Amiens Gun almost every night. This was because the Camp was one of the Reinforcement Camps for all units on the front line. While she was there she met a young 2/Lt of the Royal Scots, Dugald MacIntyre Miller, he had originally gone to France as a Sergeant with 8th Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and had been promoted in the field. He was deafened by friendly artillery fire and was therefore unfit for service on the front line but was involved in training reinforcements.

They were married in September 1919 and returned to Scotland where they lived until they migrated to Australia in 1924. My mother used to like watching *Dad’s Army* on the TV – not so much for the story line but to see the Royal West Kent Regiment cap badge which they wore.

I had a “close encounter” with the regiment while serving in the Australian Army in Korea (Post Armistice – 1956/57) in the CCK Sig Sqn, I had occasion to have to hand deliver a signal to the Brigade Major (can’t recall his name) and on entering his office I noticed that he was from the Royal West Kent’s and commented that I had “family connections to the Regiment” we had a short chat and shortly afterwards he hand delivered a Royal West Kent Regiment cap badge to me to send home – I still have that badge.

Now to the involvement with the Regiment:

I have no details on when **Charles Guess** enlisted in the Regiment but in addition to his other postings he was, I believe, a Warrant Officer at one of the Boer Prisoner of War Camps on St Helena in 1900. He retired in 1913 only to be recalled as an Honorary Lt (QM) with the 8th Battalion during “the Great War” and worked in the War Office. He died in 1945 shortly before the end of World War 2.

Frederick James Guess enlisted in the Queens Own {Royal West Kent Regiment} in Cork, Ireland. He died at age 22 on the Battle Field in France and Flanders (Mons) on Tuesday 1st September 1914 while serving as L/8545 Corporal with the 1st Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment) as part of the British Expeditionary Force. No Known Grave. Remembered with honour La Ferte-Sous-Jouarre Memorial.

Edward Alexander Guess enlisted in the Queens Own {Royal West Kent Regiment} in Cork, Ireland. He died at age 20 on the Battle Field in France and Flanders (Mons) on Wednesday 28th October 1914 while serving as L/9011 Lance Corporal with the 1st Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment) as part of the British Expeditionary Force. No Known Grave. Remembered with honour Le Touret Memorial.

Charles William Guess enlisted in the Queens Own (Royal West Kent Regiment) in Cork, Ireland. He died at age 25 as a Prisoner of War on Wednesday 4th October 1916 while serving as L/8240 Lance Corporal with the 2nd Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment) as part of the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force. He was taken prisoner after the fall of Kut-el-Amara. No Known Grave. Remembered with honour Baghdad (North Gate) Cemetery.

Footnote on the Commonwealth Contingent Korea.

The Commonwealth Contingent Korea was formed in April 1956 on the disbandment of the Commonwealth Division. The Contingent was made up from units from The United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. The UK providing the majority of the units, including Infantry (1st Btn Royal Sussex Regiment), Military Police (included 2 Australian and 1 NZ MP), MP Staff Corps, REME, RE, RAOC and Admin Staff. Australia supplied the Signal Squadron, New Zealand Transport (10 Transport Coy, RNZASC), and the Canadians (Royal Canadian Medical Corps) the Medical Component which included the Hospital. The Commander was a Brigadier from the UK and, as Australia was the second largest component the Deputy Commander was an Australian Colonel. The CCK was finally disbanded in late 1957.

Ian Miller

Lionel Chandler sends his greetings to all Members of The Queens Own Royal West Kent Regiment Living History Group and Friends:

My name is Lionel Chandler and I live at White River South Africa. My interest in the Regiment began during 1998. Whilst on a visit to friends Richard and Frances Roberts at Tunbridge Wells whose relative David Hanmore visited at the time during which the subject arose The Royal West Kent Regiment, at that time I was unaware that it was the Regiment's area.

To digress a little the photo of my uncle Alfred Meggs Service No. 1147 has been in my memory since a small child all I knew of him was his name and Regiment and that he was killed during the First World War by a snipers bullet so my late mother told me. She also told me that she had a letter from his pal who was with him at the time he was killed which she kept for many years and then destroyed it. Unfortunately I never questioned her further in that regard so have no knowledge of the contents much to my regret now. To continue - Shortly after Richard, David and I had discussed the Regiment; Richard phoned the Commonwealth War Graves Commission re Alfred and to my wife and my amazement gave his casualty details over the phone. To further amaze us the details were typed and posted the same day and arrived in the post box the very next morning (we were returning to South Africa the following day) - we are not used to such efficient promptness.

After our return to S.A. Richard wrote to the Ministry Of Defence and received Alfred's military service record.. This revealed all his brothers and sisters and that he was promoted to corporal a short while before he was killed on the 3rd October 1916. David has since discovered that this might be the incorrect date however. I imagine promotions were thick and fast then with so many casualties. Also revealed was the fact that there was no known grave but his name was recorded on the Thiepval memorial alongside all the other Royal West Kent's and thousands of other soldiers killed in action. David has since visited Thiepval during a remembrance Sunday and at the time placed a wooden cross with a poppy attached on our behalf sending me a photo of it for which I am very grateful.

During 2003 Richard posted me a Newsletter No.5 from the Thiepval Visitor Centre Project and told me they were asking for photos of soldiers commemorated there giving me the email address of the person dealing with that. I forwarded his photo and some information and his picture is one of the six hundred on a panel at the centre. Unknown to me at the time was the fact that Richard had made a donation on my behalf to the project in remembrance of Alfred for which I am also very grateful. Early last year David gave me the name of Worcester Medal Service which I contacted and now have replicas of the WW1 Trio he was awarded together with a circular Memorial Plaque for relatives of those killed in action which I believe was referred to as the Death Penny. I have mounted these in a small cabinet and now have a place of honour in our home. The cap badge was given to me by David in 1998. I often wonder what my mother would think about these developments so many years later. Another ambition is to one day visit Thiepval and the battlefield.

Lionel Chandler

Post Script to Lionel's entry:

*Alfred William MEGGS G/1147 The Royal West Kent Regiment
Enlisted into The Royal West Kent Regiment Regular Army and posted to Depot: 03.09.1914
Posted to 3rd Battalion: 06.09.1914.
Posted to 9th Battalion: 26.10.1914.
Proceeded to France: 11.08.1915
Posted to 7th Service Battalion: 11.08.1915
Attached to 12 Entrenching Battalion: 24.08.1915
Re-joined Unit: 18.09.1915
Promoted to Corporal: 13.07.1916
Killed in Action: 03.10.1916
Service with the Colours: 03.09.1914 to 03.10.1916
Overseas Service: British Expeditionary Force (France) 11.08.1915 to 03.10.1916.*

Dates for the Diary.



April 2012

Zonnebeke Museum Week-end – TBC

June 2012

Kohima Meeting – TBC

Tenterden Railway Great War Week-end – 30th June / 1st July

July 2012

War & Peace Show – 18th to 22nd July

August 2012

'Buffs' Sunday – Canterbury – TBC

'Step-Short' Commemorative March Folkestone - TBC

Military Odyssey – 25th to 27th August

Regimental Gazette.



New Members.

The O.C. and all ranks wish to welcome the following as new Members and Friends of the Group:

Katrien Clarysse (Member)
Peter Cosgrave (Member)
Albert Godsiff (Friend)
John Norton (Friend)
Paul Ongley (Member)
Connor Young (Member)