

**1947 REGIMENTAL CHRONICLE**  
**1st Bn OXFORDSHIRE & BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY**  
**SUMMARY OF THE FIRST BATTALION DIARY, 1947**

*January 3rd* — Regimental Exercise in Susana area.

*January 4th* — Lieut-Col C. Clifton rejoins from leave.

*January 7th* — Major F. H. G. Higgins proceeded on United Kingdom leave.

*January 10th* — Regimental Cross Country Championships. Result: 1, HQ Coy; 2, S Coy; 3, A Coy; - D - C - B.

*January 11th* — A warning of a Bora in three days' time. Drag Hunt San Martino.

*January 15th* — USS *Haydon* due to arrive Trieste and to be affiliated 43rd Light Infantry. Major P. G. Thompson, M.C., joined the Regiment on first posting and assumes command of HQ, Coy.

*January 18th* — 4th Hussars Drag Meet at Equile Lippizano.

*January 19th* — Lieut-Col F. A. M. Browning, K.B.E., G.B., D.S.O., Military Security, addressed all officers on the problems of his branch.

*January 20th* — and Lieut G. G. J. Goodey joined the Regiment on first posting and posted to D Coy.

*January 25th* — A Bora arrives — very severe.

*January 27th* — Brigade Cross Country Championships. Result: 1, 43rd Light Infantry; 2, and Bn the Essex Regiment; 3, 1st Bn the Worcestershire Regiment. Capt C. J. Lambert joins the Regiment on first posting and posted to B Coy.

*January 29th* — A and C Coys with advance party move to Pola under command of Major P. R. Hayter, M.B.E., M.C.

*January 30th* — Capt H. J. W. Newton rejoins the Regiment from privilege leave and reassumes the duties of Adjutant.

*February 1st* — 43rd moves to Monumento Barracks, Pola, and hands over to 1 Scots Guards. Accommodation very bad. C Coy quartered in Valle Lunga Barracks.

*February 4th* — Major F. H. G. Higgins returns from leave and reassumes the duties of second in command.

*February 5th* — Lieuts C. H. Lee, R. Randall and G. C. Gumming join the Regiment on first posting and are posted to C, B and A Coys respectively.

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*February 10th* — CMF Gross Country Championship. Result: 1, Scots Guards; 2, 43rd Light Infantry. Brigadier W. M. de Winton, D.S.O., commanding I3th Infantry Brigade, assassinated outside his Brigade Headquarters while inspecting a guard from the 1st Bn the Worcestershire Regiment by an Italian woman fanatic. The Regiment, with one company at 30 minutes' notice, stands to for 36 hours.

*February 13th* — Funeral of Brigadier W. M. de Winton, D.S.O., at Udine. Lieut-Col G. Clifton was one of the pall bearers. The buglers of the Regiment sounded Last Post and Reveille, and eight Serjeants of the Regiment formed the bearer party.

*February 15th* — Lieut P. S. Hayes assumes the appointment of Regimental Intelligence Officer.

*February 17th* — Major-General C. O. Loewen, C.B., G.B.E., D.S.O., GOG 1st Armoured Division, visited the Regiment.

*February 20th* — USS *Rich* and *Holder* arrive in Pola harbour.

*February 21st* — Capt A. H. Morley regranted rank of major.

*February 27th* — Exchange rate of sterling increases from 900 liras to the £ to 1500 liras to the £.

*February 28th* — Good Service Certificates awarded by Lieut-General Sir Richard L. McCreery, K.C.B., K.B.E., D.S.O., M.C., Commander-in-Chief BAOR received in respect of CSM Furr, CQMS Gaiter and L-Cpls Hooker and Braniff.

*March 3rd* - Lieuts R. M. Golvile, P. M. King, and Lieuts R. F. P. Cronin, R. H. P. Brocklehurst, joined the Regiment and posted to S, B, A and D Coys respectively.

*March 4th* —Football: Serjeants Mess versus HMS *Stevens tone*.

*March 5th* — Aiello Races, Grand Military Meeting. Major F. H. G. Higgins entered Storno.

*March 6th* — Privilege leave to Berlin cancelled unless on compassionate grounds.

*March 15th* — Football: Warrant Officers and Serjeants versus Petty Officers HMS *Venus*. Lieut D. E. G. Sweetzer, D.C.M., assumes appointment of MTO. Lieut B. W. Grace assumes appointment of WTO.

*March 18th* — Major E. K. Judd appointed subeditor the *Regimental Journal* within the Regiment.

*March 19th* — Capt C. J. Lambert appointed officer in charge stables.

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*March 20th* — Notification received that 52nd Light Infantry must lapse into 'Suspended Animation'.

*March 23rd* — 43rd Advance party leaves CMF for Luneburg, BAOR, under command of Major F. H. G. Higgins.

*March 25th* — Warning order that British Armed Forces special currency would be introduced to CMF. Dog return shows the Regiment holding 34 dogs, including 2 great Danes, 6 Alsatians and 12 mongrels.

*March 29th* — Capt (Quartermaster) W. P. Warnock, M.B.E., promoted to major (quartermaster), *London Gazette*.

*April 1st* — Major P. G. Thompson, M.C., granted a regular commission. *London Gazette* supplement, March 31st, 1947.

*April 2nd* — HMS *Stevenstone* signalled Brigadier J. B. Scott-Elliot, C.B.E., D.S.O., thanking 13 Infantry Brigade for hospitality received and wishing all ranks of the Brigade good fortune. Rate of exchange of sterling to lire increased from 1500 to the £ to 1600 to the £.

*April 4th-8th* — C and B Coy Sports.

*April 8th* — Brigade Signal Exercise. HMS *Virago* and *Liverpool* arrive Pola harbour at 1400 hrs.

*April 9th* — Brigadier J. B. Scott-Elliot, C.B.E., D.S.O., inspected the five road posts manned by the Regiment on the Morgan Line.

*April 10th* — A and HQ Coy Sports.

*April 12th* — Football: Serjeants versus Petty Officers HMS *Virago*. Lieut D. E. J. Sweetzer, D.C.M., promoted Captain.

*April 14th* — Brigade TEWT on 'River Crossing' which all officers available attended.

*April 15th* — HMS *Chivalrous* arrives Pola harbour.

*April 17th* — Brigade Commander speaks to all officers at the Gothic Club.

*April 18th* — Lieut W. Morgan joins the Regiment on first posting from 2nd Bn the Essex Regiment. Capt A. F. Capstick assumes command of S Coy in the absence of Major A. H. Morley on privilege leave.

*April 21st* - HMS *Chivalrous* departs Pola harbour and is replaced by USS *Dixon*.

*April 30th* — The Regiment received warning of possible disturbances during the May Day celebrations in Pola. Rate of exchange, lire increased to 1800 to the £.

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*May 2nd*— HMS *Virago* visited by other ranks of the Regiment.

*May 7th* — HMS *Mauritius* arrives Pola harbour.

*May 9th* — The Regiment, under command of Lieut-Col C. Clifton, leaves Pola for Trieste by sea in LCTs.

*May 13th* — The Regiment arrives Bristol Barracks, Luneburg, and relieves the 2nd Bn the Devonshire Regiment.

*May 14th* — Capt N. D. G. G. McGavin, 2nd Lieuts E. A. Black and N. A. Neville joined the Regiment on first posting. A Coy under command of Major H. P. Patterson, moved to Celle on detachment. For security reasons booking in and out of the Regimental guardroom instituted.

*May 16th* — Major (Quartermaster) W. P. Warnock, M.B.E., assumes control of German Civil Labour. 2nd Lieut P. M. King promoted war substantive lieutenant with effect from February 10th, 1947. The Regiment recommences individual training.

*May 19th* — CCG game licences brought into use.

*May 21st* — All ranks in BAOR are authorized to wear berets.

*May 22nd* — 2nd Lieut E. A. Black assumes the appointment of pioneer platoon commander. Massed buglers of the Regiment sound Retreat every Thursday.

*May 23rd* — Free issue of cigarettes ceases and a ration of 90 per week is substituted.

*May 28th* — Lieut I. N. Jago transferred to B Coy. Lieut D. W. H. Osborne transferred to C Coy. Athletics: C Coy won Inter-Company Championships.

*May 29th* — C Coy under command of Capt A. B. Gillespie-Hill, comes under command of Number 3 Lumber Group at Gorleben for operation Woodpecker.

*May 31st* — Regimental Stocktaking Board.

*June 5th* — Farewell message to all ranks received from Lieutenant-General G. I. Thomas, C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C., commanding 1st British Corps District.

*June 14th* — Summer scale of bedding authorized.

*June 17th-18th* — 5th Infantry Division Signal Exercise.

*June 18th* — Inspection of optical instruments by REME.

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*June 25th* — Brigade Inter-Unit Athletic Meeting. 43rd Light Infantry winning the following events: 200 metres; 400 metres; 800 metres; hop step and jump; javelin; hammer. Result: 1, 43rd Light Infantry 120 1/2 points; 2, 2nd Bn the Green Howards; 3, 1st Bn the Worcestershire Regiment.

*June 26th-27th* — Regimental Individual Rifle Meeting held at Wyvern Range. The Commanding Officer's Watch won by Sjt Powis, D Coy.

*June 27th* — 1st field dressings withdrawn from general issue. Lieut R. G. Merriman promoted Captain.

*July 1st*— 13th Infantry Brigade Inter-Unit Swimming Championships at Peine. Result: 1, 1st Bn the Green Howards; 2, 43rd Light Infantry; 3, 1st Bn the Worcestershire Regiment.

*July 3rd*— Lieut P. S. Hayes, CSM Blockley and 7 other ranks departed for Bastogne, Belgium, to attend a memorial service to commemorate the liberation of Belgium by the United States Forces. The Regiment played 13/18 Hussars in the 5 Division Inter-Unit Water-polo Championship. Result: 13/18 Hussars 2, 43rd Light Infantry 0.

*July 5th-6th* — 5th Division Inter-Unit Athletic Championships at Brunswick. Result: 1, 43rd Light Infantry; 2, 2nd Bn the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment; 3, 2nd Bn the Wiltshire Regiment.

*July 9th-10th*— 13 Infantry Brigade Rifle Meeting held at Wyvern Range, Luneburg. Result: 1, 1st Bn the Worcestershire Regiment; 2, 2nd Bn the Green Howards; 3, 43rd Light Infantry.

*July 11th-12th* — 5 Division Individual Athletic Championships. The following results were obtained: CSM Welshman, 1st 200 metres, 400 metres; Cpl Thurman, 1st hop step and jump, no metres hurdles; Sjt Black, 2nd polevault; Pte Smith, 3rd hammer; Pte Salter, 3rd 800 metres.

*July 12th* — 2nd Lieut J. B. Harvie joined the Regiment on first posting and is posted to B Coy.

*July 15th* — Capt P. W. B. Thomson, M.C., is re-granted rank of Major with effect from July 15th, 1947. Capt R. S. C. Dowden joined the Regiment on first posting and is posted to D Coy.

*July 16th* — Test for the Commanding Officer's Bugler held. Results: 1, 5383797 L-Cpl Sharp, K., Commanding Officer's Bugler; 2, 14415889 Pte Aldridge, F.; 3, 14959605 Pte Clarke, F. An advance party moved to Lopshorn Camp, Paderborn, to prepare for the Summer Training camp.

*July 19th* — The Regiment less D and C Coys, departed to Lopshorn (Brigade Group) Camp near Paderborn. D Coy remained at Luneburg as a maintenance party under command of Major E. K. Judd. C Coy remained at Gorleben on operation Woodpecker.

*July 21st* — Training at Brigade Camp began.

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*July 22nd* — Major E. K. Judd in Luneburg, granted powers of a detachment commander.

*July 23rd* — Rifle companies carried out training with tanks of 7th Hussars.

*July 25th-26th* — Rhine Army Inter-Unit Athletic Championship held at Hanover. The Regiment were third.

*July 31st* — All Officers and Warrant Officers attended a lecture on the 'Crossing of the Segnio River' by Colonel Kendrew, D.S.O., at Sennelager.

*August 4th* — The Regiment, supported by two troops of the 7th Hussars, one MMG platoon of the 1st Bn the Manchester Regiment, and 145 Battery Royal Artillery, carried out a battalion attack with Major F. H. G. Higgins in command. Lieut-Col C. Clifton directed operations.

*August 7th-8th* — Lopshorn Training Camp ends and the Regiment marches from Lopshorn Camp to Sennelager Station, a distance of 15 miles and entrains for Luneburg.

*August 9th* — Capt D. C. Blake joined the Regiment on first posting on July 23rd, 1947, and is posted to A Coy. 2nd Lieut E. Withers joined the Regiment on August 2nd, 1947, and is posted to B Coy.

*August 11th* — Capt D. C. Blake reverts to the rank of lieutenant with effect from July 23rd, 1947, on posting. Capt A. C. Eyre joined the Regiment on first posting on August 10th, 1947, and is attached to C Coy. Lieut D. C. Blake assumes command of A Coy vice Major H. P. Patterson on leave. Capt R. S. C. Dowden assumes command of S Coy vice Capt A. F. Capstick posted to Headquarters 13 Infantry Brigade.

*August 12th* — Civilian clothes may now be worn by all ranks while taking recreational exercise.

*August 13th* — Weekly cigarette ration increased to 105 per head.

*August 15th* — Lieut E. Withers transferred from B to A Coy.

*August 19th* — Major F. H. G. Higgins assumes command of the Regiment vice Lieut-Col C. Clifton, absent on duty.

*August 23rd* - Lieut-Col C. Clifton reassumes command of the Regiment with effect from August 22nd, 1947.

*August 26th* — Information is received that the Colonel of the Regiment has laid down that bronze gorget buttons will replace the present polished buttons worn on battledress by Officers and Warrant Officers.

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*September 3rd*— Major F. H. G. Higgins relinquishes the appointment of second in command and departs to assume the appointment of GSO 2 at headquarters, Nigeria District, West Africa. Major E. K. Judd assumes appointment of acting second in command.

*September 5th* — 2nd Lieuts R. F. P. Gronin and N. A. Neville are promoted war substantive lieutenants. 2nd Lieuts W. J. Uff and A. M. Miscampbell joined the Regiment on first posting and are posted to C Coy.

*September 10th* — Major P. G. Thompson, M.C., takes over the duties of Quartermaster in the absence of Major (Quartermaster) W. P. Warnock, M.B.E., on duty. Lieut P. S. Hayes assumes command of HQ Coy in the absence of Major P. G. Thompson, M.C.

*September 17th-19th* — Brigade exercise Hotfoot.

*September 20th* — Brigadier J. Scott-Elliot, G.B.E., D.S.O., congratulates the Regiment on its performance in Exercise Hotfoot.

*September 23rd* — Major G. G. Rush joined the Regiment on first posting and assumes command of HQ, Coy. 2nd Lieut F. P. Ramsay joined the Regiment on first posting and is posted to A Coy.

*September 24th* — Capt G. J. Lambert assumes command of B Coy in the absence of Major P. W. B. Thomson, M.C., on privilege leave.

*September 25th* — Lieut M. Graham joined the Regiment on first posting and is posted to C Coy.

*September 27th* - Capt A. C. Eyre assumes the duties of Adjutant in the absence of Capt H. J. W. Newton on leave and duty.

*September 29th* — Major P. G. Thompson, M.C., assumes command of D Coy. The Regiment begins work on Phase III of operation Woodpecker at Ebstorf Forest. This entails the employment of 10 officers and 310 other ranks daily.

*October 1st* — C Coy returns from Number 3 Lumber group, Gorleben.

*October 4th* — Lieut J. A. Colven rejoins the Regiment and is posted to D Coy.

*October 9th* — Lieut P. M. King assumes duties of WTO in the absence of Lieut N. A. Neville on leave. Lieut D. G. Blake assumes the duties of MTO in the absence of Capt D. E. J. Sweetzer, D.C.M., on leave.

*October 10th* — Lieuts A. G. Crawford, A. R. D. Perrins and 2nd Lieut E. J. Rohll joined the Regiment on first posting and are posted to C, B and D Coys respectively.

*October 11th* — Lieut D. C. Blake, A Coy, reassumes the rank of captain.

*October 13th* — Lieut J. A. Colven is promoted captain.

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*October 17th* — CQMS Barry is awarded the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal after 18 years' exemplary service.

*October 20th* — 2nd Lieuts E. N. L. Featherstone, J. A. D. Lord and D. R. Clayton joined the Regiment on first posting and are posted to D, S and A Coys respectively.

*October 21st* — The Divisional Commander, Major-General J. B. Churcher, D.S.O., visited the Regimental Woodpecker site.

*October 25th* — Capt R. G. Merriman proceeded on class 'A' release.

*October 28th* — and Lieut J. B. Harvie is appointed Regimental Signals Officer.

*November 9th* — HQ and S Coys under command of Major G. C. Rush paraded for an Armistice Day service.

*November 10th* — 2nd Lieuts G. G. J. Goodey and E. N. L. Featherstone are promoted war substantive Lieutenants. 2nd Lieuts C. W. Daykin and R. Wride joined the Regiment on first posting, and posted to A and D Coys respectively. Rugby: First round of the Army Cup, 43rd Light Infantry versus 2nd Bn the Wiltshire Regiment. Result: lost 6 points to 9 points.

*November 15th* — Lieut P. B. Dunn joined the Regiment on first posting and is posted to D Coy.

*November 17th* — Petrol-less days instituted in BAOR.

*November 20th* — All number V rifles and bayonets exchanged for number IV rifles and bayonets.

*November 21st* — The Army Commander, Lieutenant-General Sir Richard L. McCreery, K.C.B., K.B.E., D.S.O., M.C., visits the Regiment and inspects the barracks. Lieut-Col Charles, GSO, 5th Division, visited the Regimental Woodpecker site. Lieut F. L. W. Coles joined the Regiment and is posted to HQ, Coy.

*November 24th* — The pioneer platoon comes under the Quartermaster for all duties.

*November 29th* — Capt A. C. Eyre assumes the appointment of Adjutant vice Capt H. J. W. Newton posted to A Coy. 2nd Lieuts G. C. Cumming, C. W. Daykin and F. F. Ramsay are promoted war substantive lieutenants. The Regiment won the 13 Infantry Brigade Cross Country Championship by 100 points.

*December 1st* — Major G. C. Rush assumes command of the Regiment in the absence of Lieut-Col G. Clifton on privilege leave.

*December 6th* — Lieut W. F. Nassau posted to HQ, 13 Infantry Brigade and assumes the appointment of Staff Captain 'A' in the rank of captain.

*December 19th* — Operation Woodpecker ceases.



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*December 22nd*— Lieut-Colonel G. Clifton reassumes command of the Regiment on return from privilege leave.

*December 23rd* — 2nd Lieut R. H. P. Brocklehurst promoted lieutenant. Lieut I. R. C. Greenlees joined the Regiment on first posting and is posted to B Coy.

*December 29th* — Capt H. J. W. Newton assumes command of A Coy vice Major H. P. Patterson on leave.

*December 30th* — Lieut E. N. L. Featherstone is appointed assistant Adjutant.

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**FIRST BATTALION LETTER**

Dear Editor,

There is one thing constant about the Army these days and that is that you never know what is going to happen next. That is no reflection on the planning staffs, but a result of the extremely full and varied existence that the post-war conditions have brought us. One day we were lying in the sun at Pola; the inside of the same week saw us unpacking in Luneburg; a placid week's training programme became the world headline operation of disembarking Jews at Hamburg; dreams of a gentlemanly autumn were rudely shattered by operation Woodpecker. Just as 1947 could not be visualized when the last 43rd letter was written, so it is now quite impossible to imagine what 1948 will bring.

The first weeks of the New Year saw the Regiment still in Trieste. Guards were the principal duties — but we actually did a full scale Regimental exercise on January 3rd. We found we were much better at advancing to contact with the temperature below freezing point than we were at guarding vehicles. Everybody was keen once we started and there was no hope of getting out of it; Pat Patterson accepted my concession quite cheerfully that he could light a fire with wet wood if he made no smoke — and the Brigadier was unstinting in his praise.

The Regiment set off through Jugoslavia to Pola late in January for a pretty austere three months. Mike Harbottle we left behind doing a mysterious job that started six months later, but we brought Peter Hayter with us only to lose him to the Light Infantry Brigade Training Centre within two months. The weather was extremely unpleasant and the living conditions in a battered submarine base were shocking. There were more guards than ever to do, five road posts astride the northern and north-eastern approaches to the enclave, three Regimental guards, and every other week a Brigade Headquarter guard. We lived and dreamed guards, every known combination of dress, tours of duty, strengths and rosters were tried out by the greying Adjutant, Henry Newton, on the greying company commanders. But still we contrived to train, field firing furiously on our own range, the anti-tank guns firing at rafts out to sea, and the 3" mortars blazing away just outside the main gate. We carried out Regimental and Brigade signal exercises, and a full scale twenty-four hour exercise; and it was not to impress the Jugoslavs, or that we particularly wanted to, but because the Brigadier made us.

I must record with sadness the senseless assassination of our Brigade Commander Brigadier R. W. de Winton, D.S.O. We had been under him nearly a year and really knew and admired him. His murder was a crime inexcusable on any grounds, least of all a sense of misplaced patriotism. His place was taken by Brigadier J. Scott Elliot, C.B.E., D.S.O., who had already had the 7th Bn in his Brigade and Peter Hayter and Mike Harbottle as his Brigade Major and Deputy Assistant Quartermaster General. He has since had Douglas Bright as Brigade Major. While in Pola the Regiment won the Brigade, Divisional, Central Mediterranean Forces and Central Mediterranean Forces/British Troops Austria boxing championships, and was only beaten 1 — 0 in the 1 Armoured Division football final. Our sports teams and spectators almost wore away what was left of the Pola road, a rutted pretence of which the Jugoslavs were frightfully jealous. Trips to Trieste, however, were worth any sacrifice; Pola was a dying town devoid of all amenities and Trieste, I suppose, was amongst Europe's gayest and brightest cities.

When the spring came that we so badly needed, and we were bathing and boating hard in April, rumours of our move began to fly, and it seemed that after all we should not have to wait for the ratification of the Peace Treaty.

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General Harding, then Commander-in-Chief Central Mediterranean Forces, came down and told us that we should be off soon. The advance party under Fergus Higgins had already left and were writing glowing letters of life in BAOR. As for the move itself I might as well have thrown my movement order complete with its twenty-seven serials into the sea. It catered for a move spread over a month and we had eventually only four days' notice. On May 10th the Regiment with most of its men, vehicles, tracks and baggage all on one LST and escorted by the Royal Navy steamed out of Pola harbour. And in no time we were in Luneburg.

The summer in Luneburg has passed in an absolute flurry of events. In May, C Coy under Gillespie-Hill went off into one of the local forests to start a distinguished wood-chopping career with No 3 Lumber group. Guards, except for the Regimental Quarter Guard, were a thing of the past, the sun shone, we won the Brigade athletics with almost embarrassing ease, Henry Newton and Dick King started learning all about show jumping, and Rocky Lambert did frightful execution day and night amongst the buck. Race goers, headed by Fergus Higgins, and clutching copies of BAOR Race Form, actually made some money at Hanover and Hamburg, and those who backed our gallant old Alex II could have put away their advance of pay books for a long time after his first win in BAOR.

We went on in the athletic world to win the Divisional meeting easily, an occasion on which our field event competitors really shone; the Divisional Commander, Major-General Churcher, D.S.O., himself a light infantryman, was delighted. We were beaten into third place by 1 Grenadier Guards and 2 Rifle Brigade in the Rhine Army finals but they were both good teams and deserved their success. It had been a good season for us, and the greatest credit must be given to Brian Lewis and his right-hand man Peter Bavin for their slavish devotion to the training of the team all through the summer. We had the same German trainer this year who had trained the team since 1945, and hope to have him up from the Rhine-land again next spring.

Despite the demands of athletics, the Regiment ran the Brigade rifle meeting and also shot in the Divisional and Rhine Army meetings. The Colonel, who is an extremely keen shot, first really introduced shooting to us: a most important part of peace-time soldiering. In July we took all our young soldiers and specialists to the Brigade Group Training Camp at Bad Lipp-springe for three weeks' toil and sweat under a blazing midsummer sun. The camp was an unqualified success and men who had to be taught how to load and fire a PIAT or 2" mortar during the first few days of the camp, tackled a full scale Regimental field firing exercise with full supporting arms with confidence and dash three weeks later, which is some comfort in these days of many National Service men and few regulars. The officers, conscious of the good the next day's labours would do them, visited the clubs for miles around most evenings, and gave a most successful cocktail party one sunset.

Back to Luneburg with the last fence of summer, exercise Hotfoot, in sight we did some jumping and racing and soon found ourselves disembarking Jews at Hamburg. Operation Oasis was a great experience and the men behaved extremely well in the face of considerable provocation. Peter Thomson and Tommy Thompson commanded the two companies engaged. There can be little doubt that the majority of the cargo of those three ships were the unfortunate misinformed dupes of a Zionist organization that thought far less of finding homes and a country for wandering Jewish displaced persons than the propaganda value of the whole enterprise.

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With C Coy still breaking all Woodpecker records at Gorleben, the Regiment prepared to give battle with 1st Bn the Worcestershire Regiment and group of supporting arms on exercise Hotfoot. For three days the most terrific battle raged to and fro. The first day was spent by both sides grouping their forces, day two belonged to the Worcestershires who attacked heavily with tanks, SP guns, armoured cars and scores of aircraft. Day three was the Regiment's turn and using a lateral road to the Worcestershires' line of retreat attacked with company battle groups of tanks, SP guns, 6-pounder anti-tank guns and medium, machine guns. It was a hectic battle and most exciting as the score of tanks and soft-skinned vehicles knocked out mounted hourly. Peter Thomson was in his element — collar and tie were soon discarded in favour of scarves, silk, old school. Ronnie Dowden having fought his way out of a village with F echelon, turned the tables when he had most of the Worcestershires in a village street nicely sealed off with Valentine 17-pounder SPs.

So with all the 'ops', 'exs', camps, shoots, athletics, races and horse shows safely behind us only operation Woodpecker remained. But I went on leave for two months at this moment so I hand over to my successor who, I am pleased to say, had more to do with operation Woodpecker and the rest of 1947 than I had.

Having taken over from Henry Newton and reading his very fine description of the year's activities of the Regiment, I am immediately struck by the difficulty of reaching such a standard for the last three months. The Regiment in September was preparing and re-organizing for the formation of the unit Woodpecker lumber group and as such had orders to produce a total of three hundred men daily for site work. At the beginning many were the birth pangs and they occurred at regular intervals. Tempers at all levels fluctuated with the rise and fall of the daily tonnage loaded, but it was fully realized that commanders everywhere were being pressed, and lower down the scale the attitude was for Brigades to ring up and ask for assistance in fighting rearguard activities against overwhelming odds at Divisional levels — it was even rumoured that Sir Stafford had a finger in the pie. In conclusion more has been written about this task elsewhere and it only remains to state that it was the very high standard of hard work shown by all ranks under harsh conditions which resulted in the Regiment gaining their target and some by December 17th.

During this period George Rush arrived from the 43 Primary Training Centre and took over HQ Coy and the stables — having been included in his riding class I can testify to the adroitness of his lessons and passion for teaching the learner to trot endlessly round the school without stirrups. In November after conferences at high levels and after both parties were satisfied, it was agreed that the 1st Bn the Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry should send us all their high age and service group men before they returned to the United Kingdom. As a result the Regiment now possesses some three hundred men of all categories from that Regiment and we have now formed quite a useful cadre of regulars for our future role thanks to the high standard shown by the drafts which arrived from Minden.

As Christmas drew near rumours about our future destination sprang up, first Berlin, but later on it changed to Hamburg and this remains firm at the time of writing — most ranks seem to like the idea but our married families are doubtful, having heard of the shortage of accommodation. Celebrations over this festival period were plentiful and culminated in an orgy of fancy dress football. For the game between the Officers and Serjeants Mess, the Colonel, sporting a flowing tow beard and hat, ably lead the forwards, while Tommy Thompson, Peter Thomson and Ronny Dowden formed a redoubtable half-back line.

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My predecessor and myself merely endeavoured to keep out many an ugly rush led by Regimental Serjeant Major Cox.

And so ended 1947 in Luneburg, BAOR.

Yours, 43rd.