

**1948 REGIMENTAL CHRONICLE
OXFORDSHIRE & BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY**

THE FREEDOM CEREMONIES APRIL 1948

An Account of the Three Ceremonies conferring on the Regiment the Freedom of Entry into the City of Oxford and the Boroughs of Banbury and Aylesbury

SHORTLY after the war ended offers were received from the City of Oxford and the Boroughs of Banbury and Aylesbury for the conferment on the Regiment of the privilege and distinction of the Freedom of Entry into these Towns on ceremonial occasions in full panoply with Colours flying and Band and Bugles playing in recognition of their close association with the Regiment and to show their appreciation of its long and distinguished record.

Owing to the fact that both battalions were overseas, it was not then possible to find a body of men sufficiently representative of the Regiment for these ceremonies, and it was not until the autumn of 1947 that the man-power position improved sufficiently for planning to be started.

By then the Cadre of the 52nd had come home from Palestine, with the original intention that that battalion was to go into "Suspended Animation"; the 43rd was in Germany and therefore fairly accessible; the 43rd Primary Training Centre at Cowley Barracks was entirely staffed by members of the Regiment, and the Light Infantry Training Centre at Cove had a Regimental company as part of its establishment.

At this time, moreover, the reconstituted 4th Battalion had started to find its feet, and had its Headquarters at Slade Camp. The newly formed Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire battalions of the Army Cadet Force were also well established.

The Colonel of the Regiment decided, therefore, that the time was now propitious for the ceremonies of the 'Three Freedoms' as they were often referred to in conversation, and as a preliminary step, in consultation with the Mayors concerned, the dates were fixed: Banbury for Thursday, April 8th, Oxford, Saturday April 10th and Aylesbury for Sunday April 11th.

A small sub-committee from the Regiment consisting of Lieut-Colonels Clare and Ducat-Hamersley was appointed to arrange the form and details of the ceremonies in conjunction with the Mayors and Town Clerks of the Town and Boroughs concerned. It was decided that the Regiment should be represented by a detachment consisting of the Colours of the 52nd and 4th Battalions (T.A.), each with their own Colour parties, and 2 officers and 100 other ranks, all under the command of Lieut-Colonel H. J. C. Ducat-Hamersley. The other ranks were found as follows: 1st Battalion 50, 4th Battalion 25 and 25 from the permanent staff of the 43rd Primary Training Centre.

The Regimental Band was to have joined the 1st Battalion in Germany early in January, but special permission was obtained for its retention for the period of the ceremonies.

From the outset the preparations with the civil authorities went very smoothly, and were marked with a high degree of co-operation by all concerned. Preliminary meetings were held with the Mayors of the three Towns to settle the main points, and the Town Clerks were then deputed to arrange the details. These were many and varied, seeming to accumulate as time went on, and necessitated several conferences at each Town. Not the least of these were the traffic arrangements.

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In each Town the ceremony was to be held in one of the main thoroughfares with the consequent threat of disorganization to traffic. The date fixed for Banbury was that Town's market day and the Oxford ceremony took place on a Saturday when the streets of the City are always crowded with people. The police, however, took the matter in hand with their customary efficiency, and when the time came everything went without a hitch.

Another problem was the organization and marshalling of the various representative bodies at the parades. At Banbury and Aylesbury in particular the space allotted was so small that considerable difficulty was met in fitting in the whole parade, and the timing for the arrival of the contingents had to be very carefully worked out.

A great deal of consideration had to be given to the composition and size of these representative parties and the arrangements by which they should fit in with the Regimental parade at the March Past. Forming up places were very limited in the crowded streets, and at Banbury and Aylesbury the streets were narrow and tortuous, making the March Past a particular problem.

The main difficulty encountered as far as the Regimental parade was concerned was the limited time in which to practise. The 50 men selected from the 1st Battalion were paraded on the square at Cowley Barracks for their first practice on April 2nd, and the Colour party and the 25 men from the 4th Battalion could only be got together on two evenings and a Sunday morning for full rehearsals. A considerable amount of clothing fitting was also necessary in this short time. Moreover the 43rd Primary Training Centre was in the process of closing down, which provided certain administrative difficulties.

The success or failure of the ceremonies was largely dependent on the weather. Had it been wet there was no alternative but to go through with the parade as planned. Here we were extremely fortunate as, apart from a short shower at Banbury, the weather was ideal and the country looked at its best in spring.

FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH OF BANBURY APRIL 8TH

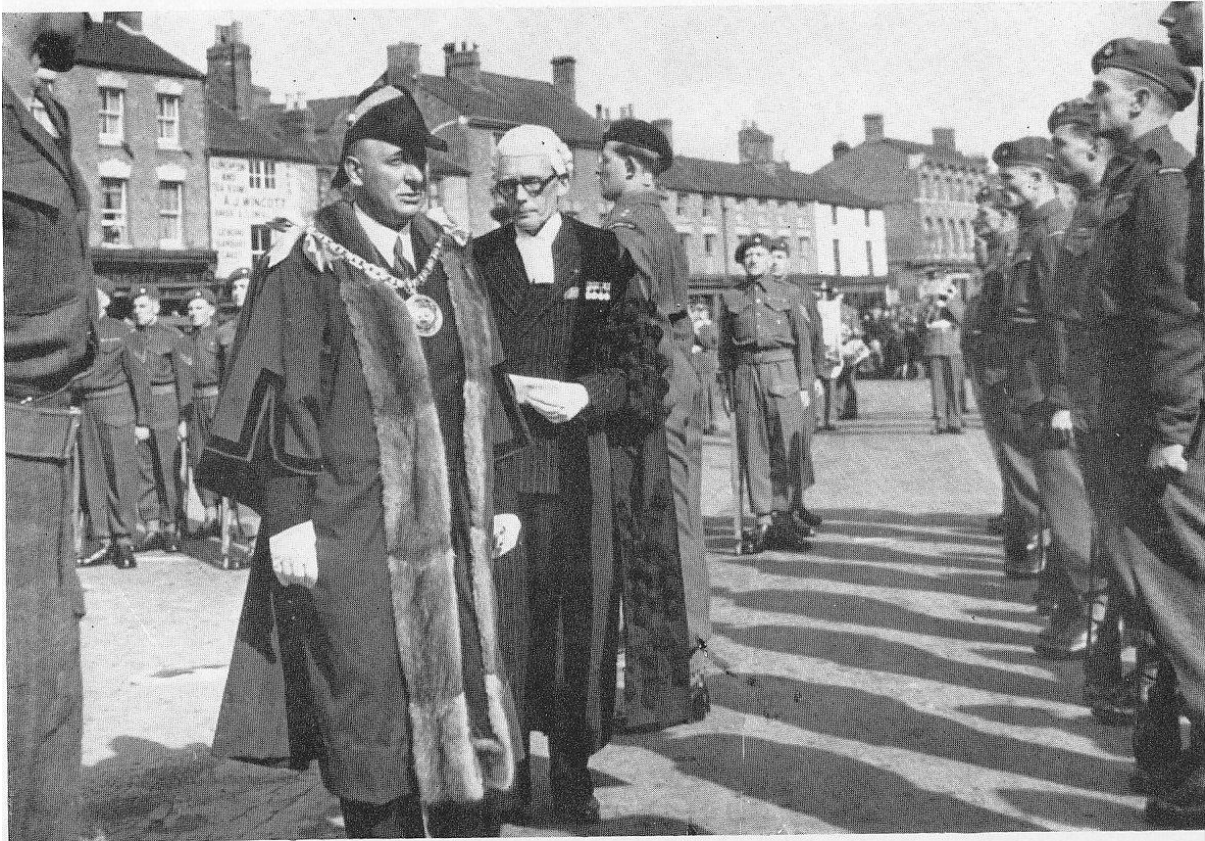
The Regimental parade, the composition of which has already been stated, debussed at the T.A. Drill Hall at Banbury and formed up in line for a short ceremony of welcome to the Borough by the Mayor (Councillor F. Partridge). There had been heavy rain *en route* which now gave way to sunshine, although thunder clouds still threatened. At 2 p.m. the Mayor accompanied by the Colonel of the Regiment, inspected the parade and made a short speech of welcome. The Band meanwhile had gone ahead, and for half an hour before the ceremony, played in front of the Town Hall.

The parade then marched through the streets, thickly lined with spectators, to the Cow Fair Bus Stand and formed up in three sides of a square with the two Colour parties in front and the Band and Buglers in rear. Also on parade in rear and to the flanks were a smart detachment of the 1 Oxfordshire (Banbury) Battalion Army Cadet Force under Major E. T. Clark, contingents of representatives from the Regimental Old Comrades Association, the Banbury branch of British Legion and former members of the Home Guard.

The marshalling of these detachments was carried out by Lieut-Colonel Clare, and was no easy task in the crowded thoroughfares.

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BANBURY



THE MAYOR INSPECTING THE PARADE

A be-flagged stage had been erected in front of the Cow Fair Bus Shelter, and on this were assembled the Town Clerk, the Councillors, Lord Sandford (High Steward), Mr. C. Erskine Simes (Borough Recorder) and a number of senior officers of the Regiment and their wives.

At 3 p.m. the Mayor and the Colonel of the Regiment, attended by Brigadier R. J. Brett, mounted the dais and were received by the General Salute. The Mayor, speaking into the microphone, formerly moved the resolution conferring the Freedom of the Borough on the Regiment. This was seconded by Alderman W. G. Mascord and unanimously carried by the assembled Councillors.

The Mayor, accompanied by General Sir Bernard Paget, then inspected the full parade, afterwards returning to the dais when the Recorder read aloud the Scroll conferring the Freedom of Entry on the Regiment.

Presenting the Scroll and Casket the Mayor said:

'Today, when nations and peoples the world over are struggling with the complex problems of peace, it is our pride and pleasure to look upon the victories which have brought us the peace, complex though it is, and, on this memorable occasion, to pay, as representatives of the largest Borough in Oxfordshire, our share of tribute to the valiant part played in the gaining of these victories by the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, our own County Regiment, in which so many sons of the Borough have been proud to serve and to which we all owe so great a debt.'

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The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry have a fine tradition of service, and, as ancestors, the old 43rd and 52nd Battalions, raised in the mid-eighteenth century, the 52nd being affiliated to Oxfordshire for recruiting purposes in 1782 and the County of Buckingham added to the recruiting area forty years later. Both battalions were granted the distinction "Light Infantry" in 1803 and subsequently saw service in the Peninsular War as part of the "Light Division", of which the historian writes: "Six years of warfare could not detect a flaw in their system nor were they ever matched in courage or skill".

The great battle of Waterloo in 1815 saw them playing a leading part, resulting in their receiving permission to bear on their Colours, which you see here this afternoon, the names of the principal battles in which they had been engaged, and again later, during the Indian Mutiny of 1857, the Regiment as a whole behaved with great gallantry and three Victoria Crosses were awarded for outstanding bravery on the part of individuals.

In the year 1881, the old 43rd and 52nd became formally linked together as the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the Oxfordshire Light Infantry and in 1908 received the title by which we now know them, the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, still, however, as the subsequent campaigns of the First and Second World Wars have shown, carrying on the same fine tradition of service and permeated with the dauntless spirit and high standard of morale of the old battalions.

Representatives of the Regiment in both these wars are here today — in the contingent we see before us, some of whom are not long returned from overseas service, and among the members of the Regimental Old Comrades Association present.

Many will well remember in the First World War the defeat of the Prussian Guard by the 52nd in Nonne Bosschen Wood in 1914, the defence of Kut-el-Amara in 1916 and the Regiment's further gallant service in 1917 and 1918 when two non-commissioned officers were awarded Victoria Crosses.

The Second World War, of which memories for all of us are but too recent, saw in 1940, the 4th Battalion of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry with the British Expeditionary Force in France and the epic withdrawal from Dunkirk when the battalion made a great stand at Cassel Hill, fighting off repeated armoured attacks with great gallantry. From this action only two officers and sixty-five other ranks returned with the British Expeditionary Forces. Other battalions saw distinguished service in North Africa and Italy, while the 6th gained a great reputation in Burma. The first formed body of troops to land in Normandy on D-Day, 1944, was provided from the airborne (52nd) battalion of the Regiment — high proof of the Army's confidence in the courage and skill of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry and a practical tribute in our days equivalent to that of the words of the historian of 130 years ago to a regiment "never surpassed in arms since arms were first borne by man". We too would praise and honour them and express our pride in the long and enduring association between the Borough and the Regiment in which so many of our sons have served. We do pray from the bottom of our hearts that they will not be called upon to fight other battles and of the answer to this prayer we have no certain hope, but we can be assured that the Regiment which has shown such firmness, faith and valour in the face of great odds throughout the long period of its history, will not be found wanting in these qualities should the evil we dread befall and the cause of freedom be once more at stake.

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We are an ancient Borough whose first charter was granted in 1554 by Queen Mary and today we rejoice in our status and its longstanding as a heritage which enables us to pay an especial tribute to the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry in conferring upon them in perpetuity the privilege, honour and distinction of marching through our streets on all ceremonial occasions with Colours flying and Band and Bugles playing — and this we do in recognition of the close link between us by reason of the service in the Regiment of our sons of yesterday, today and tomorrow, and as the highest tribute we can, as a Borough, pay to the Regiment's achievements in the cause of freedom for our nation and Empire and for the world as a whole.

To you Sir, I hand, on behalf of the Borough of Banbury, into your keeping, this Casket and Scroll, as a token of the Borough's tribute to this famous Regiment of glorious tradition, and the learned Recorder will now read the Scroll.'

BANBURY



THE COLONEL OF THE REGIMENT RECEIVING THE CASKET CONTAINING THE SCROLL

Scroll Conferring the Freedom of Entry

We, the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of the Borough of Banbury in the County of Oxford, in pursuance of a Resolution passed at a meeting specially convened for the purpose, held at the Town Hall in the said Borough on Thursday, the 8th day of April," 1948, confer in perpetuity upon the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry the Privilege, Honour and Distinction of marching through the streets of Banbury on all ceremonial occasions with colours flying and band and bugles playing, in recognition of the long and close association existing between the Borough and the Regiment in which so many sons of Banbury have been proud to serve, and as a Tribute to the Regiment's achievements in the cause of the Nation and Empire.

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Given under the Corporate Seal of the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of the Borough of Banbury this 8th day of April, 1948.

FRANK PARTRIDGE, *Mayor*

E. OWEN REID, *Town Clerk*

The Colonel of the Regiment, after receiving the Casket and Scroll, expressed on behalf of all ranks of the Regiment the deep sense of pride and pleasure on receiving from the Borough the highest honour it had to confer. As of necessity the speeches made by General Paget at all three ceremonies were basically the same, the one at Oxford only will be recorded in full.

During the General's speech the sky began to darken and directly after, as three cheers were being given, first by the spectators for the Regiment and then by the parade for the Borough, a heavy storm broke and hail continued to beat down on hundreds of bared heads as the Band played the National Anthem.

The Regimental detachment, headed by the Band, then moved off on a short march through a part of the town, taking the route — Broad Street, George Street, and back past the Town Hall where it was joined by other detachments. The whole column then marched past the dais, where the Mayor with the Colonel of the Regiment took the salute. Members of the Regimental Old Comrades Association marched immediately in rear of the Regiment.

By this time the storm had passed and the ceremony concluded in brilliant sunshine. The Regiment and guests were afterwards entertained to tea at the Crown Hotel where, after grace by the Rev A. Bateson, there were informal speeches of appreciation. The other contingents taking part in the parade were provided with a good tea at the Town Hall.

REGIMENTAL AT HOME

On the following day, Friday, April 9th, the Regiment gave a Sherry Party at Cowley Barracks, to return the hospitality afforded by the three Towns and to entertain the civil authorities of the two Counties and members of the Regiment visiting Oxford for the ceremonies. The Band played on the lawn and a fine evening helped to make this party, which two hundred and fifty guests attended, a great success.

FREEDOM OF THE CITY OF OXFORD APRIL 10TH.

On Saturday April 10th the Regimental detachment with the Band proceeded by transport as far as the junction of Morrell Avenue and the main Oxford-London road. Thence, led by the Band playing, it marched to the forming up place opposite Pusey Street in St Giles, via Magdalen Bridge and Carfax. The weather was perfect, and a great number of spectators lined the streets and cheered the detachment as it passed. The detachment then formed up with the two Colour parties in line in the centre of the street facing the dais on which were assembled among others, the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire (Lord Bicester), Major the Hon. Quintin Hogg, M.P., the Deputy Mayor (Councillor E. A. Smewin), the Sheriff (Councillor J. G. Darlow), City Councillors and senior members of the Regiment and their wives.

Beneath the dais there was an enclosure reserved for past and present officers of the Regiment and their friends. About three hundred were present.

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On the flanks of the Regimental detachment were assembled contingents of the Regimental Old Comrades Association, British Legion, the Old Contemptibles Association, the County of Oxford Army Cadet Force (with its own Band) under Lieut-Colonel A. J. Marigold and the Oxfordshire Boy Scouts.

The Old Comrades Association was particularly well represented, there being about three hundred on parade, some of whom had travelled considerable distances to take part.

OXFORD



THE MAYOR INSPECTING THE PARADE

The Mayor (Councillor J. W. Heading) with the Colonel of the Regiment arrived on the dais at 3.30p.m. and, having received the General Salute, inspected the full parade. Returning to the dais the Mayor made the following speech, at the conclusion of which he handed the Scroll and Casket to the Colonel of the Regiment.

The Scroll was first read aloud by the Town Clerk, Mr H. Plowman.

'My Lord, General Sir Bernard Paget, Ladies and Gentlemen —

It is the expressed wish of the citizens of Oxford that an opportunity be afforded to pay special tribute to the distinguished record of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry which has been so closely associated with our City for almost two hundred years.

We are indeed proud of and admire the gallantry and devotion shown by the Regiment whenever the call for its services has been made. Its battles have been fought in many lands, and its courage and skill have been unsurpassed. We are proud also of the many sons of our City who, as members of the Regiment, have served in the defence of our beloved country. They form a link between the City and the Regiment, which assures mutual affection and respect for all time. We are proud that this distinguished Regiment has made our beautiful City its home.

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It is proper therefore that we should bestow upon the Regiment such honour as lies within our power. Accordingly it has been resolved that we should confer upon the Regiment the privilege and distinction of Freedom of Entry into the City on ceremonial occasions in full panoply with Colours flying and Band and Bugles playing.

It is my duty on behalf of the citizens of Oxford to deliver at this ceremony the Deed whereby this privilege is conferred. With great pleasure, therefore, I ask General Sir Bernard Paget as the Colonel of The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry to accept this Casket and the Scroll which it contains as a token of our esteem and friendship.

To you, Sir Bernard, and to all ranks of the Regiment both serving and former members, I express congratulations on your great and splendid achievements, and the wish that you may enjoy good health, good luck and prosperity. May the efforts of the Regiment be crowned with glory and success at all times.

Scroll Conferring the Freedom of Entry

To the Colonel of the Regiment, the Officers, Warrant Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Men of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry

Greeting

We the Mayor, Aldermen and Citizens of Oxford acting by the City Council being sensible of the glorious traditions established by and the distinguished record of the Regiment during many years of loyal and devoted service to our beloved King and Country and being desirous of according recognition thereto and to the long and historic association of the Regiment with the City.

Do by these presents and in pursuance of a resolution passed unanimously by the City Council on the First day of October 1945 confer upon the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry the privilege and distinction of Freedom of Entry into the City of Oxford on ceremonial occasions in full panoply with Colours flying and Band and Bugles playing.

In witness whereof we have caused the Common Seal of the City to be hereunto affixed this Tenth day of April 1948 in the presence of:—

J. W. HEADING, *Mayor*

HARRY PLOWMAN, *Town Clerk*

In reply the Colonel of the Regiment said:

“My Lord, Mr Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen — As Colonel of the Regiment, it is my privilege to express on behalf of all ranks of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, past and present, our deep pride and pleasure in receiving from the ancient City of Oxford the greatest honour you have to bestow, namely the Freedom of the City, and the privilege of marching through your streets on ceremonial occasions with the Colours flying and Band and Bugles playing.

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OXFORD



THE COLONEL OF THE REGIMENT RECEIVING THE CASKET CONTAINING THE SCROLL

Today will always stand as a very memorable occasion in the history of the Regiment, strengthening the many ties of comradeship and service linking us with the City which has been our home for over 150 years, and serving as an incentive to all ranks of the Regiment to uphold at all times the great traditions and the splendid achievements, which are marked by this signal honour conferred upon us by the citizens of Oxford.

In receiving this honour we are mindful of all those who gave their lives in the service of the Regiment and for King and Country; not only in the many wars in which the Regiment has fought with such distinction, but also in watch and ward on the outposts of our Empire. In honouring their memory let us also strive to redeem their sacrifice through loyalty to the ideals of faith and fellowship for which they died.

Marshal Bugeaud, one of Napoleon's Marshals, once said that the British infantry were the most formidable in Europe, but fortunately there were not many of them. Unfortunately for us the same is true today, there are not many of us; but I am glad that in spite of our small numbers, we have been able to ensure that the Regiment is well represented on this parade.

We have here present representatives of the 43rd and 52nd (now to be amalgamated into the 1st Battalion); the 4th Battalion; and, among our Old Comrades, the service battalions of both World Wars, and members of British Legion and the Home Guard with whom we are proud to be associated; we have also on parade the Army Cadet Force. We are all members of one family, the Regiment.

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As the great historian, Mr Arthur Bryant, wrote in the Sunday Times last week: "The safety and honour of Britain depend not on her wealth and administration but on the character of her people. This in turn depends on the institutions which form character. In the British Army from time immemorial the most important of these institutions has been the Regiment."

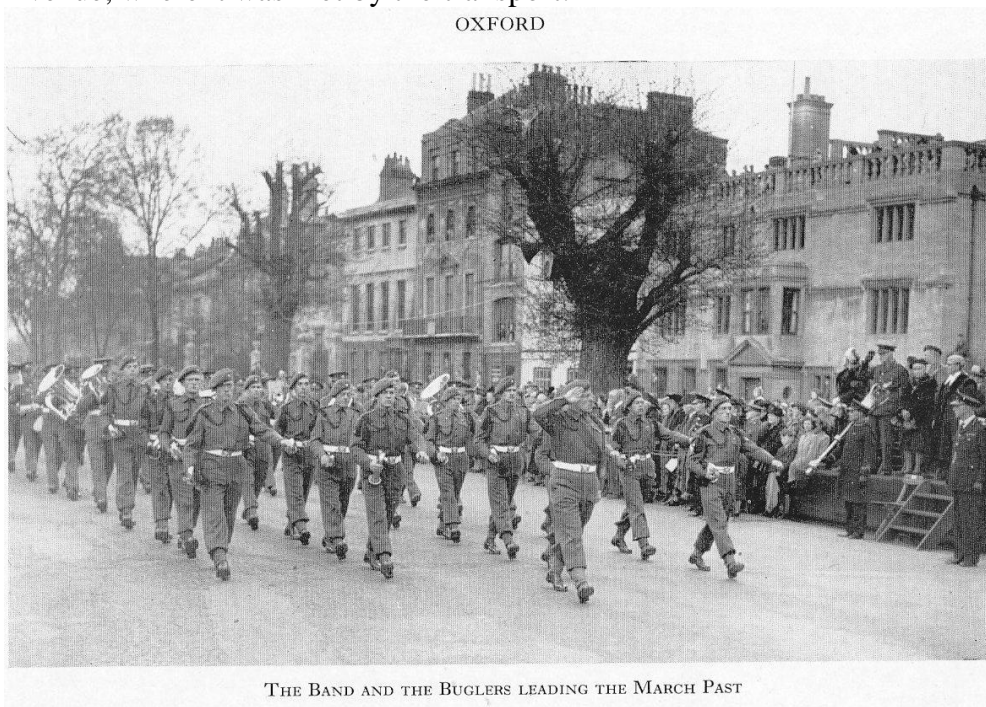
We of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry know how true this is, and we are proud to be linked with another great institution for the formation of our national character on which the well-being and progress of this country depend, namely Oxford.

On behalf of the Regiment I again express to you, Mr Mayor, and to the Aldermen, Councillors and citizens of Oxford, our most sincere thanks and appreciation for the great honour that you have conferred upon us, and for the very beautiful Scroll and Casket you have presented to us, which will always be among our most treasured possessions.

At the conclusion of the speeches, and after cheers had been called for, the full parade led by the Band and Regimental detachment moved off for the March Past to the forming up place at the end of St Giles. The Old Comrades marched immediately in rear of the Regiment. Their excellent marching and bearing bore testimony to the Regimental system, proving that after many years in civilian life men could come together and take their place in a parade with all the smartness expected of Light Infantrymen.

The Mayor and the Colonel of the Regiment took the salute from the dais, and the Band and Regimental detachment then marched through the crowded streets to the Town Hall where they, with a number of guests, were entertained to tea. The Old Comrades were given tea in the T.A. Headquarters, Manor Road.

Owing to the crowds it was found impracticable to embus at the Town Hall, as had been the original intention, so the detachment led by the Band and Bugles playing marched to Morrell Avenue, where it was met by the transport.



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FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH OF AYLESBURY APRIL 11TH

This was the last of the three ceremonies and it was marked by the sunniest day of the spring.

The parade took place on the Market Square facing the Chesham Statue. Owing to the limited space in this square a certain difficulty was experienced in fitting in the full parade and keeping clear routes for the contingents to march on and off.

Contingents taking part included: the 645th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery (Bucks) T.A.; the Bucks Army Cadet Force; the Regimental Old Comrades Association; the Bucks Battalion Old Comrades Association; the Old Contemptibles Association and British Legion.

The weather was perfect and large crowds had assembled for the occasion; the old town looked very gay with its festive dressing of flags and bunting, and had a most friendly atmosphere.

Seated on the dais, which was in front of the Chesham Statue were, among others, the Lord Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire (Lord Cottesloe); the Town Councillors; the Mayors of High Wycombe, Buckingham and Slough; the High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire (Colonel C. L. Samuelson); Air Commodore J. F. Titmas; the Deputy Chief Constable (Colonel V. R. Scroggie); and Colonel and Mrs O. Viney.

The enclosure reserved for past and present officers of the Regiment and their friends provided accommodation for about 250, all of which was filled.

The Colonel of the Regiment and Lord Cottesloe, accompanied by Brigadier R. J. Brett, met the Mayor in his parlour. The party then proceeded to the parade where they were received by the General Salute.



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The Mayor, with the Colonel of the Regiment then inspected the parade, and returning to the dais the Mayor made the following speech before handing over the casket containing the Scroll. Before handing it to the Colonel of the Regiment the Scroll was read aloud by the Town Clerk, Mr H. Crookes.

'General Paget, Officers, Warrant Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Men of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry:—

I want to say at once how delighted Aylesbury is to welcome you today in this old Market Square, where so many of the Town's ceremonies and functions have taken place. We have waited a long time, with, I hope, suitable patience, for the opportunity of implementing the resolution which the Council passed so cordially at its meeting in October 1945. Now, at last, the opportunity presents itself, and what I want most particularly to do this afternoon is to leave no doubt whatever in the minds of the members of the Regiment as to the feelings of pride and pleasure which we all have in asking the Regiment to allow Aylesbury to confer upon it the highest honour which the Town can bestow.

As time passes, I suppose it is natural that the difficulties and dangers which we all shared in common during the war years tend to fade in our minds, and quite properly, I suppose, our thoughts are now busy with our civilian and civic duties, but surely this afternoon it will be a good thing, and very fitting and proper, that in this ceremony we should remember again all that those war years meant to us, and all that the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry did for us.

I shall not attempt to recount at any length the history of the Regiment in the presence of so many who must be more competent to speak on that subject than I am, but, as the 43rd Regiment of the Line it was with Wolfe at Quebec in 1741, and since that date there can surely have been few important landmarks in the military history of our country when the Regiment has not played its part — The American War of Independence from 1765 to 1782, the East and West Indies, 1782 to 1799, the Peninsular War from 1808 to 1814, Waterloo, the Indian Mutiny, South Africa and the two World Wars. Surely this is a tremendous record and a glorious tradition, which is also the proud heritage of Buckinghamshire, and therefore of its County Town.

When we in Aylesbury think of the Regiment, we think, too, of course, of the Buckinghamshire Battalion, in which many men from Aylesbury and district have served. In the changes which time brings the battalion has gone, and in its place we have the 645th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. We civilians must try and adjust ourselves to the new position, and whilst we shall, I have no doubt, continue to think with pride of the Bucks Battalion, we will now take into our hearts the 645th.

It is a typical feature of our English way of life that the highest honour a Borough Council can bestow, either on an individual or a regiment, brings with it no material gain or advantage whatever, but it does signify, and this is the thread which runs right through this afternoon's ceremony, and the thought I most desire to leave with you all, the very real pride in which this Town holds the Regiment, the admiration for its glorious past and the part it played in two World Wars and the Town's desire to express that pride and admiration in the highest degree it is possible for a municipality to achieve.

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This is the third ceremony in which you, General Paget, and the Regiment have taken part within the last three or four days, the other two being at Banbury and Oxford. I assure you that the feelings of Buckinghamshire, as expressed by Aylesbury today, are not one whit less cordial and sincere than those which you have so recently met with in the adjoining County of Oxfordshire.

I now call upon the Town Clerk to read the Scroll conferring the Freedom of Entry on the Regiment.

General Paget, in the name of the Aylesbury Borough Council, and speaking for all the citizens of Aylesbury, I ask you, as Colonel of the Regiment, to accept, for the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, the highest honour the Borough can bestow upon the Regiment — the Freedom of Entry into the Borough on all ceremonial occasions, with Band and Bugles playing and Colours flying.

Scroll Conferring the Freedom of Entry

To the Colonel of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry the Officers and Other Ranks.

Greetings

We the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of the Borough of Aylesbury, in the County of Buckingham, appreciating the glorious traditions created by your most distinguished Regiment over many years of loyal and devoted service to King and Country and in recognition of the long association between the County of Buckingham our Borough and the Regiment in which so many of our sons have been proud to serve.

Do by these Presents and in pursuance of a Resolution passed unanimously by the Borough Council on the Eighth day of October One thousand nine hundred and forty-five confer upon you the Freedom of Entry into the Borough on all ceremonial occasions and the privilege honour and distinction of marching through the streets of the Borough with band and bugles playing and colours flying.

In witness whereof we have caused the Corporate Seal of the Borough to be hereunto affixed this Tenth day of April One thousand nine hundred and forty-eight.

CECIL G. COUSINS, Mayor

H. CROOKES, Town Clerk

After the Colonel of the Regiment had replied. Lord Cottesloe addressed the gathering as follows:

“It gives me great pleasure, Mr Mayor, to be here today and to add to your welcome of the Regiment to the Borough a no less hearty welcome on behalf of the County generally. As you will know, the Buckinghamshire Battalions of the Bucks Territorials and their predecessors the Bucks Volunteers have been intimately connected for three-quarters of a century with the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry.

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The Regiment which we honour today is indeed worthy of honour. It has a very long history, going far back into the past. It has the distinction of having been one of the regiments of the Light Division, so famous during the Napoleonic Wars, which was trained at Shorncliffe by Sir John Moore on a new system which made a revolutionary change in the tactics of our Army, and contributed in an important degree to the overthrow of Napoleon. It is a regiment which has fine traditions and a staggering list of battle honours.

The inclusion of Buckinghamshire in the Regimental district with Oxfordshire does not absolve us from the need to keep our distinctive County name for our Territorials. I am glad to see so many past and present members of the Force on parade, and also the Old Comrades and British Legion, and that the cadets are so well represented. It is unfortunate that the southern part of the County has of late years so greatly changed, both by its increase in population and in its dependence on London as its chief centre for all purposes, that it can no longer look on Oxford as its chief military centre or afford the Regiment all the support which could have been desired. Nothing, however, could diminish the high regard in which we of the County hold the Regiment.

Thinking of the old days, and of the old armies which have done so much to keep our country safe, I know very well that the spirit which animates the men of Bucks will always be as patriotic and as determined as that to be found in any other part of the country. Whether it is a John Hampden who calls on us in the name of liberty, or a General Paget who shows us the great Regiment with which we are so intimately connected, Bucks men will always be ready fully to take their part and to do their duty.

The Regiment has the best wishes of all in the County. It will, I am confident, go on in the future as it has in the past, from strength to strength, ever gaining more honour and continuing to be a great bulwark to the liberty of the country."

Three cheers for the Regiment were then called for by the Mayor and were answered with cheers for the Borough by the parade.

Following the National Anthem the parade moved off to form up in Market Street preparatory to marching past in the Market Square, where the salute was taken from the steps of the County Hall. A short march through the streets with the Band playing was then made via Walton Street, Exchange Street, High Street, and back through Market Square to the County Hall.

There was a strong parade of over 300 Old Comrades of the Regiment, the majority of whom were Bucks Battalion men. Several Bucks Battalion officers were in this part of the parade which was commanded by Lieut-Colonel R. D. R. Sale, O.B.E., G.M., T.D.

The Regimental detachment was entertained to tea at the Town Hall, and all other contingents at the Hazell, Watson & Viney Club. The officers of the Regiment and other guests were given tea at the Bell Hotel.

Thus ended three days which will be for ever memorable in the Regiment for the honour conferred by the two Counties whose sons have played so distinguished a part in its history.

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AYLESBURY



THE MAYOR INSPECTING THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE ARMY CADET FORCE