

1952 REGIMENTAL CHRONICLE
1st Bn OXFORDSHIRE & BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY (43rd & 52nd)

SUMMARY OF THE FIRST BATTALION DIARY, 1952

January 1st— New Year's Day passed off without incident.
The Commanding Officer inspected Support Company vehicles.

January 3rd— The companies changed round,
A Company to El Quantara.
B Company to El Firdan.
C Company to Port Fouad.

January 5th — The Second in Command, Major R. R. F. T. Barry. M.B.E., left by air for fourteen days dut in Cyprus.
The G.S.O. 1 HQ. 1 Infantry Division visited the Regiment.

January 6th — The officers entertained El Ballah Garrison in the mess before lunch.

January 7th— 2nd Lieut. J. St. C. Simmons attended a short course on air support at Fayid.
Lieut. R. M. Colvile attached HQ, 1 Infantry Division was admitted to hospital.

January 8th — A board of officers visited the Regiment to investigate the sufficiency of the present ration in Egypt.
The Brigade Commander visited the Companies on detachment, the road blocks manned by the Regiment and the Filtration Plant.
The Regiment was officially congratulated for rescuing three British subjects who were being deported by the Egyptian Police.

January 9th— Captain A. B. Gillespie-Hill was promoted temporary Major with effect from July 1st, 1951.
The following officers were promoted Temporary Captains with effect from July 1st 1951:
Lieutenants J. R. Whalley, M. R. Pennell, J. F. H. P. Johnson, R. M. Colvile

January 10th— Lieut. G. C. Stacey returned from the United Kingdom.
The Regiment played 29 Field Regiment at football: Result — a draw.

January 12th— Lieut. T. D. R. R. Byrne rejoined the Regiment and was attached to S Company.
The warrant officers and Serjeants entertained the officers.

January 16th — B Company less one platoon returned from detachment at El Firdan.

January 18th— One Platoon of B Company returned from the Filtration Plant.
The defence of Omar Camp was handed over to 29 Field Regiment.
A Company prevented a party of thugs from blowing up the railway line. They recovered forty pounds of explosives without casualties.

January 19th— Major G. C. Rush arrived from Cyprus.

January 20th — B Company went on detachment to Moascar to fire their Course.
Captain E. R. R. Hicks returned to Cyprus to Command the Rear Party.

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January 22nd— Lieut.-General F. W. Festing, C.B., D.S.O., O.B.E., G.O.C. Designate visited A Company.

January 28th — WD Train derailed just north of Quantara. A Company engaged in recovery operations.

February 8th—T.E.W.T. on defence in the desert organized by 2 Infantry Brigade.

February 10th— Captain H. J. Newton and 2nd Lieuts. J. E. Lott and S. E. Thistlethwayte joined the Regiment, together with a draft of 10 other ranks.

February 11th — D Company relieved the MMG. Platoon in the desert west of Quantara. Warning order for move to Suez received.

February 13th — Recce party of Commanding Officer, Intelligence Officer and Quartermaster visited Suez. No one impressed with the camp, 1 Buffs however most helpful and had done an enormous amount of work.

February 15th — Recce party 1 Coldstream Guards arrived in Wolseley Camp. Congratulatory letter received by Brigadier R. G. S. Hobbs, D.S.O., O.B.E., for hard work put in by A Company.

Military train blown up just south of El Cap. No casualties.

A Company arrested station master and signalman El Cap and signalman El Quanatra. Lieut. W. S. B. Rawlings escorted these prisoners to HQ B.T.E.

February 16th— Admn. conference HQ, 2 Infantry Brigade reference move to Suez.

Captain D. B. Fox left to Command Rear Party.

Captain M. R. Pennell left for service with 1 K.S.L.I. in Japan.

February 17th — B and D Companies under Majors A. B. Gillespie-Hill and G. C. Rush respectively moved to Suez to take over guard commitments from 1 Buffs.

Advance party 1 Coldstream Guards arrived.

February 18th — The main body of the Regiment moved to Suez.

Captain D. J. Wood sat for the Staff College entrance examination at Moascar.

February 19th — Rear Party under Major (QM) G. J. F. White rejoined the Regiment.

February 20th— Captain E. R. R. Hicks returned from Commanding Rear Party Cyprus.

February 25th — The Commander of 2 Infantry Brigade visited Grovehurst Camp and B and D Companies on detachment.

February 28th — All officers attended a lecture by the G.O.C.-in-C. British Troops in Egypt on the Internal Security Situation.

March 3rd— Start of the Regimental Training Period. B and D Companies returned to camp from detachment.

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March 4th - B, C and D Companies on company training.

March 5th — All officers attended a lecture on Korea by Major Trevor, D.S.O., i Cheshire Regiment.

March 6th — Exercise “Signal Box” — Regimental Signal Exercise.

March 10th— The officers fired the King George Cup —score 554.
The second Serjeants team fired the Royal Irish Cup competition—score 532.

March 11th— Captain D. J. Wood left for England on the *Empire Fowey* to assume appointment of Training Captain at the Depot.

March 12th - Regimental Exercise 'Long Valley'⁵. Desert movement in MT.

March 13th— Exercise “Long Valley”.

March 14th — Exercise “Long Valley”.
The Regiment experienced the first Khamsin.
Visit in the field by Major-General Mathews and the Brigadier.

March 17th— Visit by Lieut.-Colonel W. E. B. Dansie, O.B.E., C.R.A.O.C. 1st Infantry Division.

The Regiment took over guards and duties in the Ataq sector from 1st Bn the Cheshire Regiment. C Company to Cold Storage, A Company to Kilo 99.

March 18th— Visit by the G.O.C. Lieut.-General Sir George Erskine.
Ceremonial Guard found by B Company.
All officers attended lecture on the Canadian army by Major Moore, the Royal Berkshire Regiment.

March 24th — Visit by Major-General F. L. G. Mathews, C.B., D.S.O., G.O.C. 1st Infantry Division. Ceremonial Guard found by S Company.

March 26th— T/Captain R. M. Colville ceased to be attached to HQ, 1 Infantry Division and rejoined C Company as second-in-command.

March 28th — 4 officers and 20 other ranks attended demonstration of Air Support at R.A.F. station Shallufa.

March 31st—Major J. F. Ballard rejoined the Regiment, posted to C Company as Company Commander.

T/Major A. B. Gillespie-Hill relinquished temporary rank of Major.

April 1st— Major A. de V. Gibson left for Cyprus prior to posting to 2 D.L.I.
Captain T. R. M. Paul left for Cyprus on temporary duty.
A draft of 6 other ranks arrived for service with the Regiment.

April 2nd— A draft of 13 other ranks arrived for service with the Regiment.

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April 6th — Captain R. J. N. Bartlett rejoined the Regiment and assumed command of B Company.

April 7th— Lieut. W. S. C. Chevis rejoined after leave in England.
Lieut. G. C. Stacey attended special three day messing course at Gebel Maryam.

April 10th— Inter Company Cross Country Championship was won by A Company or Major Patterson's company, with C or Major Ballard's company second, and HQ or Major Colvile's company third. Individual winner Lieut. A. S. Payne (D Company); second Pte. Bradley (HQ Company).

April 11th — Captain A. V. Brown joined the Regiment and was posted to C Company.

April 12th— The officers of the Regiment attended a T.E.W.T. on street fighting, run by the 1st Bn the Royal Berkshire Regiment.
2nd Lieut. J. St. C. Simmons left on temporary duty to Mauritius to draft conduct.
Captain T. R. M. Paul returned from temporary duty in Cyprus.

April 15th— Lieut. G. C. Stacey went to 2 Infantry Brigade HQ on detachment as Intelligence Officer, to relieve Lieut. W. M. Cracknell.

April 18th — The Regiment officially told of its return to United Kingdom in April '53 or possibly earlier.

April 20th - The New Ante Room designed and built by officers and men of the Regiment opened for the first time.
Lieut. W. M. Cracknell posted back from HQ 2 Infantry Brigade, reassumes Command of the Anti Tank Platoon.

April 22nd—Major R. R. F. T. Barry M.B.E., and Lieut. W. S. B. Rawlings went to Cyprus on temporary duty.

April 30th— 2nd Lieut. C.N. Allinson joined the Regiment together with a draft of 29 other ranks.

May 1st — The Regiment relieved of duties in order to carry out a month's training.
B and D Company established camp on the coast, five miles South of Adabiya.

May 6th— Lieut.-Colonel M. Darell-Brown, D.S.O., admitted to hospital (Lieut.-Colonel Darell-Brown never returned to the Regiment but was eventually flown to England), Major R. R. F. T. Barry, M.B.E., assumed command.

May 8th - Lieuts. W. S. C. Chevis, W. M. Cracknell sat for the promotion examination Lieutenant to Captain.

May 10th— Major G. N. Astley-Cooper rejoined the Regiment and posted to B Company.

May 13th— Captain H. J. Sweeney, M.C., rejoined the Regiment and appointed Adjutant.
Captain A. B. Gillespie-Hill and Captain T. R. M. Paul left on temporary duty to Cyprus.

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May 17th— Adjutant held parade in preparation for Brigade Commander's inspection. A draft of 25 recruits from the Light Infantry Brigade Training Centre arrived. It included 15 regular soldiers.

May 19th—The Regiment took part in exercise "General Post". A Brigade wireless exercise.

May 20th — The Regiment took part in exercise "General Post" which ended at 1230 hrs.

May 21st— Adjutant held parade in preparation for the Brigade Commander's inspection. Captain I. R. C. Greenlees left the Regiment on posting to the 4th Bn Oxf. & Bucks. Lt. Infy (TA) where he will take up the duties of Adjutant in succession to Captain L. Porter, K.O.Y.L.I.

Brigade Commander introduced the new garrison Commander Colonel J. T. Gough, to the Commanding Officer. The Garrison Commander was shown around camp.

May 22nd— The Commanding Officer held parade and inspection in preparation for the Brigade Commander's inspection.

May 23d—The Brigade Commander's Inspection. Commenced 0730 hrs ended 1330 hrs.

May 27th — Exercise "Hot Foot". An exercise with troops in the practice of defence withdrawal, night attack and moving in desert formations across country. The exercise was set by Major P. R. Hayter, M.B.E., M.C., Major R. R. F. T. Barry, M.B.E., was in command. The Regiment left barracks at 1100 hrs and went by MT to area of Gebel Jweibid a large feature on the road to Cairo. A defensive position was taken up and the Regiment dug in. A signal was sent to Lieut.-General Sir John Harding which read 'All ranks 43rd and 52nd offer congratulation on the appointment as next C.I.G.S.'

May 28th— Exercise "Hot Foot" continued. The Regiment withdrew from a defensive position and carried out a very successful night attack across 1500 yards of open country. The navigating was done by Lieut. W. S. C. Chevis, the Intelligence Officer.

May 29th—Exercise "Hot Foot" continued. The Regiment dug in on another defensive position. In the evening the Regiment withdrew 8 miles across country to another position and leaguered for the night.

2nd Lieut. J. S. Ibbotson arrived from Eaton Hall and was posted to A Company.

May 30th— The Regiment moved off at 0400 hrs and carried out movement in close formation across country.

The exercise ended at 0500 hrs and breakfast was cooked in the field before returning to camp.

May 31st —The Regiment took over all the Brigade Guard duties from 1 Cheshire Regiment. This included a guard at the G.O.C.s mess. A Company and a platoon of S Company were sent out on detachment to guard filtration plants and ferry sites respectively. S Company Carrier escorting a vehicle taking a sick man to hospital partially overturned into a large hole in the ground (the cellar of a disused house) causing injuries to Lance-Corporal Knight and Private Evans.

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June 8th— Lieut. Williamson departed for U.K.

June 9th— Major J. C. Rush departed for Cyprus en route to U.K.
Exercise “General Post II”, skeleton wireless exercise.

June 13th — 40 National Service other ranks paraded before the Commanding Officer to say goodbye before proceeding to the U.K. on release. Many of the K.O.Y.L.I. draft which arrived last year were in this party.

June 18th— Waterloo Day. At 0700 hrs the Regimental Buglers sounded massed Reveille followed by 'Light Infantry'. Swimming sports were held during the morning at the Garrison Swimming pool. Prizes were presented by Mrs. Ballard. Afterwards sideshows were patronized by all soldiers where the lucky members won prizes. Owing to a typical Arabic misunderstanding of time the horses ordered by the PRI failed to materialize until just after everyone had left for lunch.

The Serjeants were entertained by the officers in the officers mess before lunch. The men had a special meal of turkey and pork.

At 1600 hrs the officers and Serjeants cricket match took place.

In the evening a grand concert was presented by members of the Regiment in the open air near the MT. lines.

Afterwards the Serjeants entertained the officers in the Serjeants mess.

June 19th— Captain Johnson and Lieut. Briscoe went by air to England to attend a regular commission board.

June 22nd— A party of officers were entertained by the officers of H.M.S. *Cygnets* on board the ship which was lying off Adabya Docks.

June 23rd— B Company relieved A Company on detachment at the Filtration Plants.

June 25th — Major R. A. Colville left Cyprus for U.K. on Python.
Major A. V. Brown assumed Command of HQ, Company.

June 27th — Major-General F. R. G. Mathews, C.B., D.S.O., G.O.C. 1st Infantry Division, Captain M. E. Butler-Bowden, O.B.E., R.N., H.M.S. *Cygnets* and Lieut.-Colonel W. G. Lyon R.A., AA&QMG 1st Infantry Division were entertained to dinner in the officers mess.

June 29th—Major Patterson left for U.K., after spending twelve years continuously with the Regiment. Captain Fox assumed command of A Company.

The Commanding Officer and Major G. N. Astley-Cooper had lunch aboard H.M.S. *Cygnets*.

June 30th — Egyptian thieves robbed officers lines during the night.

Major Barry departed for Cyprus to inspect rear party. Major Astley-Cooper temporarily in command.

National Service and Python draft left for U.K.

Two officers and 10 other ranks boarded H.M.S. *Cygnets* to go up the Canal to Port Said.

July 1st— A draft of 20 other ranks arrived for service with the Regiment.

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July 3rd— Major G. C. Rush left Cyprus to go home by car via Italy and France.

July 10th— Major R. R. F. T. Barry, M.B.E., assumed command of the Regiment. The G.O.C. 1st Infantry Division, Major-General Mathews made a farewell speech to the Regiment. He paid a visit to the Serjeants' and officers' mess.

July 15th—The Brigade telephone battle. The following took part; The Commanding Officer, Adjutant, Signals Officer and Intelligence Officer.

July 17th— Recce party consisting of Lieuts. Chevis, Hinton, Maitland and Thistlethwayte and signallers set off for Sinai.

July 18th — Lieut. Colvile promoted temporary Captain with effect from May 13th.

July 19th— Captain Gillespie-Hill promoted temporary Major. Captain Brown promoted temporary Major. Captain Sweeney, M.C., promoted temporary Major. Lieut. Chevis promoted temporary Captain.

July 23rd— Major White, D.A.Q.M.G., 1 Infantry Division visited the Commanding Officer to discuss future exercises.

General Neguib seized control of the Egyptian Army.

The Regiment had a Company at 30 minutes notice. Regiment at 90 to move.

July 25th — A draft of 20 other ranks arrived for service with the Regiment.

July 26th— King Farouk abdicated.

A draft of 8 other ranks arrived for service with the Regiment.

July 28th — The Regiment prepared to move at one hour's notice. Ammunition packed. R.A.S.C. transport reported.

July 29th— Major G. N. Astley-Cooper recalled from leave.

July 31st— Lecture on the current situation by General Festing, G.O.C., B.T.E.

Lecture on Soviet Army by Major Maxwell.

Commanding Officer and 6 officers entertained to dinner by 1st Bn the Royal Berkshire Regiment.

August 1st— Port Tewfick put in bounds again.

Duties handed over to 1 Royal Berks.

August 5th — Short Signal Exercise set by Brigade to try out new allocation of wireless sets. Major Sweeney, Captain Fox, Captain Chevis, Lieut. Hinton, 2nd Lieut. Maitland and men from the Signal and MT platoons took part.

August 9th— Major Sweeney, Captain Chevis, Lieut. Cracknell and 2nd Lieut. Margetson visited 1 D.L.I. on board the *Empire Trooper* which was at Port Said en route for Korea.

August 15th — Major Fox departed to take over Command of the Rear Party in Cyprus.

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August 18th — Leave to Cyprus started once more.

August 25th — The Regiment went to Bir Odeib on a five-day Regimental Exercise, which included an assault landing from H.M. Frigates *Magpie* and *Loch Dunvegan* against B Company who were enemy. During the exercise we were supplied entirely by air, with rations, water and petrol, and were attacked by jet aircraft.

August 27th— A draft of 8 other ranks arrived for service with the Regiment.

September 1st— Lieut.-Colonel P. G. F. Young, O.B.E., arrived from England to take command of the Regiment.

September 8th— Major R. R. F. T. Barry, M.B.E., left for Cyprus, en route to England on expiration of his overseas tour.

Lieut.-Colonel P. G. F. Young, Major G. N. Astley-Cooper, Major H. J. Sweeney, Captain W. S. C. Chevis, Captain C. A. S. Hinton and a skeleton Regimental Headquarter went out on a four-day divisional exercise 'Preliminary Canter' in the area of Bir Odieb on the Gulf of Suez.

September 10th— Captain C. A. S. Hinton returned to England on 28 days privilege leave.

September 12th— Major Gillespie-Hill departed for England on Python.

September 15th — First day of Regimental Athletics meeting. Individual heats for track events.

September 17th — Major H. J. Sweeney and Captain W. S. C. Chevis attended a two-day Military Law course in Suez Garrison.

September 20th— 2nd Lieuts. T. S. B. Card, A. C. Maitland and M. K. Newton left for England on National Service release and posting to the TA.
A Company returned from the Guard detachment at Ataq Cold Store. B Company took over.

September 21st— 2nd Lieut. S. E. Thistlethwayte departed by air for England, to attend a course at the School of Signals.
Major J. F. Ballard went on leave by air to Kenya.

September 25th— 2nd Lieut. J. P. Margetson left for England on National Service release and posting to the TA.

September 26th— Exercise 'Run Through'. Two-day Regimental signal exercise in which HQ, Company and skeleton rifle companies took part.

October 2nd— Regimental one-day skeleton signal exercise.

October 3rd— The Commanding Officer and Major D. B. Fox went on a reconnaissance for 3 Infantry Brigade Exercise "Four Square".

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October 13th — Captain W. S. C. Chevis went to Cyprus on 10 days temporary duty.

October 20th — 2nd Lieut. K. A. How went to Cyprus to take over duties of o/c Rear Party.

October 25th— Captain W. S. C. Chevis returned from temporary duty in Cyprus.

October 27th — Captain C. A. S. Hinton returned from leave in England.

October 29th—The Regiment packed up camp in preparation for 'Exercise Triangles'. All kits packed and stored, tent walls removed. Apart from a small rear party left to guard the camp all ranks are taking part in the exercise. The total number is approximately 500.

October 30th— The Regiment moved out to take part in army manoeuvres "Ex Triangles". At 0600 hrs all tent walls had been removed and vehicles were being loaded for the exercise when a storm broke out over the camp and it began to rain heavily. This was the first rain since March.

November 8th— After a good night's rest the Regiment returned to Grovehurst Camp Suez.

November 10th— 2nd Lieut. Hanbury-Williams joined the Regiment together with a draft of 37 other ranks.

November 11th— A draft of 4 other ranks arrived for service with the Regiment.

November 15th— Adjutant's Drill Parade with the band of the 1st Bn The Cheshire Regiment in preparation for the visit of the Colonel of the Regiment.

November 17th — Commanding Officer's Drill Parade with band of 1st Cheshire Regiment.

November 18th— A draft of 26 other ranks arrived for service with the Regiment.

November 19th— Brigade Rifle Meeting.

The Colonel of the Regiment arrived at Fayid Airport having flown out with C.-in-C. Transport Command. He was met by the Commanding Officer and came straight to Grovehurst Camp.

2nd Lieuts. W. H. Goodhart and D. G. Lloyd Evans joined the Regiment.

November 20th — The Colonel of the Regiment attended the Brigade Rifle Meeting and lunched with the C.-in-C. General Sir Brian Robertson.

November 21st—Exercise "Gunfire I". Officers training. Lectures by Lieut.-Colonel Hutt commanding 29 Field Regiment, R.A., Major G. Eve commanding 145 Field Battery, R.A., and the Commanding Officer on Artillery Support.

Dinner in the officers' mess attended by G.O.C. 1 Infantry Division and Brigade Commanders 2 and 3 Infantry Brigades. Band of the Royal Berkshire Regiment played during dinner.

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November 22nd— Ceremonial Parade in honour of the Colonel of the Regiment. The Colonel of the Regiment addressed the battalion after the March Past. Captain R. M. Colvile departed for England to attend a Regular Commission Board. Captain W. S. C. Chevis took over command of B Company.

November 23rd— A Memorial Service in honour of the fallen of the Regiment in both World Wars. The Reverend Youens, M.C., S.C.F., took the service and the Colonel of the Regiment read the lesson; the band of the Royal Berkshire Regiment were in attendance.

A reception was held in the officers mess at 1200 hrs. It was attended by a great number of officers of units in the Canal Zone.

A draft of 35 other ranks arrived for service with the Regiment.

November 24th— Exercise “Gunfire II” demonstration by 145 Battery, R.A.

The Colonel of the Regiment attended and then had lunch with G.O.C. 1 Infantry Division, Major-General T. Brodie, D.S.O.

The Colonel of the Regiment addressed all Officers in the officers' mess in the evening; his subject was training for war.

November 25th— Exercise “Gunfire III”; a Battalion exercise with artillery and 3 in. mortars and machine guns firing live ammunition.

The Colonel of the Regiment saw the Regiment move out of barracks and then went to the airfield at Fayid to board a plane for England.

November 26th— Exercise 'Gunfire Ends' ends.

Battalion marched back to Suez across the desert by platoons.

December 1st — A Company went on a month's detachment on IS duties at the Suez Filtration Plants.

B Company went on a week's detachment to train at 'Stop Butts' in the desert.

December 4th— 2nd Lieut. K. L. S. Blockley arrived in the Regiment and posted to B Company.

December 12th — A draft of 10 other ranks arrived for service with the Regiment.

December 15th — The two Regimental Cross Country running teams came second and third in the 2 Infantry Brigade Cross Country Competition.

Major P. R. Hayter left the Regiment on posting to School of Infantry, Warminster.

Major D. B. Fox went to Cyprus on temporary duty.

December 17th — The Commanding Officer and nine Officers attended the annual dinner of the Light Infantry Club (M.E.L.F. Branch) at the Officers Club at Fayid.

December 18th —The Commanding Officer flew home to England on fourteen days leave.

2nd Lieut. J. St. C. Simmons flew home to England to attend an MMG Course at the School of Infantry.

December 20th— A draft of 25 other ranks arrived for service with the Regiment.

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December 22nd— A party of W.O.s, N.C.O.s and privates whose families reside in Cyprus left to spend Christmas with their families. Owing to the corvette in which they were travelling going to the rescue of a ship in distress they did not arrive in Cyprus until December 26th.

December 23rd— A draft of 11 other ranks arrived for service with the Regiment.

December 25th — Christmas Day. An open air Carol Service conducted by the Reverend Rankin at 10 o'clock. Officers invited to the warrant officers' and Serjeants' mess at 1200 o'clock. Officers, warrant officers and Serjeants served the soldiers with Christmas dinner at 1 o'clock.

December 26th — Officers versus warrant officers and Serjeants football match, after which the warrant officers and Serjeants were invited to the officers' mess for drinks at midday.

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FIRST BATTALION LETTER

Dear Editor,

When the last First Battalion letter was written to you we were at El Ballah in the Canal Zone, living under rather primitive conditions. We are now at Suez and the conditions have changed only slightly.

We moved down here in February and took over from another battalion what had been until very recently some Horse Transport Lines. The other battalion had improved the camp slightly and we set to with a will to make something of it. A special platoon called the Construction Platoon was formed with the household pioneers as its nucleus. In this platoon we put all the carpenters, plumbers and bricklayers we could find. This skilful band under the energetic leadership of Jock Paul (D.L.I.) built and improved buildings until we had a canteen, Serjeants mess and officers mess and some of the other amenities necessary to the present-day soldier.

Our camp is about two miles from Suez and about a mile from the oil refineries. It is flanked on one side by the vast Jebel Ataka a large and impressive mass of sand and rock. The prevailing wind fortunately is from the north and so blows towards the refineries. However, on days when there is no wind or when the wind changes direction the air is filled with the nauseous smell that all oil refineries seem to produce. Beyond the refineries can be seen the Bay of Suez shimmering in the sunlight and usually dotted with the nostalgic sight of liners and merchant ships awaiting their turn to pass through the Canal on their way to Europe. Sometimes these ships have on board friends and relatives of men of the Regiment. One cannot board at Suez so in order to greet one's friends one must go to Port Said. We have only been partially successful in seeing our sister Light Infantry Regiments on their way through the Canal. We saw 1 D.L.I., but failed to see 1 K.S.L.I., and 1 Som. L.I.

You have, no doubt, heard of the Khamsin, the hot wind that blows during the spring in the Middle East. We felt its full effects earlier this year when it broke all records for its beastliness and the length of time it continued to blow. When the wind blew the air was full of sand and sand found its way into everything — our clothes, hair, tents and food. Life indeed was miserable then. And when it abated it took days to rid one's self and one's belongings of the sand.

Our time here has been spent in duties and training. Considering the number of duties there are, it is remarkable that we have been able to carry out so much training. In each period of three months we have had duties for two months, and then on the third month have been completely free for training.

When one is doing duties practically the whole battalion is committed on guarding Filtration Plants, Cold Storage Depots, Garrison HQ G.O.C.'s mess, families village and our own camp. These duties are gradually decreasing but they are still heavy.

Training has of course been in desert warfare, a type of warfare new to most of us who did our fighting during the war in North-west Europe, Italy or Burma. In the spring we practised moving across country in transport keeping line and changing formation like a squadron of destroyers. Officers were sent on courses to learn desert navigation by sun, compass and the stars and we gradually learned to find our way about areas where the maps are little more than a sheet of paper covered with grid lines. Our drivers and recovery team performed wonders in keeping vehicles going and 'de-ditching' them when they bogged down in loose sand.

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This year has seen the most complete change over in officers that has been experienced since the war. On page 23 of last year's CHRONICLE is the list of officers serving with the 1st Battalion then. Of these thirty-four officers, only the Quartermaster, the Medical Officer, two captains and five subalterns remain. The changes began in February when Henry Newton joined us and a little later David Wood who had been adjutant for two years went to Regimental Headquarters.

Tony Gibson was the next to go. He and Stephen Tracey went to help form 2 D.L.I. Our numbers were restored by the arrival of Dick Bartlett from G.H.Q., Victor Brown from the War Office and John Ballard from nearby Suez Garrison. Dick Bartlett only stayed with us a short time for he had already applied to retire and after some argument with the War Office this was allowed and he left in June.

In May Mark Darell-Brown went into hospital. He had been suffering for some time with arthritis and eventually this became so serious he could not work. After a painful time in hospital he was flown home in July and has since made a good recovery. We were sorry to see him go and miss his sparkling witticisms. Gerald Astley-Cooper and Tod Sweeney arrived in May, the former from a job as Liaison Officer with the Royal Naval Air Force and the latter from Berlin. They were appointed Officer commanding B Company and Adjutant respectively. There was a sudden depletion in the ranks of our senior officers when Pat Patterson, George Rush and Robert Colvile all left within a week of one another. Pat Patterson had served continuously with the 43rd and the 1st Battalion for twelve years. Tony Gillespie-Hill followed shortly after having delayed his departure until his car was safe from the Customs.

In May the security restrictions were generally relaxed throughout the Canal Zone and after being confined to camp for four months we found ourselves able to partake of such pleasures as bathing at Adabiya or the French Beach and dining at the French Club at Port Tewfik. Leave to Cyprus was also started and those fortunate to have their families there were able to get back to see them.

However, this happy state of affairs did not last long for in July General Neguib seized power in Cairo from the corrupt politicians and there was a period of uncertainty until it could be discovered what Neguib's policy was. So far he has proved to be quite favourably disposed towards us but no one is beguiled by this into thinking that he will remain so if things prove difficult for him. It is usually too much of a temptation for Cairo politicians, having a whipping boy on their doorstep in the shape of the British Army in the Canal Zone, to resist turning attention to us if they want to hide their own shortcomings.

There have been many exercises this year, wireless and skeleton exercises as well as full scale battalion, brigade and divisional ones. We had a good week out in May dealing with an exercise set by Peter Hayter and again in August we had an unusual type of exercise set by Gerald Astley-Cooper in which we landed from the sea, were supplied from the air and attacked by jet aircraft. In addition we had a tame Auster pilot staying with us who borrowed an aeroplane for the exercise and flew us around.

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About this time we marched all one night by battalions as a Brigade. The Brigade Commander (a gunner) kept with us for an hour and then marched with one of the other battalions. He was reported the next morning as sinking exhausted into his chair at Brigade Headquarters ruefully regarding his feet and murmuring against marching at a light infantry pace.

In September Colonel Peter Young came out to command. Colonel Mark Darell-Brown had flown home some time before and Rupert Barry had been holding the fort. He handed over to the new Commanding Officer and went to Cyprus where he picked up his family and eventually departed for England.

Under the new regime our training continued at an intensified rate. Many were the headquarters and wireless exercises that we had until we reached the culminating exercise of all – “Exercise Triangles”. This was a most entertaining exercise in which the conditions of war were practised as well as possible in peace time. An account of this is given elsewhere so I shall not reiterate except to say that we all returned with our tails high feeling that we had maintained the Regiment's good name.

And so we came to what was the final major event of the year— the visit of the Colonel of the Regiment. He stayed with us for one delightful week during which time we had a ceremonial parade, a commemoration church service and an exercise with artillery, to say nothing of a cocktail party and a dinner party. We enjoyed it all and the Colonel of the Regiment appeared to as well. When the time came for him to go we felt quite sad as we saluted him standing by the crossroads on our way out to yet another exercise.

So we came to the end of the year and to the beginning of 1953. This will be a memorable year for us for we go to England and then to Germany. There is the prospect too of great events; the presentation of new Colours and perhaps some duty on Coronation Day.