

"D" SQUADRON

QUEEN'S OWN OXFORDSHIRE HUSSARS

NEWSLETTER

From: Maurice French

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Dear Yeoman,

With this 34th Newsletter I am very pleased to send you an invitation to the 58th Reunion to be held on Friday 15th June 1984. Once again it will be held at Villiers Park, School Lane, Middleton Stoney.

In case you should mislay your letter I remind you that you should reply by telephone or letter to Derek Marsh before Saturday 2nd June.

Needless to say, it is hoped a gathering of over twenty persons will be achieved. If you have transport problems don't be afraid to mention these to Derek and he and the staff at Villiers Park will see what they can do for you.

Unfortunately you will see that three of those who are listed in our obituary are those who came to our Reunion last year, so it is hoped that one or two who could not be present in 1983 might make it in 1984 to keep the numbers up.

Those present in 1983 were:

<u>'D' Squadron</u>	<u>'A' Squadron</u>	<u>'C' Squadron</u>	<u>Wives</u>
P. Batchelor	J. Alden	T. N. A'Bear	Mrs. Alden
T. E. Brown	W. A. Annetts	C. W. Clarke	Mrs. Foster
G. Huggins	B. Fitchett	K. M. Castle	Mrs. Johnson
G. W. Stone	A. B. Foster		Mrs. Tompkins
H. Timms	W. R. Hanson		Mrs. Willoughby
W. Tompkins	F. Johnson		
H. P. Ward	H. Miles		
	F. Morris		
	E. Organ		
	A. Parker		
	N. Willoughby		

You will see that is twenty-one Yeomen, only one less than the year 1982, and five wives, two more than in 1982, resulting in twenty-seven Yeomen and wives being present along with the drivers and companions. Considering that at the time we were writing to only forty old comrades and two of those were abroad, that is a pretty good muster: just over 50% of the Regiment still known to us. Well done all those who can and do make the effort. In addition to those who come we also hear from some of the others which is most pleasing.

At the Reunion we had five guests: The Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, Sir Ashley Ponsonby; Mr. Robin Fleming, the son of the late Major Philip; Mr. Adam Fleming, the grandson of the late Major Valentine; John Owen of The Oxford Mail & Times and Fred Lee who for many years helped me and Major Villiers with the Reunions.

Sir Ashley told us of his memories of Arthur Villiers and even stretched back to a meeting with Arthur's mother, The Dowager Lady Jersey, who told him of her conversations with those who fought in The Battle of Waterloo.

Percy Batchelor took the chair and made the customary toasts - The Queen, The Regiment and to the memory of the late Major Villiers. In the sidelines Albert Foster (who has sadly died since the day) gave Robin and Adam Fleming brandy goblets, made from bottles and hand engraved by his nephew.

The usual chat with each other, the guests, with sons, daughters, friends who drove the cars, the Villiers Park staff and those two stalwart Red Cross ladies, Miss D. A. Mountain and Mrs W. McFadyan, who are in regular attendance each year, made it another memorable day - one that I know a lot of you look forward to with much enthusiasm during the year.

We were delighted to see Harry Miles and Mrs. F. Johnson present for the first time and hope they will come again this year. Albert Parker came up trumps and came a second time after his 1982 debut.

The Reunion was very well and interestingly written up by John Owen in The Oxford Times.

Those who were unable to attend and who sent us best wishes for the day were Lt. H. Evetts, Sidney Bennett, W. A. Butler, A. Cordell, W. Dunwoody, P. Hughes, S. Thornton and L. Willis.

It was really good to get news from Dr. Dunwoody after no news for a couple of years. Sidney Bennett passed his old burnisher on to us and it will be given to the Green Jackets Museum along with a few items sent to us by Miss Beckingham after her father's death. From South Africa Frances Beckingham writes:

"I found the Newsletter very interesting, as in 1960, Dad, Mum and I motored from Dunkirk all round about and to Poperinghe where dad tried to locate the farm where he was billeted. He spoke to an Englishman there who had returned after the Great War and married a French girl. I think they pinned the farm down.

We spent two nights at Ypres and how well I remember dad standing each evening at the Menen Gate to salute the fallen at the sounding of the Last Post. I will remember that for many a year. He was very interested in the cemeteries of the 1914-18 War and also 1939-45 where our South Africans fell. We visited a countless number of cemeteries throughout Europe.

If I remember correctly, dad may have met you in 1960, 1962 or 1965 when we visited Britain. (This of course was so - Maurice)

One of dad's last requests was that I should contact you to ask whether you would be interested in having either or both of the following books:-

1. The Story of the Oxfordshire Yeomanry from 1794-1914
2. The Oxfordshire Hussars in the Great War by Keith Falconer

My late father was one of the contributors to the message to the late Sir George Schuster on his 100th birthday - I wonder if there were any other "old boys" from South Africa? It may interest you to know that the late Major Worsley and his wife died here and are buried in our local cemetery.

Amongst dad's effects are two pocket badges, also a photograph of him in uniform taken about 1917. Do you have a museum? Would you like anything I may find? He was in Ireland at the time of the riots too. Any survivors of that still alive? He was on the Curragh."

Soon after last year's Reunion we heard that L. Willis was very poorly in Witney Hospital and I'm grateful to Albert Foster for going along to see him.

On behalf of Lt. Evetts, now the last serving officer on our records, his son Jonathan writes from California.

"We moved down here a year ago, and bought a small house, so we can be near Harold who is, as you know, in a Nursing home in Palo Alto. I told dad that he is probably the last surviving yeomanry officer who went to France in World War One and it perked him up a lot.

Considering that he will be ninety on April 1st, 1984, Dad does very well and in many ways is as sharp as ever. He retains his wonderful manners let me say in closing, how nice it is that the Regiment still shows an interest in Harold after sixty-five years."

It hasn't been possible for Derek and his staff to make many visits to Yeomen during the year but nevertheless Jan Dean has been to see Sidney Bennett and Ted Organ, Janet Shirt has entertained Frank Morris to lunch and Derek went along to see Reg Lewis in Bodicote. Reg is probably our last serving First World War Prisoner of War and he showed Derek the message in George V's handwriting that was sent to all those who were released.

It read:

"The Queen joins me in welcoming you on your release from the miseries and hardships which you have endured with so much patience and courage.

During these many months of trial, the early rescue of our gallant officers and men from the cruelties of their captivity has been uppermost in our thoughts.

We are thankful that this longed for day has arrived and that back in the old country you will be able once more to enjoy the happiness of a home and to see good days among those who anxiously look for your return."

George. R.I.

Some years back we recorded that a grandchild of a Yeoman, namely Delphine Barney, Jack Beasley's grand-daughter, had attended one of the educational reading parties held at Villiers Park. We are delighted to tell you that it has happened again. This time it is Andrew Tulloch, Frank Morris's grandson. He is hoping to gain a place at university and consequently attended an Economics Reading Party designed to give some impetus towards his objective.

I dislike dwelling too much on the obituary since to record the passing of our old soldier friends is not a pleasant task, but I must quote the entry in The London Gazette about T. N. A'Bear:

"No. 285169, Private T. N. A'Bear, M.M., awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. Conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty when at a listening post in advance of our line. During a fierce enemy attack he came under heavy shell fire, but in spite of being isolated he remained unmoved, bombing the advancing enemy and causing them to retire. His splendid determination and courage contributed largely to the failure of the enemy's assault."

During the year we have heard from a number of widows, namely Mrs. Elsie Ayres, Mrs. Rose Barnes, Mrs. C. Batts, Mrs. Patricia Carpenter, Mrs. Elizabeth Crawte, Mrs. Ethel Hackling, Mrs. F. A. Haynes, Mrs. Gladys Hibberd, Mrs. Elsie Muller, Mrs. Ethel Noon and Mrs. Vera Spatcher.

Mrs Hackling informs us that she is a cousin to the local horse trainer, Derek Ancil, who still farms in Middleton Stoney and whose father Harry was one of our number. Gladys Hibberd once worked for The Mount Hotel, Banbury, in the days when the hotel did all the catering for the Reunions so has been on both sides of the counter so to speak in the days when she was eligible to come to the Reunions. Mrs. Noon sent a copy of The Times - War Graves Number, dated November 10th, 1928 which will be kept at Villiers Park. Mrs Muller's son, whom you may remember from last year's Newsletter was awarded an M.B.E. for his part in the Falklands War in 1982, kindly dropped us a line saying:

"Mum sent me a copy of the last 'D' Squadron Newsletter; it was very kind of you to include my little story and mum of course was absolutely thrilled.

It's like all these things unfortunately, they train you for years to do your job and then when you are actually called to do it they think you need some kind of recognition. I had a great team around me, even the young men who had punched their way around Portsmouth during the last few years came up trumps when the chips were down. I know dad would have loved to have been there and no doubt yourself.

Well many thanks again, mum often speaks of you. The help you have given has been really appreciated and helps her to remember that dad has not been forgotten by his chums."

You will remember that a horse brass belonging to Captain Goldie was passed around the tables at the last Reunion. It was sent along by Mrs. Enid Turney, the mother of Paul of P. A. Turney.

the agricultural contractor in Middleton Stoney. Captain Goldie had given it to her for the help she gave him whilst he lived opposite her. At Mrs. Turney's request, this too was presented to the Green Jackets Museum.

You will be pleased to know that last summer Charles Clarke was a guest of The Trustees of Rhodes House at a Garden Party at which the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh were also present. He was delighted to be remembered following his long service at New College, Oxford.

Derek tells me that Villiers Park recently held a course for the study of Modern Art and one of the places visited was Sandham Memorial Chapel at Burghclere just south of Newbury. It contains nineteen wall paintings by Sir Stanley Spencer, R.A., C.B.E. They are all of the artist's experiences in the First World War in Macedonia. To give you an idea of the content of each, they are titled:

Convoy arriving with wounded	Ablutions
Kit inspection	The dugout
Scrubbing the floor	Moving kitbags
Sorting the laundry	Tea urns
Camp at Karasuli	Reveille
Filling waterbottles	Map reading
Firebelt	Frost bite
Tea in the hospital ward	Bedmaking
Washing lockers	Riverbed at Todorovo
The Resurrection of the Soldiers	

I'm told they are fine paintings and it seems the Chapel is well worth a visit by those interested in World War One, especially any of our number who are still fit enough to make the journey.

I was interested to discover that I was being nursed in my Nursing Home in Banbury by Miss Payne, a grand-daughter of a Yeoman, Reg Payne. I wonder if any of you remember him? He was reported missing in battle 22nd March 1918.

My time at The Gables in Banbury is quite quiet, but comfortable and Joan, my daughter, has been regularly reading several books to me, amongst them, A. J. P. Taylor's "History of the Great War", "The Battle of the Somme" and "Verdun - 1916".

She reads the books until there are any references to any Yeomanry involvement, historically or from a general knowledge point of view, and then refers to Keith-Falconer's book.

Unfortunately I won't be able to be at this year's Reunion, but I know Villiers Park will do all it can to make the day go smoothly. I wish you all a very happy day.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Maurice French

See over for obituary