

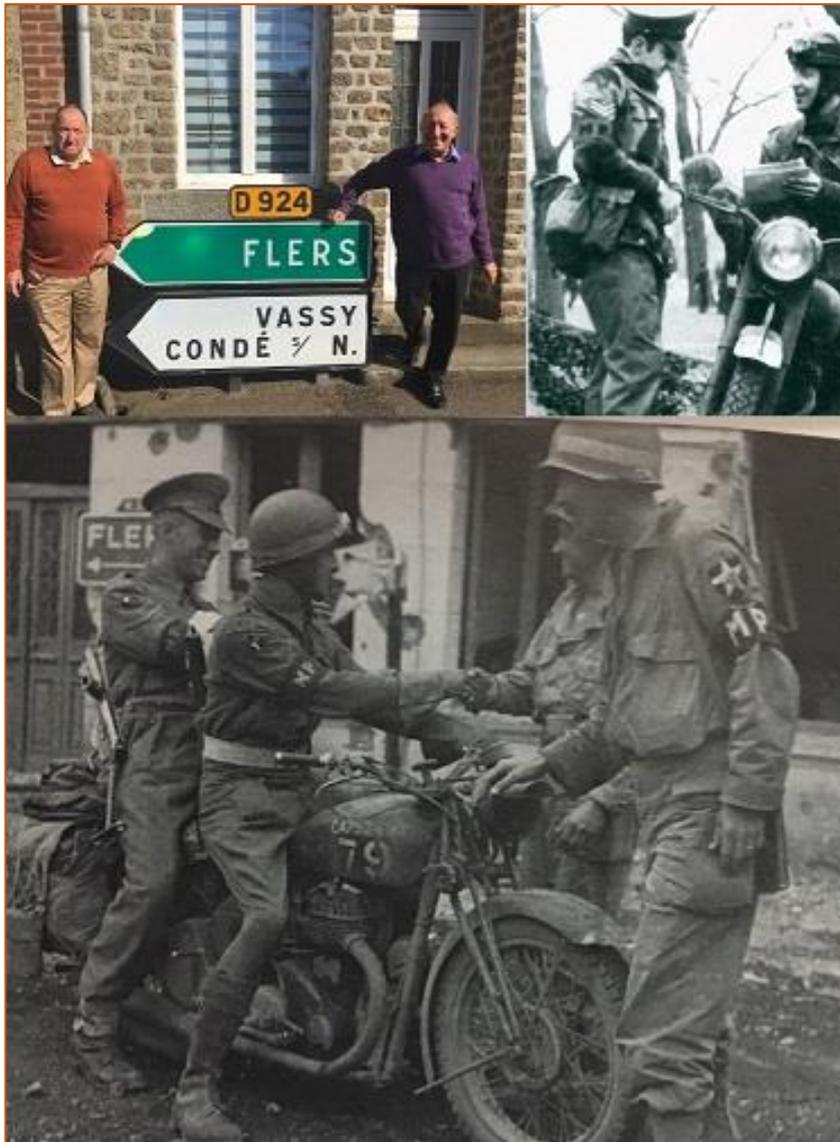


ROYAL MILITARY POLICE  
 OLD COMRADES LINK UP  
 NEWSLETTER #131 MAY 2018



**YOUR CORRESPONDENCE**

Following an extended holiday Stewart Leach made the following comment, 'In the latest newsletter you make mention of the display within the Wellington (NZ) Museum in commemoration of the Gallipoli Campaign. I can only add to Jim McKinley's comments in that on our recent trip to New Zealand I had the good fortune to be able to visit the museum and the display, absolutely brilliant, the models were incredible even down to the flies on the open can of bully beef and the tears on the cheeks of the military nurse.'



Derek Mead contacted me from his home in France and said, 'Not sure if you would be interested in the attached photo that my son put together?'

The bottom photo was taken in August 1944 in Tinchebray, Normandy which is about 8 miles from where I live. The top left is of myself and Mike Beale, at the same place, taken yesterday evening, 17<sup>th</sup> May, and the top right is of Mike and myself but this one was taken in June 1971.'

-ooOoo-

Dan Cowley made further comment on the type of Battle Dress worn in Berlin. 'What an interesting photograph of 247 taken in June 1959; the Canadian Battle Dress and the weights and elastics in the trouser. Now this was a smart uniform, much to the disapproval of some of the RSMs of that time; but for us who could and did get away with it happy days' Dan later added, 'For the record; in those days it was reported that the Canadian

BD was the standard Dress for 247 then, as, the British BD was withdrawn and the Canadian issued.'

-ooOoo-

Like most people I do like a surprise and I was not disappointed on the 18<sup>th</sup> May. This date had been booked for some time and as far as I was aware Joy and I were going to meet up with Mike



Parry for a meal. Much to my delight there were a few more than Mike and his wife Betty. Also present were Derek and Eve Coleman, George and Janet MacLeod, Maurice and Sue Nicholls, Roger and Pat Golden and Frank and Jean Norman. All the men served in the Corps during more troubled times in Cyprus or Egypt or in some cases both theatres. I was made aware that Roger Golden and George MacLeod served in Suez together and it was not until this particular Friday evening that they once again met up having last seen each other Christmas 1954. Suffice to say both Joy and I had a

most enjoyable and delightful evening and even the Royal Wedding on the following day did not overshadow our evening with some truly great guys and their wives.

-ooOoo-

Andrew Banks, who is becoming a regular contributor to the newsletter, has come up trumps again.

### **Curragh – the war’s most bizarre POW camp**

Germans and Brits shared captivity at K-Lines in Ireland.

During World War II, a Canadian bomber flying from a base in Scotland crashed in what the crew thought was the vicinity of their airfield. Spotting a pub, they entered to celebrate their survival with a quick drink but were stunned to see a group of soldiers wearing Nazi uniforms and singing in German. Even more confusingly, the Germans responded to their entry by shouting at them to “go to their own bar.” The crew was soon given an explanation: after getting lost they crashed in the Republic of Ireland, and now they were captured, just like the Jerries.



*Photograph on the left shows German prisoners in Ireland having a drink at a local pub*

Having negligible military power, Ireland was a neutral nation during the war; Prime Minister Éamon de Valera went to great lengths to maintain that neutrality. As part of this policy, he made a deal with both the British and German governments: combatants of either country could be detained if found in Ireland and interned there for the duration of the war. Technically, the men were

not prisoners of war but “guests of the State,” with an obligation on the state to prevent them from returning to the war. A 19th century military camp named Curragh Camp or “K-Lines” was designated to hold “guests” of both nationalities – along with a much higher number of Irish citizens who were imprisoned because they were considered a threat to the country’s neutrality, such as IRA men and pro-Nazi activists.

At first, authorities looked the other way when British aircraft crashed or emergency landed in Ireland, allowing the crews to make their way home. The appearance of a German aircrew in 1940, however, forced them to start taking their job seriously. Lieutenant Kurt Mollenhauer’s Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condor aircraft was taking meteorological readings off the Irish coast when they got lost in the mist and hit a mountain, with two crewmen suffering injuries.

They were captured and taken to Curragh. They experienced some harsh treatment first but the Department of External Affairs quickly requested the army to improve their living conditions. With some Germans in actual custody, it was now also necessary to detain British pilots who landed in Ireland to maintain neutrality and the two sides had to be given the same treatment – preferably a lenient one to avoid angering Britain.

*The photograph on the right shows the exterior view of K-Lines. Being neutral, Ireland had no night time blackouts and spotlights made it much harder to escape at night.*



Between 1940 and 1943, some 40 British and 200 German military personnel were taken to K-Lines, mainly air crews and men from shipwrecked U-boats. In appearance, the camp was a regular POW camp with guard towers, barbed wire and huts built on short stilts to prevent tunnelling to freedom, though the fence separating the British and German sides was a mere four feet tall. Unlike in most camps, however, the guards had blank rounds in their rifles and the prisoners were allowed to run their own bars with duty-free alcohol.



The British bar was run on an honour system, with everyone pouring for themselves and recording their consumption in a book. Prisoners were also allowed to borrow bicycles and leave the camp, provided they signed a parole paper at the guardhouse, giving their word of honour not to escape and to return in time. Pub visits, with separate bars for groups of different nationalities, evening dances with the locals, fishing and golfing trips and fox hunts were the norm, with one English officer even having his horse transported there from home and others having their families join them in Ireland for the duration of the war. Some prisoners ended up marrying local girls and one German prisoner, Georg Fleischmann, stayed and became an important figure in Irish film industry.

*Former German soldier Kurt Kyck with his Irish wife. Kyck spent most of his post-war life in Ireland.*

While both sides enjoyed the chance to sit out the war in reasonable comfort and without dishonourable behaviour such as desertion, the Germans were generally more uptight about their situation. Despite being given some money to buy themselves civilian clothes for trips to nearby towns, the preferred to stay in uniform inside the camp, planted gardens, made tennis courts, held exercise classes. On one occasion, they even set up a court to convict a comrade for treason, though the defendant couldn't be executed, as the Irish refused to furnish the Germans with a rifle and a single bullet.. Sometimes, German prisoners sang Nazi songs just to annoy their British co-internees. The two nations held boxing and soccer matches, with a historical record noting a German victory of 8-2 at one.



*Some of the camp's German inhabitants*

Escape attempts were rare. The Germans had no easy way of reaching continental Europe and the British had their own special problem, best demonstrated through the story of Roland "Bud" Wolfe, seen on the left. An American citizen, Wolfe signed up with the RAF before the U.S. entered the war, getting stripped of his American citizenship as a consequence. After flying cover for a ship convoy off Ireland, his Spitfire's engine overheated and he had to land in the Republic of Ireland, where he was taken to the Curragh. Unwilling to sit out the war, he made his move two weeks after his capture, in December 1941. One day he walked out of the camp, deliberately "forgetting" his gloves. He quickly went back for them and left again without signing a new parole paper, so he now considered his escape to be a legitimate one. He had lunch at a nearby hotel, left without paying and made his way to nearby Dublin, where he boarded the first train to Belfast in Northern Ireland. To his surprise, his superiors were far from pleased when he reported at his base and he was quickly sent back across the border to the internment camp.



The reason was that Ireland's neutrality was important not only to the Irish but to Great Britain as well. Though Churchill considered Ireland's refusal to fight a betrayal, he understood that a pro-Nazi Ireland would have allowed the *Kriegsmarine* to use its Atlantic ports and wreak havoc on vital convoys from America. In order to guarantee Ireland's neutrality, however, the British also had to play fair and prevent K-Line internees from jeopardizing the diplomatic status quo by escaping whenever they pleased. As a result, attempts were sparse: Wolfe tried to escape again only to be captured this time around as well, finally settling into the relaxed life of the camp. There was an aborted tunnelling attempt and a successful mass rush on the gate, which the Irish decided was a "legal" escape and the men who made it back to British territory were not returned.

*The photograph below shows British and German prisoners at the camp.*



In 1943 it became clear that the Allies were slowly winning, British airmen were moved to a separate camp and secretly freed, while 20 Germans were allowed to rent residences in Dublin and attend the local colleges. All remaining German prisoners were repatriated after the war, ending the history of what might well have been history's

strangest, and possibly most comfortable, POW camp.

The story of the British and German prisoners living together in Ireland, hushed up during and after the war, only came to light in the 1980s, when English novelist John Clive heard the story from a taxi driver who had served as a guard at Curragh, and decided to research the matter for a novel.

## 131 (L of C) PROVOST COMPANY CMP



Not a lot to be gathered on this Provost Company but I do know that it existed in Singapore c1945 when the following photographs were taken.

All I know is that the photograph above is of Brigadier Leeson with a section of the Company and the other two are of mobile patrols taken in Singapore



-ooOoo-

What is a Squaddie?

Between the security of childhood  
And the senility of old age  
Is found that fascinating group of  
Humanity called squaddies.

A squaddie can be found anywhere,  
In love, in bars, in trouble and always in debt.

Girls love them  
Towns tolerate them  
Hotels hide them  
And governments support them

A squaddie is:  
Laziness with a pack of cards,  
Bravery with a tattoo,  
Ruggedness in a uniform

And defender of the world  
With a copy of Playboy

He has the brains of a bear,  
The energy of a sea turtle,  
The slyness of a fox,  
The stories of a sea Captain,  
The sincerity of a liar.  
The aspirations of Casanova  
And a desire for people to be free.

His interests are: girls,  
Females, Women  
And any other members of the opposite sex.  
He likes: beer,  
Booze, plonk and ale,  
Leave Passes  
And an "excused all duties chit"

He spends his money on:  
Girls, beer, cards  
And any that he has left he likes to spend foolishly.

No one else could cram into one pocket:  
Food for 24 hours,  
A packet of crushed cigarettes,  
A box of matches, a picture of his girl,  
Receipts for lost equipment,  
SA deck of cards and an old leave pass.

THAT IS A SQUADDIE

*Ed: Before any of you think I am being somewhat politically incorrect may I point out that the above was written in, or about the time of the National Serviceman or early sixties. That how it was then and they all did a great job when called upon.*

## **NOTICES AND INFORMATION**

### REMEMBRANCE ACTIVITIES IN NORTH CYPRUS 2018

The following information was received from The Chair, Royal British Legion, Kyrenia.

Dear Veterans and families, please find below details of this year's Remembrancetide activities in North Cyprus. The RBL Kyrenia Branch committee and members very much hope that you can join us once again with this year being our 10<sup>th</sup> annual service at the old British cemetery:

POPPY WALK – We have 2 walks planned for 2018, one from Aligadi beach in the east from 11am on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> October then one in Lapta a week later on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> October commencing at 1pm. This event is a good money earner for the Poppy Appeal and you are more than welcome to attend both walks. There will not be a poppy ball in 2018.

RBL HELP DESK – This will be manned by me and Adele plus our Treasurer between 11.30am – 1pm on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November in the main foyer of the Pia Bella hotel in Kyrenia. You can purchase your tickets for any of the functions outlined in this letter including the coach which we will run as usual from the Pia Bella hotel to the church service, on to the lunch and then back to the hotel on Remembrance Sunday.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY SERVICE – The annual Remembrance Sunday service will take place on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> November commencing at 12.30pm and will follow the tried and tested format of previous years. If you want to ensure that you have a reserved seat then again please contact our

Chairman at the link above and likewise if you wish to lay a regimental wreath during the service. The coach will pick you up at the Pia Bella hotel at 12 noon in order to get you to the cemetery in time for the wreath layers brief at 12.15pm.

**REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY LUNCH** – This will take place at the Ship Inn in Karaođlanođlu from 2pm immediately following the Remembrance Sunday service. There are only 175 places available so please book early. To book simply email the Chairman at the above address and you can collect and pay for your tickets at the help desk. The ticket price for this year is not yet confirmed but will be around 50tl.

**WAYNE'S KEEP VISIT** – This year's Wayne's keep visit will take place on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> November with a 50 seater coach departing from the Pia Bella hotel at 9.30am and returning from Nicosia at approximately 1pm. The cost per seat is likely to be around 10 Euros. Please book and also send your passport details as soon as possible to my email above in order to arrange the necessary clearance with the UN in plenty of time. We are attempting to gain access to Wayne's Keep directly through the TRNC military gate, however this is proving a rather tortuous process with the UN at themoment, but I will keep you updated as it would save a lot of time and energy if it were possible, plus a lot cheaper.

For further information contact Major (Retd) Brian Thomas BEM on chair@rbkkyrenia.com

### CAN YOU HELP

Request from Clare, PA to Regimental Secretary. 'I have had someone on the phone looking for former Second-Liuetenant RR Lockhart in connection with a reunion. The last address I have for him is from 1969 so I'm guessing he may have moved since then. Back in 1969 he was based Nr Salisbury, Wiltshire, wondering if you could try and find anything? Replies to me please.

I receive many requests for help from various sources and they come in many forms. This request comes from Paula who originates from Famagusta, Cyprus. She said that during the troubled times c1957 she met a Military Policeman and was wondering if he could still be alive. She remembers little about him other than his name was Derrick, or something like that, and in her eyes was a bit of a hero. I know this is a long shot but if you can help let me know.

### DEATHS

#### **FINLAY**



The following message was received from Mrs Shelagh Finlay. "Former 24344893 SSgt James Michael Finlay (Mike) passed away peacefully at his home in Bridlington on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018. He enlisted in Liverpool on the 28<sup>th</sup> May 1974 and served as a Royal Military Policeman in Great Britain, Northern Ireland, Germany, Cyprus and Canada. His final tour was in Catterick as the CQMS where he finished his 22 years as an exemplary soldier. He held the GSM with Clasp, LSGC and United Nations medals. Those who knew Mike will remember his dry sense of humour and loyalty. He was a member of the Bridlington Branch RBL, Hull & East Riding RMPA Branch and served as Parade Marshall for events in Bridlington for many years. He was buried at The Priory Church in Bridlington on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2018 with full honours and the funeral was

attended by 86 mourners."

#### **GARSTANG**

Gathered from Facebook entry. Steve Garstang died as a result of a traffic accident on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2018. At the time of writing I do not have any further information but I do recall Steve from my days in Bulford and the entry reminded me that he turned up from the Training Centre complete with a teddy bear. Nice guy.



## GRANT



Former 23871431 (Rank unconfirmed) William Grant. Bill, born in 1946, was in Squad R83 following transfer from Queens Own Highlanders. He served Munster prior to returning to the UK in 1967 with 6 Infantry Brigade to Barnard Castle. It is believed he served in Northern Ireland in the early 70's. The photograph on the left was taken in Munster.

## HAWKESFORD

Former Warrant Officer Class 1 Dennis Hawkesford 13<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> Hussars, passed away at the beginning of the month. Dennis was attached to 247 (Berlin) Provost Company RMP as a Russian interpreter. Some of you would have known him.

## LOCK

I received the following message from Andrew Banks. 'It is with regret that I have to inform you of the recent passing of former Lance-Corporal Ron Lock in hospital in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. He died yesterday (26<sup>th</sup> May). I think he was in his early 80s. Ron Lock was a highly respected author of books and articles relating to the history and warfare of southern Africa. His most recent book, "*The Anglo-Zulu War- Isandhlwana*" has been praised for its refreshing and original explanation of that often examined British military disaster during the 1879 conflict.

Ron joined the Royal Military Police circa 1951. Posted to the Mounted Troop, his name appears on the 1950s-era RMP Modern Pentathlon Trophy that sits in the Officers' Mess in Southwick Park. He went on to join the Kenyan Police and helped in the fight against the Mau Mau (in a mounted role) in the mid/late-1950s. He later moved to South Africa and became a very successful businessman. Over the past 30 years he'd been a highly respected author and battlefield guide in Zululand. Having led a varied and interesting life, he was never prouder to state that he had served in the British Army and especially the RMP. I'd personally known him for over 20 years; we first met as I journeyed about the Zululand battlefields whilst on leave from RMPTS. An absolute gentleman, he and his wife Brenda were always the perfect hosts.'

## LOWE

Former 23802772 Lance-Corporal Anthony Phillip Lowe passed away on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2018. Tony was called up for National Service in 1959 and after a short time in the REME transferred to the Corps and served in Hong Kong between 1960 and 1963. His funeral was held on Friday the 18th May 2018 at Hutcliffe Wood Crematorium.

## REID

Former 24075658 Warrant Officer Class 2 Ian Reid, died at the age of 70 in December 2017 following a long illness. Ian enlisted into RMP in 1967 and having trained with Squad R64, served in RMP for 22 years with 200 (Singapore) Pro Coy, 20 Armd Bde Pro Unit RMP, 177 Pro Coy RMP, 247 Pro Coy RMP, SIB RMP BAOR at Dusseldorf, SIB RMP UK at York and Preston, two tours as the WOIC Belize Det SIB, 178 Pro Coy (Investigations) RMP and finally with SIB RMP in Edinburgh. Ian ended his Colour Service in 1988 and commenced a career in the security sector retiring as the National Director of Security for a large British company. Ian was a member of the RMPA SIB Branch from its inception in 2006. Ian's funeral was held on the 29<sup>th</sup> January in Stoke on Trent, attended by family, friends and old comrades from RMP. Ian is survived by his wife Kathy and daughter Claire.

Compiled by Bob Eggelton.

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