

1954 REGIMENTAL CHRONICLE
1st Bn OXFORDSHIRE & BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY
SUMMARY OF THE FIRST BATTALION DIARY 1954

January 1st—2nd Lieut. J. Finny attended Platoon Weapons Course at Hythe.

January 5th — Capt. R. R. W. Workman assumed the appointment of Adjutant vice Capt. P. J. Durant.

January 10th — Major F. H. G. Higgins rejoined 1st Battalion as Second in Command vice Major G. Astley-Cooper.

January 12th — Osnabruck Garrison cross country race. Won by 3 Dragoon Guards with 102 pts., Regimental “A” team 2nd with 108 pts. Regimental “B” team was 4th with 234 pts. Private Redrup (HQ) was 1st home, Lieut. A. S. Payne was 4th.

January 13th — A draft of thirty-three other ranks joined from RHQ, Oxford.

January 20th — Lieut. E. W. Leask rejoined 1st Battalion and appointed A/M.T.O.

January 29th — 61 Lorried Infantry Brigade T.E.W.T. attended by Majors F. H. G. Higgins, J. F. Ballard, D. R. L. Bright, J. S. Southey, A. V. Brown, J. M. A. Tillett and H. G. Newton.

January 30th — 2nd Lieut. J. J. Grafftey-Smith joined 1st Battalion and was posted to A Company.

February 4th — Brigade Commander, 61 Lorried Infantry Brigade, Brigadier C. L. Richardson, C.B.E., D.S.O., visited the Battalion.

February 12th — Capt. C. A. S. Hinton posted to HQ, 61 Lorried Infantry Brigade, as Intelligence Officer.

February 19th — 61 Lorried Infantry Brigade T.E.W.T. attended by Commanding Officer and Majors F. H. G. Higgins, D. R. L. Bright, V. Brown, P. K. Everett, J. S. Southey and J. M. A. Tillett.

Capt. I. R. C. Greenlees posted to HQ, 6 Armoured Division.

February 20th — Inter-company drill competition won by B Company, C Company 2nd, A Company 3rd, S Company 4th and HQ Company 5th.

February 22nd—Mr. M. Gannon, military correspondent of the *Evening News*, visited the Battalion and talked with a number of all ranks.

February 23rd— Brigade Signals Exercise “Gone Away III”

February 26th — 2nd Lieut. R. A. S. Melluish joined the Battalion with forty-five other ranks from RHQ Oxford.

February 28th — Battalion skill-at-arms competition won by B Company, 2nd C Company, 3rd A Company.

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March 1st — Lieut. Tintum, Burma Army, attached for fourteen days.
Lieut. J. D. F. Mostyn rejoined the Battalion and appointed Intelligence Officer vice Lieut. W. M. Cracknell.

March 3rd — Cross country friendly match. Regiment 1st, Osnabruck Garrison 2nd and 27 Field Engineer Regiment 3rd. Private Redrup (HQ) was 1st home. The Regiment gained the first eight places.

March 4th — Capt. P. W. Mitchell attended course at the Joint School of Chemical Warfare.

March 9th — Guard of Honour provided by S Company, under command of Capt. E. R. R. Hicks, officer for the Colour Lieut. P. J. Lott, for General Carpentier, C.-in-C. Allied Forces, Central Europe.

March 14th—Regiment moved to A.A.T.C., Sennelager, for one week for classification on the ranges.

March 20th — Regimental rifle meeting, 1st A Company, 2nd B Company, 3rd C Company, 4th HQ Company and 5th S Company.
Regiment returned to Osnabruck.

March 31st — Lieut. Cracknell posted to West Africa to command Potential Officers Training School.

April 2nd — 2nd Class Certificate of Education Examination.

April 3rd — Two officers and twenty-eight cadets from St. Edwards' School, Oxford, arrived for fourteen days' attachment to the Regiment.

April 4th — Regiment moved to Reinshlen Camp, Soltau, for two weeks platoon and company training.

April 6th — Capt. E. R. R. Hicks assumed command of HQ Company vice Major A. V. Brown posted to HQ, North-West District, Preston, as G.S.O. II.

April 13th — Major-General F. N. Mitchell, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., G.O.C. 6 Armoured Division, visited the Regiment.

A party of all ranks visited Becklingen War Graves Cemetery and laid wreaths on the graves of members of the 43rd killed in March/April 1945.

April 17th — Regiment returned to Osnabruck.

April 22nd — Easter break began.

April 25th — Easter break ended.

Capt. Hay-Will rejoined the Regiment from GHQ, M.E.L.F., and was posted to A Company.

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April 26th — Capt. P. S. Hayes rejoined the Regiment and was posted to C Company.

May 7th — Presentation of Colours by General Sir Bernard Paget, G.C.B., D.S.O., M.C., on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen and attended by Sir Frederick Hoyer-Miller, U.K. High Commissioner in Germany.



Presentation of new Colours to the First Battalion

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May 8th—Regimental holiday. The officers held a small gymkhana.

May 9th—Regimental church parade.

May 11th—Regiment moved to bivouac camp at Hohne for training with 2 Royal Tanks.

May 12th—Major D. R. L. Bright left the Regiment on posting to Eaton Hall O.C.S.

May 13th—Brigadier C. L. Richardson, C.B.E., D.S.O., Commanding 61 Lorried Infantry Brigade, visited the Regiment.

May 17th — Battalion HQ Exercise.

May 20th — Battalion Exercise “Sunrise”.

May 21st — Battalion Exercise “Sunrise” ended with a twelve-mile march.

May 22nd — Regiment returned to Osnabruck.

May 28th — B.A.O.R. Small Arms Meeting ended.

Battalion results:-

Officers 5th of 31.

Young Soldiers 2nd of 31.

Battalion team 3rd of 34.

Sten team 13th of 34.

Serjeants team 10th of 31.

L.M.G. team 24th of 31.

Rhine Army Shield 6th of 31.

Falling Plate 2nd of 40.

May 29th — Regimental Athletics Meeting won by C Company. 2nd A Company, 3rd HQ.

May 30th—Regiment moved to A.A.T.C., Sennelager, for one week's training in Infantry/Tank co-operation.

May 31st — S Company moved to Putlos for S Company concentration.

June 1st — Inter-company field firing competition.

Officers' Study Period attended by Commanding Officer and officers, Commanding Officer and officers 2 Royal Tanks, two U.S. Army officers and by representatives of 2 K.R.R.C. and R.E. - 'Defence on a broad front'.

June 3rd— Battalion Exercise “Epsom I” — Withdrawal on a broad front.

June 4th—Battalion Exercise “Epsom II” — Withdrawal on a broad front.

June 5th—Twelve mile battalion route march. Embus and return to Osnabruck.

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June 11th—Whitsun break began.

June 12th—Cricket *versus* 7 Field Ambulance, won by 88 runs.

June 13th — Cricket *versus* 6 Armoured Division Workshops, R.E.M.E., won by six wickets.
Whitsun break ended.

June 16th — Battalion Exercise “Sunshine”.

June 17th —Draft of twenty five other ranks joined from 1 K.O.Y.L.I.

June 18th —Exercise “Sunshine” ended and the Regiment moved to Soltau for two weeks' Brigade training.

June 21st —Brigade Exercise 'Scorpion' began.

June 24th —Brigade Exercise 'Scorpion' ended.

June 28th —Battalion Exercise 'Sunset' — Night attack.

June 29th —Battalion Exercise 'Sunset' ended and the Regiment returned to Osnabruck.

July 1st—Divisional R.A. Exercise 'Silver Sedge' began. Regiment represented by skeleton Battalion HQ,
Captain H. J. W. Newton promoted temporary Major.

July 2nd— Lieut. J. D. F. Mostyn promoted temporary Captain.
Cricket *versus* 1 K.O.Y.L.I. in Berlin, match drawn.

July 3rd — Exercise 'Silver Sedge' ended.
Light Infantry Day. Regimental holiday.

July 7th—1 (Br.) Corps Signals Exercise “Javelin VIII” began. Regiment represented by complete Battalion and umpire staff.
Cricket *versus* 38 Corps Engineer Regiment, R.E., won by 7 wickets.

July 8th—Battalion Bisley team returned. Results: Britannia Shield 9th of 52 entries.
2nd Lieut. D. C. Stanley won the Young Officer's Cup.

July 24th — 2nd Lieut. R. A. Pascoe rejoined the Regiment.
Brigade Signal Platoon concentration ended, 1st 1 Oxf. & Bucks, 2nd 1 Royal Sussex and 3rd 1 Green Howards.
Draft of twenty other ranks joined from RHQ, Oxford.

July 26th —Regiment visited by D.M.S. HQ Rhine Army.

July 27th —D Company formed in cadre.
Four officers and twenty-eight other ranks compete in Nijmegen 100-mile march.

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July 29th —Assault Pioneer Platoon competed in the Minden Military Regatta and won the assault boat race.

July 30th —Nijmegen march ended. All ranks completed the course of twenty-five miles a day for four days and all were awarded medals.

Major F. H. G. Higgins and ten officers and warrant officers attended an artillery day at “G” Battery (Mercers Troop) 5 R.H.A.

July 31st —Officers' Study Period —“River Crossing”.

August 1st —Regiment moved to Sennelager for two weeks' field training.

2nd Lieut. R. A. Pascoe promoted Lieutenant.

August 12th —Fire Power demonstration to Regiment and 2 Royal Tanks by “B” Battery, 5 R.H.A., Mortars, M.M.G. and Anti/Tank Platoon, “B” Company and a Troop of 2 Royal Tanks.

August 13th —20 Armoured Brigade Exercise “Loch Ness”

August 14th —Regiment returned to Osnabruck.

August 17th—61 Lorried Infantry Brigade Cloth Model Exercise on 'Assault River Crossing' attended by Commanding Officer, company commanders and Assault Pioneer Platoon Commander.

Draft of sixteen other ranks joined from D.C.L.I. Depot, Bodmin.

August 25th —2nd Lieut. J. Leach joined and was posted to S Company as Assault Pioneer Platoon Commander vice 2nd Lieut. B. Peppiatt posted to U.K. for release.

Draft of thirty six other ranks joined from RHQ, Oxford.

August 26th —Officers fired A.R.A. King George V Cup.

August 27th—Inter-platoon football competition started.

September 4th —2nd Lieut. Hon. D. Dickinson arrived and was posted to C Company. Draft of seventy eight other ranks arrived from RHQ, Oxford.

September 10th —Draft of ten other ranks arrived from RHQ, Oxford.

September 18th —Regiment concentrated for Northag Exercise “Battle Royal”.

September 19th —Capt. A. Morley rejoined the Regiment and was posted to HQ Company as Second in Command.

September 28th — Regiment returned to Osnabruck from Exercise “Battle Royal”.

September 30th — Capt. S. B. I. Jaafar, Malay Regiment, arrived for ten days' attachment.

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October 8th —Memorial Service for the late Divisional Commander, Major-General F. N. Mitchell, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O.

October 9th —Capt. T. D. Byrne rejoined the Regiment and was posted to D Company.
Football versus 3 Dragoon Guards, lost 5-4.

October 11th —Officers' Study Period —“Defence in the light of Atomic Warfare”.

October 12th —Lieut.-Colonel P. G. F. Young, O.B.E., assumed command of 61 Lorried Infantry Brigade.
Major F. H. G. Higgins assumed command of 1 Oxf. & Bucks.

October 14th—2nd Lieut. J. C. Gardner joined the Regiment with a draft of eighty six other ranks.

October 15th —Presentation of Colours to 1 K.S.L.I. attended by Commanding Officer, four officers, Regimental Serjeant Major and five Serjeants.

October 16th —Army Hunter Trials at Osnabruck. Regiment won the Light Infantry Cup and was 4th in the Dismounted Units.

Army Hunter Trial Ball run by the Regiment held at the Kasino, Georg Marienhutte, attended by the C.I.G.S.

Football versus 6 Armoured Division Workshops R.E.M.E., lost 4-0.

Rugby versus 16 L.A.A., lost 20-11.

October 18th —Capt. A. C. Eyre rejoined the Regiment and was posted to C Company.
Football versus 37 Corps Engineer Regiment, lost 3-1.

October 21st —First round of the inter-company boxing.

October 24th—Band and Bugles gave a display of marching and playing outside the Osnabruck Town Hall attended by 1000 spectators.

Football versus Osnabruck, won 16-4.

October 26th —Special Order of the Day by new Corps Commander, Lieut.-General Sir Hugh Stockwell, K.C.B., K.B.E., D.S.O.

Replay of the preliminary round of the Army Football Cup, Regiment *versus* 3 Dragoon Guards, won 3-2.

October 27th —Trooping of the Colour by 1 Green Howards to commemorate A.L.M.A. Day attended by five officers and twenty other ranks.

October 29th —Major A. C. Mason rejoined the Regiment and took over HQ Company from Capt. E. R. R. Hicks.

October 31st —Capt. W. S. B. Rawlings rejoined the Regiment and posted to S Company as Second in Command.

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November 1st —Inter-platoon .22 competition won by 2 Platoon A Company,
2nd 6 Platoon B Company,
3rd 3 Platoon A Company.

November 3rd—Hockey *versus* HQ, R.A.S.C., Osnabruck, Won 5-2.

November 4th —Final of the inter-company boxing competition, 1st A Company, 2nd S Company and 3rd C Company.

November 5th — Regimental bonfire and firework display.

November 6th —Capt. A. Morley awarded Mention in Despatches for services in Malaya.
Hockey *versus* 38 Corps Engineer Regiment, R.E., drawn 1-1.

November 7th —Remembrance Day. Regimental church parade.

November 8th —A and C Companies moved to Haltern Training areas to classify on rifle and L.M.G.
Capt. D'Ambrosia of the Bersaglieri (Italian Light Infantry) attached to the Regiment until 22nd.

November 12th —Regimental Band broadcast on B.F.N.

November 14th —Major F. H. G. Higgins left to take up appointment as G.S.O. I (Liaison) to the Belgian Corps HQ in Cologne.
Capt. E. R. R. Hicks left to take up appointment as G.S.O. III at HQ, 61 Lorried Infantry Brigade.

November 15th —Capt. R. S. C. Dowden left to take up appointment as G.S.O. III (intelligence) HQ, 6 Armoured Division.

November 18th —B Company moved to Haltern, A and C Companies returned.

November 19th —General Sir Richard Gale, G.C.B., K.B.E., D.S.O. M.C., A.D.C. C.-in-C. Northag and Brigadier C. L. Richardson, C.B.E., D.S.O., Commanding 61 Lorried Infantry Brigade, visited the Regiment.

November 22nd—Annual classification of buglers. Corporal Hester appointed Commanding Officer's Bugler.

November 23rd—11 Engineer Group Officers' Study Period attended by three officers.

November 24th —Officers' lecture on M.T. documents by Capts. P. W. Mitchell and W. S. B. Rawlings.
Football *versus* 38 Corps Engineer Regiment, R.E., won 3-0.

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December 3rd—Inter-platoon cross-country race won by 2 Platoon A Company, 2nd 8 Platoon C Company and 3rd 4 Platoon B Company.

Brigadier Chamberlain, Chief Education Officer, B.A.O.R., visited the Regiment. Officers' lecture on methods of instruction by Major H. P. Patterson, Oxf. & Bucks Methods Officer, School of Infantry, Warminster.

December 6th—Officers' Study Period on the 'Organization of Individual Training'.

December 7th—Major J. C. Ballard posted to HQ Northag, as G.S.O. II (SD).

December 10th—Annual Administrative Inspection by Brigadier C. L. Richardson, C.B.E., D.S.O., Commanding 6 Armoured Division. Assessment — very good.

December 16th—61 Lorried Infantry Brigade Study Period attended by all company commanders.

December 17th—Draft of seventy-three other ranks joined from RHQ Oxford.

December 18th—Major R. St. G. Martin rejoined the Regiment and appointed Second in Command.

December 22nd—Inter-company cross-country race won by C Company, 2nd A Company and 3rd HQ Company.
Christmas break began.

December 25th—Christmas dinner served to the men by the officers, warrant officers and Serjeants.

December 30th—2nd Lieut. R. D. Sale joined the Regiment and was posted to C Company.
Capt. M. G. Hay-Will assumed command of B Company vice Major H. J. W. Newton.

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FIRST BATTALION LETTER

Dear Editor,

This letter covers our first full year in Germany since the Regiment left for Greece in April 1949. At the end of last year's letter, the Commanding Officer wrote that the Chronicle, and in particular the Battalion letters, serve as the main source from which the future historians of the Regiment will draw. This view sets the unqualified chronicler a hard task: it is difficult to narrate history at such close quarters and this has been a historical and crowded year.

Thinking back on 1954 I find that five things stand out in the memory: first, of course, the Presentation of New Colours in May; then the great Northern Army Group manoeuvres, Exercise "Battle Royal"; the annual Administrative Inspection in December; and the cold discomfort of our first camp at Reinsehlen, Soltau, in April; and finally a sense of wonder and relief, shared I think by us all, that the Battalion so successfully survived the rush and tumble of crowding events.

The training cycle, on which most else depends, is well defined in B.A.O.R. Individual training in January and February; then company and platoon training in spring and early summer, largely at camps away from barracks and leading to battalion and formation exercises at the end of the summer and in the autumn; then finally annual classification and preparation for the Administrative Inspection. Into this cycle sporting and social and Regimental occasions have to be fitted.

The year started, then, with intensive individual training, with the majority of men on courses and classes and officers much occupied with T.E.W.T.s. and study days.

Regimental and Company Headquarters took part in a Brigade Signal Exercise in January, memorable for the intense cold which froze vehicles on the move and men wherever they were.

During February the cross country team came second in the Divisional cross country race. They went on to take part in the Rhine Army championships, but the competition was too much for them.

The Regiment won the Brigade skill-at-arms competition at Minden.

In March the Regiment, less Regimental Headquarters, spent two weeks at the All Arms Training Centre at Sennelager. There we moved into excellent barracks with all amenities in the middle of the old German Army training areas. As the A.A.T.C. is only some 50 miles from Osnabruck and well used to battalions coming and going, the administrative problems are simple — very much more so than at our next camp at Reinsehlen near Soltau to which we went in early April.

I referred to this camp at Soltau in the opening paragraphs as a memorable one. Apart from Exercise 'Mailed Fist' the previous summer and two simple moves from Sennelager, it was our first major adventure as a complete battalion away from barracks. We see now that we had a lot to learn in the complexities of moving over large distances, in the general fuss and business of getting 'formed up' and 'clear away' from our base and in making ourselves comfortable on arrival. Later on it became a simple routine but we had to learn.

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The camp itself is entirely tented except for cook-house and shower-rooms. It is situated on the west side of Luneburg Heath training area on an old airfield, open to the coldest of east winds.

Other regiments of the Division were there too and amongst them all we certainly gained a reputation for Spartan living, not undeserved though not entirely intentional. However, it was excellent training, both administratively and tactically and as so often happens in considerable discomfort, morale of all ranks was very high.

We returned to barracks in the middle of April to a delayed Easter break (such upsets to the calendar are typical of the priority given training in B.A.O.R.) and to intensive preparation for the Presentation of New Colours. This was indeed a great occasion. On May 7th, 1954, New Colours were to be presented to the Regiment by the Colonel of the Regiment on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen. There can be few who saw or took part in the parade on May 7th who will see it repeated.

The Commanding Officer's article on the parade is printed elsewhere in this Chronicle and Fergus Higgins has written an article on the administrative and social arrangements. The detailed Order of the Parade has been lodged with Headquarters, the Light Infantry Brigade, and with Regimental Headquarters for record and safe keeping. I will therefore report the event only briefly.

We had about three weeks for detailed preparations and rehearsals, although, of course, invitations had been sent out, contracts made and much thought given long before this.

On the evening of May 6th, the Band and Buglers sounded retreat on the Regimental Square. The Colonel of the Regiment took the salute and during the ceremony presented the Meritorious Service Medal to our Quartermaster, Major George White and the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal to Bandmaster (W.O. I.) H. A. Kenney. There were a large number of spectators including many distinguished members of the Regiment.

From reveille on the 7th all arrangements started to roll very smoothly on. The day was fine and cool, perfect for the occasion. At about 9.30 a.m. the square, now a well policed car park, began to fill with cars and the spectators to take their seats in the stands overlooking the playing fields on which the parade was to take place. Perhaps a thousand came to watch; they included the United Kingdom High Commissioner in Germany, His Excellency Sir Frederick Hoyer-Millar, many past and present serving members of the Regiment, among whom were three serving major-generals, Major-General Sir John Winterton, Major-General Bayley and Major-General Lathbury, officers and men of our affiliated battery (Mercers Troop, 5 R.H.A.) and Armoured Regiment (2nd Royal Tank Regiment), Light Infantry Regiments in B.A.O.R., other regiments in the Brigade, our Brigade and Divisional Commanders and their staffs and many distinguished officers of other formations.

The Light Division Assembly was sounded as a Quarter Horn for Parade at 10.10 a.m.; at 10.25 a.m. the Advance was sounded and the Regiment marched on parade. It was an honour to have been there; of it all, the march-off of the old Colours to 'Auld Lang Syne' was an emotional experience none could forget.

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Soon after 12 o'clock the parade was over and all ranks dispersed to take part in the festivities of the day.

The Commanding Officer received many letters about the parade. He quotes in his article an extract from that received from the Colonel of the Regiment which made us very proud. Amongst the many others let me quote the letter received from our Brigade Commander, who knows the Battalion well and whose praise we greatly value:

"I am writing to send you and your Battalion my congratulations on the splendid parade yesterday.

You will have heard praise from many more important and competent observers than myself, but I feel that they may not know as well as I do the extent of the other commitments with which the Battalion has had to compete while the long-term preparations for the parade were going on. Taken on its merits the standard of the parade throughout was excellent, and bearing in mind the short time you had for final preparations, I do sincerely feel that the Battalion put on a magnificent show."

Saturday, May 8th, was a holiday. For the entertainment of our guests and ourselves we held a successful and amusing Hunter Trials and Gymkhana. On Sunday, as a fitting end to the celebrations, a church parade was held in which all ranks dedicated themselves afresh to the service of the Regiment and remembered those who had served so well under the Old Colours.

From then until the end of September, our time was fully taken up with training. Our detailed comings and goings can be seen in the Diary of Events and they gave us little time indeed to ourselves.

Immediately after the Presentation of the New Colours, the Battalion went to a tented camp near Hohne to continue training with armour. This was a most enjoyable interlude — the first (and last) sight of summer amongst pine woods and far away from Headquarters.

At the end of May we returned to Osnabruck for a week, during which we held the Regimental Athletic Meeting and the Regimental Shooting team went to Sennelager for the B.A.O.R. Meeting. The Shooting team must here be congratulated on their excellent results after very little practice.

And so, on May 30th, to Sennelager (less Support Company) for further training with armour. Support Company had meanwhile moved to the Baltic Coast at Putlos, to take part in the annual Brigade Support Company concentration. The Machine Gun Platoon did well in the A.R.A. Machine Gun competition and for a while we thought they might have won but other battalions, shooting later, produced even better scores.

The final results were: M.M.G. Cup, 3rd; M.M.G. Corps Cup, 4th.

We had ten days back in barracks in early June and time for a (delayed) Whitsun break. Then out again on June 13th on a battalion exercise in the Minden area and from there back to Reinshlen Camp where we started higher level training and took part in two brigade exercises.

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July was, for all except Regimental Headquarters and some others, devoted to company training from barracks. Regimental Headquarters were away for ten days on an Army Signal exercise (without troops). We sent, too, a team to Bisley, which showed promise for next year; 2nd Lieut. D. C. Stanley is to be congratulated on winning the Young Officer's Cup. The Signal Platoon went away to its Annual concentration and won resounding success over its rivals.

At the end of the month, four officers and twenty-seven other ranks took part in the four-day International March at Nijmegen in Holland. The Commanding Officer, who visited the marchers, commented on their soldierly bearing under very arduous circumstances.

We had four days' summer break before returning to Sennelager for a fortnight's training with armour and field firing, ending in a two-day brigade exercise.

We returned on August 13th to prepare for the divisional exercise. This, after first postponement and then rumours, was cancelled due to the damage which would have been caused to the already rain-beaten harvest.

The cancellation of the divisional exercise gave us some time to recuperate and repair our much-trying administrative machine in preparation for Northern Army Group manoeuvres. Exercise 'Battle Royal'. This exercise which took place in the last ten days of September is reported to have been the largest staged in Germany since the war, involving Dutch, Belgian and British divisions, the Canadian Brigade and specialized American troops. It took place in the Osnabruck area which saved the Regiment a long move, though it meant that we had a long wait in the concentration area whilst others came from further afield.

Our division formed part of a Dutch corps, which, with a British corps, was on the attacking side against the Belgians and Canadians. Our role was the classic one of an armoured division — to advance swiftly once the infantry had made the hole. Advance we did, often at short notice and in foul weather. All, I think, agreed that it was the most 'warlike' exercise that the Regiment had taken part in, with all the frustrations, weariness and administrative problems that war entails. Unfortunately, particularly for the men, it lacked much excitement, as we never made contact. We were about to do so in no mean way, in a daylight assault river crossing, opposed by an alerted and vigorous enemy, when the exercise was stopped. This was probably as well, as it would undoubtedly have been beyond the power of umpires to stop some sort of international incident if the assault had been launched.

Two highlights must be mentioned. The first was when, after continual moves and little sleep, an atomic bomb 'burst' in the Battalion area. This resulted in our being completely out of action for several hours — an unexpected and most welcome relief, but how different from reality. The second occurred towards the end of the exercise. The Regiment was in divisional reserve and had just settled into various barns in pouring rain, expecting a good night's sleep. No sooner had supper been eaten and command posts set up, than the order was received for us to move forward about twenty miles in M.T. into unreconnoitred territory and close up to a river line — all this on a very dark night and as usual 'as soon as possible'. By dawn the move had been successfully completed, the leading troops had reached the river and the information was beginning to flow back.

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Described boldly like this, the operation may not seem to amount to much, but it was thought a considerable feat of versatility and initiative for which the Commanding Officer received congratulations for the Regiment.

After 'Battle Royal' we had a breathing space in barracks. A lot of time had to be spent on 'tidying up' after the training season, but everyone managed to play a lot of games and generally enjoy themselves. In particular the officers got some excellent shooting on local German shoots.

In early November companies fired their Annual Classification, some locally and some on excellent ranges at Haltern, west of Munster. The results so far, particularly on the rifle, have been encouraging, due in some part, though, to an easier course.

We then got down in earnest to prepare for the annual Administrative Inspection. This is the great annual 'spring clean', very necessary since for the rest of the year the emphasis is so very much on training.

It is, however, a deal of trouble to all concerned. For a fortnight we polished and painted, paraded and inspected and were rewarded by an assessment of 'Very Good' from the Divisional Commander, Brigadier C. L. Richardson. This was an improvement on last year when the assessment was "Good". The Commanding Officer published an order congratulating everyone who took part in achieving this assessment which was entirely the result of hard work by all ranks and one only achieved by a few units in the Army.

And so to Christmas and the New Year with all their attendant festivities. We were able to celebrate in great style and everyone enjoyed themselves.

During the year we have been glad to welcome several officers of other armies on attachment including a Norwegian, an American, two Burmese, a Sudanese and finally an Italian officer of the Bersaglieri, who wrote the Commanding Officer a charming letter:

"Before leaving I make a matter of conscience of saying to you I am grateful for your friendly kindness and the perfect reception by the 1st Oxf. & Bucks' Officers, whom I have been in full keeping with.

You are C.O. of a strong unit, in which minds and hearts are quite amalgamated in hard training. Let me congratulate you on it with all my heart.

I would like you to extend my greeting to your valorous officers and especially to B Company's. (*The Italian officer, Capt. C. G. D'Ambrosia, spent most of his time with B Company.*) And would you accept my best wishes of a good luck and a great prosperity for you, your family and your great people."

There have been many changes in the Battalion during the year, which are recorded in the Diary of Events. We welcome those who rejoined or joined for the first time and wish those who have left all good fortune.

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With great regret we shall shortly say goodbye to the Commanding Officer, Lieut.-Colonel P. G. F. Young, O.B.E., after two and half years in command, on appointment to command of a Territorial Parachute Brigade, and to our Quartermaster for the last five years, George White; to him we send a special goodbye as he nears the end of his thirty-seven years' devoted service to the Regiment. In their place we shall welcome early in 1955 Lieut.-Colonel J. A. J. Read, D.S.O., M.C. and Major (Qr.-Mr.) S. A. Cox.

1954 has certainly been a busy year for the Regiment, but we have managed to play hard ourselves too. It has been a year of solid achievement in training and administration and a thoroughly happy and enjoyable time.

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PRESENTATION OF NEW COLOURS TO THE FIRST
BATTALION (43RD AND 52ND)

SINCE the time after the last war when the 43rd Light Infantry and the 52nd Light Infantry were amalgamated into one battalion, the 1st Battalion has had two stands of Colours. Those of the 43rd were presented at Shorncliffe in 1887 by Lady Aberdare, the daughter of a famous 43rd soldier. Sir William Napier, K.C.B., and so were sixty-seven years old. In recent years they have been rarely carried on parade owing to their condition. The 52nd Colours, although nineteen years older than the 43rd Colours, were completely renovated by the ladies of the Regiment thirty years ago and are therefore still in a good condition. For three years new Colours for the 1st Battalion to replace the old Colours of the 43rd have been waiting in the Keep at Cowley Barracks for a suitable occasion for their presentation. In the autumn of 1953 a day in early May 1954 was selected for this event. And so on May 7th, 1954, at Osnabruck in Germany the 1st Battalion were presented with new Colours by General Sir Bernard Paget, G.C.B., D.S.O., M.C., the Colonel of the Regiment, who was nominated by Her Majesty the Queen to make the presentation. This is an account of the ceremony which had only taken place once in the lifetime of the oldest members of the Regiment and which may well not take place again this century.

The spectators among whom were many members of the Regiment, past or still serving, who had come out from England, and a large and distinguished gathering from all over Germany, had already begun to arrive when the band and buglers marched on to the parade ground to "56th Brigade". A short pause and the buglers sounded "The Light Division Assembly" just as 145 years ago they had sounded it as a call for the regiments of the Light Division to assemble on their Regimental parade grounds, and so is now sounded in the Regiment as a quarter for parade. Fifteen minutes later the buglers sounded the 'Advance' and the Regiment marched on parade to "Light Infantry" while the old Colours of the 43rd took post on the flank of the parade ground guarded by the Serjeants of the Colour Party (C.Q.M.S. A. Scott, Serjeants J. Wrigley and J. Ball).

After the Adjutant, Major R. R. W. Workman, had collected reports in the traditional manner, the Commanding Officer, Lieut.-Colonel P. G. F. Young took over command of the Regiment which, drawn up in line, was now ready to receive the Colonel of the Regiment.

At 10.45 a.m. the Colonel of the Regiment arrived at the saluting base and was received with a General Salute, after which he inspected the Regiment and then returned to the saluting base.

THE TROOP

The Commanding Officer then gave the order 'Troop' and in accordance with the ancient ceremony and tradition of the British Army the old Colours of the 43rd Light Infantry were trooped in front of their Regiment for the last time. First the band and buglers marched in slow and quick time from one side of the parade ground and back to the marches 'The Troop' and 'Waterloo', especially composed by Bandmaster H. A. Kenney for the occasion. Then on the sounding of the Regimental horns by a bugler the escort for the Colours, found by B or Capt. H. W. J. Newton's Company, and commanded by Lieut. J. D. F. Mostyn, marched from the right flank of the Regiment to a position facing the old Colours, still in the charge of the Colour Serjeants, on the left flank. R.S.M. J. Stevenson, D.C.M., then took over each Colour in turn from the Colour Serjeants and handed them to the officers

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for the old Colours, Lieut. D. S. Hawker and 2nd Lieut. M. R. Radcliffe. The escort for the Colours presented arms to the Colours now in their charge while the National Anthem was played by the band in their honour. The old Colours were then trooped in slow time in front of the Regiment standing at the present, to 'Raglan', that band and bugle slow march so well known in the Regiment but rarely heard elsewhere.

There was a pause for a minute when the Colours and escort reached the right of the line. The old Colours had been trooped and the Regiment had accorded the honour and tribute which was their due as the Regiment's sign of its duty to its Sovereign and its country for sixty-seven years. Their duty done they were now about to leave the Regiment for ever and the new Colours would take their place.

And so the Commanding Officer gave the order 'March off the old Colours of the 43rd Light Infantry'. In slow time to the 43rd Regimental Slow March the old Colours were carried in front of the Regiment from right flank to the left flank for all to see them for the last time. And as they reached the end of the line the Regiment presented arms and all the spectators stood and saluted, and with the band playing 'Auld Lang Syne' the old Colours left the Regiment.

THE CONSECRATION AND PRESENTATION OF THE NEW COLOURS

The consecration and presentation of the new Colours now followed. First the Regiment formed hollow square, the drums were placed in position by Bugle-Major R. Savage, and the Quartermaster, Major G. J. F. White and warrant officers carrying the new Colours, R.Q.M.S. S. F. Welshman and O.R.C.Q.M.S. W. Bayliss, marched forward with the new Colours, still cased. The two field officers for the new Colours, Major J. F. Ballard and Major P. K. Everett then uncased them for the first time. Meanwhile the Colonel of the Regiment and the chaplains led by the Assistant Chaplain-General to the British Army of the Rhine, the Rev. R. J. F. Mayston, M.B.E., came forward and placed themselves in position in front of the drums. When all was ready the Commanding Officer asked the Assistant Chaplain-General, on behalf of the Regiment, to bid God's blessing on the Colours. And the Chaplain-General then consecrated the new Colours of the Regiment and blessed them and the Regiment prayed with him and dedicated itself afresh to the service of its Colours.

The chaplains now withdrew and the Colonel of the Regiment took over the new Colours from the field officers for the Colours and presented the Queen's Colour to Lieut. P. J. Lott, and the Regimental Colour to 2nd Lieut. D. Marshall, both kneeling to receive them. And when the Colonel of the Regiment had presented the Colours he addressed the Regiment in the following words:

"It is a very great honour for me to have been commanded by Her Majesty the Queen to present new Colours to the 1st Battalion, the 43rd and 52nd; and it is a notable event in the history of the Regiment, when the old Colours are trooped for the last time and we march off parade with new ones.

But though the Colours themselves wear out in course of time and have to be replaced, the ideals of service and self-sacrifice, of loyalty and devotion to our Sovereign, our Regiment and our Country, which they represent to us, remain constant; ideals which tens of thousands of those who have served in the Regiment have given their lives to honour and uphold.

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And so it is that our Colours are our most valued and sacred possession, a symbol to us of the glorious history and traditions of the Regiment, and a reminder of our individual and collective responsibility to prove ourselves worthy of our heritage.

The last occasion on which new Colours were presented to the 43rd was in 1887 soon after linking up with the 52nd in the Oxfordshire Light Infantry, and these Colours carried the battle honours of both the 43rd and 52nd. Since that date the Regiment gained thirteen more battle honours up to 1918, making a total of thirty-seven on the Colours; and the battle honours for the war of 1939-45 have still to be added.

These battle honours are a wonderful record of achievement through two centuries of history; they are a great source of pride to all who belong to the Regiment, and a powerful incentive to us to maintain the high standards for which the Regiment has always been famous.

So may our Colours be a constant inspiration to us to be true to the ideals to which we have dedicated ourselves afresh this morning, and to the hallowed memory of our comrades whose courage and endurance add undying lustre to our emblems.”

The Commanding Officer then replied on behalf of the Regiment:

“Sir,

We are proud and pleased on this great day to receive our new Colours from Her Majesty at your hands.

We are conscious that we are the heirs of a great history and of great traditions. And today as our old Colours were trooped and marched off parade for the last time we have remembered those who have served the Colours of our Regiment in unbroken line for over 200 years, and those who have fought and died for the Colours and whose courage and endurance has added undying lustre to them.

And when in the service of consecration for the new Colours we dedicated ourselves and our Colours afresh, we spoke and prayed from our hearts. And we were conscious that we not only dedicated ourselves who serve these Colours today but also those who will serve in years to come when we are gone.

Sir, we will guard and cherish these Colours and, sustained by their inspiration, we will endeavour to maintain the great name of the Regiment and the high standards in peace and war which we have inherited from those who have served before us.

And we would ask you, Sir, to assure Her Majesty, with our humble duty, that these Colours will indeed be for us a constant sign of our duty to our Regiment, to Her Majesty, and to our Country.”

The Colonel of the Regiment then withdrew to the saluting base and the Regiment reformed line, while the new Colours and the officers carrying them remained out in front of the Regiment and facing it. The final act in the ceremony came with the order of the Commanding Officer “43rd and 52nd General Salute, Present Arms”. And with the band playing the National Anthem and the Regiment presenting arms to them for the first time, the new Colours were slow marched to their Regiment and took their rightful place in its centre.

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THE MARCH PAST AND ADVANCE IN REVIEW ORDER

The sadness of the departure of the old Colours and the solemnity of the presentation of the new Colours was over. Now it remained for the Regiment to march past with its new Colours in its midst, and then to advance in Review Order as a finale to the parade. So much of the impressive and moving ceremony of the day had been that which was traditional and universal for the whole army on such occasions. Except for the variations in drill there had been little which was peculiarly 'Light Infantry' in it. But now the mood was different and suited to the Light Infantry traditions of the Regiment. Quickly and joyfully and conscious of its own spirit and with a pride in itself the Regiment marched past its Colonel in column by companies to the Regimental marches of the 43rd and 52nd. Then quickly reforming line it advanced in Review Order and gave a final General Salute to the Colonel of the Regiment.

The ceremony was over and with the permission of the Colonel of the Regiment the new Colours were marched off parade for the first time, followed shortly by the Regiment itself while the band and buglers played 'Old Monmouth', a march as well known as the Regimental marches themselves to many generations who have served the Regiment.

Many and genuine were the congratulations and compliments which the Commanding Officer received verbally and in writing on behalf of the Regiment. Only one will be quoted here as it gave the greatest pleasure coming as it did from General Sir Bernard Paget, the Colonel of the Regiment, and one of the most distinguished soldiers in its history:

“The parade and the presentation of the Colours was the proudest moment of my life, and I was deeply impressed by the flawless way in which the ceremony was carried out and by the excellence of the turn-out and the drill.

I congratulate you and all under your command most sincerely in having thus brought great prestige to the Regiment on this historic occasion.

To be able to do all that you did before, during and after the ceremony last Friday, and then go out on strenuous training the following Tuesday is a further tribute to all under your command. Such versatility is a Light Infantry ideal.”

The day following the parade the Commanding Officer issued the following Special Order of the Day.

The Colonel of the Regiment has congratulated us on our steadiness, our excellent turn-out, and on the faultless perfection with which we carried out our parade yesterday.

I have also received on behalf of the Regiment the most genuine and enthusiastic compliments and praise from everyone who attended the parade.

Each one of us have in some way contributed to the success of this great occasion in the history of our Regiment and we will long remember the day with pride.

Indeed each one of us who took part in this parade will long remember the day with pride.

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OFFICERS AND WARRANT OFFICERS ON PARADE

Commanding Officer Lieut.-Colonel P. G. F. Young, O.B.E.
Second in Command Major D. R. L. Bright

Field Officers for the New Colours
Major J. F. Ballard Major P. K. Everett

Officers for the Colours
OLD Lieut. D. S. Hawker, 2nd Lieut. M. R. Radcliffe
NEW Lieut. P. J. Lott, 2nd Lieut. D. Marshall

Adjutant Major R. R. W. Workman

No. 1 Company (Escort for the Colours)
Capt. H. J. Newton Lieut. J. D. F. Mostyn

No. 2 Company
Major J. M. A. Tillett, 2nd Lieut. J. D. Finny, 2nd Lieut. O. R. W. Wynne

No. 5 Company
Major J. F. Ballard, Capt. R. S. C. Dowden, 2nd Lieut. B. J. Lane

No. 4 Company
Major P. K. Everett, Capt. R. M. Colvile, 2nd Lieut. B. K. Peppiatt

No. 5 Company
Capt. P. W. Mitchell, Lieut. S. E. Thistlethwayte, 2nd Lieut. M. N. Peppe

No. 6 Company
Capt. E. R. R. Hicks, 2nd Lieut. R. A. S. Melliush, 2nd Lieut. J. J. Grafftey-Smith

Quartermaster Major G. J. F. White

Regimental Serjeant Major J. Stevenson, D.C.M.

Bandmaster H. A. Kenney, L.R.A.M., A.R.C.M.

Warrant Officers carrying New Colours
R.Q.M.S. S. F. Welshman O.R.Q.M.S. W. Bayliss

Bugle Major R. Savage

The consecration service was conducted by: Rev. R. J. F. Mayston, M.B.E., M.A., Q.,H.C.
Assistant Chaplain-General Northern Army Group.
Assisted by: Rev. R.C.T. Wallis, S.C.F., Rev. R.P. Rankin, C.F. (Chaplain to the Battalion).
In Attendance: Rev. W. A. McBride, C.F. (R.C.).

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Presentation of new Colours to the First Battalion