

NEWSLETTER
THE FRIENDS OF
THE SOLDIERS OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE
MUSEUM



AUTUMN 2010

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

On one of the sunniest evenings of this summer, The Friends were able to join the fund raising event on the Royal Flying Corps airfield at Chedworth. The owners of the old field, Anne and Vic Norman, invited the charities of 'Help for Heroes', 'The Rifles Benevolent Fund' and 'The Friends of the Museum' and their guests to enjoy an evening of acrobatic flying, wing walking and 'Sounding Retreat', performed by the Band and Bugles of The Rifles. It was a most enjoyable event and our thanks go not only to the Normans but all the volunteers, including Col. Robert and Jilly Dixon, who worked so hard for these charities.

This injection of summer capital to our account has meant that we will be able to contribute, if required, to the '*Imjin Appeal*', details in this edition, as well as give our usual annual donation to the Museum. The Imjin fund will create a special exhibition to mark the battle in which many Glosters were killed and hundreds were held in captivity for over two years. Other events will be held in April 2011 to commemorate the 60th anniversary of this Korean War engagement.

Our Autumn Lecture this year takes place on **Wednesday November 3rd 2010**, again at Chavenage House and we have been very fortunate in that Prof. Richard Holmes CBE. TD. has agreed to talk this year. He needs little introduction, being a prolific author, an absorbing lecturer and TV presenter and a busy battle field guide. He has, in the past, been a Lecturer in Military History at RMA Sandhurst and Professor of Military and Security Studies at Cranfield University. He served as a TA officer in the 5th Bn. The Queen's Regiment and ended his military career as the Brigadier TA at HQ Land Command. We are extremely grateful to him for giving us his time and we know he will have a large audience, so book early and bring your friends to hear him.

Lt. Col. Ralph Stephenson TD.



The Service of Dedication at the Fromelles War Cemetery 19th July 2010

FROMELLES 2010

Both the Museum and the Friends were represented at the ‘The Service of Dedication and Burial’ of the Australian and British soldiers excavated from burial pits near Fromelles, which was held on the very day of the battle 94 years later, 19th July 2010. On a perfect summers day the last body to receive a permanent grave was brought to the newly completed Pheasant Wood Military Cemetery in a WWI GS wagon, drawn by horses of the King’s Troop, Royal Horse Artillery and both the bearer party and firing party were shared between Australian and British troops. The moving service was held in the presence of HRH The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall, The Governor-General of Australia, HRH The Duke of Kent who is President of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and the French Minister for Defence. The Chief of the General Staff, Gen. Sir David Richards and The Australian Chief of the Army, Lt. Gen. Ken Gillespie were also present and Sir Nick Parker read The Collect for The Rifles.

A reception for the official guests, members of the Services and descendants of the lost soldiers was later held in the village school, the ‘Cobber’s School’ – named after the Australian memorial statue which is only a mile away, on the site of the German front line below the ridge on which Fromelles lies. It depicts Sergeant Simon Fraser with a wounded man of the 60th Battalion on his shoulders, carrying him to safety and the work is entitled ‘Cobbers’.



The last ‘unknown’ is laid to rest by an Anglo-Australian Burial Party

The ill fated battle in July 1916 was a feint to try and prevent German reserves being sent further south whilst the Battle of the Somme was taking place, but it was ill prepared and poorly planned. The two Divisions (the Australian 5th and the British 61st, in which the 2/4th and 2/6th Battalions of Gloucestershire Regt were in the assault) attacked the trenches the Bavarian Regiment on higher ground, who had watched and shelled them forming up in the Front Line trenches. Some of the Australians captured a section of German trench, which they held well into the night, but the 61st Div. were cut down by accurate artillery and machine-gun fire as they tried to exit their trenches to cross ‘no man’s land’.

The Australians lost 5,533 men and the British 1,547, many of whom were never recovered, even though – ‘for three days and nights men ventured into no-man’s-land, despite potential enemy fire, to bring in the wounded paying them ‘that magnificent tribute of devotion which the Australian soldier never failed to pay to his mates’. The scene was a dreadful one, particularly opposite the ‘Sugar Loaf’ where the wounded could be seen moving, especially one man, ‘blinded and distraught’, who kept walking in circles, falling and walking on again. Eventually, along with other wounded, the enemy shot him dead’. ‘A man’s position would be marked in daylight hours and he would then be fetched under cover of darkness’. - www.westernfront.com

Even after the War, when the temporary graves were emptied, the body count was never reconciled, but in 2007 the work of an Australian, Mr. L. Englezos, studying serial aerial photographs of the Front Line taken over the following months later in 1916, showed that pits had been dug and filled in beside a light railway, over the ridge, behind the German lines.

The two year project to excavate these pits and identify the soldiers, hastily buried in 1916, has revealed the remains of 250 soldiers and identification from uniforms, physical characteristics and items of personal possessions has shown that 111 are Australian and four are British. Many families have come forward, including some from descendants of lost Glosters, to give samples of DNA and from this 96 have been named, all Australian. However this work on DNA analysis will continue for another four years and more of the ‘unknown’ may have their names carved on their grave stones.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY AND TREASURER’S REPORT

This is my first report as your new Membership Secretary and Treasurer having taken over from Lt. Col. Ron Coleman in May this year. I am grateful to Colonel Ron for handing over the membership records and accounts in such good order, this has made settling in to my new role so much easier.

On the membership front I can report that the Friends currently have 360 members on the books in all membership categories. Of the 128 Friends who pay an annual subscription, as at 31 August, 72 had renewed their membership. For those who pay by Banker’s Standing Order the receipt of the payment in our bank will trigger action on my part to issue new membership cards. This is likely to take several weeks from receipt of the money principally because I will be unaware of the transaction until I receive a bank statement which is often up to 6 weeks after the event – so please bear with me on this. Could Friends who pay by cheque or over the internet, but have not renewed their membership yet, send their subscription payments as soon as possible? Cheques should be made payable to the ‘Friends of the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum’ and sent to me at the Museum address. If you wish to save having to write cheques and pay for postage in future why not complete a Banker’s Standing Order Mandate? I will be happy to forward the form on request.

We are also endeavouring to create an e-mail address list of the Friends so that we can notify you of events at the Museum more quickly and more cheaply. We will collect these at every contact opportunity, but if you would like to be pro-active please send your address to the Hon. Sec.: simon.colbeck@glos.nhs.uk

The finances of the Friends remain healthy with funds as at 31 March 2010 valued at £27,223.52, so we are well placed to continue with our activities in support of the Museum this year. I look forward to meeting you at one of our future fund raising social events.

Wng. Cdr. Chris Campbell

THE GLOSTERS IN KOREA 1950-51

On 1st October 1950, 890 officers and men of 1st Battalion, The Gloucestershire Regiment, led by Lieutenant-Colonel J.P. "Fred" Carne, set sail from Southampton bound for Korea. The Glosters formed part of 29th Independent Infantry Brigade Group, with 1st Royal Northumberland Fusiliers, 1st Royal Ulster Rifles, 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars, C Sqn. 7th Royal Tank Regiment, 45th Field Regiment Royal Artillery, 11th Light Anti-Aircraft Battery Royal Artillery and 170th Mortar Battery Royal Artillery, together with supporting arms and services. The formation was under the command of Brigadier Tom Brodie, and the men were a mixture of Regular soldiers, Reservists and National Servicemen.

When 29th Brigade Group arrived in Korea on 3rd November 1950, U.N. forces had already scored a striking success against the North Korean Communist forces and, after the Inchon landings, had advanced as far north as the Yalu River, close to the Chinese border. This advance had created its own very serious problems and brought Communist China into the war.

29th Brigade Group arrived at the front in early December, and took part in the withdrawal as Chinese armies crossed the Yalu into Korea. On New Year's Eve the Chinese crossed the Imjin, and the Glosters were in brigade reserve as U.N. forces continued to fall back. Later, a counter-offensive was launched in February, during which the Glosters led the successful assault on Hill 327. On 1st April, 29th Brigade Group, under the command of U.S. I Corps, was back on the Imjin, deployed on an extended front which covered the direct approach to Seoul. The Chinese Spring Offensive saw a patrol from Chinese 63rd Army making first contact with the Glosters' "B" Company listening post at Gloster Crossing on the Imjin River on 21st April.



View from Glosters Hill. looking south

The terrain over which the Glosters were to fight over the next few days was ideally suited for defence, but the Glosters were very thinly spread on the ground. Colonel Carne had positioned his limited resources carefully. "A" Company under Major Angier was on the left, holding Castle Hill and overlooking Gloster Crossing on the Imjin; 1,500 yards to the south-east was Major Wood's "D" Company at Point 182; further east was "B" Company led by Major Harding; "C" Company under Major Mitchell was in reserve near Battalion Headquarters at Solma-Ri with supporting mortars. Two miles to the Glosters' right were the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers (1 RNF), with the Royal Ulster Rifles (1 RUR) behind them in Brigade reserve. Ahead of 1 RNF on the north side of the river was the Belgian United Nations Command, which comprised of a Belgian battalion with a detachment of Luxembourg soldiers, attached to 29th Brigade Group. To 29th Brigade Group's right was U.S. 65th Regiment, and to their left was Republic of Korea (ROK) 12th Regiment.

The Chinese offensive began in earnest on 22nd April, 1951. A battalion of 559 Regiment, 187th Division advanced across the river opposite Lieutenant Guy Temple's ambush patrol from "C" Company at Gloster Crossing late that evening. The Chinese took heavy casualties from Temple's men and supporting artillery until Temple was forced to withdraw as his party's ammunition began to run out.

Another battalion attacked "A" Company on Castle Hill and, when Temple withdrew, "D" Company's position came under attack. By daylight on the 23rd April, the situation for 29th Brigade Group had become extremely hazardous. Colonel Carne could not withdraw his hard-pressed men without exposing 1st ROK Division's right flank and any retrograde movement would also put 1 RNF at risk, as well as the Belgian Battalion which was itself under heavy enemy pressure. But the Glosters themselves were increasingly in danger of being surrounded. The summit of Castle Hill was captured by the Chinese at 07:30, and another Chinese regiment began to envelop the Glosters' forward Company positions. Even after the loss of the summit of Castle Hill, "A" Company still stood and fought, while their numbers were being steadily depleted. It was at this time that Lieutenant Philip Curtis, on attachment from the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, was killed in a selfless act of heroism which would be recognized with the posthumous award of a Victoria Cross. At 08.30 "A" Company, now reduced to one wounded officer and 53 men, withdrew under heavy fire to Gloster Hill, west of the village of Solma-Ri, led by Company Sergeant Major Gallagher.

Colonel Carne had been forced to draw in his horns and concentrate his battered battalion around the Solma-Ri position in the morning of the 23rd. The Glosters' flanks had been turned, and Carne's isolated Companies were in danger of being overrun piecemeal by the seemingly inexhaustible reserves of men that Chinese 63rd Army were throwing against them. The Glosters, with the magnificent support of British and American artillery, had inflicted fearful casualties on successive waves of enemy attackers throughout the night and early hours of the morning and, by concentrating his battalion, Carne could still expect to further impede the enemy's progress before they broke through. If nothing else, the sacrifice made by the Glosters would buy valuable time for the rest of I Corps forces to withdraw in good order.

"D" Company was pulled back alongside "A" Company on Hill 235 (Gloster Hill) and Battalion HQ, with Support Company to their front. On the eastern side of Solma-Ri, "B" Company was withdrawn to take position on the high ground of Hill 314 with "C" Company to their left. Daytime gave some breathing space, but now the Glosters were completely

surrounded by the enemy's 189th Division, which had taken the place of the mauled 187th. The rest of 29th Brigade Group faced the Chinese 63rd Army's third division, the 188th, and the remnants of 187th. The assault on the Glosters recommenced with new ferocity in the late evening of the 23rd. Once again, successive waves of Chinese soldiers attacked through the night and uphill, taking heavy casualties while concentrating at first upon "B" and "C" Companies. The enemy managed to separate the two companies on Hill 314, driving "C" Company from its position around 3.30 a.m. Colonel Carne ordered an evacuation of Hill 314, and those men of "C" Company who were able made their way to Hill 235, where the Battalion would concentrate with "C" Troop 170th Mortar Battery. "B" Company continued to hold their ground, before those who could joined the rest of the Battalion on Gloster Hill later.

The fighting companies of the Glosters had been cut off from their rear support elements, "A" and "F" Echelons. A further air-drop of supplies and ammunition by two light aircraft took place, but most of it missed the intended recipients, and water, weapons, radio batteries and, especially, ammunition were critically low. In the evening of the 24th and throughout the early hours of the 25th the Chinese launched waves of new attacks against Gloster Hill, their trumpets blaring above the crackle of rifle and machine gun fire. Drum-Major Philip Buss, at the instruction of Captain Farrar-Hockley, replied with an extended repertoire of British bugle calls, except Retreat, to confuse the enemy and put new heart into the Glosters. The bugle, which had belonged to Drummer Eagles, was later blown up by him to prevent it falling into enemy hands.



Drum-Major Boss 'countermands' the Chinese bugle calls. Sketch by Brian de Grineau 1952

The wounded were left behind under the care of Captain Bob Hickey, the doctor, Padre Sam Davies and Sergeant "Knocker" Brisland, but of those who made the breakout, less than fifty were to make it back to U.N. lines, the majority of the others being captured. Captain Mike Harvey led a party of men back to safety, a journey that was not without many dangers

It was Brigadier Tom Brodie who was credited with coining the new name by which the Regiment would become famed around the world: "The Glorious Glosters". And it was the award of the U.S. Presidential Unit Citation to the Gloucestershire Regiment and C Troop 170th Mortar Battery that would set the seal on that international recognition:- ". . . These gallant soldiers would not retreat. As they were compressed tighter and tighter in their perimeter defense, they called for close-in air strikes to assist in holding firm. Completely surrounded by tremendous numbers, these indomitable, resolute and tenacious soldiers fought back with unsurpassed fortitude and courage. As ammunition ran low and the advancing hordes moved closer and closer, these splendid soldiers fought back viciously to prevent the enemy from overrunning the position and moving rapidly to the south. Their heroic stand provided the critically needed time to regroup other I Corps units and block the southern advance of the enemy. Time and again efforts were made to reach the battalion, but the enemy strength blocked each effort.

Without thought of defeat or surrender, this heroic force demonstrated superb battlefield courage and discipline. Every yard of ground they surrendered was covered with enemy dead until the last gallant soldier of the fighting battalion was overpowered by the final surge of the enemy masses. . . "

Col. Stephen Oxlade OBE.

IMJIN APPEAL

The 60th Anniversary of the Battle of Imjin is in April 2011. To commemorate the occasion there will be a parade and a cathedral service in Gloucester, and the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum will produce a new Imjin Exhibition.

Please help us to create an exhibition worthy of the men who took part in the battle.

Many lost their lives and hundreds were held captive for over 2 years. It was also landmark in the history of The Gloucestershire Regiment and it will probably be the last significant anniversary when the Gloster Korean Veterans will still be with us.

Please make a donation, no matter how small, on the Just Giving Web Site:

<http://www.justgiving.com/imjin60>

Many have done so already leaving their name and a message and we are very grateful for their support.



CURATORS REPORT

The Museum has had a very difficult spring and summer season. Victoria Basin has continued to be a building site and all the coach parking has been removed the Westgate car park - not ideal for general visitor let alone the elderly who hate being separated from their transport. As a result we have suffered a 40 per cent drop in visitors and our income has suffered accordingly. However all is not doom and gloom. Like the cavalry, SWRDE has ridden to the rescue and have made a very generous grant of £10,000 which just about compensates us for the consequential loss of business caused by the building works. Also, there are also signs of visitor life returning to the Docks. The numbers are slowly improving and we have had some very good days. We are still suffering from the lack of coach visitors but this normally improves in the autumn and the run up to Christmas and the arrival of the Allies Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) at Imjin Barracks is encouraging

As our phase of the project is ending, I am confident the short term pain that we have suffered, will be rewarded in the future. The contractor has done a very good job and the quality and finish of the work is excellent. After a number of years, we now have Back Badge Square in front of the Museum, and we have been blessed with a new piece of public art called 'the candle'. It is prominent and has attracted some not altogether favourable comment. However, the overall result of the project is a vastly improved public space for visitors to the Docks to enjoy.

Meanwhile, the shop has been holding its own, with book sales being quite strong. Sadly our internet sales have not been as we had hoped, but now that we have a new series of "Who Do You Think You Are" we expect a surge of Archive enquiries and sales, which should continue to build up until Remembrance Day. With the summer school holidays now over, we have started to get a number of new enquiries for visits. We are vulnerable to public spending cuts in the education system, but if we can emphasise the good value of an outreach visit we should be rewarded

Future exhibitions plans have concentrated of the 60th. anniversary of the Battle of Imjin River next year. We plan to remove the National Service exhibition and replace it with a new Imjin Exhibition incorporating the existing room and artefacts. It is an exciting project especially as new items for display are already being offered, not least the Curtis VC from the SCLI museum. We look forward to welcoming you to this new exhibition when it is opened in the Spring 2011*. Meanwhile we are all very grateful for your continued support of the Museum and very much look forward to seeing you here.

George Streatfeild

*The Committee of the Friends is planning a Reception to be held in the summer of 2011 to give Members the opportunity to see the new Imjin Exhibition and to give a welcome to the staff of the ARRC to our Museum.

The Chairman

GLOUCESTERSHIRE AT WAR 1940

This year has seen the anniversary of such events as the evacuation of the British Army, less its vehicles and heavy weapons, from the mole at Dunkirk and the beaches stretching to La Panne, and, a month or so later, the remembrance for those who served and many who gave their lives, in the Battle of Britain. The 'phoney war' was well and truly over, in 1940, when Hitler's Army invaded the Low Countries, Norway and later France with such ruthless and efficient 'blitzkrieg', a new form of coordinated tank, artillery, infantry and air warfare which took the allied armies of Britain, Belgium and France by surprise. The rapid withdrawal to the Calais-Dunkirk area is well known, but what were our county regiments doing through the early months of the Second World War?

The 1st Bn The Gloucestershire Regt. had arrived in Burma from India in 1938 and were stationed at Mingaladon, about twelve miles from Rangoon. On the outbreak of war they took up duties protecting oil and dock installations in and around Rangoon and the Pegu River. They would see action in spring of 1942, when Japan entered the war, and be in the rear guard as the British and Empire forces undertook a fighting withdrawal back through Burma to the Indian border. Through this period the Bn. lost 9 officers and 187 other ranks.



A column of the 1st Bn. Gloucestershire Regt. – Burma 1938-1940

The 2nd Bn. had mobilized at Plymouth in 1939 and by October was part of the 3rd Div., British Expeditionary Force in France. In early 1940 a Regular battalion was transferred to each of the TA divisions and the 2nd Bn joined the 5th Bn. The Glosters in the 48th (South Midland) Div.

The 5th Bn. was the first TA unit to arrive in France in January 1940. When the Panzers struck into France and Belgium the Gloster battalions first faced the Germans near the battlefield of Waterloo but rapidly, with tiring forced marches and long periods with no food, the division fell back to hold part of the defensive line around Cassel and the village of Zuytpene.

The 2nd Bn., together with the 4th Ox and Bucks Light Infantry held the town for 3 days as the Dunkirk rescue continued (May 27th – 30th) whilst the 5th Bn. had the same instructions to hold the two villages of Ledringhem and Arneke, about four miles north west of Cassel.

After determined resistance both battalions, together with the other defensive troops gradually crept away, in small numbers and mostly by night, to try and reach the Dunkirk beaches.



Prisoners of the 2nd Bn. attend a funeral at Stalag VIII B Lamsdorf 1941 (above) and (right) members of the 5th Bn. enjoy the hospitality of 'The Citizen' at Kington, June 1940.



The 2nd Bn. suffered more severely during the defence of Cassel and the subsequent disengagement and relatively few reached Dunkirk. Five officers were killed and twelve taken prisoners, many of whom were wounded; 132 other ranks were killed, 57 wounded and 472 became prisoners of war for the next five years. The battalion was reformed, near Hereford, around the few of the 'old battalion' and were then posted to defend the Devon coast. In June 1944 they landed back in France on the Normandy beaches.

Some 400 of the 5th Bn. regrouped at Kington, in Herefordshire, in early June 1940, having been picked up by small boats and landed at various small ports in England. The battalion had lost two officers and 85 other ranks killed in action during their fierce fighting. They spent the summer of 1940 on coastal defence duties in Cornwall until the following year when it was converted to a reconnaissance unit, eventually becoming the 43rd Reconnaissance Regiment of the 43rd (Wessex) Division.

The other TA units of the Gloucestershire Regt. also changed their titles and functions, as follows;

The 4th (City of Bristol) Bn. was converted to the 66th Searchlight Regt. Royal Artillery in November 1938. It served on the Home Front and was disbanded in May 1945.

The 6th Bn., also in November 1938, became the 44th Bn. Royal Tank Corps and eventually became the 44th Royal Tank Regt. and served in North Africa, Sicily and Italy.

The 7th Bn. was formed in 1939 as a second line battalion of the 5th T.A. Battalion, with an HQ at Stroud. It became part of the 61st Division and during August 1939 was renamed the 7th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regt. and assigned to home security duties, guarding important sights in Gloucester, Cheltenham, Quedgeley, and Cirencester. In June 1940 the Battalion moved to Belfast, Northern Ireland on home defence service.

'The 8th Bn. Gloucestershire Regt., formed in 1940, consisted mainly of older and unfit men and was employed on static duties, but a special company drawn from young soldiers, commanded by Major W.D.M. Attwood, was given the duty of guarding Badminton House from October 1940 to June 1942, while Her Majesty Queen Mary was living there as a guest of the Duke of Beaufort. The Badminton guard become very much a 'royal guard' and the men were very proud and devoted to 'our queen'they were delighted when Her Majesty strolled informally in the company lines, wearing a Back Badge.'



HRH Queen Marv with the 8th (Home Guard) Bn. - Badminton 1940-42 and the Back Badge on the Hat.
 The 9th Bn. was formed in Llanelly, South Wales in May 1940 for Home Defence duties guarding important sites in the area. It moved to Northern Ireland in October 1940, after a period of training near Carlisle, and continued local defence duties guarding RAF stations. The 10th Bn. raised in 1940, served in India and Burma after it had been converted to 159th Regiment, Royal Armoured Corps, in July 1942. It reverted to 10th Glosters in April 1943. The 11th Bn. was formed in October 1940 at Shorncliffe from the 50th Holding Bn. This unit, which had been originally raised in Ludlow and Leominster, held and trained men for service in active battalions before the move to Kent. Thereafter the 11th undertook guard duties at Chatham for the remainder of 1940.

Regimental Depot moved from Horfield Barracks, Bristol to Gloucester in 1940 to form No. 15 Infantry Training Centre. This unit moved to Colchester in 1942, but a Depot Party remained at Reservoir Camp, Gloucester throughout the war.



Mk.1 Crusade. Roval Gloucestershire Hussars. 22nd Armoured Brigade. 1st Armoured Division. England.1940.

The Royal Gloucestershire Hussars, having been the 21st (RGH) Armoured Car Company (TA) from 1922 until 1938, regained its former title and, with a camp attendance in 1939 of over one thousand yeoman, was allowed to form two armoured regiments; the 1st and 2nd RGH, the 2nd equipped with Crusader tanks. The 1st RGH became a training regiment for the Royal Armoured Corps.

New Acquisition **Waterloo Medal to Sgt Watts, 28th Regiment of Foot**

During the summer, the museum collection has been very fortunate to be given a fine Waterloo medal to Sgt Robert Watts of 28th Regiment of Foot. Sgt Watts was in No.1 Company which was commanded by Major William Irving. Also in the company was one Ensign William Mountsteven, who carried the Colour at Waterloo.

Research is at an early stage, but it possible the Sgt Watts was one of the Escorts to the Colour.

In the two days of action at Quatre Bras and Waterloo the 28th lost 20 officers and 230 other ranks killed or wounded, two-fifths of its total strength.

One of Ensign Mountsteven's descendants was the much missed Simon Logie, who died earlier this year. Simon completed his national service in Kenya with the Gloucestershire Regiment and was along time supporter of the Museum



The Waterloo Medal is historically important in that it was issued to all ranks who fought in the Battle of Waterloo and the preceding conflicts at Ligny and Quatre Bras, thus making it the British Army's first ever true campaign medal, and setting a prototype for all such awards in the future. The medal, won by nearly 37,000 Waterloo veterans, was made of silver, and depicts the head of the Prince Regent, rather than the reigning monarch, King George III. The reverse depicts the figure of Victory. The medal was originally suspended on a steel clip and ring, but as this was prone to rust, many wearers had their own more durable and attractive suspensions made privately. The ribbon is crimson, with blue edges.

- Edited from www.military-genealogy.com

Two hundred years ago – No. 4

THE PENINSULAR WAR 1810

The Duke of Wellington's forces, now 50,000 strong, including the 1/61st, a detachment of the 1/28th and the newly arrived 2/28th, spent the night of the 26th September 1810 on the reverse slope of the long Bussaco Ridge, concealed in the darkness, with no fires or cooking on Wellington's strict orders. Marshall Ney, having done an evening reconnaissance, assessed the British and Portuguese troops on the ridge and assumed they were the rear guard of the allied force moving back towards Lisbon. Marshall Masséna, having only arrived on the 25th,* agreed with him and ordered 'L'Armée' to attack the next morning. Early in the morning mist Merle's Brigade of Gen Reynier's Corps were sent to assault up the southern road, (1) from the village of San Antonio, in the belief that this would bring them round the southern flank of Wellington's forces. Just over the ridge, however were the bulk of the allied army, 50,000 infantry and 60 guns.

*'Massena had unaccountably delayed at the village of Mortagoa, eight miles from Bussaco, between the 19th and 25th. He explained to Napoleon that he was waiting for supplies; others believed that he was resting his mistress 'Madame X'. wife of a Capt. Heberton on his staff and sister of an earlier mistress, she rode everywhere with him in an aide-de-camp's uniform. Ney had to shout the results of a very inadequate reconnaissance through Massana's bedroom door. No doubt she had found the road rough going.' – **Elizabeth Longford. 'Wellington' 1969.**

Heudelet's division, (2) setting off while the morning mist still hampered visibility, met the 74th Highlanders¹ and two Portuguese battalions on the ridge. The 3rd Division fought a prolonged battle against the French who refused to give ground. The last unit (3) of Reynier's command, under Brig. Foy, seven battalions strong, reached the top of the hill but were driven back by units of the 5th division, moved rapidly to their left, headed by the 9th Foot². Leith's troops formed a line and rolling volleys poured into Foy's column, wounding Foy and causing 2000 casualties.

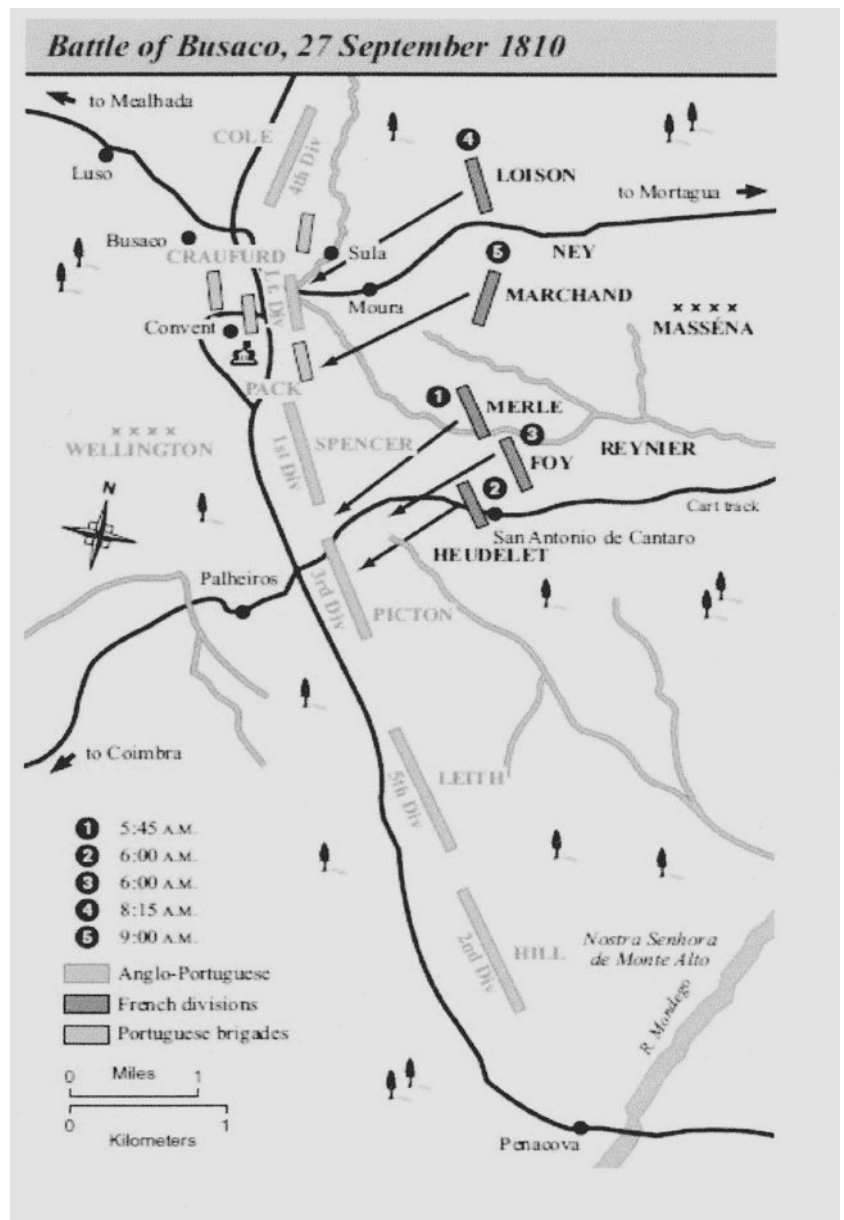
Believing Reynier had taken the Ridge, Ney sent his Corps up the road from Moura (4) to take this section of the hill and the Convent, which was acting as the Allies head-quarters, so that Wellington would be taken in both front and rear. As they appeared and the allied artillery withdrew at the gallop of over the ridge, the 43rd and 52nd Foot³ of the Light Division, under Brig. Robert Crauford, rose from their positions in the sunken road and put a volley through the French ranks at close quarters.

"Now then 52nd, avenge the death of Sir Thomas Moore!" called Crauford, waving his hat. This was followed by a loud "Huzza!" and eighteen hundred British bayonets charged, pushing the French back down the hill.

Marchand's attack was halted by the steady volleys of the British trained Portuguese brigade (5). Messéna, seeing his assaults failing, began his withdrawal and, having found a route to the north of the Busaco Ridge, continued his march on this flank. He had lost 4,400 troops including five generals, the British and Portuguese loosing 1250 killed or wounded. Both the 2/28th which had little to do in the southern end of the line or the 1/61st, in the 1st Div., received casualties.

Wellington, having won this battle, on September 28th continued his move back towards Lisbon, where he would wait until he was strong enough to push the French out of Portugal. He withdrew behind the Lines of Torres Vedras, now finished and waiting for him, for the winter of 1810-11. The French were surprised by the scale of the fortifications and were unable to attempt an assault on the defensive line. The countryside occupied by the French had been laid bare by Wellington, with the population pulled back behind the Lines. To make matters worse heavy rain started on October 8th.

¹ later the Highland Light Infantry ² later the Norfolk Regiment ³ later the Ox. and Bucks Light Infantry



The 2/28th were in the 2nd Div. and the 1/61st in the 1st Div.; both saw little action in this battle, especially the 2/28th.

Sickness soon appeared within the French ranks, which were short of all supplies, but reluctant at first to withdraw, they began to starve and lost their fighting strength. Silently, through the night of November 14th, leaving straw dummies in outposts to confuse the Allies, they finally withdrew thirty miles back without having to fire a shot.



The 43rd and 52nd Light Infantry drive Losin's Div. down the hill at the point of the bayonet, having attacked from the sunken road

Wellington contemplated a pursuit but, by November 24th he left them 'to be dealt with by General Starvation'. They did not return to Spain until March 1811 and they did not invade Portugal again.

Meanwhile, back in Gloucester, October 1810:

AN AFFRAY IN WESTGATE STREET

'On Tuesday last a desperate affray took place in this city, between a detachment of Volunteers from a Regiment of Irish Militia who were on their route to the depot in the Isle of Wight and a body of townsmen and others. The dispute arose at the Swan Inn, Westgate Street, where a party of soldiers were quartered, and in which some of the townsmen interfered. This led to a large assemblage in the streets of partisans of both parties, when a conflict arose which at one time threatened the most serious consequences.

On the first appearance of the disturbance, however, the magistrates and civil power interfered their authority and, aided by the personal exertions of Col. Morgan and the district staff, together with a detachment of Capt. Morris's troop of the Gloucester Yeomanry Cavalry, then fortunately at the time at duty, and the permanent staff of the Eastern Local Militia, who were under arms and paraded the streets during the greater part of the night, the rioters were dispersed. The Irishmen resumed their march next morning, without molestation. The rioters, civil and military, were disposed of at the City Sessions on Friday and the thanks of the magistrates voted to the military for their laudable zeal and alacrity with which they contributed their assistance on the above occasion'.

Gloucester Journal - 15 Oct 1810.

The Gloucester Troop of Yeomanry Cavalry was formed in 1797 at the Bell Inn, by Capt Robert Morris, two years after the first troop of the Yeomanry had been raised in Cheltenham, by Capt Powell Snell of Guiting Grange. Volunteers, responding to the Lord-Lieutenant's 1798 call to serve beyond the county in the event of an invasion, provided their own horses and the government provided arms and accoutrements. In return these 'Gentlemen and Yeomen' were exempt from tax on horses and hair powder.

It is unlikely that Capt Morris was leading his troop in Westgate Street at the time; he was a partner in the Gloucester Bank of Turner and Morris and was MP for Gloucester from 1805 until 1816. From 1800 until 1805 he had Barnwood Court greatly extended for his son, Robert Morris Jnr., but it is said that Robert Jnr. preferred to live in Cheltenham.



Capt Robert Morris, a similar scarlet coat of the first Troops of Gloucestershire Yeomanry is exhibited in the Museum

When Capt Robert Morris died in 1816, still commanding his troop, he left the estate to his son Robert and a life interest in the house to his widow, Mary. His son, like his father, was a partner in the Gloucester bank, which failed in 1825 and the estate was sold when he was declared bankrupt.

The Swan Inn is recorded as receiving an ale-house licence in 1807 but there was certainly a tavern there before that. It stood on the eastern end of Westgate Street, below St Nicholas' Church, on the corner of Swan Lane and opposite the Dial House Inn. By 1847 it's name had been changed to The White Swan and it was described as a "double fronted brick built premise, well placed on a busy main thoroughfare".* It was demolished in 1972 after efforts to preserve it failed for lack of a tenant.

*Report by Whittle's Forest Brewery of Mitcheldean, the owners in 1847