



# Newsletter

No. 14, February 2018

## From the Curator's Desk

This has been another very busy period for the Museum staff and our thanks are due to our dedicated team of volunteers. We continue to respond to enquiries and to acquire new material for the museum collection, although, as we draw to the end of the First World War Centenary, the pace of both of these has slowed. Our volunteers are currently engaged in a mixture of activities including: research, collections work, retrospective documentation and responding to enquiries. As a result of their hard work the collection now consists of 12,150 objects.

Our most recent exhibition in Worcestershire Soldier Gallery was "Passchendaele" which ran from 31st July to 31st October 2017. As part of our commemoration of the role of the Worcestershire Regiment in the battle, the Museum also took part in "Passchendaele Remembered" a local Worcester one day event on the 4th November 2017 to commemorate the centenary of the end of the battle. The specific commemoration for Private Frederick Dancox VC on 21st October 2017, including a plaque laying ceremony at Dancox House, preceded by a freedom parade by elements of 1 and 4 Mercian was a huge success, as was the Fundraising Dinner hosted that night by the Trustees of the Museum at the Guildhall, Worcester which raised over £7,250 for the museum.



German 'Stormtroopers' on the move during operations on the Western Front, 1918.

Looking forward to later this year the museum will be mounting an exhibition in the Worcestershire Soldier Gallery examining the Worcester's role in the "The Kaiserschlacht": The German Spring Offensive of 1918. This will run from 19th March until 30th June 2018. In early 1918 the Western Front had been locked in stalemate since the winter of 1914. All that was changed by the Kaiserschlacht, a series of major German attacks intended to destroy the

British Army and win the war in 1918 before the US became seriously engaged. The Worcester's, as usual, were heavily engaged, winning three VC's between March and May 1918. This year there will also be the following VC commemorations: Capt. Frank Roberts 23/3/1918 (born in Islington in 1891, formerly of the 1st Bn Worcestershire Regiment) will take place at 11am on Wednesday 21 March 2018 in Islington; Lt John Crowe 14/4/1918; Colonel George Grogan 27/5/1918 will both be commemorated in ceremonies held in Devonport, Plymouth.

The Museum is in the middle of an important new project funded by the Arts Council. Following the acquisition of the medals of John Freeman, we are working with an oral

historian Tony Thompson. This project will reexamine the Mercian Regiment Museum's recognition of African Caribbean soldiers in regimental and British history – starting with the heritage of Black Drummer Boys from the 1750s to the story of John Freeman in the early 1800s, the experience will then be brought up to date with 4 oral history interviews that bring to life Afro Caribbean soldier's experiences in the modern era.

One final piece of good news is that The Mercian Regimental Council has decided to extend their grant aid of £20,000 per annum to the museum for the next three financial years until March 2021. The Trustees are now starting to plan for the Museum's long-term future.

## Editorial

In this issue we mark two anniversaries, the centenary of the formation of the RAF which was formed from the Royal Flying Corps in which many officers of the Worcestershire Regiment served, and the tenth anniversary of the Friends which has provided substantial support for the museum, but for how much longer?

At this time of heightened tension between Russia and the West we are grateful to Major John Parry for his article on BRIXMIS which explains how NATO monitored Soviet military activity during the Cold War when Britain had a large garrison in Germany. The article on the Bowyers Cup is included because the Master of the Worshipful Company of Bowyers, who dined in Worcester recently, saw the cup on the dining table which he had not previously seen. It is possible that some members of the Regiment who attend Bowyers functions are also unaware of its existence.

We hope you enjoy reading these and the other offerings, and we are always interested to hear your views on the content of the newsletter and other activities. Finally if you live locally please make a note of the date of the AGM and try to attend.

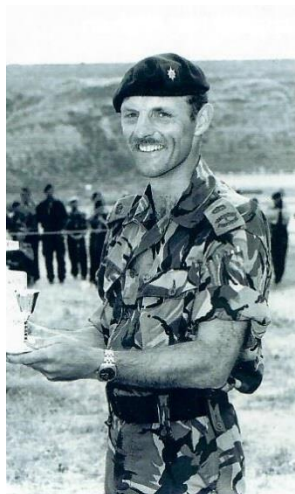
### The Worcestershire Cup - ADDENDUM

We much regret failing to include in the article in the last issue the other winners of this cup. We should have included:

“A further six years were to elapse before the cup was won in 1980 by Capt. Chris Howse and Sgt. Harry Ward”.

We offer our apologies to them both.

Capt. Chris Howse



Sgt. Harry Ward

## Tenth Anniversary of the Friends

Andrew Oddy, a former member of the British Museum senior management team who served a term as a trustee of the museum, once remarked that a museum which does not acquire new artefacts is not fulfilling its role. With the museum's funds under constant and increasing pressure it is fortunate that over the past decade the Friends organization has been able to contribute to this function. During this period it has either bought or supported the purchase of several objects including weapons, important 19th Century medals and other items to enhance the museum displays. All purchases except one have featured in past newsletters.

This Chinese silk was bought at auction and has not previously been illustrated because the newsletter at that time was not printed in colour. As well as regimental emblems it has the flags of the various nations which had trading concessions in China. The significance of the fine cockerel is not known. It was commissioned by Pte Harold Reeves in Tientsin in 1936. He had enlisted in 1933 and after service with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion in China and India returned to England in 1943. He was killed in action in Normandy in July 1944 while serving with the 1st Battalion.

The Friends' funds have also to date funded fourteen newsletters which has enabled much unique information from the archives to be disseminated for the first time...albeit so far to a restricted audience.

This invaluable support for the museum is due to the exceptional generosity of a small band of mostly officers, the majority of whom have paid well in excess of the minimum subscription for the past ten years. But they are a dwindling group and the present scale of support for the museum cannot continue much longer unless new members can be recruited and more of those who live locally can be persuaded to join the committee on which there are already some vacancies. More serving and recently retired members are also needed, particularly if they can contribute articles on recent operations which are not well documented in the archives. We have been trying, so far without success, to persuade someone to write an article on Afghanistan.

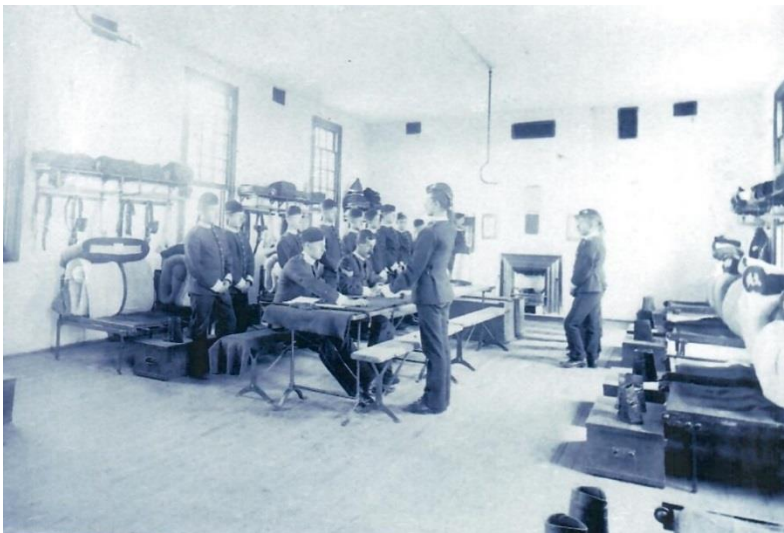


## Soldiering in the 1890s – Pay

This is the second extract from articles written by Colonel FP Dunlop CBE DSO, based on his experience as a soldier in Malta, and originally published in FIRM in 1937-8.  
(N.B. 12 pennies = 1 shilling and 20 shillings = £1.)

**“Shilling a day, blooming good pay,  
Lucky to touch it, a shilling a day.” Kipling**

They never touched it. A private's pay was a shilling a day, with a penny for each good conduct badge. Paid lance corporals got one and threepence, corporals one and eight, sergeants two and four. But threepence a day was deducted for messing and a halfpenny a day for laundry. That brought it down to £1.1s.111/2d. for a private for a 31 day month, before charges for sports club, rifle club, haircuts, barrack damages, tailors' and shoemakers' bills, issues on payment and marking charges. A steady old soldier might pick up “three fives and a four” during the month, while a young soldier would be lucky to pick up “three fours and a five.” Then there was compensation for free issues of clothing not drawn, but the issues were not on a generous scale, and you were more likely to be booked for an issue on repayment than to be credited for an issue underdrawn. The theory was that if you were entitled to a pair of boots (price 9/6d I think) and did not want them, you could be credited with their value; but you could not draw the money until you were again entitled to a free pair in case you might want a pair in the meantime. Duty men did not make much out of it; but employed men who could avoid sweating through their red serges and gravel crushing with their boots, stood to receive an occasional windfall. Each of the eight companies had a Colour Sergeant who also performed the duties later undertaken by a company sergeant major, and as often as not, was a drill sergeant to a squad of recruits. There was no Pay and Record Office. The colour sergeant made up the pay list, or got somebody to do it for him. That pay list had to be closed on the last day of the month, with as few debts and credits as possible. If the weekly pay day did not coincide with the last day of the month there would be “monthly settlement” on that date, when you would receive seven pence halfpenny, or whatever had accrued since the last weekly pay day.



At the pay table you produced your Soldier's Pocket Small Book which contained spaces to show the state of your accounts on the last day of every month of your service. If the statement was all square or in debt, the soldier signed; if by any unusual chance, such as being in a place where money was not available, there was a credit, the officer signed. But the great idea was to start all square on the first day of every month.

The idea still persisted that the company was more or less the company commander's property; that he was entitled to draw pay and rations for his men, and that any discrepancy was his responsibility. The system crashed in the Boer War. Our first battalion provided a mounted infantry company, which drew men from many sources and changed commanders many times. After the peace more than a year was spent trying to unravel an alleged deficit of several hundred pounds. It was made no easier by the fact that many men had left the colours. “It's not too bad now sir” said the colour sergeant “we've got the debt down to seventy pounds, and *the officer won't feel that*”.

# The Bowyers Cup

The inscription on this cup in the museum collection reads:  
ALDERSHOT COMMAND RIFLE MEETING  
1907  
THE BOWYERS CUP  
WON BY 3RD BN THE WORCETERSHIRE REGT



Standing L-R Lt A Whitty L/Cpl FJ Palmer Cpl AHC Hart L/Cpl JR Jewsbury  
Seated L-R Sgt A Partridge QMS C Stone Sgt ES Payton Sgt T Bills.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Bns were two of several regular battalions from seven regiments raised in 1900 following the setbacks suffered by the army in the Boer War. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn quickly established a reputation as one of the best shooting battalions in the army. It won the Queen Victoria Cup four times between 1903 and 1913, and many other competitions including seven by different teams at the 1907 Aldershot meeting. All the team members were experienced marksmen, none more so than Lt Whitty, the captain, who had won his first competition in 1893 and had been described as *the finest rifle shot the service has produced*. All except QMS Stone went on to serve in the war; Whitty gaining promotion to Lt Col QM and being awarded the DSO; Bills and Jewsbury in the sniper team; Payton taken prisoner in 1917; Palmer a WO2. The records of Hart and Partridge have not survived.

Much of the credit for this standard of marksmanship in the battalion was also due to the support and encouragement of Lt Col D'Arcy Thomas who was CO from 1904 to 1908.

In 1947 Col Melville Lee, describing life in the battalion before the war, wrote *"While at Aldershot the Bn did very well at musketry and training. One of its successes was F Coy's winning of the Evelyn Wood competition for marching and musketry. This was considered to be one of the best feats of company efficiency in the Command. Lt Col D'Arcy Thomas. One of the strictest disciplinarians the army has seen was previously second in command so knew the battalion well and had its interests at heart, and the battalion became very efficient. He knew every man in the battalion, or at least it appeared that he did. He was also present on the ranges when the rifle teams were practising, and on one occasion was there before he was expected, with the following result:*

*One of the men in the butts rang up the firing point, and said, as he thought, to the telephone operator*

*"Hi Bill, has old Shacks arrived yet?"*

*Reply (by old Shacks) Yes, and he will see you at orderly room tomorrow morning!*

## Captain John James Crowe VC

John Crowe was born in 1877, the son of a 36<sup>th</sup> Regiment soldier. He enlisted in the Worcestershire Regiment in July 1897 and developed his musketry skills to a high level of proficiency. He deployed to France in 1914 as QMS with the 3<sup>rd</sup> battalion and was appointed as QMS at 29 Base Infantry Depot as soon as it was created. For three years he therefore enjoyed in the main a quiet war. He did his job very efficiently, and also found time in this peaceful backwater to create a productive and well-ordered 4 acre vegetable garden in the depot grounds; this won a French government horticultural award. In August 1917 he joined the Worcestershire Regiment's 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion as RSM, and was commissioned 2/Lt and appointed adjutant on 1 April 1918.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion served in the Ypres salient while he was with them, and participated in the British 1917 offensive there. But its greatest trial came in April 1918, when the German army launched the Kaiserschlacht offensive against the British front in Flanders. This was intended to win the war in 1918, and the attack here had the potential to do that, striking at the British supply and communications links with the Channel ports. The German formula was simple but effective: short but intense artillery bombardment followed by stormtroopers seeking out and exploiting the weak points in the defences.

On 11 April, with the offensive in Flanders only two days old, German successes were such that Sir Douglas Haig had issued his "backs to the wall" message to his soldiers, calling on them for a supreme effort to hold their ground. On 13 April, the blow fell on the Worcestershire Regiment's 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion, which had just taken its place in the line about a mile to the east of the village of Neuve Eglise. The attack was made in force; the defenders could gauge its strength by the large numbers of German soldiers clearly seen deploying during the preceding day.

By nightfall on that day the front line had been penetrated, with the Worcestershire companies driven back and fighting separate isolated defensive actions. The battalion HQ in the village, reinforced by two infantry platoons, was now in the front line, and its defence of the Mairie became the subject of a fierce and sustained fire fight, the Germans surrounding the position and employing machine guns and trench mortars. By mid-morning on the 14<sup>th</sup> it was clear that the defence could not be sustained indefinitely. Withdrawal however looked impossible; the route out was dominated by German machine guns with supporting troops behind the position, and a messenger who had tried to take out a message had already been killed. At this point Crowe, who had already shown great bravery in the defence, volunteered to lead a sortie into the same fire-swept terrain, to clear the way.



Lieutenant John James Crowe V.C.



The ruins of Neuve Eglise after capture.

Leaving the Mairie accompanied by 10 volunteers on what appeared to be close to a suicide mission, his party now advanced by short rushes to a position where it was able to engage the machine guns with rifle fire. It was however clear that a frontal assault from there was unlikely to succeed, so he worked his way around to the rear of the enemy positions with two

soldiers, the three of them engaging and killing a number of enemy soldiers they encountered as

they did so; this dramatically illustrated the very great dangers of their mission, as well as the proficiency in musketry of the pre-war regular soldiers. The three of them then attacked the guns in a bold rush, surprising the enemy, who fled. The remainder of the party joined Crowe and secured the position, holding it until the garrison had effected its retreat, which it was able to do, thanks to the success of the sortie, in good order and without further casualties.

2/lieutenant (later Captain) Crowe was awarded the VC. Two members of his party who had distinguished themselves during the defence of the Mairie and in the sortie, were also decorated, 2/Lt AC Pointon with the MC and CQMS Trotman with the DCM. Both the soldiers who had shared the dangers and the success of the sortie with him, were killed during it; sadly, they have never been identified. Crowe



Lieut. John James Crowe receiving his Victoria Cross from H.M. King George V in a field at Blondeck, not far from Neuve Eglise.

recorded his regret that he did not know their names.

*“They were very brave and did not hesitate to help me out. You know how it was....no chance to make a note. We were staring death in the face. They were the bravest of the brave”.* He was unconsciously passing comment on his own deeds.

# The Centenary of the Royal Air Force

## 1 April 1918 - 1 April 2018



The Royal Air Force became the world's first independent air force and Britain's 'Third Service' on 1 April 1918. It was given birth, very much against the wishes of the two existing armed services, by the union of the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) and the Royal Flying Corps (RFC), the air arms of the Royal Navy and the British Army respectively.

In congratulating the RAF on reaching its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, it is fair to note that the Worcestershire Regiment played its part in the formation and the development of the fledgling air service. Officers, non - commissioned officers and men of the regiment were transferred or attached to the new air service and prior to its formation, to the RFC, before and throughout WWI.



Captain Patrick Hamilton

One Officer in particular, Captain Patrick Hamilton of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, can be said to have 'led the way'. One of the early British pioneer aviators, he was the first Officer of the Regiment to be attached, firstly, on 1 May 1912 to the Air Battalion of the Royal Engineers, then on its formation on 13 May 1912, to the RFC. Appointed immediately as a flight commander because of his rank and acknowledged flying ability he was to have a very short career as a service pilot. He was tragically killed in a flying accident on the 6 September 1912, during the first military exercises in which aircraft were employed to carry out reconnaissance duties. Captain Hamilton's flying career was a short but spectacular one, lasting less than 18 months. Nevertheless by the time of his death he had demonstrated the usefulness of the aeroplane in military work and contributed a great deal in moving forward the cause of British aviation. He had flown in excess of 8000 miles, a considerable achievement

at a time when flights generally, given the performance of aeroplanes of the day, were of a short distance and duration. Passionate about the possibility of an independent air force he was never to see the birth of the RAF, but certainly would have been one of its most ardent supporters.

Worcestershire Regiment officers took to the air in numbers as pilots and as observers, but also served in the RFC as staff officers. Many of them were to be decorated for valiant service in the air, including that of winning the Victoria Cross, others were to give their life in aerial combat. Lieut. William Leefe Robinson of the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion transferred the RFC in March 1915. Famously he became the first airman to shoot down an airship, when on the night of the 2/3 September



Capt. Hamilton and aeroplane after one of his early flights.

1916, he shot down the airship Schutte Lanz S11 over Cuffley in Hertfordshire. Following this action Lieut. Robinson was invested with the Victoria Cross, the first airman to win the decoration for service in the U.K.

Lieut. William Hugh Stobbart Chance was another officer intent on flying with the RFC. He joined the 2/8th Battalion Worcestershire Regiment as a subaltern in March 1915, becoming a platoon commander of 'D' Company. Early in 1916 the Royal Flying Corps needed pilots and Lieut. Chance applied to be seconded to the Corps. In April 1916 he received orders to proceed for preliminary pilot training at Wantage Hall, a Hall of Residence of Reading University having been taken over by the RFC. He joined 27 Squadron in France in August 1916. On the 17 September 1916, his squadron was ordered to make a raid at Valenciennes, a long way behind the lines. Hugh Chance took off at 7 a.m. and flew in formation towards the target. When he was about twenty miles inside German-held territory, amid heavily shelling his engine was hit and stopped, after several attempts to get it going again failed he dropped his bombs on a wood and made a forced landing behind enemy lines. After landing he set fire to the machine before being surrounded by German soldiers, after a short time a staff car appeared and he was taken to a German H.Q. for interrogation, he remained a POW until the end of the war.

Another of the early Worcestershire Regiment pilots was 2nd Lieutenant Leonard Kingdon who was commissioned in to the Worcestershire Regiment and served with the 2nd Battalion. He trained to fly in a Maurice Farman Biplane at the Military School, Farnborough and achieved his flying certificate on the 4 August 1915. He was seconded to the Military Wing of the Royal Flying Corps on the 25 September 1915 as a Flying Officer and was attached to 12 Squadron. On the 12 January 1916, Lieut. Kingdon and his observer Lieut. Kenneth Whitmarsh Gray were flying in a RE7 biplane on a reconnaissance mission. While flying over Tourcoing they came under attack by the German Ace Oswald Boelcke. Lieut. Kingdon was hit and the plane came down in a garden in the village of Mouscron, north-east of Tourcoing. As the plane landed it hit an apple tree in the garden, Lieut. Kingdon was found to be dead and the observer Lieut. Gray severely wounded. By the time Oswald Boelcke visited the scene the British crew had already been removed.



2/Lt Alfred Kingdon

Major Alan Sidney Dore DSO was to have a long association with the RAF. In 1915 he served with



RAF 4a powered R.E.7

the 1/7th Battalion Worcestershire Regiment as second-in-command, and landed with them at Boulogne during the night of 31 March 1915. After serving at the front for only a few months he was wounded on the 6 May 1915 and returned to England to recover. On the 24 March 1916 he was seconded for duty as an Observer with the Royal Flying Corps and appointed Flying Officer on the 3 November 1916. He later learnt to fly on BE's with 13 Squadron RFC and then joined

43 Squadron. He took command of 43 Squadron on the 6 March 1917, after Major Sholto Douglas was injured after hitting a horse



Maj. Alan Sidney Whitehorn Dore DSO

on take-off. After over two years with the RFC, on the 7 November 1918 he was restored to the establishment of the Worcestershire Regiment and on the 4 February 1919 he was transferred to the Army unemployed list. On the 19 March 1930 Lieut-Colonel Dore, raised and was given command of 604 (County of Middlesex) Squadron, Auxiliary Air Force. He was given the rank of Squadron Leader (Honorary Wing Commander). He commanded the squadron, who later flew Blenheim night-fighters during the Battle of Britain, until the 8 April 1935. On the 1 June 1936 he was appointed to the General List in the rank of Wing Commander.

With the rapid expansion of the flying services during the war, tradesmen with appropriate or transferable skills were recruited from within the services and as direct entrants from civilian life. Soldiers from the regiment were among some of the earliest of those recruited to serve in the new Flying Corps. They were employed as tradesmen and on general duties, as air mechanics, engine

fitters, riggers, carpenters and armourers as well as drivers, clerks, store men and regimental duties, they did exceedingly well in their new roles. The first Worcestershire soldier to transfer to the RFC was 5858 Pte John Smith of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion. He became Number 900 Air Mechanic Class 2 (AM 2) transferring on 6 May 1913. As RFC numbering began with the number 1, he was in fact the 900<sup>th</sup> man to join the RFC. He later became a founding member of the RAF, the 1918 RAF Muster Roll showing him as a Chief Mechanic (Technical Flt/Sgt) Armourer. Interestingly the second man to join the RFC was also a John Smith, 12015 Pte J. Smith of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, he became Number 954 AM 1, transferring on 30 May 1913. Ignominiously he deserted in June 1914. Both of these men and 11257 Pte T. C. Lock of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, who transferred on the 2 May 1914 and who by 1918 was 1348 Sergeant T. C. Lock (Carpenter), were all very early entrants to the RFC. This is put into context when seen alongside the strength of the RAF at the armistice, when it totalled 292,175 officers and men. Sgt Lock stayed in the RAF after the war and was awarded the RAF LS&GC Medal in 1926.

In all nearly 300 Officers and men of the Worcestershire Regiment served with the RFC and the RAF. Through those men that had served in both services, the Worcestershire Regiment and the Royal Air Force have enjoyed a close relationship and as the RAF reaches and celebrates its Centenary, the regiment can be justifiably proud of the part it has played and the significant contribution made to its success.



Royal Aircraft Factory B.E.2c

# The British C-in-C's Mission to the Soviet Forces in Germany (BRIXMIS)

*Only two members of the regiment were fortunate enough to serve with this unique unit. Here Major John Parry MBE recalls his enjoyable tour with it.*

At the end of the Second World War Germany was divided into four zones of occupation: British, French, American and Russian, and in 1946 military liaison missions were set up in these zones. The three Western powers each established a Mission House at Potsdam in the Soviet zone, and the Russians did the same in the Western zones.

In the early stages after the war there was some goodwill between GSFG (Group of Soviet Forces in Germany) and the Western missions but, after the start of the Cold War and the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961, relations turned more frosty. As a result the Western missions became information-gathering agencies.

When I was posted to Berlin as a tour officer in 1963 Brixmis had a strength of about thirty Army and RAF officers and NCOs plus clerical support and mechanics to service the tour cars which were Opel Kapitans.

An Army tour team normally consisted of an officer, NCO and Cpl driver, all unarmed and without a radio. Their task was to observe Soviet and East German ground exercises and their equipment, and to watch for any signs of large-scale movement near the border which might indicate an invasion of Western Europe. Tours usually lasted 2-3 days, including staying out overnight. They had general freedom of movement except



A RASC driver and NCO on tour.

where restrictive signs denied access on some roads or warned of a permanently restricted area. Entry into the latter might result in the tour officer having his Soviet pass withdrawn and having to leave Brixmis.

Apart from the Western mission staff in Potsdam, a WO and NCO, all Brixmis members lived in West Berlin. Before a tour team could enter the Soviet zone cars were halted at the Glienicke Bridge on the edge of the city where passes were checked. From there, apart from calling at the mission house, tour teams were on their own. As the Chief of Mission, Brigadier Douglas Darling, put it to me on my arrival in Berlin "When you cross that bridge you are at war".

The Soviet zone covered a large area stretching from Rostock on the Baltic to Dresden in the south. East and West lay the Polish border and West Germany. Sometimes East

German 'narks', either VOPO (Volkspolizie) or STASI (Secret Police), were waiting to follow our cars and disrupt the tour plans. Fortunately our Opel Kapitans had cross-country tyres and strengthened chassis, so we were usually able to 'lose' them in difficult terrain where the 'narks' in their smart West German Mercedes could not venture.

On one of my tours we observed a Soviet divisional exercise in winter. We first saw a sentry at a road junction, followed a few miles later by another. This was a sure sign of an impending exercise, as the Russians relied on them to show units the right direction of movement - they never seemed to use maps. Just before dark we heard in the distance the growl of engines starting up and before long we knew that a tank division was moving south along roads and tracks on an advance to contact exercise. No enemy was involved. Night fell and we had to keep the exercise under observation, but the snow was lying thick and soon we became bogged down on a side track. Fortunately tours always carried a hand winch and chain, and after about half an hour we extricated ourselves and continued to follow the exercise. Apart from a short break at 0200 hours to give the driver a rest after fifteen hours driving, we continued to try to identify the tanks, self-propelled guns and other units and vehicles by getting as close to them as possible without being rammed or becoming bogged down again. By dawn the division had covered several miles and we had not seen any breakdowns or 'lost' vehicles – quite an achievement for the division. Eventually the forward elements reached an autobahn which marked the limits of the exercise. We then started the long drive back to Berlin.

Over the years Brixmis was operational there were at least two unpleasant incidents resulting in injury to its members. An RAF corporal was seriously injured by East German police in Potsdam who fired on him at night, and a Chief of Mission was lucky to survive when his car was rammed and badly damaged. The other Western missions each had at least one member killed: a French warrant officer was killed when his car was deliberately rammed by an East German truck which had been intentionally driven across the central reservation of an autobahn, and a US officer was shot and killed by a sentry near a tank firing range.

The Western missions ceased to operate soon after the Berlin wall came down in 1989. Life in Brixmis had been unusually interesting and exciting and I don't suppose any of us would have missed it for the world. In my case it was my final army posting and I entered civilian life with wonderful memories of a unique experience.

**We hope you have enjoyed reading this and thank you for your continued support.**

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**'The Worcestershire Soldier', The Mercian Regiment Museum (Worcestershire)**

Worcester City Art Gallery and Museum, 40 Foregate St, Worcester, WR1 1DT.

Tel. 01905 25381. 10.30am – 4.30pm Mon-Sat (closed Sun and Bank Holidays)

*"The Friends exists to help the museum to record, preserve and display the history and traditions of The Worcestershire Regiment, its predecessors and successors from 1694 to the present day including the deeds and sacrifices of those who have and are serving in it"*, to join, or for further information please email [museummercian@btconnect.com](mailto:museummercian@btconnect.com) or 01905 721982.