

The Lanarkshire Yeomanry Group Newsletter

December 2012



Recent Passings

We were saddened to learn of the deaths of three lovely people connected to the Lanarkshire Yeomanry. The sudden death of Anne Marshall, the wife of John Marshall of the 155th came as a shock to John and the family. Anne had been John's bedrock all his life and the unexpectedness of her passing made it even worse.

Another family to receive a shock was that of Bob McCrum of Addiewell in West Calder. We last met Bob in August when he and his daughter Ella made the journey through to Motherwell to take part in the VJ Day Service held at the Civic Centre. Although frail, Bob had been in good fettle and his death in November after a short illness came as a shock. His obituary was initially carried in the Scotsman and the West Lothian Courier and Bob would have been amused at the subsequent stooshie when the Herald Scotland sent us a rather huffy email complaining that they had not been sent a copy! The Herald then published an Obituary only for the Hamilton Advertiser to contact us and ask why they hadn't been told! They later also carried a story about Bob. All these obituaries can be accessed on the internet. Although an acknowledgement of the worth of men like Bob, it is something which continually saddens and annoys us that national newspapers are all too happy to carry obituaries of those amazing men but show little interest in them when they are still alive.



Bob McCrum

Bob had been one of A Battery which did not go with B and C Batteries to Malaya but instead had been sent north to Quetta in India where he and others had been attached to the famed Chindits. A year or so ago, on visiting Bob at his home, he regaled us with amusing stories about the contrary mules that the Chindits used to transport their weapons and equipment when operating behind the Japanese lines in the jungles of Burma. Having since read Bernard Fergusson's book, *Beyond the Chindwin*, we realise now that the experience was no joke!



Pat Campbell

Yet another of our veterans has gone with the death of Pat Campbell at the beginning of December. Pat had become increasingly unsteady on his feet and stumbled while leaving Church. Sadly, he later passed away in hospital. He had never really got over the death last year of his wife, Margaret.

Pat was a gentleman who patiently and kindly endured hours of questioning and along with Tom McKie and Tom Hannah, was one of the invaluable and key sources in our quest for information about the 155th in the Far East. We will greatly miss his quiet good humour.

His goodness and tenacity was highlighted earlier this year when we first heard of the crucifix which he had doggedly held onto and looked after while on the Death Railway and in later POW camps.

The crucifix is now displayed in the Thai-Burma Railway POW Museum at Kanburi and is a fitting memorial to Pat and the others who slaved as POWs of the Japanese.

In Remembrance

Since our last newsletter, we have participated in a number of events held to commemorate members of the armed forces who served their country faithfully in past conflicts and who often made the ultimate sacrifice.

On the 15 August, VJ Day, more often known as the FEPOW Day, was commemorated at the Far East memorial at the Civic Centre in Motherwell. The event was very well attended by veterans of the Lanarkshire Yeomanry and other units and by the families of those of the Regiment who are no longer with us. The service, conducted again by the Rev Paul Grant from Stonehouse, was as moving and memorable as that given by him at Newmains in February. Thereafter wreaths were laid by the Provosts of both South and North Lanarkshire Councils and Col. David Cranstoun representing the Lord Lieutenant. Betty Gwillim and Margaret Kelso, whose late husbands both served with the 155th in the Far East, laid a wreath on behalf of the Lanarkshire Yeomanry and family members laid poppy crosses in memory of their loved ones.



Back row L-R Peter Corrigan, Richard Smith, George Adam, Betty Gwillim, Tom McKie
Seated Tom Hannah, Bob McCrum

Service of Remembrance at Carluke

The week before Remembrance Sunday, we were invited to the opening of a Garden of Remembrance at the Market Place in Carluke, the idea of Provost Eileen Logan, who is also a local councillor.

This was the first time such an event had been held in Carluke but from the numbers and reaction of those attending, it will surely not be the last.



Some of the crosses which were laid at Carluke



Gunner William Barrie

Remembrance Sunday

On Remembrance Sunday, Tom McKie of the 155th laid a wreath proudly displaying the emblem of the Lanarkshire Yeomanry at a Remembrance Service in Birmingham.

At Hamilton, Tom Gordon, whose uncle, also Tom Gordon, served with the 155th and died as a POW on Taiwan laid a similar wreath on behalf of the Lanarkshire Yeomanry.

Meanwhile, at Motherwell another wreath was laid by Anne Gilmour, daughter of the late William Barrie who was also with the 155th. William slaved in the copper mine at Kinkaseki until February 1945 when he was one of a group sent to Japan to work in the Omine coal mine.

Like many POWs who survived Japanese captivity, William was bedevilled by poor health when he returned home. This culminated in a leg amputation - a direct result of injuries received while a slave of the Japanese.

Proposed Memorials to the Men of the Regiment

The wheels grind slowly but inexorably towards our goal of having the men of the Lanarkshire Yeomanry recognised in the County of the Regiment's origin. We are grateful for the interest and support shown by so many people, not least the Provost of South Lanarkshire, Eileen Logan, who is determined to have a Memorial to the Lanarkshire Yeomanry located in the garden area of the Market Place in Carluke. This would be very appropriate as the Regiment was formed in 1819 by Norman Lockhart who lived just outside the village at Lee Castle. In addition, there is already within the Market Place a memorial to Carluke's VC winners, one of whom was Lanarkshire Yeoman, Sgt Thomas Caldwell who was awarded his VC while serving with the 12th Battalion (Ayr and Lanark Yeomanry) RSF on the Western Front during WW1. We would be keen to have a similar, albeit smaller memorial, to that of the VC winners and have had preliminary discussions with James Mullen, Lanark Memorials, the stonemason responsible for its design and sculpting. A proof image of the proposed Memorial is shown alongside and we would value your comments on design or wording.



The wording shown is

“In Memory of the Men of the Lanarkshire Yeomanry who Faithfully Served Their Country Over the Years 1819 - 1956.
We're no awa tae bide awa”. (taken from the Regimental song.)



Our initial order of 100 Remembrance badges was bought up so quickly that we have had to ask Michael Hurst to provide us with a further supply. These have now arrived and are available at £2 per badge + £1 P&P. All proceeds will go towards the Memorial Fund. Everyone who has already purchased badges has commented on their beauty and quality and, once again, we would like to thank Michael for his efforts on our behalf.

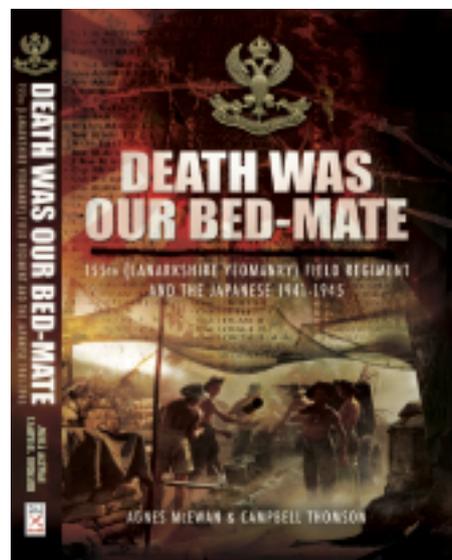
Service of Remembrance February 2013

Looking forward to next year, we are planning an event to be held at Newmains on Sunday 10th February to once again remember the fall of Singapore and its aftermath. All being well, we hope that some of our veterans will be able to join us.

Death Was Our Bed-Mate – the 155th (Lanarkshire Yeomanry) Field Regiment and the Japanese 1941-45.

We are regularly being asked about our story of the Men of the 155th and their experience in the Far East and as POWs and can confirm that we are at the last stages in the process. Final proofs will shortly be completed after which the book can go into print ready for publishing. The date set by the Publisher, Pen and Sword, is 20th March 2013 but we are hoping for an earlier release in February to coincide with the anniversary of the Fall of Singapore. Having said that, it amuses us to see that the book is already advertised for sale – or to be totally accurate, pre-order, on Amazon. Such is the power of the internet distributor!

The book will, of course, also be available direct from Pen and Sword.



Lanarkshire Yeomanry Veterans in the News

In recent months, two former members of the Regiment have seldom been out of the news.

In August, Andy Coogan released his book – ***Tomorrow You Die*** – to immediate recognition and acclaim. The book is an excellent account of the early life and wartime experience of this amazing man and can be obtained from bookshops and on the internet at Amazon. Sadly, Andy's success was marred by the sudden and tragic death of his son-in-law, Derek Hoy, and we remember the family at this sad time.

Tom McKie was also to the fore when he appeared on the BBC 2 TV remembrance series in the week running up to Remembrance Day. We have since been advised by the team who made the series, that the item about Tom was one of the most talked about.

Spreading the Word

Over the past few months we have been busy in telling the story of the Men of the Lanarkshire Yeomanry. First with Clyde Valley Rotary – particularly apt as one of the club's founders was Tom Collins who as a Gunner with the 155th fought in the Far East and was held as a POW on Taiwan. He was originally from Dumfries and was well known to his fellow gunners as having worked with the '50 bob tailors' before being called up. After the war, Tom settled in Larkhall in Lanarkshire where he ran a successful drapers' business.

Another interesting venue was at the Strathaven and District PROBUS Club. The small Lanarkshire market town had been home to the 156th (Lanarkshire Yeomanry) Field Regiment and many a Strathaven lassie found a husband from their ranks. In addition, one of the club members was able to recount past experiences while working after the war with Sammy Frew, a character of some note who had served with the 155th.

Once again we participated in the Lanarkshire Museums Forum Open Day when the many independent museums and historical groups located throughout Lanarkshire set up a display at Low Parks Museum in Hamilton. This allowed us to use and display our new 'pop-up' banners which we were able to commission with the help of a small grant from South Lanarkshire Council. The banners have proved to be a valuable and informative addition to our displays and exhibitions. As part of a series of events held at Summerlee Museum in Coatbridge by our friends in the Lanarkshire Family History Society, we were invited to put on show some of the many artefacts about the Regiment which we have either been donated or have managed to acquire privately in recent years.



Our display at Low Parks Museum, Hamilton

The display was supported by a talk on the history of the Regiment and, once again, their exploits during WW2 was the part that most folks attending wanted to hear about.

Throughout 2013, as part of a major cultural event – ***Celebrating Lanarkshire 2013*** - the Lanarkshire Yeomanry will feature prominently in a display being held at Low Parks Museum to celebrate and recognise the culture, nature and history of the people of Lanarkshire. Our contribution, entitled – **Respect and Dis-Respect** - will centre on the attitude and loyalty of the men towards their Regiment and comrades contrasted with the treatment meted out to those of the 155th while POWs of the Japanese.

Imperial Yeomanry Banner Moves On.

Last year the British Army handed into our care a Lanarkshire Imperial Yeomanry banner, or flag, which for as long as anyone could remember had hung in the Officers Mess at the Scottish Division at Craigiehall near Edinburgh.

The banner has now been donated to the Burgh of Lanark Museum who will display it in their exhibition area in the YMCA building at 29 Bloomgate, Lanark.

In 1900, following the beginning of the Boer war, volunteers were called for to serve with the Imperial Yeomanry and thirty men from the Lanark area, along with volunteers from the Ayrshire Yeomanry, made up the 17th Company of the 6th Battalion of Imperial Yeomanry which saw action in South Africa. The banner commemorates this service and it is appropriate that it should now return to Lanark.



The Lanarkshire Imperial Yeomanry Banner

Gifts and Donations

We would like to record our sincere thanks and appreciation to the following people for the generous and kind donations recently given towards a Memorial fund .

Mrs E. Brown, John Byers, Derek Coleman, Audrey Douglas, Angela Lane, Blyth Mitchell, Jean Thomson, George Tominey and Strathaven PROBUS Club.

During a recent charity event held on behalf of St Andrew's Hospice, we auctioned the snooker cue donated to us by John Higgins, the snooker champion. The winning bid was £160 and we shared this with the Hospice. So far, without a formal appeal having been established, we have been gifted over £2000 towards the cost of a Memorial!

Another special gift was that of a cavalry officer's sword donated by Mrs Margaret Dale from Rigside near Douglas. The sword, which had been in the family for many years, has long links with the Lanarkshire Yeomanry and after conservation by Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum will be on display along with the uniform of Lt Col Fasson during the ***Celebrating Lanarkshire 2013*** event to be held at Low Parks Museum.

South Shields Reunion

In September we attended the annual reunion for Taiwan Veterans at South Shields. The event was initiated some years ago by Michael Hurst with the co-operation of Eileen Bacon. Unfortunately Michael has been unable to attend in recent years but Eileen has continued the tradition with the help of friends and family.

It is always a pleasure and inspiration to meet with the Veterans and the families of deceased Taiwan POWs.

This year we learned that Ken Pett, formerly 80th Anti Tank Regiment, a veteran of Kinkaseki and Kukutsu, intended to visit Japan with his daughter and son-in-law. While there, they visited the War Graves Cemetery at Yokohama and laid flowers at the graves of the five men from the 155th who died in Japan. All five men had been moved from camps in Taiwan in February 1945 and were medically unfit to make the journey. Ken's son-in-law, Mike Heather took photographs of the graves and kindly passed them on to us.



Ken Pett at the grave of one of his comrades.



*Captain
Michael Anderson*



*Bombardier
Thomas F. Donnelly*



*Lance Bombardier
Harold Askew*



*Lance Bombardier
John C. Farmer*



*Gunner
Ernest Barnes*

Contact us:

agnes.dougan@live.com

2 Castle View, Newmains, ML29PQ

01698 382330

campbell.thomson@live.co.uk

07870140357