



## **Gibraltar: Challenge, Change & Continuity**

The Friends of Gibraltar Oral History Project (1930 to 1970)

**Clarke, Eddie (Ser 217 / IWM 026579R05-06-07-08)**

### Object description

British NCO served with 1st Bn Cameronians in GB, Gibraltar, Italy, Hong Kong and Malaya, 1946-1951; served as instructor with Lowland Brigade Training Centre in GB, 1951-1953; NCO served with 1st Bn Black Watch in Korea, 1953; served with 1st Bn Royal Scots in Korea, 1953-1954; served with 156 Transit Camp, Port Fouad, Egypt, 1954-1956; served with 1st Bn Cameronians in Germany and GB, 1956; served as instructor at Cameronians Regimental Depot, Lanark, GB, 1956-1958; served as recruiting sergeant in GB, 1958-1960; served with 1st Bn Cameronians in Germany, 1960-1963; served as drill instructor with Junior Tradesmen Regt in GB, 1963-1968

### Content description

REEL 1 Recollections of background in Hamilton, 1928-1945: social circumstances; education; football activities; newspaper round; outbreak of war, 3/9/1939; impact of Churchill speeches; German air raids and evacuees from Clydebank area; 'baffle' walls to reduce bomb blast; minimal effect of rationing; following progress of war; training with Hamilton Sqdn, Air Training Corp, RAF at Hamilton Academy, 1944-1945, including interest in RAF, instructors, drill, flights at airfield camps, aircraft recognition training and navigation; boxing activities; background to decision not to enlist in RAF; VE Day celebrations, 8/5/1945; apprenticeship as carpenter, 1942-1945; volunteering to join Cameronian Rifles, 10/1945. REEL 2 Continues: Recollections of conditions of service, lifestyle and daily routine with 26th Infantry Training Centre, Gordon Barracks, Aberdeen, 1/1946-2/1946: reasons for joining CR; train journey from Glasgow; reception; hut accommodation; food rations; drill; rifle training and cleaning; Bren gun; PT and consequent discharges on medical grounds; lectures; route marches; preparing for kit inspections; relationship with recruits, instructors and officers. REEL 3 Continues: story of washing plate sin soup Dixie; passing out parade and issue of Cameronian badge. Recollections of continuation training at Hayton Camp, Aberdeen, 2/1946-5/1946: laying out kit for inspection; outdoor ablutions; relationship with instructors and story of fight with corporal; PT including log drill, assault courses, developing team spirit, cross country runs

and route marches; training in hand grenades, Sten gun, 2" mortar and PIAT; section tactical training; recreational visits to Aberdeen and relationship with civilians. REEL 4 Continues: live ammunition exercises on moors; opinion of training; bayonet training; final inspection; leave and family reactions to enlistment. Period with 10th Holding Bn at Annan, 6/1946-7/1946. Period detached to HMS Warren Shore Station, Largs, 7/1946-8/1946: prior rumours; role clearing ammunition washed up on beaches. Assisting farmers during period with 10th Holding Bn at Dundonald Camp, 8/1946-9/1946. Period with C Coy, 1st Bn, CR at Nook Camp, Warminster, 9/1946-2/1947: state of unit; role acting as demonstration battalion for School of Infantry; duties in rifle range butts; opinion of officers, NCOs, ORs and National Servicemen; demonstrations of river crossing and attack on Imber village. REEL 5 Continues: severe winter conditions and foraging for fuel, 1/1947; handing over to Seaforth Highlanders; packing kit. Voyage aboard Almanzora to Gibraltar, 2/1947: hammocks; troop deck inspections; lectures; recreations; question of seasickness. Recollections of period guarding German POW camp and based at Little Bay Camp, Gibraltar, 2/1947-4/1947: cases of German POW suicide; relationship with German POWs; opinion of Colonel Eric Brickman and his role in conversion of POW camp to open camp and accelerating repatriation of German POWs; hut accommodation; introduction of sheets for bedding; routine duties and training; sports activities; permission to wear civilian clothes; visits to bars and fights; recreations. REEL 6 Continues: recreational visits to Spain including visa procedure, question of brothels and VD, bars, licensing hours and relationship with Spanish civilians; success of battalion's concert party under Company Quartermaster Sergeant Billy Fulton; canteen. Period at Four Corners Camp, ca 4/1948-12/1948: barrack accommodation; guard duties on headquarters and Governor's House; working parties unloading ammunition and rations in docks; training with potential NCOs' cadre; promotion to corporal. REEL 7 Continues: organisation of barrack room cleaning details; relationship with ORs; lectures to corporals and opinion Regimental Sergeant Major George Ellwood; corporals' mess; drinking habits; opinion of various battalion characters including Rifleman Joe Armit, Rifleman William Macauley, CSM Galbraith, Sergeant Docherty and Captains Quartermaster Bruce, R B Bruce and Boddington; attitude to promotion; background to taking over from detachment of Parachute Regt aboard ships carrying Jewish refugees turned back from Palestine including filthy state of ship and use of strict discipline to re-establish order. REEL 8 Continues: background to taking over from detachment of Parachute Regt aboard ships carrying Jewish refugees turned back from Palestine including checks for underwater sabotage, supervising cleaning of ship, return of Parachute Regt detachment and return of ship to Germany; story of being reprimanded over accusation of warning new corporal of guard of approach of officer; story of being reprimanded for allowing member of guard party to leave post; story of lying to CSM to protect rifleman attempting to evade fatigue party and consequent loss of rank; duties as servant to RSM George Ellwood and reactions to demotion; opinion of Major A C Mackinnon; preparations for move under control of Quartermaster Captain Bruce. Recollections of period at Trieste Barracks, Italy, 12/1948-12/1949: opinion of

Colonel Buchannan-Dunlop and his initial refusal to accept condition of new barracks being handed over by 1st Bn, Royal Scots; prior voyage aboard Lancashire; state of barracks; local 'bora' wind; initial acclimatisation period confined to barracks; promotion to corporal; visits to NAAFI canteen. REEL 9 Continues: cadre course and subsequent leave in GB on original promotion to corporal; role of British Element Trieste Force and attached Italian police; patrols on Morgan frontier line; company tactical training arrangements; company on stand by duty for internal security duties; relationship with other British units; period of combined operations and rest at Duiao; firing camp ain Schmeltz, Austria; food rations; story of temporary arrest for drunkenness during night out in Willac; recreations in Trieste; soldier arrested for rape; hernia operation. Voyage to Hong Kong, 12/1949: send off; route and visits ashore. Recollections of period on company detachment at Sacred Hill Camp, New Territories, Hong Kong, 12/1949-6/1950: nature of camp; Chinese graves. REEL 10 Continues: observation post duty and patrols on Chinese border; illicit visits to Chinese village; minimal recreational facilities; opinion of RSM Bowman and his weekly inspection parades at Fan Ling Camp; train journey on recreational visits to Kowloon and Hong Kong Island; death and funeral of Corporal Wilkie; PT. Recollections of operations in South Johore, Malaya, 6/1950-12/1950: prior briefing at Nee Soon Camp, Singapore; opinion of Colonel Bill Henning; prior company detachment for jungle training at Tampoi including laying ambushes, booby traps, drill when ambushed and opinion of instructors; rejoining unit at Muar; C Coy detachment on Craigielea rubber plantation including tent accommodation, barbed wire defences and patrols; shortage of soldiers due to recruitment problems; 3 day patrols under command of Sergeant Danny Brown including jungle green uniform and equipment issued. REEL 11 Continues: three day patrols under command of Sergeant Brown including adapted Lee Enfields, refusal to use Sten with silencer, inadequate maps, removal of rank insignia, single file formation and role of leading soldier Rifleman Willy McLoughlan, hand signals, dense jungle conditions, importance of silence, night bivouacs and changing uniform, leeches, Tommy cookers, food rations and snakes; baths; increasing length of patrols; story of catching Chinese Malayan camp worker spying on briefing and his subsequent execution; question of Malayan insurgents methods of getting support local Malayan villagers; opinion of Sergeant Danny Brown and CSM John Dalzeil; question of changing and drying uniform on patrol; story of clash with Malayan insurgents during jungle patrol including first warning, decision to attack and casualties Riflemen Holland and Vallance. REEL 12 Continues: story of clash with Malayan insurgents during jungle patrol including wireless reports of clash, question of carrying out corpses; story of prior accidental discharge of gun and punishment of subsequent casualties Riflemen Holland and Vallance; policy of photographing Malayan corpses for identification purposes; post-combat reaction and personal morale; role of Dyak trackers and story of one beheading corpses of Malayan terrorists during patrol; question of extension of tour of duty; failure of attempts to set ambush in jungle; company patrol on Mount Ophir including situation, terrain and evidence of former occupation by Malayan insurgents; relationship with Ghurkhas of 26 Bde; question of Malayan snipers; malaria

attack during voyage back to GB on LIAP leave, 12/1951. Leave in GB, 12/1950-3/1951. Period as instructor with Lowland Brigade Training Centre at Dreghorn Camp, Edinburgh and Regimental Depot, Lanark, 3/1951-4/1953: organisation of basic training; hut accommodation; establishing strict disciplinary standards and relationship with recruits. REEL 13 Continues: marriage; reorganisation of unit and move to Lanark; attending civil defence course at Millom Camp; success in boxing competition; question of Roman Catholic background and existence of Protestant bias within CR; reactions to posting to 1st Bn, Royal Scots at Dreghorn Camp, Edinburgh prior to active service in Korea. Recollections of service with 1st Bn, Royal Scots in Korea, 4/1953-4/1954: voyage out with advance party, 4/1953; move into front line sector and attachment to 1st Bn, Black Watch including Chinese mortar fire and infantry attack, reconnaissance patrols, nature of trenches and rat problem; declaration of peace whilst unit was moving into line; transfer to Assault Pioneer Platoon, Headquarters Coy; lack of experience in assault pioneer role; initial disciplinary problems within platoon. REEL 14 Continues: actions to resolve disciplinary problems within platoon; digging Kansas defence line including use of explosive charges and wooded kits; story of clashes with drunken NCOs during New Years Eve celebrations and subsequent court martial and clearance on charges of grievous bodily harm, 31/12/1953; transfer to C Coy; recreations; leave in Tokyo, Japan including hospitality of British civilians and rugby match. REEL 15 Continues: leave in Tokyo, Japan including rugby match and recreations; background to request to return to CR; relationship with NCOs and sergeants' mess; relationship with US NCOs. Period with 156 Transit Camp, Port Fouad, Egypt, 5/1954-4/1956: prior journey from Korea with advance party from Royal Scots; role as quartermaster; relationship with Egyptian civilians; sergeants' mess; period as MT sergeant; question of wife coming out to Egypt; hockey activities; story of Defence Platoon commanded by CR officer and NCO; story of murder of Sergeant Acklew; story of missing flight in aircraft that subsequently crashed; voyage back to GB, 4/1956. Periods of leave and at Regimental Depot, Lanark, 4/1956-7/1956. REEL 16 Continues: Recollections of period with 1st Bn CR at Buxtehude Barracks, Germany and Redford Barracks, Edinburgh, ca 7/1956-8/1956: reversion to corporal on joining unit; opinion of Colonel Duncan Carter-Campbell; barrack accommodation; roles as training NCO in checking weapons; attending weapons instructors course at Small Arms School, Hythe; opinion of SLR rifle and Sterling sub-machine gun; rejoining unit in Edinburgh; posting to D Coy; opinion of Major John Baynes; story of guard duties at Edinburgh Castle; reaction to possible overseas posting to Africa. Period as instructor at CR Regimental Depot, Lanark, ca 8/1956-2/1958: promotion to sergeant; monitoring recruits' progress. REEL 17 Continues: attending drill course at Guards Depot, Pirbright including necessity of acclimatising as light infantryman to infantry drill; daily inspections, sergeants' mess, assessment and differences between guards and light infantry drill. Period as recruiting sergeant based at Army Information Office at Hamilton, 2/1958-5/1960: circumstances of posting; status as information office; touring Lanarkshire; liaison with youth employment officers; procedure on enlistment of recruit; question of quality of recruits. REEL 18

Continues: question of quality of recruits; married quarters in Winston Barracks, Lanark; sergeants' mess. Recollections of period with C Coy, 1st Bn, CR at Elizabeth Barracks, Minden, Germany, 6/1940-8/1963: joining unit at Glencourse Barracks, Edinburgh; company tactical exercises at Sennelager training area; signals training on 28 wireless sets; map training; use of armoured personnel carriers; rifle range at Sennelager; married quarters; routine duties; opinion of Lieutenant David Ashley; measures to improve quality of platoon and dismissal of worst soldiers from army; pay system; winter routine; social life and Neuve Chapelle ball. REEL 19 Continues: exercises in Soltau training area including increasing liaison with artillery, advance in APCs, platoon exercises, tank support question of air support, story of commanding successful platoon exercises, use of smoke mortar bombs, importance of flexibility in tactics, story of dispute between Colonel Kit Harper and brigadier over repeated river exercise, relationship with 3rd Royal Tank Regt and story of silent approach of their Centurion tanks during exercise; story of court martial of soldiers from Lancashire Fusiliers of mutiny and consequent Minister of War John Profumo investigation into press arrangements; arrival of press after onset of 'Profumo affair'; question of reputation of CR and misunderstanding originating nickname of 'Poisoned Dwarfs'; opinion of Colonel Reggie Kettles and his attitude to press; story of meeting journalist who originated nickname 'Poisoned Dwarfs'. REEL 20 Continues: story of meeting journalist who originated nickname 'Poisoned Dwarfs'; relationship with German civilians; story of deteriorating relationship with company commander and consequent poor confidential report and background to leaving unit. Recollections of period as drill instructor with Cassell Coy, Junior Tradesmen Regt at Troon, 8/1963-8/1968: purpose and nature of unit; reasons for accepting posting and reactions to leaving CR; organisation and composition of unit; basic training programme; opinion of Colonel Hogg; coaching boxing team; question of promotion and decision not to return to CR; success in drill competitions and value of Guards drill course; relationship with recruits; leave; night duty in huts. REEL 21 Continues: night duty in huts; composition of training staff; reactions to news of CR disbandment; council house provided for family; attending ceremony on disbandment of CR, 5/1968; leaving army, 6/1968. Post-service career: carpentry course; running catering van; rejection as unsuitable for probationary service; value of military service as prison officer; story of rejected application to learn to fly with Army Air Corps, ca 1962; learning to fly as civilian pilot, ca 1970; membership of Cameronian Rifles Regimental Assoc and role maintaining CR memorial plot at Westminster Abbey, 1999-2003.

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