



Gibraltar: Challenge, Change & Continuity

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

Name Withheld 01 (Ser 222 / IWM 033350R23-24)

Object description

British NCO served with 1st Bn Black Watch in GB, Germany, Korea, Kenya, Cyprus, Oman and Northern Ireland, 1950-1977; civilian Yeoman Warder at the Tower of London, 1979-1999

Content description

REEL 1: Background in GB, 1933-1950: born in Potters Bar, Hertfordshire; childhood in Stanmore, Middlesex; family; father's service with police force; education; evacuated with sister, to north Wales, 1943; opinion of billets; various memories of wartime period in Stanmore; air raids shelter in garden; food rationing; awareness of progress of war; brother's service with Black Watch in Burma; returned to Stanmore, 1944; clothing; VE Day celebrations, 1945; left school at 14; training with Army Cadets; employment as photographer's runner with Planet News in Fleet Street, London; employment as printer; family moved to Ramsgate; reason for enlisting; father's service during First World War; reason for joining Black Watch; enlistment process in Canterbury; train journey to Inverness. Aspects of training at Highland Brigade Training Centre, Fort George, Scotland, 18/Sep/1950-11/Feb/1951: arrival and first day. REEL 2 Continues: daily routine; messing arrangements; washing eating utensils; issued with uniform; cleaning kit and equipment; opinion of accommodation; washing clothes; regimental history; opinion of food; inspections; cleaning pull-through; story of punishment for dirty fire-grate; cleaning gymnasium; attitude to army life and discipline; background of other recruits; recreational activities; issued with Highland dress; off-duty activities in Inverness; relations with local civilians. REEL 3 Continues: description of 18-weeks basic training; weapons training and tactical exercises; camouflage; final tests; organisation of squads and role of NCOs; awarded marksman badge; map reading; physical training; route marches; sporting activities; physical condition; care of feet; issued with own rifle; cleaning of rifle; Bren gun and bayonet practice; passing out parade; description of Highland dress; attitude to physical fitness; posted to Cameron Barracks, Inverness, 12/1950; amusing story of whitewashing pigsties at Fort George; drafted to 1st Bn Black Watch, 2/1951. REEL 4 Continues: guard duties. Aspects of operations with 1st Bn Black Watch in Berlin, Germany, 2/1951-4/1952: attitude to posting; description of travelling through Russian

zone; transport system; recreational activities in Berlin; opinion of accommodation and food; sporting activities; training as driver in Land Rover; maintenance of vehicle; guard duty at barracks; further infantry training; duties at King's birthday parade; story of punishment for oil stain on uniform; training on 2-inch mortar and Sten gun; problem of ammunition shortage; grenades; story of Russian tank battalion; guard duties at Spandau Prison. REEL 5 Continues: further training as driver; passed driving tests; description of duties as driver; maintenance of vehicle; educational classes and qualifications; relations with German civilians; living conditions in Berlin; rationing and black market; use of American PX facilities; home leave; daily routine and duties with Motor Transport section; restrictions on movement; reaction to being drafted to Korea. Aspects of period in GB, 4-5/1952: returned to camp in Crail, Scotland, 4/1952; engagement; public attitude to Korean War; training for operations in Korea.; sailed aboard troop ship from Southampton, 5/1952; description of voyage; daily routine aboard ship; opinion of food; shore leave in Ceylon, Singapore and Hong Kong. REEL 6 Continues: weapons training and physical training aboard ship; cleaning weapons; lectures. Aspects of operations with 1st Bn Black Watch in Korea, 6/1952-7/1953: moved into training camp; accommodation; uniform; further training; patrols; attached to signal platoon; laying and repairing lines at night; problem of reading French labels on lines; danger of walking into mine fields; duties as Special Delivery Service driver; allocated a heated Land Rover. REEL 7 Continues: description of trenches on Hill 159; disposal of food tins; problem of rats; opinion of compo rations; traded cigarettes for chocolate; water supplies; personal hygiene; problem of washing and shaving in winter; summer and winter uniforms; problem of using latrines in winter; rum ration; terrain around Hill 159; defensive positions; stand to; story of cards and banners left by Chinese for Black Watch; attitude to use of propaganda; description of accommodation in dugouts (hootchies); method of heating; latrines; night duties; communication with family; parcels from home; problem of snakes; story of CO hunting wild boar. REEL 8 Continues: casualties from shelling; daily routine and duties on Hill 159; problem of dust; driving conditions; personal hygiene; memories of leave in Tokyo; duties as driver with signal platoon; command structure; opinion of officers; HQ command post; army cobbler sewed bodies into blankets; description of rear echelons. REEL 9 Continues: morale in Black Watch; attitude to National Servicemen; story of veteran soldier in signal platoon; reconnaissance mission with advance party along the Hook; collected abandoned kit; reason for wearing American helmets; description of moved into position on The Hook; description of trench system on the Hook; strategic importance of the Hook; description of Chinese attack during Second Battle of the Hook 18-19/11/1952; opinion of tunnel system; use of searchlights on Chinese positions; problem of repairing lines at night; attitude to danger; casualties; problem of Chinese snipers; method of repairing telephone lines; further comments on duties as Special Delivery Service driver; road conditions; opinion of Korean porters REEL 10 Continues: opinion of Turkish troops and other nationalities; theft of personal items; role in operations during First and Second Battles of the Hook, 11/1952; sporting competitions in Commonwealth Division; celebrations for Coronation Day, 6/1953;

casualties in Black Watch; memorial parade at Pusan; description of three week voyage aboard troopship to Kenya; duties in armoury. Aspects of operations with 1st Bn Black Watch in Kenya, 7/1953-4/1955: disembarked Mombassa, Kenya, 7/1953; travelled by train to Nanyuki; accommodation at race course; opinion of Kenyan trackers; rejoined Motor Transport section and promoted lance-corporal; promoted corporal in Delta Coy in charge of company transport; posted to White Highlands camp; patrols; opinion of company commander; nature of patrols in pursuit of Mau Mau insurgents; reaction to atrocities committed by Mau Mau; description of locating and capturing Mau Mau camps; role of Mau Mau women as food carriers; nature of role during Operation Anvil, 4/1954; amusing story of rhino; danger from elephants; wildlife; hunting game. REEL 11 Continues: kit and equipment used on patrols; bandolier with 50 rounds; uniform and boots; issued with slouch hat; number in patrol; description of terrain; billeted in Fort Jericho; sleeping arrangements; memories of pet monkey and sergeant-major's pet baboon; use of tracker dogs; description of battalion scoreboard showing enemy killed and captured; daily duties with Motor Transport section including collecting rations; road accidents; opinion of rations; extra food obtained from villages; washing and personal hygiene; recreational activities; amusing story of gorilla. REEL 12 Continues: story of capturing Mau Mau insurgents and weapons; amusing story of cook shooting rats; story of Scottish soldier deserting; story of losing consciousness due to petrol fumes; various memories of Nairobi; search patrols; opinion of re-education programme in villages; opinion of National Servicemen in Kenya; returned to Scotland, 4/1955; story of striking dockers welcoming back Black Watch; customs; description of train journey to camp at Crail; awarded cash gratuity; period of leave with family in London. REEL 13 Continues: Aspects of period with 1st Bn Black Watch in GB, 4/1955-10/1956: lectures to Army Cadets; story of Kenyan service medal; lack public of interest in Korean War; marriage; reason for leaving army; signed on for seven years with Army Reserve; problem of finding employment; worked at iron foundry; re-enlisted with Black Watch; worked in armoury at Queen's Barracks; duties as drum major in band. Aspects of period with 1st Bn Black Watch in Berlin, Germany, 10/1956-11/1957: re-trained as NCO; duties as corporal with A Coy; infantry training; Cold War exercises; parades; opinion of food and accommodation; moved into married quarters; comparison of life in West and East Berlin. REEL 14 Continues: guard duties at Spandau Prison; memories of seeing Rudolf Hess; duties in charge of section; restrictions on movement in Berlin; further training; travelled by train through Russian sector; returned to GB. Aspects of period with 1st Bn Black Watch in Scotland, GB, 11/1957-11/1958: moved into camp in Edinburgh; accommodation in married quarters; recreational and sporting activities; guard duties; training; duties with Queen's Guard at Balmoral Castle and at Victoria Barracks, Ballater, acted as beater during shoots; various memories of meeting the Queen and Queen Mother; Sunday church parade; social life; opinion of facilities for soldiers; further memories of Queen Mother. REEL 15 Continues: social events attended by Royal Family; comparison of new self-loading rifle and bolt action rifle; training; posted to Tobruk. Aspects of period with B Coy, 1st Bn Black Watch in Tobruk, Libya, 11/1958-

11/1959: attitude to posting; opinion of barracks at RAF camp; guard duties at palace; corporal of guard of honour; description of voyage to Cyprus; problem of seasickness. Aspects of period with B Coy, 1st Bn Black Watch in Cyprus, 1-4/1959: accommodation at Camp Zeros; training and exercises; returned to Scotland, GB, 4/1959. Aspects of period as instructor at Black Watch Regimental Depot, Perth, Scotland, 4/1959-12/1960: accommodation at Queen's Barracks; duties training new recruits; social and family life. Aspects of period with 1st Bn Black Watch in Cyprus, 12/1960-11/1961: duties as platoon corporal with rifle company; training and tactical exercises; REEL 16 Continues: duties as instructor with NCO cadre; trained with sergeant's cadre; living conditions in Cyprus; selected for shooting competition; returned to GB. Aspects of period with 1st Bn Black Watch in Warminster, GB, 11/1961-3/1964: role of 1st Bn as Demonstration Bn; accommodation in camp; training run by School of Infantry; duties as instructor in tactical exercises for junior officers; weekend leave with family; reaction to being promoted sergeant; improvement in pay and conditions; posted to Stirling Castle as platoon sergeant; duties training recruits; six weeks All Arms Drill Course in Purbright; kit inspections; amusing story of adjutant; training and tests; passed out and returned to Stirling Castle; effect of training on recruits; opinion of accommodation; drill square. REEL 17 Continues: co-operation with Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders; duties as acting RSM at Stirling Castle; handed castle over, 22/Nov/1963; organised passing out parade at Fort George; sergeants' mess; story of marching with squad from Fort George to Brigadon Barracks, Aberdeen; recruit training and exercises; squad passed out; opinion of barracks and facilities; posted to Germany. Aspects of period with A Coy 1st Bn Black Watch in Minden, Germany, 3-6/1965: duties as sergeant with rifle company; training; relations with German soldiers and civilians story of attending U-boat commanders convention; accommodation in barracks. REEL 18 Continues: opinion of changes in training methods; vehicle maintenance; appointed musketry sergeant for Bn; weapons training and exercises for cadets; story of applying for post as instructor with Trucial Oman Scouts; six week course in Arabic in Aden; attached to Anglian Regt for training; flew to Oman. Aspects of operations as Recruit Training Sergeant in Oman, 3/1965-3/1967: posted to Recruit Training Depot, Trucial Oman Scouts, Manama; uniform; accommodation; wore sandals without socks; daily routine and duties for recruits; physical training; messing arrangements; weapons training; route marches; opinion of quality of recruits; own servant to do washing; problem of snakes; method of recruitment in villages; problem of communication with guide ('Jungly Jim'); story of cooking goat; water supplies; lemonade powder; opinion of rations; attitude to duties training new recruits. REEL 19 Continues: medical examination of recruits; education; taught English; basic drill and physical training; personal hygiene; care of uniform and kit; attitude of recruits to training; weapons training; religious customs of recruits; reason for sleeping at firing range; competition among recruits; started camera club; film shows; cultural differences; social life and interaction; training programme; assault course; training exercises with Royal Artillery; amusing story of live shell; observance of local customs. REEL 20 Continues: relations between British

troops and recruits; army rations; exercises between British units and recruits; story of sheik's sons; rivalry between tribes; squads drilled in Arabic; story of visit by general; route marches; story of march with recruits to Sharjah. REEL 21 Continues: reaction of recruits to first sight of sea; description of camp; unfamiliarity of recruits with toilets and other modern facilities; story of goat being cooked in bath; passing out parade and recruits posted to different squadrons; returned to GB; home leave; posted to Fort George, Scotland. Aspects of period with A Coy 1st Bn Black Watch in Minden, Germany, 3/1967-2/1968: duties as platoon sergeant; maintenance of armoured vehicles; escape and evasion exercises; inspection of vehicles; training to be colour sergeant; duties as acting sergeant-major; daily routine and training; represented battalion at U-boat commanders convention; escorted married families back to GB; promoted to colour-sergeant. REEL 22 Continues: Aspects of period with A Coy 1st Bn Black Watch in Scotland, GB, 1968: posted to Kirknewton; duties as colour-sergeant; liaison with quartermaster; problem of absenteeism; recreational activities; company exercises; training on rifle ranges; story of visit by CO; role of A Coy during Edinburgh Tattoo; story of 10 day exercise with Norwegian forces in Norway. REEL 23 Continues: Aspects of operations with A Coy 1st Bn Black Watch in Malaysia, Gibraltar and Scotland, GB, 1968-1969: story of 6 week exercise at Jungle Warfare School in Malaysia, 1968; jungle training with SAS; description of 'wait awhile' foliage barbs; knowledge of jungle plants; medication; problem of sunburn cases; construction of helicopter landing strip in jungle; promote to company sergeant-major; training exercise against Gurkha troops; duties as company sergeant-major in GB; posted to RAF North Front, Gibraltar; opinion of accommodation and food; messing arrangements with female personnel and problem of bad language; daily routine and duties; story of representing soldier convicted of stealing bicycle. REEL 24 Continues: conditions in prison for convicted soldier; medical examination after release; guard duties on airfield; attitude to possible Spanish invasion of Gibraltar; training exercises; fortress parade; duties as drill battalion for parade; opinion of tour of duty on Gibraltar; trained company cadre; story of visit by Brig Ferguson; story of helping civilians build viewing point across harbour; returned to Kirknewton, Scotland REEL 25 Continues: story of rehearsal for tribute to Harry Lauder in Glasgow; training for deployment to Northern Ireland. Aspects of operations with 1st Bn Black Watch in Northern Ireland, 1969-1972: billets in Belfast; description of incident with crowd in Belfast; role of battalion reinforcing police; reduction in ammunition; prohibition on use of bayonet; training with batons and shields; tactical training; description of operations in Falls Road area; fired on from rooftops; duties dispersing crowds and making arrests; required to testify in court; patrol duty; story of running out of ammunition during incident at night; story of arresting rioters setting fire to buses; debriefing; returned to barracks in Kirknewton. Scotland for further training; amount of ammunition issued; Yellow Cards rules of engagement; posted to Londonderry; crowd control; stop and search patrols; story of Irish sergeant-major; method of dispersing crowd with Land Rover; problem of snipers on rooftops; tactics for dealing with crowds and snipers; question of issuing correct amount of ammunition. REEL 26 Continues: procedure for stopping and

checking vehicles at checkpoints; use of Short Strand Bus Depot as strong point; snipers took over houses; story of sniper shooting two NCOs; installed own sniper post in Bus Depot; story of accidentally shooting cat on roof; foot patrols; relations with local civilians; searched houses for weapons; 6 month tour of duty in Enniskillen; relations with local civilians; river patrols; under command of 17th/21st Lancers; security precautions; story of bomb attack on Land Rovers; marched through Enniskillen and Beating Retreat; accommodation in school; off-duty activities; opinion of rations; story of visit by Sir Anthony Farrar-Hockley; REEL 27 Continues: posted to Londonderry; billets in army camp; reconnaissance missions in helicopter; required to give evidence in courts; foot patrols and back-up in Land Rover; weapons and kit; duties as company sergeant-major; intelligence gathering. Aspects of period with 1st Bn Black Watch in GB, 1972-1977: posted to Sir John Moore Barracks, Folkestone; duties as instructor with Infantry Junior Leaders Bn; organisation and command structure; opinion of training and facilities. REEL 28 Continues: training and qualification as tug of war coach; participation in army tug of war competitions and winning medals; drill competition; passing out parade; presented with red hackles; cross country running to test fitness; service with Black Watch extended by two years; opinion of junior soldiers; posted to Scottish Infantry Training Depot, Glencorse; opinion of staff; duties training recruits and revising training regime; tug of war competition; end of service and discharge, 12/Dec/1977; activities as British Legion standard-bearer. REEL 29 Continues: various social events to mark leaving Black Watch; 4 week general maintenance course to prepare for civilian life. Civilian life and employment in GB, 1978-1979: duties as school sergeant-major/quartermaster with Combined Cadet Force, St Lawrence's College, Ramsgate; training of shooting team; story of obtaining post as Yeoman Warder, 10/1979. Aspects of period as Yeoman Warder at the Tower of London, 10/1979-1999: description of accommodation in Tower; six weeks training; qualified as Yeoman Warder; story of taking first public tour; sworn in as Yeoman Warder. REEL 30 Continues: sworn in as Special Constable in Tower and issued with warrant card; description of ceremony at St James' Palace; oath of allegiance; daily routine and duties as Yeoman Warder; story of escorting Queen and Duke of Edinburgh on opening of wall walk; charity events and escorting ex-servicemen; appointed regimental escort for Queen Mother; story of Black Watch uniform; story of parade in Berlin; various engagements escorting Queen Mother REEL 31 Continues: daily routine and duties in Tower of London; story of seeing ghost of Sir Walter Raleigh and other supernatural experiences in Tower; retired after 20 years service as Yeoman Warder; duties as standard bearer at St George's, Hanover Square; appointed Freeman of the City of London; various memories of visits to battlefields of Western Front.

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