

## A FALKLAND ISLANDS VETERAN REMEMBERS

This article has been written as a result of telephone conversations between Col.M.Nolan and Harry Calder on 14-9-07, 19-9-07, ??-9-07, and 8-10-07, from Barry Calder's interviews with Harry (his father) in October and November 2007 and from a few documents now in the possession of Barry Calder.

At the beginning of World War 2 Harry Calder was reading for a Geography degree at Manchester University. He volunteered for service and was commissioned from Sandhurst into the Lancashire Fusiliers on 7 March 1942. After two weeks' leave he was sent to Cottingham, East Yorkshire, to command 16 Platoon in D Company. After about four weeks he was allocated to the 11<sup>th</sup> West Yorks Battalion stationed in Bridlington to prepare for overseas service. Here he commanded 11 Platoon in B Company. Harry was unaware of a plan of action but the Battalion went on several exercises to protect the east coast. While carrying out these duties they lost a sentry to a German submarine and had their temporary HQ, an old railway carriage, suffer a direct hit from a bomb while they were away.

The battalion in Bridlington prepared for overseas service and was kitted out with both cold weather and tropical kit, including the necessary injections. This surprised them. They had no idea what the special kit was for, but assumed that, like other battalions, they were to go to the middle East. When the battalion was ready it was sent to Greenock in Scotland where they immediately boarded ship. The ship was the S.S. *Esperance Bay*, an ex-armed merchant cruiser with a 6 inch deck gun. They joined a large convoy. The destination remained secret, but they assumed it was the middle East because the rest of the convoy, which included the 50<sup>th</sup> Northumbrian and 55<sup>th</sup> Highland divisions, was going there.

As a German speaker, Harry was employed during the crossing of the Bay of Biscay and eastern Atlantic in translating German messages picked up on the ship's radio. The ship put in for supplies at Freetown and Dakar. On reaching Cape Town the main convoy went on into the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea, accompanied amongst others by HMS *Warspite*. The remainder was left behind in Cape Town for three weeks. This force comprised the 11<sup>th</sup> West Yorks. battalion, some miscellaneous personnel, some RASC (REME) and about 100 Royal Engineers led by Lt.Daniel Sutton. Together they formed Force 122, under the command of Col.Hines.

On leaving Cape Town the *Esperance Bay*, heavily laden with personnel and equipment, was rammed in broad daylight at an oblique angle by a larger unladen Norwegian ship. As a result the *Esperance Bay* lost many of its lifeboats on the starboard side. Harry recalls: "There was a huge grinding noise. People were shouting 'It's going to hit us', then they began running away from the point of impact. The *Esperance Bay* heeled over, then came back upright." The Norwegian ship slid the entire length of the starboard side of *Esperance Bay*

during this collision. On their second attempt to depart Cape Town, after further deck cargo had been taken aboard, it became clear that the Falkland Islands was the destination, since the cargo was so labelled. *Esperance Bay* was accompanied on the voyage by RMS *Carnarvon Castle*. *Esperance Bay* was sister ship to the *Jervis Bay*, which had just been sunk in “very brave” action against the German fleet, which included the pocket battleships *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisnau*.

In September/October 1942, after 14 weeks at sea, the Force arrived in the Falklands.



**Figure 1** *SS Esperance Bay at anchor in an inlet south of Berkeley Sound*



**Figure 2 Force disembarking from Government Jetty on to Ross Road, Stanley**

On landing at Stanley the infantry were engaged in assisting the field engineers to build the Force camp. Construction itself was carried out by the infantry. Some artillery was included in the Force and Harry recalls two 3.7 inch guns and two Bofors guns being emplaced, together with a predictor. On landing, and for a period after, the Force had no maps of the Falklands, and had to rely on Fitzroy's Admiralty charts of the 1830's. The Engineers soon produced an initial sketch map to remedy this deficiency.

Later in 1942 a Section from 14 Field Survey Company arrived on the Islands. The Section was 18 strong.



**Figure 3 14 Field Survey Section**

**Left to right:**

**Back row: -, -, -, -, -, -, -, Spr.Plews Gregory**

**Middle row: Cpl.John Bunn, L/Sgt.Walter Lockwood, Lt.Harry Calder, Lt.T.Lesley Thomas,  
Sgt.Gilbert Holland, Cpl.Suddaby**

**Front row: draughtsman, -, -, draughtsman from Liverpool**

The Section was commanded by Lt T.L.(Tommy) Thomas, a Welshman, who had worked at the General Electric Company in Stafford. Harry describes Thomas as “a brilliant mathematician” and recalls that he was later awarded an M.B.E. After the war he took a lectureship at Imperial College, London.



**Figure 4 Lt.T.L.Thomas**



**Figure 5 Lt.Thomas in his Office**

The 2 i/c in the Section was Sgt Gilbert (Gil) Holland. Harry describes Holland's role as "mainly administrative", the field work being largely executed by Lt.Thomas and Lance Sgt W.Lockwood.



**Figure 6 Lance Sgt.W.Lockwood**

Apart from Holland and Lockwood, all the Section were wartime surveyors. They included two draughtsmen whose names Harry cannot at present recall. With the agreement of Col.Green, the battalion commander, Col.Hines sent Harry on attachment to the Survey Section because of his university background in Geography.

The Section was accommodated in two Nissen huts, one for eating and sleeping, the other for use as an office. The office hut was divided in two: a small office for Lt.Thomas, Lt.Calder and Sgt.Holland, and a larger working space for the Section, which served as the drawing office.



**Figure 7 Field Survey Staff**



**Figure 8 The Drawing Office**

**Left to right:**

**Man operating Frieden calculating machine (from Sweden), Lt.Thomas, L/Sgt.Lockwood(?), Chief draughtsman**

The Section was equipped with two steel tapes: one used as standard, the other as the field instrument. The base was measured on Stanley Racecourse by surface taping in accordance with Winterbotham's manual, and ten bays were measured ten times in one direction. The base was then re-levelled and measured again from the other direction. The maximum error was 1/10 inch.

The Section's first task was to address the projection. The tables supplied were for the U.S. World Polyconic Projection Band 5 Zone South. These used the yard as their unit of measure. Because the British army measured in metric units, the projection tables had to be converted. Harry was given the job; he

used the Benoit Cheney conversion, which had succeeded the Clarke conversion.

The next task for the Section was a reconnaissance of the ground. The datum was fixed at the west end of the base, and latitude and longitude were derived from position line observations to appropriate southern stars. On 1 April 1943 L/Sgt. Lockwood observed for latitude and longitude, by position lines in the vicinity of Stanley at about 51-41-30S and 57-52-13W. The booker was L/Cpl Suddaby. Spr L.A. or S.A. Morgan's name also appears on booking forms. Cpl. Bunn, another of the observers, eventually became O.S. Director of Surveys, Northern Ireland after the war.

For the triangulation the Section was equipped with three Tavistock theodolites. The triangulation was based as far as possible on braced quadrilaterals with some points fixed by intersection and resection. The base extension was to three points on the north side of Stanley Harbour. The trig point on Twelve O'Clock Hill was concreted on the spot with an iron bolt as a fine point. An O.S. beacon was erected above it. The Hill was so named because it was due north of Government House.



**Figure 9 Twelve O'Clock Range from Sea View Top**

Heighting was by trig heighting methods. Initially a height was transferred from datum to Sapper Hill and back by levelling. Detail was surveyed by plane tabling. One surveyor was Spr Plews Gregory, from Liverpool. Gregory had been an artist before the war, and was a very fast worker. He once produced 9 square kilometres of plane-tabling in a day. As Harry put it, "He was wopping them in." His work for that day was checked by Harry and Lt. Thomas and found



to be without error. Large scale plans, such as that of Falkland Camp, were surveyed by chain survey.

Some photographs of the survey at work survive in Harry's possession.



**Figure 10** Survey at work 1



**Figure 11** Survey at work 2



**Figure 12** Survey at work 3



**Figure 13** Survey at work 4



**Figure 14 Mt.Kent from Hill 14**



**Figure 15 Strike-off Point (later Mt.Misery) from Hill 14**

The draughtsmen produced only one copy of each field sheet. The sheets were assembled together to produce a single map. The map was sent back to the U.K. and copies were only printed later. However Harry indented for a set of maps later in the war. These are now in the possession of Mike Nolan.



Figure 16 Completed map, on Drawing Office table

One of the geomorphological features encountered during field work was “Stone Runs”. These are rows or collections of boulders, some as large as houses. The largest was named on the map as Princes Street, about 5 miles long, near Berkeley Sound. Another, later visited by Harry, was at Impassable Valley near Mount Osborne. He is adamant that these were not glacial features and reports that a geologist on the Falklands at the time had written a paper on the subject.

In November 1942, on a week’s leave, Harry and two officers from the Force were invited to stay at Douglas Station by the Deputy Governor of the Islands, Robbie Greenshields. Their journey from Stanley to Douglas Station was made by jeep to Salvador Water, motor boat to Teal Inlet, motor boat from Teal Inlet, and finally on horseback to Douglas Station. On at least one occasion, the jeeps got stuck in the boggy ground between Stanley and Salvador Water.



**Figure 17 Jeep bogged 1, 19 November 1942**



**Figure 18 Jeep bogged 2, 19 November 1942**



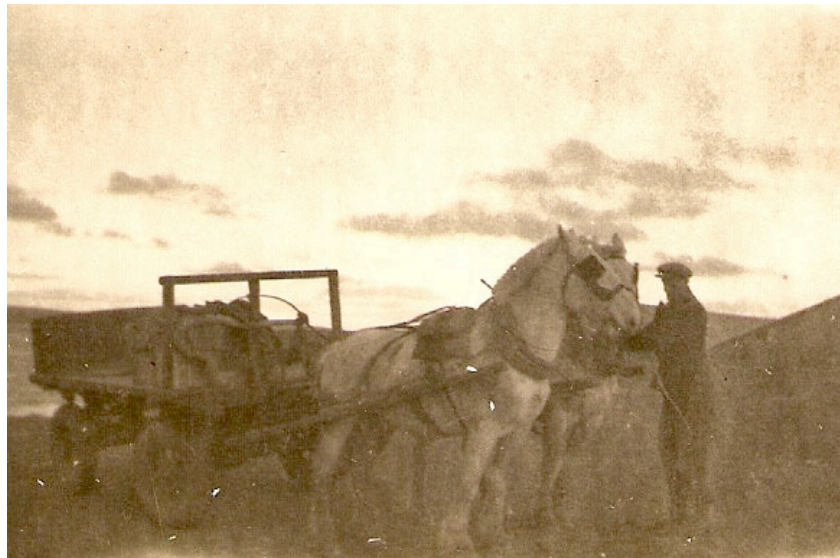
**Figure 19 At Salvador Water, awaiting water transport**



**Figure 20 At Teal Inlet, awaiting water transport**



**Figure 21 1921 Morris at Teal Inlet, Lt.Calder front passenger**



**Figure 22 Near Teal Inlet, en route to Douglas Stn.**



**Figure 23 At Douglas Station, Lt.Calder on horseback**

On departure of the Survey Section of 14 Company in 1943, Harry reverted to regimental duties with his battalion. He was asked to do two jobs at this point:

- (1) To find out how much coal remained in the coal dump;
- (2) To put a rangefinder on Bender's Ridge on the south side of Stanley Harbour. This was to act as a checker for the rangefinders for the Force's mortars.

The battalion embarked on RMS *Highland Monarch* in mid-January 1944. Harry has a copy of the Governor's valedictory speech to the departing Force (see Appendix 2).



**Figure 24 Farewell Parade, Force 122, January 1944**

Without stopping on the way, the returning troops arrived safely at Liverpool in late February or early March 1944. As a result of his work with the Survey, Harry had determined to try to transfer to the Royal Engineers. On disembarkation the battalion was accommodated temporarily in an empty housing estate at Huyton for about two weeks. They then entrained for a camp on Dartmoor, and arrived at Whitchurch Down near Tavistock marching through pouring rain. One bright spot for Harry was being sent to Okehampton to collect the £64,000 back-pay that the battalion had accrued in the Falklands, after which a fortnight's leave was granted.

Shortly after this, Harry was sent on a mine warfare course at Deveraux Barracks, Ripon. Here he learned the skills of both laying and lifting mines and took the top prize in sapper assault before becoming the O.C. of "a sort of pioneer platoon" in Support Company. On returning to his battalion, who were still at Whitchurch Down, Harry and two other subalterns who had also been in the Falklands, Bob Atkinson and Peter Linnell, were sent for by the C.O. He told them he had been asked for three officers "to fill gaps in forces" and that he was posting them to a Reinforcement Holding Unit of 21 Army Group. The R.H.U. was in a tented camp, apparently near Maidenhead in Surrey. A transfer to the R.E's seemed out of the question at this time and shortly after, on D-Day +4 (10<sup>th</sup> June), Harry crossed to Normandy. He landed on Gold Beach and was posted to the Assault Platoon of Support Company of the 6<sup>th</sup> Bn Durham Light Infantry, "to fill a gap left by a wounded officer". In the next few weeks Harry kept a tally of 178 mines which he lifted personally. Nearly all were "S" or Teller, three-prong pressure anti-personnel mines. The "cordite" was removed from some of these



in order to make a display with the sign "If you see these, let Harry know" (or words to that effect). On one occasion, not far from the site of his final accident, Harry was ordered to advance with 'A' Company. The route lay through a farm gateway. Harry was standing by the gate and the Company were advancing through it when one of the men spotted a three-pronged mine. Harry immediately ordered the men to lie down, and went to inspect the mine. It had six igniters; he unscrewed each in turn. When the mine was disarmed, the Company advanced.

He also recalls that he was in one of the first units to be issued with the man pack flamethrower. This weighed 80 lbs., with power being supplied by a No.8 battery. He was in the party that demonstrated this equipment to other units behind the lines, and reports that "It was b...y scary I might tell you".

On 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1944 Harry was sent out in a Bren carrier on a mine-lifting task somewhere north of Villers Bocage, in the vicinity of Tilly-sur-Seulles and Lingevres. It so happened that he was the driver that day, and that unusually, Sgt. Tom ('Jackie') Pease accompanied them. As the non-drivers were crossing over a 'bocage' stone hedge to look for mines, there was a huge explosion. Sgt. Pease and L/Cpl.Charles Whitwell, who had crossed over the hedge, were killed instantly and Cpl.Metcalf, who was standing on the hedge about to cross, was severely wounded. Harry, wounded by shrapnel from the blast, managed to get Cpl.Metcalf evacuated on a passing jeep to the Casualty Clearing Station. Shortly after, he himself got a lift on a jeep to the C.C.S., his battle dress by now soaked in blood. At the C.C.S. he was stretchered and ambulanced back to Bayeux along a 'corduroy' road of railway sleepers before being transferred on a DUKW to a hospital ship. The graves of Sgt.Pease and L/Cpl.Whitwell are to be found in the small War Cemetery on the road between Tilly and Lingevres.

On disembarking at Southampton Harry was transferred initially to Park Prewett Hospital and then, after three days, on a "very full" train to a former mental hospital in Sedgefield, Co.Durham. The wing in which he found himself held 200 walking wounded. They were looked after by a single nurse, who had to cope with treating all sorts of wounds. After a few days he was transferred to the Officers' Ward of the Robert Richards Convalescent Home at Barnard Castle. Here found himself in a 15-bed ward. He was allowed to get up for the first time and discovered he had 16 shrapnel wounds from the blast. The hospital was well appointed. He recalls being briefed to avoid embarrassing visiting VIPs by explaining where on the ground one was wounded rather than where on the body!

A subsequent move to a convalescent unit and depot at Kingston on Thames provided the opportunity at last for Harry to raise with the O.C. there the question of a transfer to the Royal Engineers. His application for transfer was successful. With several other officers he underwent training at the Survey Training Centre at Wynnstay Hall, Ruabon, the officers' mess there being a house called *Pen y Nant*. While he was there, in December 1945, the STC moved to Longleat where

it occupied a former American hospital camp. One of the instructors at Longleat was Donald Bartlett an ex-schoolmaster from the south coast (Bournemouth?). At Longleat Harry also remembers Don Wilde who later became O.S. Regional Officer South West.

A series of Field Astronomy Lecture Notes Nos.1-10 survives from this period, together with worked examples of computation of astro-observations. The forms used were Geographical Section General Staff (GSGS) forms printed at the School of Military Engineering, typically in 1940. These appear to be identical to those found in *Survey Computations*, Second Edition, 1932.

On completion of his training Harry was posted to 522 Company, a holding company for officers. However he never saw it because he was employed in the G.S.G.S. instead. One section of the G.S.G.S. was then under Colonel Dowson and Harry was allocated to Maj. Jack Kelsey's Svy 2a(Air) alongside a civilian, Mr Long, who was in Svy 2a(Land). For much of this time Kelsey was in the U.S. where he was involved in the setting up of ICAO, the International Civil Aeronautical Organisation, and Harry never met him. During this period however he completed much work on deviant compasses in tanks, as well as doing some work on Italy for the security services.

Harry's demobilisation number was 40 and when it came due, on 4 October 1946, he was demobbed at Barton Stacey camp, in southern England. At the time, Col. Sanceau the Deputy Director-General of GSGS offered him a majority and two years' employment in Survey Production Centre, Southall. But since completion of his degree was his top priority, Harry declined, and returned to university immediately to resume the final year of his degree course.

Harry completed his degree at Manchester, graduating in 1947. He stayed on to get a Royal Town Planning Institute qualification and became a town planner. Initially he was in private practice earning about £350 per annum. He mentioned the 1947 Town Planning Act as being a disaster for planning consultants such as himself because executive planning powers were given to local authorities. He later switched employment to the City of Manchester, where he was Assistant Planning Officer.

While there the post of Officer I/C of the Survey Production Centres was advertised in the *Guardian* and Harry was short-listed for interview. He found himself with five officers whom he knew well from his time in the R.E. The successful candidate was Major Quaife, who had already been doing the job.

Later still he applied for and became Senior Assistant Planning Officer in Warwickshire, remaining there for 9 years until 1960. During this time he was instrumental in planning the Green Belt around Birmingham. He then applied for and obtained a position as Assistant County Planning Officer for Cornwall County Council. He retired in 1981, as Chief Planning Officer for the county.

In later years he collected and repaired clocks and watches and is the proud possessor of an 1830 vintage chronometer by Dent which, when checked in the 1960's, was timed to 3 seconds a day. He also owns two Deck-chronometers from the 1920's. These were used for transferring time from the chronometer, which was kept below decks, to the deck itself, where the observations were made. They are identical to the models used in the Falkland Islands in 1942.

## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1**

At one point in our conversations, Harry went off at a tangent about the Battles of Coronel and the Falkland Islands in the Great War.

HMS *Canopus* received a battering at Coronel. In the Falklands, the German fleet was spotted as it came over the horizon in November 1914. The observer was a woman who was on Sapper Hill, and she sounded the alarm at Stanley. The fleet was believed to have the intention of capturing the Islands' governor in reprisal for the earlier Allied action at Samoa where the German governor had been taken prisoner at the beginning of the war. The action took place on 14<sup>th</sup> November and coincidentally this was the same month as the Graf Spee action some 26 years later, in 1940. The first the Germans knew of the British fleet in the Falklands in 1914 was when a shell from *Canopus* ricocheted off the water and hit the base of the funnel of one of the German ships.

Harry has a picture of himself and Lt. Thomas in a jeep at Rookery Bay, near *Canopus* trig point.



Figure 25 Jeep and driver (RASC) at Rookery Bay. Lt.Thomas in front, Lt.Calder in rear

**Appendix 2**

Governor's Farewell Speech to the Force, January 1944

*H. Calder*

Speech made by His Excellency, Sir A.W. Cardinall C.B.E., C.M.G.,  
The Governor of the Falkland Islands.

to  
the Force Commander, Officers, Warrant Officers, Non -  
Commissioned Officers and Men of the Falkland Islands  
Force at the Ceremonial Parade held at Port Stanley on  
Saturday, 15 January, 1944.

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I have long awaited an opportunity to address you. But hitherto that has been impossible. It would have been most pleasant to me to have been able to have done so on your arrival, but you know that that could not in the circumstances have been arranged. Since then there has been no occasion. And so it is that today I am only able to greet you and bid you farewell.

I do not do so on my own behalf alone but in the name of every single person in the Colony.

There are two matters I would wish to stress, a remembrance of which I should like you to take home.

The first of these is our thanks. We owe these to you for many things. Not only are we grateful for the sense of safety your presence brought us, but far more for the friendliness and affection that you gave. You entertained us who should have entertained you. Many of us have tried to repay this; our homes have been open to you. But there is no doubt that we have received more than we have given. Particularly is this so with our children, the majority of whom can never forget the kindness and love shown to them from their parents' guests from the homeland. You have re-forged and strengthened the already strong link that has always bound the Falklands to the Motherland.

Do not forget that; we shall not. You, who have, by the strange accident of this war, been stationed in the southernmost country of our Commonwealth, you, who for the first time in history have garrisoned a station on the very frontier of the Antarctic, you are about to leave us, your first duty done. Remember then that we think you have done more than that, and that you leave behind a deeper love for England and a greater loyalty to our King and Homeland than ever before.

Do not forget us when you are far away. Remember that here, in the most distant and isolated spot - further removed from another part of the Empire than anywhere else - we hold a love for you which is of your own creation. If ever some of you were to wish to return, he would be welcome, more than welcome. There are openings here, and in the coming time of peace it may well be that this land will so develop that she will require fresh blood. We should like it to be yours.

However, that is a dream thought. More practical is it to ask you to keep always in touch with us. There is one somewhat sentimental way that may appeal to those of you with small gardens. Why not ask us in the appropriate time to send you a few of our unique sweet-smelling flowers for your rockery? If they were to grow there would be a living souvenir of your short sojourn here, and you would have planted in the soil of Great Britain some of the soil of her most British and distant land.

The second point I would wish to make is to give you all a message of God Speed. It is merely to say goodbye in the name of every one of us. "Goodbye" is not final, nor is it sad. It is truly an inspiring expression. "God be with you" is its meaning, and from our hearts we wish that. No matter where you go, or in what task you may be called upon to partake, that wish is with you. It is the most sincere expression of what we have in our minds, that God may always be with you, at your side at all times, your Guide, Your Prop and your Protector.

So thanks once more for all you have done, and take with you our fervent wish that you leave us in the care and custody of God.

-o-o-

Figure 26 Facsimile of Governor's Speech, Jan.1944