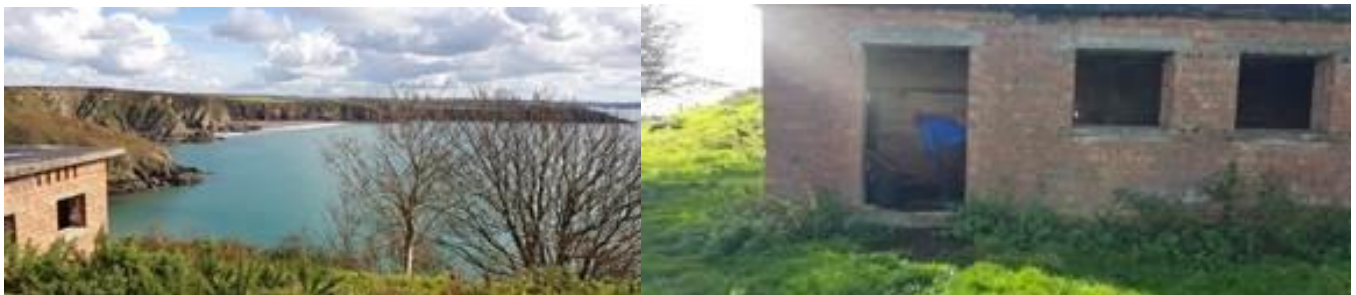


The bunker itself had been used as shelter for cattle but needed a lot of work and this is still ongoing. Some of our veterans with DIY experience have turned their hands to fitting windows and doors and laying a hardcore path.



Other veterans led by our gardening expert a 90-year-old Naval Veteran started tending to the land with an ambitious project to try and reap some rewards from the land this year. Those that have taken part so far have benefited from being outdoors, some who live in flats and would not normally get the chance to get those fingers green whilst enjoying a friendly social environment.

This project is open to veterans who would like to join in and can sign up by contacting [sean@thevcgallery.com](mailto:sean@thevcgallery.com) or calling 01437 765873.



At the heart of The VC Gallery is always art and we've been running some fantastic online art sessions with some in particular for Armed Forces Families funded again by The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust. This has seen families on Zoom interacting with other veterans' families and enjoying each other's company. We supply the resources, and an experienced artist facilitates the workshops. These have been real fun and brought a real sense of positivity through these difficult times. There are still places available to join in and you can sign up by getting in touch with Steph on [steph@thevcgallery.com](mailto:steph@thevcgallery.com) or calling the gallery on 01437 765873.

Should you wish to donate to the VC Gallery please use this link <https://thevcgallery.com/donate.html>

## **K2 conquered in winter**

You will have seen recently the excellent news that a team of 10 Nepali climbers who set a new world record by becoming the first to reach the summit of K2, the world's second highest mountain, in winter. They reached the peak at 17:00 local time (12:00 GMT) 16 January 2021. Nimisdai "Nims" Purja MBE a Nepalese mountaineer and former Gurkha and soldier of the Special Boat Service lead the team.

One of only 14 mountains higher than 8,000m, it is widely considered the most demanding of all in winter. It has long been referred to as "the savage mountain", a name that stuck after US mountaineer George Bell said of his own attempt in 1953: "It is a savage mountain that tries to kill you." Among the most treacherous sections is the notorious "bottleneck", a couloir liable to icefalls. Eleven climbers were killed there in an avalanche in 2008. Dozens of climbers have been on the 8,611m (28,251ft) mountain this winter hoping to achieve the same feat. But one Spanish mountaineer died after suffering a fall a few days before while descending. K2, which is only 200m shorter than Everest, is part of the Karakoram Range that straddles the PakistanChina border. **What has this to do with the Regiment I hear you ask.... The peak is also known as Mount Godwin-Austen\*\*.**

**\*\*GODWIN-AUSTEN, Henry Haversham FRS FZS FRGS**

Born 6.7.1834, From RMC Sandhurst, Ens **24th Foot** 26.12.1851, Lt 12.10.1854, Capt 29.10.1858, To Indian Army 17.11.1868, Retd as hon Lt-Col 2.3.1878. Served Burma (1853) & Bhotan; Served as Deputy-Supt, Trigonometrical Survey of India; **He gave his name to Mount Godwin-Austen (K2)**; he died 2.12.1923.

He was not the only Godwin-Austin to serve in the 24th and later the South Wales Borderers, five members of the family served in 24th. First there were three brothers - • **Henry Haversham Godwin-Austen** (Mount K2 fame) (1837-1923),

- **Alfred Godwin- Austen** (wounded E Cape 1878 - Rorke's Drift dog owner. His dog is in the picture of Rorke's Drift painted by Lady Butler) (1844-1940)
- **Frederick Godwin- Austen** (killed at Isandlwana) (1853-1879)

**Alfred Godwin-Austin** had sons -

- **General Sir Alfred Reade Godwin- Austen KCSI CB OBE MC** - (he fought in WW1 and was a WW2 General. Fought in the Africa & Middle East - and was the Colonel SWB) (1889-1963) and
- **Robert Annesley Godwin- Austen** (Served RE/Colonial Office) (1885-1977).

**Robert Annesley Godwin- Austen** had a son - **Robert** (better known as Robin) **Haversham Godwin- Austen** (CO 1 RRW 1973-75). Colonel **Robin Godwin- Austen** is nephew of the General, and great nephew of Surveyor of K2.

Fifty Years ago - February 1971



It was with immense pride that we learnt of the award of the **George Medal** to Private **Dorian Bennett**, of 'A' Company for gallantry in the **Lower Falls** area of **Belfast** on the night of 8th February 1971. His award serves as a reminder to all of us. of the magnificent way our young soldiers are conducting themselves in **Ulster** today. Lt Col IDB Mennell OBE, Commanding Officer 1 RRW. His citation reads:

On the night 7/8 February 1971, there was rioting on the Falls Road, at the junction with Leeson St. **Pte Bennett** was a member of a five-man patrol mounted in an armoured vehicle, which was used to disperse the crowd, and dominate the riot area.

At 0010 hrs., 8th February, the patrol was deployed at the Dunlevy St./Falls Rd. junction after two nail bombs had been thrown at the vehicle. **Pte Bennett** was covering the arc Spinner St. to Leeson St. A man attempted to throw a grenade from Spinner St., and **Bennett** immediately fired and ran to the street to make sure of his man. The patrol came under fire from three men in Leeson Street and **Bennett** fell with a bullet in his right upper arm. He quickly recovered and engaged the attackers, hitting one man and possibly a second. **Bennett** then returned to his original fire position, although by this time, he was undoubtedly affected by his wound. A third group attacked the patrol from Sevastopol Street with firearms and nail- bombs and **Bennett** engaged this group also and had one suspected hit. **Bennett** remained with the patrol until a replacement rifleman arrived, and only then would he agree to retire for medical attention:

By his prompt action against the attacking groups despite his wound, **Bennett** undoubtedly saved his patrol from further casualties. His refusal to retire from the scene of the shooting for medical treatment ensured that the small patrol was not weakened further at a very critical time. Throughout the entire action, **Bennett** showed initiative, courage and devotion to his comrades and to his duty to a very high degree.

Unfortunately, Dorian Bennett GM (Ben GM) died in February 2015 he was only 63 years old. As befits a comrade who had been awarded a significant gallantry medal, he was given a suitable Regimental send off, Brigadier Robert Aitken CBE, the last Colonel of the RRW, read the lesson and LCpl Bennett GM was carried into church by pall bearers from the 3rd Battalion. The Last Post was played by one of our excellent Bandsmen.

## Last Bit

At the end of my previous update letter I quoted that "dawn comes after the darkness," the vaccines are now giving us hope that the dawn is on its way.

**"Hope begins in the dark. The stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing, the dawn will come. You wait and watch and work: you don't give up".**

Stay safe and well and let's hope we will be able to meet up soon.

**Yours sincerely Chris Kilmister**

**RHQ Contact Details.** I remind you we are all working from home and therefore our office phone numbers will not work. However, we have had a delivery of MOD laptops and some of our email addresses have now reverted to our original office email addresses.

### **Our Email Addresses are:**

#### **RHQ RWELSH Cardiff**

**Regimental Secretary**

**Maj Derek Adams**

**Regimental Adjutant**

**Richard Tuffney**

**Debbie Martin**

**Rachel Hill**

#### **RHQ RWELSH Wrexham**

**Capt Des Williams DCM [Deswilliams1950@gmail.com](mailto:Deswilliams1950@gmail.com)**

**[chris.kilmister100@mod.gov.uk](mailto:chris.kilmister100@mod.gov.uk)**

**[derek.adams100@mod.gov.uk](mailto:derek.adams100@mod.gov.uk)**

**[Anthony.Kironde-Strain101@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Anthony.Kironde-Strain101@mod.gov.uk)**

**[richard.tuffney112@mod.gov.uk](mailto:richard.tuffney112@mod.gov.uk)**

**[debbie.martin450@mod.gov.uk](mailto:debbie.martin450@mod.gov.uk)**

**[rachel.hill759@mod.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.hill759@mod.gov.uk)**

It is best to **use email for almost all communication**. Our mobile phone numbers are also listed:

- Lt Col Chris Kilmister mobile **07724 856 422**
- Maj Derek Adams mobile **07886 017 448**
- Capt Des Williams DCM mobile **07545 243 513**
- Richard Tuffney mobile **07555 681 493**
- Debbie Martin mobile **07862 262 076** or  
Skype +44 300 1619 761
- Capt Tony Kironde-Strain, Regtl Adj mobile **07900 035 656**
- Rachel Hill Skype +44 300 1590 693

## Provisional Diary Dates for 2021

- **Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March - Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> March** - 3 R WELSH Wrexham week of activities has also had to be delayed until later in the year possibly July.
- **Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> March** - Freedom of Wrexham. 3rd Battalion will not now exercise the Freedom of Wrexham in March and hope to do so in July.
- **Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> April RRW Officers' London Lunch**. At the Army & Navy Club. Peter Kerruish is still in touch with the Army & Navy Club to see if this event will be possible. He will confirm as soon as he has had a reply from them.
- **Mid-July (date TBC)**. Branch Secretaries Meeting in the Monty Club, Newtown. Agenda to follow.
- **Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> - Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> July**. 3 R WELSH surge week in Wrexham with Freedom Parade in Wrexham on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> July is currently under review as Wrexham Council has cancelled all public events for 2021.
- **Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> July** – Brecon Reunion. Planning is underway for this event.
- **Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> September** – Wrexham Reunion. Planning is underway for this event.