



52nd (Lowland) Reconnaissance Regiment

Formed on 14 January 1941. Became part of the Royal Armoured Corps on 1 January 1944.

Formed January 1941, from the three Brigade Reconnaissance Groups of the 52nd Lowland Division. A Squadron - Royal Scots and Kings Own Scottish Borderers, B Squadron - Royal Scots Fusiliers and Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), C Squadron - Highland Light Infantry and Gordon Highlanders.



The 52nd was originally trained for mountain warfare, and included a squadron of Valentine tanks. They later used Daimler Armoured Cars and Dingo's.

The regiment was officially re-roled as an air portable formation but in the event the regiment was shipped to north west Europe as a conventional formation in October 1944.

The Regiment first went into action on the flat stretch of Holland between Eindhoven and Nijmegen at the time of the Arnhem operation (September 1944).

The Regiment subsequently fought to the end of the campaign in North-West Europe in May 1945 and was disbanded on the 1st August 1946.



Picture courtesy of the family of Mr P Hartley & Simon Hamon
Photographers: George Goddard

Description: This photo is suspected to be some where near the Rhine prior to the crossing and that it is a 'Buffalo' on the back of the Diamond Transporter.

Date: February 1945



Picture courtesy of the <http://alfgritton.co.uk> & the family of Mr P Hartley
Photographers: Alf Gritton / P Hartley
Description: C squadron, 14 troop Hamburg, Alf Gritton 2nd from left.
1945



Picture courtesy of the <http://alfgritton.co.uk/>
Photographers: Alf Gritton
Description: 14 troop rest up Munster next to Daimler armoured car named KESTRAL
Date: 1945



Picture courtesy of the <http://alfgritton.co.uk/>
Photographers: Alf Gritton

Description: Trooper Alf Gritton on the toolbox of the Daimler Armoured car named 'SPIDER'

Contributed by Alf Gritton

Location of story: France, Belgium, Holland and Germany

Contributed on: 01 August 2008

I thought would drop you a line and anything I had on Dingo's, I was mostly a Sherman tanks driver (with the 3rd RTR) but I was transferred to the Recce outfit after I got out of a field hospital.

I had a heavy Daimler armoured car for the work I did, we usually had three or four cars to a troop. The Dingo's were used by the squadron office for contact between the different troops. We were attached to the 52nd infantry division doing recce work for them there div sign was the cross of St Andrews of Scotland on the front of a blue shield as they were a Scottish division.

As armoured cars go they weren't too bad, I didn't care for the pre-selector gearbox, I found it a bit queer at first because you could not slip the clutch. I found it pretty different from a tank crew, in recce you worked in smaller actions and you also had many various jobs.

Sometimes you would do foot patrols, dashing forwards to capture bridges and looking for mine fields and then having to clear them! The main job was keeping the division informed about the situation at the front.

We were pretty good with weapons, 2 pounders, BESA MG, revolvers etc. Most of us had a German Schmeisser machine pistol, using 9mm ammunition; it was a lot better than the sten.

The Recce regiment was formed at the end of 1942 so it had a very short life. The recce work is now done by the household cavalry Regt, so the job is in good hands.

Good luck to you, and remember; Time spend in Recce is never wasted'

Yours Alf Gritton.



Brave Boy

Contributed by Alf Gritton

"After Normandy the war became a war of movement instead of the confined area of Normandy. I was asked if I would like to join a Reconnaissance squadron and I thought, I've nothing to lose, I'll go for it. I was in time to take part in the dash up through Belgium into Holland, and that was a very exciting time. A war of movement, racing through villages, and being rewarded by the civilians with drink and flowers".

"I found the Reconnaissance Regiment, being a member of it, gave you more scope to use one's initiative, as you worked in smaller groups. I found it very interesting. We consisted of a troop - we had three heavy Armoured cars, with two-pounder guns and machine guns, and our personal weapons, side arms. We fixed ourselves up with German M42 Schmeizers which we found lying around. They were very good guns, similar to a Sten, 9 millimetre ammunition, and we had those as a personal weapon, so all around we had quite good fire power, and our jobs were to be a screen in front of the army, going forward, patrolling, contact work, flank protection, whatever."

"A typical job was one day going up into Holland, a little place called Helmond. We were creeping along, clearing the villages and hamlets. For the first three there was nothing and the King's Royal Rifle Corps were behind us about a mile or so, and we just kept forward of them, going through these hamlets, making sure they were clear."

"We came to about the third one and we stood there, looking down into it, at about 600 yards away, and we couldn't make up our minds whether it was defended or clear. Sometime we would have to hit them because they always put a road block down. You couldn't go too far but, we were undecided on this third one. I had an opinion it was clear but the Lieutenant, who was the commander, he wasn't too sure about it. About half an hour before I'd taken a change from my driving position, I went up back into the turret to have a spell, and we were leap-frogging along, but this village intrigued us.

But anyway, we had to make up our minds and the commander said he wasn't happy, and I said it was OK but just as we were debating it, the driver shouted out 'at one o'clock, fifty yards, ditch' Well, we'd been looking, I was looking through the 'scope at the village about 600 yards away, and I couldn't imagine what he was talking about, but I swung round, traversed round, and as I traversed down to 50 yards in the ditch, one o'clock, I could see this helmet sticking up, and I done a quick burst, more in fear than anything else, and just then a mighty crash hit the side of us and someone said, 'We're alright', but by then the village erupted. They'd been waiting for us, no doubt about that."

"I managed to jump out into a ditch with the driver. The lieutenant, he was still in the turret, he received a wound to the head, but the rest of the troop deployed and started pouring fire into the village, and in no time at all the Rifle Brigade came up with half a dozen Sherman's, and they went past us into the village."

"What was burning on our car was - this young fellow, Jerry, in the ditch - he'd fired a bazooka at us at the same time as I'd fired at him and he'd hit the side but not to penetrated it, what he had done though, was to set fire to all our bedding kit. After pulling that off the Armoured car was quite OK.

While we were sorting ourselves out, I ambled along to see this young Jerry in the ditch, and he was lying on his back, and I went down to him and he'd been sick, and he was choking on his own spew. I turned him over and cleared his mouth. I noticed his arm was shattered at the shoulder, more or less hanging off, but he was conscious. He was saying 'Mutter, Mutter'.

He was a young fellow about my age, about twenty year old, and he was quite a brave kid to crawl out from the village to right in front of us there and have a go, I just knelt down beside him there, but I couldn't do nothing really. I saw a medical corps chap running down the lane from the infantry, and I called him over to have a look at him but when he came back and looked at him and saw he was a German he said 'Oh sod him', and went to run off again.

But I shouted and swore at him and he came back and he knelt down beside him, looked at him, and said 'We're wasting our time, he's just about had it', and he did die after a few minutes. But I felt sorry for him - he was a brave boy."



10 Troop carrier section.



Pictures courtesy of the Phil Hartley
Photographers: George Goddard

Description: Bren Carrier with 0.5 Browning Machine gun.

Len David (who is sadly no longer with us) stated that they got the gun from a crashed American aircraft, possibly a Marauder. They got a base of a car jack welded onto the top of the carrier and the Browning slotted into place. Apparently they swapped 9mm Sten gun ammo for .5 calibre with the yanks, who did not use 9mm but wanted it for their captured Lugar's . Luckily for the Germans Len cannot remember firing it in anger."

Crew left to right, Wickham, Murphy, Priest, Gray (kneelinh) & Graham
Circa 1945



Picture courtesy of the <http://alfgritton.co.uk/>
Photographers: Alf Gritton
Description: DAC A last check of the map before going out on patrol
Circa 1945



Picture courtesy of the family of Mr P Hartley & Simon Hamon
Photographers: George Goddard
Description: Daimler armoured car VALIANT at Freckenhorst.



Date: Circa 1945



Picture courtesy of the family of Mr P Hartley & Simon Hamon
Photographers: George Goddard
Description: Passing the saluting base at the last parade,
Freckenhorst, Germany
Date: 1st August 1946