

GRENADIER GUARDS  
A COLLECTION OF POEMS, STORIES  
AND  
DISCUSSION MATERIAL, SOMEWHAT CHRISTIAN IN NATURE  
CHRISTMAS DAY 2011...

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## THE ARMY

### POETRY

#### A Cry For Poetry

*(Written February 3, 2007 when my Christian brother Tom Ainsworth reminded us this (Guards Poetry) was a poetry section!)*

Brother Thomas do not weep...  
Some of us are still asleep  
Poetry to make every time  
Is just not in the make up of us kind!

Please bear with us brother Tom,  
Remember your namesake got it wrong!!  
But doubt not longer my friend,  
A return to poetry will be the trend!!

#### An Ode To A Brother

My friend Rodney 'Spot' Baker  
Who is C of E and not a Quaker  
His hands he claims would make him a Shaker!

However, to those of us growing older  
Would suggest Rodney speaks of thing bolder  
To the plough the hands belong,...

So my friend, worry not about mistakes {sic}  
As Grenadier we are all mates!  
So to the end we follow Him, who all cures makes!

---

#### Armistice Or Remembrance Who Gives A Care?

*(Written in time for the 2006 Remembrance Day)*

One, two, three or four,  
No, try fifteen, sixteen or more...  
Seventeen is the total, of men lost...(in one wider family)  
So, to war there is no cost?

1914-18 the war to end all wars...  
1939-45 well, so there was need for more...what a bore!  
Korea, Peace Keeping, Afghanistan all in a row,  
All keeping men and women caught in the flow...

So you think remembering the wars with all the old Vets.  
Is something to be ignored, that we have no debts?  
No goose-stepping hordes, no raid in the night...  
No breaking glass or concentration camp plight...

So on the eleventh remember with pride,  
The men and women who have died....  
Without their sacrifice it is plain to see...  
That their sacrifice did bring victory!!

It's not the war we gloat about;  
War brings so few things about which to shout.  
It is about men and women and young people too,  
Who gave their all for me and you!

### **'Lest we forget'**

---

Bible Basher Pointman

*(Written in January 2007 in response to a piece on the forum where  
the writer would put the 'bible bashing nut' on the point...closest to the  
enemy)*

Greenaway is a happy chap  
He shouts when he wants to chat

Bible bashers he quotes with glee  
Methinks the problem is with thee

Put the nut on the point  
We don't want him smelling up the joint

So, where do you put the bloke  
Right up front in the smoke...

Strange place for one who you trust  
To save your hides, if he must

Will he run and turn tail  
Methinks not!!

---

### Blacks Need Not Apply

*(Written in response to some racist remarks about a black Grenadier Officer)*

I am a Brit, so supreme  
I bet God put me on the scene  
To show the unwashed millions  
Nay trillions  
On how life should be lived!!

Oh, show me the Brits who owned slaves  
'I'm pure and good they all rave'!

Oh, show me the Brits in countries of yore,  
Dig for coal, and diamonds bore  
On the backs of the natives...

I am a black, in Britain living,  
I have struggled to be more giving  
To those who would cast me down  
Do they think I am some kind of clown?

I have lived in England or the commonwealth.  
I have persevered; sometimes hard on my health  
To meet those standards so carefully set  
Sometimes by those who still don't get it yet  
That I am qualified, you bet!!

---

Death...Face It We Must!

*(Written in February 2007, having heard from a friend that his brother-in-law had died at the age of 68: Poem posted on the Guards Forum, where so few believe)*

Grim reaper, game over, end of the line?  
According to some  
Unless...

Three score and ten we are promised  
Maybe more  
Unless...

Some think and are sure  
There is no more  
Unless...

The death gasp, the dying breath  
It's over  
Unless...

Unless God did send his Son  
Unless Christ died for us  
It is indeed over...

Unless we believe in Him  
Who died for us.

Unless we swallow our pride  
And accept Him...  
It is indeed over...

---

### Friends Across The Waves

*(Written to Tom Ainsworth, a former Grenadier, junior to me by one number: He was feeling down and I hoped this would cheer!!)*

Many friends exist across the waves  
Not always the ones we must brave  
There are kinds that simply go  
How it happens? Do we know?

My friend Tom from long ago



In England to escape the snow  
Wonders about heavenly things  
And, what the future brings

Our God in heaven so wise  
Only allows us to surmise  
What His plans are for us...  
It is so hard at times to simply trust

So, my friend Tom, from my basement cell  
I really pray that all things are well  
That the Lord you trust, as you must  
Will bring you through ....as you trust!!

And now about that other wave...

From the land next to the brave...  
An e-mail to cheer you up...  
As I head up stairs, lunch to sup...

Years ago this notice did post...  
Englishmen need not apply!!  
Wonder why!

---

Grenadiers Are.....

*(Written in December 2006 when pondering how to be a witness on  
the Grenadiers Forum...posted December 23, 2006)*

Grenadiers are an awesome lot  
Some are tall and some are not  
Grenadiers are a group supreme  
Laying down their lives for the Queen

Grenadiers are a drilling crew  
Prepared to lay down their lives for you

Grenadiers are guarding England's sod  
But, please never mention God!

Grenadiers are according to some, irreverent men

Why, is far beyond my ken.

Grenadiers are the best of men  
So, why do they sneer at my Friend?

Some Grenadiers are in need of this Friend...  
Just look!!

---

Grenadier Forum....

*(Written in December 2006. I had joined the Grenadier Guards Forum and in about November had started a topic whereby those interested in Christianity would participate. It turned out that there were only a couple of Christians who either read or saw the topic. One withdrew when he suggested that most Grenadiers would have been influenced by Christianity. He chose not to continue based on the flack he received. I continue although I did withdraw for a short period of time...we shall overcome)*

Gosh and by golly while working 'on-line'...  
I noticed a forum, how sublime!!!

I cheered up some and with nary a plea...  
The thought of conversations filled me with glee

So away I went at full tilt....  
Hoping responses would have some lilt...

Alas and alack there was no luck  
Most of the words ending rhyming with truck

Shall I give up this passion I thought,  
But no, I said though overwrought....

These are my friend Grenadiers all...  
So I shall continue to have a right old ball...

Honi soit qui mal y pense  
I'm sure they meant no real offense...

So to continue to write that shall I do  
And a Merry Christmas to you and you and you...

---

Hello Parky:

Your reply is really quite delightful,  
But your suggestions are equally frightful!!

We all are entitled to our say  
Even you Brother Parky, every day!

Come on and enjoy the fun  
Even try the odd pun  
Better than facing a gun..  
Everyone agreed on that one? Bike

---

I'm Fine, How Are You?

*(March 10, 2007 written in response  
to a poem asking how we were!)*

Hello Brian my sergeant and friend  
When this life is coming to an end  
What will we think about?

Will we think of deeds done,  
Some perhaps to the sound of a gun?  
I think not...

We will, I think be pleased, to know  
That we talked with Eggy, Tom, Andrew and so  
Learned some real things about each other.

So, we don't always agree about how things should be  
But we did, as gentlemen free,  
Speak our minds...

Honi soit qui mal y pense

---

It Was Said.....

*(A whimsical attempt to get the writers on the Grenadiers Forum  
to check their entries and to quit 'shouting',  
i.e. using upper case letters.)*

*December 31, 2006)*

Your mother said....  
Take your elbows off the table.  
Don't talk with your moth full  
Sit up straight...  
You did and people thought better of you...

Your squad instructor said...  
Dig your heels in  
Swing your arms,  
Look up,  
You did and your pass out parade was successful

Your fellow Grenadiers and friends said...  
Don't write when you are angry  
Sit on it for a day or two  
Try cut and paste  
Use a word processor program  
Spell check it  
Read it before your post it...  
You do it and your fellow Grenadiers and friends say...  
Well done...good for you!!

---

### I Wonder Why

*(Written in response to a submission on the Grenadiers forum from a  
Granddad who listened to his grandson tell the Christmas story...  
and he mocked)*

Andrew was a cheery guy,  
But his grandson made him cry  
Wonder why?

Perhaps his childhood was sad  
If Jesus to him is bad  
Wonder why?  
Made his grandson glad  
Andrew is a granddad

---

## No Christian Stuff For Me...

*(Written for the Grenadier forum...December 31, 2006 trying to witness )*

A reply to the Grenadier who objects to the suggestion  
there are Christian attributes shown in the Regiment.

OK, so to what does he object?  
Fellowship, also known as camaraderie?  
Good discipline to follow the cause?  
Good instruction from those who have learned the way?

Would he object to helping his fellow squad members?  
Would he object to helping another learn the ropes  
Would he object to the kindness of soldier to soldier  
Would he object to pride in the Regiment

Does righting wrong not follow as good?  
Ridding the world of what is wrong?  
OK...so you still don't believe...

---

## Posting Or Filling Up The Site

*(Written January 26 after being gently chided  
for 'filing up the web site')*

Rainy is a thoughtful bloke...  
Makes sure we don't miss a stroke...  
To his suggestion I shall comply,  
Promptly and forthwith!

---

Recruit Guardsman J. Christ

If my Friend Jesus had been born in England in 1935  
He would have had His call up postponed in 1953  
To finish his apprenticeship as a carpenter.

In 1958 through Caterham's gate he would have passed  
To do the service, His country asked.  
He would have followed the piquet I am sure  
As many, many of us have done before.

Would He stand out from the very start...?  
Would his appearance, demeanor, be very smart?  
Or, would he just be a recruit Guardsman?  
His book suggests that this would be the plan.

On the parade square would He compete with us all?  
Would he arise at 6.30 as if having a ball?  
Would he bone his boots instead of burn  
Hoping some special status to earn?

Would His uniform have creases real neat...  
Or the tramlines formed by the bed sheet.  
Would He sit across His bed at night  
Trying to get His kit just right?

Would he sit in the washroom after ten...  
And tell the Sergeant He chose  
To spit and polish to be like the other men.

Should I really bring Him down to my level  
Of course my critics will revel.  
But I believe in my heart  
Jesus would have done His part  
With courage, truth, and loyalty.  
He would have helped where he could  
To right wrong and make good...  
And, He would have passed out, top tier,  
Guardsman J. Christ, Grenadier.

---

### Reply To Arry

Arry, Arry, Arry it's good to see you're thinking,  
But I will respond without blinking...

Methinks the plank in your eye makes you blind  
And even making you unkind...  
Not really what you're like  
So and only because it rhymes...  
Arry take a ride on your bike!!

---

#### Reply To Arry....2

Arry, Arry right on time...  
Told you I needed a word to rhyme  
Nothing more and nothing less...  
Just in jest...

---

#### Replies To Arry-3

Dyke  
Hike  
Trike  
Mike  
To name but a few...  
These words? Would they do for you?  
No harm meant,  
All in good fun...

---

#### The Bible

*( Written for the Grenadier web page. December 2006)*

As old as dust, and musty with age  
Reading it fills some people with rage!

How dare they impose on us such rot...  
For us, the Bible, is not!!

It really has nothing to do with us...  
So why the fuss?

Nothing to do with us...hmm!

Throughout its pages our feelings are listed...

Are you sure you not interested?

Not I, you say, I'm too modern...  
Too modern for anger, hate, envy, worry,  
Despair, love, kindness, forgiveness...and more...

The solution is 'in the book' from beginning to end...  
Learn and lean on Him my friends....  
For God so loved the world...Amen

---

War...

*(Pretty sure this is one of mine written in response to a  
Remembrance Day poem that featured World I)*

In wars today the Hun is done  
Rats in trenches no longer run

People in wars have become collateral damage  
Too bad the experts, a name cannot manage

Pin-point accuracy with rockets is the norm  
Like those used in Desert Storm

Soldiers are dressed in uniforms so odd...  
one wonders if they are from another sod

No matter the war,  
whatever the score...

There are hundreds or dead...  
A mother's dread...

God in his heaven must sit and wonder...  
If creating man was a bit of a blunder...

But, in His wisdom he went his Son...  
So even in death the battle can be won...

We remember those who died,  
those who cried...



We remember.....

---

## **GRENADIER RELATED STORIES**

### Archives

11315-60 Street NW  
Edmonton  
Alberta  
Canada  
T5W 3Z2

Grenadier Guards  
Birdcage Walk  
London  
SW1E 6HQ  
England  
May 19, 2004

Hello People,

Greetings from Canada. I am John Tidridge, formerly L/Sgt. 22545749.

Shortly after serving three years with the First Battalion, from 1953 to 1956, I was recalled to the Colours and finished up in the Suez Canal Zone, via Malta, serving in the Third Battalion.

I am working on my (very ordinary) life story and I am requesting information relating the Suez Crisis. The Battalion sailed from Southampton in (please) what liner? The Battalion returned to Southampton in what liner?

As a member of the machine gun platoon I was fortunate enough actually go to Port Said. We travelled by minesweeper (did it have a name, type?). We returned by a similar type of minesweeper, but a different ship...which finally had to be towed back to Valletta. Do you have the names of the towed and tow-er?

By the time we reached Malta the rest of the Battalion had moved to Cyprus. Our platoon was shipped by a Tank Landing Craft (?). Would the boat have a name or is the type known?

Would you be able to give me the name of the airfield where the battalion was camped in Malta, and the area where we were camped in Cyprus?.

Yours sincerely,

John Tidridge  
jtidridge@interbaun.com

---

Archivist

June 16, 2004  
Some information received  
Major (Retd) R.G. Woodfield MBE  
Regimental Headquarters  
Grenadier Guards  
Wellington Barracks  
Birdcage Walk  
London SE1E 6HQ

Your ref: 3123

Dear Major Woodfield:

Thank you for the information supplied by your staff.

I would like to re-word my questions so that the answers will come from battalion records rather than my own!

1. What liner transported the 3<sup>rd</sup> Btn. Grenadier Guards from Southampton to Malta in August 1956 for the Suez Crisis?
2. Was the name of the minesweeper that transported the Machine Gun platoon of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Btn. Grenadier Guards from Valetta to the Suez Canal HMS LEVERTON? (the handwriting in 'my' records is not clear)
3. What minesweeper transported the Machine Gun platoon of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Btn. Grenadier Guards from the Suez Canal to Malta, and what was the name of the minesweeper that towed this ship when it caught fire?

4. What was the name or description of the ship, a Tank Landing Craft, which transported the Machine Gun platoon of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Btn. Grenadier Guards from Malta to Cyprus?
5. What was the name of the liner that transported the 3<sup>rd</sup> Btn. Grenadier Guards from Cyprus to Southampton?

Hoping that battalion records are a little more illuminating than mine,

Yours sincerely,

John Tidridge  
22545749

---

Bren Gun Carriers....

UPDATED January 2008

The year 1954 or close to it...the place Pirbright where some Support types were sent to learn to drive Bren Gun Carriers; Reg. Mann, Herbert (Bert) Garnett Baxter, and Jack (Slap leather) Matteson (?)... and yours truly.

We had finished the training course under a very proficient Sgt 'Spike' Jones. A real gentlemen (when we were in Berlin he and his wife invited us to his home for Christmas dinner...it is only now, having raised and fed four kids that I realize that was an expensive meal...). Unfortunately during the testing by Major Way (?) we all failed... 'bobbing' was/is that the word?

We were to be shown the error of our ways by (I may not be entirely accurate here) the Police Sgt of the 1<sup>st</sup> battalion.... Turner. He had a series of tactics to make us learn faster...he would make us park the carrier on a hill, get out, put our cigarettes (didn't we all smoke back then?) under the rear tracks, and then drive off up the hill...those of you young enough to remember standard transmissions will know what happen if you did not engage the clutch properly! The standard punishment for stalling...shut off the motor, put the crank handle, twelve feet long (?!), seemed like it, although it was only five, or four, into place and then crank ten times!! The sergeant would turn on the motor and you cranked for the last time...

However, what gave us all a laugh...not the sergeant of course...was when he tried to show us how easy it was to change gears....we were huddled in the carrier and he was showing us easy it was to change gears, 'you can do it with one finger', that did not work, 'you can do it with two fingers'...( in the barrack room, we of course took the whole load of fingers before the proper operation was used) that did not work, and it required a full handed effort to change gears...

Reg. Mann gave a rather disrespectful, but appropriate pantomime of the whole procedure...

Oh yes, we all passed the second time...if only the people of Europe knew what was in store for them....

---

### From Palaces To Prisons

June 19, 1996

Between the years 1953 and 1957 I served in the Grenadier Guards. After receiving training at the dreaded Caterham Barracks, and the more relaxed Pirbright, I was posted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion stationed at Wellington Barracks in London. After a short period of public duties, which saw me standing reasonably still outside such places a Buckingham and St. James's Palaces, I finished up in Berlin, Germany.

This was a unique experience as it was a joint venture with the French, American and Russian forces. In Berlin I made my first prison stay... in Spandau Prison, as a guard, where the remnants of the Hitler regime were imprisoned.

My three years finished in record time and I settled down to civilian life. Then more trouble erupted in the Middle East. Someone took back a canal called Suez and I was back in the army again. Within a week of recall in August 1956 I had been shipped, along with 900 other Grenadiers, to Malta. At least the sun shone there!

We were camped on the airstrip used during the Second World War during the air battle of Malta. Here I visited prison for a second time, this time a short-term prisoner. It happened this way. I had played soccer against a nearby RAF team and had injured my feet and received an 'excused duties' rating from the Medical Officer. On

returning some three days later I was upgraded to 'medicine and duties'. This meant I was to be on parade later that morning. Although I was a lance-sergeant and should have known better, I decided I would miss the drill parade.

Apparently many others decided to do the same thing. The outcome was that the drill sergeant, a warrant officer, checked the tents – we were living under canvas - found me and told me to place myself in close arrest. I was not foolish enough to disobey that order. So I marched down to the guard-room, which was also a tent, and handed myself over to the sergeant of the guard.

The punishment was small and painless. Another interesting item occurred connected with my imprisonment: When you are a prisoner in the armed forces you are doubled (running) everywhere. I was being escorted by another sergeant to face trial and receive punishment. It was about a mile to the commanding officer's tent. We were well on our way when we spied our company commander, an officer, so we had to salute. My escort was so out of breath he couldn't get the words of command out ... so I gave them ... he saluted; the officer returned the salute, I broke us into double time, again, and off we went. Suddenly the officer realized what had happened. We ignored his command to return and he chose not to follow up on the incident.

A short while after the above incident, the machine gun platoon, of which I was a member, was transferred to a minesweeper and we traveled from Malta to Egypt. As we approached the harbour at Port Said, we swept for mines.

Much to our relief and the chagrin of the crew, who received a bounty for destroying mines, we did not find any. The ship ran aground going into the harbour. The return trip to Malta was also by another mine sweeper that caught fire ... but that's another story.

The crisis in the Middle East ended for a while and I was released. I married shortly after being released from the army and arrived in Canada in 1957 ... and that's another story as well!

---

**Gordon Whitehead**

11315-60 Street

Edmonton  
Alberta  
Canada  
T5W 3Z2  
September 2, 2006

Dear Gordon,

Thank you for your recent letter....it was good of you to reply so quickly!!

Yes, indeed 1953...we were both much, much younger then!!

I knew of your successful career...and successful it was. I am not sure mine paralleled yours as I took a somewhat different route, but, modestly, I did achieve some success!!

I left the regiment, first time in 1956, from the first battalion, RSM Dickinson, with me in Support Company and you in Queen's. I started in Queens in London, but better and wiser heads decreed I could/should drive a bren-gun carrier better than shining boots!! And some, in retrospect, might have even wondered about that!! I did make lance-sergeant before leaving. I was a driving instructor. I was recalled to the Colours for the Suez Crisis, starting in 3 Company but finishing up again in Support, as a lance sergeant. As I look back, Someone was clearly in control.

I will list my career path!

1953 joined the Grenadiers, served in London and Germany.

1956 Left the Regiment, but later recalled, same year; finished up in Malta, Cyprus and (yes!!) Egypt, with the Machine Gun Platoon.

1956 engaged to the girl who is now my wife, decided to follow the Christian lifestyle. (Still working on this one!!)

1957 Left the Regiment, got married. Left for Canada, worked first on a pig farm, (only qualification being I knew at which end to put the food) later in a warehouse.

1959 Joined the City of Edmonton Police Service. At one point I helped drill recruit squads; the Sergeant Major (the Police Service was just like the military at that time.) was an ex-Coldstream Guardsman!!

1972 Promoted to sergeant.

1978 Left Police Service to become the first Security Officer of the Edmonton Transit System; later took on Industrial Safety duties as well.

1983 Left Transit to become the Senior Supervisor of the Bylaw Department.

1994 Retired, first time.

1996 As a self employed person, joined Leduc County ( about 1200 square miles, located just south of Edmonton) as an Assistant Development Officer. It would have been like taking over a failed squad....not much prior enforcement for thirty years!!

2002 Retired for the second time.



This picture as taken about three years ago...you will note the Andy Capp cap, jauntily slashed!!...Other things... same wife, Maureen...49 ½ years...four children, all adults now and all working, married and have between them produced eleven grandchildren (four boys and seven girls). My son is 6'4" 225 pounds...ramrod straight...a right hand man!! One of our grandchildren married in early July so the Tidridge Tribe stands at 22! Plus there are about three or four boy-girl friends in the picture.

OK back your letter... knowing that you took on 3 or 4 'failed' squads certainly puts a different perspective on things!! I can see (now) it would have been a blow to Ron Dancer to have a failed squad on his résumé. I can't imagine you having a failed squad on yours! I confess though I had some feelings of compassion for L/Sgt Searcy (would you know how to get a hold of him?) I can imagine how embarrassing his return to the battalion would have been. What little I remember about him does not reflect on his military abilities but his too human approach in the early stages of the squad's training. He would come up to the barrack room and chat...As I recall, we did not realize you were human until the last several weeks of our training!! ☺ I was never sure about Ron!!

Gordon, in my first letter I mentioned the Grenadier Guards Forum, a web page dedicated to, yes, Grenadiers. Through the page I tried to get in contact with former squad members...it would seem, however, that none have remained Association members...or are dead or? However, several other men did respond saying that they knew of you... in summary, their remarks could be stated as follows...a man to be feared but respected and who led from the front... May I pass on the information you have provided about your career...if yes, could you also give me a biography....where born etc. and why "Bunny". You really are a legendary person!! I remember being in the 'butts?' at Pirbright and having to speak to the Lance Sergeant of our platoon...I banged in my tabs in the way you taught...to hear the sergeant say, you must have been in one of Whitehead's squads!!

Please give active consideration to my request!!

Best wishes,

John T

---

11315-60 Street NW  
Edmonton, Alberta  
Canada T5W 3Z2

October 4, 2006

Hello Bunny,



Hmmm...much after my time!!

Thank you for your letter.... Delighted that you have the time (even though you are retired and a grandfather!!) to correspond.

I have followed your request and have limited my response to the web page in accordance with your wishes...unfortunately!!

Just a couple of comments from your letter....I knew Sgt. Tattersall, he was with us in Berlin and helped coach the boxing team. As I said in my response to the web page, there was a CSM killed as well in another accident, the vehicle he was a passenger in struck a



tree. ...I think it was Bunny? Gorman? We were on a scheme (fighting the Russians I think!!) and RSM Dickenson was badly shaken by the incident. I think you were still at Caterham at the time.

Then there were the two lance sergeants from Queen's Company who did not survive a mid-night dip in a reservoir on the base. Were you in the battalion when L/Sgt Nightingale, (also of Queen's) suffered a fatal heart attack? This was in Düsseldorf. Does the name "Elephant Tango" brings back memories!! ☺

In your comments about representing the Army in Cyprus....I cannot make out the Sgt's name?

So, what do you do in your retirement? Garden, work with Guard's organizations...I don't see you much attached to a rocking chair.... Your health is good? Mine is excellent...but then I am much younger than you!!

You did not tell me the origin of Bunny?! For private consumption only!!

I was just thinking how the squad, at the beginning, hated all those stupid things we did...like lining up kit bags, buffing the floor etc. etc. etc. but how, by the end of the training, we had been programmed to do it without being required to and actually enjoying it!!



I felt badly about the first instructor we had....Searcy, does ring a bell...I think he was more suited to battalion life rather than Training Depot. I often wondered what happened to NCO's who did not make the grade at Caterham... were they punished or?

You will have to get your grandson to let you use his e-mail...or you could buy a computer!! Don't tell me you can't type...it's hit a key, 1,2,3 hit....you remember the drill..

You will not, of course, remember the chap to the left!!

Take care, Gordon,

### Stolen Boat And Tea

The year 1955, the place Suez Harbour, the occasion? Well let's see. The machine gun platoon of the Grenadier Guards 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion had been assigned to a minesweeper. The Mediterranean Sea had been crossed from Malta to Egypt, and our ship, quite literally, was stuck in the harbour. The trip had been uneventful except for (unsuccessfully) sweeping for mines, until we reached the harbour: The other side had sunk obstacles into the harbour and unfortunately.... But I digress.

Our platoon was disembarked and had taken up residence in, of all places, the Brooke Bond Tea factory!! There was tea everywhere. Our sergeant thought it would be a gesture of kindness to the Petty Officers' Mess of the minesweeper if we could take them some tea. After all, they had treated these military interlopers with (really) great food, hospitality and had introduced them to the daily ration of grog! Lance sergeants were selected to make up the 'loading' party; after all we had all enjoyed the hospitality.

A large (really) large bag was filled with tea, the party made its way to the shore. Now what, too far to swim (!), the ship was too far away to attract the attention of anyone on board...so! A large boat (dhow?) was noted nearby, the owner was conveniently absent...so, like true Grenadiers we, in the name of the Queen, commandeered the boat, manned the oars, with the Sergeant sat in the sharp-end (OK bow!!), calling out the time, and away we went, initially like a squad in its first day of training...but because of our superb adaptation to the problem at hand, we were soon rowing like seasoned Tars!

Reaching the minesweeper our sergeant sought permission to come aboard...it was granted and the tea was safely delivered... Ah, it's a tough life, whether on sea land or...did I tell you about the air trip our Platoon Commander arranged...perhaps another time!!

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Polishing Boots Or Not....

September 2007

Malta, 1956, sleeping in tents on an old airfield: Recently recalled to the colours, several lance sergeants gather and discuss how they will clean their boots for the up-coming, first drill parade....

We unanimously agree no spit and polish. We return to our tents...

Next morning...we are lining up for parade, only one of us has followed the agreed plan...guess who...three evening orders later!!

It's funny (!) how these things affect our thinking...I have never really been a groupie ever since...I prefer to take on any tasks by myself...not relying on others....there is a good and bad side to this of course... The good side is you get all the credit....the bad side? You will have to figure it out for yourself!!

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## Suez (The) Campaign

### **One Man's Recollection From A Military And Personal View** by John Tidridge

Why now, some fifty years later, have I decided to write an account of the Suez Campaign of 1956? When my friend Chip dePierne, of Connecticut, USA casually mentioned my cousin Edward (Ted) Tidridge, had been involved in the dredging of the Suez canal, after the hostilities were over, I thought that two Tidridges in one location...just has to be written about! Ted was an accountant with the Standard Dredging Company of New York. And, perhaps Betty Pickering would serialize my story in the North American Association

Newsletter and I would become an immediate, overnight, best selling author. So, here we go!



In some accounts of different events, information provided has appeared as being factual; what I have done is to 'mark' information that was 'generally believed' and to separate it from what I know! I find

my memory sadly lacking for names, and etc.

In either July or August 1956 a headline in the British newspapers<sup>1</sup> read: '*250,000 EXPERTS WILL BE RECALLED*' (as far as I recall), to meet the need to rectify the situation in the Suez: President Nasser had seized the Suez Canal before the end of the (internationally) recognized agreement. I breathed a sign of relief; by no stretch of the imagination was I an expert at anything. I had received the Grenadier Guards training, reached the rank of lance sergeant, had successfully completed a driving instructor's course, finishing up as the Motor Section NCO for the Machine Gun Platoon, in Düsseldorf, Germany. However, shortly after that a telegram (?) arrived saying I was to report to Pirbright, forthwith. The first thing to be done was to cash the 10/- (?) voucher in the AB64 Part 1.

What happened between arriving at Pirbright and Windsor Barracks is a mystery; a part from the fact many of us wore blazers with the regimental crests, and being trucked to Pirbright Camp from the station. At some point we must have been issued our kit. My next recollection is being in a large barrack room, at Windsor, writing my will, and finding some one who slashed peaks...the important stuff. I found myself in 3 Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, an infantry man!!

Minor training was carried out at Windsor, again what has disappeared from mind: the next thing I recall is boarding a ship at Southampton, being assigned a cabin, and having inoculations. Our ship was sent on her way with a bugler playing



*'Davy  
Crocket the  
King of the  
Wild*



*Frontier'*, using a rifle for a bugle! The ship was 'the Empress of Australia'. And so we left for Malta. The trip was uneventful, but somewhere along the way the order of dress changed to 'shorts' because we were greeted with cries of "Get yer knees brown", as we disembarked. This greatly annoyed some of our men who had just finished serving in Egypt.

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<sup>1</sup> It was either the Daily Mirror or the Daily Express, or both!

The battalion was 'under canvas' on an airport. (It was said) aircraft that took part in the Second War Battle of Malta took off and landed from this point. The tents were, I think six man size, lance sergeants and up had beds, the others just mattresses. There were, of course, the usual company offices. Things ran smoothly until one night when there was a torrential downpour which flooded<sup>2</sup> the area having a bad effect on the sleeping area of the guardsmen. Later some of the more keen types secured bricks and mortar and built small walls to direct any future water to a safer area. Toilets were in a separate area, and to me were of a new design!! There were 20 or 30 toilets, in a double line, backing onto each other with a walkway in front of the seats; the whole collection was covered in canvas. Showers were located elsewhere. There was, of course, the Sergeants' Mess, (I suppose there must have been a corporals' mess) and the men's N.A.A.F.I.<sup>3</sup> The food in the Mess was adequate.

We quickly learned condensation made clothes hung up outside the tents to dry off over night wetter than if it had rained. I (seem to) recall a memo or oral order advising us to drink at least twelve pints of liquid a day; the form of liquid did not matter. Use of the 'locals' was made for washing clothes and providing 'pop'. These people seemed to have the run of the camp. I have desperately tried to get things in the correct order, however... I was by nature, and am still for the most part, quiet, amiable and certainly not a non-conformist and not the rabble rousing sort: however this was to change!! The orders for first drill parade was posted and I, along with several other lance sergeants<sup>4</sup>, debated how our boots should be shined for the parade; it was agreed that we would polish, but not spit and polish, as it turned out I was the only one foolish enough not to 'spit and polish'. I received three evening orders for my folly!! Drill parades, and I do not recall how many or how often they occurred, were otherwise uneventful, but I do remember Drill Sergeant Clutton MM giving the sergeants' squad a good 'warming up' before settling down to some good Guards' drill. There were other soldiers from other units watching nearby and he said, "We will show them how it's done". A good man was the late Fred Clutton. He was my CSM for my short stint in the Queen's Company.

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<sup>2</sup> As I recall not the normal situation where water gathered but a quickly rushing stream of water that swept much away in its path

<sup>3</sup> I am not absolutely sure it was the N.A.A.F.I. per se

<sup>4</sup> While it could be so construed, this was not an act of mutiny, it was a response to military rules and regulations that seemed so out of place for men who had been hauled back into the service, and...there seemed to be no real need for the drastic action taken by governments.

A soccer (football) match between our company and some nearby RAF types resulted in an overwhelming victory for the good guys, but also resulted in my tearing my feet badly by using 'store' soccer boots. ( I wonder at what point boots were discarded as these should have been dumped years ago) The 'wounds' were severe enough to get me Medicine and Duties for several days, ending on the Saturday morning, just before a drill parade. I received clearance from the Medical Officer, returned to my tent and decided drill was not for me. There was no malice aforethought, believe me!! Sometime later I was sat on my bed, the tent flap opened and there was RSM White. "Put yourself in close arrest", said he, "Sir" said I. I am fast becoming a very unsuccessful, 'kicker over of the traces'. The cut a short story long!: A L/Sgt from my company and tent comes to escort me to Commanding Officer's Memorandum; it's a fair hike (double!) from the guardroom to the CO's tent; my companion is not very fit. As we make our way, we see our Company Commander, Major Giles(?); time for the order to 'break into quick time, eyes right, eyes front, break into double time', my escort is so out of breath he can't but I do, and we continue on our way, ignoring the major's command to 'come here', or something like that. The major must have had a sense of humour because he let us go!! I think I got a couple of evening orders.

I recall carrying out some field duties during my healing period; I was wearing 'civvy' shoes, the ground was somewhat rocky!! We practiced 'bren (gun) on the left' and the same major suggesting I had taken the bren (gun) crew too far left; I pointed out, respectfully, that there was precious little cover etc. He had no problem with my 'argument'! We also did a bayonet charge.<sup>5</sup> There was a least one route march of some considerable distance. The Commanding Officer was noted to be striding along the ranks; it was said he had been in or very nearly had been in, the Olympic Games. On another occasion he gave a speech to the troops in a building of some kind welcoming us to his battalion and Malta. It was, as I recall, full of good advice and humour. I also attended a church service where he led, I was impressed by the fact he appeared to know the service by heart.

On a night field exercise we were supposed to crawl up to an 'enemy' post and listen for any conversations we might detect. From their conversations they had detected us but chose not to do anything about it. In order to reach the post we had crawled through a vineyard, and had, ignoring earlier instructions, filled our stomachs

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<sup>5</sup> From what I see on TV these sorts of protocols (?) are much outdated.

with the fruit, resulting no ill effects I might add! Yet again, two other things I have never forgotten; cacti my height, with both flowers and 'prickly pears' on their stems, and, resting with other men along a wall, and being suddenly covered with black flies, I have never, ever seen so many!!

(As far as I can recall) the order went out for a 'kit inspection'; a note appeared on a bulletin board in the middle of the company tents that (I saw it) 'Meeting in the NAAFI at' (and I don't remember the time) but 8.00 p.m. comes to mind. (Later it was reported) a group, numbers unknown, headed (apparently) for the Officers' Mess. (It was reported) they swept aside the barrack guard who (apparently) only offered passive resistance. (It was rumored, but never confirmed, that an officer finished up in a pool of some sort.) I never did find out what happened at the Officers' Mess or what happened to those taking part in the 'march'. Members of Parliament visited the camp; I saw them but did not hear the remark by a guardsman when told by one of the visitors that the food looked OK. (He was quoted as replying) "That's because you are here". It's fair to say the reservist were not a happy bunch!! I guess this was and is understandable; it was a political squabble over a canal and the squabble had taken on rather dangerous consequences. They had been recalled from their jobs and homes, (based on what I was told) given no good reason for being where they were and no time schedule for a return. I have less sympathy for the war now than at the time I was in Malta. The Americans were strongly opposed to the action of the Allies; (and it was rumored) they would resort to military action (it was said the Americans had moved one of their fleets into the Mediterranean Sea) if the allies military action was not terminated. I think there was some apprehension in the camp after the march (it was called a mutiny<sup>6</sup> by some) to the point where my loyalty, and that of another L/Sgt, was questioned by our CSM. This was shortly after my missing parade and the march; he apparently made some connection between the two. I assured him his concerns were unfounded. The sergeants were also called to a meeting in the Mess; the RSM said simply, "If any of us supported the actions of the men who marched to the Officers' Mess we should leave, now!" No one left.

Around this time was I was transferred to the Machine Gun Platoon; I do not know why<sup>7</sup> or how, but I finished up #2 man to

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<sup>6</sup> Giles, the Daily Express cartoonist, draw a squad of guardsmen marching, receiving the 'eyes left' as they passed a field to their right, in which a huge bull stood.

At the same time a song was being aired on the British radio that was (at least) anti-war if not subversive.

<sup>7</sup> In Germany the platoon was relaxing and firing the MMG. It could be rigged up and fired accurately at

L/Cpl 'Wally' Cox. I knew next to nothing about the gun and had no time to learn. I would have been a handicap<sup>8</sup> if we ever went into action. I am annoyed that I can only guess that our Platoon Officer was the late Captain Wise and our Platoon Sergeant, Ken (?) Langford. Both were gentlemanly in their demeanor. The captain was responsible for my first ever airplane ride, over and around Malta, (and the rest of the platoon). And on another occasion, seeing the bay where (St.) Paul landed when he was shipwrecked off the coast of Malta. Things moved rather more quickly at some point, we, the platoon, were with the battalion on a scheme; we were called back to camp. No one told us why, but the fact that we had a kit inspection, loaded up all our supplies and ended up at Valletta harbour and then onto a ship, we later learned was a mine sweeper<sup>9</sup>, caused us to ponder!!. Oh, yes, we loaded 100,000 rounds of ammunition as well. . We were called on deck with the remainder of the crew and informed by the captain that we were at war with the Egyptians; that we would set sail fairly quickly, and we did!! Plates to accommodate the machine guns had been secured to the right-hand side, OK, so I'm not a sailor, but I do know what 'posh' stand for, of the ship. These proved later to be effective.



The first few days at sea were difficult and (it was said) that everyone on the ship was sea sick, even the skipper, who took a bucket onto the bridge with him!! I never did leave my bunk for at least a day except to visit the 'heads'...Oh, yes, I learned what and where they were!! However, once recovered, we (the NCO's) were treated royally by our equivalent rank on board. The food was superb, and we were waited on!! We were introduced to the historical rite of 'splicing the main brace'. (I seem to remember) that some consideration was given to the fact that we were at sea; experiencing salt air, that our cap badges did not have to be cleaned, or was it the other way around and we had to clean them more often. Does not really matter now!! One practice shoot was carried out; to ensure the machine guns were 'up and running', they were, and so were we!!

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close range...by some Divine intervention I manage to put a round through an empty .303 shell...but t his did not me a machine gunner make!!

<sup>8</sup> In retrospect I am convinced I would have 'learned quickly'!!

<sup>9</sup> Interesting enough, from a plaque on the bulkhead I learned the ship had been built in Southampton, my home port, as it were, by Harland and Wolffe



During the voyage we were met by the supply ship and we all (platoon members) missed a glorious opportunity to do something we would have been proud to tell our grandchildren: we were offered a ride in the boson's chair to visit the other ship; I have never seen so many steps taken backwards so quickly. The sad thing is that the sailor who did make the trip would have been dismissed by most of us as not being suitable for our regiment, goes to show doesn't it!! Looks are deceptive; thinking back though, I have a sneaky suspicion that the lines between the two ships would have slackened dramatically if we had taken them up on the challenge!!



"Mines are going to be swept as we approach Port Said Harbour" was the message we were given. "Would we like to sit on deck and observe". It was dark so I am guessing this was in the evening. We did sit but there was nothing to observe but a sailor with a .303 Lea Enfield, looking over the side, seaward, hoping for a mine to pop to the surface so that he could destroy it. (Apparently) five pound sterling was paid out for any mines destroyed. To my knowledge no mines were located or destroyed; but there was a 'sense of interest' on our part as we sat on the deck!! As we entered the harbour there was one aircraft diving into and out of (what appeared to be the quayside) and it fired one volley (?) of I assumed, rockets. There was no gun fire from the ground, and this was the only aircraft I noted in the area.

Our entry to the harbour was interesting; the ship ran aground on debris sunk in the harbour. Never did find out what had been sunk or left to impede the entry of the ship. The platoon left the ship; I do not recall the type of craft that took us or how we arrived at our destination, a Brooke Bond tea factory, of all places. I recall it being very clean, and noted that at least one toilet had no seats but a tiled hole in the floor. No vehicles were taken, but the drivers were there; I was returned to the section to be the sergeant of the guard outside of some distant village. Our orders were to prevent anyone entering the village. Only one bunch of men approached our post and they heeded our yells to 'buzz off'. We believe we used the right language!! 'Impshee' comes to mind! One group was seen in the distance trying to enter the village but I fired one round from my rifle and they left, quickly. We did not wander too far from our post, it was never left unmanned, however two fellows visited the village, which they found to be deserted. At another time several others moved away from

the post to check on a dead body lying nearby. No food was provided for the guard and all we received was from a jeep driven by members of another unit (not Grenadiers) who threw us some, not too ripe, grapefruit. After 18 hours and after it became dark, we could hear a group approaching; we recognized several of the voices as being fellow platoon members, I pointed this out to our officer when he asked why we had not challenged the group.

One other 'incident' stands out in my memory: the NCO's of the platoon were extremely grateful to the Petty Officers' of the minesweeper so we thought we owed them a gift of gratitude for the good care they took of us on the way over. We were in a tea factory; what better gift than a sack of tea? Tea was quickly found, bagged and secured in a sack: then the trip to the harbour to get it to the minesweeper. A minor problem occurred: no boat, quickly resolved by 'borrowing' a nearby boat, large enough for the tea and five NCO's. The Gold Sergeant sat in the 'pointy end' of the boat, the rest of us each grabbed an oar, and with the front man calling out the time in true Grenadier fashion, we rowed across the harbour and delivered the tea.

A resolution to the dispute was arrived at and the hostilities were at an end: It seemed we were not there for more than three days. As we boarded a minesweeper to come home (not sure if it was the same one we arrived on) we noted a huge pile of small arms in the (assumed) dockyard area. It seems we were not to have an easy trip home: the minesweeper caught fire (at least there was a lot of smoke) and it was towed the remainder for the trip...perhaps one half! What I do know is, there was one happy machine gun platoon when we got our feet on dry land...

But where was our battalion? That story is for another day!! Maybe!

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### Water Tower And The Boson's Chair

I am 10-11 years old on my way to church with a friend...the fire department has an aerial ladder up against a warehouse. "Wanna go up", says a firefighter... "No, we're on our way to church we say" (white lie?!)... So, off to church we go...

I am thirty-something....now a police officer, and I am at the top of a water tower...two hundred feet high...well, thirty-five or

forty...anyway. I am with a juvenile who had climbed to the top for 'refuge'. The fire department has again strung up their aerial ladder... the fireman takes the juvenile (he is not causing an problems) and he (the fire fighter) goes first, and puts the lad between him, and guess who...so, my first experience with aerals is not going up, but coming down, on my backside...

It's 1956, I am on a minesweeper with the machine gun platoon of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion. We're in the Mediterranean, and a supply ship has drawn up 'close by'. They, the crew members, sling what I think is called a boson's chair between the vessels...

"Any volunteers to fetch the mail", says a sailor...there is a sudden tilt of the decks as we the rush to the other side of the ship (kidding)...anyway a sailor who most of us thought would not get into our regiment, is in the contraption and heads there and back without incident....so, based on the time lag for using the aerial ladder....I am wondering what kind of boson's chair will be confronting me...I can hardly wait!! Ha!!

It was years later that I had to come down a similar ladder!! I had to help a young fellow down from the Calder water tower that had climbed to the top to attract attention about something or other. Now to the other incident: When we were on the minesweeper we drew alongside the supply ship. It was mail call. The other ship must have been over 60 yards away because of the rough sea. One of our sailor's shot a line to the ship, and rigged up, what I think it is called a Bosun's ladder. It's just a harness strung between the ships. A sailor merely seats himself into the harness and the sailors in the other ship pull him across the water. Again we were asked if we would like to try it, we, the soldiers all declined. I'm 59 years old now. I wonder when I will have to use one.

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Biography For The North American Guards Association

December 2011

Submitted to The North American Guards Association, December 2011

John Tidridge  
Biography  
December 29, 2011

I was challenged by Peter's (DABBS) effort to be more inventive in my biography. So, here goes!



First the name, it is a great old English name! Its earliest history starts in the village of Cheriton Hampshire, where John Titheridge, note the spelling, set up shop as a tailor. This was in about 1643 or so. In the following 468 years one part of the family gained a new name, 'Tidridge' in 1815, and along with spellings has spread to several continents, including Australia as a guest of the government, to USA, New Zealand and Canada. There are many variations of the surname some of which are best left unspoken

My direct line, I can modestly say, and I can hear W. S. C's quote here when he spoke of Mr. Atlee, seemed to be ordinary, hard working people. Many of whom served their country, several giving their all, and some I am delighted to say, served with the Grenadier Guards!!

My own résumé began at an early age when I was born in the bustling village of Hedge End, Hampshire in 1935. I was the first born of Sid and Ethel. A move was made to the hugely popular Totton, same county, in about 1938 and there I remained until I received the request to present myself for military service.

I was schooled locally, flunked the exam to go to grammar school (I would not have looked good in a straw boater) I hate to admit it, but both my younger sister and brother did make it! Anyhow, I scored well enough in the exam to be eligible for Southampton Technical School. This fact has never been accepted by any of my four children, nor that I ever sang in a choir... something to do with un-level structures and out of tune singing. But I digress.

I was good at sports and got as far as a trial in both cricket and soccer for Southampton Boys, and I dabbled at boxing. Hence my classic feature: A roaming nose.

Work-wise, I wanted to be a nurseryman, no, not looking after children: greenhouses and all that kind of stuff! That did not pan out!

Presenting myself for 'conscription' I had a medical in which the doctor found flea bites on my shoulder... I worked where there were animals and straw...go figure. I was graded to serve 'anywhere'.

The recruiting sergeant did an excellent sell job and I was signed on for twenty-two years with the option to leave after three years. Much more money (ha!). So, I was now a Grenadier Guardsman or so I thought!

Ah! Caterham! My number was given to me:22545749. From the 'make up a squad' barracks I moved to the Block and found a charming Ron Dancer was our Trainer Soldier. Our first squad



instructor was I think L/Sgt Searcy. We flunked our 4<sup>th</sup> week inspection. The charismatic, debonair L/Sgt 'Bunny' Whitehead became our squad instructor. Those who were trained by these two will allow me to pass along here... however, regardless, I am grateful that they got us through. Our squad quickly and truly learned the meaning of our feet 'never touching the ground'. Had it been tried we would have emulated the feat of my Friend, who tried it on water.

Pirbright was a breeze, then onto the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, a few stints of public duty, and training (successful) to become a bren gun carrier driver, and later yet a driving instructor. I had started off in Queen's Company; fortunately, my lack of an absolute 'spit and polish' attitude had me moved to Support Company. I was 6'3" and 175 lbs. By turning sideways I passed most of my inspections... then off to Berlin. Berlin was a breeze. I finished my service from Germany. I served in the mortar and then the machine gun platoon.

Having finished my service I dismissed the police force as an employment option and was merrily driving truck for the 600 Group when the telegram arrived! In short order I reported to Pirbright, then off to Windsor barracks and within two weeks we were settled on an airfield in Malta. Tents were our abodes! It was here that I was first placed under arrest! It must have been the heat. I had played soccer for Support Company, wore army issue soccer boots and tore one foot quite badly with the nails that were in the soles. Bad enough to get 'excused duties', After several days I reported to the MO received M&D and decided I would not go on Saturday Parade; apparently several

others did the same, the result was the RSM did a tent inspection, he found me and I was told to put myself in 'Close Arrest'.

I think I received three 'Evening Orders'. A funny thing happened on the way to the Commanding Officer's Memorandum: I was being escorted by a fellow lance sergeant, and tent companion. Halfway there we spy our company commander: must break into quick time and salute. My escort is out of breath (badly) I give all the words of command we salute, and we break into double time and off we go. We hear our officer calling us back... we decide not develop husbanditis (selective hearing)... he was a good enough sport to let us go!



I enjoyed my first aircraft flight courtesy of the RCAF and the kindness of our platoon officer. There was a riot of sorts by the men of the battalion, which undoubtedly affected the careers of many... and brought about a visit by Members of Parliament. No NCO's were involved. It was a sad occurrence. I think it was due to the conditions, the needless war, no end in sight... however!

This is going on and on... eventually the machine gun platoon was shipped to Port Said, on a mine sweeper that ran aground going into the harbour and caught fire on the return trip to Malta. We swept for mines: I passed up the opportunity to try the boson's chair between the minesweeper and the supply ship.

Returning to Malta we found the battalion had moved to Cyprus. We caught up using a Landing Tank Craft. I enjoyed my first steak, rare! Marvelous!

I concede my service was soft... not one round fired in my direction...

We (the reservists) eventually were shipped back to the UK by ship (my Dad's old liner) having been bumped from flying by some British Passport carrying individuals. The ship arrived in Southampton and we found we were to stay on board another night as the stevedores were on strike... good old Dad among them.



I enjoyed my time with the regiment, straightened the back, gave me much to write about! Oh, yes, many (many) years later, as a constable in the Edmonton Police Service I was conscripted again by the Sergeant Major, an ex-Coldstream Guardsman, to help with the drilling of new squads!

My wife and I have now been in Canada almost 55 years, raised four adult kids (three girls and a boy) and have been blessed with eleven grandchildren (seven girls and four boys) and one great grand daughter.

I was employed by the City of Edmonton in the Police service, Transit and Bylaw Enforcement for a total of 35 years. I was retired for about 18 months when I contracted myself out as an assistant development officer in the nearby Leduc County: a position I enjoyed for seven years.

I am presently a volunteer at my church, the local Memorial Society and I write for the Community League magazine.

The Lord has been good!

I have developed a family web site that can be viewed at:

<http://clubweb.interbaun.com/~jtidridge/>

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**THOUGHTS AND CONVERSATIONS GENERATED THROUGH A  
GRENADIER GUARDS FORUM.**

**By way of explanation:** Most of the following material appeared on a Grenadiers website, under the heading Church Parade. It was intended to be a **discussion** for fellow Christians. It quickly developed into something far different. It was shutdown at the end by the webmaster because of the deterioration of the material.

John Tidridge learned a valuable lesson: those who are not seeking but who are intent on running Christianity down are not prepared to listen to reasonable arguments, one way or the other!

As I read some of my material I think I would change things... but that be as it may, that's how I felt at the time. I might have written a bit differently... but, as I write this, Christmas Day 2011 my beliefs have not changed!

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### Accountability Groups And Friends

April 13, 2008

How many of us really like to be held accountable? Those of us who are married to loving wives know what it means...it's a little more than just taking out the garbage! But how about being accountable to a group of your peers.... Grenadiers for instance?

What would it mean? It would mean the group has code of standard that each member is expected to live up to. That each member of the group has the privilege and responsibility to 'call out' any other member who is not living up to the set standard.... And to be called out themselves!

This is not some, as 'Arry' might call it, a touchy-feely group.... This is a group that calls it like it is...it can be amusing, embarrassing, educational and uplifting... but, it also builds that 'esprit de corps' or that feeling of self-worth so necessary today.

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### A Con Game

Taken from a blurb, from me to the Grenadier Guards web page.

Several 'threads' have mentioned that Christianity is a 'con' game, or people have been 'conned'.



There are several meanings to the word 'con'... but probably the reference is to swindle, as in a confidence game. I suppose we could say it's when a person is suckered into beliefs or actions they would not normally take.

I suppose ones determines one has been suckered when the promises held out by the organization have not been fulfilled. I would leave it to you to know whether I have been suckered or not. I cannot answer for others, of course.

From my perspective not too many promises were held out... in fact, although I had attended church for many years and had gained a pretty basic of knowledge about the Christian faith, no promises were held out at all... In fact it was not until I was 20 years of age when I heard a sermon that suggested there was more to the Christian faith than 'going to church on Sunday': If I was interested in learning more, then perhaps I would like to meet with the minister!

That conversation made me realize I had better get my act together and make a commitment to follow Jesus. No promises were held out. I was baptized and I began a new adventure. That was over 50 years ago and I can honestly say I have no regrets; I have had to give up nothing that would have benefited me, but have gained a new perspective on life!

I have belonged to the same church for over 50 years now, I have never been browbeaten to give more money than I can afford, I have never been threatened that if I don't do this or that, I will be damned. Apart from a constitutional requirement to pledge to follow the teachings of Jesus as best as I am able, to treat others with respect, both in and out of the church, there are no rules. I can wear my hair long, (I wish!!) or not at all.

I have enjoyed and still do enjoy, friendships with people from a kinds of backgrounds, engineers, teachers, police officers, self employed and blue collar workers. I can disagree with them, yet still be treated as an equal. I expect my peers to be honest with me and to tell me when my actions might bring the name of Jesus into disrepute. I have that same privilege with the others.

Now, of course, you will say the greatest 'con' is the promise of eternal life...which is the teaching of my church... that I won't know until I die, but based on my life experience, that if you try to follow his

teachings He will/has been there to guide and protect, through all of life's experiences, good and bad. The truth I have found in the teachings of the New Testament leave me absolutely no doubt that that promise will be fulfilled!!

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## An Oppressed People

November 18, 2007

Webster's Dictionary says that to oppress means, in part, to crush or burden by harsh rule. (A country is *oppressed* by a dictator's rule.)

It has been said by some, that religions (read Christianity here) have been used to oppress people. It would be foolish for me to deny such a claim. However, let me hasten to add, not in defense of the charge, but to help you to admit the same can be said for any organization you might chose to mention, be it school, the military, a union, or political party. In fact, some of the leaders of the aforementioned groups would claim that it is their real intent...to oppress!

In reading about our leader, we quickly discover that nothing could be further from the truth... Let me illustrate this from our handbook. The New Testament tells us that all people, men and women, are all equal before God and therefore, should be in the eyes of Christian believers. Colour, creed, wealth, poverty, language etc, **must** make no difference.

Jesus is pictured as standing outside of the door of your heart (handbook language) knocking...**but you have to let him in**...he does not force himself into your life.

When he laid out his Kingdom in his talks to people, he let them decide; there was no pressure applied. In his selection of disciples he simply called them, there was no coercion. Even Judas Iscariot chose to follow and then to betray, and Jesus spoke no evil about him or his enemies. The problem does not lie with the message of Christianity, which is freeing not oppressive, it has been and is, the interpretation, or rather misinterpretation by man, sometimes intentionally. Christianity is a lifestyle, where the only requirement is to love God and our neighbours as ourselves, once we have decided to follow

Jesus. Men have added some 'requirements' to join 'their' particular brand(s) of the church.

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Bible, The  
December 9, 2007

I believe the Bible to be have been given to man by God, that it was initially accurately recorded and since, just as accurately transcribed. I believe it to be true account of God's chosen people, the Jews, recorded in the Old Testament and a true account of the life of Christ, whom I believe to be God's son, in the New.

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Born Again

July 1, 2007

As mentioned last week some churches 'require' that an enquiring member be 'born again' before being accepted into membership. These new 'birthing' experiences differ greatly and there is evidence of this in the Bible. Some of these experiences are dramatic as in Paul's (formerly Saul) who had held the cloaks of men stoning a disciple; he was 'born again' on the road to Damascus. He was heading to that place to arrest some of the new believers. His **conversion** turned him from persecuting the believers to becoming the one of the strongest of the believers himself. As you can imagine he had some considerable difficulty convincing the believers he had in fact changed! I will mention but two others: One was a high ranking Ethiopian, after having the scriptures interpreted for him, and the other, a Roman centurion, after seeing Christ in action. I would suggest neither were gullible individuals. There are more examples in scripture among most notable are Nicodemus, a Jewish leader, and Matthew (Levi) a rich tax-collector.

As this is mostly about me... I had no Damascus Road experience. Sometimes it would be easier to explain my changes if I had had long hair (any kind of hair would help now!) and had been into sex and drugs! But I lived just an ordinary life!!

But, way back in 1956, I was convinced that I needed to change. This occurred at a service in a small Baptist Church at Thornhill,

Southampton, Hampshire, I remember nothing much of the sermon, but the pastor had been awarded a medal for bravery in World II: he had been in the RAF. This fact added some oomph to the 'calling' I received as I was a serving member of our Regiment. The 'calling' was simply that if I was to be a Christian *7 days a week*, I had better get my act together. The pastor asked that those who wanted more information should meet with him after the service. I did exactly that, and thus began my first few steps into the Christian faith.

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## Born Again-2

July 8, 2007

So what gives with all this 'born again' material... one can read or hear all kinds of stories about people falling in the aisles or screaming and sobbing out loud... quite dramatic responses. Mine was simply an internal response; to accept Jesus as Lord of my life; and even what that entailed was neither completely understood by me at the time, nor even now, as I am still learning and changing. I did not hear any bells go off or anything dramatic, but I **knew** I had made the decision to follow him.

Having attended church for most of my life (but not necessarily being a Christian) made the transition less complicated. I believed the basic elements of the Christian faith. What I had to learn was to LIVE the Christian life. In my view, being 'born again' does not mean a person, in one 'fell swoop', becomes an 'instant expert' in the faith. For me, far from it!

It is the start of an interesting journey with an even more interesting and exciting finish!

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## Brothers!

March 23, 2008

The masculinity of Christian men is sometimes questioned because they are seen hugging (bear hug!) and holding hands (this is a practice that still does not come easily to me!!)

So how would Grenadiers of all ages and ranks and lengths of service greet one another if 'herded' together for a reunion? How would you greet a former platoon member? How would we greet a

fellow member of a unit that had a special reputation and had formed very strong bonds within the group? Should we stiffly shake hands or stand around waiting to be 'formally introduced'? What if "our" team wins the Cup... and we're with 'unknown' people who support our team?

Ah, we say, but we're British... As I watch the occasional soccer game I don't observe too much 'reserve' being shown! Christian men share many things in common, but the main one is, they are committed to Jesus... who died for them... this puts them in a very personal relationship with him and other Christians, regardless of race or colour, or denomination. Oh, yes, but we don't hug every man right-off-the-bat, so it's unlikely anyone would get a mass 'hug-in'...it's reserved for those for whom we have regard!!

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## Christians

February 24, 2008

So how did a bunch of Jewish men, charged with telling the world about Jesus, become Christians? It was not an easy trip. Try to imagine, if you will, a platoon of 12 men, Grenadiers, with varying years of service, rank and age, but 100% behind their leader, whose age was about average for the group. This leader had no rank other than a three year good service stripe. However his personality, so striking, these men were absolutely committed to him and the cause, even if they all had different ideas on what it might mean. The leader is captured and executed but returns to the group... and tells them to preach the good news to the world... The rest of the members of the platoon do it, but remain Grenadiers nevertheless with a fixed idea that the only thing worth being in the world is a Grenadier... And so it was with the disciples...their religion was for just the Jews!

But! this exclusiveness was not the Leaders plan, and, through a series of dramatic happenings one of the leaders of the group, and a new recruit as it were who had been changed from persecuting the group, to becoming part one of it, realized this new religion or lifestyle was for all, regardless of sex, creed, background, condition of servitude, country or previous religion. Indeed, it would be a universal religion.

The group became so recognized for its loving behaviour to both those on the inside and the outside, that they finally came called Christian; after their leader, Jesus Christ.

As you know, this group grew and grew; and is still recognized as a group known for its kindness to those within and outside the group. This unique group of people was first called Christian at Antioch, less than 60 years after the death of Jesus.

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## Church-1, The

October 14, 2007

The Church this, the Church that, the Christian Church is corrupt, evil and should be done away with.... From the 'inside' those statements are pretty damning and need to be addressed, and have been and the church has in some cases come out 'wanting'. In many cases they have recognized their mistakes and have and are making amends. If, however, the accusers want to use broad brush strokes to condemn the church then they must accept those same broad strokes when the church responds.

First of all, though, one wonders how an organization that has a billion or so members can be clumped together without much consideration being given to the diverse nature of the church. Many within that church would say the church is the people not the organization; and would also say that the church has been misunderstood and wrongly 'convicted' as being **overall** bad. How can such broad accusations be laid against the entire church when those making the accusations know little of or are not willing to learn of the church...in its many and varied operations?

The church catholic (world wide, not Roman Catholic but including that church) contributes much to the world in the way of religious, art, science and secular teachings, help for the needy, supplying shelter, food and clothing. It helps Third World nations to develop their communities through improved agricultural practices, creating new buildings and clean water systems. And did I mention the relief they are supplying after man-made and natural disasters.

Next week I will tell of my 'own' church to show how some small churches operate.

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## Church-2, The

October 21, 2007

As mentioned last week, I am going to share a little about the church I attend. This is just to show that perhaps, your view of Church is not entirely complete!!

The church began in 1947 by holding Sunday School in a local secular school. When the need arose, the church that had sponsored the Sunday School purchased three lots for the construction of a small church building. A small building was constructed and the Sunday School and new church now began its work in earnest.

Since it was opened, the church has added to the original building twice, so that it now looks like a church and not the village hall! The size of the membership of the congregation has stabilized at about 146: and has added another church some 4-5 kilometers away.

The church is autonomous in its governance but is affiliated with both Provincial and Federal bodies Baptists. We follow a fairly evangelical Baptist style. By way of explanation, autonomous means we govern ourselves and pay our own way.

Our budget for 2007 is around \$C380,000.00, which is met by the contributions of the membership. We have a Constitution and a set of bylaws. Officers (elders) are elected from and by the fellowship. We hire our pastors (2) through a normal recruiting process. For the most part, staff, teachers and helpers are volunteers. We have a paid custodian and groundskeeper.

The church is involved in community and overseas projects. It also offers programs for young people. Our services are relaxed (our pastor says that those opposed to the organized church should really attend ours, because it ain't!).

Our congregational makeup includes many ethnic group; white, black, shades in between, Oriental, European, etc. The people are of various working backgrounds.

We are expected to follow the teachings of Jesus as best we are able...every day of the week, at church, at home, and at work and play.

Where is the church? In a pleasant community called Highlands, Edmonton, a city of some 700,000, the capital of Alberta. Alberta is, among other things, an oil rich province.

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### Church-3, The

October 28, 2007

"Judging from the number of churches there are you guys obviously can't tell your elbows from your ear holes"! Good point??? I don't know. To me it's shaky at the best!

If you consider that any group, even those with a united purpose, e.g. the Grenadier Guards, whose purpose is to produce (and it does) the finest military persons possible, still, there are differing personalities within its ranks. There are those who would do things a little differently if 'they' would permit it. Of course 'they' will not permit it. It would result in anarchy in the ranks.

God's church is just a little different. Churches large and small form because of different leadership styles, different worship and differently interpreted beliefs and traditions. Perhaps it would be ideal if there were one world wide church whose control over the parishioners was so complete everyone toed the line without complaint. Now, that might be a perfect church...but it would not admit the likes of me who are far from perfect and like to have the freedom to express my opinion, contrary or otherwise. (That would be a weird church indeed)

Christian churches, for the most part, share the same fundamental beliefs. They will vary greatly in interpretation (somewhat like the difference in the drill practice of the Guards compared with other regiments, both do it differently but the end result is (almost!) the same). This means that baptism can be by sprinkling, both as a child or an adult, or full immersion in water.

Some churches have the leaders in 'uniform', some in 'plain clothes', some ranks are such one does not get 'familiar' with a person senior in rank, others are so informal that one can't tell the pastor from the custodian. Service formats also differ greatly, again according to traditions and customs. Some are very (very) formal with processions, icons and incense and the congregation responds formally as well.



The other extreme, of course, is where there seems to be no formality at all and people are led to participate, pray, sing, raise their hands (and yes, play the tambourine!!) There are of course services that contain or incorporate all of the foregoing!! There is something for everyone's taste... and, as long as the true Gospel is preached, that's OK.

There is a church for everyone as God intended his believers to meet together, regularly.

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### Church Parade

I thought that it would be simple to write a few lines about church parades...I would 'google' the phrase, to get a history of the topic, and then add a few remaining words for comfort.

As some of else may have said, 'the best laid plans of men and mice are bound to go awry'... it simply did not turn out that way!! The 'googling' resulted in two web sites very much caught up into the question of Church Parades. Both were totally opposed and the language was worse (well, somewhat so) than any I have seen on the GrenadierForum.

I am only just beginning to realize the hatred some Grenadiers have, and that's not too strong a word, for all things related to Christianity. And if that hatred is based on being forced to attend church parade what kind of torture was perpetrated on that person? I am trying to think of my confirmation classes in 1947(?). They seemed to be a bit of a lark, where we tormented the curate with our misbehavior. I cannot imagine the army (Church of England) confirmation classes being that much different... well, being Grenadiers there would be no misbehavior...the only torture was having to endure a exposure to material not believed in. I fail to see how it could/would have such long lasting, negative affects?

I would hope (and pray) the original intent of church parades was to save the souls of new soldiers, and nothing else. If one thinks back to those days the average 'other ranks' soldier did not rate too high on any social scale. One would hope it was not to simply build the numbers of the church. And even now, there is nothing wrong with saving souls... unless the men (and now women) were coerced or threatened in anyway to join a particular church. I would not be foolish

enough not to admit that those original intentions have been corrupted from time to time.

I feel that those so adamantly opposed to the Christian church that they can see no good in it at all, are doing themselves a disservice! To lambaste and deride an organization, world wide, that has done so much good in the world, simply shows they really haven't taken the time to study the facts with open hearts and minds. While there is much to criticize there is much to be honoured! Radicalism from either side of the spectrum is to be condemned!! After all both believers and non-believers are acting on faith!

Jesus said...I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. Matt. 16:18

On a lighter note:

A man insisted that he be allowed to join the local choir...he auditioned. The leader said he had two choices...  
He could sing 'solo'....solo no one could hear him  
Or 'tenor'...ten or twelve miles away!

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### Coincidences Or....

Sunday, June 10, 2007

People speak of the uncanny things that happen in their lives as chance or luck, or whatever. As a Christian believer I simply cannot accept that, after all, at the age of 72 I have likely had more experience in this area than most of the readers of this topic.

Here are excerpts from the short list of 'coincidences or' that I have experienced...

At the age of 5, praying to God he would prove his existence by sending me a marble... (Hey, we have to start somewhere!!) which he did...as I found one the next day on the way to school (as an aside here...as far as I know, I have no loose marbles!)

While in the Grenadier Guards, being taught to drive: This proved to be an asset in the period between my release and being recalled for

the Suez Crisis. So what you may say... but, I came from a non-car family, with little or no chance of ever getting a licence.

During my 3 year term in Germany, reading a movie magazine with a pen pal section, I began writing to a young lady who, you guessed it, became my wife... we have just celebrated our first 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this past February.

While serving in the Middle East, my fiancée 'amused herself' by going to see a travelogue **on** Canada, which resulted in us moving to and now living **in** Canada.

Coming to Canada, being in the Immigration Offices looking for a job, I was interviewed by a Christian farmer who was happy to know that I knew at which end of the pig to put food ...happy enough to hire me!!

I could go on... there are many more 'coincidences or'... several related to leaving the Police service after 18 years, moving into another branch of City governance, then after retirement...and the story would/could go on!!

I believe God has a plan for my life...it does not mean times will be easy...nor have they been.... It simply means my life is under the control of the Supreme Being. This does not imply that I have surrendered my free will, which is a gift from our Creator and with which I am blessed... indeed, we all are. But surely God does have a plan. Sometimes he makes us work to 'get it' (get it?!) and sometimes he doesn't share the plan with us. But when I look at all of the 'coincidences' I can see that another hand has guided me. One thing I am sure of, **God does have a plan.** If we want to see God smile just a little, we can ask him to use our plan instead!

If you ever think I am implying I am perfect....just ask my wife or my kids or my grandchildren they will surely tell....

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## Communion

March 30, 2008

Holy Communion, the Lord's Supper, Eucharist, Breaking of Bread. Some of the several names used to describe the Communion Service.

The Communion Service ranks high as a 'must attend' service for most Christians, regardless of the name or form that it might take.

I'd be willing to presume that just about everyone has witnessed, I'm sure, very ritualistic services, with those offering the communion dressed in fine regalia, performing the rites of their particular denomination. I'm also be willing to bet that a goodly number of people may never have witnessed a simple 'breaking of bread and a glass of fruit juice'...both services are equally meaningful for the participants. I have enjoyed Communion services in several churches of different denominations.

The service commemorates the supreme sacrifice Jesus paid on the cross for us sinners. Those taking the sacraments or elements are urged to put right wrongs they have committed before taking part...even if it means leaving the service to amend wrongs...this exhortation is should not be taken lightly.

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## Creation

February 3, 2008

In the beginning God created...and saw that it was good

In the end, every knee will bow

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## Crutches

August 5, 2007

Would you like a serviceable crutch? What? So you don't want a crutch!!! You don't need a crutch and certainly if you did, it would not be religion!! Heard it, said it, even believe it, perhaps?

OK... excuse me, but I have to get 'religious' here... if a person decides that he wants to become a Christian and accepts the premise that he must be .born again....and makes his confession to God, he is born again and receives his 'crutch'...the Holy Spirit! Now that's a crutch! Some of you will remember the scene in the film Crocodile Dundee. A fellow confronts him with a small knife, a switch knife, and Dundee looks at it and laughs saying "you call that a knife'. He draws his own 12 inch bowie knife, brandishes it and says "now THAT'S a knife!"

Let's consider at a medical crutch. It's designed to be a 'helper'. We use it when we have an injured leg or ankle. It can be adjusted to fit not only our injured limb but our body as well. If we treat it properly it is always at our side to assist us as needed

We men, and Grenadiers in particular (?), have it all together all the time...no fears, no worries, no problems, our dealings and relationships with others are 100% copasetic, we are 100% men. We are the absolute master's of our destiny!

If you answered affirmative to the any or all of the above then I have some seaside lots in Arizona for sale, interested?

With the Holy Spirit as the 'crutch', you have a Friend, Comforter, Advisor, a Connector to God. Some crutch!

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### Dress Codes

May 11, 2008

When we were serving in the Guards there were dress codes that we tried to follow... following them made us feel comfortable, at ease and 'properly dressed'.

Most churchgoers know the dress code... let's see; for the men, suits, ties, shiny shoes, short(ish) hair. For women, it is a head covering, no makeup, straight hair, dresses and plain shoes. Oh, you want to know where I found that information? I didn't, I made it up...but that is what many people, both inside and outside of the church, perceive the rules for proper church dress to be. (Although we could blame (St. Paul I sure did, (still do to some degree) that's the way my parents dressed for church... well, not that strictly, but you get the picture!!

So, does it really matter how you/I dress for church?

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### Forgiveness

September 30, 2007

The Lords Prayer, as recorded in the New International Version of the Bible says in part, .... *Forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven our debtors....*

(St.) Peter, when looking for a number of times he should forgive a person, was told by Jesus... my paraphrasing... 'as many times as you must'!

Christians must forgive others because Christ has forgiven us!! Can we categorize the things we must forgive? No, we must forgive anyone who has 'harmed' or 'insulted' or merely just 'brownd us off', for sure, and, we must forgive them even if they don't ask!!

Easy stuff this Christian life! We all know someone who is bitter or angry or frustrated at the world. This someone makes life miserable for himself and everyone he comes in contact with...you know the chap... the one with a chip on his shoulder... still angry, even now, over something that happened years ago....but will he forgive the other person? No. He'd rather carry this unholy burden around with him every day... and suffer endlessly...in a private little version of mini-hell. In many cases, people don't even remember what it was that they were angry about that they somehow couldn't forgive...Why not forgive the offender and get on with life! Even if he/she hasn't asked! Get rid of the useless baggage.

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### Getting Taken For A Ride

May 2007

*(Written in response to a Grenadier who, when a 15 year old run-away from home, had sheltered in a church where he felt a sense of peace. He had 'borrowed' some money from the poor box for a meal. Returned to the church and confessed. He was turned over to the Police. His opinion was that the Police treated him far better than the church people.)*

The story from Leslie is a good example of the dilemma that faces Christians about how to treat the less fortunate who wish to make use of Christian resources. Even in Leslie's case (and I am not making

excuses) there are, perhaps, some reasonable explanations for the actions of the churchmen.

It is possible that they were more concerned about the welfare of the then young lad, rather than the small amount of money used by him to buy food. By involving the police (police are known to be reasonably softhearted with young people) the runaway would receive care and perhaps more importantly, put back in touch with those who cared for him. At 15 years of age he surely would not allowed to be a runaway? Unfortunately from my perspective, police officers are pretty cynical about organized religion as well, and any excuse to find fault would be fair game...I should know, I was in law enforcement for over 40 years!

So what's a believer to do? I am addressing *individual believers* here, not denominations. Do you, when asked for small change, say 'I don't have any'... or do you give the person a dollar or two. Do you give a few dollars when they ask for fare for the bus...and you are pretty certain they have no more intention of catching a bus than flying to Saturn! Have you ever encountered this situation... an individual approaches you with a seemingly sincere request for food but seconds later, indeed in the same breath, rejects the offer to either buy food with them, or even an opportunity to have a meal gratis in a local café? Could they have had a hidden agenda perhaps?

If indeed, you really do not believe that you are your brother's keeper, then the answer should be obvious ...you simply tell the person to buzz off ... and that's the end of it. However, if you *are* a believer...then it's not quite that cut and dried; for the believer reflects that, but for the grace of God, go I!! As believers, we are reminded of our Lord's words "What ever you do to the least of these, you do to me."

People rant and rave about the millions of dollars the church takes from congregants... money given for the most part, willingly...but they forget the amount of money spent by those churches on the welfare of others...who are the NGO's that give aid at disasters...for the most part Christian organizations...I might add, that the Christian organizations do not ask if those whom they help are believers or not. They do not require a pledge of future membership. Gifts, in order to be real gifts, must, and ought to be, freely given.

## Gospel And Recruiting

October 7, 2007

I'm not sure quite how the Gospel is spread in Jolly Olde, in Canada.

About the only people that come to our door are the Jehovah's Witnesses and, very infrequently, the Mormons. We, of course, have a variety of Christian TV and Radio shows. You may ask though, why keep bugging people for something they don't really want to hear?

First of all our leader said we should! And the need for **recruiting** should not necessarily be anything foreign to my readers, even if for an entirely different army

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## Grace

September 23, 2007

Jesus has done it all... but even with the millions of words written on the subject no one has adequately explained why God did what he did through the death of his son on the cross. To those who believe, it was God's way of opening up a way for us to get back to him... and because of his love for mankind

For me, it was a man of about 30 years of age, healthy in all respects, with a life yet to live. A man, God's son, who followed his father's bidding and gave his life for me...

In his book called, *What's so Amazing About Grace*, by Phillip Yancey (an accepted author in both secular and Christian circles) say this (in part) about Grace:

Grace makes its appearance in so many forms that I have trouble defining it. I am ready, though, to attempt something like a definition of grace in relation to God. ***Grace means there is nothing we can do to make God love us more*** – no amount of spiritual calisthenics and renunciations, no amount of knowledge gained from seminaries and divinity schools, no amount of crusading on behalf of righteous causes. *And grace means there is nothing we can do to make God love us less* – no amount of racism or pride or pornography or adultery or even murder. Grace means that God loves us as much as an infinite God can possibly love.



John 3:16 For God so loved John Tidridge he gave his only begotten Son so that if John believes in him he will have ever lasting life.

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### Great Commission, The

From Matthew 28:18 and on: Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

And secondly because we believe the message is worthy of publication. What is this message... in spite of many interpretations and presentations, the Gospel as I understand it is as follows: Taken from the New International Version of the Bible; footnote to the Gospel of Mark: *gospel* From the Old English *godspel* "good story" or "good news", which accurately translates the Greek. The good news is that God has provided salvation through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Jesus summarized the law and told us we were to love God with all our heart, soul and mind and our neighbours as ourselves.

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### Grenadier Guards Association

Mrs. Betty Pickering  
Hon. Secretary  
North American Branch.

Dear Mrs. Pickering (this is a serious letter)

Re: Annual General Meeting.

I regret (with tongue firmly in my cheek) that I have to inform the Executive of our Association that there is a vast amount of land between Ontario and ~~La-La-Land~~ British Columbia. This land is divided

into the three most prosperous and desirous provinces of Canada, and are known as Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the best, Alberta.

While it is great news that a coordinator has been appointed for the far western province, it seems to me the best have been missed. I will, therefore, volunteer to coordinate the members in those superior provinces. If you would be kind enough to send me a nominal roll I will 'sort out' those members and I will get on it.

Kindest regards,

John Tidridge.

Ps. Betty, as always a good newsletter!!

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### Heated Discussions On Various Topics!!

April 6, 2008

Over the almost last year I have read, dare I say, religiously (?), the Grenadier Forum. I have joined in some, looked at some others and moved on. What has been obvious to me, as I have become familiar with some of the writers, is that there is a vast difference in the way we express ourselves!! It would seem that the younger (?) contributors let go with both barrels and let the shots fall where they will: Others seem to tread more lightly. Perhaps a gentler approach bespeaks of lessons learned along life's sometimes rocky road!! After all, honey is found to be more enticing than vinegar!!

I have found that the understanding of 'being tolerant' differs somewhat... sadly. It would not do for 'sensitive' souls to join in for any length of time!! It is remarkable how much knowledge we have jointly attained and are prepared to share with others!!

So, what's the point of this week's message... it seems to me from reading the Forum regularly that many contributors either fake it and are acting as the devil's advocate, or they are really as bitter as they sound ... If it is the latter, then perhaps, just perhaps, they should consider more seriously the claims of my Friend who offers a more abundant life!

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## Hypocrites-1

April 20, 2008

Webster's (Canada's Dictionary) defines a hypocrite as follows: *a person who affects virtues or qualities he does not have.*

Wisely or unwisely Christian leaders and laypeople have (sometimes) given the (false) impression that Christians are perfect. You are of course well aware that just ain't so!! Surprise? Well, at least for some of us, anyway! I have yet to meet, in person, a perfect Christian, and if I did it is unlikely that he/she would want to be around me!! Dare I say the feeling would be mutual?

The 'perfection' talked about is a spiritual issue and not a description of how we appear to the world. (St.) Paul was quite certain we are not perfect, yet

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## Hypocrites -2

April 27, 2008

This is not a defense of Christian hypocrisy or any other kind of hypocrisy that exists in all and every occupation or religion. It's not just a Christian fault, but it (the act) seems far worse when it is a Christian, presumably because we Christians sometimes set ourselves up for a fall. I want to tell you that the Christian community suffers as well, they feel for the victims, and thank God that, but for his grace there they go!

Sometimes, just sometimes, the person is unaware of the fault... I was trying to think of something relevant; OK, Churchman is friendly and caring in church, treats his wife and kids badly at home. He thinks he is showing leadership and that his wife and children should do as he says (without question) i.e. submit to him (he says) as the Bible says. Here is a man who has only read/understood half of the scripture that deals with husband and wife relationships.... Once the scripture is read and understood the man should change his attitude.

I will not mention the obvious scandals that have embarrassed and shamed the Christian community. How do these things happen? The person is tempted and turns away from God's teaching ... in spite of what Christian commitment the person has made, they chose to move away from God...God never moves away from us. And if we remain true to him he provides the means to overcome all of our temptations.

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### Long Hair

May 18, 2008

So, what does the Bible say about hair? Not going to go there but it's too bad Absalom did not have access to the New Testament; he might have cut his hair and saved himself from a painful death!! In 1 Cor 11:14 says in part that, 'if a man has long hair it is a disgrace to him...'. I imagine this verse has caused lots of discussion (read arguments) in churches and I daresay other places as well! I know my son and I had some 'interesting' discussions about the appropriate length of hair a young man should wear his hair. At the time I was a deacon and a sergeant in the Police Service and 'everyone' wore their hair short, except my son! But now, in my case it is 'hair today and gone tomorrow'. We laugh about it now; my son has a hair length that would satisfy any drill sergeant! So what's the point here.... Don't get hung up on the simple things!!

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### Loving The Lord

February 17, 2008

To most men, the idea of a man saying he loves a man (outside of the family context) seems at best odd and at the worst repugnant! And there is no easy way to explain this situation!! So I won't!

Personally, I find holding hands with another male awkward and... but if he is a fellow believer, then, well the idea is not so bad. I suppose the reason is that I'm of British stock... but if I were from the Middle East or some parts of Europe.... Hugging another man? Hmmm! But suppose a man has cancer and I'd want to demonstrate my caring... a caring that words alone will not convey? Just simply shake his hand? Methinks not!

So I admire Jesus, I think he is the finest example of manhood I have ever learned about. I am eternally grateful that he died for me. But as the song in the 'Fiddler on the Roof' goes, 'Do I love him'? Yes, I do and I can't explain it apart from the preceding inadequate description.

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## Membership

June 30, 2007

The world-wide church would agree to some extent, that their practices require a member make a conscious effort to 'practice what the church preaches'. Having said this, some churches acquire new members through procedures related to the initiation of infants who are brought into membership by parents. At this time of infant initiation no response is required from the new member, other than keeping quiet at the appropriate times during the services!

Most churches also require a further commitment at a later age; this is generally a 'confirmation' of the vows or promises made by the God-parents much earlier. The service of confirmation may or may not be purely 'ceremonial', meaning that the person is simply meeting cultural requirements, or, as some of you are aware, meeting the requirements of the service.

Other churches, usually Protestant, and usually of the evangelical bent, require a slightly different process. The language of the church mentions 'making a commitment' or 'being born again'. The term 'being born again' is as I understand it, is based on the Bible scriptures as found in John 3: 1-21. Specifically in my own church, infants are dedicated by the parents, who jointly with the congregation, promise to bring up the child in a Christian way. Then at a later time, the young person (or older one for that matter) must decide for themselves if they wish to become a church member.

Some make much of this church process, for others it is simply recognizing a need that has to be met. I will talk more of this next Sunday!

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## Music In The Church

March 2, 2008

Too loud, too soft, too old, too new, not enough, too much. Complaints, lots of complaints, and these are from church goers!! And, 'boy, those musicians were off key!! And that singer.... should have sung tenor...ten or twelve miles away!!' Goodness, who knows what those outside of the church say...if anything!!

Our Handbook tells Christians to 'make a joyful noise unto the Lord'... that I can do, well, the noise part anyway!! But, it would not be generally suitable for worship... and that's what the use of music is for ... a worship aid and to help others worship. It contributes to the entire worship experience. Each playing worshipper should do his/her best...and if, as it were, they are 'up the front of the church', their renditions should be top notch....but then again how do we bring younger musicians along if they are not allowed to play in front of the church... before they are good enough....

There are no easy answers to the question of what kind of music is acceptable... personally, any music with a bit of a beat is to my liking... classical, standard, Southern Gospel... hymns old and new, choruses... and like everyone else, my lack of musical skills does not prevent me from being the music critic of the church!!

But believe me, it's all in the Book

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Odd Neighbours (ours)

November 25, 2007

Jesus did not leave many demands on his followers, but this one he did leave...Love your neighbour as yourself... The question was posed, (by a lawyer of all people) "Who is my neighbour"?

In response Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan. I'm sure most of you know the story... So how does a Christian respond to this dilemma in 2007? How about this; the house next door, owner occupied for all the time he has been your neighbour...he. suddenly moves out and the house is sold to a 'developer', who runs out of money and sells the house for \$500:00 down. We are talking about a home of 1200 square feet, sitting on a lot 60 feet by 124 feet, in a 'good' neighbourhood. A nice home.

The place is sold to a couple who live out of town...absentee landlords, not a good sign. Their first tenant was a biker, complete with a 'hog', long hair and leather jacket with tassels! He left and the next tenant was also of the long haired variety, the first thing he did was to build a compound... for his Doberman-Pincher! He finally left and the actual owners moved in... they had campfires... at 2:00 in the morning!!

The last owners were financially unable to keep the home and it was sold to a young couple, who have settled in nicely. This situation actually occurred... to us! That's right, us! It was pretty unsettling, but, mainly due to my wife's cookies, we had friendly relationships with the owner, their 'odd' tenants, and now finally with the young couple... Nope, no ramming religion down the throats ... just simply being friendly... not always easy! But, we are to 'love our neighbours', that presumably means we have to make ourselves lovable to them as well Oh, were the neighbours 'odd'? Not really, just different; human with the same concerns as anyone else. They probably thought we were 'odd' too!

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### Other Religions/Denominations

One cannot argue against the view there are too many religions and denominations! I, however, believe that Christianity is the one true lifestyle and the only way to heaven is through Jesus Christ. Now, before you get annoyed, let me remind you that all other religions have that single-minded view...that their religion is the only way to whatever goal or prize they are aiming for. Check it out, please!

As for the many denominations within Christianity: It's not such a bad thing, although from the 'outside' it does suggest 'even the Christians can't get it together'! But not so... let me suggest this: We Grenadiers, for the most part, think we are the cat's meow as far as regiments go... we believe this on faith, on what we have read, on what we have experienced serving, and, on what has been chronicled about the regiment. Other 'lesser' regiments think the same about their units, and they are all part of the British army... so, on the same premise, I believe that 'my' Baptist Church theology is the cat's meow for my interpretation of the Christian lifestyle... and, like a true Grenadier, I'm not 100% sold, I even gripe about some things... but until something else much superior comes along....

## No Grandsons In This Man's Army

November 4, 2007

Being born into a Christian family no more makes one a Christian than walking into a garage believing you are now a car!

There is no denying the positive side of being born into a family where individual members have chosen to follow Jesus and this is exemplified in their behaviour in the family, and toward others, both those inside and outside of the faith. It puts the family all on the same page when trouble strikes...and it will!

The template is continually before one, challenging and almost demanding we follow him as well. But, the gift of freewill can present a bit of a challenge! I would guess that the tendency seems to be, with men anyway, that the bad and negative aspects of Christianity are remembered and used as a prime excuse for not making that personal commitment.

Some claim that where the parents have jointly made a commitment that the family is 'saved'...perhaps. However, at some point in time, each and every member will be held accountable for the decisions they have made. Trust me here, based on scripture, if you don't decide for Jesus, you have decided to be against him!

Jesus was quite emphatic about this...he would want us to be either hot or cold in our beliefs...not lukewarm.

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## Prayer

December 16, 2007

There are Prayer Groups, Prayer Chains, All Night Prayer Sessions, 24 hours of Prayer, Women's Day of Prayer... and the list goes on and on and on... so just what is this Prayer thing!? Basically it's communication (and even conversation) between me/you and God... how does this work out for me? Hmmm!

Do I pray? Yes! How often? As often as the situation demands it, and/or as I feel the need to have a talk. This is a personal relationship,



but usually at least once a day. Do I kneel? Sometimes. Do I close my eyes, clasp my hands? Infrequently. Do I believe my prayers are answered? Definitely. Do I receive the expected answers what I prayed for? Not always! Am I always happy with the answers? Not always!

I pray while on the computer, driving the car... I write out my prayers, and then I don't forget too much! Then I actually pray that those written prayers are accepted...not acceptable...because all of my/your prayers are acceptable...even if I am, dare I say it, cheesed off with God!

I use the Lord's Prayer, praying ... **My** Father.... Do I believe in prayer...you betcha!! You're reading this aren't you!

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Preachers/Priests/Pastors/Vicars

December 2, 2007

While the name Jacques Plante will mean nothing to most of you, he was the goalie for the Montréal Canadiens hockey team. The Montréal Canadiens are the equivalent of Manchester United. He is quoted as having said "How would you like a job where if you make a mistake, a big red light goes on over your head, and 10,000 people boo!?"

It must be tough to be in a profession that requires you to turn the other side of the face every time someone slaps you!! Think you could handle it? Could you handle constant media publicity about your perceived sexual orientation? Or, could you deal with unending criticism that your views are too liberal or too conservative or that you are too wishy-washy...and these remarks all come from the people of your own congregation...

It's your fault when the people leave or they don't come to church; if you finally buy a new car being told, "You are obviously overpaid because 'we' know what your salary is and you can't possibly afford **that** car". Would you like it if your family was under perpetual scrutiny and continually under the public microscope to act and behave as a Christian family...whatever that means!!

Christians, including me, are shamefully notorious for, at times, 'killing their wounded'... and for wounding...

I think I have been fairly honest about describing being a Christian minister. Now imagine being one, having to put up with that sort of nonsense and then going out into the community as well... and then preaching on Sunday on 'love'!

Anyone, male or female, who is or wants to be a preacher/priest/pastor or vicar is either out of their mind or has had a 'higher calling' to serve God. Most of the ones I have met are certainly of the 'called' variety.

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### **Raising hands and all that strange stuff....**

March 9, 2008

If someone might have told me 50 years ago, that I would have four children and eleven grandchildren .... If perhaps another might have told me 30 years ago, that I'd leave the Police Service before 25 years was up, ... If anyone had told me ten years ago, that I would be raising my hands 'in praise' in a church service, I would have said, like Lisa Doolittle, of *My Fair Lady* fame, "Garn"... but all these things have indeed happened!

I cannot begin to tell anyone how a reasonably staid, usually unemotional, British-born bloke, would even consider it acceptable to raise his hands in praise, in a church service... nope!! can't explain it... but, against my better self (?) ( or perhaps because of my better self) I find, on occasion, that I am so moved!! No tambourines yet!! But the Lord does move in mysterious ways!!

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### **Remembrance Day**

November 11, 2007

We chose to remember in different ways...why do I remember? I lost two uncles in World War I, one from each side of the family, both younger than 20 years of age. The combined Titheridge/Tidridge/.Titheradge family lost 16-17 members, in both wars.

Most countries honour their dead on November 11. Many younger people are perhaps (reluctantly?) recognizing that it is their **privilege** to do as they are now doing is the result of the loss of many lives.

What does this have to do with Church Parade?

I am on Church Parade with you this day, united...

### **LEST WE FORGET.**

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Repent

July 22, 2007

We have all (well most of us!!) have heard the words or seen the billboard with the words, "Repent sinner, for the end is near...." Those have been the words of the Christian Church since Christ left the earth and laymen have been responsible for the 'operation' of the church. That was Christ's last command: 'go ye therefore into the entire world...'

As I said in my last piece, sin is a word not often used, frequently avoided, and occasionally glossed over!! But sin is sin!!

OK so what's this requirement to 'repent'? Webster's Dictionary says: *"to feel sorry for a wrong action and determine to do what is right..."* There is also a need to be accountable for our sins. Many years ago a comedian named Flip Wilson had a skit where he dressed as a woman and would cover all his/her misdeeds with the remark, "The devil made me do it..." But that's not true. Even though the temptation might be severe (we are promised that no temptation will be sent to us to big too resist if we hang in there with Jesus) Sin is a conscious choice.)

Repenting, therefore, is a conscious action to recognize we are fallible humans who have and will make mistakes. Our reconnection with God comes only through the new birth and repentance (These are my beliefs but my guess would be they are not too different from what any Christian church believes.) When a person wants to reconnect then a **confession** and a **repenting** must be made...there is no other way. Money or gifts or promises cannot bring that reconnecting to

fruition at all! And in some cases we need to **reconcile** with the person(s) we have offended.

And He does forgive us our sins if we repent...

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## Rules And Regulations?

March 16, 2008

I love rules and regulations...after all I served in the Grenadier Guards; I was a Police Officer for 18 years and engaged in law enforcement for another 20 or so years!! I have become a 'rules and regs' man, much to the dismay of some people. I like business meetings, of any kind, but particularly church meetings; and I like them run according to the prescribed 'rules of order'!! I am probably a real a pain-in-the-neck... maybe or lower!! And, I have an eye with a wooden plank, looking for splinters other people's eyes.!!

Having said that (and it's probably enough) I want to say the New Testament, from my Handbook, does not give too many 'rules and regs' although (St.) Paul did try hard!! But even Paul said that if you couldn't use these 'without love' then we had better pack up our tents and go home!! (Well he did not use those words exactly, but you get my drift!!)

So what are the 'rules and regs' of Church?... love God (commit yourself to him) with all your heart, mind and strength, and love your neighbour as yourself!! Of course, we may want to join a church whose style and order of service and membership requirements suit our particular needs and personality.... But... be careful of 'man' made 'rules and regs'

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## Sin

July 15, 2007

A bit of background...my beliefs, based on the Bible... Adam and Eve sinned, and this separated them and the remainder of the human race, from God. The situation remained this way until Christ came to earth and paid the ultimate sacrifice, being crucified, and thereby providing man with a way back to God. That is a very basic view to be sure, but

from a layman's point of view it covers the situation. Theologians tend to complicate the issue for laymen!

So what is sin? Sin is a word not used much anymore, even in church circles, it's simply not fashionable...but that does not make it any less potent or deadly. But what is it? It is anything that involves us where we fall short of God's mark or standard or sin can be open rebellion against God'

The Bible is quite specific about who has sinned... all of us have! Except one person of course, and that person Christians believe to be Jesus.

The 'punishment' for sin, hell, causes great concern to some believers and most non-believers. How could a loving God sentence people to an eternity for not 'obeying God'?

My take on hell is that a person who is there, realizes he had the opportunity not to be and chose not to accept Jesus. That's the penalty; a person now knows he made the wrong choice and must now live with it...he has actually got his own way. For Christians we too must face God, but our sins have been covered as we have Christ as our lawyer.

But there is a way ....

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Some Baby!

December 23, 2007

Some Christmas gift... Oh, the cynical ones could say it's not even celebrated on the right day!! Or that it's the same day as some heathen celebrity was remembered. But to those of us who do celebrate it, the day is not as important as the occasion itself is God comes to us in the form of his own son, fully human and vulnerable to live among us, and have the human experience, and provide a means of restoring our relationship with God or, to use the church's terminology, bring 'salvation'.

Christmas is often condemned as being 'too commercial' and as having lost its true meaning... But it has not lost its meaning...it still offers the greatest gift ever... for God gave his only son that whosoever believes in him will have everlasting life...why not take this free gift?

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## Some Conclusions

June 23, 2007

You may recall my last submission where I spoke about the group of men who had all come to believe that there is a God who had a Son born of a virgin, who performed miracles and who was crucified, killed and rose again.

I mentioned that these men were/are from completely different backgrounds and some originally, from different denominations as well. Being a Canadian group there were several different ethnic backgrounds thrown into the mix as well.

So how did this happen? All of these men, and over the years there have been dozens, came to this conclusion by different routes. Some had been brought into church as infants, some as young men, others as older grown ups. All over a period of time, had, in spite of having perhaps been 'churched without their consent', came to a realization something special was required of them, or being asked of them.

They would agree they had been 'born again', and an accounting would show each new birth was different for each man! So much for a general brainwashing! These men still enjoy exercising their free will.

But enough this time: "Born Again" needs to be discussed, and I will try to cover this next time...

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## So, A Decision Is Made To Sign-On!

July 29, 2007

As a youth, I was a member of the St. John Ambulance and when I joined the Grenadier Guards, I assumed that the drill movements I had learned as a member of St. John Ambulance would suffice!! Boy, was I wrong! This experience is very much like the assumption that the few Bible verses learned in Sunday School, contain all the information necessary to live the Christian life.

I, along with most frank Christians, would say that they are not always the best representatives of the lifestyle they profess to follow! We forget that Jesus is our continual helper and that he does not criticize but instead, offers his hand, even when we fall flat on our faces!!

By becoming a Christian, we turn our life over to Jesus...that is, we promise and pledge to let him be the sole controlling influence in every area of our life... our thoughts, actions, speech, money, family and other relationships... 'Piece of cake'. Right? Or, as some might say here in Canada, Duck soup! Think about it though... really think about it... It means letting go of life's steering wheel... and not trying to be a back-seat driver either. It's a matter of control or more accurately, *perceived* control.

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### So What About This Year?

January 6, 2008

2007 was a learning experience for me (as the other 72 have been!) ... one where I learned a lot from a mistake; gained a better understanding of how 'younger' people thought and expressed themselves, and vowed, in a Grenadier fashion to soldier on in spite of opposition...

I was saddened by the cynicism and sometimes anger at the Christian lifestyle: I tried to understand why, and tried to develop some kind of rapport with others. With mixed results!

I shall indeed soldier on.... In 2008 I take this opportunity to wish all Grenadiers a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

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### So, Who Is This Jesus 1?-1

August 12, 2007

Our Father, God, says, "Son, I want you to go to earth and win the people back to me"! "OK", says the Son. Christians would believe this to be a joint effort between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Even I would be leery on writing about this Triune... but undoubtedly I will.

We can, if we take the time, imagine how this would work for any of us if we were that Son. How to make an entry onto earth! Just how could God's Son manage to do that... and come and live with us?

It is an unlikely story but unfolds as follows:

He was *born* in an animal shelter to a peasant girl who was engaged to a carpenter. He was, for lack of a better word, an illegitimate child. In spite of his lowly beginnings he was a descendant of the great king, David. His birth visitors were shepherds, who were considered to be men of no repute, although later, a visit by Eastern Astronomers and Kings had the neighbours talking. His birth caused the death of baby boys, and he and his family were forced to flee as refugees to another country. It is recorded, however that he grew in favour with God and man, and at the age of 12, he gave the religious elite a run for their money in Jerusalem.

It is assumed he learned his carpenter's trade at the hand of his earthly father, and continued at hard work for modest wages for about 18 years before he quit his trade and followed his calling. His public ministry was announced by a local man, his first cousin, (whom some thought to be a weirdo) who lived in the wilderness and who was stirring things up by calling people to repent! Jesus was baptized in a river and his calling was confirmed by his heavenly father. Nothing simple or easy so far.

He immediately retreated, by himself, into the wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights, and prepared for the remainder of his mission. In the wilderness he found himself confronted by the devil and put him in his place by rejecting temptation outright, but his task was just begun.

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So, Who Is This Jesus?-2

August 19, 2007

During the next 3 years he traveled up and down and across his country personally delivering his message to his people, the Jewish people. He selected a crew of followers, a right bunch from all appearances and tried to teach them his message. He lived an entire life without sin, but he was tempted in all the areas we are. Although



he was entirely God, he was also entirely human, and had the complete human experience.

Parts of his message were meant for the religious leaders, and he had some harsh words for them. A couple of times he got them and the crowds so riled up they tried to kill him...but he simply walked through the crowd!

Finally, he became such a threat, that he was arrested after being betrayed by a friend, and was executed. He was treated to a taste of what passes for human justice. He had a mock trial, first at the hands of the Jewish leaders where he was accused by perjured witnesses, then he was briefly taken before the puppet government, and finally dealt with by the Romans. He was brutally flogged, and, after carrying his own cross for about a fifth of a mile, was nailed to it and put to death. (But he rose again) He was despised then as he is now by some.

Despised and rejected by men, but worshipped and accepted by several billion others!!

Your story would probably be different. His story is as it is because he had to be human to know what humans suffer and put up with. He (now) knows all of our problems and is waiting to help you.

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So, Who Is This Jesus?-3

August 26, 2007

So, with their main man executed, his rag-tag bunch of men now had no leader?! A right mess!! They'd given up jobs, their homes and in many cases, even their family relationships and traipsed around a country that was occupied by a foreign army and inhabited by robbers and a prevailing religious leadership who wanted them arrested or dead!!, Oh, sure their leader had gathered a crowd of others, poor folks for the most part, enamored by his ability to provide food and healing. He talked about defeating death and giving people 'eternal life'...but they had not really understood this message. They simply didn't "get it". They wanted or expected a warrior to defeat and restore Israel to its former glory. They were in anticipation of one like King David of old, anointed by God to kick out the Romans and reestablish their rightful place among nations.

Admittedly the twelve, we, actually are now eleven had not proven to be very loyal when the chips were down, one had betrayed him, and one had denied him...and the rest, 'scarpered'! Only one of the twelve had the stomach to witness his cruel execution, seen him taken down from the cross... they were well aware of the efficiency of the Roman troops. No one survived a crucifixion!! This one follower actually bore witness that his former leader was indeed dead.

How come then they locked themselves in a room: Scared of the local authorities; the Romans, basically hiding-out from the police? They were thoroughly terrified. Who among them would the authorities target next? The information given to them by a couple of the disciples and the two or three women, who also knew, that the tomb was empty, meant nothing to them. The eleven continued mopping around like the day before pay day... but a pay day it was about to be! Jesus suddenly appeared in their midst! Not possible you say? Aha! The information was right! Jesus was alive.

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So, Who Is This Jesus?-4

September 2, 2007

Risen from the Dead!!

According to the scriptures, in a part written by (St.) Paul as a letter, if Jesus did not rise from the dead, then Christians are a bunch of lug-heads and might just as well quit their farcical beliefs...well, not exactly, but that's my paraphrasing of his comments!!

The resurrection is absolutely essential to the Christian faith, it is the focal point, no resurrection, no life after death, no eternal life, hence, no forgiveness of sins, and worse than that, our leader was a con-man, a liar a cheat, and a real humbug!

So do I believe Jesus rose from the dead, oh yes, I stake my entire life on it. Some of the reasons: The Bible, written by many authors over an extended period of time, 'talks' of this happening throughout many of its books; Jesus himself spoke of it and I see nothing in what Jesus said or did would not allow me to conclude that Jesus was who he said he was, God's Son!!

Now, how about the actual event? Much has been written by both religious and secular authors, and this material is available from many sources. A trip to any public library will reveal hundreds of books written on the subject, but pro and con. I will just list a few of my own reasons: I believe the Bible is inspired by God. Christians shifted their worship day to Sunday rather than the old Sabbath because Jesus rose on Sunday. After a brief period of indecision, the group of non-descript men, who had seen their leader alive, and in spite of their awareness of the terrible consequences for the perceived threat they posed, nevertheless, began spreading the Gospel message, boldly, and fearlessly.

Of course there is the matter of the body, or rather the lack of one... the Leaders of the time were so sure that Jesus would in fact beat death they secured the body. They put the Imperial Roman Seal between the door and the door jamb and put a guard unit on the tomb. Now comes the greatest cover-up in history; the guards either fell asleep or ran away, but they gave no account to their officer. Someone claimed an earthquake broke the seal, but the earthquake had happened on Friday afternoon, long before the tomb was even used or sealed. Remember, this was a new tomb, never used before. If the authorities had taken the body they would have simply trotted the body out after the first sermon of the disciples and destroyed their 'ridiculous' story about the resurrection. It is even more preposterous to think that the disciples stole the body, but then, knowing he was dead, persisted in perpetuating the story of his resurrection. They were prepared to face persecution, imprisonment and risk death, death by crucifixion, which is no joke, all this... based on a big lie? Would you? Would I...methinks not!!

I will end this with a greeting used by some Christians on Easter morning: "The Lord is risen" ...the response. "The Lord is risen indeed!!" Amen.

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### **So, who is this Jesus?-5**

September 9, 2007

A Ruler returning the claim his kingdom!!

There is a saying in Canada, "As slow as the second coming of Christ", which it echoes peoples' thoughts on the subject succinctly, it not wisely!

God's timing is not our timing, and as a follower I believe I can enquire of God when he will return but have chosen not too! I am urged to live the Christian lifestyle daily... this is not a threat ... but reminds me of my commitment to follow him. This in no way implies that non-believers do not live good, solid and productive lives doing good in the community and the world.

Interpretations of the End Times vary greatly and embarrassingly; and from my view, many cases bringing disrepute on the Christian Faith. So, what can I say as a layperson? Just this, I'm sure it will happen; we will ALL know that it is happening

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### Stewardship- Money

January 13, 2008

Stewardship means properly managing goods or money or anything else entrusted to your care to manage.

Many (most?) Christians believe that everything they have, including family, is a gift from God to be managed according to his standards.

MONEY- It is pointed out to us by some, that money is the root of all evil... however, the Handbook I use says the Love of Money is the root of all evil!! A somewhat different reading!

You often hear people say that when they go to church all the message seems to be saying is that 'they' want their money.... there are two possible solutions to this dilemma; for the person to go more often and I'm sure other topics will come up for discussion! And, remember God does not want or need your money.

Money is discussed extensively in both the Old and New Testaments... there is nothing wrong in talking about money...in church or anywhere else!

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### Stewardship- Giving

January 20, 2008

We have all heard the word tithe; it means 10% of (you name it). Do all Christians tithe? It is unlikely that we will get a straight answer to that question... It could be said, "Well it seems pretty straight forward to me..."

Interestingly, it is one of the most discussed items within the Christian Church... even though the actual issue of tithing may be avoided, most churches have budgets, most budgets come down to, 'the total amount divided by the number of members and adherents'. If there is a potential for a shortfall, sermons then tend to take on a Stewardship theme... and, depending on the teaching of that particular church, 10% becomes a topic of discussion.

So, what are my views; there is ample teaching throughout the Handbook, 10% is strong Old Testament. The New Testament takes on a kinder (more flexible) approach allowing for some leeway. We are told to give generously, to set aside a gift each week, to give enthusiastically and give as Jesus gave to the church...and he gave his life... to the committed believer 10% seems low...on either gross or net income...

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### Stewardship- Time

January 27, 2008

To most Christians the tithing of time is quite normal... it is not usually a question of how much, but where, when and how!! There are accounts of men (and women) who have spent so much time at church work, that they have become alienated from their families. I imagine this has happened in other families as well, in matters not connected to the church... The Handbook is quite firm on this...'the man who ignores his family is worse than an infidel'. Sometimes, one hopes only occasionally, that 'working for the church' is an escape from responsibilities at home!!!

Once again perhaps, the view is that men who work in the church are less than manly...whatever that means!! My experience has been different; the men I have and am working with, have chosen a life that reflects their respect, admiration and allegiance to their Leader... but are we perfect... methinks not... but then, we are not supposed to be!!

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### Strange Beliefs

June 16, 2007

Many years ago, a newly graduated Professional Engineer and a member of a Bible study group I have belonged to for longer than I care to remember, stated quite emphatically: "**Non-Christians sure believe in some strange things, don't they**"? I said, having always suffered from raging foot in the mouth disease, "Then what about us? We believe (the Group) in a God who allegedly created the world: had a son, conceived with the help of a peasant woman. This pregnancy was initiated by a Spirit, so the girl did not lose her virginity until she married her intended husband. The baby grew up to perform miracles; upset the local and ruling authorities and was put to death; we say he arose on the third day. Further, he will return again to rule the earth".

"Well", he said, "because the Holy Spirit enables us to believe". That answer, of course, was sufficient for the group. But what about this group and how did they arrive at that conclusion?

Over the years the group has been made up of: Professional Engineers, a Computer Analyst, teachers, an accountant, a social worker, trades-people, self employed and those who work for others, truck drivers and managers. These are men who hold responsible, reliable positions in society; well respected and recognized for their integrity in their chosen profession, and the community in which they live.

Not the sort of men easily led by overly zealous church leaders or bamboozled television evangelists. So how can they all believe the same, all coming to that belief by separate and disparate routes, backgrounds and churches? Surely the logical and reasonable explanation is that there is some one or thing that causes this to happen: This belief cannot be scientifically proven, but the results are there for all to see! As an aside, non-belief cannot be proven either!!

How did they arrive at this conclusion...you will have to read next Sunday's item to find out!!

## **When things don't go right**

February 10, 2008 It seems to be human nature, whether we actually believe in God or not, to blame him when things go wrong....but we think it's **our** skills that cause things to go right!

My Handbook talks about it 'raining on both the bad and the good'... meaning I guess, that good and bad come to us all, whether a person is a Christian or not!! I remember a cartoon that showed an obvious Church picnic scene and the raining just teeming down... the minister is saying, "Well, maybe the Baptists prayed for rain".

Any thoughts that Christians will live an easy life because they have chosen to follow Jesus are, in my opinion, wrong. The positive feature we Christians possess is that when things do go wrong, we have help at hand in a number of forms beginning with the Holy Spirit and followed by Christian friends as well. Sometimes, God comes to our assistance through ways we could not have even imagined.

As a believer, I am convinced that , through God, all things work for good because I love the Lord.

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## **Why is Jesus seen as being unmanly?**

September 16, 2007

"Gentle Jesus, meek and mild", you have heard it and perhaps even said it as a child. What's wrong with that statement? Nothing if you are a Christian. It all makes sense. But, if one is a non-believer, in all likelihood it makes you cringe! What *man* wants to be considered meek and mild...real men are supposed to be just the opposite! Let's examine this so called wimp a bit more closely. His manly image is not helped by the pictures in stained glass windows, and other religious art forms, and, unfortunately, as portrayed to some extent by the church.

As a young man he lived and worked, it is thought, as a carpenter... he had no power tools, no fork lifts, no easily adjustable hand tools... nothing but a lot of sweat and probably some tears too. No ATV to whip off to the lumberyard....just lots of walking.

No one knows whether Jesus was good looking or not...undoubtedly he would have looked ethnically Jewish and had a swarthy and weathered complexion from working outside. No stylish or fashionable robes....his

simple clothes were home-made by his mother since he was still single. Indeed, his coat was made without a seam (something like a poncho).

He gathered around him (along with some women) a bunch of rough characters, including a family of small-time commercial fishermen, some lacking a classic education, some politically incorrect, a few of unsavory reputation, and even one who was considered a bit of a cheat. These men, of varying ages, were Jesus' best choice to spread his message. He walked (marched, if sandals are still called Jesus boots!) throughout an occupied and hostile countryside: A countryside with more than its fair share of robbers and thieves. They often camped out wherever they might stop for the night, in all weathers. Those of you who have been in the Middle East know that it is not all sunshine and roses, weather-wise.

He challenged, the established Jewish religious leaders face to face ... no mean feat in a Jewish state! He faced his trial, brutal flogging and death unflinchingly, even forgiving his executioners and accusers as he was being nailed to his cross.

Pretty manly I would say, especially seeing he could have called on all kinds of heavenly power to save himself.... Gentle Jesus meek and mild....depends, doesn't it? Oh, remember this too, Middle East people (read men here) are far more emotional than us 'stiff upper lip' types... so 'kissing' as a form of salutation would not be considered, 'unmanly'!

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### **Wives, husbands and children**

May 4, 2008

I certainly knew all there was to know about being married and raising children... then I married and my wife and I had children and I knew that I knew diddly squat!!

I would guess there are as many views about the roles of husbands and wives as there are husbands and wives, both inside and outside of the Christian lifestyle. Some are good some are bad, very, very bad.

My Manual, in chapter 5 of the book called Ephesians, verses 22-33 it clearly outlines the 'rules of engagement'... for a husband and wife. Take a moment to read it... but only those verses that apply to your role i.e. as a husband. Any comments?



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## **Responses to blurbs**

The following texts were copied 'as is', no to embarrass but to show hoe the conversations went...

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Good morning Gooile! It's gonna be a good day today!!

We've detected the air that we breathe by other means.

To Gooile: But you still cant' see it or taste it....but you had better belief its there when you wake up in the morning!!

As for the Bible, heres no doubt, from other sources, that a Jewish Prophet named Jesus lived.

Gooile: Careful there!!

Its the Christian Religion's and the Bible that is now in question. Both have been munipulated and corrupted by Men.

To Gooile: Pretty difficult for me to respond to those broad statements... be specific, please!!

As for the one true God, there is no proof that he or she is the Christian God.

To Gooile: The God the Bible talks about is not a Christian God, he is the God of all men!

Im not saying there is'nt a God Gods or Godesses just that there is no proof apart from the beliefs and writings of there followers.

To Gooile: If a person has a faith....then they know there is a God.... Trust me on this...

Even though we cannot see it there is proof of the air we breathe,that arguement worked with the poor old natives

To Gooile: That argument, as you put it...just points out you cannot always hold the fact of a belief in your hands...anymore than you can hold air in the your hands....but it's still there....

of the undeveloped World as we 'Converted' them while stealing the products of their homelands but not with modern man.....

To Gooile: There you go again...charging off on your white steed with general statements....be specific!!

by the way Ive not got a problem with the conquest of our neighbours just with the sneaky way the Church did it.

To Gooile: What neighbours, what sneaky way and what church... you use the shot gun approach hoping at least some of your shots will hit....

To Gooile: Welcome back!!

John,

Just back from a quick break in Cornwall, visited Boscastle where there is the Witches Museum and Tintagel and the ruins of that ancient pre Christian Castle, believed to be the birth place of King/Lord Arthur contray to popular belief a Pagan.

To Gooile: As a kid I enjoyed the stories of Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, saw his round table at Winchester Cathedral... also Robin Hood and His Merry Men... never looked at it as being Christian or otherwise...rather like the old Westerns...js divided into white hats and black hats! Nor would I now...I enjoy escaping once in a while!!

As for your last reply John:-

The air we breathe has been detected by scientific means, its there. Do'nt ask me how the boffins do it

To Gooile: Some scientist have also come to the same conclusion of their being a Greater Power...

I crack heads for a living outside bars and clubs. You can walk up to some poor native and say 'But you can't see the air you breathe etc etc', and that might win the poor <expletive deleted> over while you cart off his countrys mineral wealth as was done in numerous 3rd world countries....hey and thats ok by me but have the decency to fight a war first.

To Gooile: You have your shotgun out, again... so I will shoot back!! You speak as though all colonization was carried out by "Christians" all of whom "raped" the countries they 'converted'.. you must surely realize this is too broad a statement.. Obviously there were some who in the name of "Christianity" did some of these things. But not all "rapers" were "Christians", in fact I doubt if any were, true Christians. Misguided, maybe!

The Vatican collaborated with the Nazis, fact, oh I know many brave Priests and Nuns saved many Jews from the death camps but many many stood by.

To Gooile: That is what I have been trying to point out to you and Arry (you could be collaborating...is that not a conspiracy!!) that in my view "Christianity on occasion, has been badly represented and still is by the organized catholic (read world wide not Roman) church. I have apologized for this, and if need be will continue to admit we have not been the example Jesus would have us be.

Jesus Christ has been more better displayed by those who have made a personal commitment to him and in their day to day example, in the way they respond to situations around them, in their dealings with people who oppose them, and in their work and daily ethics. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a pastor in pre-War II Germany, stood up for what he thought was right. Many supposedly Christian churches were swept up in the Hitler era. He remained true. He was executed by the Gestapo just before the end of World War II.

When the Spanish arrived in the New World they brought only one thing that benefited the Native People, The Horse. The rest...VD, Christianity and Slavery ended their way of life forever. Just one example of the way Man spread the Word of that Middle Eastern Sect, Christianity.

Gooile: What can I say... again you are tarring all those that came with the Spanish for carrying out all of those things, which cannot be denied... but not all would have participated. And, you must remember there was no separation of church and state...it was an era politics being the overwhelming faction.

Here in Canada a judge has asked to be released on parole after serving 4 of a 7 year sentence (he is dying of cancer). He pled guilty four years ago to violently sexually violating several First Nation girls. It was also alleged that other members of the judiciary including, police officers had done the same sort of crimes. Do I now assume that all the judiciary in that particular town are all rapist etc. Of course not!

To Gooile, it's time to get off the bad "Christian" and give some credit where credit is due... you have beaten it to death...

The Religion of the British Isles is that of the Horned God and his opposite the Goddess in her three aspects. Every day more turn from the Christian way and return to the Old Ways.

To Gooile: Be that as it may, there are many committed Christians in, not so Jollye Olde England, who will remain faithful. They will continue to tell others of Jesus' and his forgiveness! They will continue in 'good works of kindness'. You can trust me on this one!!

Blessed Be.

Amen!!

John - you've avoided answering my question. I didn't ask if the Bible were a diary simply asked why there were no dates in it. By that statement any History book, that has a date in it is a Diary not a History book. Surely the inclusion of some form of dating would make the bible even more acceptable to the millions, whom like me, have an open mind on the subject.

I think you've missed the point here, go back to mine of the 8th - where you say "he was dealt with by a puppet government then the Romans" - even in the Holy land the Romans kept records - where are the records kept by the "puppet government and the Romans"? of this trial - or do you ascertain that there were no records kept? Oh and thank you John for the long email - I'll try and read it later.

Arry:

I think 'gooile' has been telling me I have been less than direct with you, so here goes, the Bible has long been accepted by millions as the word of God, it needs nothing added to it or taken away from it to lead people to a better life. By truly following its precepts you are opened

up to a new life... that to me, as I have said before, 'proves' its accuracy and veracity!! And, the New Testament in particular, was written by men who had everything to lose and nothing to gain from a worldly standpoint, by recording what they did.

I am sure you know you can find what you want about Jesus, about his life, death resurrection etc, the Bible etc by 'googling'...you will find just as much for as against.... As I said before...it's a matter of faith... I have faith that the words attributed the Jesus are true...I believe he is who is says he is... and there is enough evidence for a reasonable person to come to that conclusion... and you will respond, I am sure, there is enough evidence for a reasonable person to not believe... So we are two reasonable people who chose to come to different conclusions... But as has been said before, if I am wrong I have lost absolutely nothing, I have had a blessed life... but if you are wrong...

Jesus did not brow beat people and I have no intention of brow beating you or anyone else...

You say you need absolute proof of everything....how about the air you breathe? You can't see it...but its there! You can't 'see' God but he is there...what you have to do is believe. I do not believe you have an open mind, (you will say mine is closed) you have an unbelieving mind....no matter what information, whether sworn to as being true, presented to you, or available to you from numerous recognized sources, both religious and secular, you would put up a contrary argument, for arguments sake! If I told you that there are probably no written Roman records of Jesus' trial because he was a 'minor' alleged criminal convicted in an obscure Roman outpost, you would find someway to twist what I have said!! Having said that, there is scads of evidence that shows that the main characters lived at that particular time , facts recorded in the New Testament indicate that trials were held in the manner as recorded, in secular reports of trials at that time period, floggings were enforced as recorded and executions (crucifixion) carried out as recorded.

Cheers!

John

This thread has been the most popular one on this forum, have you ever thought of politics. After service, I did a degree in politics and have worked in the trade union movement ever since. I come from the Marxist standpoint on religion, and i think that what is happening within the Muslim world only strenghtens that view, which is a shame.

if only we could harness such enthusiasm in the class struggle we could achieve more for the oppressed than any religion has ever done or for that matter has ever wanted to.

QUOTE "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people."

Hello Scoobie:

Still warm here in Edmonton, Alberta, forecast temperature 34!!  
Shades of Malta, Egypt and Cyprus!!

Congratulations on your degree!! I'm working on mine vicariously, through my grandchildren! Me, in politics, hmmm!! I am far too thin skinned!! My Dad was a union man, he worked in Southampton Docks, was forever on strike. He was on strike the night we came home from Egypt and we had to stay on board over night!! My leanings are to the right!! 'Nuff said about politics. Dad always said religion and politics don't mix, and he was an occasional church go-er, from a church background...C of E.!

To Scoobie, I think perhaps your brush doth sweep too broadly!! To say all religions are oppressive is like saying all unions are good! For about 15 years of my career I was a manager, with union people. When I wanted to promote or hire, it was always based on seniority, not on the best person available. ... and I won't even go there. I found that most workers did not need a union, those that did....I won't go there either!!

Christianity, as I understand it, is not oppressive... well, at least not for me or the people I associate with... Jesus liberated women, as he has done men... Unfortunately, and like unions, the leadership has at times really allowed their power to go to their heads and have given both Christianity and unions bad names...

I sense a fairness in your writings... and an understanding that it is unwise to make 'sweeping' statements!!