

Trenches, tents, castles, caravans... and the Tower of London!

Abroad and at home, **Joe Hubble** has lived in them all. He currently resides at Four Horseshoes Park, in Faversham, Kent and loves it

I feel privileged to have become acquainted with Joe Hubble. He is a remarkable and resourceful man with a captivating life history to tell.

Joe's life journey was much influenced by his father who fought in World War I and was an outstanding and most decorated soldier in his regiment. During combat on the Somme he witnessed the Black Watch (Scottish Regiment) assaulting enemy lines and was impressed by the disciplined, forward approach of the soldiers. Thereon in he declared his wish for any son of his to be in the Black Watch.

It turned out that three of his four sons did become part of the Regiment; most notably Joe, the third son. Joe joined the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) in September 1950 and served for 28 years. His travels were far and wide, often in the midst of active service in dangerous and troubled spots throughout the world. Joe reflects happily on some of the lighter, humorous sides of his experiences, but there were inevitably some very dark and challenging times, too.

Joe spent his first two years in Berlin then 13 months in Korea. Time in Kenya was an eye opener for the many young men of the

British army as they found themselves among elephants and lions for the first time. He tells of one occasion when the soldiers were on a planned advance through the forest, flushing out bandits on the way. Kenyan riflemen led mules carrying mortar barrels and equipment while the men soldiered on foot.

Fleeing a rhino

Three-quarters of the way through the operation a rhino appeared and made chase, causing the mules to take fright and flee back down the hill again, discarding all munitions on the way.

Joe recalled, 'You've never seen so many Scots up trees before!'

Needless to say the operation was delayed as they spent half the afternoon re-grouping and looking for all lost gear!

Posted in Berlin, Joe was assigned to guarding war criminals such as Rudolf Hess and others. It was in Tobruk that he spent six months guarding and protecting King Idris from assassination. He unhesitatingly says this was the most awful and boring time of his life! They were in the desert - nowhere to go, nothing to see or do, in scolding heat. They were unable to venture far into the desert as treacherous mines were still prevalent.

Joe took great pride and pleasure in his time as training instructor for new recruits in Perth, Fort George, Stirling Castle and Brig of Don. To this day, many of the men hold Joe in high esteem and gratitude for his influence over their careers and lives.

Joe spent time in Cyprus and did five tours in Northern Ireland. In 1964 Joe returned to the hot and sandy climes of Middle East Aden to learn Arabic. From there he was seconded to Trucial Oman Scouts, a Bedouin force in the United Arab Emirates.

Big responsibility

As Platoon Commander, Joe was responsible for the initial 19-week training of the Arab recruits before being posted to their squadrons. Training was hard: muster parade commenced at 0600 hours followed by assault course, breakfast, weapon training, field craft and shooting section attacks. Temperatures were searing, reaching between 110°C and 120°C.

After the training period the squad of 80 marched a 48-mile journey for the passing out parade in front of the Trucial Sheiks. The marching itself was also cause for concern. The sand was blisteringly hot but sandals had >>



Above: Joe Hubble, a legend of the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) and Yeoman Warder at the Tower of London



to be discarded to try to avoid provocation of sand snakes. The NCOs - equipped with long sticks - would walk on the outside, waiting to 'clonk' the venomous snakes. The only mode of transport in search of medical aid was on camel-back, showing the enormity of risk and danger when bitten by a snake or scorpion!

Joe said many of the boys who wanted to join were too young to become soldiers. They were sent to the boys' squadron and became signallers. Joe

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- Joe has served nation and community. He now cherishes the community life he enjoys from his park home environment.
- Joe is actively involved in local activities and generously shares his experiences and knowledge, encouraging others to do the same.
- A common misconception about the younger generation is that they wouldn't be interested in older people or their exploits. On the contrary, it brings history alive for them!
- Joe is thrilled with the service from Park Home Chassis Services. He recognised the benefit of engaging the specialists in the underside of park homes and is confident in the knowledge his home is now properly supported and safe.
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they became at Morse code; so adept that they lost the navy once as it couldn't keep up with the boys!

After Black Watch

It was difficult for Joe to envisage what he would do after service in the Black Watch but, true to form, he continued in his unyielding desire to serve and became a Yeoman Warder of the Tower of London. This was a highly acclaimed and enjoyable job for the next 19 years! Joe loved his interaction with the public and his publicised role as regimental escort to Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, at various ceremonial events.

Joe accompanied the Queen Mother to Berlin. This coincided with the Queen Mother's 60th anniversary as Colonel in Chief to the regiment of the Black Watch.

He escorted her through the ranks of battalion wearing full Tudor ceremonial dress, which had not been done before.

Joe has also escorted Her Majesty the Queen on several occasions, including the Royal Tournament.

Living at the Tower of London was much like a village and community environment where all warders and families lived. In fact, both of Joe's daughters and two sons got married in the Royal Chapel!

Starting to question how Joe found sanctuary in park home living, it became clear when he told me that he had bought a static holiday caravan early in his employment at the Tower of London. A friend had bought a caravan at Sandwich Park and Joe soon followed suit. Having only one weekend off in six it became a valued retreat for the family.

Great community

One year before retirement, aged 65, Joe and his wife purchased a park home at nearby Four Horseshoes Park. That was 17 years ago and he speaks fondly of his home, friends and the local community, of which he is an integral part.

Joe bought his park home from new and has maintained it well. Recently he decided to employ a supplier to work on the underneath of the home. Unfortunately, his suspicions of bad workmanship were confirmed when he requested experts in the underside of homes, Park Home Chassis Services Ltd (PHCS), to carry out another inspection. The home had not been supported properly or satisfactorily and PHCS prepared a full report of their findings with photographic evidence. Joe said, 'It was the most comprehensive report I've ever read and really well presented!'

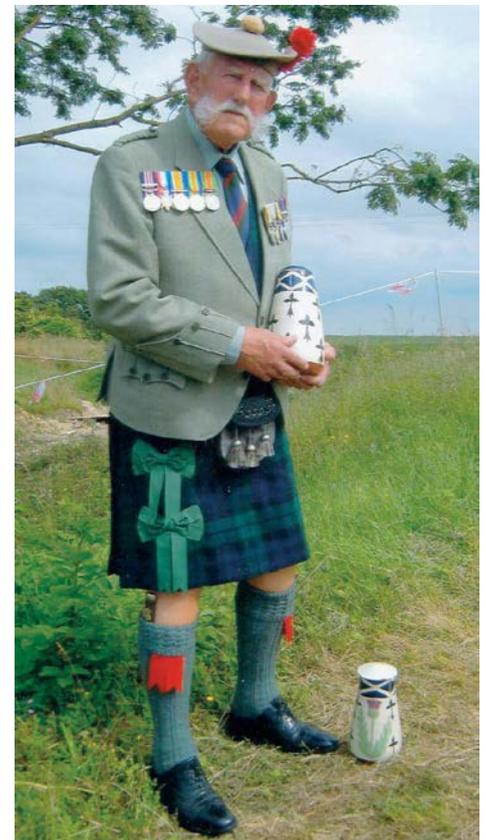
PHCS re-supported the home with its own PHCS hot dip galvanised supports. 'I have peace of mind now that I know the home is supported properly,' said Joe. 'Plus I have a 10 year guarantee. I am very pleased!'

Church warden

Joe hasn't rested. At the time of our interview, he was cleaning his gear for a parade on the Saturday! He has been the local church warden and now looks after the churchyard.

He also holds regular educational talks for the children at the local school, is active in the British Legion and attends regular parades, dinners and events for both the Black Watch and Yeoman Warders. At 82, he still drives to France and meets the many friends he has made throughout the decades. He appears on book covers, LP cases and postcards. Held in utmost regard and respect, his Regiment has even dedicated a pipe tune to him.

Quite simply, Joe Hubble is a gentleman of immense achievement and service - a true British treasure! ❁



Above: Joe in his kilt at La Boisselle, in the Somme