

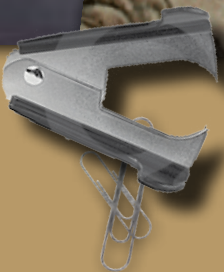
CASE NO.
FD-SMI-43-UK
SMITHEE REPORT
(O. CAVENDISH)

FD-SMI-43-UK
SMITHEE

Hey Charles,

Stumbled on this while
doing a bit of research.
Thought you might find this
interesting.

Enjoy!
Mark Gunter
'thebard72'



CASE NO. FD-SMI-43-UK

compiled by Owen Cavendish, Archival Records Clerk
under supervision of Clarence Watson, Director of Archives.

REPORT SUMMARY - Contains all documents or copies of documents found in Location 33J-B during standard archival maintenance procedures involving a documentary production attempted by the producer Alan Smithee c.1943. Subject: History of The Green Howards Regiment. Contents believed to be incomplete.

DOCUMENT CATALOG

- Correspondence from 2003 resulting from discovery of materials
- Correspondence from mid-1943 between Alan SMITHEE and Humphrey BUTCHER
- Various research materials relating to documentary including maps and photos
- Copy of suggested Imperial War Museum search page featuring unreleased footage

Footage currently at CFI Restoration for processing - Nov 2008

21 August 2003

Mr. Watson,

Per your request, here is my account regarding the Smithee materials:

While performing routine duties in the archives, I was sorting and cataloguing the items remaining in 33J-B. While moving a box from a lower shelf a panel, presumably for some sort of duct work access, fell open. Upon investigating, I found some old paperwork that apparently had either fallen in by some mishap or was intentionally misplaced. It was dust-covered and other than a bit of fading and aging natural to this sort of paper, it appeared unharmed. I immediately noted the incident in my daily work log before bringing the paperwork to your office.

Owen Cavendish

Owen Cavendish
Archival Records Clerk

23 August 2003

Mr. Cavendish,

Your incidental discovery of these documents has been formally noted in your employment records. After discussing the matter with Mr. Terrance Salisbury at the corporate offices, we have decided to give you this opportunity to compile an official dossier regarding this paperwork.

Clarence Watson

Clarence Watson
Director of Archives

29 August 2003

Mr. Watson,

In accordance with dossier processing procedures, I submit my weekly activity report.

To date, I have managed to identify many of the primary characters involved in this paperwork, although the exact identity of Alan Smithee, a name very prominent in these materials, still eludes me. It appears that the bulk of the materials are in regards to a documentary film for which I have found no record. I have begun cursory research on the subject of the film mentioned in hopes that it will shed light on further evidence such as shoot locations, details of the subject matter, and evidence of the shortcomings cited in some of the correspondence.

Owen Cavendish

Owen Cavendish
Archival Recorder

3 September 2003

Mr. Cavendish,

You are to be congratulated for uncovering yet another piece of the puzzle! Taking the initiative the way you did is to be highly commended. I will see that you are reimbursed for the fee charged by Mr. Walpole for his work. Hiring a chimney sweep to search in such cramped quarters was a stroke of genius. The reel he discovered will be sent to CFI Restoration for immediate processing. I do not wish to get your hopes up, Clarence, but this could be a very important piece of film you have discovered!

Clarence Watson

Clarence Watson
Director of Archives

Mr. Butcher,

3 March 1943

Please find enclosed a copy of my script for a documentary on The Green Howards. I briefly mentioned this project to Leslie Mitchell who would be ideal for the narrative as usual, and he suggested that I contact you directly. I would be very pleased to offer the finished work to Movietone News for purposes of distribution. However, I need funding to send a film team to capture first-hand footage as the stock reels are not sufficient for my needs. We already have footage, personally funded by myself, of one interview taken with Bill Cheall.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Alan Smithee

12 March 1943

Mr. Smithee,

You presume to call this is a war documentary? Your pedantic treatment is unacceptable for release by Movietone News. You have redacted vital details from the telling, evidently to spare the public from the horrors of war. Many people have met with personal tragedy, Mr. Smithee. Your script spares none of their pain.

I would like to bring to your attention several points in which this script fails completely. It would appear that Bill Cheall is your only interview and I am quite certain other survivors can be found. The 'enemy' and 'fascists' are well known. Attempts to disguise their identity are ludicrous. Our allies are not even mentioned. It is as if The Green Howards alone is leading us to victory simply by being overseas! You have omitted the very parts of the history that make this regiment worthy of note! You have glossed over the fighting at Gazala, where the neighboring 150th Brigade was destroyed. The all-to-brief treatment of El Alamein makes no mention of the support provided by the 7th Armored Division. Indeed, this great battle is made to sound like a walk in the park!

You have, in fact, hardly covered the actions of The Green Howards at all! In the attempt, you have butchered the first-person account of Mr. Cheall to the point that we can not even use that footage to properly share his story.

You, sir, are a cad!

Humphrey Butcher

Humphrey Butcher
Assistant Editor

British Movietone

Mr. Butcher,

18 March 1943

It appears that we have gotten off on the wrong foot.
I would like to request a meeting so that we may
discuss this personally.

Alan Smithee

22 March 1943

Mr. Butcher,

Despite our difficulties in finding a time and place to meet, I
have been proceeding with my efforts in good faith. I have
contacted the Ministry of War in regards to the possibility of
travel to North Africa in the near future.

Alan Smithee

Mr. Butcher,

30 March 1943

It is with great regret that I have presumably missed
your calls. I left a fresh copy of my script with
your secretary just this morning. I stopped by a
second time this afternoon to see if you were in and,
unfortunately, I have missed you again.

As an aside, I noticed that my script had somehow
made its way into the dustbin, no doubt accidentally
knocked off the desk by your very busy secretary.
Luckily, I had a second copy on hand. I would prefer
that a bruised copy of my script did not alter your
opinion as to its quality in any way.

Alan Smithee

Mr. Butcher,

19 April 1943

I have received permission to join a junket to Tunisia where my
crew and I will be filming soldiers in action. I hope to correspond
with you soon about final funding of the project so that this
documentary can be seen in the cinemas shortly.

Alan Smithee

KNOW YOUR 2ND LINE TERRITORIAL ARMY UNITS:
THE GREEN HOWARDS OF 69TH DIVISION

a documentary

by

Alan Smithee

*A copy of the original script
found with the newsreel.*

-Owen

NARRATION - Leslie Mitchell
INTERVIEW - Bill Cheall

ACT I
"How Green the Howards?"

SCENE I

RICHMOND'S MARKET SQUARE, YORKSHIRE, ENGLAND

NARRATOR: On the Home Front, between the Tyne and Tees Rivers. Another day of waiting for word from the sons of Yorkshire. Responding to the call of King and Country, brave men have left their homes, their families, their lives behind to defend their homeland. They carry a blazing beacon of hope into the dark world of fascists seeking to enslave the world.

FADE TO SOLDIERS IN DESERT

NARRATOR: Our sons brave a hostile environment to lay low the enemy. His vain attempt to rebuild a crumbled empire and enslave so many people must not be allowed to go unchallenged! Here, in the deserts of North Africa, the men of The Green Howards carry their banner to victory!

SCENE II

BEGIN PHOTO MONTAGE OF APPROPRIATE HISTORIC IMAGES AS VOICE OVER CONTINUES

NARRATOR: But who are these Sons of Yorkshire? Their story begins with a call to the service of William, Prince of Orange in 1688. Their name recalls the Wars of the Austrian Succession when the Regimental Colonel, the Honourable Charles Howard lent his name to his unit. To avoid confusion with a contemporary "Howard's Regiment", green facings were added to the uniform and thus they were christened The Green Howards.

PHOTO MONTAGE ADVANCES THROUGH APPROPRIATE PERIOD AS BATTLE HONOURS ARE RECITED.

NARRATOR: Malplaquet. Belleisle. Alma. Inkerman. Sevastapol. Tirah. Kimberley. Paardeberg. Ypres. Langemarck. Gheluvelt. Neuve Chapelle. St Julien. Frezenburg. Bellewarde. Aubers. Festubert. Loos. Somme. Albert. Bazentin. Coziers. Flers-Courcelet. Morval. Thiepval. Le Transloy. Ancre Heights. Arras. Scarpe. Messines. Pilckerm.



Menin Road. Polygon Wood. Broodseinde. Poelcappelle. Passchendaele. Cabria. St Quentin. Hindenburg Line. Cana du Nord. Beaurevoir. Selle. Valenciennes. Sambre. France and Flanders. Piave. Vittorio Veneto. Suvia. Scimitar Hill. Gallipoli. Egypt. Archangel. Afghanistan.

250 years of Battle Honours and thirteen Victoria Cross awards precede The Green Howards into the current fight. Already, these brave men have added Otta, Norway, the Defense of Arras, and Dunkirk to the list. What further glory has risen from the desert sands of Africa?

ACT II
"The Desert Green"

SCENE I

INTERIOR - SUBJECT INTERVIEW

BILL CHEALL: We all felt certain we were going to the Middle East, though of course no information had been given to us for reasons of security.

CAPTION: Bill Cheall of The Green Howards shares his tale
My first impression of Egypt was not very favourable, the Arab natives seemed to be carrying on where their forefathers had left off, they lived in squalid huts and were garbed in what looked like dirty night shirts! Children were everywhere, very unclean, and scrawny animals were roaming around about the dwellings. The built up areas of Egypt were of course totally different, more than acceptable.

I must mention the flies, I have never in my whole life seen so many flies, swarms of them would descend on everything, even as I was eating they would settle on my lips, it was most revolting. I reckon I must have had an iron constitution - give me good Army grub cooked by good Army cooks.

NARRATOR: Bill Cheall would wait for his time to return to the front line. He had already missed much of the desert warfare. The Green Howards belonged with the 69TH Infantry Brigade of the 50TH "Tyne and Tees" Division and they had already added to the tally of Battle Honours.

FADE TO DESERT WARFARE SCENES

NARRATOR: Gazala. 27TH MAY 1942. The fascists launch an attack, momentarily forcing the front to the east.

El Alamein. Late October 1942. The 69TH Infantry Brigade holds a position south of Al-Ruweisat Ridge before going on the offensive.

BILL CHEALL: A motor transport Officer in the 6th Green Howards, Captain Carmichael, came over to me and said "Well Cheall, you have caught up with us at last, good to see you". I replied that I was afraid I hadn't really caught up with them as I was now in the East Yorkshire Regiment. "Oh", he said "I can do something about that, just stand over there Cheall", and to the N.C.O. who accompanied him he said "transfer this man from the East Yorks to the Green Howards with immediate effect" - just as easy as that. My record card shows that it actually happened on 29th March 1943.

What I expected to see and what greeted me were two entirely different things - we didn't know at the time what hard battles the 50th division had fought or that the 6th had taken such a battering, as had all other units. The bitter confrontations with the enemy had caused devastation in their numbers.

NARRATOR: 19 March 1942. Operation Pugilist. General Montgomery assaults the Mareth Line. The 69TH Infantry Brigade penetrates enemy positions near Zarat. ~~An enemy counterattack would recapture much of the bridgehead on 22 March.~~ Lieutenant Colonel Derek Anthony Seagrim is awarded the Victoria Cross for leading an attack pivotal in the capture of an important objective. ~~Two weeks later, he would be killed in action.~~

MIX INTERVIEW FOOTAGE WITH IMAGES OF DESERT FIGHTING

BILL CHEALL: I will never forget the 6th April 1943. The enemy were dug in at a place called Wadi Akarit in Tunisia and "had to be sent packing" to use General Montgomery's words.

It started at 0400hrs. The enemy were ensconced on hills four miles away. We advanced at a steady walking pace, into the unknown and had gone about one mile when the enemy let us know that he was expecting us and was responding. The shells began to come across accordingly but were falling short at this time - he was still finding his range. After another half mile it was a totally different story and the shelling became more accurate with the result that some of our lads began to fall wounded, killed and at times blown to smithereens. We were also being mortared now. Then the enemy put flares into the sky making it as light as day. Hell, I felt vulnerable but never afraid. We had other things to think about!

~~Under orders our section began to move to the right and would be about fifty yards from any other section. We were in open order of course, when suddenly and without us being aware that we were under observation, our section leader dropped stone dead only six feet away~~

~~from me. We were horrified and I being the senior soldier took command. It all happened in seconds and I shouted to the other lads to keep firing towards the enemy trench on the hillside to make them keep their heads down. I grabbed poor Coughlan's sub-machine gun and shouted "come on lads, charge the bastards, send them to hell but keep firing and don't forget your grenades." When we were about ten yards away we had reached the top of the slit trench and we killed any of the survivors. It was no time for pussy footing, we were intoxicated with rage and had to kill them to pay for our fallen pal. This much I had learned at Dunkirk - no quarter given - and those Italians paid the supreme penalty. The event is still imprinted on my mind as if it was yesterday.~~

Our division did not see any further part in this theatre of war, the honour of seeing the enemy routed right out of North Africa was largely being left to others who had not already chased the enemy for two thousand miles.

FADE TO AXIS SURRENDER FOOTAGE

ACT III
"The Green Tide"

NARRATOR: Africa secured from the fascist and the next target already chosen, The Green Howards prepare for the invasion.

MONTAGE OF FILM FOOTAGE - SICILY

BILL CHEAL: In the early hours of 5th July 1943 we embarked on board ships at Suez and we sailed to Port Said. It was early next morning by the time our invasion fleet moved off for our destination.

On this occasion, the 69th Brigade of which the 6th G.H. was a part, were to be the follow up to the initial assault. Our beach was called Jig which was near Avola and we were due to land at 8am. I know everybody was surprised at the lack of opposition, even though we had not been in the first wave and consequently we were soon established on dry land, but with very wet legs.

We progressed up the Eastern side of the island to make an attack on Sortino and during this period came under attack by the enemy and lost some of our lads, including Sgt. Harrington, John Ryan, Charlie Lee and Jack Betly.

Now, for the first time since landing we came to a halt which seemed to be causing the high command some anxiety. At a later date we knew what the problem had been and it is written about in other books but this is my story and at the time of the event we had no idea why we were

being held up. It was Primosole bridge, and during the next three days a fierce battle took place ahead of us. Much of the fighting was done by the 151st Brigade of 50th Division.

It would be about 7th August when we learned that the war in Sicily was over. We were told that although it had been a short fierce campaign, the 50th division had played an important roll.

FADE TO MAP OF EUROPE

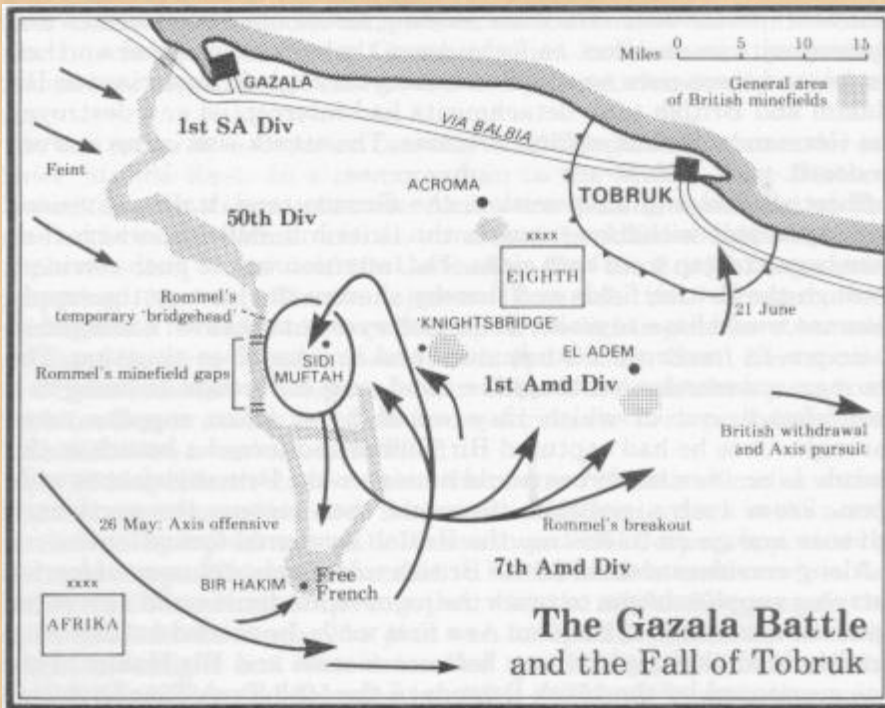
NARRATOR: And so another outpost to fascism tumbles. So to will the foundations of evil be annihilated.

ACT IV
"Green Days to Come"

FOOTAGE OF SOLDIERS PREPARING FOR BATTLE

NARRATOR: These are your sons and brothers. Proud soldiers of The Green Howards, veterans of France, Africa, and Sicily. Already, they have helped open a path into the soft underbelly of Europe. What next awaits these brave souls? Whatever may lie ahead, know that they fight for freedom.

Reading the original script,
it is no wonder that Mr.
Butcher largely ignored
Smithers. So much wrong,
even to my untrained eye.



Gazala
May 26-27, 1942

After a lull in the North African desert, Rommel devised a plan that was hoped to be a stepping stone for the Axis capture of the Suez Canal. The British had some 100,000 men of the 8th army on the Gazala Line. The 50th Division held an area that included the vital Bir Hakim 'box' which housed the 150th Brigade, positioned to the left of The Green Howards. Rommel's 90,000 men began the attack on May 26th, 1942. A feint near the coast was designed to distract from the main thrust of the force, a sweeping arc south, hitting the Gazala Line and driving north to take Tobruk.

The initial Axis success was hampered due to lengthy supply lines and fuel was essential. By May 28th, Rommel's armour had moved too far from his fuel supplies. By the next day, the fuel convoy had been located and redirected, allowing Rommel to press his attack. However, he was not in a position to attack Tobruk and he began taking up defensive positions. With no response from the British under Ritchie, Rommel's Afrika Korps attacked the 150th Brigade Box which did not fall until June 1. This victory secured Rommel's supply lines and allowed him to follow up with the capture of Bir Hakim.

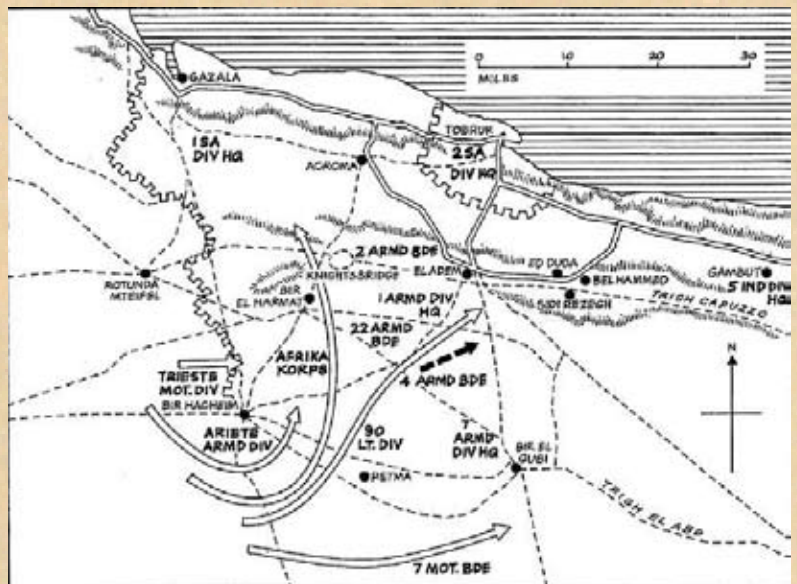
The British created a defensive perimeter around Tobruk in preparation for Rommel's inevitable

*Here is a general history of
The Green Howards during
the war, much of it pulled
from the diary of Bill Cheal.
-O. Cavendish*

attack. On June 20th, the attack began. The defensive positions crumbled and Tobruk was captured in less than one day. Of this defeat, Churchill would write, "This was one of the heaviest blows I can recall during the war. Not only were the military effects grim, but it affected the reputation of British arms...Defeat is one thing; disgrace is another."

El Alamein
July 1-27, 1942

As the British forces fell back from Gazala, General Claude Auchinleck assumed direct command of the Eighth Army and made the decision to fall back to El Alamein. The Battle of Mersa Matruh served as a delaying action while defenses were prepared. On June 30th, Rommel's Afrika Korps approached, exhausted and under strength, but ready to push on.



The offensive began on July 1st. Each move was repulsed but not without difficulty. On July 4th, Rommel went on the defensive. The British forces began to reorganize. Beginning on July 10th, the Eighth Army went on the offensive, striking at the Axis lines while they were weak and their supply lines were stretched. Tel el Eisa, Ruweisat Ridge, Ruin Ridge, and El Mreir were the sites of offensives through July. Finally, the Eighth Army launched its final attack, a third attempt at Ruin Ridge.. Here, the 69th Infantry Brigade, including The Green Howards, took their objectives by 0800 on July 27th. The supporting units became lost or delayed, leaving them isolated and exposed. An immediate counterattack threw the British back to their starting points, putting the Eighth Army into a defensive position once again.

in which the 50th Infantry Division participated. The 69th Infantry Brigade was called upon to penetrate the Italian lines near Zarat. Terrain and heavy rain prevented the deployment of tanks and anti-tank guns following their successful offensive and the 15th Panzer Division counterattack on 22nd March recaptured much of what was gained. Eventually, fresh attacks by other units broke through the Tebaga Gap, forcing the Axis to retreat to a line at Akarit.

Operation Supercharge II followed this action up with an attempt to break through the Axis defensive lines, allowing the 1st Armored Division to exploit the gap. The Green Howards did not participate directly in this operation, but it set the stage for their next battle.



The stalemate held with further fighting occurring, most notably at Alam el Halfa after which Rommel dug in and prepared his defenses. It was the turn of the Eighth Army, but as yet, no successful

offensive had the strength needed to exploit a victory. With Lieutenant-General Bernard Montgomery in charge, plans were put in place. Various actions were taken in preparation for the main battle referred to as Second Alamein, but that is not the focus of this research.

The battle began with Operation Lightfoot in the north, but we will focus on the area occupied by The Green Howards. The 69th Brigade had been deployed in the south near Ruweisat Ridge, set to attack the Italian 186th Parachute Division Folgore with support from the 7th Armoured Division. The 1st Free French and 1st Greek Brigades had been attached for the battle. When the Axis lines finally broke on November 4th, the 50th Infantry Division advanced, pursuing the retreating enemy.

Mareth Line March 14-23, 1943

The pursuit continued until the next notable action

Gabes April 5, 1943

On April 5th, Wadi Akarit was attacked by The Green Howards. The Italian "Tobruk" Battalion of the San Marco Marines were destroyed. Casualties among the 6th Green Howards were severe, however.



Two senior officers, six NCO's and junior officers, and one hundred and eighteen other ranks were killed in the fighting. German General Hans-Jürgen von Arnim later said of the San Marco Marines fighting abilities in Tunisia in 1943, that they were "the best soldiers I ever commanded".

After Gabes, the war in North Africa was all but over for the Green Howards. Preparations for the next campaign were underway.

Operation Husky July 9-10, 1943

The Green Howards were to land on the eastern coast near Avola along with the rest of the 50th Division. The objective of the Eighth Army was to follow the coast north from their landing assignments and capture the port of Syracuse and the airfield at Pachino.

Boarding ships at Suez on July 5, 1943, The Green Howards sailed to Port Said. Early the next morning, the invasion fleet made way for their destination. The plan called for the 69th Brigade to follow up the initial assault. The Green Howards landed with their brigade at about 0800 hours on the beach code-named 'Jig' near Avola.



The Green Howards progressed north along the eastern side of the island to attack Sortino, coming under enemy fire and taking casualties. Most of the travel was on foot with the occasional transport provided along the many dirt roads of the island.

The Green Howards were brought to a halt while the 151st Brigade of the 50th Division fought for control of the Primasole bridge. The regiment was called upon to assault the hills overlooking the bridge in order to wrest control from Axis forces of this strategic ground. They took the advantageous position, capturing several Italian and a few Germans, losing ten of their own. The Green Howards witnessed the British Paratroops being dropped in the area of the fighting from this new position. Even though they were some distance away, they were still the target of occasional shelling, presumably from enemy 88mm guns.

Passing through the area of the Primasole bridge itself, The Green Howards had a first-hand look at the aftermath.



Evidence of the fighting was everywhere with bodies "scattered all over the river and on the ground, corpses, parachutes, and weapons lay around everywhere." (Bill Cheal)

The next stubborn resistance met by The Green Howards was on the plain in front of the Catania airfield. Deep slit trenches were dug about a mile from the airfield do to the severe shelling from the slopes above the regiment. For two days, they held the ground as ordered until the 25 pounders opened up with a tremendous barrage. With the support of tanks, The Green Howards attacked, forcing the enemy to evacuate their moutainside positions.

Finally, on August 7th, news arrived that Sicily had been taken and the 50th Division was regarded as having played an important role. Taking advantage of the situation, Bill Cheal's company, they followed the signposts pointing towards Letojani, a seaside village a half mile from their position, to find a place to rest. Here his company remained until they were recalled to England to prepare for the Normandy Invasion.



Mr. Butcher,

16 May 1943

It is unfortunate that all of the articles I have previously sent you have been misplaced. I am certain that we can arrange a second interview with Mr. Cheall to replace the lost footage. Much of the remainder was stock and will simply require some time and money to recompile. In the meantime, I hope you will enjoy the film taken near Tunis just last week. Unfortunately, I was not allowed to join The Green Howards in their next action for filming. Somehow, the authorities felt I may have been inconvenienced by the harsh nature of the battlefield. In any case, I was able to elicit the assistance of some of our brave men and I was able to get some of the troops preparing for their next adventure. It is hoped that this experience will open a door to allowing my crew direct access for live battlefield shots.

Alan Smithee

17 May 1943

Mr. Wilson

It is with sincere urgency that I formally request an immediate audience with the Executive Barrister to discuss legal action. Just this morning, Mr. Smithee once again created a disturbance, insisting that he would stay until he could meet with me. Twice in the last week alone he has visited my home in hopes of catching me at the dinner table. I can no longer be bothered by this incorrigible man and I demand immediate action!

Humphrey Butcher

Hump
Assis
Briti

19 May 1943

Mr. Butcher,

It appears that there has been some misunderstanding. I received notice from an odd gentleman just outside your building that I was not to be permitted inside. He was quite forceful in tone and I preferred not to irritate him further. Therefore, I have sent this urgent missive to you, not only to suggest that you may want to inform the local authorities as to this strange behavior, but also to let you know that I have finally obtained permission to film our soldiers in action! Upon arriving in Tunisia, I will be instructed as to which unit I will be provided for the re-enactment of some of The Green Howards finest moments in the desert!

Alan Smithee

4 July 1943
Tunisia

It is with great regret that I inform you that your associate, Alan Smithee, was killed in an unfortunate incident while filming our troops during a re-enactment. He and his crew wandered into a location known to be unsafe. It is unclear what happened to the mine field warning plates. Immediately following the incident, they were found in a nearby crevasse and immediately replaced in hopes that further injuries could be avoided. I must say that his crew took it very well and appear more than ready to head back to England. I have granted them permission to carry what footage they have back to your office.

My sincere condolences,
Lt. Col. Ted Hillersden
Battalion Headquarters
9 Royal Fusiliers

COI 857
FILM NUMBER

FILM TITLE: THE GREEN HOWARDS[Main]
PRODUCTION DATE: 1943
PRODUCTION COUNTRY: GB
PRODUCTION SPONSOR: Ministry of Information
SUMMARY: Unfinished documentary film about The Green Howards.
NOTES: Remarks: this film, considered too British in its bias, was not released; the information contained on the reel is very rough and is short of quality information. A related, uncut interview with Bill Cheal is believed to have been lost.
Documentation/associated material: COI file on THE GREEN HOWARDS holds script, synopsis, correspondence about the film.
PRODUCTION CREDITS:
Smithee, Alan: director
ACCESS CONDITIONS:
UPU
FILM / VIDEO FORMAT:
P 3/35/N
NUMBER OF REELS:
1
LENGTH:
972 ft
RUNNING TIME:
12 mins
BLACK & WHITE / COLOUR:
B&W
SILENT / SOUND:
comopt
LANGUAGE OF SOUNDTRACK:
English
LANGUAGE OF MAIN TITLES:
English
LANGUAGE OF SUBTITLES:
None

Screenprint of suggested
database entry for IWM site.
Very incomplete - unable
to verify further production
credits.