

MOD Misunderstandings ( Derek Twigg to John Greenway 28..2.07.)

In his letter to John Greenway of 28.2.06 the Minister stated, (para 5 ) that " Major Perkins was always entitled to appeal that decision but chose not to do so until 1998 "

It has twice been clearly explained by my MP that even if I had wanted to appeal that decision in 1959 it was not possible because at the time I was suffering the mental illness which caused my retirement, and I would not have been in any condition to understand the letter he has now stated had been sent to me.

In his letter of 28<sup>th</sup> February 2007 the Minister brushes aside many of John Greenway's explanations as to why my claim for overdue recompense should be immediately agreed. He merely repeats, in particular that I " was always entitled to appeal,"- (the decision that my disablement on retirement in 1959 was not due to Service ). He asserts that I did not **choose** to do so until 1998. That is absurd . Crucially he adds that " This is the central point in so far as the level of compensation awarded " **He should be held to that.**

I consider it essential now to lay that particular ghost, by explaining in some detail my life from 1959 to 1998 and why it had nothing to do with "claims".

I have no reason to doubt that the decision referred to would certainly have been issued at some stage after my, retirement, and possibly sent to my mother's address in Poole Dorset where she had been, widowed on 17<sup>th</sup> of December 1958, just before Christmas, I was allowed out to go to her from Netley Hospital where I was a patient following my breakdown at HQ Western Command in late 1958.

After Christmas and the bereavement period we were not in touch consistently for some time. My brother and I were trying to find her a retirement home somewhere in the Petersfield area. I was intermittently in touch and she would have sent on any letters..

The only documents I have held or recall ever receiving from the Army after retirement were from the Military Secretary dated 2.January 1959, and from APC Glasgow dated 9 October 1998. The former stated that I had

been " *pronounced as unfit for any form of military service under existing standards*" - - " *your retirement on retired pay on account of disability will be carried out with effect from 28<sup>th</sup> February 1959* ". Then notification of the due publication in the London Gazette, and that the Secretary of State " *has it in command from the Queen to convey the thanks of Her Majesty for your valuable services.*"

The latter stated " *Our records suggest that you may be affected by this error.*" (The error was that revealed by Major John Perry on wrongful taxation of those disabled due to Service )

Reverting to the Military Secretary's letter above, there was nothing in it about the disablement itself. All I knew was the relief of escape and getting away. I probably would not have absorbed the information during my illness, which must have been slowly developing ever since the trauma in Ipoh during the Malayan Emergency .

As to any letter between those dates, whilst I can accept it might well have been written and dispatched to me, that is not evidence that I ever received it after being invalided out of Netley Hospital. Thereafter for many months I was itinerant, still in shock and with " no fixed abode ". For a month or two I was in retreat, shunning society and living in a forest hut near Liphook out of the generosity of a local owner. Then I moved to Steep, nearby and several other short-term addresses before finding bed and breakfast at a house outside Midhurst.

If I had in fact received such a letter as suggested, even if by then I had recovered from my disorder it would have been of no interest to me whatever conclusion the War Office made as to the cause of my disablement, since either way there would have been no benefit involved, but instead a revulsion in reawakening the true origins of my ruined life back in the Malayan Emergency.

Had I somehow been confronted with an allegation as to the cause of my disablement I would, have probably wanted to accept the ( mistaken ) idea of it having been due to my marital break-up as was originally suggested.

Exactly the reverse was the case.

The break-up was one of several disasters stemming from the trauma at Ipoh, Whilst not material to this letter it is not restricted, and the full 12-page Psychiatric Report from Dr Gareth Vincenti presented and accepted by the Lord Chancellor's Pensions Appeals Tribunal is available on request.

In fact the state of my mind when in Singapore after leaving Perak State, where I had been Brigade Major of I Malay Infantry Brigade, was directly caused by the traumas imposed on me in Ipoh, resulting in no home whatever in the 3 years in the sticky Malayan climate and a life cooped up in one hotel room with my wife and daughter, first in Ipoh then again in Singapore.

It all contrasted bitterly with the high enthusiastic optimism when I was suddenly wanted in the Far East at short notice from Germany. The devastation of my career which followed under those conditions in that humidity equally depressed my wife and was bad for my small daughter.

As to myself, my misery and bewilderment were compounded by the dread of the impending humiliation I anticipated once I returned to my Regiment in England, where so much had been hoped and expected of me on my sudden promotion from Germany. Indeed command of my Regiment was at least on the cards after my Brigade Major appointment.

Despite a good interim appointment which my GOC had I think privately and sympathetically helped me to obtain on the Staff at GHQ FARELF Singapore I was sure any regimental future had been blighted however and I was now dreading my future.

Meanwhile my poor wife had to cope with my increasing depression and anxieties. She obtained a courier/ hostess job with Shell at Singapore involving some travel so we saw less and less of each other but were still mainly cooped up in one room at night with our daughter. Ultimately I was the main cause of our break-up some 6 months before I was due back in England. (Again details are in the Psychiatric Report).

On returning to England I was posted to HQ Western Command and it was the exquisitely crass Staff appointment I then received from the War Office which precipitated my mental disorder causing me immediately to be

admitted to Netley Hospital where I began various treatments including drug therapies and injections.

The appointment concerned was that of Deputy Assistant Adjutant General ( DAAG) HQ Western Command, in which rôle I (, by now desperately seeking to escape at all costs from all things military and my wrecked career which had looked so promising 3 years earlier) would have been expected as DAAG actively to encourage and recruit the populace to join ! It was that which sent me to the Command Medical officer and so to Netley..

My life thereafter, involved much traveling about ,seeking to exist on a half-pension and eventually to work myself into journalism until my 70s. Until then it included many small enterprises such as courier work, garden compost selling, sales for Thomas Edison Inc etc etc. I had no contact whatever with the Army apart from my pay cheque from the Paymaster at Crawley.

All this brings me back to Derek Twigg's assertion that "the 40 year delay" as he puts it in appealing a decision about the cause of my disability in 1959 was my fault since I could at any time have appealed. Appealed for what and why ?

I knew no more about all that than if we had been on different planets. And since until 1998 there was nothing to appeal for, anyway - all Service pensioners were expected to pay income tax and knew nothing of the 1998 revelation to come with John Perry's bombshell.

In conclusion, I believe that the Minister, if directly approached in person, and not surrounded by officials, as an intelligent man, should understand as facts that I was wrongly taxed for 42 years during which my life was as described above in sustained chaos and often in penury,( I drew dole for 6 months when in Hampstead ) and I had no contact with the Army.

In 2004 the taxation was all rebated . Therefore for 42 years I had no access to that part of my salary for investment or other use., The Ministerial Declaration of 8.6.99 that all affected exactly as I was would be recompensed should not now be betrayed by ingenious diversionary or delaying bureaucracy in my case and I believe the British public will not wish, the current persecution I endure to continue until I die. R.L.P