

## NEWS

## OBITUARIES

## Lt-Col Lionel 'Bunny' Trueman

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL LIONEL "BUNNY" TRUEMAN, who has died aged 99, joined the Army at the age of 17, claiming he was a year older: the mistake was not rectified throughout his Army career.

In the spring of 1918 Trueman, then serving with the 20th Hussars, was awarded the Military Medal for his conduct in a valiant counter-attack.

On March 21, the Germans had launched a massive offensive on the Western Front using 6,000 guns — as well as gas — and had pushed the Allies back 40 miles within a week.

On March 31, the 20th Hussars dismounted and counter-attacked through "Rifle Wood", west of Domart-sur-Luce. The Hussars had to cross a stream, negotiate a sunken lane — taking many casualties — and then rush their objective, a process involving hand-to-hand fighting. They suffered severe losses, but the attack was completely successful, and won the admiration of General Rawlinson, the 4th Army Commander, who described it as "a brilliant achievement."

"I fear they suffered heavily," he said of the Hussars, "but their victory has been invaluable at this critical stage."

When the German offensive had been held, the 20th was withdrawn from the line to reform and retrain for their own offensive. Though ravaged by the influenza epidemic sweeping both the German and Allied Armies, the Hussars amused themselves playing various sports, and staged an inter-troop boxing contest in which the bouts between officers were noted as being "particularly bloodthirsty".

In July, 1920, having being posted to Turkey, Trueman took part in the last charge made by a British Army cavalry regiment (there were a few cavalry charges during the Second World War but not on a regimental scale).

After learning the harsh conditions of the Treaty of Sevres the Turks had risen in revolt and cut off the Izmid peninsula, capturing Gebze and blowing up the bridge: the 20th were instructed to restore the link with the rest of the British Army of Occupation.

The Hussars' trumpeters sounded the trot at 1,000 yards, then the canter and then the charge. With their swords fully extended, the 20th struck the



Trueman: cavalry charges

Turks at full gallop, sending them sprawling or cutting them down. After riding through the enemy the 20th rallied, reformed and charged again. By that time the Turks were in full retreat.

Lionel Edgar Trueman was born at Marlborough on Feb 28 1895 and spent his early years at the Manton Racing stables in Wiltshire, where his father worked.

In 1912, he enlisted in the Rifle Brigade at Andover and the next year transferred to the 20th Hussars. The regiment went to France in 1914, but Trueman was retained at Colchester as an equitation instructor for new recruits. In 1917, he joined the regiment in France.

After the award of his MM he was sent back to England to attend a course prior to being commissioned, but the course was cancelled after the Armistice of Nov 11 1918, and Trueman did not receive his commission till 30 years later.

He rejoined the 20th at Tel-el-Kebir, Egypt, and in 1920 went to Turkey with the regiment as part of "The Black Sea Army". The next year he returned to Britain to attend a cavalry course at Netheravon, where he was awarded the "Distinguished" certificate and kept on as an instructor.

In 1922 he was appointed Staff Ser-

geant Major (Riding Instructor) on the formation of the Army Equitation School at Weedon. When the 20th was amalgamated with the 14th, to make the 14th/20th Hussars, Trueman joined the new regiment.

The 14th brought with them their nickname, "The Emperor's Chamber Maids". When Napoleon's brother Joseph was making a rapid exit from the battlefield at Vittoria in 1813, he abandoned his coach. This was captured by the 14th Hussars, and found to contain a handsome silver chamberpot. Once thoroughly cleansed it was employed in the officers' mess as a mazer for champagne — a popular drink in the cavalry, in which it was customary to open bottles by smashing off the tops with swords.

In 1927 Trueman was Champion Man at Arms at the Royal Tournament, and won numerous competitions and trophies throughout the country. In 1931 he was back with the regiment in Egypt and two years later went with them to Risalpur in the North-West Frontier province.

In 1937 he received a regular commission and was posted to the 20th Lancers, an Indian cavalry regiment. In 1942 he was appointed DAQMG of a brigade in Burma but enemy action prevented him taking up the position.

Instead he was promoted major and posted to the Indian Armoured Corps training centre at Babina. In 1946, as a lieutenant colonel, he was posted as chief instructor to the Indian Armoured Corps Training Centre at Ahmednagar, from which he retired two years later.

He was appointed MBE in 1946.

In 1951 he took up a retired officer's appointment as camp commandant at Blaenau Camp, Colchester, and five years later retired to Merseyside.

At the age of 62, Trueman took up archery, formed three clubs, and taught archery to beginners and to handicapped patients at a local hospital.

Bunny Trueman was cheerful and friendly. His attitude made him a first-class instructor; he was always particularly concerned that pupils and colleagues were at their ease.

He married first, in 1919, Lillian Young; they had a daughter. He married secondly, in 1956, Marcia Humphrys.