1947 – 1948 Peter Gibson

Regarding my reported death!

It is so that after I'd been in EBTW for a couple of weeks it became obvious to the PS (whom I could name but in this context, will not) that I had very little if no aptitude for polishing things such as boots, buttons and similar appurtenances nor indeed, for folding clothes (both uniform and bed) in a manner that pleased the eyes of inspecting NCOs/Warrant Officers/Officers.

There were other recruits who appeared also to fall into this category therefore the EBTW CSM (a Guardsman) decided that such 'orrible creatures should be segregated from the main stream of those presentationally adept, for fear of contamination.
Accordingly he formed a unique section to be known as "The Awkward Squad". I was to be its' founding member and by the end of its inauguration day of I was joined by others.
We of the Awkward Squad were paraded in a separate part of The Square, at least 30yards from the “Presentables”, and words of command were loudly delivered, such as "Awkward Squad, Awkward Squad (pause) - 'Shun!'.
At the ensuing inspection the Guardsman Sar'n't Major would peer behind my collar dogs (express disgust), look closely at my blancoing efforts, (express disgust), count the number of hobnails in my boots and finding only twelve instead of the regulation 13 expressed more disgust. As a finale to the inspection his face would transcend the colours of the spectrum as he surveyed my chinstrap and boots.
The Guardsman aligned the edge of his slashed cap as closely as possible to the edge of my boy's-service Peaky-Blinder and screech in a tone that all of Aldershot could hear "Gibson, you are an absolute disgrace. Look at you, you are brain-dead. What are you?" and in the thin, falsetto voice of a teenager, I replied "Brain-dead, Sir".

The world having been told those many years ago that I was brain dead, it comes as no surprise that I had been listed as "croaked".
May I therefore please implore you not only to change "1950" to "1948" but to resurrect me to the world of the RAOC?
You don't know - it may even start a new religion!!!

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I passed into man's service in October 1948 (not 1950 as prvioulsy listed) and was posted to CVD Ashchurch, where I stayed for about six months - then in May (or it might have been June 49) I was drafted to the British Military Mission (Greece) (BMM(G)), travelling there on the troopship "Empire Test", a 'liberated' "Strength Through Joy" Nazi ship.
A civil war was going in Greece at the time and it culminated with the Royalists defeating the Communists in a battle on the Greko/Albano border at a place called Gramo-Vitzi. This happened in the latter half of 1949 consequently BMM(G) started to run down.
The combat troops in Greece at that time were a Bde of 4 Inf Div that had been inserted after the landings of 2 Para Bde, 6 Ab Div, at Megara in Oct 1944.
The 4 Inf Div bde comprised a Bn of the Beds & Herts; a BN of the Oxs & Bucks and (I think but can't quite remember) a Bn of the Suffolks.
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To support this force an Ordnance Depot (Ord Depot Athens) had been established on the Athens racecourse close to the coast road from Kalamaki to Pireaus. As a lowly (and probably ineffectual) Clerk/Tech I was sent from the dying BMM(G) to Ord Depot Athens to help in the back loading of the ODA holdings (mostly to 5 BOD, Tel-el-Kebir and 10 BOD in Fanara, Egypt).
This happened and in the early part of 1950 Ex-Boy Gibson P was aboard a LCT named "Snowden Smith" en route for Port Said and HQ MELF at Maida Camp Fayid, on the Bitter Lakes.

Peter Gibson
RAOC Boy Soldier
January 1947 - October 1948