Reference code: GB165-0572
Title: William Kerr Collection
Name of creator: Kerr, William Walker (1930-2012) Lieutenant Colonel
Dates of creation of material: 1971-2003
Level of description: Fonds
Extent: 2 boxes

Biographical history: Kerr, William Walker (1930-2012) Lieutenant Colonel

Scope and content: Papers, photographs and artefacts relating to William Kerr’s service in the Sultan’s Armed Forces (Muscat Regiment) Oman, including administrative papers, maps, printed publications, 2 shield plaques and a photo album/scrapbook. The photograph album/scrapbook covers his period of service in 1973 and a visit to Oman arranged for Sultan’s Armed Forces Association members in 1984, and includes photographs of Sultan Qaboos and the British and Jordanian Ambassadors. A further series of photographs documents Sultan Qaboos’ visit to Simba in 1972.

System of arrangement:
1. SAF Personnel: Officers’ appointments and leave
2. Maps of Oman
3. Mao’s Little Red Book
4. Photographs: Sultan Qaboos’ visit to Simba
5. Photographs: Kerr’s Album/Scrapbook
6. Muscat Regiment History: Booklet
7. Dhofar article
8. Artefacts: Wooden shield plaques
Access conditions: Open

Language of material: Mainly English, with some Arabic. Mao’s Book contains Chinese

Physical condition: A large space may be required to view the folding maps

Conditions governing reproduction: No restrictions on copying or quotation other than statutory regulations and preservation concerns

Custodial history: In the possession of William Kerr and then his widow Jaqui Kerr

Immediate source of acquisition: Received as a gift from Jaqui Kerr (widow of William Kerr), on 22 Jan 2013

Related units of description:
In MEC Archive
The MEC Archive has many collections relating to Oman’s military history in the 1970s. Please consult the Guide to Collections relating to Oman for further information.

Finding aids: In Guide; Handlist

Archivist’s note: Fonds and file and item level description created by Charlotte Austin, May 2013 and revised by Debbie Usher 20 Jun 2013. Biographical history based on information from Jaqui Kerr.
SERIES AND ITEM LEVEL DESCRIPTION OF THE WILLIAM KERR COLLECTION

1 SAF Personnel: Officers’ appointments and leave

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>Officers’ Leave Plot</td>
<td>Feb 1973- May 1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TS “Officers Leave Plot” table with pencil annotations, covering February 1973 to May 1974. Used to record the annual leave of twenty-four officers (including Kerr).</td>
<td>1 sheet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 1/2 | Officers’ Appointments Plot | 1973-1976 |
|     | TS “Officers Plot – Key Appointments” table, used to record the appointment details of officers (including Kerr). | 2 sheets |

2 Maps of Oman

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/1</td>
<td>Shell Map</td>
<td>1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1:1,000,000 scale folding colour map of the Sultanate of Oman, published by Shell Markets (Middle East) Ltd.</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| 2/2 | Drawing Office Map | June 1971 |
|     | Copy of a hand-drawn 1:5,000,000 scale map of Oman produced by the Drawing Office, HQ SAF, showing the international boundary, tracks and Jebel. A version of 2/3. | 1 sheet |

| 2/3 | TS Drawing Office Map | [1971] |
|     | 1:5,000,000 scale TS map of Oman produced by the Drawing Office, HQ SAF, showing the international boundary, tracks and Jebel. A version of 2/2. | 1 sheet |

| 2/4 | Aerial Photograph | Not dated |
|     | Black and white aerial photograph with annotations, showing a mountainous region with rivers. | 1 sheet |

3 Mao’s Little Red Book

*Little Red Book* issued by Chairman Mao as Communist propaganda, featuring his portrait. A memo from Captain Antcliff, HQ SAF, explaining that the book was found in an arms cache at Hazm, Rostaq, has been loosely inserted.

<p>| | | |</p>
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<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Little Red Book</td>
<td>28 Feb 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(memo)</td>
<td>1 vol.</td>
<td>1 sheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 sheet</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4  Photographs: Sultan Qaboos’ visit to Simba

Black and white photographs of Sultan Qaboos’ visit to Simba, featuring Omani and British soldiers (including Kerr).

Related material: For further photographs of Sultan Qaboos’ visit to Simba see 5 Photographs: Kerr’s Album/Scrapbook.

4/1 Photograph of Sultan Qaboos meeting Omani soldiers at a military camp. [23 Dec 1972]

4/2 Photograph of Sultan Qaboos shaking hands with an Omani soldier, with Kerr to the left. [23 Dec 1972]

4/3 Photograph of Sultan Qaboos with Omani soldiers and Kerr. [23 Dec 1972]

4/4 Photograph of Sultan Qaboos with Omani and British soldiers, including Kerr. [23 Dec 1972]

4/5 Photograph of Sultan Qaboos standing with Omani soldiers and Kerr. [23 Dec 1972]

4/6 Photograph of Sultan Qaboos meeting Omani soldiers, with Kerr. [23 Dec 1972]

4/7 Photograph of Sultan Qaboos meeting Omani soldiers, with Kerr. [23 Dec 1972]

4/8 Photograph of Kerr indicating something to Sultan Qaboos, with British and Omani soldiers watching. [23 Dec 1972]

4/9 Photograph of Sultan Qaboos shaking hands with an Omani soldier, amongst Omani soldiers and Kerr. [23 Dec 1972]

4/10 Letter from Dr. J. E. Peterson, SAF historian, to Kerr, on paper headed “Office of His Highness The Deputy Prime Minister for Security and Defence”, Muscat, Oman, thanking him for the loan of the photographs, copies of which have been added to the SAF archives. 24 Apr 1993

5  Photographs: Kerr’s Album/Scrapbook

Album/scrapbook assembled by Kerr, containing 129 1970s, 1984 photographs (including scenes of soldiers at work and rest, accommodation, aircraft, landscapes, places of interest and daily life), captions (naming some soldiers) and ephemera, grouped into four sections:

- First section (photographs 1-16) documents Kerr’s time in Nizwa from 5 March 1973 to 25 May 1973; an
annotated 1:100,000 scale map of Dhofar has then been inserted

- Second section (photographs 17-68) documents Operation Simba from 6 June 1972 to 29 January 1973, including Sultan Qaboos’ visit
- Third section (photographs 69-98) documents Kerr’s time in Nizwa from 30 January 1973 to 12 November 1973
- Fourth section (photographs 99-129) documents the Sultan Armed Forces Association’s visit to Oman in September 1984, with related ephemera (such as the visit programme, correspondence relating to travel arrangements, an accommodation plan, Muscat Regiment Staff List for Sept 1973, dinner tickets/invitations).

Photographs are in colour unless otherwise stated. A small number of photographs are non-extant, but some captions remain. There are no captions from 5/80 onwards.

5/1 Photograph of buildings and a garden, captioned “Bayt Maalee”. 1973
5/2 Photograph captioned “The main road to Nizwa (after rain)”. 1973
5/3 Photograph taken from a vehicle, captioned “The main road to Bahla”. 1973
5/4 Photograph of soldiers standing by a vehicle, captioned “The main road to Muscat”. 1973
5/5 Photograph of three Omani soldiers standing by a vehicle, captioned “Jeeves, Marconi and Fangio, alias Abdullah, Habeeb and Hilaal”. 1973
5/6 Photograph a man (possibly Kerr) standing in a stony landscape, captioned “Entrance to Persian copper mine – Nizwa”. 1973
5/7 Photograph captioned “Bahla Fort”. 1973
5/9 Photograph of Kerr, a colleague, Omani soldiers and vehicles, captioned “Ziki airstrip during company roulement. Johnny Johnston 1973
and self”.

5/10 Photograph captioned “An arms find. Ted Taylor and informer”.

5/11 Photograph of Kerr and two colleagues at rest, captioned “Saiq Officers Mess. Self, David Jones, Patrick Evans”.

5/12 Photograph of a mountainous landscape taken from a vehicle, captioned “Jebel Akhdar from Saiq”.

5/13 Photographs 13 and 14, showing British and Omani soldiers in a stony landscape, are captioned “The recce – Akoot. Martin Robb, Paul Mangin and FTZ, Nigel Knockers Co Dr”.

5/14 Photographs 14 and 13, showing British and Omani soldiers in a stony landscape, are captioned “The recce – Akoot. Martin Robb, Paul Mangin and FTZ, Nigel Knockers Co Dr”.

5/15 Photographs 15 and 16, showing British and Omani soldiers watching an aircraft taking off, are captioned “The move – FIRQ by Hercules”.

5/16 Photographs 16 and 15, showing British and Omani soldiers watching an aircraft taking off, are captioned “The move – FIRQ by Hercules”.

5/17 Aerial photograph of a landscape with military structures, captioned “BN HQ – White III and the airstrip”.

5/18 Photograph of Kerr and the British Ambassador at a military base, captioned “HM British Ambassador (Mr Donald Hawley)”.

5/19 Photograph of a British soldier at rest at a military base, captioned “Major Martin Robb on his patio on Blue II”.

5/20 Photograph of an aircraft landing alongside a military base, captioned “Caribou coming in”.

5/21 Photograph of an aircraft, captioned “Skyvan going out”.

5/22 Photographs 22 and 23, showing aircraft flying above military bases, are captioned “Jets overhead”.

5/23 Photographs 23 and 22, showing aircraft flying above military bases, are captioned “Jets overhead”.

5/24 Photograph of an aircraft landing, captioned “Yarm resupply. The dust, the noise and the people”.


©Middle East Centre, St Antony’s College, Oxford. OX2 6JF
5/26 Photograph of a British soldier, with an aircraft in the background, captioned “Colonel Mike Harvey Comd Dhofar, CBE, (OBE), OO, WB, WKLM, Accesion ?Meaul, GSM (Dhofar)!”. 1972-1973

5/27 Photograph of a British soldier at rest at a military base, captioned “Sandy Blackett OC B Coy on Blue II patio”. 1972-1973

5/28 Photograph of Kerr and two colleagues in a vehicle, captioned “?Durr Kerr, Mary Fletcher and Brig Jack grumbling about ?Durr”. 1972-1973


5/30 Photograph captioned “? Soaf, Jordanian Ambassador & self”. 1972-1973

5/31 Photograph of a British soldier walking through a stony landscape, captioned “Bob Tomlinson (RTR) off to the office”. 1972-1973

5/32 Photograph, with Kerr, captioned “Briefing a Saudi delegation. ‘Generals all’”. 1972-1973

5/33 Photograph of four British and Omani soldiers, captioned “John Dean, Oman artillery, Brig Jack Fletcher”. 1972-1973

5/34 Black and white photograph captioned “Visit of HM Sultan Qaboos to Simba, 23 Dec 72”, showing Kerr to the left of the Sultan. 23 Dec 1972

5/35 Photographs 35 and 36 are captioned “HM Sultan Qaboos looking over scarp. Tim Langdon (PA?), Martin Robb, Brig Fletcher”. 23 Dec 1972

5/36 Photographs 36 and 35 are captioned “HM Sultan Qaboos looking over scarp. Tim Langdon (PA?), Martin Robb, Brig Fletcher”. 23 Dec 1972

5/37 Photograph of a mountainous landscape, captioned “The view with “Capstan” on right”. 1972-1973

5/38 Photograph of a British soldier (possibly Kerr) at a desk in a military building, with office equipment and papers. 1972-1973

5/39 Black and white photograph of Sultan Qaboos during his visit to Simba, with two soldiers to the right. 23 Dec 1972

5/40 Black and white photograph of Sultan Qaboos with Omani soldiers and Kerr, during his visit to Simba. 23 Dec 1972

5/41 Black and white photograph of Sultan Qaboos with Omani and British soldiers (including Kerr to the right), during his visit to Simba. 23 Dec 1972

5/42 Photograph of a British soldier walking at a military base, captioned 1972-1973
“Young Lochinvar. Capt Hugh Lockhart on Green”.

5/43 Photograph of two soldiers at rest at a military base, captioned “Malcolm Vining (?ZK) and Martin on the patio outside the command post”.

5/44 Photograph of a British soldier at a military base, captioned “I wonder if she will like it here? OC C Coy reflects on Black”.

5/45 Photograph of two Omani soldiers at a military base, captioned “Capt Ghulam Rasool (OC HQ Coy) and ?ZLT Murad Jan (?ZK HQ Coy)”.

5/46 Photograph of a stony landscape with a gully and distant military base.

5/47 Photograph of two soldiers at a military base, captioned “A ?mochar on White III looking west”.

5/48 Photograph of a military base, captioned “Soldiers tents in BN HQ”.

5/49 Photograph of a British soldier looking across a gully to a distant military base, captioned “That bloody walk: Red to White. Romilly David contemplates BN HQ on other side”.

5/50 Photograph of soldiers at a military base, captioned “Green with Khareef”.

5/51 Photograph captioned “Salalah from west”.

5/52 Photograph of soldiers at a military base, captioned “Blue II Sgts mess”.

5/53 Photograph of soldiers leading a blindfolded man at a military base, captioned “Our first (and only) SEP (who wasn’t)”.

5/54 Photograph of Kerr awarding a medal to an Omani soldier, captioned “Long service in the field”.

5/55 Photograph of soldiers at rest at a military base, captioned “Fuddle on Yellow. Sandy, Ssgt Mubarak, CSM Hilal Ali”.

5/56 Photograph, with Kerr, captioned “Briefing a Saudi Arabian team”.

5/57 Photograph of a British and two Omani soldiers at a military base, captioned “‘Topcanna’. Ssgt ?, David McFadden, Lt Lal Bux”.

5/58 Photograph of a distant aircraft taking off, captioned “Camouflage? Caribou taking off. Taken from Yardarm”.

5/59 Photograph of four Omani soldiers at a military base, captioned “Gunniers with Abdullah – note Bull –”.

1972-1973
5/60 Aerial photograph captioned “Farewell to Simba. BN HQ – Scarp – White I & II”. [Jan 1973]

5/61 Photograph of four British soldiers at rest at a military base, captioned “The take over bid (successful). Martin, Simon Stewart, David Williams, Andrew Swindale”. [Jan 1973]

5/62 Photograph of soldiers standing alongside an aircraft, captioned “Hope it works! RAF Hercules at Salalah”. [Jan 1973]

5/63 Photograph of soldiers standing beneath an aircraft, captioned “Brig Jack Fletcher, Ghulam Rasul”. This page is captioned “The ‘Off!’”. [Jan 1973]

5/64 Photograph of an Omani soldier, a woman and a British soldier, with Omani soldiers in the background, captioned “Jay Mohan (RMO), Mary Fletcher, Martin and friends”. This page is captioned “The ‘Off!’”. [Jan 1973]

5/65 Photograph of two British soldiers and Mary Fletcher, captioned “‘I wish to hell they would go!’ Mary, Brig Jack, Nigel Knocker”. This page is captioned “The ‘Off!’”. [Jan 1973]

5/66 Photograph of Mary Fletcher disembarking from an aircraft, captioned “All ashore that’s going ashore”. [Jan 1973]


5/68 Photograph of Kerr on return to Nizwa, captioned “Home sweet home. Nizwa 29 Jan 73”. 29 Jan 1973

5/69 Photograph captioned “The fort”. 1973

5/70 Photograph of Omani men and boys gathered beneath trees, captioned “The auction mart”. 1973

5/71 Photograph of an Omani soldier in a garden, captioned “The Bustaan with Nagman and the new wall”. 1973

5/72 Photograph captioned “View from top of Nizwa fort”. 1973

5/73 Photograph captioned “Street in Al Hamra”. 1973

5/74 Photograph of Omani boys swimming outdoors, captioned “Temporary swimming pool in Nizwa after rain”. 1973

5/75 Photograph of two Omanis riding laden donkeys, captioned “To market (near ?Dhawk).” 1973

5/76 Photograph of Omani boys leading a goat through water. This page is 1973
captioned “Going, coming, going, gone”, referring to a flood and the slaughter of a goat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5/77</td>
<td>Photograph of a flood. This page is captioned “Going, coming, going, gone”, referring to a flood and the slaughter of a goat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/78</td>
<td>Photograph of a flood. This page is captioned “Going, coming, going, gone”, referring to a flood and the slaughter of a goat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/79</td>
<td>Photograph of an Omani man with a goat carcass. This page is captioned “Going, coming, going, gone”, referring to a flood and the goat’s slaughter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/80</td>
<td>Photograph of four soldiers in a vehicle in a stony landscape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/81</td>
<td>Photograph of vehicles and soldiers in a stony landscape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/82</td>
<td>Photograph of 2 Omani men and 2 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/83</td>
<td>Photograph of soldiers driving vehicles through a stony landscape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/84</td>
<td>Photograph of an Omani soldier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/85</td>
<td>Photograph of ten Omani soldiers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/86</td>
<td>Group photograph of thirteen Omani men and boys dressed in white.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/87</td>
<td>Photograph of an Omani soldier, with vehicles in the background.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/88</td>
<td>Photograph of three Omani soldiers at a military base.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/89</td>
<td>Photograph of soldiers and men around a mast or winch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/90</td>
<td>Photograph of camels in a stony landscape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/91</td>
<td>Photograph of an aircraft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/92</td>
<td>Photograph of two British men looking at a camel, with Omani men and a boy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/93</td>
<td>Photograph of an Omani man standing by a building, with a lake beyond.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/94</td>
<td>Photograph of Omani men with camels and goats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/95</td>
<td>Photograph of a British man inspecting an oriental carpet, with other British and Omani men.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/96</td>
<td>Photograph of a British man inspecting an oriental carpet, with other British and Omani men.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/97</td>
<td>Photograph of a British man and Omani men drinking beer on and around an oriental carpet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/98</td>
<td>Photograph of Omani soldiers and a British soldier standing by a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Group photograph of SAF Association members during the visit to Oman. Kerr is second from the left on the front row. According to the itinerary, the photograph was taken on the morning of the first full day.

Photograph of SAF Association members standing outside a building.

Photograph of SAF Association members standing outside a building.

Photograph of SAF Association members disembarking from the ship SNV Al Mabrukah, following a sea trip and lunch (according to the itinerary).

Photograph of Kerr seated alongside other SAF Association members.

Photograph of a stony landscape with gullies and distant buildings, taken during a trip to Salalah, including the Jebel and Plains areas (according to the itinerary).

Photograph of SAF Association members outside a military building, during a trip to Salalah, including the Jebel and Plains areas (according to the itinerary).

Photograph of military structures and vehicles, during a trip to Salalah, including the Jebel and Plains areas (according to the itinerary).

Photograph of two soldiers, vehicles and a roadside structure, during a trip to Salalah, including the Jebel and Plains areas (according to the itinerary).

Photograph of a stony landscape with gullies and distant buildings, during a trip to Salalah, including the Jebel and Plains areas (according to the itinerary).

Photograph of camouflaged roadside buildings and a vehicle, during a trip to Salalah, including the Jebel and Plains areas (according to the itinerary).

Photograph of two SAF Association members looking over a stony landscape with a road and a car, during a trip to Salalah, including the Jebel and Plains areas (according to the itinerary).

Photograph of stone structures (possibly military bases) on a hill, taken from above, during a trip to Salalah, including the Jebel and Plains areas (according to the itinerary).
Photograph of six SAF Association members including Kerr (first left) with military buildings in the background, during a trip to Salalah, including the Jebel and Plains areas (according to the itinerary).

Photograph of SAF Association members observing the view from a military base, during a trip to Salalah, including the Jebel and Plains areas (according to the itinerary).

Photograph looking over a gully to distant military buildings, during a trip to Salalah, including the Jebel and Plains areas (according to the itinerary).

Photograph of a stony landscape with gullies, a road and distant military buildings, during a trip to Salalah, including the Jebel and Plains areas (according to the itinerary).

Photograph of SAF Association members and two soldiers standing on a road, during a trip to Salalah, including the Jebel and Plains areas (according to the itinerary).

Photograph of Kerr greeting Sultan Qaboos and an Omani soldier. The inventory records that the Sultan invited SAF Association members to a dinner party at Ma’murah Gardens on the evening of 20th September.

Photograph of Kerr and other SAF Association members greeting Omani soldiers.

Photograph of soldiers seated outdoors on an oriental rug.

Photograph of an Omani soldier and a woman.

Photograph of Kerr and other men and soldiers seated on oriental rugs.

Photograph of an SAF Association member and an Omani man with a bundle on his head, standing outside a building labelled “Barrack Stores”.

Photograph of Omani soldiers in a garden.

Photograph of Omani men (including five soldiers) outside a barracks.

Photograph of Kerr and another soldier, with barracks in the background.

Group photograph of British and Omani men and soldiers standing outside a barracks. Kerr is fourth from the right on the front row.

Photograph of Kerr and another SAF Association member by the sea.
5/128 Photograph of Kerr and another SAF Association member. Sept 1984
5/129 Photograph of two SAF Association members by the sea. Sept 1984

6 Muscat Regiment History: Booklet

7 Dhofar article

8 Artefacts: Wooden shield plaques
Two wooden shield plaques bearing emblems of the Sultan’s Armed Forces. One, made by C. H. Munday, London, bears Kerr’s name and “The Muscat Regiment” and is labelled “Al Quaaid Feb 1972-June 1974”. The other was obtained from NAAFI HQ, Singapore.