

ISSUE 11

SPRING - SUMMER 1997

O B A N



ARBORFIELD OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

ARBORFIELD OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

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Vice Presidents - Past Commandants

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Warrant Officer 1(ASM) Dave W Merrick REME (77C)

Peter D Gripton (56B)

Staff Sergeant Mick M Cuthbert REME (84C)

Bill E N Pusey (46A)

Committee meetings are held 3-4 times per year. Any member wishing to put forward a motion or item to the Committee for consideration may do so by writing directly to the Honorary Secretary. Additionally, an ad hoc administration committee is convened, usually under the Chairmanship of the College Adjutant and attended by all interested parties, to deal with the details of the reunion weekend.

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Arborfield Old Boys Association Newsletter

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From the Editor

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Issue 11. Again we have had a sizeable amount of letters in response to others and some on new subjects, and some interesting articles on a wide range of subjects, so many that I have started compiling OBANs 12, 13 and 14!

Just to whet your appetites, the following articles are to appear in future issues of OBAN:

- Reminiscences, Part IV - By Walter Jobber (Oct43),
- The Wade Family at War, Part 2 - By Dick Wade (39A),
- Those Local Inns, Part 2 - By Brian Hornsey (54A),
- The Arborfield Experience - By Dick Wade (39A),
- An extract from **Arborfield Apprentice**, July 1956 - an appreciation of RSM McNally on leaving the AAS, - courtesy of Pete Gripton (56B),
- The REME to Civvy Street Experience - By Dick Wade (39A),
- 2 Personality Slots
- Ken Burren (42A) & Michael Dickenson (42A),

...and *more* Letters to the Editor!

If possible, it would be a great help (and reduce the likelihood of so many typos appearing) if contributors could send their contributions on disk, preferably Word Perfect 5.1 (DOS version) or MS Word (DOS or Windows version) - then the spelling mistakes would be theirs! I have even 'press-ganged' my long-suffering wife Jenny into proof-reading OBAN, a most necessary function with my typing!

If you don't have access to a computer, then of course I will accept clearly written hand written contributions. It's the old eyes, you know!

If your contribution doesn't appear in the next expected issue of OBAN, it will certainly appear in a later issue - don't panic! All contributions that I receive will eventually be published - it all depends on how the final layout of a particular issue turns out as to which article or letter I select.

Last date for Issue 12 contributions:

31 September 1997, (except for Reunion 97 reports).

Brian Hornsey (54A)

Chairman's Message

As I sit here in my ivory tower I can only wonder at the enormous amount of change that has taken place at the College since I wrote my last message and even since I gave my Chairman's Report to the Reunion. To chronicle every change would take too long but here are a few of the highlights and some of the lowlights as well.

Firstly and most sadly of all the last of the 2 year apprentices left in December. The 41 apprentice Vehicle Mechanics of 94C marked the event in some style and I am sure you will all join with me in wishing them the very best of luck in their future careers. Linked directly to this was the closure of the last of the trade wings and the handover of the final few of the College buildings in Hazebrouck Barracks to the School of Electronic and Aeronautical Engineering. This leaves Rowcroft Barracks as the sole home of apprentice training in Arborfield.

A further flurry of activity before Christmas resulted in formal approval of the College's new (?) title of the 'Army Apprentices College' and one of the REME companies was renamed Carlisle Company to celebrate our links with the old College at Carlisle. This latter event was done in some style with a formal parade at which Brigadier Mike Kneen, the last Commandant of Carlisle, was the Reviewing Officer. Even our Royal Signals squadron gained a new name, 263 (Harrogate) Squadron, aimed at commemorating their links with the College at Harrogate.

We also moved into the old REME Officers' School which is now our Maths Department and Military Training Wing and that all seems to be running quite smoothly. Additionally, the builders moved into Rowcroft in strength to perform a whole range of minor works including converting the buildings at the top of the old College square back to accommodation blocks. Even as I sit here typing this message I can look out of the window and see the apprentices of Carlisle Company who live in those blocks doing drill on the old square: something that I guess is pretty familiar to all of you.

The final event of last term was, as ever the Passing Out Parade, at which the Reviewing Officer was The Earl Howe, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Defence. It was quite a coup for us to get someone of such high rank as shows that there is high level support for what we are doing here in the college. Moreover the Quartermaster managed to get the archway over the gates repaired in time for the parade so the College looked at its best for the event.

At the moment the College is really buzzing as our January intake of 248 begin to get into the swing of things. In fact the College looks rather like the set for an episode of 'Soldier, Soldier' as there seem to be apprentices everywhere doing drill, PT, fieldcraft or even just marching between classes. It gives me this warm feeling inside that after shrinking in size considerably over the past year we are at last growing again.

Looking ahead we are about to lose our Pay Office and Quartermaster's staff to a centralised organisation called Garrison Support Services. Whilst this is clearly a very different way of doing things we should get the same level of service as we have in the past. More to the point I'm sure you will join with me in wishing all the best to those staff who have served the College loyally in the past and who are moving to this new organisation.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity of welcoming Cfn Ellis and Cfn Boyle as the first female members of the OBA. I have every confidence that they will be the first of many and as they set off on their military careers I wish them every success.

STOP PRESS

Having just returned from the OBA Committee meeting I can report that the membership now stands at a record 662, moreover we have set ourselves a target of 1000 by the year 2000. However we need your help so if you know any ex-apprentices that are not members get them to join today!

Lt Col Nigel Moore

THE NORMAN FURSDEN AWARD

The Norman Fursden Award is given to apprentices who by their personal endeavour and actions have enhanced the prestige and reputation of the College. Acts of heroism, voluntary and noteworthy effort by individual apprentices in aid of the local community, Garrison or College in conjunction with satisfactory endeavour in all aspects of training would merit a recommendation for this award. At the Winter 96 Pass Out Parade there was one recipient who met the award's strict requirements:

AT Cpl Crimes - 95A. AT Cpl Crimes gained the Award for his Duke of Edinburgh Award charity work and for his involvement in the MS Challenge and for visits to MS patients.

**From the Honorary Secretary
Larry Le Var (47A)**

Fifty Years On. It seems almost impossible to comprehend that I arrived at Arborfield 50 years ago on 17th February 1947. I had a call from Major Gordon Burt on the 19th February which was the day he arrived in Arborfield. The message from him was, "Get on parade!"

Intake 47A was the first intake to go into HQ Company which was then commanded by Major Carrington, 10th Hussars. The memory that lingers on in my mind is that of drawing my uniform from the Quartermaster's store; I mentioned to the RQMS that my uniform did not fit me and he replied, "Boy, your lucky, if it fitted you would be deformed" (or words to that effect).

We in Arborfield are most heartened to see that the Army Apprentices College is now truly up and running. It is also a pleasure to see the church filled to bursting on College Sundays under the paternal gaze of Padre Thompson. Recently there was a unique occasion in the church, when a Royal Signals officer turned a page in the REME 'Book of Remembrance' and the Signals Collect was read in church - this is a first in the Arborfield Garrison Church of St Eligius.

There are a number of changes of Association officials that have either taken place or are due to happen in the future. Major General Philip Corp, our President, retired in March and our new President is Major General Peter Besgrove. I am sure that we all wish to thank Major General Corp for supporting the Association during his tenure as President and wish Major General Peter Besgrove all the success in his appointment as Director General of Equipment Support (Army).

John Northam will be retiring later in the year and the Membership Secretary Designate is Col (Retd) Peter Gibson.

I will be retiring from the post of Secretary in October; the Secretary from October onwards will be Major Bob Hambly. Although I am retiring from the Secretary post, I am looking forward to attending reunion weekends for many years to come.

Finally, I look forward to meeting old friends at the next reunion weekend 4th and 5th October and, as usual, 'swinging the lamp' more than a bit.

Larry Le Var (47A)

**From the Membership Secretary
John Northam (47A)**

I find one of the most enjoyable things about the Membership Secretary's job is receiving letters and phonecalls from ex-boys all over the world. It never ceases to surprise me that, even after being out of touch for 30, 40 or even 50 years, after a minute or two on the 'phone they are recalling names and events as though 'twere only yesterday! It is especially satisfying to be able to put old pals in touch with each other again after many years.

Encouragingly, the Active List now stands at 669, which is an increase of 35 since it was prepared for OBAN 10 just under 6 months ago, with 83% having paid the annual subscription for 1997 which, with still a month to go, is something of a record. There is not enough room on the page to list all the new members joining since January 1996. The list below shows those new members who joined since the last reunion. And of course, this being something of a milestone, I would like, particularly, to welcome our first female members.

2005	A-89A-D	Surtees, Darren Joseph
2006	A-45A-D	Fendick, Frank
2007	A-60A-B	King, Barrie Lionel
2008	A-39A-D	Savage, Ronald Charles
2009	A-95A-H	Ainge, Jason Paul
W2010	A-95A-B	Boyle, Jennie Lee
2011	A-95A-D	Caunce, Peter Christopher
2012	A-95A-B	Dalby, David
W2013	A-95A-H	Ellis, Laura Katie
2014	A-95A-H	Fenner, Paul Eric
2015	A-95A-B	Gledhill, Antony Gary
2016	A-95A-H	Johnson, Ben
2017	A-95A-B	Marcus, Paul David
2018	A-95B-A	Cowler, Jay David
2019	A-95B-A	Harrison, Neal Antony
2020	A-42A-D	Austen, Bertie William Edward
2021	A-78C-C	Kennedy, Andrew John
2022	A-64C-B	Ball, Michael John Patrick
2023	A-48A-B	Head, Donald Albert
2024	A-75C-B	Mitchell, Garry
2025	A-78C-A	Eggett, Graham John
2026	A-39A-C	Lyndom, Herbert John Owen

John Northam (47A)

**'OH, WHAT TRANSPORTS
OF DELIGHT!'**

**By
Tom Pearce (Feb44)**

I read Fred Ford's 'Jumbled Jottings of a Thirtyniner' in OBAN 9 with interest. I encountered him at 23 Anti Aircraft Workshop Company REME at Selby in Yorkshire in the summer of 1948. Fred, amongst other things, ran the MT section. He was noted for his stentorian voice and sometimes stood in for the CSM at morning parade.

As part of our 'continuation training' after leaving AAS, we were driven a short driving course which was not considered to be sufficient to justify a driving test. However, I thought that I would be able to make a fair try at it, so one Saturday morning I presented myself to Fred and asked, "Please can I take a driving test?" He replied with the question, "Can you drive?" I said, "Of course I can!" He turned to his MT Corporal and said, "Take him out in that 3-ton Bedford and see what he can do." I was taken out through the streets of Selby and the surrounding country lanes. On our return to camp Fred asked, "What's he like?" The Corporal replied, "He is no worse than some of our drivers." On the basis of this glowing testimonial I was issued with my 'pink slip'. This I sent off to the licensing authority in York with my own 5 shilling postal order for a full driving licence. It may be worthy of note that the MT Corporal was due for demob on the following Monday morning after an 'early

breakfast'. However, I am sure this had no affect on his judgement of my driving capabilities!

As an Armourer LCpl (acting unpaid) I was called upon to visit regular Army and TA Units in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire to carry out inspection and minor repairs. I would load an Armourer's toolbox in the back of an Austin Utility or 15 cwt truck and a driver would take me out to the unit. On our way back one afternoon, we developed 4 flat tyres simultaneously in the Kirkstall Road in Leeds. We came to a halt in the middle of two sets of tram-lines and in no time a queue of trams had built up behind us in both directions and we were rapidly bringing the City's public transport system to a halt.

I said to the driver, "Turn into that factory yard there," which he did. I then went to find a telephone and called Fred Ford. He said, "What's your problem - you've got a puncture repair kit haven't you?" I returned in some dismay to the factory where the managing director had appeared and was leading off at the driver. When he had cooled down a bit, I explained our predicament and he very kindly offered the use of his maintenance workshop in helping to repair the punctures. They had repaired the flat tyres (all inner tubes in those days) and we had just finished refitting the wheels when another utility truck arrived from the unit with 4 spare wheels - Fred had obviously only been pulling my leg. We never did find out what caused those punctures!

It was after my driving licence had arrived that I again requested a truck and a driver. Fred said, "I haven't got a truck for you, but you *can* have a motor bike." I had all of 3 or 4 days of instruction on motorcycles at Arborfield in a 30 mph crocodile but I could hardly admit this, could I? So it was with some trepidation that I set out on an aged Norton 500 with girder forks and pannier bags packed solid with tools and spares. I was to travel through the cobbled streets of Leeds and Bradford. I survived, obviously, even having after stalled the engine on a steep (the only type they have) hill in Bradford and struggling to kick start it again with a growing crowd of silent but most interested spectators gathering on the pavement. They all watched me, with sweat dripping off my brow with no apparent reaction. The next time out was a lot better - you learn fast at that age, although the maximum speed I managed to get out of that bike was 55 mph and at that speed the vibration made it difficult to hang on to the handle bars!

Selby was my first proper working unit and I have very happy memories of the 6 months or so I spent there. I never got to drive a truck on that licence before leaving on *HMT Devonshire* to spend Christmas 1948 in Singapore. This mode of transport is worthy of description some other time for the benefit of those who have always travelled by air. *HMT Dilwara* then took me to Hong Kong in January 1949, where I had some quite adventurous journeys with Ghurka drivers, but that's another story!

(The following 'Family Saga' was sent to me by Dick Wade, just after Reunion 96 and he wondered if it would be suitable for reproduction in OBAN. It covers his father's career, his own career and family background during the World War years. I read it through, found it all extremely interesting, and so decided to include Part I in this issue. - Ed)

**THE WADE FAMILY AT
WAR
By
James R (Dick) Wade
(39A)**

**Part I
World War 1,
Between the Wars
World War 2**

World War 1

My father started life on a farm, then went to Colchester and enlisted in the Royal Fusiliers and did his training in Falmouth and then on to Dover for more training.

Not being old enough, he was put on Class Z Army Reserve and sent home. After an interval of nine months, he was recalled to 7 Battalion Royal Fusiliers, re-trained and embarked at Folkestone, posted to France to join 11 Battalion Royal Fusiliers near Ypres (Passchendaele).

The first attack was in deep mud in Flanders, the conditions were terrible. From there he was sent to the Somme area (father was a sniper and observer). The Ger-

mans were now using mustard gas.

Whilst out of the front line in a town called Alberte in the Somme area, he was billeted in a shed in a garden and a long range German shell came over. He suffered a shrapnel wound to his right side hip and so was then evacuated and posted home to Southport and then on to Tipperary, Ireland to convalesce.

Following the Armistice, father was demobbed in 1919, two months after the war's end.

He could not get back into the Royal Fusiliers, so enlisted with his County Regiment, The Suffolks, at Bury St. Edmunds on 29 May 1920 and was eventually posted to India.

Between the Wars

Amidst this description of our Army careers, I thought it would be appropriate to tell how the family came to be in India in the first place.

My grandfather, on my mother's side was serving with the 17/21st Lancers in 1888 on the North West Frontier. My grandmother died of smallpox when my mother was only three years old; she was the youngest of three girls. My mother was born in Calcutta. Grandfather did the only thing that was possible. All three girls were sent to the Memorial Lawrence School, Lovedale in the Niligiri Hills, South India. After finishing school my mother went to Mauritius as a nanny to the de

Chazal family. (John de Chazal was a Police Inspector with the India Police and wrote about his experiences in 'Sunset of the Raj' - Ed)

Returning to India, she met my father stationed out there with the Suffolks and they were married in 1923. Grandfather died in January 1925 when I was about seven months old. He was buried just outside Madras.

In 1929 the Suffolks were stationed just outside Secunderabad, the family being housed in married quarters. It was from here that I was sent to the same school that my mother had attended, the Memorial Lawrence School at Lovedale. Cynthia, my sister, followed in my wake to the same school. In 1933, the Suffolks moved to Madras, stationed in Fort St. George. Then all were moved to Mhow, Central India in 1937. In April 1939 my father saw me off from Bombay with fifteen other ex-Lawrence schoolboys on the troopship Lancashire, to start my Army career.

Later, in 1940, my parents and my sister came back to England and lived in Sandhurst, Surrey.

World War 2

Meanwhile, my father was stationed in various places in the UK. Having completed his twenty-one year enlistment, he asked to stay on and because of the war was allowed to do so. He was earmarked to care take the Suffolk Regimental Trophies at Bury St. Edmunds. However,

owing to the short notice of the Regiment being drafted overseas *and* being the Battalion's Regimental Quarter Master Sergeant *and* there being no replacement at that time, in 1941 he set sail with the Battalion for an unknown destination. This turned out to be Singapore and he travelled via Nova Scotia and on an American ship via Cape Town, South Africa.

After the capitulation of Singapore, my father had to take charge because the Captain Quarter-Master had been wounded and was in hospital. Owing to food and water shortage, he took two trucks plus food from under the Japs' noses and also water from the reservoir, (which now explains his Military Medal award).

The process of the Jap takeover was gradual. With others he was in Changi Jail, but at that time not interned. Eventually the prisoners were loaded into cattle trucks for the journey by rail to Bangkok and were treated with contempt.

From Bangkok they were marched (moving every day) to the Thailand-Burma Railway Project. Conditions on the march were dreadful, they stayed in open camps with no shelter.

Diet was just rice. Daily, they were marched to the railway construction, working from dawn to dusk. All the work was done by hand with a few minutes break, sometimes. Everyone was tired and weak. Bamboo sores turned septic, banana leaves being used

for bandages. As long as they could stand up they worked.

A wireless, made under cover by the Signal Corps, kept them going with outside news and some would sabotage the railway line from time to time.

The jungle weather was wet and humid. Mosquitoes were present and malaria was rife, in addition to dysentery, beri-beri (malnutrition), jungle sores, etc.

Some ex-Indian troops on patrol were seen dressed in Jap uniforms, led by a Japanese commander. (I can confirm this switching of sides by some of the Indian Army; we captured hundreds during our advance down the Irrawaddy during the Burma Campaign. The Japs referred to the defectors as 'The Indian National Army'.)

After the dropping of the Atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and three to four days after the War ended, American planes dropped supplies.

There were no reprisals against the Japanese by the POWs, the Japs just disappeared. A convoy of trucks took them to Bangkok and then on by air to Rangoon.

In Rangoon, hospitals were set up with lists being published daily of the new arrivals. I finally met my father in Rangoon's Main Hospital. He did not know I was in Burma. Our meeting was quite a moving occasion. During our rest and recuperation for ten days before sailing home, I took my father in my jeep up to WAW

near the Sittang river where my unit was, explaining that it was our seventh Indian Division who were destined to move into Thailand from this point to free all our POWs. Father returned home from Rangoon by sea in October 1945 and following his back-dated leave, was demobbed in 1946. As can be seen so far, we are truly an Army family.

The details of my father's thirty years service span from 10 January 1916 to January 1946, summarized as follows:

Enlisted Royal Fusiliers, Colchester, served until 14 February 1919 and then was demobbed.

Re-enlisted Suffolk Regiment, Bury St. Edmunds 29 May 1920. His posting were:

India 1922,
Gibraltar 1925,
Hong Kong & Shanghai 1927,
Freshwater, IOW, on 6 months leave 1928,
India 1929,
Razmak, North West Frontier 1939
UK, via Marseille & Calais 1940,
Singapore via Nova Scotia & Cape Town, South Africa 1941,
Thailand 1941,
Rangoon, Burma, August 1945,
UK, October 1945,
Demobbed, January 1946.

(Part 2 will follow in the next issue, covering Dick's Army service, the aftermath and post war army details - Ed)

A TRIBUTE TO THE LATE RSM BEN COOK - GRENADIER GUARDS

By Dick Wade (39A)

In May 1939, at the Apprentice School gate,
Who was this ruddy faced fellow?
For an answer, not long did I have to wait,
As from beneath his peaked hat he would bellow

"Get fell in then," said this RSM,
"And do it at the double!
Refusing to heed the orders I give,
You lot will soon be in trouble!"

From that day on, morning till dusk
Ben Cook was always about
On morning parade, his day was made,
Drill orders he would belt out.

During the cold winter season,
Come rain, hail or snow,
From Company A to Company E,
At the double he would go

Around those spider huts he went,
The barrack square was looking bare,
But there was one exception,
Ben Cook, alone, just standing there

Rigidly to attention
"Get in step you idle boys",
Though Ben could hardly see us,
He did make lots of noise,

But we were not the only ones,
He chased by day and night,
He chased some permanent staff as well,
which gave them all a fright!

When war broke out old Ben would shout,
"Time to increase your skill,
Sandbags to fill for protection,
Dig for victory, this land you will till"

Now Ben was an accomplished drinker,
Favourite spot, the Sgts Mess,
Then wandering around the perimeter,
Had his own ideas on how he dressed

Just open necked shirt - no tunic,
With trousers supported by braces,
He would catch us bypassing the guardroom,
In the most unlikely places

Aside from all that has been written,
I am sure Ben liked us all,
No doubt, he was a great character,
As adults the past we recall

So I would say in his own sort of way,
Shortcomings, whatever they be,
Had a heart of gold,
Most ex-boys I am sure will agree,

Thus my final tribute to this RSM,
He led us boys to be worthwhile men,
So through our reunion,
Never forgotten, RSM Ben Cook.

**Snippets from
The Arborfield Apprentice
Summer 1996**

*(The following have been extracted
from the Summer 1996 edition of The
Arborfield Apprentice - Ed.)*

**LIFE IN THE BAND
By Pipe Major Walker
(25033376)**

Experience dictates that any hobby which involves more learning than your normal every day trade lectures is a complete and definite no-no! At least these were my thoughts until I joined the College Band. The normal stereotypes of being a 'bandsman' were soon blown away by the Pipe Major (the real one!). His Black Watch hackle and temperament ensure that all the pipers are kept on their toes. What would seem to be a dull choice of hobby in comparison to competitions like go-karting, motor-cross and sailing, more than makes up for the lack of speed and thrills with good band jobs (involving getting pretty sloshed and being fed for nothing). Band jobs, such as Bailleu Sgts' Mess where we were always popular and war cries such as, "Pipey, what are you drinking?" were thrown at us from all directions!

The whole of the College, permanent staff included, have had the privilege (or fortune as the case may be) of listening to us at one point or another and to be honest we are not professionals, not by a long shot, but we are dedicated and some of the best team work I have seen has been during my time with the band. This is due to the air of humour which we maintain, no matter what, with characters like Ploughman (the Drum Major's target), Cpl Donald (the dancer from Hell), Mairns (the grey man whose one liners put Billy Connolly to shame) and of course there's Flemming (please promote me or I'll cry!)

There are a few down sides to being in the band. For example, the last Pass Off Parade at Christmas when feet were numb, noses were running and fingers so cold that playing a tune required a lot of concentration and guess work, to figure out where your fingers actually

were, as they were numb. All in all, my time in the College band has been an experience! I hope the next AT Pipe Major has as good a bunch of lads to work alongside as I had.

**MY TIME AT
PRINCESS MARINA
COLLEGE
By
AT Sgt Mackenzie (94C1)**

My time at the College since I left Junior Company has been most enjoyable and I have taken part in many new activities and travelled to new places where I have never been before.

For instance, in 2 Div., I managed to get the opportunity to go to Belfast, Northern Ireland in an Army Careers Convention. I also went to Vancouver, Canada on 'Exercise Snow Eagle'. This proved to be a very exciting exercise on which I learnt to ski and received my bronze ski certificate.

Then came 3 Div., in which the term was fairly quiet, except for one week of Leadership Cadre. This was good and it made a change from sitting in the classroom everyday, all day.

When 4 Div., came, the dreaded exercise came, but after terms of worrying, it turned out to be alright and the few days passed within no time at all. Also in 4 Div., I won the Female Junior Tennis Competition in Aldershot, where I won the title, 'Army Junior Female Tennis Winner 95'.

Next came my best and last term ever in the College. To me 5 Div. has been the most interesting and enjoyable div to be in. This term has comprised many activities other than trade. During this term Leadership Cadre 2 came, this proved to be even better than Leadership Cadre 1. I had a good time with my group and we came third overall, so I guess LCpl Bysh should be impressed by this, as it was the first time he had ever been a syndicate leader. Another activity that took place was 94C platoon's section competition. This took place over two days and required each section to orientate themselves around different command tasks. This was also

another out-of-trade activity that was enjoyable.

Next came the time to face the great hills of South Wales and to participate in a chosen activity over two days. Of course, I am referring to External Leadership 2. For the first two days I experienced the thrills and scares of caving. I thought this was excellent even though some parts of it scare you, especially when I found myself asking will I get my rather large butt through this extremely small gap. After this we took to the hills for two days. This was hard and could be very demoralising, when you get to the top of one hill and see another one even bigger in the background. However, we did have Captain Higham blasting music over the radio to boost morale! Well, this term is near enough at an end and drill rehearsals for the POP have started. So, hopefully there will be no hiccoughs and I will pass out on April 19 1996. So goodbye PMC!!

**'A' COMPANY
By
AT LCPL McDougall**

The time had finally come to move our kit into the accommodation where we would spend the rest of our time at Princess Marina College. We were all optimistic that life was going to get a lot easier and were looking forward to a more relaxed atmosphere. However, these ideas were shattered when we began to be briefed by our new platoon staff. They told us of the standards we would need to set, being the first intake to the newly formed A Company.

The first week proved to be what we had been told in the briefings, as the first Wednesday we had an inspection by our platoon commander in which every person was picked up. That night we had a re-inspection - again we were picked up. This carried on for a few more days until the block was up to a suitable standard.

In the next few weeks the pressure began to ease off as the platoon pulled together and started to perform up to the required standard. In return, we were rewarded by receiving the privileges

promised to us. It wasn't long after that we began our share of exercises. First was an NBC weekend, then a day of bayonet training, as well as external leadership and Leadership Cadre 1. Life was busy and sometimes it felt harder than Junior Company due to the physical exercise coupled with sitting in a class room learning things that are a lot more boring than the characteristics of the 5.56 rifle.

Christmas arrived and the leave that every one was waiting for, not only because of the time of year, but it symbolised the end of another term. The atmosphere in the block at this time was electric and everyone was on a high, counting the days until eventually it was time to leave. After our farewell speech from the CSM, warning us not to get into trouble, we scrambled aboard the buses to begin the journey to two weeks in civvy street. On our return, our platoon staff wasted no time in knocking us back into the military way of life, although now the new intake had formed another two platoons, so less attention was paid to us as they were introduced to the A Company standards. After the initial shock, we began to work towards the next and final term which we knew would be as testing as the terms we had already done. As the time passed, again the pressure eased off and by this stage we had a good working relationship with our platoon staff as they gave us more rope to play with, although on more than one occasion we hung ourselves with it and life went back to week one, day one.

Finally came the time to pass out and to look back and think how difficult we had sometimes made it for ourselves, but like everything is in the Army a company is only what you make it.

JOINING THE ARMY

**By
AT Nicholls**

I don't think I will ever forget that fateful day, 10 January 1995 at 10.45 am when I arrived at Princess Marina College. I had a lot of ideas of what it was going to be like from some of my mates who had already joined the Queen's Own Highlanders and told me about all

the dreaded basic training. They were all shattered after three days and it sounded like nothing I had ever done before. They told me it was very hard work although enjoyable at the same time.

Even after the first seven weeks when the first leave arrived and we got home, my parents and friends noticed the change in me and on occasions so did I. It was mostly little things like cleaning up after myself and everybody else and making sure my clothes were ironed. Before I joined up I just wouldn't bother and always let someone else do it. The main change in me, I think, is that I have grown up a lot since joining and when I go home I notice that some of my friends worry and panic about stupid little things and just work to get money for the weekend to go out on the drink. I suppose I was the same before I joined, but now I know there is more to life than going out and getting drunk.

Another significant change is the way other people act towards me. Where I come from, nearly everybody knows you or knows a member of your family so if you are ever in trouble you get help if the need arises. Down here people keep to themselves and it is up to the individual to look after oneself. Overall, I think the Army has changed my life for the better in most ways in that it has really opened my eyes to what you can do and achieve as an individual and also as a team. I have a lot more self respect and an altogether better attitude to life.

LIFE AT PRINCESS MARINA COLLEGE

**By
AT Jackson**

I have been at Princess Marina College now for just over a year. I joined at the age of 16 and am one of the youngest in my division. The first 15 weeks at Arborfield Garrison were, to put it politely, an experience. The regime was hard and at times tedious.

However, I progressed and in May started my second term. After being in Junior Company, joining B Company was a bit of a culture shock. The daily

routine was more relaxed and we only had one inspection every week - things were looking better already!

My first term of trade training started off slowly, but as 3 division approached I knew that things were going to get harder. During 2 division I started doing hobbies. I chose art and every Monday night, Colour Sergeant Humphreys taught me how to paint in water colours.

The term gradually came to an end and we progressed on into 3 division. It was much the same as 2 division, although trade training had become more demanding. This term we went on a platoon outing to Alton Towers which was a laugh. It made the platoon mix together as the girls are normally very much separated from the lads. Towards the end of this term I had produced enough paintings of reasonable quality to be put in an exhibition. I successfully sold two to the Commandant and am now back on the drawing board preparing for the next exhibition. The term was coming to an end and I was looking forward to going home and spending Christmas with the family. This didn't happen as I got picked for recess, but we had a good time and did our best to make the most of the situation.

4 division had now arrived, the term I was dreading as we had our junior CFT and Exercise. The time arrived for the CFT and off we 'tabbed' in the snow. I didn't know what to expect as we had never done a march with our weapons. However, I found at the end it was not worth losing sleep over - compared to my PT lessons it was easy. Now all I have to look forward to is Exercise, which should bring back memories of basic training.

Joining the Army was probably a mistake as I was so young and after being in a year I think maybe I should have waited. However, at the moment I am enjoying it and my family are very proud. I have learnt a lot since I came here - one thing is being able to paint which is proving to be profitable! I wouldn't change my life at the moment as I can't think of anything I would want to do in civvy street.

THOSE LOCAL INNS
Part I
The Arborfield Pubs

By
Brian Hornsey (54A)

The Bramshill Hunt.

In 1939, when Princess Marina College was called 'The Army Technical School', the Commandment was Col F A Hilborne MBE. (I wonder if *he* ever frequented the local inns.) In that year, the landlord of the Bramshill Hunt was Frank Norman Hornby.

Have you ever wondered where the name 'Bramshill Hunt' originated? I have - so while researching the historical detail of the other Inns in this article at Reading Library, I followed this one up.

As suggested, it all relates to fox-hunting. Back in the latter part of the 18th century there existed an enormous number of 'Harrier' packs in Hampshire and these were kept by local squires and landowners. One of these packs became foxhounds and survived long enough to become the origin of the Garth Hunt from which, in turn, derived the Bramshill Hunt.

The real history of the Garth Hunt, however, began in 1816 with Sir John Cope of Bramshill, near Winchfield. Sir John had succeeded his brother Denzil in 1812 and had immediately given up practising Law for foxhunting. In 1816 Sir John decided to hunt on his own and established a pack at his residence, the



The Bramshill Hunt

hounds being known as the 'Bramshill Hunt' (or Sir John Cope's).

The Inn has changed quite considerably since my time in the 1950s. It is now isolated from the main A327 road to Reading being situated, and hidden, on the old Reading road.

An ugly extension has now been built across the original frontage, completely disguising the original building outline.

I remember in the fifties the bar floor was covered in sawdust and contained a couple of bar billiard tables and a dart board. In those days it was a Simonds house, the price of a pint being about 1/2^d.

It was always a handy place to loiter until the bus to Reading arrived. As 'beer connoisseurs', as we considered ourselves to be (at all of 18 years old) Simonds beer was thought to be very inferior and only to be drunk as a last resort!

The Bramshill Hunt is now a Morlands Inn and is now very

dependant on Garrison custom.

The Arborfield Bull.

In 1939 the landlord of the Arborfield Bull was Joseph Bushell

Arborfield was the site of an Iron Age settlement long before it had ever heard of Army Apprentices, and there has been a village of some kind there ever since.

The Arborfield Bull is thought to be between 400 and 500 years old and was originally a coaching Inn. It now stands at the cross-roads in the centre of the village where the Reading-to-Farnborough traffic rushes by on the A327. The building is 17th century, the walls attractively cream washed, with some timber framing, and it has a red tiled roof.

The present day inn sign hangs out over the porch, depicting a large and placid bull, whilst a blue-painted board, with gold lettering, affixed to the wall at one side, states that The Bull is a Courage house.

In January 1845, Queen Victoria is thought to have called at the Inn in her carriage, to change horses, on her way to visit the Duke of Wellington at Stratfield Saye. Though there is no record of her having taken any refreshment there.

Highwaymen, too, frequented the vicinity, and more recently the Garth Hunt (remember Bramshill?) used to meet outside, until the traffic along the road became too busy.

With the advent of the motor car, the Inn's character has changed, and the former saloon, lounge and public bar have now been knocked into one. The old front door beneath the front porch, has been bricked up and the entrance is now at the back, through the car park. A century ago, this would have been frowned upon, as encouraging women, children and riff-raff to sneak in at the back - but those days have long gone.

The Swan at Arborfield.

In 1939 the landlord of the Arborfield Swan was Frank Speller.

The building is 17th century, built in 1661 and is where King George III is reputed to have taken refreshment while stag hunting in 1790.

I remember as a young Craftsman using this pub and on several occasions encountering the ubiquitous Ben Cook in its homely depths.

Situated on the A327 Reading road the Inn is found on the left



The Arborfield Bull

as you travel through the village, just past the Village Hall.

The Swan is a white building, its walls punctuated by original oak support beams and announces its age with the year '1661' sported outside on one of its gable ends.

The interior is well supported by original oak beams, which in one of the bar rooms, form a series of columns on the bar, through which one is served. The floor in this bar is built over the original cellar - no longer in use.

The chalked-up wall menus are

deliberately mis-spelt. This means that you are compelled to read the other menus, so inadvertently becoming tempted by the variety. This compels you to displaying your superior knowledge to the landlord with the result that you end up ordering a meal which you might otherwise not have done!

At the time of writing, their 'doorstep' sandwiches are really something into which to sink your teeth.



The Swan at Arborfield

REMINISCENCES - PART III From Schoolboy To Soldier

By
Walter Jobber (Oct43)

The time had finally arrived! Leaving the recruiting office which was located at Holloway, London (no, not the prison) after having signed my attestation papers, committing me to the Army for 8 years with the colours and 4 on the reserve to count from my 18th birthday, having sworn the oath of allegiance to the King, his heirs and successors, taken the King's shilling and being given a travel warrant to a place called Wokingham, I was instructed to get to Waterloo station and proceed by train to the aforementioned place. Having a rough idea where Waterloo station was but absolutely no knowledge of Wokingham, I eventually got on the right train and settled down for the journey wondering just what I had let myself in for.

On arriving at Wokingham I alighted from the train and proceeded out through the booking office and was met by a Sergeant who enquired politely if I was for the Army Technical School. On being informed that I was, his manner towards me underwent a slight change and I was ordered in no uncertain terms to, 'join those others waiting over there!'

On looking around, I saw a bunch of lads about a dozen strong waiting in the station car park. After waiting for one more train the Sergeant decided that we should board a 3 ton lorry that was at the side of the park as this was to convey us to the School at Arborfield. Before we moved off, however, we were asked by the Sergeant if any of us happened to smoke. Several of us admitted to the practice only to be told that smoking was forbidden to boys under seventeen and that he was therefore confiscating our cigarettes. Of course, knowing no better we obligingly handed them over. I had had my first contact with Army life and with the man who, over my 3

years at Arborfield, I was to be in contact with the most.

He was Sergeant 'Taff' Evans, South Wales Borderers (SWB).

On arriving at Arborfield, we in the lorry proceeded to the Regimental Headquarters where we were indoctrinated into the Army Technical School. When I departed the office at the RHQ I left with three items that were to stay with me forever more - my Army number, my Company allocation (though this changed later), and my designated religion (I learnt that I was Church of England).

Up until this point, my religious beliefs had been somewhat nefarious. Living in London, my schoolmates and I tended to follow the religion that gave out the goodies. Consequently, I had attended churches of various faiths such as, Presbyterian, Baptist, Salvation Army, Welsh Chapel and several other lesser denominations especially at Christmas time when all the parties were laid on. On no occasion though, had I embraced the Church of England, so how I became a member of that Church has always remained a mystery.

I was taken over to F Block, C Company and led into Room F4. Here there were numerous empty beds, one of which I was invited to select. In the room were a number of other boys in various types of dress, some in canvas overalls, some like me in civilian clothes and some in uniforms that had short trousers.

At this time, I learnt that there were 3 Army schools in existence from which recruits were taken, besides the civilian source. These were The Duke of Yorks, The Queen Victoria (a Scottish school) and The Gordon Boys School (at Woking).

Next day more boys were allocated to C Company and Room F4 was eventually filled. These boys, then, were to be my comrades for the next 3 years, though not necessarily in the same barrack room or Company.

As regards my first day at the School, shortly after being allocated my bed-space, we newcomers were taken to the cookhouse for our first Army meal. I cannot remember what the sweet was or, in fact, if there was one, but I will never forget that first meal - Sausage and Mash.

We returned to F4 and were then directed to draw our kit, get our bedding, label our kit, learn how to make a bed 'up' and later how to make it 'down', put our kit in our lockers and hang certain items under our lockers, all to precise instructions. The whole of this was supervised by 2 boy soldiers, A/L/Cpl George Taylor and Senior Boy Soldier 'Chesty' Kellow.

Of course, being new boys, although we were on parade the next day with our drill instructor Sgt 'Taff' Evans, we were not allowed to take part in the ceremony of 'Getting on Parade'. At this stage we had received no drill instruction whatever. Sergeant Evans was yet to impart this knowledge and make us into proficient soldiers. This he proceeded to do with complete success, except that one boy who could only co-ordinate left-arm swing with left-leg forward, right-arm swing with right-leg forward. No matter what, he could not be made to swing his right-arm forward when stepping out with his left-leg and so on. He was eventually discharged from the School.

Along with Sgt Evans, we in C Company had another regimental instructor, Sgt 'Jock' Hunter (KOSB). Woe betide anyone who referred to his regiment as the 'kosbies'. Jock also sported a red & white checked Glengarry and wore the Service Dress with rounded cutaways.

'Taff' Evans was to be my regimental instructor for the remainder of my period at Arborfield, and continued to be so when we had a short period at Bury in Lancashire. Although I transferred Companies three times (being transferred to B Company on my return to Arborfield) he was always in the Company to which I was allocated. Other regimental instructors come to mind, but none are so vivid.

My first Company Commander was Captain Ingram who had as his CSM, 'Ticker' Pryor of the Rifle Brigade. This was in my C Company days. Funny enough, I remember very little of our sojourn at Bury and have no recollection of who was the Company Commander or his CSM.

On arriving back at Arborfield after our August leave in 1944, I joined B Company, which was commanded by Captain Pete Gardiner and SSM 'Trumpy' Towler. During this time our regimental requirements were still being cared for, in that all the necessary 'bull' was taking place - boots continued to be 'spit and polished', webbing continued to be 'blancoed' to the correct shade, white belt meticulously 'whitened', brasses polished front and back, chin-strap highly 'bulled' and Service Dress neatly pressed (under the biscuits in cardboard at first, then by electric iron towards the later days).

While all this was going on and we were being instructed in our trade, we were also being instructed in other regimental subjects such as, TOETs, field craft, map reading, tactics, rifle drill, stripping rifles and machine guns (pretty tame to the Armourers among us). We even fired the rifles and machine guns. All this in addition to the physical training, games and education - one wonders how there were enough hours in the day to do it all.

One day, towards the end of my stay at Arborfield (about 5 intake time) I was idly looking out of the barrack room window when I observed across the other side of the square 3 ramrod-backed figures, who seemed to be about 7 feet tall, marching across the hallowed ground. Who they were we did not know (by this time I had been joined by some of the other lads in the barrack room), but we soon found out. The Guards had arrived!

Up to this time, the only guardsman at the School was the Regimental Sergeant Major - WO1 (RSM) McNally, Scots Guards (Ben Cook had by this time been transferred from the Guards). One of these 3 guardsmen was posted to B Company and placed in charge of

6 Platoon of which I was a member. Against all expectations, the experience was not earth shattering as he rapidly adjusted to the ways of the School.

Finally came the day when having completed our trade training and regimental training, we were considered fit to 'pass out'. Much 'bulling' and parading was carried out until we were finally mustered for the Passing Out parade. This was to be a grand effort, because we were to parade in front of Field Marshal Montgomery, who was taking the salute.

My recollection of the parade is a bit hazy, however I do remember that we were on parade at 1100 hrs, but it seems that somebody must have forgotten to tell the Field Marshal as he did not arrive until about an hour later. This wait, plus the fact that there was a continuous drizzle falling and the November day was none too warm, did not put us in the best of spirits.

Eventually, everything went according to plan and we duly marched passed the Field Marshal. I believe at that time he was also Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS) so this passing out parade was a most distinguished affair - has it been bettered I wonder?

At the end of the day we said our farewells to the School and passed through the gates for the last time as boys. We were embussed to Reading Station and proceeded by troop train to Maidstone, Kent for a period of infantry training with the Royal West Kent Regiment. This was one of life's ironies for this happened to be the very Depot and Regiment that an uncle of mine had served with the colours in the 1920s.

I must admit that I for one was not exactly enamoured with having to learn new sorts of drill movements totally different to those which we had been practising for the past 3 years. Still, the field craft was enjoyable and, for the first time since putting on the uniform in 1943, I could go outside the gate to the nearest pub and drink a pint without looking over my shoulder to see if I was being observed by any of the permanent staff.

At last, in the middle of December we had our first taste of REME. We arrived at a holding camp at Ottley, Leeds, Yorkshire. As with all things in the Army at that time, they did not know what to do with us so they sent us on Christmas leave! The period of leave meant that we had to return on New Years Eve. This was spent riotously in the village of Ottley.

The following day, News Years Day 1947, we were on a troop train going from Leeds to Wokingham, complete with the necessary refreshments, for onward transportation to Blackdown for a training course designated as Regular REME Craftsmen.

We did the rounds of the Arborfield Garrison in those days, but I never found out why we had to revise all our previous trade training. However, we were taught to drive and the weather around June/July was good enough to make the recovery and waterproofing courses enjoyable. After completing 6 months *extra* training it was deemed that, at last, we were now suitably trained to join the Corps.

In July 1947 it could be said that the intake of October 1943 was finally dispersed to take its part in the annals of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. After nearly 3 years and 10 months we had achieved our ambition - we had made it - we were paid up members of REME!

**ADDITIONAL APOLOGIES
RECEIVED
FOR
REUNION 1996**

P Davis (38A)

M D Barnard (61C)

SCRAPBOOK MEMORABILIA

By Alan Morton (51B)

By way of introduction, I am the ex-Arborfield Apprentice, Intake No 51B, who volunteered to carry the Old Boys Standard on parade over the last couple of annual reunions.

While visiting my mother and sisters just before Christmas 1996, I was presented with a small scrapbook of memorabilia that my mother had kept for many years and amongst the treasures were letters I had written to my family while on Boys Service. In particular, she had kept my first letter home (September 1951) and my last letter (July 1954) and I now present copies of these, *spelling mistakes and all*, as I feel they would be of some interest to other members of the AOBA. They certainly brought back vivid memories to me. I am sure other people's memories will be stirred by the innocence and optimism (the confidence of youth!) evident from their tone.

22771070 A/T MORTON A J
A PARTY
HQ COY
ARMY APPRENTICES SCHOOL
ARBORFIELD
BERKSHIRE

5/9/51

Dear Mum, Dad & Babs

I am terribly sorry I did not write last night, but I know you will forgive me when I tell you what we had to do. When I left Dad yesterday morning I got on the end of a queue of 5 other new boys waiting to hand in my ration book and identity card. Then a sergeant took us round to one of the barrack rooms and a boy in there told us to hold out our arms. He then pile on us 5 blankets, 2 sheets, 1 pillow, 1 pillow-case, 1 bolster, 1 set of Dennams (WORKING DRESS) and a kit bag. The kit bag was full up with all sorts of things such as a house-wife, socks, towels etc. We all then went round to our barrack room and chose a bed. In our room there are 17 beds including the boy sergeants and the corporals. It is painted green, cream and brown, with a brown mat down the centre of the room. Over our beds we have a large locker fixed to the wall. In it we have two shelves and one small drawer. I am glad I took that padlock as all of my kit is in my locker. Underneath our locker we have 3 pegs. I have hung my kit bag and raincoat on them. The number of our room is F1, and all new recruits are in F block. Our wash room is a very big room with about 24 basins and above each basin is a mirror. The toilets are on one side of this room and a couple of showers are down the far end. This room is quite close to our barrack room so it is very handy in the morning. Talking about the morning, we have to get up at 6.30. Breakfast is at 7.30 so we have to do as much as we can during that hour. We have to go and have a wash for a start. Then we have to make our beds. Regarding the beds, they are green and about 7 feet long. We have been shown a special way of making our beds and boy!! it is a special way. The mattress which they gave me always sinks in the middle so I can never get my bed nice and square.

Now to get on to the question of food. When we arrived yesterday we went to the dining hall and formed a queue (as per usual). We then picked up a tray, then put 2 plates on it and went along the line where different chaps dished out the different veg etc. Yesterday dinner time we had corned beef, potatoes (MASHED) and runner beans. For sweet we had bread and butter pudding. For tea yesterday we had lovely fried bread with an egg on top, also a mug of tea and some bread and jam. I have thoroughly enjoyed the food so far, and it is first class.

I have made several mates so far, but in particular I have made friends with a chap named Kieth Tilley. He is a very nice lad who comes from Canterbury, but for the last 2 years he has been living in Gibraltar, that is where his parents are now. Most of the other boys are from the London area, and a jovial lot they are too.

I saw (my cousin) Jim Bartlett for a fleeting second last night and he was very pleased to see me. Well, I must sign off now; heres hoping you are all in the best of health,

Your Everloving Son

ALAN

NIL DESPERANDUM

PS

They say that after the first six weeks we get 4 days leave so I only hope its true.

Heres to the next time.

22771070A/CSM A J MORTON
B COY
A.A.S
ARBORFIELD
BERKS

16/7/54

Sunday

My Dear Mum, Dad & Babs,

As I promised in my letter of Friday last, here I am with a few more lines to let you know all is well here at Arborfield as I hope things are at Taunton. Talking about excitement, I need hardly tell you what the atmosphere is like up here at Arborfield with the big Parade only 4 days away. It seems as though all the feelings built up during the past 3 years by members of our intake are suddenly coming to life, and no-one is more excited than yours truly. Everyone has been trying hard to make this P.O.P. the best of all P.O.P.'s, without a word of a lie, and believe me they are succeeding too. When you come up on Thursday you can see for yourselves all the little trimmings which we have put to our schools appearance, and so long as the weather keeps fine, then we should have a first class Parade. Dont forget, dear all, please try and be a little early wont you, then you will be able to get a good seat by the flagpole. Another point is that when the Parade on the square is over I wouldnt leave it till the last moment before you go to the Camp Hall, because an unusually large crowd is expected this time, and the Camp Hall will soon get filled up. Anyway, with Dad in uniform I shouldnt think there will be any difficulty for you in getting a seat, especially if you can get talking to some of the REME officers on the School staff. This is the first time we have had a Cabinet Minister (RT HON SIR ANTHONY HEAD MP MINISTER FOR DEFENCE) taking the salute on the P.O.P., so with a stroke of luck I might get my photograph in one of the daily papers, as a special place is being ringed off for members of the press. We had a full dress rehearsal of the Parade yesterday and boy!! were my knees knocking. Still it went off OK with only a couple of minor slip-ups, so Im praying hard that all will be well for Thursday.

We have all handed in our suits of service dress, white bets, S.D. caps and all the other paraphernalia (a good word!!!) of our boys uniform, and we are now the proud possessors of battle-dress and and real soldiers uniform. My two suits of B.D. fit me like a glove and you would be surprised how different it makes one feel when walking around the school in sensible uniform instead of those monkey suits with brass buttons. Ha!! Ha!! Joking aside, though, I think we look a lot smarter now and, Im pleased to say, much more comfortable. We wore our best B.D. on Church Parade this morning, and we all tried extra hard to be a little extra smarter for two reasons. One, because we had the Commandant of the Staff College, Camberly, taking the salute, along with 23 student officers from all the countries of the Commonwealth. And secondly, because today was our last Church parade in the school, and we wanted to make it our best. The padre (REVD TAFF HINTON) gave us a very touching sermon, especially for the Senior Division, and it was made more memorable by the fact that it was the last one which he would preach in the School. You see, he is being posted to Egypt next month, and today was the last Church service he would conduct in Arborfield.

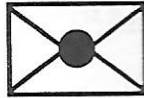
Well, all, I certainly have rambled on, havent I, but never mind, when I see you on Thursday we can talk our heads off cant we. So until then I will say cheerio, God Bless and keep smiling. Tons and tons of love,

Your Everloving Son

ALAN

P.S. I might not be able to see you before the P.O.P starts on Thursday, dear all, but Ill definitely find you straight after.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



✍ Tom Pearce (44A) writes

Having read the letters section of OBAN 9 with considerable interest, I would like to raise some comments. My assertion that there was some remission of sentence for VE day absentees seems to have attracted quite a few denials, but Peter Darton (43B) seems to share my recollection. Does anybody else, please? I wonder on reflection if it may have been only those returning before reveille on VE+1 who were released before time. After all, I said that some were let off after 3 days and others say they had not even returned by then.

We all seem to be agreed on the mass justice that was dispensed. I now feel that I must make a strategic withdrawal in the face of superior numbers on this subject - unless, of course, any others can remember an amnesty.

I would like to comment on a couple of points in the letter from Dave Ferns.

(a) The School march with the 'Reds' trio was written and arranged by Bandmaster (BM) Reggie Newman. The sequence of bands and bandmasters was as follows:

First came BM Knell and 4/7 & DG. I have read somewhere that BM Knell wrote and arranged the original REME (Hi Ho, Hi Ho) march but cannot vouch for that.

We then had BM Vinnecombe with his 13/18 Hussars band.

Then came BM Roberts with his 12 Lancers band followed by BM Newman, whose Regiment I cannot remember. He came from having conducted a Canadian Army band which had returned home, although he was in the British Army. He conducted the School band on its own.

Then came a BM from, I believe, the Beds

& Herts, whose name I cannot remember and it was he who took us to the Royal Tournament at Olympia in 1947.

(b) There was a lot of discussion about D'Oyly-Cardé copyright, but the School march complete with the 'Reds' trio was played at every performance. I was there, playing the tuba and David Tilt, bass drummer at that time confirms this. Are there any other bandsmen of the day or any of the Toy Soldiers about?

Dave is right about the fact that we all enjoyed our free time in London. David Tilt tells me that the singing of the 'Reds' was discouraged later by the authorities, as being politically incorrect.

I was pleased to see another letter from Gerry Preston. He and I were in the same classes at the DYRMS over a number of years and we were sworn in together at Staunton on 21 February 1944 before travelling to Arborfield on the following day.

All this correspondence from George Knight and Gerry Preston on the subject of mathematics in recent issues of OBAN leaves it at the risk of becoming regarded as a learned journal. My first reaction was that if Gerry had been fortunate enough to have taken a Radar or CE 'tiffy' course at 5 Trg Bn, he would probably have learnt all about 'inverse hyperbolic antilogs' during the first few weeks of his course! However, joking apart, I blew the dust of an old maths book and there it was, all explained on pages 1, 2 and 3. I have already sent a copy to Gerry, whereupon I am sure he will recognize them under the less baffling name of natural logs!

Finally, a question to Paul Wilson. Did CSM Depper not indeed wear a Rifle Brigade cap badge rather than that of the KRRC. It doesn't much matter nowadays, does it, as they are all Royal Green Jackets?

(Since receiving this letter, the AOBA has been informed that Tom died on 12 January 1997 and his obituary appears in the obituaries section- Ed)

✍ *James E Macdonald (Apr 43) writes*

Many compliments are contained in the OBAN about the publication itself and all are richly deserved. My own praise is for its clarity, the size of its print for tired eyes, the uncluttered layout and the pleasure gained from other's reminiscences akin to one's own thoughts.

I feel the OBAN does not need glossy presentation and the fancy font styles that seem to be prevalent in other publications of a similar theme - the presentation is fine as it is and I thank you very much for it.

I am still very much a £.s.d. man, with old fashioned standards - moral and financial, however, there is a bottom to my pocket. I listened to the comments made at the AGM (I could hear because I was at the front) and I personally would like the opportunity of a standing order or direct debit facility to pay for OBAN and at its correct value, more or less. I feel sure that in the long run it would be more beneficial to the AOBA and a lot easier for us all. How about a microphone at the next AGM?

✍ *Paul Wilson (42A) writes*

I don't know what makes one AOBA Reunion weekend better than another, I don't think it was just the buffet this year which was well up to standard. Sincere thanks to all those whose efforts go into making the weekend a success. I'm sure it is very much appreciated by all of us.

Many people commented on myself-provided, prominent name tag. I feel with no name tags supplied and no displayed attendance list we could have missed a few faces not seen for so many years and not recognised - such a shame. I look forward to my twentieth consecutive attendance in 1997!

(I think it was an oversight by the administration committee, but I know you agree that despite that they still do a great job, Paul. Perhaps next year they will remember - Ed.)

✍ *Frank Fendrick (45A) writes*

My name is Frank Fendrick and I have just joined the AOBA. It all started when my brother told me that the Dukies were having a reunion at Saunton Sands the other day, so I joined their OBA. Some-time later I received a telephone call, "Were you in 16 Airborne Workshops?" I was. It was Dave Cross, who told me that many ex-members of 16 Airborne Workshops also attended the Arborfield reunions, so I joined the AOBA.

As a new "old" member, firstly, I feel I would like to congratulate the editor of OBAN on a very impressive magazine and I would also like to contribute something. The following is my own effort, recalling those days at Arborfield. My memories of Arborfield are few, so I was amazed at the stories I read in OBAN 9. How can they remember so much and I so little? How is it that they are so witty and can write so well? How come they tell it how it was and not as it was supposed to be? My memories are somewhat sketchy, but here goes:

Two or three Dukies waiting at Wokingham station for transport to the School. An ex-Dukie in the NAAFI asking whether I had any cigarettes and tapping my pocket. "Are they glasses in there?" "No," I said, but they were! I was so ashamed of having to wear glasses! I remember always being scared that someone would ask me the time in the gym, because I couldn't read the clock (why would they ask me when they could read it themselves?)

Six months filing and chipping and then being awarded extra filing and chipping every time I was caught doing something wrong. The smell of cooling fluid has made me feel sick ever since. The other punishment I remember is cleaning buckets with sand and water in freezing weather.

On VE day, telling my father (an ex-RSM) that I was missing the fun being stuck at Arborfield while all the celebrations were going on and that on VJ day I would come up to London whether we got leave or not. His reply (remembered word for word) was, "Do you think that after 30

years in His Majesty's Army, I would harbour a deserter?"

The winter of 1947 which was so cold that most of the School were sent home on leave. Those of us who stayed - I don't know why - were huddled together in a boiler room. We had a long slide on the road outside.

Saving up my money to go to dances in the Corn Hall in Reading every other week. Getting drunk in the pub opposite first, in order to have the courage to ask the girls to dance. Knocking over a glass table in the hallway (I didn't see it) and being chucked out.

Filling a small bottle with whisky and orange which I used to sip at the bottom and then at the top of the hill on my bike ride back to the School. Sobering up in order to sign-in at the guardroom.

Once I was invited home by a 21 year old girl to see her transparent nightie. We crept upstairs. She showed me her nightie. I said, "very nice", and went downstairs again! Oh to be 16 again and know what I know now!

Having a fight with someone (I think his name began with 'P') by the air raid shelters, damaging his face and having to take him to the hospital. We were both charged but got away without any punishment as it was judged that he got what he deserved (I was a Sergeant - he wasn't).

Being on the Woolwich course (32 days first year, reduced to 16 the second year and 8 boys going to Woolwich Polytechnic) and freezing in the chemistry lab. We took little sips of methylated spirits to keep warm. Eventually, the bottle was empty and one of us had to go to the paint store to get it re-filled. Somehow I was chosen. I was scared stiff. Anyway, the bottle was re-filled with no questions asked.

Our last parade the day before we left. RSM McNally sent for me. I jumped out of bed and rushed onto parade. I had already removed my Sergeant's stripes or Mac would have probably done it for me.

The last incident was using a rope to climb over a fence from the next camp where I was now stationed. There was a large knot at the bottom end, on which you were supposed to put your feet. I put my hands on it instead and swung my legs up - and went bottom first straight into the barbed wire.

(Welcome to the AOBA, Frank and keep writing - Ed).

✍️ *Tony (Digger) Head (46A) writes*

OK you guys, call me pedantic, but Walter Jobber (Oct43) in OBAN 10 was mistaken to swear that Captain Gardner, then the 2 IC of B Company, was serving in the Midlothian and Border Horse. Perhaps when I am as ancient as Walter I will be allowed some memory lapses too. The reason I am so cocky is two-fold. Firstly, today I telephoned the Imperial War Museum just to play it safe. Secondly, we need to think about Pete Chiverell, who came from the Duke of Yorks Military School in February 1946 and slept almost opposite me in our B Company barrack room. Like most Dukies he had some training in a practical skill and also the ability to tear a tune from a musical instrument.

His speciality was the piccolo and his claim was that he could play from memory the regimental quick march AND the slow march of every regiment in the British Army. No mean feat considering the large number of regular and mobilised TA regiments that existed shortly after World War 2.

Just to mention a few of those fabulous names;

The Buffs,
The Green Howards,
The Seaforth Highlanders,
The Lancashire Fusiliers,
The Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry,
The Enniskillen Fusiliers,
The Welsh Regiment,
The Border Regiment.

I can clearly remember Lovat Scouts working in the cookhouse.

Anyway, we became accustomed to newly arrived members of the permanent staff being ushered into our room to confront Chiverell, who would unfailingly reach for his music tube and play the requested two tunes. He never flunked, no matter how exotic the regiment. It was shortly after our arrival at Arborfield that we thought Chiverell had met his match.

Captain Gardner had heard of the musical jeep and came calling. I can recall that his cap badge depicted a sheaf of corn bound around the middle (as in a field), and his shoulder flashes, which I believe were pale blue, indicated his regiment. We waited with baited breath as Chiverell reached for his instrument to meet this challenge. Then, cool as a cucumber, he played the regimental quick and slow marches of the 'Second Lothian and Border Horse'. Beat that, I thought. Truly a magical moment.

(Tony, it would be interesting to have a list of all the regiments that have existed in the British Army and their regimental march titles - fancy a job? - Ed)

Ken Giles (42B) writes

Herewith a copy of a photograph I have of the members of Hut D2, B Company taken in 1942. My reason for sending it is twofold:

In the library there is a photograph and citation for Geoff White who was unfortunately killed in Korea. It shows Geoff as being originally in C Company. This is incorrect as Geoff is in this photo in the front row on the extreme right.

The identity of the others are shown beneath the photo below. I just wondered if anyone had any news of the others. It would be nice to have 'a reunion' at a reunion, if you see what I mean.



Back row: 'Toss' Dawson (Perth), 'Paddy' Hutchinson - Boy Sgt (Belfast), Brock (Newquay).
Second row: Middleton (Emsworth), who left to return to civvy street, 'Tommy' Atkins who now lives in Godalming, Surrey, McGowan (Edinburgh), Jim Petrie (who I met in Korea).
Third row: Bertie (Birmingham), 'Skinny' Walters (Chatham), Myself, Reg Owen (Birmingham, I think), Bob Sewell.
Front row: 'Sandy' Cunningham (Stirling), Green (Shepshed), Ivor Spearman (now of Brighton), Geoff White.

In conclusion, may I thank everyone for another first class reunion. I know how much hard work must have gone into the weekend, 'thank you all'.

BC Atkins (43A) writes from Australia

I have just received OBAN 10 and as usual find lots of articles in it that I can equate with. However, there is one error on Page 29 in a letter written by Peter Simmonds (44A) in which he attaches that the prototype of the new badge was 'borrowed' by one of his intake. This may have been so, but it was initially lifted from its show-case on the main road, by one Craftsman Jones of 43A. The passing out parade was held and three cheers given to the boys who were leaving. The salute was taken by Field Marshal Montgomery. He appeared to be a very small man and quite pale in colour.

We were all then marched to the camp hall where we had to turn out our kit, and everyone was searched to find the badge. Not only was the badge found, but quite a lot of contraband was seized at the same time. We then departed to Maidstone to the Depot of the Royal West Kents (The Buffs), where we broke all records by recruits as we went through our 'basic' training. The O C of our company had quite a few words to say as we all marched into barracks, wearing our good conduct stripe. As we had been taught to march at the Guard's pace, it was not long before the rest of the recruits from civvy street did the same, and no matter how much the instructors tried to speed up the pace, it never met with any success. We met up with Jones a fortnight later, after he had had a holiday in the guardroom at Arborfield.

Please keep up the good work with the Newsletter, I am always happy to read it, especially the letters from the old boys.

Arthur 'Chip' Tomlinson (42A) writes

Until September of this year I was unaware of the existence of an Old Boys Association, nor was I sure that the Army still had an apprenticeship scheme.

My ignorance, having been corrected, I am now a member of the Association and have read with interest Issues 8, 9 and 10 of OBAN and the booklet on the history of 'Princess Marina College'. I have found that almost all the characters that I remember are mentioned, although there is nothing mentioned of my particular small group.

I joined in January 1942 and was in C Company and in particular, Room G6 with the same group of lads for almost 2 years. Most of them were January 42 intake, although I recollect some April 42 intake joining us. Our original room NCO was 'Burly' Hillier and later 'Jock' Craig. While I can recall most of the names, there are one or two which elude me as do those who went to Greenford when we were dispersed in April 1944. I remained in the Army until 1956 and apart from meeting a couple of the lads in Germany in the late 1940s I have had no contact with anyone from my Arborfield days.

In reading the recent issues of OBAN I note the name of Peter Baldwin who, I believe, was at Greenford and was a fellow Tele Mech and also a reference to Charles Ashdown. Is this the same Charlie who was in G6 with me and was bass drummer in the band?

The most recent OBAN contains quite a lot of correspondence from Brian Conway who was obviously well known. On Page 17 he queries whether the Pipes and Drums wore kilt order during the war. I enclose some old photos, one of which will clarify this matter. I believe the Pipe Major was named Cunningham. With regard to the other photos, the apprentice receiving the cup was Tony Wheatley and I believe that the leading drummer in the centre file was Derrick Pollard, who regrettably was named in the Deaths on Page 30 of Issue 8. When one has more past than future 'nostalgia' results. I look forward to further issues of OBAN and possibly a renewing of friendships.

(Arthur, I sent your photos onto Brian Conway for help in identification and he has replied with a long letter which I will publish in due course, with the photos. The photos will then be offered to the museum - Ed.)

✍ Anthony (Tony) Domoney (56B) writes
from Australia

As a new member I was very pleased to read the contents of past OBANs, very interesting and informative. For anyone who may remember me, I am Anthony (Tony) John Domoney, No. 23487111, Intake 56B, D Company, General Fitter, A/Sgt Band, Military & Pipes.

On passing out in 1959 I transferred to the Army Air Corps and continued my career as an Aircraft mechanic, leaving in 1968 as Sgt. I continued my aviation career in civil aviation as a licensed aircraft maintenance engineer.

Currently, I am with the Australian Civil Aviation Safety Authority as a district office airworthiness manager (15 years). I am also a qualified auditor (lead accessor).

I look forward to an interesting association with the AOBA and certainly hope to catch up with some 'long time lost' old boys.

✍ Walter Jobber (Oct 43) writes

Received the No 10 copy of OBAN and have already inwardly digested same. Again, an excellent read and the 'career' articles most welcome. One or two points though:

The boxers in my article pertaining to sporting activities were the 'DANAHAR' brothers, not as printed, 'DANABAR' - (*must be your writing, Walter - Ed*). A small error and obviously a misprint, but I felt I had to put matters straight or my contemporaries will be saying the 'old grey matter' has slipped a gear!

With regard to the letter by Jess Pye, with whom I happened to share a billet at the 96 reunion, I did not infer that 'Chalky' White (Commandant at the time in question) revoked *my* sentence for *my* part in the Great Escape. I had, after all, gone over the wall and my absence could in no way be termed legal in any sense of the word.

If I remember correctly, official leave had been granted to all at the School, but overnight passes only to those who lived within a very limited distance of the Camp. We others only had day passes. This, of course, meant that the majority of 'overnighters' were AWOL, and I suppose the crime was considered the more serious and therefore did not warrant an amnesty of any kind. Perhaps this was the remittance of sentence to which Jess was referring (i.e. late on returning while on a day pass).

Still, as they say, that is now all water under the bridge, and each of us who elected to spend the VE celebrations, and of course the consequences, in our own way do not have any regrets.

Finally, I enclose the last of four articles, describing my reminiscences of life at Arborfield and elsewhere appertaining, whilst being on Boys Service prior to joining REME permanently, for inclusion in OBAN 11. Hope they have made useful copy and at the same time jogged other people's memories. I have enjoyed writing them.

(Walter, Part III is published in this Issue (11), so Part IV will have to await its turn, and will appear in Issue 12 - but don't stop now, I'm sure you can think up yet another article - Ed.)

✍ B A (Eggy) Eggleton (52B) writes

As a postscript to my last letter (in OBAN 10) I managed to change my trade to Recovery Mechanic and become a first class tradesman. I was offered a transfer to the Military Police which I declined. I am afraid that I was not an ex-boy success story.

In REME I wore two 'G-flogs' and with great disappointment cut them down when my sub rank came through. I changed my engagement from 8 year with the colours and 4 years with the reserve to straight 9 years with the colours and no reserve for a pay rise of 24/6d a week. I rued the day when my 8 years were up and I still had a year to do!

To end on a lighter note, some ex-boys might remember that when I was at the School, I had my name published in a film magazine, advertising for a pen pal. I had hundreds of girls and women write to me and I gave most of the letters away all over the School, but kept ten. I eventually married one of the ten!

Other NCOs I remember in HQ Company during my time were, Sgt Phillips KRRC, Cpl Cowan East Surreys (a glider pilot), Cpl of Horse Wilcox Life Guards (believed later to have re-badged to REME), Cpl of Horse Stevenson and Sgt Roberts East Lancs. I am afraid Sgt Perry Tanks Corps slips my mind. In A Company, Sgt Driscoll Dorsets and in Regimental HQ, the postman Cpl Perry REME.

(Sgt Phillips KRRC eventually left the Army and worked for my father in the Accounts Dept of a cosmetics factory in Aldershot, where I met him again several times as a civilian- Ed.)

✍ J R (Dick) Wade (39A) writes

Last October I attended my first Reunion Weekend. This was a very well organised and impressive event, I hardly need to mention names that have already been praised many times in OBAN for all the dedication and hard work that has made these reunions possible. The pity of it all is, I was unaware of these events until it was pointed out to me through the SAGA magazine - still, better late than never - it was a wonderful nostalgic experience.

(This sounds a bit final, Dick, you are coming again? - Ed.)

During the march through the gate, I stood on the spot where the old guardroom once stood and where, apart from reporting in and out, or answering the bugle call for jankers, I did recall the nights I spent there on guard duty (two on - four off) with the inevitable stewed tea brewing till dawn and by then it tasted like nothing on earth, you could cut it with a knife and fork, it was so thick.

I also recalled one of the songs we used to sing in the pubs. It went like this:

Why don't they send away the REME?
Why don't they send away the boys?
We are the boys of the Regiment,
Ready to do or die (I don't think),

Why don't they send away the REME?
Like the boys of the Navy on the sea,
If it was not for the boys of the REME,
Where would England be?
Bugged if I know,
Where would England be?

(What was the tune this was sung to, Dick? - Ed)

I was an Acting Sgt, but not substantive rank, so on the books I was just a Corporal, so I may conclude with this verse:

I was never a Staff Sgt: nor was I a Tiffy,
Being in the wrong place most of the time,
I missed the required courses,
Through postings galore,
Yet the end of the day,
I never felt sore,
Being in a Corps Unit,
It's the luck of the draw.

✍ Jack King (51B) writes

How the memories came flooding back after reading 'Eggy' Eggleton's entry in OBAN 10.

I joined 51B a year earlier with two other lads from Manchester, Alan Tarbrooke (who recently died) and Ken Abram.

I remember Ken Abram being issued with his two SD uniforms. The jackets were of different sizes. When he tried the first one on, it was too tight. He complained to the QM, only to be told that they were meant to be tight as this gave them a smart appearance. His second was somewhat loose. When he brought this to the attention of the powers that be, he was told, "How do you expect to swing your arms when you are marching if your tunic is too tight?"

Like Eggy, I also went into A Company after winning my weight in the 'Novices' Boxing Competition.

I remember Sergeant Bill Buckley, Grenadier Guards and visited him on several occasions when I was home on leave. He was then the Recruiting Sergeant in Piccadilly, Manchester. I was informed that he had been wounded in the Italian Campaign, hence the reason for his saluting with his left arm. A typical example of Sgt Buckley's perverse sense of humour was demonstrated on the day I slipped on parade. As usual, we had been inspected prior to commencing drill. We slow marched in line down the parade ground and executed a left turn at the bottom. There I committed the cardinal sin of slipping. Bill Buckley ran up to me, grabbed my arm and hurled me upright. I continued marching with him shouting in my ear, "You are a dirty little boy soldier." He then started at the top and worked downwards. My beret needed brushing, cap badge was dirty, I was unshaven, my belt was 'manky', my brasses were dirty, gaiters the same and my boots needed polishing (remember the term, 'beezing'?). Report to his bunk at 1800 hrs that night, dressed as for morning inspection. This I duly did. I knocked on his bunk door and entered when ordered. "What do you want?" I reminded him of the morning's occurrence. "Oh yes, go and fetch me a mug of tea from the canteen." Sitting on his locker were about eight white mugs. This must have been a favourite ploy of his!

When I first went into A Company, I was told by a more senior A/T never to let CSM Weston hear you call him 'The Bull'. It was obvious that he knew of his nickname and he clearly revelled in this. One of his tricks was to murmur in a new Company member's ear, "What do the lads call me? I know they have a name for me, what is it?" Woe betide the foolish young man who actually told him.

Eggy mentioned Pete (Paddy) Hanlon. He was a good friend of mine and we were both in the School's boxing team. He will also remember 'Julie' Phayer, Eddy Orr-Munroe and Henry Whitehead, to mention a few others who were also in the team.

Remember Friday nights? Laying polish on the floor - sitting on the bumper to get that final shine. Polishing the bucket with Brasso. Scrubbing the trestle table and polishing the leg irons.

Full kit inspections on the whim of some bored A/T Corporal and the cries of "Blanco wet, Corporal." Hoping that in the morning that you would get the soft broom instead of the hard one to sweep your bedspace. The polishing of brasses, 'dollying' of greatcoats, white blanco on both belt and water bottle string, rushing to get your clean denims, desirous of getting a pair of long denim trousers so you could use the forbidden chain gaiter weights - 7 days jankers if caught! What about the huge safety pins or kilt pins (*we called them blanket pins - Ed*) to box them, in that extra effort to get smartly turned out. I, like Eggy, could go on and on, each memory invoking others. But enough is enough!

Perhaps through the auspices of OBAN, it would be possible to mention that I have attempted a reunion of 51B Arborfield boys, but unsuccessfully. If anyone is interested, they can ring me on 01706 526471.

(Jack, never be afraid to write more material for OBAN, we don't hear a lot from the 50s intakes - Ed)

✍ *Ron (Doc) Savage (39A) writes from Zimbabwe*

Having taken the oath of allegiance (did I ever receive the shilling? - can't remember) at the Duke of York's Royal Military School in company with Tedder, Wade, Abbot, Clements and one other whose name escapes me, we duly arrived at Arborfield and were kitted out, given regimental numbers (mine was 7594924), handed in our school uniforms and started a new life. Having come from the Duke of Yorks we had the advantage, as did the lads from the Queen Victoria School, Dunblane, of having military training behind us. There had always been friendly rivalry between the two schools and it carried on at Arborfield. At first, the Dukies were in A Block and the Queen Vics were

in B Block, so we started raids and pillow fights which very soon degenerated into full inter-block affairs. However, within a month or two we got it out of our systems and settled down to some proper soldiering.

On September 3 we were assembled in the NAAFI to hear Chamberlain's speech, followed by the Declaration of War. At that time we numbered two Companies only, as the next intake was not due until the October, so the capacity of the hall was not strained. The Commandant then made a speech, no doubt to 'stiffen the sinews' etc., finishing with the stirring words, "Courage mes enfants," which I think went over a lot of heads present. Not to worry, the thought was there, as it was in 1940 in the days of the Blitz when the Commandant of the time, Lt Col Fowldes (Fowkes?) would come tearing down from his quarters in his old Riley, accelerator flat on the floor, engine revving like mad, still in bottom gear, to be with his boys and set an example. Bless his cotton socks, his heart was in the right place. Still in 1940, the older apprentices were detailed for duty in case an enemy airman bailed out in the school grounds. I often wondered what would have happened in reality as they were only armed with pick-axe helves. (*Dick Wade tells of a Lewis Gun, mounted in a sand-pit in the middle of a field - ring any bells Ron? - Ed*).

Apropos comments by Doug Phillips (39B) in OBAN 6, on an article by Fred Ford (39A) in OBAN 4, I can definitely confirm that the episode of the Heinkel bomb occurred in 1940 and furthermore it was the FIRST day of national prayer called for by HM The King. When the machine gun opened fire at the RA camp across the way, the Heinkel turned and machine-gunned the whole unit that was on parade. The only casualty was a cap F S, shot off the head of the last man in the rear rank. The Heinkel dropped an oil bomb (early type of incendiary?) and a small bomb which killed a cow in the field where it fell - the only casualty that day. If I close my eyes, I can still see the 'sparks' from the engine which turned out to be flashes from its guns! We were so enthralled that we had to be chased inside by one of the permanent staff. My first experience of being under enemy fire - will somebody please swing the lamp!

As for the controversy over the first AT/RSM, when I left in October 1941 for 11 AA Workshops, Wednesfield, the highest rank we had was AT/LCpl.

Talking of appreciation of ex-Rats, I'm afraid not all receptions were 'ecstatic'. Two of us were posted to 11 AA Workshop and as the senior, I was given charge of the documents. On arrival, I reported to the Orderly Room and handed them over. As I turned to leave, a Staff Sergeant in the office said, "Savage!" "Staff?" I replied in the best manner as trained. "Ex-boy service aren't you?" "Yes Staff", I answered proudly. "Huh, thought as much", was the rejoinder. Out I went with my tail well and truly between my legs.

Shortly after the outbreak of war, we received a nucleus of the 4/7th Royal Dragoon Guards band around which we formed our own military band, ably assisted by ex-bandboys of the aforementioned military schools and musicians from other boarding schools. Right up to the time I left in October 1941, we had the military band with a few drummers and fifers, but no Corps of Drums as such, still less a Pipe Band - shades of the Dagenham Girl Pipers!

Reference the multitude of Ben Cook stories. I remember his guardroom instructions, such as, "Go and lock yourself in the guardroom and *bring me the key!*" I can vouch for the last bit, having been on the receiving end. In the early days we were scared stiff of him, until the one day a party of jankerwallahs had to report to his house for gardening duties. When it was seen how 'Mrs Ben' had him under her thumb, I'm afraid the word soon spread around and his scaring days were numbered. Then he was commissioned Lt QM and succeeded by RSM McNally. All this in the days before the School became designated Princess Marina College.

Before writing any more, I must publicly thank Brian Baxter of the REME Museum who was so helpful when I called-in to try and trace some items I sent to the School in 1985 for which I received no acknowledgement - not even when I wrote to the Commandant later. I called on August 19 to 'raise Cain' over the slight - don't know why

because by then there would be nobody there who would have been involved at the time. We had a very interesting session when I was able to put a number of names to the photo of D Company and to receive from him an application form for the AOBA and the information about the annual reunion which I had every intention of attending.

However, on the following Friday (23rd) I slipped on some muddy stones at the top of the Devil's Dyke overlooking Brighton and broke my left arm, effectively putting paid to any thought of driving, so left it in abeyance. Pity, it would have been grand to meet Dick Wade again and chew the fat over old times. *(At this point Ron enclosed a photocopy of 5 former Duke of Yorks boys, but not good enough for reproduction - Ron, if you can get it re-photographed I will put it in - Ed.)* The photograph includes Wade, Abbot, myself, a PSI and Tedder. I think the photo was taken by the sixth man in the photo, 'Dusky' Clemens. Apart from bumping into Clemens in December 1942 on a course at Sidcup, I have never met another Arboretum chap of my era. If anybody knows the addresses of Rex Bryant (4903) and Jack Straw from Pontefract I would like to have them please, to say nothing of those in the snap.

Back to the days when..... In October 1942 while awaiting a posting to the ranks, I was doing a stretch of jankers and one night another chap and I were delegated to take a camp kettle of soup to the Sgts Mess. Halfway across the barrack square (it was dark at the time and I was *Allah Keyfic* of the consequences), we stopped for a breather. I asked my opposite number if he was ready to carry on and receiving an affirmative reply, lifted my side. Of course, he had not taken hold of his side, so half the soup spilled over onto the square. We carried on to the Sgts Mess - there was nobody about, so we put the camp kettle onto a table, added a convenient jug of gravy and a couple of jugs of water and skedaddled. I was never given that job again and to this day wonder why.

The reason for my spell of jankers? The chaps who had passed out and were to go into the ranks had been seen *en masse* by the Commandant (a term no longer used I believe) and we were told we would be given leave from A to Z. When the passes

were made out, they were from A to X only. Believing them to be misprinted I returned on date Z. The Commandant would not believe my interpretation, hence the jankers. I always seemed to drop in it on matters of principle. Earlier, I had blotted my copybook, when, together with the remainder of my squad (No. 22, if I remember correctly), training schedules had been made out and we had to follow them religiously. However, one day we were doing PT and the PTI kept us until the end of the period, say 0930 hrs and we also had to be at the workbench at 0930 hrs. Impossible! Naturally, we were late at our benches and we were all put on a 'fizzer' (a 252 for the uninitiated). We all said what had happened. We were then asked who had a watch. Only I had one. When everyone said they had all taken the time from my watch, I was a marked man!

In 1943, I was stationed at Keynsham and had a bottom bunk behind the blackout screen, a favourite place as it meant that you were the last to be kicked out of bed at reveille. I went on seven days leave and on my return found that the Lance-jack in charge of the hut had taken over my bed and refused to move out. Shortly afterwards he went on leave too - what would you have done? S'right. That's just what I did. I moved back to my old bed. When he returned he ordered me to move out and of course I told him to do the impossible to himself. He put me on the pegs (AKA 252) and I went in front of the Skipper confident that such an unlawful command would be thrown out of court. How wrong can you get. I was given ten days field punishment. NOT jankers, but full blown FP. The only consolation was that I served it there. And thereby hangs a tale. The guardroom nissen hut was divided into two, half was the QM's store. The other half held the guards' beds and a single cell. BUT, the cell was used as a sports kit store so I had to sleep on a spare bed in the guardroom. Naturally, all the lads knew why I was there and showed their loyalty by showering me with fags when they booked-in at 2359 hrs. I was not allowed to eat with them - I might have contaminated them, so I had to eat in a corner of the cookhouse - again I was in clover - double rations! I had to be escorted everywhere I went and in those days the guard was issued with the old P14 (Canadian Ross) rifle with the long bayonet.

One evening I was escorted across the cookhouse by Mr Shorthouse himself. He stood the rifle on its butt - with bayonet fixed it would have towered over him! I lie not. To cap things, he did not have any ammo at all, so to avoid loosing me in the dark he held my hand wherever we went. Laugh? I darned nearly wet myself. But even that was not the end. The local cops had apprehended a deserter and as we were the nearest Army unit, he was handed over to us. Now that did put the cat among the pigeons. There was only one spare bed in the guardroom and I was using it - what to do? Quite simple. The OC sent for me and explained the position and 'put me on my honour not to try to escape over the remaining four days of my sentence.' You know, in company with many others, I sometimes wonder how on earth we won the war!

Apropos the letter from Brian Conway (greeting Brian from another Dukie and Arborfield Rat, though of much earlier vintage in both cases), I took part in the film 'Stepping Toes' as a member of the band.

The young lady who 'starred' in the film was hailed as Britain's answer to America's Shirley Temple. I never heard of her again, but after World War 2 there was a young English film actress named Hazel Scott and I often wondered whether she was the Hazel Ascot of pre-war days, having altered her name slightly.

Glad to know you joined the DYRMS OBA, Brian. Aubrey Sadler - also of my vintage year - is doing a fine job and deserves all our support. Had you not mentioned it, I had thought of passing on your address. Hi also to Dick Wade (39A) - have you contacted Aubrey yet?

(Thank you Ron. However, I would take issue with you over the P14 rifle. It certainly had an eighteen inch bayonet, but wasn't a Canadian Ross, although it was the same .303 calibre. The Pattern 14 rifle was manufactured in the US, approved for British service on June 21, 1916. The Canadian Ross had a straight pull bolt action, while the P14 had a Mauser type bolt action. Sample P14s were made in the UK by Vic-

kers in 1915 and after approval were made in the US by Winchester, Remington and Eddystone during 1916-1917. Which one was yours? - Ed)

✉ *John Smithson (46B) writes*

With reference to the letter from Brian Conway in OBAN 10, regarding film footage of the College, wouldn't it be wonderful if we could collate all the known film footage material on the College and produce a video tape.

The main problem would be to collect enough material to produce at least a half hour video. To this end we would hope to enlist the help of the AOBA membership to loan any films of good quality for copying onto video tape. I have been connected with the film and TV industry for some years and would be prepared to repair and clean all films free of charge. I know of three films in existence featuring the College; a short news item in a wartime Movietone News, a circa 1946 post-man recruiting trailer and, the toy soldier display, featured in a 1947 Newsreel. We could, of course, have some worthy person introducing these items from various salient points in the college area. Surely, no AOBA member could resist buying a copy!

(John, I mentioned this at Committee meeting, and you've got the job! Please contact Larry Le Var, he tells me there are a number of film rolls in the museum archives which could be included- Ed).

✉ *F J (Lofty) Cotsford (46B) writes from Germany*

Many thanks for OBAN 10 which, as usual, was interesting reading. I must admit that I must be getting old as I completely missed the significance of the 50 years for my intake last year! I studied the 46B group photograph and tried very hard to match the faces to the names of those who attended, but couldn't match any - perhaps it would be possible for someone to help out in a future issue of OBAN. Having read about the time some

people spent in the gym, does anyone remember the winter of 1946-47? As far as I remember there were masses of snow and no heating - rumour had it that the rest of Arborfield Garrison had been sent home so that we could have their coke for heating. As I remember we spent the mornings on route marches and the afternoons in the gym. I unfortunately contracted rheumatic fever and was away for about 6 months, but was allowed to rejoin my intake on return, much to my relief - nobody wanted to be back squadded in those days.

I was very pleased to see the letter from 'Titch' Cowdrey in response to my photos in OBAN 9 and I have a couple more with other names none of which I have ever seen mentioned in OBAN. I well remember poor old Doug Foster burning his trousers, but I thought it happened in the barrack room, but then Doug did seem to have bad luck with smoking. I had a clean jankers record until my first smoking lot and it seemed never to stop. Does anyone remember a Provost Sgt Dransfield? Many a time I had to clean his buttons on jankers. That also reminds me of when I was discharged at SEE in 1971. I had to pay for a missing button-stick and no argument would persuade the QM staff otherwise, despite the fact that we had had 'no polish' buttons for years. I also 'lost' my 'jersey heavy wool', which I still have and use in this winter weather - one of the best couple of quid that I ever paid for 'lost' items. In closing, I would like to wish all AOBA members and especially the committee, an excellent and successful 1997.

(I had a word with the QM Staff - could they have their jersey back? - Ed)

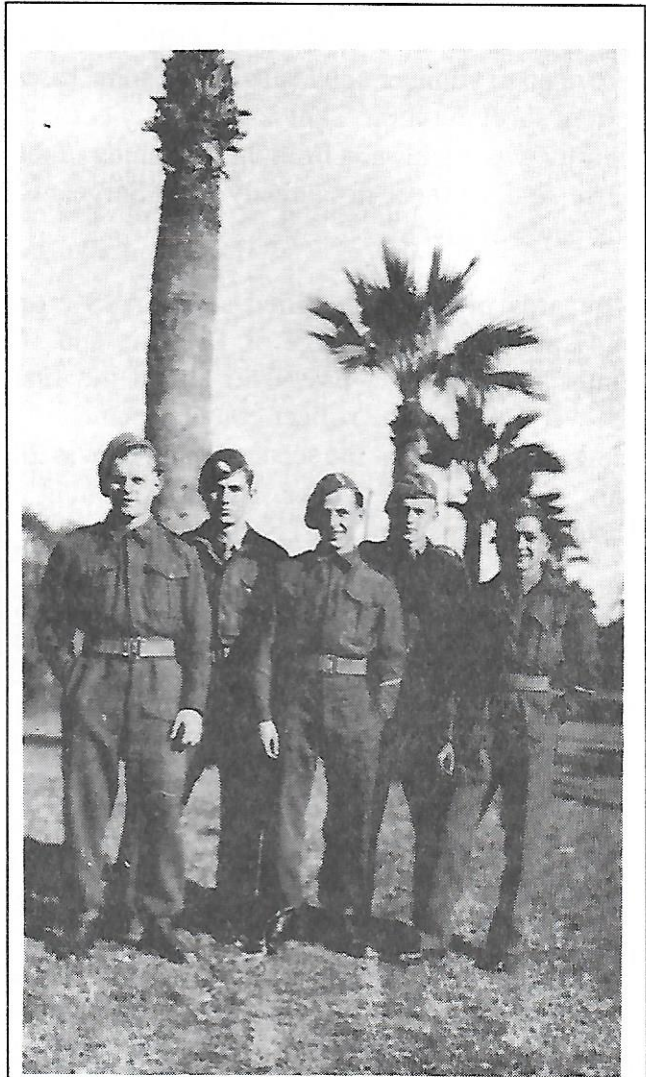
✍ Don Walker (45A) writes

I hope you had a Merry Christmas and best wishes for a prosperous year. Once again, a first class OBAN - interesting stories and reminiscences. I enclose a photograph in response to our 'new boy's' letter from Jess Pye, in OBAN 11, regarding where are they now!

I went out to east Africa with Maurice Burford (44B) on draft DLPLA together with Dandy

Hunter, Sam Salter and Paddy Moynon in January 1949 and the photograph, taken in Port Said on a day's shore leave clearly shows the Arborfield look!

While 'Bert' Burford was enjoying life at Mackinnon Road, I was roughing it down in Rhodesia - reference my article in OBAN 7. We met up again, if the old memory serves me, at FVRDE Chobham? I was with Bob McGrillan in the early 60s in Malaya.



The photograph, taken on 10 January 1949 by a street camera man, shows from left to right: Dandy Hunter, Paddy Moynon, Bert Burford, Sam Salter and Donald Walker.

(I just love those G-flogs - Ed).

Lawrence Nixon (April 42) writes

Responding to my very good friend Eric Cook's (Jan42) comments in the last issue regarding Tom Pearce's (Feb44) article on Armament Artificer Training in the early 1950s, I took the opportunity to once again approach REME archives to verify dates concerning myself. The fact is that No 2 Instrument Artificer Field Course took place between 7.10.47 and 27.7.48, just over 9 months duration! One has to remember that these were the first of the post-war courses and presumably were intended to fill the gap of demobilisation, hence were open to younger applicants and in some cases were of short duration. Tom is absolutely correct, seniority was established from the beginning of the course, and for those not already Staff Sergeants, back pay was given!

As regards myself, I qualified as a LASS'y on 1.4.47 at the ridiculous age of 19 years and 10 months; subsequently passed to attend the first post-war Instrument Artificer course, deemed too young so had to await the second, and thus was 20 years, 4 months and 5 days, before becoming a substantive Armament Staff Sergeant.

It is interesting to reflect that at Bailleu Barracks, this led to there being two Sergeants Messes, one for the permanent staff and the other for the 'students'. Those already holding Staff Sergeant rank before going on the course were not amused!

By the same token, the league table as it stands is a composite of LASS'y and Arm Arts. These should be either separated into two tables, or the LASS runners be excluded from the existing table.

In Tom's article, mention of CSM Harry Muckett brings back more recent memories when he retired to be a civilian working in the Sergeants Mess. He was a brilliant gardener, taking holidays to coincide with the big horticultural shows where he invariably won awards for everything he entered, particularly the longest parsnip which he grew in drain pipes placed vertically in the ground. It was only when I was invited to visit him in his garden near Shinfield that I discovered his 'secret' - pig manure! Not 'Muckett' for nothing, the garden was at least two feet higher than the surrounding

land with pure pig manure. It smelt dreadful, but produced fantastic results!

Walter Jobber (Oct43) stirred memories of the PTI greats. Alf Danahar was not, in my experience, a very nice person. He used us A/Ts as unwilling punch bags and then resorted to playing 'conkers' with the acorn shaped draw blind ends on one's head. Perhaps I was unlucky? Dennis Compton left Arborfield to head up the cricket team in India. Before that, Leslie Compton visited him and we were brought into contact with them both. Even Dennis could be somewhat ungracious if one took the ball off him in a 'friendly' football match.

Tony Head (46A) in his article of Reunion 96 mentions as an aside, consumption of 11 plates of porridge. The feeding arrangements during my boy service consisted of two six foot tables with the bottom table frequented by the 'jeeps' and the top table usually of those with 'G flogs'. Needless to say, two thirds of the food went to the top table. One of the exceptions was chocolate rice, (rice pudding with cocoa powder) of which, because of its unpopularity, I became apt at consuming vast quantities.

Ken Burren (Jan42) probably doesn't remember me, but I also experienced being sent on 'indefinite leave' when the AAS was taken over by the Canadians for 'D' Day, and then finishing up to six and a half weeks later at 3 BOD Donnington. We were converting Ford vehicle-mounted 40mm guns from automatic to manual control and preparing 150mm searchlights for the Russians. Sadly, we had to repeat these consignments frequently due to losses on the Murmansk convoy. The Americans and the civilian girls were something else.

Finally, whilst there are other OBAN entries I could comment upon, one of my colleagues might like to recall 'Smokey Joe's' and the 'Magpie and Parrot' pub. How about that for names from the past?

(Lawrence, if you care to research previous issues of OBAN, please feel free to convert the existing 'Tiffy' table into two - Ed)

✍ *June Northam (47A - Wife of!) writes*

When John suggested at the beginning that I might like to consider being OBAN's 'Girl Friday' I had visions of sun, sand, sea and sangria but before long there were times when I felt more like 'Girl Friday to Thursday' - with nothing more than the odd glass of home-made plonk to keep me going! However, as we gained experience in compiling the newsletter it became really interesting and enjoyable, made more so with the ever-increasing number of letters and contributions from AOBA members around the world. In response to the kind and generous comments published in OBAN 10, may I express my thanks and appreciation to Lt Col Nigel Moore and all members of the AOBA for the very kind gift of a watch presented to me at the last reunion. I really enjoyed the day. It was nice to meet old friends and many who, until then, I had known only by name and intake number. Watching the parade and chatting in the Sgts' Mess during lunch I was able to appreciate at first hand the significance to the members of belonging to an association such as the AOBA. My best wishes to the Association and OBAN.

✍ *Frank Webb (63C) writes*

Congratulations on another fine Newsletter. It was great to read all the news of the Reunion. I hope one day I will be able to attend one, assuming I am home from Nigeria. It was good to see that my request for information on the film 'Ten Feet Tall' is still raising interest. While I appreciate the comments of the vehicle mechanic who was around at the time saying he never heard of it, the majority of the technical side of the film as I recall was spent with the aircraft technicians of 63C as we were the first of such a course at Arborfield. Anyway, one day I hope that a copy of the film can be found. (*It has been - Ed*). All the very best for the New Year to everyone at Arborfield, including all the apprentices, past and present.

✍ *Pete Gripton (56B) writes*

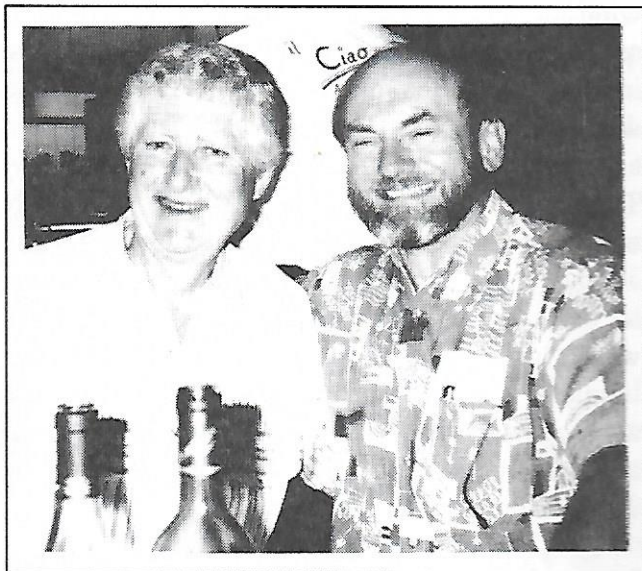
Down-under reunion. It was just about a week before my wife Joyce and I were due off on our

holiday trip to Australia. The phone rang one evening and a voice with a distinct 'Aussie' twang started to ask me questions in regard to my name and intake! At first I thought it must be one of my pals, knowing about the intended trip, trying to wind me up. But no, the caller identified himself as Tony Domoney of 56B and my thoughts turned immediately to the membership list at Arborfield, where the name A Domoney appeared with an address in Canberra, Australian Capital Territory. Tony then explained that he was over in the UK on a family visit and during a chat with an old pal, another ex-boy of a slightly earlier era than ours, he had been able to read the latest OBAN (10), which had contained my report on the 56B Reunion. Wishing to make contact with old friends and acquaintances, he had contacted John Northam and obtained my phone number - and here he was talking to me!!

It turned out that Tony was due to leave the UK the very next morning and that he was sorry that he missed the opportunity to meet someone from 56B on his visit. "Well Tony," I was able to say, "guess where I'll be this time next week." I then told him about our holiday plans. "First, we'll be staying up in Cairns for a few days, taking in the barrier reef and the rain forest and then we'll probably fly over your place on the way to Melbourne." (Readers may wish to consult a map of Australia at this point!) Tony seemed a bit confused at this and asked, "How come?" I was trying to steal a march on him here and told him that I knew he lived in Canberra. He replied that he used to live there, but he had moved across to Perth in Western Australia some 10 years previously and that my information was 'old hat'. But I was able to get back on track by telling him that after our stay in Melbourne, we would indeed be ending up in Perth for the last 3 weeks of our stay - after all, my dear old Mum lives there, along with one brother and one sister and all their respective families.

Well, the upshot of all this was that Tony was able to give me his address in Perth and a few weeks later Joyce and I enjoyed a splendid night out with Tony and his wife Heather at an Italian restaurant called 'Il Ciao', just down the street from where my Mum lives! We reminisced quite a lot and

managed to make great inroads into the aussie wine lake too, as can be seen from the photo - if you haven't tried Aussie wine, take my advice and start tonight - its pretty damned good!



It turned out that we only met up with Tony and Heather the once, as within a few days they were moving to - Zimbabwe! Just a little way off our return trip itinerary! However, Tony indicated that having finally made contact with a 56B ex-boy, he fully intended to try to attend the 1997 Reunion this coming October. Tony, I'm sure you'll read this well before then, so here's hoping you make it. Thanks for a great evening, good wishes to Heather and, as they say, "Good on yer, mate!"

(See also Tony Domoney's letter in this Issue. Tony, have you noticed that Ron Savage (39A) who writes in this Issue also lives in Zimbabwe? Bye the way, Peter, looking at my old Passing Out Parade programme for January 1957, I see listed an A/T P D Gripton of HQ Coy, as winning the Education Prize for Junior Division. Ring any bells? - Ed).

✍ *Charley Ayre (50B) writes*

I would like to thank you and all concerned with Issue 10 of OBAN. I've read and re-read it. I think it's most interesting and informative. Keep up the good work.

(Thanks Charley, always good to know we're appreciated. Please feel free to contribute some 50B memories! - Ed).

✍ *Chris Fussel (55A) writes*

Eggy Eggleton's (52B) letter in OBAN 10 stirred some memories. If you are reading this, Eggy, you were one of the more 'human' apprentice NCOs I ran across in the 1950s. I well remember your visits to old friends in A Company. Other names jangle through my head: Paul (Sludge) Sudler, 'Curly' Sharp, Ken Ainger (most 'grovel', i.e., smartest of all), Mike Costanzo, Paddy Vosper and Solly Joel (A/CSM). Certainly you didn't see permanent staff very often in 1955 - except in Workshops or at Education. Apprentice NCOs seemed to run the place, very often with some excess of zeal, but no real hard bullying like the disgraceful cases which, from time to time, get the present day Regular Army into the popular press. I met some of the god-like A/T NCOs later on, typically when I was a young subaltern MTO in RAOC and they were my attached VMs! There seemed to be no lasting hard feelings all round. I felt sorry for the ones who *didn't* make Arm Art - they got a bit fed up. Anyway, whatever they all taught me made the 'bullshit' aspects of Welbeck College and (partly) of RMA Sandhurst seem quite easy by comparison. So thanks all - perhaps it was not such a bad system in the old AAS after all. As a non REME man, I'm glad to see the old badge is back as well!

(Chris, another god-like Apprentice NCO that comes to mind of that era is 'Ginger' Dale. He was our room Corporal when we were in HQ Company in 1954 - Ed.)

✍ *L R (Jess) Pye (Oct43) writes*

Many thanks to all those who worked so hard to make Reunion 96 so enjoyable. I was very impressed by today's apprentices. One hears so many derogatory remarks about today's youth, not always true. They were so smart, courteous and polite to us that it made us feel quite at home. I can rest easy in my bed if the rest of the British Army comes anywhere near their standards. Well done!

DECEASED

It is with sadness and deep regret that the Association reports the deaths of the following:

On 8 June 1996, WO2(AQMS) John Phillips (Aug 76)

In July 1996, W A (Bill) White (42A)

On 26 October 1996, D (David) Isgrove (62C)

On 12 January 1997, T L (Tom) Pearce (44A)

OBITUARIES

Colonel R F D Legh OBE Late RA

Old Boys of the College will be saddened to hear of the death of Colonel Richard (Dick) Legh OBE who was the last non-REME Commandant of the College between November 1959 and October 1962. He passed away on 22 December 1996 at the age of 85.

Lt Col Nigel Moore

Tom Pearce (44A)

Tom Leslie or 'Honker', depending on when you knew him, died on 12 January, 1997. Tom was a 'Dukie' who joined the Army Technical School (Boys) in the 44A intake, passing out three years later as an armourer and accomplished euphonium player. After service as an armourer, including a tour as Armr/Sgt with 3 RTR in Hong Kong, he became one of the five members of 11 Arm Art (Gun) to successfully complete the course. After a tour as an instructor he decided to change disciplines and took an Arm Art (Radar) course. He then served as an Artificer Radar until his 12 year point when, mainly for family reasons, he left the Army. In civilian life he joined the Scientific Civil Service, initially with the Atomic Energy Commission at Aldermaston. He then moved to the European Aircraft Project and during trips to France and Germany taught himself French and adequate German. After working on the Challenger project at ROF Leeds, he came back to REME as head of the Engineering Support Division at Electronics Branch, Malvern, staying there until his retirement. During this time, as well as bringing up 3 children, he studied, through the HNC and endorsement route, and became an active member of the IEE. At one time he was chairman of the Hereford and Worcester Branch.

His retirement was not a 'feet up' time. When not caravanning with his wife Jean, he started and ran his local Neighbourhood Watch Committee, corresponded with the Duke of York and Arborfield Old Boys Association and attended their functions, but mainly exercised his skills as a craftsman in his workshop. The apprentice and artificer training plus the later electrical and electronic experience produced a tradesman capable of tackling any job and completing it in a way that would have gained the approval of those early fitting instructors, even 'Oily' Branville. One of his memorials is a rocking horse that would grace any nursery. Tom bore his final illness in his normal 'no fuss' manner and those of us who knew him have lost a friend of the 'old school'. He took his responsibilities seriously, had little time for soft options and sociology degrees but tempered it all with a dry sense of humour. Our sympathies go to his family who have lost a loving husband, father and grandfather.

Peter Darston (43A)

David 'Taffy' Isgrove (62C)

It is with deep regret that I inform the Association of the sudden death of David 'Taffy' Isgrove (62C) on 26 October 1996 of a heart attack whilst at home. 'Taffy' will be remembered as one who thoroughly enjoyed his reunion weekends; he had a good memory of our days as apprentices. He will be much missed by those of us who knew him. Taffy's wife, Mary, has given permission to inform the Association of this sad event.

Steve Kerr (62C)

DONATIONS

The Association acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

Ades T J (45A) £5.00
Austen B W E (42A) £2.00
Ayre C (50B) £5.00
Barnes L V (43B) £10.00
Burren K (42A) £5.00
Burt G R (47A) £2.00
Clements B R (50B) £5.00
Comrie M (48A) £1.00
Conway B R (42A) £5.00
Cooper C E (52A) £10.00
Davis P (38A) £8.00
Devey M (60B) £15.00
Fendick J (45A) £30.00
Gilbert B (42A) £20.00
Giles K B (42B) £10.00
Gutteridge P A (58A) £10.00

Harold G (46A) £10.00
Hipkin D F (45A) £2.00
Howes D J B (J38B) £5.00
Ivens R A (54A) £20.00
Jobber W J E (43B) £15.00
Knox G (55B) £5.00
Larby M B (42C) £5.00
Packman J T (39A) £9.00
Sauvary R A M (42A) £5.00
Savage R C (39A) £15.00
Silby J (B38) £5.00
Stephenson W (39A) £5.00
Tanner D J (88B) £5.00
Walker D (45A) £5.00
Webb F M (63C) £20.00
Wells W J H (42B) £5.00
Winchester A G (42A) £5.00

Rowcroft Sergeants' Mess Refurbishment Programme

At the 33rd Annual General Meeting of the Arborfield Old Boys Association, held within the Sgts Mess of the Army Apprentice College, Arborfield on the Weekend of the 5/6 Oct 1997, the gathered audience generously agreed to lend financial assistance to the Sgts Mess refurbishment programme.

The original proposal of a donation of £500.00 was quickly overturned by the generous gathering of ex-apprentices, who obviously appreciate the desperate needs of the Sgts Mess. After an explanation of the work already carried out and the proposed work for the future, described by the RSM in elaborate detail, the gathered company quickly voted on a counter proposition, proposed by Mr Schofield to double the amount to a generous £1000.00, which brought a smile to the RSM's face, the sight of which is seldom seen.

The amount was agreed and voted in a true and proper manner and recorded for posterity in the minutes of the meeting. I did hear questions asked after the splendid dinner we all attended, if Mr Schofield was related in any way to the RSM.

I would like to take this opportunity to squash any rumours that Dave and I are related in any way.

The generous grant will be used to assist with the purchase of new furniture for the newly decorated Ante Room. The new furniture is due for delivery towards the end of November. It was a very pleasurable occurrence for me to witness the solid support afforded the Sgts Mess by the ex-apprentices of the AOBA - they all, to a man, lent their support to the proposal. This leads me to the conclusion that they all hold the Sgts Mess in very high esteem. When you consider the wide selection of personalities that attend the AGM, ranging from ex-boys of the 1940s, through to ex-boys of the 1970s and later, one thing that they all agreed on without hesitation or disagreement was to help the Sgts Mess to the fullest extent. It gives one a warm feeling to know that such support is still available within the 'Old Boys'.

Once again, on behalf of the Sgts Mess, very many thanks.

Roy Mathews WO1(RSM)

NOTICE ON UNSUITABILITY OF SUBS PAYMENT BY DIRECT BEBIT

Gentlemen,

After consultation with the Garrison Regimental Admin Officer and the representative of the Royal Bank of Scotland it is thought that this method is only viable if ALL members use it. This would call for a change in the Association's rules to make it compulsory. Even then, there will be those who will ignore the ruling for whatever reason and this could result in a loss of membership by default. If this method were introduced and then not ALL members complied, this could result in bank charges being raised against the Association which would then have to be paid from Association funds. With the unlikelihood of ALL members agreeing to this scheme it would appear that this is not the best way of claiming subscriptions from members.

Treasurer AOBA, Gillian Apperley Capt. (Retd).



ASSOCIATION ITEMS.

The following items may be ordered from the Membership Secretary:

Item 1. Princess Marina College - A Brief History 1939-1992.

This 24-page illustrated A5 booklet is offered FREE to members.

Item 2. Association Ties.

These terylene ties have a single motif incorporating the College Gates in gold with scroll and letters AOBA below.

They are available in royal blue, maroon and green (note that green ties are only available while stocks last).

Please state colour preference when ordering. Price £5.50 each incl P&P, UK only. Please note that postage on overseas orders will increase as appropriate.

Please make cheques for these items payable to: Central Bank Army Apprentices College (OBA Account).

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