

ISSUE 14

SUMMER 1998

O B A N



ARBORFIELD OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

ARBORFIELD OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

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

Mr Peter D Gripton (56B)

Mr 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 14. Well, this is the first Summer-only edition of OBAN. This special 'supplementary' edition has come about in an effort to catch up on publicising those contributions kindly presented by the membership over the last year or two. This means, of course, that I will no longer have a store of articles to dip into for future editions, so your continued contribution input is now more important than ever! I also repeat my plea for contributions from members of the 'younger' intakes - the '60s, '70s, '80s and even the '90s.

Please continue to write about the past, not necessarily all about the School, but some adult service experiences as well. I believe that to keep the OBAN alive, we need to cover a wide variety of subjects, which includes some more up to date experiences from the younger element of the membership.

As you will see, from time to time extracts are taken from The Craftsman and The Army Apprentice (the current magazine of the School) to try to make OBAN a little less 'enclosed'.

My apologies for the small font size used in the Notices section, but there was so much information to go in, I had no choice!

OBAN will only survive with your help, so please continue to write me letters on all subjects and 'bones of contention'. It's your magazine!

Contributions received for anonymous publication must be supplied with the writer's name and address, if only for reference purposes, otherwise its no go.

If possible, it would be a great help if contributors would send their contributions on disk, preferably Word Perfect 5.1 (DOS version) or MS Word (DOS or Windows version). If you don't have access to a computer or typewriter, then of course I will accept clear, hand-written contributions. If your contribution doesn't appear in the next expected issue of OBAN, it will certainly appear in a later issue - don't be disheartened!

All contributions that I receive will eventually be published, subject to editing - it all depends on how the final layout of a particular issue turns out as to which article or letter I select. So please keep 'em coming!

Contributions for OBAN 15 to be received by 16 October 1998, except of course, the Reunion input. Talking of which I still need someone to write the Reunion report.

Brian Hornsey (54A)

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Attempting to produce my first message as the new Chairman of the Arborfield Old Boys Association after only 4 working days in command of the College has been something of a tall order. However, Lieutenant Colonel Nigel Moore gave me a tremendously efficient and thorough handover, for which I am extremely grateful. As you might no doubt expect, I have been left with a clear impression of a well run, adaptable and above all, happy establishment. Lieutenant Colonel Nigel's tenure saw a period of great change and it is to the very great credit of all the staff at the College that so much has been achieved with so little fuss and with the College's high morale intact.

As a sapper, service at Arborfield comes as a new experience. A military surveyor by background, I have been tremendously lucky in my Army service to date and I have had some wonderful postings around the globe. Although Arborfield does not score highly in the sunshine stakes, it is clearly a good place to live and work and I am looking forward to my tour here immensely.

The new Army Apprentices College, providing training for the Royal Engineers, the Royal Signals, the Royal Logistic Corps and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, is now well established. With up to 650 apprentices at any one time currently completing the new 8 month foundation course, the College is now running at full capacity. As you know, it is an aspiration to move towards a one year course in the future, although when exactly that will be possible is not yet clear.

The new course currently offers apprentices basic Military Training, Vocational Education and Leadership & Initiative Training, leading to nationally recognised civilian qualifications. The first apprentices to benefit from this new integrated foundation course will pass out in December 1998 as trained soldiers, with a handful of the new National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in their kitbags. Meanwhile, we are running a condensed version of the new course for those apprentices passing out in August 1998. As a short term

measure to help out the wider Army training organisation, we also have a platoon of Infantry with us under training, following the new course until December 1998. As you might expect, this has thrown up some interesting and sometimes surprising new challenges to our staff.

With the technical complexity of the modern Army at an ever accelerating rate, there is no doubt that it is an exciting time for apprentice training and the future for the College looks extremely bright and positive. I look forward to meeting you all in October 1998 at the annual reunion.

Lt Col Jim Mitchell RE

Departure of Lt Col Nigel Moore MBE REME from the Army Apprentices College

The staff and apprentices at the Army Apprentices College bade a fond farewell to Lt Col Nigel Moore on Friday 19 June 1998. In a tribute to the dedication of the outgoing Commanding Officer, the entire strength of the College lined the route from the Headquarters Building to the Main Gates. Lt Col Moore then took his leave of the College, being applauded out by the ATs and piped out by the College Pipe Major, Sergeant MacIntyre of the Highlanders. A REME antique vehicle was acquired for the purpose of transporting the Commanding Officer out of the College, the speed of which gave him some time to reflect on what were, hopefully, two rewarding years for him.

Whilst at the helm, Lt Col Moore has seen through an immense period of change at the College. When he took over, the 'two year apprenticeship' was still running. The College had a different name on a different site and consisted solely of REME apprentices.

Clearly, the Army Apprentices College has undergone a sea change since then, the smoothness of which can largely be attributed to Lt Col Moore. It cannot be denied that his period in command has been a turbulent and busy one. However, through this he was able to instil in his staff his vision for the future of the College; that of being the best training establishment in the ATRA. The new course now includes CMS(R) coupled with military and technical duties, condensed into a 28 week period. This results in a busy, but professional and rewarding life for staff and apprentices, who now come from a multitude cap badges, mainly AGC, REME, R SIGNALS, RE, RLC and Infantry.

Lt Col Moore leaves the College to take up a Staff appointment at Andover and is replaced by Lt Col JH W Mitchell RE. With the momentum built up over the last two years, the new Commanding Officer can be assured that the College is set for a bright future.



Lt Col N Moore leaves the College, in a REME Museum vehicle

**From the Honorary Secretary
Major Bob Hambly (64A)**

Just a few words from 'The Jeep'. A warm welcome to our new Chairman and Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Jim Mitchell, Royal Engineers. With a welcome, of course, it inevitably means that someone has been posted and in our case, Lt Col Nigel Moore has moved on to another appointment. On behalf of the Management Committee and the Old Boys our heartfelt thanks for your stewardship during your tenure as Commanding Officer. We take this opportunity of formally wishing you and your family the best of health and good fortune in your new post. Keep in touch.

As I write, 156 Old Boys have registered their intention to attend all or part of the Reunion weekend activities. Thank you for your promptness. Please remember that the list closes on 1 September. After that date, I will be sending out the details to all that have applied, so please be patient. As the Reunion looms, I have a volunteer for Standard Bearer but would still like to hear from someone moved spiritually enough to read the prayers on the Sunday morning. Any volunteers? The good news is that there will be NO chicken on the menu for the Reunion dinner and our speakers will be requested to limit their oratory performance. Please send your applications in as soon as possible - do it now!

If you want an AOBA tie I have a new stock, they will be available over the Reunion weekend or from me if you want one before that time. Increased production costs dictate that they are now £7.50 plus postage & packing.

You will read about the video; it's really very good and will make a great heirloom (for lesser mortals) - leave it in your will (to someone who needs sharpening up) or as the ultimate alternative Christmas present, give it to the wife, partner and/or girlfriend. I thoroughly recommend the video to you.

Essay Competition. The Management Committee have decided to organise an annual Old Boys' Essay Competition; the prize will be either £50.00 cash or the equivalent amount in expenses towards attending the annual AOBA Reunion. The topic for the inaugural competition will be 'Memories - The Army Apprentice'. Essays are to be between 1000 and 3000 words, but if a particularly well written essay should fall outside the guide lines, then it will still be considered. We would like entries to be as amusing as possible - no names will be changed to protect the guilty (presumed innocent). It is the intention of the Committee to aim the competition at specific groups of intake years (for example, the 60s, but on our first attempt it will be an all comers competition. The aim of the Committee is to bring alive those amusing

**From the Membership Secretary
Peter Gibson**

It is 1 July 1998 and 550 members have paid their subscriptions. This is not too bad, but still 33 fewer than the number who paid in 1997 - despite strenuous efforts on my part. Most of the defaulters are guilty of bad-memory syndrome; either they forgot to pay when asked or forget to tell us that they have moved house. You, of course, are not guilty. Only those who have paid are receiving this edition of OBAN, but please make sure that you do not succumb to bad-memory syndrome in the future.

To insure against such a terrible event, why not provide the Association with a Standing Order (if you have a UK bank account). Your subs are then paid automatically, without any risk to you or your bank account and if you forget to tell us that you have moved house, your bank will forward our letters on to you. What could be easier!

Don't be confused between a Standing Order and a Direct Debit. With a Standing Order the amount paid from your account and the frequency can only be changed by you.

I still need you to help find both missing members (as listed at the back of this OBAN) and new members. The winner in the 1997/1998 'find a new member' competition is Tom Lennox (50B) who has provided me with 20 names and addresses, many of whom have joined the Association. Keep up the good work Tom!

Reaction to my proposal for a Membership Directory has been extremely positive. If you have any comments - and will not be at the AGM this year - send them to Bob Hambly before the Reunion weekend.

Peter Gibson

anecdotal 'apprentice' incidents that are often talked about between apprentices and *ex-apprentii* and have them recorded for posterity, thus providing the Corps archives with a fund of information and detail about life in the School or College throughout its history, written by the people who experienced it first hand. You do not have to be a member of the AOBA to compete - to qualify, all you need is to have gone through one of the many forms of Apprenticeship at either Arborfield, Jersey or Carlisle. The winning entry will be published in OBAN.

The panel of judges will be: Senior Membership Representative - Bill Pusey (46A), Editor OBAN - Brian Hornsey (54A), former Honorary Secretary - Lt Col (Retd) Larry Le Var (47A - he likes a good read), and current Honorary Secretary - Major Bob Hambly (64A). The judges' decision is final. We cannot undertake to return original manuscripts unless a stamped addressed envelope is enclosed with your entry. All entries to have reached the Honorary Secretary by Friday 18 September 1998.

Bob Hambly (64A)

SOME REMINISCENCES
(as they come to mind)

By Ron Savage (39A)

My reminiscences are not in historical order but merely memories that I have put down as they come to mind.

The 'Founding Fathers' of Arborfield may recall three of four FANY ambulance drivers attached to the camp. At first they were billeted in the camp hospital but were afterwards housed in a proper house that overlooked the School. When they were in this house somebody gave them an old wreck of a motorcycle, absolutely rusted solid. I had developed a crush on the youngest (a Miss Pool(e)) - a gorgeous blonde, about 19/20 years old.

Being a youth of only 16 years, I merely gazed from afar and when asked to get the motorbike in running order jumped at the chance to bask in her aura - Oh callow youth! Teenagers of today must surely curl up at such a statement and yet one wonders whether they have lost a lot that we had with the 'mystery' of the female sex.

I must cross swords with those who say that there was no garrison entertainment. I clearly recall a garrison cinema where the operator had only one record (it seemed) and only played one side of it. I have only to hear the opening bars of *Tuxedo Junction* and I am immediately transported back mentally to those far off days.

My family, having been stationed at Aldershot in 1935, we had friends there and I used to cycle over every Sunday after Church Parade and back in the evening. No, matter how hard I tried I could never do the trip in less than one hour ten minutes. Still, I suppose that wasn't bad con-

sidering we were only allowed out in full SD with a gas mask slung over the left shoulder! How I perspired in the summer.

After serving in the 11th AA Workshop at Wednesfield, Wolverhampton, I was sent to a small workshop at Truro. I was only there for six weeks as all six ex-rats were suddenly posted away to the workshop near Keynsham (not 1943). The only chap I can remember was a Peter King, ex-Chepstow I believe.

Being ex-boys' service, we were supposed to be keeping up our education for the Army First Class exam., as a consequence of which we went to a school in Bristol, ostensibly all day, but as far as the school knew we were there for mornings only. Lunch was taken in a driver's 'caff' nearby, then off to the cinema for the afternoon. That may have had some bearing on our failing to sit the exams, as well as the fact that we were posted here and everywhere.

From Keynsham I went to a workshop at Charminster, near Dorchester, and from there to Willand village, Tiverton Junction near Culmpton - a lovely place.

My sole claim to fame there being the winning of the two heats of a 440 yards race. Another lad and myself put our names down for the Mile and Half-Mile, but as we were the only contestants, these two races were cancelled and we were put into the 440 yards race. Owing to the size of the field available, we had to make two 220 yard laps. We two led the rest all the way in each lap and each time I was able to open up and pip the other lad to the post.

I still get the same feeling today when I put my foot down and leave the other car standing! My reward was a £1.00 Savings Bond which

was converted into fluidity as soon as possible

After a couple of months we were delighted to have a contingent of ATS attached to us. Naturally, they wanted 'to be numbered among the lads', so we told them that they would have to sink a half pint on scrumpy in one go - ooh what b.....ds we were.

To anyone who knows not 'scrumpy' - can there be such? - it is the local name for rough cider, the operative word being *rough*. The poor girls never knew what hit them. We had quite a job getting them back to camp - 'motherless' wasn't the word for it!

There was a Forces canteen in the nearby village of Culmpton and we were 'quids in'. We were surrounded by farms and as each farmer had an egg quota to supply weekly to the rationing Board, he naturally gave his figures based on winter production. Come summer, the hens worked overtime, so the surplus eggs were donated to the canteen. If going on leave, we just mentioned it to the staff and we went home with a dozen very welcome pieces of hen fruit - this at a time when eggs were rationed to one a month - if lucky.

For some reason or other, possibly to keep me out of the way, I had been put in the small room that doubled as the Diesel injector repair office.

We eventually had a Diesel generator (mobile) sent in with the fault, 'blowing out oil'. No less than four times this 'thing' checked over and nary a fault found. On the receipt of a fifth G1045 it was decided that I have a look at it *in situ* as perhaps the altitude was causing it to play up. Accordingly, another chap and I wended our way to the gun site and reported to the ATS Sergeant I/C

generators, who showed us the off-
fending equipment. A quick check
found nothing wrong except that the
sump oil was a bit black. Checking
the daily Issues book we noticed that
the ration for that day had not yet
been issued. We pointed this out to
the sergeant, who called 'Mary' or
whoever. Mary duly turns up with
the daily pinta.

By now we had the engine running
and were intrigued to watch her un-
screw the wing nut, remove the air
cleaner cover the pour the oil down
the *inlet manifold*, which led to
much revving and spewing out of
black smoke! "There", said the ATS
Sergeant, "you see what I mean?"

At least we had had a morning out
in the beautiful countryside as con-
solation. Whenever I see an advert
for a Lister generator of whatever
design, I have a quiet chuckle to
myself.

From Tiverton Junction I went to
Weyhill, near Andover and event-
ually on to Mill Hill where we (22nd
Advance Base Workshop) were for-
ming up at 10 Command Work-
shops. We worked on the old duplex
drive 'swimming' tanks - repairing
and waterproofing them.

It always irked me that the civilians
alongside us with whom we worked,
were sworn to secrecy whereas we
were THREATENED with dire
penalties for the same offence. We
had a German refugee with us and
had a few lessons in basic German -
the foremost phrase being 'Do you
have a wrist watch?' Naughty
naughty!

The doodlebugs (V1s) started com-
ing over at that time. I well remem-
ber one occasion when one was
overhead. As usual, everyone
waited to see if it would go over or
the engine cut out, which meant it
was on the way down. This one cut

out. I rolled over from my bottom
bunk and I swear the chap on the top
bunk hit the deck before I did! We
were very worried because there
were two very important targets
nearby - the Adam & Eve pub and
the WREN's depot. Luckily both
escaped, although a couple of win-
dows in the pub were damaged.

Talking of the depot, this was where
the girls came straight from civvy
street and were given six weeks
basic training before being allowed
out. There was a very nice TOC H
club nearby and one day, I was read-
ing in the lounge when the door
burst open and a husky voice ex-
claimed, "Look girls, MEN!" With-
out stopping to close my book I was
out and up the stairs to the Men Only
room quicker than lightening. I re-
ally was a bit green in those days.

In late August, when once the tu-
mult and the shouting had died
down we went across the Channel.

We spent our first night in an open
field, having marched there and ar-
rived at about 11pm. On arrival, we
were told that 'lover there' (a vague
wave of the hand encompassing
some 180 degrees) was unlimited
char at all hours of the day. Four of
us got together, placed our ground-
sheets in the appropriate place and
shared our blankets between us. We
only had one apiece which meant
two under and two over, the only
way we could get halfway warm.
Strangely enough, for August the
night was quite cool. We were
awake very early and as soon as it
was light we folded our blankets
etc., dug out our mugs and went in
search for Shangri-la of char - no
luck. Eventually, we spotted a tiny
tot of a lad on the back of a huge
Percheron farm horse.

(A Percheron is a breed of draught
horse, originally raised in Perche,
France - 'know-all' Ed.)

We conferred together - who could
speak French other than myself? -
nobody, and mine was of the 'plume
de ma tante' variety. Eventually,
after much cogitating I managed to
string together, "Garçon, Ici!" The
garçon duly ici'd and we gazed at
one another. Eventually, after more
mental strain, "Ou est le thé?" "Par
Là", he replied with another vague
180 degree arc.

Just then, coming out from a dip in
the field we saw a chap carrying a
tea bucket. Tally Ho! Down we
went at a great rate of knots only to
be told that "This is for the Guard.
You get yours at 0700hrs." So much
for inside info. I've never trusted it
since.

After breakfast we waitedand
we waited. Oh yes, we waited until
nearly noon. Eventually transport
arrived and we wended our way to
Cormelles, just south of what was
left of Caen.

We took over a French canning fac-
tory and together with 20 Advance
Base Workshop set up shop repair-
ing tanks from the battle of the Fa-
laise gap. And thereby hangs a tale
- we had jerry POWs as labourers
taking away the sheets of armour
plating as it was removed it from
each tank. They complained that it
was too heavy and they must have
more food. "Bl...dy master race", I
muttered and showed them I could
carry a piece on my own. Oh boy! I
have regretted ever since.

The next day the MO diagnosed *Fi-
brositis* and treated me accordingly.
Years later in Nairobi I developed
an acute pain in my lower right thigh
that was eventually diagnosed as a
slipped disc, dating back to a mo-
ment of foolishness in Normandy in
1944 - of such things history is
made!

While at Mill Hill, prior to going to

Normandy, we had formed a couple of 'reclamation sections', the thinking being that until we captured a suitable port, all equipment, transport, ammunition etc., had to come ashore via the Mulberry Harbours off the coast of Normandy.

The question was, which had priority, ammunition or transport? A catch 22 situation. The answer was our formation; our destiny was to roam the countryside looking for derelict (or abandoned) vehicles from which we could reclaim working parts, thus freeing the Mulberry Harbours for the landing of ammunition.

Incidentally, the term 'abandoned' was sometimes interpreted VERY loosely and it was not unknown for an RASC driver to disappear for an hour or so about his unlawful business, only to find on his return that his truck would not start as several important parts had gone astray!

One day when we were stationed at Eindhoven, attached to 30 Corps Troop Workshops we went back over the frontier to a Dutch village. (No evil intent - we had been on recce, incidentally finding a back-loading point where the Staff Sergeant in charge was known to one of our crew.) Back to the village - we had just started opening our tins of Maconochie's M & V, when we found ourselves surrounded by some members of the local 'pulchritude brigade'.

During the general chat-up, it transpired that there was a village hop that evening to which we were cordially invited. Nothing loth we finished our meal, made our way back to Eindhoven and reported to the workshop officer that we had found a supply of parts, but must get back urgently, lest some black marketeer or other beat us to it. It would mean staying out all night of course.

"Good Chaps, away you go!"

It didn't occur to him to ask why we were going out in best battledress, bulled to the eyebrows on what should have been a dirty job. Well, there *are* different meanings to the word 'dirty'.

We returned to the village, had a smashing evening with the local families, vying for the honour of putting us up for the night. Up early next morning to go to our newly found supply of parts. Oh Horrors! The bl.dy Ford WOT Six would not start. We just about sweated blood before she behaved herself and we went like the clappers to the back-loading point, removed various parts that were more convenient and beetled back to Eindhoven. "Good work, lads," said the WO, "and take the day off." Virtue rewarded.

From Eindhoven the workshop moved to the little town of Geldrop and we were there when Jerry made his breakthrough in the Ardennes sector, held by the Yanks. Unkind rumour had it that half of them were in hospital with a 'full house' and the other half were in places where they could get it.

The section had a 180lb tent for accommodation and I can see it now in my mind's eye with the half dozen of us dug in all round and me fondly cuddling a PIAT anti-tank weapon. As the use of this was restricted to a range of about 100 yards I was one very unhappy lad and no one was more relieved than I to be told to stand down as the situation was now stable.

The 180lb tent was to prove my undoing. Us poor squadies were sleeping in the ice cold workshops while the more gently bred people were billeted out. This was a challenge I could not ignore. Within a matter of days my mate and I not

only had our feet under the proverbial table, but our feet in warm beds - ALONE I might add.

Letters were of course subject to censorship, but there was what was known as a 'green envelope' which was printed in green and you could write a letter and post it in the green envelope with the chance that it might be censored, but was usually not. Otherwise, you could write up to five letters and put them in the envelope which would go to the Base censor as opposed to the Unit Censor. This is where I slipped up.

I wrote SIX letters in each of which I mentioned my sleeping arrangements, put five in the green envelope left the other one for the Unit Censor, forgetting what I had written.

Oh dear, what cads some people are! Instead of keeping it to himself, he spoke to the wrong quarter and I was posted back before Christmas!! I used to wonder if he treated family letters in the same way.

The thought frequently crosses my mind that this might have had something to do with the fact that I went right through the war without once getting promotion, not even local, acting unwanted, uncared for, Lancejack! True, I was eventually granted my substantive Lance Corporal stripe in August, back dated to my 21st birthday when it was due.

I won many a bet on the question of the rank of SUBSTANTIVE Lance Corporal being the proper designation.

I could go on and on but my index fingers are getting tired (*not to mention mine - Ed*) and I reckon your readers must be too. I will therefore call it a day.

THE WAY IT WAS **- Trooping East**

By Bryan Adams (Oct42)

The following account is a reminder of the way very many Arborfield ex-apprentices would have experienced their first troopship conveyance to the declining Empire after the 1939-45 War. Prior to these days of instant communication and fast aircraft, conventional trooping was a rather leisurely progress along the old Empire routes. Transit time was measured in weeks rather than hours and posting duration was anticipated to be years rather than months. It is hoped that this narrative will arouse memories in our older old boys and that our younger members will find some interest in the comparison between 'then and now'.

In 1948, the United Kingdom was a drab and almost bankrupt nation. Rationing shortages and social hardship were accepted with a resignation borne of the long years of conflict.

Overseas it was a period of rising nationalism, and British troops were engaged in endless problems in Africa, the Middle East and the Far East.

Against this background I found myself as Unit Armourer to the then 3 Central Workshops (Havannah Barracks), Bordon. My first 'independent command' of a fully equipped and purpose built workshop within which it was possible to duplicate the exacting standards of the ATS(Boys). Never again did I come across such a fine little facility. Most would have said that I had fallen on my

feet. The workload was negligible and everyone congenial.

The Sergeants' Mess even took me as their guest in their outing to the Epsom Derby that year. However, I wished to escape another cold winter and volunteers were required for the Far East.

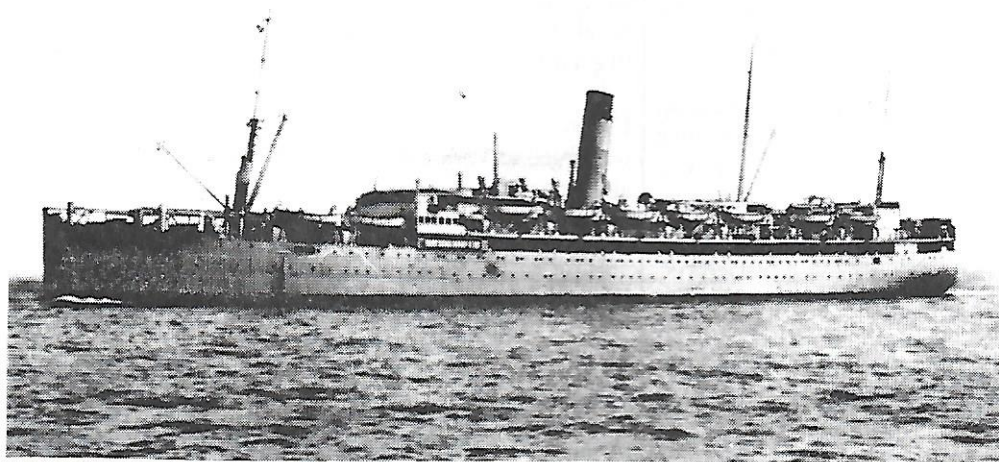
The Malayan Peoples Anti-British Army (MPABA) had just commenced their insurgency and that interest combined with a warm climate seemed a better proposition than Bordon. My offer to volunteer was taken up with alacrity and in no time I was inoculated, given 16 days embarkation leave and a travel warrant to the REME Depot which was then located some miles outside Leeds at Otley.

The Depot was a miserable war time

also served to keep everyone warm. It was bitterly cold and fuel for the cast iron stoves was in desperate short supply. My indelible memory of Otley was of those early low temperatures.

In due course, my FARELF draft was called forward, bussed into Leeds and then entrained for Liverpool via Manchester. It rained solidly all the way.

At Liverpool we found ourselves shepherded onto the landing stage to which was tied *HMT* (His Majesty's Transport) *Lancashire*. This was a single funnel steamer of about 9000 tons, built around 1917 and low in the water. It had been partially modernised over the years and was fitted with three-tier staterooms (metal bed frames which were folded up during the day), but ventilation still depended upon wind scoops.



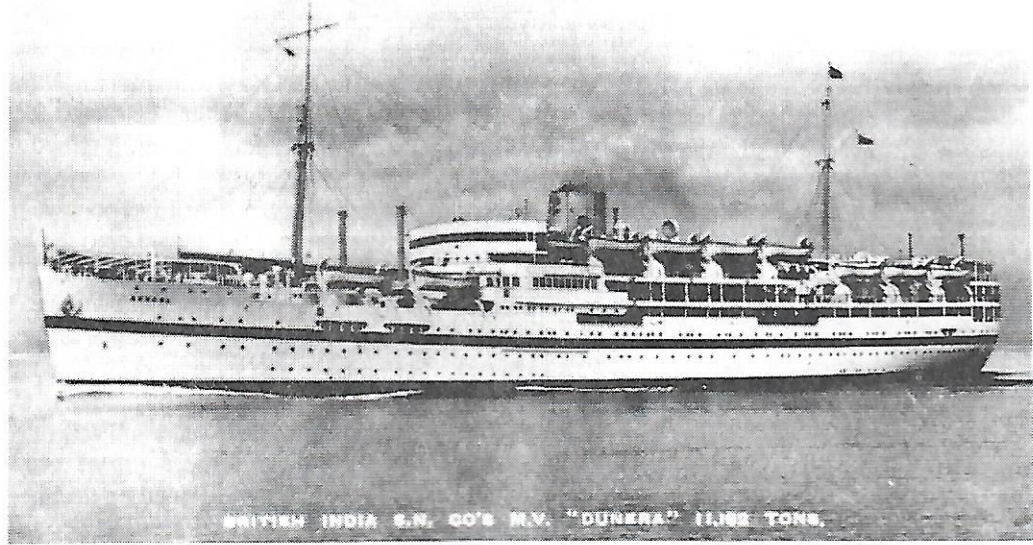
HMT Lancashire

huddled camp in parkland close to the river wharf. Here, the usual preparations were in hand for collecting together drafts for various destinations, kitting out appropriate to the destined theatre, inoculations for those who somehow had not been prepared and the occasional lecture. However, waiting time had to be passed and this was usually in the form of route marches around the superb hill country. This

For the first time I climbed unsteadily up a gangplank whilst fully loaded with webbing equipment and kitbag, a load increased by the need for tropical clothing and a lightweight blanket in addition to our home service issue! I had never been close to a ship before and once aboard I paced out the width of deck and thought how small this ship was to take several hundred people all the way to Singapore.

I had always believed that ocean-going ships were much bigger. Anyway,

I dumped my kit on a top berth, thinking this was a preferred option and removed my ammunition boots - boots were never worn on board owing to the potential hazard of slipping on companion ways and of damaging timber decking.



British India S.N. CO'S M.V. Dunera

Within a couple of hours the ship was fully loaded and quietly tugged into the mid-Mersey, where the engine vibration announced that we were under way, heading for the Irish Sea.

A tour of the ship to get one's bearing and discover the essential services, like the heads (toilets), wash and shower areas, dining facilities, the ship's tiny canteen-cum-shop, and the designated emergency assembly point (all passengers were given a card indicating their troopdeck and boat-station), didn't take much time. Immediately noticeable to a landlubber was the absence of any flat decking - all surfaces seemed to slope one way or the another.

There was no military unit on board. The passengers were a mixture of drafts from all three services with the addition of a number of dependent families. Here it should be noted that soldiers and families were strictly segregated.

At the mouth of the Mersey most people watched the Pilot being dropped with the ship under way and then hung about to catch a last glimpse of land as we headed into the Irish Sea with, no doubt, a diversity of personal thoughts. Not all, and particular National Servicemen, would have voluntarily left England for

a somewhat uncertain destination.

As soon as we reached the open sea, the swell increased and the weather deteriorated until the ship pitched and rolled like a roller coaster.

I soon discovered that the *Lancashire* was noted for its inherent motion and its ability to induce sea sickness. I also found out that I was no sailor. I recollect that I lived on dry biscuits from the canteen until we passed Gibraltar and I had acquired my sea legs.

A naval rating advised that the way to suppress sea sickness was to walk the deck fore and aft. This I did endlessly and the advice was good. I could watch the bow and stern rise and fall with equanimity, but boat-stations was a great trial in the early days.

To stand on a rolling deck watching green seas advancing and retiring whilst a solid life preserver is restricting the chest is not a pleasant experience! The inspecting Ship's Officer would always notice a loosely tied preserver and pull it tight enough to squeeze the air out of the lungs.

In rough weather, sea water was piped into the deck gutters for those poor souls who just could not hold on to their

stomachs. Fortunately, I always managed to avoid this indignity. One soon understood the signs of deteriorating weather. A heavy swell was accompanied by water piped into the deck gutters. When the crew closed all ports one knew rough seas were expected, and when all troops were ordered below decks and safety ropes erected for deckhands, one knew a real blow was on the way.

Life on a trooper really revolved around eating, sleeping and domestic essentials. The greatest hardship was the lack of fresh water. Washing, shaving and managing personal laundry in salt water is not recommended. Although we were all issued with salt water soap at the Depot, it was almost impossible to make it lather.

The food was varied, adequate and of good quality and this could always be topped up with biscuits, chocolate and the like from the canteen. Cigarettes were duty free and plentiful and never sold in less than tins or boxes of fifty. Postcards and stamps could be purchased for posting at the next port of call.

The ship's tannoy system broadcast a daily news bulletin to keep us in touch with world affairs. There was a daily

sweepstake at noon on how far the ship had run during the previous seven hours. A good day would perhaps be three hundred and ten miles. A poor one down to maybe two hundred and sixty miles - not exactly a greyhound of the seas.

Once into the Mediterranean and warmer weather, all changed from our battledress to our olive (or jungle) green attire. As this was new ex-stock and had been jammed into kitbags, it was a pretty miserable looking outfit. Proper laundering and starching was just not possible. However, with the warmer weather most of our time was spent on deck with just a pair of shorts, endeavouring to get some colour into our white bodies and legs.

Skin cancer hadn't been thought of then. Our main thought was to avoid the taunts of the troops along the Suez canal with their cries of "Get your knees brown!"

Washing was tied to the ship's rails in order to dry, although it all had to be removed when approaching port - probably the Master didn't want his vessel to look like a gypsy caravan.

With higher temperatures, below decks in the *Lancashire* became very oppressive and most troops then took to sleeping in the open under the stars. Besides more air, there was one other great benefit to me.

I had taken a top bunk thinking it best. However, the ship's racking carrying service cables, pipes etc., was within inches when lying on the bunk and the ship was full of

cockroaches which made full use of the highway. As I didn't care for them in such close proximity, I was more than glad to sleep on deck.

Long sea voyages tend to be a bit of a bore with nothing to see for days on end except perhaps schools of porpoises or dolphins in northern latitudes and flying fish in the tropics or occasionally maybe, another ship in the distance. Gibraltar was just seen in passing, but our first anchorage was at Port Said, reached after ten days. Here, the stop was just for fresh water and provisions and for re-fuelling.

As was traditional, the ship was immediately surrounded by the small 'bum-boats' with pestering Arab 'gully-gully' vendors selling to passengers by a thrown up rope with an attached basket. Some of these Arabs sported names such as Jock McDonald. Perhaps after decades of British influence they had a right to such unlikely names.

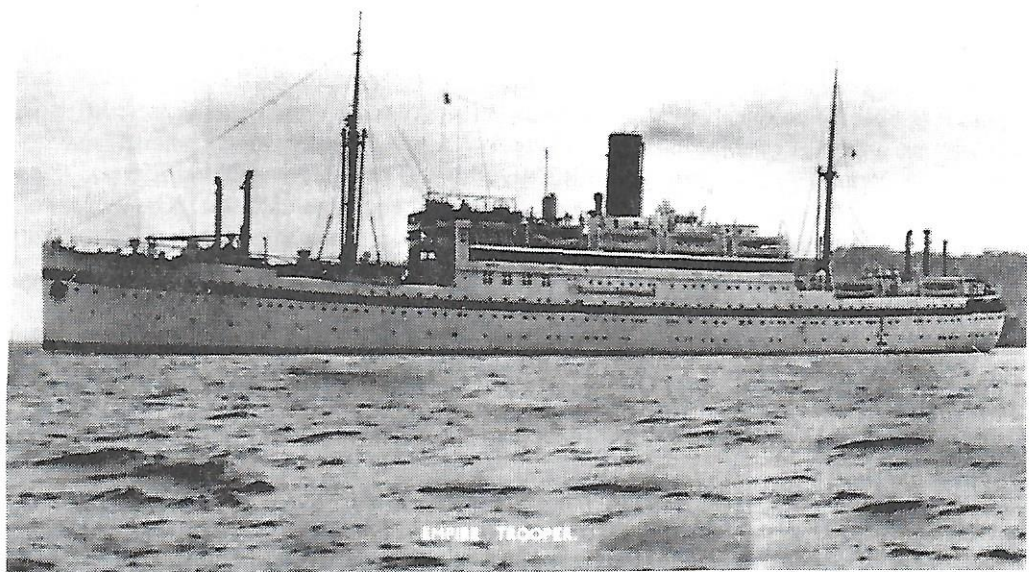
Although there was no shore leave, it was a relief to have a break from ten days of incessant ship motion, vibration and engine throb. However within

hours a canal Pilot was taken aboard, a search mounted in the bow and we were under way again as part of a southbound convoy.

It is a curious sight to see a convoy of ships in line astern steaming through a desert. The length of the canal is approximately one hundred miles and it took about twelve hours to complete the passage. Hence part of the time had to be within the hours of darkness, and thus the need for the temporary rigged searchlight.

The odd Egyptian Arab on the bank sowed his disdain for the troopship passengers by lifting his ankle-length garment, waving his private parts at the troops and at the same time shouting obscenities. The replies from the ship's rails more than adequately questioned the parentage of the Arab! I believe this British - Egyptian interchange had been an established custom for many decades and was seen as a light-hearted interlude on the voyage.

A little over half way the canal opens into a lake of considerable size and this is the layby for the northbound and southbound convoys to pass. Then



Empire Trooper

under way again for the last section of the canal to Suez. Without stopping, the Pilot was dropped and then down the Gulf of Suez and into the Red Sea for the next leg of thirteen hundred miles to Aden.

The sun temperatures were now becoming too high for prolonged exposure and from this point onward the deckhands rigged canvas awnings to provide additional shade. The word went out that for the re-fuelling stop at Aden passengers would be allowed some hours ashore.

The Troop Office collected names of those wishing to go, organised currency, gave instructions for dress, and warnings about missing the ship's departure.

For the first time we got properly dressed in our OG uniform - shorts, bush shirt, hosetops (khaki knee-length stocking without feet) and gaiters to connect them to our ankle boots, and the standard two inch webbing waist belt. Our ill laundered outfits were not exactly smart. However, fifteen days after embarking at Liverpool, the *Lancashire* tied to a buoy, ship's steps were suspended over the side, and we shakily climbed down into the harbour craft to be carried to the Aden waterfront.

Aden, of course, was no great tourist centre being hot, dusty and seemingly half dead. However, three of us joined together for safety, had a look around the town and had a passably good meal in a restaurant. The main point was to stretch the legs after the confines of the ship. At least we were now over the half way mark to Singapore.

With the ship re-fuelled and the fresh water tanks filled, the *Lancashire* put out to sea for the next stage of over two thousand, 100 miles to Ceylon (Sri Lanka). By now we were all pretty fair sailors and had lost our British pallor.

The seven day passage to Colombo was very agreeable. Absolutely nothing to see except endless ocean, but the weather was good and the days passed with eating, reading, playing cards or just walking the deck for a little exercise.

At last a thin line of palms was visible ahead, and straight as a die, the ship steamed into its temporary anchorage. Again, shore leave was allowed and local currency issued.

The organisation at these Empire stops was always well practised. As soon as the *Lancashire* stopped engines, the necessary service vessels were alongside and harbour boats were waiting to transport passengers to the waterfront. Colombo appeared to be all that one imagined of the East, but a few hours was all too short to take in this rather idyllic place. A walk and a meal was again the order of the day before returning to the ship.

The final leg to Singapore was shorter at five days duration and having rounded the northern tip of Sumatra and into the straits of Malacca, there was more to be seen in the way of islands, distant coastlines and much more ship-ping.

As we approached Singapore, there was considerable activity on board with everyone getting their kitbags and equipment together, drafts being forewarned of the order of disembarkation, and the last stocks of duty-free being bought. After a leisurely twenty-eight days the *Lancashire* rounded the fortress island of Blakang Mati and berthed at, I think, the Empire Dock.

It was but three years since the surrender of the Japanese, but the port was a hive of activity and every indication of commercial prosperity.

My REME draft was eventually called forward, down the gangplank onto the quay, a last look back at the *Lancashire* and into waiting transport. A drive through the town and out on the Bukit Timor road (the main route to the Johore Causeway and Malaya) to the Base Workshops.

Our reception was civilised and the hutted living quarters good. The huts had wide sheltered verandahs, ceiling fans and glassless windows with timber slatted shutters. Chinese fruit sellers and tailors/laundrymen were all on hand.

My first impressions were of constant high temperatures and humidity, the lushness of the vegetation, and the enormous concrete monsoon ditches at each side of the roads.

Although the camp was part of Base Workshops, we were actually in a reception area to be acclimatized and sorted for onward unit posting.

An immediate windfall was the Local Overseas Allowance of S\$1 per day - equivalent then to almost 12p. To me FARELF seemed a better proposition than cold, drab England and a very agreeable end to my first experience of blue water trooping.

As fate decreed, this was not the last time that I travelled in the *Lancashire*. I sampled also the pleasures of the *Dunera*, the *Empire Trooper*, the aircraft carriers *HMS Illustrious* and *HMS Triumph* and a wretched converted corvette.

Particularly when trooping with a battalion, the old slow movements by sea with emotional dock farewells or arrivals registered deeply in the memory, but one's first voyage as a novice was perhaps best remembered. It seems odd now, in this age of air travel, that mundane soldiering had such a close relationship with the sea.

MY REME TO CIVVY STREET EXPERIENCE

By Dick Wade (39A)

After leaving Arborfield, one had a choice of postings, I opted for ACK-ACK workshops Crookham, which was nearest to where my parents lived in Sandhurst.

While I was at Crookham, the Corporal in charge of our Nissen hut was one time world record holder of the mile, Sidney Wooderson. Sid used to go to the field nearby at the RAMC Depot, Boyce Barracks to train most evenings followed by his camp followers who were hoping to learn the secrets of becoming world mile champions.

At Crookham in 1942 REME was formed and we all handed in our RAOC badges in exchange for REME badges and subsequently were classified as craftsmen with trade pay.

At this point RASC and Engineers, driver mechanics etc. all wanted to transfer into REME to qualify for craftsman status and trade pay; but most had to pass a trade test; some succeeded where others failed which in my opinion was a good thing; I do not think any of us apprentices would want to see our training undermined.

The inevitable arrived I was posted to Command Workshops, Setchy near Kings Lynn, Norfolk. It was here that we were engaged (among other things) in working around the clock fitting sand shields to Bren gun carriers for the North African Campaign. It was during this period I was sent on a two week assault course to Buntingford in Hertfordshire.

Finally, the crunch came - I was posted to (prior to overseas) pool at Hucknall Nottingham. While there, we were kitted up with tropical gear at Nottingham Ice Rink and at Hucknall we had to run around inside a portable gas chamber (tear gas) - I nearly cried my eyes out. We were all allocated a draft number, but about a week later I was called into a major's office, who said he

was just going through my family background, relative to me being born in India and my father being stationed out there most of his army career.

One week later my draft was changed (I still remember it) to RDFFG - no need to say, I had a fairly good idea where my destination could be and as careless talk cost lives, I kept mum.

I was moved on from this pool to Forest Hill Nottingham, where we were put on standby and we had to sleep fully dressed; we were woken up late one night and were marched off to a hall, where (bearing in mind food rationing), we were served with a meal of Ham, Eggs and Chips. The Lord Mayor of Nottingham was there and we were presented with free cigarettes, compliments of John Player and Sons (a product of Nottingham).

Following the last supper, (so to speak) we marched in battle order, (Hurricane lamps front and back) to one of Nottingham's stations; it was a very eerie sight, only one porter on the platform (I'm sure he had his lips stitched up), a train with no lights reversing into the platform which reminded me of a ghost train.

We had no clues as to where we were going until, as dawn broke, a Scot in our compartment recognised the terrain - we were crossing the border into Scotland.

We pulled into Edinburgh station 6 a.m. where we disembarked for a mug of tea served by the WVS. then back on the train. We found that our journey had doubled back to Glasgow Docks where we boarded the *Highland Princess* and set sail down the Clyde. All the shipyard workers (many were women) were waving their welding torches and cheering us on. I began to wonder what all the secrecy was all about.

We dropped anchor at Greenock where we stayed for 48 hours. This was where the convoy was forming up. Eventually, at the break of day, we found ourselves in convoy and after two air attacks in the Mediterranean arrived safely at Port Said (Egypt). We disembarked and

went by train to Port Suez and spent 6 weeks in transit just outside of Suez. From here on we embarked on a tiny troopship *The Empire Woodlark* and finally arrived in Bombay (which I more or less anticipated).

From here we trained it to Secunderabad (Central India) and were transported on to a REME pool workshops in that area; repairing Sherman and Lee Grant tanks of the Gordon Highlanders who were now a motorised unit. After a spell there, I was posted to Ranchi near Calcutta, LAD attached to the 136 Field Artillery Regiment.

Following a waterproofing course at Ahmadnagar we moved with the 136 through Assam into Burma with the 7th Indian division. We finished up on the borders with Thailand, where we were destined to go in and free our POWs; but as history shows the war came to an end.

I was then posted to REME at Insien just outside of Rangoon, where we were reconditioning ex-army vehicles to sell to the Burmese, whose transport at that time was non-existent. We did have Jap POWs (tradesmen) helping in this task.

Finally, I was repatriated home and posted (once again) to REME workshops Crookham, and from there posted on to Camberley; LAD attached to the Royal Engineers, who were building extended accommodation for the cadets at the RMA Sandhurst.

Their plant and equipment was in a right mess; when anything went wrong on the site, we were never called into effect repairs until the CO pleaded with us to do something. It transpired that when any of the existing plant broke down, they would just order up more plant to overcome the problem; this over ordering of plant finally came to a head when a REME inspection team were called in from 13 Command Workshops Aldershot and as a result there was hell to pay.

Following the Engineers CO's plea, a bit of 'horse trading' took place; our WO1 Les Caley made conditions: no guards or fire picket duties (which we

were subject to). The CO was only to willing to oblige (we worked all hours).

After this project was completed, I was posted to Hillsea, Portsmouth; social facilities after hours was good; visits to the Fleet Club Portsmouth, plenty of WRENS to dance with, also dancing at the South Parade Pier, Southsea and other surrounding ballrooms; but unfortunately my fun and games were not to last.

I was posted to Colchester, attached to the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and with just two other craftsmen and the Regiment's MTO, we prepared the Argyll's transport for shipment from Birkenhead to Hong Kong.

Subsequent to this the whole regiment embarked on the *Empire Hallidale* in Southampton, we were destined to go to Hong Kong during the height of the Chinese Nationalist/Communist Conflict; to defend the colony.

Once on board we were informed that there was a problem with the ship's steering gear and there would be a 24 hour delay. So next morning, armed with corned beef sandwiches and an apple, we filed down the gangway and at the bottom stood an Argyll junior officer, just out of Sandhurst, which to me looked like an overgrown school boy from Eton College. He was holding a football; the media was informed that the lads would be holding a game of football during their lunch break.

We set off on a route march along the coast; none of us were pleased about this, we were all knackered from the previous preparations for our departure over seas. We stopped around midday to devour our rations and a mug of tea brought in by tea wagon, before marching back to the ship.

Next day, at sea, we were all horrified to see a picture in the national press of a junior officer standing at the foot of the gangway holding a football and alongside an article saying, 'troopship delayed, Argylls go on a picnic and a good game of football was enjoyed by all.'

Arriving in Hong Kong we were stationed at Stanley Barracks on the island for a short while, then we moved over to the mainland to the new territories under canvas near the Chinese border. This event passed off peacefully apart from a severe typhoon.

I was then posted to the REME workshops in Kowloon on the water front, but after a short stay here, I left Hong Kong for the UK having nearly completed my 8 years regular engagement.

On the last day of my 28 days release leave I received a telegram from the war office, instructing me to report to the REME depot at Arborfield, as a reservist. I had been called up to serve in the Korean War!

At that time it was decided that national servicemen would not be required to serve in Korea. This requirement caused quite a stir, as still in Hong Kong were the Argylls, Leicesters and Middlesex Regiments - the brigade sent out to defend the colony. So as the Argylls were designated to join the UN force in Korea, there was an overnight swapping of personnel.

National servicemen in the Argylls were transferred to the Leicesters or Middlesex and regulars from these two regiments (overnight) found themselves wearing the kilt and sporran!

Arriving at the REME Depot (on recall) I did meet up with Ben Cook again and over a pint in the Sgts' mess we talked about old times. He remembered me once I had recalled some of the events which I have already written about. I never did meet Ben again but did hear about his accident.

From the depot I was posted to a reinforcement unit which was being formed up at the RA Barracks Woolwich and alongside a Captain (reservist) MTO we organised (in conjunction with Whitehall) the transport requirements and prepared the same for shipment to Korea.

Arriving at Princess Landing Stage Liverpool, (which only for a short while back I had disembarked from, on re-

turning from Hong Kong) we boarded the troopship *Lancashire*, the same one I had come in on from India to UK as a boy soldier in 1939. The only difference being there were no hammocks but instead double bunk beds on a red asphalt deck.

While out in Korea I managed to get two weeks leave in Tokyo Japan; nice break that was. Eventually all reservists were repatriated to the UK and demobbed. From here on I spent 32 years as a detail fitter with the aircraft industry at Weybridge.

It was at Weybridge I became a shop steward for many years and in 1974 when the Health and Safety at work act came into being, I attended Health and Safety courses, and became a senior safety rep., representing all the shop floor workers.

I had many successes in this field, such as removal of Asbestos, getting treatment for the three water cooling plants pertaining to air conditioning to remove risks of Legionnaires disease and also eliminating undue factory noise. In due course, we at Weybridge won the Golden Hand Award for safety from the Employers Federation, thus I felt that some of my efforts were worthwhile and did not pass unrecognised.

In the end (1988) Weybridge closed down and following a redundancy, I moved from Lightwater to Shanklin, Isle of Wight as a very happy person.

In spite of my hearing disability due to war circumstances, I consider myself very lucky indeed, having survived all the trials and tribulations of war and still enjoying good health. However, I must say, I am forever mindful of those who were not so lucky whatever the circumstances; I can only count my blessings.

To sum up I can say that my apprenticeship training at Arborfield was without a doubt a contributory factor in enabling me to cope with all the circumstances that I was faced with and for that I am truly grateful.

(The Arborfield Apprentice for Spring 1996 reprinted the ATS (Boys) Curriculum as part of its content and I thought it might interest anyone who was at the school during this period. Comparing it to my time in the fifties, there seemed to be much more on offer or perhaps I just was not aware that half these activities existed - Ed))

ARMY TECHNICAL SCHOOL, (BOYS), BERKS

SITUATION

Arborfield, Berkshire

Railway Station:

Reading G.W.R 7 miles

Wokingham S.R. 4 miles

HISTORY

In 1938 the Army Council decided to prepare the facilities for training apprentice tradesmen for the Army. Accordingly this School was set up and commenced operations on the 1st May 1939.

OBJECT

The School is designed to accommodate and train 1020 boys in the following trades:

Fitters

Vehicle Mechanics

Armourers

Instrument Mechanics

Electricians

Telecommunication Mechanics

Boys are allotted to these trades in accordance with their aptitudes, within the numbers required.

TERMS OF SERVICE

All Apprentice Tradesmen are enlisted for a term of 12 years commencing from the age of 18 years, eight with the Colours and four on the Reserve.

AGE OF ENTRY

Between the ages of 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ and 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ years

METHOD OF ENTRY

Entry is obtained by competitive examination conducted by the Civil Service Commissioners. These examinations are held twice a year and candidates must be between 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ and 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ years of age at the date of examination. Particulars are notified in the Press and by the B.B.C. shortly before examination takes place.

DURATION OF TRAINING

Approximately three years.

STANDARD OF PROFICIENCY

To train to the Third Class Army Standard in their respective trades.

PAY DURING TRAINING

During the first year

1/5d per day

During the second year

1/5d to 1/9d per day

During the third year

1/9d to 2/1d

TRADESMEN'S RATE OF PAY

On attaining the age of 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ years apprentices are trade tested and if successful graded as 3rd Class Tradesmen and paid at the rate of 4/3d per day.

The above rate of pay is, of course, in addition to accommodation, food, clothing, medical and dental treatment etc.

LEAVE

The school year is divided into three working periods and leave is granted as under:

Easter	14 days
Mid-summer	28 days
Christmas	<u>14 days</u>
	56 days

No other leave is granted except in very special circumstances. Parents and Guardians should never ask for boys to have extra leave if it can possibly be avoided as it unsettles them and deprives them of some of their instruction.

TRAVELLING FACILITIES

Apprentices receive a free railway warrant for the above periods of leave.

ORGANIZATION

For administrative purposes the School is divided into four Companies and each Company into three wings. Each new intake is divided between the Companies so that they remain equal in strength, ages, and experience. This makes it possible to run inter-Company sports and competitions on a fair basis.

BARRACKS

Housing accommodation is provided in a series of Barrack Blocks. Each block contains six living huts, connected by means of corridors to a central lavatory and ablution block. The living huts are centrally heated and hot water is always available in the central block for washing and shower baths.

COOKHOUSE & DINING ROOM

A central Cookhouse with Dining Rooms on either side, provides feeding facilities for the whole school at one sitting.

WORKSHOPS

The School possesses seven large workshops, each measuring 210 feet by 73 feet giving a total capacity of over 107,300 square feet. These shops possess excellent lighting both natural and artificial and are centrally heated.

The layout is as follows:

Fitters Shop; Machine Shop; Electricians; Blacksmiths (including Welders and Coppersmiths); Armourers; Carpenters; M.T. Shop; Instrument Shop; Radio Laboratory.

Each workshop has a tool store and also a classroom for instructional lectures.

MILITARY TRAINING

On entering the School, each boy is medically and dentally inspected, clothed, and equipped and then spends the first four weeks of his service on the square, in Education classrooms and the Gymnasium. Later on he is given weapon training and field craft.

TRADE TRAINING

All apprentice tradesmen spend the next six months in the Fitters Shop where they learn to file, and to use tools of their trades. The hours of work are from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. and the allotment of time in this period is as follows:

Workshops and Trade Lectures	15 ¹ / ₂ hours
Education	10 hours
Technical Lectures	2 ¹ / ₄ hours
Physical Training	2 ¹ / ₄ hours
Games	3 ¹ / ₄ hours
Religious Instruction	³ / ₄ hours
Regimental Training	7 ¹ / ₄ hours
TOTAL	41 ¹ / ₄ hours

After this period, boys are allotted to their trades and specialize on work appropriate to their particular trade.

The trade training is accepted as an Apprenticeship and consequently the soldier trained in an Army Technical School is definitely a 'craftsman' and on return to civilian life has the full status as such.

EDUCATION

General. Three huts each sub-divided into four rooms give facilities for general education for 360 students at one time and instruction is continued throughout the three years of training. The First Class Army Certificate is obtained by the majority and the Special Certificate by many others.

Technical. Technical instruction in Machine Drawing, Science, Workshop Practice etc., is given in special classrooms provided for the purpose.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

Each Apprentice Tradesman receives ³/₄ hours religious instruction weekly under a chaplain of his own faith, namely, Church of England, Church of Scotland, Methodist, Baptist or Roman Catholic.

SMOKING

Smoking by apprentices under 17 years of age is not allowed.

CINEMA ETC.

The Camp Hall provides seating accommodation for 1,200 people and fulfils three functions:

1. Gymnasium
2. Cinema and Concert Hall
3. Church for Sunday Services.

The School possesses its own 35 m.m. projectors and pictures are shown on Tuesday, Saturday and Sunday evenings. Company dances are also held each Thursday evening and concerts at frequent intervals.

REGIMENTAL INSTITUTES

The NAAFI has a well furnished canteen in which light refreshments can be obtained.

SPORTS

The billiard room is equipped with three full-sized billiard tables and one half-size. In addition ping-pong tables are provided in the Games Room together with Draughts, Chess and Dominoes.

The grounds of the School are fairly extensive and Football, Rugby, Hockey, Cricket and Netball are played. Boxing is exceedingly popular and the School possesses an up-to-date boxing ring.

Many apprentices are in possession of the Royal Society's Medals and Certificate for Life Saving but the absence of a swimming bath makes this very necessary sport rather difficult.

LIBRARY

The School possesses two libraries, technical and fiction, and excellent use is made of both.

HOBBIES

An organisation known as the Arborfield Union Society exists in the School. It has nothing to do with trade or trade unions; its purpose is to encourage and assist apprentices in the pursuit of suitable spare time hobbies. Among the hobbies catered for are:

Shooting
Cycling
Scouting and Rambling
Fishing
Photography
Sketching
Dramatics
Appreciation of Music
Airplane Modelling
Swing Music and Choral Singing.

VOLUNTRY STUDIES

In order that apprentices may make the best possible use of their time in the School they are encouraged to take up extra studies connected with their training through the City and Guilds Institute of London, Reading University or other suitable institutions.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Parents and guardians of trainees are furnished with detailed reports of the progress of their sons or wards, twice yearly i.e. Christmas and mid-summer and it is obvious that in the majority of cases these reports are treated seriously.

HOSPITAL

The School possesses an excellent hospital with accomodatiom for 72 patients. Medical Officers and Nursing Sisters are always available.

SAVINGS GROUP

The School possesses a War Savings Group and practically all the Apprentice Tradesmen contribute at least 4 shillings per month to the Fund. The certificates are held by the School until the boys leave on completion of training.



Young Barrie

MEMORIES FROM THE SIXTIES

By Barrie ('Titch') King
(60A-B)

As a recent recruit to the AOBA I have read with interest the issues of the OBAN I have received and I am amazed at the ability of your contributors to remember the names and dates of what, at the time, must have been routine events.

Most of the input I have read seems to come from the pre 1960

intakes and maybe this reflects the pre TV age when stories of such events were told time and again.

Although my memory for names and dates may not be as attuned as your other contributors I can relate to a lot of their stories and the feelings of those times can return very strong.

My first memory of Arborfield was trying to carry all my bedding

from the stores at the bottom of the square to the new 'jeep' block at the top of the square - not an easy start for a 'titch'. In fact as you can see from the enclosed photo, B Coy had the long and short of it, with both Lofty Ricketts and myself in the same company!

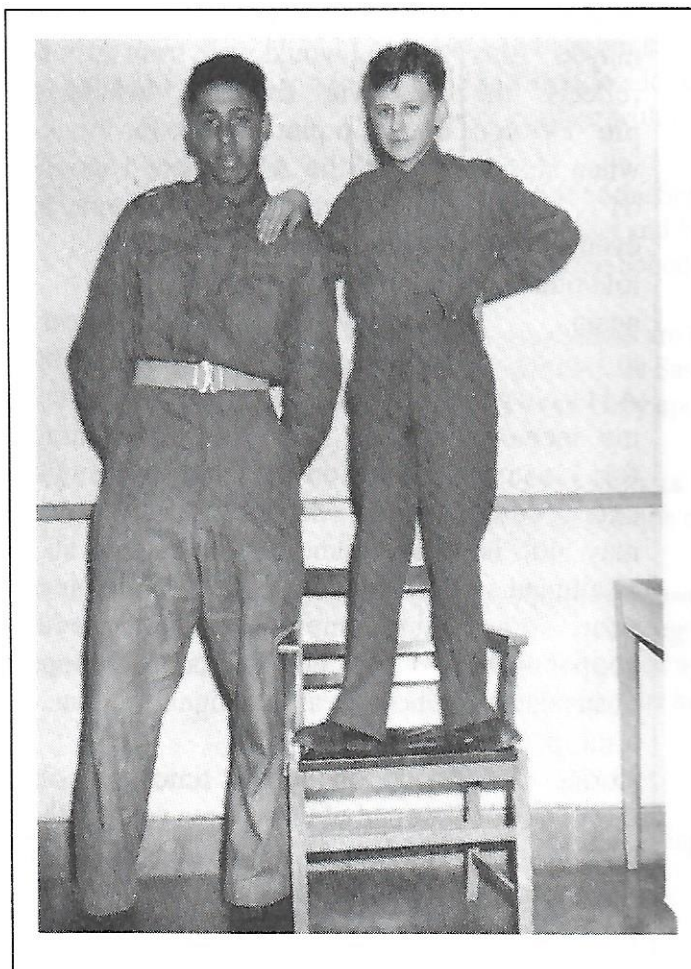
When we were allowed the fourth Sunday of each month off, I used to be at the main gate waiting to book out at the earliest opportunity.

Dressed in best SD kit (see photo) I would walk from Arborfield via Eversley, where I bought a pint of milk for breakfast, to the A30 where I would start 'hitching' for my home in Bournemouth.

With my 'little boy lost' appearance I could usually get a lift and would often be home for Sunday dinner! To be sure of returning to camp on time I always caught a train back which meant I had to leave home for the railway station around the time 'Sing Something Simple' came on the radio - I still get the same feelings when I hear that signature tune.

Some of the best times towards the end of those three years in the summer of 1962 were spent at weekends around the Reading area on our motor cycles. Although motor bikes were banned during term time, some of us managed to hide them away in rented garages etc. The photo shows (left to right) Wilkie Wilkinson (AJS), Johnny Muers (Royal Enfield), Paddy Clash (AJS), Albe Beedle (BSA), with myself (Triumph) taking the snap. We were all intake 60A and kept our bikes in Reading for most of the time. I wonder if, like me, they still have motor cycles to enjoy.

After 3 years training to be an Instrument Technician, which as I remember entailed a lot of late evening filing and fitting in the two large Nissen huts at the top of the camp, we passed out as Instrument Technicians (Fd) and went to Bordon to be completely retrained as Aircraft Technicians



Lofty Ricketts and Me!

(Electric and Instrument).

Some older Instrument Technicians joined this conversion course but they protested so much changing trades they were taken off course while our group from 60A, consisting of Alan 'Shag' Twyning, Colin Cameron, Barry Birch, Pete Donnison and myself, just had to get on with it.

In my twenty four years army service the encounters with ex-boys of my intake, apart from our new trade group, were few and far between. The most memorable, though

brief, was just before curfew in Kuching Market Place, Borneo around 1965. After visiting a few bars I had just sat down in a market stall for a nasi goreng, the equivalent of the present day d o n n a k e b a b , when out of the dark a beaming black face appeared and, with a voice to match, said

'Hi'yu - its Tich King i'n't it ?'

Before I had a chance to gather my senses Milton Browne had disappeared back into the night. Maybe he will turn up at a future AOBA reunion!

I spent the rest of my service life as an Aircraft Technician, changing from Electrics and Instruments to Avionics along the way. Until recently I was still working in a REME unit as a civil servant in Aircraft Branch at Middle Wallop. Now we are part of the Army Technical Support Agency (ATSA) although we still provide support for REME tradesmen maintaining army aircraft.

Maybe my memory will improve with the telling of some tales and I will be able to make another contribution sometime or, better still, perhaps some other post 1960 intake member will be encouraged to tell his tale.



The 'Angels' of Intake 60A

YEARS TO REMEMBER

By Roy (Dusty) Miller (41A)

My love affair with Africa started in July 1955 and was to last 32 years. It all began on the morning the troopship sailed into Mombasa harbour. I was so struck by the beauty, the smells and the sounds of this wonderful place that I felt right from the start that this was a place where I wanted to stay. I had no knowledge of Africa nor had I any friends or relations there but I immediately felt as if I had come home.

Obviously, in the beginning, life followed the usual route of a craftsman arriving abroad.

To summarise, I was posted to 401 Command Workshops, Nairobi, and later joined the 11th East African Division in Ranchi, India, after VJ Day. All I did was help pack up 1 Brigade Workshops and sail back to Kenya and 401 Workshops again.

I was Promoted to Armourer Corporal and eventually to Staff Sergeant.

I was then posted to East African Inspectorate and travelled throughout East Africa Command with various AIA.s.

There followed a posting as Battalion Armourer to DCLI in Hargeisia, British Somaliland and when the battalion was moved to Cyprus, I requested a cross-posting to an East African Unit so that I could stay in Africa.

Finally, I was posted to 4th Uganda Battalion the King's African Rifles with whom I stayed until discharged in July 1955.

In all I was to stay for ten consecutive years in East Africa. This was because each time a tour of three years finished I volunteered for another tour in East Africa as soon as I arrived in the UK. In those days anyone arriving home after a tour overseas was automatically posted to UK or the Army of Occupation for 18 months, and as I wanted to go back from whence I came, the



Young Dusty - 1941

'powers that be' thought I was quite mad and happily granted my wish.

During this period I became interested in hunting. The first time I shot at a wild animal I was shaking so badly with 'buck fever' that I missed by miles with two shots and the herd of Thomson gazelles decided that it was a noisy place in which to be and so disappeared over the horizon.

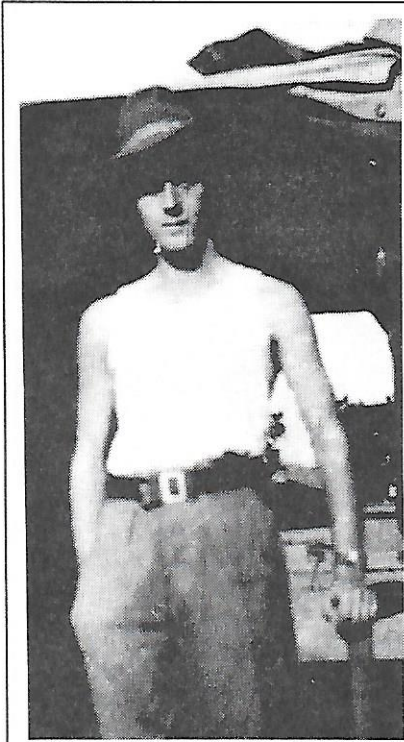
My accuracy improved in time and I spent a lot of spare time supplying the Sergeants' Mess with meat, but as happens with most hunters, I progressed to hunting only trophy size heads, and then to the big five and finally to not wanting to kill anything at all.

As my twelve years with the Colours came to an end I began to look for a job in Africa, hopefully something in the

Arms line. I first tried Tsetse Control, who as an armed force had a lot of weapons. Unfortunately, they couldn't afford a full time armourer but they were kind enough to put me in touch with the Uganda Game Department.

The Uganda Game Department, as with most other game departments in Africa, had a massive back-log of work on their damaged large calibre sporting rifles. None of them had been able to buy weapons during the war years and by 1955 only a trickle of new ones were coming through and they were prohibitively expensive for the low budget game departments, as was the cost of repairs which were mainly carried out by gunsmiths in the UK.

I suggested to the Uganda Game Department that I repaired some of their weapons in my spare time which was at



A REME Armourer - 1946!

weekends and while taking local leave. This was agreed and led me to eventually being offered a newly created post of Armourer Technician to the Uganda Game Department. This I accepted on the proviso that I was recruited in the UK, which meant that I would be a Colonial Civil Servant rather than a locally enlisted person and that the Game Department would send me on a refresher course to a gunsmith in the UK. This was agreed and after taking my discharge in the UK,

I attended a course at Westley Richards in Birmingham for several weeks. This was vital as up until then I had obtained my knowledge of gunsmithing only from books I had bought from WH Smith. Gunsmithing and armouring are quite different in some respects.

So, in 1955 I started with the Uganda Game Department and stayed with them for seven happy years. It took nearly three years to clear up the backlog of weapons and by then a routine had been set up which worked well. Twice a year I would tour Uganda and visit every game warden. The game guards of each area would be waiting with their rifles which would be repaired on the spot or exchanged from a

stock of re-serviced ones I carried with me in the Landrover. As these tours took in all the Game Department's stations they were useful for replenishment of clothing and equipment, so I became a sort of travelling Quartermaster as well.

One of the most frequent exchanges was for broken stocks. This was an avoidable breakage but unfortunately some of the game guards became too excited after shooting a buffalo and although it was dead or mortally wounded they would then try to beat its brains out with their rifles! As the buffalo is particularly hard-headed the rifle always came off worse, and as a new stock had to be carved from a 'blank' they were not my favourite people!

Back at HQ in Entebbe it was not unusual for very young animals to arrive at short notice from outlying stations. These were the offspring of animals shot on control work. So, in the course of time, my long suffering wife became surrogate mum of several leopard cubs, various warthogs and bush pigs, different types of monkeys and at one time four lion cubs from one litter. I, in the meantime, tried my hand with several baby elephants, sadly unsuccessfully, some young buffalo, various gazelle and antelope and even a baby gorilla!

It was these young animals and the desire by the Game Department to start an educational programme for the Africans, especially the school children, as many of them knew absolutely nothing of the wild life of their country, that led to the establishment of the Entebbe Animal Orphanage. I started with one small enclosure and when I left in 1962 there were twenty acres under paddocks, cages, aviaries, ponds and 100,000+ visitors a year coming to see them free of charge. It gave me a great deal of satisfaction and I was sorry to leave it behind.

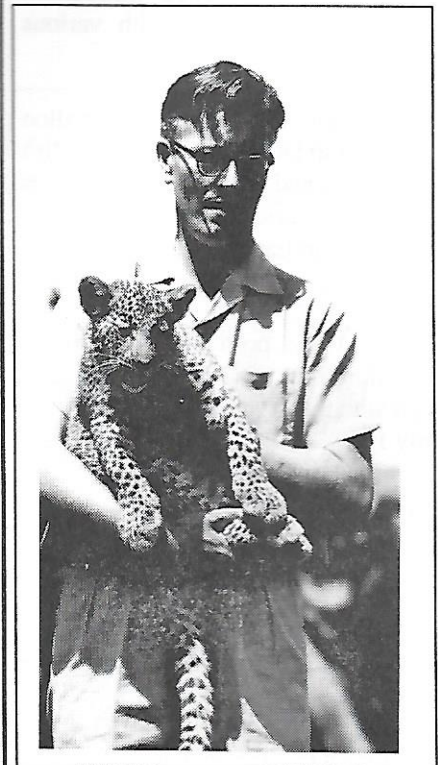
By 1962 Uganda was approaching independence. I had trained an ex-EAEME African armourer into gunsmithing and an African carpenter into stockmaking and I had become more involved in game warden's work, so as Africanisation was looming and I

was frustrated with bench work I decided to take a chance on something else.

For the next two and a half years I was a partner in a live animal trapping company in Nairobi, Kenya. The company dealt only in Vervet monkeys and baboons and later we added birds for the pet trade. The animals were mainly used in the research and resultant manufacture of vaccines, especially against Polio. Before all the conservationists among you start writing indignant letters, I would point out that Vervet monkeys and baboons were classed as vermin in East Africa because of the damage they caused.

The Government paid a bounty of one shilling per head for every one killed. We trappers paid a five shilling licence fee for every monkey or baboon that was exported and I like to think that a lot of human lives were saved because of the trade.

Together, my partner and I turned the company around from near insolvency to a thriving business, but after two and a half years, for personal reasons, I quit and went back to the UK.



With a Leopard Cub - 1960

That was in 1964. I opened a pet store in London with the intention of building up a small chain of shops and I did eventually have three, but things went wrong and by the beginning of 1969 I had gone 'traumatically' broke.

By the greatest good fortune, my wife spotted an advertisement in the *Daily Telegraph* offering two posts of game warden in Zambia. Over 3000 applications were made. I think everybody who had ever owned a pet rabbit or who had seen *King Solomon's Mines* wanted to be a game warden! I secured one of the posts. Africa had smiled on me again!

anti-poaching to put me in charge of an area called 'Blue Lagoon', a former cattle ranch, turned over to conservation together with a large area of swamp land interspersed with islands.

The dry area contained a variety of animals which included the *Red Lechwe*, an antelope peculiar to this region of Zambia. The swamp lands were inhabited by, among other occupants, the *Sitatunga*, a rare web-footed antelope and an estimated one million spur-winged geese. I remained there for two years and then moved on to Kafue National Park.

owned camp across the Kafue river at Lifupa, where I lived.

The Park had a large variety of animals including elephant, lion and, in the north, a herd of 2000+ buffalo. I remained there for four years and then moved to the South Luangwa Valley National Park, where I remained for the rest of my time in Zambia.

Luangwa Valley was the dream posting of every ranger. Its primary attraction was the elephants. At one time an aerial survey had estimated that there were 100,000 elephants in the Luangwa Valley and the surrounding area.

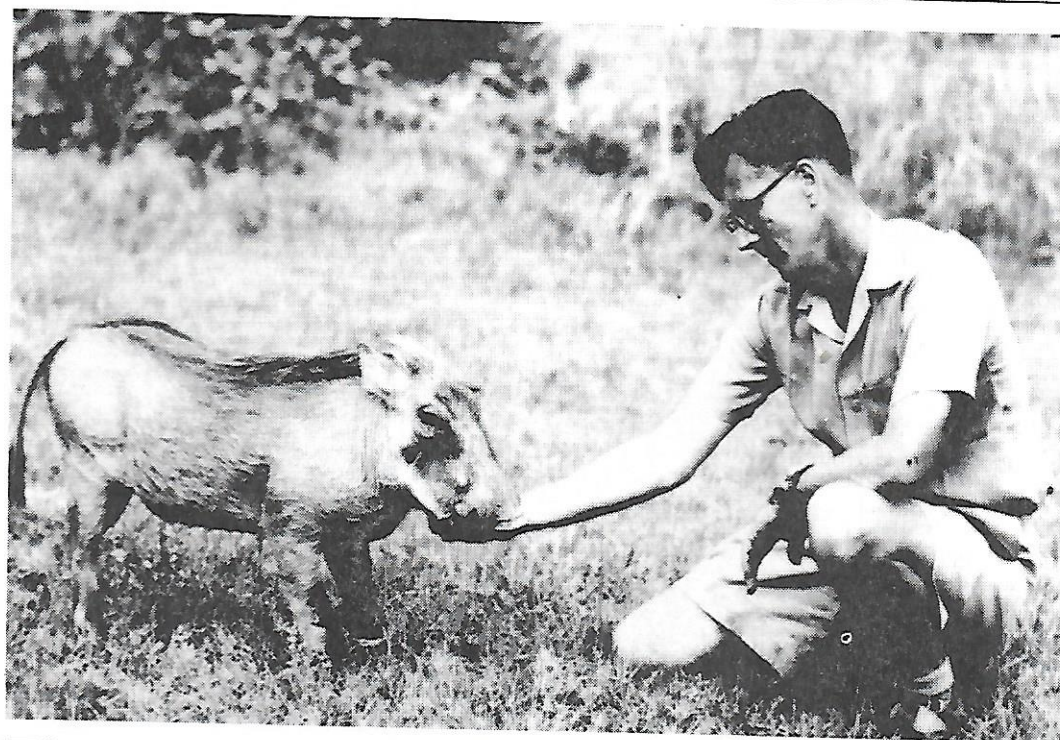
Unfortunately, by the time I arrived in the Luangwa Valley, it was down to about 30,000 elephants and falling. This was the time of the ivory poaching in a big way all over Africa and I regret to say that the staff (all ranks) of the Game Department in the Luangwa Valley were heavily involved.

I arrested a young African game ranger

from whom I had taken over, for stealing ivory. He stole some tusks from a store he had handed over to me only the day before. I also saw from a helicopter some of my uniformed game guards running away from an elephant carcass with a band of poachers.

When I left Zambia I passed on information about a cache of four tons of ivory that I knew of in the area, but not the exact location, to British S.I.B. officers who were working in Zambia.

It is interesting to note that when I left, the man to whom I was to hand over was



Making Friends with a Warthog - 1960

I joined the Zambia Wildlife & National Parks Service in mid 1969. My first job was as O I/C the mobile anti-poaching team with a crew of twenty African game guards. I had a roving commission which covered the whole of Zambia. We were very successful and I thoroughly enjoyed the work. However, I blotted my copybook after nine months by arresting two Government Ministers.

The Game Department lost its sense of humour and cancelled the charges after receiving instructions from a higher authority. They moved me away from

Kafue National Park spans 7,500 square miles of which I was responsible for the Northern Sector, an area of some 4000 square miles, plus a further 4000 square miles of hunting area, mainly used by professional hunting safaris.

The game guard's post furthest from the Northern Sector HQ was ninety miles away during the dry season, but during the rains the internal roads became impassable, so increasing the distance to some one hundred and fifty miles. There were four tourists camps open during the dry season, fully furnished and staffed, plus one large privately

the game ranger I had arrested for ivory theft when I had first arrived in Luangwa. His case had never reached the Court. So much for law, order and conservation in Zambia!

In spite of these drawbacks Luangwa was a superb posting - animals of all species were in abundance. Prides of lion of over ten or more were a common sighting and of course elephants were all over the place.

It was the policy in all newly independent African territories for the expatriate staff to train up their African successors, so once again in mid 1976 I had worked myself out of a job and had to move on.

Fortunately, a vacancy occurred in the neighbouring country of Malawi and during my terminal leave in the UK I was interviewed and accepted as Regional Game Warden (Central Region) Malawi, later to be re-titled and upgraded to Senior Wildlife Management Officer.

Malawi was divided into three regions, Northern, Central and Southern. My first station was in Kasungu National Park. My previous Park, Luangwa Valley in Zambia was just across the border from Kasungu, and although the range of animals was very much the same, there were far fewer because Kasungu was only about 500 square miles. There was a large tourist lodge run by concessionaires which was open all year round, extremely popular with local and overseas visitors.

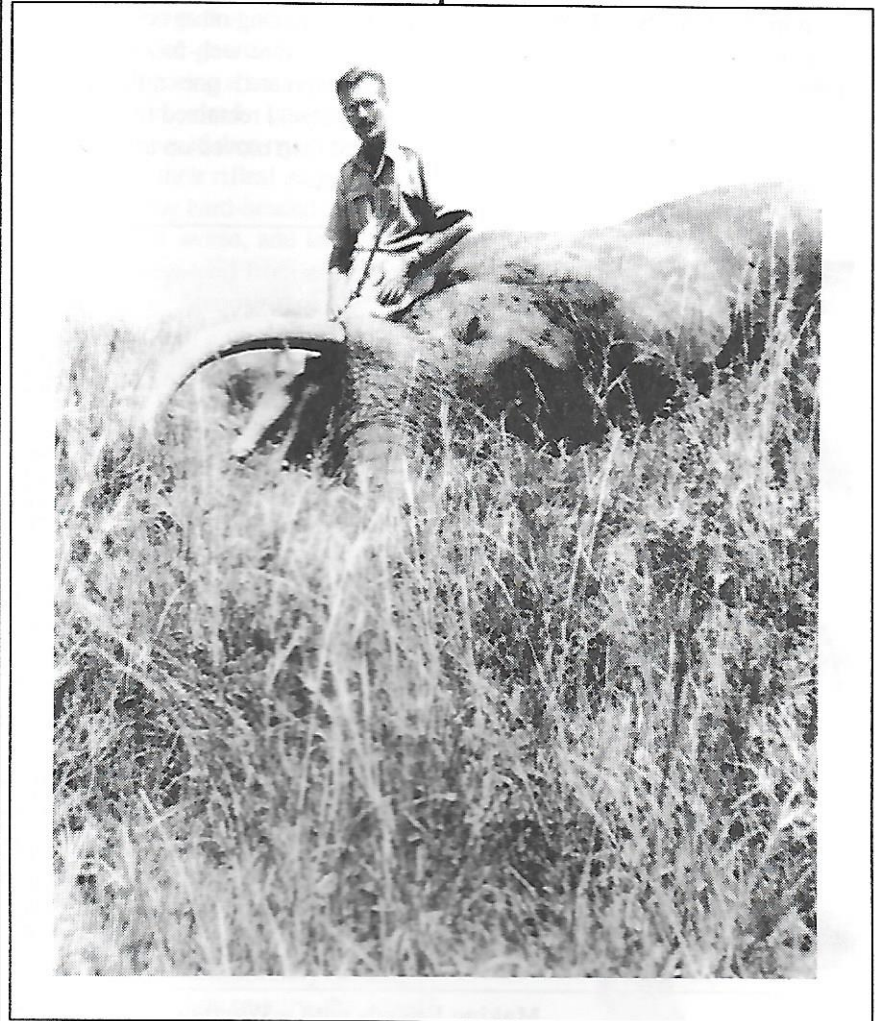
Also in the Central Region there was a large game reserve which was not open to the public but policed by game guards.

I remained at Kasungu for five years and then took over the Southern Region where I lived in Liwonde National Park. This was only about 100 square miles. Compared with the larger places in which I had worked this was small. When I first arrived I felt as if I could stand on my front door step and spit over the boundaries! However, I soon discovered it was a delightful place in which to be.

Liwonde National Park had the usual variety of animals plus a very large number of hippopotamus and crocodiles in the Shire River, which flowed down one side of the Park. It also had a surprising number of *Sable* antelope, over 900, which I counted in a two day aerial survey. This is an exceptional number for any part of Africa.

Malawi, the first maritime national park was formed in Lake Malawi. This was also part of the Southern Region.

Then, towards the end of 1982, guess what? I had worked myself out of a job again! So when my Malawian replacement arrived I was to leave Africa for the last time. There was no place to



A Casualty of the Ivory Trade - Circa 1960

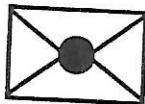
The Park had been neglected but with the kind aid of a large firm of road contractors working nearby I managed to get the main roads in the Park up to an all weather standard. I also managed to build up, with no extra funds, a ten hut tourist camp and a large kitchen at a riverside site. This, I gather, has been improved upon, is now open all year round and is privately run.

The Southern Region also had another national park run by an African warden who came under my supervision, plus three game reserves. Just before I left

move on to. I had run out of countries and was getting too long in the tooth to be acceptable in a new place.

Africa had been very kind to me and I sincerely hope I have given her something in return. My consoling thought was that for all those years I had done exactly what I had wanted to do and 'they paid me for it as well'.

LETTERS TO
THE EDITOR



✍ Harvey Liddell (46B) writes

Jim Baker's photograph (*q.v. Jim Baker's and Bill Pusey's letters on Pages 23/24 of OBAN 12 - Ed*) brought back memories of the Royal Tournament - 1947 at Olympia. Those 'barrack rooms' with Hessian walls lining the entrance for Queen Mary, the smell of grease paint and the thrill of going on stage!!! (If you believe that you believe anything.) I think we did enjoy ourselves but for the life of me I cannot remember what the food was like - can anyone help?

I am certain I am No. 8 on the photograph - mainly identified by my 'sticky-out' ears and elongated chin. The show, I think, was some charity 'do' held in an upstairs hall in the Broad Street/West Street area of central Reading.

Talking about the 'Terrible Three' (*q.v. Para 8 on Page 22 of OBAN 12 - Ed*), Chicken, Judson and Hanley, I am sure I was the first one to meet Andy Chicken (Chick). That was at Newcastle Central Station on our way to meet our fate at Arborfield. Chick went on to join the Newcastle City Police, ending as the Force's Police Federation Representative.

Jud's Arborfield career has been revealed (*q.v. Page 23 - Ed*), but Tom Hanley's whereabouts remain a mystery. Those of us in D Company must remember Bill Garner's swim in the static water tank - and he was not thrown in!!

While on the subject of water, it was the practice of a few of us to block the waste water pipes in the shower area of J Block Ablutions (a wonderful expression), flood the area (remember a 2ft 6in concrete wall divided the shower area off from the main wash room) and use it as a swimming pool. Naturally, the best time to carry out this operation was on a Saturday afternoon when no one was about. Of course, my integrity prevents me saying that Billy Thornhill and Alan Fairclough were my partners in crime.

It was great to celebrate our 50th Anniversary at Arborfield in 1996 with George Marshall, Bob McGrillen and the other lads from 46B. Also on the top table at the Dinner was Phil Christie (46A) who served with me in Egypt at 71st HAA Workshop at Fayid. Others there at our time were Tubby Cardinal (of boxing fame) Lofty Holmes (45/46?) and Titch Allan (46B). I have not had this confirmed, but the boss of our vehicle section was a certain Staff Sergeant J Cox who, I am sure, is John Cox (42?). At the time I was not aware he might have been an ex-boy.

Like Tom Pearce (44A), I cannot remember the name of the Bandmaster (Beds & Herts) who led the School Band at the Royal Tournament (*q.v. Page 16 of OBAN 11 - Ed*). I am correct in stating he composed the Introduction to 'The Reds'

- the School march. Is there any chance of the band at the '98 Reunion playing this tune for the AOBA march past?

In closing, may I thank John Northam and all the Committee for the sterling work they have put in over the years to make the Association what it is.

✍ Bryan Adams (Oct42) writes

From time to time mention in OBAN has been made of famous sportsmen who have served or made an appearance at Arborfield during the war years. Unforgettable to me was the 'Brown Bomber' - the greatest heavyweight boxer of all time - Joe Louis. Does anyone else remember the demonstration bout with his equally immense sparring partner at a School boxing tournament in the Camp Hall? The date escapes me but it was after March 1944.

I can recollect the occasion because I still hold his autograph on a programme for the ceremony of the American black battalions of the US Army Aviation Engineers handing over the completed AAF Station 152 to the United States Army Air Forces. The programme does not name the location of the new base. I didn't actually obtain the autograph directly, but through the trading of a swap after the tournament.

It would be interesting to know the circumstances and person who managed to arrange this demonstration at the School.

'Eggy' Eggleton makes an interesting comment (in OBAN 13) that other than the AOBA, he has more affinity with reunions of other regiments than with his parent corps. I am relieved to know that I am not the only one guilty of heresy in preferring to remember time spent with the infantry rather than with REME. Perhaps this is a point of unspoken common experience and is worthy of debate. Why should this be?

I suggest that marching with and being an accepted honorary member of an historical line regiment made a much deeper impression than that of being a number in a huge corps of worker-soldiers. The experience of soldiering with a battalion created a common bonding which can be compared with that to which we were exposed as young boys at Arborfield. We were all in it together!

Finally, I was treated with far more respect and consideration by my infantry COs than I was by my parent corps. Perhaps this is also not a unique experience of days long past.

(Bryan, my own experience of always being attached to the Royal Artillery, but never with any one battery for very long, made me feel no particular bonding whatever with either the RA or REME - but with the AAS most definitely. It would be interesting to hear other views - Ed.)

 *Eric Corscadden (42A) writes from New Zealand*

(As extracted from his letter to Peter Gibson - Ed). I would dearly love to be with you all at the 1998 reunion, but unfortunately will have to miss out again this year as old age is catching up with me. Please tender my apologies.

The British Services Ex Boys Association (BSXBA) is holding its annual reunion early in November (to coincide with Armistice Day) and this year we are holding it in Napier (organised by the Navy Boys).

May I wish you all every success for the October get-together.

 *Clem Clements (50B) writes*

What a great idea to increase the number of OBANs a year. Personally I find it very interesting, and the names and memories that flood back as a result are amazing. Like most people, I have been meaning to write, but until now never got around to it, but two letters in OBAN 13 have prompted me.

John Simon's illness that terminated his career before it had started and Frank Fendick's letter regretting his father's advice, and the wasted years in the Army.

John's letter could well have been mine. Joining the Boy's School in 1950, I had never been away from my mother's apron strings and as a result knew nothing of life or work. After the period of regimental training, we started basic fitting, manual work and education. It was during this time I picked up an infection that spread up both my arms from the wrists upwards. As a result I spent a few weeks in the MRC near the back end of the camp, confined. This, of course, resulted in my losing instructional time and being back-squadded to intake 50B. I often reflect that this skin disease could have resulted in my premature discharge, and what my situation would be now. Thankfully, it cleared up, and I went on to have a career in a job I loved to the end.

With reference to Frank's letter, I had been and still am 'Army barmy' and as a young lad in India, before the war, wanted to join the Army. My father was an RSM in the Northamptonshire Regiment when I was 16 and wanted to enlist. His advice was, certainly, but learn a trade so that you have something to fall back on after your service. Thankfully I took his advice and never regretted it. This resulted in getting to the top of the NCO's rank structure and consequently having good responsible jobs in civilian life in the communications business - namely, Satellite Navigation and Satellite Television, followed by working for the Electricity Board. As a result of my Army career I travelled the world, learnt a trade and was able to take early retirement at 58 years of age.

I have three men to thank for my career, which I loved: my

father's insistence that I learn a trade, the basic workshop instructor who recommended that I be back-squadded (as he realised that I was still immature), and the ASM who spotted that I was Tels material as against Instruments, which was my wish. It made me sad that Frank wrote in the vein he did.

In closing, may I pass on some views of my time at Arborfield 1950-53? Three years was a long time - two years would have been about right. Living in barrack rooms of 20 or so lads brought out comradeship and team work, doing barrack block duties etc. Having contact with other cap badges in our off duty hours broadened our views without realising it. CSM Brady - Irish Guards, Sgt Buckley with the left-handed salute - Grenadier Guards, Sgt Furneo? - South Wales Borderers, Sgt Roberts - Lancashire Regiment, and Sgt Outerside - Gloucesters (the drill squad I was in, being rather short on enlistment). CSM 'Bull' Weston - Grenadier Guards was the guiding light in A Company.

Looking at the present day set up, I am not too keen on the smaller rooms and the personal possessions the apprentices are allowed at present. They appear to be more isolated from their mates and being made more responsible for their environment would be an improvement. In my opinion the living quarters are not so good - the ablution areas are not up to standard and some of the amenities are in need of repair.

What is not up for criticism is the quality, bearing and good manners of those apprentices that I have met and I hope that they all enjoy their careers as much as I did.

See you all in October, all the best.

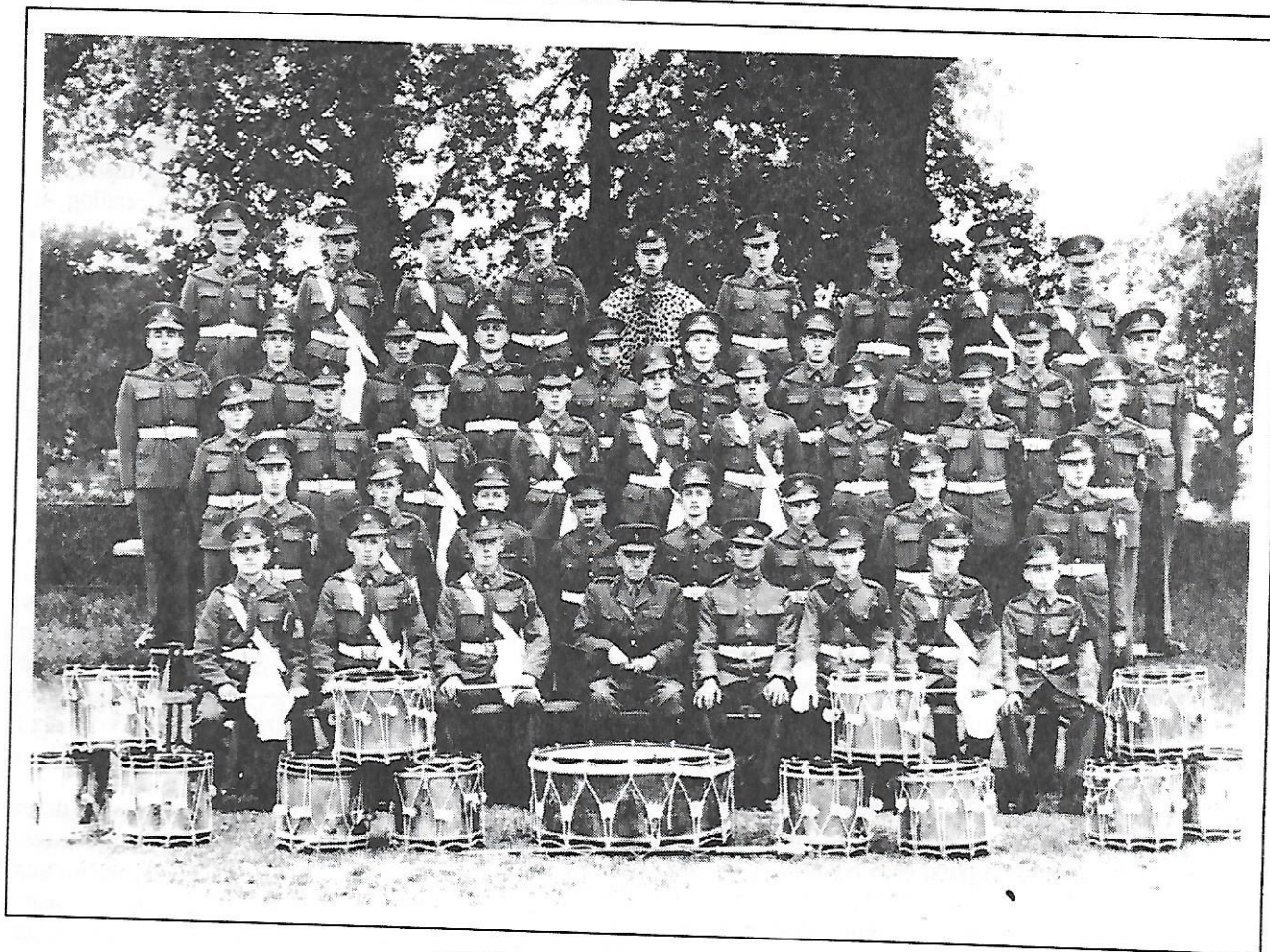
 *Peter Baldwin (42A) writes*

I am most grateful to Brian Conway for convincing me that my memory was not yet as bad as others would have me believe. In 1974 I visited the College, and wrote letters, to try to resurrect our School march, 'The Arborfield Apprentices'. I hummed the tune as best I could but no one recalled it; even a member of the Pipe Band at that time in 1942-44 could not remember such a tune. The words are exactly as Brian quotes them!

By any standards, 'The Arborfield Apprentices' is a stirring march and I wonder if, when it is properly scored, the Admin meeting referred to would reconsider their decision? I don't know what it would cost to have it transcribed for full military band but, if it is an attainable sum, I would contribute and believe many pre-1944 recruits would do likewise.

Whilst I am writing, I would value any news of 'Ginger' Smeaton (D Company) and 'Pidge' Harrison (C Company). Best wishes.

(Peter can be contacted on Tel No. 01753 882927 - Ed.)



ATS Drum & Fife Band - Circa 1943

Charles Ashdown (42A) writes from Charlotte, USA

I regret the length in time completing this letter (it is now 11 MAY 1998) but my wife and I have moved again, this time only locally. I was reflecting on the number of times we have moved in our marriage and we are now up to twenty-five!

I am still making plans to come to the reunion, but many things are conspiring to impede that plan. My health has been causing problems and medical bills are impending. Also, one of my grand-daughters is getting married in July and that will involve visits and consequent additional expense for gifts etc. As a special affect on my decision to come is the fact that a British Airways flight goes from Charlotte to Gatwick - very convenient.

Rather than write a lengthy résumé of my career, I have included a 'biographical sketch' of my fifty years of service to the Crown. I hope you find it (like this letter) readable. I have also included a photo of the ATS Drum & Fife band circa 1943 (q.v.). I realize you may already have a copy but it cannot hurt to have more. Personnel in the photo are identified as follows:

Front row (from left):
No 4 - Col Hilborne, Commandant ATS (Boys)

No.5 - WOII ? - Bandmaster (E. Yorks)
No. 6 - Drum Major Conway

Third row (from left):
No. 3 - Leading Tap Connell

Fifth row (from left):
No. 5 - Charlie Ashdown - Big Drum
No. 9 - 'Dusky' Pollard.

Most boys are wearing the GS badge (January 1942 and after). 11 boys are wearing the old REME badge & dogs. 1 boy in the front row is wearing the RAOC badge - these are 1941 intake.

In Issue 12 of OBAN it was very interesting to see mention of 'Curly' Hellier by Michael Dickinson and of Tony Wheatley by Donald Smith. Tony and I joined the Army at Acton, London and consequently had adjacent numbers; 2547022 and 2547023. I especially regret that I should learn of his death - another comrade gone over to his reward.

You may wonder why we have left Canada for the US. As the years go on, my wife and I had taken to spending the worst of the winter months in Florida. Eventually tiring of moving backwards and forwards, we split the difference and moved permanently to North Carolina and rather better weather.

It is quite interesting here in the deep south, the people are very friendly and helpful (if a little difficult to understand sometimes). We find that they are just as intrigued by our accent as we are by their's.

I look forward to seeing you (collectively) in October and hope that nothing else conspires to interfere.

(Thanks for your résumé and photo, Charles. Please be patient, your résumé will appear in a subsequent issue of OBAN. I am intrigued that you are in Charlotte, North Carolina, much publicised by those very readable stories written by your local author Patricia Cornwell. I will pass on your photos to the REME Museum - Ed.)

✉ *Stanley Swallowell (PS) writes from Australia*

I am enjoying receiving the AOBA News Magazine and have very much enjoyed the Spring Issue just received. You have asked for names to some of the photos printed in this issue and I have a few that might help your readers.

Photo 5 : Far left - Mickey Sharp, outside left - Sgt Arthur Cunliffe, partly hidden - 'Jacko' Jackson. The instructor going over the horse is Corporal Godfrey.

Photo 6 : Each side of the horse: with his back to the camera - Sgt Arthur Cunliffe, almost facing the camera - 'Jacko' Jackson.

Photo 7 : Centre display, standing on necks - Mickey Sharp.

Photo 8 : 'two clowns, the one with his back to the camera - Sam Cohen (I would really like to find him now) and facing the camera - Sgt Arthur Cunliffe.

I hope this is of some help to you and I look forward to the next Issue of OBAN and, who knows, if I win the 'Lotto' I could be visiting you for the reunion!! Best wishes to all.

(Thanks Stanley, I will forward your idents to the photographic archives in the REME Museum - Ed.)

✉ *John Smithson (46B) writes*

I was pleased to be able to announce to the last Management Committee Meeting that I have now completed the School Video Cassette and it has been agreed that it will be available for Reunion 98. Details are included in the *For Sale* section of OBAN 14.

(I have seen excerpts of this video - very nostalgic - Ed.)

✉ *Brian 'Lex' Barker (54B) writes*

As a 'sheep' that has rejoined the flock even as far as locating my membership card, it is with nostalgia that I have read the copies of OBAN I have received. Some of the memories though have been tinged with sadness when reading of 'mates' who have gone - especially Alan Stanton with whom I enlisted.

Regarding the list of deceased in Issue 13, I can't remember two Stantons in our division. The entry doesn't refer to Stanyer J (54B) D Company, who would be next on the roll. Has a mistake been made? If so, Jim Stanyer is dead - he unfortunately was one of the casualties of the Zeebrugge ferry disaster.

(Brian, our apologies, you are absolutely right - an erroneous computer entry. Many thanks for your vigilance - Ed.)

✉ *Wally Footner (Oct39) , Room C5, B Coy Army Technical School (Boys) writes*

The letter I received from Bob Hambly telling me the dates for this year's AOBA reunion ((23/25 October 1998) brought a wave of nostalgia to me, as that was the big day of joining the Apprentices School - 23 October 1939 - some 49 years ago. That wasn't the only reason for the nostalgia, the other one being my 20th anniversary of membership of the AOBA.

I enclose two photos of those early days (*q.v.next page*).

Photo 1 is of our combined intake, ex-Bramley, Didcot & Hillsea, plus '39 intake - B Company, CSM Barney, Lincolnshire Regiment centre, winged by Corporal Plume, K.O.S.B. and Corporal Evans, S.W.B.

Photo 2 is of 6 Wing, B Company, Oct '39 with CSM Paddy Corr R.U.R. centre, winged by Corporal McCarthy, Lancashire Fusiliers and Corporal Sanford, Beds & Herts.

In 1978 my wife brought my attention to an advert in the newspaper, saying a reunion was taking place for ex-apprentices at Arborfield. I had been meaning to join for some time, but had never got around to it. This was the opportunity - so I applied.

When I attended my first AOBA (October 1978), walking through the old 'old gates' to the Guardroom and eventually reporting to the Gym, it was as if time had stood still. Everything was the same - wonderful!!! I was told my accommodation would be C5 - B Company and did I need a guide? They were joking of course. As I walked up the road to C Block, it was as if I had just been dismissed after church parade on Sunday. Ah, those memories.

Arriving at Room C5, there was the usual barrack room

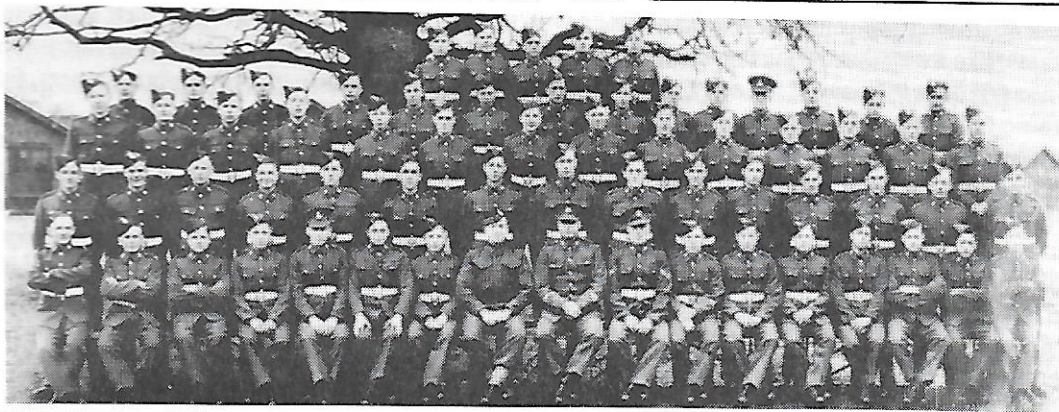


Photo 1

banter and on entering, there were several chaps milling around; one chap in particular was actually sitting on my bed in my bed space! That was dear old Sam Coster. Sam and I were great friends in '41/'42, prior to him mustering in the ranks. It was a sad loss when Sam died several years ago. We had great fun that weekend, re-enacting (in a mature way of course) the things we did 39 years previously, like marching to the Cookhouse by rooms, still using 1 pint mugs, calling out 'Boys for Work', like you know who, the late Ben Cook.

Dinner was going to be served in the Gym. Firstly, members assembled in the NAAFI/Games Room and following the Commandant, were 'piped' up the road to the Gym for dinner. The layout being the flat area partitioned off, one half for the dining area, the other being the bar. Can you imagine the organisation required to transport the bar, food etc. Everyone concerned did a great job.

One of my most memorable AOBA weekends was, as it was termed, 'The Last AOBA Re-union at the Old School 1980'.

I wonder how many of the 'old gang' are still in possession of the memorabilia given to them at the dinner - a ball point pen and lead pencil, suitably inscribed in gold lettering. That is now eighteen years ago. Where does the time go?

Who remembers during the cabaret, Bill Smith being draped with a six foot snake? (a live one!) Perhaps the most striking and pleasurable part of the weekend was the people I met, mainly for the first time in 30 years or more. Names which come to mind are, Bomber France (Cyprus '56), Charlie Cameron - we came home from Burma together in 1947 - Reg Lucas (March '43), and John Simmonds (permanent staff). I lost touch with John, he was Godfather to my son on Cyrenaica (now Libya to the uninitiated) in 1952, Sam Coster 1942, the Fountain brothers in 1940/41, Ivor Vale 1940 and Bill Hooper. Bill and I served together first as instructors at Chepstow 1952 to 1956, then Cyprus 1956 to 1959 and finally Warminster in 1960.

I could go about the early days, but of course memory is fading somewhat. Although as time drew into the middle '80s, a new intake of faces arrived, namely Spanky Roberts, Les Dangerfield, Nobby Hall, Allan Tucker, Dicky Smallman, Arthur Sainsbury, Lofty Dear and Jim Collis. The early '90s gave me more pleasure - I met Darky Smallpage, last seen (in 1947) in a cycle rickshaw in Singapore. Only he knew where the rickshaw was heading!! Bob Penny (ex-Chepstow and I served together at 1st AA Workshops, Kidbrooke in 1943. I also met his wife who was our ATS driver! Can you think of anything so wonderful?



Photo 2

I had better stop mentioning names as I could go on and on, but I would just like to say that during my service it has been an honour and privilege to know all the chaps mentioned and of course those I have not. I hope the trend continues and I meet some more old new faces.

So by 1981 a new era started for the Association, when we commenced a very close relationship with the WOs and Sgts' Mess at Bailleul, ending in 1994 with the full cycle, and the Association found itself back home. The School - (sorry) - the College, had altered somewhat - the main road and the main gates are still there, at least. The old tree had long gone from the top of the square, but not the shelters (air raid) - I can still see vividly the lads running over the shelters in FSMO, with rifles at the High Port. Ouch!!!

I must draw my epistle to a close, but before I do so, I would like to thank all Commandants past and present for their support to the Association over the years, members of their staff and not forgetting the senior members of Bailleul WOs and Sgts' Mess and latterly RSM Rooney, Welsh Guards for the use of the College Mess.

There is one more point I would like to clear up before I close and it is with reference to the letter written by Brian Conway in OBAN 13, para 2, 'The Reds'. I would like to put the record straight as to where it came from. In 1939 the School at Didcot (RAOC) closed and the boys transferred to Arborfield. With them came what we called our 'battle cry' - The Reds (Frank Archer taught me the words). From 1939 until I left the School in 1943, this battle cry was sung by B Company supporters at all inter-company sporting and other competitive events - only B Company ever sung The Reds during my time, so I don't know when it became the School/College March. Needless to say, B Company colour is RED.

I would like to conclude by saying, we did during that period (the war years) have some hard times, especially when you first joined at 14 years old, but I think I can say we also has some great times.

Finally, I hope this, my 20th consecutive AOBA reunion will be better than all the rest.

 *Brian Conway (42A) writes from Cyprus*

In your (privately) written letter of June 25, 1997, you wrote, 'because you are such a prolific contributor to OBAN, I have to delay your latest letter(s) to OBAN 13. You are due to appear in OBAN 12 and to put this current contribution in as well would completely fill the *Letters to the Editor* with Brian Conway!!'

With that comment. I had decided to give you and all other readers a well deserved rest from my literary endeavours, or at least, *that had been my intention* until I had read the very amusing musical article from Peter Simmonds, published on

Pages 22 & 23 of OBAN 13, which ended with your comment, 'thanks Peter - I bet this will start Brian Conway off again!!' (You are a glutton for punishment, Ed?)

And so it has! But it was not this letter which has 'started-me-off-again', but that from Harold Price (42A? - Surely 42B, Ed?) who, writing on Page 19, says that he was of April '42 intake, and seems to believe that I was? I was of January '42 (42A) intake and had enlisted at Arborfield some 12 weeks before Harold, by which time not only had I been appointed Boy Drum Major of the Corps of Drums, but was also a Boy NCO i/c a barrack room in E Block, across the square from the jeeps in K Block!

Harold should remember that, when the Corps of drums was formed in January 1942, the majority of its members were from the Duke of York's School, each of whom had had many years of experience playing in the Corps of Drums before coming to Arborfield? My appointment to lead the Corps of Drums, so very early in my career, was because of this previous experience more than anything else.

General Montgomery formerly took command of the Eight Army in North Africa on 15 August 1942. If Harold believes that my 'Monty' photo was *not* taken in May 1942 (some 16 weeks after I had enlisted, not 6 weeks as stated by him), perhaps he would like to put a date to it, given that Easter and Summer Leaves would have been taken during the periods under debate above??

It was believed that General Montgomery was taking his leave of all units under his command prior to his leaving for Egypt when this picture was taken. If Arborfield was not part of Southern Command, of which Command was it part?

It would seem that Harold had missed my article, spread across *three* pages of OBAN 12 (I can see what you mean about me being such a prolific contributor, Ed), wherein, on Page 18, I offer my apologies to Pete Jones (42B) for doubting that members of the Pipe Band wore 'Kilt Order' during the War years.

As I explained in a previous article, 'Tiny' Parsons (42C) was selected from a number of boys by RSM McNally to lead the Military Band down the square for the March Past after the Sunday Church Parade, in my stead. This change could not have taken place until after October 1942, when 'Tiny' enlisted. Up until then I had been the *only* Boy Drum Major on parade and if Harold would care to examine the 'Monty' photo again, he would see that I, and not 'Tiny' Parsons, am standing in front of the Military Bandsmen of the 4/7 Royal Dragoon Guards as their Drum Major.

Nor is Harold correct when he says that the Pipes and Drums also led the parade up the main road after the Camp Hall Church Service. It is not customary for Pipes and Drums to precede a Corps of Drums on ceremonial occasions (see the Massed Bands of the Brigade of Guards during the 'Trooping the Colour' on Horse Guards Parade) and as Harold himself

tells us, he does have a photo of the three bands, led by Brian, taken during the General Montgomery visit, with the Pipes and Drums *at the back!* And how many Boy Drum Majors are shown in this photo, Harold?

It was not Sergeant *Hotchkiss* to whom I was referring as, 'a sanctuary of love and tranquillity', but to Sergeant *Hospice* (- well that's what it sounded like to me!) - Page 18, OBAN 10. My attempt at witticism seems to have been lost on Harold Price (and on you, Ed)?

There was often ribald banter going on between Ben Cook and Sergeant Hotchkiss and when I wrote of 'the bellowing voice of Ben as it reverberated throughout the School, ordering Sergeant *Hospice*(?) to report to the Guardroom', he was actually yelling for Sergeant *Hoss Piss*! and I would have thought that Harold might have 'twigged' this from my further comment, on the same page, '..... and *Horse Gilbert* was not amused either??' (David Ferns - 44B, Page 19, OBAN 3 refers).

(Is all now clear, A/T Price? - Ed.)

I most certainly did my fair share of 'agriculture' under Ben Cook! Nobody was exempt from 'digging for victory' and if Harold thought that doing jankers under Hotchkiss was preferable to doing agriculture fatigues under Ben Cook, then I can only assume that he had never done jankers. I know which I would have preferred!

With regard to the 8 photos, 'all of the 1943 era' from Arthur 'Chip' Tomlinson (42A) - Pages 13 to 16 of OBAN 13 - which had been forwarded to me by the Editor for possible identification of those shown in each, and in particular, Photo No. 1, which claims to show Mrs Hilborne presenting a silver cup to A/T ADG Wheatley? I have expressed some doubts about this picture, particularly the identity of the lady making the presentation. Was it Mrs Hilborne?

From the Gymkhana-like scenes, emanating from these pictures, the marquee, the bunting, PT display, the summery dress worn by the lady, I would have placed these scenes to have been about the Summer of 1943, at a time when I had believed that Colonel Hilborne had handed over command of the School to Colonel White. Perhaps the Editor could confirm when this hand-over took place?

There are two minor errors in the write-up to Photo No 2, 'Brian Conway leads the Corps of Drums'. Errors which might make all the difference for identification purposes. 'The drummer in the third rank, third file from the left is Jack Wadsworth, next one behind Derek Pollard'. This caption should have read, 'next BUT one behind Derek Pollard'. The same should apply to the position of CQMS (CSM) Nobby Hall, next BUT one behind Dickenson. Charlie Ashdown was the *Base* Drummer of the Corps of Drums, *not* the Military Band.

At the end of the very fine, 'Appreciation of RSM McNally MBE', published on Page 9, OBAN 13, contributed by Pete gripton (56B) you ask, 'Anyone know if he ever visited the School after his retirement?' Yes he did. I can remember Mr and Mrs McNally visiting the Sergeants Mess on several social evenings. I believe that they lived in Reading and that Mrs McNally was employed in the offices of the Berkshire County Council.

When I returned to the School for my second stint as an instructor (1960/67) I was saddened to learn of RSM McNally's untimely death which I believe was caused when a bus ran into a queue standing at a bus stop, with Mr McNally being one of the fatally injured.

I had the pleasure of attending RSM McNally's Farewell Dinner at the Sergeants Mess, where he formerly handed over to Regimental Corporal Major Sallis (The Blues) amidst a great deal of good humoured banter between them, when the RSM handed over a pace-stick to the RCM with the words, 'Would a *Donkey Walloper* know what to do with it?' (or words similar) Sir!! I never did see the RCM carrying a pace-stick on parade. He normally carried a riding crop and dressed in his riding breeches and boots (à la Monty in my photo). He was often mistaken for an officer and was saluted (which I believe earned him a few extra pints in the Mess).

I have read much about the 'Tiffy' stakes in the past numbers of OBAN and I wondered whether I would head the list of *RSM's-Served-Under at Arborfield*, with RSM McNally (1942/44 & 1953/56), RCM Sallis (1956/?), RSM Stewart, Irish Guards (?), RSM 'arold Simpson, Coldstream Guards and RSM McMahon, Grenadier Guards? I forget the dates, but I served under every one of them. (*Look at next page, reprinted from Page 5, OBAN 8 - Ed.*)

(John Northam and I met RSM McMahon in the Swan at Arborfield a couple of years ago, having asked him to contribute to OBAN. Although he said he would consider it, he hasn't come back to us as yet. I think he still lives locally though - Ed.)

At the beginning of this letter I mentioned the article from Peter Simmonds. In the third para of that article, on Page 23, Peter attempts to persuade Ken Jenner (44A) to tell of the sense of humour (or lack of it) of the Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry at Cowley Barracks, Oxford.

By a strange coincidence, at about the same time that I received my copy of OBAN 13, I also received a telephone call from Larnaca, from the same Ken Jenner who, I regret to say, I do not remember, although he tells me that he was the 'cymbal basher' in the Corps of Drums. Ken was holidaying in Larnaca with his family and had called to tell me that he knew most of the words to Bandmaster Nel's composition, The Arborfield Apprentice. I have urged him to send these in for possible publication in a future issue of OBAN.

With regard to your (the Ed) question, Do I know of any LP or CD in existence of the old bugle calls?' (Page 19, OBAN 12). I regret I do Not. I would have guessed that your best avenue in this direction would have been through 'Young Rifleman' John Maddox (44B) who, with his experiences as Secretary of the Royal Green Jackets Association, might have contacts with Bugle Majors who might be willing to help you in your search.

While I was in charge of the buglers at Arborfield, they learned their calls from a 'A Book of Regimental and Daily Routine Bugle Calls' which, I believe, was available from either Boosey & Hawkes or George Potter & Co., both of Aldershot, from whom you may gain further knowledge about the LPs or CDs. If you have no further success in this direction, please let me know. I do have one other contact who is with the Royal Green Jackets (TA) in London, who is also a regular visitor to our holiday complex in Paphos.

(Many thanks, Brian. As to being a glutton for punishment, I deliberately make comments designed to provoke our readership into putting pen to paper. It works! - Ed.)

REGIMENTAL SERGEANT MAJORS 1939 - Sept 1995

Army Technical School (Boys)			
Rank	Name	Regt	Dates
WO1 RSM	H E Cook	GREN GDS	1939-Apr 41
WO1 RSM	R L McNally MBE	SG	May 41-Feb 47

Army Apprentices School			
Rank	Name	Regt	Dates
WO1 RSM	R L McNally MBE	SG	Feb 47-Sep 56
WO1 RCM	J T Sallis	RHG	Sept 56-Jun 60
WO1 RSM	J Stewart	IG	Jun 60-Jan 63
WO1 RSM	H Simpson	COLDM GDS	Jan 63-Apr 66

Army Apprentices College			
Rank	Name	Regt	Dates
WO1 RSM	D McMahon	GREN GDS	Apr 66-Apr 69
WO1 RSM	R Woodfield	GREN GDS	Apr 69-Jan 71
WO1 RSM	D Delgarno	SG	Jan 71-Sept 72
WO1 RSM	C Petherick	COLDM GDS	Sept 72-Jul 74
WO1 RSM	H V Meredith	IG	Jul 74-May 78
WO1 RSM	L Perkins	GREN GDS	May 78-Oct 79
WO1 RSM	D Cummings	GREN GDS	Oct 79-Jan 80
WO1 RSM	D P Yorks	COLDM GDS	Jan 80-May 81

Princess Marina College			
Rank	Name	Regt	Dates
WO1 RSM	D P Yorks	COLDM GDS	May 81-Dec 81
WO1 RSM	A Fox	COLDM GDS	Dec 81- Aug 83
WO1 RSM	J H Todd	COLDM GDS	Aug 83-May 86
WO1 RSM	A Milloy	SG	May 86-Jul 88
WO1 RSM	N F Hartley	COLDM GDS	Aug 88-Jun 90
WO1 RSM	M Burns	IG	Jul 90-Apr 92
WO1 RSM	D Murray	SG	Apr 92-Dec 93
WO1 RSM	J F Rowell	GREN GDS	Dec 93-Sept 95

✍ B C Atkins (43A) writes from Australia

I received the latest Issue of the Newsletter today and as usual did not put it down until I had gone from cover to cover. The articles, as always were interesting and it brought back a lot of memories just reading the Newsletter.

(The original OBAN abbreviation stood for Old Boys' Association News - not Newsletter - Ed.)

✍ Colin Williams (44A) writes

Recently, my leg was broken in an accident; consequently, having time on my hands, I decided to have a 'clean-out' of some old papers, magazines etc., a process long overdue. Amongst the accumulated rubbish of 50 years or so was a copy of the first issue of 'THE ARBORFIELD APPRENTICE'. Some predictions for the future by contributors of the first issue are interesting and worth comparison with the present day. Writing styles seem to be somewhat different to modern practice! My memory was jogged whilst reading some of the articles contained within the magazine. Some of my recollections were painful - jankers with Provost Sergeant Hotchkiss ('Get yer bucket, scrubber and cloth and get dahn to the cook'ouse!'). I think I clocked up well over 100 days jankers during my time at ATS (Boys) including 14 days awarded by Col 'Chalky' White for losing my own (as opposed to WD Issue) spectacles! Another unappreciated activity was 'agriculture' with Ben Cook and Gilbert the Horse - I could swear Gilbert was laughing while we pulled his plough, and just because there was a piece of cake short at tea-break! There were some happier memories though - 'Flash Gordon' films and excellent shows in the Camp Hall - cross country running for the School - even 'going over the wall' for VE Day. In case you may wish to use some of the articles when producing OBAN, I enclose the first issue of THE ARBORFIELD APPRENTICE. See you at the Reunion in October.

(As you say, Colin, a very interesting Volume 1, Number 1 copy. I can already see areas of interest that I will re-generate in future issues of OBAN - Ed.)

OBITUARIES

Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Ray Morris OBE - By Lt Col Moore

Old Boys will be saddened to learn of the recent death of Lt Col Ray Morris OBE. After a 37 year Army career during which Ray served with the 4/7th Dragoon Guards and more widely within the Royal Armoured Corps, he retired in 1984. Upon retirement he joined the College as a Retired Officer in the appointment of QM(Tech). He finally retired in 1994 and lived in Wokingham until his death on March 1998.

DECEASED

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

Marcus Shepherd, died 12 June 1997 (as published in **The Craftsman**).

Ex WO1(ASM) John Ronald Telford, Intake 62C at AAS Carlisle, died 24 September 1997.

Major (Retd) R J Hewton, Intake 50B at AAS Chepstow, died during 1997.

Nick Raynor, Intake 79A, died 22 January 1998 (as published in **The Craftsman**).

Members whose deaths have been notified or discovered since the publication of OBAN 13:

Name	Inits.	Intake	Member No	Date of Death
Alderman	P	54B	0289	Not Known
Baker	P R	42A	1643	Not Known
Beck	C N	54B	0264	Not Known
Bull	P N	55B	0552	Not Known
Chantler	C F	41A	1749	Sept 1997
Climo	J F	56A	0632	Not Known
Crookes	L	39B	1090	10 May 1998
Lyle	A S	43A	0392	Not Known
McBride	M	54A	0355	Not Known
Morris	N E J	56B	0685	Not Known
Toms	M J	48B	0407	Not Known
Wallis	P C	56B	0703	Not Known
Williams	D G H	52A	0121	Not Known
Williams	T J	82C	1421	Not Known
Young	P R	58A	0691	Not Known

DONATIONS

The Association acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations to the Museum Development Fund:

Name	Membership No.	Donation
G G Bonner (49B)	1296	£5.00
E G Cummings (39X)	1606	£10.00
W C Clure (44B)	1964	£10.00

One other member has increased his Standing Order payment to include an annual donation:

Name	Membership No.	Donation
J L Netherwood	1596	£10.00

If your donation has not been listed, the Committee apologises and expresses its thanks.

MALAYA REUNION 2000 - Greetings from Canada.

A reunion is presently being planned for all who served in Malaya & Borneo during the emergency years. Calling all British & Commonwealth servicemen and women to join the reunion.

Eligibility. This reunion is open to all who served in Malaya & Borneo during the emergency years and includes the Armed Forces of the British Isles, Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, South Africa and the Gurkha Regiments. Army, Navy and Air Force and their

appendages, you are all welcome!

Contact us for the full programme:

Malaya Reunion 2000
205 Carrick Avenue,
Keswick, Ontario,
Canada L4P 3N7.
Telephone area code: 905 476-9369
Facsimile area code: 905 476-3278

RESIGNATIONS

The following members have resigned from the Association in recent months:

Name	Init.	Intake	Member No	Date of resignation
Tidey	D R	53B	0177	09-04-98
Williams	R A	54A	0184	04-04-98
Barnard	M C	54B	0291	22-04-98
Basting	T R J	54B	0364	26-06-98
Bell	J	55A	0475	04-04-98
Blackwell	A L	44A	1009	01-11-97
Stevens	P J	52B	1150	19-03-98
Bishop	S P P	88B	1745	23-03-98
Cawle	J R	PS	1857	04-04-98
Harvey	L J	45B	1859	23-03-98
Jeffrey	J P	87B	1908	10-03-98

MISSING MEMBERS

Over the years, the Association has lost touch with large numbers of members. The Membership Secretary is continuing to search for these missing members and is having some success; a number have re-activated their membership and a few have formally resigned. (A list of this group is included above). There are, however, large numbers for whom we have insufficient detail to mount a successful search. A list of these missing members will be published in future issues of OBAN. If any member has any information at all which might help the Membership Secretary in his search, please contact him.

Name	Init.	Intake	Member No	Name	Init.	Intake	Member No
Ashton	A	51B	0001	Hill	-	50A	0027
Banks	M	51B	0002	Hoare	-	52B	0028
Barlow	D	49A	0003	Howard	-	52B	0029
Bennett	R	48A	0004	Hutchinson	J	49A	0030
Bennett	-	51B	0005	Humble	J	50A	0031
Bennie	R	49A	0006	Jacques	R	48A	0032
Blakey	G	49A	0007	Knight	R	48A	0033
Bradley	J	51B	0009	Longbottom	-	52B	0034
Brant	R	49B	0010	Newton	J	51B	0039
Brennan	M	51B	0011	Nixen	R	51B	0040
Brown	E J	PS	0012	O'Brian	R	51B	0041
Butler	G	Not Known	0013	Patterson	D	49A	0042
Callan	W	49A	0014	Parrack	-	47A	0044
Cant	J	51B	0015	Robinson	W	Not Known	0046
Cavalier	J	51B	0016	Russel	R	49A	0047
Charrington	N D	PS	0017	Singer	C A	51B	0048
Clement	K	49A	0019	Skeates	-	49B	0050
Coppen	M J	50B	0020	Stevens	R	49A	0051
Cullum	A	49A	0021	Smith	J	49A	0052
Daughters	p	49A	0022				
Foreman	R	50A	0024				
Goodes	J	49A	0025				

OLD GORDONIANS ASSOCIATION - "Semper Fidelis"

Calling all Old Gordonians. The Old Gordonian Association is currently engaged in a nationwide/international operation to trace those members of the Gordon Boys Home, now Gordons School, who, from 1943 onwards, left the School and went to the Army Apprentices College, Arborfield, to train as technicians. The impetus for this was due to the determination of Brigadier F A Hilborne MBE who was particularly interested to give Gordon Boys a sound technical training for a career in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers; he had recently moved from Arborfield to take over as Commandant of the Gordon Boys Home, as it was then called.

We have already advertised in hundreds of local newspapers around the UK and, more recently, in *Soldier* magazine. The response has been most encouraging with some Boys making contact again after 30, 40 and even 50 years +. You will see that those who had lost contact for 50 years or more would be contemporaries, like myself, of the Boys who attended the College at Arborfield in the 1940s.

I would like very much to hear from any Old Gordonian Boy who made

the transition to the Army Apprentices College and is interested in renewing his association with the Gordon School, to contact me as follows:

1. C/o Old Gordonians Association,
The Gordon School,
West End, WOKING,
Surrey GU24 9PT.
Tel No: 01276 858085 (Please leave message).

2. Roy Newman (5473)
Secretary & Treasurer (OGA)
6 Pickering, Wildridings,
BRACKNELL RG12 7EA.
Tel No: 01344 427701 (Please leave message).

Roy Newman (5473) Secretary & Treasurer.

ASSOCIATION ITEMS FOR SALE.

Video Cassette, entitled 'Army Apprentice' - running time 54 minutes - contents: *Reunion Parade 1997 + Old Boys Reminiscences + 'Soldier Apprentice' 1951 + 'Apprenticed to Adventure' 1962.*

Contact John Smithson (46B) on Tel. No: 01904 534491.

By post to members: £11.50

By post to non-members: £14.00

AOBA ties are available from the REME Association at the REME Museum (or the Hon. Sec.)
(Tel. No: 0118 9763223 for ordering information).

A 24 page history of the Princess Marina College/Army Apprentices College is available from the Membership Secretary, as are back numbers of the OBAN.

History: No charge, but 50p postage & packing to UK and BFPO addresses and £1.00 for overseas.

OBANs: £1.00 each including postage & packing. 5 Issues for £4.00 including postage & packing. (Orders from members overseas will attract considerably higher postage charges - overall cost will be £2.50 per issue).

If you require a copy of the History, UK based members should send postage stamps. Although payment for a single copy of OBAN may be made with postage stamps (5 x 20p) requests for more than one copy should be accompanied by a cheque.

Cheques for ALL items should be made payable to:
Central Bank AAC (AOBA).

THE CRAFTSMAN

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	Air Mail Rates:	On application.

Cheques should be made payable to REME Corps Account No. 2 and crossed. All correspondence should be sent to :

The Editor,
THE CRAFTSMAN,
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