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**Issue
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O B A N



Arborfield Army Apprentice's Magazine

Arborfield Old Boys Association

www.arborfieldoldboys.co.uk

ARBORFIELD OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

President

Colonel Dan Scott ADC CEng FIMechE

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Chairman

Lt Col Mike Tizard, CEng, FIRT, (76B)

Vice Chairman

Lt Col Bill Cleasby, MBE, IEng, FIET, sq(w), (61C)

Honorary Secretary

David (Tich) Schofield (65A)

7, St Marks House, St Marks Avenue, Salisbury, SP1 3DL

Tel:01722239174 E-mail tich@arborfieldoldboys.co.uk

Honorary Registrar

Alec Powell (64C)

30, Pyrton Lane, Watlington, Oxfordshire. OX49 5LX

Tel: 01491 614142 E-Mail alecreme38@gmail.com

Honorary Treasurer

Laurence (Laurie) Blakley (61B)

47, Chaplains Avenue, Cowplain, Waterlooville, Hampshire. PO8 8QH

Tel: 02392258934 E-mail laurie.blakley@ntlworld.com

Honorary OBAN Editor

Ray Stevens (64C)

4, Golden Grove, Southampton, Hampshire SO14 1PT

Tel:02380491570 E-mail: raystevens599@live.co.uk

Honorary Webmaster

Mark Jobes

6, Donnington Close, Camberley, Surrey. GU15 3NJ

E-mail: mhjobes@gmail.com

Honorary Recruitment Officer

Rob Castell (64A)

4, Grace Close, Haslington, Cheshire. CW1 5FX

Tel: 01270 258978 E-mail rsc100@hotmail.co.uk

AOBA Chairman's Report



I must open by reminding us all that REME no longer has a home in Arborfield; the last element to leave was the REME RHQ which left on 9th November 2015. The loss of Arborfield will undoubtedly have some impact upon us,

but I sense it will be more a spiritual loss than one of any practical concern. We still have a strong following in and around the Arborfield area and as we move forward I aim to ensure we as ex-apprentices and members of the Corps leave some lasting legacy of our time spent there. I will remain engaged on your behalf and update you as and when I know more.

We had our usual 6 monthly committee meeting in October, but for the first time it was held in Lyneham. The RSM of the newly formed 8 Trg Bn REME is an apprentice VM of 93A vintage and kindly agreed the use of his new mess. It's heartening to see that ex-apprentices are still serving throughout the Corps in various roles and ranks, I bumped into one the other day who was 2003 vintage, a Sgt who has just started his Artificer training. Building and maintaining relationships with serving ex-apprentices will be key to maintaining our link to the Corps as we move forward. We were extremely grateful to the RSM as it gave the committee the opportunity to visit Lyneham and see the new Warrant Officer's and Sergeant's Mess first hand. Later we took the opportunity to visit the site of

the REME museum which currently resembles a warehouse as it is full of packing cases of various shapes and sizes. We all agreed it will be a superb venue when it's complete.

Reflecting on my first three months in the Chair, I have to say how impressed I've been by the enthusiasm and commitment of the committee and members. We have held yet another superb reunion in Hinckley with the 65'ers celebrating their 50th. It was lovely to see David Schofield, who has done so much work for the AOBA leading the parade; I know he enjoyed it. Mark Jobes has completely revamped the website which now has a fresh feel about it and is very impressive, please if you haven't already done so take a look. And, we've had another excellent magazine hit our doormat. Other members of the committee are busy working in the background to ensure we operate as professionally and efficiently as we can. Finally I must report that our long standing Honorary Secretary, David Schofield, has decided that after 14 years service, the time has come to give someone else a go. David has held the baton for long enough and has given notice. He will be standing down next year and I'm therefore looking for a volunteer to take the baton forward. Ideally (but not essential) it would be someone of late 60's early 70's vintage who would be willing to give up their time for around a three year tenure before passing it on again. If you feel the post has your name on it, please get in contact with any member of the committee.

Mike Tizard

Please note that the views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the policy and views, official or otherwise, of either the Editor or of the Arborfield Old Boys Association and therefore, no responsibility for these will be accepted. All contributions and articles for inclusion in OBAN are most warmly welcomed although text in Microsoft Word format and photo/images in TIFF or high JPEG formats are preferred. Photographs or diagrams must be high resolution if they are to look acceptable - aim for something at least 100kb in size.

Send article and photographs separately, please do not embed photographs within the text.

Membership of the Arborfield Old Boys Association is open to all those who served as apprentice or staff member, at one of the Army Apprentices' Schools or Colleges at Arborfield between 1939 and 2004. There is an annual subscription of £15.00. Application forms are available by post from the Honorary Secretary, and on the website www.arborfieldoldboys.co.uk

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Committee Members Reports



Honorary Secretary's Report

What a great reunion we all had! For me it topped all of the other 24 I've attended.... Made so by being my 50th Anniversary year and being given the honour and privilege of taking the Parade. Won't be possible to top that I doubt... having said that I just know I'll enjoy all the reunions yet to come. On that point I can report a couple of changes to the general format for 2016..... just to see how we get on. Firstly we are relaxing the dress code for Friday evening and propose a somewhat more informal approach, no ties and jackets – but a shirt with collar and slacks; but no sweatshirts and jeans please (not that liberated!). Hope we all find that more comfortable and relaxing. Then following a number of comments regarding the lack of time to look around the NMA and the increased cost of providing lunch we are going to try something different for 2016 and see how it goes down. We will not be renting the marquee (at a cost of £1,800 for the two hours) and having a sit-down meal, but in place we will have 'haversack rations' delivered to the Apprentice Memorial directly following our Drum Head Service. Frankly the cost of the sit-down meal is getting well out of hand and we feel the NMA are being quite avaricious over this. Anyway this will enable us to have around 2 hours to look around the NMA before the coaches take us back to Hinckley. Of course the public bar will be open as well the main reception area, but we hope this will give people the opportunity of having a better look at some of the other memorials around the NMA. This is a trial and so we urge you to give us your feedback for future years.

So now I have to report an item of personal sadness and one I have deliberated over for an age

In 1999 the association decided the time had come to have a website, and so I volunteered for the task and as such joined the AOBA Committee. In the early days I built the site with only dial-up as a means of connection and to say the least this was frustrating – broadband had not been invented at that time.....However I'm proud of the fact that over 80% of the current content on our site today has its origins in that early work. However, sadly I had to stand down in mid 00'es

as the Web Master due to family commitments. After a short break of a little over 2 years I was asked to re-join the committee picking up responsibility for the website again. This I was delighted to do and remained in that role until 2010 when our dear friend Bill Cleasby announced he was standing down as Honorary Secretary at the 2011 AGM.

At the same time the AOBA considered the possibility of moving away from our beloved Arborfield and so I took on the responsibility of considering one of the alternatives. You guys must have thought the option I proposed worthwhile as you voted almost unanimously for it at the 2011 AGM. Since then I have organised 4 reunions away from Arborfield and am proud to say they have gone down very well with the attendance levels increasing year on year. However all good things come to an end and 2016 will be both my 14th full year on the committee and the 5th reunion I will have organised. As such I believe I have done my bit, so to speak and consider it's time for fresh eyes to take over, so with a high degree of reluctance I must inform all I will not be seeking re-election as Honorary Secretary at the 2016 AGM.

I want to thank all the committee members for their unwavering support and in particular both Brian Hutchins and Bill Cleasby for their support and guidance, both of them have always been available whenever I have needed any help. In addition I am more than a little grateful to all my friends in the Association who have shown unwavering support for me over the years and I am very very grateful for the friendships forged over those years and look forward to enjoying many many more years in the company of those friends.

Mike Tizard is seeking volunteers to take over from me following the 2016 AGM and so I urge people to consider stepping up It's only because of volunteers we are able to continue going from strength to strength.

God bless

David Schofield 65A

Front & Rear Photographs: Both of buildings we all remember, but sadly no longer exist.



Honorary OBAN Editor's Report

It has been pointed out to me that the joke on page 34 Of OBAN 62 may well have caused some people distress.

I wish to apologise, and make it perfectly clear that no offence was meant or intended by its inclusion in this magazine.

I must thank all of those members who have responded to my appeal for material. I just need the rest of you to do the same now. Details of what formats to use for both text and photographs is on page 3. I know that Pdf files are much smaller, but please do not use this format, as it makes it very difficult, sometimes impossible for me to use, especially for photographs.

I was lucky enough to attend an AOBA Committee Meeting, at Lyneham recently. We did not get to see very much of the new camp, but what we did

see looked impressive. I now need to talk our new Chairman into obtaining some photographs as soon as possible, so that I can publish them for all to see.

May I take this opportunity to wish one and all a very Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year, and safe 2016.

Ray Stevens 64C



Honorary Web Master's Report

Firstly I would like to thank David Schofield for the immense support he has provided during the transition to the release of the new website and for having the blind

faith to allow me to be involved in the first instance. The project would not have been possible without his assistance.

I would also like to thank other members of the committee for their input and guidance during the development and pre-release phase and my two pressganged testing/checking volunteers – John Darwent and Nigel Canning.

The new website is now up and running and most of the content from the "old" website has been transferred over. There are a number of photo albums that need to be completed but I now have the relevant files and will continue to upload the content in the coming weeks.

There is still a lot of development that I would like to do to enhance the website and to hopefully use the site in a very productive manner in an attempt to assist in the recruitment of new members and to provide more information and services to current members.

All members currently receiving the OBAN magazine electronically have now been registered on the website and can download the magazine at their leisure and will be able to access members only areas which will be expanded in due course. I am open to all good suggestions on site improvements and what members would like to see incorporated into the site – please contact me via the website.

Overall it has been and still is an absolute pleasure and I am happy with the transition and progress so far but there is still a great deal of work to do. Some projects in the pipeline are:

- An all in one application form that can be completed online and payments made in real time.

- An interactive version of OBAN and other documents that can be viewed directly from within the website.

- All members to have a login to the site (all new members/those renewing will automatically be registered and details sent to them via email)

Mark Jobs 77C



Honorary Registrar's Report

The following have joined the Association since the last OBAN.

Surname	Initials	AT Details
Bartholomew	R	A-58A-X
Cain	K	A-76C-D
Eston	PJ	A-66A-A
Collings	MJ	A-84C-B
McClafferty	R	A-68C-D

Surname	Initials	AT Details
Knowles	P	A-65A-D
Smith	DC	A-69B-A
Webster	KAG	A-77C-B
Smith	A	A-65A-D
Saunders	W	A-65B-A

Alec Powell 64C



Honorary Treasurer's Report

As mentioned in the last Treasurers Report, I have finally been able to submit the Gift Aid Claims for 2013/2014 and the Fixed

Rate Bonus account for 2012/2013, 2013/2014, 2014/2015 (account now closed) to HMRC for processing and payment which hopefully will be by the end of November.

The main focus of the rest of the year will be on working with the Webmaster, Dave Cosway, on

modifying the finance side of the database to simplify the transfer of the data required by HMRC.

On a happier note for me, the amount of activity on the account has now died down and should remain very quiet until the end of the year. On which note I wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Laurie Blakely 61B



Honorary Recruiting Sergeant's Report

First, a very warm welcome to all the new members. Don't forget the committee members are here to help you, should

you have any questions, and our contact information can be found in this magazine.

I'm happy to report that recruiting is still remains buoyant, with many new members being recruited from this year's reunion of the 65ers.

Hopefully next year's reunion of the 66ers, who are a particularly strong group in the Association, will provide many more new members.

Meanwhile I am continuing with the distribution of leaflets publicising our Association to the Army

museums and REME Association branches. I have also had some self-adhesive car windscreen stickers produced, if any of you would like one of these then please contact me.

Finally, the year after next, 2017, is the 50th anniversary for the boys of 67 and we unfortunately only have thirteen members in the Association from this year group.

So if you know of anyone from the 67ers encourage them, by whatever means, to join so we can put on a good show for them in 2017 to celebrate their 50th.

Bob Castell 64A

Farewell to Bordon Weekend.

As I expect most of you are aware not only is Arborfield closing as an Army garrison but so is Bordon, with all REME training eventually being transferred to Lyneham in Wiltshire. To celebrate the ending of REME's, and especially the VMs, long association with Bordon a 'Farewell to Garrison' event was held there on Saturday June 27th. This of course offered an ideal opportunity to promote the Arborfield Old Boys Association and recruit as many ex-Arborfield people as possible – never would there be so many REME and ex-REME people gathered in one place again!

With this in mind I 'volunteered' some of the other committee members, David Schofield, Alec Powell and Ray Stevens, to join me there for the day.

Having travelled down from Cheshire the night before, and stayed at Alec's overnight, he and I turned up at Bordon at 8.30, shortly to be joined by David (late as usual) Unfortunately Ray was ill that day so was unable to join us. The field, where the event was being held, was very large and was busy with people setting up tents, gazebos, barriers, an arena, vehicles and other

day, well organised (as only REME can do it) and thoroughly enjoyable.



So, at that time we broke camp and packed up the gazebo and all the other paraphernalia, well pleased with our day's recruiting effort. It had been a long, hot and tiring day, but unfortunately it wasn't over for me yet, as I still had a three hour drive back home to Cheshire!

I must give a big thanks to David and Alec for their support on the day, to the event organisers, who did a fantastic job and to all those of you who attended and came over to say hello and give your support.

Bob Castell 64A



miscellaneous equipment.

We were directed to our pitch, between the small arms display and the REME tent, and quickly erected my gazebo and set up the table, adorned, with recruiting posters, leaflets, joining forms and copies of OBAN, and waited for the crowds to arrive. The weather was very warm and soon the field began to fill and the events began. There was dog trials, motor cycle racing, the military wives choir, a pipe band, a fun fair, displays of military vehicles and many other events going on throughout the day. One of the best and most exciting was the REME parachute display team which gave a wonderful display of precision parachuting with all of the team landing exactly on the cross in the arena.

Our gazebo attracted a lot of attention from colleagues and friends and was busy throughout the event. We managed to recruit eight new member on the day, the oldest being a 39C entrant, with many others taking away the joining forms with promises to join. We even managed to recruit the Garrison ASM who is a 95A!

The day was rounded off with a flypast at 5 o'clock by the Red Arrows, a wonderful sight. It had truly been a very successful



Terry O'Sullivan – Still fighting Part 2.

In late 1966 I decided to take my full leave entitlement for 1967 so that I could get back to Australia, my OC applied for an indulgence passage, however, I did find out later it went to the wrong department.

Although I was saving all my haircutting money I needed to save more so I volunteered to go on exercise with the Military Police to Bavaria, they needed a mechanic to look after three Land Rovers and 10 motor bikes, it turned out their fitter knew more about the bikes than me, so I looked after the Rovers and the young Lieutenant's sports car, whilst the MP sorted the bikes. It was three great weeks, I learnt to ride a motor bike, and it was great road testing the Triumph Spitfire, after a night out to get back to base we had to row across the lake and after a few beers became interesting, one night with one oar then no oar, however ... sadly no money saved .. but still here to tell the tale !!!.

On my return, our LAD went on exercise in the same area and as I had just returned from exercise I was asked to look after the rations truck and drive to and from Bavaria with a good mate Bill Almes.

We did get into a little hot water however after taking a bit too long getting back to Bielefeld after the exercise, only 3 days, we did have the rations truck after all. We also managed to cover the inside of the Bedford RL with baked bean juice after opening a can too soon, we had left it on the exhaust for a while too long!! The drive back up the Rhine was great, there were lots to see and some great places to stop and NO mobile phones !!! ...again no money saved

By February 1967 I had saved about £440 for my Australia trip, I had a letter from the OC regarding the indulgence passage as we had not heard from the Army Movements office. There was no way I couldn't go, I had told everybody and his brother I was going and I headed off to Australia.

I had my free flight from Germany to England, all ok so far. When I arrived at the Movements Office in London, the indulgence passage request had been sent to the wrong office, Movements B not A, same floor, same hallway, just 20 feet away !!! Bless 'em ...

One of the clerks told me the earliest I could travel was in three weeks, on informing him I only had six weeks leave his reply was 'tough s***' and left me standing there however, I found out from one of his colleagues that the flights left from RAF Lyneham in Wiltshire and best to speak to the Air Commodore at Lyneham. After showing my ID on arrival at the RAF Lyneham gate I was given directions to the Air Commodore's office. As luck would have it, no one was about so just knocked on his door very nice bloke, told him about

being brought up in Brisbane, wanting to see childhood friends in the Aussie Air Force and my indulgence request being sent to the incorrect office in Movements etc. He arranged my stay in



the camp until there was a flight available. When I left his office a sergeant was sat at a desk outside, he was not very happy about me slipping past him.

It was three days before my flight on a Britannia to Changi in Singapore, costing £3/9s/6d (£3.50) for three days

stay and the flight ... a bargain! I was nearly away twice before I actually went, only to be told at the last minute to stand down; very frustrating. However, on the third attempt all looked good, I sent my parents a telegram saying *I think I am off, third time lucky .. see you soon xxx*. Even as the plane was moving down the runway, I thought it was going to be cancelled, then it finally left the ground and I relaxed, what a relief, I was on my way at last !!

It was a very interesting flight, the conditions in the Britannia were a little cramped with loads of families/kids and of soldiers being posted. We stopped at Bahrain (bit smelly !!) and also RAF Gan, a very small hot island with an airstrip down the length of it. During the flight I got talking to a few lads from the Green Jackets who were being posted to Butterworth in Malaya and decided to tag on with them. It was a good decision and when we finally arrived at Changi I went to Nee Soon Transit Camp with the lads and managed to get myself some free lodging for a few days and train warrant. When we arrived the duty sergeant did a roll call and asked if anybody was missed off the list, so I piped up 'Cfn O'Sullivan Sergeant, being posted with the Green Jackets'.....he added me to the list .. Thank you Sergeant much appreciated! My travel warrant was for the train from Changi to Penang stopping at Kuala Lumpur, what an eye opening 24 hour trip, just like an old 1880's American frontier train with locals cooking in the

in the aisles, strange British Rail fruit cake and green meat.....upset tummy !!.

I caught the Chinese New Year celebrations at Kuala Lumpur which were very colourful. While sampling the green meat in the 'restaurant car' I met a guy from Sydney, we decided to team up to get to Oz and when we got to Penang we shared room costs. Next day I caught the ferry over to RAAF Butterworth and called into the Australian Air Base. I thought I would use the same tactics as at RAF Lyneham, it didn't work, I was stopped by an Englishman in the Aussie Air Force! As luck would have it, he went off for a break not long after I got there so I approached an Aussie airman and he let me see the Air Commodore, he was really helpful, I had a coffee with him and a long chat, the upshot was, I was to ring every day at 10am to see if there was room on the plane, a Hercules. Vietnam was on then, so wounded and equipment were being ferried back daily, anyway after a few days we got our lift, what a journey that was, six hours plus to Changi then another six hours plus to Darwin, I didn't care, it had taken me about two weeks to get to Australia ...

While the plane was being re-fuelled in Darwin I went in search of one of my school friends Allen Nowland from Rocklea who was in the Australian Air Force stationed there.

I found him in their equivalent to our NAAFI, on calling out his name the first thing he said to me was 'Terry you're speaking like a pom' or words of that effect, then we got my baggage off the plane and proceeded to the bar. Tragically, he was killed less than a year later, in a car accident with a kangaroo near Alice Springs, I named my first son Allen after him.

My travelling mate went on to Sydney, and as usual, I didn't keep in touch, forgot to get his details

Although there was not much to see in Darwin in those days, I had a great week there, steak for breakfast, drive in movies, only remember the Doris Day film, *Calamity Jane*, sunbathing and a few beers, the only downside, I fell asleep on the last day and burnt all the skin off my stomach.

It was a great week though, but had to set off again; Allen had organised a lift to Richmond Air Base, which took over six hours by Hercules, it was steady flight in the comfy red plastic strap seats !!

My other mate, Doug Russell was stationed with the Australian Air Force at Williamstown near Sydney, however, as he was on duty when I arrived I ended up kipping in his NCO barrack room that night. The following day we were off to see his brother John, ex RAAF living in Nelson Bay.

I stayed at John's place in Nelson Bay, it was great seeing John, however, he thought I was still the young lad from years ago who used to have a problem at the sight of blood etc and he asked me

to skin and gut a rabbit for tea ... I did it no probs! We drank loads of beer at the local pubs and went swimming on Bondi beach. After a few attempts at body surfing I caught what they call a 'grubber', the wave takes you along bottom on the sand at a fair speed, it took all the burnt skin off my stomach, I can still remember when I was dumped on the beach just standing up and not moving for some time, boy did that sting !!!



I went back there after the Sydney Championships in 2012 and surfed again, even though it was a bit chilly for November it had to be done ...no grubber this time ..

The following week I went up to Brisbane and called into Rocklea and Inala, saw friends and stayed a couple of days with my Mum's friend in Rocklea; Mrs Barsby (Aunty Toots), lovely lady,

years later in January 1974. The school was on stilts as were all the houses in the area by Oxley Creek, it was hard to imagine the water getting so high.

Going there brought back memories of the snakes that got into the house, under the house, making their way up the road by our house...., my Dad caught a small one under the house and chopped it into small bits. I took it into school the next day in a vinegar jar. Our neighbour also caught and dispatched a huge monster making its way up the middle of the road too big for a jar though. The other beasties were the spiders, we had them under the house (houses also on stilts), you had to be a bit careful round those little red beggars

...

My brother Peter went back to Brisbane in 2001 and visited the Rocklea State School and picked up their Centenary Book (1885-1985), I remembered a few faces and teacher's names, but sadly no photo's survived of my time there. One picture showed a Dutch boy I knew well, he lived at the other end of the same road, I remember it took a week to learn his name, still can't spell it though !!. Johanas Yosavias Donkersloot!!

Doug sent me a telegram to let me know a flight was available to Darwin so I got the train from Brisbane to Sydney for the return journey, what a great 24 hour journey I shared the carriage with servicemen about to re-join their units for Vietnam Very enjoyable, beer and the scenery through the Blue Mountains was also fantastic . I ended with a week to spare when I returned to Nelson Bay as Doug thought I was going to hitch-hike back so he arranged a trial with the local rugby team who were to play the RAAF in Williamstown. They let me play 20 minutes as scrum half, I did ok ..

We won in spite of the cow pats and me...

Doug had arranged for me to get back to Darwin from Richmond (near Sydney)... by Hercules, a much more interesting flight this time though, the plane hit a hail-storm on the way, damaging it and we had to do a forced landing in Mount Isa, (middle of Queensland, well into the outback!!). It was a bit nerve-racking, one of the pilot's came down to where an RAAF bloke, myself and masses of equipment were and showed us how to put our parachutes on! Certain things were twitching in the plastic strap seats! As the plane was descending, all we could see was mountains and more mountains, then it opened up and there was the little airstrip, we were well pleased to see that .., however, it turned out I wasn't really supposed to be on the plane and as this was the first RAAF plane they had seen since the WW2, there were lots of people there including local newspaper photographers... so I had to be spirited out the way without being seen.

Luckily they managed to patch the Hercules enough to limp to Darwin, only trouble was, spares were needed so the plane was grounded for a week.. not good. I had a date with a Chinese Malaysian girl (Helen Ching) in Penang, I missed the date but kept in touch with her for quite a while, I was supposed to be going back when I was 21... The other consequence of the delay apart from more beer, sunbathing and steaks in the morning for breakfast was by the time I got to Changi the aircraft handlers were on strike for the military flights. As I had to get back to BAOR or be AWOL I had to pay for my flight back on a Boeing 747. The flight cost £180.00. It was much more comfortable, but I used up the rest of my money with which I was hoping to buy a car.

Remember, this was a time without mobile phones, skype etc, so my Mum and Dad were well pleased to see me, , I don't think they expected me back, it was a close thing, Doug actually talked me into boarding the plane, I had not kept in touch very much ... apart from a telegram when I left Lyneham and from one post card which they hadn't received until after I went back to Germany. I managed to get back to my unit on time with my free flight back to Germany, I had sent a couple of friends a postcard on my travels and some didn't think I would make it and if I did wouldn't come back , me included !!!

About September time 1967 I was posted to 34 Light Air Defence Regiment in St David's Barracks in Hilden, just before they moved to Napier Barracks, Dortmund. It was a great workshop, again good bunch of lads, good rugby team and an excellent boxing team; I was in my element!!! Boxing training was from 7.30am to about 3pm every day, we were boxing nearly every fortnight, special food at the cookhouse (I acquired a taste for raw eggs and vinegar), no queues and were well looked after. The only problem for me was I was expected to fight at either bantam or featherweight, depending on what the trainer needed, so I was constantly losing or gaining weight

I can remember quite a few times trying to gain weight and being sick and when having to lose it - craving for Mars bars and being sick!!!

One time I went on leave and was due to fight on my return, I promised faithfully to train and keep an eye on my weight, well I did train, long runs etc, but I did not take into account Mum's cooking. I even went to my Uncle Danny's gym at the *Times Newspaper* to train but didn't make the same mistake I did with my Dad this time though, I treated him (the old boy .. ha) with lots of respect, it's not every day you get to spar with a guy who has fought for the World Title, he still put me through my paces though...great experience.

On returning to my unit, I was nearly 10lb overweight, the trainer was not happy. I had extra

training and after each session I had to sit under a few blankets with an electric fire for company, I think he even made me suck lemons!!!. I did enjoy fighting at different weights though, however, that could account for the difficulty I now have to keep my weight stable, ,. I managed to lose the weight in time and win my next fight which was a bit of a bonus.

In those days, to keep a check on my weight, after tea every evening I would either play squash with a mate for an hour or two, no scoring just running round like a lunatic for every ball or skipping in the main corridor in the living accommodation, more often than not I had an audience which spurred me on to skip harder doing stunts. I would also have the radio on and skip at a fair speed while the music was on then sprint when the DJ started. I had a great couple of years in 34 Regt with the Boxing and Rugby; same old problem though, Boxing and Rugby commitments clashed for a few weeks each year... although I must have done the odd day's work in the workshop as well.

Early in 1968, we heard the 34 Regiment was disbanding with some of us going to 12 Regt and others to 22 Regt. I didn't fancy either, so applied to join the Commando's. A few Fijians Rugby players had already joined but I didn't think I would get it, I had been applying for all sorts over the years, even the Trucial Oman Scouts.

So it came as quite a surprise when I was told to get fit and learn about weapons, I went to different units to strip and assemble all types of guns and was pretty fit with the boxing and within a few months I was off.

I arrived at 95 Commando RA at the Royal Citadel, Plymouth in November 1968 and did my training over December and January... bit chilly. My first impression and the Duty Sergeant's first impression didn't match when I reported in at the very imposing guardroom at the Citadel; we fell out straight away and after my second attempt at reporting in he sort of lost it, I didn't think I had done much to upset him. I had walked into the guardroom and asked where I was to report for the Commando course, apparently I should have marched in etc, so out I went again and on returning I think maybe I had a little beastie on my shoulder because I decided to wind him up.... I still remember this so well, his face went absolutely crimson ... I thought he was going to burst !! As I marched in and came to attention, all I said was in my best posh accent 'Excuse me Sgt, could you please direct me to where I am to report for this wonderful Commando course'. I think it was a while before he came down from the ceiling.

The next time I saw him was probably about a week or so later when we had to do milling, as he walked into the gym I knew I was in for it and sure enough I was picked to fight first in this little circle they use for basketball. The other trainee didn't

have much idea, so when he came in swinging I got inside him with a nice uppercut in the solar plexus, he went down, I started taking my gloves off and was told to fight another, by the end of the third fight I was getting nicely warmed up, it was then he called me out and asked if I had boxed, on replying yes, he wasn't too happy that I hadn't told him before, but to be fair ... he hadn't asked, he turned out to be ok though ...

A couple of ex SAS guys were our trainers, it was tough, out of 30 who started only six went to the Marine's in Lympstone.

The Citadel was by far my best posting, with a bunch of like-minded guys, I still chuckle now when I think what we used to get up to.

A couple of lads there I had taught to box at Arborfield, Pat Roberts (Robbo) and Pete Moran, they ended up keeping an eye out for me and keeping me out of trouble, most of the time. Met Pat Roberts (Robbo) again in April 2011 when he visited the UK, he stayed with me for a couple of days, Pat owned Pats Bar in Port Harcourt Nigeria and after a short retirement in Thailand he went back to Port Harcourt Nigeria as manager at the Elkan Terrace Hotel, sadly Pat died unexpectedly in December 2013, still upsets me now (Pete wrote Pats *Obituary in the July 2014 issue of The Craftsman*)., ...I had lost touch with Pete Moran until January 2014 after Pats passing. We met up with a few other ex-boys at the Fox & Hounds in Warminster

When Robbo was over in April 2011 we discovered we had both been in Iran at the same time just before the Shah was deposed but different areas we also had a bit of a laugh about my young brother John nearly destroying a car, John was 16 when he came down to Plymouth for a couple of weeks, I had been teaching him to drive; Robbo and I had just finished working on this *Karmann Ghia* for a young Lieutenant, John asked if he could park it up, we didn't think he would have a problem with that (to be honest we didn't think full stop), John starts reversing and his artificial foot gets caught on the accelerator and he is heading for the Workshop wall at a fair old speed with me and Robbo yelling and panicking, he was within a few feet of totally destroying the car when he managed to get his foot off and on to the brake, Robbo was very near to wetting himself, I know I was !!!.

At that time I mainly boxed for the *Mayflower Club* in Plymouth fighting all over the country and only lost one fight, in Crewe and that was to be the very last one of my career and just before being posted. I met and married my first wife in 1969 and my first boy Allen arrived in 1970. Married life and being in 95 Commando didn't go together too well and as she came from near Hull I had arranged to be posted to 15 Field Workshop near Exeter, soon to move to Catterick.

What can be said about Catterick, I was there until I left the Army in 1974 and in April 1972 we went to Ireland for six months in Sydenham. I actually did some serious VM work in Sydenham, working all hours on the Humber pigs and Saracens and on the recreation side I kept fit and was also the resident DJ !!!.

A few incidents there that stick in the mind, some I can reveal... some not, best one was nearly destroying the OC's boat, yes boat.... I had to pick up something from the QM's in a Land Rover and did what I usually did, went past the opening and reversed in the gap between the two buildings, then there was this almighty crash, got out, and there was this boat stuck in the bumper, I sheepishly went to the QM and told him, his reply was.....'what boat' !!!

After some detective work we found it was the OC's... turns out he had sent it over from England while on leave ...ooops !

The Adjutant was great, he organised the paddy wood workshop to repair it on the 'QT' before the OC returned from leave, they did a brilliant job, couldn't tell it had been mangled, however, I never did find out if it still stayed afloat .. I took some ribbing from the lads for a while, every time I walked into the workshop they would start singing 'BOR ... BOR ..BOR RRR (ha .. Boat off Road)

Just before the July parade we got a call saying one of the Foden water bowser trucks had trouble, (never seen one before or since), so off I went to sort it out in the Recovery Truck with a Land Rover escort. When we arrived, on testing the Foden, it went to full revs on starting, if memory serves me right it was a little spring that had broken on the pump gallery and I had no spare, I actually managed to get it to work by using the spring from a BIC pen!!! Those days I was a fair mechanic, these days I lease my cars with a full maintenance contract !!!

I kept pretty fit there and trained up a guy (Phil Qualter), who was joining 95 Commando when we got back to England. I met up with him years after, late in the 80's in Poole, he recognised me straight away. I'm afraid I didn't recognise him at first, since we last met he had been involved in a motorbike accident and was also having cancer treatment, I used to see him a lot until I moved but have not seen him for some years, I hope he is still ok.



Terry and Friends. Windsor

Blind Veterans UK – Centenary Year

Many veterans of the Services have been helped by the charity known as Blind Veterans UK myself among them.

My situation is that I have had dry Macular degeneration in my left eye for several years - no central vision – that's the face recognition bit and the reading bit. My right eye fortunately compensated without a problem for some years. Then one night when acting as Duty Officer at my yacht club, I had a bleed in the right eye and found that I could not read. This is known as wet Macular Degeneration.



I found no immediate help but after being given the diagnosis I was put in touch with some local authority units that one can go to for help. It was my elder daughter Debbie who suggested I contact Blind Veterans UK, formerly St Dunstan's, and having had a full Army career I decided to do that. At that time though my sight was not bad enough for me to become a member. However my sight deteriorated and within a year I was able to join. I was given training and advice on everyday living and most of all encouragement and support.

So I'd like to tell you a little about this wonderful organisation which has helped me so much.

The charity began during the First World War when Sir Arthur Pearson, who had lost his sight to glaucoma in 1913, decided to try to alleviate the suffering of those Service personnel who had been blinded at war. It was Sir Arthur's vision that blind people should have the dignity of regaining employment and also becoming useful members of their local communities.

On 29th January 1915 the charity was set up as the Blinded Soldiers and Sailors Care Committee in Bayswater Road, London. It soon became over crowded.

Meanwhile, Sir Arthur Pearson had managed to persuade an American banker, Otto Kahn, to lend him his house in Regent's Park. That house, St.

Dunstan's Lodge, took in its first 16 blind soldiers and sailors on the 26th March 1915 and was to give the organisation its name, St Dunstan's.

Once trained, his new 'army' returned to their home areas and showed just what could be achieved.

These World War I blind veterans were the real pioneers of this new organisation and they demonstrated the standards, objectives and skills that could be achieved by visually impaired people. Those men and women of the Second World War who were visually impaired took up the challenge and pushed those abilities to further heights. Tremendous advances had been made before and after the arrival of the 3rd generation veterans who had lost their sight after 1945.

History

As mentioned earlier on 26th March 1915 the Charity moved to St. Dunstan's Lodge in London's Regent's Park with 16 war-blinded soldiers. People started referring to it as 'St. Dunstan's'. It was there that they were trained in trades such as joinery, boot repairing, shorthand writing, massage, telephone operating, poultry farming, mat making and basketry. They also learned to touch type to enable them to do their own correspondence and Braille. Though seemingly old fashioned now, the jobs the newly blinded took up then, were novel for their day.

In 1915 Her Majesty Queen Alexandra became Patron.

Before the end of 1918 over 600 men had already been trained and had returned to their homes.



Nearly 700 were still in training at Regent's Park and the staff was ably contributing to their happiness and welfare.

Post War-attributable blindness would eventually nearly double the numbers and between 80 and 95 per cent of those who passed through the charity for training could — and did — earn a living or add substantially to their pensions. A very good success rate.

The remaining 5 to 20% were prevented from working at all because of the severity of their injuries, physical or mental.

Sir Arthur Pearson said: "In days before I lost my sight I had the direction of some big enterprises, but St. Dunstan's became the biggest individual business that I have ever conducted."

In 1921 the headquarters was moved from St. Dunstan's Lodge to St John's Lodge, also in Regent's Park and tragedy struck when Sir Arthur Pearson died in an accident at the age of just 55. Captain Ian Fraser was appointed as his successor and served for 53 years.

In 1923 the Regent's Park training centre officially became St. Dunstan's and in 1934 in conjunction with the RNIB it produced the UK's first talking book service.

In 1938 The Brighton centre, newly built by the sea was opened. More than 300 members had taken a holiday or spent a period of convalescence there by the end of the first year.

The building is shaped very loosely like an aeroplane pointing in a south-westerly direction, and it could quite possibly be the first building to have been designed specifically to meet the needs of its blind occupants. St. Dunstan's Chapel to the front of the building has a 20 foot statue of the Winged Victory by Julian Phelps Allan.

In the same year the Corps of Good Companions was formed to recruit guides and friends to the people staying at the centre. The response was excellent and years later volunteering at the Brighton centre remains popular with more than 100 dedicated volunteers.

My personal experience of three visits to the Brighton Centre is of the untiringly helpful and consistently warm attitude of the staff and volunteers to the veterans staying at the Centre either as live-in patients, holiday makers or trainees.

At the outbreak of the Second World War the new Brighton centre became a war hospital for eye injuries but members and staff were soon evacuated to Church Stretton in Shropshire, the main wartime home.

In 1944 a Scientific Advisory Committee was set up to study the use of other senses — hearing, touch and smell — in particular for reading and walking.

In 1952 men from the First World War were still joining the charity as a result of the delayed effects of mustard gas.

In 1961 Tommy Gaygan became the only handless man to pass the official Braille writing test using a machine adapted by Norman French, a research engineer at the Charity.

In 1965 Members took part in an experimental long cane course at the Brighton centre. This was introduced from America by a beneficiary who specialised in mobility. By 1967 instruction on the use of the long cane was available to all the members and it remains an integral part of today's mobility training.

In 1979 the Charity together with the RNIB evaluated the Kurzweil the first reading machine to instantly convert print into speech.

Over the years a variety of clubs have been set up that are still extremely popular. These include skiing, walking, writing, golfing, computing, archery, shooting, fishing and the amateur radio club.

In 1982 Terry Bullingham was the first of those who were blinded in the Falklands war to come to one of the centres and later in 1991 three members were admitted as a result of injuries received in the Gulf War.

HM The Queen visited the Brighton Centre in 1985 and opened the new South Wing that was specifically built to accommodate members and their spouses.

During the 75th anniversary celebrations in 1990 a rose was officially named St Dunstons. I planted one in my garden last year to mark the occasion of my membership and we've enjoyed the beautiful blossoms during this, the 100 year anniversary. I guess there could be another rose



bred soon for in 2012 St Dunstons was renamed Blind Veterans UK!

A few years before that the constitution was amended so that veterans who lost their sight after their Service ended were permitted to join the charity.

After the millennium two new centres were opened – the first in 2005 in Sheffield and the second followed in 2011 in Llandudno.



I recently spent a week's holiday in the Llandudno Centre and enjoyed the wonderful scenery of Snowdonia and many activities including clay pigeon shooting, traversing three zip wires and horse riding to name but a few.

We were driven to several interesting areas and one evening was spent at a concert held in the local Methodist church featuring a male voice choir and some soloists.

In 2005 at the age of 108 Henry Allingham, a veteran of the First World War, became a member and moved into the Brighton Centre. He is the oldest entrant ever to join the charity as a member and in 2006 was given the Freedom of Eastbourne.

In 2012 the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, Anna Soubry MP, visited the Brighton Centre and £1 million was donated by the Armed Forces Covenant (Libor) Fund, to refurbish accommodation facilities at the Brighton Centre. This event coincided with the change of name to Blind Veterans UK

In 2015 the charity celebrated its centenary and 100 years of proud service with a Garden Party held at Buckingham Palace and a Service at Westminster Abbey.

I was lucky enough to attend the Garden Party with Jan my wife to enjoy a peaceful, sunny afternoon under the shade of the trees supplied with a delicious tea to the accompaniment of military bands playing all afternoon. Her Royal Highness Sophie Countess of Wessex attended for most of the afternoon and spoke to a number of veterans and staff of Blind Veterans UK. Several Yeomen of the Guard were on duty throughout the afternoon looking resplendent in their scarlet uniforms.

I also attended the Service at Westminster Abbey.

So to summarise its current activities it has three centres used for training and leisure activities situated at Brighton, Sheffield and Llandudno.

Facilities are available to nurse live-in veterans who are disabled and blind. New members are offered a week's induction course to introduce them to the facilities and training available.

Training is offered in how to live with poor eyesight, demonstrating aids for the kitchen and general living such as magnifying glasses, video magnifiers, talking labelling devices, talking scales and so on. Training is given in the use of long canes and white sticks and the use of a computer by touch-typing, keyboard shortcuts, text reading software and magnifying software.

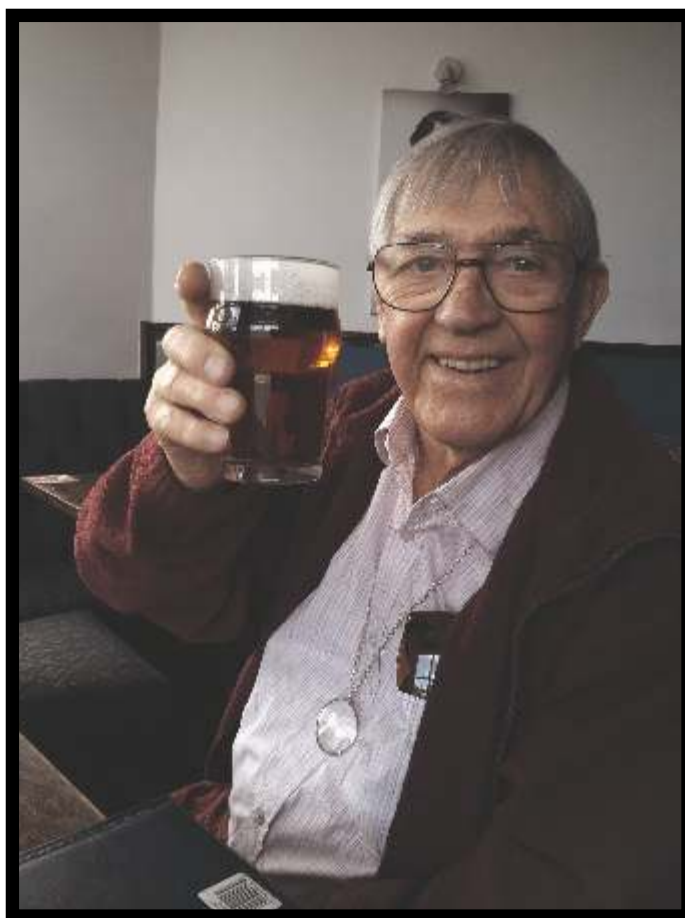
Well-equipped gymnasiums are available and many sports such as archery, bowls and shooting are offered.

Accommodation is available for holidays to members and their spouses at reasonable cost and each Centre provides a series of themed holidays during the year.

Many subjects are offered – photography, water sports and gardening being but a few available.

This charity has stood the test of time and has adapted to accommodate new techniques and modern practices

May it long continue to prosper.



George Hodge 42B

I am pleased to say that this is one of the charities we have supported. Ed

Rhymes of Our Tymes

Jankers

A/T O'Toole had been such a fool, going out when he should have been in,
So the very next day, with no undue delay, he was marched in to explain his sin.
The CO said "O'Toole, while you're at this school, Standing Orders you have to obey,"
"And to help you reform, seven days you'll perform, and confined to these barracks you'll stay."

O'Toole was so sad, it was hard for the lad to watch all his mates go to town,
While he had to work - he felt a right Berk - peeling spuds till his fingers wore down.
And not only that, he had also to start getting kit bulled for evening parade,
Best SD to press, boots, belt, and then dress, attention to detail was paid.

For he knew if he failed, he would then be assailed by the Orderly Sergeants great wrath,
And the following day, the price he would pay, on another charge, and that is tough.
For the cycle'd begin, the chances to sin while on Jankers, they would multiply,
So a seven day stint could become in an inst't, a fortnight, or worse, could apply.

Therefore, duly at nine, he stands in the line of Defaulters, all nervous and glum,
While the Sergeant, so slow, inspects the first row, as he's waiting for his turn to come.
The Sarge, with a frown, eyes him up and then down, and turns on his heel - walks away,
Then O'Toole grits his teeth, breathes a sigh of relief, he's survived yet another long day.

The following dawn, O'Toole was forlorn at the prospect of six days to do,
All that Bulling and Beezing, a prospect displeasing, at the thought, his despondency grew.
So, up at Reveille, his courage he rallied, for he had an appointment with Fred,
And if he was late, such a terrible fate of more days, which filled him with dread.

Then, down to parade, with the others, he made his weary way to the Guardroom,
What jobs would he do? The Cookhouse, he knew, would be spuds again, peeling till noon.
But he thought he'd got lucky, a job not so mucky,

he'd pulled QM's detail - that's good!
Inside, in the warm and the dry, he would try to filch items of kit if he could.

With his loot in his pocket, he knew he could flog it, when back to the Spider he went,
Selling ill-gotten gains, he would then take great pains to profit from his punishment.
But alas and alack, when reporting back to the QM's department, he found
That instead of work cushy, with whitewash and brush, he was shown to a dirty great mound

Of coal in the yard, and the going was hard, but, "Coal has to be whitewashed", it states,
To stop boys thieving the coal, and then heaving it all over the fence to their mates.
Who, back at the Spider, then sat down beside the stove, stoking away till it glowed,
But the coal that was nicked, left a black mark when picked, and the crime, then, quite obviously showed!

So O'Toole learned a lesson, it's no use just guessing that jobs can be doddles, no fear!
To make such assumption shows a lack of gumption, as he found, while whitewashing the gear.
He thought that he'd cracked it, when he attracted the QM job, and so he laughed,
Forgetting that QM's activities ranged wide, from cushy to downright hard graft!

The worst time he'd spend was at the weekend, the Saturday film in Camp Hall,
While he polished the brass, and mowed all the grass, he could hear the lads having a ball.
And so, as the days of his time slipped away, as he tried to avoid further strife,
Released at the end, he vowed not to offend ever again in his life !

And so it goes on, Jankers never was fun, it's a punishment one must avoid,
But to give it wide berth, it never is worth to get those placed above you, annoyed,
Or you'll live to regret it, and they won't forget it, so humour them, make them feel good,
So creep if you have to, although you won't want to, it's better than peeling those spuds !

Tee Cee

Follow me!



YOUR ASSOCIATION NEEDS YOU

RECRUITING NOW!

The AOBA urgently needs new members. In order for us to continue as successfully as we currently are, your help is needed to recruit more Arborfield veterans to our Association. So if any of you know of a likely candidate, who is not a member, use all your persuasive powers to get them to join! Your reward will be a year's free membership, well worth it.

Introduce a friend and get ONE Years FREE Membership.

Ten Tors Training...and Soggy Sennybridge Experience.

I am not sure who suggested it, or why, but at some point in my latter time at Arborfield I found that I had, somehow, "volunteered" to be part of 65C, 'B' Coy's Ten Tors Team.

This, it seemed, involved walking mile after mile across the South of England just about every weekend available nearly everyone a memorable, if not enjoyable, experience!!!!

To recall several; there was a weekend on Salisbury Plain. In addition to the usual daylight "yomp" [to use the modern idiom], BRETT [Co. Com. Major Hislop], thought it would be a "Jolly bit of training, chaps". Just a couple of hours stroll across the 'plain' practising navigating to various check points at night. [Ha - Ha - Ruddy - Ha].

Off we toddled from our campsite as darkness fell, clutching our list of compass co-ordinates, maps and freshly laundered white hankchiefs [Oh yes, we were pretty clued up on "night marching"]. Unfortunately for us we had one or two problems. Firstly, that night was darker than Satchmo's armpit and secondly, and more importantly, our given compass bearings were about as useful as an ashtray on a motorbike, how were we to know that BRETT had taken his initial bearings from our campsite using a magnetic compass surrounded by a ring of 3 ton lorries, trailer mounted generators and landrovers!!!!

Six hours later, and with the sun poking it's head over the horizon, we hadn't a clue where we were. With blisters the size of the Hindenberg, we found a village complete with bus stop and a Milkman. "When's the next bus to Tidworth mate?", we politely enquired. "Next Wednesday lads, [Ha, Ha]" (it was Saturday morning!!!!). Luckily there was a phone box nearby and we managed to cobble together enough pennies to make sufficient calls to finally get someone from the R.A barracks to agree to go to our campsite and let BRETT know where we were.

Two hours later a wagon turned up.....we were back in camp just in time for lunch and a painful session of blister popping before going on the hunt for BRETT with murder in mind. Surprise, surprise, he had, apparently, a domestic emergency and had had to leave 10 minutes before we got back.

Then came Dorset!!!!!!!!!!!! Oh Joy of Joys; a weekend of traipsing from Weymouth train station to Lulworth Cove, [about 36 miles cross country]. It didn't help that we were in the middle of a

Summer heatwave. If anyone is unfamiliar with Weymouth, it's set in the base of a 'bowl' and to escape it means a slow, but inexorable climb up [as my memory recalls], mainly 1 in 3 slopes. By around 4 pm we arrived at a village.....and I was in trouble!!!!

We had filled our waterbottles at about 5 am in the morning back at Arborfield [remember those metal ones clad in some sort of felt? Within 10 minutes of filling, they left an aftertaste just like sucking on a mouthfull of nails]. Throughout the climb from Weymouth I had been sipping the water, which by the halfway point was at a temperature one would normally make tea with. By the time we got to the village I was in agony with stomach cramps. With the usual 65C cameraderie that existed..... my mates dumped me!!!! In their defence they did make sure I had 4 pennies and the phone number of Arborfield before they waved a cheery farewell. Dusk was setting in when a little grey haired old lady came out of a cottage, opposite the village green phone box against which I was slumped, to enquire if I was ok. . My grey pallor, clutching of my stomach, and other 'twitches' made it obvious I was far from 'ok'.

"Come in lad", she said, "I think you could do with a bite to eat and a strong cup of something hot and sweet". An hour later, 3 pints of tea and half a chocolate cream sponge cake inside me, I was feeling much better. Better still after a night's kip buried in straw in her barn out back and a full [and I mean full] English breakfast. Following a brief phone call, a Landrover was eventually sent out for me and I was there to welcome my 'loyal' mates at our campsite at Lulworth Cove as they finally limped in....me satiated by an Aldershot Concrete Company Irish Stew and them suffering from sunstroke, exhaustion and blisters bigger than Billy Smart's Circus tent.

The only other event of that weekend that sticks in the mind occurred on that Saturday night when we managed to slip out for a 'lemonade' at the local village pub. Apart from the 8 [?] of us the rest of the customers were locals from the farming community including what can only be described as a 'well endowed, well built blonde wench', of whom one of our number took a definite liking to. Having plied her with pints of scrumpy all night, they both left 5 minutes before us. Exiting the pub, we were just passing an unlit lane next to the church, when a loud female voice emanated from the pitch dark, "Ere you, get your ans orf

moi tits!!!!” The lane was suddenly lit up by a very red face as our comrade re-joined us. Now who was that???

THEN CAME BRECON.....A.K.A..... SOGGY SENNYBRIDGE

Now, I’m not sure if this was exclusively ‘Ten Tors’, or just part of our general ‘Adventure Training’. All I do know is, that it was one of the most amazing, and traumatic, weeks of my life so far.

It all started when we ‘entrained’ at ‘Woko City’ and arrived God know’s where in South Wales. At the train station we then ‘embussed’ in 3-tonners to our campsite. Now, I have to say, that once again BRETT was O.C. campsite location decisions.....and his campsite decision was to camp on a lovely bit of flat grass right next to a river at a place called Sennybridge. Yeah, there’s a pub across the road!!!! Bum!!!! It’s out of bounds.

Whilst we had travelled by train, our advance ‘Support Team’ had come down by lorry complete with 14-man tents, ‘Aldershot Concrete Company’ kitchen [why are all A.C.C chefs scousers???], live ammo and the bolts for our 303’s [which we carried down on the train - imagine that today!!!!!!!!!!!!]. They had got there a day earlier and so, luxury of all luxuries, the camp was up and running by the time we arrived.

Day one was an easy day. Settle ourselves in camp, get fed by the Liverpuddlian maniac who had a thing about serving meals at whatever hour ‘Zulu Time’. This we eventually discovered was an hour after [and sometimes before] G.M.T.

Day two. Adventure Training....a.m - abseiling!!!!!!!! Now, up until this point I had no idea I had a problem with heights [Pompey’s pretty flat!]. They took us to a sheer drop of about 30 metres [about 70 feet in old money]. Tied up with bits of string, we were informed by the ‘expert’ that all we had to do was walk off the cliff backwards!!!!!!!!!!!! Was he having a ‘giraffe!!’

I completed my first drop. IT WAS FANTASTIC!!!!!!!!. Then we were told this was just a practice cliff and made our way to the the ‘Big One’ Two hundred metres vertically down. With a lump in my underwear, I backed off the cliff. If you are still with me, you will know that this was in pre rubber-soled D.M.S boot days. So, with sparks flying from the steel studs off the soles of my boots I managed to find the only bush growing at 90 degrees to the cliff face half-way down. I landed at the base with a large quantity of thorny shrub firmly embedded in my groin and a grin on my face a mile wide. I loved abseiling!!!!!!!!!!!!

Then came, what was then known as Pot-Holeing !!!! In those days, as you may recall, the only concession to Health & Safety equipment was a very rudimentary ‘Hard Hat’. Dressed in a yellow plastic helmet picked out of a kit bag ‘lucky dip’ style, and standard issue ‘coveralls’ we waited with anticipation at the mouth of the hole. I was one of the fortunate ones. My hard hat was only 3 sizes too big, and it had a light that actually worked!!!!

The first part of the ‘hole’ was a piece of the proverbial. It was a 4ft diameter concrete pipe set at a steep angle in the ground with a lump of rope to help the descent. Grabbing the rope I lowered myself down, “Ha, pot-holeing, what’s the problem?” I found out 20ft down when the pipe ended and I was left dangling in space. Luckily, the floor of the cavern into which I had descended was only about 5 ft further down. I let go the rope and hoped for the best.

“Where’s everyone gone?” I asked to the only other person there [I think he wore glasses]. “Err, down there”, he said in a Bristolian accent, pointing to a hole in the cavern wall about 2ft in diameter with a rope snaking down into it [along with a river 3 inches deep of icy cold water]. Visions of Alice and the White Rabbit sprung to mind. At this juncture, another body came freefall style down the rope. “Where’s the others gone?” said Paul [with a decidedly Plymouth accent]. “Down that hole”, said ‘Specs’ and I in unison. By a unanimous vote of 2 - 1 Specs was volunteered to go first, with me going next and Paul bringing up the rear.

As I prepared to follow Specs down the ‘tube’, it occurred to me that our ‘esteemed leader’ BRETT, who had gone down first, was either ingesting something of an “exotic” nature [Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds had yet to be released by the Beatles, but it was the late 60’s], or he was a renegade from the Nazi Party.

About 10ft in, I made the mistake of lifting my head to try and see past Specs to discover what hazzards were coming up. ERROR !!!! My hard hat got jammed on the roof of the tunnel “B@&\$~!*S” I screamed. “I’m stuck!” Specs tried to reach back but to no avail. Paul, however, managed to shuffle back to the entrance of the tube, turned round and came back in feet first. By then the icy stream of water running up my trouser leg and out through the neck of my coveralls led me to think that I would never ever be able to father children. A swift kick from Paul’s size 9’s on the back of my helmet [no, not that one.....I wouldn’t see that again for at least another month], released my head. Another 20ft further on and Specs suddenly

disappeared.....as did the floor of the tunnel!!!!!!

A bit further on I discovered why. Looking down I saw that the tunnel continued on, but much larger. Unfortunately it was some 30ft below me. Luckily, scaffolding poles had been set into the rock, ladderlike. Sadly, for me, the poles were set 5 - 6 ft apart, a bit of a problem when you are a short-arse of 4ft 8". Somehow I managed a tumble and lunge until I reached the bottom. From here on in the route led down and down, but relatively without problems. Eventually we arrived in a huge cavern. There was BRETT bouncing up and down with excitement 'cos his trannie radio still worked half-a-mile underground. With the latest episode of the 'Archers' ringing in my ears, I swear I held the record for the fastest man out of that [hell] hole.

Another day...Another Trauma

Next day, up at the crack of dawn for a 'yomp' across Pen y Fan to a live-firing range beyond. First, however, BRETT had us all in the river for an early morning "freshen - up", followed by a hearty breakfast of near raw sausages, rubber fried eggs, baked bean clagg and 4-hour stewed tea ["Thanks, Scouse"]. We then proceeded to scour our mess tins in an attempt to remove the 'artex' remnants.... which also adhered to our teeth. These we lathered with Colgate and rinsed off in the 'refreshing pure mountain stream'. Setting off, about 15 minutes march from camp we went over an ancient stone bridge upstream of the river, noticing as we crossed, the rotting carcass of a sheep stuck on rocks in the water. "Aarrgghh" said 'Tex' "I cleaned my teeth in that!!!!" We all prayed that 'Scouser' didn't find it 'cos if he did it was a penny-to-a-pound that lamb hotpot would be on the menu for supper.

The actual climb up Pen y Fan is a blur. At the summit we had a welcome lunch breakhard tack, bully beef and cheese possessed. Then we finally arrived at the live firing range. It was a stunning scene. The sun was shining, the grass was as green as green...and we had 100 rounds a piece to get rid of. At first we aimed at the range targets.....then we got bored!!!!!!

"STOP SHOOTING THE BLOODY SHEEP!", yelled the Range Officer. Well, who could blame us, after all, the targets were dead easythey didn't move!!!! On the other hand, the white furry creatures on the hill 500 metres beyond the Butts meandered all over the place and presented a much better test of our shooting skills than the lifesize plywood cut-out of 'The Dreaded Hun'.

The trek back to our campsite was relatively uneventful as I recall.....apart from ever darkening skies. "Aarrgghh!!!!" Lamb Hotpot on the menu for supper!!!!!!

The next morning we awoke to a heavy dose of the 'thrupenny bits and monsoon rain. "Sorry chaps", said BRETT, "but field excercises have had to be put on hold because of the inclement weather, however, I have arranged for us to have map reading and other related lectures take place in the back room of the establishment across the road."

"Brilliant news!!!" Young girl with the chest of Dolly Parton seen entering and leaving. "Bad news!!! She is the cleaner!!!! More bad news, the Landlady is about 95 years old. Good news!!! Pub back room has serving hatch connecting with main bar [and easy access to bogs]. Even more good news, Landlady is happy to pass pints of scrumpy cider through hatch all day long. Bad news....Hangovers From Hell for next 2 days of constant rain."

On the third morning, we awoke to find we were afloat in our tents. BRETT might as well have shouted "Abandon Ship" It was the Titanic all over again!!!!!! Unsurprisingly, it was too short notice for us to change our rail tickets and get the next train so we were bundled onto the back of a 3-tonner complete with our camping kit for the long drive to Arborfield.

Oh joy of joys, we were in the catering wagon with all the leftover compo and other rations. Lounging on a pile of 10-man compo packs we discovered a huge paper sack of dried fruit.....yummy!!!!!! Dried apricots, yes; dried apple, yes; dried banana, yes; dried prunes, definite NO. However, we found an alternative, and amusingly diverting, use for them.

We had only been back at Arborfield for about 10 minutes when C.S.M. Davies appeared and 'requested' our immediate presence on the veranda outside the company office [he didn't use that many words]. Berets off we entered the C.O.'s office. With BRETT, and glowing an apoplectic purple, was the A.C.C. Q.M. "I would very much like my rations returned as soon as possible" said the Q.M. [he didn't use that many words either!!! In fact he was much more forthright and used a lot of Anglo-Saxon]. "OK chaps", said BRETT, "you have 10 minutes to return the Q.M.'s food". Within the allotted time we staggered down Isaac Newton Road with a blanket laden with our booty. [naturally, we still had the tins of cheese possessed, sweets, chocolate, Irish Stew, rich fruit cake etc. - basically all the good stuff - which we feasted on for the next month].

It was now BRETT's turn to mimic the Q.M.'s colour. "I have just put the phone down on the 6th Police Station in a row to contact me complaining that the inhabitants of their town/village have been bombarded with dried prunes, causing at least two bicycle collisions, numerous geriatric war veterans to soil their underwear and a heavily pregnant young lady to go into early labour, 14 days R.P. for the lot of you!!!!!"

N.B. Just to let you know, about two weeks before the Ten Tors event, C.S.M. Davies dropped the bombshell. BRETT had sent in our team entry form

too late and had missed the deadline. About 200 miles of tramping across Southern England in all weathers a complete waste of time.....naturally, BRETT had another 'domestic emergency' to attend to and disappeared for the next couple of weeks!!!!!!!!!!!!

Mike (Drag arse) Sheperd 65C

Next 'Dollop'..... The Riot Act, Mutiny. and maybe, The Story That Must Not Be Told [I could be writing it from the Tower of London!!!!]}

Arborfield Old Boys' Association Web Shop

Here we have a few items which we hope are of interest to you. They can be ordered and paid for using Paypal, or credit/debit card. We have added 4% to the prices to cover the cost of this service, plus £1:50 postage and packing per item. The Web Shop is run by our Honorary Treasure Laurie Blakley, and he will have items available at the reunions.

Ties



Available in original Company Colours
£8 + £1:50 P&P

Lapel Badges

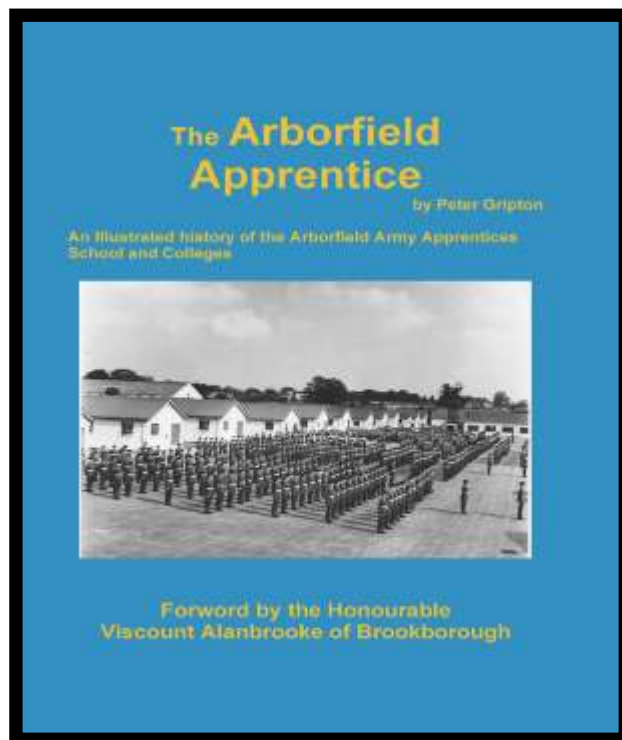


Very attractive Lapel Badge in Black and Gold
Approximately 25 x 20 mm. £3.50 + £1:50 P&P

Also available are a small amount of Blazer Badges @ £10.60 + £1:50 P&P,
Mugs with the AOBA badge @ £5.88 + £1:50 P&P
Please contact Laurie for overseas postage costs, and any other enquiries.

The Arborfield Apprentice. New Edition

Edition Two of the Arborfield Apprentice by Peter Gripton. An illustrated history of the Arborfield Apprentices' School and Colleges from 1939 to 2004, with anecdotes taken from countless Arborfield Apprentices down the years. Includes the 'Final Chapter' written by Peter Gripton after the college closure.



It is a MUST for all Arborfield Apprentices whether they joined in 1939 or any other time up to its closure in 2004.

Foreword by the Honourable Viscount Allenbrooke of Brookborough
£30.00 plus postage and packing.

The Principality of Sealand

One evening during February 2011, I was sat watching the television – the BBC early evening news and comment-type programme 'The One Show'. At this time of day I usually only have half an eye on the programme – and my hearing's none too good these days! – while attempting to finish off the crossword in my daily newspaper. But my attention was drawn to the unusual man-made structure on screen and it brought back the memory of an article that had been written by Ken Anderson (58A) back in OBAN 38, about the 'Maunsell Forts'. These were the structures that had been erected in the Thames Estuary as a defensive system against enemy (German) aircraft operations, sometime around 1943. What the current programme was showing was one such fort that has become an independent 'country', outside of the UK national boundary – and now known as 'Sealand'. 'The One Show' reporter was Ben Fogle, who by the end of his visit had been declared an Earl! I decided to follow up the story and came up with the following interesting story:

Historical background

During the Second World War, the War Department decided to establish a number of off-shore military bases, the purpose of which was to defend English ports and shipping against German air raids. These bases were in the form of sea forts, large enough to house sufficient troops to man and maintain artillery, designed to shoot down aircraft and missiles. They were situated along the east coast of England, on the edge of English territorial waters. One of these bases, consisting of a concrete and steel construction, was 'Fort Roughs Tower', situated slightly north of the estuary region of the River Thames. The original plan had been to locate the tower within the sovereign territory of England, but instead, this fortress was actually situated at a distance of some seven nautical miles from the coast – more than double the then applicable three-mile range of territorial waters. In other words, this island fortress was situated in the international waters of the North Sea.

After the end of the war, troops were withdrawn from all such bases by the Admiralty. None of them was ever used by the United Kingdom again, leaving the forts deserted and abandoned. Except for the aforementioned fortress, the bases were subsequently pulled down, resulting in the potential uniqueness of the one remaining fortress. Fort Roughs Tower, situated in the high seas, had been both deserted and abandoned, designated as 'res derelicta' and 'terra nullius'. Thus, from a

strictly legal point of view, it constituted 'extra-national' territory, which eventually paved the way for its occupation. And so, on 2nd September 1967, former English Major, Paddy Roy Bates, formally occupied the island base and settled down there with his family. Following intensive discussions with skillful lawyers, Roy Bates proclaimed the island his own state and bestowed upon himself the title of 'Prince', with the title of 'Princess' going to his wife. This subsequently entitled their property as the 'Principality of Sealand'. Roy Bates, henceforth 'Roy of Sealand', exerted state authority on the island and was thus its absolute sovereign. The 'royal family', along with other persons that have declared loyalty to Sealand, have occupied the old fort ever since.

Challenge to Sealand's sovereignty

By late 1968, the British Navy had become aware of this new situation off the coast of England. They were interested in terminating this delicate state of affairs, brought about by an error committed by the most senior military authorities, without causing too much of an uproar. Naval units entered the territorial waters claimed by Roy of Sealand. But, as he was well aware of his sovereignty, Roy threatened the Navy, by undertaking defensive activity, during which several shots were fired from Sealand as a warning. Since he was still an English citizen, Roy was thus accused of extensive crimes in Britain and was summoned to appear in an English court. The result of this lawsuit, held in Chelmsford, Essex, proclaimed a spectacular success for Sealand's claim to sovereignty. In its judgment of 25th November 1968, the court declared that it was not competent in Roy of Sealand's case, as it could not exert any jurisdiction outside of British national territory. This was the first *de facto* (in practice) recognition of the Principality of Sealand. English law had ruled that Sealand was not part of the United Kingdom, nor did any other nation lay claim to it, hence Prince Roy's declaration of a new Sovereign State was legally upheld.

Seven years later, on 25th September 1975, Roy of Sealand proclaimed the Constitution of the Principality. Over the subsequent passage of time, other national treasures were developed, such as the flag of the Principality of Sealand; its own national anthem; postage stamps; as well as gold and silver coins launched as 'Sealand Dollars'. Finally, passports of the Principality of Sealand were issued to those who had helped Sealand in some way, although they were never made available for sale.

.Sealand fights off invaders

In August of 1978, a number of Dutch men arrived at Sealand, in the employ of a German businessman. They were there to supposedly discuss business dealings with Sealand. While Roy was away in Britain, these men kidnapped Prince Roy's son Michael and took the fortress by force. Soon afterwards, Roy recaptured the island with a group of his own men and held the erstwhile attackers as 'prisoners of war'. During the time that he held the prisoners, the Governments of both the Netherlands and Germany petitioned for their release. First of all they asked England to intervene in the matter, but the British government cited their earlier court decision as evidence that they made no claim to the territory of Sealand. Then, in an act of *de facto* recognition of Sealand's sovereignty, Germany sent a diplomat directly to Sealand, to negotiate the release of their citizen. Roy first released the Dutch citizens, as 'the war' was over and the Geneva Convention required the release of all prisoners. The German was held for a further period, as he had accepted a Sealand Passport, and was therefore 'guilty of treason'. Prince Roy, grateful that the incident had not resulted in loss of life, and not wanting to sully the reputation of Sealand, eventually released him as well.

Extension of Territorial Waters

On 1st October, 1987, Britain officially extended its territorial waters from three to twelve nautical miles. The previous day, however, Prince Roy had declared the extension of Sealand's own territorial waters to an equal distance, so that right of way from the open sea to Sealand would not be blocked by British-claimed waters. No treaty has since been signed between Britain and Sealand to divide up the overlapping areas, but a general policy of dividing the area between the two countries down the middle can be assumed. International law does not allow the claim of new land during the extension of sea rights, so Sealand's sovereignty was safely 'grandfathered' in. Britain has no more right to Sealand's territory than Sealand has to the territory of the British coastline that falls within its claimed twelve-nautical mile arc.

Some nations may have tried to use this as an excuse to try to claim all of the territory of the weaker and not so well-recognized nation, regardless of international law; however, this has not proved the case. Britain has made no such attempt to take Sealand and the British government still treats it as an independent State. Prince Roy continues to pay no UK National Insurance during the time he resides on Sealand, subsequent to a ruling by the Department of Health and Social Security's solicitor's branch. There was another firearms incident in 1990, when a ship

strayed too near to Sealand and warning shots were again fired. The ship's crew later made complaints to the British authorities and a newspaper article was published, detailing the incident. Yet, despite Britain's severe prohibition of firearms, British authorities have never pursued the matter - a clear indication that the Home Office still considers Sealand to be outside their zone of control.

Fake Passports

In 1997, forged Sealand passports started turning up in various places around the world. Some were used to open bank accounts under false names in several different countries. Since very few people would have ever seen a legitimate Sealand passport (less than 300 exist today), it was difficult for these to be easily detected as forgeries. The source of these forgeries was eventually traced back to the same German businessman who was involved in the earlier attempt to take Sealand by force. Dubbing himself 'Minister of Finance', he had created a fake Sealand Business Foundation and boasted that he had sold over 150,000 fake Sealand Passports to all comers. Thus there are now unfortunately 500 times as many forged Sealand Passports in circulation than real ones! Many of the forged passports were apparently sold to people leaving Hong Kong at the time of Chinese reoccupation - at a price of \$1,000 (US dollars) each.

Current views of the Principality

The current government of the Principality of Sealand considers itself to be sovereign, and to have been recognized *de facto* as such, on the basis of the aforementioned statements by multiple world governments. It states the following:

"The Principality of Sealand recognizes jus gentium and has undertaken to regulate any activity with a view to compliance with jus gentium and international law or to have it regulated."

The existence of the Principality as an independent State, and the *de facto* recognition of its sovereignty, has been demonstrated time and time again over the last three decades by European and other States - and in particular by its nearest neighbour, the United Kingdom. Britain has stated clearly, and demonstrated on a number of occasions, either that it has no jurisdiction within Principality territorial limits, or that it has no interest in events that have taken place within the Principality.

Moreover, a number of independent legal experts have weighed carefully all arguments for and against Sealand sovereignty, unanimously agreeing that *jus gentium* (international law) applies as a basic principle underpinning its

independence. This position is further supported by other *de facto* events that demonstrate that reality. On many occasions, other States have either left Sealand alone to deal internationally with matters critical to its national interest, or have recognised Sealand as the legal and administrative authority over all activities within its territorial limits. Even today, the United Kingdom government recognises, *inter alia*, residency or work in Sealand as an overseas activity.

(I have to admit to knowing of 'Roy of the Rovers', one of those childhood comic-book heroes – but had never come across 'Roy of Sealand'. I hope readers will find the above tale worth telling!)

Peter Gripton 56B

R.E.M.E. Corps Memorial. The Final Act

Although the refurbished Corps memorial was re-dedicated on Tuesday June 2nd this year, which formally completed the eighteen month refurbishment project, there still remained one more job to complete....the small task of bringing together a small and enthusiastic group of volunteers to plant 10,000 Bluebell bulbs in the wooded areas either side of the memorial base.

So it was all fingers crossed that the previous few days of very changeable weather in the area would be kind to us on the morning of Wednesday 23rd September, which thankfully it was ...following initially a very grey and overcast early morning things brightened up as the morning progressed.



Craftsman magazine coverage of the re dedication service, so many thanks go to them.

It would not be right, not to thank or mention the other "Bluebell Diggers" and volunteers, to any I have missed out on the list I apologise to, but you know who you are, and your efforts were very much appreciated.....

The group from 30 Sig's Regt LAD, (Nuneaton) Courtesy of ex Corps ASM, now Capt Marcus Mason...

The following group from 127 Fld Coy (101 Battalion REME) from Manchester,

Sgt Eric Lancashire, L/Cpl Carl Jepson, Cfn Liam Lancashire, Cfn Leanne Webb and Cfn Stephen Howarth.

Brian Cowan and his wife Ellen who had travelled up from Bedford (another ex 7 Armd man).

From the Birmingham branch of the Association...Alan Quine with Kim Joicey and his wife.



John Blair from Stafford and also Clive Rogers from Bolton.

Although not physically in attendance, thanks must go to the Tynecastle Branch of the Association for their donation of 4 packets of bulbs.

Many thanks go to all...It was strongly rumoured that the Corps ASM was present at the start, but when the spadework commenced, a bit like the mist that hovered over the nearby river, when the sun came up he disappeared, not to be seen again.

Due to the sterling efforts of all concerned, all 10,000 bulbs had been planted by lunch time, when everyone was presented with their haversack rations. Followed in which it was pack up time, boots off, spades away and make their way home for a hot bath to ease otherwise rarely used

must go to the Tynecastle Branch of the Association for their donation of 4 packets of bulbs.

NMA's gardening guru not to expect too much initially, as only about twenty percent are likely to flower in the first year. Maybe this free annual flower show will encourage visitors to return year on year to see our own little Bluebell woods develop.



Maurice Hope.. 60B

Vice Chairman of the Potteries & District branch, R.E.M.E. Association,

Many thanks go to all...It was strongly rumoured



that the Corps ASM was present at the start, but when the spadework commenced, a bit like the mist that hovered over the nearby river, when the sun came up he disappeared, not to be seen again.

Due to the sterling efforts of all concerned, all 10,000 bulbs had been planted by lunch time, when everyone was presented with their haversack rations. Followed by it was pack up time, boots off, spades away and make their way home for a hot bath to ease otherwise rarely used muscles, and look forward to the aching back on the morrow....

We all look forward now to next spring to see if all the effort and expense was worthwhile and hopefully see a carpet of flowering Bluebells in all their glory, although we have been warned by the



You should never take your eyes off of the person with the camera Gordon. Even if you think he is friend.

Ed.

Memories of a much younger boy soldier. 1974

My story doesn't contain tales of Far East postings, and REME workshops based in North Africa. Unfortunately by the time I joined as a boy soldier, those postings had all but gone. Mine is the memories of a young lad who joined up six weeks after leaving school and was determined to do something different from my mates at school.

I was born and bred in Southport, it is now part of Merseyside, but was once Lancashire before boundary changes occurred.

I didn't really excel at school, I probably had the ability, but the will wasn't there to push myself, let's say I got by then, and I have got by though life, so maybe I wasn't that bad.

Towards the end of 1973, there was an advert running on TV, it was advertising the guaranteed vacancy scheme in the junior army. The young actor in question appeared to get a vacancy in the REME at the end of the advert, with a date for the winter term 1974. I seem to recall that he was sitting by a lake fishing and showing his mates his certificate, his mates seemed very impressed.

My step brother was already in the army, he was in the Army Catering Corp. That was a role that I didn't particularly endear to, but he did come home on leave, he always appeared to have plenty of money, and as I recall he spent rather a lot of time in pubs and clubs getting drunk. I realised sometime later that most Catering Corps types had a similar outlook on life. Anyway, with the permission of my Dad I decided to enquire into joining up in the junior army. My year at school just happened to be the first one that had to stay until you were 16 years old, a fifth year that I didn't really want to do. Along with I might add lots of others.

I did make enquiries about joining up, and at the beginning of January 1974 I set off for the junior army selection centre in Harrogate. I was there with several other like-minded young men trying to decide on their future. I had decided that the Royal Corps of Transport junior leaders sounded good, they would teach me to drive, and it sounded really exciting. Sometime during my stay at Harrogate there was some sort of ability tests, I can't recall exactly what it consisted of, but I must have done reasonably well because during an interview with a Captain from the Green Howards my future was indeed forming.

I was told that I had done extremely well in the tests and was given a list of Regiments or Corps I could join, with an untold amount of different jobs available. I thanked the Captain and informed him that I would stick with my choice of the RCT junior leaders. At this point I had my mind changed; I was advised that to go down that route would mean me not realising my full potential. No

Montgomery he said, up your sights, you can join the REME as a vehicle mechanic. So, that was how I came to join the REME.

A few days after I arrived home, a letter arrived for my Dad. It informed him that I had done very well and I had been selected to be a VM, and had been allocated a place at the Army Apprentice College, Arborfield. The intake was for the winter term which commenced on the 10th September 1974. I thought, maybe I could become mates with the lad from the advert the year before, after all his start date was the same as mine.

Sometime later I received a letter through the post. It contained my guaranteed vacancy scheme certificate, just like the lad from the advert. He we go I thought, I'm nearly in the Army. Unfortunately I still had six months of school left before I could enter the new phase of my life. Thinking back, knowing that I had a job before any exams were taken didn't do me any favours. It didn't matter what results I achieved, my job was already there, as long as I kept physically fit, and there was no stains on my character. It showed in my results. I found out sometime later that another lad from my school and year was also going to Arborfield, his name was Kevin Wood and had enlisted as an aircraft technician. After realising that we were destined for the same place for a couple of years we naturally became firm friends. That friendship remained throughout our lives.

It was now July 1974; I had left school and had been ordered to attend at Liverpool army careers office, Derby Square for a medical. The date was 31st July 1974 and I duly turned up at the allotted time. The only thing I can recall about the medical was the doctor hitting a radiator with a tuning fork, he then placed it in the middle of my forehead and asked me if I could hear it the same in both ears. Naturally I said yes, I thought you can't really say no to an officer. I don't remember being asked to cough with my testicles on a spoon.

That same day I was sworn to the army, I took the oath and swore allegiance to the Queen. I was told that I was now in the Army, but was also informed that I was on unpaid leave until my actual start date. Not to worry I thought, I'm in the Army now.

It was now the 9th September 1974. Due to me leaving for Arborfield the next day, I decided to get my haircut so I would create a good first impression when I arrived. It was this last night as a civvy that my Dad took me for a drink at his local pub. I remember sitting there drinking Pale ale, while my Dad was telling everyone that I was leaving for the Army the next day. During a lull when we had a few minutes alone, he decided to

offer me some sound advice. I thought this will be good advice, after all he had served in the Royal Marines as a young man. The advice was this, don't lend money off any one, and don't play cards for money. Okay Dad I said, I can only assume that these were things that he did during his service in the late 40's and early 50's. As it happened I never did any of those things, always listen to your Dad.

The 10th September 1974 arrived, today is the day I thought, that I get to meet my new mate from the TV advert last year, maybe he will be at Liverpool Lime Street with his guaranteed vacancy certificate, I had mine just in case it was required. greeted by an NCO and told to get on the green bus outside the station.

Eventually we arrived at Arborfield, we were debussed and escorted into the main hall just past the guardroom. I seem to recall being seated down until your name was called. When mine was called I was told that I was going to be in 5 squad, Junior Company. The permanent staff NCO was, Corporal of Horse Midwinter, he would be our guiding light for the next three months. His A/T Corporal was a fair minded lad, unfortunately I can't recall his name, his nickname though was 'Spider'. Keven Wood went to another squad, he ended up in D Company, I was in A Company throughout my time at the college. We were billeted in the block at the far end of the parade square. In all the 74C intake was 300 in numbers, there happened to be an extra lad who was back squadded because of injury. 301 in total, no one ever saw the lad from the advert. Maybe he couldn't hear the tuning fork the same in both ears and wasn't medically fit.

Also posted to 5 squad was Ian Fountaine, I believe he ended up with the rank of Major, he ranked Status Quo as the best group ever. Andy Pask, Andy Rooker and A/T McAvoy. The later of course ended up as the Commandant many years later. There was another lad called Alan Lynch, his nickname was 'Henry', this was due to the fact that he did a good impression of Clement Freud, the TV personality. I met 'Henry' a few years later in Germany, he was posted to the Royal Engineers, I was posted to the RCT workshop. Both units shared the same barracks in Munsterlager, BFPO 104.

There is a Junior company photo supplied by Vaughan Marks on the Arborfield old boys site. Geordie McAvoy is on the back row. As you look at the photo I am to McAvoy's right, Vaughan is to his left.

I had the first bed space as you entered the room, opposite me was a lad called Ross Kearns, he left before we completed Junior Company, he rebadged and joined the Para's. Unfortunately the next bed space by me was occupied by a lad called Chris Green, he was from Doncaster, his nickname was 'Donc'. He had some extremely distasteful habits, it's no wonder he wore glasses at such an early age!!! 'Donc' left us sometime into either the

second or third term. One lunch time as we were relaxing after our meal, two detectives from Yorkshire came into our billet, they searched 'Doncs' locker and took him away. Apparently he had been doing street robberies while

On the train from Southport to Liverpool were me and Kevin Wood. Also on the train was two others from our school, they had joined up and had enlisted in the RCT junior leaders and were on route to Taunton, Somerset. Strange I thought, these two had been far brighter than me at school and had got better exam results as well. The Captain from the Green Howards at Harrogate must have seen different potential in them; maybe he thought they would make better drivers.

At Liverpool Lime Street, there was no sign of the lad from the advert, not to worry I thought, he will probably get the train from elsewhere to Arborfield. All four of us set off from Liverpool to destinations down South. The two lads joining the RCT junior leaders left us at Birmingham New Street, one of them I never saw again, the other I occasionally bumped into him many years later, at Tesco's on a Saturday morning back in Southport.

The journey continued and I'm fairly certain that we disembarked at Wokingham, rather than Reading. Along with others we were greeted by an NCO and told to get on the green bus outside the station.

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from the fund can be of any help or assistance, please contact the Honorary Secretary at the earliest opportunity.

The fund also makes annual donations to the Chairman's Charities, as voted on at the AGM. r seen again.

There was a good variety of lads in 5 squad, most fitted in and got on well with each other. A couple left because the life didn't suit them. There was another lad, I can only remember his surname, I think it was Lamerton, he was extremely lanky and had been in the Army cadets before joining up. The poor lad wasn't blessed in the looks department and some comedian remarked that he looked like 'Plug' from the Beano comic, that nickname stuck with him for the duration. I recall that he left before our first 6 months was completed. I don't think the Army cadets had been much use in helping him in his chosen career.

I seem to remember that during our first few weeks of Junior Company we were marched down to the cookhouse during the evening, we were on four meals a day. The opinion being that every recruit was under weight. Can't say I am now though.

AOBA Benevolence Fund.

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Today's riddle for seniors...Here is the situation:

You are on a horse, galloping at a constant speed.
On your right side is a sharp drop-off.
On your left side is an elephant traveling at the same speed as you.
Directly in front of you is a galloping kangaroo and your horse is unable to overtake it.
Behind you is a lion running at the same speed as you and the kangaroo.

What must you do to get out of this highly dangerous situation?

Think logically before you turn to page 36 for the answer.

Retirement.

An elderly couple was at home watching TV.

Phil had the remote and was switching back and forth between a fishing channel and the porn channel.

Sally became more and more annoyed and finally said: "For god's sake Phil, Leave it on the porn channel.

You know how to fish!"

Memories of a boy soldier from 1958 (Part 1)

After luckily winning a writing competition in United Press for "Post-War Childhood of a Boy" 2010, I decided to carry the story on and write the next 3 years of my life as an Army Apprentice REME Tradesman. I wanted to do this as many people probably had no idea what went on in those early days of Army training or the type of lives we led in the Army camp.

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The Army recruitment Sergeant told me I had passed the entrance exam to be a Apprentice Tradesman and arranged for me to have a medical which was essential to being accepted into the Army.

I was shown into a room with about thirty other blokes who were talking about how they were trying to fail their medicals (these men were conscripted), one said "I'm going to say I'm deaf in one ear", another has a problem with his knee and so it went on until one chap said to me "what are you going to say", with tongue in cheek I said "I'm joining up" YOU WHAT ! he said, listen everyone, this idiot is joining up.

It went quiet for a while and then a couple of men tried to push me out of the door. After a bit of rough and tumble I explained that I was joining the Apprentice School R.E.M.E. they had mistakenly assumed that I had been called up for National Service and was eighteen years old not just fifteen.

We were then taken into another room stripped down, then had to be examined by several Doctors, one for ears, nose and throat, another for chest, then eyes and so on with the usual one holding your private parts and saying cough "and once more".

I never did find out if any of that group managed to get out of being conscripted.

Finally, I was told to sign a batch of papers, got the Queen's Shilling and was told I would receive my joining up dates and the place I would be sent to after the next intake of apprentices was due which was several months away.

I needed to get a job in the meantime and managed to find work at Palm Toffee. My job was to take bars of toffee (wrapped) off the conveyor belt and stack them into a large tray then put the tray onto a trolley with shelves. This had to be done quickly as the conveyor belt didn't stop and you could be standing knee high in toffee bars. What a boring job ! You could eat as many sweets as you liked but were not allowed to take any out of the factory, actually I went off toffees quite quickly.

- 1 -

Eventually I was moved to the cold slab tables where hot toffee was poured onto the slabs which had lips on the edge about 3" high with cold water pipes running underneath. The tables were approx 2' wide by 25' long. Once the toffee had cooled underneath you cut a strip 2' wide put your hands underneath and quickly flipped it over to cool the top. It was then off to the rollers and press to have the squares embossed. Needless to say the first time I tried flipping the slabs my fingers went through the cold toffee and into the hot. Luckily my fingers weren't burnt too badly.

I was still waiting for my Army call up papers to arrive when the Manager of the Factory called me into his office and tried to convince me to be a sugar boiler and not join the Army. It's a skilled trade he told me but I wasn't interested.

Eventually I received my joining up instructions and Railway Warrant. I would be based at Arborfield, Near Wokingham in Surrey where I would learn to be a vehicle mechanic.

With my Rail Warrant from Waterloo to Wokingham safely in my pocket and my scruffy brown suitcase I left home. I was dressed in the fashion of the day (Teddy Boy Fashion), which consisted of a long black Jacket with velvet collar, 16" trouser bottoms, brightly coloured shirt and my Brothel Creepers, these were shoes with 2" crepe soles and mauve velvet tops. My hair was cut and shaped into the D.A., which all Teddy Boys wore. I thought I looked rather smart at the time.

On leaving the Steam Train at Wokingham I was met by an Army Sergeant and told to stand with some other boys, then all of us had to climb into the back of a 3-ton truck and driven to the Army Apprentice School Arborfield. We were met by a small Provo Sergeant and made to stand in line while he looked us over. BIG mistake my clothes, "YOU" he said, pointing directly at me "will never wear those clothes here again". How such a little man could shout so loud I'll never know. I was soon having second thoughts about why I had joined up for 3 years apprenticeship and 9 years in REME. Little did I know that you could have got out within so many weeks if you hated the Army. This fact was kept quiet from all of us.

After the dressing down we were then taken to one of the wooden huts which were called Spiders. These were so called as there were six huts to each group, three one side, three the other and in the middle were the ablutions. These Spiders

were arranged around a parade ground: H.Q., A.B.C and D company with a cookhouse at the bottom of the parade ground. Each hut had approximately 17 beds with a small room for an N.C.O. to sleep who was in charge of everyone in the hut.

I was sent to H.Q. Spider and put into a room with nothing but beds and lockers either side of the room. I picked a bed and locker and then all of us boys were taken to the AQMS stores where we were all kitted out with bedding then back again for our uniforms, what a joke that was. Hardly anything fitted, boots were OK, Beret OK but trousers and jackets seemed to be XXL size to me. I was 5'10" and weighed 10st.4lbs, very skinny with a 28" waist. I had to make pleats in the back of my trousers to hold them up with safety pins. The next day we were all taken down to the Barbers shop which was just opposite the Guard Room where the little Provo Sergeant spent all of his time. As we sat in the chair he kept poking his head in to make sure our hair was short enough. Short wasn't the word – scalped was more like it and there were more than a few misty eyes when we caught sight of ourselves in the mirror.

We were given a photocopy of how all of your kit was supposed to look in your locker and of course laid out on your bed. This was called a Full Kit Layout. We were made to do this so many times in the next six months. All our webbing which was canvass belt, straps, pouches and gaiters had to be cleaned and boots as shiny as hell and "hell" was the word that described how hard we worked to achieve this. The boots had all small bumps over them and we were shown how with a lighted candle to heat a spoon and then rub the spoon over the bumps we could get a smooth surface so as to buff the boots with Spit and Polish. After a couple of weeks one of the lads borrowed an iron and this did the trick of burning the bumps off our boots.

As for our uniform, we were shown how to fold them and put them under our mattress and after sleeping on them all night they supposedly would be nicely pressed. Stupid idiots, they came out looking more creased than before. Did we look an eyesore, it was obvious to us we had to get our own iron and hide it from our NCO.

During this time our square bashing started. Six weeks of learning how to march and this started in February 1958 and was we all cold "Dig your heels in, swing your arms shoulder high, chin up, chest out" shouted our Drill Sergeant. There was one big lad that came from a farm that we called Mole, a pleasant chap that just could not march. He would swing his left arm and left leg forward together, same with the other side and his kit cleaning was diabolical. I tried helping him but it

was useless. Eventually he was discharged. Every night we were cleaning our kit and doing full kit layouts using a long piece of string to line our beds up so they were exactly evenly spaced. Then our kit was lined up on each bed so it was all identical in rows.

Our NCO would walk along each bed and inspect our kit and without fail each time the windows were opened and he would throw out our boots or webbing saying "not good enough". When he was finished, out we would run to retrieve our kit and clean it again before lights out. No-one was allowed to talk then but often I would hear crying in the night. Some of the boys really took it to heart, but with a strict stepfather like I had I could cope ok.

Another big problem was as we had 2 intakes of boys a year and our apprenticeship was for 3 years that made six divisions.

This caused a hierarchy where if you were in a meal queue or any other queues 6 Division would push in front followed by 5 div, 4 div, 3 div and so on and with nearly 1000 Apprentice Tradesmen you could be in the front of the cookhouse queue and end up with four or five hundred older boys in front of you with little time for eating your meals and to this day my wife wonders why I eat so fast. The food was really not up to any reasonable standard at all.

A typical evening meal was Pom which was powdered potato mixed with water. You held your plate by the side of a large metal bowl and the cook would scoop up the Pom, hit the side of the tub and the watered potato would splatter all over your plate, moving along down the line you then got a piece of corned beef, then a slice of bread and then you fished out a square of margarine which was floating in a tub of greasy water, then the usual mug of tea with Bromide in it and the odd rock cake.

During your first six months several divisions were now men and were allowed out and obviously 18 and over drank alcohol and they could be heard coming past our billets up to the company spiders, this went on till midnight keeping us awake. Little did we know what was in store for us when we moved into our different companies.

Each of our barrack rooms in HQ company had a black stove with a flue going out through the roof it was kept burning through the winter with coal. It was positioned down the end of the room so that end was nearly always warm each morning. Each morning the ashes were cleaned out and the top and sides of the stove had to be polished black, also every morning our beds had to be made with one blanket covering the bed and the rest were made into a box shape at the top of the bed and our bed spaces swept and floors bumped to make the floorboards shine,.



1958 H Q Company. Learning to march, February - Very cold

This was done by swinging a bumper which had a long pole and a block on the end covered in some kind of material. This was swung back and forwards to buff up the wooden boards. Everything had to be spick and span. Then those dreaded words shouted out by our NCO "Stand by your Beds" Whatever you were doing at the time you stopped and just did that. Along he came and inspected our efforts, always never good enough and with enough shouting to make your ears ring.

After six months we were moved out of HQ and put into our different companies, A B C and D. I was put into C Coy. We were now in 2 Division. I thought to myself this has got to be better than my first six months but Oh! How wrong was I. Nothing had changed except we were now vulnerable to all the rest of the boys in the higher divisions. At least we had central heating and I managed to get a bed by a radiator.

We were paid 10 shillings (50p) a week and out of that you bought your boot polish, brasso and blanco to clean your kit, not worth queuing up and saluting for. Some money was put into credits each week so at the end of term you had money to go on leave with but out of this money was taken for Barrack room damages. What damage was done? I never saw any. Each apprentice paid into this fund, I really would like to know

what happened to all that money. Any money I had left over was spent in the NAAFI on cakes. Another scam as I called it was when we were all queuing up outside the cookhouse for meals we had to stand with our white china tea mug in our hand behind our backs and every day a permanent Staff sergeant would smash several mugs with his parade stick and say "Thats what happens to dirty mugs".

It cost 1 shilling and 8 pence (about 20p) to buy another mug from the A.Q.M.S., a lot of money in those times and I'm pretty certain there were never any dirty mugs with all the inspections we had.

Each morning about eight o'clock, all companies paraded outside on the main square and roll call was taken to see who was present and who had absconded and believe it or not quite a few went A.W.O.L. (Absent without Leave).

Reveille get up call was played by an Apprentice Tradesman bugler. He would stand on the Square blowing his bugle as loudly as he could. If you were not out of bed by the time one of the Duty NCOs came around then he would end up walloping your bed with a stick the size of a broom handle.

Before lights out at night we had to stand by our beds to be checked by a permanent Staff NCO,

also allowed to be in bed asleep but some older boys wanted to stay out all night and come back over the barrack fence in the morning. The older boys would come to the Junior Division and force the younger boys to sleep in their beds for the bed check. This is how it happened to me once, I was standing by my bed at 2200hrs, just in my pyjamas and after I was counted and the NCO went into another room I had to run round to the other hut and jump into a bed, pull the sheets and blankets over my head and pretend to be asleep. I was so scared that I would be found out that I was trembling all over. Luckily the NCO just walked in and counted heads and went out again, Phew! I never got caught doNCO would just turn a blind eye as it had happened to him and it was expected but it was very soul destroying to the young men who expected so much from the Army.

There was a metal locker at the end of each room for all that rooms cleaning tools, i.e. brooms, bumper buckets, etc., this was screwed to a wall about 18" off of the floor. One Apprentice refused to clean the older boys kit so he was put in the locker naked and a fire was lit in a metal bucket under the locker. I did feel sorry for him but I felt helpless. Another time an Apprentice was put in a laundry bag and pulled up over a beam and was punched about as it swung to and fro. I never understood the brutality that went on but being only fifteen years old I was scared stiff just as the others were but vowed if I survived this Apprenticeship I would never be a bully. Another thing these bully's did was to get drunk on either a Friday or Saturday night come back to the 2 Division and tip every last bed in the room over with the boys in them, this was quite horrendous as you knew it was coming but still couldn't stop it. It was finally stopped when one Apprentice severely hit his head on a metal locker and was hospitalised. A lot of this reminded me of "Tom Brown's School Days"

All this happened in our first year but when our six months were up we were allowed to leave camp in Uniform after being inspected at the Guard House first and then signed out. We had to be signed back in again the same day but were never late.

One of the big events of the year was the Novices Boxing match which we had no choice but to enter. It was held in the main hall with the boxing ring within view of up to a thousand boys and staff. As I climbed into the ring for the first fight of my life I noticed all the blood stains on the canvass floor. My stomach turned over especially with all the shouting from everyone, If only I could get out of this I thought. Then the bell rang and out I came swinging punches all over the place, I suppose my opponent he must have felt the same as me, miraculously I won.

After winning several fights over a few days I was into the final. Watching one fight, the contestant, a cockney lad was being totally out boxed and beaten badly so in the third round he pulled the other boxer in close, kneed him in the groin and as he bent over he then rabbit punched him on the back of the neck and down he went. Everyone cheered except the referee. Needless to say he was disqualified but he didn't care. By the time the final for my fight came I was sitting on my bed when one of the boxers was helped onto his bed. He had welt marks and bruises all over his body. Who did he fight I asked. The bloke you are fighting in the final came the reply. "Jesus" I thought, I don't want any of that.

But there it was I had to fight him and all too soon the bell went and out I came throwing punches. The next thing I knew I was lying on the canvass looking up at the ref, I hadn't felt a thing – ONE,TWO, THREE he was saying, up I got but then luckily the bell went.

Same thing happened in round two and three except it was SIX, SEVEN and EIGHT before I got up. Thank goodness that was all over. I later found out that my opponent had been boxing for years and was a Hong Kong School Boy Champion. Needless to say I lost that fight.

The one good thing that came out of all this was that boxing was not for me and I managed to get into other sports but by now the school boxing team had seen the fight and Dave (the bloke who I fought) was in my room at the time when two of them came in, they were very cocky and called out "where's this boxer who can hit then". Dave didn't say a word, "You" they said pointing at Dave, we recognize you. Still pointing at Dave one NCO said, OK come on hit me but Dave said I can't hit an NCO, let's forget it but Oh No!, then crash as the NCO went down, what a punch – right on the chin, the rest of us were really chuffed. The NCO's didn't try that again.

By now we had started our Further Education and Trade Training. On entering the A.A.S. Aborfield (Army Apprentice School) you automatically had 3rd class education so we had to study and pass five separate subjects at the same time to pass our 2nd class education and the same again for our 1st class certificates which were known as AEC Class 1 (Army Education).

The first six months of our Trade Training was to learn how to use hand tools such as files, hacksaw, drilling and welding. One of our tests at the end of term was that we had a 4" x 4"x1/2" block of mild steel which had to be squared on all sides by filing. Then a hexagonal hole had to be cut in the centre of the metal block. Then a piece of brass had to be shaped and filed so that it would fit in



1958 or 59. 'C' Company somewhere in the woods trying to make a cup of tea.

Guess who is wearing the silly hat.

six different ways so that it would fix into the hexagonal hole without dropping through, quite a feat I thought by the time I had finished mine.

There were about eight of us all practising arc welding and I didn't notice anything was going wrong

But on the Saturday morning parade as the Sun came over the top of the barracks and shone straight into my eyes I couldn't see anything, Blimey, what's happened – I couldn't see anything at all. I shouted out as loud as I could to the Sergeant Major, he came over and I said that I couldn't see. I was taken to the British Medical Hospital where it was confirmed that I had "Arc Eyes" from the flashing of the arc welding. Both eyes were covered and I stayed in the Hospital for ten days. No 'elf and safety' in those days.

After coming out of Hospital I had moved up several divisions and full kit layouts had been reduced to once a week with permanent staff NCO's and Officer Commanding inspecting all the rooms. The men from the top division still came

round the night before inspection to get their kit cleaned by us. By now a good mate of mine had come up with a story that we had too much to clean, I would put my two pair of Army boots on his bed so now he had four pairs. He would put his webbing on mine so I had two sets to clean and told them that we couldn't get all this kit cleaned by "lights out" and believe it or not the idiots fell for it and took the kit to another sucker.

As the Spiders (barracks), Rats were frequently seen. One Apprentice Tradesman who was disliked by some of his room mates had made his bed and gone out on a Saturday evening. Meanwhile, a couple of lads stripped his bed and boxed his sheets into an Apple turnover and put a dead rat halfway down the bed. He came back just in time for the head count and lights out. We were all in bed by now sniggering under the bed clothes and waiting in great anticipation as to what was about to happen. He finally put his pyjamas on and climbed into bed. It was pitch black by now when an almighty scream bellowed out as his bare foot came into contact with the furry beast, followed by disgusting obscenities. On went the

lights with the NCO coming out of his bunk to see what the hell was going on. Get that bloody rat out of here and keep quiet before we are all in trouble he said. Meanwhile, across the Square we heard the Duty Sergeant shouting "GET THOSE LIGHTS OUT 'C' COMPANY".

It was quite normal if one Apprentice Tradesman in your room had dirty kit or long hair on parade the whole room would be punished by not being allowed out or doing extra kit layouts. The idea was for the rest of us in the room to bring the culprit up to scratch by showing him the standards that were required.

Everyone had to take their turn on fatigues, this was to help in the cookhouse or ration runs or even light the fires in the office of the Commanding Officer. On one occasion on cookhouse duties after helping with the washing up of pots and pans I asked the cook a question, "how do you know when the fat in the frying pan is hot enough to fry eggs" ? simple he said just watch this and spat into the frying pan from about one foot away so that the spit would hit the pan at an angle, if it jumps out its hot enough, if not the fat is too cold – got it.

One time when I was on the ration run to Aldershot we loaded up a 3-ton vehicle with food for Arborfield camp for that day. When we got back to Arborfield the butcher said "come with me while I sort the meat out", that was a real eye-opener, all the best meat i.e. steak, chops etc I took to the Officers Mess, then the next best cuts of meat to the Sergeants Mess and what was left was for the Apprentice Tradesmen, bloody typical as things were going.

Every six months we were allowed six weeks leave and dozens of double decker buses would line up on the square and take us to Reading and Woking Station. On one particular morning we were woken up by the Bugler playing Rock around the Clock instead of the normal reveille, the Apprentices were hanging out of the windows cheering until the Guards turned up and the Bugler was arrested (never found out what happened to the poor devil after that).

While I was on leave for the six weeks I got very bored so I went daily to Lyon's at Cadbury Hall, Hammersmith to line up for casual work in the factory. When the employment foreman came out of the factory the first thing he shouted was "Are there any Forces here" ? up went my hand and was asked for my leave pass to prove it. The Forces people went in first to either work in the Factory or be a Van Boy. I much preferred to be a Van Boy travelling around London and seeing all the shops and sights at the same time as delivering

cakes and bread. I earned £2.50 per week for that.

When leave was finished, it was back on the train to camp to carry on with our Trade Training.

Every company had their own Sergeant Major, our Company Sergeant Major Huxley was truly a man to look up to, strict but fair, he was from the Grenadier Guards and known as the singing Sergeant Major. When on the parade ground he would sing out 'C' company, my company ATTENSHUNNN ! This used to rattle the R.S.M. who this particular time told Sergeant Major Huxley to address 'C' company properly. Sergeant Major Huxley then brought us to Attention and marched us off the parade ground. It wasn't long after that he disappeared and new C.S.M. was brought in to take his place. It was in 2009, fifty years later that I heard that Sergeant Major Huxley was still alive and residing in the "Chelsea Pensioners Home".

My education was going very well and when the results were posted on the Notice Board I was glad to see that I had passed all 5 subjects with 100% for maths. I now had the Army Education Certificat Class II.

The Vehicle apprenticeship had many different sections which consisted of Steering, Electrical, Diesel Fuel Pumps, Reboring cylinder blocks, air brakes etc. There was also an Advanced Engine Section where we actually stripped an engine right down and then rebuilt it and made it run again.

There was even a blacksmith section.

Patrick Gutteridge 58A

This article was kindly sent in as a response to my appeal. It is taken from a book of short stories entitled 'Living Proof'. The second prt will be in OBAN 64. Ed

Parrot.

A young man named John received a parrot as a gift. The parrot had a bad attitude and an even worse vocabulary. Every word out of the bird's mouth was rude, obnoxious and laced with profanity.

John tried and tried to change the bird's attitude by consistently saying only polite words, playing soft music and anything else he could think of to 'clean up' the bird's vocabulary.

Finally, John was fed up and he yelled at the parrot. The parrot yelled back. John shook the parrot and the parrot got angrier and even more rude. John, in desperation, threw up his hand, grabbed the bird and put him in the freezer. For a few minutes the parrot squawked and kicked and screamed. Then suddenly there was total quiet. Not a peep was heard for over a minute.

Fearing that he'd hurt the parrot, John quickly opened the door to the freezer. The parrot calmly stepped out onto John's outstretched arms and said "I believe I may have offended you with my rude language and actions. I'm sincerely remorseful for my inappropriate transgressions and I fully intend to do everything I can to correct my rude and unforgivable behavior."

John was stunned at the change in the bird's attitude. As he was about to ask the parrot what had made such a dramatic change in his behavior, the bird spoke-up, very softly "May I ask what the turkey did?"

Happy Christmas!

Hoodies

Saint Peter is sitting at the Pearly Gates when two guys wearing dark hoodies and sagging pants, arrive.

St. Peter looked out through the Gates and said, "Wait here. I'll be right back." St. Peter goes over to God's chambers and tells him who is waiting for entrance.

God says to Peter, "How many times do I have to tell you? You can't be judgmental here, this is Heaven. All are loved. All are brothers. Go back and let them in!"

St. Peter goes back to the Gates, looks around, and lets out a heavy sigh. He returns to God's chambers and says, "Well, they're gone." "The guys wearing hoodies?" asked God. "No. The Pearly Gates."

Educated Terrorist Arrested at Heathrow.

A secondary school teacher was arrested today at London's Heathrow International airport as he attempted to board an international flight while in possession of a ruler, a protractor, a pair of compasses, a slide-rule and a calculator.

At a press conference, a UK Border Control spokesman said he believes the man is a member of the notorious extremist Al-Gebra movement. He did not identify the man, who has been charged by the Police with carrying weapons of maths instruction.

'Al-Gebra is a problem for us', the Spokesman said. 'They derive solutions by means and extremes, and sometimes go off on tangents in search of absolute values.' They use secret code names like "X" and "Y" and refer to themselves as "unknowns;" but we have determined that they belong to a common denominator of the axis of medieval with coordinates in every country. As the Greek philosopher Isosceles used to say, "There are three sides to every triangle. When asked to comment on the arrest, Opposition Leader Ed Milliband said, "If God had wanted us to have better weapons of maths instruction, He would have given us more fingers and toes."

Fellow Labour colleagues told reporters they could not recall a more intelligent or profound statement by the Opposition Leader.

Today's Confessional Box.

I went into the Confessional Box after years of being away from the Church.

Inside I found a fully equipped bar with Guinness on tap.

On one wall, there's a row of decanters with fine Jameson Irish whiskey and Waterford crystal glasses.

On the other wall is a dazzling array of the finest cigars and chocolates.

Then the priest comes in.

I say to him, "Father, forgive me, for it's been a very long time since I've been to confession, but I must first admit that the confessional box is much more inviting than it used to be.

> He replies: " Get out, you're on my side!"

Letter to the Editor.

Whilst having a 'clear out' in the attic recently, I came across an old copy of OBAN, Autumn 2006 (Issue 37). On page 35 John Hernon (60B) is raising a query about the authenticity concerning how Mike Devey 60B was awarded the M.B.E. John's article goes on to say that his information came from a former colleague and ex-apprentice. and I believe that information came from me.

I can verify, to the best of my knowledge, that Mike Devey was awarded his MBE for assisting in the repatriation of British personnel when Kuwait was invaded by Iraq, and being ex-military he went 'under-cover' to avoid capture, these were his exact words to me when I saw him last, when he lived in Selsey. During a tour of the magnificent house he lived in. I noticed in one room the photographs of him being presented his MBE by H.M. The Queen. Mike then quite modestly confided in me the details of how he went 'under cover' in Kuwait.

Along side the photos of Mike getting his MBE were later photos of his daughter getting married in Westminster Abbey, an honour due to Mike's status as a MBE. Before I close I would like to give a small background to my friendship with Mike (sadly no longer with us). We travelled home together most weekends (remember those days lads when motorbikes & cars were not allowed!). We both

came from Portsmouth and it was not long before I got to know his parents very well. Bill, Mike's dad was severely injured during a mortar attack in WWII and sustained horrific spinal injuries, but I never heard him complain once, when he used to help us out on our cars and motorbikes. The sadness does not end there as Greta, Mike's mum was totally blind, and was reliant on a guide dog, and often when visiting Mike's parents we would play good humoured tricks on Greta, and he would send her guide dog off to find us in the house, and I must say she loved every minute of these young soldiers having some fun with her.

I hope my contribution over the query that John Hernon raised all those years ago stirs a few memories of all those who knew and served with Mike Devey, and I for one consider myself privileged to have known him and his wonderful parents.

Ron Meacher 60B

Nice to know that someone keeps their old OBANs. Ron has told me that he is now going to write an article about when he and Austin (Lathie) Latham 60B, did a charity bike ride from John O'Groats to Lands End. Ed

Travel

I have been in many places, but I've never been in Kahoots. Apparently, you can't go alone. You have to be in Kahoots with someone.

I've also never been in Cognito. I hear no one recognizes you there.

I have, however, been in Sane. They don't have an airport; you have to be driven there. I have made several trips there, thanks to my friends, my family, and in the past, my work.

I would like to go to Conclusions, but you have to jump, and I'm not too much on physical activity anymore.

I have also been in Doubt. That is a sad place to go, and I try not to visit there too often. I've been in Flexible, but only when it was very important to stand firm.

Sometimes I'm in Capable, and I go there more often as I'm getting older.

One of my favorite places to be is in Suspense! It really gets the adrenalin flowing and pumps up the old heart! (At my age I need all the stimuli I can get!)

I may have been in Continent, but I don't remember what country I was in. It's an age thing. They tell me it is very wet and damp there.

Answer to Riddle for Seniors

Quietly get off the Merry-go-round and go home!

In Memoriam

John Colin Drasutis (55B) – died 14th July 2015

Life sure throws up some amazing coincidences, and the 'parallel paths' of myself and Colin certainly bear that out. The first time I came across him was when I started out at Grammar School – the world-famous Liverpool Institute High School for Boys, affectionately known by both pupils and ex-pupils as 'The Inny'. Colin didn't have any real personal impact on me at the time, between the years 1951 and 1956, as he was already a year ahead of me, but I do recall his mop of flaming red hair and the occasional appearance in the uniform he wore as part of the school's Army Cadet Force (ACF).

So it wouldn't have come as any great surprise to me when I joined the Army Apprentices' School for Boys in 1956 to find that Colin or - as he was known by his intake, 'Draz' – already ensconced at Arborfield as a member of 55B – still a year ahead of me! As Old Boys of the era will recall, one didn't really fraternize with any of the Senior Divisions – rather lived in awe and fear of them! However, when it came around to the leave periods, old prejudices, respect and fear went through the window and it was a case of 'all pals together'! Well, that's how it appeared to me anyway. It was particularly the



case for we band of 'scousers', as we all tended to congregate together for the seemingly endless journey home to Liverpool.

First port of call would

be the 'Molly Millar' public house, almost part of Wokingham railway station in those days, for a swift pot of foaming ale to set us on our way. Then it was the Southern Rail train to Waterloo and that madcap dash across to 'the tube' to catch the underground train to Euston by way of the Northern Line. (*Embankment, Charing Cross, Leicester Square, Tottenham Court Road, Goodge Street, Warren Street* – those station names seemed to be embossed in the memory bank!) Hopefully, there would then be time to grab a pint on the station forecourt before the long train ride up to Lime Street station in the heart of Liverpool's city centre. The buffet car would certainly make a profit when the Arborfield boys were heading home! And there was always a loud cheer when the train steamed its way across the bridge over the Mersey and finally puffed its way into the cavernous confines of Lime Street. Then it was a case of going our separate ways home - followed by the inevitable opening question from Mum – "When are you going back?"!

Not quite so much joy and excitement when leave was over and it was time to head south again. But Colin always had an extra extension to his 'happy hours', because the train would pass by his parents' house near Edge Hill and they would be able to exchange a final wave to each other! For Colin – or Draz – those earlier days in the ACF must have paid off, because he ended up as Boy RSM for his Div, famous for his ram-rod straight back and that once red hair now cut down to the bone! I never did ask him about his rather unusual surname, but he recalled that he'd had a problem upon arrival at Arborfield, when asked his religion. These came under the titles of 'C of E', 'RC' or 'OD' – that's 'other denomination'. Draz's answer to that was that he was a "lapsed Lithuanian Catholic", so make of that what you want!

Some years later, I was on my penultimate Army posting, down at the School of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering – SEME – at Bordon in Hampshire. I was still in uniform as a Sergeant, but as I had recently started working as an instructor, I was privileged to use the Instructors' Common Room during NAAFI breaks! Sitting there over coffee one morning, it must have been early in 1966, a newly recruited civilian instructor was introduced to us all – and there, large as life, was Draz! Not that he ever went by that name anymore, from now on he was Colin again! It transpired that, during a posting to Singapore, Colin had developed some

at the Command Workshop in Daisbrook Barracks, Liverpool.

Later that year I went off to dear old Fallingbommel – the dreaded 'Effing-B' – to serve with the Royal Scots Greys. By that time, I had definitely decided to finish my Army career and apply for a civvie post at SEME. Thus it was that, upon my 'demob' in the summer of 1967, I joined Colin once again – on the third lap so to speak! We were both instructors on vehicle electrical systems and, in due course, moved onto the rather complicated Armoured Vehicles such as FV432, Chieftain, Fox, Scimitar and Scorpion. Colin did very well and in later years he moved across to SEME HQ – famously termed '*The Kremlin*' – where he served in Course Design and Scheduling, before becoming the Senior Supervising Officer for Training Validation.

I had remained in the Electrics Department on the instructing side of life but, around 1980, Colin informed me that there was soon to be an opening for a post in HQ. To cut a long story short, I eventually ended up in '*The Kremlin*' alongside Colin – and we were both later heavily involved in the purchase and development of a computer system to run the SEME examination system – SPEC, as it became known, or Student Performance Evaluation by Computer. Outside of SEME, Colin was an enthusiastic member and supporter of his local cricket team, Liphook and Ripsley CC. So enthusiastic in fact that he actually recruited yours truly to spend a couple of summers playing for Liphook Second XI – and the inevitable drinking at the '*Green Dragon*' that went with it! We also enjoyed some rivalry over our respective soccer teams – Colin backing the Reds of Anfield and myself being a True Blue Evertonian. We both also became supporters of the SEME football side that seemed to win a lot of trophies back in those halcyon days.

During all these years, Arborfield had remained fresh in our memories and, when the Arborfield

Old Boys' Association rose phoenix-like from the ashes in 1977 both Colin and I became long-standing supporters of the AOBA, keenly attending the annual reunions. Then, in 1996, my sister informed me that 'the Inny', which had closed a few years previously and whose building had deteriorated into a parlous state of repair, had recently been resurrected as the 'LIPA' – Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts. Not only that, but there was to be an 'open day' for old pupils. Thus it was that both Colin and I became members of the 'Liobians' – Liverpool Institute Old Boys. We managed to attend a few reunions together before Colin's health took a turn for the worse and he stopped travelling.



I later moved house, back up to Reading, in 2011 and my contact with Colin ended all too quickly when my phone calls to his contact number went unanswered. I believe that he finally moved into a flat in Petersfield, but sadly hadn't seen him for a number of years when I received a letter from his daughter Claire to inform me of his passing, at the age of 77 years. Our 'parallel paths' had finally decided to diverge. RIP Colin.

Pete Gripton 56B

Major General Peter Baldwin.

Who has died aged 88, had a distinguished career in the Army, followed by a successful appointment as director of the Radio Authority.

Peter Alan Charles Baldwin was born on February 19th 1927 in Wood Green, North London. After attending King Edward VI Grammar School in Chelmsford, he trained as a REME Radio Technician at the Army Training School, Arborfield, Berkshire.

After a posting to Sudan he returned to England to attend OCTU at Mons, Aldershot. He was awarded the Cane of Honour and commissioned into the Royal Corps of Signals.

After several posting around the world, he returned to England to Staff College, in the middle of one of his examinations he was told that one of his lungs had tested positive for tuberculosis. He took the remaining papers in a screened-off section of the Woolwich Hospital. Surgery left him with only one good lung but, after a spell at the War Office, he

went on to Staff College. After several more posting, one of which was command of 5 Infantry Brigade and deployment to Borneo in the final phase of the 'Confrontation' with Indonesia. He was mentioned in despatches. His final posting saw him promoted to Major General and appointed Chief Signal Officer, BAOR, at Joint HQ, Rheindahlen.

He retired from the Army in 1979 and became deputy director of radio for the Independent Broadcasting Authority. He was chief executive of the Radio Authority from 1991 to 1995. He was appointed CBE in 1994.

The following year he retired for the second time but worked as a consultant to the Thomson foundation. He was involved in several charities including Crimestoppers and the Eyeless Trust, and was an associate member of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Trust. He

and his wife enjoyed travelling, visiting friends all over the world and attending musical events.

Peter Baldwin leaves his wife Gail Roberts, and two stepsons.

This is a very short precis of the Obituary that appeared in the Telegraph. Ed

Deaths Notified since last OBAN

N/a	Cooper	A	Jock	66C	2011
575	Drasutis	C	John	55B	14/07/2015
2628	Barnes	P	A Tich	60C	May 2015
N/a	Spurs	T	Tom	53B	26/05/2015
N/a	Petherick	R	W Bob	44	Oct 2014
1274	Jenner	K	Ken	44A	12/09/2015
N/a	Baldwin	P	A Peter	42A	15/09/2015
1905	Simmonds	P	Peter	44A	20/09/2015
828	Keyworth	E	I Eric	47A	08/09/2015
1057	Rayner	A	Alan	42C	23/08/2015
1803	Sauvary	R	Peter	42A	06/10/2015
N/a	Rae	M	Malcolm	47	31/08/2015

