

**August
2017**



**Issue
68**

Arborfield Old Boys Association Newsletter



2017 Reunion Edition

www.arborfieldoldboys.co.uk

ARBORFIELD OLD BOYS' **ASSOCIATION**

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Colonel Claire Phillips ADC

Vice Presidents

All Past Commandants

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

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

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Laurence (Laurie) Blakley (61B)

OBAN Editor

Andy Dickson (66B)

Webmaster

Mark Jobes (77C)

Recruitment Officer

Bruce Leslie (75C)

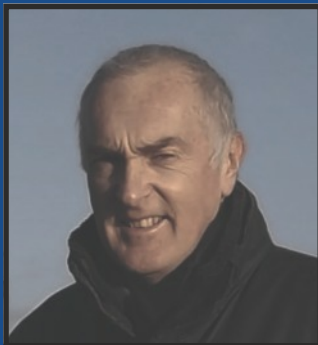
Database Officer

Ian Clark (62A)

Committee Meetings are held at least twice a year in addition to the AGM that is held during the reunion weekend.

You can contact the Secretary with any points you would like raised at these meetings.

Contact details for all committee members can be found on the AOBA website.



Chairman's Report

AOBA Chairman's Report

Well, I don't know about you but I thought the reunion was fantastic this year. I cannot put my finger on it, but it seems the relaxed format and increased participation of the band went down extremely well. I've had many comments from members saying how much they enjoyed it. Shirley and her team from Isle of Wight tours took the strain of organising and I think this helped the occasion; certainly it did from a committee perspective. Shirley has confirmed the reunion will stay as Hinkley for 2018, again on the second weekend in July, so please pen Saturday 14th July in your calendar. It was especially heartening to see Warrant Officer Joseph Frost (99) at the reunion this year; he made a special effort to attend travelling back from his unit in Germany. My personal thanks to all those who were involved in making it such a special day. The committee are still working hard on your behalf. The revised constitution was approved by the membership at the AGM and will be posted on the website soon. Bruce Leslie (75c) has taken over the helm of recruiting sergeant and he will be pushing hard to track down those 68ers for the next reunion, as well as trying to get the younger members

(those seventies and eighties intakes) to join up. As I type, we still have a gap to fill; the membership secretary post is still vacant, but I do have a tentative volunteer, so hopefully it will not be too long before we are up to full strength again.

I'm monitoring progress at Arborfield and at a recent meeting with Crest Nicholson I was informed the building work on the housing estate is progressing to plan and that work on the memorial garden will start later in 2018. I will continue to ensure our interests are represented. I plan to visit Bohunt School in the autumn as I believe the build of the school on the old Apprentice College Engineering Wing is nearly complete; hopefully I will have more to report in the next newsletter.

I'll close on a positive update on the REME Museum. After continuing delays caused by fire compliance issues, it eventually opened its doors to the public on the 7th Jun 17. It's well worth a visit and tells a compelling story of the history of the Corps from its formation to the modern day. Of note for us, is that the Apprentice College gates stand proud in a prominent position in the first hall. The REME Shop and the Crowns Café pander to the visitor's needs making it a good day out.

Mike Tizard

Your Chairman

Committee Members Reports



Webmaster's Report

I haven't much to report from my desk. Please see my comments below regarding articles for the Website.

Apologies for missing the reunion this year but I had personal issues that needed my attention.

I am migrating the website to new servers and by the time you read this it should all be complete, seamlessly I hope.

I really would encourage you to write articles for inclusion on the website. It is

not the happiest place when all I have to report week on week is the passing of members. It really would be nice to get some good news stories from time to time. Don't be shy, any interesting articles would be welcome and will also keep the website interesting to all members.

I am sure the guys from the 78 Divs who Are trying to track down their fellow members might have some things to offer or requests to make.....

Mark Jobs 77C

Secretary's Report



think the combination of rich food and alcohol, took their revenge with my Diabetes.

Those of you I had a chance to meet and talk to, it was a pleasure to do so; especially as I was could relax knowing the weekend had been superbly organised on our behalf, by Shirley and her Isle of Wight Tours team.

I trust everyone has recovered from the Reunion weekend, unfortunately I was taken ill on the Saturday night, and had to take my leave early. Lessons learnt, I

The highlight for me was meeting my old comrade Trevor Flett; sadly we were the only two from our intake 73C.

I wished I could have joined in, on parade at the NMA, but sadly Rheumatoid Arthritis stopped that from happening. Maybe next year. I thought the parade and service at the NMA, were moving and brought back memories; as any act of Remembrance does.

Moving on now, and we the Committee now start to think about next years Reunion, no rest for the wicked.

Phil Elleway 73C

Registrar's Report

Position Vacant.

I hear on the grapevine that we may have another volunteer in the wings.

We will post any appointments on the AOBA website in the short term and a fuller introduction here in the next edition.

Andy Dickson 66B (OBAN Editor)

Dates for your diary:

Oct 1st - REME75 Corps 75th Birthday

Oct 6th - REME75 Corps Officers Mess QMs' Dinner

Oct 14th - REME75 5AAC El-Alamein Dinner Night

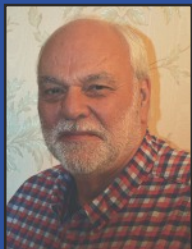
Oct 28th - Welsh Mini Reunion

Nov 9th - Field of Remembrance

Nov 12th - Remembrance Sunday

Nov 12th - Association Event Cenotaph March Pass

Dec 3rd - REME St Eligius Sunday



OBAN Editor's Report

Gents, I have been a bit tardy in getting this edition together. No matter how diligent I think I am going to be I always seem to find I am doing something else, especially when the weather is nice. Working full time doesn't help. Most evenings I just feel too bushed to sit at my computer and do my other job.

The reunion this year was very pleasant from my perspective. Thanks to Isle of White Tours who made all the arrangements. I haven't heard one complaint yet. Well done Shirley and your team.

Meeting all your old mates is in some ways surreal. It seems we meet for a few days in July each year and all the time in between didn't exist. We seem to just pick up where we left off a year ago.

It was really great to see some guys who attended for the first time, (John Horwood), and others that attend every time.

There is always something memorable that happens each year. It was fun discussing sartorial elegance with Tony (Alan) Moogan. For a laugh, you should ask him what this is all about at the next reunion.

For those of you that are not aware, The C&R's that we reviewed were drafted by Michael (Chalky) White ably assisted by Dave Cosway. They spent a lot of time discussing the changes and grammar via Skype regularly. The documents were sent via e-mail back and forth and towards the end I offered some small assistance. This was a contentious subject and I know Chalky felt he was running the risk of alienating some members. Suffice to say, I think he did an outstanding job which resulted in the

new C&R's being voted in at the AGM.

Thanks, Chalky.

It was very interesting talking with Ray Pittendreigh during the reunion. My memories of him and his double soled Ammunition Boots are very vivid. As I found out with RSM McMahon, they were both gentlemen and it is so nice to see the many lives they shaped over the years they served at Arborfield. I think we can all be grateful.

This edition includes some of the many photos of the reunion I have been sent. I must say, there are hundreds and I have passed them onto Mark for inclusion on the AOBA Website. There are too many to include them all in this newsletter but I hope you will enjoy those I have managed to get in.

As always, I will make the plea for articles. I can see from the various Facebook pages I visit that many of you contribute all sorts of information there but little seems to get to me or Mark Jobs.

You will see I have written an article later in the newsletter. I just had to fill up the empty pages.

Don't be shy. Tell the membership a little about yourself or your hobbies.

Both Mark Jobs and myself are desperate for new stories and articles.

Instead of typing something on Facebook send it to us!

Andy Dickson 66B



Treasurer's Report

This is the first report after the reunion that has not been organised by AOBA committee members. Isle of Wight Travel, from my point of view did an excellent job of organising and running the whole show and it has cut down the amount of work that as treasurer I am involved in during the weekend, it also helped when the management of the arboretum

informed me that we could not set up a shop there, which means I can now leave the hotel on the coach with my wife!

The accounts are in a very healthy state at the present time and should be within budget at years end.

Laurie Blakely 61B



Database Officers Report

Database Officer Report

At the annual AGM, the meeting was informed up and coming activities which would change AOBA's future management of member's personal data.

These activities include:

1. External influence

- a. **Data Protection (DP)** – The DP Act 1998 is going to change with the introduction of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in May 2018. In short gives
 - i. Members enhanced protection of their personal data
 - ii. Enhanced Organisational responsibility with significantly increase in financial fines for any breach of DP.
- b. **Microsoft – Share Point** withdrawal of MS Access web application. This gives AOBA the opportunity to review its management processes of data. A review is ongoing to determine the best solution to make it easier and transparent for committee members to go about their business.

2. Internal influence

- a. **Data quality** – Monthly reviews of data have taken place and appropriate tables/spreadsheet(s) updated and provided for committee use. These reviews will continue with the aim to complete prior to April 2018 (MS Access Web App removal – see 1b) above.
- b. **Data management processes -**
 - i. The **AOBA's DP policy** statement is now included in the C&R's approved at this year's AGM. An annexure document providing more detail to DP was drafted and approved by the committee and is lodged with the AOBA Secretary.
 - ii. **Procedures -**
 1. **Arborfield share point site** – This site is used to manage member's data (see 1b: above). With changes in committee members, a procedure has been developed to assist authorised committee members to access the site and manage their appropriate areas. This draft procedure is out for review by the Committee.
 2. **Other procedures** - A data management procedure is being developed to embrace committee member's data management responsibilities to ensure the compliance to GDPR (See 1a: above)
 - iii. **Data queries** – The simple listing of tables in share point does not lend itself to doing queries to answer questions. To that end excel spreadsheet tables are now available making it easier for the committee to filter and use. These are getting updated monthly or as when data has added / updated.
3. **REME 75 Open day** -Lyneham - I joined Andy Dickson (our OBAN Editor) to man the AOBA tent. During I had the opportunity to take photos of the parade, sideshows and evening events. These will be provided to OBAN and website to make available to those who are interested.

Ian Clark – Database Officer 62A



Recruitment Officers Report

May I take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new Recruitment member of the committee, to those of you who do not know me.

I joined the AAC Arborfield in September

1975, arriving at the college early morning of 9th September after a long overnight train journey from my home in Edinburgh and joining 9 Squad and changing my life forever.

During my Tels apprenticeship I played many sports, but in the main I was to be found on the rugby field, starting in the 2nd Row, but migrating to Back Row after a couple of years. In 1978 after completion of class 3 & 2 training at SEE, one of the first courses to be trained on both Larkspur and Clansman radio systems, I was posted to 20 Electronics Workshop in Minden.

"20" turned out to be one of the best postings of my career, a minor unit that excelled both at work and play and outstanding sports teams in just about every discipline, a bonus for the rugby team was that Dai Lloyd became our coach, and occasional 2nd Row a few months after I joined the unit.

On the work front, I was a member of the first Clansman ERV in BAOR, Jim Kavanagh (64C) was one of my first ever bosses.

My rugby career continued to flourish, and I started to play for the Corps (BAOR) in early 1979, if I remember correctly, my last Corps game was during the Ellis Cup in either 1990 or 1991, grey cells not what they were.

After 3 ½ years in Minden (Corps Rugby had its benefits) I was posted to SEE for my 1st Class course. On completion, I was posted to 27 Command Workshop in Warminster, but spent my entire 2 years there with the small LAD in the Demonstration Battalion (at the time the Royal Welch Fusiliers). A great opportunity, and as a Tels Tech and the only first line experience of my career.

I was posted to 4 Armoured Workshop (Detmold) in November 1984, after being deferred watch on my first Tiffy Board, lots of hard work as well as a fantastic Corps Rugby Tour to the USA in May 1985, but after 18 months, I attended and passed my Tiffy Board and was almost immediately loaded onto my Art course in March 1986.

I completed my Tiffy Course in July 1987 and was posted back to Germany to REME Technical Services (RTS) in Dusseldorf, great unit, lots of

Rugby, again, including becoming the Club and 1st Team captain of the Dusseldorf Dragons (still in existence today). Another important AOBA member, then Maj, but now Lt Col Bill Cleasby (61C) became my boss during my tenure with the Electronics Branch at RTS. Whilst in Dusseldorf I also started my love affair with Offshore Sailing and improved my German linguistic skills.

As the 1st Gulf war was finishing I was posted on promotion to WO2 to run the Optronics Platoon at 5 Armd Wksp in Soest. A very busy 2 years followed, including a Staff College demo, the REME 50, also known as "if you weren't wet, you weren't there" parade in Sennelager as well as the drawdown of the 5 Armd Wksp to Bordon. I never arrived in Bordon as I had volunteered for Serbo-Croat language training followed by a 6-month UN Op tour in Bosnia – Op Grapple – I deployed out of trade as a Local Liaison Officer using my language skills, for various reasons the best and worst 6 months of my Army career. On return from Bosnia, and with the Big Badge on my arm, I was posted to 16 Signal Regiment in Krefeld as the ASM with the Royal Signals Systems Support Team (RSSST) supporting the Ptarmigan Battlefield Communications System. During my 3 years with RSSST, the unit moved to JHQ and I re-deployed a further 2 times to Bosnia, this time with NATO, to enforce the Dayton Accord signed in December 1995. I also renewed my ties with the Dusseldorf Dragons, becoming the Club Chairman and meeting the future Mrs Leslie.

My final posting of my career was to ES Branch 1 (UK) Armoured Division in Herford, where I served out my time as the Staff Assistant for all Divisional Electronic Equipment, retiring from the Army in August 1999.

Since leaving Angelika and I set up home in Kendal in the Lake District, to start with I worked mostly within training departments of telecommunications equipment suppliers such as Nokia, Motorola, Siemens and Alcatel as a technical trainer, ironically travelling the world far more than when I was actually serving. For the last 4 years, I have been working for a Managed Services and Training provider as a Learning Design Team Leader, working from home, but travelling to our main UK office in Solihull once a week.

I am looking forward to continuing fantastic work that Bob Castell has been doing over the last few years, and am hoping to significantly improve the membership for Arborfield old Boys from the 1970s.

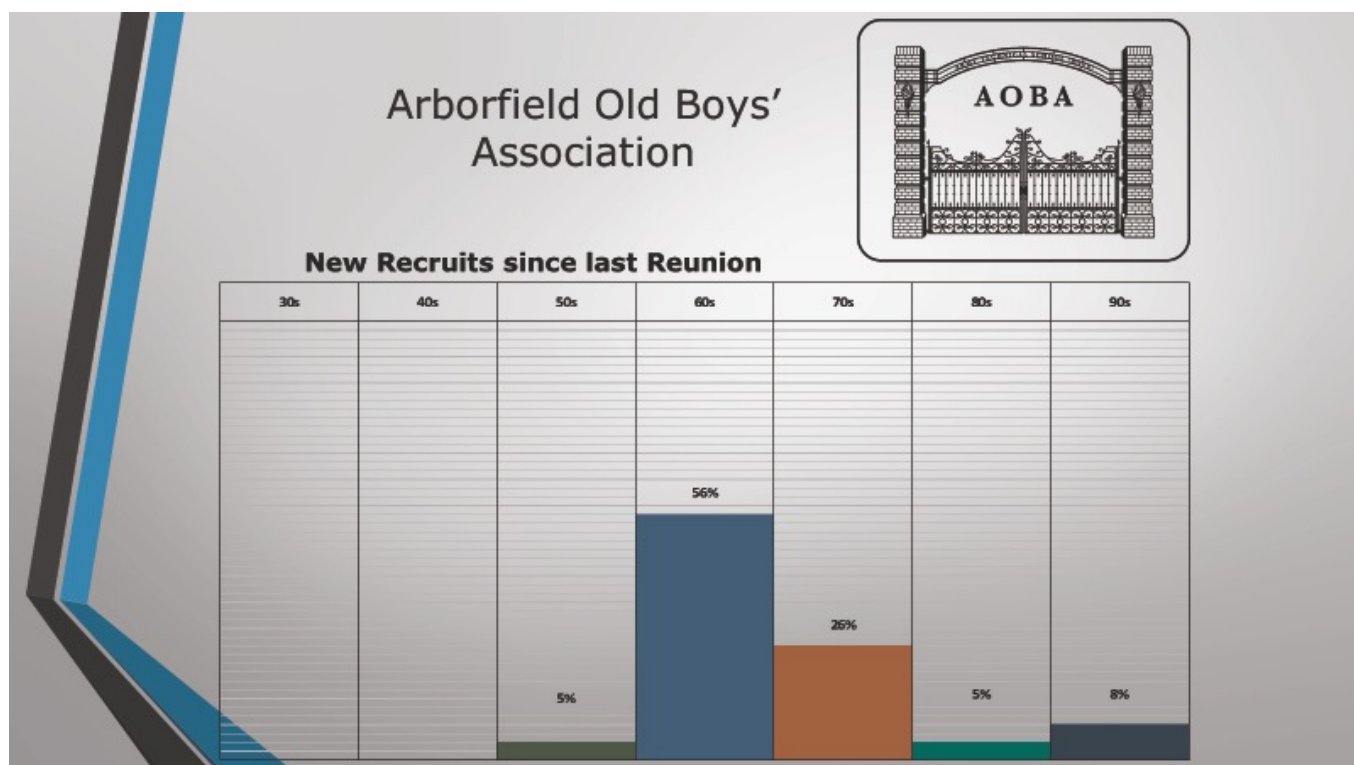
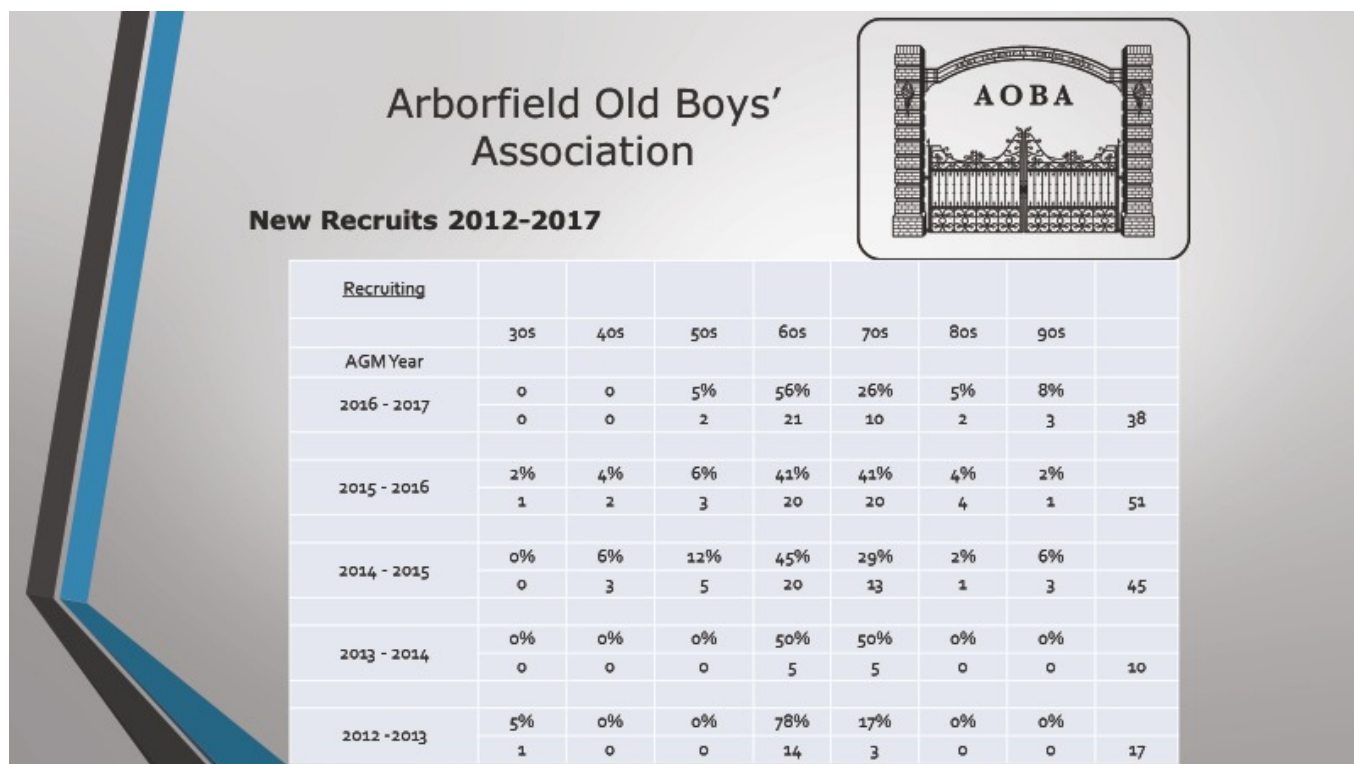
Bruce Leslie 75C

Bob Castell 64A - Report from the 2017 AGM

These slides were presented at the 2017 AGM by Bob Castell.

They show a very positive trend in terms of recruiting.

Bruce Leslie, our new recruiting officer, has a challenge on his hands to keep the trend going.



Diary of a Jeep

..... Continued from OBAN 67

Feb 14th

First time we were allowed out of camp. Walked up to the Brams to get the bus to Wokingham. Had to pass the REME Depot which houses the Junior Leaders. You could spot a JL a mile off - their knuckles drag on the ground.

No one was awake in Wokingham. It should be called Sleepingham. Couldn't get served in the pubs. Even Publicans don't like Jeeps. Stopped at Smokey Joe's on the way back for a bacon banjo and a game of pinball.

17th Feb

Double map reading today. We were all given Ordinance Survey maps of the Brecon Beacons. Taff Evans wondered why he'd never seen a contour line, even though he'd lived in Wales all his life. I think Taff is retarded. My sister wrote to ask if I had shot any Russians yet.

18th Feb

Had the inter-room (bulls**t) competition. We worked in shifts all night bumping the floor. We slept under our beds so as to not disturb our kit layouts. Came third.

Had a letter from home. Mum says she is marrying Uncle Ron.

20th Feb

Doug Dawsom bought himself out. I would too but don't have twenty quid. Sgt. Pittendreigh told us we could have walked out *for free* in the first three days. *NOW* he tells us!

23rd Feb

Had to go to the BMH because of my astigmatism. BMH stands for British Military Hospital. I still don't know what MRS

stands for - or what astigmatisms are.

25th Feb

D Squad raided us last night. We repelled them with fire buckets and stirrup pumps. Sgt. Pittendreigh gated us for the entire weekend.

25th Feb

Came last in the Drill competition. Wheeler went left when the rest of us wheeled right. I think his brain went AWOL. He was shouted at. In fact every day someone shouts at Wheeler - usually for a good reason.

26th of Feb

We were told we were to make something pointed and sharp in Workshop Practice. I hoped it would be a bayonet but it turned out to be a Scriber - f**k knows how you spell it, or what it's for.

27th Feb

72 hour pass. Went to visit my aunty Doreen who is the only relative that lives anywhere near this place. She said I'd grown since joining up - maybe that's because she hadn't seen me since I was four. I didn't mention uncle Ron - she is still married to him.

16th March

McGuiness didn't get Best AT. There is a god after all.

Last day of term. Clutching our rail warrants, kit-bags and wallets full of cash (So THAT'S WHAT CREDITS WERE FOR!), we head for the rows of buses lined up to take us to our respective destinations. Farewell Jeepland, hello 2 Div.

April 1st

Moved into the Spiders. Don't have to make a bed pack every

day - Grovel. We are no longer at the bottom of the s**t heap. I can't wait to jip my first Jeep. Bumped the centred deck - some things clearly don't change.

April 2nd.

There are sixteen of us in J3, including the room corporal who has his own bunk. He needs it because he's bloody huge and scary. (Are you listening Ted?) Atkinson grabbed the best bed space just inside the door because his name begins with A..... and he's quite hard.

April 3rd

We have fire doors at the end of the room. Considering the entire building is made of wood and blokes smoke in bed, they're probably a good idea.

Anyway they open onto the square so we can abuse passing jeeps.

You often see the red glow of fag-ends after lights out. I don't think any of us will survive past 40. We'll all die of lung cancer.

Bartlett reckons that one day they will ban smoking in barrack rooms. Everyone laughed - as if *that* will ever happen!

April 5th

Lunchtime. Moved to jip my first Jeep. Actually he is was bigger than me so I waited for a smaller one to turn up. The new intake looks really young.

April 7th

The CSM carried out a room inspection. A lot of kit became airborne. McGuiness was the only one not to have his Top Kit toppled. He's a sweat but has an older brother in 7 Div so we can't kick the s**t out of him.

Diary of a Jeep (Cont.)

April 8th

Allowed out of camp almost every weekend now but you have to walk past the Guardroom. The guardroom is where the Doom with the Plume hangs out. At night he returns to his coffin.... Or Broadmoor.

April 11th

Fred Mulley, Harold Wilson's Minister of Defence, is visiting the School of Electronics just up the road. Mulley's famous for falling asleep at the Queen's Jubilee Reviewand for being a pr**k. Harold is famous for his raincoats and pipe....and for being a pr**k. He is scrapping TSR2 whatever that is.

In case Mr Mulley chooses to drop by, we were detailed to paint the concrete blocks down by the main gate. The smell of wet paint is everywhere - as are the stains on my coveralls.

April 12th

Fred Mulley didn't turn up. Must have fallen asleep.

April 19th

Got a sore ar*e. I'd like to know which complete prat at Izal decided toilet paper should be shiny on one side. My mum tears the Daily Sketch into squares and hangs them from a hook in the bog - loads better.

April 20th

Detailed for Fire Picket. I hoped to ride on a Green Goddess. No such luck. Instead our fire tender turned out to be two cart wheels with a fire hose wrapped around the axle. There was what looked like an old ammo box on top which contained the brass nozzles.

The first thing we learn is that brass nozzles work better when brasso-ed.

Later we un-wrapped the hose and connected it to a hydrant by the Gym. Someone shouted 'water on' and Bartlett went

skywards. Someone shouted 'water off' and Bartlett returned to earth. Bartlett's back in MRS.

April 21st

Watched a Science documentary in the TV room.

Some bloke called Raymond Baxter said engineers were developing a device to remotely switch TV channels. It'll never catch on. Who in the whole f*****g world is too idle to walk the three steps required to change a TV channel - there are only two for goodness sake.

April 24th

2 Div camp. We travel to Wales by train. We pinch the tea-pots from the Buffet car.

Robbo thinks they may come in handy. Never know when we might need a brew.

April 25th

Not sure precisely where we are in Wales but there are a lot of sheep. Taff Evans is in his element. It was said a ewe was seen slipping into his bivvy after dark.

A six-seater thunder box turned up on a 3 tonner. We had to dig a bloody big hole. I'm not comfortable about using these facilities in front of mates. I went in the bushes. Nettled my ar\$e.

Issued with our compo rations. Nobody wanted the tinned processed cheese. I thought the sausage and beans were *essence*. There again my mother wasn't the world's best cook. Certainly no Fanny Cradock. Even Uncle Ron complained.

Wagstaffe took over cooking duties. Waggars may be a Bombhead but he can't f*****g cook. Washed our mess tins in the river Usk.

April 26th

We have to climb something called *Pen y Fan*. It sounded

innocuous enough but turned out to be a f*****g big hill.

Issued with a prismatic compass. We are reliably informed by A/T McGuinness that it's filled with Isopropyl Alcohol. Nobody gives a sh*t - it's not as if we'll ever drink it.

We are taught Magnetic Deviation. Taff Evans thinks *deviation* has other connotations where he comes from. My group intend to *deviate* to the nearest boozer if we get the chance. Wheeler got lost when the mist closed in. Unfortunately not lost enough.

April 27th

We were split into groups for Orienteering. Spent most of the day wandering around a very wet Wales *dis-orienteering*. Had to carry out ablutions in river water. Robbo got shat on for not shaving. I didn't shave either but my bum fluff doesn't show.

April 29th

Back to Camp routine. Muster parade. Drill. Education. NAAFI break. Trade training. Lunch. Kit inspections. Watched Bootsie and Snudge in the TV room.

April 30th

Hitch hiked to London with Robbo. Hitching is a piece of pi\$\$ if you wear your SDs. Found a boozer in Knights Bridge that would actually serve us. Got talking to a one-legged Chelsea Pensioner. He'd been wounded at Gallipoli. Me and Robbo didn't know where Gallipoli was. I'm not sure the Pensioner did either.

May 2nd

Told we have to sit the Senior Test. We are given past papers to revise.

They appear to be intended for retards or PTIs. Is there a difference?

To be continued.....

The Army Apprentices Pipes and Drums

TAAPAD

Brief history

It was in a time far away and in a place we came to love that many of the young apprentices were introduced to the magical sound of the bagpipes waking them up , calling for them on parade, and marching them around the square.

Where did these strange instruments come from and why were they here in the south of England?

When the Apprentices units were formed, they marched to whatever band was available for parades etc and the first band made from Apprentices themselves were nearly all ex-Duke of York lads from the Duke of York School near Dover. As time went by and the school grew , the band members came from those apprentices that joined. With the number of lads joining from Scotland, it was inevitable that a pipe band should be introduced.

....and The Army Apprentices Pipes and Drums was born.

It became an official band and the Scottish regiments provided both band Masters and Pipe Majors to the school to teach these young potential soldier tradesmen how to perform in a musical band.

Regimental pipe majors came from The Gordon Highlanders , The Black Watch, The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, The Highland Light Infantry, the Kings Own Scottish Borderers and several more. The teaching of the potential pipers and drummers was to the highest standard and the bands – who were a voluntary activity – flourished in the camp and were also involved in outside shows on a regular basis. Pipers also

played in the two regular messes attached to the School.

Sadly the school gave way to the college, the college to a foundation establishment and the length of time within the system dropped from 3 years of 9 terms to a six month spell with two terms. As it takes a long period to teach a piper how to play the bands dropped in strength and finally ceased to be.

The Arborfield Old Boys Association

Come forward several years and the Arborfield Old Boys Association became very active in organising reunions within the old barracks of the School and the college. The reunion weekends involved a parade on the old square and on the college square with the local Reading Scottish Pipes and Drums acting as a band for the marching.

Alex Burt joined the Association and came along to the reunions. He offered to have his band from Kent play for the parades and he would then play at the reunion dinners on the Saturday evenings. So the City of Rochester Pipes and Drums played at the parades for several years.

Then came the closure of the Arborfield Garrison as those who control the forces carried out yet another re-organisation of training and the entire REME system moved down to Lyneham. The Association had nowhere to go and no home to call its own so the decision was made to hold the reunions at Hinkley with a visit and parade to our own memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum. The City of Rochester band could not be expected to come that far so it was arranged to use the services

of the Leicester and Rutland Royal British Legion band for the parades with Alex Burt playing at the dinner. The first year was not too bad but the following year the band was less than able to carry out the parade as required so the Birmingham Fire Service band was drafted in to replace them. They were OK but at that point Tony Church asked why we could not have our own band

The new pipe band was formed. What a lot of thought and deliberation went into this one. Where to practice, where to meet, what to wear, what to play and how to play the tunes, where would we get drums etc etc

A cry was heard all over the Apprentices world – can you still play, do you still play, where do you play and what do you play. And the response was heard with 11 pipers expressing interest, 10 drummers also wishing to be involved and one drum major from the day wanting to lead the band

A note expressing the manner in which we could play was sent to everyone who had expressed or “volunteered” and who ever heard of Apprentices doing that. It included a form to fill in giving contact details and asking about experience in bands since leaving the service.

A set of the usual tunes played by bands was written up and sent to every piper. The drummers were sent beatings by Tee Cee so that we had a basis to start with. It was also stated that as we were all different, that was not so different from when we were in the school / college bands so the tartan was not important in the first instance.

Our first get together was at the 2016 reunion when I had asked for a wee room we could all get into and practice on chanter a then pipes and drums. We ran through the tunes we were to play including LILLIBULERO and The Army Apprentices March which were tunes unfamiliar to all the pipers except those from my piping club in Kent. We spent an hour practicing together then tuned the pipes ready for the evening performance at the curry night. We left our pipes in the room we practised in.



Marching On To The Parade

TAAPAD's first gig

The lads and lassies were getting stuck into their curry in the dining room and after we had a wee bite to eat we formed up in the corridor outside. We had 7 pipers, one side and one base drummer and were using the drums collected for the drumhead service from the sergeants mess in Lyneham. Bit of a mix-mash for the first time out but it was what we had. Leading the single column of the band we marched into the dining room playing. The reception we had from our peers was amazing. This was their band playing for them on their night - Magic.

We formed up on the stage and went through our tunes and even though we were in the usual

civvy dress and not kilt order, the performance went down well. Ask the 66 er's whose big night it was. The following day we were dressed in kilt order and went off to the NMA where we tuned up before the parade. As was the custom we lead the parade playing the Battle of the Somme which we thought appropriate for the time and place as remembrance was going on for that battle in WW1 where many paid the final price.

The parade and playing went reasonably well although a parade in limited space is not the easiest thing to get through and we missed a drum major giving the commands.

Then over to the memorial for our own service. We played the Army Apprentices March as a lament for the last post and it was well received again.

On the Saturday evening we played the guests into dinner in the main corridor of the hotel and the other guests were very free with their good comments about the playing. The port was played in as usual by the lone piper but after the dinner we took to the floor and played for our peers once again. I believe it went on until the wee hours.

After the ball was over

Then started the preparation for this year. How could we be different? Practice was completed in some cases using Skype but with several players at St Andrews in Southampton they played together and I went there in March 2017 to play with them. My own pipe club has three

pipers and two more live nearby so we got in more practice.

Our first order of business though was to get some kit. We had a donation from the AOBA for playing at the reunion plus a donation of £100 which went towards two second hand side drums and a base drum plus sling and sticks which TeeCee refurbished and added a drum logo we had agreed on earlier. We just needed more drummers. On 7th May 2017 we took part in the Memorial Trust service at our own memorial at the NMA and we met in the car park at 10.00 where we put on our kilts and uniforms before tuning our pipes. We had "borrowed" a drummer from St Andrews who was ex-Royal Engineer and made a great difference to the sound of the band. His name was Martin and he was very welcome to the band. We also had a new piper who was not in the pipe band in the school / college but learnt to play in 2001.

I had spoken to him when we tried to practice on Skype but that had not worked so we played the tunes over the phone so he could catch the tempo. Another welcome to the band. We were to play at our own memorial but we preceded that by playing at the REME memorial for 20 minutes attracting folks to the service. We then went round to the Apprentices memorial and took part in that. At one point at the REME memorial I asked the band to play three slow marches with different tempos that they had never practiced. I told them what was required between the tunes to get the changeovers correct and bless them all it went very well indeed and we played superbly.



The Vanishing Bedspace

I was home on leave from the 'School' and attending the Saturday night dance at my local town hall with my best mate. A little into the evening, he nudges me and points out two pretty girls on the dance floor who he informs me are 'not local'.

To cut a long story short, I spent the rest of my leave seeing one of these girls on a daily basis. No, she wasn't local, she told me that she came from Sidcup in Kent, her name was Barbara ('Babs' for short) and was currently on a short holiday, staying with her grandmother in my home town of Gainsborough, Lincs.



Our friendship blossomed and we agreed to keep in touch once I had returned to Arborfield. After a few weeks, Babs invited me to stay for a weekend at her parents' house. But how could I? Apart from the monthly 'free

Sunday', days away from Camp, let alone a weekend, were impossible. Desperate to see Babs (we were all in love at that age - or was it lust?), my young fertile mind started to work overtime - how could I secure my illicit weekend away from Camp without being declared AWOL?

I then hit on a seemingly brilliant idea. The Company Orderly Sergeant (usually Permanent Staff) was responsible for conducting the nightly bed check. They didn't bother with a roll call - provided that each bed space was physically occupied at the time of their visit, this seemed to fulfil their roll call criteria.

The solution seemed simple - get rid of my bedspace for the duration of my intended unofficial weekend absence! With a full barrack room i.e. all the spaces occupied, my plan may not have been viable, as a gaping space would have stuck out like a sore thumb. However, I was fortunate, in so much that the barrack room I was in had a couple of vacant unoccupied bed-spaces.

I started planning 'The Vacant Bedspace' with a certain amount of secrecy, although I did discuss my 'cunning plan' with a couple of trusted friends, whose thoughts were along the lines of 'mad', 'bonkers', '...you'll never get away with it' etc etc.

The Company games room was in the same spider as my barrack room. It was also the home of the odd empty six-foot steel locker or two, which were deemed surplus to requirements at the time. The plan was therefore simple - dismantle my bedspace and secrete it in the games room for the period of my absence.

But it was not such simple exercise; a few obstacles had to be overcome if my plan was to succeed. Firstly, it had to be achieved without the knowledge of the A/Sgt in charge of the barrack room. Fortunately, the weekend of my planned absence coincided with the A/Sgt being away playing a sport for the one of the School teams. I was also on friendly terms with the A/L/Cpl in the room, he therefore agreed to turn a blind eye to my scheme saying, "... I don't want to know..."

With those two obstacles out of the way, the next task was the dismantling and relocating of all the items that made-up my bed space. Disposing of my six foot steel locker wasn't a problem - with the help of a couple of guys, the locker was easily manoeuvred out of the barrack room, along the corridor of the spider and into the games room, alongside a couple of existing unused lockers.

One of the unused lockers also became the temporary home for my blankets, sheets, pillows and bedside mat. My wooden bedside locker was also conveniently hidden in the games room.

The last items of my bed space to be disposed of were my bed and mattress. The bed was dismantled into three pieces and hidden, along with my mattress, behind three of the lockers against the barrack room wall in the games room. All this activity was taking place after the Saturday morning parade, when boys were busying themselves preparing to depart Camp for a Saturday afternoon in nearby Reading or Wokingham (or had already done so). Mission accomplished!

The Vanishing Bedspace (Cont).



John Houghton & Dave Morris

All I had to do now was leave Camp, via the unguarded back gate, without 'booking-out', and transport myself to Sidcup. This was all pretty straightforward and I duly arrived down in Sidcup, to the delight of Babs. The weekend was enjoyable and it went well. *(And that's all you're admitting to eh, John? Ed.)* It was not until travelling back on the train to Arborfield that I started to have nagging doubts as to the possible success of my endeavours to sneak a weekend undetected away from Camp.

Doubts, followed rapidly by fear of being caught out, raced through my mind - was I at this

very moment being declared AWOL? I was beginning to become concerned. All the initiative, planning and execution may have come to nought *'if'* the Orderly Sergeant has been extra vigilant, or suspicious of the additional space in my barrack room.

And so I slipped unnoticed back into Camp early on the Sunday evening to learn, to my great relief, that I hadn't been missed at all.

With some assistance, I rapidly resurrected my bedspace in its rightful place ready for that evening's roll call. It came about that my friendship with

Babs waned shortly afterwards. To some degree I was relieved, as I don't think I could have pulled off the same stunt again – *nor do I think I could I have withstood the accompanying stress!*

(The above article first appeared in OBAN43, back in 2005, when Pete Gripton was editing the magazine. John Houghton sadly passed away in October 2013 and Pete wondered if it could be included in a current OBAN in the form of an 'Archive' article to remind newly recruited ex-boys of the 'good old days'!)

John 'Doc' Houghton - 56B

Army 2020 Refine, What it Means for REME?

The 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review led to the publication of new Defence Strategic Direction 2016 (the policy that directs the size and type of fighting force that the three services need to be able to generate - and the various readiness levels of the elements of that fighting force).

This new Direction meant that the Army 2020 structures needed to be adjusted to allow the Army to place a modernised enabled division in the field by 2025.

The Army's new structures, referred to as Army 2020 Refine (A2020R), provide the ability to deploy a modernised and enabled division with the development of new STRIKE Bdes and the formation of four Specialist Infantry Bns tailored for operational capacity building tasks. The new force structure will improve the capability of the Army's forces at readiness by delivering two manoeuvre Bdes (one Armoured Infantry (AI) Bde and one STRIKE Bde) at high readiness, rather than only one AI Bde and one Light Bde.

By 2025, the Army aims to have reconfigured to deliver a modernised enabled division capable of warfighting. The 3rd (United Kingdom) Division will be able to deploy as a triangular division made up of two STRIKE Bdes and two AI Bdes; this division will contain the majority of the REME personnel in the Field Army. The 1st (United Kingdom) Division will continue to focus on Defence Engagement with specialist forces capable of delivering increased Train, Advise, Assist, Mentor activity as part of conflict prevention and capacity building; the

REME personnel in this division will principally be at 1st Line.

Basing Context. The new force structure has been developed in close consultation with Defence Infrastructure Organisation and the Better Defence Estates Strategy and will fit into an optimised Defence estate. The Army will dispose of approximately one third of its built estate by 2040, leaving the regular component occupying a smaller footprint in sustainable locations around sensible centres of mass. The grouping of regular REME capabilities into three centres of mass with an approximate 50% split between the North (Catterick) and South (Tidworth & Lyneham) of the country is retention positive and compliant with the New Employment Model and Future Accommodation Model.

A2020R maintains the absolute focus that the Regular and Reserve elements of the REME will provide a critical deployable capability to the Army in every theatre of operations. Wherever and whenever the Army is deployed – the REME will be there. There will be some structural changes in the Corps that will result in unit amalgamations, location moves and changes to the role of some Bns and LADs/Workshops.

The details are spread out across this article and you will be able to see what is happening to your current unit or any other unit, but what does it really mean to the personnel within REME? Three areas will be important to many people: Job Security, Career Progression and Stability.

Job Security. Importantly, the new A2020R structures enable all those Regular and Reserve personnel currently serving in the Corps to continue to do so. The closure of some Reserve locations, or the transfer of some existing locations to a new capbadge, may mean some Reserve personnel may no longer wish to travel to their nearest REME unit location. If this is the case then options are available to allow those Reserve personnel to continue to serve in the Reserve, perhaps in another capbadge. If you are in that position then you should speak with your immediate chain of command to understand the opportunities that are available to you. Most importantly, though, if you are a REME Reserve soldier or officer who wishes to remain in the REME then you can do so.

Career Progression. Broadly speaking career progression is unaffected by A2020R. The rules for promotion and the number of REME trades remain the same. There will be some changes to the number of posts in each rank and trade but these changes will take place over the next five years or more so the changes will have very little impact on your promotion (including Artificer selection) opportunities.

The creation of the new A2020R structures provides us with the chance to review opportunities across each Artificer trade at SSgt, WO2 and WO1 ranks to seek to offer a greater variety of posts for Weapons and Electronics Artificers. We will also review the structure of the TSS trade to provide a more rewarding career structure.

REME Basing A2020R Impact

Key:
Regular Unit Location – Proposed
Reserve Unit Location – Proposed
NB: AAC and Royal Signals yet to be confirmed

Scotland
 Edinburgh: Dregorn Barracks: 3 RIFLES (1+56) until 2021 then 1 R Irish (0+15), 5 Scots (PD) (0+3)
 Glencorse Barracks: 2 SCOTS (0+13) move TBC NB 2025
 Inverness: Fort George: 3 SCOTS (1+27) move TBC NB 2025
 Kinloss: 39 Engr Regt (1+47)
 Leuchars: Royal Scots Dragoon Guards (1+40), 1 Bde CSS Regt (24+339 REME of which c 10+150 in Leuchars until 2028) (1 x Armcd Coy; 5+112 in Tidworth)
 (Note: 2 Bn REME amalgamate with 27 Regt RLC NB 2020 to form 1 Bde CSS Regt)
 REME Reserves: 102 FS Bn REME: Coy in East Kilbride & Grangemouth

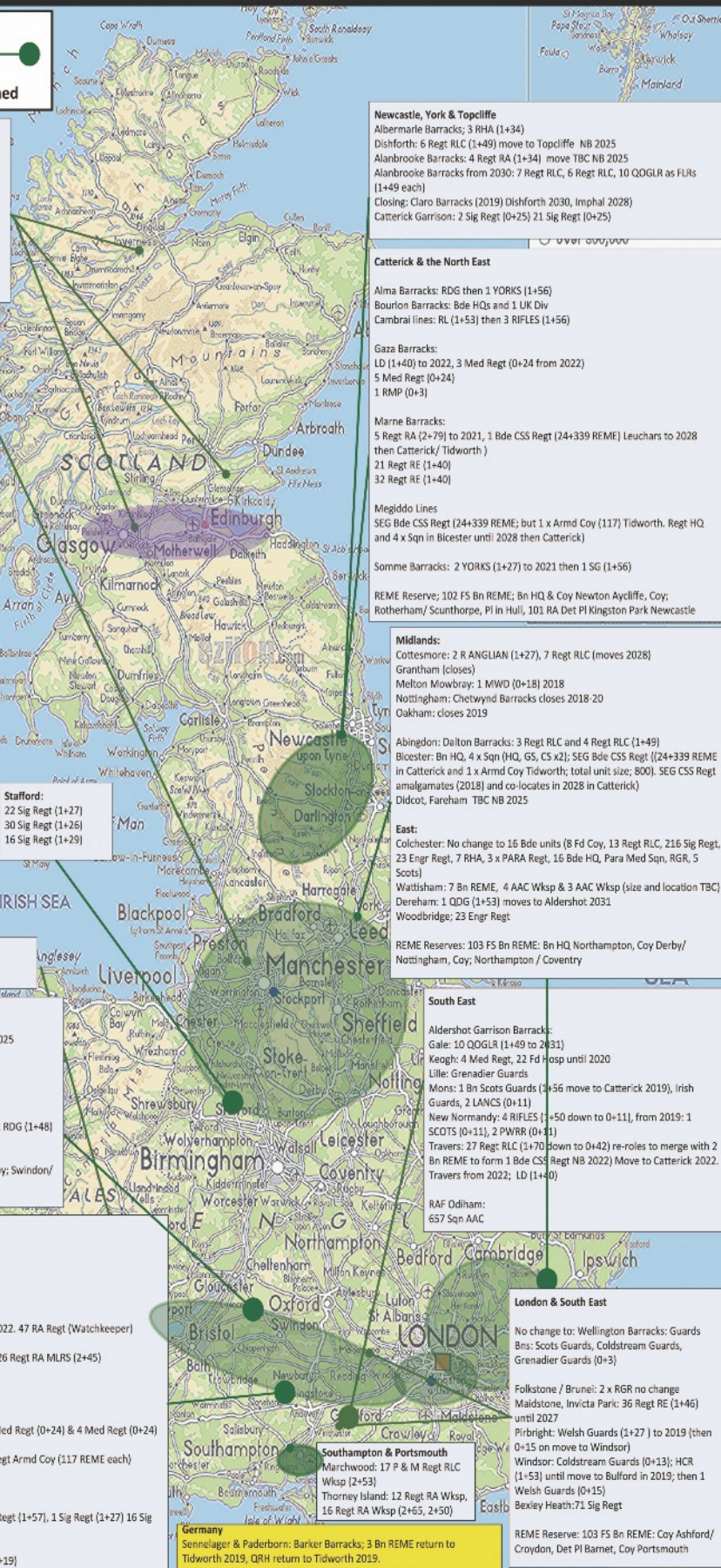
North West
 Blackpool: Weeton Barracks: 2 LANCs (0+13 to 0+11 move 2021 to Aldershot). From 2021: 1 LANCs (0+15) (Cyrus rotation)
 Chester: Dale Barracks closes 2022 (units move to Weeton Barracks); 2 MERC (1+27-0+15)/1 LANCs
 Preston: Fulwood Barracks: 3 Med Regt (0+24)
 West Midlands:
 Market Drayton: Clive Barracks: 1 R IRISH (1+27 to 0+15 in 2022)
 Nuneaton: Gamecock Barracks from 2020: 2 Med Bde (and AMSTC) 170 Engr Gp (and Works Gps), 22 Fd Hosp, 34 Fd Hosp
 REME Reserves: 101 Th Sp Bn REME; 1x Coy Telford/ Walsall. 102 FS Bn REME 1 x Coy Manchester/ Liverpool

Northern Ireland
 Aldergrove: 5 AAC (5 AAC Regt & Wksp A2020R changes TBC)
 Palace Barracks: 1 SCOTS (0+13 to 0+11) 1 R ANGLIAN: (0+15) Lisburn: 2 RIFLES (0+15)
 REME Reserves: 101 Th Sp Bn REME 1xTh Sp or Div Sp Coy Palace Barracks

Wales
 St Athan: 2 x Sig Regts (CEMA) (0+25)
 REME Reserves: 101 Th Sp Bn REME: Coy Bridgend/ Gloucester

South West
 Chipswest: Beachley Bks: 1 RIFLES (0+13 to 0+15) move TBC NB 2025
 Hullavington: 9 TLR (1+49) move 2029
 Cirencester: Duke of Glos Bks: 104 Bde, 29 PC & MC (0+8)
 Gloucester, Innsworth: 1m in Bks: ARRC Sig Regt (1+30)
 Lyneham: 5 Bn REME (25+309 REME; total size 400)
 Yeovil: 1 AAC (TBC)
 Warminster: Battlesbury Bks: 1 YORKS (1+63) change in 2020 to 1 RDG (1+48) and 1 RL (1+53)
 REME Reserves: 101 Th Sp Bn REME: Bn HQ Keynsham/Bristol, Coy; Swindon/ Bristol, Pl in Gloucester

South West
 Bullford:
 Picton 1 MERC (1+63), 3 Div Sig Regt (1+30)
 Ward Bks: 5 RIFLES (1+63), 19 Tt Tpt Sqn (0+20)
 Wing Bks: HCR (2019) (1+53)
 Larkhill:
 Horne Bks: 32 Regt DH3 RA: 1+60 until 2022; 5 Regt RA (2+79) 2022. 47 RA Regt (Watchkeeper) (4+125)
 Purvis Lines (new) from 2019: 1 RHA (1+42), 19 Regt RA (1+42), 26 Regt RA MLRS (2+45)
 Tidworth:
 Alwal Bks: KRH (1+48), RTR (1+83)
 Assaye Bks: 1 RHA to 2019 then QRH (1+83)
 Bhurtore Bks: 19 Regt RA (1+42) (Move to Larkhill in 2019); 1 Med Regt (0+24) & 4 Med Regt (0+24)
 Candahar Bks: 6 REME (28+293 REME; total size 407)
 Delhi Bks: from 2019: 3 REME (18+151 REME) Plus the 2 x CSS Regt Armcd Coy (117 REME each)
 Jellalabad Bks: 4 REME (28+293 REME; total size 407)
 Lucknow Bks: 1 R WELSH (1+63)
 Mooltan Bks: 1 RRF (1+63)
 Perham Down: Swinton Barracks: 22 Engr Regt (1+57), 26 Engr Regt (1+57), 1 Sig Regt (1+27) 16 Sig Regt (1+27)
 REME Reserves: 101 Th Sp Bn REME: Bovington/ Yeovil Det Pl (1+19)



Stability. REME Officer and Soldier Wings are already working hard to try to avoid assigning anyone to a post that will no longer exist after A2020R. Considerable effort is being made to try and avoid assigning someone to a unit that is about to move and therefore to ensure no one has to move twice in a short period of time. If you think that the A2020R structural changes and your future assignment might result in you moving twice quickly, then please contact your unit CoC immediately to ask them to liaise with REME Officer or Soldier Wing asap.

Implementation of the A2020R structures will eventually result in all REME Battalions (except for 7 Avn Sp Bn but including the new CSS Strike Regiments and 8 Trg Battalion REME) being based in three main

areas – Tidworth, Lyneham and Catterick. There will also be more LADs and Workshops in Catterick (CSS Regt locations) and Tidworth (3, 4 & 6 Bn locations), which will offer opportunities for increased stability.

Alongside this, in the Regular and Reserve force, we maintain a national footprint across all four of the home nations. This means that although there will be fewer individual base locations, there will still be opportunities to serve in a wide variety of locations across the UK and around the world. In order to achieve the assignments that best suit you and your family, you must continue to engage early with your OC/RCMO and ensure that you are keeping your preferences up to date.

Summary. So what has really changed? Your daily life will continue to involve delivering the trade you do now with exciting opportunities for overseas exercises, deployments, sport and adventurous training. Your location and the structure of your unit may change but that is no different from any assignment, to a Regular soldier, and your chances of promotion will remain the same.

The role of the Corps remains to keep operationally fit equipment in the hands of the user and regardless of our unit locations and structures, our contribution to the operational effectiveness of the Army remains critical to every training activity and operational deployment.

This article is published with thanks to the Craftsman Magazine and Mike Tizard.

Random photos from the 2017 Reunion



The Army Apprentice National Memorial Trust

One of our Founder Trustees has retired after many years of selfless work and commitment to the Trust.

Maurice Hope (Mo) was in there at the start, was a driving force behind the realisation of his dream to see a permanent Memorial to the 10's of thousands of Army Apprentices who over countless decades provided the backbone for the British Army's fist.

This tribute to Mo has been penned by another outstanding Founder Trustee, Major Gordon Bonner, and it sums up the debt of gratitude we all owe Mo

" In 2009 the Arborfield Old Boy's Association considered a proposal from Mo that a memorial be built; dedicated to all Army Apprentices who had served worldwide in war and peace.

Subsequently, on the 28 October 2009, an inaugural meeting attended by representatives from the four Old Boy's Associations of Arborfield, Carlisle, Chepstow

and Harrogate convened at the NMA, Alrewas, and decided that they could indeed, design, raise funds and construct a memorial that would provide a fitting tribute to all Army Apprentices who were trained as soldier-tradesmen.

This enterprise came to a successful conclusion with the dedication and unveiling of the memorial on the 7th September 2011.

Mo Hope was one of the founding Trustees, an unsung hero, who liked to work quietly in the background, but none the less was an effective member of the Trust.

For example the final design of the memorial was based on an original drawing submitted by Mo with the base platform representing the circle of life.

Further, since Mo lived fairly close the NMA, Alrewas; times without number, he would by the request of other Trustees (particularly the Secretary) at his own expense make a return trip of some 80 miles to follow up on some point of

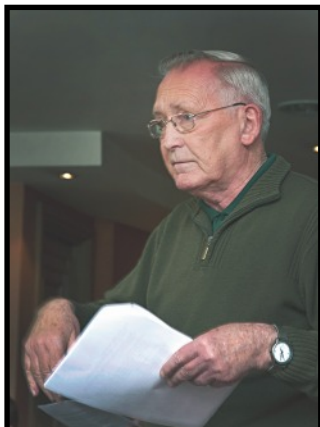
administration in liaison with the NMA or the contracting stone mason during construction.

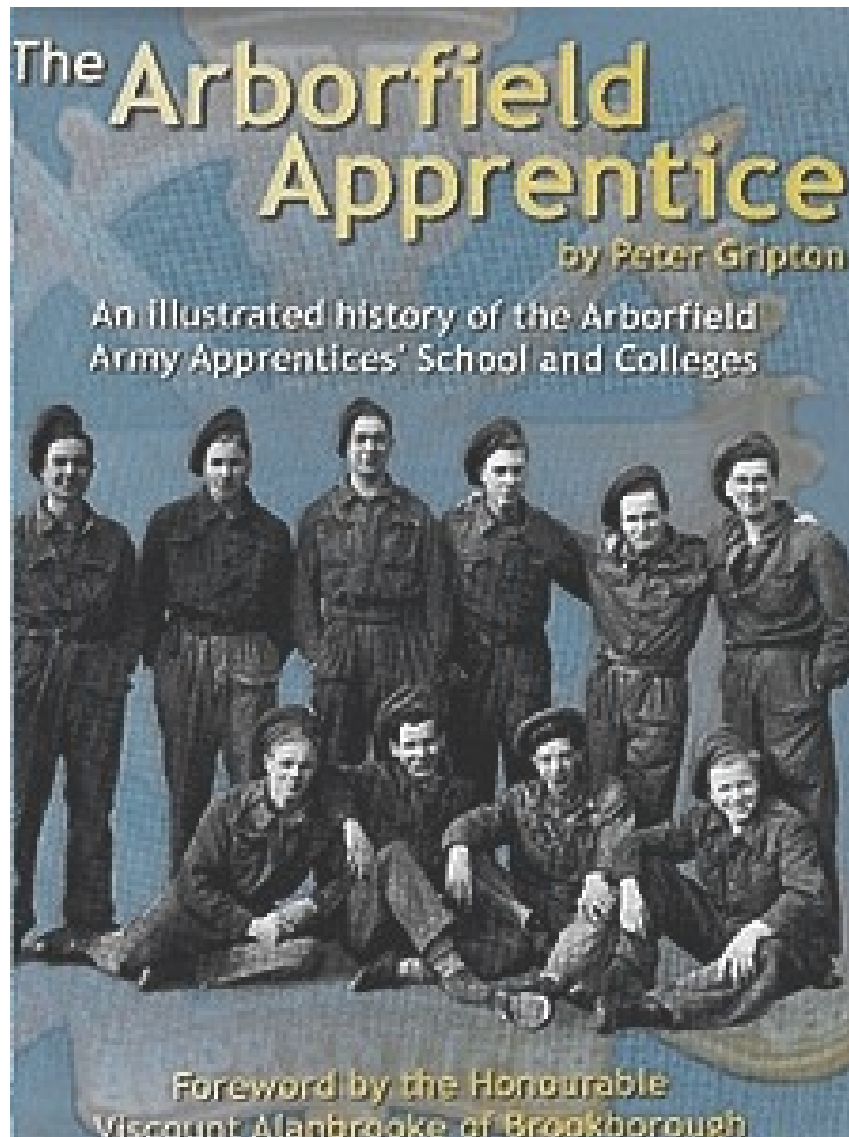
In addition during construction, he recorded many digital images of the construction process which became the basis for a historical record of proceeding for the entire project.

Recently Mo Hope was appointed Chairman of the Potteries Branch of the REME Association, consequently in view of his new commitment submitted his resignation as a Trustee of the AANM Trust.

There is no doubt that Mo Hope during his tenure made a significant contribution to our enterprise, thus on behalf of the Trustees, Members, Family and Friends we thank Mo for his dedication, commitment and for all his efforts, and we wish him every success in his new role with the REME Association "

Gordon Bonner - Sept 2017





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 articles 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

Front Cover: Marching onto Parade - 67ers

Rear Cover: TAAPAD

Reunion Photos



Riots to Mutiny - Arthur Ward 50B

1966. It was time to leave U.K. so I applied for the little known family, 3 year posting called British Military Mission to Libya. It was the peaceful time when King Idris Senussi the head of the political and religious order was in power supported by the army.

Arriving to Benina airport Benghazi five weeks before my family, I was to stay in the Sgts Mess villa where later on the 30th July, I witnessed its one other living in member, going slightly crazy on the balcony shouting "4-2 We won" (World Cup 66). Only at the weekends would all members meet for official/social functions. We were a grand mixture of officers, senior and junior ranks from Regiments and Corps, commanded by a Brigadier and all dispersed as advisers in Benghazi and Tripoli areas with a Naval Mission at Tripoli. At the old Italian, now Libyan army workshops, near Berka Barracks, our O.C. Major Blakley, ASM Don Barber and two others, who were about to leave. All worked from one office, however my office was at the armourers shop, run by Libyan Sgt Arrifalla and was set up for teaching and repair work.

English language did not exist there but my Arabic was sufficient, once I had learnt the various local Arabic (Sulaimitian) and some Italian technical terms. The Libyan weapons and equipment that I saw were mainly purchased from UK, USA and Belgium. There were also three Chinese advisers all wearing white coats! Sometimes they appeared and disappeared to do something, instruments I think, but I don't know whose

side they were on? This army, being quite secretive about what type of equipment each unit had, made it hard to formulate any plan for weapon inspections so we simply awaited their requests. The first of which would be for me to join an American army advisor Sgt M.A.A.G. who was going to inspect some damaged Dodge trucks. This country being 90 % desert, we travelled by road via Barce, Dernah and Tobruk to Bardiyah near the Egyptian border, where at an Armoured/signals Regiment, I was to inspect only signal pistols newly purchased.

I was given an armed escort at all times. Whoever the salesman was, he was pretty smart because I found two hundred brass Mk 4 signal pistols still boxed. They must have bought nearly one for each man! As I could only inspect whatever they decided that I should see, it didn't take long.

That night we decide to camp out in one of the ruined Italian army buildings on the beach below the old Bardiyah town ruins away from our escorts before reporting in the morning to the Libyan C.O.

My impression was, that he disliked it all and regarded us as spies, sent to look into his barracks. He would later be injured when attempting to stop some of his unit going AWOL by crossing the border with their equipment to join the Egyptian army. Anyway we were both happy to get back to Benghazi by late evening.

Major Blakeley was then to show me an open area of the workshops in which he proposed to submit the design for a new armourers shop, asking me to make a list of

equipment required with an internal plan. I had been warned that Colonel Abdul Wahhab's attitude to advice could be to shelve it until such time that it surfaced to become a Libyan idea! However, I was kept busy. The British army units were still at Di Oasta and Wavell Barracks so that when my family arrived, we were assigned a villa on the outskirts of Benghazi and began our shopping in the town or used the army bus service to the beach, schools and NAAFI. The climate on the coast was comfortably warm except for the occasional Ghibli (sand storm) or the mountain rain storms bringing later flooding to surround our Villa and parts of the town. At times the work would require me to stay for a week at Al Marj (Barce) on the Plains above the Gebel Akhdar (Green mountain) or on to Dernah at Moasca Abial (White Barracks). Food in the Libyan Sgt's mess was always good, if different but I never saw the menu!

Time to explore. Our only B.M.M. annual, so called, exercise was for eight of us to take four land rovers well equipped with sand channels, Benghazi burners, tents, water, rations plus a few old tyres for the nightly fire then move via the coastal road, east to Marsa al Burayqah turning south to pass the oil field at Jebel Ziltan and then by sun compass go hundreds of miles south into the Sahara to find a given point, usually over a ten day period. The mountains, sand sea, escarpments and areas of collapsing dust meant that, with caution, travel could change from fifty mph to a crawl.

It was surprising to find groups of the near complete remains of fallen palm trees, fifty million years old, now as petrified wood together with jellyfish and star fish shapes all in stone and embedded in the rocks that far south. Removing a complete specimen was a labour of love. On one such trip to locate the extinct volcano "Wau al Namus" (Oasis of mosquitoes) on the Fezzan (rough rocks) border of the Chad, where because the day light was fading, we found that although surrounded for miles by black sand, it would not become visible until the last minutes because it was below the horizons and within a deep bowl shaped area. Its lava remains which were quite easy to climb were partly surrounded by undrinkable water and minor growth. At night it became even less hospitable as the place was full of scorpions, mosquitoes and a mix of others. Naturally we all slept under nets on the vehicles.

Later in the Al Aswad, a great area of black rocks, we found the shattered remains of a USAAF bomber. Some markings would show that it had already been visited by the U.S. Graves commission. On a previous trip we had tried to get to the wreckage of the W.W.2 USAAF "Lady be good" B24 Liberator Bomber but our direction of approach in the Great sand sea high Dunes stopped the L/rovers and our Sand channels were no help.

The morning it all changed.

1967. It was now my turn to take the Mess cash to the Bank, so as I drove into Benghazi I wondered why the streets were empty as it was not a Friday. It soon became clear as I passed the still burning British Embassy building and further on where the street outside of the American Embassy resembled a rockery. Near bye and

returning towards me came a great mob of rioters. I soon forgot the Bank by reversing and picking any direction but theirs, passing on my way, some Libyan troops who had left a parade and were now dancing in the street.

In the B.M.M office they told me that the Arab-Israeli war had started, so would I go to my workshop to get the feelings of the Libyans? Lucky me!

There they seemed confused and all believed that a British aircraft carrier had sent aircraft to bomb Cairo airport. Quickly, we decided to return to our families because riots and burning had started and by afternoon it would spread throughout town. BFBS radio advised all foreign nationals to take some belongings and passports to the British army Barracks. Now because I get all the good jobs, I was nominated to stay as area Rep' for this kind of situation, so sent my family in a friend's car to Di'Osta (UK) walled barracks then visited all known European families still without transport in my area. The plan was to await a truck which I would then guide to each villa. From my villa roof "Ben Hulum" on that night I waited and watched the town fires spread to other areas. It would now be dangerous to drive about as some CYDF (army), on horseback, carrying shotguns, were pretty jumpy when looking for looters in my area.

I was glad to see the truck with an officer and two armed and worried looking A.C.C cooks arriving for my guided tour of the waiting families.

All went well to enter Di' Osta walled barracks, where during the next eleven days; over three thousand people would seek refuge, courtesy of the British army.

One Company of British infantry arrived from Tobruk to support our limited troop

numbers and an oil company mobile rig which arrived, began drilling for water below the RSM's sacred ground because it was not known how the water supply from outside would be affected. This water, when brought to the surface went straight to jerry cans amassed on the square. I was asked what I intended to do with the Mess cash? Jokingly I suggest that if forced to leave, I would buy a bag of sugar for my VW Beetle tank and leave the country with the rest!

Sadly it went to the Paymasters office. Within days USAAF helicopters would arrive taking all Americans to their Wheelers Air Base in Tripoli.

A patrol of British army military police had been attacked with petrol bombs when attempting to intervene in town so we all reverted to guard duties for the next eleven days until the Libyan army regained control. Only then would we return to our Villa hoping that it was still secure. The British army was soon to withdraw from Benghazi to Tobruk and El Adem area and all their families would leave.

Next, I was volunteered to take a convoy of six old vehicles to drive the 1000km all night stopping only at Marble Arch, the Mussolini monument which separated Cereniaca from Tripolitania then continue to Tripoli, returning with nearly new ones the next night. It was a drag of a journey so at one point I found it easier to put a rock on the pedal and leave both feet on the seat. This only recommended when driving in a straight line for hours with no other traffic or camels in sight. During the next year the situation remained calm so work returned to normal and in groups we would take our families on camping trips along the coast visiting the ancient sites of Tolmeitha Cirene and Apollonia.

. Our one family trip some way into the desert using cars was by keeping tyre pressures down to twelve PSI and having Landrover backup.

At work, if our inspections were not local to Benghazi, Arifalla and I would use a converted office wagon as a repair shop. On one occasion I was sent to B.M.M Tripoli to assist, who I seem to remember, was WO2 Roy Jones inspecting weapons at a barracks near Al Khums (Homs)

We stayed at a rather ancient beach side hotel where soup of the day was always tomato. This beach was ideal for his golf practice and seen from there was ancient ruined city called Leptis Magna, abandoned by the Romans. Although still much remains below the sands, it was truly a great ruined city. Apart from the Gaffia at the gate, I was the lone visitor to this great city for that day and perhaps more because even then Libya appeared not to be interested in tourism.

I explored this impressive city of silence alone, without a guide for the next few hours! Later, back in Tripoli, Jona' and his wife, kindly took me for an evening of entertainment at Wheelers Base which appeared to be a self-contained little America. Back in Benghazi, because the UK Forces had left, our children were now at private school and shopping was in town The NAAFI being in Tobruk meant two of us driving the five hundred miles over night, collecting family orders and return the next night on empty roads via the mountain passes. Our new O/C REME, Major Blakeborough and three new REME advisers. Ted Palmer (Inst) Taf' Powell (Tels) of Arborfield and Bill Pybus (requisitions) who settled in well as did the other new replacement.

I would remain with BMM as I had been given an extended tour.

The evening before 1st September 1969, all was without change but with hind sight I was soon to realise that the lone tented camper at the Ring road junction was one of many guides ready to assist the advance of the mutinous units ,later commanded by Capt. Muammar Qadhafi and others, as they arrived over night to take over command of the barracks, police posts and airport.

The Revolt had started.

The next morning, not hearing the news of this, I drove into work where the first sign of change was at the workshops gates where I saw armed troops above the walls. None were wearing the King Idris badges and also, there were no officers about. The troops at the guardroom were unknown to me except one who advised me, as a friend, to leave quickly. This, I thought was better than being locked up so when driving away I avoided the roads, using the olive groves as cover hoping to reach BMM. HQ at Di'Osta Brks, now Libyan army H.Q. There I was met by more troops and a large armoured vehicle jammed in the gate. This was not a time to ask questions so again I used the olives as cover until stopping at our nearby garage shop where I stocked up with extra food and petrol. All B.M.M advisers would now remain indoors for over a week listening to the BBC. Later I learnt that King Idris, who was conveniently receiving medical treatment in Turkey, had gone into exile.

All the Libyan senior officers had been imprisoned and the police were being held in some town square, we waited to see their next move. There had been no riots or fires but during the next week there were some small arms firing which I believed to be troops communicating where they were without radios. When Nasser made his official visit to Libya, his vehicle convoy passed our villa where he waved

to my wife who was on the balcony at that time.

From now on we remained out of uniform and because our villa's were so close, we would meet by knocking holes in the high garden walls.

Our officers had set up HQ in their married quarters area because their office was behind that Tank at Di'Oasta. Later, when the dust settled and with the permission of the Libyans, our CO instructed four of us to remove all documents from that office and as we may be searched, we should take the safe from the wall as well. Armed with suitable tools, we were not apprehended in our near destruction of the wall to remove the weighty safe and drag it from veranda to L/rover. There would now be months of waiting while the new government and the now self-promoted Colonel Qadhafi were to decide whether to re employ us, although this now seemed unlikely. We believed that they were hoping for us just pack up and go, the usual method of Libyan decisions. We packed most family possessions in readiness for any forty eight hours exit, so that our non-essentials would then remain boxed for months. Only one of our number was ordered to leave within twenty four hours, that being because his wife had voiced her opinion of the new gang on the street. Myself and one other, later boxed the remainder of their belongings, taking them to the dockside where they were again opened and searched.

We were given special passes in Arabic allowing us pass through the army road blocks within Benghazi areas and the beach. Well it's not everybody's luck just to sit on a beach for months waiting to go to work, if at all!

Major Blakeborough thought that he had no chance of entering our workshop office so he nominated me to make the attempt on the pretext of

During the next year the situation remained calm so work returned to normal and in groups we would take our families on camping trips along the coast visiting the ancient sites of Tolmeitha Cirene and Apollonia.

At work, if our inspections were not local to Benghazi, Arifalla and I would use a converted office wagon as a repair shop. On one occasion I was sent to B.M.M Tripoli to assist, who I seem to remember, was WO2 Roy Jones inspecting weapons at a barracks near Al Khums (Homs)

We stayed at a rather ancient beach side hotel where soup of the day was always tomato. This beach was ideal for his golf practice and seen from there was ancient ruined city called Leptis Magna, abandoned by the Romans. Although still much remains below the sands, it was truly a great ruined city. Apart from the Gaffia at the gate, I was the lone visitor to this great city for that day and perhaps more because even then Libya appeared not to be interested in tourism.

I explored this impressive city of silence alone, without a guide for the next few hours! Later, back in Tripoli, Jona' and his wife, kindly took me for an evening of entertainment at Wheelers Base which appeared to be a self-contained little America. Back in Benghazi, because the UK Forces had left, our children were now at private school and shopping was in town The NAAFI being in Tobruk meant two of us driving the five hundred miles over night, collecting family orders and return the next night on empty roads via the mountain passes.

I would remain with BMM as I had been given an extended tour.

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sight I was soon to realise that the lone tented camper at the Ring road junction was one of many guides ready to assist the advance of the mutinous units, later commanded by Capt. Muammar Qadhafi and others, as they arrived over night to take over command of the barracks, police posts and airport.

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After selling our cars, we used BMM vehicles and while driving one of these, I developed a collapsed left lung but managed to drive to the small B.P hospital. I was later flown to B.M.H. Dhekelia Cyprus for the Op' after which I returned, all stitched up, to my family in Libya on a Jordan airways plane which had more security guards than passengers. No chance of Hi jack there!

The Soviet embassy now had a giant red flag flying in the town which made them the new equipment salesmen from now on. The Benina Airport, under new management, proved no problem so that we were soon on our way to Italy for transfer to a UK flight before moving for the first time ever to BAOR, where we would meet many BMM friends again

Arthur Ward - 50B

Recollections of an Instrument Mechanic - 1942 - 1953

Timeline

6/10/1942 – 19/9/1945 Boys Service GSC
 30/6/1945 - IM A3 (Class 3 trade test)
 20/9/45 -28/11/45, REME/Regimental training, Canterbury
 29/11/45 – 12/2/47, Command Workshops, Leicester
 23/4/46 – IM A2
 13/2/47 – 28/6/49, 406 EA Command Workshops, Mogadishu
 1/7/47 – IM A1
 29/6/49 – ??/ 5/50, Donnington Base Workshops, Instrument Workshop
 ??/5/50 - 26/5/51 – Armament Artificer (Instruments) Course, Deepcut Barracks
 27/5/51 – 16/8/53, 4th Armoured Workshops, Hannover
 17/8/53 – 21/8/53, Discharge to B Reserve
 17/8/53 - 6/07/87, Nightschool -Technical College. (ONC _ HNC _ ENDORSEMENTS)
 Technician/experimental magnetron development/naval underwater detection equipment.
 Development engineer/Thunderbird 2 and design study on forerunner of Rapier AA missile system.
 Qualified as Chartered Engineer (Electronic Control Systems)
 Engineering Management – digital computer equipment

I arrived at Arborfield in October 1942. After the usual concentrated square bashing to knock us into some sort of military shape, we commenced our technical training. For the Instrument Mechs (who were distributed through several companies) this consisted of about 9 months heavy filing, working through ever more challenging test pieces. (Instructor – Mr Baker) This was followed by 9 weeks of more instrument related filing involving brass and paxolin test pieces (Instructor – Sgt Porteous). Some of the tools made during the 'metal bashing' period are shown in an attached photo.

Then followed a series of practical courses in lathe work, tin smithing, blacksmithing, carpentry and basic electrical stuff.

All this was carried out in the main workshop buildings as there was no dedicated instrument workshop at the time.

However, a double length Nissan hut was being built and was ready for use by the end of all this preliminary training. It was situated beyond the road at the top of the drill square and near the main workshop

complex. This must have been mid-1943. In this building, we did more filing, learnt how to use a watchmaker's lathe, and learnt some optics theory and how to service instruments. There was also a gun predictor (Mk 3) on which we did a little familiarisation. Specific items I can remember are binoculars, telescopes, clinometers, gun sights & compasses. In parallel, we had sessions of general education in pursuit of the second, first and special class certificates of education. The subjects were English, Maths, Military History, Geography and Map Reading. Early in 1944 the school was needed to house troops for the D-Day landings so we were sent home to await further instructions. This came in the form of various postings according to the degree of training we had already completed: The pre October 42 IMs went to the Command Workshop at Old Dalby, Nottinghamshire and Donnington, Shropshire. That October 42 IMs went to 6 Central Workshops, Greenford (Middlesex) and the younger ATs, to Bury (Lancashire) where they reassembled as a school.

At Greenford we were employed in overhauling binoculars, telescopes and gun dial sights (and exploiting the new found freedom/social life to the full). Around D-Day, the doodle bugs started coming and we had a few close encounters. The flow of work slowed down and I think it was decided that we were an unnecessary risk so we were shunted off to Old Dalby to join the boys there. There was not much for us to do (I remember repairing some watches but nothing else) so we kicked our heels and got very bored with the mundane tasks available for the few remaining weeks, before returning to Arborfield to complete our training and qualify as Class 3 Tradesmen.

I am not sure if there were any January intake IMs but Lawrence Nixon (Obituary, OBAN issue 56, Sept 2013) and ? Bewick were April 42 IM boys. I can't remember any other names from this intake. Names from the October intake that I can remember are:- Jaynes, McGowan, Frank Penfold (MBE. Commissioned), Titch Pike, Ginger Ross, Saunders & myself. There may be others.

Recollections - Cont.

We were all 'General Service Corps' badged throughout our apprenticeship, with ATS shoulder flashes at first, then changed to Army Technical School as in the attached photo.

Launched on the REME world in October 1945, we (the whole leaving intake) were dispatched to a Light Infantry training centre in Canterbury whose staff thought we were the usual green set of rookies. The next six weeks were a shock for the infantry instructors; We were not very compliant; the depot RSM could not wait to see the back of us and get back to normal.

I was subsequently posted to a small workshop in Leicester where I shared a small hut with a civilian watchmaker, so essentially my own boss. The work was mainly reconditioning speedometers, a few clinometers, telescopes and binoculars.

I gained my second class grading at Leicester after a tussle with the Technical officer who thought I was too young to go for the test.

In February 1947, I was dispatched to Mogadishu, Somalia, to 406 EA Command Workshops whose activity was mainly the repair of vehicles.

My first task was to find and rescue the mobile instrument workshop, rumoured to be located at Hargeisa in the far north of East Africa. This first required me to learn how to drive – that, previous & subsequent events are covered in my article, A/T to Ancient – OBAN Issue 33, Summer 2005.

The vehicle recovered and its minimal contents removed to a

small cell in the workshop compound I began to be an IM again. There was not much to keep me occupied – a few watches, one rangefinder, some binoculars, and a Telex machine, spread over many months.

Eventually, a civilian Italian typewriter mechanic came under my wing and he taught me how to fix them.

At some time, a Tiffy was posted in but soon departed as there was nothing for him to do. Also a National Service IM came and went for the same reason.

I had a break in Nairobi to sit my First Class Trade Test. With this low volume of work I was always available for rescue missions for our far flung detachments and so drove a 3 tonner many hundreds of miles around Somalia. A safari on the cheap!!

I badly wanted to get home for an Arm Arts Course and civilisation, eventually making it, returning to the UK in June 1949.

I was posted to the Base workshops at Donnington to keep me occupied until the Arm Arts course assembled at Rowcroft barracks Arborfield for the initial briefing. We were then sent to Deepcut barracks for the technical training followed by four weeks at an RE map making establishment near Newbury to learn how to service their equipment.

Finally we were back in Rowcroft for more regimental training. The subjects studied at Deepcut were Maths, Machine Drawing, Hydraulics, Electronic Theory, Optics & Mechanisms. The mechanisms

largely related to the mechanical predictors of the time & an example is given in one of the photos. The positional information was automatically relayed to the guns by 'magslip' transmitters. Strangely, I still have the notes taken on the course.

The names of others on the course that I recall were :- Alvin (Nutter) Coleman, Hutchinson, Jenkins, Pete Nelson, Claude Rainer, Digger Stevens, Tommy Tinman (RCEME)

Posted to 4th Armoured workshops in Hannover, which again was primarily concerned with repairing vehicles, I was assigned to be in charge of all the trades personnel other than vehicle mechs.

We were essentially a mobile workshop but housed in an old aluminium construction factory when not required in the field in support of the armoured division.

Having started studying for further engineering qualifications as far back as 1946 but with repeated interruptions due to postings, as the end of my engagement approached I decided to make a break from the army and go back to technical college part time, to achieve my ambition of gaining Chartered Engineer status focused on electronic engineering. It was tough going but resulted in a good 35 year career in development engineering & a comfortable retirement for the last 28 years.

Mike Allcock - 42C

Life After the Army - Andy Dickson 66B

Late 1974

I bought myself out after my second tour of NI. I was serving with the 45 Commando Air Squadron, (Montforterbeek Flight), at the time.

It just seemed to me that after the tension and intensity of operating in NI was what being in The Army was all about. Returning to Arbroath and the normal day to day routines just didn't sit well with me and I decided to go my own way.

Early 1975

I had two interviews lined up, one with IBM and who the other one with escapes me. I didn't fancy being an IBM Service Engineer and through a friend of my dad applied for a job as the Warranty Administrator at Hyster Europe based in Basingstoke.

This was the start of 42 years in the forklift industry, with a short break in the mining industry which I will write about later.

My technical background and Army training were a great help in my new career. It wasn't long before I was asked to take on a resident engineering role in the same office with responsibility for field service problem reporting for the European market.

This required travel to the Hyster factories in Scotland and Holland and various dealer locations in Europe.

I travelled to Algiers on a service job in 1978. One of our service engineers had crashed a brand new rough terrain crane on delivery and me and another guy had to go down and repair it. That was an interesting trip!

I also supported Sales in delivering 52 electric trucks to a customer in Libya during this time. I could write a whole article just on this one job. I can say, this taught me to be resourceful.

Late 1978

The marketing Director, (Later my father in law), called me to his office one day and informed me I had been selected to represent the company looking after a major contract we had just been awarded and this was based in Saudi Arabia. I was already dating his daughter and mentioned this to him. (We had tried to keep our relationship out of the office as much as possible). He was quite quick in his response and said this wasn't a reason behind my selection for this role!

So, off to Dammam on the East Coast of Saudi Arabia I went. I was to work closely with the dealer we had in the Middle East, Yusuf bin Ahmed Kanoo.

Kanoo were into everything commercial, as most other big Arab families. (I am sure you have all heard of the Bin Laddin family. They were the Caterpillar dealer among other things at the time).

I was given an apartment in Dammam and a car and pretty much told to get on with it. We were supplying forklift trucks to the ports in Dammam and Jubail primarily. I supported the dealer in sales, Service and Aftermarket Parts for the time I was there. The trucks started arriving from our factories in Europe and I had to make sure they were delivered and working, carry out the driver and technical training and, most importantly, collect the money.

During 1979, I asked my boss if there was something else I could do in addition to my current duties. To be honest, I didn't have enough work to keep me busy.

He asked that I take on the rest of the Middle East as a territory and so I made a move into Sales!

This latest move required me to travel to all the other Middle East countries and so I travelled to Bahrain, the UAE Oman, Kuwait, Iraq, Iran, Aden and Egypt. (I think this was them all).

Sue and I had set a date in 1980 to get married so I travelled back to the UK in June that year and we were married in Milford on Sea on the South Coast. Having earned some tax-free money, we could afford a honeymoon in Hawaii. Our hotel, Don the Beachcomber, was literally on Waikiki beach.

After the honeymoon, we had to get a visa organised for Sue. This took a few weeks but eventually we travelled back to Dammam to start our married life.

Learning to live with each other in the conditions of Saudi Arabia was difficult. Sue couldn't leave the apartment on her own, couldn't drive a car, couldn't have a job etc.

We had to do everything together. For an independent girl, newly married was very hard to deal with.

We managed to accumulate 3 cats while in Saudi Arabia. We transported them all back to the UK along with very expensive quarantine costs. Two of the cats were strays and the third a pedigree Persian we obtained from the CAT rep in Dammam.

We managed to odd trip together to Bahrain and the UAE where conditions were less restrictive from time to time to maintain our sanity. This was before the causeway was built to Bahrain so always entailed a flight, exit and re-entry visas from Saudi and visas for the countries we visited. Nothing was ever easy in those days.

Life After the Army - Cont

Late 1982

We stayed in Saudi Arabia until late 1982, and returned to take up a position at the factory in Scotland. My job required me to travel to English speaking Africa.

1983

After a few trips into the dark continent there came some sweeping changes in the way the company did business. I was asked to move to Nijmegen in The Netherlands and head up a much reduced in size. Service Department. We moved lock stock and barrel to a small town just outside of Nijmegen called Deest.

Sue got into learning the language and I must admit I picked some up too but everyone spoke English. In my team, I had all the European languages covered.

Over the next 5 years I build the team back up again to a respectable size before deciding that I it was time to move back to the UK. The company had nothing for me in the UK at the time so I handed my notice and, packed up and moved back.

We gained an Exotic Shorthair cat and a Bernese Mountain Dog during our stay and lost the Persian and one of the Saudi strays during our stay in The Netherlands.

Late 1988

We hadn't been back in the UK for a week before I got a call at my mum's house from the sales manager for in Hyster Australia. Apparently, my reputation and skill set was required there. So, back into the Hyster fold and I packed my bags and headed off to Sydney. Sue stayed behind until I got settled. After all, we had the dog and now only one cat to transport too.

Sue arrived in Sydney in mid-1999 and this was our home for the next 15 years. We became Australian citizens and had freedom of movement to come and go as we please without having to bother with resident visas. We retained our British Citizenship.

I had various jobs within Hyster Australia and saw the transition when the company changes hands and Yale and Hyster became the two brands we marketed. I ended up working for the parent company and had the marketing teams of both brands working directly for me. (Some diplomatic skills required here).

During this time, I travelled extensively throughout Australia and New Zealand and then, as our territory expanded, to most Asian countries. I also spent a great deal of time in the USA as part of the new product development process.

We gained another Bernese Mountain Dog but lost both dogs and our Exotic Shorthair during this time.

2002

Due to various management changes, I found myself at odds with the direction the company was taking. The MD and I didn't see eye to eye and I figured it would be better that I left the company.

We decided to come back to the UK, again, and see some of the family that we had hardly had any interaction with for many years. I had lost my dad while we lived in Saudi Arabia but Sue still had both her parents and we wanted to spend time with them.

Arriving back in the UK, a 40' container with all our worldly

goods in it on its way from Sydney, no job, nowhere to live..... What was I thinking.

I started to contact people I knew and before long had an opportunity to join the Heavy Truck Division of Linde Materials Handling based in Merthyr Tydfil. We found a house in Brecon and I must say I had one of the most beautiful drives to work every day through the Beacons. It was a delight.

My travels started again almost immediately.

My job now had global responsibility and I travelled to a few more countries I had never been to before and a few I had but wished I hadn't. Nigeria and India are not my favourite places.

We had a great team in Merthyr and it was one of the nicest jobs I have had. Demanding but rewarding in an odd way. The MD there was a challenge and it took me some time to win him around.

I talked the boss into letting me get my arms around the Parts business for our products in 2008. This was normally the responsibility of the Parts Operation of Linde in Basingstoke but I felt we could do better. It didn't take us long to make an impact and a 5-fold increase in parts turnover in just under three years was the result



Pen y Fan and one of my favourite fishing spots

Life After the Army - cont.

2010

I bumped into an old colleague at a marketing conference in Prague and he asked I come and work for him in Melbourne. I declined but he was persistent and eventually we upped sticks again and moved back to Australia, Melbourne this time.

For the first time in my career I was in a full retail organisation. Previously I had been in a wholesale environment in all my jobs.

The pressures are very different but with a team of 35 service engineers spread across Victoria and a huge rental fleet to look after I soon learned how things worked.

Previously I had been in a wholesale environment in all my jobs.

The pressures are very different but with a team of 35 service engineers spread across Victoria and a huge rental fleet to look after I soon learned how things worked.

The company were in the process of building a new facility and we had the task of moving fork lift trucks, people, paperwork etc. a few kilometres up the road. Quite a job to get everything done and as always, the people were the hardest to move.

Late 2012

Out of the blue, I got a call from a head-hunter.

Would I be interested in talking to a company about a role setting up a new Service Support operation in New South Wales? It was always our intention to move back to NSW but this came as a surprise.

I got a flight up to Sydney one Saturday, had the interview and then flew back to Melbourne.

It turns out Joy Mining were looking to set up a new support office in the country town of Mudgee, about 3 hours' drive north of Sydney.

They had won a major contract with one of the mines there and wanted some local representation.

So, off we went again. It took us ages to find the right house but we ended up living on 42 acres of farmland/bush with any amount of wildlife to keep us company. We had kangaroos and snakes in abundance, even right up to the house.

One encounter with an Eastern Brown left me with shaky knees. (He lost the battle by the way).



The view from my front window in Mudgee

I ended up with all the mines from Mudgee down to Wollongong under me and the service engineers that went with them.

What an interesting industry. Mining management is the bluntest I have ever come across in all my years. When you understand the cost impact of equipment downtime you can understand why. It did take me a while to work out it wasn't personal but they do tend to call a spade a shovel, accompanied by the necessary expletives.

Our nearest neighbour was probably 2 kilometres away.

I had to invest in a ride-on mower in order to keep on top of the grass cutting, just around the house.

The farmer next door used to put sheep and cows on the vacant paddocks to keep most of the long grass down but at the end of the day it was nice to see the 'roos in the fields and if the grass was too short they would have stayed away.



The Eastern Brown snake, less its head.

Mid 2014

Just as you think things are all going along nicely, something changes.

The Australian Labour party introduced additional taxes that hit the mining industry very hard. The consequence of this was that I was made redundant and my job was absorbed by somebody else in the organisation.

It is quite a shock when this happens and suddenly you have no job to do.

By chance, I bumped into somebody I knew from the forklift industry who ran his own business in Griffith in Riverina area of NSW.

I suggested I work for him from home doing some of the admin tasks he was getting bogged down in. He asked that I come and run a small branch of his in Wagga Wagga. (Yes, there really is a place called Wagga Wagga!)

I suggested I work for him from home doing some of the admin tasks he was getting bogged down in. He asked that I come and run a small branch of his in Wagga Wagga. (Yes, there really is a place called Wagga Wagga!)

So off we go again.

Sadly, after relocating and just starting to get me teeth into this much smaller role, the owner decided he could do the things I suggested as he was only a small company and didn't want to get too big. I felt let down and we decided to go our separate ways.

Mid 2015

What to do now.

61 years of age, no job and struggling to see where I wanted to go next.

Sue and I talked at length and we decided to move back to the UK.

Her dad wasn't well and both her parents are well into their 80's so we packed up and moved back to the UK, for the last time I might add.

We landed in the UK in October 2015 with the obligatory container following 5 or 6 weeks behind us.

I started to make contact with people I knew and it was suggested I visit a contact at the Cat Forklift dealer in Nottingham who might have an interesting position for me.

After a few meetings, they employed me and I ended up here in Melksham transitioning a business that had been purchased into the Cat way of doing things.

So, here we are.

Having never spent much time in Wiltshire before, we are both pleasantly surprised how accessible everything is.

We have the benefits of living in a small village but have access to the major motorways (M4 & M5) very close by.

Sue's parents are within easy driving distance, only 2 hours away.

I have seen enough of the inside of planes to last two lifetimes. The 85 or so countries I have visited have all been interesting, some more than others but it has been fun, especially as the companies I have worked for have paid for most of it.

We are not moving back to Australia. Doing this twice was enough.

I don't think we will settle in Wiltshire for good, but, who knows we may end up staying here yet.

I hope I haven't bored you with this tale.

My motivation was to fill some of the empty pages in this edition of OBAN.

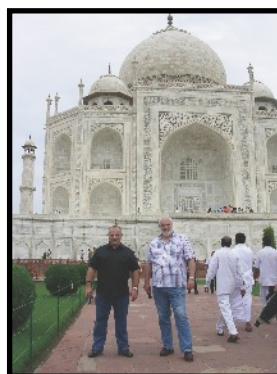
Come on, Guys.

Give me something to put in our newsletter.....

Andy Dickson 66B



On my 50th Birthday



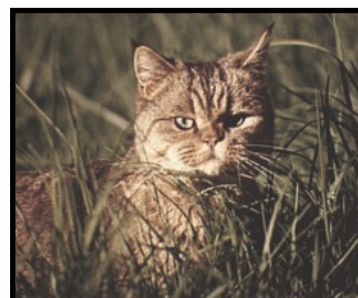
With a colleague at the Taj Mahal



Wildlife in the Garden in Mudjee



Our two Bernese, Dram & Ace



Harvey, The exotic Shorthair

Liebenau Reunion 2014

During the 'Cold War' in the early seventies, seven young men in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers served as mechanics in the British Army on the Rhine. They were attached to 1Div Transport Regiment, at a place called Liebenau with 12 Squadron RCT Light Aid Detachment. They were called to volunteer and forgo their duties protecting Europe against the hordes of Russian Communists and help assist the British establishment in Northern Ireland to combat the threat posed by the Irish Republican Army.

What this meant in essence, was that the 7 good men and true, would leave the German NAAFI and bars behind them and instead drink in the Northern Ireland NAAFI's and bars. Swapping one stupefying scenario for another. What the hell, they were young volunteers; with a devil may care attitude and something of a death wish.



None of them expected to return! Each would survive and their of tales of daring do, recounted, would, with every sand bag pulled and lantern swung, develop into mythology that put Greek gods to shame.

Their lives inevitably separated as each found their own way in the army and later in life.

Forty years or so passed and five of those seven young men, Ray Wickson, Robert Stanton, Wilf Day, Alex Wilson and John Andrusiak, managed to contact each other. Sadly two of the seven, Bob Balmforth and Pete Smith could not be traced.

They planned a reunion and a return to Liebenau!

They also made contact with a mate, who served at Liebenau during the early seventies, Howie Rogers, he would be their guide as he lived and worked in Hamelin.

Sadly Howie would not make it, he passed away before the reunion. Although they all felt he was with them in spirit!

Thursday 4th September
Trains, planes and automobiles, led the five to a hotel in Hannover, where the reunion began in earnest.

Friday 5th September
A hire car transported the five to Liebenau, where with a positive attitude, the years fell away, allowing them to be transported back in time and into the barrack rooms they all shared so many years ago.

This was thanks to Petro, a Russian, who now, ironically, lives in the house that housed the young men, who were paid all those years ago, to defend Europe against such people as Petro.

John could speak to Petro in Russian and Ukrainian, which fostered a kinship between the two, another irony given the current situation in the East of Ukraine.

Petro showed them around the camp and took them to the

workshops where they worked, taking photographs at every opportunity.

Previous research dumfounded this band of brothers, as they were unable to trace the 'Local' Pub that they each frequented, believing that it was perhaps raised to the ground. Petro, who had lived in this area since the late 90's knew of the 'Local' pub and the landlord Helmut and his wife Ingrid. He knew where Helmut now lived, and took them to the house, which they recognised as the 'Local'.

An afternoon was spent reminiscing with Helmut, but sadly also commiserating with him, at the sad loss of his wife a few years earlier. A few beers were drunk in the garden where many hundreds of gallons were consumed over the years. Helmut confided that the money he made from the British Army has funded a comfortable pension. Helmut looks well for 87 years of age and is looking forward to a birthday at the end of the month.



They left Helmut and Petro in Liebenau and headed for Nienburg, where their 2nd and 3rd nights would be spent in a B&B.

The B&B was a nice homely place run by Ingrid (coincidentally), it was very handy for the 'Old' town.

Many hostelryes were visited and eventually food consumed. The lads had a fantastic time, Nienburg was much livelier than any of them could remember. They settled on 'Maximilian's Bistro' which happened to have an umpah band where they whiled away the evening.

Saturday 6th September
The next morning after a fantastic breakfast, which alone was worth the 20 Euros each the B&B cost a night, they visited another former British Army camp, where most but not all of them were stationed for a short while.

There were still vestiges of British Army occupation, sadly overgrown, the Junior Ranks Club (AKA The NAAFI) was like a scene from 'Planet of the Apes'. Still they took delight in taking photos and reminiscing.

A walk around Nienburg was a journey of discovery, Wilf seemed to have more of a grasp for what represented old haunts and they were all soon posing outside a closed supermarket which they convinced themselves was a bar, regularly frequented by them!

After returning to the B&B and having a rest, they made their way to another bar and a restaurant on the River Waser, where a meal was enjoyed whilst watching the distant horizon, where lightening danced. The rain inevitably fell, but did not dampen their resolve and several choruses of 'Singing in the rain' were sung.

The next stop, was a gothic beer house, where the heady smell of cannabis hung in the air like wisps of cloud. A strange place, with more Russians, John didn't get very

good vibes from them and did not attempt to speak in their native tongue.

Wherever the lads went, boisterous laughter followed them, it only took any one of them to recount a tale about the other, which would have them all laughing hysterically. On a couple occasions Ray got the others worried as he laughed so hard he couldn't catch his breath.



Sunday 7th September
The following morning after yet another superb breakfast, they settled their bill with Ingrid and went on their way to Hamelin. A couple of hours drive south.

A visit to Annette Rogers (Howie's wife) had been arranged with a night out in Hamelin to follow.

The hotel was eventually found and cases placed in rooms. A walk of approximately a mile followed, with John using his satnav to find Annette's home. The intrepid five-some, would discover that Annette lived no more than a hundred yards from the hotel!

Bob Stanton, was to learn that Howie and Annette felt indebted to him in many ways, he had swapped a posting with Howie which enabled Howie to stay in Germany. He also leant Howie a car.

Although there is no doubting the sad circumstances surrounding the visit, all felt

that Annette had enjoyed the banter.

Annette waived off the five as they strode the short distance back to the hotel.

They then took a nostalgic trip to a small village a few miles south of Hamelin, where one of the five had fond memories of a Guesthouse, where 40 years ago, he stole his first kiss by a staircase. The guesthouse was there and festooned with teddy bears.

They returned to Hamelin where they participated in sightseeing and a few beers and yet more food.

A sensible day of moderation was experienced as an event which entailed each of them driving the following day had been arranged.

However their spatial awareness had left the majority of them, Alex, Ray and John got lost on the way back to the hotel. Alex recognised their mistake and knew the correct route, John bereft of his satnav maintained that he wrongly knew where the hotel was. The ensuing misunderstanding caused, Alex a 'Jock', to miss the first half of the German/Scotland football game.

Ray and John eventually found an irate Alex, walking toward the hotel.



Monday 8th September

After yet another superb breakfast, they were on the road heading towards their next destination, Autostadt at Wolfsburg, and the VW plant.

The five were all looking a little jaded during the journey, Alex, Bob and Wilf shared the backseat and imitated nodding dogs for most of the journey. Ray was in the 'compo seat', and was too scared to fall asleep!

They arrived at Autostadt in good time to enjoy the factory tour which had been arranged to commence at 12.30pm.



A part of the visit was used to test drive a VW Touran and Skoda Yeti, but on a factory built test track, which had each of them driving across railway

lines, a wavy road, figure of eight banking with a pool of water, a tube and a stepped hill. Those who didn't get told off enjoyed it, the rest, John, Bob and Alex didn't so much!

All had to agree that it was a good day out.

The included hotel was very good, but the beer prices a little steep, so the five decided to walk the 15 minutes to the next village, where a pub with it's own brewery existed. Only it was more of a full hours walk! Still they laughed all the way there.

A taxi was called to get the lads back to the hotel and an early night was had by all.

Tuesday 9th September

After breakfast, Alex was dropped off at the station so that he could travel to Hamburg in order to gat the plane back to Manchester.

The remaining four drove then to Hannover, where they kicked their heels for a few hours. Unbeknown to all of them Alex was also kicking his heels in

Hannover awaiting a connecting train to Hamburg.

The hire car was eventually handed back to Avis, without any controversy much to John's relief. The lads again had to kick their heels for a number of hours in the airport.

Ray, Bob and Wilf partook in a big belly competition.



The reunion was all but over, the remaining 5 of the 'Magnificent Seven' meandered their way home, happy in the knowledge that they would not be repeating this trip too soon, as it would most probably kill them.

John Andrusiak - 70B

One from TC:

AAS Badge

The spurred gearwheel of industry, for faith, a simple cross,
The torch of learning on crossed swords, above the words embossed.
"Army Apprentices School " worn by young boys with pride
Preparing to be artisans to give aid and provide
Support to soldiers everywhere, with skills they learned well spent
Protecting comrades from effects of war's hostile intent.

Numbered in their thousands for three score years and more
They formed the solid backbone of the Army's Tradesmen's Corps.
Working in the background, away from fame and glory,
They quietly performed their role, an unassuming story
Of skill and dedication and commitment to their trade,
Without whom many feats of arms would never have been made.

So honour those who wore it in their youth for all to see,
Remembering those who paid the soldiers debt for victory,
It has faded into history's page, no more to glint and shine
On caps and collars brightly, reminding of the time
When these young boys grew up and took their place where they should
be,
In the forefront of the British Army's place in history.

Time, Tide & Coincidence

The Database Officer's Report in OBAN 67 highlighted a number of coincidences with my own career in REME and civilian life, some twenty years ahead of Ian though.

Firstly a Swahili greeting, jambo, habari enu, although that originates more from service in Somalia than Kenya and my grasp of Kiswahili has long slipped away.

Getting back to the beginning, I started out as an Instrument Mechanic in C company, then due to the D Day interruption to our stay in Arborfield, returned to D company from the base workshops of Greenford and Old Dalby to complete my apprenticeship. Hockey was my sport of choice.

After leaving Arborfield I was posted to a laid back workshop in Leicester and thence to a very laid back workshop in Mogadishu, via Mombasa and Nairobi.

Eventually I got an Arm Arts course back in the UK from which I was posted to 4th Armoured Workshops in Hanover where I ran the ancillary trades section.

When in Leicester, I had started a correspondence course to gain entry to the Institution of Mechanical Engineers but it stalled during

my time in Somalia. With the end of my initial sign up looming I decided to return to civilian life and back to studying for a formal engineering qualification via the night school route, while working in various technical roles to support my family. That was a really tough part of my life. I switched to the electrical side of engineering and eventually finished up as a Chartered Electrical Engineer specialising in control systems.

This lead to the next coincidence; I joined English Electric (later BAC) in Stevenage as part of the Thunderbird 2 design team mainly on the LCP and its equipment.

However, before the missile system entered service I moved on to IBM and digital computers so never knew whether the design met it's objectives or not and have been forever curious.

Reflecting back on what can be achieved by today's electronics, Thunderbird's supporting vehicle entourage was very cumbersome but that's analogue computers for you! I loved them.

Coincidences - a couple more come to mind like bumping into my brother in the Nuffield Club in the mid 40s

(Nuffield Club - a real hot services club sited in the dormant, bomb damaged, Café De Paris night club during the war) also bumping into an army associates in the tube system several times. I'm sure we all have many such outlandish encounters in our lives.

The other thing which my mind wandered on to was how the changing importance of trades in the army has evolved.

I did my training as an instrument mechanic but by the end of the war there was little work outside the central workshops.

I worked on almost everything but instruments after leaving Leicester which reflects on the excellent grounding we received.

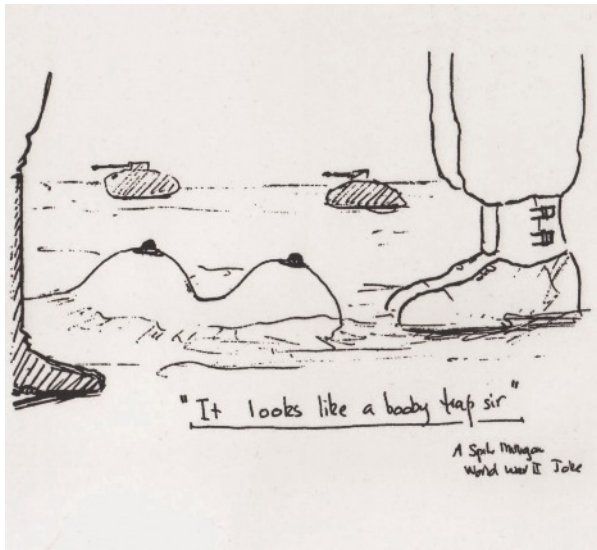
You only have to look at the current list of REME trades compared with the 1940s classifications to highlight structures to deal with an ever evolving need. But there, I think, lies the strength of our apprentice training -the ability to adapt.

Long live the Army Apprentice.

Mike Allcock,(ever more ancient) 42C & D

A few more from the reunion:





Xoddam Trophy Winner 2017 - Brian Greenhorn

Ted Bulmer presenting

A Call Home By John (Herbie) Coles

There's a cherry coloured phone box to the left of our main gate,
A pair of sad faced juniors by the door,
'Twas their only mid-term contact, with those that were at home,
To give them aspiration for some more

Punishment, it may have seemed, to some, that trod the path,
Others took it easily in their stride,
A parent's voice, "you're doing well son, keep it up, you hear?"
To swell the chest, righteously with pride.

It wasn't just a simple trade that we had joined to learn,
But skill at arms, resourcefulness, and grit,
To bear the standard set so high, working as a team,
Not landing all your room-mates in the shit!

Steep learning curve, the first term done, juniors no more,
More confident, and building by the day,
But taken down a peg or two, or," suitably advised"
If cockiness was getting in the way.

Company drill, a special halt, frowned upon by some,
As was jipping, (but we progressed along the queue)
From nuts and bolts, basic parts to theory and tests,
14 weeks, those terms just really flew.

The months and years passed quickly by, and soon it was our turn,
To practice for our ultimate parade,
The parent's turn to feel the pride, in what we had achieved
A common bond, and lifelong friendships made.

And so we left our mates behind, and went our separate ways,
Some anticipation once again before,
Arriving at our postings, a new beginning once again,
But every one of us an asset to the corps!

Letters to the Editor:

From Mike Allcock

Thanks for your reply to my comment on coincidences in career paths. I will put something together in a more readable form. I had an article published in OBAN 33 (Summer 2005) titled AT To Ancient, covering my career in detail. It is still on my files. I also have a piece about Instrument Mechanics done for David Knowles who was writing the history of Arborfield IMs, however this is largely a timeline document. I might use some of this to comment on the change in emphasis on trades over the years and coincidences on the way.

Changing subjects, I have attached a photo of Sgt David Ratter (ex Boy RSM) taken in Mogadishu 1948 where we served together. He died in a shooting accident (in Kenya I think) about 1950. I had returned to UK for an Arm Arts course by then.

Regards,

Mike Allcock 42C & D



Sgt David Ratter

Re: Diary of A Jeep

On reading this entertaining article, I was very surprised to see my name mentioned regarding hair cutting.

However, I must mention that I only charged a tanner or sixpence in old money for a quick, quality trim (2 ½ pence in today's currency, what a bargain!!) even considering we only got ten bob a week!

With reflection I should have developed another sideline in 'anything for the weekend sir', that would have been a real money spinner, but hindsight is a wonderful thing!

Shag Twynning 60A

Hello, Rob Castell.

I saw your "ad" in Legion magazine.

My father Hugh Wakely (late King George V's Own Bengal Sappers and Miners and Royal Engineers) was a maths teacher at Arborfield in 1967. I wonder if any attendees at your Reunion will remember him.

If so, I and my brother would be very pleased to hear from them. If they live in the hinterland between Twickenham and Aldershot, we might even buy them a drink.

Best wishes and I hope the Reunion goes well.

George Wakely (late Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment)

Bill Wakely (late Royal Fusiliers)

PS - Neither of us was intelligent enough to join a technical corps

I have their contact details if you would care to drop them a line - Ed.

Clifford Paul Margle

Scribes: from the 59ers.

It is with great sorrow and regret that we have to announce the death of Paul Clifford Margle who died on Sunday 9 April 2017, aged 73 after a three month battle with lung cancer. Paul, at his own request, died at home in his long-term residence in Ware, Hertfordshire.

He was the eldest son, born to Marjorie and Bob in November 1943 in Spole Norfolk. He had two younger brothers, David and Peter, later growing up in Little Cressingham.

At the age of 15, Paul (23697344) joined the Army as an apprentice at the Army Apprentice College in Arborfield, in intake 59A and went on to complete a 12-year career in the Corps as an ECE. He served in UK, BAOR and Aden.

After leaving the Army, Paul used his electronics expertise throughout his civilian career working for various companies. In 1974 he met Mary, they married and settled in Ware. They were blessed with two children Sarah (1976) and Robin (1979).

Paul was an out and out family man - always there for Mary and the children. When the children were young, he helped them with their homework, and as they grew up and obtained their own homes, he would carry out any repairs for them.

Paul was absolutely dedicated to Mary and over the last three years he has been constantly by her side caring for her after she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's.

Paul wanted to contact some of his old colleagues from his Army days and so through the Arborfield Old Boys Association he was able to find the 59'ers. He attended the reunions and kept in touch. Paul would often say, 'that Army mates are the best mates you will ever make'.

Paul would often like to play a round of golf for fun with his son Robin, and they would also venture to RAF Duxford for a look at the aeroplanes, something they were both interested in. They would also visit the REME Museum and regularly go to Tankfest at The Tank Museum in Bovington, where they would often try a tank for size. Facebook posts by Paul about Tanks and Armour worldwide, would confirm his passion for this part of our history.

Our condolences go out to all his family and especially to Mary his wife for over 40 years, his two children Sarah and Robin and grandson Riley, who arrived in 2013. *Rest in peace Paul - you will be sorely missed.*



From The Craftsman Magazine - Ed

Hi AOBA Committee, HOB & Armourers Secretaries

It is with deep regret that I must inform everyone that today I have been informed by Keith Allcock that a good friend of mine as he was to many others, that Lofty Tanner passed away on the 12 August 2017. Lofty recently became a Chelsea Pensioner and was recovering from extensive cancer treatment. Lofty was always a staunch supporter of the AOBA, HOB & the Armourers reunions and will be sadly missed by us all. RIP Lofty.

Roger Traves - AOBA Bereavement Officer

Former SSGT Alan George Smith

Scribe: Keith Bartlett

It is with great sadness that I inform you of the death of Alan Smith on the 24th of February 2017 after a brief illness.

Allan joined the Army Apprentice School at Arborfield in January 1966 and trained to be an Aircraft Technician (A&E), passing out on the 10th of April 1969. He was posted to 70 Aircraft Workshops and it was during this time, on June the 6th 1970, that Alan married his long-time girlfriend, Carole with whom he would enjoy 47 years of happily married life. His next posting was 66s Squadron AAC at Netheravon. However, the majority of Alan's service was in Germany where he served for over 18 years with brief spells in the UK to attend courses. His postings included 71 Aircraft Workshop, 9 Regiment AAC, 4 Regiment AAC and finally the Royal Anglian Regiment in Peterborough, his home town, for his last six months of service before leaving the Corps in May 1995.

Alan also served six tours in Northern Ireland and in Norway. During his service he was awarded a Commendation and the Meritorious Service Medal (MAM). Apart from his trade as an Aircraft Technician, Alan also qualified as a QTO and many will have met him as they were undergoing various driving tests within his units.

There was much more to Alan than as a soldier. He was car mad. Carole said he always had a 'sensible' car and then 'the other one'. I personally remember the Austin Metropolitan that he had at Arborfield and our trips out in it. I am informed his last 'other car' was a Mazda MX5. He was also a keen fisherman, a football fan and he and Carole enjoyed many holidays in their caravan.

On leaving the Army, Alan became a volunteer for SSAFA and also worked as a driver/carer at a day care centre in Peterborough. This was typical of Alan's character to give back something to the Forces and community in which he lived.

Alan was laid to rest at Peterborough Crematorium on the 22nd of March 2017. His family and many friends attended the service, with a large number of former Corps members turning up to show their respect for a good friend and comrade.

Our thoughts are with Carole and the rest of the family. We know he will be sorely missed.

Deaths Notified since last OBAN

Name	Intake	Mem No	DOD
David Spawforth	62C	n/a	10-Jan-17
Arthur Maddock	37H	n/a	19-Mar-17
Ivor James	35H	n/a	13-Feb-17
John Sparks	41	n/a	2016
John (Gunner) Gunstone	65A	892	18-May-17
Eric Gillam	53B	2615	27-Jan-17
William (Bill) T Ward	47A	1650	02-Dec-16
William Arthur Hayden (Bill Foxy) Fowler	58A	n/a	29-Sep-67
Norman Wilson	53B	2471	10-Jun-17
Peter Henry Thomas Styles	39B	1325	17-Feb-17
Malcolm J (Lofty) Tanner	58B	2528	12-Aug-17
Gordon Steel	61B	2446	28-Aug-17

Note:

The entry for William Arthur Hayden Fowler is belated. We have only just heard of his passing

