

ISSUE 7

SPRING - SUMMER 1995

O B A N



ARBORFIELD OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Arborfield Old Boys' Association Newsletter

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ARBORFIELD OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

President - Maj Gen P J G Corp MA, CEng, FIMechE

Vice Presidents - Past Commandants

COMMITTEE

Chairman

Col Mike C Dorward (60A) MBE, MIEE, MIMgt

Vice Chairman

Col Brian G J Hutchins (61B) BSc(Eng), MSc, CEng, MIEE

Honorary Treasurer

Maj (Retd) Peter A'Hearne

Honorary Secretary

Lt Col (Retd) Larry M W Le Var (47A) IEng, MIMechIE, MIMgt, Cert Ed

Assistant Honorary Secretary

Maj (Retd) Mick T Harold (53B)

Members

The Senior Education Officer - Lt Col John W Tustin AGC(ETS)

College Adjutant - Maj John F Lloyd QLR

College RSM - WO1 (RSM) Jeff F Rowell GREN GDS

School of Electronic Engineering - Bill E N Pusey (46A) BA, IEng, FIEIE

School of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering - Peter D Gripton (56B)

School of Aeronautical Engineering - SSgt Bert W Park (82A)

Honorary Membership Secretary and Editor *OBAN* - John F Northam (47A)

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

GENERAL AND REUNION INFORMATION

Honorary Secretary AOBA:

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Isaac Newton Rd
Arborfield Garrison
READING, Berks RG2 9NL
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MEMBERSHIP MATTERS, *OBAN* CONTRIBUTIONS

Membership Secretary AOBA/Editor *OBAN*

**John Northam
51 Aldershot Rd
FLEET, Hants
GU13 9NW
Tel: 01252-614612**

FROM THE EDITOR

Once again, many thanks to all contributors to this Issue No 7 of *OBAN*. Your letters are proving, understandably perhaps, to be extremely popular. We are delighted to have been instrumental through the Newsletter in putting old friends back in touch after many years.

However, as Membership Secretary, I am concerned that too many members are being removed from the mailing list through non-payment of their £5 annual administration subscription introduced at the 1993 AGM. Figures for 1994 show that of an active membership, then of 533, only 395 (74%) paid their annual subscription. So we *started* 1995 with this reduced total of 395. Since then 18 new members have increased that figure to 413.

Unfortunately only 224 (54%) so far have paid for 1995 reducing our mailing list still further - a disturbing trend which, if it were to continue, would reduce the list to 0 in 2 years! Concern about this situation is such that a small working group is being set up later in the year to examine all possible methods of payment of subs and a report on their findings and recommendations will be presented at the 1995 AGM.

**If you have any constructive comments on the subject please send them to me
at 51 Aldershot Road, FLEET, GU13 9NW.**

Thanks also to the anonymous member who placed an ad for the AOBA with Teletext recently - he might like to know that, as a result, we gained 6 new members.

Well done!!

Special Request To All Members

In order to give the Association wider publicity and hopefully to increase membership, members are asked to consider placing an advertisement in their local newspaper, highlighting the existence of the AOBA and inviting any 'detached' ex-boys to contact me for more information.

Have an enjoyable summer.

John Northam

SPECIAL APPEAL

Can You Help?

Princess Marina College has recently formed its own Clay Pigeon Club and Golf Club (a 9 hole golf course within Rowcroft Lines is anticipated). If you have any suitable golf equipment or shotguns for which you have no further use, please consider donating them to the College for use by the apprentices.

All offers should be made directly to :

PRI
Princess Marina College
Arborfield
READING RG2 9NJ

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

In my last article I said that "the year ahead promises to be extremely busy". At that stage I had no inkling as to just how busy it would be!

The REME Training Organization is underfunded to the tune of several million pounds and as a consequence a number of scoping studies are underway to identify substantial savings. As part of this exercise, I was tasked to identify the savings to be accrued from conducting the trade training for apprentices in the adult schools.

My study is now complete and I regret to inform you that the measure has been accepted by DGES(A). Naturally I made great play in my report of the value of the "apprentice factor" and included irrefutable evidence to prove that the aim of the College "to produce the future SNCOs and Warrant Officers of the Corps" had been consistently met over 50 years.

Nevertheless the following factors all mitigated against us:

- a. REME had to balance its books and the potential savings of £3.4 million per year, plus considerable savings in training time were irresistible.
- b. As a result of Drawdown there is spare capacity in the adult training schools and duplication of facilities is no longer sustainable.
- c. The Government initiative on "The Modern Apprenticeship" means that the adult schools can offer an apprenticeship in their own right.
- d. The Royal Engineers had already adopted this way forward and the Royal Signals will be forced to follow.

My objective, therefore, is to preserve the essential elements of the current apprenticeship and to ensure that the revised course will stand scrutiny when any future cuts are contemplated. The new concept, effective May '96, is a two term course at Princess Marina College followed by trade training at SEAE or SEME. It will comprise one term of Common Military Syllabus (Recruits) followed by one term of Common Core Skills. This will include the leadership training, character building and education which have stood us in such good stead over the years.

I do not attempt to pretend that a 2 term course can ever be a satisfactory substitute for the 2 year apprenticeship and this is recognised by our hierarchy. But, we have no choice in the matter, so now all my efforts must go into ensuring that future generations of apprentices are still taught those essential ingredients which we all recognise shaped our careers and provided the foundations for our success.

To have been in post for only 6 months and now find myself instrumental in overseeing such a fundamental change to the way in which we deliver our apprenticeship, gives me no pleasure at all. The only consolation I can offer is that twice the Army Board have considered dispensing with apprentices altogether and twice we have succeeded in having the measure rejected.

However, the pressure to change is overwhelming and if we had tried to persevere with the current courses we were in great danger of losing our most valuable asset altogether - the apprentice. The revised course at least gives us the opportunity to preserve the apprentice ethos, albeit in a much reduced and modified form.

A Ministerial submission has now been presented and we await a formal decision from the Secretary of State for Defence.

Col Mike Dorward

BRITISH SERVICES X BOYS ASSOCIATION (BSXBA)

Report on the Taupo Weekend

This extract from the report of their first reunion & AGM was sent to us by Denis Goldfinch (Chep 43B), Secretary of the newly formed BSXBA (NZ). - Ed

It all seems so far away now, but during the weekend it seemed to us it was all go. During Friday the 7th October 1994, we arrived at intervals and by 1930 hrs in the evening most had arrived at the Tui Oaks Motor Inn who were staying in-house. Situated on the edge of Lake Taupo, thanks must go to the local members who selected the venue, it was an excellent choice, as we are sure all those who attended will agree.

Friday evening gave us all the opportunity to meet one another. We were joined by members staying at the Army Holiday Units in Acacia Bay also on the lake, and those who lived locally in Taupo and nearby.

Some of us were strangers when we arrived but within an hour everyone had circulated and we were all friends. Having the ladies with us made the evening, whether they believed all the tall tales or not, and that happy session set the tone for the rest of the weekend.

Saturday arrived all too soon for some, but the day started with a very pleasant surprise - a phone call from John Northam, the Secretary of the AOBA, to officially wish us well from the AOBA who were holding their annual reunion the same weekend. He had had some problem tracking us down, but finally located us by phoning Ianto Metcalfe in Taumaranui - the ex-boy spirit is alive and well!

The AGM was conducted informally in true Kiwi tradition and a fairly extensive agenda disposed of in just under 3 hours. Most of this time was given over to reviewing the Constitution and Rules, we did however resolve all the points on the agenda to our satisfaction.

On Saturday evening 38 members and partners sat down for an excellent dinner and several hours of enjoyable socialising. The only complaint any of us would have, was that the time passed too quickly for us to circulate round everyone as well as we would have liked, but we look forward to many more dinners such as this.

Sunday morning saw most of us get down for breakfast, after which fond farewells and a promise to meet again next year at Mt Maunganui.

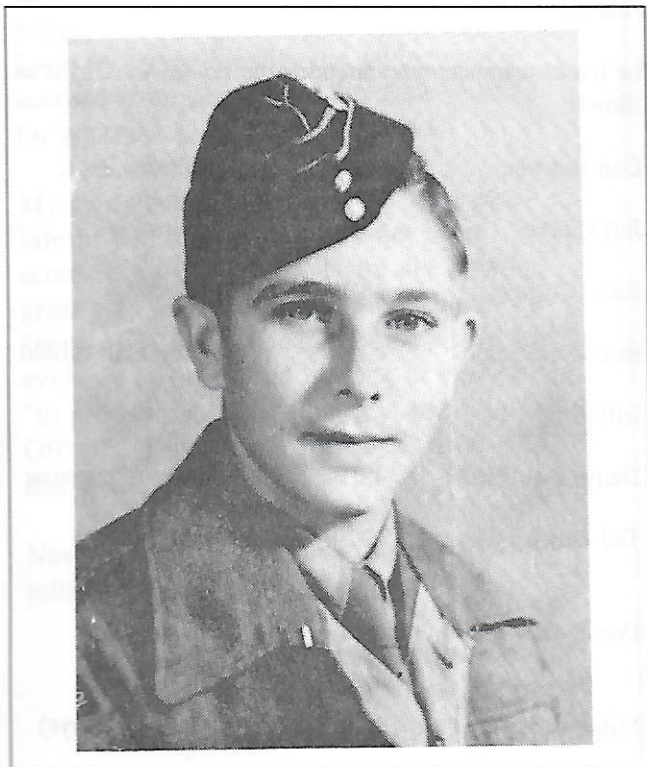
The list of members who attended the BSXBA AGM is as follows:

Dan Bowyer	1964	Junior Trades Regt.
Jeff Clarke	53B	ASS Chepstow
Keith Collier	48B	AAS Chepstow
Eric Corscadden	42A	ATS (Boys) Arborfield
Bill Eden	62A	AAS Chepstow
Denys Goldfinch	43B	ATS (Boys) Chepstow
Ted Green	1929	Duke of York RM School
Don Irwin	60A	AAS Harrogate & Chepstow
Mike Kinshott	1938	Jersey & ATS (Boys) Arborfield
Dan Lambert	44	ATS (Boys) Chepstow & Arborfield
Bill Lloyd	42A	ATS (Boys) Chepstow
Bert Packer	1935	Mil Col Sc Woolwich
Ted Pritchard	1944	Boys Battery RA
Andrew Rackstraw	55A	AAS Arborfield
Dan Rennie	53B	AAS Arborfield
Ken Salmon	44B	ATS (Boys) Arborfield
Harry Sebborn	45A	ATS (Boys) Arborfield
Mike Stevens	58B	AAS Arborfield
Bill Tiller	1938	Mil Col Sc Woolwich
Geoff Trow	55B	AAS Chepstow

PERSONALITY SLOT

Don Walker (45A)

This is me taken a few months after joining the School in February 1945



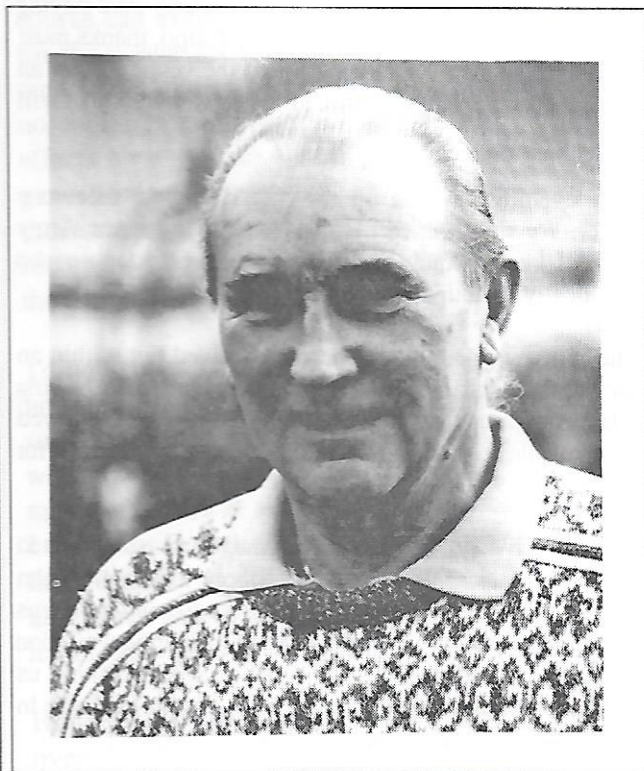
Leaving the School in 1948, several of us marched up the road to complete a regular REME craftsman's course and after one short posting to Brackley was on my way to East Africa with several other Old Boys on HM Troopship *Empire Ken*. My posting to the 1st Battalion The Kings African Rifles in Zomba and then Lusaka for 3 years, I feel, was the highlight of my service life.

A spell at FVRDE at Chobham from 1952 to 1954 followed and then I was off to the Canal Zone, Egypt, with 44 Tank Transporter Company LAD. One year later up to Barce, Cyrenaica, still 44 Tank Transporter Company LAD.

Next was a spell in BAOR from 1957 to 1958 and then back to the UK with SEME until 1960.

In 1960 I was off to Malaya with Command Workshops at Kuala Lumpur and a spell at Station Workshops Ipoh, arriving back in UK en route to BAOR again in 1963.

1964 saw me back in the UK as an instructor at SEME for 4 years and my final 2 years in the service was spent down in sunny Dorset as WO i/c the REME Workshop at the School of Petroleum RAOC, leaving the service in 1970.



I took early retirement in 1990 and the photograph above is recent. I am now enjoying life with my wife in the forest in East Anglia playing bowls, doing voluntary work and DIY.

ZOMBA OR BUST (Or Could Thomas Cook Better This?) By Don Walker (45A)

A few months after leaving the School in 1948 I had an overseas posting to East Africa. East Africa to me, and no doubt many others like me at the time, was a place marked on the map like Kenya, coloured pink to denote it was 'one of ours', and a long way from the UK, especially by ship.

Off to REME Depot for kitting out and the extra course of injections against all known forms of illness from Yellow Fever to Typhoid and Malaria - remember? The arms were sore and you could hardly move them or want anyone to knock them and the actual diseases that they were meant to protect you against seemed to invade your body making you wonder what dreaded fate awaited you if you actually caught any of them!

As soon as the effects wore off and you were feeling in the land of the living again all these thoughts vanished and soon I found myself on draft DLPLA boarding HM Troopship *Empire Ken* at Southampton. The journey to Mombasa had its moments (but that is another story) and we arrived feeling fit and well in January 1949 and then into transit. (I was always convinced that they did not know what they were going to do with you until you were actually there in person!)

Eventually, we were marched into the Admin Officer one at a time and given postings.

I remember this day very well even after all these years as some came out saying things like "Command Workshops, Nairobi" and the like which the 'old sweats', waiting to go home, swiftly translated into the direction of Mombasa, days travelling, town or bush, nightlife and women!

That was until I emerged from the office and was asked where I was going. "Zomba", I said, waiting for someone to pipe up with remarks like "It's good there - not too far to go" etc., but my faith in the ones who had their knees brown, waiting to go home, was shattered in an instance. "Zomba?" they all said, "never heard of it!"

"It's the 1st Battalion Kings African Rifles", I said knowingly.

"I know where the 2nd Battalion is", said one. Some of the others ventured locations of various other units, but 1st Battalion KAR and Zomba were not forthcoming.

After a few days 'resting' on Nyali beach in transit (where people now pay a fortune to go for a couple of weeks) I was put on the Mombasa to Nairobi train and once again in transit waiting to go to Zomba. I enquired at the Orderly Room as to when I would be going to Zomba and where was it, but they just said that it was being arranged and I would be told in due course. Was there such a place, I wondered?

One morning, strolling down for NAAFI break I was stopped by the Orderly Room runner who said I was wanted urgently (this after being there for 10 days).

The Orderly Room Sgt told me that I was off to Zomba immediately and to go and fetch my kit and report to the vehicle park. This I did and was met by the QM who confirmed that I was off to Zomba and would be travelling on the waiting civilian convoy. I asked how long it would take and was told only a few days - my 'compo' rations were on the vehicle and to get on and go.

So, armed with rations and a movement order, very little money and no idea where I was heading, I set out from Nairobi transit camp to Zomba on board a 7-ton FIAT truck in a convoy of 10 other similar trucks, belonging to the BEHANI brothers.

Once on the move I tried to talk to the driver, asking irrelevant questions like, "Where is Zomba?" and "How long will it take to get there?" etc. I thought being the driver he would know. All attempts at conversation failed as the driver managed to convey that he was not much good at English - no good would be more apt - and he spoke mainly Arabic or the like, as I later found out that he was from Somalia.

He quickly discovered that my gift for understanding languages other than English was non-existent and so we drove out west of Nairobi trying desperately to communicate in sign language.

I must admit that relations improved as time went on... and on... and on.

As we drove along the hot and very dusty roads I couldn't help feeling that here I was sitting in the cab of some old lorry with people I couldn't converse with and somehow have to make the best of what the Army had thrown at me. In the rush to get on the convoy I had failed to ask if there was a camp stove, dixie etc., to make tea and meals of some sort. I resolved to look when we made our first stop.

At midday we stopped briefly and I clambered out onto the back of the truck and as I suspected, there were boxes of compo but no cooking kit.

There also appeared to be a lot of boxes and I quickly surmised that I was in for a long trip to wherever Zomba was.

It was late afternoon on this first day when there appeared to be a lot of activity with the drivers blowing their truck horns and waving at what looked to be, through the dust, a very large car overtaking the convoy.

Not long after that we all parked up at the side of the road with the drivers chattering noisily to each other. I was glad to get out and stretch my legs and have a drink. A thin young man walked down the convoy greeting the drivers and approached me to say "I am Mohammed Behani and I will be looking after the convoy to Zomba". He said that he was sorry that he couldn't have been with us from the start but hoped I managed OK until now. I was not to worry about cooking or anything else and that every time we stopped I was to come to his truck for tea and meals.

I quickly asked where Zomba was and how long it would take to get there (after all, I reasoned, as he was in charge he must know these simple things!) He replied that if all went to plan we should reach Zomba in less than 3 weeks as it was in Nyasaland.

Although I considered myself to be not bad at geography, my mind was certainly blank on the location of Nyasaland and I most definitely did not have a copy of the African A-Z if, indeed, there was such a thing. This I told Mohammed Bihani and he thoughtfully provided me with a tattered map to trace our route through Central Africa. It was the start of a very long but pleasant friendship for the next 3 weeks.

Our route took us from Nairobi to Arusha, up and over the mountain range to Dodama. There were magnificent views going up and down the escarpments, but it was also a little disconcerting especially going down, as with heavy loads the brakes were, to say the least, not 100 per cent efficient. But suffice it to say that every truck made it to Dodama.

That was when the Police took a hand in matters and ordered all the trucks to be tested and repairs carried out which necessitated a stop of 2 days at Dodama and was it hot!

Mohammed Bihani decided that it was not my fault that they had had to stop and put me in an hotel for the two nights. It barely made 1-star rating, if any, but it provided a bed, an overhead fan, meals and beer which I exploited to the full, not venturing far for the 2 days.

Once more we were on the road, brakes more efficient, the drivers refreshed, yours truly resigned once more to take in the scenery and sleep in the truck's cab at nights.

The arrangement with Mohammed Bihani of having my meals with him worked well and I became accustomed to eating spicy food with rice and plenty of fresh fruit. We ate mostly squatting on our haunches, a position I soon got into the habit of, but found it increasingly difficult to cope with the extra pounds beginning to settle around my middle!!

My money had run out, but Mohammed gladly kept me in beer and cigarettes for the rest of the journey from his seemingly never ending supply.

From Dodama we went through Iringa and Mbeya and left Tanyanika into Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) going through Isoka, Chilonga and Kapiri Mposhi and into Lusaka.

At Lusaka Garrison, where the convoy laid up to deliver supplies, I was taken to the ORs' Mess for a shower and a meal.

After all the days travelling from Nairobi, wearing only shorts for most of the day time, I had taken on a distinctly bronzed appearance, a fact more pronounced when compared with the white midriff - and the tan did not wash off with showering!

Two days of luxury soon came to an end and we continued on our way, this time I had an infantry CSM for company who had in fact come out on the same ship as me but had flown down and I think envied me my journey by road.

The final leg of the trip took me through Fort Jackson, Blantyre and so to Zomba.

On reporting in at Zomba, the CO said that if he had known I was on the convoy I could have stayed in Lusaka as the 1st Battalion KAR was due to move there in a month's time and I was on the advance party!

In all, the journey took 27 days, an experience not to be missed. Could Thomas Cook or any other travel firm have done any better, I wonder?

I did fly up to Nairobi a couple more times to bring back new vehicles by road to Lusaka, but it never compared to that first time magic into the unknown with Behani. It was an experience I will never forget and all at the Army's expense.

DISAPPOINTMENT AT THE REUNION

By
Mike Wells (49A)

I was disappointed at the Old Boys'Reunion. Since I had exited those controversial gates after 3 years with 49A for self-imposed exile with the 'donkey walloppers' in what seems to be a century ago, I had sustained no contact with the College. My sole alternate-year visits to Arborfield garrison, and those in only recent years, had been bound up with my involvement in Services rugby.

Having dwelt in outer space for over 40 years, and prodded by REME RFC, I finally decided to enrol for the membership and the annual bash, not necessarily in that order I may add. I miraculously had a rush of nostalgia to the brain in anticipating my return to the dear hallowed ground.

Yes, I realised that the Alma Mater would be changed - modern designer accommodation, tiled ablutions and flower beds, ornamental ponds, sculptured lawns and all that, as befits the newer, caring and enlightened army.

But although foreseeably 'spiderless', still surely that sacred parade ground and the long-remembered barracks geography that had been coming back to me so vividly since my registration.

I spent the last fortnight on a blissful mental high of recollection. Names, faces, events, which had been dormant for ages sprang to vivid life again.

But when I arrived at Arborfield I couldn't even find the road past the camp gates, the road so achingly trudged all those long years ago after missing last buses from Reading.

Finally, I found in the evening gloom just those remembered gates, but in spectral isolation. Nothing else! Another illusion turned to dust. Such bitterness could only be assuaged by drink, and here things began to take on the glimmerings of hope. Incredibly, the first person I met when battering at the locked door of the Sergeants Mess, trying to overcome the remorse, was my old 49A chum Bernie Shrubsole. I noticed with satisfaction that it was not only my own carrot top which had turned to 'salt and pepper', but we were 17 year olds again, we had a quiet pint and then several noisy ones, and ENDEX came around 0200.

Well, that's it chaps. I will now come clean, forced to admit, dammit, that the Reunion was absolutely great.

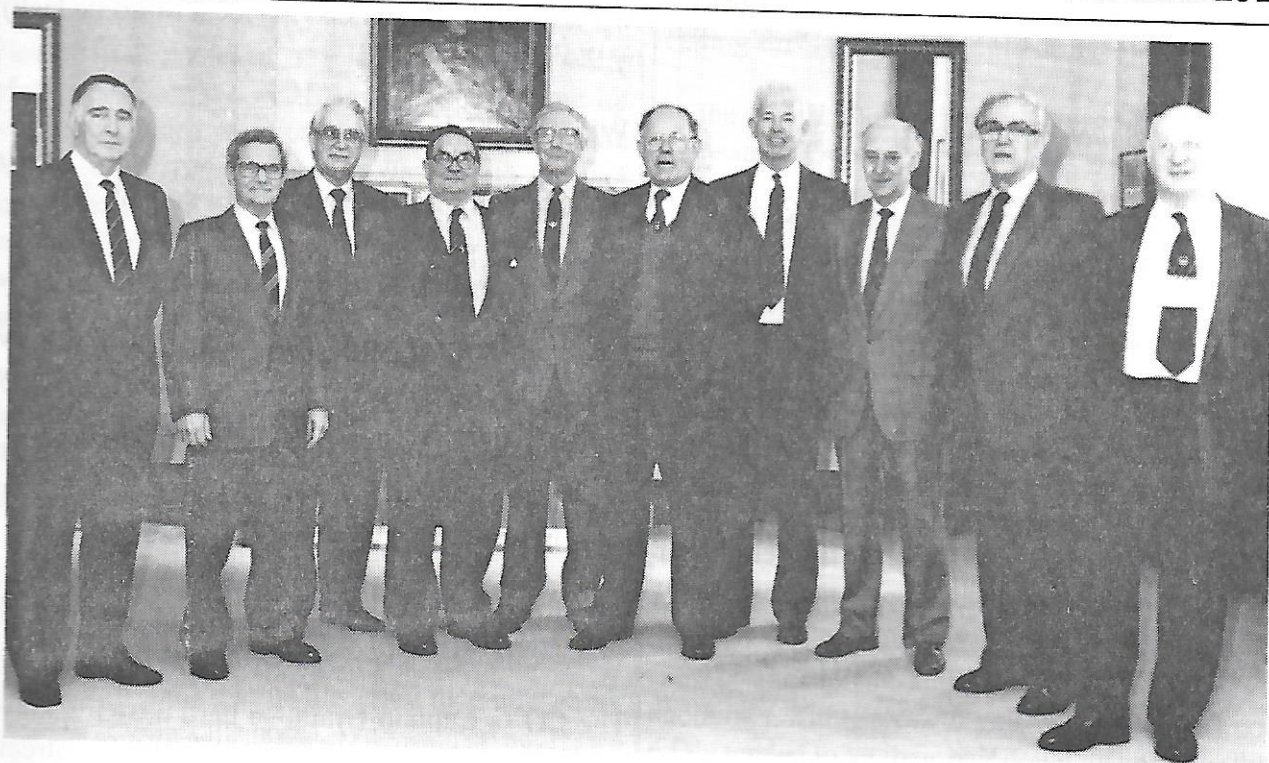
Alright, I admit that some of the social details remain somewhat hazy, but I remember all the important bits (?), and I wouldn't have missed it for worlds, even the cookhouse bacon. Yes, I'm forced to admit I cannot find anything else to complain about on the Weekend - well apart from some terrier yelping 'Lef-Rah, Lef-Rah' outside the dorm around 0600, and strange northern music at a like hour, and

which curiously seemed the constant theme of the weekend. But, sitting at dinner next to a certain onetime A/Cpl Curly Hoare, who I had unfairly remembered with some dark 'jeep' thoughts, and quickly realising that he was a friendly human being after all! And making new friends too. Bellowing out 'The Reds', word perfect as if the boxing matches against Chepstow and Halton were yesterday.

And then, in the very last act would you believe, lunch at the new Rowcroft Sergeants Mess. Return to the hallowed ground after all. Just a bunch of the 'old f---ts' (sorry - Coldstream language), joyous at being let into school. Wandering the well remembered square - saturday afternoon rodeos eh? Excitedly pointing out where their block had been, the much loved cookhouse 'wash-rinse-sterilise', the stores, the cabbage patch. No matter that cars were parked on THE SQUARE, also disfigured by empty coke tinnies! Shades of McNally, Brady, Weston and all! Photos taken to be much thumbbed.

We ambled slowly to the Mess, as walking wounded do, stopping momentarily for a defiant puff of the cigarette as we halted on the main camp road, in eyeshot of the ghostly guardroom. Bliss after all. And we should be back HERE next year. I might even forget the rugby knee and even parade. And 'her indoors' remarks "I expect that means you'll be going next year."

ARBORFIELD EX-APPRENTICES 50TH ANNIVERSARY



Denzil Keep John Dewar George Oliver Dave Richards John Venn Eddie Broomfield Doug Kew Eric Brown Stan Rycroft Keith Evans

As a result of a conversation between two members of Intake 45A (21 February 1945) at the last AOBA Reunion in October 1994, there was a proposal to hold an informal 'get together' of ex-apprentices living in the Arborfield area, on the 50th Anniversary of joining the College.

In January 1995, Eddie Broomfield of Malvern, who suggested the reunion, contacted Keith Evans, who is still working (just!) in the College, with SERCO, to make the necessary arrangements.

A total of 18 persons attended, meeting at Hazebrouck Officers' Mess at 1030 hrs for coffee; group photograph by Dave Ross, the Corps Photographer at 1100 hrs; a visit to the D-Day Display in the REME Museum; the Photographic Display (of past apprentices); a special lunch at 1300 hrs, with some of the guests still at the table at 1500 hrs.

Conversation was mainly about the three years spent at (as it was called in those days) the Army Technical School. Surprisingly, one of the ex-apprentices present remarked that the three years spent at the College were the worst three years of his life. He was always hungry, always scared and bullied - no separate Junior Company in those days.

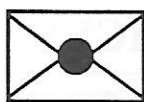
Meals in the cookhouse in those days, seated at tables of twelve, two senior boys at the top of table, who would dish the food out. Steamed pudding would arrive in a 12" square tin, the two senior boys would cut it in half, one half was split in two for the two senior boys, the other half was cut into ten pieces for the rest of the table. The custard (yellow water) was in an aluminium jug and if you were seated at the end of the table you were lucky to get a teaspoonful.

The bad memories tend to recede with advancing years and all the good memories of service at the College and the years afterwards in REME were mainly mentioned.

Of the ten Old Boys, two were unaccompanied - Stan Rycroft of Pangbourne, still with the School of Equipment Support (Army) and Eric Brown from Wokingham.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable day, with the likelihood of it becoming an annual affair. In the meantime it is hoped that as many as possible of 45A intake will attend the AOBA Reunion on 7 October this year.

YOUR LETTERS



 Doug Boucher (43A) writes

Many thanks for a superb newsletter. I know how much work goes into publishing such a document, being involved in one myself. It was a joy to receive and will bring a lot of pleasure.

I see the boy RSM saga goes on. I always thought Dave Ratter (Apr 43 Armourer) was the first and do not remember Bing Lakes as RSM. Dave Ratter, I believe, was killed in a shooting accident in Kenya very early in his career. If I remember rightly, when we arrived in Apr 43 the senior boy rank was Titch Lee, (Mar 41 Armourer) and he was a Staff Sergeant.

(Harry Peer's letter and extracts from the Arborfield Apprentice of the day would seem to finally close the discussion on who was the first AT RSM putting PM O'Callaghan in pole position - unless of course, you know different! - Ed.)

 Brian Sullivan (Hilsea 36) writes

Many congratulations and thanks for a memorable Reunion Weekend. A fine body of men were on Parade!

Reference Dudley Martin's letter (OBAN 6), 'the Inspecting Officer remarked'. On spotting my name tag he remarked, "Good God, 1936!"

If I may recount an incident about 'boys'...

Titch Travaskis and I were posted out in Oct 39 to a territorial Wksp Company in Ladybank, Scotland. They were Glasgow Terriers and we could not understand a word they said... but there we were, 2 Regulars (17¹/₂ years of age). We taught them how to 'bone' their boots, buff their brasses etc., and stood our turn on 'sentry go'.

The RSM came up to us one day and said 'You two will be back in billets (the local Masonic Hall) by 9 o'clock at night.'

'Why Sir?'

'You are still officially boys until you are 18!'

NOT ON!

The next day Titch and I requested an interview with the CO. We paraded outside the Orderly Room at 11 am 'bulled up' - brasses gleaming and boots immaculate. In we were marched, giving an exhibition of foot stamping that would have put the Guards to shame.

The RSM called our names and we answered correctly, 'Sir!'

The CO (a Captain Grant - a hard nosed 'canny' Scot who ran his own garage in 'civvy' street) looked at us and said, 'What do you two want?'

We replied in one voice 'a bottle of milk a day, Sir!' He almost fell out of his chair, but managed to splutter, 'What?'

'Yes Sir, as 'boys' which the RSM insists we are, we are entitled to a bottle of milk a day!' His reply was that he would have to consider it. Next day we were told by the RSM that there would be no milk, but our privileges would be the same as the rest of the Company.

YOU DON'T MESS WITH EX-BOYS!

Incidentally, in months I was posted out to a sub-wksp in the north of Scotland, a sort of Devil's Island, of 3AA Div Wksp. A blessing in disguise it turned out to be as I met a highland lassie and returned in 1946 to marry her.

We still go back to Dingwall to visit her folk and to revive memories at the large garage which served as our workshops. If any Oct 36 Hilsea fitters read this, I promise to reply to all who write to me at 37 Church Crescent, Bassaleg, Newport, Gwent NP1 9NR, Tel. 0633 895583.

✍️ *Charley Leah (57B) writes*

Please find enclosed my application for Life Membership of the AOBA. I have not come up with any excuse as to why I have not joined the AOBA until now. Perhaps it was due to the fact that I settled so close to Arborfield that I have managed to keep my contacts going. As I now work at SEE I have always been 'around' as it were.

I have been urged to join by Brian Glossop many times but the poor excuse is that 'I never got round to it.' However, it would appear that Derek Wheatland has finally 'pricked' my conscience.

Mind you, this is not the first time that Derek has embarrassed me. He occupied the next bed space to me for quite a time. I bumped into him a few years ago to find that he has got a nice new shiny head! (it matches his nose). We swapped addresses but we are still waiting for the other to write, which is more the pity, of course.

I was absolutely riveted by the Newsletter (*OBAN 6*), especially when I read the contributions from Scouse Gipton and George Fleetwood, who were both slightly senior to me, but with whom I was quite friendly, the more so with Scouse.

I thought it very coincidental that you should have two contributions from the same Div in the same Issue and more suprisingly their stories matched, so that the passage of time had not led to too much embroidery. I immediately sat down and wrote my memories of that era and 7 pages later, and only halfway through, I suddenly realised that you probably did not want to read my meanderings and started the letter again.

If you want me to forward my interpretation of the scene at the time I will gladly do so. I suspect that it might be 'old hat' following Scouse's and George's accounts though. I must admit that I can relate to some humorous and hairy incidents in the late '50s period too, although the same names crop up time and time again.

If it is possible (and prudent) I would like to obtain Scouse's address etc. Perhaps, Scouse, if you are reading this letter you would oblige.

By the way, I doubt whether George Fleetwood is the same George Fleetwood who served at Delmenhorst in 58/59. As George was 56B he would not have passed out until 1959. As I believe he was a VM he would have left Arborfield as a Craftsman. I believe also that some AT Sgts and above were granted LCpl stripes after 12 months, so I think our George is outside the time parameters of 58/59.

(Would the real George Fleetwood please stand up! - Ed)

As Fred Silver seems to be the flavour of the month, I would like to add to George Fleetwood's (56B) anecdotes and Dave Fisher's (49B) encounter with Fred. As you will probably know 6 Div tended to let their hair down just prior to their passing out parade. Following many old debt settling incidents, such as the Boy RSM Jock Massey 'bed telescoping' episode, the system decided to introduce some control on these activities. So from about 57A Div onwards organised 'Farewell Dos' with permanent staff invited as minders were the order of the day.

I seem to remember that when Fred attended our 'do' he was not a happy man. For some reason he decided to confide in me as to why he was in his cups. It transpired that Fred was posted when he really wanted to stay at the School to see out the rest of his service.

I believe Fred was in the Royal Artillery and the outlook for the future was pretty dismal. It would appear that Fred was really only a Substantive Lance Bombardier, acting Bombardier and a local, acting unpaid (and now seemingly unwanted) Sgt.

If my memory serves me correctly, he was going back down to Lance Bombardier and was to be put in charge of a rather large yard full of coal and coke along with copious amounts of whitewash to make it look nice - such is life.

However, Fred Silvers is part of the folklore of the Apprentice School history, and I am sad to hear of his passing, regardless of what we thought of him at the time. I know that ex-apprentices will probably remember far more readily than myself, such was his renown. One last thing. I remember as a boy reading a book about the AAS called 'Captain Cat'. Is this a book well known to the Archives?

Does anyone else recall 'Captain Cat'? - Ed

✍ *Harry Peers(44A) writes*

Thank you for the Autumn 1994 copy of the *OBAN* which has once again outclassed all previous editions. Please extend my congratulations to all concerned. As you may recall I joined the Association earlier this year, the late awareness of the AOB being due to having spent most of my business life in West Germany. I must also admit to having a memory like a sieve, but nevertheless feel that I would like to contribute some comments to include in the Spring/Summer 1995 issue of the Newsletter.

Reference Peter Coleman's (43A) letter in the Autumn 1994 Issue regarding the first boy RSM at Arborfield. Please refer to pages 136 and 145 of the Arborfield Apprentice Vol 1 No. 3 dated December 1946, extracts of which now follow.

Page 136: '.....With the departure of the Passing-Out Class in November we lost many of our esteemed members.....' This page also gives us the opportunity on congratulating SSgt Lakes on collecting his intakes Regimental Efficiency Prize.....: and S/M O'Callaghan on receiving an autographed photograph personally presented by the Field Marshal.'

Page 145: 'After presenting the prizes, Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery said that he wanted to give to the head boy of the School a special prize to mark the occasion.

He thought the most suitable thing he could give would be a signed photograph of himself, and this he gave to Apprentice Sgt - Major P M O'Callaghan.' As I previously said, I have a memory like a sieve and do not remember actual dates, but the evidence seems to point out that PM O'Callaghan was the first boy RSM and Gordon Lakes a boy SSgt.

Reference Tom Pearce's (Feb 44) article '50 Years On' in the Autumn 1994 Issue of *OBAN*. Tom has a remarkable memory in recalling so much of the Lowercroft camp at Bury, Lancs. Perhaps he can also remember the Bury School song which as far as I can tell went as follows:

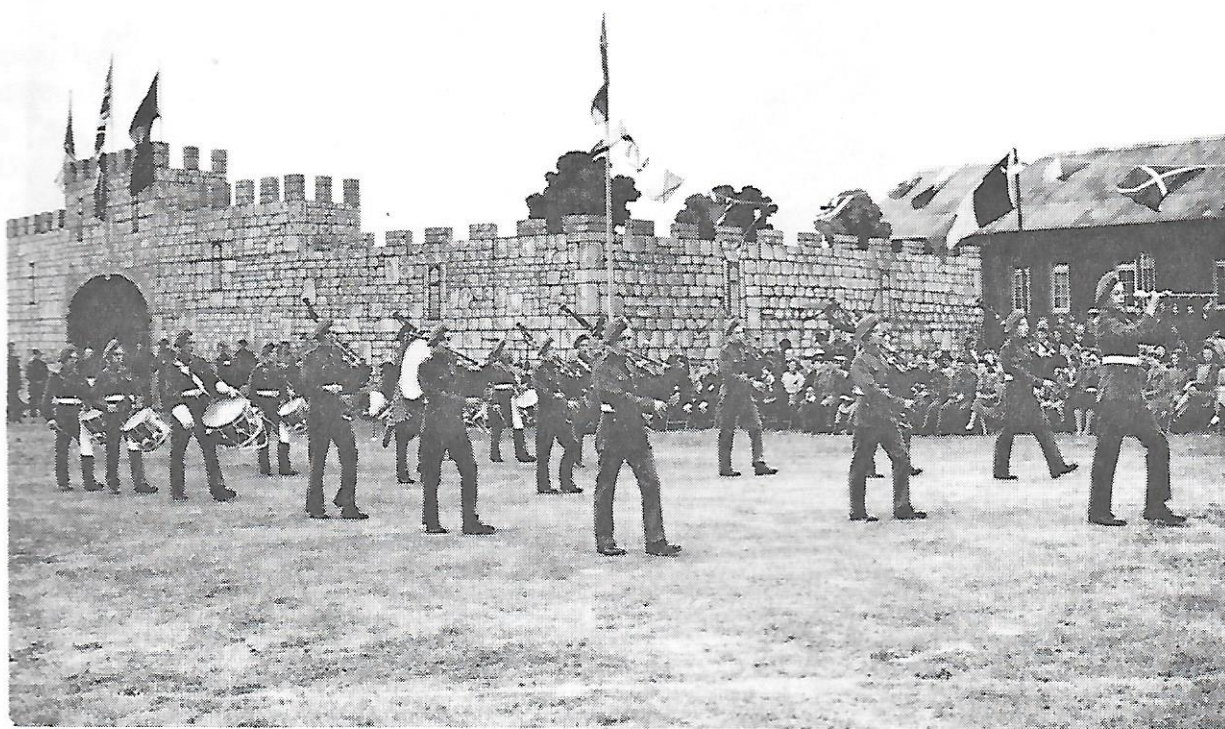
We are some of the boys
We are some of the Bury Boys
We spend all our tanners
We mend all our manners
We are detested (?) wherever we go
When we go marching down the avenue
doors and windows open wide.
All the lads and lassies cry
'the Bury boys are passing by
bring all your cats (?) inside'.

The accompanying photos, shown in the pages that follow, were taken on the hockey field, I think, outside the gymnasium/camp hall during the Open Day in September 1945. Should any member like a print, please advise. GH PEERS, 3 Ridge Way, Cromer, Norfolk NR7 0HS, Tel 0263 513236

✍ *Charley Ayre (50B) writes*

Issue 6 of the *OBAN* is most interesting and although I was unable to attend the Reunion I feel I was there after reading it. The update of the College's future and new proposals are very informative and I thank you and all involved with the creation and publication of such an interesting Newsletter.

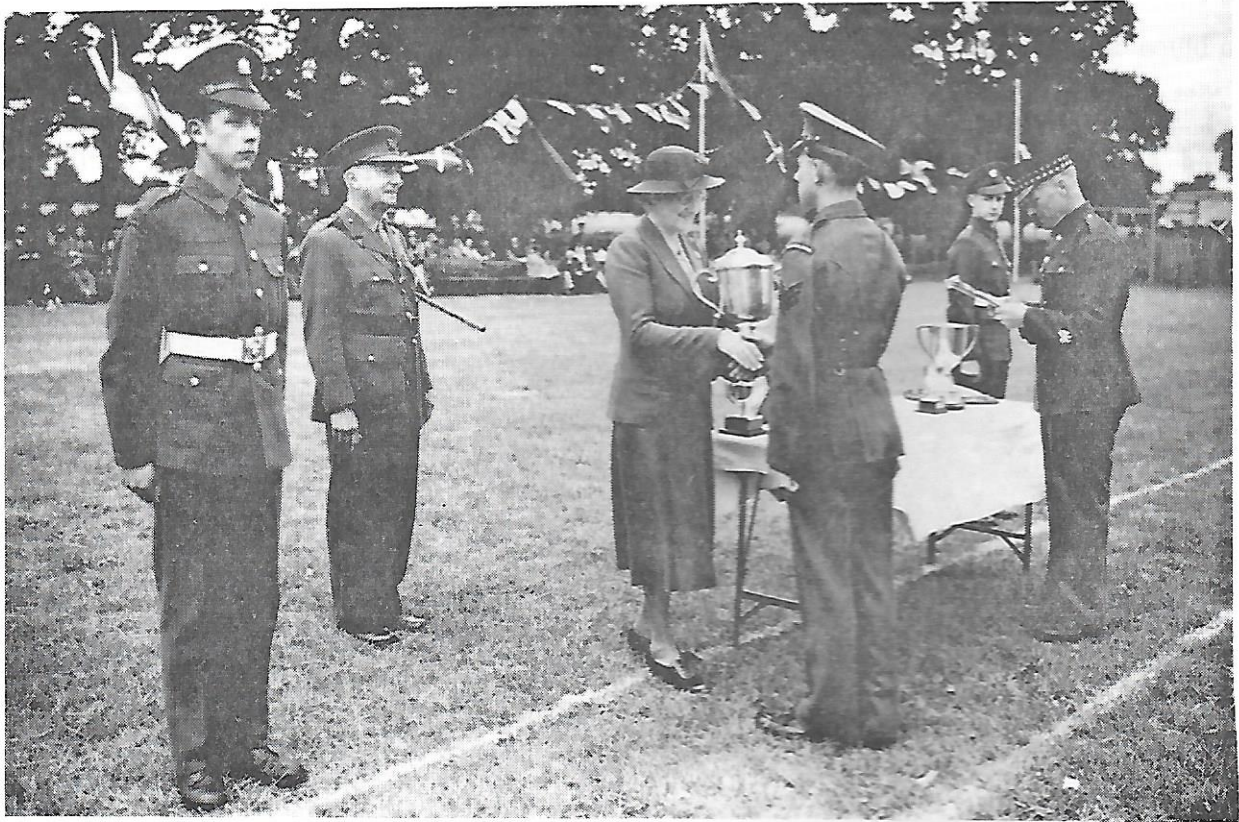
*Thank you for your kind comments Charley,
much appreciated - Ed*



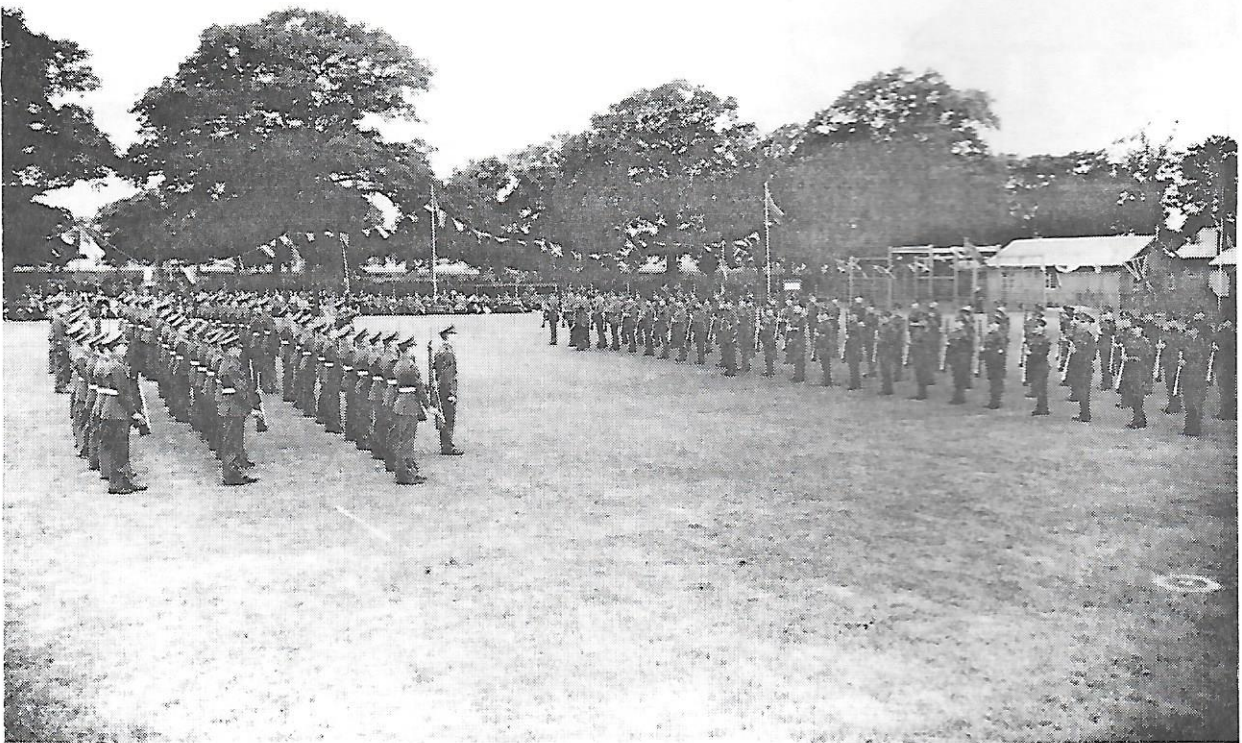
Drum and Pipe Band marching onto the field with a background of mock-up medieval castle walls



Tug of war team (D Company?)



Prize presentation by Mrs White & Col JD White DSO, MC to Dave Ratter? with a good view of RSM McNally



Dress rehearsal for the Passing Out Parade (I believe another first of its kind).

£ John Houghton (56B) writes

I spoke briefly to you (John Northam) concerning the possible inclusion in the next issue (No 7) of the *OBAN* Newsletter of extracts on the ninth AOBA Reunion taken from a report in Vol 4, No 2 of 'The Arborfield Apprentice'.

The few snippets of interest that I have found are:

Under the list stating the Committee for the AOBA for that year is the name, 'AQMS H. Kelly, REME'. This is Bert Kelly who was also at the 1994 Reunion.

The Annual Dance and Buffet was held at 8.0pm, 'Tickets 5s, Wives and Lady Guests free'.

'This year spells the School's virtual coming of age, as the first intake become eligible for their LS&GC Medals.'

'Our members are gradually increasing following the introduction of the greatly reduced Life Membership subscription and it is hoped that the majority of the current Senior Division will follow the lead set by 54A, when nearly all the Apprentices elected to become Life Members.'

Small snippets from yesteryears, say 40, 25 and 10 years ago, taken from documents in the College archives, could become a regular feature. Food for thought?

A good idea, John. We already are thinking along the same lines as you will have seen from Issue 6.

Couldn't help noticing that the report on the ninth OBA Reunion you refer to was written by AQMS Laurence Nixon (42A) who was also Hon Sec at the time - Ed.

£ Brian Atkins (43A) writes from
W.Australia

On reading the letters in the Issue 6 of the *OBAN*, I noted that John Shaw can only remember one Sgt Evans of the South Wales Borderers. I can still remember him very vividly, in that when he was the Orderly Sergeant he used to come round at reveille, beating a dustbin lid with a stick and reciting a parody on a poem.

I will not give it all here, but I am certain that those who knew him would remember the phrases I have omitted. It went like this:

'Wakey, Wakey, rise and shine,
Hands --- -----, feet in socks
Get out of bed you English -----.'

The last time I saw him was when I returned from Tripoli in 1947, and he was the conductor on a bus in London.

Thank you for a wonderful magazine, a lot of work has been put into it and it is a pleasure reading it. Also, it was nice to see that John Dutton was at the Reunion. He joined with me from Bedford in April 1943. Keep up the good work!

Thanks Brian - we'll try - Ed

£ Eric Cook (Jan 42) writes

Many thanks for the Newsletter. It improves with each Issue.

I think that Dudley Martin has made a good point in his letter in *OBAN* 6 about a suitable reminder that subs are due.

I was interested in Tony Ireland's letter and would like to take up the challenge for 'youngest tiffy'. I was promoted Artificer SSgt on Feb 25, 1947 and was born on August 15, 1926. This, I think, makes me 20 years, 6 months and 10 days (or so)!

Now before I hear yells of 'How can this be?' I must remind all, that in those early days of post-war courses Tiffy rank was backdated to the beginning of the course.

However, my course finished in June 1948 so I was still a smidgeon under 22 when I became a fully trained, extremely fit, worldly-wise and very happy Artificer. Happy Days!

Thinking about this, reminded me of my first 'command'. This was a service station in Gilgil some 100 miles plus north of Nairobi. It was manned by a number of rather large Sikh gentlemen who, to me at the time, seemed rather forbidding. My nearest REME buddy was miles away. We were attached to the RAOC Ammo Depot (which is why we were miles from anywhere!).

I made a point of visiting the OC Depot every morning and as we watched the sun come up over the wide expanse of underground bunkers, he would frequently remind me that "there'd be a right old bang if that lot went up!" I was pleased that I had plenty to do to take my mind off that possibility. I was fortunate to be reasonably presentable on the day that GOC East Africa Command's big shiny black Buick Limousine drove in unannounced.

It appeared that his ADC could not fit the flag on the car. My mind immediately flicked rapidly through all the many facets of my training and EMERS (Amended) but alas, could find nothing pertaining to 'little flagpoles.' It didn't take us very long though to realize that all you had to do was unscrew the little brass knob to get the flag on!

*Any more challengers for 'youngest Tiffy'?
(no prizes) - Ed*

✍ *Tony Guy (Apr 43) writes*

I would like to make some comments on some of the letters in *OBAN* Issue 6.

Page 2 '*Fifty Years On*' - Boys from 43A were also at Lowerscroft Camp, I was one of about 40. My recollections of the first AT RSM was Dave Ratter. John Shaw mentions Sgt Taffy Evans, South Wales Borderers - I met him in 1948 in London on a bus, he was the conductor! Bryan Adams asked who used the School in May 1944. From the kit and odd items of clothing found hidden in the walls of the huts, we thought it must have been an infantry battalion as some items had regimental letters on them. Finally, may I say how I very much enjoy the *OBAN* mag.

✍ *Jack Ree (43A) writes*

Can I make a comment on the Boy RSM point raised earlier. I am sure that Dave Ratter was the first to hold that rank. He and I were friends and visited each other's homes when on leave. He lived (his parent's house) in Gravesend and lost touch when we were all spread around the world during our army careers. Dave was an armourer and I heard on the grapevine that he had been killed in a shooting accident. I have no details of that and would be obliged if anyone could tell me what happened

✍ *Doug ('Phil') Phillips (39B) writes*

My main object in writing is to give full credence to those two chaps who so often had us all in fits of laughter, in particular with their hilarious 'ballroom ballet' routine. Where they managed to get their ballerina outfits and those huge balloons from has always been a source of wonder to me. I refer, of course, to the one and only 'YIPPEE SLEE' and his pal 'RON SLATER'. They were the highlights of Company C concerts without a doubt. In passing may I admit to having been one of the 'dancing girls' mentioned by a FAN? in a recent issue. Fancy him remembering us after all this time. While on the subject of the dance, what about the sparkling tap dance routines of Cpl Leather, who was a staff NCO with C Company around the 41-42 era - there was a touch of class for you.

I note that a misprint in the Autumn 94 issue of *OBAN* had me in B Company - with apologies to all in B Company I was only with them on occasions when I managed 'to slip-in' to their Company dances. I always scan the issues of the Newsletter for names and faces from October 39C, barrack room F2, 9 Wing - anyone still around?

✍ *Wally Footner (Oct 39) writes*

I would like to thank all the Committee for another great OBA Weekend and I can say after attending the last 16 Reunions that it was one of the best, except perhaps 1979 in the old Gym, but that is another story which I will try to relate some other time (if I remember all the details!!)

It was suggested in *OBAN* 6 that if possible intakes be allocated accommodation together - which is a good idea, but may I go a little further and suggest 'old uns' be accommodated on the ground floor as most of us find it difficult to climb one or two flights of stairs!

✍ *Ken Jenner (Feb 44) writes*

Reading the letter from Bryan Adams (Oct 42) in *OBAN* 6 has prompted me in sending a cutting from *The Craftsman*, dated July 1993 written by a Maj Ray Job (Retd) who in 1944 was a member of 231 Inf Bde Wksp REME. An extract of the cutting reads:

'...Then about the middle of June (1944) we drove north to the Army Apprentices College, Arborfield, where we did our own maintenance, stores re-stocking, and initial waterproofing etc.

Much of the time was also spent fighting heath fires....'

Perhaps this throws some light on who occupied the School during our absence.

✍ *Alan Pritchard (42C) writes*

In Issue 6 of *OBAN* I note that John Shaw mentioned Sgt Evans, South Wales Borderers.

I was in C Company and remember Taff Evans very well. He was from Swansea and under his cheesecutter was a very red mop of hair. His speciality was the polishing of chin straps. I can recall making a hash of mine and he took over and turned a scruffy piece of leather into a highly polished strap.

When the intake performed badly on the Square he had a nasty habit of slow marching us around the Square. I think our calves suffered more than those in the veal trade.

Others that come to mind as members of the permanent staff in C Company and later D Company were:

Sgt Hunter KOSB - He of the cut away tunic and trows,

Cpl J King RAOC ("My name's Joe King and I ain't joking!")

- another favourite saying of his was,

"I told yer once, I told yer twice, I won't tell yer a bleeding second time!"

This man was to the English language what Atilla the Hun was to European culture.

Other members were:

CSM Herbie Depper - Rifle Brigade

CSM Dutch Holland - Coldstream Guards

Sgt Happy Farron - Royal Norfolks

Capt Ingram - (?)

Capt (Padre) Bowen - One time Welsh rugby international.

I hope all this will be of interest to everyone.

✍️ Chris Fussell (55A) writes

40 years ago to the day, my mum threw dad's breakfast all over him because she didn't want me to leave home that morning to join 55A at Arborfield. Dad was standing there in his best BD, red sash and all, in our married quarter - he was Orderly Sergeant. Always the joker, he said the wrong thing for once. Mum cracked but her aim was good. I ran for the bus. I was 15 years, 2 months and 26 days old - the odd weeks and days seemed important at that age.

As a 'jeep' in HQ Company I was under CSM Brady, Irish Guards. When the squad got the drill really wrong, Sgt Phillips, Royal Welsh Fusiliers, used to pick up gravel from the square and let it trickle through his fingers..... and if that didn't work he took off his beret and jumped on its beautiful white hackle. *Everyone* 'gypped' juniors in the meal queue - try to sneak through and your pint tea mug might get smashed 'by accident'. Never mind, only one thousand ATs in front of you.

I already had an 'O' level from a wonderful Army Children's School in Egypt and, as most of 1 Div Telecommunications Mechanic theory was Maths, I escaped to 2 Div A Company. A nice move for me - but it gave AQMS Whitehorn in the TM workshop problems as I was hamfisted at practical work. All the same, I took Mum home some lop-sided brass cannon and Eiffel towers for her mantelpiece.

CSM 'Hippo' Hippersley, Somerset Light Infantry, sweated to get my drill up to scratch. A very nice fatherly WO2 RAEC (I wish I could remember his name) coached me for AEC1 Map Reading.

Home on leave at Easter for my sister's wedding. Dad was a pre-war soldier - he knew all about setting up SD caps, buckskin belts and how to press SD without an iron. I put all this on to take out Heather from the hairdressers. "Very nice son, don't get any ice-cream down those trousers!" What *did* he mean??

Eventually, after all their efforts, they decided there was no way I would ever make a TM. Colonel Carne GC, Gloucesters (Korea and the Imjin) leaned over the hotplate after the Communion breakfasts one Wednesday morning and told me they were passing me on to Welbeck College. There I was, kicked upstairs and not 16 yet - after 336 days, according to the red discharge book they gave me. This was given to me so that I could sign-on again and keep my original number (23234001), which confused the staff when I joined RMA Sandhurst along with some mere civilians! I cycled past 'Fred's Hotel', shouting "Cheerio Sarge - I've got my ticket". Freddie Silvers shouted back some words I couldn't understand! Since then I spent 8 happy years with the RAOC at Shrivenham, then on to Cyprus, Libya and BAOR. Then came the rude awakening of civilian life with some quite good fun in various TA mobs.

Last November I had a letter from RARO - 'Time's up - you're 55, you must hand in your kit at the nearest unit, *but you can keep your boots and socks* - and thanks'. I make that 39 years, 9 months, 2 days and an early breakfast.

That wonderful military autobiographer, Spike Milligan, once wrote 'memory, leave me alone!' I am quite happy with my memories - all 336 days at the AAS will always be with me. My thanks to J Northam and all the Committee for keeping things going until lax Old Boys like me remember and catch up.

PS: Did I tell you about the night the Fireworks Factory blew up? Another time perhaps.

✍️ Eric Edwards (45A) writes

Although I don't have a series of photographs to make up a 'Personality Slot', I have found a photo of a passing out parade taken by Field Marshall Montgomery - was it 46 or 47? I am third from the right in line with Col White. If anyone recognises themselves or anyone else, could they mention it in the next Issue of OBAN?



'46 Or '47 Passing Out Parade taken by Field Marshal Montgomery

✍ *Pat (lofty) Naylor (42A) writes*

Once again a truly magnificent Newsletter and congratulations for putting it together.

Re: the letter in the Autumn 1994 Newsletter from Tony Ireland on the subject of youngest to reach Tiffy rank SSgt - If you were to accept LASS (Leading Artisan SSgt) I would have to put in a claim having been promoted to SSgt on 14/12/47 at the age of 21 years, 3 months and 27 days. My birth date is 19/08/26.

At the time of promotion to SSgt I was in Rangoon, Burma, after having been seconded to the Burmese Army as an instructor in the repair of Field Instruments from 5 ABW, as they were preparing to leave Burma as independence approached.

It had never occurred to me that I might be the youngest SSgt and I have no doubt you will have many claimants with better credentials.

At the time of my promotion, as far as I can remember, there was no Armament Artificers course overseas and certainly not in Burma and my LASS course was a short cut to SSgt rank. The intention was to take the Armament Artificers course on return to England, but being as I had all the advantages of SSgt rank as I was, I never bothered prior to completing my service in February 1953. The extra 6 months service was due, I believe, to the Suez crisis.

✍ *Norman Dalhousie (43A) writes*

While I was at the School in 1944 my mother sent me a copy of an item which appeared in the Daily Express of the same year, which I quote:

'BOYS MADE SECRET WEAPON FOR INVASION

At a critical period in the war, the Army wanted a new type of fitting for an AA gun. It had to be produced secretly in great numbers, and fast. Part of the order went to a special class of boy technicians in the Army.

They knew they were making something in the 'Top Secret' class. Not until long afterwards did they know that their work was in preparation for the North African landings.

The boys are members of the Army Technical School at Arborfield near Wokingham, Berkshire.'

Maybe some memories would be jogged should you decide to publish it. Otherwise feel free to 'BLR' it!

Bill Kehoe (42A) writes from Greece

Thanks for the Autumn Issue of *OBAN* which has been read and re-read!

I regret I was unable to attend the last Reunion, however, hopefully this year I will be able to make it (God willing). It will be interesting to see how you (the college) have sorted out the move - also if there are any familiar 'landmarks' from my era.

You may recall when I last wrote I had a query regarding Ianto Metcalfe in New Zealand. Well, he was indeed a former comrade and we now have a steady correspondence; just goes to show how the Association (and *OBAN*) can unite former ex-boys.

I must say I find the 'Letters' section really fascinating and amusing; George Head writing from Spain spoke of an AT friendly location suitable for the 'not too energetic' - I think this place would qualify in that category! Incidentally, would that be 'Lofty' Head?

Finally, my best wishes for the continued success of all concerned with *OBAN* and the Association in general.

DONATIONS

The Association acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

DF Patterson (44A):	£5.00
DJB Howes (38B):	£5.00
RJ Callaghan (42A):	£5.00
P Gutteridge (58A):	£10.00
JE Baker (46B)	£2.50
K Warboys (39B)	£5.00
A. Winchester (42A)	£5.00
PW Christie (46A)	£15.00

For the Memorial Garden:

W Tate ((44B):	£15.00
E Edwards (45A):	£10.00
G Lakes (43A)	£45.00
H Liddell (46B)	£25.00
RA Ivens (54A)	£10.00

ARBORFIELD OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Acknowledgements

The Editor wishes to thank the following for their help in the production of this Newsletter and apologises for any errors or omissions.

Word Processing, Sub-editing & Layout

Brian Hornsey (54A)
with additional proof reading & WP by June Northam

All Contributors

Printing

SERC² Printing Dept, SEE Arborfield

ADMINISTRATION SUBSCRIPTION FOR 1996

Gentlemen,

Please note that payment of the Admin Subscription is necessary to ensure that you remain on the active list and continue to receive future *OBANs*, reunion information and Association correspondence. The Admin Subscription must be paid **ANNUALLY** by **31 MARCH**. Your Admin Subscription of £5.00 for 1996 is due before 31 March 1996.

ARBORFIELD OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION Administration Subscription 1996

Cheques should be crossed and made payable to Central Bank, Princess Marina College (OBA Account) and sent to the Membership Secretary.

Membership No. Surname Forenames
Address
Post Code

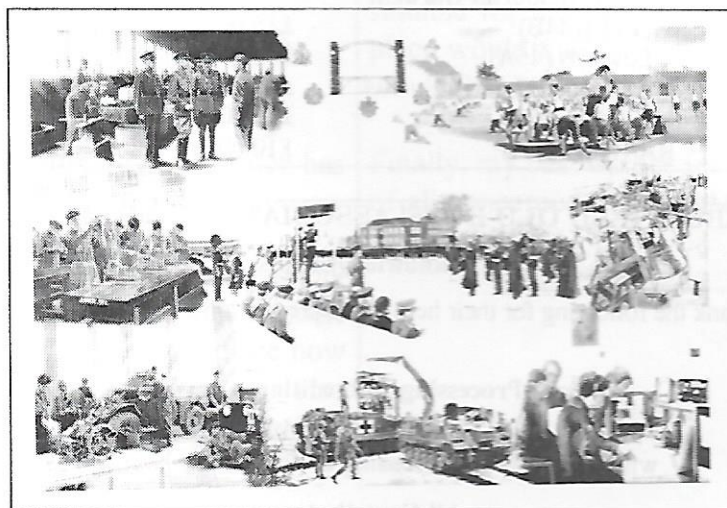
Herewith Admin Subs for £5.00 for the year 1996

COLLEGE ITEMS.

The following item commissioned to commemorate 50 years of apprentice training at Arborfield is available from the PRI Princess Marina College, Arborfield, Reading, Berks RG2 9NJ.

Cheques payable to "PRI Princess Marina College".

Please do NOT make cheques for this item payable to the OBA.



Print measures
28" x 22" @ £6.50
(incl P&P) UK only

Item A. Unframed College Print

ASSOCIATION ITEMS.

The following items may be ordered from the Membership Secretary:

Item 1. "Princess Marina College - A Brief History 1939-1992". This 24-page illustrated A5 booklet is offered FREE to members. However, to cover P&P please send: UK and EEC - 40p; Europe (other than EEC) - 65p; US, CAN, Middle East - £1.55; AUST, NZ - £1.85p.

Item 2. Association Ties. These terylene ties have a single motif incorporating the College Gates in gold with scroll and letters AOBA below. They are available in royal blue, maroon and green (note that green ties are only available while stocks last). Please state colour preference when ordering. Price £5.50 each incl P&P, UK only. Please note that postage on overseas orders will increase as appropriate.

Please make cheques for these items payable to Central Bank Princess Marina College (OBA Account).

THE CRAFTSMAN

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All correspondence should be sent to :

The Editor,
The Craftsman,
Isaac Newton Road,
Arborfield, Reading,
Berkshire, RG2 9LN.

REFLECTIONS OF AN IDLE GUARDSMAN

by Dave Sexstone (59C)

From boy soldier to old soldier in 5 years - This is the story of Dave Sexstone in *Reflections of an Idle Guardsman*.

Dave began his Army career at 16 after time as a boy scout with Baden-Powell as his hero. He joined with youthful enthusiasm, a head full of romantic ideas about seeing the world.....and not much else.

All good stuff, but soon learned there was more to Army life than knowing about knots and knives with spikes to remove stones from horses hooves.

Dave learned fast, like tens of thousands of other youngsters called up for National Service, while he was doing his boy service and three years with the Colours.

It is a story many others have told or would like to tell - but for all that it is an interesting read and will

recall for many their days as young soldiers.

Some of Dave's stories run to just a few lines. Take this one for example:

'In the spring of 1962, my best mate and I plotted to desert. The plan was to go to France, spend a season picking grapes and then join the French Foreign Legion. It seemed like a good idea at the time, but I met a girl and fell in love, and that was the end of that.'

The four letter words which litter the pages are not likely to mar the enjoyment of an entertaining and amusing tale of Army life.

This book is offered at a special discount price of only £6.00 to members of the AOBA.

Book orders to Dave Sexstone, 8 St Catherines Road, Southampton, SO18 1LJ.

OBA BOOKMARK

With permission of the Committee I have had an OBA bookmark specially designed to assist in fund raising and it also provides a useful keepsake. Each bookmark is hand-embroidered in the OBA standard colours with a silk backing (as shown in the picture below) and costs only £2.00 (plus 25p p&p). For each one sold 40p will be paid into the OBA account. I have a small stock but as they are hand-made, delivery will take 5-6 weeks depending upon demand. Cash with order please to me, not the OBA: Don Walker, 2 St Anthony's Way, BRANDON, Suffolk, IP27 0DN. Please telephone me on 0842 812633 if there are any queries.

