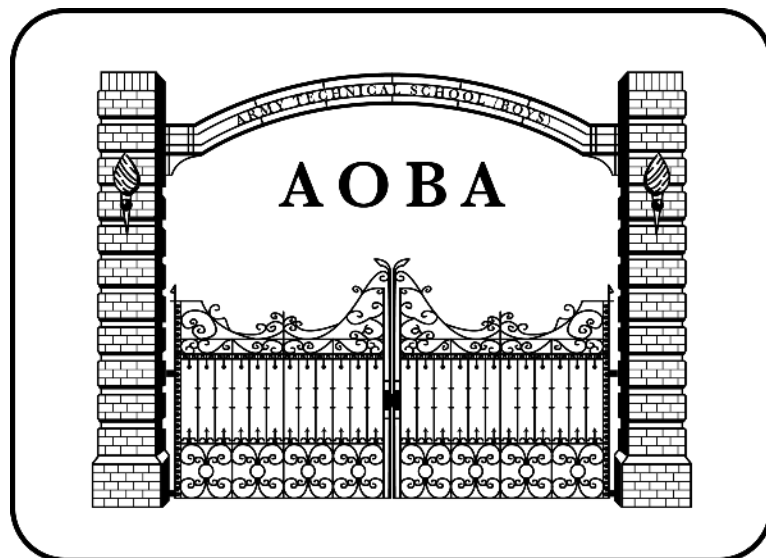


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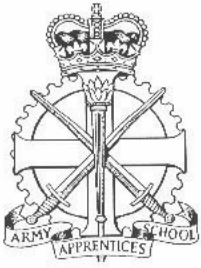
**Issue
75**

Arborfield Old Boys Association Newsletter



www.arborfieldoldboys.co.uk

ARBORFIELD OLD BOYS ASSOCIATION



President

Colonel Andy Rogers ADC

Vice Presidents

All past Commandants

Chairman

Lt Col Mike Tizard, CEng, FIET, (76B2)

Recruitment Officer

Bruce Leslie (75C)

Vice Chairman

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

Registrar

Dave Sparrow - (76B2)

Secretary

Phil Ellaway (73C)

Database Manager & Webmaster

Ian Clark (62A)

Treasurer

Bob McKeegan-Brown - (69A)

Editor of the Association Newsletter

Andy Dickson (66B)

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

If you have any points you would like raised at these meetings, please contact the Secretary at least two weeks prior to the meetings.

The meeting dates and contact details for all Committee members can be found on the AOBA website.

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AOBA Chairman's Report



I write this as the country is gripped with election fever.

Its early December, winter is definitely upon us and I'm already fed up of the long dark nights and my daily commute along the poorly lit Wiltshire A roads. By the time you read this we will have a new Government and we will see if all the promises made in the lead up to the election will come to fruition.

We live in changing times that's for sure.

Sticking with the theme of change, I see change as a positive thing as it brings fresh ideas and energy, in some respects it's the life blood of any volunteer association such as ours. We need to change, as we need to replace some of the long-standing committee members; they have done their bit and are due to stand down.

When I sell the committee job to a prospective volunteer, I ask them to consider it as a posting and commit for a 3 year 'posting'; well, many have done that and more, and they are due for replacement.

This has been a constant theme of mine for the past year or so and I'm really grateful for Bob for stepping up to replace Laurie as the Treasurer; brilliant and thank you. If you would like to volunteer, please get in touch.

At the last committee meeting we discussed options should we not get volunteers. I see it this way, things are fine so long as the committee members are enjoying the work, the work is not onerous and fits in with their family life. It's best defined as being a pleasure and not a chore.

When it flips over to become a chore, and this can happen quite quickly, the volunteer often resigns, and a gap is created. Now, we are all proud apprentices and we would not let things fail, so the workload of one is passed to another. So now, one of the members is holding two portfolios. How long is it before they find the workload to be a chore, and they resign. I'm sure you get the picture; it can spiral downward very quickly.

Areas we considered that we would need to review or close include; the bereavement role and contact with families of deceased apprentices, issuing of scrolls, placing the website in 'suspension', and a reduction in OBAN print runs, from three to two, or perhaps down to one.

I should emphasise that we don't want to consider any reductions, but we may be forced to if volunteers are not forthcoming. So, to reiterate, if you would like to volunteer, please get in touch. We need your help.

On a more positive note, we had a cracking weekend in London over remembrance weekend. Every year we hold a dinner in the Victory Services Club on the Saturday, followed by the Royal British Legion Cenotaph parade on the Sunday. Thanks, must go to Jim Gardner for pulling everything together and who achieved 47 seated for dinner and 30 members marching at the Cenotaph parade. The weather was kind again this year and as it happens, we were positioned following the REME Association contingent. I'm told it was quite a sight to see, and although we failed to make the BBC TV coverage this year, Jim was interviewed live on BBC radio, where he represented us well. This event is not a 'closed shop', and if you would like to take part in 2020, please just get in touch.

I'll close by reflecting on an excellent 2019 where much was achieved. Our excellent committee, working on your behalf, has delivered three excellent OBANs, organised a very successful reunion, a remembrance dinner and parade, and has maintained and updated the website and data base. Our benevolence officer has contacted many families and our Secretary has ensured our administration and legal compliances are up to date; recruiting, membership and the accounts are strong, and I think we are doing well. I'm truly grateful that we have such a committed team. If you fancy joining us ... just get in touch.

I would like to finish by thanking you all for your support during the past year and wishing you and your families all the best for the festive period. Raise a glass to a prosperous and healthy 2020. Take care and see you soon.

Mike Tizard

Your Chairman
Arte et Marte

Secretary's Report



I suppose, technically I shouldn't be writing this report, as we had no Secretary elected at the AGM. I have just continued on, to keep the Association going. Seriously, please review the list of Committee vacancies on the Succession Plan later in this edition. We really do need your help for some key positions. We don't bite, honest.

I am going to start this entry with a plea, if you want to write to me, please initially contact me via the "Contact Secretary" button on the website, and I will quite happily give you my address. Please don't write to me at REME RHQ, I don't work there, I don't live near there. There could be a considerable delay in your communication getting to me.

Following our October meeting, we were having a reflective conversation, about the ethos of the term Jeep, and the bullying that went with it.

I was quite stunned to hear the experiences of one Committee member, who told the story of how some Apprentices came into his spider picked him and another chap, and gave them the choice of being hung by the neck or ankles. He chose ankles, and was duly roped up and suspended by his ankles from the beams. The other chap chose neck, he was roped up, stood on something, and was told to jump, he actually did jump, but was caught by other people. Another Committee member had memories of these "hangings" taking place.

There was a conversation about how it felt to be swinging around with your head just above the floor, and a bucket of water was used at times as well.

I have to say I am not aware of anything like that happening during my time at the College.

I suppose many people will say this was just high jinks, or character building. I'm sure the chap who was hung by the neck thought it was high jinks. I'm sure they all laughed for months. Oblivious to what it did to the chaps self esteem, I wonder how many nightmares about the incident he had.

I am aware of a story about a chap being locked in his locker, and being told he was going in a static water tank, in the locker. He was carried around a bit, and then water was thrown at the locker, and poured through the gaps.

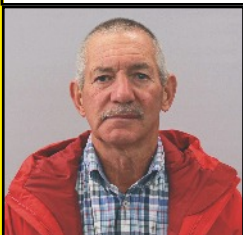
I'm sure many of you will have similar stories to tell.

Wonderful place wasn't it?

All the best,

Phil Ellaway - 73C

Treasurer's Report



At the time of writing I am still the Treasure-in-Waiting although we have no real Treasurer. How come you ask.

Well the saga began at the AGM when people were asked to volunteer to fill positions on the Committee which were becoming vacant in the near future. I was slightly dubious about volunteering but after the meeting I bit the bullet and told Mike Tizard that I would be happy to fill the Treasurer role. Laurie Blakley was obviously delighted with this as he had been filling the position for some time and we agreed that in the weeks following that we would work our way through the handover.

What should have been a fairly painless process has turned out to be something completely different.

Adding my name to the bank account was declined by the bank as the minutes of the AGM did not reflect my volunteering for the position and it was not until the next Committee Meeting in October that a set of minutes could be produced to satisfy the bank.

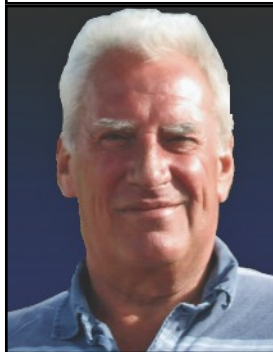
Thereafter there have been a number of setbacks (no internet banking, no recognition by HMRC) which have stopped me taking the reins fully. As we stand, at the end of November, Laurie has lost all his bank access and I have yet to gain internet banking access so only transactions via cheque are possible. Hopefully by the New Year all will be resolved and we can look forward to happier days.

As a novice in this role, one of my first impressions is the number of members who have not Gift Aided their subscriptions, this came to light during my first unsuccessful submission to HMRC. This simple task transforms the individual's £15 annual subscription into £18 and provides additional funding for the Charity at no extra cost to the members. Anyone in doubt can email me and I will be happy to confirm if your subscription is gift aided and if not guide you on how to do so.

At the moment I can only say that the accounts of the Charity remain in a good state and should be enhanced when the Gift Aid reclaim process is completed in the next few weeks.

Bob McKeegan-Brown - 69A

Database/Data Protection Officer/Webmaster's Report



General

I have used the heading as AOBA IT Officer report as it embraces “potentially” three committee roles that any member can volunteer for. As we know at each AGM the committee stands down and, in my case, have been re-elected. Getting new volunteers to step forward can be difficult however AOBA can only be good as the contributors make it. So, we would be interested in volunteers in the following roles to enable and manage our succession planning. As the saying goes “Use it or lose it!!”. Further detail for each of these roles are shown in the annex to the AOBA Constitution which is available in the Document section on our website

1. Database Officer: - Provide technical support to the Committee in its management of their roles and data processing. Good knowledge of Excel, PDF management and some analytical skills. MS Share Point skills desirable.
2. Data Protection Officer: Answerable to AOBA Chairman (as “Data Controller”) and Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO). Complete any SAR’s. Investigate data breaches and advise AOBA on Data Protection. Its strongly recommended that any volunteer takes formal training in DP and the DP Act 2018.
3. Webmaster: - Knowledge of Joomla is very desirable. Plenty of knowledge out there. Knowledge of data structures and their deployment is desirable.

As Database officer

I am glad to report that our transition from MS Access web app-based system in Share Point to Excel, DOC & PDF files is now “bedded” in and most of the work has been tidying up data and carrying the odd analysis. The Share Point site now has archives. I have been working with Andy (OBAN Editor) on our Intake year project. The aim here is to take them into the website to enable intake year searches. We currently have some 795 members worldwide.

Both of us are looking into the use of Flip PDF to make our renderings on the Website more dynamic.

I have reviewed all the consent forms (395) to determine if they had Gift Aid consents attached. We found 4 which we could add to the Treasures HMRC report to claim back tax. We back get £.025 for £1 paid in subs and donation. With the 411 who have completed consent form we are “missing a trick” as that represents about £1500 a year we would get back from the HMRC!

As Data Protection Officer

We have had no breaches. We have had one request (SAR) which was responded to within the 30-day window. We have now worked out a process with IOW Tours to enable AOBA to provide summarised Intake Gala weekend data in advance of the event. It also helps the Recruiting Officer to muster attendees for the relevant year. Please be aware the personal data provided to IOW Tours on the application form is the responsibility of IOW Tours Data protection policy. AOBA does not own that data.

Of the 795 only 48% (384) consent forms have been received. I have now got to the stage, to further our compliance, on receiving any request for IT support, if there is no consent form, nothing gets done until its completed. The DP consent from once completed updates your personal data and makes life much easier for communication and data quality. I sent a mass mailing to those that had no consent forms I had 10 responses!!

As Webmaster

Very much “holding the fort” so to speak. It does fall into the realm of “Use it or Lose it”. We have just over 100 users of the 795 members. Of all roles it is the most technical. I would like to make the website more dynamic. Andy, I have some ideas to achieve that however feedback would be appreciated and if any members have ideas the please let us know.

I have introduced some new elements and new ideas are in the pipeline but there comes a point in time where I have to balance my personal time with the derived value of this AOBA role.

We need to make contact with the members in the table on the right. They are Active members so pay their subs. We have no address information or e-mail addresses. We don’t have Consent Forms. All communication attempts have Failed. If you are named in the table please contact me. If you are a member and know any of these guys please get In touch with me.

I really would like to clear these guys membership data up.

Ian Clark - 62A

Initials	Surname	First_Name	Known_Name	AT_Details
M J	Akehurst	Mark	Mark	A-90C-B
C E	Cooper	Charles		A-52A-B
J	Cox	Jeffrey	Jeffrey	A-65A-X
A A	Hardy	Alan	Alan	A-65C-D
EG	Keen	Erington	Erington	A-47A-HQ/C
S B	Leadley	Steve	Steve	A-60C-C
D J	Pilkington	David	Dave	C-62B-B
J D	Roberts	John	John	A-45A-D
T D	Surtees	Timothy	Dave	A-76C-D
D J	Tanner	Duncan	Elsie	A-88B-A
G C	Timms	George	George	A-57A-X
D T	Tyler	Duncan	Skunk	A-79C-C
W G	Wenborn	William	Bill	A-41A-D

Recruitment Officers Report



A warm welcome to our new members, if you need any help or guidance regarding how our Association works, please reach out to either myself or one of the other committee members.

We are now into the 1970s recruitment phase, could I please appeal to any members whose intakes are 1970 A, B or C to let me know if you are interested in helping to recruit more of your intakes to the AOBA so that we can surpass the reunion attendance of the 69ers last year, please email the following email address if interested. aoba.recruitment@gmail.com

Lets continue the growth of our Association and attendance at our reunion and the Cenotaph parade, remember that this is OUR association, so to all of you, please take every opportunity to spread the word to keep our membership numbers up.

Bruce Leslie - 75C

Membership Secretary's Report



Is it the end of the year already? It is true what they say, the older you get, the quicker time goes by. This is more pertinent to me right now as my contract here in Defence School of Transport Leconfield comes to an end in March 2020 and whilst most sensible people would be retiring, I am about to launch my own business. It is called iTRUK and I will be offering accreditation for workplace transport trainers (Fork lifts, Tele-handlers, MEWPs etc). I don't want to turn this into an advert for Dave Sparrow so I will stop there!

Last year was a busy year for new memberships and this continued right up to the annual dinner. Since then recruiting has dropped off significantly, so if you are in touch with old mates who aren't yet members, perhaps you could encourage them to sign up and re-kindle the comradeship that they enjoyed as young boys, in the format of the Arborfield Old Boys!

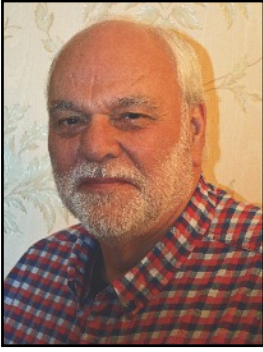
I was disappointed, to say the least, that I could not attend the reunion this Summer due to commitments with the Officers' Mess here in Leconfield. In 2020 I will be a civvy so there will be no such calls on my time and I will make sure that I book my slot to catch up with so many old friends.

Talking of old friends, Ken Caunter is about to leave the Army after 43+ years of service. Ken is an AOBA member and in recognition of his service there is a farewell dinner being held in Plymouth. Tim Ridge and myself (both the same intake as Ken) will be travelling south to attend this function and there may well be other Old Boys attending. By the time you get to read this we will have already gotten over our hangovers and will be warming up for my leaving function!

Have a great Christmas one and all and I hope that the New Year brings you whatever you wish for!

Dave Sparrow - 76B2

OBAN Editors Report



Here we are and its nearly the end of the year again. I used to wonder what my parents were talking about when they said, "Where has the year gone". Now it is me left in wonder. The days, week and months seem to fly by. We can look forward to the new year and all that 2020 will hold for us all. I hope it is a good year for you all.

Ian Clark and I have been looking at some ideas to make the website more attractive to members and we have some interesting things in the pipeline.

Trevor Stubberfield has sent me 4 CD's that contain several of The Arborfield Apprentice. For those of you who don't know, he runs the 49ers website which contains a wealth of information on Arborfield and many other subjects. The site is well worth a visit.

Flipbook - Ian Clark came across this tool. It allows documents and booklets to be published on the websites and they react like you are reading a book. Ian tested it and we then sought permission to buy an additional licence so that I could use it. Initially, I just had the OBAN in mind but the interaction with Trevor Stubberfield made me think a little deeper and I think The Arborfield Apprentice booklets lend themselves to this format too. Once we get this started I suspect there will be other uses but for now I think we have our hands full. Watch this space.....

I have trimmed this edition of OBAN back to 40 pages, (It has to be a multiple of 4 for the printer). There are a couple of articles that deserve a mention; Dave Wardle's story about his first posting after leaving Arborfield is excellent. Also, Andy Spargo sent me his father's diary from WWII. This is in his father's handwriting and also in a typed version. (Peter was 42C and later became an instructor at Arborfield). A very interesting article. Lastly, Tom Pollard and I have been communicating for a year or more and you will have seen his stories appear in past editions. Sadly, Tom passed away recently and I am sad to say we will have no more of his memories to publish after the one that appears in this edition. Tom was a real gent and an absolute pleasure to correspond with. I will miss our e-mail exchanges.

In the middle of all of this my PC started playing up. It would freeze for no reason at all and required a re-boot to get started again. This became a more frequent problem and I was on the verge of transferring everything to another laptop I have when it too crashed. I suspect both have hard drive problems.

So, out I go PC shopping and managed to get something that meets my needs adequately but the unexpected expense put a hole in my budget. I can't complain as my original PC was purchased in Australia in 2010 so it has had a pretty good run. I am looking at getting it, and the other one, repaired as back up units.

It is amazing how much you rely on the Internet and the computer in general these days. I can remember my first microcomputer bought for me in 1984 by my wife. I never thought it would all come to this.

As I don't have a portable computer at the moment I have not gone back to the REME Museum to add any Div's to the database that Ian Clark and I have been putting together. As soon as I can I will be back there entering data.

Another project Ian and I have been thinking about is listing all the Div's on the website, without any personal data other than names, so that you can all refresh your memories about who was at Arborfield with you. This is a work in progress so please be patient.

We are still looking for some key positions on the Committee. If you have some spare time and feel you could help out please contact any of the Committee members. Although I missed this year's reunion I understand Mike Tizard indicated we would have to shut some aspects of the Committee down unless we get some help. Certain members have done their stint and deserve a rest.

I have been helping a friend move house over the last week or so.

It was 5 days of very strenuous work that I am not used to. Each night even a single malt or two didn't do anything to dull the aches and pains.

In addition, I seem to have aggravated an old knee problem and am limping around like an old man. Wait a minute, I am an old man, at least my body feels old. Strange how you try and do the things you used to do in a heartbeat but when you are in your late 60's are surprised to find there are consequences. Rest and recuperation required.

Lastly, Alec Powell (64C) passed away recently. A member of the Committee for a number of years Alec was a staunch supporter of the AOBA. Arte et Marte Alec, Your job is done.

Andy Dickson - 66B

Diary of a Jeep

We proceed to Dusseldorf's Alte Stadt which is the nearest thing to Heaven I could possibly imagine. Notwithstanding the Oomphah music, a spit-roast chicken with chips is DM 7. I can honestly say, with the exception of a good bacon sandwich, 'ein halbe hanchen und pommies' is the best thing I've ever tasted. I can't say as much for German music which could hardly compete with the Troggs, Stones or Swinging Blue Jeans. Actually they could hardly compete with Herman's Herberts.

Bemoaning our lack of success on the female front, we bump in to one of the older sweats who introduces us to the delights of Schnapps. It seemed to go down with a certain ease and, better still, was relatively inexpensive. However, later that night it returned as I knelt at the alter of Armitage Shanks regurgitating portions of spit-roast chicken and diced carrot. (Why is there always diced carrot?) I woke up with a mouth like a gorilla's armpit. I'm not entirely sure what a gorilla's armpit tastes like, but I expect you get my drift.

The following morning, feeling like a corpse that had been recently disinterred, I drop into the MT office to get my work-ticket signed. WO II Bill Wright heads up the MT section. A nicer bloke I've yet to meet. A VM by trade and built like a Zeigel Scheisse Haus. For those not familiar with the German language - a substantially fabricated building for the purposes of defecation. He also boxed for the Corp. We were discussing possible hangover cures when in strode 2nd Lieutenant Plank RA. I never did discover his real name. All Royal Artillery officers are known as 'Planks' deriving from the term 'As thick as two short...'

Lt. Plank: 'Aah Bluebell. Need recovery. Bedford RL in a ditch. Can you get someone on to it right away?'

WO II Wright: 'Can you give me a location Sir.'

Lt. Plank: 'Just outside the village of Ausfart.'

WO II Wright: 'Did you say Ausfart?' Bill broke into a huge grin. 'You couldn't be a little more specific could you Sir?'

Lt. Plank: Rather too impatiently and far too loudly. 'Ausfart! Look it up on the map for god sake, it's not bloody rocket science man.' His voice seemed to echo around the walls.

WO II Wright: Addressing Yours Truly. 'Could you leave us for a moment please Corporal?'

It was as if the Angel of Death had passed over the building. There was a pause, those hammering ceased hammering. Those revving engines ceased revving engines - everything went exceptionally quiet.

I leave the office and close the door. However, being a decent, honest, trustworthy, upstanding kind of person with indisputable ethics and morals, I continue to listen from outside. It would be criminal not to. There was a sudden shuffling and what sounded like a groan.

WO II Wright Through what sounded like gritted teeth: "Firstly Sir, don't ever speak to me like that in front of a junior NCO ever again. Do I make myself clear?

Secondly, 'ausfart' is German for 'exit' there is a f****ng 'ausfart' every few kilometres on every f****ng exit-slipway, on every f****ng autobahn in West Germany. I advise you to return when you have a more precise location. Oh, and if you wish to take this up with the Colonel, I'll be only too happy to oblige. Now get out of my f****ng office, unless you want to be ricocheting off the walls when the ambulance arrives.'

The door slammed and a red-faced 2nd Lieutenant clearly on the verge of tears, his cap askew, his shirt-collar and tie in disarray, shot past me.

It doesn't pay to pi\$\$ off a REME WO II - more especially if he's a VM. Actually as a radar technician of modest stature, it doesn't pay to pi\$\$ off any VMs since they usually re-arrange more than your cap and shirt collar - that probably goes for armourers too. Anyway, by the time I'd related the full details to all and sundry during NAAFI break, I'd forgotten all about my gorilla's armpits.

The Jeep finds himself on Active Service.

When Nan heard I'd been posted to Borneo she knitted me a Balaclava and a sent me packet of Omo. She'd heard on the BBC Light Program that there was a problem with 'Detergents' in Indonesia - I think she meant 'insurgents.' Mum is still fretting about the possibility of me bumping into Japanese soldiers unaware the war is over. In reality, we are more likely to discover Amelia Earhart popping into the NAAFI requesting a jerry-can of aviation fuel.

Uncle Ron took me to one side and whispered 'jig-a-jig' into my shell-like. Apparently it's common parlance for the act of intercourse in the Far East. The very thought that he is jig-a-jigging with my mum is frankly obscene. Anyway, if a female sidles up to me in some oriental house of ill-repute and suggests 'jig-a-jig' it's highly unlikely I would expect an evening of Irish folk dancing.

After a period of acclimatisation at Tampin (Central Malaya) affectionately known as Tampax, for its proximity to the ar\$ehole of the world, I eventually make it to Kuching only to find I've pulled full-jack. There may be a god after all.

I was called into the office, given a short pep-talk about my new responsibilities and handed a couple of tapes - magic. The following evening I find myself in the role of Guard Commander responsible for the security of our LAD compound on the edge of Kuching airfield. I knew there would be a bloody catch.

The following evening I find myself in the role of Guard Commander responsible for the security of our LAD compound on the edge of Kuching airfield. I knew there would be a bloody catch.

Among my duties, apart from zapping the mozzies, allocating stags and signing everybody in and out, is the issue of condoms. McGuinness claims he only uses them to keep his Swan Vesta's dry when out on patrol. Yeh right! McNulty simply uses them for jig-a-jig or in his case - jig-a-jig-a-jig-a-jig-a-jig-a-jig-a-jig-jigging.

Around 9 p.m. the Orderly Officer drops by to tell me to pay special attention to the char-wallah's premises since there have been a number of break-ins. A large quantity of cigarettes has gone missing and Mr Abdul Ibrahim Bin Uddin (less affectionately known as 'Udders' due to the size of his man-boobs) has complained to the C.O. Christ knows how? Possibly through the medium of sign language.

Around 2 a.m. the Stag returns to tell me there are noises emanating from said char-wallah's. I pick up my Sterling 9 mm, a torch and proceed to investigate.

Right enough, there is someone moving within. After a short while, a body stumbles out into the darkness.

Employing my most excellent Malay I shout, 'Berenti. Berenti. Halt who goes there?'

The figure staggers forward. 'Berenti yer fecking self.'

I cock the SMG and point it in the general direction of the villain. 'Stand still that man!'

'Standstill yer fecking self.'

'I said Stand still!'

'Aye.... and I tell yer this Sunshine. If you don't want that fecking SMG rammed up yer jacksy then I suggest you point it elsewhere.'

A clearly intoxicated Bombardier Paddy Kane laden with several packs of 200 cigs pushes past the three of us and wanders off. I watch as he totters back to his sleeping quarters. We wait an hour and enter to find him laid out, stark-b*llock naked, still gripping his ill-gotten gains. We open his steel locker, remove numerous cartons of Senior Service (Export Only) and return them to the char-wallah's.

The lads asked me if I'm going place him on a Charge. I declined, imagining the following nightmare scenario in the C.O's office.

C.O: 'Can you tell me precisely why you didn't apprehend Bombardier Kane at the scene?'

Me: 'Well Sir, he's six foot two in his stocking feet, has 'Hate' and 'Love' tattooed on his knuckles and since the majority of his neural networks having gone AWOL, I decided it might be prudent to wait.'

C.O: 'And what were your initial thoughts when the accused said he would 'Stick the SMG up your .. Er .. rear end Corporal?'

Me: 'To be honest Sir - I was just hoping he'd have the common decency to lubricate it first.'

C.O : 'Case dismissed.'

Bombardier Kane came to thank me a couple of days later. To be truthful I thought it was to give me a good slap. He claimed he'd been sleep-walking. Yet somehow he'd managed to unload several packs to his mates at a significant discount while still claiming to be in the land of Nod. Why does this image of Pinocchio keep popping into my consciousness?

The LAD is responsible for maintenance and repair of 22 Light Air Defence, 53 Battery RA gun emplacements which are distributed around Kuching airfield. My job, along with several other techs, is to look after the FCE 7 MK4 Radars, a 4 MK 7 and any other tasks WO II Nobby Hall feels obliged to hand out.

Each gun emplacement, or gun-sub, is autonomous, looking after their own 'arc of fire', security, accommodation and catering. Most even have a bar. It's best to attend call-outs around meal-times as the grub is loads better than anything on offer at the main camp. All gun-sub members chip in a few dollars a week to supplement their Compo rations. It affords them such luxuries as Bisto gravy, HP sauce, Heinz tomato ketchup, Coleman's Mustard etc. They even pick up fresh fish, fruit, veg and poultry from the local market.

I don't think the 'Detergents' (Nan's got me at it now) have much in the way of air-power so the Gunners spend their days carrying out drills, cleaning their kit, sunbathing and drinking. A happier, well fed bunch would be hard to find.

It's my day off and WO II Hall asked if I would mind going up country to support some gunners who were on a temporary deployment close to the border. It sounded like a pleasant break from routine so I answered in the affirmative. George, one of our intrepid armourers, was to support the AA 40/70 and I was to take care of any electrical problems.

We arrived to find the action well underway. The Gunners were shelling a cave in the distance. Nobody seemed to know why. I asked the Master Gunner, but he only offered vague mutterings about some detergents (I'm going to strangle my Nan) had been seen moving about in the area.

All I can say is, if there happened to be no 'detergents', one of the famous cave-dwelling sun bears of Borneo was wakened from hibernation with one hell of a jolt.

Later that week we are given a lecture on sexually transmitted diseases. Apparently only the Padre and CO can catch a dose from the toilet seat. We learn that Gonorrhoea, Thrush, Non-gonococcal - urethritis, are usually curable with a course of antibiotics.

Crabs on the other hand can be sorted with a rag soaked in gasoline. Ugh! However, should you be unlucky enough to contract Syphilis, you are in Sh1t Street, which is where you probably contracted it in the first place. Whilst delivering the lecture, the MO made a couple of minor errors when describing the symptoms. Luckily lance Cpl McNulty was on hand to advise him.

The dress code and muster parades are fairly informal affairs. Most days are spent in flip-flops and PT shorts. It is only when you leave the workshop compound that you are obliged to slip into your Jungle Greens. The only real formality seems to be the distribution of Paludrine tablets for the prevention of Malaria. Usually the senior NCO present hands them out and is expected to ensure they are consumed. Fortunately, most don't take this area of their responsibilities too seriously and you can get away with palming the vile tasting medication and dispose of it later in McGuinness's morning coffee.

From time to time we also get issued with mosquito repellent which we rarely use after Bill Heziltine sprayed it on a huge scorpion. We watched as it slowly disintegrated. Nobody is quite sure what they put in the spray, but battery acid is reckoned to be among the principle ingredients.

The greatest perk when serving in the far east, apart from the warmth, loose women and extra cash, is the tradition of the Boot Boy. For two dollars (about 5 Bob) per week they clean your boots, make your bed, roll up your mosquito net and sort your dhobi. Age-wise they can be anything between eight and eighty, but for them, the money is brilliant and nothing is too much trouble. If this is Active Service - I'm lovin' it.

On our first evening off, we find ourselves replenishing our blood alcohol levels on Kuching market. The market is home to numerous food stalls, trinket shops and a handful of ladies of the night - some of whom have more than a handful on offer. There is actually a one-legged prostitute with a wooden leg who was among the first to hop into bed with McNulty. I've yet to encounter anyone reporting to the MO with symptoms resulting from wood-worm - McNulty could be the first.

McGuinness had bought himself a travel guide and is now the authority on all things Malay - including the language. He proceeds to order Nasi Goreng - a Malaysian staple (or so he says) for those present. It's not exactly haute cuisine but it filled a hole. However, when the waiter asked if we wanted Durian fruit to follow, he failed to recognise the word 'Durian' and nodded in the affirmative.

For those unfamiliar with the east, Durian is revered as the king of all fruits. Unfortunately, to the untrained palate it tastes like vomit and to the untrained olfactory system, smells like elephant sh1t. The natives are not even permitted to carry it on public transport.

Needless to say McGuinness enjoyed it, reminding we lesser mortals (epicurean philistines was the term he employed) that it was an acquired taste. Believe me, McGuinness is an acquired taste who, if Robbo has his way, will be waking up on the basket-ball court in the morning.

Thankfully we don't have a square.

I have to admit I was surprised at being promoted to full-screw before the others since I managed to spend the entire three years at AAS Arborfield and six months at the School of Electronic Engineering without even acquiring so much as a G-flog.

That night I had a rather vivid dream:

Adjutant: 'Chief could you pop in for a moment please? I was just about to sign off Part II Orders and noticed we are short a full Corporal for Guard Commander tonight.'

Chief Clerk: 'Difficult I'm afraid, Sir all are fully committed.'

Adjutant: 'What about the new arrivals?'

Chief Clerk: 'There is Wheeler but he's a walking disaster.'

Adjutant: 'How about lance corporal McNulty?'

Chief Clerk: 'Attending the STD Clinic Sir.'

Adjutant: 'McGuinness?'

Chief Clerk: 'He has a black mark against him for bugging up a 7 MK 4 and an AA 40/70 in Dusseldorf.'

Adjutant: 'Pity, he seems a smart lad. Only this week when I complained about the food in the Officers Mess, he offered to sack my cook.'

Chief Clerk: 'Are you sure he said 'cook' Sir? He does have a formidable Scottish accent.'

Adjutant: 'What about Evans?'

Chief Clerk: 'Welsh Sir.'

Adjutant: 'Oh I see.... Robson?'

Chief Clerk: 'Off sick - he has the squitters from eating too much Durian.'

Adjutant: 'Who is that short-arsed chap standing over there with his hands in his pockets?'

Chief Clerk: 'Where?'

Adjutant: 'Chico?'

Chief Clerk: 'Don't know his real name. Must be something to do with his youthful appearance - looks about twelve.'

Adjutant: 'He'll do. Get him in here.'

Chief Clerk: 'Oi! You... Yes you with your mind in neutral and your thumb up your bum. Get your sorry arse over here.'

In short order, present myself at the office.

Adjutant: 'Ah. Lance Corporal Chico is it?'

Me: 'Yes Sir.'

Adjutant: Well, we have been monitoring your performance for some time young man and it appears you have made something of an impression. As such, you are to be promoted to full- Corporal with immediate effect. Well done Corporal. Dismiss.'

Me: 'Thank you Sir.'

Chief Clerk: 'Can we actually get away with that Sir?'

Adjutant: 'What's the worse that can happen? Someone sticks a gun up his rear?'

I wake up in a cold sweat which is quite pleasurable in a country where it's always around 85F and 100% humidity. I check the jacket of my Jungle Greens - the two stripes are still firmly attached. Phew!

We are now 28 days in theatre so I qualify for the Borneo GSM.

I write to tell my mum that I've got my first medal. She asked. 'Great, but what did they award it for?' Good question.

I'm not sure if military citations include: 'For services to Queen and country and for generally having the time of his friggin' life, I have the pleasure of awarding.....blah... blah.....'

The Jeep moves to Singapore

I thanked Nan for the Balaclava and washing powder. She now says she's knitting me a raglan cardigan and a pair of woollen mittens. God knows where she thinks I am.

The Confrontation or Sarawak Insurgency (or Detergency as Nan prefers to call it) came to an end. We said our goodbyes to the char-wallah and paid off our tabs at the Palm Grove and Shamrock Bar. Bid a fond farewell to our boot boys, and dhobi-wallahs. Said our sombre goodbyes to the female population which, in McNulty's case, included the physically and mentally disadvantaged.

We travel from Kuching to Port Dickson, Malacca in a converted Dover to Calais car ferry. I have never had the pleasure of travelling from Dover to Calais by sea, but if it's anything like this journey, they should dig a bloody tunnel.

We are twelve to a cabin below decks so I sleep in the radar repair vehicle. One of the great pleasures of being a REME radar tech is that splendid refuge - the RRV.

We are allowed two cans of Tiger per day, but we hid several cases in the back of the Commer before departing. McGuinness doesn't drink and a few of the lads offered him folding money for his beer ration. He declined, claiming it would be against the spirit of the regulations.

Jacko had a word: 'Oi McGuinness how do you fancy swimming the rest of the way?' It's one thing waking up on the square at AAS Arborfield on a cold and frosty morning, its quite another finding yourself sleeping with the fishes. He relented.

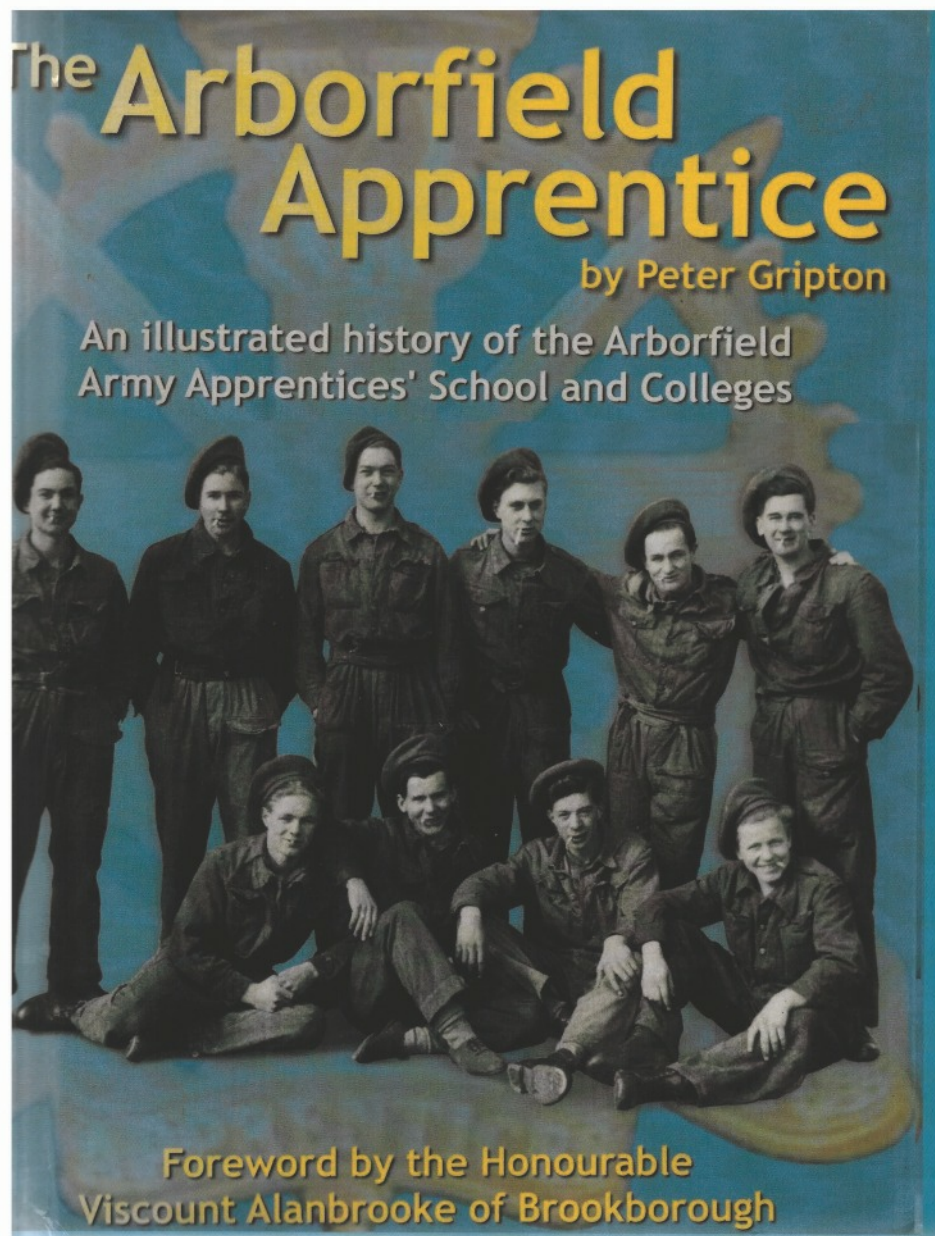
Four days later, after a vomit inducing sea crossing, I find myself, along with the other 53 Battery LAD reprobates, at Selarang Barracks Changi, Singapore.

Selarang was used as an over-spill prison facility for the infamous Changi Jail. It housed numerous Commonwealth POWs when Singapore fell in 1942. We find graffiti from that period still evident on the flat roofs of the buildings.

During their incarceration, some ten thousand prisoners of war were housed in facilities designed for perhaps four hundred. They were held at Selarang before transportation north to Kanchanaburi in northern Thailand to work, and in many cases die, constructing the notorious Burma railway.

It was a privilege to be stationed in such historic surroundings. However, being in our early twenties, our priorities lay elsewhere: sleeping, swimming, boozing and topping up our tans prior to our inevitable return to UK.

To be continued.....



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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 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 apprentices or staff members, at one of the Army Apprentice 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: Image courtesy of: www.freeimages.co.uk

Rear Cover: Remembrance Parade Attendees November 10th 2019

Calling All Ex-Apprentices



The Annual Reunion Weekend of the Army Apprentices National Memorial Trust will take place on Saturday 2nd and Sunday 3rd May 2020. All ex-apprentices are very welcome to attend all or part of this weekend which is being held at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffordshire.

The weekend will start with the Annual General Meeting of the Army Apprentices National Memorial Trust which will be held in the Poppy Room at the National Memorial Arboretum at 13:00hrs on Saturday 2nd May. This will be followed in the evening by a Gala Dinner and after-dinner entertainment at the Hallmark Mickleover Court Hotel, Mickleover, Derby. This is a great opportunity to catch up with old friends and colleagues – and swap the inevitable war stories! The bar opens at 18:30hrs and dinner will be served at 19:30hrs. There will be a donation collection on the evening to defray the cost of the after-dinner entertainment.

The Annual Drumhead Memorial Service will be held at 12:00hrs on Sunday 3rd May at the Army Apprentices Memorial in the National Memorial Arboretum. The service will be led by Rev Gary Kelly (Carlisle 67C) and will include music provided by the Army Apprentices Pipe Band, who will also be playing at the REME memorial prior to the Drumhead Service. In addition to the Standards of the Old Boys Associations of all 4 Apprentice Colleges the Standards of other Associations may be on parade.

The Hallmark Mickleover Court Hotel is offering special rates for the weekend with a Double Room for £138 per night and a Single Room for £100 per night. These prices include bed, breakfast and the Gala Dinner/evening meal. For those not wishing to stay at the hotel the cost for the Gala Dinner alone is £28 per head. Bookings can be made direct with the hotel, quoting "Army Apprentices Reunion", by telephone 01332 521234 or by e-mail at mickleover.sales@hallmarkhotels.co.uk, the hotel's website is www.hallmarkhotels.co.uk

If you have any queries please contact either:

Steve Joyce (Carlisle 63B) 01634 252982 or steve.joyce332@gmail.com.

My Arabian Nightmare by Dave Wardle 66b (Part 1)

I passed out of Army Apprentices College (ACC) Arborfield in April 1969. Three interesting and challenging years completed, one stripe on my arm, off to see the world. Or, for the next 4 months, across the road to the School of Electronic Engineering (SEE) to complete my trade training as a Control Equipment Technician. Having been lucky enough to have the chance to do an Ordinary National Certificate in Electrical Engineering, we needed to do our 2nd Class Trade training after AAC.

Having successfully completed 2nd Class in August 69 got my posting to 7 Armoured Workshop in Fallingbosal. Excited by the thought of working on tanks, bit concerned being parted from my girlfriend (now wife) Sue. I packed up my one MFO box with all my worldly possessions, including 3+ years of trade notes and sent it on its way.

In my last week at SEE I was called to the office to be told they were going to change my posting. One of the guys on our 2nd Class course, think his name was Clive, a regular entrant had failed the course. The decision had been made to swap our postings which would allow him to redo his 2nd Class at 7 Armoured, while I would go to the 4th Battalion Royal Anglian Regiment.

Wasn't too keen to go to the Infantry, which I assumed would mean working on vehicle electrics, but it would mean I could carry on seeing Sue at weekends, as the Regiment was based in Gillingham Kent.

Left SEE on Friday afternoon for a weekend at home before I reported for duty on Monday. Travel Pass in hand, having completed the best military and trade training you could get. The proceeding 3 years seeming to be part of a greater masterplan. What could go wrong!

I arrived at Gillingham Station with my suitcase containing everything that wasn't on its way to Germany in my MFO box. Got in a taxi outside station and asked to be taken to the barracks where the 4th Bn. Royal Anglian Regiment were stationed. Taxi driver starts laughing, when he gets his breathe back, he says they are in the Persian Gulf. I wasn't very sure where the Persian Gulf was, but I knew it was not in Gillingham. Tell the taxi driver he must have got it wrong because REME wouldn't have got it so wrong!

Taxi driver said he would take me to the camp where they used to be. Drove round a deserted camp until I realised the meter was at my limit, so asked him to drop me off. Walked round the camp for a while until I found an office that looked like it might be occupied. Knocked on the door and a Sgt came out who turned out to be the rear party for the Battalion. He confirmed that they were in the Persian Gulf in a place called Bahrain. He wasn't expecting me but thought he could get me on a flight leaving the next day.

When I was able to speak, I spluttered that I thought I should have some disembarkation leave. He agreed, sent me home for a week, and arranged for a flight in a weeks' time.

One week later, on 12 Aug 69, I reported to an office somewhere in London. Given a travel pass to Swindon and told I would be able to get MOD transport to the Route Hotel at Brize Norton, stay there overnight, and then be taken to Lyneham to fly out next day. (I'm not sure if I have got Brize Norton and Lyneham the right way round, perhaps someone remembers where the Route Hotel was?). I'd never stayed in a hotel in my life so was quite excited.

What a disappointment the Route Hotel turned out to be, it made the old spiders in Arborfield seem luxurious in comparison. The room was miles long with triple stacked bunks jammed in. The food wasn't too bad, but then the RAF lads had to eat there too.

Next day I got on a bus to RAF Lyneham, everyone else on the bus seemed to be RAF. They all seemed happy and knew exactly where they were going, what they would be doing and for how long. Me, I had very little idea what lay ahead. With hindsight that was probably a good thing!

Waiting for my first flight ever, I found out from the RAF lads that we would be flying in a VC10 for 7 to 8 hours. Again, quite excited, my Dad worked at Vickers Armstrong in Weybridge (don't think it had become BAC by then) and had taken me round the factory to see a VC10 being built.

Just before it was time to get on the plane, an announcement over the tannoy asked for L/Cpl Wardle to report to gate. Seemed a bit strange to be singled out, but off I went. Met by two MPs who had a big chap in handcuffs with them. I was told he had gone AWOL from the 4th Bn Royal Anglian Regiment when he found out they were off to Bahrain.

They attached one of the cuffs to my wrist, gave me the keys, asked me to sign for him, and said it was my responsibility to get him to Bahrain.

That resulted in me and my prisoner being first on plane, and no more nice chats with the RAF guys. Spent the flight giving my prisoner cigarettes and learning that Bahrain was a terrible place. We arrived at Muharraq Airport in Bahrain about 2200hrs.

When we got off the plane we found two guys from the Anglain Regiment waiting for the prisoner. They weren't expecting me, but suggested I jump in the back of landrover with the prisoner. Set off and passed through Manama City heading due south. Nearly midnight and the heat seemed unbelievable, also got my first sight of life in an Arab town. Why was it so busy, why did it smell like a garage forecourt and where were all the females?

The camp turned out to be at the far southern end of the island, as far from any civilisation as possible. At the Guardroom no one was expecting me, but the Guard Commander asked me if I knew anything about Vigilant missiles (am I the only ex ECE who didn't know Vigilant was derived from Visually Guided Infantry Light Anti-Tank missile and started being developed in 1948. info courtesy of Wikipedia). Thinking this sounded more fun than Bedford electrics I said yes. The Cpl was in the Vigilant Platoon, and suggested I sleep in his bed for the night and we see what we can sort out in the morning.

Next morning everyone in the Platoon seemed pleased to see me. I explained I hadn't got much uniform with me, but that didn't seem to be a problem. Off to the Quartermaster for two sets of lightweight khaki jackets and long trousers, a floppy hat and six bottles of squash, to encourage me to stay hydrated. Everyday dress was blue PT shorts, DMS boots with socks rolled down and beret. It made the cast of "It Ain't Half Hot Mum" look very smart!

I got my own bed in the Platoon's air conditioned barrack room. The noise of the air conditioning was deafening, but it did keep the room very cool. I think there were about 30 in the room, and they had already been there about 4 weeks. I was very conscious how amazingly white I was compared to everyone else.

Then the surprises started. The Platoon Commander, nice young 2nd Lieutenant, said they had requisitioned a Technician after they finished their Vigilant training at Netheravon a few months ago, but hadn't been told I was on the way. He then took me to large modern looking windowless building opposite the barrack room. It was like going into a small cinema, with a projector displaying a landscape.. One wall was a huge screen, and along the far wall were two long banks of computers (analogue valve based computers). In the middle of the room a sort of carpeted area. Apparently this was a Vigilant Classroom Simulator. He was surprised that I had never seen anything like it, as they were expecting me to be the system expert.

My training kicked in and I managed to find a way to get a call back to SEE. The Vigilant tiffy was very helpful, and rang me back to say it would be best for me to get a plane back to UK and go on a crash course at Netheravon. That was where there was the only other Vigilant Classroom Simulator.

Problem solved, or so I thought. The Platoon Commander and I went to explain the position to Support Company Commander. We both agreed that to get me back to UK quickly, complete the training then all would be "A OK". However, the Major did not agree. He said they had waited long enough for me, and they were not going to lose me now. Then I made the mistake of questioning his decision, saying I would be little use to his company without more training and special equipment (the previous Battalion's ECE had taken all the test equipment and tools back to UK). The Major blew his top and we were marched out.

Next day was my first parade with the company. Lined up with the Vigilant Platoon, I was inspected by the Major. He stood behind me and told the Sgt Major to charge me with having long hair (I think my hair was shorter than most of parade).

After parade I was marched into Major's office for charge to be read out. He asked me if I had anything to say. I'd learnt my lesson and said nothing. Punishment was 3 extra guard duties. And so it began, my life in Vigilant Platoon, Support Company, 4th Battalion the Royal Anglian Regiment.

Looking for some support I found the Armourers Workshop. The Staff Sgt there was a great chap and most senior REME person in Regiment. He and all the other REME guys (Armourers, Vehicle Mechs and Tels Techs) were in Admin Co. No parades or guard duties. He agreed the situation was unacceptable and went off to have words with someone. Came back a bit crestfallen and said they wouldn't budge, I had to try to make best of it.

He got me transport to the REME Workshops in town, where I found no one who knew anything about Vigilant, but I was able to sign out an AVO and basic tool box.

Normal days started at 0500 hrs. when "Good Morning Starshine" from the musical "Hair" (still can't stand the sound of it), blasted through the camp radio. Our room was lucky enough to have 2 speakers. It took me awhile to get used to waking up seeing the local Arab barber shaving the Cpl in the opposite bed with a cut throat razor when he was still asleep!

Got dressed, rushed outside to toilets to warm up (room very cold). Company run around the outside perimeter fence, avoiding camels. Back for shower and breakfast then on parade at 0700hrs. Wednesday was Regimental Parade. Had to stand cooking in the sun until the OC decided to turn up riding a white horse (I know I didn't believe it either, did they flew it out there for him). He would inspect us mounted on horse, pick on a few unfortunates before eventually letting the parade progress.

After parade I would do the same training as the rest of the platoon. This amounted to infantry soldier training with deployment of Vigilant thrown in. In the afternoon the platoon went and laid on their beds, I went to do my best to make the Simulator work properly. There were EMERs there, which helped, and I think it was reasonably useable. But as I had no idea how it should perform, I was never totally sure.

In the evening we played sport. Beach volley ball always very popular, even had a floodlit football pitch. Tried water polo but it was far too violent! One Sunday three of us booked out the 3 passes for the Sheikh's beach held in Guardroom.

Lovely white sand, fresh water showers to wash off the salt and beautiful green lawn surrounded by flower borders. Looked perfect, great swim, refreshing shower, and towel on grass and lain down to sunbathe. Big mistake, the grass was full of big ants. Had to report to MO who gave me antibiotics to stop my legs looking like tree trunks!



Dave looking very smart behind the sergeant.

Just to break the routine, I did lots of Guard Duties and Orderly Cpl in the cookhouse, organising the local civilian workers to clean and tidy up. How the cooks could work in that temperature every day was beyond me. Some of the Guard duties were at the Ammunition Compound in Maharat. These were 24hr duties, but had the benefit that you went for meals in the RAF Cookhouse, where they served steaks!

I started to settle to my new life, basically ticking off days until the 9 months were up and we went back to UK. My tan was now the same as everyone else, but I didn't go as far as putting Nivea cream on before sunbathing to get the "mahogany" look.

Cigarettes and beer were cheap, so not much to spend money on. Bought my first good watch and a camera. Started trying to take good (artistic) photos, but mostly failed. One of the Armourers was a very keen photographer and developed all my pictures. Listened to lots of records, Led Zeppelin, Blind Faith etc. Read loads of books, Catch 22, The Naked Ape, War and Peace etc. Wrote lots of letters. Apart from the cheap cigarettes and beer very similar to being in a prison!

I think it was in October we were "stood to" at 0100 hrs, sat down on the square with my SLR and kit. There was trouble in Oman, some dissident tribesmen threatening Muscat from the hills above. We were going to fly out to intervene. As these tribesmen didn't have tanks, Vigilant Platoon was going with a Rifle Company. At that stage I thought it couldn't get any worse, with hindsight I sure it could. I was asked if I had filled in my will! Luckily as we were getting ready to board buses for the airport we were told it had calmed down, and we weren't needed.

We did escape the island to go on exercise to Sharjah, Dubai, Abu Dhabi and the entire surrounding desert. Often I wasn't too sure where we were, and I know for a fact most of the Officers didn't either. Remember spending hours going round in a huge circle on salt flats being led by a Captain taking directions from his vehicle mounted sun compass!

I learnt to drive in the desert, have had no problems with potholes since, but roundabouts are more problematic. Sand channelling for miles on end meant everyone got a chance to drive, because the driver would get fed up with all the criticism for getting stuck.

One exercise we set off from Bahrain on RFA Sir Galahad, which was very comfortable. Looking down from the deck we often saw Hammer Head Sharks at the bow of the boat. Not sure where we landed, but we disembarked at sea in smaller Landing Ships Logistics.

Remember being on a beautiful sandy beach in Dubai with time to go for a swim. Out into the waves we went until, what we thought was seaweed, got tangled round our necks. Then we realised it wasn't seaweed but dead sea snakes. The end of swimming!

Another time we flew from Bahrain to Sharjah in Hercules planes. They seemed to have a real struggle to take off before we got to the end of runway. They served coffee on the plane, but as I was at the end of the line as the cups were passed down didn't get much of a drink!

I think that was the exercise we had two Royal Signals guys attached to the company.

I remember being amazed how they could send Morse code messages while driving at speed across the desert. Also amazed that they were left alone to do their thing!



Farm RFA Sir Galahad

To be continued.....

Nigeria Continued - Tom Pollard

Being in the tropics we only worked in the mornings, so in the afternoons the more energetic played sports. The Workshop had a football team and if it was short of a man I would be pressed into service, but I was hopeless. Sometimes away matches were played on lethal surfaces, some had large whitewashed rocks protruding above ground, a great help to the home side.

One afternoon my arm swelled and I was admitted to the Military Hospital in Yaba; I was told that Malarial parasites in my blood needed to be killed off, so I was dosed with large numbers of Mepachrine tablets daily, and after a week they had done the trick.

The Hospital WO1 was a keen hockey player and invited me to join their team, so I accepted at once and escaped my football fatigues. We played cricket now and then, and when we on the field at Apapa a troopship arrived, and I thought the passengers would be comforted to see that civilization ruled!

I have several memories of my time in Nigeria; a man shaving with a piece of broken green bottle, the whole field flaring up when the NAAFI manager threw down his cigarette end, being invited in to a mud hut in heavy rain, and evening jaunts to the Yaba Rest House or the Yaba Rex Club for a few drinks with the lads.

There were duty nights to be spent in the tiny telephone exchange, swatting off the mosquitoes in the heavy sweating heat and sipping stewed tea, eyelids getting heavier and heavier, and the relief as the sun appeared. After ablutions and breakfast back to work in the office.

I had to teach myself to type as there were confidential reports to be composed and despatched – various copies were required so carbon paper had to be interleaved, and correcting errors was very messy and time-consuming. If only computers had been invented earlier!

When I had some leave due I spent a few days at the NAAFI at Tarqua Bay, there was nothing to do but read books by the light of a tilly lamp. To escape the humidity of the coast I went by train to Jos Leave Camp in the Northern heights; it was a very interesting trip, I saw a chimpanzee running across a field, and near Kafanchan “Dust devils” formed by the hot air were swirling across some level ground.

At every station hawkers would be pressing their faces against the one-way window trying to see if the compartment contained any likely customers for their fruits. Going round curves every window had two pairs of feet sticking out to enjoy the breeze.

I had to attend a civilian court as a witness in a bribery case; a soldier had been put on a duty roster on his wife’s birthday, and he asked to be changed- it could be done, but it would cost ten shillings. He paid the money and then told the WO1, who marched the offender in to the CO I had to witness that the note was in his possession. The case was dismissed.

I attended a performance of “Trial by Jury” by a Nigerian cast, and it was most enjoyable.

The day started the same as any other; then the telephone informed me that I was to leave at once to return to UK on recuperation leave. I had to dash around with a form to be signed by various departments confirming that they had no claim on me, I locked my kit box, and was then taken to Ikeja Airport where a Dakota was standing on the grass runway. I knew none of the other passengers, all service personnel, but we couldn’t embark until every seat was taken.

After much engine-revving we took off, managing to hop over the palm trees. Our first stop was at Accra, where we stayed the night. We departed early next morning and flew over miles of sand until we landed at a corrugated hut beside some petrol barrels. A couple of Frenchmen appeared, wearing greatcoats, and refuelled the ‘plane, using a hand pump, while we stood in the heat – and it was HOT! I thought a flock of black ostriches was running along the horizon, and then realized it was heat haze. We took off again, although I could see no runway.

Across the aisle from me were two QARANC ladies, and one produced an orange. Her companion asked her not to eat it, as the smell of oranges made her feel sick, but she laughed and carried on. Next moment the brown paper sick bag was being put to use; then I observed that the sickness was spreading from seat to seat until all the passengers were affected; luckily I was immune, perhaps because I’d seen that the cause was not travel sickness.

Our next stop was at Agadir, a very cosmopolitan French city, the traffic police looking very smart in their impeccable white uniforms. We next landed at Tripoli in Libya for a night stopover and next day flew on to Gibraltar where we had a night at the Bristol Hotel. By this time I had only sixpence left in my pocket, so I was reduced to walking the length of the main street, entertaining myself with window shopping and listening to Spanish dancing coming from the bars.

Next morning there was a short flight up to Bordeaux, and finally to the Nissen huts at Heathrow. HM Customs wanted me to pay £6 on my wrist watch, although I told them it kept stopping, so I let them take it from me.

They kept sending me cards saying that my watch was in their warehouse, but I never saw it again – perhaps they managed to sell it to some unlucky person! A trip to the RTO in the Deep Shelter to get my travel warrant home, and then I could start my six weeks of recuperation leave.

Only Grandfather and my Aunt Ruby now lived in the house, and it was very quiet. Grandfather asked me no questions about my activities and experiences in Nigeria, so I went out meeting what few friends who were still living locally. We were supposed to be away from the tropics for twelve weeks as advised by the medical profession; these were composed of six weeks ocean travel time and six weeks home leave. Now that the journey was by air, taking only a few days, we were away for only seven weeks, but the home leave was not lengthened to compensate! So, after only six weeks, I was ordered to report to Air Transport Command at Lyneham and back we went, but not all the way – I had to disembark at Accra, for I was now to serve in HQ West Africa Command.

Here, we wore, instead of our bush hats and palm tree badge, the familiar blue beret and REME horse and lightning badge. Of course my kit was still at Yaba, so I wrote asking for it to be sent to me; I received a reply that all my kit had vanished, and my photographs and wall decorations had gone too. I wonder where they are now?

The REME office was small. we had WOII “Benny” Goodman, myself, and three Gold Coast (as it was then) soldiers, a corporal and two craftsmen. Again we worked only in the mornings, and in the afternoons I usually played tennis with Bob Manaton, who always beat me.

There was a REME detachment also located in Giffard Camp, and we all dined together in the Sergeants’ Mess. We put on a small show for the troops now and then, and on one Saturday morning WOII Fitzgerald drove me in to Accra to buy some crepe paper. When I tried to rise from my seat my shorts stuck to the leather and then split! I had to buy a newspaper and walk along with it hiding my rear.

Here we had parades every morning, and on one occasion the inspecting officer said he was surprised and pleased to see someone on parade smarter than he was – I thought he might order me to polish his boots! My bunk was directly in front of the camp cinema, and the evenings were enlivened by gusts of laughter from the audience as they watched the antics of the Three Stooges. I went there once and had a black scorpion crawling over my boot, so I shook it off and gave it a departure stamp.

My window gave me a view of the airport runway, and every evening I saw the arrival of the ‘plane from UK, a bit of tugging at the heart strings. We played five-a-side hockey on the cinder parade ground - this resulted in us having legs stained black with a mixture of sweat and dust.

We had a moonlit swim now and again; at the beach was a small sea-water swimming pool (I found out, years later, that the RE who built it actually lived fifty yards away from me), and a truck would take us over the bumpy red laterite road. Swimming at night was lovely; all movement created a bright green glow of phosphorescence, beautiful to see.

Aunt Ruby wrote saying that Grandad had died, the house was being sold, and she was moving in to a council flat, and that she expected me to come and live with her when on leave. The day after my twenty-third birthday the telephone told me to report to the airport for return to UK – the same rush occurred as at Yaba, I don’t know why an advance warning couldn’t be given, but perhaps a passenger had to drop out (I hope not from the ‘plane). So back home I went; I remember nothing of the flight, no stop-overs this time.

According to my Service Book I had served in West Africa for three years and one hundred and fifty-two days, and I thank the Army for giving me that experience.

So, I moved in with my aunt, bought her a radiogram, which was all the rage. She worked in London and arrived home every evening in time to listen to The Archers. She never missed it, in those days leaves or ice on the railway tracks seemed to make no difference. I think the driver could pull a cord which would dribble sand on the rails to give the wheels grip. I walked in to Aylesbury centre every day and misspent my youth in the billiard hall above Burton’s. I made new friends as all my old schoolmates had gone, nowhere to be found.

I was quite pleased when my leave ended and I was told to proceed to Perth, in bonny Scotland, to be of use to HQ Highland District. I went to London and then by overnight sleeper. In Perth I presented myself at Balhousie Castle camp, this was the Black Watch depot. I was allocated a tent (!) and settled in – but not for long – in the morning I woke to find three inches of water flowing around the bed, rapidly the River Tay had overflowed! I was resettled in a building on St. Catherine’s Road, where I shared a room with a Pay Corps sergeant. Every morning we listened to a Black Watch piper, which helped to get us up!

HQ Highland District and 51st Highland Div (T.A) was located at the bend of the same St.Catherine’s Road, in what was formerly Campbell’s Dye Works. The REME offices were on the first floor and we had a good view of the railway; there would be “double headers”, two engines to haul the train up the steep gradients on their way to Inverness. The amount of steam and smoke that they emitted formed a dense layer above the city.

I had two male clerks and two female typists, civilians, and REME inspection teams. Our officers comprised a DDME, ADME, and two captains. I sorted and distributed the morning mail, amended regulations when needed, and again had to type confidential documents.

Most of my time was occupied by arranging the itineraries for the inspection teams and issuing travel warrants as they had to visit units on the Scottish isles. A unit in Grantown on Spey was not submitting correct documentation, the DDME told me to go to show them what was required, so I was driven up by the vehicle inspectors and viewed the Highlands – magnificent!

Every year the DDME organised the Highland District Motor Cycle Trials, and he would take me with him to ensure all the score sheets were completed correctly and points totalled up – points were added for failing to maintain forward progress or “foot down”. The Trials took place in Comrie Park, near Crieff, and we had to stay there overnight, and it was so cold that I hopped out of bed in the morning to get warmed up!

The DDME drove an old black open top Jaguar and that was another experience altogether. On the social side, I joined Perth Hockey Club and enjoyed playing with them at the weekends, and I also joined Perth Drama Club and appeared in some of their plays on the stage of Perth Academy. I danced in the Perth Guildhall and at the Salutation Hotel, and had a great time. Our accommodation was moved from St. Catherine’s Road to Craigie House, a tall old building on a corner close to Craigie Hill Golf Course, so now we had to march the staff to and from HQ every day.

It was in 1952 that I read in the newspaper that Edward Francis Devlin, the Ted Devlin that I had served with in Nigeria, and his mate Alfred Burns, described as labourers and career criminals, had been convicted of the murder of a fifty-two year old widow, a Manchester shopkeeper, and were duly hanged. When he was in the Army he was safe, but going back to his old life was his undoing – he was only twenty-two when it ended.

I sat an entry exam for Civil Service Executive Officer, which took place at Edinburgh University, so I caught a train which would get me to Edinburgh an hour before the exam start time – unfortunately the morning was very foggy, and the train proceeded very slowly, its progress recorded by frequent exploding detonators, and it was late by an hour and ten minutes! I ran to the exam room and completed as much of the first paper as I could; I thought my efforts were in vain, but somehow I managed to pass. I needn’t have bothered, as I never joined the Civil Service!

As I neared the end of twelve years man’s service I had become engaged to a Scottish lassie, and as there was a severe housing shortage I decided it was better to sign on for another four years so that we could have married quarters. An excellent idea, one may think, but no – she dumped me, so I then found myself destined for Singapore.

My first port of call was dear old Arborfield, which looked just the same as when I last saw it in 1947. From there I was sent up to Liverpool to embark on the trooper Lancashire. I was told I was senior Warrant Officer and that I would maintain discipline. We were a happy ship with no trouble; I had to be present at Pay Parades, and every night I walked the decks to ensure all was quiet. There were two little boys on board, going to join their father in Singapore, and they ran around in the afternoons; the elder was named Mervyn, and the troops soon renamed them “Vermin”.

We had rifle practice, where small balloons were dropped at the stern, and we would bang away at them bobbing up and down in the wake. I think they all survived! We passed through the Bay of Biscay, no rolling as there was on the “Empire Bure”, and saw majestic Gibraltar, then across the Med to the Suez Canal. It looked most peculiar when we encountered a ship travelling North; all that was visible was her superstructure gliding through sand. We docked at Aden to be refuelled, and after we sailed that evening a desert wind blew up, and all were ordered below decks. I patrolled to ensure that the decks were empty, and enjoyed the sight of the masts wheeling through the stars.

Our next port of call was Colombo, where a couple of us hired a taxi to take us around to see the sights. We first stopped at a hotel on the beach at Mount Lavinia; it was a truly idyllic location, a beautiful golden beach fringed with palms. and a lovely little blue stream running through the sand into the ocean. We also visited the zoo, and back in Colombo we ate at the Scotch Tea Rooms; the “Lancashire” menu was very good, but we fancied something more down to earth, so dined on Sausage and Mash with Onion Gravy – superb! After six weeks we arrived in Singapore, where I was taken to 41 Base Workshop (Vehicle) (REME) at the junction of Anamalai Avenue with Bukit Timah Road.

The camp was divided in two by the avenue, on the Singapore side were the Mess and accommodation, and on the Bukit Timah side were the offices and workshops. I had a room in a Nissen Hut, very hot and airless, but was told that there should soon be a vacancy in the wooden hut which was up a slight rise and benefited from any breeze. The food was good – we had extra protein provided by the weevils in the bread, at first I held up each slice and removed them, but after a week of holy bread I didn’t bother. Dessert was always the same as in Africa, the famous Jungle Juice.

In the office I was Chief Clerk (Technical) with Chinese staff who were very efficient and hard-working. The function of the workshop was to repair vehicles damaged in the Malaya troubles, and paint dipping was contracted out to a civilian firm. The Contracts Officer would take me with him to witness the contract signatures; I was not present during the negotiating. The workshop had a football team, and again I was sometimes pressed into service when needed to make up the eleven – this provided me with my one minute of glory when one day the ball came to me at right back and I booted it up the field; it bounced just in front of their goalie and Hallelujah!!! went between his knees into the goal! I had scored! I only managed it because our opponents were the Singapore Jockey Club, and the goalie was very bandy!

After a couple of weeks a room became vacant in the wooden hut and life became much more pleasant, the doorway opened on to a lovely view of Bukit Timah Hill, and the verandah supported a colourful Hibiscus, and the beautiful setting sun brought a welcome reduction in temperature.

It was very humid, and to prevent clothes getting musty a heater was needed inside the wardrobe! I bought a radio and on Sunday mornings could listen to the omnibus edition of The Archers – a link with Aunt Ruby. I also purchased a fan and a Chinese waxed paper umbrella, which was cleverly constructed using wooden struts – when it rained in Singapore it came down in sheets!

Every month we had to complete a fifteen-mile route march as it was said that this mileage would take us anywhere in the Island when required. This was very pleasant as it took place during the cool of the night; one night there was an explosion, but it turned out to be a fizzy orangeade bottle over-excited by being jogged up and down. On the training side we also had shooting practice on the range - one time the rifles just popped, and you could see the bullets twisting lazily through the air before hitting the dust after twenty feet! Good job it wasn't the real thing! The next time we were on the range it was with Sterling sub-machine guns, all was going well and then the same Contracts Officer swung round saying his gun had jammed, so I snapped at him to face his front; luckily he obeyed, the only time I ordered an officer. On the range I was graded "Marksman", but I can't recall being paid extra for it – I believe at one time it was sixpence per day.

The Workshop's location was near to the Chinese High School, who were having a "sit in", and it was decided that it would be ended by the Police. The Contracts Officer said he had to collect his new car that evening, so he wanted me to replace him as Orderly Officer. I asked our Security Officer what special precautions were to be taken, but he said none were needed as the Police had the matter completely under control. However, thanks to the Boy Scouts I decided to be as prepared as possible, and thanks to Arborfield I knew what to do, so I armed myself with a billiards cue from the Mess. The evening came, and suddenly the calm was shattered by explosions and shouts. I called out our four Sikh Night Watchmen/Firemen, and together we dragged a roadblock (a piece of telegraph pole with a strand of barbed wire wrapped around it) across the road; unfortunately it wasn't long enough to cover the grass verges and monsoon ditches either side. I told the men to get their fire hoses but not to fill them, and together we awaited what was to befall us. I thought of "Some corner of a foreign field" and then pondered whether I should have the tip of the billiard cue upward or downward, and decided that it would be better with the tip resting on my toecap; I could then throw the cue up vertically and catch it about a foot above the tip and thus use the heavy end to greater effect. The two pairs of firemen each held a brass nozzle, and then the mob appeared on the main road. They stopped and turned towards us and the leaders held a hurried conference before they turned back and continued their run towards the shops in Bukit Timah. Our bluff had worked – or more likely they thought some looting more attractive!. About a quarter of an hour later the telephone rang, and the HQ Duty Officer rattled off the security level passwords in ascending order; I could then send trucks to collect weapons and Married Quarters men and bring them back; it took some time, as obstacles had been placed across the roads.

Riots continued in Singapore for several days, and I had to accompany the Contracts Officer on a visit to the contractor. I was armed with a rifle, very unwieldy in a small car. I could have fired at the sky had I had any bullets! The car stopped at an obstruction and a Chinese man armed with half a brick came running at me – I jiggled the rifle towards him and he laughed, turned away, and ran off. Eventually law and order was restored and life returned to normal. After two and a half years I was told to report to Nee Soon airfield in civilian clothes for flight back to UK. The next morning we took off and our first stop was at Bangkok for refuelling, then on to Calcutta, and then Mumbai (or Bombay as it was then) where we stayed at Mirriwalla's Grand Hotel. We arrived at midnight and supped on cold fish and chips and green jelly on one plate. Never mind – it filled the gap.

When our next refuelling took place we sat in a freezing waiting room whilst Arabs came and swept around us, then off we went to Ankara – it was like a Wild West film, with large balls of tumbleweed blowing down the runway. Here we were given a very small taste of Turkish tea, served in a tiny glass shaped like the Scottish thistle-head. Our next stop was at Brindisi in Southern Italy – we didn't think so, as it was blowing a blizzard, not at all the sunny Italy we expected. Luckily here we had a bowl of steaming hot soup to warm us up. Our next flight was the last as we landed at Bovingdon airfield, only about twenty miles from Aylesbury, but of course we had to go in to London to receive our travel warrants. It was absolutely perishing, and I was wearing only my light grey tropical suit – you could have used my goose bumps as snooker balls!

I caught a train for Aylesbury, but it broke down at Stoke Mandeville, home of the famous hospital, and I found myself shuddering with cold on the December platform. Luckily a porter appeared so I asked if I could wait inside his little cubby-hole until the next train arrived. He said I could, so I warmed gratefully back to life beside a cosy fire. A brisk ten-minute walk from Aylesbury station took me indoors, a hot drink and a hot meal that worked wonders.

My days in lightweight tropical garb were now over, and it was back to the piercing winds of dear old Blighty; I gave my aunt the latest craze, a Television, to bring her up to date, but she still preferred listening to The Archers. I spent my time going around the old haunts, but saw nobody I knew, so frequented tea rooms and ate Welsh Rarebit washed down by a coffee, not a very exciting existence!

After my leave was up I was ordered to proceed to 26 Command Workshop at Stirling – I think I was barred from anywhere near Arborfield! I had a room at Back o' Hill Camp, which, as its name suggests, was at the back of Castle Hill; rocks used to fall from on high, bounce on the road, and thump on to the Guardroom roof. After a shower in the ablutions one had to run back through the snow to the warmth of the little stove. I was there for only four months before I went on a pre-release book-keeping course at Catterick. Then it was time to collect my discharge suit, so I had to go down South. There was a typical "City Gent" suit on display, ideal for the Civil Service, so I asked to be issued with one like that,

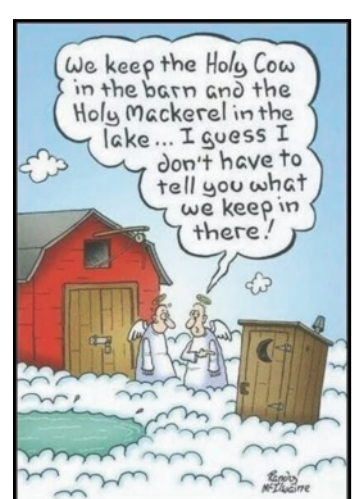
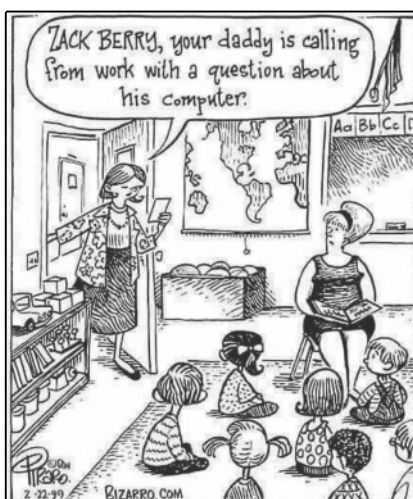
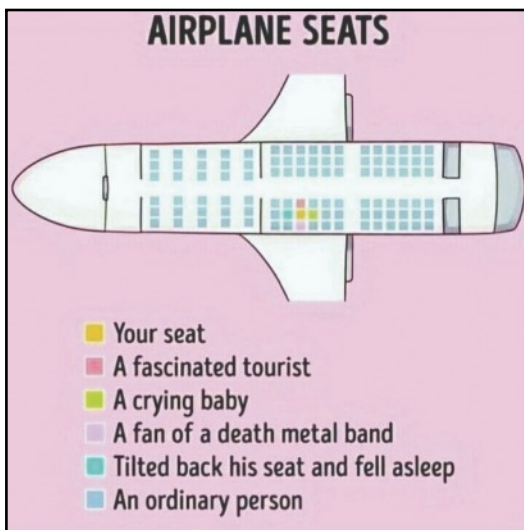
but – guess what – there were none available. It was for display purposes only, so I ended up with a very rough-looking herring-bone black jacket and trousers, and a brown raincoat. I also received £50 to set me up in Civvy Street. With my final travel warrant I was back to Aylesbury to start life anew.

Tom Pollard 43C (An absolute gent!)



Ed's Comments - Tom sent me these photos but never got around to telling me the background behind them. They are all obviously in the tropics.

Just a few funnies I picked up from the Internet.....



Robert R Temple Memories

Robert isn't a current member but some of you may remember him.

I got this letter from him earlier in the year. This was in response to him sending me some photos. He was quite a footballer and he has included some of his history below:

Dear Andrew,

Thanks for your letter. I find it difficult to remember the names of many of the men in the photos but I have tried my best. Those I remember are marked on the photos.

As regards to football, (I still play walking football), my list of performances is long and includes playing, coaching and refereeing.

- Captain for 2 seasons at AAS
- Signed on with Bristol Rovers in 1952
- Played for Alton Town
- Played for numerous REME teams in Germany, Egypt, Korea, Aden and the UK
- Played for the REME Depot team (I was the only non professional in the team)
- Won a CFN's cup medal and also coached 1 RHF to the Aldershot final
- Captain of the Combined Services team tour in Kenya
- Also played for 5 German teams and an Arab team in Yemen (I got paid!!)
- Coached in Korea, Egypt, Germany, Libya and the UK
- Refereed 2 Cup Finals in Libya (Civilian Teams)

As I am nearly 87 I might retire soon!

Maybe some of the ex Boys will remember me.

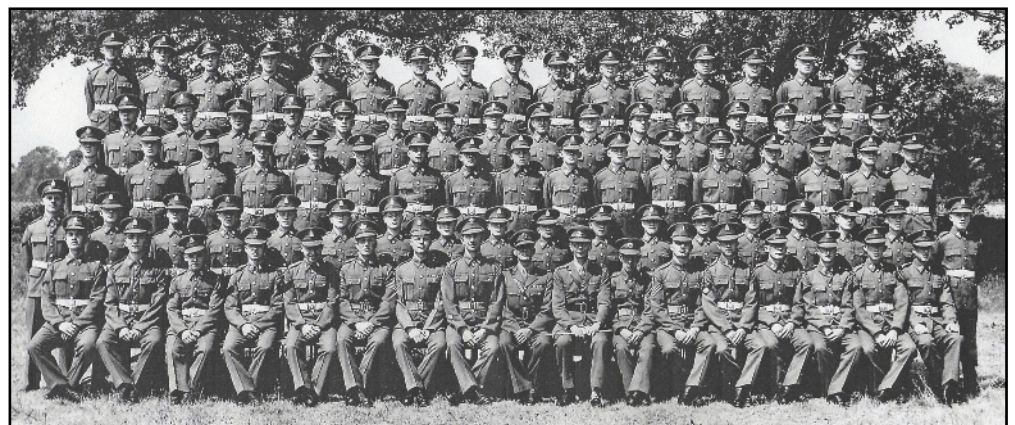
All the best, Robert R Temple

LH End of front row -
Withers

5th Front row - Williams

7th Front row - S/Sgt
Allister

RH End of front row -
Robert Reginald Temple



BOB TEMPLE - STAR OF THE PUBLIC!

SV BRACKWEDE beat TURA BERGKAMEN 2 : 1 (1 : 1)

In spite of the heat, the visitors played a quick game. In the first 15 minutes they cut out the Brackweders altogether, in this part of the match, goalkeeper BELHOUSE, fullback FRIEG and HÖFS saved the Brackweders with a good defense technique of big kicks, but as the Bergkamen centre half JOHN kicked in the 20th minute, there was no chance for the SVB goalkeeper. Well-pointed and hard, JOHN kicked the ball in the net. Then TEMPLE finished a combination and kicked in for 1 : 1.

In the second half the Brackweders played much better. With a quick start they commenced attacking. The two outside forwards FRIEG and RENNER made a good figures. The victory goal fell in the 62nd minute, MANFRED HENKE kicked in from a sharp angle.

Bob TEMPLE with his wonderful dribbling again was the star of the public.

Bob Temple war der Publikumsliebling

Die SV Brackweide besiegte Tura Bergkamen knapp mit 2:1 (1:1)

SV Brackweide: Belhouse; Fieger, Traubiller, Glensberg, Höfs, Grabbe; M. Henke, Pülkahn, Schürke, Temple, Götze. Tura Bergkamen: Lohr, Bockschack, Siedler, Matzke, John, Glazen, Frieg, Grotz, Müller, Gönig, Renner.

Tore: 20. Min. bei John, 38 Min. 1:1 Temple, 62. Min. 2:1 M. Henke.

Trotz der großen Hitze legten die Gäste ein schnelles Tempo vor. Sie schürten die Brackweders in der Anfangsviertelstunde völlig ein. In diesem Spielabschnitt bewährten Torwart Belhouse, Verteidiger Fieger und Stopper Höfs mit sehr gutem Abwehrspiel die Brackweders vor einem schnellen Rückstand. Als jedoch Bergkamens Mittelfürer John in der 20. Minute bei einem Freistoß Maß nahm, war für den SVB-Hüter nichts zu halten. Placiert und wuchtig schob John den Ball in die Maschen. Erst der 1:1-Ausgleich, Temple schloß eine Kombination ab, gab den Platzherren starken Rückhalt.

Im zweiten Spielabschnitt dominierten die Platzherren mit überlegenen Feldspiel. Mit schnellem Flügelstürmerspiel startete der Verbandsspieler Entlastungsangriffe. Die beiden Außenstürmer Frieg und Renner vermerkten bei diesen Blitzvorstößen gut zu gefallen. Das SVB-Siegertor fiel in der 62. Minute. Manfred Henke erspartete sich einen weiten Abschlag aus der Hinterrangschicht und schloß aus spitzem Winkel unahbar ein. Weitere Chancen wurden vom Brackweder Angriff anschließend vergeben. Bob Temple war mit seinem geschäftigen Dribblespiel wieder einmal der Publikumsliebling.

REFEREE LIBYA 1968

Ed's Comments: I appreciate these photo reproductions may be hard to read but I can only do my best with the material that is sent me. This is not a complaint or criticism, just a statement. I know some of the material has been out there for many decades in some cases and so doesn't reproduce very well even with the help of Adobe Photoshop. Andy 66B

The Arborfield Apprentice

The following page and a half are copies from "The Arborfield Apprentice" Volume 4, Number 8 from Autumn 1960 supplied by Ken Anderson (58A).

I have scanned the full magazine onto a .pdf an Ian Clark has posted it onto the AOBA website.
If any of you have copies of earlier or later versions please send them to me. I will scan them and then return the originals

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THE ARBORFIELD APPRENTICE

ARMY APPRENTICES' SCHOOLS

Army Apprentice School, ARBORFIELD

TRADES TAUGHT

Control Equipment Tech.	Electrician R.E.M.E.
Radar Technician	Vehicle Mechanic
Telecommunications Tech.	Instrument Technician

Army Apprentice School, CHEPSTOW

TRADES TAUGHT

Ammunition Examiner	Electrician R.E.
Engine Fitter (I.C. Engines and Pumps)	Engine Fitter (Plant)
Fitter Machinist	Survey Trades R.E. (Field and Printing)
Welder	Bricklayer
Carpenter and Joiner	Painter and Decorator
Plumber and Pipe Fitter	

Army Apprentice School, HARROGATE

TRADES TAUGHT

Electronic Technician R.C. of Signals	Telegraph Technician
Line Technician	Telegraph Operator
Radio Technician Relay	Draughtsman Architectural
Radio Technician Light	

Army Apprentice School, CARLISLE

TRADES TAUGHT

Armourer	Vehicle Mechanic
Fitter	Fitter Gun

OUTLINE OF

TRAINING & CONDITIONS AT ARBORFIELD

1. Object

The primary object of the School is to train apprentices for a technical career in the Army and to fit them for promotion to Technical Warrant Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers in the Corps to which they are posted when they leave the School.

2. Conditions of Entry

Boys are admitted by Competitive Examination and Selection. Examinations are held three times a year, normally in February, June and October. Entrants must be between 15 and 17 years old on enlistment and must have left school before being enlisted. They may take the Entrance Examination three months before reaching their fifteenth birthday.

3. Period of Service

Boys who are accepted must enlist to serve the with Colours until their eighteenth birthday, and thereafter for 12 years on Man's Service, nine with the Colours and three with the Reserve.

4. Training

All trades, taught at Arborfield, are R.E.M.E. trades. The period of training is three years, regardless of the age at entry.

All first-term apprentices are kept together in one Company and for their first term, receive military training and academic education in roughly equal proportions. Games and P.T. form a large part of this initial training and continue throughout School Life.

The syllabus of each trade is progressive, term by term. In addition to the main trade taught, each apprentice undergoes training in Basic Workshop Practice during his first year. This includes Welding, Sheet Metal Work, Blacksmithing and Machine Work. During the first two years of training, Engineering Drawing is also taught.

Education continues throughout the training period and is organised to integrate with the various trade syllabuses, apprentices receiving instruction in English, Mathematics and the more general subjects. The primary examination aim is the Senior Test which is equivalent to the Army Certificate of Education 1st Class, the educational requirement for promotion to Warrant Officer.

If the apprentice shows sufficient educational progress, he may sit for subjects in the General Certificate of Education, conducted by Cambridge University. Apprentices are also encouraged to sit for the City and Guilds of London Examinations, appropriate to their trades. Other apprentices who are sufficiently advanced educationally are entered for Ordinary National Certificate courses, which are carried out at Reading Technical College. These apprentices attend for training one day a week at Reading, their fees being paid by the Army.

In order that the apprentice's parents may watch his progress, term tests and examinations are held in trade and educational subjects and consolidated term reports are forwarded to parents at the end of each term.

There is a resident Church of England Chaplain at the School who is responsible for the Spiritual Welfare of the Staff and apprentices of his own denomination.

Regular weekly Services are held for all denominations and each Apprentice Tradesman is given regular weekly Religious instruction, both in doctrine and worship. Confirmation Classes are held and apprentices and Staff are presented for Confirmation twice yearly. In addition to this the Chaplain is always available for personal interviews and is ready to advise and help any member of the School in so far as he is able.

Other Denominations' Chaplains visit the School weekly for their classes, interviews and services.

5. Sports and Games

All types of games and sports are organized and encouraged; Inter-Company, Inter-School and Inter-Service competitions and meetings are arranged. School Colours are awarded to School representatives in sporting events. In addition to sport at week-ends, each Company has two sports afternoons during each week.

6. Amenities

Company recreation rooms and a N.A.A.F.I. which includes billiards and games rooms, are available to all apprentices. Dances, film and "live" shows are organized regularly. There is an extensive Library containing a wide range of fiction, non-fiction and technical books. A Hobbies Centre caters for the Model enthusiast, and a Stamp Club, Camera Club, Cycling Club and Music Club provide further interests for leisure hours.

7. Food

Ample and excellent food is provided under the supervision of a messing officer.

8. Pay

No fees are payable by parents and Apprentices receive Army rates of pay from the date of their enlistment. Clothing, food, accommodation and medical and

dental treatment are provided free. Apprentices pay a small subscription from their pay towards the cost of sports and entertainment.

9. Leave

Three weeks' leave is given at Christmas and Easter, and four weeks in the Summer. Arrangements are made for those Apprentices who are for any reason unable to spend their leave with parents, guardians, or friends.

10. Opportunities after Training

Successful Apprentices leave the School to join a Corps in the Regular Army according to the trade in which they have been trained as Class III Tradesmen and in possession of the Educational Certificate which enables them to qualify for promotion to warrant rank. It must, then, be the object of the ex-apprentice to qualify as soon as possible as a Class II, and then Class I Tradesman.

11. Application Forms

Further information and application forms may be obtained from the Under-Secretary of State for War, the War Office (M.P.6), London, S.W.1, from the Commandant of any of the Schools, or from any Army Recruiting Officer.

A British Soldier (From the Internet)

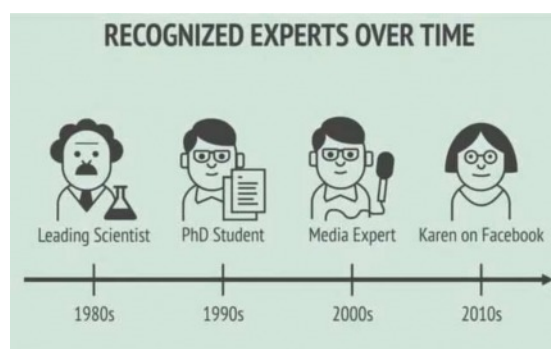
A veteran checks his watch, he is 5 minutes early for his 1st civilian job interview, looking in the mirror he straightens his tie and remembers his Sergeant Major saying these words to him many years ago, 'fail to prepare, prepare to fail' as he showed him how to tie a half Windsor knot, the ex soldier checks the shine of his shoes, the length of his shirt cuffs protruding his suit jacket and cleanliness of his fingernails, he's Good To Go.

The interviewer asks the ex soldier what he can offer the company as it seems his 22 years' service may not offer evidence of his suitability.

The ex-soldier leans forward in his chair, 'excuse me sir if I may politely add I was not just a soldier, I was a brother to those that needed a brother, I have seen countries that most people dream about and seen things most people have nightmares about.

I was trained to do things other people can't, I am physically and mentally strong, I was trained to save those injured around me and encourage those that struggled close to me.

I served my country to protect those that couldn't protect themselves, I worked hours that would break most people in some of the most horrendous conditions, "Sir I was more than just a Soldier, I was a British Soldier!



REME on Parade - Alex Burt - 62A

The 24th June 1944 saw a major incident occur early in the day. An incident which, at the time, due to necessity of secrecy, was not widely discussed as it related to the second wave of the Normandy landings. If news were to get out that the German war machine had inflicted such a significant 'hit' it could have turned evens and encouraged a greater defence by the Nazi's in the Bocage area of Northern France.

With so many actions being marked with 75th anniversary events - it seemed only right and fitting that this particular, local, event should be appropriated observed.

But what was it to do with Lenham? Some, but not all are aware, others asked me on the day of the event. This in itself suggests that such an important part of local history is forgotten by some - hence its retelling here.

Those who know the cemetery north of the A20 will be aware of the (newly refurbished) gates erected in memory of the 52 men of the 6th Guards Tank Brigade Workshop (REME) who were killed on the morning of the 24th June 1944. Of the 52 - 46 were killed instantly, the remaining 6 dying of their wounds. At the time they were billeted at Newlands Farm, now Newlands Stud, near Charing.

Their role at the time was to convert the Churchill tanks with larger armaments and plough blades specifically for work in clearing the emplacements hidden in the notorious Boccage area of Northern France. They were a highly respected unit having served in other theatres of war including Africa prior to returning to England before the invasion of Normandy. They had moved down to the secure zone (at that time covering much of Kent) ahead of their planned departure.

On the morning of the 24th, early - around 7am - a V1 (flying bomb) 'doodle bug' was being pursued across the Kent skies by a Spitfire (possibly MK811 - piloted by Flt Lt Ivor Watson of 165 Squadron). It was heard to be flying into the ground with its rocket motor still running having been hit by the aircraft (rather than one which had run out of fuel and glided to a crash). It came down on in Newlands Farm - which had been taken over during the war as a workshop and staging post - with an array of Nissen huts as billet, and the main house being the Officers Mess.

With virtually no warning 7 of the Nissen huts were destroyed along with stores and offices, damage to 14 vehicles and 16 motorcycles. One officer and 20 other ranks were also wounded.

The secrecy element due to the work they were doing on the particular tanks (and the actual armament changes) led to the order for an 'active service burial' - where the men were laid to rest in a common grave dug by Scots, Grenadier and Coldstream Guardsmen. The interment took place that night by candle-light - with a map being drawn of the order of each man laid in the grave. The map was then placed in a glass bottle and buried also under a simple wooden cross.

These are the largest group of the war graves in Lenham - closest to the Sword of Sacrifice memorial.

These are the men who were being remembered at a service attended by the Major of Ashford, Lenham Parish Council and a large number of Senior Officers of the 103 Battalion REME (Ashford) as well as a Guard of Honour.

- Each of the 52 was named in a role call.
- Each receiving the salute of one of their own.
- Each was recognised with a poppy cross.
- Each received the grateful thanks of those present for their sacrifice.

The events of the 24th June 1944 remain in REME regimental history as the single biggest loss of life of 'honest craftsmen', ever.

It is the largest REME war grave, anywhere.

There is no glorification of war - only the glorification of sacrifice. As the saying goes, 'When you go home, remember us and say, for your tomorrow, we gave our today'.

It was humbling to see the current men and women of 103 Battalion each standing by a headstone - emphasizing as it were the magnitude of what each stone represents - a man in his military uniform - gone, but not forgotten.

So many local men were lost in both conflicts – and in battles since.

It is important to remember them all, and individually. It is also important to remember the stories that accompany their sacrifice.

As a foot note: many consider that the chalk cross which sits on the downs is a war memorial. And this is true. However, it was created in 1922 as a memorial to those from the village who died in the Great War. During the second war, the cross was covered up to ensure it could not be a way marker for enemy pilots.

As a further footnote – we should also remember that other than the 52 headstones of the REME workshop incident, there are other CWWG headstone - marking the Canadians – buried a long way from home - who were lost at the Lenham infirmary in the first war, as well as individual headstones and a small group in the corner near the gates - which includes a Luftwaffe pilot, fittingly illustrating that all are equal in death and, to the futility of war.

This was witnessed and written up in the magazine Lenham Focus following the 75th anniversary of the V1 bomb hitting the workshops. It and the photos were submitted by my son-in-law who is also a Parish Councillor, Mr Andy Ratcliffe.

He knows I am involved in the annual service of remembrance each year where I play the pipers lament at the service. Before the service I also play for the two New Zealand gunners, the Royal Tank Regiment lad and next to their graves is a Luftwaffe pilot brought down in 1940 during the battle of Britain. I play for the Canadians who passed away in the local hospital during WW1 to complete all the CWWG sites in Lenham Church Yard

The site can be seen from the A20 as you bypass Lenham on the left side coast bound. The memorial with the sword is clearly seen from the road.

The gates are refurbished regularly by members of the Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and it was right that they were refurbished for the 75th anniversary of this disastrous bombing

It is a privilege to be able to keep them in mind in my own way by playing the lament over them. Other wreaths are laid by family members who attend each year and by the REME Association Ashford Branch

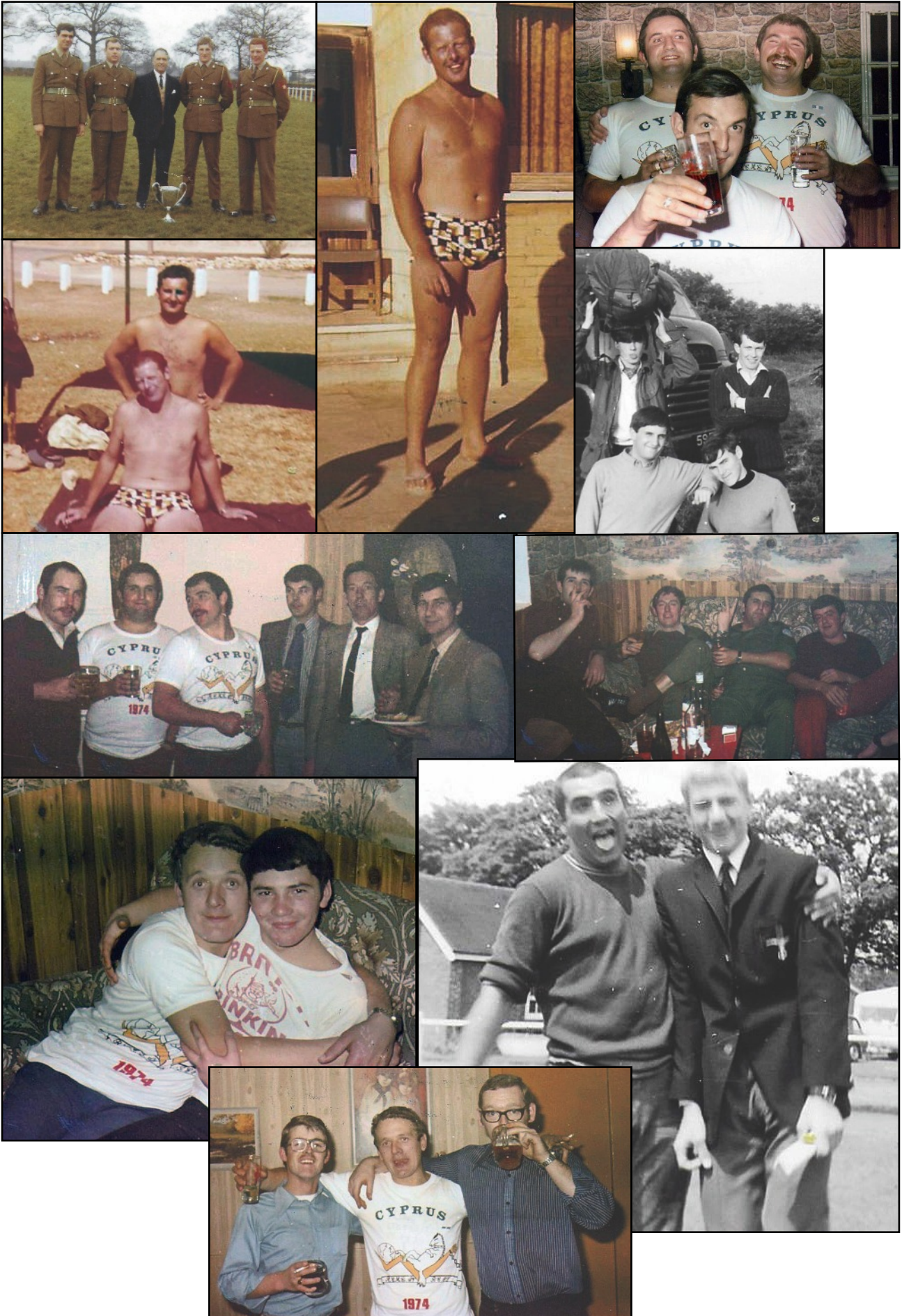
Arte et Marte lads and thanks for doing your duty.

Alex Burt -



Tony Moogan (66C) Photos

Tony Moogan (66C) found a film in an old camera recently and had it developed. Here are the results.



021617 S/Sgt Peter Sydenham Spargo R.E.M.E. Gun Fitter

Peter's Story:

Born in September 1922

At the age of 18, Peter joined the Royal Army Ordnance Corps in May 1939.

He later became one of the first 'intakes' at Arborfield, 42A, having achieved the second highest score, out of 100 candidates, for the entrance exam for REME in 1939.

At the age of 21 Peter became the youngest Staff Sergeant in REME.

Just after D – Day he was attached to the Royal Artillery 113 Battery, (LAD), looking after the Bofors guns.

Peter kept detailed daily diaries of his service and one entry tells of how he was with one of the first to go in to liberate Belsen in April 1945.

In 1947, he was posted back to Arborfield.

After further tours in Germany and UK, he retired after 20+ years' service

In 1960, Peter returned to Arborfield Apprentice College, Arborfield as a Technical Drawing Instructor.

Peter was awarded the British Empire Medal for services to his country, presented to him at Arborfield by Prince Phillip, when apparently they had a little joke about who was the eldest of the two of them.

Retirement gave Peter time to enjoy some sailing, on the REME yacht called the Blue Saluki in Southampton waters.

Peter and his wife Elsie have celebrated milestone wedding anniversaries, a Golden Wedding and a Diamond Wedding and this September they would have celebrated their 70th anniversary.

Peter's health had deteriorated recently and he passed away peacefully, with his family around him on the 5th of May aged 96.

Both Peter and his Son Andrew (74A) are mentioned in the 'Arborfield Apprentice' book, as Andrew followed in his dad's footsteps both by serving in REME and returning to the college as an Instructor in the Vehicle Wing.

Editors Comments: This is a remarkable document. Andy Spargo sent it to me a two months ago and it has taken me some time to go through the whole document to make it ready to be published here.

I have taken some liberties with the printed words. In some cases I have had to delete small sections as I couldn't make sense of Peter's handwriting. I have put (?) After some locations that I cannot find on a map. The smarter of you may be able to track them down. Andy sent me a scanned copy of the hand written diary so I have had the original document to refer to. It wasn't a help in all cases.

There are some comments that might make your toes curl and the section on Belsen Concentration camp certainly made me think about his exploits.

Peter has a smile on his face in all the photos I have seen of him.

Peter's Obituary appeared in OBAN 74

Andy Dickson 66B

From the war diary of 021617 S/Sgt Peter Sydenham Spargo R.E.M.E. Gun Fitter Serving with 370/113 L.A.A. Regt. R.A. War diary in the E.T.O. 1944

This being an authentic account of the personal adventures of Peter Sydenham, the junior Spargo, and his subsequent trials, tribulations, impressions, with tips of how to become a hero thrown in.

Please note that regard to the latter, the tips will not be gathered personally, but will be merely information relayed from diverse sources.

FORWARD

Written by that mendacious, mendicant himself, Peter S. Spargo, you lovely people.

As a general rule nobody bothers to read a "forward", but in this particular case I implore you to do so. Much must be explained! I fondly hope I am not crazy, despite prevalent opinions amongst my friends, neither am I a genius although I must say without a trace of egotism, I have my moments. However, in my impending series I hereby warn all readers that much tripe and drivel will be written but I do not apologise as this wee booklet is merely a means of passing the long winter evenings with minimum inconvenience to me. In fact, when I think of it, anyone who reads this is a Nosey Parker.

Much will be true but on the other hand much will not. Never the less these notes will prove what an ideal and praiseworthy life I am used to living, please note O future wife!

Friday 22 September 44

Spargo Day Plus One

Complete with thirty seven trucks we arrived off Dieppe at 09.00, after spending a comfortable night in LCT 7098, and landed about noon. The port certainly looks a wreck, with combined efforts at bashing's from the yanks, Jerry and us but we drove at a terrific speed through to the location of 53 RHO. My French just about stands the strain of conversation, although I do wish these people would speak "plus clairement"

Today, Tuesday we began a train journey to where I know not. Forty of us share a cattle-truck, really sumptuous travel, and the days are horrible and the nights worse.

Friday finds us moving with kit to the 34th RHO what a killer!

Bienene is the name of this place, about forty kilometres from Brussels. A high quota of cafes here with a fair shopping centre and of all things - Ice cream

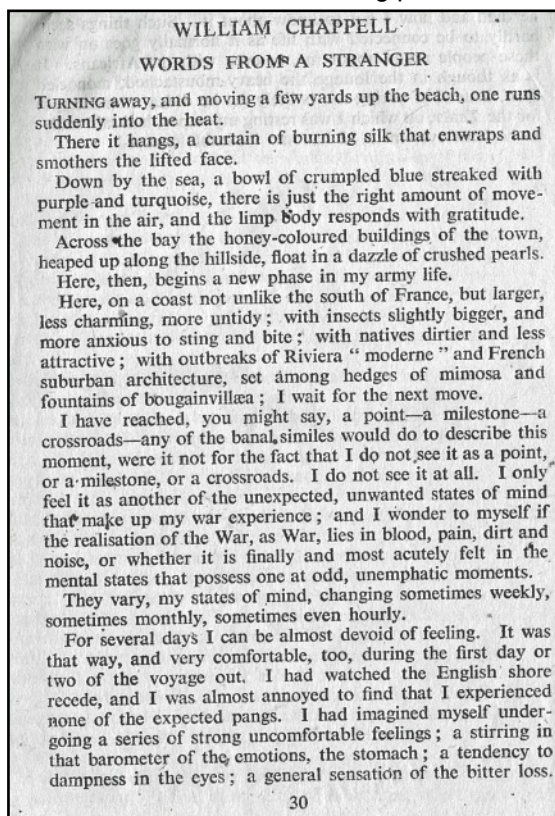
The mud around here is worthy of note, it is the most tenacious I have come across.

Tuesday 10 October 44

Entrained for Borg-Leopold where are to be our winter quarters. Pretty good here, as we RHO old soldiers have a cause and are in the process of amassing a supply of furniture.

Monday 16 October 44

At last have a unit and am being posted to the 100th AA Bde.



(6 Pages from William Chappell - Words from a Stranger attached to the original document)

Ed's note: Only 1 page attached. I have researched the Internet and cannot find the full excerpt.

Tuesday 17 October 44

Joined the 370/113 LAA Battery at Nijmegen, after passing through 12 Corps W/Shop at Eindhoven. The welcome consisted of shells from Jerry, as this unit is stationed at the top of the corridor with the enemy on three sides. The road has already been cut twice - I hope this practice will be discontinued immediately.

Saturday 21 October 44

Today opens with me having quite a comprehensive grasp on the workings and inner machinations of an LAD. It appears the essential qualifications for the poor old Staff Sergeant to have are a gift for diplomacy, ergo - to be resolute yet respectful to the officers and verbally support their opinions giving the impression that in the end all must be subject to your approval. To preserve cohesion, twist LAD and battery men if possible to your advantage and to cherish your own personnel against diverse onslaught by those in high places.

The paper organisation is now also well underway and slowly my system will render impossible any swindling attempts by the RA - I hope.

As a side-line, the war continues comparatively remote from us except for regular shelling. Planes used us and our buildings for targets this morning and the Boche with traditional generosity shared a few MG bullets amongst us. It is sincerely hoped my imagination is too be blamed but the ammunition appears to be landing more in the immediate vicinity than is usual.

But, happy thoughts!

Our monthly booze supply has arrived

Sunday 22 October 44

Spargo Day plus 31

Monday 23 October 44

Even in the most carefully regulated of units the personnel at times invariably have these moments. Such is the case now as I too have a feeling, not to be defined with words, but more to be experienced. A restless, elusive and intangible emotion, something which cannot be pinned down and dissected, a kind of yearning for I know what not of. (Pardon the grammar and terminology inexactitudes).

I suppose everything is going too well, no major setbacks as discomforts, but somehow I want to get at my work and bring everything completely up to date. But here I am frustrated as we are up to date! Perhaps a terrific social evening 'dans le ville' would improve the situation, a real ADGB affair with nothing, I repeat 'nothing' barred. But again no chance as the civilian population is very noticeable by its absence. What remains is pretty utility, no food, booze, furniture or house, only plenty of shells to share amongst themselves. Of course we also share em who stand and serve.

The war, according to the Nine O Clock news, is still going. Nothing terrific but steady progress. McAndrew now has twenty miles of beach at LATETY in the Philippines. Degalle is belatedly recognised by the Allied governments and the Spargo representative fights on in the Nijmegen salient.

Saturday 28 October 44

Today let us deal with Dutch barbers and their tonsovia methods. Thinking to slip rapidly through a hair removing process, I was very unethically driven down to the shop in our jeep, where I timed my entry through the doorway simultaneously with a burst of gunfire which caused the Netherlands therein to flinch somewhat.

I put them at ease with the famed Spargo oil.

A mere 30 minutes then went by while a chap was shaved 16.00 hours to 16.30 hours. Then I mounted the seat through courtesy of those who were there before me and with eloquent gestures said a trim, we started, or rather he nibbled, so I fluently asked for it to be somewhat shorter. He compromised by reducing the hair around my ear to half an inch. Again and again, I postured, gestured, winced and in general became very animated, but to no avail, my man was adamant and I emerged like Mickey Rooney for haircut, or conversely an excellent advertisement for Brylcreem and poorer by fifty cents. It beats me how the fellow makes an adequate living.

Passing thought! while we were returning from 'travail', a jet-plane laid 3 eggs near the bridge and also too near us for comfort, so No-chance -taken-Spargo and mate left truck and assumed recumbent position in an amazingly short time. We wear our dignity very tightly over here and one of the fastest men is our major. I'm good too!

Monday 30 October 44

Abrupt change in weather today as winter has pounced in no mean fashion. This has caused LAD priority number one job to be the fitting of doors to the jeep. This is under way.

A small ration of shells are now coming our way but 'G' troop was unlucky enough to stop one today (pardon rhyme unintended) but according to reports casualties are nil I believe (Spandee I believe)

Formal chat with the Colonel after tea, but he was not impressed with me, nor I with him. However the name born by yours truly was familiar and apparently one of our ilk is over at the 90th HAA in the radio section. My guess is cousin Nick Spargo and if ever a man was born for big army, he was.

Friday 3 November 44

A rush of work is upon our LAD, which causes me at least to move around some-what more rapidly than is usual, even to the point of causing the jeep to boil over. But with customary 'sang froid' I handle the impending situation with aplomb, a word here, another little word there, mixed with a small quantity of work and the result is harmony.

Harmony reminds me of money and in that direction I am well fiscal. For sheer villany give me the REME here, they would sell the boots and socks from each others feet if there was a profit in it. As it goes, anything goes, we'll soon be walking around with towells as loin cloths, because believe me, any portable object of monetary value becomes grist for the mill. I am an under-cover man, no active participation, but a rake off, as becomes my rank.

Our billets are now almost luxury quarters, being complete with spring beds, sheets, fires and hot water on tap. Complete I sincerely hope, with immunity from shellfire and other characteristics of active service, which gives peace of mind and a marvellous fug at night as well. Only the AT's are lacking as at present they have penetrated no further than Brussels, so here's hoping Nimegen obtains a quota, especially with regard to the 370/113 LAA Bty RA 100th AA Bde.

Tuesday 7 November 44

Today was somewhat more eventful due to a miscalculation by yours truly, an error which almost led to my hide being penetrated in several places. In fact while I am writing my heart is still thudding slightly. It came about thus:

Having finished all work down by the river, I and the gun-fitters set about looking for a little legal loot. After amassing an overcoat, new pair of slacks and cushion for self, travelled along a dyke road with the intention of finding a new and shorter way back to the billet. We travelled well secure in our own ignorance of what was about to happen. Soon the road grew rough and we began to bounce about more than is usual, and the countryside took on a certain kind of emptiness, that desolation which you associate with warfare. No people and no signs of life, just a complete void and stillness except for the push of our engine.

Away on either side of us was just peat country and in parts a sea of mud caused by the passage of many vehicles. On and on we went, past deserted buildings and a few dead and bloated animals, just ourselves perched up on a causeway, ambling along totally oblivious to the situation around us.

But we were disturbed to find what was happening in no uncertain manner. Passing a farmhouse which in some curious manner was still smouldering from shelling, we stopped to take stock of the situation, where upon below the bank and behind a hedge popped out a cautious yankee head from a foxhole, and grasping a rifle somewhat threateningly he informed us guys to get the hell out of it. 'Us Guys' off-handedly drove down the thirty degree bank to ask "we were on the road to Nimegen".

We weren't! Jerry was 400 yards away and had been mortaring the position a few moments ago and as the yank mentioned, it beat him how we had got along the road without being mortored. Temperatures rose abruptly and offering a brief prayer, I engaged the fourwheel drive and prepared to place the maximum distance between us and Jerry in the shortest possible time.

They say 'More haste, less speed' and it's true enough, straight up the bank and straight down again narrowly escaping from turning over, which did not improve our nerves any. Taking it more carefully we gained the road apparently in full view of Jerry and fled down the road as if auld Nick was after us, every moment expecting a shell or bullet. Fortunately nothing came our way and the only incidents were close due to my fast and oft erratic driving, and we eventually arrived at a post further back, one of the points where we mistook a warning as a friendly wave. Here reprimands were administered and accepted then to the safe road with the dyke between us and the enemy.

Some road, just a sea of mud but a lovely feeling to be on it in comparative safety and following an armoured truck we arrived back on the main route to find we were not yet out the woods. No sooner did I open my mouth to say only shells to bother us now, when along came one to bother us, and great was the dust, grit, and turmoil, and also great was our velocity again. There's nothing like a little blast to help things along. I recommend it - but not at close quarters!

Thursday 9 November 44

'The great Beer-Hunt'

Sum total of the days expedition down to Eindhoven was nil beer. A beer cellar which was not 'purse' in fact. However we did obtain some bottles of wine of 1922 vintage, and this will be greatly appreciated at Xmas it is hoped, but great was the suffering in obtaining this luxury.

Terrible weather and a wild drive back, no lights allowed, with plenty of mud, rain, sleet and diverse other greatly unappreciated items in the programme, so it was in a non humorous mood I arrived back beerless in our air raid shelters cum sleeping quarters

Saturday 11 November 44 Intense drama at 'Slush'?

Armistice day, but no visible signs of it over here, except one man died in Nimegen as though to mock mankind and his punny and inconclusive days of remembrance. A clean blue sky with a crisp nip in the air an atmosphere which we like to associate with the English countryside and the games of rugby we played in our schooldays but what we like is often denied us – death waited to collect his victim.

A man worked in his front garden, the only occupied house in a whole street of gaunt and wrecked buildings whose jagged chimneys pointed amusing fingers to the sky, whence came this destruction. In the adjoining courtyard a soldier worked amongst his stones unaware of the horror that was to break loose and tear flesh from bones and drain blood from vital arteries, destruction that was man-made – German made.

Yes, nobody suspected what was to happen except perhaps the man who released death and his thoughts would be cynical and dispassionate those thoughts unkind are mass produced by an evil and disease stricken regime that is Nazism and which we are determined to tear from the receptive living body of Germany and trample into oblivion with retributive and remorseless tread - a fight again in another generation. Never again must the dead be disturbed by the harsh sound of the marching jack-boot!

Peace is not yet and soundlessly the shell came, no whine or scream, only a sudden explosion which flung the soldier with irresistible force against the side of the wagon, from where he fell to the ground and automatically stretched into the prone position, cold beat at this heart and the thunder old falling masonry about him. After the deadly silence which followed came a scream of soul searching intensity, a scream of extreme mental and physical agony, causing shivers to run through a frame already shocked by the proximity of the explosion. But while one man lived, another died, and the man in his garden lay prostrate in his blood which flowed in an ever increasing stream from an almost decapitated body. The soldiers hesitantly and fearfully came closer, every instinct saying 'quickly, quickly' find shelter but nobody could have helped, a headless copse is past the aid of men.

Glancing about the soldiers prepared to dash for the cellar, but again the dread hand reached out and again the shell came, while the soldiers hugged the gutters frantically and felt the cold flush of terror run over him.

It was not his time yet however and he emerged unscathed and ran rapidly to shelter unashingly purposely dramatic account, I was really shaken today and was unbelievably glad to put the Spargo body in a safe cellar.

The dead man who was killed had his wife in the front room at the time, she was unhurt – but imagine seeing your hubby die in front of your eyes, it really did make me slightly sick.

'Note by self' Ignoring above

To be continued....



Young Spargo



L/Cpl Peter Spargo
Arborfield 1942



Bofors in Germany

GREED

By Adrian Lacamp - 64A

Copyright 2013 Adrian Lacamp

Jansen Ryder Van den Graf O'Shaughnessy was undoubtedly the biggest megalomaniac in the entire universe. At that time he owned outright, or controlled majority stock holdings in, more than twenty seven percent of all major interstellar industrial corporations, not to mention at least twenty four percent of the richest and most influential financials in the known universe.

He was, quite probably, the richest man in the Solaran Galaxy, which also meant that he was the single most powerful man in existence. But, it wasn't enough! For Jansen it could never be enough. He wanted more. No, he needed more, in fact he craved more. So much so that he had developed a plan. A plan that, if it worked out perfectly, and knowing himself as he did, it would leave him owning literally everything in the universe; lock, stock and barrel, and even the barrel makers, too.

The plan just needed someone to tweak a few knobs and blow the right whistles in the right places, and at the right time, too. And, of course, Jansen knew just the guy to do it; himself, of course. There was only one very slight drawback to this plan; he had to be on Old Earth for the next three days. The tweaks, however, had to be carried out while he had to be on Earth, and they had to be carried out by himself. And they had to be carried out on Thyloxia Five, a planet over ninety three thousand light years away across space, while also being carried out here, on Earth, simultaneously, and also by himself!

However, he knew that he could do it, because he was already on Thyloxia Five. And he was also here on Earth, in both places, already, and at the same time. Paradox? No, pure accidental luck? Oh, yes. But Jansen was just the man to take an opportunity and turn it to his advantage, and this was an opportunity, with a capital 'O'.

The opportunity had come about due to one of those mega-zillion to one random mishaps, the kind that can either wreak havoc, or prove to be serendipitous. Guess which one this was? It had happened on his travel to Earth, from Thyloxia Five, two days ago. Jansen had stepped onto the interstellar pad of his office complexes transporter platform, set his left hand on the main console, to allow the system to read his bio-signature, spoken his name and presented his left eye to confirm identification, spoke his destination, all perfectly normal, all perfectly safe. But what happened next left him not a little shaken for a moment. He not only stepped off the arrivals platform at his destination on Old Earth, but he realised that he was also still standing on his departure platform on Thyloxia Five. And, to cap it all, both of him knew that he had departed as normal and had remained, not as normal, from and on Thyloxia Five, he knew because each of him was aware of his other self at the other location. And both of him suddenly came up with the same thought at the same time. 'If I/We can make this happen again, under controlled circumstances, I/We can do what we want, where we want, when we want, for simple example, dream of world domination!'

So the seed of the plan was sown. His Earth bound self would continue to do what was needed on Earth, while his other self, whom he would call his Thyloxian self, got on with the business of finding out how to 'fix' the interstellar transport web, (the ITW), to make the same mistake again. Not only to duplicate the fault the ITW had perpetrated in creating his two selves, but to do it so that he was transported to all the main interstellar ITW inbound platforms, everywhere, and all at the same time. He would then go to each system's stock exchange and just buy, buy, buy.

Why this way, because the interstellar stock markets had dictated, many centuries ago that any major takeover, must be carried out in person, by the buyer, at the home planet exchange that the stocks were registered at. Thus hoping to prevent, in conjunction with other restrictions, the sort of takeover than Jansen was now planning.

The Thyloxian Jansen, using the ITW service logs, quickly determined the causal fault that effectively made him twice the man he was. It was actually a series of individual faults in the transmission computer system, faults that, individually, were harmless, but in instantaneous combination had caused the duplication. Each individual fault had been instantly self-repaired, however, they had each been fully documented in the auto-repair system. Knowing these details, they could easily be replicated, under the right conditions. It also helped that Jansen

Jansen, the Earth version that is, wasted no time in purchasing a further two percent stock options in the ITW and now safely controlled the whole shebang. He then set about putting their impeccable plan into action.

That had been seven Earth days ago. Jansen knew that his Thyloxian self had rewritten the safety protocols on the ITW, effectively overriding its ability to 'fix' certain 'faults' that their other new code would replicate and he had successfully tested it, by creating a third self, on Circes Seven

The time was now, the stocks targeted and carefully chosen. The timetable was fixed in his mind. The funds were all in place make the necessary purchases.

Earth Jansen, finally stepped onto the transmitter plate of the ITW in his office in New London, placed hand and eye at their receptors and, with a deep breath, clearly enunciated his name and his destination, a prearranged and fictitious destination, setup specifically for this venture.

Moments later he 'felt' almost a million other Jansens blink into existence. He felt them all, knew them all, for they were he, him, Jansen, and all with one goal in mind. To own the universe!

No, I will be the owner of the universe, came a million thoughts. And a millions minds shouted, 'No, I will rule, you will bow to me!' And a million thoughts crashed into a million minds. And a million minds could not take the strain, and a million minds could not take the pain. And in that last nano second of rationality, a million Jansens realised that each of him was exactly like the original... Greedy! ###

Ed's Comments: Ady is ex 64A B Coy. I came across him when looking for articles for this magazine. He has kindly let me publish this short story. He has other books and if you search his name on the Internet it will direct you Smashwords where they are located.

It is interesting what ex Boys get up to later in life. It seems Ady has had an interesting career as a crime intelligence analyst for a UK police force. Andy 66B

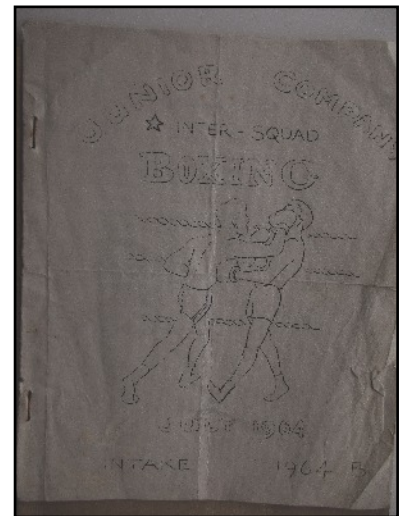
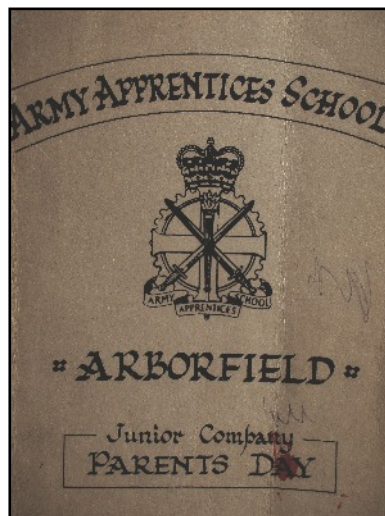
Photos from Gunter Webster - 64B

Hi Andy,

Some pics as requested for you. I think that the QM's never had my "size" combat kit! Just to also say thanks for the latest copy of the newsletter interesting read.

Cheers all the best

Gunter



AOBA Committee Succession Plan

Appointment	Name	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Remarks
Chairman	Mike Tizard				ASAP				Soonest
Vice Chairman	Bill Cleasby				ASAP				Soonest
Secretary	Phil Ellaway				ASAP				Soonest
Treasurer	Bob McKeegan-Brown				Appointed Jul 19			At AGM	Soonest
Membership	Dave Sparrow			Appointed 1 Oct 18			At AGM		
OBAN Editor	Andy Dickson	Appointed 1 Sep 16				At AGM			
Website	Ian Clark		Appointed 1 Sep 17			At AGM			
Database/GDPR	Ian Clark		Appointed 1 Sep 17			At AGM			
Recruiting	Bruce Leslie		Appointed 1 Sep 17			At AGM			
Benevolence	Roger Traves				ASAP				Soonest
Standard Bearer	Dave Merrick				Appointed 2019			At AGM	
Remembrance	Jim Gardner				ASAP				Soonest

As discussed at the AGM in July 2019, this is the current AOBA Committee Succession Plan. As you can see there are vacancies that have become available at the AGM and those that will become available soon. As Chairman, it is my duty to make sure we have continuity on the committee and I would ask that you consider the coming vacancies and put your name forward so that we can build a plan and have a smooth transition from the incumbent to the appointee.

Many thanks - Mike Tizard - AOBA Chairman

Letters to the Editor

Tom Pollard (43B) writes:

Hi Andy

Many thanks for the latest Newsletter, excellent as ever.

Seeing mention of Vehicle Mechanics, I thought they might be interested in my memories of wartime vehicles.

On my daily walk up Aylesbury High Street on my way to school I would meet lorries marked "Portland Blue Circle Cement" and others marked "London Brick Works" - they were unusual in that they were Steam Lorries and I think their tyres were solid rubber. Due to petrol rationing, some cars trailed a two-wheeled burner which produced gas to fill a bag on the car roof.

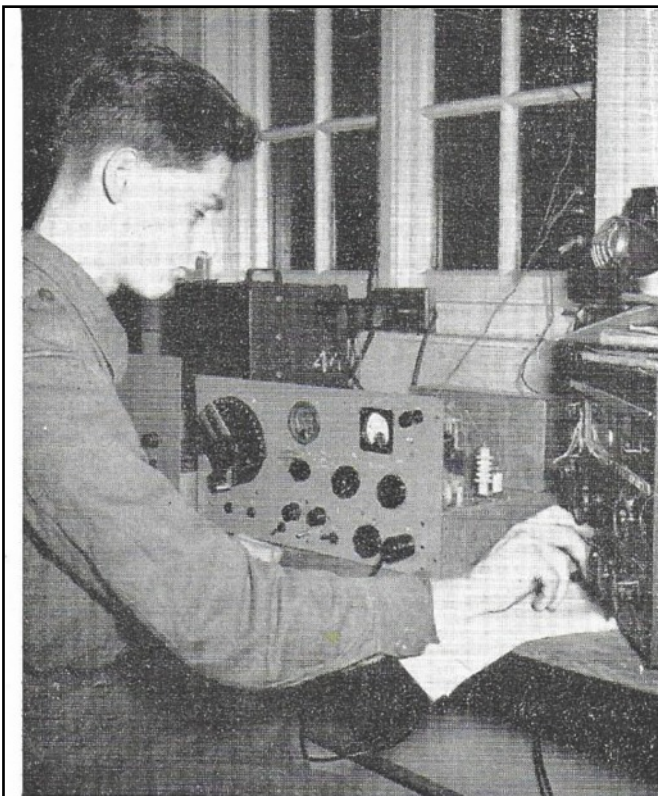
Would Arborfield Veh Mechs have been able to get them going again in case of breakdown?

Tom Pollard (43C)

Ken Anderson (58A) Writes:

Having completed the first year of my apprenticeship of basic military training, then file bashing and ancillary blacksmithing, welding and tinsmithing I started my radar mechanic trade training in earnest. Very soon I was in Fred Halls class studying electronics. Fred was a keen radio amateur who as well as running the Schools Radio Club also had his own radio shack at his home in nearby Eversley. I joined the Radio Club for their weekly meeting but Fred invited me to use his radio receivers and transmitters at his home on Sunday afternoons and to have Tea with his wife and family.

About the same time the annual Aldershot Show was coming up and it was quite normal for the Apprentice School to have a display there. I was chosen to participate to show the work of an Apprentice Electronics mechanic and spent three days constructing and wiring an amateur radio transmitter. The accompanying photo shows me in the Radio Club tuning a receiver and in the foreground next to it is the Top Band Transmitter I built.



Tuning in! Andy Anderson (A.R. 88 Receiver)

AMATEUR RADIO CLUB (G3HOS)

This club is intended to prepare members for the Radio Amateurs examination, to give experience in the operation of a Radio station, and to give opportunities for the construction of personal equipment. Our accommodation is limited at present and it was decided to restrict membership to twenty-four. However, some unsuccessful applicants for membership refused to take "No" for an answer, and "picketed" the club room on Monday nights! Such keenness had to be rewarded; we now have thirty members.

A transmitter has been built to cover the amateur "top-band" Mr. Hall, who supervised its construction has every reason to be pleased with the result; reports from other stations on its performance are favourable.

Those interested in operating the transmitter and receiver converse "over the air" with radio amateurs from all walks of life. "Pete" Corbett is usually huddled in the corner with a tape recorder, swotting morse. (One member was heard to remark that "Pete" is a useful chap to have in

Mike Allcock (42C) Responds to Peter Thompsons Contribution in OBAN 74

Peter Thompsons article and letter re Rapier in issue 74 of OBAN stirred my memory a bit. I may have beaten him to the first Instruments Arm Art to work on Rapier, in a way.

After leaving service at the end of my 8&4 as an ARM ART (Instruments), circa the 50's, I went on to qualify as a Chartered Engineer, specialising in control systems. Joining English Electric in Stevenage, again in the late 50's, I was working on Thunderbird 2. I was responsible for the LCP layout and some of the computer design. At some point before the end of 1962, when I left what had become BAC, I was assigned to a design study team for a light missile system, Land Rover or trailer mounted, assigned the name PT428. It was possibly the start of Rapier.

Looking back, I think this was possibly the most enjoyable part of my career as an engineer.

Regards,

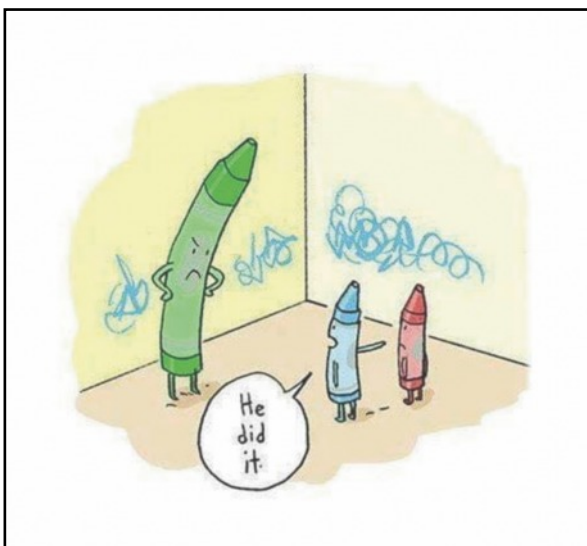
Mike Allcock 42C

From our Chairman, Mike Tizard - 76B2

The REME were delighted to be invited to Bohunt Wokingham school on the evening of the 16 October to attend their annual awards evening and present three awards. The awards were all STEM related and covered Innovation, Collaboration and Resilience.

Lt Col (read) Mike Tizard presented the Apprentice Cup, Lt Col (read) John Edwards OBE the Bluebell Bowl (Association) and WO1 CASM Paul Hembery the Rowcroft Cup (REME).

What's the connection? Well Bohunt Wokingham school sits on the same site as the old REME Army apprentice college, later known as Rowcroft Barracks. Over 55,000 REME tradesman were trained on this site from 1938 through to 2004 and we are delighted that the site remains a place of STEM education. Long may our connection with the school remain.



Obituary's

Former WO1 (ASM) Gerald Vernon Wright

Scribe: Maj (Retd) Peter Barlow



I have known Gerry for only the past three years having met him and his partner Mary through our common interest in ballroom dancing.

He was both proud of and grateful for his REME service. I thank his granddaughter Rachel for the information she has provided on his past life.

Gerry was born on 23rd August 1931 on the Isle of Wight, to Alfred and Ellen Wright, the second of their six children. The family moved to Jamaica where Alfred was Master Gunner with the RA. They returned home to England in 1939 on the HMS

Ettrick, just before war was declared. (HMS Ettrick sank following a U-boat attack in 1942.)

Growing up in Aldershot, Scotland, Hertfordshire and Northampton, Gerry considered High Cross in Hertfordshire to be his spiritual home. As a child in war time, Gerry enjoyed collecting memorabilia. His father would check the collection to exclude any live ammunition!

In 1946, Gerry attended the Army Technical School, Arborfield. His first taste of active service then came in Malaya. He served in Temerloh, Kuantan and finally Ruab where he was with the Ghurkha Brigade. On return to the UK in 1955 he met and married Joyce with whom he had three children. Postings included Singapore, Germany (Detmold, Wassenberg), Aberdeen and perhaps most exotic of all, Middle Wallop.

As well as being a conscientious and skilled soldier Gerry enjoyed the social life with Joyce and they made many friends. On leaving REME in 1972 the family settled in Swindon. Gerry graduated from St Peter's College, Birmingham in 1974 and became a teacher at Headlands School, Swindon.

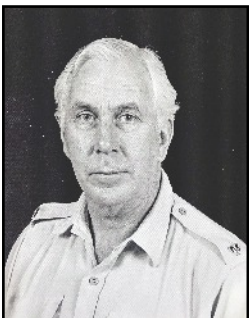
Retirement in 1991 gave him more time to enjoy golf, gardening and silversmithing. His skills at the latter were impressive and he became a part time teacher at the local technical college. How many retired REME soldiers have their own silver hallmark? Watch out for the letters GVV which grace his work.

Gerry cared for Joyce when she became ill until her death in 2008. Mary, a long term friend helped him through the difficult times and their common interests, especially golf, dancing, and the Telegraph crossword brought them together.

In the short time that I have known Gerry, he has impressed me with his pride in everything he undertakes. Sylvia and I extend our condolences to his family and friends. He will be missed by so many.

Maj (Retd) John Batchelor

Scribe: Col (Retd) M J Capper



John Batchelor was born in 1930 and joined REME as an apprentice in 1945.

He then served in Jamaica, Egypt, Tripoli, Aden and BAOR.

He was commissioned in 1969 and after a spell at 27 Command Workshop he was posted to Cyprus where he gained a Private Pilots Licence.

John then moved to 9 Field Workshop (Force Troops) as the Administrative Officer and was able to join the Bordon shoot and became a deer manager.

He then went on to serve with 10 Field, AMF(L) and again 9 Field Workshop. He was appointed as an EMAE in 1977 and promoted to Major in 1978.

He was the Senior Instructor B Vehicle Wing at SEME, before his last appointment as OC of the UEE team based at 27 Command Workshop, before retiring in 1986.

Throughout his career John had been devoted to supporting his mother in Fordingbridge but late in life he married Peggy and settled in Stratford upon Avon.

John was a lovely man, avuncular, with a good sense of humour and turn of phrase, delivered in a wonderful country burr. He loved the countryside and following Peggy's death his last years were spent in a home, where he gained great pleasure from watching the wildlife in the fields beyond his window.

Obituary – Thomas Charles Sidney Pollard (Tom)

Army Number; 2548697 Thomas Charles Sidney Pollard (Tom)
b. 20 June 1928, d. 5 November 2019

Intake – October 1943



Tom was born on Midsummer's day in 1928 in Slough where he lived until his mother passed away in 1933 and his father, who was a policeman, moved him to live with his grandparents in Aylesbury. His grandfather had recently retired as the Deputy Chief Constable of the Bucks Constabulary and Tom had a very strict upbringing living with his grandparents. He was in the Scouts until the outbreak of war at which point he was enrolled as a Messenger for the Town Clerk.

He joined the Army Cadet Force and then had to leave the Scouts as he was at Aylesbury Grammar School and had to manage his schoolwork as well as his "war time" duties. He was extremely bright and passed his school exams two years before he was actually due to take them, making him the youngest person in his class by at least two years! On 5th October 1943 Tom joined the army and made his way to Arborfield, to the Army Technical School. He joined the hockey team (it was either that or rugby which he wasn't keen on) playing as left back. He also played in the cricket team and loved a game of tug of war!

Tom eventually joined REME as a Field Telecommunications Mechanic and travelled around the UK doing a number of training courses to develop his skills. He discovered that his forte did not lie so much in technical or engineering skills but rather in administration and he was put on admin and general duties. He travelled to Sierra Leone and then Nigeria, as well as other parts of Africa where he stayed for approximately three and half years, taking very infrequent leave of absence to go back to England and visit

his family. He enjoyed his time in Africa, learning some of the local languages and living in all sorts of accommodation including mud huts. He survived through many tropical storms, including the roof of his hut being blown away, malaria and civil unrest.

Tom was posted back in the UK at Perth, Balhousie Castle Camp, where he joined the local hockey club and Perth Drama Club and appeared in some of their plays. After a few years in Perth Tom travelled via Gibraltar to Singapore with the army where he served as Senior Warrant Officer, then on to Mumbai (or Bombay as it was known in those days). He eventually returned to England at which point he left the army after a total of fifteen years' service....and was then back on civvy street!

Tom found employment as an Imports/Exports Supervisor at a company called Lucas, the once famous automotive parts manufacturer, in a village near Aylesbury called Haddenham. There he met a lovely lady called Margaret who later became his wife. Tom and Margaret lived in Haddenham for a total of 56 years where they raised their two daughters and were very active members of the community and their local church. Tom was loved and respected by everyone he met and he afforded everyone the same courtesy, regardless of who they were. He was always a very positive and kind person, very bright and quick witted and great fun to be around, often

in telling funny anecdotes of his days in the army. In recent months he has written his memoirs of the fifteen years he spent in the army and two of the three pieces he wrote have been published in the Arborfield Old Boys Association magazine. Part three will be coming soon...

He leaves behind his wife, his two daughters and two grandchildren and will be very sadly missed by all who knew him.

Juliet Pollard

Ed's comments - I have been corresponding with Tom for some months now. Articles he wrote appeared in OBAN's 71 and 74 and the last instalment he sent me appear in this edition.

Tom was a gentleman and I will miss the e-mail exchanges we had.

It was a shock to hear that he had passed away and I am grateful to his daughter, Juliet, for letting me know.

RIP Tom, Arte et Marte.

Andy Dickson 66B

Members Passed since 13th July 2019

Name	Intake	DoD	Info Received From
Gerald Vernon Wright	46	9 th Jul 19	Craftsman - Sep 19
Norman John Crocker	42A	24 th Jun 19	Janet Crocker
David Robert Ferns	44B	2 nd Sep 19	David Higgs 44B
Terrence (Terry) Reddin	52A	1 st Sep 19	Trevor Stubberfield 52A
Robert Newcombe	44A	20 th Aug 2019	Widow, Joan Newcombe
Eric Dalston Wealls	54B	5 th Sep 19	Iain Cumner
Geoffrey Frank Earnest	58A	30 th Sep 19	Son, Abi Gillison
Philip (Phil) William Christie	46A	6 th Oct 19	Son, Julian Christie
George Cecil Wooley	43A	13 th Oct 19	Son, John Wooley
Thomas Charles Sidney Pollard	43C	5 th Nov 19	Daughter, Juliet Pollard
Alec Raymond Powell	64C	13 th Nov 19	David Schofield
Charles Ronald Newnham	38B	14 th Nov 19	Son, James Newnham 64C
Phil Christie	46B	6 th Oct 19	Craftsman - Dec 19
Colin (Sam) Salter	44B	26 th Nov 19	Roger Traves

Stand Easy

No need at last to turn out more than the usual 'five minutes before'
 No final rub with yellow duster assembling for the morning muster,
 Duties now are in the past it's time for you now to 'stand fast',
 You did your time, you gave your best, and now you've more than earned your rest;
 So sleep your sleep Old Soldier - Friend, contented, knowing in the end,
 That all your friends will pause awhile and fondly think of you – and smile.

TC - 55A

Remembrance Day Parade Nov 10, 2019

