

**Aug
2022**



**Issue
83**

Arborfield Old Boys Association Newsletter



www.arborfieldoldboys.co.uk

ARBORFIELD OLD BOYS ASSOCIATION



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Colonel Jason Phillips ADC

Vice Presidents

All past Commandants

Chairman

Major (Retired) Geordie Wright-Rivers
(77C)

Vice Chairman

Lt Col Bill Cleasby (Retired)
MBE, IEng, FIET, SQ(W)

Treasurer

Lt Col Bob McKeegan-Brown (Retired) -
(69A)

Recruitment Officer

Bruce Leslie (75C)

Bereavement Officer

Roger Traves - (57A)

Secretary

Nigel Canning (77C)

Vice Chairman

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

Webmaster

Mark Jobes (77C)

Database Manager

Jeff Baker (65C)

Membership Secretary

Maj Dave Sparrow (Retired)
IEng, MSOE, MIRTE (76B2)

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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Front Cover: Flag Bearers at the 2022 AOBA Reunion

Rear Cover: Mike Tizard and Ian Buchan after the REME Virtual 10K Run in the New Forest

AOBA Chairman's Report



Dear Members,

I hope this OBAN finds you all fit and well.

This latest spike of COVID has hit quite a few people and it's been quite debilitating for some. In the lead up to the reunion we had a few catch the virus and drop out which was a real shame.

Indeed, one of our committee members felt not quite right on the Friday and dreadful by the Saturday morning. He decided to do the right thing and to head home early and self-isolate; well done Bruce. Thankfully, and I've heard nothing to the contrary, I think the vast majority of those attending survived the weekend COVID free and only had an alcohol induced sore head!

Turning my thoughts to the reunion, I thought it was an absolute cracking weekend.

For the committee, the Saturday is always a busy day and with four distinct elements to organise and run (Parade, Church Service, AGM and Gala Dinner) we are kept busy. We do enjoy it though, and I'm amazed at how we seem pull it out of the bag every time.

Having not been on parade for three years, I think we did an excellent job and even had a round of applause as we marched off. As usual, the Band were brilliant and put the icing on the cake.

In my opinion the highlight of the NMA was the church service. It was deeply moving and with over 200 family members present it touched a lot of hearts. A few tears were shed, as we remembered our past members, and our pipers playing the 'Apprentices Lament' and the bugler who played the 'Last Post' were superb and really added to the occasion. I think there were over 400 at the service, which was very special indeed.

As I think back on my tenure as your Chairman, I have only good memories. I thought I would be in the Chair for three years, you've let me stay for over seven.

I must thank all those who have volunteered to serve on the committee and freely given of their time. Gentlemen I salute you one and all, as while I may have been the man at the top, it is you that have provided the drive and energy to make things happen. As a team we have moved the Association forward and I'm delighted to hand over a pretty well sorted and stable ship.

Of course, there have been some bumps and waves along the way, but as a team we have dealt with them and driven forward. I like to think we have reformed the Association in a methodical way, we have not been revolutionary but have thoughtfully refined the business to ensure we are a modern and relevant organisation serving its members to the best of our ability.

I'm certainly very proud of what we have achieved. As I move to become a less active back bencher, I wish Geordie all the very best.

I'll finish on the same theme as previous reports, and that is in a plea to the membership to step up and volunteer to join the Committee. We have a fabulous Association and one that we are all very proud of, but if it's to continue then a timely influx of new committee members is essential. If you have the time, please think on it.

All the very best,

Mike Tizard

Your Chairman
Arte et Marte

Incoming AOBA Chairman's Report



In contemplating what to write, I scanned the latest copy of our newsletter which served not only to provide me some food for thought, but, more importantly, it reinforced what I already knew about AOBA and what a truly great organisation we are all a part of. In my day job with the REME Charity and the wider military community, it is clear to me that AOBA is a real success story, providing the benchmark for other similar organisation and is the envy of many.

Any organisation is only as good as its leadership and much of our success is attributable to the hard work and diligence of all previous committee members, not least my Jeepland AT Cpl, Mike Tizard! I know personally, having worked alongside him for much of the last 5 or 6 years, just how much time and effort he has dedicated to the Association and the sleepless nights spent mulling numerous "nutty issues" he has had to contend with. He, and the remainder of his committee, have really taken the Association forward and I know I have some very big shoes to fill, but I will give it my best shot.

To business then. I sadly missed this year's reunion due to a number of other events taking place over that weekend but this has now been de-conflicted and will not happen again. I have been told by many that it was an outstanding weekend tinged only by the sombre reality of having to say a final farewell to so many of our 132 departed friends over the last three years. In the short time since the last reunion, I have been attempting to plan for next year's event but have been greeted by the news that Jurys Inn at Hinckley is due to hike its prices by at least 36% this year thereby putting it out of our price range. It is the same story at many hotels up and down the country, so it has been a priority to seek out an alternative venue and get it booked at a reasonable price. With the assistance of Isle of Wight Tours, we have found such a place at the Delta Hotel, just off the M40 in Warwick. It is a smart and modern venue which has promised us similar prices to those which we have previously enjoyed at Hinckley. More to follow in due course but please log the new dates of **16 – 18 Jun 23** in your diaries for planning purposes.

Given the recent success of our stalwart 50th anniversary leads for the 70, 71 and 72 intakes in rallying the troops (Jim Chadwick 71C, Titch Walton 72C and Neil Graham 72A), I would like to formally introduce the position of Intake Champion, to be in post for the year approaching the next reunion. That individual's role will be to simply act as liaison with the committee and to seek out and inform those apprentices in their 50th anniversary year. Accordingly, I invite volunteer(s) from the 1973 intakes to get on board soon.

Anyone who knows me well will confirm that I do sometimes talk too much and find myself in danger of doing that now so will try to close! Before putting pen to paper today, I also looked again at our constitution and would just like to remind everyone of our objectives:

To promote the efficiency of the Army by:

- Maintaining contact between former apprentices of the Schools and Colleges and their REME Junior Soldier Successors, and;
- Fostering mutual friendship between them and providing for social gatherings for them.
- Fostering esprit de corps, comradeship and preserving the traditions of The Schools and Colleges.
- To relieve either generally or individually Beneficiaries of former Apprentices of The Schools and Colleges and their Dependents, who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress.
- To commemorate and remember Members or former Members of the Armed Forces of the Crown and in particular those former Apprentices of The Schools and Colleges and their junior soldier successors who have lost their lives or suffered injury, or put themselves at risk of loss of life or injury, in service to the public.

In the simplest terms, the key words I draw from those are:

Friendship – Esprit de Corps – Comradeship – Tradition – Relief and Benevolence – Remembrance

If we can all remember those very simple words we will undoubtedly continue to prosper and thrive way beyond the years of our current membership. Thanks again to Mike and his committee for all of your hard work in getting us here and I look forward to your guidance and support going forward as our Vice-Chair (like you did in 1977!).

Arte et Marte

Your Chairman

Geordie Wright-Rivers - 77C

Members Passed since OBAN 82

Name	Intake	DoD	Info Received From
Gordon L (Sandie) Sanders	52B	18 December 2021	Craftsman Magazine
John Strugnell	57B	9 March 2022	Sharon Strugnell
Ernest Alan Fairclough	46B	19 March 2022	Daughter - Valerie Andersen
John Langdon	60C	18 March 2022	Ted Stanford
Jeffrey Arthur (Jeff) Phillips	60A	6 December 2021	Craftsman Magazine
Niven Sinclair Bradford	46B	18 March 2022	Daughter - Alison Stillman
Ronald Charles Alexander Thompson	58A	10 February 2021	Widow - Mrs Ann Thomson
Terry M Maher	70A	01 June 1970	Steve Pallent 70A (Belated Entry)
Harold William John Price	42A	25 November 2021	Widow - Harriet Price
Clifford Patrick Charlesworth	47B	1 May 2022	Greg Peck
(Curly) Joseph (Tim) Timmings	45A	4 June 2022	Daughter - Jo Hodgson
Terence (terry) Roebuck BEM	60B	21 June 2022	Mike Davies
Christopher John Riley	64B	19 May 2022	Andy Dickson
Barry M. Thorne	64B	2 July 2022	Andy Dickson
Peter Frederick Watts	73C	10 July 2022	Brother - Barry Watts
Jack Edwin Smith	55B	7 July 2022	Son - Barry Smith

Stand Easy - By TC

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.

AOBA Committee Succession Plan

Appointment	Name	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Remarks
Chairman	Geordie Wright-Rivers							Appointed July 9th 2022	
Vice Chairman	Mike Tizard							Appointed July 9th 2022	
Vice Chairman	Bill Cleasby							At AGM	
Secretary	Nigel Canning							Appointed June 2022	
Treasurer	Bob McKeegan-Brown				Appointed Jul 19			At AGM	
Membership	Dave Sparrow			Appointed 1st Oct 18				At AGM	Soonest
OBAN Editor	Andy Dickson	Appointed Sep 16						At AGM	
Webmaster	Mark Jobes					Appointed 2020		At AGM	
Database/GDPR	Jeff Baker							Jul 2022	
Recruiting	Bruce Leslie		Appointed 1st Sep 17					ASAP	Soonest
Benevolence	Roger Traves							ASAP	Urgent
Standard Bearer	Dave Merrick				Appointed Nov 2019			At AGM	
Remembrance	Steve Thornes						Appointed July 2021	At AGM	

We are very happy to announce a few changes to the committee. Geordie Wright-Rivers assumed the Chairman Role and Mike Tizard stepped down and assumed the Vice Chairman role at the AGM in July. We asked Bill Cleasby to take up an advisory role as Vice President. Also, Nigel Canning has stepped forward and will replace Phil Ellaway as Secretary. Roger Traves is still looking for a replacement. We also welcome our new Standard Bearer Dave Merrick and Remembrance member Steve Thomes. Our new Database/GDPR manager is Jeff Baker.

Geordie Wright-Rivers - AOBA Chairman

Secretary's Report



Hello and greetings from beautiful Kernow!

Back in September last year I was minding my own business down our "not so local local" when it transpired my good lady had been part of a conversation with our Cornish friends, the result of which culminated in uprooting from Warwickshire, my home for the last 25 years and moving down to Fowey in January.

I had to give up my job at West Midland Trains and looked towards a very different way of life albeit one we had been dreaming of for more than a decade since we discovered this wonderful place and had truly found our "tribe".

I cannot claim to be Cornish but I definitely have a Cornish heart!

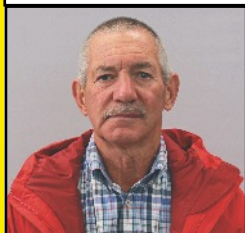
We moved ourselves after fully redecorating, and I spent many hours driving up and down the M5 and A30 getting our new home ready. Five months on and I find myself becoming one of those really annoying older folk who are "always far too busy to work" but being able to live according to my own timetable (dreckly as it is known down here) has given me the opportunity to respond to my fellow Nigel and 77Cer's call to be your new AOBA Secretary.

It was fabulous that we were able to meet again at the reunion so I hope that I met as many of you as possible over the weekend and look forward to serving the AOBA.

Arborfield bys vyken!

Nigel Canning - 77C

Treasurer's Report



Hello to you all.

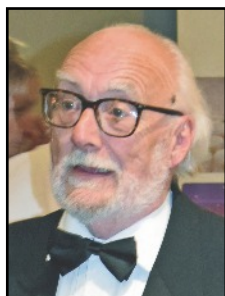
As I explained during the AGM the funds are in pretty good state and have been professionally audited. Like the majority of the committee, I am committed to another year in post as no one has yet stepped forward to claim the position of Treasurer. Mike Tizard explained that the AOBA continues to flourish because we have a good bunch of people running the organisation but this will not remain the case if committee posts are not regularly rotated.

This year we had several requests for AOBA ties and so the decision was taken to purchase 200 ties as this gave best value for money. We are hoping that they will be available in the REME Museum shop in the near future but in the interim I am holding the stock. Should you require one or more then please contact me through the website and I will post them out. The retail cost of these Polyester and Silk ties was £10 and we are selling them at cost price plus P&P.

Hopefully this year will see an influx of the 1973 intake and I would encourage the 73ers to establish their own Facebook page as a method of encouraging attendance at the 2023 reunion. As an aside the 69ers have a Facebook page with 77 members and we had the largest contingent this year with a total of 21 members attending.

Bob McKeegan-Brown - 69A

Data Protection & Database Manager



At the time of writing this I have been your new DPO (data protection officer) for 9 days.

As an introduction I was 65c, D Company and an Air Tech A&E apprentice. I completed my time at Arborfield in 1968. I served for nearly 12 years after leaving the AAC and managed somehow to avoid Army Air Corps postings.

The REME 70 Ac. Workshop at Middle Wallop was followed by a posting to BFPO 15. Posted into the RSDG air sqn shortly after their pipe band had been "top of the pops" was enough to put you off bagpipes for life. I did not move, but was a member of the 14/20th KH and 1RTR air squadrons. I believe these were the last of the independent air sqns.

My last 4 years were as a lone army Sgt at RAF Wittering on the RAF strike command NDT team.

After leaving the army I spent the rest of my working life dealing with radioactive material and its dangerous nature.

I look forward to acting as your DPO in the future.

Jeff Baker 65C

Webmaster Report



Hello to all.

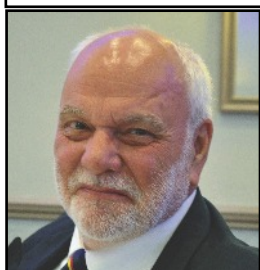
We now have 669 member accounts on the website with over 26,500 views in 2021 with over 14,000 views so far in 2022 and over 3000 visitors. The top visitor locations are the UK - 12,150, Germany 353, The United States 351, Australia 351 Canada 159 and Spain 107. We are truly international.

As always I am requesting Members to submit articles for publication on the website but apart from a couple of photo submissions there has been little response.

The comment system that was recently introduced is working well but only 15 comments throughout the whole site have been submitted. C'mon guys, send me some stories!

Mark Jobes - 77C
Webmaster

OBAN Editors Report



Hello fellow Old Boys.

It seems we waited for so long to get our reunion underway and then pffftttt and it was gone!

The weekend was a great success I think and apart from a few reports of COVID affecting some members we all seemed to have survived.

The 66ers Bowling competition was a bit depleted this year and even though I turned up I didn't bowl because of my knees. Well done to Kev Dyson who took my place in spite of his hip problem. Noddy Ketteringham took the MADDUX Trophy home for a year.

The organisation of the weekend went well and I think IOW Tours did a great job. Thanks Geoff Holt and his team. If any of you attended the AGM you will be aware that we are looking at optional dates for 2023. If hotel prices are anything to go by, we may be looking for a new venue too. More on this as things develop. (Geordie references this in his report on page 4).

I was impressed with the number of light blue berets on parade. It seemed every time I turned around there was another. I will make an effort to get one for next year but everywhere I look they all miss the black patch behind the badge. (I know I could sew one on!). If anyone has any ideas drop me a line via the website contacts page.

Ian Clark, our last database manager, did amazingly well attending all the functions and participating as best he could. Thanks to Chris, (His partner), Laurie Blakely and Alex Burt for stepping up and helping when needed. Great to see you looking so well Ian.

The list of members who have passed was sobering. I had the privilege of reading out the middle set of names and had trouble when I got to Clive Goodfellow, one of my Div, and a friend.

Roger Traves did an amazing job again of arranging for the crosses, scrolls and the attendance of families of the deceased old boys. Roger has a difficult job in dealing with bereaved families but it is the most rewarding when you see the number of people at the church service. Thanks Roger.

Alex Burt and the TAPAAD members did a great job again. I know Alex is looking for new blood to join this elite group so if you were a band member at Arborfield and feel the need to pick up your drum or pipes again please get in touch with me via the AOBA web page and I will put you in touch with Alex.

I would also like to welcome the new committee members: Geordie Wright-Rivers (77C) our new Chairman, Nigel Canning (77C) (I sense a takeover) our new Secretary and Jeff Baker (65C) our new Data Protection and Database manager. Many thanks for volunteering for these important roles. It goes without saying that we have to thank Mike Tizard (76B2) for all his efforts as Chairmen. It was a pleasure working with you, Mike.

We are still short of volunteers. We desperately need someone to take over from Roger Traves who has been in place for over 16 years now. It is about time we let him take some time off. If anyone is interested in this important role contact any of the committee members through the AOBA web page.

I am happy to remain as your OBAN Editor. This is my 6th year in the role. I think I have some idea what I am doing now and what used to worry me silly in the early days is less stressful now. If any of you feel the need to release your creative juices I would be happy to pass the baton but, as I say, no rush.

Time to have a rest now before the December edition is started. Need I say again, "Send me your articles", please.

Andy Dickson - 66B

Recruitment Officers Report



Dear All,

After an outstanding reunion a few weeks ago, attention is now turning to recruitment for the 1973 intakes for their 50th anniversary in 2023. I have already reached out to the existing AOBA members from these intakes and am hopeful that we will get a good turnout again next year and even if you are not a 73er but know someone who is, please speak to them about the AOBA.

I continue to use social media as my main source of new recruits and my suggestions to aid recruitment to the 73ers included the following:

1. Set up a Facebook group – (this will probably help the most) the 75ers and 77ers both have active Facebook groups (I am a 75er and we have had a number of well attended reunions over the past few years, including our 40th when over 100 guys attended!!)
2. Use all forms of social media to reach out to 73ers
3. Reach out to specific groups that you are part of, such as:
 - a. REME Rugby
 - b. REME Football and other sports
 - c. Para log/REME RM groups
 - d. Trade groups
 - e. Unit groups (Facebook)

My contact details are either via the AOBA website, select Recruitment Officer, or by using the email address below:

bruceleslie1959@gmail.com

Let's continue to grow our Association and increase attendance at our next reunion and, the Cenotaph parade in London in November 2022, places for this event are going like hot cakes, so get your request for a ticket in to Steve Thornes asp. 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.

Please also take any opportunity to advertise the, recently refurbished, AOBA website at

<https://arborfieldoldboys.co.uk/>

Bruce Leslie - 75C

Membership Secretary's Report



Hello fellow members.

The AGM is complete for another year and it was good to catch up after a few years without one. The members who attended the meeting were in good voice and not shy in sharing their opinions and insights.

As Mike Tizard pointed out at the meeting, many of us have been in post for longer than the prescribed time of 3 years, some much longer! I raise this point because no committee can stay fresh and innovative without having new blood to shake up the status quo.

I have done my time now and I am ready to move on. I am looking for a replacement to carry on the membership secretary's post when I go. The job of membership secretary is not difficult; some may say that it is one of the easiest jobs on the committee and I will not dispute that. Nonetheless it would be good to have a successor sooner rather than later. I do not want to have to pass my responsibilities over to another member of the committee as they are already busy enough.

With this in mind I will carry on in the post until the end of this year unless a volunteer steps up to the plate before then. If nobody comes forward by then it will be unfortunate that the role will have to be taken on by another committee member. I have made some good friends during my tenure and also renewed some old friendships and I don't regret for one minute taking up the post. I do hope that one of you will step forward as being a member of the association sometimes means that you should be prepared to give something back in return.

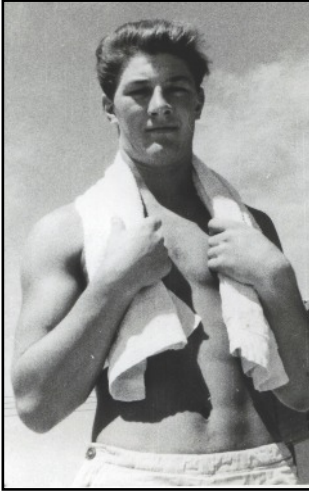
Thanks to all and I look forward to seeing some of you at the next AGM!

Dave (Spuggy) Sparrow – 76B2

Two Journeys - Edwin Barber - 54B

Two Journeys, Same Destination. UK to Maralinga, South Australia

The first journey was done in a very cramped RAF Hastings plane and we were flying from RAF Lyneham. On the morning we boarded the plane in very thick fog, the pilot told us that for safety reasons he had to see at least 10 runway lights, (He could just make out three). As the weather was bad for the rest of the day he aborted the flight until the following day.



The weather was good the following morning and after a reasonable RAF breakfast we took off and headed for our first stop, Malta, but our pilot had a brainwave and he told us over the intercom that he had enough fuel to get to our second proposed destination and this would get us back on track. This second destination was El Adem in Libya. There were a few groans from around the plane as some had shown a interest in a certain street in Malta called 'The Gut' but we had no choice.

We duly landed at El Adem for our first look at lots of sand. We all put on our overseas new kit and had the whitest knees in the country and we got a lot of stick taken out of us in the NAAFI.

The following morning we re-boarded the plane, destination Khartoum in Sudan. The next morning we took off again, this time for Aden in the Yemen. Another overnight stop and then we were on our way to Karachi in Pakistan and then another overnight stay and we were off again, this time to Bombay in India. I think it was here that we saw a fantastic sight as we were on a bus to our overnight accommodation. We had to stop at a level crossing to let a train go by. Well the train was hardly visible for the people hanging on to the outside

of it wherever there was some free space.

Virtually all that could be seen of the engine was the smoke coming out of the chimney.

Another overnight stop ahead of us the following day was at at RAF camp called Katunayake in Ceylon, now called Sri Lanka. Here we stayed for one night then up early the following day and we headed off the RAF Changi in Singapore. It was here we were blessed with a couple without any flying. The weather was extremely hot and of course like silly idiots we all did some sunbathing. I thought I had a good idea and bought some sun lotion. Well, I lathered it on following day and I think that it fried my forehead. Boy did that hurt.



At Changi, Singapore on the way to Australia

After a lovely stop at Changi we took off for Jakarta in Indonesia.. It was to be a refueling stop. When we landed the powers that be insisted we had to stay on board whilst the plane was being refueled. The pilot refused to allow this and demanded that we left the plane. As we were vacating the plane we had to walk up to a building through a corridor of armed soldiers.

Refueling complete we boarded the plane and took off for Darwin in the Northern Territory of Australia. Another hot and muggy tropical night and then one more flight over the center of Australia arriving at Maralinga, the atomic test range.

The total time of the journey was one week, arriving in the heat of an Aussie summer on the 2nd of December 1958 after leaving the UK in late November.

The second journey was done in a much more comfortable plane, An RAF VC10, this time flying from RAF Brize Norton.

As we were called forward to board the plane, the steward overseeing the seating arrangements got it all wrong as is usual way, the Big Wigs and officers went first and the cattle class Next stop was RAF Changi where I had a short stop before my next flight on a Qantas 707 to Perth in Western Australia.

I was picked up and taken to an Australian Army Camp for a couple of days. Here I mostly laid on my bed because I had left the UK in snow and arrived in a hot summer in Australia.

at the end. The steward put the officers etc. in the rear seats and loaded the plane from rear to front. This meant the junior people got the luxury seats at the front, and I was one of them. The officers found out and complained but the pilot said that swapping around would put us behind schedule and so everything had to stay as it was. We had a refueling stop on the way and as it was night time I could not find out where it was and I have to say my memory doesn't go back that far now.



Atomic Bomb photo



With Staff Car



Maralinga REME Workshop



My boomerang won't come back!

Desert Diary - Rob Castell - 64A

Part 2 – Revolution, Gaddafi takes power

Muammar Gaddafi became the de facto leader of Libya on 1 September 1969 after leading a group of young Libyan Army officers against King Idriss in a bloodless coup d'état whilst the king was on an official visit to Turkey. The Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) headed by Gaddafi abolished the monarchy and the old constitution and established the Libyan Arab Republic, with the motto "freedom, socialism and unity"



Chatham Camp

1st Sept 69 – Revolution! No one has much idea of what's going on.

2nd Sept 69 – Parts of the Battle Group have moved to El Adam to form a defence force. Those remaining at Chatham have formed a defence force.

Note: - Signal received marked urgent states -Tunis Sept 1st (AFP) The army seized power in Libya today in the absence of King Idriss and proclaimed a republican regime which was immediately backed by crown prince Hassan Erridha.

Tripoli radio broadcast the new regime's first communiqué which said:

'All legislative councils of the former regime were abolished from today and that any bid by ousted leaders to overturn the revolution would be smashed.

The revolutionary council was the only legal government of Libya and demanded the loyalty of all civil servants and police.

The council is pledged to a socialist revolution unattached to any doctrine.

It would support the union of third world countries and efforts to overcome social and economic under development.'

Sporadic shooting was reported in Tripoli shortly after the army coupe was staged.

Note: - Signal received marked S Officers 2 (London) states –The British military establishment in Libya at present consists of a small garrison at Tobruk and a Royal Air Force 'staging post' at El Adam. Officials here today revealed that an unspecified number of British troops normally stationed in West Germany were now conducting exercises in the Libyan desert. Such exercises are conducted periodically. Britain recently undertook to supply considerable amounts of military equipment to Libya including ground to air rockets and Chieftain tanks. The contract was worth at least a hundred and twenty million pounds. Officials quoting reports from Libya said no harm had been done to British subjects so far. They stressed the importance of British capital invested in Libya's oil industry.

8th Sept 69 – All possible repairs completed at Chatham.

AWD packed and moved to El Adam. We refused the site offered and moved instead to the rear of the site occupied by the LAD.

The repaired 'A' vehicles, requisitioned 'B' vehicles and a recovered RCT vehicle all safely brought to El Adam from Chatham (34 vehicles, 66 desert miles – 7 hours!)

10th Sept 69 - All vehicles for return to BAOR are to be passed through AWD for 'final' repair to BAOR standards if possible.

Battle Group flights and LSL cancelled due to the political situation.

Tobruk under curfew.

The men are in tented accommodation, I am trying to arrange permanent accommodation.

15th Sept 69 – Have arranged permanent accommodation for the men.

Programme proceeding satisfactorily.

No news yet of Battle Group move to BAOR.

End of stats period.

	<u>Received</u>	<u>Completed</u>	<u>In Hand</u>	<u>Awaiting spares</u>
Cents	9	9	-	-
432	13	13	-	-
Ferret	18	11	-	7
Power packs	8	4	-	4
'B' vehs.	4	4	-	-
Tels	29	29	-	-

29th Sept 69 – Repairs to BAOR vehicles virtually completed.

30th Sept 69 – Owing to new requirement for as many vehicles as possible to travel by road, BFG type testing is now to take place by AWD on vehicles for return to BAOR.

Severe storm preceded by terrific winds of sand which blew away the AWD marquee injuring Cfn Boyd who was hospitalised. We have previously lost LCpl Mullen in hospital with a suspected broken arm after being knocked down by a 3 tonner. In recent past two days flu has hospitalised eight personnel from the Battle Group. At present, from the AWD, two men are in hospital with gastroenteritis, plus LCpl Mullen and with Cfn Boyd now on light duties with a damaged shoulder.

1st Oct 69 – Results of BFG type testing disappointing. I had taken the trouble to pre-provision tyres, fire extinguishers, mirrors, batteries, bulbs, mirror arms etc but still faults exist. CO decrees all are to be completed by 4th Oct! Assistance again being given by the AWD.

2nd Oct 69 – Fitters distributed to various sections owning BAOR vehicles to complete minor REME tasks and supervise drivers on 'A' type jobs.

Morale of the men is reasonable considering today was the day for return.

Note: Various activities have been organised by the Battle Group and where work has permitted AWD has taken part. Our six-a-side football team won the Chatham competition and were runners up in the El Adam competition. The volleyball team won the El Adam competition. The AWD has long since provided itself a dartboard and games etc for evenings and since being at El Adam have played two matches (darts) against Families Club (lost both) Q Glover flew back to UK this week.

4th Oct 69 – Minor REME tasks on BFG inspected vehicles completed.

State of these vehicles: - BFG fit 29, not BFG fit (spares including spare wheels etc) 8.
Fordson binner now needs new engine.

No news of the move yet.

The British Ambassador is thought to be having talks with the new Libyan government today.
Weather continues heavy rain – tool box checking and packing in the open is difficult.

7th Oct 69 – Packing of AWD equipment, cleaning and checking of tools etc continues.

Warned by Commanding Officer not to expect to be relieved for at least a month.

Agreed to allow up to six VA(A) and six VM(B) to work with Ord Depot workshops and MTSS respectively in order to keep the men reasonably employed. Sgt Welder will also be loaned when required. At present three VM(A) and seven VB(B) are employed by El Adam detachments.

9th Oct 69 – One further VB(B) sent to MTSS.

Belated: During last month the Battle Group held an 'across the bay' swimming team race (across Tobruk harbour) The AWD team was the winner, although the 17/21 Lancers (stationed here) were the first team home. The AWD also took part in a 'regatta' on 10th October.

13th Oct 69 – The AWD attended a lecture given by the Desert Rescue Commander (RAF).

Two VM(A) on light duties (LCpl Mullen and Cfn Boyd) will attend a radio voice procedure course for one week starting tomorrow.

Ready to move.

20th Oct 69 – Radio course extended to two weeks.

21st Oct – Cfn Davie placed on Map Reading (written) course, this subject being the last one required for his 2nd Class.

23rd Oct 69 – Moral is still reasonably high despite all the uncertainty, but I have recommended that five personnel are RTU'd ASAP for various reasons.

	<u>Received</u>	<u>Completed</u>	<u>In Hand</u>	<u>Awaiting spares</u>
Cents	-	-	-	-
432	27	27	-	-
Ferret	24	24	-	-
Power packs	6	2	-	4
'B' vehs.	9	9	-	-
Tels	4	4	-	-

FD-36 (Rev. 5-22-64)
(Obsole. 10-1-73)

MESSAGE FORM

NUMBER

FOR COMM. CIPHERSIGNALS USE

PRIORITY ACTION DEFERRED

PRECEDENCE INFO DATE TIME GROUP

MESSAGE INSTRUCTIONS

FROM LT CASTELL

TO MRS CASTELL

5 AMORN STA

INFO

GR

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

ORIGINATOR'S NUMBER

ALL OK

Note:

This message was received from Libya this afternoon and passed to the Duty Officer 4 Div from 1 Div

PAGE -- of -- PAGES

APPROVED TO FORWARD

YES NO

DRAFTER'S NAME

Ways Dukes

OFFICE

TEL. No.

FOR OFFICE USE

R DATE TIME SYSTEM OPERATOR

D DATE TIME SYSTEM OPERATOR

PLEASE SIGN OFFICER'S SIGNATURE

NAME

Arborfield Drawings



Some weeks ago, Roger Traves had a phone call from a lady called Doreen Walker. She was the wife of A/T D.R.J. Walker who passed away in 2021. Don was ex C Coy and achieved WO11 status during his service. He was a n AOBA Member until his passing.

Doreen informed Roger that she had some memorabilia that the Old Boys Association might be interested and could someone come and collect it?

Roger asked the Committee for volunteers and as Doreen live not far from one of my sisters I said I would make contact and arrange a meeting. I called her and said that the next time I was in the area I would call her and collect what she had.

In April I was heading home from a visit to Lincolnshire and called again and again but couldn't get an answer.

The next opportunity I had was on June 28th and made arrangements to call in.

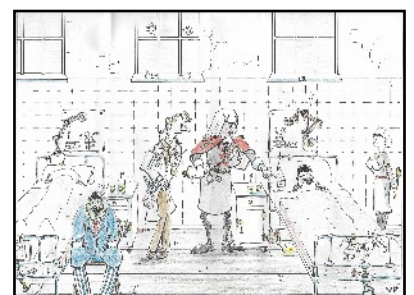
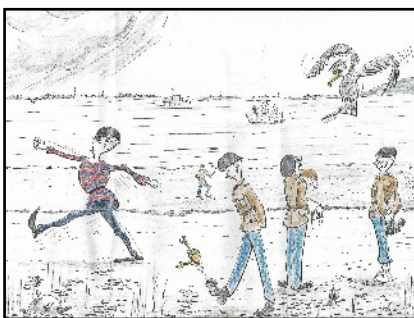
We chatted for about an hour and she eventually handed over the drawings pictured below. These were drawn by a friend of her husbands but she can't remember the name of the A/T.

I have since sent her a letter of thanks with a list of the 45A names we have on file to see if she can remember who her husband talked about. I will let you know of any developments.

These drawings are destined for the REME Museum and I hope will be displayed at some point. The large drawing is already framed and just needs a dedication plaque before it is hung.

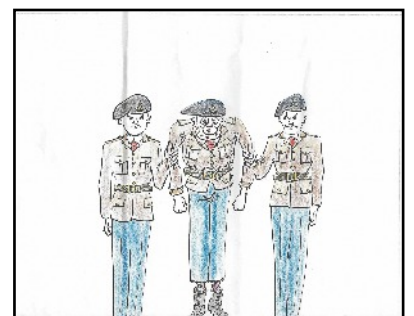
Doreen suffered a broken bone in her back after a fall recently and isn't very mobile at the moment. Even so, I would like to thank her on behalf of the AOBA for her donation.

Andy Dickson 66B



Apologies for the quality of the scans and photos. I can only do so much with the equipment I have.

You will have to go to the REME Museum to see the originals.



THE ARMY APPRENTICE'S PIPES AND DRUMS - Alex Burt 62A

On 9th July 2022 , TAAPAD paraded with the Arborfield Old Boys Association annual reunion at the National Memorial Arboretum.

It was the first time the band had got together for 3 years due to Covid lock-down and restrictions. The band on the day before spent an hour in the main restaurant dining room going through tunes to play over the weekend. We then tuned our pipes for a short performance at the Friday Curry Night. We played some 6 sets which was well received by our peers at the dinner. Then pipes away and not to be touched until the following day

Saturday the 9th and we met at the NMA around 10.15 and had 15 minutes to check our dress and play a set or two to confirm the tuning. Then it was down to the main road to form up for the Association parade.

At the word of command from the Parade Marshall we marched off playing Battle of the Somme and Heights of Dargie to honour those who fell in the great war. During the inspection we played Highland Cathedral with The Dark Island and Flower of Scotland. Highland Cathedral was written by two German pipers and the Dark Island was written by the camp carpenter at the RA Range in Benbecula. Flower of Scotland was transferred from the song by the Corries into a pipe band tune. The Parade Marshall turned the parade to the left and on the command the band remaining static played Cock O' the North until they came past the lectern where the Saluting Officer stood when the band caught the marching and marched past themselves playing Cock O' the North and Bonnie Dundee.

The band went then to the Apprentice's memorial and played The Army Apprentice's March – a lament – immediately after the last post. At the end of the service we played The Green Hills of Tyrol and The battle's o'er, this latter tune having been played by all pipers in WW2 at the end of WW2 and that tradition continues even today.

The band then went to the main path up to the top memorial area and proceeded to play and lead 5 Heavy Regt RA on their pilgrimage to 3 sites in the NMA before Dick Camp played Flowers of the Forest, which is the standard funeral tune, after their last post. The band stood down until the evening.

In the evening we all congregated in the Paris Suite for the gala dinner before playing the top table into the dinner. During the dinner, members of the band and some very kind ladies sold raffle tickets. At the end of the dinner we held the raffle. The prizes were all priced between £25 and £30 included items made from the tartan remnants from our kilts so they are all in Arborfield Apprentice Tartan Harris Tweed. We also had several items donated to the band including Malt Whiskey, Blended Whisky, REME pens, and a pen from 500 year old wood including the carbon dating certificate plus a hand made stags head mounted on the band tartan. The raffle raised £1100.

Later in the evening the band came on again to play to finish the dinner and that was very well received. As the raffle plus a donation from 5 Heavy Regt came to £1200 the band asked for the payment made to the band for performing to be waived as the band have enough funds now to carry on and be self sufficient.

This was the last raffle the band will hold as it ties up members who also want to join the celebrations and the band thanks the members for the support through the raffles which enabled the band to get their uniforms. You have been very generous.

Below is a photo of the band taken at the end of the parade. There were two pipers who could not attend and one piper we could not contact.

Alex Burt 62A



The World Moves on - Jeff Baker - 65C

Nearly all the aircraft I worked on while in the REME are now found only in museums, as gate guards or vintage Aircraft flights. It is a long list - Skeeter, Sioux, Scout, Auster, Beaver, Chipmunk, Harrier, Devon, Buccaneer, Nimrod, Spitfire and Canberra.

The world has moved on.

The buildings and the environment which were home to generations of apprentices have all gone. Replaced with houses, new roads, schools and factories, our Arborfield is unrecognisable.

The world has moved on.

Many years ago, I was stunned when my son aged 15 (now 50 and an ex-boy) knew nothing about Log tables or slide rules. He had no knowledge of £, Shillings & Pence, he thought they were from a foreign country. New ways of doing basic arithmetic were being taught.

The world had moved on.

Computers continually shrink in size while growing in complexity and speed. I struggle and am continually amazed at the ability of very young children to navigate computer screens, programs and terminology as easily as I can read a book.

The world has moved on.

One of my neighbours owns a company writing programs for Minecraft. I mentioned that I had done computer programming. What language he asked? I smiled and said "basic" the operating systems for which were punched tape and cards. It was part of my HNC syllabus in 1971.

The world has moved on.

The growth of the World Wide Web has increased our ability to find any information at the touch of a button. Previously a visit to the library would have been required. More and more of our personal information is on line somewhere. Unfortunately, this has opened new avenues for misuse, theft, cons and deceit. Trust can be abused.

The world has moved on.

For dinosaurs like me (not yet a fossil) the regulations seem to be draconian and lacking in basic common sense. They change at a speed that can be difficult to keep up with. The Data Protection Act 2018 and amendments since then are the law governing every organization. If they desire to collect, store or manage even the most basic of personal data. The requirements of this act apply to AOBA just like anybody else.

The world has moved on.

There are 7 reasons the Act allows for collecting data, only one reason "consent" is applicable to AOBA. Since 2018 these consents have been included on the membership application form and basic consent to store information is automatic with membership.

For members who joined before 2018, sometimes many years before. AOBA produced a separate consent form with a request to complete and return. This makes no difference to the way the AOBA store and handles your data. It just means that AOBA is compliant with the law and will not be subject to punitive fines for non-compliance.

As the new DPO, the time is fast coming when I have to advise the committee that this breach of the regulations must end. The committee has put a lot of time and effort over the last four years trying to correct this breach. In the near future the committee will have to take action. This would be done with a heavy heart and extremely reluctantly.

The world moves on.

Currently we have over 100 members that have not provided the appropriate consents.

For those members who continue to withhold consent the action will be serious. All their member records will have to be deleted; they will no longer be members of AOBA. We currently do not send OBAN or any other communications to these non-compliant members.

The committee works very hard trying to, if not grow the membership, at least try and replace the annual losses. We are after all, are all getting older. The loss of so many members at one time would be a financial disaster for AOBA. It would also be considered a personal failure by the current committee members.

Please accept that **THE WORLD MOVES ON.**

Please complete and submit the consent form found within the AOBA website member's area. Contact me via the pro forma contact form if you are not sure that you have provided consent.

Jeff Baker 65C

2022 AOBA Reunion Diary - Andy Dickson 66B

It was a long wait but I think you will agree it was worth it.

The 66ers started off, as they usually do with a meeting at The Elms Public House and then the annual ten pin bowling competition. Xoddam Trophy, (Noddy Ketteringham won the trophy this year), before heading to Hinckley for the reunion proper.

I think we all agree that IOW Tours did a fantastic job of organising everything. I didn't notice a single issue over the whole weekend and I would like to congratulate Geoff Holt and his team for all their efforts. Great Job.

The Friday afternoon was taken up by greeting old friends, some not seen for many years in my case. Great to see David Finch (63A) and Gunter Webster (64B) again. John Wright (66B) kept a few of us entertained with his views on Brexit and the European Union.

The usual groups started in the bar and some stayed there until we went for the Curry Supper. It was here that a conversation with David Stevenson (68B) that we discovered we attended the same school in Osnabruck and then Wilhelmshaven. What a small world it is.

A great curry by the way.

Up early on Saturday for a hearty breakfast, (I knew I was going to miss lunch), before getting dressed for the trip to the Arboretum for the parade and church service. This must have been the largest in number on parade that I have seen in all my years with the AOBA. I know Mike Tizard was worried about being able to control us all but he did a great job on his last appearance as our Chairman.

The weather couldn't have been better. It was a hot day and this took its toll on at least two people I saw during the church service. I understand there were no long lasting affects.

My own involvement in reading the names of some of those ex boys who have passed away was difficult when I got to Clive Goodfellow (66B) who was of my Div and a friend. RIP Clive.

The arrangements made by Roger Traves for the crosses and attendance of families of the deceased ex boys was outstanding. His job on the committee is one of the most difficult in that it is always dealing with bad news. He has more contact with members and our extended family than any other committee member and he does a great job. (By the way, Roger is looking to stand down from his role after 16 years of service and we would welcome a replacement coming forward).

Back on the coaches for the return trip to Hinckley to get ready for the AGM in the afternoon. Not before a few beers on the way to replace lost fluids from the heat and the morning events. I did find the use of cards made the purchase of drinks a lot easier and quicker than last year. The only difficulty was keeping track of how much I spent over the weekend. Never mind, it doesn't happen that often, the reunion I mean not me buying a round!

The AGM went well and again it was good to see a good turnout. There weren't any real contentious issues to discuss and after normal business was discussed the committee was voted in with two new members; Geordie Wright-Rivers (77C) is our new Chairman and Ron (Jeff) Baker (65C) is replacing Ian Clark (62A) as Data Protection Officer while Ian continues his excellent recovery from his illness. It was great to see Ian attending all the functions at the reunion. Thanks also to Christine Carr for bringing Ian and looking after him as well as Alex Burt (62A) and Laurie Blakely (61B) for their occasional help.

(Mike - I thought we were supposed to have cake with the tea and coffee at the AGM?)

Back to my room knowing that if I laid down on the bed I would be out for the count. A shower etc. before getting dressed for dinner and then another visit to the bar for more beer. Just what I needed.

The usual banter through dinner, which was excellent, including trying to keep Taff Southcott (66B) from taking the flags from the table and all the after dinner chocolates as he normally does.

My thanks must go to Alex Burt and the Pipe Band. They did us proud on Saturday morning keeping us all marching in step and for the entertainment on both Friday and Saturday dinners. Thanks Alex and the rest of the band members.

Sunday always seems a bit flat to me. The festivities are all but over and there is not much else to do but have another good breakfast, say goodbye to as many people as I can before packing up the car and heading off on the three hour drive home to the South Coast.

I would like to thank Mike Tizard (76B2) for his tenure as Chairman. Keeping us all under control can't be easy. His enthusiasm was there for all to see right up to the Sunday morning. Well done Mike, a hard act to follow Geordie.

Andy Dickson 66B

Attendees of the 2022 Reunion

The following two pages lists the people that IOW Tours informed me were attending the 2022 Reunion.

It may be that some people are not on this list and some people are on the list that couldn't make it for one reason or another.

The names are not in any particular order, they are just as they came to me from IOW Tours.

Andy Dickson 66B

Div	Title	First Name	Last Name
70C	Mr	Alan	Meddings
	Ms	Anne	Morcombe
59B	Mr	Tom	Pearce
69C	Mr	Tim	Nutt
69C	Mr	Harry	Cribbes
	Mrs	Karen	Cribbes
69C	Mr	Duncan	Powell
	Mrs		Powell
69B	Mr	Desmond	Bull
72C	Mr	Lee	Pownall
62A	Mr	John	Sharpe
72C	Mr	Alan	Walton
	Mrs	Kirsten	Walton
69C	Mr	Hedley	Blackwell
69A	Mr	John	Mundy
67C	Mr	Martin	Harmer MBE
	Mrs	Ann	Harmer
69C	Mr	David John	Williams
65C	Lt Col (Retd)	George	Henderson
	Mrs	Catherine	Henderson
63C	Mr	Roger	Atkins
69C	Mr	Brian	Bignell
69C	Mr	Dave	Mills
	Mrs	Anita	Mills
57B	Mr	Keith	Allcock
	Mrs	Louise	Allcock
68B	Mr	Clive	Ormandy
69C	Mr	David	Airdrie
62C	Mr	Julian (Percy)	Hoggins
69A	Mr	William	Abbott
	Mrs	Maria	Abbott
72C	Mr	Martin	Jenkinson
72B	Mr	Gareth	Poole
72A	Mr	Graham	Wilson
72C	Mr	Allan	Aikman
	Mrs	Lunne	Aikman
55A	Mr	Tony	Church
	Mrs	June	Church
62B	Mr	Robert	Smith
60A	Mr	Chris	Mackey
	Mrs	Frieda	Mackey

Div	Title	First Name	Last Name
62B	Mr	Alex	Burnett
60C	Mr	Clive	Watson
	Mrs	Brenda	Watson
57B	Mr	Derek	Wheatland
57A	Mr	Roger	Traves
57B	Mr	Peter	Corbett
	Mrs	Patricia	Corbett
55B	Mr	Rod	Strachan
	Mr	Kevin	Strachan
72A	Mr	Neil	Graham
48B	Mr	Ray	Derrick
58B	Mr	Derek	Camp
	Mrs	Susan	Camp
77C	Mr	Tony	Stone
60A	Mr	Graham	Clarkson
	Mrs	Elaine	Clarkson
59A	Mr	Richard	Manser
	Mrs	Jill	Manser
60A	Mr	Terry	Fleming
60A	Mr	Alan	Twyning
69C	Mr	Malcolm	Emery
	Mrs	Kate	Emery
62C	Mr	Bob	Henn
	Mrs	Valerie	Henn
69A	Mr	Laurence	Springthorpe
	Ms	Tanya	Dizon
61B	Mr	John	Sheilds
	Mrs	Joan	Sheilds
67C	Mr	Ian	Crawford
62c	Mr	Michael	Cheeseman
62a	Mr	David	Hurren
	Mrs	Vilma	Hurren
64B	Mr	Jim	Griffiths
78b	Mr	Paul	Kambanis
	Mrs	Lisa	Kambanis
63A	Mr	Terry	Crampton
	Mrs	Janice	Crampton
76C	Mr	Kevin	Cain
64C	Mr	Denis	Kane-Preist
55B	Mr	Simon	Thomas
	Mrs	Angela	Thomas

Div	Title	First Name	Last Name
77C	Mr	Mark	Jobes
67A	Mr	Nigel	Wickenden
76B2	Mr	David	Sparrow
	Mrs	Angela	Sparrow
65C	Mr	Walter	Kells
65C	Mr	Peter	Marsh
75C	Mr	Bruce	Leslie
76B2	Mr	Allan	Peacock
62A	Mr	Danny	Hopkins
	Mrs	Barbara	Hopkins
75C	Mr	Howard	Wood
64A	Mr	Andrew	Knowles
66B	Mr	John	Coles
60C	Mr	Ted	Stanford
	Mrs	Maureen	Stanford
62A	Mr	Alex	Burt
	Mr	Martin	Smith
60A	Mr	John	Feast
	Mrs	Sandy	McQueen
69C	Mr	Michael	Crook
	Mrs		Crook
66C	Mr	Frank	McKenna
77C	Mr	Bob	Newport
62A	Mr	Neil	Turrell
66B	Mr	Ray	Younger
66B	Mr	Tony	Higgins
60A	Mr	Ron	Hussey
77C	Mr	Kim	Pullen
68B	Mr	Rick	Lavis
64B	Mr	Gunter	Webster
60C	Mr	Ken	Brown
60C	Mr	Norman	Smith
	Mrs	Brenda	Smith
69A	Mr	Robby	Ware
	Mrs	Heather	Ware
66B	Mr	Andrew	McGee
67B	Mr	Richard M	Twentyman
64C	Mr	Chris	Twentyman
66C	Mr	Kim	Lord
64C	Ms	Patricia	Bamford
	Ms	Samantha	Bamford
64C	Mr	Stewart	Bunch
	Mrs	Averil	Bunch
65C	Mr	David	Cosway
65B	Mr	David	Brock
61B	Mr	Laurence	Blakley
	Mrs	Pamela	Blakley
69B	Mr	Chris	Massey
67C	Mr	Derrick	Walton
	Mrs	Pat	Walton
71C	Mr	Leslie	Harvey
	Mrs	Penny	Harvey
64C	Mr	James	Kavanagh
89C	Mr	Richard	Kavanagh
71C	Mr	James	Chadwick
	Mrs	Yvonne	Chadwick
69C	Mr	Peter	Madine
70C	Mr	David	Hebden
67A	Mr	Godfrey	Ballard
	Mrs	Sally	Ballard
62A	Mr	Norman	Taylor
77C	Mr	David	Merrick
77C	Mr	Steve	Thornes
76B2	Mr	Robert	Keene
76B2	Mr	Ian	Buchen

Div	Title	First Name	Last Name
60A	Mr	Garry	Middleton
	Mrs	Julia	Middleton
78B	Mr	Adrian	Walker
70A	Mr	Walter	Langer
68B	Mr	David	Stevenson
	Mrs	Lynne	Copping
63A	Mr	David	Finch
	Mrs	Norma Alison	Finch
70C	Mr	Peter	Marshall
62C	Mr	Carl	Powell
	Mrs	Ann	Powell
66B	Mr	Andrew	Dickson
65C	Mr	Ian	Cribbes
65B	Mr	John	Horwood
59C	Mr	David	Jackson
	Mrs	Patricia	Swindell
66C	Mr	Bill	Everett
66B	Mr	Tony	Moogan
67A	Mr	Jack	Shram
67C	Mr	John	Welsh
	Mrs		Welsh
69B	Mr	Frank	Summers
69B	Mr	Chels	Hale
69A	Mr	Robert	McKeegan-Brown
	Mrs	Jo	McKeegan-Brown
66C	Mr	Keith	Bartlett
72C	Mr	Steve	Beviere
76B2	Mr	Mike	Tizard
	Mrs	Shirley	Tizard
	Mr	Gary	Kelly
	Mrs	Linda	Kelly
49B	Mr	Gordon	Bonner
	Mrs	Sally	Bonner
66C	Mr	John	Gunn
66C	Mr	Byron	Hooper
66C	Mr	Lyle	Shore
66B	Mr	Kevin	Dyson
66B	Mr	John	Wright
77C	Mr	Gary (Geordie)	Wright-Rivers
62A	Mr	Ian	Tilson
62A	Mr	John	Swarbrick
	Ms	Chris	Carr
62A	Mr	Ian	Clark
67C	Mr	Ian	Scott
	Mrs	Elke	Scott
62B	Mr	Bruce	Robinson
73A	Mr	John	Billingham
56B	Mr	Brian	Fortune
	Mrs	Barbara	Fortune
59B	Mr	Barry	Williams
66C	Mr	Brian	Greenhorn
	Ms	Julie	Anderson
77C	Mr	John	Darwent
77C	Mr	Nigel	Canning
62C	Mr	Mike	Charman
61A	Mr	Alistair	White
58A	Mr	Robyn	Bartholomew
66B	Mr	Robert	Southcott
66B	Mr	Don	McCulloch
57A	Mr	James	Gardner
57B	Mr	Ian	Forbes
57B	Mr	John	Glasspool
65C	Mr	R	Baker
77C	Mr	Neville	Catchpole
69C	Mr	Robert	Curran





86A - Mini Reunion

PMC 86A

John Wilson and Martyn Byrd (Photo on the right) had a mini reunion recently. Great photo guys.

A mini reunion in Belfast, it did get a bit messy, especially when Martin Byrd decided to get the tequila shots out!! AeM brothers.

Ed's Comments:

It is great to see Div's and groups getting together outside of the main reunion.

Following the data analysis I published in OBAN 82 I have had a request from two people enquiring about ex boys in their area.

Paul Wood (76A) wanted details of members living in Norfolk and Ray Younger was interested in members living in the Luton area.

Great to see the article generated some interest.



**THERE IS NO SUCH
THING AS A GROUCHY
OLD PERSON. THE
TRUTH IS ONCE YOU
GET OLD, YOU STOP
BEING POLITE AND
START BEING HONEST.**

Oldtimers



“Why does the need
to pee intensify
by a million when
you are trying to
unlock your
front door?”



The Arborfield Apprentice

by Peter Gripton

An illustrated history of the Arborfield
Army Apprentices' School and Colleges



Foreword by the Honourable
Viscount Alanbrooke of Brookborough

Available for £21.90 plus P & P from Lulu.com (Price may vary based on Exchange Rate)

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

Exercise “Pirate Ops” Malaya 1947 - Charles Ashdown 42A

Introduction: As World War II came to a conclusion, British and Indian forces moved to retake Malaya. A landing was made by those forces in August and September 1945 on the Morib Beaches in northern Malaya.

The war in the Pacific had just ended, hastened by the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, by order of the Japanese Emperor. This was providential, because the operation would likely have involved high casualties had the landing been contested. Instead, the former enemy helped the Allied forces land. Even so, the beach defences caused a number of inexperienced personnel to be lost, as well as three DUKWs whose bottoms were ripped open.

Pirate Operations: In 1947, news began to emerge of pirate attacks on merchant junk traffic in the Straits of Malacca between Malaya (now Malaysia) and Sumatra (now Indonesia). Medium and large size ships were left unscathed. The typical method involved a junk, nondescript until it deployed ancient muzzle loading cannons and demanded surrender. Frequently, all passengers and crew of the seized vessel were put to death. There was a long history of similar activities, aided by the long and indented coastline of Sumatra. The cost of controlling the pirates was long regarded as too demanding a task to put serious resources against.

Sultan of Johore (now Johor): Johor is a state in Malaysia and was at the time ruled by the Sultan. He decided that some response to the piracy was necessary. He contacted British authorities and noted that he had seen the aforementioned DUKWs on the extensive surplus military equipment park at Malacca. He asked if these could be brought into service as anti-pirate defence vessels.

DUKW Rehabilitation: The CO of 4 Mobile Indian Workshop sent for the remaining troops in Malacca. Indian Army troops were being shipped back to India for service there, and British Army personnel were being sent back to Britain. This left four of us British Army Regulars. The three vehicles were transported to the workshop for inspection and repair if possible.

One vehicle had been badly damaged and heavily cannibalised. It was declared beyond economic repair. The other two were put into operation, and the aluminium bottoms repaired (we learned a lot about welding aluminium in a short time). Parts could only be sourced from the US, no civilian organizations were interested, and the US Army was unresponsive. We therefore resorted to cannibalising disparate unrelated equipment.

Within a week, the two DUKWs were ready for land use. Armament was provided by two Royal Marine sergeants, who installed a Lewis gun on each DUKW. Efforts to weld the gun steel mounting plates to aluminium were totally unsuccessful. The Marines slung the machine guns securely to uprights in the hull.

Seagoing trials turned out to be much more difficult. We drove one of the vehicles into relatively shallow water, and observed significant leakage at the propeller drive shaft. The seals on the shaft had degraded from years of service, tropical heat, and possibly rot. No spares were available. To deal with such an eventuality, the vehicle had been provided with a sump pump.

Unfortunately, the ingress of water exceeded the capacity of the pump. Upon reflection, it was decided to increase the pump capacity with a larger motor. This required upgrading the vehicles from 12V to 24V service. Storage was via two 12V batteries in series, and the motor generator and drive/rear lamps had to be changed over. The pump motor came from the siren on a US MP jeep. We were elated that REME know how had achieved these changes.

Before going to a trial with the RN, we suggested to our CO that we do our own trial in the Malacca Straits, as water ingress was still a concern. He agreed that would be prudent, and we ventured out the next day. We put out from the ramp, and soon discovered that while the sump pump was now much more powerful, it still could not keep up with the leak. The bottom of the craft was filling rapidly.

We returned rapidly to Malacca, bailing industriously! An additional cause for concern was the very narrow (2-3") freeboard of the DUKW. When travelling even quite slowly, ocean swells were enough to slop into the boat, and even more bailing was required. We just made it back to the ramp, and concluded the DUKWs were not seaworthy.

Our CO made the necessary explanations, and there was a great deal of RN laughter. Remarks were made about soldiers sticking to what they knew, i.e. travelling on land! The project was shelved. Of course, the problem did not go away. The Indonesian government alone did not have the resources to address it, but co-operation between the Indonesian, Thai, Malaysian and Singapore governments, aided by the Indian Navy and Coast Guard, appears to have finally essentially eliminated piracy in the Straits of Malacca.

Charles Ashdown 42A

Random Thoughts - From the Internet

- Why doesn't Tarzan have a beard when he lives in the jungle without a razor?
- Why do we press harder on a remote control when we know the batteries are flat?
- Why do banks charge a fee on insufficient funds' when they know there is not enough in the account?
- Why do Kamikaze pilots wear helmets?
- Why does someone believe you when you say there are four billion stars, but check when you say the paint is wet?
- Whose idea was it to put an 'S' in the word 'lisp'?
- What is the speed of darkness?
- Why is it that people say they 'Slept like a baby' when babies wake up every two hours?
- If the temperature is zero outside today and it's going to be twice as cold tomorrow, how cold will it be?
- Do married people live longer than single people or does it only seem longer?
- How is it that we put man on the moon before we figured out it would be a good idea to put wheels on luggage?
- Why do people pay to go up tall buildings and then put money in binoculars to look at things on the ground?

Did you ever stop and wonder.....

- Who was the first person to look at a cow and say, 'I think I'll squeeze these pink dangly things here, and drink whatever comes out?'
- Who was the first person to say, 'See that chicken there... I'm gonna eat the next thing that comes out of it's bum.'
- Why do toasters always have a setting so high that could burn the toast to a horrible crisp, which no decent human being would eat?
- Why is there a light in the fridge and not in the freezer?
- Why do people point to their wrist when asking for the time, but don't point to their bum when they ask where the bathroom is?
- Why does your Gynaecologist leave the room when you get undressed if they are going to look up there anyway?
- Why does Goofy stand erect while Pluto remains on all fours? They're both dogs!
- If quizzes are quizzical, what are tests?
- If corn oil is made from corn, and vegetable oil is made from vegetables, then what is baby oil made from?
- If electricity comes from electrons, does morality come from morons?
- Why do the Alphabet song and Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star have the same tune? (Stop singing and read on.....)
- Did you ever notice that when you blow in a dog's face, he gets mad at you, but when you take him on a car ride, he sticks his head out the window?
- Does pushing the elevator button more than once make it arrive faster?



Nostalgia Chapter 3 - Peter Corbett 57B

Bill Webster the chief clerk had researched a sea passage from Adelaide back to UK and about 6 of us signed up. The deal was we could claim Adelaide to Singapore and had to cover the Singapore to Southampton. Money again was tight so I signed up for a 4 berth on D deck, until Bill, in a coup, produced an authorization from GOC Singapore stating there was no trooping aircraft available on the day we arrived there, so we could claim the whole trip. I immediately upgraded to a single berth on A Deck. So began a pleasant 6 week cruise in the Sitmar Fair Sky.

Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Auckland NZ. I could get used to this cruising life. The ship was mainly used to export £10 Pom's. It was packed on its trip south, and about 10% full on its way north. Most memorable was the side trip to Cairo as the ship went through the Suez Canal.

We disembarked at 4am at Port Sudan. Bus ride to Cairo, Camel ride to Giza, arriving at the great Pyramid just as the sun came up. After a climb inside the pyramid, I gave up when the passage dipped to three feet. We had a photo op with the Sphinx, followed by a tour of the Egyptian Museum.

We met the ship at Port Said at 2am shattered, eventually arriving at Southampton train station for a journey to London. I decided to try my old favourite, a pint of Brown and Mild at the British Rail buffet, it was warm, flat and horrible, never again.

I did feel guilty starting 10 weeks leave after my 6 week "duty" cruise. After a few days bored at my parents' home. I signed up at the local labour exchange, and was immediately sent to a local furniture removal company as a labourer.

On arrival my Heavy Goods Driving License got me instantly promoted to Truck Driver. The Truck Driver was the small team boss, in charge of money collection, and manoeuvring a huge truck up mountain roads in North Wales as this doubled my money, I did not complain. After the first pay day I was a little more affluent, bought myself a car and met up with Stan the son of my parent's next door neighbour. After a short conversation he came up with an introduction to a girlfriend of his wife, Intro Patricia Mary, married a year later and 55 years later still going strong. Not sure how her parents figured out some kid that said he joined the army at 15 talked about being in charge of telemetry on a missile trial in Australia but drove a furniture removal truck. I guess they eventually believed me.

Arriving at SEE, the new School of Electronic Engineering for my "First Class Tels Tech course the first task was to claim back travel for Adelaide to Arborfield 12,000 miles caused a few comments but they paid it, 6 months hard studying with crazy weekends framed by 6 hour 200 mile drives to Cheshire in UK winter weather.

A few months later Fred Ordynski appeared on an Electro Med course, newly married, he got a hiring in a Gardner's cottage of General Sir somebody's stately home on Finchamstead Ridges, Pat came down to visit, we had these beautiful gardens to ourselves, featuring 53 different rhododendron colours covering a huge area. Very romantic!

Eventually moving on to 8 Field workshop Colchester as newly married I was lucky to get a hiring at Kirby Cross by the rather exclusive Frinton on Sea. Other than having to negotiate sea fog on the 20 mile commute to work daily life was good for a while. As a first class tels tech corporal I was assigned to be Air Portable and lined up for an "ACE mobile forces" 6 week camping holiday in the Tromso area of Northern Norway, 200 miles inside the Arctic Circle in February. The army called it 'Arctic Survival' with mixed British, American and Scandinavian forces. All the tels test equipment was positioned in pallets that fitted on some angle iron sitting on top of a trailer. The pallet cover was hinged to make a bench and the poor tech (me) stood in the snow and 'fixed' radios.

The detachment OC, a young captain noted I was due promotion in a few months decided I was easy prey for general dogs body and put me in charge of the many things he did not want to do. The main one was a daily NAFFI run to do the shopping for the 60 member unit. I soon discovered duty free vodka was 7 shillings a bottle I could at last afford to mimic James Bond, vodka gimlet, unfortunately the lime cordial cost 18 shillings a bottle in the local town stores but still a good deal.

After a week in Barracks on Bardufos air base we moved to 5 weeks living in 16 man Swedish tents moving every few days. The tents were circular with the centre pole a 4 inch pipe welded to 5 gallon oil drum converted to a fire in which someone fed wood logs every 10 minutes to keep us alive through the night. The door had two small flaps tightly laced up. We slept in double sleeping bags lying on reindeer skins on the snow, heads out, feet in towards the fire. Our friendly Norwegian instructor advised us to tie our bayonets to the tent by our heads in case it caught fire so we could try to escape by hacking our way through the tent wall. They had recently had several catastrophes.

Once we moved out of barracks we were all entitled to a tot of navy rum a day, and guess who was in charge? I requisitioned 60 tots per day, the first day there were 40 customers, 20 most other days, my stock grew. I did not fancy smuggling it back through UK customs. Problem solved with a couple of US, dry, army units open to barter mainly for T bone steaks. The Tels repair was a joke; puny soldering irons don't melt solder in -30C. All in all I did ok until the final move, the guys had just finished getting the tents up and their kit stowed at about 10pm when the Captain appeared and gave me his impossible task ordering that all the vehicles be parked on hard standing by dawn. The snow and ice was

at least 12 ft thick, everyone was heading to bed so my chance was zero. I remembered a nearby US Combat Engineering unit had several bulldozers and backhoes, so I headed out with my stock of Navy Rum. The Master Sergeant agreed and told me not to worry they would be over shortly. I headed back and dozed off, I expected the roar of bulldozers all I got was 10 guys with long hand snow boring tools, it took me a while to realize they were planting explosives. I got everyone up at 5am and moved them back to a safe area. The explosives did the job, the lads moved the vehicles on to the hard standing, and the Americans got paid off and headed out. Someone asked if the Captain was happy now. I had honestly forgotten him. One of the lads knew where he had pitched his tent and we dug him out with half a ton of snow covering him. His report gave me high marks for initiative and poor marks for execution!

Heading for the docks next day the roads were freshly plowed with 15ft snow banks either side. I was driving a Land Rover towing the top heavy Tels Repair trailer which apparently was snaking quite a bit. The first I knew anything was wrong was when it suddenly went completely dark and the engine laboured. Eventually I figured we were digging ourselves into the snowbank. I cut the engine and realized we were trapped, the door would not open, the rear of the vehicle was boxed in, and all I could see was a glimmer of daylight 20ft behind us. Fortunately the 4 tonner behind us had a winch on its front and once the guys stopped laughing they hooked it on to the trailer and dragged us out backwards. The local police came by and told us how lucky we were; apparently they get a couple of bodies every spring thaw. The rest of the trip was at 20 mph.

Back in Colchester I was a candidate for an Artificer board, the 2ic, Captain Marsden, gave us some coaching particularly on impromptu public speaking. After a few weeks and some video playback to cut out the bumbling, I was able to speak on the board for five minutes about a match.

I was able to score on my command task by picking up that the equipment we had to get across the 'river' was air portable, we picked it up and threw it across. The board wanted to know my opinion of the new decision to have REME tels techs take over from Royal Signals in infantry units. Fortunately I had overheard a long opinionated, heated discussion between our two "tiffies" Keith Tilley and Dixie Dean the previous week so I was able to give both sides, amazing the board of my knowledge. Anyhow, I passed, back to Arborfield.

I was approaching my 9 year contract date and thought seriously about coming out, mainly to get a degree. The thought of 2 years full time college without pay was a major sobering influence. Art Tels 40 was the first course to include an HNC (Higher National Certificate in Electronics Engineering) was a very attractive 18 months at SEE, Arborfield.

We soon settled into the 2-3 week routine: new subject, 4-5 labs with lab reports, tests, and move on. All went well; everyone was getting good marks until we started "machines" a new subject for Tels types added to justify the HNC.

The first lab report everyone scored "D" grades but the instructor could/would not explain what was wrong. The second lab report I delayed. Focusing on my new hobby 'apple wine making' the Wokingham hiring we were in had a bumper crop of apples. One particular night I was blending about 10 bottles, a sip, add more sugar, another sip. By the end I was tipsy, and suddenly realized the dreaded lab report was due next morning. 4 hours later I finished it and collapsed in bed. The rest of the class got "D" grades, I got an "A" but had no idea why. Analysis showed everyone had done 2 pages, I had done 21, 2 pages of facts, 19 pages of BS, waffle and repeats, quality plus quantity!

About 14 months in, I realized the HNC was going to be finished soon. The Tiffy course was 4 more months and my contract was pass Tiffy serve 6 more years or if I failed a civvy in 3 month, I developed a fiendish scheme to "pass my HNC, fail the Tiffy and get out. I began checking out opportunities in Australia. Several visits to Australia house in London, followed by state houses led eventually to Western Australia who came up with an opportunity with AWA (Australian Wireless Amalgamate).

They sent me over for an interview that went well until the manager said I had to pass a NASA Engineering test, he said it was very difficult and I should study for 3-6 months, I said it was now or never, so he sat me in a room with a 3 hour time limit. I turned my paper in, under 2 hours and he was convinced I had given up. He marked it on the spot and was amazed I scored 98% (thank you SEE).

He offered me the job on the spot at 3x my army wage. It was a year at a NASA DSIF (deep space Instrumentation facility) aka a Big Dish at Carnarvon about 200 miles north of Perth Western Australia in the middle of nowhere followed by a factory job in Sydney. I explained it had to start in 6 months and they agreed.

I took advice from a couple of friends in strict confidence. But a month later got called to the Chief Instructors office; normally this only happens when you're getting kicked off the course. It was weird, instead of the formalities; he sat me down, poured me a cup of tea and chatted, finishing up with telling me I was doing so well on the course that even if I failed all the remaining exams I was guaranteed to pass. I never figured out who talked, so goodbye Australia a Tiffys life for me.

Peter Corbett 57B

The Arborfield Databases - Andy Dickson 66B

Some of you may be aware that Ian Clark and I started cataloguing intakes from data held at the REME Museum a few years ago. COVID restrictions and then Ian's sudden illness prevented us finishing this project and there is still quite some work to do. It is not very interesting work, just typing the data from the record cards into a database all the time supervised by the Museum staff. I was keen to get to my own Div but we never managed to do this at the museum.

Following on from this I started to log data that was available from several sources:

- Photographs that were passed to me when I took over this role that belong to the REME Museum (Not all photos have names and some only have surnames).
- Entries and posts on various Facebook sites that I keep tabs on
- Photos that have been given to the 66ers Website that have names on them, mostly Sports photos.

So far I have catalogued 13,000 names.

These names are held in an Excel spreadsheet and I have created a pivot table that allows interrogation so that the various AOBA roles can find names of current, past and deceased ex boys.

The data is not for any external use. Roger Traves, Jeff Baker and Dave Sparrow (Committee Members) both use the data in their roles for the AOBA. I also find that people ask me for information regarding individuals or Divs. I can send out names and numbers but no contact details unless approved by the individual to be contacted.

Looking for an opportunity to expand the data and fill in some gaps in the later years I joined the Facebook page "Princess Marina College" which has over 1,200 members. I posted on this page what I was doing and what I was looking for. The response was spectacular and I gathered another 1,579 names to add to the main database. (I still have to do this. It takes time and there are duplicates that I have to contend with). The main database now has 13,095 entries. I have 98 names that I don't have Div information for. Cross checking names as I get them reduces this number.

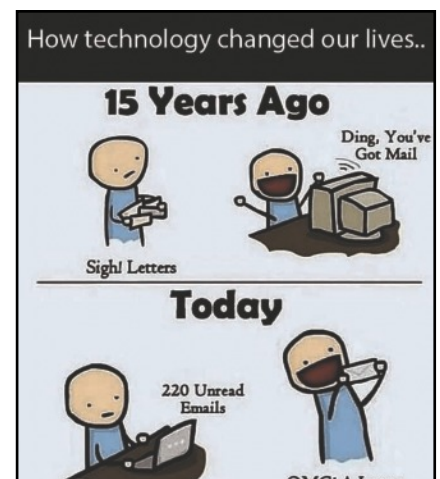
The guys who are members of the Princess Marina College Facebook page have been fantastic in responding to my requests. My trouble was trying to keep tabs on all the responses which is not easy on Facebook. I also got accepted onto various Div Facebook pages that allowed me to interrogate their memberships and include the numbers in my project, (77C, 79C, 79A, 86A and 87A). I am also a member of various REME Sites but it is not easy getting names and Divs from these sites.

In addition I had a message from Ben Holland from 87B who has offered to put the data into a Microsoft Access database with a front end that would allow interrogation. We are still working out the details and I hope the results can be posted on the AOBA Website. Ben works in the IT industry and I am grateful for his offer of assistance.

Any assistance you can give me in this exercise would be helpful.

It might be just names you remember from your Div, photos you may have, passing out parade programs etc. Anything that ties a name to a Div.

Andy Dickson 66B



Exercise 'Pirate Ops' Malaya 1947 - Charles Ashdown 42A

Introduction: As World War II came to a conclusion, British and Indian forces moved to retake Malaya. A landing was made by those forces in August and September 1945 on the Morib Beaches in northern Malaya. The war in the Pacific had just ended, hastened by the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, by order of the Japanese Emperor.

This was providential, because the operation would likely have involved high casualties had the landing been contested. Instead, the former enemy helped the Allied forces land. Even so, the beach defences caused a number of inexperienced personnel to be lost, as well as three DUKWs whose bottoms were ripped open.

Pirate Operations: In 1947, news began to emerge of pirate attacks on merchant junk traffic in the Straits of Malacca between Malaya (now Malaysia) and Sumatra (now Indonesia). Medium and large size ships were left unscathed. The typical method involved a junk, nondescript until it deployed ancient muzzle loading cannons and demanded surrender. Frequently, all passengers and crew of the seized vessel were put to death.

There was a long history of similar activities, aided by the long and indented coastline of Sumatra. The cost of controlling the pirates was long regarded as too demanding a task to put serious resources against.

Sultan of Johore (now Johor): Johore is a state in Malaysia and was at the time ruled by the Sultan. He decided that some response to the piracy was necessary. He contacted British authorities and noted that he had seen the aforementioned DUKWs on the extensive surplus military equipment park at Malacca. He asked if these could be brought into service as anti-pirate defense vessels.

DUKW Rehabilitation: The CO of 4 Mobile Indian Workshop sent for the remaining troops in Malacca. Indian Army troops were being shipped back to India for service there, and British Army personnel were being sent back to Britain. This left four of us British Army Regulars. The three vehicles were transported to the workshop for inspection and repair if possible.

One vehicle had been badly damaged and heavily cannibalised. It was declared beyond economic repair. The other two were put into operation, and the aluminium bottoms repaired (we learned a lot about welding aluminium in a short time).

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Seagoing trials turned out to be much more difficult. We drove one of the vehicles into relatively shallow water, and observed significant leakage at the propeller drive shaft. The seals on the shaft had degraded from years of service, tropical heat, and possibly rot. No spares were available. To deal with such an eventuality, the vehicle had been provided with a sump pump.

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Charles Ashdown - 42A

They Walk Among Us - Borrowed from the Internet

My husband and I went through the McDonald's driveway window and I gave the cashier a £5 bill. Our total was £4.25, so I also handed her 25p. She said, 'You gave me too much money.' I said, 'Yes I know, but this way you can just give me a pound back.' She sighed and went to get the manager who asked me to repeat my request. I did so, and he handed me back the 25p, and said 'We're sorry but we don't do that kind of thing.' The cashier then proceeded to give me back 75 pence in change. Do not confuse the people at MacD's.

We had to have the garage door repaired.

The repairman told us that one of our problems was that we did not have a 'large' enough motor on the opener. I thought for a minute, and said that we had the largest one made at that time, a 1/2 horsepower. He shook his head and said, 'You need a 1/4 horsepower.' I responded that 1/2 was larger than 1/4 and he said, 'NOOO, it's not. Four is larger than two.' We haven't used that repairman since... I live in a semi-rural area.

We recently had a new neighbour call the local city council office to request the removal of the DEER CROSSING sign on our road.

The reason: 'Too many deer are being hit by cars out here! I don't think this is a good place for them to be crossing anymore.'

IDIOT SIGHTING IN FOOD SERVICE.

My daughter went to a Mexican fast food and ordered a taco. She asked the person behind the counter for 'minimal lettuce.' He said he was sorry, but they only had iceberg lettuce.

I was at the airport, checking in at the gate when an airport employee asked, 'Has anyone put anything in your baggage without your knowledge?'

To which I replied, 'If it was without my knowledge, how would I know?' He smiled knowingly and nodded, 'That's why we ask.'

The pedestrian light on the corner beeps when it's safe to cross the street.

I was crossing with an 'intellectually challenged' co-worker of mine. She asked if I knew what the beeper was for. I explained that it signals blind people when the light is red. Appalled, she responded, 'what on earth are blind people doing driving?!' She is a government employee.....

When my wife and I arrived at a car dealership to pick up our car after a Service, we were told the keys had been locked in it. We went to the service department and found a mechanic working feverishly to unlock the driver's side door. As I watched from the passenger side, I instinctively tried the door handle and discovered that it was unlocked. 'Hey,' I announced to the technician, 'it's open!'

His reply, 'I know. I already did that side.'



The Brit's natural 'warning signal' procedure to alert everyone in the vicinity that they're about to do something:

1. Slaps thighs/claps hands
2. Says "right then"



February 24th.

Potteries & District R.E.M.E. Association.

February 2022 Newsletter.

(Scribe: Maurice Hope)

Following a request from our friends in the Shropshire branch, in response for Corps representation at a family funeral, our branch Standard Bearer Gil Mould attended, and paraded our branch Standard to support the service for Major (Retd) Geoffrey Parkes, who passed away aged 81 years, who had served in the Corps from 1957 to 2000.

The service took place on Tuesday 1st February at 10.30am at the Bushbury Crematorium (West Chapel), Wolverhampton. Two Standards were paraded from The Potteries & District and the now defunct Birmingham branches. Gil must be commended as he never refuses to respond to such requests to parade our branch Standard if he is available.

The following article from the "Telegraph" from sometime in 2009, was rediscovered by branch member Matthew Hope, and has a direct link to our branch.

It relates to possibly the biggest "Walt" in history, with the headlines..."Veteran claims medals are genuine as investigation launched"



claimed he did not think he was pretending about this, as there were pictures of him in the armed forces in his home, and he had given talks to church groups about war and peace.

When quizzed by reporters at his home, he claimed he could not talk about his service, as he had signed the Official Secrets Act, and that he was not a liar, as the medals were all "Pukka" campaign medals that he had won in conflicts while he was serving in the British Forces, in the South Atlantic, the Gulf, Kuwait, and one or two other stations.!!

I wonder if Graham ever regretted making those claims?? Graham sometime later resettled back to the village of Caverswall, Stoke-on-Trent, where he had started as a parish priest many years before.

Also brought to our attention by Matthew, was a little known or visited WW2 war memorial (Panel 2) at the Stoke-on-Trent, Carmountside Crematorium, which listed the following Corps member who must have been one of our founding fathers going by the date.

Major Frederick Mallalieu, AMimechE, R.E.M.E., aged 40, service number 185727. Son of Norman & Gertrude, and husband of Marjorie of Willaston Crewe. Dated 27th March 1946.

Prior to Christmas, and thanks to the Omicron virus, the now customary event to bring down the branch activities for the year, an informal "Christmas Sweater" buffet night had to be called off. but being ever resilient, and not needing much of an excuse to have a good night with friends, it was resurrected and held on Tuesday 22nd Feb, following our scheduled monthly branch meeting, complete with Christmas Sweaters and entertainment by singer Vicky Gotham, who had been our dinner guest in November when we held our branch Christmas dinner.

A brilliant night was had by all, with special thanks going to Joan Hubbert for the sandwich spread, and the contributions from the branch better halves for supplying a multitude of home baked cakes and pies (including Christmas sausage rolls) to further boost the buffet.

The in branch meeting raffle and the main buffet raffle raised in excess of 100 pounds which more than covered the fee of our entertainer on the night, Vicky.

We must thank George Byrne and Barry Sims of the RBL Club who donated a huge bottle of "Bells" whisky as a raffle prize, donated in appreciation of the branches support in their ongoing dispute on an absurdly high rent increase which if it goes ahead would possibly mean the end for the club. Ironically the bottle was won by George, so never left the building!

A man who flaunted a "ridiculous" array of medals at an Armistice Day parade in Warwickshire has been identified as a carpenter who lives in Hinckley.

Roger Day from Earl Shilton wore 17 medals, for privates and officers, spanning six decades of campaigns, during the march in Bedworth.

Having only been born in 1948, he insists he served in Korea in the 50's, as well as the Falklands in the 80's, the first Gulf War in the 90's and also the Balkans in the late 90's.

His glittering display of medals included three of the countries finest awards for bravery, a Military Cross with bar, a Distinguished Service Order with bar, and a Military Medal.

The final insult was that he was wearing an SAS beret and badge, but failed to wear a regimental tie and had placed his medals in the wrong date order !!

I know the Army still had "Boy Soldiers" at the time, but to have seen active service at the age of five in Korea was stretching the imagination slightly.

But the Rev Graham Gittings, the vicar at his local church (and later from 2017-2019, prior to resigning due to ill health was the Potteries & District branch Padre),

REME Corps Founders - Mo Hope - 59B

R.I.P Corps Founders

1

Having recently trawled through the entire current website of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, it was discovered that into their care are no fewer than 2106 graves and memorials to fallen members of the Corps; a surprisingly large number.

Of the above number there are only recorded 712 in the whole of the United Kingdom.

In the county of Staffordshire there are only three recorded, all in different locations: one in a Churchyard, one in a Cemetery, and one in the grounds of a City Crematorium.

So it was, on the day that Storm Franklin decided to hit the country, February 21st, two members of the Potteries and District branch of the R.E.M.E. Association braved the elements to search out and pay their respects to what must have been three of our Corps founding fathers.

Branch president Maurice Hope and son Matthew, also a branch member; first went to the south of the County to the Church of St Michael's Church on Greenhill, in Lichfield, which is an ancient burial site.

- St Michaels Church on Greenhill is very old and is allegedly one of five ancient burial sites consecrated by St Augustine in the seventh century (the others being Glastonbury, Canterbury, Lindasfarne and York) and was a place of solitude for St Chad when he was Bishop of Lichfield. As well as being a haven for wild life, there are over five hundred trees on site including a Japanese Cork Tree and an Oregon Maple.

It has a C.W.G.C. monument listing over thirty names of the local fallen from both world wars.

For the military historians the grave of Trumpeter John Browne will be of interest. He was a member of the 17th Lancers during the Crimean War and was a trumpeter who sounded the charge on the day of the ill-fated "Charge of The Light Brigade", in 1854. He was born in Nottingham and married a girl from Dublin. He lived in Lichfield and died in 1898, and was buried on site with full military honours. He was highly decorated receiving The Russian medal with four bars, as well as The Legion of Honour and The Turkish and Indian medals.

5

It takes the form of a Stone of Remembrance, with a carved inscription:

1939/1945. These members of His Majesty's forces died in the service of their country, and were cremated here. In total there are thirty names on the memorial. A memorial that neither realised existed although it was on their doorstep.

On panel 2 near the bottom, is commemorated Major 185727 Frederick Mallalieu, A.M.I.(mech) E, who had been mentioned in despatches, and died on 27th of March 1946, aged 40 years. He left his wife Florence Marjorie Mallalieu, and parents Norman and Gertrude Mallalieu of Willaston, Crewe.

2

Here they found the grave of Cfn 14700155 Alfred Ronald Wolfe, who was accidentally killed while serving with the 3rd Battalion R.E.M.E. on December 26th 1945 aged just 20 years. Inscribed on his gravestone are the words.. "Not Our Will, But Thine Will Be Done" and a family tribute.. "Beloved by all, But loved by Jesus best". He was married to his young wife Doris Muriel of Lichfield.

The grave is located by the Screen Wall, Old part, Section B, Row J, grave 10.

Around the outer grave base side stones is inscribed the following... "Also to his brother L/Cpl George Wolfe, of the 6th Battalion, North Staffs Regiment, who made the supreme sacrifice at Caen on August 15th 1944. Interred in Aunay British Cemetery in France aged 25".

- George William Wolfe, L/Cpl 5050403 killed 15th August 1944, aged 25. Recorded on the Bayeux War Cemetery, France. Married to wife Hilda.

Both were the sons of Henry and Harriet Wolfe of Lichfield.

4

Next up for the intrepid pair was to the county town of Stafford, and the part of the town cemetery devoted to WW2 Dead. There are 125 graves, 91 British and 34 Germans; only 119 of the total are identified, all tended and maintained immaculately by the CWGC. The cemetery is located in the Northern end of the town, about 2km from the town centre on the Eccleshall Road.

Buried here is Cfn 4920091 Frederick Henry Leighton Palmer, who died on the 6th of September 1943 aged just 26. He is laid to rest in Plot G, New Portion. Grave 48. He was the son of Frederick and Beatrice Palmer, and husband of Violet Ethel May Palmer of Stafford.

Inscribed on his gravestone is the following: "At his post, His duty done. He died but not in vain, He made a Soldiers sacrifice, That peace may live again".

Last on the journey was to the City Crematorium at Carmountside, sited on the A5007 in Milton, Stoke-on-Trent to pay their respects at the memorial to the fallen of WW2 that had been cremated on site.



Stafford Cemetery



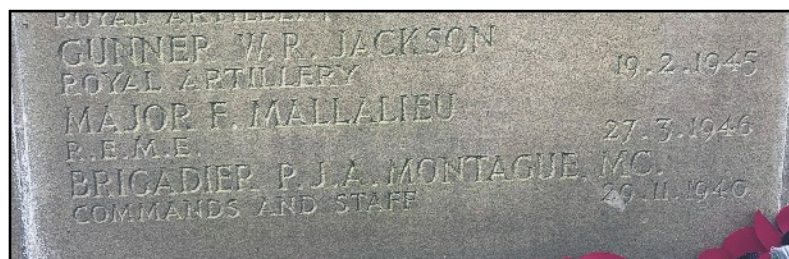
Carmountside Memorial



F.H.L. Palmer Grave



Cfn Woolf Grave



Major F. Mallalieu

Arte et Marte

Gold Lightning barb and Silver Steed, the Crown and Globe enclosing
The opening Scroll, proclaiming REME - simple, yet imposing.
This is the badge so proudly worn by members of the Corps
Which keeps the army on the move, prepared to go to war.
Yet, battle honours there are none despite its long existence,
For it has been in every action, giving its assistance;
And if all of these engagements were actually listed,
It would be (probably) the longest standard that's existed.

Now there are those who claim that REME personnel don't fight,
And this misconception must, in all justice, be put right,
For, lacking military expertise, there's no hope of promotion,
As 'Soldier First and Tradesman Second', is the REME notion.
For, when in action things look bad, the frontline combat soldier
Knows REME men will be fighting with them, shoulder to shoulder
Until the battle has been won, or till the danger fades,
And then assume their primary role, returning to their trades.

So REME soldiers of today continue this tradition,
Supporting, as has always been the case, without condition,
Prepared to do whatever is required to aid success,
Regardless of the toll that they may suffer, or distress
That might be part of helping out in whatsoever role
That they may be required to fill, to answer duty's call;
One thing is sure, no matter what is asked of them to do,
Tradition's always safe with REME lads, they'll see it through.

TC - 55A

April 23rd 1915: The death, aged 27, of the poet Rupert Brooke, known for his sonnets written during the First World War, especially "The Soldier":
"...If I should die, think only this of me.. That there's some corner of a foreign field, that is for ever England..."

1914 V: The Soldier

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

Rupert Brooke



Letters/E-mails to the Editor

Evening Andrew,

Received my hard copy of OBAN 82 in the post this morning.

Another great edition, thank you for all your hard work, looking forward to a good read.

Thanks, also, for including my item on the 'Missing Boards' in this edition. Rob and I hope it brings in some helpful info.

I trust you and yours are all keeping safe and well, all good here in Suffolk.

Best regards,

Al Jones - 61B.

From Lionel Ecclestone

Issue 82 Back cover.

It is certainly Sgt Jock Pittendragh, C Squad, Junior Company

I was 63A, C Company.

I don't recognise anyone from '63 or early '64.

I was a A/T Cpl in Junior company 64 C to 65B.

So my best guess is 65 C or early '66.

I came across CSM Jock Pittendragh in Germany late '66.

Regards

Lionel Ecclestone - 63A

Ed's Comments: We know Ray Pittendreigh very well. He has been to a reunion and was a guest of the 66ers.

From Ron (Jeff) Baker (Via the AOBA Messaging App on the website)

I have been looking at OBAN 82 pages 10-12. Congrats on the hours of work to distil info to a few tables. The table on awards etc. caught my eye. You refrained from saying how many GSMs apprentices had earned (thousands I'm sure.) The info must have come from initial applications. Like many, I never used membership acronyms with my name. I did not put them on my initial application and no way to add now.

Reply via the AOBA Messaging App:

Ronald, there are no GSM's listed in the database. Neither do we ask for this data on any of the application forms. I am sure you are right and there must have been many awarded.

Jeff Baker - 65C

From David Finch 63A (From Australia)

Hi Andrew.

Many thanks for my first official copy of the News Letter.

Unfortunately, due to our recent heavy rainfall and stupidity of the Australia Post employees in our area, the old saying, "If you pay peanuts.....", seems to apply. The envelope containing the News Letter was shoved into the mail box with about 1/3 left sticking out. This acted like a funnel and the entire thing was soaked. I managed to peel most of the pages apart, and as you can see from the photo below I hung them on the clothes dryer to dry. I did manage to read most of it, but most of the photos were damaged to the extent that I couldn't make out the faces in them. If you want to include this in the next issue, please feel free.

I did notice on the envelope that the cost of postage to Australia was £4.60. That is quite expensive. If you want to save some money, I'm quite happy to receive it via email. I will try to send you some photos with info about them in the near future, that you may want to include in future issues.

Looking forward to seeing you in July.

Regards.

Dave Finch 63A



Ed's comments: Good job you don't have your 'smalls' on view in the washing machine, Dave. I have switched you over to the .pdf version. Just remember to download it each time from the AOBA Website. Andy

E-mails to Roger Traves (57A) - 2022 Reunion Responses

From: Jacqueline Hitchen

Thank you

To Roger Traves

Dear Roger. I just want to thank

you for making it possible for my family and I to attend the Memorial Service earlier today. It was emotional but I would not have missed it for the world. A fitting tribute to my amazing husband Robert. Thank you to everyone involved in the organisation of today. With very best wishes Jackie

From: Lisa Krom 10/7/2022 10:25

Aoba memorial Day big thanks

To Roger Traves

Good morning

I'm sure you will be receiving many such emails today, but feel we must as a family express our gratitude to you and your team for a unforgettable day. We felt so proud to attend and to be among families such as ours, ... I think I started crying at 10.50 with the sound of the first bagpipe My dad would have absolutely loved it...

So once again thank you for all you do. We will continue to visit places and events related to the apprentice school my dad was sooooo very proud to be part of.

Many thanks ... The family of Alan Rayfield

From: Lorraine Rowney 10/7/2022 12:04

Hi, Roger. Just to say a very big thank you on behalf of myself and family for a very organized, emotional memorial yesterday where a lot of tears were shed. David's cross is now in the memorial garden with his comrades as we know that would have been his wish. And to top it all the weather shone on us all.

Thank you, kind regards Lorraine Rowney.

From: swilk42 10/7/2022 16:17

Re: Memorial service July 9th 22 Adrian William Cleaton

To Roger Traves

Just a quick note, to say thank you to the arborfield old boys for yesterday. It was a very emotional and hard day, but we were so glad that we came. So once again if you could pass on our thanks I would be very grateful

Sue Representing the family of Adrian William Cleaton

From: Anneliese Higgins Lee 11/7/2022 02:19

Re: AOBA Drumhead Memorial Service 9 July 2022 - Car parking at the NMA

To Roger Traves <rog.ski@talktalk.net>

On behalf of my Mother and all the family, thank you so much for a lovely service yesterday. It was so very well organised and such a fabulous tribute to not just my Father but for all the others who have passed too. It was a great pleasure to attend. I've wanted to come to the Arboretum for a long time as my husband helped erect the Royal Welsh / RWF memorial a few years back.

Thank you so much for all your organisation and kindness.

Kind regards

Anneliese Higgins Lee (Daughter of Geoffrey Frank Earnest 58A)

From: Carol Langdon 11/7/2022 08:45

To Roger Traves <rog.ski@talktalk.net>

Dear Sir,

I attended your Reunion Drumhead Service yesterday at the NMA as a family member, as my husband John Langdon 60C, died in March. I would like to thank you and all involved, for inviting myself, son and daughter in law. It was a truly wonderful, if emotional, day and you have given me an treasured memory to hold onto. Meeting up with some of his friends made our time even more memorable, in fact everyone there were so helpful, thoughtful and kind.

Thank You.

From Cathy Rankin Sat, 2 Jul 2022, 16:37

Hi Roger

I got the cross thank you so much it is appreciated and will be thinking of John on the day.

Regards

Cathy Rankin

The Mighty Beaver - Bob Cownie 66B

Hi Andy,

I read with interest the article from Peter Skinner about the Beaver aircraft, particularly the part where Peter saw one in NI where after it landed a couple of passengers literally ran from the aircraft to a waiting car which set off at speed for a destination unknown! Whilst none of the runners from the Beaver was me, I had an experience when I was flown back from UK in one that I am willing to share with others in the Newsletter.

During my NI service with the Electronic Workshop in the late 70's as the Tells Tiffy I had been sent back to UK on a course with a large well known company in Stevenage, to be shown a new piece of search and surveillance kit. I spent a week being shown how to use and repair it. When the training was finished I was whisked off to Heathrow to fly back to NI, where my flight details would be waiting for me. It was normal at the time to be flown by a civil airline into Aldergrove civil.

On arrival at Heathrow I was to give a demo of the equipment to Special Branch officers who seemed to be impressed at what this piece of kit could do. During my short stay in Heathrow I asked where I could buy a pack of 20 cigarettes I was told to follow one of the officers who walked me through the incoming international channel to the Customs area where I was able to buy a pack of 200 Duty Free cigarettes, we then returned the demonstration area with no problems.

Once the demo was finished I enquired of my flight details back to NI as nothing had been said up till then. They all knew about my flight details and thought I knew of my flight out of Heathrow and were surprised that I didn't! I was taken under escort, with my equipment and luggage, to another part of the airport well away from the normal departure areas. When we arrived in a room overlooking the pan I was surprised to see only a refueling tanker and asked how I was to fly out. I was told that my flight was being refueled, in front of me was the refueling tanker and when it completed refueling it moved away to reveal an Army Air Corps Beaver, this was my flight back to NI.

I was taken to the Beaver by my escort who thanked me for the demo and wished me a safe flight with a slight chuckle. I introduced myself to the pilot and co-pilot, both SSgt's like me. My luggage and equipment were stowed safely and I was invited to sit in the rear, as the co-pilot was under instruction. Flight checks completed we started to taxi to the runway and had to stop for a time, when I asked why I was told that we had to wait until the runway was clear of all large arriving and departing aircraft as the air wash would affect the Beavers ability to take off safely. It seems that we were the reason for delays to a number of outbound and inbound flights.

Once in the air initial part of the flight was enjoyable flying over London at a very low level by normal standards. Our journey was to be broken by a short hop to Middle Wallop to top up on fuel, we simply sat on the runway for a short period whilst this happened and then off again. Heading North East towards the west coast, where we were to fly over the Isle of Man, we circled once before heading out over the Irish Sea towards the NI coast.

Now this is where the fun ended and the flight got seriously rough, up until then the flight was interesting and enjoyable, I hadn't flown this low in a plane before but had done so many times in helicopters of various sizes in Cyprus and in NI where helicopter flights were the norm. The weather was clear but windy and we were shoved around a bit, so bad that the trainee co-pilot asked to hand the flight back to the pilot who promptly said no, that he had to learn how to fly the Beaver in windy and turbulent conditions. This did nothing for my confidence or my nerves!

The rest of the flight over the Irish Sea was turbulent but safe and as we neared Newcastle I was asked by the pilot if I knew where the Mourne Mountains were, I said yes as I had walked in them often with friends from Bangor. This led to a short detour round and over the Mournes where I saw the routes from above that I had walked previously. The final part of the flight was circling around Lough Neagh whilst waiting for permission to land at RAF Aldergrove where unfortunately the flight ended too quickly.

We taxied to a waiting area where a car was waiting for me, nothing special and no blackened out windows, I simply unloaded my luggage and equipment into the car and said a thank you and farewell to the pilot and co-pilot who were going to find some food and a well-earned rest before returning to Middle Wallop. I was quickly whisked off to HQ NI where I had to provide a short demo to the users before handing over the equipment and returning to the mess for a well-deserved meal, beer and good night's sleep.

Another of my adventures from my tour in NI ended, which again proved to be interesting in ways that I had not expected. Might not be considered by some as nothing out of the normal but for me it was yet another interesting and unusual experience that has remained with me forever.

Andy, feel free if you want to change anything if you think the above would be a worthwhile story to put in Letters to the Editor but let me know either way.

Bob Cownie 66B

Obituaries

Former SSgt David Charles Giles BEM

Scribes: Col (Retd) Mike Crabbe and Maj (Retd) John Plumb

We both served with David at different times, came together as members of Art Avionics 17 and kept in touch with David and Sylvia up to his untimely passing near his home in France in November last year.

David joined the Army Apprentices School in January 1964 and was allocated to 'B' squad for training in the aircraft trade. This was the second intake of Apprentices to have the Aviation trades as an option. At this early time in training for Aviation, Apprentices were not assigned to Aircraft or Electrics, Instruments and Radio (E, I & R) until they reached the third term and had been assessed for their suitability for a particular trade. David was selected for E, I & R. We were never sure if it was the training or David's innovative nature that led to the David Giles Mouse Trap – an upside-down cardboard box with an access hole, either side of which was connected to the mains! – sadly no mice were caught.

As a talented runner, David competed in Cross Country and in 1965, whilst attending military training in Brecon, he completed the retrieval of the safety flag from the top of the mountain on the Cym Gwdi ranges in record time – a record that stood for some time. On passing out from the then renamed Army Apprentices College in December 1966 he moved to Aircraft Engineering Training Wing at Middle Wallop to complete his training before his initial posting to 70 Aircraft Workshop for continuation training in April 1967.

After his continuation training David was posted to Development and Trials Sqn AAC which was in many respects "a match made in heaven" as it required the installation for trials purposes of equipment new to the Army Aircraft in existing helicopters. Proof of David's problem-solving ability and acceptance of new ideas resulted in the award of the BEM in the 1969 Queens New Year's Honours List.

David was selected for Artificer training and attended Artificer Aircraft (EI&R) 17 from November 1971 to July 1973. This course was renamed to Artificer Avionics in January 1972. When we returned to SEE for a period of revision for the HNC examinations in 1973, it coincided with the national power strikes called "the winter of discontent". Fortunately, to beat the power cuts, we discovered that the "Old Leathern Bottle" on the Wokingham road was on the hospital circuit and thus immune from outages – a great place to revise!

On completion of his Artificer course David was posted to 652 Sqn AAC in Bunde, Germany where he served from 1973 -75 and managed to include a tour in Northern Ireland. On his return to the UK, he joined the UK Standards Team based at Middle Wallop, which took him to all the UK based AAC units as well as Jamaica and Belize. After 13 years of Army life, David decided to try life in Civvy Street. By this time, he had married Sylvia, and they were bringing up their 4 children. He acknowledged that his Army career had given him a great deal, but it was time to move on.

Computing was just coming to the forefront, so, with his electronics background, he chose to work in a fledgling American computer company, which took the family to Dublin, and he was soon promoted to Operations Director. The family became somewhat travellers, moving house on average every 3 years because David was frequently offered lucrative and interesting job offers. From Ireland, David worked for Mitel Telecom in South Wales, then for an American company making blood analysers, based in Luton. As time went on and the children were reasonably settled in careers or University, David was head-hunted by a major international company based in Singapore. This opened up a whole new era for him. He and Sylvia became world travellers in their 40s, visiting Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia, Australia, Canada, Africa and the USA, wherever David's work took him. David progressed to high management, and eventually ran his own company.

In the late 90s he fulfilled a dream and bought a second home in SW France intending it just for holidays, where the expanding family could gather in the sunshine. However, he found that he enjoyed life so much in France, that he made the decision to retire early and move there permanently. As the family grew to include 10 grandchildren, he adored them all. He would organise treasure hunts for them, spoiling them and treating them, and generally being the ideal Grandfather. He was well known for his love of renovating houses and could often be seen outside the local 'Brico' in shorts and sandals or wellies all year round. He was a very generous, fun-loving man, always whistling and optimistic. The morning he died, he left the house after bringing Sylvia a cup of tea in bed, went off to meet a man about a digger, had a heart attack in his parked car, and died instantly.

David was an extraordinary man and will be missed by his Wife, Sylvia, children, Andrew, Sarah, Louise and Claire and all his family and many friends.

Well, after a couple of false starts I have finally made it! Thank you all for allowing me to take the reins as Chairman of the Arborfield Old Boys Association – I am grateful and truly honoured in equal measure.

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