



THE AIRBORNE ENGINEERS JOURNAL



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The Airborne Engineer

August 2002 Issue No. 7

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Publication Deadline - December 2002 Edition

Members submitting material for publication in the December edition of the Journal, are advised that the closing date will be Saturday 30th October. Articles received after this date will not be published until the April 2003 edition. **(Branch Secretaries please NOTE!)**

Kindly ensure that you forward your articles direct to the editor - address as shown above.

Please don't leave it until the last minute or you may well miss the deadline!

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From the Association President

Brigadier Garth Hewish MBE

I write my last message for the Journal as President of the Association. My confidence remains unshaken that for the large majority of our members the Association is seen to be in good health. Our membership at 1129 is the highest ever: although not cash rich we remain solvent and active. We now read a much-improved Journal and also we are on the brink of seeing two museum exhibits in place at Chatham and Elvington, dedicated to recording the exploits of Airborne Engineers from Major John Rock onwards. Running parallel with these projects the routine meetings and events, both formal and social, run effectively as always and we have been able to deploy resources to emergencies and special events as necessary. For all of this I thank on all our members' behalf, the Chairman, Bob Prosser, and all Committee members and Branch officials throughout. Gentlemen your efforts are much appreciated and happily for all of us are reflected in the success of the Association.

I would be less than honest if I did not admit to disappointment at what I see is a continuing blot on the landscape. For many years our relationship with the REA has been a vexed issue. Never sure of the collective will in this respect it has been a subject raised at AGMs. The Chatham AGM in 1996 was no exception. Reaching no conclusion except to shelve a decision for a further 5 years it adversely tainted the atmosphere of that special weekend. This I felt was disappointing for my predecessor, Maj Gen Geoff Field and a not too inspiring start for my tenure. As required at the 1996 AGM the matter was raised again those 5 years later at the Bristol AGM on the 6th October 2001. This time it seems that it adversely affected the atmosphere even more and the aftermath suggests that although the majority at the AGM voted that subject to five conditions being met, the Committee should make formal application to the REA that the AEA should become a National Functional Branch of the REA, there has been adverse reaction from a small but vociferous section of our Association. As your President I have to report that I and your Committee have yet to get a full and formal resolution of the five points as needed to allow us to proceed further with the proposal to the REA. We have run into complications with the Charities Commission.

A combination of this failure to resolve all points and an obvious section of our Association who are unsettled by the prospect of Functional Branch Membership of the REA has prompted me to propose to your Committee that we prepare to review the future of the AEA at our next AGM in Blackpool in October 2002. Further, since there has been a continuing call for a postal vote with a view to getting the truest reading of our memberships wishes in the matter this was accepted unanimously as a proper course of action at the joint meeting of the Executive and Advisory Committees at Coventry on Sun 23 June 2001. Accordingly action is in hand to stage such a vote and have the results available for the October AGM in Blackpool. There never has been any intention to impose a solution other than that which the majority of our members see to be right. In this connection I ask you to read again the relevant words of my message in Issue No 5 (December 2001) printed below:

"As the year's end approaches I am happy to report that overall the Airborne Engineers Association (AEA) continues to operate on a sound footing, with a strong membership and a good number of those intent on seeing that we meet the objectives set out in our Constitution. We also owe much to the Committee for the way in which they have selflessly pursued the Association's best interests and have ensured its continued development and wellbeing. I am sure that the AEA has already grown to a size that exceeds the founding members expectations. All that having been said, I have been prompted to write something for those who are not happy or were unable to attend to know why at the AGM the majority voted that your Committee should approach the Royal Engineers Association (REA) with a view to us becoming a National Functional Branch of it and in the process making available the full benevolent resources of the REA. Your Committee was properly authorised, by vote, to reach an agreement with the REA providing that:

- We retain our title, our structure and that no changes are imposed on our method of operation.
- There are no changes to our funds and financial arrangements
- We retain our charity status
- There should be no cost to a present fully paid member of the AEA, as he automatically and additionally becomes a life member of the REA.
- There shall be no change to the qualification for membership of the AEA.

Our approach along these lines will be considered by the REA Management Committee at their meeting in January 2002. I am confident that the above conditions will be met.

This proposed link was considered 5 years ago at Chatham, but not pursued since conditions were not then favourable. It was thought that a 5-year period should be allowed to lapse before the subject was reviewed. During this interim period much has changed within the REA and culminating in the present EinC seeing that the successful way ahead for the REA will depend increasingly on the success of Functional Branches (such as Armoured, Survey, Postal, Commando etc) rather than Geographical Branches which are experiencing dwindling membership. Against this background of change your Committee felt that it would be wrong for the AEA to remain apart as the REA reshapes itself for the future. We can and should, as members of the Corps Family, stand alongside and influence the REA's way ahead. It is for sure that we can't contribute if we stay on the outside.

I have, so far, left out the highly charged emotional issues. Whatever it is that causes this strong Airborne emotional tie-long may it live. It is not being threatened by anything that is being done to regularise the position of the AEA within the Corps Family. The sentiment towards the AEA and the day-to-day life of a member of the AEA will not be changed by us becoming a Functional Branch of the REA. However, the support of the larger Corps organisation will be available to us when we need it and will give us the platform from which we move in to the future.

Let us keep the whole in perspective. We should all be proud of being Royal Engineers and of all that the Corps has achieved in its life to date. Additionally we can allow ourselves that extra pride in our Airborne Family and all that it entails. Let us enjoy the best of both worlds.

I conclude by noting that the large majority of members feel that only good will result from our closer links with the Corps family, so please let us accept that democratic procedures were followed, that there are no hidden agendas and that we move into the future in a positive frame of mind and to the good of all involved." Having no wish to fill this journal single handedly I close by placing on record my sincere thanks to your Committee for their continuing efforts and likewise Branch Officials and finally I offer my best wishes to all members and may you continue successfully into the future with justifiable pride in the Airborne Engineers Association.

From the Chair

Bob Prosser Association Chairman

This is my last opportunity to write to you all from the chair, as I discharge my responsibilities as Chairman in October. It has been a tremendous honour to have been voted in to lead the Association over the past 3 years, I feel very privileged, and flattered.

I have been extremely fortunate to work with Brigadier Garth, our President, who has been so supportive over the three years, Garth also relinquishes his post in October and I am sure we will all miss him and his after dinner speeches. Brigadier Garth, on behalf of us all, Thank you for your five years of leadership we wish you all the very best of Good Health and Good Fortune for the future. We have received a charming letter from Brigadier Ian McGill CBE who has accepted our request to be the next President. Brigadier Ian has stated that he is honoured and extraordinarily privileged to be invited to be our next President.

I must thank the Executive Committee who with the experience of Fred Gray and Chris Chambers, two founder members, Dave Rutter and Ray Coleman, with almost 10 years each on the Executive Committee and Dick Brown who has been Treasurer for over 5 years. This group forms a solid leadership platform. Finally the Vice Presidents Chris Davies and Bill Rudd always there when you need them with unstinting support, sound advice and loyalty.

I am very conscious of the interest shown in the proposal to approach the REA with a view to us becoming affiliated. After many letters and telephone calls and discussions, with both the REA and the Charity Commission. I have requested them both to prepare a letter, which, could be published in the Journal, explaining their own situation and views regarding any affiliation for everyone to study, and make up their own minds. The letters are published on pages 4 & 5 on of the Journal. We are linked to the Charity Commission by the fact that we are a registered independent charity. Every year to maintain this charity status we are required to submit a return by our Treasurer and Secretary and confirmed by your Chairman. If we do not conform to the Commission's requirements we may lose our independent charity status.

The content of the letter from the REA indicates that they wish to embrace us, and allow us to retain full autonomy, with a seat on their management board and assistance to any of our branches or the main body of our Association, and use their charity status, i.e., reclaiming any Gift Aid.

The proposal at Bristol was to affiliate with the REA, subject to 5 conditions being satisfied. Only 4 of these conditions are applicable to the REA they have been satisfied. One of the conditions is applicable to the Charity Commission, which has not been completely satisfied.

The question of whether we join the REA or not seems to have been going on for far too many years, we should sort it out one way or another and get on with life. I wish everyone all the very best, I have carried out my duties to the best of my abilities. I do not pretend to be clever, I left school at 14yrs of age because of pneumonia, I didn't contract it, it was because I could not spell it!

When you do something right, no-one remembers-when you do something wrong no-one forgets
Goodbye all, I hope you will forget me for all the right reasons.

From Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) John McLennan, Controller REA

The Royal Engineers Association (A Registered Charity) Patron: Her Majesty The Queen

Dated 14th June 2002

Dear Bob,

I see from the REA files here at Chatham that there has been substantial discussion on this since shortly after your foundation day, so it may well be that we all see the time is now right to welcome "The Airborne Engineers Association" as a "functional branch" of the REA.

At present the AEA is not represented at any of the Corps Committees. By becoming a functional branch of the REA with more than 500 members, the AEA would be fully incorporated into the "Family of the Corps" with access through all existing Corps & REA committee systems. This would be through your representation on the REA Management Committee that has access through the Corps Committee system all the way to the Chief Royals Committee.

With regards the five conditions your members have requested:

- * You would retain your title; your structure and no changes would be imposed on your method of operation.
(Please see the REA Rules attached).
- * There are no changes to your funds and financial arrangements.
- * You retain your Charity Status subject to the agreement of the Charity Commissioners.
- * There will be no cost to a present fully paid member of the AEA, as he automatically *and additionally* becomes a life member of the REA.
- * There will be no change to the qualifications for membership of the AEA.

I note the very strong record the AEA has and we would welcome the might and history of your membership to join the other parts of the Corps as "one of the family of Sappers."

Our REA Management Committee hopes that the AEA will take advantage of this offer and we look forward to welcoming our "Airborne Engineers" to the table.

Charity Commission for England and Wales

Dated 28th May 2002

AIRBORNE ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION 1009201

Dear Mr. Prosser,

Thank you for your letter dated 1st May 2002. We have since discussed this matter over the telephone.

I will deal firstly with the question of the charity's affiliation to the Royal Engineers Association (charity number 258322). We have since discussed this matter over the telephone.

I will deal firstly with the question of the charity's affiliation to the Royal Engineers Association (charity number 258322). The Royal Engineers Association (REA) are governed by a trust deed dated 19th November 1968 (as amended). There are no provisions in this governing document, which allow for the affiliation of other organisations. Without such provisions, it is difficult to see how this could take place or what affect it would have on your charity (AEA). In terms of who can be a member of the REA, clause 5 of their governing document makes it clear that only individuals can become members rather than groups.

In your letter, you mention that the REA have offered "functional branch status." I can find no reference to functional branch status in their governing document, but clause 16 does refer to branches. However, it does not appear to be an appropriate route for your charity to take. Clause 16 states that the Council [the trustees of the REA] have power to establish branches and that any branch established may be formed by Units of the Corps of Engineers, or retired members of the Corps. Moreover, it appears that such branches come under the overall control of the REA and form part of it i.e. they do not have sufficient autonomy to become separately registered charities. Therefore, even if your charity could become a branch, it seems likely that such a step would see it lose its independent charity status, along with its title, structure, finances and functions.

However, there are similarities between the two charities.

The objects of the REA are (in summary):

1. To promote the efficiency of the Corps of Royal Engineers in a number of ways e.g. fostering esprit de corps.
2. To make grants to past and present members of the Corps and their wives, widows, children and dependants to relieve poverty.
3. To make grants to the Army Benevolent Fund or any other charity connected with the Army for charitable purposes, which further the objects of the Association.

The objects of the AEA are contained in your Constitution and are (in summary):

1. To promote the efficiency of the Royal Engineers in a number of ways.
2. To relieve the need, hardship and distress of members of the Association [all personnel who have served on an Airborne Engineer Unit or as an Airborne Engineer soldier] or past and present members of the Airborne Engineers and their dependants.

It does appear that the REA could financially assist the AEA under the third of its objects or assist individual members of the AEA under the first and second objects. ((I am assuming that the Airborne Engineer Unit forms part of the Corps of the Royal Engineers.) This would, of course, be a matter for the trustees of the REA.

I hope this is of some assistance. Please note that if I do not hear from you further within the next three months, this correspondence will be destroyed in line with our current administrative policy.

Yours sincerely,

Lucy Breakspere

Please Remember- Journal Subscription Renewal

Yes, I'm afraid it's my duty to remind many of you that the time is fast approaching to renew your subscription for the Journal. But it's not all doom and gloom, because the fee remains at £5-00 for 3 issues! To each member required to renew his subscription I have enclosed a reminder in this current issue. Several hundred members are in credit and quite a number are now paying by standing order. To those members I extend a hearty vote of thanks but please note - **If you haven't received a subscription reminder then you are in 'Credit.'**



Renewal subscriptions must be paid by 1st November 2002.

You may of course pay several years in advance or alternatively contact me (Editor) for a Standing Order Mandate (my 'phone number and e-mail address are published on page 1 of the Journal). We need your continued financial support, so please ensure that you forward your subscription promptly.

Golden Jubilee Certificates

Bob Prosser

We believe that we are the only Service organisation who have presented a commemorative certificate to its members. Each one is numbered and the nominal roll will be preserved in the archives.

We thank Tom Thornton for using his skills with the calligraphy pen and writing over 1000 names on all the certificates.

If anyone has received a damaged certificate or the spelling of a name is incorrect, please contact Tom Thornton at 12 Hillcourt Drive, Leeds LS13 2AW when a new certificate will be produced.

Address Amendment- Patrick Pronk

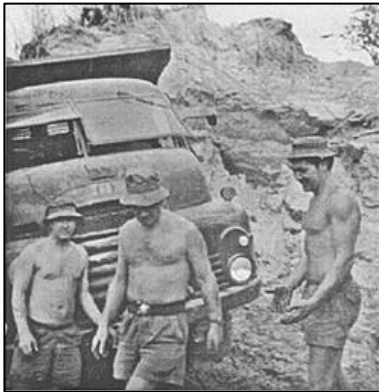
For those members wishing to contact Patrick Pronk the author who is now researching the 1st Parachute Squadron, please note the following amendment to the address published in the last Journal:

Mr. Patrick Pronk Doornstraat 279, 2584 AM Scheveningen, Holland (e-mail pjpronk@hotmail.com)

Rogues Gallery



George Flynn, Dick Richards, Caz Casterton, Tim Robertson, Ronnie Hadden, Mike Ellery, Dave Jones, Scouse Brodrick & Paddy Lindsay



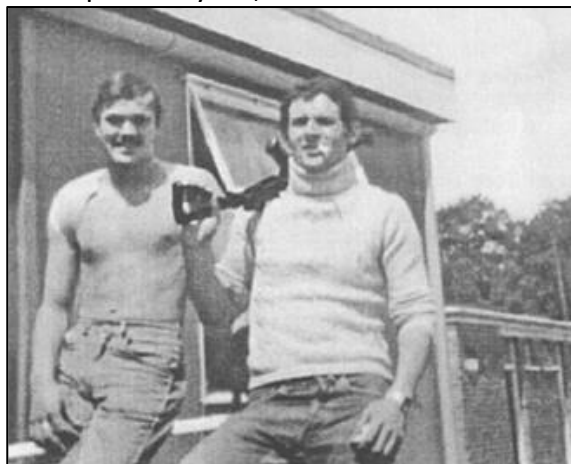
Kenya 1971
Jimmy Barr, Jim Middlemass & Dave Jones



2 Section 1 Troop 1961
Geordie Ridley, Johnny Wall, Terry Wick, Norman Mearns & Brummie Greensill
With the exception of Terry Wick, the others were all National Servicemen



Antrim 1972
Colin (Geordie) Bond & Les Reilly



Antrim 1972
Wounded clerk with Poncho O'Donovan

Jimmy Wilson MM

Mick Walker



In his introduction to a recent Journal our President referred to the dwindling band of Second World War veterans in each of the Branches of the Association. Those of you who served with Jocks will know that we like to be a little different and that applies in this case - the Edinburgh Branch has only one Second World War veteran in our midst. Like many men after the war Jimmy's prime concern were getting a house, getting a job and raising his family - you know, the normal every day, mundane things. Later on he started to try to make contact with his former comrades but to date has had no success. Partly to try to flush out anyone who served with Jimmy and partly because I feel his story is well worth recording I met with him and here is an abridged version of his life to date.

Jimmy was born in Portobello, Edinburgh in 1919 and was the first of 5 children - all sons - of dad James and mum Helen. On leaving the local school at 14 he decided not to follow his dad down the pit but served an apprenticeship as a marine engineer in Henry Robb shipyard in Leith. Work was scarce when he finished this apprenticeship and in 1938 he joined the Army, fully intending to make a career of it.

After basic training at Chatham where he excelled at all sports Jimmy was posted to 23 Field Co. RE in Aldershot and that unit was sent to Lille in France as part of the BEF. Life was relatively peaceful at first until the 'tactical withdrawal' to Dunkirk. In addition to helping blow up bridges to slow the German advance Jimmy was also being used as a dispatch rider. It was in the first capacity that Jimmy was awarded the Military Medal for his part, according to a local press report, in "the defence of bridgeheads."

At Dunkirk Jimmy saw a lot of comrades killed before he was evacuated. He was particularly saddened, having been an enthusiastic swimmer in his youth, by the inability of some of his comrades to swim out to the boats. To this day he wonders what became of these non-swimmers - did they get picked up by very small boats, did they survive or did they become PoWs?

On getting back to the UK Jimmy was posted to temporary accommodation in tents before being sent to Halifax and then to Derby. This proved to be enjoyable as he was billeted in civvy digs while being attached 199 Railway Workshop Co, a local TA unit. After a while the unit was sent to Southampton where they boarded a liner and proceeded in convoy to nobody knew where. Eventually they disembarked at Haifa where the unit set to servicing and maintaining the Palestine railways. Jimmy did this for just over a year before being accepted for parachute training at Kabrit near the Suez Canal.

This appears to have been a mixture of pre-para training and a parachute course and our man did the 6 day and 1 night jump to gain the coveted wings. Discipline seems to have been instant in those days - on Jimmy's first exercise jump after getting his wings 2 men refused and were sentenced to an automatic 3 months jankers without recourse to appeal or anything like that.

Shortly afterwards Jimmy was posted to just outside Cairo where he joined 8 Parachute Sqn RE. Jimmy's element of the Squadron was used in North Africa as infantry except of course when it came to minefield clearance. Following El Alamein Jimmy went on his first operational jump near Algiers where the aim was to cut off the retreating Germans. They remained in the Algiers area for training and mine clearance. This second activity was extended to clearance on farming land and they were rewarded with one cow and a few sheep. This brought Jimmy his first experience of an Aldershot Oven. This apparently is a brick built igloo, which was crammed with wood and then set alight before being bricked up with minimal ventilation. On burn out the Oven was opened only sufficiently to allow the ashes to be removed, large chunks of meat were put in and the oven bricked up again. Wait 12-14 hours and remove meat. Gorgeous.

A much less welcome discovery in Algeria was the wooden ramp mine. This was a device where the mine was laid and covered with a piece of wood. Step on it in a particular way and the pressure would be transferred to the mine, which would then detonate. Jimmy still remembers the name of a comrade to be killed in such a manner.

This existence was rudely interrupted when Jimmy found himself on a Dakota heading for Italy where they jumped at Fogin [spelling? Possibly Foggia] near Bari and were used in house to house fighting with the Germans. This was particularly fierce but eventually the remaining Germans withdrew and it was left to the Highland Light Infantry to pursue them. Prior to his return to Algiers by ship Jimmy ate some McConachie's tinned fish on the dockside and within 12 hours had turned beetroot red all over his body. He was apparently suffering from food poisoning and some form of allergic reaction and has resisted tinned fish ever since.

Jimmy was no sooner back in Algiers than he was repatriated to Manchester where amongst other things he had two training jumps. The reason for this became clear when he found himself en-route to Arnhem.

Regrettably there are no tales of daring-do to be recorded here. The unit was on the ground for 6 hours before they saw any action and that was when they were on their way to a nearby village to link up with another unit. The Germans attacked and in the following fighting Jimmy lost the tips of the fingers on his left hand. He was armed with a Sten and to this day cannot figure out if the bullet struck his fingers or hit the Sten and the weapon being torn from his grasp caused the injury to his fingers.

After treatment by the medics Jimmy was returned to the UK without, as he readily admits, ever having as much as seen the bridge at issue. His wound was further treated in hospital before he - now a Staff/Sergeant - was posted to Halifax from where he was discharged to be home in time for Christmas 1944.

But the Army was not finished with Jimmy. As mentioned earlier he was awarded the Military Medal While on service with the BEF and although he subsequently wore the ribbon he had not been presented with the actual medal. So it was that he reported to Edinburgh Castle in 1945 to be kitted out in an RE S/Sgt's uniform prior to journeying to London. There, watched proudly by his parents, Jimmy was presented with his medal by King George VI at Buckingham Palace.

Somehow amongst all of this Jimmy found time to woo and win Joan Smith of Portsmouth and on return to Civvy Street set about providing for her. This involved working as an engineer with various local companies, and more exotically, sailing to the Far East as Third Engineer with the Ben Line and spending 27 months away from home at the whaling off South Georgia. He did eventually settle down and spent the last 29 years of his working life as an engineer with the South of Scotland Electricity Board building electricity sub-stations with a capacity up to 33KV.

Unfortunately Jimmy's wife Joan now suffers from senile dementia and is in a nursing home. He is close to his two daughters who have produced 5 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren for him. But he shows no sign of slowing down; on the third Sunday in January he attended the AGM of the Royal British Legion and meetings of the AEA and PRA in swift succession.

“Drop in Malaya” - 1960

Archives of Baz Henderson

IN a flash the paratroopers disappear through the Beverley's port and starboard doors and plummet down towards the green sea of Malayan jungle a thousand feet below.

As their parachutes open the 16 Sappers of 9 Independent Parachute Squadron, Royal Engineers, seem perilously bunched but quickly they steer clear of each other.

The Royal Air Force pilot and navigator have done their jobs well. The men land squarely on the dropping zone exactly on time. No sooner are they aground than two more sticks from a second Beverley float down to join them; in turn, three Hastings aircraft discharge their human cargo with equal precision.

On the ground the Sappers shed their parachutes, unpack and reharness weapons and equipment and rapidly make their way to the rallying point.

This was the first of what is hoped will be four combined exercises a year to be carried out in Malaya and Singapore by elements of 16 Independent Parachute Brigade Group, from Aldershot, and the Far East Air Force. The paratroopers taking part were 98 officers and men of 9 Independent Parachute Squadron and the Brigade headquarters' defence platoon who had flown from Britain a week earlier. Two weeks later, after learning how to live and fight in the jungle, they were back in Aldershot again, having flown home in a “Whispering Giant” Britannia.

Exercise “First Try” aimed to practice mounting parachute operations from unfamiliar bases, to carry out jungle training and to refresh Far East Air Force instructors in parachute techniques.

The Sappers stayed in the jungle for two days and nights, building themselves bashas roofed by ponchos and putting into practice the jungle lore taught them a week previously by seasoned men of the 2nd/7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles.

They had learned their lessons well and were soon busy on the practical Sapper task of enlarging the dropping zone by blowing up and clearing away trees and other obstacles.

During their three weeks in the Far East the Sappers jumped four times. His men, said the Squadron's commanding officer, Major R. M. Merrell, were extremely fit and did not find acclimatisation much of a problem.

On their jungle drop, at Kuantan, some 180 miles from Kuala Lumpur, the Sappers flew from Singapore's Changi Airfield. The sun was still below the eastern horizon when they checked the parachutes they had just drawn from the Far East Survival and Parachute School. The Beverleys and Hastings were already standing by and within three-quarters of an hour the Sappers had taken up predetermined positions in their aircraft.

In the leading Beverley Major Merrell sat as No. 1 on the port side, with Major K. O'Kelly, General Service Corps, the airborne liaison officer of 16 Parachute Brigade, opposite him as No. 1, starboard. Next to them were the 14 men making up the two sticks.

The Royal Air Force parachute instructors checked the areas outside the dropping doors, the pilots and crews ran through their routine tests and the five aircraft rolled forward to take off one after the other.

At eight a.m. - half an hour airborne - Malaya's eastern coastline receded to port as the aircraft headed out over the China Sea, the faster Hastings already taking a more circuitous route towards the dropping zone.

An hour and a half to go. The paratroopers relaxed in their seats, dexterously tucked into their “in flight” rations with wooden “fighting irons,” dozed fitfully or chatted to each other. In less than an hour they would be hurling themselves from the aircraft a thousand feet above unfamiliar ground. They seemed quite unperturbed. The

operation's success depended for the most part on the skill and experience of pilots and navigators. Dropping zones in the vast jungle are infinitesimally small, with little margin for error, but the paratroopers have implicit faith in the aircrews who, in turn, have tremendous admiration for the "red devils."

As the aircraft approached their rendezvous, still some 44 miles from the dropping zone, the Sappers prepared for action, harnessing parachutes, hooking on weapon and equipment containers and fixing reserve parachutes and checking the parachute of the soldier in front of him.

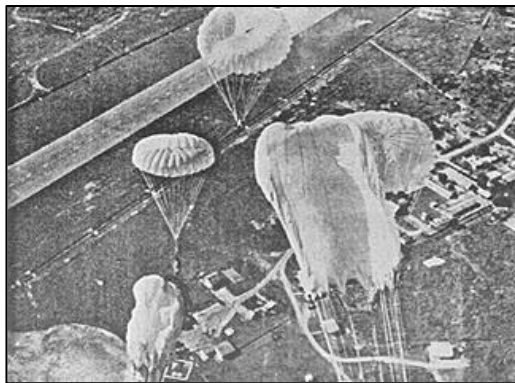
Only a minute to go now. The aircraft steadied almost at stalling speed. The two dispatchers shouted, "Stand, in the door" as, with four seconds left, the imperious red light glowed above their heads. The two majors were already there, with their stick members at their heels. **Red on...Green on...GO... GO... GO...**



Prepare for Action



Go....Go....Go....Go....



Gone....Gone....Gone....Gone....



Look out below!

The Flight from Egypt (circa 1954)

Eric Blenkinsop

A Tribute to a great travelling Companion and good friend, The Late Sgt Bob (Paddy) Neilly



The only parting of the waters, on this occasion, was that created by the bow of the SS Empire Clyde as it steamed out of Port Said bound for Malta and Liverpool.

The venture had started many months earlier when Paddy and I decided that, on becoming tour ex, we would like the opportunity to hitch hike home. An interview was arranged with the OC Major A.J. Poynder who gave his permission; both agreed that whatever the route through Europe, our primary objective would be the Moulin Rouge. So with all of the necessary paperwork to hand, leave pass, passport, bergen pack etc. the big day finally arrived. We presented ourselves at the embarkation office and obtained two boarding passes in order to see somebody or other off on their journey home. After what seemed to be a lifetime, the ship started to build up a head of

steam and a voice crackled on the Tannoy for all boarding pass personnel to disembark. Then a little later, on the Tannoy, "Will Sgts Blenkinsop & Neilly report to the Pursers Office." At this, and following Major A.J.'s sound advice, our hearing deteriorated almost totally and we could hear nothing above the sound of the ship's engines. Finally, we were far enough out to sea to avoid being put ashore and we reported to the Purser's Office. To our dismay and misfortune we were confronted by the Ship's RSM who was a GUNNER!! We explained in the nicest possible way that we were simply hitch hiking home and wished to disembark at Malta. His response to this was, "You will disembark at Liverpool under police escort, report to the ships orderly room at 1000 hours tomorrow." So in the blink of an eyelid we had been converted from hitchhikers to stowaways.

The next morning found us outside the orderly room when the RSM appeared with two prisoners under escort who were promptly marched into the Commandants office. Almost immediately there was a large crash, voices raised in anger at which we both dashed into the office to find the Commandant on the floor and his desk on its side. We grabbed the two miscreants and dragged them out of the office and back to the cells.

Sometime later when things had settled down, we were called in to see the Commandant, who, in view of our moderate assistance, could not do enough for us. So, we were allowed to disembark at Malta.

We spent a couple of days there meeting up with a couple of mess friends from Marine Commando HQ and visiting sights both Ancient and Modern

Meanwhile we were also considering how best to get to the mainland of Europe, sea or air!! Finally, deciding to try the RAF station.

Our first attempt to get on to the airfield was unsuccessful, as it seemed that our papers were inadequate. But undaunted, we found a way in the next evening and finally found our way to the transit office the next morning. We endeavoured to explain to the Flight Sgt, our simple needs, but he was not very interested and was more concerned with how we managed to be there at all. Then just as the situation was looking rather bleak-, an authoritative voice was heard from behind us, introducing himself as Brigadier?? and stating that there were spare seats on a Dakota leaving for Naples within the hour. On board the Dakota were just seven or eight senior NATO officers so we made ourselves comfortable at the tail end for the short flight to Naples.



Upon arrival we were naturally the last to disembark and just as we were entering the arrivals terminal, an American Top Sgt (he seemed to know all about us) advised that an American Globemaster aircraft was leaving for Heathrow within the hour if we were interested. It was a temptation but decided that we wanted to see more of Europe. So, a pleasant three day stay in Naples, visiting Capri, Pompeii but sadly unable to fit in Sorrento. An arduous hitchhike by road to Rome for a three-night stay in a bit of a fleapit. A visa was required to get into Vienna and we wasted valuable time just trying to find the British

Embassy or Consulate, just a brass plate on the wall. Nevertheless, made time to visit St. Peters, the Coliseum and the Forum, "Brilliant."



As we were leaving our digs, the landlady (for want of a more suitable name) asked us to give her regards to the Governor of Durham Prison. Whether or not this was due to being detained during the war under section 14B or something more sinister we were not sure. Back on the road again, this time to Venice, lifts were plentiful but, some of quite short distance. Our arrival here was probably the most amusing interlude in the whole journey just communicating with a very pleasant elderly Italian lady who could not speak a word of English; while our Italian did not extend beyond that needed to buy a couple of bus tickets. The room was up in the attic of a typical Venetian town house being very Spartan but clean and cheap.

During our time in Italy our daytime diet had been mainly bread, cheese and vino from the local market. So tonight it was off for a good three-course meal, then Harry's Bar. It was very pleasant but Paddy -was not too keen on the violinist.

The next day it was relaxing, taking in St. Mark's Square, the Basilica and other local sights. Our second day started with a visit to the Murano glass factory followed by the afternoon at the Lido.

Time was up and where to now? We thought long and hard before deciding that it was time to do a bit of sponging, so we headed for the British Army Garrison in Klagenfurt via Udine. A shorter journey time this time. Arrived at Klagenfurt and headed for the WO's and Sgts Mess. The PMC turned out to be (would you believe) an ex 43 AC Chepstow boy who had transferred to the Army Pay Corps and was already a WOII. He was also very involved in the local forces broadcasting unit and it wasn't long before Paddy and I were recording our travel experiences to date. That was alright until we heard it on the air with Paddy sounding like an American while I was the nearest you could get to Chesney Allan.

In return for our goodwill we managed to somehow obtain an official or indulgence warrant to Vienna.

This next stage was the tricky part of the journey, as we had to pass through the Russian Zone for which we had obtained visas whilst in Rome. At the border two heavily armed but scruffy Russian soldiers boarded the train, but all was well. The train arrived in Vienna when to our dismay we realised that we had reached a station too far and were actually in the Russian Zone where there was a strong presence of armed grey uniformed Russian soldiers. Fortunately, as in much of Austria; the rail and road transport runs parallel so we quickly boarded a tram and headed back to the correct station.

On arrival at the station in the British Zone we called at the RTO office to find that the CPL was a Belfast man who had a long, long chat with Paddy. He was expecting a mail van to arrive so we waited and obtained a lift to the barracks.

Headed once again to the WO's & Sgts mess and approached the barman all geared up in traditional Tyrolean gear. We asked him if we could have a room for three nights and he replied in a broad Irish accent that it would not be a problem. It turns out that he was a Dubliner who just took his demob after the war and stayed on in Vienna.

A most enjoyable stay taking in many of the historic sights, St. Stephens Cathedral, Schonbrunn Castle and one very pleasant evening in the famous wine Keller (have forgotten the name) but not Yates. Headaches all-round next morning!

Eventually, time to move on again - road or rail? Decided to try rail without tickets, which was not easy dodging the ticket collector encumbered with Bergen packs. The showdown came eventually and we were put off at Salzburg.

Funds were getting low now so just had to rough it that night sustained by part of the four 24hr ration packs that we had been saving for this last stage of the journey.

Early next morning we were awoken from our sleep by the sound of several American Servicemen arriving on the platform. When we came too, we spoke to one of them who turned out to be an Irishman from Belfast but most uncanny he was raised just round the corner from Paddy's home. So Paddy made the most of the opportunity and scrounged sufficient American Service money to get us a meal in the local PX and purchase two tickets to Strasbourg.

From Strasbourg it was back on the road again to Paris. The second lift a small two door Renault took us to just short of Paris by which time it was dark.

There was a nice wide grass verge and a high hedge just where we were dropped off so we just bivouacked down where we were after digging in to our last 24hr ration pack. The next morning two gendarmes who demanded that we move on rudely awaked us. It seems that we had spent the night at Chantilly, the horseracing centre. They obviously thought that we were horserace touts.

We finally arrived in Paris and made for the Youth Hostel (things were that bad). Booked for the Moulin Rouge cabaret only; as square meals were now off the menu. Managed to take in the Eiffel Tower and, the Arc de Triomphe during the day.

The Moulin Rouge was rather disappointing as top of the bill was a good quality Spanish dance troupe. A few more Can Cans would have been much better.

Next morning - up and away, on the road once more, to Dieppe to sleep rough for the last time.

We arrived at Newhaven, no problem until we hit customs. The question was asked, "Have you anything to declare?" whereby Paddy shot his arms forward and said, "No," There on Paddy's sun burnt left arm was the white outline of a wristwatch. Truth was that Paddy had worn a G1098 watch for three years in Egypt, which was explained to the customs officer, but he sensed a catch so Paddy and his bergen were searched time and time again. The watch of course, was never found and eventually we were allowed to proceed; but by now the boat train had long gone.

This had been a tremendous experience calling for a fair amount of ABI (Airborne Initiative) and at times some sheer animal cunning. Given the quite unique appearance of Irishmen at various stages of the journey and with an Irish companion I was convinced that if ever they put a man on the moon, he would be an Irishman!!

Ronalda the Beautiful

Jim Masters

Ronalda is a beautiful six-year-old Mestizo Indian girl who lives close the small town of Humaita on the banks of the Rio Madeira in Brazil. During the epic voyage along the tributaries leading to the Amazon, on board Kota Mama III, we met her. She came with her mother, a sister and brother hoping for some medical help the evening before we were due to move m downstream.

We had a medical team to take care of our needs. They were always prepared to give assistance to any local community along the way. There is a medical system in the area that relies on infrequent visits from Government and charity-funded riverboats. At best they can only provide first aid or simple treatments. The more complicated aid has to be referred to a hospital in a town. This is a huge problem for communities who rely on hunting and gathering to survive. Certainly there is little money to spare for medical conditions even if they be life threatening.

What made Ronalda special was the fact that her brother was suffering from pernicious anaemia, her sister had a withered arm while she had a disfiguring harelip and cleft palette. Most of us who were there were horrified that one family could be so unfortunate to have three of the children with serious medical conditions. Ronalda had a radiant smile and the most beautiful, appealing eyes in spite of the blemish to her general looks. At the time none of us dared to take her photograph as it seemed cruel to draw attention to her face. Sadly there was nothing that could be done for the family as they all needed long-term treatment and we were just passing through.

None of us could forget her though and on returning to the UK we began to pursue several possibilities. Ronalda's condition can be treated but it needed money. It seems outrageous that this could be the only stumbling block to her having a real chance in life. We discovered that an organisation called Smile Train could arrange for her to have corrective operations in Brazil. Their hospital is located at Campinas, a town near the Atlantic coast of Brazil. It is many miles from Humaita so the problem was to get her and her mother there. Funds were needed to cover travel, accommodation and a few incidentals over the period when four operations will be carried out.

A fund was set up and Expedition members and others, who knew of the case, have generously collected enough to cover most of the costs. We are in touch with the hospital authorities and a place was made available for her. So far she has had two of the operations both of which have gone well. This is the start towards giving her the beautiful face she was always destined to have. In a country of beauties she can look forward to a normal life.

As the family have never ever been anywhere other than the piece of jungle surrounding their 'home' the prospect of travelling across Brazil was an awesome undertaking. They did not even have suitable clothing, or travel kit, so we provided most of those essentials too.

We are now taking another similar step. There is a small girl at Mapiri in Bolivia who needs treatment for Birket's Lymphoma, a type of cancer. We are told that if she receives treatment soon she stands every chance of a full recovery. Any excess money left over from Ronalda's Fund will be used to help her too.

We know that our money is going right to the point where it is required. Large administrative demands siphon none of it off.

As a matter of interest the expedition team included several 9 Squadron members plus one of the old codgers, like myself, who served in the Squadron many years ago.

For more information please contact Jim Masters at Expedition Base (01747 853353) or on base@ses-explore.org

Where Are They Now?

S.R. Arnold (Queensland Australia)

I am indeed very fortunate to get and read your excellent Airborne Engineer Journal. Being an old sapper of the 3rd Para Sqn RE, I find your articles very interesting. However, I might not be clever enough in recording this episode, but I promised myself to write this before I pass on.

After handing over to the Russians at Wismar on the Baltic Coast, we started off down to Lunenburg Heath and the signing of the Peace Treaty took place. Once this was over, the units were split according to demob number - 50 & under to the right, 51 & over to the left. To the left I went; and with the others went back to Bulford, then to our surprise, got issued with Jungle Greens. (Who said the war was over!) After leave we were loaded aboard an aircraft and flown to Bombay (India). Can anyone remember this episode? Where are they now?

Getting all our equipment together, we were loaded on a train and railed to Calcutta and straight aboard a troopship. Nobody had a clue about anything, and not before we had cast off and under way we were called for a briefing. Another surprise! We learnt that we were now the 16th Independent Brigade, and were en-route to Singapore. (Not good for morale).

Half way across the Pacific, we were informed that the Yanks had dropped the 'A' bomb on Japan and that hostilities had ceased. A great deal of relief was evident. Who can remember this? Where are they now?

The Brigade landed in Singapore without incident and was split up for various jobs. We reverted back to our unit name of 3rd Para Sqn RE.

After a short while, we were organised to board a ship to Batavia (Indonesia). Surely this was an operation to help the Dutch? The war was over, wasn't it? But we were still being shot at here!

With Batavia under control, we were shipped round to Sumatra for more operations. I cannot remember any recognition from any authority. Can anyone? Where are they now?

My number was up - the other lads were still waiting - I flew home to UK.

I think I am entitled to ask the question to all those lads: Where are they now?

A Rupert's View

Lt Col (Retd) Sam Hesketh

Two articles in the last issue of the Airborne Engineers Journal have jolted me out of my normal lethargy and prompted me to write a short article, which I hope you will print. The first article was a short but extremely moving poem asking for articles. The second was 'Bing' Crosbie's article about his life and times in the Squadron. I have read the Journal avidly since its inception and there have been very few articles in it by regular officers. I thought that our readership might find a 'Rupert's' viewpoint of interest.

Like Bing, my time in the Squadron started at Haig Lines in Crookham. I arrived in May 1970, on the day the Squadron left for its first tour in Northern Ireland. Unfortunately, that left me and two Sappers in George Dunn's tender clutches for the Squadron pre-para course. In those days, the Squadron had its own gym just by Tweseldown racecourse and pre-para had its own blissful routine. We spent all morning in the gym and all afternoon out on a run. One day, I happened to mention to George that I was bored with bunny hopping to one end of the gym and seal crawling back, so he kindly changed the routine and made me duckwalk instead of bunny hopping. George was always so kind hearted.

I survived a couple of weeks of this and was sent on P Coy which I was lucky enough to pass at the first attempt. I then went to Abingdon for my jumps and joined the Squadron in mid-July in Antrim Bridging Camp. In those days, there was no NITAT training, my only orientation consisted of a short tour of Belfast in the back of a closed Landrover with Captain Bruce Norris, 1 Troop Commander, pointing out all the sights.

During that first tour, the Squadron was the only squadron in Ulster and supported the whole of Northern Ireland with SHQ, 1, 2 and support Troops in Antrim, while 3 Troop was lucky enough to be on detached duty in Londonderry. On arrival, the OC, Major Brian Awford, made me 2 Troop Officer. Captain Tim Robertson was the troop commander and SSgt. Bob Runacres was the troop staff sergeant. To an impressionable young second lieutenant straight out of training, the Squadron seemed to be full of characters. The SSM was Ivor (Bend the Knee) Anthony, who had parachuted into Suez. The QM, Captain John Humphries, was an Arnhem veteran. Other names that are indelibly printed on my mind are: 'Screech' McCabe the Plant Sergeant, Black Jim Middlemass the MT Sergeant, Danny Daniels, Tony Manley and 'Canada' Frost of the ACC and 'Psycho' Lowson the Orderly Corporal. 'Dad' Wallace was the SQMS. Sid Davies and Billy Lafferty were the other members of the QM's team. 2 Troop had its own characters such as Corporal Henry Morgan, Bing Crosbie, Geordie Barker, Mick Netting, Dave Grimbley, 'Bumper' Jones, Porky Willis and Scouse Rimmer. I was 21 years old, but in those days the average age of the Sappers seemed to be about 23 and the JNCOs about 30.

My two months in Antrim passed quickly. We worked hard and played hard. I was made Squadron rugby officer. George Dunn of pre-para fame was the team captain and we had good games, which were always followed by a few drinks in the Aviary. One of the highpoints of the tour was the Squadron deployment to the border with the Republic of Ireland to close it to traffic. This proved less than successful and the Army was still at it when I became CRE Northern Ireland in 1988. At the end of the tour, we parachuted back onto Hankley Common, before going on leave. Thankfully, there were no casualties, from the parachute jump.

When we returned from leave, we continued to play lots of rugby. The Squadron team was full of excellent and experienced players. The pack was solid, but the backs were outstanding with stalwarts like 'Yorkie' Hough, George Dunn, Dave Grimbley, Mick Qarikau and Pete Sudnik. Pete was a very powerful winger, who had recently converted to rugby from soccer. He was a ferociously strong runner who used to cut through defences to score some tremendous tries. The only problem for the rest of the team was to make sure he was pointing in the right direction when he got the ball. On one famous occasion, he ran like a charging Rhino for about 20 yards towards our try line until Mick Caddick, the full back, managed to turn him around. The Squadron won the RE Cup in 1970 and as a reward I received 7 extra orderly officer duties. This was because I had overlooked the date of the Cup Final. We had parachuted onto Stanford PTA on a Squadron exercise when the Chief Clerk (Lofty Aldridge) reminded Captain Mike Sims, the 2IC, that we were due at Chatham in about 48 hours for the final. After kicking my backside until his foot was too sore to continue, the OC pulled the team off the exercise and sent us to Chatham in a 4-ton truck. We played in a strip and boots, borrowed from the Depot Regiment sports store. We won convincingly, had a few beers and went back to the exercise in the truck. I still keep the winner's memento from the match on my bedside table at home.

We had a good season; we reached the UK semi-finals of the Army Major Units Rugby cup in late 1970 and were drawn against one of the Para Regiment battalions. Unfortunately, fate took a hand and we were sent to Kenya at fairly short notice for a civil engineering project. The OC was keen to leave the team in Blighty to play in the semi-finals, but the team was not too keen to be left behind so the Squadron withdrew from the competition.

The Squadron deployed to Kenya in early 1971. I stayed in UK for a month or so fulfilling another duty, but rejoined the unit about halfway through the tour. The engineering bit of the project was a bit of a struggle, but was completed on time. Despite the problems with the project, we did manage to play some rugby. We beat Mombasa Sporting Club and the Kenya Harlequins. We also won the Kenya 7-a-side championship and received the Christie Cup. We lost to the East Africa Scorpions by a small margin. This was not too bad because the Scorpions were a select team from the whole of East Africa and used to play regularly against senior touring sides.

All of our matches except for the Mombasa one were played in Nairobi. For the first match against the Harlequins, we flew up to Nairobi in a Kenya Air Force Caribou. I think that our pilot was still a learner and it was such a frightening experience that several of our steely-eyed paratroopers refused to fly back, preferring a 12-hour road journey instead. The night before the Quins match, we drank their bar dry. We also found out that Bing Crosbie was a world-class exponent of the Zulu Warrior and delighted our opponents' wives with his performance. We played the next day and really suffered, not from the booze but from the altitude (Nairobi was much higher than Mombasa). Never the less, we won and drank the bar dry again, with an encore of the ZW from Bing.

Kenya was a tremendous tour. On the day the bridge opened, we had a party in the Officers' mess for Mr. Arap Moi, who was then the Vice President of Kenya. As part of the ceremony, the local villagers presented Captain Mike Sims, the 2IC, with a goat. I ended up with a group of the lads playing Buzz in the NAAFI. The highlights of this game were undoubtedly one of them being sick on the earth floor and politely covering it with fresh earth, while another projectile vomited through the open walls of the hut. I can remember the names of the guilty ones, but have decided to censor them to preserve their reputations! All good things must come to an end and we flew back to the UK and had some leave. We returned from leave to discover that during the tour, the Squadron had been moved from its beloved Haig Lanes to Rhine Barracks, right under the noses of Brigade Headquarters.

My final 4 or 5 months were taken up with two things. Firstly, I was selected by the OC (or so he told me) to take charge of erecting the scaffolding castle for the Aldershot Army Show. I quickly realised that this was not an easy task, from the way I was left to it by the Squadron management. Nobody seemed keen to be associated with this job. Fortunately for me, Ivor Anthony (the SSM) rustled up some extra working numbers and we managed to finish it on time. My second task was to be the Squadron swimming officer. We had a good team with some first-class swimmers like Peter (Lofty) Bates and Dave Rutter. We trained hard and reached the Army Minor Units finals, where we tied for first place with some caphats from an armoured squadron based in Hong Kong. Unfortunately, we had come second in the medley relay and were declared the runners up. I am still irked by this more than 30 years later. The armoured squadron was on detachment from its parent regiment and had all the regiment's best swimmers in it. However, for once this appeared to satisfy the OC. I handed over as rugby officer to John Ashcroft and left the Squadron to take my degree at Shrivenham in September 1971, just as the Squadron deployed to Ireland for its second tour. I was away from the Squadron for 5 years, returning in 1976, (to the shock and disbelief of some) as the 2IC.

Without doubt, my first tour as a young officer in the Squadron was one of the outstanding periods of my life. I was tremendously impressed by everyone I met and by everything we did. I am still grateful for the friendship and loyalty, which the lads gave me. Despite the years I had spent in officer training, the lads expected young officers like me to know nothing and I don't think that I disappointed them. Fortunately, the system allowed second lieutenants to make mistakes in those days, provided that they did not make the same mistakes twice. Apart from a couple of minor occasions no one ever really let me down. Fortunately for me, whenever I was let down, the OC always saw the funny side of things and gave me the opportunity to practise my orderly officer skills for a couple of weeks. It was the same guys who let me down on both occasions, which proved to be a valuable lesson in how to spot the drama merchants. This stood me in good stead for the rest of my time in the Army. So some good came out of it.

On sober reflection, it was an outstanding time with a great bunch of guys. I learned a great deal in a fairly short space of time and this enabled me to have a reasonably successful career in the Army until I retired in 1990.

**The Squadron Rugby
Team**



Kenya 1971

Standing:

Mike Warren, Sam Hesketh, John Moss, Bing Crosbie, Tim Robertson, Paddy Campbell, Peter Williams & Mick Caddick

Kneeling:

Dave Grimbley, Taff McCleery, Mick Hough, George Dunn, Phil Philipson, Mick Fisher & Davy Jones

The Way I See It...

X9

Interesting to read the Paddy McCargo article just to know he is well and doing OK. Shows what hard work can achieve. I must say, he had the ideal training for this driving the garbage truck for Charlie Edwards! That truck must have been the busiest on the island having to dump all that wasted food! I knew many who were nicked for raiding 9 Sqn cookhouse and they all swear to a man they were not stealing the food but merely “rescuing” it from the likes of Charlie and Danny Daniels! No offence guys...By the way Charlie I saw your “boob” cake in an earlier edition of the Journal...Nice self-portrait!

Exotic locations: Bahrain ‘62. Surely the missing name should be Ticky Wright! If it isn’t Ticky then it’s the driver from the Bonnie & Clyde movie! Exotic location my rear-end!

In the Footstep of Long John Silver.

It’s always good to read about people like Froth Beer. He shrugged off his misfortune and went ahead with living. We could all take a lesson from him. Tell me Froth; do you miss competing in ass kicking competitions?

That sailboat ride you took, was that just one leg of your journey? (Pun, but no offence intended.) Wherever you go take care of yourself and remember, keep your spinnaker spinnakin’!

One sad part about Froth’s article was to hear of the death of Mick Quariku. Mick was probably one of the nicest and most inoffensive guys I have met. I remember following Joe Stoddart and Mick in the upstairs cafeteria of the NAAFI Club. Joe said to the serving girl, “I’ll have a HAM sandwich, and he, indicating Mick, will have a HAND sandwich.” Mick was in no way offended by this, on the contrary, he laughed about it for days after. Hope the Gods smiled kindly on you Mick.

How to know when you are getting old: The Bard put it this way. I wasted time, now time doth waste me. Bringing this into the twenty first century it could read like this. Alas now age is mine enemy, for my medical costs doth far surpass my bar bills! To be honest, old age isn’t so bad when you consider the alternative!

The Fairies in Borneo:

A troop of 9 Sqn routed, not by the enemy but by a bunch of oversized bees! Little wonder 2 troop were known as the fairies. They sound more like ‘F’ troop! If that had happened to me I would never dare repeat it!

An amusing tale by Jonah Jones. As far as his explosives expertise is concerned, he sounds like a latter day Paddy Smythe! I feel you were a little harsh on the third sex Jonah. Let’s be fair, if it wasn’t for the likes of people like that, we perfect people would not feel as superior as we do. Remember, “there but for fortune go you or I”...Ducky!

Glad the ed had a good time in RSA. If you do as you suggest Dave and visit again this year, please take Taff Brice a new shirt. His pictures suggest he only has the one. The look on poor Cliff Joy’s face would confirm this! As for Taff supporting the RSA rugby team, I would too if I were a Welshman! Incidentally Taff, have you ‘partially’ picked up any hitchhiking matelots in your fancy car? Don’t be shy; tell everyone what I am talking about!

Can’t imagine who would be looking for Mick Turner! His bank manager maybe! Tell me Fred, were the persons inquiring his whereabouts carrying shotguns? Better stay in the wilds Mick, they are after you!

Mick’s tale however proves the point that civvy street is no bed of roses. Once you leave the umbrella of the Army you are on your own. There is no cavalry to come charging to the rescue, or even 2 troop fairies for that matter!

Have Rapier Will Travel:

You too can be a High Sheriff: Surely you would need to be HIGH to walk around dressed like that! Looks like something out of Pantomime! From the knees down Brigadier you look like my Grandmother! Hardly what you could call a practical outfit, but I bet the bib comes in handy when you have a cold! I don’t think they could pay me enough to walk around looking like that! Nevertheless Brigadier you do cut a dashing figure. I bet when you were in 9 Sqn your red beret kept your right shoulder dry! The Sheriff job itself sounds about as exciting as watching Wales play rugby!

On a serious note Brigadier, if through your office you can do some good for the community, especially for the youth, you deserve every credit. Keep it up and I know you will not take offence from my remarks.

Let me be dressed fine as I will,

Flies, Worms and Flowers exceed me still... As they say in home climes!

(Always thought Sheriffs looked like John Wayne...)

The Red Light will Suffice

Major (retd) Pete Myatt

Gather round my hearties while I tell you of a tale of daring and stupidity.

Up until the early 1950's Most of the transport aircraft of the United States and the British RAF were busily employed on the Berlin Airlift (No - they were not trying to lift Berlin into the air).

For those too young to remember the late 1940's there was a period when the Russians decided to blockade Berlin, closing all road and rail routes into the city. As most of you will know the allies managed to thwart the Russians by flying all the food, fuel and other necessities of life by transport aircraft.

Unfortunately this operation consumed most of Transport Command's aircraft, which left only a few for parachute training. Most of our continuation training at that time was carded out by throwing us out of Balloons.

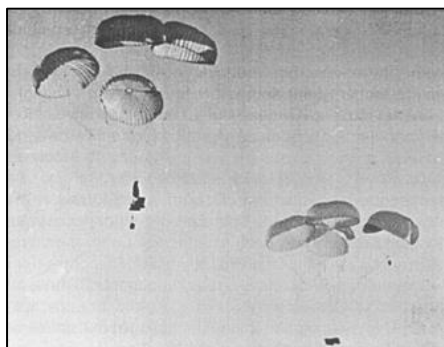
The end of the blockade in the early fifties suddenly released more aircraft for Airborne Training. At last the RAF had sufficient aircraft to drop the Brigade in two waves. Our higher echelons decided that they had seen their Brigade lounging around sun bathing in the Egyptian sand with their thumb in their bum and mind in neutral for long enough. Yes my friends, they couldn't leave well alone, they had to start planning. It was decided to do a mass parachute drop on the Island of Cyprus. The name for the exercise was I think, called, 'Snow drop.' It must have taken weeks for the, 'think tank' to come up with a name like that - though there is a strong chance that the Brigade Majors wife probable mentioned it first!

As the RAF had only sufficient aircraft to drop the Brigade in two waves they would drop the first one at night - return to Egypt and drop the second one the following day.

At this time yours truly was a fitter with 3 Troop and being a somewhat idle sod. (My unofficial title was King of the Idlebergers) I had decided that the easiest way to avoid walking was to make sure I drove a Jeep.

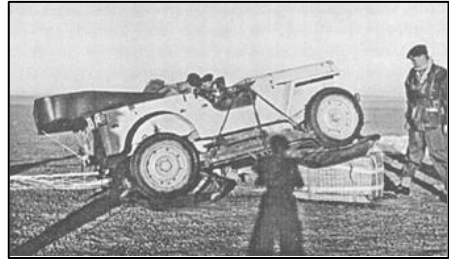
The heavy dropping equipment in use at that time was the war surplus kit from World War Two. Originally design for use with the Halifax bomber it was subsequently modified for use with the Hasting transport. This kit had been in storage for the past six to seven years and therefore required inspecting and servicing before being put to use.

It was at this point that my natural animal cunning surfaced. I remembered talking to my Troop Sergeant Eric (All Weather), Blenkinsop and suggested that, as the parachute automatic released system was hydraulically operated that a fitter should be on the Heavy Dropping team to service it and ensure it work correctly. He agreed. So far so good. At this point I think I should remind some of our members who might be brain dead or have forgotten. There are two modes of transport in airborne operations. A Jeep driver or shanks pony. My ambition was to make sure I was one of the former.



Note the abnormal 'chute deployment on the left!

The daylight droppings proceeded without mishap except for one of the hampers getting caught up under one of the Jeeps. (There are photos of this mishap with Fergie anxiously looking at the Hamper. (Rumour has it, it contained the Officers Mess bar).



As the heavy Drop teams were going to be part of the first lift at night two further night rehearsals were to be flown prior to the drop in Cyprus.

The first night we arrived about three hours before take-off and drew our parachutes and our chute serial numbers were duly recorded on the Flight Manifest sheet. We now had some time to kill whilst waiting for the RAF crew to turn up, (usually about ten minutes before take-off).

If my memory serves me correctly I think there were sixteen of us and we were due to jump eight out the port and starboard doors of the Hastings aircraft.

I can't remember who it was but some wag chalk U/S on one of his colleagues parachute. Needless to say the recipient of this graffiti was not amused and insisted on being issued with a new parachute. This did not go down well with our friends in blue - when the Captain of the aircraft came to perused the manifest and saw that one of the chute serial numbers had been scratched out and a new one substituted he quite rightly refuse to sign until another correct manifest had been made up.

I might add that despite being assured by the man who had marked the chute that there was nothing wrong with it the guy with the pseudo U/S chute would not entertain jumping with it.

Finally the RAF crew finished and signed the new manifest - gave us that weird look they reserve for all people who jump out a fully serviceable aircraft and departed. They kicked the tyres and lit the fires and we boarded. The sequence of the drop as I remember it was; the first Jeep followed by the second Jeep, followed by six containers then the hamper and finally the two sticks of eight parachutists. I think I'm right when I say that we kicked the Hamper out as soon as the Red light came ON.

Everything went according to plan- Jeep - Jeep- Containers - Hampers - finally eight Para's out each door. Now some of you clever geeks will be able to work out that as the Hastings is running in to drop it is still flying at 110 knots - that's roughly 127 mph or two miles a minute. It must have taken at least thirty seconds for the aircraft to complete the dropping sequence. The Jeeps dropping first and yours truly way at the back.

When we landed we could just about make out the light on top of the Jeeps; it must have been over a mile away. By the time we had rolled our chutes up and trudge off in the soft sand it must have taken us thirty minutes or more to get to the Jeeps.

I would like to add at this stage that my idea of volunteering to get myself on the heavy dropping team was to avoid walking. I could feel an attack of combat fatigue coming on just looking how far we had to trog. By the time we reached the Jeeps I felt slightly cheated.

This is where airborne initiative and stupidity reared its ugly head. After we had uncrated the Jeeps and collected the containers and hampers I made a very profound and stupid statement, which went something, like this. 'Right' says I. 'There's no way we are going to trog a bloody mile over this sand tomorrow night, we are going to jump on the Red light, that way we will probably only a have about four hundred yards to walk - all in agreement'? They must have been as

thick as me because no one deferred. Bob Prosser was my 2i/c - sad to say I can't for the life of me remember the names of any of the others.

The next night loomed bright and clear. No problems with U/S chutes and we managed to get airborne smack on time. The flight to the DZ was quite short - about thirty minutes at the most.

We started our run in and the big hairy flight Sergeant PJI, I remember he sported a big curly moustache called us to our feet and we all checked our equipment.

We then shuffled forward and he called 'Action stations' where upon I leaped into his lap and kissed him. I jest of course. It was Bob Prosser I really fancied.

The Red light came ON and I kicked the hamper out and followed it in quick succession. It was at this stage I realised I had made a serious error of judgement. This realisation was quickly reinforced as two containers practically flew through my canopy. One passed so close I could have struck a match on it and lit a fag, but as I was a non-smoker I didn't bother. I had even contemplated at ducking my head between my legs to kiss my ass good bye but I was completely mesmerised by containers whistling past and the fact that I was practically dancing on the top of one of the Jeep's parachute canopies.

Needless to say whilst all this was going on my fundamental orifice was twittering half-a-crown, sixpence, half-a-crown, sixpence (the older Association members may have to acquaint some of the younger members the significance of the imperial coinage).

I finally landed safely albeit within spitting distance to one of the Jeeps. I looked up to see if any of the other guys were visible - not a sausage.

To cut a long story short I had both of the Jeeps uncrated with the engines running before Bob Prosser and the remainder of the sticks arrived. I asked them somewhat angrily why they had taken so long. I said we all agreed to jump on the Red light so where the hell had they been.

'Ah!' said Bob, 'There's an extremely annoyed PJI up there and he's after your guts for garters - he jammed his arm across the door to prevent anyone else from following you - he wanted to know your name.' 'What did you say?' I croaked. 'I said you weren't from our unit and therefore I didn't know your name,' replied Bob.

It was at this stage that I realised that if the Airborne Engineers ever formed an Association what a good chairman Bob Prosser would make.

As it turned out the night drop in Cyprus went very well. I think there were only two casualties in the first wave. The second wave that came in during the following afternoon was not so lucky. The ground had heated up as was usually and created a very strong breeze off the sea. I believe the wind was in excess of twenty knots during the drop and there was something like thirty casualties.

The vindication of using fitters to service the hydraulics of the parachute release systems was graphically illustrated during the night drop when a Jeep from 3rd Battalion's Support Platoon did a free fall from one thousand feet and hurtled in. It's cross beam had not been secured correctly to the sub frame (that's right friends you got it first time; they had no fitters on their crating team) Needless to say, the crossbeam that was suspended below four enormous parachutes made a very gentle landing. There was over a thousand men on that DZ that night as luck would have it the Jeep missed us all!

In a more serious vein I have to admit the decision I advocated to jump on the Red light was quite stupid and in retrospect I was very lucky. If the PJI had wished to pursue the matter he could of course have got my name of the flight manifest and I would have been in serious trouble. Should the gentleman concerned ever get to read this missive I apologise without reservation for my stupid act. I would also like to apologise to the remainder of the sticks involved for forgetting their names. Still, it happened almost fifty years ago.



Smallest Jeep in the British Army - 3 Bns freefall vehicle

Parachutists Over Phorty Society (POPS)

Jim Brierley

(resident Australian and ex-British Airborne Engineer)

My wife and I were in New Zealand earlier this year (March 2002) on a trip which started with a coach tour of South Island where we did the usual touristy things: alpine train trip; glow worm caves; helicopter to Franz Josef glacier; Milford Sound boat trip; bungee jump in Queenstown - prior to attending the 6th World POPS Meet at Matamata in North Island.

There was a diverse mix of older parachutists attending, many of whom I had met on previous POPS Meets around the world, and Australia was well represented. After registration and a formal welcome by the Māori community we got down to the serious business of fun jumping including accuracy and four-way scrambles. The planes were two Cessna and a Pilatus Porter and they worked non-stop hauling jumpers to height. A balloon was also brought in at one stage and many POPS jumped out of the basket from three and four thousand feet. Some non-jumping wives joined their husbands to act as landing ballast. A one off treat was the opportunity to jump out of a restored Catalina flying boat (one of only two left in the world) by leaping out of a side gun blister from which the plastic bubble had been removed. Having done the leap early two of us were asked if we would like to fly in a pursuit plane alongside the Catalina, with a stunt pilot at the controls, and a cameraman who wanted footage of the jumpers from close up. It was an exciting experience watching other 'old buggers' exiting the Catalina, most of them with some difficulty, and tumbling all over the sky trying to get stable in free fall. The other POP and I were then asked to do a two-way out of the pursuit plane for the benefit of the cameraman.

During the middle of the competition a day was set aside to visit Lake Taupo to jump out of a M18 helicopter. We were given the choice of going direct by bus or going via Auckland to board a DC3 and then bailing out over Taupo at 10,000 feet. As I hadn't jumped a DC3 since 1944 I chose the latter. It was a wonderful choice. The aircraft had been refurbished with passenger seats for fare paying tourists and this was a huge improvement on wartime experience. We did two runs with about 20 getting out on each run. Some of the Americans on board had jumped a Dakota many times back in the States and they gave useful advice on diving out of a somewhat narrow passenger entry door and coping with the prop blast so that we could more properly position ourselves for docking in free fall. I had an American in front (5,500 jumps) and one behind me (4,700 jumps) so with this pool of experience I had no difficulty in docking in a three-way whilst the other jumpers were strung out in a long line behind. After repacking on the ground we queued up, 35 at a time, to jump the Russian M18. That was truly uplifting! We were up to 10,000 feet in minutes and a number of us managed an Australasian record six-way for over-60s. Four of us (two Americans, a Kiwi and an Aussie) had earlier done an Australasian record for over-70s. Coincidentally, I was in the original world record four-way in Canada in 1999. (The Americans have since overtaken this when they put together an eight-way some six months ago.) And that brought to an end a wonderful time at Matamata, the place where "Lord of the Rings" was filmed.



The final function was a farewell banquet at which medals were presented - even an award to the writer for being the oldest jumper at the Meet! The Swiss jumpers put forward a proposition that the next POPS Meet should be held in their country and they would do us proud as hosts and that their aircraft would include a restored Junkers 52. Wonderful news!

Jim Brierley at the farewell ceremony

Further Greetings from 'Down Under'

Denis Farrow

At a recent British Airborne Forces Reunion here in Australia, I was given the April edition of the Airborne Engineers Journal. I was particularly interested to read the article by Ray East; wherein he sought details of 9 TBRE Portland and its RSM.

In 1946-49 I was with 9 TBRE having returned from India/Burma, after serving with 50 Indian Parachute Brigade - so I was there when Ray was at Portland.

The RSM's name was Wright, a big man, and a regular soldier who had lost an arm. Ticky Wright was given to make some very pithy comments!

The one I remember best, was in a Weymouth pub, where he was in uniform, when a very inebriated sailor came in, looked a Ticky, noticed his missing limb, and said, "I didn't know they had blokes in the Army with one arm!" Ticky, amazingly, controlled his temper and replied, "Why wouldn't they? They have blokes in the Navy with no brains."

Of course I have had to amend the RSM's actual reply, it was much more explicit!

Calling New Zealand and Canada

Well guys, I reckon it's time for a few articles from your neck of the woods - the Australian lads are putting you to shame.

Cliff Joy has a few tales to tell, and Dave Rance could fill an entire Journal. We'll be looking forward to your contribution in the December edition (hopefully!)

Following On

Dennis Hunt

As a follow on from Dennis (Buzz) Bateman's article in the April edition, I have been tempted to make an offering. The names mentioned by Buzz rung bells within my head. I remember them all, and of course many more besides, to mention a few - Game (Lofty), Blenkinsop, Mellows, Daniels, Sturgess, Eastwood, Flexney etc.

The photograph is of 208 Parachute Course taken in 1946 after completion of our eight jumps. The photo was taken at No3 TBRE Guillemont Barracks, Cove. I am 3rd from the right (rear rank), Reg Flexney (Fangs) is 1st on the right (rear rank). The officer, centrally located in the front rank is Julian Cadbury (the chocolate manufactures son). Others include Ballinger, Scott, Lyons, Dakin 321 and Dakin 546.



After embarkation leave from the Airborne Wing, we were shipped out on HMV Georgie to Haifa (Palestine) then on to Hadera Camp 141, where I began my 6 years' service with 9th Airborne Squadron RE (1946-1952).

We had some terrific experiences in a much travelled life, and learned to volunteer for anything - a philosophy that has sustained me a varied and interesting life after '9 Squadron'.

Our lives were certainly varied whilst serving with the Squadron - depending on which troop you belonged we all had our own refinements of memories. 2 Troop, to which I belonged, were always on detachment, when required within the Brigade, to the 2nd Para Bn. This was the reason for us leaving Palestine on the last day of the Mandate with the 2nd Bn, also the Palestine Police Force. We had been dealing with an insertion of Syrian and Lebanese troops. Incidentally, the Palestine Police promptly disembarked at Cyprus from the 'Empress of Australia.' They couldn't see themselves roughing it on Troop Decks with us common Paras!

The late SQMS Bill Powell, in his wisdom, gave me the dubious pleasure of returning to the UK with the QM stores. I was informed that my disembarkation leave would be delayed due to the un-crating of the QM stores. However on arrival at Liverpool docks - good news - leave the stores crated we are off to Hameln (another deep breath another story).



If I were asked what 1, 3 or HQ troops had accomplished during their service, I would hesitate to even guess - unknown territory. All I know is that we were a 'Happy Band of Pilgrims.'

Since my demob in 1952 and prior to the birth of the Airborne Engineers Association, I had joined the Anglian Branch of the Parachute Regiment Association. We have now been adopted by the 2nd Para Bn who are based at Meeanee Barracks in Colchester - what a coincidence!

Dennis off to the Cenotaph November 2001 as a young 73 year old stood on parade for over 3 hours

A recent headline in our local paper read, "Impending Trouble from Paratroops Being Based Outside Woodbridge!" My wife remarked on seeing the huge grin on my face, "As if - wot us?"

UBIQUE should read UNIQUE "**What a Mob**"

The 2002 AGM/Reunion- Blackpool 11th – 14th October

This is the final call to members who wish to attend the 2002 AGM/Reunion. If you haven't booked yet I strongly suggest that do so immediately. Booking forms were enclosed in your April edition of the Journal. Don't delay, send it today! There is at present no seating plan, but if you have a particular preference please contact Mike Holdsworth. Tables of 10 please

Not the World Wide Web

John Aldridge

It was that other WWW - a Wet Welsh Weekend. But it was absolutely brilliant.

I have not been free for previous Snowdon weekends organised by Chris "Poncho" O'Donovan and was delighted to find myself available this year. I was greeted at Indefatigable on Anglesey late Friday afternoon by Chris and Marilyn, pointed at the spare beds and warned which in room Joe Mac appeared to be winning the snoring contest. I gather Nat Hague had quickly left it to the main contestants and dragged his mattress out of that room in favour of the corridor! Master Bates and Fergy had already completed their first round of golf and had two more days booked. Fergy is alleged to have claimed an "excused chit" for anything higher than a bunker, no Snowdon for him. Dave Rutter had been barred from this group for behaviour unbecoming an editor! Others were already checking stock levels in the sailing club bar.

My timing was near perfect, just in time to claim a bedspace and join those heading up to the nearest pub for scoff and refreshments. I have seen most of these guys in recent years (thanks to our Association) and once I had got the trick of visually tuning out the grey (or lack of) hair and the wrinkles the others looked pretty familiar too. In that sort of company old habits soon return and I was so busy talking I managed to leave my bill unpaid - and had to square Poncho for it later.

Saturday morning saw us back in barrack mode with Tony Manley cheffing like a good'un in the kitchen - producing his usual mix of good food and abuse. The wet and windy weekend forecast indicated those going out in the hills had better stoke up on that excellent breakfast. It was soon time for Chris to issue white feathers to the golfers and divide the rest of us up into two groups. It had been raining since dawn but, bag rats issued, we were into the coach and off; I was among those selected for the southerly assault.

This route was reputed to be the easier of the two but whichever way you cut it most of the going seemed to be up. We were soon at cloud base and things just got colder and wetter from there on. We split again into two groups based upon pace so there would not be too much waiting for anyone - waiting meant getting cold. Dave Rutter and the racing snakes disappeared upward; we proceeded in a more dignified manner. Visibility was minimal in the cloud and when we reached the top of Glyder Fawr we lost all protection from the wind. It was at about this point that Steve Dunk said, "You guys used to have to do this sort of thing" and asked "Why do you still do it now you don't have to?" It must have been a particularly silly question because none of us could come up with an answer!

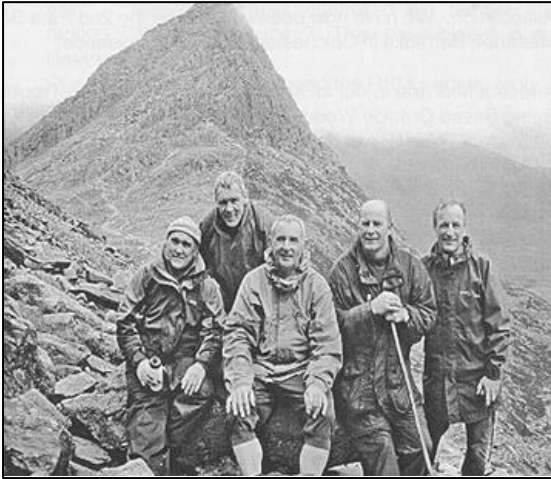


The northern assault group were also having "fun" at this point. They had long since left their group leader behind and Chris describes the interesting bit of their route as "On the top of the Glydders, hanging on by five points of contact (I presume he includes his teeth here) in the most severe winds that I've ever experienced, with zero visibility and all we could do was laugh.

Fifty-four years of age going on fifteen."

Don't look down lads!

The rump of the Southern Softies group was led by Mick Ellery on the basis that his Who's Who entry lists Munro



Bagging as a hobby. I noted he was armed with a GPS and map so had every confidence in him - until we did a vertical descent for a hundred feet before the command "Errrrh, perhaps we'd better go back up" was issued. It transpired Mick had bought this bit of technical wizardry the day before and could just about manage to extract a grid reference from it. At this point I switched my own unit on and kept a careful note of the bearing to the RV pub! Bof Harrap was suffering from muscle cramp in the thighs by this point but manfully declined all offers of massage rather than risk his reputation. It was interesting to note that one of his cramp relief measures involved rolling and lighting a cigarette.

Dave Grimbley, Bing Crosby, Poncho, Jim Harrower & Martin Walker

Despite the trials and tribulations our somewhat "scenic" route did have one happy effect; we met up with Poncho and the boys from the North and stopped for Mars bars and, as we were back out of cloud by then, a photo call.

Eventually we made it down the mine track to the Pen-y-Gwryd Hotel where we found out what had motivated the racing snakes - they were three pints ahead of us! As the various groups came in nobody complained that Phil Poulton was holding us up, least of all the landlord who was having a very profitable day. Eventually it was back for showers, off in the bus for a group meal and then back to the sailing club where Chris had taken over the bar. At some point that evening we were treated to the somewhat surreal experience of watching Bill Rudd, Keith King and Dennis Healey swapping hearing aids while having a rather loud discussion on the merits of each. Now we all need one.



Come Sunday my legs complained bitterly about anything resembling vertical movement so after another excellent breakfast from Tony and Steve I applied for my white feather. The golfers went golfing, the girls walked the beach and Barney Rooney and I headed off for a bit of touring and a pub lunch in Holyhead while the masochists were bussed off to the hills again.

Poncho reports that “yet again the weather was atrocious but it didn’t dampen spirits (only clothing) and it gave us much more of a technical challenge when on the hills” - see what I mean about masochism? He continues, “Sunday was more of a blind navigation exercise than a climb. The pints afterwards in the Pen-y-Gwrd Hotel in



front of the roaring fire, with steaming socks were absolute nectar. Steve (Charlie’s civvy bro) obligingly asked us loads of questions about parachuting; this acted as a catalyst to many old stories being retold. Lamps were well and truly swung. I was glad that we had been able to have a minute’s silence for Charlie Dunk on the summit of Tryfan. It was a fitting tribute to an old warrior who loved mountains and had climbed Tryfan last year with Dave Grimbley.”

Our Vice President (Bill Rudd) congratulates Tony (chef) for his sterling work !

Sunday evening was a Barbeque down at the Sailing Club with Tony Manley and Steve Dunk again doing the honours. Chris commented that he was only sorry he couldn’t organise a couple of extra bellies for everyone so that they could eat the quantity of excellent food that was presented, but admits to managing three bits of chicken and two portions of salmon himself. The weekend came to a spectacular finish at about 0200 hrs Monday when all the survivors danced Zorba the Greek. By that stage the loonies had well and truly taken full control of the asylum and it was time to close it down.

I gather this year’s crowd was roughly 50% old hands and 50% newbies like me and it was great to have Lorraine Dunk and Steve there. Planning is already underway for next year and Indefatigable has been booked. The winds kept people off the water this year but affected the golf less and this was considered an excellent alternative activity; Pete Bates is being encouraged to develop it for the coming years. Marian Crosbie accidentally volunteered to organise adventurous activity for the ladies and kids. Bing obviously failed to warn her that the military issue Thesaurus offers “volunteering” as an alternative to “suggesting.” Few other changes are likely to be made in what is proving to be a popular (and enduring) format, although we have been threatened with a Yorkie Davis curry next year. On this occasion it is not difficult to single people out for credit and the management team of Chris and Marilyn can take gold in this, it is also difficult to see how the weekend could run in the same fashion without Tony excelling himself in his usual manner on the food front.

It’s funny how you remember some things and forget others in life. I found that the drinking and lamp swinging came back much as I remembered it but I don’t recall the walking bit being so painful. Surely it can’t be age? Despite that, with next years dates already fixed, I shall fight to keep them free and look forward to meeting up again next year and, who knows, we might even get sunshine.

Operation FRESHMAN: 60th Anniversary Ceremony, 20th Nov 2002

Operation FRESHMAN was a very daring operation, which took place in November 1942. It was the longest glider tow attempted - certainly up to that stage of the Second World War - and, crucially, it was attempted just as the fierce Norwegian winter was getting into its stride. The objective - the Heavy Water Plant at Rjukan - would have been daunting in our 21st Century age of 'smart' weapons and precision bombing. To aim to tackle it having crash-landed in a glider and man-packed explosives on a 5-6 hour forced march over mountainous terrain was nothing short of heroic. Those who survived the attack were then expected to escape on foot over the mountains to Sweden. Thirty Royal Engineers from 9 Field Company and 261 Field Park Company were despatched on this raid in two Horsa gliders piloted by 4 pilots of the Glider Pilot Regiment. None survived. Those who were not killed on landing were murdered by the Gestapo: four of them were tortured to death and their bodies, which were dumped in the sea, have never been recovered. Of the two RAF towing aircraft, one crashed killing all on board and only one returned. This heroic attempt to scupper the German work on building an atomic bomb was a failure but this does not lessen the undying respect we have for the men who willingly risked their lives in the cause of a noble mission.

The courage, which the members of the FRESHMAN party displayed, has been an enduring inspiration to Airborne Sappers over the years and it is entirely appropriate that the Association has been invited to be represented at the memorial service to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the operation. This is to be held at Skitten, near Wick in Scotland, which was the departure airfield for the two gliders and their towing aircraft, which took part in the ill-fated mission. The ceremony will take place on **Wednesday 20th November 2002**. The format will involve a short parade and service at the memorial (between 10.30 and 12.00) this will be followed by a fly past and a civic reception and lunch in the Assembly Rooms in Wick, which will be hosted by the Lord Lieutenant.

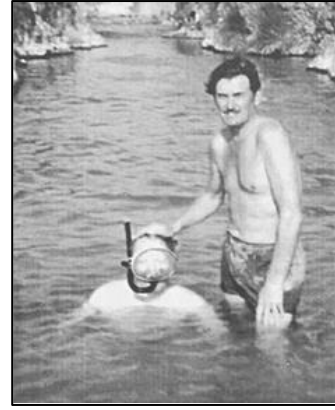
The plan is for the Association to be represented by our Standard Bearer and some members of the Association together with a small detachment of 9 Parachute Squadron Royal Engineers. Others present will include representatives of the RAF, the Glider Pilots Association, The Army Air Corps and the Norwegian SOE together with relatives of those who were involved in the operation.

Numbers are limited but the organizing committee has kindly agreed that our representation (including The Squadron) may be up to twenty people. If you would like to be there you need to make up your mind NOW. **Final numbers are needed by 19th August.**

If you are interested contact Chris Davies as soon as possible



**Guard of Honour - 299 Para Fd Sqn RETA
Official Opening of the new Middleton Barracks Hull - 1950's by Lord Lieutenant,
East Riding of Yorkshire, Sir Marcus Worsley
Recognised L to R: George Desforges, Stan Robinson,
Tommy Kilgar, Wilf Desforges, Don Ball & Noel Ward**



John Tharby & Stan Pepper (in their younger days!)

9 Parachute Squadron RE Operation FINGAL

The Never Ending Journey (Deployment) Lt Toby Rider

After a late departure from Aldershot on the evening of the 24th January 2002, 1 Troop and the bulk of the squadron arrived at South Cerney for the inevitable long process of movement control. As ever the reception centre was welcoming and friendly and stuffed full of amenities that the boys fought over....Not!!!

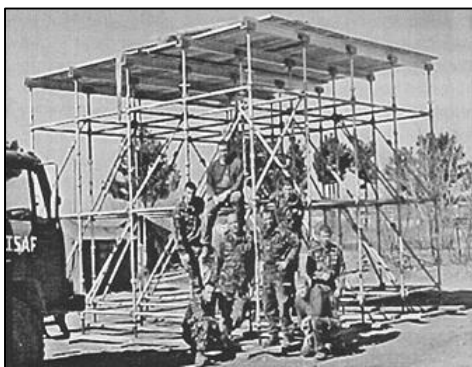
The pre-deployment briefings proved exceptionally valuable, in particular the "reaction to capture" briefing by a particularly handsome, body beautiful, Royal Marine. This was a refreshing, relevant and well delivered hour presentation.

On arrival at RAF Brize Norton we were ushered into the comfortable business lounge, where we received executive treatment as always. The friendly and always co-operative faces of the "camp" RAF stewards confirmed that travel standards were to remain high throughout the flight. We were fortunate to be upgraded to a company jet (the reliable VC 10). The in-flight entertainment was to be the constant cheery banter of Cpl "Reg" Grantham and his wild and wonderful stories about firepower and sustainability. 1 Troop was particularly upset to find that the standard white cardboard box was replaced by an in-flight meal tray, (which was outstanding). After a brief stopover in Cyprus, which allowed the pilots to get a pint and a fag! We were on our merry way to Thumrait (Oman).

Thumrait is an Omani Air force Base, which was used by the UK for Exercise Saif Sareea. 1 Tp were blessed with the opportunity to spend a heat sweltering 48 hrs in the sand. It was here that SSgt "Davie" Marr shed his Scottish winter blue skin for his Mediterranean white come rosy pink exterior.

Upon arrival at Kabul International Airport, 1 Tp were swiped into theatre and handed a boil in the bag breakfast. This was to be first event of an endurance UK ration pack-eating contest. Many competitors were upset to have learned that the SSM (Neil Fitzsimons) had entered the contest 2 days previously and had a distinct head start on the rest of the squadron.

Morale was high and we were all keen to get on and begin engineering tasks. We were given 48 hrs to reconfigure ourselves and establish our own living accommodation. Upon completion of this LCpl "Les" Dilkes (God's gift to himself) and his lads began to set up camp at Bruneval Company location for the Parachute Regiment. Cp "Scouse" Winter and LCpl "Murray" Walker's sections had been tasked with installing an ITC (Improved Tented Camp) at the HQ ISAF location. 1 Tp's capability was greatly restricted by the lack of Artisan Tools and limited vehicles.



1 Troop had been pencilled in for a school project in Kabul city centre. The squadron had completed two such tasks and had found these extremely rewarding. The people of Kabul remained exceptionally friendly and very welcoming. It is satisfying to see ISAF providing good to the community, which will give these kids a brighter future.

Cuplock Tower constructed by 1 Section

Recce Troop

LCpl Leavold

Recce Troop deployed with the main body of the squadron on the 25th January 2002. We entered Afghanistan via Thumrait (OMAN) on the 27th January 2002. On arrival we were thrown straight into action. As a new member of the Troop it was a case of on the job training under the guidance of the Patrol Commander. Recce Troop consisted of members pulled from the Training Wing and across the other Troops. I was not alone at picking up this newly formed role.

The first couple of weeks proved frustrating for all members of the squadron. Our equipment and vehicles were delayed back in the UK and our day-to-day transport was extremely limited. The old boy networking of Capt Mick Coles proved to be as good as ever for sourcing vehicles. Now that we had mobility (Civilian Land-cruisers) our engineer recces began. Our first major task was to recce the routes between Kabul City and Bagram Airfield.

The Kabul - Bagram Link roads were named Route "BOTTLE" (Old Russian Road) and Route "HORSESHOE" (Local MSR) by the present International Stabilisation & Assistance Force (ISAF). The Russians had constructed route Bottle in the early 1980's, which allowed safe passage between the two locations thus avoiding villages and natural ambush locations. Mainly the local population uses route Bottle as it links the many village networks between Kabul and Bagram. It is overlooked from the west by a severe mountain range and has many choke points and potential ambush sites. We had conducted general engineer recces along both routes which allowed us to establish their classification and been fired upon, by small arms fire, on route Horseshoe thus displaying its vulnerability. We had focussed on all existing bridges, culverts and damaged road surfaces through direct artillery strikes.

Our tasks had involved many international agencies that form part of ISAF. These agencies are mainly Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams. The mine threat in Afghanistan is constantly evident along the Kabul - Bagram routes. This threat constantly focuses your mind. We quickly realised that we could not and should not stray from the beaten track without EOD assistance. However within the role of Recce Troop we must push out the force Area of Operations (AO) with the assistance of EOD.

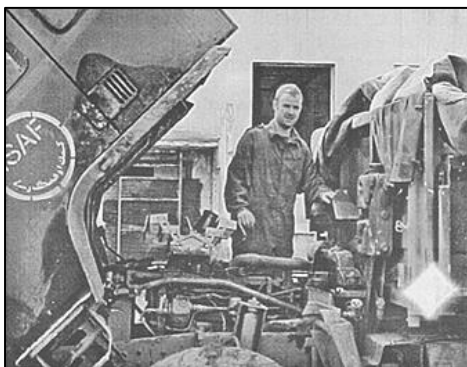
The establishment of our Recce Troop has proved to be a vital Brigade asset. We had widened the mobility of the ISAF effort within the Kabul and Bagram areas whilst working with the Path Finder Platoon (PF). I have gained much experience, learnt a lot more about the country and its people and seen how vital Engineer Recce is to the ISAF Force. I feel that I have been fortunate to be given this opportunity and have been exposed to an alternative challenge to my field troop role.

Support Troop

Capt Jamie Thompson

The majority of the troop deployed late January after a month and half of uncertainty. As with most of the UK commitment to ISAF, personnel initially flew to a forward mounting base in Oman before the final stage of the journey to Kabul International Airport.

We arrived in Kabul and reports of Afghanistan's cold temperatures were immediately confirmed. A series of lengthy lectures followed referring to intelligence, driving conditions, accident procedures and the mine/unexploded ordinance situation in theatre. Armed with this information and a little sleep, we were ready to start the tour.



Spr/LCpl Bloggs fitter

Initially the troop operated with equipment borrowed from other Squadrons and Non-Government Organisations (NGO) such as the HALO trust. With such vehicles on loan the troop was able fulfil its operational commitments and render the required support to the Squadrons Field Troops. Taskings were initially slow to develop due to limited stores, but by the first week of February the Squadrons momentum had increased and the various sites were underway, with rumours of additional G5 taskings on the horizon. These taskings were to manifest themselves as the refurbishment of schools and police stations, although the Squadron priority

always lay with supporting the 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment.

With such an array of projects undertaken the troop found itself intensely busy, supplying scarce plant resources to competing field troops. The troop had also been tasked with a route maintenance project, to facilitate movement by Afghan troops between a main road and live firing range. In addition Support Troop had been given an independent G5 tasking for the refurbishment of an operations room at the Police Headquarters in Kabul.

2 Troop

Lt Andy Hart

On Friday 1st February, 1 section 2 Troop, led by Cpl McCulloch started work on what was to be known as REBRO Hill. A few weeks' earlier members of 216 Sigs decided that they needed a Rebro site on top of a 12,000ft mountain that separated north and south Kabul. It would be our job to winterise all accommodation and to help in the defence of the site. The Recce went well and it was predicted that this would be a simple five-day operation. However, as we all know, things start to go wrong as soon as you cross the Line of Departure (LoD).

Initially we were delayed in reaching the line of departure due to Northern Alliance soldiers forbidding us to go up the mountain. Following a lot of haggling and paper work we made it to our site. Our initial task was to prepare temporary accommodation for the Parachute Regiment guard and ourselves. This was going well until we discovered that our proposed accommodation was covered in human excrement, averaging a staggering 3 inches deep in places. After meticulous cleaning, scrubbing, brushing and wrenching we set to winterising the accommodation.

The days were long and cold especially during the mornings and late afternoons. Frustration began to set in due to the delay in the arrival of our stores. After about five days the majority of the stores required were now available and we could start on the accommodation for the 216 Sigs lads. After nine days and 300 different plans on how to secure the external partitions we came up with the final plan, this involved a bit of concreting by our resident 'brickie' Spr Steve Limbrick and some chipping by Spr Sven Rathbone. On day ten we awoke to find 6 inches of snow had fallen and the temperature well below zero. This resulted in us working for 10 minutes, then sprinting for 40 metres just to get the blood flowing again. Meanwhile, while we were freezing, the local Northern Alliance fighters were sitting around in flip-flops and pyjamas.

We managed to escape our exile on the mountain six days later than scheduled. Considering the problems that we encountered with the climatic conditions and stores 'Airborne Initiative' once again came to the fore.

Falklands Reunion at the Tower of London

Was it really twenty years ago when a determined band of brothers set off for a short war in the South Atlantic?



In the words of a recent book, we were soldiers then - and young! In much happier (and warmer) circumstances more than 120 veterans met at the Tower of London for a 20th anniversary reunion on the 8th of June. Why the Tower? Well it helps that the CRE at the time of the Falklands Campaign is now the Governor and he, Major General Field very kindly invited us into his impressive castle for the evening.

Steeped in our nation's history as it is, the Tower could not have been a more appropriate setting and many took the opportunity of the evening to enjoy a private Beefeater guided tour. Others visited the chapel for short service of remembrance before the main business of the evening - meeting old friends over the odd beer or four and an excellent Gurkha curry.



The Reunion was for all Royal Engineers who took part in the campaign and all units were represented. It was hardly surprising, though, to note that most who showed up were ex-9 Squadron. They appeared from all over the place. Two came from Australia, one (ex-OC 59) came from the USA and, of course, Louis came up from Devon. As the photos show, (thanks to soft focus) all looked as young and fit as ever. It was a cracking evening and, happily,



everyone managed to escape from the Tower before the huge gates were barred and bolted - or did they???





Standing:

Scotty Plugg, Ginge Moore, ?, Robbie Burns, Stubbsy, Steve Tickle, Kev Lillicrap, Mick Humphries, John Jinks, Billy Morris, Tommy Tindall

Sitting:

Jock Ferry, Ginge Lincoln, Willie Mac & Dill Rogers

It should be noted by our readers that the former troop commander (Robbie Burns) was attired in bright red corduroy trousers!



Scotty Plugg, Mick Leather & ?



Maj Gen Geoff Field looking to ensure the Crown Jewels are still safe



Dick Ray, Stewart Gillies & Col Chris Davies



(Centre) Former OC 59 Cdo Sqn - Roddy MacDonald



The cultural part of the Reunion



Billy Morris & friends

Elvington- Airborne Forces Weekend



The last Allied soldier to leave Arnhem Bridge has opened a new exhibition about the Second World War campaign.

Harold Padfield, 81, was a lance sergeant with the 1st Parachute Squadron of the Royal Engineers in September 1944 when his unit was forced to surrender to German forces after thousands of British airborne troops died during fighting to capture the bridge.

He and a colleague, Sapper Butterworth, went on to the bridge with a white flag and approached the German forces but a machine gunner opened fire and shot Butterworth in the legs. His own senior officer for the dishonourable action then shot the gunner.

The German officer told Lance Sergeant Padfield, later promoted to Regimental Sergeant Major, that his men had been "either very brave or very foolish." Sgt Padfield disagreed and took the view that his unit was unfortunate.

After surrender the men were marched through Arnhem and held as prisoners of war.

Three days before leaving for Arnhem, Sgt Padfield received burns to his hands as he tried in vain to rescue the occupants of a crashed glider, bravery for which he was commended.

Harry, who retired from the Army in 1963, travelled from his home in Oxford to Yorkshire Air Museum at Elvington, near York, to open the new exhibition, "A Bridge Too Far" which includes exhibits never before seen in the UK.



WWII Jeep the same type as used at Arnhem



**Presentation of the kneeler worked by
Ron & Daphne Day in memory of
Bobbi Thornton**



**The Allied Air Forces Memorial Chapel for the dedication of the Plaque of Remembrance
to all Airborne Engineers who have died and a service of Thanksgiving for the lives of
Charlie Dunk, Barbara Teeley, Bobbi Thornton, Pam Dickson & Judith Allison**

Additional Airborne Sappers

51 Fd Sqn (Air Assault) Airborne Capability

Captain DE Quinn, Second in Command

The Squadron currently has 31 Para slots and we have managed to fill 27 of those within the last year, enjoying an excellent pass rate on P Coy, we have 5 on the current course. It is hoped by March 03 that we will have increased our Para allocation to 50 plus. The formation of 23 Engineer Regiment in the 2003 will see both 51 and 9 Squadron providing an identical capability i.e. we will both be fully manned Para Squadrons.

The following provides a brief history and description of our new role.

16 Air Assault Brigade was formed in September 1999 with the amalgamation of 24 Airmobile and 5 Airborne Brigades. Initially the engineer support consisted of the two close support squadrons from the old brigades namely 9 Para and 51 Air Asslt, with 36 Engineer Regiment providing the Regimental headquarters and headquarters squadron when required. With the formation of 23 Engineer Regiment and 12 (Nova Scotia) Headquarters Squadron in Jan 2003, 16 Air Assault Brigade will finally have its own Close Support Regiment.

In order to allow both Squadrons to support brigade units across the whole spectrum of likely tasks, including provision of the Lead Airborne Task Force, it was decided in April 2001 to allocate a troop's worth of parachute slots to 51 Field Squadron (Air Assault). The squadron already had a number of parachute-trained personnel, from previous tours, who quickly honed their skills with a series of refresher courses at RAF Brize Norton. A small number managed to complete the course just in time to join 4 Para on their annual jump into Arnhem.

The Squadron also had a number of eager volunteers for P Company with the first 3 passing in April 2002, providing an incentive for many of the squadron. Since then there has been a steady stream of trained personnel posted into the Squadron and home grown talent passing P company and then completing their jumps courses. In September the Engineer-in-Chief decreed that the Squadron's parachutists should wear their maroon berets, both advertising the new capability and acting as an incentive to others. The Squadron now has 24 parachute trained personnel and aim to have a fully manned troop by September 2002.

Organising parachute training with 9 Para Squadron and other Brigade units based in the Colchester and Aldershot has been a bit of a challenge. However, 4 Para based in nearby Leeds, have been very helpful with the provision of ground training and allowing Squadron members to jump with them as often as possible. As the number of trained personnel expands and 23 Engineer Regiment begins to form up the chances to jump will no doubt grow, encouraging volunteers from across the Corps to choose 51 Fd Sqn (Air Assault) as the unit to serve with as an Airborne Engineer.

News from Perth, Western Australia

Don Newman

'Pegasus Association' recently renamed 'Airborne Forces Association' of Western Australia includes a few former 9 Para Sqn RE members plus other RE airborne. We have however retained 'Pegasus' as the Title for our monthly newsletter.

The association has always enjoyed an Airborne Forces annual Day luncheon towards the end of June, and this year on the 22nd we celebrated The 20th Anniversary of the Battle for the Falklands 1982.

It turned out to be an exceptional day commencing with a church service, guard of honour at the entrance and dignitaries present. The dress being Parade dress, Blazers, Berets, Grey slacks, black shoes and medals where entitled. Lunch at the ANZAC Club house in Perth, and as one of the senior members present (by length of time in Association) I was introduced to the Governor of Western Australia, His Excellency Lieutenant General John Sanderson AC. We were to discover the fact that our paths had crossed previously at Chattenden in 1969. He was obviously as an exchange Officer Instructor at Plant Roads and Airfields Wing. He informed me that the Chief Instructor there was in fact the OC of the Engineers at Arnhem Bridge as a young Officer Eric MacKay, info that I was quite unaware of and perhaps ought to have known.

Members of the Falklands force were in attendance and a twenty minute talk given by an ex 3 Para section member, who mentioned the infamous Engineer Bridge - two bits of 4" by 2" about two feet wide with batons nailed across that tipped several heavily laden Paras into the water despite an engineer at either end to stabilize. With the acceptance of the so-called bridge (I wondered if any Squadron member could elaborate on the 'bridge'?).

Other than that the related experience by a "Trog on the Hoof" proved to be very interesting.

Information from around the tracks of W.A. RE Para wise is rather scarce, however I understand George Jones and family are all OK, Ken Barnes, Bob Waddell and wife Denise were all well as at the 22nd June. Have not seen Jim Crozier or Terry McGrath for ages.

I found the April issue No 6 very interesting reading, as we all do, we often wonder how our ex-military friends and associates got on, where they ended up etc., and associations such as ours and the excellent journal produced fills that gap. Many thanks to the efforts of those involved.

The personal story of Sean McCargo is an exceptional extraordinary adventure if indeed it could be so called. The young sapper McCargo that I remembered as a member of 3 Troop in 1960, I find difficult to slot in as the guy in the story, but he certainly is. Reading between his lines there are very much elements of hard dangerous filthy tiring unimaginable tasks that have been his lot. Many of us may have seen the oil fires towards the end of the Gulf War on TV. I remember saying to my sons, "Pity the poor sods who've got the job of putting that lot out!

The related other employment so necessary for the benefit of mankind dismantling the evils of the recent past. Many like myself I guess dabbled, perhaps not much more than the introduction of germ warfare, nuclear threats and measurement of radiation etc. Thank god we were never involved. But here is a guy that is, in the removal and destruction of such weaponry. My Admiration goes out to you Sean; you obviously excel in what you do.

Looking back in life, rank in the service has little to do with success in life, it's all a question of finding one's own 'niche.'

I recently learnt of one fellow, a sapper for many years in the Squadron - passed SAS selection and became a WO in less than 12 years only to lose his life in the Gulf War. There are as many misfortunes of commissioned ranks as there are of remarkable achievements of OR's - all Ex of course, some will say that all men are equal, but of course we are not.

I acknowledge and thank the Association for the recently received scroll of service.

P.S. I'm still endeavouring to keep fit!

Branch News

Aldershot

Bette Gray - Secretary

Our Annual General Meeting was held during the month of May. The attendance was good with twenty-five members attending and a further fifteen sending their apologies. Fred Gray was elected as the new Chairman in place of Derek Taylor who had held the post for the previous nine years. John Smith, assisted by Glenda will take over the duties of entertainments from Dave and Jeanette Rutter who have done the job very ably since the branch was formed over ten years ago. Other than those changes the committee remains the same. We were able to introduce three new members during the last period. Bill McPherson, formally serving with 249 & 9 Squadron, WO2 Mick Ackling, a serving Warrant Officer but due to finish his service in the very near future and Gerry Hicks 301 Squadron.

Sadly, Eve Coleman, the wife of Ray Coleman, the Association Secretary, passed away during the month of May. A minute's silence was observed for Eve and a rose bush has been planted in the memorial garden at Elvington Air Museum where an Airborne Engineers Museum has been established. Jan Chambers had surgery recently and pleased to say all now seems well. Tommy Handley also had major surgery in May and he is now well and truly back to his old bubbly self. We look forward to seeing them both at future branch functions.

A good number of the branch attended the Airborne Forces Weekend at Elvington. We met up with quite a number of former Squadron members who had not been seen for a few years and as is normal on these occasions there was much swinging from the chandeliers with tin hats on. The weather failed to dampen spirits and it turned out to be a very enjoyable weekend. We now look forward to our annual BBQ in September.

A number of us will be taking the long road north by coach to see the Edinburgh Military Tattoo. This includes a visit to the historic city of York and overnight accommodation in the Middlesbrough area.

The Aldershot Branch welcomes any serving soldier and former members of Airborne Engineers living within a reasonable distance of Aldershot, to join us at our meetings held every two months (March, May, July Sept etc) where you would be made most welcome. The meeting is held in the John Rock Room, Rhine Bks, 1130hrs for 1200hrs.

Yorkshire

Bill Rudd

Journal time seems to come round so fast these days, our editor Dave does a super job and braced us all, for submitting late articles, well done we deserve it?

The Branch is alive and kicking, even though we are spread over hundreds of square miles. Nothing changes from month to month; our two monthly meetings and Sunday lunches in between keep us all in contact. Our last meeting was held at Ripon Vets Weekend, thanks to Ken Hart, a great success, and will certainly become a regular feature in the yearly calendar, with invites to all Association members to come and join us for the weekend.

By the time this goes to press our Elvington Airborne Weekend sponsored by our A.E.A, and supported by the Yorkshire Branch will be under our belts, and hopefully a resounding success, thanks mainly to Bob Prosser, Tom Thornton and many of the Branch members. To date 140 have booked in for the Jubilee Dinner, with members from all branches attending. This should be a memorable night, especially with such an illustrious guest speaker as Brig Garth Hewish.

Several branch members and wife's including myself supported the Wales weekend. I would like, through this media to thank Chris & Marilyn O'Donovan and Tony Manley for all their hard work. This undoubtedly was a most successful gathering of the clans and although the weather could have been a little better, most managed to get thoroughly wet, both on the outside and inside. Many thanks again Chris!

I would like to thank the Birmingham Branch for hosting the Ordinary General meeting in June, and looking after us so well. The happy hour on the Friday night, the sing along with our Dutch friends on the Saturday night, was more than we could of possibly of ask for. The rumour is that Chris C and Moggie are going to take their kit out of the car next time? Well folks that's all for now, we look forward to seeing you all at Blackpool for the Reunion in October.

Birmingham

Bunny Brown

Since the last Journal we have held a Golden Jubilee Dinner dance, which was organized and run by our Chairman Brian Care; the evening was a great success, and many thanks must go to Brian, Wendy Clarke and Maureen Aitken who did a terrific job on the raffle.

We have also recently held our annual Clay Shoot & B.B.Q. Despite being on the same day as The England playoffs in the World Cup, was very well attended, many thanks to Rip Kirby who swelled the numbers with his not small amount of family. Mike Holdsworth again ran the shooting side of things, with Dave Clarke looking after the food. Additionally, we hosted the June O.G.M. at the Royal Court Hotel Coventry. It really is a splendid Hotel, and will I believe be the venue for the 2003 A.G.M. The meeting was well attended, although two delegates, who shall remain nameless, after happy hour on Saturday, did not manage to change clothes until leaving on Sunday.

I have just returned from the Airborne Forces Weekend at Elvington, (another Jubilee Dinner!!). The weather was kind to us, and a good turnout of Airborne Sappers was in attendance, all in all it has been a hectic couple of months since the last Journal.

I look forward to seeing old faces and new at Blackpool in October.

The Funeral Of John Vickerman

John's funeral was held at the Forest Of Dean Crematorium on Friday the 8th March. As with most Drill Instructors John was there well before most of the mourners arrived.

There were six Red Beret's in attendance to see him off, Tom Ormiston, Chris Chambers, Tom Brinkman, Ray Coleman, Stan Jones and Bunny Brown. Brig John Hooper was also in attendance.

Bequest to the Association

In the will recently published of the late George L. Mills (from West Kirby) who died last October, a bequeath of £1,000.00 has been made to the Airborne Engineers Association. A letter of sincere thanks has been forwarded to his family for this most generous bequest. The full sum has been entered into the General Purpose Fund of the Central Account of the Airborne Engineers Association for the good and benefit of the Association.

Looking forward to our next Publication (December 2002)

Stuart (Willie) Wiltshire - When I first join the Squadron

Toots Ridgway - Recruiting in BAOR

Bill Cable - Rogues Gallery

Memories of Harry (Brummie) Howell

Barnie Rooney - Sapper to Civvy Contract Manager

Plus a selection of the articles that I know (hope) you will be sending in prior to the deadline for our next edition.

Membership Secretary

Chris Chambers

Since the April edition of the Journal, a further 12 members have joined our Association. They are as follows:

| Member | Units Served | Dates of Service |
|-----------------|--|-------------------------|
| Simon Tuley | 9 Para Sqn | 1996-still serving |
| Stephen Smith | 9 Para Sqn / Pathfinder Platoon | 1995-still serving |
| Douglas Balloch | 9 Para Sqn | 1997-still serving |
| Paul Bawden | 51 Fd Sqn (Air Assault) | 2001-still serving |
| John Hollis | 9 AB Sqn | 1944-1947 |
| Robert Cole | 9 Para Sqn/22 SAS | 1972-1975 1975-96 |
| Brian Care | 131 Para Engr Regt | 1964-1993 |
| Keith Cardy | 9 Indep Para Sqn | 1965-1976 |
| Dennis Coughlin | 9 Indep Para Sqn | 1950-1955 |
| John McIntyre | 131 Para Sqn /15 (Scottish) Bn Para Regt | 1963/71 - 1971/79 |
| Melville Winton | 131 Para Engr Regt | 1954-1969 |
| Chris Beddall | 216 Para Sigs / 9 Para Sqn | 1997-still serving |

Gentlemen, welcome to the "Airborne Engineers Association"

Happy Landings, **Chris**

“Association Shop”

| Description | Price | Post & Packing (UK Post Rate) |
|---|--------|----------------------------------|
| Association Ties (Pegasus logo) | £12-50 | £1-00 |
| Association Blazer Badges | £13-00 | £1-00 |
| Association Jumpers (sizes 38-48) Maroon or blue with Pegasus log embroidered 'Airborne Engineers' | £24-00 | £3-10 |
| Association Sweatshirts Maroon or blue logo - Med/Large or extra large | £16.00 | £3-10 |
| Association Polo Shirts - Fred Perry Style Maroon or blue logo Medium/Large or Extra Large | £15-00 | £2-50 |
| Association 'T' Shirts - Maroon only - Large or extra-large only | £9-00 | £1-80 |
| Association Shields | £17-50 | £3-30 |
| A Memoir of 9 Para Sqn RE in the Falklands Campaign 1982 by Maj C.M. Davies MBE (now Colonel) | £12-00 | £2-10 |
| Anniversary Ties (silk with Wings & Pegasus logo) | £15-00 | £1-00 |
| Christmas Cards (pack of 6) Association badge on cover | £3-25 | £1-00 |
| Association Cuff Links (slightly smaller than the lapel badge) | £8-50 | £1-50 |
| The Shiny 9th (1939-1945) by Patrick Pronk The history of 9 Field Company (Airborne) | £9-00 | £1-60 |
| The 9th (1787-1960) by the late Tom Purves (Special price for AEA members) | £14-00 | £3-80 |

Would overseas members please send cheques in £ pounds sterling, with a little extra to cover postage, from your local bank or an international money order from the Post Office. Cheques should be made payable to: **“Airborne Engineers Association”**

Please note my address when submitting your orders:

Jan Chambers 24, Longfield Road, Ash, Aldershot, Hants, GU12 6NA (E-Mail aea@supanet.com)

My thanks for your continued support,

Jan
