



The Waggoner

The newsletter of the RASC & RCT



Issue 19 - December 2020



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President of the RASC & RCT Council

Brigadier Paul Evans OBE DL

“ I am absolutely confident that with renewed vigour, we will be able to focus our collective energy on making a success of 2021 by supporting our Branches and the various planned Association and Officers' Club events.

As 2020 draws to a close, we can all reflect on what has been a quite extraordinary year. For some of our members and their families, it will have been a very sad time and our thoughts and prayers are with them all. For most, it will have been a challenging and frustrating period during which we have all had to cope with ever changing restrictions and limitations on our freedoms which we so often take for granted. Above all, we have all had to work diligently to make sure that we remain safe and healthy.

I know from personal experience how upsetting it has been not to spend as much time as we would have wished with families, close friends and comrades. Indeed, the pandemic has had a major influence on the work of the Association and Officers' Club and, in particular, on our ability to get together. I do, however, know just how hard members have worked to keep in touch with each other, using applications which have now become so familiar to us, which previously we might never have considered using.

I was particularly disappointed that we were forced through circumstances to cancel Corps Weekend. We were, however, fortunate that COVID-19 restrictions at that time allowed for a small group to gather at our Corps Church, St Michael and St George. The Reverend Father Nicholas Gosnell led a short but very effective service during which we were honoured to turn the pages in the memorial books

and light a candle which will burn every Sunday in the Corps Church. The service was followed by an equally moving parade at the Corps War Memorial, during which wreaths were laid on behalf of all our members.

I am absolutely confident that with renewed vigour, we will be able to focus our collective energy on making a success of 2021 by supporting our Branches and the various planned Association and Officers' Club events. What binds us all together is the pride we have for our Corps, the experiences we have shared and the friendships we have made. In the meantime, I would like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a healthy and safe New Year.



■ Brigadier PAD Evans OBE DL

Secretary's Brief

Lieutenant Colonel Robin Moore

Despite the COVID pandemic resulting in the cancellation of a great number of functions, it was just possible for some branches to hold limited events during the brief period in the summer when the restrictions were eased, albeit with significant modification. Most branches were also able to mark Remembrance Sunday and many marked VJ Day, just not on the scale that normally would be achieved. One of this year's greatest disappointments has been the cancellation of the parade at the Cenotaph in Whitehall; where we were set to have our largest ever marching contingent and even this was not going to be enough to give places to everyone who wished to attend. For next year, I shall be seeking to increase our allocation and I have kept a record of everyone that had asked to march this year so that I can do all that I can to make sure that they can have an opportunity in 2021 should they wish.

Our emphasis now is to be ready to restart activities as soon as circumstances allow. As I write, there is more than a faint glimmer of hope on the horizon, clearly there are still significant hurdles to overcome but planning is already in hand for many of next year's functions. We will do everything to be ready to restart activities as soon as we can but will only commit funds when we know that these can legally, and more importantly, safely go ahead.

It is very encouraging to see that the efforts our regions and branches are making to stay in contact with their members and to keep things running, despite all of the obstacles that are in our way. This has ranged from John Phillips' brain taxing branch quizzes during the first lockdown to more informal but equally welcome phone calls to isolated members. One of the many

contributions that have been selflessly made by our members during this difficult year has been voluntary visits to the National Memorial Arboretum to carry out gardening and maintenance in the Logistic Grove. Berni Wilkins from the RCT Riders Branch has arranged a number of gardening visits.



■ Bryan Long 'dressed for gardening'

During lockdown, we have had new members picking up the baton as some great stalwarts of the Association stand down; Colonel Nigel has already made note of the changes to the regional chairmen. Similar changes have occurred in the branches. Unfortunately I cannot cover all of these but would just like to note Jim Gordon as one example of particularly long and loyal service to the Association, until recently he held the post of treasurer of our Aberdeen Branch for 36 years.

High on our list of priorities is to comprehensively review our membership data, with a view to improving its breadth and accuracy. Most frustratingly, we have been unable to start this work in earnest. The post of Regimental and Forming Corps Administration Assistant remains gapped. As I reported back in July, a candidate has been selected for this post. However, the Civil Service's Vetting Agency has been unable to security check them and therefore they are still unable to take post. This issue has been

driven by restrictions on the staff numbers allowed to attend work due to COVID protection measures and this work cannot be done remotely due to the security sensitive nature of the systems and information involved, creating a significant backlog of posts requiring clearance. In the meantime, please do continue to send me any amendments by post or email to: rascrtsec@rhqtherlc.org.uk and I will endeavour to make ad hoc updates, albeit slowly with my two finger typing skills.

I hope that you approve of the new Waggoner format. I would like to thank two people that have helped make this possible. Alan Pike, who has very generously produced new digital RASC and RCT badges, which I think you will agree are a much better likeness of the Corps' badges. Thank you also to Katherine Lack, who has recently joined The RLC Communications Team, her Adobe InDesign skills mean that we are now able to format the Waggoner in-house, giving us the freedom to be more imaginative with the layout.

For future contributions, it would be most helpful if contributors could provide photographs as individual JPEG images at the highest resolution available. If you have any problem doing this, please contact me at:

rascrtsec@rhqtherlc.org.uk



■ Jim Gordon with his Certificate of Merit

Chairman RASC & RCT Officers' Club

“May I hope and pray that you and your families stay safe during these difficult times and I wish you all a Happy Christmas.

Colonel Colin Constable

When I was asked by the Association Secretary to write some notes for the Officers' Club, I thought what on earth am I going to write for not a lot has happened during this lockdown! There has been no golf, no socialising (in spite of a delivery from The Wine Society!), no family visits - except on Facebook, the garden has been put to bed, the garden furniture cleaned and the house is in reasonable decorative order (although I am under notice to paint the utility room - ugh, I hate painting!). The poor dog has been walked off his feet and I have telephoned most of my chums so I am at a loss of what to write. Then, I started reminiscing about Officers' Mess life when I was commissioned in December 1963.

I reported to Buller Barracks in early January 1964 where I found, along with the rest of my Junior Officers' Course, we were to be accommodated in the Officers' Mess (other courses were accommodated in other Messes in Aldershot). This was a wonderful old red brick building, built in the late 1880s and was rather tired. It overlooked "God's Acre" - the County standard Corps cricket pitch which you walked on at your peril! We were accommodated two to a room. There was no heating in them other than an open fire which our batman lit for us around four pm. The bathroom along the corridor was equally tired with a large chipped enamel bath and no shower.

The public rooms downstairs were really quite splendid. The entrance hall was very imposing, as one might expect, with, on a table to the left of the door, the Mess Bill Summary Book which recorded your daily expenditure (including your bar bill) for all to see. That was quite enlightening! The dining room, on the left, was

panelled with oak with the portraits of ancient Generals hung on the wall above. Much of the Corps silver was on permanent display on Skinners Horse - a large, highly polished 19th century table reputed to have come from the Indian Army.

Opposite the main entrance was (as far as I can remember) the bar which was down a couple of steps in the bowels of the Mess. It was a rather dark and dingy room run by two characters, "Sailor" and Bryan, but more of them later. On the right of the entrance hall was the anteroom with large leather chairs which were hogged by the more senior officers, including David Pepperell and Howard Bentley-Marchant, who were on the course before us but stayed on to do the Long Equitation Course. Dogs also had pride of place! Everybody was more senior than us brand new Second Lieutenants anyway! Further along the corridor again was the ladies' room - the only room where ladies were "officially" allowed except of course for a public function. It was very archaic!

Amongst the Mess Staff, there were a number of characters, chief among them was Mr Catell, affectionately known as "Daddy" Catell. He was the Mess Chief Steward and ruled the Mess, and senior officers, with a rod of iron, but he looked after us subalterns as if we were his own family. No one abused "Daddy"! "Sailor" and Bryan ran the bar - a couple of rogues! "Sailor" used to sell French Letters to us subalterns when needed, negating the need to go to the barber or chemist shop, and Bryan was a jolly good racing "tipster". Further along the corridor was the Mess Treasurer, retired Brigadier McDermott whose daughter married one of our JOC. He was a delightful "old boy" who again looked after us new boys. One of the other retired officers who springs to mind was Colonel James Burgess. He was

one of those who hogged the chairs in the anteroom for his after-lunch nap. He was a wonderful character whose claim to fame was blowing his hunting horn along the corridors at two o'clock in the morning after a Dinner Night!

There were also quite a number of characters on our course. Alan Biggs, who I shared a room with, was christened "Gunge" Biggs by his Company Sergeant Major at Sandhurst and the name stuck for he certainly was a mess, as was his half of our room! He liked his brandy and always had a bottle on the go - alcohol in rooms was strictly forbidden! He left the Army halfway through his first tour having failed to impress (say no more!). Andy Massey, subsequently CO 22 SAS and Commander RCT Training Group (sadly no longer with us), used to ride his motorcycle up the stairs and along the corridors after a Dinner night - it was his party piece. Graham Rowland, who was car mad; I think he was the only one of us who had a car! He had a rather splendid MG Magnette, a large saloon motor car, which we all piled into to go to the WRAC Officer Cadet School at Hindhead. "Taffy" Drewe was horse mad and loved the equitation element of our course. He subsequently commanded the Horse Transport Troop in Hong Kong and I believe is still involved with horses with his wife in Germany. There were many other "players" - Martin Cubbitt, David Baker, Phillip Jay, who was an excellent guitar player and entertained us in the bar and again, sadly, is no longer with us, Aiden Bristow whose girlfriend followed us in her car on Exercise LONG CONVOY, when we drove our trucks around the country - all on the course were good fun and we all got on well together against "the system"!

The daily routine was really quite straight forward. Tea, courtesy of our batman, at six am, 6.30 am to the stables to learn to ride under the Riding Master - Sergeant Rose (an international equestrian rider).



■ Mandora Officers' Mess next door - Buller Officers' Mess was almost identical

We were allocated horses, mine was "Buller" a beast of a horse who always trod on my feet and would not do anything I told it - he always obeyed Sergeant Rose's voice. I was no equestrian lover and Graham Rowland and I sometimes skipped riding for a trip out in his car - somehow we were never rumbled. The rest of the day was spent on Corps activities - General Mechanical Principles under Captain Robin Barton. Always great fun. He frequently upset his wife by wiping the engine oil dip sticks with his handkerchief! Sergeant Soames looked after our motorcycling skills and others, who I can't remember, taught us Corps Operations and history etc.

Dress was always an important issue at Buller. In the Mess, on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, we had to wear a suit. Wednesdays, Fridays and the weekend a sports jacket or blazer was acceptable. If you were Orderly Officer, Blues had to be worn. Uniforms were inspected by the Adjutant, Captain Jim Goddard, to ensure that they met Corps regulations (most did) and, of course, we had

to book out if we were leaving the Barracks. Once a month was Church Parade, in Service Dress and Sam Browne, with the recruits and the Corps Band. An impressive parade which none of us really minded. I can hear you asking "what has this to do with the Officers' Club?" Well, nothing really but all members must have had experience of Mess life before they joined the Club so knew the form! It has also filled up some column inches for our Association Secretary!

So, what has been happening in recent weeks? As I indicated in my earlier paragraphs, absolutely nothing. Our Secretary, Paul Duncan, has been in contact with the various venues that we use to keep them on side for 2021, when hopefully this is all over, and he has been publishing the Notices of those who are no longer with us - that all seems to be getting a lot closer!

In conclusion, may I hope and pray that you and your families stay safe during these difficult times and I wish you all a Happy Christmas and a better New Year than 2020.

Chairman RASC & RCT Association

“ Let us hope that...the current government restrictions are eased so that we can look forward with optimism to the New Year.

Colonel Nigel Gilbert

I am writing these notes whilst we are all subject to the most recent lockdown measures imposed by government and depending on where you live within the United Kingdom, some of you will have been subjected to more curtailment in your everyday activities than others.

Looking through the calendar for the second half of this year brings sharply into focus how many Regional and Branch activities have had to be cancelled due to COVID-19, including of course our major annual gathering for Corps Weekend back in July. That said, it was agreed by the RASC and RCT Council that within government guidelines, it would be appropriate for us to go ahead with a shortened Service of Remembrance on the 15th July at our Corps Church, St Michael and St George to mark 55 years to the date of the formation of the RCT. Fr Nick Gosnell officiated and led the prayers in the side chapel where there are a number of our Corps memorials. Following readings and prayers, Brigadier Paul Evans OBE DL turned the pages in the Memorial Books as is

our custom. Following the Service, wreaths were laid at the Corps War Memorial by Brigadier Paul Evans OBE DL and myself. Last Post and Reveille were played by Mark Atkins and the Aldershot Branch

Standard was paraded by David Whiting. The whole ceremony lasted for about 20 minutes and was a poignant reminder of the importance of

remembrance.

Both VE and VJ day commemorations were either cancelled or curtailed, but I was pleased to be told that the Corps had still been represented in one way or another at a number of ceremonies around the country, and indeed the eagle eyed amongst you might well have noticed on the BBC news an RASC veteran speaking with HRH The Prince of Wales at the Arboretum on VJ Day.

In early September, I attended The RLC and Forming Corps Association Committee Meeting by Zoom and I thought it might be useful if I brought you up to date on the main item under discussion which was an update by The RLC Association President, Major General Ian Copeland, on the way forward for The RLC Association. He made clear his frustration that little progress had been achieved in forming RLC Branches and his wish to discuss the way ahead with the newly in post Corps Colonel, Colonel Jon West (previously CO 27 Regiment RLC). There was a good deal of discussion and I restated my long-held view that a starting point was the link between the Reserve Regiments and the Forming Corps veterans who had served in those regiments. The bond is already there and there were a number of examples around the country including 154 Regiment RLC in Dunfermline and 156 Regiment RLC in Liverpool to name but two. I believe the impetus should come from the Corps RSM and RSMs of individual regiments.

We were also given an update on the Corps museum which is now located in Worthy Down. the keys having been handed over to The RLC on 1 September. The building is large and from the outside resembles a warehouse. There is no doubt that it is an exciting project and the intention is for it to be opened by HRH The Princess Royal next April or May



when she will visit Worthy Down for the first time in her role of Colonel-in-Chief. It is understood that there will be representation from the Forming Corps on the day.

I am pleased to report that your Committee of Management were able to meet in person on 9 September at the Lakeside Hotel in Frimley Green, luckily just prior to the Government's 'rule of six'. It was a full house, the first for many years, with 12 of us present. I was delighted at the efforts by everyone to attend. Needless to say, we maintained social distancing, including 'masks on' where necessary! Having attended various other meetings by Zoom, we all felt that there really was no substitute for meeting 'face to face' or 'mask to mask' even though social distancing from one another tested our hearing (particularly during lunch!). This was Lieutenant Colonel Robin Moore's 'baptism of fire' as Secretary and having been in post since January, his first opportunity to meet everyone. It was also an opportunity, very belatedly, to thank Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Knowles for all that he has done for our Association over the last 14 years. I was pleased to present him with a suitably inscribed copy of the book 'Gallant and Distinguished Service, The RASC and RCT Medal Collection' by Lieutenant Colonel David Owen from all on the Committee of Management. I was also delighted to thank both Roger Sanders and Duncan Forbes, the outgoing Chairmen of South East and London Region and the Scottish Region and to present them with Certificates of Merit.

Lastly, it goes without saying that the Government's decision to severely curtail the Remembrance week commemorations was a great disappointment to all veterans. The opening ceremony for the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey was a very closed event, limited to those conducting the service, officials and the Royal Party, with

attendance by representatives of each plot no longer possible. The Poppy Factory kindly agreed to take a photograph of our plot. As far as our attendance at the Cenotaph, we would have had 60 in our contingent; however, it was not to be.

As we approach Christmas, our thoughts turn to those who are vulnerable and lonely during these unprecedented times. Let us hope that life becomes more bearable for us all and that the current government restrictions are eased so that we can look forward with optimism to the New Year.

Maureen joins me in wishing everyone good health and happiness in 2021. Let us hope that we can all meet up with friends and colleagues next year. Don't forget to put Corps Weekend 2021 in your diaries - it will be held on 17/18 July 2021.

■ **Mr Duncan Forbes presenting Lt Col Jonathan Knowles with a Quaich with thanks from the RASC & RCT Association Scottish Region**



■ **RASC & RCT plot at Field of Remembrance**



■ **Spot your Chairman**

Buller "on-line" Branch

It has been nearly eight years since the Buller Barracks Final Parade and this is our first venture into the Waggoner Newsletter. We are starting to place our feet firmly on the floor now and meeting up with other branches around the country. We have two on-line presences, which actually run side by side. One is our Facebook page and the other is our own Buller website organised and run by our Treasurer, Mr Jim Titheridge.

The Branch, along with everyone else, has had a very dismal and depressing year so far. Our members have been staying indoors, under the Government's guidelines on the COVID-19 Pandemic and no one is happy, but we are doing the best we can to avoid the virus. However, we are to be honest, better off than other branches, as we have the internet to help keep us all together, so well done for Facebook.

As an on-line branch we are still keeping in touch throughout the months and I'm pleased to say, meeting up here and there. No one is breaking any guidelines before you all start, so behave yourselves.

■ Old 10 Tpt Regt friends Alan (Spud) Murphy, Rick (KAT) Axford and Ken Blake



We now have a number of ladies in the Branch, 18 to be exact, my wife included, and we hope this will increase further. They have been added into our fold when they asked at our meeting in 2018 if they could start up another branch as they wanted to be a part of a branch and of the Association, but also because they all get along wonderfully when we all meet up. We feel this is the case with all the other branches, as we see so many wives and partners involved in all of the activities, when raising funds for their branches. Well done ladies, you are truly needed and admired by us all.

We are still upgrading the Buller Facebook page and we have added a new memorial page for our members who have sadly passed away. It is always nice to show other newer members that we will never forget our brothers and sisters and that they are always in our hearts and minds.

We are still growing each year, with our membership steadily rising bit by bit and I must say we do have our ups and downs, but mainly we are moving in the right direction, towards more members and spreading the word, ... "The RASC & RCT Association is still alive and kicking", so come and join us. I have started to add new things into the Branch's Facebook page and will endeavour to add them into the other Buller page, but as ever Facebook has changed things, which has caused me



■ Andy Rae has "something to say"

some issues - this is the same with most of you, but we have to endure these problems and soldier on, "Nil Sine Labor", as the saying goes.

I was saddened to receive a phone call from our first Standard Bearer Phil Stothard who was with us from the beginning of 2013 to tell me that he had to step down due to work commitments. I would like to express our heartfelt thanks to Phil for all the hard work he has carried out on our behalf and his dedication to the Buller Branch, he has never let us down and is a fine upstanding individual. He was also the Standard Bearer for the WO's & SNCO's Club, well done Stotty, you will be sorely missed by us all. By the way, he is still a member and still gets a good ribbing from everyone, it's just work and weekends. He has been replaced as our No.1 Standard Bearer by Mr Andy Rae, who lives in Basildon, London and he has already started to leave his

mark, presenting our Standard at various venues around the London area including Basildon, during the pandemic. He presented the Standard at a former member of 1 Sqn RCT, Mr Mike Capps, funeral in Wigan, the VJ Day commemorations in Aug 20 and he is hoping to parade them at The Port of Tilbury's Remembrance Service on Monday 9 Nov 20 if all goes well.

Just for the record, we have a number of Standard Bearers throughout the Branch, due to our reach as an on-line Branch. To date, we have three and all of them are just as dedicated as Andy and we can call on them to be present anywhere in the country if and when they are needed. We have room for two more if anyone is interested - contact me through the private messaging system on Facebook.

We have all missed the Corps Weekend, it is the one true event in our calendar where we as Branches can all come together, both for our Friday AGM, the Saturday afternoon drinks and meet ups with the other branch members from around the country and then the Associations' Dinner Dance. We all missed the Church Service at the Corps church of St Michael and St George in Queen's Ave.

The Cenotaph Parade was a very disappointing affair and it has taken our focus away from remembering our fallen brothers and sisters, but there is generally nothing that can be done to correct this.

The RBL has had its hands tied



■ Buller Branch saying farewell to Mr Alan (Whiskey) Haigh 2018

from the moment this pandemic started and none of us believed that it would have lasted this long and still it's not over. The cancelling of the Cenotaph Parade altogether has left a bittersweet taste with all of us and I ask myself, "Would our older generation have accepted this?"

It was also nice to watch the almost final days of the demolition of Buller Barracks on the TV in Sept 20, even though Mr Wally Whiting was still there shouting on the Parade Square, he should have left years ago...

Buller Barracks has now been completely demolished and is just a couple of piles of rubble. It is a sad thing to see, but also inevitable as the place was falling to bits for many years and needed to be gone. Deepcut is going the same way and so are a number of other great places in the surrounding Aldershot areas, the REME Museum has gone too.

We have now moved into the second set of restrictions from the government and we hope that you all come through the restrictions fully unscathed and in a fit and healthy condition.

You can always look us up on-line on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RASC.RCT.RLC>. Buller.Branch/ or on-line: <http://rasc-and-rct-as-association-buller-branch.btck.co.uk/> Why not come and have a look at our pages above and see what you think, we also have a guestbook where you can leave a message.

Anyway, I am busy at the moment, so much to do and sort out since being stuck indoors, so to all members of the Association, we hope that you all take care and be safe. Wishing a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2021 to all members and their families.

Ken Blake - Branch Chairman



■ Forming up for the Cenotaph march past with other members of the Association in better times

Tank Transporter Branch

Despite the very different and sometimes difficult circumstances over the past 10 months, the Tank Transporter Branch has managed to continue to function, albeit in a somewhat reduced and socially distanced manner.

The Committee had to make the difficult decision to cancel the October 2020 Annual Reunion due to the COVID situation. Although the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool could easily accommodate all those members who wished to stay there, what it could not do was to guarantee that the social distancing requirements of the time would be able to be adhered to. It would have been irresponsible to go ahead with the Reunion Weekend, taking into account that a good number of those attending would fall into more vulnerable categories. As it happened, the City of Liverpool was placed under Tier 3 lockdown restrictions over the period that the reunion was to have taken place meaning that the reunion would have been cancelled anyway.

Notwithstanding this, it gives an opportunity to regroup and prepare for the 2021 Reunion which will more than make up for the disappointment of 2020.

Members of the Branch have continued to remain active in keeping in touch with each other. The Branch Chairman, Leigh Williams, made a visit to the Forces Manor in Scotland which is owned and run by Tony Brown who is known to many of our

members. Tony has turned the Ossian Hotel into the Forces Manor with a remit to offer affordable accommodation to both serving and retired members of the Armed Forces for holidays, short and respite breaks.

Russ Taylor and a number of other members



have purchased, from the front garden of a West Country house, a Mk 3A Antar in need of much TLC. Coincidentally, this Antar, 50EK68, was Russ's wagon during his time with 16 Squadron back in 1978. Under the watchful eye of Wayne Meadows (who is the voluntary custodian of a number of vehicles that are taken to military and other shows), there have been visits by branch members to Upavon and Lyneham to continue the refurbishment of not



■ Dvr Russ Taylor and 50 EK 68 in Fallingbostal C 1978

only 50EK68, but also the Scammell Commanders and others of our historical vehicles.

In March 2020, before the first lockdown, Tony Brown organised a small gathering of former 16 Squadron members who met and spent a weekend at the Army & Navy Club in London.

Members are very active on social media platforms such as Facebook and in particular the 'Tank Transporters' group which to date has 1,900 members.

Planning is taking place now for the 50-year anniversary of the Amalgamation of 23 Tank Transporter Squadron RCT becoming 3 Tank Transporter Squadron RCT in 1971. This event is currently being planned for May 2021 at the Eastwood Hotel, Nottingham.

Plans for the 2021 Annual Reunion are in the formative stages, the aim being to provide a reunion that will be worthy of us all coming together and not just every other year as it was for some members, thereby making 2021 a truly memorable experience. **Ian Lloyd**



■ A very sad looking Antar



■ Restoration underway



■ Uncle Bulgaria? - A guest and testament to the Squadron's old "Wombles" nickname gained for litter picking

Despite the threat of a second lockdown, the Annual Reunion and AGM went ahead and once again a good time was had by all who attended. It was only three days to go when the announcement that groups would be restricted to six from the day after our event, phew that was a close one!

The new venue was Ashdown WW2 Camp at Evesham. It is a mock-up built by enthusiasts and has the character and feel of the 'real thing'. Including a guardroom, lookout tower and Browning machine gun (decommissioned, we hope?) and Nissen huts with wood burners. One hut is the NAFFI, with a kitchen, another is the local re-enactment society meeting room with lots of nostalgia. One hut is fitted out as a barrack room with bunk beds and mattresses, so if you don't want to camp or B&B, all you need is a grot bag to kip in.

The advance party arrived on Thursday and soon set up the gazebos, squadron BBQ and put the TAC signs out, naturally we use our NATO number- 200. The weather was glorious, so chairs and beer were the next order of battle.

Friday saw the arrival of the main party and despite TAC signs and Sat Nav, some still managed to get lost, good old RCT lads

17 Sqn RCT 'Old Pals' Branch Annual Reunion

■ A Nissen Hut "dressed for dinner"



no change there! I quote from a call I received from someone I won't name to embarrass him, (Hi Louge) "Titch, I can see a big flag, Nissen huts and machine gun tower, but wave your hands and give me a clue where the gate is!" Friday night is traditionally fish and chip night, so an order was placed at a local chippy and delivered on time and in insulated bags, so it was still hot. Uncle Bulgaria, the chief Womble, was in attendance to ensure no mess was left behind!

Saturday started with a full English for those who wanted it, followed by the AGM. At the meeting, it was decided to bring forward the eligibility date to join the Old Pals. If you served in 17 Sqn RCT at any time from 01.01.1972 until 31.12.1979 and you would like to meet up with your muckers, or just keep in touch, please contact the Branch Secretary Richard (Titch) Fry on oldpals17sqn@outlook.com or call 07899668433.

Saturday afternoon was again sunny and warm, as it often is in September, so the BBQ was fired up and braty's, frikadelle and potato salad was washed down with more cold beer, it had to be

done! In the evening, a raffle was held and a very nice teddy bear wearing our beret and cap badge was won by the owner of the site, it wasn't fixed, but what a nice way to keep her happy. One member also donated a large framed print of a 'pig', it was auctioned and made a good addition to the Squadron funds.

On Sunday, people started to say their farewells and were already talking about next year and all being well it won't be the usual 12 months gap, as the plan is to return to the first weekend in July. The dates for your diary are 1-5th July 2021.

The rear party then spent the rest of the day continuing to chill out, while two of the ladies prepared a supper of Haggis, tatties and neeps, or sea bream for the non-haggis bashers. The table was set in the NAFFI and a great meal and music was enjoyed. Well done Phyllis and Liz!

Here's looking forward to next year and no restrictions on attendance figures.

Richard Fry

1 Squadron Reunion 2020 - 150th Anniversary

It seems that the gods do look benignly on the First of Wheel! The Squadron was raised in Woolwich in 1870 and many will have seen that there was a formal celebratory dinner in Woolwich early in 2020, organised by the latest iteration of the First – 1 Squadron (Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment), before the lockdown due to the coronavirus. There is a squadron reunion each year in August in Colchester but it looked as though that particular part of the 150 celebrations wouldn't happen as the virus spread. However, the Government eased restrictions to allow a socially-distanced, responsible reunion to take place. The event was organised by the efficient Delyth and supported generously by the Association. Delyth persuaded our normal venue, The Bull, to close its doors to others and The George Hotel to give up all their rooms to the Squadron. Over 50 Veterans, with some partners, attended the event safely and the splendid history of the Squadron was acknowledged.

Colonel Tony Barton



The Retired WO & SNCO Club RASC & RCT

The Club was founded in 1984 by WO2 (SSM) Dave O'Bee, better known as "The Animal". The first dinner was held at the Blue Bell Inn at Liss, Hampshire with a total of 27 people attending.

The Club met twice a year after that, and in 1985 we had to change the venue due to the large number of people attending. We moved to the Undershaw Hotel (home of the late Sir Arthur Conan Doyle) at Hindhead, where we enjoyed a number of excellent functions, but once again numbers dictated that another larger venue was required. The remainder of our dinners took place at the Devils Punch Bowl Hotel, Hindhead.

In 1986, the Club was officially recognised by the Corps. In 1987, Lt Col Bob Lambdon kindly accepted the office as President of the Club and later Brigadier Tony Dixon became our Patron. Dave O'Bee continued to run the club until 1989, when he

moved to Swansea and found it difficult to continue organising from afar. John Fox kindly took over for two years and then Dave took the reins again and took the club to Wales.

Following the passing of two "Stalwarts" of the Club Management, Bob Lambdon and then Tony Dixon, Dave arranged the appointment of a new President, Terry Byrne, who took the post in 2009.

We decided on a change of venue in 2014 and our long relationship with the Wiltshire Hotel and Golf club in Royal Wootton Bassett began and continues to this day, with our next golf and dinner weekend planned for 9/10th April 2021, restrictions permitting.

It was a great honour for our club when Major General Sir Martin White KCVO CB, CBE, agreed to be our Patron.

Today, with a strong Management Committee and

healthy club membership, the aim of our club to build friendship and promote and foster Esprit De Corps in the "WO and SNCO Style" continues.

Any enquiries regarding the Club, please contact the Club Secretary, Bob Wade: bob.wade1@ntlworld.com.

Mr Bob Wade



■ Mr Derek Gale and Mr Bob Wade laying a wreath on behalf of the Club

Keeping up our 'Standards'

Our Association Branch Standards are our identity. I have the honour to be the Branch Standard Bearer for the Norfolk & Norwich Branch of our Association. Our Standard dates back to 1948 when our Branch formed as the 'Norwich and District Branch' and displays the George VI cap badge of the RASC.



■ "Too old for a show parade"

All our Branch Standard Bearers will have a busy schedule with many events to cover. Most areas will have Annual Parades or Memorial Services for Armed Forces Day, 'D' Day, VE Day, VJ Day, Battle of Britain, Remembrance Sunday, RASC & RCT Corps Weekend and local Civic Events. In Norfolk, I have the 'add-ons' of Trafalgar Day, a parade at Nelson's Monument in Great Yarmouth, the Desert Rats memorial service at High Ash near Thetford, with on average 20 Standards on parade. The Standard is also paraded at Regional meetings and Branch events.

The greatest honour and privilege is to be asked to attend, with the Standard, at funerals. These events will mainly be for branch members who have

passed, but some will be for out of area members of our Corps.

All funerals will present a challenge. You may or may not know the person or family involved or the location. Our early teaching of 'time spent on reconnaissance is never wasted' still stands. An early meeting with the Padre and the Funeral Director is a must to establish your part in proceedings. Early sight of the Order of Service is essential to establish if and when 'Standards' are to dip. Church or Crematorium hazards include steps, low hanging lights, obstacles and other trip hazards. There may be several Standards on parade, so a joint approach is needed with someone in charge to ensure space to carry and dip and to give commands. Normal routine would be to meet the hearse at the sight entrance and take the lead to the point where the coffin is offloaded, take post inside the venue and be part of the service. On conclusion, then exit the venue first and take post at the graveside or next to the funeral flowers in a garden of remembrance and then on dispersal of the family and guests, 'fall out'.

Before every outing as a Standard Bearer, there is of course the 'kit prep'. The carrying sling and boots or shoes to be bulled, black and brown polish, yellow duster and spit needed. Medals, cap badge, brasses (lots) to be polished. Trousers and shirt pressed, tie, tiepin, cufflinks and gauntlets, clean and serviceable. Beret shaped and brushed and blazer, buttons and badges in good order.

Some basic drill is also required. All carried out solemnly, in a 'smart and soldier like manner'. When at ease or to attention, the Standard is at the 'order' with the pole base on the ground, held perpendicular into the right shoulder. To pay respects or to step off on the march, the Standard is brought to the

'carry'; lifted into the carrying sling perpendicular to the front of the body, held vertically in the right hand with the arm horizontally to the ground.

For a lengthy march or to rest from the 'carry', the Standard can be carried at the 'slope' - raising the Standard from the sling and lowering it onto the right shoulder. To pay respects, the Standard is lowered or dipped i.e. for the National Anthem, Last Post and the Committal at a funeral. It is lifted from the carrying sling, placed under the right arm and lowered with the pole spike resting on the ground. The Standard is then spread on the ground to the right of the pole.

Then, after all that, just be sure to turn up at the right venue, at the right time and in the right kit. Although the drill is similar, please note our Standards are not colours, flags or banners! So, next time you see a Standard Bearer on parade, a simple 'thanks' won't go amiss. Finally, don't be shy to volunteer for the job.

Terry Byrne



■ Lt Col Terry Byrne MBE with Standard at the order, I wonder if his neighbours know that he was in the Corps?

A visit to the new museum



■ A large Black Box

Recently, Major (Retd) Simon Walmsley, The RLC Museum's Director, very kindly agreed to give me a tour of our new museum. I arrived at the appointed time and phoned for admission – the modern version of the knocking on the door to the beat of “Wait for the Waggon”. I was greeted at the door and allowed to pass at pain of masking up and maintaining social distance.

I was given a warm welcome and the museum was a balmy 22°, however I could not help noticing a slightly frosty atmosphere, what could be the problem? Two staff from Amey, the company who will be looking after FM in Worthy Down are on parade in front of Simon's desk. I soon realise the problem, one that is often faced in veterans' households up and down the country – someone has had the audacity to turn on the heating and it is only mid-October. The issue is further complicated by the fact that the building has yet to be handed over to Amey by

Skanska, the builders, and as a result, a “change control order” is required just to turn the heating down, oh the joy of bureaucracy. I am pleased to report that by the time I concluded my visit, the problem had been rectified and that there was no blood on the two rather impressive crossed axes behind Simon's desk, he was a Pioneer if you had not guessed.

Our new museum is a purpose-built structure, which is a part of the redevelopment of the Worthy Down site under Project Wellesley. It is a “black box museum”, in more ways than one. “Black box” museums are ones where the environment can be fully controlled, with light humidity and temperature all kept within strict limits. This will help to preserve our more delicate artifacts for future generations and is of course why not having the heating set

too high is very important. Also, it is useful to have a bit of a chill in the air, as this helps to keep the staff moving, after all they have a lot to do in preparation for the museum's opening in May 2021. The Central Gallery currently looks like it has just been in-loaded for a very strange operation, with all sorts of crates boxes and equipment ranging from horse drawn carriages to more recent mechanically propelled vehicles.

The Central Gallery will be very impressive once its fully dressed, with its exhibits and display cases. This is considerably larger than the Central Gallery in the old Deepcut Museum, it can accommodate many more displays and will include eight vehicles. The museum will also use more contemporary presentation methods; visits will start at the Central Cinema where a short audio-visual presentation is available to introduce what is on offer and to highlight key exhibits. The museum has a large number of interactive stands where visitors can explore exhibits and undertake tasks, learning more of the story of The RLC and all its forming Corps. Touch screen displays will be positioned around the museum, where visitors can delve into detail on stories which interest them, finding additional information, images and film.

One of the museum's star attractions will be the RCT Medal Collection. Previously hidden away in the Headquarters Officers' Mess, it will now be

■ “Which box did I put the screwdriver in?”



accessible to the general public for the first time. This remarkable, world-class medal collection is simply outstanding and a must for those with an interest in medals. This collection, together with the museum's own comprehensive medal collection, covers virtually every campaign ever undertaken by the British Army and an example of nearly every type of honour and award issued from the late 1700s to today will be on display.

An Archive Department and Research Room will be available for those wishing to use the library or conduct research. The RLC Museum holds records reaching back over 200 years, including many rare and valuable texts and scripts. This is supported by some state-of-the-art digital imaging equipment which will help to further record collections and to make it more accessible. An example of this work is an image of a very fine watercolour painting of the Royal Waggon Train, which the RLC Museum recently successfully secured at auction for the very modest sum of £250. This painting was unknown to us and has not previously been used in any of our histories, a quite remarkable find, painted in 1823, only eight years after the Battle of Waterloo, it is now the museum's oldest image of the Royal Waggon Train. We do not know where it has been for the last 200 years, some homework for the museum staff?

When it opens, the new RLC Museum will be the largest military museum in the Winchester area. Keen to carve out their place in the local area, the museum team will focus on attracting youth groups and school children, as well veterans

■ 1823 Watercolour of the Royal Waggon Train by C S'tagerhoek



and those with an interest in military history. The museum will host lectures and talks on a range of historical subjects. It will also house a temporary exhibition, which will change every six months. The first focusing on poetry and art produced by soldiers from the Crimean War to WW2. Space precludes my covering all the fascinating and memory provoking items that will be on display, I shall endeavour to give some more details of what is on offer after the museum is fully set up and open for business. However, one item that did grab

my attention during my walk round, was a slightly used looking Can-Am Bombardier. I am told that it is a runner, but not roadworthy, what would have been described as "battle worthy" and I am sure we have all ridden far worse back in the day. Yes, I did fancy a "cabbie", it would be great to get a whiff of two-stroke, despite all its short comings compared to a modern motorcycle, drum brakes, just 26 bhp at 7,500 rpm (250cc the raw power - not) and a gearbox prone to trouser-threatening seizures. Now all that is required is for me to persuade the Museum Director that this is a good plan, I will let you know if I succeed.

Lieutenant Colonel Robin Moore

■ Can-Am Bombardier Motorcycle



VETERANS RAILCARD

The new Veterans Railcard is now on sale.

Until 31 March 2021, the Veterans Railcard is on sale for an introductory price of £21 for a one-year Railcard (the normal price is £30) and £61 for a three-year Railcard.

The Veterans Railcard offers savings of 1/3 on rail travel. You can also nominate a companion to get 1/3 off when travelling with you and up to four children travelling with you get 60% off.

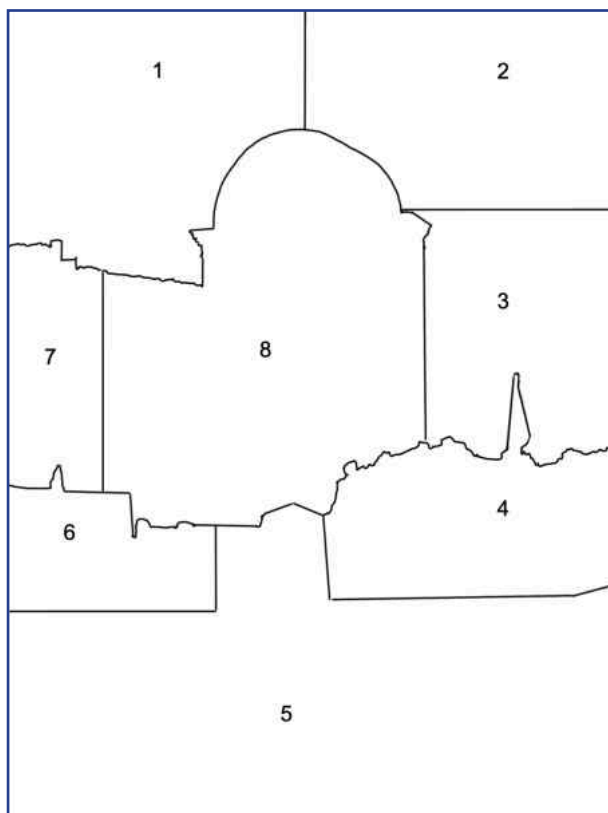
For more information and to buy online visit: www.veterans-railcard.co.uk



Remembering our fallen

Despite the restrictions placed on gatherings, our branches throughout the country made great efforts to observe acts of Remembrance not only in November, but also to mark VJ and on other significant anniversaries. A small sample of these acts are recorded in the following photographs:

1. Buller Branch Standard being paraded at Basildon on VE Day.
2. Salisbury Branch marking Remembrance at The Army Flying Memorial.
3. Doncaster Branch marking Remembrance.
4. Hull Branch in the Logistic Grove at the National Memorial Arboretum.
5. Perth Branch marking Remembrance.
6. Liverpool Sefton Branch, following Remembrance Service, presenting a cheque for Christmas presents for local children in need.
7. Perth Branch laying a wreath at Kirkcaldy.
8. Brig PAD Evans OBE DL and Col NEL Gilbert laying wreaths at the RASC & RCT Memorial on the 55th Anniversary of the formation of the RCT.





The Duke of Gloucester

I was halfway through my first Op Banner Tour, in Moscow Camp, Belfast, when we received the very sad news that our Colonel-in-Chief, HRH Prince Henry, Duke of Gloucester, had passed away on 10 June 1974.

The spirit of the Duke lives on however as one of our Main Line steam locomotives that has been preserved to haul Special trains, is named "Duke of Gloucester". It was built in 1954 and was the prototype Class 8P 4-6-2 No.71000.

Owing to the imminence of the 1955 Modernisation Plan, no more were built and "The Duke", as he is affectionately known, is therefore unique, in the true sense of the word. The locomotive was named to commemorate HRH Prince Henry, Duke of Gloucester's Honorary Presidency of the 16th International Railway Congress held in London in May 1954.

It was withdrawn from service in the early 1960s and lay in derelict and unloved condition for 12 years, until a group of steam railway preservationists were able to purchase the hulk from Dai Woodham's scrapyard in Barry, South Wales in 1974. It was then painstakingly restored over 13 years at the Great Central Railway Workshops, Loughborough with some modifications to the original design, because it was not a good "steamer" and thus not popular with footplate crews at the time, with its heavy consumption of coal.

I attended the Officers'

16-week Railway Course at Longmoor in September 1972 and thus have professional and recreational in the subject...and yes, I am a commissioned train spotter from my youth.

As part of my 60th Birthday celebrations, I treated myself to a trip on a Special train, on 21 October 2016, hauled by The Duke from Preston to Carlisle over Shap, returning on the Settle and Carlisle line, over the famous Ribbleshead viaduct. The ascent of Shap was in record time for a 13-coach train, and we breasted the summit at 50mph

I digress. The main aim of this article is actually to request that readers consider "putting their hands in their pockets" as it were, and make a contribution to the costs of the current "Heavy General" overhaul, and subsequent maintenance. Full details are at the website:

www.theduke.uk.com. It is a registered charity and thus any donations may be Gift Aided, increasing the value accordingly. Subs start at £5 per month, (price of 1.5 pints of beer approx.?).

Why should I? Well in these troubled times, with the COVID-19 crisis, many organizations like the Heritage Railways' Movement, need all the support they can get. The Movement directly, and indirectly, provides several thousands of jobs throughout the country, with repair and refurbishment workshops and new build projects such as "The Prince of Wales" 4-8-2 Mikado, Patriot class 4-6-0, "The Unknown soldier" and "Hengist", a Clan class



■ The first Colonel-in-Chief Royal Corps of Transport Field-Marshal H.R.H. The Duke of Gloucester Earl of Ulster K.G, K.T, G.C.B, G.C.M.G, G.C.V.O, A.D.C.(P)

4-6-2. There are also many volunteer groups working on the Heritage Railways themselves. They play a key role in the tourist and leisure markets, which themselves are a significant part of the UK economy.

I am sure that HRH Prince Richard, Duke of Gloucester, The RASC & RCT Association's Patron, Deputy Colonel-in-Chief of The RLC and Patron of "The Duke Trust" would welcome, and be most grateful, for your support. He has donated to the Trust many of the family's model railway gifts received over the years, so the Trust can raise funds accordingly.

You may also wish to consider taking your grandchildren, for instance, on one of the "The Duke" hauled Specials in 2021/22, or go to view it on its journey along the Main Line. I hope you may be inspired to support the "The Duke" along these Lines. I shall be chuffed if you do – and so will "The Duke", no doubt! N.B. Just one and half pints of Ale. And if you do apply please put "RASC/RCT" or "RLC" after your name, so we have an audit trail of the origins of the donations for this Campaign.

Lieutenant Colonel John Merritt



Memorial service for Driver Paul 'Geordie' Bulman RCT



■ Driver PK Bulman's grave

The 19th May 2021 will be the 40th anniversary of the loss of Paul Bulman while serving with 17 Sqn RCT, supporting 1st Battalion Royal Green Jackets at Bessbrook Mill, South Armagh.

Paul was the only soldier from the Squadron to be killed in action during the whole of Op Banner. He was carrying out an early morning patrol in a Saracen APC with section call sign 42 Foxtrot consisting of four Royal Green Jackets; LCpl Winston, Riflemen Bagshaw, King and Gavin. As they stopped to check a culvert, an IED was detonated directly under the vehicle, there were no survivors and this was the largest single loss of life the British Army had suffered since Warrenpoint.

Neil McFee who was in the same section as Paul has been keeping in touch with Paul's family and with their blessing, he is organising a service at the graveside to mark the special occasion. The location is Preston Cemetery, North Shields, NE29 9NJ. The service will commence at 10.45 and will be followed by a reception at the Royal Quay's Premier Inn Ferry Terminal North Shields.

All personnel and their partners who served in 17 Sqn RCT (regardless if at the same time as Paul or not) are invited to attend, but can you please confirm by email to: neil.mcfee@sky.com.

Obituary

Colonel Peter Leslie Patrick Douglas OBE

Colonel Peter Leslie Patrick Douglas OBE started his long association with the Army as a TA soldier before joining the RASC at 26 years old as a Driver, in 1964. He had a full and successful career serving in Malaya, Hong Kong, Germany and of course the UK, first in the RASC then, RCT, The Gurkha Transport Regiment and finally The RLC, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel. Following his Regular Army service, he re-enlisted at the rank of Full Colonel as Colonel Commandant of the Wessex ACF, with the RGBW and latterly the Rifles.

A keen sportsman and a passionate supporter of Service charities, Colonel Peter was a stalwart of the British Ex-Forces Wheelchair Sports Association and County Welfare Officer for the Royal British Legion in the South West. Fittingly, Colonel Peter's funeral was held on 11th November at 1000hrs, just in time for the two minutes silence at 1100hrs.



Obituary

Major John Poyntz RCT

"A man of great charm and decency, and with an almost legendary status."



The following is an extract of an obituary written for "STEAM RAILWAY" Magazine in November 2020 by Tony Streeter.

Major Poyntz, who died on 2 Nov of cancer, was for years the main contact for heritage lines at Her Majesty's Railway Inspectorate. He took over from Major Peter Oliver in 1989 – straight from the Royal Corps of Transport, where he had been in charge of the Army's railway operations in Germany. While at HMRI, he was responsible for, among other things, signing off new works on preserved lines, such as giving approval for the reopening of Midsomer Norton in Somerset. Dealings with steam railways were just a part of his activity at the inspectorate: as accident officer, Poyntz was on 24-hour standby and the first point of contact for some of the UK's most serious railway incidents in recent years including Southall, Ladbroke Grove and Hatfield. He continued to hold that role until after the Great Heck derailment of 2001.

However, his memory of railway accidents went back much further: in 1952, aged 14, John Poyntz and his family made a trip from South London to see the aftermath of Britain's worst peacetime crash, the double collision at Harrow & Wealdstone that killed 112. He would later tell friends of his memories of looking over the parapet of the adjacent road bridge. Born on May 27 1938 in Hammersmith, John David Pierrepont Poyntz came from a military family – an ancestor had been a general in the Parliamentary Army during the English Civil War – and he himself would join the Royal Engineers in 1955. He worked his way up through the ranks to Warrant Officer before, by now in the Royal Corps of Transport, he gained a commission in 1975. The man who had been nicknamed 'Monty' by Army colleagues – supposedly owing to a resemblance to the famous Field Marshal – became a Major in 1983.

Railways would be just a part of Army life that over nearly 35 years would take him around the world: other activities included hovercraft and landing craft. Amongst his varied talents, John was one of the RCT's pioneer hovercraft pilots when the Joint Hovercraft Trials Unit was set up and remained

involved with hovercraft until the MOD pulled the plug on this project. He also spent periods in both Borneo and Cyprus. However, it was his time at the Longmoor Military Railway (which, with breaks, stretched from 1955 to 1969) that would perhaps prove the most influential on his future career.

While at Longmoor, Poyntz witnessed the worst peacetime accident on a military railway when '8F' No. WD512 passed a signal at danger in fog during October 1956. The resulting head-on collision with a diesel shunter-hauled train killed six.

More light heartedly, he was on duty during the making of the 1966 film *The Great St Trinian's Train Robbery* – and is also credited with the fastest traverse of part of the system, at the regulator of 'WD' 2-10-0 No. 601 Kitchener.

Later, as the Cold War approached its climax, Poyntz would become OC of the RCT's 79 Railway Squadron's operations for the British Army of the Rhine. As well as internal railways in depots such as at Mönchengladbach, this included operating in West Germany's main line network, and Poyntz held the title of 'Eisenbahnbetriebsleiter', an officially recognised position equating to operations manager. Activities included preparing for the Army to take over control from the Deutsche Bundesbahn and ensure access to Berlin in case of Warsaw Pact aggression – and soldiers regularly drove DB locomotives under supervision. They also undertook technical courses on the motive power of choice, DB's diesel-hydraulics.

The following is reproduced from reminiscences from former colleagues:

On a tour to Cyprus, the Austrian General Commanding the Force was asked to present him with his medal as it would be his first medal in a very long career. Research unveiled two amazing strands came to light about this amazing English Eccentric Gentleman and Officer.

Licences: Having joined as a Sapper his first licence to drive was for a Steam Railway Engine, his second for a Diesel Railway Engine and his third, in the rank of Sergeant, a Ramp Powered Lighter during the Indonesian Campaign, his fourth, in the rank of Staff Sergeant for a Hovercraft in 200 Trials Sqn RCT and his fifth in the rank of WO1 in Northern Ireland, for a car.

Medals: At the time of our UN Tour, he had no medals but during my research I realised that he should have had a GSM for Indonesia and for Northern Ireland. When I asked him why not he said that as Skipper of his vessel he didn't think it right to ask for a medal for himself and so left his name off the roll for his crew and, as an independent WO1 in NI, he didn't think it was his place to apply for himself.

John was one of life's true Gentlemen, a true English eccentric, and a joy to be with because he was both so engaging and entertaining.

Obituary

Major Kenneth W Blease RASC/RAOC/RCT by Mike Mason, Secretary and Coordinator, Norton Manor Group, RASC

Born in Airdrie in Scotland, Ken Blease joined Junior Leaders Battalion RASC in September 1961 aged 15. At that time, his father was serving in the REME and stationed in Benghazi. Joining Connaught PI 'A' Wing, Ken quickly settled in to his Army training. Such was his cheerful personality and good humour that he made many friends. His dedication to his training quickly led to promotion through Buller, Dalton and finally Gloucester Platoon attaining the rank of Junior CSM. Ken was also sometimes referred to as 'Jock' Blease because of his Scottish heritage and sometimes as 'Benghazi' Bill. Ken proved to be an extremely capable pugilist, earning him a place in the Battalion boxing team where it is believed he remained unbeaten. He also had a reputation for clamping down on any bullying. As his parents were based in Benghazi, Ken was unable to travel home on end of term leave. On those occasions, he was invited to stay at the home of fellow Group member Dave Weyers with whom he remained a life-long friend.

On leaving Norton Manor, Ken served in FARELF Singapore, where he was transferred into the RAOC. Then on to HQ AFCENT, UNFICYP and HQ BAOR. Only ten years after leaving Jnr Ldrs he was promoted to WO2. In 1977, Ken was commissioned into the RCT returning to Jnr Ldrs Regt in Taunton as a Troop Commander. He was then involved in their move to Colerne. As a Captain, he was posted back to Germany serving in several units before a short spell in Andover. Following his well-deserved promotion to Major in August 1984, he again returned to Germany facing up to the challenges of being in command. One of his proudest moments was taking independent Command as OC Joint Tpt Coy in Rheindahlen, a rarity then for a Major. Ken's final posting before retiring in 1990 was as OC Driver Training Wing at ASMT Leconfield.

Not being one to don his slippers at that point, Ken then joined the Prison Service as OSG in prison officer support and remarkably served at the same time as his son, daughter and daughter-in-law, all in the Prison Service at HMP Hull together.

Ken and his wife Jean had married in 1967. There followed the birth of their daughter Michelle and then soon after came son Mark. In later life, Ken was often to be heard praising his children's progress in life and how proud he and Jean were of their accomplishments. Sadly, Jean passed away in 2016 leaving Ken bereft and devastated by her loss. He continued to attend Norton Manor Group reunions and mini-meetings up to 2017 but then moved with his entire family to Banff in Scotland where he settled into a quiet retirement. He had been suffering kidney

problems for quite some time, eventually, sadly, succumbing to his ailments.

Throughout his entire career, Ken devoted all his energies to his various appointments and impressed all who knew him to be a fair, competent and very capable leader, always ready to lead by example. Ken was always active and had a passion for free-fall parachuting, despite receiving several broken bones when both his main and reserve chute both "roman-candled" during one particular free-fall incident. Another Group member recalls when in Cyprus, a stores building had caught fire with people trapped inside. In a flash of inspiration, Ken organised a tow-line hooked up to a Land Rover and proceeded to tear away the walls of the building in an attempt to free those inside. Sadly, they had already perished. When Ken was OC 75 HQ Sqn of 3ADTR in Duisburg, he would attend the usual Christmas "gun-fire" ceremony, serving single soldiers their morning rum/alcohol. If that wasn't enough, Ken was to invite all of the remaining 'strays' (reprobates) with no home to go to, around to their house to enjoy more of the festivities. Mark recalls this as being one of the best Christmas Days they had as a family. Because of Ken's enduring popularity, there has been an outpouring of messages of sympathy and anecdotes from his Service friends and colleagues, too many to include all herein but all have been passed on to the family.

On behalf of all members of the Norton Manor Group, I extend our sympathies and condolences to Michelle, Mark and to all of the grandchildren and great-grandchildren too. Kenneth W Blease was a man to be immensely proud of and he will remain in all our hearts and minds for a very long time to come. RIP Ken.



Last Post

Adamson – In December 2020, Mr P Adamson

RASC

Allen - On 21 July 2020, Mr JPH Allen, RE (Q Mov 1)

Andrew - In November 2020, Mr JH Andrew RCT

Antonen - In 2020, Mr E Antonen RASC/RCT

Armstrong - On 23 August 2020, Mr D Armstrong
RCT

Batten - On 7 October 2020, Mr P Batten RCT/RLC

Banyard - On 21 September 2020, Mr KW
Banyard RASC/RCT

Bennett - On 29 June 2020, Mr R Bennett
Para/RCT/RLC

Bentley-Marchant - On 8 September, Mrs L
Bentley-Marchant

Bingham - On 27 July 2020, Mr J Bingham
RASC/RCT

Blease - On 21 June 2020, Maj KW Blease
RASC/RAOC/RCT

Bow - On 14 June 2020, Mrs W Bow

Bolderson - On 4 September 2020, Mr K Bolderson
RASC

Brook - On 5 August 2020, Mr JD Brook JP
RASC/RCT

Cairns - In September 2020, Mr J Cairns RCT

Casperd - On 20 March 2020, Mrs M Casperd
Wife of

Chaganis - On 26 July 2020, Col P Chaganis OBE
RCT/RLC

Clarke - In December 2019, Mr C Clarke
RASC/RCT

Conley - On 15 July 2020, Mr R Conley RASC

Cox - On 15 June 2020, Mr J Cox RASC

Daukes - In May 2020, Mr CF Daukes
RASC/RCT/RAF

Day-Thompson - On 23 July 2020, Mr MJ
Day-Thompson RASC/RCT

Douglas - On 28 October 2020, Col PLP Douglas
OBE RASC/RCT/RLC

Fahey - On 10 September 2020, Lt Col RJJ Fahey
RASC/RCT

Geary - On 14 October 2020, Mr BV Geary

RASC/RCT

Greenwood - On 21 October 2020, Mr CE
Greenwood RCT

Guntrip - On 4 December 2020, Mr KW Guntrip
BEM RCT

Haynes – On 1 February 2020, Lt Col Haynes RCT

Hylands - On 19 November 2020, Mr F Hylands
RCT

Hickling - On 21 September 2020, Mr L Hickling
RASC/RCT

Hornsby – On 22 November 2020, Mr W G
Hornsby RASC

Lamb - In November 2020, Mr H Lamb RASC/RCT

Marriott - In June 2020, Mr KL Marriott RASC/RCT

McAllister - On 12 June 2020, Lt Col CD
McAllister RASC/RCT

Mills - On 5 August 2020, Mr AL Mills RASC/RCT

Notman - On 13 June 2020, Maj ALJ Notman
RASC/RCT

Pass - On 4 November 2020, Mr J Pass RASC

Poyntz - On 2 November 2020, Maj JDP Poyntz
RASC/RCT

Remblance - On 18 October 2020, Mr RG
Remblance RCT

Rendall - On 14 January 2020, Mr M Rendall RCT

Seddon - On 16 August 2020, Lt Col JAF Seddon
RASC/RAOC

Shaw - On 13 August 2020, Mr S Shaw RCT

Shawley - On 24 June 2020, Mrs C Shawley

Sismey - On 27 January 2020, Mr D Sismey RCT

Swift - In October 2020, Mr DT Swift

Taylor - On 19 July 2020, Mr R Taylor RCT

Todd - In September 2020, Mrs J Todd

Twitchett - On 23 July 2020, Lt Col HR Twitchett
RASC/RAOC

Wellington - On 4 May 2020, Mr J Wellington
RASC/RCT

White - On 13 October 2020, Mr D White RASC

Whitely - In September 2020, Mr T Whitely
RASC/RCT

Wilkinson - In 2020, Mr M Wilkinson RCT

The Waggoner

The newsletter of the RASC & RCT



Cap badge images created by Alan Pike.

Front cover image: Mr Dennis West, Salisbury Branch Standard Bearer at the Army Flying Memorial. This memorial is designed so that on the 11th hour of the 11th day of November every year, the sun shines directly through the entrance illuminating the centre panel of the Memorial.

