



The Waggoner

The newsletter of the RASC & RCT



Issue 20 - August 2021



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President of the RASC & RCT Council

Brigadier Paul Evans OBE DL

“As previous pandemic restrictions and limitations are relaxed, we will once again have the opportunity to move towards reinstating those activities that we have previously enjoyed and cherished

It was with considerable regret that the Council was forced to take the decision to cancel Corps Weekend 2021 activities, but did so with the certain knowledge that all members would appreciate why such a decision was necessary. That said, and as the photographs in this edition of The Waggoner confirm, we were able to conduct a small but very effective Memorial Service at our Corps Church on 14 July 2021 and lay wreaths at our Corps Memorial, which has been recently successfully refurbished by The Royal Logistic Corps Association Trust.

As previous pandemic restrictions and limitations are relaxed, we will once again have the opportunity to move towards

reinstating those activities that we have previously enjoyed and cherished, particularly social events and events which allow us to recognise and remember all past veterans of the RASC & RCT. Many of their names are inscribed on Memorials across the United Kingdom and elsewhere and are included within the Memorial Books located within our Corps Church, the pages of which are turned every Sunday morning.

I wish you every possible success in your efforts to return to normal and would urge members to support activities at branch and regional level and at centrally organised events. I would also hope that members will make a major effort to attend Corps Weekend 2022, which will be taking place in the Aldershot area over the weekend of 8-10 July 2022.



Front cover image:
WO1 C Sutherland RLC Corps
Sergeant Major and Fred Miller

Chairman RASC & RCT Officers' Club

Colonel Colin Constable

Whilst waiting for the short Memorial Service to begin, held in lieu of Corps Sunday where each year we remember those members of the Corps who are no longer with us, I was reflecting upon how fortunate we were to have such a magnificent building as the spiritual home of our Corps. Whilst it does not have the gravitas of traditional Anglo Saxon or Norman cathedrals, the Cathedral Church of St Michael and St George is nonetheless a superb example of victorian creativity. Originally one of two Garrison Churches consecrated in the Anglican faith in Aldershot, with the reduction of troops in the local area, it was decided in 1972 to close the Roman Catholic Church, which was of poor construction, and rededicate St George's Church to become St Michael and St George the Roman Catholic Cathedral for the Bishopric of the Forces and to serve as the Garrison Roman Catholic Church.

The foundation stone was laid by Queen Victoria in 1882 and on completion it became the Christian and spiritual home of the ASC (formed in 1888 from the Commissariat and Transport Corps based the in nearby Buller Barracks), and its successors. The elegant and cavernous interior has been liberally adorned with memorials commemorating our officers and soldiers who have lost their lives ever since. The earliest is the window over the altar. It is inscribed "To the Glory of God and in Memory of the Officers', Warrant Officers', Non-Commissioned Officers' and Men of the Army Service Corps who died during the South African War 1899 to 1902". The altar rails are also dedicated to our fallen. On the south side, there is the beautiful Corps Chapel of Remembrance with many other items of memorabilia and at the side, on tablets of Portland Stone,



Corps Chapel of Remembrance



Names of those officers who have died

we record to this day the names of the regular officers of our club who have died (don't worry - there is plenty of room left!).

On the south wall, just outside of the chapel, are the Memorial Books of Remembrance recording the names of all those officers and soldiers who have lost their lives in war and other conflicts. It lists the 21 officers and 356 WO's, NCO's and men who fell in the South African War, the 280 officers and 8,187 WO's, NCO's and men who were killed in WW1 and the 286 officers, 8,871 WO's, NCO's and men killed in WW2 and the many killed since in various global conflicts - a total of over well

18,000. The pages of the MemorialBooks are turned every Sunday, throughout the year, at the direction of the Cathedral Administrator, The Reverend Father Nicholas Gosnell, who along with the Bishop-in-Ordinary to Her Majesty's Forces, the Right Reverend Paul Mason (whose cathedral it is) are huge supporters of our Corps. We are extremely lucky to have such powerful support.

Outside is the Corps Memorial. Many of you will remember it in Buller Barracks but when the barracks was sold off for housing, there was a difficult debate with Rushmoor

Chairman RASC & RCT Officers' Club

“After some 14 years on the Officers' Club Committee, the last nine years as Chairman, I shall be standing down... I hand over to Brigadier Paul Evans who will be supported by a Deputy Chairman, our ex-Secretary Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Knowles

Borough Council who insisted that it remained in situ in the middle of the housing estate! After much lobbying, common sense prevailed and it was moved to an ideal site immediately adjacent to the Cathedral. Thanks to our secretary, it has recently been refurbished and certainly looks the best that it has been for many years.

The subsequent Memorial Service was quite simple and extremely moving.

Turning to other matters, as we come out of lockdown, we are hoping to host a number of events. The first being a luncheon where we host our members who are over 90. Many have said that they would like to attend but old age and frail bones precludes them from attending. Nonetheless, several have indicated that they will join us in the Officers' Mess of Regent's Park Barracks (Courtesy of the Officer Commanding 20 Squadron RLC) on Tuesday 17 August. The second function is the West Country Curry Lunch to be held in the Officers' Mess of 40 Commando RM (Courtesy of the Commanding Officer) in Norton Manor, Taunton on Sunday 12 September.

The last function planned is the AGM and Dinner to be held on Friday 22 October at the Lakeside International Hotel, Frimley. There we will have a dedicated dining room with our own bar and our secretary is aiming to create the same ambiance as an Officers' Mess with, hopefully, some of our Corps Silver on display. This will be a dinner with a slight difference in that we are inviting our partners but we do not wish to make it a formal Ladies' Night as there are a number of our members who are widowers or their partners are now uncomfortable with formal events so we still hope to see a significant number of single officers attend. With proper hotel facilities

(en-suite and towels provided - unlike many of the Officers' Messes we have known!) we hope that many of you will feel comfortable attending.

Finally, I write to inform you that after some 14 years on the Officers' Club Committee, the last nine years as Chairman, I shall be standing down after the AGM and Dinner. Over those years, we have had some memorable events, the West Country Curry Lunches in Taunton (established by my predecessor), Ladies' Dinner Nights at Christmas, our Golden Anniversary Dinner marking the formation of the RCT when we had a terrific attendance and numerous other dinners and curry luncheons. I have been very fortunate to have been supported by two superb Secretaries in Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Knowles and Lieutenant Colonel Paul Duncan and I am extremely grateful for their wise counsel and unstinting support. I hand over to Brigadier Paul Evans who, as Chairman of Council, already has a busy portfolio so he will be supported by a Deputy Chairman, our ex-Secretary Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Knowles.



■ The Corps Memorial

Chairman RASC & RCT Association

Colonel Nigel Gilbert

As I put pen to paper (index finger to keyboard), it is the end of July (and pouring with rain again!) and I had hoped to be able to write about the return of Corps functions, but sadly the calendar for the past six months has seen either the cancellation or postponement of events due to the various Covid restrictions that have affected us all, the most important of which was the cancellation of Corps Weekend. That said, I would like to thank our Association Secretary, Lt Col Robin Moore for keeping everyone informed and for the huge efforts he has made during COVID-19 to maintain his links with our Regional Chairmen, our Branches and individual members. He has a very close relationship with Lt Col Paul Duncan, the RASC and RCT Council Secretary and with Lt Col Jonathan Knowles and between the three of them, they ensure that the Association and the Officers' Club is well served. Suffice to say that despite COVID-19, the Corps Association is in good hands and I consider myself very fortunate to have their support, together with the support of the Committee of Management. Additionally, I am pleased to report that RHQ The RLC have now recruited a newly appointed VFCEO, Victoria Parkes and also a newly appointed dedicated clerical support Administrative Assistant to the Forming Corps, Chloe Darling. Needless to say, they are both finding their feet, but in time their appointments should ease the administrative burden on both our Secretary and the RAOC Secretary.

The past six months have not stopped the various biannual committee meetings from continuing, albeit by Zoom (I had to buy a new computer!). The RASC and RCT Council met in January and May chaired by Brig Paul Evans. Amongst the items

discussed was the need to look ahead towards the inevitable amalgamation of our membership with the veteran community of The RLC. Although we do not envisage this happening in the short term, after all we are all getting older, it is important that once the RLC Association have

all who were looking forward to getting together after two years, but government restrictions were still in place and therefore we will have to be patient for another year. However, it was only right for us to pay our respects to those of our Corps and its predecessors who gave their



■ Monty's Rolls Royce Outside the new RLC Museum

developed their strategy, we make them aware of the needs and aspirations of our members. The RLC and Forming Corps Associations Committee, of which I am a member, as are the Chairmen of the other Forming Corps, last met in February and it was obvious that more progress was needed and I believe that at our next meeting in September will give us an idea on their aspirations.

I am delighted to report that your Committee of Management last met on the 26 May, not by Zoom but in person. The venue was the Lakeside Hotel in Frimley Green. I think we need to congratulate ourselves on this being our second meeting within eight months in person. My thanks for the efforts of those who journeyed a distance to attend. Needless to say, both Lt Col Robin Moore and I look forward to supporting and attending both Regional and Branch functions once Covid restrictions allow. The cancellation of Corps Weekend was a huge disappointment to

lives during wars and conflicts and to those who died recently, and representatives from the Corps Council attended a short service, similar to last year at the Corps Church on the 14 July. The Service was led by Fr Nick Gosnell and both Brig Paul Evans and I laid wreaths at the Corps Memorial. Last Post and Reveille were played by Mark Atkins, and the Aldershot Branch Standard was paraded by David Whiting. We are indeed fortunate to have such a fine church for our spiritual home and to have the support of Fr Nick who is always so welcoming to our needs. The move of The RLC from Deepcut leaves both the RAOC and The RLC with no Corps church, at least for the present time.

Many of you will be aware that the new RLC Museum was officially opened by HRH The Princess Royal in May and I can thoroughly recommend a visit. Maj (Retd) Simon Walmsley, who is the Director, and his small team are to be congratulated on what has been achieved. It really

Chairman RASC & RCT Association

“ The new RLC Museum was officially opened in May and I can thoroughly recommend a visit. It really is first class, as is the relocated RASC and RCT Medal Collection

is first class, as is the relocated RASC and RCT Medal Collection which is situated in a separate room within the museum. Congratulations and thanks also to Lt Col Nathan Smith, the Curator, for masterminding the move of the medals from Deepcut to Worthy Down via storage in South Cerney. The display is impressive, and of course can now be viewed by the public for the first time.

I was pleased to visit the museum on the 29 July to attend a 100th Birthday celebration for a Mr Fred Miller who is a Second World War veteran. He was accompanied by his wife and two helpers. Having been given a guided tour of the museum by Maj (Retd) Simon Walmsley, he was presented with a centenary

said this time only six years! Not bad getting married again at the age of 94. No wonder he had a spring in his step!

Looking ahead to the autumn, Maureen and I look forward to attending a number of functions including the rescheduled Norton Manor Branch 60th Anniversary Reunion on the 2 October, followed by the Amphibious Branch gathering on the 9 October, and then on the 23 October the Tank Transporter Reunion in Liverpool. Remembrance commemorations are likely to be back to normal, and I am delighted that The Royal British Legion have increased our Cenotaph contingent to 70 in this their centenary year. In conclusion, make sure you have had two jabs and keep safe and well.



■ Fred Miller and Colonel Nigel

birthday cake decorated with the GviR RASC badge. There followed a tour of the Worthy Down Camp in Monty's Rolls Royce after which he met the RLC Corps RSM, WO1 Sutherland who presented him with a new beret together with an RASC cap badge. It brought a tear to his eye. The proceedings ended with a birthday congratulations framed certificate which I was delighted to give him. He was amazingly fit for his age, both mentally and physically. Whilst chatting to him, I asked him how long he had been married. To my amazement, he



■ Fred Miller and wife Joan cut his Birthday cake

Secretary's Brief

Lieutenant Colonel Robin Moore

Despite the difficulties of 2020 and 2021, the Association continues to grow and our membership now stands at 5,722. Also, our newest branches are gaining ground and have firmly established themselves. I am pleased to report that the RCT Rider's Branch is now more than 500 strong and Ayrshire Branch has qualified for, and been issued with, an Association Standard - it is planned to dedicate this on Corps Sunday in 2022.

Where possible, events have taken place in outdoor settings or where arrangements could accommodate COVID-19 restrictions. I attended one of the more significant events in May, when I was privileged to attend 17 Squadron Old Pals' very moving tribute to mark the 40th Anniversary of Dvr Paul Bulman's death on Operation BANNER. This was very well supported and conducted to an exemplary standard.

As we are now finally returning to some form of normality, it is good to see activities beginning to resume in earnest. We were particularly pleased to lift the restriction on standard bearers parading at veterans' funerals. The restart of branch and regional activity has been enabled by the tenacity of our committees, who have repeatedly amended their plans to accommodate the unfolding situation and this is at last bearing fruit. Two noteworthy examples are the Norton Manor Group's Annual Reunion/60th Anniversary celebration which will take place on the first weekend in October and the next weekend the Maritime Branch's Annual

Reunion. Hopefully the next issue of the Waggoner will contain many reports of enjoyable reunions and events.

In May, I attended the "Rolling Thunder" motorcycle ride to

Parliament Square - not in a strictly official capacity. This is a veteran's protest in support of those who are facing vexatious prosecutions regarding their service in Northern Ireland. This took place on a particularly wet and miserable Saturday morning; I was impressed by the fortitude shown by individual members of our Riders' Branch who were also supporting this event - one had ridden all the way from Cumbria!

The next big focus is Remembrance. The Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey will open on Thursday 11 November and the Veterans'

Parade at the Cenotaph will take place on Sunday 14 November 2021. At the Field of Remembrance, we have been allocated plot number 274, sadly attendance for all associations at this year's opening ceremony has been severely restricted due to restoration work that is being conducted on the north side of Westminster Abbey. For the Cenotaph Parade we will have our largest ever contingent. The Association has been allocated 70 places; however, this is significantly less than the number of places we bid for and could have filled. I have been particularly impressed by the selflessness of some members who volunteered to stand down so the older members who may not have another opportunity can march with us.



■ Jonny Mercer MP and Robin Moore on a rather wet Mall waiting to ride to Parliament Square

Membership Data

A "Member's Personal Data and Consent Form" is enclosed in this issue of The Waggoner. I would be most grateful if you could fill in this form and it return to me. This will allow us to make sure that we have accurate details for you so that we can:

- Communicate more effectively with you and only in the manner that you wish
- We can plan more accurately for the future

Please return your completed form to the RASC & RCT Association Secretary at:

RHQ The RLC, Building 204, Worthy Down Camp, Winchester, Hampshire, SO21 2RG
or if it is more convenient, send this by email, as a scan or digital photograph (JPEG) to:
rascrtsec@rhqtherlc.org.uk

Background (the reason why this is necessary)

The RASC Association formed on 1 October 1927. Following the formation of the RCT on the 15 July 1965, our Association became the RASC & RCT Association. On 29 July 2011, our Association

converged with the RLC Association and as a result our records are held alongside their records, with those of the other Forming Corps on a common database.

Over the last 94 years, the Association has collected a significant volume of information from its members and some of this has become inaccurate as members' circumstances have changed. Also, the use of a common database with The RLC and other Forming Corps has led to some duplication of the records held.

Recently we have faced the additional challenges of relocating RHQ The RLC from Deepcut to Worthy Down with associated changes to, and gapping of, key posts, coupled with the impact of COVID-19 restrictions. Also, regulations on holding data have tightened, increasing our obligations to make sure that what we hold is accurate.

I am pleased to report that RHQ The RLC has now bedded into its new home, there has been some success in recruiting the gapped posts and we are now returning to more "normal" working routines including more "office-based" working. This now gives us the opportunity to improve our membership data so we can better serve you.

LOGISTICS IN THE GULF WAR – ARTICLE AND PODCAST



2021 marks the 30th anniversary of Operation GRANBY, the British contribution to the Gulf War fought in January and February 1991.

On 2 August 1990, Iraqi forces illegally occupied Kuwait. International condemnation was almost universal and, alongside diplomatic efforts, the United States and 35 coalition partners began a military effort to first deter any further military action against

Saudi Arabia and later to eject the Iraqis by force.

At the time, the Gulf War was probably the most comprehensively reported conflict ever. However, as is too often the case for the British Army's contribution, media attention focused on the combat arms armour, infantry, artillery etc. and the mammoth logistic effort critical to the extraordinary success of the operation received far less attention. This is something that I am pleased to report has recently been addressed by The Army Benevolent Fund (ABF).

Earlier this year, the ABF conducted and published an article "Logistics in The Gulf War" based on informative interviews with Major General Sir Martin White and Colonel Wayne Harber to highlight the pivotal role of logistics in the planning and executing of Op GRANBY. Both had leading roles during the operation – the then Brigadier White as Commander of the new logistic formation, the Force Maintenance Area (FMA), and Major Harber as his Deputy Chief of Staff. This article is reproduced below by kind permission of the ABF and I am most grateful for Colonel Helen McMahon's assistance in this matter.



■ Brigadier Martin White

A conflict in a distant land

This year is the 30th anniversary of a short but intense war in the Middle East that depended on our military logisticians getting it right. Wayne explains: "Operation GRANBY saw Britain's Armed Forces rise to the challenge of fighting a conflict in a distant land, where everything required to prosecute the war had to be moved from the UK and Germany across 4,000 miles of sea lanes to the port of Jubail in Saudi Arabia. "400,000 tons of freight were moved, requiring 146 cargo ships. Some 12,000 air lift sorties were flown, amounting to considerably more than the entire effort of the Berlin airlift."

After managing to overcome the inconceivable task of moving 7th Armoured Brigade ("The Desert Rats") with all its heavy equipment optimised for Europe into the Middle East within a few weeks, there was no time to rest. Sir Martin White says: "It was all a bit hectic, but then that sort of improvisation is what the Army is good at, as we only had a very few days to earmark and gather the units and mass of equipment together."

Unfamiliar and hostile terrain

Wayne continues: "Placing these resources in theatre was only the beginning of the problem. Once they had arrived, they had to be sorted and allotted to the right portion of the front, bearing in mind that servicemen and women were spread across 2,000 miles of desert in four different countries, with internal supply loops of more than 400 miles over unfamiliar and hostile terrain – not to mention the threat of chemical or biological attack."

An enormous logistical challenge

Wayne explains: "Initially, 7 Armoured Brigade was

deployed from Germany as part of Operation Desert Shield with the newly-formed FMA logistic headquarters responsible for the reception of the Brigade into theatre and its support thereafter. Their logistic support responsibilities covered all aspects of the administration, transport, supply, maintenance and medical requirements for the British force in the Gulf. Vehicles arriving by sea were unloaded by Port Operators and were married up with personnel arriving by air as quickly as possible so they could deploy into the desert.

Soldiers waiting to go forward

were accommodated in a vast portside shed, Shed 13, built by the Royal Engineers."

Wayne says: "While the focus of attention will always be with the fighting men and women who engage with the enemy, we should never forget the sheer scale of the logistic challenge facing our troops and the amazing achievement of the logisticians who planned and worked so hard, at risk, to ensure the conflict could be supported for as long as it took to defeat Saddam Hussein and his forces occupying Kuwait."

Sir Martin adds: "We all felt part of an important undertaking where the training, quality and resilience of the individual British soldier was once again demonstrated."

A Cunning Plan

The FMA was in need of its own emblem. In a nod to the famous British sitcom, they selected the insignia of a blackadder after being stationed in 'Baldrick Lines' and Sir Martin's daughter asking in her letters if he had 'a cunning plan'. Today, although the successor to the FMA is 101 Logistic Brigade, the Blackadder insignia badge still remains.

Preparing for battle

Wayne says: "With the later arrival of 1st (UK) Division from Germany and a decision to move over 300 kilometres North West into the desert for offensive operations, the British land component would increase to some 20,000 personnel, 7,000 vehicles and 72 aircraft, all of which had to be received and supported by the logistic units. The subsequent move of the Division forward for battle involved a major logistic effort, in-loading stocks to a forward supply base over 200 miles from the port, as well as moving tracked vehicles on transporters, all on the Tapline Road, the one and only, mostly single lane, road available for everyone

to use, that included the American, French, Syrian and British armies and the local population. The conditions were truly awful and, sadly, three soldiers died during this phase of the operation in traffic and other accidents."

As the FMA prepared for the 100-hour land battle, Sir Martin looks back at this tense moment, saying: "I watched the first vehicles start out along the single-track route known as the Tapline Road on 3 January. Time was very tight, the road was crowded with other nations also deploying, the weather was wet and the threat from Iraq remained real."



A life-changing experience

By the time the war ended, the Division had fired just over 1,600 tank rounds, 8,500 rounds of artillery and 2,000 rockets. They had consumed 10,000 litres of fuel per kilometre and 300,000 litres of water per day. By contrast, in the Second World War, a Division's average consumption was 100 tons per day, while in the Gulf War it was 1,000 ton per day. But the human cost is the most important aspect of any war and those who made the ultimate sacrifice must never be forgotten. Overall, 47 personnel were killed and many more wounded, while there were some 7,000 Prisoners of War who also needed support. This was, like all operations for the British Armed Forces, a life-changing experience for those who took part. It was also a war where logisticians played a central role in its success.

At the time, Prime Minister John Major promised that "we're going to get everyone home as quickly as we can." It was one task to transport vehicles, ammunition, fuel and supplies from Europe to the Middle East, but another to bring it all back after the war. An organisation was set up in Germany and deployed to the Middle East to manage the return of all the soldiers and equipment so they could finally feel the relief of being back on home soil.

The ABF have also broadcast an excellent podcast by Harry Bucknall including interviews with General White, Colonel Harbour among others and our own Gerald (Taff) Hall who deployed with 3 Tank Transporter Squadron. This is still available on the ABF website: www.soldierscharity.org/

Left: Major Wayne Harber wearing the Blackadder



Bedford TM's Loading at Al Jubail

OPERATION GRANBY

THE ROYAL CORPS OF TRANSPORT CONTRIBUTION

Op GRANBY was the Army's single largest deployment since the Second World War. This was logisticians' war and it was also the biggest test faced by the RCT. The Corps was key to the successful deployment of the force, its sustainment thorough out high intensity operations and its subsequent recovery. An overview of the Corps' pivotal contribution to the Land Component's campaign can be gained from a letter written by General Sir Peter de la Billiere KCB KBE DSO MC.

General Sir Peter de la Billiere
KCB KBW DSO MC

British Forces Commander
Middle East

When the 1st Armoured Division deployed to the Gulf, I took the decision to re-subordinate the force from the US Marine Corps to the US Army. The additional distances involved in this new and wide ranging operational role, placed an unplanned strain on sustainability which could have become the weak link in the chain. In establishing two forward logistic bases, over a distance of 250 miles, my third line transport fleet played a major role in the biggest logistic outload since the Second World War.

During an intensive three week period in January to set up the Force Maintenance Area, the vehicles of 10 Regiment RCT each averaged 400 miles a day, outloading some 30 million litres of fuel and 50 thousand tons of stocks on a single MSR. 7 Tank Transporter Regiment lifted 800 AFVs in 10 days; while the 55 men of the Port Squadron had unloaded 102 ships by late January, turning around RORO ships in 6 hours, ammunition carriers in 24 hours and that leviathan the Atlantic Conveyor, in even less time.

The servicemen and women of the logistics corps were the heroes of the hour. Without their dogged, professional and committed support, the fighting echelon could not have maintained the momentum and manoeuvre which completely overfaced the enemy. Under appalling weather conditions and on featureless terrain, the flow of combat supplies never faltered. When the 7th Armoured Brigade reached the last objective on the 28th of February, after a 300 kilometre thrust into Kuwait, their leading Challenges halted with almost full fuel tanks. The logistics corps met every target which I gave to them, on time. It was a splendid achievement and speaks volumes for the selection and training of the soldiers involved and the leadership of at every level. The Royal Corps of Transport may be justifiably proud of their great contribution to victory in the Gulf.



This letter was published as the forward to the RCT's publication "The Review" in July 1991. This copy of The Review provides a very good synopsis of the Corps' contribution to Op GRANBY, but sadly space does not allow this comprehensive and detailed account to be reproduced in this publication.

THE EAGLE – 16 TANK TRANSPORTER SQUADRON

SEPTEMBER 1990 - JULY 1991

A particularly comprehensive account of 16 Tank Transporter Squadron's involvement on Op GRANBY "The Eagle", written by the Squadron's OC, Major Dixon-Warren has recently been given to the Association. This will be added to the RASC & RCT Section of the RLC Museums' Archive website, in order that it is available for all.

16 Squadron's story is a very poignant illustration of an RCT unit's involvement on Op GRANBY - the endurance required, frictions faced and overstretch experienced. The Squadron was involved from the very start of the UK's commitment, but also remained responsible for providing a troop to Op Banner in Northern Ireland and support to BAOR. It received reinforcement from other units, underwent a change of OC, was moved between Regiments and Formations all on top of working in the most arduous of environments.

This account also gives some feel for the challenges faced by and experiences of some of the soldiers on this operation. To give a flavour of this, a couple of extracts are included below:



■ Deployment of Challenger Tanks from Scammell Commanders

Commencement of Hostilities The start of the Air War

At Bolam Lines in Al Jubail on 17 January, Major Venables roused and briefed all Regimental personnel, directed them to don NBC suits and to take cover in an ISO container until morning. Glenn Alexander (then a Lance Corporal in the 16 Squadron Workshop) subsequently recalled: "...Major Venables ... as cool and calm as any man could ever be...Everyone was nervous/excited some even scared,

but the QM was a picture of decorum, ensuring everyone was ok and knew to the best of his ability what was happening... A totally different perspective on someone who up to then had just been the typical grumpy QM, to me anyway... he was a whole lot more after that night..."

The Move to Assembly Area Keys

It is difficult to adequately describe what the crews of the tank transporters, DROPS and Crusaders went through to lift 1st (BR) Armoured Division's armour to KEYES. The wear on men and machines was relentless and it seemed to be a never-ending cycle of loading up, driving for 8-10 hours, unloading, refuelling and snatching a quick snack, driving for another 8-10 hours, refuelling and checking the truck, taking it to Workshop if necessary, feeding and then collapsing for a few hours' sleep. The whole process would then start again, if the truck was not awaiting recovery on DODGE or in the 'shops queue.

The lift was not without its cost to 16 Squadron, however, as prolonged driving over long distances in unpredictable weather and road conditions makes accidents inevitable. Lance Corporal SJC Davies and 085 Lance Corporal AJ Francis drove over a civilian car on Route HORSE at night and in fog – fortunately, it was long abandoned and half buried already but the Commander sustained enough damage to keep it off the road for four days. Other minor accidents were sustained, caused by carelessness (usually on the part of other road users) and by fatigue, but each one ate into the dwindling ability of the REME to repair and maintain the fleet. Given the frequently appalling weather and road conditions along DODGE and HORSE and the apparent death-wish of some other nations' drivers, it is extraordinary that 16 Squadron did not suffer a serious accident. A 3 Squadron tank transporter crew had a very lucky escape when an American 'Humvee' lost control and crashed onto the bonnet of their Commander – the American driver died and the Commander was damaged beyond repair.

Through the breach

The Regiment moved to the Buffer Zone at the start of Route YELLOW at 0700 hrs G+1 (25 February) and waited there all day and most of the night.

At 0515 hours G+2 (26 February), the Regiment began moving up Route YELLOW. The move was a slow, tedious process driving in wind and rain and the "pseudo long range desert groupies" must have wondered then about the wisdom of removing the windscreens, canopies and doors from their Land Rovers. There were a number of long halts as the Divisional traffic jam inched its way towards the breach, giving Corporal SJ Harvey and Private DA Jones, the SHQ (Forward) chefs, time to set up a cookset and rustle up egg "banjos" at the side of the road.

There was some excitement further along when

3 Squadron's G1098 14 tonne caught fire – on board was not only fuel and weapons, but also the Squadron's reserve of ammunition, grenades and 66 mm LAW. Though severely damaged by fire, the truck was saved from destruction by the courage and quick thinking of Corporal MR Griffiths REME, who had deployed with 414 Troop and was in a Workshop drag crew behind the 3 Squadron convoy. He rushed forward, without a thought for his own safety, cleared the blazing truck of its inflammable cargo and saved a considerable amount of personal kit. The truck was then able to drive on. Corporal Griffiths was subsequently awarded the Queen's Gallantry Medal (QGM) for his action.

The Squadron went through the breach on Route PAPA and into Iraq at about 1500 hours, welcomed by both CO and a large sign that read: "WELCOME TO IRAQ, COURTESY OF THE BIG RED ONE"! The breach was something of a disappointment – the berm was much smaller than expected and there were few signs of the battle that must have been fought. There was shattered Humvee in a mine crater, an abandoned Zil truck, occasional explosions and clouds of black smoke indicating engineers at work and some helicopter activity, but it seemed otherwise quite a tidy battlefield. The convoy then joined Route FOX, a winding engineer-graded track with which the tank transporters had some difficulty. Self-recovery was not a problem – the armour simply unloaded, pulled the train out and got back on the trailer again.



■ 16 Tank Transporter Squadron RCT awaiting call forward to move through the breach into Iraq

Recovery and aftermath

The recovery operation proceeded apace with the extra trains and the soldiers had plenty of opportunity to view the battlefield – a very sobering experience. There was sadness, too, when the two Warriors destroyed by USAF A10s were brought in by ARRV to be winched onto the tank transporters; these and the two FV 103 Spartans destroyed by "friendly fire" in the Wadi Al Batin, visible from Route FOX, were grim reminders of the limits of technology on the battlefield.

The order forbidding souvenir hunting had been obeyed by most soldiers in the Squadron but when collection of trophies properly declared and cleared

was authorised, the OC decided that he wanted the Squadron to have a tank. A T-59 sat forlornly at the side of Route FOX, near Objective PLATINUM and seemingly abandoned, and with the CO's

approval, a "spare" train was tasked to collect it. The OC and his driver, Lance Corporal MA Poole, cleared it (though left it bombed up). Sergeant

Beveridge tried to start it and when that did not work, 860 Driver LJ Francis and Lance Corporal G Cawkwell winched it onto their vehicle, observed by the ballast crew, and took it back to ECP 3. It was not the first piece of Iraqi equipment to be collected, but since it was, at the time, a 16 Squadron trophy, the soldiers felt quite possessive over it. This feeling was enhanced when Major C Beck, 16th/5th The Queen's Royal Lancers (16/5 L), identified the T-59 as one that his squadron had engaged during the advance. It had a story and the 30mm holes to prove it. "The best laid plans gang aft awry", however, and the T-59 joined hundreds like it in the Iraqi ECP near Camp Free Kuwait. Whoever got it, it was not 16 Squadron.

The human cost

When reflecting upon the Gulf War and Op GRANBY, the human cost of the logistic effort must be remembered. In "The Gulf War Assessed" Duncan Anderson reflected that "...More Coalition servicemen and civilians contracted to the Coalition were killed on MSR Dodge than in the actual ground war. The fact that the US and British forces were able to build up substantial stocks says much for their skill and fortitude".

Sadly, 16 Squadron experienced loss on Op GRANBY. "On New Year's Eve, tragedy struck. Corporal CAE Bolam, a cheerful well-liked soldier who had deployed with the Desert Detachment, was shackling a double-loaded Warrior at night and with minimal light in a tactical load. The brakes of the AIFV failed to hold and the vehicle slipped, killing Corporal Bolam almost instantly. All possible was done to revive him, but to no avail and 16 Squadron then held the unhappy distinction of being the first RCT unit to have a soldier killed in the Gulf."

In Memory of the Soldiers of the Royal Corps of Transport who died on Operation GRANBY

Cpl CAE Bowlam	31 December 1990
LCpl SR Crofts	10 February 1991
LCpl RA Robbins	16 February 1991
LCpl TTW Hill	25 February 1991
Dvr JP McFadden	26 February 1991
LCpl L Wellington	25 March 1991

9 Regiment RLC Celebrates Roger Muirhead's Centenary

Mr Roger Muirhead MBE MRCVS is a remarkable RASC Second World War Veteran who marked his centenary in April. Roger served in North Africa, Italy, Europe and very briefly in the Far East, then in the immediate aftermath of the war with the Malay Government. For five years following his return to the United Kingdom, Roger held a Territorial Army commission as an RASC Captain, serving as Second-in-Command of 525 Company RASC (Highland Division).



■ Lieutenant R H Muirhead standing in the crater of Mount Etna, 1943

When 525 Company moved to Falkirk, Roger transferred to the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. This was necessary as he was part way through his studies to become a veterinarian. Roger went on to become an eminent veterinarian. He was appointed as a member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for his work with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food identifying the connection between badgers and cattle in the spread of Tuberculosis.

On 27 April, 9 Regiment RLC hosted Roger and his nephew Hugh for a visit at Buckley Barracks in Hullavington. A very generous gesture as the Regiment "main" was deployed in Greece and in Croatia. Thanks are owed to the CO, Lt Col Joe Brown for immediately agreeing, but probably more importantly to the Rear Party under the able leadership of Maj Gareth Roberts and SSM Jones who did the hard work. They laid on a splendid visit demonstrating the modern Corps' equipment to Roger, ideal for a self-confessed "petrol head" – Roger even put himself through a PSV licence for fun.



■ The wonders of the Bowman Radio System being explained

9 Regiment really went above and beyond. The generosity of the Regiment's officers, warrant officers and senior NCOs giving Roger a bottle of champagne and a bottle of port was particularly touching. All and all a truly memorable day and a great demonstration of today's Royal Logistic Corps' equipment and young soldiers.



■ Demonstration of a MAN – EPLS (Enhanced Pallet Load System)



■ Major Gareth Roberts explains some of the finer points of an SA80 (L85 A3) Rifle

Rab Baillie achieves Skydiving A Licence 42 years after first jump

Based on an article published in Sky Dive Magazine by Rab Baillie

Rab Baillie started his parachuting career in 1978. During training as a Junior Leader in the RCT, Rab carried out "sport" parachute training with the RCT Silver Stars, completing three static line "round canopy" parachute jumps. Following Juniors, Rab trained as a Driver and worked in support units for Airborne forces, before ending his 16-year military career as a specialist Tank Transporter Driver.

Rab is an avid Motorcyclist having started on the BSA B40 at Junior Leaders and 1 Sqn RCT, then Can-Ams, Mt 500 Armstrongs, Triumph Tiger 750 escort bikes, Norton Interpol rotary Wankel engine bikes and a Honda Pan European 1100 - which he has donated to the Tank Transporter Association and are now in the care of Wayne Meadows. As part of the Airborne/Arnhem Forces Riders, Rab took part in a ride to Arnhem.

Whilst in Arnhem, a discussion took place about participating in the Market Garden 75th Anniversary parachute jump from a Dakota in 2019. So, a few people including Rab set about retraining to make this happen. This was made possible by Skydive Teuge based in Holland, through The Pathfinder Parachute Group (run by ex-Parachute Regt and 63 Sqn RCT soldier - Sgt Roy Mobsbey). Rab completed a Dutch Military B Wings 5 Jumps course, using static line round military parachutes. This qualified him to jump in WW2 uniform into Arnhem. Rab achieved his goal of jumping in Arnhem for the Operation Market



Garden 75th Anniversary celebration, first on the Friday at DZ Renkum and then as a bonus he jumped into the Driel DZ (the DZ used by the 1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade) on the Sunday. This was especially poignant due to Rab's connection with the Polish - as a former member of 7 Tk Tpnr Regt and 16 Tk Tpnr Sqn RCT. He was presented a certificate with Polish wings. The Arnhem jumps reignited Rab's passion for parachuting so on return to the UK, he started

the ball rolling to train to become a skydiver (free fall parachutist). As he was now over the age 55, this presented some challenges. However, the Chief Instructor at Skydive Langer in Nottingham recognised Rab's previous experience from 1978 and on production of certificates to back this up, he signed Rab up for a static line RAPS Course (Ram Air Progression System - a static line course using ram air rather than round canopy parachutes). Progression was quick at the beginning; Rab quickly reached "5 second delay", but then he got stuck in a rut going backwards and forwards from DRP (dummy ripcord pull) to 5 second delay. To overcome this frustration, Rab made the decision to move onto a AFF programme (Accelerated Free Fall - a fast track skydiving lesson programme which start with free fall from the first lesson, albeit under the direct instruction of 2 AFF Instructors).



Rab checks his altitude in free fall

Just as the time came to book an AFF course, lockdown kicked in due to COVID-19; three months on furlough and staying at home put a stop to that. Then a return to work (Television Industry) in May and non-stop commitments until September, when a holiday was booked to attend annual Arnhem ride. The Arnhem ride was cancelled, so Sky Dive Langar was the first call to get on the next AFF course. Ground school completed, levels 1 to 3 done and then bad weather set in, so a few days doing nothing; but not to fear Ally Milne was doing vertical wind tunnel training so Rab jumped on board, he said this was the best move ever - the tunnel training was invaluable. Then, determined not to waste any more days, Rab got onto a parachute packing course.

The weather improved so levels 4 to 7 and two console jumps were done over two days (to conclude AFF a pupil must complete 10 solo consolidation "console" jumps). Unfortunately, Rab had to return to work and follow very strict COVID-19 rules working within extreme athlete bubbles covering Golf in Cyprus. While in Cyprus, despite completing 17 negative tests, Rab was unable to jump because the skydive centre was closed due to COVID-19.

After returning to the UK and taking more holidays, Rab got on with jumping at Langar, with a jump here and there in between weather hold ups. He eventually achieved his A licence on the last day of jumping before Langar went back into lockdown. Level 8 was done, last consoles done and one jump as an A licence finishing on 56 jumps and a couple of B licence briefs. 2020 ended on a high.

Award of CSDP (Common Security and Defence Policy) Medal for Extraordinary Meritorious Service to Lt Col (Retd) David Palmer TD



David was originally commissioned into the RAF; he then left and joined the Royal Yeomanry before transferring to the RCT. Following reserve service in both the RCT and RLC, including as FTRS, David went on to serve as a civilian Staff Officer in the EU Operational Headquarters at SHAPE, a post from which he has recently retired. In 2020, David was awarded the CSDP Medal for Extraordinary Meritorious Service, for his contribution to Operation ALTHEA.

His citation read:

Mr David Palmer has been an integral member in the success of Operation ALTHEA since its inception in 2004. Initially as a military officer in the EU Command Element in Naples Italy, Mr Palmer became a civilian staff officer responsible for human resources and logistics matters operating from the Operation Headquarters in Mons, Belgium but spending considerable time in the Force Headquarters in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Whilst a master of his brief, Mr Palmer's impact on the wider issues of the operation has highlighted his extraordinary and exemplary service to the success of Operation ALTHEA. He has been a superb mentor to all members of the EU Staff Group, serving with patience, empathy and understanding always selflessly helping less experienced personnel to understand the sensitivities of the mission and the unique framework of this Common Security & Defence Policy operation under "Berlin Plus" arrangements. His amassed corporate knowledge has served to support many different Operation

Commanders to best effect leading to being invited to join delegations to key events, and in turn he has risen to the challenges of being an articulate architect of key reporting documents, an astute speech writer and provider of sage, well-founded counsel well away from his primary responsibilities.

Mr Palmer's skill and tact consistently delivers outstanding results whilst the EU/NATO relationship is navigated at all levels and managed sensitively. A consummate professional, his 'can-do' attitude and pragmatic approach are exemplified in every project he is involved in, but can be typified during the operation's first Strategic Review. Understanding the needs of EU strategic planners, whilst operating well away from his primary staff role, Mr Palmer facilitated and aided the European External Action Service in the preparatory work, spending substantive periods in the field diligently providing support and advice. His involvement ran through to the delivery of the Review's approved recommendations when the Operation re-focussed on the Executive Mandate wherein Mr Palmer displayed profound sensitivity to the Force Commander's requirements and a deep appreciation of diplomacy required to deliver compensatory adjustments. Mr Palmer has consistently been a highly respected, trusted and wise member of the team being a superb ambassador for each operation commander. His input has been indispensable and his exceptional contributions to the success of Operation ALTHEA exemplified the spirit of the EU's longstanding commitment to Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Buller Branch

As we have been in lockdown number two for most the time since November 2020, nothing much has changed.

Two of our veteran members, Chris Bridle and Alf Sollars, are now in-pensioners at the Royal Hospital Chelsea - Alf joined the hospital at the end of November 2020. As a Branch, we are very proud to be that little bit closer to the Royal Hospital, with members visiting our in-pensioners between the prohibitions - which sadly was all to brief, however I know a few members got to see both Chris and Alf. We also keep in touch with them through our on-line meetings, which also helps to get some of our other members outside of their homes, (some are now calling them prison cells.



■ **Alf Sollars (centre) on the RMAS Square** local Armed Forces Day (AFD) celebrations. For

Since the slight lifting of the second lockdown restrictions, we have been able to attend a few funeral ceremonies of veteran RASC members. These included the funeral of RASC D-Day Veteran Harry Baily in May. We have been well represented by our Standard Bearers and our in-pensioners; we send our thanks to them all for their commitment to our Corps' members.

Alf Sollars has taken part in his first engagement with the Royal Hospital at the RMA Sandhurst International Pace sticking Competition 2021. As a world champion pace sticker, Alf would

like to state: "it's fun, but I have no chance of winning". From us all at Buller, we would like to say very well-done Alf and the Royal Hospital. (PS. They beat the whole Indian Sub-Continent).

Following the sad news of the cancellation of the Corps Weekend, I spoke with John Mosinski (Vice-Chair) and we have decided to move our Branch AGM, which is normally held over this weekend. This will now hopefully be held on the Saturday morning of the Remembrance weekend. As a Branch, we meet up in Aldershot over the Remembrance weekend and move by coach to Whitehall for the Cenotaph Parade on the

Sunday morning. Even though some members cannot get a place to march, we still attend the parade to show our support and take pictures, videos and to cheer the lads on as they march past.

Many of our members attended their

me, I hobbled along to the Prince's Theatre Gardens in Aldershot to watch the parade and music show. Andy Rae, Alf Sollars, Chris Bridle, Phil Stothard and Mike Pearson attended the AFD parade in Basildon with Mike parading with The Buller Standard - we thank you guys.

I am still trying to find the time to visit the new Corps Museum which opened just recently, but this has been put on the back burner for a while as I have been waiting for an operation for a full hip replacement. I mention it here because it shows that this virus has affected so many lives over



■ **Gary Page and Harry Baily at a Normandy Commemoration**

the last nearly two years, with hospital operations and appointment cancellations and it hasn't stopped yet. I feel for the many individuals who are in a far worse state than I and who have no way of getting help that may be needed.

As a branch, we try to help the other members as much as we can. We have been keeping in touch any way possible, through emails, messaging, video and phone calls. It all helps to keep our members active and in-touch with each other. I feel lucky that we have always been able to reach out to our members to offer any help that we can.

If you know of anyone who needs help, please get in touch with your own local branch. Members in need often feel we can't help or are too worried or proud to ask. We can't solve all your problems, but we may be able to lessen the blow or point you towards the right agency or organisation to help.

Lastly, I know I speak for everyone when I say; "We are really looking forward to meeting up with our old and now "new" members in the coming months ahead".

Be safe and take care all of you.

Ken Blake (Chairman)

Tank Transporter Branch

It has been undoubtably a very different 2021 in many respects and the Tank Transporter Branch has been no exception to this. However, it would appear that we have weathered this in true "tank transporter style", demonstrating resilience and resourcefulness as only we can.

The refurbishment and maintenance work on our historic vehicles has continued. Several members have made regular trips to Lyneham where the vehicles are now stored under the watchful eye of Wayne Meadows. Wayne is former REME and has a passion for looking after our collection. Wayne, together with other former tank transporter personnel, have generously given their time to keep these vehicles on the road.

At the time of writing, the Commanders and the Antar are at the Newbury Retro Fest Show on the 13 -15 August, and on 4 September they will be at the 19 Tk Tpnr Sqn RLC Family Day. The 3 Tk Tpnr Sqn Reunion in Preston

has gone ahead and by all accounts was a well-attended and enjoyable function. The Ranby/Retford Reunion is due to take place in mid-September. In addition to meeting face to face, social media continues to be a mainstay of the Branch, even more



so since the global pandemic became part of our daily lives. Membership of our Facebook page now stands at 1,900.

A special mention should be made about one of our own - Tony Brown. Tony has been toiling at his Forces Manor Hotel in

Scotland. Essentially, Tony has been renovating and reconfiguring a former hotel in the Scottish Highlands to become a respite centre for use by all three of the Armed Services. To find out more visit: www.forcesmanor.com

We are planning for the 2021 Annual Reunion to go ahead at the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool on the weekend of 22 -24 October. Due to the uncertainty of the Covid situation, the Reunion will be run on a less formal basis, with the main change being that there will be no organised entertainment other than the excellent violinist playing the Last Post at the dinner on Saturday. As always, the reunion weekend is open to all those who have served in Tank Transporter units - RASC, RCT and RLC and any attached personnel from the REME, RAPC, ACC etc. All are welcome to this all ranks and partners' event. For more details go to the Tank Transporters' Facebook page.

Ian Lloyd

Scottish Region

Thankfully normality is now slowly beginning to return, and our activities are now able to restart. A summary of recent events follows.

Early in June memorial events were held all over the country to mark the 77th anniversary of the Allied invasion of Normandy during World War II. On Saturday 5 June, 2 members of The Glasgow Branch - Michael Emans and Stephen Donovan, attended the D-Day Service in Knightswood, Glasgow on Saturday. Following the service Michael said "Today we remembered those that went and never returned. The elderly gentleman pictured in front of the memorial is 102 years old, and he was one who was there and returned. Today I saw him getting

emotional and letting it go. A privilege and honour to stand on the same ground."

On Thursday 10 June, the Aberdeen Branch were able to hold their AGM. At this meeting the Branch Chairman, Mr John Cunningham, belatedly presented a plate to Mr Duncan Forbes as a token to mark occasion of his retirement from the role of Chairman of the Scottish Region of the RASC & RCT Association last year.

A meeting of the RASC & RCT Association's Scottish Region's Committee was held in the St Johnston's Club in Perth on Saturday 12 June 2021. This was their first meeting since lockdown. A successful and productive meeting was held with the "new committee" in place for the first

time. Our last Chairman, Mr Duncan Forbes, presented our new Chairman, Mr Benny McHale with a gavel and rest as a leaving gift from himself and his wife.



■ Glasgow Branch Standard at Knightswood

Memorial service for Driver Paul 'Geordie' Bulman RCT

The 19 May 2021 marked the 40th Anniversary of the loss of Driver Paul Bulman.

Paul died whilst serving with 17 Sqn RCT on Operation BANNER in Northern Ireland. On 19 May 1981, he was driving a Saracen APC on a mobile patrol, supporting 1st Battalion Royal Green Jackets based at Bessbrook Mill, South Armagh. Paul, along with a section of 4 Royal Green Jackets: L/Cpl Winston, Riflemen Bagshaw, King and Gavin, lost their lives when a culvert bomb was detonated under his Saracen.

Neil McFee and Dave Stokoe who both served in 17 Squadron with Paul organised a memorial service at his graveside in North Shields to mark the occasion. This was arranged with the support and blessing of Paul's family. There were over 30 ex 17 Sqn RCT personnel some with their wives plus guests in attendance. The

service was led by Reverend Jon Whalley CF VR BA (Hons), Chaplain to the 5th Battalion (TA) The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.

During the service, to observe social distancing, two ranks were formed and marched to the graveside. Various tributes were then paid to the life of Paul, the last post was sounded, standards dipped and wreaths were laid in respect. Paul's family were very grateful, and his father praised the soldiers for never forgetting his son and for taking the time to travel from near and far to pay their respects.

The event was very well organised, even having a bright sunny spring morning, despite the forecast! The 17 Squadron Old Pals would like to thank the RASC & RCT Association for the grant given toward the cost of the event.

Richard Fry



Arnhem - Les' Story

Former RASC LCpl Les Ransom died on 8 February 2021. An account of his remarkable wartime experiences is reproduced below by kind

permission of the 299 Association.



The Battle of Arnhem was a Second World War military engagement fought in and around the Dutch towns of Arnhem, Oosterbeek, Wolfheze, Driel and the surrounding countryside from 17-26 September 1944.

One man who was a

paratrooper there during that fated battle was Les Ransom, a true hero and one of the very few who actually made it to the bridge in Arnhem. The following account taken from an interview with Les

explains a little about his life and experiences and shares his perspective of what happened on the ground during this time.

Les was driving a milk van for his brother in Dunswell, near Hull, when he heard war had been declared.

When his brother couldn't afford to pay him, Jacksons took him on as a delivery driver. It wasn't long before he was unemployed due to cut backs, so Les drove a tractor for his dad for a while until he signed up at the recruitment office and was given a job driving a lorry on bomb damage, cleaning bombed out sites, shifting blocks and various other tasks.

Les got his call-up papers in March 1942, reporting to Barrhead near Glasgow. After six weeks basic training, he was posted to Halifax to a holding company. Les and his mate Charlie Clifford heard volunteers for the Airborne Division were being sought. A pay increase of a shilling a day more to fly gliders and two shillings a day more to be a parachutist was enough for both to volunteer. Les and Charlie went down to Amesbury in Wiltshire and joined 250 Company. Les had known Charlie from when he was a lorry driver in Hull as Charlie was a driver too. They had met when Les pulled Charlie out of a dyke down Dunswell Lane. Charlie and Les stuck together from then on, right up to the drop into Arnhem.

Parachute training was completed at RAF Ringway which is now Manchester Airport. Six jumps from a Whitley bomber through a hole in the floor,

two drops from a balloon. Eight drops to earn your wings, then the money went up again. It was a tough regime training to be a paratrooper. Any spare time was taken up with a lot of walking and exercise, if you wanted to go anywhere or do anything, such as get to the nearest pub!

After training, Les was sent to North Africa. The fighting was all over by the time he got there, the 51st Highland Division of the 8th Army had driven General Rommel out of Tunisia. After six or seven months, Les was sent to Italy, the whole point of being sent to North Africa in the first place was to prepare to invade Italy from there. Les remembers a close shave in Italy when he was going along the quay side and he was being told to get in a boat. He was just about to do so, when he was stopped and told to get on the next one. The boat Les should have boarded was blown up in the harbour and it went down. Les saw all sorts in his time in the Army and experienced real hardship to boot.

On the 17 September 1944, Les and 300 men of 250 Company, were attached to the 2nd Battalion, part of a group of about 10,000 men of the First Airborne Division. They were all trained and based in Lincolnshire before Arnhem. Their mission was to take the bridge at Arnhem. Les was allocated a position in a Horsa glider as there weren't insufficient planes to transport all the troops. Charlie Clifford made the crossing in an aircraft, both landing at about the same time. It was a huge operation. Les had never seen anything like it and never has since.

They landed about eight miles from Arnhem at the Drop Zone and it was carnage with the parachuting of incoming troops spanning hours. Les ran into Arnhem with his platoon, all hell broke loose when they arrived in the centre. There were bodies and people everywhere, continuous gunfire, explosions, burning buildings and vehicles were all over the place. Not many troops made it to the centre of Arnhem.

Les found himself on a tow path, where a German barge on the water was firing machine guns at anything that moved. As they couldn't fire downwards, Les took cover next to a cafe near the bridge where he sat next to two other men he presumed were his comrades. After the barrage of gunfire had ceased, Les and the two other men stood up - they were both German! No words were exchanged, they just looked at each other up and down then went off in separate directions! It was complete chaos. In an abandoned police station, Les found some bunk beds and managed two hours sleep, with all hell raging outside!

Eventually reunited with eight men from his outfit, they took up a position in a toilet block in some council offices. After four days with no food and the only drinking water available was from the radiators, the situation was grim. When the ammunition ran out, the order came through from a 'runner' (there were no radios working and 'runners' ran in to give the men information, risking their lives) it was 'every man for himself'. The group that had started off as

eight were now down to three, realising this was down to a German sniper in a church tower near by the council offices. The tower and the German were blown up with the last of the ammunition! One of these men, Geordie Hall, was even shot up the bum when he was climbing some stairs as was seen by the sniper!

With no hope of escape and no supplies, it was decided the only option was to surrender to the Germans. As the three men walked down an alley way to give themselves up, Les dropped his rifle jumping over a wall, he went back to retrieve the firearm as it had been drummed into them during training you never lose your gun. Once he'd retrieved it, he threw it away purposefully, not just dropping it by mistake.

Taken prisoner, Les never saw any of 250 Company again, until a reunion in 1963. Charlie Clifford had escaped much earlier. He managed to swim the river and got away; Charlie could swim like a fish as his dad was a swimming instructor at Beverley Road baths in Hull. Les was put in Stalag 9a and then to Stalag 4b, he was for about three weeks before being sent to Dresden with a group of 20 men, called a 'commando'.

While detained in Dresden, Les' mechanical skills were put to use repairing trams. Although treated reasonably well by his captors, food was rationed. Les lost four and a half stone in nine months. One man Les worked for at Dresden Station used to give Les two tiny boiled potatoes every day, he put them in his tool box. In fact, this man, Fritz, even asked Les to go back after the war and marry his daughter!

The Americans increased the bombing in Dresden, the outlook for Germany looked bleak. Dresden city was devastated, Les and his commando were made to dig up unexploded bombs and munitions. His captors were all around the same age as Les, late teens, early twenties, they often talked about what might be the outcome. The Germans didn't want to fight the Russians, they were all very scared. It was decided an escape plan would be put into action. As Les and his mates crossed a field heading for Czechoslovakia, they were challenged by their captors, "shoot us if you are going to" was the reply, but they didn't. They eventually were caught and taken back to Dresden. Once the Russians started bombing, Les and his commando made a second escape bid. The group got split up leaving Les and two others and he never saw the other 17 men again. From the day Les was captured, all he had on his feet were a few crude bits of wood with a carpet nailed to the top. They had a smock on each and weren't distinguishable as British, there were many displaced people all heading West and they didn't look out of place. They eventually made it to Czechoslovakia and were taken in by a family for a few weeks until news came through that the war was over.

As Les tried to make his way back home, he sought out friendly people and scavenged for food and shelter along the way. An American convoy

passed giving a well-received ride and food supply, but on the downside he spent three days in a field eating peanut butter. Les was flown by Douglas to Rheims, where he was interrogated then brought back to Lyneham by a Lancaster bomber. After being documented and deloused, issued with a new uniform and a railway pass, Les was sent home to Hull for six months leave.

Nothing remained of the First Airborne Division after Arnhem, Les couldn't get back into the airborne sector. He was posted all over England on his return and luckily got posted back to Hull for the last bit of his time in the Army. Les was demobbed 12 months after his leave, returning to his old job of driving a wagon.

Arnhem was always a massive part of Les' life and an achievement to be wholly proud of. He truly was an admirable man and probably the most humble and generous person you could wish to meet.



Obituary

Captain A R Metson
By Lt Col Tony Jackson



Captain Dick Metson died peacefully in a Devon care home on 27 December 2021 after some years of impaired health.

Dick was considerable company. Unfailingly modest, he was a determined soldier, inspiring officer and diligent pilot. He had great charm and understated wit. Combined with committed professionalism, he was a great companion and meticulous instructor.

Dick enlisted as a Driver in the Royal Corps of Transport in March 1966. After Basic Training, he joined the Potential Officer Cadet Troop in 12 Training

Regiment RCT at Buller Barracks, Aldershot subsequently moving to Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Church Crookham. Potential Officer training included radio exercises on Salisbury Plain, serving tea for Corps Cricket on God's Acre, setting up the Corps Ball at Aldershot Officers' Club and playing for Corps Rugby v Staff College. POCs served as the enemy on the SSM's course, fence marshals at Tweseldown three-day events and muleteers for the Pack Horse Squadron.

Dick was commissioned into the RCT from Mons OCS in May 1967. He served as a Troop Commander with 2 Div Regt RCT in Bunde and 62 Sqn RCT in Berlin but then followed his dream to learn to fly. He passed the Army Pilots Course in 1970 and remained with the Army Air Corps until retirement from the Army.

Dick continued flying for the remainder of his professional career. He joined North Scottish Helicopters, later Bond Aviation, and flew Bolkow, Dauphin and Sikorsky helicopters supporting the North Sea oil industry. In 12 years, he flew over 10,000 hours for North Sea oil rigs. Dick remained with Bond flying Air Ambulance & Lighthouse operations initially in Cornwall and finally with Devon Air Ambulance. After quitting flying duties, Dick continued as an instructor and landing site surveyor for Devon Air Ambulance.

An enthusiastic rugby player and follower, Dick was proud that he and eldest son both played a senior match together for Truro thirds. In retirement, he became Treasurer and Churchwarden for the local church. As a baritone singer, he joined church choirs and local choral societies particularly enjoying singing Gilbert & Sullivan.

Dick is survived by his wife Carol and his two sons from his first marriage to Wendy.

Obituary

Mr A J McAllister

Retired Warrant Officer Class 1 (RSM) Angus (James) McAllister sadly passed away on 26 June 2021. He leaves behind wife Penny, daughters Lynda and Heather, and their families.

James had a full and successful career as first a territorial and then a regular soldier. He joined 212 Ambulance Squadron (TA) in 1970 and then in May 1972 he joined the Regular Army serving first at 47 Air Dispatch Squadron RCT and then subsequently at Headquarters Scotland, 54 Squadron MT Troop in Soest, 3 Armoured Division Transport Regiment, Headquarters and Depot RCT TA and SHAPE as MTWO. His final posting before leaving the Army in 1994 was as the RSM of the Headquarters and Depot RCT TA.



Obituary

Mr David Worsfold
By Roger Burke

On 31 January 2021, the RASC & RCT Band Branch lost Mr David Worsfold, a stalwart member.

David started his military career in the Regimental Band of the Parachute Regiment and transferred to the Staff Band Royal Corps of Transport in 1967 where he continued to serve for a further 25 years. Originally a clarinet player, he transferred to Tenor saxophone and made that position his own for the majority of his service.

During his long musical career, David formed several dance bands and frequently featured in many of the prestigious concerts that the Corps Band presented. His commitment to the Corps and outstanding duty as the Band Librarian for many years, will remain a testimony to his time served.

Not only will he be missed as a colleague and friend, but the world and the Branch has lost an outstanding musician and wonderful friend to all who knew him.

David was remembered at a service was led by the Branch Chaplain, Jennie Martin. The Branch Standard was voluntarily carried by Adrian Benge and the Last Post played superbly by Steve Carrigan.



The 'COVID-19 limited' contingent of the RASC/RCT Band Branch

Last Post

Bailey - 27 April 2021, Mr H Bailey RASC
Bakx - 25 April 2021, Capt PA Bakx RASC/RCT/RAPC
Bennett - In March 2021, Mr M Bennett RASC/RCT
Bisset - 28 March 2021, Lt Col AG Bisset RCT
Bond - 21 December 2020, Mrs L Bond
Boot - 20 April 2021, Maj (QM) D Boot RASC/RCT
Bowser - 21 April 2021, Brig PC Bowser CBE DL RASC/RCT
Brooker - 19 December 2020, Mr P Brooker RCT
Brown - 5 January 2021, Mr D Brown RCT
Cail - 8 December 2020, Lt Col HH Cail OBE RASC
Cole - In February 2021, Mr E Cole RASC/RCT
Cross - In May 2020, Mr C Cross RASC/RCT
Curphey - 15 May 2021, Mr P Curphey RCT
Davy - 14 December 2020, Mr M Davy RASC
Devonald - 7 February 2021, Mr G Devonald RASC
Ditchfield - 4 November 2020, Mr A Ditchfield RASC
Doland - 26 July 2021, Mrs D Doland
Dunn - 10 October 2020, Mr GB Dunn RASC
Edwards - In March 2021, Mr WF Edwards RCT
Edwards - 8 August 2021, Maj GCW Edwards RASC/RCT
Elmer - 10 May 2021, Mr P Elmer RASC
Fox - 17 July 2021, Col GBL Fox RCT/RLC
Garrard - 26 February 2021, Mrs JM Garrard
Gillett - 3 December 2020, Lt Col CA Gillett TD RASC/RCT
Greenwood - In January 2021, Capt KA Greenwood RASC/RCT
Gutteridge - 31 July 2021, WO2 A Gutteridge RCT
Hadlow - 18 February 2021, Maj B Hadlow RASC/RCT
Haskayne-Jones - 11 April 2021, Col GE Haskayne-Jones MBE TD RASC/RCT
Hennessey - In June 2021, Mr K Hennessey Queens/RCT
Hill - 7 December 2020, Mr DV Hill RCT/RLC/SAS
Hopping - 7 December 2020, Mr KP Hopping MBE RASC/RCT
Hutley - 17 June 2021, Mr HG Hutley RASC
Hylands - 19 November 2020, Mr F Hylands RCT
Jackson - 13 February 2021, Lt Col (QM) DJ Jackson RCT/RLC
Lee - 1 August 2021, Mr R Lee RASC

Lewis - 4 August 2021, Col EA Lewis RASC/RCT
Martin - 3 December 2020, Mr HJ Martin RASC
Massey - 18 January 2021, Lt Col JB Massey RASC/RCT
McAllister - 26 June 2021, Mr A J McAllister RCT/RLC
McCulloch - In February 2021, Mr G McCulloch RCT
McDonald - In March 2021, Mr S McDonald RCT
McEnhill - In December 2020, Mr B McEnhill RASC/RCT
McKinven - 20 January 2021, Mr M McKinven RCT
Metson - 27 December 2020, Mr AR Metson RCT/AAC
Moor - 7 December 2020, Mr SJ Moor RASC/RCT
Noble - 18 February 2021, Mr AE Noble RASC
Page - 18 January 2021, Mr F Page RCT
Panks - 1 January 2021, Mr P Panks RCT
Parsons - 27 July 2021, Mr C Parsons RASC/RCT
Peradon - 25 April 2021, Capt IF Peradon RASC
Peterson - In December 2020, Maj NV Peterson RCT/RLC
Pheby - In December 2020, Maj AW Pheby RCT
Ransom - 8 February 2021, Mr L Ransom RASC
Rose - 11 April 2021, Maj P Rose RCT
Saunders - 8 March 2021, Mr IJ Saunders RCT/RLC
Saunders - 1 April 2021, Mr KBS Saunders RCT
Sharrocks - 5 December 2020, Mr TO Sharrocks RASC
Simmons - 14 December 2020, Brig JK Simmons RASC/RCT
Skelton - 18 July 2021, Maj A Skelton RASC/RCT
Skinner - In March 2021, Mr M Skinner RCT
Skitt - 5 September 2020, Mr W Skitt RCT
Spreadbury - 13 March 2021, Lt Col WE Spreadbury MBE RCT
Stretton - 7 July 2020, Maj JH Stretton RASC/RCT
Stevens - 22 July 2020, Maj DW Stevens RASC/RCT
Taylor - 2 April 2019, Mr J Taylor RASC
Tuplin - 26 March 2021, Mr D Tuplin RASC/RCT
Turnbull - 20 January 2021, Maj JC Turnbull TD RASC/RCT
Welford - 22 June 2020, Mr R Welford RASC
Wellings - 4 April 2021, Lt Col MJ Wellings RASC/RCT
White - 13 May 2021, Mr A White RASC
Wildman - 12 March 2021, Mr A Wildman RASC/RCT
Winn - 6 March 2021, Mr F Winn RASC/RCT
Worsfold - 31 January 2021, Mr DJ Worsfold Para/RASC/RCT

