



The Waggoner

The newsletter of the RASC & RCT



Issue 23 - April 2023



Lt Col Harry Dalwood BEM at his Commissioning and Farewell Parade at Junior Leaders Battalion, Taunton, 29 March 1966

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President of the RASC & RCT Council

“We should continue to encourage serving and former RLC personnel to join our organisations where, I am confident, they will be made to feel most welcome.

I am delighted to be able to confirm that we commence 2023 with the RLC Association Trust agreement to support the range of our planned Branch and Regional activities and Corps organised events. The RASC and RCT Council continues to meet on a regular basis with Council members representing our interests on all major RLC committees. I can assure them that their efforts are very much appreciated. On your behalf, I continue to serve as a Trustee on the RLC Association Trust committee.

In my previous report, I promised to keep you informed of the work we are engaged in, with the other Forming Corps, to develop plans for the integration of our requirements within the RLC Association, when we recognise the need to do so. I can assure members that further integration work remains at an early stage and there is no necessity to accelerate the work as we remain a strong and effective organisation. That said, we must ensure that all the thinking has been completed so that, when we believe it to be beneficial, we can enjoy a seamless integration with the

RLC Association. Throughout, we remain absolutely focused on our collective objective of guaranteeing future support to our members for as long as they require that support.

The RLC really do appreciate the need to enhance the RLC Association, as a high priority, to operate alongside the Forming Corps Associations in the short to medium term before they can be ready to assume greater levels of responsibility. With that in mind, the RLC Association would welcome all the help we are able to provide, particularly in terms of continuing to maintain and strengthen our Branch and Regional structure and the Officers' Club. We should continue to encourage serving and former RLC personnel to join our organisations where, I am confident, they will be made to feel most welcome.

I wish all members and their families a successful and healthy 2023 and encourage all to do what they can to support Branch and Regional activities and Corps wide events, particularly during Corps Weekend in July.

Brigadier Paul Evans OBE DL



Members of the RASC and RCT Council following the most recent meeting in January

Chairman RASC & RCT Association

I would like to start by recording my grateful thanks to Lt Col Robin Moore who has been our Corps Association Secretary since January 2020, and who retired in January this year. In his relatively short time in post, he made a significant contribution to the running of our regimental affairs. He enjoyed a challenge, and he put in place a number of initiatives to better inform himself on how the Branch and Regional structure of the Association could be measured and indeed helped.

Robin's engaging personality, his enthusiasm, his wise counsel, together with his patience and sense of humour, were the hallmarks of his success. It was a pleasure for me to present him with an engraved silver photograph frame on behalf of all members of our Association at the RASC and RCT Council meeting on the 19 January 2023, in the presence of Brig Paul Evans and all members of the Council. Robin and Jenny have moved house to the Shrivenham area, and I know that I speak for us all in wishing them both every happiness for the future.



Robin handed over the reins to Lt Col Richard Hick, who served in the RCT for seven years and in The RLC for 13 years, retiring

from the Army in September 2006 to follow a very successful career in education. I know that we all welcome him and his wife Rachel back into the Corps family.

Looking back over the last six months, September saw the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. I personally felt the need to attend the Lying in State, and went on the first night. The queue was eight hours and it was certainly an experience walking and talking to those around you and watching daybreak as you approached Westminster Hall. It was also a surprise to be interviewed live on BBC Breakfast TV!

On 21 September 2022, the Association Committee of Management held their meeting at the Royal Hospital Chelsea. It gave the Regional Chairmen the opportunity to see the facilities there, and to meet a good number of our RASC and RCT Chelsea Pensioners. We still have a RCT Retired Officer on the staff at Chelsea, Lt Col Jonny Lowe. He has been appointed Outreach Officer, a new post and very much an initiative of the Governor. The aim of outreach is to bring to the veteran community outside of Chelsea the benefits of life there, and a programme is being developed over the months ahead, linking in Chelsea with other military charities and local authorities.

On 25 September 2022, Maureen and I attended the 75th Anniversary Lunch for Exeter Branch, organised by their Chairman, Maj Martin Swallow. Sadly, Joy Carrington was unable to attend having contacted Covid, however, it was a very happy and jolly occasion.

On 19 October 2022, I travelled to Ypres to attend a rededication service for a Cpl Gilbert Willcocks, who served in the ASC and was killed in action on 28 November 1915. He lay buried as an unknown soldier for over a century, and his grave now has a new headstone bearing

his name. November saw the Association well represented at the Garden of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey in the presence of the Queen Consort, and at the Cenotaph with good coverage of our contingent on the BBC.

The active recorded membership of our Association is around 5,400. Activity wise, life is returning to normal pre-Covid levels, and as an indication, the Association has helped to fund some 34 branch and regional events in the past six months. Two regional events that Maureen and I attended were the North East Region Dinner near York in October and a few weeks later the Wales and Western Region Dinner in Blackpool.

During the last few months, we have seen the deaths of a number of key members of the Association, including Maj David Jeremy who was a strong supporter of the Amphibious Branch; Hector McKinlay who until a few years ago was Chairman of Glasgow Branch; Maj Charles Wilson who was a loyal and long-standing member of the Tank Transporter Branch, and Lt Col Harry Dalwood who was President of the Norfolk Branch for many years. The last month also saw the passing of two further Corps personalities, Lt Col Barry Hobson and Lt Col Robbie Campbell. I am also sad to report the death of one of our Normandy Veterans, Mr Fred Miller at the age of 101. His family asked me to give the tribute at his funeral on 23 February 2023, which was indeed a privilege.

We all look forward to various gatherings in 2023, none more so than the Coronation of King Charles III on the 6 May 2023, and closer to home the 30th Anniversary celebrations of the formation of The RLC on the 1 June 2023 in Worthy Down. RASC and RCT Corps Weekend will be 15-16 July 2023 - do put the dates in your diaries.

Colonel Nigel Gilbert

Secretary RASC & RCT Officers' Club

It has been pleasing to note how full the RASC & RCT Officers' Club calendar has been lately, with a number of excellent functions that were planned during the period, most of which have now taken place. In August, the Over 90s Lunch was held in Regent's Park Barracks Officers' Mess, London. Once again, the mess staff looked after our six guests, accompanying families and council hosts in a kind and generous manner, providing a delicious menu fare. The popular West Country 'Taunton Curry Lunch' was well subscribed in September, as was its eastern equivalent at Worthy Down, but sadly both were understandably cancelled because of the period of national mourning.

In October, the Officers' Club Black Tie Dinner moved location to The Village Hotel, Farnborough where close to a hundred members and wives attended. The accommodation was modern and very comfortable and the hotel's facilities were superb. The floral decorations in RASC & RCT colours were much commented on, 'A Touch of Brass' entertained the guests and an excellent menu was served with superb service on offer as the wine generously flowed. All controlled in a most

RSM-like manner by the four-foot ten Maître d'!

Many associated organisations were also busy during this period. The Officers' Luncheon Club held a well-attended function in November at The Army & Navy Club where the guest speaker was Maj Gen Duncan Capps CBE who gave an insightful commentary of his time as Commandant of the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. The Waggon Club hosted a sell-out function in December at the Cavalry & Guards Club. The Cyprus Waggoners held their usual January gathering at the Kamares Club, with a strong showing. The Luncheon Club's next function took place in the same location in February, which included the AGM. It was heartening to hear that membership had increased substantially during the year, with thirty new members joining in that period.



Over 90s, clockwise from top: Capt John Crosthwaite MBE, Maj Nic Carter, Lt Col Francis Arnold, Col Jim Payne, Brig Ron Jenkins CBE DL

All Officers' Club members will have received the 2023 Calendar of Events by now, where there is much to look forward to in 2023; the highlight of which will be Corps Weekend 15-16 July 2023.

Lieutenant Colonel Paul Duncan



Black tie dinner: Not the quietest table in the room!

Secretary RASC & RCT Association

It has been a privilege and an honour to look after the affairs of the RASC & RCT Association during the last three years. This has been a challenging period, first with the restrictions brought by Covid and more recently with the impact of rising cost of living. I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the continued success of the Association during this difficult time, and I must pay particular tribute to the dedication of our committee members at branch and regional level; their comradeship, support, good humour, and advice which has been of great help to me.

As we approach the 30th anniversary of the formation of The RLC, it is most noteworthy how successful the Association remains. I sincerely hope that the Association can continue for many more years, both as an independent organisation and then as a strong component of the RLC's Association. One area I would urge members to focus on is the support of their own branches, some of which are becoming quite fragile. It is important that we recognise the continued value of our branches - they provide a constant in the face of continued change, a tangible link to the past and are a focal point for comradeship. Finally, I wish all members the very best and thank you for your continued endeavours on behalf of the Association-nil sine labore.

Lieutenant Colonel Robin Moore

I am delighted to assume the appointment of Association Secretary and to be returning to my roots having joined the RCT on 17 March 1986. Like so many, my journey with the Corps started at Buller Barracks. I have fond memories of my early days after commissioning, firstly as RSO of 1 Div Tpt Regt in Bunde, then as

a movement control officer in 29 Regt in South Cerney. After deploying with 50 Sqn on Operation GRANBY, I soon found myself back in Germany, this time as 2IC of 27 Sqn (subsequently 12 Sqn) in 8 Regiment. My last 10 days wearing a RCT cap badge were as Adjutant of 21 Regiment in Lisburn, arriving just as The RLC was being formed. So, it is with some pride that I claim to have a fair amount of RCT blood in me!

After a 20-year Army career, followed by 17 years in school leadership, I am really pleased to be returning to work with and support our veterans. I am loving both meeting people I have served with and so many members that I am meeting for the first time; you have all made me feel very welcome - thank you.

I am now settling into the Secretary's role, helped in a large

part by a thorough handover by Robin, along with a very comprehensive and well-organised filing system which he left me. I thank him for his hard work preparing for the handover and wish him well.

I am very grateful to everyone who has contributed articles for this edition of the Waggoner. We do try to include as much as possible but do sometimes need to reduce the size of articles and obituaries to meet the editorial requirement. Where possible we will provide links to enable more in depth reading. Please can I encourage readers to submit articles for inclusion in the Waggoner. These can be either branch news or individual articles of interest. Please email articles to me at:

rascrctsec@rhqtherlc.org.uk

Articles should be in Word and photographs as separate JPEGs (not within the Word document).



Lt Col Moore and Lt Col Hick handover in the Corps Church

There is some sadness in that the New Year has brought with it quite a number of funerals. That said, branches and their members have been most keen to ensure that veterans have been given the 'send off' they truly deserve. I have been struck by how many of you have supported these events and not only for our members but many others, who were not previously known to the Association - thank you. I am happy to be contacted for advice about funeral support including wreaths, parading of standards, coffin drapes and buglers (of which I must forewarn you there is limited availability). I also now hold two RASC and RCT Association coffin drapes which can be loaned to funeral directors and returned afterwards.

As touched on by Robin, within the Association Headquarters there is much work going on to secure the future of the Association. Whilst there are some branches becoming fragile, many are thriving. We will be working on supporting those that are struggling, developing those that are thriving and continuing to develop the links with the many RLC veterans. I am delighted to see that so many branches are already doing so. I will keep you updated.

Corps Weekend – This year's celebrations are due to take place on the weekend 15-16 July 2023 in the Corps Church, The Church of St Michael and St George, in Aldershot and the Village Hotel in Farnborough. We will hold a full programme of events including a Band Concert, Drumhead Service, Dinner Dance, Church Service and Sunday Curry Lunch. Please note that at the time of going to press, the location of the Band Concert is being reviewed, further information will follow. A detailed instruction, which includes the full programme and application forms has been issued to branches (via regions). However, if you wish to attend and are not in contact with your branch or no longer have a branch, please email or write to me at the address on the front cover and I will send you the details.

Members' Data – Many members have completed and returned a 'Member's Personal Data and Consent Form'. For those that have not yet done so I would ask you to download one from the RLC Association website and send it to me. Please don't forget to complete both pages and sign the document. The form can be found at: www.royallogisticcorps.co.uk/

who-we-are/the-rlc-association/ We still aspire to have check and send forms on the website but there is a delay in doing so. Hopefully this will be resolved before the next Waggoner publication.

RLC 30 – On 1 June 2023, The RLC will formally recognise its relocation to Winchester to coincide with the 30th anniversary of the Corps. Details are in this publication. All association members are invited to attend. There are limited spaces available for the Freedom Parade and these have been allocated, with priority to those who have served in The RLC. Members are encouraged to apply for tickets to the various events that are taking place including a Service of Thanksgiving, various reception events and a community day.

Benevolence – Please could I remind members of the important role The RLC's Benevolence Office provides to support veterans from The RLC and its Forming Corps including the RASC and RCT. For more information, please contact: benovelence@rhqtherlc.org.uk Please see the advert on page 22 of Waggoner 22 for more information.

Lieutenant Colonel Richard Hick

CORPS WEEKEND TIMINGS

Saturday 15 July 2023

1030 - Band Concert (location TBC)

Followed by Drumhead Service (Standards to arrive by 1200)

1830 - Dinner Dance at Inspiration Suite, Village Hotel

Sunday 16 July 2023

1050 - All seated in Church of St Michael and St George

1100 – Service commences

1145 – Wreath laying at Memorial

1230 – Lunch at Inspiration Suite, Village Hotel

DEDICATION OF THE MEMORIAL PLAQUE - BLACKPOOL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM

I am delighted to report that on 26 November 2022, a plaque to the memory of the members of the Wales and Western Region of the Association was dedicated at the Blackpool Arboretum. This will be a great source of pride and comfort to our members and achieving this has been a bit of a mission.

It all started in the summer of 2021 when I received a call from Mrs Nuala Herbert, Secretary of the Blackpool & Fylde Branch of the RASC/RCT Association, outlining a proposal from the Branch that a memorial plaque for members of the Region should be placed in the Blackpool Arboretum. This would accompany other such tributes from a variety of regiments, corps and other veterans' associations, and although we did not know it at the time, a tribute to our late Queen.

There then followed all the usual hurdles of designing the plaque, funding it and agreeing terms by which any maintenance required will be undertaken. Space precludes a blow-by-blow account, but I must give a vote of thanks to both Nuala from Blackpool Branch and the Association Headquarters for all their assistance.

Unfortunately, due to Covid, there was a slight delay in commencing the project. The main part of the plaque with the inscription was finally completed on or about 24 March 2022 and it was finally installed at the Arboretum on 15 July 2022.

Having seen all of this through, the next thought was when could the Dedication Ceremony take place, where other members could attend? It was decided that the Dedication would take place on 26 November 2022 at 1100 hours, the weekend of the Regional Reunion which takes place at Tiffany's Hotel in Blackpool.

The Regional Vice Chairman, Mr Steve Hutchinson, informed everyone attending the Regional Reunion of the dedication and sent them a copy of the Order of Service. The Reverend Deborah Prest kindly agreed to act as the officiating vicar, she has carried out many other dedications at the Arboretum. The local



Wales and Western Region Memorial Plaque

Member of Parliament for Blackpool & Cleveleys, Mr Paul Maynard MP, kindly agreed to be our principal guest.

Despite a forecast of rain, it was a dry but cool day and the Dedication Service went very smoothly, proving to be a suitably poignant occasion. The presence of several Branch Standards added to the sense of occasion. I would like to thank Mr Steve Hutchinson for parading the Preston Branch Standard and for arranging for another Preston Branch member to carry the Blackpool Standard. I would also like to thank Mr Richard Fry who carried the 17 Squadron "Old Pals" Standard.

It was with deepest sadness that just over a week after the Dedication of the Plaque, Major (Retired) Arthur Williamson, Chairman of the Blackpool & Fylde Branch, passed away and we all send our condolences to his family and the Branch.

Major (Retired) A O Davidson – Regional Chairman



Patrick Cutting, Tankie Allen, Rev Deborah Prest, Steve Hutchinson and Richard Fry



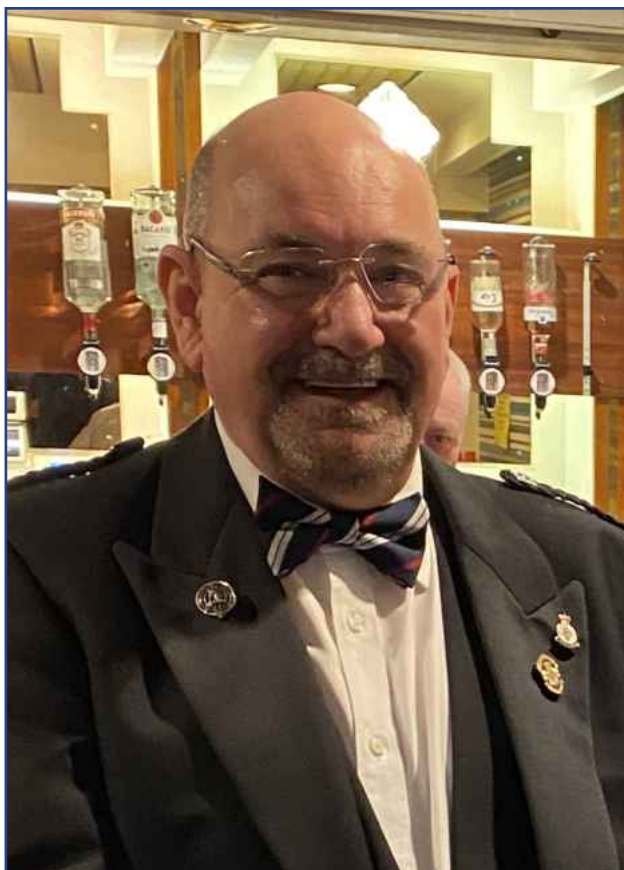
Plaque to the memory of our Late Queen

Aberdeen Branch

On the evening of Saturday 26 November 2022, Aberdeen Branch held its annual St Andrew's Day Ladies Dinner Night, as is the tradition. This event is the highlight of our social calendar and was a very successful and enjoyable occasion. Fifty members and guests attended, with seven guests from Perth Branch joining in our festivities. This year our guest of honour was Mr Benny McHale, the Association's Scottish Region Chairman, who gave us a few words of wisdom following the meal. With all the normal formalities and toast completed the dancing began. It was great fun, with any lack of style being made up for with an abundance of enthusiasm. Our particular thanks go to all members of the Committee for their sterling effort organising this event.

This year's dinner was tinged with a little sadness, as this is the first without our former Chairman John Cunningham, who was tragically taken from us last July after a short but brave fight with cancer. We all remember John with great affection; he was a generous character, always helpful and good company. John was a great supporter of the Association and Branch; he was chairman for six years. John is also missed by his former TA colleagues; he was a stalwart of 153 Regiment. John leaves behind partner Margaret and three sons.

Helen Nicol



John Cunningham - sadly missed by everyone

Doncaster Branch

Doncaster Branch held its annual Christmas Dinner on Saturday 3 December 2022 at Castle Park. We had 86 members and guests sat down; this was the most we have ever had. Everyone enjoyed the lovely food, good company and great entertainment. We were entertained by a young singer called Brogan Collins. He had a superb voice, along with a repertoire covering music from the 50s to modern

music. There was plenty of dancing going on after dinner! There were no celebrations or awards, just a great night with many friends.

On 15 February 2023, we had our annual Fish and Chip Social at Fish Bits in Hyde Park. We had 29 members come and all had a great evening; we had that many guests that the Chairman and Treasurer had to sit on a lone table!



Annual Christmas Dinner 2022



Fish and Chip Social

Bournemouth and District Branch

In June 2022, the Bournemouth Branch took over the organisation of the two parades held annually at the Canadian "Woodland" D-Day Chapel at Mogshade Hill in the New Forest. Since the 1960s, this duty had been performed by the local Mess of the Fellowship of the Services, sadly the Mess closed early in 2022. We felt the need to keep the military connection to this important site of remembrance going, so the Branch took the responsibility on.

The Chapel was created in April 1944 by a Rev. R. Keith Perdue of the Canadian Chaplain's Service. He found two pine logs and had them bolted together to form a cross. Services were held there for the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division up to embarkation for the D-Day landings.

The original cross was replaced with New Forest oak using the original bolt, which is still in use today, although the cross has been replaced again with New Forest oak.

Over the years it has been updated with a plaque

reading 'On this site a Cross was erected to the Glory of God on 14th April 1944 and services were held here until "D" day, 6th June 1944, by men of the 3rd Canadian Division, RCASC,' so we have a connection via the Service Corps.

The first service organised by the Branch was for Remembrance Sunday 2022, this was well attended by the local Harley Davison Motorcycle Club, local civilians and many ex-servicemen of various cap badges. The next service will be on 4 June 2023 at 1500hrs, so if you are in the area you are more than welcome to attend.

I would like to point out that the images of Corps Weekend in the last issue, where the Branch Chairman was cut in half (I know many would have volunteered for that job); we were not first at the bar but last as it had just shut! As a Branch we all enjoyed the weekend, and look forward to this year's celebration.

Nik Carter



Canadian "Woodland" D-Day Chapel at Mogshade Hill

Riders Branch

Birmingham International Military Tattoo and the Wreath of Respect

On Saturday and Sunday 11-12 February 2023, Berni Wilkins, Riders Branch Welfare Officer and Dave Byrne, Branch Standard Bearer, took part in the prestigious Birmingham International Military Tattoo at Resorts World Arena Birmingham.

This was the first time the Branch Standard, which was dedicated at the Corps Weekend in June last year, had taken part in such a high-profile event and joined over 100 military, Association and RBL Standard Bearers who had registered each day, as well as a number from cadet and youth groups from all over the UK. This amazing spectacular has taken place every year since 1989 (with the exception of 2020 and 2021 because of Covid and 2022 when it was postponed following the sad passing of HM Queen Elizabeth II).

Berni attended in her capacity as Custodian of the Wreath of Respect as well as promoting the Riders Branch, Association and the Wreath of Respect, which Dave is also Custodian of.

The Wreath of Respect was commissioned by an anonymous donor in 2014 to commemorate the centenary of the start of the First World War, to show appreciation for all who have been affected by conflict, not just those who served but their families, predecessors and descendants. It is for those of all faiths, beliefs and nationalities and is intended to be a medium for remembrance, reflection, respect and reconciliation.

The wreath, which weighs approximately 10lbs, is made of steel, made by award-winning blacksmith Andrew Thompson at Powerham Forge in Devon. It consists of nine metal poppies representing Remembrance, supported by a horseshoe to show appreciation for all animals affected by conflict - not

just horses but all animals - cats, dogs, pigeons etc. The horseshoe was gifted to the project and came from one of the stallions that pulled the gun carriage carrying the soil from Flanders Fields to the Memorial Garden at Horseguards and accompanied the Unknown Warrior on his journey to his final resting place in Westminster Abbey.

The Exhortation is written in the middle of the wreath and reminds us of the sacrifice made by so many. People are invited to hold the wreath and use it as a medium for reflection of their own thoughts and feelings. In order for everyone to experience the wreath, the Exhortation has been written in Braille and placed on the rear so that anyone who is visually impaired will have the same experience as everyone else who comes in contact with it.

The wreath is on a perpetual journey and has travelled extensively, visiting many battlefields, memorials and Acts of Remembrance including: Arnhem, The Scottish Parliament, The National Memorial for Scotland at Edinburgh Castle, the Welsh Assembly, the Falklands Memorial Cardiff, many memorials in Northern Ireland including Palace Barracks, and attended numerous VC Commemorations all over the UK. It has also visited St. Dunstons Blind Veterans Centre in Llandudno, Erskine Scottish Veterans Centre and the Somme Nursing Home in Belfast, as well as the Royal Star &

Garner Home for Veterans in Solihull and RBL Galanos House in Warwickshire.

In 2022, the wreath accompanied the Airborne Forces Riders on the SAMA82 Ride of Respect visiting Memorials and the final resting places of the fallen who made the ultimate sacrifice during the Falklands War.

In January 2023, Major (Rtd) Paul Moore, Ambassador for the Wreath of Respect, took the wreath to the Falkland Islands where it was seen and held by many residents and visitors at a number of memorials and battlefields.

The wreath's ongoing journey may be followed via Facebook: Wreath of Respect; Twitter @OfWreath or by visiting: www.wreathofrespect.wixsite.com/wreathofrespect. Details of how to make an application for the wreath are available on the website and Facebook page.

Tickets are now on sale for next year's Tattoo: www.birminghamtattoo.co.uk

If any branch would like their Standard to take part please make contact initially with Berni Wilkins via email: secretaryrctriders@gmail.com and details will be forwarded to the Tattoo Standard Bearers Liaison Officer.

Berni Wilkins



Standards on parade - quite a sight



Dave Byrne parading the Riders Branch Standard



Berni Wilkins with the Wreath of Respect

Junior Leader's Regiment Royal Corps of Transport Reunion Taunton - 9-11 September 2022



All together again

Over the weekend of 9-11 of September 2022, approximately 120 ex-Junior Leader soldiers descended upon Taunton, Somerset for a reunion. This number included 45 Juniors who were celebrating the 50th Anniversary since arriving at the Norton Manor Camp on 12 September 1972.

The whole event was once again organised by 'Mr Fix it' Stephen (Fred) Staszewski, who many ex-RCT and RLC personnel will know from the annual Army v Navy rugby event he organises for several hundred serving and ex-serving Forces personnel each year.

All those who attended were accommodated at the Holiday Inn, which is conveniently located just off junction 25 of the M5 in Taunton. Most attendees arrived by car from across the UK, however a number flew in or travelled from far and wide; the Shetland Isles, Germany, Cyprus, Australia and New Zealand to name a few. Those that arrived by train were kindly met by Kevin Parker, who provided a free return shuttle service between the station and the accommodation in his own private vehicle. Kevin's selfless support in this area was greatly appreciated by everyone, even those who did not need his help.

Prior to the official start of the weekend, Terry Gray arranged a visit to Norton Manor Camp on Friday morning to conduct a recce and seek final confirmation from the Regimental Sergeant Major of 40 Commando RM, who are the current custodians of the site, so that everyone could visit on the Saturday morning. The visit would consist of a tour around the camp, followed by refreshments in the WO's and Sergeants' Mess. Once all the finer details were completed, including coaches to transfer everyone to and from the camp by Taff Palmer, Terry Gray had barely left the site when he received a call from the RSM stating that, due to the very sad news of the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II the

previous day, direction had been received that all social events in camp, understandably, had to be cancelled.

Having accepted that the tour of the camp was no longer a proposition, everyone focussed their attention on the Friday night event, which consisted of a meet and greet in the bar area followed by a finger buffet and the opportunity for everyone to get settled into the surroundings and catch up with each other. For some this had been at least 40 years since they last spoke, saw or had even heard from their former colleagues. One of the things that stuck out was the rivalry that existed between the different troops and squadrons. From all those years ago, nothing had changed with the banter being as strong and as ruthless now than it ever was! In fact, it was more alive and kicking today than it was back then, which was a pleasure to witness!

On Saturday morning at short notice 'Plan B' was swiftly put into action. Bob Challenger had obtained a wreath and very kindly brought it with him to the event. It was therefore unanimously decided that all attendees would parade at the War Memorial in Vivary Park, Taunton at 1100hrs on the Saturday morning for a wreath laying ceremony, in memory of all those who had given their lives in the name of duty to their country. A short service was led by our guest of honour for the weekend, Maj (Retd) MS Corthine BEM (alias Sparky), and after the Last Post had been played, he laid the wreath in their honour.

The service went better than expected and attracted many local residents who were very keen to find out what was going on. Following the memorial event, many photographs were taken by all of the attendees and their partners. The class of the '12th September 1972' had a separate photo taken before it then started to get a bit silly in that people started

to separate groups into different squadron, troops and even room level configurations. One photograph that stands out was one of Maj Corthine meeting SSgt Colin Didcock for the first time in many, many years. Colin was an instructor in the regimental Skill at Arms wing back in 1972.

On Saturday afternoon everyone returned back to the hotel where they could chill out and prepare themselves for the evening's entertainment, dinner and formalities. The main function room was professionally decorated with many different Standards, squadron and troop flags and banners on display. The Holiday Inn staff had done an excellent job preparing the dining room, which looked fantastic, and the service and food was as good as some of the best Michelin starred venues you will find outside of London!

After dinner speeches started with Terry Gray saying a few words to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Class of 12 September 1972. He handed over the proceedings to Maj Mark Corthine who kept the entire room fixated and entertained for a good half hour

with his look on life, stories and ever lasting memories of times gone by!

The evening's entertainment included a raffle and auction, with all prizes and items up for grabs being donated by those in attendance and the proceeds going to worthwhile charities. A total of £1,260 was raised and donated to the following extremely worthy charities: Soldiers off the Streets (SOTS), Scotties Little Soldiers and Tony Brown's Forces Manor project.

Overall, the weekend was a tremendous success and was enjoyed and appreciated by all those who attended. A huge appreciation and thank you must go to Stephen "Fred" Staszewski for the meticulous hard work he puts in to ensure that everyone does thoroughly enjoy the weekend's activities. We are all now looking forward to the next reunion, which is forecast to take place at the same venue over the weekend of the 8-10 September 2023. We look forward to seeing you all there!

Terry Gray



The Class of 12 September 1972



Maj Corthine laying the wreath



Bond Ford Troop class of 12 September 1972

Norfolk and Norwich Branch

We open our notes with the sad news of the death of our President, Lt Col (QM, Retd) Harry Dalwood BEM. He was a gentle giant of a man who led by example and influenced so many military careers. Many junior leaders from Harry's time as RSM at Norton Manor, Taunton, in the mid 1960s will have fond memories of how scary a RSM can be.

His well-attended funeral was held in Southampton on Wednesday 15 February 2023, with the Plymouth and Norfolk Standards on parade. We saw the 'Old Boy' off in style - may he rest in peace.

Our Branch rounded off 2022 with a very successful Christmas lunch on Sunday 27 November 2022 with 52 attendees at our very popular venue, the Furzedown Hotel in Great Yarmouth. The Christmas carol sing along, with Richard Dawson (ex-RCT Band) and Glynis, was the highlight and sent everyone on their way in fine Christmas spirit!

At our Branch AGM on 14 February 2023 we were honoured, with a unanimous vote in favour, to elect our new President, Col HVC (Howard) Stephens. We wish him a long and enjoyable time in office.

The remainder of the stalwart committee volunteered to continue in post, and this was agreed without dissent. Our Spring lunch, scheduled for Sunday 28 May 2023, is now being planned. The Association Eastern Region AGM, hosted by Northampton Branch, will be held on Saturday 1 April 2023. We also have plans for our Branch Standard and members to attend Corps Weekend on 15-16 July 2023 in Aldershot.

We close with a heartfelt thanks to our outgoing National Secretary, Lt Col Robin Moore. We thank him for his sterling work during his period in office and welcome to the fold Lt Col Richard Hick and wish him every success in this important role.

Terry Byrne



Lt Col Harry Dalwood BEM and Lt Col Terry Byrne MBE in 2015



THE WAGGONER NEEDS YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS



Please help with content for the next edition of The Waggoner. Articles are always welcome, along with good quality photos sent as separate JPEG documents.

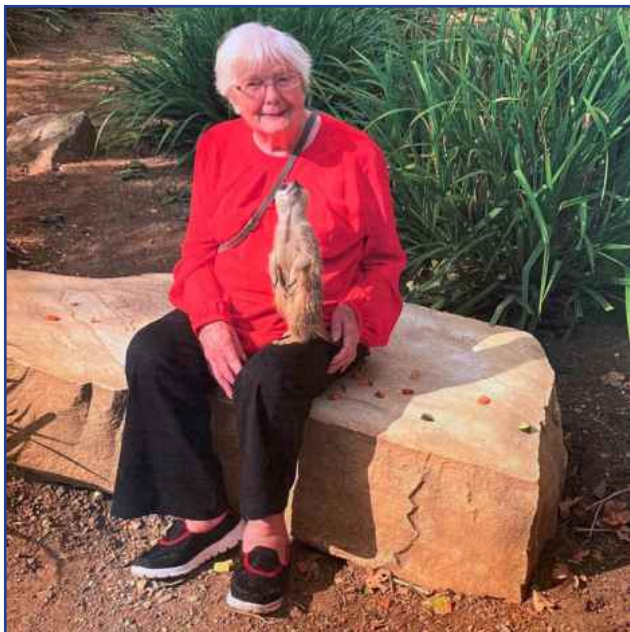
Please email to: rascrctsec@rhqtherlc.org.uk

Chelmsford Branch

During the hot month of August, one of our eldest members Gwen Tebbit reached the grand age of ninety and to celebrate this wonderful milestone, the Branch organised a trip for her to visit the Call of the Wild zoological park in South Woodham Ferrers, Essex.

The reason for this choice of venue was that it allows people to mingle with the meercats and, as they are a particular favourite animal of Gwen's, she was ever so delighted with this kind surprise.

Following the trip to see the meercats, Michael and Bev Hughes kindly arranged a barbecue at their house and yet another surprise; Gwen was given a meercat birthday cake to finish off a lovely day for a very special lady.



Gwen chatting to her new friend

All too soon summer faded away and we moved into November. Remembrance weekend as always was a busy period for the Branch, with two parades along with a visit by several members to the annual RBL Festival of Remembrance service at the Royal Albert Hall on the Saturday evening.

The first parade took place on Friday 11 November 2022 at the church of St Mary with St Leonard, the parish church of Broomfield where the Branch has historic links dating back to 1945 and where we were located until several years ago until we had to move.

The Branch colours are still on display inside this lovely church. The service was conducted at the War Memorial adjacent to the church by the Reverend Carolyn Tibbott.

The second parade took place in the town centre of Chelmsford on Sunday 13 November 2022 where the wreath was laid at the war memorial by Michael Hughes (Deputy Chairman), and he was accompanied by David Lloyd (Branch Treasurer).



Chelmsford Parade, Sunday 13 November 2022:
Michael Hughes and David Lloyd prior to the start



Post parade pose

BRANCH VISIT TO THE NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM AND THE ROYAL HOSPITAL CHELSEA WEDNESDAY 30 NOVEMBER 2022

A number of branch members had a lovely visit to the historical Royal Hospital Chelsea, home to the famous Chelsea Pensioners.

Prior to the visit, we all went to the National Army Museum which is just next door to the hospital grounds. All thoroughly enjoyed the vast amount of militaria on display, followed by a nice lunch in the cafeteria.

Back to the tour of the hospital, which was completed by our extremely knowledgeable, very

smart and funny guide, Bert, who had served in the regular Army for many years and had only been an In Pensioner (as they are known) for 12 months. We were hugely impressed by the building and the history. This is a unique place which takes real pride in looking after the pensioners. It was an absolute pleasure to be able to share the wonderful surroundings, albeit just for a couple of hours.

Arthur Pearce and David Lloyd



Branch members pose outside the Royal Hospital with their guide Bert

RCT Riders' Branch

Saturday 1 October 2022 saw the 15th annual Ride to the Wall (RTTW) and the second AGM of the Riders' Branch of the RASC & RCT Association. For those riding to the area on the Friday, the weather conditions were 'moist' to say the least, for which scuba gear would have been more fitting attire than bike gear. Saturday however, unlike last year, dawned fine and dry for the main event. The AGM was well attended and opened with the Chairman calling the meeting to attention for a 96-second silence, in respect of the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Essential business matters were efficiently dealt with and the activities throughout the year outlined, which ranged from a stand at the Scottish Motorcycle Show and members marching at the Cenotaph, through to motorcycle escorts at a wedding and, with a sad inevitability, some

funerals, including 'Harry's last ride'.

The Chairman thanked Eric Jones and Ade Corbett for their particular contributions to the Branch during the year and congratulated Amanda McNamara on being Poppy Scotland's 'Poppy Hero'.

Over recent years, DMS Whittington had kindly provided a Form Up Point near the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) for the Branch and facilitated the AGM. Key staff who had enabled this were thanked for their support and adopted as Honorary Members of the Branch – the CO, Wing Commander Jayne Arscott, previous and current RSMs Trevor Tuhey and Andrew Bazeley respectively, and the Catering Manager, Jennie Moseley. Wing Commander Arscott thanked the members and told them that she was very proud to host the Branch and that they could regard the barracks as their 'home'.

Following the AGM and having been joined by riders from other service branches, including the Royal Naval Riders, Airborne Riders, REME Riders and the Eights & Aces, 235 riders and 73 pillioners departed the barracks bound for the NMA.

Most of the riders attending RTTW arrived in convoy after departing from one of eleven designated start locations around the country, although some travelled from as far afield as Belgium and Spain. As the motorcycles approached the Arboretum, they were greeted by David 'Blu' Sheaf, a veteran of Northern Ireland, who every year braves the weather, standing to attention for five hours, saluting every rider as they pass.

The Service of Remembrance itself, which was broadcast online for those who couldn't attend the event, commenced with a flypast by a WWII Spitfire and a Lancaster bomber, and featured performances from piper Leif Findlay, and vocalists Abigail Carter-Simpson, Gari Glaysher and Oliver Moriarty. The service concluded with a minute's silence, laying of wreaths and the National Anthem performed by the Band of the Irish Guards. As thousands of 'Wallers' ascended the steps of the Armed Forces Memorial following the service, the powerful music and lyrics of 'Brothers in Arms' by Dire Straits could be heard across the site – the song is the unofficial anthem of Ride to the Wall.

Martin Dickinson, Founder of RTTW, and himself ex-RCT and a branch member, said: "Each year we gather at Ride to the Wall to remember those who can no longer ride by our side, ensuring that the names on the walls of the Armed Forces Memorial are never forgotten. Through the dedication and support of the extended 'Waller family', we want to help make sure that the National Memorial

Arboretum can continue to share the stories of those who have served and sacrificed for our country."

Following the main service, the Riders' Branch held their own act of remembrance at the memorial at Logistic Grove within the NMA, followed by a group photograph on the main steps of the Armed Forces memorial (with thanks to Paul Mack for the pipes, Graham Malam for the bugling and Rosi McIsaac for photography).

Many branch members then retired to their adopted pub, the Bull's Head, for food and refreshment (with thanks to Paul and Nicky Goldingay for their outstanding hospitality).

Since the first Ride to the Wall in 2008, 'Wallers' have raised over £1.35m to support the NMA, which features over 400 memorials to those who have served and sacrificed for the Nation, set within 150-acres of gardens, grounds and woodlands. Thank you to all the RTTW team and marshals for all their unstinting efforts.

Dave Nelson

For those with access to THE RCT RIDERS (part of the RASC & RCT Association) on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1690884977746817>) there is a video of the departure from DMS Whittington and a montage of photographs of the day, both by kind permission of Branch Photographer Rosi McIsaac.

Video: <https://www.facebook.com/1641584210/videos/444768757722246/>

Photographic montage: <https://www.facebook.com/1641584210/videos/622469942691993/>



Riders pose for a photo at the NMA



Branch members at the Logistic Grove

Tank Transporter National Branch

The Tank Transporter Branch continues to evolve and grow. Membership numbers continue to increase and the Facebook pages are popular with virtually all members; coupled with the TT App which is soon to be upgraded, there is every opportunity for all members whether serving or veterans to keep in touch.

The Annual Reunion took place in Liverpool in October and although attendance numbers were slightly lower than in previous years, it was a memorable weekend. The theme for the evening was Peaky Blinders which was complemented by live music from Claire, our regular violinist and her colleague, and also the ever popular (with many) disco.

The date for this year's reunion is 12-15 October 2023 at the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool. The reunion, as always, is open to all ranks (and partners) who served in any tank transporter unit irrespective of cap badge, location or date. Details for the 2023 reunion are being finalised and will be posted on Facebook under the Tk Tpnr Reunion 2023.



Maj Gen Steirn CBE and Paul Moreton at the annual reunion

The events in Ukraine continue to impact heavily on the tank transporter commitment in Europe. In mid-December, our Chairman Leigh Williams, was able to contact Sgt Leigh Hitchen who is currently on a six-month tour at Tapa in Estonia with the Tank

Transporter Troop. Sgt Hitchen was asked by the Chairman if we could get the detachment some form of a Christmas box for those who were not going to be able to be at home for the festive period. The response was to have some form of music system, so those working on the vehicle park had something to listen to whilst at work. As a result, the Chairman contacted the Makita shop in Tallin and purchased three Makita industrial grade Bluetooth speakers which are now with the Troop in Estonia. The gift was funded from the Tank Transporter Branch funds which represents all branch members that subscribe to the Branch.

The photo below is from the HET Troop based at Tapa, Estonia who gathered to say thank you to the tank transporter family for the speakers. It goes without saying that we as the tank transporter family send those on detachment in Estonia our best wishes for a safe tour and a safe return to their families at home.

Tank transporter gatherings are being organised as follows:

5-7 May 2023 - 3 Tk Tpnr Sqn gathering at Eastwood Hall Nottingham. Contact Ian Richards for more details.

9-10 June 2023 - Tk Tpnr Summer Gathering. All ranks informal gathering at the Bull and Royal Preston in Preston, Lancs. Contact Terry McKibben.

4-6 August 2023 - Gloucestershire Vintage and Country Extravaganza (South Cerney, near Cirencester). Display of the historic vehicles lovingly maintained and fettled by Wayne Meadows and his team of TT enthusiasts (you know who you are)!

11-13 August 2023 - Newbury Retro Festival (close to Chieveley Services). Historic vehicles displayed by Wayne Meadows.

Ian Lloyd



26 Transport Column (Bridging) RASC 1961-1963 and Hameln Prison (The 'Mutiny' and the Execution)

I find it unbelievable that it is sixty years since I moved from the Junior Leaders Battalion RASC to 26 Transport Column RASC (Bridging). My first posting in 'man's service' in 1963 was to Hameln during the Cold War, which was memorable in many ways. 26 Column experienced an unusual event soon after I arrived, that encouraged the soldiers of the Unit to refuse to work. It was considered by some as a 'Bull Strike' and by others as a mutiny. The other event involved the quiet and delightful town of Hameln, which had a notorious prison with a dark past. As I discovered, the event involved a soldier of the RASC, although he was a war-time soldier and not a member of 26 Column. In this article I recall the 'Mutiny' and the Execution.

The bridging unit in British Army of the Rhine (BAOR) during the 1950s was 125 Company RASC which was based at Hameln, West Germany. The formation of 26 Transport Column (Bridging) in 1961, whose role was to provide bridging and tipper, and later trackway, support for the Royal Engineers (RE) in BAOR, was widely dispersed with Column Headquarters in Bielefeld, 10 and 35 Companies based at Bindon Barracks in Hameln and 15 Company at Scarborough Barracks, Osnabruck. 408 Troop RE was attached to the Column and was also located in Bindon Barracks. The Barracks was close to Hameln town centre, the town made famous as the home of the Pied Piper (Rattenfänger).

Bindon Barracks (Scharnhorst Kaserne) was built in 1888/9 for the Army of the German Imperial Empire and was later used by Hitler's Wehrmacht. After the Second World War, the British Army took it over and renamed it Bindon Barracks, after the pre-war senior RE Officer General Sir Bindon Blood. The choice of Hameln to base RE bridging and RASC bridging support was sensible as it sits on the mighty River Weser.

The Column's task was to transport Light Assault Float Bridges (LAFB), which were designed to carry vehicles and equipment of an Infantry Division, Heavy Assault Float Bridges (HAFB) for larger vehicles and equipment, and Heavy Ferries. The bridges are self-explanatory but the Heavy Ferry was different. It comprised three pontoon sections – main, buoyancy and propulsion and could carry tanks and heavy support weapons across a river to repulse an enemy counter attack. Normally the ferry could be built by the RE in an hour although the RASC soldiers of 26 Column prided themselves on being able to build it in a shorter time and regularly beat the Sappers in competition.

The Unit was equipped with AEC Militant 10-ton trucks, 3-ton Bedford RLs (as they were at the time) and the Coles crane, operated by RE soldiers, which was used to lift heavy items of bridging off

the trucks. 15 Company had tipper trucks and also carried heavy metal trackway rolls on Bedford RLs for use on bridge sites. These sites were very muddy and trucks were regularly pulled out of the mud by RE bulldozers, occasionally resulting with the loss of the front bumper. RE Squadrons would take their turn to occupy the 'Bridge Camp' for a month's summer bridging training.

When the Column formed, the majority of soldiers were National Servicemen and, when National Service came to an end in 1962, they were expecting to be replaced by regulars, many who were to be ex-Junior Leaders from Taunton. However, by an act of Parliament, 228 National Servicemen in the Column had their two years' service extended by six months and at the end of that year there were 132 National Servicemen still serving in the Bridging Column.

In February 1962, the Column took part in flood relief work at Hamburg and as a result 147 all ranks were awarded medals by the City of Hamburg. The North Sea flood, as it was called, of 1962 was a natural disaster affecting mainly the coastal regions of Germany and in particular the city of Hamburg from 16-17 February 1962. In total, the homes of about 60,000 people were destroyed, and the death toll amounted to 315.



Hamburg Flood Medal 1962

A group of ex-juniors, including me, arrived in Hameln from Taunton in the autumn of 1963. Initially we all went to 35 Company although, soon after arrival, several of us moved across to 10 Company. It was an idyllic posting and seemed a good mixture of work and play. An ex-Junior recalled: 'On my first bridging exercise I was co-driver and

was very impressed by the hard working and professional nature of the Unit. However, I soon detected a great deal of unease, particularly in 10 Company. We would spend almost every week out on the bridge sites as each RE Squadron practised its bridging role and at the weekend we would be at the mercy of the CSM who always insisted on a barrack room inspection on Saturday morning, invariably followed by a re-inspection on Sunday morning. The 'Bull' was excessive and there was a distinct lack of understanding of the men's workload by Company Headquarters. This had been going on for some time and the older soldiers were fed up with it. This continued from the extension of the National Servicemen. It was becoming 'all work and no play'.

Soon after the 1963 autumn draft arrived, some were persuaded, one Sunday morning, to join the older soldiers in the NAAFI and refused to work. The British press referred to it as a 'Bull Strike' (probably advised by HQ BAOR) although within the camp it was treated as a 'mutiny'. The 1st Battalion Royal Warwickshire Fusiliers, who were the local infantry battalion based in nearby Gordon Barracks, surrounded the NAAFI and the 'mutineers' were all placed under close arrest. The new OC of 10 Company, Maj V Hook, went to the NAAFI and read the Army Act – telling the soldiers to disband the unlawful meeting. In fact, he read the precise section that dealt with mutiny and its consequences. The 'mutineers' were mainly from 10 Company although some soldiers came from 35 Company. Fortunately, the few NCOs who wished to take part were persuaded not to, had they done so it would have been taken very seriously by the military authorities. It was drastic action to take, although the soldiers achieved their aim. A CSM and OC were removed (from 10 Company and 35 Company respectively) and the routine improved considerably. However, several 'ringleaders' were posted out within 24 hours, pending an enquiry and possible court martial. All those involved were eventually charged and punished; I, as a young soldier doing what the older soldiers ordered, was fined £3, which in those days was a lot of money. The CO, Lt Col W D N Mitchell, and RHQ staff rushed from Bielefeld that Sunday morning, but the British press arrived ahead of them. On 15 November 1963, the Column Headquarters moved lock, stock and barrel from Bielefeld and remained permanently at Hameln, which left only 15 Company away from the Column. Within a year there was a large turnover of personnel in the Column with soldiers posted to other units in Germany; I was posted to the newly formed 8 Transport Column (Advance Weapon Support) at Munster. In July 1965, the Column rebadged on the formation of the RCT and, on the introduction of the M2 bridging vehicle in the early 1970s, the Bridging Regiment was disbanded.

Hameln Prison

Hameln was liberated from the Nazis by US infantry troops on 7 April 1945 and came under

British military rule. From 1945 to 1949, Hameln Prison was the central location for the execution by hanging of 156 war criminals sentenced by British Military Tribunals, as well as an additional 44 persons sentenced to death for other post-war crimes against the occupying powers. Two British soldiers who had been convicted of murders were among the 44 and were hanged after trial by court martial. T/5948278 Dvr Francis John Upson RASC for the murder of a German woman was executed on 22 January 1947 and A/Sgt Charles Edward Patrick for the murder of Pte Georgina Kelty, who he shot in the head. He had transferred from the Dorsetshire Regiment to the Royal Military Police Special Investigation Unit, was found guilty and hanged in September 1947.



Francis, or Frank as he was known, was born in Guernsey on 18 December 1919. He enlisted in the 1st Battalion Hampshire Regiment and served in Palestine in 1936. He later served in the RASC as a driver during the Second World War. He was awarded the General Service Medal (GSM) with Palestine clasp, which was returned to the medal office and scrapped after he was executed in 1947; it is unlikely his WWII medals were issued.

A note in the British Western Daily Press in August 1946 reported that on Friday 16 August 1946 in Berlin, standing before a court martial, Driver Francis John Upson had pleaded guilty to a charge of murder of a German woman. Other newspaper accounts stated that the incident had occurred in the French Sector of Berlin and that the woman was 60 years old and had been hit over the head with a table lamp.

On 22 January 1947, Francis Upson was hanged in Hameln prison by British hangman Albert Pierrepont, assisted by RSM Richard O'Neill, who had been Pierrepont's assistant in nearly all previous executions at Hameln, starting on 13 December 1945 with thirteen German war criminals. Frank, who was serving with 528 HQ Company RASC, was buried in Hanover War Cemetery, Germany. Strangely, on his burial certificate he is 'Remembered with Honour'.

Lieutenant Colonel David J Owen MBE

Humanitarian Aid to Ukraine

As a few of you know, I have been making regular aid runs to Ukraine. The war started on 24 February 2022. A friend of mine gave me a phone call a couple of days later to ask if I would be interested in a trip to Ukraine delivering aid. Of course, I jumped at the chance. On 7 March 2022, I was outside the Fox and Hounds Pub in Ramsden Heath helping to load 15 Transit type vans and a 7.5 tonner, with anything from nappies to water purification tablets, ready to take to Ukraine.



Flying the infamous 1 Sqn RCT flag at a quick pitstop on the German autobahn

After a few paperwork problems at the Port of Dover, the 16 vehicles and 32 drivers were on their way that night. After a quick refreshment break in Ghent, we were on our way through Germany, passing all the tourist attractions like Paderborn, Dortmund etc. After an overnight stop in Dresden, as we were all knackered due to the 7.5 tonner being limited to 56mph, we were on our way to Krakow in Poland. The following day the 15 vans went off to Khyriv in Ukraine to deliver to an Aid Station while myself and Sarah Hood (pub landlady) went to empty the truck at a distribution centre in Krakow.

Trip two was in April 2022. This time three vehicles made their way via Harwich-Hook of Holland with more aid. We made our way to Krakow once again. The following day, due to the border being backlogged, we transferred most of our aid to a Ukrainian contact's vehicle, then made our way to two refugee camps to see if we could help out. We visited Medyka and a place I can't even spell the name, let alone say it.

This really was heart breaking; seeing all the women and children with nowhere to go.

Trip three was in May 2022, this time with just two vehicles. Myself in a Transit and Steve Parker (ex-Queen's Lancs Regt) made our way to Khyriv, just over the border in Ukraine to deliver some aid, then I went off to Lviv with a young lady to deliver equipment to a military warehouse. I was pulled over for speeding and when I showed the medical equipment I had in the back, I was told to go 'fast fast'. Once delivered, Zoe and I made our way back to Krakow via Krakowets.

Our fourth trip was on 4 May 2022. Once again, Steve and I made our way to Khyriv to drop aid off to our contacts. Steve then made his way to Kyiv and I was off to Lviv to deliver a drone to an Army barracks where I was made most welcome. After arriving at around 1730, I was offered food and drink, and very nice it was too, I then got to play with some Ukrainian kit (AK47). By the time we had finished, the camp commander was saying I should stay overnight due to the curfew. As tempting as it was, I chose to go for the border. I'm glad I did, as I left at 2105 and the base was hit by four missiles at 2109. I saw the flashes and heard the bangs. Thankfully, all they hit was a disused derelict building and there were no injuries or fatalities.

Our fifth trip was in June 2022. There were problems from the start. We were to deliver six ambulances to Katowice in Poland. Of the six ambulances, two never made it outside the UK, one had a catastrophic gearbox breakdown in Holland not long after we got off the ferry and another died by the famous refuelling place of Wankum. The two that did make it were driven by myself and Matt Nice



At the Ukrainian border with a former member of the Azov Battalion

(ex-Para). Although we were told a medical depot was expecting us, when we arrived the depot was all locked up. A quick phone call back to the UK discovered the bloke that organised the trip was having a nervous breakdown, so I got his Polish contact's number off him and eventually managed to find another site to leave the ambulances. We then travelled to Katowice airport where we met Neville Staples from the band The Specials.

Our sixth and final trip was in February 2023. Myself, Steve, Terry Fallows and our resident fossil, 76-year-old Dave Stubberfield, started loading our two vans. We were assisted by Mark Francois MP and the Mayor of Basildon, as we were to escort a third van from the Basildon Twinning Assoc to Borodyanka; the site of a massacre last year when over 300 civilians were killed in one block of flats. This town is not far from Kyiv and it was heartbreaking to see and hear what had happened there. We delivered our aid to a Home Guard Depot after staying overnight in a church. We were then introduced to the Mayor of Borodyanka who was most thankful for the aid we delivered to his town.

By the time you read this we will hopefully have completed our next trip to go to the soldiers of Ukraine in March. You can follow our progress on Facebook if you follow Boxers Barbers 4 Ukraine or via our website: www.4ukraine.org.uk

Andy Rae



The RLC Museum is well worth a visit. It includes the prestigious RASC & RCT medal collection

North East Region Annual Reunion

North East Region's Annual Reunion was held at the Yorkway Motel, Pocklington, 14-16 October 2022.

33 members and wives/partners attended and we welcomed Colonel Nigel Gilbert and his wife Maureen as our guests. They seemed to enjoy the activities and I am delighted to report that they participated in all of the entertainment; they won the bingo and came in the middle in the quiz. Our thanks go to the Yorkway Motel who excelled themselves again with

great rooms, fantastic meals and a nice warm and friendly atmosphere.

The get-together was organised by the President of Hull Branch, Gordon Barker MBE, and Chairman of Hull Branch, Craig Metcalfe. We were delighted to have representatives from Teesside, Grimsby, Hull, and Doncaster Branches. We also managed to find time for a trip into Pocklington and Burnby Gardens for the day. I am delighted to report that the driver bought everyone back safely, that was me!

Now you may wonder why we have included a picture of an empty table... that's because we are very proud of our table mats. They were retrieved from a skip!

Craig Metcalfe



Top table with our beloved Association Pennant



Our cherished table mats



Some of our branch members with Col Gilbert



Our glamorous ladies

MANCHESTER BRANCH VISIT TO THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM

On 10 September 2022, we organised a branch visit to the National Memorial Arboretum.

The visit took place in conjunction with The Salford Veterans Breakfast Club, where we hold our monthly meetings. The occasion was to commemorate Northern Ireland Veterans Day. Mr Paul Davis was our Standard Bearer and because the event took place only two days following the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, a Book of Remembrance was opened, and I had an opportunity to sign it on behalf of the Branch. It made the visit even more poignant.

Alan Marshland



Standards are marched from the service



On arrival, 18 members and wives of the Branch together with members of the Breakfast Club

Heathrow Branch

Heathrow has had a placid but interesting year. A few members were able to secure tickets for the Army v Navy game at Twickenham. We had a shaky moment when trying to get tickets for the Trooping of the Colour. The Secretary had to approach Horse Guards direct to secure tickets to the Colonel's Review. After originally being told that all tickets were sold, the Secretary then got a surprise invitation from Boris Johnson's Office to attend the Queen's Review, where he ended up in the now infamous garden, rubbing shoulders with the Heads of the Commonwealth.

562 Sqn held a Families Day on 13 August 2022; the Branch ran a table to try to attract new members. It was probably the hottest day of the year, so thank goodness we were in the garages, albeit beside the bouncy castle. The Chairman and Secretary were in attendance and tried the trick of having sweets on the stand... the sweets went, but that was all that happened.

In August the Secretary went on the Arnhem Pilgrimage organised by Salisbury Plain Branch. It was an excellent five days, although it was a shame that the weather was inclement during the open-air church service on the Sunday morning when the local children place flowers on the graves.

For the Christmas dinner, the Branch went to an outside caterer. It was an ex-RAF chef, who teaches at a college and is also a member of a Breakfast Club that some members attend. He got some of his students down to help cook and serve the meal. It was a great success, and we look forward to

repeating it this year. The chef has also joined the Branch!

Heathrow Branch had the honour of sending its standard and a RASC Wreath to the Funeral of Frederick (Fred) L Miller on 23 February 2023. Fred was an RASC Driver during WWII and a D-Day veteran.

Fred's funeral procession was escorted from his home by riders of the Royal British Legion Riders Branch. The procession was greeted at Breakspear Crematorium by the Branch standard and three RBL standards (Ruislip, Teddington and Twickenham). There was a large congregation of family, friends and military well-wishers who had heard about Fred on the grapevine, it was standing room only in the aisles.

During the service, tributes were led by Colonel Gilbert, who spoke about his war time service and meeting him on the occasion of his centenary year, when he was invited to Worthy Down RLC Museum, with his wife Joan (Waggoner 20). We also heard from Eugenie Brooks who first met Fred and Joan on the MV Boudicca, (the ship that ferried the veterans to and from France for the 75th D-Day Anniversary), they found they only lived a few miles apart and became firm friends.

A bugler, Pte Rai RLC of the Corps of Drums, played the Last Post. It became apparent that Fred was a man of high standards, well loved by his family, grandchildren and great grandchildren, also well respected by those who knew him.

Ian Ritchie



Standards on parade at Fred Miller's funeral



The Royal Logistic Corps



On 1 June 2023 The Royal Logistic Corps will formally recognise relocation to the historic city of Winchester to coincide with the 30th anniversary of the Corps, with a Freedom of the City Parade and service of Thanksgiving at Winchester Cathedral.



■ Parade and Service of Thanksgiving

500 personnel from across The RLC will conduct a Freedom Parade. They will be joined by RLC and Forming Corps veterans. Following the parade there will be Service of Thanksgiving at Winchester Cathedral. Tickets should be booked via the QR code below.

■ Reception Events

Following the Service of Thanksgiving there will be a VIP reception at the Cathedral and a Regimental Lunch. Free transport will be available to Worthy Down Camp where food and refreshments will be available including an all ranks BBQ and curry lunch for on duty personnel. Further tickets are available below for veterans, families and friends.

■ Open Day and Concert

From 1500hrs a Community Open Day for 3,000 people will highlight the breadth and depth of the talent within The RLC, promoting the aspects of diversity, sport, STEM and sustainability, representative of the modern Army and The RLC. The open day will transition to an open-air concert following a spectacular firework display commencing at 2200hrs. Entrance will be by ticket only (see below). There is no parking on site.



To register to attend the RLC 30 events scan the QR code and select from the menu of options

For updates on the RLC 30 events go to:
www.royallogisticcorps.co.uk

REDEDICATION SERVICE FOR CPL GILBERT WILLCOCKS ASC YPRES RESERVOIR CEMETERY - 19 OCTOBER 2022

It was confirmed during 2022, by the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre at the MOD, in conjunction with the historic branch of the National Army Museum, that Cpl Gilbert Willcocks ASC, who served with the 2nd Coy, 9th Div Train had been formally identified. He had been buried as an unknown soldier for more than a century in the Ypres Reservoir Cemetery, and his resting place would now be formally rededicated in his name.

There were five other rededication services carried out over 18-19 October 2022, all from different regiments including The Black Watch, The Cameronians, The King's Own Scottish Borderers, The Worcestershire Regiment and The Lancashire Fusiliers. They were all buried in various military cemeteries around Ypres.

The Rededication Service for Cpl Willcocks took place on the 19 October 2022, and was conducted by the Reverend Andy Nicolls CF, with representatives from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, who provided the newly named headstone, as well as from the British Embassy. The RLC was represented by Major Dean Askey, and the RASC and RCT Association by myself in my capacity as Chairman. The RBL Ypres Branch provided a Standard Bearer.

Cpl Willcocks was killed in action on 28 November 1915, aged 24. He was manning a canteen behind the frontline trenches, which was hit by a German shell. He had no known grave, and his name is included amongst the many who are remembered on the Menin Gate memorial in Ypres.

Born in Taunton in 1891, he was one of nine children. His parents were both from the West Country and moved to Swansea in 1901. Bert's first job after leaving school was as a clerk for the Swansea Education Office, before he became a commercial traveller. In 1910, Bert's father died leaving him the eldest of the children living at home. In 1911, the family moved to Roath outside Cardiff, where he found employment as a grocer's assistant. He regularly attended the Crwys Hall Memorial Chapel and played football in the Cardiff Football League. He joined the Army at the outbreak of the War and went to France in May 1915. Bert was much respected, not only locally but also by his fellow soldiers. Indeed, it was sometime after he died that the Crwys Hall Methodist Chapel received a letter from the frontline saying that the officers and men from 105 Coy ASC, 9th Div Train wished for a brass tablet in his name to be erected at the church and the funding was to be paid for from a collection by them. When the work was commissioned, the maker in Birmingham refused to take any money for it, and the £6.15s was given to Bert's widowed mother. The memorial plaque was unveiled on 2 April

1916 with a congregation of over 1,000 present including the Lord Mayor, with music being provided by the Band of the 3rd Welsh. It was the first memorial to a casualty of the First World War in any of Cardiff's places of worship. Sadly, Crwys Hall Methodist Church closed its doors in the 1980/90s, and the building fell into disrepair. It has now been renovated and renamed Highfields Church. During the renovation, all the memorials were removed and ended up in a private collection in Europe. They have subsequently been brought back, and re-hung in the Highfields Church, a lasting memorial to Cpl Willcocks. His name and sacrifice will not be forgotten.

Colonel Nigel Gilbert



Cpl Willcocks' new headstone

THE ARNHEM BATTLEFIELD AND PILGRIMAGE 2022

15-19 SEPTEMBER 2022

The Salisbury Branch left Middle Wallop in the early hours of 15 September 2022, rather like Active Edge but with our ladies, a wonderful addition to the group! Our driver navigated his way successfully through the customs and Covid procedures on both sides of the channel, then drove through France in good order. We finally descended onto Arnhem soil in early evening, bedraggled and tired, but enthusiastic for the forthcoming adventure. It's surprising what difference a G&T can achieve, just like Active Edge!

My late evening, 'Arnhem presentation' gave them food for thought and hopefully a different perception regarding the 1st British AB phase of Operation MARKET GARDEN.

Armed with maps and 'wet weather gear' we set forth for the DZs/LZs at Wolfheze and Ginkel Heath, all used by the AB forces, some 79 years ago. The area has not changed, except for the magnificent memorial to the Glider Pilot Regiment that was inaugurated whilst we were there. Our coach moved off to the nearby railway station, the intended route of the Reconnaissance Corp. We walked the track and located the SS ambush area and discussed in hindsight the reasons how and why the first attempt to reach the Arnhem Bridge had failed. Colonel Frost and his 2 Para Group would pay the price later that day.

So on into Arnhem, we passed the house of General Urquhart's hide away and finally the road bridge, the main objective. The first day's programme was completed with only a few blisters between us, the hotel was a welcome sight after a long but successful day.

As the local population descended onto the original DZ of 4th Bde on 18 September 1944 at Ginkel Heath, in anticipation, the weather was beginning to turn. We were all fortunate to observe a multitude of Hercules from various nations dropping paratroopers, a magnificent occasion that included meeting up with 47 AD Sqn RLC.

On Sunday we attended two memorial services, one at the AB cemetery in Oosterbeek, with the heavens opening up with torrential rain not one of the group drowned fortunately, but a more sorry bunch of veterans would be hard to find. Having dried out and recovered, we attended the Air Despatch Service in the afternoon, with our chairman laying a wreath for the members of 250 Coy RASC and to the Air Despatch Group who gave their lives during those desperate days.

All our objectives had been achieved, a humbling experience for many but the events of 1st Airborne must never be forgotten.

Derek Armitage

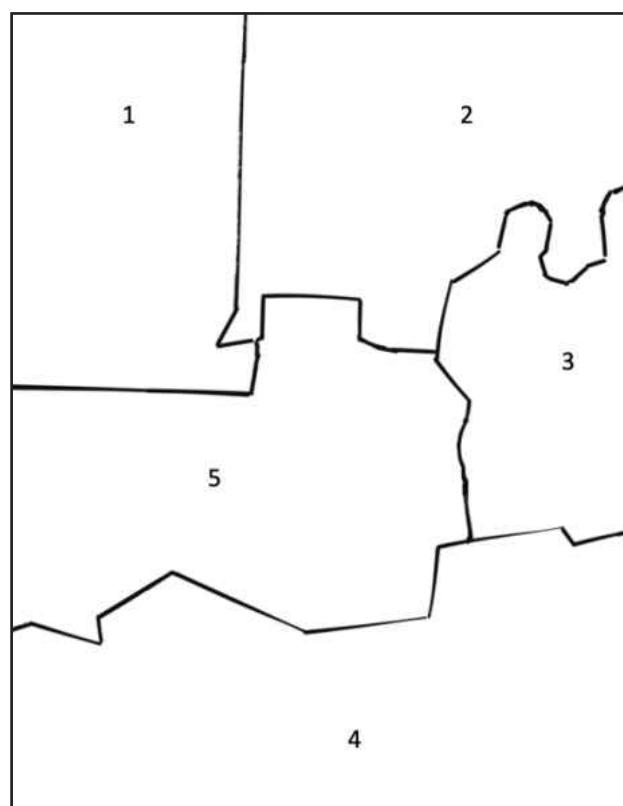


The tour group - all smiles when they are dry!

REMEMBRANCE 2022

On Sunday 13 November 2022, once again branches of the Association paraded in all corners of the country to remember the fallen. After a challenging few years, members were pleased to once again be able to pay their respects to fallen comrades. In addition, it gave everyone a very welcome opportunity to gather, share experiences and reflect together.

This year over seventy Association veterans paraded at Horse Guards Parade and marched past the Cenotaph. Spaces are always limited and we normally have more requesting places than allocated spaces. Members who would like a place for the Cenotaph Dispersal on 12 November 2023 should contact the Secretary via their Branch. If this is not possible, please contact the Secretary at: rascrtsec@rhqtherlc.org.uk

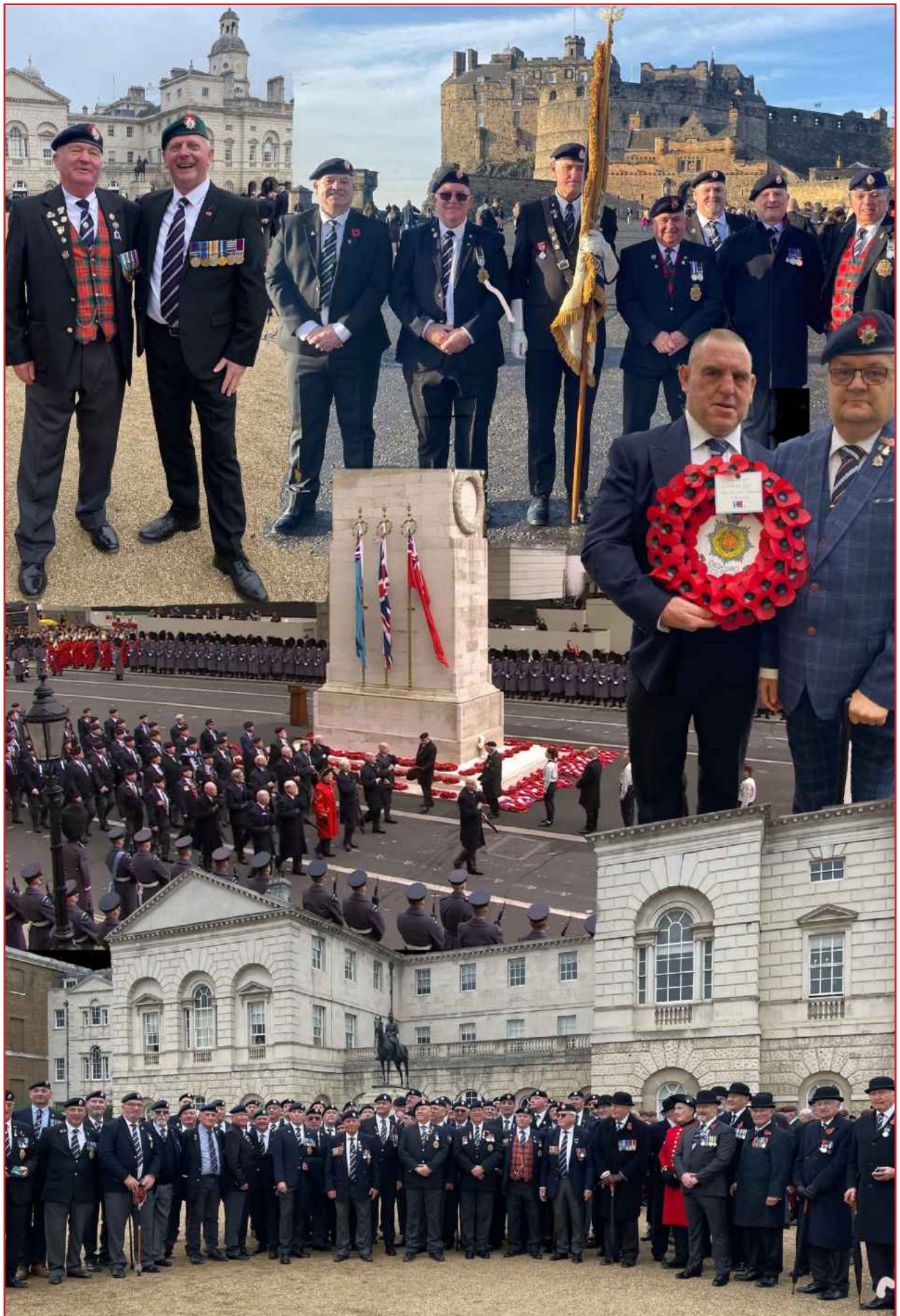


Photographs

Above: The RASC & RCT Association Contingent pay respects passing the Cenotaph

1. Mr George Redpath and Mr Stevie Byrne on Horse Guards
2. Mr C Evans, Mr I Duff, Mr S Cunningham, Mr R Thewlis, Mr A Blue, Mr T Boydon and M A Mclean at Edinburgh Castle
3. Mr Michael Hughes and Mr David Lloyd
4. RASC & RCT Association contingent on Horse Guards
5. RASC & RCT Association contingent marching past the Cenotaph

For a place in the 2023 RASC & RCT Association Cenotaph contingent contact:
Lt Col Richard Hick - rascrtsec@rhqtherlc.org.uk



Obituary

Gavin Robert 'Harry' Wragg



Gavin Robert 'Harry' Wragg RCT died peacefully, surrounded by his family on 21 July 2022, following a battle with cancer. In typical tenacious form, he was determined to make his 60th birthday, which he did, with a day in-hand.

In good RCT style, Harry (or 'H') had a love of motorbikes, a thread which one can follow throughout his life, from his time in the Army to his time in 'civvy street', where he undeniably left his mark and a considerable legacy.

Harry was, by his own admission, a wee bit of a rogue during his time in the Army, that ebullient character who was always to be found living life to the full and making the most of each and every opportunity with which he was presented (and why not); not all of which may have worked out quite as planned! His time in the Army, the Royal Corps of Transport, and in particular 1 Squadron, meant so much to him. Throughout his time in his beloved 1 Squadron, he developed a close group of loyal mates who stuck with him through thick and thin to the very end.

After much necessary planning to accommodate

the anticipated numbers, Harry's funeral was held on 3 September 2022. People did not disappoint, with around 400 motorbikes (plus pillionists) turning up from all over the country to escort Harry on his 'Last Ride', riding with him past the family home and on to South Leicestershire Crematorium.

Appropriately, Harry made his final journey to the Crematorium carried on a Long Wheelbase Land Rover, draped in the Union and Corps flags. It would doubtless have brought a smile to his face that he was driven on that journey by a friend who was a warrant officer in the Parachute Regiment; Harry often ribbed him that he was still aspiring to be a 'proper' soldier (i.e., RCT)! The Crematorium was filled to capacity for what was a very moving service, with hundreds more outside listening to it via an audio relay, after which, the stories and memories continued to flow at the wake, at the Blaby and Whetstone Boys' Club.

Most notably, Harry was the spark and provided the inspiration and leadership which in a mere three weeks created 'Rolling Thunder', famously galvanizing over 22,000 motorbikes (a conservative estimate from the Met Police) and 5,000+ on foot, to peacefully, and with the full co-operation of the police, demonstrate in London on 12 April 2019 in support of those veterans of the Northern Ireland conflict

(Operation BANNER) that were being subjected to vexatious prosecutions. In addition, there were co-ordinated satellite demonstrations for those that were too far from London – including Edinburgh, Belfast and even Cyprus. He turned the strength of feeling on the matter into action, giving rise to political engagement and consultation with Parliamentary bodies. Harry's efforts led to a legacy of continuing peaceful demonstrations, representation and engagement, plus regional veteran support groups and meetings. The veteran community would not have made anything like the progress it has on the matter without his efforts – he was the catalyst.

He has left a remarkable legacy, which continues to this day. He leaves his mother Wendy and children Luke, Lucy, Charlie, Emma and Ruby. He is, and will continue to be, missed so much, by so many.

I would encourage everyone to view the short video (9 mins) about the original 'Rolling Thunder': <https://rollingthunderuk.com/video-channel>

Dave Nelson

Obituary

Lieutenant Colonel Harry Dalwood BEM



Lt Col Harry Dalwood died peacefully at home in Southampton on 4 January 2023. Among many postings, he served at Jnr Ldrs Bn Taunton in 1964 as RSM, 14 Sqn RCT Bielefeld in 1967/68 as TCO and GTR Hong Kong in 1977 as QM. This tribute is written by Mike Mason of the Norton Manor Group.

We received the very sad news of Harry Dalwood's passing earlier in January. As one of our Group members commented, "He was a giant of a man with a giant heart." He was very much liked and respected by all at Norton Manor during his period of service there as RSM. Harry arrived at Norton Manor Camp in October 1964, taking over from RSM WO1 D C Saxton (leaving upon commissioning after only seven months with the Battalion). The Battalion magazine, *The Waggonette*, recorded Harry's arrival:

"RSM Dalwood, BEM, enlisted in 1946, serving until 1949 with the 1st Bn Suffolk Regiment in Palestine, Egypt and Greece. In June 1949 he joined the RASC and drilled recruits and potential officers in No 1 Trg Bn until 1953, when he joined 78 Coy RASC

in Korea and played Basketball for the Combined Services in his spare time. Returning to the Trg Bn in 1954, he worked in Clayton Platoon of the Boys Coy (the forerunner of the Junior Leaders Battalion) until he took over as CSM of the Regt Trg Coy in 1956. Two years later, having been awarded the BEM in the Queen's Birthday Honours, he was out in Cyprus with 17 Coy and then 40 Coy RASC, returning home to 597 Coy RASC (HYGT) (TA) in 1961. In 1963 he moved to HQ BAOR, taking over as RSM to HQ 7 Tpt Colm RASC (Tk Tptr). Now, looking as if he could transport a tank personally, he's moving us around."

And indeed, he did. The overriding response from Group members, saddened by Harry's passing, is that by his example and stature he was the role model that created men out of boys. Several have remembered Harry's comical response to a drop of rain on parades or at rehearsals. At the first drop of rain, he would raise both arms in the air and looking heavenward he would shake fist and pace stick at the gathering clouds and cry out "Oh Nebbee, why have you forsaken me" and eight times out of ten the rain would stop! Apparently Nebbee was Harry's name for his God.

Group and former band member Kit French writes: "Harry was a good friend of my Dad who, like him, came through the ranks and was RSM for a long time before becoming an officer. I claim fame because I was the cushion bearer for his LS&GC presentation by the GOC South West District. I recall he gave me a quick wink as I stood there with his award."

Member Tom Broadfoot recalls beyond Norton Manor, when serving as a WO1 in HQ BAOR, he and Harry (then a retired Lt Col) shared an office in support of Brigadier Baggins RCT; his lasting memory was Harry's humour, his intelligence and his total dedication to the Service. Also remembering Harry's great sense of humour is Group member Paul French (who went on to retire as a Lt Col) and who met Harry again at 14 Sqn RCT in 1 (BR) Corps and at Gurkha Tpt Regt Hong Kong where he served as QM. Paul adds: "He was an outstanding soldier who will be missed." Group member, former Junior RSM, Mike Brocks recalls that in 1966 Harry formed up the Battalion on parade as RSM. He then marched off the parade ground, changed his No 2 Dress jacket and returned to the Parade wearing the insignia of a Lieutenant and took the salute as the Battalion was marched off.

Many years later, at our Group Annual Reunion in 2015, we were delighted to welcome Harry Dalwood (himself a member of the Norton Manor Group) as our VIP guest, and he rendered a very interesting and humorous account of his time at Norton Manor and of his long and loyal service before and after. In his later years Harry served as President of the Norfolk Branch of the RASC/RCT Association, supported by the Chairman of the Branch, our very own Terry Byrne MBE.

Obituary

Lieutenant Colonel Dale Hemming-Tayler



Lt Col Dale Hemming-Tayler ('HT') RCT died on Friday 3 February 2023 after many years of fighting a number of debilitating health conditions, which he fought courageously and valiantly.

Dale was born in Birmingham in August 1951 to Bill and Mavis Hemming, the third son of four. His first seven years were spent in Khartoum where his father had work. After the death of his father, his mother, Mavis, married Max Tayler.

Dale was ten days old enough for officer training when he joined in August 1969. He ended up as the youngest officer in the Army in January 1970. Dale decided to bring back his father's surname Hemming, adding it to Tayler, and invented the nickname HT... it stuck before the soldiers could think of anything else!

After a few months, he was posted to Germany where, the next year, he met Kay. They married in 1972 and went on to have two children, Duncan and Emma-Kate.

Many will remember Dale for his love of sport, particularly rugby. He also served as Captain of The Joint Services Golf Club, Episkopi, Cyprus. Dale was committed to the Army and left these final words:

"I had thirty years' service all over world, including as a Gurkha in Hong Kong where Duncan was born. I also served as a young infantry officer with The Royal Anglian Regiment and The Light Infantry. As a family we lived in England, Germany, Cyprus, Hong Kong and Canada. I had a great time, messing about in all sorts of other places. I served with a great range of Arms and Regiments, both British and Foreign during which I met many friends; some very close to me, who were so important to my life. I am proud to have served with so many courageous and wonderful characters. I loved my soldiers and remember those I lost with a sad heart, but with thanks for their loyalty, honour and devotion to duty."

Having served for eight years away from his home Corps, including postings with the American Forces in Kaiserslautern and with the Canadian Army in Ottawa, Dale retired from the Army in 1999.

Dale and Kay went on to property development and to run their own alcohol-free business, LoNo, retiring from all when Dale's health took an unexpected turn for the worse in 2004.

In typical HT style, Dale fought a number of debilitating health conditions courageously and valiantly. He died at home, with his family by his side, on 3 February 2023. He will be much missed by all who knew him.

Fred Miller



Fred Miller passed away aged 101 on the evening of Tuesday 24 January 2023 in Wrexham Park Hospital, Slough. He was a Second World War Normandy veteran who served with the RASC. Readers may recall that to celebrate his 100th Birthday, he visited the RLC Museum in Worthy Down in July 2021. He featured on the cover of Waggoner Issue 20. The following is the tribute to him by Colonel Nigel Gilbert from his funeral on 23 February 2023 at Breakspear crematorium, Ruislip.

In my capacity as National Chairman of the RASC and RCT Association, I feel very privileged to attend Fred's funeral service today, along with Major Grant Carnegie-Brown from the Regimental Headquarters of The Royal Logistic Corps, and the Standard Bearer

Obituary

from the Heathrow Branch of the RASC/RCT Association. In particular to have been asked to give this tribute to Fred's military service during the Second World War.

I only met Fred on one occasion, and that was at the end of July 2021, when I hosted a visit by him and his wife Joan to the RLC Museum at Worthy Down near Winchester to celebrate his forthcoming 100th Birthday. Once met, never forgotten, for his personality and his bearing were the hallmarks of his visit. He was obviously a very proud man, with high standards; he looked immaculate in his blazer, Corps tie and his medals. His visit was a most memorable occasion and included being chauffeured around the Worthy Down Camp in the back of Monty's Rolls Royce, driven by the Director of the Museum, with myself in the front passenger seat, acting as escort and door opener! It was a day to remember, and I know that Eugenie will refer to it later. The visit was well recorded in the August 2021 edition of our Regimental magazine, and the front cover picture was of Fred and the Corps Regimental Sergeant Major in front of the Rolls Royce. Fred wrote about his war time experiences, and I would like to share his story with you.

He was born on 21 August 1921, and was brought up in Leytonstone along with his sisters. After school, he became a lorry driver working for a company that had reserved occupation status, after which he was called up for military service in February 1942, aged 20. He enlisted into the RASC and reported for duty to Bulford Camp in Wiltshire. As he was a qualified driver, he received four-weeks training on heavy duty trucks (no power steering in those days) and carried out night driver training with no lights driving cross country on Salisbury Plain Training Area. He was then posted to a RASC camp near Woking in Surrey before getting seven days embarkation leave, prior to embarking for Egypt. Due to the dangers of travelling through the Mediterranean, his ship the MONARCH OF BERMUDA sailed south down the Atlantic, and around the Cape of Good Hope stopping in Cape Town where he had a month's wait until boarding a P&O ship named the SIPIA which transported him to the southern tip of the Suez Canal. There, he joined 559 GT Coy RASC responsible for unloading cargo and delivering supplies, vehicles and equipment to various locations in the area. During a period of leave in Cairo, he contracted typhus, spending three weeks in hospital. Once recovered, he was posted to 432 Coy RASC at Tell El Kebir, near Cairo. The Company had just returned from the campaign in the desert.

432 Company were redeployed for a short while to Aleppo in Syria on what was to be a secret mission; however, it was cancelled, and so the Unit went back to Tell El Kabir. Having spent two years abroad, he was sent back to England for 14 days leave, following which he was posted to Stamford in Lincolnshire for what was called 'waterproof training' but in fact was training in preparation for the D-Day

landings.

In June 1944, Fred embarked from the West India Docks on an American military ship for Juno Beach, arriving on 9 June 1944 as part of a third wave. It was an experience in itself, for when unloading, the first vehicle to disembark sank as the ship had failed to get close enough to shore. As a result, they had to lay offshore overnight until the tide was right for disembarkation. His unit was assigned to the 2nd Canadian Corps and his assignments took him to Lille in France, on to Brussels in Belgium and then to Breda in Holland in time for Christmas, where they prepared Christmas dinner. It was never eaten, as the Unit received orders to report back to Brussels immediately, where they were tasked to pick up British troops and take them to the Ardennes. It was clear at this stage that the War was coming to a close, and his unit redeployed into Germany, and in particular to Munster, Osnabruck, Minden and Bremen. Following another spell of leave, Fred returned to Germany posted to 777 Coy RASC in Iserlohn where he became a Staff Car driver for the Financial Advisor to the British Liberation Army of the Rhine, before being demobbed and returning to civvy street.

So, what were Fred's thoughts about his wartime service? In his own words: 'Like all other young men at the time, I had been taken away from my family and home surroundings to fight in a war in which my country was engaged. We all naturally felt homesick and depressed occasionally when we were abroad, but we simply plodded on, hoping for the day when it would all end and when we could get back to normal life. Little did I know that years later I would receive an award in recognition of my services at the D-Day landings.' It was in August 2016, that Fred was invited to the residence of the French Ambassador in London, where he was appointed to the rank of CHEVALIER in the ORDRE NATIONAL DE LA LEGION D'HONNEUR, by the President of France.

As a veteran of the Normandy Landings, Fred was invited to the Royal British Legion week-long celebration of the 75th Anniversary of D-Day. They sailed on the MV Boudicca from Dover. At one of the ceremonies they were presented to HRH The Duchess of Cornwall, now the Queen Consort. They witnessed the ceremony at Ver-sur-Mer when our then Prime Minister, Theresa May, and French President Emmanuel Macron, laid the first stone commemorating the 22,442 British troops who died there in 1944.

Like so many of his age, Fred served his country with honour. His medals awarded for his wartime service were: The 1935-1945 WW Star, the Africa Star, the France and Germany Star, the 1935-1945 Defence Medal, the 1939-1945 War Medal and the French Legion d' Honneur.

May he rest in peace.

Obituary

Captain John Higgs



Captain John Higgs died peacefully on 17 December 2022 in Exeter hospital where he was being treated for age-related illness; he was in his one hundredth year. His funeral took place on 28 January 2023, this is a copy of part of the Eulogy.

On 18 May 1923, in Nottinghamshire, John was born to proud parents Stanley James Higgs (Civil Engineer, Highways Department) and Eliza Annie Short (Cooper's daughter). An idyllic early childhood was tragically interrupted; before John's fifth birthday Eliza Annie succumbed to peritonitis. John's world turned upside down; the loss deeply affecting him for the remainder of his life.

Term time for John meant boarding school. From St Hilda's Harpenden, John progressed to St Albans. He spent his school holidays with his father visiting interesting engineering projects, or with his aunt who ran the sweet shop opposite the cinema in Newark.

In 1934, John witnessed the start of the Mac Robertson Trophy Air Race from London to Melbourne. The race was won by a DH-88 Comet, Grosvenor House. John would be reunited with that same aircraft upon visiting the Shuttleworth Collection for his ninetieth birthday.

In 1938 a Welsh lady fleeing the Civil War in Spain came to look after Stanley and John. A year later she took John for coffee one morning and told him that his father had asked her to marry him. John considered himself very lucky to have such a super stepmother from whom he learned so much. She referred to him as her son. "Auntie Anne" was to remain effectively John's mother for another 50 years.

John cared very much about anything and everything to do with Crediton; when the bins were to be emptied, or uneven pavements repaired. It was however when promoting equality of access or the health needs of the elderly that John's energies were most exercised.

John excelled at sport; he played rugby for the school; he was an exceptional swimmer and diver, regularly winning competitions.. He was also a keen member of the Officer Training Corps, rising to the

highest rank for a cadet and gaining his Certificate A.

Upon leaving school he took on an apprenticeship with The General Post Office Telephones, qualifying as an engineer in 1942. While working for the Post Office, John joined the Home Guard. He then joined the regular Army and, after a brief spell in the Royal Signals, moved to his County Regiment; the Sherwood Foresters, before the honour of being commissioned into the Royal Army Service Corps.

He was posted to Palestine, 223 Company RASC (Air Despatch). With the rank of Captain he was then given command of the Air Transport Training Wing MELF (Middle Eastern Land Forces) in Egypt.

It was whilst in Egypt that John met Elizabeth Cooke. After a fun-filled few months of courtship, they were married on 29 November 1947 at the evocatively named Church of St Martin in the Sands.

John was demobbed in 1949 and for the next 20 years he worked for three companies in the building industry: Williams and Williams, Andersons and Gardiners.

John and Elizabeth moved house 16 times before settling in Baguley, Manchester, where they were safely delivered of their only child. Not quite as ordered, Anne was supposed to be a boy! Undeterred, John taught her painting, decorating, woodwork, gardening and how to maintain cars; a cunning ploy to get her to do some of the work around the house!

When John's new job brought them south, the family moved to Shipham in Somerset. In 1970, John decided to work as an independent Manufacturers Agent and, in 1973, amalgamated the business with a similar one in Bristol; Bray Walker Associates. Following a partial buyout, John took on what remained of the business, before in 1980 relocating to Crediton. There followed a twenty-year association with Ritchlight.

After his partner's death, John continued in business, before retiring aged 83. Having joined him in Crediton, Elizabeth, or 'The Flapjack Lady' as she became known, shared John's retirement until her death in 2012.

Over the years, John became increasingly involved with many organisations in Crediton; he filled several roles in the Royal British Legion, including President, running the local poppy appeal for many years. He was Chairman of the Disabled Access Group and Newcombes Patient Participation Group and the League of Friends of Crediton Hospital, he also attended the former Crediton branch of Devon Senior Voice. John enjoyed attending RASC & RCT Officers Club Lunches at Norton Manor Camp. John was very honoured to receive the Crediton Town Plate in 2014, and to be named the Rotarian's Citizen of the Year in 2019.

After ninety-nine years and seven months, if we also include nine months in gestation, as John himself would cheerily have endorsed, we may celebrate his centenary, nonetheless.

Last Post

Allen - On 2 February 2023, Mr H Allen RCT
Beer - On 10 October 2022, Maj AR Beer RCT
Blackburn - On 13 January 2023, Mr P Blackburn RCT
Bridle - On 4th October 2022, IP C Bridle RASC/RCT
Brinley - On 30 October 2022, Maj JR Brinley RCT
Burnett - On 16 October 2022, Mrs BE Burnett
Campbell - On 29 January 2023, Lt Col RGC Campbell RCT/RLC
Chisholm - On 24 October 2022, Maj RM Chisholm RCT/AAC
Clarke - On 17 September 2022, Mrs SR Clarke
Cook - On 13 February 2023, Mr SJ Cook RCT
Cornet - On 2 February 2023, Major (QM) AB Cornet RCT/RLC
Corney - On 29 June 2022, Mr D Corney RASC/RCT
Cotgrave - On 17 December 2022, Mr R Cotgrave RCT
Coulthard - On 26 November 2022, Mr S Coulthard RCT
Cunningham - On 10 July 2022, Mr JTW Cunningham RCT
Dalwood - On 3 January 2023, Lt Col (QM) HL Dalwood RASC/RCT
Darling - On 30 December 2022, Mr F Darling RASC/RCT
Dilly - On 29 November 2022, Mr DF Dilly RCT
Edwards - On 16 January 2023, Mr G Edwards RCT/RLC
Etheridge - On 6 January 2023, Maj SP Etheridge RASC
Evans - On 20 April 2022, Maj KN Evans RASC/RAOC
Fernside - In October 2022, Mr K Fernside RASC/RCT
Forbes - On 07 January 2023, Maj ARM Forbes RASC/RCT
Fuller - On 20 October 2022, Maj DJC Fuller RASC/RCT
Gibbs - On 5 March 2023, Mr K Gibbs RASC/RCT
Gibson - On 1 January 2023, Capt ACL Gibson RASC/RCT
Gowlett - On 5 September 2022, Mr (Capt) GP Gowlett RASC
Gray - On 1 February 2023, Maj (QM) S Gray RCT/RLC
Griffiths - On 1 December 2022, Mr B Griffiths RCT
Harris - On 6 October 2022, Maj RW Harris RASC/RCT
Hemmens - On 23 February 2023, Mr A Hemmens RASC

Hemming-Tayler - On 3 February 2023, Lt Col DJ Hemming-Tayler RCT
Higgs - On 17 December 2022, Mr (Capt) JS Higgs RASC
Hobson - On 11 January 2023, Lt Col (QM) RB Hobson RCT
Hope - On 17 November 2022, Maj JO Hope RASC/RCT
Isherwood - On 1 March 2023, Maj MD Isherwood RASC/RCT
Jones - On 9 December 2022, Col IR Jones RASC/RCT
Killinger - On 23 July 2022, Mr JS Killinger RCT
Lewis - On 10 January 2023, Capt RE Lewis RASC
Lincoln-Jones - In May 2022, Mrs J Lincoln-Jones RCT
Mackenzie - On 28 January 2023, Mr VR Mackenzie RASC
McClean - On 29 October 2022, Mr H McClean RCT/RPC
Meier - On 17 September 2022, Maj Gen AL Meier
Miller - On 24 January 2023, Mr FL Miller RASC
Milward - On 14 October 2022, Mr WG Milward RASC
Morris - On 13 August 2022, Mr KC Morris RASC/RCT
Murray - On 2 December 2022, Maj (QM) JD Murray RCT
O'Grady - On 4 January 2023, Mr WP O'Grady RASC
O'Neil - On 31 October 2022, Maj TN O'Neil RASC/RCT
Pashby - On 5 September 2022, Lt Col A J Pashby RCT
Rankin - On 20 January 2023, Mr SS Rankin RCT
Read - On 12 August 2021, Mr J Read RASC
Reeks - On 11 October 2022, Maj D Reeks RE/RCT
Scott - On 11 October 2022, Mr D Scott RASC
Shipman - On 21 November 2022, Mr HJ Shipman RASC
Skelly - On 12 October 2021, Mr W Skelly RASC
Storey - In November 2022, Maj R Storey RCT/RLC
Street - In February 2022, Mr M Street RASC
Tippen - On 24 December 2022, Lt Col JF Tippen AAC/GPR/RASC
Trollope - On 28 December 2022, Maj CFA Trollope RASC
Walton - On 07 January 2023, Mrs B Walton
Williams - On 31 October 2022, Mr J Williams RCT
Williamson - On 5 December 2022, Maj (QM) AF Williamson RASC/RCT



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As a serving soldier you often come across the Chelsea Pensioners. They get invited to the mess. Although they were in the Army 20 or 30 years before you, they've done the same things. It doesn't change. You're singing off the same hymn sheet. When you've been soldiers, you have this bond.

When my wife died, I thought, "What am I doing knocking around in a three-bedroomed house? I don't like this. I'll apply to be a Chelsea Pensioner". I came down on a small recce first, because I knew someone who was living there. That first night I went with him to the Pensioners' club for a beer and as soon as I walked in the door I thought, "This is the place for me". It took me back 30 years to the sergeants' mess. In my berth at night, I sometimes think of how many generations of Chelsea Pensioners have been here in these buildings before me.

My four-day trial stay was brilliant. Everyone stops and talks to you. During my interview they said, "Aren't you a bit young to come in here?". I said, "I can live independently, I'm not married and I'm in receipt of a state pension, so I meet your criteria. And you need people like me to cheer up those old ones!"

For me, the best part is going out and representing the Royal Hospital. There's nothing else to worry about. The hardest thing is choosing what to have for lunch!

For anyone even thinking of joining, don't hesitate – it's one of the best decisions I've made.

