



The Waggoner

The newsletter of the RASC & RCT



Issue 25 - April 2024



RASC DUKW supporting D-Day Landings on the 6th of June 1944
(From a pencil and watercolour painting - credit RLC Museum).

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President of the RASC & RCT Council

“ I would particularly highlight the relatively new partnership between the RLC and the Veterans Charity who, when approached for help, will manage cases on behalf of The RLC, either making small immediate payments or referring more complex cases to the RLC benevolence team.”

I thought that it might be beneficial to use this publication to encourage members, and the wider RASC and RCT veterans' community, to better understand what is available to support them in terms of benevolence and build upon the welfare and benevolence articles included in previous publications. I would also like to tackle two of the myths we often hear concerning money gifted by the RCT to The RLC in 2011 and payments made by RLC serving personnel under the Day's Pay Scheme (DPS) arrangement, which we are all familiar with.

I can assure all that RLC Regular and Reserve personnel are very positively encouraged to subscribe to the DPS, and the vast majority are doing so. In addition, I would like to remind all that, embedded within the RLC Association Trust Fund, is a significant amount of RASC and RCT money, which is legally ring fenced for benevolence and therefore remains available to support RASC and RCT veterans in need of help.

We all have the responsibility to ensure that our veterans receive help, particularly those who are too proud to seek support. After all, it is why we so willingly paid into the DPS in the knowledge, and with the confidence, that we would have

somewhere to turn for financial help, should the need arise or where circumstances became too difficult to manage. Over the last 12 months for example, support has been provided to help those in need to pay utility bills, care fees, mobility aids and white goods.

I would particularly highlight the relatively new partnership between The RLC and the Veterans Charity who, when approached for help, will manage cases on behalf of The RLC, either making small immediate payments or referring more complex cases to the RLC benevolence team.

The arrangement is now well established and working very well. So, if you know any member who requires help, please consider making contact with the Veterans Charity first. The RASC and RCT Association Secretary is of course always available to provide assistance, putting veterans in touch with the RLC benevolence team.

Finally, I would again wish to stress that, where the need exists, funds are available to help.

Brigadier Paul Evans OBE DL

Useful contacts:

benevolence@rhqtherlc.org.uk
www.veteranscharity.org.uk



Scan for the Veterans Charity page

Chairman RASC & RCT Association

By the time you receive this latest edition of the Waggoner, we will already be three months into 2024, however I would like to take this opportunity to thank so many of you for your support during 2023 and to wish all members a healthy and happy year ahead.

Looking back to the early autumn of last year, late September saw myself and both the Secretaries of our Association and the Officers' Club attend The RLC and Forming Corps Associations meeting at Worthy Down. The most important item discussed revolved around the progress that was being made towards migration of The RLC with its Forming Corps. Following that meeting, I wrote to all our branches through their Regional Chairmen outlining what progress was being made. What is clear is that although migration is some way off, our aspiration is to keep our branches running very much as now, and for as long as possible. The future structure of The RLC Association will be hybrid, and a combination of what the Forming Corps and The RLC have now. In order for us to keep our branches healthy number wise, there will be a need to do all we can to recruit new members. With that in mind, I would encourage branches to welcome veterans from The RLC and indeed from the other Forming Corps to join them; after all we are all one extended family. I know from my attendance at a number of functions around the country that this is already happening, albeit informally, and it is very encouraging for the future.

What was agreed in principle at the September meeting was that all Forming Corps Associations should consider adopting the term 'In Partnership with The RLC Association' on all correspondence. This step ensures that we continue to keep our own identity as well as recognising the important link with The RLC. Getting migration right is vital to our future and requires a good deal of detailed work. A working group has been established to plan for the future and is RLC led, but with significant input from the Forming Corps Secretaries. They convened in November and have already begun work on what needs to be achieved.

Your Committee of Management met in early October, and they were briefed on migration planning, and the need for us to ensure that we get the views of our active members on their thoughts for the future. With that in mind, our Secretary sent out a short survey before Christmas to all branches for them to complete. The results of which will be discussed at the next Committee of Management meeting in April.

Turning to events, as is customary in November, Remembrance was the focus for all veterans. Our

Association was represented at the 95th Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey on the 9th of November. Our plot was but one of 308. Sadly, due to the continuing building works around the Abbey, the numbers attending were much reduced again this year. We were well represented at the Cenotaph on the 12th of November, with nearly 80 'on parade'. It included one of our Chelsea Pensioners, Peter Bateup, who was a Falklands War veteran. He was in a borrowed mobility scooter and was positioned immediately behind me at the head of our contingent. My fear was that at some stage he might press the accelerator rather than the brake pedal inadvertently knocking me over, but all was well! I would like to congratulate all in the contingent for their smart turnout on the day; our drill benefitted from the voice of Stevie Baird, former RSM of 27 Transport Regiment, who ensured we kept in step, not easy without a State Band when marching down King Charles Street from Whitehall to Horse Guards. Following the parade, a number of us adjourned for a drink or two at a local pub, Walkers of Whitehall.



The RASC & RCT Association plot at the Field of Remembrance

Maureen and I were the principal guests at the Wales and Western Region Annual Reunion over the weekend 17th/18th November at Tiffany's Hotel in Blackpool. It was our second journey up the M6 in a month, having attended the Tank Transporter Reunion in Liverpool on the 14th/15th October. The journey to Blackpool took six hours, the last hour of which meant joining the queue of traffic making its way to the seafront illuminations.

Chairman RASC & RCT Association

We made it with thirty minutes to spare before changing and going down to dinner!

That apart, it was a great weekend, the unexpected bonus was winning £40 at bingo! Our thanks go to Steve and Vicki Hutchinson for all the arrangements. Our thanks also to Leigh Williams, Chairman of the Tank Transporter Branch for his organisation for this year's gathering at the Adelphi Hotel. As ever, there were many faces from years gone by, including meeting up with Angus Paterson who was in my platoon in 1964!

In my capacity as President of Aldershot Branch, we attended this year's Christmas dinner and dance, where the guests were Richard and Rachel Hick. It was also good to be joined by Jonathan Knowles, Mike and Liz Graham, and Helen McMahon once again. As ever, our thanks go to Brian and Lyn Quist for all their hard work in preparation for the evening. On the 12th of December, as is customary for all Regimental Associations, I was delighted to go back to The Royal Hospital Chelsea along with Lt Col Richard Hick and Paul Duncan to wish our cap badged Chelsea Pensioners the very best for Christmas and the New Year.

I have very many happy memories of my ten years there as Captain of Invalids from 2000-2010.



Aldershot Branch Christmas celebration with Colonel Helen McMahon and Toni Chambers

Looking ahead, the diary is already filling up, and I look forward as always to attending a number of regional and branch events in the months ahead. Corps Weekend will be the 13th/14th July, so please put the dates in your diaries.

Colonel Nigel Gilbert



Together with the RASC and RCT In Pensioners at the Royal Hospital Chelsea

Secretary RASC & RCT Officers' Club

Members of the RASC & RCT Officers' Club have enjoyed a full programme of events towards the end of 2023. In early September, the Taunton Curry Lunch was held in the delightful Officers' Mess, where many members remembered their days there when it was home to The Junior Leaders Regiment. On a sunny day, those who attended spent a long time reminiscing over coffee after lunch on the terrace, taking in the stunning views.

Also in September, the Waggon Club organised a visit to Bletchley Park, where members had travelled from across the country and were delighted to meet up with friends and colleagues not seen in a few years. The group were given a fascinating tour and insight into life at Bletchley by a guide. Members then had time to explore the museum for themselves and visit some of the award winning exhibitions on site. This was followed by a most enjoyable lunch at Brasserie Blanc in Milton Keynes.

The Worthy Down curry lunch and Museum visit had a record attendance in early October with over seventy members enjoying an 'old school' curry in the ante room where Skinner's Horse is located. Later that month, our annual Officers' Club Black Tie Dinner was held for the second time at The Village Hotel, Farnborough with close to one hundred attendees. Once again, the menu and accommodation were first class and we will continue our new relationship with this venue in 2024.

Forming up under a watery sun on Whitehall, fourteen officers marched as part of the seventy-five plus RASC & RCT contingent past the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday on 12 November, where the salute was taken on our return to Horseguards by The Princess Royal. After much back-slapping all round, many of our contingent retired to Walkers of Whitehall, which had been booked for us to enjoy some well-earned refreshments. In November, the Maritime Officers' Reunion took place in the beautiful Byam's House Officers' Mess and was well attended. On the final day in November, The RASC & RCT Luncheon Club, now in its 74th year, saw a well-attended function at the Army & Navy Club in Pall Mall, London. In December, The Waggon Club's annual Christmas Lunch took place once again at The Cavalry and Guards Club, Piccadilly, which was once again a sellout.

At the beginning of this year, all Officers' Club members have received the Calendar of Events for 2024, alerting them to what is a varied, very popular, full programme throughout the year. The highlight of course is our Corps Weekend, which will take place on the weekend of 13th/14th July. More about the Corps weekend can be found in this publication.

Lieutenant Colonel Paul Duncan



Guests enjoying the October Black Tie Dinner

Secretary RASC & RCT Association

It never really quiets down in Association Headquarters. No sooner have we completed one key event, we have to start thinking about the next. At the same time there is a steady stream of correspondence; from branch accounts and AGMs minutes to grant requests, membership, benevolence, as well as a wide range of activities and queries. Work is already going on to plan and prepare for Corps Weekend in July and the next Cenotaph parade in November; more on both of these later. Not to forget the Waggoner; I started gathering articles for Waggoner 26 before this publication went to print.

Once again there are a range of articles in this publication. Branches are reporting on the numerous events that have been organised and individuals have submitted articles on memories or events in history which are of interest to us. Please keep submitting articles but do please remember to think about the quality of photos. Subjects need to be in focus, facing the camera and well lit, with an appropriate background!

I have once again included a few articles (or adverts) on matters that I think readers would have an interest in. Are you confident that you are receiving the Forces pension you are entitled to? Please read the article by the Forces Pension Society. In addition, do please take note of what Brigadier Evans has written regarding benevolence support. I have always been hugely impressed by the amazing team in RHQ The RLC who support those in need. Please don't be afraid to enquire for you or someone else if you think there is a need. Even if you are not sure, do please contact the team and they will give you very well considered advice. They are wonderful and want to help if they can.

Corps Weekend – This year's celebrations are due to take place on the weekend 13th/14th July 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. 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 email address below and I will send you the details. Last year we were very close to capacity, so please do book early.

One final plea from me. If you are coming, please remember to inform me, along with any dietary requirements, by filling in the return that will come with the instruction and returning it to me!

Members are to make their own arrangements for accommodation. Should they wish to stay at the Village Hotel, rooms are available for the nights of Friday 12th, Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th July 2024 at the concessionary bed and breakfast rate of £80.00 per night single occupancy, £90.00 for double occupancy.

Please note that this concessionary rate will only be available until 31st May. After this date rates will revert to normal room rates, so please book early. The Village Hotel booking system is not very user friendly, all those using the booking link should be careful to ensure that they book the correct days and the number of people staying in each room. Anyone experiencing problems should contact me.

CORPS WEEKEND TIMINGS

Saturday 13th July 2024

1030 - Band Concert (Princess Gardens Aldershot)
Followed by Drumhead Service at 1130
1830 - Dinner Dance at Inspiration Suite, Village Hotel

Sunday 14th July 2024

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

An instruction has been sent to branches via Regional Chairmen.
Any queries or requests for additional information should be addressed to the Association Secretary by e-mail at rascrctsec@rhqtherlc.org.uk.

Veterans ID Cards – As many of you will have heard, the veterans ID Cards can now be applied for by those who have a UK address. Veterans who do not have a UK address will be able to apply later this year. An HM Armed Forces Veteran Card is a way to prove that you served in the UK armed forces. The card can make it quicker and easier to apply for support as a veteran. It's free to apply, further details can be found at www.gov.uk/veteran-card

Website – Work is ongoing to update and improve the Forming Corps sections of the RLC Association website. A recent new feature is a click and send form whereby applications for membership can be made and also current members can update their details, including addresses and consents. If you do this and are a member of a branch, please do inform your branch secretary as they need to know any change of address etc. Please note past copies of the

Waggoner are also available on the website.

Cenotaph 2024 – You will see coverage of the 2023 Cenotaph parade in this publication. This really is a very special event and a real privilege to be part of. Traditionally our contingent consists of a mix of 'regulars' and those who are marching for the first time. Everyone is grateful for the opportunity to pay their respects whilst surrounded by friends, colleagues and fellow veterans.

If you would like to register to take part this year on 10th November, please email me to register your interest. There are a limited number of spaces, and we are required to register our marchers some months ahead of the event, so don't leave it too late to do so.

Lieutenant Colonel Richard Hick
rascrtsec@rhqtherlc.org.uk

42 Squadron AMF(L) Reunion

42 Sqn RCT AMF(L) held its 2023 annual reunion at the Kings Arms in Amesbury, our 15th year straight. It was a fair turn out this year, it is always great to see everyone who turned up and many thanks to those that tried to attend.

A great day again and many thanks to the landlord and staff of the Kings Arms for looking after us so well yet again. It always amazes me how much commitment people put into attending every year and we all thank the Association for their assistance with these reunions. We always raise a glass to absent friends and obviously to the Corps.

We have people come from all over the country, and this year for his second visit from Norway was Martin Jones, who wrote the following:

"I served with 42 Sqn RCT from 1983-1986, my first posting in the Army. I went not knowing what to expect and I remember my first day nervously joining

my troop. From the first day to my last day in the Squadron, I can say hand on heart that I loved every minute of my time there. I made lifelong friendships with my 42 Sqn mates. After I left the Army, I went to live in Norway where I still reside.

With the internet age came Facebook, so finding old comrades became easier and I found the squadron Facebook page and loved seeing old photos from our tours abroad. On the page I learnt that the Squadron had a reunion every year, organised by Sam Butler, Gary Woodhouse and Paul Pope; I had served with all three during my time.

To cut a long story short, I made myself a promise that one day I would make the reunion, that promise became a reality in 2021. My first time back in Amesbury/Bulford since 1986. It was quite an emotional experience for me, seeing friends who I hadn't seen in 33-34 years. I attended last year's

reunion and I have booked flights and accommodation for this year. I am so grateful to the 42 Squadron reunion committee for organising the yearly event. They manage to bring old friends together, something which I value immensely. I have now pencilled in the date for every year and will be attending."



A traditional reunion photo

John Butler

38 Squadron Reunion

This year's reunion was held in Taunton and hosted by Garry and Sue Frith, it was another resoundingly successful event. Arriving in the area from Friday, evening attendees took up residence within various local hotels and subsequently met up for libations and food in the many superb hostelrys in and around Taunton. Old friends caught up and new friends were introduced and made. All being tied by the common bond of having served in the much loved 38 Squadron RCT at some point over circa 4 decades of her existence.

On Saturday morning after meeting up for breakfast, visits were made to local attractions including Taunton Castle and the Museum of Somerset which also houses a fantastic exhibition of the history of the Somerset Light Infantry, this includes a Rorke's Drift element which has a very direct and poignant link to our own Corps.

The venue for the main event on Saturday evening was the Vivary Golf Club, Taunton and a super location it was. The Manager Ed and his staff welcomed one and all in the warmest manner, helping immeasurably to set the scene for yet another truly memorable reunion.

Old friends mingled and chatted, new friends were welcomed into the fold and through this ongoing warm and welcoming process, our legacy just gets stronger and stronger year on year. The numbers this year, as with last year were once again down a little from the norm, with that said, around 60 were in attendance, thus a great turnout all things (current financial situation, busier and busier lives for most et al) considered.

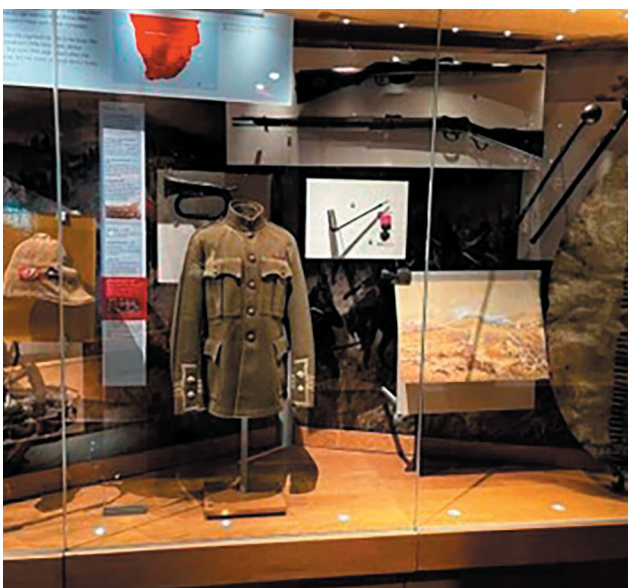
Once again there was a cracking raffle held in support of reunion funds, many thanks go to all who kindly donated prizes for the raffle, it is greatly appreciated. Our hosts Garry and Sue, despite being let down at the last minute, sourced the fantastic trumpeter and ex Portugese paratrooper Luis Martelo to entertain our happy throng which went down extremely well. The buffet this year took the form of an BBQ meal which also went down a storm, big thanks again to Ed Cullen for his sterling efforts in putting this on for us. Glen Martin proposed toasts to 'The King' – 'Absent Friends' – 'The Corps'

On Sunday morning folk met to eat breakfast or partake in 'coffee & cake' in the local cafes, regale in the antics of the previous night and to bid farewells and safe travels before the inevitable 'bomb burst' of departures home, both near and far (Ian Bryson - Australia and Mark Willmore - Canada).

Many sincere thanks must go to Garry and Sue Frith along with the reunion committee for a job superbly well done, in putting together yet another fantastic and most memorable event.

Subsequently a smaller gathering met in Stockton on Tees a few weeks later, hosted by Ricky McKay in the 'Don Memorial Museum and Last Post Bar' an old favourite of the reunion crew. It was a fantastic catch up for those who could not make it to Taunton and indeed some who did manage to fit in both events. A big thank you goes out to Ricky for hosting and to (friend of 38 Squadron RCT) and Julie for her ever warm and welcoming hospitality.

Ian Grinton



The Rorke's Drift display at the Museum of Somerset



Friends reunited

66 Squadron Reunion

66 Squadron's annual reunion took place at the Kings Arms in Amesbury on 25th Mar 2023. Some 14 years ago John 'Sam' Butler set the ball rolling by setting up the first reunion down in Amesbury Wiltshire, not far from Tidworth where the Squadron was based.

He reached out to the old contacts he had and they reached out to their contacts. Sam set up a Facebook page and people requested to join, each person is verified as being a part of the Squadron in some way. At the first reunion I was quite apprehensive as I hadn't seen most of these people for over 25 years. I need not have worried; it was a great event that reconnected people and we found ourselves picking up where we left off.

From 30 or so members to start with, we now have over 550 members spanning the life of the RCT from 1965 to 1993.

Over the years we have formed some traditions that we always follow, such as we always have a group photo with the flag. Also, at 6 minutes past 6 pm we always have a toast (with honey Jack Daniels!) to all our friends that are not with us anymore.

We have members who live in Europe, USA, Canada and Australia as well as all over the UK and many have travelled to catch up with old friends. We also would like to thank the Association for their support with these reunions.

Jon Richards



Our traditional group photo

Doncaster Branch

Doncaster Branch held their Christmas Dinner at the Castle Park Rugby Club in Doncaster.

Eighty-eight members and guests sat down, which is the most we have had, among them were three ex OC's, and five ex SSM's from 150 Regiment. We were treated to a four-course meal and the entertainment was by Shorrell Jade. We have had nothing but praise and kind thoughts from those who attended.

Mick Gill



A great attendance



Everyone enjoying the evening

Band Branch

The following is based on 'A Musical Ride' The Story of The Staff Band of the Royal Corps Transport', by Steve Ambler. The Staff Band Undertake Public Duties and Meet Pop Icon

On 25th February 1973, the Corps, for the first time, undertook public (Royal) duties at Buckingham Palace. At 11:23 a.m. Drum Major Ronald Madden led the Corps of Drums and the Staff Band out of Wellington Barracks, past a cluster of waiting pressmen and across Birdcage Walk. They were followed by 41 officers and men who were to guard the Royal Palaces. The spectators, crowded around the Victoria Memorial and against the Palace railings, heard the music change to Wait for the Wagon as the contingent approached to enter the forecourt. Once inside the North Centre Gate, the RCT New Guard wheeled to face the detachment of the Irish Guards from which it was to take over the duties of the Queen's Guard.

The Guard mounting had been of special significance to two members of the Staff Band. Musician Geoff Gibbins had been following in the footsteps of his brother, Musician Phil Gibbins of the Band of the Irish Guards, who had performed at the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace on many occasions. Musician Adrian Bengé had been performing under the fatherly, if critical, eye of Mr Alfred Bengé, a former Guardsman and no stranger to public duties.

On 28th February, two Corps Directors of Music came face-to-face at the Palace. Major Desmond Walker, who had directed the Corps Staff Band until 1969 and was now Director of Music of the Band of the Welsh Guards, was with his band playing in the forecourt whilst Major William Allen was directing the Corps Band.



Orinoco Womble conducting the Corps Band with Staff Sergeant Frank Clifford supervising

Les Killingbeck had recently been promoted to WO2 and was due to be appointed Band Sergeant Major, (BSM) as the current BSM Bill Kitto was about to retire. Les was therefore BSM for public duties: a real baptism of fire! (Author's note: at approximately this time in the band's history there were two WOs working in tandem. This allowed for a smooth transition between BSMs and a sharing of management duties and tasks.) The band was billeted at Hounslow for the duration of public duties. On the first day, one of the band's coaches broke down and there was considerable lateral thinking on Les's part to ensure that everyone was at their appointed place at the right time.

In early 1974, the band received an entertaining and amusing visit from composer and musician, Mike Batt, who had recent great success in the pop charts with his Womble music. His visit centred around a proposed LP of 'Womble' music. Staff Sergeant Frank Clifford had arranged a suite of Womble tunes, which were: The Wombling Song, Great Uncle Bulgaria March and a Madame Cholet Bossa Nova. 'Orinoco Womble' accompanied Mike Batt and even conducted a rehearsal of the music. Unfortunately, due to financial implications the record was never produced. Although this was a disappointment, the band did record 13 albums between 1967 and 1992.



The RCT Staff Band public duties – 1973

Bands Within the Staff Band

The Staff band was not just a military band but always provided smaller more specialist musical combinations. One of the most notable and successful of these was the Clubmen who gained a considerable reputation as a contemporary band in both military and civilian circles.

The original five members of the Clubmen were: Dave Davies (guitar and vocals), Spence Wright (bass guitar and vocals), Jimmy Drummond (drums), Roger Balls and Ray Probert (both trumpet and vocals).

Later when Jimmy left the band, Brian Hindmarsh replaced him. The group specialised in performing Herb Alpert's 'Tijuana Sound' and other styles that were popular at the time.

They performed at every conceivable 'military gig', i.e. troop concerts, officers and sergeants and other ranks functions. On the civilian music scene, they appeared at the Dorchester Hotel, Cafe Royal, Derry and Toms, the Connaught Rooms and numerous civic halls, theatres and clubs locally and throughout the southeast of England. They also appeared with some of the legends of showbiz, for instance, with Sir Harry Secombe, Dame Vera Lynn, Ken Dodd, Ivor Emmanuel and the King Brothers. A highlight of their career was appearing on BBC TV's 'Late Night Line Up'. In 1967 the Clubmen were runaway winners of the Southern Command's competition to find the best army group. Spence and Dave left the Army in 1968 after a very successful tour of the BAOR with the Staff Band, embarking on a professional musical career in civvy street.

The Clubmen's legacy was the standard of professionalism and versatility that they set in their time together; a standard within the band by which

perhaps many of the future dance/pop groups were measured, by those who could remember them. The Clubmen also broke new ground and made audiences sit up and take notice of the fact that military bands could play music other than the rather traditional marching and waltzing.

In Memory of Spence Wright



The Clubmen – standing: Dave Davies, Brian Hindmarsh, Spence Wright; kneeling: Roger Balls and Ray Probert

Norfolk and Norwich Branch

As the 2023 Branch records are filed and we open our 2024 account, we are pleased to report that all is well in Norfolk. Our Christmas lunch, in the Furzdown Hotel in Great Yarmouth, on Sunday 26th November 2023 was yet again well supported with 50 attendees. Mr Richard Dawson (Ex RCT band) and Glynis led our traditional Christmas sing-along to the delight of all in attendance and some hotel guests besides.

The Branch Standard was paraded at the funeral of Mr Mike Soames, ex star of Army and Corps motorcycling, at Bury St Edmunds on 14th August 2023. Also, at the funeral of Mr Sid Barnes, a long serving member of our Branch and a D-Day veteran, at Kings Lynn on 29th August 2023. May they rest in peace. Following on from previous reports of the Armed Forces Advocates in NHS hospitals, we are pleased to record our excellent relationship with

our local man, Mr Chris Blyth, based at the James Paget Hospital here in Great Yarmouth. In support of the excellent work he is doing, one of our Branch members, Mrs Jean Sherwood, decided to make a contribution to the newly created, military themed, garden at the hospital. Jean knitted hundreds of small individual poppies that were then mounted on wooden frames and secured in place on the hospital wall. I think we can all agree, they look great.

Well done Jean and Chris!

The Association Eastern Region AGM, hosted by the Bedford Branch, will be held on Saturday, 6th April 2024. Other plans for our Branch include a spring lunch in May, support to events marking the 80th anniversary of D-Day in June and attendance at Corps weekend in July.

Terry Byrne



Richard, leading the sing-along



Jean and Chris at the Poppy presentation

Bideford Branch

It is never an easy decision to close a branch especially one that is relatively young.

Bideford Branch was formed in 1999 and survived until November 2023. The branch was started by Bill Wills, a former Mayor of Bideford and RASC butcher, who realised that the Bideford RBL Branch was no longer able to provide proper support or administration to meet the members' wishes.



Members say a final farewell to their Standard at the Laying Up ceremony

He had a following of RASC and RCT veterans that expanded with Associate members who followed our Standard. We filled a gap that the local former servicemen and women wanted, and we were able to assist those in need. The branch joined in with the southwest weekends at Newquay, and won prizes for fancy dress, travelled to South Cerney for the parades, held many party evenings, carvery lunches, and BBQs. Not least we paraded in Bideford on Remembrance Sunday as part of the Veteran contingent, making many friends in the process. We joined in the June Veteran's parade from the start; with the President taking command of the parade on one occasion (former Adjutant!). There were many outings to various southwest locations and a visit to the National Memorial Arboretum. As the years passed, and the footfalls reduced, our numbers

dwindled. We kept going and even managed a BBQ and Auster (dated from Korea) flying session at Endsleigh courtesy of one of our members. It was a cosy ride for the lady passenger invited to join the pilot Bryn! Until 2023 we kept going as numbers dwindled and, with difficulty, as we struggled with our own infirmities and arranging meetings convenient to all, it was decided that we should lay up the Standard and cease to be an active branch.

St Mary's Church in Bideford was the natural location for the Standard. They hold a service at 11am on 11th November annually and we were invited to lay up the Standard at that service during which an approved laying up process was included. It was emotional for all present not least our members and their families as well as the congregation. Those of us who remained; Robin Croslegh and his wife Lesley, Bryn Andrews and his wife Shirley, John Parsons supported by his son and Trevor Evans, our Standard Bearer, who escorted the widow of our treasurer Sheila Gibbs, gathered after for lunch. Sadly, Bill Wills' widow Pam was unable to attend through ill health and our branch President Kevin Cole and his wife Theresa were away.



The final branch gathering

Our branch filled a spot in Bideford for more than sixty people during its time, provided support and advice, and had fun. We will remember those who served on the committee, those who have passed on and those who remain will continue to meet socially as we are able.

Robin Croslegh



THE WAGGONER NEEDS YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS



Please help with content for the next edition of The Waggoner. Complete articles are always welcome, along with good quality photos sent as separate JPG files. As a guide a one page article should be a maximum of 550 words which will allow for three decent size images to be included.

Please email to: rascrtsec@rhqtherlc.org.uk

BRIXMIS



At the Moscow Conference of foreign ministers on the 30th October 1943, Anthony Eden, Cordell Hull and Vyacheslov Molotov, reached an agreement to set up a European Advisory Group (EAG) to define the organisation of the Allied Command

Machinery, which would govern Germany after the unconditional surrender of the Nazi regime.

The EAG met at Lancaster House and on 14th November 1944 published the secret agreement on the control of machinery in Germany, in which Article 2 states "Each Commander in Chief in his zone of occupation will have attached to him military, naval and air representatives of the other 2 Commanders in Chief for liaison duties".

This agreement was ratified at the Yalta Conference of allied powers in 1945, adding a French zone of occupations. As a result, the concept of the Soviet and Western (Allied) Military Liaison Missions (Including BRIXMIS) was born, regulating bilateral links between Commanders in Chiefs (C in C).

The mission titles for each country were as follows:

Great Britain: The British Commander in Chief's mission to the Soviet forces of occupation in Germany (BRIXMIS)

America: USMLM

France: FMLM

Soviet Union: SOXMIS

In 1958, Ted Moore and Dick Place were both posted to BRIXMIS in Berlin and served there for almost three years, each having completed numerous tours of Soviet controlled East Germany; neither received any training prior to their arrival. It is therefore a testament to their quick learning and survival instincts that they both completed the tours unharmed. It is also a pleasure to report that they are both long-standing, well regarded members of the RASC and RCT Chelmsford Branch. Note: A 3 week training course was introduced in the 1960's.

Each tour consisted of 3-man teams, a tour officer, a tour NCO and a driver; their mission was to complete intelligence gathering and spying in Soviet East Germany. Each vehicle would contain sufficient fuel, rations and recovery equipment for up to 3 days deployment. All deployed personnel would wear uniform, were unarmed and had no protective body armour. Tours were completed by different teams, 24 hours a day, 365 days per year in sometimes extreme winter conditions, from 1946 until the mission was

disbanded on the reunification of Germany in late 1990.

Threats to all the 3 allied country teams included constantly alert, often aggressive, Soviet & East German military and secret police (STASI), heavily armed with live ammunition, who the Warsaw pact declared as to be probable enemy. Other threats included: shootings, deliberate ramming of vehicles, poisoning and laser attacks. As a result, over the years there were a number of bad injuries and indeed fatalities recorded.



In September 1976 the deliberate ramming of BRIXMIS Opel Admiral No 7 by an NVA Ural-375 heavy truck resulted in serious injuries requiring 15 days in hospital

Despite the daily rigours that were experienced by all tourers, the vast majority from all three allied countries received no recognition for their brave efforts. Since the reunification of Germany in 1990, two very heavily documented submissions for the grant of the GSM have been compiled and submitted on separate occasions by very high ranking personnel from all three services including, Field Marshall, The Lord Guthrie of Craigiebank GCB LVO OBE DL, who was very supportive for them to receive recognition.

Unfortunately, these compilations were to no avail for the majority of extremely brave servicemen that served their country in very difficult, extreme conditions with daily threat to their lives including Ted & Dick.



Arthur Pearce

Army Benevolent Fund Charity Walks

In October 2023, I took part in the Army Benevolent Fund (ABF) charity fund raising Normandy Beaches Front Line Walk event where I walked 100km in three days along the D-Day Landing Beaches. Due to the fantastic generosity of friends, family and BAE Systems employees I raised over £4500 for the Army's charity. In November, I decided to take on another walk again raising money for the ABF.

The aim of this challenge, again in support of the ABF, was to walk 100km between 1st November and 12th December in commemoration of those who fought in World War I and World War II while supporting the soldiers and veterans of today. This was a personal challenge that could be completed at any location and at your own pace with the requirement to raise £250. We were encouraged to visit local War Memorials and Commonwealth War Graves (CWG) in the local area and as we passed mileage milestones, for example 10km, 20km etc, we would receive detailed e-mails from the ABF highlighting the history of the two World Wars. I decided to make the walk more challenging by increasing the distance to 150km, with a fund-raising target of £500, all to be completed in the month of November. The walk proved to be a hugely interesting and thought-provoking challenge which I completed on Friday afternoons & weekends in the Forest of Dean & local area. With the help of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, I was able to identify a large number of graves and memorials within walking distance of my home. I have outlined some of the highlights below.

A little bit of research identified that my local graveyard, Forest of Dean (Christ Church) Churchyard contains 7 CWG from both World Wars, 5 from WWI and 2 from WW2. There is no explanation as to why the soldiers, whose ages ranged from 26 to 51 years old,

were buried locally. Having visited Christ Church the next leg of my walk took in Newland Church yard where I found the grave of Private Marc Symonds. His grave is not a CWG but must have been erected by his family. It shows The Royal Logistic Corps badge and highlights that he was killed helping others in a foreign land. A little research identified that he was killed in a road traffic accident in Mrkonjić Grad, Bosnia in 1997.



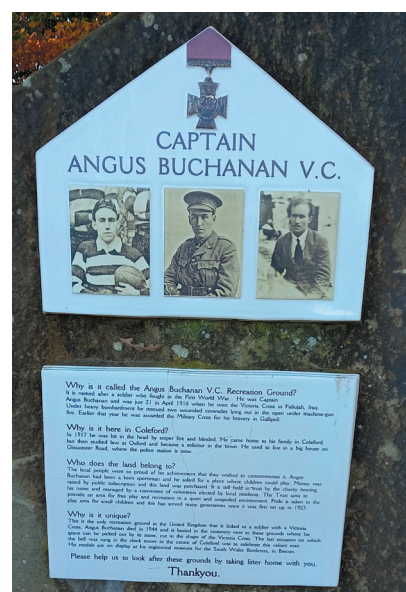
Pte Marc Symonds family grave at Newland All Saints Church Forest of Dean

My local town of Coleford honours the war dead with an impressive memorial in the centre of town. A plaque in front of the town memorial is dedicated to Captain Angus Buchanan VC who was the recipient of the Victoria Cross for gallantry in the face of the enemy in Mesopotamia. He was the son of a Doctor from Coleford and was educated at Monmouth School where he was the head boy. Having attended Jesus College, Oxford, he joined the Army where he served at Gallipoli and in Mesopotamia. He was awarded the Military Cross in 1916 and was mentioned four times in despatches. He was 21 years old and an acting Captain with the South Wales Borders when the action for which he received

his Victoria Cross took place: On 5th April 1916 he rescued two wounded men while under heavy enemy fire. On 13th February 1917, Captain Buchanan was shot in the head and permanently blinded. He died in Coleford in 1944. He is buried in the cemetery next to the playing field named in his honour. There is a small memorial garden dedicated to him at the entrance to the playing field with a boulder engraved with a Victoria Cross and a plaque commemorating his achievements.



Capt Angus Buchanan VC Memorial Ground, Coleford, Forest of Dean



Capt Angus Buchanan life and award of the VC

The local village of Clearwell provided a really interesting walk and thought-provoking afternoon. It was clear that a large number of villages in and around the Forest of Dean do not have War memorials, my own village of Berry Hill included, but have Memorial Halls for use by the local community. Clearwell is such a village. I had walked to Clearwell in the hope that I would be able to get into the Memorial Hall to see the board commemorating the war dead but found it closed. I decided to visit the churchyard to see if it contained any CWGs. Not only did I discover a number of CWGs but also a further grave dedicated to another Victoria Cross recipient, Private Miles V.C.



Pte Francis Miles VC grave at Clearwell Church Cemetery Forest of Dean

He was 22 years old, and a Private in the 1st/5th Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment when on 23rd October 1918 at

Bois-l'Évêque, France, when his company was held up by a line of enemy machine guns in a sunken road, Private Miles, alone and on his own initiative went forward under exceptionally heavy fire, located a machine gun, shot the gunner and put the gun out of action. Then seeing another gun nearby, he again went forward alone, shot the gunner and captured the team of eight.

Finally, he stood up and beckoned to his company who, acting on his signals, were able to capture 16 machine guns, an officer and 50 other ranks. He survived the War and joined up again in WWII serving with the Pioneer Corps.

My walking was not only in the Forest of Dean as I also visited the Monmouth Cemetery. Here, there are 14 CWGs, again from both World Wars. The most interesting grave is not a CWG but a grave & headstone provisioned by the South Wales Borderers Regiment for Corporal William Allen VC.

Allen had joined the 24th Regiment in 1859. He was about 35 years old, a sergeant who had recently been reduced in rank to corporal for being drunk on duty. He was in the 2nd Battalion, 24th Regiment of Foot, during the Zulu War when he was awarded the Victoria Cross for gallantry in action. On 22nd and 23rd January 1879 at Rorke's Drift, South Africa, Corporal Allen and another man (Frederick Hitch) kept communication with the hospital open, despite being severely wounded.

Their determined conduct enabled the patients to be withdrawn from the hospital, and when incapacitated by their wounds from fighting, they continued, as soon as their wounds were dressed, to serve out ammunition to their comrades during the night. Allen died of pneumonia on 12th March 1890 at 85 Monnow Street, Monmouth.

A posthumous charity fund was set up to assist his family, his wife,

Sarah Ann and his seven children – the ABF did not come into existence until 1944.

These are just some of the interesting stories I encountered while walking locally & raising another £500 for the ABF.

I will be walking again this year but this time visiting the battlefields of the Western Front.

Over the course of 3 days, I will be walking from the Lochnagar Crater, where the Battle of the Somme began & exploring key sites from the Battles of Ypres and Arras before finishing at the Ypres Memorial.



William Allan VC grave at the Monmouth Cemetery

If you would like to make a donation, my ABF Fund raising page can be found at the following link. <https://events.armybenevolentfund.org/s/18937/35515>

Lt Col Marcus Gartside

News from the Director of The RLC Museum

RASC Involvement in the D-Day Landings

It is difficult in only a few words to accurately describe the scale, importance and immense contribution that the Royal Army Service Corps played, in support of the D-Day landings of 1944.

Operation OVERLORD was the codeword for the delivery of an allied invasion force to five Normandy beaches, named UTAH, OMAHA, GOLD, JUNO, and SWORD situated between the Carentan estuary and the river Orne.

The RASC had secretly stockpiled vast quantities of vehicles and supplies before the invasion, transporting them to France despite hostile weather and intense opposition, and then played a vital role in every aspect of these landings. This included supporting the Airborne Assault, Seaborne Assault, Beach Maintenance and assisting with the Mulberry Harbour.

The 11 RASC companies equipped with amphibious DUKWs played a key part during the initial landing assault phase and during the early build-up of forces; ferrying stores from ship to shore and evacuating casualties. Until sufficient General Transport vehicles had landed, DUKWs were tasked with moving supplies across the beaches and on to the forward supply dumps, involving large loops on land and at sea, whilst under constant enemy bombardment.

However, 716 Coy RASC of the 6th Airborne Division, were actually the first RASC troops to land in France, with two platoons parachuting down at night, in advance of the beach landings. Their company commander was wounded on landing and Lieutenant JF Bland took charge, being awarded an MC for his bravery during the ensuing operations.



RASC at SWORD Beach

At Arnhem, cut off and surrounded by German forces, 70 members of 250 Light Composite Coy RASC were detailed to defend a section of the perimeter defences, as troop numbers dwindled. Many acts of heroism were performed. Of the 10 Officers and 243 other ranks of the RASC who took part in the airborne operation, only 5 officers and 83 men came back.

In support of these beleaguered forces, air despatch crews avoided enemy fighters to drop vital supplies to maintain the force.

Terrible three-day long storms which occurred shortly after the invasion destroyed the American prefabricated harbour and severely damaged the British Mulberry harbour. During these storms, Motorboat Companies of the RASC Fleet distinguished themselves saving stranded soldiers and assisting smaller naval vessels, rescuing their crews in the pounding waves.

The supply of petrol was vital to the landing's success, and it was estimated that fuel would account for 60% of the weight of stores required by the force. The RASC firstly provided petrol using jerry cans and petrol tankers, but later during the campaign, by operating the Pipeline Under The Ocean (PLUTO), petrol was supplied directly to France from the UK. The pipeline was then extended as the troops advanced across France. The bravery, resilience and determination of these RASC personnel helped 150,000 allied troops go ashore on the first day of these landings, with thousands more arriving each subsequent day after that. The eventual breakout from the beachheads led to the unconditional German surrender on 7th May 1945.

Simon Warmesley



PLUTO arriving in France

Plymouth Branch

Certificate of Merit awarded to retiring Chairman

On 29th December 2023, retiring Chairman Colin Surita was awarded a Certificate of Merit for his long and faithful service. New Branch Chairman Mike Cleaton also presented Colin with a Branch Polo shirt and his wife Pam with a bouquet of flowers.



Mike Cleaton presenting Colin Surita with his Certificate of Merit

Colin was called up for National Service in 1957 but, as he was doing night and day college at that time, he was granted a deferment and finally joined the RASC at Aldershot on the 6th February 1958. In his words, he did his 'square bashing and trade training' at Buller Barracks and then was posted to 2nd Infantry Brigade at Salisbury Plain. Subsequently the Brigade moved to Crownhill Fort in Plymouth. Colin finished his 2 years of service, was demobbed, and went back to London where he was living. He moved back to Plymouth in 1963 and worked in the motor

trade for the rest of his working life till he retired in 2002. It was while he was a volunteer at Derriford Hospital for The MacMillian Centre that he met another volunteer and, during their many talks, Colin found out that he was a member of the RASC/RCT Association, Plymouth Branch.

Colin joined the Association in 2003 and was asked if he would like to be Vice Chairman and eventually took the position of Chairman, a post he held until he stepped down in 2023. He was also the Standard Bearer for the Branch for 13 years. During his time as



Colin and Pam after the presentation

Chairman, Colin attended many different meetings, chaired many AGMs, attended many different functions, and met many high ranking people. Colin said "During my many years of service to the Branch I have enjoyed every bit of what I have been asked to do and would do it all over again."

Kevin Marshall

Wales & Western Region

The annual reunion 2023 took place at Tiffany's Hotel Blackpool over the weekend 17th/19th November 2023.

The event was attended by 48 members and guests, the numbers were lower this year as many cancelled in the weeks before the event, but those who did attend had a very enjoyable weekend and Gala Dinner.

Colonel Nigel and Mrs Gilbert were our guests for the weekend. On the Friday evening after dinner, we joined other hotel guests in the main lounge. The Bingo was about to start, and Colonel Nigel asked if he could join in. We went to purchase some Bingo tickets, I was asked by Colonel Nigel where the numbers are, my reply was he needs to open the book. So needless to say, I did not think he had played Bingo before. As the Bingo continued Colonel Nigel was assisted by Vicky, the first game finished, then the second game began. Colonel Nigel needed one number for a full house, it came up, so Vicky shouted for him.



Left: Colonel Gilbert with his winning card-was it beginner's luck?

Right: Eric Read enjoying a sing along with his table

Colonel Nigel said "have I won" to which Vicky said yes, he commented he thought he needed to get every number on the page. Colonel Nigel won £40. Well done Sir!

Steve Hutchison

National Amphibian Branch (NAB)

There is an amazing family spirit amongst former members of the amphibious unit (formerly known as 18 Amphibian Squadron RCT) in Fremington, North Devon. We were the DUKW men of old and continue to meet each year in Barnstaple, and DUKWs continue to be regarded with huge respect. We were delighted to be informed that sometime soon one will be on permanent public display outside The Royal Logistic Corps Museum at Worthy Down. It is known as 'Crispy Duck', christened by the Royal Marines. They were co-located with us in Fremington and they rebuilt 3 old DUKWs after 18 Sqn left, to assist them in their work at the Amphibious Experimental Establishment (AXE) at nearby Instow. I'm sure we will all be going to Worthy Down to pay our respects to 'Crispy DUKW' in due course.



Crispy Duck (credit RLC Museum)

We held our annual reunion in Barnstaple in October. Our now traditional 10-pin bowling session broke the ice on the first day of our get-together. We were delighted to see that our own Ray Chimes brought along his recently presented campaign medal for his service with DUKWs on Christmas Island during the nuclear tests. The new medal was recently announced by the government as veterans gathered to mark the 70th anniversary of the country's first successful atomic test, today dubbed the 'plutonium jubilee!' Congratulations Ray!



The Nuclear Test Medal



Ray Chimes displaying his medal

The dinner dance on Saturday night was as popular as ever, as was the entertainment, we happily danced through the evening to music from 'our era!' Prizes were awarded for the 10-pin skittles and a raffle drawn, so everyone went home happy, especially those who also went home with prizes! Our Branch Standard was on parade (courtesy of the ubiquitous Dennis West), and in an important support role we had an unofficial guest, Mary Cole, who's father was on the DUKWs in Burma during the War.



Dennis West parading our Standard

We have now had to close our website and in its place a DVD has been produced. It is available to

all our members and the widows, and copies were distributed at the reunion (it includes several wartime experiences of DUKW operations, including stories from Mary's father).

We are never quite sure how long we can keep going, as all our members are in in their 8th decade or above. The annual reunion boasted an attendance of nearly 70, including family members and other carers. Age didn't stop a lot of serious catching up around the bar of the Barnstaple Hotel. Because our members come from all over the country, and sometimes from overseas, we make a weekend of it. In the past we have included outings on the DUKWs, courtesy of the Royal Marines, and had a church service and golf match as well. With maturity has come a shortening of the celebrations but not the fun!



Our icebreaker working well

At our AGM it was decided to go one last year with the same level of activity. So, 2024 will mark the last occasion for the Branch in its present format (although we hope to keep a simpler version of it going for a few more years) and it will mark 50 years since the last DUKWs were decommissioned by Lord

Mountbatten at a disbandment parade in Marchwood. Some of our members come down for several days and make an 'Autumn Break' of it at the Barnstaple Hotel. The reunion is over the weekend 6th/7th September, all Association members with fond memories of visits to Fremington are very welcome to join us. The main event normally has tables of 8, so why not make up a table? Further details can be obtained from our Chairman, Bill Brook, contactable through RHQ. Everyone is welcome!

Afternote for the uninitiated. DUKWs were built by the Americans in 1942 (a very rapid conversion from a conventional truck!) to meet the requirements in future plans for the Allied invasion of Europe. They were used successfully first in amphibious landing in Italy. Soon their full value was recognised and several thousand were manufactured and some distributed to other Allied nations, including the British. One of their cleverest design features was an ability to control tyre pressures from the driver's seat so they could adjust tyre pressures for surf, sand dunes, and road driving at will! They were also able to drive up onto a Landing Craft, which could carry 11 DUKWs.

They were an important presence at D Day, appeared at the 'Garden' operation phase at Arnhem, and in the Rhine crossings. They were also used in the Far East in Burma and Singapore. After the war they were used in the tropics, on Christmas Island and in Antarctica by the Australians. Later in their service they were adopted for peacetime roles, including for resupply by the monks of Caldey Island and for tourist trips on the Thames and Mersey (the latter not altogether successfully!) and four were totally renovated by the Royal Marines for their own use. This enduring and versatile equipment is very much missed by those who worked with them.

David Pepperell

Doncaster Branch



Fish and Chip Night

On 28th February we had a fish and chip social evening instead of the monthly meeting.

We had 27 sat down, all were members apart from 3 guests, everyone commented how good the food, atmosphere and location were. It was great to be able to talk amongst each other with being on one long table. Many thanks to the Chairman who took the pictures.

Mick Gill

REMEMBRANCE 2023

On Sunday 12th November 2023, RASC and RCT veterans around the world gathered to pay their respects to fallen comrades. What is great to see are the photos that Association members send in, not only of the larger services in cities and towns, but also of their own poignant and more private Acts of Remembrance.

Cenotaph Parade

This year over seventy-five Association veterans paraded at Horse Guards Parade and marched past the Cenotaph. It was the first time I had participated, and it meant a lot to me for several reasons. On a personal level I could pay my respects and remember my own father whose WW2 medals we had found, still in their box with the seal on, after he died. He was a glider pilot and took part in Operation VARSITY, the largest airborne operation ever conducted in one day in a single location. To be part of the RASC & RCT contingent was a great experience; I was surrounded by exceptionally smart and proud fellow veterans, some of whom I had served with-what a privilege.

I was struck by how smart and professional looking everyone was; we really do feel we were one of the best dressed contingents, and rightly so.

On behalf of all those who paraded, I would like to thank Stevie Baird for all his efforts to keep us in step. I have photographic evidence that we were in step (at least at the point the photo was taken)! I should also thank Sophie Rayworth for agreeing to have her photo taken with us. To be honest, she was not given a huge amount of choice as she was extracted from her BBC colleagues and briefly 'kidnapped' by certain members.

Spaces are always limited and we normally have more peorequesting places then allocated spaces. Members who would like a place for the Cenotaph Dispersal on 10th November 2024 should register their interest as soon as possible by contacting the Secretary at: rascrtsec@rhqtherlc.org.uk Please note that members of National branches normally register through their secretaries.

Richard Hick



Don't squash me! Dave Williams, Vic Antona, Terry McKibbon



A tough job-Stevie Baird trying to explain to the officers how to stay in step



Looking very dapper-Riders' Branch Secretary Dave Nelson, accompanied by an equally smart Rob Stevens



In Pensioner Peter Bateup



Stevie Baird and Andrew Lawton



Thanks to the ladies for their support



Sophie Rayworth surrounded by her new bodyguards and fan club



Buller Branch members after the parade



Group photo after the parade

Remembrance around the country and overseas

Bideford

The 11th of November 2023 was in many ways a sad day with our Branch closing, but it was the right thing to do.

Before we handed the Standard over at St Mary's Church, my wife Linda and I went to our local War Memorial at East the Water at 0900hrs for our last Act of Remembrance with the Standard.

We were also able to pay our respects to Kieth Gibbs who passed away in March of this year at the age of 90; Kieth was one of the founder members of the Bideford Branch. At 1115 hrs our Standard was placed on the Church Altar and the Bideford RASC/RCT Branch was no more.

Trevor Evans



Trevor parading the Bideford Standard for the last time.



Duisburg

Association members Robert Astbury, David Seward and Robert John Everett took part in three Remembrance Services in Germany.

The first was the Remembrance Day Service at the Brunssum War Cemetery (NL) on the 11th November. They laid a wreath on behalf of the Royal British Legion Rheindahlen Branch, Germany.

A day later they were joined by further RCT Veterans from Duisburg, to pay respects at the Commonwealth War Cemetery in Rheinberg, where two wreaths were laid; one on behalf of the Veterans Duisburg by Howard De Winton, the other by Robert Everett on behalf of the RASC/RCT Association.

On 19th November they joined the German Reserves Duisburg at their Remembrance Sunday Service (Volkstrauertag) at the New Cemetery in Duisburg, where a further wreath was laid.



Edinburgh Branch



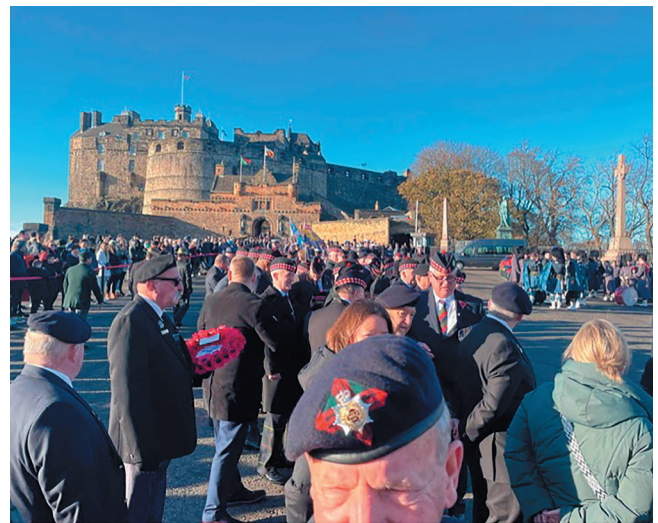
Branch members before the parade



Lest we forget



Meeting up with old friends after the parade



An amazing setting for the parade



Standards on parade

Londonderry Branch



As with most branches Remembrance weekend was a busy time for us. On Friday 10th November our Branch standard bearer was invited to parade at Lisneal College at a Remembrance concert, which as always was a great success.

Then on the Sunday our standard and a few of our branch members joined with the Royal British Legion main parade through the city ending up at the Cenotaph for an Act of Remembrance and then returning back to the waterside RBL, which is a march of approximately 3 miles there and back. Unfortunately, the weather was unkind to us, and it rained most of the time we were marching. Later in the afternoon we met at Caw Camp (most of our members served here) where we have a memorial plaque for past members. There we were joined by members of the Combined Cadet Force, serving members of 211 Tanker Sqn RLC and the Kildoag pipe band. We had a short parade followed by an Act of Remembrance; our President Mr Colin Neely, the OC 211 Tanker Sqn and Mr Kenneth Holmes (on behalf of the REME) laid wreaths at our memorial plaque.

Davy Burnside

Retired Warrant Officers and Senior NCOs' Club



Remembrance Day

Club Secretary Bob Wade with his son Gary and Grandson Ethan along with other club members Nigel Ward, Bob Lawrence, Derek Gale and Phil Stothart laying a wreath at the Upton Grey War Memorial near Basingstoke on behalf of the Retired WO & SNCOs' club RASC RCT.

Riders' Branch

Normandy Battlefield Tour

The planning for our motorcycling adventure started in October 2022, with routes and itineraries proposed by our very own Riders' Branch Vice President, Chris McShane.

Our group consisted of Chris McShane, Richard Ingrey, Andrew Wigfall, Daryl 'Basher' Jayne, Martin 'Ginge' Bordley, Phyllis Ellen and John Elton. Unfortunately, in his eagerness to join us at the ferry terminal in Portsmouth, John Elton was involved in a collision and was unable to carry on! The good news is that John is making a good recovery.

With only 5 days in France, we were determined to fit in as much as possible in the time we had, so it was destined to be a very busy schedule! Setting out on Sunday 14th May, we boarded the ferry at Portsmouth for the overnight sailing to Caen. Once docked, a short ride took us into the town of Caen, where we set up camp in the Brit Hotel. A quick check-in and turn-around, and we were off to the Merville Gun Battery, a German coastal fortification. From Merville, we rode to Pegasus Bridge where we had lunch at the famous Café Gondrée and picked up a few souvenirs.



**Pegasus Bridge, left to right.
Wiggy, Chris, Basher, Phyllis, Ginge, Rick.**

After a night of refreshment and merrymaking, the next stage of our road trip took us firstly to SWORD Beach, one of the two British landing sites on D-Day, followed by JUNO Beach and its museum - JUNO being a joint British and Canadian landing beach. From JUNO, we rode on to the British War Memorial at Ver-Sur-Mer, a truly outstanding and beautiful area of remembrance.

Here we laid an RASC/RCT Riders' Branch wreath,

paid our respects and paused to reflect and gather our thoughts. Our final visit on this busy day was to Arromanches-les-Baines and GOLD, the second British landing beach and one at which the famous Mulberry Harbours were used.

The Mulberry harbours solved the problem of needing deep water jetties and a harbour to provide the invasion force with the necessary reinforcements and supplies and were to be used until major French ports could be captured and brought back into use after repair of the inevitable sabotage by German defenders. Comprising floating but sinkable breakwaters, floating pontoons, piers and floating roadways, this innovative and technically difficult system was being used for the first time.

The Mulberry B harbour at GOLD Beach was used for 10 months after D-Day, and over 2.5 million men, 500,000 vehicles, and 4 million tons of supplies were landed before it was fully decommissioned. The still only partially completed Mulberry A harbour at OMAHA Beach was damaged on 19 June by a violent storm that arrived from the north-east before the pontoons were securely anchored. After three days the storm finally abated, and damage was found to be so severe that the harbour had to be abandoned and the Americans had to resort to landing men and material over the open beaches.

Next day, we moved our 'Base Camp' to our second hotel, this time in Carentan, from where we visited the American War Graves, a very humbling and thought-provoking experience, and perhaps a little 'dusty' in the RTTW sense. Here, we laid another RCT Riders' Branch wreath. We made time for a quick visit to the nearby Operation OVERLORD Museum and moved on to OMAHA, one of the two US beach landing sites, and then on to Pointe-du-Hoc, a fortified German stronghold, where American Army Rangers scaled 90ft cliffs under fire in order to take the position.



Paying respects at the American cemetery



The wreath laid at the British war memorial.

Finally, that day, we visited UTAH beach (US) and on the way back to our hotel, stopped at the Major Dick Winters Memorial ('Easy' Company, 506 Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne) whom many will recall from the book and TV series 'Band of Brothers'.

The German war cemetery we visited the following day was a markedly different but equally humbling experience to the Allied cemeteries. We then made our way to St Mère-Église, famous for the American paratrooper who landed on the church spire, as seen in the film 'The Longest Day'.

We rounded off our day with visits to the nearby American Airborne Museum and German stronghold of Azeville Battery.

Friday 19th May saw us pack up and head for home at the end of what had been a truly awe-inspiring trip, with superb weather and first-class riding colleagues. Looking forward to Belgium in 2024!

Richard Ingrey

Ride to the Wall 2023



Fellow Wallers can often be heard commenting on the large numbers of Royal Corps of Transport present at the NMA. This year I heard one such comment in respect of one of the volunteer marshals, "Oh, he'll be bloomin' 'Rickshaws, Cabs and Taxis' again, they're everywhere!" Indeed, it would be true to say that amongst the many Regimental and Corps flags on display at RTTW, there is a preponderance of RCT flags being flown from bikes each year, with the more select individuals amongst them, perhaps, also flying a chequered flag with a golden number '1' emblazoned on it: 1 Squadron RCT.

But why so many RCT?

The RCT was one of the parts of the Army (along with the Royal Corps of Signals, Royal Military Police, and a small number of Royal Army Ordnance Corps and Royal Armoured Corps), which required troops to hold a motorbike licence in order to fulfil their professional role. The RCT (and later, transport elements of the RLC) had one of the largest requirements, which was for reconnaissance, vehicle convoy escort and marking routes on exercise and operations (all now conducted in 4x4 vehicles). This may go some way to explaining why there are so many Ex-RCT motorcyclists: it was this requirement to hold a licence which facilitated them to also ride motorbikes recreationally, something not all may have done otherwise. All soldiers wanting to attain the rank of Corporal needed a licence in order to be considered for promotion. Aspirant motorcyclists at unit level were often 'thinned out' by a 'robust' introduction, involving plenty of off-road riding as would be required on exercise and operations. All RCT Officers were also required to attempt their bike licence (if they didn't already hold one) during their Troop Commanders' Course, following commissioning from Sandhurst.

A few former RCT soldiers therefore, thought it strange that there was no RCT veterans motorcycle group. The idea was originally mooted some 8 years ago, but the concept really gained traction 2 years later when, from an initial nucleus of 4 (founder Andrew Wright, plus Mark Mobius, Alan McNamara and Willie Mitchell), the RCT Riders was born on social media. Overnight, it gained 50

members, after a day 100, and soon hit 1,200. At that point, the RCT Riders approached the Corps Association regarding affiliation. The Association was formed on 1st October 1927 for the benefit of past and present members of the Corps. The main purpose of membership being to keep in touch with former friends and colleagues, and to keep alive the comradeship and esprit de corps that was so important during military service. The Association readily agreed to the affiliation and thus, the Riders' Branch of the RASC & RCT Association came into being. There are now 578 paid-up members and an additional 1,036 non-member followers on social media.

As a global branch of the Association, it is logical for the Riders' Branch to hold their AGM on the same weekend as RTTW, as this is the time when most members are in one place. The Branch does this on the Saturday morning of RTTW at Defence Medical Services, Whittington Barracks, some 6 miles from the NMA. This year it was held by kind permission of the Commanding Officer, Wing Commander Sharon Wheeler, with the Regimental Sergeant Major Andrew Bazeley RAMC, even allowing the bikes to be parked on 'his' square!

Vital sustenance was made available too, in the form of breakfast rolls and brews which were kindly provided by the Catering Manager, Jennie Moseley. Following their AGM, the RCT Riders were joined in the Barracks by other groups, which all formed up on the square. This year, the RCT Riders were joined by The Royal Naval Association, The Household Division Veteran Riders' Motorcycle Group, The Airborne Riders, The REME Riders, The Military Police & Law Enforcement Motorcycle Group and The Eights & Aces. This whole group of 247 bikes then departed the barracks on the final leg of their 2023 RTTW pilgrimage to the NMA.



Branch members gather for the annual Wallers photo



Laying a wreath at the Logistic Grove

Following the main service, and similar to most cap badges, Branch members and friends then gather at their own memorial, which is 'Logistic Grove', where a wreath is laid. The Branch then gather once more at The Wall for a group photograph.

The Riders' Branch of The RASC and RCT Association is for all those Ex members (or indeed still serving RLC) of the RASC, RCT & the other Corps (or parts of) which formed the RLC (RAOC, ACC, Pioneers & P&C Branch of RE) who ride, used to ride, or are no longer able to ride and are sufficiently interested in motorbikes/scooters/trikes etc, for the Riders' Branch of the RASC & RCT Association to be their natural home. Photographs by kind permission of Wallers and branch members Neil Wahlers and Rosi McIsaac.

Dave Nelson

6 Squadron Reunion



Friends reunited again

The 6 Sqn RCT's annual reunion took place at the RBL Club Davenham, which is one of the last few clubs that remain.

As a band of men, we have adopted the club as we are well looked after by them, the food is fantastic, the welcome warm and inviting. The venue is walking distance from the hotel where we all stay which has also got used to us turning up every year. We had a few no shows but those that came had a good time catching up with old and new friends. This event usually takes place in October, but we made a decision to hold it in the summer next year to get the better weather.

Kevin Terry

Riders' Branch

Victory Festival

The Victory Festival was first introduced in 2021 and is now held every two years and commemorates VE and VJ days and all British Armed Forces in service around the globe.

To this end Martin Ginge and Paul Russell approached the organisers to find out if there was any way we can get the motorbikes involved. By the end of the meeting, it was agreed that the RCT Riders Branch, supported by other veteran riders and serving military personnel, would lead the Saturday morning parade which would consist of up to 500 marching troops, military WWII veterans, reenactors and vintage military vehicles.

It was also agreed that the branch could have a stand at the main festival for the duration of the weekend where they could put up the branch gazebo and park their bikes up to be seen in all their glory.



Bikes parked up after the parade

On the morning of Saturday 23rd September 2023, 33 bikes of all sizes met up at the Rolling Scones Cafe in Gosport, which is home to the Gosport Motorbike Social group, at 0700hrs for breakfast and the pre-ride brief. The ride went without a hitch and leading the ride was our very own Tiny TROG with Martin Ginge and Paul Russell alongside.

Riders from all three services were in attendance and all went back to the main showground at Deadalus after the parade, where all the bikes were parked up outside the gazebo for all to see. The riders then enjoyed the rest of the day taking part with other stall holders, veterans, serving personnel and the reenactors.

All were reliving the bravery, lives and memories of our past while sharing it with the younger generations. All whilst advertising the branch and enjoying photo opportunities with some well-known celebrities and other entertainers. We even managed to give out some stickers.



Posing with a superhero

Each participant of the ride was given a wristband as a mark of respect, which entitled the wearer to free entry for the whole weekend. Camping was available for the duration of the festival, and many returned on the Sunday to continue enjoying the atmosphere. It was a great success, so much so that we have been invited back to take part in the parade for 2025.



Branch members posing with Captain America

Special thanks to Paul Russell and Martin Ginge for liaising and organising the parade ride, and to Kelly Purple for helping with the setting up and administration of the Facebook page for this event.

Phyllis Bordley

A Tale of the Unexpected

In 1964 the Army in its wisdom, posted me to 18 Amphibious Company RASC at Fremington Camp in North Devon, with the objective of turning me into a DUKW driver.



Dvr Terry Peters at the wheel of his DUKW

At this time, I was single, thin and very excited at the prospect! During my early years at this camp, I used to walk in my spare time the short distance upstream to Fremington Quay, on the river Taw, taking with me my fishing tackle, slung over my shoulder. I came to spend many an hour on that quayside, dangling a hook in the water, trying to land something bigger than a sardine!

In 2010, whilst at the unit's annual reunion in Barnstaple, I made a point of returning to the now deserted camp and on up to Fremington Quay. This was to relive some old memories and to show my wife Susan one of the many places that I have reminisced about.

Once I was back home the reunion over, I delved once more into pursuing my hobby; that of researching into my family's history. Top of my trace list of forebears, was my father's stepfather, namely one Horace Foster Setterfield.

Horace's father's identity, was unknown to me at this time. It took some convoluted 'digging' through

various records, for me to eventually find him, in the 1901 census.

He was a 14 year old cook aboard a fishing smack, called 'Sultan', a sailing vessel out of Ramsgate, Kent. Horace was one of a four-man crew, and the Master was his father, Henry George Setterfield. This census had been handwritten, signed and submitted by his father.

The eerie part came, when I looked at where they were on the 31st March 1901. They were tied up at Fremington Quay! They would have used the same steps and stood on the same spot that I was standing on, some, 109 years later.

Further research has revealed that they had most probably been using the fishing grounds between Land's End and the Scilly Isles and on up to the Old Head of Kinsale, Southern Ireland.



Terry Peters at Fremington Quay in 2010

From there, they could have landed their catch in either Hakin, near Milford Haven, or Fremington in the North of Devon. One reason for picking Fremington Quay, was that there was a railway station at that quay, only some 30 yards away. Freight wagons pre-packed with ice in Barnstaple, would meet them, load up and take the fish, crabs and shellfish etc, to the markets in London.

I think that as coincidences go, this must rate pretty highly.

Terry Peters

Tank Transporter Branch

The Tank Transporter National Branch continues to thrive. The National Reunion and other social gatherings are many, with enough events for members of all generations to participate in.

One of the major changes for 2024 is the location for the Annual Tank Transporter Branch Reunion. Following 25 years in Liverpool at the Adelphi Hotel the general consensus was that it was time to change the location.

Liverpool itself remains a vibrant, active city centre location, however, out of proportion increases in pricing has made the Adelphi Hotel non-viable as a location for the annual reunion. Accordingly, the decision to move the location was made at the AGM in October 2023.

The new venue for the 2024 event will be in Nottingham which offers better value for money for both accommodation and facilities. The Crown Plaza hotel in Nottingham city centre was chosen and the reunion will be held there from 18th-20th October 2024.



Preston Summer Gathering 2023 at the Bull and Royal

Full details can be found on the Tank Transporter Facebook events page. As always this annual reunion is open to all ranks who served in, and supported, Tank Transporter units irrespective of cap badge or location, whether in UK or BAOR.

In addition to the National Reunion, other gatherings planned for 2024 are as follows:

- Ranby Gathering (Ken Mintram)
- 16 Tk Tptr Sqn Seaside Gathering at Weston-Super-Mare 12-14 April 2024 (Phil Metcalf-Boyen)

- 3 Tk Tptr Sqn Gathering at Eastwood Hall, Nottingham 10-12 May 2024 (Ian Richards)
- Tank Transporter Summer Gathering (Royal and Bull Preston) 7-8 June 2024 (Terry Mckibben)
- Amesbury Christmas Drinks. Christmas Jumpers mandatory. (Eddie Edwards)
- The Tank Transporter Historic Vehicle will be on display at the Gloucestershire Vintage and Country Extravaganza at South Cerney (2-4 August 2024) and also at Retrofest Newbury (9-11 August 2024).

Other shows and events may be included and will be notified on Facebook.



Amesbury Christmas Jumper Gathering 2023

We are also proud to see that 'Arthur' English is now a Chelsea Pensioner joining 'Tanky' Allen at The Royal Hospital Chelsea. Our best wishes to them both and in particular Arthur on the start of another chapter of his life. We look forward to seeing them both at the Reunion in October.

'Na Zdrowie!'



'Arthur' English our newest Chelsea Pensioner, with his fan club

Ian Lloyd

Tyneside Branch

More tea Padre.....

On Wednesday 2nd August 2023 the Tyneside Branch said thank you to retired Padre Michael Bass for his long-dedicated army service, and support to the branch. Branch President Colonel Varn Jassal awarded him with the Certificate of Merit and a rather nice bottle of whiskey, along with his wife Jacqui, who was presented with a bouquet of flowers.



Presentation of the Certificate of Merit to Padre Michael Bass by Branch President Colonel Varn B Jassal TD, DL, JP.

In 1969 Michael served as a chaplain to the Northumbrian Army Cadet Force for two years,

before joining the Regular Army in July 1971. He was posted to BAOR and served in Krefeld with 28 Signal Regiment. He then moved to Minden with 3 LI.

He was then posted back to the UK at Bulford, where amongst other units he looked after 19 Tank Transporter Squadron who 'introduced' him to the Antar, with 65 Squadron helping him pass his HGV licence. Whilst there he was also part of the ACE Mobile Force and exercised in Norway and Turkey, later returning back to BAOR at Fallingbostal with 17/21 Lancers, Coldstream Guards and the 4/7 Hussars.

Later he returned back to UK to the Depot of the Queen's Division. His next posting was to be with the WFR and the Scottish Highlanders, followed by HQ RSME at Chatham, the Duchess of Kent's Military Hospital, and the Depot of the King's Division. In 1986 he served with 20 Armoured Brigade for two years until posted to RSA at Larkhill in 1988. Michael finished his service as DACG North East District Catterick.

But Michael just couldn't walk away from service altogether after his long army career, so he became the Honorary Chaplain to the RASC/RCT Association, Tyneside Branch. As our Padre, the Branch always saw Michael as it's 'father figure', giving guidance and support when and where needed. The whole branch membership wishes him well on his new and longest posting, his retirement.

Members of the Tyneside Branch head North to get totally tattooed for an experience like no other!

Yes, you've guessed it, to see the show that brings together the best Military performances from a global cast, featuring cutting edge lighting and military precision at the impressive backdrop of Edinburgh Castle. Members and guests attended the Royal Military Tattoo on 19 August 2023, for a fantastic evening of music, dance displays and performances by the Massed Pipes and Drums, Lone Piper, Tattoo Dancers and Fiddlers as well as the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force Steel Orchestra, King's Colour Squadron, The Swiss Armed Forces Central Band, His Majesty the King's Guard Band and Drill Team of Norway, The United States Air Force Band and others.

Members of the branch arrived by Caledonian Travel coach before lunch, allowing members and guests free time in the city before being collected and taken to the Britannia Hotel in central Edinburgh to their comfortable accommodation and an evening meal. Following this they all set off to the Castle for the 9pm show, after which they were tucked up in bed for an overnight stay.

Having had breakfast the following morning, some with blurry eyes, yet again allowed some free time before the enjoyable journey home to North Shields. Everyone had a great time and there were even some fun prizes won on the obligatory raffle on the coach journey. A big thanks to our Social Committee; Debra, Lynne and Johanne for all the hard work in organising the visit.

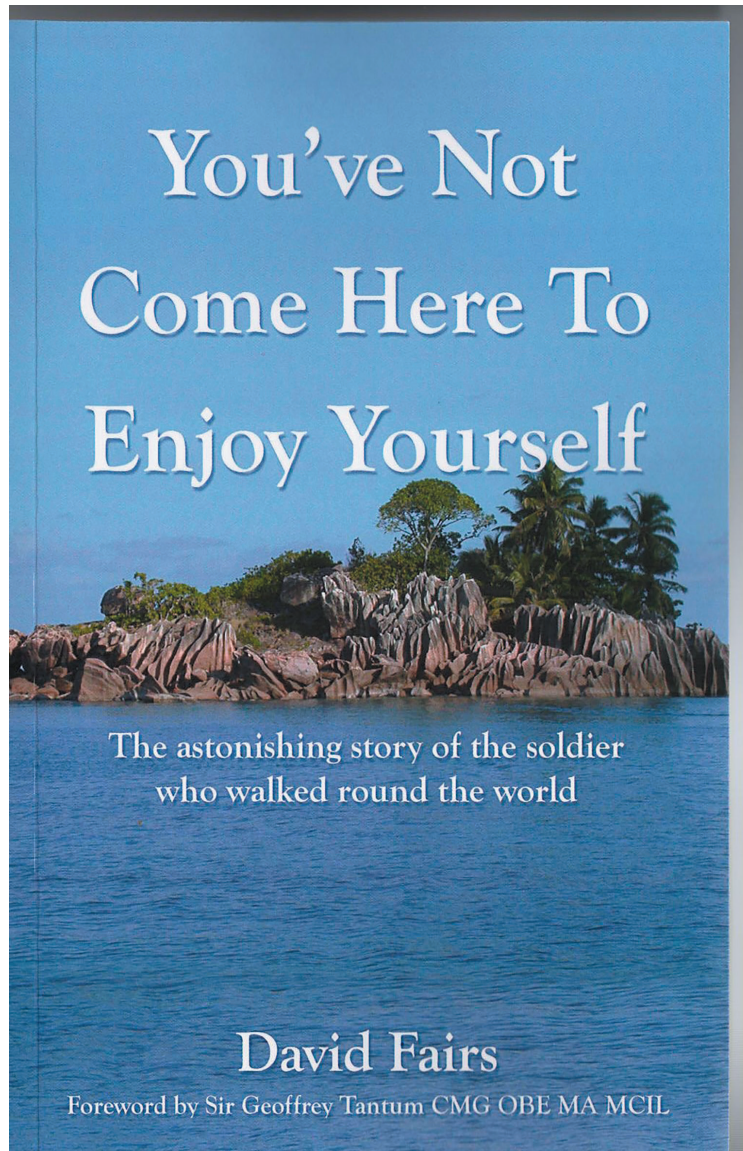


All smiles on the coach journey

Also, many thanks to Lt Col Richard Hick, our RASC & RCT Association Secretary, who worked on our behalf in providing a central grant to assist.

Malcolm Cohen

Book Review



'You've Not Come Here To Enjoy Yourself'

This book by David Fairs covers an entire lifetime of adventure including twenty-five years in the Army and the difficulties he found in adjusting to civilian life. During his military service with the Royal Corps of Transport David takes much pride in recounting his experiences with Airborne Forces and as an Army Commando, as each event fills the reader often with the humour of the occasion.

Of particular interest to anyone serving in the Army today is explaining the difficulties he encountered after taking the decision to leave the Army, which he loved, in mid-career and the lack of help or support, which, hopefully, is not the case today.

To get to this part of his life means going back sixty years to find out what made this extraordinary man tick, for he has always lived life to the full. Twenty-five years including two tours of duty with Airborne Forces, and two as an Army Commando all added up to an exciting and exhilarating experience that leaves a lifetime mark.

He led an expedition to canoe a thousand miles down the Nile for which he was proud to become a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society (FRGS). Being a Para was light work compared with having to compete with huge crocodiles on the same piece of sand as he wanted to pitch camp and navigating down the boiling surf of the cataracts sometimes upside-down.

As David adds: "Try finding a dentist in the middle of the desert to extract a tooth without anaesthetic, is worth a book on its own."

There is often a dark point in one's life and David found it when he left the Army to try something completely different. Life became very difficult until he took up a post as Manager of a Pontins Holiday resort, somewhat out of character for someone with his background, but rewarding all the same, and reminiscent in some ways with life in the Army encircled, as he was, with barbed wire and guards on the gates! Life was full of humour not lost in these pages and the experience helped in eventually forming his own travel company which was hugely enjoyable.

His book covers the million miles travelling to over seventy countries as his fellow travellers felt the loneliness of Antarctica, the Patagonia Steppe, the sweaty heat of the Indian jungle and the thin air in the lungs on the Himalaya slopes. Torremolinos it wasn't, but it made his clients become his friends. David's life and thus, his book, is an inspiration to all those seeking to dig themselves out of a dull and unproductive routine. It is also funny and packed full of facts.

The book is published as a hardback (£15.00) or paperback (£12.00) plus £4.00 post and packaging. You can order a book by contacting davidtfairs@gmail.com

Obituary

Colonel Peter S Mears



Peter was commissioned into the Royal Army Service Corps after passing out of the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst in July 1955 age 21. His first appointment was to the Depot RASC in Bordon. From Bordon, Peter was posted to Kenya. Returning to the UK, he went to Junior Leader's Regiment. From there he spent the next few years working his way up the promotion 'ladder' to reach the rank of Major. I first met him in 1972 when he was doing a desk job in the Training Centre, at Buller Barracks, Aldershot.

After one or two more 'jobs' he was selected for promotion to Lieutenant Colonel to command of 7 Tank Transporter Regiment in Germany. This was to be his most important and demanding job. As his second-in-command I got to know him well.

7 Regiment had a vital operational role being responsible for taking the main battle tanks to their war locations. With such a high-profile role the regiment attracted many visits by high-ranking officers, some from other NATO countries, which Peter always took in his stride.

One of the three Squadrons in the Regiment was made-up of locally enlisted men, many of whom came from Poland, with little or no military experience, but they were excellent drivers of the 30-ton Mighty Antar tank transporter, with which the regiment was equipped. Knowing their limitations as soldiers, Peter was anxious about how they would perform in a forthcoming NATO Operational Readiness Test and ordered that the Squadron be deployed for a regimental assessment.

Arriving in the field location, where the squadron had been deployed for 24 hours, Peter commenced his inspection, accompanied by the usual entourage, including the Polish Superintendent. He quickly came across a soldier wearing a respirator who had his finger holding the mask away from his face. This, of course, rendered the mask totally ineffective.

Peter asked the man what he was doing. The soldier replied that he could not breathe! After taking the mask off it was discovered that a cardboard protective sleeve in the filter, which should have been removed, was still in place! Later during the inspection, one area was defined by a lot of white mine tape. When told that this was not appropriate in a war location, the Polish Superintendent replied in his Polish accent, 'Simmoledat dannert wire, Colonel.' Peter saw the funny side of both incidents and put everyone at ease. There might have been a different reaction by some other senior officers! The Regiment subsequently passed the NATO Operational Readiness Test. Peter's time in command of 7 Regiment was highly successful. His firm, fair and relaxed style of command engendered loyalty in the Regiment.

After relinquishing command, Peter moved to Headquarters British Army of the Rhine as a senior staff officer before he subsequently ran the Soldiers Record Office in Hastings. As a 'people person' he was extremely well-suited to this role. At the end of this job, Peter was promoted to full Colonel and appointed Commander 2 Group which comprised a number of units responsible for reinforcing the British Army of the Rhine in war.

This was another important role, demanding special qualities required in moulding a disparate number of units into an efficient organisation. At the end of this job, in May 1989, he retired from the Army after 35 years' devoted service. After leaving the Army he worked for the Army Security Vetting Unit.

Interested in sport, Peter was an excellent hockey player who had represented the Army. With his encouragement and support, 7 Regiment reached the final of the Team Army Golf Championship. Peter's sense of duty and comradeship were the main planks on which he built his successful command appointments. He trusted his subordinates and allowed them to discharge their responsibilities. Peter was a fine officer and a lovely man.

Peter died at home in Taunton on 27th September 2023. He is survived by his wife, Ann, 2 sons and a daughter.

Ian Vaughan-Arbuckle

Obituary

Sergeant Brian Glasspool



Brian Glasspool sadly passed away on October 1st 2023 aged 89 years, after being in ill health for a long time.

Brian joined the RASC in June 1952 after doing army training as a 'boy soldier' and served for 23 years. Brian was known to many as 'Geordie' or 'Gramps' - both were nicknames given to him throughout his time in the Army. His postings included Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, Cyprus, Gibraltar and Germany, as well as Catterick Camp, Bulford and Gravesend in Kent.

He embraced army life with enthusiasm and after his discharge in 1975 he drove HGV vehicles all over England and was a very competent mechanic.

Brian leaves Joyce, his wife of 63 years, along with their four children and eight grandchildren. In the words of his wife 'He was simply the best' and is sorely missed by all his family.

Last Post

Bailey - On 7 September 2023, Mr JF Bailey
RAOC/RCT

Barker - On 14 October 2023, Mr P Barker RCT

Barton - On 15 December 2023, Maj RHG Barton
RASC/RCT

Birch - On 25 November 2023, IP PJ Birch RCT

Blanche - On 13 December 2023, Capt WD Blanche
RCT

Bonnalack - On 29 September 2023, Sir M
Bonallack RASC

Burdett-Weston - On 27 September 2023, Mr J
Burdett-Weston RASC

Caiger - On 13 November 2023, IP PJ Caiger
RCT

Clifford - On 11 September 2023, Mrs K Clifford

Deeks - On 22 November 2022, Mr DJ Deeks RCT

Dunham - On 12 September 2023, Mr P Denham
RASC

Evans - On 18 October 2023, Mrs B Evans

Eyley - On 30 December 2023, Mr JW Eyley
RASC/RCT

Flanagan - On 23 November 2023, Mr S Flanagan
RCT

Gibbs - On 15 February 2024, Mrs S Gibbs

Glasspool - On October 2023, Mr B Glasspool
RASC/RCT

Gulley - On 19 September 2023, Mr SN Gulley RCT

Harper - On 4 December 2023, Mr K Harper RCT

Hawes - On 12 January 2024, Mr MJ Hawes
RASC/RCT

Hawley - On 11 October 2023, Mr E Hawley RASC

Ingram - On 31 August 2023, Maj JH Ingram
RASC/RCT/AAC

Kier - On 24 December 2023, Maj J Kier TD JP
RASC/RCT

Leaver - On 14 January 2024, Lt Col J Leaver
RASC/RCT

Lee - On 10 July 2023, Mrs KG Lee

Macfarlane - On 28 August 2023, Mrs C Macfarlane

Melville - On 8 October 2023, Mr P Melville RASC

Pallister - December 2023, Mr M Pallister
RASC/RCT

Pollitt - On 12 January 2024, Lt AD Pollitt RASC

Riches - On 18 December 2023, Maj JMR Riches
RASC/RCT

Robertson - On 1 January 2024, Mr S Robertson
RCT

Snell - On 12 December 2023, Lt Col PW Snell
RASC/RCT/INT

Spackman - On 4 February 2024, Col S Spackman
KStJ TD DL Late RCT

Stringer - On 31 July 2023, Maj AP Stringer TD
RASC/RCT

Swindale - On 27 November 2023, Mr T Swindale
RASC/RCT

Taylor - On 12 January 2024, Mr J Taylor RASC

Thomas - On 4 December 2023, Mr A Thomas RCT

Townsend - On 9 September 2023, Lt Col PE
Townsend RASC/RCT/RMP

Wallis - On 7 December 2023, Mrs P Wallis



Can you help identify a Veteran with an unclaimed pension?

As part of our campaign to encourage Veterans with unclaimed pensions benefits to come forward, we are asking for your help to identify anyone you think might qualify.

We know thousands of Veterans have not yet made their pension claim – some 2,000 preserved Armed Forces pension benefits go unclaimed every year. And our recent Freedom of Information request showed that during the 24-month period between 1 June 2020 and 31 May 2022, more than 4,000 Armed Forces pensions went unclaimed.

The AFPS Annual Report (July 2023) identified more than 17,100 unclaimed benefits, with some Veterans having more than one entitlement.

We can all play our part in encouraging Veterans we know to come forward if they have not

claimed their preserved pensions or preserved lump sums.

These can be significant amounts of money. A preserved pension of £1,500 for someone who left in April 1985 would now have a value of £4,500 pa. And anyone serving after April 1975, now aged 60-plus, could have an unclaimed pension.

AFPS pensions earned before April 2005 are payable at age 60 but they will not be paid automatically – they must be applied for.

We ask you to encourage anyone who might be eligible to visit the Veterans' Gateway website – www.veteransgateway.org.uk – to find out more.

The government also has a role to play in signposting the issue to the Veterans community, and we continue to encourage them to do just that.

Indeed, some welcome added momentum was provided by the Office for Veterans' Affairs (OVA), which announced in its recent Veterans' Strategy update: "The OVA is working with the MOD and the Forces Pension Society to reunite more Veterans with unclaimed, deferred pension benefits."

To help spread the word, we have produced this simple poster set out below, which highlights eligibility and how to claim.

It is also available via the landing page on our website.

Please help by sharing it across your networks or with those whom you know have a connection to the Armed Forces.

Thank you! 🇬🇧

AFPS pensions will not be paid automatically - they must be applied for

Veterans Unclaimed Armed Forces Pensions



CHAMPIONING ARMED FORCES PENSIONS SINCE 1946



At least **17,100** unclaimed Armed Forces pension benefits *



Between June 2020 and May 2022 over **4,000** preserved Armed Forces pensions went unclaimed



Anyone serving after April 1975 now aged 60 or over could have an Armed Forces pension if they served for 2 years or more



The pension is **NOT** paid automatically - Veterans must apply to Veterans UK using AFPS Form 8 or can call **0800 085 3600** for further information



FIND OUT MORE

* SOURCE: MOD AFPS ANNUAL REPORT 2023



