



# The Waggon Master

The Newsletter of the  
RASC & RCT Officers' Club



Issue No 14

May 2024



Major RJ (Nic) Carter (far left) and the 12 other UK veterans at 'Amazing 70,' in South Korea commemorating the 70th anniversary of the end of the Korean War.

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Major E.L. (Butch) Barrat MBE presenting his book 'The Army's 48 ft Fast Launch Derby Winner Class' (which featured in a 007 film) to Major Simon Walmsley, Director of the RLC Museum.



The Worthy Down Curry Lunch on 24 March.



**The Royal Army Service Corps  
and The Royal Corps of Transport  
Officers' Club**



**Newsletter**

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**Issue No 14**

**May 2024**

Club Committee

Chairman: Brigadier P A D Evans OBE DL  
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**2024 Dates for your diary:**

**14th July 2024:** RASC & RCT Corps Sunday, Cathedral Church of St Michael and St George, Aldershot, GU11 2BY. Curry Lunch at The Village Hotel Farnborough.

**15th August 2024:** Over 90s' Lunch, Regents' Park Barracks, London

**8th September 2024:** Taunton Curry Lunch, Norton Manor Camp, Taunton, TA2 6PF. Fire regulations limit us to 50 places.

**6th October 2024:** (Sixth) Museum Visit and Curry Lunch – Worthy Down.

**25th October 2024:** Officers' Club Annual Black Tie Dinner. The Village Hotel Farnborough, (GU14 7BF).

**7th November 2024:** Field of Remembrance (limited numbers).

**10th November 2024:** Remembrance Sunday and Cenotaph Parade.

## THE PRESIDENT OF THE RASC & RCT COUNCIL

### From the Waggoner, Issue 25

*“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 responsibility to ensure that our veterans receive help, particularly those who are too proud to seek support.”*

### RASC & RCT CORPS WEEKEND, 13 - 14 JULY 2024

This year’s Corps Weekend celebrations are due to take place on the weekend 13 & 14 July 2024 in Aldershot and Farnborough. There will be a full programme including a Band Concert, Association Dinner Dance, Church Service and Sunday Curry Lunch. In order to carefully control the Officers’ Club numbers attending the Church Service and Curry Lunch, members are asked to complete the return *included in this newsletter.*

**Church Service, 14 July 2024, 11 a.m.** The RASC & RCT Corps Sunday Service of Thanksgiving and Rededication will take place at 11 a.m. in the Cathedral Church of St Michael and St George, Queen’s Avenue, Aldershot (GU11 2BY) on Sunday 14 July 2024.

**Memorial Tablets.** The names of Officers’ Club members who passed away in 2023/24 are inscribed on Memorial Tablets in the RASC & RCT Chapel in the Church. Widows, partners and family of these members are invited to the Service and also to the Curry Lunch as guests of the RASC & RCT Council. Those who plan to attend the service and the lunch this year should fill in the relevant part of the attached return, or make themselves known by email at: [rasc-rctcouncilsec@rhqtherlc.org.uk](mailto:rasc-rctcouncilsec@rhqtherlc.org.uk)

**Corps Sunday Curry Lunch, 14 July 2024, from 1230 hrs. Also will take (place) at the Village Hotel.** You should note that the Sunday Curry Lunch, which is open to Officers’ Club and Association members, will take at The Village Hotel, Pinehurst Rd, Farnborough (GU14 7BF), which is about a mile from St Michael and St George.

### OVER 90s’ LUNCH – 15 AUGUST 2024

To be held on Thursday, 15 August 2024 in the Officers’ Mess, Regents Park Barracks. Those over 90s who wish to attend (families welcome) should contact the Secretary at: [rasc-rctcouncilsec@rhqtherlc.org.uk](mailto:rasc-rctcouncilsec@rhqtherlc.org.uk)

## **TAUNTON CURRY LUNCH – 8 SEPTEMBER 2024**

This year's event will be held in the Officers' Mess, 40 Cdo RM, Norton Manor Camp, Taunton on Sunday 8 September 2024. You are reminded that fire safety regulations restrict us to an attendance of 50 people. *A return is included in this newsletter.*

## **THE (SIXTH) WORTHY DOWN CURRY LUNCH AND MUSEUM VISIT 6 OCTOBER 2024**

To be held in the Officers' Mess, Worthy Down Camp on Sunday 6 October 2024. Following the successful (and delicious) lunch held there in March, attended by over sixty members, another Museum visit and curry lunch is planned. *A return is included in this newsletter.*

## **OFFICERS' CLUB BLACK TIE DINNER – 25 OCTOBER 2024**

To be held at once again at the Village Hotel Farnborough on Friday, 27 October 2024. Due to the success of the last event, where nearly one hundred attended, the Council agreed that partners should be invited to attend and that the event should be subsidised as in past years. *A return is included in this newsletter.*

## **REMEMBRANCE 2024**

**Remembrance Day Cenotaph Dispersal, 10 November 2024.** Members wishing to join the RASC & RCT contingent should follow the instructions under RASC & RCT Association on page 4/5.

## **OFFICERS' CLUB MATTERS**

Since the last edition of the Waggon Master a further RASC & RCT Council Meeting took place at the RLC Museum in December 2023. Because there are no AGM minutes to include here, a selection of the Minutes of this Council Meeting, of interest to members of The Officers' Club, is published instead:

### **Benevolence.**

In the new year, final figures for 2023 revealed that the RLC had processed 180 RASC/RCT cases and granted £139k. Our average grant per case is currently £732. The RLC Benevolence office is still operating at reduced capacity with staff hybrid working; they are working at least three days a week in the office.

**Partnering with The Veterans Charity.** The partnership with the veterans Charity is going very well, they have been extremely busy with supporting 550 cases Army-wide in total up to December 2023. 90 cases have been RLC, out of the 90 cases 4 were either RASC / RCT. They can be contacted via - [www.veteranscharity.org.uk](http://www.veteranscharity.org.uk).

### **The RLC Museum.**

Construction has begun of a canopy structure at the front of the museum to house the Museum's WW2 DUKW and to mark D-Day 80. This is a major project and is being funded from museum development funds and is scheduled to open on 31 May.

The Museum is employing a part time marketing/commercial officer to promote the museum to the wider public.

### **RASC & RCT Heritage.**

**Royal Waggoners' memorial plaque.** The plaque has been recovered from the National Army Museum and is safely in the RLC Museum. The Council have secured agreement from Father Nick Gosnell, Vicar General and Dean of the Cathedral Church of St Michael and St George, that permission will be granted to site the plaque in the RASC & RCT Memorial Chapel.

### **The RASC & RCT Medal Collection**

**Overview.** Steve Lewis who has been helping the collection had suffered two bouts of ill health that had slowed progress. Staff have identified some fascinating records that it is proposed might be published and sold via the Museum shop.

**Medal Display:** Work has commenced on filling the drawers. Three trays (for the drawers) had been fitted and a further 12 are awaiting fitting. The curator is investigating a hand-held device for Museum staff and visitors to use to access the background records.

### **The Logistic Grove at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffordshire.**

HQ The RLC secured a grounds maintenance contract for The Logistic Grove with the office of the National Arboretum, which appears to be working well. The HQ is monitoring the need for refurbishment at the site when necessary.

## **THE RASC & RCT ASSOCIATION**

**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](http://www.gov.uk/veteran-card)

Cenotaph 2024 –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 Richard Hick, the Association Secretary ([rasc-rctsec@rhqtherlc.org.uk](mailto:rasc-rctsec@rhqtherlc.org.uk)) 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.

### **BACS PAYMENTS (an update)**

The Treasurer’s Team at RHQ is accepting BACS Payments and/or Bank Transfers for RASC & RCT Officers’ Club functions. It should be noted that the title of the account includes the word ‘Fund.’

Details are included in **all attached returns** to this publication and are as follows:

**RLCA Trust Fund**, Sort Code **16-19-26**, Account **14841865**.  
**Ref:** function/your name (e.g. Dinner/Smith)

For those who do not use internet banking, do not fear, the supportive Treasurer’s Team will continue to accept cheques.

### **EVENTS - COSTS**

Due to recent national cost of living increases, we have seen function prices rise in many key areas, not least the cost of room hires, as well as an increase of foodstuff costs being passed on. For this reason, members’ contributions to our subsidised events will increase this year. Despite this, these functions remain competitively priced and good value.

**Curry Lunches;** from £10 per person to £15.

**Black Tie Dinner.**

Dinner only from £25 to £30.

Dinner and accommodation from £35 to £40.

## **Membership Data Sharing Form**

You are encouraged to complete the Membership Data Sharing Form enclosed with this publication. In the absence of the Blue Book, your Secretary gets numerous enquiries about contact details that your friends may have lost. If you give your consent to share your data , this will be added to our database ONLY and will negate the numerous telephone calls, needed for GDPR purposes, to seek your permission.

# REVISIT 2023 AMAZING 70

Major RJ (Nic) Carter

AMAZING 70 was the name given to a programme arranged by the South Korean Ministry for Patriots and Veterans Affairs to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the ending of the Korean War on 27th July 1953, to which veterans from the United Nations who participated in the war were invited.

I was fortunate in being one of the thirteen UK veterans and another fifty one veterans from seventeen other countries who were invited by the South Korea Government to take part in this week- long series of events and enjoy business class travel to get there and back. Veterans were allowed and encouraged to be accompanied by wives, family or carers making up a group of one hundred and sixty four around which the programme of expressions of gratitude and appreciation was built.

The manner in which we were greeted on our arrival at Seoul Airport was an indication of things to come, with masses of photographers and welcoming staff. We were left in no doubt that we were to be treated as celebrities and heroes to an extent that was almost embarrassing.

Our accommodation in the best and newest hotels in Seoul and Busan showed their determination to make our visit special. It was also an opportunity to see the transformation of a war torn Korea that I photographed in 1953 to the tenth largest economy in the world.



The first full day started with an Appreciation Breakfast. This was a series of speeches by Government Ministers, Generals, Pastors, Korean Choirls singing songs of praise, presentation of gifts, more photography, and it was nearly lunchtime before we got round to having breakfast!

In the afternoon we set off in eight coaches with a police escort to go North through the demilitarised zone to Panmunjon to stand on the border of North Korea, visit the Museum and have more photographs taken with hosts from many nations.

The next day was an early start to board the 300kph train to Busan, formerly Pusan, in the South of Korea, and to spend the evening at a Thank You Banquet. More speeches, more choirs, presentation of Ambassador for Peace Medals, more exotic food, more gifts and more photographs.

Day four started with a visit to the huge and beautiful United Nations Cemetery. It was a hot humid morning, but a chance to take in the enormity and tragedy of the loss of so many young lives.



The British losses were over one thousand killed but only eight hundred plus are buried in the cemetery the rest are still missing or died in prison camps in North Korea. The American losses were very large, over thirty thousand, but most repatriated to the States. We joined a very moving Remembrance Service at the Australian Memorial.

The highlight of the week took place that evening on 27th July, in a huge arena where the sixty four veterans took part in a grand ceremony hosted by the President of South Korea, to commemorate the ending of the Korean War, seventy years ago.. They were introduced individually to the enthusiastic audience of thousands. Each veteran was accompanied onto the huge stage by a military escort

More speeches, more photographs, more presentations, more choirs, but this time accompanied by the National Orchestra. It was a very grand affair, and the President shook hands with all the veterans and their families.

There was another early start next day to take the train back to Seoul to pay floral tributes at the Wall of Remembrance at the National War Museum.

There was just time for a group photograph then back to the hotel to change and to be taken to a reception at the British Embassy, for the UK veterans and their families. This very British evening was a very fitting end to a most poignant, impressive and memorable week.



The fourteen hour return flight with Korean Airways,

although in the comfort of Business Class, just added to the exhaustion of our adrenalin drained bodies and it took a full week to recover.

The South Korean Government, and all those members of the MPVA and staff associated with our visit deserve the highest praise for the planning, organisation and implementation of such a comprehensive programme. The attention to detail in all the paperwork, graphics, presentations, timing and co-ordination was meticulous and most praiseworthy. I doubt if there will ever be the like again and it was a privilege and pleasure and at times embarrassing, to be a recipient of so much attention and adulation.



# Isandlwana

by Major Robin Croslegh

There is a 'feeling' to Isandlwana that is more than the sum of its parts. The white painted cairns that scatter the former battlefield, sparsely in some spots and thick in others, mark the flow of the conflict. In such manner the tide of battle is left as an indelible tracing on the ground, a tattoo of pain sorrow, bravery and failure. The route of the colours is marked with a line of cairns to the river, the last stand on the small plateau halfway up the Sphinx shaped hillside clearly set out the shape of the dreadful defeat. There is little evidence to suggest that the landscape has changed since the battle, no unnecessary buildings or edifices other than some discrete memorials to the fallen; the ground is very much the same as it was then and, probably, for many thousands of years before that.

The description of the battle by a descendant of the chief, who commanded one of the Impi groups on the left horn, was mesmerising as we were drawn into the mindset of both sides. The pent-up desire of the young unbloodied Impi coupled with the solid experience of their elders, the fear that emanated from the British regiments who were subjected to the war cries of the thousands of hidden Zulus was imparted during of our visit by our guide who copied the cry of a single warrior ; it was not difficult to imagine the pin prickling fear that the redcoat soldiers would have experienced, the steadying exhortations of the seasoned NCOs , and the whinnying of horses under the fearful heat of the summer sun. The British commanders believed that they would soon defeat the native warriors who were armed only with Assegais against the superior firepower of the Martini-Henry rifle. Only when the full might of the Zulu force was apparent would they begin to doubt their unassailable position.

Now there is peace and quiet amongst the memorial site that is accepted as a national monument for both sides.

Three members of the ASC died during the battle, Corporal Joseph Pritchard, Private John Cole and Private William Jaques. Unlike the other Regiments and Corps there is no memorial to them on the battlefield. Their only memorial is included on a typewritten list of names in the Museum by the church in the nearest village. Both the museum and the battlefield are beautifully maintained by the South African War Graves Commission as are the remains at Rorke's Drift.

The site of Rorke's Drift is not as evocative or as moving as Isandlwana, possibly because it was a victory and also, as the site is situated within a rural settlement, that seems to dilute its impact on the senses. We celebrate the victory there and the VC awarded to Dalton, but we have ignored the sacrifice of the three members of the ASC slaughtered at Isandlwana; they deserve more.

# THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF OC 20 SQUADRON RCT

(By Colonel C J Constable)

Last summer, having previously been Chairman of the Officers' Club, I was a self invited host to the Over 90's lunch held in the Officers' Mess of Regents Park Barracks. I was seated next to a charming nonagenarian who had left the Corps many years before after a tour with 20 Company RASC, when the Company was involved with the Queen's Coronation in 1953. He was recalling the events of that summer and the pressure on the Company to provide all the VIP transport for the occasion. This brought to mind my own tour with 20 Squadron RCT when I assumed command in May 1977, a month before the Queen's Silver Jubilee celebrations.

When I arrived the plans had been prepared but there still needed to be a conference to fine tune the event. I duly reported to St James's Palace for the final planning meeting. It was Chaired by the Lord Chamberlain with a wide spectrum of attendees from a Deputy Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Deputy Chief Executive of London County Council, Ambulance and Fire Service Chiefs, staff from HQ London District and OC 20 Squadron seated at the far end! When all was finalised a small classified booklet was published detailing, to the minute, each activity. The Squadron's involvement was largely concerned with the transportation of very senior serving and retired officers of all three Services, for the Squadron had tri-Service responsibilities. In the event all went smoothly notwithstanding complaints from many one and two star officers serving in MOD who were not allocated transport; they were told to go by taxi - my phone was red hot!!

The Silver Jubilee provided the blue print for many subsequent events in the London social calendar. State visits were high on the agenda. Following more conferences at St James's Palace the Squadron's involvement was primarily concerned with the Queen's Baggage Train - a troop of small pantechnicons tasked with transporting personal items from the Queen's household around the country. For State visits the visiting Head of State generally arrived at Gatwick to be met by a senior Royal and transported to London by train to Victoria Station where the Queen, or another very senior Royal, met the visitor prior to an open carriage ride to Buckingham Palace. Our job was to transport the luggage from Gatwick to Buckingham Palace to get there before the Queen and her guest for one of the the first actions was the exchange of Royal gifts. To achieve this almost impossible timeframe the motor cycle mounted Special Escort Group of the Metropolitan Police escorted our vehicles. They stopped traffic at junctions and overruled traffic lights, they went up one way streets the wrong way and redirected traffic and pedestrians to clear the way. Drivers loved it! They were driving through the streets of London at speeds up to 60 mph!! I only went on one journey from Gatwick but on another occasion I went to Heathrow to see off President Ceausescu of Romania after his State Visit in June 1978. The Lord Chamberlain was saying farewell on behalf of the Queen but before the party arrived he asked if I had ever been on a Presidential aircraft?

The answer of course was NO! He duly took me on board the Presidential Boeing 707. It was amazing; a large exquisitely furnished double bedroom at the back with a conference/dining room complete with bar just forward of it, forward of this were the staff quarters which were very simple and basic. Not bad for a communist Head of State he observed!

The Queen's Baggage Train was a very sensitive Troop and caused me quite a problem during the Fireman's strike of 1977. Most of my drivers were driving the "Green Goddesses" - old 1940's Fire Engines which had been stored in Home Office garages since WW2 in case of a nuclear attack. Notwithstanding, the Squadron was still expected to man the Queen's Baggage Train. I had no drivers to spare but there happened to be in the Barracks a WRAC Drivers upgrading course. One morning Brigadier Ann Field (Director WRAC) called in, having parked her car in the barracks, and asked if she could help. In the event she authorised me to hold on to the WRAC drivers to drive the Queen's Baggage vehicles. When on Royal duty these vehicles carried the Royal Crest above the windscreens and had to keep to specific routes so that the police could keep a watching eye out for them. On one detail they went wrong and I was subsequently summoned to Buckingham Palace to explain myself to the Controller of the Royal Household (Sir Jonathan Miller). When I arrived in my best "bib and tucker" he looked up and said "young man - you do not wear a bowler hat with a soft shirt collar!!". I thought this is going to go well!! Actually when he had heard what we were up to and how we solved the problem he was terrific and became quite a friend of the Squadron ringing me direct on a number of occasions.

The Fireman's strike caused me another problem. NAAFI had generously provided £25 gift vouchers to all servicemen involved in covering the strike over the Christmas period. I gave them to the drivers driving the Green Goddesses and to the Workshop who were working 24/7 to keep these ancient vehicles on the road. To staff car drivers going about their daily business I did not give vouchers. Within days the Chief of Staff London District (Brigadier The Prince Ghika) was on the phone giving me a rocket as his driver had not been given a voucher, so I directed that all staff car driver should have a voucher as their Principals' were visiting fire stations. Within another couple of days the MA to the VCDS P & L (Air Chief Marshal Sir Ruthven Wade) rang to say the ACM wanted to see me to explain why his driver had been given a voucher when he was only doing his normal job! I couldn't win!!! I duly went to the MOD Main Building and took the lift to the sixth floor (the VIP floor). I was having a nervous pee in the loo when who should walk in but General Peter Blunt who had previously been TO in C. He asked what I was doing and when he heard he told me to go back to Regents Park Barracks for he would sort it out; he worked for the ACM - I was much relieved!!

One of the highlights of the Fireman's strike was a visit to the Squadron by the Quartermaster General (General Sir Patrick Howard-Dobson) when he heard that no senior officer had visited us or our hard working Workshop. He arrived in all his finery (frock coat, plumed hat, sword and medals etc) having been to a parade at

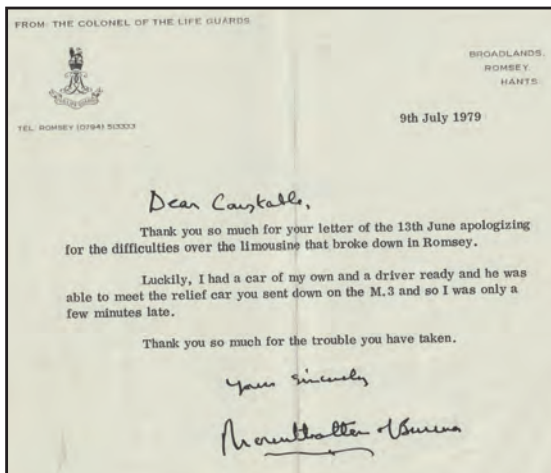
Woolwich). After chatting to the drivers and vehicle mechanics he asked if anything else was going on - Yes, I replied, the children's Christmas party in the Sergeants' Mess. He asked to visit - not only did he chat to the Mum's and Dad's he really got involved and I picture him now sitting on a very small stool, in all his glory, with a clowns hat on surrounded by children. What a star! He was a good friend for 20 Squadron.

My trips to the sixth floor were quite frequent as I went to all of the front offices of our principle customers to check that all was well - we had 53 three star officers or above (including the Defence Ministers) of all three Services to look after. This was invaluable for it did nip in the bud many potential difficulties. It also had a further benefit for one of our senior officers driver. I called into the MA to AG one morning and he showed me draft DCI which said that no soldier should be promoted to acting rank unless he/she was qualified for that rank. Very laudable and most of us would agree. However, when I pointed out that AG's driver would have to revert from Acting Staff Sergeant to substantive Corporal, for he refused to take his Drill Certificates, that DCI was never published - I wonder why!!

Life as OC 20 Squadron was by no means a bed of roses. There were always problems be they the Constable of the Tower of London (Marshal of the Royal Air Force "Bomber" Harris) always demanding limousines, to which he was not entitled, or the First Sea Lord who demanded two staff cars for he lived with his son near the Oval and did not want to be seen being collected by a smart Rover 3.5 registered number 00 RN 01 every morning.!

One incident does stick in my mind. One day we were tasked to collect Admiral of the Fleet Lord Mountbatten from his home in Romsey to take him to Horse Guards where he was taking the salute at a Beating of Retreat - one of London's premier social events. The limousine broke down on the way. A quick thinking Sergeant driver, in Blues, stopped a police car to tell them of his problem. They responded very quickly and informed our transport office (there were no mobile phones at the time). I immediately got on to Broadlands to explain what had happened and agreed to position another limousine at Fleet Service on the M3 for the Admiral liked his stars and flags and wished to arrive correctly. I subsequently wrote to Lord Mountbatten and received the following reply:

Sadly he was killed about a month or so after he wrote this letter



There were always mini crisis which the TCO/2IC generally solved. I was lucky in that I had two excellent officers, the first was Gavin Haig followed by Peter Poole. It was the major ones that hit my desk and I sometimes had to escape when my phone was ringing off it's cradle. I used to visit our sign writer; a delightful old boy called Bill Showell who painted the plaques carried above the windscreens of vehicles when on Royal duties. Thus, I was unavailable!! There were, however, benefits for I was frequently invited to drinks parties by the very senior officers. On one occasion Ann and I were invited by the Commandant of RCDS (a four star General) to a cocktail party. We went for it was the only time that I would see the inside of RCDS! On arrival in a Rover 3.5 complete with a Corporal driver in Blues, one of the students (all brigadiers or generals) stepped forward to open our doors. It was Brigadier (later Major General and DGTM) Freddie Plackett. He was very amused but I can't tell you what he said!

The real highlight of my tour however was a review of the Royal Baggage Train by Her Majesty The Queen. This was towards the end of my tour and really was the "grand finale". The review was set for the 4th May 1979 but there was much to do before this. After weeks of preparation our ARU for that year was an inspection by The Major General (as the GOC London District was known) as a rehearsal for the occasion. It was extraordinary to see "the Guards Machine" click into action. All of the drivers selected were issued with a new set of made to measure Blue's and new No 1 dress hats, the vehicles had additional chrome added and all of my uniform was whisked off me - my leathers were highly polished, medals Court Mounted and spurs silvered. The Metropolitan Police Special Escort Group (whom we invited to join us) bought new BMW motor cycles. Eventually the great day arrived. It was the day after the General Election of 1979. Later that day the Prime Minister, Jim Callaghan, had an audience with the Queen to tender his resignation and Margaret Thatcher was to arrive after to be asked to form the next administration, but we were on first! As we drove into Buckingham Palace there were TV cameras outside and quite a crowd gathering. One wag cried out "God! She's going to move!!"



The Review was extremely memorable. The Queen had this extraordinary ability to put everybody at their ease. As she moved down the inspection line she stopped at Driver Antoine, a West Indian lad who had had a difficult start in the Squadron. She said to him "didn't I see you at Sandringham a fortnight or so ago?" She could never have been briefed on that incident; she was just super observant. Antoine's tunic buttons nearly burst with pride as did mine when I escorted Her Majesty back to chat to the families.

My tour ended in July 1979 with a posting to HQ UKLF

Did I enjoy my posting to 20 Squadron RCT? Not really! It was not helped by the fact that after being offered a slum in Putney or a flat in Bushey Ann and I decided that I should weekend commute (although after I was offered a detached four bedroom house in Millhill that had been reserved by the ex Guards Housing Commandant for a Guards officer (no nepotism in the Household Brigade!)). Our pay was appalling - on the Notice Board outside my office there were advertisements for chauffeurs appointments for a salary greater than mine! We did get a 25% pay rise the following year. However, the real problem was that there were too many alligators and too many people to answer to - Buckingham Palace, MOD, HQ London District, occasionally HQ UKLF and senior UK staff at European NATO HQ's, returning to the UK for conferences or Regimental affairs. The Corps were quite supportive but they were always terrified that the Squadron would one day drop an enormous "clanger!" It would have been very easy!! There were never enough resources and those that we had were exhausted. Most of the Grade 2 Staff Cars, the Rover 3.5's, were well beyond their sell by dates and frequently broke down. They were being replaced with downmarket Ford Grenada's which the Principals hated and demanded their Rovers back. The soldiers were out of barracks most days so there was very little rapport with the the rank and file. It was, however, an experience that I would not have missed for the world.

## A Varied Military Career

Major (Retd) C.B. Holden OBE BSc(Eng) FIRSE CMILT MInstRE

I was commissioned into the Royal Engineers in November 1950 as a National Serviceman and was posted to the Longmoor Military Railway. I decided to become a regular soldier in 1952. Incidentally, whilst at Longmoor during those first two years, I first met Lt Col Ian (I.K.A.) McNaughton, Major Peter Olver and Major Tony King all of whom became Inspecting Officers of Railways. I returned to Longmoor in 1959 to begin the "Long Transportation Course", in the meantime having obtained an honours degree in engineering at the Royal Military College of Science at Shrivenham. I had married after leaving the RMCS and our first two children arrived during the Long Transportation Course (LTn Course) which consisted of six months of theoretical work in each of both railway and port operations, leavened with a fair amount of practical work. The remaining six months of each of the two years was spent on attachments to civilian operators, again embracing both railways and ports. One of my instructors at Longmoor was Major Freddie Rose, later to become Chief Inspecting Officer of Railways. My railway attachment was spent mostly with the Eastern Region with forays to the other regions. It covered a month with the District Civil Engineer at Stratford and two months with the operators of Cambridge Division, including a spell at March Locomotive Shed. However, half this attachment was spent at the Doncaster Works at the very interesting time of the changeover from steam to diesel. Interestingly in the light of my future career I did not have any time with the Signalling Department. This gap, as it turned out, was not significant because the grounding I had had at Longmoor was more than adequate because there were perhaps an even greater range of signalling equipment in use than on the Eastern Region. This included, for instance, continental double-wire lever frames which are not used on the UK railways.

On completion of the two-year course, I was posted to Marwood Military Port in command of a Lighterage Troop which was complete with a steam tug. Also, I was the local secretary of the RE Yacht Club. After a year there the family and I were posted to Singapore to join Peter Olver again who was in command of 10 Port Squadron. This time I was the Port Maintenance Troop commander. A month after we arrived in November 1962 Sukarno, the president of Indonesia, made an attempt to march into Brunei. Britain's response was to send a small force to Borneo. As part of that force the squadron sent a troop to handle the military cargo shipped in and out of Borneo, establishing an HQ in Brunei and a larger logistical base in the nearby island of Labuan some 25 sea miles from the port in Brunei. During that time, I had two visits to Borneo. The first was purely a liaison visit to Brunei but the second, of which more later, was to Kuching where there was a small detachment which had one of the two RPLs (Ramp Powered Lighters). These craft were capable of carrying a 50 ton battle tank or other cargo on an open deck. The RPLs had been shipped to Singapore as deck cargo on one of the Ben Line heavy lift ships and taken round to our small military port at Tanjong Berlayer where the top hamper was put back onto the top of the wheelhouse and other fittings replaced.

The accommodation, if I remember correctly, was for a skipper, mate, engineer and a deck hand and which was below the wheelhouse. I was familiar with these craft as I had dealt with them at Marchwood and so refitting them out was not a problem. The time in Kuching was memorable for two events. The first occurred getting there. The body of the twin engine, twin boomed tailplane, had a cargo carrying capacity of 10 or so people and/or a small amount of hand-portable cargo. There was a drop-down door or ramp at the rear. (I can't remember the name of the aircraft). The under-carriage had two main wheels and a small nose wheel. After two abortive attempts, and a day's delay, we finally took off for Kuching. On the approach to the landing strip the pilot calmly informed us that he could not get the nose-wheel to lock. I must pay tribute to that pilot; he held the nose up until the last minute before putting it down. As predicted the wheel collapsed and the nose caught fire as it hit the ground. I gather that the fire crew on the ground were chasing us down the runway fearing the worst. The ramp door was let down and we were told to bail out without taking any of our personal kit with us. The two days without shaving and on Gurkha food I would not wish to repeat. The second event was equally exciting for a very different reason. The RPL which had been stationed in Kuching needed repairs to one engine. The engineer and I had stripped it down when the river level began to rise. This would not have mattered but for the fact that there was a small footbridge downstream which would have prevented egress to the rest of the river network. It was a case of off with the Radar one man on the bridge pressing down on the wheelhouse and the two of us on the wheelhouse trying to lift the bridge! We scraped, literally, through to everyone's relief. We celebrated by sailing the RPL up an uncharted river to deliver some supplies to the Gurkha troops on the border with Indonesia.

One of the tasks of the Port Maintenance Troop included looking after the short stretch of military railway which connected the main Malayan Railways line to the large engineer's stores depot. During my time in Singapore, I had a month in Thailand doing gauging runs on the Thai Railways to see which routes were available for carrying tanks to the borders between Thailand and Laos. The special wagons for carrying the tanks, 6 in all, had arrived in Singapore each in three parts on a heavy lift ship as deck cargo. We had quite a time at night fitting the body of each wagon to its two bogies as the only crane available was the ship's derrick. Readers will recall that there was much unrest in neighbouring Vietnam at the time. On return to the UK, we rented a house in Liphook, being near to Longmoor which we looked on as being our 'base' and settled our two children in schools nearby and close enough to the British Transport Staff College at Woking at which I attended Course 14, being only the second soldier to do so. The 3 months course was run very much on 'military' lines. Because of the need to keep the children settled at their schools they had to stay in Liphook when I went down to Plymouth. My wife Anne and the two children Sarah and Andrew joined me there in early 1966. No.2 son, Simon, arrived in 1967.

This was then yet another change in direction, for not only most of us in Royal Engineers (Transportation) transferred to the Royal Corps of Transport on its

formation, but I was sent to join the newly formed Assault Ships Army Trials Staff, which sounds grand, but it consisted of a Gunner Lt Col, me and two clerks one from the RAOC and a WREN, Our task was to work with the Royal Navy to provide advice on the shipping of army material on the two new assault ships HMS Fearless and Intrepid. I was loaned, initially, for five months, but stayed two years, during which time I had a part in deciding how the army were to use, not only the assault ships but also the new landing ships logistic (LSL), of which Sir Galahad was one, in amphibious warfare. What we did then was put into practice, nearly twenty years later, in the Falklands.

The next nine or so years were spent mostly in road transport including two years in command of the first, rather experimental, garrison transport squadron where the size of the vehicles ranged from a tank transporter to a bicycle. The real task of the squadron was to act as the military bus and taxi company for Aldershot, plus a freight delivery service. These nine years also included two in developing new equipment for use by the RCT and as a member of the NATO committee on cargo handling. Major Tony King was my opposite number in the HQ policy branch in London. The final year and a half before joining the Railway Inspectorate saw me back at Shrivenham attending a post-graduate course in military vehicle engineering, followed by a short time in the MOD Procurement Executive.

In April 1977 I joined the Railway Inspectorate (RI), retiring after 27 years in the Army to do so. After a short induction period, I found myself assisting the late Lt-Col Tony Townsend-Rose on the approvals of new works and on level crossing protection, taking over his mantle when he retired some five years later. I had first met Tony when we were both in the same Corps Engineer Regiment in Germany in 1958 where we spent a fair amount of time racing dinghies either as partners or rivals and sailing 100sq and 30sq meter yachts. Thus, I was joining the company of friends all of whom I had known over many years of service. Apart from taking my fair share of conducting formal Inquiries into railway accidents, including being an Assessor to Sir Anthony Hidden at his Inquiry into the Clapham Junction accident, my main activities were for the approval of new works and the modernisation of the protection at level crossings. I handed over the latter when the proposals for the new Light Rapid Transit (trams) began. Inspections of new works have taken me as far away as Hong Kong, the electrification of the KCRC, and Singapore, the initial stages of the MRTC. Other involvements overseas have taken me to Northern Ireland and Eire. The Northern Ireland Department of the Environment asked for help from RI in 1978. I was given that task which resulted in holding two public enquiries into accidents the first of which, into the collision at Lisburn between a CIE train and a local train, was the first to have been held by an Inspecting Officer of Railways since the partition in 1921. Other tasks included the modernisation of all their public level crossings, the resignalling of the Lisburn – Antrim and Larne lines and the new cross-harbour link and the new railway into Great Victoria Street in Belfast. I had also helped my opposite number in the Republic with their proposed Dublin LRT scheme. I have subsequently advised the Republic's Government on other railway related matters. The Inspectorate was transferred

from the Department of Transport to the HSE in December 1990 becoming Her Majesty's Railway Inspectorate which enabled railway staff safety to become part of the more general staff safety of all industries. Railway accidents fell under the aegis of HSE, but approval of new works etc remained with HMRI.

I had been heavily involved with the new light railway systems since their resurgence, particularly the DLR since its very beginning and more so during its changeover to moving block signalling. Manchester Metrolink and Sheffield Supertram had interesting differences in that the latter ran on line of sight, as in the old, pre-war tramways, but the former used conventional railway signalling. I was asked to visit both Hong Kong and Singapore to advise on the safety arrangements for their new MRT (Mass Transit) systems.

On retirement at the age of 65 I was asked to join, as safety advisor, the boards of Serco Docklands and Serco Metrolink; an offer which I readily accepted. The late John Parry, whom I had known for many years over his struggle to get acceptance for his ParryPeople Mover now the Class 309, also asked me to join his board. I was not short of work! To make things busier I went to Australia, Hong Kong and Singapore. A friend in Australia, who had been corresponding with me over books he was writing on railway engineering, had been asked by Western Australian Railways to advise them over a serious accident at Hines Hill where one train had overrun a stop signal and hit an oncoming oil-tanker train which was halfway into the loop. He suggested to them that I went out to help them at the Inquiry which was to be held in Perth. I readily accepted that invitation as it gave us an opportunity for my wife and I to see some old army friends in Sidney; but that's another story. We also had several visits to Brisbane at the request of Queensland Railways and one to Adelaide to do a safety audit for Serco on one of their two tourist trains, The Ghan, which at that time ran from Adelaide to Alice Springs but has since been extended to reach Darwin. Their other service, The Indian Pacific, ran from Sidney to Perth. As a member of a Safety Audit Team also saw me back in Hong Kong.

In July 2009 we decided to sell our home in Woking and move to Scotland to be near our daughter in Findhorn. This did not stop John Parry asking me for advice on his various projects. You might have thought that a quiet life was indicated, but no, Simon and I decided to buy out John's interest in his company Holdfast Carpet Track in order to develop my design for a new form of railway track which would cause less disruption when a street-running tramway was being built. We have got as far as having a very short section being rolled etc. as proof of concept. Watch this space!!

## Waggoner and Royal Engineer update

By Mr John Kirkcaldy (Isle of Wight Sream Railway)

Both locomotives saw considerable use during 2023, including the Santa Specials and New Year Special.

Since the operating season finished on the 1st January, both locomotives have also had some workshop time for various issues. Royal Engineer had a broken piston ring replaced and rather surprisingly Royal Engineer also failed a boiler examination because of excess build up of scale in the boiler.

It has to be assumed that the water has changed recently as our program of additives and wash outs has not altered. Normally the additives break any deposits down so that they can be washed out through the mud doors. (The substance that is washed out really is like mud).

However over the last twelve months there has been a big build up of hard salts between some of the boiler tubes. Because of this failure, a number of tubes had to be removed to allow access to clean out the deposits. Retubing has now been completed and hopefully Engineer will soon return to service.

While further analysis of our water is continued, both locos have been fitted with blow down valves and the program of when these will be used is being developed. At the finish of the day Waggoner is exhausting Steam passed the "top hat" cover we put on the chimney (mainly to keep birds off).

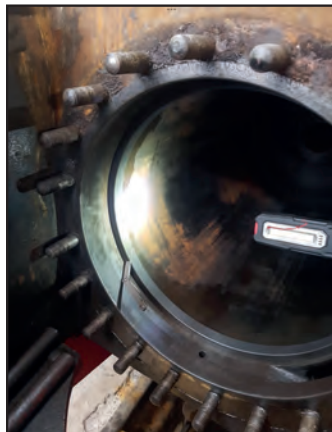


Photo: New piston ring being checked for size for Royal Engineer

# On Safari

Major Malcolm Allen

*The best book I have ever read about hunting in East Africa is Colonel JH Patterson's epic tale 'The Man Eaters of Tsavo.' In 1898 he arrived in Mombasa to work on the construction of the Mombasa to Uganda railway but early on had to shoot a number of lions which had developed a taste for human flesh and were holding up progress by regularly swallowing substantial quantities of the Indian workforce. His story is a masterpiece of determination and Victorian sangfroid and includes a marvellous appendix of practical tips for anyone organising a safari. For example, he lists a veritable arsenal of weapons and explosives including two hundred rockets for signalling, and recommends the best boots, pith helmets, spine protectors and, of course a 'modern Kodak' with at least two hundred films. Human porters, he tells us, are more reliable than donkeys, can carry more and will only cost fifty pence a day.*

As you will see, three of us from 60 Coy RASC in Kenya in the early 1960s, 'Bogs' Cully, 'Bongo' Lawrence and 'Kudu' Allen, the Greater not the Lesser kind I add, made do with a lot less, except for whisky of course.

Captain Peter 'Bogs' Cully arrived from England with his dog but without his wife. I soon gathered that it was unlikely that she would follow when I noticed that the blanket which lined the canine's basket was her wedding dress. Neither Goldie nor Bogs was nonplussed by this. I also discovered that Bogs, obviously an Irishman, adored the outdoor life and should have been born a hundred years before. It was no surprise therefore when he announced that the three of us would go on safari.

During the Mau Mau troubles of the previous decade the government had decided that any surplus weaponry held by the white community should be handed in for safe keeping, and one of the collection centres was the Police Arms' Store just outside the gates of our barracks. Originally this was a very sensible precaution indeed, but, five years after the end of hostilities a huge number of weapons remained unclaimed, so it had been decided to destroy them. Bogs got wind of this and arranged a visit to the store so that we could select a weapon of our choice. To say that it was an Aladdin's Cave of guns of all types would be an understatement, and we spent a good few hours making our decision. I wish I had had my wits about me but, as usual, I didn't, foregoing a matched set of Purdeys in favour of a rather beautiful Mannlicher-Schoenauer, a light game-rifle with a wonderful action, but of little value.

Under Bogs' direction we prepared for the expedition in great detail and booked an area about three thousand miles square on the Loita plain, organised our provisions for ten days and, most importantly, read Something of Value and The Man-Eaters of Tsavo to glean some sort of understanding of the proper way to conduct a safari. To evoke the right atmosphere, we gave ourselves proper white hunter nicknames

like Bogs and Bongo, and I even grew a dashing 1930s moustache. To gain our licences we undertook the game recognition test in the Game Department Office in Nairobi, which involved identifying animals, their sex, and their approximate age from arrays of tricky, blurred photographs. 'Is that the rear end of a pregnant warthog or a bush pig?' Vital knowledge this, as you could be heavily fined if you shot an excluded species.

We had freedom to shoot what we liked in our area but the Big Five were out of the question for two very good reasons. First, our weapons were not of heavy enough calibre and second, we couldn't afford to. Even in the early 1960s the fee to shoot an elephant was over a thousand pounds and I remember a lion was five hundred. To put this in perspective, when I returned to England in 1964, I bought a new Austin Healey Sprite sports car for £640. Shooting Big Game was a millionaire's sport so we impoverished army chaps had to content ourselves with antelope, zebra, and wildebeest and, of course, game birds for the pot; but that was fine.

We moved camp every second day and hunted in the early morning or as dusk fell and we emulated the habits of the animals by sleeping in the hottest part of the day; but not without interruptions. One day a woman brought her baby to us for treatment for a rash on its backside. I'm afraid risk analysis was unfashionable then and our medicine chest consisted of a crate of whiskey, some elastoplasts and a packet of aspirin for use as the whisky antidote. The lady wouldn't take no for an answer so in the absence of any proper ointment, we applied rifle oil which seemed to do the trick. So well in fact that she returned the next day with half a dozen other women and their children. All the diseases, whatever their symptoms, were treated the same way.



One early morning, I was cooking breakfast ready for Bogs' and Bongo's return from the dawn hunt when two young Masai turned up. They squatted near my primus stove, spitting occasionally into the flame as if it was an open fire, and watching with amusement my culinary skills and, later, my imitation of their traditional leaping dance which I performed to the accompaniment of pop music from the British Forces Broadcasting Service. They even joined in, much to the amusement of the returning hunters, but it was my shaving mirror they liked best. I have two daughters but their love affair with a mirror in their teenage years was nothing to the preening and posturing that the glass brought out in these young men. I presented it to them in the end and they wandered off carrying their fearsome spears and clubs, while giggling like tarts over their reflections.

It was our custom to make camp by stretching a tarpaulin between Bogs' Landrover and Bongo's Mk1 Ford Zephyr, using the vehicles for storage and the covered area for sleeping, and very comfortable it was too. At night when it was cool, we lit a fire and sat around drinking Bushmills, Bongo would have none other, and chatting about the day's adventures or the morrow's plan. Any game that we had prepared for the cooking pot was strung up in trees to avoid being lost to the eating prowess of the ants. How lucky we were to have an opportunity like this. Of course the meat and the other interesting smells of our camp attracted scavengers of all sorts and one night the sounds of movement outside the fire's glow became very evident. In his book *Something of Value*, Robert Ruark gets his hero to fix a torch to the barrel of his rifle to 'sight up' the game at night, so we did the same. It was amazing. As I aimed along the beam, unblinking pairs of eyes stared back; we were surrounded, but by what we weren't sure. Eventually Bongo fired his rifle and we knew by the screaming and scuffling that followed that he'd hit something. He went forward, slowly, to investigate' with Bogs and I supporting him armed with shotguns loaded with the heaviest shot we could muster and out there in the scrub we found a wounded Spotted Hyena; a female. Hyenas are really ugly animals which as well as scavenging from the kills of lions and other cats are quite capable of bringing down large herbivores themselves. Their jaws are fearsome and are said to be more powerful than a lion's, and it was not unknown for them to bite the face off a sleeping man. Well, one round from Bongo's rifle put the beast out of its misery and the cat amongst the pigeons so to speak for, as soon as he fired, two or three other hyenas, which must have been lying close by, leapt up and rushed off into the darkness. Shaken and very well stirred, we returned hastily to the safety of our fire and the comfort of our Bushmills.

Bogs was the first to decide to sleep in his Landrover that night. 'It will be more comfortable than the lean-to,' he explained casually. Bongo followed suit preferring the back seat of his Ford to his camp bed in the lean-to. I had no such choice so, feigning a composure that I did not feel, I settled down under my mosquito net between the two vehicles. That night it seemed that every sound was magnified. I lay awake watching the stars and listening to the distant and not too distant whoops and grunts and calls and the rustling and creeping of various beasties just beyond the range of our fire. With the help of the Bushmills, I must have fallen asleep but not

for long, because suddenly I heard the roar of a lion which was so close I imagined it to be in bed with me. It woke the others too and as Bongo said later, 'I've never seen anybody, or anything, move so fast!' In one movement, like a wraith in the night, I exited my camp bed and mosquito net and entered the front seat of the Ford without touching the intervening ground. Bongo had already wound up the windows and we sat there sweating anxiously in the darkness. I think Bogs regretted retiring to his Landrover as he was now on his own. And so it came to pass that three brave hunters had become, at least in their own perception, the terrified hunted. We got to sleep in the end but were woken in the early morning by the sound of Bogs firing both barrels of his shotgun at hyenas approaching the opening of our lean to. He killed two and I was very relieved that I had not been the meat that attracted them.

What can I say about the animals we killed: guinea fowl and gazelle for the pot, a zebra for a rug over a sofa, various other antelope for the thrill of the stalk, and a wildebeest for its tail. After all, it was the trademark fly swat for Jomo Kenyatta so what was good enough for him was certainly OK for us. My last kill was a Thompson gazelle, a beautiful animal with a black and white stripe on its flank. I shot it through the head one morning and when I got up to it I was pleased to see that the entry wound was small. On the other hand, the exit wound was huge and had taken the whole of the right side of its skull away. I skinned the animal without much enthusiasm and as I was doing so a very old man appeared from out of nowhere, it seemed. He watched my efforts at cutting and scraping for a few minutes, mumbled a few words and then strode off across the plain with a purposeful and dignified step. The next morning I found my rifle had broken at the stock. I could find no reason for this and Bogs and Bongo assumed that I had been cursed. Who knows; but I was not too upset as my appetite for hunting had faded from the moment I realised what I had done to that innocent creature. We knew it was an absolute 'no no' to wound an animal and leave it to die slowly in agony so to reduce the risk of this we always stalked as close to our target as we could get, and if in any doubt just gave up the hunt. That at least was the theory but I'm afraid we failed when it came to the wildebeeste or Gnu, a *Gnother Gnu*, made famous by the amusing song of that popular duo of the time, Flanders and Swan.

We came across the herd early one morning towards the end of our safari and Bongo drew the straw to hunt. The herd was enormous: some five or six hundred animals, with sentries posted on ant hills around the fringes. Bongo started the stalk and I followed him to take photos. It was a long and hot affair and just as we were getting into range, the alert sentries appeared to move the herd along. When at last we did get into an acceptable position, Bongo's aim was disturbed because the 'boulder' he was using as a rest moved. It was in fact a tortoise, perfectly camouflaged under a pile of grass. After we stopped laughing Bongo moved into another position, took careful aim and fired. It seemed to be a great shot as we both saw the strike just above the foreleg which should have guaranteed a heart kill. At the sound of the shot the whole herd took off at the gallop and our wildebeest fell to the ground, only to struggle up immediately and join the stampede. Bogs, who was waiting with the Landrover, witnessed the whole affair through his binoculars and

drove up rapidly to let us aboard and we set off in pursuit to make the kill. It was an amazing experience. We bounced wildly across the plain, moving in the dust of the herd and gradually cutting out the wounded animal which was tiring and weakening all the time. After what seemed ages but was probably no more than ten minutes or so, we had separated about six animals and then it was down to two until, finally, the wounded one stopped, lowered its head and fell on its haunches. Its mate, for that is what we assumed it was, stopped also, but some distance away. We got out of the truck and gathered round the dying animal. It looked at us, we looked at it, and Bogs put it out of its agony. We didn't catch each other's eye or say much and, certainly, no-one suggested taking its tail.

As we drove off the remaining lonely gnu walked across and looked at the carcass for a few minutes, then it turned and trotted slowly back towards the herd which had begun to graze again a couple of hundred yards away. We packed up and went home the next day.



## .....And Now for Something Entirely Different

By Maj (Retd) H.C. Moore

After what had been up until then an interesting but fairly conventional career things quite unexpectedly took a different turn. Upon returning from the delights of a two year posting in Cyprus I found myself in the Logistics Branch of HQ NORTHAG (Northern Army Group) to do I was not quite sure what, not helped by the fact that most of the staff were away on exercise in Fort Hood, Texas. One thing, however, soon became apparent – the Branch was generously staffed and the thought of spending the next two years, albeit in an international environment, sharpening pencils and pouring over hackneyed plans and staff tables didn't exactly cause my adrenaline to flow any faster, if at all!

Strolling leisurely around this deserted headquarters trying to orientate myself, I accidentally bumped into who was probably the only other living soul in the entire building apart from the military police at the main entrance, the other more usual ways in and out all being temporarily locked and barred awaiting the eventual return

of the usual occupants from across 'the pond'. After initial introductions it turned out that he was a British sapper and the MA to the Chief of Staff who was a German two star officer. He was somewhat perplexed and when I casually inquired what the problem was he replied that after the recent Nato CPX, HQ AFCENT wanted to know why NORTHAG had failed to respond to the PSYOPs incidents. When I inquired why, he said the reason was very simple – there was no PSYOPs desk nor anyone responsible for this esoteric discipline and that he had been tasked by his boss to come up with an answer. I offered my services there and then saying that whilst I knew nothing about it I was willing to find out if that would be acceptable. The MA seemed mightily relieved and said that he would pass my name to his boss immediately and that my posting order would be amended in due course. The German general said he was delighted a British officer would be leading the project and that I should start right away. As PSYOPs is a combination of G2 and G3 staff functions it was decided I should locate myself with G5 HNS (Host Nation Assistance)!



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And so my meanderings, albeit purposeful, commenced. I was met with glee by those responsible for PSYOPs up the chain of command – a British special forces officer at HQ ACENT and an American ‘bird colonel’ at HQ SHAPE. Initial training comprised attending a bespoke course at Ashford and a tactical course at the German PSYOPs school near Cologne. Oh, and my mission by the way, was to demotivate the 3rd Shock Army of the GSFG (Group of Soviet Ground Forces Germany)! I think this, probably, was the first time I really began to think ‘outside the box’ in my military career and, incidentally, marked the beginning of my capricious love affair with the Russian language.

Luckily, I was fortunate enough to be introduced to my opposite numbers in HQ CENTAG (Central Army Group) and HQ GTNC (German Territorial Command North) who took me under their respective wings and began to educate me in what is sometimes called the ‘dark art’. Interestingly, during a visit to a German PSYOPs battalion near what was known as the IGB (Inner German Border) the unit commander proudly related that the dropping of the local population over the fence of glossy departmental store catalogues from weather balloons which conveniently drifted across on the prevailing winds had resulted in a strong diplomatic protest! Apparently, anyone seen picking up the catalogues or caught in possession of one was subject to a very large fine. Such was the potential for unrest perceived by the East German authorities.

Essentially, my CPX (Command Post Exercise) task was to respond to PSYOP incidents from AFCENT and to write incidents and ensure a meaningful response from each of the NORTHAG corps. This seemed on more than one occasion to have a missionary aspect to it as I tried to convince them of the value and necessity of their support! However, on exercises, the NORTHAG commander who was also the British C-in-C, insisted that I briefed him daily on the PSYOPs situation and future plans. Needless to say, this encouraged the national corps to take more of an interest in this direction! To help staff a fully operational cell on exercise I succeeded in obtaining additional manpower in the form of American, German and British reserve officers and so started a close and friendly liaison with a PSYOP Group from Cleveland, Ohio. The making of plans involved host nation support (HNS) especially those which would have made use of Federal German radio broadcasts and transmitters. The co-operation received was impressive. Earlier, whilst on the course at the German PSYOPs school, I was left in no doubt just how seriously they took this particular aspect of combat support.

I felt that NORTHAG PSYOPs ‘had arrived’ when I was invited to Fort Bragg in North Carolina, the home of 81st and 101st US Airborne Divisions, to give a presentation on NORTHAG PSYOPs. In due course further invites followed including one from the SHAPE officer responsible for PSYOPs, the aforementioned American ‘Bird Colonel’, to present to the NATO Staff Officers Course at the NATO School in Oberammergau. This was to become a regular commitment that was not altogether unpleasant!

Towards the end of my tenure I wrote an article which was subsequently published in the British Army Review on the role and organisation of a possible British PSYOPs unit suggesting just how much of a 'combat multiplier' it could become. Much to my great surprise, it elicited a lengthy reply from no one less than C-in-C UKLF who said how interesting he had found it and that he was instigating something towards this end! All too soon my 'time was up' and I moved to a more conventional staff appointment in the UK, however, shortly afterwards, HQ SHAPE invited me to Belgium to assist in one of the big NATO exercises. Needless to say, I was only too happy to oblige. (Afternote: Shortly afterwards the Berlin Wall came down followed by the collapse of the Soviet Union and so it seemed that the PSYWAR had been won, at least for the time being! After a little while, I happened to say to PB8 that if anything interesting and different comes up would they please bear me in mind. Well, it did and they did!

Sitting at my desk in HQ DGMT grappling with the Army's overall driver training requirement, my phone rang and the voice at the other end was none other than my desk officer at PB8 who said that something new had come up. They did not have many details at present but there was an urgent need to form a UK Arms Control Verification unit. Apparently, it would involve visiting the former Warsaw Pact (WP) countries, including Russia, and acting as escorts when they visited us. Needless to say, I was hooked!

I was posted as an inspection team leader to the newly formed Joint Arms Control Implementation Group (JACIG) at RAF Scampton in Lincolnshire, a location which drove most Army members of the unit to the nearest AA Road Atlas especially as we had been led to believe that we would "probably be somewhere in the Aldershot area"! After having attended training in WP organisation and equipment recognition at Ashford I duly reported to my new unit. The commander was a former head of BRIXMIS, which had now become redundant, of course, and many of my new colleagues had also come from that unit. JACIG was comprised solely of experienced officers, WOs and SNCOs and had an air of relaxed informality. Cap badge and rank counted for little though not too far from the surface there was an unmistakable layer of military professionalism and humour.

Whilst the Helsinki Treaty for East – West co-operation was the justification for countries' arms control units, the Vienna Document provided the vehicle for carrying out this new and somewhat sudden 'love-in'

The first year, whilst waiting for the Treaty to be ratified, provided much needed training time both for ourselves and UK units and defence installations generally. Each signatory nation was entitled to a set number of inspections dependent on the size of its own forces. Some of the inspections were 'notified' well in advance whilst others were very short notice and called for a rapid response from JACIG and its escort teams whose responsibility it was to brief and 'protect' the units and installations being inspected. Classified maps and equipment had to be 'shrouded' and guarded and an outline explanation given to the inspecting team. In order to simulate such inspections many training exercises were organised in UK, Germany

and Cyprus with the full authority of Service chiefs. Perhaps, understandably, a certain degree of panic gripped some units when they were informed of a short-notice visit. In order to achieve as much realism as possible, JACIG personnel would arrive at a unit in the middle of the night dressed in Eastern 'bloc' uniforms and speaking Russian! Occasionally, things got a little out of control and on one such training visit a RAF Station Commander was locked in his office and the keys to the armoury 'borrowed' by an over-zealous inspection team keen to illustrate the need for security awareness!

I spent some months attending a unit run Russian language course the aim of which was to enable as many JACIG members as possible to engage with their Eastern European counterparts. Suddenly, the Treaty went 'live' and we were into a plethora of inspections both inbound and outbound. Due to the high demand for interpreters that summer I found myself going on an inspection to Russia as 'aircrew interpreter/minder' where my newly acquired albeit limited grasp of the Russian language was soon put to the test when our pilot asked for an auxiliary power unit to charge the aircraft's batteries. Fortunately, the phrase was at the top of my hastily assembled crib sheet and my credibility started on a high note! The inspection team duly carried out their mission and returned to Moscow ready to be taken home and in the meantime the aircrew and myself were treated royally by our hosts and spent much of the time sight-seeing. One notable outing included a trip on the Moscow River where, as a way of saying 'thank you', we decided to provide the liquid refreshment. Having bought the entire stock of 'Champanskayer' from a nearby kiosk and loaded it onto the host's minibus we were driven to the point of embarkation. Unfortunately, due to a combination of the hot weather and the cobbled road surface the bottles started to explode prematurely as they were being loaded onto the boat, much to the general surprise and merriment of all concerned!

Other highlights included trips to Romania, where the seats of a locally supplied aircraft for an internal flight rolled backwards and forwards on their runners as we took off and landed, and to what was still Czechoslovakia where we were accompanied by a journalist from a British national daily. A headline duly appeared, along with a front page picture of us inspecting T55 tanks, saying "Former enemies now drink beer together after work"!

During this time the first Gulf War broke out and I was in somewhat of a quandary whether or not to offer my services in the field of PSYOPs or to go on inspections to Russia and other former Warsaw Pact countries. In the end the latter option won though I subsequently learnt that I would have been lifted out to the Gulf rather quickly if the powers that be had known of my previous PSYOPs experience! And so my love affair with Russia and the Russian language continues until this day.



Date	Event	Organisation	Location	Remarks
10 November	<b>Remembrance Sunday Luncheon</b>	All Officers' Luncheon Club	<b>Cenotaph</b> Army & Navy Club	Annual event
28 November				
<b>December 2024</b>				
7 December	<b>Christmas Luncheon</b>		<b>Cavalry and Guards Club, Piccadilly, London</b>	
<b>2025</b>				
<b>January 2025</b>				
Date tbc	<b>January Luncheon</b>	The Cyprus Waggoners		Annual event
<b>February 2025</b>				
18 February (tbc)	<b>London Luncheon</b>	Officers' Luncheon Club	Army & Navy Club	Annual event
<b>March 2025</b>				
19 March (tbc)	<b>Lunchtime Lecture</b>	The Waggon Club	RAF Club, Piccadilly, London	Annual event
23 March	<b>Curry Lunch and Museum Visit</b>	Officers' Club	<b>Worthy Down</b>	<b>Spring event</b>
<b>May 2025</b>				
10 May (tbc)	<b>AGM &amp; Dinner</b>	The Waggon Club	Grantham	Annual event
<b>July 2025</b>				
12/13 July	<b>RASC &amp; RCT Corps Weekend and Church Sunday</b>	All	<b>Aldershot/Farnborough</b>	Annual event
<b>October 2025</b>				
5 October	<b>Curry Lunch and Museum Visit</b>	Officers' Club	<b>Worthy Down</b>	Autumn event

Notes:

- The Cyprus Waggoners usually holds a function in January & March?

Key: **Red** Officers' Club / RLC / All **Light Blue** Airborne Officers' Club

**Orange** Air Despatch Association **Blue** Officers' Luncheon Club

**Green** Waggon Club **Purple** Maritime Officers' Club

**Brown** Movement Control Association **Black** The Cyprus Waggoners

## **RASC & RCT OFFICERS' CLUB AND ASSOCIATED ORGANISATIONS – KEY DATES 2024/2025**

(Updated version – May 2024).

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
<b>May 2024</b>				
11 May 2024	<b>AGM &amp; Dinner</b>	The Waggon Club	Grantham	Annual event
18 May (tbc)	<b>Luncheon</b>	Airborne Officers' Club	Regent's Park Officers' Mess	Annual event
<b>June 2024</b>				
12 June	<b>Luncheon</b>	Officers' Luncheon Club	Army & Navy Club	Annual event
<b>July 2024</b>				
13 & 14 July	<b>RASC &amp; RCT Corps Weekend and Church Sunday</b>	All	13 <sup>th</sup> Assn Dinner 14 <sup>th</sup> Corps Sunday Church Service & Curry Lunch	Annual event: Church - Aldershot Meal events - Village Hotel Farnborough
<b>August 2024</b>				
15 August	<b>Over 90s Lunch</b>	All	Regent's Park Barracks Officers' Mess	Annual event
<b>September 2024</b>				
8 September	<b>Taunton Curry Lunch</b>	Officers' Club	40 Cdo RM	Annual event
<b>October 2024</b>				
6 October	<b>Curry Lunch and Museum Visit</b>	Officers' Club	Worthy Down	Autumn event
25 October	<b>Black-Tie Dinner</b>	Officers' Club	Village Hotel, Farnborough	Annual event
tbc	<b>Reunion</b>	Maritime Officers' Club	Byams House	Annual event
<b>November 2024</b>				
7 November	<b>Field of Remembrance</b>		Westminster Abbey	

## Parish Notices

<b>Last Posts:</b>			
<b>Bartlett</b>	Brig GE Bartlett MBE DL	06 March 2024	RASC/RCT
<b>Barton</b>	Maj RHG Barton MBE	15 December 2023	RASC/RCT
<b>Bateson</b>	Lt Col BB Bateson	15 July 2023	RASC/RCT
<b>Blanche</b>	Capt WD Blanche	13 December 2023	RCT
<b>Bonnalack</b>	Sir M Bonnalack	29 September 2023	RASC
<b>Byrne</b>	Mrs Eunice Byrne	22 June 2023	
<b>Clifford</b>	Mrs Kath Clifford	11 September 2023	
<b>Cooper</b>	Maj J Cooper	24 March 2024	RCT/RLC
<b>Evans</b>	Mrs Barbara Evans	18 October 2023	
<b>Hutton-Dunton</b>	Maj DP Hutton-Dunton	19 May 2023	RCT
<b>Ingram</b>	Maj JH Ingram	31 August 2023	RASC/RCT/AAC
<b>Kier</b>	Maj J Kier TD JP	24 December 2023	RASC/RCT
<b>Lawrence</b>	Mrs Theresa Lawrence	28 May 2023	
<b>Leaver</b>	Lt Col J Leaver	14 January 2024	RASC/RCT
<b>Macfarlane</b>	Mrs Carole Macfarlane	28 August 2023	
<b>Marshall</b>	Lt Col WJ Marshall OBE	20 April 2024	RASC/RCT
<b>Pollitt</b>	Lt AD Pollitt	12 January 2024	RASC
<b>Ponting</b>	Major KT Ponting	27 May 2023	REME/RCT/RLC
<b>Riches</b>	Maj JMR Riches	18 December 2023	RASC/RCT
<b>Robinson</b>	Mrs Lyn Robinson	09 July 2023	
<b>Shield</b>	Lt Col P Shield MBE	07 July 2023	RASC/REME/RCT/AAC
<b>Skingley</b>	Capt (QM) R Skingley	21 August 2023	RASC/RCT/AAC
<b>Snell</b>	Lt Col PW Snell	12 December 2023	RASC/RCT/INT
<b>Soames</b>	Capt MA Soames	29 July 2023	RASC/RCT
<b>Spackman</b>	Col S Spackman KStJ TD DL	04 February 2024	RCT
<b>Stringer</b>	Maj AP Stringer TD	31 July 2023	RASC/RCT
<b>SurrIDGE</b>	Maj VEW SurrIDGE	12 April 2024	RE/RCT
<b>Tatham</b>	Maj JT Tatham	10 April 2024	RASC/RCT
<b>Taylor</b>	Maj R Taylor	21 July 2023	RCT
<b>Templeman</b>	Mrs Barbara Templeman	31 July 2023	
<b>Townsend</b>	Lt Col PE Townsend	09 September 2023	RASC/RCT/RMP
<b>Wallis</b>	Mrs Pamela Wallis	07 December 2023	
<b>Wilkinson</b>	Colonel RM Wilkinson TD	25 March 2024	RCT/RLC

## RASC & RCT OFFICERS' CLUB BLACK TIE DINNER – 27 OCTOBER 2023

The RASC & RCT Officers' Club held their annual Black Tie Dinner at the Village Hotel Farnborough on Friday, 27 October 2023. Brigadier PAD Evans OBE DL, Chairman of the Officers' Club, presided. This was the second occasion that the club met at The Village Hotel and, once again, the food was excellent, the wine flowed and the accommodation was first class. The meal was accompanied by the 'Touch of Brass' quintet, who closed their contribution, after the loyal toast, with a rousing rendition of 'Wait for the Waggon.' Judging by the comments received afterwards, those who attended give The Village Hotel the thumbs up and we look forward to the 2024 event, scheduled for 25 October. The hotel's facilities include a gym, a heated indoor swimming pool and a jacuzzi, steam room and sauna, so remember to pack those swimming costumes / trunks!

The seating plan for the dinner is below:

### Table 1

Col Nigel Gilbert  
Mrs Maureen Gilbert  
Col Colin Constable  
Mrs Ann Constable  
Col Howard Bentley-Marchant  
Mrs Sandra Birnstiel  
Lt Col David Pepperell  
Mrs Sandy Pepperell  
Maj Howard Moore

### Table 2

Maj Gen Graham Ewer CB CBE  
Mrs Mary Ewer  
Brig Paul Evans OBE DL  
Mrs Ann Evans  
Brig Mike Hodson CBE  
Mrs Janet Hodson  
Ms Sue Adams  
Col Paul Cummings  
Col Helen McMahon MBE

### Table 3

Lt Col David Gibley  
Mrs Irene Gibley  
Col Howard Stephens  
Mrs Celia Stephens  
Lt Col Jonathan Knowles  
Col Nick Beard MBE  
Mrs Ann Beard  
Lt Col Duncan Saville

### Table 4

Lt Col Paul Fraser OBE  
Col Mark Weatherley  
Mrs Caroline Weatherley  
Col Geoffrey Hardaker  
Mrs Maryse Hardaker  
Lt Col Butch Barrett MBE  
Lt Col Mike Graham  
Mrs Liz Graham

### Table 5

Lt Col Leonard Clifford TD  
Col Graham Shawley TD  
Lt Col Mike Hyde TD  
Lt Col Andrew Lawrence  
Maj Derek French TD  
Mrs Barbara Mahoney

### Table 6

Maj Jim Cox  
Mrs Sheila Cox  
Lt Col Peter Robertson  
Mrs Susie Robertson  
Lt Col Anthony Jackson  
Mrs Hilary Jackson  
Lt Col Richard Evetts  
Mrs Jenny Evetts

### Table 7

Col Dick Wilkinson TD  
Mrs Pippa Wilkinson  
Maj David Moynham TD  
Col Rick Ahern  
Lt Col Richard Campbell-Robson  
Ms Judy Prime

### Table 8

Maj Robin Crosleg  
Mrs Lesley Crosleg  
Lt Col Geoffrey Heal  
Mrs Ann Heal  
Col Rupert Prince QCVS  
Lt Col David Sanders  
Mrs Evelyn Sanders  
Maj Brian Heil

### Table 9

Lt Col Jim Ferrier  
Dr Iris Ferrier  
Maj Lee Bedborough  
Mrs Jane Bedborough  
Lt Col Des Norton OBE  
Mrs Debra Norton  
Brig Iain McKend CBE  
Mrs Fiona McKend

### Table 10

Col Drew Fielden LVO MBE  
Dr Kathy Fielden  
Col Tony Phillips MBE  
Mrs Joy Phillips  
Lt Col Paul Duncan  
Mrs Sally Duncan  
Lt Col Terry Byrne MBE  
Lt Col Richard Hick

### Table 11

Col Mark Baker  
Mrs Jane Baker  
Lt Col Derek Armitage  
Mrs Anne Bennett  
Mr Tony Bray  
Lt Col Ian Stark  
Lt Col John May OBE  
Mrs Jacky May  
Lt Col Jonathan Shorer



RASC & RCT Officers' Club black tie dinner

