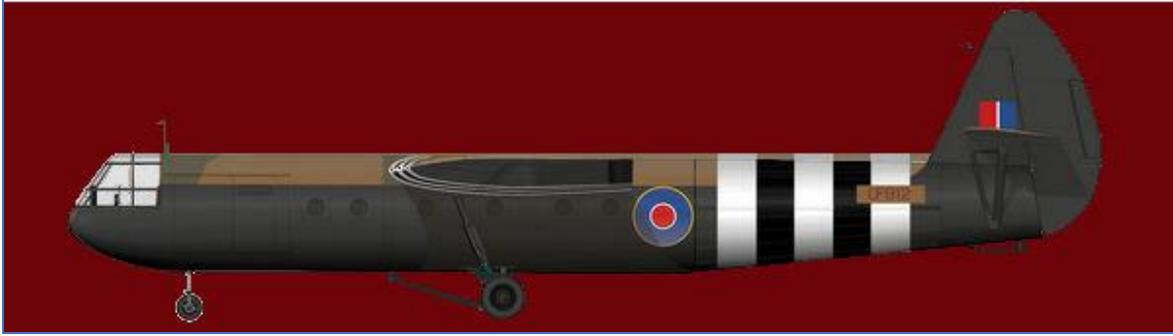




# THE AIRBORNE ENGINEERS JOURNAL



The following articles were originally published in the printed version of the Journal in August 2005, Issue No. 16



# The Airborne Engineer



August 2005, Issue No. 16

**President**  
To be confirmed

**Chairman**  
Bunny Brown

**Editor**  
Dave Rutter

**Membership Secretary**  
Chris Chambers

**Welfare – Advisory Member**  
Position vacant

**Association Shop**  
Ray Coleman

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**Entertainments Secretary**  
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**Life Vice Presidents**

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Chris Chambers, Bob Jones Bob Prosser BEM and Tom Carpenter

**Publication Deadline - December 2005 Edition**

Members submitting material for publication in the **December 2005** edition of the Journal, are advised that the closing date will be **Saturday 12th November**. Articles received after this date will not be published until the **April 2006** edition. **(Branch Secretaries please NOTE!)**

Kindly ensure that you forward your articles direct to the editor - address as shown above.

Please don't leave it until the last minute or you may well miss the deadline

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## Resignation of our President

Bob Ferguson (Secretary)

In my position as secretary I have received by hand through a third party, the following letter of resignation, which I copy below. I have retyped the letter using the exact wording.

**21 May 05**

**Airborne Engineers Association**

**Gentlemen,**

I wish to inform you of my immediate resignation as your President. This decision has been made in the light of a number of issues over which I have no control, resulting in me being unable to continue in the post.

Thank you for the honour that was bestowed upon me for the short period of my tenure.

I take this opportunity to wish you and the Association my very best wishes.

Peter Bates

(The letter has been reproduced for your information and the subject shall be an item on the AGM agenda.)

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## Association Chairman

Bunny Brown

Dear Members,

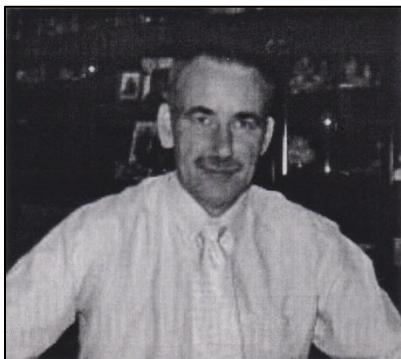
It is at this time of year that thoughts go towards the October AGM and Reunion. Bookings are coming in fast and furious, however, I must remind you that all bookings must be in by the second week of September, applications received after this date will have to be refused. May I ask once again request for members to contribute prizes towards the Grand Raffle, which will be drawn during the Gala Dinner. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have donated prizes in the past. To make things a bit more interesting at this year's event, we will be introducing a 'Star Prize.'

I hate to go on about this, but it is important that everyone uses the booking application forms, we have a system in place and it works, so please do not try to bypass the system!

I hope that as many of you as possible will be attending the opening ceremony of the Col John Rock display in Chatham on Saturday 17th September 2005. Maj Gen Peter Wall CBE has kindly offered to open the display. Proceedings start at 10.00 at the RE Museum. Our 'Piper,' Frank Menzies Hearn will also be in attendance. If you are not going to Arnhem please make your best efforts to attend. Further details can be found on page 18.

This will be my last address as Chairman of The AEA; I stand down at the AGM in October. We have a willing and able replacement in the form of Mick Humphries, who has been nominated by the Aldershot Branch. Mick is a Falklands Veteran, who served with Col Chris Davies MBE. I believe Mick will make a very capable and able replacement who will take the Association on to new levels.

I look forward to seeing you all again at Coventry.



**Michael (Mick) Humphries - Chairman Elect**

Mick Humphries left The Corps of Royal Engineers as a SNCO in 1989 after 13 years' service. He served in 2 Troop 9 Para Sqn for 6 years from 1976 until the end of the Falklands War in 1982. Mick has had previous experience in the role of chairman of a similar organisation and is currently a trustee of a large military charity.

Although still working Mick is keen to spend the hours required to lead the Association forward. If elected, his main thrust would be to bring the association back together with an outbreak of peace, raise the profile of benevolence within the Association and assist in promoting the

Association to the younger generation of Airborne Sappers.

The Executive Committee unanimously endorse the election of Mick Humphries, subject to the approval of the members attending the AGM, as Chairman Elect of the Airborne Engineers Association.

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## Journal Subscription

Editor

It's Journal subscription renewal time. However, I must emphasise that only those who receive a 'reminder' need to respond. If you do not receive a reminder then your Journal account is either in credit or you have opted in the past to pay by Standing Order. I'm sure you will all recall that the subscription charges are to be increased for future publications - UK residents £6 and overseas members £7. For those members who opted to pay by Standing Order, you will find a 'Amend a Standing Order' slip enclosed in the magazine. Simply fill in your own banking details, sign and date the instruction then post or hand it in to your OWN bank by 1st October 2005.

I would ask all members who have not opted to pay by Standing Order, to give it serious consideration. Provided that your bank account remains in credit, your bank raises no charges for using this facility. You simply apply to me (editor) for a 'Standing Order Mandate.' You actually save money by selecting this method! No further requirement to post me your subscription, a saving of a postage stamp and envelope. No more worries if you've paid your subscription and most importantly; you would save me a great deal of work. The subscription would be deducted annually from your account with affect 1st November This would then be shown on your next bank statement

PLEASE give it serious consideration. My contact address, telephone number and email address are published on page 1 of each and every publication.

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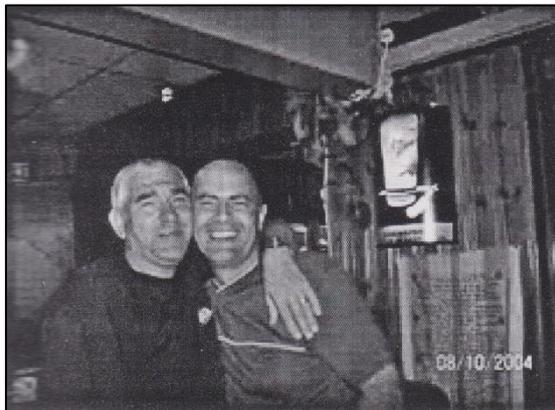
## Rogues Gallery



A toast to the "Airborne Engineers" from George Jones & George Bell



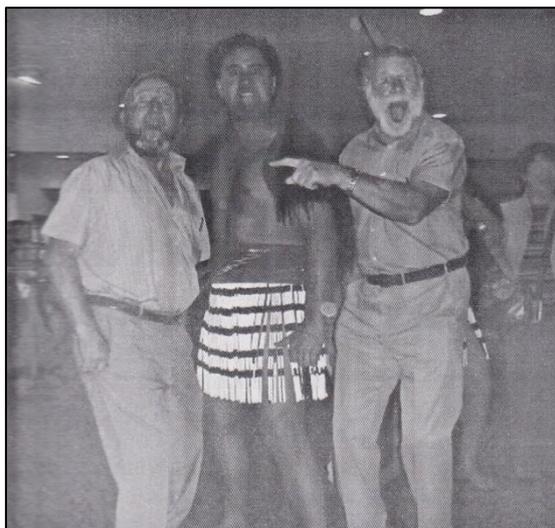
Joe Brine, Jim Grove & John Logan (a few moons ago)



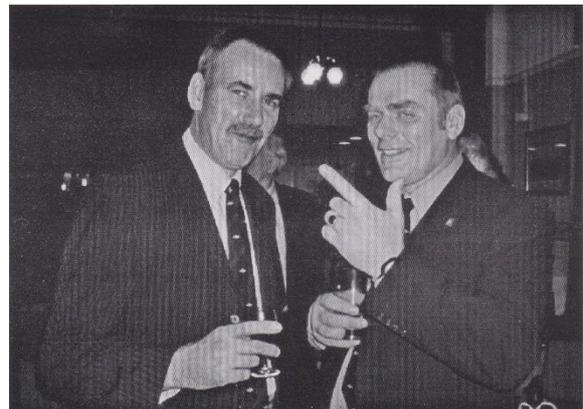
Just 'good friends' Paul Dunkley & Jim Harrower Cyprus 2004



So why in those days did the guys wear their cap badge over their nose?



George Bell & George Jones join in the Māori festival at Rotorua during the Jones' visit to New Zealand to celebrate their golden wedding anniversary. It was the first time the two Georges had met up in 50 years.



Mick Humphries & 'Jugsy' Unsing - January 2005

## 9 Para Sqn RE

Major Frazer Ross

Ninety men of 9 Parachute Squadron Royal Engineers from Aldershot, are currently deployed in south west Iraq on Operation TELIC 6, as part of 12 Mechanised Brigade. The Squadron is working with Tidworth based 26 Engineer Regiment, supporting the Brigade in a number of roles:

\* Firstly providing close support to the British infantry battle groups (and an Australian Task Force), enabling them to move and fight, whilst denying the insurgents the opportunity to do so.

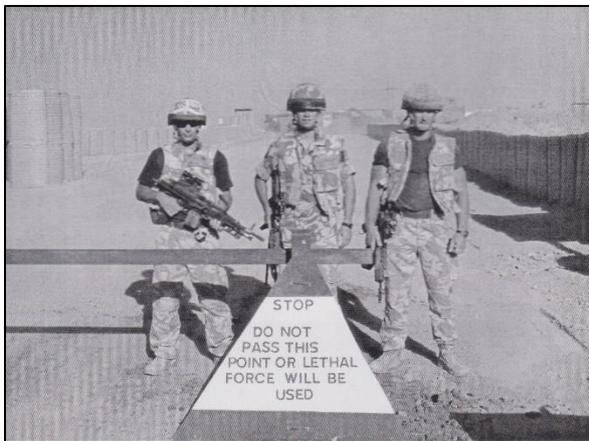
\* Secondly, the Squadron has spent a significant amount of its time and efforts enhancing the force's protection and defences at UK troop bases as well as making life more comfortable for the soldiers deployed in difficult conditions.

\* Finally and most importantly, the Squadron's efforts have been focused on the local communities, helping the country to get back on its feet after years of war and oppression, primarily assisting in improvement of the fragile water network across the south west of this and country. This in turn is winning the support of the population, improving the stability of the security environment and the safety of the troops. It also undermines the rationale of the insurgents and their continued fight. The Squadron has also been instrumental in projects designed to improve the country's economy, assisting in the reopening of major roads, vital to ensuring that oil production reaches full efficiency as soon as possible.

Four articles, primarily written for internal Army media, and a number of high quality photographs covering our key activities in the last 2 months have been produced. Hopefully these articles and photographs will give you an idea of what we have been up to in Iraq.

### Force Protection at Camp Abu Naji, Al Amarah

2 Troop Capt Andy Lowe



Having deployed to Iraq in late April, 9 Parachute Squadron were soon bedded in to TELIC 6 life in Shaibah Log Base (SLB). Almost straight away the call came to deploy further north in support of 1 STAFFORDS. On 9th May an advance party from 2 Troop 9 Para Sqn RE deployed up to Camp Abu Naji (CAN), just south of Al Amarah in Maysaan Province. The main body arrived 3 days later on the 12th.

**Capt Andy Lowe, Cpl Wes Abbott & LCpl Ronnie Ragan in front of the PVCP**

The requirement was to put in place force protection (PVCP) for Task Force HQ and subsequently to build a Permanent Vehicle Check Point at the main gate. As is usual for force protection works, Hesco filling would prove to be a major part of the task. The work began on Friday the 13th, with the construction of a sanger at the front gate. Unfortunately, LCpl Baillie and Spr Drummond were seriously injured in an accident when a wall collapsed on them. The quick thinking of LCpl Woolgar and Spr Landon ensured the lads were rescued and sent on their way to A&E at Shaibah as rapidly as possible. A testament to the Squadron lads was the fact that the medics were confident enough in the lad's drills, to let them crack on. A special mention goes out to Spr Drummond, who whilst still under one and a half metres of wall declared that he was still off to sample the delights of Thailand during Post Tour Leave! The 'Baillie Drummond' sanger was completed 3 days later, with the good news that LCpl Baillie and Spr Drummond were on their way back to the UK. We all wish them a speedy recovery, and look forward to seeing them on the DZ in the near future.



**Cpl Abbott's section finishing the force protection of TFHQ**

The next job was the placement of a combination of 2:1 Hesco and 2m high concrete Alaska Barriers (10 feet high barriers). True to from the lads got amongst the task and found themselves ahead of schedule. The Hesco was soon in place and it was time to move the 17 tonne Alaska Barriers into position. This was no mean feat, as Iraqi cranes are on average 20 years old, with most of the lifting strops coming from the same batch that were used by the Egyptians to build the pyramids. It was at this time that we experienced our first 'incoming' of the tour. At around 0130 hours a Chinese rocket was fired at the camp, missing by a

couple of hundred metres. On hearing the fire alarm we all carried out the drills of placing on our helmets and body armour. The IA drills must have been slightly lost on Spr Cofax who inquired if he could go relieve himself (not because he was scared!) 5 minutes into the soak period of 30 minutes. SSgt Dickson politely told h m to he down and shut up, which seemed to cure his weak bladder. Thirty minutes passed by and all protection equipment was removed to ensure a more comfortable night's sleep. When I say all, I lie! No one woke up LCpl Johnson to inform him that the threat had passed and so he slept the rest of the night in full Combat Body Armour and helmet. To say that he was bitter about it the next morning would be the understatement of the year.

We moved on to constructing the PVCP outside the wire next. It was during this task that we met Karim, a local who came down to the site to watch us all day, giving all sorts of advice in Arabic. He either had nothing to do or he was the intelligence officer for the local insurgents. If he was a spy, then I wish them all the luck in the world trying to hunt down Cpl Punishment, LCpl Peter Kay and Spr Jimmy Saville to name but a few. He was absolutely delighted when some of the lads decided to give his bicycle a makeover by spraying it with green line spray! Never let it be said that 9 Para Squadron don't do hearts and minds. It was while we were constructing the PVCP that the Commanding Officer of 26 Engineer Regiment visited. He was given a tour of the site and had the chance to speak to several of the blokes, all except LCpl Johnson who was locked in an ISO container for the duration of the visit due to his dubious track record when speaking with senior officers. LCpl Woolgar showed Clerk of Works potential with his answer to the CO's inquiry as to what they had been doing, "Well Sir, we've filled Hesco from there to here with mud and that's about it."

I must at this point thank the 1 STAFFORDS COMS Dept, who were an extremely hospitable and helpful bunch of individuals. Quite why they felt the need to padlock all the fridges containing the bottled water I have no idea – especially in the 50 degree heat! It seems that the old adages 'stores are for storing' and 'what's mine is mine' are alive and well. It also served to prove that 9 Sqn's SSgt Jackson is not the tightest SQMS in the British Army.



On a more serious note, all members of 2 Troop were able to pay their respects to LCpl Brackenbury of the KRH, whose was killed in an IED attack on the outskirts of Al Amarah during our time at CAN. There was also a memorial service for Pte J Kelly 3 PARA who was killed in the area during Op TELIC 1.

**Moral boosting visit for the lads of 2 Troop**

Admittedly this wasn't the most airborne of jobs but as usual, the lads professionalism and hardworking nature ensured another job well done. 2 Tp returned

to SLB exactly one month after they had arrived, for some much needed rest and then to prepare for the Squadron Main Effort, which was the upcoming strip out of the Rumaylah Bridge.

## 9 Para Sqn Newsletter 25 Jun 05

It's been just over 8 weeks now since 3 Troop were joined by the rest of the Squadron at Shaibah Logistics Base (SLB) in Iraq. The first few days in theatre were spent on a training package which is designed to familiarise troops with operations, here in the south of the country. Thankfully it was a fairly relaxed few days and above all a good chance to acclimatise to the heat. After 3 days it was time to move down the road to our new home known as Gundolph Lines where facilities were more than adequate. Everyone at home will be happy to know that the food is good, internet and phones are nearby and the NAAFI has enough Mars bars even for SSgt Dickson.

The Squadron are currently all back at SLB, but our work has spread us far and wide. 2 Troop have been up to Camp Abu Naji, Al Amarah in the Maysan Province working on improvements to the camp. 3 Troop have been working on a number of smaller tasks in and around the Basra region. Support Troop are working as hard as ever; however they have still found time to construct the welfare centre otherwise known as the "Squadron bar." With Cpl Floyd taking the lead on the internal fittings and fixtures this should soon be fully operational, a great relief for the SSM who is struggling with the 2 can drinking rule. We have also been carrying out a number of other functions. The pocket sized duo of Lt Rob Gout and Sgt (soon SSgt) Marc Dorkings have been tasked with supporting the locals in their efforts to improve the water supply. Finally we have a team headed up by Cpl Paul Carr who are tasked with providing transport and protection in and around Basra City for military officers working on improving conditions for the locals.

Our most recent task took us up to the Rumaylah Bridge, which is to the north west of Basra - a site that many of the Squadron are familiar with after Op TELIC 1. Three nights were spent on site working around the clock stripping a bridge that 51 Squadron had put in place almost 2 years ago. The majority of the Squadron were involved, and the bridge was stripped quicker than anybody thought possible, which left some more impressed than others! Despite everyone working incredibly hard Cpl 'Sooty' Sutcliffe still managed to find time to give us a fine display of boat handling skills (he had to be reminded that the motor worked better when filled with fuel than without).

### 2 Troop:

Management are leading the way in the vanity stakes, with a daily bicep measuring session. Capt Andy Lowe is leading the pack at the moment with 8 Inches, and if he keeps up the hard work will soon catch up with Sgt Pam Johnston (Chief Clerk). Awards for the most hours sunbathing easily go to Spr's "BJ" Orrell and "Apples" Orchard who puts in nearly as much time as LCpl Jon De Carteret does into his nightly morale 'O' groups! Rumours that the Troop has bought the Naafi's entire stock of protein powder and baby oil are completely unfounded...honest!

### 3 Troop:

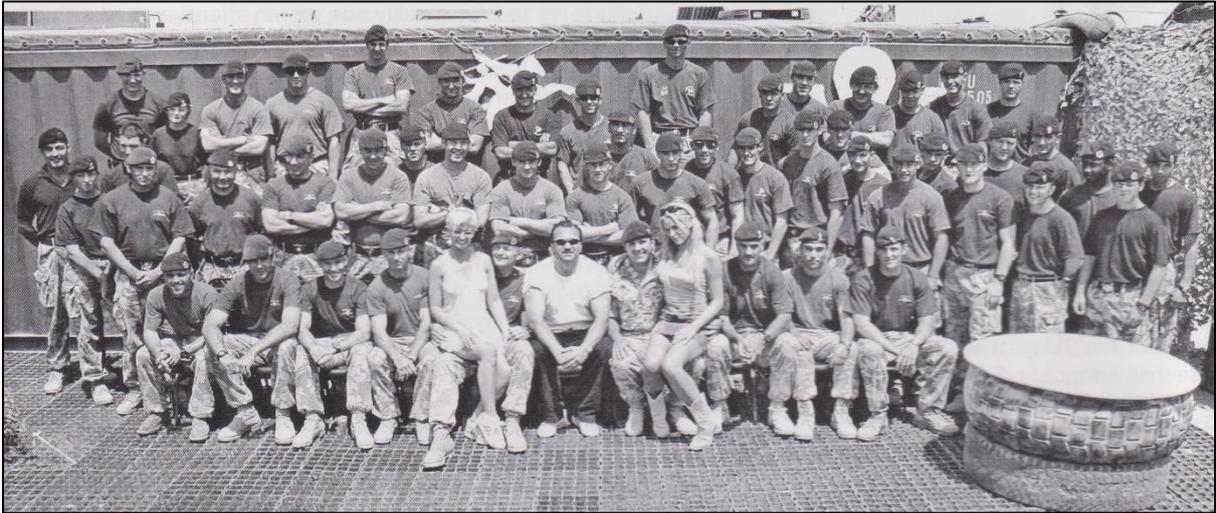
Since the last newsletter Cpl's Walton and Malcolm have been busy on various tasks, mainly involving moving large amounts of sand around the Shatt al Arab Hotel in Basra. Cpl Floyd took a section to the Old State Building in central Basra and fitted a new front gate. The troop also completed the strip of the Rumaylah Bridge, a 33 metre steel equipment bridge, with the rest of the Squadron, which was completed in 47 hours - far less than the allotted time of 5 days. SQUADRON! In between jobs everyone has also been involved in training for the CO's competition which consists of a 2 mile run with 50 lbs and a blindfolded weapons skills test. Otherwise there has been the usual round of equipment and stores checks with a bit of tanning thrown in on the side.

### Support Troop:

Life in Iraq is somewhat slower than in UK, however the ever present threat of nugatory inspections driven by this host Regiment is still managing to stop morale reaching full potential. SSgt Zak Needham is at the helm and keeping the ship on a steady course while the "Admiral" SSgt Martin Corby works on the planning of tasks in the Ops Room (he has now jumped ship back to the UK before moving up to Waterbeach). The club "Massif" with Shep, Muz, Simmo, Elvis and Fort Bragg are all working hard towards Arnie status. The muscle powder industry has just taken a turn for the better with 9 Squadron in town! Sgt Daz Hicklin known otherwise as 'The Ghost' (due to his uncanny ability to be absent from meetings and conferences) and the LAD team have been keeping the Sqn on the road - which way that road leads is open to discussion!

Finally:

With R and R in full swing, all are looking forward to their time back in UK - with families for many - showing off their tans and newly acquired muscle definition for others (Wes 'chicks dig muscles, not fast runners' Abbott!). 3 Troop are awaiting their return date in August with preparations and packing underway soon.



Smiles all round as the visiting 'pin-ups' and Neil 'Razor' Ruddock join the Sqn for a photo shoot

---

## Moascar Garrison

Ken Berry

The following collection of photographs were taken at 9 A/B Sqn Camp and around the Moascar Garrison in Egypt during the period 1952-54. I think most of those named are correct but I stand to be corrected as the passing of some 50 years sometimes fogs the memory.

If any member would like copies of any of these photos please drop a line to: Ken Berry [REDACTED]

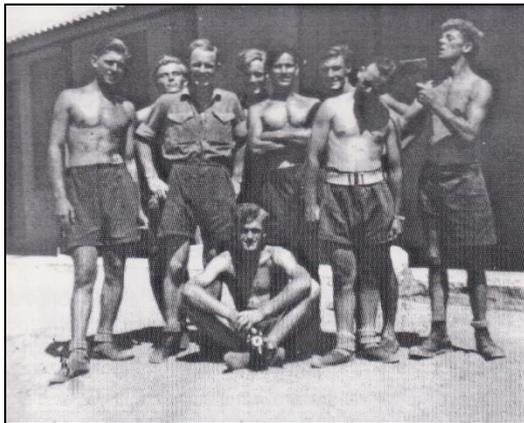
[REDACTED] or call [REDACTED]



**On Parade!**

Middle of centre rank: Moore

Front rank: Tavener, ?, Hubbard, G Rook, ?,



Taffy, Swain, Rook, Berry, Wade, Truscott, Scott & Nurse (seated)  
not known



A young 'Yacca' Nurse



Swain, Nurse & Sgt Linham watching an American carrier in the  
Suez Canal



Sand bag pill box constructed by one of the Troops of 9 A/B  
Sqn RE

# Proposal to form The Airborne Engineers Association Sports Club

Steve (Billy) Morris

## Background

During the latter part of 2004 a group of Ex 9 Sqn warriors from my generation started to meet up at venues across the south for drinks and curries. During one of these sessions we decided to enter the Grim 8, which is an 8 mile run around the Long Valley training area in Aldershot. The race is run each year in December and attracts around 2000 runners from around the country.

We all had a great time and it started the old airborne spirit once again. "We must do this again" was the general consensus of opinion, so a second event was planned for March, giving us time to get over Christmas and the New Year.

This was to be the Steying Stinger half marathon over the South Downs Way. One of the team, Mr Reg Grantham came in 4th from a field of over 400 runners. The pre London Fleet half marathon was the next event in March and the lads all managed personal best's. In June Reg Grantham, Bob Chatterton and myself completed the North Downs Run a 30km race over the downs around the Strood area of Kent, a hot and cheeky little number. We always try and plan to do something each month to keep the fitness going.

## Proposal

It is my proposal to form a sports club affiliated to the main frame work of the AEA. I am predominantly a runner and have been known to swing a golf club, but the sports club would be open to any sport or activity that AEA members participate in around the country. The aims of the club would be to...

- \* Form a focal point for the members of the younger generation to be part of the AEA through entering sporting events around the country, under the banner of the AEA sports club.
- \* Being an affiliated club allows teams or individuals to enter events at reduced rates.
- \* Promote the AEA through regular features in the Journal and web site that are current so people will still be recognised by the new members.
- \* Publicity on running vests or sports tops with logos etc. On the back- "you're following an AEA Member" with e-mail or web site address?
- \* Promote inter branch challenges through team events.
- \* Have regular meet-ups with fellow sportsmen across the UK..

More than this it would be another chance to bring together all ages throughout the association, old and new, in a common field.

This idea was discussed at the Aldershot Branch Sunday meeting on the 17th April 05. The president and members thought that the idea was very positive, and would hopefully encourage new members of the younger generation into our Association.

Each branch could have its own representative or co-ordinator for any events or focal points. I have liaised with the South of England Amateur Athletic office on the formation of a club, and have information regarding the membership process. With that in mind I am calling to all who read the Airborne Engineers Journal and who are interested; in becoming a sports member as well.

I am not trying to form a breakaway association but to add another string to its bow, through the sports and past times of all members old and new. T shirts, polo tops, running vests etc. would be the cost to the individual once the numbers can be established; and also membership to the athletic association on the forming of a club.

I am of course interested in everyone's general thoughts, and any ideas or guidance on the above matter. With that in mind I will give a brief at the Coventry Reunion 2005 as to the progress and the way ahead, with points

of contact for branches and key figures etc. Please contact any of the following members with your thoughts and ideas:

Billy Morris (Aldershot Branch) Email: [REDACTED]

Email: Bob Chatterton (Aldershot Branch) Email: [REDACTED]

Reg Grantham (Aldershot Branch) Email: [REDACTED]

---

## Gliders

Baz Henderson

The following is a except from an article originally published in the magazine, "The Aeroplane" in September 1940 and entitled 'Notes on German Aerial Troop Trailers'.

...Aerial troop trailers are almost invulnerable to rifle or machine gun fire. They contain no petrol, oil or water, no tanks, pipe lines, engine or aircrew. They could be shot so full of holes that they would not even cast a shadow! And yet, they might still hold together.

One would not care to be inside, perhaps the passengers, desperate men all, could put up some defence by poking machine guns out of the roof and windows!

---

## Fergie Semple Memorial Golf Tournament 2004

John Hughes

As winner of the above tournament, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Bob Ferguson for organising the event and the owner of the course for allowing us to play there (free).

It was a pity that the event wasn't better supported and perhaps more support in the future would make for a greater competitive day's golf.

I look forward to defending my 'title' in the next competition - which will hopefully be in the not too distant future.

---

## The Start of a Long Journey

Lt Col (Retd) John Humphreys

It all began when I was walking home from school. We were living on an Island named Pulau Brani, just off Singapore Harbour. It was a small island and defended by a number of gun emplacements that faced towards the sea, supported by searchlights. These were operated by the Royal Engineers; when I was there it was 41 Fortress Company in which my father was a Sergeant. I was happily making my way back home from school; we went to school on another island called Blakang Mati and were transferred by military ferry, when I met my father who said to me "You will be fourteen next year, what do you want to do?" "Do you want to join the Army, the Navy or the Air force?" Well, I knew nothing of the Air Force but I did know that soldiers always seemed to be covered in lots of equipment, wore puttees and were always marching this way and that. A few years ago we had lived at Chatham and I had seen the apprentices at the Royal Naval Apprentices College. They were dressed in blue doeskin uniforms with white shirt, shoes and collar and tie and served five years at the end of which they became Petty Officers. That's for me I thought and told my father where I wanted to go. On the 5th of November 1935, how could I forget that date, I was told to make my way to Fort Canning, the military headquarters and sit for the exam. To get to Fort Canning from Changi, where we now lived, I rode on the 'piggy bus,' which cost only a few cents but meant that I was sandwiched between corpulent Chinese and pigs encased in wickerwork baskets.

On arrival at the military headquarters I was shown to the room where I was to sit the exam and duly got my nose into the first examination paper. There were four papers, Geography, Mathematics, English and General Knowledge. It was nearly 4pm when I finished the last paper and having checked it for stupid mistakes I idly read the heading and found that I had sat the entrance examination to the Army Technical School. When I got back home, by which time the bonfires were burning and the fireworks exploding, I told my father that it was the wrong examination that I had sat for. He said to me, "Boy, you don't think that you are going into the Navy, you are going into the Army and make quite sure that you pass well enough to get into the Royal Engineers." Looking back I sometimes think that it might not have been such a bad decision, I could have been sunk many times over.

And so the great day came: I was wearing my first ever pair of long trousers and lugging an enormous suitcase as I staggered up the gang plank of the HMT Neuralia and reported to the NCO at the top. He directed me to Mess Deck 88 about as deep in the bowels of the ship as one could get and told me that I was number 12. The other 11 were adults, a Cpl and 10 Sappers and I was a gift from heaven for them as it was me that would be doing all the fetching, carrying and cleaning.

The days all started the same; a Petty Officer would come around the Mess decks blowing his pipe, a form of Naval whistle whilst shouting "Heave ho, lash up and stow before the sun shines out of your eyes." I would then unhook my hammock from the rails overhead and lash it up tightly, lift it onto my shoulder and stagger off to the bilge's, I was 5 ft and a half inch tall and weighed 100 pounds; the hammock felt heavier and was much longer. After a quick wash and brush up, I was too young to grow a beard, I legged it to the kitchen and collected the breakfast for my mess deck, sometimes feeling like an octopus struggling with all the pots and pans and scared that I might drop one. Breakfast over the adults would take off leaving me with the instructions to wash and scrub the table and forms, clean all the pots and pans and lay everything out for inspection before the 'Ships Rounds.' This took place at 1000 hours each day, except Sunday, and consisted of the senior ship officers together with the Adjutant and RSM. This was when I learnt that RSM's have eyes in their arse and Adjutants are not to be trifled with. The first rollicking I got was for saluting whilst not wearing a hat on Pay Parade. I wasn't really bothered as I had never seen ten shillings let alone been given it and for that I would happily scrub the ship from stem to stern.

After 'Stand Down' I would grab hold of the tea bucket and with the money that the Corporal had given to me I would dash to the canteen carrying the bucket and 12 mugs, I must have been like a monkey, and buy tea and 12 packets of biscuits and then I would find them at the boat station that they had told me where they would be. It would be bliss for the next two hours whilst I listened to their 'Old Soldier' stories. Quite a few wore 1914-18 medal ribbons and had seen service in India as well as the Far East. The midday meal was a repetition of breakfast, and the spud bashing at 3pm followed this. A representative from each mess deck was required to

report to the kitchen where he gave his mess deck number and was given a quantity of potatoes to peel. No mess deck rep meant that that mess deck would not be served with potatoes the next day. I duly reported and was given a basin of spuds to peel but I had never done this before so just chopped then into squares. When I handed them in the cook laughed at me and said "Don't bother in future, I'll just cross your deck off." That was the second lesson that I learnt, the first of course was to beware of the RSM and Adjutant. Teatime came and went and after cleaning the pots and pans I would make my way to where the Corporal and Sappers were and was allowed to sit with them and learn how to play 'Housy-House' now called Tombola. There was almost always a singsong and the night would be filled by the songs sung by the soldiers of the 14-18 war and those who had served in India. At 9pm I would be told to get off to bed and would then pull my hammock out of slot number 88/12, stagger up to the mess deck area and fit it onto the hooks and so another day would pass. It was to be a long time before I learnt about homosexuality and in later years realised that my father had probably ordered the Cpl to keep an eye on me and to make sure that I wasn't molested; as it was I was never still long enough for anyone to get near me! On the way home we stopped at Colombo, Aden, Port Said and Malta where the ships bunkers were filled with coal and six weeks after leaving Singapore we docked at Southampton where my mess deck companions were to go to Chatham to be demobbed and me to Chepstow to the Army Technical School.

Now I was to learn the meaning of SNAFU, situation normal, all fouled up, for instead of going to Chepstow I was sent to Chatham to join the RE boys who were buglers, or learning to be. It was some time before someone tumbled to the fact that I was to be an apprentice tradesman and was duly put onto a train, together with my heavy suitcase, on route for Chepstow. When I arrived there I was met by a Sergeant who told me to follow him, he marching off at a brisk pace and me staggering along behind him with my suitcase. (I wonder what happened to that suitcase) On arrival at Beachley Camp, the home of the Army Technical School, I was duly booked in and sent to one of the huts at the bottom of the camp. This was where all the juniors started. The huts were built in 1922, had wood floors polished by the boys, a double fronted fireplace in the centre, 20 bed spaces and a small room in the corner known as the bunk for the boy NCO. The beds were iron framed, one half slid under the other. The mattress was of three biscuits, the blankets and sheets were folded around these and set up to form an 'arm chair' with the blankets and sheets folded to show a blanket, sheet, blanket, sheet and a final blanket, and woe betide the boy whose bed layout did not conform to the correct layout.

I was issued with socks, flannel shirts, 'drawers Dracula,' two pair of boots, puttees, serge trousers and jacket plus overalls and PT clothing. The first job was to get some of the newness off the buttons and boots and that meant a lot of 'spit and polish' and wrist work with a button brush. It was at that stage that I wondered why my father had never bothered to teach me the easy ways to polish and blanco my equipment, as it was I had to find out the hard way. Over the next few days the other boys arrived and gradually we became 38C, we were 38 Group in 'C' Company, all to be trained as fitters and turners. It was at this time that the school bully influence showed itself. I had fair hair; blue eyes and a girlish face so was an obvious target but what they did not know was that I was a 'Barrack Rat.' I had lived all my short life in and around barracks and had attended not less than 8 different schools, all of which had their resident bully so I had learned how to fight the hard way. The Marquis of Queensbury could have been a chocolate bar for all I knew; I just knew how to fight to win. Having established who was who in the barrack room we settled down to the routine. There were twenty boys in the room and a boy Cpl, or to give him his correct title, an A/T Cpl. He slept in the bunk and was responsible for our behaviour and would also teach us how to keep the room clean. Each boy had a different task each week, these included polishing the floor, cleaning the windows, black leading the fireplace and polishing the implements, cleaning the washroom and toilets and all this after first making up ones bed in a strictly regimental fashion.

First parade was for breakfast. We would assemble by Groups and march over to the cookhouse and make our way to the table allotted to our room. At the table head would be sat the two boys whose task was to fetch the food and below them the A/T NCOs whom would keep their beady eyes upon the distribution of the food making sure that they always had the greatest portions. It was certainly a great incentive to earn promotion. The two boys at the head of the table changed each week but the NCO's stayed there until promoted and moved to another table. Breakfast over we made our way back to the hut and changed into whatever dress was ordered for the next period. It could be overalls for the workshop, PT dress for the Gym, service dress for a drill period or the same dress for school. Our instruction included trade training, military and physical training and academics. Any boy who was stupid enough not to keep his nose to the grindstone and pass the entrance examination for

the 1st Class Certificate and not go on to gain the Special lost the chance to rise to the dizzy rank of Sergeant and beyond, although in those days the thought of becoming a Sgt, let alone a Warrant Officer was beyond our imagination.

Trade training was very thorough, although in my case it was not done with a lot of enthusiasm. We spent 12 months on the bench using a hammer, hacksaw and chisel then went into the machine shop where we learnt how to use the lathe, shaper, router and other machines. The last year was spent in the Blacksmiths and Tinsmiths shop, and in this year we spent six months stripping i/c engines and learning how to white lead bearings. Three evenings a week we would be taught applied mechanics.

Physical training was very good. All the games were available, football, rugby, hockey and cross country running were available in the winter; in the summer it was athletics and swimming and for those good at gymnastics there was always the chance to represent the School at displays around South Wales.

Military training was harsh. A mistake during stick drill would result in a swift belt across the arse from the instructor with his cane, dirty or dull brasses would result in seven days CB, as would blanco on the brasses or Brasso on the webbing and CB was no joke in those days. Every Saturday the Commandants Parade would take place and woe betide the boy whose turnout did not meet the RSM's eye. We would form up in Companies, go through all the drill movements after first having been inspected and then march past the Commandant. Sunday was another dreaded day. We always had a Church parade and were required to parade in Service Dress, with highly polished boots, puttees folded to 4 inches below the knee, box creases in our trousers and belts blancoed white. After three years I no longer had any interest in the church, I was more concerned that I would not get booked for dirty brasses or blanco and spend the next seven days on 'jankers.' One weekend I was in Chepstow and before the main film started I went to the back of the cinema for a quick 'Spit and Drag.' Halfway through my cigarette I felt a hand on my shoulder and heard the dreaded words "What's your name Boy." It was a Regimental Policeman and he booked me so I was up in front of the Company Commander on the Monday and got seven days CB. At 0615 I had to parade at the Guardroom in overalls, clean, bright and slightly oiled. The slightest blemish and it would be another seven days. After having carried out whatever task was given to me I would be permitted to race back to my barrack room, change into the clothing of the period and march to breakfast. The day's training over I would report to the Guardroom at 1800hrs and be told what dress I was to report in 15 minutes later; it could be anything from PT dress to ceremonial or marching order or working dress. The inspection over we would be detailed off for various jobs; digging holes, cleaning the Guard Room, building the bowling Green for the Sergeants Mess or, best of all, cleaning the cookhouse kitchens. This was the best as it meant that we could filch some sausages in the winter or slab cake in the summer and smuggle them into the barrack room where it would be shared out.

Time went by and I enjoyed the sporting side of life at Beachley; the military side I became accustomed to and could not be faulted on my turnout, academically I had gained all the certificates that my Father had told me to get but I still felt that I would be happier in the Infantry; if I was going to be a soldier I wanted to be a proper one. Eventually I became an A/T Cpl. Not exactly a great effort as the ranks went all the way up to Boy RSM. I was a lot better as an athlete as I won the 100 yards, the 200 yards, the long jump and secured the school record for each. I also played for the school rugby team and was selected for the School Gymnastic Display Team. Towards the end of the last year, at the beginning of the last term, I was permitted to move up to the hut at the top of the Wing and no longer had to supervise the young boys. Now all I was concerned with was passing all the examinations sufficiently well to achieve my choice of selection to the Royal Engineers. In the last year we sat both academic and trade exams and dependent upon where one finished in the pecking order decided which Corps or Regiment one would be posted to. The Royal Engineers were the favourite, followed by the Royal Tank Regiment, then the Royal Artillery, the Royal Army Service Corps and the Royal Army Ordnance Corps. As it had been made quite plain to me by my father which Corps I should go to there was nothing to do but swat like mad and pass all the exams at the top. Six weeks before we were to leave we all knew where we were to go and then we bought the buttons and badges of our choice and furiously polished the newness off them. We potential Sappers had been warned that a high standard of dress was expected of us and an Ex-boy who did not meet the standard would have a hard time.

And so the time came for us to put away our toolboxes and say farewell to Beachley. After a very good apprenticeship in fitting and turning I never opened a toolbox again whilst in the Royal Engineers; I became a Combat Engineer.

In the spring of 1939 I joined 275 Party at Brompton Barracks and shared a barrack room with other Ex-Boys and a few civilians, brand new to the Army. It was our task to teach mem how to spit and polish and keep the blanco off the brasses. After Beachley it was a fairly easy life as we finished each day at 3pm and could then get on with the cleaning and polishing. Each morning we would parade in Service Dress box creases 4 inches below the knee and puttees wound at regular intervals with the end finishing in line with the seam of the trousers. The Party Officer would then look at us whilst the Sergeant inspected us, that was the last we saw of the Party Officer until the next day. Only on Fridays did we see him twice and that was because it was Pay Day, he paid us out. The first six weeks we spent doing Foot and Rifle drill. After three years at Beachley drill was just a form of entertainment and we Ex-Boys delighted in performing the most complicated manoeuvres. At the end of the six weeks we 'Passed off' and were now permitted to leave the barracks, in uniform, provided one had a pass and passed the inspection at the Guardroom and we had to be back in barracks by 10pm. As we Ex-Boys who were under the age of 18 only received 10 shillings a week it was unlikely that we would go mad. There was still the brasso, blanco, stamps and other essentials to buy.

I was now seventeen and a half with six months to go before I would be classified as a man, and still a virgin. There had not been much chance to be anything else, girls at Beachley were like feathers on a frog and up to date we had either been confined to barracks or were too busy polishing and cleaning. Now we were let out into the big wide world and had not the faintest idea what we were supposed to do when we got there, only that we were to keep out of trouble and away from the Regimental Police. I smoked but did not drink and could not dance and when I did go out of barracks it had to be in uniform which meant boots, puttees, trousers with box creases, etc. Not exactly conducive to romance. Towards the end of July I met an old friend from Beachley who was six months older than me and about to be posted to a Field Company. He asked me if I wanted to buy his suit of Blue Patrols and I quickly accepted. This meant that I could now go out of barracks dressed rather more attractively than in khaki and meant that I made an effort to learn to dance but not very successfully. This fancy uniform allowed me to meet a very attractive young lady; all females were ladies to me then, and we would go to the cinema or walk on the Downs, there was not much else we could do on my pay. My sexual instruction began when we were in her house one night and locked in a passionate embrace when she said to me "Darling, I need you so much." Unfortunately I did not know what she meant so the evening did not end in the way it was meant to.

Now the days were spent learning to be Sappers. The instruction was all based upon the activities of the RE during the 14-18 War. We learnt how to dig dogleg trenches, dugouts, parapets and paradoes, use barbed wire, make revetments. Build Box Girder and Pontoon bridges and behave like moles digging mines; I also learnt a lot about the use of explosives. Not a lot of this was to be of any use to me when I went to Africa, The only mines that I met went off with a bloody great bang when they were trod on or cleared but my knowledge of explosives came in handy. Mixed in with this training was the use of weapons when I learnt to use a Lewis Gun and became quite proficient with the 303 Lee Enfield rifle. Before we had finished our Field Engineer training the threat of war loomed up and we moved to Shorncliffe. On Sunday, 3 September we were all busy digging slit trenches beside our tents when the first air raid warning was sounded and we knew that we were at war with Germany.

A few days later we slung our rifles over our shoulders and pulled on our equipment and marched down into Shorncliffe and Roberts Barracks. I suppose that the previous incumbents had gone to France and now Roberts Barracks (or was it Burgoyne Barracks) was to become the 1 Training Battalion, Royal Engineers. A few weeks later I was told to attend the Cadre Class for potential Junior NCO's. This was a surprise as we were still used to peace time soldiering when it took at least three years to rise to the dizzy rank of Lance Corporal and now we, who were very young, and in my case still technically a Boy, were to undergo a six week course to become Junior NCO's and if we passed would become LCpls. It was a hard and difficult period of instruction but at the end of it I was pleased to find that I had passed and was duly promoted to Acting/Unpaid/L/Cpl. Whilst on the course, the girl that I had met at Chatham, whose father was a Naval Officer, wrote to me to say that her mother had gone to meet her father and that she would be very lonely. Would I please come down and keep her company. I had a

choice; I either stayed on the course with a chance of passing or I applied for a 'Long Weekend' pass and would almost certainly be failed. I stayed on the course and lost my love!

Now I was a brand new, bright and shiny Lance Corporal with a stripe on my sleeves teaching men old enough to be my father how to be efficient Sappers but I was still being paid as a boy and would be until I was 18 years old. After my 18th birthday Pt II orders were published stating that 3012 A/T J.E. Humphreys was posted to the ranks as 1877368 Sapper J.E. Humphreys and appointed Unpaid/Acting/ L/Cpl and that having carried out the duties of a L/Cpl for 21 days was appointed Paid L/Cpl. My pay went from fourteen shillings a week to forty two, I had never had so much money in my life but soon found ways of spending it after having made my mother an allowance of 10 shillings and sixpence a week, quite a lot of money in those days. This was when I was talked into going to dancing classes twice a week by Charlie Callaghan and finally mastered the waltz, quickstep and foxtrot. I would never be brilliant but I could get around without treading on too many feet. After we had graduated we would go to the Leas Cliff in Folkestone on a Saturday night, dressed in our blues, and dance to Victor Sylvester and other good bands. The days went by with monotonous regularity as I carried out my duties as an instructor of what was then known as 'Field Engineering.'

Christmas came and went but there was no leave and not much time off. January came and with it the movement of troops to France and that was where I wanted to be so I went to the Sergeant Major and asked if I could be posted to a Field Company. He put a flea in my ear and told me to get on with instructing, as there were plenty of Sappers but not a lot of instructors. Not to be put off I would go to his office about every two weeks and get told off.

Sometime in February I was detailed to be the Junior of the Guard which meant polishing everything that could be polished and mounting guard wearing a greatcoat and webbing plus rifle and bayonet; all very formal and a waste of time. I deliberately left my buttons unpolished and the brasses on my equipment were not cleaned. The Guard was inspected by the Orderly Officer and the RSM and ten minutes after being inspected I was in front of the Company Commander, reduced to the ranks and posted to a Field Company. That same day I happily made my way to the railway station en route to London where I was to join my unit.

The CSM was waiting on the station platform to meet me and his first words were "I thought that you were a Lance Corporal." I told him what had happened and he said, "Well, I want an NCO so get that stripe sewn back on again." I was now in a Field Company teaching mostly Territorial soldiers how to build wet and dry bridges.

The Company was camped by the Thames near Pangbourne, and I had been promoted to Cpl. Whilst there I talked one of the DR's (despatch riders) into teaching me how to ride a motor cycle: the officers were all TA and discipline was quite lax compared to what I had known so none of the officers or senior NCO's stopped me.

We moved from Pangbourne to Aldershot in May and prepared to go to France. I was happy, at last we were going to be where the real soldiering was taking place but my happiness was quickly dispelled when the CSM sent for me and told me that as I was not yet nineteen I could not go on active service so would not be going with them. As I was leaving the office a clerk advised me that if I could get my father to sign an 'Immature certificate' I would be able to go with them. He gave me the blank certificate and I wrote to my Father who signed the certificate and that was me free to go with the Company.

We did not go to France; it was overrun by the Germans and Dunkirk became history. Instead we dug anti-tank ditches over most of Hampshire and then moved to Saffron Walden where we were issued with tropical clothing as though it were peacetime. We each had a Bombay topee and a Wolesey, the former for working and the latter for ceremonial occasions plus shorts, shirts and trousers, so it did not require much intelligence to guess where we were going. In August we sailed for Africa and three weeks after landing the Bombay topees were being tied together and used as footballs whilst the Woleseys were discarded.

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## Can You Help?

I have been given details of your Association after contacting the Market Garden Veterans.

I would like to request via your journal for any information concerning my father-in-law Henry (Harry) Tolson. He was a member of 9th Field Company who historically went to Arnhem. I believe he came in on a glider. I have visited both the Royal Engineers and Airborne museums but they have no information on individuals.

My father-in-law never spoke of what happened at Arnhem, so I am unable even to find out what Platoon/Battalion he was in. His service number was 2193107. He unfortunately died in 1997.

I do have a copy of the War Diaries for 29th September 1944 in which Major Jack Winchester states that, "Cpl Tolson take 12 sappers of the 1st Seaborne party back to England by sea".

If any of your members know anything about him, or, were in Arnhem with him, I would be very grateful if they would contact me.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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## Where is he?



Taken at Barton Stacey camp in 1952, (L to R) Derek Whitehead ( 3 Tp), Peter Kirk and George Cook (1 Tp) - waiting to join 9 Sqn in Egypt. Derek is trying to locate Peter Kirk. Would anyone knowing the whereabouts of Peter, please contact Derek (Tel: [REDACTED]) or drop him a line at:

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## Observation

Edward Ratcliffe

May I make a small amendment to the letter from Don Newman (down under).

After 60 years it is a bit difficult to place things in strict chronological order, but here goes.

After flying back to the UK, remnants of the 4th Para Sqn RE were loaded into two Dodge lorries, together with their sleeping bags. We spent the first night in a building at the gates of an aerodrome. The next day we were fed by the RAF and later moved to Wragby in Lincolnshire where we joined members of the 1st Para Sqn RE.

All This you probably have on record, but what is not made clear in Don Newman's letter is that not all the men who were at Arnhem went on to fly to Norway, for after a short while under a new OC a number of these men were returned to Germany for active service until the end of hostilities.

Two names I recall are Joe Gallea and Ronnie Allsop, the latter finishing up in Bremen and I think Magdeburg.

I would like to add on the subject of amalgamating with the REOCA. I have served with both a Para Sqn and a Field Coy in action and learned to respect both. Let us pull together as we have done in the past and amalgamate.

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## Benny Benson

Den Healey

Following the continuing quest for the identity of X9, there have been so many references to Benny Benson that I wonder if there were more than one Benson in the Squadron.

About 1958-59 when Rick Mogg was Plant Sergeant, the rest of the section comprised Ivor Slane, Barry Massingham, Paddy Rogers and me; we were joined by a short, moustachioed Cumbrian who had served in the Squadron in the Canal Zone and then in the SAS in Malaya before returning to the fold at Cove. This is the only Benson I came across; are there any more?

After demob in 1961 I lost contact with everyone until the mid-eighties when I attended a reunion which included crashing out on the floor of a Rhine Barracks room. Even half asleep and more than half hung-over I recognised his voice instantly, and spent most of the rest of the day driving him around Aldershot and being filled in about the intervening quarter century.

The most interesting thing about Benny was a cloud of mystery which people like Rick Mogg, Dennis Scott, (MT Sergeant at that time), and Mick Leigh referred to from time to time. It appeared that Benny did not leave the Squadron in the early fifties because of a desire to swap the dust of Moascar for the tropical charm of Malaya and the delights of Singapore, but to serve an invigorating spell in military detention. Benny's customary reticence on this subject was only once overcome to my knowledge. He was eventually wound up by Rick to the point of saying words to the effect, "Well nobody knew what happened to the two D8's, and nobody ever found the money, and I'm saying nothing!"

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At the tender age of 65, Wally Clift is still on the team sheet

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## Visit to Normandy and Arnhem

With my good friend Ralph Brooks acting as my carer and driver/operator we took the opportunity to join the annual pilgrimage to Normandy in June, and later visited Arnhem. During the service at Ranville cemetery we met Bob Sullivan, but was unable to have a good natter because he was with friends and the service was about to start, but as the tour continued I met up with a few more colleagues.



Harry & Ralph at Pegasus Bridge with Cafe Gondree in the background



Flying the Draig Cymraeg (Welsh Dragon) at Troarn Bridge

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## The Taming of Taffy

Harry Barnsley (A young 90 year old)

The whole population of Cymru waited with bated breath during the rugby season as the Welsh fifteen slowly but surely ascended from the doldrums to become a team to be reckoned with and as the weeks went by the chance of winning the triple crown was becoming a reality. When that goal was finally attained everybody suddenly went stark raving bonkers. The Welsh Assembly organised an office party with line dancing in the nude when even Rodd Morgan did a 'full monty.' Swansea council declared an amnesty for fly tippers, traffic wardens smiled and turned a blind eye to illegal parking, and it was rumoured that some redundant miners actually forgave Maggie Thatcher. The Bishop of Llandaff tucked his cassock into the top of his long johns and did a hornpipe in the pulpit, and Cardiff School of Art carved an effigy of George Bush in seasoned laver bread.

After a king-sized p\*\*\* up, which had lasted seven days, the Welsh Regiment was finally brought under control when they were told they were being shipped out to Iraq and the bricking up of the door of the wet canteen caused all the Welsh Baptists to sign the pledge. However during that period of indiscipline the regimental mascot, Taffy the goat, had wandered into the RSM's billet where he found a dirty pair of underpants and as goats are capable of eating anything he devoured them, but in less than ten minutes he was dead. A post-mortem revealed that he had died from skid mark poisoning. When the RSM later received a letter of censure from the MOD with an order to wash his underclothes more often than did not please him at all.

It was decided to hold a triumphal march through Cardiff and the task of planning a route was given to a Lieutenant Colonel whose sexual appetite was well known and rather bizarre. Naturally he chose the red light district but there was one problem. Owing to the demise of old Taffy they would have to use the standby goat, which was young and not fully trained, but it was decided to press on.

The rehearsals started and young Taffy stood at the head of the column resplendent in his trappings. The order was given to march off and that was where the trouble started. The goat major stepped off smartly but Taffy remained as immobile as Nelson's Column which resulted in the first two ranks of the band failing over him in a complete tangle of arms, legs, bugles, trombones and side drums, with the goat biting every arm or leg he could reach.

After many abortive attempts of that simple drill movement the RSM was on the verge of apoplexy but his many versions of the Morris dance on the edge of the square were very entertaining. He marched up to the goat major and after cussing him for ten minutes, without repeating a word, he issued an ultimatum that if the goat was not fully trained by 0900hrs the following morning lots of delightful things would befall him, such as circumcision with a bolt cropper, having his testicles stitched to the back of his neck, an enema with a gallon of battery acid and de-waxing his ears by kicking him in the crotch.

They assembled on the square the following morning, the RSM brought them to attention and giving the goat major a mean look which boded "no good" for failure, he gave the dreaded command and the parade moved as one, INCLUDING THE GOAT. The RSM tried it a few more times and dismissed the parade.

Later that day the Padre met the goat major and he enquired how the goat had been trained so quickly whereupon the Padre was taken into the goat-house and shown a length of white nylon string which had a loop and slipknot on one end. The goat major explained, "First I slip the loop over his NUTS, I take up the slack, pass it under his belly and up through his collar then along his lead to my hand. As I step off I jerk the string and it works every time!"

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## SSgt Sid Burrell's Return to Crete

Bob Prosser

Aside from becoming an important chapter in World History, the "Battle of all Battles" signalled as in similar cases, nations becoming allies and enemies. Soldiers from Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand battled side-by-side with unarmed yet determined Cretan freedom fighters, against the German army made up mostly of their crack German parachute regiments. When the interrogation of Colonel General Student, the senior German officer, took place (War Office Intelligence Review 1945) he is quoted as saying, "After Crete I proposed that we should make an attack upon Cyprus in order to make a jumping off ground for an air and paratroops attack on the Suez canal. Hitler rejected it because of the losses we received in Crete. The Fuhrer was most displeased with the whole affair' admitted Student, German losses in Crete were very high it cost 4,000 killed and missing out of 20,000 men thrown into Crete.

There was one direct consequence of the German heavy losses and the delayed victory in Crete, Hitler became affected with the distrust of Airborne operations in general and in particular the German offensive in the Mediterranean and set his eyes upon Russia.

Sid Burrell was fighting his battle at Daratsos just west of Chania, when the orders came for the troops to fall back and fight a rear guard action to Sfakion where they would be taken off by ship to North Africa. The distance as the crow flies is approximately 42 miles, the terrain is one of the most intimidating in the Middle East with May temperatures in the 80's and low 90's at sea level and 5° to freezing in the highlands with snow on the mountains, dressed only in KD shorts and short sleeve shirts the journey began. The highest mountain in Crete is 1,102 metres with many others almost as high. After days of skirmishes and fighting the rear guard action, with little or no ammunition and a scarcity of food, Sid arrived at Sfakion having travelled from North to South of the island. Hundreds of troops waited to be lifted off the beaches, they took to the lower hills to hide in the olive groves to wait for the ships arrival. German spotter planes continually flew over the area and soon heavily armed German soldiers arrived to capture those who had been left behind. It was here that the prisoners started to experience the violence and terrorism of being a prisoner-of-war. Sid Burrell, with others were made to walk all the way back from the way re) rad come, carrying and helping the wounded, leaving those too bad to carry on to die by the roadside. On arriving in Chania Sid was put in a prison camp awaiting to be taken to Germany via Greece, then by cattle rail truck, which took weeks upon weeks often shunted into railway sidings for days being only let out occasionally, to Germany and then to Austria. After escaping twice and being recaptured and punished, Sid had to wait until the end of the war before returning to England, a spell of convalescence and then he joined the Airborne Engineers and served out his 22 years. Would you believe Sid was also a Chelsea Pensioner - but escaped to marry his dear Celia and they now live in Spain. Sid had never returned to Crete until now, a small band of his friends accompanied him on his return. An account of what he did together with his friends is as follows: -



Sid with some of the local villagers

Thursday 19th May: We had ordered a coach to take us to all the Memorial Services that we had been invited to. With the exception of the Piper Frank Menzies-Hearn, none of us had ever been to any of these Services before. We all dressed in blazers with berets and medals, our first outing was to Kiriti village where we attended a Memorial Service and wreath laying. It was here that we received our initiation into the emotion and passion of these Memorial Services. It was a colourful affair; a large number of the local

people had dressed in traditional Cretan/ Greek costume and included a party of mountain Cretans in their black shirts, boots and a lace like head-dress.



Also on parade were a squad of Greek Commandos, who we all thought were very impressive. They fired a salvo during the service, the Greek national naval band were also in attendance and played our National Anthem very well. After many prayers and hymns; wreaths were laid.

George Barrett laid our wreath to spontaneous applause. After the service we were led to the tables where we had our first taste of Cretan hospitality, meat and cheese pie, goat and rice, sweet potatoes, salad etc, and wine by the gallon.

In the evening we were taken to the Venetian dockyard to see a display of children's paintings of the war, these were very poignant. We then had the book presentation "Memory of Ashes" we were all given a copy which was written in Greek and English and tells the story of the atrocities which happened in Crete during World War II.

Friday 20th May: Dressed again for a parade, we were taken at 10 o'clock in the morning to Firkas. Here we formed up with the Crete veterans and marched along the quayside to the flag raising position. The flags raised were the Greek, British, Australian and New Zealand. During the playing of our National Anthem all the veterans started to sing, it was a very moving experience. The British Naval Attache, the Australian Military Attache and dignitaries and members of the Chania Government inspected the parade. We were then taken to the beautiful Cretan maritime museum finishing with a stroll around this wonderful harbour.

8 o'clock in the evening we were taken to Galatas village where there is an everlasting memorial flame. This again was a village where everyone was killed. Rose petals were laid across the engraved Stones of British, Australian and New Zealand servicemen and the Stone for Cretan freedom fighters. The service was in Greek and English and proved to be very powerful and extremely emotional.



Tom Thornton laid our wreath here. We moved to the centre of the village where Harold Padfield laid our wreath in the centre of the square. We were then taken to the Panorama Hotel to a reception hosted by the Municipality of Nea Kydonia. Again masses of wonderful food, unlimited drink, music, Greek singing and dancing and back to our hotel at 1 o'clock in the morning.



Saturday 21st: Dressed for parade, off to Kastelli Kisamou, a large town to the West of Chania, again a very moving ceremony, this time the hill Cretans sang as a choir what sounded to be laments. Chris Chambers laid our wreath on this occasion. Back to our hotel for a rest before the big Service at 6 o'clock in the evening at the Commonwealth Military Cemetery at Souda Bay. The veterans formed up in the shade of the trees outside the cemetery and we were invited to join them. The parade was inspected by the British Ambassador, His Excellency Sir Simon Gass with the Ambassadors from South Africa, Australia and New Zealand in attendance were their Military Attache's. The parade, led by a party from HMS Cardiff, followed by Piper Frank Menzies-Hearn and Standard Bearers, walking between them and the Crete veterans were the four Ambassadors, a very moving sight, marching into the cemetery. Over 50 wreaths were laid and Sid Burrell laid our wreath to thunderous spontaneous applause. When we walked out of the cemetery a reception had been laid out by the men of HMS Cardiff, the British Embassy hosted it - you can imagine how much drink and large platters of canapes we

were offered.

Back on to the coach to return to Galatas village where they had laid out in the Square another sumptuous reception hosted by the people of the village, arriving back to the hotel well past midnight.



Sunday 22nd: 6:30 in the evening to the RAF Memorial at Maleme. This was a very short private service where Bill Rudd laid our wreath.

The observers commented on our turn out and the close relationship that we have with the RAF. Across the road to Maleme airfield, here the President of Greece presided, he had flown in from Athens, again with all the Ambassadors, Senior Officials and the higher Priests from the Greek Church for a Memorial Service to the Cretan people and all those who had laid down their lives.

We then sat and watched a re-enactment of the Battle for Crete which had taken place in May 1941, it was a very sobering experience to see how the Cretans played back, the inhumanity, terror and degradation of the executions and imprisonment of defenceless civilians, elements together painted a dark portrait of the time. The theme of the re-enactment was being read out to the audience in both Greek and English, it concluded with the words, "Let us all comprehend that the future we build today shall be the one we deserve." In a very quiet mood we were all taken back to the magnificent Creta Paradise Hotel for a reception hosted by the Prefect of Chania for the last but not least wonderful meal, singing and dancing, with much wine alongside the President, Ambassadors, Senior Military Officers and many Dignitaries. It finished just after midnight. The end of a truly memorable 4 days.

When we left to come home Sid Burrell commented, "It has laid to rest the demons of being captured and the horrendous journey to the prisoner of war camps."

We remained in Crete for a further 10 days recovering in the sun and touring the Island. It seems we may be going back again next year!

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## On the Air-2005

Jack Braithwaite (G3PWK)

This year has more 60th anniversaries of events during WWII. The REA Radio Branch has run three special event stations. GB 6 OP Operation PLUNDER the river crossing of the River Rhine. GB 6 OV Operation VARSITY the Airborne crossing of the Rhine and GB 60 VED Victory in Europe Day.

Stations from America to Australia were worked during these events, with many stations wanting to make contact with us.

One station we contacted Ray Wollaston (G4IVB) took part in Operation Plunder. Ray was in 6th A/B Div Signals. Here is what he remembers of the operation:

I will try to recall the events of those days. I was in the 6th Airborne Div Sigs. My jumping efforts finished with a broken ankle and I went to the 6th Airlanding Brigade (Gliders). In those days an Airborne Div consisted of 2 Para Brigades and one Airlanding Brigade with all the other odds and sods needed to run a division.

After the Ardennes affair 6th Airborne withdrew from that theatre to Holland and we overwintered on the Maas. Actual dates are a bit vague but some time before the Rhine crossing the Div returned to the UK to prepare for Operation VARSITY. Correction— not all the lads went back to the UK. As you will be aware the theory was; an airborne op was brief, do the job and get relieved and get out. It never was that easy. Three months in Normandy; dash, at a couple of days' notice by road, up to the Ardennes and now another dash in the advance of the 21st Army Group to the Russians on the Baltic. The heavier gear needed for this job could not go by air so anything extra we had begged, borrowed or indented for disappeared down into Belgium. Lille, Bethune Arras, somewhere round there. I was only concerned with Royal Signals but imagine the same applied to the R.E. etc, they would not be far away. The job was a bit cloak and dagger. All red berets and insignia were out of sight and we just laid low for a few weeks until the call came. When it did come there was the usual excitement but for me pretty boring. I was stuck in a "Gin Palace" (Radio Truck) with a 19 set and wireless silence, small windows in any case very dark outside, and no lights inside. We were in convoy by road towards the Wesel crossing and the order came back OK lads you can get your berets out — moral up a couple of pegs! The crossing itself was an anticlimax for me. Apart from the shock of suddenly, with no warning, finding oneself in the middle of the Rhine seemingly balanced on what looked like a row of canoes in a box on the back of a Morris chassis. I could not see much out of the window so I opened the back door and looked into the abyss of what looked like swirling black oil illuminated by the reflection of tracer from fixed Brens as a guide for the drivers. Yes, there were also nets on both sides but don't know whether these were for the gallant REs who had done the job or the bods crossing. The split second of opening that door was like a photo etched on my mind. Not necessarily unpleasant but one of hundreds stored up during those exiting days. (R. Wollaston)

The next special event stations will commemorate Victory in Japan Day (GBOVJD), and on the 17/18th September (GB 0 JJR) John Rock Room at the RE Museum.

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## New Zealand Visit

Ron White 1st Para Sqn (California USA)

Recently, Irene and I had the pleasure of a visit to New Zealand. We stayed as guests with Angela and Alex McKeen. Alex was a glider pilot who owes the government money for Horsa gliders he left in France (D-Day), Arnhem and other non-friendly places.

Just before we flew, he informed me that the British Ex Airborne were having their annual AGM; to which we were invited. One of the highlights was a visit to a New Zealand Army HQ and museum at Waiouru. We were welcomed to the Marae, a sacred meeting house. The custom is that they sing a song of welcome and the guests sing in reply. It was decided whilst on the coach taking us that we would render our version of 'Tipperary' and I might add a noisy and melodious one. After all of the speeches we rubbed noses and departed to the museum; which was most impressive. Afterwards, we were entertained to lunch in the Sergeants' Mess, an excellent meal served in a very modern mess (far too good for Sergeants). The visit was an outstanding success by any standard with an invitation to return next year when they intend to demonstrate all their goodies (live ammo) - should be fun.



The AGM held at the RSA (Returned Services Association) at Turangi was a very spirited affair with the object of improving all things connected to the Association. On Sunday we marched (with four 'pipers') to the military monument and laid wreaths and a short moving ceremony, followed by lunch and libations.



Former members of the 9th will probably recognise one or two of the faces in the photograph. Summing up, a very successful trip.

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## Invitation

# Lt Col John Rock & Airborne Engineers Display

at the

Corps of Royal Engineers Museum Chatham

This joint venture by

The Airborne Engineers Association & FORTEA

Will be officially opened by Major General Peter Wall CBE

On Saturday 17th September (Arnhem Day) 2005

You are most cordially invited to attend the following programme: -

10:00 hrs: Assemble in front of the RE Museum. Our Piper Frank Menzies Hearn will be in attendance

10:30 hrs: Assemble at the exhibit in the WW2. Section for the 'Opening Ceremony'

11:00 hrs: Coffee will be served in the Museum.

Repair to the King Charles Hotel (Just across the road)

12:00 hrs: Pegasus Bar for Drinks

13:00 hrs: Main Restaurant for Hot Buffet Lunch (Curry) at £8.50 per person

The dress for all Association Members will be: - Red Beret, Blazer or Suit, Medals

Bookings for lunch must be paid for in advance by submitting a short letter with an enclosed cheque, made payable to the "AEA Chatham Branch," the cost will be £8.50 per head. Kindly ensure your name and address is clearly written on the reverse side of your cheque and forward your application to:

Mr. Bob Seaman

 to arrive not later than 17th August 2005

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## Agenda for the Annual General Meeting 22nd October 2005

The agenda of the meeting shall follow the normal format of opening address, reports by officers and the election of committee members. Some interesting points from the agenda are:-

### **Election of officers:**

Office	Person Retiring	Nominee
President	Peter Bates	
Vice President	Bill Rudd	
Chairman	Bunny Brown	Mick Humphries
Membership Secretary	Chris Chambers	Billy Morris

### **Membership Status:**

Following the general discussion and opinions voiced at the 2004 AGM the committee met and debated the wording of Rule 3 of the constitution concerning membership.

The committee have reached their conclusions and shall be proposing an amendment to the constitution

### **AEA Sports Club:**

There shall be a proposal to form a sports club affiliated to the main frame work of the AEA. by Billy Morris. The sports club would be open to any sport or activity that AEA members participate in around the country.

For further information please see the article by Billy published on page 8 of this journal edition.

### **Advisory Committee:**

It was proposed at a committee meeting that the AEA Shop Manager, be elected to attend as a member of the advisory committee. This was accepted unanimously by the committee and shall be put to the floor for their approval.

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## Back to the Rhine and Ardennes 3rd Para Sqn return to Belgium and Germany

Nick Gibson



On the 19th March 2005 Jim Rogers, Ron (Smokey) Gibson and Bob Sullivan, all ex 3rd Para Sqn, returned to visit the sites and memorials of the Ardennes offensive of Dec Jan 44-45 and the later Rhine crossing of 22nd March. Picked up from the Union Jack Club and at Folkestone, the coach trip through the tunnel and on to Namur was long and uneventful. We met our guide Will Cavanaugh, whose mother was born and grew up in the Ardennes during the war, and who spoke excellent French, not that you detect it through the profound Co. Durham accent. Will turned out to be a mine of knowledge, particularly on the Ardennes offensive, as he spent his childhood playing in the foxholes and bunkers left by the American Airborne forces around Bastogne.

The next day we visited the CWGC at Hotton where we found the graves of Lt Teddy Knox (3rd Sqn) and Lt Gordon Wade (591 Antrim Sqn) who were both killed whilst lifting mines from the frozen ground around the town of Marche.

A wreath was laid on behalf of the association by Smokey. The afternoon was taken up with a trip around the town of Bure which saw some quite intense fighting by 2 Para in the early stages. We had with us Maj Jack Watson who led the company in their attempt to clear the town of Germans, and he and Will gave us a quite fascinating insight into the action there. Lunch was provided by the town as well as the usual Vin d'Honneur and Maj Watson received a commemoration from the Mayor. An interesting diversion through the town of Bande followed where we visited the shrine to 32 partisans who were murdered by the retreating Nazis in a cellar. Across the road to this was a small stream leading up to the village across which an improvised bridge was built by 2 Tp 3rd Sqn. Because of the angle of the road to the stream the resulting bridge was angled in the middle giving rise to the name 'Bandy Bridge.' One local man told me that as a child he remembered the bridge being there for some years before being replaced by the stone structure there now.



The next day was taken up in the morning by a tour around the British sector attempting to locate many of the small civilian cemeteries where British servicemen were buried. If a soldier was buried where he fell during the conflict then the CWGC could and did relocate his remains to a CWGC cemetery, however if the soldier was buried in consecrated ground the rules are that he may not be exhumed and must remain. We found several graves of Parachute Regt men and held small services over each of them. Unfortunately we ran out of time and was unable to visit the grave of the only sapper so interred, LCpl Ken Lea, who also was killed lifting mines in the snow. The afternoon was taken up with a visit to Bastogne where we saw the extent of the

defences including those occupied by E Coy 506th PIR (The actual Band of Brothers made famous in the TV series).



The 22nd was taken mostly with the move from the beautiful city of Namur to the Dutch city of Nijmegen. En route we stopped at the site of the Massacre at Malmédy where 80 US servicemen were killed by Joachim Pieper's SS soldiers, there is a rambling site with various stones and a wall of commemoration to the dead soldiers.

The 23rd took us to Hamminkeln in Germany where the bitterest fighting of the Rhine crossing occurred, After a multilingual service in the Church we retired to a reception in the Town Hall presided over by the Mayor and Civil Dignitaries. Considering that this town was

invaded rather than liberated the reception to the veterans was extremely cordial and friendly. The band of the Para Regt was there to entertain the populace and later that day a move to a local riding school saw us plied with food and good German beer to watch the band march and play over an extremely rough field, a very commendable performance. The afternoon took us on a tour around the Drop Zones and a service near the railway station where there is a stone placed to commemorate the action defending the 2 bridges there. There is where the main Engineer participation of the action took place. The sappers were required to prepare both bridges for demolition to prevent a German counterattack, one bridge being blown almost in the teeth of a German attack.

591 (Antrim) Sqn lost some 18 men in this action alone. A fine display by the Red Devils free fall team concluded the day.



The following morning was spent at the Reichswald CWGC cemetery with a service and wreath laying by Jim Rogers. This cemetery holds the remains of most of the airborne engineers who fell in action from the Rhine crossing to the end of the war.

During the afternoon we visited the Hartenstein Museum at Arnhem followed by an all too brief tour to the bridge, accompanied by Alan Brown, curator at the Airborne Forces museum in Aldershot.

And so the return to UK came all too quickly. The trip was organised by Tours International and was extremely well organised with few mishaps and nothing dropped from the schedule. The Hotels were comfortable and the food was excellent. A worthwhile and informative trip - well worth the cost.

## Responding to X9 & Another Venture

John (Tommo) Thompson

That was very kind of you in your article of April 2004 associating me as a Don Quixote. I'm glad it was not Walter Mitty there were a couple of like-minded in the Sq. Yes X9 it is a dream but a perfectly viable commercial venture of which I have done untold hours of research in the British Library, The Records Office Kew, the Maritime Museum, and other libraries in Europe. I also have possibly one of the best researchers and historians in the world working with me. A French guy called Patrick Lize who is now researching 'The Sussex.' She sank off Gibraltar with 4.5 billion pounds worth of gold bullion on board. Unfortunately, it is not my project, a bit too deep for me at present! Surprisingly this is the 400-year of celebration of the date Cervantes wrote Don Quixote. Like Don Quixote I have windmills to fight perseverance and knowledge will prevail in the end.

We are also now looking at a possible \$100,000 grant from a trust fund amongst other sponsorships. Anyway let me tell the story so far. Towards the end of 2003 I was looking at going back to Socotra in the middle of January 2004 in the hope that the monsoons had died sufficiently to do the set out tasks. I had four targets. Once again the SS Oder a German passenger cargo ship that sank in 1897. She was carrying copper ingots and Chinese Porcelain. We thought we'd got close on the last expedition but I realised the fishermen had placed us on the wrong location. They were not sure exactly what the ingots were but they knew they cost a few bob and even on the bottom of the sea they called it their bank. The other three are ancient Portuguese shipwrecks from 1503 and 1601. The 1503 are from the fleet of Vasco de Gama and would be a more historical marine archaeological find than the Mary Rose. Ken Maybee, ex 9 Sq and I were on the dive team who found the first artefact when we were at the Royal Engineers Diving School - but never received the acclaim.

From past experience I had costed the expedition knowing full well that I would ask for a price from the island and being good Arabs they would take a price out of thin air, double it then multiply by ten. True to form they came back with an exorbitant price. Towards the end of December I was becoming very despondent with the negotiations to date but then received an e-mail from an American guy on the island saying he had taken over the running of operations out there and had accepted my price. I could now start organising the final preparations.

This time we were taking a proton magnetometer and underwater metal detectors. The magnetometer works on the earth's polarity and once set up it has the capability of detecting ferrous metals even below six meters of sand or more at depths up to 100 meters. I had arranged to do a two-day course with the company Aquascan of Newport in Wales. The divers, to substantiate that there was some form of metal below the sand would use this equipment to locate it. Or with a bit of luck above the sand! With regards to the weather, Southampton University had put a graduate on the task of researching the Gulf of Aden to assist us. In accordance with his findings mid-January seemed the best time to go on the understanding that if we made a hit we would have further time to consolidate our findings. Financially it had been a close thing. I had to ask Jack my twelve-year-old love child if I could raid the investment I had for him to pay for the magnetometer. He told me to go for it.

As we were to be carrying out surveys I was taking two divers with me. Enough for the task in hand! Craig my lead diver is a first class underwater - video cameraman and photographer. As the date of our flight was getting closer I was getting more and more excited. We were flying via Aden, as I wanted to pay my respects to the lads who died in the Aden and Radfan conflict. About four days before we were due to fly out I caught a bad bout of flu, which knocked me flat. At the same time there was a rumour that three Europeans had been stabbed in Sana'a in the North of Yemen. I got a call from Bruce the other diver saying he did not want to go with the trouble out there, leaving it too late to get another diver. This happened the previous expedition, Jim Queen, ex 9 Sq dropped out the day before we left, because of potential trouble in Yemen. As I was too ill to carry out the magnetometer course, I told Bob Williams the owner of Aquascan that I would pick it up the day before flying out.

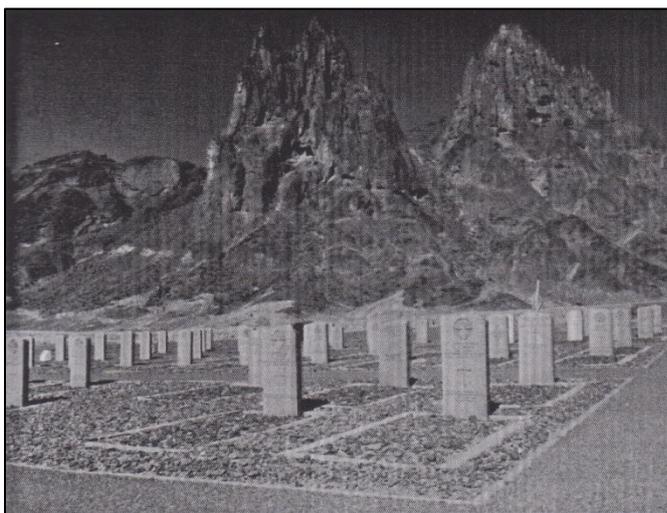
We were flying out with Yemeni Airways who had given us a very good deal on flight costs. Yemen with all its past history of warfare and terrorism is now trying to get back into this century and doing lots for tourists. For instance you can buy a Kalashnikov assault rifle very cheap in the market in Sana'a. I arrived at Heathrow airport

and met Craig. After saying tearful goodbyes to my wife and kids we went through to the departure lounge. This is where my story takes a turn for the better. I mean financially not the wife and kids. It was getting close to departure time when it came over the Tannoy system for us to go to gate 36. As we stood up a voice said "I would wait lads they have got it wrong" the voice came from a very marine looking guy with the beard. I smiled at him and said "You've been here before?" "Approximately fifteen years," he replied. The Tannoy then announced that there had been a mistake and that we should go to gate 22.

We landed at Khormaksar, the old Royal Air Force base, which has changed for the worse. Stepping out of the aircraft the heat and humidity hit me. We walked the short distance into the arrivals lounge and stood around waiting for the bags to arrive. It was mayhem, Arabs pushing and shoving, shouting and yelling. Nothing changes! After a period of time we were called into a small room and told that all our baggage and equipment had gone on to Sana'a. Par for the course in that part of the world! I was more concerned than angry, as the magnetometer is a very expensive item. Once again a voice came from behind! It was the marine guy, he told us that he would sort the baggage out for us. He asked where we were staying that night. At this point I had asked the Yemeni representative what hotel we were staying at. He replied that he had not received any fax from London so he did not have the authority to place us in a hotel. I was going into ballistic mode very quickly when the voice said, "Don't worry you can stay at my flat, I have a spare bed and another mattress." With a smile he introduced himself as Roy Facey the Harbour Development Manager for the Port of Aden. He quickly got us moving through customs where his driver was waiting. It did not take us long to get to his flat, by now I was feeling quite rough with the flu. He dropped his bags and got straight on the phone. Yelling at someone in very fluent Arabic he slammed the phone down and looked at us with a smile. "Your bags are coming down tonight on a military flight" he carried on saying, "I reckon you should get your heads down; my driver will pick your gear up from Khormaksar." Very relieved I got onto my mattress on the floor and slept like a log. Who wants the luxury of the Aden Hotel when you can get service like this!

The following morning I awoke very early and went into the main lounge. Roy was doing what I thought was a form of Chinese exercise. I walked past him into the kitchen and made myself a coffee. He came through and asked me what our plans were for the day. It was Saturday and we could not fly down to the island until Monday morning. I told Roy that it was my intention to visit both the cemeteries, Silent Valley and Mahalla.

He told me his driver was off for the Haj, a Muslim religious festival but he would phone the British diplomatic mission and get a driver from there. Twenty minutes later there was a knock on the door, I opened it to find a smiling Hassan, the driver. He could speak perfect English and was more than pleased to take us wherever we wanted. He suggested we go to Silent Valley first.



During our trip through Aden I recognised various landmarks particularly the old British army officer's quarters going towards Mahalla road where they now keep goats! It hasn't changed much. We arrived at Silent Valley to be met by an old man dressed in military uniform. The young driver told us he was his granddad and had fought with the British in the Arab Federal Army against the 'Red Wolves' of Radfan as they were called. He came to attention and saluted me. I did likewise and his face broke into a big smile and he grabbed my hand and started to shake it as if he would never stop saying "Askari, Askari," Arabic for soldier. The old guy, who was probably two

years younger than me! He took us all over the cemetery showing how well it had been kept. It was his job to take care of both cemeteries and I must admit Silent Valley is immaculate.



Looking through the names I came across Taff Iles and the three TA Airborne Engineers who had died out there. There was also seven Royal Northumberland Fusiliers who had been killed in an ambush in Crater. My brother had been there at the time and had asked me to look them up. I said a silent prayer and remembered Taff Iles who had been in 3 Troop with me in the sixties. However he was with 22 SAS when he died in a helicopter crash.

Wandering back to the gate the driver and his granddad had remained a discreet distance. I smiled and got quietly into the Land Rover. We then headed for Mahalla. This cemetery is much bigger and quite sad because all the wives and children of military persons who served in Aden are buried there, from when we first colonised Aden. I

looked for and found the two SAS guys, Warburton an ex Royal Engineer and the officer Edwards. At the start of the Radfan campaign, Farah Hockley (Fara the Para) had sent in B Company 3 Para. Initially they were going to parachute in. A patrol of SAS had gone ahead to check out the ground but was ambushed. The two previously mentioned were shot and killed, their bodies taken to Taiz where they were beheaded and stuck on poles in the market place. This action caused an international outcry.

Once again I said a silent prayer for both of them and all the others who had died in the fighting.

By now it was close to lunchtime so we headed back to the port to meet Roy. We had lunch at an Arab 'Greasy Joe's' and Roy told us that he had put on a boat to take us on a tour of the port, which is immense with a very large container terminal. He told us that the port had been expanding until the American cruiser the 'Cole' had been attacked with seventeen US sailors killed. The port had got back on its feet when there was a further incident when a French tanker was attacked offshore Aden. The French abandoned the ship and it was Roy who got on board while it burnt out of control. He attached a towrope and then got back onto the tug and towed her out to sea. She had been drifting towards the Port of Mukhalla, which could have caused a major disaster.

The following day, Sunday, Hassan arrived early at the flat. I wanted to go to the Dhalla Road. During the conflict all the British army units would mass at the Dhalla Road to head into the mountains in an enormous snaking column. The road was constantly mined and the columns sniped at on their long and arduous journey into the stark mountains of the Radfan. As we passed through Sheik Othman's village I remembered the hatred that had emanated from the villagers as we passed through in 1964. Sheik Othman was a hot bed of terrorism. Hassan drove us across the sandy plain until I told him to stop. I got out and walked slowly forward looking at the mountains and thinking "What the hell were we doing there?" Apparently the Commander of the Middle East forces had decided to teach the mountain tribesmen a lesson as they had sided with their brothers in North Yemen. At that time our Government knew they were pulling out of Aden. So many young lives lost once again to please someone back in London. I seemed to be saying a lot of prayers. One would hope that one of the guys; wherever they were; would hear me, knowing they will never be forgotten.

The whole weekend soon passed and before we knew we were back at Khormaksar trying to book in for the flight to Socotra! In the departure lounge there were lots of bales of Qat. The Arabs were yelling and screaming pushing the bales forward to be sent down to Socotra. Qat is the leaf of a plant, which just about everyone from the age of 14 years chews. It has a stimulating drug like effect on them but in fact is a disaster. When they are high you can't get them to do anything. They keep chewing and chewing until they have this very large ball of Qat like a balloon in their cheek and their eyes glaze over. We eventually boarded to find the aircraft half empty. One wonders why they were doing all the pushing and shoving.

The flight takes just over an hour and soon we were descending into the new airport on Socotra.

To be continued in the next edition

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“Last of the Winter Wine”  
Bob Dorrell, Alan Brough & Roger Howies  
(301/131 Sqns 1960s-70s) still playing with  
guns!



## Snowdonia Venture – 2005

John Aldridge

This year's Snowdon Geriatric Challenge could possibly be described as the best ever due to some surprisingly kind weather and a particularly entertaining Barbecue, the latter thanks to Martin - the musical half of the Rooney brothers - adding to the good beer, scoff and crack.

Friday 20th May saw about 30 stalwart ex-paratroopers and three very tolerant camp followers invade their favourite hostelry in Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogogoch (is that allowed [or even



possible] in Scrabble?) After having dumped kit in the Nuffield Centre at Indefatigable. A good sociable evening was had by all and most showed some restraint with the liquid stuff in case Poncho had planned a similar ball-breaker to 2003.

Saturday morning dawned bright and sunny, as of course did Tony Manley with his chef's hat on - you all remember Tony's sunny countenance behind the hot plate don't you? After a seriously good breakfast we split into the now usual three groups - the men, the non-combatants and the golfers. It is surprising how the second group has grown in size. Are 9 Squadron men finally deciding they prefer the company of the ladies to some hard exercise? We'll say no more about the golfers. There were 15 in the hill walking party and Poncho was kind to us with the route; although getting up onto the Glydders starts with the customary 2000 ft climb, that is Snowdonia for you and pretty much unavoidable. Naturally we did have a few racing snakes (step forward Frank Burton, Mick Robertson ... and stand up Nat, oh you are) who were determined to go further than the rest of us and still beat us to the pub - but they only succeeded in the former. Some precipitation did cut short our rest at the summit but it stayed mainly dry and clear so we were finally able to enjoy the impressive views of the area. Of course we did have our drop-outs, who



shall remain anonymous, especially the one who was last heard saying "and make sure you put half an aspirin under my tongue" before he lit another fag and was helped back down - only to find he had to walk twice as far (10 miles) around the mountain as he would have had to go over it and reached the pub after the rest of us. Other casualties were Tony Manley who fell on his critical pan-hand and was heard to mutter that anyone who laughed could take over as chef and Dennis Healey who managed to wash a little more than his boots in the river at the end of the tab.

The non-combatants actually walked further than all of us around some of the most scenic parts of Anglesey and came back sunburnt and singing Barney's praises for organising it. Of course he had taken a leaf out of the Ramblers' Association handbook and made sure it finished at a decent pub. Keith King did actually wave his "excused chit" for this one but impressed everyone doing the distance on a bicycle. Louis' chit was a little more suspect - as was his balance on the bicycle.



We all got back to find we had been joined by Willie Lawrence and the lovely Hilda plus an unaccompanied Bert Tate posing as Bobby Watts, whose meal ticket he had blagged. Poncho had been unable to get us into a better-organised venue for the traditional Saturday evening meal this year so it was back to the Tyg Wyn in LlanfairPG. The disappointing delays in serving the food were more than made up for by the live music - a duo (did some of you notice there was a guy in the background?) with an attractive and energetic young lady vocalising, playing the saxophone and the stand-up piano while treating us to what seemed to be rock through the ages.

Fennymore gets the prize here as the only one who managed to get her 'phone number at the end of the evening - though there are some who claim he only got it 'cos he was heard posing as a booking agent.



Sunday again dawned bright and again so did Tony as he uncomplainingly fed the lot of us - apart from Bridget who obviously felt that two shandies entitled her to an extra few hours kip, oh, and young Ty Harrap who had gone from mountain gazelle to dormouse overnight.

**Martin Rooney on guitar, Marilyn O'Donovan lead vocalist, Keith King on accordion & Willie & Hilda Lawrence providing the cabaret**

A few members bailed out that morning claiming work or domestic commitments but we hope it was nothing to do with confidence in Mike Ellery's navigation when news leaked out that he was to lead that

day! The mountain goats had dwindled to nine and the Barn[ey] stormers' numbers were also depleted. Our chosen mountain route was Moel Siabod but again ending up at the Pen Y Gwyrd Hotel rather than doing the traditional walkers circular route. Fennymore joined the goatish trio to race ahead up an unusual approach to the top - but a couple of beers later did admit that was only a navigational error. The other five of us made a steady approach and were so impressed by the scenery we just had to take several breaks on the way up to admire it. Apart from some hail on the top the weather remained fine and we all had a most enjoyable morning before joining the racing snakes in the P-y-G for refreshments. It seemed strange that the bar staff were a bit grumpy about the constant call for more logs for the fire - until we found out that Nat had lit it when they refused! The Non-Cs also had another good day and Barney Rooney himself got the prize for most sun burnt walker of the day.

Sunday evening brought the traditional barbeque in the sailing clubhouse where Marilyn had taken over the bar for us - and Ty Harrap ran it under Bof's supervision, or was it just that Bof never gets far from the bar? Jim Harrower assisted a handicapped Tony with scorching the scoff and the rest of us settled down to be entertained - and entertained we certainly were. Martin Rooney had both his guitar and mandolin and was impressive on

both instruments but it was his range of songs through traditional, modern, comic, which was both varied and extensive - despite more than a slight whiff of Scouse bias! A brilliant evening.

Poncho ran the usual raffle but this time the raffle money was to go to Mike Ellery's attempt on Kilimanjaro. Mike is also using this attempt to fulfil a personal ambition as a way to boost association funds and is seeking sponsorship to that end. From a combination of the raffle money and promised sponsorship our small group raised £500 - which even beats last year's efforts on behalf of the AEA. We all wish Mike both success and satisfaction in his effort.

Although several contribute to the success of the whole Snowdon weekend I feel it mainly hinges on two people, our organiser Chris O'Donovan whose concept it was and Tony Manley who makes it a viable idea to base ourselves in the self-help environment of Indefatigable and still have a slick and smooth running operation. Well-done guys.

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## Weekend Retreat – Snowdonia

Barney Rooney

Prologue: The start of the two days fun was the arrival at Indefatigable on the Friday (for most) when quarters were sorted out and a shake off of journeys dust etc. Then, following Poncho's earlier e-mail instructions all hands applied themselves to the business of refreshments and possibly a drink or two at the Tyg pub in Llanfair gogogoff. A band played and the usual fun with the pleasant task of re-acquaintances ensuing until chucking out time.

Day 1 (early) at Indefatigable Cookhouse: after a good night's kip - as they say in Mick Fisher's area of this green and pleasant land, it was up to a great bacon and eggs breakfast; cooked by our own Tony Manley.



0900 hours (about) a briefing from your very own 'Team Leader' in the cookhouse.

After the breakfast and briefing, it was the mountain men who were first to embark on the coach, for dropping off at their own predetermined spot-with the coach returning for the really hard-core walking/cycling party, (Hereinafter know - as the Groundhogs or Walking Wounded, whichever takes your fancy) under the leadership of yours truly. None of the easy stuff, like vertical and slippery slopes for them, but a grinding slog over moors and coast that would see a darker ratted person in stitches! Oh! And the participants: -

Barney Rooney (Team Leader). Dave Davis (Assistant to the assistant of the team leader), Keith King (Bicycle brigade + entertainments Louie Gallagher (Bicycle brigade), Margaret Davis (Another assistant type person), Martin Rooney (Bicycle brigade - entertainment's), Marilyn O'Donovan (Assistant to the assistant to assist assistants), Mick Fisher (Assistant team leader). Peter Kershaw (Assistant to the assistant team leader) and finally Sue King (Another assistant - without portfolio)

The first tab, the sun came out (it continued warm and sunny all weekend and all caught a touch of sunburnt) when disembarking from the coach, was from the village of Newborough at GR 425657 in a southerly direction around and through the Newborough forest to Llanddwyn bay where the trail led to Llanddwyn Island. When a photo call at the peninsular of the Island was taken the party carried on along the edge of the Malltraeth sands to finish the first day's amble at the Joiners Pub in Malltraeth just in time to watch some of the FA Cup Final.

The coach arrived later and we made our way back to base for a clean-up and later, ate a hearty meal, (in the pub again.)

Day 2 - Malltraeth (GR 406682) to Trecastle (GR 336706) Substitutes (admissible under the Country Code) Delete: Dave & Margaret Davis and Louie Gallagher. Insert: Bridget Robertson, Hilda and Willie Lawrence. Appointments remain as for day one.

Another hearty breakfast from Tony and it was down to business again and the coach was again employed to drop off the 'Mountain Men' and then pick up the 'Groundhogs' for the continuation of the tab from the previous day's finishing point (This will be the general procedure for all walks in the future). Louie left the party due to other commitments at home but his place on the second bike, was taken by 'Our Kid' who would now be accompanying Umbalapa Mugagwa (Keith King)- on the road sections of the tabs.

From Malltraeth the party moved off onto the A4080 and met up at Aberffraw stone bridge for a mid-day break. After the break, the party, apart for the bike brigade, moved of southerly again towards and around the Penrhyn

peninsular following the rugged coastline and was rewarded with some of the islands more spectacular views, including the ancient church of St David. Marilyn decided to pay it a visit and had a good 'pray' for us!

The walk continued up through the gap in the rock defences around a racing circuit and over a stile. Away from the noise of the cars' revs and clatter we again made our way around the coast offering us further spectacular views from the cliff tops to the rocks below and the sea beyond. I spotted an RAF rescue helicopter making its way I thought, to the main land and towards the Snowdonia mountain range. I trusted, quietly, that all was well with the 'Mountain Men.'



We continued on to the bay at Trecastle and met up with the Cycle Brigade for an ice cream on the beach. The weather throughout was super and yours truly accordingly had a paddle in the briny prior to embussing (party members intact) then back to base. I'm pleased to report that all party members said kind things about the tabs (walks, to the civvies among the troops) and all were determined to come back in 2006.

The Barbie - The traditional BBQ was held later in the evening in the centres sailing club, and again was I believe, due to Tony's skill, Poncho's organisation, Jim Harrower's and Peter

Kershaw's cooking assistance, a great success. The musical entertainment was provided by Our Kid (Martin) and Keith, and a good time was had by all.

To Poncho and Marilyn - for I'm told there is no great man without a women behind him., again in my books you score 100% for organising a very enjoyable weekend with Tony Manley giving of his time, once more to feed us all in the highest order of the Sqn.

I for one am looking forward to next year when I will again volunteer to sort out the walks - that is - if you can put up with me!



My very best wishes to Mike Ellery on his great adventure to climb Kilimanjaro (with my GPS - I trust it helps as it was a great comfort to me!!) We look forward to hearing of his success and account of it at a later date. Good luck and God speed.

And good luck to you all will see you in Coventry.

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## Normandy Pilgrimage 2006

John Mason 6th Airborne RE

6 ABRE have been making annual pilgrimages to Normandy since 1948. Inevitably with the passage of time those able to go have become fewer in number so we were very pleased to have the support of members of Chatham branch in 2003 and 2004

This year it was a much quieter event but we were welcomed as warmly as ever, and thanked yet again for giving the Normans their Freedom. We plan to go again in 2006 - D + 62 years. Would you like to join us?

Including travel to and from Normandy the 2006 Pilgrimage will last from 4th to 8th June. It can be expected to include Divisional ceremonies at Ranville and Le Mesnil, together with Royal Engineer ceremonies at Bure sur Dives, Troarn, St Samson, and Grangues.

There will be time to visit Pegasus Museum, Benouville a first class museum dedicated to 6th Airborne Division. You could combine this with a short visit to the Commando museum or the Grand Bunker both at Ouistreham.

Alternatively you could consider visiting the Canadian Centre, Sword Beach, Courseles or the Musee de la Paix, Caen.

We should be pleased to have your company, and so will the Normans (French)

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## Regimental Cap Badges

Brigadier John Hooper

One of the distinctions not mentioned in the article by Fred Gray on Regimental cap badges in the last issue of the journal is that of the Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers (M). The R. Mon. RE (Militia) is the senior regiment in the Reserve Army, senior even to the HAC which annoys them no end. There is no doubt about the seniority as Her Majesty specifically confirmed it many years ago. The R Mon RE (M) is the only regiment to have two Royals in its title. The second Royal arrived in 1896 before which the regiment was The Royal Monmouthshire Engineer Militia.

I had the honour to be joint Honorary Colonel of the Regiment from 1987 to 1996. My very much better half was His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester and this appointment was the only appointment which a member of the Royal Family shared with a commoner. The system has now been changed and HRH is now the Royal Colonel. Colonel Tony George RE (a former CO of the Regiment and a former subaltern in 10 Para) is the Honorary Colonel. I handed over to Col Tony George after the "Double Royal Centenary" celebrations in 1996.

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## Fort Riley (Kansas)

Baz Henderson

In the early 70's, myself and Bill Rudd (along with other former 9 Sqn members) were billeted in Fort Riley, Kansas. This was the home of the U.S. 1st Infantry Division (the Big Red One!)

Fort Riley was the traditional home of the U.S Cavalry. A certain General Custer set out from Fort Riley to RV with some Indians at a place called Wounded Knee on the Little Big Horn. I read somewhere that the General's last words were, "Where the b\*\*\*\*\* hell did all those Indians come from"? His mounted statue overlooks the parade ground at Fort Riley.

Between the end of the Indian wars and the commencement of the First World War, a period of half a century or more, the U.S. Cavalry had very little to do except play polo and carouse. This time became known as, "Living the Life of Riley"!

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## Untold Memories

Roy Arnold (ex 6th Airborne Division)

It was not surprising when I came across a chap that was in my unit during 2nd World War, and after chatting it brought this episode to memory.

As is usual being on the move so often as members of the Royal Engineers Para mob 6th Div, we found ourselves in Ripon, Yorkshire doing an update in bridging, which unfortunately happened to be a Xmas period.

All of a sudden it happened, orders were received the day before Xmas eve, to get packed ready for the 5pm train. Of course rumours were flying. Travelling through the night the train arrived at Dover for connection by boat to the Hook of Holland. It was later revealed that the Germans had broken through at Ardennes. With no boats sailing on Christmas day, my mate Gus suggested we should scout around the town and try our luck for a Xmas dinner. I said that was hardly likely, but Gus reckoned it was better than hanging around the camp. So we set off and roamed all over the place. There was hardly anyone about and finally found ourselves walking along the esplanade.

We suddenly came across a sailor on duty armed with rifle and bayonet; obvious this was a naval depot. Gus went up to him and said, "Hi mate what's the chance of a Christmas dinner?" The sentry just glared at him and told him to \*\*\*\* off. But still Gus kept at him and then the sentry put his free hand behind his back and pressed a button. All too soon a giant of a Petty Officer appeared. He spoke to the sentry and turned to Gus and told him not to joke and be on his way. But Gus went back at him saying, "Look mate, we're all fighting the same war, we're all in this together, so how about it?" With that the P.O. led us down to the mess. Once there, he went to see the cook. He came back, poured 2 large tots of Rum and we started chatting and filled him in on what was taking place. Very soon 2 large plates arrived absolutely filled with Xmas cheer followed by Christmas pudding. The navy certainly knew how to turn it on. It was a marvellous meal and we thanked the P.O. for all his efforts and he in turn wished us the best of luck.

We took off and trotted back to camp with Gus laughing his head off saying, "Who said it can't be done?"

I wonder if that big Petty Officer remembers that little episode?

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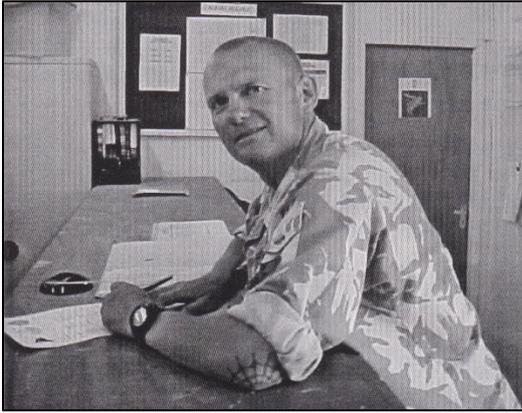
## Modern Youth- Medical Dictionary

Don Newman (from Down Under)

Artery - Study of painting  
Bacteria - Back door of a cafeteria  
Barium - What doctors do when patients die  
Bowel - A letter like A, E, I, O, U  
Caesarean Section - A neighbourhood in Rome  
Cat Scan - Searching for kitty  
Cauterise - Made eye contact with her  
Coma - A punctuation mark  
D & C - Where Washington is  
Dilate - To live longer  
Enema - Not a friend  
Fester - Quicker  
Fibula - A small lie  
Impotent - Distinguished, well known  
Labour Pain - Getting hurt at work  
Medical Staff - Doctors  
Cane Nitrates - Cheaper than day rates  
Node - Was aware of  
Outpatient - A person who has fainted  
Pap Smear - a fatherhood test  
Pelvis - A cousin of Elvis  
Recovery Room - A place to do upholstery  
Rectum - Dang near killed em  
Secretion - Hiding Something  
Seizure - Roman Emperor  
Tablet-A small table  
Terminal Illness - Getting sick at the airport  
Tumour - More than one  
Urine - Opposite of, "you're out"  
Varicose - Nearby  
Vein – Conceited

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## Congratulations



WOII (Bill) Baugh on your appointment as SSM 9 Para Sqn.

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Quite obviously, rank does have certain privileges and it hasn't gone unnoticed how much the OC and the SSM are roughing it in Basra!

The Airborne Engineers Association wish each and every member of 9 Para Sqn a safe and successful tour and a speedy return to their families and friends.

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## Branch News

### Birmingham

Bunny Brown

Greetings from the Birmingham Branch. We are sorry that the Brummie news has not managed to reach the esteemed pages of the Journal for the last couple of issues, our normal scribe keeps popping off to Cyprus. The branch has had a fairly full year so far, with the usual Christmas dinner dance, ably organised and run by Roger Howies. We then move on to St Valentines dinner dance which was held at the Birmingham Nautical Club, and our usual St George's Day Dinner at the Britannia Hotel in Birmingham City Centre. Both of these events were organised by our Chairman; Brian Care, and were well attended and good fun.

The Branch also joined with the Royal Warwicks/Royal Fusiliers Association, at their annual rifle shoot, where we old soldiers are able to get our hot sticky hands on the SA 80, the branch fielded three teams of four and although we were not allowed to sully the RRF/RW competition all made good scores.

Some of the branch also attended the Tower of London Chapel, for the Palm Sunday Service, and afterwards refreshments were served in the Tower Mess. Our latest venture was our annual Clay pigeon shoot and BBQ. This again was very well attended with one member travelling from New Zealand for the event (Bob Gravenor)

Thanks must go to Mike Holdsworth for running the shoot, and to Dave Clarke for the BBQ, not forgetting the ladies who looked after the money.

Looking forward, we have some of the Branch attending the opening of the John Rock display at Chatham, and will also attend the Service at Cromwell Lock on the river Trent, where 10 of 300 Troop 131 Para RE (V) lost their lives on a river exercise 30 years ago.

The event is being organised by 131 Sqn Management and is due to take place on the 2nd October, at Cromwell Lock. 131 will provide a Guard of honour, Bugler and firing party for the rifle salute after the minute's silence. They are also hoping to put in a parachute insertion on to land near to the site, if any of the other Branches would like to attend please contact myself; Bunny Brown or Brian Care, on 0121 553 2492.

Well that's us up to date, look forward to seeing everyone at Coventry.

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## Chatham.

Eric Blenkinsop

We entered the New Year full of hope and with our sights set firmly on the John Rock Airborne Engineer Display on Saturday 17th September.

However our Membership Secretary Steve Collins thought that we should change our focus and promptly enrolled two new branch members, Craig Marshall and Spencer Cardel, both trained fire fighters so it could be said that the branch has received a Fireman's Lift!



Given that there are so many ex Airborne Engineers residing in the Medway Maidstone locality; Steve decided that it would be a good opportunity to meet up with some of them by organising a Spring Social on a Saturday evening - a new venture for the branch.

The social took place at the 221 Sqn RE (TA) drill hall at Fort Clarence Rochester, which proved to be a resounding success.

There were some forty or more people in attendance, some new faces from the locality in Baz Bassett and Tim & Jenny Duffy from Beckenham. However many of the new faces

were members of the Keith King Glee Club with Barney Rooney from Liverpool, Brian Lacey, Maidstone and Louis Gallagher from Somerset who gathered together with Robert (Paddy) Smyth & Grace to celebrate the betrothal of the latter.

A very successful raffle was organised by Steve, Smokey Gibson & Jim Rogers. Bob Woolley won the star prize a mountain bike, but given the dearth of mountains in Essex, it has been rumoured that he is considering a Tour de Snowdonia with Keith King in 2006!

So given the success of the Spring Social a similar style "Round Up" is being planned as a BBQ at Fort Clarence on Saturday 20th August.



Finally for this edition we would wish everyone to know that Jim & Mary Rogers celebrated their Diamond wedding anniversary on Thursday 2nd June. Jim & Mary actually met whilst Jim was packing panniers for the 3d Para Sqn RE operation in Normandy, at Blakehill Camp, Mary being a local lass from the nearby village of Purton. Unfortunately their anniversary was initially marred because Jim chose that moment to be proper poorly but has since recovered well enough to take a trip down memory lane with the family.

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## Suggestions- Shop Stock

Do you have any suggestions for any new range of stock that you would like to see available from the Association Shop? If so, please give Ray a call. Provided the idea is plausible and affordable, we'll endeavour to adjust our stock holdings accordingly.

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## Regimental Concentration at Wyke Regis

LCpl Lee 51 Fd Sqn (Air Assault)

On the 6th June 2005, 23 Engr Regiment Air Assault deployed to Weymouth for a 2-week Regimental Concentration Exercise. The whole of the regiment was present, with the exception of 9 Para Sqn due to their commitments in Iraq, which made a welcome change compared to being spread around the country. The aim of the concentration was to revise, learn and refresh some of the Combat Engineer skills at troop level.

We hit the ground running on the first day with the troop JNCOs teaching MGB, MGOB, APB and HGOB at Wyke Regis Training Area (WRTA). For some people this was just revision on various bridges, but for some of the younger troop members it was a big learning curve. This was followed by the Troop building a 12 bay double storey under the command of SSgt Banham. This type of activity is always a good opportunity for the Troop to work together, and proved very valuable to our training

The next day saw a “change of pace” as we had a morning out completing a 10km coastal tab, a good opportunity to get some sun on our faces with a well-deserved beer at the end of a good session of fitness training.

During our time in Weymouth there was the annual Veterans Day parade. 51 Fd Sqn (Air Assault) Sqn were asked to put on this year’s display for the D Day veterans that meet each year in and around Weymouth. The display consisted of 2 troop in command of Lt Anderson doing a beach assault followed by a section of 3 troop putting in a 4 bay MGB, all of this in front of a lot of media, several thousand members of the public and a few guests such as the Town Mayor and Falklands hero, Simon Weston. The day went very well thanks to the support of Major Harry Reddick (Commandant of WRTA) and his staff. Unfortunately Simon Weston could not be persuaded to enjoy the nighttime delights of Weymouth due to family commitments.



After a particularly enjoyable night of socialising down Weymouth High Street it was time to get our competitive heads on for the inter Sqn competition the next day. Sports included football, volleyball and basketball. All this was followed by a BBQ knocked up by the chefs, which offered an exceptionally large spread.

After our few days of relaxing it was time for the ranges. We completed our LF4 in order to prepare ourselves for the new APWT. Certain aspects of this new test were an improvement, and with correct training and coaching the test was well within every body’s parameters.

The final days were taken up by watermanship down at WRTA, which included getting our hands on the new Air Portable Ferry Bridge (APFB). The kit was very impressive, and after a short while getting used to it, was fairly easy to construct. It certainly offers a capability improvement for 16 Air Assault Brigade, as it will allow all of the brigade’s vehicles (which go up to a weight of 40 tonnes) to be ferried across and open expanse of water. Once again the training offered the JNCOs the opportunity to teach their sections all about watermanship including practical boat handling, rules of the road and so forth. Needless to say it rained during this phase of the training, a stark contrast to the hot weather that had been typical of the rest of the exercise.



It is always good to get the regiment together, not just to work and train, but socially as well. A lot was achieved in the short time at Weymouth and it was something different for the blokes to be the centre of attention during the veteran's day festival. It was good to see some of the vets talking to our young lads, telling them "what it was like in their day." Many thanks must go to WRTA and Major Reddick, without whom the training would not have been possible. The WRTA facility offers some excellent Combat Engineer training, with the added benefit of Weymouth to keep everyone entertained during the evenings.

All in all it was a well-deserved 2 weeks after a busy year, hopefully next time all the squadrons will be there.

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## The way I see it!

X9

Some great articles in the last issue. Each one fills you with pride. Congrats to all those who submitted them.

I guess if officers can wear their cap badges over their left ear, so can other ranks. Has the dress code changed? I will ask Fred Gray; he is a cap badge specialist!

Nice to see Dave Grimbley has lost some weight. He's almost as thick as Bill Rudd is wide!

Coventry reunion. If the devil had cast his net! According to the photo, George Tipping appears to be the only one not 'tipping'!

Good picture of Mick Crampton, looking every bit like Randolph Scott! I know it's not Randolph Scott as he never did a picture shoot with Pinky & Perky!

I see that Tom Downie is still using a 'dark rinse' on his hair. Tell Tommo your secret Tom then he can use some on his upper lip!

It appears to have been an entertaining night. There was Harry Mennie doing his Jerry Lee Lewis bit and I see Tiny Tim was also there, pictured with Mr & Mrs Moorhouse!

'Toots,' Mac & Gobble! The good, the bad & the ugly. I'll leave it to you to figure out who the ugly is!

Tell me Mr. Editor, why were we subjected to a double exposure of Paddy Foulton and his wife? Don't tell me you are selling space in the Journal!

Fred Gray in his article on cap badges mentioned the 'hated staybrite' Anything they introduced that afforded you more NAAFI Club time could hardly be ranked as hated! A very interesting article Fred.

Chris Chambers must have seen you coming Harry and beat a hasty retreat! Can't say I blame him!

Peter Twelftree's article on the Philippines and their cost of living almost made me want to live there. The trouble is, I hear that roses don't grow to well in the Tropics!

I guess the picture of the Edinburgh Branch AGM could be captioned 'A Rock of Jocks'

Lean and Mean. They all look very fit and hardly fall into the category of 'lardies'! Lean they may be but I hope they are not too 'mean' to spend a few quid and join the AEA!

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## Membership Report

Chris Chambers

Since the April Journal, a further 8 members have joined our ranks

Russell (Russ) Raymond	9 Indep Para Sqn RE	1968- 1972
WOII William (Bill) Baugh	5 AB Bde / AB EOD To / 9 Para Son RE	1993-still serving
Robert (Bob) Chatterton	9 Para Sqn RE	1981 - 1985
Clifford (Slash) Sowerby	9 Indeo Para San RE	1955-1958
Edward (Eddy) Carnegie	9 Para San RE	1970 - ?
Paul Murray	9 Indep Para Sqn RE	1974- 1976
Clifford Dare	131 Indep Sqn RE	1996 - still serving
Lee Stevenson	9 Para Sqn RE	1998 - still serving

“Gentlemen, Welcome to the Airborne Engineers Association”

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## Forthcoming Events- Dates for Your Diary

Lt Col John Rock Display (Opening Ceremony, Chatham (RE Museum 1000 hrs) 17th September 2005

Arnhem Weekend & RE Veterans Weekend Chatham

17-19th September 2005

24th September 2005

25th September 2005

21st -23rd October 2005

1 Para Sqn Re-union, Donington.

Double Hills Remembrance, Paulton. (Muster at 1400 hrs)

AGM/Reunion Coventry

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## Association Shop

Ray Coleman

Description	Price	P&P (UK Post Rate)
Association Ties (Pegasus logo)	£13.00	£1.00
Association Blazer Badges	£14.00	£1.00
Association Jumpers (sizes 38-48) Maroon or blue with Pegasus logo embroidered 'Airborne Engineers'	£25.00	£3.10
Association Sweatshirts Maroon or blue logo - Med/Large or X Large	£16.50	£3.10
Association Polo Shirts - Fred Perry Style Maroon or blue logo Medium/Large or X Large	£15.50	£2.50
Association 'T' Shirts - Maroon only - Large or X Large only	£9.00	£1.80
Association Shields	£18.00	£3.30
A Memoir of 9 Para Sqn RE in the Falklands Campaign 1982 by Maj C.M. Davies MBE (now Colonel)	£12.00	£2.10
Anniversary Ties ((Silk with Wings & Pegasus logo)	£15.00	£1.00
Association Cuff Links (slightly smaller than the lapel badge)	£8.50	£1.60
The Shiny 9th (1939-1945) by Patrick Pronk The history of 9 Field Company (Airborne)	£9.00	£1.80
The 9th (1787-1960) by the late Tom Purves (Special offer while stocks last)	£7.00	£3.80
Bow Ties (silk woven with Wings & Pegasus logo)	£9.50	£1.00
Lapel Wings - Blue Enamel S/C	£3.50	£1.00

Would overseas members please send cheques in £ pounds sterling, with a little extra to cover postage, from your local bank or an international money order from the Post Office. Cheques should be made payable to:

"Airborne Engineers Association"

Please note that all shop orders should now be sent to:

Ray Coleman [REDACTED] Tel: [REDACTED]

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

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## Directions to the Royal Court Hotel- AGM/Reunion 2005

From the North & North West: Leave the M6 at junction 3 exiting onto the A444 towards Coventry; follow the dual carriageway with Macro to your left hand side. At the first roundabout turn right and take the first left slip road, sign posted Holbrook's passing through the traffic lights under the bridge. Follow on to the first set of traffic lights go over the first set of traffic lights, and at the T Junction turn left into Parkville Highway. At the second set of traffic lights turn right into Parkgate Road, follow this to the next T Junction and turn left into Bennetts Road South. At third set of traffic lights by the Save Garage, turn right into Sandpits Lane. Follow on to the next T Junction turn right the Hotel is located 100 yards on the right hand side.

From the South (M 40) Leave the M40 at Junction 15 onto the A46 towards Coventry. Then turn left onto the A45 towards Birmingham. Go straight across at the 1st roundabout following the A45 towards Birmingham. Go straight across at a number of traffic lights and straight across at the next roundabout. There are several more sets of traffic lights so continue straight across these remaining on the A45. Take the exit signposted A4114 City Centre, Allesley, Jaguar assembly Plant & Brownhill Green. At the roundabout take the fourth exit signposted City Centre, Allesley, Jaguar Assembly Plant & Brownhill Green. At the next roundabout take the 2nd Exit signposted Browns Lane Plant & Keresley. Follow onto next roundabout straight across (Jaguar on your left hand side). At next roundabout straight across (Garden Centre on your right hand side). Follow onto T Junction; at T Junction turn right Hotel is located 100 yards on your left.