

For All Airborne Sappers - Service Not Self - June 2022, Issue No. 58

## Contents

Contacts .....	3
President's Report.....	4
Chairman's Report .....	5
From the Branches.....	6
299 Association .....	6
Chatham.....	7
Scotland .....	10
Articles .....	12
Stan & Jim .....	12
Shiny Nine Adventures 2021.....	13
Belonging to 2 Troop.....	19
Hardwick Hall Commemoration – 14 <sup>th</sup> May 2022.....	20
75 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of 131 Parachute Engineer Regiment.....	21
Woodbridge Freedom Parade.....	22
The Falklands Islands Campaign Forty Years On.....	30
Falklands 40 Celebrations, Freedom of Woodbridge, Wreath Laying & Falklands 40 March Past ..	33
Falklands 40 Celebrations .....	33
Freedom of Woodbridge.....	35
Aldershot Wreath Laying Service .....	36
Aldershot Celebrations - Falklands 40 March Past .....	41
AEA Old & Bold Adventures in Wales 2022 .....	46
Ordinary General Meeting .....	55
Association Audited Accounts .....	60
Association Charity Commission Return .....	66
Obituaries.....	68
Dennis (Danny) Hart.....	68
Eric Mathews .....	69
Bob Sullivan.....	71
Association Merchandise.....	73

## Contacts

<b>President</b> Lt Col (Retd) John Lee Email: <a href="mailto:jlee664@btinternet.com">jlee664@btinternet.com</a>	<b>Vice President</b> John Brennan
<b>Chairman</b> Steve Wallis Mansfield, Notts NG21 OFF Tel: 01623 460628 <a href="mailto:stephen.wallis57@ntlworld.com">stephen.wallis57@ntlworld.com</a>	<b>Secretary</b> Mike Fuller <a href="mailto:mike.fuller@sim-45.net">mike.fuller@sim-45.net</a>
<b>Treasurer</b> Lt Col (Retd) Dick Brown Dairy Farm Cottage, 2, Deadbrook Lane, Aldershot, GU12 4TY Tel: 01252 661233 Email: <a href="mailto:hartleybrown9@gmail.com">hartleybrown9@gmail.com</a>	<b>Membership Secretary</b> Billy Morris MSM 23, Cambridge Road, Aldershot, GU11 3JZ Tel: 07840 102900 Email: <a href="mailto:bsfm968@gmail.com">bsfm968@gmail.com</a>
<b>Association Shop Manager</b> Mrs Jeannette Rutter Fermain, Hazel Road, Ash Green, Aldershot, GU12 6HR Tel: 01252 326140 Email: <a href="mailto:d_rutter@sky.com">d_rutter@sky.com</a>	<b>Welfare Advisor</b> Mrs Issy Leather Mobile: 07813 859565 Email: <a href="mailto:ileather899@gmail.com">ileather899@gmail.com</a>
<b>Webmaster</b> Dave Pace 169, College Road, Deal, Kent, CT14 6BX Tel: 01304 373933 E-mail: <a href="mailto:contactaeawebmaster@gmail.com">contactaeawebmaster@gmail.com</a>	<b>Association Archivist</b> Nick Gibson
<b>Life Vice Presidents</b> Bob Ferguson, Tom Ormiston, Fred Gray, Ray Coleman, Bob Prosser BEM, Chris Chambers, Dave Rutter	

## President's Report

Welcome to the new Online Journal of the Airborne Engineers Association which I hope you will enjoy and find interesting. Sadly, the printed version was becoming ever more expensive to produce and post. With an online version, there is more flexibility and the ability to place colour images where previously we could not do so. I would like to extend my personal thanks to our webmaster, Dave Pace who has done a sterling job in producing this, and also of course to Dave Rutter who prepared the old hard copy version for 20 years and can now deservedly put his feet up. It is proposed to produce two editions annually but these are of course dependent on you, the members, supplying input so don't be shy to put pen to paper or fingers to your keyboards.

Paradoxically, this will be my first President's Update in the Online Journal and also my last, as many of you know, I will be standing down in October after having been in office for 14 enjoyable years. I would like to thank all the past Chairmen and other members who have assisted me over those years; a lot of water has passed under the bridge, some a little turbulent at times but generally smooth flowing thanks to our combined efforts to make the Association what it is today.

Things are now more or less back to normal with regular Branch meetings and other events being held and the AGM and Gala Dinner in October, courtesy of the Birmingham Branch getting closer. As I write this there are memorial services being held for those who served in the Falklands campaign and of course the Arnhem commemorations in September. I recently attended the Freedom Parade in Woodbridge where 23 Parachute Engineer Regiment exercised their right to march through the town with bayonets fixed and drums beating and there is a report on this elsewhere.

I hope to meet up with as many of you as possible in the forthcoming months and of course at the AGM so until then I wish you all the best.

John Lee

President

---

[Back to Contents](#)

## Chairman's Report

Hi everyone

It's good to see that the Association is getting back into the swing of things post Covid and that the branches have resumed the cycle of regular meetings. 'Teams' and 'Zoom' are fine but nothing beats a face to face meeting.

There have been a number of changes within the Executive Committee which will take place from the AGM in Birmingham in Oct.

Our President Lt Col (Retd) John Lee will be stepping down and will be replaced by Lt Col (Retd) Mervyn (Baz) Bassett BEM. John has been outstanding as the president and has assisted me greatly with his knowledge and experience of the Association and its workings.

Lt Col (Retd) Dick Brown is stepping down as the Association Treasurer and will be replaced by Lt Col (Retd) 'Bobby' Matthews

We have a new National Secretary. Lt Col (Retd) Mike Fuller MBE has taken up the post which has been vacant for the last three years.

Dave Rutter has stepped down as the Journal Editor, the Journal has now gone 'Online' and will be administered by Dave Pace.

Lastly but not least, Jeanette Rutter has decided to stand down as the Shop Manager and we are looking for a volunteer to take over this role.

I am sure that you will all join me in thanking John Lee, Dick Brown and Dave and Jeanette Rutter for their sterling efforts, over many years, on behalf of the Association and in welcoming Baz, Bobby, and Mike to the committee.

It has already been a busy year! We have seen the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Falklands conflict and the numerous gatherings of the Class of 82 culminating in the parade in June in Aldershot. It was particularly pleasing to see that the mainstream media gave a lot of coverage to the anniversary with numerous Documentaries and News items highlighting the achievements of those who helped recover the Islands.

I have now received confirmation that the MOD and 23 Parachute Engineer Regt have agreed to support the refurbishment of the memorial to the 10 reserve Sappers from 131 Para Sqn who died during a night navigation exercise on the River Trent when their assault boat was swept over the weir at Cromwell Lock. It is intended that the work will be complete before the end of August ready for the annual Memorial service on 25<sup>th</sup> Sept.

Once again, this year I have applied for 36 Tickets for the annual Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph in London. I am expecting to hear very shortly whether the application has been successful and will then contact the Branches and the wider AEA to allocate the tickets.

It only leaves me to say that I wish you all well and hope to see you at the AGM and Gala Ball in Birmingham in October. I Have been to the venue, and it is excellent with good accommodation and a huge ballroom.

Stay Safe

Steve Wallis

---

[Back to Contents](#)

## From the Branches

### 299 Association

The following are from the 299 Association Newsletter:

Email received from **Craig Gadd** regarding himself:

After being kindly invited to a right Royal garden tea party at Buckingham Palace through the 'Not Forgotten Association' who's patron is the Princess Royal, he represented the many service personal damaged in the line of duty and he openly, and without prejudice, kindly represents our own 299 Squadron men who are serving today, and also includes 299 Association colleagues affected whilst serving their country, and for this we have to thank him.

**Craig lost a leg on his 3<sup>rd</sup> tour of Afghanistan** and is the currant Vice Chairman of this association and is greatly respected by all, especially those of us who witnessed his personal struggles with his own disabilities. Also as a veteran of this conflict he was asked to represent the damaged veterans from the Iraq wars.

3,500 guests were invited to enjoy a few very posh sandwiches with tea or apple juice, (no alcohol), but plenty of very polite chatter.



#### **Craig talking to Vice Admiral Sir Timothy Laurence (Princess Royal's husband)**

**N/B:** The Not Forgotten Association is a British Armed Forces registered charity for serving & ex-service personnel, including wounded, and operates throughout the UK.

The 'Not Forgotten' helps to combat isolation and loneliness in the armed forces community by providing entertainment, social activities, challenge holidays and respite breaks for all those who are wounded, injured and sick because of their service.



Rich Gill & Mick Sutherland

#### **A Big Bike Ride**

Two 299 Association men set about saving their train fares and biked from Edinburgh to Scarborough and still managed to get two ladies to fly the 131 colours for them (see Facebook), well done lads, good effort.

#### **Chairman's Comments:**

It's a big well done to **Gilly & Mick Sunderland's** bike ride, we have seen our 131 flag and 299 rugby shirts all over the world and at lots of events which you guys get involved in, therefore well done to you all, and if you are going anywhere on holiday, up the mountains or wherever, don't forget who you are, the expats amongst you have no excuse in showing the colours, please get a photo in at every opportunity and let's get them on the Facebook page.

## Chatham

### BRANCH CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

As Chairman I have found this a very difficult period to report on, recovery from COVID has had an impact and it is a struggle to get going again. We met as a Branch for the Christmas function at the King Charles in December however since then it has been difficult to rearrange the social side. We were able at the Christmas dinner to say a branch thank you to Dave and Jeanette Rutter for their tireless work over the many years for the AEA in producing the Journal and of course running the shop.



**The Kershaw Table prior to winning all the raffle prizes**

The branch were also delighted to host our National Chairman Steve and Melanie Wallis at the lunch.



And the winner for the best dressed "Star" was - Tim VdK

The King Charles has had a face lift although accommodating fewer numbers it is still a good venue for events. Our next planned event is the John Rock on the 16<sup>th</sup> of July, we have had to move it from June due to the many other events going on in that period but hope to move it back to June for next year.

I am sure we are like the other branches and struggle with membership. With no one being discharged at Chatham, there is little or no Airborne involvement from the two Regiments, these are 1 RSME and 36 Engr Regt. The RSME is a School and very limited permanent staff. At 36 Engr Regt there is only 20 Fd Sqn and 50 HQ and Sp Sqn, the main focus for Airborne is Woodbridge with very little interaction to the AEA from there.

However, the branch will continue to organise events and fly the flag as best it can, representing the AEA in the South East. We hope to push on with a Curry lunch in the autumn and plan to have our normal Christmas Lunch this year on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December. As always, all are welcome to attend just drop me a line.

Baz Bassett

---

[Back to Contents](#)

## Scotland

By Jim Queen

We had a great turnout for the memorial service for Scotty Wilson in Edinburgh yesterday. As we were waiting for everyone to arrive, Scotty's cousin, Colin Campbell and his wife turned up to lay a wreath and pay their respects, which they do every year, it was lovely meeting them.

After the service we went for a pint in the pub at the end of the road then headed to the Guards Club for a few more beers. Some of us had already left and as the other guys were waiting for a taxi one of Scotty's best pals from Durham also turned up to pay his respects, this guy travels up from Durham every year, sadly some of us didn't get to meet up with him.

Willie Scoular, I also laid one of your flags at the graveside. A great day was had by all so thanks everyone for turning up.





---

[Back to Contents](#)

## Articles

### Stan & Jim

By Stan Swierzbinski

After leaving the sqn in 79, I did a couple of jobs but ended up becoming an HGV driver.

On a trip to France whilst waiting in traffic on the south circular in London I looked across to my right to see a truck from Northampton. Then I clocked the driver it was Jim Harrower talk about shock. So, I pulled up behind and we had a natter. Stuff the traffic but it got busier, he was on his way to Italy. Unfortunately, I had to go to Folkstone first so his ship had sailed by the time I got to Dover.

Some years later I went for an interview at Texas homecare (later became Homebase). Sat nervously waiting for my turn. I was shown into an office and was told the interviewer would be in soon. Behind me the door opened and a voice said you've got the job. It was Jim Harrower!!!

Anyway, after a good natter I started my new job the following week.

---

[Back to Contents](#)

## Shiny Nine Adventures 2021

Winos (9 Sqn Oldies) and Guests 2021

Christmas Dinner, Stayover and Walks/ Cycles from Hartington YHA

Northern Winos: Foggy (Barney Rooney), Compo (Phil Poulton), Shez,(Dave Sheridan), Grimbo (Dave Grimbley), Jimbo (Jim Harrower), Don (Donal Maroney), Jeff (Jeff Langford), Paddy D (Paddy Denning), (Danny - AWOL! – get well soon mate) Fenny (Richard Fleck) and Clog Claughton) – Plus Monty Dog

Southern and Welsh Winos: Dave R (Dave Rutter), Tony M (Tony Manley), Peter B (Peter Bailey) and Frothy Beer

### **Christmas WEEK Celebrations in Hartington YHA 30<sup>th</sup> of Nov to 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec 2021**

#### **Prologue:**

Well Gents another Year gone by in a flash with a great bundle of hikes, walks and trails, organised by Phil Poulton (Compo), and covered by us all, at one meeting or another, due to the Pandemic Corvid or, generally, other personal commitments.

#### **Locations:**

Mostly the tabs were in the Derby Dales encompassing Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Cheshire, Nottinghamshire, Yorkshire, and other areas not remembered by me!

#### **The First Days Out:**

##### **Day One - Tissington Trail and Area - 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

Attendees: Paddy, Grimbo, Pete Bailey and Foggy

#### **The Walk**

Any road up, after an horrendous drive over the lower Pennines in ice, snow and fog (taking Googles route on my phone!) I arrived at HYHA at about 12.30 hrs when Paddy called to say they were at the Car Park at GR SK 149 612 and hang-on for me. Having arrived I met Peter Bailey, Paddy and Dave Grimbley for the Tissington Trail walk for a 13.00hrs start.

After kitting up for a cold day, Paddy taking the lead, headed due south with gusto, towards Heathcote, but after a K all decided it was the wrong way and headed back to the car park to start again!!

Agreeing the trail now we moved north for the two mile easy tab, to Parsley Hay (a level 1100 foot walk, at GR SK 150 616, due to its being once a railway line.)

A NAAFI break taken here we retraced our steps to the junction/fork at GR SK 147 631 and strode forth though railway cuttings and level ground to a cross road (unpaved road) where Pete Bailey noted that it was a right turn here and to ascend its, muddy rise, (1160FT).

Alighting a short time later at the B5014 \*(Thus avoiding the middle of this part of the walk's finger post, eyeballing further muddy terrain, directing to, and around, the Tumuli (1204ft) at GR SK 150 616.) we turned right towards the underside of the old railway bridge to turn into the rough lane leading back to the car park

The metalled road \*– [B5014] was welcome (after miserable weather but good company) and a short, westerly walk to the waiting cars saw off the short first tab (of the mid-week), and drive back to the Hartington YHA, of the Christmas get together.

### **Later that Day!**

Returning from the walk we decided to stop off into the village for an aperitive, in the Devonshire Pub, before an evening meal in the Y with all hands that had landed during the day. At 6.30 pm after a good scan in the hostels restaurant, an impromptu meeting was had, when a few more libations were consumed after the cheese board was passed around. Retiring to our pits about 11 pm we all were gonking by midnight for an early start the next day.

Earlier on having been ejected from Froths billet I found another two bed shelter in the grounds Bunk House when, later on, Jeff arrived to complete the bunkhouse occupation.

### **Day Two – Chatsworth Christmas Walk**

Attendees: Foggy, Compo, Shez & Monty Dog, Grimbo, Jimbo, Don, Jeff, Paddy D, Dave Rutter and Peter B

After a good breaky in the Y we set off in convoy some 15 miles west, for the start at the car park at Baslow (GR SK258 721) where on parking up nobody had the coinage for the parking meter (except Don who travelled there with me in my van!) and had to rely on the attendant to assure of our integrity in this respect!

#### **The Walk**

This was accepted and we, thereupon, set off along the A519 to turn south at the Nether End Hotel, entering the trail towards our first goal of Chatsworth House where we soon found the REVOLVING gate separating the Chatsworth grounds and the Hoi Polloi! (To keep the deer in)

A fine days walk for a couple of Ks south, along the east side of the river Derwent, (Chatsworth Deer Park) which was in full flow, brought us past the great house and over the three arch bridge (GR SK 257 701) to the west side of the stream.

Still going south, along the DVH Way national trail, a number of weirs were tumbling down towards Matlock and beyond to join the Trent at Long Eaton some miles downstream.

Reaching the exit of the park at Beeley Lodge on the B6012 were, after stepping smartly over the road bridge (No footpath!) we turned east up the Beeley Hilltop metaled road, for three hundred feet within half a mile, were entering the rough track (GR SK 271 685) just beyond the namesake farm.

Further climbing, was now the trails advised route, when we reached the summit at 880 feet within a distance of 1 mile through mud and bracken to the junction/summit of the Bunkers Hill for to catch our breath (500 feet in a mile and a half – Phew said Barney, Bailey n Jeff = who made it limping all the way up! what A STAR )

After consolidating a head count, the party moved west, and north, down and around Swiss Cottage and lake where loggers were busy felling the immediate wooded area [Known as the Grotto] as is their want. (SK 264 7060)

The Hunting Tower now came into view where our NAAFI break was instigated on its, expansive, steps where Jimbo quietly got out the Sloe Gin bottle, he'd been carrying, and proceeded to place measured glasses along one of the ten pounder guns barrel (Now ornamental and of previous days conflicts) and passed one each around to us all [yummy]

Calling to order Dave Rutter, being the senior member of the pack, lifted his glass to say " here's to absent friends and to agree on the lasting, and continuing, friendship of us all over many years". Then with a cheer of "hear hear", from us all, the glasses were emptied in one.

### **After the break**

Raining now we were still descending around, and onto the trails south, of Chatsworth House (SK 261 702), we were, once again, down to river level, at 400 feet, where a long northerly walk through picturesque gardens and manicured fields of the Chatsworth estate took us to our finish in Baslow car park.

### **Verdict**

A good steady walk it was with the added bonus of all the gang present (Apart from Dave Knowles, Tony Manley and Froth who decided that a bike adventure along the Tissington trail was their bag!) but, deciding that POST-APERITIFS were back at Hartington, instead of the delights of Baslow, we all set off back for a few libation's there was preferable. (and so it was friends!)

### **Wednesday Evening 1.12.2021**

#### **The Dinner**

A post clean-up of everybody after the days exertions, it was a short walk to the Cotton Pub in the Market Place in Hartington, Buxton where the WINOS Christmas dinner was to be held at 18.30 hours.

All hands, except PB, had on, once again, their Christmas Jumpers when, after the delicious dinner (In my case – Soup, Turkey and Plum Duff) (Other dishes were on the menu) Donal won the best one of the party!

Any road up along with the dinner, past and generally repeated, old derring-do stories were told, by all, and 9 Sqn's tails of yesterday's exploits came in thick and fast. (Some embellished methinks)

#### **Speech by Paddy – Voted Winos 2IC**

Paddy, along with and in cahoots with all, stood up to present a token of the Winos gratitude to Compo of a miniature bottle of wine and a packet of Jelly Babies (Always carried on the walks by Compo!). A cheer went up then in unison when, on receiving the present Compo thanked us all with his tongue in cheek. 😊. Then the real Two Bottles of decent wine were presented much to his delight 😊 and chagrin! Paddy also thanked Barney (Foggy) for his post-walk and forwarded, scribblings about the ups-n-downs of the weekly walks, (Thanks men I thought 😊 nobody read them! :-}

Around 11 pm the party was in full swing but the, steep, hill up to the Y was to come and all hands made the move after the toast to absent friends. Cheers!

The old pit was a welcome site after a thoroughly, good couple of days hiking and partying with old friends. (We particularly welcomed Clog Claughton along this year as he's not been in the rudest of rude lately – Cheers Clog!)

#### **Homeward Bound**

After early breakfast the next day we noticed it had been snowing overnight so all made our way back to our, respective, domiciles in different parts of this great land.

#### **My Thoughts**

Could we decide on the same venue next year, should this COVID virus be defeated by then, or we are to live with it ad infinitum?

## Anyway

Thanks to Compo for his work in organising the Do and the weekly walks throughout the year and thank all the Winos and camp followers for the great, but sometimes, exacting tabs forwarded but always completed.

(Off-piste is acceptable, I think, chaps so long as we get to the right path sometime! 😊)

TaTa for Now and Happy Christmas and New Year to you all

## FOGGY

PS: Back the rite horse in Vegas Don!



Paddy Denning and Phil Poulton



Phil, Danny, Shez, Barney & Paddy



Jimbo, Paddy, Phil, Shez, Barney & Dave K  
(We also walk in Summer! Carsington Water area)



Barney, Jimbo, Dave Knowles, Phil & Paddy  
(A halfway break at Hartington disused signal box)



Dave Knowles, Phil Poulton, Jim Harrower & Paddy Denning



Jeff Langford,  
Phil Poulton,  
Barney Rooney,  
Shez Sheridan,  
Paddy Denning,  
on Helvelen's  
Striding Edge in  
the lake district  
with Red Tarn  
behind and right  
down the valley



Phil Poulton,  
Richard Fleck,  
Shez Sheridan,  
Dave Grimbley,  
Barney Rooney



Barney Rooney,  
Shez Sheridan,  
Paddy Denning,  
Richard Fleck,  
Dave Knowles,  
Phil Poulton,  
Jim Harrower,  
Don Maroney

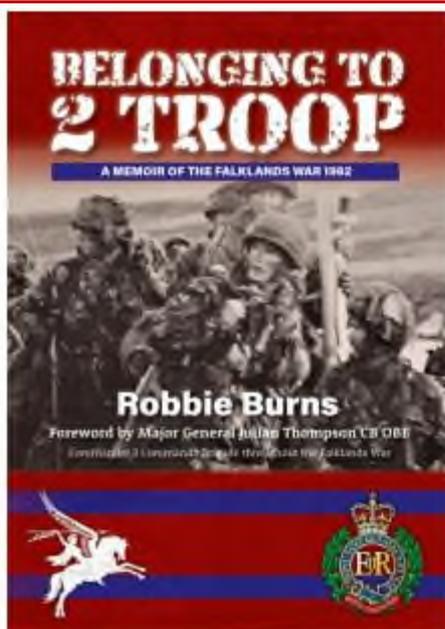


Phil Poulton,  
Dave Knowles,  
Shez Sheridan,  
Jim Harrower,  
Dave Grimbley,  
Paddy Denning

Dave Grimbley,  
Pete Bailey  
Shez Sheridan,  
Dave Rutter,  
Barney Rooney,  
Jeff Langford  
Jim Harrower,  
Froth Beer,  
Clog Claughton,  
Paddy Denning,  
Phil Poulton,  
Tony Manley  
Don Maroney



[Back to Contents](#)



**Title:** Belonging To 2 Troop

**Formats**

Hardback: £14.99

ISBN: 978-1-913012-68-7

Paperback: £9.99

ISBN: 978-1-913012-69-4

Kindle: £5.99

ISBN: 978-1-913012-70-0

**Content**

Genre: Non-fiction

Page Extent: 176pp

**Release Date:** 19th April 2022

Available from

Riverside Publishing Solutions

4 Court Farm Yard, Lower Woodford,

Salisbury, SP4 6NQ

Tel: 01722 783050

contact@riversidepublishingsolutions.com

Also available from Amazon online and  
all good book shops



Riverside Publishing Solutions

# BELONGING TO 2 TROOP

A MEMOIR OF THE FALKLANDS WAR 1982

**Robbie Burns**

This authentic account is a tribute to the courage and resolve with which soldiers and their loved ones confront uncertainty, fear, hardship and the loss of their comrades. Subjected to continual changes of affiliation as the Falklands campaign unfolds, 2 Troop has to create its own identity and sense of belonging drawing on its professional belief, strength of leadership, and intrinsic camaraderie.

This is the story of how they did it, and the contribution they made, in one of the toughest campaigns since World War 2. A 'must read' for aspiring junior commanders and students of the realities of war.

**General Sir Peter Wall**

**GCB, CBE, DL, FREng**

Chief of the General Staff, 2010–2014 and  
formerly 1 Troop Commander, 9 Parachute  
Squadron, Royal Engineers, 1978–1980

Riverside Publishing Solutions

www.riversidepublishingsolutions.com

## Hardwick Hall Commemoration – 14<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Parachute Regiment & Airborne Forces - 1942-1946.

A group of first time visitors from A.E.A Birmingham Branch fortunately decided to attend the Chesterfield P.R.A organised Memorial Service and Airborne Gathering, or we would have missed the experience of a well organised celebration and Service of Remembrance for the first members of our Airborne Forces trained at Hardwick Hall between 1942 and 1946.

The Memorial Stone had recently been moved to a position where those Parading, their families and friends, and those visiting the Hall could witness the Parade march past Saluting Officer, Maj. Gen. Jolliffe and take part in the Service officiated by Padre Rodney Warden. The Sheffield Pipes and Drums played an integral part in the Parade and Service, which was moving, very much highlighted by the tunes played by the Pipe's and Drum's, in remembrance of those who trained at Hardwick Hall, many of whom did not return from conflicts during the last World War and thereafter.

We then made our way to Doe Lea Social Club, "The Stute", to be entertained by a Vera Lynn tribute artist, The Sheffield Pipe's and Drum's, and just a very few good ales. The buffet was spread across many yards of tables, which was very much appreciated by all present.

Well done Chesterfield P.R.A on your understated organisation of the Service and thanks for your hospitality. I'm sure "we will return" next year. Please can we have the same weather which helped to make it a day to remember.



[Back to Contents](#)

## 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of 131 Parachute Engineer Regiment

A report from Monty (Syd) Dane.

131 Airborne Engineer Regiment TA was formed 1<sup>st</sup> April 1947 as part of 16 Airborne Division TA. It had units nationwide and at one time had more than one thousand volunteers and was the biggest regiment in the TA. On the 1<sup>st</sup> April 1978 it became 131 Independent Commando Squadron Royal Engineers (Volunteers), with Troops in Hull (299), Grangemouth (300), Birmingham (301) and Kingsbury (HQ & Sp). In 2006 299 Troop was reformed as 299 Parachute Squadron, part of 23 Parachute Engineer Regiment.

On Saturday 23 April 131 celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the Kingsbury Volunteer Centre (Lonnergan Lines) under the command of Major Olaf S Dudley. 192 former members attended plus the serving members of 131. I was given an efficient and friendly check when I arrived inside the gate at 1300 hours and, like all the visitors, when inside I was given a tee shirt, an emblazoned glass tumbler, a booklet on a short history of 131 and other goodies.

In an extremely friendly way I was conducted to see the weapons display in the drill hall and the hundreds of photographs mounted on panels, then outside to the arctic warfare set up and other displays including using the night vision sights.

Back inside all along one side of the drill hall a finger buffet was laid out with a great variety of food. Plenty of tables and chairs to sit at and eat in comfort and naturally the bar was open!

After speeches and general socialising at 1900 hours a very tasty hog roast was served and later music and singing.

A lot of attendees stayed the night in airborne shelters on camp beds.

Amongst other of my contemporaries I met Ingram Murray, Derek French, John Brennan, Ray Checkley, Paddy Bracken, John Pffifner, John Phillips (Birmingham) and Bud Oldfield (Doncaster)

A very memorable, well done and friendly 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary

---

[Back to Contents](#)

## Woodbridge Freedom Parade

Friday 10<sup>th</sup> June dawned brightly in Woodbridge for 23 Parachute Engineer Regiment to exercise its right to march through the town, with bayonets fixed and drum beating. Drum? Not a spelling mistake, this year despite strenuous efforts to procure a band for the parade none was forthcoming, but at the last minute a Bass Drummer from the RAF became available and he was inserted into the centre of the marching column.

The parade formed up with RHQ leading under the command of the CO, Lt Col Jack Crossley RE, followed by 12 Para HQ & Sp Sqn under Maj Danny Reilly RE, 9 Para Sqn under Maj Rob Sharrock RE with 70 Ghurkha Para Sqn under Maj Oliver Clark RE. Three AEA members, Baz Bassett, Bob Prosser and George represented the 'Old and Bold' and a naval detachment brought up the rear of the parade.

The salute was taken by Maj Gen John Sutherell, CB, OBE DL, one-time Director of Special Forces, from a dais at Market Hill, accompanied by the Mayor of Woodbridge and other dignitaries, watched by a good number of the local residents.

After marching through the town, the parade returned to Market Hill where a short service was conducted by the Regimental Chaplain, the Reverend Trevor Homfray-Cooper CF. Afterwards, a reception was held in the Market Hall where some well-deserved cold and other drinks and snacks were served.

Altogether, an enjoyable event, further cementing the already strong bonds between the Regiment and the town and residents of Woodbridge.

















[Back to Contents](#)

## The Falklands Islands Campaign Forty Years On

In 1982 it was forty years since the epic WWII raids of Bruneval, St Nazaire, Dieppe, Op Freshman, the Cockleshell Heroes and many more. We took our inspiration from the spirit, courage and derring-do of our predecessors and we wondered whether, if our chance came, would we live up such hard-earned reputations? Now, it is forty years since our chance came, in the Falklands Campaign. Looking back, can we hold our heads high among our valiant forebears? Without question, we can.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1982 we were happily parachuting from a balloon in Aldershot, looking forward to going on Easter leave that afternoon. Suddenly, with no warning at all, we were thrust into hectic preparations for a winter war in the South Atlantic.

### **Sgt Ron Wrega MM and Spr Mark Creer-Thornton returning from a minefield recce**



The details of the Campaign, the battles and the heroes have been trawled over many times in the intervening years, so need to repeat them here. What IS worth repeating, however, is that, across the board, Sappers stepped up to the plate and 9 Parachute Squadron was in the vanguard with its own heroes and heroics.

In ferocious weather conditions (and a short break to shoot at attacking aircraft) 1 Troop repaired the Fitzroy Bridge after an Argie demolition, then, built an Air Portable Bridge for a Chinook underslung to where it was needed to cross the Murrell river. 2 Troop deployed ahead of the rest of the Squadron, in support of 2 PARA. The troop landed with 3 PARA and supported that battalion in the approach to Port Stanley and in its attack upon Mount Longdon. One of the best Corporals you would ever wish for, Scott Wilson, was killed on that mountain. Elements of the Troop were among the first British soldiers into Port Stanley, alongside their Airborne brothers in 2 and 3 PARA. (Despite the Media reports, the Royal Marines arrived later!) 3 Troop supported the Scots Guards in their attack on Mt Tumbledown (where LCpl John Pashley was killed and Cpl John Foran earned a well-deserved Military Medal). In addition, the Troop turned its hand to track repair, water point construction, casualty handling and a host of other urgent tasks.

Tragically, 4 Troop (the troop attached from 20 Field Squadron) was bombed on the SIR GALAHAD before it could get fully into its stride. Two men were killed (Cpl Andy McIlvenny and Spr Wayne Tarbard) and eight others were badly wounded. This blow did not prevent the rest of 4 Tp remaining intact and becoming a vital resource for HMS INTREPID in minefield marking and breaching plus other works on West Falkland. Support Troop and Sqn HQ dealt masterfully with the mass casualty situation that occurred on 8<sup>th</sup> June when the GALAHAD was bombed, as well as coping with a host of other tasks in the Brigade Administration Area at Fitzroy. (Our Signallers were the envy of the Brigade with the quality of their comms).

Wherever the Infantry went, The Squadron was with them. Cpl David 'Ginge' Ford and a half section went with a 'covert' patrol to Port Harriett House. Poor infantry tactics led to the patrol being 'busted' and, the hasty withdrawal would have been a shambles if 'Ginge' had not provided the necessary 'grip'. (He earned a Mention in Despatches). Spr Martin Sankey was wounded in this action and, later, lost a leg. Cpl 'Adge' Iles led his section in front of the Scots Guards on Mt Tumbledown to clear a route through a minefield so that the Gurkhas could approach Mt William. (He earned a well-deserved MiD, too).

**LCpl 'Henry' Cooper and Spr Dave Leibrick clearing APers mines**



There were so many more examples of determined, Airborne Sappers 'doing the business' in conditions that would have tested the most determined of men. No other unit equalled the stoicism, courage and will to win of the men of The Squadron. Their WWII predecessors would have been proud of them. Indeed, those who are still alive lose no opportunity to acknowledge the achievements of such 'youngsters.' That is praise indeed.

**Adge Iles and Seth Roose proudly showing off their field shower, built for the Scots Guards and POWs at Ajax Bay**



The end of the fighting did not mean that it was all over for The Squadron. We had to leap into 'Winning the Peace'. The Infantry went home. We stayed to clear mines and booby traps, install generators to give Stanley electricity and we fixed the water pumping station to give Stanley water. We repaired roads, did vital work on making Stanley airport operational, did the dangerous and hugely important work on the finding and marking of minefields and carried out thousands of other vital engineering works to restore Stanley and the outlying settlements to some sort of 'normality'. The 'Peace' was even more demanding than the 'War' and we were relieved when the arrival of fresh RE Squadrons (3 and 50, initially) arrived so that we could climb on St EDMUND to sail North in the middle of July, some six weeks after the victory in a totally unexpected short war. The reputation of the Squadron could not have been higher: it remains so today.

In his book *Across and Angry Sea* (page 4) the SAS Squadron Commander who led in the capture of South Georgia and the very successful Pebble Island raid – along with many other actions in the war – wrote “9 Squadron has form. Airborne Engineers, they are tough, hard, a bit of a handful to command (he can say that again!) but plain inspiring on operations.” Major General Cedric Delves DSO knew what he was talking about! Can there be higher praise?

Squadron!

---

[Back to Contents](#)

## Falklands 40 Celebrations, Freedom of Woodbridge, Wreath Laying & Falklands 40 March Past

By Baz Bassett

### Falklands 40 Celebrations

There have been a number of events throughout the summer celebrating the Falklands 40 across the country. Not just the Military but many towns and villages have joined in and recognised the efforts of the country back in 1982. Along the south coast our Naval support recognised the loss of the ships and sailors at the time as well as the many units involved in the deployment. Sometimes as Sappers we only think of 9 and 59, quietly forgetting the other members of our Corps. Col Chris Davies fights the corner of the other Corps members such as our 4 Troop, HQ 36 Engr Regt, 61 Fd Sp Sqn and 11 Fd Sqn and the smaller specialist dets such as EOD, Posties and STRE personnel who served down there.

I managed to get to a few of the events but I would encourage others if they attended any to get some photos and a description onto the site to widen the involvement and our knowledge of what went on.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of June I was at the Headstone of Andy McIlvenny in Gillingham in Kent. This small gathering is down to a lot of Hard work by Tim van der Kraan and draws together the family and a wide range of individuals. This year CO 1 RSME and SSM 24 Sqn with the REA, members of the Airborne Engineers Association and former members of RHQ 36 Engr Regt 20 Fd Sqn and 61 Fd Sp Sqn attended. It is also one of the stops for the SAMA riders. It has become an annual recognition, focus and a position where we can meet and remember not just Mac but our other fallen comrades. Of course a big shout out to Edwina, Tim's better half, for the tea and Cakes, much appreciated.





## Freedom of Woodbridge

On the Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> June, I attended the freedom of Woodbridge for 23 Parachute Engineer Regiment. The Regiment, having just returned from Macedonia after being involved in a large multi-nation exercise and with 51 Sqn in Jordan, Marched through Woodbridge exercising their right to the Freedom of the town. On show of course were 70 Gurkha Sqn, who join 23 as part of the Regt, interesting to see the various drill movements as the Gurkhas have a slightly different style, some things never change. The Regt had to postpone the planned open day on the 11th due to these commitments, but do plan to fix a future date and I hope we can all make it to the new one.



Freedom of Woodbridge, Myself, George, Bob Prosser and Sparky our Host from the Regt.

## Aldershot Wreath Laying Service

I was back over the M25 and down to Aldershot on the 11<sup>th</sup> of June for our annual Wreath laying service, this was led by our own Col Chris Davies and it has become a central event for all of us who can make the gathering of remembrance. It has naturally grown with the addition of families, friends and Falkland Islanders. A small but poignant service with a toast to absent friends and those that can, retire for a lunch to the local hostelry.

A few then head off on Sunday to meet up with a number of 4 troop for the service at Pangbourne. I have only visited there once, a beautiful design and concept offering solitude to rest and think, but I have never been to a service, I am informed that it is a must, so possibly next year. A small collection of photos of the day with an important one of our "family piper" JJ Ferry playing the lament. Also of Stu Allen who was one of the key players in the construction of the Airborne Shelter, a lovely and detailed piece of carpentry built by the Airborne for the Airborne, well done.











## Aldershot Celebrations - Falklands 40 March Past

We were back the following week in Aldershot on the 18<sup>th</sup> June for the March past for Veterans and it was a great turn out by civilians and Vets. The March past was a bit of a tab but made very enjoyable by the residents who turned out to applaud us. I must admit that back in 1982 it was a bit longer and we did weave through the town a lot more. I think we started in the football stadium and I remember the crowds with ticker tape, flags and bunting and the roads being absolutely packed.

It commenced with a lovely service at the Aldershot cemetery, although the PA system needed the volume turned up a bit. It was held close to the New Wooden shelter built with the enthusiasm and drive of Stu Allen and other volunteers; it was an outstanding piece of workmanship by the team along with the beautifully finished benches located in the vicinity. Well done to Rushmoor council who put on a very good event and made a great effort for all the veterans who attended for the day. It was a great opportunity to see a few faces I / we had not seen for a few years and to get together for this important day. A small serving section from 9 Para Sqn had been allocated as part of the serving contingent to attend and who were swiftly given a variety of stories. However, having spoken to a few at Woodbridge we must not forget what these young men have been out through themselves in the last 10 years.









We all took pride in the memorial service and subsequent parade and it was a great day to meet up again and refresh old friendships. I did not take part in the evening festivities, but looking at the events on social media I

probably would have fallen asleep by 9pm and I would have dreaded what would have occurred to me overnight.

I do hope that we can get together in the future, but we are all well aware that the Aldershot Family is aging and the Sapper Airborne family focus is now Woodbridge. It is an established and battle hardened Regiment, with outstanding soldiers and officers that lead them, and it is moving forward with the rapidly changing Field Army.

I look forward to their open day where we can engage with these young servicemen and allow them to show off their skills, I hope that if you get the chance you can attend and hope to see you there.

Baz Bassett

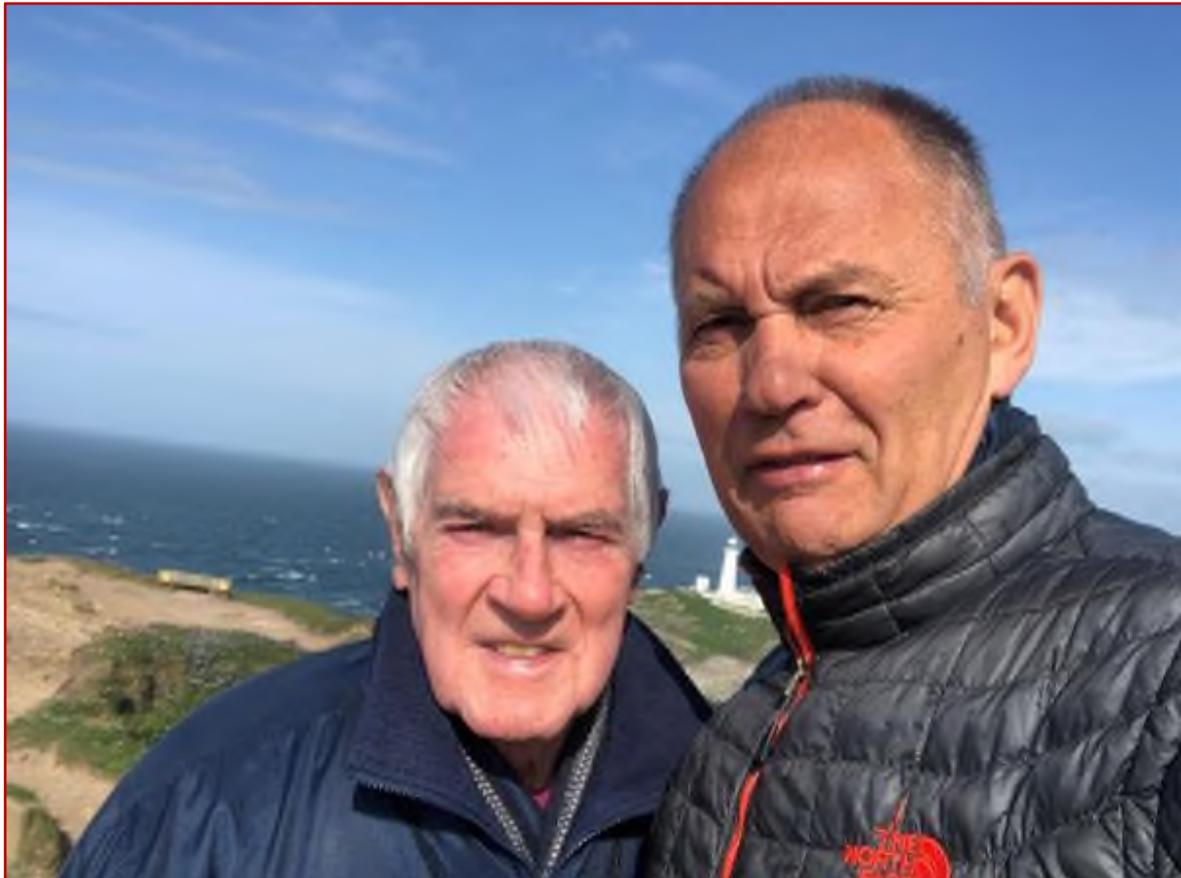
---

[Back to Contents](#)

## AEA Old & Bold Adventures in Wales 2022

After a 2 year layoff and a few failed attempts to reorg there was success at last in May this year, when we were once again able to assemble at HMS Indefatigable for a weekend of jolly fun!

Numbers were down from previous years, which was to be expected after a lay off, and with individuals booking other events. No matter, a hardy bunch of some 17 turned up on Friday the 13th for the weekend. The rece party of Peter and Baz had arrived Thursday to take over accommodation but more importantly to stock the Bar. It was a standard arrival procedure, whoever arrives first gets the top bunk! Mr Denning has a solution to this of course, promptly throwing his mattress to the floor to save negotiating the ladder to the top bunk.



**Peter and Baz on the island for a small stroll.**

It was good to see some old faces on the Fri evening in the Bar and after a few warmers into the bank it was off to the Penhros Hotel for the evening meal and a few more pints of liquid refreshments before returning to the rooms.



**Porky in tears as it was his round next**



**Just enjoying a beer**

This year there was a slight change to the feeding arrangements, although we had a kitchen and rest room with television etc where we could make a brew all feeding was in the Main dining room. Bright and early 0730 the queue was already formed at the hot-plate for a full English / Welsh breakfast and for once we did not have to make up a packed meal, the caterers had provided us with an excellent packed meal. The great news was that Barney Rooney arrived in time to organise the lower walk.



**Some things never change same faces at the front**



**Barney getting the crew ready for his stroll**

The group spilt into two groups, one with Barney and one under the careful watch of Blackie, but as he will say it was like herding cats with at least 6 individuals who all thought they knew the best route! Porky continued to tell us confidently that we had walked this way before!



**Paddy demonstrating again that he has hundreds of pairs of “socks arctic”**

The route was a great challenge having everything which we would want. Weather was ideal varying slightly but not heating up until the end. Nice long approach with an increasing climb as we went up. A few false ridges allowed us to view the hills at the odd break.





**A quick breather, although Dave never seems to need one.**



Still going up but what a view. Once gaining some height we followed the ridge going east and again the weather was kind. But with large windy gusts, clouds and mist coming and going it was typical Welsh weather.

The ridge continued and we found the climb reasonable but at times there were one or two places where if you were a goat you would have had an advantage but all in all a great challenge. We breathed a sigh of relief when we traversed around and could see the ridge dropping away to our left down into the forest and then homeward bound.



**A few places were a little tricky but manageable.**



**Off the top ridge and heading down to the lower ridge, homeward bound, you did need one leg shorter than the other for this part.**



**Eventually off the ridge and before we hit level ground a quick break. This allowed us to hear the woes of Paddy Denning and the untold damage to his unbreakable flask, which worked, although slightly battered” he” continued on like a good Sapper.**



**Another great view as we head home.**

Saturdays are always either a curry or BBQ and this year was a BBQ produced magnificently by the Chefs Tony Manley and Clog Claughton. Clog had made the decision to join us at the last moment so it was great to have him on board, some of you may or may not know but Clog was the Sqn Chef with Tony, prior to transferring. He was heard to say "I hope Tony doesn't bollock me like he used to" A brilliant BBQ to round off the day at the Sail club ensued. With the standard raffle generating £350.00 for our charities and of course many stories elaborated on.



**The dynamic duo producing a great effort for the team**



**Pat and Peter reminiscing and also wondering whose round it was next.**



Not a lot of noise when the BBQ came out but enough food for the whole Sqn not just a handful, but Tony was not going to get caught short.

Sunday was a day of rest, clear up and visits but this year the majority opted to depart by late afternoon. An enjoyable weekend and if you want to join in the fun drop Baz an email [mrb375@gmail.com](mailto:mrb375@gmail.com) and get you name down for next year, which is currently planned to be 12 – 14 May 2023.

---

[Back to Contents](#)

## Ordinary General Meeting

### MINUTES OF AN AIRBORNE ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION NATIONAL ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING HELD by 'ZOOM' ON SATURDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2022

#### **1. Chairman's Welcome and Opening Remarks**

The Chairman opened the meeting at 10:10 hrs and welcomed those present.

There were 7 Members present. Apologies were received from Gil Nichol, Dick Brown and Steve Brown.

The Kohima Epitaph was recited, and a minute's silence was observed in memory of Fallen Comrades.

#### **2. Minutes of the previous AGM and OGM**

The minutes of the last National Meeting held at the Cedar Court Hotel Harrogate on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2021 had been previously circulated. The Chairman asked for a proposer and seconder that the minutes as recorded were a true and accurate record of what had taken place:

**Proposer: John Lee                      Seconder: Dave Rutter                      Carried.**

#### **3. Treasurers Report**

The treasurer's report was presented by The Chairman on behalf of the treasurer

Assets - Cash in Hand £0, Cash at Bank £8883.96, Deposit account £14833.31 giving total assets of £23,717.17

Liabilities – Journal £1471,87

Giving a total working Capital (Assets – Liabilities) of £22,245.30

A copy of the statement of accounts is attached to these minutes.

The Chairman asked for a Proposer and Seconder that the report as presented be accepted.

**Proposer: Steve Morris    Seconder: Mick Leather    Carried.**

#### **4. Shop Report**

On behalf of the Shop Manager Mrs Jeannette Rutter, Dave Rutter presented the shop report:

Dave Rutter reported that shop sale had been extremely slow and that, due to the requirement for minimum orders and low sales, it was no longer economic to stock and sell 9 Sqn Blazer Badges.

The Chairman asked for a Proposer and Seconder that the Shop Report as presented be accepted and to record a vote of thanks to both Dave & Jeannette Rutter.

**Proposer: Dave Pace    Seconder: Billy Morris    Carried.**

#### **5. Journal – Editor's Report**

Dave Rutter informed the meeting that his involvement with the journal has now ended.

Dave Pace reported that he had received several articles for the new on-line journal. Dave also stated that he had posted on the 9 Sqn FB page and also contacted all of the Branch Secretaries asking for articles to be included. It was noted that 23 Parachute Engineer Regiment is currently out in Macedonia.

Work has been undertaken to transpose past journals onto CD so that the Association will have a permanent record. Dave Pace reported that this would take time but that he had a format which he would send out. Additionally Dave has asked for the loan of Journal Copies from 2004 and before as he doesn't have these.

There were no further comments from the floor.

## **6. Membership Report**

The membership report was presented by Billy Morris.

- Total membership since conception 1,535
- Members who have since departed to another DZ in the sky, 459.
- Living membership now stands at 1,075.

There has been one new member this year.

The President gave an update on the membership situation at the Birmingham Branch where several of the Branch members are not members of the Association. The Birmingham Branch is addressing this which may result in the Association gaining a few more members.

Dave Pace informed the meeting that he had amended the database to identify those who were Honorary members. The database now has the facility to 'Flag' someone who is an Honorary member.

The subject of membership from 23 Parachute Engineer Regiment was discussed. The Chairman suggested that this would be a task for the National committee once new members were in place.

The Chairman thanked Billy on behalf of the Association.

## **7. Welfare Liaison Officer's Report**

Mick Leather, on behalf of Issy Leather informed the meeting that there had been no requests for assistance during the Covid Pandemic.

The subject of what support the association could provide was discussed and it was decided that Dave Pace would make an entry on the Association Web Page detailing what assistance the association was able to provide.

## **8. Archivists/Historian Report**

The Association archives are stored at the RE museum at Brompton Barracks. Nick Gibson had not been able to Dial into the meeting and there was no further report.

## **9. Sports Club Report**

Billy Morris advised the meeting that Mick Leather was organising a golf tournament for the 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> May at Morpeth, 18 members will be taking part.

The Walking weekend in Wales will take place over the weekend 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> May

The South Coast Ramblers continue to meet under the guidance of Nat Hague. And the 'Last of the Summer Wine' ramblers continue to meet on a weekly basis in the Peak District.

## **10. Election of Officers**

The following changes to the National committee were discussed and agreed;

- National President – Lt Col (Retd) John Lee to step down at the AGM in October. Lt Col (Retd) Mervyn 'Baz' Bassett has volunteered to take up the post. This was accepted by the meeting and Baz will take post at the next AGM. The Chairman extended thanks to John Lee for his sterling service over many years.
- National Charman – Steve Wallis to remain in post unless decided otherwise by the association.
- National Treasurer – Lt Col (Retd) Dick Brown to step down. Lt Col (Retd) Bob Matthews has volunteered to take up the post. This was accepted by the meeting and Bob will take post at the next AGM. The Chairman extended thanks to Dick Brown for his sterling service over many years.
- National Secretary – Mike Fuller has volunteered to take up the post of National Secretary. There were no other Volunteers and Mike will take post immediately

## **11. Branch Reports**

**11.1 Scotland Branch** – The Branch has resumed regular meetings and has also had an influx of new members led by Mike Ellery and Jim Queen. The Branch was saddened to lose a stalwart member in Ronnie Drummond. Ronnies funeral has taken place and his coffin was attended by members of the AEA and Lothian PRA. On 12<sup>th</sup> June the Branch will attend the Grave of Cpl Scott Wilson who was KIA during the Battle of Mount Longdon during the Falklands conflict.

**11.2 Aldershot Branch** – There have been two meetings in the last two and a half years. The next Branch meeting will be on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May at the Brewers Fair in Aldershot, this is a relatively new venue as Potters is no longer available.

**11.3 Wales and West** – The last meeting was just before Christmas with about 12 attending. John Askey was elected as the Secretary in place of Gerry Bonner who sadly passed away last year. The meeting planned for 16<sup>th</sup> April was cancelled as several key members could not be present. The Branch has identified the Abbey Hotel in Malvern as a venue for the 2023 AGM. The Branch Sept meeting will coincide with Double Hills and Mick Leather is in contact with Peter Yeates.

There were no other branch reports.

Dave Pace raised the subject of Branch articles for the Journal and stated that it would be good to get an article from each branch.

## **12. Propositions**

It was proposed that Lt Col (Retd) Dick Brown be made a Life Vice President in recognition of his service to the Association over many years. The President is in agreement and asked the Chairman to formally request the award by writing to the secretary. It is the intention to present this award to Dick at the AGM in October.

## **13. Remembrance Events and Services**

The following major events will be/were attended by members of our Association this year:

- Falkland Islands.
  - Falklands Memorial Service at Pangbourne Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> June (Ticket only)
  - Falklands Memorial Service at Aldershot 11<sup>th</sup> June at Aldershot Military Cemetery.
  - Falklands 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Sat 18<sup>th</sup> June
- Hardwick Hall Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May
- Double Hills 4<sup>th</sup> Sept.
- Cromwell Lock 25<sup>th</sup> Sept at Cromwell Lock, 25<sup>th</sup> Sept at Zetland Park Grangemouth.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Parachute Squadron Memorial at Donnington. Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> Sept
- National Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> November
- 131 Parachute/Commando Sqn 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2022 at 131 Commando Squadron, Lonergan Lines, Kingsbury

## **14. Any Other Business at National Level**

**14.1 Update on the On-Line Shop** – No further development has taken place since the last meeting. The shop development is such that it is ready to launch subject to acquiring a suitable payment platform. However, the current solution is admin intensive, and Dave Pace is looking at alternatives which he will present to the committee for consideration. It was re-iterated that no changes to the way the shop operates will take place without the full agreement of Dave and Jeanette Rutter.

**14.2 Birmingham Branch Membership** – The President reported that there were members of the Birmingham Branch, who were allowed to vote at meetings, but who were not members of the AEA. This places the branch in conflict with the requirements of the AEA constitution. The Birmingham Branch have been made aware of this and will address it after their upcoming AGM.

**14.3 Public Liability Insurance** – The President informed the meeting that the Association now has Public Liability Insurance. He has written to all branch secretaries to inform them of this and requested that any branch organising an event contact the committee to ensure that their event is covered.

**14.4 Cromwell Lock Memorial** – The Chairman gave an update on the renovation of the memorial at Cromwell lock. Permission has now been obtained from the Canal and Rivers trust for the work to be carried out, however they require a Method Statement and Risk Assessment before the works can be completed. Volunteers from 299 Para Sqn have agreed to carry out the works, but the requirement for the Method Statement and Risk Assessment mean that this now has to be an official undertaking. Discussions are underway to progress this. The Chairman is also to convene a meeting of 299 Association, Birmingham Branch and Scotland Branch to determine responsibility for the annual memorial service and for the regular upkeep of the site.

**14.5 Trustees** – The Chairman raised the subject of Trustees. The association is required to have three trustees who are members of the executive council. With John Lee standing down other members will need to be appointed. It was suggested that the incoming President and Treasurer be approached. The Chairman will look at the Charity Commission requirements.

#### **15. AGM and Gala Ball**

- 2022 AGM will be hosted by the Birmingham Branch, 21st to the 23rd of October 2022. Venue The Holiday Inn (Birmingham Airport) Coventry Road, Elmdon, Solihull. B26 3QW.
- 2023 AGM will be hosted by the Wales and West Branch, dates and location to be confirmed.
- The Scotland Branch have been invited to host the 2024 AGM and Gala Ball
- 299 Association have been invited to host the 225 AGM and Gala Ball

#### **16. National Presidents Points**

The President had no further points to raise

#### **17. National Chairman's Points**

The Chairman stated that the 'Zoom' subscription would be maintained as it is a useful tool for organising meetings at short notice should the need arise and agreed to add the new secretary as an admin on the site

#### **16. Next National Meeting**

The next National meeting will be the AGM on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2022 at the Holiday Inn Birmingham Airport

#### **17. Chairman's Closing Remarks**

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and there being no further business at National Level the meeting was closed at 11:40 Hours.

Steve Wallis  
National Chairman

Copy to:

National Chairman  
Those attending.  
Branches  
File

---

[Back to Contents](#)

**STATEMENT  
OF  
ACCOUNTS**

**For the  
AIRBORNE ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION**

**Dated September 2021**

**Produced by Lt Col R Brown RE (Retd)  
Honorary Treasurer – Airborne Engineers Association  
Registered Charity 1009201**

**Final Accounts and Auditors' Report -  
Audit Board Scheme**

Title Airborne Engineers Association  
 In respect of the Airborne Engineers Association fund  
 for the period from Sep 20 to Sep 21

**Account Holder(s) during the period:**

From Sep 20 To Sep 21 Name R Brown  
 From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

**The Board consisting of:**

President \_\_\_\_\_  
 Member \_\_\_\_\_  
 Member \_\_\_\_\_

Assembled at Dairy Farm Cottage on TBC (date)

By order of AEA Constitution

**Shop Trading Details:**

\*Last 12 months, including current month.

Trading Account details	Percentage profit	
	Current	Previous
Shop	12.70	133.00

**Auditors Comments:**

NTR

**BALANCE SHEET AS AT SEP 21**

Previous Period	FIXED ASSETS	Current Period
(£ )	Investments at Market Value	(£ )
Purchase Cost	Capital Property	Purchase Cost
nil	Total Fixed Assets	nil

**CURRENT ASSETS**

Nil	Cash	Nil
8638.07	Current Account	7717.75
14830.99	Deposit Account	14832.35
2860.09	Shop	2800.50
26329.15	Total Current Assets	25350.60
26329.15	Total Assets	25350.60

**LIABILITIES**

3467.54	Newsletter	2888.97
3467.54	Total Liabilities	2888.97
22861.61	TOTAL ASSETS MINUS LIABILITIES	22461.63

**GENERAL PURPOSE FUND**

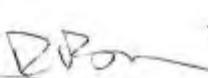
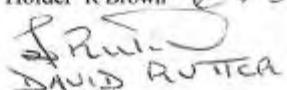
23968.80	Balances as per last Balance Sheet	22861.61
	Add Excess of Income	
1107.19	Deduct Excess of Expenditure	399.98
22861.61	Accumulated General Purpose Fund	22461.63

Date Sep 21

Signature of Account Holder R Brown

Date Sep 21

Signature of Auditor

 21/5/22  
 24/5/22

Statement of Financial Affairs as at Sep 21 (date)

Expenditure/Losses	Current Period	Previous Period	Income/Gains	Current Period	Previous Period
Stationary / Postage		136.84	Interest	1.36	7.42
Wreaths	111.00		Subscriptions	126.00	221.00
Transfer News Letter		400.00	Donations	350.00	343.34
AEA Web Site	112.75	112.76	Shop Profit	208.77	606.30
AEA Aldershot (Error Payment)			Wreaths	50.00	
FI Trust Donation		1000.00	Gala Dinner 2019		238.42
Gala Golf Trophies	100.00	108.36			
Donation	812.36				
Donation AEA West Branch		500.00			
Shop Stock Presentation		165.75			
AEA Aldershot Branch		100.00			
<b>CONTINUATION SHEET</b>			<b>CONTINUATION SHEET</b>		
Total Expenditure	1136.11	2523.71	Total Income	736.13	1416.52
Excess of Income			Excess of Expenditure	399.98	1107.19
Grand Totals	1136.11	2523.71	Grand Totals	1136.11	2523.71

**PERCENTAGE PROFIT CALCULATOR**  
**TRADING ACCOUNT**  
**AEA SHOP FUND:**  
**SEP 21**

**COST OF GOODS SOLD**

First Line total from left-hand page of AB 397	4444.73		
Deduct Expenses charged	_____		
		4444.73	<b>A</b>
Value of Goods disposed of at cost (mess guests, write-offs, etc)	_____		
Add value of closing stock at cost	2800.50		
		2800.50	<b>B</b>
<b>COST OF GOODS SOLD (A minus B)</b>		1644.23	<b>C</b>

**INCOME FROM SALES**

Final total from right hand page of AB 397	4653.50		
Deduct figure at B above	2800.50		
		1853.00	<b>D</b>

**PROFIT**

Income from Sales (Fig D)	1853.00		
Deduct cost of goods sold (Fig C)	1644.23		
		<b>PROFIT</b> 208.77	<b>E</b>
<b>Percentage Profit is therefore</b>	<b><u>E x 100</u></b>		
	<b>C</b>	12.70%	



# Association Charity Commission Return

## Charity Commission Annual Return 2021

AIRBORNE ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION

Charity registration number: 1009201

Most of the information you give in this form will become publicly available on the Register of Charities. Any field that the Charity Commission will not display will be clearly marked.

This document is a record of the information provided in the Annual Return 2021.

### PART A - Charity information

#### Financial period

Financial period start date

01/10/2020

Financial period end date

30/09/2021

#### Income and spending

Income £

£ 737

Spending £

£ 1,137

## Privacy statement

Any information you give us will be held securely and processed only in accordance with the rule on data protection. We will not disclose your personal details to anyone unconnected to the Charity Commission unless:

- you have consented to their release; or
- we are legally obliged to disclose them; or
- we regard disclosure as either (a) necessary so that we can properly carry out our statutory functions or (b) necessary in the public interest.

We may share and disclose information about you with relevant public authorities, regulatory bodies and agencies, outside the Charity Commission but only if:

- we can lawfully do so; and
- we decide that disclosure is necessary for national security, crime detection, prevention, and law enforcement, or other issues in the public interest

Information we collect about you

We will use this information:

To enable us to carry out our statutory functions and duties;

This will include the following actions:

- (a) update, consolidate, and improve the accuracy of our records;
- (b) undertake crime detection and prevention and law enforcement and assist the third parties specified above to investigate or prevent crime and carry out law enforcement;
- (c) data analysis, testing, research, statistical and survey purposes

Information we receive from other sources.

Information we receive from other sources

We may combine this information with information you give to us and information we collect about you.

We may use this information and the combined information for the purposes set out above (depending on the types of information we receive).

We will ensure that any such disclosure and use is proportionate; considers your right to respect for your private life; and is done fairly and lawfully in accordance with the data protection principles of the Data Protection Act.

The Data Protection Act 1998 regulates the use of 'personal data', which is essentially any information, however stored, about identifiable living individuals.

As a 'data controller' under the Act, the Charity Commission must comply with it. Any changes we may make to our privacy statement in the future will be set out in the replacement version of this form.

Please check back frequently to see any updates or changes to our privacy policy.

## Declaration

This annual return has not been submitted and no Declaration has been made

---

[Back to Contents](#)

## Obituaries

### Dennis (Danny) Hart

by Fred Gray



It was with great sadness the Airborne Engineers Association were informed that Dennis (Danny ) Hart had passed away on 26th December 2021. His devoted wife Jill of sixty years, was by his side.

Danny, as he was better known by his mates in 9 Parachute Squadron, joined the Squadron sometime in the late fifties early sixties and very soon became a popular member with his tales of his life in the Merchant Navy as a deckhand, and experiences in Australia as a semi pro boxer. In the Squadron he was known as ‘a Hard Man’ one that had no fear of his contemporaries and one that could look after himself if he ran into any trouble.



He was a member of 1 Troop, who were sent up to the coastal town of Mallaig in Scotland early March 1961 to remove a huge rock face to enable a track to be built to help an isolated Scottish family to be able to visit the town by vehicle instead of a dangerous boat trip around the headland, or by climbing up over the mountain, of which was either dangerous by boat or exhausting by climbing over the mountain. His knowledge of ropes and lashings, gained from his life in the Merchant Navy, was very useful when two Sappers had to be lowered over the rock face in cradles to drill the horizontal bore holes for the explosives and detonators to be inserted into the hole and bring the rockface down.



**L-R Ken Bowen, Danny Hart, Jock Brown, Kevin McGrath, & Barry Henderson.**

On his return to Aldershot five members of the Squadron including Danny were given an order by the Squadron Sergeant Major, to go and collect a piano from a Liverpool TA unit. When the Sergeant Major was asked if transport had been laid on the reply was ‘no’. For the next three days the intrepid paratroopers hitch-hiked to Liverpool and back to Aldershot, often carrying the piano on their shoulders, and nearly losing it when they stopped for a break in the early morning at an all-night night truck stop.

They had put the piano in a car parking space and had gone for a break. Sometime later a police car arrived and were about to take it away when one of the groups dashed outside and saved the day. On their arrival at the barracks a photograph was taken of the group. The Story of the piano remains as one of the best episodes in Squadron folklore!

In 1962 Danny was a member of the very successful Squadron shooting team taking part in the 16 Parachute Brigade competition which included all three battalions of the Parachute Regiment. The squadron team carried off most of the trophies, nine in all. He stayed a member of the team for some years to come.

Danny decided he wanted to do something different and asked for a ‘Shallow Water’ diving course which was granted and resulted in a change of direction in his career. Both shallow and deep sea diving is a very hazardous occupation and, in many cases, detrimental to the diver’s health. Later in his career Danny did

suffer chest and lung difficulties but he was well cared for by his beloved wife Jill, whom had been by his side for over sixty years. He had one daughter, Karen, two sons: David and Timothy, eight grandchildren: Stephen, Johnathan, Carys, Connor, Jasmin, Bradley, Madeline, and Nathen, and three great grandchildren: Eli, Aurea, and Wade, whom he doted on and who gave him a tremendous amount of pleasure throughout their childhood and for the remainder of his life.

Danny and Jill settled in Barry, South Wales after his retirement, and it was there that his health further deteriorated, and he passed away on 26<sup>th</sup> December 2021. A wonderful character, he will be remembered for years to come, especially by those who had the privilege of being called his mate, and there were plenty of them. but also shrinking in numbers with the passing of the years.

Rest in peace Danny, you played a great game.



---

[Back to Contents](#)

## Eric Mathews

**19<sup>th</sup> October 1933 -14<sup>th</sup> April 2022**



Eriann  
Springfield Hill  
Pentre Halkyn  
Flintshire  
CH8 8BA  
  
Tel: 01352781053  
Email: epmatt3@aol.com

Membership Secretary  
Airborne Engineers Association

13.5.2022

### OBITUARY

Eric Mathews – KNOWN AS “Scouse” Mathews

I regret to inform you that my dear husband Eric Passed away 14<sup>th</sup> April 2022 aged 88 years.

Eric was a member of the North West Region and enlisted as a Sapper in Pall Mall, Liverpool on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1951 and demobbed in 1957. Attached is a copy of a record Eric made some years ago of his life as a Sapper.

Eric continued to be a regular subscriber to the Airborne Engineers Journal throughout his life.

Pat Mathews (wife)

NAME: Eric Mathews

RANK: Sapper

KNOWN AS: Scouse Mathews

DOB: 19<sup>th</sup> October 1933

Wife's Name: Pat

## BRIEF SUMMARY OF ERIC'S ARMY SERVICE

- Enlisted in Royal Engineers, Pall Mall, Liverpool on September 21st 1951
- Did basic training at Malvern Links, Worcestershire
- Posted to 49 Railway Training Regiment for trade as Traffic Clerk.
- Posted to Seaforth Barracks, Liverpool to work on receiving Marshall Aid imports from U.S.A, at Liverpool Docks.
- Posted to No. 1 Engineering Stores Department, Stratford-on-Avon. Worked in Railway Section.
- Joined "P" Company at Maida Barracks, Aldershot, and then on to R.A.F. Abingdon for para training. Then posted to Barton Stacey, Andover, for transfer to 1 Troop, 9 Squadron, in Moascar, Egypt in 1952.
- Squadron OCs were Majors Pointer and Edwards.
- Squadron SSMs were Bill Powell and Reg Orton.
- 1 Troop Sergeants were W. Martin, Tubby Lennon and John Elliott.
- Approximately 48-50 descents from Hastings, Vallettas and CI 19 aircraft.
- Took part in exercises in Sinai Desert involving 42 ? Commando and R.A.F. Regiment.
- Night drop in Cyprus and normal sapper work. Came back to Waterloo Barracks, Aldershot.
- Two days off demob in 1956 I was sent back to Cyprus and took part in operations Sparrowhawk and Foxhunter against Eoka at Kyrenia and Nicosia in northern Cyprus. Then came "Musketeer" battle of Port Said along with French Legionnaires.
- Returned to U.K. in Shackletons from Cyprus in time for Christmas and New Year 1956.
- Demobbed in 1957.



---

[Back to Contents](#)

## Bob Sullivan

December 19<sup>th</sup> 1922 – May 23<sup>rd</sup> 2022



Bob Sullivan, who has died aged 99, was parachuted into Normandy on D-Day on a mission to destroy a bridge of great strategic importance; after the war, he had a successful career in industry.

Robert James Sullivan was born at North Woolwich in London on December 19<sup>th</sup> 1922. Always known as Bob, he left school aged 14 and was called up in 1942. He joined the Royal Engineers and, after parachute training, was posted to the 3rd Parachute Squadron RE

In the early hours of June 6<sup>th</sup> 1944 Bob, a sapper serving with 3rd Parachute Squadron Royal Engineers, part of 3rd Parachute Brigade, 6th Airborne Division, was dropped into Normandy.

His troop was tasked with destroying the bridge over the river Dives at Robehomme to prevent German armoured attacks on the landing beaches from the east.

Many paratroopers of the division were scattered over a wide area instead of landing in their planned drop zones, but one sapper and 14 men from B Company 1st Canadian Battalion, who were the supporting force for the sappers, arrived at the bridge within an hour of landing.

The explosives that were needed to blow up the bridge had not arrived so 301b of high explosive was collected from the Gammon bombs that each paratrooper carried. This caused considerable damage to the structure but did not destroy it. At 0600 hours, a much larger party of sappers finally arrived with 2001b of explosive and demolished it.

Bob was so exhausted, having been awake for 36 hours, that he fell asleep in the crater that he had blown at the bridge approach. He was awoken by the sound of gunfire.

As the squadron were about to withdraw from the bridge towards the brigade defensive position at Le Mesnil about three miles away, they came under heavy fire from a German counter-attack. The fields had been flooded by the Germans and the men had to wade down flooded ditches alongside the hedgerows, keeping their heads down until they were out of range of the enemy machine gunners.

To evade the strong enemy presence in the area, they spent the night in the churchyard at Robehomme. There was a danger that they would be fired on by their own troops as they reached their lines so a young officer was sent to Brigade HQ to warn the sentries that the group was trying to return to them.

Moving quietly along country lanes the following night, they were stopped by a German staff car. The occupants took them for Germans and asked for directions. Bob and his group opened fire, dealt with them and moved on.

They reached 3rd Brigade HQ later that night and were ordered to man the frontline slit trenches and relieve men who had been fighting all day.



### **Bob in 1943 after parachute training and posting to 3<sup>rd</sup> Parachute Squadron RE**

Bob returned to England with 6<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division in September 1944 to retrain and refit. On Christmas Eve, however, he was ordered to Belgium and took part in the Battle of the Bulge, the campaign to repel the German offensive in the Ardennes.

In March 1945, he was dropped with the 6th Airborne Division to support the amphibious assault across the Rhine. During this action, while helping to bring in stragglers who had landed wide of their drop zone, he was targeted by a German mortar unit.

Caught in the blast when a bomb dropped close to him, he was hit in the knee by shrapnel, stunned and unable to walk, he managed to drag himself into cover. He was later found by medics; his wound was dressed and the next day he was evacuated to England.

In August 1945 he was discharged from hospital and in December he re-joined the 6th Airborne Division, which had deployed to Palestine on internal security duties. He was demobilised the following year in the rank of sergeant.

Bob joined Taylor Woodrow, the house-building and general construction company, and became a director. Major projects in which he took part included Heathrow Airport and Hinkley Point nuclear power station.

In 1983 he was appointed MBE for services to the construction industry.

Two years later, he retired and settled in a village in Hampshire. He regularly attended the annual Normandy commemoration service at Ranville war cemetery. He also travelled extensively on holiday and to visit friends. In 2018 he entered the Royal Hospital Chelsea as a Pensioner.

Bob Sullivan married first, in 1946, Norah Quinlan. She died in 1965. He married secondly, in 1970, Edna Graham, who also predeceased him. He is survived by three sons and a daughter of his first marriage. Another son predeceased him.



---

[Back to Contents](#)

## Association Merchandise

Shop Manager – Mrs Jeannette Rutter

[AEA Web Site Shop Page](#)

<b>Ties</b>	Price	UK P&P
Association Tie (Pegasus Logo)	£18.00	£1.50
Anniversary Tie (Wings & Pegasus Logo)	£18.00	£1.50
9 Para Sqn Tie (Wings Logo)	£18.00	£1.50
Bow Tie (Wings & Pegasus Logo)	£12.00	£1.50

<b>Badges</b>	Price	UK P&P
Association Blazer Badge	£16.50	£1.50
Lapel Wings (Blue enamel)	£3.50	£1.50

<b>Clothing</b>	Price	UK P&P
Association Sweatshirts (Maroon or Blue with Logo S / M / L / XL)	£17.50	£3.50
Association Sweatshirts 'V' Neck (Maroon or Blue with Logo S / M / L / XL)	£17.50	£3.50
Association Polo Shirts (Maroon/ Blue with Pegasus Logo S/ M / L/XL)	£14.50	£3.50
Association T Shirt (Maroon or Blue with Logo S / M / L / XL)	£9.00	£2.00
Association Shower Proof Fleece (Maroon or Blue with 'Airborne Engineers' Logo M / L / XL)	£29.00	£3.50
Baseball Cap (Blue or Maroon with Pegasus & Wings Crest)	£8.00	£1.50

<b>Miscellaneous</b>	Price	UK P&P
Association Shield	£22.00	£3.50
Association Cuff Links	£10.00	£1.50
Pegasus Tie Clip	£6.00	£1.50
Ladies Long Polyester Scarf (Pegasus Logo)	£14.00	£1.50
Ladies Pegasus Brooch (Gold Coloured)	£3.50	£1.50
Fridge Magnet (Pegasus Logo)	£2.50	£1.00
Paper Weight (Pegasus Logo)	£5.00	£2.00
AEA Car Sticker (Pegasus in RE colours with website address)	£2.00	£0.60
AEA Car Front Grill Pegasus Badge (Airborne Engineers Lettering)	£12.50	£1.50

P&P cost refers to UK locations only. All cheques to be made payable to: "Airborne Engineers Association". Please send Shop orders to: Mrs J.A. Rutter Fermain, Hazel Road, Ash Green, Aldershot, Hants GU12 6HR  
Shop Enquires Tel: 01252 326140 Email [d\\_rutter@sky.com](mailto:d_rutter@sky.com)

[Back to Contents](#)