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This week we spoke to 2Lt James Shenfield and Cfn Connor Shenfield, two brothers who joined REME through different pathways, to discuss life inside the Corps and out.

1. What drew you both to REME?
2Lt James Shenfield: Being part of the DTUS scheme – going to Welbeck Defence sixth form College, then to university for Eng Bsc, then onto Sandhurst for one year – I had a lot of exposure to technical Corps’ and found that I enjoyed spending my time around the REME Officers and therefore the REME has, since the start, felt like home.

Connor Shenfield: Looking at the Army for the first time and examining all the trades, I realised I wanted to be a Craftsman and specialise as a Recovery Mechanic. Also, I had been told by veterans that REME looks after you when you come out; this coupled with the qualifications you can gain during your time in the Corps, which are also transferable to post-military life, made the Corps stand out.

2. Why did you both choose your respective entry paths?
Connor Shenfield: For me the opportunities of being a solider were what really stood out, whether that be the eight trades you can choose from or all the other benefits, like sports and adventure training. Personally I’ve been able to take part in Ex SUPREME GLACIER this November, which gave me the opportunity to experience my first AT in REME.

James Shenfield: I have always been engineering focused, so going to Welbeck and being able to get a degree, while on the scheme just kind of made sense to me. The facilities and other benefits including adventurous training, were highly appealing and as a result I have been able to become a climbing instructor, an opportunity I may not have had at home. But importantly, it gave me a basic military induction which paid dividends at Sandhurst.

3. Do your ranks inspire familial competitiveness?
Connor Shenfield: Short answer, yes. However it’s only in a humorous sense; Connor always suggests I just sit around drinking tea while he’s off doing the real work, although Dad is the worst for instigating it. When I ask Connor to do something at home he often replies “Yes Sir!”, sarcastically.

James Shenfield: Me and Dad love winding James up at home, saying he does no work and goes home early. Although I think it’s a good thing, that competitiveness drives us both on and is always, as James said, done in good humour. I’d like to rein him more but I’m not sure how much I can get away with!

4. What have been the highlights of your careers so far?
James Shenfield: For me commissioning was the biggest thing I’ve done so far, but things like adventurous training, including rock climbing and scuba diving in Malta also stand out. Obviously we are both still in the early stages of our careers but it’s exciting to see all of the opportunities that are ahead of us. Looking back though, even from the beginning, my experience at Sandhurst and the last exercise you do during your time there, are great memories to take forward.

Connor Shenfield: Yes, I’m relatively similar, my graduation from Harrogate was a standout moment, and as I mentioned before Ex SUPREME GLACIER was another highlight. It was also nice to be able to attend James’ commissioning out of Sandhurst and I’m thankful that my Platoon Commander gave me a day release out of Phase One to attend.

5. What are your goals for the future within and outside REME?
Connor Shenfield: I’d like to work my way up to Warrant Officer within the non-commissioned ranks, whilst making the most of the opportunities to travel the world with REME via various postings and AT. I’ve been fortunate already to represent the Army in Judo and I’d like to continue working my way up in the sport, as well as continuing to represent 8 Trg Bn in Football, as I’ve been doing since I began Phase Two training. In civilian life, particularly after my Army days, I want to be able to utilise the skills and trades that I learn during my time with REME to help me in Civvy Street.

James Shenfield: I’ve been posted to 8 PARA Fd Coy where I will have the opportunity to complete P Coy so that is my initial goal, but I’m also looking forward to all my future postings and the opportunities it brings. This all fits into my long term goal of becoming a chartered engineer within the Corps. In sport I’m looking to complete my first ultra-marathon next year alongside continuing to play Rugby, well, once my broken arm is healed anyway!

6. Which aspect of your respective pathways would you highlight to any prospective members of the Corps?
Connor Shenfield: I think, as an officer, having the opportunity to become a chartered engineer is brilliant. REME itself is, in my view, the best Corps for professional development. While soldiers can of course achieve this too, I think taking the Officer pathway makes this a more streamlined process, as long as you’re willing to work hard towards that end goal.
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James is definitely right when he talks about the family feel within the Corps, everyone plays their part and wants to see others progress as well as themselves.

9. What feature of the opposing entry path is most appealing?

CS: I think going to Sandhurst and commissioning is certainly very appealing. I also think that the opportunity to make key decisions, when you know that they may well be important to the success of an operation, is very appealing. Also this extends to the opportunity of testing your leadership skills and looking after the guys around you.

JS: For me, I think REME Soldiers have a lot of fun together, that isn’t to say that we Officers don’t have fun, but as Soldiers they seem to be able to have a laugh and get their hands dirty pulling tanks out the mud and that for me has always been appealing. The jobs that they do are really interesting and exciting but always highly useful during their time in REME and looking ahead to life after REME.

10. Are you happy you made the right choice in joining REME?

JS: Absolutely, I couldn’t see myself in any other Corps or as happy in any other walk of life. REME continues to excite and challenge me and I couldn’t ask for a better Corps, with better opportunities.

CS: Yes I agree, I think James summed it up really well, I’m very happy in REME and am looking forward to all the opportunities and experiences that I’ll get over the coming years.

CS: For me it is coming out with higher level NVQ’s and your respective trade. I think if you take all the opportunities that come your way and are willing to work hard towards those goals, you can come away with a lot.

7. What do you believe is the largest difference between your career paths?

JS: As an officer we’re there to lead and manage the Soldiers to ensure that they’re happy in day to day life and in their careers. We want to see them develop, by taking the Soldier route; I think this takes the responsibility of leadership off your shoulders and allows you to focus solely on the job at hand, particularly at our respective levels early in the process.

CS: Yes, I agree with James, I think it enables you to focus on yourself more, particularly in your early days, which is equally important in making sure you become a valuable member of the Corps.

8. What is your favourite aspect of REME life?

JS: My favourite aspect is definitely the kind of family feel within the Corps and knowing that you can turn in any direction and find someone there to support you within your job. There will always be someone keen to sit down and have a drink together while you chat about whatever help you need.

CS: All of my Section Commanders have been hugely welcoming and have always made themselves available if I’ve needed them.

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CS: All of my Section Commanders have been hugely welcoming and have always made themselves available if I’ve needed them.
When I took command of 8 Training Battalion REME at the end of October last year, one of my first considerations was the tremendous privilege that comes with this role and is shared by all the permanent staff: the Officers and NCOs. That privilege is the responsibility we have of taking Phase 1 recruits – fresh from AFC Harrogate or ATR Pirbright and Winchester – and helping them to become REME Craftsmen, a credit to the Corps and to themselves. We are in many ways shaping the future of our Corps. Young people today are often criticised by some people for their attitude, lifestyle and behaviour. I think that is unfair. When I look at the trainees in this Battalion, I am humbled by the lifestyle choices that they have made in joining the Armed Forces: it will often be difficult and challenging and they may be sent into harm’s way. So, we, the staff owe them our absolute best. The professional and personal satisfaction my team has, throughout the chain of command, in training, guiding, helping and mentoring the soldiers in our care is incredibly rewarding. But we, in the chain of command, gain from this as well. We gain a unique set of professional and personal skills by working with the trainees. These are skills that will hugely benefit the careers of 8 Trg Bn REME staff when they move to their next front line posting. I have asked members of the Battalion staff to write articles explaining their day-to-day tasks, their challenges, opportunities and how they themselves are growing and developing as REME personnel. When you read these articles, I hope you will understand how skills such as leadership, mentoring, communicating and management are improved, honed and perfected at 8 Trg Bn REME.

Lieutenant Michael Franklin – 9 (Gold) Platoon

I command a Platoon within Normandy Company, 8 Training Battalion REME. Normandy Company holds the Vehicle Mechanic trade group, and is made up of Phase 2 (initial trade training), Phase 3 (Class 1 course) and Artificer students. My Platoon consists of more than 100 soldiers, although through the year at least 350 could transit on courses. My role entails a variety of tasks, ranging from administering my team of staff (sergeant and three corporals) to organising/supporting PT and sporting activities. In addition, Platoon Commanders are primed to conduct military and adventure training exercises – with all the planning that entails! Another side of the role is ensuring that any of my soldiers not under training are gainfully employed, to keep them enthused, as well as supporting, managing and visiting soldiers sick at home. Platoon Commanders also assume the role of accused advisors, though thankfully not on too regular a basis, for soldiers who have warranted a hearing with the Officer Commanding or even the Commanding Officer. Occasionally we have to attend Court Martials or assist soldiers at civilian court. I am regularly involved in assisting my soldiers when they are struggling – be that with their academic studies or with personal issues. This can range from welfare to legal and financial concerns. I am fortunate because my role offers a wide range of experiences and presents unprecedented opportunities, unique to MOD Lyneham, for the development of a junior REME officer. It has certainly developed my leadership and management capability, and while having responsibility for a soldier has its challenges – mainly focused on administration, discipline, care and welfare – it also has its rewards. The pride one feels seeing keen young trainees’ progress and then move on to the Field Force as fully trained soldiers is substantial. As with all of the other Platoon Commanders within the unit, I strive daily to make the organisation better. As a cohort, we do this in many ways, including tutoring students who are struggling and taking steps to improve training where possible. I have focused on the development of the Section Commanders, who surprise me daily with their capacity for challenging work. I would recommend this role to anyone who wants to challenge and develop their leadership and management capability. There really is no comparison at the junior officer rank: where else do you get command of more than 100 Craftsmen so early on?

Platoon Sgt Martin Hunt – 8 (Harris) Platoon

As the most experienced senior soldier in 8 Platoon, I am the ‘bridge’ between the Platoon Commander and the rest of the unit. I lead the Platoon in many assigned tasks and take charge in the Platoon Commander’s absence. My key responsibilities include command, administration, mentorship, discipline and personnel-management. This role has strengthened and tested my management and leadership skills. It is a rewarding role and one that lets me play my part in the development and support of the soldiers’ progress through from Phase 1, to successfully completing Phase 2 with a trade. Within Harris Platoon I have three
I had served just over nine years as a Vehicle Mechanic before being assigned to 8 Training Battalion REME as a Section Commander. During this period, I deployed on OP HERRICK 17 attached to the Royal Dragoon Guards and experienced a number of exercises in BATUS, Canada. I volunteered for the role of a Section Commander at 8 Trg Bn REME as I wanted a change from the Field Force and saw this as an ideal opportunity to challenge myself. As a Section Commander here in the Battalion, no two days are the same. Each day brings with it different tasks and challenges. You need the ability to adapt, not only to the task but with your style. For instance, some issues need to be dealt with sensitively and some firmly. Although I have various responsibilities, the one that must always be at the front of your mind is the care and mentorship of the trainees in my section. This ranges from ensuring they know the locations and timings for medical appointments, to liaising with the Training Managers so one can follow the trainees’ progress towards becoming skilled Craftsmen. Maintaining discipline also falls to the Section Commander, so it is vital that you command respect and trust from the trainees. Your personal behaviour must be exemplary, highlighting the need to remain approachable and fair. You are their role model. As a Section Commander, public speaking skills are also put to the test, as regularly it will fall to you to take the lead briefing soldiers and officers. For the first few times it’s a daunting task, especially if it’s something you are not used to. However, you soon become more accustomed to such requirements. I believe the development I have experienced here will greatly benefit me, and the other Section Commanders, when we move to our future posts. For me, the best part of this job is when I have effectively mentored a trainee after listening to their issues. You can see that they are grateful for all you have done in helping them come up with a solution. This builds trust and a deeper understanding that you are there to help and not hinder them in any way, so they can be the best they can be. There is no greater reward than when you solve a problem and by doing so, you visually see the positive impact it has on a trainee. I would highly recommend this job to anyone who wants a new and different challenge and is ready to be taken out of their comfort zone. Daunting as it is, the rewards make it all worth it. When you see a trainee succeed, you take pride in the knowledge that you had a part to play.

My role as a Section Commander within 8 Training Battalion REME is a varied one. On a daily basis I am responsible for the discipline and mentorship of a large number of Phase 2 soldiers on trade training. My daily responsibilities are wide-ranging, covering administration, discipline, mentoring, briefings and data reporting. I also regularly organise and lead sporting events, military or life skills development training and the management of any soldiers within my Platoon who are not under training to keep them engaged and enthused. Most of the Phase 2 soldiers that come to MOD Lyneham are still young and have not yet settled into military life. Therefore, the Section Commanders focus on developing maturity as well as military and trade skills. I have developed and tested my skills in this role by dealing with a variety of issues. Although young soldiers need structure and discipline they also require guidance and support. I believe having a Female Section Commander has a positive impact on young soldiers, by providing a strong female role model. I believe that mentoring and developing trainees is an area in which Section Commanders can really play an important role, helping to ensure the trainees successfully complete Phase 2 training.

As a mother I can often see when young soldiers are struggling. I then try to find ways to get them to open up about their issues and assist them with finding a solution. Having a section of around 30 young trainees, all at different stages, has developed my skills in management and leadership. This role needs people who can quickly adapt to, and handle, a multitude of varied tasks and roles.

My role has certainly given me a lot of experience of personnel management, while honing my skills in prioritising tasks and improving my ability to meet deadlines. It has provided me with a level of responsibility not usually encountered until reaching the rank of sergeant. The role of a Section Commander within the Battalion is a challenging, yet rewarding one: a role demanding commitment.
Officer Commanding, Maj Horn. From here, the two worked tirelessly together; deploying the Company to lead WINTER REPAIR. Maj Horn moved on to pastures new. Since their parting of ways in 2013 and moulding 8 Trg Bn REME as it continues to develop, their shared experience will ultimately position them to thrive, shaping the future of our Corps. A mutual understanding and previous CS Bn REME. In July 2014 he promoted to Warrant Officer Class 1 and was chosen to become the RSM of 1 CS Bn REME, where he served from one that might not have been initially evident came to the fore. It was a day that saw Lt Col Horn reunited with his erstwhile right-hand man; WO1 (RSM) Christopher Kipling. Lt Col Horn and RSM Kipling had the honour of serving together as OC and CSM of 4 Field Company, 1 Close Support Battalion REME, back in 2013. In that instance it had been the then CSM Kipling who got posted in after completing Op HERRICK 17 to support the incumbent Officer Commanding, Maj Horn. From here, the two worked tirelessly together; deploying the Company to lead WINTER REPAIR PROGRAMEM 14, in Battu. Not long after returning from WRP14, Maj Horn moved on to pastures new. Since their parting of ways in 2014, RSM Kipling was selected as the Training Warrant Officer at 1 CS Bn REME. In July 2014 he promoted to Warrant Officer Class 1 and was chosen to become the RSM of 1 CS Bn REME, where he served for a year before being selected to be RSM at 8 Trg Bn REME on 2 Aug 16. Reunited at 8 Trg Bn REME, this command team is now in charge of shaping our Corps’ future. A mutual understanding and previous shared experience will ultimately position them to thrive, shaping and moulding 8 Trg Bn REME as it continues to develop.

From OC + CSM to CO + RSM – Scribe: Lt R. Hayward

On Friday 27 October 2017, Lt Col Matt Horn assumed command of 8 Training Battalion REME. This was a momentous day for many reasons, though one that might not have been initially evident came to the fore. It was a day that saw Lt Col Horn reunited with his erstwhile right-hand man; WO1 (RSM) Christopher Kipling.

Lt Col Horn and RSM Kipling had the honour of serving together as OC and CSM of 4 Field Company, 1 Close Support Battalion REME, back in 2013. In that instance it had been the then CSM Kipling who got posted in after completing Op HERRICK 17 to support the incumbent Officer Commanding, Maj Horn. From here, the two worked tirelessly together; deploying the Company to lead WINTER REPAIR programme 14, in BATU5. Not long after returning from WR14, Maj Horn moved on to pastures new. Since their parting of ways in 2014, RSM Kipling was selected as the Training Warrant Officer at 1 CS Bn REME. In July 2014 he promoted to Warrant Officer Class 1 and was chosen to become the RSM of 1 CS Bn REME, where he served for a year before being selected to be RSM at 8 Trg Bn REME on 2 Aug 16. Reunited at 8 Trg Bn REME, this command team is now in charge of shaping our Corps’ future. A mutual understanding and previous shared experience will ultimately position them to thrive, shaping and moulding 8 Trg Bn REME as it continues to develop.

Former WO1 (ASM) Dick Packer Awarded The Legion d’Honneur – Scribe: Maj (Ret’d) Bill Jordan

On the 70th anniversary of D-Day in June 2014, the French President announced that all British Veterans who fought for the liberation of France during the Second World War – They must have taken part in military operations in France between 1944 and 1945 – would be eligible for the award of Chevalier de l’Ordre National de la Legion d’Honneur. In a ceremony at Bordon, on 5 December 2017, the Honorary French Consul, Captain Francois Jean, carried out the investiture to Former WO1 Richard Packer. Richard, better known as Dick, was unusual in that, having enlisted in June 1938, by the start of the war, he had already completed two years in the Army and continued to serve after the war was over. He volunteered to join the Royal Artillery and trained as a Weapons Artificer, where he was quickly promoted to Lance Bombardier. During WW2 he took part in several battles to ‘free France’ including the Normandy Landings. Dick describes his war time activity in a matter of fact way, but clearly it left a huge impression on his life. In his own words Dick said: As part of 220 Bty 112 Field Regiment RA we landed on Gold Beach five days after D-Day. Following preparations, as part of 43 Wessex Div, we took part in the 26 June attacks on Carpiquet Airfield and villages around Hill 112. These attacks were unsuccessful and, as we had suffered severe casualties, towards the end of June we were withdrawn. Our next action was the 10 July attack direct on Hill 112, supporting 5 Dorsets and 7 Hants. As an Artificer RA I had a motorbike for transport and during the advance on Hill 112 an explosion knocked me off and I was badly burned. After treatment at the Regimental Aid Post I was moved to the Casualty Clearing Station then medically evacuated by aircraft back to the UK and hospitals in Lyneham and then the Derby Royal Infirmary to recover. My war was over.

On recovery, as a regular soldier he returned to service and was re-assigned to 5 Field Regiment RA, returning to France before moving onto Italy and then later, Germany. Now began a long career as both a soldier and civilian with REME, when in accordance with ACI DC 628 of July 1948, Dick was transferred into the fledgling Corps of REME. Upon joining REME he completed his Artificer Weapons course, was promoted to Staff Sergeant and posted into the Field Army. He went on to serve in, Palestine, Italy with ‘L’ Neary Battery, Gibraltar with responsibility for the gun defences, UK with 1 Coast Artillery Workshop and as an Instructor Guns with 4 Battalion REME. Then began what Dick describes as one of the highlights of his career. He was promoted to WO1 (ASM) and posted to 7 Armoured Workshop, where his CO was the legendary late Lt Col Sam Lecky. They formed a firm friendship and for many years they shared Christmas cards. He then returned to SEME once more as an Instructor Guns, before his final posting to Singapore Workshop. He certainly had his share of sunshine postings! This was the end of his travels and he returned once more to Bordon where, on his discharge, he became a Civil Servant Instructor Weapons and spent the next 15 years teaching Gun Fitter students at SEME. He will be a familiar figure to many. At the age of 94, Dick is a long-time member of the Bordon Branch of the Royal British Legion and, along with his companion Meg, he is a regular worshipper at St Mathews Church in Blackmoor. He lives in Whitehill near Bordon and is very well looked after by his sons John and Bill, who visit him regularly.
GRAND MILITARY GOLD CUP DAY

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It has been a busy year. 71 Coy and Forward Repair Team (FRT) 5 have been across the globe experiencing different environments and the specific challenges that they each bring, both in engineering terms and how to operate as soldiers.

The first stop on the FRT 5 worldwide tour was El Centro, California and Gila Bend, Arizona for Ex CRIMSON EAGLE 16. The exercise is conducted once a year, where the AHF’s 653 AAC Sqn deploy to finish training combat ready Apache pilots so that they are ready to join their frontline squadrons. FRT 5 deployed to provide engineering support to this crucial phase of the training. The exercise consisted of dust landings, mountain and limited performance flying and the spectacle that is the Apache live firing.

Not only does all this test the pilots’ flying capabilities and their split-second judgement calls, but it also pushes the Technicians and aircraft to their absolute limits, with the crucible of heat and the never-ending sand that gets everywhere, combined with a fast-paced tempo, adding up to a tough but rewarding exercise. All the hard work paid off, allowing the Technicians to take some well-deserved R&R. Some chose to drive further into Arizona and explore the Grand Canyon and Arizona Meteor Crater, while others chose to drive down to San Diego for the weekend. At the end of the exercise the Technicians sterling efforts to get all the aircraft ready for air transport meant that there was time to take part in an AT package in San Diego, kindly organised by the RAF, who were also exercising in America. The package consisted of sailing on Stars and Stripes, an old 78 foot America’s Cup racing yacht and sea kayaking and snorkelling in some of the area’s outstanding bays. All in all Ex CRIMSON EAGLE became a firm favourite for most.

However deploying straight from Ex CRIMSON EAGLE 16 onto Ex BLACK ALLIGATOR proved to be a significant change of scenery. From air conditioned rooms and swimming pools in El Centro to tin huts in 29 Palms, California certainly made life uncomfortable in the 40°C plus heat. Ex BLACK ALLIGATOR, was first conducted in September 2016 and FRT 5 provided engineering support to 664 Sqn, 4 AAC. The exercise allowed Marine Forces from all over the globe, including the Royal Marines, to come together and train in desert warfare with the Chinook and Apache Forces providing integral support. Once again the hard work paid off and the FRT were given the chance to conduct further AT in San Diego. This package consisted of mountain biking, paddle-boarding, sea kayaking and rock climbing. Yet again the FRT rose to the challenge and produced high levels of availability whilst still managing to enjoy Ex BLACK ALLIGATOR.

There is no rest for the wicked – or 71 Avn Coy – and the remainder of 2016 was spent in numerous ways; skiing on Ex SUPERME GLACIER, running in the victorious 7 Avn Sp Bn Field Gun team, completing various courses including Team Medic, NDT (ET) and MATTS.

With a short break for Christmas and all the festivities that that time of year involves, FRT 5 returned in the New Year and underwent environment specific training to ready them for future maritime commitments. One of these was the Helicopter Underwater Escape Training (HUET) course, more commonly known as the ‘dunker’ course. It consisted of four ‘dunks’ each getting progressively harder with the addition of the ‘helicopter’ being rotated until upside down and the light levels reduced to complete darkness. The HUET course isn’t for the faint of hearted. Initially FRT 5 were the only maritime trained FRT within 7 Avn Sp Bn and bore the brunt of deployments on board both the Royal Navy (RN) and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) vessels. The ship RFA Argus was used in an exercise to allow the AAC pilots to gain their deck landing qualifications. With weather in the North Sea closing in, rumours of a stop in Amsterdam started to circle around the ship and morale was high. Unfortunately, the storm passed quicker than expected and the AAC pilots and their Apaches were able to join the awaiting REME Technicians and Ship’s Company after four days, and before the ship was able to stop in Amsterdam. The work soon began, followed by the flying shortly after; however, the weather delay had resulted in a two day extension to the exercise. Working on-board any ship is very different from the usual environment that the FRT operate in. The first difference from previous exercises was that it was certainly not 40°C plus heat in the North Sea, nor was it dusty. The damp and salty air at sea causes the metal on the aircraft to corrode faster, which results in us having to conduct more regular servicing of the airframe. However, the strict regime on the ship meant that everyone knew what had to be done and by what time, with no room for delays, so the crew

A typical recovery task

AH sat on the dispersal ready for tasking
The final part of this year in the life of FRT 5 involved fulfilling 71 Coy’s readiness commitment to support Special Forces (SF), Littoral Manoeuvre (LitM) and Lead Commando Group (LCG) operations. This involved ensuring that any aircraft that may be required for the SF operations were kept at high rates of availability for whenever they may be needed, with as many hours clear of maintenance to maximise their ability to deliver the effects they are renowned for. In supporting the LitM, the FRT are currently deployed on Ex SWIFT RESPONSE, a multinational exercise taking place in Germany. The exercise includes elements from foreign nations and aims to test the capabilities of 16 Bde in working in conjunction with them. The AHF is deployed to provide close air support to these ground forces with FRT 5 providing some of the engineering support.

Looking forward to what the next year holds in store for the FRT, it is increasingly likely that on top of the usual readiness requirements, that FRT 5 will be heavily involved (Ex SWIFT RESPONSE, CHAMELEON, JOINT WARRIOR, SAIF SAREEA), they will also have to provide aircraft for the new trainee pilots of 653 Sqn. Hopefully this support will include another visit to California for Ex CRIMSON EAGLE and more importantly to Otterburn for Ex LIGHTNING FORCE. 7 Avn Sp Bn has demonstrated this year that nothing flies without VII and FRT 5 is fundamental in ensuring that this statement is true.

72 Aviation Support Company

Scribe: Capt Adam Starr

Ex CRIMSON EAGLE is the main effort to produce new Apache attack helicopter pilots and is a highly anticipated annual exercise for the Apache Helicopter Force. Conversion to Role (CTR) is designed to test and train new pilots in both pilot and co-pilot disciplines for the attack helicopter role in the most realistic operational training available. It features environmental training and live firing for the trainee pilots. To make sure this was possible, along with ground crew, air crew, and support staff, 7 Aviation Support Battalion REME deployed 72 Company to deliver the maintenance output required to make CTR a success.

The location was El Centro in California and Gila Bend in Arizona, providing a hot and dusty climate with temperatures reaching 40 degrees centigrade and above, testing both man and machine. It all began at 0230hrs for the main body from RAF Wattisham, for many their first Ex CRIMSON EAGLE. After a three hour wait we left RAF Brize Norton.

On the other side of the North Atlantic we reached our home for the next two months; the Naval Air Facility El Centro (NAFEC). Not quite what many had in mind for California, but San Diego would make up for this. On arrival there were briefings from HoDs, which consisted primarily of reasons to avoid drawing attention to yourself to the American Police Force and what to expect over the weeks that lay ahead.

Time to settle in and check out the local surroundings were put on hold, as the Company had two maintenance days to produce serviceable aircraft for Monday morning. With 3 Platoon taking the lead, we began the 24-hour shift pattern, with 4 Platoon taking over the next day. This would be the working routine for the next three weeks to produce as many flying hours possible to allow the new Apache pilots to undergo training. By the end of the exercise this was 480 flying hours, complete with 47 maintenance hours to every one hour of flying. Although it wasn’t all work as the camp had great facilities to keep the off-duty Platoon busy and active, with two outdoor swimming pools, running track, free cinema and a kitted-out gym.

Setting up the hanger was completed by the Advance party, who had been in NAFEC for the previous three weeks, which meant that work could begin immediately. For the first three weeks the main effort for the pilots were environmental training. As an aircraft landed a spray team headed out to the pan ready to turn it around for its next sortie. Additionally, night shifts were soon introduced, spreading the workload over the 24-hour period, with many crews working until sunrise to make sure any faults found during the last sorties were rectified before flying began the next morning.

With the work coming in thick and fast, there were plenty of inexperienced Technicians gaining valuable knowledge, applying what they had learnt from Ex LIGHTNING FORCE earlier in the year, whilst even our experienced Technicians’ skills were put to the test. From engine change unit (ECU) replacements to main rotor head changes, the jobs varied, coming in day or night.

In Gila Bend, Arizona, different challenges waited for the aircrew, ground crew and Technicians. Everyone loves a three-hour coach journey in what felt like a sauna, whilst moving across a desert, and that is exactly what occurred whilst moving to Gila Bend Air Force Auxiliary Base. Here the three-week period of live firing took place, in
what could quite possibly be, the hottest place known to mankind. Just like a typical American film, we were put up in American style motels with our very own resident Sonoran Desert toad. The food was produced by Army Chefs, who had to deal with not only the heat from the kitchen but also the extreme temperatures outside. Every meal was delivered in a friendly positive manner, despite the long hours.

With live firing being the main focus, the workload did not change accordingly. Major maintenance packages were sent back to NAFEC for the Rear Party to undertake and turn around, ready to fly back to Gila Bend Air Force Base. Meanwhile at Gila Bend, everything was going smoothly until a pan-pan-pan call was made in the last week of flying, caused by a hydraulic fault. This posed an engineering challenge to turn the aircraft around and recover it to NAFEC in time to return back to the UK. A small team were left behind to fix the problem, which included four hydraulic servo changes, an APU change and flight testing to follow.

Not all challenges were faced at work. An adventure training package was put together by 653 AAC and provided its own trials and tribulations. Whether it was height, physical stamina or mental focus, they were all tested over the four days. Conducted in San Diego, groups from all departments had the opportunity to a welcome break with a coastal breeze and 10 degrees centigrade drop in temperature. Featuring rock climbing and a five-peak challenge covering 12 miles in San Diego’s National Park, which was, by no means, a walk in the park. Then a bike ride which started leisurely enough taking in the views around the coast, soon turned into, what felt like, a stage of the Tour de France. Although tough at times for varying reasons, everyone got out what they put into it and, on return to NAFEC felt motivated to finish the final stages of the exercise.

With only two weeks left of flying there would be another test and more training in the form of Very High Readiness (VHR). The aim is to replicate the events on operations where the pilots, ground crew and REME Avionic Technicians receive the call ‘VHR’ shouted up and down the hanger. This prompted all personnel involved in an aircraft lift to grab their kit and run on to the pan as quickly as possible, nobody had ever seen ‘greenies’ move so quickly. As the time to come home came closer, the aircraft were being prepared for transportation right up until the closing days, meaning no break for REME, and with a hanger to close, kit to send home, it was demanding work until the end.

With all trainee pilots passing the two-month CTR course there was a pass out parade to celebrate. A great opportunity for support staff to go along and enjoy a hard earned break and see what had been achieved through their efforts. Held on the USS Midway, in San Diego Harbour, the pilots received their awards, drank what looked like an unpleasant shot, followed by a visit to the Kansas City Barbeque, where a scene from Top Gun was filmed. Everyone made it back the next day with no passports missing, which was a pleasant surprise.

Army Motorcycle Championships

Members of the Battalion took part in the Army Motorcycle Championships at Bovington from 13-15 October 2017. 72 Company’s Lcpl Daniel Hughes, who had previously participated in the event whilst in training, encouraged Motocross rider, Lcpl Scott Howard to enter his first Army Championships. Together they dragged their OC, veteran Enduro rider Maj Spike Corsie, along to join them. This prestigious event, the highlight of the Army Motorcycle Association’s competitive calendar, has been run since 1937 and see Regular, Reserve and former service personnel compete in three disciplines over three days.

After a Friday afternoon of crowd pleasing extreme enduro prologue, Saturday was a demanding series of 10 trials sections three times around a nine-mile lap. On Sunday there was an arduous time card Enduro, on a circuit set out by Army Team Manager, WO2 Dean Hughes, Welsh Guards. After three days of rigorous competition, Lcpl Hughes (a second generation REME Enduro rider) lifted the Gwinnell Trophy for the best Army Aviation rider. Even motorbikes fly with VII!
1. What made you join REME?
I wanted to join REME to follow in my grandad’s footsteps, he was an Avionics Technician and the idea of the job always interested me from a young age.

2. Are you happy you made the right decision?
I am happy with my choice, it's everything I expected it to be. I work alongside some interesting people and have made some great friends. The job is challenging but rewarding at the same time.

3. What have been the highlights of your career so far?
Receiving a detachment to RAF Northolt to work on Islander, followed by an exercise to The Ascension Island to work on Watchkeeper. I also recently received my Royal Artillery Regimental Colours.

4. What are the secrets to your success in Powerlifting?
The secret, first and foremost is commitment and determination with training which has been greatly assisted by REME. Crucially the Corps have afforded me time off, as well as financial aid, which has been instrumental in helping me to train and attend events, including travelling to Boston for the Powerlifting World Championships.

5. How does Cpl Becky Jones, World Champion Powerlifter differ from the Becky Jones who first came to the Army and Corps?
I found that I can now apply the values learnt through the Army to my sport. I believe this was instrumental and is clearly evident in my training and event mentality, for example it takes courage to step on a world level platform, it takes discipline with my training and

6. What is different about life in the Corps?
This is the second year running I have been selected for the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme, fully supported by my unit. I am fortunate and very grateful I receive two days off a week from my chain of command to receive elite level coaching at Bath University, while still managing to progress in my role as an Avionics Technician Class 1. That is a major benefit of Corps life and one that I think shouldn't be overlooked.

7. What are your goals for 2018 as a REME Soldier and in wider life?
My goals for 2018 are to attain promotion and to continue to put my all into my training and to hopefully retain my title as World Champion.

8. What advice would you give to members of the Corps who want to chase down their own success?
I would say go for it, don’t be put off by what anyone else is doing, focus on what you want. The support is there within the Corps for anyone who needs it.

9. What advice would you have for people in the civilian world who have not considered a career in the REME?
I’d say because of the vast opportunities available in REME, it’s the ideal place for a career in engineering. I’ve followed my passion in my sport and REME has fully supported it. Every couple of years your posting changes too, bringing with it new opportunities and adventures.

10. If you could sum up your life now, how would you do it?
Living the dream.
What is the Centre for Army Leadership?

The Centre for Army Leadership is the Army's home of leadership debate, thinking and doctrine. As well as supporting soldiers doing academic study into leadership, staff visit units to run leader development days and share leadership advice. CAL also works to improve the leadership courses in the Army, from Soldier CLM to Officer career courses. It is based at Sandhurst, but it's focussed on developing both soldiers and officers: WO1 Sarah Cox is the CAL’s Leadership Warrant Officer and she works with the Army Sergeant Major on improving soldier leadership development.

How did you take up your role as REME’s lead activist for the CAL?

Sort of by accident if I am honest. I read some papers from the CAL's lead professor and had some views and opinions that I wrote to him about. Next thing I know I was sitting in the CAL HQ at Sandhurst having a 'chat' about my views and all things leadership. Shortly after, the SO1 mailed me asking if I was interested in becoming a 'leadership activist' at the Centre. That was well over a year ago now and I have been involved ever since and sort of worked up through the CALs activist ranks.
Before submitting an article you are requested to read the guidelines on the inside front cover

LAD Photo before our first stint on public duties.

The LAD at Windsor Castle.
How can it help REME leaders, junior and senior?

Part of the remit of the Centre is to deliver training support, both training aids and speakers, for leadership development events and courses across the British Army. If you have ideas for training aids or would like assistance in leadership development, contact the team or join the Twitter and Facebook accounts.

Who influenced you as a leader?

Initially, and you may laugh, my parents. Reason being, as in my opinion one of the main aspects of being a good leader is treating people well and how you would want to be treated; this is what my parents taught me and I would like to think I always have, regardless to who and what rank they are. As I joined REME at 16, I was still quite impressionable and was lucky enough to have been exposed to both good and bad leaders. I stole the good from the good leaders and made a mental note not to be and do what the bad leaders did. That coupled with all the leadership training I have been on, such as CLMs and even the leadership development weeks (Pot Tiffy weeks), have shaped me into who I am today.

How can I help develop my own leadership and the leaders in my unit?

I am a huge fan of self-assessment and 360 degree feedback with tools such as SWOT analysis and questionnaires. There have been times where I have thought I was good at something or handled a situation well, but the feedback suggested otherwise. This gave me the opportunity to explore ways in which to improve. In good REME fashion we should all be striving for constant improvement, as no one is perfect.

How can members of REME get involved?

With the help of the Corps ASM, we are setting up a small team to gather leadership ideas from the field force within REME as well as suggestions of best practice with regards to leadership. I am after JNCOs and SNCOs, any trade, any appointment. This team will receive and give information to the CAL and likewise to RHQ REME. If you are interested please email me on hedley.midgley834@mod.uk.

What advice would you give to leaders in REME to aid their development?

The easiest and probably most effective way is to get involved in the CAL events, sign up as an activist via myself and follow the CAL on Facebook or Twitter. There are also a whole load of blogs and websites out there to learn more about leadership. As well as leadership advice such as the CAL’s Leadership Insights (www.army.mod.uk/leadership) there are blogs like The Army Leader (www.thearmyleader.co.uk), the Military Leader (www.militaryleader.com) and From The Green Notebook (www.fromthegreennotebook.com). All of them are full of leadership advice shared by other soldiers that are useful in improving yourself and others.
Visit to Team Mercedes-AMG Petronas Motorsport Factory

Scribe: LCpl Al Thwaites

Nine Technicians from 72 Aviation Company, 7 Aviation Support Battalion REME, visited the world renowned Mercedes-AMG Petronas Factory in Brackley in Northamptonshire. The F1 Team, who have won the past three World Championships, kindly allowed us to visit the site and gave us a tour of the state-of-the-art technology and manufacturing, that goes into creating such a successful team. We were received in the reception, which had an entire wall of at least 30 massive trophies, as well as a Mercedes W08 EQ Power+ F1 Car for the 2017 season casually sited next to the desk – this gave us an idea of what was to come.

After a free brew in their dining area, we were led into the assembly rooms, where the cars are built and inspected. We were shown cars which had most of the carbon-fibre panels removed in order to highlight the level of detail and precision underneath. From these bays we could see how accurate and clinical the whole process of assembly was and they even had very similar tool control procedures to military aviation. We then headed to various bays which maintain specific components, such as the gearbox, hydraulics and the engine etc. In these environmentally controlled rooms, we were briefed about the components and how shaving off even a few grams of weight could mean the difference of a fraction of a second on the track – the gearbox assembly itself only weighs around 50kg and the hydraulic manifold weighs just over 1kg! – very impressive for a 1000+ brake horsepower car.

What was most impressive though, was how they manufacture many of the components in-house. The factory boasts several CNC machines (4 and 5 axis) as well as an entire wing for 3D printing. The 3D printers were using materials such as acrylic, but they could also print using aluminium alloys. It won’t be long before more components – especially more complicated and intricate ones – are manufactured this way. After lunch in the Silvers Lounge, the group was shown into the Dyno building, which assesses the engines and the brake systems. You can watch through the glass as the engine was replicating going around a track in Singapore, to assess its performance and also to monitor any problems.

Towards the end of the tour, we were shown into the simulator room, which had a complete car chassis on tracks, which moved side to side to simulate G-force when going around corners. Around this car was a huge curved screen with 4K projectors displaying the track, which looked just like the latest gaming console. Overall the tour was a great success and we thoroughly enjoyed the trip. It was eye-opening to see the work that goes into modern Formula 1 racing, and is well worth a visit.
Four members of the Company volunteered to give up a week of their summer leave to partake in the initial parachute trials for the new MOD aircraft, which will eventually replace the C130 series (Heracles). The trials took place out of RAF Brize Norton, descending onto IMBER DZ, Salisbury Plain. Initially everybody was sceptical about being the ‘guinea pig’ for this trial, as there were various horror stories that had been rumoured about the high parachute entanglement rate due to the aircraft’s four propeller engines. The aircraft was a Spanish prototype with modified doors and wind deflectors and was rigged up with several cameras to capture footage from all angles.

In total the members of the Company achieved two descents each, from various heights and speeds. Captain Axon’s initial jump concluded with him saying ‘exiting that plane felt like I had been hit by a train’ and many of the other parachutists found themselves in
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Ex LEAPFEST – Scribe: Cpl Keegan

Ex LEAPFEST is an annual multinational parachuting event organised by the 156th Rhode Island National guard. The week-long event involved military teams from across the world. This year’s event saw 68 teams compete from ten countries, including New Zealand, Mexico and even Botswana. The Company had representatives with 13 Air Assault Support Regiment (13 AASR) RLC. Deploying three five man teams, our focus was enhancing multinational interoperability, specifically given that the 16 Brigade’s partnered international units were attending; including US teams from both 82 Airborne Division and also 173 Airborne Brigade Combat Team. For many of the team, the US MC-6 steerable parachutes proved to be unfamiliar, with the exception of RQMS Biggs who ‘nearly’ landed on the DZ marker panel. Top descents were achieved by Cpl Keegan and Capt Axon, with times of 13 and 16 seconds respectively. However, this was no match for the competition winners – US parachutists from the Special Operations Airborne Regiment who landed on the DZ marker panel achieving a time of 0 seconds.

Company Adventurous Training, Wales – Scribe: Sgt Jones

For the last two weeks of July, the Company deployed for two, one week blocks of multi activity AT consisting of hill walking, mountain biking, indoor climbing and canyoning. Sgt Muzavazi and I were the hill walking instructors; whilst leading our groups we experienced some spectacular weather and views over the Brecon Beacons. I also had the chance over the two weeks to have a go at both canyoning and mountain biking, with canyoning being the real highlight here, experiencing freezing cold pools of water, ledges up to 10m high to jump from and sliding down natural features; an exhilarating one-off experience was had by all. I also managed two days of mountain biking at Bike Park Wales, the venue is amazing for any mountain biker, with fast swooping berm runs to massive jump runs. The hired hardtail bikes held up really well and those who took their own full suspension bikes really got the most out of them. Thanks to Cpl’s Ingledew and Stevenson for the instruction over the two weeks.

Para’s 10 Mile – Scribe: Cpl Foster

The Company has seen success over previous years, winning both Colchester and Catterick competitions. This is the opportunity for the Company to get back up the road and compete against others within the airborne community. Our journey began early the day before, making the long journey up to Catterick, and after a comfortable night’s sleep on the green issued mattresses it is race day and an ‘all you can eat’ breakfast buffet all round, as champions can’t excel on empty stomachs! As a Company we fielded teams of four with the fastest three competitors’ times contributing to the final scores. At 1050hrs we were fully kitted up with 35lb bergens ready to race across 10 miles of undulating terrain, metaled roads and steep hills. The gold standard is 1hr 50. This replicates one of the seven tests that we, as potential parachutists had to complete during the All Arms Pre Parachute Selection. After ten miles of sweat, team encouragement and pounding knees, it is over for another year and we felt the tension as we awaited the official times and finishing placements. Thanks to the time put into training, the grit and self-motivation for the high demands the teams have of themselves, we had the honour of another victory for the Company, the winning team comprising of Cpls Foster, Ingledew and Olechnowicz.
Ex SWIFT RESPONSE
– Overview by Cfn McAdam

Due to military speed restrictions and driver hours, the journey from Colchester to Grafenwoehr in Germany was a four-day convoy. So, after staring at the same vehicle reg, listening to the same ten songs and eating the Army D-shape pastries for 96 hours we finally arrived. Our first day in the US Garrison was a rest day to reset our driver’s hours. We decided to use this time to look round the PX before a busy few days of production. It was then straight into the REHAB following the road move; it was encouraging to see that there was significantly less work required relative to previous exercises, although still enough to justify working night shifts! Whilst in Germany, the Company celebrated the Corps 75th birthday and the promotion of LCpl Latty to Cpl.

Once the Brigade vehicles were ready to deploy we set off to Hohenfels Training Area. 2 PARA deployed into the box, first securing the area before we went in. Initially, only a small element of the Company deployed, this consisted of a single fitter truck, FRT assets and our Coyote. As the exercise progressed more Equipment Support was requested, which saw the rest of the company deploying to conduct any Level 3 work required.

Once ENDEX was called, it was time to set up the post exercise REHAB before heading back to Colchester. With the help of the Brigade LADs, some late nights and plenty of brews the REHAB was carried out effectively and efficiently.

It was now time for a well-deserved mandatory 48hrs rest. We travelled to the famous Hitler’s Eagles Nest, where the 101st Airborne Division enjoyed the view at Berchtesgaden and drank Hitler’s private collection of Cognac and wine at the end of WWII. The soldiers’ drinking binge is considered one of the most expensive of all time.

Ex SWIFT RESPONSE was the first time the Company had deployed with a Coyote; its primary task was the Airborne Forward Repair Team (ABFRT) crewed by LCpl Brown and Cfn Hamer. This involved being held at High Readiness to provide ES to battle winning platforms further forward on the battlefield. Secondary responsibilities included acting as Force Protection for recovery assets and Quick Reaction Force (QRF) within the Brigade Support Group (BSG) location. The Coyote provided the capability to carry one individual of each trade within the Company, complete with essential ST&E on one vehicle platform, as opposed to spread across multiple Pinzgauers. Furthermore, it provided greater freedom of movement around our AO, increasing our ES effect due to its level of protection and ability to upgrade weapon systems from GPMG through to HMG. A highlight was early one morning we were contacted by an armoured column of eight tanks advancing towards our location. We quickly sprung from our scratchers, ready in seconds. Using the Coyote’s speed and agility to full effect engaging the head on the advance. In doing so we succeeded in cutting off their assault by disabling the first two tanks, which created a road block, unfortunately during the contact we became disabled ourselves. However, we were able to halt their advance, defending our location, demonstrating the need for REME to be Soldier First! During the exercise we were used in a variety of serials, working with the French and American Forces, which was a new and exciting experience for the Coyote crew. At times it took us away from the regular trade aspect of exercise and put us in a much more combat focused role, a fantastic experience.

Scribe: LCpl Duchesne – Armourers

Whilst the Company was the CSS element to the exercise, I was embedded into 2 PARA’s A1 echelon. I had come straight from Ex MEDITERRANEAN PATHWAYS in the mountains of Corsica...
with A Coy which had prepared me for Ex SWIFT RESPONSE. The echelon comprised of the MTO of 2 PARA, Sp Coy CSM and 3 RIFLES Coy C Sgt and CSS staff, including me. My role, as the sole Armourer was to be the Small Arms SME. As an Airborne asset it is essential that I carry only what I could parachute with. This limited the spares and tools I could carry but also meant that we had to live out of our webbing and daysack for the majority of the exercise phase. As a secondary task, I was utilised for delivering essential ammunition, water and rations to re-supply the fighting echelons using quad bikes, which proved an interesting addition to my ES role.

**Close Comments**

The Company has re-set its foundations by getting back to basics with Battle-Craft on STANTA during Ex PEGASUS PINNACLE and honed our skills on Ex LEAPFEST, parachuting in the USA, Arnhem and A400M Trials in Salisbury. Most recently, we had to cathartic-ally relearn the value of dispersion, camouflage and concealment on Ex SWIFT RESPONSE dealing with T72’s through or ECCP, whilst narrowly avoiding 155mm Artillery rounds ‘in the Box’ in Hohenfels German Training Area. Next year looks equally challenging, and espousing James Kerr’s ‘Champions do extra’, we volunteered and look forward to deploying as a Trial of Concept 8 Hybrid CSS Coy next year on Ex ASKARI STORM in support of 1 RGR. We hope to stay true to our Pegasus Ethos and remain humble.

**8 PARA Fd Coy reenacting the 101st Airborne, after liberating Hitler’s Eagles nest.**

**Scribe: Cfn Gardner – Recovery**

Being a Recovery Mechanic on Ex SWIFT RESPONSE was a brilliant experience, but very challenging. My colleagues and I improved our knowledge greatly and for the new ones among us, it was great for them to see the input we have in the Brigade to keep equipment moving forward. The exercise provided many opportunities such as road moves, battle scenarios, emergency cutting drills and interoperability training. The long road moves across Europe provided plenty of vehicle casualties to recover forward. We completed five recovery tasks in 24hrs, two of which happened before we had left the UK. The battle scenarios were very realistic allowing us to improve our ability to rapidly recover a vehicle to safety, which was exhilarating. The emergency cutting drills lesson with the US Fire Service was extremely worthwhile, highlighting the value of inter-operability training. It was fascinating to see equipment used by other nations and we were able to take away points on their recovery techniques, whilst demonstrating our own. Relative to our partnered nations, the MAN (SVR) was the best recovery asset and our training certainly stood out.
Slightly nervous and a little apprehensive, I packed my kit. Upon arrival at Knook Camp I was welcomed by members of 3 SCOTS LAD who had already been on exercise for about three weeks. Initially overwhelmed, I was quickly introduced to members of the LAD and put to work.

The exercise itself was a real eye opener as to how the Army, and in particular REME, work in the field. Vehicles came in thick and fast, jobs were prioritised and allocated to the various trade groups. Dropped in at the deep end, I was challenged instantly. I did however learn a valuable lesson whilst on exercise - my head is not as strong as a FOXHOUND; I tried to prove otherwise and received a few stitches for my efforts. Whilst on exercise I had to forget about finishing work at 1700hrs as we worked shifts around the clock to ensure vehicles and equipment remained fit and ready for the next phase of the exercise.

Before I left Lyneham, I remember feeling like I was really unlucky to be thrown straight on exercise from Phase 2 training. However, looking back it was one of the best things I have ever done, I would recommend it to anyone starting out. Get to know your new colleagues and get stuck in as soon as possible.

From Salisbury Plain, I eventually moved north to my new home, Fort George, which is a large 18th-century fortress near Ardersier, 11 miles to the north-east of Inverness. Originally built to pacify the Scottish Highlands in the aftermath of the Jacobite rising of 1745, the current fortress has never been attacked and has remained in continuous use as an Army garrison since its construction finished in 1769.

During WESSEX STORM, I was given the opportunity of a place with the LAD in Austria for Ex SUPREME GLACIER post exercise. There was some initial panic before I realised it was in fact Adventure Training and not a much colder military exercise. This was probably the first proper time I had been with members of the LAD outside of work, unfortunately the week I went conditions...
weren’t the best for learning to ski – I spent a lot of the time slipping on ice – but was pleased to have been given the opportunity to take part in something I wouldn’t have necessarily been able to do as a civilian. It was a great way to finish off what had been a pretty busy twelve months for me.

After Christmas leave I returned to Fort George and was busy working towards my Class 2, thankfully a lot of the work had been completed during WESSEX STORM. Whilst finishing off my workbook I was asked what I thought about deploying to Jordan for five weeks on Ex OLIVE GROVE. Needless to say, I jumped at the chance. The opportunity to go abroad on exercise so soon seemed too good to be true. I was keen to put the skills I had learnt to the test.

I deployed to Jordan at the start of March. Work was steady and with limited technical resources, maintaining vehicle availability was at times a challenge. In addition, working without an established spares supply chain meant we had to be cautious with replacing parts due to damage from the terrain and heat. The country itself was amazing, we were all lucky enough to visit the ancient city of Petra which was a welcome reward at the end of the exercise. Just seeing the difference from our culture was of real interest to me. If you ever get the chance to go to Jordan, or indeed take part in an overseas exercise, go for it.

Life at the unit has taken some getting used to, mostly the accent and the fact I’m living in an 18th century Fort, but also being so far up north from where I’m from, you definitely feel the temperature difference. Plus, the distance means I can’t just hop in the car each weekend and go home, which has helped me to be more independent, which was one of the main reasons I applied for a posting up North.

For the soldiers of the LAD, life in Fort George represents some fantastic opportunities. The Highlands of Scotland offer some of the very best adventure training in the UK. With the Cairngorm National Park and Avimore just 45 minutes by train or car, there is some excellent skiing on your doorstep. If you fancy something else, there is hill walking, rock climbing, sailing and kayaking. Maybe you want to try something different? There is always the option to get involved with field sports. If golf is your thing, have you heard there are some pretty good golf courses too?

Just because the Fort is nearly 250 years old, it does not mean the equipment the LAD maintains is. 3 SCOTS is a busy Light Mechanised Infantry (LMI) Regiment which operates from FOXHOUND, HUSKY and RWIMK+. Tradesmen work from a workshop located just outside of the Fort which is part of a larger MT and Gym complex.

More recently I have taken part in an LAD led Adventure Training Exercise; HADRIANS WALK during which 14 members of the LAD walked the length of Hadrian’s Wall from Carlisle to Newcastle; a three week Battalion Battle Camp where I learnt to fire a pistol, fire a rifle from a vehicle and completed Live Fire - Fire Team Night Shoots and the REME 75 celebrations in Lynham and in St Andrews, as part of REME Scotland. In addition, I have completed my SV Auto, CAV Auto, and MACM (air conditioning) courses. I have even found time to complete a Team Medic and MASTIFF driver course.

To wrap things up, I’m currently in the middle of pre-deployment training for Op SHADER in preparation for deployment to Iraq in January 2018. It has been an incredible twelve months and I cannot wait for the challenges ahead.
**Introduction – WO1 (ASM) White**

The Army Aviation Engineering Branch is a small team within the Army’s Capability Directorate. The team consists of seven military and six civilian personnel, led by the Chief Aircraft Engineer (Army) (CAE (A)) – Col Tim Hall.

We provide three distinct functions:

- **Engineering Policy** – Monitor changes to the regulatory environment and write Single Service aviation engineering policy for the Army. The branch manages Air Publication (AP) 7300 – Army Air Safety Management Policy and AP 7400 – Continuing Airworthiness Engineering (Army) Policy.
- **Assurance** – The Senior Duty Holder, Chief of General Staff, has appointed Col Hall as his CAE and as the Army Competent Authority for engineering airworthiness. The CAE (A) provides assurance that Army aircraft are being maintained by competent tradesmen, appropriately trained, authorised and supervised in accordance with current regulation and policy and working within a viable Support Solution. CAE (A) conducts Second Party assurance, which currently includes TECHEVAL, Engineering Flight Safety Surveys, Equipment Table Audits and representation at decision-making forums.

**Recognition and Reward – Maj Myers**

The introduction of the new Class One Supervisor and Senior Supervisor courses and their link to promotion seeks to align responsibility with rank and pay, but this is only part of the solution. The training review identified the opportunity to map our training to civilian qualifications and work is ongoing to provide recognition of the technician career training provided by SAAE. Whilst it is not possible to award a civil licence, it is possible to gain a link to promotion seeks to align responsibility with rank and pay, but this is only part of the solution. The training review identified the opportunity to map our training to civilian qualifications and work is ongoing to provide recognition of the technician career training provided by SAAE. Whilst it is not possible to award a civil licence, it is possible to gain a credit from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) on the training and experience gained whilst serving within Army Aviation. The new courses being introduced from our Basic Technician to Senior Supervisor training have been mapped to CAA training modules and we will be applying for a route to accreditation in 2018.

The voluntary outflow of Aviation technicians has been higher than the planning assumptions for a number of years and currently there is a sub-optimal balance between Class One Supervisors and Class Two/Class Three technicians. The introduction of the new Class One Supervisor course has seen a marked increase in the numbers attending. Given time, this will start to reduce the pressure felt by our Class One Cpls and build a firm base for the recovery of the balance. We continue to support the use of Financial Retention Incentives (FRIs) to help retention, but we recognise that this is a short term fix. In order to provide a sustainable long term solution we are proposing the introduction of an Aviation Engineering Pay Spine, which links additional responsibility to an increase in pay. However this is in the early stages and is currently being reviewed against a number of other options. We will provide updates as it develops.

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**Structures – Lt Col Ireland**

Current ES Avn organisations are being optimised to support the future requirements of Army Avn under the Defence Strategic Direction (DSD) 16 assumptions. They will be updated in harmony with changes to AAC and RA future structures under Army 2020 Refine.

The new REME structures can support warfighting at divisional scale (Div WF@S) and DSD16 contingency operations within the resource liability when fully manned with Suitably Qualified Experienced Personnel (SQEP). Implementing Force ES structures will improve the way REME supports Army Avn, better aligning REME Support (SQEP). Implementing Force ES structures will improve the way REME supports Army Avn, better aligning REME Support (SQEP).

We provide three distinct functions:

- **Engineering Policy** – Monitor changes to the regulatory environment and write Single Service aviation engineering policy for the Army. The branch manages Air Publication (AP) 7300 – Army Air Safety Management Policy and AP 7400 – Continuing Airworthiness Engineering (Army) Policy.
- **Assurance** – The Senior Duty Holder, Chief of General Staff, has appointed Col Hall as his CAE and as the Army Competent Authority for engineering airworthiness. The CAE (A) provides assurance that Army aircraft are being maintained by competent tradesmen, appropriately trained, authorised and supervised in accordance with current regulation and policy and working within a viable Support Solution. CAE (A) conducts Second Party assurance, which currently includes TECHEVAL, Engineering Flight Safety Surveys, Equipment Table Audits and representation at decision-making forums.

**Recognition and Reward – Maj Myers**

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Training – Maj Myers
A complete review of the career training provided to our technicians by the School of Army Aeronautical Engineering, has been completed over the last three years. The review highlighted a number of areas that needed to be addressed:
- The need to deliver training at more appropriate points in careers.
- The rationalisation of training to remove duplication.
- The need to efficiently utilise SAAE delivered training.
- Use common courses delivered to both trade groups where appropriate.
- A reduction of course lengths through more focused training.
- Adopt a method of: Select, Train, Promote.

You will be aware of the ending of the old 2-1 Upgrader course and the introduction in May 2017 of the Class One Supervisor course. The new common course is aimed at preparing Class Twos from both aircraft and avionic trades to become supervisors, capable of holding both first and second signatory responsibilities. Current priority is to load Class Two CPLs, but from the 2018 Promotion Year (01 Oct 18 – 30 Sep 19) attendance on the Supervisor course will be determined by CPLs being selected for promotion to CPL. Course loading will be based on merit and promotion will depend on the successful completion of supervisor training. More detail on the changes to promotion policy for aviation trades can be found in Corps Instructions E6.

The next course update will be the Senior Supervisor course. The current plan is to run a pilot course towards the end of 2018 to align with the Promotion Year. This course will prepare CPL Supervisors, selected for promotion to Sgt, to undertake: Independent inspections, work outside of trade, aircraft co-ordination and the responsibilities expected of a Crew Chief. On completion of this course, Senior Supervisors will attend PAAB unless they opt to decline as per the current rules.

Finally, the rewrite of the Basic courses is at an advanced stage with the first new aircraft and avionics courses planned for January 2019. The two new courses are being designed to reflect the new civilian recognised apprenticeship standard for engineering technicians (Trailblazer).

End State – Col Hall
We are starting to see a re-gain in Aviation manning but I am mindful we have a long way to go. My aim remains to ensure we get onto a sustainable, long-term footing to deliver the Army Aviation capability, which is unachievable without REME. We must not lose sight of the unique capability we provide. Our USP, Unique Selling Point, is our Readiness for operational deployment. We are, “Soldier maintainers, deployable at High Readiness to high threat, mobile, non-linear battlefields, on land and in the littoral, from the artic to the desert, providing assured support to Army Aviation.”

There are great opportunities in Army Aviation for professional development and to gain qualifications, with training that is second to none. There remains a great offer to our Officers and Soldiers of a rewarding career, gaining skills and experience, while working on some fantastic aircraft and systems that provide the Army with battle winning capability. We are aiming to get the balance right between fun and hard work; responsibility, recognition and reward; supply and demand. The outcome will be a rewarding career, which offers great opportunities and provides a good work life balance.
Ex MAYAN STORM 17

1 COLDSTREAM GUARDS MT/LAD

Foreword: WO2 (AQMS) Greenwood

On 12 August 2017, the Battalion deployed to Belize on Ex MAYAN STORM 17. The two month exercise consisted of three rifle companies focusing on enhancing their basic soldiering skills in an arduous jungle environment; this was in order to achieve CT level 2+. There was also the opportunity for the Battalion to work closely with the Belizean Defence Force (BDF) in order to improve relations between the British and Belizean militaries, as well as draw off each other’s experience and expertise.

The exercise was divided into four stages:

Stage 1: Basic – An introduction into jungle survival training.

Stage 2: Intermediate – Basic jungle tactics.

Stage 3: LFTT – An array of live firing packages, including Sniper, grenade and claymore.

Stage 4: FTX – A five-day confirmatory exercise which put all the newly learnt skills into practice, from tactical river crossings to full Platoon attacks on purpose built villages deep in the jungle.

For the duration of the exercise, LAD personnel were spread throughout the training locations, working tirelessly to ensure the equipment remained in the user’s hands; no easy task when you take into account the exhausting terrain and demanding environment. As you can imagine, the BATSUB fleet is rather ‘tired’ from being continuously put through its paces, however with the positive attitudes and professional skillset amongst the LAD personnel, no task was too much. Like other members of the LAD, this was my first deployment to Belize and I am sure they will agree when I say that it certainly came with its challenges. However, having never operated in a jungle environment before, I can safely say that the experience gained was invaluable; it was an exercise of a lifetime.

Scribe: LCpl Tilley – Price Barracks

After a delayed flight from RAF Brize Norton and an overnight stay in Bangor, Maine (USA), the activation party touched down in Belize. Once we had found a room with a half working ceiling fan and settled into our accommodation we were eager to make up for the lost time after sitting in Brize Norton for two days. We arrived at BATSUB LAD ready to begin the handover of the fleet. We were allowed to use a couple of the bays in the workshop, which allowed us to take over the vehicles fairly smoothly. As the vehicles were handed to us in dribs and drabs, we had to learn to work with the LEC’s, which come with strict working hours, including NAFFI breaks. As the last of the vehicles were taken over, we relocated to a flight hanger. This would become our main workshop for the duration of the exercise. One of the first things to fail was the outboard motors on
I deployed to Manatee Training Area, which was A1 forward; this is where the Companies conducted the LFTT phase of the exercise. Before they came to our location we had to set up a field kitchen and accommodation, there was also road repairs which needed to be carried out that took a week to complete. Once the LFTT phase began, my main priority was the Landrover BFA’s; luckily there was no issue with them due to the effort of the drivers conducting thorough first parades. However, I did have issues with RTA’s in a Landrover FFR, quads and a MAN SV. This demonstrated the degree of difficulty in trying to operate on these jungle tracks, especially when the monsoons came. Having some experience in recovery I got a call to 1963 line Training area, where I was tasked with recovering an SV that had come off a track, due to the heavy rainfall. With the Rec Mech not available at that time, I had to use a Tirfor winch to recover the SV. With the help of the MT drivers and the Commanding Officer, the vehicle was soon recovered off the training areas and the track was repaired.

the morning of the river crossing drills. The boats are a key safety asset for the river crossing and without them, training could not commence. Cfn Shahid and I deployed out into the jungle to repair the engines and used this time to pass on my knowledge of carburettors to him. Within an hour, the safety boats were back in the water and the training resumed. Cfn Shahid and I took full advantage of being there and asked if we too could take part in the river crossing exercise. This was something new for us both which we fully enjoyed, whilst keeping one eye open for the lurking crocodiles.

Scribe: LCpl Tilley – Basic Jungle Training

When the vehicles had been taken over and the majority of the work completed we were offered a chance to complete the basic jungle training phase. The AQMS and I volunteered. The three day training phase began with a mile loaded march into the jungle. Once at the location we set up our hammocks just as it began to rain. During the night I soon realised that my issued fly sheet wasn’t up to scratch when it came to protecting me from the heavy Belizean rain. This lead to my spare poncho being set up in the pitch black, which was risky due to the wildlife. The following day was filled with lessons on how to conduct military activities in a jungle environment, such as patrolling and pacing. After another wet night, the day’s activities were focused on basic survival. We learnt how to light fires from scratch, set traps, kill and prepare animals to eat. With our newly learnt skills, we were put into groups of eight for our 24 hour survival assessment. We quickly set about building our shelter, an eight-man raised bed with a thatched roof, and this was a priority as most of the people in the group were terrified of spiders and snakes. The AQMS and I were tasked with making traps to catch our dinner; we successfully caught the biggest chicken in the jungle, some say it had claws as big as a velociraptor. That night we were kept busy by trying to keep the fire alight in the heavy rain, this was part of the survival assessment to ensure our ’rescue’ the following morning. This is no easy task when you’re in the middle of a monsoon.
Scribe: Cfn Largan – 1963 line Training Area

During my time in Belize I spent the majority of the deployment located on the 1963 line Training area. While I was there, the Rifle Companies rotated through various training phases such as Section and Platoon level battle drills, concluding in a final exercise. The end result of this was that there was always plenty for me to do. The standard day-to-day tasks included rectifying weapon faults and giving advice on equipment care. In addition to this I took the opportunity to take part in the exercise as enemy forces, which involved working alongside the BDF (Belizean Defence Force).

Working at the 1963 line didn't come without its difficulties. When the rain came in, it came down hard, causing flooding and damage to the roads. We took action to repair these by sandbagging large amounts of it in order to keep the exercise running. Allowing the BFA to maintain movements along the routes was paramount in order to ensure the ranges were run safely. As an Armourer deployed to that location, and being my first overseas exercise with the Battalion, the experience allowed me to encounter real world engineering problems and tested my intelligence and ingenuity in overcoming these challenges. These weren't just limited to weapon faults, but being a REME tradesman with two years' experience certainly helped overcome them. As a training area, the location itself was beautiful and had some stunning scenery. It was a perfect temperature in the evenings and in the morning you even got slightly cold! The surrounding location was surreal, a few miles down the road was Rio on Pools which was a fantastic leisure facility and a great place to relax as well as get a decent wash.

Scribe: Cfn Shahid – R&R

R&R is always a favourite aspect of any deployment and Belize was no exception. With an early breakfast and the obligatory 'don't get into any trouble' briefs, we were on our way to the Caribbean island of San Pedro for two nights. This was a well-deserved break from the hard work we had put in back at Price Barracks and out in the jungle. Perhaps this one time, I would mention the infamous saying in the Army; 'civvies pay thousands for this'. Relaxing on a golden beach and eating local food was more than we could ask for in return for our hard work. We booked snorkelling and swimming with sharks, which was a tremendous experience, not to mention an incredible cure for some sore heads that morning. Along with local food and drink we also got to sample San Pedro's nightlife, which we will all agree did not disappoint.
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Challenge 1

Design and manufacture a 'chariot' that allows the operator to deliver Christmas presents to 'nice' children. Christmas presents are considered to be fragile (I won’t bore you with the other specs, but they were pretty rigid as you would expect!). The design and construction of manpowered chariots proved to be amongst the highlights of the weekend, with each chariot being time-trialled on a suitably identified down-hill stretch of Wathgill training area. There are no shortage of hills on the training area, but finding a tarmacked road reduced the options quite substantially. However, a long enough section was located and with some additional chicanes thrown in for good measure, the perfect course was set up. Suitably attired in racing leathers, helmets and safety gloves, the volunteer drivers from each Company were strapped in and launched into the incline to claxons and cheers, each carrying the pride of their company with them. Along the route they were met by supporters from each of the companies who threw snowballs of encouragement to aid their passage! Chariots had to pass rigorous safety checks before being allowed on the course, including adequate steering, robust brakes and, essentially the ability to carry a number of parcels to help Santa over the Christmas period.

Challenge 2

Manufacture a Field Oven that enables the user to warm/heat pre-made packaged food when training in an outdoor environment. The pre-made packaged food is routinely found in service provided bagged meals. A secondary function of the item is to enable the user to cook a bread based, tomato and cheese topped savoury food of Italian origin. (Once again there were some specific engineering 'do’s and don’ts', which are worthy of any tradesman’s handbook).

After a packed lunch in the field, Challenge 2 took place. This design challenge was to test the Pizza ovens which would ultimately be retained by the companies for use on subsequent exercises. While there was an acute
Pizza shortage, thanks to *Sodexo Catering* we had an abundance of surplus cheese and onion pasties, which were to be cooked in the ovens and served to the Commanding Officer and his team according to a pre-designated rotation. There were four very different oven designs and each were checked to ensure they matched the capacity specifications presented for the challenge. Likewise, the pasties themselves were each probed for temperature by the Quartermaster prior to serving to ensure that they complied with regulations for the serving of hot food. 186 Field Company attempted to gain a few extra points by setting up a dining table with place settings and waiter service, which although well received by the Honorary Colonel, CO and guests, did not quite pull the additional points that might have moved them up the overall charts!

In the evening Officers and SNCOs served the assembled Northern Craftsmen a traditional Christmas lunch, courtesy of the *Sodexo Catering* staff at Wathgill. With only time to clear away, everyone moved from the Cookhouse to the Sgts’ Mess for the premier screenings of the Corporate Identity challenge.

**Challenge 3**

Each Company was to produce a short film in HD (1080 format) of no more than two minutes duration inclusive of titles or credits. The four films that were produced were excellent, each capturing the diversity and inclusivity within the company, while simultaneously underpinning the values and ethos of being a member of the Northern Craftsmen. However, 146 Field Company had the edge, with an informative and stylish entry that fully met the brief. 147 Field Company, who included Miranda Simpson (The Corps Communications Director) in their credits, finished commendably in second place. The weekend was packed with activities including Sunday morning Fancy Dress Cross Country, a performance of *The Nativity* and a Christmas Church Service, conducted by Padre Charles Hope, and finally presentations of medals and awards.

All in all it was another great Ex ELIGIUS SPROCKET and the perfect way to end the year. We look forward to doing it all again next year with our restructured companies and even more diverse blend of Northern Craftsmen.

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**REME AVIATION**

**ANNUAL AVIATION OFFICERS’ DINNER NIGHT**

To celebrate the ongoing success of REME Aviation at the home of the Corps, the annual gathering of REME Aviation Officers will take place over the 3-4 July 2018 at The Prince Philip Barracks, Lyneham. The aim is to bring the REME Aviation community together and welcome into the fold the graduating officers from the OLAE course, who receive their blue berets on the morning of 4 July 2018.

The outline of the event is as follows:

**Tuesday 3 July 2018**

1900hrs  Formal Black Tie dinner in Princess Marina Officers’ Mess with the graduating OLAE Course

**Wednesday 4 July 2018**

0800hrs  Relaxed breakfast

0900hrs  Symposium followed by a tour of the School of Army Aeronautical Engineering

1030hrs  Attend OLAE Brief (this is aimed at the graduates’ parents)

1130hrs  Attend OLAE Blue Beret Parade (in Hangar –SAAE staff and OLAE officers will be in No2 Dress, Visitors MTP or suits)

1215hrs  Visitors depart (OLAE Course move to the Mess for their private function)

Anyone interested in attending all or part of the gathering should contact Laura Tognarelli
Laura.tognarelli100@learn.mod.uk or 07414 552755
**Ex Northern Lancer**

**Land Rover Fest North**

**Scribe: Capt Muir**

In early 2017, as rumours of Ex Prairie Storm being cancelled for The Royal Lancers were rife, the opportunity presented itself to fill some of the training void that missing out on BATUS would bring. This is where Ex Northern Lancer began. The idea of the exercise was to conduct ‘low level reconnaissance in a real world environment’. What that looked like was an uplift of over 140 vehicles onto The Royal Lancers BUF, a three week deployment on an exercise area from Catterick to the Scottish Boarders and Fitter Sections working very much in isolation, conducting low level recce in urban and rural environments.

**Scribe: Cfn Gavin Dunlop**

As our core platform is CVR (T), in order to deploy on an exercise which would take place on a mixture of military training areas, public and private land, The Regiment had to convert to Land Rovers. A total of 117 Land Rovers deployed and facilitated the Regiment conducting a 3-up advance by the Squadrons from Catterick to the Scottish/English border. Then, 4 x Sqn’s dispersed into isolated urban and rural locations for the remainder of the exercise and rotated through different scenarios. These varied from using shopping centres in Stockton-on-Tees; using the cover of night and setting up OPs to gain intelligence on an OPFOR, which would operate within a populated environment, to live fire training at Otterburn Camp, reconnaissance serials at disused RAF runways and a challenging manoeuvre through Kielder Forest. Every location and scenario brought with it its own ES challenge.

**Scribe: WO1 (ASM) Pordage**

The idea of taking on a large training uplift fleet from across the Field Army, getting them fully fit to deploy as vehicle platforms for independent manoeuvre Squadrons with a BGHQ, while keeping a wary eye on Unit BUF holdings and managing this around other 1* commitments in under three weeks, might seem difficult. This however, opened up the opportunity to test resource planning within doctrine and offered us the chance to really test the LAD both in-barracks and whilst deployed to deliver mission effect. As so many of the uplifted BUF vehicles arrive only a few weeks before deployment, we utilised our Catterick REME neighbours. 1 CS Bn REME, RDG LAD and SCOTS LAD assisted us with inspecting and then subsequent repairs on the Land Rover fleet as we strived to get the highest possible vehicle availability before H Hour.

Fortunately, I am blessed with the best LAD in the British Army; to a man everyone grabbed the opportunity to take stock of the challenge and as a group, deliver the EME’s intent. With the LAD centralised to allow direct control of working hours, the senior cohort divided up troops to task and adapted our summer leave arrangements around HOTOs of vehicles. The key was to remain flexible and allow mission command at all levels to meet our H Hour start state.

Once H Hour arrived the LAD needed to deploy the Fitter Sections back to their parent Squadrons, meet A2 echelon requirements and keep an ROG that could function. This was delivered seamlessly and during the exercise the equipment availability was maintained at an average of 97 per cent with 176 vehicle platforms deployed; by day eleven availability hit 100 per cent for 36 hours. A large part of this high availability is directly related to the robust inspection standards that the vehicles went through pre-deployment. It is with great pride that I have been able to witness a group of young engineers working long hours, thinking on their feet and remaining focused, delivering the highest quality of equipment support to the user.

**Special Thanks**

This exercise really was a success for the Corps, to get the BUF uplift to the start line and in a suitable condition to deploy would not have been possible without the efforts from 1 CS Bn REME, 4 Armd CS Bn REME (particularly LCpl Grant and Cfn Thomson who were our excellent FTR throughout the exercise), 4 SCOTS LAD and RDG LAD. From everyone at The Royal Lancers, thank you for your support.

This was all done in great humour and a degree of competitiveness between Squadron Fitter Sections. Would I do things differently next time? Maybe, but from a team perspective (I include 12 Bde ES Branch and the 4 Bn REME FRT in that) REME nailed this.

**Scribe: Sgt Brooks - Vehicle Mechanic**

As we were getting an uplift of B vehicles, the equipment came from all over the British Army. I was tasked, along with six other members of the LAD to activate the 30 x Land Rovers from LFT (W). This involved inspecting and ultimately repairing an aging Land Rover fleet that had not been used in the field force for more than two years. Our 20 days in Warminster consisted of early mornings, late nights and a lot of JAMES. The first week began with the inspections and as this week went on, the size of the task at hand became clear. For the remaining two weeks there was an intense repair and servicing period which was bolstered by the addition of an FTR from 4 Bn REME. Once Fully Fit, the Land Rovers then had the acid test of a 300 mile road
trip up to Catterick ready for the start of the exercise. All the vehicles successfully made it.

Scribe: LCpl Neal - Technician
As a newly posted in Class 3 Technician to the Royal Lancers LAD, this was my first major exercise. Initially, I was very nervous about deploying because I didn’t know what to expect, this was because I was still learning what the Regiment’s role was within the Brigade and still meeting new people. I gained a lot of experience and knowledge over the three weeks because I had to learn from the rest of the Section and learn quickly. This enabled me to spend more time working and helping the Section out, rather than constantly asking questions about things I didn’t know. I also gained vital experience about my trade.

Although I received the basic skills needed in Phase 2, I learnt more in the build-up and execution phases getting hands on experience. By the end of the exercise I felt a lot more confident and competent in my role, however more importantly to me, I had settled into my Fitter Section.

Scribe: SSgt Hurton - Artificer
The concept of the exercise had never been done before, therefore the fear of the unknown was evident and there were no guidelines. Past experiences did not come into the equation around an unusual training area, civilians, civilian roads and private land. Likewise the logistics involved of receipting, repairing and preparing so many platforms from across the UK proved to be an enormous task.

As a Fitter Section Artificer, balancing the morale of my Fitter Section during extended working hours before, during and post Exercise, while maintaining 35 vehicles with only three VM’s, navigating tactically down country roads with a 9T SV, whilst juggling 24 different OS maps and persuading local farmers to stay in their barns was somewhat demanding to say the least, however a very rewarding experience. The knowledge acquired from this exercise will undoubtedly be beneficial for future deployments.

Scribe: Cpl Evans - Recovery Mechanic
After finding out that we would be covering large B vehicle packets of varying age and condition, across 100 miles of Northern English/Scotch countryside, we quickly realised that we were likely to have some work on our hands. An extra SV(R) was required, bringing our total to two, and Tirfor winches were prepped as we suspected they might be needed. We were right!

Once located within Otterburn Camp the jobs started to roll in. Every job was a new experience and often proved challenging to get to. Getting an SV(R) to places that were designed for small quad bikes or tractors at best was often an issue. However, with some careful route selection, good old Rec Mech ingenuity and the odd farmer’s tractor, no task was too much.

Once Endex was called, only the straightforward return journey back to Catterick stood in our way. This was only held up by the odd MAN truck taking a slight diversion into a rather boggy field! All in all, it was a successful exercise that proved to be a challenging and testing environment, but nothing the Recovery Mechanics couldn’t match!

Summary
Ex NORTHERN LANCER was not on conventional military training areas and offered something new and different that tested all members of the LAD in a variety of ways. It was warmly received. Due to the current financial climate, these types of self-generated exercises may start to become more common practice as the overall cost of the exercise, which was nicknamed ‘Land Rover Fest North’ by Army HQ, came in at under £300K.

REME COMMANDO FAMILIARISATION 2018
04-09 March
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In the initial stages of the deployment the Fitter Section split in two over the British Virgin Islands and Grand Turks. The logistical problems alone proved significant, as all movement in theatre was conducted by aircraft - approximately 500 miles between the islands made the use of helicopters extremely limited.

On BVI, the initial task was to re-open the Airport. Elements of the Workshop were dropped into the only airport via Osprey to try and restore power and get the comms system working again. During the hurricane, the generator for the flight control tower was damaged, preventing the flight controllers from being able to communicate safely and effectively, resulting in landings taken at an increased risk. A rapid ES estimate on the situation resulted in many of the reconciled batteries, some solar panels and the communication system in the airport control tower being quickly returned to near full functionality. This was down to the efforts of LCpl Hughes and with the airport now operational, it was able to help conduct the safe evacuation of the injured and the inflow of essential supplies.

Another key task that fell to Workshop personnel was to fix and oversee the transport of a critical generator required to power the desalination plant situated on the island of Jost Van Dyke. The net result of this task was providing much needed fresh water to the islanders.

After two weeks, the Lead Commando Group from the Regiment moved to Tortola Pier Park, where we set up in a closed shopping complex with limited water and facilities.

The majority of ES was conducted through the application of expedient repair, with ES Mat difficult to acquire. In addition, much of the equipment was bespoke and civilian in nature which led the tradesmen returning to first principles in order to get safe equipment back into operating condition. Key equipments proved to be civilian generators and the task was made more difficult due to the lack of routine maintenance and servicing. The kit seemed to be in a state of disrepair before the hurricane, so getting it back online proved challenging.

During our time in BVI we created a great relationship with the locals, this included aeroplane technicians, local tour guides, construction workers and many others; a particular group of friends brought back KFC bargain buckets from St Lucia as a gift for us helping them with all the maintenance around the airport; a great morale booster!

This allowed for Combat Engineers to concentrate on critical infrastructure, including weather-proofing the island’s main power plant. We continued repairing local vehicles and generators but we also turned
3 Commando Brigade are continuously held at Very High Readiness (VHR) and are always the first to deploy into any challenging situation. We also have personnel deployed on Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief for six months every year on ship. If you aspire to serve in the only VHR Bde in the UK then amend your employment preferences, attend the Cdo Fam course or contact the CoC at either 24 Cdo RE Wksp, or 29 Cdo RA Wksp for more guidance. United We Conquer.

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our hands to repairing roofs on tour buses which provided transport for the crew from HMS Ocean after it arrived with critical supplies for the island.

The whole deployment lasted four weeks and all those deployed benefitted from the experience and found the end result extremely rewarding; having the opportunity to actually affect peoples’ lives. The training value alone saw the improvement of key trade skills in a challenging and austere environment, but also proved that the Corps holds the key skills required for the most testing situations.

Assisting in the unloading of clean drinking water for the islands.
In June 2017, a group of 80 personnel from 3 Regt AAC travelled to the Scottish Highlands to take part in an action-packed week of adventure training. As it was an all-expense paid trip many people jumped at the opportunity and needed little persuasion to go.

We departed on the nine hour journey from Wattisham at 0730hrs on Sunday 4 June to ensure we arrived in good time for the Exercise organiser SSgt Lyles’ Welcome brief some 500 miles away in Kinlochleven. The regiment was then split down into the following four groups for the week; hill walking, mountain biking, rock climbing and round robin. Round robin enabled us to try four different activities through the week, which is a perfect starter pack for people with little AT experience, giving everyone a chance to find an activity that they enjoy and could even possibly pursue in the future.

Kayaking was up there with people’s most enjoyable day as you can soak up the magnificent scenery whilst paddling down the many canals and rivers Fort William has to offer. If you think the weather is cold in Scotland, you should try the water. As always, some people grasped things quicker, however by the end of the day most excelled, although for some the day was spent trying to paddle in a straight line. Kayaking around the infamous Neptune’s Staircase was thoroughly enjoyable, whilst garnering the attention of many tourists’ camera lenses was an added flattery. Whoever says kayaking is easy is not telling you the full truth as it is a tremendous shoulder workout when paddling, additionally, core strength is needed to keep you up right and balanced. However, all in all it was the perfect blend of physical endurance and enjoyment as by the end of the session many people were keen on progressing further in the sport. The day was finished off perfectly with a mug of coffee and slice of cake at the Ben Nevis Café.

Rock climbing took place at the local Climbing Centre in Kinlochleven, which had an abundance of climbs to tackle as well as a bouldering room, a café, an outdoors shop and to top it off, the tallest ice wall in Europe. Layers were donned as we entered the giant freezer to learn the basics of ice climbing, which are always useful if you ever find yourself stuck down a glacial crevice. The technique was easy to pick up and before we knew it we were scaling the huge slabs of ice as if we had all done it several times before. The rock climbing wall catered for all abilities with skill ratings ranging from beginner to advanced.

In typical Army fashion it soon became a competition as everybody was either trying to tackle the wall their partner failed on or stepping it up a gear if they managed to get to the top. The utilisation of the buddy-buddy system along with soldiers giving advice to their ascending teammates highlighted the team spirit and enthusiasm on show. The bouldering room allowed people to be more daring getting from A to B along awkward routes as the cushioned floor made for a soft landing when the wall got the better of you.
Again, competitiveness came out as the instructors organised games to test our ability and endurance. We made the most of the cushioned floor during breaks by channelling our inner gymnast, doing flips and rolls in the relatively safe haven. Inevitably I ended up landing on my head, much to the enjoyment of everyone else.

Hill walking was the most disputed day by far, as we found a sub 9min 30sec PFA was of no assistance when tackling the tallest mountain in the British Isles. We used muscles we never knew we had as we embarked up the many steps leading us to the summit of Ben Nevis. Layers were quickly removed, as although so high up, t-shirts and trousers were all the insulation we needed.

Given half the chance I think a few people would have turned back on the ascent, however we all dug our heels in and carried on. It became quite apparent just how tall the mountain was as the temperature soon dropped below zero on the snow-covered summit. Even though the cloud cover was high it still made for a good photo, and gave us all a great sense of achievement which made it all worthwhile. The descent was as equally tasking as it placed a lot of pressure on our knees as we followed the man-made route back down, which in essence was five miles of steps. A much needed burger was devoured in Fort William afterwards and we still managed a second helping with the corps meal that evening.

My favourite day by far had to be the mountain biking. You can make it as daring as you like depending on how fast you go and of course, subsequently there were a few near misses. It was pretty cool, racing down routes where the Downhill World Championships were held a mere two days before. Gondolas were very useful to get to the starting point at the top of the mountain; however SSgt’s Lyle and Paul thought it would be more of an adventure if we cycled up, so we never actually got to use them.

Rock climbing was a thrill, as the daring individual’s scaled fierce cliff faces that would give many people vertigo from a photograph alone.

Last but not least the mountain bikers had a thoroughly enjoyable week on many more challenging routes and were also fortunate enough to take a ride on the gondolas.

Friday was topped off with the opportunity to take part in Via Ferata and canyoning.

Via Ferata, in layman’s terms is clipping to a wire and travelling along the middle of large cliff faces, with at best, a very narrow path beneath you. The trick to this is hugging to the cliff as tight as possible to avoid falling whilst retraining from looking down. Canyoning was great fun, travelling down a gorge through and down ice cold waterfalls occasionally at quite a rate of knots. Bravery was definitely put to the test as we stood before a nine metre drop from the top of the waterfall to the pool below. Many people bundled up the courage to quite literally take the plunge, however no names being mentioned, a hand full took the long way round.

By weeks end morale was definitely on a high, which helped take the pinch out of the long drive back to Wattisham the following morning.
On 23 October 2017, a group of twelve members of 8 Trg Bn REME, consisting of predominantly Phase 2 Trainees, embarked on a five-day Kayaking Adventurous Training package in the Lake District, with accommodation provided in the scenic and sleepy village of Warcop. The exercise looked to advance the attendees from novice Kayakers to a Kayaking 2* Foundation (K2F) level. For many, it was their first exposure to AT, so it proved to be an excellent opportunity to provide them with the knowledge and understanding of what is available through the Army. The focus of the week was that if the trainees got the basics right, then the fundamentals of paddling would keep them in control when we took them outside their comfort zone on more demanding rivers.

**Day 1**

On the first day the group had the chance to show off their natural kayaking talents on the relatively calm and still lake of Ullswater. They were instructed on basic kayaking safety, the equipment used, paddling techniques and capsizing drills, which was greatly appreciated given the late October weather! The day’s lessons culminated in an afternoon of water based games, putting all those newly acquired skills to the test.

**Day 2**

Tuesday was very similar to the previous day, but this time looking to build upon and hone the skills we had already learnt. These sessions took place on Derwent Water, where the weather decided to take a bit of a nasty turn. Fortunately, the group were already soaking from the continued capsizing practice, so it didn’t detract from the day’s enjoyment. In the afternoon, we travelled up to a rapid on the River Eden near Carlisle. This was where we learnt about safety on moving water and defensive swimming. This was my first time swimming in a fast moving river and the techniques learnt made this session one of the best parts of the week.

**Day 3**

On the next day the group embarked on their first river journey, again building on the previous lessons. Instead of the calm waters experienced in the earlier stages of the week, the river journey brought with it a number of challenges such as flowing water, rocks, low hanging trees and weirs to name but a few. The river was a Grade 2, meaning that in parts, the flow of the river could be hazardous and we would have to work hard to maintain control of the Kayaks. This provided an amazing opportunity for the whole group to see the Lake District from a fairly unique viewpoint. The section of river tackled was roughly 15km in length, taking around five hours to complete.
Day 4
On Thursday the group took on the somewhat more challenging River Lune. This journey took the Kayaks down 11km of river, and enabled the group to really put into practice the abilities learnt throughout the week. Early on, while paddling the Lune we had a section where the River Rawthey joined the Lune. The confluence of these two rivers was very tricky to handle and we had several capsize training we had done earlier in the week. We went out on the river bank and took 20 minutes to learn about water flow and how it forms stagnant areas called eddies that are your safe locations in rapids.

Day 5
On Friday with the week almost over and with one final opportunity to tackle yet another river, the group set off for a smaller 7-8km paddle. The water level was not as high as anticipated, and with plenty of scraping the bed of the river, we triumphantly managed to make it to the end of the river with our heads held high.

Summary
The week provided all those currently in Phase 2 training with a chance to test themselves in an unfamiliar environment. It made it evident how useful Adventurous Training is as a tool in growing teamwork, courage, discipline and even fitness through exposing soldiers to a range of new challenges and experiences. Despite the record number of capsizes and runny noses, due to the nature of the scenery and quality of the water, Ex FIRST PADDLE will always be remembered as an excellent and unforgettable experience, and a building block for the attendees to hopefully go on similar exercises in the future.

Captain’s Log
Scribe: Capt David Chaytor

Introduction
I stood there watching as WO2 “H” Hilliard gathered the team around him at the water’s edge and then effortlessly start, what turned out to be, a 15 minute discussion and demonstration breaking down the water flow around him. I realised that everything great about Adventurous Training was being demonstrated in this single act.

Diary
Earlier that day ‘H’ and I came to the conclusion that we needed to push the group out of the simple ‘follow me’ attitude that they had so far experienced on river journeys. The aim was to get them to begin to think for themselves and apply the knowledge that ‘H’ and I had imparted to them on the course so far. ‘H’ suggested the Rawthey confluence. This is a Grade 2 stretch of river about 200m in length that both of us had paddled before. It was perfect. The Rawthey confluence was where the River Rawthey flows into the River Lune at the point where the two rivers join. You have a change in river flow and some strong eddy currents are present that will throw the boat around if you are not careful. To be successful in paddling from the River Rawthey onto the River Lune, the paddlers would require strong forward paddling techniques and an upstream edge and angle of paddle. This would then propel them onto the Lune and out of the grip of the eddy lines. These were all skills that had been taught earlier in the week. At the very least, paddling hard would give you enough momentum to get out of the destructive eddy flows and into the main flow of the Lune. However, if you didn’t judge your edge or your angle of approach or paddle with enough force then it would be likely that you would remain stuck in the turbulent water around the eddy lines and this would likely lead to a capsize. For maximum benefit, ‘H’ had suggested that I go first and give them a good demonstration of what to do, but let them use their own judgement to interpret my demonstration. The intention was that with me at the front of the group of nine paddlers and ‘H’ at the rear we would pass from the Rawthey into the Lune and enter the shallow waters of a pool near the far side of the river Lune. We both knew the likelihood of everyone judging the water correctly was low.

It didn’t take long for ‘H’s predictions of capsizes to come true. After I paddled across to the far side of the Lune, I turned around to watch two people successfully follow me, so far so good. Then the third paddler didn’t build enough momentum and got stuck on the eddy line. The forth paddler, seeing what had happened with the third, panicked and got his angle wrong and soon capsized. ‘H’ went over to support him. The third paddler did the same and soon capsized as well. The two capsizes had bunched the group up and unfortunately with nowhere else to go but attempt to cross from the River Rawthey into the Lune, three of the remaining four paddlers attempted to cross at the same time, two of them made it, one capsized but managed to swim to the river bank. We now had a situation in which the group was spread across the river in three locations. I was on one bank of the Lune with four paddlers whose good judgement of the river conditions had got them across the tricky flow safely. ‘H’ was about 25m downstream attending to the first two capsized paddlers and I had the third capsized paddler on the far river bank with his boat. The last paddler I had instructed to stay on the far bank with the capsized individual.

This situation was uncommon for a kayaking instructor to deal with and the 4 star training that both ‘H’ and I had received from JSAT had prepared us well. In the ten minutes that followed, we restored order to the group by giving each person clear instructions about how to paddle in the flow to a safe point on the river bank and then to get out.

‘H’ gathered the group around and explained that we had deliberately not given them direction about the changing flow where the two rivers met in order to test their judgement and paddling skills. Then, in what turned out to be one of the best river side lessons I’ve witnessed, he used me to demonstrate entering and exciting the flow several times until everyone understood the fundamental concepts that he was explaining. They then lifted their kayaks back above the Rawthey confluence and all paddled the section again with ease.

Here you had a group that less than 30 minutes earlier had struggled to judge the river conditions and apply the correct paddling fundamentals and as a result had been scattered and had several capsizes. Yet, now, having had a master class of a lesson in judgment of the river by WO2 Hilliard, they all took to the river with confidence.
After a long slog down to HMS Sultan in Portsmouth, for a Charity Boxing night, 8 Trg Bn REME boxers had a lot to prove. Considered the underdog in this fixture, in part due to being on Navy soil, the odds were against us; however a jubilant crowd was awoken by a stupendous boxing spectacle, in which passions flared both in and out of the ring. Everything was to play for. Nothing was held back. Blood, sweat and tears adorned the canvas; a testament to the heart and soul poured into the bouts by the bold contestants. The boxers were given a tremendous roar as they took to the ring. Competing alongside the Royal Engineers we were fighting not just for the pride of our Corps but that of the Army as well! Ten bouts were on the card for the evening, four of which included budding amateur boxers from the Battalion; their performances were anything but amateur. It was not until the third bout that the first boxer from the Battalion stepped into the ring. Cfn Wilde, a welterweight took to the red corner eager and determined.

As soon as the bell rang, Wilde came out all guns blazing; dominating his opponent, Able Seaman Roberts, from the off. Taking blows from our ‘big hitter’, Roberts found himself on the back foot, Wilde’s strength and power enabling him to dominate and after Roberts’ second count of eight in only the first round, the referee called the contest in Wilde’s favour. One down three to go! Cfn Thapa was next in the ring and started the first round like a welterweight Mike Tyson possessed! With fancy footwork and quick hands, he landed blow after blow on Able Seaman Penfold, racking up the score in the process. Penfold was stoic enough to soak them up and hold on until the bell. The brief respite clearly served Penfold well as the second round saw a titanic clash in the centre. Both boxers tried to dominate the ring, neither wishing to yield ground. Penfold looked to slow down Cfn Thapa, as both were landing scoring blows.

Thapa soon switched to attack and worked Penfold’s body; showcasing his skill and ability to fight intelligently. The round could have gone either way, leaving the fight open in the third. All eyes were fixed on the ring as the bell rang for round three. It was not to disappoint. Shots were coming from all angles from both fighters, as they soldiered on through their opponent’s blows. A strong punch by Penfold saw Thapa receive a standing count, yet the fight continued. In the final moments, both boxers gave everything they had. The fight came down to the last minute of the last round, the tension, the suspense and the atmosphere would have rivalled any Rocky film! The crowd was on its feet urging the two gladiators on. Inseparable in the ring, the bout would go to the scorecards. The suspense was broken when Cfn Thapa was declared the winner by a well-deserved unanimous vote; however both were commended for their stunning performance as the bout secured the ‘Best Fight of the Night’ award.

Next up was Cfn Hawken, who took to the canvas for his first ever fight. A Light-Heavyweight, Hawken quickly showed the coaches he was up to the challenge. Clearly enjoying the fight, he began to exert his dominance. In true REME boxing style, he proved too much for his opponent and with a savage one, two, left hook he gave the Navy fighter a standing count. Cfn Hawken landed successive shots thereafter and dazed his opponent once more, leading the referee to stop the contest in the second round. What a fine way to celebrate your 22nd birthday! The night concluded with a heavyweight contest. Cfn O’Brien took a few early ‘wake-up’ shots to remind him he was
in a fight, however, they did the job and flicked the right switches. Soon both fighters stood toe to trading blows. O’Brien’s opponent, a Royal Marine, threw everything he had at O’Brien, who took a heavy shot, receiving an eight count as a result.

The blow knocked some sense into him though as he came back strong with a solid guard, coupled with fantastic head movement. Slipping and counterpunching, he took the fight back to his opponent. When the bell went for the third, O’Brien put on an amazing demonstration of courage and discipline which put him on the front foot. Repeatedly, he landed scoring blows, whilst keeping his opponent in the corner. With this relentless assault the Marine was given a standing count. After regaining himself and continuing the fight the Marine was dominated and soon another count followed, with the referee calling in favour of O’Brien. 8 Trg Bn REME, came away with four out of four wins and the Army team beat the Navy 9-1 on their home ground, showing everyone what a professional outfit we are. The Battalion Boxing Team are now working hard towards the Inter-Company Championships held at MoD Lyneham in March and the REME Corps Championships in April.

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December News

Scribe: Maurice Hope, Photo’s: John Hubbert
Although all formal branch activities ceased for the year following our November meeting, there remained a small matter of holding a very informal pre-Christmas get together at the Meir/Longton RBL Club, held on the Tuesday 19 December 2017. This event was more popular than our branch dinners, with a total of 24 people making it on the night. Entitled “Drinkies & Nibbles” by Chairman John Painter, it proved a great success; we must thank branch members John & Joan Hubbert for supplying an ample and enjoyable buffet on the night.

It was very pleasing to welcome Mr Brian Jones on the night.

Brian was one of the branch’s founding fathers in 1991 and served as branch secretary for many years prior to illness curtailing his involvement in branch activities. Hopefully we will see a little more of him now his is upwardly mobile once again.

Each attendee had been asked to bring along a seasonal raffle prize, which resulted in a sum of £76.00 being generated for the branch. Chances of winning a prize had been doubled by a novel, buy one get one free deal on the raffle tickets.

On display on the stage was our newly purchased and unique to the branch, 8ft x 5ft Coffin Drape, which was admired from above, with no one present wishing to be the first to view it from below, when first used for its intended purpose!
Joy Bell
REME Association Branch New Zealand
Scribes: Maj (Ret’d) Martin Ough Dealy
and Lt Col (Ret’d) Bobby Haslam

It was sad news indeed to learn of Joy’s passing on 21 October 2017. Every member of the REME Association New Zealand Branch will have known Joy and have benefitted from her work for the branch. Many members will also have been privileged to have known her as a friend and will have enjoyed her cheerful and robust outlook on life. Her passing will be felt by all of us and she will be remembered with appreciation and love.

Joy’s link to the branch was through her husband Brian, who was one of the early members when the branch was first officially formed in 1997. Brian had served with REME from 1943 to 1947 and had been involved in the Normandy landings in 1944, as well as the Middle East. He left REME, as Sgt Armourer, in May 1947. Joy and Brian raised their family in New Zealand after the war and Brian worked for a long time with New Zealand Railways. They finally settled in Auckland. Joy was a regular companion for Brian at most branch activities. However, she soon began to make her own, invaluable, contributions to the Association. She served variously as Secretary, Newsletter Editor/Co-Editor, Membership Secretary and general organiser of our lunches and reunions. She was a thorough and conscientious member of the committee and a pleasure to work with. One of the many kind things she did for others was to collect old copies of The Craftsmen Magazine and send them to members of the Association who did not get them. Joy’s name was particularly appropriate for her association with REME. Bell of course is part of the Army code for REME which many of us remember as ‘BLUEBELL’, evocative of pretty flowers in spring. Her first name reflected her personality and the effect she had on all who knew her. She certainly brought joy, happiness and positivity, one way or another, to all with whom she came into contact. We will all miss her and wish her well in a happier place. RIP Joy.

Former WO1 (RSM) STUART SENIOR

It is with great sadness that we must inform the Corps of the passing on 6 December 2017 of a legend of the Corps at the age of 79. Stuart was born on 4 January 1938 in Huddersfield in Yorkshire. At 18, like all eligible adults of the time, Stuart was called up for National Service. On encouragement of two of his brothers in law, Stuart immediately signed up for 22 years, so straight away got an extra shilling a day and took an immediate liking to the Corps. He was a Radar Technician and was informed that going onto the RD role would mean instant promotion so that is what he did. Stuart spent five years at Blandford where he met a local girl, Myrna whom he married. The couple had two children during this time. At Blandford, Stuart made the front pages of some newspapers in February 1958 after being one of the Corporals returning from a dance as the guardroom was being attacked by five, self-proclaimed, IRA raiders. Stuart was hit on the head with a pistol and tied up.

After Blandford, Stuart’s next posting was to Malta. In those days the movement was courtesy of a two weeks cruise from Southampton. On return from Malta in September 1962 Stuart was posted to Tidworth in Wiltshire where his third child was born. From Tidworth, Stuart was detached to Cyprus for an eight month stint with the United Nations Peace Keeping force. Upon his return he was posted to the REME hub in Arborfield where the couple’s fourth child was born.

After his time at Arborfield, Stuart and his family then moved to Colchester, during which Stuart completed two emergency tours of Northern Ireland in 1972 and 1974. During the second tour Stuart met his second wife Claire after the breakdown of his first marriage.

On completion of Stuart’s time in Colchester he was posted to Bordon to take up the appointment of RSM. Stuart’s children from his first marriage were now leaving home but his second wife brought her three daughters from her first marriage to Bordon with them. Sadly whilst in Bordon he lost one of his daughters to cancer, but he and Claire were later blessed with a son.

Stuart’s role as RSM went from strength to strength and although he was considered harsh, he was always fair; some young soldiers would do a detour in their daily routine so as they did not have to pass Stuart’s office, in case they were found to have a flaw in their turnout, which meant they would have to appear on an evening show parade.

On completion of his 22 years of service, Stuart joined the Long Service List and stayed on in Bordon, ending up running the Artificer Selection Centre. During his career he was awarded the LSGC and clasp, GSM NI clasp, UN Medal Cyprus and MSM. On completion of 37 years’ service Stuart went to work in the Stores Section in the Technical Training Area; his passing accolade was nearly burning it down one night when he left a soldering iron on overnight. It smouldered well into the night, luckily it did not ignite anything dangerous but there was substantial smoke damage.

In 2010 Stuart was widowed when Claire passed on and had to get used to living alone; but he would always talk to anyone he happened to meet.

In November 2016, Stuart had a quadruple heart bypass operation, which seemed quite successful. However, in August 2017 Stuart started complaining of a lot of pain in his lower back and stomach. He was admitted to the Royal Surrey Hospital on 9 November 2017 after initially just going for an outpatients appointment. The following week he was diagnosed with bladder cancer which was spreading in his body. He was then transferred to the Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice in Farnham where he died surrounded by his family.

Stuart was cremated at Park Crematorium on 27 December 2017, the service was attended by many REME friends and his family. The REME Association Bordon Branch Standard was paraded and an Honour Guard was made up of his Corps comrades from around the world. The Last Post was played as we paid our last respects to a fallen comrade. His ashes were interred in his wife’s grave on 11 January 2018 at Whitehill Cemetery near Bordon again with his family and REME friends in attendance.

REME has lost a legend of his time but more importantly his four children, their husbands’ and wives, his three stepchildren and all the grandchildren have lost a gentleman of immense bearing and stature.
**Former WO2 John Delaney Vaughan**

Former WO2 John Delaney Vaughan, known as Charlie, enlisted at the age of 15½, at the Arborfield Apprentices’ School on 3 September 1946, where he completed an apprenticeship and joined REME on 26 August 1949 as an Armourer. He served in Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Aden, Germany, Singapore and units in the UK. In 1965, he took a change of course and on promotion to WO2 became a Company Sergeant Major, where he continued until discharged in April 1971. As a civilian he became a teacher and taught for many years in the military community in Colchester. In 2006, after the loss of his beloved wife, Jill, he entered the Royal Hospital, Chelsea where he died on 1 October 2017. Much missed by his children Anne, Andrew and Julie and grandchildren Zoe, Justine, Gary, Heidi, Lewis and Jacob.

Always the supportive and caring elder brother, he took a deep interest in his growing family of nieces and nephews and their children, and he keeps a special place in their lives as the tall and kindly uncle figure. We all miss him but celebrate Malcolm having led a full and good life.

**Maj (Ret’d) Julian Charles Johnson MBE**

I regret to inform the Corps of the death of Major Julian Johnson who died in Wokingham, aged 92 on 15 October 2017. Julian Johnson was born in India and joined the Army at 15 as an apprentice at Chepstow in 1940 and saw service in India and Japan. In 1951 he qualified as an Artificer Electronic Control. He was commissioned in 1962 and served in P&EE at Eskmeals, Inventory Systems Development Wing at Didcot, in EME 8 REME(A) at First Avenue House, where he was awarded the MBE and completed three tours at SEE from where he retired after 41 years in 1981. His sporting passion was Hockey and he played regularly for unit teams. On retirement he became Deputy Editor of The Craftsman Magazine as a Retired Officer Grade and later had two periods as Editor. During his time in the Corps Secretariat he was also Secretary of the HQ Officers’ Mess at West Court, which was also the local Officers’ Mess. REME Officers have much to thank him for in his largely unseen work to maintain standards so easily taken for granted. Julian was a constantly cheerful and extremely conscientious member of the Corps Secretariat, not only beavering away under the increasing pressure of publication ‘deadlines’, but also in applying his very considerable expertise in the development of the Secretariat’s computer system. After serving a further six months beyond normal retirement age, thus taking him past the milestone of 50 years of service to the Crown, he had a happy and peaceful retirement in Arborfield with his wife Doreen. Doreen also worked in the Secretariat and later his daughter Kim, worked in RHQ REME. He leaves behind his daughter Kim and son, Graham.

**Former Cpl Malcolm Tanner**

It is with regret that we inform the Corps of the death of Former Cpl Malcolm John Tanner who died on 9 August 2017, aged 74. Despite having a heart transplant 20 years ago, he lived a full and active life but in the last couple of years his health began to deteriorate.

He was the eldest of three brothers, one of whom followed him into the Corps. Malcolm joined as an Army Apprentice aged 15 in 1958 at Arborfield and was later transferred to the newly opened school at Carlisle. He trained as a Gun Fitter and served for nine years in the Corps. His first posting was with 40 Field Regiment RA in BAOR and he deployed with them on active service in Borneo. His later career included service with tank units in North Africa at El Adam and with the 1721st Lancers again in BAOR. Despite his long absences abroad he never neglected his family and he left Regular service in 1970 to return home to look after our recently widowed mother.

Having seen our mother settled he returned to the military environment, serving in the TA with the Westminster Yeomanry, before joining Millbank Technical Services in Iran in 1973 in their support to the Shah of Iran’s tank force. His Iranian adventures terminated when the Shah was overthrown in the revolution in 1979 and he made a dangerous cross-country journey in a last-minute escape on one of the last UK flights out of the country.

Back in the UK, Malcolm took employment with the Redland Tile Company which led to more foreign travel, installing vast tile making plants in France and Thailand until his need for a heart transplant in 1997 led to early retirement. Both prior to this and after, he continued to pursue his lifelong love of cricket, playing in his local league. He also became actively involved with the REME Association Surrey Branch, taking up the post of Branch Secretary, becoming the key member in driving the group’s activities and business. Malcolm undertook his duties conscientiously and was instrumental in arranging care and support for those members for whom welfare and company was becoming necessary. But being a master of Own Time Management, he had many other commitments such as the busy but lonely, manager’s role for his block of flats. He maintained strong links with the London Sharpshooters Association, often visiting overseas battlefields in France, Portugal and Gallipoli, yet his enthusiasm for the REME Association never dimmed, nor his keenness to help others, despite his many painful conditions.

If he wasn’t organising funeral arrangements for deceased members, welfare assistance for others, he’d be collecting in Crawley for Help for Hero’s, helping Merstham Royal British Legion volunteers sell Poppies in Redhill or linking with Yeomanry events, especially at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday.

With the onset of now failing health in 2016 he moved into the Royal Hospital Chelsea to join the small but select band of REME In-Pensioners. It was at this point that Malcolm handed over Association Secretary duties to Mayor (Ret’d) Robin Needham, but still maintained a keen and much appreciated presence. It was especially nice to see him at group events splendidly attired in his Chelsea Pensioner’s uniform when he would gently and proudly advise anyone Remarkings his ‘red’ tunic that it was actually scarlet.

In order to publish a death notice we require the following information:

Surname, first name, rank, full date of death, ages and dates of service.

An obituary with additional career and life information is welcome.

To inform us of the death, please contact Ms Bev Bate, Corps Welfare Manager on 01249 894523 or REMERHQ-CorpsWelfareMngr@mod.uk.
5 December 2017
ARMY RESERVE

The following officers have been awarded the 2nd Clasp to the Volunteer Reserves Service Medal
MAJ, M. SIM, REME, 549931

The following officers have been awarded the 1st Clasp to the Volunteer Reserves Service Medal
MAJ, M. SIM, REME, 549931

The following soldiers have been awarded the 4th Clasp to the Volunteer Reserves Service Medal
SGT, R. R. TANCOCK, REME, W1052025
SGT, M. C. SMITH, REME, 25150886

The following soldiers have been awarded the 3rd Clasp to the Volunteer Reserves Service Medal
CPL, J. M. BURGER, REME, 24671736

The following soldiers have been awarded the 2nd Clasp to the Volunteer Reserves Service Medal
SGT, A. RITCHIE, REME, 246505265

The following soldiers have been awarded the 1st Clasp to the Volunteer Reserves Service Medal
CPL, S. P. SIMMONDS, REME, 25054027

12 December 2017
ARMY RESERVE

Regular Commissions (Late Entry)
Lieutenant Colonel S. D. COWEN 547235 retires 26 May 2017 (Belated Entry)

Intermediate Regular Commissions
Major D. W. JOHNSTON 556388 retires 6 May 2017 (Belated Entry)

19 December 2017
ARMY RESERVE

Regular Commissions
Major S. J. TAYLOR 515461 retires 28 June 2017 (Belated Entry)

Regular Commissions (Late Entry)
Lieutenant Colonel W. W. FORREST MBE 554415 retires 13 June 2017 (Belated Entry)
Major (Acting Lieutenant Colonel) S. P. COPLEY-SMITH 552251 to be Lieutenant Colonel 22 September 2017
Major (Acting Lieutenant Colonel) B. D. LAMONT MBE 563047 to be Lieutenant Colonel 24 September 2017

Intermediate Regular Commissions
Captain A. PARK 30044211 retires 24 June 2017 (Belated Entry)

27 December 2017
REGULAR ARMY

Regular Commissions
Lieutenant Colonel P. J. BECK 533480 retires 4 July 2017
Lieutenant Colonel A. D. TEARE 511914 retires 1 August 2017

Intermediate Regular Commissions
Captain P. J. E. MCIVER C35534 retires 1 August 2017
Captain C. J. STEWART 30046867 retires 1 August 2017

Intermediate Regular Commissions (Late Entry)
Major N. F. SMITH 559469 retires 16 July 2017

Short Service Commissions
Captain C. C. WHITE 30055902 retires 23 July 2017

The following personnel have been awarded the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal (Military)
SGT, T. D. ASHTON, REME, 25139388
SSGT, A. F. BELL, REME, 24494540
SGT, S. M. CASS, REME, W1045626

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased to give orders for the following promotions in, and appointments to, the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire: M.B.E. To be Ordinary Members of the Military Division of the said Most Excellent Order:
Warrant Officer Class 1 John Richard LEWIS, Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, Army Reserve, 25051911.
The Trustees of The REME Charity acknowledge with sincere thanks the donations received during the month of December 2017. They also wish to acknowledge the regular subscriptions received from the Officers and Soldiers of the Corps and retired members of the REME Institution:

Donations
Virgin Money Giving .................................................. £115.03
TSS Seminar .......................................................... £40.00
C and C Nobbs .......................................................... £15.00
Payroll Giving .......................................................... £14.44
Total Donations in December .................................. £184.47

Donations/Grants made in 1 Jan – Dec 31
No. Grants ............................................................... 385
Average Grant ....................................................... £499.26

If you would like to see how your money is spent, we welcome one or two observers at The REME Charity meetings. The meetings are held midweek, approximately every three weeks. If you would like to observe a meeting, please contact The REME Charity Secretary on +44 (0) 1249 894527 in the first instance.

Anyone wishing to leave a legacy to The REME Charity, which is exempt from inheritance tax, can add a codicil to their will. Our registered charity number is 1165868.

On Sale Now

REME 2018 CALENDAR

- January 2018 - January 2019
- NEW design
- One excellent photo per month
- Monthly planner and notes
- £2 plus P+P

www.remeshop.org.uk

The REME Institution London Reception 2018

I am pleased to report that the date of the REME Institution London Reception, has now been confirmed and it will take place on Tuesday 13th March 2018. We have the honour of being hosted by His Royal Highness Prince Michael of Kent. Those members attending will have been notified by email on Thu 18 Jan 18. However, if, for whatever reason, you have not received a confirmatory email then please contact the Corps Officers’ Mess and REME Institution Secretary Maj (Ret’d) Geordie Wright-Rivers at REMERHQ-CCTSec@mod.uk or call Military 95481 4525/Civilian 01249 894525.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
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<th>June</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 REME75 Corps Officers’ Mess Regimental Guest Night (subject to Royal Reception confirmation)</td>
<td>6 The Broxhead Club Dinner</td>
<td>3 REME Young Officers’ Seminar and Dinner</td>
<td>10 Colonel in Chief’s Birthday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 REME Charity Grants Committee</td>
<td>10 REME Soldiers’ Conference South – Tidworth</td>
<td>7-18 Ex GRIFFIN SPANNER</td>
<td>21 REME Institution Beating Retreat &amp; Cocktail Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 REME75 Institution Royal Reception (subject to confirmation)</td>
<td>10 REME Soldiers’ Conference East – Wattisham</td>
<td>10 REME Colonels’ Command Group</td>
<td>20 REME Warrant Officers’ Seminar – Lyneham</td>
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<tr>
<td>TBC REME Association Executive Committee</td>
<td>12 REME Soldiers’ Conference North – Catterick</td>
<td>10 ES Executive Board</td>
<td>20 Corps WOs’ &amp; Sgts’ Mess Spring Dinner Night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TBC REME Association Executive Committee</td>
<td>17 REME Soldiers’ Conference BF(G) – Paderborn</td>
<td>10 Corps Officers’ Mess Dinner Night</td>
<td>20-23 REME Association Weekend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Colonels’ Commandant Dinner</td>
<td>20 REME Warrant Officers’ Seminar – Lyneham</td>
<td>17 NMA Memorial Service</td>
<td>24 REME Corps Athletics Championships</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 Museum Policy Committee Meeting</td>
<td>20 Corps WOs’ &amp; Sgts’ Mess Spring Dinner Night</td>
<td>25 Field of Remembrance, Westminster</td>
<td>26 Corps Officers’ Mess Spring Guest Night</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 The REME Charity Trustees Workshop</td>
<td>27 Corps Council Meeting</td>
<td>11 Remembrance Sunday</td>
<td>28 Reserves Management Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 HQ Officers Mess &amp; REME Institution Executive Committee</td>
<td>28 Reserves Management Board</td>
<td>29 Corps WOs’ &amp; Sgts’ Mess Autumn Partners’ Dinner Night</td>
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<td>23 Armed Forces Day</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>October</td>
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<td>26 REME Institution &amp; HQ Officers’ Mess AGMs</td>
<td>3 2018 Aviation Officers’ Dinner Night</td>
<td>5 Corps Officers’ Mess QMs’ Dinner</td>
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<td>15 REME Association Executive Committee</td>
<td>15 Regimental Sunday Royal Hospital Chelsea</td>
<td>15 REME Craftsmans’ Cup Cricket Competition</td>
<td>9 The REME Charity Grants Committee</td>
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<td>18-19 Sportsfest 18 (TBC)</td>
<td>11 Orienteering REME Individual and Unit Championships</td>
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<td>14 Retired Officers Dinner</td>
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<td>8 Field of Remembrance, Westminster</td>
<td>11 Remembrance Sunday</td>
<td>11 REME Association Cenotaph March Past</td>
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R E M E

S O L D I E R S

THE CORPS ASM & COLONEL REME NEED YOU

....TO ATTEND THE REME SOLDIERS’ CONFERENCES!

APRIL 2018

10th REME Soldiers’ Conference South
TIDWORTH

11th REME Soldiers’ Conference East
WATTISHAM

12th REME Soldiers’ Conference North
CATTERICK

17th REME Soldiers’ Conference BF(G)
PADERBORN

Through a series of conferences RHQ REME aims to provide an update to Corps personnel on the significant changes that affect REME units and our soldiers. The conferences will also provide a look forward to the coming year from a Corps perspective and the opportunity for our soldiers to have an open and honest discussion with the Corps Colonel and Corps ASM.

The conference is open to Regular and Reserve Cfn-Sgt. Every REME Coy/Wksp/LAD/Detachment/Outpost are requested to send a minimum of 1 x Cfn, 1 x JNCO and 1 x Sgt.

For more information or to register for a conference event please speak to your Chain of Command or visit the REME RHQ MOSS site.