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On 20 February 2015, members of 1st The Queen’s Dragoon Guards LAD downed tools and under the watchful eye of Sgt Bell, made their way to the illustrious German Tank Museum in Munster (Deutsches Panzermuseum Munster). For the majority, it was the first time we had been able to get up close and personal with so many pieces of armour. Levels of excitement were fairly high.

Once we had overcome the initial language barrier, our group rolled into the exhibition to view the very first tank Germany ever produced in 1918: the A7V (the only example of its type in Europe). This box on wheels boasts a crew of eighteen, top speed of nine mph (four mph cross country), six 7.9 mm machine guns surrounding the vehicle, a single 37 mm cannon on the front and an operational range between twenty and fifty miles on a full tank of fuel. Nearly one hundred years on it is certainly impressive how much technology has changed.

In order to ensure we all appreciated the collection and didn’t just ‘mince’ around, it was necessary for everyone to produce a short talk on a vehicle of choice as and when we encountered it. Tanks of choice included the infamous Tiger I & II, the T-54 (the AK47 of the armoured world, having been in uninterrupted active service around the world since its creation in 1946), a prototype version of the Jagdpanzer IV and a Leopard I. With well over one hundred tanks and military vehicles in the collection, there was certainly something for everyone.

From a mechanical perspective, it was very interesting to see how problems encountered with design in the early days of WWI and onwards into WWII were rectified quickly, but not as efficiently as expected. In desperation, German Command pushed for the creation of weird and wonderful designs. Many of these examples were on display. Fortunately after the chaos of the 1940s, standardisation in armoured vehicle design could be seen and as the exhibition moved towards the modern day, we could see errors from previous years had been rectified.

Overall, it was a thoroughly enjoyable visit with a real insight into the history of armoured warfare. If anybody reading has visited the REME Museum or Bovington Tank Museum and enjoyed the collections, it would be a fantastic opportunity to visit this particular venue as the staff continue to refurbish and add new content to what they have at present.
The new REME Institution Blue Book is currently being produced. Please ensure your details are correct.
It was a mild, drizzly Sunday morning at Albemarle Barracks and 3 RHA LAD’s Exercise Griffin Spanner team were assembling at the workshop. Morale was not high as the rumours we had heard about Ex Griffin Spanner had us believing that the week ahead would not be enjoyable. The one thing we had though was the determination to win.

It was a five hour drive to Swynnerton Training Area, to join the other 18 teams competing and saw the Exercise ‘Scoring’ stands start immediately on our arrival with the completion of the Reception, Staging, and Onward Movement (RSOM) stand. This stand completed, and a bed space issued for the night, it was time to start preparing for our road move on Monday to Nesscliff Training Area; this is where the competition was to truly start.

Monday morning came, admin done, vehicles packed, safety brief given and our radio call sign for the week was received. The 3 RHA LAD team; SSgt Howells, Cpl Daines, Cpl Tate, Cpl Frank, LCpl Reilly, Cfn Godwin, Cfn Ardis, Cfn McDonald and Cfn Armstrong were to be known as Tango One!

The road move to Nesscliff training area went well and was where the Tactical Move and Anti Ambush stand was to take place. We were feeling apprehensive having no knowledge of what lay ahead in that tree line but we went in as confident and prepared as we could be, knowing that it was the first of many challenges ahead of us.

Unfortunately, the stand got the better of us and left the team feeling demoralised but we chose to forget about it and focus on the day to come. With five stands on the Tuesday, we were not wasting any time lingering on the past.

Starting the day with a patrol and a casualty evacuation in full CBRN suits woke the team up in preparation for the day ahead. Scoring almost full marks, we were back on track. Morale was on the way up and we flew through the next four stands at Swynnerton with confidence. We felt back in the running with a chance of a podium finish. Tango One was getting stronger as a team and it was not going...
Wednesday was to be a physically demanding day incorporating the Assault Course, March and Shoot, Equipment Support in CBRN and Equipment Support in a hazardous environment. This was the day that Tango One began to rise above the rest and started by smashing the opposition's times and scoring 94 out of a possible 100 across the 5 stands; we were unstoppable. We were there to win it and we were only getting better.

The last day came and it was set to be a good one. It was the final attack; the making or the breaking of us. If we were going to win or lose, it would be this day that decided our fate. It started with a Rolling Replenishment before moving into and defending our harbour area until the time came to roll out and proceed to the Ground Defence and Medical stand. The sun was shining, we were prepared for battle, everyone was in place and knew their role and not a single mistake was made. We had one stand to go but already felt certain that we would be returning to our unit with a medal.

The final and one of the most enjoyable stands, was Recovery. The sun was shining and morale at an all-time high. We were faced with getting chest deep in muddy water to recover an Abbott 105 Self Propelled Gun. More of us got soaking wet than necessary but we got in there and got the job done with speed and efficiency. It was another successful day and we scored 76.5 points out of a possible 80.

All stands completed, there was nothing more to do than drive back to Swynnerton Training Area and wait for the results. The nerves began to rise as we stood on parade waiting for the presentations to begin; standing in the rear rank, rifles slung tightly on our backs with palms sweating. Each of the team was as nervous and excited as the teammate next to him; it was time.

‘In third place, 3…’. Was it us? There was a split second of tension before we heard ‘36 Engineer Regiment Workshop’. Only two more chances for us to achieve an award. ‘In second place, 3…’, it happened again, ‘35 Engineer Regiment LAD’. The whole team was on edge as there was now only one place left. Surely this time it was 3 RHA LAD. Finally, the announcement we were waiting for ‘The Champions of Exercise Griffin Spanner 15 is a team that showed incredible determination, who said they were here to win it from the start and they were not wrong’. The hairs stood up on the back of our necks, we were braced up and ready. ‘3rd Regiment Royal Horse Artillery LAD’. We came to attention and following the commands of our leader, SSgt Howells, we marched to the front as champions to receive our trophy.

We came to win. We went into every stand with more enthusiasm and determination than the last. We worked hard and we worked as a team and it showed. We were Tango One and we were proud.
During the past eight months there have been some significant changes within the workshop. This included the transition from LAD to Workshop with H (Precision Fires) Battery moving from 39 Regt RA to 1 RHA, still based in Newcastle and the Workshop repair responsibilities increased for Special to Role equipment. Secondly and significantly more disruptive and time consuming was the arrival of new OC Major Steve Wright. The OC gave direction to everybody of what he expects and where he wanted the workshop to be in a year’s time. His vision was simple, to transform into the best first line REME unit in the British Army; providing military and technically trained, motivated and integrated regimental sub unit, delivering support to all 1RHA and the wider Corps activity. The OC’s main focus was to continually improve the fitness (physical and technical) of the workshop personnel to deliver against any set mission – fit in body = fit in mind = technical excellence or any excuse to complete more PT.

This period has been extremely busy for the workshop personnel with ECI and Ex Cypher Dagger / Steel Sabre then moving straight in to a BATUS deployment for Prairie Storm 1-3. Throughout we have been able to maintain our core function of supporting the regiment delivering to a busy and very demanding customer. There was also time in the schedule for personnel to take part in various sporting activities, entering Craftsman’s Cup Football competition and REME Squash Championships 2014. The sporting excellence of the workshop has been clearly identified; two of its members LCpl McKenna (Army Cricket Team) and Cpl McDonald (Corps Rugby) attended tours to the Caribbean and USA respectively.

**Exercise Cypher Dagger / Steel Sabre**

Scribe: SSgt Prasad

Exercise Cypher Dagger was a regimental level Collective Training (CT) 1 and CT 2 live firing exercise on Otterburn Training Area (OTA) during February and March 2015. The workshop as a whole deployed on the area to maintain all exercising fleet and equipment in order for the Regiment to conduct their training. This exercise was the culmination of weeks of hard work in preparing the unit equipment and our soldiers prior to deployment.

All Fitter Sections imbedded with their respective battery’s and deployed under the cam nets throughout the training exercise. SSgt Walker led Chestnut Tp fitters; SSgt Lloyd did all the exercise preparation for E Bty, only to be relieved by SSgt Illingworth after being on the area for just two days (as he enjoyed the longest wedding in history); SSgt Cudmore stayed with HQ Bty in the Ammunition Control Point alongside the Workshop HQ; SSgt Mavin spearheaded H Bty and myself with B Bty. A number of tradesmen were straight from phase two training, which
ensured that this training exercise provided invaluable experience in preparation for the future deployment to BATUS.

What a way to start your career, these tradesmen embraced the opportunity and took full advantage of it. As the exercise intensified, there were moments of highs and lows. None of our technicians were trained on BGTI and at times they looked bemused as it was found AESP’s provided limited information when doing fault diagnosis. The immense knowledge possessed by the legend that is SSgt ‘Dave’ Cudmore helped our young technicians to solve the problems and getting the kit ready to fire again.

VM’s worked tirelessly across all Fitter Sections. Adverse weather conditions did not deter them; instead they rose to the challenge and performed tasks well beyond expectation. With the likes of Cfn Ball, Elsom and Exon our new addition in Armourers cohort from SEME, they have learnt a lot under the guidance of Artificer Weapons SSgt Walker – or more accurately they told him of the repair techniques and he just agreed and signed the form!

Armourers were the busiest people on exercise doing normal repair works, pre-firing checks and even an AS90 barrel change. Supply chains of spares were very efficient and the turnaround times were surprisingly unbelievable particularly items required for the AS90 fleet. The smart response times were probably related to the ASM phoning the IPT (civilians and military) at 0600 hrs every Sunday to keep them on their toes. During the course of the exercise, the OC or ASM visited all the fitter sections every day – the OC to talk about the weather, boots and socks and what physical training we had been able to complete and the ASM about equipment availability. They also brought the G1098 Storeman, Sgt Hedley and his tuck-shop, so some value was definitely added.

Exercise Steel Sabre was a 1 Arty Bde controlled exercise which was high tempo and demanding on all involved; it was a huge test for our team and we delivered against every set target. The pace of this exercise enabled the REME JNCO cohort to develop their leadership skills and provided all deployed tradesmen with the opportunity to learn, develop and perfect their trade skills and understanding.

The workshop received REME attachments from 19 Regt RA, 26 Regt RA, 3 and 6 Bn REME at various stages of exercise. High equipment availability is testament to the effort and hard work of the whole team before and during exercise. All IRHA tradesmen have achieved an invaluable amount of training and experience from the exercises and are ready to attack the opportunities presented during Exercise Praire Storm season in BATUS.

Football Team - Craftsman’s Cup Competition
Scribe: LCpl McKenna

IRHA approached the 2014/15 football season with huge confidence having performed extremely well in previous seasons and the arrival of some old guy who claimed to play a bit? However, having made the transition from LAD to a workshop meant a large turnaround of personnel; we still harboured trophy winning ambition under the very methodical guidance of the G1098 Storeman.
Being drawn away to 1 R WELSH LAD in a local Tidworth derby was definitely a motivating factor for a number of players. Some of the newer members of the side wanted to make an impression on the ‘Gaffer’ in their debut game; unfortunately he did not play as he had an ongoing injury – turning 45! The game kicked off under floodlights in chilly winter conditions. As the match went on (the first minute) a moment of brilliance gave Royal Welsh the lead. It started and finished as Sgt Warbarton gathered the ball in the centre circle and lofted an arcing shot over the frantically back pedalling LCpl McKenna in the RHA goal – the match ‘donkey’ award was sorted very early in the game! 1-0. Credit goes to the Royal Welsh for an outstanding performance. The final score was 6-0; unfortunately the result doesn’t reflect the true balance of the match. With the nucleus of our starting eleven remaining in the unit and the inclusion of Royal Welsh’s star striker Cpl Bird, (who scored a hat trick), to the 1 RHA ranks, we will be looking forward for the next season’s competition. With a bit more training and fixtures under our belt, we will endeavour to do better next time around.

Squash Championship  
Scribe: Cfn Leech

Members of the Workshop entered the REME Squash Championships led by SSgt Walker. It was a short journey from Tidworth to Aldershot, where we would be spending the next two days playing games in different categories. When we arrived at the venue, we were greeted with, what we could only describe as professional players (well to us anyway, they wore sweat bands on their heads and were not sharing the duty racquet)! As the opening brief concluded, we all hovered around the board to see who had been drawn in the first round of the tournament. LCpl Robertson, LCpl Paull, Cfn Exon and I were in team events, whilst Sgt Walker and LCpl Holbrook were representing us in the individuals. In the team event we played against different minor units where we did quite well, winning three of the five games. This came as a surprise and also boosted our confidence for the forthcoming individual events. The individual events for SSgt Walker and LCpl Holbrook didn’t go as planned as they lost in the first round.

On the second day there was an earlier start with the games beginning at 0730 hrs. I was involved in the first match of the day against our own LCpl Robertson, I lost. LCpl Robertson advanced to the quarter final, where he lost as lady luck deserted him and he played someone who had seen a squash court previously. Cfn Exon reached the semi-final where he played a hard fought match but was unlucky to lose. With all our teams out of their respective groups we watched the final, showing the spirit of sportsmanship. We will be better prepared for the next tournament.

Christmas Function  
Scribe: Cfn Exon

On 7 November all available members of the Workshop arrived in Salisbury for our Christmas function. The venue was a picturesque thirteenth century inn on the outskirts of the town, overlooking the River Avon. We had decided that there should be a theme and after much debate we decided it should be James Bond. To compliment the theme and entertain the guests we also hired a casino.

The function room was a classy venue, as we walked through the doors we were greeted by Christmas songs and dining tables filled with crackers and decorations. In the far corner there was a blackjack table and a roulette table. After a short speech from the AQMS and a not so short speech from the OC, we finally began our meals. The food served was delicious if a little cool after the OC chat. Following the food we moved to the blackjack and roulette tables. It was good fun although some people, (including myself) got a little carried away and lost all their chips in the first ten minutes. The winner with the most chips at the end of the night was Cpl Green. He was awarded fifty pounds which he very kindly donated to the Craftsmen to spend at the bar.

Later the DJ played some slightly more contemporary music and people slowly but surely drifted onto the dance floor with some fantastic shapes being thrown. As the party drew to a close the oldies retired to their beds whilst the remainder hit the town – we were all on parade for PT the next day, even if some were still dressed as Goldfinger and Jaws.

I think the party was a great success, lots of people turned up and had a fantastic evening and it got people feeling the Christmas spirit, even though it was only November.

Reflection

Getting an overall GREEN in an Equipment Care Inspection (ECI), securing a GREEN grading on the TECHEVAL completed on exercise and the performance of every soldier throughout the period is a clear indication of our success. We have soldiers representing the Regiment, Corps and Army on the sports field and there is always time for social events. As we move into the battery rotation through the BATUS 2015 season, we now have clear daylight in the Forecast of Events which matches delivery of the OC’s latest strap-line, ‘Our soldiers must have something to look forward to be it trade or military training courses, family time at their convenience or the comfort of routine.’ Not that we endorse poaching but we are always open to transfers and we can guarantee a place in the starting team and the opportunities develop and learn.
The Week’s Events by LCpl Holmes

1 COLDM GDS was tasked to conduct a leadership development exercise for all REME units in their AOR. The AQMS put together a three day training package that included a wide range of activities also guest speakers including the Senior Instructor from Artificer Command Field Course, Capt Lewis, RSM from the resident unit and even the Corps ASM!

The exercise began with a PFA on Monday morning which helped sort the participants into fair fitness groups for the physical aspects. We then moved into the lecture theatre where BEME and Capt Lewis provided views on what made a good or bad leader and the personalities of a leader. An update of the future of conflict was also given. On Monday evening we were invited into the WOs’ and Sgts’ Mess for a dinner night. Whilst there, we had a five minute briefing by the RSM followed by great briefing from the Corps ASM. It was a privilege to receive an update from the most senior soldier in the Corps and everyone felt the same. The mess was fantastic and steeped in history; if nothing else, it gave everyone the aspiration to push themselves to enter this elite club.

Tuesday started in the lecture theatre. We were divided into three groups for a debate session; group one was judging, group two was FOR and group three was AGAINST the argument. Different topics came up and everyone had a chance to give their opinion also changing between the three roles. This gave a huge insight on how to conduct a structured argument and tested our current affairs knowledge. It even tested our diplomacy when we were made to put an argument forward that we didn’t agree with. After the debate session we moved onto the command tasks. For those who had never done a command task, it was a good learning experience and a refresher for those who had done them before; new to us all was acting as DS and giving feedback to those being tested.

Wednesday, being the final day of the exercise, was going to be the most physically demanding, the Sandhurst assault course. Once SSgt (SSI) Loader had us complete the (lengthy) warm up, we went straight into a walkthrough of the assault course that we were about to tackle. The first time around was a race against someone of equal physical ability, this was without a doubt, one of the hardest and longest assault courses I have ever done! The second time around we were divided into two teams with a race between the two. To make it more interesting the AQMS brought out a couple of medicine balls and 25 kg power bags that we had to take across. When we thought we had finished and won, there was a stretcher that needed taking around the parade square - a surprise for everyone!

The exercise was very enjoyable and we all got a lot from it; being a leader of men is harder than we thought and I can’t wait for the next leadership development exercise!
104 Bn REME is one of the six REME Reserve Bns and is paired with 5 FS Bn REME. The battalion stood up in July 2014, with a new Fd Coy in Swindon and 148 Fd Coy in a new location in Derby on a strong foundation of manning from 73 Engr LAD. In December, 118 Rec Coy and 126 Fd Coy were resubordinated from 5 FS Bn REME and 101 Bn REME respectively. 104 Bn REME covers a wide area, stretching from Nottingham in the north to Swindon in the south, with a detached platoon as far east as Ipswich. Over the last six months, the battalion has grown from modest beginnings to being more than 60% recruited with over 220 personnel attested. The growth has come from a combination of 1st line REME TA transferees, new Reserve recruits, as well as ex-Regulars joining up and benefitting from the Reserve Commitment Bonus Scheme (2014DIN01-103, a limited training commitment of 19 days for three years or up to a taxable £10,000 incentive if the annual training commitment is completed). With 12 regular soldiers from our paired battalion permanently forward to aid in the recruiting effort, we are seeing a steady upward trend in enlistments.

The first year of the battalion has proved challenging, against a backdrop of reorganisation, high permanent staff gapping and constrained infrastructure in some sites. However, the battalion has already developed a strong ethos and is generating substantial outputs, including quality Special To Arm (STA) training across all trade groups, and soldiers taking up Annual Deployment Exercise (ADE) opportunities in Canada and Kenya. One group of tradesmen have relished the opportunity to work on unfamiliar protected mobility fleet at the Herrick Exchange Point (HXP) and 118 Rec Coy sup-
Under A2020 restructuring and a reduction in Regular Power Pack Repair (PPR) capacity, 104 Bn REME has been tasked with developing a PPR Reserve Resilience Platoon to mitigate the PPR risk on an enduring basis. 129 Fd Coy are the focal point for this capability and 1 RTR LAD and 5 FS Bn REME have already hosted members of 104 Bn REME on two trade weekends introducing VM class one and two tradesmen to the PPR facility and the CV12 (Challenger 2 fleet) and CV8 (Warrior Fleet) PPR.

The first weekend surprised the Regulars, with the quality and level of output the Reservists achieved with two CV8 Power Packs regenerated for the Forward Repair Pool (FRP). The battalion tradesmen involved have appreciated the opportunity to learn new skills and work alongside their Regular counterparts sharing knowledge and experiences.

In order to fulfil all these commitments, 104 Bn REME with tremendous support from 5 FS Bn REME is now actively recruiting for all of our sub-units with a variety of ranks and posts, including Technicians, Armourers, Metalsmiths, Recovery Mechanics, TSS, PTIs, Clerks, Chefs and CMTs.

If you are interested contact: 104REME-BHQ-ROSWO@mod.uk or our facebook page – 104 Battalion Royal Electrical Mechanical Engineers.

Quick Facts – 104 Bn REME
Based in Northampton, Corby, Derby, Nottingham, Coventry, Redditch, Swindon and Ipswich
The only Reserve battalion with a Power Pack Repair Platoon
This year soldiers will be exercising in Austria, Belize, Croatia, France, Kenya, Warminster and Wales
Currently have vacancies for: VMs, ARMRs, MTSMs, Rec Mechs, PTIs, Clerks, TSS, Chefs, CMTs, and NOW Technicians.

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craftsmaneditor@reme-rhq.org.uk
OC’s Foreword

39 Regiment Royal Artillery Workshop REME has been one of the longest serving sub-units within the Regiment since its establishment post WW2 in 1947. Since then the workshop has provided both 1st and 2nd Line ES to the regiment during a vast array of deployments around the world. More recently, the workshop has been fully committed for the last eight years providing a Fitter Section in support of the resident Precision Fires MLRS Bty in Afghanistan. On 22 February 2015, post operations and under A2020 re-establishment, the regiments and workshop disbanded and placed into suspended animation, with the PF Bty’s and Ftr Sects being re-aligned to three separate Precision Strike Regt’s based in Tidworth and Gutersloh. With the temporary re-naming of the barracks to Albemarle Station, the workshop technical infrastructure has been handed over to 3 RHA LAD on their return to the UK from Hohne, as part of the A2020 re-basing plan.

Serving with the Regt has been an honour for many a REME soldiers and it is with great sadness that the hangar doors have now been closed for the final time - 'Absentis, tamen non forgotten.'

Deployment to Kenya
Scribe: Sgt Chapman

Deploying to Kenya for six months was a new experience, both trade related and socially. Being employed as the Wksp MT SNCO, this was not like any normal unit where the eqpt fleet is managed by JAMES MIS. In Kenya, the unit were still using the old FMT 1002 system and paper ATUDs, which kept the MT Dept busy on a daily basis.

Apart from the new experience of being employed out of trade as the MT SNCO, as a Technician there was still plenty of trade related work to keep the fleet on the road, ranging from producing circuit diagrams for solar IR sensors for the KFOR vehicles, to converting two Landrovers into crash out vehicles for 25 Flt Sqn, which required numerous modifications from spotlight to Motorola radio fits.

Although life in Kenya was very busy, members of the workshop still found time to assist with charitable activities. This involved numerous civilian organisations requesting engineering assistance, including installation of playgrounds and painting of school fences, repairs to vehicles and also joining in with the community to play football against the local schools, whose students would put many a premiership footballer to shame. Lt ‘Molly’ McLean provided the entertainment during long days at the schools by accompanying the children in song or dance in order to prevent them getting covered in paint.

Op HERRICK 20
Scribe: Cpl Stokes

With 132 Bty due to deploy on Op HERRICK 20 in May 2014 and after having completed all of the pre-deployment training, including a further six weeks special to role eqpt training for the Tech Elect’s, the Bty Ftr Sect commanded by SSgt Aiden
Carbutt, was ready for the task in hand. On arrival in Camp Bastion, the battery quickly established themselves to the ‘gun positions’ one based in the North of the airfield and the other to the South, which were also co-located with the USMC. The role of the Ftr Sect was to provide equipment support to the new UOR Exactor 2 platform, a precision strike capability. Much to the frustration of everyone, the missile system was not tasked for use on a live target, however was made ready on a number of occasions for countless close calls. After a few months, the main effort quickly switched to the drawdown of Camp Bastion and the backloading of equipment and stores, majority of which was legacy from previous tours. As the tour drew to a close the ‘gun positions’ were slowly scaled back and personal sustainment was reduced to a bergan and a camp cot. Finally, the battery re-located back to the main base in Camp Bastion, where we attended the closing ceremony of the memorial wall, which was a fitting and moving tribute to all that had made the ultimate sacrifice during the 12 year campaign.

The final few days in Camp Bastion came to a dramatic end, with a fire mission for Exactor 2 being executed, which was the first successful firing of the Precision Strike capability. After a brief-stop over in Cyprus, the Bty and Ftr Sect finally arrived back in Newcastle to conduct some well-deserved Geordie decompression and to confirm that everything was the same as we had left it in May. With everybody normalised, POTL began and the final and very last Op HERRICK for 39 Regt RA was completed.

**BATUS**

_Scribe: Sgt Mee_

On 11 August 2014, 39 Regt RA deployed 176 Bty to BATUS in Canada as the Precision Strike capability to 1 YORKS BG. In support of the Bty, the Wksp deployed a seven strong Ftr Sect to provide ES to a troop of MLRS, including two Bulldogs and the RRV along with the ‘B’ echelon vehs.

Exercise Prairie Storm 3 was the first time in over 10 years that MLRS had deployed to BATUS in support of a BG and proved to be a successful demonstration of the MLRS capability. The vehicles and the Battery conducted 28 days of tactical manoeuvres and live firing. For the battery and the less experienced Gunners and Commanders, it was the first time that they have been able to deploy with full freedom of manoeuvre and not be constrained by the size of the training area.

This bespoke deployment allowed both the Bty and Ftr Sect to conduct valuable training and really highlighted what the MLRS platform and battery were capable of in a more austere environment. During the time in BATUS the battery were also allocated plenty of exciting AT places and for those who didn’t get chance to partake, cultural visits to cities within Alberta were laid on, including trips to Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge and Banff. Overall the experience was enjoyed by everyone involved and placed the Bty Ftr Sect in good order in preparation for the high readiness role with 19 Regt RA commencing January 2015.

**Ex Northern Alpine Supreme**

_Scribe: Sgt Hughes_

With the bulk of the work now complete prior to the drawdown and disbandment of the regiment, it was decided that one last ski trip was to be organised. A small expedition of nine was assembled with the OC, Maj Lockwood as the Chief Instructor. With everything sorted out in record time, the team set off on 1 March 2015 from Albermarle Bks and headed for Manchester Airport. After a short hop over the water and short taxi ride, the team arrived in Neustift, Austria and with the accommodation and equipment all sorted it was time for to sample a few local beverages in readiness for six full days of Alpine skiing on Stubat Glacier.

Throughout the week, the OC put the team through their paces, with WO2 (CSM) Matty Cowlard awarded the best fall hat almost every day and Sgt Gaz Henderson demonstrating badly his attempt at off-piste snowboarding. All in all, a great final expedition was enjoyed by all participants. This has been the second ski trip that I have been a part of and for anyone who is looking to gain AT qualifications and have a lot of fun in the process, then skiing is highly recommended (both Nordic and Alpine). The workshop has had a long history of...
organising annual ski trips and it has been a pleasure to be a part of this one prior to its disbandment in February 2015.

Children-in-Need Cross Border Challenge  
_Scribe: LCpl Bushell-Chapman_

The Cross Border Challenge was planned and organised following an idea from the OC to raise money for _Children in Need_. The challenge involved cycling from Edinburgh to Newcastle down the A68, which was roughly 100 miles in of undulating winding roads and non-forgiving hills. The participants were divided into three groups, two completing roughly 50 miles each, with the elite group (personnel who had ridden a bike before) completing the entire route.

On Tuesday 5 November 2014, the teams accompanied by the Regt 2IC and Wksp CSM on motorbikes to act as safety outriders departed for Edinburgh to have a photo taken at the start point at Edinburgh Castle and also to prepare the equipment and get some much needed rest prior to the long ride ahead. After an early morning call and breakfast at McDonalds, the teams set off at 0600 hrs on 6 November full of determination and confidence and even though the weather wasn’t exactly the best, morale was high.

Following a gruelling day in the saddle, at around 1500 hrs the teams eventually came over the brow of the hill towards Alnwick Barracks in Newcastle and rolled through the gates to a fanfare of well-wishers and fireworks. Throughout the entire day, the teams had only sustained two punctures and following the collection of money pledged had managed to raise a grand total of £1100, which was presented by cheque on the televised event at Stockton on Tees. A huge well done to everyone that took part both with the riding and admin support.

Football  
_Scribe: Cpl Lucas_

As part of 39 Regt RA, the Wksp has flourished in recent years in all aspects of sporting life. Be it in regimental sports or REME based competitions, workshop personnel have done extremely well. Over the years, they have participated in various sporting arenas including: football, boxing, rugby, cycling, tug of war and cross country. Although a varied range of sports, it was football and boxing where they really excelled.

The football team has had great success in recent years, culminating in winning the Craftsman Cup Minor Units competition in both the 2010/11 and the 2012/13 seasons. This was then followed up in both seasons by winning the reverse fixture against the REME team in Germany, who had also won the same trophy on German soil.

On the boxing front, there have been many great representatives from the Workshop, especially at regimental boxing evenings, but it was LCpl Dunne who has shined the brightest, going on to win the RA Championships at middleweight in 2013 and light middleweight in 2014 at Larkhill. LCpl Dunne holds a record of 14 wins and one defeat and has been touted as a future Army boxer.

The Workshop has also had personnel represent the Corps at different sports and to name but a few. Cpl ‘Tommy’ Allatt and Cpl ‘Phil’ Lucas for football, Cpl ‘Mark’ Robertson at cycling (recently selected for the Army Team) and Cpl ‘Craig’ Macdonald for rugby. All in all, the Wksp has had many sporting successes over the years as part of 39 Regt RA and it will be sad to see it come to an end, but here’s hoping those remaining can end these last few months on a high with some more trophies for the cabinet.
On 15 April 2015 the Commander, Commanding Officers and chosen RSMs (me!) from 102 Logistic Brigade deployed on a Staff Ride to the Falkland Islands to identify lessons learned from Op CORPORATE in 1982. Discussions and analysis would identify the relevance of the lessons for the current and future operating environment in the following areas:

- Command, communications and control
- Joint and single services CSS at the operational level
- Realities of war

The overall theme throughout the study was the moral, physical and conceptual components of fighting power. Preparations were extremely thorough and having completed a reading list that would have filled a small library, the attendees deployed from Brize Norton on a 17 hour flight late in the evening of 15 April.

In attendance from REME were Col Bullard, MBE, Dep Comd (ES), Lt Col Prosser (1CS Bn), Lt Col Hughes (106 Bn), Lt Col Black (102 Bn) and myself. Our academic guide was Lt Col (Retd) Peter McCutcheon from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

The study began on 15 April at the Defence Academy at Shrivenham with very captivating lectures from some of the main characters of the conflict who briefed on their first hand experiences during the war. Cdre Michael Clapp CB RN (Comd Amphibious Force), Col Ivor Hellberg (CO, Cdo Log Regt) and Brig Ian Gardiner (OC X Coy, 45 Cdo RM) delivered detailed and emotive presentations on their experiences and the lessons they learned. The first syndicate also delivered their analysis of the C2 at the operational level. The principal lesson was that C2 must be pre-planned and as simple as possible. Clear articulation of the ‘main effort’ and which Commander is supported for which phase is also critical to success.

That evening the journey to the Falkland Islands began a total of 8000 miles via the Ascension Islands. Slightly weary, the main body met up with a select few who deployed early to recce, secure and hold key terrain ie collect vehicles and sign for accommodation. After an impressive evening meal the group headed to a more social setting to discuss the plan for the week.

The next day, we were privileged to have a helicopter recce around the island. This was to really appreciate the challenges of the ground whilst also understanding the terrain and scale of achievement by the British Forces. We landed at Ajax Bay, next to what was an old meat factory, but became the ‘The Red and Green Life Machine,’ which served as the field hospital run by Surg Capt Rick Jolly OBE who many of the older readers will remember; it was also where the Brigade Maintenance Area (BSG in modern terms) was sighted and commanded by the Cdo Log Regt RM. Whilst here, sustainment and reach were analysed, focussing predominantly on the logistic constraints of the British task force. We visited San Carlos Water and the British Military Cemetery where Lt Col H Jones VC, CO 2 PARA was laid to rest after his heroic action that ended in his death during the battle for Goose Green. Before leaving, the Padre led a small, yet poignant service of remembrance to honour those that lost their lives.

The third day involved a tactical level study focusing on the battle for Goose Green conducted by 2 PARA. After receiving an initial ground brief by me and an in depth brief from CO 253 Med Regt, we walked the ground of Darwin Hill to understand the mind-set from both the Argentinians’ and 2 PARA’s positions and more importantly what limited 2 PARA’s advance before they took over 1000 POWs at Goose Green. In my view, this was the turning point of the whole campaign as the initiative switched to the British Forces. The Staff Ride analysed leadership, tactics and the realities of conflict. The battle for Goose Green certainly had it all and it was a captivating experience.

The following day we travelled to Bluff Cove, the
McCutcheon describe the battle and what 3 PARA had to accomplish, we were all in awe. He focussed on C2, leadership and tactics. By this time the rain and freezing wind seemed almost trivial.

Before the staff ride finished there was one final question set by the Bde Comd, ‘What was the most significant event or action that led to winning the war?’ This question raised a lot of debate and after hearing how the war unfolded during the week, it offered a chance to reflect on our views; it was a great way to end the study.

I was only six years old when the Argentinians invaded the Falkland Islands, so suffice to say I knew very little about the campaign that the British Task Force undertook. I can quite honestly say that this staff ride has broadened my way of thinking and my overall knowledge of a campaign that could have ended so differently. We will remember them.

site where Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) Sir Galahad was bombed and 48 men (most of which were Welsh Guards) aboard were killed; it is also where RFA Sir Tristram was bombed killing two crew members. Here the syndicates delivered their analysis of Readiness and Force Preparation, which highlighted the different levels of preparedness between 3 Cdo Bde and 5 Inf Bde. It reinforced the importance of both collective and individual Readiness in today’s modern Army. The key take away was: training, training, training.

Going into day five and up to this point weather conditions had been cold but sunny, so we couldn’t really appreciate the conditions that the Task Force endured back in 1982. That was until the day we were to walk to, up and over Mount Longdon, retracing the line of advance of 3 PARA. 23 soldiers were killed during this battle, one of which was Cfn Alexander Shaw, aged 20. When we listened to our academic, Lt Col (Retd) Peter McCutcheon describe the battle and what 3 PARA had to accomplish, we were all in awe. He focussed on C2, leadership and tactics. By this time the rain and freezing wind seemed almost trivial.

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Life as a crafty at 24 Cdo Engr Regt is very different to a workshop outside 3 Commando Brigade. The high work rate, good ‘phys’ level and long deployments require a certain type of personnel, of which I’m glad to be part. I arrived in May 2014, with intentions of doing the Commando Course as soon as possible. I had done a commando familiarisation course at 29 Cdo Wksps and liked what they had to offer. I had a month to prepare myself and complete some techniques with the rope climbs and rope regains with help from my colleagues in the workshop. I was loaded onto the course, which comprises three stages after a month of self-inflicted training.

The first stage being the Commando Conditioning Course (CCC), this is where 24 Cdo train you for four weeks and get you to a good level of fitness in order to meet the requirements for the second stage, which is the Pre Commando Course (PCC). At this stage, staff from the Royal Marines Training School, Lympstone, come and take part in assessing you for four weeks. The main criteria are military knowledge and lots of commando physical training. On the last week of the assessment, you carry out four essential criteria tests. The first is a 30ft rope climb carrying webbing and rifle weighing a total of 21 lbs, followed by a lap around the assault course aka ‘Bottom Field’. This needs to be completed in under five minutes, this then leads into the 200m fireman’s carry under 90 seconds and the last test is a full regain. During a regain you pull yourself along a 15 metre rope, about half way along you hang by your finger tips and conduct the technique with the training you have learnt over the past eight weeks. Finally, you make your way to the end of the obstacle, climb down and that’s the four criteria tests completed...easy!

The main stage – being loaded onto the All Arms Commando Course (AACC), which takes place at Lympstone, for the first three weeks you will carry out these tests over and over again until your ‘Bottom Field’ pass out. The first week at Lympstone is a survival exercise showing you how to survive in the elements with the limited resources around you. Once the first three weeks are completed, you move to harder criteria tests such as the six-mile speed march and 12 mile load carry, while still on exercise learning new skills and refreshing old ones. The Commando Training Team look for you giving 110% in everything you do all the way through to week eight, where you will complete the four infamous ‘Commando Tests’ which are: endurance course, nine mile speed march, Tarzan assault course and the 30 miler. After completion of the 30 miler you will be awarded the ‘green beret.’

Feeling proud and arriving back at my unit, I was asked if I wanted to deploy to Norway, which I gladly grabbed with both hands and by the next week I was doing a two week pre mountain training course in Snowdonia. It was amazing but testing at the same time, our skills on navigation during really bad weather (white out) came into play trusting ONLY the bearing, which you worked out the night before. I really enjoyed this type of exercise because it was something different.

After my Christmas leave I had a week preparing my kit fit for cold weather environments. This consisted of simple small things but would become more apparent when the temperature is below 0°C. When I arrived in Norway I did a week exercise showing how to live and manoeuvre in the deep snow. The final 48 hours were very interesting! We completed a 24 hour survival exercise on which the Royal Marines Mountain Leaders (ML) took us through many different shelters. I knew most of them from my previous survival course but it was good to refresh my memory. We were also surviving on what we had killed such as chickens, using only what was provided in our pocket contents. The next day consisted of the infamous ‘ice breaker drills,’ to simulate you patrolling along and falling into a frozen lake, without panicking you have to recover your senses and retrieve all of your kit. The rest of my time in Norway was spent conducting my trade, learning new things and fixing vehicles such as the BV 206 with limited tools and spares.

Since returning from Norway my squadron has elevated onto Lead Commando Group (LCG) and able to deploy anywhere in the world within 48 hours notice to move. For the remaining time on LCG we have pre-planned exercises such as Exercise Green Dragon and OP COUGAR, which will take place in Cyprus this year. I look forward to this because once again it will expand my experience within the field force and allow me to see more of what 3 Cdo Bde has to offer.
Introduction

What many people are unaware of is, adjacent to St Barbara’s Barracks, Fallingbostel, there were a number of large prisoner of war camps which began to be populated during the German Blitzkreig advances of the Second World War. Within the barbed wire confines, the Red Army lost 30,000 soldiers alone due to starvation, exhaustion, extremes of temperature and disease, with a further 734 deaths of soldiers belonging to the United States, Belgium, Britain, France, Italy, Yugoslavia, South Africa, Canada, Holland, Poland and Slovakia. During recent years, 2 CS Bn REME has taken the lead in celebrating the anniversary of their liberation and played host to many former prisoners of war of various nationalities. With this year marking the 70th anniversary and with British troops due to leave Fallingbostel within the next few months, it proved all the more poignant.

The Liberation in 1945

On 16 April 1945, the 8th King’s Royal Irish Hussars, 7th Armoured Division, had awoken having spent the night leaguerung in the turnip fields of the northern German hamlet of Düsborn. After a rushed breakfast of egg banjos, washed down with hot tea, orders were issued for them to push north-east to the neighbouring town of Fallingbostel.

Recce Troop, commanded by Captain Pierson, was specifically given the task of determining the location of two large prisoner of war camps thought to lie to the east of Fallingbostel. Being the Division’s armoured reconnaissance regiment, the Troop advanced in their M3 Stuart light tanks, towards an unmistakably large area shown on the map with uniformly positioned buildings. With C Squadron hot on their heels, they nosed cautiously through the pinewoods until coming across a number of high-rise buildings served with rail flats. It was here that they were met by a human mass of khaki, with a prominent figure being seen to wear the maroon beret. Dressed to a standard far higher than that of the liberating troops, these prisoners of war had maintained an excellent level of military discipline throughout their captivity by the persuasion of this man himself, WO1 (RSM) Lord, Grenadier Guards, of the 1st Airborne Division.

The contrast between the neighbouring camps was quite staggering and despite the elation which could be seen in the faces of the men being liberated, it could be observed that there was order and discipline. These soldiers were fit, reasonably well fed and healthy; the Camp Medical Officer could even profess to their being no cases of typhus. With an exchange of autographs on both sides, the conversation invariably began with ‘What’s your mob’. A most memorable day for all those involved.

Our Honoured Guests
- The Former Prisoners of War

Private Percy Lewis of the 1st Battalion, the Buckinghamshire Regiment - landed on Sword Beach, Normandy, on 6 June 1944 and fought as an infantryman through France, Belgium, and Holland. He was injured during combat operations and returned to fighting as a radio operator with the Black Watch. He was captured on the Dutch-German border in early October 1944 and sent to Stalag XI-B until his liberation.

Corporal Charles Mayhead of the Royal Army Service Corps - joined the British Army after the outbreak of hostilities in 1939. He fought in North Africa until his capture in 1942 where he was initially held at Tobruk before being shipped to Naples, Bologna, and Novara, Italy. It was here that he made a break for freedom in an attempt to head across the Alps to Switzerland, but was captured and moved to Braunschweig, Germany. After interrogation he was transferred to Stalag XI-B, where he finally escaped again and made his way west to be liberated by troops of the British Army.

Leutnant Günter Halm of the 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, 21st Division - served as an anti-tank gunner with the Afrika Korps. On 22 July 1942, aged only 19, he won the Knight’s Cross at Ruweisat Ridge, El Alamein, for playing a lead role in breaking up a 120 strong British tank attack with his 7.62cm anti-tank gun, the PaK 36(r). Having destroyed 9 Matildas and Valentines himself, the combined defensive effects caused a faltering in the attacking...
Stalag Commemorative Weekend 18 - 19 April

The Weekend Itself

Thursday and Friday saw the arrival of many of the former prisoners of war, who were eagerly greeted by their respective personal hosts. WO2 (RQMS) Freddie Laker teamed up Percy Lewis, who was also accompanied by a former serviceman, Mr George Mathews, who had been mobilised in the immediate post-war years. WO2 (CSM) Mel Davies partnered up with Charlie Mayhead, accompanied by his daughter, Sally, and WO2 (AQMS) Philip Graham entertained Lt (a.D.) Günter Halm and his lady wife, Regine.

The start of the official programme commenced with a Friday brunch in the WOs & Sgts Mess, attended by a select few and shortly afterwards a televised ceremony took place at Fallingbostel Military Museum, which also involved footage of the camps being shown by a Russian television crew. Now situated in the historical Union buildings outside camp, its curator, Mr Kevin Greenhalgh, a former SQMS with the 2nd Royal Tank Regiment, was thrilled to share the moment with his honoured guests after many months of tiresome hard work.

Following this, a battlefield study of the fighting that took place in the local area was led by WO2 (AQMS) Graham, where he imbued his in-depth knowledge on anyone willing to listen about the April 1945 battles for the bridgeheads at Essel and Rethem.

That evening, the Warrant Officers’ and Sergeants’ Mess held a meet and greet, before heading down to the museum for what was a very colourful 1940’s garden party.

Saturday also began with brunch and another visit to the vicinity of the museum where a number of re-enactors set up various specific encampments which ranged from a WWII representation of the force’s command structure and the assault collapsed. Due to his bravery and the fact that his own gun had taken a number of direct hits; resulting in injuries to its three man crew, he was decorated in a televised ceremony by Field Marshal Rommel himself.

In 1944 he went on to form part of the Normandy defences, having been promoted to lieutenant, and fought against the Allies during the D Day landings, later being captured and transferred to America as a POW.

Halm receiving the Knight’s Cross from General Field Marshall Erwin Rommel

WO2 (AQMS) Philip Graham covering the Battle of Essel where 450 soldiers of 6 Commando advanced through thick forest in extended file on the German positions to establish a bridgehead on the Aller

The prelude to dinner

2 Lt (a.D.) Günter Halm, left, during the action the earned him Germany’s highest award. Note the damage to the gun’s mantel resulting from a direct hit
East Yorkshire Regiment to the Infanterie-Regiment Großdeutschland and even a group depicting the US involvement in Vietnam. Additionally, a number of UOR and conventional vehicles were placed on display, along with contributions from a Land Rover enthusiast and even a member of the public in possession of a working Volkswagen Kübelwagen. The day proved extremely popular, despite the biggest threat being that of wet weather.

Staying with the museum, a 1940s Black-Out dance was held that evening, while the former prisoners of war entourage went into the Warrant Officers’ and Sergeants’ Mess for a formal dinner, organised by SSgt Lee Murray. Headed up by the RSM, WO1 William Biggar, and accompanied on the top table by the CO, Lt Col Richard Gibb REME, CO SCOTS DG, and former POWs Charlie and Percy, the evening fitted such a wonderful occasion that even saw Lt (a.D.) Günter Halm receiving a standing ovation for his speech on Anglo-German friendship.

Remaining with tradition, Sunday began with brunch before the entourage moved in procession to the site of the Stalag XI-B memorial, piped along by Trooper Crowe of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards. In a poignant church service, the Commanding Officer, and his second in command, Maj Paul Francis, performed readings and Hugh Pierson, son of the aforementioned Captain Pierson, read out his late father’s moving account of the liberation, followed by the wreath laying ceremony and last post. Attended also by Brigadier

East Yorkshire Regiment to the Infanterie-Regiment Großdeutschland and even a group depicting the US involvement in Vietnam. Additionally, a number of UOR and conventional vehicles were placed on display, along with contributions from a Land Rover enthusiast and even a member of the public in possession of a working Volkswagen Kübelwagen. The day proved extremely popular, despite the biggest threat being that of wet weather.

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Mortimer, Commander 20 Armoured Brigade and Colonel Reynolds, Commander Bergen-Hohne Garrison, the service was blessed by sunshine and all those present retired to the Warrant Officers’ and Sergeants’ Mess for a very enjoyable garden party, Sunday buffet and drinks.

Summary
The commemoration of Stalag 2015 was particularly poignant for all personnel taking part, inclusive of our very venerable veterans. This year draws to a close the Battalions unique connection and affiliation to Stalag and the welcome return of our remaining POW’s. As we prepare to move to our new home in Scotland, we leave behind a legacy and connection to Fallingbostel and the local community. It is hoped that the Battalion can continue to give it’s full to support to the Stalag commemorations, in Germany or the UK.
Rest in peace – Les Allen, Tom Carpenter and Frank Malbon all former POW’s of Stalag XI-B.
When you go home tell them of us and say ‘for their tomorrow we gave our today’.

REME Commando Fam 2015
25-30 October 2015
Hosted by
29 Cdo Wksp

For more info or to book contact:
Cpl Partridge
☎: 93784 6099
or Chris Drake, Wksp Clk
☎: 93784 6013

Help the
REME Benevolent Fund
to help others
The re-dedication service of the Corps memorial was held at the NMA at Alrewas on Tuesday 2 June. Conducted by the Corps Padre the Rev Stephen Thatcher, in the presence of the MG, Lt Gen A Figgures CB, CBE, it successfully brought the curtain down on an eighteen month project to upgrade it.

On 19 May 2015, the last part of the refurbishment project was complete, when the new granite engraved information lecterns were put in place by the stonemason replacing the illegible brass plates. The following day in the presence of Corps Secretary Lt Col (Retd) Bill Barclay, Corps Welfare Officer Mr Richard Barber and Corps Padre the Rev Stephen Thatcher, the memorial was finally returned to the Corps in pristine condition, in readiness for its re-dedication.

The need for the refurbishment was first mooted to the Corps hierarchy following Founders Day in October 2013, where numerous people were shocked to see how soon the relatively new memorial had fallen into a poor state, having only been originally dedicated on 9 July 2009 by Colonel in Chief, HRH The Prince Philip.

This prompted Maj (Retd) Gordon Bonner to approach Col REME and Executive to see what could be done to halt its decline. After many years in the Corps, Gordon obviously got the golden rule never to volunteer for anything, as the ball was placed firmly into his court to formulate a refurbishment plan.

A refurbishment team was assembled consisting of a serving Corps officer to lead the project, Capt Andrew Corrigan, who at the time was in post at Arborfield but then posted to BAOR, which left Maj (Retd) Gordon Bonner, who then co-opted myself to represent the REME Association and our nominated stonemason Mr Keith Rackham from the firm of H.L.Perfitt Ltd. The latter three had previously been involved in the project to build the impressive Army Apprentice Memorial on site.

One of the main jobs was to implement a sustainable and fully financed maintenance programme so the NMA would take responsibility for the memorial for its whole life.

Many health and safety aspects came to light and were rectified during the project, such as the introduction of granite curbing, which had been cut and imported from China! In addition, the application of a slip proof base material for the ramp, to join the ‘Rail train’ roadway and so eliminating the pooling at the ramp base which made access for the disabled impossible.
A total re-profiling of the area was required and many tonnes of soil being imported to the site to remove the steep sides of the memorial mound.

Although there is no doubting the original sculptor, Mr Alan Micklethwaite, had done a brilliant job of the Corps badge roundels, which were originally gilded around the edge, sadly with the base stone being soft and porous, it meant that the gilding would not stick to the damp stone and the raised profile of the badges soon began to erode away, so these had to be replaced with hardwearing granite roundels.

Likewise the centre flat slate disc bearing the Corps motto of ‘Arte -et-Marte’, became a water trap and required replacing, so a depiction of the stable belt buckle produced on a domed granite roundel was introduced.

The last task was to remove what was left of the gilding in the shallow cut lettering on the memorial front and rear faces, and to have them re cut deeper and highlighted with the application of a dark grey paint, enabling them to be read from the base of the ramp.

During the whole refurbishment process, regular fortnightly visits were made to check on progress, with a photographic record being kept as the project went along. On re dedication day this whole photographic record, and relevant paper trail had been compiled into a record dossier that was presented to the Master General, during the after dedication buffet in the hospitality tent, which he accepted to be kept in the Corps archives.

As can now be seen by any visitor to the National Memorial and Arboretum at Alrewas, we now have possibly the most stunning memorial on the site that Craftsmen past, present and future serving in the Corps can be justly proud.

We now look forward to later in the year when 10,000 bluebell bulbs will be purchased and sown around the wooded area adjacent to the memorial.

The significance of ‘Bluebell’, for those not familiar with radio procedure is the call sign for REME.
On Tuesday 5 May, the REME tennis team took a four man squad, comprising of Capt Russ Lewis, SSgt Andy Bickerton, Cpl Simanajuntak and myself to Edinburgh for the annual match against The Edinburgh All Stars at the Craiglockhart Tennis Centre.

We departed Gatwick Airport just after midday in the knowledge we had a long training session ahead of us that evening. As we touched down in Scotland we were greeted with the most traditional of Scottish welcomes, thick dark cloud and rain!

Luckily for us we had an ace up our sleeve in Lt Col (Retd) Roger Jagger, previous REME Tennis Chairman, who after inspecting the tennis courts at Craigiehall (Army HQ Scotland) decided the courts were unplayable. We cut our losses and instead he took us to an Edinburgh steak house for a lovely meal and a rundown of REME tennis success since he left. The REME tennis squad currently hold three of the four Army tennis trophies, and are in contention for the fourth - the Army Summer League title.

The following morning we made the short trip to the Craiglockhart Tennis Centre. The format for the match was REME vs Edinburgh All Stars with a ‘Masters’ doubles match being played alongside, representing both teams. Last year the REME team comfortably won the fixture and this year the Manager of the Edinburgh team took no chances, pulling together a very strong team consisting of professional tennis coaches.

After a brief warm up it was clear for all to see that REME had a tough task ahead, the young players from Edinburgh University were of a very high standard and they had come to win.

On court one, the REME pair of Cfn Padgett and Cpl Simanajuntak played the All Stars first pair in the opening game of doubles. The opening set went past quite quickly with the All Stars pushing no punches and taking the first set 6-1. Having seen the relentless standard of their opposition the REME pair got stuck in playing some incredible tennis and led the second set 6-5, before the All Stars leveled to take it to a tiebreak. Unfortunately, the All Stars proved too strong and won the tiebreak to win the match 2-0.

On court two, Capt Lewis and SSgt Bickerton had an equally hard task in their opening match with the Edinburgh men once again playing some outstanding tennis. The first set was a close fought affair with each pair struggling to win their service games, in particular the REME Captain, SSgt Andy Bickerton. Luckily, we had Capt Lewis on top form and REME secured the first set 7-5, thanks to some strong net play.

After such a tight first set everyone expected another grueling battle to take place for the second set but no one could have expected what was to follow. SSgt Bickerton and Capt Lewis played some outstanding tennis to break serve on the opening game and the momentum seemed to have swung in REME’s favour, but the young All Stars rallied. They won the next six games in a row with some inspired tennis and great determination to give their team a three sets to one lead at the half way point.

As the third and fourth matches got underway, the REME players knew they had a mammoth task ahead of them and with time now also becoming an issue, both pairs were under pressure to get games on the board early. On court two, Cfn Padgett and Cpl Simanajuntak needed to secure both sets to give REME a chance of winning the tie and they got off to a dream start taking a 2-0 lead. With the All Stars backs against the wall they dug deep, producing some of the best tennis of the day. Over the next ten games, the two sides had some unbelievable rallies and the scores were level at 6-6. Tiebreak! At this point both sides agreed that with time being a common enemy it would be best to play a tiebreak to ten points instead of the normal seven. This would decide both sets so the pressure was on. It was clear to see the REME players had learnt their lesson from the previous tiebreak and romped to a 5-0 lead. Try as they might the All Stars just couldn’t close the deficit and the REME pair won the tiebreak 10-7.

The comeback was on. On court one, SSgt Bickerton and Capt Lewis also started strongly, playing some sublime shots and winning some key rallies to take a well-deserved 2-0 lead. The next game however turned out to be the pivotal point in the set. At 0-40 down in the third game the All Stars were looking shaky. The REME pair had played some outstanding tennis with SSgt Bickerton
placing some key volleys just out of reach and Capt Lewis hitting some big forehand shots from the baseline. The All Stars however lived up to their name and ruthlessly fought back to win the game with some first class serves.

This fight back seemed to halt the REME pair in their tracks and with the clock running down the All Stars pushed hard. Despite the REME pair playing their best, the All Stars were just too strong and took the first set 6-2. The second set began in a similar manner as the first, with the REME pair not dropping a single point on their way to a 2-0 lead. The determined youngsters once again produced a vast array of brilliant shots to get a game on the board but unfortunately for them time was up.

The fate of the match rested on the result of the Masters doubles, had Roger Jagger done enough to give the REME the victory for the second year running. Unfortunately the Edinburgh Masters had produced their own master class and using their years of experience had cunningly dispatched the REME pair winning both matches. After a quick count of the scores there was no doubt as to who had won the tie this year. A well-deserved victory went to the Edinburgh All Stars.

‘Credit must go the All Stars this year,’ said Roger Jagger, ‘They have come out fighting and played without question some brilliant tennis across all three courts. Once again every match was contested in a fierce but friendly manner which is what we have come to expect. We can look forward to next year when we will be back to try and get the REME’s name on the trophy once more.’

A brilliant day’s tennis was had by all and a big thank you goes to Lt Col (Retd) Jagger and his REME Association team for all their hard work in organising the match, providing a fabulous spread to round off the day. Special thanks go to the students from the Edinburgh Universities who took time out from revision for their exams to play this memorable match.

For further information on REME tennis please contact Capt Russ Lewis ☏: 94251 2357 ☈: dseme-remeas-arttrg-si2@mod.uk or SSgt Andy Bickerton ☏: 94342 2833 ☈: Andrew.Bickerton269@mod.uk

On 25 April 2015, a group of 12 soldiers from 11 Trg Bn REME in Arborfield conducted a bucket collection in aid of the ABF – The Soldiers’ Charity. The collection took place at the Madjeski Stadium, home of Reading FC, at their final home game of the season against Brentford.

The match was well attended and the fans were in generous spirit, including a former Deputy Editor of the Craftsman Magazine, Mr John Worrall.

Following the collecting, the soldiers were given complimentary tickets to watch the game, a comfortable Brentford away win. On behalf of the ABF – The Soldiers’ Charity, we thank Reading Football Club and the fans of both clubs who donated a total of £1189.

Former Deputy Editor, Mr John Worrall supporting the charity

Generous Reading Supporter

The new REME Institution Blue Book is currently being produced. Please ensure your details are correct.

craftsmaneditor@reme-rhq.org.uk 329
The CO 11 Trg Bn REME presenting Master General’s Commendations to John Porch and Bob Griffiths

Since the beginning of the year and since our last article, members have been busy on various fronts. We held our Annual General Meeting in February, when the Committee was voted in, the only change from last year was the appointment of John Hukins as Welfare Secretary, taking over from the long serving Bob Griffiths. The branch is in good order, with Dave Walker managing our accounts and making sure we do not spend too much. He will no doubt be under pressure to spend some money later this year, as with the closure of the garrison we are planning for a bumper BBQ, which is being combined with the Association Delegates Meeting BBQ on Friday 3 July in the Bailleul WO’s and Sgts’ Mess. Then in August, what will be the last event to be held in the Mess, our Dinner is being planned. This will have to be a special occasion and I am sure Dave will let us ‘push the boat out’!

As reported previously and a subject high on the list of the Executive Committee is the quest for new members. Despite having good publicity in the local press and other means, we have had a poor response in our efforts to recruit new members. On the face of it, this area is one of the best in the country with regard to numbers of retired members of the Corps living here, but we will keep trying in the hope that we can attract more to join us.

One action that came out of the AGM was the recognition of the positive contribution that wives and partners of members make towards the success of the branch. We now have over 20 family members, which under the Rules of the Association give them a say in the routine matters of running the branch.

In January, Bren Stacey and his wife Margaret visited New Zealand and during his stay, Bren laid a wreath on behalf of the branch at the Tomb of The Unknown Warrior at the National Memorial in Wellington. In much evidence during his stay was the restoration work being carried out after the earthquake in 2011.

In February, John Porch arranged a coach trip to the Imperial War Museum in London and as usual the coach was full. The Museum, which has been refurbished is a wonderful place to visit, but the day was tempered by the time it took to get in and out of London. The 39 miles journey back to Arborfield took over two hours. So perhaps the best way to go is by train!

At our meeting on 17 March we had a talk by Major(Retd) Paul Whittle on the Hill Stations of the Raj. Paul is a much travelled man and his talk was very topical in relation to the TV Programme Indian Summers. He told it how it really was up in the hills of Simla.

Come April of course the Annual Reunion at Coventry took the pride of place. Members from the branch were in evidence and it was gratifying that two of our long serving members John Porch and Bob Griffiths were awarded Master General’s Commendations. Unfortunately neither was able to receive the award from the Master General REME, but they were accepted by our President Lt Col John Edwards OBE and Chairman Myles Taylor on their behalf.

At the April meeting on 21 April, just after the Reunion, it was appropriate that the CO of 11 Training Battalion, Lt Col Claire Phillips, who had been invited to give a talk on the move of the Garrison to Lyneham was able to present the MG Commendations to John Porch and Bob Griffiths. Both have been stalwarts of the branch, Bob has recently relinquished the post of Welfare Officer after many years on the Committee, during which time he served in four different positions. John is continuing as our Social Secretary, his efforts in this role over many years has given members the opportunity ‘to get out and about’ both in
UK and on the Continent and has been a major contribution in maintaining the excellent spirit of comradeship that exists in the branch. Flowers were presented to Pauline Griffiths and John accepted a bouquet on behalf of Flora, who was unable to attend. Both Pauline and Flora have given great support to their husbands and the branch.

Lt Col Phillips gave a very interesting talk on the move of training assets to Lyneham. Accompanied by the RSM of the battalion, WO1 Ceri Redburn, with the aid of a Power Point presentation she was able to convey to members the enormous opportunity the move offers for the future of training within the Corps.

Naturally members are very sad that the Garrison will be closing later this year, for many of us it has been at the centre of our serving, civilian working and social and in some cases sporting lives for many years. As mentioned in my previous article in February, we have been looking for a new venue for our meetings and we have decided, and they are happy to accommodate us, that the best place is the British Legion in Arborfield village. At this point we are not sure when our first meeting there will take place, but it is likely to be in September.

In readiness to move to Lyneham, the Museum held a closing event on 25 April, which was attended by locals and serving and retired members of the Corps where many old acquaintances were renewed. The branch had a tent from which books, bottles and balls (golf) were sold or raffled. The team was led by Vice-Chairman Gerry Walters, who had visited many supermarkets and other similar establishments to get some ‘goodies’ to help boost the ‘profits.’ Most were very happy to contribute, so Gerry’s efforts were a major factor in raising £260 for charitable causes, these were The REME Benevolent Fund, The Museum Development Fund and the Stowford House Appeal, a charity based in Abingdon.

What of the future, well at the end of May we are off on another of John Porch’s outings, this time to the Isle of Wight for four nights. Then we have the BBQ to look forward to on 3 July, then, our annual dinner on 28 August, which will be held in Bailleul Sgts’ Mess, our ‘home’ for many years. We will certainly miss the excellent service provided by Mess Manager, Teresa Groves and the staff and are very grateful to RSM Ceri Redburn and successive RSMs over the years who have been kind enough to let us have the privilege of using the facilities.

We congratulate Ceri on his selection for a commission and wish him and his family the very best for the future.

Maria Hanson wrote to say she has a caravan in Mablethorpe set up in the memory of her good friend who served in REME - named Daz’s Den. She offers the holidays free of charge in a caravan for four on a quiet part of a Haven site. It has full facilities, privacy overlooking fields and comes with its own beach hut too.

Holidays are for any serving or former serving military personnel and it is for those who have sustained injuries and/or with PTSD. You can go on your own, together with family or they can go separately from you.

Daz’s Den – ‘Charity’ Caravan

The Maria Hanson Foundation for short and precious lives
Treasured times by the sea with me & Dee

Maria Hanson wrote to say she has a caravan in Mablethorpe set up in the memory of her good friend who served in REME - named Daz’s Den. She offers the holidays free of charge in a caravan for four on a quiet part of a Haven site. It has full facilities, privacy overlooking fields and comes with its own beach hut too.

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Please just drop a line to: maria@mariahansonfoundation.org.uk
for more details visit: www.mariahansonfoundation.org.uk
Maria Hanson Foundation, Motor Plus Office Suite 1, Chapel Street, Derby, Derbyshire, DE1 3GU. Registered Charity 1146147
Mid Anglia Branch is proud to support St Helena Hospice!

Over the past year Mid Anglia Branch carried out five events devoted to raising money for St Helena Hospice based in Colchester and raised a total of £1304, which was presented to Claire Johnson, a representative from the hospice at our December meeting.

One such event was a pitch at the West Bergholt Historic Vehicle Show during the last weekend of July which raised £189.59 from tombola! In addition, a quiz at our monthly meeting raised £92.41, Vic’s vegetable and fruit raffle raised £13.50 and a 24 mile sponsored walk raised a further £360 and finally a five mile sponsored walk carried out by 10 members of the branch raised £648.50.

Members of the branch were kindly invited to attend Prince Philip’s visit to 7 Air Assault Bn REME.

It was an honour to have official guests at our Annual Dinner on Saturday 6 December, Lt Col David Batty, CO 7 AA Bn REME with his wife Karen. Other guests included Major Steve and Nina Bharat, RSM Kez and Julia Porter, both from 7 AA Bn REME, also John and Sheila Worrall, Arborfield Branch and John and Grace Cousins, North East London Branch. Wally Grimsey paraded the Branch Standard into the function room with our Chairman and Lt Col Batty following to the music of the REME Regimental March. Unfortunately very few photos were taken that evening! The one featured shows the presentation to Wally Grimsey, made by our Chairman, a set of REME Crystal Whisky Glasses, in recognition for his dedication Wally has given over the many years as the Branch Standard Bearer.

At our meeting on 14 December, members and guests enjoyed a three course lunch at WOs’ and Sgts’ Mess, MCTC after which the presentation was made to Claire Johnson from St Helena Hospice. This was followed by a cabaret act featuring Alexa Steele who sang a variety of seasonal and popular songs from yesteryear. As she sang ‘Land of Hope and Glory!’ members stood waving flags.

Farewell to Major Glenn Soane

On Sunday 17 May, 25 members of the branch, plus two from Thetford Branch (former members of Mid Anglia) dined out our out-going President, Major Glenn Soane. Glenn only became President last May but during that short time he forged our ties with 7 Air Assault Bn REME based at Wattisham and attended as many monthly meetings as possible. He also involved himself with two branch activities, a charity five mile sponsored walk and recently, with two other members, took part in a 24 mile walk raising funds for BLESMA. Money raised as I write is nearing £1000 with a few more pledges to come! Our target of £1500 is looking very promising! It is sad to see Glenn go but on a positive note the incoming BEME, Major Paul Smithurst has kindly agreed to take on the role as President.

Mid Anglia Branch
Chairman: Bill Dyer Secretary and Scribe: Vic Langabeer
The 24 Mile Sponsored Walk
The photo shown was taken at Walton Pier soon after we arrived. We departed Wivenhoe at 0900 hrs and arrived at the pier just after 1600 hrs, taking just over seven hours! I would like to thank the only branch from the REME Association, Derby and Nottingham Branch for their kind donation, plus the individual branch members, Derek and Janis Hunter (Scotland Branch) Chris and Aileen Brice (Humberside Branch) and Bob and Jeni Tanner (Bournemouth Branch) for their kind donations.

Our next event, the branch 20th Anniversary Dinner Dance will take place on Saturday 20 June, where after a superb three course dinner, Gwyn Prichard, a former REME soldier and apprentice from Arborfield will entertain us with the hit songs from yesteryear. No, he is not entertaining us for free, it’s part of his career today but hopefully after appearing with us he maybe enticed to join our branch!

Future events which involve 7 Air Assault Bn REME based at Wattisham are the re-dedication of the REME Memorial at the NMA on Tuesday 2 June and an open day with the Battalion on Wednesday 12 August.

**Update regarding our fundraising for BLESMA.** The amount raised to date now stands at £1452 with, as far as I know, one pledge to be donated and that is from the WOs’ & Sgts’ Mess, 7 AA Bn REME. Their pledge is for £50 which once paid will mean we have reached the target of £1500.

Presentation to Wally Grimsey

Front row: L-R: Daphne White, Anita Sargeant, Kath Mason, Eve Webster, Jan Page, Maggie Welton and Carol Dowling.
Rear: L-R: Vic Langabeer, Jim Welton, Mark Sargeant and Robin Dowling.
Like Father, Like Uncle, Like Son

Our reader will no doubt recall the article, ‘Like Father, Like Son’ on page 86 of the February edition. It tells the story of Cfn Jack Manfield passing out after his Basic Military Qualifications Course at the Canadian Forces (CF) Leadership and Recruit School in St Jean Sur Richelieu, Quebec, being watched by his proud father Mick, a former Artificer Vehicle in the Corps; well there’s more. Prior to starting his Common EME Training at the CF School of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering (SEME) at Base Borden, Jack, accompanied by his Dad, travelled from Winnipeg ‘Across the Pond’ to visit his Grandmother and the REME Museum. At this time he met up with his Uncle Chris, a former Sapper, who transferred to REME in 2002 as a VM (B), and is still living in the UK.

REME Museum Gold Card Number 22000 Goes To...

The REME Museum Gold Card scheme was introduced in 1996 to attract pledges from Corps members so that the museum could generate funding towards its development. In return the holder and his/her family get free admission into the Museum for life. Those pledges are crucial for the Museum’s continuous development, which aims at safeguarding REME’s heritage by recording the past, present and future achievements of the Corps and we are very grateful for the support, thank you.

The Museum Business Manager, briefs the Phase 2 Induction Courses at 10 and 11 Trg Bns REME about the Museum and Corps’ Heritage, then invites them to become Lifetime Members; he himself is the holder of Gold Card #11181. On Thursday 26 March 2015, Cfn Arron Bayley, on day four of being part of the REME family, became the proud holder of REME Museum Gold Card #22000. He is actually the 12,000th Gold Card member as the first Gold Card was sequenced from 10001 and was issued to Brig (Retd) Tony Ball CBE.

As the Museum Director pointed out, Vol 3 of Craftsmen of the Army is currently being written but new members of the Corps could find themselves in Vol 4 or 5.

If you have misplaced/lost your Gold Card then please do not despair, simply contact us and we will happily issue a replacement. Unlike the original, it’s actually a piece of yellow laminated card with the relevant details on it but it will suffice - and do remember, your pledge is tax deductible!

Radio Berkshire (95.4FM | 104.1FM | DAB) speaks to the REME Museum Director

After appearing on Meridian TV, see April’s edition, page 193, Museum Director, Maj (Retd) Rick Henderson now ‘takes to the air waves’ by speaking on Radio Berkshire. Presenter/Broadcast Journalist, Bridgitte Tetteh, began the interview in front of The Listening Cage – WW2 Intercept Station Display in the James Johnston Room. Rick explained that REME maintained all the Army’s electronic/radio equipment then went on to talk about Med and Dent and WHEELBARROW, just some of the exhibits in the Room. Bridgitte was then escorted around the museum speaking to staff and visitors.

Rick took the opportunity to quash the rumour about the use of a tub of face-powder when appearing on Meridian but did say, ‘He had a face for radio!’

Rick also quashed the rumour that the seated figure in the cage is his first girlfriend but is, in fact, a member of the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS); the women’s branch of the British Army during WW2, formed on 9 September 1938, initially a Women’s Voluntary Service. The ATS would have worked on equipment such as AR88D (Radio
Corporation of America (RCA): 1941). The British Government purchased large quantities of these receivers; mainly used by the Army and the RAF, the AR88D was used for interception and provided raw Enigma messages to Bletchley Park for decoding.

**REME Yeoman of the Bodyguard**

After the REME Association Reunion Weekend at Coventry in April 2015, I was contacted by Ian Tilson, of the Doncaster Branch, who having read my article, ‘The Tower of London – Amazing who you bump in to!’ in the November 2014 edition of The Craftsman, asked me if I was aware of a Yeoman of the Bodyguard, Alex Burnett RVM; I wasn’t, but I am now.

The photograph was taken on the day that Alex was presented with the Royal Victorian Medal by Her Majesty the Queen in 2013. All three were ASMs and clearly served the Corps well! Since leaving the Corps in 1998, Alex has served as a Yeoman Bodyguard for over 24 years with the rank of Yeoman Bed Goer (Google it for more information). Keith, enrolled as a Yeoman of the Bodyguard in 2004, and ‘looked after’ the Crown Jewels in the Tower of London (Google him too), and Google has also much on Alan, who enrolled as a Yeoman of the Bodyguard in 2002.

Our reader may also remember the photograph in the November article (page 526) to commemorate the occasion when the Corps held the inaugural Regimental Sunday at the Royal Hospital Chelsea on 9 July 2006 because back row, centre stage was Keith.

**Another Oral History for the REME Museum’s Collection**

W/214735 Pte Margaret Paling (nee Hindle)

Malcolm Caddick, Secretary of the Potteries and District Branch of the REME Association, knowing that the REME Museum wanted to capture oral histories contacted the Assistant Curator, Juliet Turk, about one of its members, Mrs Margaret Paling.

Juliet, knowing that I would be travelling up to the Potteries to see Stoke City’s last game of the season against Liverpool asked me if I would ‘interview’ Margaret for the Museum’s Oral History collection as she lived at Clayton, which is not far from my home. So on a Bank Holiday Monday and with tape recorder in hand, I travelled to see W/214735 Pte Margaret Paling and after 40 minutes, we now have her oral history in the Museum for evermore. Margaret’s story can be read in The Craftsman magazine in two articles written by Maurice Hope from the Potteries Branch. In the May 2015 edition, the article refers to a piece published in Stoke’s local newspaper, ‘The Sentinel’ entitled ‘Margaret served overseas in war’ and the June 2014 edition, entitled ‘Profiling Mrs Margaret Paling’ which includes a photograph taken on her 21st birthday (9 January 1946) wearing her ATS uniform with the REME badge clearly visible on her tunic.

For those who do not keep old copies of The Craftsman, to summarise: Margaret came from a military family, her brothers, father and grandfather all served in the Armed Forces. She was determined to follow suit and in 1942, aged 17, she joined-up. She wanted to be a driver but at that time there were too many and as there was a shortage of clerks, that’s what she became. She served with REME from the outset and was discharged on 14 September 1946.

When asked about her time in the Army, she says that she was, ‘Part of a family, not regarded as being any different, life was enjoyable, rarely unhappy and really proud of REME.’

The REME Museum wants to hear your story; we want to have oral histories in our archives, so please get in touch: assistantcurator@rememuseum.org.uk

A copy of REME News, Caserta 1600 hours - BBC 1300 HOUR NEWS GMT – 7th MAY 1945 announcing, ‘Germany surrenders unconditionally to the Allied Powers. General Eisenhower accepted the unconditional surrender of Germany at 01.41 today.’
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Headley Court and Mutual Support

Dear Editor,

I have served quite some time (a lot) in REME; 18 months boy service, 22 years regular and 12 years as NRPS. Never had a serious illness or accident, until five years ago when I was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS). I tried to ‘man up’ and carry on, which I did for around three years but then things started to decline, quite rapidly.

I had to come clean about MS and seek help from medical staff and work colleagues. I was still able to get the job done until the start of this year, when I developed a separate injury and attended physiotherapy. The physiotherapist tried to help for a couple of weeks but then she approached Headley Court and asked if they would assess me. I came to Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre (DMRC) Headley Court for an assessment and the Consultant agreed that they could help. I was taken in to the Peter Lord Unit (PLU), which has a hospital style set up, for a more in depth assessment and at the end the ‘team’ (neuro consultant, neuro physiotherapists, neuro psychologists, cognitive therapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, vocational rehabilitation, mental health team, social workers, assistants to each discipline and physical training instructors, I must also mention the nursing staff both service and civilian, who look after every other need) decided that I needed to stay for some rehabilitation. At present I am in week four of that rehabilitation, which is scheduled to last for eight weeks. I am coping and understand MS in such a better way now.

A reason for this letter is to highlight the fantastic work being carried out here at DMRC Headley Court. We all know of the efforts and brilliant job they do for those who have suffered the loss of limbs, but we are not all aware that they also carry out rehabilitation of service personnel with other life changing illness’ and injuries, such as stroke, brain injuries and road traffic collisions and more recently multiple sclerosis. They are able to help and offer guidance with rehabilitation, recovery and future planning. The atmosphere is always upbeat, both with the patients and the staff, this, I am sure, speeds the recovery of everyone here. There is a welfare team, who, should you need help with other things that may be going on in your life, are also glad to help. They have contacts with Help 4 Heroes, The RBL, BLESMA and other charities that are so willing to offer support of whatever you may need.

Another reason for this letter is that whilst browsing the internet one evening looking for information regarding MS, I came across a support group purely by chance and I would like to tell how they have changed my outlook for the future. They are called, ‘Mutual Support’ and are aligned with the MS Society, but are purely a volunteer organisation run by service or former service personnel who are either suffering with, or live with someone who is suffering with MS. I contacted them via email and received a phone call the next day from Hilary. We chatted about how and when I found out I had MS and she then told me that she would have a member of the support team contact me. The phone call came from Alistair the next day and we talked for quite some time about effects and help etc. I then received another call from Terl, who was to be my advisor. We have spent an enormous amount of time writing my personal statement about the effect MS has on my life and ensuring that it has been accepted and inserted into my medical records. Without Terl and Mutual Support’s help I would still be trying and probably failing, to come to terms with my illness. They have been invaluable to me. On the facebook page, members can chat and get all manner of things off their chest. There is always a massive amount of support available.

If anyone out there has MS or knows any service personnel with MS then please contact Mutual Support; they will help you significantly: www.mutual-support.org.uk.

SSgt Mark Rogerson

The REME Journal 2015

Articles for The REME Journal 2015 are to be submitted by 30 November 2015 to Ed Paice, Corporate Communications Manager: commsmanager@reme-rhq.org.uk or contact: ☎️: 0118 9763711.

Please note: The contact details for the Corporate Communications Manager as they appeared in The Journal 2013/2014 are now incorrect.

A Guide to Contributors

Subject

The range of topics accepted for publication is wide, including matters of specific REME concern, can include subjects such as sport, pastimes, personal experience and achievements. Authors may be military or civilian, of any rank, serving or retired though selection of articles for publication will be biased towards members of REME.

Length and Illustrations

A good length article is between 2000 and 3500 words. A journal page without illustrations accounts for approximately 1200 words. Photographs should preferably be in electronic (JPEG) high resolution format, but can also be prints. Graphics, diagrams or tables should be to the best standard the author can achieve and may, in some cases, be reproduced to improve definition. Text should be in electronic format (MS Word preferred) and include a pen picture or bio of the author.

Submissions

Articles should be submitted by e-mail or on CD.

Authority to Publish

Where the content of articles may necessitate clearance to publish, particularly from within Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) or Other Government Departments (OGD) and industry, authors are advised to obtain the necessary clearances before offering articles to the journal. Where necessary, authors should submit a certificate to the effect that clearance has been granted when forwarding their articles.

Top Post May 2015
FORMER WO1 (ASM) JOHN FREDERICK NORTHAM

John Northam came from an extended military family background. His father, Maj (Retd) EFW Northam served in REME, so it was no surprise that John enrolled into boy service in 1947 at the Exeter recruiting office, aged 14 and then completed more than 28 years Army service before retiring in 1975. After attending the Army Technical School in Arborfield (intake 47A), John transferred to REME himself as a fitter and completed his Artificer training in 1957. He was subsequently trained in works study at the Royal Military College and saw service in Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore during this time. Also in 1957 and by now a Sgt, John met and married June in Harwich. Shortly after their wedding they were posted to Cyprus where their two children Christopher and Suzanne were born.

Whilst back at home in 1963, John was promoted to WO2, which preceded postings to Malaya, Singapore and BAOR before finally arriving permanently back in the UK with the rank of WO1 (ASM) in 1972 and finally retiring from the forces in 1975, when his service conduct was noted as ‘Exemplary.’

Service notes, handwritten by the OIC at that time stated that John, ‘Is a calm, confident man with much experience as a man manager and organiser... particularly able at combining his engineering knowledge and workshop practice with his work study training and experience... a most reliable and completely trustworthy man.’

In the 1980 and 90’s John returned to Arborfield College as an Instructor and it was his brain child to start newsletters for the Army Apprentices School, Beachley Camp in Chepstow, passing out in November 1946. He served with the RASC, initially in UK until August 1947, then overseas in Hong Kong, transferring to REME in August 1949, but remaining in Hong Kong until September 1952. He returned to the UK until October 1958, during which time he met Eileen, his mother and they married in 1954. He had been a keen motorcycle trials rider, Captain of the Army and Sandhurst Cricket Teams, also a very good badminton player, achieving recognition as an umpire at the Wimbledon Badminton Championships. In 1958 we were posted to Singapore, where we recall having a very memorable time. We returned in December 1959 for father’s Artificer Training, after which, on successful completion in January 1961 he was posted to BAOR, returning home for a short spell in 1963 before moving overseas once more, for Malaya in January 1964. He returned to the UK for his final posting, after declining

FORMER WO2 RONALD DALES (RON)

By Mrs Yvonne Woodward (Daughter)

It is with much regret that I inform the Corps of the passing of my father Ronald Dales, on 30 March 2015, after a protracted period of illness. He was born on 15 November 1928, in Cumbria and enlisted into the Army at Kendal, in February 1944, aged 15. He attended training as a Vehicle Mechanic at the Army Apprentice School, Beachley Camp in Chepstow, passing out in November 1946. He served with the RASC, initially in UK until August 1947, then overseas in Hong Kong, transferring to REME in August 1949, but remaining in Hong Kong until September 1952. He returned to the UK until October 1958, during which time he met Eileen, his mother and they married in 1954. He had been a keen motorcycle trials rider, Captain of the Army and Sandhurst Cricket Teams, also a very good badminton player, achieving recognition as an umpire at the Wimbledon Badminton Championships. In 1958 we were posted to Singapore, where we recall having a very memorable time. We returned in December 1959 for father’s Artificer Training, after which, on successful completion in January 1961 he was posted to BAOR, returning home for a short spell in 1963 before moving overseas once more, for Malaya in January 1964. He returned to the UK for his final posting, after declining
a commission. He departed the service on completion of 25 years in May 1969.

Both mother and I, as a child, have many fond memories of father, being protective over us in Singapore, against ‘spiders’. He was also a very dependable, patient, loving and a safe, secure guardian at all times. He was always the gentleman, a man who could turn his hand to all manner of work with much success, his favourite saying being, ‘Don’t find a problem, look for a solution!’ After service life my parents ran a Public House for a couple of years, during which he was made Grand Master of Woolmer Forest Lodge in Hampshire, following in his grandfathers footsteps. Later he took up a post with the Crown Agents in Iran, to run a Military Engineering Training establishment at Masjide Suleiman, for five years, until forced into a rapid evacuation by RAF, C130, when religious conflict broke out in the country. I remember at this time meeting up for a quick reunion in Regents Park, from my Boarding School, prior to my parents proceeding to Nigeria to take up a training post in Lagos with The Nigerian Brewing Co Ltd, a pioneering task which lasted for six years, which he enjoyed immensely and was very proud of his achievements there.

Numerous stories could be retold about my father’s life and his personal undertakings, but one in particular stands out to us, his family, and that was the 4000 mile round trip to Iran, to ‘run-in’ his new car! A very daunting feat for many I’m sure.

He was a wonderful father and husband and his protracted illness during which mother cared for him 24/7 spoke volumes of her loyalty and deep love for him. Throughout, father showed such stoicism, a few weeks before his 95th birthday.

It is with great sadness and regret that I report the death of William Ward, a valued member of the Manchester Branch for many years and a personal friend. Bill passed away after a long protracted illness, a few weeks before his 95th birthday.

Bill grew up in the peaceful village of Ashton on Mersey, now part of Greater Manchester.

At aged 15, he was employed by a local butcher and apart from learning his trade he was expected to drive an early Morris Commercial van.

His life changed dramatically on the 25 June 1940 as like many others he was called up. After a brief spell in the 7th Battalion North Loyal Lancashire Regiment, initially trained as an infantryman, Bill had to learn how to be a Gunner with a light Ack Ack regiment. After very realistic exercises, his section took part in the invasion of Europe, landing in Normandy on 10 June 1944 (D+4) with the British 3rd Division on Sword Beach. They landed in shallow water as part of the second army. Bill’s unit continued on into Europe, via Belgium, Holland and then finally into Germany, finishing up near Hamburg.

Bill was discharged on the 24 June 1946 and stated he ‘could have gladly stayed on in the Army’, but felt he had to go back to his parents. He took on many jobs, including the Kellogg’s Factory at Trafford Park, where he was able to continue his passion for football, playing left half (a position he had played whilst serving). He finished his working life as a heavy goods driver and was still working until his late 80’s at Chelford cattle market.

He was an active member of the Wilmslow Branch of the Royal British Legion and the Market Garden Association, so when a branch of the Normandy Veterans was formed in Stockport he joined them, taking on many duties. This brought him into contact with former REME personnel who had served in Europe. He therefore joined the Manchester Branch as an associate member along with his wife Freda, who for a number of years was the minutes’ secretary and took part in all the branch activities. Bill was always ready and willing to help, particularly enjoying our connection with 127 Field Company, then TA, based at Clifton.

A Service of Thanksgiving for the Life of Bill Ward was held on Thursday 12 February at Stockport Crematorium. Members of all of his former service association formed a guard of honour along with their respective standards. The Chapel was full, with all his many friends and colleagues, who came to pay their respects and to take part in this brave man’s last parade.

All of the members at Manchester Branch will miss him greatly and it is with deep sorrow we send out sympathy and condolences to his wife Freda, their daughters and grandchildren.

BILL WARD
- ASSOCIATE MEMBER

By Ron Taft, President Manchester Branch REME Association

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Bill grew up in the peaceful village of Ashton on Mersey, now part of Greater Manchester.

At aged 15, he was employed by a local butcher and apart from learning his trade he was expected to drive an early Morris Commercial van.

His life changed dramatically on the 25 June 1940 as like many others he was called up. After a brief spell in the 7th Battalion North Loyal Lancashire Regiment, initially trained as an infantryman, Bill had to learn how to be a Gunner with a light Ack Ack regiment. After very realistic exercises, his section took part in the invasion of Europe, landing in Normandy on 10 June 1944 (D+4) with the British 3rd Division on Sword Beach. They landed in shallow water as part of the second army. Bill’s unit continued on into Europe, via Belgium, Holland and then finally into Germany, finishing up near Hamburg.

Bill was discharged on the 24 June 1946 and stated he ‘could have gladly stayed on in the Army’, but felt he had to go back to his parents. He took on many jobs, including the Kellogg’s Factory at Trafford Park, where he was able to continue his passion for football, playing left half (a position he had played whilst serving). He finished his working life as a heavy goods driver and was still working until his late 80’s at Chelford cattle market.

He was an active member of the Wilmslow Branch of the Royal British Legion and the Market Garden Association, so when a branch of the Normandy Veterans was formed in Stockport he joined them, taking on many duties. This brought him into contact with former REME personnel who had served in Europe. He therefore joined the Manchester Branch as an associate member along with his wife Freda, who for a number of years was the minutes’ secretary and took part in all the branch activities. Bill was always ready and willing to help, particularly enjoying our connection with 127 Field Company, then TA, based at Clifton.

A Service of Thanksgiving for the Life of Bill Ward was held on Thursday 12 February at Stockport Crematorium. Members of all of his former service association formed a guard of honour along with their respective standards. The Chapel was full, with all his many friends and colleagues, who came to pay their respects and to take part in this brave man’s last parade.

All of the members at Manchester Branch will miss him greatly and it is with deep sorrow we send out sympathy and condolences to his wife Freda, their daughters and grandchildren.


HOMARD - Maj (Retd) R Homard (Roy) died 20 May 2015 due to carcinoma of oesophagus with metastasis, aged 94.

Extracts from the London Gazette

18 May 2015

Intermediate Regular Commissions

Captain F. J. G ALEXANDER 563870 RETIRES 13 May 2015

22 May 2015

Short Service Commissions

Officer Cadet Ross Phillip DAVIDSON 30191859 from The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst to be Second Lieutenant 11 April 2015

Officer Cadet Thomas Mark Folley 30089173 from The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst to be Second Lieutenant 11 April 2015

Officer Cadet Richard William Edward Hayward 30201893 from The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst to be Second Lieutenant 11 April 2015

Officer Cadet Rayner Harry SHELMDINE-HARE 30119246 from The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst to be Second Lieutenant 11 April 2015

Officer Cadet Charles Samuel WEBBER 30077315 from The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst to be Second Lieutenant 11 April 2015

2 June 2015

Short Service Commissions

Major R. A. KENYON 550462 retires on medical grounds 16 April 2015

ARMY RESERVE

Group A

Captain C. B. STACEY 560345 is promoted to the substantive rank of Major 1 May 2015

Saturday 15 August 2015

REME Association Scotland Branch has a block of tickets for the 7.30pm performance of the tattoo. Tickets are £29 each.

Any members of the Corps and their families are more than welcome to apply for these tickets. Prior to the event there will be the opportunity to meet for a meal in The Grassmarket, a short distance from the castle esplanade.

Tickets will be issued during the meal before the event or can be sent upon receipt of payment. We hope you can make it but please book early to avoid disappointment!

If you would like to come or require further information, please contact the event organiser as soon as possible: Ray Young ☎: 07752 741317 or ☉: REMEAssnScotSec@astutefm.co.uk

Officer Assignments

Lieutenant Colonel

M Barker SO1 Cam Apache HQ Wattisham 26 Jul 15
R J Cooper SO1 Res Pol CSS REME Res 01 Jul 15
R M Gibb SO1 ES CSS Land 01 Jul 15
C King CO 2 Bn REME 01 Jul 15
P A Wilson SO1 Adv DEME LSP Oman 12 Jul 15

Major

P J Carrotte CO 18 FD coy 3 CB BN REME 27 Jul 15
J E Faull SO3 DSEM Lyonham 15 Jul 15
A Huggins CO 72 AVN coy 7 AA BN REME 27 Jul 15
R Jenkins CO 33 Engr Rgt (EOD) Wksp REME 13 Jul 15
W M Naylor WCO 17 P&M Rgt RLC Wksp 13 Jul 15
J N Robertson CO 7 Coy REME 27 Jul 15
I E Sands DCOS HQ 101 Logistic Bde 01 Jul 15
M J Sutton CO 1 Coy REME 06 Jul 15
D C Toland SO2 Ops HQ JHC DComd 15 Jul 15
L K White CO Wksp HQ BATUS 20 Jul 15
N G Whitehead CO ES Sqn CDO Log Regt RM 01 Jul 15

Captain

N G E Aitken CO 1 IC AVN Coy 7 AA BN REME 27 Jul 15
J G Brooks Adjt 104 BN REME 01 Jul 15
S Burrows Adjt 101 BN REME 01 Jul 15
M J Casey CO LAD 13 AA Sp Regt RLC 25 Jul 15
H A Cawthorpe CO 2 R ANGLIAN LAD REME 01 Jul 15
R G Duffield 2IC 73 AVN Coy 7 AA BN REME 27 Jul 15
K M Edgar PI Comd 5 Regt AAC Wksp 23 Jul 15
D P Edwards CO 1 SG LAD REME 23 Jul 15
S J Heaney HQ Int Offr 6 Arm Coh BN REME 23 Jul 15
D N Middleton 2IC 71 AVN Coy 7 AA BN REME 23 Jul 15
S D Nel AEO 74 Sp Wks 23 Jul 15
D N Nicholls CO 36 Engr Wksp 06 Jul 15
S Phoenix Ops Offr 5 BN REME 06 Jul 15
C J Postlethwaite Adjt 1 CS BN REME 20 Jul 15
J T Robertson 2IC 72 AVN Coy 7 AA BN REME 23 Jul 15
I A Rodger CO 5 Arm Coh 3 BS BN REME 01 Jul 15
S C Thompson Ops & Trg Offr 6 Arm Coh BS BN REME 01 Jul 15
P W Ward CO 3 Engr Regt (AA) Wksp REME 13 Jul 15
C J Woods Ops Offr 6 Arm Coh BS BN REME 01 Jul 15
A R Deacon 2IC 4 Regt AAC Wksp 23 Jul 15
P J Dyer Engr Offr 3 Regt AAC Wksp 23 Jul 15
K L Jasper PI Comd 12 FD Coy 1 CS BN REME 13 Jul 15
J S Lawson PI Comd ES Sqn CDO Log Regt RM 01 Jul 15
J N Robertson 2IC 71 AVN Coy 7 AA BN REME 23 Jul 15
S J Milne PI Comd 1 Regt AAC Wksp 23 Jul 15
D N Middleton 2IC 71 Avn Coy 7 AA Bn REME 23 Jul 15
J T Robertson PI Comd 9 Regt AAC Wksp 23 Jul 15

Saturday 15 August 2015

Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo

REME Association Scotland Branch has a block of tickets for the 7.30pm performance of the tattoo. Tickets are £29 each.

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Corps and Garrison Church of St. Eligius

Concert for July
16th July 2015

Flute Ensemble: rarescale
Flute Academy – Carla Rees

Admission free, to include buffet lunch.
To book your lunch please contact
Rita Le Var  01252 372320
  rita_le_var@ntlworld.com

REME BENEVOLENT FUND

The Trustees of the REME Benevolent Fund acknowledge with sincere thanks the donations received during the month of May 2015. They also wish to acknowledge the regular subscriptions received from the Officers and Soldiers in the Corps and retired members of the REME Institution:

Donations
Church service at the REME Association Reunion  . . . . . . £343.81
Mr and Mrs Albert Wynne  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . £10.00
St Eligius Church concert, April  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . £140.00
REME Association Arborfield Branch  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . £180.00
PC Murdoch in memory of Major Wilfred Joseph McKie  . . £50.00
Mr PT and Mrs AM McGrath  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . £20.00
Mrs Kitty Campbell  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . £75.00

Grants Made
Since 1 January 2015, 175 applications for financial assistance have been received, which included nine received in 2014. The Executive Committee has authorised grants totalling £85,156.50 which is an average grant of £486.61.

If you would like to see how your money is spent we welcome one or two observers at the Benevolent Fund meetings. The meetings are held midweek, approximately every three weeks, if you would like to observe a meeting please contact the Ben Fund Secretary  Mil: 94251 2219 Civi: 0118 9763219 in the first instance.

Anyone wishing to leave a legacy to the REME Benevolent Fund, which is exempt from inheritance tax, can add a codicil to their will. Our registered charity number is 246967

NOTICES

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

REME HEADQUARTERS OFFICERS’ MESS AND REME INSTITUTION

The AGMs of the REME Headquarters Officers’ Mess and the REME Institution are to be held on Thursday 2 July 2015 at West Court Officers’ Mess.

Proceedings will start with the REME HQ Officers’ Mess AGM at 1000 hrs, followed after a short break by the REME Institution AGM at approximately 1130 hrs.

Serving REME officers are encouraged to attend the first of these events and to stay on for the second event, to which all REME Institution members are invited.

Refreshments will be available from 0945 hrs and again during the break between events.

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THE REME RESERVE OFFICERS & WARRANT OFFICERS CONFERENCE

The REME Reserve Officers & Warrant Officers Conference will be held on 3-5 July 2015 in Arborfield.

A calling notice has been promulgated through the Chain of Command.

The POC for the event is the SO2 REME Res, Maj Lis Wilson on  94391 7854 Civi: 012654 381854 or DII(F): Army CapCSS–ES–Reserves–SO2

The Arborfield Old Boys Association ANNUAL REUNION 2015

The Arborfield Old Boys Association annual reunion is to be held on the weekend of 17-19 July at the Hinckley Island Hotel, Leicestershire, with a visit to the National Memorial Arboretum on the Saturday morning.

If you are an ex-Apprentice and would like to come along then please join us, you will be made very welcome. It doesn’t matter if your time at Arborfield was not completed, or when you attended, it doesn’t matter how your Army career progressed (or didn’t), as long as you were an Arborfield Apprentice you are eligible to join our Association. We are a charitable organisation and can provide, either generally or individually, to members of the College, the Association or former Apprentices of the School or College and their dependants who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress. The Association is free to join and the annual fee is only £15. We have a magazine which is published three times a year and is a great way to keep in touch. For full details, please contact any of our committee members via our website:  www.arborfieldoldboys.co.uk

BEACHLEY OLD BOYS’ ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL REUNION 18-20 SEPTEMBER 2015

To be held at Beachley Barracks/Chepstow Racecourse

All Ex Beachley Boys and Staff, together with partners are welcome. For further information please visit our website: www.armyapprenticescollege.homestead.com or contact:

Reunion Secretary: Mr Peter Burridge 01305 835989 or 07716405587  boba2015@btinternet.com

8 REGT RASC / RCT / RLC
14th ANNIVERSARY REUNION DINNER

Date: Saturday 24 October 2015
Venue: The Village on the Green Club, Aspull, Wigan

Open to all former members of 8 Regt RASC, regardless of cap badge, who served in the regiment during the period:

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Scrolling: Artificer Weapons D050/13/001

The Staff Sergeants pictured were presented with their scrolls on 29 May 2015 by Col MA Pendlington, Comdt DSEME

Back: L-R: SSgts Fidrmuc, Samson

Middle: L-R: SSgts Barham, Jeffrey, MacKenzie

Front: L-R: SSgt Al-Qassabi, Col Pendlington, WO1 (ASM) Jackson, SSgt Bailey

342 craftsmaneditor@reme-rhq.org.uk

The new REME Institution Blue Book is currently being produced. Please ensure your details are correct.
Scrolling: Artificer Vehicles D057/13/003

The Staff Sergeants pictured were presented with their scrolls on 27 March 2015 by Col MA Pendlington, Comdt DSEME

Back: L-R: SSgts Job, Cooper, Meager, Goldthorp, McKenna, Ling, Bodman
Front: L-R: CSgt Saunders, SSgts George, Williams, WO1 (ASM) Owers, Col Pendlington, SSgts Halliwell, Smith, CSgt Clarke