

The Crossed Quills

Issue 11

December 2007



The Magazine of the

Artillery Clerks' Association

by the
Honorary President
Maj Gen Peter Currie CB

It's that time of year again. As I look out the window it is still raining, which just about sums up 2007. All around there is change in the air (no pun intended!), not least here at the Royal Hospital where the new Infirmary is rising majestically from the dust. When it is finished next year it is going to be a grand building, one of the finest built in London for many years and a fitting tribute to future generations of Chelsea Pensioners.

For the Gunners, too, it is all change. With great sadness we said our farewells to Woolwich this Summer. Those of you who were present on the day will remember how, rather symbolically perhaps, the heavens opened and for an hour or more a steady downpour soaked us. Undeterred by the weather the parade went ahead in fine style, including a very dignified final march past before The King's Troop brought proceedings to an end. A lovely family occasion tinged with sadness.

But just as one door closes in life another always opens and presents fresh opportunities. Larkhill is now the Regimental home, and a very fine and fitting home it will prove to be, of that we can be sure. The Association itself has changed over the years and continues to thrive. So let us make the first of our reunion dinners to be held at Larkhill on 19th April 2008 a very special occasion. I look forward to seeing you there.

Peter Currie.

FORWARD FOR

chairman's notes

by

Lt Col(Retd) Joe Falzon BEM

The best thing about working for The Royal British Legion, as Mel Charlton and David Tyler would testify, is that there is no such thing as a typical day. Because of the breadth of the organisation and those other ex-service charities we work with and the vast variety of beneficiaries we all help means our work is rewarding and varied.

The variety the job offers and the fact that we come into contact with such a wide range of different people heighten the job satisfaction levels. I personally enjoy the problem solving aspect of the work and also the opportunity of working with our Executive Group and Board of Trustees at the strategic level.

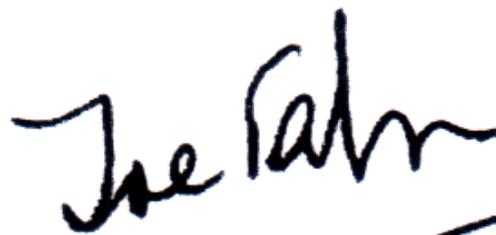
This is why I am very proud to be part of an organisation that has just launched a campaign calling for the Government to review its guidance for compensation, to provide a greater commitment to support the physical and mental health of Servicemen and women and their families and to offer more support for bereaved Service families. I am confident that with everyone's support, including that of our Association members, this campaign produces some real benefits for our serving colleagues as well as veterans.

We have quite a number of our members

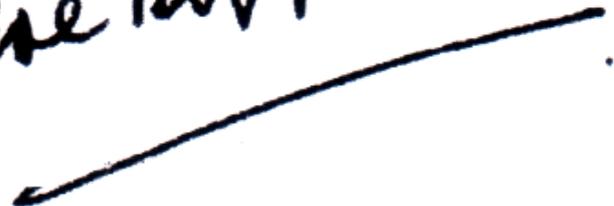
currently on operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and many others in training to deploy in the next few months. We wish them all well and we look forward to see them back home safe and out of harms way.

A couple of years ago I called Crossed Quills a "live, vibrant and quality" magazine. Thanks to Andy Tibble, this issue continues to live up to that high level of excellence and will serve as a permanent and enduring record of every facet of our Association. Thank you to all those who have contributed articles and photographs.

All that remains now is to wish you all well in whatever you are doing and to look forward to catching up with you at our first Reunion weekend in Larkhill in the spring.



Joe Falzon



by
Mel Charlton (former WO1(SMAC))

Due to the anticipated lack of transit accommodation, the Association 'Farewell to Woolwich' Reunion Dinner took place earlier during the month of February. According to records, Reunion Dinners have been held at Woolwich on a regular basis since 1963 and it was a particularly sad occasion to hold our final Dinner there this year. We were all proud to welcome the Master Gunner St James's Park, General Sir Alex Harley KBE CB as our Guest of Honour and the Royal Artillery Sergeant Major, WO1(RASM) Alec Harvey as our guest. A full report on the Dinner by our Reunion Secretary, WO1(SSM) now Capt Ian Constantine RA is contained within the magazine. Maj(Retd) John Reynolds deserves a special mention for flying all the way from Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada to attend the Reunion Dinner.

Subsequent to the AGM held on Sat 17 Feb 07, the Royal Artillery Sergeant Major (RASM) during his after Reunion Dinner speech welcomed the Association with open arms to hold future Reunion Dinners in the Sgts' Mess at Larkhill. He was happy to carry on with sponsoring our Reunion Dinner as an official function and to pass details on to his successor. The Chairman has spoken to the QM 14 Regt RA at Larkhill and it was considered that facilities and accommodation would be available for our use. The Committee have taken the decision that the next AGM and Reunion Dinner will be held on Sat 19 Apr 08 at Larkhill. Perhaps we can include a Church Service on the Sunday.

This year the 25th Centenary of the Falklands Campaign was commemorated. To the best of knowledge we have three members who were part of that Campaign, namely Major(Retd) Dave Cussell, Major Ian

Groom RA and Capt(Retd) Paddy Hope. Hope I haven't missed anyone else.

300 raffle tickets were received from the RAA for the 2007 Grand Draw. As the Association is no longer able to sustain payment from Association Funds as in previous years, I sent tickets to Area Secretaries to sell. 268 were sold and 32 were lost in the post. Thank you Area Secretaries for helping out this year. A list of winners was published in the September issue of Gunner magazine and no you didn't win.

Congratulations and well done to Majors John Haddock and Martin Birch on being selected for an Intermediate Regular Commission (Late Entry). Other than that I have not been informed of any promotions, awards or anything else during the last 12 months.

Having thoroughly enjoyed former WO1(SMAC) and Major John Reynolds 'Ramblings of a Retired AC' over the 2005 and 2006 editions of Crossed Quills, we now have the pleasure of reading 'Reminisces of a VERY retired Ex Artillery Clerk and Quartermaster' by former WO1(SMAC) and Major Eddie Mills. Thank you Eddie.

Sadly another three brother Artillery Clerks have died since my last report. Our oldest member, former WO1(SMAC) and Capt Pete Bunn who wrote his exciting story over three editions of Crossed Quills died on 15 Mar 07 aged 95. Former WO1(SMAC) Alex Forbes Ross died on 18 Mar 07 aged 75. Unfortunately I was never informed of Alex's death or funeral and read of his demise in the May edition of the Gunner magazine. You may recall that

secretary's report

Alex was the first person to be awarded the RAA Gold Medal. The death of our Welfare Officer, former WO2(QMS(AC)) Ted Morgan on 30 May 07 aged 62 came as a sudden shock to us all. Ted's funeral was well attended by family, friends and work colleagues. I travelled up to Derby with the Historical Secretary Joe Hoggins BSc where we met up with the Chairman Lt Col(Retd) Joe Falzon BEM and Standard Bearer Andrew Jones. Andrew led the coffin both into and out of the church and lowered the Association Standard when the bugler played the last post when Ted was laid to rest. Tears were shed!

Saturday 26th May 2007 saw the Farewell to Woolwich, the Home of the Royal Artillery since 1776. It was an overcast day which ended in rain, but this didn't dampen the spirits of participants and spectators alike. I have included one or two shots that I took on the day elsewhere in this magazine, including one or two members who were 'Seen at Woolwich', namely IP George McKinnell, Colin Davidson, Andrew Jones (Standard Bearer), Jim Cussell BEM, James McNamara and Ray Lewis MSM.

The scale of the Royal Artillery Barracks has been compared to St Petersburg. At over 1000 feet in length, its main building has the longest façade of any in Britain. The barracks has the largest parade ground in Britain. It was built between 1776 and 1802. In 2012 the Barracks will host the shooting events for the London Olympics.

For those of you who enjoy a McDonalds will be interested to know that the restaurant in Woolwich was the first one to be opened in the UK on 1 Oct 74.

Due to membership being spread over the Globe and not having in my possession everyone's e-mail address (or up to date one) may I please ask you all to make a point of reading the Notice Board on the Association Website www.artyclerkassn.org at least once a week. There is no other way I can get details of promotions,

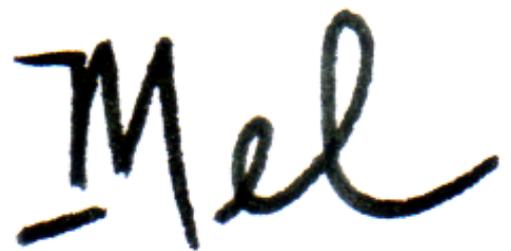
deaths, etc to you in a timely fashion. In return may I please ask you to keep me up to date with any news, promotions, deaths, award of medals, change of address including e-mail, etc, etc.

As I write preparations are underway for the next Germany Reunion being held in 26 Regt RA Sgts' Mess, Mansergh Barracks, Gutersloh on Sat 3 Nov 07. In addition we are all looking forward to the first ever Reunion to be held at the Sgts' Mess, The Artillery Centre, Larkhill on Sat 19 Apr 08. I look forward to seeing you all there.

In the meantime I hope to see as many members as possible attending the St Barbara's Day Church Service being held at the Garrison Church Larkhill on Sun 2 Dec 07. If you live within reasonable travelling distance, please support the occasion.

In the meantime have a good Christmas and New Year. Please remember those members and families who are ill at home and to those members who are deployed on operations during the festive season. Our thoughts and prayers are with you all.

See you at Larkhill, if not sooner.



Ubique.

by Andy Tibble MSM (former WO1(SSM))

The responsibilities of the Assistant Secretary is to assist the Secretary in his duties, coordinate the production of the Crossed Quills and also with all of your assistance where possible, encourage individuals on the Wanted List to join the Association as well as other potential members who meets the criteria as published in the Artillery Clerks' Association Charter. A copy of the Artillery Clerks' Association Charter is published in this edition of the Crossed Quills.

Once again it is that time when we find ourselves producing the next edition of the Crossed Quills. Firstly, I would like to pass on my apologies to all members of the Association for not having this edition out to you all prior to Christmas. Unfortunately, due to sickness followed by mechanical problems occurring with the reproduction machinery, I found myself in a situation where I was unable to send this edition out to you all prior to Christmas. However, Issue 11 of the Crossed Quills should now be with you all. The magazine seems to grow in size each year! Issue 12 of the Crossed Quills is due to be published by the end of November 2008. I would therefore be most grateful if you could forward all of your articles that you would like to be considered for publication in this edition to the Secretary, Mel Charlton by no later than **Monday 8th September 2008**. Please remember to forward all articles in typed script where possible, including either a CD-ROM or Floppy Disc with the article on along with any photographs that you may have. The photographs will be returned back to you once they have been scanned onto the system.

The Association continues to grown slowly with only 3 members joining since 14th

November 2006. There are currently **179** Potential New Members on the Wanted List who were Artillery Clerks', but have not yet joined the Association. I am sure that there is Potential Members listed on the Wanted List, that we know of their whereabouts. I would therefore ask all Members of the Association to make a consolidated effort this year to try and encourage those listed to join the Association. A copy of the Application for Membership of the Artillery Clerks' Association Branch of the Royal Artillery Association is enclosed within this edition of the Crossed Quills. Further copies of the Application Form can be obtained from the Secretary, Mel Charlton or myself. Please remember that there is a requirement to continue with the recruitment of new members to the Association, which will in turn ensure that the Association remains for many years to come!

It only leaves to me to say that I look forward to seeing you all again at the 74th Artillery Clerks' Reunion and Association Dinner being held in the Sergeants' Mess, Larkhill on Saturday 19th April 2008. My kind regards to you and your families and best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

assistant secretary's report

Association Committee 2007 - 2008

Honorary President	Maj Gen Peter Currie CB
Chairman	Lt Col(Retd) Joe Falzon BEM
Secretary	Mel Charlton - former WO1(SMAC)
Assistant Secretary	Andy Tibble MSM - former WO1(SSM)
Reunion Secretary	Capt Ian Constantine RA
Treasurer	Maj Paul Corker AGC(SPS)
Welfare Officer	Secretary (until replacement is voted in)
Standard Bearer	Andrew Jones - former Sgt(AC))
Association Padre	Rev Dennis Brett - former WO2(QMS(AC))
Webmaster	David Stotan - former WO2(QMS(AC))
Historical Secretary	Joe Hoggins BSc - former WO1(SMAC)

Regional Secretaries

North	Vince Scott – former WO2(QMS(AC))
North West	Dennis Norris – former WO2(QMS(AC))
Midlands	Steve Callaghan – former WO2(QMS(AC))
East	Capt(Retd) Chris Berry BA
South	Graham Brown – former WO1(SMAC)
West	Roy Deal MBE – former WO1(SSM)
London Area	Steve Truslove – former Sgt(AC)
Scotland	Ted Fairbrass – former Sgt(AC)
Wales	No nomination
Northern Ireland	No nomination
Germany	WO2(SQMS) Ron Holmes LSL/AGC(SPS)
Rest of the World	The Secretary

Contact with Area Secretaries

The duties of Area Secretaries referred to as Regional Representatives in the Association Charter are as follows:

- The Recruitment of new members.
- Maintaining an area membership list.
- Coordinating travel to Reunions and other Association activities

Area Secretaries should also be keeping an active eye on the health and well being of members in their area of responsibility and report anything untoward to the Welfare Secretary.

All members are encouraged to establish contact and 'touch base' with their Area Secretary as follows:

The North West

- consisting of Cumbria, Lancashire, Merseyside, Greater Manchester and Cheshire. Contact Dennis Norris at dn001k3794@blueyonder.co.uk

The North

- consisting of Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, Durham, Cleveland, North, West and South Yorkshire and Humberside. Contact Vince Scott at vincent-scott@hotmail.com

The Midlands

- consisting of Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, West Midlands, Leicestershire, Hereford and Worcestershire and Warwickshire. Contact Steve Callaghan at steve.callaghan@vincipark.co.uk

The East

- consisting of Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Essex,

Hertfordshire, Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. Contact Chris Berry BA at berry3@tinyworld.co.uk

The South

- consisting of Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Surrey, West Sussex, East Sussex and Kent. Contact Graham Brown at lancing@ntlworld.com

The West

- consisting Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Avon and Wiltshire. Contact Roy Deal MBE at roydeal@hotmail.com

The London Area.

Contact Steve Truslove at stevetruslove@aol.com

Scotland. Contact Ted Fairbrass at tedfairbrass@btinternet.com

Germany. Contact Ron Holmes at ronandkadj@aol.com

Rest of the World.

Contact the Association Secretary

area secretaries

webmaster's report

by

David Stotan – former WO2(QMS(AC))

As always it's good to see the message board being used by members to impart words of wisdom, share funny stories or just pass on important information. So a big thank you to all those who have posted messages on it. In my last article I highlighted the problems of SPAM Mail and how this was a big problem to the home PC user. On the same theme I read an article in January which concentrated on the "State of Spyware" report published by Webroot software, developer of Spy Sweeper and it shows spyware infection rates rising to their highest levels since 2004. No less than 89% of all consumer PCs scanned were infected an upward trend from the 2006 report. Not surprisingly, Webroot lays the blame for this increase on people who rely on free anti-spyware products. Hard core phishers, on the other hand, have realised that the number of newbie's flooding online due to the availability of broadband accessibility means an increased opportunity to defraud by the use of malicious spyware websites, fake corporate and financial websites, and search engines ads to drive traffic to them.

If all this weren't bad enough, there's more! Yes rogue anti-spyware masquerading as a professional product, often via a highly professional website that's linked to by seemingly genuine search engine adverts. The last thing a rogue application will do is REMOVE spyware from your system, and it usually does the opposite but it does vary a lot between different applications. The two main purposes of these rogues are either to install malware or fleece you of your money, and often both. If you activate one of these programmes you may see a promised scan of your PC, or rather you think you do. It is more than likely that it's just a scam, just a flash-driven animation

or similar that looks like a scan. Not that it matters, because even if it is a real scan the result will be the same: your PC will become riddled with spyware and require the rogue application to remove it. This is where the FREE STUFF syndrome strikes again because rather than part with £20 for a recognised application they are quite happy to accept the free download to care of business. This free rogue download will, almost without exception, install a malicious payload as your reward!

IF YOU READ NOTHING ELSE PLEASE TAKE TIME TO CHECK OUT THESE IMPORTANT LINKS

The following bookmark will take you to a site which will enable you to consult a list of know rouge anti-spyware. The site can be found at:

http://spywarewarrior.com/rogue_anti-spyware.htm

The article published in PC PRO highly recommends McAfee SiteAdvisor which can be found at:

www.siteadvisor.com

This is an early warning system that flags potentially unsafe sites both when you visit them and, more helpfully, within a set of Google search results. I've installed it and find it impressive, it adds safety ratings to search results and the sites you visit to help protect you from spyware, ad ware, spam and identity theft. It's free – recommended from a trusted source and only takes about 30 seconds to download. I also think SiteAdvisor is a useful weapon against click through malware sites, but as always use your common sense when using such a tool.

Artillery Clerks' Association Ties

The Association tie is of a silk/polyester Gunner zig zag design depicting the crossed quills and the 'AC' in gold. Please send a cheque to the value of £13.00 made payable to The Artillery Clerks' Association to:

Mr Roy Deal MBE, CGTW, School of Army Aviation, Middle Wallop, Stockbridge, Hampshire SO20 8DY



Wanted - Army Numbers

In order to complete records the following members are requested to inform the Secretary of their army numbers (present or former):

Brian Bailey, Pip Bailey, Jim Findley, Stu Hunt, Tresh Matthews (both please), Dennis Phillipson BEM, Steve Seymour, Gordon Timmis, Ron Waterfield, Andy West, Chris Wood, John Yeowell

Membership Recruiting - Eligibility for Membership

Full membership of the Association is open to any former Artillery Clerk in the rank range from Sergeant to Warrant Officer Class 1, either serving or retired. Membership may also be granted, with the recommendation of a former Artillery Clerk or member of the Association, to clerks who served in the Royal Artillery in the rank range from Gunner to Bombardier, and have subsequently been promoted to Sergeant and above in the Adjutant General's Corps.

by
Major Paul Corker AGC(SPS)

Opening Remarks

Where do these years go? This time last year I was on Post Operational Tour Leave from Iraq and nothing changes because I am again on leave. This time though I have been playing some golf, having a few beers with friends and visiting family in the North East. Sorry we missed one another Mel, it would have been nice to have a pint together in God's country! I have been informed that I will be staying in HQ 2 Brigade until at least April 2008 with a posting before August 2008. Where am I going? Well your guess is as good as mine but hopefully I shall know before November 2007. Enough about me, let me now give you the full statement of account of the fund.

Statement Of Account As At 31 Aug 07

Assets (A)		Liabilities (B)	
Current Account	£2,082:42	Function	£1,817:41
Deposit Account	£2,212:74		
Shop Stock	£ 364:00		
Total Assets	£4,659:16	Total Liabilities	£1,817:41
Total Cash (A – B)	£2,341:75		

General

The fund continues to remain financially strong, however known debtors are not included in the final totals. Assets last year totalled £3,686:24 compared with £4,659:16 in 2007. The cash available to the fund has dropped slightly from £2,745:62 to £2,341:75. The function has increased from £940:62 to £1,817:41.

Subscriptions

This continues to my major area of concern as Treasurer. The level of outstanding subscriptions is far too high. This is tying up much needed cash that could be receiving interest. I will be writing to all members to clear outstanding subscriptions shortly but I ask all of you to contact me and I will let you know immediately if you are an "honest debtor". To give you some idea of the current debtors, these are shown as:

Long Term Debtors	£600:00
Short Term Debtors	£225:00 (2007 subscriptions)

Mandate System

All members are strongly encouraged to subscribe by this method. Forms are available from the Treasurer. There are 60 members not subscribing by this system.

Gift Aid

This area continues to be a good source of income to the fund. The grand total received from the Inland Revenue stands at £1,337:39. I do ask politely, that if you are one of the 66 members who are yet to complete the 'Gift Aid Declaration Form' then please contact me soonest. The Taxman pays the fund £1:41 for every subscription received. Therefore it makes very good financial sense for you to contact me for a declaration form. I have already received the 2007 income which netted the fund £324:30.

Shop

The shop has a total of 28 ties @ £13:00 each. This equates to £364:00 in shop stock as shown by the Statement of Account.

Insurance

The fund remains under the insurance umbrella of Towergate Wilsons.

Summary

It has been a quiet year for the fund and again I thank all members of the Committee and members who have assisted me with the running of the financial side of the Association. My message to all members is to clear outstanding subscriptions as quickly as possible, subscribe by the mandate system and complete the Gift Aid Declaration Form. This action will result in the fund becoming stronger and therefore more able to support members when required. My contact number continues to be Folkestone Military (94281) 2301 or Civilian (013030 225301). Again, I wish you all the very best for 2007 and hope to see you in early 2008. One final note, I will be looking to hand over the reigns of Treasurer in 2008 and therefore I ask all those interested to contact me soonest and I will pass your names to the Committee for consideration.

historical secretaries report

by

Joe Hoggins BSc (former WO1(SMAC))

Since I penned my last report I have had a few disasters, the major one being the loss of nearly all my e-photographic records due to a hard drive failure. I went immediately to my back-up pen drive to find that this was unreadable! Wot's coming next?

The loss of this data is quite a major setback. I am trying different people who may have photo's of the farewell to Woolwich dinner. If I haven't contacted you and you have any photo's I would be grateful if you would e-mail them to me at joe.hoggins@btopenworld.com . Ron Holmes has sent me a disk with a number of different photo's going back a number of years. In fact there is one of me when I was Chief Clerk of 39 Heavy Regiment in Sennelager, with CO etc. etc. (including Bill Pattison (where are you now? Willy Wallace and Bob Cowan), which I had forgotten all about. These sorts of photo's are exactly what we are after – MORE please. It just goes to show that there must be numerous photo's similar to this one!

Many people, I am sure, will have photo's of the Clerks School at Bramcote which we would appreciate if you could let us have a copy (or original and we will return), BUT more especially the Clerks School at Woolwich. Any photographs at all of these two schools would be really appreciated. (Please put your name on the back of each photo)

Can I ask everyone, immediately after reading this, to go and look straight away for any items of historical interest, including photo's, and send them to me or Mel.

Thanks to everyone who has sent me

reports and photo's by post. I really appreciate it. Keep them coming.

Best regards

Joe

Minutes of the Artillery Clerk's Association Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 17th February 2007

Opening Remarks by the Chairman

The Chairman opened the Meeting by welcoming all those in attendance, especially to those who had travelled great distances, and to those who had come to the Reunion for the first time. The added attraction was that the Reunion was the last one to be held at Woolwich and the Master Gunner being the principal guest. The Chairman gave a briefing on the TV Team who would be in attendance.

Apologies for Absence

There were 27 apologies for absence, the majority of which were listed in the Reunion Dinner Menu Card.

Approval of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 8th April 2006

The Chairman stated that the Minutes had been circulated to all members via Crossed Quills and it was not intended to read them out again unless a member wished it to be done so. A proposal was taken to ensure that they were a true record:

Proposer Lt Col Richard Horner MBE RA
Seconder Mr Brian Morgan

Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 8th April 2006

There were no matters arising from the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 8th April 2006.

Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported:

- His thanks to the Committee for all their work.
- New ground had been broken with WO2 Ron Holmes holding a Reunion in Germany which had been a tremendous success. The next Germany Reunion was to be held in Gutersloh during October. A standard had been set for SSgt Adam Martin who was arranging the Dinner.
- Gratitude to David Stotan our Webmaster for maintaining the Association Website which is a very good means of communication and keeping in touch.
- Thank you to Andrew Jones our Standard Bearer for his continuing support and involvement in additional parades outside his Reunion duties.
- Thank you to Andy Tibble for finding time in his busy appointment to arrange the production of Crossed Quills. The latest edition in particular being very professional.
- The sad passing away of George McGilvery. A great credit to the Association for the members who had travelled great distances to attend the funeral in Kent.
- Membership now stood at 203 which had met the Committee Objective of reaching 200.

Secretary's Report

- Unfortunate death of former WO2(QMS(AC)) George McGilvery who had died on 9 Nov 06 aged 62.

- Belated congratulations to Maj Phil Spencer who was promoted to Lt Col during FY 2005/2006. Our first AGC Lt Col.
- Congratulations to WO1(SSM) Ian Constantine on being selected for a commission in the Royal Artillery during FY 2007/2008.
- Congratulations to Capts John Haddock and Martin Birch on being selected for promotion to Major during FY 2007/2008. Martin Birch has also been selected to attend the Intermediate Command and Staff Course (Land).
- Congratulations to WO2 Gary Prottey on being selected for promotion to WO1 during FY 2007/2008.
- Ties for sale during the weekend at a cost of £13.00.
- Annual reminder to keep the Secretary up to date with any postings, promotions, new addresses, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, award of medals, etc etc.

Assistant Secretary's Report

The Assistant Secretary reported:

Crossed Quills

- Requested confirmation that everyone present had received their copy of Crossed Quills.
- Thanked individuals for the submission of photographs for inclusion in the latest edition.
- Confirmed that Crossed Quills Issue No 11 would be out by 30 November 2007. He requested that the submission of photographs and articles for inclusion into the next edition of the 'Crossed Quills' should be forwarded through the Secretary, to be with him by the 1 September 2007.

Recruitment of New Members

- 183 members are currently on the Wanted List. He suggested that members must know someone on the list that they could recruit for membership of the Association. Anyone knowing the whereabouts of any potential members is requested to forward their contact details to the Assistant Secretary who will make contact. All members were urged to make a consolidated effort to recruit potential members.

Treasurer's Report

Liquidity State as at Sat 17 Feb 07:

Assets

Current Bank Balance	£2,458.30
Deposit Bank Balance	£2,197.90
Shop Stock	£ 390.00
Total Assets (A)	£5,046.20

Liabilities

Function	£1,931.25
Total Liabilities (B)	£1,931.25
Available Cash (A-B)	£3,114.95

Notes:

As at 31 Dec 06 there are 124 subscriptions outstanding. This would result in £620:00 to the fund.

2007 funds outstanding currently stand at 40. This would result in £200:00 to the fund.

Total outstanding is £820.00.

There are 63 members not subscribing by the direct mandate system. The Treasurer holds the list of those members not subscribing. If you would like to check contact the Treasurer direct. Copies are available and you are reminded "they are to be forwarded to your bank not to the Treasurer".

Another letter kindly reminding members to send their cheques to the Treasurer and to complete a mandate proforma will be actioned by the Treasurer in the near future.

The Reunion fund stands at £1,931:25. There are cheques to be paid into the account and further bills to be paid.

2006 Income and Expenditure Report (as at 31 Dec 06 submitted to the RAA)

Income	£1,666.51
Expenditure	£1,791.89
GPF	£ 125.38

Insurance

The insurance for the fund is valid until 31 Mar 07. It is with the firm Towergate Wilsons. The cost this year was £188:61. This includes personal accident cover for the Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Reunion Secretary, Standard Bearer and Regional Secretaries.

Gift Aid

£1.41 income for every £5.00 you have paid to the fund. The Gift Aid allowance began on 6 April 2000, therefore it is good to report that a sum of £1,013:09 has been received from the Tax Man to date. I will ensure this continues annually as subscriptions are received. This should take place in May/June. Please if you have failed to complete the declaration form, do so immediately. Please return to the Treasurer as soon as possible. Copies are available on the chair should anyone remain sober enough to take it home.

Shop

Ties cost £13:00 and there are 30 in stock.

Welfare Secretary's Report

- The Chairman reported that due to illness the Welfare Secretary Ted Morgan had been unable to attend the Reunion. Ted had sent his sincere apologies for non attendance. The Chairman was not aware of any relevant cases or outstanding issues to be reported.
- Mr Dennis Norris (Area Secretary North West) explained the circumstances surrounding his son's deployment in Iraq and his suggestion about the financial collection for the families of the bereaved members of 12 Regt RA. A subsequent collection was made and a cheque for the sum of £770.00 was presented to the RSM 12 Regt RA during the Germany Reunion.
- The Chairman reported that the Association Committee had discussed a possible donation of £250.00 to RAA Funds. If agreed, the donation would be presented to the RAA General Secretary during the Reunion Dinner. A proposer and second from the floor was requested.

Proposer: Maj(Retd) Pat Verdon
Second: Mr Joe Hoggins BSc

(All members were in favour of this proposal)

- The Secretary explained to the AGM that any approaches made to the Welfare Secretary are kept private and the Committee do not get involved in the private and confidential affairs of any member.

Historical Secretary's Report

The Historical Secretary Mr Joe Hoggins BSc, made a plea for members to dig out articles, stories, photographs etc for the proposed book 'The History of the Artillery Clerk'. A certain amount of articles have been received but not sufficient to justify publication at this stage. Without further input a publication could be delayed indefinitely.

Reunion Secretary's Report

The Reunion Secretary WO1 Ian Constantine gave a comprehensive briefing on the format of the Reunion Dinner and the evening including the photograph which was to be taken in the Gymnasium.

Elections

Election or re-election of Committee

The Chairman stated that the present Committee wished to remain in office as follows:

Chairman	Lt Col(Retd) Joe Falzon BEM
Secretary	Mr Mel Charlton
Treasurer	Maj Paul Corker AGC(SPS)

Reunion Secretary Due to commissioning of WO1(SSM) Ian Constantine a new incumbent was to be sought

Proposer: SSgt Adam Martin
Second: Mr Alan Lowthian

Assistant Secretary

The Secretary proposed and Mr William Watson seconded that Mr Andy Tibble MSM be accepted to fill the new post of Assistant Secretary.

Area Secretary South

The Secretary proposed and WO2(SQMS) Nick Perkovic seconded that Mr Graham Brown be accepted to fill the post of Area Secretary South vice Mr Andy Tibble MSM .

(All members were in favour of these proposals)

Any other Business

Location of Future Reunion Dinner

The Chairman started a lengthy discussion on the subject of new venue for Reunion Dinners stating that Larkhill was to be become the new spiritual home of the Royal Artillery.

The following possible new locations were mentioned by various members and it was generally agreed that we should remain in a military environment:

Bramcote (central for everyone), Larkhill, HAC, Royal Hospital Chelsea, Union Jack Club, Victory Services Club. It was agreed that a final decision would be made by the Committee.

Subsequent to the AGM, the RASM during his after Dinner speech welcomed the Association with open arms to hold future Reunion Dinners in the Sgts' Mess at Larkhill. He was happy to carry on with sponsoring our Reunion as an official function. The Chairman has spoken to the QM of 14 Regt RA at Larkhill and it was

considered that facilities and accommodation would be available for our use. The Committee have taken the decision that the next AGM and Reunion will be held on Sat 19 Apr 08 at Larkhill.

Message from Carol McGilvery

Maj(Retd) Dave Cussell informed those in attendance that he had spoken to Mrs Carol McGilvery who wished to relay her thanks to members of the Association would had helped and supported her at the time of her husband George's death and subsequent funeral. In addition Carol had sent her best wishes for a good evening.

Germany Reunion Photograph

WO2 Ron Holmes (Area Secretary Germany) informed members that the Germany Reunion Photograph was available for those members who had placed orders and payment was requested by return.

Message from Maj(Retd) Tony Wilson MBE

Maj Pat Verdon stated that Maj(Retd) Tony Wilson had sent his regards to all members from Thailand. In addition Maj(Retd) Pat Verdon proposed a vote of thanks to the Committee.

Donations to the Huntingdon's Society

Mr Steve Read explained to members that Mr Mick Johnston was suffering from Huntington's Disease. He mentioned that two young members of the Huntington's Society were running a Marathon and he requested sponsorship from members.

Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next Meeting was to be decided. Subsequent to the Meeting the Committee have decided that the next Annual General Meeting will be held on Sat 19 Apr 08 at Larkhill.

ARMY ORDER 54 OF 1903

Pay and Promotion of Clerks, Royal Artillery

EDWARD R.I.

A.O.54 **WHEREAS** We deem it expedient to amend the regulations relating
April to the pay and promotion of soldiers employed as clerks in Our Royal Artillery;
1903

18
Artillery
3038

OUR WILL AND PLEASURE is that all soldiers who may hereafter be permanently employed as clerks in Our Royal Artillery shall form a section to be called the Artillery Clerks' Section, and shall, from the 1st April 1903, be paid and promoted as follows:

Allowances.	Rank	Pay	Class for
1ST DIVISION			
On Promotion from the 2 nd Division	Warrant Officer	s. d. 5 6	16
2ND DIVISION			
On promotion from 3 rd Division.	Company Sergeant Major	4 0	17
After 3 year's service with pay at 4s per day.	Quarter Master Sergeant	4 6	16
After 3 year's service with pay at 4s 6d per day.	Quarter Master Sergeant	5 0	16
3RD DIVISION			
On appointment	Acting Bombardier	2 0	20
After one year's service in the division	Bombardier	2 6	20
After 2 year's service with pay at 2s 6d a-day.	Corporal	3 0	20
After 2 year's service with pay at 3s a-day.	Sergeant	3 6	19

No increase of rank or pay under this article shall be allowed, unless specially recommended by the officer under whom the non-commissioned officer is serving.

Given at Our Court at St. James's this 21st
day of March, 1903, in the 3rd year of Our
Reign.

By His Majesty's Command,

Sr. JOHN BRODRICK

(Extract by kind permission of the Royal Artillery Institution)

army order 54 of 1903

Artillery Clerks' Association Charter

General

1. The Association, entitled the "Artillery Clerks' Association" was formed at Woolwich on Saturday 7th March 1998. This Charter is being adopted to guide its activities. The Charter may be changed at any time by the Committee to reflect the wishes of the Association members.
2. The Aim and Object of the Artillery Clerks' Association is to promote comradeship amongst its members, both serving and retired and to provide a focal point for all members of the Association. The Association is essentially an old comrades association of former Artillery Clerks, either serving or retired.
3. The Artillery Clerks' Association is affiliated to and is a Branch of the Royal Artillery Association (RAA). All members of the Royal Artillery Association will be granted life membership of the RAA on acceptance.

Eligibility

4. **Full Memers.** Full membership of the Association is open to any former Artillery Clerk in the rank range from Sergeant to Warrant Officer Class 1, either serving or retired. Membership may also be granted, with the recommendation of a former Artillery Clerk or member of the Association, to clerks who served in the Royal Artillery in the rank range from Gunner to Bombardier, and have subsequently been promoted to Sergeant in the Adjutant General's Corps.
5. **Honorary Membership.** Honorary Membership of the Association is specially designed to cover the widows and relatives of deceased Artillery Clerks. Other special cases of honorary membership will be considered on merit by the Committee and voted upon by the Committee and voted upon by the members at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Honorary members may not vote on matters voted upon at the AGM.
6. **Authorization.** Membership of the Association may be sought by anyone under these rules. In the event of there being some doubt regarding application, the Artillery Clerks' Association Committee will arbitrate. The Association Committee has the right to refuse any application for membership, or cancel any existing membership, for example, for disciplinary reasons.

Purpose

7. The specific purpose of the Association is to provide:
 - a. A focal point for comradeship, largely through periodic reunion of:
 - (1) A formal Annual Reunion Dinner.

(2) An informal Dinner to be held at a frequency and location to be decided by the Committee, to include wives, girlfriends and widows.

(3) A very limited welfare service. This essentially means that the Artillery Clerks' Association, in promoting contacts between members, provides a network through which help can be given to any member. The focus for this activity within the Association is the Secretary.

Organisation

8. The affairs of the Artillery Clerks' Association will be overseen by the Artillery Clerks' Association Committee. The Committee will meet at intervals decided upon by the Chairman, and will comprise of:

- a. President (Honorary).
- b. Chairman.
- c. Secretary. Responsibilities cover:
 - (1) Association Membership.
 - (2) Correspondence.
 - (3) Providing a focus for the Association's welfare work and links to the RAA.
 - (4) Production of a periodic newsletter.
 - (5) Coordinating the activities of the Area Representatives.
- d. Treasurer. Responsibilities cover:
 - (1) Maintenance of a bank account entitled the "Artillery Clerks' Association".
 - (2) Accounting for all the finances of the Artillery Clerks' Association.
 - (3) Presenting a Statement of Account to the Committee (as and when required) and annually at the AGM
- e. Regional Representatives. Responsibilities cover:
 - (1) The recruitment of new members.
 - (2) Maintaining an area membership list.
 - (3) Coordinating travel to Reunions and other Association activities.

Areas covered are:

- (1) Northern Ireland.
- (2) Scotland.

(3) Wales.

(4) The North West consisting of Cumbria, Lancashire, Merseyside, Greater Manchester and Cheshire.

(5) The North consisting of Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, Durham, Cleveland, North, West and South Yorkshire and Humberside.

(6) The Midlands consisting of Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, West Midlands, Leicestershire, Hereford and Worcestershire and Warwickshire.

(7) The East consisting of Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Essex, Northamptonshire, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk.

(8) London Area

(9) The South consisting of Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Surrey, West Sussex, East Sussex and Kent.

(10) The West consisting of Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Avon and Wiltshire.

(11) Germany.

(12) The Rest of the World – covered by the Secretary.

9. Additional members of the Committee may be appointed by the Chairman as required, for example, Reunion Secretary and Assistant Secretary.

Fees

10. Membership fees are to be determined by the Committee. There is to be a fee to join the Association and the annual renewal fee.

11. Fees are to cover the costs of administration, including telephone calls, postage and stationery.

12. Reunions are to be self-financing, that is, those attending are to meet the full cost of all activities of the Reunion.

73rd Artillery Clerks' Reunion and Association Dinner by former WO1(SSM) and now Capt Ian Constantine RA

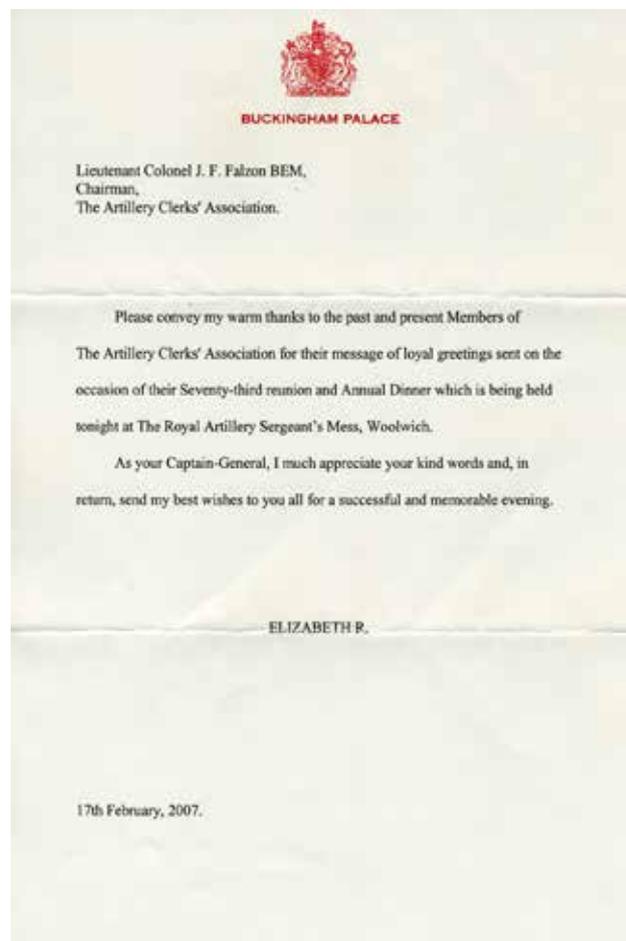
The 73rd Artillery Clerks' Reunion and Association Dinner took place at Woolwich over the weekend of Friday 16 - Sunday 18 February 2007. This was also to be the Associations "Farewell to Woolwich" Dinner and as hoped this brought out many old faces and attendance was, as hoped, particularly high.

The Reunion started in style with a large number of Association Members arriving on Friday evening and meeting in the Sergeants' Mess where they were joined by the Mess Members of 16 Regiment on their return from Sandown. This proved to be a lively evening and set the standard for the weekend ahead.

Saturday night arrived and over 70 former Artillery Clerks' sat down for Dinner with a further 7 guests, included the Guest of Honour, The Master Gunner St James's Park, General Sir Alex Harley KBE CB, and the Royal Artillery Sergeant Major, Warrant Officer Class 1 Alec Harvey. The Association also secured the attendance of Mrs Mary Faulkner (the Mess Manager of the Sergeants' Mess) as a Dinner Guest, a rare group and a chance for the Association to show their gratitude for the outstanding service given to our Reunions over the years. Dinner was, as ever, excellent, with the Mess Staff maintaining their usual excellent standards. We were entertained throughout by the String Quartet of the Royal Artillery Band under the leadership of Bombardier Simon Duggan. Further entertainment was provided by an outstanding Pipe set given by Pipers Craig Davison and William Wallace.

Following this the Reunion Secretary spoke, welcoming all to the Reunion and as fitting for our Farewell to Woolwich, marked the occasion by acknowledging the help of a number of individuals for their assistance to the Association over the 44 years the Reunion had been held in Woolwich. Thanks were given to the Royal Artillery Sergeant Major, Major Mike Gleeson MBE, the Quartermaster Woolwich Garrison and the Commanding Officer and Regimental Sergeant Major of 16 Regiment Royal Artillery. Special thanks were then given to Mrs Mary Faulkner with a small presentation to show our appreciation.

The Association also acknowledged Lieutenant Colonel Ian Vere-Nicoll MBE,



reunion secretary's report

the General Secretary of the Royal Artillery Association, welcoming him and Captain (Retired) Alan Solly, the RAA Membership Secretary to the Dinner and presenting a cheque for £250 to the RAA.

The Reunion Secretary continued by proposing a toast to "Absent Friends". The Royal Artillery Sergeant Major then gave a stirring "State of the union" report, reiterating his support to the Association and throwing out an invite to Larkhill for future Reunions. The Guest of Honour was then introduced and gave a poignant address, which was warmly received by all those in attendance.

Following the speeches the Royal Artillery Clerks' Association retired to the Ayres Lounge where the Reunion continued into the early hours of the morning.

The 74th Artillery Clerks' Reunion and Association Dinner will take place in the Royal Artillery Central Sergeants' Mess, Larkhill, Wiltshire on Saturday 19th April 2008



Members waiting for the AGM to start

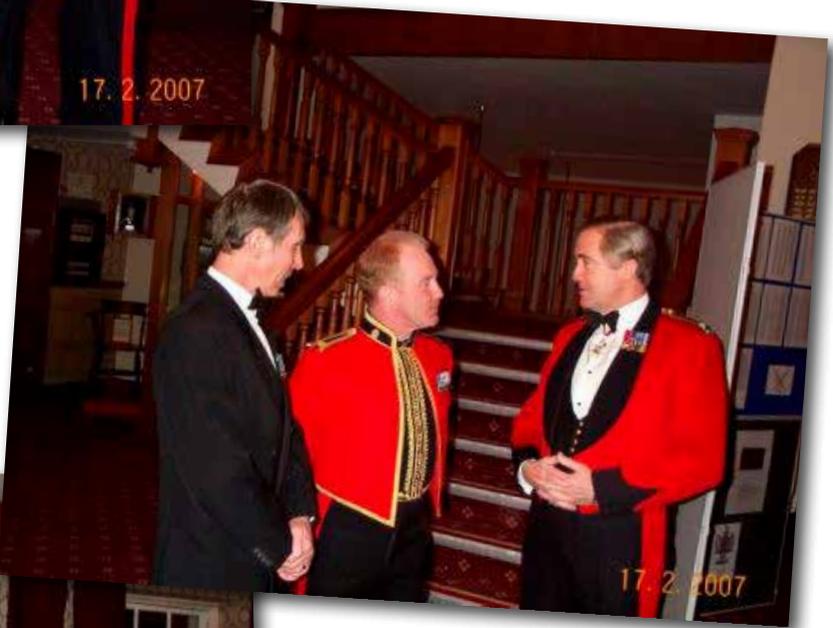


Prior to AGM, Assistant Secretary Andy Tibble MSM, Chairman Lt Col(Retd) Joe Falzon BEM, Secretary Mel Charlton and Reunion Secretary WO1(SSM) Ian Constantine



Left: Waiting in foyer for Guest of Honour to arrive, Assistant Secretary Andy Tibble MSM, Treasurer Maj Paul Corker, Secretary Mel Charlton, Maj(Retd) John Reynolds and Reunion Secretary WO1(SSM) Ian Constantine

Right: Guest, RAA Membership Secretary Capt(Retd) Alan Solly, Tresurer Maj Paul Corker talking to the Honorary President Maj Gen Peter Currie CB



Below: Reunion Secretary WO1(SSM) Ian Constantine meets the Master Gunner

Above: Guest of Honour Gen Sir Alex Harley KBE CB, Master Gunner St James's Park talking to Assistant Secretary Andy Tibble MSM, Chairman Lt Col(Retd) Joe Falzon BEM and Maj(Retd) John Reynolds to the right



Right: Guest Maj M Gleeson MBE (Woolwich Station QM) and Mrs Mary Faulkener (RA Central Sgts' Mess Manager) prior to Dinner



Left: Secretary Mel Charlton accompanies the Master Gunner into Dinner

Right: View of top table



Left: Members standing prior to Grace (note candelabra in centre)



Left: Reverse top table, Lt Col(Retd) Vic Holdaway BEM, Honorary President Maj Gen Peter Currie CB and Chairman Lt Col(Retd) Joe Falzon BEM

Right: The port flowed for Brian Leadbetter, Joe Phelps, Ron Cooper, Steve Read and Mick Johnston



Above: Des Riley, SSgt Adam Martin and Webmaster David Stotan enjoy an after Dinner port

Below: Capt(Retd) George Martin plays a favourite tune on his 'chair pipe' about 3 am when most of you were tucked up in bed





Left: SSgt Chris Buckley and Historical Secretary Joe Hoggins BSc

Below: Standard Bearer Andrew Jones and Mick Johnston



Below: Pete Deverall has got the 'boot' with Mick Johnston and Steve Read behind



Right: Mick Johnston and Area Secretary Germany WO2 Ron Holmes



203 Members as at 17 Sep 07

Sparky Allen	Ted Fairbrass	Leon Lyall	Mike Shellard
Alf Alvin	Joe Falzon	Dave Manchester	Chris Shuter
Richard Ancliffe	Jim Findlay	Adam Martin	Sid Siddall
Alan Ashcroft	Ron Flemmings	Tony Martin	Dougie Silver
Al Artley	Graham Flint	George Martin	Tony Skinner
Brian Bailey	Alan Foot	Tim Mathews	Bob Smith
Pip Bailey	Foxy Fox	Tresh Matthews	Dave Smith
Brian Bassett	Mark Gaines	Ken May	Brian Smith
Taff Bellis	Brian Garthwaite	Tommy McCarthy	Snowy Snowdon
Chris Berry	Martin Geddes	John McDermott	Phil Spencer
Martin Birch	Ian Grant	George McKinnell	Mark Spring
Dave Boulton	Mick Grenham	George McLachlan	Trevor Spurr
Peter Bradburn	Ian Groom	Paul McMahan	Will Stirman
Denis Brett	John Haddock	James McNamara	David Stotan
Graham Brown	Colin Haine	Martin Meek	Dave Straw
David Brown	Ted Hall	Tony Meek	Andy Sykes
Phil Buckingham	'H' Hammond	Eddie Mills	Ritchie Syme
Titch Buckley	Graham Hampton	Tam Millsip	John Taylor
Budgie Burgess	Chris Harvey	Brian Morgan	Mark Testi
Martin Butler	Steve Hawke	Bill Morland	Andy Tibble
Steve Callaghan	Phil Hayes	Ian Morris	Gordon Timmis
Iain Campbell	Phil Headford	Andy Moss	Trig Tregower
Walter Carney	Marty Hester	Tony Mott	Frank Trimby
Mel Charlton	Alan Hill	Paul Mudd	Steve Truslove
Rob Clarke	Geordie Himlin	Richard Nichol	Mel Turpie
Lawrence Collingwood	Joe Hoggins	Dennis Norris	Dave Tyler
Ian Constantine	Vic Holdaway	Tony Nuttall	Gary Tyson
Ron Cooper	Ron Holmes	Andy O'Neill	Pat Verdon
Paddy Corbett	Paddy Hope	Steve Paton	Dave Vesty
Paul Corker	Richard Horner	Roy Penhallurick	William Wallace
Stan Cornwell	Idris Hughes	Nick Perkovic	Dick Walmsley
Mike Cottrell	Stu Hunt	Paul Perry	Daz Ward
Bob Cowan	Mick Hutchinson	Joe Phelps	Ken Ward
Dennis Crawford	Geoff Hyatt	Dennis Phillipson	Ron Waterfield
Kev Crump	Geoff Janik	Chris Piper	Duggie Waterhouse
Peter Currie	Dick Jeavons	Eddie Platts	Tom Webb
Dave Cussell	Bill Johnson	Jim Pottle	Andy West
Jim Cussell	Mick Johnston	Garry Prottey	Ronnie Whelan
Colin Davidson	Andrew Jones	Steve Prowse	Wills Williams
Paul Davies	Ted Jones	Derek Ralphs	Jeff Williams
Steve Davies	Derek Kelsey	Steve Read	Ian Williams
Bob Day	Clive Knaggs	John Reynolds	Mick Williams
Roy Deal	Ralph Lalabalavu	Howard Richardson	John Wilson
Pete Deverall	John Lane	Neil Ridout	Alan Witts
John Dewberry	Dave Larcombe	Des Riley	Chris Wood
Ray Dickinson	Brian Leadbetter	Jim Roast	Al Wood
John Dixon	Russ Lee	Brian Rose	Woody Woodford
Jim Doran	Ray Lewis	Arthur Rowell	Den Wright
Paddy Ennis	Bob Lewney	Alan Sawdon	John Yeowell
Rog Essex	John Lindley	Vince Scott	Bill Young
Sid Evans	Alan Lowthian	Steve Seymour	

LISTENERS



In Crossed Quills Issue 10,, we published this potograph asking if anyone recognised the Squad Leader. It is none other than our Chairman Lt Col(Retd) Joe Falzon BEM (with Peter Gauci to his immediate right)

Here are some great ways of dealing with the burdens of life:

- Accept that some days you're the pigeon, and some days you're the statue.
- Always keep your words soft and sweet, just in case you have to eat them.
- Always read stuff that will make you look good in case you die in the middle of it.
- Drive carefully. It's not only cars that can be recalled by their maker.
- If you can't be kind, at least have the decency to be vague.
- If you lend someone £20 and never see that person again, it was probably worth it.
- It may be that your sole purpose in life is simply being kind to others.
- Never put both feet in your mouth at the same time, because then you won't have a leg to stand on.
- Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance.
- Since it's the early worm that gets eaten by the bird, sleep late.
- The second mouse gets the cheese.
- When everything's coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.
- Birthdays are good for you. The more you have, the longer you live.
- You may be only one person in the world, but you may also be the world to one person.
- Some mistakes are too much fun to only make once.
- We could learn a lot from crayons... Some are sharp, some are pretty and some are dull. Some have weird names, and all are different colours, but they all have to live in the same box.
- A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.

Wedding Etiquette - FAQs

by Paddy Corbett, WO2(QMS(AC)) Retired

It is impossible to overstate the importance of wedding etiquette especially in rural Ireland. Okay, not as important as the latest fashions statement by Posh Spice, nor the colour of David's hair or even Jade's visit to Baluchistan, but, never-the-less up there with John Prescott's swan around the Caribbean.

So, **Question One.** What are the Best Man's duties? Most people feel that his duties are to be nice to the groom and don't forget the ring at the crucial moment. This, as seasoned observers know is not strictly the case. The Best Man is there to humiliate before, during and after the ceremony. Chief among his functions is the arranging of the stag night, an ancient ritual of tribal evolution during which the future groom is beaten derided, half-drowned and then resuscitated long enough to have his private parts anointed with Dubbin. It is considered compulsory to have the Best Man's speech lightly peppered with amusing anecdotes about the bride and groom, how they met, fell deeply and tenderly in love, how they decided to embark together on that great spiritual adventure of spiritual togetherness, and finally what constitutes their favourite sexual position.

Question Two. What are the Bridesmaid's duties? Her main duty is to lose enough weight to fit into the ghastly pink velveteen/leopard skin Lycra strapless, backless puffball meringue garment which has been rented out by the bride's family.

Question Three. Who pays for what? Well-established tradition has it that the

bride's family have the privilege of paying for the dresses, the suits, the cars, the flowers, the singers, the church, the altar boys, the hotel, the drink, the band, the priest and the damage. The groom's family's contribution is £3:20. 20 P for the phone call for the taxi (£3) to take them when they are completely plastered.

Question Four. What should the band play? This is a very important question. All good bands should be proficient in both kinds of music that is Country AND Western. Everything they played will be rendered into Country and Western Style. Everything from "Get your biscuits in the Oven and your buns in the Bed" to "I woulda writ you a letter but I couldn't spell Yuck".

Question Five. Who should be the first people to leave the Reception? Of course this should be the Bride and Groom, the Best Man and the Bridesmaid will be close behind, with the Best Man whispering into the Bridesmaid's ear, "I suppose a ride would outs the question?" It's at this point that the Brides mother breaks down into tears, starts drinking really heavily and mumbling to the priest, "I nivir liked that shower of miserable gombeen counter-jumpers (meaning the groom's relations).

Question Six. What should the newly married couple find in their room? The bridal suite should now have been reduced to rubble by the Best man and his associates, reminiscent of Sarajevo and beneath the bedclothes a mix of frogs cockroaches and maggots.

Question Seven. Who should be the last people to leave the Reception? This will

wedding etiquette

be heavily armed police officers who have come to arrest a pageboy who urinated over the Hotel Manager and the Bride's sister who attacked the lead singer when she given the brush-off.

I hope this be of some help to those who intend to jump the broom in the near future. Remember, never go to bed angry - stay up and fight.

British Farces - Amendment to Awards

NEW RIBBON SYSTEM

Issued completely without authority behind the Minister's back

 <p>NEVER LEFT UK RIBBON For 20 years of Home service</p>	 <p>EVERYBODY WENT TO GERMANY EXCEPT ME RIBBON Numeral denotes number of years you have been sniveling for an overseas posting</p>	 <p>NEVER DID U.N. TOUR RIBBON Globe device added for each UN tour successfully avoided</p>
 <p>MY WIFE'S UNCLE KNEW SOMEONE WHO SERVED IN WW II RIBBON Like anybody really cares</p>	 <p>MY UNCLE SPENT WW II HIDING IN A CAVE NEAR UXBRIDGE RIBBON</p>	 <p>GOT DIVORCED AGAIN RIBBON Dollar sign device added for each divorce</p>
 <p>MY DADDY'S A GENERAL RIBBON Star devices indicate daddy's rank</p>	 <p>MODUK - PJHQ - HQSTC TOUR RIBBON Skull device awarded for each three-year life-sucking tour in HQ position</p>	 <p>MISSED MY LSGC MEDAL BECAUSE OF JAIL RIBBON</p>
 <p>CORPORAL / CAPTAIN FOR LIFE RIBBON Happy face device for Captains only, denoting extra pay incentives</p>	 <p>DRUNK DRIVING AND STILL IN THE MILITARY RIBBON Patrol car device awarded for each conviction</p>	 <p>NEVER EVER BEEN IN THE FIELD RIBBON Happy face devices awarded for each additional 5-year non-field tour</p>
 <p>ALWAYS BEEN IN THE FIELD RIBBON Sad face device awarded for each additional 5-year field tour</p>	 <p>I'M NOT MOVING! RIBBON House device awarded for each posting avoided by threatening to take release</p>	 <p>EIGHT-TO-FOUR RIBBON Shows up on time, does minimum work, goes home on time</p>
 <p>MY BUDDY IS MY CAREER MANAGER RIBBON Island device added for each jammy posting</p>	 <p>I GOT MY BOSS PROMOTED RIBBON Numeral indicates number of superiors promoted by your hard work who have already forgotten your name</p>	 <p>PVR'd AND GOT BACK IN, PASSED GO AND COLLECTED £200 RIBBON</p>
 <p>AIRMAN OF THE MOMENT RIBBON Additional OK devices can be awarded as earned, or just on a whim</p>	 <p>DRINKING MATE COMMENDATION RIBBON Additional device awarded for each commendation</p>	 <p>NEVER EARNED A RIBBON RIBBON Just to take up space</p>



TEMPORARY DUTY IN US 'FRUIT SALAD BAR'
Entire set of ribbons attaches to uniform so senior personnel don't look like complete losers next to junior USAF members.

NOTE: to be worn only in US, otherwise someone might complain that we look too military

Reminiscences of a VERY retired Ex Artillery Clerk and Quartermaster

by G E Mills

Having agreed to extract from my life story (written for my grandchildren) that portion dealing with my army service I re-read John Reynolds contribution. I quickly realised that although a contemporary of John he had a much more varied and interesting life than I. However, here goes.

Born in 1935 I was a virtual orphan as I was taken away from my mother in 1939 when she was diagnosed with TB, my father was already in the Royal Artillery. Having been in the TA he was one of the first to be conscripted. So my paternal grandmother took in myself and my younger brother. Almost immediately we were evacuated to Anglesea for some 4 years before returning to Manchester.

I left school at 15 years of age and, after a gap weekend, commenced work. I had four reasonably interesting but more or less dead end jobs whilst waiting for my National Service call-up. Eventually I pre-empted call-up by volunteering for the Army at seventeen and a half years of age in order to qualify for regular rates of pay. My father having been a Gunner I elected to join the Gunners also. Having completed the selection tests I was offered all sorts of jobs the only one of which I recognised was "clerk". So was my future determined.

In due course I arrived at 68 Training Regiment in Oswestry and was allocated my very own army number – 22814639! Has anyone ever met an ex-soldier who could not rattle off his army number?

There were 30 or so of us in our squad and we lived in a wooden hut part of a 'spider' consisting of (if I remember correctly) 4 wooden huts, 2 side by side with a gap

of some 12 feet between them with an ablution block at the end separating us from 2 similar blocks the whole forming an 'H'.

The first few days were rather hazy but my indelible memory is of the difficulty I had understanding Scouses, Geordies, Brummies and Glaswegians – they might just as well have been French or German. (Interesting point – my spellchecker accepts Geordies and Glaswegians but refuses to accept Scouses and Brummies). Some of them were a rather rough lot but within a short space of time a one for all and all for one attitude prevailed. In fact our Glaswegian hardcase was often the one to help one of the weaker ones. There was certainly no bullying except for one of our number being given a stiff brush bath for failing to observe basic cleanliness rules.

We were a fairly mixed bunch including the Glasgow tearaway who regaled us with stories of sharpened bicycle chains under jacket collars and razor blades set into the peak of a cap. Two Salvation Army lads, one with a trombone the other a violin (both destined for the RA Band I believe). A Yorkshire tyke who disappeared one Friday evening and re-appeared Sunday evening having hitchhiked to his home and back which, so he informed us, included a



Age 17½ after 2 days in the Royal Artillery! July 1952

REMINISCENCES

'ride in a posh car with a toff who bought me a meat pie'. We also had a giant of a Devonshire lad who managed to faint when he saw the lad in front of him receive his vaccination jab.

Being a non smoker at that time I was amazed at the grip that nicotine had on people. Having watched 3 or 4 lads sharing one cigarette I made up my mind never to start smoking. A resolution that was to last at least nine months! A resolution made easier by the fact that our weekly wage, 45 shillings, hardly ran to the purchase of cigarettes.

We had one character whom I believe was trying to get thrown out of the army. Having been told to blanco his kit and receiving the reply 'all of it' when he queried what exactly he was to blanco, did exactly that. He blanched his webbing, his boots, his beret, his overcoat in fact everything! I don't remember the outcome.

Our first two weeks were spent getting our kit in order, blancoing webbing, bulling boots until the toe caps were like glass. Learning to lay out our kit for inspection and of course learning to march.

I was not a natural marcher but then none of us were, however it was I that was selected for the observation (probably heard a mile away) "Mills, you march like a pregnant duck" I was then "invited" to double over to the flagpole and shout "I march like a pregnant duck" 3 times at the top of my voice. Most embarrassing with hordes of WRAC girls passing by. Never having observed a pregnant duck I am not sure whether this was a compliment or not!

After that first fortnight and a passing out parade we moved across camp to 64 Training Regiment where we were to spend the next 6 weeks learning the intricacies of gun drill, map reading and other aspects of soldiering.

We had a subaltern section commander who we very rarely saw, A Sergeant who we were quite happy not to see and a Bombardier we never saw as he played rugby for the regiment and the Gunners. The real power behind the throne was of course the Lance Bombardier. In our case this was LBdr Gates who, I must admit, guided us with admirable patience through the many pitfalls awaiting civilians training to be soldiers.

Shortly after starting my 6 weeks training I had a rather weird reaction to the Schick Test (a small prick on the forearm) and lost all the skin off my hands and feet so I was carted off to Chester Military Hospital where, in addition to learning how to bump floors, I learnt to play Solo, Pontoon and Poker. My education was further advanced by learning all about syphilis when two Northumberland Fusiliers were brought in from Hong Kong.

I also well remember the Army Matron. When she came to the ward, which she did each and every morning, the floor would be

immaculate as would the beds with their occupants lying strictly to attention.

Naturally I was back squadded but the six weeks training when it finally started passed fairly quickly. We were all put into teams for soccer, hockey and rugby games. Presumably if anyone showed real talent they would be kept at Oswestry. As far as rugby was concerned I was not a danger to anyone – it was the first time I had ever played rugby (and the last) and I spent the whole time on the wing hoping the ball would stay well away from me.

I recall setting off in the back of a 3-ton vehicle to (I believe) Tonfanau to fire 25 pounders. We were given packets of bacon and mousetrap cheese sandwiches to sustain us; most of these disappeared over the tailboard en-route. We were also given cotton wool to plug our ears, not as effective as Amplivox as witness the number of ex gunners receiving disability pensions for hearing loss – myself included.

Then came the great day of the passing out parade. With the assistance of the RA Band all went well and it was with great anticipation that we all traipsed to the pub in Oswestry to celebrate. We were of course in uniform and none of us had much cash and in any case for most of us it was the first time we had ever been in a pub. I remember one soldier was very adept at playing popular tunes on the spoons, so adept that one of the locals made a collection for him only for an officer in civilian clothes to state that he could not for some reason accept the money. The cash was eventually surreptitiously put in the soldier's pocket at a later stage in the evening.

It was early December before I was to report to Woolwich for my clerks course. We were billeted in what had formerly been stables with cast iron lockers set about 5 foot from the floor – this was the cause of my being rushed to the Royal Herbert hospital to have stitches inserted in my forehead, this before I had even got as far

as the clerks school. My recollection of names is rather vague after some 50 years but I think the OC was Major Abbot, and the Chief Instructor Jim Poor. One of the instructors was SSgt Foord (double o). It was the latter whose opening words at our first typewriter lesson went "cleaning a typewriter is like making love to a woman – you start at the top and work your way down"!!

Because our course straddled the Christmas/New Year break my friend (a Scot) and I opted for Christmas duty in order to be off duty for the New Years Eve. Trafalgar Square on New Years Eve at the end of 1952 was to me magical. Still not quite 18 I had never experienced anything like the vast rejoicing crowd, everyone in high good humour, young girls (and some not so young) kissing everyone in sight, especially servicemen (we were of course in uniform). The only drawback was having to get back to Woolwich as there were no trains or buses and we definitely could not afford a taxi.

I found the course intensive but interesting and in due course passed the Bill test and was asked to nominate where I should like to be posted to. My friend and I (both regulars) opted for Korea as we understood it would be a year in Korea and 2 years in Hong Kong. In due course back came our posting orders – my friend to Yorkshire and I to BAOR. So much for choice.

Anyway my unit was to be 77 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment stationed in Delmenhorst, so after some leave which took me past my 18th birthday it was off to Harwich where I recall tramping along a railway track carrying full kit to the dock where we embarked for the Hook of Holland. Not a pleasant crossing as we were in bunk beds in the bowels of the ship – it was a night crossing so we did at least manage to get some sleep.

On arrival at the Hook I was put on the Green train (I think it was green, there were also red and blue trains depending on ones

destination in Germany).

77 Regiment was part of 5 Army Group Royal Artillery (Anti-Aircraft) – (5 AGRA(AA)). The HQ was located in Oldenburg with all units based in either Oldenburg or Delmenhorst. The first summer was a gloriously hot one remembered chiefly for evenings spent in the Diehorster Krug (the Huppach) where I acquired a taste for German beer and Bratwurst (a long grilled sausage).

Until we had been stationed in Germany for 6 months we were not allowed to wear civilian clothes and had to be back in barracks by 10pm. Another rule I remember was that anyone who had had intercourse with a local girl had to sign a register in a room next door to the guard-room where there were self treatment tubes of anti-VD cream. To contract VD and not to have signed the book was a Court Martial offence. Whether or not one had to enter the girls name I do not know, never having had the necessity to visit the room.

My first Chief Clerk was SSgt Ernie Jordan who I remember at that time as being very bitter having had to reduce in rank from his war time rank of WO1.

I was employed in the Regimental Office as Training Clerk but one of my other duties was to establish each sub-units entitlement of cigarette ration chits (140 cigarettes per week per man), collecting them from the NAAFI manageress and distributing them to the batteries. It was not long before a fellow clerk and I were buying far more than our ration and selling them to locally employed German civilians for 1DM a packet (about 75% profit). One of the reasons, apart from profit, for our dealing was that we were paid in BAFSV (British Armed Forces Special Vouchers), which looked and felt like monopoly money, and German Marks. We had to specify on Monday what mix we would require on Thursday pay parade. By the weekend we had invariably got the mix wrong and would require Marks for our pilgrimage to the Huppach. The sale of 5 packets of cigarettes would see us reasonably well off for beer money. We could of course have sold the cigarettes in the pub but detection would most certainly result in a Court Martial.

Whilst at 77 Regt I went with a RHQ party on a trip to an American base in Bremerhaven. What an eye opener. Their food was so much grander than ours - steaks that looked like weekend joints, ice cream by the bucketful and everyone so friendly and welcoming.

During this period I spent a lot of my spare time standing in for Duty Clerks so that I could study for my Bill trade and Class 2 education certificate. In August I was sent to HQ 5 AGRA to take the Bill test. I passed and within a couple of weeks I was promoted LBdr(AC) and posted to HQ 5 AGRA in Oldenburg. I should mention here that in those far off days the LBdr (AC) Clerk was, other than the RMP LCpl, the only substantive Lance rank. Danny Danton was the

WOI (SMAC) Chief Clerk to be replaced by my namesake Stan Mills shortly after I arrived. I was to work with SSgt Fred Jones on the AQ side dealing with Courts Martial, Boards of Inquiry, Traffic Accidents etc. Sgt Ken (Knocker) Knowles ran the 'G' side.

Six weeks later I was promoted Bdr(AC) and because I was substantive I was immediately the Senior Junior NCO!! Next came my introduction to the Sergeants' Mess, but not as



Sgt(AC) Ken Knowles, Bdr(AC) Eddie Mills and HQ 5 AGRA (AA) clerical staff on Exercise BATTLE ROYAL

a Sergeant. The BAOR Artillery Clerks Dinners were held, if my memory serves me correctly, in the Sergeants Mess 45 Field Regiment in Menden. All Artillery Clerks were invited and I as a Bdr attended. Mess Dress had not yet been invented so the dress for the event was civilian clothes. Even so, to a fairly young Bdr (I was not yet 20) to attend such a function was fantastic. Up until my last house move in 2006 I had signed menus from several of the BAOR dinners but sadly can no longer find them. I do know that Duggie Waterhouse would have been there (he always was!)

My 3 years in Oldenburg were very happy and busy years both socially and militarily. In due course Fred Jones left to attend a Long Gunnery Course that meant he would not be replaced until he passed the course and was posted elsewhere. I found myself doing the job (without pay!) for some 18 months.

At this time I was also our unit representative on the Committee of the Casino Club. This was a NAAFI Club for other ranks in the town centre. We held two dances, one with a band the other to records, a whist drive and two nights of Tombola every week. It was very popular with both Army and RAF personnel and their families – German girls were allowed in but not German males. It was licensed which led to frequent disturbances at the Saturday night dances. At the outbreak of an altercation one of us would signal to the band who would immediately play the Queen – all movement would cease and we committee members would move in to restore order. We were invariably successful in this but occasionally RMP and RAF

Police would have to intercede (they were generally parked outside).

On at least three occasions I had to appear as a witness at a District Court Martial of soldiers who had caused more than an acceptable amount of trouble in the club. I have often wondered since if I should have been allowed to prepare the Court Martial papers in those cases. I did!

It was as a committee member that I first met my future father-in-law Sergeant Ron Burns and subsequently his son Bryan, daughter Margaret, twins Sheila and Shirley, daughter Angela and in due course baby Kathleen.

Margaret was engaged to Peter, a Military Policeman. I spent quite a lot of time in the RMP mess located in a private house not far from the HQ. I well remember one evening when all the RMP were called out, leaving a cook and I alone in the mess. Naturally the telephone rang and an excited German barman requested assistance. Tongue in cheek I took the address and promised action! On another occasion I was in the mess with one of the Corporals when he received a callout. It was policy not to leave the RMP vehicle unattended (it would not have been the first to end up in a stream) so I went along and sat in the vehicle whilst he investigated the occurrence.

Peter was posted away from Oldenburg so I used to escort Margaret to dances etc and eventually became friendly with Shirley and Sheila. We used to meet in the YMCA in town that was run by a very popular lady called Paulie (Mrs Paul). In time Shirley and became engaged, this coincided with my promotion to Sergeant and a posting to HQRA 2 Div in Hilden near Dusseldorf. This was a blow as I did not drive and it was some distance by train.

At Hilden I was re-united with Ernie Jordan who was by now restored to WO1(SMAC). SSgt Buttenshaw ran the AQ side and I the 'G'

I travelled up to Oldenburg as often as I could and soon asked Ron if Shirley and I could marry. Twin daughter Sheila and Norman Davey (a REME Sergeant) had also agreed to marry so the obvious answer was a double wedding.

Having agreed that the 14th September 1957 should be the date we duly assembled in the Army church in 44 HAA



Norman and Shelia Davey, self and Shirley, Crerar Barracks, Oldenburg, Germany - 14 Sept 1957

Regt barracks in Oldenburg. My best man Roy Waslidge REME was particularly pleased ; his CO brought forward his impending promotion to Sgt for the wedding. After the ceremony we all walked from the church to the Sergeants Mess. This was quite some distance through the camp – you can imagine the comments from the soldiers leaning out of barrack room windows! It must have been quite a spectacle – two brides with their grooms, best men, bridesmaids, family and friends, the men in blues and the ladies in their finery.

We stayed in a German Guest House that night before leaving for Bad Harzburg in the Harz Mountains. Bad Harzburg was a British Forces leave centre, primarily a winter skiing venue but in summer the scenery was fantastic and we enjoyed long walks and travelling to local villages

and beauty spots. We did not own a car, however another couple occasionally take us out in their car.

Honeymoon over we returned to Hilden with nowhere to stay and about 10DM (about £8.50) between us!. It was enough to secure bed and breakfast for the night so the next day I went to see the Housing Officer who asked if I was willing to care-take a requisitioned German house which had to be occupied to prevent the local authorities re-claiming it.

What a godsend. It was a large beautiful house with lovely old oak and mahogany furniture and we had it rent and fuel free. This coupled with a twice-weekly delivery of army rations at very little cost set us up nicely. Another bonus was that it was within a short walking distance from camp.

Our stay lasted some 6 months and then we managed to rent a large room in a German house. We also had the use of the bathroom except for between 1 and 2 o'clock on Sunday when the owner, an elderly man, took his bath! We had a small 2 ring electric cooker in the bathroom and a wooden box on the balcony for a refrigerator. We were happy.

We were friendly with Tom Naysmith and his wife (Tom had replaced SSgt Buttenshaw in AQ) and we used to babysit for their two young sons and were invited to their house for meals or just to escape the confines of our room. We were also frequent cinema goers and regular mess members.

It was then decreed that HQ 2 Inf Div was to amalgamate with HQ 6 Armd Div and re-locate to Lubbecke. I was to move to join WO1(SMAC) Keith Longman from HQRA 6 Armd Div.

We were still not eligible for a married quarter so Shirley moved in with her parents who were now in Bielefeld (Ron was Sergeants Mess caterer in the HQ Sgts Mess). Only an hours drive away but I still could not drive so my first priority was to learn and get myself a car.

My first lessons alternated between a 3-ton Bedford and a landrover (no HGV licence in those days). I was lucky in that the CRAs driver was my instructor and it was not long before I was deemed ready for my test. Our Staff Captain was my examiner on the test and was not happy with my three- point turn but agreed that if I could do better next day he would pass me. This I did and obtained the coveted 'pink slip'.

I now needed a car but did not have much money, however lady luck was still on my side. Keith Longman was about to leave for the UK and sold me his 1948 Opel Olympia with nine months insurance on it for £49. The fact that you could see the road through the floor did not seem too important!. I sold the car a year later for £45 and

purchased a Mercedes 170 which had the petrol tank under the bonnet immediately below the windscreen.

Keith duly departed to the UK and I was re-united with WO1(SMAC) Ken Knowles, Keith Cresswell was running the AQ side and I the 'G'.

Shirley and I were then allocated our first married quarter and we settled down to life in the 'patch'. We were about to own our first dog which came about by Ken Knowles asking us to look after his dachshund bitch whilst he was away in UK on leave. Not our fault but said bitch gave birth to two puppies not long afterwards. The puppies were a cross between the dachshund bitch and a German Shepherd dog (Alsation). This gave rise to endless discussion as to how the Alsation managed the feat but we ended up with a miniature Alsation with the body, tail and legs of a dachshund. We called him Butch!

One snowy Sunday morning as I was clearing the path of snow I saw smoke billowing out of the roof of the Headquarters Building (Tax House). I roused my neighbours (one of whom was the Camp RSM) and we sped to the building. Then followed a few frantic hours as trucks and men from the barracks (some 3 miles away) arrived and we set to carrying out files, office machinery etc all to be ferried to the safety of the camp. Some of the files were of course highly classified. All this activity with fire appliances from miles around converging on the building. In the event the fire was confined to the attic floor (where camouflage nets and church pews were stored) but of course smoke and water damage was considerable.



Tax House, Lubbecke, Headquarters of HQ 2 Inf Div, February 1959 (HQRA occupied the ground floor on the right of the picture)

There was a lovely picture in the local paper of a major in civilian clothes carrying out a tray with cups, teapot etc whilst all around was chaos! I spent the latter part of that Sunday delivering Board of Inquiry convening orders around the 'patch'.

Two incidents concerning Ken Knowles spring to mind. Both

occurred at firing camp on Hohne Ranges. We were out for a drink (or two or three) and on the way back to camp we came across a very drunken German youth thumbing a lift. I was surprised when Ken stopped the car and let him in the car – but only as far as the next cross-roads where Ken with the assistance of our BQMS Charlie Bezzant, hung said youth by his coat collar from a convenient signpost!

On another occasion Ken was in a different room to Charlie and I. We were awakened one morning by a shout of 'Fire'. Ken threw a lighted newspaper into the room and vanished!

My next posting was to 654 Light Aircraft Squadron. I was to be replaced by SSgt Don Cormack who was the Chief Clerk of 654. So on the given day Don and I passed each other on the Autobahn, Shirley and I travelling to Hildesheim, Don and his wife travelling to Lubbecke. As well as exchanging jobs we also exchanged married quarters - a nice neat arrangement.

Serving in an Aircraft Squadron was certainly different. Equipped with Auster fixed wing planes and Skeeter helicopters

which seemed to spend most of their time revving up their engines just under my office window. The servicing of the aircraft was carried out by a mix of REME, RAF and Naval personnel. This was due to the

REME being unable to provide sufficient servicing personnel, particularly for the helicopters. Shortly after I arrived we were re-badged from the Royal Artillery to the Army Air Corps and issued with light blue berets (powder puffs according to one Naval petty officer).

In a neighbouring flat lived one of our naval ratings and his very pregnant wife. As he did not have a car I told him to give me a shout if necessary. I had by this time exchanged the Mercedes for an Auto Union DKW 3-6, my all time favourite car. Naturally the necessity arose in the middle of a cold dark night. Off we went to the BMH at Hannover some 20 miles away. About 400 yards short of the hospital the car stopped and refused to restart. Leaving the couple in the car I ran to the hospital and managed to get an ambulance. Off went the couple in the ambulance whilst I got back in the car and pressed the starter – the engine burst into life!

I arrived back at the hospital just as the rating arrived at reception from the labour ward. We were about to leave when the receptionist called over with the news that he was a father – definitely a narrow squeak. I later learnt that the air hole in the petrol cap was blocked and this had caused a vacuum in the petrol pipe – another lesson learnt the hard way.

It was about this time that I was involved in my first traffic accident. I had just dropped off my Adjutant at his house and had travelled about 50 yards when I was hit on the left side by a motor-cyclist coming out of a side road. The motorcyclist was in a bad way, I later learnt that he had broken most of the bones down one side of his body. The German police were very good and assured me that I was not to blame as I had right of way. This was not what the local paper printed under a headline “English soldier to blame for serious accident”. My German typist was furious and marched me off to the newspaper office where she literally thumped the table

and demanded they print a correction in the next edition – this they did.

On a more pleasant note I went to see the motorcyclist in hospital and we got on famously and after many months he recovered more or less completely.

On 17th September 1960 came an event we had almost given up hope on. After several alarms and a miscarriage our firstborn arrived. Weighing in at 8lb 7oz Patricia Ann was born in the BMH Hannover. Our joy was a little premature because at 6 months Shirley noticed that one of Patricia's legs was shorter than the other. A specialist confirmed that Patricia had a congenital dislocation of the hip. After various referrals the upshot was a Heath Robinson device was made the REME Workshops consisting of a leather padded backboard with 2 metal bands which met across the chest/stomach and were secured with butterfly bolts. From the bottom of the board were two leg irons that were tied to the bottom of the bed holding the legs 2ft apart with the hip joints in the correct position. After 6 months she was put in a plaster cast to do more or less the same job only this time a metal bar was set in the plaster to keep the legs 2ft apart.

An amusing episode connected with the arrival of Patricia. We had purchased a lovely Silver Cross pram from the camp doctor. With Patricia in plaster we could no longer use the pram so we advertised it for sale – the same doctor appeared on our doorstep and asked to buy it back!

My next posting came out of the blue. I was telephoned and ordered to take over as Chief Clerk 39 Missile Regiment at Sennelager in two weeks time. Apparently the unit had failed its documentation inspection – a rare but serious event that had brought about the removal of the Chief Clerk and the promise (threat?) of a re-inspection in 6 months time. I was very lucky in that there were some very good clerks in the unit, Bdr Alan Ashcroft, LBdr Mick Carter and Gunner Sid Evans come to mind and they all became Chief Clerks in due course of time. The culmination of a lot of hard work and several late night workings was the successful negotiation of the re-inspection.

Shirley and Patricia soon joined me in Sennelager and at the age of two years Patricia was finally released from her plaster cast. We now felt able to increase our family and on 17th August 1963 Sandra Christina was born.

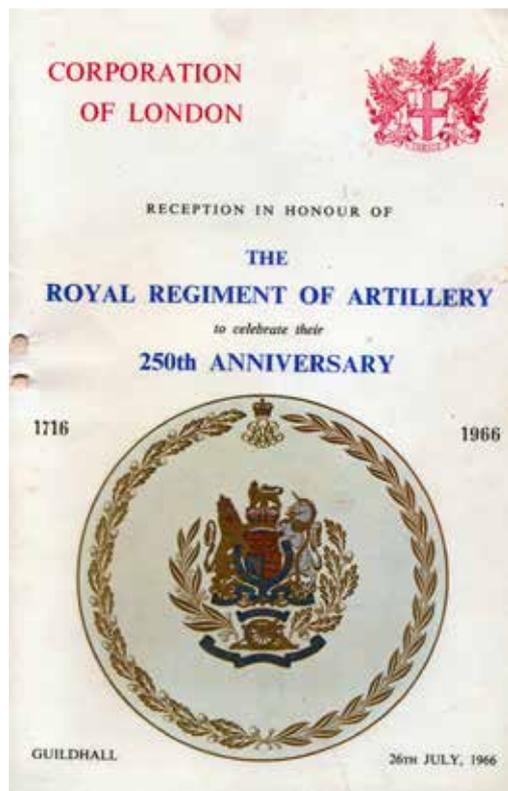
It was whilst serving in 39 Regiment that the long awaited time promotion system for Artillery Clerks was introduced. This meant that a Sergeant was promoted to SSgt after three years in the rank and then after a further three years promoted to WO2. In order that the system would be fair to those who had waiting more than three years to SSgt it was decreed that promotion to WO2 would take

effect six years from promotion to Sergeant no matter how long that person had been a SSgt. In my case it meant that in spite of the fact that I had only been a SSgt for a few months I was due for promotion to WO2

My Commanding Officer took some persuading that I was in fact due for promotion after only a few months as a SSgt – so did the Regimental Sergeant Major!

Eventually Records decided that after 12 years in BAOR I was in danger of going native so I was posted to the War Office (as it was then) and I found myself in RA1 with WO1(SMAC) Bill Heaven – this was only for a short time as a big re-organisation then took place and I became Chief Clerk of ASD6 (Army Staff Duties 6) dealing with RA Matters concerning Vehicles, Guns, Radio, Establishments and movement of RA units. I had a civilian staff of three and a SSgt(AC) Ron Read. I was quite happy working in civilian clothes and with civilian clerks but not so happy having to commute from Catford to Waterloo which I found both boring and irksome particularly when trains were cancelled due to flooding at Clockhouse – wherever that may be.

I wore uniform only once during my stint at the War Office/MOD and



that was in July 1966 to attend a celebration of the 250th anniversary of the formation of the Royal Artillery held at St Pauls Cathedral in the presence of Her Majesty the Queen. This led to a most unusual occurrence. Shirley and I took a taxi from Waterloo to St Pauls. On arrival the driver refuse payment saying “that’s all right mate, this ones on me”. Stranger things have happened, but not very often!

As part of the same celebrations Shirley and I were invited to attend a reception at

the Guildhall hosted by the Lord Mayor, Sir Lionel Denning Kt MC. A glittering affair not to be forgotten.

I was next selected to be the first Chief Clerk of the about to be formed 100 Medium Regiment TAVR located at Grove Park in South East London. There were to be 5 new TAVR Regiments.

Forming a regiment with a Headquarters in Grove Park, Batteries in Brighton, Luton and Bury St Edmunds was bad enough but each sub-unit and the Headquarters were formed from the remnants of several disbanded units (not all Royal Artillery). The fact that personal documents had been maintained by assorted clerks each of whom had their own ideas of how this should done made for an interesting few months working in sub unit locations, generally at night.

The highlight of my tour was when we were sent on a live firing exercise to BAOR. The Headquarters was to establish a camp on Hohne Ranges and each sub unit in turn would spend 2 weeks in BAOR.

The HQ and a gun battery complete with vehicles and guns embarked on a Landing Ship Logistic at Southampton and sailed to Ejsberg in Denmark’. We then motored down to Hohne, the gun battery stopping en route to fire their guns before setting up camp.

RHQ and HQ battery were obviously required to stay in BAOR for the whole 6 weeks, which was no problem for the regular soldiers but the employers of TAVR soldiers were only committed to releasing them for 2 weeks annual camp per year. Volunteers were therefore sought to complete a 6 week camp. No problem – one lad, asked whether his employer would agree, quite matter of factly said he had given in his notice and would get another job when he got back.

We were lucky in that we had virtually no rain and a hectic programme ensured that the time passed both enjoyably and quickly. The middle weekend of each period was set aside for “rest and recuperation”. This for most people took the form of a trip to Hamburg.

What I have always considered to be a magnificent achievement was the fact that although very few of the drivers had ever driven on the continent and all had to

take a written test before travelling we did not have a single traffic accident on the exercise or on the journeys to and from Germany.

It was now time for me to return to HQRA 2 Div in Lubbecke, this time as WO1(SMAC) taking over from Derek Taylor. Keith Cresswell occupied the AQ slot but the 'G' post, which I had occupied on my previous tour, was now a Bdr post.

Apart from the normal routine and exercises HQRA was responsible for the administration of the Divisional, BAOR and Army Ski championships which at that time were held in Oberjoch on the German/Austrian border. Oberjoch is the highest occupied village in Germany and is approached via a road with 132 bends which, when snow covered, is quite an experience. Especially driving a Ford Escort with only 1st and 3rd gears as happened one year.

My particular task was to organise the race office responsible for helping to seed the runners, prepare start lists and produce the results list. It was a matter of pride that the lists should all be available and on notice boards by the time of Team Captains meeting at 5pm. With some races not finishing before mid afternoon this was no easy task, remembering that we had manual typewriters and hand turned Gestetner duplicators.

We took with us quantities of food, drink and cigarettes to last the 4/5 weeks. We prepared our own lunches (generally soup and local bread) and were given a small allowance to purchase our evening meal.

The evening meal was an enjoyable experience as we had several choices of venue – one in particular owned by a former German Olympic gold medal skier. I recall seeing him ski down the mountainside carrying a dustbin from a ski chalet.

Our race office was located in the cellar of the house where we were also

accommodated. The owners and their son and daughter all spoke good English but we were encouraged to speak German, especially when we were in their cellar bar in the evening when it was almost mandatory. I learnt more of the German language in the few weeks in Oberjoch than in all the rest of the year.

It so happened that my birthday fell during our stay in Oberjoch. I would return to my room to find a flower in a vase and a birthday present from the family. That evening I would host a party for the family in their cellar bar – mostly drinking our spirits and their lemonade!

Keith Cresswell had by now been replaced by Cliff Fields who was not only a good clerk but an excellent cricketer.

Once again Records decreed that it was time for me to move on, this time to take over from Alan Jeffery at the Royal School of Artillery, Larkhill. An interesting, if not too demanding a job, involving as it did overseeing both military and civilian clerks. At one time I recall the military clerks included Mick Price, Trevor Spurr, Jack Booth and Harry Lomax.

Spring 1973 saw the visit of Her Majesty the Queen to the School. A dual visit with the morning of the 7th April set aside for a tour of the School followed by the Royal Artillery Hunt Point to Point after lunch.

I was now nearing the end of my service and therefore due to leave



Being presented to Her Majesty The Queen during her visit to the Royal School of Artillery on 7 April 1973

in January 1975 on completion of twenty-two and a half years service (the half year being the time from enlisting at the age of seventeen and a half years to reaching the age of eighteen when pensionable service commenced). My initial chat with my GSO2 regarding a resettlement interview met the surprising response along the lines of "don't bother your army service has a lot longer to run

yet" - wink wink. This I assumed, quite rightly, to indicate that I should be successful when the next Quartermaster commissioning board met. So instead of leaving on the 22nd of January I was commissioned Captain Quartermaster on the 13th January and posted to 22 Locating Battery whose barracks was about a mile down the road. In fact my move to an Officer type married quarter covered a greater distance.

My predecessor, John Grimes, had already left so I was very lucky in that I had a very good RQMS who was on top of his job and able to guide me. This was vitally important as it was to be some time before I was able to attend a Messing Officers Course and an even longer time before a Quartermasters Course arose. My natural trepidation regarding transition was unfounded as I was made very welcome by the 22 Battery Officers.

Shirley was at this time running a nursery school for some 30 children and with both daughters settled in school we decided it was time to buy our own house. We found what we wanted in Durrington but after adding our mortgage to our savings we were still £2000 short. With only one day to go before completion I went in desperation to the RSA Paymaster. After a quick telephone call his response was "no problem, go to Wilsons Insurance agents in Wilton after lunch". I duly reported and within half an hour was given a cheque for £2000 – what a relief.

It was then decided that the Battery should exercise in Cyprus. I went on the advance party staying in the Dhekalia Officers Mess whilst sorting out our camp, which, instead of a permanent camp (which had been occupied by refugees from the Greek/Turkish division of Cyprus) was to be on the sands near RAF Akrotiri. We had a brick cookhouse and 3 mess buildings but sleeping accommodation was in tents. I managed to find a very obliging RAF Corporal in RAF Akrotiri who was in charge of stores. He not only supplied me with some carpets, easy chairs etc for the messes but also arranged for transport to deliver it. At the end of the exercise I again contacted him to arrange return of the stores. He was aghast and pointed out that he had written off said stores and in no way did he want to see them again! What a player.

All was well and we were enjoying life in general when Shirley was taken ill one evening with what turned out to be an aneurism in the back of her head. The initial operation was of limited success and it was some time before Shirley regained anything like her former self.

In discussion with my posting authority regarding my next move it was explained that Shirley was not recovered so one or two fairly easy posts in the south of England or perhaps Cardiff were mooted. Neither I nor my CO could believe it when a posting order to join the 9th Battalion of the Ulster Defence Regiment in Antrim arrived. Our joint representations came to naught so on the 8th January 1979 off I went to Antrim leaving Shirley and the girls in Durrington.

With companies located in Ballyclare, Carrigfergus and Lisburn I spent a lot of my time travelling between the company locations, usually at night in civilian clothes and in an unmarked car. I lived in the Royal Engineers Mess located half a mile from Battalion Headquarters. The security situation dictated that I was not allowed to walk to work in uniform, however, it was perfectly alright if I wore an anorak over my uniform and didn't wear a beret!

I found that the social life was very restrictive, most of the Engineers lived out in married quarters and of course all the UDR lived in the community. I persuaded the Army Kinema Corporation to allow us to borrow films on the same basis as emergency units (ie at no cost). I showed them in the Officers Mess, they then went to the Sergeants Mess and then on to the soldier's canteen. They were very popular and turned into social evenings that sometimes went on until quite late.

With the help of the Royal Engineers I manufactured a horse racing kit. We set up a tote and just about all the officers and their ladies turned up for the first race evening. I expected that we would be dealing in 50p bets – I had not bargained for the Irish love of horse racing (and the betting thereon) – we made a profit of some £200 on the evening.

I was permitted a free flight home for a long weekend each month. This enabled me to keep a check on Shirley – this as particularly important now as Patricia had married and Sandra was still at school. It was a laborious journey, BEA from Aldegrove to Heathrow, bus to Woking then a train to Salisbury where I was met by a vehicle from 22 Battery. My best trip was via a RAF executive jet carrying government officials from Aldegrove to RAF Uxbridge – executive cucumber sandwiches and a beer included!

We were to attend a summer camp in Scotland. The CO, Training Major and I flew from Aldegrove to a small grass

landing strip near Carnoustie golf course where we had to wait for half an hour for a customs officer to arrive on his bicycle before we could proceed.

Shortly after the main party arrived I was inundated with complaints about the food. I had briefed the civilian caterers that above all else plenty of potatoes and strong tea were essential. The strength of the tea was the main complaint. The caterers were adamant that they were working to the laid down specification. We eventually worked out that they were using exactly half the laid down number of tea bags per urn.

After some 15 months Shirley's health began to deteriorate culminating in my being flown home on compassionate grounds. Although in my time in BAOR I had on many occasions had to assist in repatriation of soldiers or dependants on compassionate grounds I was amazed at how meticulous were the arrangements in place.

I had an hour to pack and was then whisked off to the Airport, first off the plane at Heathrow and straight into a car which took me to RAF Hospital Wroughton where a room was available for me to stay overnight, complete with tea and breakfast ingredients.

In due course it was arranged that I should return to 22 Battery exchanging places with Jim Allen. I returned to Antrim to hand over to Jim, pack my belongings and to say cheerio to the many friends that I had made both in the UDR and the Royal Engineers.

Shirley's health continued to deteriorate until she slipped into a coma on 14th September (our 23rd wedding anniversary) and remained so until she finally passed away 2 months later on 22nd November. I continued to live in Durrington with Sandra.

In early August 1981 I left 22 Battery on posting to 2nd Field Regiment, this time only half a mile down the road. 2nd

Regiments role as support regiment to the RSA was for me a rather humdrum post, I was Tech QM.

Then came another milestone in my life, I met my future wife Sheila and gave up smoking on the same night, after smoking 40 cigarettes a day for 25 years.

With a posting back to 100 Regiment imminent Sheila and I married on the 8th January 1983 moving to Grove Park shortly afterwards.

It seemed strange going back to Grove Park as Quartermaster some 14 years after having left as Chief Clerk. We bought a house a few hundred yards from the drill hall and I settled into the routine of evening visits to the scattered sub-units.

As I approached my 50th birthday I began to feel that my army career had lasted long enough so we decided to take the plunge and return to civilian life.

My exit from the regiment and the army was marked in a rather hilarious way. After a dining out dinner in the officer's mess I was marched outside where a forklift truck had been fitted with a cabin on the forks complete with armchair. I was placed in this contraption, the forks raised to maximum height and driven home through the streets of Grove Park with the lights blazing and the horn blowing. I don't believe the neighbours ever did know what it was all about.

And so began my civilian life as sometime guest house proprietor, parish clerk, church warden, RAA President, grandfather and bowler. But that, as they say, is another story.



My Promise

My Promise



*I promise you dear soldier
To remember what you've done.
All the sacrifices you have made
In battles lost and won.*

*I promise you dear soldier
A poppy I will wear.
To show the world I'm proud of you
And that I'll always care.*

*To you I make this promise
Pray God will hear my call.
For me life means just everything
And for mine you gave your all.*

by Leslie Brown



Alexander Forbes Ross

Former WO1(SMAC) Alex Forbes passed away on 18 Mar 07, aged 75 having succumbed to a serious illness. Alex was a highly respected member of the RAA who was awarded the first ever RAA Medal to be presented. Alex will be a great loss to the Association. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his wife Rose and family.

Rest in peace brother Alex.

Pete Bunn

Former WO1(SMAC) and Capt(QM) Pete Bunn passed away on 15 Mar 07, aged 95. Pete was our most senior member and wrote his military memoirs in three issues of Crossed Quills. Pete will be a sad loss to the Association. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family.

Rest in peace brother Pete.

Ted Morgan

Former WO2(QMS(AC)) Ted Morgan passed away unexpectedly on 30 May 07, aged 62. Ted who ran the RFEA Office Derby was a SSAFA Caseworker, RBL member and Welfare Officer for the Artillery Clerks' Association.

A man whose heart was enormous and who never stopped giving to others. His work here may be done, but the benefits he provided to so many will stand as a testament to his genuine care for others displayed over a lifetime of service to others. Ted was a much loved, inspirational and respected individual who will be sadly missed by all those who had the good fortune to call him a friend and comrade. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his wife Margaret, sons Mark and Karl and their respective families.

Rest in peace brother Ted



rest in peace

WANTED

for membership of the Association

John Adams	Fred Cullingford	Alan Jeffery	Jim Rostron
Peter Allwright	Jim Diamond	Chris Jones	Mick Scaife
Ron Anson	Derek Donovan	Kev Keast	Dave Scott
Bob Barber	Dave Dunn	Roy Kinsley	Martin Smith
Ron Baynes	Steve Edgeley	Dick Kibble	Colin Stephenson
Adrian Boxall	Paul Evans	Steve Lee	Trevor Stokes
Dave Brookes	Paul Fairbank	Mick Lynch	Paul Stratton
Dave Askham	Vic Ferguson	Ron Marsh	Bernie Swift
Gary Barker	Dick Finch	Eric Miller	Frank Thorne
Dave Boswell	Derek Gauci	Maurice Metcalfe	Dave Townley
Alan Broomhead	Les Gillard	Mark Lindsay-Smith	Jock Stewart
Ron Allen	Chris Gluning	Derick Lund	Dave Stoneham
Jimmy Anderson	Paul Green	Alistair McKenzie	Derek Taylor
Robbie Astick	TH Fairweather	Harry Lomax	Tom Taylor
Derek Baldry	PE Field	C McCusker	Charlie Thompson
Baz Barry	Bill Heaven	Steve McKenna	Jimmy Treanor
Benny Bennett	John Haddow	Ken Moore	Alex Stelfox
James Bond	CJ Hamley	John Nicholas	Joe Stockhill
Ron Bristo	Clif Fields	Bill Ogilvie	Roy Swann
Dave Burfitt	Dave Fisher	Gil O'Mallo	Bill Tasker
Tom Carmichael	Keith Garbett	Andy O'Neill	Graham Telford
Sandy Cran	Mike Greening	Pete Oxley	Harry Thompson
Mick Carter	Bob Hagen	Pete Murphy	Bob Thompson
Fred Carroll	Brian Harrington	John Osman	Bob Walkinshaw
Chris Chamberlain	Ted Harvey	Jim Peggie	Nigel Waring
Dick Cliffe	Andy Holder	Ken Peacock	Chalky White
Andy Collins	John Hopkins	Duncan Pettit	Harry Waldron
Alan Cosgrove	Steve Hoyle	Dave Parkinson	LS Warren
Tom Browne	Derek Hughes	Peter Petts	Kev Watkins
Stuart Carnegie	Tab Hunter	Clem Pooke	Fred Westwell
Les Carton	Adrian Harrison	Nick Powell	John Turner
Bill Charlsworth	Mick Hopkins	John Pratt	Derek Taylor
M Collinge	Pete Hubbard	Bill Pattison	Chris Williams
Paul Buxton	Pete Hutchinson	Paul Perry	RVM Walker
Jeff Carter	Terry Hart	Len Price	Geoff Whitby
Merv Chadwick	Adrian Hawker	Mick Price	TC Williams
S Cornwell	Eric Hubbard	Gaz Prottley	Tony Wilson
Keith Creswell	Tony Hunt	Dave Robertson	Malcolm Wynn
Pat DeMaria	Steve Jones	Dick Scatcherd	Brian Wolstenholme
John DeMaria	Bob Kindness	Alan Seal	
Pete Deverall	Jack Knott	Syd Simpson	179 Potential New
Mick Dunn	Brian Hyland	P Robinson	Members
Harold Deacon	Steve Jukes	Fred Pulfer	Plus any member of the
P Drury	Trevor Kemish	Mick Regan	AGC(SPS) who served in
Mel Durrant	Alan King	Ron Reid	the Gunners as a clerk and
Roger Escott	Dave Langstaff	Graham Roberts	has subsequently been
Karl Ezard	G Jacobs	Tom Rooney	promoted to Sgt or above.

Stress Management

A lecturer, when explaining stress management to an audience, raised a glass of water and asked, "How heavy is this glass of water?"

Answers called out ranged from 20g to 500g.

The lecturer replied, "The absolute weight doesn't matter. It depends on how long you try to hold it. If I hold it for a minute, that's not a problem. If I hold it for an hour, I'll have an ache in my right arm. If I hold it for a day, you'll have to call an ambulance. In each case, it's the same weight, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes." He continued, "And that's the way it is with stress management. If we carry our burdens all the time, sooner or later, as the burden becomes increasingly heavy, we won't be able to carry on."

As with the glass of water, you have to put it down for a while and rest before holding it again. When we're refreshed, we can carry on with the burden. So, before you return home tonight, put the burden of work down. Don't carry it home. You can pick it up tomorrow."

So, my friend put down anything that may be a burden to you right now. Don't pick it up again until after you've rested a while.

Pingat Jasa Malaysia Medal

The Pingat Jasa Malaysia Medal is a commemorative medal which the Government of Malaysia would like to award to eligible British Citizens. To qualify for the medal you must have served in Malaysia for 90 days between 31 Aug 57 and 12 Aug 66 or in Singapore between 31 Aug 57 and 9 Aug 65.

If you have not applied for the medal please send a SAE for an Application Form to:

Mr Fred Burden
Membership Secretary
National Malaya and Borneo Veterans
Association
44 Meadgate Avenue
Chelmsford
CM2 7LQ

Application Forms should not be submitted for any other dates than those shown above. Be sure to include your service number, unit you served and the exact dates of service.

For further information and details visit www.nmbva.co.uk.



farewell to Woolwich



Left: The magnificent Front Parade Centre Arch Woolwich
Below: In Pensioner George McKinnell



Above: Graham Brown (Area Secretary South), wife Janet and family

Right: Colin and Mary Davidson and family plus the dog



Left: Andrew Jones (Association Standard Bearer)
Below: Jim Cussell BEM and partner Sheila



Below: James McNamara
Right: Mel Charlton (Association Secretary)



Above: Ray Lewis MSM

Right: Two distinguished and very smart local Gunner army cadets





The RA Parachute Display Team come down from the skies

The RA Motorcycle Display Team showed off their skills



Above & Right: Kings Troop RHA galloped into the arena and fired a magnificent salute





Above: The Royal Regiment preceded by the RA Band marched through centre arch onto the square



Above: The Royal Regiment marches past

Below: The Master Gunner St James's Park, General Sir Alex Harley KBE CB taking the salute, accompanied by the Inspecting Officer Field Marshal The Lord Vincent GBE KBE DSO



farewell to Woolwich

What is the Axe Keeper?

by Pat Verdon

Pat (or Paddy) Verdon joined the Royal Regiment in 1959, he was commissioned from WO1 (SMAC) in 1981 and retired from the Regular Army as a Major (QM) in 1993 when he joined the Honourable Artillery Company as the Permanent Staff Administrative Officer (PSAO). He transferred to the Adjutant General's Corps at the age of 57½ and retired as the Regimental Administrative Officer (RAO) on reaching his sell by date – age 60 – in 2000. Shortly before retirement he attended a PSAO/RAO meeting at the Duke of York's Headquarters, where he was approached and asked if he would be interested in a part time job that was coming up later that year. After some research, he was interested, and successfully applied for the position. After

a six-month occasional and a two month full-time handover he was appointed as the Axe Keeper and Butler in Her Majesty's Body Guard of the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen at Arms in November 2000.

The Body Guard

Her Majesty's Body Guard of the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen at Arms – the Sovereign's "Nearest Guard" – was instituted by King Henry VIII in 1509. The Royal Body Guard of the Yeomen of the Guard, composed of 50 archers, was already in existence having been established by Henry VII, at his coronation, 24 years earlier. As distinct from this he decided to have "this new and sumptuous Troop of Gentlemen composed of cadets



Her Majesty's Body Guard of The Honourable Corps of Genlemen at Arms.
Maj(Retd) Pat Verdon (The Axe Keeper) 2nd row, last on right (dark suit)

of noble families and the higher order of gentry”, until 1834 called the Band of Gentlemen Pensioners, as his personal body guard.

At its institution, “the Kynge ordained fiftie gentleme[n] to bee Speres, every one of them to have an Archer, a Demilau[n]ce and a Castrel (orderly), and every Spere to have three greate horses to bee attendaunte on his persone”. In 1834 King William IV changed the style “Gentlemen Pensioners” to “Gentlemen at Arms”.

In earliest times the Band was essentially a mounted escort to protect the Sovereign’s person in battle or on progress. As such it accompanied Henry VIII to France in 1513 and took part in the Battle of the Spurs. In 1520 the Gentlemen Pensioners were again in France attending the King at the famous “Field of the Cloth of Gold”, where, as his bodyguard, they competed in tournament with the French King’s “Noble Garde du Corps”.

The Household Statutes of 1526, made at the Palace of Eltham, describe the Band as complete and fully officered. The officers being (as to this day), the Captain, the Lieutenant, the Standard Bearer, the Clerk of the Cheque and Adjutant, and the Harbinger. About this time the Band started doing duty on foot in the Court, as well as mounted in the field, and carrying the battle axe when on chamber service.

Through successive reigns and hundreds of years the duties of the Gentlemen Pensioners of the Royal Bodyguard went on – at times on horseback and on the field of battle, at others on foot, guarding the sovereign and engaged in ceremonial about the Court. Only during the period of the Commonwealth, when Oliver Cromwell, as “Protector”, instituted a bodyguard of 40 gentlemen of his own choosing, has this corps ever been suspended.

Today the duties of the Honourable Corps are ceremonial only and include attendance on the Sovereign at State Arrivals of foreign

Heads of State (at Buckingham Palace or Windsor Castle), the annual Garter Service at Windsor, the State Opening of Parliament, and the Evening Reception held by the Sovereign for the Diplomatic Corps. In addition, the Corps is on duty when the Sovereign attends Services of the Orders of Chivalry at Westminster Abbey, St Paul’s Cathedral or St George’s Chapel, Windsor. It also kept vigil at the Lying in State of the late Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and were at her funeral service. The Body Guard also attended Her Majesty at a number of ceremonies celebrating the Golden Jubilee in 2002. The Gentlemen at Arms also attend The Queen’s Garden Parties where their task is to form the lanes in which presentations are made to the senior members of the Royal Family.

The Honourable Corps today consists of the five Officers mentioned above and twenty-seven Gentlemen, all of whom, with the exception of the Captain, have to be retired officers of the Army or the Royal Marines. The senior Officer is the Captain, a political appointment made by the Government of the day, who is now always the Government Chief Whip in the House of Lords. The other Officers are promoted from amongst the Gentlemen. Each officer carries his stick of office on duty, gold for the Captain, silver for the Lieutenant, Standard Bearer and Clerk of the Cheque and ivory for the Harbinger. When the standard is paraded, the

Pictured below,
Pat Verdon and
HRH Prince
Charles





Standard Bearer does not carry his stick of office. Each Gentleman on duty carries an axe.

The Corps has its Headquarters and Mess in Engine Court, St James's Palace. The Mess and Orderly Room is in the immediate charge of the "Axe Keeper and Butler", whose ancient duty it is, as the name implies, to look after the battle axes. He also acts as orderly room clerk and messenger for the Clerk of the Cheque.

There is a tradition that the axes carried by the Gentlemen at Arms were once part of the equipment of the so called Invincible Armada. The belief is picturesque rather than correct. The axes now used date from the early part of the eighteenth century. They are processional, or ceremonial, axes rather than the original fighting axes. The axes are 6 foot 10 inches tall. See illustration.

The Axe Keeper

At some time the Body Guard reduced in size and the need for each Gentleman to have his own Castrel (orderly) ceased. So the fifty castrels were replaced by one Axe Keeper! The following rules were issued.

RULES FOR THE GUIDANCE OF THE AXE KEEPER, BY LORD BATHURST 1743

I. Every Sunday and on all other days when the attendance of the whole Band, or of all the Gentlemen in the Quarter's wait, is required on His Majesty at Saint James's, the Axe Keeper is to take care to set their axes ready for them in the Presence Chamber, where they attend; and when their attendance is over, he is to lock them up in the chest placed in the Guard Chamber for that purpose.

II. When the King receives the Sacrament, after the Gentlemen have guarded His Majesty from the Presence Chamber to his closet, he is to remove the axes into the ante-chapel, where the

Gentlemen attend His Majesty's coming to receive or offer.

III. When the King goes to the Parliament House, the Axe Keeper must have the axes there, and place them on the stairs leading up to the Prince's Chamber, and when their attendance is over he is to carry the axes back to Saint James's.

IV. When His Majesty removes to any of his Palaces out of town, the Axe Keeper is to give the whole Band notice, and to remove a sufficient number of axes to such places where His Majesty shall reside.

V. When the whole Band, or twenty of them, are in waiting, the Axe Keeper is to wait in the Guard Chamber adjoining the Presence Chamber, in which the Gentlemen wait, and not to depart the room till the Gentlemen are discharged their attendance: and at the Parliament House he is in like manner to wait on the inside, close to the door leading up to the stairs to the Prince's Chamber, and to give notice of the King's arrival.

VI. He must always give the respective Gentlemen notice when they come into their quarterly and weekly waiting, and also he must always give notice whose turn it is out of their quarterly waiting to attend His Majesty at the Parliament House, in the places of the five Gentlemen who are to wait on such days at St James's.

VII. He is to give the Officers, Gentlemen in Waiting, and Gentleman Harbinger, notice whenever the Court goes into close mourning, second mourning, and out of mourning.

VIII. He is to inform himself and give notice at all times when the King goes to the Parliament House and to summon the Gentlemen whose turn it shall be to attend there.

IX. He is also to inform himself and give notice to the whole Band to attend whenever the King gives any audiences or

receives addresses to the Throne. And also for the whole Band to attend every Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Twelfth Day, the King and Queen's birth days, and the birth days of their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales.

X. *Whenever the Captain, or in his absence the next Commanding Officer, shall give any orders, and the same be communicated by the Clerk of the Cheque to the Axe Keeper, he is to acquaint the Officers and the rest of the Band with the same.*

Today, as explained above, the Body Guard only attends Her Majesty in uniform on the great State occasions. The Axe Keeper's current duties are essentially: day to day administration; ceremonial; and running the Mess.

He normally works for four hours per day Monday to Thursday. Much of the administration is now conducted by email, e.g. receiving Summonses and other correspondence from the Officers, which he then reproduces and issues. The Honourable Corps is in the Army List and has its own UIN, which is used for the issue of Army railway warrants for duties. Receiving mail, filing, typing, reproduction, despatch, and issuing railway warrants – a born again Battery Clerk! He even has one of the old standard Army typing desks on which he learned to type on his B3 Clerks Course in Singapore in 1960! As it was manufactured in 1958, it could even be the same one!

The ceremonial duties have not changed greatly from those laid down by Lord Bathurst. It is the Axe Keeper's duty to transport the axes, sticks of office and standard (when paraded) to the place of duty, and hand them out to each Gentleman on duty. He accompanies the senior officer on duty on his inspection. The Officers and Gentlemen then march to their positions where they have to stand for up to, and some times in excess of, an hour. During this time the lucky Axe

Keeper finds himself a good position, sometimes a seat, where he enjoys the ceremony. At the end of the duty he recovers the axes etc. For some duties the Axe Keeper travels independently; for others he travels by coach with the Body Guard with a police motorcycle escort, which is great fun – going down Whitehall on the wrong side of the road was a particular highlight! The ceremonial duties are by far the most interesting and enjoyable part of the job – a priceless privilege to serve Her Majesty.

The Mess duties include the safeguarding and maintenance of all Mess property, organising and supervising Dinners, normally two per year, in the splendid Dining Room taking a key part in the preparation and background work for the Body Guards annual reception in the State Apartments of St James's Palace attended by over four hundred people; maintaining the cellar; organising the running of the bar after each of the three Garden Parties in the Summer; and supervising private parties held by members of the Body Guard.

All in all a fun job ideal for someone who is retired from fulltime employment, but who wishes to do something to keep the brain ticking over. The normal starting age is 60 and the normal retiring age is 70. Pat Verdon is looking forward to the celebration of the quincentennial of Her Majesty's Body Guard in 2009. He is due to retire in 2010, but there is always the possibility that he could fall off his perch before then! So if anyone reading this would like to register an interest then please get in touch with Pat.

Her Majesty's
Axe Keeper's
the
Pat

Germany Reunion

by WO2 Ron Holmes LSL/AGC(SPS)

'Friday Night'

What a weekend we had, it was a blast. I had handed the reigns to Adam Martin for this years dinner but Adam was short toured to the Falklands in the middle of this year, so here we are again. Almost a liquid carbon copy of the last year except this year we only had 15 Artillery Clerks. With the kind permission of WO1 (RSM) Dave Wood, 26th Regiment Royal Artillery, Mansergh Barracks, Gutersloh; members of the Artillery Clerks' Association met in Germany for the second time in fourteen years. The weekend started in the afternoon with a group of us visiting the old RAF Gutersloh Camp, now known as Princess Royal Barracks. The disused runway is one giant car park for logistic and support regiments vehicles for over 2000 troops. Friday evening was the usual weekend preamble in the Sgts' Mess. Tom Webb, bless his cotton socks was the last to arrive at midnight. We faithfully kept the bar open for him until the early hours of the morning. Some of us even ended up down town (big mistake).

Saturday morning started off with a leisurely brunch although many did not make it. We had planned to visit the old haunts in Bielefeld, Herford and Lübbecke but nobody was in a fit state to go any ware so we unanimously decided to have a day of rest before the dinner.

'The Dinner'

The table was laid out to perfection and fourteen Artillery Clerks, one guest and the RSM sat down to a superb dinner in the warm and congenial atmosphere of the 26th Regiment's Sgts' Mess. The Mess Manager Gaz Heathwaite and his staff did the Regiment proud. The RSM gave a succinct

and informative 'state of the union' on behalf of the RASM who sent his apologies for not being able to attend. Mr Vice, SSgt NRPS Roy Penhallurick gave the "Loyal Toast" and our stand in Chairman, Germany Association Secretary and PMC; yours truly read out the "Loyal Message" from Her Majesty the Queen. I informed all present that we had 24 apologies. All cards, letters and copies of e mails had been carefully filed in a folder for all to read and peruse at their leisure after the dinner. There were many funny anecdotes, poems, regards and wishes from old friends. Bill Morland sent another Jockanese poem, which has been sent of for an expert translation. A few ACs also sent their apologies as they were inconvenienced by their current tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. It was a great night with many memories being shared and old acquaintances catching up on who is doing what and where. As we such a small group our group photograph was taken whilst we were at the table, The bar finally closed at 0530 hrs or there about with Steve Seymour closing the bar.

The Germany crew have agreed that we must definitely attend the next dinner at Larkhill and that most of us will arrive together by bus (working with a transport regiment has its advantages). We also pondered about whether it was worth having another Germany dinner next year (with the dwindling numbers and costs etc). The RSM answered that question for us. Of course we should, even if it was just a handful (tailor the event to fit the bill). WO1 (RSM) Wood said that from what he had seen this evening; the camaraderie, the characters and banter and ancient history that made up that evening he would certainly want to see us again next year. Oh well, looks like we will after all.

The weekend was not over for some. On Sunday morning, Des Riley, polished his massive motor bike, said his goodbyes and set off for Arnhem to complete his European tour (he took four days of bendy roads to get to Gutersloh). Most others rested for the day, waiting for the shuttle to take them to Paderborn airport. Pat, Steve and I finally did take a trip down memory lane and visited Lübbecke. The old 2 Div HQ 'Tax House' was now the 'Amts Gericht' (County Court). Church House, the old officers mess is now a BFG MOD Defence Course and Conference Centre and Tunis Barracks has been turned into a

housing estate with an old peoples home situated on what was the drill square!!

We then drove off to Bielefeld, visiting Catterick Barracks and what was Ripon Barracks, which is now a housing estate with a few of the old block still standing converted into schools. We skipped Herford and went to the airport via my place for a cup of tea as it was getting late.

Sorry to those who could not make it. It was a memorable weekend.

Ubique

Right: Steve Seymour, WO2 Ron Homes and Major Pat Verdon at the bar on Friday night.

Below: Major Pat Verdon and WO2 Ron Homes (Reunion Secretary Germany) standing on the steps of the old 2 Div HQ in Lubbecke

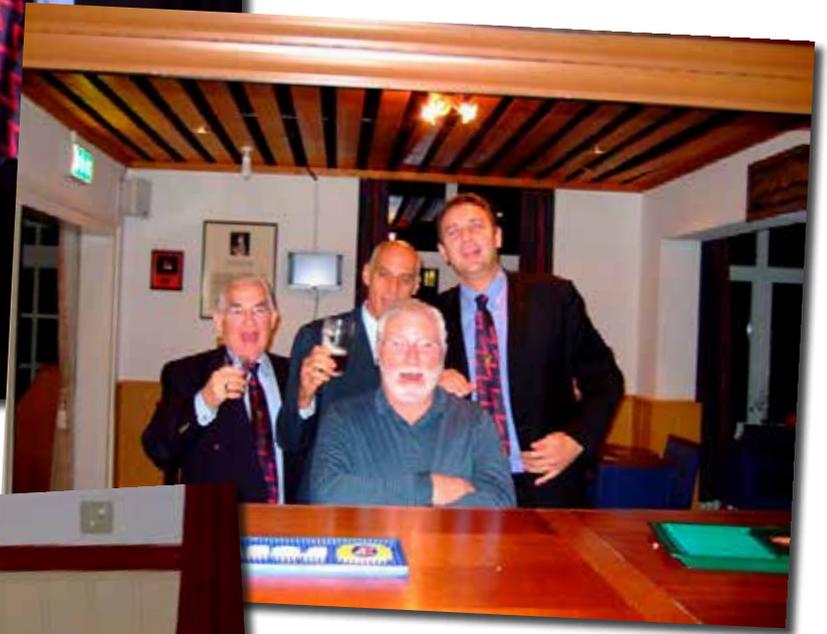
Below right: Dennis Norris (North West Area Secretary) sporting a handsome beard and Steve Seymour





Left: Dennis Norris, WO2(SQMS) Bob Smith and WO2 Ron Homes

Below: Cheers! - Major Pat Verdon, Steve Seymour and WO2 Ron Holmes standing behind Tom Webb



Left: A handsome Major Pat Verdon

Right: Chris Shuter tells the tale o SSgt Roy Penhallurick, WO1(SM) Dave Wood and guest Barry Gibson





Left: Tom Webb, Pete Deverall (more port please) and Major Pat Verdon enjoying an after Dinner coffee



Right: Steve Seymour, Dennis Norris and Tim Matthews waiting for the after Dinner speeches



Left Side from front: Russ Rogers, Iain Campbell, Bob Smith, Des Riley, Richard Ancliffe, Barry Gibson (guest), Chris Shuter, Roy Penhallurick

Right side from front: Tim Matthews, Dennis Norris, Steve Seymour, WO1(RSM) Dave Wood, Ron Holmes, Pat Verdon, Tom Webb, Pete Deverall

Farewell to Woolwich
73rd Artillery Clerks' Reunion and Association Dinner

Saturday 17th February 2007



Back: Mr BJ Leadbetter JP, Mr RH Lewis MSM, Mr J Phelps, Mr DC Manchester, WO2(SQMS) NU Perkovic, WO2 RJ Nichol, Sgt JT Allen, WO2 RJ Holmes LSL/AGC,
WO1 JM Hutchinson LSL/RA, Mr IM Grant, SSgt AL Martin, WO2(SQMS) DJ Ralphs, WO2(SQMS) R Smith, SSgt CP Buckley, Mr KT Crump, Mr JE Pottle

Mr B Morgan, Mr R Cooper, Mr DG Stotan, Mr DA Riley, Mr SP Callaghan, Mr GO Hyatt, Mr MI Grenham, Mr ST Trustlove, Mr WM Wallace, Mr G Brown, Mr P Gauci, Mr D Norris, Mr SV Read,
Mr C Shuter, Maj(Retd) DJ Cussell,

WO1 S Clark, Capt(Retd) CJ Berry BA, Mr AC Davidson, Capt(Retd) D Martin, Mr J McNamara, Mr TE Webb, Mr CG Day, Mr HU Cussell BEM, Mr WM Young, Mr P Deverall, Mr TL Matthews,
Mr EU Hall, Mr WD Johnson, Mr J Lindley

Mr AJ Jones (Standard Bearer), Piper W Wallace, Mr GA Lowthian, WO2(SQMS) DA Ward, SSgt SA Snowdon, Maj(Retd) PJ Verdon, Maj(Retd) D Crawford BEM, Sgt SA Whelan,
Mr M Johnston, Mr SR Seymour, Mr AM Tibble MSM (Assistant Secretary), Mrs M Faulkner (RA Central Sgts' Mess Manager), Piper C Davison

Maj P Coker AGC(SPS), Mr D Logan (RAA Wessex Area Representative), Maj M Gleeson MBE RA (Woolwich Station QM), Maj PA Headford BEM AGC(SPS), Lt Col(Retd) DP Brown OSJ BEM,
Lt Col RH Horner MBE RA, WO1(RASM) AE Harvey, Mr JM Charlton (Secretary), Gen Sir Alex Harley KBE CB (Guest of Honour), Lt Col JF Falzon BEM (Chairman),
Maj Gen APN Currie CB (Honorary President), WO1(SSM) JF Constantine (Reunion Secretary), Lt Col IA Vere-Nicoll MBE, (RAA General Secretary), Lt Col(Retd) VC Holdaway BEM,
Maj(Retd) JH Reynolds, Mr J Hoggins BSc, Capt(Retd) AL Solly (RAA Membership Secretary)