

# The Crossed Quills

The Magazine of the Artillery Clerks' Association

Edition 28  
December 2024

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# Royal Artillery Association Forecast of Events

## 2025

Date	Event	Location	Description
24 January	RA Gold Cup	Sandown Park	Family - Reunion
12 March	RAA NEC Meeting	Larkhill	NEC Committee
13 April	Gunner Sunday	RHC - Chelsea	Family-Church Service (SB)
16-18 May	RA Assembly	Blackpool	Family – Reunion (SB)
17 May	RAA NEC Meeting	Blackpool	NEC Committee
5 July	RA Service of Remembrance	National Memorial Arboretum	Family -Reunion Church Service (SB)
8 October	RAA NEC Meeting	Larkhill	NEC Committee
6 November	Field of Remembrance	Westminster Abby	Church Service
9 November	RA Ceremony of Remembrance	Hyde Park Corner	Church Service – Reunion (SB)
7 December	St Barbara's Day	Larkhill	Family-Church Service (SB)

**SB = Standard Bearer Supported Event**



# Foreword by Association President

*Lt Gen Richard Nugee CB CVO CBE*

It seems incredible that it was 10 years ago that we pulled out of Helmand, having been there for 8 hard and long years. The implications of that war, and the casualties that came from it, are still with us and will be for some time. Some say the withdrawal emboldened Putin to take the Crimea in 2014, taking advantage of a supposed defeat for the West, with the tragic consequence of so little reaction that he was further emboldened to take on the whole of Ukraine just 8 years later. Some say that it led to a re-appraisal of Defence's approach and the eventual 'pivot to the Pacific' and concerns about the security of Taiwan which seems to have dominated Defence thinking for at least 5 years.

The threads are coming together in many ways. The new government has launched a Strategic Defence Review (SDR), which is different for a number of reasons. First it is a defence

review, a review of how Defence works and operates, rather than the last few Security and Defence Reviews (SDSR) which looked at Britain's place in the world. This one is very much about how to govern and manage Defence as an entity in its own right and how it will operate. As such, part of its remit is looking at recruiting, skills and people matters, so rare in previous SDSRs. It is also being led by experts from outside defence, including our own General Sir Richard Barrons. The review will be in full swing by the time you read this, but it is heartening that they have called for evidence from those concerned about Defence. Let's hope it delivers a more robust and better run defence for all our security and for that of our partners in the support of Ukraine.

Another thread is that of casualties. It is only now, with the war in Ukraine and in the Middle East showing how difficult medical recovery can be, that we can appreciate quite how superb our teams were in Helmand and in the closing stages of Iraq, with the imperative to get casualties to a hospital within a Golden Hour;

for soldiers in Ukraine it can take 2 days to get to Kiev to a hospital. On this theme, it is wonderful that the Invictus Games will be coming back to the UK – Birmingham – in 2027, so we can celebrate the great achievements of our wounded brethren not just at the Paralympics, but also on our own soil.

A new Government, extraordinary and unexpected successes at the Olympics, and a summer that didn't, in the end, break any records for heat or floods, there is much to look forward to. The spirit of serving soldiers and veterans is to be positive about what is around the next corner, whatever it might bring!

I would particularly like to thank the Chairman and Secretary for their unstinting work on all our behalf, and very much hope they can take great pride in what they do for the Association, as they deserve to. And as ever, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and very much hope to see you at the Reunion Dinner in 2025.

## *Artillery Clerks' Association Virtual Annual General Meeting Tuesday 13th May 2024*

The Artillery Clerks' Association virtual Annual General Meeting will be held at 1900 hours on Tuesday 13th May 2025. Further details can be seen in the Secretary's report and will be published in due course





## Report by Association Chairman

*Lt Col Joe Falzon OSJ BEM*

developed in the heat of service. It allows us to find strength in one another through support networks, fostering a sense of belonging that is often difficult to replicate outside service life. Most importantly comradeship provides a safe space where members can share their triumphs and challenges, knowing they are among those who understand.

I am not someone who reads the Association Charter like a bedtime story, but I am sure you all know that the aim of the Association is to provide a focal point for all members; to promote and celebrate a common bond through comradeship amongst its members, both serving and retired, so that they can maintain close links with each other.

Comradeship is a unique and powerful bond, forged through shared experiences, challenges, and a deep understanding that transcends words. It is a bond that stands as a testament to the values of loyalty, trust, and mutual respect

In an era where many of us face the challenges of old age, such camaraderie is more than just a nicety—it is a lifeline. It helps combat isolation, supports mental well-being, and offers practical and emotional assistance that can make a profound difference. The mutual support seen within our Association highlights the best of what comradeship can achieve, showing that when we come together, we are stronger, more resilient, and better equipped to face whatever comes our way. Continuing the theme of comradeship, I would like to express my gratitude to Paul Corker, who suggested at one of our earlier Association Committee

meetings that we consider inviting a few of our widows as official guests to our Reunion Dinner. Traceylee Cowan and Janet Brown graciously accepted our invitation, setting a wonderful precedent for similar invitations in the future. This gesture reflects our ongoing commitment to being more inclusive, dynamic, and innovative in support of our aims and objectives.

As an Association, we have so much to be proud of and celebrate. Yet, as with all great organisations, we are driven by a continuous desire to improve and do even better

In closing, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to our Honorary President and all members of the Association Committee for their dedication, enthusiasm, and hard work throughout this year. Season's greetings to you, your family, and friends. I wish everyone a relaxing, safe, healthy, and prosperous New Year, filled with hope, kindness, and joy.



## Report by Association Secretary

*Andy Tibble MVO MSM (former WO1(SSM))*

Once again this has been a very busy and successful year for the Artillery Clerks' Association. We have continued to support the Royal Artillery Association (RAA) by having representation from the Association at some of their major events throughout the year. Our Standard Bearer, Andrew Jones has continued to represent the Association at some of the

major RAA events. On behalf of the Committee and members I would like to thank Andrew once again for his continued dedication and commitment in representing the Association throughout the year. Details of those events that Andrew attended can be seen in the Minutes of the AGM that took place on Tuesday 14th May 2024 further in the newsletter.



We have once again throughout the year been ably supported by our affiliated Battery, 34 (Seringapatam) Battery who have themselves been very busy. I would like to express on behalf of the Association our gratitude to them for their continued support. Further details on what 34 Battery have been doing throughout the year can be found later in the newsletter.

We had a most excellent 89th Reunion Dinner which was held at the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Central Mess, Larkhill on Saturday 22nd June 2024 under the auspices of our Reunion Secretary, Mr Roy Deal. The Association was proud to welcome the Colonel Commandant Veterans and Chairman of the Royal Artillery Association, Brigadier Mark Pountain CBE as our Guest of Honour and as our guests, the Royal Artillery Sergeant Major, WO1 (RASM) James Lighfoot and SSgt Diamond from 34 (Seringapatam) Battery. A full report on the Reunion weekend and dinner can be found later in the magazine. On behalf of those members who attended, I would like to say a big thank you to Roy for all the hard work that he put into this dinner, making this a most memorable evening and a most enjoyable weekend. Further details regarding the 90th Artillery Clerks' Association and Reunion Dinner that took place at Larkhill on Saturday 21st June 2025 can be read later in this edition of 'The Crossed Quills'.

It was agreed by the Committee we would hold a virtual Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 13th May 2025 instead at our reunion weekend in June 2025. This will enable as many members as possible to come together for the AGM who might not be able to attend the reunion weekend. Further details will be published in due course. I would be most

grateful if you would all put this date into your diaries, please.

The 90th Artillery Clerks' Reunion will take place over the weekend of the 20th – 22nd June 2025 at Larkhill. Details of the Guest of Honour and Guest will be published in due course. The calling letter for this reunion weekend is enclosed with your edition of 'The Crossed Quills'. This is the only opportunity for all members of the Artillery Clerks' Association to meet up over a weekend in the UK and therefore, it would be good to seek the support of all members in supporting this event each year. Should any members have any concern regarding transportation to/from the reunion, this should be included on your Reunion return when sending them back to Roy, so that we can contact you directly to possibly provide any assistance where possible, such as car sharing or even arranging for a group of members to travel by minibus to the event. I can appreciate that this might be slightly more difficult for those travelling from Germany to the UK. If you wish to attend, however, have transport issues, then you should speak to Ron Holmes or myself as soon as possible as we may be able to come up with a possible solution to ensure that you are able to attend.

I do hope that you enjoy reading this edition of 'The Crossed Quills'. I would like to take this opportunity in thanking those Association members who have contributed to this edition by forwarding articles and photographs for inclusion into this edition. Donations for this year's magazine have been received from the Committee members and 34 (Seringapatam) Battery. Many thanks for your contribution. I would be most grateful if you could all look through your individual archives

to see if you have something of interest, old photographs that you would like to be published in next years' edition. These articles, with photographs should reach me by no later than Friday 5th September 2025. Please remember to forward all articles in typed script where possible, including a CD-ROM with the articles on, along with any original photographs that you may have. The photographs will be sent back to you once they have been scanned onto the system. Edition 30 of the Crossed Quills is due to be published by the end of December 2025.

I would like to bring your attention to the RAA Forecast of Events on the inside of the front cover of this edition of 'The Crossed Quills'. If any members of the Artillery Clerks' Association wish to attend any of these events, grateful if you could let me know please in advance.

Our current membership stands at 129. There are currently 200 Potential New members on the Wanted List who were Artillery Clerks' but have not yet joined the Association. I am sure that there are Potential Members on the Wanted List that you know of their whereabouts. I would ask all Members of the Association to make a consolidated effort this year to try and encourage them to join the Association. Recruiting has currently slowed down and I urge you all to try and motivate either a formerly appointed Artillery Clerk or former Junior Rank Clerk's in the Gunners who has subsequently been promoted to Sgt or above within the AGC. A copy of the Application for Membership can be obtained from the Secretary.

As you know, Leo Lyall our Webmaster has continued to dedicate a lot of time and hard work to make sure that the Artillery Clerks' Association

website is highly presented and very informative. I continue to receive a lot of feedback about our look website and would like to thank Leo for all his hard work over the past year. Unfortunately, as you are all aware a lot of our members tend to visit Facebook (Crossed Quills) to leave messages etc. This is clearly a good way for our members to communicate and keep each other up to date on events. I would, however, like to urge you all please to visit the Artillery Clerks 'Association website at regular intervals please to see what messages have been place on the message board and to see details of forthcoming events both as an Association but also within the RAA. Please remember this is our website so we need to support it as well. Your support would be gratefully appreciated.

The St Barbara's Day Church Service will be held in the Garrison Church of St. Alban the Martyr, Larkhill on Sunday 7th December 2025. If you live within reasonable travelling distance, please can I urge you to support this event and get this date into your diary's. If you wish to attend, please inform the Secretary

I know that is has become even more difficult to try and engage with our membership, however, could I please continue to urge our Area Secretary's to continue where possible, to engage with all members of the Association who currently live within their areas of responsibility. As mentioned, many time before, the aim of this exercise is to re-engage with our members and to encourage them to attend future dinners or at least to get some feedback from them as to why they are no longer participating. The Committee can then address these issues to improve attendance levels. I would like to take this opportunity once again to thank all our Area Secretary's for their continued

support over the past year. Your support is gratefully appreciated by us all.

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](http://www.artyclerkassn.org). 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.

I would like to take this opportunity in wishing every member a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

See you in Larkhill in June 2025, if not sooner.

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Andy

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## Association Committee 2024 - 2025

Honorary President	Lt Gen Richard Nugee CB CVO CBE
Chairman	Lt Col Joe Falzon OSJ BEM
Secretary	Andy Tibble MVO MSM - former WO1(SSM)
Assistant Secretary	Roy Deal MBE - former WO1(SSM)
Reunion Secretary	Roy Deal MBE - former WO1 (SSM)
Treasurer	Maj (Retd) Paul Corker
Welfare Secretary	Dennis Norris - former WO2(QMS(AC))
Webmaster	Leo Lyall - former SSgt
Historical Secretary	Stephen Read - former WO1(SMAC)
Standard Bearer	Andrew Jones - former Sgt(AC)
Association Padre	Rev Dennis Brett - former WO2(QMS(AC))
RAA Representative	Lt Col Richard Horner MBE

## Regional Secretaries

North	Brian Morgan – former WO2(SQMS)
North West	Dennis Norris – former WO2(QMS(AC))
Midlands	Leo Lyall - former SSgt
East	Alf Alvin - former WO1 (SSM)
South	Paddy Butler – former WO1(SSM)
West	Roy Deal MBE – former WO1(SSM)
London Area	Andrew Jones – former Sgt(AC)
Scotland	Andy Tibble MVO MSM – former WO1(SSM)
Wales	Andy Tibble MVO MSM – former WO1(SSM)
Northern Ireland	Andy Tibble MVO MSM – former WO1(SSM)
Germany	Ron Holmes MSM former WO1(SSM)
Rest of the World	Andy Tibble MVO MSM – former WO1(SSM)

# Contact with Area Secretaries

The duties of Area Secretaries referred to as Area Representatives in the Governing Regulations of the ACA 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 Secretary, Andy Tibble.

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

## ***The North West -***

Cumbria, Lancashire, Merseyside, Greater Manchester and Cheshire. Contact Dennis Norris at [Northwest@artyclerkassn.org](mailto:Northwest@artyclerkassn.org)

## ***The North***

Durham, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, Cleveland, North, West and South Yorkshire and Humberside. Contact Brian Morgan at [North@artyclerkassn.org](mailto:North@artyclerkassn.org)

## ***The Midlands***

Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, West Midlands, Leicestershire, Hereford and Worcestershire and Warwickshire. Contact Leo Lyall at [Midlands@artyclerkassn.org](mailto:Midlands@artyclerkassn.org)

## ***The East***

Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Essex, Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. Contact Alf Alvin at [East@artyclerkassn.org](mailto:East@artyclerkassn.org)

***The South*** – Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Surrey, West Sussex, East Sussex and Kent. Contact Paddy Butler at [South@artyclerkassn.org](mailto:South@artyclerkassn.org)

***The West*** – Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Avon and Wiltshire. Contact Roy Deal at [Reunion-sec@artyclerkassn.org](mailto:Reunion-sec@artyclerkassn.org)

## ***The London Area.***

Contact Andrew Jones at [London@artyclerkassn.org](mailto:London@artyclerkassn.org)

***Scotland.*** Contact Andy Tibble at [Secretary@artyclerkassn.org](mailto:Secretary@artyclerkassn.org)

***Germany.*** Contact Ron Holmes at [Germany@artyclerkassn.org](mailto:Germany@artyclerkassn.org)

## ***Wales/N Ireland & Rest of the World.***

Contact the Association Secretary, Andy Tibble at [Secretary@artyclerkassn.org](mailto:Secretary@artyclerkassn.org)



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## Assistant Secretary's Report by Roy Deal MBE (former WO1 (SSM))

The Artillery Clerks' Association ties are available from the Assistant Secretary at a cost of £20 each. Please wear your tie with pride on the Friday evening and at social gatherings, we are an elite Association and proud to be so. For those who have managed to hang onto the older versions and new members who have joined us why not buy the new high-quality version for the 2024 Reunion. The Association tie is of a silk/polyester Gunner zig zag

design depicting the crossed quills and the 'AC' in gold. If you wish to purchase a tie please contact me at [Reunion-sec@artyclerkassn.org](mailto:Reunion-sec@artyclerkassn.org)







# Report by Treasurer

*Major (Retd) Paul Corker*

## General

As this year comes to a close, I would like to begin my report by wishing all members and their families the very best for the rest of 2024. Quite a different year to the previous one: especially given the Association's 25th anniversary but nonetheless a lot has been achieved by the committee so far in 2024. I am sure the reports will confirm my statement. I reported last year about all of my medical woes but what a difference a year makes: I'm feeling fit and the golf handicap is becoming to come down once again. It must be that new titanium hip!!

This year's reunion was somewhat of a quiet affair but with that said it was an excellent weekend, enjoyed by all who attended. Again I made the Friday night and what a good catch up it really was. The photographs will show that everyone was in good form. The Saturday saw in attendance some of the families of our deceased members. I hosted Bob Cowan's wife Tracey-lee) and daughter (Robyn) on the Saturday and may I say they were delighted to be there and they send their best wishes to all members. What a lovely gesture to invite the families: it shows a great togetherness and friendship which the Association is so rightly acknowledged for. Well done to Joe and the rest of the committee for organising

this. Although few in numbers, it was good to see the ladies at the table once again, I believe as our numbers decline this is the best way forward

Now the important part of my report – the accounts. The 'Silver Centre Piece' is now accounted for; all donations received, the invoice paid and HMRC (gift aid) has given us our well-deserved return. I can report that account is balanced to zero with no issues raised. Leading on to 'Gift Aid', could I please politely request those members who are yet to complete the form to do so as in January 2024 and the Association received £1,094.13. This total included money for the 'Silver Centre Piece' however I forecast an annual return of approximately £550 which is always good news.

My continued mission to the Committee and to the members is to ensure that the fund has long-term sustainability and a solid platform to meet all challenges. Please take a look at the accounts; with clear guidance from the Committee I can report that the fund is in good shape.

**Just some parish notes.** As I previously alluded to, the website is a fantastic platform that we all should embrace and use to improve what we do as an Association. You will find an 'Artillery Clerks' Action List' which highlights those members, who for some reason need to complete some outstanding administration. Please take time to look at this and where necessary complete your individual areas. It would be nice to complete this as soon as possible.

**To recap: Please** check your bank statements prior to January 2025 and where necessary, **change your annual subscription to £15**. Pay subscriptions by 'direct mandate' if not already doing so and complete the 'Gift Aid' declaration form which can be found on the website. I value your support; with it, I am able to do my job and to achieve my goals. It is extremely rewarding for me to achieve targets on your behalf and to end my report by stating that the fund is 'fit for purpose'.

## Statement of Account – 30 September 2024

### ASSETS (A)

Cash	£	0:00
Current Bank Account	£	683:35
Deposit Account	£	6,104:80
Shop Stock	£	300:00
Property (Display Boards)	£	600:00
Silver Centre Piece (SCP)	£	9,980:00

**Total Assets (A)** £ 17,668:15

**Property and SCP (P)** £ 10,580:00\*

**AVAILABLE CASH (A – B – P)£ 5,727.67**

### LIABILITIES (B)

Function 2025	£	110:48
Kemish Fund	£	1,250:00

**Total Liabilities (B)£ 1,360:48**

**\* SCP and Property not available cash**

## Main Action Areas

Outstanding Subscriptions  
- £1,325:00 (this is total). Only 12 unpaid 2024 subscriptions.  
Mandate - 09 Members not paying by Direct Mandate  
Gift Aid - 19 Members have not submitted the Declaration Form

## Summary

The fund continues to be financially sound and has the strength to support the needs of its members when required. My efforts are: to clear outstanding subscriptions totaling £1,325:00 (slight increase from 2023), to ensure all members change their annual subscription to £15 and for all to complete their Gift Aid forms prior to January 2025. There are no outstanding invoices; therefore this statement is a true reflection of the worth of the fund. The General Purpose Fund has the strength to support future events, should you the members decide that. The fund is on a strong financial footing and continues to be ready to meet any unknown challenges as they come along.

Wishing you all the very best and I hope to see you in Larkhill in June 2025. Take care.



# Report by Standard Bearer

*Andrew Jones (former Sgt (AC))*



## Gunner Sunday Royal Hospital Chelsea

I was very honoured and privileged to represent the Artillery Clerks' Association at the Gunner Sunday at the Royal Hospital Chelsea on Sunday 28th April 2024.

The Artillery Clerks' Association Standard was paraded with the Royal Artillery Standard Bearers, members of the serving regiments and veterans joined in by In-Pensioners on parade where we were inspected by the Governor of the Royal Hospital Chelsea.

Following the Church Service, a buffet lunch was available where I had the opportunity to meet some of the In Pensioners at the Royal Hospital Chelsea at the bar.

## St Barbara's Day Service - Larkhill

On Sunday 1st December 2024, both Lt Col Joe Falzon (Chairman) and myself attended The Royal Garrison Church of St Alban with St Barbara which is the Regimental Church of The Royal Regiment of Artillery at Larkhill for the St Barbara's Day service.

The Artillery Clerks' Association Standard was paraded along with the Royal Artillery Standard Bearers. Following the Church Service, we went back to the Garrison Officers' Mess for lunch.



*The Master Gunner St James's Park, Lieutenant General Sir Andrew Gregory KBE CB DL, Mr Andrew Jones (Standard Bearer) & Lt Col Joe Falzon OSJ BEM (Chairman)*



*Andrew Jones on parade with the other Royal Artillery Standard Bearers and In-Pensioners from the Royal Hospital Chelsea*



## Report by Welfare Secretary

*Dennis Norris (former WO2 (QMS(AC)))*

Whether your mobility problems are caused by getting older or an existing medical condition, our volunteers are trained to help you get the equipment that you need, including mobility scooters, stairlifts and recliner chairs.

*SSAFA's services are only available to people who have received at least one day's pay from the Armed Forces (British Army, Royal Navy, Royal Air Force, Royal Marines, including Reserves), or are in the immediate family of someone who served.*

### **Defence Medical Welfare Service (DMWS)**

Defence Medical Welfare Service (DMWS) is an independent charity providing medical welfare to those who have, and continue to, serve on the frontline. Their services are proven to help people:

- Have better experiences of healthcare and recover from illness quicker
- Feel less stressed and anxious
- Access financial support to reduce the stress of money
- Feel less lonely and more connected to their communities
- Enjoy positive relationships with families and friends
- Find and stay in safe housing
- Overcome alcohol and drug misuse
- Access treatment for mental health illnesses such as PTSD
- Stop thoughts of taking their own life
- Find meaningful employment or volunteering after service

They support all members of the Armed Forces Community across the services, including serving personnel, reservists, veterans, and their family members/carers.

DMWS has provided a professional and confidential medical welfare service to the Armed Forces since 1943. With the number of veterans of all ages continuously growing, there is an increased demand for their professional service to support this community when they are receiving medical treatment.

Any hospital admissions or a programme of treatment can be a stressful and daunting experience. Being a veteran can bring its own set of challenges; returning home from combat, many suffer from ill mental health and often find it difficult to transition into civilian life. This can lead to other problems such as marriage breakdown, unemployment and homelessness.

Combined with the transient nature of service life, veterans are less likely to have family nearby or a long established support network, leading to loneliness and isolation; all of which can hamper recovery.

Veteran's health needs are significant; in general, veterans often experience physical health issues linked to their service, such as:

- Combat related injuries and back problems from carrying heavy equipment
- Ear, nose and throat problems
- Sleep disorders
- Chronic pain problems
- Mental health problems

DMWS welfare staff are available for veterans to offer practical and emotional support when they receive medical treatment. The aim is to improve mental wellbeing, encourage a positive approach to

There are currently 11 Association members on the 'radar' of the Welfare Secretary and Committee predominantly with conditions ranging from Cancers, Heart conditions and other debilitating illnesses. These conditions are being managed through medical services but, if you are aware of any member suffering, a contact call and a chat, or even a friendly exchange on social media can go a long way to make the sufferer feel better and ensuring they do not suffer alone.

As always, the Committee and myself are always available for a Welfare Support contact plus SSAFA has long been the primary support for the Armed Services and their website is well worth a visit if you feel you need further help. Below is an extract from the site regarding help and support with mobility:

### **Help with Mobility**

Helping veterans maintain their independence and dignity.

*My SSAFA caseworker has been a guardian angel! This chair has really made my life so much easier.*  
- Ken, Army Veteran

Our volunteers have plenty of experience in finding solutions for veterans seeking financial support to help maintain their mobility and independence at home.



treatment, reduce social isolation, and promote independence which can lead to earlier hospital discharge. **Our person-centred service is tailored to the individual needs of the patient and their family.**

Further information and application procedures are available from their website <https://dmws.org.uk/>

## Artillery Clerks' Association Virtual Annual General Meeting Tuesday 13th May 2025

The Artillery Clerks' Association virtual Annual General Meeting will be held at 1900 hours on Tuesday 13th May 2025. Further details can be seen in the Secretary's report and will be published in due course



## Report by Webmaster

*Leo Lyall (former SSgt)*

year. These changes have been updates to Notices, additions of the Larkhill Reunion page (<https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/reunion2024.htm>) to provide a visual reference to the event held in June, and the odd rectification of errors I've found on other pages.

This year's webmaster report marks 10 year's since I took over from Dave Stotan and revamped the Association website. Since 2016 the website has seen many changes and has given members a better online presence to access essential Association information. There are regular updates to notices, there are now quarterly newsletters and there is a better passage of information between the Committee and the membership.

Along with the website there is also the Association Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/40892256023/?fref=nf>) which further enhances the Association's online presence and enables members to engage with each other and the Committee.

It has been a quiet year with requirements for webmaster activity, there have been only minimum alterations during the

The quarterly newsletters are sent out to those members who are subscribed. It is a more direct way of getting Association information to the membership. I assume that I have all of the members email addresses and that they are receiving the newsletters but if this is not the case you can sign up at <http://eepurl.com/gaw5on>.

As usual I'd like to add a piece to my report regarding cyber security. It is so important that you are as aware of your personal security online as you would have been of your personal security while serving. You were provided with measures to take to ensure your safety in line with the environment you were working in. This is all the more important on the Internet. I interpret the WWW and the Wild-Wild-West. Staying safe online is essential to protect your personal information, maintain your privacy, and avoid becoming a victim of cybercrime. Here are some of the best ideas for staying safe online:

Staying safe online is essential to protect your personal information, maintain your privacy, and avoid becoming a victim of cybercrime. Here are some of the best ideas for staying safe online:

### 1. Use Strong, Unique Passwords

- Create complex passwords that include a mix of uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers, and special characters. Try passwords that you can remember but are not too simplistic that an hacker can work out or guess. One trick is to pick three words such as dog, cat, fox, throw them together and add in a character or two to break it up or substitute some of the letters for numbers. Here's an example: \*c4tD0g@F0x\*.
- Avoid using the same password across multiple sites. If one site is compromised, all your accounts could be at risk.
- Use a password manager to generate and store strong, unique passwords for each of your accounts.

### 2. Enable Two-Factor Authentication (2FA)

- Add an extra layer of security by requiring a second form of authentication (like a code sent to your phone or a biometric scan) in addition to your password.

- Enable 2FA on all accounts that offer it, especially email, banking, and social media.

### 3. Be Aware of Phishing Scams

- Avoid clicking on links or downloading attachments from unknown or suspicious emails and messages.
- Verify the sender's email address and check for any inconsistencies or unusual requests.
- When in doubt, contact the company or individual directly using a known, trusted communication method.

### 4. Keep Your Software and Devices Updated

- Regularly update your operating system, browsers, and applications to protect against security vulnerabilities.
- Enable automatic updates whenever possible to ensure you have the latest security patches.

### 5. Use Secure, Trusted Networks

- Avoid using public Wi-Fi for sensitive transactions, such as online banking or shopping.
- If you must use public Wi-Fi, use a Virtual Private Network (VPN) to encrypt your internet traffic and protect your data.

### 6. Limit Personal Information Shared Online

- Be mindful of the personal information you share on social media and other websites. Avoid sharing sensitive information like your home address, phone number, or financial details.
- Review privacy settings on social media platforms to control who can see your information.

### 7. Be Cautious with Downloads and Links

- Only download software or apps from official, trusted sources like the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.
- Avoid clicking on unknown or suspicious links, especially in emails or direct messages.

### 8. Use Antivirus and Anti-Malware Software

- Install reliable antivirus and anti-malware software to detect and protect against malicious software.
- Keep your security software updated to guard against the latest threats.

### 9. Regularly Back Up Your Data

- Regularly back up important files to an external hard drive or a secure cloud service. This will help you recover your data in case of a ransomware attack or hardware failure.

### 10. Monitor Your Accounts and Online Activity

- Regularly review your bank statements, credit card statements, and online accounts for any unauthorized transactions or changes.
- Set up alerts for suspicious activity or logins from unrecognized devices.

### 11. Be Skeptical of "Too Good to Be True" Offers

- Be wary of online offers that promise unrealistic rewards or deals. These could be scams designed to steal your personal information or money.

### 12. Educate Yourself and Stay Informed

- Stay updated on the latest online security threats and trends.
- Educate yourself about common cyber threats, such as phishing, ransomware, and identity theft, to recognize and avoid them.

### 13. Log Out of Accounts When Not in Use

- Always log out of accounts when you are finished, especially on shared or public devices, to prevent unauthorized access.

### 14. Use Secure Communication Methods

- Use end-to-end encrypted messaging services for sensitive communications to ensure that your messages cannot be intercepted.

### 15. Disable Unnecessary Features and Services

- Disable Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, location services, and other features when not in use to reduce the risk of unauthorized access.

By following these best practices, you can significantly enhance your online security and protect yourself from a wide range of cyber threats. Remember that staying safe online is an ongoing process that requires vigilance and awareness.

After that, I'd like to wish all members and their families all the very best and that they enjoy the festive season. Happy New Year - 2025!



## The Artillery Clerks'

HOME  
ASSOCIATION  
NOTICES  
NEWSLETTER

### Welcome to the Artillery Clerks' Association website.

The Artillery Clerks' Association was formed at the Royal Artillery Barracks, Woolwich Garrison on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March 1998.

Providing a focal point, it is essentially an old comrades association of former Artillery Clerks, either serving or retired, promoting comradeship amongst its members.



## The Artillery Clerks' Website Menu Listing

<a href="https://www.artyclerkassn.org">https://www.artyclerkassn.org</a>	Wherever you are in our website just click the ' <b>Home</b> ' link in the menu or any of the Association badges on every page to get back to the Home page.
<a href="https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/notices.htm">https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/notices.htm</a>	The ' <b>Notices</b> ' link gives you our web page for up-to-date information deemed relevant for the membership.
<a href="https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/silverwareProject.htm">https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/silverwareProject.htm</a>	There are multiple menu links on this webpage laying out a timeline of the 'Silverpiece' Project.
<a href="https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/newsletter.htm">https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/newsletter.htm</a>	This webpage link gives you a list of all back copies for the quarterly Association ' <b>Newsletter</b> '.
<a href="https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/assn.htm">https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/assn.htm</a>	The ' <b>Association</b> ' link in the menu provides the contact details of the Association Committee.
<a href="https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/areaSecs.htm">https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/areaSecs.htm</a>	The ' <b>Area Secretaries</b> ' link in the menu provides the contact details of the Association Area Secretaries.
<a href="https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/member.htm">https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/member.htm</a>	If you need to see who is a member of the Association go to the ' <b>Membership</b> ' link in the menu
<a href="https://www.artyclerkassn.org/pdf/AC_Charter_Edition_5.pdf">https://www.artyclerkassn.org/pdf/AC_Charter_Edition_5.pdf</a>	For any details regarding the charter of the Associations business follow the ' <b>Charter</b> ' link. This opens in a new tab as a PDF document.
<a href="https://www.artyclerkassn.org/pdf/2020_Governing_Regs_v3.pdf">https://www.artyclerkassn.org/pdf/2020_Governing_Regs_v3.pdf</a>	For any details regarding the governing regulations of the Association follow the ' <b>Governing Regulations</b> ' link. This opens in a new tab as a PDF document.
<a href="https://www.artyclerkassn.org/pdf/FOE.pdf">https://www.artyclerkassn.org/pdf/FOE.pdf</a>	The RAA annual ' <b>Forecast of Events</b> ' for this year and into the early part of the next one. This opens in a new tab as a PDF document.
<a href="https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/wantedList.htm">https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/wantedList.htm</a>	The ' <b>Potential Members</b> ' link shows the list of ex-RA Clerks who could potentially join the Association.
<a href="https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/interests.htm">https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/interests.htm</a>	There are multiple menu choices in the ' <b>Interests</b> ' area and includes online security, veteran memberships, medals, among other interesting items.
<a href="https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/membershipApp.htm">https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/membershipApp.htm</a>	The ' <b>Membership</b> ' link provides all the information required to apply for membership of the Association.
<a href="https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/XQuills.htm">https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/XQuills.htm</a>	Follow the ' <b>Crossed Quills</b> ' link for the complete collection of past and present editions of.
<a href="https://www.boards2go.com/boards/board.cgi?user=shadowen">https://www.boards2go.com/boards/board.cgi?user=shadowen</a>	The ' <b>Message Board</b> ' facility is not used so frequently but this is a convenient way of getting messages to the Association.
<a href="https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/silent.htm">https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/silent.htm</a>	' <b>Silent Quills</b> ' provides an area to respect the ex-Artillery Clerks' who are deceased and shows the tributes to them from our comrades.
<a href="https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/bearer.htm">https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/bearer.htm</a>	Our ' <b>Standard</b> ' is paraded all over the country at events such as St Barbara's Day and Gunner Sunday and where possible at deceased member funerals.
<a href="https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/reunion.htm">https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/reunion.htm</a>	This link called ' <b>Reunion</b> ' is dedicated to everything a member needs to know regarding the upcoming Reunion Weekend, including the Calling Notice.
<a href="https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/reunion_gallery.htm">https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/reunion_gallery.htm</a>	If you would like to see photographs from past reunion weekends then follow the ' <b>Reunion Gallery</b> ' link. Find photos from the UK and Germany reunions.
<a href="https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/history.htm">https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/history.htm</a>	There has been a lot of information collated over the years to provide a history of the Artillery Clerks'. Follow the ' <b>History</b> ' link to investigate further.
<a href="https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/shop.htm">https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/shop.htm</a>	The ' <b>Shop</b> ' only has stock limited to the Association Tie but this page provides the information required to obtain a new one as required.
<a href="https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/welfare.htm">https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/welfare.htm</a>	There is a wealth of information and links to various external agencies associated with veteran welfare on the ' <b>Welfare</b> ' webpage.
<a href="https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/treasurer.htm">https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/treasurer.htm</a>	The ' <b>Treasurer</b> ' page has been formulated to give all the financial details required for the Treasurer to be able to manage the Association's finances.
<a href="https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/34_Battery.htm">https://www.artyclerkassn.org/webpages/34_Battery.htm</a>	The ' <b>34 Battery RA</b> ' link is to our hosts at Larkhill who provide welcome help and assistance to our Reunion Weekend.
<a href="https://www.army.mod.uk/who-we-are/corps-regiments-and-units/royal-artillery/14-regiment-royal-artillery/">https://www.army.mod.uk/who-we-are/corps-regiments-and-units/royal-artillery/14-regiment-royal-artillery/</a>	An external link is provided to ' <b>14 Regt RA Website</b> ' on the Army portal. They are 34 Battery's parent unit.
<a href="https://www.facebook.com/14RegtRA/">https://www.facebook.com/14RegtRA/</a>	This link to ' <b>14 Regt RA Facebook</b> ' will take you to up-to-date information from a social level about the Larkhill based regiment.
<a href="https://www.thegunners.org.uk/">https://www.thegunners.org.uk/</a>	The final link in our website menu structure, ' <b>RAA</b> ' is another external link to the Royal Artillery Association website



# Report by Historical Secretary

*Stephen Read (former WO1 (SMAC))*



Back in “flaming?” June my wife, Penny, and I, and friends spent a week visiting north eastern France and north west Belgium. Our aim was both to explore these areas to find what they have to offer in the 2020s and to go back 110 years to the battle fields of WW1. Like many of us I have ancestors who fought in the Great War, some survived, others were not so lucky. They were all extremely brave young men.

At times it was an emotional trip, for example visiting the grave in Boulogne of a man who, were it not for his untimely death in 1914, I would not be here. We visited the major British sites, like the Menin Gate (covered in scaffolding so I didn't get to see a relative's name) and the massive Tyne Cott cemetery, along with some of the smaller Allied sites which seemed to pop at sad repetition ever couple of kilometres. Their row upon row of immaculate white marble headstones and name plaques were ore inspiring to see and immaculately maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Whilst very moving these were not, for me, however, the most impactful sites. The brass keys embedded in the pavements in Ypres; each one commemorating a named child or adult who, along

with 700 other civilians were killed in that utterly destroyed city. The medieval cloth hall and cathedral, the 700-year-old inn, all of which look their age but we're actually completely rebuilt in the inter war period. The original and very first TOCH (Talbot House) in Poperinge that was frequented by many young soldiers, who unlike us BAOR veterans, often did not make it home.

All of these added a different perspective to the usual picture of WW1. But, most surprisingly, the two things that had the greatest impact were, personally, both very close and very far from me. The closest was standing on Dunkerque beach looking down this miles long, wide, stretch of sand that in 1940 my 19 year old father crossed on his way to embark on one of the little boats back to England. The other, was visiting the German cemetery at Langemark that contains over 44 thousand dead including a mass grave, not much bigger than a tennis court, containing the remains of 20 thousand men. As explained in the small commemorative hall (packed floor to ceiling with thousands of names) many of the men that lye there were little more than boys. They were young students and their lecturers and professors, who formed reserve divisions thrown against the machine gun like rifle fire of highly trained, professional, British Guards and Scottish Infantry divisions.

We visited the excellent Passchendaele battlefield museum with its immersive virtual reality representation of the battlefield with its dual clock and casualty counter. There we met one of the many parties of British school

children who visit the Battle fields as part of their GCSE History curriculum. The majority were not really interested, but who could blame them? They were being made to visit these sites from a past, that to them, is an “ancient” history that they have no connection with. How do we change this? I don't know but as a nation we ought to try as the men (and women) who gave their lives deserve to be remembered.

Putting life stories to the names is a start. The most memorable people for me were those names we could find on the Internet with their life histories. The young nurse, the first to die in WW1. The Austrian Count who fought for Britain as a Pilot in WW2 and came to grief in Northern frame in 1943. The 2 British Army Ptes who died in captivity in 1918 and who now lie in a mass German war grave.

So, I have 3 final thoughts:

1. Belgium trappist beer is excellent and the brewery and restaurant at Watou is well worth a visit.
2. If you have not already done so, visit the battlefields.
3. Before you are unable to write down your memories of service so that your families and future generations can learn from you lives and experiences. You don't need to be a professional author, just write down what ever thoughts you have and send them to me. I will help you with the word crafting. If you wish further details of how to start drop me an email.

# Report by South Area Secretary

*Paddy Butler (former WO1 (SSM))*



Just a quick update up on what I have been up to as Association Secretary for the South of England area. Part of my role as the regional representative for the South of England is to act as a conduit for the Association Committee and if any Association Members are in need of any kind of assistance, or if I become aware of any members in the South requiring help, support or assistance then I would make contact with the Committee or other relevant agencies to alert them and put in place any support that may be required. I would like to take this opportunity to reach out to the Members of the Association that live in the South and ask you to please confirm your details with me. This will ensure that we hold your correct details, so please email me your details, or even just contact me via my email [paddy.vysk@gmail.com](mailto:paddy.vysk@gmail.com). To craft the foreword this year has been a lot easier than last two years.

Unfortunately, I could not attend this year's reunion due to ill health but I'm very much hoping to attend in 2025 subject to doctor's orders. Clive Nutall another stalwart was unable to attend for health reasons. So, I'm sure he will be there in 2025 also. I wish him a speedy recovery on behalf of myself and the Southern Area members.

Once again, the highlight from an Association point of view for this year, was the Reunion weekend. It was great success if the pictures are anything to go by and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Roy and his committee for executing yet again a fabulous weekend for all who attended. It's also been great to see that the weekly MS Teams meetings have continued throughout 2024. So nice to see smiley faces on the "big screen" and the virtual AGM in March was also a success. As with previous editions of "Cross Quills", we would like to keep the theme of "going down memory lane". So, if you can find some snap shots of your service to embellish next year's edition, please send them to me and I will forward them to Andy Tibble or feel free to send them direct to Andy.

I'm still working at The Forces Pension Society as their Deputy Head of Membership and have settled into a hybrid model of home and London based work. This affords me to keep ties with the Services and you will be pleased to know that we are Royal Regiment heavy at Vauxhall. One of our Vice-Presidents is Lord Richards and I always remind him of when 4th Armoured Brigade Headquarters Sergeants' Mess dined him out as Commander with a reverse Regimental Breakfast starting at 0730hrs. Boy was that a long day at the office for both of us.

Our chairman is Lt Gen Sir Gerry Berragan. He always requests me to pass on his very good wishes to any members that worked with him during his career. The Chief Executive is Maj Gen Neil Marshall who was our Guest of Honour at the 2022 Reunion

Dinner. I keep reminding him that he had to sing for his supper. He is former, CO and current Honorary Colonel of 1 RHA. He has also served with 7 RHA, 19 Regt RA & 39 Regt RA where Steve Seymour confirmed at the 2022 dinner that he was his first Chief Clerk. Every month we look forward to receiving Gunner magazine which keeps us informed on the current state of nation of the Royal Regiment. He also looks forward to reading Cross Quills which I present to him annually since his arrival in 2018 and I'm sure he will love this year's edition. He still resides within the Salisbury area and loves listening to The Guns firing on the Plain every now and then and was grateful that the Association asked him to be Guest of Honour at the 2022 dinner. Maj Gen Bill Moore, former CO of 7 RHA and previously of 4th Regt RA during the Falklands campaign, a former Director has also requested to pass on his good wishes to members of the Association that know him. We still have two Gunner veterans on the Executive staff as Pension Consultants. Maj (Retd) Alison Waddie, she served in a Post 1992 era where some of her clerks in the AGC were former Artillery Clerks and understands the comradeship and professionalism that these personnel brought to the regiments.

Former WO2 Colin Thomas. Colin served 35 years, 22 in the Royal Regiment and 13 on the LSL. He wishes to pass on his regards to all members of the Association that may know him, especially Chris Shuter; from their sailing days. I still reside in Sandhurst, just around the corner from Andy Tibble and Clive Nutall in Yateley. We meet up occasionally when our diaries permit, normally at "The

Cricketers” in Yateley for a bite to eat and mull over fond times. I’m happy to remain your area Secretary if you wish. I have not received any correspondence from members since my last report and it is still my intention not to hound people via e-mail, so if people require any assistance; please drop me a line.

I’m extremely looking forward to attending (health permitting) the 2025 Reunion and am looking forward to meeting you all there. It now just leaves me to wish All Members of the Association, to have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year for 2025. Keep safe, calm; and carry on. My Best Regards to You All, Ubique.

### *Help Our Veterans!*

In May 2025, 10 vulnerable veterans will embark on a life-changing working trip to Malta – a project being masterminded by our Chairman, on behalf of Alabaré.

Thanks to the generosity of our members, £673 has been raised so far — but we need your further help to reach our target of £1,000!

This trip will provide vital opportunities for rehabilitation, skill-building, and memories that will last a lifetime. Every donation counts in helping these veterans thrive.

Let’s make the final push and reach £1,000 for this incredible cause!

Donate today and show your support for those who have served.

Full details can be found in pages 47 and 48 towards the back of this magazine.

## North Area Secretary Report

*Brian Morgan (former WO2(SQMS))*



Hello, all fellow Artillery Clerks hope this finds everyone well, can it really be another year already, since I was last writing my area secretary notes for Crossed Quills for Andy.

After a splendid 25th Anniversary Reunion Dinner and unveiling of the magnificent Artillery Clerk’s Association silver centrepiece in June 2023 there was always the risk that the preceding reunion may be an event a little bit like “after the Lord Mayor’s show” thankfully however, it was not the case and although our numbers were smaller this year it was a great weekend none the less and a thoroughly enjoyable evening and Reunion dinner. The Wiltshire Police Band out did themselves and almost matched the numbers sitting down to dinner. I had a thoroughly enjoyable evening and as always it was great catching up with brother Artillery Clerks and guest.

I retired in May from North Yorkshire Police after 21-year service, having sold our house and downsized we moved the short distance from Northallerton to Bedale in April, my wife referred to it as future proofing and being mortgage free I decided the time was right for me to give my notice and retire although I am still two years away from state pension/retirement age.

No climbing up Pen y Fan this year for me the date for the

annual British Airborne Forces Club event was the weekend following the Army v Royal Air Force rugby fixture at Kingsholm in Gloucester and I was meeting up with friends and former players of Tigers RFC Hong Kong. The two years I served as an Artillery Clerk at HQBF Hong Kong were possibly the most enjoyable years in my 24-year army career and although I was the only Gunner SNCO/other rank in Hong Kong I made many friends in my time stationed there. Tigers Rugby Club was a team made up from military and civilians based at the Headquarters on Hong Kong Island and the Kowloon area on the peninsular including the British Military Hospital and the RAOC Stores Depot and the Ammunition Depot on Stonecutters Island. For the past six years a group of ex Tigers RFC players and our wives have met up once a year at a variety of venues for a little reunion. It’s quite an amazing thing about military personnel that although I only played rugby with these individuals for the two years, I was based in Hong Kong that we have managed to stay in contact with one another to this day.

Staying connected and looking out for each other is something that we as an association are keen to embody as a group and if anyone feels they need help, assistance or support please feel free to contact me, never feel embarrassed to hold your hand out, or ask for any kind of help, I can assure you everything will be dealt with in strictest confidentiality. I was recently contacted by a member of the association who although not directly requesting any assistance was clearly having one or two issues, the committee



quickly contacted the individual who advised that he was already receiving adequate assistance and support but wanted the association to be aware the reason that he was unable to attend the Reunions.

As the Area Secretary for the North of England I cover a large area which covers the counties of Northumberland, Durham, Yorkshire (North, South, West & East Ridings) and Humberside. Although geographically a large area there are not an enormous number of association members living in the area, previously I would send out a small newsletter by post to the association

members in the area, one member would often send me a reply and stated although he is unable to attend the Reunions or Dinner as he does not wish to leave his wife on her own as she was not in the best of health but he is happy to be a member of the Association and enjoys reading the Crossed Quills. Part of the role as a regional/area representative is to act as a conduit for the Association Committee and if any members of the association (or indeed any former Artillery Clerk even if not a member of the Association) need any kind of assistance or support or if anyone becomes aware of any members in the North of England who require any kind of assistance

or support, please contact me and I will ensure the Committee and other relevant agencies in order that appropriate support can be put in place as appropriate.

Can I take this opportunity to reach out to all Association Members living in the North and indeed to any potential new members please could I ask you to confirm your current contact details with me. This will also ensure that the Association hold your correct and up-to-date details or even just contact me via my personal email: morgan\_45@hotmail.co.uk.



On the 9th of March 2024, I received a letter from our Association Chair, Joe expressing his gratitude for taking over this role as the secretary for the East of England. The role was vacated by our colleague Dave Cussell, and it is with hope that I can bring what he has for so many years to the association and carry on in his stead. Thank you, Dave, for all your work in the role.

So, to start at the beginning I thought it would be just right to share with you a short bio of my time within the Royal Regiment, and more latterly my longer career in the AGC(SPS) and finally what I am up to in civilian street.

So, my journey began on 24 Oct 1983, when I entered the gates of the Junior Leaders Regiment,

## Report by East Area Secretary

### *Alf Alvin MSM (former WO1 (SSM))*



*My Artillery life in ties, 33 Bty, 45 Fd Regt, 170 (Imjin) Fd Bty and now.*

Gamecock Barracks, Nuneaton and joined Wingate Troop of 33 (Campbell) Battery. After fourth term I was posted to 45 Field Regiment in Haig Barracks, Hohne and served with them until they were placed in suspended animation in 1993. Moving from Hohne to Colchester and then back again to Germany, this time Paderborn. During the time I got married and had a most enjoyable time, filled with Northern Ireland tours, the Gulf War and lots of

stints on Soltau and Bergan Ranges. There were fun times to of course, sailing, windsurfing, Canada exactly what the TV adverts said at the time! Although I did the usual stint of Headquarter Battery roles, I was most settled when I was appointed the Battery Clerk of 170 (Imjin) Field Battery, I really had found my place in the world. Friendships made there and the wider West Yorkshire Gunners would prove to be life long and I am extremely

humbled to say that we meet up every June for a spot of golf (walking in my case) and drinks in Leeds each October, all of us reverting to the age we were back then.

After 45 Field Regiment went into suspended animation I was appointed as the Operations Bombardier within Headquarters Royal Artillery and Herford Garrison in Germany, I completed my Bombardier leadership course at Vogelsang with 16 Air Defence Regiment, gained promotion to Bombardier and then within a month found myself as a Corporal within the Adjutants Generals Corp! It was at this time that I was sponsored by Mark Testi and joined the Association, around 1999 if memory serves.

The compulsory volunteering into the Adjutants Generals Corp in July 1993 was found by some as quite disturbing, I remember with fond memories being presented with an Artillery Plaque by the then CRA, Brigadier Smyth and a colleague (no names) becoming quite overtaken by emotions. I must tell you, and I know the audience, I grabbed the opportunity with both hands, as I knew then and continue to believe that Artillery Clerks had more about them, were more meticulous, proud and pro-active and could conquer all barriers.

It did open a new world, with a newborn son James and Shell my wife we were posted to 'JHSU', who, what? The Joint Helicopter Support Unit in Laarbruch. I took the role as Chief Clerk as a Corporal and had a massive hands-on role in the unit, often volunteering to hang about under chinooks or pumas to 'hook up' whatever was required – fantastic, again just what the adverts were saying – oh yes and skiing a plenty.



*Exercise POND JUMP WEST Sep-Oct 1989, 170 (Imjin) Fd Bty Op & CP JNCOs*

The Medium Support Helicopters moved out of Germany back to RAF Odiham, just outside of Aldershot. I was then offered a vacancy as the independent Pay Sergeant at the 23rd Parachute Field Ambulance in Old Montgomery Lines. I again found a skill for this after attending the RAO Finance course and really being dropped in it. Becoming the Imprest Custodian, I was indeed impressed – I had no idea what I was getting myself into! But in Arty Clerk mode I just grabbed it and got on with it, often taking the ledger home for some extra training.

After 5 Airborne Brigade rerolled into 16 Air Assault Brigade and moved to Colchester and I completed my third tour in the Balkans, I was posted to Headquarters Allied Rapid Reaction Corps in Rheindahlen, again having a slice of Staff Clerking it was an excellent posting.

I enjoyed it so much, after after a posting at 5th Battalion REME in Catterick as the FSA and Regimental Accountant, I was promoted to WO2 and asked if I could return to HQ ARRC. I knew they were about to deploy to become HQ ISAF in Kabul. My wish was granted, the downside was we arrived in Rheindahlen again and I 'hopped' onto a Galaxy and flew to Kabul, leaving Shell & James to unpack and settle in alone this time, nothing new here, something I think we have all experienced.

After the Kabul Tour, James was in his last 2 years of school at Windsor in JHQ, we asked to retain a quarter there as I would be approaching another posting. This was permitted when HQ ARRC was moving into Imjin Barracks, Innsworth, as I was the Support Battalions RAOWO and was appointed as the UK side liaison to get everything set up for both the Battalion and the HQ to

arrive, it was at this point I was awarded the MSM for my actions.

We were then posted to the NATO Communications Support Agency in Mons, located with SHAPE. James became a weekly border at JHQ, and we lived in Mons, which was converted into our chance to save up the deposit for our future home in the UK. I carried out another tour of Kabul at this stage, again administering the civilians and soldiers of the agency who deployed to ensure the communications network in Afghanistan remained active and secure.

After NCSA, I was posted as the RAWO of the 10th Training Battalion REME in Borden as the RAWO and Imprest Holder, tag teaming the job with Paddy Butler, another amazing job having a contracted RAO department and a MOD Civil Servant as an RAO – I had never worked in that world before but again it was most rewarding. At this point I volunteered for a tour of Afghanistan, this time as the RAWO of the Overseas Mentoring

and Liaison Team – what a great tour that was, a real test. This would be my last operational tour and a high note to end on. During the tour I was personally introduced to Prince Harry as he attended the last remembrance service in Kandahar for UK forces, 30 years prior to this in 1984 on a Chindits parade I spoke to his father, the then Prince Charles – now that's a memory to hold on to.

The Chindits link would appear again on my next posting to the newly formed 77th Brigade at Denison Barracks, Hermitage when again they sponsored the Chindits association on a visit, I met a former Chindit who was on the same parade back in 1984!! 77th Brigade at the time based themselves on Wingate's units, operating in columns and conducting irregular operations in the grey area.

I finally ended my career at the newly formed 6th (United Kingdom) Division based at Trenchard Lines Upavon and was discharged in October 2021, not a bad innings really for someone

who's natural 22 years' service should have ended in October 2005!

I now find myself working for the NHS in a role not dissimilar to my military ones, where I am responsible for the induction of new starters to the community nursing teams and I directly support two area nursing managers in their role. Our vocation of supporting others runs through me like a stick of rock, learnt in whole during those formative years in the Royal Regiment.

I am grateful for the opportunity to carry out the role of area secretary for the East of England now and would like to take this chance to wish you all well for Christmas 2024 and the New Year. I am very much looking forward to seeing you all in person online and I will make a most overdue physical appearance at our next reunion weekend.

Stay safe and well everyone, yours  
Alf – Ubique//

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## Royal Artillery Association Working Group

### *Lt Col Richard Horner MBE*

I have recently taken over responsibility for Wessex and the South West Region of the RAA and, as a newly elected member of the RAA executive council will also champion the needs of the Arty Clerks Association.

I have been involved in three RAA Working Groups (WG) looking at the current model of RAA Branches and considering options for the future. One early conclusion the WG came to was that the old model, although still very strong in some areas, was certainly on the demise and not attractive to the majority of current

service leavers. Therefore, this review was deemed critical to help navigate a way ahead.

During the first session it was clarified that the RAA views the Artillery Clerks' Association as one of its National Branches, covering both national and international links to its members across the globe. The WG reviewed the Association's constitution and governance and concluded that they were fit for purpose.

Work is still ongoing with priority effort in outreach to be more

inclusive and receptive to the current veteran population. Formal branch regularity and propriety have been scrutinised to help them become more flexible and less formal. One of the major work streams is capturing all the disparate veteran groups that currently communicate very successfully via social media with reunions and catch-up meeting mainly being organised via "Facebook" or "WhatsApp". As all these groups are entitled to the welfare provisions of the Royal Artillery Charitable Fund, it follows that they should have closer links to RHQ RA without the need to



become a formal branch with all the legacy regulations and rules.

Future meetings have yet to be decided but work is currently ongoing by RHQ RA in Establishing the governance and management process to bring the eclectic cyber space groups closer to the Regimental Hub without the intervention of a formal bureaucratic process.

## *Congradulations*

The Artillery Clerks' Association congratulates Lt Col Richard Horner MBE on being selected to the Royal Artillery Association National Executive Council and as a member of our committee.

## 34 (Seringapatam) Battery Royal Artillery

### *2Lt J Owen RA*

As ever 34 (Seringapatam) Battery RA, The Tigers, continues to be incredibly busy fulfilling a uniquely diverse role within 14 Regt RA and the wider Royal Regiment, ably supported by a broad parish of highly skilled and motivated soldiers and officers that rotate in and out of the Battery for their 2-year posting. The forecast of events is as diverse as out people and filled up quickly this year, especially with a significant number of opportunities beyond the Battery's primary role of Live Firing on Salisbury Plain. Troops deployed in support of 2 R YORKS as part of the Experimentation and Trials Group, to both America and France, moreover the Battery is spearheading a two week deployment to Brecon on Ex COMBINED WARRIOR (CW) where nearly a dozen ITT and STT schools will exercise together in a combined arms exercise. This will be the first deployment of this kind for the Battery and 14 Regt RA in the memory of any currently serving within the organisation.

We'll start with the end of the year and work our way backwards, a winter deployment to Brecon is not the norm for a Battery that have become SME's at firing live on the Salisbury Plain Training Area but is a challenge the Tigers

welcome wholeheartedly. Ex CW will be the third iteration of the deployment for the Tigers but will be the most aspirational to date with some first-class training opportunities planned. The evolution of the exercise has seen the Battery deploy to provide a week of fire planning in support of the FST Commanders Course from the Royal School of Artillery. For the first time this was done as the FSTs embedded themselves within phase 2 and 3 IBS infantry companies. A genuine success and welcome change of pace the Exercise has now blossomed into a full scale all arms exercise with a focus on integrating Combined Arms Manoeuvre into the exercises for phase 2 officers and soldiers alike. To list but a few of the schools and units deploying you obviously have IBS that make Sennybridge their home, the YO's on their Close Support segment of the Gunners officer phase 2, phase 2 Gunner soldiers on the L118 strike, ACS close support and Arty Log courses, the Royal School of Military Engineering will be supporting with digging gun pits to be used during the Live Fire serials, the newly founded Royal Army Medical Services providing a full med chain for simulated exercise casualties, RMP to marshal Brigade moves

and REME to service any vehicles that might require it. As you can see it is a full scale exercise that will give all soldiers deploying and especially personnel still under training invaluable insight into how the Army will and must fight going forward to match the threats we are facing on the contemporary global stage.

Alongside preparing soldiers for the future of warfighting, the Regiment has said goodbye to an iconic piece of equipment the AS90, Monday 4th Nov saw the Regiment send off the last of the Royal Regiments AS90's after 32 years of service. The Regiment had the privilege of saluting the Colours as they departed Larkhill to take up their new role serving in the Ukrainian armed forces as part of the British Army's GiK (Gifting in Kind) programme in support of Ukrainian defence. A sombre occasion but one that opens the door to a focus on our newest Artillery system the Swedish designed Archer 155m Howitzer and how best to employ it before the Royal Regiment fully converts to the newly announced 155m RCH based on the Boxer platform.

On November 11th as part of the nations commemoration of the fallen, the Tigers had the





privilege of supporting 3 local Remembrance services as well as conducting the minute gun at the Larkhill Garrison church during the two minutes silence. A chance for the Battery and the wider local community to come together, reflect and remember the sacrifice made by those that came before us and the importance of remembrance. Photos included with the article show a contingent of the Battery present at the war memorial in Durrington (from right to left Lt Fraser, Bdr Gater, Sgt Gasan, Bdr Whittaker, Bdr Jolliffe).

The Battery has continued to provide opportunities for its



personnel outside of what would be considered normal duties for soldiers. Visits have been organised to the Defence Academy Shrivenham to study AFV design and production as well as a display on explosives and their utility in munitions. A favourite within the Battery was the trip to Plymouth, this gave the soldiers and officers that attended 2 days away from the gun park with events that included insight into the Citadel and the history of 29 Commando RA. The culmination of this visit was the Batteries attempt at HMS Havoc, the Navies sinking

ship simulation. This put the participants in a series of rooms quickly filling with water with limited time and tools to stop the 'ship' from sinking. An excellent opportunity to test decision making and leadership abilities in a strenuous environment, it proved to be an experience that none of the participants will quickly forget.

As the Battery continues on to the end of the winter term, once deployment on Ex CW has concluded we will join the wider Regiment in celebrating the festive season with CO's PT, the junior ranks Christmas meal and the Officers to Seniors Mess event. Which will then be followed by an extremely well earned block of leave for a Battery that consistently punches above its weight when it comes to its varied commitments.

## The Future of Crossed Quills

*Lt Col Joe Falzon OSJ BEN*

Dear Members,

I wanted to inform you of some significant changes regarding the distribution of our annual magazine, the Crossed Quills. During our recent Association Committee meeting on Tuesday 26th March 2024, it was unanimously agreed that starting from December 2025, the Crossed Quills will be distributed online. This decision reflects our commitment to make savings (circa £370 per year), streamline our communications methods, reduce our environmental footprint and enhance accessibility for

all members, regardless of geographical location.

However, we recognise that some members may prefer to continue receiving hard copies of the Crossed Quills. Therefore, discretionary exception will be made for those members who register their preference to receive hard copies with the Association Secretary. More details of how this registration can be done will be included in the 2024 edition. As we make this transition, please note that this year's edition will be the final one circulated in hard copy format.

To ensure that you stay updated on future editions, the Association Secretary will notify members by email or through the Crossed Quills Facebook page when each new edition becomes available online.

Thank you for your continued support, understanding and cooperation as we adapt to this change, as well as for your enthusiasm for the Crossed Quills. We look forward to sharing many more engaging editions with you in the future.

# Artillery Clerks' Association Membership List as at 31st December 2024

Dave Allen	Ted Fairbrass	Tony Meek	Will Stirman
Sparky Allen	Joe Falzon	Eddie Mills	David Stotan
Alf Alvin	Jim Findlay	Jim Mutch	Dave Straw
Richard Ancliffe	Peter Gauci	Hauke Michelsen	Andy Sykes
Alan Ashcroft	Martin Geddes	Brian Morgan	Phil Syddall
Robbie Astick	Ian Grant	Ian Morris	Mark Testi
Derek Baldry	Mick Grenham	Andy Moss	Andy Tibble
Brian Bassett	John Haddock	Richard Nichol	Gordon Timmis
Brian Bayliss	Colin Haine	Dennis Norris	Trig Tregower
Steve Beard	Ted Hall	Richard Nugee	Steve Truslove
Taff Bellis	Adrian Harrison	Tony Nuttall	Gary Tyson
Chris Berry	Phil Headford	Gil O'Mallo	Dave Vesty
Jon Bevan	Marty Hester	Roy Penhallurick	Freddie Viggers
Peter Bradburn	Alan Hill	Nick Perkovic	William Wallace
Denis Brett	Geordie Himlin	Duncan Pettit	Daz Ward
David Brown	Trev Hind	Joe Phelps	Chris Wood
Paddy Butler	Joe Hoggins	Chris Piper	Al Wood
Steve Callaghan	Vic Holdaway	Eddie Platts	Bill Young
Iain Campbell	Ron Holmes	Jim Pottle	
Merv Chadwick	Richard Horner	Steve Prowse	Membership stands at
Rob Clarke	Mick Hutchinson	Derek Ralphs	129
Mel Collinge	Geoff Hyatt	Steve Read	
Tony Coombes	Dick Jeavons	Michael Regan	
Terry Cooper	Mick Johnston	John Reynolds	
Ian Constantine	Andrew Jones	Ritchie Richardson	
Paul Corker	Clive Knaggs	Des Riley	
Stan Cornwell	Ralph Lalabalavu	Ken Russell	
Dennis Crawford	Russ Lee	Alan Sawdon	
Kev Crump	Ray Lewis	Vince Scott	
Peter Currie	John Lindley	Steve Seymour	
Dave Cussell	Harry Lomax	Chris Shuter	
Roy Deal	Leon Lyall	Sid Siddall	
Ray Dickinson	Dave Manchester	Dougie Silver	
Brian Dobson	Tony Martin	Bob Smith	
Paddy Ennis	Tim Mathews	Snowy Snowdon	
Sid Evans	George McLachlan	Phil Spencer	

## WANTED

### *For membership of the Association*

John Adams	Gary Barker	Tich Buckley	Chris Chamberlain
Ron Allen	Baz Barry	Dave Burfitt	Bill Charlsworth
Peter Allwright	Ron Baynes	Budgie Burgess	Dick Cliffe
Jimmy Anderson	Martin Birch	Martin Butler	Andy Collins
Ron Anson	James Bond	Paul Buxton	Fred Cullingford
Al Artley	Dave Boswell	Tom Carmichael	Mike Cottrell
Dave Askham	Dave Boulton	Stuart Carnegie	Alan Cosgrove
Brian Bailey	Adrian Boxall	Jeff Carter	Sandy Cran
Pip Bailey	Dave Brookes	Mick Carter	Keith Creswell
Bob Barber	Tom Browne	Les Carton	Paul Davies

Steve Davies  
 Harold Deacon  
 John DeMaria  
 Pat DeMaria  
 John Dewberry  
 Jim Diamond  
 Derek Donovan  
 Jim Doran  
 P Drury  
 Mick Dunn  
 Dave Dunn  
 Mel Durrant  
 Roger Escott  
 Karl Ezard  
 Steve Edgeley  
 Roger Essex  
 Paul Evans  
 Paul Fairbank  
 TH Fairweather  
 PE Field  
 Cliff Fields  
 Dick Finch  
 Dave Fisher  
 Graham Flint  
 Alan Foot  
 Foxy Fox  
 Derek Gauci  
 Les Gillard  
 Paul Green  
 Mike Greening  
 John Haddow  
 CJ Hamley  
 Bob Hagen  
 Gary Harland  
 Brian Harrington  
 Terry Hart  
 Ted Harvey  
 Chris Harvey  
 Steve Hawke  
 Adrian Hawker  
 Phil Hayes  
 Bill Heaven  
 Andy Holder  
 John Hopkins  
 Steve Hoyle  
 Eric Hubbard  
 Pete Hubbard  
 Derek Hughes  
 Tony Hunt  
 Stu Hunt  
 Tab Hunter  
 Pete Hutchinson  
 Brian Hyland  
 Alan Jeffery  
 Chris Jones  
 Steve Jones  
 Bob Kindness

Jack Knott  
 Steve Jukes  
 Kev Keast  
 Dick Kibble  
 Dave Langstaff  
 Dave Larcombe  
 Steve Lee  
 Mark Lindsay-Smith  
 Derick Lund  
 Mick Lynch  
 Adam Martin  
 Ken May  
 Tommy McCarthy  
 C McCusker  
 John McDermott  
 Steve McKenna  
 Alistair McKenzie  
 Martin Meek  
 Maurice Metcalfe  
 Eric Miller  
 Tam Millsip  
 Ken Moore  
 George Mould  
 Tony Mott  
 Paul Mudd  
 Pete Murphy  
 John Nicholas  
 Bill Ogilvie  
 Andy O'Neil  
 John Osman  
 Dave Parkinson  
 Bill Pattison  
 Ken Peacock  
 Paul Perry  
 Peter Petts  
 Alan Phillips  
 Clem Pooke  
 Nick Powell  
 John Pratt  
 Len Price  
 Mick Price  
 Gary Prottey  
 Richie Pryor  
 Fred Pulfer  
 Ron Reid  
 Harry Richardson

Neil Ridout  
 Jim Roast  
 Graham Roberts  
 Dave Robertson  
 P Robinson  
 Tom Rooney  
 Jim Rostron  
 Dick Scatterd  
 Mick Scaife  
 Tony Skinner  
 Syd Simpson  
 Dave Smith  
 Martin Smith  
 Mark Spring  
 Alex Stelfox  
 Colin Stephenson  
 Bill Tasker  
 Jock Stewart  
 Joe Stockhill  
 Trevor Stokes  
 Dave Stoneham  
 Paul Stratton  
 Roy Swann  
 Bernie Swift  
 Ritchie Syme  
 Derek Taylor  
 Tom Taylor  
 Graham Telford  
 Charlie Thompson  
 Bob Thompson  
 Harry Thompson  
 Frank Thorne  
 Mark Thorington  
 Dave Townley  
 John Turner  
 Mel Turpie  
 Dave Tyler  
 Harry Waldron  
 RVM Walker  
 Bob Walkinshaw  
 Nigel Waring  
 LS Warren  
 Kev Watkins  
 Andy West  
 Fred Westwell  
 Sean Whelan

Chalky White  
 Dave Whitby  
 Chris Williams  
 Will Williams  
 Mick Williams  
 Ian Williams  
 TC Williams  
 Tony Wilson  
 Alan Witts  
 Brian Wolstenholme  
 Den Wright

200 Potential New  
 Members

Plus any member of the  
 AGC(SPS) who served  
 in the Gunners as a clerk  
 and has subsequently  
 been promoted to Sgt or  
 above.

(As at 31 December 2024)

## *Artillery Clerks' Association Virtual Annual General Meeting Tuesday 13th May 2024*

The Artillery Clerks' Association virtual Annual General Meeting will be held at 1900 hours on Tuesday 13th May 2024. Further details can be seen in the Secretary's report and will be published in due course



# Minutes of the Virtual Annual General Meeting held on MS Teams on Tuesday 14th May 2024

## 1. Agenda Item 1 - Opening Remarks by the Chairman

The Chairman, Lt Col Joe Falzon OSJ BEM, opened the AGM by welcoming all members and honorary members present. He expressed regret over several unavoidable last-minute cancellations, including that of the Honorary President, who was delayed in London due to meetings. The Chairman then shared a brief message received earlier in the afternoon from General Richard who extended his apologies for his absence and conveyed his best wishes. General Richards also expressed that he looks forward to seeing everyone at the dinner in June.

The Chairman noted that, as usual, there was a long agenda to cover. With an important Premier League match starting soon, he suggested that the meeting commence without delay. He also reminded those present, as he does each year, that this meeting is their opportunity to actively contribute to discussions that will shape the future of the Association. He expressed hope that everyone had taken the time to review the documents that were circulated in advance.

The Chairman highlighted that the Association celebrated its 25th Anniversary last year, noting that some members present at this AGM have been part of the Association from the very beginning. He recalled that a few had even attended the inaugural dinner, which took place in Woolwich on Saturday, 7th March 1998, 26 years ago. As is customary, he mentioned that they would later take a few moments to remember absent friends. In the absence of General Richard, the Chairman formally opened the AGM.

## 2. Agenda Item 2 - Conflict of Interest

- 2.1 The Chairman invited all those attending to declare any interest held, directly or indirectly, in an existing transaction or arrangement which would conflict with any discussion during the meeting. He explained that this could either be done in advance or at any point during the meeting and that all declared conflict of interest will be recorded in the minutes.
- 2.2 He confirmed that the meeting was quorate as there were more than 15 full members present. Therefore, any proposal or resolution carried by a majority of the full members present would be deemed as valid and effective.
- 2.3 In conclusion, the Chairman reminded everyone to follow the Virtual Meeting Etiquette requirements, which had been circulated in advance.

## 3. Agenda Item 3 - Apologies for Absence

- 3.1 The Secretary confirmed that he had received 38 apologies for absence from:

Maj Paul Corker	Lt Col Vic Holdaway
Mr Marty Hester	Mr Jon Bevan
Maj Richard Ancliffe	Mr Andrew Jones
Mr Ray Lewis	Mr Mick Hutchinson
Maj John Reynolds	Mr Des Riley
Mr Alan Ashcroft	Mr Alan Sawdon
Mr Snowy Snowdon	Mr Tim Matthews
Mr Peter Bradburn	Mr David Stotan
Mr Gary Tyson	Mr Clive Nuttall
Capt Dave Straw	Mr Peter Petts
Mr Andy Sykes	Mr Nick Perkovic
Mr Steve Prowse	Mr William Wallace

Mr Julian Allen	Mr Mick Grenham
Mr Chris Piper	Mr Terry Cooper
Mr John Lindley	Mr Gil O'Mallo
Mr Geordie Himlin	Mr Colin Haine
Mr Ken Russell	Mr Ritchie Richardson
Mr Vince Scott	Mr Duncan Petit
Mr Michael Regan	Mr David Manchester

#### **4. Agenda Item 4 - Approval of the Minutes of the AGM held on Tuesday 7th March 2023.**

- 4.1 The Chairman said that the Minutes of the AGM held on Tuesday 7th March 2023 had been circulated in advance via Crossed Quills (Issue 27) and that it was not intended to read them at the meeting.
- 4.2 A proposal by Richard Horner, seconded by Hauke Michelsen to confirm that the Minutes were a true and accurate record was CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

#### **5. Agenda Item 5 - Matters Arising from the Minutes of the AGM held on Tuesday 7th March 2023.**

- 5.1 There were no matters arising from the Minutes of the AGM held on Tuesday 7th March 2023 which were not included in the agenda.

#### **6. Agenda Item 6 - Chairman's Report**

The Chairman introduced his report, which was circulated in advance.

He recorded that 2023 will be remembered as a testament of the spirit, ethos and camaraderie that define our Association. It was, without doubt, a milestone year. As Chairman, he had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the overwhelming support from Members and Honorary Members in response to our fundraising campaign for the 25th Anniversary Silver Centrepiece, the strong turnout at our Reunion Weekend and the successful mini reunion in Bielefeld towards the end of the year.

As I reflect on these three highlights from that momentous year, I am filled with a deep sense of pride and privilege in serving as Chairman during such a historic chapter of our Association's story. I am confident and optimistic that those experiences will continue to inspire and unite us as we face and navigate future challenges.

While the planning and execution of these three events undoubtedly took centre stage, they also served as a catalyst for momentum and progress in other crucial areas of the Association. I am therefore pleased to report that:

- The Association remains in good shape in terms of maintaining good governance and healthy membership numbers. These are essential pillars for any organisation's sustainability and effectiveness.
- Our message of congratulations to His Majesty King Charles III on his coronation served to affirm the bonds of our Association with their Captain General.
- Our social media platforms, Crossed Quills and Quarterly Newsletter have kept our members informed and connected. These channels play a crucial role in disseminating timely information. The informal Weekly Catch-up on MS Teams (Sunday evenings at 7pm) have also continued apace but would benefit from more members joining as and when they are able to.
- We have continued our representational work, both at Regimental events, such as the RAA Assembly in Blackpool and St Barbara's Day in Larkhill and, just as visible, at the funerals of our deceased members. The "icing on the cake" was to secure a place for our Association Standard Bearer to be present at the 2023 Festival of Remembrance – the second time in our 25-year history.
- Ron Holmes single-handedly organised another hugely successful and enjoyable reunion in Bielefeld.
- Dennis Norris, our Welfare Secretary has kept in regular contact with those members who requested assistance and advice.

So, we have a lot to applaud over the past year – and I have not even mentioned the 25th Anniversary weekend and our donation of £1000 to the Royal Artillery Charitable Fund – our charity of choice.

I am very proud personally of my successful negotiations to secure a place for our Association Standard to be paraded at the 2023 Festival of Remembrance. I cannot emphasise enough what a huge privilege it is for any Association to have its Standard paraded at the Royal Albert Hall in front of our Sovereign. So far, in our 26-year history, we have achieved this twice. A vote of thanks was also mentioned to both Andrew Jones and Leo Lyall who represented the Association at the Festival of Remembrance.

The Chairman concluded by saying that none of the above would have been possible without the dedicated support and commitment of all the Committee Members. All of us owe Andy Tibble, Leo Lyall, Paul Corker, Roy Deal, Dennis Norris, Steve Read, Ron Holmes and Andrew Jones a huge amount of gratitude for all they do behind the scenes for the good and benefit of our Association.

- 6.1 Motion to Amend the Charter.** The Chairman presented his paper entitled “Change to the prescribed conditions for Honorary Membership of the Association”, attached as Annex A to these Minutes, proposing that the prescribed conditions for Honorary Membership of the Association are changed to include relatives of Full members of the Association, as well as widows and relatives of deceased Full members of the Association.

***The proposed amendment of the Charter to include a new sub paragraph 8.b was proposed by Ron Holmes, seconded by Leo Lyall, put to the vote and CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

## **7. Agenda Item 7 - Secretary's Report**

7.1 The Secretary, Mr Andy Tibble MVO MSM made the following comments:

- Membership. The membership of The Association currently stands at 132.
- New Members. Nothing to report.

Former WO2(QMS(AC)) Steve Hawke rejoined the Association on the 8th January 2024.

Former SSgt(AC) Peter Petts joined the Association on the 14th February 2024.

- Deaths.

Former Sgt (AC) Graham Flint passed away in Germany on Monday 3rd March 2024.

Former Bdr (AC) Sid Copeland (Honorary Member) passed away in February 2023.  
Message was received from his daughter through Paul Corker.

Former Bdr (AC) Tony Combes (Honorary Member) passed away on the 26th February 2024.  
Message received from his widow.

- Honours & Awards. Nothing to report.
- Promotions. Nothing to report.
- Membership – Wanted List. The Secretary explained that there are currently 197 potential members listed on “The Wanted List” who were former ‘Artillery Clerks.’ He urged everyone to look through the list which was published in the ‘2023 Crossed Quills’ to see if they recognise anyone who might be living nearby, and then to try to encourage them to join the Association.
- Change in personal details. The Secretary asked to be kept informed of any changes of rank, address, telephone numbers, email addresses, awards etc, etc. All members present were asked to send their current email addresses to the Secretary.



- **Crossed Quills.** Items for Crossed Quills Issue No 27 are to be forwarded to the Secretary by **Tuesday 1st September 2024**. The Secretary urged members to put pen to paper and to send in articles that they would like published along with any photographs that they may have. All photographs would be returned as soon as possible on receipt.
- **Recruitment.** The attention of all Members was drawn to the importance of recruiting new members.
- **Standard Bearer.** The Secretary informed those present that our Standard Bearer, Andrew Jones had represented the Association at the following events:

**Sunday 11th November 2023** – Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall.

**Sunday 3rd December 2023** – St Barbara's Day Service, Larkhill

**Sunday 28th April 2024** – Gunner Sunday (Royal Hospital Chelsea)

Due to attend:

**Sunday 10th November 2024** – RA Ceremony of Remembrance at Hyde Park Corner.

**Sunday 1st December 2024** – St Barbara's Day Service, Larkhill

- **Regional Representatives.** The Secretary mentioned that all Regional Representatives had been asked to engage with members of the Association who currently live within their areas of responsibility. The aim of this exercise is to re-engage with our members and to encourage them to attend future dinners or at least to get some feedback from them as to why they are no longer participating. The Committee can then address these issues in order to improve attendance levels. The Secretary went on to thank all the Regional Representatives for their continued support.
- **St Barbara's Day Service.** St Barbara's Day Service will be held at Larkhill in the Church of St Alban the Martyr on **Sunday 1st December 2024**. The Service will be followed by lunch in the Officers' Mess. Further details will follow in due course, however, all members, especially those living close to Larkhill were encouraged to attend. The Secretary urged anyone who was considering attending to inform him as soon as possible so that he could reserve places at the Service.
- **Artillery Clerks' Association Website.** The Secretary mentioned that the Artillery Clerks' Association Website was constantly being kept updated by the Webmaster and that it contained a lot of useful information and links that is for the good and benefit of our members. He urged all members to visit the website on a regular basis as well as the Crossed Quills on Facebook. The Secretary went onto thank Mr Leo Lyall, Webmaster for all the hard work that he had done to ensure that we have an excellent website.

## **7.2 Application for Honorary Membership**

The Secretary informed those present that an application had been received from Dennis Norris requesting approval for his son, Ex WO2 (Mr Chris Norris) to apply for Honorary membership of the Artillery Clerks' Association. In Dennis Norris's absence, the Secretary provided a brief overview of Chris Norris's background, noting his service in the Royal Artillery and his support for the Association in recent years by attending Reunion Weekends as Dennis's guest.

***A proposal by Andy Tibble, seconded by Ron Holmes, that Mr Chris Norris be granted Honorary Membership of the Artillery Clerks' Association for a period of 12 months was CARRIED Unanimously. This will be reviewed again at the AGM in 2025 in line with the Associations Charter.***

## **8. Agenda Item 8 – Treasurer's Report**

Maj (Retd) Paul Corker, circulated in advance the following Liquidity State as of 14th May 2024:

<b>ASSETS</b>	
Cash	£ 0:00
Current Bank Balance	£ 3,479:94
Deposit Bank Balance	£ 6,082:05
Property (Display Boards) (C)	£ 600:00 (£200 Annual Depreciation)
Property (Silver Centre Piece) (C)	£ 9,980:00 (No Devaluation)
Shop Stock	£ 300:00
<b>TOTAL ASSETS (A)</b>	<b>£ 20,441:99</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>	
Function 2024	£ 2,164:48
Kemish Fund	£ 1,250:00
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES (B)</b>	<b>£ 3,414:48</b>
<b>AVAILABLE CASH (A-B)</b>	<b>£ 17,027:51</b>
<b>AVAILABLE CASH (A-B-C)</b>	<b>£ 6,447:51 (Without Property)</b>

He particularly emphasised that:

- **Subscriptions.** Subscription is set at £15 annually and should be paid on or close to 1 January. Outstanding subscriptions total £1,355.00 as of today. There are currently 14 unpaid subscriptions for 2024. As directed, I have issued a letter to members requesting payment of outstanding subscriptions.
- **Mandate.** All members are urged to pay by mandate. If all personnel paid subscriptions by the mandate system, then this would ease and simplify the administration burden. 9 members are yet to pay by this method.
- **Gift Aid.** This is an excellent source of income for the fund. £4,536.46 to date. Our take continues to be £3.75 for every £15 individuals contribute. For the Association to claim our Gift Aid then members must complete the declaration. I urge the 19 members to put pen to paper. The Association has now been granted charity status with effect 9th October 2020. It is estimated that a refund of approximately £450 per annum can be expected. In 2023 this was £1,094.13. The additional balance was due to advances made to the Silver Centre Piece Fund caused by members donating post the 2022 submission date.
- **Suspensions.** In accordance with the Association's policy on suspension, The Treasurer wrote to all members who have not paid their subscriptions for 3 years. There are currently 54 members shown as 'suspended'. There could be a further 1 for 2024.
- **Shop.** Shop stock consists of 15 ties @ £20:00, therefore totaling £300.00. There are no cuff links and lapel pins remaining.
- **Property.** Property is divided into 2 sections. Display Boards which total £600. Silver Centre Piece £9,980.00. These items are now accounted for within the Association's Property Book. These are shown as an asset in the amount as you can see at £600.00 and £9,980.00 respectfully. Annual depreciation is set at £200 for the display boards and there is no devaluation set against the Silver Centre Piece.
- **Insurance.** The insurance for the fund is valid until 31 Mar 25. It is with the firm Towergate Wilsons. The cost this year was £305.06. This includes personal accident cover for the Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Reunion Secretary, Standard Bearer and Regional Secretaries.
- **2023 Income and Expenditure Report (As of 31 Dec 23 submitted to the RAA)** The End of the Year Report for 2023 was submitted to the RAA as directed, signed by the Chairman and Secretary. More details are available on request if required but the end state was:

Income	£12,601.63
Expenditure	£2,262.60
GPF	+£10,339.03 (deduct £9,980.00 for the Silver Centre Piece)
Real GDP	+£359.03 (Real Excess of Income over Expenditure)

- **Support to the RAA.** The Association, via the Secretary continues to support the RAA when called upon to do so.
- **Conclusion.** With available cash totaling £6,447.51 (less property) the fund is healthy and strong, which sets us up well for the coming year and beyond. I urge all members to check to ensure their subscription is £15.00 and if not, to contact their banks to amend this prior to 2025. I thank all members for their continued support to the fund and to me in my role as Treasurer.

***David Cussell proposed, and Richard Horner seconded, that the `Treasurer's Report is accepted. This proposal was put to the vote and CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

The Chairman thanked the Association Treasurer for his custodianship of the Association's funds and especially for his ability to extract the Gift Aid Refund from HMRC.

## **9. Agenda Item 9 - Assistant/Reunion Secretary's Reports**

The Reunion Secretary sent his apologies for his absence His report was circulated in advance of this AGM. He hoped that everyone enjoyed the 2023 Special Anniversary Reunion in Larkhill, it was great to get together again and have members travelling from afar.

The costs of maintaining the standards of a full silver service Mess Dinner night that we have all come to love, are continually proving challenging but we can remain confident that the Association will be well supported by Elaine and the Mess staff.

I recommend that a sum not to exceed £1500 is transferred from the GPF to the 2024 Reunion Fund to off-set the costs for the evening for the 2024 Reunion.

***Joe Falzon proposed, and Richard Horner seconded, that the sum of not to exceed £1500 be transferred from GPF to the Reunion Fund to help off-set costs for the evening of the 2024 Reunion is accepted. This proposal was put to the vote and CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

***(Treasurer's Afternote: The total amount transferred from the GPF to the 2024 Reunion Fund was £662.11)***

More attendance from members and honorary members at the 2024 Reunion is encouraged.

Members attending (as of 8 May) is 19 with 4 partners. Our guests will be Brig Mark Pountain, the new RASM, BSM 34 Bty and 4 ladies: Traceylee Cowan (widow of Bob) and daughter Robyn and Janet Brown (widow of Graham) with daughter Carol. (An up-to-date list of those attending is available on the website).

The format for the Reunion weekend from Friday 21st to Sunday 23rd June 2024 will be as follows:

### **Friday 21st June 2024**

1900 hrs - Meet in the Sgts Mess for drinks (AC Tie)

2230 hrs - Last Orders

2300 hrs - Bar Closes

- A small buffet will be provided, and I have invited the BSM to bring some Bty SNCOs

### **Saturday 22nd June 2024**

0930 – 1200 hrs - Brunch is available in the Sgts Mess



1815- 1840 hrs - Meet Guests - Foyer  
1845 - 1900 hrs - Group photograph  
1900 hrs - 1930 hrs - Drinks  
1935 hrs – seated for dinner.

#### **10. Agenda Item 10 - Welfare Secretary's Report.**

The Welfare Secretary, Mr. Dennis Norris, informed those present that 11 Association members are currently on the Welfare Secretary and Committee's 'radar,' primarily due to conditions such as cancer, heart issues, and other debilitating illnesses. While these conditions are being managed by medical professionals, he emphasised the importance of reaching out to members who are suffering. A simple phone call, a chat, or even a friendly exchange on social media can make a significant difference, helping them feel supported and ensuring they do not face their challenges alone.

He went on to say that, as always, he and the Committee are always available for a Welfare Support contact. He added that SSAFA has long been the primary support for the Armed Services and their website is well worth a visit if members feel they need further help. Below is an extract from the site regarding help and support with mobility:

##### **HELP WITH MOBILITY.**

Helping veterans maintain their independence and dignity.

*My SSAFA caseworker has been a guardian angel! This chair has really made my life so much easier - Ken, Army Veteran*

Our volunteers have plenty of experience in finding solutions for veterans seeking financial support to help maintain their mobility and independence at home.

Whether your mobility problems are caused by getting older or an existing medical condition, our volunteers are trained to help you get the equipment that you need, including mobility scooters, stairlifts and recliner chairs.

SSAFA's services are only available to people who have received at least one day's pay from the Armed Forces (British Army, Royal Navy, Royal Air Force, Royal Marines, including Reserves) or are in the immediate family of someone who served.

#### **11. Agenda Item 11 - Historical Secretary's Report**

The Historical Secretary, Mr Stephen Read, informed those present that that over the past year work has been completed to upload photos and documents provided by John Reynolds to reflect his service during the 1950s and 60s. A document written by Peter Bunn about his service in the 1930s and 40 has also been digitised and uploaded. I have carried out further research to identify sources that contain details of our predecessors. The Army List has provided to be useful in this regard, but the information is patchy and has now yet made in into our archive. As always, if members have any photos of their service as Artillery Clerks, or any other documents that may be of interest and they are willing to share for the archive, please send them through to me.

Stephen then presented his paper, entitled "Creation/Population of an Archive of members reminiscences of serving as Artillery Clerks.", attached as Annex B to these Minutes, proposing that the Association creates an archive of members reminiscences of serving as Artillery Clerks to which all Association members are invited to contribute.

He mentioned that this will come at no cost to the Association as Google Docs would be used from the History Archive. To sign up please email Stephen Read at [artyclkproject@gmail.com](mailto:artyclkproject@gmail.com)

The Chairman thanked Stephen for his report and encouraged members to put pen to paper and submit their articles as and when they can.

***Stephen Read proposed, and Joe Falzon seconded, that the creation of an archive of members Reminiscences be created is accepted. This proposal was put to the vote and CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

## **12. Agenda Item 12 - Webmaster's Report**

The Webmaster, Leo Lyall mentioned to those present that his involvement with the Association Committee and the Silver piece Project up to its presentation at last year's Reunion kept me quite busy on our website and the Facebook page. Since then, there hasn't been much for me to do in this context other than run-of-the-mill stuff like the quarterly newsletters, notices, and the odd page updates.

In November I represented the Association at the Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall with Andrew Jones. The place looks big from the outside but even bigger on the inside. It was good to see our Standard paraded out there in the round and up on the stage. Being together with so many serving and veteran personnel on such a solemn occasion was quite overwhelming and filled you with pride. It was a spectacular event which I will never forget.

He went on to say that he will continue into the coming year on the same professional standing as always and look for ways to enhance the user experience for our members.

The Chairman recorded a vote of thanks to acknowledge Leo's contribution in maintaining the high standard of our Association website and social media platforms.

## **13. Agenda Item 13 - Germany Secretary's Report.**

The Germany Secretary, Mr Ron Holmes, informed those present that the reunion weekend that he organised in Bielefeld last November was a great success and was enjoyed by all those members who attended. He went onto mention that it was proposed to hold the same Reunion later this year between Friday 6th to Sunday 8th December 2024 to coincide with the Christmas Markets.

The Charman thanked Ron for his report.

## **14. Agenda Item 14 - Elections or re-elections**

**14.1 Association Committee.** The Secretary confirmed the following re-elections for 2024/2025

Chairman	Lt Col (Retd) Joe Falzon OSJ BEM
Secretary	Mr Andy Tibble MVO MSM
Assistant Secretary	Mr Roy Deal MBE
Treasurer	Maj (Retd) Paul Corker
Reunion Secretary	Mr Roy Deal MBE
Welfare Secretary	Mr Dennis Norris
Historical Secretary	Mr Stephen Read
Webmaster	Mr Leon Lyall

***Stephen Read proposed, and Russ Lee seconded this proposal. The proposal was put to the vote and was CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

**14.2 Honorary Membership.** The Secretary informed those present that the following Honorary Members have now held their Honorary membership for a period of three years or more and in accordance with the Association's Charter their membership needed to be reaffirmed annually by the membership at an AGM or EGM. The following members have confirmed that they would like to continue with their Honorary membership which comes with the recommendation of the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer:

Mr Jon Bevan	Mr Ritchie Richardson
Mr Steve Beard	Mr Peter Gauci
Mr Terry Cooper	Mr Trevor Hind

***A proposal by Ron Holmes, seconded by Robbie Astick, that the Honorary Members listed above have their honorary membership renewed for a further period of 12 months was CARRIED Unanimously. This will be reviewed again at the AGM in 2025 in line with the Associations Charter.***

- 14.3 Regional Representatives.** The Secretary informed those present that the Association Chair has reviewed the committee roles for the Association principal officers (Regional Representatives) as laid down in the Association Charter and Governing Regulations Part 1), in advance of the 2024 AGM.

The Chair has been informed that Major David Cussell wishes to stand down as Area Representative East and that Mr Alf Alvin MSM has agreed to fill this position with immediate effect.

The Association Secretary has been informed that the undermentioned incumbents wish to remain in post until the next AGM to be held in 2025.

North	Mr Brian Morgan
North West	Mr Dennis Norris
Midlands	Mr Leo Lyall
East	Mr Alf Alvin MSM
South	Mr Paddy Butler
West	Mr Roy Deal MBE
London Area	Mr Andrew Jones
Wales	Mr Andy Tibble MVO MSM
Northern Ireland	Mr Andy Tibble MVO MSM
Germany	Mr Ron Holmes MSM
The Rest of the World	Mr Andy Tibble MVO MSM

**Steve Seymour proposed, and Andy Moss seconded this proposal. The proposal was put to the vote and was CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The Chairman thanked Dave Cussell for his contribution as an active member of the Association Committee and welcomed Alf Alvin, thanking him for stepping up into the vacant post.

## **15. Agenda Item 15 – Future of Crossed Quills**

The Chairman reminded members that in March of this year, he announced significant changes regarding the distribution of our annual magazine, The Crossed Quills. To recap, during the Association Committee meeting on 26th March 2024, it was unanimously agreed that, starting from December 2025, The Crossed Quills will be distributed online. This decision reflects our commitment to make savings (approximately £370 per year), streamlining our communications methods, reducing our environmental footprint and enhance accessibility for all members, regardless of geographical location.

However, we recognise that some members may prefer to continue receiving hard copies of The Crossed Quills. Therefore, discretionary exception will be made for those members who register their preference to receive hard copies with the Association Secretary. More details of how this registration can be done will be included in the 2024 edition.

As we make this transition, please note that this year's edition will be the final one circulated in hard copy format.

To ensure that you stay updated on future editions, the Association Secretary will notify members by email or through the Crossed Quills Facebook page when each new edition becomes available online.

The Chairman thanked everyone for your continued support, understanding and cooperation as we adapt to this change, as well as for your enthusiasm for The Crossed Quills. We look forward to sharing many more engaging editions with you in the future.

## 16. Agenda Item 16 - Any other Business

- 16.1 RAA Working Group update.** Lt Col Richard Horner informed the AGM that he has been involved in three RAA Working Groups (WG) looking at the current model of RAA Branches and considering options for the future. One early conclusion the WG came to was that the old model, although still very strong in some areas, was certainly on the demise and not attractive to the majority of current service leavers. Therefore, this review was deemed critical to help navigate a way ahead.

During the first session it was clarified that the RAA views the Artillery Clerks' Association as one of its National Branches, covering both national and international links to its members across the globe. The WG reviewed the Association's constitution and governance and concluded that they were fit for purpose.

Work is still ongoing with priority effort in outreach to be more inclusive and receptive to the current veteran population. Formal branch regularity and propriety have been scrutinised to help them become more flexible and less formal. One of the major work streams is capturing all the disparate veteran groups that currently communicate very successfully via social media with reunions and catch-up meeting mainly being organised via "Facebook" or "WhatsApp". As all these groups are entitled to the welfare provisions of the Royal Artillery Charitable Fund, it follows that they should have closer links to RHQ RA without the need to become a formal branch with all the legacy regulations and rules.

Future meetings have yet to be decided but work is currently ongoing by RHQ RA in establishing the governance and management process to bring the eclectic cyber space groups closer to the Regimental Hub without the intervention of a formal bureaucratic process.

## 17. Agenda Item 17 - Date of Next Meeting

The next Virtual AGM will take place at 1900 hours on Tuesday 20th May 2025.

- 18. Toasts.** At the end of the AGM, the Chairman led the loyal toast to His Majesty The King, our Captain General, followed by toasts to the Association and to absent friends.

*Andy Tibble*  
*Secretary*

Annexures:

Change to the prescribed conditions for Honorary Membership of the Association.

Creation/Population of an Archive of members reminiscences of serving as Artillery Clerks.

### *Artillery Clerks' Association Virtual Annual General Meeting Tuesday 13th May 2024*

The Artillery Clerks' Association virtual Annual General Meeting will be held at 1900 hours on Tuesday 13th May 2025. Further details can be seen in the Secretary's report and will be published in due course

### *90th Artillery Clerks' Association Reunion and Dinner 2025*

The Artillery Clerks' Association Reunion and Dinner will take place in the Royal Artillery Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess, Larkhill from Friday 20th to Sunday 22nd June 2024. The Guest of Honour will be Maj Gen RM Clements CBE, Director Army Basing and Infrastructure.

The calling letter for the Reunion is enclosed with this edition of the Crossed Quills.



## THE ARTILLERY CLERKS' ASSOCIATION

### DISCUSSION PAPER

Agenda Item: MOTION TO AMEND THE CHARTER  
Agenda Item: 6.1  
Sponsor: Joe Falzon, Association Chair  
Presenter: Joe Falzon, Association Chair  
Date: 14th May 2024

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#### The Association Chair proposes the following motion:

**Title:** Change to the prescribed conditions for Honorary Membership of the Association.

**1. Proposed Amendment:** That the prescribed conditions for Honorary Membership of the Association are changed to include relatives of Full members of the Association, as well as widows and relatives of deceased Full members of the Association. It proposed that the Charter of the Artillery Clerks' Association is amended by including a new sub paragraph 8 b, as shown in bold below:

8. **Honorary Membership.** The prescribed conditions for Honorary membership of the Association are:

- a. Widow or relative of deceased Full member of the Association.
- b. Relative of an incumbent Full member of the Association.**
- b. Incumbent and former Honorary Presidents of the Association.
- c. Former clerks who served in the Royal Artillery in the rank of Bombardier with distinction and worthy of consideration.

**2. Reason for inclusion:** Our Association is an agile, caring and responsive. The proposed amendment, if passed, reinforces the aim of the Association Committee to continue to explore ways to increase the Full and Honorary Membership base of the Association. The Proposer feels that the prospect to maximise wider recruitment opportunities ensures that the Association is not missing out on the value and benefits of broader membership, opening a way to fresh ideas and new friendships.

**3. Effect if passed:** In pursuance of paragraph 8 of the Association Charter, the Association Committee will remain vested with the authority to confer Honorary Membership of the Association to any nominated person who, in its opinion, is likely to deliver beneficial service to the Association. Successful nominations will then be submitted with due notice for ratification by a majority vote by those members present and entitled to vote at an AGM or EGM.

**4. Main argument:** Increasing the Association membership base has been a persistent challenge over the past several years. We need to embrace all opportunities to increase Full and Honorary membership to ensure the vitality and sustainability of our Association. Restrictive clauses in our Charter should not hinder our ability to welcome new members. This change would allow us to recognise and welcome individuals who may not meet the traditional criteria but nonetheless have strong ties to our Association their familial connections and are nominated by trusted and long serving Full Members.

Joe Falzon  
Association Chair

## THE ARTILLERY CLERKS' ASSOCIATION

### DISCUSSION PAPER

Agenda Item:	MOTION TO CREATE AN ARCHIVE OF MEMBERS REMINISCENCES
Agenda Item:	11.1
Sponsor:	Stephen Read. Historical Secretary
Presenter:	Stephen Read. Historical Secretary
Date:	14th May 2024

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#### The Historical Secretary proposes the following motion:

**Title:** Creation and population of an **Archive of members reminiscences** of serving as Artillery Clerks.

**1. Proposal:** That the Association create an archive of members reminiscences of serving as Artillery Clerks to which all Association members are invited to contribute.

**2. Reason for inclusion:** When we are gone how do we help others understand what it was like serving as an Artillery Clerk? Having recently worked on the reminiscences of 2 former Artillery Clerks I was struck by how different their worlds were to the one we live in now and how their experiences of being an Artillery Clerk was both familiar yet different. Having marked the 25th Anniversary of the Association with a physical memorial, the Crossed Quills, the Committee wish to initiate a project to record the intangible; the experiences of members before we fade away into history. This will allow current and future generations to learn something about us and the service we gave.

**3. Effect if passed:** The Association would create an archive of reminiscences to which members would be encouraged to contribute.

**4. Main argument:** When we are gone how do we help others understand what it was like serving as an Artillery Clerk? Having recently worked on the reminiscences of 2 former Artillery Clerks, one who served during WW2 and the other during the 1950s and 60s, I was struck by how different their worlds were to the one we live today and how their experiences were, on one hand, so familiar and yet on the other so different. Having now completed 25 years as an Association, and having marked the event with a physical memorial, the silver Crossed Quills, the Association wish to start a project to record members experiences. This will allow current and future generations to learn something about us and the service we gave.

5. Before members say: "Why would people want to hear about my story?" Think about the places you served (Germany, Hong Kong, Cyprus, Singapore, Aden, Iraq, Bosnia, NI etc), the units you served with (the majority now gone), the service and support you gave (In today's Army officers do their own typing and filing, and soldiers complete much of their administration on-line, not by interacting with an experienced and knowledgeable clerk). By recording your experiences, you will help people understand that life and service were once very different (and in many ways better?).

6. You do not need to be a skilled writer or budding author to record your memories. Write them down or type them up as best you can, or even record them. You do not need to produce everything at one go, write things up in whatever sections work best for you. Send the results to me and I will help put them into a form that we can publish in an accessible archive.

7. When writing up your memories members are encouraged to think about:

When did I join up?

Where did I do my training and what was it like?  
 Why did I decide to be an Artillery Clerk?  
 What people did I service with and what were they like, who were the characters?  
 Where did I serve, with what units, in what countries and what was it like?  
 What were the best things and the not so good things, about living in another country?  
 When I went on exercise or on operations what was it like, including your thoughts on being in a war situation?  
 What was my social life like; in the Bombardiers' or Sergeants' Messes, in town, on the patch, did you make good friends, even meet your future spouse?  
 Did I play sport, what sport and did I enjoy it?  
 What were the highlights of my career and what, if appropriate, do I wish I had done differently?  
 Have I got any photos that I can include to illustrate my story?

In short anything, irrespective of how trivial it may feel to you, that casts light upon your experiences.

Stephen Read  
 Historical Secretary

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## Association & Reunion Dinner Friday 21st – Sunday 23rd June 2024 - Royal Artillery Sergeants' Mess, Larkhill

### *Roy Deal MBE (former WO1(SSM))*

The Artillery Clerks' Association: A Memorable Reunion Weekend  
 The Artillery Clerks' Association followed up last year's hugely successful 25th Anniversary Reunion with yet another memorable weekend in Larkhill from 21st to 23rd June 2024.

This year, 40 members, partners, and guests gathered for a traditional regimental dinner at The Royal Artillery Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess. Attendees travelled to Larkhill from far and wide, including Malta, Germany, France, and even Aberdeen for this occasion.

The Association Chairman welcomed the Guests of Honour, Brigadier Mark Pountain CBE, Colonel Commandant Veterans and Chairman Royal Artillery Association, and the newly appointed Royal Artillery Sergeant Major, WO1

(RASM) James Lightfoot. The Association's affiliated battery, 34 (Seringapatam) Battery, was represented by SSgt Diamond.

Of particular pride and interest to the Association this year was the presence of Mrs. Traceylee Cowan and Mrs. Janet Brown, widows of two of the Association's most esteemed former members. Both ladies wanted to see for themselves their late husbands' names inscribed in perpetuity on the Association Silver Centrepiece, a touching moment that resonated deeply with all present.

The music during dinner, which included the much-appreciated Post Horn Gallop, was provided by The Wiltshire Police Band. After dinner, the Loyal Toast, toasts to the Ladies and Absent Friends, thank-yous, and speeches led to the most eagerly anticipated part of the evening around the bar.

The atmosphere was filled with camaraderie as old friends reconnected and new memories were made. The dinner was not only a celebration of our shared service as Artillery Clerks but also an opportunity to support ongoing initiatives. One such initiative, the Malta Heritage Project under the leadership of the Chairman, benefited greatly from the generosity of those in attendance. The appeal during the dinner raised a handsome sum of £123, contributing to the project's costs as it moves into its planning phase for May 2025.

The weekend was a great success, underscoring the enduring spirit and fellowship of the Artillery Clerks' Association, and shared experience of service to the Royal Regiment. We look forward to many more reunions in the years to come—2025 will see us gathering again for our 90th Reunion weekend!!



#### Friday Evening

1. Maj Ian Constantine, Mr Hauke Michelsen, Lt Col Joe Falzon (Chairman), Mr Marty Hester & Mr Mick Hutchinson
2. Lt Col Joe Falzon (Chairman), Mr Peter Gauci, Mrs Julia Knowles, Mr Hauke Michelsen, Maj Paul Corker (Treasurer) & Mr Mick Grenham
3. Mr Mick Hutchinson, Mr Roy Deal (Reunion Secretary) & Mr Ron Holmes
4. Maj Dave Cussell & Mr Roy Deal (Reunion Secretary)

#### Saturday Evening

5. Mrs Josphine Falzon, Lt Gen Richard Nugee (Honorary President), Brig Mark Pountain (Guest of Honour), Lt Col Joe Falzon (Chairman), Lt Gen Sir Freddie Viggers & Lt Col Richard Horner,
6. Brig Mark Pountain (Guest of Honour) addressing those present at the Reunion Dinner. Left: Lt Gen Richard Nugee (Honorary President)
7. Mr Ron Holmes, Lt Gen Sir Freddie Viggers & Mr Mick Grenham
8. Mr Hauke Michelsen, Mr Brian Morgan & Mr Mick Grenham





9. Lt Col Richard Horner & Lt Gen Richard Nugee (Honorary President)
10. Mrs Traceylee Cowan, Maj Paul Corker, Mrs Julia Knowles & Ms Robyn Cowan
11. Mr Gil O'Mallo, Mrs Jenny O'Mallo, Mrs Wendy Hawke & Mr Steve Hawke
12. Lt Col Joe Falzon, Mrs Josephine Falzon, Mrs Rosemary Gauci & Mr Peter Gauci
13. Mr Andrew Jones & Mr Brian Morgan
14. Mr Steve Hawke & WO1 (RASM) James Lightfoot
15. Mr Gil O'Mallo, Mr John Bradford & Ms Karen Langley
16. Mr Hauke Michelsen & SSgt Diamond (Guest)

# Long Service & Good Conduct Award (Part 2)

## *Brian Morgan (former WO2(SQMS))*

When I passed through the gates of Gamecock Barracks, Bramcote in June 1976, I had little idea what to expect and I didn't have a clue what the future lay ahead for me in the Royal Regiment of Artillery. I certainly did not realise that I would spend the next 23 years 253 days in the British Army achieve the rank of Warrant Officer Class 2 and see service throughout the world including operational tours in Northern Ireland.



*Day One - JLRRA J Gnr Morgan rear rank far right*

During my time in the Army the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal (Regular Army) was only available to other ranks, the qualifying period for the award was to have served for 16 years (from 18th birthday or date of enlistment) and have a good conduct (no entries on your Regimental conduct sheets). My first ever Regimental Chief Clerk at 7th Regiment RHA in Roberts Barracks, Osnabruck was Colin Turner, I am sure he would look at the likes of Gunner Morgan and other young wet behind the ears junior clerks and wonder if we were even old enough to be serving. It must be said it was nothing uncommon to find oneself tapping the boards in front of the Battery Commanders desk for various minor misdemeanours. I received 14 days Restriction of Privileges for Bouncing a cheque at the pay office for £20, some

years later when I had changed roles to become a clerk I was able to access my conduct sheets and found out that the award was illegal as the BC could only award punishment up to 7 days, needless to say no one told me and I carried out all 14 days of the punishment.

Unfortunately for me an incident in 1978 would see me incur a Regimental entry and end up in front of the Commanding Officer

being fined two weeks wages for fighting with another soldier. To be fair when I look back, I feel a little aggrieved, I acknowledged my guilt and accepted the CO's award rather than elect to go for trial by Court Martial. To be fair I had given the other lad a broken nose and two black eyes but had gone to my bed with the intention of resolving whatever the issue that had caused, or disagreement and subsequent fist fight the next morning. Unfortunately, the other lad clearly had other ideas and as I lay asleep in my bed, he decided to seek retribution and assaulted me with a piece of shelving metal. Fortunately for me, I woke and was able to force him out of my room before one of the JNCO's who lived in the adjoining single room came to see what all the noise and commotion was about. As you would imagine having been assaulted with a heavy metal

object I was bleeding profusely and not feeling too good, I was taken by ambulance to the local German hospital where it was identified that I had sustained a fractured skull and had three deep lacerations to my scalp. After a few days in the hospital, and 32 stitches in the wounds I was transferred to BMH Munster to convalesce, two weeks later I was later discharged from hospital and returned to the Regiment.

The other soldier involved in the incident was due to be discharged and leave the Army in short time and he was charged with Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm and fined three weeks wages. He left the army and I put the matter behind me and moved on with my service career. The Commanding Officer of 7 RHA at the time was Lt Col Giles Arnold RHA some months later I would be in front of him again however, this time it was to receive an award in the Inter-Battery Boxing Finals.



*Gnr B Morgan receives his Runners-up award from Lt Col Giles Arnold RHA in the Light-Middleweight category of the 7 RHA inter-Battery competition*





*RHQ 3 RHA DRB Drummanrd Barracks Armagh 1992 Chief Clerk SSgt (AC) B Morgan (3rd from Left), Adjutant Captain Richard Nugee RHA (far right)*



*CO's Patrol Group DRB Northern Ireland 1992-93 Lt Col David Richards RHA (2nd from left) Chief Clerk SSgt (AC) B Morgan (2nd from right)*

It was not until 1993 when I reached the period of eligibility for consideration for the Long Service and Good Conduct award that the entry on my Regimental Conduct sheet and blemish on my otherwise exemplary record of service resurfaced. I was by then a Staff Sergeant (Artillery Clerk) and the Regimental Chief Clerk of 3rd Regiment Royal Horse Artillery and enjoying my time with the Regiment stationed in Colchester, Northern Ireland and Topcliffe. In October 1992 the Regiment deployed at short notice to Northern Ireland as the Drummanrd Roulment Battalion in South Armagh. The Commanding Officer at the time was Lord David Richards and I was extremely humbled to receive the award of a General Officer Commanding Northern Ireland's Commendation on completion of the 6-month deployment. During the operational deployment I was not only carrying out my normal duties as the Chief Clerk but was also the Commanding Officer's Patrol Group Commander and was

often deployed independently on the ground with clerical staff from RHQ making up the foot patrol, occasionally I even deployed in command of multiple teams made up of Ulster Defence Regiment soldiers and other personnel from 3 RHA. I was immensely proud to receive the GOC's commendation along with 4 other SNCO's in the Warrant Officers and Sergeant's Mess at Alanbrooke Barracks in Topcliffe, having returned to Colchester on completion of the deployment the Regiment was informed that it was to Arms Plot Move to North Yorkshire and swap locations with 19 Regiment Royal Artillery.

Although I submitted a plea in mitigation in support of my application for the Long Service & Good Conduct Medal it was sadly rejected, Lord Richards however, reassured me that he was determined that I should receive the award and on the back of a strongly worded application by him and a lot of hard work by the Adjutant (General Richard Nugee) a further plea in mitigation and application was submitted and I was awarded the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal (Regular Army) in 1994.

Having been transferred into the Adjutant General's Corps (Staff and Personnel Support) in 1993 and promoted to the acting rank of Warrant Officer when I was presented the award by General Sir Mike Jackson



*GOC Northern Ireland's Commendation Chief Clerk SSgt B Morgan (2nd from left) Major General Patrick Cordingley (Commander 2 Div) (2nd from right) Lt Col David Richards RHA (far right)*

(late Parachute Regiment) and at the time GOC 3 (UK) Division, whilst presenting me my medal Gen Jackson commented on my parachute wings and enquired when I had passed P Company and did I have aspirations to return to Airborne Forces. It may have been purely coincidental but Gen Jackson had previously Commanded 1st Battalion The Parachute Regiment but I was a little surprised that when I was posted from 3rd Regiment RHA in 1995, I found myself being posted as the Regimental Administration Officer Warrant Officer (RAOWO) to 1 PARA I met General Jackson later whilst attending as a guest at a function for the opening of the new Normandy Barracks Mess in Aldershot, we spoke briefly, and he smiled as he said I'm sure you'll have an extremely enjoyable time with the Battalion (now that's a story for another time).

Having completed my 22-year engagement I retired and was discharged from the Army on 10 February 2000, having returned to Topcliffe for the final three years of my military service career. Having returned to North Yorkshire with my wife and family where we had a great time and many happy memories. Indeed we felt so settled that is where we live to this day along with our three daughters and six grandchildren. My resettlement was planned and based around me joining the Police with the intention of being a Police Constable and all was moving in the right direction having passed the initial assessment and fitness tests to join Cleveland Police only to be turned down on medical grounds that I had or may have incurred injuries that may affect me later in my Police service, the doctor at Topcliffe was the local GP and he had discovered x-ray's in my medical docs from back in 1984 which indicated that there was potentially an issue with my neck

(sports injury (rugby) and military parachuting).

I was bitterly disappointed and reevaluated my options but was successful in securing employment with the local Hambleton District Council as a Verification Visiting Officer moving to live in Northallerton in May 2000. I supplemented my income working as a Doorman at a local night club on weekends. I spent a large part of the first few years after leaving the army trying to re-enlist or join the Reserve, I even had a former Artillery Clerk as a member of the interview panel when I interviewed for the FRTS RAOWO post with 4 PARA in Pudsey, Leeds. Sadly, I didn't get the post and in June 2003 I successfully in obtaining a position with North Yorkshire Police working as a Data Input Controller in the Police National Computer Bureau at Northallerton Police Station. In 2005 I moved to work in a uniformed position as an Operational Support Officer in the Enquiry Office at Northallerton Police Station providing support and assistance to operational police officers in a variety of roles. I still however, harboured a desire to be a Police officer and applied to be a Police Community Support Officer and in 2007 and completed the selection for the role, unfortunately, as the role was still relatively new there were limited vacancies and I moved instead to work in the Custody Suite as a Detention Officer. I thoroughly enjoyed this position which must be considered as part of the front-line policing as you were most definitely up close and personal with the under belly of society and those criminals who have literally no respect whatsoever for the rule of law and order. I was assaulted on a numerous occasion's but became very adept at realising when something or someone was about to kick off or utilising a pre-emptive strike to

prevent being assaulted. During the 10 years I spent as a Detention Officer I dealt with everything from murderers, rapists, drug dealers, thieves, and criminals of every persuasion. We had the Chief Constable and Deputy Chief Constable from a neighbouring Force arrested and detained in our cells whilst under investigation for corruption, interestingly there were no other prisoners in the cells the two days they were in custody, and they did not have to eat the meals provided by custody staff. My claim to fame is a fingerprinted and photographed ex-England football international Paul Gascoyne when he was detained on suspicion of driving over the prescribed limit. Unfortunately, due to a restructuring of the custody suites within North Yorkshire Police the custody cells at Northallerton closed and indeed the police station was sold off and is now a boutique hotel, bar & restaurant and the new Police station is now housed within the new joint Police and Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters in Northallerton. Initially at risk of redundancy I moved to the Force Intelligence Bureau as an Intelligence Research Officer where I am heavily involved in North Yorkshire Police Warrants, Wanted and Missing Persons, Prison Recalls and I am also the Force Single Point of Contact for all enquiries with the National Disclosure Unit for the Department for Work and Pensions.

In June 2023 I completed twenty years' service with North Yorkshire Police and on Monday 31st July 2023 I was invited to attend a Long Service and Good Conduct Ceremony held at Police Headquarters, which also included some Police Officer Promotions, the awards were made by the Chief Constable Lisa Winward QPM and the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire Brigadier David Maddan, also present was the

Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for North Yorkshire Zoe Metcalfe, Assistant Chief Constable Elliot Foskett. All recipients received a Certificate of Service, a Long Service & Good Conduct Medal including for the first time Police Staff as well as Police Officers to recognise the effort and contribution made by all staff and personnel within North Yorkshire Police.

I have had some extremely challenging times during my service with North Yorkshire Police and it has not always been easy job, and that is not just dealing with the criminals, so it was nice to hear my citation being read out on the evening of the awards ceremony and to then to receive my award which I am extremely proud to have received.



*North Yorkshire Police Long Service & Good Conduct Award - Deputy Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire Brigadier Davi Maddan, Intelligence Research Officer Brian Morgan, Chief Constable North Yorkshire Police Lisa Winward QPM*



# Living the Dream - My Post-Army Life in France

*Major (Retd) Ian Constaintine*

When I was asked to write something for Crossed Quills I was at first a little hesitant; would anybody be that interested in what I've been up to since I retired? Well, I'm about to find out!

I suppose the story begins back in 2005 when Caroline and I first got the keys to our home here in Lennon, a picturesque little village in Brittany. We had bought a large 4-bedroom detached house in need of some attention and over the next 12 years we pretty much spent all our leave (and a lot of our money) renovating. Most of what was required was cosmetic, although the village had just gone onto a mains sewerage system, so we took the opportunity to engage a builder to connect us and install new bathrooms; since then, we've pretty much redecorated the entire house, including converting the attic into a master suite with changing room and ensuite bathroom and creating a Gite from an old stable attached to the house. The only room still to receive the full makeover treatment is the kitchen, mainly due to artistic differences – we still can't decide/agree on the type of kitchen to install.

My retirement from the Army in late 2017 coincided with Caroline deciding to use an inheritance to purchase a "project" property on the outskirts of our village; a four-bedroom farmhouse with a large L shaped barn complex (the barn being split into 3 distinct areas) and just over half an acre of land. The plan being to modernise the farmhouse and convert the barns into two two-bedroom properties, giving us 3 Gites, and a classroom with communal facilities from the third area of the barns. 2018

saw little in the way of progress, it was all about getting planning permission from our local Marie and getting a builder booked in to replace the roof across the entire barn building; I intended to do as much of the overall build as I could myself, but replacing the entire roof structure was definitely more than I could cope with alone. We saw the barn roof as a priority, as a large section of it was quite rotten and in danger of collapse if left unattended. The rest of 2018 saw me working on the main house, finishing the Gite and tanking the cellar (which is now a smart little cellar bar known as "The Mess").

Work on the roof started in earnest in May 2019. Whilst I was a fairly competent DIYer and decorator, I was initially classed as a builder's labourer, mainly responsible for lifting and carrying. We were blessed with fine weather that spring and summer and were able to remove the old decaying slate and strip out the rotten timbers in fairly quick order. We then had to stabilise the top of the stone walls with a concrete pad, rebuilding a gable end and replacing a door lintel in the process. We then rebuilt the entire roof and re-slatted, by this stage I was allowed to participate in actual skilled work (albeit supervised!). Part of the barn build included the construction of a timber frame extension at the rear of the buildings to create a kitchen and toilet for the classroom area and, most importantly, a workshop and garden store for me. This stage of the work commenced in September after a much-needed break for holidays. Unfortunately, it was a rather wet autumn, so not nearly as much fun as the roof build.

With the integrity of the barns sorted out, I then turned my attention to the farmhouse, using my newly acquired skills I began to strip out the 1960s electrics and plumbing. This was a slow process, I quickly realized that when working alone it takes much longer to get anything done.

Throughout the period from my retirement in October 2017 through until March 2020 Caroline was still serving in the Army, so I was making regular trips to see her, initially to UK then to Germany. She joined me full time in March 2020, just as the world shut down due to COVID 19. With both of us now living full time in France we started the process of applying for Residency, a process made easier for us as we were both earning a little money and paying our taxes in France – me through our little Gite at the main house (available to view on AirBnB – "Lennon Cottage with Countryside Views!") and Caroline as an English teacher at a language school in Brest.

COVID 19 probably set me back a year in terms of the renovation of the farmhouse, Caroline arriving and giving me a hundred other tasks has probably added another two! I'm rarely idle, with two large gardens to keep on top of, the continuing farmhouse renovations and all the little jobs that come my way via Caroline, life is pretty full. That isn't to say we don't find time to enjoy our local environment. Finistère (our region of Brittany) is truly beautiful, we sit just on the edge of the Armorique National Park, are only half an hour from the Brittany coast which has miles of picturesque beaches to explore. Our garden is south facing with

views of the Black Mountains and is a pretty good place to enjoy a small glass of red.

If I'm asked how I'm enjoying life after the Army, I can honestly say I've never been happier. I'm as busy as I want to be and wine rack is never empty.



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## The Accidental Artillery Clerk

*Lt Col (Retd) David Brown LSJ BEM*

As I have continued to read the AC Crossed Quills Newsletter over the years, the stories of how individuals came to be an Artillery Clerk have always been of interest. People who know me are aware of my split career, the “cuckoo in the nest” at Reunion Dinners having spent a mere 14 years as a Gunner followed by the same as an officer in the RAMC. All well in the rear-view mirror now having retired from the Army early in 2002 to take my chances with a civilian career. But as I inhabit the world of an artificial knee, greying hair and forgetfulness, looking back it was all great fun. However, my Gunner career was an accident and my AC days started not as a volunteer, but press-ganged and it is long past time to dig into those memory banks and blame the guilty.....

The Army was not on my 17 ½ year old apprentice's radar until one day I saw a military aircraft disgorge a bunch of paratroopers onto a local training area. Within the space of a couple of months I had taken the shilling (Southend

on Sea) and in December 1972 found myself in Sutton Coldfield. Although courtesy of my father we had spent a lot of time abroad, I had never been north of London and the variety of accents and backgrounds was quite something. Freshly shorn, naïve but full of mustard it was time to meet the recruiters and although determined to be a paratrooper, I was convinced by an RA Major that it would be much more fun to be a Gunner where I could parachute, be a commando and do all sorts of mystical things with large items of fire breathing machinery. For some reason I cannot recall, at that time volunteers for parachute/ commando units were sent first to “normal” units to then be asked after 12 months if they still wanted to volunteer. After getting through basic training at Woolwich, in a bitingly cold Spring of 1973 I joined 42 Heavy Regiment in snow-covered Fallingbomel, equipped with the M107. As a newbie gun number, carrying shells and manning the gun

platform in all weathers life was... shall we say interesting.. which explains why when it came time to be asked if I was still a Commando volunteer, the answer was a most definite yes. Apart from NI tours, Site Guard and weeks in the field I had not achieved much apart from finding I was good at orienteering and attending a B3 clerks course in the UK to avoid another particularly cold month on the deck of an M107..... so in Spring 1974, with one other volunteer it was off to Plymouth. Did I mention I had also never been West of Salisbury?

To my surprise an exotically bearded, well-tanned man wearing a green beret in No 6 dress (by the name of Dave Scott (RIP )) met me at the train station and off to the Royal Citadel we went. I was living in a castle!!! The Commando Course beat-up was very aptly named and quite something, the training team were all determined to weed out the weeds and most individuals on my first course fell by the wayside. I hung in

but 2 weeks before completion I picked up an injury and did not move on to the Lymestone Royal Marines phase so for a few weeks of recovery time was at a loose end and here dark forces in the shape of the Cussells, father and son came into play! A certain Dave saw the B3 clerks course pass on my records and referred me to a certain Jim, the Chief Clerk (RIP). I was summoned to the Chief and the conversation went something like this “Do you want to be a Commando?” “Yes Sir” “You are a B3 trained clerk” “Yes Sir” “Do you want to work as a clerk in 29 Commando?” “No sir, I want to be on the front line”. Jim, who had a lovely manner when helping people see the light changed tack slightly “Do you want to be a Commando?” “Yes Sir” “You are a B3 trained clerk” “Yes Sir” “Do you want to work as a clerk in 29 Commando or return to unit?” Well, I may not be the sharpest chisel in the toolbox but even I saw the writing on the wall and, with as much enthusiasm as I could muster, replied “I want to be a clerk in 29 Commando Sir”. Smiles all round and off to report to said son of the Chief I went.... To be frank, I have not one single regret about the course my life then took – no grudges Dave! Serving in RHQ, HQ, 7 and 79 Batteries I had a fun time grappling with the Gestetner and four-fingered typing. I saw many parts of the world, did a huge amount of sport, gained para wings, learned to ski and qualified as a military ski instructor, survived in snow holes, trenches and “camped” in more forests than I could name. And being alongside Jim and Dave as well as various BSMs, BCs, Battery Clerks, Chief Clerks, Adjutants et al I learned so much about the workings of the Army in a short space of time. George Martin was a huge positive influence, on one occasion following some youthful high jinks (!) saving me from

the desire of the then Adjutant to have the Army dispense with my services...another, longer, story. I was fortunate enough to be promoted to Sgt AC in June 1980. As luck would have it, that signalled the end of my time with 29 Commando and despite my protestations and attempts to do a deal involving a swap, I was posted to 1 RHA. I was bitterly disappointed, enjoying life to the full with 29, knew nothing about horses and they were stationed in Yorkshire with a move to Germany on the cards. How I moaned to anyone that would listen about being totally unsuited to the RHA as I had never ridden a horse and because I was having such a nice time, the total injustice of sending me there..... Oh, the naivety and arrogance of youth. Once I had been firmly put back in my box, Topcliffe beckoned, and I went determined to prove myself. As luck would have it, opportunity to shine came when I was made the Movements Sergeant responsible for 1 RHAs move to Hohne. I had a final wobble just before this move when the Falklands conflict arose, going so far as to be told to stop driving to RAMRO to pester the manning officers as it would make no difference, I was staying with 1 RHA...

Regimental move successfully completed, I started to get over myself as we all do and buckled down to some serious work... interspersed with lots of sport naturally. Here again I learnt a huge amount from watching COs such as Mike Willcocks, Tim Granville-Chapman and from working closely with a whole series of supportive Adjutants – Andrew Ritchie, Chris Down, Danny Skillman, Mark Williams to name a few. After 4 years of strong recommendations for a commission, I formally applied in 1985. Finding myself, SSgt(AC), at the end of a long line of RSMs going in to see the MGRA (no

names, no pack drill but it began with an L...), I quick-timed in to be metaphorically patted on the head and told well done Brown, see you back here in 10 years ready to be a Quartermaster. Those who know the rest of the story will be giggling already.... Suffice it to say that my retort to MGRAs face that my 29-year-old self wasn't interested in waiting 10 years to be a QM (no disrespect), my Divisional Commander said I was ready now so why the wait went down like the proverbial in the bathwater. Quick-marching out somewhat faster than on entry, accompanied by a stern faced ADC, I went back to Hohne. The ADC, an RHA officer who I already knew and liked a lot, followed up and thanked me for the performance which had apparently been the source of considerable merriment amongst the HQ staff and added that a telephone call had taken place which meant that I had no hope whatsoever of a commission in the Gunners, full stop. Lady Luck again smiled on me when an orienteering friend, RAMC, laughed at the story with me and said why not try the RAMC. My “But I'm not a Doctor” led to a full briefing on the roles of administrative officers in the RAMC, at which point I retrieved my paperwork, added MC to RA and re-submitted it all. 8 months later I was discharged from the Royal Artillery to a commission in the RAMC, managing to reach the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, selected for Colonel AMS Blue List 2002, at which point aged 46 and working in MOD I decided enough was enough. Summing up, rose-tinted glasses firmly to one side, my Gunner career was a very enjoyable part of my life and I am in no doubt whatsoever that my AC training and experience was the basis for my relatively successful trajectory. UBIQUE.

# Reminiscences of being an Artillery Clerk

*Stephen Read (former WO1 (SMAC))*

When we are gone how do we help others understand what it was like serving as an Artillery Clerk? I have recently had the pleasure of working on the reminiscences of 2 former Artillery Clerks, one who served during the Second World War, and the other during the 1950s and 60s. What struck me about their stories was how different their worlds were to the one we live in now and how their experiences of being an Artillery Clerk were, on one hand, so familiar and yet on the other so different. Having now completed 25 years as an Association, and having marked this event with a physical memorial, the silver Crossed Quills, the Association would now like to start a project to record the experiences of our members. This will allow current and future generations to learn something about us and the service we gave.

Before members say: Why would people want to hear about my story? Think about the places you served (Germany, Hong Kong, Cyprus, Aden, Iraq, Bosnia, NI etc), the units you served with (the majority now gone), the service and support you gave (In the Army of today all officers do their own typing and filing, and our soldiers complete much of their administration on-line, not by interacting with an experienced and knowledgeable clerk). By recording your experiences, you will help people understand that life and service were once very different (and in many ways better?)

You do not need to be a skilled writer or budding author to record your memories. Write them down on paper or type them up as best

you can, or even record them. You do not need to produce everything at one go, write things up in whatever sections work best for you. Send the results to me and I will help put them into a form that we can publish in the Artillery Clerks History Google Docs and on our website so people can read and understand them.

When writing up your memories think about the following:

When did you join up?

Where did you do your training and what was it like?

Why did you decide to be an Artillery Clerk?

What people did you service with and what were they like, who were the characters?

Where did you serve, with what units, in what countries and what was it like?

What were the best things and the not so good things, about living in another country?

When you went on exercise or on operations what was it like, including your thoughts on being in a war situation?

What was your social life like; in the Bombardiers' or Sergeants' Messes, in town, on the patch, did you make good friends, even meet your future spouse?

Did you play sport, what sport and did you enjoy it?

What were the highlights of your career and what, if appropriate, do you wish you had done differently.

Have you got any photos that you can include to illustrate your story?

In short anything, irrespective of how trivial it may feel to you, that casts a light upon your experiences.

Our Chairman, Joe, has stepped forward and volunteered to write down his reminiscences, so to build on his example, I encourage you all to have a go and record your experiences of being a Clerk in the Royal Regiment.

## *90th Artillery Clerks' Association Reunion and Dinner 2025*

The Artillery Clerks' Association Reunion and Dinner will take place in the Royal Artillery Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess, Larkhill from Friday 20th to Sunday 22nd June 2024. The Guest of Honour will be Maj Gen RM Clements CBE, Director Army Basing and Infrastructure.

The calling letter for the Reunion is enclosed with this edition of the Crossed Quills.



# The Alabare Project

## Visit to Fort Delimara – Friday 15th November 2024

*Lt Col Joe Falzon OSJ BEM*

While on holiday in Malta, I had the opportunity to arrange a visit to Fort Delimara on Friday, 15th November 2024. The primary purpose of the visit was to provide Mr Steve Carrivick, President of the Salisbury Circle of the Catenian Association, (the Circle members are one of the project's major donors) with a firsthand view of the scale and significance of the restoration effort. We were joined by ten other guests, including Mr Michael Attard and Mr Joseph Scicluna, both members of the San Lucjan Circle of the Catenian Association, and the Rev Stephen Robbins who is an Ambassador for Alabare and Senior Chaplain of the Royal Regiment of Artillery.

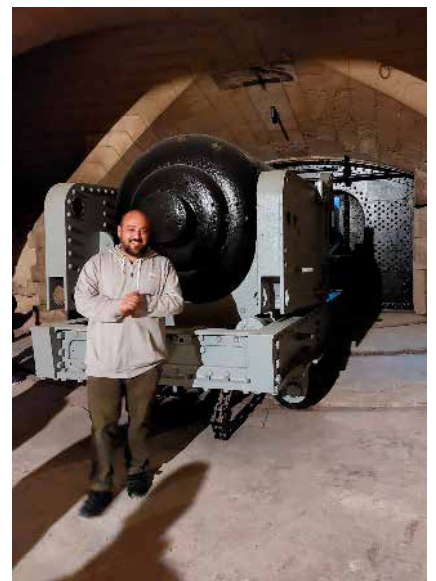
Prior to the start of the tour, I took a moment to emphasise the importance of acknowledging the enduring values that have long been associated with the Royal Regiment of Artillery. Courage,

service, duty, friendship, and sacrifice are not merely historical ideals but remain at the heart of military ethos, continuing to inspire and guide those who serve today. I also pointed out that although the fort was designed by British Royal Engineers, it is essential to acknowledge the remarkable craftsmanship, skill, and ingenuity of the Maltese master masons who completed its construction in under three years.

We were fortunate to have Matthew Balzan from Heritage Malta as our guide. We owe him a special thank you for his enthusiastic and insightful commentary, which he delivered with both passion and flair. His deep knowledge of the fort's history and significance was truly impressive, and he struck the perfect balance—informing us thoroughly without overwhelming us with excessive detail. As a result, we all left the tour not only better informed but also deeply

engaged by the story of Fort Delimara.

As you know, during their time in Malta, the veterans from Alabare will play a key role in the conservation efforts at Fort Delimara, working alongside the experts from Heritage Malta. This invaluable opportunity will not only contribute to the preservation of Malta's rich heritage but also support the veterans in regaining their self-esteem, improving their mental well-being, and enhancing their overall quality of life. Your unwavering belief in this project continues to inspire us, driving us to work tirelessly to make a meaningful difference for those who need it most.



## APPEAL BY JOE FALZON

(Chairman. Artillery Clerks' Association)

### Supporting Homeless, Marginalised and Socially Excluded Veterans



*Dear Friends,*

In a world that often rushes past and forgets the sacrifices made by our veterans, it is crucial to pause and reflect on their stories and experiences. Many men and women who once wore the uniform now face homelessness and marginalisation, struggling to find their footing in modern society.



Since 1991, Alabaré, a UK based Christian care and support charity, has been dedicated to empowering homeless, vulnerable and excluded veterans to lead fulfilled and independent lives.

Eighteen months ago, I had the privilege of being approached by Andrew Lord MBE, CEO of Alabaré, to draw on my 37 years of service in the British Armed Forces and over 21 years with the Royal British Legion as a member, employee, trustee, and national officer. I was invited to develop a meaningful initiative focused on restoration and conservation at a military site of historical significance in Malta, aimed at uplifting the morale and well-being of ten veterans.

Thanks to the invaluable support of my colleagues in *The Catentian Association Circles in Malta*, my vision was presented to Heritage Malta, custodians and guardians of 8000 years of history, who embraced our project, and identified Fort Delimara as the ideal location. We have held several meetings, both online and in-person, to build up and refine the logistical details for the project scheduled to take place from 3<sup>rd</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> May 2025.

#### **Our Objectives**

1. **Support Meaningful Development:** Enrich the lives of Alabaré's veteran beneficiaries through a hands-on project that fosters a collaborative environment, enhancing mental health, resilience, confidence and self-esteem, while combating loneliness and isolation.
2. **Contribute to Conservation:** Actively support the restoration and conservation efforts led by Heritage Malta, ensuring that our project leaves a lasting legacy in a historic country cherished by Alabaré's donors, supporters and beneficiaries.
3. **Establish Community Links:** Create and strengthen enduring connections between Alabaré and the Maltese community, raising public awareness and inspiring future collaborative initiatives for the benefit of both communities.

We are particularly proud and privileged to have the support and patronage of the Commander of The Armed Forces of Malta for this project.



**Fort Delimara** was built between 1876 and 1884 by the British as part of a network of forts and batteries that protected Marsaxlokk Harbour. The end of World War II brought all existent fortifications in Malta into question. In 1956 the fort was stripped of most of its artillery and suffered decline, abandonment, neglect and misuse.

Ownership of Fort Delimara was transferred to Heritage Malta in August 2005. The fort still retains four of its original complement of six Victorian 12.5-inch 38-ton rifled muzzle-loading guns, mounted on their original small port carriages and platforms. Today, Fort Delimara stands as a testament to Malta's colonial past and British military history.

Throughout my time with the Royal British Legion, and now with *Alabaré*, I have witnessed firsthand the eight most pressing issues facing vulnerable veterans: These are:

A sense of belonging	A supportive community	A listening ear.
A purposeful life		A path to healing
A strong connection	A safe environment	A second chance

At *Alabaré*, we believe that these eight vulnerable veterans deserve hope and the chance for a more fulfilling life. While we may not be able to solve all their challenges, we excel at providing compassionate support and practical assistance. Together, with your financial support, we can make a meaningful difference in these eight lives.

If you wish to support and donate, please pay in £GBP by Bank Transfer before **Monday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025** to:

"The Artillery Clerks' Association"

Post Code: 20-75-01

Account Number: 40945706

For identification of your payment, please include the following.

"ALBARE followed by your Surname"

(Example: ALBARE *Falzon*)

Alternatively send a cheque payable to "The Artillery Clerks' Association"

To Joe Falzon, 1 Stonemasons Yard, Salisbury, SP1 2HX, Wiltshire

Thank you for your generous support and for standing shoulder to shoulder with us.

With gratitude,

*Joe Falzon*



# Crossed Quills

All members are reminded that previous editions of 'The Crossed Quills' going back to Edition 1 (May 1998) can be found on the Artillery Clerks' Association website at [www.artyclerkassn.org](http://www.artyclerkassn.org)



# Germany Reunion – Friday 6th to Sunday 8th December 2024

*By Ron Holmes (former WO1(SSM))*

Merry Christmas to all Artillery Clerks and families.

Time has really flown by since our last reunion. We have just had another great time in Bielefeld over the weekend 6-8 December. We managed to get a handful of our ACs across from Denmark and UK, (Richi, Phil, Ron, Chris, Gil and Dennis) and their good ladies. We had a smashing festive weekend starting Friday night in the famous Bielefelder Brauhaus. Prior to that some took the first opportunity to browse through the extensive Christmas market, then a quick RV and cocktail or beer in the Irish bar before the main event. The place was packed and very lively with music and dancing. We were given a nice oldy world room in which to have our dinner to have a bit of privacy from the crowd. The atmosphere was amazing, the service was excellent and the traditional platters of schnitzels and other gourmet delights, washed down with the local brew was much appreciated.

Saturday was a re-group for some over a few Gluhweins and currywurst whilst shopping and exploring the Christmas market.

We met up in the swish Glück und Seligkeit restaurant at 7pm. Phil, Lisa, Gil and Gen had never been before and were amazed how nice it was. The place was packed as it is so popular but being so large we had a nice table for dinner. The festive atmosphere was very welcoming in this large old converted church. The ladies looked great and we had a superb evening in stylish surroundings. I passed on greetings and messages followed by toasting absent

friends. Gil was given a special surprise desert as it was his 71st birthday. Sadly the weekend had to end so we departed the restaurant at midnight and said our Bon Voyage to each other. By popular demand my arm has been twisted to organise the reunion same time or thereabouts next year.

I have to book our tables at least 8 months in advance to get us in these places over the festive season. So, I will be sending out calling details in the new year,

I wish you all a great festive season wherever you are.  
Ubique



*Mr Gil O'Mallo celebrating a birthday drink with Ron Holmes (Germany Reunion Secretary)*



*Left side: Mr Gil O'Mallo, Mr Chris Shuter, Mr Ron Holmes (Germany Reunion Secretary), Maj (Retd) Phil Headford, Mr Ritchie Nichol & Mr Dennis Norris  
Right Side: Mrs Julie Shuter, Mrs Jenny O'Mallo, Ms Sylvia Lane, Mrs Lisa Headford, Mrs Rikke Nichol & Mrs Dorothy Norris*



**26th Anniversary of the Artillery Clerks' Association**  
**Royal Artillery Warrant & Officers' & Sergeants' Mess, Royal Artillery Barracks, Larkhill**  
**Saturday 22nd June 2024**



**Front Row: Left to Right**

SSgt Diamond, Lt Col R Lee MBE, WO1 (RASM) J Lightfoot (Guest), Mrs J Falzon, Lt Gen RE Nugee CB CVO CBE (Honorary President), Brig MN Pountain CBE (Guest of Honour), Lt Col JF Falzon OSJ BEM (Chairman), Lt Gen Sir Freddie Viggers KCB CMG MBE DL, Lt Col RH Horner MBE, Mr RH Deal MBE (Reunion Secretary)

**Second Row: Left to Right**

Ms R Cowan, Mrs T Cowan, Mr M Hester, Ms J Knowles, Mrs P Read, Mrs R Gauci, Maj P Corker (Treasurer), Mr J Lindley, Ms C Drake, Mrs J Brown, Mrs J O'Mallo, Mrs W Hawke, Mr H Michelsen, Mr JM Hutchinson, Mr GO Hyatt, Lt Col DP Brown OSJ BEM

**Rear Row: Left to Right**

Mr AJ Jones (Standard Bearer), Mr MI Grenham, Mr RJ Holmes MSM, Ms K Langley, Mr SV Read, Mr GG O'Mallo, Mr S Hawke Mr RA Jeavons, Mr P Gauci, Mr B Morgan, Maj DJ Cussell, Maj IF Constantine





"Each of you who contributed that day – sailor, soldier, aviator, civilian – whether you fought on the beaches or parachuted from the skies, or flew fighters or gliders, whether you were an engineer or a radio operator or an intelligence officer, your actions freed a continent and built a better world."