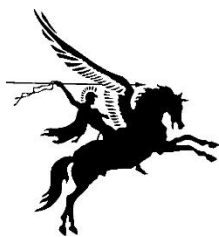


The following articles were originally published in the printed version of the Journal in December 2004, Issue No. 14



The Airborne Engineer

December 2004, Issue No. 14



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Publication Deadline - April 2005 Edition

Members submitting material for publication in the April 2005 edition of the Journal, are advised that the closing date will be Saturday 12th March. Articles received after this date will not be published until the August 2005 edition. **(Branch Secretaries please NOTE!)**

Kindly ensure that you forward your articles direct to the editor - address as shown above. Please don't leave it until the last minute or you may well miss the deadline!

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Greetings from the Association President

Peter Bates



Gentlemen, having been nominated by the Aldershot branch and seconded by the Birmingham branch, it was a truly memorable and proud moment to be unanimously elected at the AGM in Coventry on the 30th October to be your President.

I can assure you that I will work hard on your behalf to make certain that the original aims and principles that were set out at the Associations inception on the 10th November 1989 are adhered to. We have been very successful during the past 15 years and each and every one of us deserves to be congratulated, however it is to those members and their partners that have willingly contributed huge amounts of time and effort that I particularly wish to thank. I am grateful to Ray

Coleman for his enormous personal effort and look forward to his advice and experience during my term of office.

We, the members, are the Association's lifeblood and as a result have an individual and collective duty to recruit new members, but also support and maintain our existing ones. It is vital that we can demonstrate to potential new members that we have an attractive, energetic and forward-looking Association that not only acknowledges the exploits of the past but very importantly recognises those of the present.

During the coming months I look forward to visiting all the branches and meeting as many of you as possible; listening to your views and ideas which will enable me to carry out my task on your behalf more effectively.

Gentlemen, I wish you and your families my very best wishes for Christmas and the best of health for the coming year.

Association Chairman

Bunny Brown

Gentlemen, hello and welcome to the last Journal of 2004. have just managed to recover from the annual AGM and Reunion - what a splendid weekend.

On your behalf may I extend congratulations and offer a warm welcome to our newly appointed President, Peter Bates. Peter was unanimously elected to the post of Association President at the Annual General Meeting and we now look forward to his professional advice and guidance in Airborne Engineer matters.

It was good to see so many familiar faces at Coventry and some new ones. I was delighted to see people like Stan Jones and Keith King, although not attending the gala dinner, they came along for a drink with the lads.

The Committee and myself offer a huge vote of thanks to Ray Coleman, who has now retired from his position as Hon Secretary to the AEA. Another stalwart of our Association takes up the appointment, Bob Ferguson, whom I also thank for running the Association Golf Tournament. John Hughes who was presented with the 'Fergie Semple Memorial' trophy by our President, Peter Bates, won the event.

We now look forward to The AGM and Reunion next year, again at Coventry, followed by a possible move to Aldershot in 2006, hopefully prior to 9 Para Sqn's departure as the last of the Para's to leave Aldershot.

I would like to give the Committee's thanks to all the Birmingham Branch members who worked their socks off to ensure that all those attending the reunion enjoyed themselves. Thanks also to Smokey Gibson for being a general dogsbody again, and finally, a very big thank you to those who donated prizes for the raffle.

May I take this opportunity in wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Congratulations

The chairman and members of the Airborne Engineers Association extend sincere congratulations to Major Frazer Ross on his appointment as Officer Commanding 9 Parachute Squadron Royal Engineers.

London Marathon- Poppy Appeal

Maj Fazer Ross

The Squadron extends a huge vote of thanks to those from the Airborne Engineer branches who contributed to this year's major fund raising events. The support shown from across the country has been first class, with a huge amount contributed in personal donations. At time of going to press we have raised in the region of £7.500 for the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal.

In addition, in late July this year the Squadron diving team conducted a charity dive along the length of the Basingstoke Canal, some 32 miles, raising £1,500 each for BLESMA and for the Frimley Park Hospital Lifesaver Appeal.

The financial contributions have been superb, so once again, sincere thanks to all concerned.

Extract of Letter Responding to Reunion Invitation

Major Paul Fountaine

From my perspective, there is then the issue of etiquette and protocol, which would suggest as the 'out-going' OC I should give Frazer some breathing space. To that end, Jo and I will probably not be joining you at the Royal Court this year. I would however, like to take this opportunity to thank not only the committee, but also the membership as a whole for two full years of tremendous support. Whether it be during operations, or whilst engaged in charity fund raising endurance events at home! We have enjoyed an unrivalled level of heartfelt support from across the ranks, for which I must thank the entire membership. During our deployment to the Gulf, when the chips were down and public opinion was less than positive, the many words of support received by not only those of us away but also the families we left behind, will remain with us all for some time.

I trust the happy union that exists between Airborne Engineers old and new will remain for years to come.

Rogues Gallery



Nina Booth, Gen J.D. Frost, Rhoda & Maurice Richardson & Eric Booth, during Airborne Forces Weekend (Aldershot) a number of years ago.



Now I expect anyone who served in 9 Sqn during the late 60's will remember Cliff Joy! Razor blades are obviously in short supply in New Zealand.



**Froth Beer's demob party -1976
Louis Gallagher, Tony Manley, Chris Read, Froth, BOF Harrap,
Gerry Bonner, Tom Ormiston and Paddy Denning**



Maggie Stephenson in the safe hands of John Mason and Bill Morton during the Arnhem weekend. Bill served with 1 Para Bn (Support Company 1949-1966. Leaving as ROMS 1 Para



Margaret Taylor feels safer in a crowd of former Airborne Warriors during the service at the Airborne Memorial (Arnhem)

Out Of Chaos Comes Order

Tom Carpenter (former member of 9 Fd Coy AB)

(Concluding episode following Tom's capture at Arnhem)



Soon after our arrival at Stalag XIB, possibly the third morning, we were stumbling out to early morning roll call when we heard an authoritative English voice barking out orders like 'come on chaps, get fell in quickly.' Standing out there taking this morning parade was Regimental Sergeant Major

J.C. Lord. He stood there as though it was his parade ground at home, with the German guard commander to his rear and side. He looked immaculately dressed in battle dress with one sleeve cut back above the elbow of his injured arm neatly sewn, with a sling supporting his arm. He stood us at ease, and then called us to attention. Many of the lads mumbled reluctant to conform. He again stood

us at ease then immediately to attention, and then smartly turning to the guard commander, handed the parade over to him for roll call. After the Germans were satisfied that the numbers were correct R.S.M Lord dismissed the parade. It was a very important start towards getting some sort of control over the running of the British compound. His next move was to sort out the fair distribution of rations by forming small units of eight men, using the not so badly injured to help those who found difficulty in mobility. Two men could easily collect the rations for the eight-man section. He then steadily built a team of senior NCO's around him, names like R.S.M Bill Kibble and CSM Day come to mind. Many of the senior N.C.O's volunteered to stay at XIB, even when they could have moved on to less austere surroundings. XIB was to become known as the hell of Soltau Road and later arrivals at the camp immediately volunteered for "Arbeiter commando groups" (work parties.)

Eventually we were moved into huts, which had housed some Polish civilians, men and women, who had been rounded up during the Warsaw uprising in August, September '44. The four huts stood in a larger compound surrounded by the usual barbed wire and goon towers. The parade ground was about the size of an average football pitch, the huts were designed for about two hundred but already there were in excess of four hundred in two of them and this was to get worse in the coming months. In mid-October some of us walking wounded were allowed to visit the lagerette. The huts were up close to the main gates in their own compound and housed some four hundred seriously wounded 1st airborne men who had arrived by hospital train. In the second week of October, the senior medical officer was Major Smith who had a medical team of "Royal Army Medical Corps" personnel. This hospital was without heat or light except for hurricane lamps with very little paraffin available. The conditions were little better than in the main lager at this time, other than for trained medical staff keeping an eye on the wounded, medical supplies were little more than fifty or so paper dressings and bandages per week.

On our walk to the lagerette we were looking forward to getting some medical treatment for our many and varied wounds which had received no treatment, in my case since Kassel almost three weeks ago. My right arm was useless, the intense pain, which pulled on my back with every step taken, was causing me to stoop in order to try and ease myself. We had to walk under guard about ten of us at a time, and on our arrival we stood around at the entrance to one of the huts waiting to be called in. When my turn came I was first seen by an orderly who took details of when I was hit, when I was last treated, was it bullet or shrapnel etc. He then set about removing what was left of the 9 handkerchiefs and the paper dressings, which were just a sodden mess. How these R.A.M.C personnel had steeled themselves to the job of cleansing the putrefaction of these unattended wounds I do not know. The vile smell alone was enough to turn the strongest stomach.

After doing his best to clean the entry wound he called for an officer, Captain Green, R.A.M.C. who asked a few questions and then did a little probing. With nothing found by the probe he told the orderly to apply an Aqua Flavine dressing. He then looked at my leg wound and prescribed the same treatment and said I should return in two days. Although I felt a little more comfortable on the shoulder, nothing much had changed as the dressings were already becoming soaked as we entered the Lager. It was about this time that a civilian photographer appeared at our compound. We were each given a board and in turn, our photos were taken with a few details -

name, rank and number. On my board was the number 117901. I was now (Kriegs Gefanger) War Prisoner 117901. How long before the Red Cross people, family and friends at home would have to wait before notifications of this new status we had no idea, but at last we were now on record as a being

RSM Lord was beginning to instil self-pride and discipline into the compound and with the aid of homemade brooms made from scrounged branches and twigs of trees, the floors of the huts were already looking cleaner. The problem of getting rid of the lice was ongoing and a never ending battle right up to liberation in April 1945, but you would find men everywhere trying to kill the millions of lice eggs which always seemed profuse in the seams of shirts etc. We fully realised our present situation was a world apart from the way we had been raised. Unless someone has lived through such an experience it is not possible to imagine how it was. Men within prison camps made up a culture that could not have existed in any other circumstance. They came from all walks of life and nationality. We shared a close relationship and, as a unit of 8 men, we shared everything - a razor, a bit of soap, even the very elusive toilet paper. We helped each other through bouts of depression or doubt. We laughed together in adversity. One of us could always come up with a light remark to overcome an unpleasant situation of which there were many. Food was always a main topic, always a remark like 'Oh what I could do for a slice of toast and dripping. Our basic diet had now become, after morning, roll call, ersatz coffee (burnt acorns) $\frac{1}{3}$ of a pint at around midday, $\frac{1}{2}$ pint of watery soup, either pea, barley, swede, sauerkraut or whispering Grass soup, so named by us and which contained all the disposable parts of vegetables. The sauerkraut soup would turn our inside upside down; I for one could not stomach it. At about 1700 hours we would receive an eighth share of a 1 and a half kilo loaf of black bread with sometimes a spoon of jam followed by a third of a pint of mint tea. All the foregoing was subject to allied air activity so that on many a day we were deprived of at least some of the ration, the effect of the poor rations was starting to show as we were all looking gaunt and pale. In early November the rumour was circulating that Red Cross parcels had arrived and everyone was on a high with anticipation, but nothing arrived that day in the compound. The following day started in the usual way, RSM Lord's roll call parade at first light followed by the German count, which was still the farce of count and double check. Then at about 10 am on my visit to the lagerette this day I met Joe Sibley another 9th Field Company man of HQ platoon. Joe had spent his early years in Germany and so was very fluent with the language. Our meeting was brief but he was able to tell me of two more of our chaps who were in the hospital block, Sappers Jack Everitt of number 2 platoon and Charlie Rostans. Joe said he would try and arrange for me to visit them the next time I was at the hospital, which would be in two days' time. I received my treatment, a cleaned and dry dressing. I knew my condition was worsening by the day and stood no chance of improving until the foreign body was taken out. Once again by the time I had reached the compound gate the dry dressing was saturated with putrescence. Such condition in any of the limbs led to an amputation of which there were many at Stalag XIB during the 8 months we were incarcerated there. On passing into the compound we were met by excited comrades telling us that Red Cross parcels had arrived. Our group had collected to be shared between four men. On entering the hut it was like waking up on Christmas morning as a child with excited groups of men rummaging through boxes about 10" by 10" by 5". It was an American Red Cross parcel. There would be a change of diet this day, with an American parcel including an issue of 100 cigarettes.

Along with the arrival of the Red Cross parcels another unexpected development occurred that day. Many of our compound guards were acting furtively, some were concealing loaves of bread, others potatoes, even frying pans, inside their great coats. Our first introduction to the barter system, indeed the first time we had anything that interested our captors, everything was short or even totally unobtainable in Germany by 1944 so the guards seemed willing to take a risk of being caught for genuine coffee, spam, cigarettes etc.

Our group quickly agreed between us to forgo half the cigarettes in order to try for extra bread and potatoes. There were three in who were compulsive smokers, so we agreed they shared the rest between them. Contact was made and that evening we obtained a 3 kilo civilian loaf and some potatoes, and after our diet of watery soup and black bread the civilian bread was certainly more satisfying and filling. It was of a greyish colour, certainly doughier, made with rye, I believe. Every group by this time had homemade implements made from scraps of all the items found or scrounged over the previous weeks including Heath Robinson gadgets for heating our acorn coffee or herb tea. I had no idea who was the inventor but they had appeared out of the blue.

The only way to describe the blower as it was called was that it was like a mini forge. It was mounted on a bed board from one of the bunks and it had an enclosed fan, which blew air through a tunnel to the base of a burner pan in which we placed charcoal. It could burn almost anything and bring liquid to the boil very quickly. Another innovation was a very dangerous immersion heater connected through a lamp socket, through insulated wire attached to two pieces of a metal can, each piece of metal being separated by a non-conductor piece of electricity i.e. wood placed directly into water. It always seemed to work well until someone put tea into the simmering water causing the compound light to dim and flicker and, more often than not, lead to hours spent outside on parade while the Germans searched for radios. By such methods we were surviving on a day-to-day basis.

Two days later on my visit for treatment, I did manage a brief visit to see my two ninth field company comrades. At this time Jack Everitt did not seem too ill but Charlie Postans was so bandaged about his face and head, I could not be sure it was him; but he seemed to know me. I was told he was caught by a flame-thrower.

The days wore on interminably, and it was at least another month before we received any more parcels.

I was just about dragging myself around the compound on our exercise walks ordered by RSM Lord.

It was now becoming much colder and the early morning roll call was the most painful experience standing there undernourished, ill clothed and shoddy, some of us now wearing self-made clogs with a square of cloth as socks.

It was about mid-November when something happened which helped raise morale. Many times, when heard back in barracks or encampments, the sound of reveille at six in the morning, would have weary troops hurling abuse at the poor unfortunate bugler, but when heard ringing out over this bleak enemy terrain it was like a voice from home. Other calls were sounded throughout the day, which helped us judge the time. Once again, RSM Lord had gained a little bit more from the Germans. This time it was in the shape of an old Belgian bugle and through one of his earlier batmen, who had served with the corps of drums, we were to hear these comforting calls from then on.

Late November at the early morning roll call RSM Lord, who would always pass on any information following the count of heads, announced that Sapper Jack Everitt had succumbed to his wounds in the lagerette and that any comrades wishing to attend his funeral were to report to him at 1000 hours.

RSM Lord had a few battle dresses, which he kept in his bed space area, enclosed to form something of an office area and created by panels from the Red Cross packaging cases. He had drilled men who were to provide the honour party and bearers, these always were turned out as smart as possible under these conditions. I was provided with one of the battle dress and a pair of boots and followed the cortege, which was a flat track pulled by two of the trained men. The pine wood coffin was bedecked with a home-made union flag.

The honour guard and bearers marching on each side, it was a very moving experience for me, as we passed other compounds, which held Russians, French, Poles etc., to witness them lining the wire, heads bowed in respect. The hillside cemetery was about one mile in total distance and here a brief internment service was held with our German guard watching from a distance, as the bugler sounded last post or reveille.

On our return journey I was beginning to flag a little as my pain increased with each step, but as we neared the main gate RSM Lord said firmly but quietly, "Come on chaps, march to attention. Show these people what you think of them," as our armed guard ambled along it was good to feel like a soldier again.

I had to return my kit for it to be made ready for the next burial. There were fifty British burials in our eight months incarceration. Eventually the Germans did forbid the union flag being paraded through the camp, but RSM Lord would stop the cortege just outside the main gate and there drape the colours over the coffin before continuing to the cemetery as usual.

By mid-December we had received letters from home. I had written cards home but never said anything about my wounds so as not to worry them. As my right arm was useless I had to manage using my left, which I found out afterwards, did cause some concern. Christmas came and Boxing day which was to have been our wedding day and the news reaching us in the camp was a little disquieting, as the Germans made the most of the Ardennes offensive and were boasting about pushing the Americans back into the sea. Conditions in the camp were

becoming very severe with the subzero temperatures now persisting and still only one blanket per man. These were extremely cold and long nights and the early morning roll call was a freezing torture, with our extremities ready to drop off. All the guards and goons had extra topcoats and wore nose and earmuffs for extra protection.

I had now developed a pronounced stoop and hunchback, which was the result of accumulated poisons at the seat of my wound. Although these extreme low temperatures persisted, RSM Lord still insisted on the men taking their exercise walks around the compound. This made sense, as often it was colder inside than moving outside. At this time Stalag XIB had started to receive large numbers of American servicemen who had been captured in the Ardennes offensive, many of them with severe frost bite. Most of them said they had been captured at rest camps some as much as a hundred miles behind their lines this was most disconcerting to us. Was the war now turning in favour of the Germans as they had been trying to make us believe in recent weeks? Our outlook was very gloomy. It is so easy to see the black side when you are starving, cold and very far from home.

One morning in late January I was struggling around the exercise field with my comrades making an extreme effort to make one painful step follow the other. Gradually becoming, more remote and distant from them they were making their usual conversation but I could not hear them, I was gradually enveloped in blackness.

When I came round I was in the lagerette where I became aware of Major Smith and Captain Green discussing my condition with a German officer.

Reasoning prevailed, as I soon found myself with Major Smith being transported to a hospital in Fallingbommel. On arrival I was taken to a room where I was made to stand behind a screen which was part of an early model X ray machine. After a while the medical officer who had been observing with the German operating staff said to me, "that's it, we'll get you back and have that out." On my return to the lagerette I was taken to a small room, which had six two-tier bunks, some of which; were occupied by Americans. The orderly said he would be back for me as soon as the medical officer was ready.

Some of the Americans started to quiz me about conditions in the lage. The picture I painted, whilst being true, was not easily or readily accepted by them and possibly led to some of them trying to pull the wool over the medical officers eyes in an effort to prolong their stay in the lagerette. This discussion helped pass the time and took my mind off my pending ordeal. Although having endured some five months of agony the thought of having an operation to remove the source of my problem was a little disconcerting especially with the very limited resources available to these R.A.M.C personnel. They were all trained to operate in the field under harsh conditions of battle, but after some five months of prison camp medicine, cut off from supplies, their options were primitive. After about 20 minutes the orderly collected me and we walked to another room where the doctors were waiting. There was a cabinet, a couple of chairs and a white wood trestle table. One of the doctors reassuringly said, "We'll soon sort you out." I was told to help get my battle dress blouse and shirt off, then to lie face down on the table. I do not recollect any administration of anaesthetic - I felt the first cut. I had a feeling of floating, looking down at the scene. When I came round I was in one of the lower bunks in the room with the Yanks. The orderly was close by and told me not to move as there was a rubber tube in my back to drain off the poisons. The yanks were shouting, "Welcome back Tommy." I had no idea how long I was unconscious and I gradually became aware of something in my left hand. Wrapped in a piece of paper dressing was a chunk of shrapnel one and a half inches by three quarters of an inch, and covered in a green like web, which the doctor later told me was the body trying to seal it off. The immune system I suppose.

I was very ill for many days' running a high temperature. The caring attention paid to me by the orderly, who I knew as Butch and his mates was eventually bringing me through. I was being fed at times with a gruel type substance and drink of Horlicks. These came; I was told, from the special Red Cross parcels, which were held by Major Smith for the invalids. The lagerette was like an oasis in the midst of the squalid surroundings of the main camp. The luxury of 2 blankets and sometimes more, and the smaller rooms with up to 12 men as against the cold vast barrack huts now containing well over 400 individuals.

By mid-February I was beginning to improve. It was still very cold with plenty of snow about. I was always thinking of my mates enduring the early morning roll calls and I hated the thought of returning to the compound. A couple of Americans who had befriended me were about to be discharged to the compound and told me to look them

up on my return. The one who I knew as Pinky was a Sgt Woods, of North Carolina and the other was Duke, who came from Brooklyn, both had very outgoing personalities. Well into February and our area of Germany was receiving increased air activities both by day and night, so our daily rations were sometimes late or even totally adrift. On one daylight raid we were all very amused at the antics of one of the lagerette sentries (Postans) who, on hearing and seeing wave after wave of very low flying U.S.A Thunderbolt aircraft. drew his pistol waved it in the air and then, panic stricken, dived head first into a slit trench feet up. He never lived it down.

On 1st March 1945 I was considered fit enough to return to the compound As I was leaving the hospital block on this occasion I came across Sergeant Sonnie Gibbons, my platoon Sergeant. He was in a terrible state, both feet badly injured He was sitting in a chair awaiting treatment and he told me he had suffered Diphtheria and Pneumonia. His weight was about half his usual bulk of around 13 stone. Our meeting was brief, as my guard had come to collect me. I immediately reported to RSM Lord on reaching the compound and he told me to seek out my former group, which I did. They were pleased to see me but chided me that they would be on reduced rations again, having shared my allowance. The compound was rife with rumours, there were more tents on the parade area and many more prisoners were arriving daily, many not more than skeletons who had been forced to walk many hundreds of miles from the East as the Russian army relentlessly advanced towards the German borders. Some of these were sleeping in tents on the straw covered ground.

The increase in numbers created all sorts of problems. A large latrine had been dug with sitting panels on the four sides. Dysentery was rife and food allocations were even more of a problem. Many were saying the Germans were trying to congregate as many allied prisoners together as hostages to barter a better cease fire deal.

RSM Lord and his team were concerned that the SS troops stationed in the barracks opposite might do something desperate in their death throes so they had made contingency plans which included having one of our men on duty with the camp guards. This was in agreement with the camp commandant who was already concerned at the possibility of the Russian and other nations compounds erupting into violence.

I still visited the lagerette every other day for dressings but I felt much better. I had lost a lot of weight and what clothing I had was falling off me. I decided to try and find the two Americans. They were billeted in a separate hut within our compound and. true to form, when I did come across them they seemed to have a racket going through bartering with Jerry. Before leaving, they gave me two blankets, a chunk of bread and some potatoes, which were more than welcomed by my inmates. Such was the kind of friendships made at the time.

We could hear gunfire and see the flashes at night. It seemed to be all around us with a continuous rumbling. Then, early April a large party of RAF prisoners arrived and many of them had to sleep outside even though they were in a dreadful state. These, alone, with others, were marched out the following morning. 'We soon found out that RSM Lord had been ordered to go with them, but he managed to hide underneath a Belgian hut. We heard that RAF. Typhoons had attacked the RAF prisoners and some 56 had been killed along with some of their guards. Yes, our small area of Germany was becoming most dangerous. About the 8th April 1945 we were on the noon roll call when a couple of 88mm guns started ranging shots over the camp from the high ground. This led us to believe that the area was to be contested over and quickly had us lime washing roofs with British POW and USA POW. By now RSM Lord had re-emerged and there were now 2 of our men close to every German. On April 14th I was wandering around the compound with my mates when we heard a low flying aircraft. On looking up we started waving and cheering, as it was an Auster artillery-spotting plane. It flew back over us, waggled its wings and was gone. These aircraft, although unarmed, could stall and outmanoeuvre most problems but what courage was needed for such an onerous task, prone to ground fire.

The Auster had obviously done a good job when at 11 am we witnessed two low flying Typhoons. We immediately ducked for cover when we saw the incoming rockets, which looked as if they were for us but zipped overhead to silence the guns that had been ranging, on the previous days.

Many of the guards had disappeared and the remaining ones now had strange bedfellows in the shape of British airborne men armed with instructions to protect the remaining Germans both military and civilian. We were maintaining order throughout the camp.

At about 0900 hours a light armoured vehicle drove slowly up to the camp with a Major Cobbald of 8 Hussars. He was most surprised to be met by the smartly turned out men of the 1st British Airborne Division as he thought that somehow the 6th Airborne had got there in front of the 7th Armoured Brigade.

The news soon spread around the camp that we were liberated, the day, 16th April 1945.

It was to be another 10 days before I left the camp confines, my wound still suppurating, but I was in one piece. On that day we were lined up in the roadway where we were attacked with DDT guns in the hands of Royal Army Service Corps Personnel attached to the field hygiene units. Then we were allowed to get on board troop carrying vehicles. In those eight months I had lost 6 stone, which was almost half of my weight. It was going to be a long hard road back to fitness.

I mentioned earlier of P.T.S " Post Traumatic Stress," no such condition in those days. The words most bandied about if anyone complained was L.M.F "Lack of Moral Fibre."

It was just great to be free and on our way home!

Moving House- Change of Address?

Editor

Please note: As editor of the Airborne Engineers Journal, I am responsible for ensuring each and every subscriber receives their copy of our publication.

If you're moving house, kindly inform me, not a third party of your new address. I will ensure that my mailing system is amended with your new address, and will then notify Bob Ferguson, who maintains the Association Directory, and the Membership Secretary, of your new location.

My contact address, telephone number and e-mail address are printed on page 1 of every publication.

Secrets of Navigation

Jim Masters

When I think of the word 'navigator,' visions of Drake, Raleigh, Ticky Wright and so many other daring adventurers come into my mind. Ticky Wright - who is he I hear you ask? Let me explain! In my early days of exploring I knew nothing about finding my way. My role was handling boats along the rivers. We used to get scientists into difficult areas and then out again, complete with their collection of specimens. Alive! Well, usually!

I found my way in the most reliable way possible. Follow the flow of the current because somewhere there will be a sea at the end of the river. It was foolproof even if, occasionally, there might be the odd cataract along the way to cause mayhem.

It got more difficult when the 'river principle' could not be used. We needed to cross the Darien Gap on one occasion - it's the area between Panama and Colombia. We had to push, winch and curse at a couple of prototype Range Rovers which were to be the stars of the journey. Some sort of dreadful error had been made; the rivers were running at right angles to where we wanted to go! "That's gone and done it," I thought. "We are going to get seriously lost and my wife will be very cross"!

Ticky was in my team of sapper slaves. He, like all of the others, were there to heave, curse and sweat to get those bl***y cars across the jungle clad mountains and swamps. Which brings me to the navigation methods employed, at last!

We employed a small group to work ahead of us to find the best route south. All we had to do was follow a trail of pieces of rag tied to the vegetation and which pointed the way to Bogota and beyond, eventually. It worked really well too, most of the time! The jungle was dense and one only had to go a few paces off the track to be completely lost. Even the sound of the vehicle engine became muffled, so noise was no guide. The dreaded day came when we lost the trail of bits of rag. Panic was close as my throat constricted and my heart beat faster. "Christ! What are we going to do?" Then it happened, Ticky stepped forward and in his rich Dorset twang, said "Don't ee panic, don't ee panic! (He did watch a lot of TV in those days!) He then demonstrated his method of finding true north; at least I think it was true! It might have been a little bit magnetic? The method was so simple. He stuck his right forefinger into his mouth, covering it generously with spittle. He then stood on one leg, his right one as I remember, then spun to the right with the finger held aloft and the left leg akimbo. Eventually he stopped and the finger was lowered parallel to the ground. "Where ee be pointed be the north," he said. He returned to stolidly chewing on a piece of grass as Dorset blokes do. Fortunately, as I am a Somerset man, I can understand West Country dialects.

How we scoffed, what a berk! Still no one else had a better idea, so off we set in the opposite direction to that indicated. Guess what? Within a short distance, there hanging on a twig was the most beautiful bit of red rag you have ever seen! I do believe that it was nylon too. We were saved! Range Rover production could go ahead! The most famous cross-country vehicle ever produced was safely tested and launched onto, and off of, the roads of the world.

So 'Ticky' the navigator had saved us all with a long lost Dorset (or was he from Hampshire?) tradition. He did say that the only time it did not work was when he had been eating Blue Vinney Cheese. Messed up the sensitivity of the fingers apparently!

I wonder how Drake & Raleigh did it?

Labouring with the English Language

Don Newman

Signs seen in foreign hotels

Outside a strictly Male building: It is forbidden to enter a woman even a foreigner dressed as a man.

Unaccompanied ladies not admitted unless with husbands or similar.

If you require just condition of warm in your room please control yourself.

Notice on room TV set - if set broken inform manager do not interfere with yourself.

If this your first visit to our hotel you are welcome to it.

The flattening of underwear with pleasure is the job of chambermaid you invited to take advantage of chambermaid.

Ladies requested not to have children in the bar.

Because of the impropriety of entertaining guest of the opposite sex in hotel rooms it is suggested the lobby be used for this purpose.

Our wines leave you nothing to hope for.

Do not enter lift backwards and only when lit up to move cabin push button for wishing floor if cabin should enter more persons each one should press a number of wishing floor driving, is then given alphabetically by national order. Aussie Hotel washroom - shake excess water from hands, push button to start, rub hands rapidly under air outlet and wipe hands on front of shirt.

Other signs from around the world

Take one of our horse drivers city tours we can guarantee no miscarriages.

In Japan - Road Sign - Stop and drive sideways.

Hong Kong clothing store - Ladies can have fits upstairs.

Order your summer suits because in rush big we will execute customers in strict rotation.

At the dry cleaners - Drop your trousers here for the best results - leave your clothes here and spend afternoon having good time on the beach.

At the Beach - Woman wearing topless suits will be placed in hands of authorities.

Diary Date

Ripon Weekend 20 - 22 May 2005

Full details and booking information can be obtained by contacting : Bill Halloran, [REDACTED]

Tel: [REDACTED] or E-mail Ken Hart: [REDACTED]

Ex Normandy Salute 2004



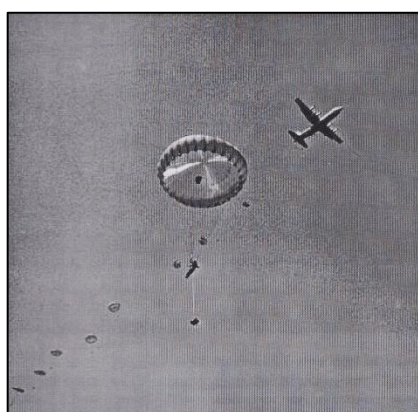
The Sprs for Normandy 2004 waiting to enplane in the UK

25 individuals from 23 Engr Regt (Air Assault) were given the opportunity to participate in Ex NORMANDY SALUTE over the weekend of the 5th and 6th June 04 as part of the 60th D Day Celebrations. It was a fantastic weekend which began with parachuting on to Ranville DZ with 600 others and a Dakota, where a number of the party were able to meet HRH Prince Charles, and included battlefield tours of the Merville Battery and Pegasus Bridge.

The highlight for everyone involved was undoubtedly the opportunity to meet and talk with the D Day veterans from the 6th Airborne Division, including Sapper Cyril Haslett at Cafe Gondree. Mr Haslett was one of the first Sprs to reach Pegasus Bridge from the first gliders and assist Maj John Howard.

Following a fascinating day and night speaking with the veterans, enjoying a beer with friends and a poor night's sleep on a gymnasium floor, the Ex concluded by jumping back into the UK at STANTA.

All sympathies go to Cpl Mitchell who spent the weekend in plaster having snapped ligaments and tendons in his knee on the first jump into France!



Parachuting on to Ranville DZ



(L-R) OC 51 Fd Sqn (Air Assault) Maj Andy Clee, Sgt Rob Barton, Lt John Whatley and Lt Jon Evett speaking with Sgt Tom Melliush MM (a friend of Sgt Barton's Grandfather) outside Cafe Gondree

A Belated Right to Reply

Harold Padfield



Chris (Poncho) O'Donovan's remarks regarding size and shape of our regular airborne soldiers, hadn't hit home to me, until I read Bill Rudd's reply in the August edition of our magazine. To emphasise what Bill says, I myself was not regular size either, being big in "depth and width," but I was fit enough to be a parachutist in 1942 and serve with 1st Para Sqn RE throughout the war. In 1946 I rejoined them in Palestine and was selected to serve with 9 Indep Para Sqn in Hameln in 1948. I doubt whether he would find anyone who served with me at that time, who would class me as unfit, and to emphasise still further, on my sideboard is a silver cup engraved to me as winner of the 6th A/B Div Cross Country Championship 1948 (Not 6th A/B Div RE). I was then the ripe old age of 27. When I was posted to 302 A/B Park Sqn TA in Hendon (1949 - 1953) on my free Saturdays I played rugby for De

Haviland's Aircraft Rugby Club at Hatfield, either at forward or wing %.

So it's not size that matters, it's what you have in your belly Poncho that counts.

The 60th Anniversary of the Battle of Arnhem

Editor

In August 1944, General Montgomery proposed an Allied offensive based on one powerful thrust through Holland and across the Rhine, to isolate and occupy the Ruhr, thus depriving the Germany of more than half her industrial potential. The plan was to lay an 'airborne carpet' along the Eindhoven-Arnhem road, across which the British 2nd Army could advance quickly to and beyond the Rhine, the last great natural obstacle to the Reich, and turn the Siegfried Line. The task of the airborne operation was to seize intact the bridges over the canals and rivers enroute, those at Grave, over the river Maas, the crossing or the Maas-Waal Canal, the great steel bridge over the Waal at Nijmegen and the road bridge over the Rhine at Arnhem. Three airborne divisions, the US 82nd and 101st and the 1st British, together forming the 1st Airborne Corps of the newly formed 1st Allied Airborne Army, were assigned for the mission. The Americans were to open the corridor from Eindhoven to Nijmegen and the British were to seize the bridge at Arnhem.

If the all of the objectives had been captured and held, and the ground forces had been able to relieve the airborne forces, then there would have been a good chance of ending the war before Christmas 1944.

In the mortal words of Maj Gen (Boy) Browning when ordered by Field Marshall Montgomery to hold the bridge for two days, he replied, "We can hold it for four." "But I think we might be going a Bridge too Far." They held it for nine days. Outgunned and outnumbered, Major General Urquhart's 1st Airborne Division fought their way into legend...

For the Dutch, to the north of the great rivers, who had waited for liberation for over four years, the most difficult winter of the war began. Arnhem was evacuated on the orders of the Germans. All 96,000 inhabitants had to leave their homes within a few days. Taking with them only the bare necessities, they withdrew to the Veluwe, Groningen and Friesland. In their absence, the city was looted and severely damaged by shelling and bombing. When the population of Arnhem returned after the liberation in 1945, no more than 145 houses remained intact.

The Rhine Bridge at Arnhem, the largest monument of the battle of Arnhem, was renamed in 1978 as the "John Frost Bridge". Located midway along the bridge is a commemorative plaque on which is inscribed, in both Dutch and English:

"This is the bridge for which John D. Frost fought
leading his soldiers persistent and brave
in an advance where freedom was sought
went a bridge too far which they tried to save.
The bridge is now with his name proudly wrought."

A letter pinned inside a small alcove shrine at the north end of the bridge reflects the gratitude that still exists 60 years on by the people of Arnhem, to those who gave their all at the 'Battle of Arnhem'

(This is a direct copy of the letter)

Friends,

My parents lived close nearby the bridge, on the south bank of the Rhine. They suffered very much from the fights and even they were in desperated need to help you, they couldn't.

And my grandparent, a few miles away, could safe their lives but lost close relatives and in their old days they lost their home and has taken to flight.

My father always told me, that I may never forget you and must always proud and grateful for what you did. You had so much courage and fought as lions for our freedom. You couldn't give us at that moment, but gave us so much hope and encouragement for the latest part of the war.

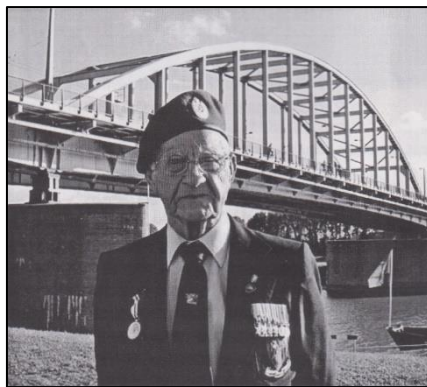
My mother took me always to the memorials to lay flowers. I grew up in a destroyed town, but I was safe, I was FREEH! That is the most important in a human's life.

THANK YOU SO MUCH

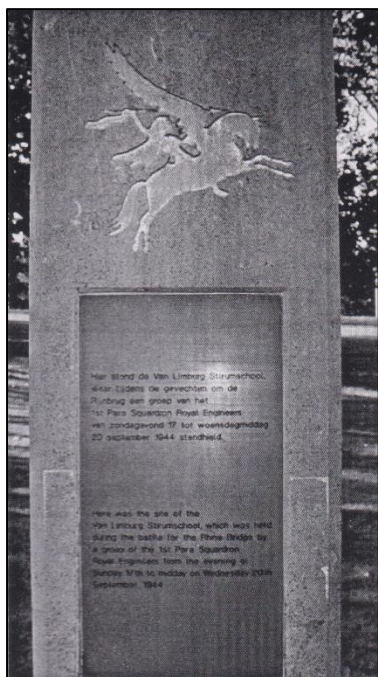
Greet Scholten: "an Arnhem girl" of 1946



The "Welcome Arch" across the main road near the Hartenstein museum in the town of Oosterbeek



Arthur Hendy, who was one of the last to evacuate the school building in which approx. 40 members from 1st Para Sqn formed part of the defence force around the north end of the bridge. He was captured and served as a POW, eventually ending up in a prison camp in Czechoslovakia where he was put to work in the coal mines



Eric Booth standing at the site of the school and the memorial, at the north end of the bridge.

The memorial inscription reads:

Here was the site of the Van Limburg Struyschool, which was held during the battle for the Rhine Bridge by a group of the 1st Para Squadron Royal Engineers from the evening of Sunday 17th to midday on Wednesday 20th September 1944.



Eric and his friends from the 1st Para Sqn RE, held the bridge for 3 days without support. Eric (82) said, "We were only supposed to hold the bridge for 24 hours". "It was ferocious fighting against one of the finest enemies we could have possibly met. At the time Eric was just 21 years old.



Bob & Vi Jones meet up with their close Dutch friend of 40 years Mrs Winkler (centre)



Harold Padfield (1st Para Sqn) & Tom Carpenter (9 Fd Coy (Airborne). Both were taken POW



John Humphries, 60 years later, revisits the John Frost Bridge (the Bridge too Far)



Ray Jardine, Tom Carpenter (both of 9 Fd Coy AB) with Barry Ladlow



British Airborne troops once again drop onto the Ginkel Heath DZ. An estimated 600 troops took part in the drop, mainly from Hercules C130 aircraft and a much smaller number from a DC3 Dakota. The DZ was ringed with an estimated 60,000 Dutch and British spectators.

Twenty members from the newly formed 23 Engineer Regiment (Air Assault) were among those taking part



One of the 50 Polish freefall parachutists about to land on the Driel DZ. The main parachute drop was cancelled due to high winds.



Members of the Polish armed forces freefall unit line up for a celebratory drop of the 'hand stuff.' One jumper received a special bottle of the 'hard stuff' to commemorate his 7,000th freefall descent.



Mrs Caroline O'Callaghan (widow of Col Eric O'Callaghan) with their children Matthew and Victoria at the dedication of the bench located on the north side of the Rhine overlooking the John Frost Bridge.

The inscribed plaque on the bench reads:
In memory of Colonel Eric O'Callaghan MBE, MC 1923-2003. As 2 Platoon Commander 9 Field Company (Airborne) Royal Engineers, he was pivotal in the defence of Arnhem Bridge and was Mentioned in Dispatches for his heroic actions.

Beloved husband of Caroline and father of Susan, Sarah, Victoria and Matthew



John (Spaceman) Parker (leading) with the Airborne Engineers Standard heading for the ceremony at the Airborne Memorial in Arnhem



Prince Charles (foreground) and Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands (right foreground) meet the Arnhem Veterans following the service at the Oosterbeek



Tod Rothwell (now residing in Australia), Rick Mogg & Mitch Mitchell meet for the first time in 50 years



The school children of Arnhem, hold aloft their floral tributes before laying them at each and every grave (1,600) in Oosterbeek cemetery



Yorkshire branch members (and guests), enjoy a night out in the town of Arnhem



The gathering at the internment of the cremated remains of Col Eric O'Callaghan MBE, MC in Oosterbeek cemetery



Bob Runacres and Tom Thornton flank 4 members of 23 Engr Regt (Air Assault) who jumped into Ginkel Heath



Tommy Handley, Ken Roberts & Tom Gilks



Tom Hicks (pictured above) at 85 was the oldest veteran to jump onto Ginkel Heath completing a tandem freefall descent from 11,000 feet. Tom, of Barnsley, South Yorkshire, was captured after being wounded by a shell in the 'Bridge too Far' operation. "The shrapnel is still in my neck," he said, "But nothing was going to stop me taking part in the jump." Eight veterans jumped in tandem with members of the Red Devils display team but two managed the feat solo. Safely on the ground, the veterans were greeted by applause from locals and British spectators who had come to Ginkel Heath where men of the 10,000 strong 1st British Airborne Division dropped.

Old soldiers in the crowd brushed away tears of pride and sorrow at the memory of fallen friends and colleagues.

The veterans have vowed to jump again next year, health permitting. They hope to raise £100,000 for the Royal Star and Garter Association Home in Richmond, Surrey, which cares for disabled ex-Service personnel.

To make a donation ring 020 8940 1351 or visit: www.starandgarter.org



The coach party organised by John Smith with members of the Aldershot and Birmingham Branches, and below are the ladies accompanying them



Members from 9 Para Sqn who jumped onto Ginkel Heath

Arnhem and the Escape from Captivity

Although this account was previously published some 5 years ago - it seemed most appropriate in this 60th Anniversary year of the Battle of Arnhem to once again print this personal account.

John Humphreys is one of the very few men to have been captured, first by the Italians, and then the Germans, and still manage to escape from both. His first escape took place during 1942 whilst being held prisoner in Lucca, near Pisa and the second occasion whilst in transit to Germany after the battle of Arnhem.

My Second Escape

Lt Col (ret'd) John E. Humphreys OE, DL, CSTJ

I arrived back from Italy at the back end of December '43 and after a period of leave was posted to 1 Trg Bn RE which was then stationed at Clitheroe in Lancashire. Having reported in I was told that I had been selected as a potential officer and that I was to report to the WOSB in nearby Whalley the next week. The five-day tests completed, it was back to the TBRE to discover that it would be two months before the start of the next OCTU and that in the interim period I would be employed escorting the ration trucks to and from Preston. To hell with that I thought, and now it was 17 September and I was sitting in a Dakota with others from 'B' troop 1 Para Sqn, on my way to Arnhem.

The role of 'B' Troop was to provide the Engineer support to the 2nd Bn in the assault on the northern end of the Road Bridge. Our route from the DZ at Wolfhezen to the bridge would be along the road, which ran parallel to the river.

Until we got over the Scheldt all was peaceful, apart from those prone to airsickness that were occupied filling the brown paper bags. It was here that we met the first of the antiaircraft fire. This was soon disposed of by the accompanying Typhoons. Shortly after, we were on our feet and hooking up. The aircraft was now approaching the DZ and through the window I could see the flaming red balls creeping up only to flash past the aircraft. Then it was 'Green on, Go' and out we went lead by Lt. (Stiffy) Simpson with me doing "tail end Charlie." After collecting the equipment from the containers we moved off the DZ and made for the yellow smoke where the 2nd Bn was forming up. We waited for what seemed to be a long time before starting the march to the bridge. The landing had been unopposed, we had caught "Jerry" having his Sunday lunch, but now he was wide-awake and starting to show it. I thought that we would do a "walk - run" to the bridge, but it was all "hurry up and stop." Four hours after dropping, we arrived at the bridge to a noisy reception.

There was a pillbox at the end of the bridge, and until this was eliminated, there was no possibility of capturing the bridge. This was achieved with the aid of a portable flame-thrower. The north end of the bridge was now in our hands, but capture of the south end was not possible. From there, we went into a school, which overlooked the approach to the bridge and prepared it for defence. It was intended to house the Bde HQ, but they never made it to us. Having removed all the glass from the windows, we filled every available container with water, and were then assigned to our defensive positions. Mine was at a circular window looking north over a park, and as it was high up I pushed one of the school desks against the wall and knelt on that. I rested the Bren gun on the windowsill and prepared for whatever was going to happen. All my previous operational experience had been in the desert, so my knowledge of street fighting was negligible.

In the early hours of the morning there was a lot of noise, rifle fire, automatic weapons, bursting grenades, then a loud explosion from the house next to us. It had been occupied by 'A' Troop, and the survivors' lead by Capt Mace came into our building. Our Troop Commander had been wounded early in the battle, so, 'Stiffy' Simpson, my stick officer, had taken command, but Mace now took over. The school was situated against the ramp, which leads up to the bridge. The ramp was actually level with the second floor, so we had a good view, and could cover the approach to the bridge from the top floor where most of us were. The north side of the building covered the park. The rear looked onto a grass play area dotted with trees, and the south view was similar.

It was not long before the "Jerries" started attacking in earnest, and they came across the park in armoured half-tracks heading for us. The sheer volume of fire directed at them stopped them. This firefight went on for what seemed a long time, but eventually the half-tracks pulled back out of sight and there was time to reload the

magazines and get ready for the next assault. Monday was another long day, as were all the others that we spent there.

The second attack came from the south as the Jerries tried to rush the north end of the bridge in half-tracks. These vehicles, although armoured, had no head cover so we were able to shoot down into the occupants. The driver of the first half-track was hit and "slued" his vehicle across the road, effectively blocking it. The rest of the half-tracks were easily destroyed and most of the occupants killed. The rest of that day was spent beating off attacks by small enemy forces. Tuesday the attacks became stronger, we now knew we were up against two SS Panzer Divisions that had been refitting and regrouping in the woods north of Arnhem. Most of the attacks were of platoon strength, but they had to cross the open grass area to get to us. We just let them get about twenty yards away, then shot them at point blank range.

During the afternoon they brought up a Tiger tank and positioned it opposite us. We scrambled down to the second floor and waited for it to open fire, knowing that it could not depress its gun any lower. As the shell went through the top floor and the ceiling of the second it was like standing on the platform of an underground railway station when the train went through - plus a lot of dust and flying brickwork. After he had fired half dozen shells at us he packed up and trundled off, leaving us to trudge back up to what was left of the top floor. Of the forty or so that we had started with, seven had been killed and many more wounded, and although we had taken their ammunition, another hard day of fighting would use what was left.

Wednesday dawned wet with drizzling rain, but that was the least of our worries. The town was still burning. One of our re-supply Dakotas had been shot down and had struck the steeple of the church opposite, and there was still no sign of the promised relief. The "Jerries" were still very active. They had wiped out most of the resistance around the north end of the bridge, and it looked as though only a few others and us were left. They were now tackling one problem area at a time, and only moving on when they had eliminated that position. It was difficult for them to get close to us, so they were now targeting the school with a mixture of high explosives and incendiary mortar bombs. Early that afternoon we could see the enemy forming up, and it was obvious whom their target was to be.

Mackay got us all together then said: "We will let them get very close before opening fire, then, if they succeed in breaking in, we will go to the first floor where we will fight to the last man and the last round." The thought came to my mind that he too must have read "Beau Geste." Their infantry then started moving towards us. We waited until they were about 15 metres away before opening up with everything that we had. This put an end to that attack. Later, a rifle grenade came through one of the windows killing Jock Gray and mortally wounding "Twiggy" Hazelwood and Joe Simpson. The numbers left fit to fight were decreasing, but worse was the ammunition situation, one more severe attack would see it all expended. Nevertheless, it looked as though they had had enough, and were going to bomb or burn us out with their mortars. The mortar bombs began dropping on and around the school almost non-stop. The first fire broke out in the afternoon, but was extinguished quickly with what was left of the water. By late afternoon, the roofs were well and truly alight, and it was obvious that we would have to leave the building. Those of us who had automatic weapons and a few rounds left, went out first keeping the "Jerries" at bay, whilst the wounded were brought out and laid amidst the ruins of the house next door. By now, we were all filthy having not washed for four days. We were covered in dust from the tank attack, plus the effect of soot, and in my case, a blood stained smock. No wonder the "Jerries" were reluctant to get close to us! I lay amidst the rubble of the house with a Sten, one almost empty magazine, and knew we would be damn lucky to get out of it. But I wasn't ready to give up yet, the memories of prisoner of war life in Italy were still fresh in my mind, and I did not want to go in to the "bag" again. In a short while everybody was out, the school was collapsing as the fire raged through it cremating the dead. We lay there waiting for the next event. It was not long coming, the mortar bombs began dropping around us, and Mackay said we would have to surrender.

It seemed such an anti-climax to that long desperate fight, and I had no wish to just pack it in, if there was still a faint chance of making it across the Rhine. I told the four that were left of my stick that I was going to make a break for it, and that they were welcome to follow me.

Waiting until the machine gun that was firing across our front finished a long burst, I raced across the road to the shelter of the houses opposite followed by the others. As with most continental houses, these had cellars, and

the gutted windows were level with the pavements allowing me to dive through one and land amongst the still hot bricks of what had been a row of houses. The houses ran down towards the river and the walls that we would have to climb over separated the gardens. There were now four of us, one having been hit crossing the road. We were now scrambling madly over the garden wall accompanied by odd bursts of fire that cracked as they flew over our heads. All was going well and I thought that we might well make the river when I heard Joe Malley shout "Help, I'm stuck" I looked back to see him caught up in barbed wire on the top of the last wall that I had crossed. Racing back to him I reached up, grasped his shoulder straps, and started to pull him down. There was the noise of a MG 42 firing, and a rash of bright pink holes in the brickwork about an inch from my left eye. I thrust Joe back over and dived to my right into a flower bed, had a quick frightened piss, without standing up, then flew over the remaining walls. I caught up with the other two at the edge of the tram depot. The depot was large, but so was the number of Germans assembled there. I came around the corner of a building moving fast and ran into a group of them who ran even faster, away from me. Before any shooting started, we had crawled under a tram, taking shelter behind the wheels and hoping we could hold the "Jerries" off until nightfall. My hopes were rising as the minutes ticked away, and then again, I heard the sound of enemy tank tracks. It was a self-propelled gun, and it stopped about forty yards away, the barrel was depressed until it was pointing at us and a voice with Oxford accented English called, "if you don't come out, I will blow you out." Well, there didn't seem to be any point in arguing with that bloody great gun, so I said that we were coming out. Before moving outside, I pulled the jack-knife, which was on a lanyard around my waist, to the front of my trousers and dropped it inside. A button compass was already in the lining of my smock. The one thought in my mind was how long would it be before I got the chance to escape.

I walked towards the SP Gun with my hands up with the other two behind me. Two SS soldiers came from behind the gun carrying Luger pistols; one pushed his into my naval, and the other into my back. My anus popped like a flute players lips, and I thought that this was it. We had, after all, killed rather a lot of their friends and comrades. The one facing me took my AB64 from my pocket, and told me to take off my equipment. He then reached out to take my beret, and I knocked his hand away telling him to leave it alone. It was then that I realised that he was more afraid of me, than I was of him. We were then marched to their HQ where an officer tried to interrogate me, but I kept replying, "1877368, Cpl J.E. Humphreys", to all his questions. He then told me the names of my OC; my Troop Commander and many things that Cpl's never bother themselves with. After that, we were sent into a courtyard, given a tin of meat and a packet of biscuits for which we were very grateful.

Sitting in the courtyard watching the antics of the opposition it was obvious that we had given them a hard fight. Whilst there I heard a burst of Sten gun fire, but the SS were taking no chances. They sent a Platoon accompanied by a half-track and one poor fellow who was carrying a flame-thrower, and did not look at all happy about it. Night fell, and we were told to climb into the back of a lorry guarded by two soldiers armed with Schmeisser machine pistols. There was no chance of escaping yet. In the early hours of the morning we stopped and were herded into a disused roadside cafe where we slept for a few hours. Then back onto the truck until we reached a transit POW cage at Emmerich.

The cage was the usual design, a few buildings surrounded by a double wire fence with sentry boxes on stilts. All the POWs went looking for friends who had been captured earlier into one large building. At right angles to this were a number of smaller buildings and these were what I was interested in. I wanted to find a way of escaping before we were moved deeper into Germany. Having been captured in Africa, my morale had not suffered the trauma that one feels when first taken prisoner. The door of one of the smaller buildings was not locked, and I looked in to see that it was a cookhouse with two Sawyer stoves; best of all, there were two windows, which had metal bars set into them. I immediately made myself the cook and wedged the door shut, then looked to see how the bars had been set into the windowsills. Using the marlin spike on the knife hidden in my trousers, I started to pick at the cement around the base of one of the bars. There seemed to be more sand than cement in the mix. Working with haste, I picked the cement completely away from the bottom of one of the bars, and knew that if I could do that to all three it was possible to bend the bars and get out through the window. One long dose of prisoner of war life had been enough for me. In two hours I had cleared the cement from the other two bars, then made a mix of ash and cement chipping, which I used to camouflage my actions. Whilst freeing the bars I noticed that the building backed onto a grassy bank, which sloped down to a country lane bordered by hedges. So, providing we were not moved before dusk, it would be possible to affect an escape. All I had to do

was bend the bars upwards; climb out and slide down the bank, then leg it to the Rhine, and hopefully steal a boat. Failing that, I would have to swim for it. First, I wanted to let Joe Malley know, thinking that he would like to come with me.

The difficult part was to leave the kitchen where I had a definite means of escape not knowing what would happen in my absence. I slipped out and made my way to the main building. Finding Joe, I explained my plan of escape and asked if he like to join me. To my surprise, he refused. I then saw Chick Weir, who was a Cpl in 'A Troop. He was keen to come, so I lead him to the kitchen and showed him what I had done. I also let him know that the reasons for not letting everybody know was that there was always the chance of a 'stooge' or informer amongst us.

Sometime in the late afternoon a German NCO pushed his way in, looked at me, said 'Kommen Sie.' With great reluctance, I followed him wondering what it was about, but he took me to their kitchen, pointed at a sack of potatoes, and told me to take them and cook them. Back I went to the cookhouse as fast as I could, and Weir let me in. I poured the potatoes into the Sawyer stove, added water and lit the fire. It must have been late evening by this time, as before the water had started to boil there was a great hullabaloo outside as another batch of prisoners arrived.

They were making their way to the main building looking for their friends. Now was the time to go. The "Jerries" were more interested in what was happening, than looking at the kitchen. I asked Weir if he would let Lt Simpson know what we were doing so that he could come with us. He came back with Simpson and Mackay, who was his Troop Commander. As soon as they were inside, I grasped one of the bars with both hands, put my feet against the wall and with the strength born of desperation, I pulled. It was surprisingly easy and in no time, the other two were bent up. So out I went, dropped onto the bank, and slid down into the lee of the hedge. Simpson and Mackay followed me, but to my horror, Weir was stuck in the bars just as a German soldier came down the lane with a girl on his arm. Thankfully, he was more interested in her than what was going on around him. Weir had the sense to keep still until I ran back up the bank and freed him. There was just enough light to see by, as the officers lead us towards the Rhine. Making our way across fields where we could to avoid the roads and tracks where possible. The only incidents that come to mind are crossing a field with a bull in it and us breaking the 100 metres sprint record. The other was coming out of a wood only to see the dim shape of a soldier trying to persuade a girl to surrender her virginity. I don't know what the others were thinking, but I was wishing she would give in and quickly. It seemed ages before it was safe to cross the road and carry on. Dawn broke to find us on very flat and open ground with the river Rhine in front and nowhere to tie up. We followed the river until we saw a small wooden hut on the riverbank and quickly got inside knowing it was not the best of places, as we would be trapped if surprised.

It was a long day. About 0800 hrs a van delivering bread stopped on the track that ran parallel to the river and was just below us, the smell of the newly baked bread was so appetising to us. We had eaten so little in the past few days that I was almost tempted to run out and steal a loaf. The day wore on with the odd alarm, a policeman cycled by, children played on the riverbank, and the occasional pedestrian strolled past. Eventually night fell and with the dusk came a Rhine barge that moored up almost opposite us. The crew scrambled ashore and no sooner were they out of sight than we were on board.

In the cabin were the remains of their supper, a stew, which we quickly scoffed, together with the loaf. The best of all was the rowboat that was tied up alongside. Taking the few blankets that were there, we all got in the boat. Whilst the others made themselves comfortable I took the oars and we cast off. Mackay told me to keep to the far bank and make sure that I took the left fork when the river split. The current was running fast so all I had to do was to keep the bow pointing in the right direction and at a safe distance from the far bank. The journey was uneventful apart from the odd burst of machine gun fire that went over the top of us. Then, as the false dawn was breaking I saw a bridge, which looked the same as the one at Arnhem. I woke the others up, and when they saw the bridge started to accuse me of not keeping to the left fork of the river. At that moment, we heard a voice calling "Halt, who goes there?" and it was obviously a British sentry on the bridge. We did not know the bridge at Nijmegen was identical to the one at Arnhem.

The sentry had not actually seen us, and was challenging someone else so we drifted into the bank. We moored up the boat, climbed out to find that we had landed in the middle of a Gunner defensive position. All the slit trenches were facing away from the river. When I tapped one of the gunners on the shoulder, he turned, looked at me, and thought he was going to faint. I didn't realise what I looked like covered in dried blood and grime, and to see an apparition like that at 0500 hrs was enough to frighten anybody. Mackay contacted the Battery Officer so that we could move out of their perimeter and make our way to 1st BR AB Div HQ. Weir and I were ordered to wait outside whilst they went in to make their report (Officers make reports, not Cpls), which is why there are different accounts of the escape! Sometime later, we were told to find the seaborne element, get cleaned up and into a change of clothing. We were later interviewed and photographed by the press. Weir and I were ordered not to say anything about the escape.

I think that it was the next day that the survivors of the battle made their way across the river, and were accommodated in Nijmegen. Most of this period is a bit vague. I do remember the remains of the 1st Airborne Division standing on a cross roads with the 1st Brigade on one corner, the 4th Brigade on another, the Airlanding Brigade on the third and the remains of the Polish Brigade on the fourth. It did not seem possible that this was all that was left of the Division. There were only ten left out of the 153 of my Sqn that had dropped. Not long after we were ferried down to Louvain to spend the night in a school before moving to Brussels airport and the flight back to the UK.

Manchester Airport Remembers

Manchester Airport's annual wreath laying ceremony, marking the airport's links with the airborne forces that were established at Ringway in 1940, took on a special significance this year when over 300 guests gathered in June to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the D-Day landings. The specially extended commemorative celebrations began with a moving service by Canon Mike Vincer against an impressive backdrop of 14 standards, a parade of 35 paras who had trained at Ringway during World War II, and, poignantly, seven veterans who parachuted on that historic day 60 years ago.



(seated) 4th from the left Spr Ivor Anderson & 5th is Sgt Lanahan (both of 1 Troop 591 Para Sqn)

The highlight of the afternoon was undoubtedly the freefall parachute display by the Red Devils, although those remaining into the early evening would add that the fly past by the DC3 Dakota or the tour of Concorde was a very special end to the day

Chance Meeting

Ed



Ivor (centre) with Para Regt colleagues)

It was a chance meeting that I should have the opportunity to make the acquaintance of Ivor Anderson. We were making our way back towards the Oosterbeek town hall following the Sunday service at the Oosterbeek cemetery, and got into conversation.

And from that meeting and a prompt that I'm always looking for input into the Journal - the article concerning the Manchester Memorial Service together with covering letter arrived a few days later.

Ivor wrote:

Lanahan was an ex Chepstow boy around 1937 while I started in boys service at Fort Darland, Chatham in 1938, then moved to Chepstow in 1940. After boys service I was posted to Kitchener then to Brompton barracks, then later to 77 Assault Squadron - didn't like that, and chose the glamour of a red beret in 1943.

Five weeks in Normandy, mucking about, an 88mm shell finally got me flown home in a Dakota and was invalided out in February 1945 - so much for my army career!

It was great meeting up with you at Arnhem, but would have enjoyed your company more if you had had a water bottle or better still a Jeep.

My hobby since the late 50s has been Amateur Radio and have held a licence since 1959 (G30AX) and if anyone is interested, stooge around on 40 meters.

Have returned to Normandy for many years, and have met Prince Charles 3 times, and he still doesn't remember my name! - Ah Well.

It's getting late, so will bail out now, not forgetting to "hook up."

1st Parachute Squadron RE

50th Annual Reunion & 60th Arnhem Memorial Church Service

This annual event was held during the weekend 25/26th September at the Comfort Friendly Inn at Bicker - not far from Donington. This Lincolnshire village is where the Squadron was stationed before their deployment to Arnhem in 1944. A total of 80 attended this event, which included former Squadron members, relatives, friends and guests.

Our guest of honour this year was Lt Col Baz Bassett BEM, who was accompanied by his wife Linda. We also had the pleasure of the company of Col Chris and Jenny Davies, Bunny Brown (the AEA Chairman), Bob Ferguson, Kevin Lambeth (Arnhem Veterans Standard Bearer) and a number of AEA members and their partners.



In spite of the late 'Lights Out,' everyone was on parade at the Red Cow, ready for the short march to the parish church.

The Rev John Moon conducted the 60th Arnhem Memorial Service, with lessons read by Peter Stainforth and Lt Col Baz Bassett and the names of the

Fallen were read aloud by Tom Hicks. Harold Padfield, Arthur Hendy and "our" Diane, daughter of Joe Simpson, laid wreaths. The Last Post, a minute silence and Reveille were sounded, and a lament played by the piper concluded the service.

With the customary photo session under the 'Arnhem Oak' accomplished, we retired to the village hall for an excellent finger buffet lunch, which had been produced and organised by the ladies.

All who attended had a very enjoyable weekend, and we extend our sincere thanks to Eric and Nina Booth for organising this and the past 49 annual reunions.



Harold Padfield, Arthur Hendy, Tony Clark, Gordon Christie, Jack Hobbs, John Simpson, Peter Stainforth, Eric Booth, Tom Carpenter, Bob Jones, Tam Hepburn, 'Pinky' White, Tom Hicks & Norman Swift



Dave Rutter, Jenny Davies,
Lin Bassett, Col Chris Davies,
Tony Manley,
Harold Padfield,
Lt Col Baz Bassett,
Bob Jones & Tom Carpenter

For the Record

Fred Heads

Reference issue No 13 page 12 regarding a query from Horace Stokes - It is indeed Billy Fellows in the Team photo. We served together in 1 Troop 3 Para Sqn from 1943 until 1945. Come 1950, Billy was HQ Tp Sgt and I was 2 Tp Sgt. I then did a runner (demobbed) after my eight years' service, but was called back after two weeks (they couldn't do without me, or perhaps it was for the Korean War). Billy by then had grabbed 2 Tp, so I finished in HQ. Although a staunch Welshman, he was always 'Billy' to us and never 'Taffy.' 3 Para Sqn changed to 3rd Airborne in 1945 for the record.

Billy is still alive and lives in Australia. Bill Dickson has his address and occasionally visits him from his home in Manley. Just for the record (again) it was another twelve years before I finally finished my reserve service.

The RE- RCE Monument at Driel

Baz Henderson

(A translation from Dutch)



During the night of 25/26th September 1944, British Royal Engineers (260 and 553 Fd Coys) and Royal Canadian Engineers (20 and 23 Fd Coys) ferried about 2,400 British and Polish personnel from the northern side of the Rhine at Oosterbeek to the southern bank, where safety awaited them. The canvas boats and those equipped with outboard engines were extremely vulnerable to the continuous German fire as they ferried the troops across the Rhine. This monument is dedicated to those brave Engineers and was erected 15th September 1989.

The monument consists of a large slab of Portuguese bianco sardo granite onto which two black granite slabs are attached; one carries the badges of the Royal Engineers and the Royal Canadian Engineers, whilst the other granite slab shows the dates and an image originally sketched by a Canadian Sapper.

Quoting a British paratrooper who was one of those ferried across the river that night, he said, "They were just whispers and shadows in the night."

Suez Veteran's Association

John Davis (Secretary)

The main part of this correspondence is to thank the Airborne Engineers Association for the donation to our National Memorial fund. The Memorial is now in being and is located at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffs.



The Memorial is for all Services who served on the Canal Zone of Egypt in the early fifties and of course, 9 Squadron was there at that time.

Realising that the events of those years was not well documented, it was decided some three years ago, to have

erected, a permanent Memorial commemorating the events of that time.

The order was placed in the summer of 2003 and completed in February 2004. The Memorial was dedicated on the 13th of March 2004 with 450 members in attendance.



A few words on the Suez Vets, we are I suppose though old in years a relatively young organisation. We commenced as an organisation in the middle of 1997, with 46 members. Our membership now exceeds over 2,000. We have regional situations set up with local meetings taking place throughout the UK, we also have a fairly strong membership of overseas personnel: Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Spain, Portugal, Italy, France, USA. and Cyprus. You can imagine the difficulty we have at times. We have two UK reunions per year, one in the spring and the other in September, which is also our AGM. A third reunion is a return to Egypt, late April for 10-11 days, but again, age is taking its toll.

We stay at the Mecure Hotel on the banks of Lake Timsah or Crocodile Lake (no crocodiles now). Spring 2005 will be my eighth trip, the word being, Imsh'allah or God Willing.

2006 will see two trips to Egypt, one in April and the other in September/October (50th Anniversary of the Invasion). We have about 30 members from that period with only a take up of ten it was thought due to the lack of numbers it would not take place, but God works in odd ways, the Op GAMIL group have contacted our organisation and about 25 of them wish to join us. If any of 3 Troop, who did the drop wish to join us would they please contact our organiser Jeff Malone Tel: [REDACTED]

We have quite a few 9 Squadron chaps in the Suez Veterans; it is of course open for membership to those who served on the Canal Zone at that time. The main point I will make, the Egyptians now love us.

Our web site: www.suezveteransassociation.co.uk Members List: www.suezveteransassociation.supanet.net

Arnhem 2004- Camping Yorkshire Style

Camp Commandant

Early in 2004 it was decided that the Branch would attend the pilgrimage to Arnhem for the 60th Anniversary. There were no shortages of volunteers. Dave Grimbley organised the ferry from Hull and made use of his camping trailer, pulled by Yorkie Davies 4x4 with our favourite Chairman, Bill Rudd, bringing up the rear with his people carrier. The trip on North Sea Ferries was excellent with a five-course dinner and cabaret. As normal the sappers were first in and last out of the bar having spent many hours entertaining and educating the many FRA that were on board that night.

We arrived at the campsite in Swarsbergen, 5 kms North of Arnhem, the following afternoon and the pantomime commenced! Twelve ex Airborne soldiers watched Davey and Yorkie start to erect the trailer tent, watched by caravanners from Germany and Holland, they must have been saying to themselves; "How they won the war I'll never know"! At this stage most of us were asking ourselves, how are we going to get 12 bodies in a trailer tent designed for four. Davey then produced an awning, the booking of bed spaces then began and the main concern at this stage was the location of the nearest bar.



During the period of four days we had at least 14 bodies sleeping head to toe. As normal, we picked up many ex PRA (2 Para) of no fixed abode, which we offered our sapper hospitality.

Bill Rudd's dressing room!

Johnny (Airborne) (Drakeley) flew into Amsterdam with his friend Craig and joined us, and last but not least the famous Syd Hoyle, who now lives in the Netherlands, joined the party along with Lou Gallagher, our dear friend from Taunton. To complete the list of those attending - we must add Derek (Gungy) Oldfield Ex 3 Para cook and 131 Sqn, Bill Braniff Ex 216 Para, our standard bearer John Parker and finally the youngest member of the party Boff Harrop, (we won't mention the Black Eye!) Incidentally the average age

worked out at 65. We did sail with one member missing, namely Bob Clow, we are led to believe his passport expired! Take five extras Bob from your ex section commander, Bill Rudd.

The Party- Friday 17th It commenced at 1700hrs when Bills car, driven by Boff ferried the first seven bodies into Arnhem to attend the wreath laying at the memorial on the John Frost Plin. Although the silent march was not on the program, we arrived early just in case it had been reinstated - this was not to be so. After the parade, we watched the march past of the veterans and were very proud to see the many RE cap badges making their way to the civic function in the town hall. Nice to see Bob Jones pushing Vi in a wheel chair due to an accident early in the day. Also Tom Carpenter, Paddy Padfield and many more familiar faces. We then got down to the serious business of meeting the local population in the many pubs and clubs around the market square. We all met up at a pub where we bumped into Dave Rutter and John Barrie who informed us that Tony Manley was on our campsite, (we found his camping van only 30 meters from our tent the next morning). The steak house called, but Bill Rudd and Bill Braniff decided to carry on 'meeting' the local population. The hospitality and the generous nature of the Dutch ensured that steak house was a low priority. Once we had all met up again, it was decided to go night clubbing (0200 hrs) but kept get turned away until Bill Rudd persuaded a 7-foot bouncer to let us in with no charge. The least said about this the better. On leaving the nightclub we noticed the broad grins of the local police - say no more!

Saturday - We headed for Ginkel Heath DZ for the wreath laying ceremony and para drops. On reaching the N224 road we met the world's biggest traffic jam. The younger members including Louis decided to walk, little realising that the DZ was 8ks away - like all good ex paras who make the wrong decision they finished up getting the bus and arrived much later. I had previously produced an excellent sign of the Pegasus (blue and red), which was displayed on the windscreen of Bills car. The traffic police always seem to pick this up, within minutes we

had a motor cycle escort with flashing red lights pull alongside, pointed to the card on the windscreen and indicated to follow him to the Ginkel Heath DZ .

We just missed the service, but were in good time to watch the veterans jump, followed by wave after wave of C130 aircraft dispatching well over 600 men, including many from 9 Sqn, 51 Sqn and the remainder of the Brigade. It was a most enjoyable morning meeting many friends such as Tom Thornton, Bob and Shelia Prosser and many more. It was a lovely sunny day and we were ready for refreshments!



We retired to the beer garden of the Ginkel Heath Hotel where, during a very long liquid lunch we had the pleasure of meeting up with many old friends of 299, 131 and PRA and our Chairman, Bunny Brown. Our plan to visit the Polish service at Driel and then move along the dyke road to the RE/RCE memorial later in the afternoon failed. I wonder why? So Bunny and I jumped in a taxi and headed to Driel.

Syd, Craig, Baz, Davey, Bill Braniff, John, Tony, Bof & Lou

On our arrival, a Dutch Band was playing at the ceremony, which was attended by government officials from the Netherlands, Canada, Poland, and the UK of which all laid wreaths, along with local government officials from Arnhem, Oosterbeek and Driel. The Canadian Army paraded twelve uniformed Royal Canadian Engineers, who, during the last post and reveille, lowered and raised the four National Flags. It was a little sad to see only Bunny and myself and one other British member, who laid a wreath - even the Americans managed to have three uniformed servicemen present. A young Englishman videoing the ceremony promised to send me a copy, and offered both Bunny and I lift back. The branch that night had planned to hold an informal dinner night in the camp restaurant; this was in full swing by the time I arrived.

Our VIP guests were Tony Manley and two Para Regt gentlemen from the Teeside PRA Branch - we all sang for our supper!

Sunday - This was an early start to attend the service in the Airborne Cemetery at Oosterbeek. Not even a cup of tea that morning, and all feeling a little drowsy, we made our way with Syd Hoyle leading - he got lost! The church ceremony was most certainly the most moving event of the weekend with local school children laying flowers on each veteran's grave. Numbers attending, we were told was 50% higher than in previous years. During the service Bill befriended a local Dutchman called Ed Van der Laan who spent the next twelve hours with us. He is due to fly over on the 11th November to join us for two days for the remembrance service at Hebburn, Tyne and Wear. Ed has also produced a DVD of the ceremony in the cemetery.

Following the service we all attended a service of remembrance for Col Eric O'Callaghan at his graveside where his cremated remains were interned. This was attended by a large turnout from the Association. The senior officer present was Maj Gen Peter Wall, along with Maj Frazer Ross (new OC 9 Para Sqn) and Sqn members who had parachuted the previous day. Following the service we made our way to the famous Scoornord Hotel for a well-earned beer. We spent several hours watching the world go by and meeting many of the older generation of Oosterbeek, who 60 years ago were only school children - there lays some wonderful stories of bravery. The Chinese restaurant called for another party, dragging along with us 3 ex 2 Para friends, who we offered a bed in the trailer tent for the night - but that's another story. I'm sure they will not forget the Airborne Engineers hospitality.

Monday - Yet another sunny day, and Bill volunteered to take the 2 Para guys back to Oosterbeek to collect their car - no cup of tea again! By the time Bill returned the camp had been struck and ready for the move back to Rotterdam. Our last port of call was to visit Oosterbeek and Hartenstein Airborne Museum and revisit the Airborne Cemetery, without the crowds. We found a grave with ashes scattered on it and wondered who had

paid the tribute - we were later to find out. Off to town, including lunch, a cup of tea at last, and a few more beers for the non-drivers. During our lunch in the Town Hall square an elderly lady came in and sat on her own, Louis got into conversation with her. The lady had come over with 'The Less We Forget Foundation' and commented on how well they had been looked after and had hardly spent any money? With that she thrust a 10 Euro note into my top pocket and said, "Get your mates a drink - this obviously was nowhere near the cost of a round of 16 pints! It was appreciated in the correct manner.

Conclusion - Firstly, thanks to Dave Grimbley who got the ball rolling and all the Yorkshire boys who supported the trip. Certainly a memorable five days that included many emotional moments to reflect on. Most certainly the laughs outweighed the early morning hangovers and the buddy, buddy system that was there from day one. Not a pretty sight watching Yorkie and Louis trying to put their underpants on, that's if they could find them among the rest of the clothes that were laid about.

Would we do it again, definitely not - it's a hotel next time! We all had a super time with our family of airborne friends who had made the supreme effort to go to Arnhem to pay their respects to a very brave bunch of soldiers, and we're booking for next year.

AEA Wives Update on the "Teddies to Love"

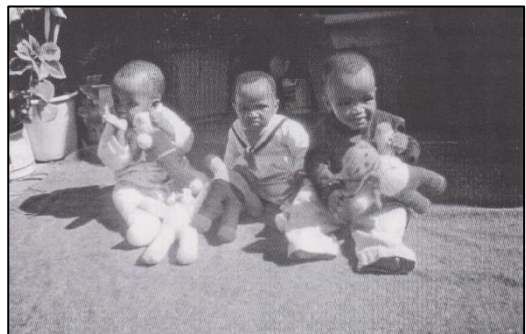
Ruth Barrie



We are still continuing to send consignments of "Teddies to Love" to Botswana

As these recent pictures show, the teddies have been warmly welcomed by the children in the SOS Villages. The villages are home to children who have been orphaned or abandoned, many of whose parents have died from Aids, and a great many of the children have Aids themselves. To-date 500 teddies have been sent to Botswana and we have just received news that a consignment of teddies have arrived safely in Swaziland.

Ida McVetis and her friends have been wonderful throughout the summer knitting many teddies and so with this huge effort we are now able to send a consignment to Mauritius, having been approached by Action Aid for their needy children. If any AEA wives would like to knit a "Teddy to Love," make a bag for the teddy or have any ideas for sponsorship for the postage to send the teddies, please contact Ruth on [REDACTED]



Double Hills- The 60th

Peter Yeates

Double Hills Arnhem Memorial Service and parade, is held annually to commemorate the 21 Airborne Sappers of 9 Field Company (Airborne) Royal Engineers and 2 Glider Pilots who were all killed when their Glider Horsa RJ113 crashed into Double Hills Field on Sunday 17th September 1944. This year saw the 60th Anniversary of the deaths of these men from Airborne Forces who were the first casualties in the Battle for Arnhem Bridge. It was also the 25th Anniversary of the unveiling of the Memorial by General R E Urquhart on Sunday 23rd September 1979.



Over 800 people took part in the Service and watched the Inspection and subsequent parade at this year's event, organised for the 26th time by Peter Yeates. Some 40 Standards were present at the ceremony. Glider Pilot Hero at Arnhem, then Lt, now Brigadier Mike Dauncey, the Double Hills President, arrived in an authentic 1944 model (9 Fd Coy) Jeep. Brigadier Ian McGill CBE, RE and Brigadier Richard Folkes, Director Army Aviation, the reviewing officers, accompanied him.

The Regimental Band of the Army Air Corps provided splendid music, initiating the

proceedings with a fanfare to welcome the flypast of the Historic Aircraft Flight from Middle Wallop

Senior officers representing the Royal Air Force and the United States Air Force were in attendance and the US Ambassador to the UK was represented by Commander Tim McHugh USN. Wreaths were laid by each of the VIP's and by the 9 Parachute Squadron Commanding Officers, Major Paul Fountaine (past) and Major Frazer Ross (current), on behalf of 9 Para Sqn RE. Lord William Rees-Mogg (West countryman) Double Hills Patron was in attendance, together with Mr Dan Norris MP (local).



Over 30 wreaths were laid at the Memorial from various villages, British Legions branches and Regimental organisations. Veteran Glider Pilots lead by their Chairman, Col Nick Nichols, were well represented together with friends and relatives of the fallen. As the years go on, it is now grandchildren and great-grandchildren who are predominate. One small single wooden cross said it all 'To the granddad I love, and whom I never knew' - It is the tradition at Double Hills that village children and children of those present take an active and leading part in the service of Remembrance similar to the Oosterbeek service.

A message from HRH Prince Charles was read out to those present. HRH has said in the past, "This piece of land matters very deeply to me." The land on which the Memorial is located is owned by HRH and has been assigned by trust to the Double Hills Group. Messages were also received from The Prime Minister.

9 Para Sqn RE was represented by over 50 Airborne Sappers. The last time we had such a number was RE 2000 when the Squadron marched through the village with bayonets fixed. The Double Hills Contingents were under the command of WOII (SSM) Al Pearson (9 Para Sqn). Mr Pearson and Staff Len Connors the Double Hills Parade Marshall organised the subsequent inspection and parade through Paulton village.



Veterans old and bold together with some young and bold were in attendance and we consider the latter to be particularly encouraging. A full contingent from 668 Regiment Army Air Corps was in attendance and the Airborne Engineers Association was well represented. We sadly missed Jan Chambers who was ill in Arnhem, but husband Chris did a sterling job in her absence. The AEA is now an integral part of Double Hills and the village especially welcomes and enjoys the Squadron within its midst.

Double Hills Annual Memorial Service will now certainly be held for the foreseeable future

This has been assisted with a generous donation to the Double Hills Group by the Airborne Engineers Association for which I am especially grateful.

3 Troop, 9 Para Sqn, had renovated the Memorial back to its original condition when first constructed by Royal Monmouthshire (Militia). The village enjoyed the Squadron's visit and restoration work during the sunny weeks of early September.

The Bristol Branch Royal Engineers Association is now the 'umbrella' organisation for the Memorial, and the advantages of the REA has enabled Insurance and other concerns to be overcome. The Memorial has become a focal point of 'Arnhem Remembrance in England,' and is also 'twinning' with the Operation Freshman Memorial in Stavanger which was inspired by the Double Hills project. Finally, Double Hills is an example of good lives lost in the name of freedom. A freedom that is gradually being eroded in this modern changing world. With the continued recognition of this British Heritage, we can help to maintain all that those Sappers and Glider Pilots gave their lives for. It is with that thought that we ask for an equal attendance at next year's commemorative service, which will be on Sunday 25th September 2005. Muster 1400 hours at Paulton, Nr Bath.

AEA- Fergie Semple Memorial Golf Trophy

Bob Ferguson

The inaugural competition for the trophy, the cost of which had been donated by Frank Menzies-Hearn, took place following the AGM/OGM. The number of competitors that participated was a little disappointing in relation to the number of golfers/hackers/slathers who were in attendance at Coventry. Some of course like Tom Downie and Dave Rutter had validated medical certificates and 'Excused Duties' chits, which Tom was never short of anyway. For those who did play by setting a smart pace on over the closing few holes, managed to complete the round before we had to don our miner's helmets, had a very enjoyable afternoon.



Success on the day went to John Hughes who played very close to his club handicap and finished two points clear of the field.

John proudly receives the trophy as the inaugural winner from our President, Peter Bates.

We cannot close without thanking John Mason of the Birmingham branch for his generosity in allowing us play at his club free of green fees, particularly as he thought that there would be about 20 players. We must also thank Brian Coleman, the Club Secretary and his staff for arranging the day and for providing coffee and bacon baps on arrival.

We look forward to the challenge again next year, and since Tom did not manage to play and get his name on the trophy we may see him again. From all those who took part in the day, a big 'WELL DONE' to JOHN HUGHES

The Way I See It

X9

Once again the Festive Season is upon us. Let me wish all members of the AEA and their families a very Merry Xmas and a prosperous New Year. Is it really a year since the last Xmas? My, how time flies!

The good old boys at 'Twickers.' May all your chariots swing low guys!

Henry Morgan and Pete Kershaw posing for the camera. Don't know which is the shinier, your boots or your knuckles!

Jack Hobbs showing a pose many of us have been in at least once while serving King/Queen and Country. Good on yer Jack. I suppose there will be those among us who will frown and say that printing such pictures in the Journal is discrediting the AEA. To those I say a seasonal 'HUMBUG'!

That Quarry. Tell me Harry, would things have turned out better for you and your Welsh friend if the 'enemy' had turned out to be a sheep! Would you now be recounting the incident? Your being such a staunch and patriotic Welshman I would have thought you would have got the blazer badge maker to design you a personal one. Something like Bellerophon 'astride' a winged sheep and brandishing a leek! Incidentally Harry, who in the hell is Max Boyce?

Right to reply. Whoa up there Trigger, take it easy! While I share your view Bill, there is no need to get so worked up about it. Remember, you have just had a heart bypass op, so relax some. We want to see you around for many years to come.

Kota Mama. I enjoy reading about Jim's adventures in his strange craft. "Eccentric, strange, cuckoo," yes, all of these things but he sure seems to enjoy being so. As for taking your "rickety raft" to France, could you not contact 'someone' in the Sqn and see if they could arrange an initiative test for some of the lads?

Jack Braithwaite's D-Day on the air seemed to be a great success. Good for you Jack, keep up the good work. I only hope your Arnhem calls were as successful.

I hesitate to comment on the serving units but when I read about them I am very impressed. Everything appears to run so smoothly. What happened to the days when the two c's, confusion and chaos were the name of the game!

Sad to hear of the demise of yet another Battalion character, 'Smokey' Furness. I did 'time' under Smokey when he was Provost Sgt. He was not the ogre his men painted him!

Sad to hear the last of the airborne military will be leaving Aldershot. When they closed the NAAFI Club and would not allow you to sit on the roundabout eating daffodils, the writing was on the wall. I guess I saw the best of 'The Shot' when the Airborne Brigade was stationed there. It was our town!

Daily Part One Orders. I am sure the complaint was not directed at any of the Sqn personnel. We were more singers than dancers. We were downstairs in the bar serenading the fair maidens of Mandora barracks! Yes, those indeed were the days!

Graham Sheward at it again! You know Graham, you cover more distance in 9-1/2 hours than I do in a month! Why don't you make it to one of the Welsh weekends and show "Dads Army" how it's done!

Merry Xmas!

9 Para Sqn RE

Double Hills - 60th Anniversary



During early September 2004, 3 Tp 9 Para Sqn RE, were tasked with the reconstruction of the Double Hills Memorial. When we arrived at Paulton, a small village just south of Bristol. Peter Yeates, Chairman of Double Hills Committee greeted us and then took us to the site. The Memorial stands on top of a hill and was in much need of renovation. On our arrival we got straight to work, with 2Lt Burton in charge. With the help of a local farmer Dave Hamblin equipped with a chain saw, we began removing the trees so that the Memorial could be seen from a distance. While this was going on, Cpl Walton was able to continue over seeing the digging that was

going on around the Memorial in order that the formwork could be put in place to allow the concrete to be poured.

The next day we continued with the work on the memorial, repainting the flagpoles and the fencing surrounding the Memorial. The renovation of the memorial allowed 3 Troop to work together as a team to produce an outstanding result. On the final day we finished earlier than had been expected and were rewarded for our hard efforts with a BBQ on the site, whilst 2Lt Burton went into the village to collect a Brass Plaque that we set into the memorial.



Some two weeks later, on 23rd September 2004, 9 Para Sqn RE arrived at Paulton once again but this time to join in for the service and Parade at the Double Hills site. There we remembered the twenty-one members of 9th Field Company and two members of the Army Air Corps Glider Sqn who were tragically killed on their way to "Operation Market Garden" in Arnhem 1944.

Brig Ian McGill CBE inspects the 9 Para Sqn contingent

The turnout was very good due to the fact it was attended by members of the AEA, REA volunteers, VIP guests, Association Standards, Members of ex-Service Organisations, Army Air Corps and 9 Para Sqn RE. The Parade lasted approximately two hours and went very well, with a march past finishing it off led by the Royal Engineers and assisted by the Band of the Army Air Corps with the salute being taken by Brigadier MDK Dauncey DSO, DL, President of the Double Hills Committee.

News from the Branches

Aldershot

Joe Stoddart

Since the last edition of the journal the members of the branch have been busy. First we supported members of the Squadron in their marathon run and then the Basingstoke Canal swim by the Divers. Both challenges were successfully completed. Betty and Fred Grey held a curry lunch at their house in Fleet in aid of the canal swim with 56 members enjoying a superb lunch. A sum of £300 was collected, this, added to the £700 already in the kitty brought the total for the two events to £1000. Congratulations to the squadron for the hard work and organisation that went into the events, especially the participants for their efforts and last but not least to the branch members for supporting the causes.

21 August saw us back at Betty and Fred's for our annual BBQ where some 58 members attended including, Major Frazer Ross, the new OC of 9 Para Sqn, Capt Jugsy Unsing and his wife Jacky and a blast from the past, Ken and Marilyn Maybe. All were made welcome, and we hope Ken will join the branch in the near future. Another welcome pair of visitors on loan from Australia was George Jones and his wife. Tony Manley and his party of helpers did the cooking and the ladies provided the desserts. As a way of introduction, Major Ross gave a rundown on the work and possible future deployment of the squadron, which was well received by the members.

Well at last it had to come, after all the talking and briefings our trip to Arnhem arrived and as it happened all the hard work done in advance by John Smith and Glenda paid dividends. We started in Monument Square in Arnhem and for the next two days we steadily went through Museums, Churches and displays usually avoiding any major hold-ups. I believe that for many members, the Airborne Memorial service at Oosterbeek War Cemetery was a high point on the tour. I was particularly honoured to lay a wreath on the memorial, but the sight of the schoolchildren standing one in front of each gravestone with flowers raised above their heads, then in an act of remembrance, lay the floral tribute on the grave and whisper the name of the young man it held. Even the old warriors I was standing amongst were reduced to tears.

While we were in the Cemetery we were privileged to attend the interment of Col Eric O'Callaghan MBE MC RE which was performed by his widow Caroline with family members in close support.

One casualty while we were in Arnhem was Jan Chambers who had to go into hospital for an operation. Fortunately her daughter was able to stay with her until she was fit to come home. At the time of writing, Jan is nearing full recovery.

Bill Morton (Parachute Regiment) joined us on the trip and an extract from his letter to the branch reads as follows: "In no time at all I was accepted as one of the group, so much so that by the last day I thought of doing a 'Monty' by wearing two badges on my Para Regt beret. And Royal Engineers, I was amazed at the comradeship and esprit de corps within your group, which you all seem to take for granted. The planning was first class, it will take some time forgetting."

So with everything in mind let us record well-earned thanks from all members on the trip to John and Glenda Smith and for making this trip one to remember.

Chatham

Eric Blenkinsop

Following the wonderful experience of the 60th Anniversary of Normandy, life back home seemed somewhat mundane, but not for long.

At our June meeting, on arrival in the WO's & Sgt's mess, we found a large screen and the England v Switzerland football match in full swing. So we held our meeting as usual in the anteroom and it has to be the fastest branch meeting on record. So on to July, to find on arrival that the RSM had arranged an RE Band Concert in the anteroom for the RSM's course that was in progress. Our ladies made themselves comfortable in the TV room and we held our meeting in the bar/lounge. Our ladies were invited to the concert by the RSM but declined, preferring to have a good natter.

August found us once again at the Five Bells in South Chailey for Sunday lunch followed by tea & cakes at Orchard Cottage courtesy of Bertie & Dee Fordham. We were pleased that Norman Swift and Ray Coleman were once again able to join with us along with new found friends of the branch, Sandra and George Middleton (6 AB Div Reconnaissance Regiment).

It was a joy that our President, John Grosvenor with Sue were able to join with us once again following John's heart bypass. Likewise it was good to share the day with Terry and Elaine Porter as Elaine had recovered well from recent surgery.

The weather was not so kind this year but we all managed to settle comfortably into the conservatory and as usual Bertie & Dee took it all in their stride.

Thursday 16th September found 23 of us boarding the coach to Arnhem courtesy of Brig John Hooper and the members of SW branch.

What a wonderful, exhilarating, yet humbling experience, never to be forgotten. We were fortunate to have on board two Arnhem veterans, Norman Swift and John Humphries, who were in the battle at the bridge with Eric Mackay. John Humphries in particular was most helpful as he was with us all day on the Friday during our conducted tour of the various sites and was able to give first hand support to tour guide Alexander Junior in some localities with a few anecdotes thrown in. It was a joy for some of us to embrace Harold Padfield like long lost brothers when we met him at the High Ground site.

On Saturday we were privileged to witness the biggest mass parachute drop that many of us have seen since we ceased parachuting. In the evening we attended the Tattoo on the square in front of Oosterbeek Town Hall and were able to enjoy a variety of brass band music and manoeuvres, which only the Dutch could dream up including whilst, riding bicycles (quite superb)! Sunday brought an early start in order to ensure that we all got into the Oosterbeek cemetery. All went well and Frank the Piper who was with us; played non-stop until the start of the ceremony at 1100 hrs. This ceremony, some 1,200 or so graves and a child with a bouquet of flowers to each grave must be one of the most heart rending experience of one's life. Rumour has it that six of our members, who shall be nameless, gained access to the VIP enclosure!

Most of us have read several books on the battle but to visit the sites and to tread the ground that these valiant men fought over really puts the whole event into perspective. It was only during the visit that most of us learned of the retribution that the Germans exacted from the people of Arnhem during the winter of 1944. So despite this horrendous suffering that they were forced to endure, when you walk among them wearing your Red Beret you can truly feel the love and warmth emanating from them. It almost beggars belief.

Finally, Brigadier John and all South West Branch members, thank you for the privilege of joining with you on such an unforgettable pilgrimage.

Edinburgh

Mick Walker

As I write this the AGM in Coventry is still fresh in my mind. I, and those in the Branch who did not attend last year, are of the opinion that this is a very much-improved venue. There is even a little pub half a mile or so away if you want a quick hour away from matters Airborne! A little daft aside - I got a return Edinburgh-Birmingham flight for £16 - pity about the £15.60 airport parking charges for less than three days.

We're currently looking forward to our own Branch AGM in November. One member I am confident will be there is Ian Thomson. Ian used to attend regularly at National AGMs, but his health is not what it was. He suffers from emphysema but still manages, accompanied by his portable oxygen supply, to attend all of our bi-monthly meetings. That is an Airborne RE for you.

Another event we are looking forward to is the local PRA Xmas dance. This is the one occasion of the year when we and our ladies all get together socially and is always a good night. Mind you, I am still suspicious about the results of the raffle.

A few of us went as guests of the Dundee Branch of the PRA to the 60th Anniversary celebrations at Arnhem. Speaking as one who had not been before I found it very moving and was touched by the extent to which the local people remember the sacrifices made by our predecessors.

Good to see the Association now have a website along with 9 Sqn. Look forward to developments.

It is a matter of some pride to me that none of my previous contributions to the Journal have been edited or amended I was therefore somewhat surprised to see the obituary of Brian McKean amended to him being "stunned" by the reduction in size of the Para RE (TA) when I had said "scunnered." Scunnered is a good old Scottish word which means sickened or pissed off and that I think reflects the mood of all of us at that time.

Yorkshire

Bill Rudd

Not a great deal of news to report for this period. The Branch moves along at a steady pace, but we as a committee get a little concerned that we see no new members coming our way to join us? Now that 51 Sqn are up and moving, this may change. Mark Hindley a long serving member of 9 Sqn who many know, is now residing in Huddersfield and has promised me he will come and support us - looking forward to seeing you Mark (Myra).

Since the last Branch news members have attended and supported the following functions: dedication of the new colours to 4th Para which was held at Hardwick Hall. The day was hot and after the parade the company and the wine was good. Our next trip took 14 of us camping to Arnhem for the 60th Anniversary; it will be a hotel next time? An excellent five days and thanks to Dave Grimbley for the organisation. (See Baz Henderson article in this issue). This social whirl never seems to stop, on 16th October saw us all in Hull celebrating Sid Hoyles 35th wedding anniversary - thanks for a great weekend Sid, nice to see Lou Gallagher again. Our yearly pilgrimage to Hebburn for Remembrance Parade on the 11th November; is now finalised, 38 members and wives have now booked in and staying for two nights. We will be hosted by the Mayor of South Tyneside, with lunch in the Mayors Parlour following the Remembrance Parade. Also in attendance will be the CRE 3 Div Col Tim Grimshaw CBE, and Major Ian Pincombe RE.

One or two dates for the diary: Our Xmas Lunch will be held in the Unicorn Hotel on the 11th December, meet 1200 hrs. Our Annual Dinner is now confirmed for the 6th March 2005 and will, as normal, be held in the WO's & Sgt's Mess 38 Engr Regt. We look forward to seeing the many travelling guests from Aldershot and other areas of UK who now make this a regular event - twin beds this time for the terrible twins, R and M!

Well folks we look forward to our AGM which will be well gone by the time this goes to print. The Yorkshire Members wish you all a very Merry Xmas and Happy New Year.

Arnhem Remembered

Jack Braithwaite G3PWK

For the third time this year members of the REA Radio Branch spent the weekend at Chatham operating an amateur radio station from the RE Museum. The Airborne landings at Arnhem 60 years ago were reason.

We applied to Ofcom who have taken over from the Radio Communications Agency, for a special call sign. The call sign GB 60 AE (Airborne Engineers) was issued. This was one of only two special calls allocated to UK stations. Frequencies suitable for working UK, and northern Europe were chosen so that we could contact stations in countries who were involved in the battle. Two hundred and fifty seven stations worked mainly in the UK, France, Belgium, Holland, and Germany. Unfortunately we did not make contact with any Polish stations.

A 12ft x 12ft Shelter was borrowed from the RSME and set up in the grounds of the Museum. This allowed us to operate outside Museum opening hours. At 1626 hrs 17 September we made our first contact, conditions were good, and the station closed for the day at 2315 hrs. On Saturday conditions were poor and not many contacts were made. Sunday started slow but soon livened up and until we closed down at 00 hrs we were working stations as fast as we could write down the required information in the log book. Many stations were still calling us when we closed down. All stations worked have been sent a card with a battle scene at the bridge to confirm the contact, and we will get cards in return.

Among the stations worked were several in Arnhem including two special call signs PA 60 BTF (Bridge Too Far) and PA 6 OMG (Operation Market Garden) operating from a barge on the river. We were very pleased to work Doug Walker GOAEJ and Ron Sawkins G3ADS. Doug was in 277 Coy Pioneer Corps and landed by glider. Doug did not return to the UK but was transferred to the Royal Military Police, attached to the Canadians and was in Hamburg until 1947. Ron served with "G" Section Royal Signals attached to 80th Field Regiment Royal Artillery 157 Brigade, who moved up the land corridor. At the briefing they were not given much information (unlike the Airborne) in case they were captured. He crossed the bridges as far as Eindhoven without too much trouble, but met heavy fire from 88mm guns after Nijmegen. It was here they found out about the battle at Arnhem after seeing Gliders landing ahead of them. Next year there are more 60th anniversaries including the Rhine crossing "Operation Varsity", said to be the most successful of all airborne operations, which we hope to put on a station to commemorate.

Recalling Arnhem

Ivor Sherrad parachuted into Holland on the second day of Operation Market Garden - after the element of surprise had gone. "After the first drop the Germans knew more of us would be coming and were waiting for us in the woods." Many of my comrades died in their parachute harness before they hit the ground: "I was too busy concentrating on getting down, but I could hear the ping of the bullets as they went past."

The men of the 4th Airborne Brigade, commanded by Brigadier Hackett, later to become a General, were met by two Panzer Divisions and crack SS troops.

We had landed at Oosterbeek, several miles from Arnhem. As we came through a little village at the side of a railway line, all hell was let loose. We were told to expect an army of old men and no tanks, but we met well-trained and well-organised troops, and tanks as well. They pushed us back and we dug in at the side of the woods. "We were dug in for three days until a Sergeant came over and said, "Smarten yourselves up, we're pulling out. Find some sacking to put around your boots." I suppose he meant that would deaden the sound, but it wouldn't have done a lot of good in the woods.

We crossed a main road filled with burning jeeps and other vehicles and took a path to the river. We lay there for about 31/2 hours but knew if we didn't get out before daylight we'd had it.

We clung to each other from behind in the darkness and, as we were pulling out, we could hear the Germans muttering and shouting - we were that close to them. Canadian and British Engineers were waiting with boats to take us across the Rhine River. Some lads tried to swim the river, but never made it and we saw boats hit as the Germans continued to shell us." Eventually, we made it to Nijmegen where he stayed for two nights before being flown back to England.

Although the veterans are feted and revered in Holland, there has never been a medal issued for Arnhem. Churchill said, "We don't give out medals for defeats."

I've made several pilgrimages to the graves of the men I fought with in the greatest airborne invasion in history. But this latest visit was something special. It was very emotional because for many of us it was the last. But the things the Dutch people did for us were out of this world. We were treated like kings. People kept coming up to us and saying 'thank you.' We were marching over the bridge little kids were running out, grabbing our hands and saying 'thank you, thank you.' Some of them were wearing T-shirts on which was written, 'I'm a child of freedom. Thank you, Mr. Veteran.' It was incredible when you think that we were only there nine days and the damage and confusion we caused and we didn't even win.

AEA Website

John Aldridge

I feel that our association needs an active website and improved electronic communication for a couple of reasons. Firstly, we are very bad at communicating from the top down to the ordinary member in an age when it couldn't be easier. Secondly, we risk missing out on the younger potential AEA members who lead busy lives and whose natural first search point for information on anything, including past comrades, is the World Wide Web.

After the Bristol AGM problems I set up an example of what I felt an association website might contain and got some very positive feedback about my amateur effort. This site can still be seen at <http://www.rogallo.co.uk/aea.htm> but I haven't done much to update it for over a year. Nick Gibson also set up something similar at Bob Prosser's behest but warned me that his experience of such things lead him to believe that anyone taking on the project would have to do all the work and chasing up themselves for it to stay up to date and of ongoing interest, rather than just a "look once" site. He was probably right but I still think we need a "live" website with up to date information on branch activities as well as the historical stuff that people mainly look for just once - and I'm sure there must be at least one person in each branch organisation to ensure I get regular information. An example of an actively managed website is the Edinburgh Branch one - www.edinburgh-branch-airborne-engineers-association.co.uk/

I have been re-motivated to try and make the website active and relevant again partly as a result of recent contact with Tony Fry, webmaster of the 9 Squadron site <http://www.ninepara.co.uk/Welcome.htm>, who told me he regularly gets inquiries from ex-Sqn guys who want either information on airborne engineer history or old comrades. Tony has now restored the link from the 9 Squadron site to my AEA one so it is important I get current information onto it. For this I need your help; Fred Gray has been great in supplying material from the archives but I need branch secretaries to e-mail me their newsletters, preferably as MS Word files, I need members to let me know about other small group activities that are planned or have recently taken place - and I need nobody to take umbrage if I have to edit stuff!

Membership Report

Chris Chambers

Since my last report, a further 12 members have joined our ranks

Wayne Sear	51 Fd Sqn (Air Assault)/ 9 Para Sqn	2000 - still serving
Mike Hookem	131 Indep Cdo Sqn RE (V)	1980-1989
William (Bill) Bradbury	1 Para Regt RE	1943-1945
John Powell	9 Indep Para Sqn RE	1958- 1965
Maurice Harrison	9 Para Sqn RE	1955- 1957
Donald (Dad) Wallace	9 Indep Para Sqn RE	1957/62 & 1968/1972
Andrew Lowe	9 Para Sqn RE	2004 - still serving
Ashley Lawes	9 Para Sqn	2003 -still serving
John Donald	9 Indep AB Sqn	1955-1957
Graham Singer	9 Para Sqn RE	1978-1982
George Tipping	9 Indep Para Sqn /131 Para Engr Regt	1957/59 & 1960/68
Albert Lesslie	131 Para Engr Regt	1959-1967

“Gentlemen, Welcome to the Airborne Engineers Association”

Association Shop

Description	Price	P& P (UK Post Rate)
Association Ties (Pegasus logo)	£13.00	£1.00
Association Blazer Badges	£14.00	£1.00
Association Jumpers (sizes 38-48) Maroon or blue with Pegasus logo embroidered 'Airborne Engineers'	£25.00	£3.10
Association Sweatshirts Maroon or blue logo - Med/Large or X Large	£16.50	£3.10
Association Polo Shirts - Fred Perry Style Maroon or blue logo Medium/Large or X Large	£15.50	£2.50
Association T Shirts - Maroon only - Large or extra-large only	£9.00	£1.80
Association Shields	£18.00	£3.30
A Memoir of 9 Para Sqn RE in the Falklands Campaign 1982 by Maj C.M. Davies MBE (now Colonel)	£12.00	£2.10
Anniversary Ties (silk with Wings & Pegasus logo)	£15.00	£1.00
Association Cuff Links (slightly smaller than the lapel badge)	£8.50	£1.60
The Shiny 9th (1939-1945) by Patrick Pronk The history of 9 Field Company (Airborne)	£9.00	£1.80
The 9th (1787-1960) by the late Tom Purves (Special offer while stocks last)	£7.00	£3.80
Bow Ties (silk woven with Wings & Pegasus logo)	£9.00	£1.00

Would overseas members please send cheques in £ pounds sterling, with a little extra to cover postage, from your local bank or an international money order from the Post Office. Cheques should be made payable to:

"Airborne Engineers Association"

Please note my address when submitting your orders:

Jan Chambers [REDACTED] E-Mail [REDACTED]

My thanks for your continued support,

Jan
