



THE AIRBORNE ENGINEERS JOURNAL



For All Airborne Sappers

December 2022, Issue No. 59

Thank you to everyone who has provided the content for this issue of the Journal, your input is much appreciated. If you would like to submit an article for a future issue, please get in touch using the Webmaster contact details below.

Committee Contacts				
President Lt Col (Retd) Baz Bassett Email: mrb375@gmail.com		Vice President John Brennan Email: brennanj@btopenworld.com		
Chairman Steve Wallis Email: stephen.wallis57@ntlworld.com		Secretary Mike Robertson Email: michaelj.robertson@outlook.com		
Treasurer Lt Col (Retd) Robert Matthews Email: robert.matthews52@gmail.com		Membership Billy Morris MSM 23 Cambridge Road Aldershot, Hants, GU11 3JZ Tel: 07840 102900 Email: bsfm968@gmail.com		
Webmaster Dave Pace 169 College Road, Deal, Kent, CT14 6BX Tel: 01304 373933 Email: contactaeawebmaster@gmail.com		Shop Manager Jon Nichols Email: aeashopmanager@gmail.com Shop: https://airbornesappers.org.uk/shop/ Facebook - Shop Discussion Group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/2016356088754648		
Welfare Advisor Paul Moore Email: To be advised. Once known will add to welfare page of web site at https://www.airbornesappers.org.uk/welfare.htm		Association Archivist Nick Gibson		
Life Vice Presidents	Bob Ferguson	Tom Ormiston	Fred Gray	Ray Coleman
	Bob Prosser BEM	Chris Chambers	Dave Rutter	

Contents

President's Report.....	4
Chairman's Report	6
Branch News	7
299 Association Report	7
Aldershot Branch – AGM Update.....	8
Birmingham Branch Report	9
Chatham Branch Annual Update 2021 – 2022.....	10
Scotland Branch Report	11
Wales & West Branch	13
Yorkshire branch update.....	14
AEA Archives	15
Bequest to the Association from the Late Bob Sullivan MBE	16
Remembering Lt Col John Rock	18
The Spirit of a Soldier Fighting Cancer – Sgt Robert McCaigue.	19
Brian's Bar	24
Cromwell Lock.....	28
Cromwell Lock Memorial Service.....	28
Cromwell Lock and the Majestic but Lethal River Trent.....	29
Cromwell Lock Memorial Refurbishment	31
Double Hills Memorial Service 2022	32
Paul Downie – Sailing Odyssey.....	34
Airborne Engineers Association Online Shop	41
Airborne Engineers Shop - Facebook Discussion Group.....	41
Tips for Buyers Outside the UK	42
New Product Design Proposals	42
Sale Items.....	42
Association Merchandise	43
AGM Minutes.....	44
Financial Statement	51
Obituaries.....	52
Walter Reginald (Wally) Clift.....	52
Sydney Warrilow	53
Trevor Ernest (Ernie) Bugdale	53
Join the Airborne Engineers Association	54

President's Report

INTRODUCTION FROM YOUR NEW PRESIDENT LT COL (RETD) BAZ BASSETT

Our Chairman Steve Wallis twisted my arm back in 2021 and asked if I would consider to temporarily stand in as President while he found a volunteer. I assumed that he would be true to his word and find someone, unfortunately it was not to be, and in October I found myself in Birmingham, at the AGM, being elected in as your President. Having said that, I was not the only one stepping up, as there were a number of other moves to the executive panel. A number of members stood down after having carried out their duties, loyally and successfully for many many years. The likes of Dave and Jeannette Rutter, who magnificently looked after the Journal and shop, Dick Brown as treasurer who has kept those hands tightly on the purse strings of the accounts very efficiently, and at last we have an association secretary, welcome to Mick Robertson. Of course, I must mention my predecessor John Lee and his wife Pat, who have been such a permanent fixture with the association at the various events around the UK. John over the years has worked tirelessly behind the scenes in keeping the association moving forward, and wherever he can, to engage with the branches and serving units.

I welcome the new faces to the committee who will be taking your association forward. Dave Pace, who is making tremendous strides in our social media world to ensure the new generation can post and draw information at a moment's notice in this technical world. I would encourage you all to take the time to email Dave with your ideas or information so he can post it onto the site. However, we do also need an editor or editors to check the articles, this is not an onerous task and if you have spare time please stick your head above the parapet - it won't be shot off, many hands can make light work. Bob Matthews is taking over as the new Treasurer; I fear we will have as hard a time as we had with Dick to get any funds out of the account. The new Shop manager is Jon Nichols (JB) another IT genius, JB continues to develop the Airborne shop web site to allow a wider view of the stock, quicker response for orders and a more customer focus for the association. His presentation at the AGM was impressive and showed us how easy it was for us to order online. I would point out that it is your association and your shop, you can have your say and speak up, either on face book, web site page or email. Moaning about it will not change things, engage with the team and we can sort the problem or at least try to address the problem.

As always, I would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to the branch members in supporting their branches and of course to those of you organising the events and running the branches. Without these volunteers there would be no events, without members there would be no branches and no association, so many thanks. Of course, it goes without saying whenever we can we should advertise and recruit. How we engage with the new generation of Airborne Engineers at Woodbridge is the challenge for us all, something for myself and Steve to address. One big step is 23 Regt's open day next year at Woodbridge, a large presence there, engaging with the serving airborne and advertising ourselves will assist in making a mark. A stand at the open day with some veterans and history is a must, any ideas and volunteers would be welcome.

Finally, I do hope to get around to visit where I can and if I miss you, the AGM and gala dinner in 2023 will be a good opportunity to catch up, if you have not been to one I would encourage you to attend. Birmingham branch did us all very proud this year and it was an excellent gathering. Next year it is to be held in Malvern at the Abbey Hotel organised by the Wales branch. I have stayed there and it is a fantastic location.

I believe that 23 will produce a really good open day next year at Wodbridge and I hope that those that can make the effort to be there and support the Association will be very impressed. The Regt continues to expand and grow and it will be fascinating to see the equipment and material they now

have to carry out their operational role and what capability they have to deliver as an Airborne Sapper unit.

Until then may I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and safe and successful New Year.

With best wishes

Baz Bassett

[Back to contents](#)

Chairman's Report

Hi everyone and season's greetings to you all.

I must start this by mentioning the late Queen. Almost all members of the association swore an oath of allegiance to the Countries longest serving monarch and it was only fitting that she received a state funeral which highlighted all that is good about this country and its traditions. You will be sorely missed your Majesty.

Well, this has been a very busy year both personally and for the Association.

After 25 years living in the same house, Mel and I have moved to a new retirement bungalow. This has been a very hectic time made more difficult by the mediocre performance of solicitors in organising the procurement chain. Thankfully, we have now moved in and are settled in time for the festive season. Those of you who know Mel will appreciate that the new house had to be bought up to scratch before she would relax and at one time we had Decorators, Blind Fitters, Floor Layers and Electricians (Me) all working around each other at the same time.

The association has been just as busy. We have seen many changes to the Executive Committee with John Lee stepping down as National President, Dick Brown standing down as Treasurer and Mike Fuller standing down as National Secretary. In addition, both Dave and Jeanette Rutter stepped down from their roles with the Journal and the Association Shop. I thank them all for their sterling efforts over many years in support of the Association. These stalwarts have been replaced by Baz Bassett, Bobby Matthews and Mike Robertson and I thank them all for Volunteering, without such willing volunteers the Association would not be able to function as it does. Special mention must go to Jon Nichols and Dave Pace for their magnificent efforts in moving the Association Shop on-line. Both are going above and beyond in establishing the on-line platform and re-evaluating the stock. This facility will be a great asset to the Association.

As usual, the association has flown the flag for the greater Airborne Engineers fraternity. The year started with organising the refurbishment of the Memorial at Cromwell lock and ensuring a Sapper presence at Hardwick Hall. Both of these were completed successfully. During the summer there were the usual memorial services attended by members of the association, Double Hills, Donnington, the Falkland Islands and Cromwell Lock to name but a few.

We also managed to get 36 Tickets for the Remembrance parade at the Cenotaph in front of His Majesty the King. Thanks must go to the Birmingham Branch for their support of this event with a particular mention for their President, George Barrett who was pushed around the parade route giving 'Royal salutes and Receiving' the acclamation of the watching public.

This year's AGM and Gala ball was hosted by the Birmingham Branch, and I offer them my heartfelt thanks for organising such a fantastic event. The venue was fantastic with good clean rooms and a magnificent hall for the evening function. The weekend highlighted what the Association is all about with many people attending for the first time.

Nothing remains but for Mel and I to wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

[Back to contents](#)

Branch News

299 Association Report

299 Association had another good year starting with Remembrance Sunday in Hull, A well-attended parade joined by the serving lads of 299 Parachute Squadron R.E. A 299 Association wreath was laid then all back to The Minerva our spiritual home where a buffet was laid on and plenty of Alcoholic refreshments was consumed. Our lads are very generous with raffle prizes, and we held our annual Remembrance Day raffle which the whole pub takes part in, and the profit pays for the buffet.

We were asked to parade with an organisation called URBAN who look after the underprivileged kids of the Bransholme council estate as we do most years to lay a wreath with our standard flying to pay our respects to the fallen, we then have tea and biscuits with the Lord Mayor of Hull, Police, and other dignitaries.

In December we lost our long serving 299 Para AEA member John Mace we gave him a special 299 send off at the crematorium with a large guard of honour. Our webmaster Dave Hines made a 2023 calendar with pictures of John in each month.

Christmas drinks in the Minerva in December with a great turnout from the lads.

In March one of our lads Kev Blacker ran the Northern traverse a 200 mile over 3 days for charity. And Lee Smith a mere 50 miles.

We lost our Arnhem veteran Les Ransom whilst covid was on so never got the funeral he deserved so his son invited the association near his birthday to an unveiling of a bench in his memory. We turned up mob handed with our standard to celebrate his life with a few beers and photos to mark the occasion.

April 23rd St George's Day we hired a coach went to Kingsbury London to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of 131 who put on a buffet and hog roast and brought us up to date with modern weapons and plant and other interesting stands, and a shoot. We met up with a lot of old friends and had a great weekend.

our well attended AGM over 40 attended and we raised £300 for the charity S. E.N.

Two of our guy's Richey Gill and Mike Sunderland cycled from Hull to Edinburgh 265 miles.

A few 299 guys went to Airborne forces day at Eden camp.

- Great Arnhem trip this year met up with the Airborne riders at Driel where we laid a wreath to the fallen . Unfortunately, a few of the lads came back with covid.
- Cromwell lock with AEA standard and 299 Association standard to pay our respects to our 131 independent Para Squadron brothers who perished there in 1975. Would have had more numbers but some still getting over Covid.

[Back to contents](#)

Aldershot Branch – AGM Update

Despite our numbers slowly but surely depleting, we continue to hold bi-monthly meetings at the Brewers Fayre in Aldershot. The management incurs no cost for the use of their facilities from which we also benefit a reasonably priced carvery lunch following our meeting.

For the past 13 – 20 years the branch has provided the mainstay of the Association committee. Notably John Lee as the AEA President, Dick Brown as the AEA Treasurer, Dave Rutter as the AEA Journal Editor and Jeannette Rutter (Honorary Member) the Association Shop Manager. But time and tide wait for no one and at the 2022 AGM our President will be handing over to Baz Bassett, Chatham branch, Dick Brown has handed over the keys to the cash box to Bob Matthews, Chatham branch, Dave Rutter put down the quill, and Dave Pace Chatham branch has now, after many hours of IT work is now producing an on-line version of our Journal. Finally in August 2022, Jeannette completed the transfer of the AEA Shop management into the capable hands of Jon Nichols.

Having mentioned our depleting numbers, we sadly bid farewell to two of the stalwarts from the branch. Firstly, to our Normandy veteran Bob Sullivan MBE at the age of 99 years, whose final departure was held in the Wren Chapel, Royal Hospital Chelsea. The service was attended by family and friends, branch members, PRA members and Chelsea pensioners dressed in their scarlets. The setting and service within the chapel was a most fitting final farewell to a wonderful gentleman, who will be sadly missed.

More recently we suffered a further loss by the departure of Wally Clift. Wally was one of the founder members of the Airborne Engineers Association. He was one of the real characters within 9 Para Sqn, and many readers will have their own recollections of his antics and humorous activities. Wally had suffered a slow decline in health and was unable to join us at our meetings in recent times. His final farewell was attended by retired officers, airborne colleagues and many family members and close friends. His widow Kathleen and son Gary expressed their most humble thanks to John Ferry, who 'piped' Wally into and out of the church, and to Tim Van-de-Kraan who carried the AEA standard and to the many airborne colleagues (donned with 'red berets') who were in attendance.

Characters such as Wally are very few and far between, and we sadly miss his presence.

Our newly appointed entertainments member, Billy Morris, has put forward several suggestions for consideration and these will be investigated for possible inclusion into our program in the New Year. However, branch members have not been sitting on their hands. The South Coast Ramblers, initiated originally by Nat Haig, meet up fortnightly on a Thursday for a hike around various places of interest within the Hampshire countryside. Organised by various individuals, the hikes have included, Hankley Common, the Devils Punch Bowl, Caesars Camp, The New Forest, areas of the South Downs and Barton Stacey.

Branch members have been attending a variety of events/ceremonies in support of the AEA, with special mention to John Ferry who has travelled many miles throughout the country 'piping' at these occasions. Many members will be in attendance at the 2022 AGM and at the Cenotaph ceremony in November.

[Back to contents](#)

Birmingham Branch Report

The branch currently averages around 18 to 24 members attending monthly meetings. The monthly meetings have been a mix of Ordinary General Meeting and Social Meetings as a means of maintaining contact with members.

The meeting venue went through a few changes over the past 12 months due to economic pressures to licensed premises but the branch now enjoys a more permanent meeting venue and attendances are improving.

The branch held its usual Christmas dinner in December 2021 after an enforced break due to Covid and was a huge success with all thanks to the organising members and wives.

January 2022 was a new start for the branch.

The Branch AGM which was programmed for April but was bought forward to the end of March due to some member's holiday commitments.

The Branch AGM resulted in a change of committee and since then the branch has been able to get back to normal business and a healthier environment. We have welcomed a number of new full members.

Branch Members have continued to support Airborne and PRA events and Services with members attending Hardwick Hall in May, Double Hills and also Cromwell Lock services in September all of which were very well attended.

The branch has also enjoyed a more social side after the pandemic with restaurant meals, the restarting of the Breakfast Club meetings and simply social meets for a drink.

The sadder side is that the branch has lost members or ex-comrades over the past 12 months. Ken Woolenough who was a regular attendee passed away in October 2021, Sidney Warrilow MBE passed away in September this year. John Cooper who was not a branch member but who served with 131 in the late sixties passed away in September with members attending his funeral. Paddy Powers, who again was not a branch member but served with 131 passed away in October. The branch has also supported funerals of ex service personnel in the area.

The branch has also had its share of members who have had severe injuries, hospital admissions and cancer scares.

Upcoming event for the Branch is the Christmas Dinner on the 3rd December 2022 which should see the year out on a positive and festive note.

[Back to contents](#)

Chatham Branch Annual Update 2021 – 2022

I am sure like the other branches we have also suffered post COVID issues, not just with the frustration of being unable to meet up for over 24 months but with the many other associated problems. By far the largest of these is losing our more elderly members and the lack of new members to the branch. I won't dwell on these as it is a problem we all have.

Sadly, we did lose our oldest veteran recently Maj Alan Graham (Aged 98), a D Day veteran who parachuted into Normandy with 3 Para Sqn, fought in the Ardennes counter-offensive and who also served in Palestine. I aim to place a small eulogy on the AEA Website for all to see. An engaging and entertaining man with a lovely family who have great memories of his service, post war in Europe and throughout his career.

However, even with numbers slowly decreasing we did have a reasonable turnout for the last Christmas function and the John Rock dinner in July. Although the numbers were down which was to be expected when you consider what we went through in the summer months, Jubilee parties and the Falklands 40th celebrations of which there were many.

The branch, supported as many events as it could, and like other branches were at the number of National events, all are not listed.

National Arboretum for the Falklands 40th

The Falklands ride of respect on its stopover in the Medway towns

The Freedom of Woodbridge, although there were only 4 from the Association there.

The annual Wreath Laying at the Aldershot ceremony organised by the Aldershot branch.

Pangbourne memorial chapel service

The Falklands 40th Parade in Aldershot

And only this Wed the 19th a presentation by Col Chris Davies on the Falklands was attended by 15 Veterans in the WOs and Sgt Mess Brompton Bks

The Branch committee now meet every 2 to 3 months at my house for a Brew and Bacon buttie where we plan the next events and catch up of future national events, welfare and support. Our welfare officer Mike Tindal does a great job in keeping the communication going with the members and widows and Peter Kershaw balances the books to show that we are still in a healthy enough position to subsidise our main dinners. A different way in working, but there is that old adage that we need to change and adapt to stay alive and keep going.

[Back to contents](#)

Scotland Branch Report

Jan 2022 - Dec 2022

We have been meeting up again since January 2022 and are still going strong

Fortunately, we have had an influx of new members (all ex 9 Sqn.). This has been mainly due to the efforts of a returning founder member, Michael Ellery, who has been pursuing ex members relentlessly, for which we applaud his efforts

Unfortunately, we recently lost one of our oldest and longest serving members Ronnie Drummond. He was a regular and stalwart member of AEA Scotland and will be sorely missed. He also attended PRA Lothian Branch meetings, so at his funeral we had 3 members of AEA Scotland and 3 members of PRA Lothian attending his coffin as it entered the chapel. There was a very good turnout from both AEA Scotland and PRA Lothian. It should be noted that Ronnie was a Korean Veteran.

On 12th April 2022 members of AEA Scotland attended The Guards Club, Edinburgh where we raised a few glasses in memory of the late SSM John Lonergan who was tragically killed whilst attending an overseas camp at Al Milah, Aden in 1965.

One of our members, Andy Nelson, recently completed a charity walk around Loch Leven (Approx.13 miles) on behalf of C.H.A.S. (Chest, Heart, and Stroke Scotland) we applaud this effort. Another of our members, Dave Henderson, attended the 131 – 75th Anniversary at Kingsbury Barracks , London and had a very good time.

We attended a rededication service, Saturday 11th June, of the War Memorial at Zetland Park , Grangemouth at the invitation of RBL Grangemouth .This event was well attended by local dignitaries as well as representatives from RBL Grangemouth , AEA Scotland , Air Cadets , Army Cadets and Sea Cadets.

On the 12th June we attended the grave of Cpl Scott Wilson (Ex 9 Sqn) who was killed in action at Mount Longdon during The Falklands War 40 years ago. This is a duty we have undertaken to ensure that on the anniversary of his death he is visited and remembered as sometimes his mates are not always able to attend on this particular date

During the month of June some members attended parades for the 40th anniversary of The Falklands War and Armed Forces Day

While all these events were going on in June our Treasurer, Craig Mc Quade, took ill and subsequently had a pacemaker fitted. I am happy to report he is back to normal and looking forward to the future.

Again, during this period some members visited Zetland Park, Grangemouth and cleaned up The Memorial Stone. This was followed up by a friend of Gordon McLeod, who is a sign writer, he repainted the lettering and logos (free of charge) so this should look good on our Memorial Day parade.

We had a memorial service on Sunday 25th September 2022 at Zetland Park, Grangemouth in honour of the 10 Sappers who were tragically killed whilst participating in "Exercise Trent Chase" in 1975. This was well attended with family members, local dignitaries, RBL Grangemouth, AEA Scotland, Ex 9 Sqn members, 131 Commando Engineers, PRA Lothian as well as locals. The same day a memorial service was held at Cromwell Lock, Newark.

Our Annual Lunch, due to be held on 8th October 2022, was unfortunately cancelled as the venue could not guarantee the price quoted or even supply us with a menu. This was unfortunate as we have had several lunches over the years at The Royal Scots Club , Edinburgh

The opening of The Garden of Remembrance, Edinburgh was held on 24/10/22 where some members attended.

On Sunday 13 November a member of AEA Scotland will attend the Armistice Day Parade held in London

Some members will attend the PRA Lothian Annual Christmas Dinner/Dance at RBL Edinburgh on Friday 2nd December 2022

Thankfully we managed to have all our meetings as planned throughout the year
As you can see, we are still relatively active and hope to be so for the ongoing future
All the best to our colleagues South of The Border.

[Back to contents](#)

Wales & West Branch

The Branch was formally initiated by Mick Leather and encompasses an area covering Wales, the south west of England and the Marches, and although geographically spread out has the potential to become a fully active branch of the AEA. There are potentially about 60 members in the area but not all of course would be able to attend events. Initial meetings were held in Clehonger in 2019 and in Hereford in January 2020 but with the Covid lockdown no further meetings were held. Sadly, during the lockdown period Gerry Bonner who had been the Branch Secretary passed away.

A formal meeting was held in Hereford in January 2022, where future plans were put forward including hosting the AEA AGM and Gala Dinner. This has now been booked at the Abbey Hotel, Great Malvern for the weekend 13th – 15th October 2023.

In September both Mick Leather and Gus Hales announced their retirements as Treasurer and Secretary respectively with immediate effect. This left a void in the Branch; however, replacements have now been found for the vacancies.

A formal meeting is planned to be held in Hereford, probably in November, to re-establish the branch.

The current post holders are as follows:

President	Lt Col Clive Lee
Chairman	John (Arthur) Askey
Secretary	Dave Leibrick
Treasurer	George Firth

[Back to contents](#)

Yorkshire Branch Update

by Adam Frame

Our annual trip to Arnhem was a huge success as it is every year, led by Dave Grimbley this side and Ed van Der Laan on the other side of the Channel.

As a branch we continue to survive albeit a suggestion we fold and become REA Airborne by Bob Prosser. If we were to fold it would be because nobody was interested therefore it flies in the face of adversity to suggest such a thing. I personally do not agree as I have canvassed several members privately and we will continue as we are. Should those members feel the need to leave and become REA Airborne, they are free of course to do so. we are due to vote on this proposal at our Dec meeting and Xmas dinner in Stockton on 03 Dec. At that meeting, I will step aside and become branch President again whilst George Anderson has agreed to step up and been voted in as Chairman. My businesses are demanding more and more attention and I have very little free time to devote to anything outside of work and family at present.

Our funds continue to be healthy enough for the size of the branch. Clearly the Covid 19 lockdown periods were difficult for all branches, we were no different but have managed to fight through.

We continue in the vein that Bill Rudd would have wanted.

Afternote:

I have had a message this morning from Phil Taylor, in sum asking me to strike Bob Prosser proposal of subsuming the York's branch AEA into the REA Airborne branch. I had intended putting it to the vote at our meeting on 03 Dec when I will sidestep to President and hand over the Chairman reins to George Anderson.

I will be sending an email to all our branch members today stating that the proposal has been withdrawn.

I said that any decision would have had to be unanimous i.e., if not voted as agreed by all members with a vote, the proposal would be rejected. Clearly those in favour could then leave and pursue their futures with the REA Airborne branch or continue as they are with a foot in both camps.

[Back to contents](#)

AEA Archives

In the absence of Nick Gibson, the association archivist, please find a short update.

Nick sends his apologies but he has had an unfortunate 12 months. His failing sight has exacerbated his person situation to the point he has no sight in one and now limited sight in the other. The impact of course has required him to reassess his personal life with transportation, work and other matters restricting his movements, therefore having an impact on being able to liaise with the RE museum on our archived material.

However, suffice to say that our material and archived documents are stored safely at the Museum and as I am a member of the FOREM (Friends of the Royal Engineers Museum) I am keeping a watching brief on the items. For the association's information you should be aware that not a lot is going to occur with the massive amount of documents they have stored from across the Corps over the years. The museum has budgeted over £1.5m towards scanning the documented archives and a private company have been contracted to carry this out. This is part of a much larger project across UK museums that are going to engage with other museums and universities to take it forward as a joint project. Historically the education sector has realised the large amount of primary and secondary source material is stored now at these museums and the Corps Museum is a Golden Nugget. It will clearly not be a quick fix as there is a requirement for a lot of other organisations to buy into the project and an overall plan on what is scanned and in what order. Suffice to say we are looking at many years before it will come into fruition. But the RE Museum is also pushing ahead with a resources and historical research centre to be built and developed so while the larger project is going ahead we can still have access to the Corps material, again it will take time.

In summary though I would say our material is safe and in the archives, when Nick is firing back on 4 cylinders he will audit and check our items and give us full feedback.

Baz Bassett

Chair

Medway branch

[Back to contents](#)

Bequest to the Association from the Late Bob Sullivan MBE

The following is a copy of a note received by the Association from Bob's son, Peter, and below that a letter of thanks from our President Lt Col (retd) Baz Bassett BEM

11 m Nov 2022 30 KNIGHT Place St. Leonards Road Windsor. Berks SL4 3LE charity no. not known	in touch with each other. As I'm sure you know Dad was a veteran of WW2 serving in the parachute regiment. He passed peacefully away at the age of 99 in May this year. He spent the last 3 years of his life living as a Chelsea pensioner. With best wishes Peter Sullivan (son)
---	---



AIRBORNE ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION

Regd Charity No: 1009201



15 November 2022

Dear Peter (If I may)

Bequest to the Airborne Engineers Association

On behalf of the Airborne Engineers Association, I would like to express my sincere thanks on behalf of our members for the very kind bequest made by your late father Mr. Bob Sullivan. I can assure you that the monies will be well used in the furtherance of the aims of the Association which amongst others, includes providing assistance to members of the AEA who require access to welfare or benevolence and also to preserve the memory and traditions of airborne units of the Corps of Royal Engineers.

I met your father earlier in the year when I visited John Humphreys at the Royal Hospital Chelsea. They were certainly an interesting pair thoroughly relaxed in each other's company. Unfortunately, we are losing the stalwarts of WW2 and their great tales of adventure and camaraderie, each individual has their own unique story to tell. Bob was no different, we discussed the problems of locating and lifting mines in cold weather, he during the Ardennes offensive and mine during the Falklands conflict, fascinating subject and how little had changed as Sappers 40 years later. Conflicts have a habit of throwing us all into a melting pot, all colours, creeds shapes and sizes. It binds us together to the point that it becomes a hidden part of our DNA which when we meet up we reset ourselves. The Royal Hospital Chelsea does a great job in allowing the servicemen and women to be with their own.

Once again may I take this opportunity in thanking you and your family for the kind donation to the Airborne Engineers Association. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance in the future.

Yours sincerely

Lt Col (Retd) Baz Bassett BEM

President, Airborne Engineers Association.

You can see Bob's entry in the Association web site Roll of Honour here:

<https://www.airbornesappers.org.uk/rollofhonour/S/bobsullivan.htm>

[Back to contents](#)

Remembering Lt Col John Rock

On the 10th November 2022 Dave Rutter and Tony Manley visited Tidworth Military Cemetery, to lay a wreath at the final resting place of Lt Col John Rock RE, initiator of the assembly of British Airborne Forces. You can find some additional information on Lt Col Rock on the AEA website at <https://www.airbornesappers.org.uk/johnrock.htm>

Dave and Tony made this same act of remembrance in 2021.



[Back to contents](#)

The following article was received from Capt Jack Noden, 23 Para Engr Regt RHQ, IO and is classified as "Official – Sensitive" please treat the content accordingly

The Spirit of a Soldier Fighting Cancer – Sgt Robert McCaigue.

SSgt Mooney 1 Troop 9 Para Sqn RE

Being the best Carpenter in The Corps of RE is no easy feat. I am constantly bombarded with "*can you do this or can you make that*" type requests. Obviously, I can, but being a Class 1 tradesman is not the only feather in my cap. I was recently asked if I could help a fellow Sapper, Sergeant Robert (Bobby) McCaigue, who was terminally ill, with a wheelchair access ramp to his house. This request was nothing short of a privilege to complete for a fellow Sapper and Brother in the Brigade. I canvased the opportunity to those in the Sqn and the reaction was no different to being tasked to get out the door for a short notice rapid reaction force deployment - everyone was keen and willing to help.

Sergeant Robert McCaigue, 32, from Braintree, a serving member of 16 Air Assault Brigade Combat Team based at Merville Barracks, Colchester, was diagnosed with brain cancer in 2019. When I initially met him and told him I was going to help with his request, I was struck by Bobby's positivity. He was full of squaddie humour stating, "My prognosis is not great, but I'm still here' ... 'Bad news can be dealt with by the 'never give up' attitude, discipline and pride, as that makes a good soldier'. In true form all the lads gave Bobby stick for being a Clerk of Works, however he gave as good as he got and appreciated the banter from fellow Sappers.

The Troop got straight to work as soon as we arrived on site. It was the day after a cheeky storm had knocked over a few fence panels, so they immediately set to work repairing these. The main effort was the construction of a ramp so Bobby could get in and out of the front door with his wheelchair without his family constantly collapsing the foldable ones they currently had.

Always wanting to deliver beyond what has been asked of us, we borrowed the plate compacter from Support Troop and asked the civilian contractors if they would be willing to donate some hardcore for the task. We also wanted to build a pathway out the back of his house so Bobby and Najette (his Wife) had multiple options to get out with the wheelchair and enable him to move freely to fulfil one of his final wishes to have a curry down the road from the house.

It was an absolute honour to help Bobby achieve his final wish. He leaves behind his loving wife Najette and 2 beautiful children Harrison, aged three, and Teagan, six months.

RIP Fellow Sapper.

Spr Macdonald 1 Troop 9 Para Sqn RE

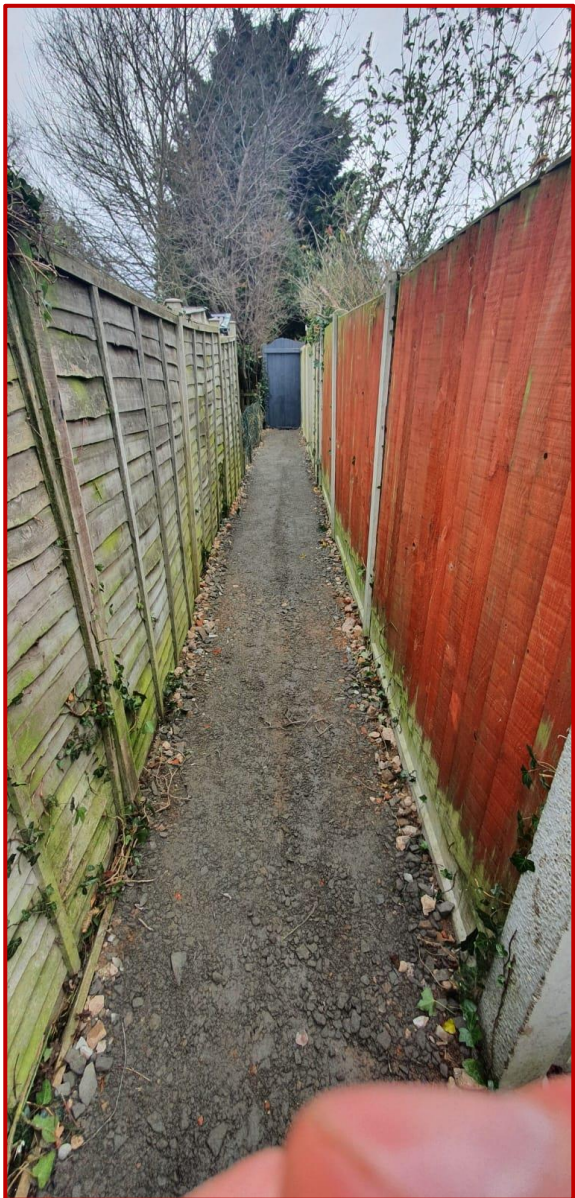
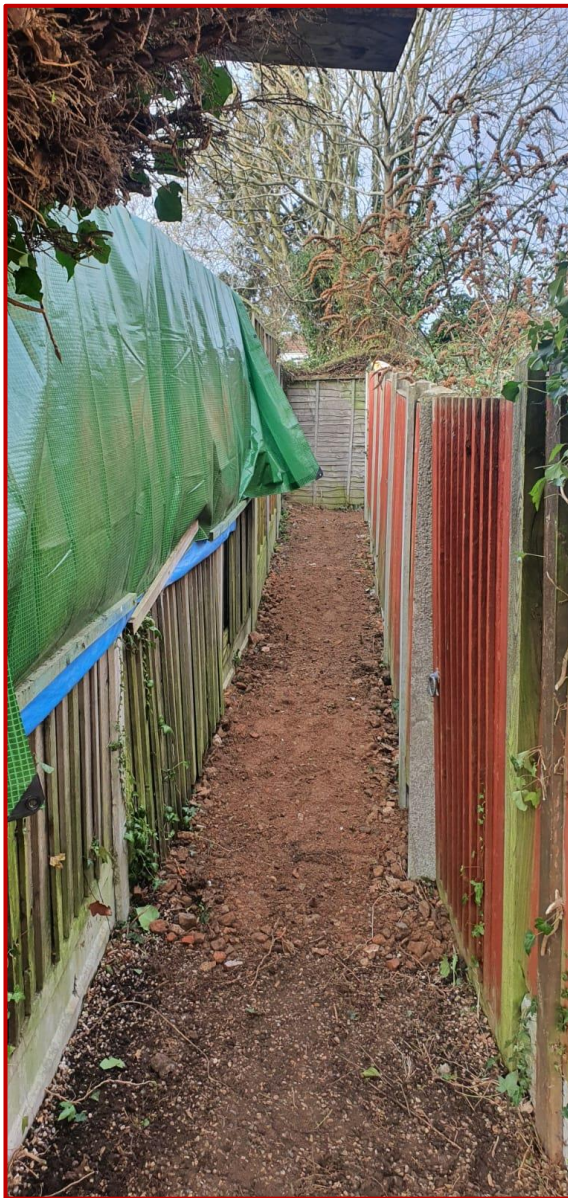
"It was a privilege to meet Sgt Robert McCaigue and his family. He shared stories with us about his time as a Sapper and showed us his inspiring artwork which he created for his children to appreciate in years to come. Sgt McCaigue and his family were truly grateful for the work we carried out."

Spr Tynan 1 Troop 9 Para Sqn RE

"Sgt McCaigue's garden was overgrown, uneven and damp making it impossible for him to leave the house. Over a few days we cleared the whole path, dug and put down aggregate on the surface. This allowed Sgt McCaigue to leave the house and have more freedom rather than being restricted to his bed. To help Bobby in making a walkway and building a ramp outside so he could leave the house was a privilege. His family were very appreciative of our work and took good care of us whilst we were there.









[Back to contents](#)

Brian's Bar

How Did I Get Here?

Brian Lee (Squadron Shiny Arse).

After having been invited by Dave Pace to write an article for the AEA journal, my thoughts went back to my Squadron days and how my journey unfolded on the long road from my youth to my present age.

So here goes!

Born in early 1948 a son of a soldier, my first overseas tour was as a service brat living in Tripoli in 1951 and returning to UK late 1953. On returning to UK family my life fell apart and I was placed in an orphanage, here I remained for 10 years. By this time my father had remarried and being still in the Army was stationed in Hohn (BAOR). He called for our release from council care, and so my second overseas tour started in December 1962. This did not last for long; my schooling was very basic to say the least. Work was almost impossible to find for service brats, so my only real option was to join the Army. Along with my two brothers I enlisted into the Corps of Royal Engineers in 1963.

Thus started my career which lasted until November 1998 (35 years). Many units and many tours and exercises later I retired, starting a second career in IT with a private healthcare company. But that's another storey.

Now at the ripe old age of 74 years and having been retired since the age of 58, I've had plenty of time to remiss and reflect over my career. Without doubt my proudest time was serving with the Airborne Forces.

In May 1966 I was posted to Herford BAOR, here I quickly realised that I was not comfortable with sitting on my backside swigging ale and smoking cheap cigarettes, so I applied to do the All-Arms Parachute course. November that year saw me complete P Company. Then it was off to RAF Abingdon, and after having completed my eight jumps, (Balloon 2, Hastings 3 and Argosy's 3). I was awarded my wings on the 8th December 1966.

My first tour was with 16 Parachute Brigade Aldershot until 1969 and during this period I managed to get 27 jumps in, these all being Hastings, Argosy and Hercules C130's. I remember being on one of the first Hercules C130, jumps from RAF Odiham into Hankley DZ on the 19th June 1968, it was a great experience compared to the old Hastings and Argosy.

I was then posted back to BAOR in September 1969.

My second tour with the Brigade was in April 1975 and I was posted to 9 Indep Para Sqn RE as a Clerk RE. I knew this was going to be an interesting tour. The first person to greet me was Louis Gallagher (RIP) and as I walked into the barrack block his first words were "Who the F**k are you?" Within 10 minutes of putting my kit into my bunk, my TV had disappeared. My thoughts then being that this is only the first hour of a three-year tour, and it certainly proved anything but dull!!

Northern Ireland, Canada, and Cyprus tours were a few places I travelled with the Squadron. During this time, I was awarded my American wings, attached to 131 Indep Para Sqn (V) this being at the time they were converting from Para to Cdo role. So off I went to Lympstone and did the course, but as it was a TA course, I just obtained the experience. Then in August 1978 went down and had a crack at Hereford, (failed) but still this was another great experience. I left the Squadron in 1978 on another

posting to BAOR. I left the Squadron with a Bergen full of great Squadron memories and a host of photos to remind me of my best years in the Corps.

So, on retirement (Aug 2006) I went to live in Cyprus it was here that I built my first Squadron bar and had a visit from Baz Bassett (who incidentally wrote an article along with a few pictures published in a previous issue of the AEA journal).



Sqn Bar Cyprus with Baz Bassett

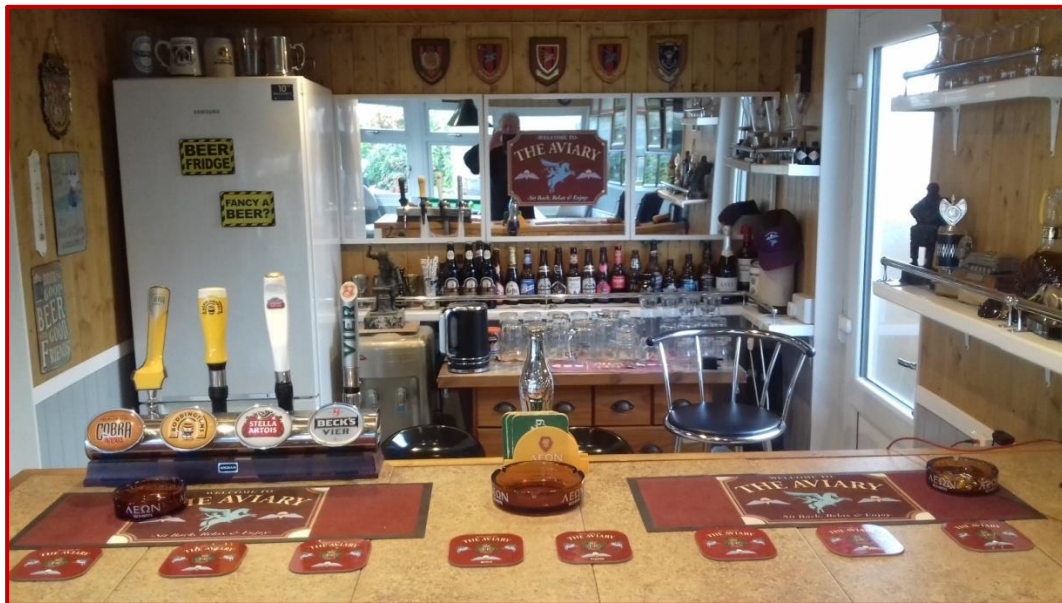
After living in Cyprus for 15 years my wife (Tracey) and I returned to UK, and we now have a nice little bungalow in Barnby Dun near Doncaster.

My first task after settling in, was to build my second Squadron Bar, this took 3 months but it was well worth the effort and I'm pleased with the results. The bar walls are festooned with Squadron memorabilia, they are covered with over 65 photos of the Squadron lads, a Squadron Flag, Regimental and Squadron shields, etc.



Sqn Bar Barnby Dun, Doncaster

Sqn bar mats provided by Jim Queen (great job Jim)! Sqn bar Signs, Sqn bar mats and outside Sqn lantern, and a Sqn bar clock. Really pleased with all my Squadron extras.



This wall shows my Royal Warrants and citations, My father's medals, my medals my Stable belts and pictures of The Squadron sevens rugby teams and tucked in the bottom right a picture of me in London in Jan 1964.



9 Indep Para Sqn Bar Lantern.



The top picture, the first picture I ever took in the Squadron, was of Paddy Hoon his dog and Squadron POMS (Bren Barr and Chris Gosling are two names I remember) at High Whycombe in April/May 1975.

The second picture is of Support Troop (Cyprus 1975/76) Bobby Jenks, Stumpy, Clogg, Sid Groundsill, Taff Griffiths (RIP) etc.

Other Sqn guys in my rouges gallery include such names (in no specific order) as Old Sid (G1098 Sgt), Jim Queen, Chunky Freeman, Ian McGill, Lee Gayle, Rogalski, Colin Sangwin, Chris Blagg, Boff Harrap, Paul Clowes, Tricky Dicky (SSM), Tom Ormiston, and many more.

(Please excuse any names wrongly spelt)

I have a few beers every afternoon in my bar, and think of the Squadron days and the guys I served with. What a bunch of rogues, bounders, blaggards, piss heads, piss takers, etc, etc. But great guys to have around when the chips are down. Definitely, they were and still are the best guys and days of my career.

Any Squadron guys in the area are always welcome to visit and crack a beer.

Great Memories and that's HOW I GOT HERE!

Brian Lee (Shiny Arse)

[Back to contents](#)

Cromwell Lock

Cromwell Lock Memorial Service

By Lt Col (Retd) John Lee

The annual Cromwell Lock service was held on Sunday 25th September to remember the 10 soldiers from 300Tp, 131 Indep Para Sqn RE (V) who died there after the assault boat they were navigating went over the weir in September 1975.

A total of 61 people attended with representatives from the Airborne Engineers Association, 131 Cdo Sqn, Newark and neighbouring Parachute Regimental Associations and the Royal British Legion.

The memorial had been recently renovated by members of 23 Parachute Engineer Regiment who had done a fine job in making good the wear and tear sustained over 40 years and it was in pristine condition.

The service was conducted by the Rt Revd John Finney who conducted last years' service and the theme of his address was dedication and service, citing the late Queen Elizabeth's reign as a shining example. Wreaths were laid by the AEA President, Lt Col (Retd) John Lee, and the representatives from 131 Cdo Sqn, the Birmingham and 299 Association Branches of the AEA and from the PRA Branches.

After the service the attendees retired to The Muskham Ferry Inn for refreshments and a chance to renew old friendships.

A service was also held at Zetland Park in Falkirk on the same day where there is another memorial and which was attended by families and friends and members of the AEA Scottish Branch so it can be truly said the lads are not forgotten.



The following is an article written some time ago by a local councillor.

[Cromwell Lock and the Majestic but Lethal River Trent](#)

As we approach September 28th, we are again reminded of the tragedy on that same date in 1975 when 10 men from the 300 Troop 131 Independent Parachute Squadron of the Royal Engineers Territorial Army lost their lives at the weir. Eleven young sappers were on an 80-mile night navigation exercise from Stoke to Hull. When they reached the weir there was a force 6 gale and the river was in spate. Tragically they arrived at the same time as a power cut and there were no lights at the lock that might have directed them to safety. One of the soldiers was saved after clinging to the assault boat for an hour, but the "Devils Cauldron" at the base of the weir claimed the other ten including two brothers.

The only survivor was Sapper Pat Harkin.

A fairly short time after that another tragedy occurred at the weir. A family in a pleasure cruiser were having breakfast below whilst the son was left at the helm and the craft went over the weir and despite valiant efforts by the emergency services the father was drowned.

At the time I was employed at Newark District Council at Kelham Hall with a remit for safety including at that time, water safety. Due to these tragedies and the coroner's concerns the Council made substantial lobbying to British Waterways (BW), who were responsible for river navigation and weirs at that time, to improve safety at Cromwell Weir and indeed nationally, at all similar weirs. With the help of the Royal Society for the prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) the Council was successful in persuading BW to take action. As a result, nationally, surveys of all hazardous weirs were undertaken and booms were installed, approach signage was made more conspicuous, communications were improved and other safety measures implemented.

I always remember approaching the weir from upstream with BW in one of their crafts and it was impossible to see the weir- it just appearing as one continuous length of water. Thus, anyone in a boat without knowledge of the weir at that time could similarly have been at risk of death.

Since then, the Devil's Cauldron has claimed at least one other life; a fisherman in a boat at the base of the weir in 2012, that entered tow back" current and was drawn into the cauldron of water.

My career at Newark District Council developed and later included a remit as lead for Emergency Planning and again the river Trent played a haunting part of my life. This time the impact of its ability to flood into its rightful flood plains which of course are occupied by many communities. I observed first-hand the damage and trauma that can be caused by fluvial (river) and pluvial (sudden heavy rainfall) flooding and witnessed the plight of many families that were uninsured and lost livelihoods. Girton, Collingham, Besthorpe, Lowdham etc have all been seriously affected on many occasions.

Again, (not wishing to blow the trumpet of my ex-employer), but from 1998 up to 2010 Newark and Sherwood District Council was one of the leading local authorities to building resilience in their communities against flooding and responding to flood incidents.

Fortunately, for some 80 years, North Muskham has not been seriously hit by flooding albeit one or two properties have been affected. A hundred years is nothing in the life of the planet and if one ventures over the river to Girton, look out for the "Flood House" which has a number of food levels recorded on its walls. You will see that the floods in the 18th century were nearly above your head. That of course is likely to happen again at some time: hopefully perhaps a long time in our futures and we have in place now some defences to mitigate the risk.

The District Council (or at least some of its officers under my management) was starting to take climate change seriously in the late 1990's not least because a substantial part of the district is at risk of flooding. I remember a sobering fact in a local climate change Impact Assessment carried out by the Environment Agency which suggests that by 2050 , due to global warming and sea level rises, the water levels in the current tidal reaches below Cromwell Weir will be the same as the levels upstream on the Muskham side of the weir.

Quite a sobering thought and a reminder that we need to act now to mitigate climate change...but on the plus side we may be able to observe the frolics of seals and perhaps the odd dolphin whilst sitting with a refreshing pint outside the Muskham Ferry.

Ian Harrison



Cromwell Lock Memorial Refurbishment

The memorial at Cromwell Lock to 10 Airborne Sappers from 131 Parachute Squadron Royal Engineers TA(V) who lost their lives when their Assault Boat was swept over the weir on 28th September 1975 during a night navigation exercise on the river Trent.

In August 2022 the memorial has been refurbished by a team from 299 Parachute Squadron Royal Engineers led by SSgt Scott Comer RE. Thanks go to 23 Parachute Engineer Regiment for providing the manpower and to the Canal and River Trust for providing Onsite Facilities to the team. The images below show the memorial before and after the refurbishment.



[Back to contents](#)

Double Hills Memorial Service 2022

By Lt Col (Retd) John Lee

This years' service was held on Sunday 3rd September and was a somewhat shorter one than in previous years, as the Army Air Corps were not able to provide a detachment and 23 Parachute Engineer Regiment supplied a small contingent under the command of Capt Henry Irvine. Consequently, there was no formal parade or inspection as in previous years. Despite this there was a good attendance from the local community and it is good see that the first casualties of the Arnhem operation are well remembered.

The service followed the normal format, preceded by the landing of a Scout helicopter from the Historic Army Aircraft Flight Trust piloted by Major Jim Trayhurn of the Army Air Corps Reserves. Your President laid a wreath on behalf of all members of the AEA and John Ferry carried the AEA Standard amongst others, not the easiest of jobs in the strong wind that was blowing, but the rain which was threatened luckily held off. Members from the Birmingham Branch and individuals represented the AEA. The memorial has been refurbished in recent times and the two statues had been damaged earlier in the year but have been repaired and the memorial looked pristine for the service.

This year for a change a reception was held at the local football club who did us proud in the supply of refreshments available.

Once again, our thanks to Peter Yeates for his hard work in making this event the success it was under somewhat trying circumstances.

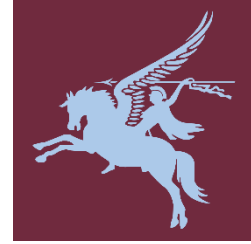


The following is a letter sent to Peter Yeates from Maj Peter Dobinson OC 9 Parachute Squadron regarding the service.



XXIII

9 Parachute Squadron RE
23 Parachute Engineer Regiment
Rock Barracks
Sutton
WOODBIDGE
IP12 3LU
Email
peter.dobinson233@mod.gov.uk



Date: 01 Sept 22

Dear Peter and all those in attendance at the Double Hills memorial service this Sunday 4th September 2022.

9 Parachute Squadron Royal Engineers – A note from the Brunei Jungle

It is with our deepest regret for a second year in succession the majority of Airborne Sappers of 9 Parachute Squadron Royal Engineers have been deployed overseas at short notice over the period of the Double Hills memorial.

9 Parachute Squadron has been rapidly deployed to conduct urgent Helicopter Landing Point upgrades based deep in the remote Jungles of Brunei. This task is critical to British activities in the Brunei Jungle as the only method of infiltration and exfiltration is by aviation. Much like our Airborne predecessors we are considered the first point of call for challenging, remote, and arduous tasks.

This year, albeit from a distance, we will continue to remember and reflect on the service and sacrifice of our forbearers. The fearless spirit of those 21 Airborne Sappers from 9th Field Company Airborne Royal Engineers who lost their lives on the 17th Sept 1944 remains in our Ethos to this day. As the Squadron will imminently deploy into the jungle, we send our thoughts and wishes to all those in attendance today.

'Airborne'

OC 9 Parachute Squadron

Major Pedro Dobinson RE

Officer Commanding 9 Parachute Squadron Royal Engineers

[Back to contents](#)

Paul Downie – Sailing Odyssey

Why Sailing? Let's go back in time to my days in 9 Sqn when an ex-Parachute Regiment sergeant named Chay Blyth advertised for crew on part one orders for his next round the world adventure on his latest sailing trimaran Great Britain 111.

Chay had already sailed around the world against the prevailing winds on British Steel followed by the first Whitbread round the world crewed race in GB 11.

I volunteered with another 9 Sqn soldier Billy McCormick and we were both selected by Chay as crew for GB 111. In those days there wasn't any formal training or qualifications for sailing like there is today.

I remember being on GB11 sailing in the Solent with a mass of ropes scattered all over her deck, thinking "where would you start with all these ropes"? Billy and me were chosen for the foredeck work for changing head sails. Probably the most dangerous place to be on in a sailing boat especially in big seas. Those days there were no inline cockpit foresail reefing lines to reduce sail area. They were all "hanked" on sails meaning you have to connect the forward edge of the sail by the hanks to the stainless-steel stay at the bow of the boat.

That was my basic introduction to sailing. Let's wind the clock forward to my late 40's. To be honest I had a what people call a mid-life crisis after the failure of my engineering business. I wanted to get the buzz back in my life what better way to do it than take up an adventurous pursuit of some sort?

But what? I tried a number of things but eventually it was Scuba diving, which I loved with a passion. After completing a PADI course I joined a BSAC dive club who were active divers diving mainly in UK abandoned quarries such as Dost Hill and Stony Cove. That took me on to the Red Sea with some amazing dive sites at Sharm El Sheikh and up the Sinai coast to Dahab.

Shortly after I was working on an engineering contract as coded welder at Esso oil refinery Fawley Southampton. I was lodging in Fawley and in the evenings or weekends I used to cycle down to Calshot Spit overlooking the Solent and the home of sailing at Cowes.

Sitting at the edge of the water I started to dream of diving in the Caribbean. I thought now what would be the best form of transport to dive on in accessible coral reefs surely it would be a sailing boat?

Back at the engineering construction rest cabin in Esso I was reading a sailing magazine. Actually, I was in the process of sending deposit off to the British Offshore Sailing School for a Royal Yacht Association Yacht Master Fastrack course for £2,500.

The course would cost a total of £8,000 with 16 weeks of intense sailing I was pondering this when I was looking at the sailing magazine. One of the lads passed a comment to me "Paul you're a bit of a dreamer". I guess you might know what my reaction would be to that type of comment. I sent off my deposit forthwith and sailing became the greatest passion of my life. Strange how dreams and choices can radically change one's life?

Not long after I crossed the Atlantic to the Caribbean in 32 feet sailing boat called Barada a Nicholson 32. With all my scuba gear and small dive compressor and with my girlfriend we did dives together on inaccessible coral reefs one of the most famous was off the French island of Guadeloupe.

At Jacques Cousteau's underwater reserve of Pigeon Island, a famous French dive site. We moored on one of the dive buoys at Pigeon Island and we used it as our shot line to go down to the coral below. Wow what a dive site it was teeming with tropical fish of every description, green turtles, octopus, angel fish and beautiful hard and soft coral.

I completed my Caribbean adventure back in 2010 leaving the boat at various locations on the way; Lanzarote, Antigua and the British Virgin Islands coming back to UK to earn some money contract welding over the 4-year period of my Atlantic circumnavigation.

In 2012 I had a serious accident in Connah's Quay power station with a fall from height ending up with fractured neck. Having been an ex-paratrooper it helped save my life. I fell from 8 metres from scaffold inside no. 4 Boiler.

When I fell over the handrail I thought to myself "let the ground come to you." I was totally relaxed awaiting my fate?

"Paul, I don't think you'll survive this fall" But I did a miracle. Fortunately, I fell on an EON engineer below me standing on the boiler floor, it broke my fall. I was in great pain and badly winded but still alive. But with fractured neck. After a long convalescence I got back to full fitness. It took me some time before I could sail again and gain my confidence but I was determined not to stop this passion of mine. One consolation I was awarded a handsome settlement because of my work accident. That brings me to my latest sailing boat Stella Polaris a Vancouver 32.

I sold both my previous sail boats to Italian buyers one which was in Sardinia and the other in Venice. They are stories for another time, especially my solo sailing trip to Venice in Barada.

Why a Vancouver 32? Barada my Nicholson 32 was wonderful sea kindly boat being built in 1964 of fibre glass with a long-encapsulated keel. Barada could take any type of weather but she was rather narrow down in the main cabin/saloon. I wanted something of the same length overall with a more spacious cabin with an encapsulated keel. Modern sail boats have bolt on keels and I feel in big seas and storm conditions the bolts can sheer if overly fatigued. Once the keel comes off the boat turns turtle.

A famous sailor named Tony Bullimore lost his boat Exide Challenger when his keel sheared off in the southern oceans. He spent many days in his survival suit down in the water filled saloon on his overturned bunk. Fortunately, he was rescued by the Australian Navy and survived the terrible ordeal.

I saw Stella Polaris Vancouver 32 on the Vancouver Association website; she ticked all the boxes. Nice comfortable saloon area, long encapsulated all in one keel. British boat made by North Shore Ltd in 1987. The boat was built on my birth date 26 June, not the year though! I thought that was good omen. The boat was just south of Malmo owned by a Finish couple. Another positive omen Saku the owner had served as Paratrooper in the Finnish army when he did his national service. I went out to view the boat at the time covid was in full swing. Making it difficult to travel but if there's a will there's a way. Other interested parties hadn't the will to travel during covid which was great opportunity for me to view and purchase the boat.

After buying Stella Polaris I sailed her back to north Wales via the Skagerrak, Inverness, the Caledonian Canal and Northern Ireland.

In April I left Conwy North Wales on my sailing odyssey to the Mediterranean. We left at about 23.00 hrs to catch the tide. The Conwy was still in flood and we had to negotiate the buoyed channel carefully as there are shallows to be avoided.

I had two crewmen with me to help sail Stella Polaris to North West Spain. You have to go around Anglesey and have to watch out for the squalls off the west Pembrokeshire coast. We rounded the Lizard in the dark and headed to Brest the winds picked up from the east and we had lively condition prior to daylight before heading towards the main channel past the lighthouse of Pointe Du Petite Minou onto the port of Brest.

After a weekend break with plenty alcohol to wash down Moules de frites on the Monday morning we left Brest headed out across the Bay of Biscay with a good uneventful crossing to the Ria Betanzos and on to Sada east of La Coruna. My two crew men left me and I stayed in Sada for a number of weeks getting work done by a marine company called Cadenote, mast off standing rigging replaced and alteration of the fore sail, etc.

After nearly 5 weeks at Sada I sailed out past the iconic lighthouse of the Tower of Hercules. You pick up the Northerly trade winds that blow you down past Lisbon and on to Cabo Sao Vicente and you turn to port for the straits of Gibraltar.

I had wonderful downwind sailing all the way to the straits of Gibraltar with my foresail poled out to starboard and my mainsail out to port. In the sailing parlance I was goose winging it was near last light when I passed the lighthouse of Tarife that the wind had changed to easterlies and which created choppy roughish seas. I had been warned about orcas the "killer whales" attacking passing boats at or near Barbate. I made sure I wasn't too close to the shoreline heading up the straits to avoid a possible attack from the Orca whales.

It was long hard slog with maximum revs on my Yanmah 30 hp engine. I arrived into the large natural bay of Algeciras which was full of anchored vessels mainly large oil tankers for the refinery at the top of the bay. I tried to find a mooring in Gibraltar no luck and I had to head around to La Linea on the Spanish side, went into the marina of Alcaidesa at about 3am in the morning, I was pretty knackered.

I stayed in la Linea for about a week or so and had to get some alterations made to the mainsail as the reefing points were chafing through the reefing lines. Same old story with boats, always something or other that needs sorting out.

I headed out into the bay of Algeciras winds were strongish and the sea was lively with lots of boats speeding back and forward, a nightmare for a solo sailor as leaving and coming into ports is always a busy time, mooring ropes to be stowed, fenders to be tied inboard and the mainsail up and ready and foresail unfurled. Sea was pretty choppy heading around Europa point and my passage to Cabo De Gata, before heading on to Cartagena the famous ancient port of Hannibal the Phoenician general, the scourge of the Roman army on the Italian peninsular.

Whilst there I spoke on the phone to a Spanish crew guy, Juan who had sailed with me on Black Swan in Sicily a few years before. I headed out of the port of Cartagena in the dark in the early hours of the morning in lively conditions. I wanted to take advantage of the westerly winds for my trip to meet Juan at Valencia.

From Cabo De La Nao I headed north westerly against strong head winds to Valencia. After meeting Juan my next port of call was Puerto Portals south of Palma in Majorca. Puerto Portals is a superyacht marina for the rich with fine dining restaurants on the quayside.

Not a place for a solo a yachtsman in a 32 feet boat, it's a place for the WAGS and beautiful people. Mooring prices reflect it superyacht status. I soon was on my way across the bay of Palma crossing to Sardinia and an old sailing haunt of mine to Carloforte at the south west tip of Sardinia.

There I picked a young German sailor Patrick from Berlin for our sail to Tunisia Bizerte. Patrick had never sailed before and was keen and took to sailing like a duck to water.

Patrick told me about his life and the Berlin night life scene. He also mentioned he'd been married to a beautiful Russian lady but he was in the process of trying to get a divorce, but couldn't find her whereabouts, he mentioned Sicily?

We sailed back to Cagliari where Patrick left me and I sailed on to southern Sicily to the port of Ragusa. After few days and a haircut, I headed to the eastern southern end of Sicily and anchored, waiting for fair winds for my crossing of the Ionia Sea to the Peloponnese. I had a good overall sail from Sicily and arrived after a number of days off the island of Kithria in the failing light. The winds started to increase; I had planned to anchor in a small bay but I thought I must take advantage of these favourable winds and push on into the Aegean.

The following morning, I rounded the headland of Kithria and the two small eastern islands of Dragonera and Antidragonera.

It did mention on the charts the sea conditions can get very rough if you have strong northerly winds in the Aegean Sea called the "Meltemi winds".

It was my "baptism of fire" and the sea was rough but Stella Polaris performed beautifully as I expected. I had excellent northerly winds all the way across the Aegean to Leros my final port north of Kos. The southern Aegean is dotted with islands such as Santorini, Anafi, Astipalia, Kos, Kalymnos and Leros. Leros has fantastic deep water natural harbour of Lakki. The town of Lakki which was built for the Italian navy in 1930's, in an Art Deco style, was called Porto Lago later the Greeks renamed it Lakki. Stella Polaris is now at the northern end of Leros in Artemis boatyard on the hard standing awaiting for her next big adventure.

Below are a some photos, you can also visit my [Website](#) and [You Tube Channel](#)



Artemis Boatyard, Leros, Greece



Lakki, Art Deco Italian Town, Leros, Greece



Haul out, Artemis Boatyard, Leros, Greece



Leros, Greece



Lakki harbour entrance



Lakki, Leros



Cagliari, Sardinia



Ragusa, Sicily



Peloponnese headland



Rough seas, Aegean



Puerto Portal, Majorca



Caloforte, Sardinia



Bizerte, Tunisia



Valencia



On passage to Valencia



Cartagena



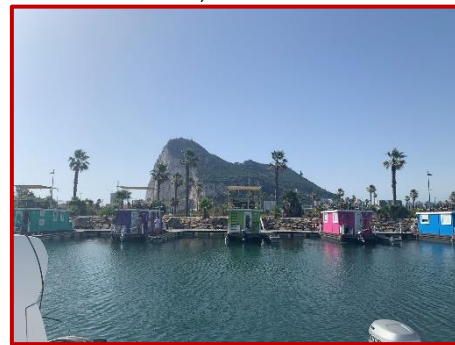
Sunrise



Cadenote, mast installation



On passage to Gibraltar



Gibraltar



Caledonian Canal



Conwy



Stella Polaris

[Back to contents](#)

Airborne Engineers Association Online Shop

Online Shop Update

By Jon Nichols, Shop Manager

Hello All,

I hope this correspondence finds you and your families well.

Please be advised that the Airborne Engineers Association shop is [online](#) and orders can be made by visiting the AEA website and clicking on any of the shop links within the website itself.

Points to note:

1. The shop uses the PayPal platform for payments at Checkout. Now this does NOT mean you need to have a PayPal account to make your order. Simply use your debit / credit card within the card payment boxes provided within checkout. However, if you want to create a PayPal account here's the [Link](#)
2. Purchase of clothing, if you order different size clothing of the same product (one for me & one for the Boss), please order one at a time choosing the sizing & colour as necessary. But if you want two products of the same design and size, just adjust quantity as necessary.
3. If you usually just wait for the AGM to buy your yearly requirements, please login to the shop, order as necessary and at checkout, choose 'COLLECT AT AGM' within the postage options & I will bring your purchase along to pass on as necessary. By this method, all payments are electronic, simplified & no need for me to drag huge amounts of stock to the AGM weekend.
4. Please know, your shop manager is still a full-time working member of society and may not be able to post your item on the day of your order. So, if you need it soonest, please add notes within your order as necessary. Or copy the last four figures of your order number and drop me an email @ aeashopmanager@gmail.com for speedy postage options.
5. [PLEASE REGISTER](#) for an account within the shop and tick 'receive newsletter option.' By doing this, we can keep you updated to all latest and incoming new stock via a quarterly distributed newsletter.

Airborne Engineers Shop - Facebook Discussion Group

We have a newly created Facebook group for discussion of all shop related matters. The intention is for it to be a two-way exchange of information, we, the shop Admin & Development team (sounds grand but there are only two of us) will keep you updated on any new developments, products and any hints and tips for using the shop.

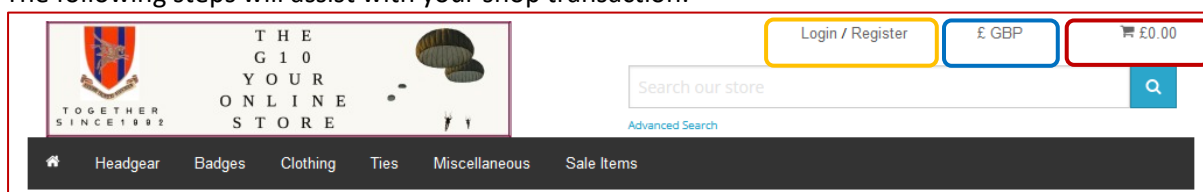
We welcome your input into the Discussion Group on all shop related matters whether it be product reviews related to shop purchases, new product suggestions, even photos of products in use, it is your shop and we want to provide the best products and service we can for you.

Click the link below to visit the Group and click the Join button. Group Admin will need to approve your Join Request but that will usually be done quickly

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2016356088754648>

Tips for Buyers Outside the UK

The following steps will assist with your shop transaction:



- Register for a shop account and include your delivery address. It is possible to have multiple delivery addresses within your profile, for example, address one, your own home address in your country of residence, address two, a relative's address in the UK.
- Select your currency from the drop list at the top of the Shop Home page, if your currency isn't listed contact the Shop Manager via email, aeashopmanager@gmail.com
- Explore the Shop products and add to your shopping basket as necessary
- Go to the shopping basket by clicking on the Shopping Cart icon at the top of the Shop Home page
- You will be able to review your purchase costs by product cost and by postage and packaging cost.

New Product Design Proposals

Quote requests submitted to manufacturers are starting to come back in and planning is in progress. When available we will get some initial picture designs published in the Facebook Discussion Group for your thoughts.

Two rugby designs have been planned:

1. Traditional heavy cotton maroon shirt with white collar.
2. A short sleeve design from Samurai, we are in discussion with their Area Manager and hope to have a design picture soon, again we will publish this design in the Facebook Discussion Group.

You can view details of these proposals via

1. Facebook Shop Discussion Group - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2016356088754648>
2. AEA Shop Google Shared drive - https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1PXAbdZi8S7XvE5e7BclT3jlfEzOEvfNk?usp=share_link

Sale Items

The following items are on sale:



Click the link to view the item instore	Original Price	Sale Price
Airborne Engineers Polo Shirt, in Blue with Pegasus logo	£15.00	£11.50
Airborne Engineers Showerproof Fleece, in Blue with Pegasus logo	£32.00	£26.00
Airborne Engineers Crew Neck Sweatshirt, in Blue with Pegasus logo	£19.50	£14.00
Airborne Engineers V Neck Sweatshirt, in Blue with Pegasus logo	£19.50	£14.00
Airborne Engineers T Shirt, in Blue with Pegasus logo	£9.00	£7.50

Association Merchandise

Shop Manager – Jon Nichols

Visit the AEA [Online Shop](#) for Product Details & Pricing

Ties
Association Tie (Pegasus Logo)
Anniversary Tie (Wings & Pegasus Logo)
9 Para Sqn Tie (Wings Logo)
Bow Tie (Wings & Pegasus Logo)
Badges
Association Blazer Badge
Lapel Wings (Blue enamel)
Clothing
Association Sweatshirts (Maroon or Blue with Logo S / M / L / XL)
Association Sweatshirts 'V' Neck (Maroon or Blue with Logo S / M / L / XL)
Association Polo Shirts (Maroon/ Blue with Pegasus Logo S/ M / L/XL)
Association T Shirt (Maroon or Blue with Logo S / M / L / XL)
Association Shower Proof Fleece (Maroon or Blue with 'Airborne Engineers' Logo M / L / XL)
Baseball Cap (Blue or Maroon with Pegasus & Wings Crest)
Miscellaneous
Association Shield
Association Cuff Links
Pegasus Tie Clip
Ladies Long Polyester Scarf (Pegasus Logo)
Ladies Pegasus Brooch (Gold Coloured)
Fridge Magnet (Pegasus Logo)
Paper Weight (Pegasus Logo)
AEA Car Sticker (Pegasus in RE colours with website address)
AEA Car Front Grill Pegasus Badge (Airborne Engineers Lettering)

Please send any shop related enquiries to Jon Nichols aeashopmanager@gmail.com

[Back to contents](#)



Airborne Engineers Association

Registered Charity Number: 1009201

~

President: Lt Col (Retd) Mervyn Bassett BEM

Email: mrb75@gmail.com

Chairman: Steve Wallis – Tel: 07757 115681

Email: Stephen.wallis57@ntlworld.com

Secretary: Mike Robertson

Email: Michaelj.robertson@outlook.com



MINUTES OF AN AIRBORNE ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) HELD AT THE HOLIDAY INN BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT ON SAT 22ND OCTOBER 2022

1. Opening.

1.1. Opening address

The Chairman welcomed all those attending and opened the meeting at 10:05am

1.2. Members Present

There were 42 Members attending

1.3. Apologies:

Apologies were received from Adam Frame and Dave Pace

1.4. Exhortation for Absent Friends

The Chairman asked the meeting to remember HM Queen Elizabeth 2nd and gave The Exhortation followed by a minute's silence for 'Absent Friends'. The silence was followed by a resounding 'God Save the King'

2. Minutes of the previous AGM and OGM.

The minutes of the previous AGM held at the Cedar Court Hotel on Saturday 16th October 2021 and the OGM held by 'Zoom' on Sunday 16th April 2022 have been circulated. There being no comments from the floor the Chairman asked for a proposer and seconder that the minutes as recorded be accepted.

Proposer: John Brennan

Secunder: Pat Neal

The minutes as read were accepted.

3. Treasurers Report.

The association's new treasurer Lt Col (Retd) Bob Matthews gave an update on the current national financial position advising all present that these were subject to audit.

A copy of the accounts is appended to the minutes and will also be added to the AEA website.

The Chairman requested a proposer and seconder that the Treasurers Report, subject to annual audit, is accepted as presented.

Proposer: Dave Raes

Seconder: Sir Donald Spiers

Carried.

The Chairman then proposed a vote of thanks to Lt Col (Retd) Dick Brown for his work as treasurer over many years, reminding the meeting that Dick had always treated the associations money as his own! This was passed unanimously

4. Association Shop Report.

The Association shop report was presented by the new shop manager Jon Nichols

The shop is now online, and Jon gave an update on sales since the platform went live

- Value of Stock taken over - £1745.51
- Sales (Since Shop went online) - £ 225.49
- Cost of Sales - £ 211.49
- Profit (Income minus Cost) - £66.05 (25%)

The Chairmen reminded those present that the shop is a trading account and forms part of the Treasurer's report, and that the vote is to reflect how the shop is stocked, maintained, and run.

A request was made for a proposer and seconder that the shop report as read be accepted.

Proposer: John Brennan

Seconder: Neville Collins

Carried

The Chairman then proposed a vote of thanks to Jeanette Rutter for her Stirling service in managing the shop over many years. This was passed unanimously

5. Journal – Editor's Report.

In the absence of Dave Pace, the Chairman presented an update on the Journal.

The first online issue was produced and was well received by the Association Membership. It was suggested that the frequency of future Journal Issues be increased to three or four time a year. This would only work if a sufficient number of articles are submitted to Dave Pace.

It was suggested that each branch nominate a 'media' rep' with responsibility advising Dave Pace on Branch activities for inclusion in the Journal. This will be followed up by the Chairman.

Currently the Journal is being collated and produced by Dave Pace. The Chairman asked for Volunteers to act as Journal Editor, Lt Col (Retd) John Lee volunteered to act as 'Proof-reader' and John Askey has also volunteered to assist.

The Chairman thanked Dave Pace on behalf of the association for the amount of work he has put in to make the online version of the Journal a success.

6. Membership Report.

The membership report was presented by Billy Morris

The current running total of members who have joined the AEA since its conception in Nov 1989 stands at **1570**. Those departed to the Sqn Bar – **463** giving a total membership of **1107**

It was requested that members check their details in the database to make sure that these are up to date.

There were no comments from the floor.

The Chairman thanked Billy on behalf of the association.

7. Welfare Liaison Officer's Report.

The Chairman reported that Izzy Leather had decided to stand down as Association Welfare officer. Maj (Retd) Paul Moore has volunteered to take over the role.

There have been no requests for welfare assistance since the last meeting

8. Archivists/Historian Report.

The Archivist report was presented by Lt Col (Retd) Mervyn Bassett on behalf of Mr Nick Gibson.

The archives are stored at the RE Museum in Chatham

A copy of the report is attached to these minutes.

The Chairman thanked Mr Gibson on behalf of the association.

9. Presidents Awards/Commendations.

The president, Lt Col (Retd) John Lee, announced the following awards/commendations

9.1. Life Vice President of the Association

Lt Col (Retd) Dick Brown

9.2. Presidents Commendation.

Sir Donald Spiers – President of the Aldershot Branch

Malcolm 'Mick' Walker – Founder Member of the Scotland Branch

10. Election of Officers

- 10.1. The National President, Lt Col (Retd) John Lee had previously announced his intention to retire from the post at the AGM. Lt Col (Retd) Mervyn 'Baz' Bassett volunteered to fill the position. The vote in favour of 'Baz' was unanimous and he took over as Association President at the meeting.

- 10.2. The National Chairman, Steve Wallis, having completed 3 years, plus an extension, announced that he was willing to stay in post for a further 3-year stint. There were no other volunteers and Steve was re-elected to the post.
- 10.3. The National Treasurer Lt Col (Retd) Dick Brown has stood down as National Treasurer. Lt Col (Retd) Bob Matthews had previously been appointed to the post by the executive council. A full audit was carried between the outgoing and incoming treasurers.
- 10.4. Following the meeting, Mike Robertson volunteered to take up the post of National Secretary
- 10.5. Maj (Retd) Paul Moore has replaced Izzy Leather as Welfare Officer

11. Branch Reports.

The following Branch Reports were received

299 Association – Presented by Chris Shillito

Aldershot Branch – Due to an oversight by the Chairman, the Aldershot Branch report was not presented at the AGM.

Birmingham Branch – Tom Smith

Chatham Branch – Baz Bassett

Scotland Branch – Presented by the Association Chairman on behalf of Gordon McLeod

Wales and West – Presented by John Askey.

Yorkshire Branch – Presented by the Association Chairman on behalf of Adam Frame

Copies of all of the Branch Reports are appended to the minutes and will be included in the next issue of the Association Journal.

12. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes.

- 12.1. Jon Nichols gave an excellent presentation on the On-Line shop. The presentation detailed how the shop is set up and will be run for the benefit of the association. Jon went through the process of ordering an item and explained the process for packing and allocating postage.
- 12.2. Steve Brown gave an update on the Membership of the Birmingham Branch. Previously a substantial number of Birmingham Branch Members were not members of the AEA. The Branch addressed this and there has been a significant uptake in the number of applications for AEA membership.
- 12.3. Lt Col (Retd) John Lee gave an update on the Associations Public Liability insurance.

Should events such as the Cromwell Lock service be held then it is a requirement of the Canal & River Trust that PLI is in place, otherwise a licence will **not** be issued. I can foresee possible events where this requirement may be needed e.g., an AEA stand at a venue which

could be privately owned but to which the public is admitted. I feel it would be a good idea to get a few quotes on this, as in my experience, the application forms are for commercial organisations and companies and not for registered charities such as us.

It may be cheaper to have a policy to cover just one event e.g., Cromwell Lock instead of 365-day cover as at present, but should an event come up as described above then individual insurance per event is an expensive matter.

It would seem that to prevent branches having to have their own PLI then if a nominated person is deemed to be organising an event anywhere in the UK and the branch works through him then we are covered as at present.

Note that any events overseas e.g., Arnhem, organised by the association would not be covered, however, provided all participants have personal health and travel insurance and the transport arrangements are covered then in my view they would be OK.

- 12.4. The Chairman gave an update on the refurbishment of the Cromwell Lock Memorial. This was successfully carried out by members of 299 Parachute Squadron who were tasked by 23 Parachute Engineer Regiment following a request for assistance from the Association Chairman. The project was an example of what can be achieved when the association communicates and works together with the Regiment.

13. Propositions and Notices of Motion

Proposed by Dave Pace that the Association recognise the significant contribution made by Vision Internet Services for their support in providing the Association with Web Services since 2006.

This was well received by the Association; a vote of thanks was passed unanimously, and it was agreed that the President would write to Vision Internet Services expressing the gratitude of the Association and that an Association Plaque would be presented.

14. Remembrance Events and Services.

The following major events will be/were attended by members of our Association this year:

- 14.1. Falkland Islands.
- Falklands Memorial Service at Pangbourne on Sunday 12th June
 - Falklands Memorial Service at Aldershot 11th June at Aldershot Military Cemetery.
 - Falklands 40th Anniversary in Aldershot on Saturday 18th June.
- 14.2. Hardwick Hall, Saturday 14th June. This was well attended by the Birmingham Branch and the Branch Standard was paraded.
- 14.3. Double Hills, Sunday 4th Sept.
- 14.4. Cromwell Lock
- Sunday 25th Sept at Cromwell Lock.
 - 26th Sept at Zetland Park Grangemouth.
- 14.5. 1st Parachute Squadron Memorial at Donnington. Sunday 25th Sept.

- 14.6. National Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph Sunday 13th November – this year the association has thirty-six tickets, all of which have been allocated.
- 14.7. 131 Parachute/Commando Squadron 75th Anniversary Reunion on 23rd April 2022 at 131 Commando Squadron, Loneragan Lines, Kingsbury.

15. Any Other Business at National Level

15.1. Cromwell Lock Memorial Garden

The Chairman gave an update on the refurbishment of the Cromwell Lock Memorial which was completed by members of 299 Para Sqn RE. This was a notable example of what can be achieved by communicating and co-operating with 23 Parachute Engineer Regiment at all levels. The Chairman thanked those who had contributed to making this a success.

15.2. Status of the Birmingham Branch

Steve Brown gave an update of the Birmingham Branch membership and requested that the Association recognise that the Branch is made up from both Para and Commando trained members, this was discussed and recognised by the meeting. The constitution allows for members who are not para trained to become honorary members of the Association with all of the benefits of membership with the exception of voting at the Annual General meeting.

15.3. 23 Parachute Engineer Regt 20th Anniversary

2023 will see the 20th Anniversary 23 Parachute Engineer Regt and a number of activities have been planned. Capt Marc Dorkings has provided the following information.

- Friday 28 July 22: 23 Parachute Engineer Regiment, Freedom of Woodbridge Parade, timings TBC but expect a 1100hrs step off. The RSM would like a good veteran marching contingent if possible.
- Saturday 29 July 22: 23 Parachute Engineer Regiment Open Day followed by an all-ranks function with live music.
- A camping and campervan area is being allocated for the weekend.
- The cookhouse will be open all weekend for pay as you dine feeding, expect a ticket price for the function in the Saturday night.

More information will be published as soon as becomes available.

Marc suggests that this would be a good opportunity for the Association to have a recruitment/info/shop stand which he will help to facilitate

16. AGM and GALA Ball.

- 2023 Event will be hosted by the Wales and West Branch on the weekend 13th-15th October at the Abbey Hotel Greater Malvern
- Scotland Branch have been invited to host the 2024 AGM but have stated that they feel unable to hold the event. 299 Association have agreed to take this on.
- Chatham Branch will host the 2025 AGM

Afternote: This year's raffle raised a sum of £550 and the Heads and Tails raised a further £213 making a total of £763.00 which will be split between BLESSMA and Head Up charities. Thank you all.

17. National President's Points

The incoming president Lt Col (Retd) Mervyn 'Baz' Bassett thanked those attending for their faith in electing him as the Association's new President and went on to thank the outgoing President Lt Col (Retd) John Lee stating that John would be a hard act to follow.

Baz then went on to stress the importance of volunteers to the Association pointing out that the Association could not function without the support of those people from all of the branches who gave up their time to help the Association fulfil its function.

18. National Chairman's Points

The Chairman raised the matter of the relationship between the AEA and the REA Airborne Branch. At a previous AGM held in Nottingham, it was decided that this matter would be held over for a period of at least 10 years, this period has passed.

The meeting had a discussion and agreed to allow the executive committee to look at the relationship between the AEA and the REA Airborne Branch with a view to allowing the AEA members to choose one of the following options

- The Association remain autonomous from the REA Airborne Branch.
- The Association remain autonomous but work more closely with the REA Airborne Branch for the benefit of all Airborne Engineers.
- The Association affiliate itself to the REA Airborne Branch.

The chairman recognises that there are strong feelings within the association about this subject and assured the meeting that any decision would be made by the whole membership of the AEA and not by the committee.

19. Next Meeting National Meeting Date:

The next National meeting will be the OGM to be held in April 2023 at a date and location to be confirmed.

20. Chairman's Closing Remarks:

The Chairman thanked those members of the Association who attended and for participating in this Annual General meeting.

The meeting was closed in good order at 12:25hrs.

Attachments

- Treasurers Report
- Branch Reports
- Archivists Report

Financial Statement

AIRBORNE ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

AS AT 20 AUG 2022

ASSETS

Cash in Hand	Nil
Cash at Bank	£8705.24
Deposit Account	£14833.71
Shop Stock	£ 1879.41
<u>TOTAL ASSETS</u>	<u>£25418.36</u>

LIABILITIES

News Letter	Nil
<u>TOTAL LIABILITIES</u>	<u>Nil</u>

WORKING CAPITAL

Assets	£25418.36
Minus Liabilities	£0.00
<u>TOTAL WORKING CAPITAL</u>	<u>£25418.36</u>

Points:

Audit completed on the 20 Aug 2022 and handed over to Bob Matthews.

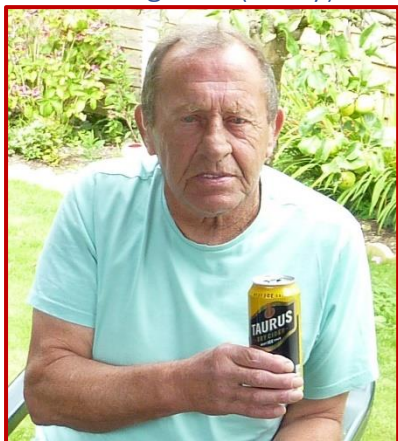
R J Matthews

Treasurer

[Back to contents](#)

Obituaries

Walter Reginald (Wally) Clift



He was born back in 1940, one of a large family, growing up in Olney in Buckinghamshire. From schooldays, Wally trained and worked as a cabinet-maker, until joining the Army.

Turning to personal and family life, romance blossomed between Wally and his chosen one, Kathleen who he married in 1969. Over the course of their devoted partnership, they became loving parents to son Gary, and as the years went by, Wally and Kathleen were pleased to welcome Sarah as their daughter-in-law, and later to become proud grandparents to Aiden and Ethan, and also a fond uncle to his nephews and nieces.

With Wally's love for family, community and country, there is much to be thankful for, memories to treasure

Walter, known to all his military friends and colleagues as Wally, joined the Army in Northampton on 27 June 1960 aged 21 years. After basic training he was posted to Osnabruck in Germany, from where he attended a basic Carpenter & Joiners course in Chatham. On returning to his unit, he volunteered for service with 9 Indep Para Sqn RE who were based in Crookham, Hants, where he served with them from 1961-72. He saw service in Greece, Borneo, Bahrain, Aden, Kenya, Libya, Canada, BAOR and Northern Ireland.

Wally had that rare talent of making light of tedious, labour intensive tasks or insect infected locations with that infectious grin and quick wit. He could raise a smile by just walking into the room. His never-ending comic antics would raise the spirits of those around him during dire situations at both home and abroad. He was great fun to serve with and a truly professional soldier.

He was promoted to the rank of corporal whilst serving with 9 Indep Para Sqn RE. In 1972 he was attached to the Joint Air training Establishment at Old Sarum where he was employed as a Carpenter on the experimental side of the Heavy Drop Section.

His next posting was to 35 Engr Regt in Hameln where he initially served with 29 Fd Sqn serving with them in Canada and later crossed posted to 42 Fd Sqn serving with them in Northern Ireland.

Promoted to Sgt on 1 April 1977 he was posted as the Workshop NCO to 3 Training Regt in Farnborough.

During his Army Career Sgt Wall Clift had been a rugby player, cross country runner, lightweight boxer (being champion of that weight in 35 Engr Regt). He represented 9 Para Sqn in the 16 Para Bde boxing championships and was the Bde lightweight champion on a number of occasions. He was also a competent Free Fall parachutist completing over 350 descents.

For 18 years of irreproachable service Sgt Walter (Wally) Clift was awarded the Long Service & good Conduct Medal (Military)

Wally completed his military service in 1982 making his home in Cove where he continued to work for the Army as a civilian carpenter in Gibraltar Barracks

In his eventual retirement, Wally continued to serve his community, where he would spend hours while walking his neighbour's dog picking up discarded litter around the local area, for which he was to receive the Hampshire's Good Neighbours Award.

RIP Wally, you will be sadly missed by us all.

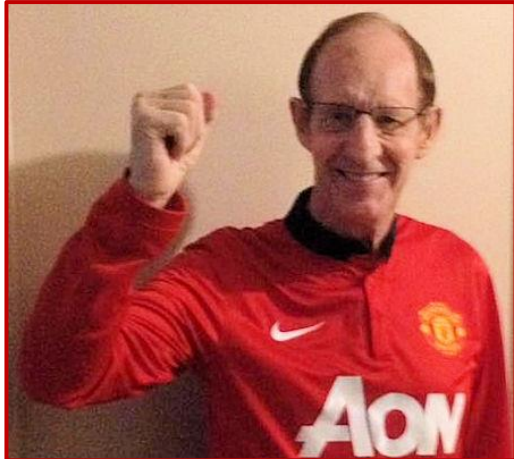
[Back to contents](#)

[Sydney Warrilow](#)

Sydney (Sid) Warrilow MBE passed away in Stratford-upon-Avon on 20th September 2022 aged 97 years

[Trevor Ernest \(Ernie\) Bugdale](#)

Ernie passed away on 15th April 2022



Ernie's plaque on one of the benches in the Aldershot Military Cemetery

[Back to contents](#)

Join the Airborne Engineers Association

Eligibility

The Airborne Engineers Association (AEA) was formed in 1989 and is open to all personnel who have served, or are still serving, on the strength of any Airborne Engineer Unit.

This also includes parachute trained Royal Engineers who have served, or are presently serving with any Regular or TA unit, which has in its order of battle a parachuting capability.

Membership may also be given to any person who in the opinion of the Executive Committee has rendered special service to the Airborne Engineers.

The Association currently has seven branches:

Aldershot, Birmingham, Chatham, 299 Association (Hull) Scotland Wales and West & Yorkshire.

Life membership of the Association costs just £25.00

Unsure if you're eligible to join the AEA or have any other questions? Get in touch via our [Contact](#) page

Apply for membership via [web form](#)

or print, complete and post the following PDF documents

[Membership Application Form & Gift Aid Declaration](#)

General Data Protection Regulations - [Personal Data Consent Form](#)

[Back to contents](#)