



OLD PARKY

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Twice Yearly Journal

Lead by Example

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In This Issue:
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Once again August will soon be with us and at last in July we seem to be having the sort of summer that we all seem to remember as callous young boys. Did the jet stream always seem to be in the same position that it is at the moment bringing the glorious weather? Possibly not and if I clear the clouds from my memory, inclement conditions surfaced in the summers of my youth; ignoring it, with much better things to plan, took precedence.

The plans for the AGM, Dinner and the inauguration of the memorial Bench at the Arboretum have now been completed. To the donors a grateful thanks from **ALL** Junior Sappers. If you are intending to attend the weekend, time is not your best friend so action is required. Booking forms have been posted out with all relevant details. Hotel phone number and meal choices. If they have been mislaid try the web site or give me a call. 01274 580481 and we will rectify the situation. Officers for the Branch are elected at the A.G.M.. A president needs to be elected as Lt.Col Larry Inge (Retd.) had to retire earlier in the year so this post is vacant. All other posts are up for election as well. Details for proposer and seconder should be sent to the Secretary Mr. Mick Dobson by the end of September. Email j_secretary@btinternet.com

An appeal for funds to purchase the Memorial Bench was launched at the last AGM. The Sapper magazine highlighted it and we have promoted it in our own Newsletter and on the Web site. Many Junior Sappers have contributed, many of those not even members of the branch. Every year we show concern at the branch numbers. This appeal has shown me from the letters I have received with contributions, that being a Junior Leader R.E. for many people was something special in their lives, and this contributed both in military service and civilian life to a well thought out outlook. In years to come our memorial bench will be a thoughtful tribute to all of us, at a special place. There will be an inauguration service at the National Memorial Arboretum Alrewas Staffordshire. This will be on Sunday the 6th October 2013 at 1200hrs. The branch Padre The Rev. David Ridley will be travelling from his new Parish at Eastry near Sandwich to conduct the service. WO2 Paul Thomas from the R.E. band will also be with us to play Last Post and Reveille.

Our Standard and Dover Standard will also be on Parade. Afterwards a Curry Lunch or, Chicken Casserole will be served. at cost.

Bernard Davis has kept me amused with his Email jokes. As I warned you at the last AGM if suitable copy is not received from the membership, Bernard's jokes would have to take up the strain and fill some space. I have looked through what I have kept from him and now I'm not sure if I should have made the warning. There must be something that is suitable for a mixed audience.

Bernard's Jokes. (By Email)

Nymphomaniac Convention

A man boarded an aircraft at London 's Heathrow Airport for New York , and taking his seat as he settled in, he noticed a very beautiful woman boarding the plane.

He realised she was heading straight toward his seat and bingo - she took the seat right beside him."Hello", he blurted out, "Business trip or vacation?"

She turned, smiled enchantingly and said, "Business. I'm going to the annual Nymphomaniac convention in the United States ." He swallowed hard. Here was the most gorgeous woman he had ever seen sitting next to him, and she was going to a meeting for nymphomaniacs!

Struggling to maintain his composure, he calmly asked, "What's your business role at this convention?" "Lecturer," she responded," I use my experience to disprove some of the popular myths about sexuality.." "Really", he smiled, "what myths are those?"

"Well," she explained, "one popular myth is that African-American men are the most well-endowed when, in fact, it's the Native American Indian who is most likely to possess that trait.

Another popular myth is that French men are the best lovers, when actually it is the men of Greek descent. We have also found that the best potential lovers in all categories are the Irish."

Suddenly the woman became uncomfortable and blushed. "I'm sorry," she said. "I really shouldn't be discussing this with you, I don't even know your name!"

"Tonto," the man said. "Tonto Papadopoulos, but my friends call me Paddy."

And finally, there was the person who sent twenty different puns to his friends, with the hope that at least ten of the puns would make them laugh. No pun in ten did.

Sapperfest 2013

Over the weekend of the 14 – 16th June 2013, the second SAPPERFEST took place at Tilstock airfield in Shropshire.

This year saw over 300 ex Sappers attend, an increase of more than 100 over last year's inaugural bash. Most pitched tents, but many brought mobile homes and other vehicles in various states of luxury. Toilets and wash basins were laid on, and showers and superb breakfasts were to be had at a local truck stop a ten minute stagger away. A marquee and bar area was set up, and this also accommodated two excellent bands who played their guts out till the wee small hours. A euchre competition took place again, and there were prizes for best (and worst) dressed and the most rubbish shirts. Pith helmets and "sapperfest" shirts were Ubiquitous (see what I did there), as were various bottle of dubious liquor from the four corners of the Globe – and Asbach brandy was de rigeur. A hog roast was arranged, with funds going to service charities.

Of particular note was a fine old gent called Tom Gilzean – a 92 year old Ex Sapper who earlier this year was criminally relieved of his mobility scooter at the hands of some feckless thugs. He

has raised literally hundreds of thousands of pounds for Charity. He was invited to the fest, and came along accompanied by a rather delightful female chaperone. He was superb company and stayed up with the chaps until dawn. He was duly presented with a brand new scooter courtesy of the Sapperfest fund – there wasn't a dry eye in the house. Surely that is exactly what our wonderful Brotherhood stands for?

Representatives of the Sappers' fund were also around – this is an organisation paid for and run by Sappers for Sappers in need, and can be found via the internet and Facebook.

This really is proving to be an absolutely fantastic weekend, free from regimental BS and protocol but full of belly laughs, beer and bluster. By all accounts we may reach 500 “festers” next year!!.

www.sapperfest.co.uk, or sapperfest 2014 on Facebook if that is your bag.

Try it – you won't be disappointed gentlemen.

Part 2.

Doug's Canal Walks for Help for Heroes

After completing a further 70 miles around the Birmingham area we attended our annual 11 Sqn Reunion at Coventry where once again we relived past glories and sank the odd pint. May 20th saw Sue and Myself depart Coventry and drive up to bonny Scotland more specifically Edinburgh. On the 21st we took in the impressive sights of Edinburgh including the Castle and Carlton Hill, stunning architecture, had obligatory photo taken with Piper at the Castle and enjoyed a nine mile stroll in glorious sunshine along the Union Canal, and then back to Ratho where we were staying.

Next day and thanks were due to Rotary for their help with cosy billets, Gyle shopping centre welcomed us and the customers at Morrison's and M & S were more than generous, with us collecting over £900 for the cause. Ratho on the Union heading towards Falkirk was next, quiet and picturesque with peacefulness all around, shattered periodically by aircraft coming in to land at Edinburgh Airport.

The very high, impressive Almond Aqueduct gave us spectacular views which included a viaduct, possibly the longest I have ever seen. The arches I counted came to forty at least. Polmont was where the days walking ended. Shattered but pleased to have completed 19 miles in challenging heat. I completed the Union Canal from Polmont to the amazing Falkirk Wheel. I passed through Happy Smiley End and Sad Face End of the Falkirk tunnel. It struck me that a children's TV writer could make a wonderful story up with names as graphic as these. My host for a time was Councillor Bob Spears R.E. . At times you need somebody local to point the way and Bob took me to the start of the Forth/Clyde Canal at Grangemouth which is on private yacht club land. Their security man gave us a guided tour and a brief history of the area. This section of the canal is no longer in existence but a new section is soon to be dug, to replace the area lost. We joined the existing canal west of the M9 and walked to and beyond the Falkirk Wheel.

Another day dawned but instead of the chore of one foot in front of the other, a bit of R&R., with a boat journey courtesy of The Seagull Trust to The Falkirk Wheel. We and the boat were lowered gracefully into the canal basin linking the Union Canal to the Forth and Clyde. For those who

haven't heard of this feat of modern engineering it is the world's first and only rotating boat lift, constructed as a millennium project to replace the original 11 locks that were dismantled in 1933. The Wheel was necessary to re-link the two canals where the Union stands at 35metres above the Forth and Clyde. The Wheel is so perfectly balanced it only requires 1.5kw of energy to assist rotation the equivalent of 8 electric kettles, a fantastic feat of engineering. Well worth a visit live or on the website www.thefalkirkwheel.co.uk . Part 3 Next Edition.

ARMY 2020 – Changes to the British Army

By Serving Member Major Iain George RE

The latest Defence review sees the changes to the Regular and TA Army by 2020.

The regular Army will reduce from 102,000 to 82,000 and the TA will be increased to a deployable force of 30,000.

The basing announcement which shows the final locations of Regular units when they return from Germany and the completion of Army 2020 has been announced, but further changes could happen and the TA basing will be announced soon.

The Royal Engineers will reduce in size and Clairo Barracks will be sold off. By 2014 38 Engr Regt, 28 Engr Regt and 24 Commando Regt will be no more. 59 Independent Commando Sqn will still support 3 Commando Brigade.

Other main location changes include:

21 Engr Regt moving to Catterick, no move before 2017.

32 Engr Regt moving to Catterick, no move before 2015.

35 Engr Regt moving to Perham Down, no move before 2017.

42 Engr Regt (Geographic) moving to RAF Wyton, no move before 2014.

Other Issues

Afghanistan is still the Corps main effort but other commitments include maintenance teams in Cyprus and the Falkland Islands.

Manning – The Corps is almost at full strength against current liability but is over manned for future liability. The redundancy programme saw the Corps lose 233 personnel (incl QGE) as part of the Tranche 2 Redundancy announced in June 12. Tranche 3 Redundancy is announced on the 18 June 13 when the Corps could lose up to another 800 personnel.

The redundancies include voluntary and compulsory personnel.

Four Sappers have lost their lives on Operations in the last 12 months.

A.G.M. and Dinner 5th October 2013

AGM start 1400hrs in the hotel. Details of proposer and seconder to Mick Dobson. (Sect.)

Dinner 1900hrs for group photo. Dinner 1930hrs.

Hotel : Cathedral Lodge Hotel. Beacon St. Lichfield for Accommodation. 01543 414500

