

REA COUNCIL REPORT
TO THE 40TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OCTOBER 2008

1. The REA is governed by the Deeds of Trust 1968 supplemented by the REA Rules 2004. Trustees of the REA are recommended to the Council after a thorough search for suitable candidates in the eleven REA Group areas and by ex-officio appointments for REA representation by the Chief Royal Engineer. On appointment each Trustee is given a standard Trustee briefing pack, undergoes an induction briefing and has the opportunity to attend Trustee briefing days where they are given updates on various matters on the running of their Association.
2. Trustees make and approve Association policy and delegate the day to day running to the Controller REA and his Staff through different committees for management, benevolence recruiting and finance. At each Council meeting the minutes of each of the delegated committees are reviewed recommending adjustments as necessary including detailed examination of the Risk Register. Council is content that all measures are in hand to minimise risk.
3. The delivery of benevolence is at the heart of what the REA does and the Association is structured in a way to ensure that this is done in a caring and efficient manner. Government initiatives over the past few years have increased the awareness of the general public and departments of state as to the availability of benevolence assistance for those who have served in the Corps and their dependents. This has resulted in less of a decline in applications than expected five or six years ago. Indeed, case numbers have slightly increased by 26 over comparable times at the end of 2006 and those of 2005. Full details are contained in the REA Annual Report and Financial Statements issued to all branches earlier this year and available on the Charity Commission website.
4. There was a much higher rise in applications last year with an increase of 30% since Jan '07 resulting in the Trustees being alerted to allocate further financial resources to the 2007 & 2008 benevolence expenditure. There is no obvious trend at this stage but we can reasonably expect an increase in requests for those families who have separated as a direct result of the pace of operational deployments, greater involvement of the TA and for those who have been affected by the floods in Yorkshire and the Midlands.
5. Effective "benevolence" requires many organisations in "partnership" to bring the help needed to the applicant. The REA relies on the volunteer caseworkers of SSAFA Forces Help and The Royal British Legion to act as our "eyes and ears". They inform us of the requirements of the applicant and help him or her complete the application form comprehensively and succinctly so the right type of financial assistance is accurately and speedily delivered. Our link with the Army Benevolent Fund is also important as it contributes to the homes and other military charities that our family of Sappers is connected to including such organisations as BLESMA and St Dunstan's. The ABF also continues to control the "ring fenced funds" set up following the comparatively recent operations in the South Atlantic, Northern Ireland, the Gulf and Afghanistan. The REA Council this year approved a grant of £5000 to the ABF Current Operations Fund. Council also made a long term commitment to the excellent work of Combat Stress and mad a grant of £7.5K with an ongoing grant of £2.5K per year for the foreseeable future.

6. The REA Council wish to record their gratitude and appreciation to all these organisations and to the volunteers who act as caseworkers and fund raisers in a combined “partnership” for the benefit of all those in need in our Corps family.

7. **Branch Changes.**

a. **New Branch:** A new National REA Branch, the Commando Engineers, was approved in January 2008.

b. **Closure of Branches:** Liverpool North, Coventry, York and Bridgend & District Branches were closed.

8. **Badges of Merit.** We are pleased to announce the award of Badges of Merit to the following:

Name	Branch	Group
Mr A Calvert	Newcastle & District	North East Group
Mr M A Crooke	Potteries	North West Group
Mr T Finigan	Gosport	Central Southern Group
J W G Wynne	Portsmouth & District	Central Southern Group
Mr J Y Guthrie	Edinburgh	Scotland & NI Group

The following member was awarded the Badge of Merit as a result of a recommendation by the Chairman REA, Maj Gen J D Moore-Bick CBE DL.

Mr Roger Prince – Taunton Branch – South West Group

9. **Recruiting** The Committee continues to review ways of exposing the work of the REA to serving Members and marketing the activities of the REA with the aim of attracting more members to each of the branches. New Membership applications average about thirty per month but this is offset by the overall number of those who die leaving a modest increase. A poster campaign highlighting esprit de corps was begun in late 2007 and has received very favourable comment. The campaign has continued throughout 2008.

Reunions & Family Events

10. **Re-unions.** The Association reunions have again been a great success and I wish to give you brief details on them:

a. **Ripon.** The REA were again magnificently hosted by 38 Engr Regt. It was a great weekend and we are most grateful for all the excellent arrangements made by all the organisers. The Chief Royal Engineer took the salute on the Sunday Freedom of Ripon parade.

b. **Minley.** There was a very good turnout at Minley that reflected the hard work of the staff of 3 RSME Regt who sponsored the events and demonstrations. There was an excellent Pass Off demonstration at Chimaera Bridge carried out with great skill, pride and professionalism. A number of stands and displays were also laid out at Five Ways. The reviewing officer at the Drumhead Service and Parade was Col G K Gibb late RE, Commandant Combat Engineer School.

c. **Chatham -- Corps Memorial Weekend.** This was one of the best weekends for many years. The event was attended by over 200 veterans who were able to mingle with the many parents of students who came to Chatham to see the environment and living conditions of their sons and daughters. It was also the first occasion for the additional element of the Corps Band to play a concert in the afternoon and for the parade on the Sunday. The Salute was taken by Major General Keith Cima CB.

d. **Family Events.** Mr Ken Coward and his team organised an excellent week at Mundesley Holiday Village on the Norfolk coast. It was the first time this venue had been used and it proved to be an outstanding success. These events are very popular and well organised with outings and entertainment as part of the package. The REA are most grateful to Mr Coward and his team for arranging these families' events and all REA Members are encouraged to take advantage of this very inexpensive full board holiday in congenial surroundings.

e. **Benches.** The REA Trustees have approved a grant of £4.2K towards the costs of installing 10 x garden benches, with Corps cap badge and "A Gift from the Royal Engineers" engraved on the back, at Headley Court and Selley Oak hospitals.

f. **The Rock Memorial Garden.** The REA Trustees approved a grant of £5K towards a bust of Lt Col John Rock, founder of the Airborne Forces and the development of a "garden of reflection" for 23 Engr Regt (Air Assault) at their spiritual home in Rock Barracks, Woodbridge in Suffolk.

g. **A Memorial Website** The REA Trustees have approved a grant of £5K towards a memorial page to be developed as an adjunct to, and as part of, the REA website. This is in conjunction with "friends & relations" and will allow friends and families to add comments and reflections to those who have passed away. There will also be an opportunity to donate to the REA "in memoriam" as they remember the past.

B

HONORARY TREASURER'S REPORT TO THE
2008 AGM OF THE ROYAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION AT THE
VICTORY SERVICES CLUB ON SATURDAY 11 OCTOBER 2008

1. The 2007 budget was authorised with an expenditure of £645k and closed on 31 December 2007 with an expenditure of £807k this was because of higher benevolence spending than expected. However, because of considerably higher legacy receipts than budgeted for the year ended with a £671k surplus.
2. This year's budget, which started on 1 January 2008, had an authorised expenditure of £739k. It is on track to close, on 31 December 08, within budget.
3. Next year's budget, 2009, has been approved by Council with an expenditure of £785k.
4. This year has seen some extraordinary receipts and expenditures;
 - a. A single legacy of £826k from a National Service Sapper who became a successful architect. Over the last 2 years almost £1m has been received in legacies.
 - b. A pledge, subject to Corps driven caveats, of £200k to the improvements to the RE Museum and the relocation of the Corps Library to the Ravelin building.
5. REA capital is invested in the Armed Forces Common Investment Fund and as at Fri 03 Oct this year the capital value was £6.11M, compared to £7.44M in 2007 and £7.04M in 2006. This drop is not surprising because of the volatility of the current markets. Fortunately, there is no need to release capital at the moment, and the REA can wait to weather the storm to recovery.
6. Benevolence is, of course, the most important objective of the REA and is its biggest expenditure. In 2007 £658k, including £75k to the Royal Hospital to help with the rebuild of the infirmary, was spent on benevolence. This year £576k has been budgeted for and is on track to come within budget at the end of the year.
7. I now report for the 3rd time to the 3rd AGM's that the accuracy of the Branch and Group annual financial returns has been disappointing. Too many reports are inaccurate or not received at all. This places an undue strain on the Corps Treasurer and his staff at a time when the many Corps accounts have to be prepared for the annual audit. HQ REA have taken steps to make the process as simple as possible for Branches and Groups to prepare their financial reports. I again urge to please return reports accurately and on time. If you are unsure or want help then just pick up the phone to HQ REA they will be only too willing to help. The REA does not want to incur the wrath of the Charity Commissioners!
8. In summary, I can report to you that the REA finances are in good order, except the annual financial returns, and I would once again commend to you the excellent work of our Corps Treasurer Lt Col Jake Townsley. Last, but not least, I commend to you the really excellent work done by the Benevolence Committee chaired by Brigadier Andy Craig. This committee brings a tremendous amount of comfort and relief to a large number of Sappers who find themselves in distress through no fault of their own.

Colonel Mike Reynolds
REA Honorary Treasurer