

The Royal Engineers Association

(Registered under the Charities Act 1992)

Patron: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN



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Corps Treasurer

19 February 2009

MINUTES OF THE 110th MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF THE ROYAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION, HELD IN 0602 MEETING ROOM 09, MINISTRY OF DEFENCE, MAIN BUILDING, LONDON, ON WEDNESDAY 28th JANUARY 2009

PRESENT

Maj Gen J D Moore-Bick CBE
Maj B Ironton RE
Lt Col R Murfin TD DL
Maj (Retd) B Henderson
WO1 (RSM) S Pattison
WO1 (RSM) M Stewart
Mr K Coward
Mr T Mitchley
Mr J R V Mason
Mr B Baxter
Mr E Lowbridge
Mr E Briggs
Mr R Fenn
Mr B Prosser
Mr J Bell

Chairman
Comdt RETC Wyke Regis
Reserve Army
South Wales Group
38 Engr Regt
3 RSME Regt
Chairman, Families Reunion Committee
East Anglia Group
South West Group
North West Group
North Midlands Group
London Group
South East Group
North East Group
Scotland & NI Group

IN ATTENDANCE

Lt Col J R McLennan
Lt Col N Jordan

Controller REA
D Con REA and Secretary

APOLOGIES

Col D Caulfield
Lt Col W Clark
Lt Col J Townsley
WO1 (RSM) S Lomas
Mr C Warnes

Regimental Colonel
Central Southern Group
Corps Treasurer
1 RSME Regt
South Midlands Group

1. The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed those present especially those who had come from afar. He extended seasons greetings to all assembled. For the benefit of the new members, he asked those around the table to introduce themselves.
2. The Chairman noted that apologies had been received from those listed above. He welcomed the following new members to the Committee:

- Maj Baz Ironton Comdt RETC Wyke Regis
- Maj (Retd) Brian Henderson South Wales Gp
- WO1 (RSM) M Stewart 3 RSME Regt
- WO1 (RSM) S Pattison 21 Engr Regt
- Mr Trevor Mitchley East Anglia Gp

ITEM 1 - TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE 109th MEETING

3. The Committee accepted that the Minutes of the 109th Meeting were a true record of the proceedings.
4. Proposed: Ted Lowbridge (North Midlands Gp). Seconded: Eddie Briggs (London Gp)
5. The Chairman signed the Minutes.

ITEM 2 - MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 109th MEETING

6. Branch Financial Summary (Paragraph 25). There was an action on Gp representatives to remind their branches of the requirement to submit timely and accurate Annual Financial Summaries. Gp representatives confirmed that the message was passed on to branches.
7. REA Rules 2009 (Item 11). There was an action on Council to approve REA Rules 2009 and their re-issue. This was done, but since then HQ REA has been advised of some potential changes. Rules 2009 will be considered later as a separate agenda Item.

8. Standard Bearers Travel Expenses (Paragraph 42). Council approved the payment of travel expenses to Standard Bearers attending all National Events with their branch Standard.
9. Budget Line Increase (Paragraph 47). In order to inform the REA Finance Cttee of the potential increase in the budget, there was an action on the D Con to collate previous year's expenditure for Standard Bearers expenses. Completed.
10. Wreath for Japan. There was an action on the D Con to provide a wreath for use by Mr Ray Fenn, South East Gp. Mr Fenn would be visiting Japan in November 2008 and planned on visiting the Commonwealth Graves at Yokohama where he would lay the wreath. Action completed.

ITEM 3 – TO NOTE THE REPORT OF THE BENEVOLENCE COMMITTEE

11. The Controller presented the Benevolence Report for the 6-month period ending 31st December 2008. The report is at Annex A.
12. The Controller said that no trends could be identified from the figures shown. He said that the charity Combat Stress figured more upon the REA horizon. It was estimated that there were about 400 sappers registered with Combat Stress. It is for this reason that Council approved an initial grant of £7500 and thereafter an annual grant of £2500 to Combat Stress; this will continue for the foreseeable future.
13. Cttee members were reminded that there was an open invitation for branch and units to send observers to the Benevolence Cttee meetings. A good attendance by observers ensured that the benevolence work of the REA was brought to the attention of the serving Corps.
14. The Controller said that the responsibility of running the Kitchener Scholarships on behalf of the Corps had now been accepted by Council. The day-to-day running of the fund has been delegated to the REA Benevolence Cttee. Details of the RE Kitchener Scholarships Fund are provided at Annex B
15. A Corps Memorial Book, sponsored by the REA, has been created online to allow for dedications to be published for deceased former and serving members of the Corps. Dedications are not confined to those who have died on Operations. Currently the Book has been populated with about 750 dedications. Applications for dedications to former members of the Corps can be made by completing the online Form. The Memorial Book can be reached from the REA website by choosing 'Corps Memorial Book' under the 'In Memoriam' tab or by directly entering <http://www.reahq.org.uk/index.php/in-memoriam>
16. Bob Prosser (North East Gp) asked how REA could be informed of deaths without using the internet. The D Con advised that all branches had been sent REA Form 8. This should be used by branches to inform HQ REA about deceased personnel.
17. The Chairman said that because of the current financial turmoil and the increase in our

dependencies, pressures on REA benevolence would be increased. The Controller confirmed that there was an increase in the number of benevolence applicants citing debt as a factor.

18. The Benevolence Report was accepted.

ITEM 4 - TO NOTE THE REGIMENTAL COLONELS REPORT ON THE CORPS

19. The Controller presented the Regt Col's report. The report is at Annex C.

20. WO1 (RSM) M Stewart (3 RSME Regt) gave a brief update on life at Minley since the beginning of the Holdfast contract.

21. The Regt Col's report was accepted.

ITEM 5 - TO NOTE THE REPORT FROM THE FAMILIES EVENTS COMMITTEE

22. Ken Coward presented the Families Events Committee report. The report is at Annex D.

23. He said that numbers for the Spring Reunion at were about 170 though this could go up or down. He was doubtful that exclusivity this year would be achieved. He said that there was a problem with coaching which was proving more and more difficult to acquire. Coaching for 2009 and 2010 had been secured but the future looked difficult.

24. The venue for 2010 would be Mundesley which proved a most popular venue in 2008. The price for this 7 day full board break would be £320 which includes coaching. He urged Cttee members to take the message back to their branches that there was still a chance to attend the 2009 Spring Reunion and to extol the virtues of the 2010 event at Mundesley.

25. The Controller commented that although the Family Events currently had sufficient funds, should the situation change, he was sure that the Trustees would view any request for financial assistance sympathetically.

26. John Bell (Scotland & NI Gp) said that over the last two years he had been asked by his Group members about the lack of coaching north of the border. Ken Coward replied that Holiday Camps will not provide coaches north of the border. It is for that reason that Secretaries of branches north of the border do not receive full booking forms which include details of coaching available. The Chairman asked why coaches would not travel over the border, Ken Coward said he did not know but it was a fact. He added that they currently pick up as far north as Newcastle.

27. The Controller said that this is a prime example of the sort of subsidy that could be granted in order to bring potential attendees from Scotland into England and return.

28. The Chairman asked John Bell (Scotland & Nf) and Ken Coward (Families Events) to collaborate and determine what sort of take-up there would be if cross border coaching was made available.

29. The Families Events Committee report was accepted.

ITEM 6 – TO AWARD THE BADGE OF MERIT FOR 2009

30. The Committee approved the Award of the Badge of Merit to the following members:

Name	Branch	Group
Mr M J Barry MM	Cambridge Branch	East Anglia Gp
Lt Col (Retd) D Holloway	Medway Branch	South East Gp
Mr T Linley	Leeds Branch	North East Gp
Mr L E Simpson	Hull & Distr	North East Gp
Mr R Cushion	Andover & Winchester Branch	South West Gp
Mr P H Webster	Bournemouth & Distr Branch	South West Gp

ITEM 7 – REA RULES 2009 – AMENDMENTS AND ADDITIONS

31. The Controller said that last year the Rules were examined and brought up to date as Rules 2009. Some activity has occurred since then and as a result several rule changes and additions were deemed necessary. A full description of the additions and amendments to Rules 2009 considered by the Cttee is included at Annex E. The changes and additions were considered by the Cttee and approved for consideration by Council.

Proposed: John Bell (Scotland & NI Gp)

Seconder: WO1 (RSM) M Stewart (3 RSME Regt)

Carried

ITEM 8 - BRANCH MATTERS

32. REA Reunions and Other Events. Although not advised at the meeting, the dates of the following events are confirmed:

15 - 17 May	Ripon Weekend*
8 - 15 May	Spring Families Reunion, Mill Rythe Holiday Resort, Hayling Island
03 - 04 June	Beating Retreat, London **
30 May	Trooping the Colour – “Major Generals Review” **
04 June	Royal Hospital Chelsea Founders Day Parade
06 June	Trooping the Colour – “Colonel’s Review” **
13 June	Queens Birthday Parade **

19 - 21 June Aldershot/Mixley Weekend *
18 - 20 September Corps Memorial Weekend Chatham*
10 October REA AGM and Annual Dinner *
11 October Sapper Sunday at Royal Hospital Chelsea
05 November Field of Remembrance, Westminster
08 November Remembrance Sunday

* REA National Events

** 1st Bn Irish Guards

33. Commando Engineer Branch Standard. John Mason (South West Gp) asked Cttee members to approve the Cdo Engr Branch Standard design. HQ REA said it was content with the design and in reply to John Mason's question about the size of the 'Daggers' the D Con said that Corps Enterprises had advised that the maximum size of emblems in the margins was 4 inches. The Cttee approved the design.

Proposed: John Mason (South West Gp)

Seconded: Maj B Ironton RE (Comdt RETC Wyke Regis)

Carried

34. Formation of the Middle East (Gulf) Branch. D Con submitted a proposal to form a new Branch called the Middle East (Gulf) Branch. HQ REA has been in communication with the Mr Gary Irvine and fully supports the proposal. HQ REA is in receipt of the names of 25 REA members/prospective members and confirms that Association Rules regarding the formation of Branches have been met. The Branch will be allocated to the HQ & Overseas Group. The Cttee approved the formation of the Branch.

Proposer: D Con (HQ REA)

Secunder: Ken Coward (Families Events Cttee)

Carried

35. Re-Formation of the Paisley Branch. John Bell (Scotland & NI Gp) submitted a proposal to reform the Paisley Branch. HQ REA has been in communication with the Mr Bob Neilson and fully supports the proposal. HQ REA is in receipt of the names of 28 REA members/prospective members and confirms that Association Rules regarding the formation of Branches have been met. The Branch will be allocated to the Scotland & NI Gp. John Bell explained that the Paisley Branch was originally formed in July 1987. It ceased to exist in 2000 when authority was given by the Management Cttee for the Branch to amalgamate with the Glasgow Branch to form the Glasgow and West of Scotland Branch. An application for the new Branch to retain both Standards was approved at the same time. The D Con said that the Paisley Branch Standard should be returned to the Paisley Branch by the Glasgow and West of Scotland Branch. The Cttee approved the formation of the Branch.

Proposer: John Bell (Scotland & NI Gp)

Secunder: WO1 (RSM) S Pattison (21 Engr Regt)

Carried

ITEM 9. TO NOTE THE ALLOCATION OF GRANTS TO ANNUAL EVENTS

36. Grant requests have been received for the following events in 2009:

Minley/Aldershot Weekend	£4,000.00 – £4000 supported by HQ REA
Ripon Weekend	£6800.00 - £5000 supported by HQ REA
Chatham Weekend	£6,500.00 - £6500 supported by HQ REA

37. The Controller reminded the Cttee that it does not have any financial authority; it can only recommend amounts to Council. The Controller said that HQ REA will only support a grant of £5000 to the Ripon Weekend 2009 and asked that the Management Cttee recommends this amount to Council. The Controller said that in agreement with the Chairman of the Ripon Branch, the grant was to be paid via the Gp Sec, WO1 (RSM) S Pattison, to Central Bank 21 Engr Regt.

38. Cttee members agreed to recommend the revised allocations to Council.

ITEM 10. REA GROUP STRUCTURE REVIEW

39. The REA Group Structure Review by Lt Col Mike Fossey was introduced by the Controller. He thought it wise to let the Cttee know that the Regt Col had had sight of the Paper and that he was less than satisfied with it. The Regt Col was a Trustee and he would be discussing the Paper in detail with other members of Council at their meeting in May. The Chairman said he thought it necessary only for the Cttee to note the Paper,

40. Bob Prosser (North East Gp) agreed with the recommendation that the Airborne Branch should come under the control of the East Anglia Gp. This had already been discussed and agreed at Branch and Gp level.

41. John Mason (South West Gp) asked how many members were in each Gp area. The Controller said that branch membership was a dynamic and did not impact upon the geographic nature of group boundaries. He continued by saying that REA membership was probably around 80000 with the vast majority being HQ members. John Mason continued by asking if there was any way the large number of HQ members could be brought into branches. The D Con said that the query was moving away from the Item detail but gave a brief explanation as to why, because of the Data Protection Act, HQ REA did not have the contact details of those who were HQ members. He continued by saying that Recruiting Cttee members were well aware of the problem and at each of their meeting discussed ways of recruiting to branches; it was not a new problem. The Controller agreed with the D Con and confirmed that members of the Recruiting Cttee were always active in seeking ways to increase membership, not only in their Groups, but across the whole REA structure. The Chairman advised John Mason to take the matter up with his Dep Gp Dir who was a member of the Recruiting Cttee.

42. John Bell (Scotland & NI) had a concern about the Northern Ireland Branch whom he thought were rather 'out on a limb'. He offered that for branch members travelling to England the first footfall for many was either Liverpool or Heathrow Airport, North West Gp and London Gp respectively. He said he had an open mind on the final location of the branch, but stressed that the Northern Ireland

Branch does present a strain on Group funds. The cost of travel for branch delegates to attend Group meetings is high and this year would be particularly painful as it is hoped to hold the Group AGM in Northern Ireland. He suggested that the current REA Welfare Grant might not be equitably allocated across the groups.

43. The Cttee noted the REA Gp Structure Review.

ITEM 11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

44. Annual Branch Financial Summary. The D Con briefed the meeting on the status of Branch and Group submissions for the FY 2008. He reminded all members that the end of year Financial Summaries were due from all Groups and Branches by the end of January each year. He said that in past years, the timely submission and accuracy of these documents left much to be desired; he hoped this year would be different. To-date he had received 99 Summaries with 16 outstanding; the names of the branches yet to submit a Summary were read out to members. He asked that Group delegates contact these branches and remind them of their responsibilities. He said he could provide Cttee members with details of those branches and groups that had so far submitted a Summary.

45. The D Con said that there were still too many Summaries being submitted that did not balance. Resolving these errors had resulted in a huge amount of telephone time with branch Treasurers. He said that whilst he was more than happy to discuss the completion of the Summary with Treasurers before it was submitted, he was less than pleased to deal with submitted branch Summaries that clearly did not balance. It was particularly frustrating to note that had the Treasurers of these branches used the simple arithmetic check explained in the notes on the Summary, the imbalance would be startlingly obvious, prompting them to take corrective action.

46. The Controller said that in spite of the D Con's stern words the submission of Summaries was getting better. He continued by saying that he would like to commend the D Con for all his hard work at this time of year in calling-in and collating the Summaries, and for his helpful and patient dealings with branch Treasurers.

47. REA Awareness. The Chairman said that as part of the Recruiting Cttee's ongoing Awareness initiative, the latest edition of the Sapper Magazine carried a card insert poster. He said that copies of the poster in A4 size had been sent to all major and minor RE unit both Regular and TA. The Controller said that it was the intention of the Recruiting Cttee to follow on with more posters on a regular basis. Input from the Cttee would be most welcome and should be made to their Dep Gp Dir who are members of the Recruiting Cttee.

48. Revision to Group Grants. Ted Lowbridge (North Midlands Gp) said he thought the annual REA Welfare Grant paid to groups was insufficient to meet the needs of branches. He remarked that branch activities needed subsidising as did the cost of branch governance. He said that currently within

the North Midlands Group there were two outstanding claims totalling about £600. He added that if these were met they would leave the budget in deficit. He was concerned that this inability to meet branch travel claims when attending branch meetings and functions would have an effect on branch membership. The D Con said that the purpose of the REA Welfare Grant paid to groups was to support activities that would benefit the group as a whole; it was not to be used to support branch activities and this is made quite clear in the letter sent to groups each year with the grant. He continued by saying that in terms of branch activities, cost lie where they fall and that it was unreasonable to expect the Association to fund branch activities; Association Rule 17.12 was quite clear in this respect. Regarding the reimbursement of postage expenses by branches the D Con gave an example of the circumstance in which a claim might be met; this did not include reimbursing postal charges incurred during the normal day to day running of the branch.

49. The Chairman asked if any of the Cttee did not understand the rules regarding the disposal of the Group REA Welfare Grant. All in attendance said they understood the rules.

ITEM 12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

50. The date of the next meeting is planned for 20th July 2009 in 042 Historic Room 24, MOD Main Building.

19 February 2009



Deputy Controller

Minutes Approved

Date

Chairman