

THE PIONEER



PIONEER MEMORIAL UNVEILING

THIS PIONEER MEMORIAL STANDS
ON THE SITE OF THE GUARDROOM
OF SIMPSON BARRACKS





Farewell to our Commander-in-Chief

IT WAS the legendary Field Marshall Bill Slim who had the honour of being the first Chief of the General Staff to serve under Her Late Majesty The Queen upon her accession in 1952.

The Army that she inherited still had the ribbons of the Second World War emblazoned upon its khaki battledress, was engaged across the globe in the brush-fire wars resulting from the nation's withdrawal from empire.

Her passing 70 years later is a moment of profound importance for the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth and the Army.

The nation has lost its sovereign. We have lost our longest serving Commander-in Chief and this country's most dedicated servant.

The British Army evolved significantly during her reign. Her Majesty remained a constant.

She was a soldier herself and an exceptional leader. She served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service during the Second World War and

today's soldiers can learn a great deal from her.

She was steadfast and unshakable in her duty and dedicated to those she served.

As the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Colonel-in-Chief of so many of our Regiments and Corps, she showed unwavering devotion to her Army and remarkable care and commitment to our families.

I am deeply grateful for her mentorship and, on behalf of the Army, I salute our former sovereign and offer the Services's deepest condolences to the royal family.

God save the King.

Gen Sir Patrick Sanders
Chief of the General Staff



Front Cover

Memorial Unveiling

Picture: Jim Bricknell
Thank you Jim!



Back Cover

Queen and Paddington Bear

Picture: Eleanor Tomlinson
Thank you Eleanor!
www.eleanortomlinsonart.co.uk

Registered Charity Number
1024036

Patron

HRH The Duke of Gloucester
KG GCVO

President

Brigadier D Clouston MBE

Controller / Editorial

Norman Brown BEM Esq

Design / Photos / Editorial

Paul Brown

☎ telephone

07868 757642

✉ email

royalpioneer corps@gmail.com

➔ website

www.royalpioneer corps.co.uk

📘 facebook group

www.facebook.com/groups/chunkies/

📘 facebook page

www.facebook.com/royalpioneer corps

📺 youtube page

www.youtube.com/user/royalpioneer corps

The Royal Pioneer Corps Association

c/o Bicester Garrison
Support Unit
St George's Barracks
Arcott
Bicester OX25 1PP



EDITORIAL

FELLOW Pioneers, it's been a hectic part of the year ranging from the Reunion Weekend, AGM and then the Officers' and Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' dinners.

I know for many of you that's only the tip of the iceberg but it's been great to get out and about again now COVID restrictions have eased a little. It's been especially good to catch up with many of you at these events.

I remain grateful to Norman and the wider Pioneer Council. So to, does WO1 (RSM) Stevie Soper who does a great job as the Pioneer Head of Trade, looking after those who still serve on my behalf. His update is definitely worth a read. Our people continue to do their duty and do us all proud. There is no doubt about that.

I'm glad that Lt Col Billy Dilkes is now set to take over from Norman. I hope to be able to say a proper farewell and thank you to Norman at next year's reunion, by which time Billy will be in the seat. Norman has asked if he can stay on our Regimental Council and his experience will add a lot of value there.

On a slightly separate note, I know the cost of living crisis is starting to bite in certain parts of our Association. We do have the ability to flex

some benevolence in certain instances and I'm briefed 6 monthly on such activity. It's good to be able to help others in their time of need. Norman has the necessary details and I would encourage anyone to reach out and take advice from him as they deem appropriate.

In the interim, I hope life finds you all well. All the best and take care.

Brigadier David Clouston MBE

AT this year's Annual General Meeting in July I announced that I intended to retire in the next year, we advertised the post and I am happy to announce that Lt Col Billy Dilkes has been appointed as my successor.

For those of you that don't know Billy, he appeared on the front cover of the newsletter on the 2020 edition. Looking back at the front covers on the next page, I have never been put on there!

Billy will take over on 1 June 2023, I hope you give him the support you have given me. I must thank all those who left some fantastic messages thanking me on Facebook, your comments were really appreciated.

CONTENTS

- | | | | |
|-----------|---|------------|--|
| 2 | Farewell
Farewell to Her Late Majesty The Queen | 66 | Simpson Manor Memorial
Opening of new memorial |
| 4 | Message from President
And news from the Editor | 73 | Future Events
Hope to see you there! |
| 6 | 19 years of Newsletters
Review of 34 colour Association Newsletters | 74 | Archibald Parfitt
An interesting Pioneer |
| 10 | Founders Day
At Royal Hospital | 80 | The work of Pioneers in World War 2
We did a lot of work! |
| 11 | Freedom of Bicester to BGSU
Freedom of Bicester to BGSU | 84 | Aliens in the Pioneer Corps
During WW2 |
| 13 | Platinum Jubilee
And Trooping the Colour | 94 | Hull Formation
The formation of Hull Company Pioneer Corps |
| 14 | Paddy McPhillips's Send Off
And what a send off! | 98 | Soldier Magazine
Extracts from Soldier Magazine |
| 18 | 10th Anniversary
Tenth Anniversary of losing two Pioneers | 100 | Bernard Elliott
War History |
| 20 | Sherringham Jolly
Hope to see you there next year! | 102 | Remembrance
Remembrance throughout the country |
| 28 | Head of Trade
Message from Pioneer Head of Trade | 104 | Photograph Gallery
Some ugly Pioneers here! |
| 30 | D-Day Trip
Northampton Branch visit Normandy | 108 | Digging through the archives
Her late Majesty The Queen |
| 40 | Reunion
1985 Anzio Platoon Reunion | 110 | Collector's corner
Mostly featuring Douglas's finds! |
| 41 | Northern Veterans Awards
Featuring Dougie Durrant! | 114 | AGM Minutes
Held at Bicester |
| 42 | Pioneer Reunion Weekend
Another great weekend! | 116 | Blast from the Past
Photographs through the ages |
| 52 | Northampton Branch Museum Trip
With a tour by the Director | 118 | Letters to the Editor
We love to hear from you |
| 54 | Officers' Dinner Night
This one was the 74th Dinner | 122 | Book reviews
Six books are reviewed |
| 56 | Victoria Remembrance
Service at Victoria for Unknown Soldier | 124 | The Last Post
May they rest in peace |
| 58 | Cenotaph Parade
See you there next year! | 126 | And finally
A little humour, a farewell to Norman |

STOP PRESS

■ We are sent a lot of photos, most cannot be used in print, due to poor quality. Perhaps upgrade your phone :)

STOP PRESS

■ Date of Army v Navy Rugby now confirmed as 13th May 2023

STOP PRESS

■ Josh Campbell is representing Great Britain at Ice Hockey. Please sponsor him at <https://tinyurl.com/2ezyha3n>

■ The British Legion has launched a Cost of Living Grant to assist veterans struggling with energy bills



In 2003 I took over as Controller of the Association for a period of 6 months and now some 20 years later I am retiring, how time flies! In that time I have moved office 7 times, I became an expert at packing and unpacking. I must thank Council members who have supported me during this time and especially the 4 Chairmen/Presidents.

During my tenure I have had some extremely happy events such as Battlefield Tours with 23 Regiment (one to Italy, one to Normandy, one to Scotland and two to Cyprus), I have also been on three more with the Northampton Branch. I have also enjoyed the Reunion Weekends over the years especially the one in 2014 (which was also the farewell parade of 23 Regiment), for this I had to find some 450 beds.

There have also been some unhappy times particularly when I hear the news of the death of a member, especially those who passed at an early age and those with whom I served. In the last few years, as we all get older, there seems to be more deaths.

Over the years I have asked you to support the Derby and Christmas Draws, once I retire I will then be able to buy tickets myself – it would not look right if my ticket came out of

the draw. Once again tickets are being sent out with this Newsletter, please give them your support, if you can sell more tickets please do not hesitate to ask for more.

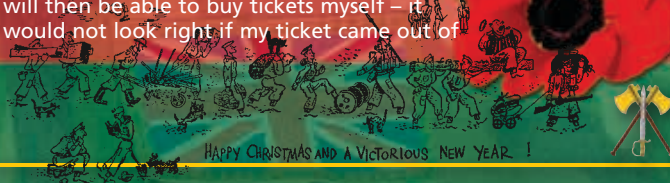
In the last 2 years our active membership list has reduced by nearly two hundred, this is mainly due to people moving and not informing us of their new address as well as the large number of deaths in that period. We have one member who joined the Association in 1952 (70 years a member!) and WO2 Les Banks joined in 1955.

This year's reunion was again a huge success and we hope to make next year's even better as it is being arranged at the same time as Bicester hold their Veterans Day, a programme of the weekend will be sent out in the March 2023 Pioneer Update.

2023 will be the 30th anniversary of the amalgamation of the RPC into the RLC, how time flies.

May I finish by wishing you all a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Norman Brown



Can you spot the mouse?

The winner of "Find the Cuneo Mouse" was Colin Thomas.

A prize will be on its way to Colin. It was of course on Paddies red bag on Page 11!

We had six correct answers this time, well done to Bob Pawley, Peter Matthews, Sue Thomas, Tony Lunn and Col Chris Everett for spotting him!

Can you spot the Cuneo Mouse in this edition?

Terence Cuneo painted 'Sword Beach' which shows the activities of the pioneers who were among the first British troops to land on the beaches of Normandy on D-Day. Sword Beach was the codename of one of the five main landing beaches in Operation Neptune, the initial assault phase of Operation Overlord, the Allied invasion of Normandy on 6 June 1944.

Cuneo also painted himself into the painting and he can be seen with his bicycle and his easel on the beach.

Pioneers played an essential role on D-Day and suffered many casualties.

26 Pioneer Companies went

August 1944 there were over 35,500 pioneers in Normandy. D-Day + 79 there were 231 Coys and over 68,000 men.

In most of his paintings Cuneo hid a small mouse (sometimes lifelike, sometimes cartoon-like) which was his trademark and somewhere in this newsletter we have hid a Cuneo mouse and it's not the one on this page!

They can be difficult to detect, and many people enjoy scouring his paintings to find one.

Entries should be submitted (by letter, email or telephone) by 31st January 2020.

Correct entries will go into a hat and the first one pulled out will win a prize!

Good luck.





19 years of newsletters!

I was going through the front covers of the newsletters that we have published and was struck by how many there are - 19 years worth to be exact! I thought it would be a fitting feature now that the old man is finally hanging up his socks to put all of these together and say a few words about each one.

Report: Paul Brown
RPCA Archive

THE first newsletter that I got involved with was the February 2004 issue. I was training the old man in the use of desktop publishing software. He informed me that he may need my help to produce a few issues. Nineteen years later, he still needs help!

All newsletters contain details of past and future events (including photographs), book reviews and details of members who we have sadly lost in the Last Post section.

1. February 2004 – this was the first colour issue of the RPC Association newsletter, its main purpose was to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of D Day. It contained details of Pioneer Operations and extracts from the war diaries of those units which landed on 6 June 1944. The

edition also included details on Anzio Beachhead and reviewed a new book on "T Force" which included many Pioneers.

2. September 2004 – the front cover showed the late Maj Bill Elliott (a D-Day veteran) and his grandson visiting the graves of his former comrades.

Other articles included the 60th anniversary of World War 2, the Armed Forces Memorial and recollections of a D Day Veteran, Mr Harry Ratner.

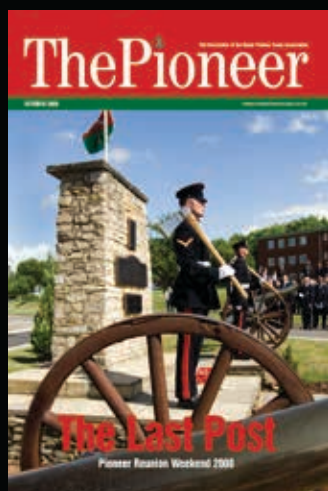
3. February 2005 - the main article in this issue was "The Battle of Salerno",

other articles were "Acts of Bravery" – the award of a DCM and 3 MM's to Pioneers and a report on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

4. October 2006 – as we had recently moved to Bicester from 51 St George's Drive the front cover showed our former home. Capt IW Haxwell shared his memories of service in WW2 as did Lt Alex Dickson.

Bill Owen, Compo in Last of the Summer Wine appeared in a photograph taken whilst he was at Officer Cadet Training Unit.

THE PIONEER





5. April 2006 – the front cover shows a Pioneer rescuing a dog during the Blitz in London, a lovely photograph!

Captain (Retd) Peter Leighton-Langer published his book "The Kings Own Enemy Aliens" describing the 10,000 German and Austrian who joined the British Army (mainly Pioneer Corps) during WW2.

Details of the recently refurbished St David's Barracks (including naming the new blocks after former Pioneers).

6. October 2006 – the front cover shows the grave of Pte J Tancred and the rear a photograph of him.

Ex RQMS PG Smith describes his six years as an RQMS and a report and photographs of the Liberty of Bicester being granted to 23 Pioneer Regiment RLC.

7. April 2007 – Arthur C Cole, Charles Thursby, Iann Insch and Leonard John Hooper describe their war time service.

A silver "The Working Pioneer" was presented to Maj ER Elliott on his retirement as Treasurer of the Association and a visit to 23 Pnr Regt by the Princess Royal.

8. October 2007 – in this edition we published the complete book "It don't cost you a Penny".

A hilarious story written by Maj RH Rhodes-Wood (he also wrote the War History of the Royal Pioneer Corps 1939-1946).

Details of a visit to Monkton Farleigh – a wartime underground ammunition store and a report from Stalag VIIIIB are also published.



9. May 2008 – my first picture on the front cover showing the CO 23 Pnr Regt leading the Regiment through Bicester.

WO2 M Grange describes his service in BAOR, an article describing an escape from Nazi Germany and a report and photographs of Pioneers changing guard at Buckingham Palace.

10. October 2008 – front cover showing the Corps War Memorial and the Cannons. The late George Pringle (a regular at Reunions) describes his early service in the Corps, Harry Sinclair describes his service with 219 Coy and Fred Hall describes his journey from Westward Ho to Austria via Monte Casino. An article "Tragedy of the Lancastria" first published in 1947 was re-published.

11. April 2009 – George Pringle continues his life in the Corps, Frank Nichol remembers his time in Munster.

A detailed report of 67 Coy from Normandy to Neumunster and a report on war-time Smoke Companies – Smokey Joes.

12. October 2009 – front cover, Spear Alley, Cyprus, love this photograph!

We finished the final part of George Pringle's story also published for the first time details including photos after the Battle of the Falklands.

Details of 120 Coy and the life and death of Horsley Hall which was part of the Depot and Training Centre at Wrexham

13. April 2010 – Articles in this edition included from Italy to Normandy, tunnels



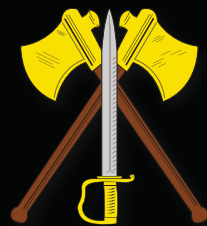
full of cheese sandwiches by Lt E Hayball, details of the Battle for Caen and service details of Colonel Donald Dean VC.

14. October 2010 – Capt AL Hale kept a wartime log as a Prisoner of War, the tragedy of the ship Erinpure-Bosotho where 633 Pioneers lost their lives, details of the National arboretum and the memoirs of Lt Col CC Davey.

The front cover shows a serving Pioneer dressed as a WW2 vet taken at the reunion.

15. April 2011 – Sadly this issue contained full details of the funeral of WO2 Charlie Wood. Other articles included Col Dean's exploits in Madagascar during WW2, work of Pioneers during the Blitz, the unveiling of the Athens Memorial, how the Germans reacted to Jewish POWs and a report of 206 Coy during the Firemen's strike.

16. October 2011 – details included details of 847 (Smoke) Coy, Coco the Clown (a WW2 Pioneer), the diaries of Pte S Johnson from 1943/45, the Pioneer Magazine from 8 Corps District 1945 and an article on the Pioneer Trades School 1945.





17. April 2012 – the front cover shows Richard Goedecke who attended the Cenotaph for the first time at the age of 93.

I spotted him and his grand-graughter when I was walking off Horseguards to get into position to take photos. I led them to the Pioneer contingent and took this photo.

We found out that he had 2 weeks left to live and this was his wish. Sadly he passed away shortly afterwards.

A report on Pioneers involved in the Suez Crises and Gran Pere Williams's diary of French prisoners in WW1 and reminiscences from 1955 – 59 by Jonn Young are also included.

18. October 2012 – the main story in this issue was the news of the disbandment of the Pioneer CEQ, other articles included disbandment of 8 Regt, Harry Carass's letter home in 1940, Pegasus Pioneers – Pioneers with 1st Airborne Division and William Cartwright describes the D-Day landings. The sad news of the loss of 2 Pioneers in Afghanistan – Cpl Roberts and Pte Silibaravi was also included.

19. April 2013 – the front cover shows the Pioneer contingent marching past the Cenotaph. Articles included details of the Pioneer Corps of Drums reforming, Frank Shipley's war service, an unknown Pioneer soldier's diaries from WW2, Steve Blenman's African adventure and the story Kraxel, some of which parts are still classified by MI6 today. We also started to publish Press Cuttings, in this edition from 1941.



20. October 2013 – we continued the diaries of an unknown Pioneer from WW2, other articles include a history of 64 Group, behind the scarlet coat, Ernest Mears returns to Normandy and we continue the Press Cuttings this edition covers 1942.

21. April 2014 – 23 Regt win the Commando Speed March for the 3rd time and retain the trophy, also included are details of 1912 Basuto Coy and Pioneers who served in 51 (Middle East) Commando, a Pioneer POW helped to save the life of a Jewish escapee from a concentration camp, the history of the Labour Corps and the sad event of the disbandment of 168 Pioneer Regt (V). Press cuttings from 1943 are also included.

22. October 2014 - The front cover shows the flag of 23 Pnr Regt being lowered for the final time as the Regiment disbands. Details of the newly commissioned painting "The Fighting Pioneer", memoirs from 44 Coy, D Day facts and figures, Pioneer Fritz Lustig returns to the Isle of Man where he was interned for a period in 1940 are all included as well as press cuttings from 1944.

23. April 2015 – The front cover shows in colour Pioneers Landing in Italy and other colour photos from WW2 are shown inside this edition. Details of service from TG Cartwright who won a Military Medal in Italy and 2 months later was Mentioned in Despatches and a recruiting leaflet to join the Auxiliary Military Pioneers are included.



Press Cuttings for 1945 are also included.

24. October 2015 –Articles include Sgt Butler describing his war, details of PTSD, a conscripts tale, details of Pioneers on Juno Beach, postcards from France during WW2 and press cuttings from 1946. Effective front cover depicting PTSD effects on service personnel.

25. April 2016 – More WW2 photographs seen in colour for the first time. Unveiling of new memorial at Brookwood Cemetery, stories from 406 and 88 (Alien) Companies, a complete history of 518 Coy/Sqn and press cuttings from the years 1947 – 1950.

26. October 2016 – The front and rear cover show Pioneers at the Invictus Games (winning gold and silver). Articles include the 1st Sherringham Bash, Bill Sear's life story, 40 Porter Group in Burma, details of Brig Charles Bolton service and press cuttings from 1951 – 1960.

27. April 2017 – The front cover shows Pioneers wearing the new polo shirts. Articles include Pioneers involved in the Berlin Airlift, Simpson Barracks remembered, Bicester from the air, Pioneers clearing the mess at Bergen-Belsen, the formation of Mauritian Pioneers and the early problems of Civil Labour and press cutting from 1961 – 1970.

28. October 2017 – Articles include Craig Winspear winning another medal at the Invictus Games, how a Pioneer became





a Nazi Hunter, WW2 letters home, The Chinese Labour Corps in WW1 and press cuttings from 1971 – 1980.

29. May 2018 – The front and rear covers show Pioneers at the Cenotaph. Articles show the RLC 25th Anniversary, Shrouds of the Somme, Palestinian Pioneers, report on Gulf War One, Pioneers who mutinied, 307 and 85 Companies land on the beaches and press cuttings from 1981 – 1990.

30. November 2018 – A full copy of the Commando comic “The Pioneers” was reproduced in this issue. Articles include Roy Palmer becoming an In Pensioner at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, service details of Capt E Rhodes (who possibly fired the first shots in WW2), Pioneer graves in Eire, details of 14 (Indep) PCLU in Berlin, the award of the George Medal to Sgt Waghome and Pioneers with T (Target) Force, the re-opening of the National Army Museum after a full re-vamp and press cutting from 1991-2000.

31 November 2019 – (it had been decided that colour newsletters would now be produced annually). Articles include Pioneer John Jenkins receiving a standing ovation from both Her Majesty The Queen and Donald Trump (also his 100th birthday), record 102 Pioneers march at the Cenotaph, Pioneers from Northampton on a WW2 Battlefield tour, the 50th Anniversaries of Op Banner and Bicester Garrison and the 20th Anniversary of Op Agrigols (Kosova)

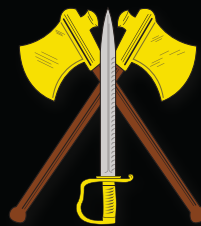
32. December 2020 – A year we will not forget due to covid, apologies for the front cover picturing showing Lt Col Billy Dilkes who organised the “Meals for NHS Workers” - it was

the best picture we had for this issue!

Other articles include the Duke of Bicester’s (Billy again!) story, another selection of WW2 letters home, an Irish VC holder who served in the Pioneers, service details of Col EC Smith who served with Rodrigues, Mauritian and East African Pioneers.

33. December 2021 – Articles include the war service of Trevor Deutsch (who appeared on the front cover - a cracking photograph!), memories of Rheindahlen Garrison, Yardley Chase Training Area, Heroism in France, Russian Major on D Day, Leicester City Football Club during WW2, 50th Anniversary of CAD Kineton, the war history of Maj JA Lasenby, Indian soldiers in Sicily and how Pioneers cleared Maralinga (the Army’s test site for long-range missiles and atomic weapons)

34. December 2022 – Articles include a review of all colour newsletters, the first time we have ever used some photographs from a drone! The front cover has a drone shot of the new Memorial at the site of the old Simpson Barracks in Northampton. Other articles are: Paddy McPhillips’ send off, convict turned Pioneer (A Parfitt), Pioneers in WW2, Pioneer Aliens in WW2, Hull Pioneer Coy and, of course, retirement of Norman. The biggest newsletter we have ever done!





■ **HAVE YOU** got a Blue Light Card? If so, well done. If not, why not?

You are entitled to one! The cost is £4.99 for 2 years and you can access more than 15,000 discounts from large national retailers to local businesses across categories such as holidays, cars, days out, fashion, gifts, insurance, phones and much more. Goto www.bluelightcard.co.uk to register.

■ **AS THE** cost of living rises make sure you're claiming all available discounts for your heating.

The British Gas Energy Trust aims to remove the burden of debt from vulnerable individuals. And can provide grants to help with various bills and debts. The Trust awards grants to clear gas and electricity debts, other priority household debts such as rent arrears and council tax, and to purchase essential household items. Visit <https://bget.org.uk/login.php>

Also checkout the Veterans' Gateway guides for the E.ON Energy Fund if you're based in UK. For more info visit www.tinyurl.com/3y85x77b for England and Wales and www.tinyurl.com/bdhd79px for Scotland. Living in Northern Ireland, for help with managing your heating bills, energy efficiency and more, visit www.nihe.gov.uk/Energy/Energy-Query

Are you getting the Winter Fuel Payment? If you were born on, or before, 26 September 1955 you should automatically be entitled to £100 to £300 to help with your heating costs. The money is usually paid out between November and December. And you should have received it by January 14th, 2023. If not, you may need to claim. See eligibility criteria or call 03459 15 15 15.

If you don't receive the Winter Fuel Payment you may qualify for a Cold Weather Payment. This also depends on you meeting certain benefits criteria, and getting support for mortgage interest. You can also quickly check if this is available in your postcode area and call the same telephone number as above.

There's also the Affordable Warmth Guide. This can help with insulation and heating costs. Find out more about eligibility criteria or call the Energy Saving Advice service on 0300 123 1234.

■ **DID YOU** know The Forces Pension Society empowers its members to make better, well-informed choices about their Armed Forces Pension.

The Forces Pension Society provides members of the Armed Forces Pension Schemes, and their partners, with personalised pension guidance.

Annual membership is £41 and gives you exclusive access to Forces Pensions Consultants. They will help you to navigate your way through the pension maze empowering you to make better informed decisions. They also have a range of membership benefits and discounts available on a range of products and services.

For more info visit www.forcespensionsociety.org

Oak Apple Day

Founder's Day is the highlight of the Royal Hospital Chelsea's calendar, an event attended by all Chelsea Pensioners, which celebrates the founding of the Royal Hospital by King Charles II



■ **Pioneers at Chelsea Hospital**

Picture: Supplied

FOUNDERS DAY has taken place almost every year since the Royal Hospital opened in 1692. Below, we celebrate the history of this very British ceremony.

The Royal Hospital Chelsea's Founder's Day, also known as Oak Apple Day, is always held on a date close to 29th May – the birthday of Charles II and the date of his restoration as King in 1660. In 2022, Founder's Day took place on 9th June. After 2020's cancellation and last year's pared back celebrations due to the pandemic the most iconic date in the Royal Hospital's calendar returned to its full glory.

The Oak reference commemorates the escape of the future King Charles II after the Battle of Worcester (1651) when he hid in an oak tree to avoid capture by the Parliamentary forces, and is expressed through all Chelsea Pensioners wearing oak leaves on their famous scarlet uniforms. Vice Admiral Sir Timothy Lawrence KCVO CB ADC (husband of the Princess Royal) was the reviewing officer.

After the moving opening music from the Band of the Grenadier Guards, Vice Admiral Laurence, watched the Chelsea Pensioners replendent in their scarlet uniforms and tricorn hats parade past - the most able veterans marching, followed by their frailer comrades on mobility scooters and in wheelchairs. In his speech he reminded all of those in attendance of the role the Chelsea

Pensioners have played in serving the country, saying:

"If I may say to the Pensioners, you have all played your part in keeping our island safe from the sort of appalling tragedy that we see in Ukraine today. Your service is reflected in the large number and variety of medals that I have seen on parade today, so justly deserved and so proudly worn. You, ladies and gentlemen, have honoured this establishment by your exemplary appearance and bearing today, and you have also honoured your families, your regiments and corps and the nation as well. I wish you all a very happy 330th birthday."

From the trumpeters above the colonnade, to the bearing of the ceremonial mace and the three cheers as the veterans lifted their tricorns to celebrate their founder, the reviewing officer and Her Majesty The Queen, the Chelsea Pensioner's relished the return of the traditional Founder's Day celebrations to a full audience of delighted guests.

The photograph above shows Bob McGinley, Norman Brown, Ian Dewsnap and In Pensioner Micky Hull, Brig David Clouston and Capt Kev Jessop, In Pensioner Roy Palmer is missing from the photograph he must have been making a rare visit to the bar!

The celebrations in the hospitality tents included belly dancers, military band and a disco together with a reasonably priced bar.



■ Mayor of Bicester, with Lord Lieutenant of Oxford and Commanding Officer Lt Col Atherton of Bicester Garrison

Picture: Paul Brown

Freedom of Bicester

Bicester Town Council granted the Freedom of Entry to Headquarters Bicester Garrison on 24th April 2022.

BICESTER Garrison were granted the Freedom of the Town of Bicester on Sunday 24 April 2022. A celebratory service was held in St Edburg's Church followed by a reception held in Bicester Garrison Officers' Mess.

In recognition to celebrate the eighty years of the close association between Bicester Town Council and Headquarters Bicester Garrison and confer upon them of the right, privilege and honour of marching through the streets of Bicester on ceremonial occasions, with swords drawn, bayonets fixed, drums beating and colours flying.

Headquarters Bicester Garrison is based at St George's Barracks, Arncliffe and consists of a team of 50 military and civilian personnel responsible for administration, security, logistics, finance and infrastructure support to units in Bicester Garrison. The Headquarters is subordinate to 11 Security Force Assistance Brigade and HQ South East.



■ Bicester Garrison Support Team

Picture: Paul Brown



■ ACCORDING TO The Samaritans , Suicide is on the increase. Whilst this may not come as a surprise the tragedy is that suicide is always preventable. The Samaritans are here 24/7 for everyone, and believe in creating hope through action.

For more info and help please see this page on the Veterans Gateway at www.tinyurl.com/3zmc9wcp

■ HAVE YOU got a Veterans Railcard? The card provides 1/3 off most standard and first class anytime, off-peak and advance fares in England, Scotland and Wales. There will be conditions on some fares though so you'll need to check.

Thanks to the card an estimated 830,000 veterans will now have access to 1/3 off most travel. This includes deductions for their travelling companions and accompanying children.

For more info see www.tinyurl.com/34b2duk5

■ YOU MAY be eligible for free travel in London.

Eligible veterans can use London's travel system for free by using a Veterans Oyster photocard.

The photocard can be used on bus, Tube, tram, London Overground, TFL Rail, and most National Rail services in London.

To be eligible for a Veterans Oyster photocard you have to be in receipt of payments under the War Pensions Scheme, or Guaranteed Income Payment under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme. Veterans who have received a one-off gratuity payment are not eligible to apply.

To apply, call 0343 222 1234 and request an application form.

■ THE NORTHAMPTON Branch meet every 3 months in the Navy and Royal Marine Club in Lorne Road, Northampton, details of meetings can be obtained by the Branch Chairman Steve Harrod (steveharrod3088@hotmail.co.uk).

On 24th September 2022 a party travelled to Worthy Down for a tour of the new RLC Museum.

We were lucky to have a guided tour by the Museum's Director, Maj (Retd) Simon Walmsley, an ex Pioneer Officer. All attending agreed that the museum is well worth a visit and the Pioneer history is well reported. After the visit we travelled into Winchester for a meal (and obviously a drink!). On return to Northampton most thought another drink was required and visited the "Wig & Pen" – just to be sociable!

■ JOSH CAMPBELL joined the Army in 2008, aged 18, fulfilling a life long dream. In March 2009 he deployed to Afghanistan with 23 Pioneer Regiment.

On the 17th of September 2009 his life changed forever when his vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device.

Josh is representing Great Britain in Ice Hockey but need some assistance from my friends & colleagues.

Please sponsor him at <https://tinyurl.com/2ezyha3n>

■ ON 10 November 2022, for the first time, data on people who have previously served in the UK armed forces will be published.

Further details can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/3e9uzzre>

Ride to the wall

2022 marked the 15th year that the Ride to the wall has taken place and it seems to be getting bigger every year, with over 12,000 in attendance!



■ Pioneers you may recognise at The Ride to the Wall

Picture: Darren Burton / Robert Brown

RIDE TO THE WALL is a unique motorcycling event which gives motorcyclists an opportunity to gather together at a place of remembrance, to pay their respects to our serving and fallen service men and women and in doing so, raise funds solely for the purpose of perpetuating their memory and recognising the sacrifice made.

The RTTW mission statement is that motorcyclists may gather together and ride as a group to a place of remembrance to pay their respects to our serving and fallen servicemen and women and in doing so raise funds for the National Memorial Arboretum, solely for the purpose of perpetuating their memory and recognising the sacrifice they made.

The RTTW core values are

1. RTTW is founded on the principles of Remembrance and Respect.
2. To remember those that can no longer ride by our side.
3. To give all motorcyclists an opportunity to pay their respects to the memory of the fallen and express our gratitude for their sacrifice.
4. To show support for the Armed Forces currently serving both at home and abroad.
5. To raise money for the upkeep of the venue that serves to perpetuate the memory of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

For ride information, group riding, registration and much more, visit www.rttw.org



■ Horse Guards Parade, London

Picture: John Pannell

Trooping the colour

The 2022 Trooping the Colour ceremony was held on Thursday 2 June 2022, as part of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations of our late Queen Elizabeth II.

OVER 1,400 parading soldiers, 200 horses and 400 musicians came together in the traditional parade to mark the Queen's Official Birthday, which usually takes place on the second Saturday of June.

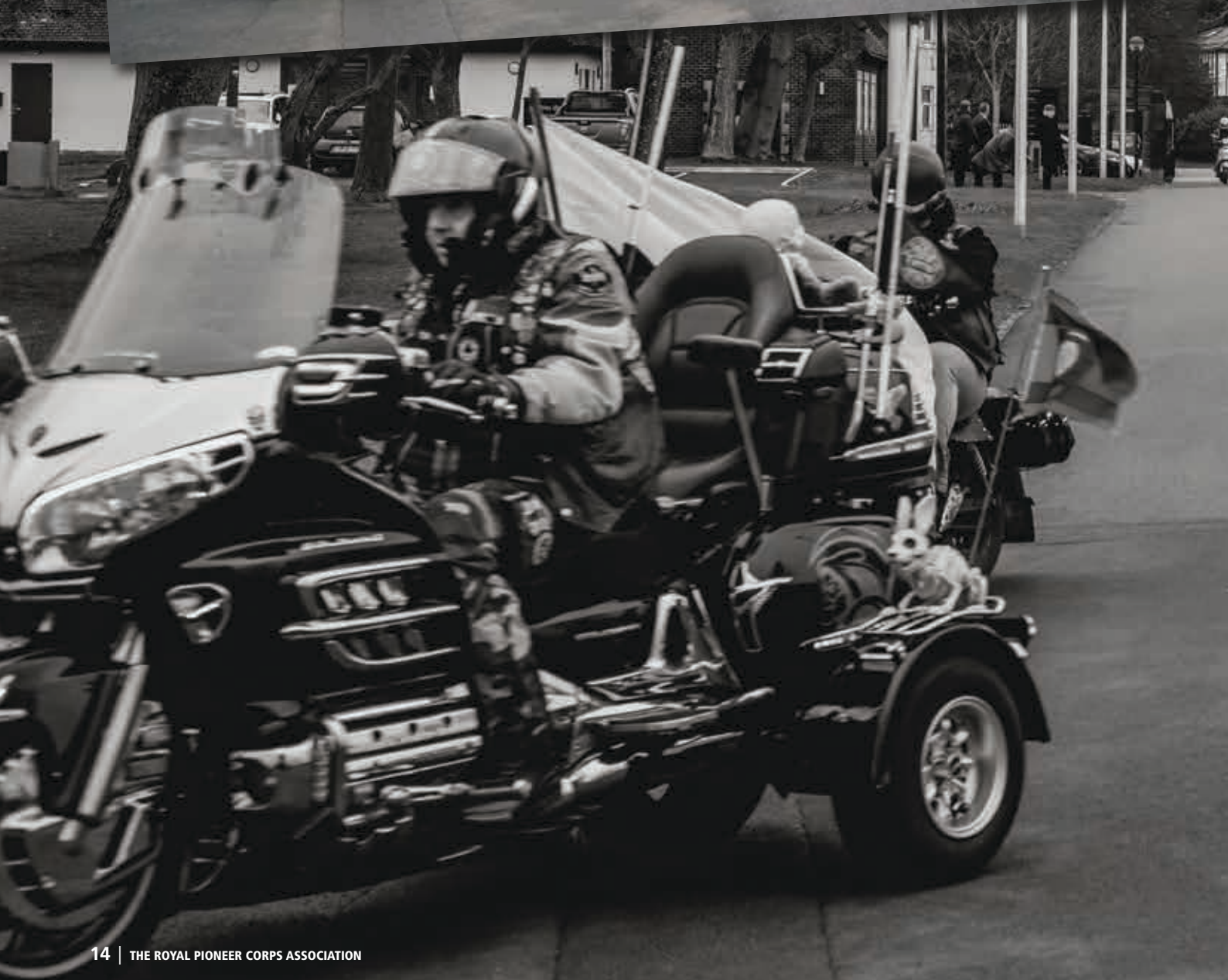
People viewed the display along The Mall as the troops paraded to and from Horse Guards Parade on its journey between Buckingham Palace and the parade ground. The public were also able to watch the ceremony on a large screen at St James's Park. 7,500 ticketed spectators were present at the Horse Guards Parade and another 7,000 at the Victoria Memorial.

It is pleasing to report that a large number of Association members managed to obtain tickets and watch the spectacular event and afterwards meet up in the Civil Service Club. Mr Norman Brown and Mr David Williams even managed to appear on Sky News!



■ Pioneers following Trooping of the Colour

Picture: Supplied



What a send off Paddy!

For Paddy McPhillips funeral on Friday 21st January 2022 at Carleton Chapel, Blackpool we had motorcycle outreach riders and a completely packed chapel full of Pioneers

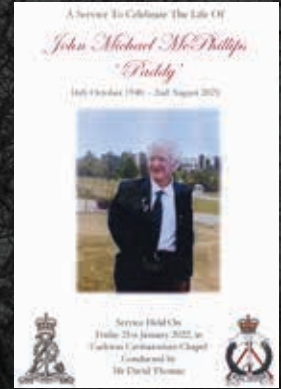
IN THE last newsletter we sadly announced the passing of a Pioneer Legend - Paddy McPhillips. He sadly passed away on 2nd August 2021 and his funeral was on Friday 21st January at Carleton Crematorium Chapel 2022.

Paddy was one of the Corps characters and attended nearly every Association function including marching at the Cenotaph for at least the last 25 years!

Thanks go out in particular to the following people. John Kear and Tony Codling for checking up on Paddy and organising the funeral. Steve Williams for raising £4,200 by setting up a Just Giving page for Paddy. My son Paul for organising

a bugler for the sounding of the Last Post and Reveille (excellently played by Neil Jones from the Poulton-le-Fylde band) and a cavalcade of motorbike outreach riders, Major (Retd) Mel Smith for reading out memories of Paddy at the funeral and of course all the Pioneers in attendance!

*They seek him here, they seek him there!
The RE's seek him everywhere.
Be it on the road, or other site,
Early morning or late at night.
Be he in Canteen drinking beer,
They will seek him, never fear!
The RE's made it very clear.
They're stumped without the Pioneer.* ■



Pictures: Paul Brown





*Almighty God, without whom our Labour is but lost,
grant us beseech-Thèe,
that the 'former members of the' Royal Pioneer Corps
may faithfully accomplish every task entrusted to 'their' care,
that our faith may be made perfect in work well done;
Hear us, O Lord, as we call unto thee from the ends of the earth,
In the name of Jesus Christ,
Our Lord, Amen
Amended Corps Collect*





■ **CONGRATULATIONS TO Bicester Garrison** for being granted the Freedom of the town of Bicester on Sunday 24th April 2022.

Some photographs may be found in the gallery section.

■ **THE NORTHAMPTON BRANCH** has had another trip on the Great Union canal on 16 Jul 22. Although the numbers were low we still had a great day.

The weather was really good to us and it was nice to have Tony Brooks join us with his partner.

The halfway stop was enjoyable especially when we had surprise visitors, Nic Horsley (still on crutches!) and Geogina which made the day even better.

Hopefully we will have more on the boat next year. The date of next year's trip is 15 Jul 23, we hope you can make it.



■ **IT IS pleasing to report that the Rt Hon Johnny Mercer MP** has been appointed a Minister of State (Minister for Veterans' Affairs) in the cabinet Office - he will attend Cabinet.

As a veteran this is great news, time after time he has put his values before political gain.

■ **A UK wide veterans survey is coming soon** - you can share your experiences of using services in the veteran community.

Veterans, sign up to be the first to hear about when the survey goes live.

Sign up at: <https://tinyurl.com/3avfs2bu>

■ **HAVE YOU considered raising funds for an excellent charity that supports both serving soldiers, former soldiers and their families for life.** Details of their activities can be found at:

<https://tinyurl.com/2s3t8dvy>

Examples of these events are:

Op Bletchley - a codebreaking challenge you can take part anywhere in the world using your phone or fitness tracker.

Skydive - held throughout the country
The Cateran Yomp 2023 - 54 miles in 24 hours - the ultimate charity walk is back, are you tough enough to take on the Yomp?

4th May @ 1830

Residents show their respects to two fallen Pioneers, Private Ratu Silibaravi and Corporal Andrew Roberts who were killed in an indirect fire attack on their forward base



■ Residents and Pioneers pay their respects

Pictures: Supplied

LAST MAY, it was moving once again to see so many residents showing their respect through the deeply poignant gesture of joining together to clap in memory of the men whose roads are named after.

Corporal Roberts and Private Silibaravi were both of 23 Pioneer Regiment Bicester, The Royal Logistics Corps and attached to the 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh Battle Group, serving as part of Combined Force Burma. This year marks the 10th anniversary of 4th May 2012, when they were killed in

an indirect fire attack Forward Operating Base Ouellette, in the northern part of Nahr-e Saraj district of Afghanistan.

Every year residents mark their respects and all are invited to join in a minute of applause, at 6.30pm on Wednesday 4th May 2022 and to raise a glass of port.

This year were be in Silibaravi Drive and once again were delighted that regiment members and family joined us.

Ribbons will be tied to the road signs on the day and photos will be sent to their families.



Leg- end



At the Sherringham Jolly this year, 'H', aka Steve Henderson was sporting this rather splendid tattoo!

Pictures: Paul Brown

Sherringham Jolly 2022

Mr Peter Wegg organised the 4th Sherringham Pioneer Jolly from 12 – 15 May 22 when a large number of Pioneers attended in motorhomes, tents, caravans and others sleeping in the fully serviced shepherds huts and bell tents at Breck Farm Campsite, Sherringham.

ALL attending had a thoroughly enjoyable time and all agreed that Peter (with a little help from his family and friends) worked exceptionally hard. The programme was:

Wednesday (for those arriving early) – a chilli and garlic bread provided by Bill & Kaz Colclough.

Thursday – a cooked breakfast supplied by Kev & Linda Hilton, this was followed by a trip to the Mo Museum followed by drinks in Sherringham.

The evening concluded with a delivery of Pizzas etc and a chat around the camp fire.

Friday – an archery and rifle range was available (the Wegg family won the best

archer and the best shot!). In the evening there was the Jolly BBQ superbly cooked by Jaqui and Tinos (Pete's friends), this was again followed by a chat around the camp fire.

Saturday – a short Service and Parade was held at Sherringham's War Memorial where Jayne Parker laid a wreath, Kev Hilton carried the Pioneer Standard, Mick Micklethwaite read the Exhortation and Wendy Micklethwaite read the Pioneer Collect and the Mayor of Sherringham made a short speech.

This was followed by personnel exploring the delights of Sherringham and a visit to the Tyneside Club in Sherringham. Taxis were provided in the evening to take all

personnel to Bernies Bar East Runton for music, buffet and a raffle. (During the evening Wendy Micklethwaite demonstrated her dancing skills).

Sunday – some attenders left during the day while most of those staying again visited Sherringham and in the evening a final fire side chat.

The weekend was enjoyed so much a large number returned in September to celebrate Peter's 60th birthday and semi-retirement where the fire pits were again put to good use.

It was on the Thursday evening we heard the very sad news of the passing of Her Majesty The Queen, a toast to her memory was made.

Pictures: Background and other pages: Paul Brown, others on this page: Peter Wegg





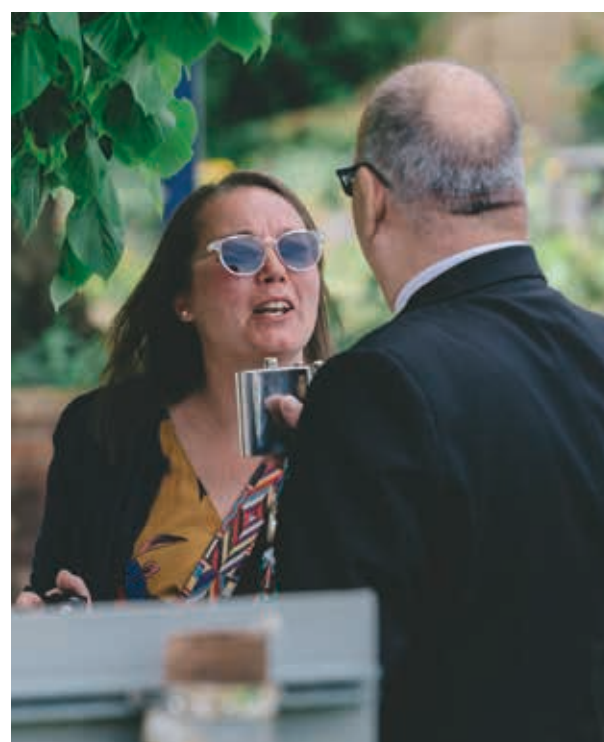












PAST EVENTS



■ THE WOS & SNCOS Pioneer Reunion Club held a dinner at the Littlebury Hotel, Bicester on Saturday 15 October 2022.

Although numbers were low as a lot of people had to drop out for various reasons the night was a resounding success. The hotel staff were marvellous and really looked after us, I believe the bar finally closed at 0230 hrs.

A wedding reception was held in the next room and the bride actually invited us into the wedding after our meal, however we decided to retire to the bar and enjoy a chat (and drink!) together.

The Association President, Brigadier D Clouston MBE, made a short speech and was followed by a humorous story from In Pioneer Roy Palmer who had acted as MC for the evening.

We hope more members attend the event next year which we plan to use the Littlebury Hotel again.



■ TOM APPELYARD presenting The Pioneers painting to Wootton Parish Council.



■ THE FIELD of Remembrance was limited due to building work.

7 lucky people attended Plot 264, the RPC Association Plot. Maj (Retd) Mike Buckingham fronted the plot and unfortunately Her Majesty The Queen Consort only managed to thank him for his service before moving to the next plot.

Following the Field of Remembrance 9 members visited the Civil Service Club in Great Scotland Yard for a meal and a drink (or two!).

Later that evening Paul Brown laid a wreath on behalf of the Association at Platform 1 at Victoria Railway Station for a lovely small ceremony. More of this Ceremony at Victoria can be seen on pages 56-57.

Head of Trade

Pioneer Head of Trade WO1 (RSM) Stevie Soper gives us an update on our serving Pioneers

WELL, 2022 got off to a celebratory bang, with WO1 Russell Clarke being awarded the Meritorious Service Medal (MSM) on what sadly turned out to be her late majesty the Queen's final New Year's honours list.

A new Corp Colonel has taken up post at the RLC Headquarters in Worthy Down since I last wrote to you all. I had the honour to brief Col P Allen ADC on the journey from the disbandment of 23 Pioneer Regiment RLC through to where we are today and beyond as a trade. Covering the stories of promotions, Operations and successful transfers to name a few areas discussed.

Overall I'm confident following this meeting that opportunities will still be plentiful for us that remain in service as we enter a new era under His Majesty King Charles III.

The next great piece of news as we entered 2022 was that of Brian "Northy" Hinton, not only for coming off the board but earning himself the prestigious appointment of Regimental Sergeant Major of 151 Regiment RLC, London's Logistic Regiment.

For a period early in the new year Northy's promotion meant that the Pioneer trade, who now make up less than 0.15% of the RLCs total strength, held 12.5% of the Corps RSM appointments across both Regular and Reserve units. A statistic that shows how highly competitive and sought after our troops remain as we reach the eighth year of the Trades and Regiments disbandment and deletion from the Army's orbit.

As we rolled into springtime and most of the world's focus was firmly focused on the unfolding picture in Eastern Europe, which has kept many of us fixed and busy over this past year both in operational roles as well as training with our eastern European allies.

There was a rare sighting at the Army Training Regiment Grantham (formally 5 Training Regiment, RLC), where by chance; three serving Pioneers were present and in attendance for a passing out parade of the next generation of Army Reserve soldiers.

A fantastic day hosted by WO2 (SSM) Rusty Emmanuel and his team, again highlighting there's still plenty of "Pioneer Spirit" being instilled in the future generations as he's at the absolute forefront of moulding not only his instructors but the future generations that are fortunate enough to be under his tutelage.

While on the subject of continuing to influence troops at the beginning of their careers, as the summer period drew to a close we got another promotion over the line. This time Pete Straughan was successfully selected for promotion to SSgt and selected to take up a key job at 25

Training Regiment in Leconfield. A role that will see him become an integral part of initial trade training for all trades across the RLC that now pass through the gates of DST before becoming fully qualified in their chosen trades and moving into their field Army units.

Pete's promotion sees him leaving the Regimental Training Wing at 29 Regiment, as awesome as it is for him and his family will sadly see another poignant Pioneer chapter close, likely for the final time.

It is expected that his promotion will see him as the final ever Pioneer Sergeant in the RLC. The final one that's hot off the press this week that I pen this update to you all is that yours truly has also just received some cracking news; as I've just been selected to turn to the dark side with an offer for LE commission.

As ever our numbers continue to dwindle, but hopefully you can all see from this curtain call of a 2022 update; we remain an ever shrinking yet key component to the RLC as it's about to enter its 30th year anniversary in 2023.

At the years end we bid a farewell and send our best wishes to the following legends as they transition into becoming proud veterans of the trade.

WO1 (RSM) Gaz Furlong -
152 (North Irish) Regiment.

WO1 (RSM) Paul "PNut" Jordan -
167 Catering Support Regiment.

WO2 (SSM) Graham Fisher -
7 Battalion REME.

WO2 (SSM) Mike Smith -
11 EOD & Search Regiment.

WO2 (SPSI) Frank Gerrard -
165 Port & Maritime Regiment.

WO2 (SPSI) Micky Hart -
151 (London) Regiment.

SSgt (PSI) Louis Thomas -
165 Port & Maritime Regiment.

As we roll into 2023 and bid the above the best of luck for the future, it brings the trade strength down to only 13 soldiers - X3 WO1's, X4 WO2's, X4 SSgt's and X2 Cpl's serving across 9 different units both regular and reserve.

Even with such small numbers remaining though as we enter 2023 and the RLCs 30th year; rest assured that I'm already on the Corps Sergeant Major's case to ensure that as the RLC hits this awesome anniversary, my ambition is to have two Axemen front and centre of the celebrations to keep the flag flying.

WO1 (RSM) Stevie Soper



Nice Tat!

Picture: Nigel Brown

Another tattoo! Sporting this great tattoo is Nigel Brown!



On D-day of the invasion of the Continent, 6 June 1944, 13 Pioneer companies landed with the first tide and a further ten companies with the second tide, making a total of about 6,700 men ashore by the end of the day. By the end of D + 2, three Pioneer Group HQ and 42 companies were ashore (about 12,000 men) and by D + 5, when Second Army took over command from the Corps, the totals had increased to 10 Pioneer Groups and 63 companies, representing

Normandy on D-Day 78

Despite the Royal Engineer tour guide, a poignant and enjoyable tour, visiting Gold, Juno and Sword beaches, together with visiting Arromanches, Bayeux and various D-Day sites

On 4th June nine personnel waited patiently for the coach to take us to Normandy to celebrate the 78th Anniversary of D Day, the Northampton Branch Chairman, Steve Harrod, and his wife turned up and gave each a "doggy" bag to take.

Our seats were at the rear of the coach and we soon made ourselves known on the coach by the banter. We picked our guide up on the M25 services and made our way to Folkestone where some had to change coaches for other tours. Once on the way we were surprised that we were travelling by the tunnel as on all previous tours it was by ferry.

After a 10 hour journey we finally

reached our hotel, Hotel Carline Caen Nordi, I must at this point report that it was not one of the best. I am still trying to work out how Tony Cursons managed to fit into the very small shower!

The guide was ex Royal Engineer and most of the tour consisted of him explaining how the REs had won the war, Bob Fox actually started counting how often he said Royal Engineers and worked it out that it was every 10 words!

We did explain that 23 Pioneer Companies (approx 6,500 men) landed on D-Day and by D+2 we had 42 Companies ashore. We also had to explain that Pioneers worked in the Airfield Construction (we had 10 Pioneer Companies on this task)

I will not explain the full tour this can be found on the Leger Battlefield website and seen from the photographs. The final part of the tour was to Arromanches, and instead of going to the town itself we ended up at the top of the hill overlooking the town.

What is at the top of the hill, yes the Royal Engineer monument where a short service was being held. Lee Holloway and Paul Brown did walk down to the town and the Museum let them in for free (they thought they were both coach drivers!).

As is normal on coach tours it was decided to hold a collection for the driver, we did not do this until the guide had been dropped off at the M25 services! ■

Pictures: Paul Brown



approximately 19,000 men. The build-up of the force was rapid and by D + 25, all the Pioneer units allotted to Second Army, amounting to 14 Pioneer Group HQs and 115 Companies (33,500 men) were in Normandy. By D + 79, the complete Pioneer Order of Battle consisting of over 68,000 officers and men, had been brought to France. A force which was built up to 34 Group Headquarters, 231 Companies and 23 Pioneer Civil Labour Units (PCLUs).





JUNE 1944. The Second World War has lasted nearly five years. In Europe, German forces of the Third Reich occupy the entire west of the continent.

They are fighting elsewhere against Soviet forces (U. S. S. R.) in the East, whilst England, having resisted German attacks, continues the struggle in the West. She is helped by her Allies, and especially by the United States (U. S. A.), who, for their part, are fighting the Japanese, Germany's allies, in the Pacific.

In the greatest secrecy, the Allies plan the mightiest combined operation yet known in history: the invasion of the Continent of Europe to overthrow the German forces, first in France, then in other occupied countries.

The secretly-decided invasion coast is in Normandy, between the Cherbourg Peninsula and the mouth of the River Orne, despite the fearsome coastal defences constructed by the Germans, over a period of four years, along the French coast (The Atlantic Wall), especially opposite England. The date finally chosen is 6 June 1944.

But before the invasion itself, the beach-areas, where troops and war-material are to be landed by the Navies, must be safeguarded. To the East of the landings a bridgehead must be established to foil any German counter-attack on the invasion flank.

To the 6th Airborne Division was allotted this extremely perilous task during the night of 5/6 June, several hours before the main landings.

By parachute and glider, men of General Sir Richard GALE's division were to be the first to set foot on French soil (British and Canadian troops).

The village of RANVILLE was chosen as the centre of this bridgehead: German troops stationed thereabouts were repulsed or taken prisoner. RANVILLE was to be the first French village liberated.

The 6th Airborne Division's objectives were all achieved in spite of the extreme difficulty of a glorious attack: BENOUVILLE Bridge (Pegasus Bridge) and RANVILLE Bridge were taken unscathed; the MERVILLE Battery was silenced before the Allied Fleet arrived; the bridges over the River Dives were all destroyed. All this in a few hours, at night—thanks to young soldiers, mainly volunteers.

Early in the morning of 6 June there was a link-up with seaborne troops, and in particular with the 6th, 3rd and 45th (Royal Marine) Commandos. Later that day 4th Commando, with its French contingent, joined up after fighting in OUISTREHAM.

Then, for several months, the RANVILLE bridgehead faced German counter-attacks, thus protecting the invasion area.

This heroic feat must stay fresh in our memory. It succeeded bravely; but only because of those young men who sacrificed even their very short lives to help liberate Europe.

Some never returned home. They lie for ever in RANVILLE cemetery. They did this to save our future.

Let us never forget it.

They wrote a page of world-history in the RANVILLE area on that night of 5/6 June 1944.

The D-Day tasks of the various units of the 6th Airborne Division and the Commandos are shown on the adjacent map.

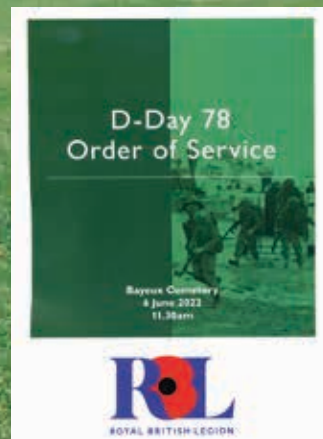
Details and authentic relics of this extraordinary operation are on exhibition to pilgrims and other visitors in the Museum west of BENOUVILLE Bridge (Pegasus Bridge).













“At this historic moment surely not one of us is too busy, too young or too old to play a part in a nation-wide, perchance a world-wide vigil of prayer as the great crusade sets forth”

King George VI







■ HOW TO get help from the RLC Benevolence Team.

Serving Personnel – if you need financial assistance and you are a serving member of either the Regular or Reserve army, please contact your UWO. They can make a grant under the “Discretionary Payment Scheme” which was approved by the RLC Trustees. To be eligible you must be a member of the one-day’s pay scheme. It is important to note that the ceiling for all payments is not to exceed on one-off sum of £200. If the need is greater UWO’s are to switch to the current Form A procedure.

Veterans – both Regular and Reserve. If you need financial assistance from the RLC Benevolence Team you have two options, you should contact either SSFA or The Royal British Legion via their websites (<https://www.ssafa.or.uk/> and <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/>).

They will allocate a caseworker who will complete Form A with you. This form is loaded onto the case management system (CMS) and sent to the RLC. This is the best way to ask for help as it enables us to involve other service charities, such as The Royal British Legion and the Army Benevolent Fund.

Partnering with The Veterans Charity. In recognition that the Veterans of the RLC and Forming Corps are experiencing hardship, the Corps has announced a new partnership with the Veterans Charity. This charity was founded in March 2008 and provides immediate needs support to Veterans who find themselves battling hardship. They provide essential items including food shopping, clothing, household items like kitchenware and single appliances, utilities support and even smartphones and tablets to aid vital communication. They can be contacted via www.veteranscharity.org.uk

■ **DEFENCE DISCOUNT** service provides discounts both online and on the high street for members of the Armed Forces, Veterans and Armed Forces Community.

Defence Discount Service is home of the Defence Privilege Card, the vetted discount card that can be used in stores, restaurants and venues to obtain armed forces discounts. This discount card allows Veterans and the Armed Forces Community to have a card that can allow them to receive military discounts.

The cards are free, you can apply at: <https://www.defencediscountservice.co.uk/newuser.php>

■ **VETERANS BADGE** - if you have served in any of the UK armed forces you are entitled to an armed forces veterans badge and they are totally free.

You can apply by downloading the application form this can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/2p994p86>

You can also get the first replacement veterans badge for free if your badge has been lost or stolen, replacements usually take between 6 to 8 weeks of applying.

■ A UNIQUE Exhibition of images chronicling Ukraine in the years leading up to – and during – the current conflict has gone on display at Imperial War Museum North.

Taken by photojournalist Anastasia Taylor-Lind, the evocative pictures will move to London next year.

For more info visit www.iwm.org.uk

Anzio Reunion

The reunion of Anzio Platoon, C Coy, Depot Queens Division, June 85-Nov 85 took place on 15th October 2022 at the Northampton Royal Navy and Royal Marines Club



■ Anzio Reunion, pictured bottom left, Mark Moody

Pictures: Shaun Wrigley

SINCE THE passing of Mark Moody, who was a member of the Platoon, Jeff Richards (ET) and I thought it would be a good idea to try and arrange a Platoon Reunion.

In April a whatsapp group was created with former Platoon members and a provisional date was set for October.

My first task was to find somewhere to meet and have a few drinks and Jeff was tasked with arranging accommodation. With the help of Tom Appleyard and Steve Harrod we managed to book the Northampton Royal Navy and Royal Marines Association Club.

Alan Burns (I’m only here for the night), Matty Shearer, Speccy Hall, Neil Walkley, Paul Wafferne (who came from Germany) together with a few others arrived on the Friday.

A surprise visit by our Platoon Sergeant, Paddy Haddock, and our Section Commanders, Tony (Daddy) Day and Brummie Whitson added to the occasion. Tom Appleyard and Steve Harrod were also

invited in appreciation of their help.

Ray (Rab) Mackay and I arrived on the Saturday morning with the official photographer, Kacy Bostock, as I thought it appropriate to bring someone who would not get in a drunken mess!

The first trip was to view the new monument to the Royal Pioneer Corps at Simpson Manor, formerly the site of Simpson Barracks, this was followed by some food in the local Sports Bar and obviously a few drinks.

In the evening a presentation was made to the late Mark Moody’s daughters on behalf of his fellow Anzio comrades, this was made by our Platoon Sergeant Paddy Haddock.

Mr Neil Robertshaw who was unable to attend due to prior commitments but spoke to many on a video call.

This ended a great weekend for Anzio Platoon and a lasting tribute to Mark Moody who will never be forgotten.

Shaun Wrigley



■ Bruce Crompton and Dougie Durrant!

Picture: Supplied

NI Veterans Awards

On Wednesday 26th June the AAVSNI hosted the Annual Northern Ireland Veterans awards for veterans who have gone above and beyond the call of duty.

On Wednesday 26th June the AAVSNI hosted the Annual Northern Ireland Veterans awards for veterans who have gone above and beyond the call of duty.

This was the first of it's kind in Northern Ireland and we were honored to have Bruce Crompton and Jonny Mercer as very special guests.

My team of veteran photographers was asked to do the photography for the event and to say it was a pleasure was an understatement.

Well done to all the winners on the night and I'm ready for next year as now I know the event is on I might nominate a few veterans myself as I know there are more out there.

If you can I encourage any of my fellow Pioneers to get involved in a veterans charity you won't regret it.

Stay safe my Red and Green Brothers.

Dougie Durrant



■ Veterans with Johnny Mercer

Picture: Supplied

The Pioneer Reunion

Once again the Royal Pioneer Corps Association Reunion was held at Bicester. A most enjoyable weekend was had by all. The date for next years reunion is 23rd-24th June.

THE Reunion Weekend was again held at Bicester from 1 – 3 July 2022. Most arrived on the Friday and quickly made their way to Bicester Ex-Services Club who, once again, had agreed to have “Happy Hour” prices for the whole weekend – all drinks at £2.25!

During the afternoon the Association shop was open and managed to see £658 worth of goods thanks to Mrs Christine Thomas and Miss Karen Lewis (now Mrs McGinley).

Entertainment by “The Summit” was held on the Friday evening together with an

auction which raised £597 thanks to those who supplied items for auction (mainly Mr Bob Gillespie). A free buffet was also provided.

Saturday morning a short church service was held in the grounds of Garth Park which was led by the vicar of St Edburg’s Church, Bicester.

The Annual General Meeting was later held in the Ex-Services Club, the minutes of which are at page ????????

On Saturday afternoon a coach tour, once again organised by Lt Col Billy Dilkes, toured Graven Hill, St David’s and St George’s Barracks.

The remainder of the afternoon was free for personnel to explore the delights of Bicester and Bicester Village.

Saturday evening was again held in the Ex-Services Club with entertainment supplied by Crystal Disco and “The Monokromes”.

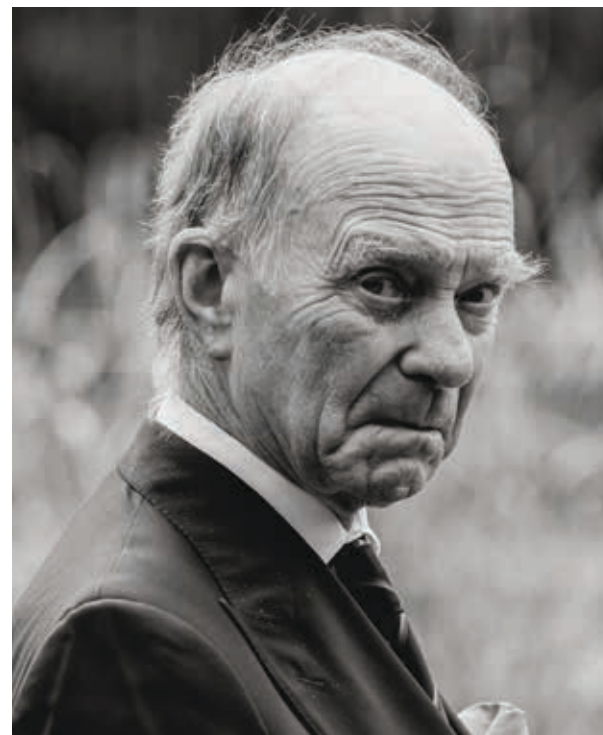
Another free buffet was supplied and a raffle held which raised £335, once again thanks to the many people who donated raffle prizes.

At the AGM it was again decided to hold the 2023 Reunion in Bicester – the dates are 23 – 24 June which coincides with Bicester Town Veterans Day. ■

Pictures: Paul Brown



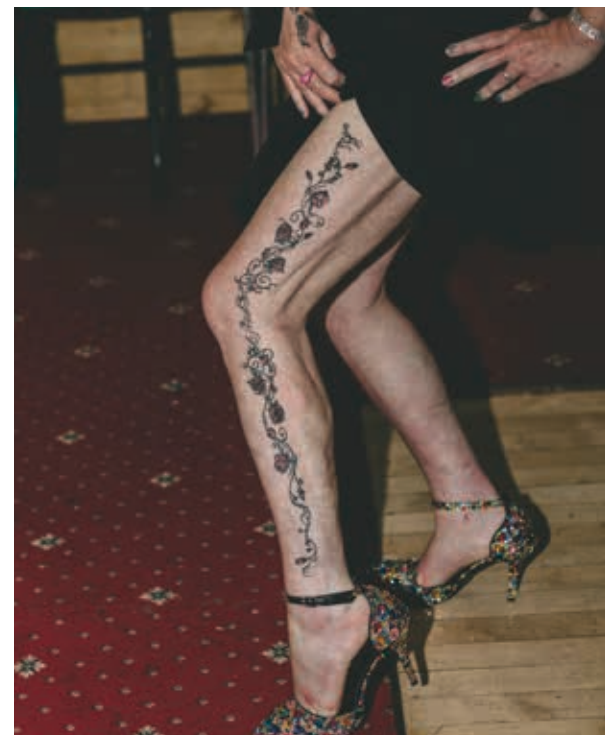


















RLC Museum Trip 2022

On 24th September 2022 Northampton Branch members paid a visit to the new Royal Logistic Corps Museum at Winchester and had a guided tour by Simon Walmsley

We were lucky to have a guided tour by the Museum's Director, Maj (Retd) Simon Walmsley, an ex Pioneer Officer. All attending agreed that the museum is well worth a visit and the Pioneer history is well reported. The medal room is well worth a visit to see the VCs

and other prized medals (including some Pioneer ones)

It was especially pleasing to see the Pioneer Axes in full view, these can be used for parades and funerals etc.

It is hoped to see them at next year's Royal Logistic Corps 30 celebrations, (1 June 2023) when the RLC celebrate their

30th anniversary (a pity the Pioneers will not be there!)

After the visit we travelled into Winchester for a meal (and obviously a drink!).

On return to Northampton most thought another drink was required and visited the "Wig & Pen" – just to be sociable! ■



Pictures: Paul Brown



Officers Dinner Night

The 74th Past and Present Pioneer Officers' Dinner was held in Bicester Garrison Officers' Mess, Ambrosden on Friday 14th October 2022 with 50 personnel attending.

THE 74th Past and Present Pioneer Officers' Dinner was held in Bicester Garrison Officers' Mess, Ambrosden on Friday 14th October 2022 where 50 personnel sat down to a wonderful meal.

It was a mix of personnel from the old to the newly commissioned and thanks to the organisation by Lt Col Billy Dilkes the evening was a great success.

Some officers who had not attended for many years have reported how much they enjoyed the evening and are already looking forward to the next (20 October 2023).

The Association President, Brigadier D Clouston, having read out the loyal greeting from the King and the Duke of Gloucester made a short speech highlighting the fact that we still have 15 serving Pioneers.

Since the disbandment in 2014 most

Pioneers who remained in service have reached Warrant Officer rank, which is quite an achievement.

He then made a presentation of a Commendation from the Master General of Logistics to Mr Norman Brown in recognition of his 20 years' service as Controller of the Association and his retirement in April 2023.

The President's speech was followed by In

Picture: Paul Brown



Pensioner Roy Palmer reading a poem he had written, the poem is as follows:

I look around and can't see many faces that I know, But regardless of that, to you all, I say hello.

Let us think of our comrades and loved ones who have this life fled, Their places filled by others as they wait for us at God's beachhead.

Some of us look laggard, but you do at eighty plus, As those years pass us by we still make lots of fuss.

This ought to be the last dinner by the title we know now

We should call it the Octagenarian get together before we take a bow

Dick McDonald is the eldest, who tops at eighty five. While 84 year old Charles Telfer still can duck and dive.

In a few days' time Geoff Hill will join us at eighty. We would say Happy Birthday Geoff if you bought the next round gladly

Gunner Walmsley has at last escaped the

RLC Museum

His persistence for staying there really was hard to fathom

Here is Brigadier Clouston a man of dubious fame. Retired from the Regulars and then joined the Reservist game.

His current job is begging, we need funding for the RPC. But his efforts up to-date wouldn't buy a cup of tea

The intrepid Billy Dilkes can't wait for Norman to retire.

Taking over as secretary, replacing his uniform for that dreaded civvy attire.

Kiss is the only lady here, she should be so lucky. Mixing with these folks, she is really plucky!!

Taff Teague works for the charity dealing with PTSD.

Known as Horse Back UK, who for the weekend has set him free.

There sits Taff Thomas, known by me for many a year.

Life to him is but a game, as he slurps his beer.

The Lord Comer the senior serving RPC officer has made his normal entrance He agreed to Honour this event and sit with all the peasants.

It is nice to see some younger boys, Orrell and Hildreth who have joined our ranks Now they are commissioned for coming here we give our thanks

I mentioned in this ditty alongside Norman and Stu Woodward

We were clerks together, two were pretty useless but I was very good.

Finally we say a sad farewell to the CO of Bicester Garrison

He endeared himself to us by finding a home for the Association

So dear Sir, you may depart with our best wishes

But before you go help us once again by washing these bloody dishes

I apologise to all and sundry who are not mentioned here.

But if you keep coming maybe I might remember you next year ■



Victoria Platform 8



102 years ago at 2032 hrs on the 10th November 1920 the body of the British Unknown Warrior arrived at Platform 8, Victoria Station where he was guarded overnight.

WAS due to lay a wreath in 2020 at the 100th Anniversary of when the British Unknown Warrior arrived at Platform 8 at Victoria Station, London, however a Covid lockdown in force put paid to that trip!

2 years later, I attempted the trip again, my train into Euston was delayed due to an idiot aboard and we had to wait for the Police to turn up and take him away. When we got into London, it was beyond busy - the whole place was completely gridlocked!

It is an absolute disgrace that 10,000 members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport union took strike action on this particular day. Remembrance ceremonies

are taking place across London, such as the opening of the Garden of Remembrance at Westminster where the old man is and also this small intimate ceremony at Victoria.

Obviously their members have absolutely no respect whatsoever. Pardon my french but they can go and go and **** **!

It was looking doubtful that we could make it across London in time (I had allowed hours and hours extra in the schedule as well), however we met a chap called Jan who is the Manager of a 5 star hotel in London and he offered his assistance to get us and another small party across London to Victoria Station.

I had wrote off getting there on time,

however Jan was amazing, even helping to carry peoples bags - we got on and off several hot and cramped buses (many had come out of service part way through the journey) and we used all sorts of shortcuts.

After the trek through London, Victoria loomed ahead, we entered the station and could hear the sounds of a bugler!

I followed the noise of the bugler to Platform 8, where a small ceremony had just started! A lady saw that we had a wreath to lay and escorted me to the column. We had made it!

This would be the first time I have ever laid a wreath. It would also be the first time for a long time that I have worn my beret.

Article and Pictures: Paul Brown

8



THE BODY OF THE BRITISH UNKNOWN WARRIOR ARRIVED AT PLATFORM 8 AT 4.03pm ON THE 10th NOVEMBER 1920 AND LAY HERE OVERNIGHT BEFORE INTERMENT AT WESTMINSTER ABBEY ON 16th NOVEMBER 1920

Also it was the first time that I am wearing my Great Fathers medal - the Queens South Africa medal (with 5 clasps).

It was my turn to lay the wreath on behalf of The Pioneers and the ceremony was soon over. Eternal thanks to Jan for getting us here and for restoring my faith in humanity!

Wetherspoons was literally upstairs and that was where everyone was heading. I only had time for a beef curry and 1 pint, before setting off again across London.

This time, we got a bus fairly quickly. Onboard the bus was Captain Toms Daughter! We set off, however soon got bogged down in traffic again and hence took the decision to get off and walk.

We made it to Euston and got on the next train with a few minutes so spare at around 2322. Alas on the journey back to Northampton we heard that this train was now only going as far as Bletchley and we would have to wait for the train behind!

The train behind was running late and turned up at around 0115. My head finally hit the pillow at 0210.

Never again, I am going to venture into

London when there is a tube strike. Those tube workers are on very good salaries and I said it earlier and will say it again... they can go and **** themselves!

History and background of the Unknown Warrior

The Unknown Warrior is part of the UK's national remembrance of the Great War. A single, un-identified serviceman (probably a Pioneer), represents all those bodies that were missing. The Cenotaph represents all those who did not return.

The idea was that an unidentified body would be repatriated from the battlefields in France and Flanders to lie in the heart of London to represent the British Empire's one million dead, and especially those whose bodies were not located or identified. The warrior's journey was recorded in a 5 minute Pathe News film.

Four bodies were disinterred from the battlefields of the Aisne, the Somme, Arras and Ypres. They were taken to St Pol and a blind selection was made of one body to be returned to Britain, on the ship HMS Verdun. The ship landed at Dover and the

coffin was transferred to a Royal Mail train.

The train arrived at platform 8 at Victoria at 2032 on the 10th November, 1920. The carriage remained in the station and guarded overnight.

On 11th November 1920, the Warrior's coffin was transported on a gun carriage to Westminster Abbey. The procession left Victoria at 0940am and travelled via Hyde Park Corner and The Mall to Whitehall, passing the newly erected Cenotaph before arriving at the Abbey.

A guard of honour of a hundred Victoria Cross holders welcomed the coffin, accompanied by King George V, Field Marshals Haig and French and others.

After the burial service, the King dropped a handful of French soil onto the coffin as it was lowered. After thousands of mourners had passed the spot, the grave was filled with 100 barrels of French soil.

On 10th November 1998 the Western Front Association erected a commemorative plaque by Victoria Station's Platform 8 and annually on the evening of 10th November a short service of remembrances takes place. ■





Cenotaph Parade 2022

86 members of the Association formed up in Column B28 (near the front this year) for the Cenotaph Parade at Whitehall.

WE originally had 115 tickets for the parade but unfortunately quite a few had to drop out at the last minute for a variety of reasons i.e. 4 with covid, one had a death in the family, one had a car breakdown etc.

Ian Dewsnap turned up at Aldershot railway station to find out that no trains were running from there due to a lorry hitting a railway bridge, he was just about to go home when an Engineer said, "Get on the bus, Chunk!" so he got on the bus.

This year the contingent seemed to keep in step and they looked good especially as we got a good mention from the BBC.

We also noticed a few ex Pioneers as spectators, one of whom was ex WO2 Kev Gransom, we hope he joins us next year.

It is also pleasing to report that we had quite a few marching with us for the first

time, all have promised to come again next year.

The contingent was, once again, led by a sprightly Brigadier Charles Telfer and our Parade Marshall was Pete Thomas.

The wreath was laid by ex Cpl Mick Micklethwaite who had to stand in at the last minute as the original selected person failed to turn up.

Mr John Kear, a regular for many years at the Cenotaph, had recently been discharged from hospital and said that he could not march this year but would still spectate. Mr David Williams, a volunteer at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, volunteered to push him in David's wheelchair.

This resulted in the following poem being written by a friend who observed him on the TV:

David Williams, volunteer wheelchair pusher – 13 Nov 22

"Not for the money, not for the fame and not for any personal gain.

It's just for love of fellow man and to give a helping hand.

Not for the badges worn with pride Just for the feeling deep inside.

Having a heart that you've been a part Of helping others far and near

That makes you a volunteer"

Following the parade most went to the Civil Service Club in Great Scotland Yard for a meal and a beer (or two), the Pioneers took over the garden as we have done in the last few years.

We have already had members asking for a ticket for next year.

If you wish to march please submit the following information to royalpioneercorps@gmail.com: full name, place and date of birth, full address, dates served, service no and email address ■

Pictures: Paul Brown / Tracy Brown











Congratulations...

Thank you to members for purchasing Pioneer Derby Draw Tickets. The Association made a profit of £2450, this helps the Association to carry out its work. The results are...

1st £1000

P Stevens - 42333

Dundee

2nd £500

B Towler - 04856

March, Cambs

3rd £200

RPC Association - 41941

**A number of individuals wrote this on their ticket,
it is very much appreciated**

4th £100

M Tickner - 36815

Salisbury

5th £50

L Parker - 18607

Sheffield

Once again with this issue you will find

Christmas Draw Tickets

Please do your best to either buy them or sell them to others. If you can sell more please do not hesitate to ask for more. This is one of the few ways the Association can raise money to keep the Association going.

We have extended the draw until **12th January 2023** and not the date published on the tickets, due to this bumper newsletter taking a lot of time to produce.



Roy's Skydive

In Pensioner and Sandra Kettlewell completed their skydive on 21 July 2022 and raised over £2,000 for Chelsea Hospital and the RPC Association. *(Ed note: I did offer to double the amount raised if he would do it without a parachute!)*

Picture: Supplied

The dive was from 15,000 feet, 10,000 in freefall and the remaining 5,000 controlled by parachute.

Opening of Memorial

3 years ago Tom Appleyard in conjunction with Wootton Parish Council decided to erect a memorial to the RPC in the grounds of the memorial garden within Simpson Manor (originally Simpson Barracks). On Sat 19th Nov 2022 the monument was unveiled.

It is very appropriate that the memorial now stands on what was the site of the Guardroom where many Royal Pioneers visited (either in "nick" or on duty!)

On Saturday 19th November 2022 the unveiling of the monument finally took place. The parade of veterans together with a detachment of Caroline Chisholm School Army Cadets formed up at the Queen Eleanor and marched to the memorial garden. Tom and Pete Thomas acted as parade marshals and a piper, followed by four standards (3 Pioneer and 1 Cadet Force) led the parade with 2 Pioneer

Axemen following behind them. Although most veterans had not marched since discharge they kept remarkably in step.

On arrival at the garden they were welcomed by the Chairman of Wootton Parish Council (Cllr Noel Lodge), children from Wootton Primary School then produced some excellent singing. Brigadier Charles Telfer then made an introductory speech and the children then read some poems.

The stone was then blessed by the Rev Lakshmi Jeffreys before Brig Telfer cut the ribbon to officially open the garden.

Last post was then played followed by

two minute silence before reveille was played. Everyone then sang the National Anthem which was the final of the service.

Brig Telfer then asked the Pioneers to give three cheers to the people and the Parish Council of Wootton.

The Pioneer veterans then formed themselves into the letters RPC for the drone to take a picture.

Various other photographs followed before everyone retired to the Toby Inn for a carvery lunch, over 110 attended the lunch.

We must thank Tom for his hard work in enabling this event to take place. ■

Pictures: Paul Brown















FUTURE EVENTS

2023

39/93 CLUB – RED LION HOTEL, FAREHAM - 3RD-4TH MARCH 2023

■ The Club is to hold a meet at The Red Lion Hotel, Fareham, all Association members are welcome to attend. Further details can be obtained from Mr Les Rowley (07955 237932). Prices are (for 2 nights) £140 for a double room without breakfast and £156 with breakfast, single rooms are £100 without breakfast and £115 with breakfast.

SHERRINGHAM JOLLY, BRECK FARM CAMP SITE, SHERRINGHAM - 11TH-14TH MAY 2023

■ The 6th Sherringham Jolly will be held at Breck Farm camp site, Sherringham.

This event is organised by Mr Peter Wegg. Events next year will include air rifle and archery morning, a trip on the local North Norfolk steam railway. Instead of the usual Friday night BBQ there will be a sit down meal and on the Saturday the normal Jolly night at the Tyneside club which will include a buffet.

The usual remembrance service will be held on the Saturday morning at Sherringham War Memorial.

PIONEER REUNION WEEKEND AND AGM - BICESTER - 23RD/24TH JUNE 2023

■ The Royal Pioneer Corps Association Reunion Weekend also co-incides with Armed Forces Day at Bicester, whereby there are going to be military vehicles, displays and all sorts going on in Bicester!

We have tried to do a Group Booking with Travelodge but have been quoted £219 for the Friday night and £239 for the Saturday night. In view of this it has been decided that members who wish to attend should make their own bookings in hotels, bed and breakfast establishments etc. There are 3 camping sites near Bicester, these are: Glebe Leisure, Godwins and Diamond Caravan Park. We will supply a mini bus to transport personnel to and from these locations.

BATTLEFIELD TOUR, 'ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT' - 21ST - 25TH SEPTEMBER 2022

■ We already have 10 members booked on this tour, if you wish to attend please send an email to: royalpioneer corps@gmail.com and further details will be supplied.

PAST AND PRESENT OFFICERS' DINNER - 20 OCTOBER 2022

■ It has been agreed that the 75th Past & Present Dinner will be held on 20 October 2022 in Bicester Garrison Officers' Mess, Ambrosden.

FIELD OF REMEMBRANCE, WESTMINSTER ABBEY - 9TH NOVEMBER 2023

■ We hope that building work will be completed at the Abbey and we will have a full allocation of tickets. If you wish to attend please let the Controller RPC Association know. A London Lunch will be held afterwards in the Civil Service Club, 13/15 Great Scotland Yard, London.

CENOTAPH PARADE - 12TH NOVEMBER 2023

■ This is to be held on Sunday 12th November 2023, if you would like to march with 10,000 other veterans please supply the following details (details are required by the Royal British Legion:

Full Name

Place and date of birth

Full Address (including postcode)

Service number and dates served

email address

Tel Number

We managed to apply for over 120 tickets in 2022

As usual a coach will leave from Northampton – if you would like to use this service please let us know when you apply to march.

Following the parade we normally gather in the Civil Service in Old Scotland Yard for post parade drinks and a meal.

NORTHAMPTON BRANCH

■ The Northampton Branch of the Association hold various events throughout the year, these include Christmas Function, Burns Night and a Canal Trip on the Grand Union Canal (this includes a meal) - you quietly glide along the canal looking at the various wildlife etc and is highly recommended.

If you do not receive updates from the Branch Chairman, Mr Steve Harrod and would like to please contact him at: steveharrod3088@hotmail.co.uk

NORTHERN BRANCH

■ The Northern Branch holds various events throughout the year including a Christmas Function, Ride to the Wall and others.

To receive update from the Branch please contact Mr Darren Burton on darren-burton@hotmail.co.uk



Archibald Parfitt

Here is an interesting Pioneer, having served in WW1 with the Welsh Guards he later saw service in India. After this he travelled to Canada and Alaska and on his return he was a habitual criminal spending time in prison in each year from 1932 -1939. He enlisted into the Pioneer Corps in 1940 and served until 1945, during which time he spent several periods in military prisons. After discharge he again appeared in several magistrates courts and in 1958 it was disclosed that he had 40 previous convictions. Quite a character! He died in 1966 at the age of 71.

Report: RPCA Archive
RPCA Archive

A ARCHIBALD PARFITT was born on 31st May, 1895 at Porth, Pontypridd. In the 1901 census was listed at Police Station, 42 Merchant St, Brithdir, Gelligaer, Merthyr Tydfil and in the 1902 census was listed at 7 Mary Street, Treharris, Merthyr Tydfil and was a Collier Boy.

1914 Enlisted 5 November 1914; attested Newport, Army Service No. 1117
1915 Transferred Welsh Guards, Private Army Service No. 4180263 Welsh Guards 1st Battalion

26.02.1915 Formed by Royal Warrant at White City.

28.04.1915 Moved to Sandown Park.

04.06.1915 Moved to Wellington Barracks.

17.08.1915 To France (date on medal card)

18.08.1915 Mobilised for war and landed at Havre joining the 3rd (Guards) Brigade of the Guards Division and engaged in various actions on the Western front including;

1915 The Battle of Loos
1916 The Battle of Flers-Courcelette, The Battle of Morval,

1917 German retreat to the Hindenburg Line, The Battle of Pilkem, The Battle of the Menin Road, The Battle of Poelkapelle, The First Battle of Passchendaele, The Battle of Cambrai 1917

1918 The Battle of St Quentin, The Battle of Bapaume, The First Battle of Arras 1918, The battles marked, The Battle of Albert, The Second Battle of Bapaume, The Battle of Havrincourt, The Battle of the Canal du Nord, The Battle of Cambrai 1918, The pursuit to the Selle, The Battle of the Selle, The Battle of the Sambre.

11.11.1918 Ended the War in Maubeuge, France.

1919 Discharged 3 April; Shrewsbury – after 4 years and 150 days service

1919 Re-enlisted 4 April 1919; Royal Welsh Fusiliers, Army Service Brecon

1919 Transferred 15 April to 'Z' Army Reserve. T

The Class Z Reserve was a Reserve contingent of the British Army consisting of

previously enlisted soldiers, now discharged. The first Z Reserve was authorised by an Army Order of 3 Dec 1918.

When expected problems with violations of the Armistice with Germany did not eventuate, the Z Reserve was abolished on 31 March 1920

Army Service no: Private 4180263 and 101205

Age: 23 years and 11 months

Occupation: Valet

Born: Porth, Pontypridd

Father: G. Parfitt; Wellington

House, Pontlottyn

Former service: 1. Welsh Guards:

Lance Corporal no.

1117

2. Welsh Guards:

Private no. 1117

Discharged: 4 July 1922,

Shrewsbury. Private –

Conduct – VG after 3

years and 92 days

WW1 Service Record

Lance Corporal, Private - Welsh Guards, Royal Welsh Fusiliers

1. Welsh Guard: Lance Corporal no. 1117

2. Welsh Guards: Private no. 1117, 1st Battalion guardsman

3. Royal Welsh Fusiliers Private no. 4180263

4. Royal Welsh Fusiliers Private no. 101205

Medals: 1914-1915 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal

1919 India for three years with the Indian Signal Service – fever and malaria. 26 July 1921- 26 August 1924

1920-24 India, 1st Battalion Royal Welsh Fusiliers (1st Battalion on active service against Waziris on North West Frontier). Medals: India General Service Medal, Clasp Waziristan, 1919-1921, Clasp Waziristan, 1921-1924



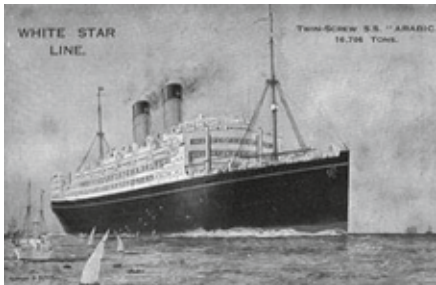
Name	Corps	Rank	Regtl. No.
PARFITT	W. Gds.	L/Cpl	1117
	"	R/S	"
	R. W. F. U. S.	"	4180263
	"	"	101205
Archibald			
Medal	Roll	Page	Remarks
VICTORY * 10G/105 B	106	9125	Disch?
BRITISH			
15 STAR 10G/118	57	2937 598	2082
# 165/104/105/106/107/108/109/110/111/112/113/114/115/116/117/118/119/120/121/122/123/124/125/126/127/128/129/130/131/132/133/134/135/136/137/138/139/140/141/142/143/144/145/146/147/148/149/150/151/152/153/154/155/156/157/158/159/160/161/162/163/164/165/166/167/168/169/170/171/172/173/174/175/176/177/178/179/180/181/182/183/184/185/186/187/188/189/190/191/192/193/194/195/196/197/198/199/200/201/202/203/204/205/206/207/208/209/210/211/212/213/214/215/216/217/218/219/220/221/222/223/224/225/226/227/228/229/230/231/232/233/234/235/236/237/238/239/240/241/242/243/244/245/246/247/248/249/250/251/252/253/254/255/256/257/258/259/260/261/262/263/264/265/266/267/268/269/270/271/272/273/274/275/276/277/278/279/280/281/282/283/284/285/286/287/288/289/290/291/292/293/294/295/296/297/298/299/300/301/302/303/304/305/306/307/308/309/310/311/312/313/314/315/316/317/318/319/320/321/322/323/324/325/326/327/328/329/330/331/332/333/334/335/336/337/338/339/340/341/342/343/344/345/346/347/348/349/350/351/352/353/354/355/356/357/358/359/360/361/362/363/364/365/366/367/368/369/370/371/372/373/374/375/376/377/378/379/380/381/382/383/384/385/386/387/388/389/390/391/392/393/394/395/396/397/398/399/400/401/402/403/404/405/406/407/408/409/410/411/412/413/414/415/416/417/418/419/420/421/422/423/424/425/426/427/428/429/430/431/432/433/434/435/436/437/438/439/440/441/442/443/444/445/446/447/448/449/450/451/452/453/454/455/456/457/458/459/460/461/462/463/464/465/466/467/468/469/470/471/472/473/474/475/476/477/478/479/480/481/482/483/484/485/486/487/488/489/490/491/492/493/494/495/496/497/498/499/500/501/502/503/504/505/506/507/508/509/510/511/512/513/514/515/516/517/518/519/520/521/522/523/524/525/526/527/528/529/530/531/532/533/534/535/536/537/538/539/540/541/542/543/544/545/546/547/548/549/550/551/552/553/554/555/556/557/558/559/560/561/562/563/564/565/566/567/568/569/570/571/572/573/574/575/576/577/578/579/580/581/582/583/584/585/586/587/588/589/590/591/592/593/594/595/596/597/598/599/600/601/602/603/604/605/606/607/608/609/610/611/612/613/614/615/616/617/618/619/620/621/622/623/624/625/626/627/628/629/630/631/632/633/634/635/636/637/638/639/640/641/642/643/644/645/646/647/648/649/650/651/652/653/654/655/656/657/658/659/660/661/662/663/664/665/666/667/668/669/670/671/672/673/674/675/676/677/678/679/680/681/682/683/684/685/686/687/688/689/690/691/692/693/694/695/696/697/698/699/700/701/702/703/704/705/706/707/708/709/710/711/712/713/714/715/716/717/718/719/720/721/722/723/724/725/726/727/728/729/730/731/732/733/734/735/736/737/738/739/740/741/742/743/744/745/746/747/748/749/750/751/752/753/754/755/756/757/758/759/760/761/762/763/764/765/766/767/768/769/770/771/772/773/774/775/776/777/778/779/780/781/782/783/784/785/786/787/788/789/790/791/792/793/794/795/796/797/798/799/800/801/802/803/804/805/806/807/808/809/810/811/812/813/814/815/816/817/818/819/820/821/822/823/824/825/826/827/828/829/830/831/832/833/834/835/836/837/838/839/840/841/842/843/844/845/846/847/848/849/850/851/852/853/854/855/856/857/858/859/860/861/862/863/864/865/866/867/868/869/870/871/872/873/874/875/876/877/878/879/880/881/882/883/884/885/886/887/888/889/890/891/892/893/894/895/896/897/898/899/900/901/902/903/904/905/906/907/908/909/910/911/912/913/914/915/916/917/918/919/920/921/922/923/924/925/926/927/928/929/930/931/932/933/934/935/936/937/938/939/940/941/942/943/944/945/946/947/948/949/950/951/952/953/954/955/956/957/958/959/960/961/962/963/964/965/966/967/968/969/970/971/972/973/974/975/976/977/978/979/980/981/982/983/984/985/986/987/988/989/990/991/992/993/994/995/996/997/998/999/1000			
J.C.S. No. 1117	1919-21	Roll 15475-79	Free for verification
Theatre of War first served in	France	68P/412.68P/307	68P/273
Date of entry therein	17.8.15.	60/157	8-7/9/4136
	2724/45	X 1.7.19	68P/1524

18 February 1917 - West London Press INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE –

Archibald Alan Parfitt, 30, valet, and Albert Harding, 30, ship's fireman, no home were charged, on remand, as suspected persons, loitering at Great College-Street, Westminster, with intent to commit a felony. – The prisoners were said to have loitered about suspiciously at midnight and went into several doorways. Their defence was that they were merely looking for a clergyman who had promised to befriend them as they were unable to obtain a night's lodgings in the usual way. – The reverend gentleman referred to was now in Court, and he said that up to December last he was living in Great College-street, and it often happened that men came to him for assistance. He knew prisoner, Harding, who had seen him at Great College-street, but it was unusual for men to come to him after 10 o'clock at night. – Mr Boyd thanked the rev. gentleman for his attendance. – Addressing the prisoners, the magistrate said he was not surprised they were arrested. They were seen to go into three doorways very late at night. But in the circumstances, and after hearing the rev. gentleman he (the magistrate) did not think the evidence sufficient, and the prisoners would be discharged.

2 April 1927 - West London Press

Address given: 82 Cedar Lawn Avenue, High Barnet, Herts. Age 30
Southampton to New York & Halifax, Canada SS Arabic, Red Star Line



for Klondyke, Alaska, Premier Mining Company, British Colombia farming/checker for gold mining company.



1931

Sent home

1932 February

Patient at the Queen Mary Hospital, Sidcup

The Queen's Hospital was opened in prefabricated buildings in the grounds of Froggnal House on 18 August 1917.

It provided pioneering plastic surgery under the guidance of Sir Harold Gillies to soldiers sustaining facial injuries during First World War. It was re-opened as a general hospital known as "Queen Mary's Hospital" by Queen Mary in 1930.

1932 April

Sentenced at Bromley to 14 days

15 April 1932 - West London Press – Surrey Mirror and County Post BEGGING LETTER WRITER FINED.

ATTEMPT TO DECEIVE REDHILL COLONEL
At Bromley Police Court on Saturday, Archibald Alan Parfitt (34) lately employed as boots and barman at Criccieth, North Wales was fined 40s. for endeavouring to obtain charitable contributions by fraud from Lieut. – Colonel Dudley Lewis, of Brendon Upper Bridge-road, Redhill. In addition, he was fined 10s. for being drunk and disorderly, and as he absconded after his arrest on that charge an order was made for his recognisances. 40s. to be estreated.

The alternative was a sentence of 14 days' imprisonment, and Parfitt, having no money, was removed in custody.

Detective-Sergt. Ault said Parfitt solicited alms from bishops as well as retired army officers, and it was known that he had written to the Bishop of Worcester in the name of Spence Thomas. He served through the was in the Royal Welch Fusiliers and in his letter to Colonel Dudley Lewis he stated that he was captured by the Germans in a trench raid. He refused to give any particulars about his activities since the war beyond stating that he was a gold digger in the Klondyke, and he gave an address in Canada with the advice 'Go there if you want information'.

Parfitt who was sent home from America last year, and while on the high seas he sent a begging letter to the Royal Welch Fusiliers Comrades Association, of which he was a member. They sent him 10s. care of GPO Liverpool but he never collected the money. When he reached London the Association helped him, but they washed their hands of him on learning that he was using another name for correspondence. While living in one welfare hostel he used another as an accommodation address. In February, while he was a patient at the Queen Mary Hospital, Sidcup he was arrested for being drink and disorderly and was bailed out, but absconded. A day or two after his disappearance Colonel Dudley Lewis notified the police of the letters he had from Parfitt.

William Thomas Goodman, Area Secretary of the Royal Welch Fusiliers Comrades Association said that they had ascertained that Parfitt was cadging from other people while they were helping him.

Parfitt, who assured the Court that he had never been in trouble in this country. Said that Spence Thomas was the name of another down-and-out whom he met on the boat coming home. He added that he was 'foolish, but not felonious' in writing to Colonel Lewis.

1932 February

Sentenced at Marylebone to 6 months hard labour for fraud.

21 February 1933 – Western Daily Press, Bristol and Bristol Mirror

SIX MONTHS' SENTENCE ON
EX-GUARDSMAN

A former Welsh Guardsman was yesterday sentenced by Mr. Bingley, the Marylebone (London) magistrate, to six months hard labour on charges of defrauding and attempting to defraud

officers of his old regiment and of the Welch Fusiliers.

The accused Archibald Parfitt (37) described as a valet, pleaded guilty to five charges of fraud and attempted fraud and asked that seven others should be taken into consideration.

21 February 1933 – Western Mail and South Wales News

GAOL FOR FORMER GUARDSMAN

Charges of Fraud on Welsh Officers

A former Welsh Guardsman, who served with some distinction during the Great War, was sentenced by Mr. Bingley, the Marylebone magistrate, to six months hard labour on Monday on charges of defrauding and attempting to defraud officers of his old regiment and of the Royal Welch Fusiliers.

Accused Archibald Allan Parfitt, aged 37, valet, pleaded guilty to five charges of fraud and attempted fraud and asked that seven others should be taken into consideration.

Amongst those he tried to victimise were: Sir Rhys Williams, Bart. KC, DSO, Sir Paul Makin, Major H. Talbot Rice, Sir G Jones DSO. and Brig. gen Ferguson.

Detective-sergeant Keen said that the accused enlisted at the outbreak of war aged 18 and served in France until 1918. His character was then exemplary and he was awarded two bars.

Since then he had been leading a more or less adventurous life in various parts of the world.

He wrote to officers of the Welsh Guards and the Royal Welch Fusiliers pointing out that after long period of unemployment he had obtained a situation but was unable to take it up unless he could redeem his clothes from pawnbrokers.

Sir Rhys Williams said that the accused was in his regiment during the war and was a very good soldier, but he had been victimising so many officers of his old regiment and other regiments that he (Sir Rhys) thought it necessary to take action to stop it.

24 February 1933 – London Observer

OFFICERS VICTIMISED

SIX MONTHS FOR EX-GUARDSMAN

A former Welsh Guardsman, who served with some distinction during the Great War, was sentenced by Mr. Bingley, the Marylebone magistrate, to six months hard labour on Monday on charges of defrauding and attempting to defraud officers of his old regiment and of the Royal Welch Fusiliers.

The accused Archibald Allan Parfitt, aged 37, valet, pleaded guilty to five charges of fraud and attempted fraud and asked that seven others should be taken into consideration.

Amongst those he is said to have tried to victimise were Sir Rhys Williams, Bart. KC, DSO, Sir Paul Makin, Major Hy. Talbot Rice of Montagu Square, Marylebone, Sir G Jones DSO. and Brig. Gen Ferguson.

Det. Sergeant Keen said that the accused enlisted at the outbreak of war aged 18 and served in France until 1918. His character was then described as exemplary and he was awarded for medals and two bars. Since then he had been leading a more or less adventurous life in various parts of the world until comparatively recently when he was fined 40s. or 14 days

imprisonment for obtaining charitable contributions by fraud. He then turned his attention to officers of his old regiment the Welsh Guards and to officers of the Welch Fusiliers. He wrote to them pointing out that after a long period of unemployment he had obtained a situation but was unable to take it up unless he could redeem his clothes from pawnbrokers. He then asked for a loan of 31 and enclosed a letter purporting to come from his prospective employer.

Sir Rhys Williams said that the accused was in his regiment during the war and was a very good soldier, but he had been victimising so many officers of his old regiment and other regiments that he (Sir Rhys) thought it necessary to take action to stop it.

1933 **73 Eastern Road, Brighton.**

1933 **September**
Sentence fined 5s.

15 September 1933 – West London Press
DRUNK AT GREAT SMITH STREET.

Archibald Parfitt (36) described as a journalist, 51 Auckland Hill, West Norwood, admitted having been found drunk at Great Smith-street, Westminster, shortly before midnight on Friday. He stated that he was staying with a sister, and had not had work since he returned from Canada twelve months ago. He was fined 5s.

1934 **April**
Remanded for stealing field glasses in Bath.

13 April 1934 – Western Daily Press and Bristol Mirror

At the Bath Police Court yesterday Archibald Parfitt (38) of Aber-Bargoed, Glamorgan was remanded on a charge of stealing a pair of field glasses valued at £8 10s. (?) from the shop of Messrs. Curry and Paxton Ltd. at Bladad (?) Buildings, Bath.

1934 **June**
Sentenced at Torquay on June 27th of the larceny of a mackintosh – six months.

1934 **December 9**
Released from prison

1935 **35 Eastern Road, Brighton**

1935 **Left Brighton for Exeter/Filleigh**

1935 **July**
Sentenced at South Molton to 6 months hard labour for fraud.

6 July 1935 - Western Press

SENTENCED MAN AND THE SOCIAL SYSTEM
'ONCE YOU ARE DOWN, YOU STAY DOWN'
SIX MONTHS FOR FRAUD
Money Obtained from West Buckland Bursar

Sentence of six months hard labour was passed by South Molton County Bench Tuesday on Archibald Parfitt, 40, of no fixed abode, a native of South Wales, who pleaded guilty to a charge of obtaining £1 by false pretences from Mr Edward Eastmond Hodge of West Buckland School

on June 7th. The bench also took into account two outstanding charges at Exeter which the accused admitted. Passing sentence, the Chairman (Mr F.J...) expressed the hope that the accused would change his habits.

Parfitt thanked the Bench for their remarks and added 'In this country there is no chance; once you are down you stay down. When you get a different social system, it might be better.'

The Chairman said the accused had had every opportunity.

INDOOR MAN WANTED

Supt. A.C Parr stated that Mr. Hodge, as secretary and bursar at of West Buckland School advertised for an indoor man and among the application was one signed A. Parfitt and the address given was 35 Eastern Road, Brighton. Accused, the prosecution suggested, wrote the letter, and he was engaged to arrive on June 5th.

He did not arrive and, subsequently a telegram was received handed in at Exeter requesting £1 to pay accused's fare to Filleigh. Mr Hodge wired the £1. As a matter of fact, two days before this Parfitt had been granted a rail voucher by the British Legion at Brighton which enabled him to travel to Filleigh free. On the afternoon that he obtained the £1 from the bursar accused called on the Rev. J.A. Goudry (Rector of St. Mary Major, Exeter), a gentleman known for his benevolence, and asked him for the money to pay his fare to Filleigh. Mr. Goudry did not give him money, but gave him an authority to the railway company to obtain a ticket. Accused never used this however.

WENT ON THE BOOZE

Accused told the Court he admitted having the voucher from the British Legion, but had been drinking on the train with a petty officer who told him he had to get out at Exeter. Accused added that he had no clothes suitable for the appointment at West Buckland School, and he had wired for the £1 to buy some clothes. In Exeter, however, he met some acquaintances and 'went on the booze.' When he had left Brighton, he had no intention of defrauding.

Supt. Parr said the two outstanding charges were for stealing a book of relief tickets, the property of the Rev J.A. Goudry and obtaining food and lodging to the value of about 7s. and 6d. by false pretences from Mrs Julia Mitchell of Guinea-street, Exeter for which purpose the accused used one of the tickets he had stolen.

Segt. Parr mentioned a number of previous convictions, including six months hard labour at Marylebone. He had also been convicted at Totnes and Paignton.

26 July 1935 – Devon and Exeter Gazette

FALSE PRETENCES
EX-SOLDIER SENT TO PRISON AT SOUTH MOLTON
OTHER CHARGES TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION

Before South Molton Court Magistrates on Tuesday, Archibald Parfitt, 40, of no fixed abode, pleaded guilty to obtaining £1 by means of a false pretences from Mr. Edward Eastmond Hodge of West Buckland.

Segt. Barry said that Mr Hodge a

secretary and bursar at of West Buckland School engaged Parfitt as an 'indoor man' to arrive on June 5th. He did not arrive and, consequently, a telegram was received handed in at Exeter requesting £1 to pay the fare to Filleigh. Mr Hodges wired the £1. Two days before Parfitt had been granted a rail warrant by the British Legion at Brighton which enabled him to travel to Filleigh free and on the ... afternoon he obtained the £1 from the Bursar he called on the Rev. Goudry, Rector of St. Mary Major, Exeter and asked for money to pay his fare to Filleigh. Mr. Goudry gave him an authority to the railway to obtain a ticket.

Parfitt told the Court he realised he had not suitable clothes for the appointment at West Buckland and the reason of his sending a telegram for £1 was to buy clothes but he met some acquaintance at Exeter and 'went on the booze'. When he had left Brighton, he had no intention of defrauding.

Two outstanding charges – stealing a book of relief tickets, the property of the Rev J.A. Goudry and obtaining food and lodging to the extent of 7s. and 6d. by false pretences from Mrs Julia Mitchell of Guinea-street, Exeter – were taken into consideration in his sentence of six months hard labour which was passed on the defendant.

1936 **6 May**
Sentenced days at Evesham to 14 days - theft of mackintosh.

6 May 1936 – Gloucestershire Echo
THEFT OF A COAT

Archibald Parfitt, aged 40, described as a writer, was charged with the theft of a mackintosh, valued 30s, at Evesham on April 28. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 14 days imprisonment.

John Albert Satterley, a roadman, of Windsor-road, Evesham, said that on the evening of April 28 he attended a meeting at Cowl-street Baptist Church, leaving a raincoat in the porch. On going for it later the raincoat was missing and he reported it to the police. On the previous Sunday he saw the prisoner at the Baptist Church and gave him 4d. because he said he was penniless.

Det. Constable Thomas said he saw the prisoner in a common lodging-house and when he charged him with the theft of the raincoat he admitted the offence. He produced the coat from underneath the mattress of a bed. Prisoner, who said he had been out of work since 1932, and had been in prison for two years, stated that he stole the coat under the influence of drink.

Inspector Ridley read out a number of previous convictions against prisoner for larceny and theft.

5 June 1937 – Eastbourne Chronicle
WINDOW SMASHING INCIDENTS
EX-SOLDIERS STRANGE CONDUCT

A window smashing incident at midnight on Sunday led to the arrest of Archibald Parfitt, aged 42, on charges of being drunk in a passage at the rear of Lansdowne-terrace, Grand Parade, and committing wilful damage. He was alleged to have broken a window value 10s. in a basement flat at 57 Jevington-gardens the property of William Woodall, and also to have committed damages to the extent of £5? to

various windows, a mirror, electric bulbs and a clock at 59 Jevington-gardens the property of Messrs. Robertson and Garret. He pleaded guilty.

P.C. Dawson said that at midnight he heard disorder in Jevington-gardens and the smashing of glass, and on going to No. 57 found that a pane had been broken by a missile thrown. Whilst there he heard glass being broken next door. He got on the wall and found the prisoner standing in the middle of the road. While awaiting the arrival of the police ..., the defendant adopted a fighting attitude towards another man and had to be restrained. He was arrested.

Mrs Bremmer, the manageress of a private hotel, said the prisoner had been employed on the kitchen staff and had not given any trouble before.

A GOOD RECORD

Mr. Munn, a chef, said the defendant had been working at the hotel for twelve months. He had been a very good man and witnesses had nothing to say against him. He had been a kitchen porter and a most perfect man at his work. The trouble started when he went to a demonstration, which proved too much for him. They had since had to fill his place. He had not been having anything to eat and had not known what he had been doing.

Defendant told the Court he had nothing to say.

It was stated that the defendant joined the Army in 1914 and saw service with the Welsh Guards in France. Then he went to India for three years with the Indian Signal Service and was subsequently in France and Italy. He was discharge with good character. His home was at Guildford.

The Chairman (Lt. Colonel R.V. Gwynne) said that it seemed an awful pity that a man with a good record should have allowed himself to get into such a condition during the past few days. Having regard to his excellent character the Bench felt that they would be justified in dismissing the charges under the Probation of Offenders Act.

1937 July

Sentenced to six weeks hard labour for being drunk and disorderly and causing malicious damage to geraniums in front of an hotel.

28 July 1937 – Eastbourne Gazette

Archibald Parfitt, of no permanent address, was sentenced by the magistrates yesterday to six weeks hard labour for being drunk and disorderly and causing malicious damage to geraniums in front of an hotel.

31 July 1937 – Eastbourne Gazette

THREE TIMES DRUNK IN TWO MONTHS

Hard Labour for Hotel Worker

At 1.30 am on Monday PC Haynes heard loud singing coming from a house in South-cliff. On going there he found Archibald Parfitt, hotel worker, of no fixed abode, sitting on the forecourt. He smelt strongly of drink. His shoes were under the seat and when asked to put them on he was unable to do so. At the officer's request he left the premises, staggering, and on reaching the highway began shouting and singing again. At the Grand Hotel he threw his shoes into the garden shouting as he did so. He was arrested.

Later in the morning Parfitt pleaded guilty to being drunk and disorderly.

The Chief Constable said the prisoner was before the Court on May 31 for drunkenness and committing wilful damage and the cases were dismissed under the Probation of Offenders Act. The Bench paid his railway fare to Guildford where he had friends.

A sum of six shillings was found on the prisoner and the Bench ordered him to part with 5s., the Mayor advising him to leave the drink alone if it got such a hold over him, they should send him to prison but they would give him another chance.

BENCH'S CONSIDERATIONS WASTED

The Mayors advice and the Bench's leniency had as little effect as water off a ducks back, for the next morning Parfitt again stood in the dock for being drunk and disorderly on the Grand-parade at 3am that morning and committing wilful damage, value £1 10s to geraniums growing in a garden of the Lansdowne Hotel. He admitted both charges.

According to PC Goad the prisoner was shouting and refused to go away. He was covered with geranium petals and it was afterwards found that the front of the hotel was strewn with broken geranium blooms that had been growing on eight big ornamental vases on pedestals.

The Mayor said it was not a bit of good being lenient with Parfitt and the best thing to do was to keep him away from the drink for a time. He would be sent to prison for 14 days with hard labour for being drunk and disorderly and a month for the damage he had committed – six weeks in all.

1938 July

Sentenced to six months at Torquay for stealing.

1938

Address given 197 Southway, Westborough near Guildford (home of Emily, William John and George Leonard).

8 July 1938 – Western Morning News and Daily Gazette

THEFTS AT TORQUAY

Varied Career of Man Sent to Prison

Archibald Alan Parfitt of 197 Southway, Westborough near Guildford was before the Torquay Bench yesterday charged with stealing a mackintosh valued at 42s. the property of Charles Stiles. He was further charged with stealing 'a flapjack' and a bottle of smelling salts, valued at 37s 6d. the property of Messrs Heppells Ltd.

He pleaded 'Guilty' and was sentenced to six months imprisonment on each charge to run concurrently.

Thirty-seven years of age Parfitt was sated to have been a hairdresser, valet and kitchen porter, and he had previously been convicted of fraud, attempted false pretences, theft and being drink and disorderly.

1939 January

Sentenced at Guildford six months hard labour

4 January 1939 – Surrey Advertiser and County Times

STOLE FROM A POLICE STATION

WHILE ON REMAND ON CHURCH THEFT

CHARGE

Pleading guilty at Guildford Borough Police Court on Monday to stealing a number of articles belonging to a policeman from Aldershot Police Station on January 1st. Archibald Alan Parfitt (43) of South-Way-avenue, Guildford explained 'I thought the back of the police station was the back of a pub.'

Parfitt appeared on remand on a charge of stealing from the upstairs lobby of the Congregational Church, North-street, Guildford on December 11th, a gentleman's overcoat, a pair of leather gloves and cigarettes valued at £4 5s 6d. On Monday he was further charged with stealing from Aldershot Police Station at 2.30 am on January 1st, a razor, shaving brush, mirror, an accumulator, a bottle of cough cure and a comb together valued at 1s. 3d(?).

Frederick Bramwell Vivian Over, 25, of Byre-field-road, Guildford said on December 11th he went to the Congregational Church and left his overcoat containing a pair of gloves and some cigarettes in the lobby at the top of the stairs. After the service he found that the overcoat had gone.

PC ?? said on December 11th he went to the Seven Stars, Swan-lane where he saw the defendant wearing the coat procured. Defendant said that he had bought the coat from a man in North-street. At the police station he said he paid 3s 6d.(?) for the coat.

Det, Con Young, Devon Constabulary stationed at Torquay said accused had been convicted at Torquay on June 27th of the larceny of a mackintosh. He was also convicted of another offence of larceny.

Parfitt said that he bought the coat while under the influence of drink and in regard to the other offence to which he pleaded guilty he made the statement quoted above.

The Chief Constable (Mr W. Oliver) read out a list of previous convictions and said that the accused last came out of prison on December 9th. He did not think that there was any doubt that the chief cause if the defendant's trouble was drink.

Parfitt was sentenced to six months hard labour on the charges of stealing from the Congregational Church the other charge being taken into consideration.

1940 13 March

Enlisted at Caister on Sea; Army Service No. 13013357. Aged: 44 years and 10 months. Address: 194 Southway, Guildford. Next of kin: mother – Emily Parfitt

Transferred to: No. 2 Centre (Glasgow) for training on 13 Mar 40 and served until 3 Sep 45?

Regt. or Corps; Pioneer 410
Nature of Engagement: TA (W)

1940 26 May – 4 June 1940
Dunkirk -severe leg wound??

8 July 1940 154 Company

14 June 1941 Y List (non-effective)

25 July 1941 154 Company

5 Sept 1941 Y List (non-effective)

27 Nov 1941 154 Company

31 Dec 1941 Y List (non-effective)

Jan 1942

Private in the Pioneer Corps and a patient at a convalescent depot' sentenced at Taunton 6 months; 'he arrived at Taunton on 24th December having been in hospital. It being Christmas-eve and having no intoxicants for five months ...'

8 January 1942 – Western Morning News

CHRISTMAS BLAMED

Soldier Sent to Prison at Taunton

The Christmas season was blamed by Archibald Parfitt, a private in the Pioneer Corps and a patient at a convalescent depot, when he was charged at Taunton Police Court yesterday with stealing ten coats value £8 8s 6d, the property of GWR on route for Penzance.

Accused who pleaded 'Guilty' told the magistrates he had too much to drink on Christmas Eve and it made him 'sort of irresponsible'.

It was stated that the accused served in France from 1914-1918, and in India from 1920-23, where he suffered fever and malaria. In the present war he sustained a severe leg wound at Dunkirk.

Insp. Whittle said after a good military career accused had worked in a gold mine in Canada. He returned to England and commenced his downward career in 1932. He had been convicted 19 times since then principally for theft.

Accused was sentenced to six months imprisonment.

1942 January

Discharged – not guilty at Luton

10 January 1942 – Somerset County Herald

**DUNKIRK SURVIVOR SENTENCED
TAUNTON RAILWAY THEFT**

A survivor from Dunkirk, Private Archibald Parfitt of the Pioneer Corps, aged 48, was sent to gaol for six months by Taunton Borough Branch on Wednesday for stealing ten coats values £8 8s 6d the property of the Great Western Railway Co. between December 24th-27th

Charles Herbert Hitchings, manager of Messrs Hepworth's shop, Penzance, spoke of despatching to the branch at Taunton on 23rd December a cardboard box containing the coats and Percival Blackwell Sylvester, GWR porter, Penzance said the box was despatched by rail the same day.

Det. Sergt. E.S. Slade GWR police said the train arrived at Taunton at 11.30pm on December 24th and the parcel would have been unloaded onto a barrow ready for conveyance to the parcel office, but it never reached the parcel office.

Det. Constable Serie gave evidence of receiving the accused with the property from Guildford police and conveying him to Taunton. Witness read a statement by accused that he arrived at Taunton on 24th December having been in hospital. It being Christmas-eve and having no intoxicants for five months too much drink made him irresponsible. He freely admitted taking the parcel.

The statement proceeded that the accused served with the Guards in France from 1914-1919 and in India from 1920 until 1923. He volunteered again in this war and had a severe leg wound at Dunkirk.

An officer produced a copy of accused's military conduct.

Inspector C. Whittle reported 19 previous convictions since 1932 principally for thefts, with sentences ranging from two months to six months. Accused had a very good military record, however.

After the last war he was employed as a butler valet in France and Italy. Then he went to Canada where he worked as a gold checker for a gold mining company. He returned to England in 1931, and in 1932 began his downward career.

9 May 1942 283 (F) Company

26 June 1942 – Bedfordshire Times and Standard

DISCHARGED

A soldier, Archibald Parfitt, aged forty-eight, was found not guilty of maliciously setting fire to straw under a Dutch barn at Kensworth on 23rd May, and he was discharged. He had been committed from Luton Division Sessions on 1st June. He pleaded not guilty.

5 Oct 1942 Y List (non-effective)

26 June 1943 202 Company

21 July 1943 76 Company

30 Aug 1943 Y List (non-effective)

23 Feb 1944 RD (Repair Depot?)

5 March 1944 12 Centre??

22 April 1944 102 Company

**17 May 1944 46 RHU
(Reinforcement Holding Unit?)**

29 June 1944 219 Company

**29 July 1944 53 RHU
(Reinforcement Holding Unit?)**

4 Sept 1944 215 Company

17 Jan 1945 X3 list (missing?)

**26 Mar 1945 52 RHU
(Reinforcement Holding Unit?)**

28 April 1945 251 Company

1958 December

Sentenced at Bow Street for stealing – forty previous convictions.

**24 December 1958 – Daily Mirror
DEPARTMENT OF NERVE**

This week's finest piece of coolness comes from Archibald Parfitt who was found guilty of stealing from a shop in Whitehall.

He had forty previous convictions and before being sentenced addressed the magistrates at Bow-street with these monumental words:

In mitigation I ask for all possible leniency. As the Press indicates there is an upward trend in the nation's prosperity and I wish to share in it.'

Absolutely splendid.

**1966 Hollenden House,
Bexhill on Sea**

THE EMBANKMENT FELLOWSHIP CENTRE
Founded in 1932 by Mrs. G. I. Huggins, the Embankment Fellowship Centre has as its object to assist ex-Service men and ex-Merchant Seamen of all classes over the age of 45 and who are in distress by providing food, accommodation and clothing. The Centre also helps in finding employment. The Centre comprises a country home, "Downgate," near Tunbridge Wells, a rehabilitation centre accommodating 40 men, and "Hollenden House," at Bexhill-on-Sea, a permanent home for aged men, as well as a London hostel at 59 Belvedere Road, S.E.1. Interviews are held daily at Headquarters for admission to all branches of the Centre. The Council is the governing body, through a Committee of Management elected from their number. The Administrator is responsible for the general management to the Committee. Each house is controlled by a Resident Warden. The Centre is entirely supported by voluntary subscription. The income for 1946-47 was £8,400. A General Meeting is held annually to which all subscribers are invited to attend.

59 Belvedere Road,
London, S.E.1
**1900 Dreu westminster
Hospital**

Long Lost Trails...

The following are trying to re-establish contact... can you help?

23 PNR REGT UN TOUR CYPRUS 2009

Leslie Ball would like a copy of the photograph of HQ Sqn that was taken standing on the wing of the Cyprus Airways abandoned jet at Nicosia airport.

If you have a copy please send it to: royalpioneer corps@gmail.com

ADAM OLDHAM

Writes "I am trying to get in touch with older members of the RPC with whom I served but have had no luck so far.

I will be 87 this year and am semi house bound and still trying to work out the internet! Hoping to find someone who knows me.

Contact: adam.oldham@

btinternet.com

RICK KEARNEY

Hi Norman I am looking for an old pioneer called Rick Kearney he was stationed at Larkhill, a friend of mine is looking for him. He was his best man at his wedding and he's lost touch with him.

I was wondering if you could

help Cheers Andy Barratt New Zealand

PATRICK EDWARD MICHAEL HOLLAND 23934284

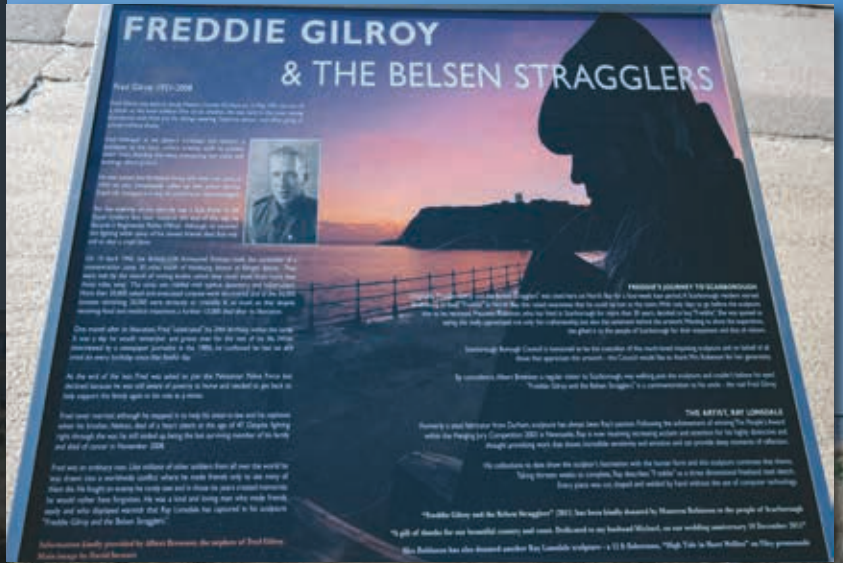
Does anyone have contact with Patrick Edward Michael Holland 23934284 Pte.

His last know address was Priory Road Bicester – contact RPC Association.

Freddy Gilroy

I recently made a trip to lovely Scarborough and discovered this stunning sculpture of a local WW2 Soldier, Freddy Gilroy

Picture: Paul Brown





Pioneers in WW2

Our historian Lt Col John Starling discusses the wide range of tasks undertaken by the Pioneer Corps during World War 2



EVERYONE and Everybody thinks they know about the role of the Pioneer Corps in WW2 when we fielded over 480 British Companies employed in various labour duties. In reality the Pioneer Corps supplied numerous other units such as civil labour, native companies, PW companies, fire-fighting units, salvage units and even mobile bath units. This article will give some idea of the wide range of tasks undertaken by the Pioneer Corps.

(NOTE: - The following notes are not complete but are based on work undertaken at the National Archives and the Army Medal Office. Establishments were subject to constant changes so manpower figures are only a guideline. The report covers operations in Europe and Africa, it is nearly impossible to find any information of operations in the Far East (Burma etc) as these records are not held in UK.)

British Pioneer Companies

The standard Company consisted on 10 sections of 26 men (divided into 3 sub-sections) and a small HQ under command of a Major. He was assisted by a Captain (2IC) and a number of officers. The number of sections could vary depending on the task undertaken but rarely exceeded 16. They were tasked by the Pioneer & Labour Officer at Corps HQ through a Group HQ. Generally, Divisions did not have a P&L Branch as the intention was to task from the highest level to ensure the correct priorities. Tasks varied from road and rail construction, maintenance, operating supply dumps, guarding installations and assisting in hospitals.

Although the Pioneer as a 'Jack of all Trades' some units became so skilled in their allotted tasks that they were retained on that specific role for long periods. Here are a few examples: -

70 Company

The company built the Central European Pipe Line which started in UK (the Isle of White) and involved PLUTO (Pipe-line Under The Ocean) to Normandy and on into Germany.

Bridging Companies.

47 Coy (Italy), 149 Coy (France and Holland). These companies, although general labour companies became so skilled at bridging they remained on that task throughout the campaign. In Feb 45, 149 Coy took part in Operation VERITABLE (the Rhine Crossing) and were involved in building GENNAP Bridge, 4058 ft long including approaches – at the time the longest Bailey Bridge ever constructed.

277 Company. Was selected to support 1st Airborne Division and were trained as Glider Troops but did not deploy to Arnhem.

Alien Companies

These companies were formed right at the start of the war and consisted of refugee enemy personnel, Jews, Communists and other persecuted personnel escaping from Europe. Although willing volunteers they were initially only

allowed to join the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps. Some units fought well with the British Expeditionary Force and along with the rest of the PC they were fully combatant once weapons became available. Later in the war many were to volunteer for front line duty with the Infantry, Intelligence Corps, SOE, 21 Independent Parachute Company, 10 (Inter Allied) Commando, and the SAS. Others transferred to the other services being used as deception in the RAF and intelligence in the Navy. As numbers reduced the companies reverted to British from Alien. Companies included 1 (Spanish) Coy, 69, 74, 77, 87, 88, 93, 127, 219, 220, 226 (Cz), 227 (Cz), 246, 248, 249, 270 (Italian), 386 (Yugo), 388 (Yugo). Two companies 337 & 338 were formed in North Africa from freed Internment Camp inmates (who were generally from the French Foreign Legion). Two other companies 253 & 257 were used as holding units for the Special Operations Executive (SOE).

Smoke Companies

Generally numbered **801 – 825 and 840 - 847** (although 112 Coy was made a Smoke Company in Italy). Initially formed to protect key sites in the UK from Air Attack 26 Companies were formed. In 1940 they were static and operated screens around key locations such as dockyards and factories; they operated smoke pots and generators. Later, with the invasion of Europe being planned, a number were made Mobile units to cover operations and screen off flanks these were numbered in the 840 series. The establishment was different to all other Pioneer units and they had their own transport (some 70 vehicles). After Operating PLUNDER & VARSITY, the crossing of the Rhine (14 – 23 March 1945), the mobile companies were formed into T-Force a special unit with infantry protection sent ahead to locate German Scientists and Technology to transport back to UK. There were also African and Italian Smoke Companies as well as 8 Company NCC who protected the water supplies following the Dambusters Raid in Germany as we were concerned of a similar attack by the Germans.

T-Force

After Operating PLUNDER & VARSITY, the crossing of the Rhine (14 – 23 March 1945), the mobile companies were formed into T-Force a special unit with infantry protection, sometimes sent ahead of the advancing infantry, to locate German Scientists and Technology to transport them back to UK. There were also African and Italian Smoke Companies. Companies involved were 805, 806, 845 and 846 (Smoke) Companies.

Airfield Construction

In order to establish airfields in support of ground troops Airfield Construction Groups were established in Europe. They usually consisted of an RE HQ, supported by an RE Construction Company, an RE Plant Company Coy, an RASC Company and 2 Pioneer Companies. These Groups moved forward behind the advancing troops to re-establish captured German Airfields. Examples are 141, 197, 198 & 216 Companies in Italy and 96, 132, 202, 212, 214 Companies in North West Europe.

Foreign Pioneer Companies

The exact number of these companies is hard to ascertain as many did not retain diaries. Generally, the officers and key SNCOs (CSM, CQMS) were British and the remainder were locally recruited. They were fully combatant and undertook similar work to British Companies. So far some 350 Companies have been identified. Examples are:-

Palestinian. 601 – 612 Companies

These consisted of both Arabs and Jews. 601 Company was part of the BEF in 1940. The companies went on to serve in North Africa and Greece and many were captured in Crete in April 1941. Some personnel formed 31 (Middle East) Command in Ethiopia/Sudan and the Special Interrogation Unit in Egypt (this would be a separate article as they were German Jews who wore German Uniform to operate behind enemy lines).

Sudanese 1101 – 1114 Companies

These companies were involved in maintaining roads during the Eritrea/Ethiopian Campaign against the Italians. 1104 Company were working on road repairs and in December 1941 and on completion returned to GADAREF on foot as transport was not available (196 miles), they marched between 19 and 35 miles a day.

Cypriot 1001 – 1013 Companies

These served in North Africa but morale was low due to lack of leave and 1108 Company mutinied in Quassassin in July 1941 and the units were disbanded.

West African 1 – 30 Companies and 2401 – 2444 Companies.

Recruited in Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and initially employed in defending Sierra Leone against possible attack from the Vichy French Colony at Guinea building defences and roads and working the docks. They were also used on Anti-Malarial Work. Later, in 1944, increased and renumbered between 2401 – 2444 Companies they deployed to North Africa.

Mauritius and Seychelles. 1501 – 1509 Companies

Employed in North Africa. They proved so successful they were maintained after the war and remained in Egypt. Renumbered after in the war 2036 – 2059 they continued until 1950.

East Africa 1801 – 1897 Companies and 2001 – 2004 Companies

Raised in Kenya and Uganda these were mainly employed in North Africa and Syria, although a large number of companies remained in East Africa fighting malaria.

Basutoland 1901 – 1951 Companies

Raised in the High Commission Territories they were to serve with distinction in North Africa and Syria. Later as the British Army moved into Italy some units were deployed there but many were 'diluted' to form Anti-Aircraft Units in North Africa replacing the British Gunners to fight in Europe.

Bechuanaland 1941 – 1990 Companies and 2301 – 2318 Companies

Raised in the High Commission Territories

they were to serve with distinction in North Africa, Syria and Italy. As with the Basutos some units were deployed there but many were 'diluted' to form Anti-Aircraft Units in North Africa replacing the British Gunners to fight in Europe. They also supplied 1977 and 1978 Smoke Companies.

Swaziland 1991 – 1999 Companies and 2001 & 2319 Companies

These were raised by Col Herbert Johnson MC who was made a Zulu Chief in order to assist in the recruitment of these companies. Again they served in North Africa, Syria and Italy. Part of the recruiting arrangement was to keep the units in a single group if possible so they formed 64 Group. The Group had its own band and Zulu dance troop.

Aden Pioneers 1401 – 1402 Companies

Initially raised to work the dockyards in Aden Port they were also involved in the invasion of Somaliland in March 1941 before being disbanded at the end of 1941. The association has the nominal roll of 2331 men in these units.

Syria and Lebanon Labour Battalions

There are no known records of these Labour Units in the Middle East. They served under Pioneer Corps Officers and SNCOs. A nominal roll does exist of some 6,900 men who served in these units.

Indian pioneers – North Africa and Italy only

25 Companies recruited from throughout India each consisting of 1 British Officer and 4 Indian officers with 305 men of which 272 were labourers.

Italian Pioneers

Initially Italians were all in PW Companies but when Italy 'changed sides' in September 1943 things changed. Italian PWs could become 'co-operators' which meant a rise in pay and although still living in camps the security was reduced, there were 12 such companies (numbered between **2669 and 2740**). Those who did not accept this change remained 'non-co-operator' PW Companies.

By far the biggest element was the conversion of the Italian Army into Pioneer Companies. As morale was low and equipment poor Italian Infantry Units were converted to undertake Pioneer Work rather than a combatant role. Each Italian Company had a UK Pioneer Capt, CQMS and Clerk attached to assist in the smooth running of the company under their own Italian Officers and consisted of 5 officers and 209 Italian ORs. They entered the Order of Battle and were commanded by Pioneer Group HQ. They were employed on road and railway maintenance, in depots, on docks and on portering to the front line. Over 166 Companies were formed (numbered between **93 – 308 Italian (Pioneer) Companies**), in total over 33,000 men. They were disbanded in September 1945.

Non-Combatant Corps

This was a separate Corps in the British Army and 8 Companies were formed, the officers and NCOs were provided by the Pioneer Corps. Strict limitations on their employment were enforced, they could

work on roads and railways but not ammunition or anything directly involved in combatant warfare. Initially many were improving the railway network by building sidings in the countryside so ammunition trains could be placed in sidings away from towns. The men were generally of superior intelligence and many were involved in bomb disposal (saving lives) during the Blitz. No 8 Company became a smoke company.

Civil Labour Units

These varied depending on the theatre of operations. In North Africa, although locally recruited, they were often moved when labour was wanted elsewhere; whereas in Europe personnel were recruited from the local area and discharged when the Civil Labour Units moved.

Italy and North Africa. (20 Units numbered 2901 – 2920 CLU)

1 Maj, 2 Captains and 4 Lieutenants supported by 12 Work Supervisors with an extra officer for every 1,500 men above 10,000 employed. The units varied in size from 6,000 to over 15,000 skilled and unskilled workers. At its height some 120,000 skilled and 196,000 Italian Civilians were employed 120 British officers and 300 British ORs

North West Europe. (Numbered 950 – 972 PCLU)

In April 1944 Pioneer Civil Labour Units were formed at 12 Centre, Prestatyn, Wales for the forthcoming invasion of Europe. The establishment seems to be 1 Maj (OC), and 2 Lts although this was increased if manpower levels became too high or there was a need for further detachments. The PCLU moved with the Army across Europe and operated in France, Belgium and Holland before entering Germany. The French soon took over all responsibility for French civilians although PCLU were still operating in Belgium and Holland at the end of the war. There is currently no accurate number of civilians employed but PCLUs varied in strength between 3,000 to 11,000 personnel. Many were to re-number and form the peacetime PCLUs and later PSLUs.

Austria, Greece, Albania

Civil Labour Units were sent to all these areas from Italy but no records have been identified.

Fire Fighting Units

Fire-fighting units were initially in the Pioneer Corps and on 1 July 1946 transferred to the Army Service Corps. The training centre was in Catterick and many men who were conscripted were initially released to join the Auxiliary Fire Service and serve throughout the Blitz only to be recalled to the Army in time for the Invasion of Europe. The basic units were: -

Fire Fighting Sub Section

1 Sgt and 1 or 2 men who provided fire cover for specific units such as hospitals, storage depots etc. They moved as part of that unit and probably had hand held appliances.

Fire Fighting Section

1 Sgt & 6 men one fire engine, other attached to storage depots etc.

Fire Brigade

1 WO and 4 Sgts & 30 men. It consisted of 4 Sections (numbered A – D) under a WO2 with 4 appliances. In North Africa they were slightly smaller with 1 WO, 2 Sgts and 18 Ptes and only had 2 appliances.

Fire Fighting Coy (North West Europe only)

Under a Captain with a Lieutenant (2ic) and consisted of 2 Fire Brigades (total strength about 80 men), it would also oversee independent Fire Sections in the Area. There were also Fire Boat Companies operating in docks where the Pioneers were augmented with Army Service Corps and were commanded by a Major. They operated Fire Boats each with 2 Sgts, 2 Cpls and 3 – 4 Ptes.

Exact number of units is unknown but there were over 50 Brigades in Mediterranean Area (2000 men) and 20 Companies (including 3 Fire Boat Companies) in Europe (at least 1600 men). Searching at the Army Medal Office which lists units that served overseas the following have been identified 38 Companies (3040 men), 162 Fire Brigades and 377 Sections (numbered between 9001 and 9413 but not including 46 Sections in Burma)

They were employed through the area of occupation and in Holland they provided the bulk of the fire-fighting capability as the Germans had removed all appliances to Germany. As British units were demobilised they were replaced with Dutch civilians and equipment transferred to the Dutch authorities. The current Dutch Fire service can trace its legacy back to the Pioneer Corps.

Numerous acts of gallantry were records including response to the V2 attacks to Antwerp and most importantly the response to the Air Raid on Bari Port, Italy on 9 April 1945 in which an ammunition ship caught fire and exploded, over 152 military and 360 civilians were killed and a further 2000 personnel injured. 29 Appliances attended the scene and RSMs Ellis (58 FF Coy) and Hutchins (57 FF Coy) were awarded MBEs for gallantry.

Salvage Units

There were many salvage units formed by varying corps during the war. This article will consider the Pioneer element only. Most units had attached personnel from REME and RAOC to advise on technical issues such as ammunition handling and dismantling of vehicles. No 13 Salvage Unit was formed and served with the BEF, in France in 1940, losing 14 men in the sinking of the ABUKUR whilst leaving Ostend.

Once the units became more established they consisted of the following: -

HQ Base Salvage Depot

1 Capt, 1 Sgt and 1 Driver. These were generally loaded at railheads and docks and co-ordinated the loading of ships and trains for back-loading vital equipment, steel, rubber and solder to UK. They also supplied stores direct to fighting units when required and as such employed a number of Artisans to repair and mend equipment. The generally employed civilian or PW Labour. Sometimes a Field Salvage Units located alongside the Depot. So far 10 Pioneer Units have been identified in Northern

Europe.

Field Salvage Unit (FSU)

1 Lt, 3 Sgts & 40 ORs. They operated in Depots and sometimes at HQ Base Salvage Depot. Operating a minor depot and loading trains for back-loading to Base Salvage Depot. They sent out Salvage Collecting Sections to recover specific items such as Jerrycans, Ammunition Packages or even Parachutes for back-loading to the nearest Depot. At this moment in time 11 Pioneer Corps FSU have been identified.

Salvage Collecting Centre (SCC)

Usually 1 Lt and 9 men with support from Civil Labour or PW. These Salvage Collecting Centre recovered specific items such as Jerrycans, Ammunition Packages or even Parachutes for back-loading to the nearest Depot.

Bath Units

Pioneer Bath Units seemed to operate only in the Middle East. There is one reference to work in the BEF in 1940 but otherwise every record is from North Africa. There are some 32 Bath units in North Africa/Middle East in 1943.

They consisted of 1 Lt, 1 Sgt and 20 men with 3 vehicles (2 x 3 ton and 1 x 15 cwt). The unit had the capability of operating 24 shower units (in groups of 6) and running a disinfectant for clothing and bedding. Generally, they were located alongside other permanent fixtures such as Camps, PW Cages and Water Points. They could provide showers for about 1200 men a day; they were also responsible for operating Mobile Disinfectors to treat bedding and clothing.

Units deployed to other theatres including the Far East. Probably the least known about are those operating in Syria (in support of the units facing the French in the Lebanon) and Iraq who were supporting the 2nd Polish Corps which was formed from

Poles and their families released by the Russians in 1941/42.

PW Units

The Pioneer Corps was responsible for co-ordinating the work and guarding PW Units throughout all theatres of operations. Records of this work are hard to obtain as most diaries cease in 1945 with the end of the War.

UK - There were some 370 PW Camp in the UK of varying sizes. Many were commanded by Pioneer Personnel but a significant number employed personnel of other cap-badges who were about to leave the service and wanted to be near their home town. Camps were graded 'White - Grey - Black' depending of the perceived threat from the inmates - Black being mainly reserved for SS and extreme Nazis. White and Grey camps were employed outside their camp on farming and other duties and were supervised by Pioneer Guards.

Europe - Many German PW Companies were moved from France and the Low Countries back to Germany at the end of war to assist in the re-building of Germany. A lot of these became DGs (German Service Groups) later named GSOs (German Service Organisations) - 60 identified numbered between 411 - 470. Some of these later became Mobile Civil Labour Group (MCLGs).

Italy - During the War, Italian PWs (as listed above) were given the option of converting to Co-operator Companies and some of these were sent to the UK (numbered 552 - 630 (It) PW Coys) to work in Depots replacing British labour. They were returned to Italy in early 1945.

North Africa - Some 39 German Companies were working in Italy at the end of the war (numbered 1001 to 1039

German P/S Labour Units). Many returned to North Africa after the war. Some were still in existence in 1950. Total number are not known.

Far East

Although not covered in this article to quote Brig Blanchard: -

"The Pioneers were used for work on beach assaults, they built roads, bridges, railways and aerodromes. They laid petrol pipe lines - thousands of miles in length - and signal lines. They unloaded ships in docks, handled stores in depots. Petrol and oil were carried by Pioneers. In some cases they made the cans. They cleared swampy areas for anti-malarial schemes."

The force in May 1945, included 34 Pioneer Group HQs and 266 Pioneer Companies, each Company being 417 strong (over 110,000 servicemen). The area of operations spanned from Iraq to Burma and China.

The Ledo Road from Ledo to China was a British commitment. Pioneers and labour, in April 1945, had 53,000 men (civilians and military) on these American projects, and five Group HQs organised this force from Assam to the China border.

Civil Labour Control Teams, on the same lines as in Europe, took place in March 1945, and, starting from scratch, the 150 Pioneer officers from Europe and the Middle East, and 100 NCOs had by March 1946 produced a local labour force of over 400,000. At this latter date CLC Teams were operating in Ceylon, Burma, Malaya, Java, Sumatra, British North Borneo, Hong Kong, French Indo-China and Siam

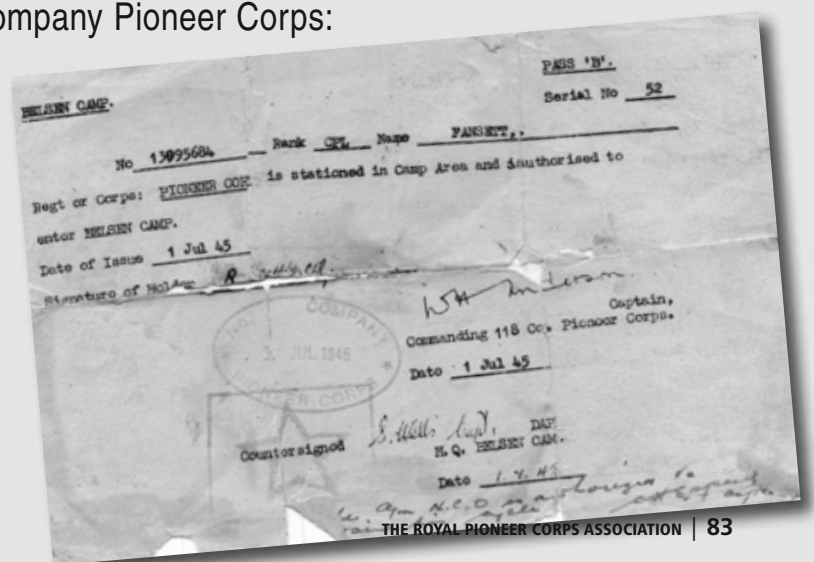
Summary

It has not been the intention to list every unit but to inform of the types of unit and employment undertaken by the Pioneer Corps in WW2. There is still much to discover! ■

Cpl R Fansett in Belsen

13095684 Cpl Ronald FANSETT (Date of Birth 3 Feb 21) enlisted at Cambridge and joined 12 Centre Pioneer Corps for training on 17 Jul 41 and served until 29 Jul 46. The following is an extract from the war diary of 118 Company Pioneer Corps:

- 28 Jun 45 Moved to BELSEN Camp - supervising PWs and Displaced Persons
- Oct 45 Still employed at BELSEN and HOHNE Camp
- 21 Dec 45 Disbanded at BELSEN



Foreign Aliens

Foreign aliens were used in World War One, there were seven Companies (Numbered 1 – 7) in the Middlesex Regiment. These units consisted of men who are naturalised British subjects if enemy alien parentage.



■ Pioneer with Iron Cross (awarded in WW1)

IN World War Two these Companies were composed of refugees, who had fled from the Nazi regime but had not resided in this country long enough to qualify for naturalization and were therefore still classified as enemy aliens.

They came from all classes of society, university professors, lawyers and bankers being intermingled with skilled and unskilled tradesmen. Some 4,500 aliens of German and Austrian origin were enlisted, about 90% of them being Jews.

The various nationalities were not formed into separate Companies except in the case of the Spaniards, Italians and Czechs. Several of these Companies went to France in 1939/40 and again in 1944. They did good work both in the United Kingdom and overseas. Considerable numbers were usefully employed as interpreters and several gained commissions.

Enlistment into the AMPC was normally to be confined to men between the ages of 35 and 50; in the case of aliens between the ages of 20 and 50.

No 3 Centre formed at Richborough in 1939 was to become the Centre for Alien personnel, it moved to Westward Ho in May 1940 and moved to Illfracombe October 1940. It was disbanded in January 1942.

Alien Companies

At the outbreak of war there was in this country a substantial number of persons, over 90% of them Jews, who had sought refuge here from Nazi persecution.

Many of them desired to join the British forces, but there were too many difficulties, the first that, although they had been deprived by the Nazis of their original nationality, they were still technically 'alien enemies' in the eyes of British law, the second, that many of them had a very imperfect knowledge of the English language.

There was also the consideration that, if serving in combatant units, they ran the risk of being taken prisoner, a danger to which in these particular circumstances the War Office was reluctant to expose them or their families still in Germany.

The formation of the AMPC in October 1939, provided a solution to the problem, though many of the refugees were indignant at only being permitted to enlist in what was then an unarmed and non-combatant Corps. There had been in existence for some time a civilian camp containing some 3,500 refugees, mostly recent arrivals, at Richborough, near Sandwich, where they were housed in huts.

In October 1939, the War Office decided to form No 3 AMPC Training Centre and locate it in this camp for the exclusive purpose of forming Companies out of such refugees as volunteered to join. There was a certain amount of delay in receiving recruits at first owing to the requirements of MI5, who examined the case of each applicant individually before his attestation was carried out. This first batch of alien recruits were enlisted on the 16th and 17th November 1939, a special recruiting office being established in the camp under the supervision of a German speaking officer.

By the 19th November 100 recruits had been attested, the number being doubled by the 3rd December.

The first Company, No. 69, was put into training by the middle of that month and, after a farewell inspection by Field Marshal Lord Birdwood, left on the 28th January to join the BEF in France. Meanwhile the second Company, No. 74, had been completed and left in its turn on the 4th February for the same destination. Enlistment at the Centre went on but the strength was now supplemented by arrivals from other parts of the country, who had presented themselves at various recruiting offices and been sent down after attestation to Richborough.

No. 87 Company left on the 17th March, No. 88 on 28th April and No. 93 on the 5th May, all for the BEF, whilst No. 77 departed in February 1940 for the RAOC. Depot at Donnington, Salop.

The Companies, as well as all others of the same kind subsequently formed, were officered by British Officers with a British CSM, an alien CQMS, 5 British Sergeants and 5 alien Sergeants.

The men were predominantly of German origin, the proportions, which remained fairly constant throughout, being something like 55% German, 29% Austrian and the remainder Stateless – Poles, Czechs, etc.

The various nationalities were not formed into separate Companies or even sections but all mixed up together. No friction resulted from this policy, but an experiment carried out some 2 years later of forming an Austrian Company proved a failure.

The great majority of the men were not manual workers but either business or professional men, and the process of hardening them for the heavy work to be undertaken was slow and painful.

As an illustration of the variety of types it may be mentioned that of three men who chanced to arrive together one was a Polish miner from Silesia, one was a German Professor of Philosophy from Leipzig and one was an Austrian dress designer from Vienna.

After the completion of their training and whilst awaiting orders to move the Companies were employed in clearing up other derelict camps in the area, which was not only valuable work in itself but useful in the toughening process. The task of handling men of this type was an extremely novel experience to nearly all the Officers and all the WO's and British NCO's. But with very few exceptions they set about it with a will, exhibiting infinite kindness and patience in their efforts to make this unfamiliar material conform to some extent to the standards of the British soldier.

The invasion by the Germans of Holland and Belgium in May 1940 had two serious effects upon the Centre. In the first place, the War Office decided that the South East coast was no longer a suitable location for it; in the second place, the Government decided upon a policy of wholesale internment of 'enemy aliens,' which involved the drying up overnight of the only source of supply of recruits.

On the 19th May 1940, No. 3 Centre was moved to a tented camp near Lydford in Devonshire and a week later to a holiday camp at Westward Ho! where it remained until September 1940 when it moved to Illfracombe. Meanwhile the 5 Alien

Companies sent to the BEF had returned from France, where they had done good work. They had sustained no casualties but required refitting, after which they were distributed to Commands.

The arrival of so large a body of men in British uniform but speaking with foreign accents was likely to produce unpleasant incidents in a new neighbourhood until the situation had been explained to the inhabitants. The OC Centre therefore confined all alien personnel to the new camp for the first 7 days, an unpopular but necessary measure which was effective in avoiding all incidents.

Recruiting for aliens had re-opened in July, when those in internment against whom nothing was known were released on condition that they joined the AMPC. A Spanish Company was also formed from men who had originally fought on the republican side in the Civil War, had subsequently been interned in France, had been released on the outbreak of War to supply labour in France and had somehow contrived to reach England on the fall of France.

At Illfracombe Nos 219, 220, 248, 249 and 251 Companies were formed and left at various dates between October 1940 and March 1941. In addition No 270 Company was formed of Italian ex-internees and Nos. 226 and 227 from Czechs, who arrived in one party over 500 strong. Most of the Czechs had seen service in their own Army and had fought in France, but they were unwilling to re-engage in the Czech forces being reformed here, though anxious to serve in the British Army. Unfortunately there was a bad element amongst them and they gave more trouble throughout than all the rest of the aliens put together. Both Companies were subsequently disbanded.

No more alien Companies were formed at No 3 Centre after the spring of 1941.

One Aliens Company, No 229 was formed at No 6 Training Centre, Bradford in the autumn of 1940.

Three Alien Companies were formed in North Africa in 1942-43 from Germans and Austrians released from Vichy French concentration camps there.

Three Alien Companies were included in Special Force London for War Debris Clearance during the air attacks 1940/41. They did excellent work in the East End areas and their relations with the civilian inhabitants were extremely happy.

On the formation of 21st Army Group for the invasion of France Nos. 69, 74, 87, 93, 137, 220, 229 and 249 Alien Companies were included in the Order of Battle and proceeded overseas. By this stage, these Companies were fully armed and fully combatant. Opportunity had been given – and advantage freely taken of it – for the men to change their name, if they wished, for the purpose of their military documents, in order that, if captured, they would be less easily identified. (Ed note: initially all aliens had a service number prefixed "1380", they were also allowed to change this if they wished).

No 165 Company had by then been disbanded, as had also the two Czech Companies, whilst Nos 219 and 251 had been converted into ordinary British Companies. The problem of finding recruits to counterbalance the inevitable wastage

was becoming acute and early in 1944 a programme had to be worked out whereby Companies were successively nominated for disbandment, the personnel being used to keep up to strength those Companies which it was decided to retain as long as possible. This wastage was only due in a minor degree to discharges. The chief contributory cause was the throwing open to aliens to arms and corps of the Army other than the Pioneer Corps, an opportunity of which large numbers took prompt advantage.

During 1942 it was decided to give commissions in the Pioneer Corps to a small number of carefully selected aliens, who fully justified as Officers the confidence that had been placed in them.

A number had volunteered from time to time for work of an especially hazardous nature, such as Commando raids, where their knowledge of German was most valuable.

Leaving out of account the Spanish, Italian and Czech Companies, which are in a different category, some 4,500 refugees from Germany and Austria joined the Pioneer Corps and they showed to the best of their ability their desire to serve the country which had offered them sanctuary and the cause for which it was fighting.

The following are the details on one such Alien Company – 74 Company – as can be seen this unit was sent to France with the BEF returned on 17 June 1940 (after Dunkirk) and returned to France in August 1944. You will also notice that at one time they were stationed at Graven Hill, Bicester where both HQ 23 Group RPC and 23 Regiment RLC were stationed.

74 (Alien) Coy

28 Jan 40 Formed from Aliens from Germany, Austria & Poland
1 Feb 40 Landed in France working at 1 ESBD
30 Mar 40 Moved to BRUZ – roads
20 May 40 Moved to VIEUX MARCHE – working at BAD (Base Ammunition Depot)
17 Jun 40 Moved to BREST and embarked for UK
18 Jun 40 Landed at PLYMOUTH
24 Jun 40 Moved to WESTWARD HO
10 Jul 40 Moved to BIDEFORD
3 Aug 40 Moved to LLANVACHES – camp construction and forestry
31 Dec 40 Camp construction and forestry
17 Jan 41 Moved to LONDON – demolitions and debris clearance
1 Feb 41 Officers:- Maj J E Durber, Capt R H Newcombe, Lts J T Leitch, J P Goldschmidt, G J Loveless & A Edwards and 2Lt V H W Sandeman
9 Mar 41 Moved to MARLBOROUGH, Wilts – ammo dump
29 Mar 41 Moved to FONTHILL GIFFORD, TISBURY, Wilts – hutting and camp construction
1 Apr 41 Moved to TISBURY
13 Apr 41 Moved back to FONTHILL GIFFORD (21 Gp)
13 Sep 41 Moved to TISBURY
2 Dec 41 Moved to WEYMOUTH – road construction and concreting
16 Apr 42 The following is a report by the OC 74 Coy PC:

During the night of 2 Apr 42, two bombs were dropped in and behind Wyke Road, Weymouth and two billets occupied by NCOs and men of this unit were completely wrecked and had to be evacuated.

The safety of their own comrades assured, LCpl Stein, Ptes Goldschmidt and Conradi attracted by cries of help crossed the road and searched some private houses which had also suffered considerable damage.

Finding it impossible to enter the building from the front they made their way to the rear of the house known as 12 Glen Avenue, smashed a window and internal doorway and rescued Mrs Protheroe, Miss Watkins and Mrs Rourke who were buried amongst piles of debris under a Morrison table shelter.

Later LCpl Stein climbed up the waterspout of an adjoining house in order to comfort an elderly gentleman who was trapped and had to be rescued by means of a ladder.

LCpl Stein and the two Ptes are employed as cooks in this unit and after the above quoted incident continued to work throughout the night, salvaging Cookhouse equipment from their billet and preparing breakfast which was served at the set hour.

Their conduct has set a fine example and is herewith commended.

The following letter was received in the unit:

I, Marjorie Bonsey Watkins, late of 12 Glen Avenue, Rodwell, Weymouth, certify that I was in a Morrison Table Shelter with my friend, Mrs Beatrice Protheroe at the above address, when a bomb fell in the road opposite 12 yards from head of shelter. The house collapsed and, after a short time, while bombs were still dropping we were rescued by LCpl Stein, Otes Goldschmidt and Conradi, who in spite of the fact that some said, there could be no one alive in the house, climbed over the rubble at the side of the house, smashed windows at the back and got in and helped us out of the shelter, through two windows (greenhouse outside rooms) and helped us over the rubble and took us to the ARP First Aid Post.

We were told later by a neighbour that they had to shelter in the rubble from other bombs while they were coming to help us.

We are both very grateful to them for the risks they took and the help they gave us.

Signed Majorie Bonsey Watkins at Ranis Hill, Symonsbury, Bridport.

I, Mrs Beatrice Protheroe at Rail Hill, Symondsby, Bridport, endorse the foregoing account and have nothing to add.

Signed Mrs Beatrice Protheroe

1942 During this year the Coy featured in the film 'Lift your Head Comrade'

1 Apr 42 Steel erection, hutting and constructional work.

1 Sep 42 Officers:- Maj J E Durber, Capt F W Andexser, Lts H F Goldschmidt, A H Menzbach & L Kuh

23 Sep 42 Maj J E Durber – placed under close arrest

20 Oct 42 Maj J E Durber – resumes command of Coy

31 Dec 42 Coy still at WEYMOUTH on hutting and camp construction. Detachments at FAWLEY, SWANAGE and

PORTISHAM

15 Jan 43 Officers:- Maj J E Durber, Capt L Kuh, Lts W A D Wilson, J Cairns, H F S Miller, H F Goldschmidt, & H A Chard (attached)

10 Apr 43 Moved to SHIREHAMPTON – firewatching at Avonmouth Docks

13 May 43 Part of 37 Gp

25 Jun 43 Firewatching and training

26 Jun 43 Moved to BICESTER – camp construction (14 Gp)

31 Dec 43 At GRAVEN HILL, BICESTER – camp construction and training.

May 44 Moved to ARNCOTT DEPOT, OXFORD – RAOC support

27 Jul 44 Moved to CHICHESTER – training

6 Aug 44 Landed in Normandy

8 Aug 44 Part of 45 Gp

10 Aug 44 Commence hospital construction

13 Aug 44 Part of 11 Gp

3 Sep 44 Comes under 16 Gp – 1st Canadian Army. Camp construction, mine clearance, unloading ships, handling RE stores & ammo.

Oct 44 Handling ammo and petrol

6 Dec 44 Part of 10 Gp – RAOC store work

Note – This diary is so security conscious that it gives absolutely no detail of the Coy's activities, locations, moves etc and what little that can be gleaned is solely from work reports.

8 Feb 45 Part of 103 Gp – in BELGIUM

Mar 45 Part of 179 Gp until 18th Mar then 79 Gp

Apr 45 Under command 103 Gp from 17th

30 Sep 45 Last diary entry in BELGIUM part of 15 Gp



■ Capt Kuh - Weymouth

Number	Surname	Forename	DOB	Date of Enlistment	Date of Disch/Tra nsfer	Remarks
Major						
16984	PEPPER MC	W				TOS Jan 40, SOS 5 Mar 40
60361	DUNSTEVILLE	AG				TOS 10 Mar 40, dismissed GCM 10 Aug 42
Capt						
48523	DURBER	James Edward				Commissioned RA 5 Apr 19, joined from RA 18 Dec 39
Lt						
38310	HANCOCK	FHJM				Ex Lt London Regt, joined 6 Jan 40. SOS 28 Apr 40
55922	LEITCH	JT				TOS 28 Apr 40
7691	GOLDSMITH MC	W				TOS 14 May 40
CSM						
	CHARLTON					
CQMS						
13800047	MUELLER	LEOPOLD	14 May 05	16 Nov 39	25 Apr 42	Discharged to commission, new service number 232804 (achieved rank of Capt)
SGTS						
13800008	BUN	WALTER	6 Apr 14	16 Nov 39	24 Feb 42	
	HAMER					
13800022	HENSCHEL	OSKAR OSWALD	1 Mar 13	16 Nov 39		Later 13118603 Oscar Roy O'NEILL, transferred to Buffs 16 Nov 43 (new No 6305481) – 10 Commando
13800580	LIEBER	ERWIN	7 Aug 14	27 Dec 39		Later 13046344 Henry GOODAY, transferred to RA(HAA) 13 Oct 43
13801011	POLLACK	GUENTHER	17 Aug 16	24 Jan 40	25 Dec 47	
5610318	SKINNER	HARRY BEER	26 Nov 02	22 Dec 39	11 Mar 42	
	SPENCER					
13800705	STOESSEL	RICHARD	26 Jan 95	1 Jan 40	6 Sep 45	Later 13041767 Richard STANLEY
3848127	WARR	JAMES WILLIAM	24 Jan 02	8 May 34	20 Oct 45	Was RAC transferred to AMPC 27 Dec 39
6450564	WEDGE	CHARLES HENRY	11 Jan 93	6 Nov 39	18 Apr 45	
Cpls and Below						
13800661	ABRAHAM	KURT	31 Aug 07	1 Jan 40	14 Dec 45	Later 13116377 Kennard Jack ASHFORD
	ARONKEIN					
13800436	ARONSOHN	ADOLG	17 Oct 04	19 Dec 39	30 Oct 45	Later 13116323 Arthur RONSON
13800833	ATLAS	KURT	9 May 03	3 Jan 40	16 Oct 41	Transfer to RAOC
13800458	BACK	SIEGBERT	5 Mar 08	20 Dec 39	10 Jan 49	
13800346	BALLIN	KURT WALTER		18 Dec 39	27 Jan 48	
13800681	BARBASCH	JULIUS	13 FEB 07	1 Jan 40	19 Dec 45	
13800883	BARSAM	SIEGMANN	21 Jan 07	4 Jan 40	16 Oct 41	Transfer to RAOC
13800388	BARUCH	ALFRED	26 Dec 99	19 Dec 39	12 Jul 41	Discharged from 69 Coy
13800558	BASS	HERMANN	28 Aug 07	22 Dec 39	12 Sep 40	
13800634	BAUMGARTEN	GUSTAV	16 Feb 98	29 Dec 39	18 Sep 41	
13800814	BECKER	KURT	27 Apr 19	3 Jan 40	9 Jan 46	Later 13116268 Kenneth Bernard BAKER
	BENILIT					
13800389	BERNSTEIN	MAX IWAN	3 May 08	19 Dec 39	5 Aug 42	Discharged from 69 Coy
13800711	BERNZWEIG	BENEDIKT	30 Mar 98	1 Jan 40	6 Jan 49	Later 13116264 Ben BERN
13800336	BISCHBURG	LEO	17 Aug 97	16 Dec 49	Died 27 Aug 40	
13800687	BLAJWAS	SZMUL ELA	20 Jan 96	1 Jan 40	24 Aug 42	
13800835	BLOCK	MOSES MAX	19 Dec 94	3 Jan 40	19 Jan 42	
13800578	BLUM	SZMUL	18 Apr 95	27 Dec 39	15 Aug 45	Later 13116499 Samuel BLOOM
13800557	BORCHARD	ILBERT	15 Sep 12	22 Dec 39	6 Nov 45	
13800905	BRANDES	CHAIM	11 Mar 04	8 Jan 40	13 Nov 45	
13800478	COHN	RICHARD	28 Jun 07	20 Dec 39		Transferred to RASC 15 Apr 42
13800485	COHN	ERICH	11 Mar 97	21 Dec 39	11 Jul 47	Later 13116660 Eric COLLINS
13800694	CONRADI	MAX	3 Sep 16	1 Jan 40	18 Jan 46	
13800884	DACHES	ARTHUR	21 May 04	4 Jan 40	18 Nov 45	Later 13116446
13800342	DAVID	PAUL JOSEPH	21 Feb 97	16 Dec 39	8 Sep 45	
13800651	De JONGE	ALFRED	18 Feb 08	29 Dec 39	18 Dec 45	
13800764	DREIFUSS	MAX	3 Oct 13	2 Jan 40	28 Nov 45	Later 13116278 Mac DAVIS
13800697	DRUCKER	ERNST	25 Sep 16	1 Jan 40	3 Dec 46	Later 13046347 Ernest DORMER
13800550	DZIALOSZYNSKI	WOLF	25 May 01	21 Dec 39	10 Oct 46	Later 13055325 Sidney ROSENAK
13800352	EBENSTEIN	ABRAHAM LEIB	12 Oct 08	18 Dec 39		Later 13041493 Leon Gordon transferred to ACC 11 Jul 44

13800707	EISENBERG	GUSTAV	7 Jun 04	1 Jan 40		Transferred to REME 22 Jan 43
13800635	EPSTEIN	WALTER	25 Jan 01	29 Dec 39	17 Jan 42	
13800756	ERNST	JULIUS	1 May 95	2 Jan 40	8 Oct 42	
13800672	FEILMANN	GEORG GERSON	23 Aug 02	1 Jan 40	12 Apr 45	
13800559	FELDHEIM	SIEGMUND	31 Mar 04	22 Dec 39	4 Nov 45	
13800698	FINKELSTEIN	HELMUT SIEGFRIED	6 Dec 14	1 Jan 40		Transferred to REME 8 May 43
13800648	FISCHER	JOSEF	19 Oct 16	29 Dec 39		Transferred to RAOC 7 Nov 41
13800744	FRAENKEL	HANS LOUIS	7 Aug 13	2 Jan 40	31 Aug 42	
13800628	FRANKEN	ERNST	13 May 07	29 Dec 39	12 Feb 42	
13800891	FREUD	ROBERT	6 Oct 05	4 Jan 40	5 Dec 45	
13800693	FRIEDLAND	FERDINAND	18 Dec 05	1 Jan 40		Transferred to RASC 28 Feb 42
13800695	FRISCHMANN	PAUL	12 Aug 98	1 Jan 40	28 Dec 43	
13800647	FUHRMANN	PAUL	27 Nov 15	29 Dec 39	11 Dec 45	
13800700	GELLERT	GUENTER	9 Jun 16	1 Jan 40	3 Oct 44	
13800702	GELLERT	Heinrich	4 Apr 18	1 Jan 40		Later 13041605 Henry BARFORD, transferred to Essex Regt 16 Feb 44
13800718	GERSON	KURT	1 Jun 12	2 Jan 40		Transferred to RASC 14 Dec 41
13800240	GILDENER	JULIUS	7 Jul 02	5 Dec 39	18 Oct 45	
13800689	GILLY	MARTIN KURT	18 Oct 07	1 Jan 40	2 Sep 41	
13800125	GIMPEL	ERICH	19 Oct 12	30 Nov 39	25 Oct 45	Later 13051507 John Robert GORDON
	GOLDBERG					
	GOLDSCHMIDT					
13800623	GOLTFELD	FITZ	15 May 99	29 Dec 39	20 Jul 42	
13800908	GOLTHEINER	ISMAR	7 Sep 05	9 Jan 40	27 Nov 45	Later 17000079 James GODDARD
13800608	GOTTSCHALK	ADOLG	4 Aug 07	21 Feb 40	30 Nov 45	Later 13051405 nRalph Allan GORDON
13800632	GRIFFEL	MORITZ	11 Nov 12	29 Dec 39	21 Sep 42	
13800683	GROSS	LUITPOLD	4 Mar 11	1 Jan 40		Transferred to RASC 9 Dec 41
13800625	GRUEBEL	THEODOR	7 Sep 11	29 Dec 39		Later 13041603 Theodore John GRIFFITH transferred to RAC14 Jul 43
13800709	GRUHN	BERTHOLD	4 Feb 03	1 Jan 40	15 Aug 45	
13800747	GUENS	LUDWIG	13 Jul 00	2 Jan 40		Later 13053331 Leslie Garrod GUNS transferred to RE 30 Aug 43
13800531	GUTTENTAG	HEINZ	3 May 05	27 Dec 39		Later 13046344 Henry GOODAY transferred to RA(HAA) 13 Oct 43
13800455	HALPERN	JULIUS	12 Apr 11	20 Dec 39		Transferred to RASC 6 Dec 41
	HAUSER					
13800682	HECHINGER	HANS	29 Oct 09	1 Jan 40	14 Nov 45	Later 13041604 Jack HENDON
13800505	HENOCH	LUDWIG	13 Apr 00	21 Dec 39	24 Aug 42	
13800510	HERBST	HEINZ	27 Feb 09	21 Dec 39		Transferred to RASC 8 Dec 41
	HIRSCH					
	HIRSCH					
13800692	JACOBSBERG	HERMANN	17 Jan 15	1 Jan 40	5 Jan 46	Later 13116263 John Stephen HARRISON
	JACOBY					
13800609	JOSEPH	MAX	12 Jun 07	27 Dec 39		Transferred to RASC 12 Nov 41
	JUNG					
13800540	KAISER	MAX	27 May 11	21 Dec 39	12 Nov 45	
13800523	KALLMANN	ARTHUR	13 Apr 12	21 Dec 39		Transferred to RASC 29 Dec 51
13800869	KANIN	MARTIN	8 Apr 07	4 Jan 40	27 Nov 45	
13800509	KASSNER	KARL	24 Nov 11	21 Dec 39	26 Oct 45	
13800534	KATZ	ALFRED	19 Apr 99	21 Dec 39		Later 13041739 Alfred John KAY transferred to King's Regt 1 Sep 44
13800688	KAUFMANN	HANS	7 Nov 18	1 Jan 40	27 Mar 46	
13800649	KESTEN	NAFTALI RUBIN	25 May 03	29 Dec 39	8 Dec 45	
13800644	KLAIN	ABRAM	27 Aug 00	29 Dec 39	7 Jul 44	Disch from 138 Coy
13800612	KLEIN	FRANZ	12 Oct 11	27 Dec 39	12 Nov 41	
13800690	KLEIN	ROBERT	5 Feb 00	1 Jan 40		
13800553	KOENIGSTEIN	BERNARD	6 Nov 03	21 Dec 39	7 Sep 44	Later 13053430 Bernard Leslie KINGSTON
13800642	KOHN	JACQUES	20 Aug 97	29 Dec 39	22 Aug 45	Later 13055481 Jack KNOX
13800157	KOLLER	RUDOLF	20 Jul 12	1 Dec 39	12 Nov 45	Later 13116363 Randolph KOLVIN
13800902	KONIFOFF	ALFRED	2 Apr 18	8 Jan 40		Transferred to REME 3 May 43
13800668	KORNITZER	OTTO	24 Mar 06	1 Jan 40	19 Dec 45	Later 13041763
13800367	KOTKOWSKI	WILLI ARON WOLF	29 Nov 04	18 Dec 39	4 Nov 45	Later 13046341 Ronald Steven KING
13800588	KOWAISKI	ISAAK	25 Jan 97	27 Dec 39	1 Jun 42	
13800767	KRAUS	WALTER	12 Dec 19	2 Jan 40	1 May 40	
13801203	KRAUS	HANS OTTO	8 Nov 15	1 Feb 40		Later 13046409 Hubert Owen KENDALL transferred to Glos Regt 14 Jun 43

13800036	KRIWACZEK	LEOPOLD	6 Aug 03	16 Nov 39	24 Oct 45	Later 13046663 Leo Clive KIRK
13800590	LABE	ALFRED	5 Jun 03	27 Dec 39		Transferred to ACC 11 Jul 44
13800717	LAMMEL	IGNACY	13 Sep 19	2 Jan 40		Transferred to AAC 28 Aug 43
13800738	LANDAU	KURT	24 Apr 05	2 Jan 40	30 Apr 41	
13800838	LANDAUER	RUDOLF HEINRICH	2 Jul 14	3 Jan 40		Transferred to RASC 18 Dec 41
13800787	LANDMANN	FRIEDRICH	21 Jul 12	3 Jan 40		Transfer to RE 10 Jul 42
13800528	LANGFUER	JAKOB	20 Jan 97	21 Dec 39		Transferred to RASC 16 Dec 41
13800650	LESSER	HERMANN	06 Nov 05	29 Dec 39		Later 13053648 George MAY transferred to Ox & Bucks LI 8 Sep 44
13800646	LEHMANN	MAX	29 Nov 00	29 Dec 39	28 Sep 45	
13800768	LEHMANN	RUDI HELMUT	6 Apr 15	2 Jan 40	8 Jan 47	Later 13053465 Ronald Levy
13800830	LERCHER	HERMANN	19 Dec 11	3 Jan 40	25 Oct 43	Later 13041608 Harry LESTER
13800085	LESER	HANS ULRICH	5 Dec 18	27 Nov 39		Transferred to RASC 12 Apr 42
13800724	LEVI	LUDWIG	28 Dec 19	2 Jan 40		Transferred to REME 21 Apr 43
13800844	LEVITE	HEINZ SIMON	05 Aug 08	3 Jan 40		Transferred to RASC 14 Apr 42
13800522	LEVY	ERNST	10 Jan 11	21 Dec 39	3 Nov 45	Later 13041600 Ernest LEVER
13800653	LEVY	LEO	17 May 97	29 Dec 39	29 Sep 42	
13800685	LEVY	FRIEDRICH ALBERT	16 Feb 03	1 Jan 40	11 Oct 73	
13800645	LEWIN	SIEGFRIED	25 Mar 15	29 Dec 39		Later 13118218 Frederick Mac LOUIS, permanently att to War Office 22 Aug 42 – 10 Commando
13800716	LEWIN	KURT ERNST	2 Jan 98	2 Jan 40	9 May 45	
13800735	LEWIN	ARNHOLD	21 Feb 09	2 Jan 40	25 Dec 45	Later 13116444
13800508	LEWINSOHN	EDGAR	1 Mar 10	21 Dec 39	25 Dec 45	Later 13116256 Edgar EINSON
13800582	LEWINSOHN	FRITZ	19 Oct 07	37 Dec 39	18 Dec 45	
	LIBOWSKI					
13800567	LIEBERMANN	EMIL	25 Mar 07	22 Dec 39	4 Nov 45	
13800599	LIPPMANN	FRITZ	12 Mar 07	27 Dec 39	30 Nov 45	
13800532	LITTWACK	KURT	3 Jan 15	21 Dec 39		Later 13051489 Jack Robert LYNTON transferred to RAC 15 Dec 43
13800654	LOESER	ERICH	23 Jan 04	29 Dec 39	5 Nov 45	
13800725	LOWENSTEIN	ERNST	2 Sep 04	2 Jan 40		Transferred to RAOC 23 Sep 41
13800834	LOEWY	JAKOB	9 Apr 09	3 Jan 40		Transferred to RE 10 Jul 42
13800573	LOMNITZER	GEORG	2 Mar 05	22 Dec 39		Later 13046546 Reginald LEE transferred to RAC 15 Dec 43
13800864	LURIA	KARL	4 Aug 19	4 Jan 40	2 May 46	
13800888	MANNHEIMER	HERBERT	2 Aug 09	4 Jan 40	5 Oct 43	Later 13046485 Herbert Percy MANNING Commissioned new service no 299242
13800542	MARCUS	LEO	3 Aug 01	21 Dec 39		Transferred to RE 10 Jul 42
13800629	MASCHKOWSKI	ERNST	25 Nov 02	29 Dec 39	22 Oct 45	
13800643	MESZNIK	LEOPOLD	6 Apr 10	29 Dec 39		Transferred to REME 10 Nov 42
13800633	METZGER	HELMUT ALBERT	22 Nov 10	29 Dec 39		Transferred to RA (Field) 25 Aug 43
13800593	MKEYER	FRITZ	24 Sep 05	27 Dec 39	6 Jan 46	Later 13041679 Morris MORLEY
13800867	MICHEL	WALTER	24 Jan 07	4 Jan 40	16 Nov 45	
13800714	MICHELSON	FRIEDRICH	29 Jan 10	2 Jan 40	12 Nov 45	
13800544	MICHELSON	SIEGFRIED	30 Nov 98	21 Dec 39		Transferred to RASC 16 Dec 41
13800712	MIEDZWINSKI	ERNEST	22 Dec 00	2 Jan 40	7 Oct 45	
13800622	MIRSKY	SAMUEL	24 Apr 94	29 Dec 39	Died 13 Oct 41	
13800821	MONDSCHHEIN	ARMIN	31 Mar 04	3 Jan 40	13 May 44	
13800621	MUELLERHEIM	KURT	6 Jul 00	29 Dec 39	27 Sep 43	
13800548	NATHAN	JOSEF	20 Apr 02	21 Dec 39	21 Oct 45	
13800595	NELKEN	KURT	14 Nov 06	27 Dec 39		Transferred to REME 2 Jul 43
13800556	NEUMANN	LUGER KOPEL	10 Sep 93	22 Dec 39	5 Jan 42	
13800516	NIEDERMANN	SIEGFRIED	2 Oct 07	21 Dec 39	18 Dec 45	
13800589	OSCHITZKI	EDWIN EDWARD	7 Jan 07	27 Dec 39	13 Feb 43	
13800603	PELIKAN	FRITZ	22 Jan 18	27 Dec 39	7 Aug 46	Later 13116269 Fred PELICAN
13800726	PERL	ULRICH LOUIS SIMON	5 Dec 18	2 Jan 40		Later 13046348 Michael Arthur MONTGOMERY, transferred to RAC 25 Aug 43
13800803	PHILIPPSEN	WERNER HORST	11 Aug 15	3 Jan 40	Died 17 Sep 42	
13800871	PICK	ROBERT	25 Jan 17	4 Jan 40	12 Oct 45	
13800722	PLAT	MOSES MENDEL	15 JAN 93	2 Jan 40		Transferred to RASC 18 Jul 42
13800615	POPOWER	HENOCH	24 Aug 19	29 Dec 39		Later 13116261 Henry POWER, transferred to RE 12 Jun 43
13800734	POTTITZER	WOLFGANG	1 Jan 19	2 Jan 40		Transferred to REME 5 May 43
13800518	PRAG	KARL	18 Jul 05	21 Dec 39	27 Oct 56	Later 13116257 Charles PERRY

13800535	SELBIGER	OSKAR	16 May 11	21 Dec 39	1 Nov 45	
13800602	SIEGER	MAX	20 Jul 01	27 Dec 39	26 Jun 43	
13800515	SIMON	SIEGFRIED	15 Jul 03	21 Dec 39		Later 13046342 Sidney SIMMONS, transferred to RA (HAA) 13 Oct 43
13800874	SIMON	HERMANN	25 Sep 02	4 Jan 40	15 Oct 45	Later 13041483 George SIMMONDS
13800746	SINAI	JAKOB	29 Jan 07	19 Dec 45	19 Dec 45	
13800655	SOLLAENDER	JAKOB	21 Dec 04	29 Dec 39	29 Oct 45	
13800802	SOMMERSTEIN	THEOPHIL	12 Feb 09	3 Jan 40		Transferred to RE 8 May 43
13800541	SPUNER	FRIEDRICH	14 Mar 04	21 Dec 39	22 Jan 45	
13800812	STEIN	MAX	26 Nov 14	3 Jan 40	21 Dec 45	
13800866	STEIN	ARTUR	16 Dec 16	4 Jan 40		Later 13118709 Tom SPENCER, transferred to Buffs 15 Nov 43 (new No 6305470) – 10 Commando
13800610	STEINBERG	HERBERT	6 Oct 16	27 Dec 39	6 Jan 46	
13800527	STERNBERG	HERBERT	9 Mar 04	21 Dec 39	14 Aug 47	Later 13116258 Herbert Robert STEVENS
13800554	TAUBER	DAVID	16 Mar 99	21 Dec 39	29 Apr 43	
13800448	TAUBER RECTE RAUCHBACH	LEO	31 Mar 16	20 Dec 39	20 Dec 39	Later 17000087 Leslie TEDDER
13800794	TAUFER	PAUL	12 Aug 18	3 Jan 40		Transferred to ACC 5 Sep 45
13800291	TEICHER	SOLOMEN	26 Oct 00	5 Dec 39		Died 18 Mar 44
13800611	TIMAN	KARL	3 Oct 04	27 Dec 39	7 Nov 45	Later 13046345 Charles TYMAN
13800824	TISCHLER	WALTER	6 Dec 06	3 Jan 40	9 Dec 45	
13800667	TOBIAS	MAX MORITZ	11 Aug 08	1 Jan 40	16 Oct 46	
13800761	TREITEL	AMO	31 May 05	2 Jan 40	5 Dec 45	Later 13115267 Jon BAYFIELD
13800275	TROPKE	LUDWIG	10 Apr 06	5 Dec 39		Transferred to ACC 11 Jul 44
13800792	VALFER	JAKOB	1 Jan 06	3 Jan 40	5 Nov 45	
13800537	WARSHAUER	ARNOLD	3 Apr 98	21 Dec 39	23 Nov 42	
13800820	WEDEL	EDMUND	7 Nov 39	3 Jan 40	13 Oct 42	
13800545	WEIHMANN	ERNST	13 Aug 19	21 Dec 39	25 Sep 48	Later 13041602 Ernest James WALKER
13800560	WEIL	SALLY	23 Dec 05	22 Dec 39	29 Jul 45	
13800817	WEIL	OTTO	7 Oct 02	3 Jan 40	21 Oct 45	
13800638	WEINBERT	FITZ	21 Jul 13	29 Dec 39		Later 13046346 Frank Michael WARNER, transferred to RAC 16 Feb 44
13800839	WEISSENBERG	ERNST SALI	11 Aug 93	3 Jan 40	6 Sep 45	Later 13116269 Ernest Dennis WILT
	WEISSMANN					
13800875	WETTENSTEIN	JOSEPH	10 Jul 05	4 Jan 40	5 Dec 45	
13800776	WETTERHAHN	HERMANN	13 Oct 09	2 Jan 40	5 Oct 44	Later 13041607 Herbert BEAVER
13800806	WEYL	HERMANN	11 Oct 94	3 Jan 40	15 Aug 45	
13800634	WIENER	MARITZ	9 Jun 99	29 Dec 39	9 Sep 45	Later 13116262 Maurice WIDE
13800566	WIENSKOWITZ	HANS	23 Jul 94	22 Dec 39	25 Mar 43	
13800597	WIESINGER	BRUNO	14 Sep 15	27 Dec 39	20 Dec 45	
13800887	WILHEIM	HUGO	4 Aug 01	4 Jan 40		Transferred to RE 10 Jul 42
13800765	WILZIG	ADOLF	12 Nov 16	2 Jan 40		Transferred to REME 21 Apr 43
13800583	WOLF	BRUNO HUGO	15 Feb 06	27 Dec 39	14 Nov 45	Later 13116435 John BARSFORT
	WOLFF					
13800797	WOLFFSBERG	JULIUS	20 Oct 10	3 Jan 40	28 Jan 46	
13800772	WRESCHNER	KURT	15 Oct 03	2 Jan 40	25 Oct 45	
13800604	ZACHARIAS	JULIAN	9 Jul 05	27 Dec 39	18 Nov 45	
13800800	ZAJAC	ISAK	01 Oct 00	3 Jan 40	9 Sep 44	Transferred to RA 20 Mar 42, re-joined 9 Feb 43
13800636	ZARNOVER	ISRAEL	11 Aug 95	29 Dec 39		Transferred to REME 23 May 43
13800585	ZELECHOWER	MOYSZE AIZYK	21 Sep 15	27 Dec 39		Transferred to RA (LAA) 16 Feb 44
13800854	ZELLEMAYER	WALTER	30 Mar 13	3 Jan 40	2 Dec 45	Later 13053547 Walter Stanley HARTLEY
13800805	ZWEIG	RUDI	4 Sep 18	3 Jan 40	5 Dec 42	
RASC Driver	BROOKS					



■ France 1940

Another "Alien" Company was 87 Company, the following is a short brief on this unit including details of the explosion at Pembroke Dock when 5 members of the unit were killed:

87 (Alien) Company Pioneer Corps PEMBROKE DOCK

The extraordinary story of the 10,000 German and Austrians who fought for Britain during the Second World War, only recently investigated and publicised, has implications for the on-going research at the Pembroke Dock Trust in Wales. And, in particular 87 Company of the Pioneers, the men who died in the disastrous explosion at the Defensible Barracks in 1942, and the on-going search for other men of the unit who served there, but survived. Although, in the main, the Jewish population who settled in the UK prior to the war had found a safe haven in this country, the shock of the German advance into Europe in early 1940 radically changed the dynamic. 75,000 German and Austrian refugees had fled Nazi opposition: of these one in seven, some 10,000 enlisted in the British Forces, initially to serve in the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps, a labour unit of the British Army. But this, in the possibly-justifiable paranoia of the times, and encouraged by the media, which accused them of being potential 'fifth columnists', led to their becoming categorised as 'enemy aliens'. Their fate was to be interned in camps in Britain or sent abroad, often under harsh conditions.

Of those categorised by tribunals as 'Category C'. of 'potential but no immediate danger', those who volunteered for the forces were accepted, but in a non-combat role. Issued with World War 1 vintage boots (and later rifles), their pick and shovel cap badge reflected the type of duties they would be engaged in; labouring, building, guard duties, defence work, damage clearance in Blitzed cities, mine clearance, sometimes dangerous, but more often resulting in a "sad, frustrated and disappointed bunch." The image of the Pioneers suffered from an attitude within the military establishment that they were "mostly unfit for active duty due to their records as criminals, of poor fitness and intelligence", a "less than stellar reputation", which the high quality of the alien troops helped to dismantle over the following years. A small but determined minority, mainly from the upper echelon of Jewish society, refused to accept this; as will be seen, in part because of the suffering of themselves and their families under Nazism, they decided to take an active role, although this would take nearly two years to achieve. By the end of the war, "they had distinguished themselves out of all proportion to their numbers."

At the outbreak of war, some 3,500 of these volunteers were based at 3 Centre AMPC near Folkestone which moved to Illfracombe, Devon in early 1941. There were six companies, of which five, including 87, were to be sent to France to support the British Expeditionary Force facing the German invasion. 87 Company landed at Le Havre in May 1940, according to their War Diary, and were billeted at the Quai Oblique, aiding the Royal Army Service Corps, and immediately under heavy bombing. The return shows 272 NCOs and

men, "entirely recruited from refugees", with five British Sergeants and three drivers. They were then transferred to Harfleur, with orders to "hold the road (north of Montvilliers, with the regulars of 65 and 106 Regiments) ... at all costs." There was no question now of their non-combat status, they were issued with rifles; the enemy had broken through at Amiens, and they were issued with machine guns, anti-tank and Bren guns in a failed effort to hold the German advance. Three days later they were in reserve, as part of a defence line from the sea to the Seine River. In spite of assisting Royal Engineers constructing road blocks, the Germans broke through, and they were entrained at Le Havre before it fell, on to Rennes, then St Malo and evacuation to England. By the 23rd of June they were back at Bideford in Devon. One of the men recalls the retreat, and "the sight of French citizens lining the streets and jeering at them."

Back in England, the powers-that-be had decided to try and repair the negative image of the Pioneers by re-designating the Corps by the dropping of the title Auxiliary Military to become Pioneer Corps. As the worst of the invasion scare diminished, they were moved to Dartmoor, then to Chard, remaining in Somerset area until January 1941, when they were posted to London, clearing bombed areas in Bermondsey, Woolwich and Blackheath, and billeted in requisitioned houses. Although 87 Company suffered no fatalities during this period, leaving for Wales in March 1941, (after a short spell of duty in Blitz-hit Liverpool), the loss of five Pioneers of 69 Company during bomb clearance in Bexley, illustrates the reality of 'non-combat work'. In February Capt GT Garrett takes over as Acting Captain, replacing Capt Stott. In early March they are based at Valindre, near Cardiff, on various duties; pipe-laying, planting minefields, laying sleepers and other defence-rated work locally in Pembrokeshire at Lampeter, Newport, Fishguard, Manorbier, Carmarthen and Angle RAF base. In September they were in Tenby, awaiting transfer to their new base at the Defensible Barracks, Pembroke Dock in September, ending 1941 there with "all the men of the Jewish faith Celebrating their New Year".

In April 1941 this relatively peaceful existence was shattered by an explosion at the Defensible Barracks, overlooking the harbour, and home to many military units over the centuries. Capt Garrett was in charge of a training course in the clearance of beach mines, which were now redundant (and highly unstable), planted in their thousands around the coast during the earlier invasion scare. In an enclosed basement room the mine exploded, and the results were catastrophic; nineteen men from the Pioneers the 16 Bomb Disposal Company and the King's Own Scottish Borderers were killed, amongst them were three young Jewish soldiers. There had been exhaustive research in the lead-up to the 2012 ceremony (the 70th anniversary of the explosion), hoping to find surviving relatives of these three, with the cooperation of AJEX, appeals in the media (local press and radio and the Jewish Chronicle). In spite of some unconfirmed leads both here and abroad, it was reluctantly concluded that, in the light of their youth, their forced

departure from Germany and early joining into the army, there was no real possibility that relatives might be found.

Later, as the 80th anniversary approached, we became aware that there was interest in the other large group which escaped the tragedy, being involved in regular duties in the local area, and spared by the chance of fate from the tragedy at the Barracks. Amongst these were the small, highly-motivated group from the Pioneers already mentioned, men like Walter Baungart (later he changed his name to Gary Rogers for his protection and of his family in Germany), Claude Ascher (Colin Anson), and Anton (Walter) Freud. They and several others went on to see distinguished service in the British forces, their exploits have been documented in several sources.

From Pembroke Dock 87 Company moved to Long Marsden until summer 1943, loading trucks for the RE and on defence duties. The Company were to land in Normandy in 1944, following the 5,000 Pioneers who landed on D Day working in hospitals, depots and eventually escorting Prisoners of War but at this stage it was no longer an 'Alien' Company. ■



■ Blitz London Officers



■ Blitz London



■ Blitz London



■ Bideford Devon - 24 Jun 40 - Blanco Inspection



■ Bideford Devon Jun 40 Lunch



■ Cpl Baer - Jul 41



■ Driver Joseph - Aug 41



■ Driver Joseph - Aug 41



■ Cpl Drucker - Aug 41



■ CSM Fox - Weymouth



■ Fonthill Gifford - Oct 41



■ Fronthill Gifford Band



■ Ilfracombe in 1940



■ Lt Goldsmith - Bideford 1940



■ Pte Gruenberg - Sep 41



■ Sgt Jacobsberg - Sep 41



■ Pte Roserstein Jun 40



■ The first Section - Kitchener Camp



■ Sgt Gimpel - Weymoth



■ The Continental Orchestra 1940



■ Orderly Sgt Jacobsberg - Bideford Jun 40



■ The Winners - Bideford 1940



■ BEF Return Plymouth 1940



Hull Company, PC

The formation of the Hull Company of the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps, 1940. Hull Company later became 193 Company, Pioneer Corps

FOREWORD.

THE raising of this Hull Unit under the patronage of the Lord Mayor of Kingston-upon-Hull, Councillor H. M. Harrison, J.P., with the valuable help of my friends, Alderman A. Shepherd, J.P., and Mr. Tom Hudson, J.P., is a further expression of the determination of the people of this City to show to the World their desire to fight for democracy and freedom and the right to choose their own way of life, especially as it refers to all those things which mean so much to us—freedom in speech; freedom in action; freedom in choice of faith.

The Unit is under the command of a Hull Officer, Major T. E. Anderson, and mainly composed of Hull citizens, with a contingent from Leeds, Doncaster and surrounding areas.

A word to the Members of the Unit:

It is the wish of everyone associated with the raising of this A.M.P. Coy., that your life in the Army will bring a strengthening of comradeship, and that together you will enjoy a healthy life in the service of your Country at this stirring time in its history. May God bless and keep you and bring you safely back to those you love.

ROBERT G. TARRAN.



THE LORD MAYOR OF HULL
(COUNCILLOR H. M. HARRISON, J.P.)



ALDERMAN A. SHEPHERD, J.P.



TOM HUDSON, J.P.



ROBERT G. TARRAN.



Souvenir

OF THE
FORMATION OF THE
HULL COMPANY

OF THE
AUXILIARY MILITARY PIONEER CORPS



THE FIRST RECRUITS TO LEAVE HULL, WITH ALDERMAN A. SHEPHERD, MAJOR T. E. ANDERSON, ROBERT G. TARRAN AND TOM HUDSON, AUGUST, 1940.



AFTER A FORTNIGHT'S TRAINING. LEAVING THE CITY HALL, HULL, AND MARCHING TO THE GUILDHALL FOR LUNCHEON. 5th SEPTEMBER, 1940.



KINGSTON - UPON - HULL

PRESENTATION CEREMONY
OF
DRUM AND FIFE BAND TO THE HULL COMPANY
OF THE
AUXILIARY MILITARY PIONEER CORPS.
SEPTEMBER, 1940.

THE City Hall, Hull, scene of many historic events in the annals of the country's Third Port, laid claim to yet another memorable occasion on Thursday, 5th September, 1940, when the Hull Company of the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps was presented with instruments to form a Drum and Fife Band. These were the gift of Mr. Robert G. Tarran, the well-known Hull industrialist, who, along with Alderman A. Shepherd, J.P., and Mr. Tom Hudson, J.P., had collaborated in the recruiting of the unit.

The presentation ceremony was impressive and unforgettable. On an expanse of apple green and maroon material, the unit's regimental colours, reposed the glistening instruments—big drum, side drums, fifes, etc., the big drum bearing the badge of the A.M.P.C. combined with the Coat of Arms of Kingston upon Hull. Behind these had been formed a dais on which were assembled many military and civilian dignitaries. They included the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Northern Command

THE HULL COMPANY OF THE AUXILIARY MILITARY PIONEER CORPS

(Lieut-General Sir Ronald Adam, Bt., C.B., D.S.O., O.B.E.), Captain the Lord Remnand (Aide-de-Camp), Lt-Col. Lamotte, D.S.O. (O.C. 5th Training Centre A.M.P.C.), Brigadier A. G. B. Buchanan (C.E., Northern Command), Major Parsley (O.C. Training Coy. A.M.P.C.), the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress (Councillor and Mrs. H. M. Harrison), Mrs. B. Pearlman (Sheriff's Lady), Ald. T. D. Fenby (Mayor of Bridlington), Councillor and Mrs. Watts (Mayor and Mayoress of Beverley), Capt. M. Hewitson (Sports and Welfare Office A.M.P.C.), Sir Arthur and Lady Atkinson, Mr. G. Muff, M.P. (East Hull) and Mrs. Muff, and many others.

At the rear, on the platform of the City Hall, was the Tarran Waterloo Silver Band, who, as the official party entered the hall, played the song which the A.M.P.C. have adopted as their Regimental March—"There'll always be an England."

Forming three parts of a square, facing the instruments, was a detachment of the Hull Company of the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps, at the head of whom was Major T. E. Anderson, their Commanding Officer, and Capt. Fennelly, D.C.M. As the civic and military party took their seats on the dais, the detachment sprang to attention and sloped arms. The Bishop of Hull (The Rt. Rev. H. T. Vodden) stepped forward to dedicate the instruments:

We bless and dedicate these instruments to the Service of Almighty God, to the praise and honour of Him Whose mercy endureth for ever.

Prayer: O, Lord God, Who art the Giver of all wisdom and willest that Thy people should dwell together in peace and love, may Thy loving kindness be with all who hereafter shall use or listen to these musical instruments, and grant that they may grow in grace and be delivered from all evils of body and soul. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer. Blessing.

The Lord Mayor then came forward to present the instruments to the Commanding Officer of the Company.

THE HULL COMPANY OF THE AUXILIARY MILITARY PIONEER CORPS

He said it was a very great honour he had been asked to perform on behalf of the City of Hull, to present the instruments which had been so generously given by Mr. Robert G. Tarran, who had taken such a prominent part in the formation of the unit. As was the case in the last war, Hull was, in this war, taking a very great part. In the last war 80 per cent. of the man-power of the city joined His Majesty's Forces. This had been followed very much in this war by the men and women of Hull. Every member of the community, whether they were members of the Home Guard, the Civil Defence Services, or members of H.M. Forces, were all doing their share. He was pleased to see the efficiency and smartness of the newly-formed Hull Company, and it was with great pleasure that he asked Major Anderson to accept the very handsome instruments. He hoped the Company would have a very happy time and he congratulated them on the magnificent work they were doing.

Major Anderson, accepting the instruments, expressed grateful thanks to the donor. He was quite confident the Company would at all times and in all circumstances worthily uphold the traditions of the city whose name they bore.

The Luncheon at the Guildhall, which followed, was attended by many people representative of the Forces and civilian life.

Mr. Robert G. Tarran presided, supported by Mrs. Tarran, the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Hull (Coun. H. M. and Mrs. Harrison), the Sheriff and Sheriff's Lady (Ald. and Mrs. Benno Pearlman), Lt.-General Sir Ronald Adam, Bt., C.B., D.S.O., O.B.E. (General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Northern Command), Capt. the Lord Remnand (Aide-de-Camp, G.O.C.-in-C.), Brigadier A. G. B. Buchanan (C.E. Northern Command), The Lord Bishop of Hull (Rt. Rev. H. T. Vodden), the Mayor and Mayoress of Bridlington (Ald. and Mrs. T. B. Fenby), the Mayor and Mayoress of Beverley (Coun. and Mrs. A. Watts), Ald. A. Shepherd, J.P., Mr. T. Hudson, J.P., Col. Bradley-Williams, Lt.-Col. C. C. Dowding (Assistant Director of Labour, Northern Command), Lt.-Col. L. Lamotte (O.C. 5th Centre A.M.P.C.), Major T. E. Anderson



PRESENTATION CEREMONY OF THE DRUM AND FIFE BAND



LUNCHEON AT THE GUILDHALL, FOLLOWING THE PRESENTATION CEREMONY.
5th SEPTEMBER, 1940.

THE HULL COMPANY OF THE AUXILIARY MILITARY PIONEER CORPS

(O.C. Hull Coy, A.M.P.C.), Mrs. Anderson and Miss J. Anderson, Lt.-Col. Mulligan (O.C. 50th K.O.Y.L.I.), Wing-Commander G. E. S. Lamb, Major H. Parsley, Capt. Unsworth, Capt. Hewitson, Capt. Simpson, Capt. Fennelly, Major Sykes, Major J. A. Spilman, Col. Knight, Col. E. Laverack, Rev. F. Boreham (Rural Dean), Rev. J. A. French (Port Chaplain), Mr. K. W. Tarran, Mr. F. P. Tarran, Mr. A. Pickard (Town Clerk), Mr. W. S. Robinson (Editor-in-Chief, *Hull Daily Mail*) and Mrs. Robinson, Dr. H. Standring, Mr. T. E. Howden (Chief Constable), Major E. Macdermott, D.C.M., Capt. Tony Crouch, Coun. L. Speight, Ald. F. Holmes, Ald. J. L. Schultz, Ald. R. W. Wheelton, Coun. E. Chapman, Ald. A. Stark and many others. Apologies, coupled with good wishes for the future of the Company, were received from Lord Lieutenant of Hull, Lord Middleton, M.C., Major General N. M. S. Irwin, C.B., D.S.O., G.O.C., 2nd Division, Colonel J. Aldous, C.R.E., 2nd Division, Rear Admiral A. F. Pridham, C.B., R.N., Flag Officer, Humber, Rt. Hon. Lord Harlech, K.C.M.G., Major General L. W. Amps, General G. B. O. Taylor, O.B.E., Brigadier A. L. I. Friend, O.B.E., M.C., Director of Labour, War Office, and J. R. Macdonald, Stipendiary Magistrate, Hull.

The Loyal Toast was submitted by Mr. Robert G. Tarran and enthusiastically honoured.

The Lord Mayor (Mr. H. M. Harrison) proposed "His Majesty's Forces," coupling with it "The Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps." He said: I think there has never been a time in the history of this country throughout the whole of its wars, and they have been many, when it could have been so truly said that the war is one in which every section of the community is not only engaged in it but is tenaciously fighting for the defence of everything we hold dear—the right to live freely, the right to worship in whatever form you desire, the right of free speech, and to maintain the rights of free citizens. Not only have we raised great armies in this country, but the young men of the Dominions and Dependencies over the seas have deemed it worthy not only to fight for the Mother Country, but also for the great cause we have at heart—freedom and the preservation of democracy. It is a great crusade.

You must feel very proud, Mr. Tarran, of the steps you have taken in the formation of this Pioneer Company and of your men under Major Spilman in the Tarran R.E. Company. (Applause.) I was reading the other day of the remarkable work they did, men armed with picks and shovels, in extricating our men from Dunkirk. That shows the true British spirit, and is very inspiring. We see the great deeds the British Navy have done; our magnificent Air Force are making great exploits and showing the whole world what British mechanism, backed up by British craftsmen, can do to smash absolutely the danger that is threatening this country, and they will proceed to smash the power of Germany without the slightest doubt. (Applause.)

Then we have the Civil Defence Corps; and I think probably in this city we have, without doubt, one of the best local defences in the country. We have built up an A.R.P. service which is looked upon, by people in authority, as a pattern to the whole country.

Lt.-General Sir Ronald Adam, Bt., C.B., D.S.O., O.B.E. (G.O.C.-in-C. Northern Command) replying, said: In war-time, speeches, like air raid warnings, should be as brief as possible. I should like, in the first place, to congratulate the Company we saw to-day on their turnout after three weeks' training. (Hear, hear.) It shows what the British Army can do. As a matter of fact, we will have to get this Company into this Command as quickly as possible. I am sending an officer to the War Office on Saturday to do it.

I should like to say a word or two about the A.M.P.C., although I admit I do not like the word "auxiliary." Personally, I find they are the best fighters and the best pioneers I have had under my Command. I had companies under me in France, and I have got companies under me in this Command. The companies in France were prepared to fight anyone, at any time, and in their spare time to do any amount of concreting or other highly skilled work. One company told me they were the rearguard of the Guards at Boulogne. They would not have got off if it had not been for the work they did for them! They fought very hard and suffered very heavy casualties. The war

THE HULL COMPANY OF THE AUXILIARY MILITARY PIONEER CORPS

to be a hard task, not so much now as a little later, when we have the long black-outs, when people who are now absolutely keyed up to fight find they have to put off that fight for a certain time. We are going to do it by pulling together, by the soldiers and civilians helping each other in entertainments and concerts. One of the most important parts is going to be played by military bands.

Personally, I think "satisfied" is an awfully bad word—we don't want to be satisfied with anything, but we are prepared, and are going on preparing to withstand invasion, and the next few days are going to tell us whether it comes off. Personally, I think about the 20th of September is as late in the north country as he can wait; therefore we have not got very much longer to wait. There is no doubt he has been trying to get superiority in the air before attempting an invasion, and he has failed, thanks to our Air Force. (Applause.) Whether he will try, in spite of that, to do something it is impossible to say. He may be prepared to take the appalling risk of an invasion, but it is going to be the next fifteen days that will tell us what will happen, and the weather will play an important part in it. But after that we shall have to sit still and prepare for an offensive, because until we are offensive, and very offensive, we are not going to win this war. (Applause.)

Alderman T. D. Fenby (Mayor of Bridlington), proposed the health of the Chairman. As one from the "far country" in the East Riding, who always looked at Hull with a particular amount of envy, it had been a pleasure to him to come to Hull that day and get a little peace. (Laughter.) One thing seemed to have changed very little, and that was the quality and quantity of what they had found on the table that day, and for that they were very grateful indeed to His Majesty's Forces who looked after us on the land, on the sea, and in the air. There was another thing that had increased, even in war-time. That was the spirit of generosity displayed by individuals and the community, and he rose voluntarily to ask them to pay tribute to the hospitality and kindness and generosity of their Chairman and host.

Report: Norman Brown
RPCA Archive

HULL Company of the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps became 193 Company Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps. A brief history of the unit is as follows:

Aug 40 Formed at HUYTON Maj T E Anderson – OC

19 Sep 40 Moved to NORTON FITZWARREN near TAUNTON – working at 3 SRD

17 Oct 40 Maj T E Anderson – sos

23 Oct 40 Maj A R Hutchins – tos OC

31 Dec 40 Still working at SRD

31 Dec 41 Still working at SRD and supplying petrol guards

21 Sep 42

6 Dec 42
Apr 43

23 May 43
12 Jul 43

27 Jul 43

20 Oct 43

27 Oct 43

30 Oct 43

Moved to LOSTWITHIEL – detachment at DOUBLEBOIS – support to RAOC

Moved to DOUBLEBOIS Detachments at FOWEY and WASHAWAY

HQ moved to BUDE Detachments working at ASDs at

LAUNCESTON, FOWEY, BUDE and DOUBLEBOIS

HQ moved to DOUBLEBOIS

HQ moved to DOUSLAND

HQ & 6 sections moved to BERE ALSTON

Moved to RYDE, Isle of Wight – digging cable

31 Dec 43

10 Jan 44

1 Feb 44

trenches
Detachments at SHANKLIN and BRADING
3 sections move to SOTHAMPTON to unload ships Remainder still cable digging on Isle of Wight
HQ at CHANDLERS FORD
2 sections constructing railway sheds at EASTLEIGH
2 sections with RAF at STONEY CROSS
1 section on cables at SANDOWN
2 sections constructing bomb shelters in

could not get on without the "Military Pioneer Corps," as I prefer to call them. They have done a tremendous lot for the defence of this country, and they are prepared to defend it at any time.

I should like to say a word or two about my friend Mr. Tarran. Firstly, to thank him for the magnificent gift he made this morning, and for what he has done to defend the coast of this country. When I arrived here about three months ago we had no defence at all. Mr. Tarran took on a most important sector of this coast, which incidentally was defending Hull, and in the matter of a few weeks there came up like mushrooms, all along the front, pill-boxes and anti-tank obstacles, and one can now say that the coast is now very solidly defended, thanks to Mr. Tarran and his workmen. It has been done in an amazingly short period—a magnificent job of work. (Applause.) He has done that in addition to his other activities in connection with air raid precautions.

Hull is now a defended garrison. It has got as strong coastal defences as most places in the British Isles. It is defended internally; and we know that apart from the material defences the moral defence of the city, the spirit of the people, is extraordinarily high; and the moral defence of the whole of the North of England is extraordinarily high. (Applause.) We do not know what "that man," as the Prime Minister calls him (he won't allude to him by any other name) is going to do. Whatever he is going to do he has left it darned late. It always comforts me to go and have a look at the North Sea. Most days of the week it looks most unpleasant in spite of the fine weather we have been having, and work has been done which will make it impossible for anyone to land.

What I am thinking of now is the morale of this winter. This winter is going to be a real testing time. We can beat the Germans this winter because the morale of the country in the Spring, when we are ready to take the offensive, is going to be the thing that wins the war, and both military and civilian morale are what matters. It is going

THE HULL COMPANY OF THE AUXILIARY MILITARY PIONEER CORPS

The gathering rose and heartily sang "For he's a Jolly Good Fellow" as Mr. Tarran replied. That this vocal greeting had deeply touched Mr. Tarran was very evident. He said that to be hailed in this manner by a gathering of friends gripped his heart, in fact, no-one could understand what an effect such a greeting had until one had actually experienced it. Mr. Tarran warmly complimented the Company on their smart appearance and turnout, and said one wondered if there was any need to train them as soldiers. Anyone who had had the pleasure of seeing them might well have thought they were the Guards. Lady Atkinson had said to him that it was really inspiring to see the men marching as they did. Whatever Sir Ronald had said about the working side of their activities there was no doubt that whenever it became necessary these men would give a very good account of themselves. Speaking of the drums and fifes, Mr. Tarran asked, "Why not turn out once a day with the drum and fife band to the cookhouse?" (Laughter.) Knowing what he did of the Army of to-day and what it was during the four-and-a-half years he spent in it, and not having had the benefit of a university education, he wanted to say that he regarded his four years in France as the finest university education a man could possibly have. Terrible as it was in many of its phases, the *esprit de corps*, the spirit which banded them together, and the knowledge which he had gained of his fellow men, was something which had helped him throughout his industrial life and would help them. He asked them when we took the offensive, and they were torn from their loved ones, and from the England which was theirs, to remember they could be instantly in touch with their loved ones by prayer, and that they were fighting for something far greater than the Swastika—the Cross.

4 May 44	SOUTHAMPTON Moved to GUILDFORD – training	26 Aug 44	HQ & 4 sections – moved to FIRFOL	12 Dec 44	HQ moved to BAARLE NESSAU
11 Jun 44	HQ & 6 sections moved to GLYNDE	5 Sep 44 HQ	moved to BOURHTHEROULDE	3 Jan 45	Moved to BREDA
16 Jun 44	HQ & 4 sections landed in NORMANDY and moved to CRESSEROUSS	10 Sep 44	HQ moved to TILLOY FLORIVILLE	12 Jan 45	Moved back to BAARLE NESSAU
19 Jun 44	Moved to MAGNY – working at BSDs	12 Sep 44	Maj E C T Pullin – tos OC vice Hutchins	7 Mar 45	HQ moved to VUGHT
24 Jun 44	HQ moved to LA DELIVERANDE	14 Sep 44	HQ moved to MARQUILLIES	13 Apr 45	HQ moved to NIJMEGEN
	The remaining sections travel independently being married to other installations:-	30 Sep 44	4 sections with 62 BSD	7 May 45	HQ moved to OLDENZAAL
1 Platoon	(Lt C M Brown) – with 14 DID and landed in Normandy on 10 June	16 Oct 44	4 sections with 58 BSD	29 May 45	HQ moved to NIJMEGEN
2 Platoon	(Lt C D Oliver) – landed 13 June and worked on BSD & DID at MAGNY	17 Nov 44	2 sections with 164 DID	18 Jul 45	Moved to LAAG SOEREN
3 Platoon	(Lt W H Sykes) – landed 14 June and moved to ST BERNIERS (via CRESSERONS) working on petrol and later returned to CRESSERONS for work at 151 DID	26 Nov 44	HQ moved to LIPPELOO, Belgium		This appears to be the first time the coy has been together since leaving England
1 Aug 44	HQ & 4 sections – LOC SUR MER with BSD		1 section on guard duties with 1 Canadian Ordnance Maintenance Coy	5 Aug 45	MATTHEWS, Private, LLOYD STANLEY, 13036564, - casualty
	Remainder of Coy in scattered detachments all supporting CRASC		3 sections with 1 Canadian Ordnance Maintenance Coy at BAESRODE	25 Nov 45	LEITH, Private, ALEXANDER, 11271443, - casualty
			5 sections training	1 Dec 45	Working on POL
			2 sections resting	17 Dec 45	Maj C M Cusack – promoted OC vice Pullin (sos release) (Ed note: Maj Cusack later became Corps Secretary and curator of the RPC Museum at Northampton)
			2 sections with 29 DID	Feb 46	Disbanded at LAAG SOEREN, Holland ■
			2 sections with 49 DID		
			2 sections with 133 DID		
			1 section on guard duties with 1 Canadian Ordnance Maintenance Coy		
			2 sections training		



Major Rhodes-Wood

The War History of the Royal Pioneer Corps contains, amongst other stories the bravery of Private J Tancred.

Report: Norman Brown
RPCA Archive

It was the night of 4 December 1943. In the bitter Italian winter 46th Division was attacking Monte Camino. From Monastery Hill 13011512 Private J Tancred set off on the downward journey, carrying a wounded Infantry officer. Sixteen hours later he stumbled into an advanced dressing station, handed over the officer, then collapsed and died.

Private Tancred won no medal; he was neither killed in action nor did he die of wounds. He was 42 years old and he died of exhaustion. He was an older Pioneer, one of many of his Corps, all on the wrong side of 30, who provided bearers for forward positions and during the battle worked for 72 hours without sleep or rest.

The story is told in Major EH Rhodes-Wood's "A War History of the Royal Pioneer Corps 1939-46", a long-overdue tribute to the thousands of middle-aged men who, like Private Tancred, worked steadfastly in every theatre of World War Two to help the front-line troops and who many times fought gallantly by their sides.

Only from this history does the full picture emerge of the tremendous contribution made by the Corps.

The Pioneers came through Dunkirk, they went back into Normandy on D-Day. They were flung out of Greece and Crete –

Palestinian and Cypriot as well as British companies – and returned with the liberation forces.

There were Pioneers in Iceland, in Madagascar, the Faroes, the Cocos Islands – in Changi gaol and on the Siam Death Railway. On the home front thousands of them laboured in London and other cities clearing the debris of German air raids.

As diverse as the Corps' geographical distribution were the tasks allotted to it and the nationalities of its men. In this most international of all corps were men from the Colonies, refugees from Hitler's yoke, men who had soldiered in the Spanish Civil War and the French Foreign Legion, porters from Nepal and Russians who had served in the German Army.

Major Rhodes-Wood has meticulously chronicled every aspect of the Pioneers' war and usefully listed, in a series of appendices, the British Roll of Honour, the Corps' honours and awards and the units and their commanding officers who fought in the major theatres and worked in London during the blitz of 1940-1941.

This is a history which should be read by soldiers of every arm, for it will bring a realisation to war veterans that the Pioneers were, in their earlier days, a grossly maligned Corps. It will show younger men how the Royal Pioneer Corps has justified its permanent place in the Regular Army of today.

JACK OF ALL TRADES

Major EH Rhodes-Wood makes only two brief references to himself in his book – as a deputy-assistant director of labour and Pioneer company commander. But his own story is as entertaining as his History.

The son of a missionary, he joined the Royal Horse Artillery in 1912, was wounded at Passchendaele and invalided out as a captain. After a convalescence in Canada he served for two years in the Royal North-West Mounted Police and for a short time in the 5th United States Cavalry.

Next, Major Rhodes-Wood toured America as a stooge in a variety act, then he turned hobo, riding trains all over the United States and serving three gaol sentences for vagrancy, the last in a Georgia chain-gang.

Deciding to work for a living, he wandered the world as a journalist, deck hand, ship's steward, trimmer, welterweight boxer, trader, telephone linesman, assistant embalmer to an undertaker – and lecturer in Chinese!

Returning to England in 1936 he joined the Territorial Army as a Gunner, became a battery sergeant-major and in August 1940, was gazetted a lieutenant in the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps, serving in North Africa and becoming a major.

In June 1945, he made "news" as the first officer to be released in Age and Service Group 1. ■



Home with the RPC

Articles from the Soldier Magazine Feature, 'At home with the RPC' from 31st October 1988

Report: Soldier Magazine
31st October 1988

PIONEER FRONTIER. Although detachments of The Royal Pioneer Corps can be found serving in most British Army Garrisons, Berlin can boast just three members of the corps – a Colonel, a Captain and a Corporal!

Lt Col Garry Cooper and Capt Phillip Wilde are responsible in varying degrees for all 3,800 civilian employees in the British Sector, while Cpl Guy Wesley is the training NCO and All-Arms skill-at-arms instructor attached to 3 Squadron, 13 Signal Regiment.



■ Colonel Cooper

Col Cooper is the Commanding Officer of 14 Independent Pioneer and Civilian Labour Unit (PCLU) and Capt Wilde is his second-in-command.

The PCLU itself has a civilian staff of 28 who give advice to Berlin on matters such as recruitment, allowances and the day-to-day administration of civilian labour.

Recently the unit formed another department – the Garrison Labour Support Force (GLSF) of 23 German nationals.

The GLSF provides a labouring service to military units so that soldiers can be relieved from administrative tasks that take up valuable training time, enabling the men of the infantry battalions to concentrate on their primary role of the defence of Berlin.

"The PCLU, in addition to all its other tasks, makes three valuable and unique commitments to the military and civilian community in Berlin," said Col Cooper.

The first is the Learn and Earn scheme, designed to give work experience to dependant youngsters aged 15 and still in full time education.

They are encouraged to work within the British community on weekday mornings to gain on-the-job experience in a wide range of employments, such as office work, catering and estate maintenance.

The scheme ran for nine weeks during the summer and was broken into three-week periods. It helped 157 youngsters gain valuable work experience for which they also received a useful amount of pocket money as an incentive!

"We also earned the thanks of numerous grateful parents who had their offspring taken off their hands during the long summer holiday," said Capt Wilde.

To balance what the PCLU does for British youngsters, they also brought in an apprenticeship scheme for German youths.

Thirteen young Berliners have signed indentures with the British Forces to train for three years in trades such as vehicle mechanics, cooks, joiners and hairdressers.

In the presence of a representative of the Berlin Senat, GOC Berlin presented certificates to the local youngsters, who will go to night school and on day release schemes for extra training the military units are unable to provide.

In 1989 and 1990, it is planned to recruit ten more apprentices each year so that at any one time approximately 30 Berlin apprentices will be benefitting from training with the British community.

The third unique area within the PCLU is its Help and Advisory Service run primarily for dependants but also for anyone who has an employment related query.

This necessitates close co-operation with the Berlin HIVE and German official institutions such as the Arbeitsamt (equivalent to our DHSS and employment offices) and the Landesamt (German Pay office).

The Help and Advisory Service helps dependants claim unemployment benefit by translating application forms, attending the institutions with claimants, and by explaining in simple terms the rules of receiving benefit.

Said Col Cooper, "The success of this venture has been shown by the fact that over DM 500,000 was paid out to claimants last year." ■

THE PIONEERS are hoping that a leading member of the Royal Family will join them in their 50th anniversary celebrations next year.

Their headquarters are at Simpson Barracks, Northampton, and their half-century coincides with the borough's 800th anniversary.

The various units will be celebrating in their own way and a full programme is being organised at Northampton, including taking part in a flower festival at the

Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the "soldiers' church".

The role of the Pioneer is diverse, varied and complex, but succinctly defined by Brig John Hickman, Director Army Pioneers and Labour, as: "He will go anywhere, do anything."

"You can't be more versatile than that, and that encapsulates what we are about." Recruiting is nationwide, and the Royal Pioneer Corps, which enjoys a close rapport with Northampton, shows a family tradition of son following father, and brother signing on after brother.

Brig Hickman, who joined up as a National Serviceman private, believes soldiers with an infantryman's outlook make the most successful Pioneers.

"They need that extra restlessness of character, working in a specific dimension which is not technical, and able to switch from one to another diverse job."

He said that officers needed to be skilled technical managers and professionals, as well as the kind of leaders who can take on a high degree of responsibility at an early age.

While the corps history is relatively short, the principle of having fighting soldiers whole role is to provide labour is not a new one. But among civilians – and the Services – there is some misconception of their role.

The role has changed extensively in the past ten years and the RPC is now an expanding specialist and logistic corps of 120 officers and 1,500 soldiers. Pioneer support can be divided into three categories.

In the first – military logistic support – a company of Pioneers is a self-contained operational unit of combatant soldiers, trained in manual and mechanical materials handling, able to operate at platoon or section level.



■ Brigadier Hickman

Military manpower in support of the United Kingdom Logistics is provided by three of the five Pioneer companies stationed in England.

The rest are organised as Field Force Units, and are available to meet bids for operational and non-operational tasks worldwide.

187 (Tancred) Company, currently based at headquarters, is one such unit and can be called on by 23 Group Royal Pioneers (Bicester). At present it has detachments in Belize, Northern Ireland, Cyprus, Canada, Germany and the Falklands.

206 Company is based at Long Marston, near Stratford-on-Avon, and provides support to the Central Engineer Park as part of the Resources Organisation of the Royal Engineers.

Its day-to-day routine includes maintaining, inspecting and palletising portable fuel tanks, maintaining Harrier landing pads, the refurbishment of RE plant, bridging parts and Class 30 Trackway.

Meanwhile 518 Company, alias the "Globe Trotters", is a field force unit, responding to operational and non-operational tasks – whenever and wherever. 521 Company works at COD Bicester, where its main job is loading and unloading the thousands of stores and equipment.

522 Company at Kineton, the most advanced depot in Europe, where it receives and issues ammunition.

The second main RPC category is civilian personnel management with the Pioneers responsible for the recruitment and administration of 30,000 civilians employed by the Services in BAOR.

Thirdly, a large proportion of the corps is employed on operational duties including the defence of major headquarters in the UK and overseas including the 1st (British) Corps and the Armoured Divisions.

Last month they took over responsibility for the security and defence of HQ BAOR where 50 Pioneers are deployed.

In Northern Ireland, soldiers of the corps serve in defence platoons on internal security duties, and are involved in a number of other support tasks, including specialist dog handling.

The RPC Training Centre is at Simpson Barracks, along with the Pioneer School, where courses cover personnel management training for officers for all arms of the Service, worksite management for SNCOs and potential NCO cadres.

The RPC TA consists of four specialist units – 34 Company (V), 68 Company (V), 79 Company (V) and 12 Pioneer and Civil Labour Unit (V) – catering particularly for those whose civilian skills can be best adapted to military life.

CAPTAIN MEL SMITH believes he may be the only serving soldier who umpires the counties' 2nd XI cricket championships the majority of them in Northamptonshire. He is general secretary of the Army Cricket Umpires Association and also umpires for the MCC Young Professionals.

But he has no illusions about his own ability as a player. "My ambition far exceeded my ability.

I have been umpiring for ten years, and I am involved in a far higher class of game than I would have been as a player," he explains.



■ Captain Mel Smith

ANTIQUES armchairs puts Bill in the hot seat - RPC Secretary Bill Elliott is hoping that someone with the antiques knowledge of the late Arthur Negan, combined with the fictional detection expertise of Sherlock Holmes, will come forward to solve a long-running mystery that's been a conversational gambit in the mess for years.

It centres on the origin of two antique Italian armchairs that were somehow "acquired" by the Corps. There is no record of where they came from, when they arrived or details of any kind about them. More than two years ago they were valued at £1,000 each; and they now have pride of place in the mess foyer.



■ Major Bill Elliott

Bill maintains, "There is a long-standing tradition that no one ever sits on the chairs, and it's a long-standing joke that I become apoplectic if anyone does. I do admit that I got quite upset once when someone left his hat on one of the chairs."

A UNIQUE Collection - one of the treasures in the Royal Pioneer Corps Museum is this collection of decorations and medals, described by Spinks, the medallists, as "unique". conversational gambit in the mess for years.

In the top row (from left) are an Iron Cross First Class (1918); a Grand Order of Merit Germany (1971); and an Order of Merit First Class (1964). Underneath are an Iron Cross 2nd Class (1916); a soldier's Cross of Honour (1981); a Defence Medal (1945); a War Medal (1945) and a European Cross of Peace (1978).

They were awarded to Herbert Sulzbach, who was born in 1894, and joined the

German Army in 1914. He was commissioned two years later, won the Iron Cross twice and emerged unscathed in 1918.



■ Herbert Sulzbach's medals

His Jewish antecedents forced him to flee to England in 1937 and when France fell he was interned on the Isle of Man. In October 1940 he joined the Pioneer Corps and was commissioned for the second time, on this occasion by King George VI.

At the age of 86, he retired from his work as cultural officer at the German Embassy, where his main interest was the promotion of Anglo-German friendship. He died in London at the age of 91.

In 1978 Mr Sulzbach became a close friend of the RPC secretary, Bill Elliott who said, "We never expected to receive this collection and we will always be indebted to Miss Yvonne Kiemperer, his niece and sole relative for presenting them to the museum.

VITAL Battlefield Role Emerged in Falklands - One unique role the RPC are reluctant to talk about was developed as a direct result of the Falklands conflict. But their work in graves registration is too vital to go unheralded.

In July 1982, a team of Pioneers – all volunteers- flew to the South Atlantic to exhume the remains of soldiers, sometimes hastily buried by comrades under fire.

Next came the important task of correctly identifying each corpse before full military funerals either in San Carlos or Britain.

None of the volunteers had any previous experience of the work, and were accompanied by two civilian undertakers. A total of 64 bodies were repatriated and released to their families after the Southampton Coroner had recorded a verdict of unlawful killing.

Their successful completion of the task led to the award of an MBE to OC Maj John Robb and BEMs for two soldiers.

The American army technique of graves registration is far advanced – through lessons learned in Vietnam – and RSM Tom Appleyard of 187 (Tancred) Coy has completed one of their specialist courses at the American Quartermasters School in Fort Lee, Virginia.

He is the RPC Graves Registration Team instructor and said, "I feel my role would be to give peace of mind to the next of kin. There are still 4,000 missing in Vietnam, and I would never want that for my wife and family.

"It can be extremely distasteful job, but someone has got to do it." ■



■ Uncle Tom



Cpl Bernard Elliott

He enlisted into the Pioneer Corps on 20th June 1940, landed on D-Day and served in Caen, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Belsen, Brussels.

Report: RPC Archive
RPC Archive

I ENLISTED into the Pioneer Corps 20 June 1940. After basic training, I was posted to Marlborough for a period of 2 years. We were to establish an ammunition dump to keep the ammunition out of sight of the German Reconnaissance.

These spy planes always came at the same time, 1700 hrs, 1 or 2 times per week. The ammo was transported off trains, back to Savernake Forest. On arrival at the forest, the troops had to firstly round up red deer by forming a circle and slowly mustering them into a coral. At times the deer were quite agile and jumped over the head of the troops.

Ammo storage included everything from the bullets of a .303 rifle to 12-inch shells used in cannons. Some of the shells contained mustard gas.

Some days the troops were expected to work from 0800 – 2200 hrs and, at times, wore gas masks for practice in the event of a gas attack. January 1942 was my first leave back to Manchester, which had recently been bombed.

My recollection is the bombed warehouses and the lists of the confirmed dead displayed on the church wall.

In 1942 I went to the orderly room to inquire about an alternative position. After a quick test in dictation, and with my quick draw, two finger typing skills, I was posted to Warminster as a clerk, at No. 8 Group HQ.

I remained with 8 Group for most of the war and received a nice raise in pay.

As Clerk of HQ, I was responsible for typing amendments to the Army Council Instructions, such as pay and uniform changes.

I was also responsible for notifying next of kin, demobilisation papers, daily company orders, typing out signals from the 1st Canadian Division, manning the phones and court martials. One court martial that I remember was of a Private who stabbed a Sergeant in the cheek with a fork.

In 1943 we were posted to Minehead, then in January 1944 to Southampton until D Day. Here, we were taken to a camp known as the "Cage" and waited for 4-5 days before being sent to Normandy. To prevent escape, the US army patrolled this camp, as the UK army patrolled the US camp.

Each person was issued with 400 francs of "Occupation Money" and then deployed to the American Liberty troop ships, which then transported us to Normandy.

1 mile from the beach, with full kit, the troops were required to disembark via the

scrambling net onto the landing craft.

It was only the CO who managed to tangle his foot in the net, much to my amusement.

We troops landed on Gold Beach.

On the beach the troops left their kit bags and went in search of a suitable campsite, leaving me alone to look after the gear until they returned. As the evening came, I met a Lieutenant who had been given the same orders. As it seemed unlikely our troops would return to us soon, we searched for somewhere to sleep for the night.

We came upon a campsite and scrambled into the first empty tent. Waking the next morning we found ourselves in a British POW camp full of German prisoners. Much to our relief, we were ignored and watched the Germans being loaded into tank landing crafts, much like cattle, for their journey to England.

Once back on the beach, I spoke to a Colonel, who arranged for my transport back to my unit. The Group continued to advance, following the movements of the infantry.

There were, however, small pockets of resistance along the way.

At this time, my group was under the command of the 1st Canadian Division. In Alamache, our 30-man troop surrounded a farmhouse holding about 20 German soldiers.

A German soldier who was otherwise unarmed hit me on the back, with a spade. In response, I rolled onto the ground and fired my Sten gun into the man.

The result for me, 2 broken ribs. The German soldiers surrendered after a few hours as they ran out of ammunition. Overall there were few casualties and 1 ally shot dead. The Germans were transported to Alamache.

The next move was to Caen. There was little for the Pioneer Corps to do here as it had been heavily bombed and the Germans had retreated. However, the Group found the French people to be very unfriendly, rude and ignorant. Pioneers were definitely not welcome.

Onward the Group moved to the Falaise Gap, again here all was quiet after a heavy tank battle. Passing through Dunkirk, I noted in the mess hall a mural painted on the wall it showed many German soldiers looking at Britain with the inscription "We are coming".

Belgium was very different for the Group. The people were excited and happy to see the British army.

They ran to the trucks and cheered while throwing bottles of wine up for the soldiers. During our stay, the Belgians couldn't do enough for us.

Each soldier was housed with a family

and life was full of R & R. At this point I was offered a position of field commission, which I declined.

Through Holland, we met with no resistance. As the Group entered the Ruhr we were stunned at the destruction of burnt out shells that once made this town, a result of the English Incendiary bombs. The Germans were living in extremely poor conditions and were housed in the sewers. Across the Rhine and into Munster where the war was to end and the clean up begin. It was here that we came across Belsen concentration camp.

The smell and desolation surrounding the camp was overwhelming.

The CO rounded up all the officials and wealthy people of Belsen and set them to work caring for the sick and dying and burying the dead.

The Group settled in Altone for occupation until September 1946.

Although the stores were empty and the people went hungry, there was plenty of beer. After being given a 48-hour pass to travel to Brussels for some R & R, King Leopold opened one of his palaces for the use of the 21st Army Group.

This became known as the "21st Club".

I have fond memories of rows of tables, white linen and silver cutlery. All meals and drinks were free to the servicemen. Towards the end of 1945, No. 8 Group HQ was disbanded and I was posted to No. 1 Group HQ until discharge.

The night before I left Germany, the Major 2IC invited me into the officer's mess for a celebration.

Christmas in the army was just another day, but on Christmas day 1945, this infamous Major once again surprised the Group and ordered two lieutenants to wake the lads up with a hot cup of tea.

I was discharged to England in September 1946. I was transported to Folkstone then caught a train to Newcastle. Here I handed over my arms and then boarded the train to Stayley Bridge. I was then issued with a complete new civilian outfit, £500 in back pay and £500 in discharge money. A rich man now, I went home and bought my first car, a Morris 8, for the princely sum of £180.

My most memorial experience is of the people of Belgium and their welcome and warm reception.

My best moment was my discharge and the sight of the rookies on their way to Germany for the occupation.

My worst experience was walking into Belsen concentration camp and seeing the millions of refugees trying to find their way home.

Although discharged from the army, I continued to be a part of the army reserve until 30th June 1959. ■

Sydney Charles Wooderson MBE

(30 August 1914 – 21 December 2006) dubbed “The Mighty Atom”, was an English athlete whose peak career was in the 1930s and 1940s.



Report: RPC Archive
RPC Archive

SYDNEY The Mighty Atom set the world mile record of 4:06.4 at London's Motspur Park on 28th August 1937. This record stood for nearly five years.

Born in Camberwell, London, he was 5 ft 6 in and weighed less than 9 stone (126 lbs). He attended Sutton Valence School, Kent. At 18 he became the first British schoolboy to break 4min 30sec for the mile. He won the British mile title for the five years up to the outbreak of the war in 1939. In 1934 he won the silver medal in the one mile event at the British Empire Games.

At the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin, he suffered an ankle injury and failed to qualify for the 1500 metres final.[1] However, in 1937, after surgery, his performance increased and culminated in

his world mile record of 4:06.4 in 1937. In 1938 he set world records in the 800 m and 880 yards with times of 1:48.4 and 1:49.2 respectively.

Off the track Wooderson was a City of London solicitor and missed the 1938 Empire Games in Sydney because he was taking his law finals.

He joined the Royal Pioneer Corps on 25 July 1940 and joined 2 Centre Pioneer Corps for basic training and was employed in London during the Blitz. He transferred to the Royal Army Ordnance Corps in 1942 and then later, to the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers as a radar operator. In 1944, he spent several months in hospital suffering from rheumatic fever and was warned by doctors he might never run again.

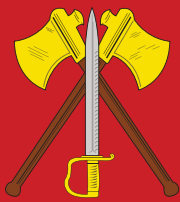
Immediately after the war, however, in 1945, he ran his fastest mile, 4:04.2, just behind Arne Andersson of Sweden. In Oslo at the 1946 European Championships, he

won the 5,000 m in 14:08.6, the second-fastest time to that point. His versatility was demonstrated when he won the national cross-country title in 1948.

He was the natural choice to carry the Olympic torch into Wembley Stadium for the 1948 Summer Olympics. However he was turned away at the last minute because members of the organising committee wanted a more handsome final runner. They chose the relatively unknown John Mark instead.

He was awarded an MBE in the 2000 Birthday Honours List for services to Blackheath Harriers and athletics.

Wooderson lived in retirement in Dorset in the South of England. He remained a life member of Blackheath Harriers and was twice its president. He died on Thursday 21 December 2006 in a nursing home at Wareham, Dorset. His ashes are interred in the churchyard of Lady St. Mary's Church, Wareham.



Association Shop



VISIT THE NEW PIONEER SHOP AT

www.facebook.com/pg/royalpioneer corps/shop

More items are being added all the time - there are new Pioneer red and green tops and even Pioneer red and green socks!





■ Adrian Hughes and my brother, Torquay



■ Cayah Roberts, Upper Heyford



■ Chris Belgum now serving in RCLC



■ Gerry Vick at Northants Remembrance Breakfast Club



■ Charlie Fraser, proud to be with Stephen and him wearing his great grandfather's medals



■ Cooper Andrew



■ Dave Whitford



■ David Reid, Seaham Co-Durham



■ Derek Dudley with Pioneers at Blackpool



■ Garth Bomber Lancaster, Glasgow



■ Gary Howe and granddaughter



■ Jim Stough, Billingham



■ Jay Leach in Tasmania



■ James Connon



■ Jim Stough



■ John Langridge



■ Keith Burrows



■ Taff Teague with Horseback UJ



■ Laurent Larsson



■ Maj Wayne Fuller, Cirencester



■ Michael Walters



■ Mark Cox



■ Garth Lancaster and Dougie Miller



■ Neil Butterworth



■ Clare Perry Pez and I created 12 x12 ft hand sewn poppy wall, dedicated to 23 Pnr Rgt



■ Paul Harper with his son and grandchildren



■ WO1 and Sarah Jones



■ On the way to the Cenotaph!

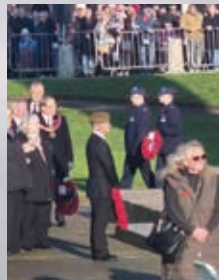
REMEMBRANCE DAY PIONEER GALLERY



■ Taken at the Cenotaph, cannot remember everyone's names! Apart from Roy in middle!



■ Kev Digger Young



■ Tony Codling, Blackpool



■ Tony Codling, Blackpool



■ Tony Codling and Daz Owen, Blackpool



■ David DeSouza, what a great display and turnout!



■ Taff Evans



■ Dave Fender after a long day



■ Del Hindmarsh & his mate Colin raised £17,063.61



■ Scotty Ringer and Geordie Bates



■ Roy Sellstrom



■ Stephen Hall, Leamington Spa



■ Rab Gray and two of his grandchildren



■ Steve Ibo



■ Damien Leavitt

remembrance



■ Pioneer members at Ride to the Wall

Picture: Supplied



■ Pioneer members at Ride to the Wall

Picture: Supplied



■ Marlene Brown with Dougie May (Former NAAFI Manager at Simpson Bks)

Picture: Karen McGinley



■ Bob and Karen McGinley at Founders Day

Picture: Karen McGinley



■ D-Day Trip, Bob McGinley laughing at French beer!

Picture: Paul Brown



■ D-Day Trip, David waving the Normandy flag in preference to his Welsh flag!

Picture: Paul Brown



■ Albert, 98, D-Day veteran. Landed on Juno beach with the RASC went through France and into Germany to liberate Belsen.

Picture: Paul Brown



■ Reunion Weekend - Billy Dilkes Coach Tour, this was a stop off at St Georges Barracks and the Memorial Garden
Picture: Paul Brown



■ Paul and Norman Brown with Frank Nichols at Paddy's funeral
Picture: Frank Nichols



■ Alan Sharp on his 80th birthday
Picture: Supplied



■ Douglas Miller (left) celebrating his birthday. Both are wearing very nice WW2 Pioneer Corps side hats
Picture: Douglas Miller



■ Ex Provost Sgts from 23 Gp Pete Collins Darkie Ainsley and Paddy Haddock, the one missing was Dennis Geordie Richardson
Picture: Supplied



■ In Pensioner Roy Palmer with Duchess of Cornwall at her 75th birthday (he managed to keep the cake!)
Picture: Supplied



■ Kev Hilton sleeping again! On way back from Queens Jubilee
Picture: Supplied



■ Some of the Pioneers who attended Queens Jubilee
Picture: Supplied



■ It has been a long day for Mick Micklethwaite, on way back from Queens Jubilee
Picture: Supplied



■ Ray Jones with his grandson Kieron (currently serving with 202 Sig Regt) attending Queens Jubilee
Picture: Supplied



■ Cenotaph Parade, Whitehall
Picture: Royal British Legion



■ Colonel Atherton's Dine Out - arriving in style
Picture: Paul Brown



■ Colonel Atherton's Dine Out
Picture: Paul Brown



■ Colonel Atherton's Dine Out
Picture: Paul Brown



■ Reunion Weekend

Picture: Patrick Bradley



■ Reunion Weekend

Picture: Patrick Bradley



■ Paul Davis getting ready for Pioneer Reunion

Picture: Paul Davis



■ Uncle Tom on Litter Patrol (not a drop of litter in sight!)

Picture: Supplied



■ Reunion Weekend

Picture: Patrick Bradley



■ Reunion Weekend

Picture: Patrick Bradley

| We dig through the archives of the many thousands of Pioneer photographs, picking out the



Report: Paul Brown
Pictures: RPCA Archives



THOUGHT it fitting to show a few more Royal Pioneer related pictures of our late Queen, in addition to the ones at the front of this edition of the newsletter.

The pics show Her Majesty the Queen in Northampton on Fri 12th Nov 1982 and here is an extract from 'The Royal Pioneer' Issue 152, dated 15th December 1982.

The highlight of the period was without a doubt the visit of Her Majesty the Queen to Northampton on Friday 12 Nov 82. The Guard of Honour was provided by the Corps, being composed of members of both the Training Centre and 23 Group. Lt Col McDonald escorted the Queen during the inspection of the Guard which was commanded by Maj Rayner, with Lts Starling and Clayton being officers on parade.

A letter has been received from Buckingham Palace expressing Her Majesty's "Thanks and congratulations to Major Rayner and every man on parade for an immaculate Guard of Honour".
Until next time. ■



Digging through the archives...

very best ones that we think are of historical significance or are just very good photographs.





Collectors Corner

Welcome to our Collectors Corner pages, this time I discuss the Post War era of the Pioneers. Also we feature some of your Pioneer finds that you have unearthed on your travels !

Report: Paul Brown
Pictures: Paul Brown

WELCOME back to my Collectors Corner pages. This is one of the very last pages that I normally put together when putting together the newsletter and I am rapidly running out of space in this bumper newsletter, hence we'll see where I get to!

I have covered the majority of badges etc worn by WW1 / WW2 Labour Corps/Pioneer Corps, apart from a few miscellaneous items which I will fit in later.

Now let me delve into the badges of the Post War Pioneer!

On 28th November 1946 the War Office issued an Army Order. It read,

"In recognition of their past service His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to approve the following regiments and corps shall in future enjoy the distinction of "Royal".

The Lincolnshire Regiment, the Leicestershire Regiment, the Hampshire Regiment, Army Educational Corps, the Army Dental Corps, Corps of Military Police and Pioneer Corps were designated with "Royal" in their title, hence Pioneer Corps, became Royal Pioneer Corps.

So, let's start with the expanded designation of the title 'Royal'. Below we have a darker shoulder flash which I believe to be Ordnance issue and below this a manufacturers issue.



With the change to Queen's Crown (official title is Royal Cypher, more on Royal Cyphers later) after 1953, all Royal Pioneer Corps badges were now standardised to reduced size, caps, sliders, collars, lugs.

Below left is a 1954 Other Ranks G/M cap badge and on the right is the common Anodised other ranks badge, made by J R Gaunt, London.



Next we have the Officers silver badge for standard and No.1 dress by J R Gaunt, London.



Next we have the shoulder titles. Below left is from 1946-1960's. Below right is from the 1960's to 1993.



Next we have the stable belt of this era. I don't yet have one in my collection, the old man's own one, he unfortunately never got back when he lent it out. If anyone has one

to sell at a reasonable price please let me know.



And, lets not forget the lovely Red and Green Lanyard of the era!



Below left is an Officers Beret badge and below right is Officers Mess Dress badge, featuring Queens Crown and Blackpool Tower design.



In the early 80s planned were being made to change the traditional 1917/1939 design of the Blackpool Tower badge.

In early 1983, the Director of Army Pioneers and Labour (DAPL) sent the Duke of Gloucester, Colonel-in-Chief a number of designs for the new badge to reflect its changing role.

The Duke selected one and slightly amended it to incorporate his own idea and sent it back with his approval.

The below is his drawing.



Pioneer Finds...



■ Douglas Miller picked up these lovely glasses, engraved with the Queens Crown and Blackpool Tower Cap badge. Very nice!



■ Queens Crown and Kings Crown (above) car emblem, picked up by Douglas. Nice!



■ Pioneer spoon with Lee Enfield rifles! Picked up by Douglas! I also got one last year :)



approved by, Her Majesty the Queen.

The description is:- Two Pioneer axes crossed in saltire beneath their heads and surmounted of a Pioneer Sword and a laurel wreath below the same scroll inscribed Royal Pioneers and the whole ensigned by a Royal Crown all argent.

By removing the pick and shovel of the badge the outdated image of labouring is eradicated; instead, the inclusion of the axes and sword is both traditional and symbolic of the skills required by members of the Corps in discharging their military role.

This new and approved badge design is featured over on the right and this new badge came out in 1985 and the old design of the Blackpool Tower was replaced with one featuring crossed axes and a bayonet, and on the scroll the Corps title was shortened to 'ROYAL PIONEERS'.

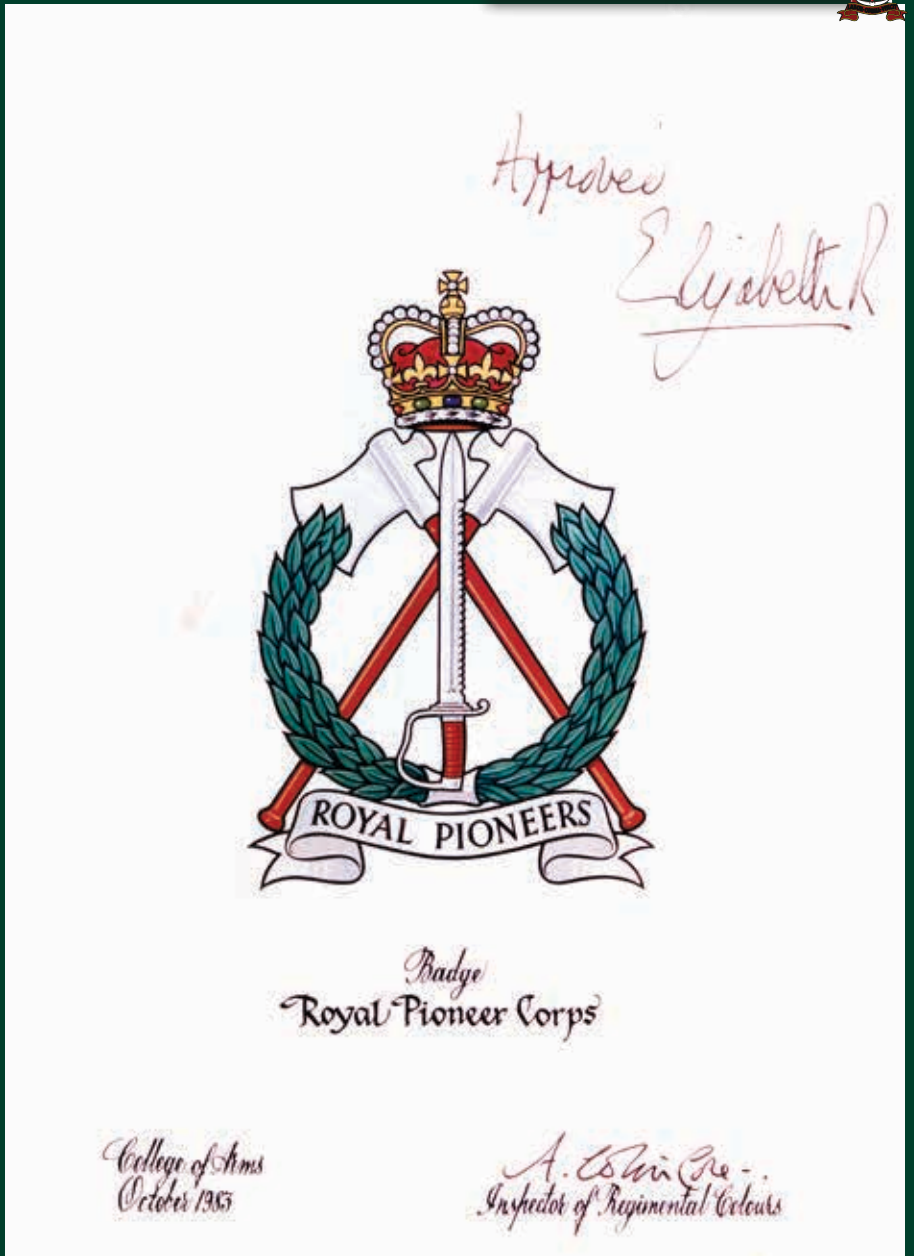
On 13th February 1985 a Rebadging Parade took place at Simpson Barracks, Northampton. I re-produced the programme for this parade and it is available here www.tinyurl.com/5ezkxv25

Below on the left is the Annotated Others Ranks badge and on the right is the frosted silver Officers badge. These badges are actually becoming less common, as they were around for only 8 years.



On the left we have an Officers Beret badge.

These are scarce, the old man has a rather tatty one that he says I can have, however am on the lookout for an original one in better condition!



Pioneer Finds...



■ I think I will have to rename the Pioneer Finds corner, to 'Douglas's Pioneer Finds' :) Here Douglas has picked up a very nice Royal Pioneer Corps Bugle and this beautiful tankard from Lieutenant Colonel T H Briggs, MC. We also helped Douglas with the history of L/Col Briggs, MC.

Below we have the stable belt featuring the new cap badge.



I am also after one of these for my collection, if anyone is selling one or fancy swapping for something that I have!

Right, here is something below that I do not have a clue what it's use was.

It is a blue cloth badge featuring the later badge, can anyone shed any light on this badge and it's use?



After the Gulf War in 1991 the Ministry of Defence announced the future incorporation into a large Logistic Corps. This announcement was made on 23rd July 1991 and the Secretary of State for Defence announced that the Royal Pioneer Corps would combine with the Royal Corps of Transport, the Royal Army Ordnance Corps, the Army Catering Corps and the Postal

and Courier Service of the Royal Engineers to form a large Logistic Corps.

The Royal Logistic Corps both Regular and Territorial Army was formed on 5th April 1993. The Corps drew from the 5 previous Corps or branches of the Corps and elements of these previous Corps are shown in the Royal Logistic Corps cap badge.

Below left is the Royal Logistic Corps Other Ranks Cap badge and on the right the Royal Logistic Corps Officers Cap badge.



When the Royal Pioneer Corps was subsumed into this, the new badge, which looks mainly RCT plus RAOC, added the small, incongruous, crossed axes.

I think over the last three issues we have pretty much summed up the badges from the early days of the Non Combatant Corps, Labour Corps, Pioneer Corps, Royal Pioneer Corps and the present day Royal Logistic Corps.

Now, I will discuss a few oddities and other badges that I have not mentioned.

This one featuring the letters RPC is dated 1946.



Have brought this one up with our historian John Starling and he is of the

same opinion. It didn't exist. Strange one!



Above is silver wire on Scarlet, a real oddity, any one shed any light on it?



Above is Spanish Companies, a nice badge. 1 (Spanish) Company was formed in Sep 40 from Spaniards who had fought in Norway with the French Foreign Legion and landed in Normandy in August 1944.



Above is a Pioneer Basuto Companies. In addition to Basuto Pioneer Companies we had Companies from Bechuana, Swaziland, East and West African, Mauritius, Rodriguez, Seychelles and in the latter stages of the war Italian. We have been unable to obtain shoulder flashes from these Companies, apart from Italian.

Right, I am running out of space in this issue! If you have picked up some Pioneer related items, let us know and we may feature them on our pages!

Until next time! ■

Queens Crown or Kings?

Will our new King wear the Queens Crown or the Kings Crown? This is an article I published on Facebook on 23rd September 2022, well before the Official announcement.

Report: Paul Brown
Pictures: Paul Brown

WE often refer to the crown on cap badges as the Queens Crown / Kings Crown. The actual name is the Royal Cypher. The cypher is the monogram of the reigning sovereign and consists of their initials of their name and title and often includes a crown.

Queen Elizabeth II used a St Edward's Crown and Kings historically have used the rounded Tudor Crown.

So will the Crown change on cap badges, standards, medals, belts, swords and anything else bearing the Queens Cypher?

Charles automatically became King once his mother passed away and the Accession Council was called as soon as possible to make it official. The Cypher usually consists of the initials of the monarch – hence 'CR'

(he could of selected one of his middle names, Philip, Arthur or George) which stands for 'Charles Rex III'. The 'R' stands for 'Rex' which means 'King' in Latin.

When our new King signed the formal Accession Council Papers he used the signature 'Charles R'. When our late Queen had the cypher 'ER', the 'R' is for the Latin word for 'Queen', which is 'Regina'.

What was interesting though when our new King signed the papers was that he wore a tie pin. This tie pin has the rounded Tudor Crown, aka 'Kings Crown'. However, the media outlets that I have read, such as the National Press and Forces.net etc have all misinterpreted this tie pin. They assumed that this tie pin, pictured below) was his new Cypher.

They are incorrect. After further scrutiny, the tie pin that our new King is wearing is not his but the Cypher of his grandfather, George VI.

I have now seen 3 different published versions in the press!

So, are we going to get a Kings Crown or is our new King, going to use the Queens Crown?

At this stage, if I was going to hazard a guess, our new King will continue to use the Queens Crown, however at this stage, who knows!

UPDATE: On 27th September the new Cypher was announced. Our King has gone for the traditional Tudor Crown. ■





Pioneer Finds...

RLC 2006.1067.01

(28)

D 208

THE ROYAL PIONEER CORPS



NEWS



No. 1

Price Three Pence

1st July 1947

EDITORIAL

We present the first number of "The Pioneer Corps News" with some trepidation. With the increasing responsibilities of the Corps in B.A.O.R. it seems essential that a magazine should be published. But we had hoped our first number would contain more actual news of Royal Pioneer Corps activities in the Zone and some articles of a semi-serious nature on matters concerning our daily work. Unfortunately contributions and news have not been forthcoming to the extent we hoped.

All publications of this nature depend for their success on the number and type of contributions received from readers. We ask for the co-operation of all Groups and P.C.L.U.'s in this matter. Articles, news flashes, drawings and photographs are all welcome, and should be addressed to the Editor, The Royal Pioneer Corps News, Headquarters, 102 Group, Royal Pioneer Corps B.A.O.R.

We aim at producing a monthly magazine with up to date news of the Corps and with thoughtful articles on events in Germany, especially as far as political developments are concerned or problems regarding the handling of Civil Labour involved.

This first issue is being distributed free of charge. In the future it will be necessary to make a charge of three pence per copy. If three hundred copies are sold this will cover expenses. We hope every member of the Corps in B.A.O.R. will become a regular reader and if possible supply us with news and articles. We will endeavour to give value for money and to produce a publication that is a credit to the Royal Pioneer Corps.

THE DIRECTOR OF LABOUR, B.A.O.R.

I have the greatest pleasure in sending "The Royal Pioneer Corps News", which I welcome most heartily, a welcoming message for its first number. The message is really a short story, and the story has a moral. It is about a dog. During the days when I was a P. o. W., locked up in a picturesque old Schloss, not very far from Kassel, we were occasionally allowed out on a crocodile walk under strong armed guard. Passing a large farm on the outskirts of the local town, very rich in old half-timbered houses, we were struck by the welcoming attention the chained up farm dog always gave us as we passed. He seemed to be mad to join our walk and we felt, with understandable sympathy I think, that the farmer was unusually cruel to his dog in denying him any freedom.

One day, to our surprise, the dog bounded out of the farm, dragging his chain with him, and joined us. Despite the efforts of the guards the dog continued with us on our walk, and on future occasions it was a rare thing for him to be absent.

No other dog in the village took any notice of us. We were interested in this particular dog's outlook, and the problem became one of almost psychological research until we discovered that he was a French dog imprisoned in Germany like ourselves, for he had been brought back by the officer son of the German farmer from France when he returned to his farm on leave, and was left there. Through some dog sense yet to be explained he obviously knew our plight and helped the common allied cause by co-operating with us. Alas, his enthusiasm was such that the fate which met so many patriots, was to be his also. His empty kennel was a sad reminder to us of the absence of a good friend.

The moral, I think, is obvious, although its implication is lessened in these days of Peace. I am sure that we in the Royal Pioneer Corps maintain that team spirit, which the dog obviously possessed, without propaganda partiality or affection, and yet which we, with all these three attributes, sometimes fail to achieve.

D. FRAZER, Colonel
Director of Labour

AGM Minutes

The 73rd Annual General Meeting of the Royal Pioneer Corps Association held at The Ex Services Club, Bicester on Saturday 2nd July 2022

President: Colonel D Clouston MBE
Secretary: Mr N Brown
Members Present: 85

THE President, Colonel A Barnes, opened the meeting at 0900 hrs by welcoming all present and then handed over to the Chairman of the Association.

ITEM 1. MINUTES OF 73rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

1. The Secretary opened the meeting at 1200 hrs by welcoming all present and reading the following apologies which he had received: Col R McDonald, Lt Col PDC Baird, Taff Shaw, WO1 S Soper, Stefan Mussett, Kenny Sampson, Stuart Stevens, Alex Cardow, Maj S Woodward and Mr J St Hill.

ITEM 2.

2. The Secretary read out the 46 names of ex Pioneers who had sadly died since the last AGM, this was followed by one minutes silence.

3. The minutes of the 72nd AGM which had been circulated with the April 2022 Pioneer Update were accepted as a true record, there were no matters arising.

ITEM 5. ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

4. In accordance with the Constitution one third of the Council must stand for re-election every year. The following members all were willing to serve for another term and were unanimously elected: Lt Col B Dilkes, Maj G Crook and Mr N Brown.

ITEM 5. HEAD OF TRADE REPORT

5. WO1 S Soper RLC was unable to attend as he had to attend the RLC Open Day which clashes with the Pioneer Reunion, his report was read by the Secretary:

"Ladies and gentlemen, firstly my sincere apologies for not being with you in person today. I've no doubt that last night would of been a roaring success and most of you will likely be nursing a pint of "hair of the dog" right now in preparation for another memorable one this afternoon and into this evening.

As the head of trade for the serving Pioneer cohort, Norman has kindly asked if I could pen a few words in my absence to inform you all of the comings and goings of those of us that remain in service.

Since last year's AGM all of the troops that were offered the opportunity to transfer into other branches of the Royal Logistic Corps have all now completed their trade training and it seems most are flourishing in their new roles including even a few promotions. As for those of us that remain, the first bit of great news since I spoke with you last year was that of the promotion of John "Fluffy" Payne to SSgt who is now well established in his post as SQMS at the new RLC Headquarters in Worthy Down.

2022 got off to a fantastic start with Bri (Northy) Hinton not only being selected for promotion to WO1 just before Christmas but also in taking up the Regimental Sergeant Major's appointment at 151 Regiment RLC. This appointment sees our trade; that makes up only 0.15% of the RLC hold 12.5% of the RSMs appointments across the Corps, both Regular and Reserve for a period. The next bit of cracking news that broke over the Christmas period was that WO1 Russell Clarke was to be awarded the Meritorious Service Medal on the 2022 New Year's honours list, I'm sure a shock to many but most of all Clarke himself who still can't fathom how he even bagged an LSGC let alone an MSM!

January saw both a new Master General of Logistics (MGL) Major General S Hutchings OBE and a new Corps Colonel take the helm of the RLC. I was fortunate and privileged enough to be given some time to brief the Corps Colonel, Colonel PA Allen ADC, on both the backstory and trials and tribulations of the Pioneer cohort since the disbandment of 23 Regt; both the troops frustrations and successes (As for successes there have been 16 promotions to date during my tenure as HoT which began early 2019). Rest assured what I took from that meeting with the Colonel RLC is that the serving troops and legacy of the trade remain in extremely safe hands as the RLC march's towards its 30th birthday celebrations in April 2023.

As most troops have reset from the MACA tasks supporting the emergency services throughout the pandemic and the drawdown of Operations in Afghanistan including OPERATION PITTING, the efforts now for the remaining Pioneers and clearly the wider Army involve being eastward facing at present, a position some of you I'm sure will remember well (or not so well depending on where you were based in the 80's, I've heard plenty stories of how strong that German lager was).

To finish up; I'd just like to go on record to say a massive congratulations and thank you to the following for their completion of

colour service and good luck for the future to the following Pioneers that have left the service since last year's AGM.

WO1 (RSM) Andy Parker WO1 (RSM) Gaz Furlong SSgt Martin Payne SSgt Stevie Weatherall, Sgt Tony Bysouth, Cpl Jason Booth, Cpl Mark Beecham and WO2 (SSM) Graham Fisher who leaves next month.

Have a great weekend and sorry again that I can't be there with you all." Kind Regards Stevie Soper

ITEM 6. SECRETARY'S REPORT

6. The Secretary gave the following report:

This is the 19th time I have stood in front at the AGM, it would have been 20 if the 2020 AGM had not been cancelled due to Covid. I now report that this will be my last as I intend to retire from the post of Controller in April next year – it will be 20 years since I took over, not bad for someone who was initially appointed as a 6 month sick replacement.

We will shortly be advertising the post, although we already have one applicant, if anyone wishes to apply I will send them details, applications are to be made by the end of September.

When I took over, the Association owned 51 St George's Drive but unfortunately it needed major repairs which we could not afford so the decision was made to sell it and I moved into St David's Barracks, initially in a small office at the top of the square, then was moved to the old TV room in Block 3 and then to the bungalow behind the guardroom. This incidentally was my first posting when I came out of training in 1968 as it was then HQ 23 Group. In 2015 I was having difficulties getting my mail in St David's and was made to feel unwelcome so I moved into St Georges, firstly in an office under the clothing store and then to a temporary office in the QMS department and finally into my new luxurious office in B Sites. That is 7 offices in 20 years; I seemed to have spent a large amount of time packing and unpacking boxes.

I have mostly enjoyed my 20 years although there have been some unhappy times for example recording the deaths of members especially when I knew them quite well particularly when they were fairly young and more so the 3 we lost in Afghanistan. Another very sad day was in 2012 when the news was released that 23 Pioneer Regiment was to be disbanded. The final Reunion/Disbandment Parade in 2014 although very sad, was a day to remember. I managed to find 450 beds within the

Garrison and the party that night in the hanger will always be remembered, especially when you saw the empty cans the following morning!

I must thank the various Chairmen who I have worked under, and of course, our current President who answers his emails immediately, in the next few weeks he completes his Regular service and I wish him well to the future, although he has already accepted a reserve appointment. It is pleasing to report that he has decided to live in "God's Country" the North East. I must also thank the Council Members who during my time have had to make some hard decisions for example, the sale of 51 St George's, the disposal of Association property etc. Thanks also to John Starling the Association's historian for his tremendous work. This included building a data base of personnel who have served in our Corps – the only forming Corps to have this, in fact we have better records than any other Corps or Regiment in the British Army.

I must also thank my son Paul for his help in firstly making the Association website, the production of the newsletters – the first colour one was in 2004. His many photographs he has taken and for keeping our social media outlets in good order.

I hope to continue on the Association Council, now that you have re-elected me. I have served on the Council since 1983 so it will be 40 years when I retire next year.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

7. The President gave the following report:

It is now 10 years since we received the devastating news that 23 Pioneer Regiment was to be disbanded and the Pioneer CEQ cease, two years later in 2014 the final disbandment parade was held.

The Reunion returned to Bicester for the first time last year and it was decided at last year's AGM that it should return to Bicester, once the home of the Pioneers. It is nice to be holding this AGM within Pioneer Square and it is noted that the development at Graven Hill, which has appeared on Grand Designs on numerous occasions, has a number of streets named after Pioneers.

It was noted on Stevie Soper's report that Pioneers are still being promoted within the RLC, at one time Pioneers were 4% of the RLC but 25% of the RSMs.

It has been noted on social media that Pioneers, both regular and reservists, continue to meet friends and comrades throughout the country.

The Northampton, Bicester and Northern Branches are still going strongly and the Fijian Pioneers have recently started their own Branch, the 39/93 Club still exists and the Past and Present Officers Club together with the WOs & SNCOs Pioneer Reunion Club still hold their annual dinners – this year 14th and 15th October respectfully. This year 176 members attended the Army v Navy Rugby match at Twickenham.

The Northampton Branch had 10 members travel to Normandy for the 78th anniversary of D Day and next year they intend doing a World War 1 Battlefield Tour in September.

Last year we only had 76 march at the Cenotaph although 120 tickets had been sourced, this year we have requested 125 tickets but will not know our allocation until mid-July.

You have just heard that Norman has indicated that he intends to retire at the end of April next year, this will be his 20th year in the post of Controller RPC Association. It is intended to say a proper farewell to him at next year's reunion.

As reported last year the RPC Association continues to be well represented on the various RLC Committees, the Director of the RLC Museum is an ex Pioneer as is the RLC Treasurer.

As previously reported funding for the Association has been guaranteed by the RLC as long as there is a requirement, in other words as long as you the members wish it to continue, this was confirmed recently by the Master General of Logistics. We must however continue to recruit members, especially the younger ex Pioneers to keep the Association in a good place for the future.

I must also thank the committee of this Ex Services Club for once again letting us use their premises and their very kind gesture of having "Happy Hour" prices throughout the weekend - £2.25 a drink is remarkable these days!

I would also like to those who have travelled long distances to be with us this weekend, from Denmark, Germany, Northern Ireland, the top of Scotland and the South West. I hope you all thoroughly enjoy the weekend.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE NEXT AGM AND REUNION

8. Lt Col B Dilkes reported that next year it was important to make sure the date of the reunion did not clash with either the RLC Open Day or Silverstone.

He suggested that we hold the event simultaneously with Armed Forces Weekend (last weekend in June), if held in Bicester members could follow the display of military vehicles onto Pringle Field where the Association could have two tents, one for the Association Shop and one for a BBQ. It was unanimously agreed that next year's reunion should be held in Bicester during Armed Forces weekend.

9. Lt Col Dilkes also gave an update on the Pioneer Memorial and details of a new app which should be available early next year which would keep members connected and hopefully encourage younger ex Pioneers to join – there would be a one of charge of £1 per person.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10. Maj (Retd) R Teague gave details of the charity HorseBack UK which aims to inspire recovery, regain self-esteem and promote positive change in an individual.

Using horsemanship and outdoor activities, they deliver nationally recognised and accredited personal development programmes that encourage their participants to acquire new coping strategies, life skills and build lasting resilience to service personnel and veterans suffering from life-changing injuries and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

He emphasised that individuals must be referred by their doctor to attend the course. Certain other Arms/Regiments contribute to the charity and he hopes that in future the RLC will do likewise.

11. In Pensioner Roy Palmer stated that he intended to carry out a charity sky dive in the near future and asked if members would be willing to contribute. It was confirmed that the donations could be made through the RPC Association

12. There being no further business the meeting closed at 1245 hrs.

N BROWN
Secretary

Tom's Photographs

Tom Appleyard BEM has been about a bit... from rescuing the guns in WW2 and firing at the enemy to meeting the Queen. Each month we will feature some of Tom's Photographs from his own personal collection. *"This photo was taken 5 minutes after I had had conversation with her in respect to the uninhabited island and its wildlife."*





■ BEM presentations to Wo2 Fielding, Cpl Carr and LCpl Sellstrom
Picture: RPCA Archive



■ Belize – 522 Coy Sep 89 – Pte Parkes, 2Lt Goodwin, Cpl Gowdy
on patrol with 2 Engrs Picture: RPCA Archive



■ 59th Past & Present Officers Dinner 14 October 2005
Picture: RPCA Archive



■ Lt Perry
Picture: RPCA Archive



■ Sgt Black, WO1 P Garthwaite, SSgt J Stenton, Sgt S Stainton,
Sgt Evans, SSgt Morrison Picture: RPCA Archive



■ Hmm... what is going on here? Pictured on left our historian
Lt Col John Starling Picture: RPCA Archive



Blast from the Past

This time a wide assortment of photographs from throughout the years!



■ Training Coy – 25 October 1977
Picture: RPCA Archive



■ Sgt Harry Sinclair at Catterick Fibua 1982
Picture: RPCA Archive



■ WO2 Paul "Docker" Townsend
Picture: RPCA Archive



■ RPC Central Officers Mess Meeting October 1992
Picture: RPCA Archive



■ Maj Code and WO1 (RSM) Warren
Picture: RPCA Archive



■ Another photograph of Lt Perry!
Picture: RPCA Archive



■ London Lunch 6 Nov 08. Two of Cpl Sculley's daughters and IP M Hulls talk to SSgts Cheung and Belcher-Marks and LCpl Field
Picture: RPCA Archive

Still the worst disbandment the army have done!

ALWAYS GREAT to see the regimental journal through the door, fair few familiar faces on the inside and will have a good read soon.

Love seeing the history of the pioneer and this one apparently finally ends all the myths about the famous red and green flash! Heard loads of stories about why it's red and green so its good to finally hear the reason!

Still the worst disbandment the army have done!

Not a job in the world The Pioneer can't or won't do! Jack of all trades.....master of none!

Carl Bowen

Merry Christmas

SEASONS GREETINGS to all at the RPC Association. I have Sent £40 for Christmas Draw Tickets, £20 for the tickets already received with the Corps Magazine (Brilliant as usual) and £20 for a further 20 tickets.

Thanks for all the hard work you put in year on year it's truly appreciated.

Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Stay safe and well out there.

Ian Rahilly

Cad Kineton

MANY THANKS for an interesting copy of The Pioneer. I read the story about CAD Kineton and my thoughts went back to April 1954, I was posted there following training and completing a cadre course Nissen huts, cold and damp!

The article "The old Salute" by Brigadier FR Steer MBE, I remember when I fired against him in the 1955 Corps Rifle meeting, he was then a major at 23 Group. Sorry I beat him by two points.

Doug Rolfe

Retire in 2023

HAVE I read the newsletter correct are you going to retire in 2023.

What are we going to do without you shocked isn't the word.

Just come out of hospital and read your letter.

So very sorry to hear your news you have worked so hard for the association thank you.

Take care. Kind Regards.

Christine & Percy Powell

War experiences

AS I am nearing the end of my research into my father's war experiences, I would like to say a very sincere thank you for all the invaluable assistance you have given me, replying so swiftly and helpfully to my enquiries – especially so on late Friday evenings – above and beyond any reasonable call of duty.

A general thank you to your colleagues, too, for providing this service free of charge to people like me trying to put some meat on the bones of family history.

Please accept this small donation to the Association for the impressive service that you provide.

Bill Lindsay

Now not AWOL!

IN THE December 2021 Newsletter we published details of a Pioneer who had been absent without leave from 1972.

I have now received the following message from him: "Reading in the Pioneer 2021 page 109, Absent Without Leave, and with the help from you Norman who sent my letter to the MOD that was In August last year, my letter was passed on to the Army Secretarial in Hampshire.

I received two letters back from them one in October and one in November 2021 saying that I was removed from the AWOL register on 4th February 2009 and subsequently the wanted marker against me was removed and as a result was given an administrative discharge, sorry for not getting back to you sooner thanking you for all you have done in helping me.

Name Supplied

Thanks to Tom

GOOD AFTERNOON Norman and Paul first with the way the posts would be better for you to email me the pioneers newsletter, next can you put in the newsletter our thanks to Tom and all at Simpson manor for inviting to the opening of the memorial garden and the very warm welcome they all gave us

Also a very big thank you to John

didn't know his surname as he pushed around and very sorry I didn't say thank you to him, thanks to everyone we had a day to remember and we are honoured to have been invited.

Thank you both for all you have done for us all over the years you and yours keep safe and well.

John and Brenda Winterburn

Very informative

DEAR LT COL Starling, I am writing to you as I know my brother-in-law, Colonel Brown, has been researching the war records of my grandfather Capt Clive Ferguson MC, and has been in contact with you.

I know my brother-in-law has been very appreciative of the digging you have done for him, as have I.

I had no idea he was in charge of looking after some of the men in the Chinese

Labour Corps assigned to digging trenches and of also his time in the Malay Volunteer Rifles. All very interesting.

In view of all this very informative information I would like to make a donation to the Association which he was a part of.

A huge thank you once again to you for spending your time researching the records. It has been greatly appreciated.

NC Ferguson

Fantastic Reunion

TAFF TEAGUE, posted in Royal Pioneer Corps Association 3 July at 15:28 That's me home in Alford, Aberdeenshire.

Once again a fantastic Reunion in Bicester, catching up with people that I haven't seen for years. A big thank you to Norman Brown and team for organising the

event. It was pure class.

Thank you to my shell scrape mates Jan Olesen and Andy Hendry for Fridays accommodation.

Great spooning.

Seen you all next Year.

Taff Teague

Proud as punch!



■ Pioneer Larry Gains

MR DEYES from Scarborough sent in a newspaper clip showing the following story:

PROUD AS PUNCH – Family reveal his story as 100 year old cup is taken to Repair Shop. The 100 year old trophy was dented, tarnished and dull, but was a cherished piece of family heritage.

The silver cup belonged to heavy-weight Larry Gains, the first black boxer to fight in the Royal Albert Hall. Larry won it as Canadian amateur champion in 1922, a year before he turned pro and emigrated to the UK.

Granddaughter Janie Davis, 73, says, "It represents all the obstacles and prejudice granddad overcame."

Janie and her nephew Paul Simmons, 34, turned to the BBC's The Repair Shop to get the trophy mended and enthralled host Jay Blades and silversmith Brenton West with Larry's life story.

He began boxing at the age of 20 in 1920 and came to England, on a cattle ship to further his career.

It took him around the world and he fell in love with Liza, in Cologne, Germany. They married and settled in Leicester and then Shoeburyness, Essex.

Larry joined the Army as a physical trainer in 1939 and served as a Sergeant Major in the Royal Pioneer Corps in the Middle East. He died of a heart attack in 1984 but Liza lived until her 90's.

Julie, a retired hairdresser from South West London, says, "Granddad was such a clever and lovely man. He made a lot of money. Nan used to tell me they'd stay in posh hotels and she'd buy fox furs."

Being black, Larry was only allowed to fight for the Coloured Heavyweight World Championship. Paul said, "It's shocking, really. It was unjust that he couldn't be world champion."

Jamie and Paul were stunned by the restoration of the trophy, Janie says, "It has pride of place on our mantelpiece."

Ed note: I believe this is 13002900 Lawrence Samuel Gains, date of birth 12 Dec 1900 who enlisted on 9 Nov 39 and served until 7 Oct 45 – the report states that he served in the Royal Pioneer Corps however the Corps was not awarded the title Royal until 1946.

Celebrating 25 years

I HAVE built up quite a collection of first day stamp covers as my hobby over the years. I thought you might like to see the one below which I picked up on eBay a few months back.



■ Pioneer First Day Cover

Picture: Tony Way

I was wondering about its history when it first was released in 1971. I personally enlisted just under seven years later. But you on the other hand were just a whipper-snapper probably working close to the Corps Secretary, which might have been Major Bill Elliot at the time. I thought you might wish to give it a small mention in the magazine, with it being rather rare in good condition and over fifty years old now. The Corps celebrating twenty-five years with its grant of Royal Distinction, 26 Nov 71, was a milestone.

On the social front I have kept closely in contact with Steve Valentine since moving to Rochdale ten years ago from where it all started back in 522 Coy in 1978, and also I am led to believe too Taff Power lives in the area, he was my platoon Cpl who definitely deserves a mention along with the others down the depot of CAD Kineton where one of them 'Cockney' Broadbent who made a lot of his time winding up the 'RAOC' ammunition Cpls. He now resides in Peterborough with his family.

The other coincidence is that Michele is presently in Munich quaffing beer with

Maria Smith whose husband is Billy from 144 Coy. The first none-RCT Master Driver: some honour that at 8 Regiment RCT. He went onto much greater things however. Just this month he had retired being Head of Logistics, Germany after being posted from Bonn to British Embassy, Berlin as a civvy after leaving the Army, with distinction. On two separate occasions he had private audiences with The Queen. The other coincidence is that Maria's sister is married to Kevin Rain. Definitely RPC has a thick line running through their families. Anyone at Munster between 81 and 84, Portsmouth Bks, will remember fondly 'Bille-Jean' being our mode of transport to get to all the nearby discos for a night out when we were not called on Ex 'Active Edge' where we met the girls and has everything change from then?

I am personally still chugging along as the site and facilities manager at Parrs Wood High School. Being a true Pioneer I don't do things in half measures having the daunting responsibility of the logistics at the biggest secondary school in Manchester and probably around the eighth largest in the country with over 2000 kids and 300 staff before the pandemic struck!

Finally, it was very sad to hear about Phil O'Connor passing away. Everyone knew he was a larger than life character at 70 Coy, and I was fortunate enough to mix on many occasions with him where our paths crossed many times over the years as we followed each other's career.

Take care, all the very best to a great bunch of lads whom we know from day one that everyone was going to be a leader in their own right proudly wearing the Corps badge, Cheers, Tony Way

Ed note: I replied to Tony that I have a few of these first day covers in my collection.

Tony Way

Fijian Pioneers

WE MANAGED, to attend The Bristol Poppy Day(RBL), last Saturday (05/11/2022).

Just a small team of Pioneer Veterans including Lt Col Saukuru to support the Royal British Legion.

We did enjoy the day and help out, and they asked us if can sing 2 songs to the crowd that gathered on this day, and we did.

We thank the 2 ladies which joined us, Mrs Rakaseta and Mrs Kamanalagi. They really enjoy the day and they are willing to do this again next year.

Attached are just two photos. (From the left; Mr J Kamanalagi(206), Mr J Kava (518), Mr A Tutora (206) and Mr M Rakaseta (518), The Ladies (Mrs A Kamanalgi, Mrs S Rakaseta

**Mr Marika Rakaseta
Fijian Gloucester Pioneers**



Approaching Ninety!

THANK YOU, for sending the Corps Magazine, it was good to read about people I know are still about. Approaching ninety I now can't sell tickets like I used to.

Delighted what Wootton Parish Council are going to have a Memorial Garden. I wish I could be there. If my husband John Hickman had been alive he would have been very pleased as he was a true Pioneer starting with National Service at Wrexham, as an ordinary soldier. Many happy days at both the Officers' and Sergeants' Messes when invited. My children remember curry lunches and being helped by the staff at Corps Open Days.

I do remember John Starling and Tom Appleyard and a few when letters are printed in the magazine. We have a book about Cloggy Compton which he wrote, and at times gave my husband "a headache", quite a character I believe, some Pioneers may remember him.

I hope the garden memorial will be in the Chronicle & Echo and hope I will manage to get a copy. I still keep in touch with some still in Northampton and Bicester. Thank you to you and Paul for magazine and pictures (photographs). Sincerely

June Hickman

(w/o Brigadier John Hickman)

Red&Green

I WOULD like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you for you and all your staff for the fantastic work you all do for the association.

Please keep it up and all stay safe. A big thank you again from all the brothers in Red and Green. Yours faithfully

Byron Phillips

Lost Trails

DEAR SIR, re the photo on page 59 under 'Lost Trails' in the latest edition of The Pioneer.

I was the bugler on that main gate guard at Hermitage Camp, Wrexham. It was to welcome John Profumo MP, who at that time was Secretary of State for War.

H Heddon (22668174)

War Diary

THANK YOU, very much for the sending the War diary extract so very promptly.

It does fill in some of the blanks for me. I can't really express how grateful I am to know what was going on in those times and for all your help over the past months. Very best wishes

Jane Randle

Hanging in french village just after D-Day

THE ASSOCIATION receives many letters requesting information mainly regarding the history of relatives but the following letter was slightly different! The Pioneer Corps/Hanging in French village just after D-Day.

I have been given your name by the RLC Museum, as they were unable to help with my enquiry.

My later father served in the Pioneer Corps during the Second World War (John Joseph Walsh/Army No 14408191), he was in the second wave in the morning of D-Day.

He told me a story of about a particular incident my father was involved in just after D-Day. Whereas his Platoon in entering a French village, and came across a young French girl and a German Officer hanging from posts in the village square.

So, my question you is – Do you have Army records, from the Pioneer Corps, whereas did the British CO of the platoon concerned, make a written report about the incident – and hopefully give the name of the village concerned.

I contacted the French authorities, who said that they knew nothing about the incident – but could do more if I could name the village.

The story goes as follows:

As the platoon entered a French village, shortly after D-Day, they found a young German Officer hanging from a post, and on the other side of the road, a young French girl also hanging from a post. Both had been shot in the head.

The Platoon thought that the French Resistance must have done this. But they were wrong.

They were told (by the village Mayor) that in fact, it was the German Commanding

Officer who ordered this hanging. And it was the German CO who had shot the young girl, because she was carrying French Resistance papers. And he had also shot the young German Officer because he had refused to shoot the young French girl.

The German CO told the village people (who were ordered to assemble in the village square), and he announced that to help the French Resistance was punishable by death.

And so the CO ordered the young German Officer to execute on the spot the young French girl – but he refused to do this (apparently he refused three times).

So the CO took out his gun and shot the girl dead, and then turned and shot the Young Officer dead, for under German Army Law to refuse a direct order from a senior officer was punishable by death.

The German CO then ordered that both were not to be cut down, that both were to be left hanging as a warning to French people, that if they helped the French Resistance, they would be shot.

And to German troops, a reminder that if they disobeyed a direct order, they also would be shot.

He also said that if he returned and found that they had been cut down, then every person in the village would be executed, men, women and children.

The Germans then left the village, the British CO upon arrival in the village instructed that the two were to be cut down, saying to the French people that the Germans would not be coming back.

I am therefore very interested in what happened to the two young people concerned. Best regards

Jim Walsh

Death of 3 very fine Pioneers

NORMAN, IT was sad to read in the current edition of The Pioneer of the death of 3 very fine Pioneers.

It was tremendous to see Paddy McPhillips get the recognition he so very much deserved. No matter where I encountered him, he was never shy of telling me how I should be doing my job. A good man. Colin Langford was a very able officer and a decent individual. And finally

Phil O'Connor: another in a long line of outstanding Pioneer Corps Chief Clerks. Phil was a man of great ability and tact, and it is of no surprise to anyone who had worked with him, that he made a great success of things when he moved into civilian life.

Well done to you for giving each their deserved recognition.

Nick O'Connor South Australia.

Brought to tears



■ Trevor Deutsch, on the front cover of our last issue

Picture: Supplied

NORMAN, Paul and everyone at RPC Association, I am rarely brought to tears, but this morning when I opened your package with my father's face on the cover of the *The Pioneer*, I was quite overcome.

As I may have mentioned to you, this year would have been his 100th birthday and this is a remarkable gift for us and our children, especially at Christmas.

Everything was wonderfully assembled. I have not read through the article yet, but I did notice that there are a lot of details that have been included - a considerable amount of research which will help fill the gaps and for this I am so grateful. I can't wait to read it.

I am also sending scans to Scouts

Canada headquarters here in Ottawa. Stalag 383 was one of the few camps which actually had a Scouts Rover Crew and there is a display on the camp at the Scout museum (my father was a Scout there as well).

Although he was never one for soliciting recognition, I know he would have been very proud of this article, as he was proud of being part of the Corps.

I would like to think that I would have made the sacrifices he made as a youth, but fortunately, because of what he and your colleagues did back then, I never had to make that decision.

My sincere thanks again and Merry Christmas.

Lawry Trevor-Deutsch

Hopefully one year I will make it to Remembrance Day

Hi Norman, we moved again! New address is ??? Canada.

Just received the magazine, perhaps the best yet! Nice to see some old friends like Andy and Ruth Parry.

Hopefully one year I will be able to make it to Remembrance Day or the Reunion. Still in uniform with the Canadian Army, but

just for a couple more years. I can tell you though, at 60, I am feeling it LOL. One thing, do we know if ex-Sgt Paddy Breen is still around? Paddy Haddock might know or maybe Graham McLane might.

Take care and all the best, still doing stellar work for us!

Chris Belgum

THE PIONEER

■ I WOULD like to say a massive thank you to Two Legends Norman Brown & Paul Brown for another fantastic Corps Magazine, So many sexy buggers, and most of all Red&Green legends. Miss & love you all.
James Upfield

■ NORM, just got the latest edition of the pioneer. What an amazing issue buddy. Perfect in every way.
Lee Hanlon

■ NORMAN, mag came this morning and some good looking people are in it, and some only a mother could love joke. Cheers keep up the good work.
Andrew Cooper

■ MANY THANKS, Norman Brown for yet another cracking reunion, nice seeing a few old faces, thank you.
Nigel Smilie

■ MANY THANKS, for yet another cracking reunion, nice seeing a few old faces, thank you
Eddie Butler

■ NEARLY HOME, thanks for a great weekend everyone. See you all next time.
James Mackay

■ I WOULD like to thank Norman Brown for a great weekend, it was good to meet old friends at the reunion.
Ted Kewley

■ WHAT A fantastic day on the Pioneer reunion weekend. Glad to see people that we had not seen for long time.
Johnny Dau

■ THANKS FOR a fantastic weekend Norman, was definitely worth coming over from Denmark.
Tony Simm

■ BIG THANK YOU from me and Linda to Norman Brown and all who made a great reunion weekend happen, thanks again.
Steven Kohut

■ THANK YOU Norman and all his team for a great weekend once again, well done. It was great to meet up with old comrades, can't wait for next year
Ian Morewood



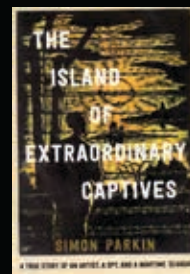
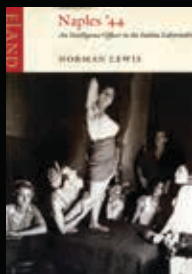
Write in or email us...

The Royal Pioneer Corps Association

c/o BGSU
St George's Barracks
ARNCOTT
Bicester OX25 1PP

or email us at:
royalpioneer corps@gmail.com





Naples 44

Report: Norman Brown
Picture: Supplied

NORMAN Lewis arrives in war-torn Naples as an intelligence officer in 1944. The starving population has devoured all the tropical fish in the aquarium, respectable women have been driven to prostitution and the black market is king. If it could move, it was eaten! Dogs and cats would disappear with most ending up in the pot!

Lewis finds little to admire in his fellow soldiers, but gains sustenance from the extraordinary vivacity of the Italians. There is the lawyer who earns his living bring a

touch of Roman class to funerals, the gynaecologist who 'specialises in the restoration of lost virginity' and the widowed housewife who times her British lover against the clock. "Here I was given the chance to be born again", writes Lewis, "Italy would be the country of my choice." He quickly came to love the area and the locals who once he came to know them became close friends.

Although at first he had little intelligence work to do it gave him a chance to observe the civilian population at close quarters, the population who were suffering from near starvation and poverty.

The soldiers stationed there quickly

learned how to exploit the situation to their own advantage with some hilarious results. They would sell, or exchange for wine, anything they could from the QM stores, clothing was the favourite as well as rations and even soap. Civilians would even wash and iron their clothing.

Ed note: although this book was first published in 1978 I do highly recommend it, copies can still be obtained from local libraries or even on ebay.

NAPLES 44 – AN INTELLIGENCE OFFICER IN THE ITALIAN LABYRINTH
AUTHOR: NORMAN LEWIS
ISBN: 0-907871-72-1

Labour Corps Pioneers

Report: Norman Brown
Picture: Supplied

THIS booklet, whilst relating specifically to the Labour Corps in France, provides not only a fascinating insight into Labour Corps itself but also an overview of how a British Army was organised.

It details the type of units that made up the Labour Corps and helps understand more about an organisation that rarely features as a subject widely studied, but played a vital role in France on the Western Front. The Corps consisted of the following:

1. Organisation of Labour Units. The unskilled labour in France includes the following categories:
 - a. Labour Companies
 - b. Divisional Employment Companies
 - c. Area Employment Companies
2. Canadian Labour Battalions
3. Middlesex (Alien) Labour Companies
4. South African Native Labour Corps
5. Cape Coloured Battalion
6. Egyptian Labour Corps
7. Chinese Labour Corps
8. Fijian Labour Detachment
9. Indian Labour Corps
10. Non-Combatant Corps
11. Prisoner of War Companies
12. French and Belgian Civilian Labour

NOTES FOR GUIDANCE OF OFFICERS OF THE LABOUR CORPS IN FRANCE
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED BY GENERAL STAFF WAR OFFICE REPRODUCED IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM IN 1913
ISBN: 978-1-908487-67-4

told me

Report: Norman Brown
Picture: Supplied

IN 1980, at the age of 16 I joined the army (Royal Pioneer Corps) and 23 years later I retired as a Staff Sergeant and became a teacher at Tuxford Academy. During my service I travelled to many parts of the world including: Belize, Northern Ireland, The Gulf States, Bosnia, Angola and Germany.

This isn't the story of a battle hardened person because I was just an average soldier, but this book is about my experiences and all the people I met and their awesome qualities.

Ed note: this book was written by 24576044 Ex SSgt NICHOL A, it mentions his time at the Junior Leaders camp at Norton Manor Camp, Taunton his posting to 206 Coy RPC at Long Marston and 8 Regiment RCT at Munster and 187 (Tancred) Coy plus various detachments. Some of the well known characters are mentioned i.e. Lt PA Wilde, Maj J Starling, WO2/IWO1 T Appleyard, Sgt/WO2 P Thomas and Sgt/WO1 R Fox (and many others) a recommended read!

THE PIONEERS TOLD ME BEFORE THEY DIED
AUTHOR: ANDREW NICHOL
ISBN: 978-1-915-33008-6

Wash my underpants!

Report: Norman Brown
Picture: Supplied

MEMOIRS of a soldier in the 60's and 70's (Ed note: RCT) Most of the young recruits were escaping either poverty or the thought of following their fathers down the mines but it did not take long for us to become one unit and help, assist, support and laugh as one unit. The book is based on the Junior Leaders [Battalion at Norton Manor Camp, Taunton. (The RPC supplied instructors at this unit for many years). The book describes the training of raw very young recruits most of whom had only left school and how it turned them into soldiers.

Most found the discipline very strict at first but soon became used to it and those that completed training usually made excellent soldiers. It certainly brings back memories of training, even for those who did not undergo training at a Junior Leaders establishment.

Ed note: a very humorous book, although you may have heard a few of the stories before – especially at Reunion Weekends!

WHO'S GOING TO WASH MY UNDERPANTS?
AUTHOR: KEITH COLEMAN-COOKE
ISBN: 9781 7981 43094

The Star's War

Report: Norman Brown
Picture: Supplied

IN 1993, the actor Bill Owen MBE, generously recounted his early days in the Royal Pioneer Corps for a fundraising book being prepared by Autism West Midlands. The book was called 'The Stars' War' which captured the personal stories of military life experienced by many well-known stars' of stage, screen and sport.

Bill is himself perhaps best known for playing 'Compo' in 'Last of the Summer Wine', Thelma's philandering Dad in 'Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads' and featured prominently in several of the early 'Carry On' films. When the book, which contains a foreword by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, was eventually launched in the House of Parliament, Bill further contributed his time by signing many bookplates".

I have permission from the editor to publish Bill Owen's story:
"Pioneering in Oxfordshire"

It was in the Pioneer Corps, stationed in the peace and safety of the Oxfordshire countryside, where on the first cold morning of a temporary posting with a dozen ORs, I found myself as a Corporal in charge of our working party, shifting coal from railway trucks, as the Duty Sergeant had absented himself to phone HQ, well that was his excuse.

It was during this sudden responsibility that we had a visit from the Brigadier, a tall, understanding gentleman, who enquired as to our welfare and the state of our temporary billets. They were bad, very bad, a draughty, rat infested barn, of which on behalf of my comrades in arms, I explained this: "I wouldn't ask a pig to sleep there, sir!"

This evidently prompted him to immediately inspect said billets and, consequently, led to a hasty and angered visit to our CO. A nasty little shit, who raised fire and brimstone down upon my head with such remarks as, "If necessary, you will sleep in trenches of blood!" I must confess

during this tirade I had vision of an immediate posting to some far flung hotbed of slaughter.

But I was wrong. The first indication was the appearance of Army transport to take us back the two miles we had just had to walk with countless tools and barrows in the half-light of that first morning.

We were then driven to our new billets, a warm welcoming village Community Centre, almost next door to the village pub. Our Commanding Officer was posted elsewhere by the end of the week. I was very popular!

(Ed note: Bill Owen real name William John Owen Rowbotham (Date of birth 14 Mar 14), his initial service number was 13059558, he enlisted in London and joined 1 Centre Pioneer Corps for training on 26 Jul 41. He was commissioned in July 42 and then served in 217 and 282 Coys)

THE STARS' WAR
EDITED BY @ HUGH MORGAN
ISBN: 1 85421 222 2

The Island of Extraordinary Captives

Report: Norman Brown
Picture: Supplied

THE police came for Peter Fleischmann in the early hours. It reminded the teenager of the Gestapo's moonlit roundups he had narrowly avoided at home in Berlin. Now, having endured a perilous journey to reach England – hiding from the rampaging Nazi thugs at his orphanage, boarding a Kindertransport to safety – here the aspiring artist was, on a ship bound for the Isle of Man, suspected of being a Nazi spy. What had gone wrong? He could not believe this was happening to him, he thought, along with many others, that they had escaped persecution when they had left Germany.

In May 1940, faced with a country gripped by paranoia, Prime Minister Winston Churchill ordered the internment of all German and Austrian citizens living in Britain using the phrase "Collar the Lot". Most, like Peter,

were refugees who had come to the country to escape Nazi oppression. They were now imprisoned by the very country to which they had staked their trust.

Painstakingly researched from dozens of unpublished first-hand accounts and previously classified documents. The book tells, for the first time, the story of history's most astonishing internment camp and of how a group of world-renowned artist, musicians and academics came to be seen as 'enemy aliens'. Many of the artists managed to sell their work, this allowed them to supplement their meagre rations. They also displayed their work at various exhibitions throughout the island.

The book is the story of a battle between fear and compassion at a time of national crisis. It reveals how Britain's treatment of refugees during the Second World War led to one of the nation's most shameful missteps, and how hope and creativity can flourish in even the

most challenging circumstances.

On May 1940, following this internment, Hitler wrote:

The British have detailed in concentration camps the very people we found it necessary to detain. Where are those much-vaunted democratic liberties of which the English boast?"

This was, of course, not published in the British press and most of the population were unaware that this was happening.

Ed Note: Peter Fleischmann (DOB 23 January 1921) enlisted at Euston into the Pioneer Corps on 23 March 1943 and transferred to the Royal Army Ordnance Corps on 18 August 1944.

He later became an interpreter at the Nuremberg War Trials. Over 4,000 personnel enlisted into the Pioneer Corps from the Isle of Man internment camps.

THE ISLAND OF EXTRAORDINARY CAPTIVES
AUTHOR: SIMON PARKIN
ISBN: 978-1-529-34722-7



The Last Post

Since the last newsletter it is with great sadness to report the following deaths

SANDERS ERIC IAN EX WO1 (13801620) 30 AUG 21 (AGED 101).

Served from 17 Feb 40 until 5 Jan 43 before transferring to Royal Fusiliers for work with SOE. Enlisted under the name Ignaz SCHWARZ

STENHOUSE ANDREW EX PTE (24521681) 23 JAN 33 (AGED 59)

Served 1980 – 1991

JACKSON ROBERT JAMES MCKENNA EX PTE (24075754) AGED 72) 31 JAN

Served 2 Jun 67 – 26 May 73

MCNAIR WILLIAM J EX PTE (24586554) AGED 56 15 JAN 22

Served 84 – 89

MARCHANT TERENCE (TERRY) EX PTE (24322731) AGED 65 1 FEB 22

Served 74 – 85

WATSON MICHAEL MBE EX LCPL (25039448) (AGED 46) 27 JUL 22

Awarded MBE in 2020 Queens Birthday Honours List for saving a man's life.

WATSON MICHAEL MBE EX LCPL (25039448) (AGED 46) 27 JUL 22

Served 1954 – 1991. Awarded BEM whilst Post NCO (Long Service List) at 1 (BR) Corps in 1988.

KEOGH PAUL EX CPL (24553827) 9 AUG 22 (AGED 56)

Served 1980 – 2002

WARD DAVID (DANNY) EX PTE (23966155) 7 AUG 22 (AGED 76)

Served Feb 54 – Feb 70

YATES MICHAEL EDWARD GEORGE EX LCPL (24175340) 13 AUG 22 (AGED 76)

Served 1970 – 1979

CLARKE ARTHUR A EX PTE (23374843) 15 OCT 22 (AGED 84)

Served 1955 – 1957

NEAL JOHN RICHARD EX CPL (22870499) 28 SEP 22 (AGED 87)

Served 1953 - 1955

RAYNER JOHN E (24105399) EX LCPL (AGED 68) 22 MAR 22.

Served 1972 - 1984



CATLOR ALFRED PETER (23348104) EX CPL 18 MAY 22 (AGED 86)

Served 1956 – 1958

TROTTER THOMAS (TOMMY) (14395388) EX CPL 3 APR 22 (AGED 101)

Enlisted into General Service Corps (for basic Training) on 17 Dec 42, transferred to Pioneer Corps on 27 Jan 43 and served in 269, 231, 96 Coys and then 104 Fire Fighting Coy and 61 Fire Brigade before transferring to the RASC on 1 Jul 46.

DECEICO DENNIS PATRICK (TAFF) (24006634) EX SSGT 12 APR 22 (AGED 77)

Served 1964 – 1986 before transferring to the Long Service List

WHITTAKER IAN (GEORDIE) (24171545) EX PTE 15 MAY 22 (AGED 62)

Served 1985 – 1987

WOLSTENHOLME COLIN E (22523749 & 488722) EX MAJ 16 MAY 22 (AGED 89)

Served 1950 – 1975 (Commissioned 26 Jan 70)



BROWN GEOFFREY (14844712) EX PTE 22 DEC 21 (AGED 95)

Served 14 Sep 44 – 3 Jan 48

BALDWIN RG (22891940) EX PTE 17 MAY 22 (AGED 87)

Served 1955 – 57

MCHUGH KEVIN (24198483) EX CPL 2 JUL 22 (AGED 67)

Served 1971 – 1992

SMYTH ROBERT (BOB) (24446774) EX SGT 1 JUL 22 (AGED 63)

Served 1977 – 1999 – the last Chief Clerk of 518 Coy RPC

COULTHARD JOHN (23443031) EX PTE 16 DEC 21 (AGED 81)

Served 1958 – 1964

HOGG ALAN (24344790) EX PTE 11 OCT 22 (AGED 66)

Served 1974 - 1980

THORNTON BRIAN ARNOLD (486540) EX MAJ 10 MAR 21 (AGED 75)

Transferred into RPC(V) in 1980 and served in 12 PCLU(V) and Mobile PLSU.

BROADBENT RICHARD JOHN (24477444) EX PTE 16 APR 22 (AGED 65)



Michael Watson



Paul Keogh



George Yates



Patric Deceico



Ian Geordie Whittaker



Colin Wolstenholme

Served 1978 – 1981. Tony Way writes: "It is with deep sadness to announce the peaceful passing of Richard John Broadbent (ex private) in Peterborough at age of 65 on 16 Apr 22.

Commonly known as 'Cockney' he joined his colleagues at 522 Coy after passing out of the RPC Training Centre in 1978, these included Tony Way, Lloyd Yates, and Steve Valentine. Joined also by Tony Lown and his girlfriend at Kineton, Cockney and his new mates had a common interest with the love of punk music which regularly reverberated from the turn table down at the local NAAFI disco each week led by Cockney, who always took charge on the dance floor pogoing from one side of the room to the other.

After spending a tour at the RAOC Ammunition Depot where he had much fun enjoying Army life from the minute morning parades had been decided onto where the work parties were going to end up to finishing with a pint a lot later at a local pub in Gaydon or Banbury, he would speak fondly with glee the part he played in role plays where he would be legally allowed to wind-up the newly promoted ammunition technicians by striking on the job with jaw-dropping hilarity. He moved on to Northern Ireland where he spent a tour where the troubles were at its highest peak with the greatest of risks.

The Esprit de Corps played an extremely important part in his life where he was

supported through the posting, which had continued through him leaving the Army to spend more time with his loving wife Joan and their daughter, Michelle. He had always said 'civvy street' never had offered the same type of laughs or more patriotically being proud to wearing the green uniform and beret of the RPC. He had been married for thirty-five years. Richard, will be sadly missed by family and friends. RIP 'Cockney'

DAVIES DAVID DAWELL LLOYD (461208) EX MAJ (AGED 82) 9 FEB 22

Commissioned 13 Jun 59 (after serving 268 days in ranks) retired 2 Apr 80. Col RF McDonald writes:

Maj David (Dai) Davies died on 9th February 2022 at the age of 82 following a long illness. He lived in Portugal with his wife Dagmar who continues to reside there.

Dai as he was known to most of us joined the Corps in 1958 for National Service initially serving with 405 Company at Corsham and then 521 Company at Didcot where I first met him in 1959 for what was to be a long and firm friendship. The Company was located with 14 Bn RAOC and COD Didcot; Officers' Mess accommodation was short so we shared a room in Ordnance House, a room in a general state of chaos which from time to time caused our OC, Major Walter Clarke, a mix of official irritation and amusement.

Dai was a very fit young officer passing his Army PT Course at Aldershot – something most of us dreaded attending. He captained 52 Group RPC cross country team achieving a commendable 5th place in the Southern Command Championships. In 1961 he took a Pioneer team to the Nijmegen Marches, an event he participated in many times.



As a Training Company Officer in 1961 he introduced recruits and staff to Push Ball an often violent and always physical team game, the aim being to get a ball the height of a grown man into the opponents goal by any means. Throughout his Army Service he was an excellent shot winning many trophies with the rifle, SMG and pistol at Corps Shoots, Divisional Skill at Arms Meetings and ARA Central and non-Central competitions. Also a keen rugby player, when in BAOR he played for HQ Inf Bde and other units.

He was granted a regular commission in 1970. At various times he served at 5 PCLU, 1 PCLU, HQ BAOR (J&L) as an SO3 and SO2 and he took command of 521 Company in 1972. He completed several tours at the Training Centre, finally as the Careers Planning Officer in 1978.

Following retirement from the Army he held Bursar appointments at the Dragon School and Rye St Anthony's School both in Oxford. He and Dagmar later moved to Obernkirchen, Germany to assist with Dagmar's parents business after which they moved permanently to the Algarve.

Dai and Dagmar married at Obernkirchen in April 1966, an occasion that has fond

memories. They have two sons, Mark and Stefan and four grandchildren. Dai will be remembered for his kind and caring nature, his mischievous sense of humour and fun and friendship. A much missed true friend.

DAVISON ANTHONY (GEORDIE) EX SSGT 23 JUL 22 (AGED 79)

Ex French Foreign Legion joined RPC in 1972 and served until 1984.



SIMPSON PATRICK JOSEPH BEM (24132974) EX CPL 17 OCT 21 (AGED 71)

Served 1968 – 1990. Awarded BEM in 1983, the following is his citation:

Corporal Simpson has served in the RPC Trg Centre since 22 Nov 79. He is the Mess Cpl for the RPC Central Officer's Mess. He is responsible to the PMC for the organisation of all functions arising out of the unit and Corps activities. This is a daunting task, involving the frequent reception of officers attending courses, the organisation of lunches for senior officers visiting the Training Centre, and the organising of Corps reception and dinners.

He is involved in organising functions for the Regimental Association of the Northants Regt, the Talavera Evening for the ABF and other local charitable evenings, including the Mayor of Northampton's Charity Reception. He has carried out these duties with extreme competence, patience and good humour. He puts all his energies in everything he does and the excellent results he has achieved are the measure of his efforts. He has played an important part in the founding and the running of the Unit Cpls Club and his administrative work made a positive contribution to the RPC Corps Reception in Jul 81.

He is cheerful, hard-working and persistent in all he does. He set a standard of behaviour and achievement far above that normally expected of a non-commissioned officer of his rank and service.

There is no doubt that the RPCTC, the Central Officers' Mess and the ex-service organisations in Northamptonshire would be the poorer without his efforts. He is most strongly recommended for an award.

IAIN CAMERON, BORN FEBRUARY 11 1943, DIED APRIL 10 2022

Brigadier Iain Cameron, who has died aged 79, served as Provost Marshal (Army), head of the Royal Military Police (RMP), from 1992 to 1995.

During Cameron's tenure, he came under considerable pressure to surrender the scarlet beret (the "red cap") and RMP badge and require all ranks to wear the insignia of the Adjutant-General's Corps.

The implementation of the "peace dividend" at the end of the Cold War led to large-scale reductions in Army strength. A raft of reviews saw the disbandment of the RMP Mounted Troop and economies in

policing and guarding systems. Cameron also oversaw the deployment of RMP on Operation Grapple, the United Kingdom's defence operations in the former Yugoslavia, from October 1992 until December 1995.

He was born at Stubbington, Hants, on 11 Feb 43. His father, Commander Donald Cameron, was awarded a VC for commanding a midget submarine which carried out a daring and successful attack in Sep 43 on the German battleship Tirpitz in a Norwegian fjord.

In 1960, in Southampton, cold, hungry and homeless, he walked into the Army recruiting office and enlisted in order to get a hot meal and a bed for the night. After three years in the ranks of the RPC, he attended the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst.

He was commissioned into the Corps of RMP in Dec 63. After attending the first provost officers' course at Roussillon Barracks, Chichester, he was posted to 247 (Berlin) Provost Company. A year on attachment to 1st Battalion, The Duke of Wellington's Regiment, was followed by command of 11 Inf Brde Provost Unit at Minden. He subsequently commanded 176 Provost Company in Londonderry and was Mentioned in Despatches.



A staff appointment as Deputy-Assistant Quarter-Master General was followed by a tour as Deputy-Assistant-Provost Marshal at HQ 4 Armd Divi. On promotion to Lt Col, he was appointed to the operational staff at Allied Forces Central Europe, the NATO command at Brunssum in the Netherlands.

After his appointment as Commander Provost at HQ 1st (British) Corps, he moved to Rheindahlen as the commander of the Garrison.

In 1995, Cameron took early retirement and worked as deputy chief assessor for Charter Mark, the forerunner of the government's Excellence in Customer Service scheme. He worked overseas for the UK Government, spreading the customer service excellence philosophy to Ethiopian and Nigerian government departments. He was also national chairman of the RMP Association.

A natural leader, he was popular and widely respected. Iain Cameron married, in 1966, Tessa Leadbitter, who survives him with their son and daughter.

MRS SHEILA TELFER AND MRS SHIRLEY NAPIER

In June we received the sad news that Mrs Sheila Telfer had sadly passed and we have also been informed of the recent death of Mrs Shirley Napier wife of the late Lt Col Napier.





And finally...

We're Corporals now, a Professor, a Pioneer pub in Wales, some signs, a US Soldier, My Daddy, alcohol, landrover and 4 tonner!

Report: Norman Brown / Paul Brown
Pictures: Norman Brown / Paul Brown

TWO Royal Pioneers, Dewsnap and Brown, have been promoted from Privates to Corporals in record time. Not long after, they're out for a walk and Dewsnap says, "hey, Brown, there's the NCO's Club. Let's you and me stop for a pint."

"But we're Privates," protests Brown. "We're Corporals now," says Dewsnap, pulling him inside. "Now, Brown, I'm gonna sit down and have a drink." "But we're Privates," says Brown. "Are you blind, numbnuts?" asks Dewsnap, pointing at his stripes on his arm, "We're corporals now." So they have their drink, and pretty

soon a female Corporal comes up to Dewsnap. "You're cute," she says, "and I'd like to date you, but I've got a bad case of gonorrhoea." Dewsnap pulls his friend to the side and whispers, "Brown, go look in the dictionary and see what gonorrhoea means. If it's okay, give me the okay sign." So Brown goes to look it up, comes back, and gives Dewsnap the big okay sign. Three weeks later Dewsnap is laid up in the Med Center with a terrible case of gonorrhoea. "Brown" he says, "why did you give me the okay?" "Well, Dewsnap, in the dictionary, it say gonorrhoea affects only the privates." He points to his stripes. "But we're Corporals now!" ■

THIS is an article about the Tories defending the rich. Suppose that every day, ten men go out for beer and the bill for all ten comes to £100... If they paid their bill the way we pay our taxes, it would go something like this... The first four men (the poorest) would pay nothing. The fifth would pay £1. The sixth would pay £3. The seventh would pay £7.. The eighth would pay £12. The ninth would pay £18. The tenth man (the richest) would pay £59. So, that's what they decided to do.. The ten men drank in the bar every day and seemed quite happy with the arrangement, until one day, the owner threw them a curve ball. "Since you are all such good customers," he said, "I'm going to reduce the cost of your daily beer by £20". Drinks for the ten men would now cost just £80. The group still wanted to pay their bill the way we pay our taxes. So the first four men were unaffected. They would still drink for free. But what about the other six men? The paying customers? How could they divide the £20 windfall so that everyone would get his fair share? They realised that £20 divided by six is £3.33. But if they subtracted that from everybody's share, then the fifth man and the sixth man would each end up being paid to drink his beer. So, the bar owner suggested that it would be fair to reduce each man's bill by a higher percentage the poorer he was, to follow the principle of the tax system they had been using, and he proceeded to work out the amounts he suggested that each should now pay. And so the fifth man, like the first four, now paid nothing (100% saving). The sixth now paid £2 instead of £3 (33% saving). The seventh now paid £5 instead of £7 (28% saving). The eighth now paid £9 instead of £12 (25% saving). The ninth now paid £14 instead of £18 (22% saving). The tenth now paid £49 instead of £59 (16% saving). Each of the six was better off than before. And the first four continued to drink for free. But, once outside the bar, the men began to compare their savings. "I only got a pound out of the £20



■ Lest We Forget

Picture: R Jay



saving," declared the sixth man.

He pointed to the tenth man, "but he got £10!"

"Yeah, that's right," exclaimed the fifth man. "I only saved a pound too. It's unfair that he got ten times more benefit than me!"

"That's true!" shouted the seventh man. "Why should he get £10 back, when I got only £2? The wealthy get all the breaks!"

"Wait a minute," yelled the first four men in unison, "we didn't get anything at all. This new tax system exploits the poor!"

The nine men surrounded the tenth and beat him up.

The next night the tenth man didn't show up for drinks, so the nine sat down and had their beers without him. But when it came time to pay the bill, they discovered something important. They didn't have enough money between all of them for even half of the bill!

And that, boys and girls, journalists and government ministers, is how our tax system works.

The people who already pay the highest taxes will naturally get the most benefit from a tax reduction.

Tax them too much, attack them for being wealthy, and they just may not show up anymore.

In fact, they might start drinking overseas, where the atmosphere is somewhat friendlier.

David R. Kamerschen, Ph.D.
Professor of Economics.

For those who understand, no explanation is needed.

For those who do not understand, no explanation is possible. ■

THERE is a pub in Wales called the Red Lion, near Penderyn. They have loads and loads of Pioneer related pictures etc covering their walls.

We wanted to know the connection and obviously see if we get a discount!

We rang them up, they simply like The Pioneers and bid on these ages ago! ■



THOSE BRITS ARE A STRANGE OLD RACE, THEY SHOW AFFECTION BY ABUSING EACH OTHER, WILL THINK NOTHING OF CASUALLY STOPPING IN THE MIDDLE OF A FIRE FIGHT FOR THEIR 'BREW UP' AND EAT FOOD THAT I WOULDN'T GIVE TO A DYING DOG! BUT F*CK ME, I WOULD RATHER HAVE ONE BRITISH SQUADDIE ON SIDE THAN AN ENTIRE BATTALION OF SPETZNAZ!! WHY? BECAUSE THE BRITISH ARE THE ONLY PEOPLE IN THE WORLD WHO, WHEN THE CHIPS ARE DOWN AND THERE SEEMS LIKE NO HOPE LEFT, INSTEAD OF GETTING SENTIMENTAL OR HYSTERICAL, WILL STRAP ON THEIR PACK, CHARGE THEIR RIFLE, LIGHT UP A SMOKE, THEN CALMLY AND WHIVLY GRIN "WELL, ARE WE GOING THEN YOU WANKER??"
UNKNOWN US SOLDIER - IRAQ 2005

All staff:
Please ensure that copies of 'My Daddy is a Giant' are not placed at the front of the book box. Thanks.



I'm done with Alcohol. Look at this parrot I bought last night.



Drivers handbook paragraph 1.

When the driver stalls the vehicle any passengers in the back must cheer loudly.





And finally 2...

Last but certainly not least, we say goodbye to Norman! We also feature some photos of him over the years!

Report: Paul Brown
Pictures: Norman Brown / Paul Brown

WELL you didn't think we would get to the end of The Pioneer without saying a goodbye to Norman did you!

I do not know of the old mans full history, hence I got him to put a brief version together! In his words:

"Prior to joining the Army I was employed in Local Government, at the County Hall Durham, in the Education Department and hated having to work with bloated ego Councillors and what was even worst in those days was the unelected Aldermen. I signed up to join the Army in 1967 and after the normal tests and medical was given a list of Regts/Corps which I could join. Not knowing much I decided to join the RPC, the recruiting Sergeant tried to talk me out of it but I was bull-headed and

would not change – a decision I have never regretted!

I arrived at Simpson Barracks, Northampton in January 1968 with long sideburns which lasted about two days. My instructors were Sgt Robinson (who later sadly died of a heart attack in Northern Ireland, I ended up living two doors from his widow), Cpl Danny Daniels and LCpl Bob Eccles. In my platoon were also Bob Salter (later commissioned), Jim Peters (made RSM) and Graham Herrington (awarded BEM for his work as a train driver during Op CORPORATE), somehow I managed the award of best recruit, and for those who do not believe this I still have the certificate.

Both Bob Salter and myself were assessed as potential clerks and were posted to HQ 23 Group at Bicester where we attended our Basic Clerks Course and we both achieved A passes. Whilst at 23 Group we attended the PQ2 Course as quite a few students had not turned up, we were only 3 months out of training so we both passed fairly easily

achieving 5th and 6th out of 25 students.

I was then posted to 521 Coy, a short 200 yards away. In the Coy at the time were Roy Palmer (now an In Pensioner) George Dobson, Dave Salter, Bob Salter and myself – we all made Warrant Officers.

Whilst at 521 Coy Roy was asked to run the unit disco which was above the NAAFI, to start we had no glasses so asked everyone to get their first drink downstairs and bring their glass up with them. In no time at all we had more glasses than the NAAFI and the manageress asked if she could borrow some of ours, Roy and I even worked at the local chicken farm (we were all poorly paid in those days).

My first married quarter was a mobile home at the end of Willow Road, Ambrosden, there were about 30 of these homes. The area has since had houses built on where they were situated. I was then allocated a quarter in Didcot where we had to be bussed to Bicester daily. I quickly obtained a weekend job at the power station which was then being built just below the quarters.

I worked with Pete McNally there for nearly 2 years and we had a laugh a minute.

I was then send on detachment to Gibraltar with a section from 521 Coy on the Europa Road project, the border in those days was closed and Gibraltar was spotlessly clean – unlike modern times. We could get on the daily navy ration boat to Tangiers on our days off and most of the Section loved that tour.

Two weeks after my return I was posted to 206 Coy at Long Marston. Part time work here was plentiful from catching chickens (4 of us would catch 34,000 per night), working at the pickle factory, farm work at harvest time, working for Mr Kipling cakes at Evesham and other work. Whilst at 206 Coy I was promoted to Sgt and posted back to 23 Group.

I was only here for a very short time before I was posted to 5 PCLU in Hannover, the military staff at a PCLU consisted of a Major and a Sgt in the HQ and 3 Detachment



1972 - Gibraltar



Commanders (Lt or Capt) who each ran 2 Detachments. Whenever we had visitors to the PCLU I often had to take them to nearly Bergen-Belsen, a most depressing place. I thoroughly enjoyed PCLU but unfortunately I never made it back to BAOR, except for inspections when I was at MOD.

I was posted back to Bicester and granted a married quarter at Caversfield, once I had unpacked and was waiting for my family to join me I was posted on promotion to the Records Office at Exeter. I never slept in this quarter (Geordie Dewsnap and girlfriend did however!).

Being on the Documentation Team meant leaving Exeter on the Monday morning to carry out inspections and returning Thursday morning to write the reports and then have the Friday off. I then became a tourist travelling all over the South-West, part of the country which I still travel to the my motorhome.

Following this tour I was posted, again on promotion, to the Training Centre at Northampton. I had managed to stay away from the Training Centre, except for one course and the Open Days, since my training. I believe the Training Centre was one of the nicest camps in the British Army, Jimmy Atkins when he was QM had planted rose bushes around the camp and the area behind the medical centre was fantastic for wild mushrooms. In 1982 I joined the Council of the Association and 40 years later am still on the Council.

Following a tour here I received a posting order to HQ 13 Group at Bielefeld, the order stated that I needed

my HGV to drive the office box body. I had already been asked if I would like a job at the MOD so I knew I would not be going to Bielefeld but wanted my HGV so applied for the next course. I arrived at Leconsfield on the Monday and passed on the Wednesday, they asked if I would like to stay for HGV 1, I said yes so they telephoned the Training Centre who said that I had to return immediately. My posting order to MOD had arrived in the unit and I was blamed for wasting a HGV course, I explained that I had not wasted one of our allocation but had jumped on a cancellation.

My tour at MOD was really enjoyable, I had to visit Hong Kong once a year, Cyprus twice and Gibraltar once as well as various visits to BAOR together with travelling all over the UK. One year I travelled 24,000 miles (all at ODR!).

Following this I returned to the Training Centre and stayed there until in 1991 I decided to leave. Purchased a business from one of the old Corps stalwarts, Tom Mickley, and worked for myself for the next 12 years. I decided at the age of 55 to retire, which I did for six weeks until I went with my daughter to buy some carpet at an auction where I bumped into Brig Telfer, who, at the time was Chairman of the Association. He asked what I was now doing, I explained that I was now retired.

He telephoned me a week later asking if I would take over the post of Controller of the Association as a sick replacement. I did this and now 20 years later am on the point of retiring

again!

When I started we were, of course, at 51 St George's Drive, London. It was decided in 2005 to sell the building as it was in need of expensive repairs and the RLC had indicated that they did not want to take the building on.

We sold the building in December of that year and I moved to Bicester where the QM found me the smallest office he could (in the bungalow at the top of the square), I later moved to the television room in Block 4 before moving to the bungalow behind the guardroom – this was the same building I had been posted to after leaving basic training.

When 23 Regiment disbanded I had a few problems with the new unit, I could not get my mail and they often lost my parcels. The QM at St George's Barracks managed to find me an office and I moved (again) in 2015. I later had, once again, to move this time temporarily within the QMs office block before my present office was re-furbished.

I now have the best office amongst all the other forming Corps' Associations thanks to the CO Bicester Garrison an ex Pioneer, Lt Col Atherton.

So my successor, Lt Col Billy Dilkes, hopefully will not have to pack and move – I have packed and unpacked 6 times in 20 years!

Finally I must thank all the Chairmen/ Presidents and Council Members who have helped me over the years and also my son Paul for his help in not only his work on the Association Newsletters (the best in the British Army!) but also our website and social networks. ■





1977 - Stewart Woodward & Ernie Greaves, Bielfeld



1984 - Central Sgts Mess



1986 - Marathon days



2006 Lunch at Buckingham Palace with Maj ER Elliott



2009 - Royal Logistic Corps Predecessors Lunch



2009 - Visiting 23 Pioneer Regiment, Cyprus



2015 - With Nostalgia Group



2017 - Coventry Reunion



2018 - Royal Hospital, Chelsea

Coming up in the next newsletter ...

- News
- Forthcoming events
- Your stories
- Your Letters
- Pioneer Reunion
- Blast from the Past
- Digging through the Archives
- Photo Gallery
- Book Reviews
- Collectors Corner
- And much more!





Can you spot the mouse?



1991 - Wedding



1997 - 23 Regt Sgts Mess Dinner Night



2006 Battlefield Tour Tancred's Grave



2013 - Burns Night



2014 - Founders Day



2015 - Award of BEM



2019 - WW2 Tour



Cenotaph Parade 2022 - getting a send off! I will still be attending the Cenotaph so see you there!



2019 Canal trip



LABOR OMNIA VINCIT