



Website: www.newtonabbot-rea.co.uk

E-Mail: secretary@newtonabbot-rea.co.uk

Newsletter Jan / Feb 2015.

Our monthly meetings are normally held on the 4th Sunday of the month, at Newton Abbot RBL Club, Marsh Road.

Parking is available at the Cricketfield car park opposite The RBL Club (Park and Display, pay on exit including Sundays) There is free on street parking in the surrounding streets (Sundays only)

Our next 2 meetings will be held on: **Sunday 22 Feb 2014**
Sunday 22 Mar 2014

Members should be seated ready to start at 11: 30hrs. In the upstairs function room



Branch Standard Handover

The Branch President hands over the Standard from Tony Franklin to the new Bearer Alan Duncombe

Our next 2 meetings will be held on: **Sunday 22 Feb 2014**
Sunday 22 Mar 2014

Please support you local branch of the Royal Engineers Association.
We need your support to survive.

BRANCH OFFICIALS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR 2015

Following the Branch AGM which was held on 18 January 2015, the following members were duly elected to serve as your Branch Officials & Committee for the next twelve months.

President	Mr Brian Cocker
Chairman	Mr Tony Franklin
Secretary	Mr Roger Andrews [Webmaster; Newsletter Editor]
Treasurer	Mr Keith Tapp
Committee	Mr Dave Cairns [Welfare] Mr Martin Jones Mr Jason Downey

All the branch Officials and committee members who were re-elected to serve another term of office thank the Branch members for their continued vote of confidence

During the AGM Tony Franklin submitted his resignation as the Branch Standard Bearer. Alan Duncombe stated that he would be Proud and Honoured to serve as the Branch Standard Bearer. Alan was proposed and seconded to replace Tony and this was unanimously confirmed by all members present at the AGM. Alan gladly accepted the post. The Branch Standard was passed back to the Branch President Brian Cocker by Tony and it was duly handed to Alan by Brian.

If any member has any ideas or suggestions to benefit the branch please feel free to contact any one of the committee to discuss it.

BIRTHDAY CONGRATULATIONS TO:-

Tony Franklin	07 January
Brian Cocker	17 January
Niel Mead	21 January
Sue Peters	02 February
Alan Duncombe	03 February
Gerry Lakey	24 February
Mike Tribble	25 February

If we have missed your birthday we apologise, if you would like your date mentioned here let me know your details so the records can be updated and your name included in the future.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH 2014

Our Christmas lunch which was held on the 14 December 2014 was a great success enjoyed by all who attended.

A total of 46 members and guests which included representatives from Taunton and Bridgwater branches sat down to an excellent meal at the Newton Abbot RBL Club. There was plenty of food and the wine flowed well.

I would like on behalf of the branch to thank the RBL Steward "Dave" and his staff for the excellent well cooked and presented meal along with the complimentary Wine and Port which was supplied.

The two raffles were also a great success with Paul Lloyd walking off with the three litre bottle of brandy and Tricky (the Barman) winning the final mystery prize of £50.00 which was donated by Serenity Bridal Wear of Newton Abbot, altogether there were in excess of over forty prizes and a great thank you to all who donated prizes.

With the record takings for raffle tickets were able to show a profit on our Christmas event so thank you all for your participation and a heartfelt thanks to all involved in making the day so enjoyable..

A Brief History of the Royal Engineers

The story of the Corps of Royal Engineers covers over nine hundred crowded years and cannot be rivalled by any other Arm or Service. The Corps can claim direct descent from the military engineers brought to England by William the Conqueror and an unbroken record of service to the Crown since then.

The Corps has no battle honours, its motto 'ubique', awarded by King William IV in 1832, signifying that it has taken part in every battle fought by the British Army in all parts of the world. As well as gallantry in war, their skills are in even greater demand in peace, where Sappers have built the infrastructure of civilization, wherever British interest has led.

Gundulph built a great edifice to overawe the Saxon citizens of London. It still stands today as the White Tower within the Tower of London. He also strengthened the castle at Rochester, the best preserved Norman Keep in the country.

Appointed Bishop of Rochester, he developed the Saxon church there into a cathedral, the second oldest in England. Gundulph's Tower still stands against the South Transept. Today the Cathedral is the Church of the Corps and houses many memorials. Each year a service is held there as part of the Veterans' Memorial weekend. Gundulph is held in such high esteem by the Corps that he is regarded as the Founding Father rather than his predecessor who took French leave!

The Board of Ordnance

With the development of the cannon an Office of Ordnance - later, the Board of Ordnance - was set up in Gundulph's Tower in London to control the King's cannon, arsenals and fortifications. The first Master of Ordnance was Nicholas Merbury who had been Chief Engineer to Henry V at Agincourt. Until its abolition in 1855, the Board held all Gunners and Engineers on its permanent establishment, in effect a private army. Young Engineer Officers were

sent to the Continent to study fortifications and siege warfare since there was no facility in England until the establishment of the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich in 1741. It was the construction of saps or trenches to enable the enemy fortifications to be assaulted which gave the Corps its nickname of 'Sappers'.

On 26 May 1716 a Royal Warrant of George I authorized the Royal Regiment of Artillery and the Corps of Engineers as separate entities. In 1787 they were granted the title Royal and Engineer officers were styled Royal Engineer. Commissions were awarded on merit, unlike the cavalry or infantry, where they were purchased. Engineer and Gunner officers received rigorous professional training at the Royal Military Academy, at Woolwich.

The Engineer workforce was recruited from civilian tradesman as required for particular campaigns but this system faltered in Gibraltar. After several sieges the Chief Engineer, William Green, persuaded the Ordnance Board in 1772 to allow him to recruit some soldier artificers, skilled tradesman who would wear uniform and be subject to military discipline. The Soldier Artificer Company was so successful during the Great Siege of 1779-1783 that in 1787 a similar unit, the Royal Military Artificers, was formed in England for service worldwide.

The Peninsular Wars against France showed the need for a trained body of field or combat engineers. In 1812, on the authority of the Duke of Wellington, Major Charles Pasley RE set up a school for this purpose at Chatham. It continues today as the Royal School of Military Engineering (RSME). The first trainees were in action in Spain in 1813 and in 1814. The Engineer soldiers were retitled as the Royal Sappers and Miners.

After the Napoleonic Wars, the Royal Engineers and Royal Sappers and Miners were employed around the world both on active service and in the peaceful development of the Empire. Tasks were many and varied. Campaigns in North and South America, Africa, China, Australia and New Zealand all had Engineer support.

The Ordnance Survey of Great Britain and Ireland was staffed by these men who also carried out the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India and set out the international boundary between Canada and the United States of America. Throughout the Empire, towns were set out and public buildings, roads, canals, railways and water supply systems designed and built.

In 1856 after the Crimean War the Board of Ordnance was abolished, control of the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers being vested in the Commander-in-Chief of the Army. In the same year the Royal Sappers and Miners were incorporated into the Royal Engineers and the officers and soldiers served under the same cap badge.

TECHNOLOGY

The Royal Engineers were responsible for the introduction of much new technology to the Army-telegraphy during the Crimean War of 1854 - 1856, photography in the Abyssinian Campaign of 1867 and steam road traction in the Ashanti Campaign of 1873.

With their expertise of firing explosive charges underwater the Royal Engineers became responsible for harbour defences, using submarine mines in conjunction with searchlights. Indeed, the Submarine Mining Service grew into a major specialization and was not handed over to the Royal Navy until 1905.

The ultimate development in this field was the Brennan Torpedo, which was launched from a base on shore and could be steered to its target up to 11½ miles away. In service from 1890 until 1905 it was regularly demonstrated although never once fired in anger.

Operational diving was introduced in 1839 and Royal Engineers became involved in flying at the time of the American Civil War. This speciality led from balloons, airships and man-lifting kites to

powered flight and the formation of the Air Battalion Royal Engineers which became the Royal Flying Corps, precursor of the Royal Air Force in 1912.

Royal Engineers were also trained in architecture and building construction for fortifications and public works. They introduced the use of cast and wrought iron, used in the huge covered slipways of the Royal Naval dockyards. Sappers designed the Royal Albert Hall and Pentonville Prison and were closely involved with the buildings for the Great exhibition of 1851 and the museums in South Kensington, London.

THE FIRST WORLD WAR

With huge armies in the field, the Royal Engineers expanded and raised many specialist units to undertake work normally done by civilians. Engineer units built and maintained camps, stores and depots, provided water and sanitation, supplied timber and stone, built and operated docks and railways and manufactured many items required by the Army.

Responsibilities included gas and chemical warfare, air defence searchlights, tunnelling, mining, meteorology, postal services and wireless communications. This last became so large that in 1920 a new Corps was raised for the purpose - the Royal Corps of Signals. Sappers also contributed significantly to the tank.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Once again there was an enormous expansion of the Corps. Responsibilities, too, changed. Air defence searchlights were handed over to the Royal Artillery. Mines and booby traps were extensively used. Whilst every soldier needed to know something about them, Sappers led the way in breaching enemy minefields. The Luftwaffe blitz early in the war brought a new responsibility - bomb disposal, a field in which 55 officers and 339 soldiers were killed and 13 George Crosses were won.

Royal Engineers were closely involved in the development of airborne forces and played an important part in many of their operations. In the planning of the Invasion of Normandy Royal Engineers took part in the hazardous business of conducting reconnaissance of the enemy-held beaches and produced the essential maps. During the invasion, specialized engineer tasks led the assault, breaching the sea wall and opening routes inland. After the assault, one of the greatest military engineering feats ever was the construction and operation of the Mulberry Harbour. Prefabricated in Britain in a matter of months, its components were towed across 100 miles of open sea and installed on the Normandy coast, an artificial port to resupply the armies ashore, bring in reinforcements and evacuate the wounded. A particular challenge during the advance into Germany was the number of major rivers and waterways that had to be crossed. Fortunately the need for a simple and versatile bridging system had been foreseen by a brilliant civilian engineer, Mr (later Sir) Donald Bailey. He sketched out the basic details on the back of an envelope during a train journey and the Bailey bridge came into service in 1942. Its versatility is legendary. Multiple span dry bridges, even suspension bridges were possible. Its success is exemplified by the enormous bridges built over the Rivers Rhine, Maas and Elbe and the longest floating bridge of the war, 1000ft, over the River Chindwin in Burma.

THE PRESENT DAY

Since the Second World War the Corps has played its full part in three main areas of activity. The first was the Cold War with its threat of global nuclear conflict, successfully prevented by the NATO alliance. The second was the dismantling of the Empire which involved withdrawal from many former colonies. The unexpected is often just around the corner and the Falklands War of 1982 is a classic example. The third area is operations under the auspices of the United Nations. The Korean War of 1951 was the first such operation. Today these are becoming more common as peace-keeping and humanitarian operations. British forces in general and the Royal Engineers in particular are in great demand for these operations

ROGER'S WORDSEARCH 14-01

E O V E L E C R A I N K D E
G C O M P E T I T O R I R W
D A N S W E R A D H E N A S
E T E S P I I U U E Y D O N
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N D I M E G E T A A S N E T

ANSWER
BLUE
BOARD
BRAINY
CATEGORY
COMPETITION
DIE
DUMB
FAMILY
GAME
GREEN
HISTORY
HUB
KNOWLEDGE
LEISURE
LOSER
MOVE
ORANGE
RULES
SELECT
SPORTS
TOKEN

Friendly fire - isn't.

Recoilless rifles - aren't.

Suppressive fires - won't.

You are not Superman; Marines and fighter pilots take note.

A chest wound is Nature's way of telling you to slow down.

If it's stupid but it works, it isn't stupid.

Try to look unimportant; the enemy may be low on ammo and not want to waste a bullet on you.

If at first you don't succeed, call in an air strike.

If you are forward of your position, your artillery will fall short.

Never share a foxhole with anyone braver than yourself.

Never go to bed with anyone crazier than yourself.

Never forget that your weapon was made by the lowest bidder.

If your attack is going really well, it's an ambush.

The enemy diversion you're ignoring is their main attack.

The enemy invariably attacks on two occasions: a. When they're ready. b. When you're not.

There is no such thing as a perfect plan.

Five second fuses always burn three seconds.

There is no such thing as an atheist in a foxhole.

A retreating enemy is probably just falling back and regrouping.

The important things are always simple; the simple are always hard.

The easy way is always mined.

Teamwork is essential; it gives the enemy other people to shoot at.

If you are short of everything but the enemy, you are in the combat zone.

When you have secured the area, make sure the enemy knows it too.

Incoming fire has the right of way.

If the enemy is within range, so are you.

The only thing more accurate than incoming enemy fire is incoming friendly fire.

Tracers work both ways.

Military Intelligence is a contradiction.

If you can't remember, the Claymore is pointed towards you.

The Cavalry doesn't always come to the rescue.

Sniper's motto: reach out and touch someone.

Killing for peace is like screwing for virginity.

Interchangeable parts aren't.

When in doubt, empty your magazine.

Never stand when you can sit, never sit when you can lie down, never stay awake when you can sleep.

The most dangerous thing in the world is a Second Lieutenant with a map and a compass.

No matter which way you have to march, it's always uphill.

The newest and least experienced soldier will usually win the Medal of Honor.

All-weather close air support doesn't work in bad weather.

The crucial round is a dud.

Every command which can be misunderstood, will be.

There is no such place as a convenient foxhole.

Don't ever be the first, don't ever be the last and don't ever volunteer to do anything.

If your positions are firmly set and you are prepared to take the enemy assault on, he will bypass you.

If your ambush is properly set, the enemy won't walk into it.

Odd objects attract fire - never lurk behind one.

The more stupid the leader is, the more important missions he is ordered to carry out.

The self-importance of a superior is inversely proportional to his position in the hierarchy. There is always a way, and it usually doesn't work.

Success occurs when no one is looking, failure occurs when the General is watching.

Your bivouac for the night is the spot where you got tired of marching that day.

If only one solution can be found for a field problem, then it is usually a stupid solution.

What gets you promoted from one rank gets you killed in the next rank. Odd objects attract fire.

You are odd.

Your mortar barrage will put exactly one round on the intended target. That round will be a dud.

Mine fields are not neutral.

The weight of your equipment is proportional to the time you have been carrying it.

Things that must be together to work can never be shipped together.

Professionals are predictable, it's the amateurs that are dangerous.

No matter which way you have to march, it's always uphill.

The worse the weather, the more you are required to be out in it.

The quartermaster has only two sizes, too large and too small. (or "on order")

When a front line soldier overhears two General Staff officers conferring, he has fallen back too far.

Newton Abbot and District Branch - Royal Engineers Association Officers

Branch President	Brian Cocker
Branch Chairman	Tony Franklin
Branch /Secretary	Roger Andrews – [Webmaster/Newsletter Editor]
Branch Treasurer	Keith Tapp
Committee	Dave Cairns – [Welfare Advisor] Martin Jones Jason Downey
Standard Bearer	Alan Duncombe

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Current Membership

Life Members.....	68
Active Members.....	33
Associate Members.....	3
Friends of Branch.....	5